SHAKESPEARE

COMPLETE WORKS

DELPHI CLASSICS

THE COMPLETE WORKS OF

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

(1564-1616)

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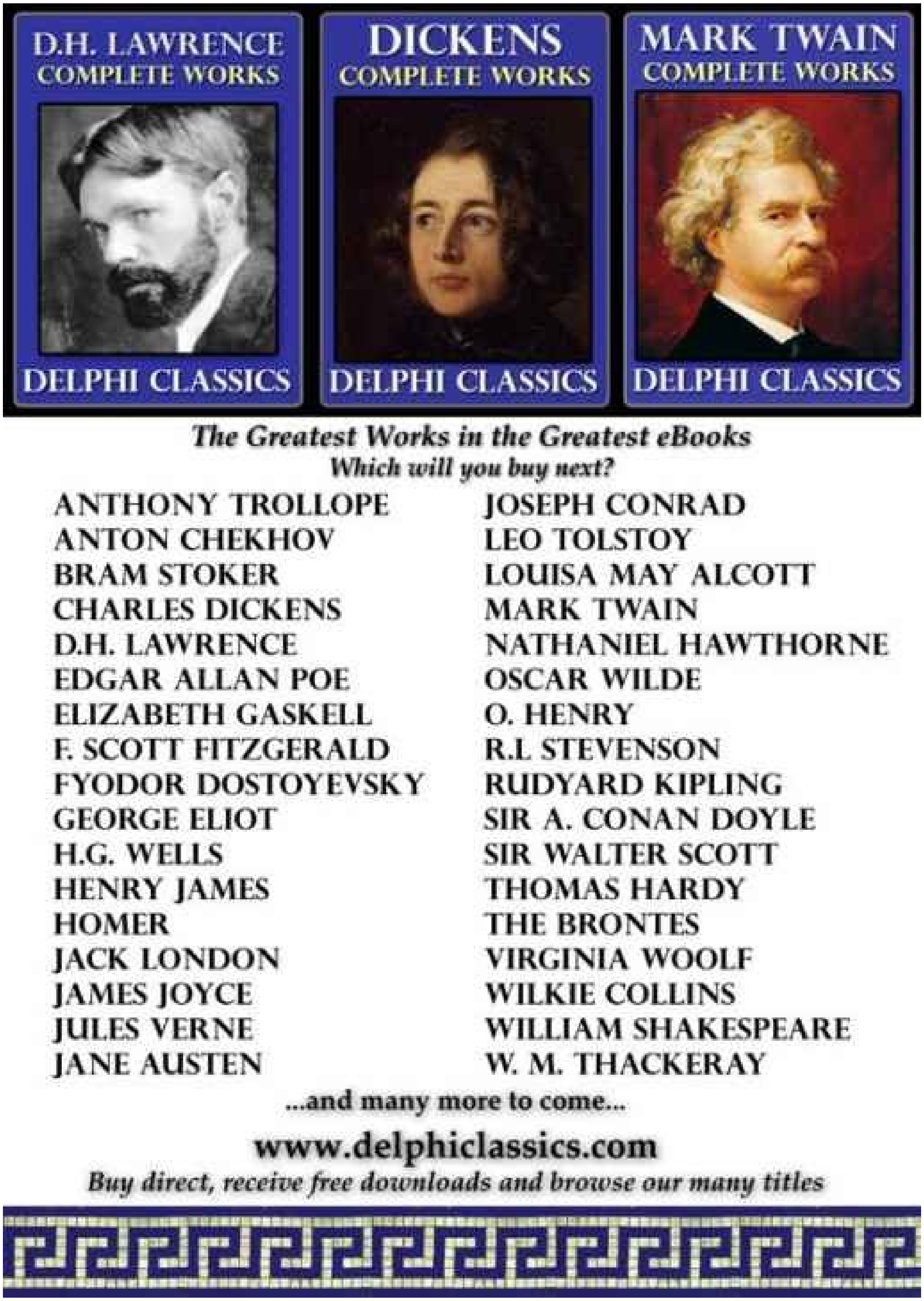
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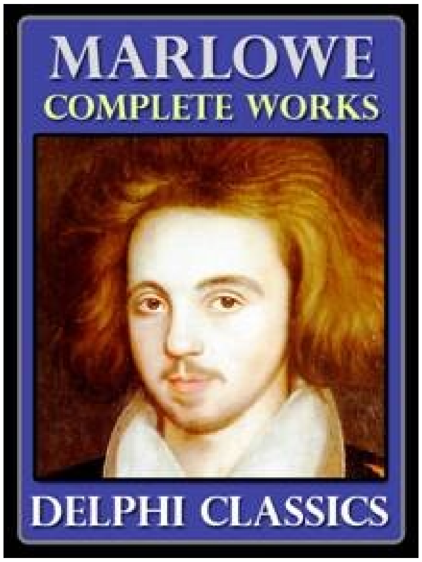

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The Plays

Shakespeare's birthplace, Stratford-upon-Avon

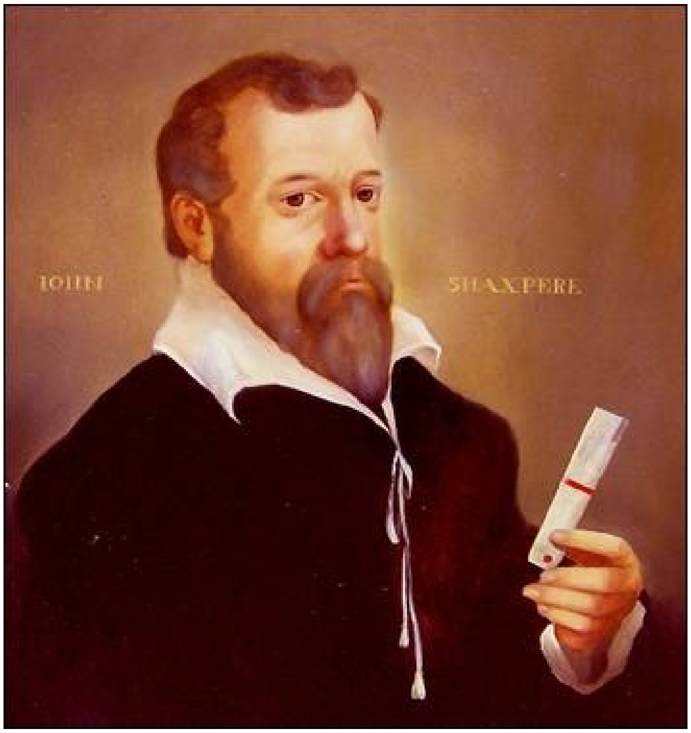
HENRY VI, PART 2

This history play is believed by many scholars to be Shakespeare’s first play, having been written in 1591, and it was only titled Part II following the production of a prequel two years later. This play focuses on the King Henry's inability to quell the bickering of his nobles, the death of his trusted adviser Duke Humphrey of Gloucester, the rise of the Duke of York and the inevitability of armed conflict. As such, the play culminates with the opening battle of the war - the First Battle of St Albans.

Although the *Henry VI* trilogy was not written in chronological order, the three plays are often grouped together with *Richard III* to form a tetralogy covering the entire Wars of the Roses saga, from the death of Henry V in 1422 to the rise to power of Henry VII in 1485. The success of these plays firmly established Shakespeare's reputation as a playwright.

Interestingly, *Henry VI, Part 2* has the largest cast of all Shakespeare's plays, and is seen by many critics as the best of the Henry VI trilogy, though sadly the play receives little attention elsewhere.

Shakespeare's main source text for this play is available via this link .



John Shakespeare – the writer's father, a glove maker, who later became Mayor of Stratford

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DRAMATIS PERSONAE

KING HENRY THE SIXTH.

HUMPHREY, Duke of Gloucester, his uncle.
CARDINAL BEAUFORT, Bishop of Winchester,
great-uncle to the King.
RICHARD PLANTAGENET, Duke of York.

EDWARD and RICHARD, his sons.
DUKE OF SOMERSET.

DUKE OF SUFFOLK.
DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM.

LORD CLIFFORD.
YOUNG CLIFFORD, his son.

EARL OF SALISBURY.

EARL OF WARWICK.

LORD SCALES.

LORD SAY.

SIR HUMPHREY STAFFORD, and WILLIAM STAFFORD, his brother.

SIR JOHN STANLEY.

VAUX.

MATTHEW GOFFE.

A Sea-Captain, Master, and Master's-Mate, and WALTER WHITMORE.

Two Gentlemen, prisoners with Suffolk.

JOHN HUME and JOHN SOUTHWELL, priests.

ROGER BOLINGBROKE, a conjurer.

THOMAS HORNER, an armourer. PETER, his man.

Clerk of Chatham. Mayor of Saint Albans.

SIMPCOX, an impostor.

ALEXANDER IDEN, a Kentish gentleman.

JACK CADE, a rebel.

GEORGE BEVIS, JOHN HOLLAND, DICK the butcher,

SMITH the weaver, MICHAEL, etc., followers of Cade.

Two Murderers.

MARGARET, Queen to King Henry.

ELEANOR, Duchess of Gloucester.

MARGARET JOURDAIN, a witch.

Wife to Simpcox.

Lords, Ladies, and Attendants, Petitioners, Aldermen, a Herald, a Beadle, Sheriff, and Officers, Citizens, Prentices, Falconers, Guards, Soldiers, Messengers, &c.

A Spirit.

SCENE: England.

ACT I

SCENE I. London. The palace

[Flourish of trumpets: then hautboys. *Enter* the KING, GLOUCESTER, SALISBURY, WARWICK, and CARDINAL BEAUFORT, on the one side; the QUEEN, SUFFOLK, YORK, SOMERSET, and BUCKINGHAM, on the other.]

SUFFOLK.

As by your high imperial Majesty

I had in charge at my depart for France,

As procurator to your excellence,

To marry Princess Margaret for your grace,

So, in the famous ancient city Tours,

In presence of the Kings of France and Sicil,

The Dukes of Orleans, Calaber, Bretagne, and Alencon,

Seven earls, twelve barons, and twenty reverend bishops,

I have perform'd my task and was espous'd,

And humbly now upon my bended knee,

In sight of England and her lordly peers, Deliver up my title in the queen

To your most gracious hands, that are the substance

Of that great shadow I did represent:

The happiest gift that ever marquess gave,

The fairest queen that ever king receiv'd.

KING.

Suffolk, arise.—Welcome, Queen Margaret.

I can express no kinder sign of love

Than this kind kiss.—O Lord, that lends me life,

Lend me a heart replete with thankfulness!

For thou hast given me in this beauteous face

A world of earthly blessings to my soul,

If sympathy of love unite our thoughts.

QUEEN.

Great King of England and my gracious lord,

The mutual conference that my mind hath had,

By day, by night, waking and in my dreams,

In courtly company or at my beads,

With you, mine alder-liefest sovereign,

Makes me the bolder to salute my king
With ruder terms, such as my wit affords
And over-joy of heart doth minister.

KING.
Her sight did ravish, but her grace in speech,
Her words yclad with wisdom's majesty,
Makes me from wondering fall to weeping joys;
Such is the fulness of my heart's content.—
Lords, with one cheerful voice welcome my love.

ALL.
[Kneeling] Long live Queen Margaret, England's happiness!

QUEEN.
We thank you all.

[Flourish.]

SUFFOLK.
My Lord Protector, so it please your grace,

Here are the articles of contracted peace

Between our sovereign and the French king Charles,

For eighteen months concluded by consent.

GLOUCESTER.

[Reads] 'Imprimis, It is agreed between the French king Charles and William de la Pole, Marquess of Suffolk, ambassador for Henry King of England, that the said Henry shall espouse the Lady Margaret, daughter unto Reignier King of Naples, Sicilia, and Jerusalem, and crown her Queen of England ere the thirtieth of May next ensuing. Item, that the duchy of Anjou and the county of Maine shall be released and delivered to the king her father'—

[Lets the paper fall.]

KING.

Uncle, how now!

GLOUCESTER.

Pardon me, gracious lord;

Some sudden qualm hath struck me at the heart

And dimm'd mine eyes, that I can read no further.

KING.

Uncle of Winchester, I pray, read on.

CARDINAL.

[Reads] 'Item, It is further agreed between them, that the duchies of Anjou and Maine shall be released and delivered over to the king her father, and she sent over of the King of England's own proper cost and charges, without having any dowry.'

KING.

They please us well.—Lord marquess, kneel down.

We here create thee the first duke of Suffolk,

And girt thee with the sword.—Cousin of York,

We here discharge your grace from being regent

I' the parts of France, till term of eighteen months

Be full expir'd.—Thanks, uncle Winchester,

Gloucester, York, Buckingham, Somerset,

Salisbury, and Warwick;

We thank you all for this great favour done

In entertainment to my princely queen.

Come, let us in, and with all speed provide

To see her coronation be perform'd.

[Exeunt King, Queen, and Suffolk.]

GLOUCESTER.

Brave peers of England, pillars of the state,

To you Duke Humphrey must unload his grief,

Your grief, the common grief of all the land.

What! did my brother Henry spend his youth,

His valour, coin, and people, in the wars?

Did he so often lodge in open field,

In winter's cold and summer's parching heat,

To conquer France, his true inheritance?

And did my brother Bedford toil his wits

To keep by policy what Henry got?

Have you yourselves, Somerset, Buckingham,

Brave York, Salisbury, and victorious Warwick,

Receiv'd deep scars in France and Normandy?

Or hath mine uncle Beaufort and myself,

With all the learned counsel of the realm,

Studied so long, sat in the council-house

Early and late, debating to and fro

How France and Frenchmen might be kept in awe,

And had his highness in his infancy
Crowned in Paris in despite of foes?
And shall these labours and these honours die?
Shall Henry's conquest, Bedford's vigilance,
Your deeds of war, and all our counsel die?

O peers of England, shameful is this league!
Fatal this marriage, cancelling your fame,
Blotting your names from books of memory,
Razing the characters of your renown,
Defacing monuments of conquer'd France,
Undoing all, as all had never been!

CARDINAL.
Nephew, what means this passionate discourse,
This peroration with such circumstance?

For France, 't is ours; and we will keep it still.

GLOUCESTER.
Ay, uncle, we will keep it if we can,

But now it is impossible we should.
Suffolk, the new-made duke that rules the roast,
Hath given the duchy of Anjou and Maine
Unto the poor King Reignier, whose large style
Agrees not with the leanness of his purse.

SALISBURY.
Now, by the death of Him that died for all,
These counties were the keys of Normandy!—
But wherefore weeps Warwick, my valiant son?

WARWICK.
For grief that they are past recovery;
For, were there hope to conquer them again,
My sword should shed hot blood, mine eyes no tears.
Anjou and Maine! myself did win them both,
Those provinces these arms of mine did conquer;
And are the cities that I got with wounds
Deliver'd up again with peaceful words?
Mort Dieu!

YORK.

For Suffolk's duke, may he be suffocate,

That dims the honour of this warlike isle!

France should have torn and rent my very heart,

Before I would have yielded to this league.

I never read but England's kings have had

Large sums of gold and dowries with their wives;

And our King Henry gives away his own,

To match with her that brings no vantages.

GLOUCESTER.

A proper jest, and never heard before,

That Suffolk should demand a whole fifteenth

For costs and charges in transporting her!

She should have staid in France, and starv'd in France,

Before—

CARDINAL.

My Lord of Gloucester, now ye grow too hot;

It was the pleasure of my lord the King.

GLOUCESTER.

My Lord of Winchester, I know your mind;
'T is not my speeches that you do mislike,
But 't is my presence that doth trouble ye.

Rancour will out.
Proud prelate, in thy face
I see thy fury; if I longer stay,
We shall begin our ancient bickerings.—
Lordings, farewell; and say, when I am gone,
I prophesied France will be lost ere long.

[Exit.]

CARDINAL.

So, there goes our protector in a rage.
'T is known to you he is mine enemy,
Nay, more, an enemy unto you all,
And no great friend, I fear me, to the king.
Consider, lords, he is the next of blood,

And heir apparent to the English crown.
Had Henry got an empire by his marriage,
And all the wealthy kingdoms of the west,
There's reason he should be displeas'd at it.
Look to it, lords.
Let not his smoothing words
Bewitch your hearts; be wise and circumspect.
What though the common people favour him,
Calling him 'Humphrey, the good Duke of Gloucester,'
Clapping their hands, and crying with loud voice,
'Jesu maintain your royal excellence!'

With 'God preserve the good Duke Humphrey!'
I fear me, lords, for all this flattering gloss,
He will be found a dangerous protector.

BUCKINGHAM.
Why should he, then, protect our sovereign,
He being of age to govern of himself?—
Cousin of Somerset, join you with me,
And all together, with the Duke of Suffolk,

We'll quickly hoise Duke Humphrey from his seat.

CARDINAL.

This weighty business will not brook delay;

I'll to the Duke of Suffolk presently.

[Exit.]

SOMERSET.

Cousin of Buckingham, though Humphrey's pride

And greatness of his place be grief to us,

Yet let us watch the haughty cardinal;

His insolence is more intolerable

Than all the princes in the land beside;

If Gloucester be displac'd, he 'll be protector.

BUCKINGHAM.

Or thou or I, Somerset, will be protector,

Despite Duke Humphrey or the cardinal.

[Exeunt Buckingham and Somerset.]

SALISBURY.

Pride went before, ambition follows him.

While these do labour for their own preferment,

Behoves it us to labour for the realm.

I never saw but Humphrey Duke of Gloucester

Did bear him like a noble gentleman.

Oft have I seen the haughty cardinal,

More like a soldier than a man o' the church,

As stout and proud as he were lord of all,

Swear like a ruffian and demean himself

Unlike the ruler of a commonweal.—

Warwick my son, the comfort of my age,

Thy deeds, thy plainness, and thy housekeeping,

Hath won the greatest favour of the commons,

Excepting none but good Duke Humphrey;—

And, brother York, thy acts in Ireland,

In bringing them to civil discipline,

Thy late exploits done in the heart of France,

When thou wert regent for our sovereign,

Have made thee fear'd and honour'd of the people.—
Join we together, for the public good,
In what we can, to bridle and suppress
The pride of Suffolk and the cardinal,
With Somerset's and Buckingham's ambition,
And, as we may, cherish Duke Humphrey's deeds
While they do tend the profit of the land.

WARWICK.

So God help Warwick, as he loves the land
And common profit of his country!

YORK.

[Aside.] And so says York, for he hath greatest cause.

SALISBURY.

Then let's make haste away, and look unto the main.

WARWICK.

Unto the main! O father, Maine is lost;

That Maine which by main force Warwick did win,

And would have kept so long as breath did last!

Main chance, father, you meant; but I meant Maine,

Which I will win from France, or else be slain.

[Exeunt Warwick and Salisbury.]

YORK.

Anjou and Maine are given to the French;

Paris is lost; the state of Normandy

Stands on a tickle point now they are gone.

Suffolk concluded on the articles,

The peers agreed; and Henry was well pleas'd

To changes two dukedoms for a duke's fair daughter.

I cannot blame them all: what is't to them?

'T is thine they give away, and not their own.

Pirates may make cheap pennyworths of their pillage,

And purchase friends, and give to courtesans,

Still revelling like lords till all be gone;

Whileas the silly owner of the goods

Weeps over them and wrings his hapless hands

And shakes his head and trembling stands aloof,

While all is shar'd and all is borne away,

Ready to starve and dare not touch his own.

So York must sit and fret and bite his tongue,

While his own lands are bargain'd for and sold.

Methinks the realms of England, France, and Ireland

Bear that proportion to my flesh and blood

As did the fatal brand Althaea burn'd

Unto the prince's heart of Calydon.

Anjou and Maine both given unto the French!

Cold news for me, for I had hope of France,

Even as I have of fertile England's soil.

A day will come when York shall claim his own;

And therefore I will take the Nevils' parts,

And make a show of love to proud Duke Humphrey,

And when I spy advantage, claim the crown,

For that 's the golden mark I seek to hit.

Nor shall proud Lancaster usurp my right,

Nor hold the sceptre in his childish fist,

Nor wear the diadem upon his head,

Whose church-like humours fits not for a crown.

Then, York, be still awhile till time do serve;

Watch thou and wake when others be asleep,

To pry into the secrets of the state;

Till Henry, surfeiting in joys of love,

With his new bride and England's dear-bought queen,

And Humphrey with the peers be fallen at jars.

Then will I raise aloft the milk-white rose,

With whose sweet smell the air shall be perfum'd,

And in my standard bear the arms of York,

To grapple with the house of Lancaster;

And, force perforce, I 'll make him yield the crown

Whose bookish rule hath pull'd fair England down.

[Exit.]

SCENE II. The Duke of Gloucester 's House.

[Enter DUKE HUMPHREY and his wife ELEANOR]

DUCHESS.

Why droops my lord, like over-ripen'd corn,

Hanging the head at Ceres' plenteous load?

Why doth the great Duke Humphrey knit his brows,

As frowning at the favours of the world?

Why are thine eyes fix'd to the sullen earth,

Gazing on that which seems to dim thy sight?

What see'st thou there? King Henry's diadem,

Enchas'd with all the honours of the world?

If so, gaze on, and grovel on thy face,

Until thy head be circled with the same.

Put forth thy hand, reach at the glorious gold.

What, is't too short? I'll lengthen it with mine,

And, having both together heav'd it up,

We'll both together lift our heads to heaven,

And never more abase our sight so low

As to vouchsafe one glance unto the ground.

GLOUCESTER.

O Nell, sweet Nell, if thou dost love thy lord,

Banish the canker of ambitious thoughts;

And may that thought when I imagine ill
Against my king and nephew, virtuous Henry,
Be my last breathing in this mortal world!

My troublous dreams this night doth make me sad.

DUCHESS.

What dream'd my lord? Tell me, and I'll requite it
With sweet rehearsal of my morning's dream.

GLOUCESTER.

Methought this staff, mine office-badge in court,
Was broke in twain;—by whom I have forgot,
But, as I think, it was by the cardinal,—
And on the pieces of the broken wand
Were plac'd the heads of Edmund Duke of Somerset
And William de la Pole, first duke of Suffolk.
This was my dream; what it doth bode, God knows.

DUCHESS.

Tut, this was nothing but an argument

That he that breaks a stick of Gloucester's grove
Shall lose his head for his presumption.
But list to me, my Humphrey, my sweet duke:
Methought I sat in seat of majesty
In the cathedral church of Westminster
And in that chair where kings and queens are crown'd,
Where Henry and Dame Margaret kneel'd to me
And on my head did set the diadem.

GLOUCESTER.
Nay, Eleanor, then must I chide outright.
Presumptuous dame, ill-nurtur'd Eleanor,
Art thou not second woman in the realm,
And the protector's wife, belov'd of him?
Hast thou not worldly pleasure at command,
Above the reach or compass of thy thought?
And wilt thou still be hammering treachery,
To tumble down thy husband and thyself
From top of honour to disgrace's feet?

Away from me, and let me hear no more!

DUCHESS.

What, what, my lord! are you so choleric
With Eleanor for telling but her dream?
Next time I'll keep my dreams unto myself,
And not be check'd.

GLOUCESTER.

Nay, be not angry; I am pleas'd again.

[Enter Messenger.]

MESSENGER.

My lord protector, 't is his highness' pleasure
You do prepare to ride unto Saint Alban's,
Whereas the king and queen do mean to hawk.

GLOUCESTER.

I go.—Come, Nell, thou wilt ride with us?

DUCHESS.

Yes, my good lord, I'll follow presently.

[Exeunt Gloucester and Messenger.]

Follow I must; I cannot go before
While Gloucester bears this base and humble mind.
Were I a man, a duke, and next of blood,
I would remove these tedious stumbling-blocks
And smooth my way upon their headless necks;
And, being a woman, I will not be slack
To play my part in Fortune's pageant.—
Where are you there? Sir John! nay, fear not, man,
We are alone; here's none but thee and I.

[Enter HUME.]

HUME.

Jesus preserve your royal majesty!

DUCHESS.

What say'st thou? majesty! I am but grace.

HUME.

But, by the grace of God, and Hume's advice,

Your grace's title shall be multiplied.

DUCHESS.

What say'st thou, man? hast thou as yet conferr'd

With Margery Jourdain, the cunning witch,

With Roger Bolingbroke, the conjurer?

And will they undertake to do me good?

HUME.

This they have promised,—to show your highness

A spirit rais'd from depth of underground,

That shall make answer to such questions

As by your Grace shall be propounded him.

DUCHESS.

It is enough; I'll think upon the questions.

When from Saint Alban's we do make return,

We'll see these things effected to the full.

Here, Hume, take this reward; make merry, man,

With thy confederates in this weighty cause.

[Exit.]

HUME.

Hume must make merry with the duchess' gold,

Marry, and shall. But, how now, Sir John Hume!

Seal up your lips, and give no words but mum;

The business asketh silent secrecy.

Dame Eleanor gives gold to bring the witch;

Gold cannot come amiss, were she a devil.

Yet have I gold flies from another coast.

I dare not say, from the rich cardinal

And from the great and new-made Duke of Suffolk,

Yet I do find it so; for, to be plain,

They, knowing Dame Eleanor's aspiring humour,

Have hired me to undermine the duchess

And buzz these conjurations in her brain.

They say ' A crafty knave does need no broker;'

Yet am I Suffolk and the cardinal's broker.

Hume, if you take not heed, you shall go near

To call them both a pair of crafty knaves.

Well, so its stands; and thus, I fear, at last

Hume's knavery will be the duchess' wrack,

And her attainture will be Humphrey's fall.

Sort how it will, I shall have gold for all.

[Exit.]

SCENE III. London . The palace.

[Enter PETER and other PETITIONERS.]

1 PETITIONER. My masters, let's stand close; my lord protector will come this way by and by, and then we may deliver our supplications in the quill.

2 PETITIONER. Marry, the Lord protect him, for he's a good man! Jesu bless him!

[Enter SUFFOLK and QUEEN.]

PETER.

Here 'a comes, methinks, and the queen with him.

I'll be the first, sure.

2 PETITIONER. Come back, fool; this is the Duke of Suffolk and not my lord protector.

SUFFOLK.

How now, fellow! wouldst any thing with me?

1 PETITIONER. I pray, my lord, pardon me; I took ye for my lord protector.

QUEEN.

[Reading] 'To my Lord Protector!' Are your supplications to his lordship? Let me see them; what is thine?

1 PETITIONER.

Mine is, an 't please your grace, against John

Goodman, my lord cardinal's man, for keeping my house and lands,

and wife and all, from me.

SUFFOLK.

Thy wife too! that's some wrong, indeed.—What's yours?—What's here! *[Reads]* 'Against the Duke of Suffolk for enclosing the commons of Melford.'—How now, sir knave!

2 PETITIONER. Alas, sir, I am but a poor petitioner of our whole township.

PETER.

[Giving his petition] Against my master, Thomas Horner, for saying that the Duke of York was rightful heir to the crown.

QUEEN.

What say'st thou? did the Duke of York say he was rightful heir to the crown?

PETER.

That my master was? no, forsooth; my master said that he was, and that the king was an usurper.

SUFFOLK.

Who is there? *[Enter Servant.]* Take this fellow in, and send for his master with a pursuivant presently.—We'll hear more of your matter before the king.

[Exit Servant with Peter.]

QUEEN.

And as for you, that love to be protected

Under the wings of our protector's grace,

Begin your suits anew and sue to him.

[Tears the supplications.]

Away, base cullions!—Suffolk, let them go.

ALL.

Come, let's be gone.

[Exeunt.]

QUEEN.

My Lord of Suffolk, say, is this the guise,

Is this the fashion in the court of England?

Is this the government of Britain's isle,

And this the royalty of Albion's king?

What, shall King Henry be a pupil still

Under the surly Gloucester's governance?

Am I a queen in title and in style,

And must be made a subject to a duke?

I tell thee, Pole, when in the city Tours

Thou ran'st a tilt in honour of my love

And stol'st away the ladies' hearts of France,

I thought King Henry had resembled thee

In courage, courtship, and proportion;

But all his mind is bent to holiness,

To number Ave-Maries on his beads,

His champions are the prophets and apostles,

His weapons holy saws of sacred writ,

His study is his tilt-yard, and his loves

Are brazen images of canoniz'd saints.

I would the college of the cardinals

Would choose him pope and carry him to Rome,

And set the triple crown upon his head;

That were a state fit for his holiness.

SUFFOLK.

Madam, be patient; as I was cause
Your highness came to England, so will I
In England work your grace's full content.

QUEEN.

Beside the haughty protector, have we Beaufort
The imperious churchman, Somerset, Buckingham,
And grumbling York; and not the least of these
But can do more in England than the king.

SUFFOLK.

And he of these that can do most of all
Cannot do more in England than the Nevils;
Salisbury and Warwick are no simple peers.

QUEEN.

Not all these lords do vex me half so much
As that proud dame, the lord protector's wife.
She sweeps it through the court with troops of ladies,

More like an empress than Duke Humphrey's wife.
Strangers in court do take her for the queen;
She bears a duke's revenues on her back,
And in her heart she scorns our poverty.

Shall I not live to be aveng'd on her?
Contemptuous base-born callat as she is,
She vaunted 'mongst her minions t' other day,
The very train of her worst wearing gown
Was better worth than all my father's land
Till Suffolk gave two dukedoms for his daughter.

SUFFOLK.
Madam, myself have lim'd a bush for her,
And plac'd a quire of such enticing birds
That she will light to listen to the lays,
And never mount to trouble you again.
So, let her rest; and, madam, list to me,
For I am bold to counsel you in this.
Although we fancy not the cardinal,
Yet must we join with him and with the lords

Till we have brought Duke Humphrey in disgrace.
As for the Duke of York, this late complaint
Will make but little for his benefit.
So, one by one, we'll weed them all at last,
And you yourself shall steer the happy helm.

[Sennet. *Enter* the KING, DUKE HUMPHREY, CARDINAL BEAUFORT, BUCKINGHAM, YORK, SOMERSET, SALISBURY, WARWICK, and the DUCHESS OF GLOUCESTER.]

KING.
For my part, noble lords, I care not which;
Or Somerset or York, all's one to me.

YORK.
If York have ill demean'd himself in France,
Then let him be denay'd the regentship.

SOMERSET.
If Somerset be unworthy of the place,
Let York be regent; I will yield to him.

WARWICK.

Whether your grace be worthy, yea or no,
Dispute not that; York is the worthier.

CARDINAL.

Ambitious Warwick, let thy betters speak.

WARWICK.

The cardinal's not my better in the field.

BUCKINGHAM.

All in this presence are thy betters, Warwick.

WARWICK.

Warwick may live to be the best of all.

SALISBURY.

Peace, son!—and show some reason, Buckingham, Why Somerset should be preferr'd in this.

QUEEN.

Because the king, forsooth, will have it so.

GLOUCESTER.

Madam, the King is old enough himself

To give his censure; these are no women's matters.

QUEEN.

If he be old enough, what needs your grace

To be protector of his excellence?

GLOUCESTER.

Madam, I am protector of the realm,

And, at his pleasure, will resign my place.

SUFFOLK.

Resign it then, and leave thine insolence.

Since thou wert king—as who is king but thou?—

The commonwealth hath daily run to wrack;
The Dauphin hath prevail'd beyond the seas;
And all the peers and nobles of the realm
Have been as bondmen to thy sovereignty.

CARDINAL.
The commons hast thou rack'd; the clergy's bags
Are lank and lean with thy extortions.

SOMERSET.
Thy sumptuous buildings and thy wife's attire
Have cost a mass of public treasury.

BUCKINGHAM.
Thy cruelty in execution
Upon offenders hath exceeded law,
And left thee to the mercy of the law.

QUEEN.
Thy sale of offices and towns in France,
If they were known, as the suspect is great,

Would make thee quickly hop without thy head.—

[Exit Gloucester. The Queen drops her fan..]

Give me my fan. What minion! can ye not?

[She gives the Duchess a box on the ear.]

I cry your mercy, madam; was it you?

DUCHESS.

Was 't I! yea, I it was, proud Frenchwoman.
Could I come near your beauty with my nails,
I'd set my ten commandments in your face.

KING.

Sweet aunt, be quiet; 't was against her will.

DUCHESS.

Against her will! good king, look to 't in time;
She'll hamper thee and dandle thee like a baby.
Though in this place most master wear no breeches,

She shall not strike Dame Eleanor unreveng'd.

[Exit.]

BUCKINGHAM.

Lord cardinal, I will follow Eleanor,
And listen after Humphrey, how he proceeds.
She's tickled now; her fume needs no spurs,
She'll gallop far enough to her destruction.

[Exit.]

[Re-enter GLOUCESTER.]

GLOUCESTER.

Now, lords, my choler being overblown
With walking once about the quadrangle,
I come to talk of commonwealth affairs.
As for your spiteful false objections,
Prove them, and I lie open to the law;
But God in mercy so deal with my soul

As I in duty love my king and country!

But, to the matter that we have in hand:
I say, my sovereign, York is meetest man
To be your regent in the realm of France.

SUFFOLK.
Before we make election, give me leave
To show some reason, of no little force,
That York is most unmeet of any man.

YORK.

I'll tell thee, Suffolk, why I am unmeet:
First, for I cannot flatter thee in pride;
Next, if I be appointed for the place,
My Lord of Somerset will keep me here,
Without discharge, money, or furniture,
Till France be won into the Dauphin's hands.
Last time, I danc'd attendance on his will
Till Paris was besieg'd, famish'd, and lost.

WARWICK.

That can I witness; and a fouler fact
Did never traitor in the land commit.

SUFFOLK.

Peace, headstrong Warwick!

WARWICK.

Image of pride, why should I hold my peace?

[Enter HORNER and his man PETER, guarded.]

SUFFOLK.

Because here is a man accus'd of treason.
Pray God the Duke of York excuse himself!

YORK.

Doth any one accuse York for a traitor?

KING.

What mean'st thou, Suffolk? tell me, what are these?

SUFFOLK.

Please it your majesty, this is the man

That doth accuse his master of high treason.

His words were these: that Richard Duke of York

Was rightful heir unto the English crown,

And that your majesty was an usurper.

KING.

Say, man, were these thy words?

HORNER.

An 't shall please your majesty, I never said nor thought any such matter; God is my witness, I am falsely accused by the villain.

PETER.

By these ten bones, my lords, he did speak them to

me in the garret one night, as we were scouring my Lord of

York's armour.

YORK.

Base dunghill villain and mechanical,

I'll have thy head for this thy traitor's speech.—

I do beseech your royal majesty,

Let him have all the rigour of the law.

HORNER.

Alas, my lord, hang me if ever I spake the words. My accuser is my prentice; and when I did correct him for his fault the other day, he did vow upon his knees he would be even with me. I have good witness of this; therefore I beseech your majesty, do not cast away an honest man for a villain's accusation.

KING.

Uncle, what shall we say to this in law?

GLOUCESTER.

This doom, my lord, if I may judge:

Let Somerset be Regent o'er the French,

Because in York this breeds suspicion;

And let these have a day appointed them

For single combat in convenient place,

For he hath witness of his servant's malice.

This is the law, and this Duke Humphrey's doom.

SOMERSET.

I humbly thank your royal Majesty.

HORNER.

And I accept the combat willingly.

PETER.

Alas, my lord, I cannot fight; for God's sake, pity my case.

The spite of man prevaileth against me. O Lord, have mercy

upon me! I shall never be able to fight a blow! O Lord, my heart!

GLOUCESTER.

Sirrah, or you must fight or else be hang'd.

KING.

Away with them to prison; and the day of combat shall be the last of the next month.—Come, Somerset, we'll see thee sent away.

[Flourish. Exeunt.]

SCENE IV. Gloucester 's Garden

[*Enter* MARGERY JOURDAIN, HUME, SOUTHWELL, and BOLINGBROKE.]

HUME.

Come, my masters; the duchess, I tell you, expects performance of your promises.

BOLINGBROKE.

Master Hume, we are therefore provided; will her ladyship behold and hear our exorcisms?

HUME.

Ay, what else? fear you not her courage.

BOLINGBROKE.

I have heard her reported to be a woman of an invincible spirit: but it shall be convenient, Master Hume, that you be by her aloft while we be busy below; and so, I pray you go, in God's name, and leave us.—*[Exit Hume.]* Mother Jourdain, be you prostrate and grovel on the earth.—John Southwell, read you; and let us to our work.

[Enter DUCHESS aloft, HUME following.]

DUCHESS.

Well said, my masters; and welcome all. To this gear the sooner the better.

BOLINGBROKE.

Patience, good lady, wizards know their times:

Deep night, dark night, the silent of the night,

The time of night when Troy was set on fire,

The time when screech-owls cry and ban-dogs howl

And spirits walk and ghosts break up their graves,

That time best fits the work we have in hand.

Madam, sit you and fear not; whom we raise,

We will make fast within a hallow'd verge.

[Here they do the ceremonies belonging, and make the circle;

Bolingbroke or Southwell reads, Conjuro te, *etc.*

It thunders and lightens terribly; then the Spirit riseth.]

SPIRIT.

Adsum.

M. JOURDAIN.

Asmath,

By the eternal God, whose name and power

Thou tremblest at, answer that I shall ask;

For till thou speak thou shalt not pass from hence.

SPIRIT.

Ask what thou wilt. That I had said and done!

BOLINGBROKE.

[Reads] 'First of the king: what shall of him become?'

SPIRIT.

The duke yet lives that Henry shall depose,
But him outlive and die a violent death.

[As the Spirit speaks, Southwell writes the answer.]

BOLINGBROKE.

'What fates await the Duke of Suffolk?'

SPIRIT.

By water shall he die and take his end.

BOLINGBROKE.

[Reads] 'What shall befall the Duke of Somerset?'

SPIRIT.

Let him shun castles;

Safer shall he be upon the sandy plains

Than where castles mounted stand.

Have done, for more I hardly can endure.

BOLINGBROKE.

Descend to darkness and the burning lake!

False fiend, avoid!

[Thunder and lightning. Exit Spirit.]

[Enter the DUKE OF YORK and the DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM with their Guard and break in YORK.]

Lay hands upon these traitors and their trash.—

Beldam, I think we watch'd you at an inch.

What, madam, are you there? the king and commonweal

Are deeply indebted for this piece of pains;

My lord protector will, I doubt it not,

See you well guerdon'd for these good deserts.

DUCHESS.

Not half so bad as thine to England's king,

Injurious duke, that threatest where's no cause.

BUCKINGHAM.

True, madam, none at all; what call you this?—

Away with them! let them be clapp'd up close,

And kept asunder.—You, madam, shall with us.—

Stafford, take her to thee.—

[Exeunt above, Duchess and Hume, guarded.]

We'll see your trinkets here all forthcoming.—

All, away!

[Exeunt guard with Jourdain, Southwell, etc.]

YORK.

Lord Buckingham, methinks you watch'd her well;

A pretty plot, well chosen to build upon!

Now, pray, my lord, let's see the devil's writ.

What have we here?

[Reads] 'The duke yet lives that Henry shall depose.
But him outlive and die a violent death.'
Why, this is just
'Aio te, Aeacida, Romanos vincere posse.'

Well, to the rest:
'Tell me what fate awaits the Duke of Suffolk?

By water shall he die and take his end.
What shall betide the Duke of Somerset?
Let him shun castles;
Safer shall he be upon the sandy plains
Than where castles mounted stand.'—
Come, come, my lords;
These oracles are hardly attain'd,
And hardly understood.
The king is now in progress towards Saint Alban's,
With him the husband of this lovely lady.

Thither go these news, as fast as horse can carry them;

A sorry breakfast for my lord protector.

BUCKINGHAM.

Your Grace shall give me leave, my

Lord of York,

To be the post, in hope of his reward.

YORK.

At your pleasure, my good lord.—

Who's within there, ho!

[Enter a Servingman.]

Invite my Lords of Salisbury and Warwick

To sup with me to-morrow night. Away!

[Exeunt.]

ACT II

SCENE I. Saint Alban's.

[*Enter* the KING, QUEEN, GLOUCESTER, CARDINAL, and SUFFOLK, with FALCONERS halloing.]

QUEEN.

Believe me, lords, for flying at the brook,

I saw not better sport these seven years' day;

Yet, by your leave, the wind was very high,

And, ten to one, old Joan had not gone out.

KING.

But what a point, my lord, your falcon made,

And what a pitch she flew above the rest!

To see how God in all His creatures works!

Yea, man and birds are fain of climbing high.

SUFFOLK.

No marvel, an it like your majesty,

My lord protector's hawks do tower so well;
They know their master loves to be aloft,
And bears his thoughts above his falcon's pitch.

GLOUCESTER.

My lord, 't is but a base ignoble mind
That mounts no higher than a bird can soar.

CARDINAL.

I thought as much; he would be above the clouds.

GLOUCESTER.

Ay, my lord cardinal? how think you by that?
Were it not good your grace could fly to heaven?

KING.

The treasury of everlasting joy.

CARDINAL.

Thy heaven is on earth; thine eyes and thoughts
Beat on a crown, the treasure of thy heart,
Pernicious protector, dangerous peer,
That smooth'st it so with king and commonweal.

GLOUCESTER.
What, cardinal, is your priesthood grown peremptory?

Tantaene animis coelestibus irae?
Churchmen so hot? good uncle, hide such malice;
With such holiness can you do it?

SUFFOLK.
No malice, sir; no more than well becomes
So good a quarrel and so bad a peer.

GLOUCESTER.
As who, my lord?

SUFFOLK.
Why, as you, my lord,

An 't like your lordly lord-protectorship.

GLOUCESTER.

Why, Suffolk, England knows thine insolence.

QUEEN.

And thy ambition, Gloucester.

KING.

I prithee, peace, good queen,
And whet not on these furious peers;
For blessed are the peacemakers on earth.

CARDINAL.

Let me be blessed for the peace I make
Against this proud protector, with my sword!

GLOUCESTER.

[Aside to Cardinal.] Faith, holy uncle, would 't were come to that!

CARDINAL.

[Aside to Gloucester.] Marry, when thou dar'st.

GLOUCESTER.

[Aside to Cardinal.] Make up no factious numbers

for the matter;

In thine own person answer thy abuse.

CARDINAL.

[Aside to Gloucester.] Ay, where thou dar'st not peep;

an if thou dar'st,

This evening, on the east side of the grove.

KING.

How now, my lords!

CARDINAL.

Believe me, cousin Gloucester,

Had not your man put up the fowl so suddenly,

We had had more sport.—*[Aside to Gloucester.]* Come with thy two-hand sword.

GLOUCESTER.

True, uncle.

CARDINAL.

[Aside to Gloucester.] Are ye advis'd? the east side of the grove?

GLOUCESTER.

[Aside to CARDINAL.] Cardinal, I am with you.

KING.

Why, how now, uncle Gloucester!

GLOUCESTER.

Talking of hawking; nothing else, my lord.—

[Aside to Cardinal.] Now, by God's mother, priest,

I'll shave your crown for this,

Or all my fence shall fail.

CARDINAL.

[Aside to Gloucester.] Medice, teipsum—

Protector, see to 't well, protect yourself.

KING.

The winds grow high; so do your stomachs, lords.

How irksome is this music to my heart!

When such strings jar, what hope of harmony?

I pray, my lords, let me compound this strife.

[Enter a Townsman of Saint Alban's, crying 'A miracle!']

GLOUCESTER.

What means this noise?

Fellow, what miracle dost thou proclaim?

TOWNSMAN.

A miracle! A miracle!

SUFFOLK.

Come to the king, and tell him what miracle.

TOWNSMAN.

Forsooth, a blind man at Saint Alban's shrine,

Within this half hour, hath receiv'd his sight;

A man that ne'er saw in his life before.

KING.

Now, God be prais'd, that to believing souls

Gives light in darkness, comfort in despair!

[*Enter* the Mayor of Saint Alban's and his brethren, bearing SIMPCOX, between two in a chair, SIMPCOX's Wife following.]

CARDINAL.

Here comes the townsmen on procession,

To present your highness with the man.

KING HENRY.

Great is his comfort in this earthly vale,

Although by his sight his sin be multiplied.

GLOUCESTER.

Stand by, my masters.

Bring him near the king;

His highness' pleasure is to talk with him.

KING.

Good fellow, tell us here the circumstance,

That we for thee may glorify the Lord.

What, hast thou been long blind and now restor'd?

SIMPCOX.

Born blind, an 't please your grace.

WIFE.

Ay indeed was he.

SUFFOLK.

What woman is this?

WIFE.

His wife, an 't like your worship.

GLOUCESTER.

Hadst thou been his mother, thou couldst have better told.

KING.

Where wert thou born?

SIMPCOX.

At Berwick in the north, an 't like your grace.

KING.

Poor soul, God's goodness hath been great to thee;

Let never day nor night unhallow'd pass,

But still remember what the Lord hath done.

QUEEN.

Tell me, good fellow, cam'st thou here by chance,

Or of devotion, to this holy shrine?

SIMPCOX.

God knows, of pure devotion; being call'd

A hundred times and oftener, in my sleep,

By good Saint Alban, who said 'Simpcox, come,

Come, offer at my shrine, and I will help thee.'

WIFE.

Most true, forsooth; and many time and oft

Myself have heard a voice to call him so.

CARDINAL.

What, art thou lame?

SIMPCOX.

Ay, God Almighty help me!

SUFFOLK.

How cam'st thou so?

SIMPCOX.

A fall off of a tree.

WIFE.

A plum-tree, master.

GLOUCESTER.

How long hast thou been blind?

SIMPCOX.

O, born so, master!

GLOUCESTER.

What, and wouldst climb a tree?

SIMPCOX.

But that in all my life, when I was a youth.

WIFE.

Too true; and bought his climbing very dear.

GLOUCESTER.

Mass, thou lov'dst plums well that wouldst venture so.

SIMPCOX.

Alas, good master, my wife desir'd some damsons,
And made me climb, with danger of my life.

GLOUCESTER.

A subtle knave! but yet it shall not serve.—

Let me see thine eyes.—Wink now;—now open them.

In my opinion yet thou seest not well.

SIMPCOX.

Yes, master, clear as day, I thank God and Saint Alban.

GLOUCESTER.

Say'st thou me so? What colour is this cloak of?

SIMPCOX.

Red, master, red as blood.

GLOUCESTER.

Why, that's well said. What colour is my gown of?

SIMPCOX.

Black, forsooth, coal-black as jet.

KING.

Why, then, thou know'st what colour jet is of?

SUFFOLK.

And yet, I think, jet did he never see.

GLOUCESTER.

But cloaks and gowns before this day, a many.

WIFE.

Never before this day in all his life.

GLOUCESTER.

Tell me, sirrah, what's my name?

SIMPCOX.

Alas, master, I know not.

GLOUCESTER.

What's his name?

SIMPCOX.

I know not.

GLOUCESTER.

Nor his?

SIMPCOX.

No, indeed, master.

GLOUCESTER.

What's thine own name?

SIMPCOX.

Saunder Simpcox, an if it please you, master.

GLOUCESTER.

Then, Saunder, sit there, the lyingest knave in Christendom. If thou hadst been born blind, thou mightst as well have known all our names as thus to name the several colours we do wear. Sight may distinguish of colours; but suddenly to nominate them all, it is impossible.—My lords, Saint Alban here hath done a miracle; and would ye not think his cunning to be great that could restore this cripple to his legs again?

SIMPCOX.

O master, that you could!

GLOUCESTER.

My masters of Saint Alban's, have you not beadles in your town, and things called whips?

MAYOR.

Yes, my lord, if it please your grace.

GLOUCESTER.

Then send for one presently.

MAYOR.

Sirrah, go fetch the beadle hither straight.

[Exit an Attendant.]

GLOUCESTER.

Now fetch me a stool hither by and by.—Now, sirrah, if you mean to save yourself from whipping, leap me over this stool and run away.

SIMPCOX.

Alas, master, I am not able to stand alone;

You go about to torture me in vain.

[Enter a Beadle with whips.]

GLOUCESTER.

Well, sir, we must have you find your legs.—

Sirrah beadle, whip him till he leap over that same stool.

BEADLE.

I will, my lord.—Come on, sirrah; off with your doublet quickly.

SIMPCOX.

Alas, master, what shall I do? I am not able to stand.

[After the Beadle hath hit him once, he leaps over the stool and runs away; and they follow and cry, 'A miracle!']

KING.

O God, seest Thou this, and bearest so long?

QUEEN.

It made me laugh to see the villain run.

GLOUCESTER.

Follow the knave, and take this drab away.

WIFE.

Alas, sir, we did it for pure need!

GLOUCESTER.

Let them be whipped through every market-town till they come to Berwick, from whence they came.

[Exeunt Wife, Beadle, Mayor, etc.]

CARDINAL.

Duke Humphrey has done a miracle to-day.

SUFFOLK.

True; made the lame to leap and fly away.

GLOUCESTER.

But you have done more miracles than I;

You made in a day, my lord, whole towns to fly.

[Enter BUCKINGHAM.]

KING.

What tidings with our cousin Buckingham?

BUCKINGHAM.

Such as my heart doth tremble to unfold.
A sort of naughty persons, lewdly bent,
Under the countenance and confederacy
Of Lady Eleanor, the protector's wife,
The ringleader and head of all this rout,
Have practis'd dangerously against your state,
Dealing with witches and with conjurers,
Whom we have apprehended in the fact,
Raising up wicked spirits from underground,
Demanding of King Henry's life and death,
And other of your highness' privy-council,
As more at large your Grace shall understand.

CARDINAL.

[Aside to Gloucester.] And so, my lord protector,

by this means

Your lady is forthcoming yet at London.

This news, I think, hath turn'd your weapon's edge;

'T is like, my lord, you will not keep your hour.

GLOUCESTER.

Ambitious churchman, leave to afflict my heart.

Sorrow and grief have vanquish'd all my powers;

And, vanquish'd as I am, I yield to thee,

Or to the meanest groom.

KING.

O God, what mischiefs work the wicked ones,

Heaping confusion on their own heads thereby!

QUEEN.

Gloucester, see here the tainture of thy nest;

And look thyself be faultless, thou wert best.

GLOUCESTER.

Madam, for myself, to heaven I do appeal,

How I have lov'd my king and commonweal;

And, for my wife, I know not how it stands.

Sorry I am to hear what I have heard;

Noble she is; but if she have forgot

Honour and virtue, and convers'd with such

As like to pitch defile nobility,

I banish her my bed and company,

And give her as a prey to law and shame,

That hath dishonoured Gloucester's honest name.

KING.

Well, for this night we will repose us here;

To-morrow toward London back again,

To look into this business thoroughly,

And call these foul offenders to their answers,

And poise the cause in justice' equal scales,

Whose beam stands sure, whose rightful cause prevails.

[Flourish. Exeunt.]

SCENE II. London . The Duke of York's Garden.

[Enter YORK, SALISBURY, and WARWICK.]

YORK.

Now, my good Lords of Salisbury and Warwick,
Our simple supper ended, give me leave
In this close walk to satisfy myself,
In craving your opinion of my title,
Which is infallible, to England's crown.

SALISBURY.

My lord, I long to hear it at full.

WARWICK.

Sweet York, begin; and if thy claim be good,
The Nevils are thy subjects to command.

YORK.

Then thus:

Edward the Third, my lords, had seven sons:
The first, Edward the Black Prince, Prince of Wales;
The second, William of Hatfield; and the third,
Lionel Duke of Clarence; next to whom
Was John of Gaunt, the Duke of Lancaster;
The fifth was Edmund Langley, Duke of York;
The sixth was Thomas of Woodstock, Duke of Gloucester;
William of Windsor was the seventh and last.
Edward the Black Prince died before his father
And left behind him Richard, his only son,
Who after Edward the Third's death reign'd as king;
Till Henry Bolingbroke, Duke of Lancaster,
The eldest son and heir of John of Gaunt,
Crown'd by the name of Henry the Fourth,
Seiz'd on the realm, depos'd the rightful king,
Sent his poor queen to France, from whence she came,
And him to Pomfret, where, as all you know,
Harmless Richard was murther'd traitorously.

WARWICK.

Father, the duke hath told the truth;
Thus got the house of Lancaster the crown.

YORK.

Which now they hold by force and not by right;
For Richard, the first son's heir, being dead,
The issue of the next son should have reign'd.

SALISBURY.

But William of Hatfield died without an heir.

YORK.

The third son, Duke of Clarence, from whose line
I claim the crown, had issue, Philippe, a daughter,
Who married Edmund Mortimer, Earl of March.
Edmund had issue, Roger Earl of March;
Roger had issue, Edmund, Anne, and Eleanor.

SALISBURY.

This Edmund, in the reign of Bolingbroke,
As I have read, laid claim unto the crown;
And, but for Owen Glendower, had been king,
Who kept him in captivity till he died.
But to the rest.

YORK.
His eldest sister, Anne,
My mother, being heir unto the crown,
Married Richard Earl of Cambridge, who was son
To Edmund Langley, Edward the Third's fifth son.
By her I claim the kingdom; she was heir
To Roger Earl of March, who was the son
Of Edmund Mortimer, who married Philippe,
Sole daughter unto Lionel Duke of Clarence.
So, if the issue of the elder son
Succeed before the younger, I am king.

WARWICK.

What plain proceeding is more plain than this?

Henry doth claim the crown from John of Gaunt,

The fourth son; York claims it from the third.

Till Lionel's issue fails, his should not reign;

It fails not yet, but flourishes in thee

And in thy sons, fair slips of such a stock.—

Then, father Salisbury, kneel we together;

And in this private plot be we the first

That shall salute our rightful sovereign

With honour of his birthright to the crown.

BOTH.

Long live our sovereign Richard, England's king!

YORK.

We thank you, lords. But I am not your king

Till I be crown'd, and that my sword be stain'd

With heart-blood of the house of Lancaster;

And that's not suddenly to be perform'd,

But with advice and silent secrecy.

Do you as I do in these dangerous days,—

Wink at the Duke of Suffolk's insolence,
At Beaufort's pride, at Somerset's ambition,
At Buckingham, and all the crew of them,
Till they have snar'd the shepherd of the flock,
That virtuous prince, the good Duke Humphrey;
'T is that they seek, and they in seeking that
Shall find their deaths, if York can prophesy.

SALISBURY.

My lord, break we off; we know your mind at full.

WARWICK.

My heart assures me that the Earl of Warwick
Shall one day make the Duke of York a king.

YORK.

And, Nevil, this I do assure myself:
Richard shall live to make the Earl of Warwick
The greatest man in England but the king.

[Exeunt.]

SCENE III. A Hall of Justice.

[Sound trumpets. *Enter* the KING, the QUEEN, GLOUCESTER,
YORK, SUFFOLK, and SALISBURY; the DUCHESS OF GLOUCESTER,
MARGERY JOURDAIN, SOUTHWELL, HUME, and BOLINGBROKE,
under guard.]

KING.

Stand forth, Dame Eleanor Cobham, Gloucester's wife.
In sight of God and us, your guilt is great;
Receive the sentence of the law for sins
Such as by God's book are adjudg'd to death.—
You four, from hence to prison back again,
From thence unto the place of execution.
The witch in Smithfield shall be burn'd to ashes,
And you three shall be strangled on the gallows.—
You, madam, for you are more nobly born,

Despoiled of your honour in your life,

Shall, after three days' open penance done,

Live in your country here in banishment,

With Sir John Stanley, in the Isle of Man.

DUCHESS.

Welcome is banishment; welcome were my death.

GLOUCESTER.

Eleanor, the law, thou seest, hath judged thee;

I cannot justify whom the law condemns.—

[Exeunt Duchess and the other prisoners, guarded..]

Mine eyes are full of tears, my heart of grief.

Ah, Humphrey, this dishonour in thine age

Will bring thy head with sorrow to the ground!—

I beseech your majesty, give me leave to go;

Sorrow would solace, and mine age would ease.

KING.

Stay, Humphrey Duke of Gloucester.

Ere thou go,
Give up thy staff; Henry will to himself
Protector be, and God shall be my hope,
My stay, my guide, and lantern to my feet.
And go in peace, Humphrey, no less belov'd
Than when thou wert protector to thy king.

QUEEN.
I see no reason why a king of years
Should be to be protected like a child.—
God and King Henry govern England's realm.
Give up your staff, sir, and the king his realm.

GLOUCESTER.

My staff? Here, noble Henry, is my staff.
As willingly do I the same resign
As e'er thy father Henry made it mine;
And even as willingly at thy feet I leave it
As others would ambitiously receive it.
Farewell, good king; when I am dead and gone,

May honourable peace attend thy throne!

[Exit.]

QUEEN.

Why, now is Henry king, and Margaret queen;
And Humphrey Duke of Gloucester scarce himself,
That bears so shrewd a maim; two pulls at once—
His lady banish'd, and a limb lopp'd off.
This staff of honour raught, there let it stand
Where it best fits to be, in Henry's hand.

SUFFOLK.

Thus droops this lofty pine and hangs his sprays;
Thus Eleanor's pride dies in her youngest days.

YORK.

Lords, let him go.—Please it your majesty,
This is the day appointed for the combat;
And ready are the appellant and defendant,
The armourer and his man, to enter the lists,

So please your highness to behold the fight.

QUEEN.

Ay, good my lord; for purposely therefore

Left I the court, to see this quarrel tried.

KING.

O' God's name, see the lists and all things fit.

Here let them end it; and God defend the right!

YORK.

I never saw a fellow worse bested,

Or more afraid to fight, than is the appellant,

The servant of his armourer, my lords.

[Enter at one door, HORNER the Armourer, and his Neighbours, drinking to him so much that he is drunk; and he enters with a drum before him and his staff with a sandbag fastened to it; and at the other door PETER, his man, with a drum and sandbag, and Prentices drinking to him.]

1 NEIGHBOUR. Here, neighbour Horner, I drink to you in a cup of sack; and fear not, neighbour, you shall do well enough.

2 NEIGHBOUR. And here, neighbour, here's a cup of charneco.

3 NEIGHBOUR. And here's a pot of good double beer, neighbour; drink, and fear not your man.

HORNER.

Let it come, i' faith, and I'll pledge you all; and a fig for Peter!

1 PRENTICE. Here, Peter, I drink to thee; and be not afraid.

2 PRENTICE. Be merry, Peter, and fear not thy master: fight for credit of the prentices.

PETER.

I thank you all; drink, and pray for me, I pray you, for I think I have taken my last draught in this world.—Here, Robin, an if I die, I give thee my apron;—and, Will, thou shalt have my hammer;—and here, Tom, take all the money that I have.—O Lord bless me! I pray God! for I am never able to deal with my master, he hath learnt so much fence already.

SALISBURY.

Come, leave your drinking and fall to blows.—

Sirrah, what's thy name?

PETER.

Peter, forsooth.

SALISBURY.

Peter? what more?

PETER.

Thump.

SALISBURY.

Thump! then see thou thump thy master well.

HORNER.

Masters, I am come hither, as it were, upon my man's instigation, to prove him a knave and myself an honest man; and touching the Duke of York, I will take my death, I never meant him any ill, nor the king, nor the queen;—and therefore, Peter, have at thee with a downright blow!

YORK.

Dispatch; this knave's tongue begins to double.—

Sound, trumpets, alarum to the combatants!

[Alarum. They fight, and Peter strikes him down.]

HORNER.

Hold, Peter, hold! I confess, I confess treason.

[Dies.]

YORK.

Take away his weapon.—Fellow, thank God, and the good wine in thy master's way.

PETER.

O God, have I overcome mine enemies in this presence? O

Peter, thou hast prevail'd in right!

KING.

Go, take hence that traitor from our sight,
For by his death we do perceive his guilt;
And God in justice hath reveal'd to us
The truth and innocence of this poor fellow,
Which he had thought to have murther'd wrongfully.—
Come, fellow, follow us for thy reward.

[Sound a flourish. Exeunt.]

SCENE IV. A Street .

[*Enter* GLOUCESTER and his Servingmen, in mourning cloaks.]

GLOUCESTER.
Thus sometimes hath the brightest day a cloud,
And after summer evermore succeeds
Barren winter, with his wrathful nipping cold;
So cares and joys abound, as seasons fleet.
Sirs, what's o'clock?

SERVINGMEN.

Ten, my lord.

GLOUCESTER.

Ten is the hour that was appointed me

To watch the coming of my punish'd duchess.

Uneath may she endure the flinty streets,

To tread them with her tender-feeling feet.—

Sweet Nell, ill can thy noble mind abrook

The abject people gazing on thy face

With envious looks, laughing at thy shame,

That erst did follow thy proud chariot-wheels

When thou didst ride in triumph through the streets.—

But, soft! I think she comes; and I'll prepare

My tear-stain'd eyes to see her miseries.

[Enter the DUCHESS OF GLOUCESTER in a white sheet, and a taper burning in her hand; with SIR JOHN STANLEY, the Sheriff, and Officers.]

SERVINGMEN.

So please your Grace, we'll take her from the sheriff.

GLOUCESTER.

No, stir not for your lives; let her pass by.

DUCHESS.
Come you, my lord, to see my open shame?

Now thou dost penance too. Look how they gaze!
See how the giddy multitude do point,
And nod their heads, and throw their eyes on thee!
Ah, Gloucester, hide thee from their hateful looks,
And, in thy closet pent up, rue my shame,
And ban thine enemies, both mine and thine!

GLOUCESTER.

Be patient, gentle Nell; forget this grief.

DUCHESS.

Ah, Gloucester, teach me to forget myself!

For whilst I think I am thy married wife,

And thou a prince, protector of this land,

Methinks I should not thus be led along,

Mail'd up in shame, with papers on my back,

And follow'd with a rabble that rejoice

To see my tears and hear my deep-fet groans.

The ruthless flint doth cut my tender feet,

And when I start, the envious people laugh

And bid me be advised how I tread.

Ah, Humphrey, can I bear this shameful yoke?

Trow'st thou that e'er I'll look upon the world,

Or count them happy that enjoy the sun?

No; dark shall be my light and night my day;

To think upon my pomp shall be my hell.

Sometimes I'll say, I am Duke Humphrey's wife,

And he a prince and ruler of the land;

Yet so he rul'd and such a prince he was

As he stood by whilst I, his forlorn duchess,

Was made a wonder and a pointing-stock

To every idle rascal follower.

But be thou mild and blush not at my shame,

Nor stir at nothing till the axe of death

Hang over thee, as, sure, it shortly will;

For Suffolk, he that can do all in all

With her that hateth thee and hates us all,

And York, and impious Beaufort, that false priest,

Have all lim'd bushes to betray thy wings,

And, fly thou how thou canst, they'll tangle thee;

But fear not thou until thy foot be snar'd,

Nor never seek prevention of thy foes.

GLOUCESTER.

Ah, Nell, forbear! thou aimest all awry.

I must offend before I be attainted;

And had I twenty times so many foes,

And each of them had twenty times their power,

All these could not procure me any scath

So long as I am loyal, true, and crimeless.

Wouldst have me rescue thee from this reproach?

Why, yet thy scandal were not wip'd away,

But I in danger for the breach of law.

Thy greatest help is quiet, gentle Nell.

I pray thee, sort thy heart to patience;

These few days' wonder will be quickly worn.

[Enter a Herald.]

HERALD.

I summon your grace to his majesty's parliament,

Holden at Bury the first of this next month.

GLOUCESTER.

And my consent ne'er ask'd herein before!

This is close dealing.—Well, I will be there.—

[Exit Herald.]

My Nell, I take my leave;—and, master sheriff,

Let not her penance exceed the king's commission.

SHERIFF.

An 't please your grace, here my commission stays,
And Sir John Stanley is appointed now
To take her with him to the Isle of Man.

GLOUCESTER.

Must you, Sir John, protect my lady here?

STANLEY.

So am I given in charge, may 't please your grace.

GLOUCESTER.

Entreat her not the worse in that I pray
You use her well.
The world may laugh again,
And I may live to do you kindness if
You do it her; and so, Sir John, farewell!

DUCHESS.

What, gone, my lord, and bid me not farewell!

GLOUCESTER.

Witness my tears, I cannot stay to speak.

[Exeunt Gloucester and Servingmen.]

DUCHESS.

Art thou gone too? all comfort go with thee!
For none abides with me; my joy is death,
Death, at whose name I oft have been afeard,
Because I wish'd this world's eternity.—
Stanley, I prithee, go, and take me hence;
I care not whither, for I beg no favour,
Only convey me where thou art commanded.

STANLEY.

Why, madam, that is to the Isle of Man;
There to be us'd according to your state.

DUCHESS.

That's bad enough, for I am but reproach;

And shall I then be us'd reproachfully?

STANLEY.

Like to a duchess, and Duke Humphrey's lady;

According to that state you shall be us'd.

DUCHESS.

Sheriff, farewell, and better than I fare,

Although thou hast been conduct of my shame.

SHERIFF.

It is my office; and, madam, pardon me.

DUCHESS.

Ay, ay, farewell; thy office is discharg'd.—

Come, Stanley, shall we go?

STANLEY.

Madam, your penance done, throw off this sheet, And go we to attire you for our journey.

DUCHESS.

My shame will not be shifted with my sheet;

No, it will hang upon my richest robes

And show itself, attire me how I can.

Go, lead the way; I long to see my prison.

[Exeunt.]

ACT III.

SCENE I. The Abbey at Bury St. Edmund's.

[Sound a sennet. *Enter* the KING, the QUEEN, CARDINAL BEAUFORT, SUFFOLK, YORK, BUCKINGHAM, SALISBURY, and WARWICK to the Parliament.]

KING.

I muse my Lord of Gloucester is not come;

'Tis not his wont to be the hindmost man,

Whate'er occasion keeps him from us now.

QUEEN.

Can you not see? or will ye not observe

The strangeness of his alter'd countenance?

With what a majesty he bears himself,

How insolent of late he is become,

How proud, how peremptory, and unlike himself?

We know the time since he was mild and affable,

And if we did but glance a far-off look,

Immediately he was upon his knee,

That all the court admir'd him for submission;

But meet him now, and be it in the morn

When every one will give the time of day,

He knits his brow, and shows an angry eye,

And passeth by with stiff unbowed knee,

Disdaining duty that to us belongs.

Small curs are not regarded when they grin,

But great men tremble when the lion roars;

And Humphrey is no little man in England.

First note that he is near you in descent,

And should you fall, he is the next will mount.

Me seemeth then it is no policy,

Respecting what a rancorous mind he bears

And his advantage following your decease,

That he should come about your royal person

Or be admitted to your highness' council.

By flattery hath he won the commons' hearts,

And when he please to make commotion

'T is to be fear'd they all will follow him.

Now 't is the spring and weeds are shallow-rooted;

Suffer them now, and they'll o'ergrow the garden

And choke the herbs for want of husbandry.

The reverent care I bear unto my lord

Made me collect these dangers in the duke.

If it be fond, can it a woman's fear;

Which fear if better reasons can supplant,

I will subscribe and say I wrong'd the duke.—

My Lord of Suffolk, Buckingham, and York,

Reprove my allegation if you can,

Or else conclude my words effectual.

SUFFOLK.

Well hath your highness seen into this duke;

And, had I first been put to speak my mind,

I think I should have told your grace's tale.

The duchess by his subornation,

Upon my life, began her devilish practices;

Or, if he were not privy to those faults,

Yet, by reputing of his high descent,

As next the king he was successive heir,

And such high vaunts of his nobility,

Did instigate the bedlam brain-sick duchess

By wicked means to frame our sovereign's fall.

Smooth runs the water where the brook is deep,

And in his simple show he harbours treason.

The fox barks not when he would steal the lamb.—

No, no, my sovereign; Gloucester is a man

Unsounded yet and full of deep deceit.

CARDINAL.

Did he not, contrary to form of law,

Devise strange deaths for small offences done?

YORK.

And did he not, in his protectorship,

Levy great sums of money through the realm

For soldiers' pay in France, and never sent it?

By means whereof the towns each day revolted.

BUCKINGHAM.

Tut, these are petty faults to faults unknown,

Which time will bring to light in smooth Duke Humphrey.

KING.

My lords, at once: the care you have of us,

To mow down thorns that would annoy our foot,

Is worthy praise; but, shall I speak my conscience,

Our kinsman Gloucester is as innocent

From meaning treason to our royal person

As is the sucking lamb or harmless dove.

The duke is virtuous, mild, and too well given

To dream on evil or to work my downfall.

QUEEN.

Ah, what's more dangerous than this fond affiance!
Seems he a dove? his feathers are but borrow'd,
For he's disposed as the hateful raven;
Is he a lamb? his skin is surely lent him,
For he's inclin'd as is the ravenous wolf.
Who cannot steal a shape that means deceit?
Take heed, my lord; the welfare of us all
Hangs on the cutting short that fraudful man.

[Enter SOMERSET.]

SOMERSET.

All health unto my gracious sovereign!

KING.
Welcome, Lord Somerset. What news from France?

SOMERSET.

That all your interest in those territories
Is utterly bereft you; all is lost.

KING.

Cold news, Lord Somerset; but God's will be done!

YORK.

[Aside.] Cold news for me, for I had hope of France
As firmly as I hope for fertile England.
Thus are my blossoms blasted in the bud,
And caterpillars eat my leaves away;
But I will remedy this gear ere long
Or sell my title for a glorious grave.

[Enter GLOUCESTER.]

GLOUCESTER.

All happiness unto my lord the king!
Pardon, my liege, that I have staid so long.

SUFFOLK.
Nay, Gloucester, know that thou art come too soon,
Unless thou wert more loyal than thou art.

I do arrest thee of high treason here.

GLOUCESTER.
Well, Suffolk, thou shalt not see me blush,
Nor change my countenance for this arrest;
A heart unspotted is not easily daunted.
The purest spring is not so free from mud
As I am clear from treason to my sovereign.

Who can accuse me? wherein am I guilty?

YORK.
'T is thought, my lord, that you took bribes of France,

And, being protector, stay'd the soldiers' pay,

By means whereof his highness hath lost France.

GLOUCESTER.

Is it but thought so? what are they that think it?

I never robb'd the soldiers of their pay,

Nor ever had one penny bribe from France.

So help me God, as I have watch'd the night,

Ay, night by night, in studying good for England!

That doit that e'er I wrested from the king,

Or any groat I hoarded to my use,

Be brought against me at my trial-day!

No; many a pound of mine own proper store,

Because I would not tax the needy commons,

Have I dispursed to the garrisons,

And never ask'd for restitution.

CARDINAL.

It serves you well, my lord, to say so much.

GLOUCESTER.

I say no more than truth, so help me God!

YORK.

In your protectorship you did devise

Strange tortures for offenders never heard of,

That England was defam'd by tyranny.

GLOUCESTER.

Why, 't is well known that, whiles I was protector,

Pity was all the fault that was in me;

For I should melt at an offender's tears,

And lowly words were ransom for their fault.

Unless it were a bloody murtherer,

Or foul felonious thief that fleec'd poor passengers,

I never gave them condign punishment.

Murther indeed, that bloody sin, I tortur'd

Above the felon or what trespass else.

SUFFOLK.

My lord, these faults are easy, quickly answer'd;

But mightier crimes are laid unto your charge,

Whereof you cannot easily purge yourself.

I do arrest you in his highness' name,

And here commit you to my lord cardinal

To keep until your further time of trial.

KING.

My Lord of Gloucester, 't is my special hope

That you will clear yourself from all suspect;

My conscience tells me you are innocent.

GLOUCESTER.

Ah, gracious lord, these days are dangerous.

Virtue is chok'd with foul ambition,

And charity chas'd hence by rancour's hand;

Foul subornation is predominant,

And equity exil'd your highness' land.

I know their complot is to have my life,

And if my death might make this island happy

And prove the period of their tyranny,

I would expend it with all willingness;
But mine is made the prologue to their play,
For thousands more, that yet suspect no peril,
Will not conclude their plotted tragedy.
Beaufort's red sparkling eyes blab his heart's malice,
And Suffolk's cloudy brow his stormy hate;
Sharp Buckingham unburthens with his tongue
The envious load that lies upon his heart;
And dogged York, that reaches at the moon,
Whose overweening arm I have pluck'd back,
By false accuse doth level at my life.—
And you, my sovereign lady, with the rest,
Causeless have laid disgraces on my head
And with your best endeavour have stirr'd up
My liefest liege to be mine enemy.—
Ay, all of you have laid your heads together—
Myself had notice of your conventicles—
And all to make away my guiltless life.
I shall not want false witness to condemn me,
Nor store of treasons to augment my guilt;
The ancient proverb will be well effected,—

'A staff is quickly found to beat a dog.'

CARDINAL.

My liege, his railing is intolerable;
If those that care to keep your royal person
From treason's secret knife and traitor's rage
Be thus upbraided, chid, and rated at,
And the offender granted scope of speech,
'T will make them cool in zeal unto your grace.

SUFFOLK.

Hath he not twit our sovereign lady here
With ignominious words, though clerkly couch'd,
As if she had suborned some to swear
False allegations to o'erthrow his state?

QUEEN.

But I can give the loser leave to chide.

GLOUCESTER.

Far truer spoke than meant; I lose, indeed.
Beshrew the winners, for they play'd me false!

And well such losers may have leave to speak.

BUCKINGHAM.
He'll wrest the sense and hold us here all day.—
Lord Cardinal, he is your prisoner.

CARDINAL.
Sirs, take away the Duke, and guard him sure.

GLOUCESTER.
Ah, thus King Henry throws away his crutch
Before his legs be firm to bear his body.
Thus is the shepherd beaten from thy side,
And wolves are gnarling who shall gnaw thee first.

Ah, that my fear were false! ah, that it were!
For, good King Henry, thy decay I fear.

[Exit, guarded.]

KING.

My lords, what to your wisdoms seemeth best,

Do or undo, as if ourself were here.

QUEEN.

What, will your highness leave the parliament?

KING.

Ay, Margaret; my heart is drown'd with grief,

Whose flood begins to flow within mine eyes,

My body round engirt with misery,

For what's more miserable than discontent?—

Ah, uncle Humphrey! in thy face I see

The map of honour, truth, and loyalty;

And yet, good Humphrey, is the hour to come

That e'er I prov'd thee false or fear'd thy faith.

What lowering star now envies thy estate,

That these great lords and Margaret our queen

Do seek subversion of thy harmless life?

Thou never didst them wrong nor no man wrong;

And as the butcher takes away the calf

And binds the wretch and beats it when it strays,

Bearing it to the bloody slaughter-house,

Even so remorseless have they borne him hence;

And as the dam runs lowing up and down,

Looking the way her harmless young one went,

And can do nought but wail her darling's loss,

Even so myself bewails good Gloucester's case

With sad unhelpful tears, and with dimm'd eyes

Look after him, and cannot do him good,

So mighty are his vowed enemies.

His fortunes I will weep and 'twixt each groan

Say 'Who's a traitor? Gloucester he is none.'

[Exeunt all but Queen, Cardinal Beaufort, Suffolk and York; Somerset remains apart.]

QUEEN.

Free lords, cold snow melts with the sun's hot beams.

Henry my lord is cold in great affairs,
Too full of foolish pity, and Gloucester's show
Beguiles him as the mournful crocodile
With sorrow snares relenting passengers,
Or as the snake roll'd in a flowering bank,
With shining checker'd slough, doth sting a child
That for the beauty thinks it excellent.
Believe me, lords, were none more wise than I—
And yet herein I judge mine own wit good—
This Gloucester should be quickly rid the world,
To rid us from the fear we have of him.

CARDINAL.

That he should die is worthy policy,
But yet we want a colour for his death,
'T is meet he be condemn'd by course of law.

SUFFOLK.

But, in my mind, that were no policy.
The king will labour still to save his life;

The commons haply rise to save his life,
And yet we have but trivial argument,
More than mistrust, that shows him worthy death.

YORK.
So that, by this, you would not have him die.

SUFFOLK.

Ah, York, no man alive so fain as I!

YORK.
'T is York that hath more reason for his death.—
But, my lord cardinal, and you, my Lord of Suffolk,
Say as you think, and speak it from your souls,
Were 't not all one an empty eagle were set
To guard the chicken from a hungry kite,
As place Duke Humphrey for the king's protector?

QUEEN.
So the poor chicken should be sure of death.

SUFFOLK.

Madam, 't is true; and were 't not madness, then,
To make the fox surveyor of the fold?
Who being accus'd a crafty murtherer,
His guilt should be but idly posted over,
Because his purpose is not executed.
No; let him die, in that he is a fox,
By nature prov'd an enemy to the flock,
Before his chaps be stain'd with crimson blood,
As Humphrey, prov'd by reasons, to my liege.
And do not stand on quillets how to slay him.
Be it by gins, by snares, by subtlety,
Sleeping or waking, 't is no matter how,
So he be dead; for that is good deceit
Which mates him first that first intends deceit.

QUEEN.

Thrice-noble Suffolk, 't is resolutely spoke.

SUFFOLK.

Not resolute, except so much were done,

For things are often spoke and seldom meant;

But that my heart accordeth with my tongue,—

Seeing the deed is meritorious,

And to preserve my sovereign from his foe,—

Say but the word, and I will be his priest.

CARDINAL.

But I would have him dead, my Lord of Suffolk,

Ere you can take due orders for a priest.

Say you consent and censure well the deed,

And I'll provide his executioner,

I tender so the safety of my liege.

SUFFOLK.

Here is my hand, the deed is worthy doing.

QUEEN.

And so say I.

YORK.

And I; and now we three have spoke it,

It skills not greatly who impugns our doom.

[Enter a Post.]

POST.

Great lords, from Ireland am I come amain,

To signify that rebels there are up

And put the Englishmen unto the sword.

Send succours, lords, and stop the rage betime,

Before the wound do grow uncurable;

For, being green, there is great hope of help.

CARDINAL.

A breach that craves a quick expedient stop!

What council give you in this weighty cause?

YORK.

That Somerset be sent as regent thither.

'T is meet that lucky ruler be employ'd;

Witness the fortune he hath had in France.

SOMERSET.

If York, with all his far-fet policy,

Had been the regent there instead of me,

He never would have stay'd in France so long.

YORK.

No, not to lose it all as thou hast done;

I rather would have lost my life betimes

Than bring a burden of dishonour home

By staying there so long till all were lost.

Show me one scar character'd on thy skin;

Men's flesh preserv'd so whole do seldom win.

QUEEN.

Nay then, this spark will prove a raging fire,

If wind and fuel be brought to feed it with.

No more, good York.—Sweet Somerset, be still.—

Thy fortune, York, hadst thou been regent there,

Might happily have prov'd far worse than his.

YORK.

What, worse than nought? nay, then a shame take all!

SOMERSET.

And, in the number, thee that wishest shame!

CARDINAL.

My Lord of York, try what your fortune is.

The uncivil kerns of Ireland are in arms,

And temper clay with blood of Englishmen.

To Ireland will you lead a band of men,

Collected choicely, from each county some,

And try your hap against the Irishmen?

YORK.

I will, my lord, so please his majesty.

SUFFOLK.

Why, our authority is his consent,

And what we do establish he confirms.—

Then, noble York, take thou this task in hand.

YORK.

I am content.—Provide me soldiers, lords,

Whiles I take order for mine own affairs.

SUFFOLK.

A charge, Lord York, that I will see perform'd.

But now return we to the false Duke Humphrey.

CARDINAL.

No more of him; for I will deal with him

That henceforth he shall trouble us no more.

And so break off; the day is almost spent.—

Lord Suffolk, you and I must talk of that event.

YORK.

My Lord of Suffolk, within fourteen days
At Bristol I expect my soldiers;
For there I'll ship them all for Ireland.

SUFFOLK.

I'll see it truly done, my Lord of York.

[Exeunt all but York.]

YORK.

Now, York, or never, steel thy fearful thoughts,
And change misdoubt to resolution.
Be that thou hop'st to be, or what thou art
Resign to death; it is not worth the enjoying.
Let pale-fac'd fear keep with the mean-born man,
And find no harbour in a royal heart.
Faster than spring-time showers comes thought on thought,
And not a thought but thinks on dignity.
My brain more busy than the labouring spider

Weaves tedious snares to trap mine enemies.
Well, nobles, well, 't is politicly done,
To send me packing with an host of men;
I fear me you but warm the starved snake,
Who, cherish'd in your breasts, will sting your hearts.
'T was men I lack'd, and you will give them me;
I take it kindly, yet be well-assur'd
You put sharp weapons in a madman's hands.
Whiles I in Ireland nourish a mighty band,
I will stir up in England some black storm
Shall blow ten thousand souls to heaven or hell;
And this fell tempest shall not cease to rage
Until the golden circuit on my head,
Like to the glorious sun's transparent beams,
Do calm the fury of this mad-bred flaw.
And for a minister of my intent,
I have seduc'd a headstrong Kentishman,
John Cade of Ashford,
To make commotion, as full well he can,
Under the tide of John Mortimer.
In Ireland have I seen this stubborn Cade

Oppose himself against a troop of kerns,

And fought so long till that his thighs with darts

Were almost like a sharp-quill'd porpentine;

And, in the end being rescu'd, I have seen

Him caper upright like a wild Morisco,

Shaking the bloody darts as he his bells.

Full often, like a shag-hair'd crafty kern,

Hath he conversed with the enemy,

And undiscover'd come to me again

And given me notice of their villainies.

This devil here shall be my substitute;

For that John Mortimer, which now is dead,

In face, in gait, in speech, he doth resemble.

By this I shall perceive the commons' mind,

How they affect the house and claim of York.

Say he be taken, rack'd, and tortured,

I know no pain they can inflict upon him

Will make him say I mov'd him to those arms.

Say that he thrive, as 't is great like he will,

Why, then from Ireland come I with my strength

And reap the harvest which that rascal sow'd;

For Humphrey being dead, as he shall be,

And Henry put apart, the next for me.

[Exit.]

SCENE II. Bury St. Edmund's. A Room of State.

[Enter certain Murderers, hastily.]

1 MURDERER.

Run to my Lord of Suffolk; let him know

We have dispatch'd the duke, as he commanded.

2 MURDERER.

O that it were to do! What have we done?

Didst ever hear a man so penitent?

[Enter SUFFOLK.]

1 MURDERER. Here comes my lord.

SUFFOLK.

Now, sirs, have you dispatch'd this thing?

1 MURDERER. Ay, my good lord, he's dead.

SUFFOLK.

Why, that's well said. Go, get you to my house;

I will reward you for this venturous deed.

The king and all the peers are here at hand.

Have you laid fair the bed? Is all things well,

According as I gave directions?

1 MURDERER. 'T is, my good lord.

SUFFOLK.

Away! be gone.

[Exeunt Murderers.]

[Sound trumpets. *Enter* the KING, the QUEEN,

CARDINAL BEAUFORT, SOMERSET, with attendants.]

KING.

Go, call our uncle to our presence straight;

Say we intend to try his grace to-day,

If he be guilty, as 't is published.

SUFFOLK.

I'll call him presently, my noble lord.

[Exit.]

KING.

Lords, take your places; and, I pray you all,

Proceed no straiter 'gainst our uncle Gloucester

Than from true evidence of good esteem

He be approv'd in practice culpable.

QUEEN.

God forbid any malice should prevail

That faultless may condemn a nobleman!

Pray God he may acquit him of suspicion!

KING.

I thank thee, Meg; these words content me much.—

[Re-enter SUFFOLK.]

How now! why look'st thou pale? why tremblest thou?

Where is our uncle? what's the matter, Suffolk?

SUFFOLK.

Dead in his bed, my lord; Gloucester is dead.

QUEEN.

Marry, God forfend!

CARDINAL.

God's secret judgment!—I did dream to-night
The duke was dumb and could not speak a word.

[The King swoons.]

QUEEN.

How fares my lord?—Help, lords! the king is dead.

SOMERSET.

Rear up his body; wring him by the nose.

QUEEN.

Run, go, help, help!—O Henry, ope thine eyes!

SUFFOLK.

He doth revive again.—Madam, be patient.

KING.

O heavenly God!

QUEEN.

How fares my gracious lord?

SUFFOLK.

Comfort, my sovereign! gracious Henry, comfort!

KING.

What, doth my Lord of Suffolk comfort me?

Came he right now to sing a raven's note

Whose dismal tune bereft my vital powers,

And thinks he that the chirping of a wren,

By crying comfort from a hollow breast,

Can chase away the first-conceived sound?

Hide not thy poison with such sugar'd words;

Lay not thy hands on me; forbear, I say!

Their touch affrights me as a serpent's sting.

Thou baleful messenger, out of my sight!

Upon thy eyeballs murtherous tyranny

Sits in grim majesty, to fright the world.

Look not upon me, for thine eyes are wounding.

Yet do not go away; come, basilisk,

And kill the innocent gazer with thy sight,

For in the shade of death I shall find joy,

In life but double death, now Gloucester's dead.

QUEEN.

Why do you rate my Lord of Suffolk thus?

Although the duke was enemy to him,

Yet he most Christian-like laments his death;

And for myself, foe as he was to me,

Might liquid tears or heart-offending groans

Or blood-consuming sighs recall his life,

I would be blind with weeping, sick with groans,

Look pale as primrose with blood-drinking sighs,

And all to have the noble duke alive.

What know I how the world may deem of me?

For it is known we were but hollow friends.

It may be judg'd I made the duke away;

So shall my name with slander's tongue be wounded

And princes' courts be fill'd with my reproach.

This get I by his death. Ay me, unhappy!

To be a queen, and crown'd with infamy!

KING.
Ah, woe is me for Gloucester, wretched man!

QUEEN.

Be woe for me, more wretched than he is.
What, dost thou turn away and hide thy face?

I am no loathsome leper; look on me.
What! art thou, like the adder, waxen deaf?

Be poisonous too and kill thy forlorn queen.
Is all thy comfort shut in Gloucester's tomb?

Why, then, dame Margaret was ne'er thy joy.
Erect his statue and worship it,
And make my image but an alehouse sign.

Was I for this nigh wrack'd upon the sea,
And twice by awkward wind from England's bank
Drove back again unto my native clime?
What boded this but well forewarning wind
Did seem to say 'Seek not a scorpion's nest,
Nor set no footing on this unkind shore?'
What did I then, but curs'd the gentle gusts
And he that loos'd them forth their brazen caves,
And bid them blow towards England's blessed shore,
Or turn our stern upon a dreadful rock?
Yet Aeolus would not be a murtherer,
But left that hateful office unto thee.
The pretty-vaulting sea refus'd to drown me,
Knowing that thou wouldst have me drown'd on shore,
With tears as salt as sea, through thy unkindness.
The splitting rocks cower'd in the sinking sands
And would not dash me with their ragged sides,
Because thy flinty heart, more hard than they,
Might in thy palace perish Margaret.
As far as I could ken thy chalky cliffs,
When from thy shore the tempest beat us back,

I stood upon the hatches in the storm,
And when the dusky sky began to rob
My earnest-gaping sight of thy land's view,
I took a costly jewel from my neck—
A heart it was, bound in with diamonds—
And threw it towards thy land; the sea receiv'd it,
And so I wish'd thy body might my heart.
And even with this I lost fair England's view,
And bid mine eyes be packing with my heart,
And call'd them blind and dusky spectacles,
For losing ken of Albion's wished coast.
How often have I tempted Suffolk's tongue,
The agent of thy foul inconstancy,
To sit and witch me, as Ascanius did
When he to madding Dido would unfold
His father's acts commenc'd in burning Troy!

Am I not witch'd like her? or thou not false like him?
Ay me, I can no more! die, Margaret!

For Henry weeps that thou dost live so long.

[Noise within. *Enter* WARWICK, SALISBURY, and many Commons.]

WARWICK.

It is reported, mighty sovereign,

That good Duke Humphrey traitorously is murther'd

By Suffolk and the Cardinal Beaufort's means.

The commons, like an angry hive of bees

That want their leader, scatter up and down

And care not who they sting in his revenge.

Myself have calm'd their spleenful mutiny

Until they hear the order of his death.

KING.

That he is dead, good Warwick, 't is too true;

But how he died God knows, not Henry.

Enter his chamber, view his breathless corpse,

And comment then upon his sudden death.

WARWICK.

That shall I do, my liege.—Stay, Salisbury,

With the rude multitude till I return.

[Exit.]

KING.

O Thou that judgest all things, stay my thoughts,

My thoughts, that labour to persuade my soul

Some violent hands were laid on Humphrey's life!

If my suspect be false, forgive me, God,

For judgment only doth belong to thee.

Fain would I go to chafe his paly lips

With twenty thousand kisses, and to drain

Upon his face an ocean of salt tears

To tell my love unto his dumb deaf trunk,

And with my fingers feel his hand unfeeling;

But all in vain are these mean obsequies;

And to survey his dead and earthy image,

What were it but to make my sorrow greater?

[Re-enter WARWICK and others, bearing GLOUCESTER's body on a bed.]

WARWICK.

Come hither, gracious sovereign, view this body.

KING.

That is to see how deep my grave is made;

For with his soul fled all my worldly solace,

For seeing him I see my life in death.

WARWICK.

As surely as my soul intends to live

With that dread King that took our state upon him

To free us from his father's wrathful curse,

I do believe that violent hands were laid

Upon the life of this thrice-famed duke.

SUFFOLK.

A dreadful oath, sworn with a solemn tongue!

What instance gives Lord Warwick for his vow?

WARWICK.

See how the blood is settled in his face.

Oft have I seen a timely-parted ghost,

Of ashy semblance, meagre, pale, and bloodless,

Being all descended to the labouring heart,

Who, in the conflict that it holds with death,

Attracts the same for aidance 'gainst the enemy,

Which with the heart there cools and ne'er returneth

To blush and beautify the cheek again.

But see, his face is black and full of blood,

His eyeballs further out than when he liv'd,

Staring full ghastly like a strangled man;

His hair uprear'd, his nostrils stretch'd with struggling,

His hands abroad display'd, as one that grasp'd

And tugg'd for life and was by strength subdu'd.

Look, on the sheets his hair, you see, is sticking;

His well-proportion'd beard made rough and rugged,

Like to the summer's corn by tempest lodged.

It cannot be but he was murther'd here;

The least of all these signs were probable.

SUFFOLK.

Why, Warwick, who should do the duke to death?

Myself and Beaufort had him in protection;

And we, I hope, sir, are no murtherers.

WARWICK.

But both of you were vow'd Duke Humphrey's foes,

And you, forsooth, had the good duke to keep;

'T is like you would not feast him like a friend,

And 't is well seen he found an enemy.

QUEEN.

Then you, belike, suspect these noblemen

As guilty of Duke Humphrey's timeless death.

WARWICK.

Who finds the heifer dead and bleeding fresh

And sees fast by a butcher with an axe

But will suspect 't was he that made the slaughter?

Who finds the partridge in the puttock's nest
But may imagine how the bird was dead,
Although the kite soar with unbloodied beak?

Even so suspicious is this tragedy.

QUEEN.
Are you the butcher, Suffolk? Where's your knife?

Is Beaufort term'd a kite? Where are his talons?

SUFFOLK.
I wear no knife to slaughter sleeping men;
But here's a vengeful sword, rusted with ease,
That shall be scoured in his rancorous heart
That slanders me with murther's crimson badge.—
Say, if thou dar'st, proud Lord of Warwickshire,
That I am faulty in Duke Humphrey's death.

[Exeunt Cardinal, Somerset, and others.]

WARWICK.

What dares not Warwick, if false Suffolk dare him?

QUEEN.

He dares not calm his contumelious spirit,

Nor cease to be an arrogant controller,

Though Suffolk dare him twenty thousand times.

WARWICK.

Madam, be still,—with reverence may I say;

For every word you speak in his behalf

Is slander to your royal dignity.

SUFFOLK.

Blunt-witted lord, ignoble in demeanour!

If ever lady wrong'd her lord so much,

Thy mother took into her blameful bed

Some stern untutor'd churl, and noble stock

Was graft with crab-tree slip, whose fruit thou art,

And never of the Nevils' noble race.

WARWICK.

But that the guilt of murther bucklers thee

And I should rob the deathsman of his fee,

Quitting thee thereby of ten thousand shames,

And that my sovereign's presence makes me mild,

I would, false murtherous coward, on thy knee

Make thee beg pardon for thy passed speech

And say it was thy mother that thou meant'st,

That thou thyself was born in bastardy;

And after all this fearful homage done,

Give thee thy hire and send thy soul to hell,

Pernicious blood-sucker of sleeping men!

SUFFOLK.

Thou shalt be waking while I shed thy blood,

If from this presence thou dar'st go with me.

WARWICK.

Away even now, or I will drag thee hence.

Unworthy though thou art, I'll cope with thee

And do some service to Duke Humphrey's ghost.

[Exeunt Suffolk and Warwick.]

KING.

What stronger breastplate than a heart untainted!
Thrice is he arm'd that hath his quarrel just,
And he but naked, though lock'd up in steel,
Whose conscience with injustice is corrupted.

[A noise within.]

QUEEN.

What noise is this?

[Re-enter Suffolk and Warwick, with their weapons drawn.]

KING.

Why, how now, lords! your wrathful weapons drawn

Here in our presence! dare you be so bold?

Why, what tumultuous clamour have we here?

SUFFOLK.

The traitorous Warwick with the men of Bury

Set all upon me, mighty sovereign.

SALISBURY.

[To the Commons, entering.] Sirs, stand apart;

the king shall know your mind.—

Dread lord, the commons send you word by me,

Unless false Suffolk straight be done to death,

Or banished fair England's territories,

They will by violence tear him from your palace

And torture him with grievous lingering death.

They say, by him the good Duke Humphrey died;

They say, in him they fear your highness' death;

And mere instinct of love and loyalty,

Free from a stubborn opposite intent,

As being thought to contradict your liking, Makes them thus forward in his banishment.

They say, in care of your most royal person,

That if your highness should intend to sleep

And charge that no man should disturb your rest

In pain of your dislike or pain of death,

Yet, notwithstanding such a strait edict,

Were there a serpent seen, with forked tongue,

That slily glided towards your majesty,

It were but necessary you were wak'd,

Lest, being suffer'd in that harmful slumber,

The mortal worm might make the sleep eternal;

And therefore do they cry, though you forbid,

That they will guard you, whether you will or no,

From such fell serpents as false Suffolk is,

With whose envenomed and fatal sting,

Your loving uncle, twenty times his worth,

They say, is shamefully bereft of life.

COMMONS.

[Within.] An answer from the king, my Lord of Salisbury!

SUFFOLK.

'T is like the commons, rude unpolish'd hinds,

Could send such message to their sovereign;

But you, my lord, were glad to be employ'd,

To show how quaint an orator you are.

But all the honour Salisbury hath won

Is that he was the lord ambassador

Sent from a sort of tinkers to the king.

COMMONS.

[Within.] An answer from the king, or we will all break in!

KING.

Go, Salisbury, and tell them all from me,

I thank them for their tender loving care,

And had I not been cited so by them,

Yet did I purpose as they do entreat,

For, sure, my thoughts do hourly prophesy

Mischance unto my state by Suffolk's means;

And therefore, by His majesty I swear,
Whose far unworthy deputy I am,
He shall not breathe infection in this air
But three days longer, on the pain of death.

[Exit Salisbury.]

QUEEN.
O Henry, let me plead for gentle Suffolk!

KING.

Ungentle queen, to call him gentle Suffolk!
No more, I say; if thou dost plead for him,
Thou wilt but add increase unto my wrath.
Had I but said, I would have kept my word,
But when I swear, it is irrevocable.—
If, after three days' space, thou here be'st found
On any ground that I am ruler of,
The world shall not be ransom for thy life.—
Come, Warwick, come, good Warwick, go with me;

I have great matters to impart to thee.

[Exeunt all but Queen and Suffolk.]

QUEEN.

Mischance and sorrow go along with you!
Heart's discontent and sour affliction
Be playfellows to keep you company!
There's two of you; the devil make a third!

And threefold vengeance tend upon your steps!

SUFFOLK.
Cease, gentle queen, these execrations,
And let thy Suffolk take his heavy leave.

QUEEN.
Fie, coward woman and soft-hearted wretch,
Has thou not spirit to curse thine enemy?

SUFFOLK.

A plague upon them! wherefore should I curse them?
Would curses kill, as doth the mandrake's groan,
I would invent as bitter-searching terms,
As curst, as harsh and horrible to hear,
Deliver'd strongly through my fixed teeth,
With full as many signs of deadly hate,
As lean-fac'd Envy in her loathsome cave.
My tongue should stumble in mine earnest words;
Mine eyes should sparkle like the beaten flint;
Mine hair be fix'd an end, as one distract;
Ay, every joint should seem to curse and ban;
And even now my burthen'd heart would break,
Should I not curse them. Poison be their drink!

Gall, worse than gall, the daintiest that they taste!
Their sweetest shade a grove of cypress-trees!

Their chiefest prospect murthering basilisks!
Their softest touch as smart as lizards' stings!
Their music frightful as the serpent's hiss,

And boding screech-owls make the consort full!
All the foul terrors in dark-seated hell—

QUEEN.
Enough, sweet Suffolk; thou torment'st thyself;
And these dread curses, like the sun 'gainst glass,
Or like an overcharged gun, recoil
And turns the force of them upon thyself.

SUFFOLK.
You bade me ban, and will you bid me leave?
Now, by the ground that I am banish'd from,
Well could I curse away a winter's night,
Though standing naked on a mountain top
Where biting cold would never let grass grow,
And think it but a minute spent in sport.

QUEEN.
O, let me entreat thee cease. Give me thy hand,
That I may dew it with my mournful tears;
Nor let the rain of heaven wet this place,

To wash away my woeful monuments.
O, could this kiss be printed in thy hand,
That thou mightest think upon these by the seal,
Through whom a thousand sighs are breath'd for thee!
So, get thee gone, that I may know my grief;
'T is but surmis'd whiles thou art standing by,
As one that surfeits thinking on a want.
I will repeal thee, or, be well assur'd,
Adventure to be banished myself;
And banished I am, if but from thee.
Go; speak not to me, even now be gone.—
O, go not yet!—Even thus two friends condemn'd
Embrace and kiss and take ten thousand leaves,
Loather a hundred times to part than die.

Yet now farewell; and farewell life with thee!

SUFFOLK.
Thus is poor Suffolk ten times banished;
Once by the king, and three times thrice by thee.
'T is not the land I care for, wert thou thence;

A wilderness is populous enough,

So Suffolk had thy heavenly company;

For where thou art, there is the world itself,

With every several pleasure in the world,

And where thou art not, desolation.

I can no more; live thou to joy thy life,

Myself no joy in nought but that thou liv'st.

[Enter VAUX.]

QUEEN.

Whither goes Vaux so fast? what news, I prithee?

VAUX.

To signify unto his majesty

That Cardinal Beaufort is at point of death;

For suddenly a grievous sickness took him,

That makes him gasp and stare and catch the air,

Blaspheming God and cursing men on earth.

Sometime he talks as if Duke Humphrey's ghost

Were by his side, sometime he calls the king

And whispers to his pillow as to him
The secrets of his overcharged soul;
And I am sent to tell his majesty
That even now he cries aloud for him.

QUEEN.

Go tell this heavy message to the king.—

[Exit Vaux.]

Ay me! what is this world! what news are these!
But wherefore grieve I at an hour's poor loss,
Omitting Suffolk's exile, my soul's treasure?
Why only, Suffolk, mourn I not for thee,
And with the southern clouds contend in tears,
Theirs for the earth's increase, mine for my sorrows?

Now get thee hence.
The king, thou know'st, is coming;
If thou be found by me; thou art but dead.

SUFFOLK.

If I depart from thee, I cannot live;
And in thy sight to die, what were it else
But like a pleasant slumber in thy lap?
Here could I breathe my soul into the air,
As mild and gentle as the cradle-babe
Dying with mother's dug between its lips;
Where, from thy sight, I should be raging mad
And cry out for thee to close up mine eyes,
To have thee with thy lips to stop my mouth.
So shouldst thou either turn my flying soul,
Or I should breathe it so into thy body,
And then it liv'd in sweet Elysium.
To die by thee were but to die in jest;
From thee to die were torture more than death.
O, let me stay, befall what may befall!

QUEEN.

Away! though parting be a fretful corrosive,
It is applied to a deathful wound.
To France, sweet Suffolk; let me hear from thee,
For whereso'er thou art in this world's globe

I'll have an Iris that shall find thee out.

SUFFOLK.
I go.

QUEEN.

And take my heart with thee.

SUFFOLK.
A jewel, lock'd into the wofull'st cask
That ever did contain a thing of worth.
Even as a splitted bark, so sunder we;
This way fall I to death.

QUEEN.
This way for me.

[Exeunt severally.]

SCENE III. A Bedchamber.

[*Enter* the KING, SALISBURY, and WARWICK, to the CARDINAL in bed.]

KING.

How fares my lord? speak, Beaufort, to thy sovereign.

CARDINAL.

If thou be'st Death, I'll give thee England's treasure,

Enough to purchase such another island,

So thou wilt let me live and feel no pain.

KING.

Ah, what a sign it is of evil life

Where death's approach is seen so terrible!

WARWICK.

Beaufort, it is thy sovereign speaks to thee.

CARDINAL.

Bring me unto my trial when you will.
Died he not in his bed? where should he die?

Can I make men live, whether they will or no?
O, torture me no more! I will confess.—
Alive again? then show me where he is;
I'll give a thousand pound to look upon him.

He hath no eyes, the dust hath blinded them.
Comb down his hair; look, look! it stands upright,
Like lime-twigs set to catch my winged soul.—
Give me some drink; and bid the apothecary
Bring the strong poison that I bought of him.

KING.
O Thou eternal Mover of the Heavens,
Look with a gentle eye upon this wretch!
O, beat away the busy meddling fiend
That lays strong siege unto this wretch's soul,
And from his bosom purge this black despair!

WARWICK.

See how the pangs of death do make him grin!

SALISBURY.

Disturb him not; let him pass peaceably.

KING.

Peace to his soul, if God's good pleasure be!—

Lord cardinal, if thou think'st on heaven's bliss,

Hold up thy hand, make signal of thy hope.—

He dies, and makes no sign.—O God, forgive him!

WARWICK.

So bad a death argues a monstrous life.

KING HENRY.

Forbear to judge, for we are sinners all.—

Close up his eyes and draw the curtain close;

And let us all to meditation.

[Exeunt.]

ACT IV.

SCENE I. The Coast of Kent.

[Alarum. Fight at sea. Ordnance goes off. *Enter* a Captain, a Master, a Master's Mate, WALTER WHITMORE, and others; with them SUFFOLK, and others, prisoners.]

CAPTAIN.

The gaudy, blabbing, and remorseful day

Is crept into the bosom of the sea;

And now loud-howling wolves arouse the jades

That drag the tragic melancholy night,

Who, with their drowsy, slow, and flagging wings,

Clip dead men's graves and from their misty jaws

Breathe foul contagious darkness in the air.

Therefore bring forth the soldiers of our prize;

For, whilst our pinnace anchors in the Downs,

Here shall they make their ransom on the sand

Or with their blood stain this discolour'd shore.—

Master, this prisoner freely give I thee;—

And thou that art his mate, make boot of this;—

The other, Walter Whitmore, is thy share.

1 GENTLEMAN. What is my ransom, master? let me know?

MASTER.

A thousand crowns, or else lay down your head.

MATE.

And so much shall you give, or off goes yours.

CAPTAIN.

What, think you much to pay two thousand crowns,

And bear the name and port of gentlemen?—

Cut both the villains' throats;—for die you shall.
The lives of those which we have lost in fight
Be counterpois'd with such a petty sum!

1 GENTLEMAN. I'll give it, sir; and therefore spare my life.

2 GENTLEMAN. And so will I, and write home for it straight.

WHITMORE.
I lost mine eye in laying the prize aboard,—

[To Suffolk] And therefore, to revenge it, shalt thou die;—
And so should these, if I might have my will.

CAPTAIN.

Be not so rash; take ransom, let him live.

SUFFOLK.
Look on my George; I am a gentleman.

Rate me at what thou wilt, thou shalt be paid.

WHITMORE.

And so am I; my name is Walter Whitmore.

How now! why start'st thou? What, doth death affright?

SUFFOLK.

Thy name affrights me, in whose sound is death.

A cunning man did calculate my birth

And told me that by water I should die.

Yet let not this make thee be bloody-minded;

Thy name is Gaultier, being rightly sounded.

WHITMORE.

Gaultier or Walter, which it is, I care not.

Never yet did base dishonour blur our name

But with our sword we wip'd away the blot;

Therefore, when merchant-like I sell revenge,

Broke be my sword, my arms torn and defac'd, And I proclaim'd a coward through the world!

SUFFOLK.

Stay, Whitmore; for thy prisoner is a prince,
The Duke of Suffolk, William de la Pole.

WHITMORE.

The Duke of Suffolk muffled up in rags!

SUFFOLK.

Ay, but these rags are no part of the duke;
Jove sometime went disguis'd, and why not I?

CAPTAIN.

But Jove was never slain, as thou shalt be.

SUFFOLK.

Obscure and lowly swain, King Henry's blood,
The honourable blood of Lancaster,
Must not be shed by such a jaded groom.

Hast thou not kiss'd thy hand and held my stirrup?

Bare-headed plodded by my foot-cloth mule

And thought thee happy when I shook my head?

How often hast thou waited at my cup,

Fed from my trencher, kneel'd down at the board,

When I have feasted with Queen Margaret?

Remember it and let it make thee crest-fallen,

Ay, and allay thus thy abortive pride,

How in our voiding lobby hast thou stood

And duly waited for my coming forth.

This hand of mine hath writ in thy behalf,

And therefore shall it charm thy riotous tongue.

WHITMORE.

Speak, captain, shall I stab the forlorn swain?

CAPTAIN.

First let my words stab him, as he hath me.

SUFFOLK.

Base slave, thy words are blunt and so art thou.

CAPTAIN.

Convey him hence, and on our long-boat's side
Strike off his head.

SUFFOLK.

Thou dar'st not, for thy own.

CAPTAIN.

Yes, Pole!

SUFFOLK.

Pole!

CAPTAIN.

Pool! Sir Pool! lord!
Ay, kennel, puddle, sink, whose filth and dirt
Troubles the silver spring where England drinks.

Now will I dam up this thy yawning mouth
For swallowing the treasure of the realm;
Thy lips that kiss'd the queen shall sweep the ground;
And thou that smil'dst at good Duke Humphrey's death
Against the senseless winds shalt grin in vain,
Who in contempt shall hiss at thee again.
And wedded be thou to the hags of hell,
For daring to affy a mighty lord
Unto the daughter of a worthless king,
Having neither subject, wealth, nor diadem.
By devilish policy art thou grown great
And, like ambitious Sylla, overgorg'd
With gobbets of thy mother's bleeding heart.
By thee Anjou and Maine were sold to France,
The false revolting Normans thorough thee
Disdain to call us lord, and Picardy
Hath slain their governors, surpris'd our forts,
And sent the ragged soldiers wounded home.
The princely Warwick, and the Nevils all,
Whose dreadful swords were never drawn in vain,
As hating thee are rising up in arms;

And now the house of York, thrust from the crown

By shameful murther of a guiltless king

And lofty proud encroaching tyranny,

Burns with revenging fire, whose hopeful colours

Advance our half-fac'd sun, striving to shine,

Under the which is writ 'Invitis nubibus.'

The commons here in Kent are up in arms;

And, to conclude, reproach and beggary

Is crept into the palace of our king,

And all by thee.—Away! convey him hence.

SUFFOLK.

O that I were a god, to shoot forth thunder

Upon these paltry, servile, abject drudges!

Small things make base men proud; this villain here,

Being captain of a pinnace, threatens more

Than Bargulus the strong Illyrian pirate.—

Drones suck not eagles' blood but rob bee-hives.

It is impossible that I should die

By such a lowly vassal as thyself.

Thy words move rage and not remorse in me.

I go of message from the queen to France;

I charge thee waft me safely cross the Channel.

CAPTAIN.

Walter,—

WHITMORE.

Come, Suffolk, I must waft thee to thy death.

SUFFOLK.

Gelidus timor occupat artus; it is thee I fear.

WHITMORE.

Thou shalt have cause to fear before I leave thee.

What, are ye daunted now? now will ye stoop?

1 GENTLEMAN. My gracious lord, entreat him, speak him fair.

SUFFOLK.

Suffolk's imperial tongue is stern and rough,

Us'd to command, untaught to plead for favour.

Far be it we should honour such as these

With humble suit; no, rather let my head

Stoop to the block than these knees bow to any

Save to the God of heaven and to my king,

And sooner dance upon a bloody pole

Than stand uncover'd to the vulgar groom.

True nobility is exempt from fear;

More can I bear than you dare execute.

CAPTAIN.

Hale him away, and let him talk no more.

SUFFOLK.

Come, soldiers, show what cruelty ye can,

That this my death may never be forgot!

Great men oft die by vile bezonians:

A Roman sworder and banditto slave

Murther'd sweet Tully; Brutus' bastard hand

Stabb'd Julius Caesar; savage islanders

Pompey the Great; and Suffolk dies by pirates.

[Exeunt Whitmore and others with Suffolk.]

CAPTAIN.

And as for these whose ransom we have set,

It is our pleasure one of them depart,

Therefore come you with us, and let him go.

[Exeunt all but the 1 Gentleman.]

[Re-enter WHITMORE with SUFFOLK'S body.]

WHITMORE.

There let his head and lifeless body lie

Until the queen his mistress bury it.

[Exit.]

1 GENTLEMAN.

O barbarous and bloody spectacle!

His body will I bear unto the king.
If he revenge it not, yet will his friends;
So will the queen, that living held him dear.

[Exit with the body.]

SCENE II. Blackheath.

[Enter GEORGE BEVIS and JOHN HOLLAND.]

GEORGE.

Come, and get thee a sword, though made of a lath; they have been up these two days.

HOLLAND.

They have the more need to sleep now, then.

BEVIS.

I tell thee, Jack Cade the clothier means to dress the commonwealth, and turn it, and set a new nap upon it.

HOLLAND.

So he had need, for 't is threadbare. Well, I say it was never merry world in England since gentlemen came up.

BEVIS.

O miserable age! virtue is not regarded in handicraftsmen.

HOLLAND.

The nobility think scorn to go in leather aprons.

BEVIS.

Nay, more, the king's council are no good workmen.

HOLLAND.

True; and yet it is said, labour in thy vocation, which is as much to say as, let the magistrates be labouring men; and therefore should we be magistrates.

BEVIS.

Thou hast hit it; for there's no better sign of a brave mind than a hard hand.

HOLLAND.

I see them! I see them! There's Best's son, the tanner of Wingham,—

BEVIS.

He shall have the skin of our enemies, to make dog's-leather of.

HOLLAND.

And Dick the butcher,—

BEVIS.

Then is sin struck down like an ox, and iniquity's throat cut like a calf.

HOLLAND.

And Smith the weaver,—

BEVIS.

Argo, their thread of life is spun.

HOLLAND.

Come, come, let's fall in with them.

[Drum. *Enter* CADE, DICK the Butcher, SMITH the Weaver, and a Sawyer, with infinite numbers.]

CADE.

We John Cade, so term'd of our supposed father,—

DICK.

[Aside.] Or rather, of stealing a cade of herrings.

CADE.

For our enemies shall fall before us, inspired with the spirit of putting down kings and princes,—Command silence.

DICK.

Silence!

CADE.

My father was a Mortimer,—

DICK.

[Aside.] He was an honest man and a good bricklayer.

CADE.

My mother a Plantagenet,—

DICK.

[Aside.] I knew her well; she was a midwife.

CADE.

My wife descended of the Lacies,—

DICK.

[Aside.] She was, indeed, a pedler's daughter, and sold many laces.

SMITH.

[Aside.] But now of late, not able to travel with her furred pack, she washes bucks here at home.

CADE.

Therefore am I of an honourable house.

DICK.

[Aside.] Ay, by my faith, the field is honourable; and there was he born, under a hedge, for his father had never a house but the cage.

CADE.

Valiant I am.

SMITH.

[Aside.] A' must needs; for beggary is valiant.

CADE.

I am able to endure much.

DICK.

[Aside.] No question of that; for I have seen him whipped three market-days together.

CADE.

I fear neither sword nor fire.

SMITH.

[Aside.] He need not fear the sword, for his coat is of proof.

DICK.

[Aside.] But methinks he should stand in fear of fire, being burnt i' the hand for stealing of sheep.

CADE.

Be brave, then; for your captain is brave, and vows reformation. There shall be in England seven halfpenny loaves sold for a penny; the three-hooped pot shall have ten hoops; and I will make it felony to drink small beer. All the realm shall be in common; and in Cheapside shall my palfry go to grass; and when I am king, as king I will be,—

ALL.

God save your majesty!

CADE.

I thank you, good people;—there shall be no money; all shall eat and drink on my score, and I will apparel them all in one livery, that they may agree like brothers and worship me their lord.

DICK.

The first thing we do, let's kill all the lawyers.

CADE.

Nay, that I mean to do. Is not this a lamentable thing, that of the skin of an innocent lamb should be made parchment, that parchment, being scribbl'd o'er, should undo a man? Some say the bee stings; but I say 't is the bee's wax, for I did but seal once to a thing, and I was never mine own man since.—How now! who's there?

[Enter some, bringing in the Clerk of Chatham.]

SMITH.

The clerk of Chatham; he can write and read and cast accompt.

CADE.

O monstrous!

SMITH.

We took him setting of boys' copies.

CADE.

Here's a villain!

SMITH.

Has a book in his pocket with red letters in 't.

CADE.

Nay, then, he is a conjurer.

DICK.

Nay, he can make obligations and write court-hand.

CADE.

I am sorry for 't.

The man is a proper man, of mine honour;

unless I find him guilty, he shall not die.—Come hither, sirrah,

I must examine thee; what is thy name?

CLERK.

Emmanuel.

DICK.

They use to write it on the top of letters.—'T will go hard with you.

CADE.

Let me alone.—Dost thou use to write thy name? or hast thou a mark to thyself, like a honest, plain-dealing man?

CLERK.

Sir, I thank God, I have been so well brought up that I can write my name.

ALL.

He hath confess'd; away with him! he's a villain and a traitor.

CADE.

Away with him, I say! hang him with his pen and inkhorn about his neck.

[Exit one with the Clerk.]

[Enter MICHAEL.]

MICHAEL.

Where's our general?

CADE.

Here I am, thou particular fellow.

MICHAEL.

Fly, fly, fly! Sir Humphrey Stafford and his brother are hard by, with the king's forces.

CADE.

Stand, villain, stand, or I'll fell thee down. He shall be encountered with a man as good as himself; he is but a knight, is a'?

MICHAEL.

No.

CADE.

To equal him, I will make myself a knight presently.—

[Kneels.] Rise up Sir John Mortimer.—*[Rises.]* Now have at him!

[Enter SIR HUMPHREY STAFFORD and his Brother, with drum and soldiers.]

STAFFORD.

Rebellious hinds, the filth and scum of Kent,

Mark'd for the gallows, lay your weapons down;

Home to your cottages, forsake this groom.

The king is merciful, if you revolt.

BROTHER.

But angry, wrathful, and inclin'd to blood,
If you go forward; therefore yield, or die.

CADE.

As for these silken-coated slaves, I pass not;
It is to you, good people, that I speak,
OVer whom, in time to come, I hope to reign,
For I am rightful heir unto the crown.

STAFFORD.

Villain, thy father was a plasterer;
And thou thyself a shearman, art thou not?

CADE.

And Adam was a gardener.

BROTHER.

And what of that?

CADE.

Marry, this: Edmund Mortimer, Earl of March,
Married the Duke of Clarence' daughter, did he not?

STAFFORD.

Ay, sir.

CADE.

By her he had two children at one birth.

BROTHER.

That's false.

CADE.

Ay, there's the question; but I say 't is true.
The elder of them, being put to nurse,
Was by a beggar-woman stolen away,
And, ignorant of his birth and parentage,
Became a bricklayer when he came to age.

His son am I; deny it, if you can.

DICK.

Nay, 't is too true; therefore he shall be king.

SMITH.

Sir, he made a chimney in my father's house, and the bricks are alive at this day to testify it; therefore deny it not.

STAFFORD.

And will you credit this base drudge's words,

That speaks he knows not what?

ALL.

Ay, marry, will we; therefore get ye gone.

BROTHER.

Jack Cade, the Duke of York hath taught you this.

CADE.

[Aside.] He lies, for I invented it myself.—Go to, sirrah,

tell the king from me that, for his father's sake, Henry the

Fifth, in whose time boys went to span-counter for French crowns,

I am content he shall reign; but I'll be protector over him.

DICK.

And furthermore, we'll have the Lord Say's head for selling the dukedom of Maine.

CADE.

And good reason; for thereby is England mained, and fain to go with a staff, but that my puissance holds it up. Fellow kings, I tell you that that Lord Say hath gelded the commonwealth and made it an eunuch; and more than that, he can speak French, and therefore he is a traitor.

STAFFORD.

O gross and miserable ignorance!

CADE.

Nay, answer if you can: the Frenchmen are our enemies; go to, then, I ask but this: can he that speaks with the tongue of an enemy be a good counsellor, or no?

ALL.

No, no; and therefore we'll have his head.

BROTHER.

Well, seeing gentle words will not prevail,

Assail them with the army of the king.

STAFFORD.

Herald, away; and throughout every town

Proclaim them traitors that are up with Cade;

That those which fly before the battle ends

May, even in their wives' and children's sight,

Be hang'd up for example at their doors.—

And you that be the king's friends, follow me.

[Exeunt the two Staffords, and soldiers.]

CADE.

And you that love the commons follow me.

Now show yourselves men; 't is for liberty.

We will not leave one lord, one gentleman;

Spare none but such as go in clouted shoon,

For they are thrifty honest men and such

As would, but that they dare not, take our parts.

DICK.

They are all in order and march toward us.

CADE.

But then are we in order when we are most out of order.—Come, march forward.

[Exeunt.]

SCENE III. Another part of Blackheath.

[Alarums to the fight, wherein both the STAFFORDS are slain.

Enter CADE and the rest.]

CADE.

Where's Dick, the butcher of Ashford?

DICK.

Here, sir.

CADE.

They fell before thee like sheep and oxen, and thou behavedst thyself as if thou hadst been in thine own slaughter-house; therefore thus will I reward thee: the Lent shall be as long again as it is, and thou shalt have a licence to kill for a hundred lacking one.

DICK.

I desire no more.

CADE.

And, to speak truth, thou deservest no less. This monument of the victory will I bear *[putting on Sir Humphrey's brigandine]* ; and the bodies shall be dragged at my horse heels till I do come to London, where we will have the mayor's sword borne before us.

DICK.

If we mean to thrive and do good, break open the gaols and let out the prisoners.

CADE.

Fear not that, I warrant thee. Come, let's march towards London.

[Exeunt.]

SCENE IV. London. The Palace.

[*Enter* the KING with a supplication, and the QUEEN with Suffolk's head, the DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM and the LORD SAY.]

QUEEN.

Oft have I heard that grief softens the mind

And makes it fearful and degenerate;

Think therefore on revenge and cease to weep.

But who can cease to weep and look on this?
Here may his head lie on my throbbing breast;
But where's the body that I should embrace?

BUCKINGHAM.
What answer makes your grace to the rebels' supplication?

KING.
I'll send some holy bishop to entreat;
For God forbid so many simple souls
Should perish by the sword! And I myself,
Rather than bloody war shall cut them short,
Will parley with Jack Cade their general.—
But stay, I'll read it over once again.

QUEEN.
Ah, barbarous villains! hath this lovely face
Rul'd, like a wandering planet, over me,
And could it not enforce them to relent

That were unworthy to behold the same?

KING.

Lord Say, Jack Cade hath sworn to have thy head.

SAY.
Ay, but I hope your highness shall have his.

KING.

How now, madam!
Still lamenting and mourning for Suffolk's death?
I fear me, love, if that I had been dead,
Thou wouldst not have mourn'd so much for me.

QUEEN.

No, my love, I should not mourn, but die for thee.

[Enter a Messenger.]

KING.

How now! what news? why com'st thou in such haste?

MESSENGER.

The rebels are in Southwark; fly, my lord!
Jack Cade proclaims himself Lord Mortimer,
Descended from the Duke of Clarence' house,
And calls your grace usurper openly,
And vows to crown himself in Westminster.
His army is a ragged multitude
Of hinds and peasants, rude and merciless;
Sir Humphrey Stafford and his brother's death
Hath given them heart and courage to proceed.
All scholars, lawyers, courtiers, gentlemen,
They call false caterpillars, and intend their death.

KING.

O graceless men! they know not what they do.

BUCKINGHAM.

My gracious lord, retire to Killingworth

Until a power be rais'd to put them down.

QUEEN.

Ah, were the Duke of Suffolk now alive,

These Kentish rebels would be soon appeas'd!

KING.

Lord Say, the traitors hate thee;

Therefore away with us to Killingworth.

SAY.

So might your grace's person be in danger.

The sight of me is odious in their eyes;

And therefore in this city will I stay

And live alone as secret as I may.

[Enter another Messenger.]

MESSENGER.

Jack Cade hath gotten London bridge;

The citizens fly and forsake their houses.

The rascal people, thirsting after prey,

Join with the traitor, and they jointly swear

To spoil the city and your royal court.

BUCKINGHAM.

Then linger not, my lord; away, take horse.

KING.

Come Margaret; God, our hope, will succour us.

QUEEN.

My hope is gone, now Suffolk is deceas'd.

KING.

Farewell, my lord; trust not the Kentish rebels.

BUCKINGHAM.

Trust nobody, for fear you be betray'd.

SAY.

The trust I have is in mine innocence,

And therefore am I bold and resolute.

[Exeunt.]

SCENE V. London. The Tower.

[*Enter* LORD SCALES upon the Tower, walking. Then enter two or three Citizens, below.]

SCALES.

How now! Is Jack Cade slain?

1 CITIZEN. No, my lord, nor likely to be slain; for they have won the bridge, killing all those that withstand them. The lord mayor craves aid of your honour from the Tower to defend the city from the rebels.

SCALES.

Such aid as I can spare you shall command,

But I am troubled here with them myself;

The rebels have assay'd to win the Tower.

But get you to Smithfield and gather head,

And thither I will send you Matthew Goffe.

Fight for your king, your country, and your lives;

And so, farewell, for I must hence again.

[Exeunt.]

SCENE VI. London. Cannon Street.

[*Enter* JACK CADE and the rest, and strikes his staff on

London-stone.]

CADE.

Now is Mortimer lord of this city. And here, sitting upon London-stone, I charge and command that, of the city's cost, the conduit run nothing but claret wine this first year of our reign. And now henceforward it shall be treason for any that calls me other than Lord Mortimer.

[Enter a Soldier, running.]

SOLDIER.

Jack Cade! Jack Cade!

CADE.

Knock him down there.

[They kill him.]

SMITH.

If this fellow be wise, he'll never call ye Jack
Cade more; I think he hath a very fair warning.

DICK.

My lord, there's an army gathered together in Smithfield.

CADE.

Come then, let's go fight with them. But first, go and set
London bridge on fire; and, if you can, burn down the Tower too.

Come, let's away.

[Exeunt.]

SCENE VII. London. Smithfield.

[Alarums. MATTHEW GOFFE is slain, and all the rest. Then enter

JACK CADE, with his company.]

CADE.

So, sirs.—Now go some and pull down the Savoy; others to the inns of court; down with them all.

DICK.

I have a suit unto your lordship.

CADE.

Be it a lordship, thou shalt have it for that word.

DICK.

Only that the laws of England may come out of your mouth.

HOLLAND.

[Aside.] Mass, 't will be sore law, then; for he was thrust in the mouth with a spear, and 't is not whole yet.

SMITH.

[Aside.] Nay, John, it will be stinking law, for his breath stinks with eating toasted cheese.

CADE.

I have thought upon it, it shall be so. Away, burn all the records of the realm. My mouth shall be the parliament of England.

HOLLAND.

[Aside.] Then we are like to have biting statutes, unless his teeth be pulled out.

CADE.

And henceforward all things shall be in common.

[Enter a Messenger.]

MESSENGER.

My lord, a prize, a prize! here's the Lord Say, which sold the towns in France; he that made us pay one and twenty fifteens, and one shilling to the pound, the last subsidy.

[Enter GEOGE BEVIS, with the LORD SAY.]

CADE.

Well, he shall be beheaded for it ten times.—Ah, thou say, thou serge, nay, thou buckram lord! now art thou within point-blank of our jurisdiction regal. What canst thou answer to my majesty for giving up of Normandy unto Mounsieur Basimecu, the dauphin of France? Be it known unto thee by these presence, even the presence of Lord Mortimer, that I am the besom that must sweep the court clean of such filth as thou art. Thou hast most traitorously corrupted the youth of the realm in erecting a grammar school; and whereas, before, our forefathers had no other books but the score and the tally, thou hast caused printing to be used, and, contrary to the king, his crown, and dignity, thou hast built a paper-mill. It will be proved to thy face that thou hast men about thee that usually talk of a noun and a verb, and such abominable words as no Christian ear can endure to hear. Thou hast appointed justices of peace, to call poor men before them about matters they were not able to answer. Moreover, thou hast put them in prison, and because they could not read, thou hast hanged them; when, indeed, only for that cause they have been most worthy to live. Thou dost ride in a foot-cloth, dost thou not?

SAY.

What of that?

CADE.

Marry, thou oughtest not to let thy horse wear a cloak when honester men than thou go in their hose and doublets.

DICK.

And work in their shirt too; as myself, for example, that am a butcher.

SAY.

You men of Kent,—

DICK.

What say you of Kent?

SAY.

Nothing but this; 't is 'bona terra, mala gens.'

CADE.

Away with him, away with him! he speaks Latin.

SAY.

Hear me but speak, and bear me where you will.
Kent, in the Commentaries Caesar writ,
Is term'd the civil'st place of all this isle.
Sweet is the country, because full of riches;
The people liberal, valiant, active, wealthy;
Which makes me hope you are not void of pity.
I sold not Maine, I lost not Normandy,
Yet, to recover them, would lose my life.
Justice with favour have I always done;
Prayers and tears have mov'd me, gifts could never.
When have I aught exacted at your hands
But to maintain the king, the realm, and you?
Large gifts have I bestow'd on learned clerks,
Because my book preferr'd me to the king;
And seeing ignorance is the curse of God,
Knowledge the wing wherewith we fly to heaven,

Unless you be possess'd with devilish spirits,

You cannot but forbear to murther me.

This tongue hath parley'd unto foreign kings

For your behoof,—

CADE.

Tut, when struck'st thou one blow in the field?

SAY.

Great men have reaching hands; oft have I struck

Those that I never saw, and struck them dead.

GEORGE.

O monstrous coward! what, to come behind folks?

SAY.

These cheeks are pale for watching for your good.

CADE.

Give him a box o' the ear, and that will make 'em red again.

SAY.

Long sitting to determine poor men's causes

Hath made me full of sickness and diseases.

CADE.

Ye shall have a hempen caudle then, and the help of hatchet.

DICK.

Why dost thou quiver, man?

SAY.

The palsy, and not fear, provokes me.

CADE.

Nay, he nods at us, as who should say, I'll be even with you. I'll see if his head will stand steadier on a pole or no. Take him away, and behead him.

SAY.

Tell me wherein have I offended most?

Have I affected wealth or honour? speak.

Are my chests fill'd up with extorted gold?

Is my apparel sumptuous to behold?

Whom have I injur'd, that ye seek my death?

These hands are free from guiltless bloodshedding,

This breast from harbouring foul deceitful thoughts.

O, let me live!

CADE.

[Aside.] I feel remorse in myself with his words, but I'll bridle it; he shall die, an it be but for pleading so well for his life.— Away with him! he has a familiar under his tongue; he speaks not o' God's name. Go, take him away, I say, and strike off his head presently; and then break into his son-in-law's house, Sir James Cromer, and strike off his head, and bring them both upon two poles hither.

ALL.

It shall be done.

SAY.

Ah, countrymen! if when you make your prayers,

God should be so obdurate as yourselves,

How would it fare with your departed souls?

And therefore yet relent, and save my life.

CADE.

Away with him! and do as I command ye.—*[Exeunt some with Lord Say.]* The proudest peer in the realm shall not wear a head on his shoulders unless he pay me tribute; there shall not a maid be married but she shall pay to me her maidenhead ere they have it. Men shall hold of me in capite; and we charge and command that their wives be as free as heart can wish or tongue can tell.

DICK.

My lord, when shall we go to Cheapside, and take up commodities upon our bills?

CADE.

Marry, presently.

ALL.

O, brave!

[Re-enter one with the heads.]

CADE.

But is not this braver? Let them kiss one another, for they loved well when they were alive. Now part them again, lest they consult about the giving up of some more towns in France.—Soldiers, defer the spoil of the city until night; for with these borne before us, instead of maces will we ride through the streets, and at every corner have them kiss.—Away!

[Exeunt.]

SCENE VIII. Southwark.

[Alarum and retreat. *Enter* CADE and all his rabblement.]

CADE.

Up Fish Street! down Saint Magnus' Corner! kill and knock down! Throw them into Thames! *[Sound a parley.]* What noise is this I hear? Dare any be so bold to sound retreat or parley when I command them kill?

[Enter BUCKINGHAM and old CLIFFORD, attended.]

BUCKINGHAM.

Ay, here they be that dare and will disturb thee.
Know, Cade, we come ambassadors from the king
Unto the commons whom thou hast misled,
And here pronounce free pardon to them all
That will forsake thee and go home in peace.

CLIFFORD.

What say ye, countrymen? will ye relent
And yield to mercy whilst 't is offer'd you,
Or let a rebel lead you to your deaths?
Who loves the king and will embrace his pardon,
Fling up his cap, and say 'God save his Majesty!'
Who hateth him and honours not his father,
Henry the Fifth, that made all France to quake,
Shake he his weapon at us and pass by.

ALL.

God save the king! God save the king!

CADE.

What, Buckingham and Clifford, are ye so brave?— And you, base peasants, do ye believe him? will you needs be hang'd with your about your necks? Hath my sword therefore broke through London gates, that you should leave me at the White Hart in Southwark? I thought ye would never have given out these arms till you had recovered your ancient freedom; but you are all recreants and dastards, and delight to live in slavery to the nobility. Let them break your backs with burthens, take your houses over your heads, ravish your wives and daughters before your faces. For me, I will make shift for one; and so, God's curse light upon you all!

ALL.

We'll follow Cade, we'll follow Cade!

CLIFFORD.

Is Cade the son of Henry the Fifth,

That thus you do exclaim you'll go with him?

Will he conduct you through the heart of France,

And make the meanest of you earls and dukes?

Alas, he hath no home, no place to fly to;

Nor knows he how to live but by the spoil,

Unless by robbing of your friends and us.

Were 't not a shame that whilst you live at jar

The fearful French, whom you late vanquished,

Should make a start o'er seas and vanquish you?

Methinks already in this civil broil

I see them lording it in London streets,

Crying 'Villiaco!' unto all they meet.

Better ten thousand base-born Cades miscarry

Than you should stoop unto a Frenchman's mercy.

To France, to France, and get what you have lost;

Spare England, for it is your native coast.

Henry hath money, you are strong and manly;

God on our side, doubt not of victory.

ALL.

A Clifford! a Clifford! we'll follow the king and Clifford.

CADE.

Was ever feather so lightly blown to and fro as this multitude? The name of Henry the Fifth hales them to an hundred mischiefs and makes them leave me desolate. I see them lay their heads together to surprise me. My sword make way for me, for here is no staying.—In despite of the devils and hell, have through the very middest of you! and heavens and honour be witness that no want of resolution in me, but only my followers' base and ignominious treasons, makes me betake me to my heels.

[Exit.]

BUCKINGHAM.

What, is he fled?—Go some, and follow him;

And he that brings his head unto the king

Shall have a thousand crowns for his reward.—

[Exeunt some of them.]

Follow me, soldiers; we'll devise a mean

To reconcile you all unto the king.

[Exeunt.]

SCENE IX. Kenilworth Castle.

[Sound trumpets. *Enter* KING, QUEEN, and SOMERSET, on the terrace.]

KING.

Was ever king that joy'd an earthly throne, And could command no more content than I?

No sooner was I crept out of my cradle

But I was made a king at nine months old.

Was never subject long'd to be a king

As I do long and wish to be a subject.

[Enter BUCKINGHAM and old CLIFFORD.]

BUCKINGHAM.

Health and glad tidings to your majesty!

KING.

Why, Buckingham, is the traitor Cade surpris'd?

Or is he but retir'd to make him strong?

[Enter , below, multitudes with halters about their necks.]

CLIFFORD.

He is fled, my lord, and all his powers do yield,

And humbly thus, with halters on their necks, Expect your highness' doom, of life or death.

KING.

Then, heaven, set ope thy everlasting gates,

To entertain my vows of thanks and praise!—

Soldiers, this day have you redeem'd your lives

And show'd how well you love your prince and country.

Continue still in this so good a mind,

And Henry, though he be infortunate,

Assure yourselves, will never be unkind.

And so, with thanks and pardon to you all,

I do dismiss you to your several countries.

ALL.

God save the king! God save the king!

[Enter a Messenger.]

MESSENGER.

Please it your grace to be advertised

The Duke of York is newly come from Ireland,

And with a puissant and a mighty power

Of gallowglasses and stout kerns

Is marching hitherward in proud array,

And still proclaimeth, as he comes along,

His arms are only to remove from thee

The Duke of Somerset, whom he terms a traitor.

KING.

Thus stands my state, 'twixt Cade and York distress'd,

Like to a ship that, having scap'd a tempest,

Is straightway calm'd and boarded with a pirate;

But now is Cade driven back, his men dispers'd,

And now is York in arms to second him.—

I pray thee, Buckingham, go and meet him,

And ask him wha t's the reason of these arms.

Tell him I'll send Duke Edmund to the Tower;—

And, Somerset, we will commit thee thither,

Until his army be dismiss'd from him.

SOMERSET.

My lord,

I'll yield myself to prison willingly,

Or unto death, to do my country good.

KING.

In any case, be not too rough in terms,

For he is fierce and cannot brook hard language.

BUCKINGHAM.

I will, my lord, and doubt not so to deal

As all things shall redound unto your good.

KING.

Come, wife, let's in, and learn to govern better;

For yet may England curse my wretched reign.

[Flourish. Exeunt.]

SCENE X. Kent. Iden's Garden.

[Enter CADE.]

CADE.

Fie on ambitions! fie on myself, that have a sword and yet am ready to famish! These five days have I hid me in these woods and durst not peep out, for all the country is laid for me; but now am I so hungry that if I might have a lease of my life for a thousand years I could stay no longer. Wherefore, on a brick wall have I climb'd into this garden, to see if I can eat grass, or pick a sallet another while, which is not amiss to cool a man's stomach this hot weather. And I think this word 'sallet' was born to do me good; for many a time, but for a sallet, my brain-pain had been cleft with a brown bill; and many a time, when I have been dry and bravely marching, it hath served me instead of a quart pot to drink in; and now the word 'sallet' must serve me to feed on.

[Enter IDEN.]

IDEN.

Lord, who would live turmoiled in the court,

And may enjoy such quiet walks as these?

This small inheritance my father left me

Contenteth me, and worth a monarchy.

I seek not to wax great by others' waning,

Or gather wealth, I care not with what envy;

Sufficeth that I have maintains my state

And sends the poor well pleased from my gate.

CADE.

Here's the lord of the soil come to seize me for a stray, for entering his fee-simple without leave.—Ah, villain, thou wilt betray me, and get a thousand crowns of the king by carrying my head to him; but I'll make thee eat iron like an ostrich, and swallow my sword like a great pin, ere thou and I part.

IDEN.

Why, rude companion, whatsoe'er thou be, I know

thee not! why, then, should I betray thee?

Is 't not enough to break into my garden,

And, like a thief, to come to rob my grounds,

Climbing my walls in spite of me the owner,

But thou wilt brave me with these saucy terms?

CADE.

Brave thee? ay, by the best blood that ever was broached, and beard thee too. Look on me well: I have eat no meat these five days; yet, come thou and thy five men, and if I do not leave you all as dead as a door-nail, I pray God I may never eat grass more.

IDEN.

Nay, it shall ne'er be said, while England stands,

That Alexander Iden, an esquire of Kent, Took odds to combat a poor famish'd man.

Oppose thy steadfast-gazing eyes to mine,

See if thou canst outface me with thy looks.

Set limb to limb and thou art far the lesser;

Thy hand is but a finger to my fist,

Thy leg a stick compared with this truncheon;

My foot shall fight with all the strength thou hast;

And if mine arm be heaved in the air,

Thy grave is digg'd already in the earth.

As for words, whose greatness answers words,

Let this my sword report what speech forbears.

CADE.

By my valour, the most complete champion that ever I heard!—Steel, if thou turn the edge, or cut not out the burly-boned clown in chines of beef ere thou sleep in thy sheath, I beseech God on my knees thou mayst be turn'd to hobnails.—*[Here they fight. Cade falls.]* O, I am slain! famine and no other hath slain me; let ten thousand devils come against me, and give me but the ten meals I have lost, and I'd defy them all.—Wither, garden; and be henceforth a burying place to all that do dwell in this house, because the unconquered soul of Cade is fled.

IDEN.

Is't Cade that I have slain, that monstrous traitor?—

Sword, I will hallow thee for this thy deed, And hang thee o'er my tomb when I am dead;

Ne'er shall this blood be wiped from thy point,

But thou shalt wear it as a herald's coat,

To emblaze the honour that thy master got.

CADE.

Iden, farewell; and be proud of thy victory. Tell Kent from me, she hath lost her best man, and exhort all the world to be cowards; for I, that never feared any, am vanquished by famine, not by valour.

[Dies.]

IDEN.

How much thou wrong'st me, heaven be my judge.

Die, damned wretch, the curse of her that bare thee;

And as I thrust thy body in with my sword,

So wish I I might thrust thy soul to hell.

Hence will I drag thee headlong by the heels

Unto a dunghill which shall be thy grave,

And there cut off thy most ungracious head,

Which I will bear in triumph to the king, Leaving thy trunk for crows to feed upon.

[Exit.]

ACT V.

SCENE I. Fields between Dartford and Blackheath.

[*Enter* YORK, and his army of Irish, with drum and colours.]

YORK.

From Ireland thus comes York to claim his right,
And pluck the crown from feeble Henry's head.
Ring, bells, aloud; burn, bonfires, clear and bright,
To entertain great England's lawful king.
Ah! sancta majestas! who would not buy thee dear?
Let them obey that knows not how to rule;
This hand was made to handle nought but gold.
I cannot give due action to my words
Except a sword or sceptre balance it.
A sceptre shall it have, have I a soul,
On which I'll toss the flower-de-luce of France.—

[Enter BUCKINGHAM.]

Whom have we here? Buckingham, to disturb me?

The king hath sent him, sure: I must dissemble.

BUCKINGHAM.

York, if thou meanest well, I greet thee well.

YORK.
Humphrey of Buckingham, I accept thy greeting.

Art thou a messenger, or come of pleasure?

BUCKINGHAM.
A messenger from Henry, our dread liege,
To know the reason of these arms in peace;
Or why thou, being a subject as I am,
Against thy oath and true allegiance sworn,
Should raise so great a power without his leave,
Or dare to bring thy force so near the court.

YORK.

[Aside.] Scarce can I speak, my choler is so great:
O, I could hew up rocks and fight with flint,
I am so angry at these abject terms;
And now, like Ajax Telamonius,
On sheep or oxen could I spend my fury.
I am far better born than is the king,
More like a king, more kingly in my thoughts;
But I must make fair weather yet a while,
Till Henry be more weak and I more strong.—
Buckingham, I prithee, pardon me,
That I have given no answer all this while;
My mind was troubled with deep melancholy.
The cause why I have brought this army hither
Is to remove proud Somerset from the king,
Seditious to his grace and to the state.

BUCKINGHAM.

That is too much presumption on thy part;
But if thy arms be to no other end,
The king hath yielded unto thy demand.

The Duke of Somerset is in the Tower.

YORK.

Upon thine honour, is he prisoner?

BUCKINGHAM.

Upon mine honour, he is prisoner.

YORK.

Then, Buckingham, I do dismiss my powers.—
Soldiers, I thank you all; disperse yourselves;
Meet me to-morrow in Saint George's field,
You shall have pay and everything you wish.—
And let my sovereign, virtuous Henry,
Command my eldest son, nay, all my sons,
As pledges of my fealty and love,
I'll send them all as willing as I live;
Lands, goods, horse, armour, anything I have,
Is his to use, so Somerset may die.

BUCKINGHAM.

York, I commend this kind submission;

We twain will go into his highness' tent.

[Enter KING and Attendants.]

KING.

Buckingham, doth York intend no harm to us,

That thus he marcheth with thee arm in arm?

YORK.

In all submission and humility

York doth present himself unto your highness.

KING.

Then what intends these forces thou dost bring?

YORK.

To heave the traitor Somerset from hence,

And fight against that monstrous rebel Cade,

Who since I heard to be discomfited.

[Enter IDEN, with CADE's head.]

IDEN.

If one so rude and of so mean condition

May pass into the presence of a king,

Lo, I present your grace a traitor's head,

The head of Cade, whom I in combat slew.

KING.

The head of Cade!—Great God, how just art Thou!—

O, let me view his visage, being dead,

That living wrought me such exceeding trouble.

Tell me, my friend, art thou the man that slew him?

IDEN.

I was, an 't like your majesty.

KING.

How art thou call'd? and what is thy degree?

IDEN.

Alexander Iden, that's my name;

A poor esquire of Kent, that loves his king.

BUCKINGHAM.

So please it you, my lord, 't were not amiss

He were created knight for his good service.

KING.

Iden, kneel down. *[He kneels.]* Rise up a knight.

We give thee for reward a thousand marks,

And will that thou thenceforth attend on us.

IDEN.

May Iden live to merit such a bounty,

And never live but true unto his liege!

[Rises.]

[Enter QUEEN and SOMERSET.]

KING.

See, Buckingham, Somerset comes with the queen.

Go, bid her hide him quickly from the duke.

QUEEN.

For thousand Yorks he shall not hide his head,

But boldly stand and front him to his face.

YORK.

How now! is Somerset at liberty?

Then, York, unloose thy long-imprisoned thoughts,

And let thy tongue be equal with thy heart.

Shall I endure the sight of Somerset?

False king! why hast thou broken faith with me,

Knowing how hardly I can brook abuse?

King did I call thee? no, thou art not king,

Not fit to govern and rule multitudes,

Which dar'st not, no, nor canst not rule a traitor.
That head of thine doth not become a crown;
Thy hand is made to grasp a palmer's staff,
And not to grace an awful princely sceptre.
That gold must round engirt these brows of mine,
Whose smile and frown, like to Achilles' spear,
Is able with the change to kill and cure.
Here is a hand to hold a sceptre up
And with the same to act controlling laws.
Give place; by heaven, thou shalt rule no more
O'er him whom heaven created for thy ruler.

SOMERSET.
O monstrous traitor!—I arrest thee, York,
Of capital treason 'gainst the king and crown.

Obey, audacious traitor; kneel for grace.

YORK.
Wouldst have me kneel? first let me ask of these
If they can brook I bow a knee to man.—

Sirrah, call in my sons to be my bail.—

[Exit Attendant.]

I know, ere thy will have me go to ward,
They'll pawn their swords for my enfranchisement.

QUEEN.

Call hither Clifford; bid him come amain,
To say if that the bastard boys of York
Shall be the surety for their traitor father.

[Exit Buckingham.]

YORK.

O blood-bespotted Neapolitan,
Outcast of Naples, England's bloody scourge!
The sons of York, thy betters in their birth,
Shall be their father's bail; and bane to those
That for my surety will refuse the boys!

[Enter EDWARD and RICHARD.]

See where they come; I'll warrant they'll make it good.

[Enter old CLIFFORD and his SON.]

QUEEN.

And here comes Clifford to deny their bail.

CLIFFORD.

Health and all happiness to my lord the king!

[Kneels.]

YORK.

I thank thee, Clifford; say, what news with thee?

Nay, do not fright us with an angry look.

We are thy sovereign, Clifford, kneel again;

For thy mistaking so, we pardon thee.

CLIFFORD.

This is my king, York, I do not mistake;
But thou mistakes me much to think I do.—
To Bedlam with him! is the man grown mad?

KING.
Ay, Clifford; a bedlam and ambitious humour
Makes him oppose himself against his king.

CLIFFORD.
He is a traitor; let him to the Tower,
And chop away that factious pate of his.

QUEEN.
He is arrested, but will not obey;
His sons, he says, shall give their words for him.

YORK.

Will you not, sons?

EDWARD.

Ay, noble father, if our words will serve.

RICHARD.

And if words will not, then our weapons shall.

CLIFFORD.

Why, what a brood of traitors have we here!

YORK.

Look in a glass, and call thy image so;
I am thy king, and thou a false-heart traitor.—
Call hither to the stake my two brave bears,
That with the very shaking of their chains
They may astonish these fell-lurking curs.
Bid Salisbury and Warwick come to me.

[Enter the EARLS OF WARWICK and SALISBURY.]

CLIFFORD.

Are these thy bears? we'll bait thy bears to death,

And manacle the bear-herd in their chains,
If thou dar'st bring them to the baiting-place.

RICHARD.
Oft have I seen a hot o'erweening cur
Run back and bite because he was withheld,
Who, being suffer'd with the bear's fell paw,
Hath clapp'd his tail between his legs and cried;
And such a piece of service will you do
If you oppose yourselves to match Lord Warwick.

CLIFFORD.
Hence, heap of wrath, foul indigested lump,
As crooked in thy manners as thy shape!

YORK.
Nay, we shall heat you thoroughly anon.

CLIFFORD.

Take heed, lest by your heat you burn yourselves.

KING.

Why, Warwick, hath thy knee forgot to bow?—
Old Salisbury, shame to thy silver hair,
Thou mad misleader of thy brainsick son!
What, wilt thou on thy death-bed play the ruffian,
And seek for sorrow with thy spectacles?

O, where is faith? O, where is loyalty?
If it be banish'd from the frosty head,
Where shall it find a harbour in the earth?
Wilt thou go dig a grave to find out war,
And shame thine honourable age with blood?
Why art thou old, and want'st experience?

Or wherefore dost abuse it, if thou hast it?
For shame! in duty bend thy knee to me
That bows unto the grave with mickle age.

SALISBURY.

My lord, I have consider'd with myself

The tide of this most renowned duke,

And in my conscience do repute his grace

The rightful heir to England's royal seat.

KING.

Hast thou not sworn allegiance unto me?

SALISBURY.

I have.

KING.

Canst thou dispense with heaven for such an oath?

SALISBURY.

It is great sin to swear unto a sin,

But greater sin to keep a sinful oath.

Who can be bound by any solemn vow

To do a murtherous deed, to rob a man,

To force a spotless virgin's chastity,

To reave the orphan of his patrimony,

To wring the widow from her custom'd right,

And have no other reason for this wrong

But that he was bound by a solemn oath?

QUEEN.

A subtle traitor needs no sophister.

KING.

Call Buckingham, and bid him arm himself.

YORK.

Call Buckingham, and all the friends thou hast,

I am resolv'd for death or dignity.

CLIFFORD.

The first I warrant thee if dreams prove true.

WARWICK.

You were best to go to bed and dream again,

To keep thee from the tempest of the field.

CLIFFORD.

I am resolv'd to bear a greater storm
Than any thou canst conjure up to-day;
And that I'll write upon thy burgonet,
Might I but know thee by thy household badge.

WARWICK.

Now, by my father's badge, old Nevil's crest,
The rampant bear chain'd to the ragged staff,
This day I'll wear aloft my burgonet,
As on a mountain top the cedar shows
That keeps his leaves in spite of any storm,
Even to affright thee with the view thereof.

CLIFFORD.

And from thy burgonet I'll rend thy bear
And tread it under foot with all contempt,
Despite the bear-herd that protects the bear.

YOUNG CLIFFORD.

And so to arms, victorious father,

To quell the rebels and their complices.

RICHARD.

Fie! charity, for shame! speak not in spite,

For you shall sup with Jesu Christ to-night.

YOUNG CLIFFORD.

Foul stigmatic, that's more than thou canst tell.

RICHARD.

If not in heaven, you'll surely sup in hell.

[Exeunt severally.]

SCENE II. Saint Alban's.

[Alarums to the battle.   Enter WARWICK.]

WARWICK.

Clifford of Cumberland, 't is Warwick calls;

And if thou dost not hide thee from the bear,

Now, when the angry trumpet sounds alarum

And dead men's cries do fill the empty air,

Clifford, I say, come forth and fight with me!

Proud northern lord, Clifford of Cumberland,

Warwick is hoarse with calling thee to arms.—

[Enter YORK.]

How now, my noble lord! what, all afoot?

YORK.

The deadly-handed Clifford slew my steed,

But match to match I have encount'red him,

And made a prey for carrion kites and crows

Even of the bonny beast he lov'd so well.

[Enter old CLIFFORD.]

WARWICK.

Of one or both of us the time is come.

YORK.

Hold, Warwick, seek thee out some other chase,

For I myself must hunt this deer to death.

WARWICK.

Then, nobly, York; 't is for a crown thou fight'st.—

As I intend, Clifford, to thrive to-day,

It grieves my soul to leave thee unassail'd.

[Exit.]

CLIFFORD.

What seest thou in me, York? why dost thou pause?

YORK.

With thy brave bearing should I be in love

But that thou art so fast mine enemy.

CLIFFORD.

Nor should thy prowess want praise and esteem

But that 't is shown ignobly and in treason.

YORK.

So let it help me now against thy sword

As I in justice and true right express it!

CLIFFORD.

My soul and body on the action both!

YORK.

A dreadful lay!—Address thee instantly.

[They fight, and Clifford falls.]

CLIFFORD.

La fin couronne les oeuvres.

[Dies.]

YORK.

Thus war hath given thee peace, for thou art still.

Peace with his soul, heaven, if it be thy will!

[Exit.]

[Enter young CLIFFORD.]

YOUNG CLIFFORD.

Shame and confusion! all is on the rout;
Fear frames disorder, and disorder wounds
Where it should guard.—O war, thou son of hell,
Whom angry heavens do make their minister,
Throw in the frozen bosoms of our part
Hot coals of vengeance!—Let no soldier fly.
He that is truly dedicate to war
Hath no self-love; nor he that loves himself
Hath not essentially but by circumstance
The name of valour.—*[Seeing his dead father.]*

O, let the vile world end,

And the premised flames of the last day

Knit earth and heaven together!

Now let the general trumpet blow his blast,

Particularities and petty sounds

To cease!—Wast thou ordain'd, dear father,

To lose thy youth in peace, and to achieve

The silver livery of advised age,

And in thy reverence and thy chair-days, thus

To die in ruffian battle?—Even at this sight

My heart is turn'd to stone; and while 't is mine

It shall be stony. York not our old men spares;

No more will I their babes; tears virginal

Shall be to me even as the dew to fire,

And beauty that the tyrant oft reclaims

Shall to my flaming wrath be oil and flax.

Henceforth I will not have to do with pity;

Meet I an infant of the house of York,

Into as many gobbets will I cut it

As wild Medea young Absyrtus did.

In cruelty will I seek out my fame.—

Come, thou new ruin of old Clifford's house:

As did Aeneas old Anchises bear,

So bear I thee upon my manly shoulders;

But then Aeneas bare a living load,

Nothing so heavy as these woes of mine.

[Exit , bearing off his father. *Enter* RICHARD and SOMERSET to fight. SOMERSET is killed.]

RICHARD.

So, lie thou there;

For underneath an alehouse' paltry sign,

The Castle in Saint Alban's, Somerset

Hath made the wizard famous in his death.

Sword, hold thy temper; heart, be wrathful still;

Priests pray for enemies, but princes kill.

[Exit.]

[Fight: excursions. *Enter* KING, QUEEN, and others.]

QUEEN.

Away, my lord! you are slow; for shame, away!

KING HENRY.

Can we outrun the heavens? good Margaret, stay.

QUEEN.

What are you made of? you'll nor fight nor fly;
Now is it manhood, wisdom, and defence,
To give the enemy way, and to secure us
By what we can, which can no more but fly.

[Alarum afar off.]

If you be ta'en, we then should see the bottom
Of all our fortunes; but if we haply scape,
As well we may, if not through your neglect,
We shall to London get, where you are lov'd,
And where this breach now in our fortunes made
May readily be stopp'd.

[Enter young CLIFFORD.]

YOUNG CLIFFORD.

But that my heart's on future mischief set,

I would speak blasphemy ere bid you fly.

But fly you must; uncurable discomfit

Reigns in the hearts of all our present parts.

Away, for your relief! and we will live

To see their day and them our fortune give.

Away, my lord, away!

[Exeunt.]

SCENE III. Fields near Saint Alban's.

[Alarum. Retreat. *Enter* YORK, RICHARD, WARWICK, and Soldiers, with drum and colours.]

YORK.

Of Salisbury, who can report of him,

That winter lion, who in rage forgets

Aged contusions and all brush of time
And, like a gallant in the brow of youth,
Repairs him with occasion? This happy day
Is not itself, nor have we won one foot,
If Salisbury be lost.

RICHARD.
My noble father,
Three times to-day I holp him to his horse,
Three times bestrid him; thrice I led him off,
Persuaded him from any further act;
But still, where danger was, still there I met him;
And like rich hangings in a homely house,
So was his will in his old feeble body.
But, noble as he is, look where he comes.

[Enter SALISBURY.]

SALISBURY.
Now, by my sword, well hast thou fought to-day;
By the mass, so did we all.—I thank you, Richard;

God knows how long it is I have to live,
And it hath pleas'd him that three times to-day
You have defended me from imminent death.—
Well, lords, we have not got that which we have;
'T is not enough our foes are this time fled,
Being opposites of such repairing nature.

YORK.
I know our safety is to follow them;
For, as I hear, the king is fled to London,
To call a present court of parliament.
Let us pursue him ere the writs go forth.—
What says Lord Warwick? shall we after them?

WARWICK.
After them! nay, before them, if we can.
Now, by my hand, lords, 'twas a glorious day;
Saint Alban's battle won by famous York
Shall be eterniz'd in all age to come.—
Sound drums and trumpets!—and to London all;
And more such days as these to us befall!

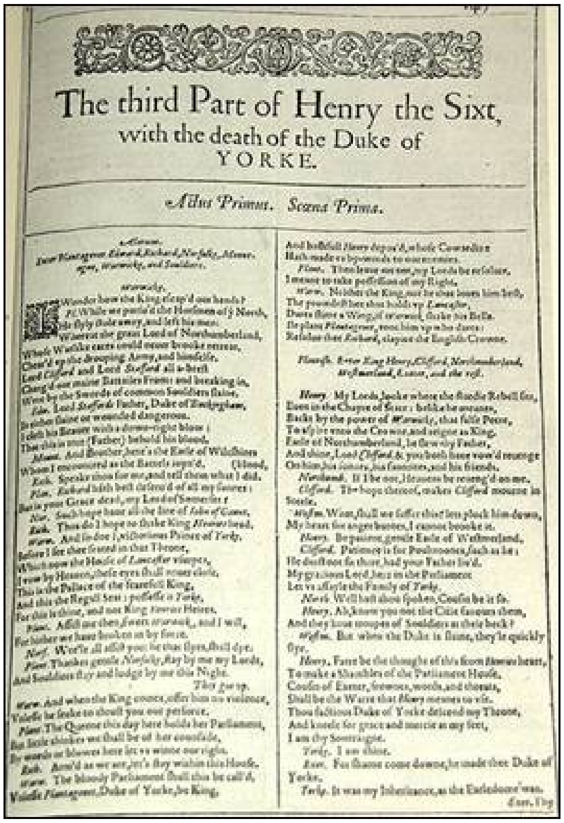
[Exeunt.]

HENRY VI, PART 3

Believed to have been written in 1591, this history play deals with the horrors of the War of the Roses, as the once ordered nation is thrown into chaos and barbarism, with the breakdown of families and their moral codes in the pursuit of revenge and power.

The play features the longest soliloquy in all of Shakespeare’s works (see Act Three, Scene II), and it has more battle scenes than any of the other plays.

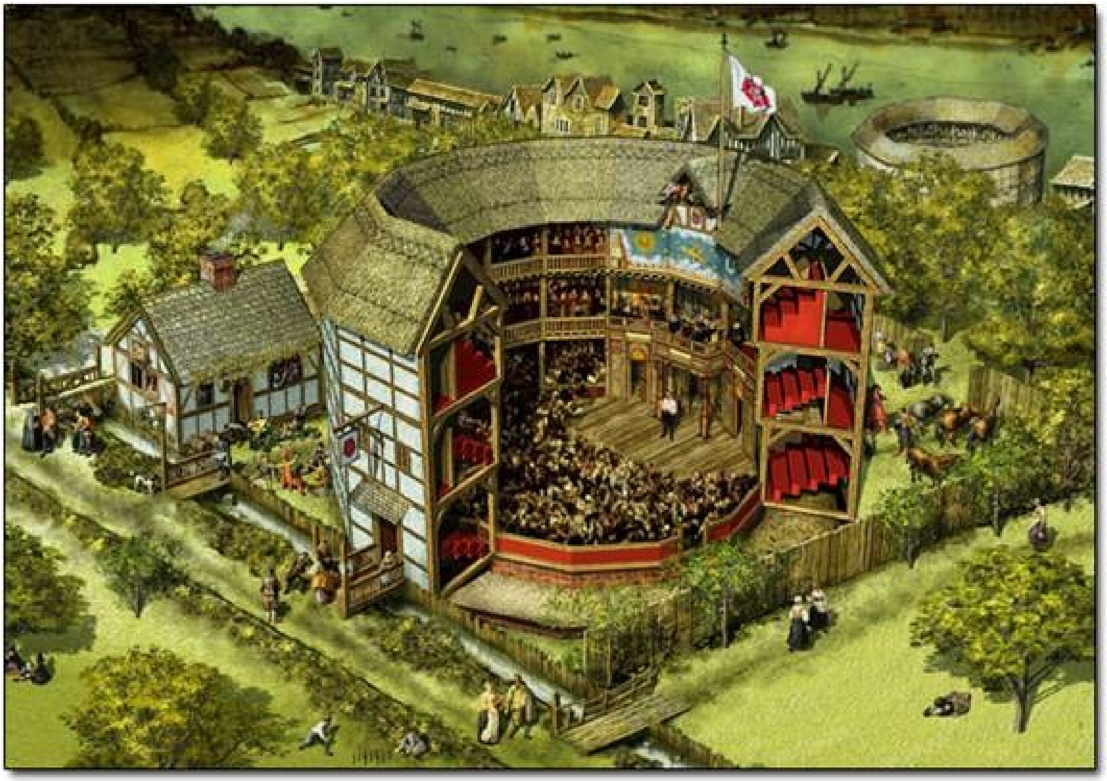
Shakespeare's main source text for this play is available via this link .



The third Part of Henry the Sixt,
with the death of the Duke of
YORKE.

Actus Primus. Scæna Prima.

The First Folio printing of the play



An artist's impression of The Rose – the theatre on Bankside where this play was first performed

The Rose, during its excavation, 400 years later

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SCENE I. A plain near Mortimer's Cross in Herefordshire

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DRAMATIS PERSONAE

KING HENRY THE SIXTH

EDWARD, PRINCE OF WALES, his son

LEWIS XI, King of France DUKE OF SOMERSET

DUKE OF EXETER EARL OF OXFORD

EARL OF NORTHUMBERLAND EARL OF WESTMORELAND

LORD CLIFFORD

RICHARD PLANTAGENET, DUKE OF YORK

EDWARD, EARL OF MARCH, afterwards KING EDWARD IV, his son

EDMUND, EARL OF RUTLAND, his son

GEORGE, afterwards DUKE OF CLARENCE, his son

RICHARD, afterwards DUKE OF GLOUCESTER, his son

DUKE OF NORFOLK MARQUIS OF MONTAGUE

EARL OF WARWICK EARL OF PEMBROKE

LORD HASTINGS LORD STAFFORD

SIR JOHN MORTIMER, uncle to the Duke of York

SIR HUGH MORTIMER, uncle to the Duke of York

HENRY, EARL OF RICHMOND, a youth

LORD RIVERS, brother to Lady Grey

SIR WILLIAM STANLEY SIR JOHN MONTGOMERY

SIR JOHN SOMERVILLE TUTOR, to Rutland

MAYOR OF YORK LIEUTENANT OF THE TOWER

A NOBLEMAN TWO KEEPERS

A HUNTSMAN

A SON that has killed his father

A FATHER that has killed his son

QUEEN MARGARET

LADY GREY, afterwards QUEEN to Edward IV

BONA, sister to the French Queen

Soldiers, Attendants, Messengers, Watchmen, *etc.*

SCENE: England and France

ACT I.
SCENE I. London . The Parliament House

Alarum. *Enter* DUKE OF YORK, EDWARD, RICHARD, NORFOLK, MONTAGUE, WARWICK, and soldiers, with white roses in their hats

WARWICK.

I wonder how the King escap'd our hands.

YORK.

While we pursu'd the horsemen of the north,

He slily stole away and left his men;

Whereat the great Lord of Northumberland,

Whose warlike ears could never brook retreat,

Cheer'd up the drooping army, and himself, Lord Clifford, and Lord Stafford, all abreast,

Charg'd our main battle's front, and, breaking in,

Were by the swords of common soldiers slain.

EDWARD.

Lord Stafford's father, Duke of Buckingham,

Is either slain or wounded dangerous;

I cleft his beaver with a downright blow.

That this is true, father, behold his blood.

MONTAGUE.

And, brother, here's the Earl of Wiltshire's blood,

Whom I encount'red as the battles join'd.

RICHARD.

Speak thou for me, and tell them what I did.

[Throwing down SOMERSET'S head]

YORK.

Richard hath best deserv'd of all my sons.
But is your Grace dead, my Lord of Somerset?

NORFOLK.

Such hope have all the line of John of Gaunt!

RICHARD.
Thus do I hope to shake King Henry's head.

WARWICK.
And so do I. Victorious Prince of York,
Before I see thee seated in that throne
Which now the house of Lancaster usurps,
I vow by heaven these eyes shall never close.
This is the palace of the fearful King,
And this the regal seat. Possess it, York;
For this is thine, and not King Henry's heirs'.

YORK.
Assist me then, sweet Warwick, and I will;

For hither we have broken in by force.

NORFOLK.

We'll all assist you; he that flies shall die.

YORK.

Thanks, gentle Norfolk. Stay by me, my lords;

And, soldiers, stay and lodge by me this night.

[They go up]

WARWICK.

And when the King comes, offer him no violence.

Unless he seek to thrust you out perforce.

YORK.

The Queen this day here holds her parliament,

But little thinks we shall be of her council.

By words or blows here let us win our right.

RICHARD.

Arm'd as we are, let's stay within this house.

WARWICK.

The bloody parliament shall this be call'd,
Unless Plantagenet, Duke of York, be King,
And bashful Henry depos'd, whose cowardice
Hath made us by-words to our enemies.

YORK.

Then leave me not, my lords; be resolute:
I mean to take possession of my right.

WARWICK.

Neither the King, nor he that loves him best,
The proudest he that holds up Lancaster,
Dares stir a wing if Warwick shake his bells.
I'll plant Plantagenet, root him up who dares.

Resolve thee, Richard; claim the English crown.

[YORK occupies the throne]

Flourish. Enter KING HENRY, CLIFFORD, NORTHUMBERLAND, WESTMORELAND, EXETER, and others, with red roses in their hats

KING HENRY.

My lords, look where the sturdy rebel sits,

Even in the chair of state! Belike he means,

Back'd by the power of Warwick, that false peer,

To aspire unto the crown and reign as king.

Earl of Northumberland, he slew thy father;

And thine, Lord Clifford; and you both have vow'd revenge

On him, his sons, his favourites, and his friends.

NORTHUMBERLAND.

If I be not, heavens be reveng'd on me!

CLIFFORD.

The hope thereof makes Clifford mourn in steel.

WESTMORELAND.

What, shall we suffer this? Let's pluck him down;
My heart for anger burns; I cannot brook it.

KING HENRY.

Be patient, gentle Earl of Westmoreland.

CLIFFORD.

Patience is for poltroons such as he;
He durst not sit there had your father liv'd.
My gracious lord, here in the parliament
Let us assail the family of York.

NORTHUMBERLAND.

Well hast thou spoken, cousin; be it so.

KING HENRY.

Ah, know you not the city favours them,
And they have troops of soldiers at their beck?

EXETER.

But when the Duke is slain they'll quickly fly.

KING HENRY.

Far be the thought of this from Henry's heart,

To make a shambles of the parliament house!

Cousin of Exeter, frowns, words, and threats,

Shall be the war that Henry means to use.

Thou factious Duke of York, descend my throne

And kneel for grace and mercy at my feet;

I am thy sovereign.

YORK.

I am thine.

EXETER.

For shame, come down; he made thee Duke of York.

YORK.

'Twas my inheritance, as the earldom was.

EXETER.

Thy father was a traitor to the crown.

WARWICK.

Exeter, thou art a traitor to the crown

In following this usurping Henry.

CLIFFORD.

Whom should he follow but his natural king?

WARWICK.

True, Clifford; and that's Richard Duke of York.

KING HENRY.

And shall I stand, and thou sit in my throne?

YORK.

It must and shall be so; content thyself.

WARWICK.

Be Duke of Lancaster; let him be King.

WESTMORELAND.

He is both King and Duke of Lancaster;

And that the Lord of Westmoreland shall maintain.

WARWICK.

And Warwick shall disprove it. You forget

That we are those which chas'd you from the field,

And slew your fathers, and with colours spread

March'd through the city to the palace gates.

NORTHUMBERLAND.

Yes, Warwick, I remember it to my grief;

And, by his soul, thou and thy house shall rue it.

WESTMORELAND.

Plantagenet, of thee, and these thy sons,

Thy kinsmen, and thy friends, I'll have more lives
Than drops of blood were in my father's veins.

CLIFFORD.
Urge it no more; lest that instead of words
I send thee, Warwick, such a messenger
As shall revenge his death before I stir.

WARWICK.

Poor Clifford, how I scorn his worthless threats!

YORK.
Will you we show our title to the crown?

If not, our swords shall plead it in the field.

KING HENRY.
What title hast thou, traitor, to the crown?
Thy father was, as thou art, Duke of York;
Thy grandfather, Roger Mortimer, Earl of March:

I am the son of Henry the Fifth,
Who made the Dauphin and the French to stoop,
And seiz'd upon their towns and provinces.

WARWICK.

Talk not of France, sith thou hast lost it all.

KING HENRY.

The Lord Protector lost it, and not I:
When I was crown'd, I was but nine months old.

RICHARD.

You are old enough now, and yet methinks you lose.
Father, tear the crown from the usurper's head.

EDWARD.

Sweet father, do so; set it on your head.

MONTAGUE.

Good brother, as thou lov'st and honourest arms,

Let's fight it out and not stand cavilling thus.

RICHARD.

Sound drums and trumpets, and the King will fly.

YORK.

Sons, peace!

KING HENRY.

Peace thou! and give King Henry leave to speak.

WARWICK.

Plantagenet shall speak first. Hear him, lords;

And be you silent and attentive too,

For he that interrupts him shall not live.

KING HENRY.

Think'st thou that I will leave my kingly throne, Wherein my grandsire and my father sat?

No; first shall war unpeople this my realm;

Ay, and their colours, often borne in France,

And now in England to our heart's great sorrow,

Shall be my winding-sheet. Why faint you, lords?

My title's good, and better far than his.

WARWICK.

Prove it, Henry, and thou shalt be King.

KING HENRY.

Henry the Fourth by conquest got the crown.

YORK.

'Twas by rebellion against his king.

KING HENRY.

[Aside] I know not what to say; my title's weak.-

Tell me, may not a king adopt an heir?

YORK.

What then?

KING HENRY.
An if he may, then am I lawful King;
For Richard, in the view of many lords,
Resign'd the crown to Henry the Fourth,
Whose heir my father was, and I am his.

YORK.
He rose against him, being his sovereign,
And made him to resign his crown perforce.

WARWICK.
Suppose, my lords, he did it unconstrain'd,
Think you 'twere prejudicial to his crown?

EXETER.
No; for he could not so resign his crown

But that the next heir should succeed and reign.

KING HENRY.

Art thou against us, Duke of Exeter?

EXETER.

His is the right, and therefore pardon me.

YORK.

Why whisper you, my lords, and answer not?

EXETER.

My conscience tells me he is lawful King.

KING HENRY.

[Aside] All will revolt from me, and turn to him.

NORTHUMBERLAND.

Plantagenet, for all the claim thou lay'st, Think not that Henry shall be so depos'd.

WARWICK.

Depos'd he shall be, in despite of all.

NORTHUMBERLAND.

Thou art deceiv'd. 'Tis not thy southern power
Of Essex, Norfolk, Suffolk, nor of Kent,
Which makes thee thus presumptuous and proud,
Can set the Duke up in despite of me.

CLIFFORD.

King Henry, be thy title right or wrong,
Lord Clifford vows to fight in thy defence.
May that ground gape, and swallow me alive,
Where I shall kneel to him that slew my father!

KING HENRY.

O Clifford, how thy words revive my heart!

YORK.

Henry of Lancaster, resign thy crown.

What mutter you, or what conspire you, lords?

WARWICK.

Do right unto this princely Duke of York;

Or I will fill the house with armed men,

And over the chair of state, where now he sits,

Write up his title with usurping blood.

[He stamps with his foot and the soldiers show themselves]

KING HENRY.

My Lord of Warwick, hear but one word:

Let me for this my life-time reign as king.

YORK.

Confirm the crown to me and to mine heirs,

And thou shalt reign in quiet while thou liv'st.

KING HENRY.

I am content. Richard Plantagenet,

Enjoy the kingdom after my decease.

CLIFFORD.

What wrong is this unto the Prince your son!

WARWICK.

What good is this to England and himself!

WESTMORELAND.

Base, fearful, and despairing Henry!

CLIFFORD.

How hast thou injur'd both thyself and or us!

WESTMORELAND.

I cannot stay to hear these articles.

NORTHUMBERLAND.

Nor I.

CLIFFORD.

Come, cousin, let us tell the Queen these news.

WESTMORELAND.

Farewell, faint-hearted and degenerate king,
In whose cold blood no spark of honour bides.

NORTHUMBERLAND.

Be thou a prey unto the house of York
And die in bands for this unmanly deed!

CLIFFORD.

In dreadful war mayst thou be overcome,
Or live in peace abandon'd and despis'd!
Exeunt NORTHUMBERLAND, CLIFFORD,
and WESTMORELAND

WARWICK.

Turn this way, Henry, and regard them not.

EXETER.

They seek revenge, and therefore will not yield.

KING HENRY.

Ah, Exeter!

WARWICK.

Why should you sigh, my lord?

KING HENRY.

Not for myself, Lord Warwick, but my son,
Whom I unnaturally shall disinherit.
But be it as it may. *[To YORK]* I here entail
The crown to thee and to thine heirs for ever;
Conditionally, that here thou take an oath
To cease this civil war, and, whilst I live,

To honour me as thy king and sovereign,

And neither by treason nor hostility

To seek to put me down and reign thyself.

YORK.

This oath I willingly take, and will perform.

[Coming from the throne]

WARWICK.

Long live King Henry! Plantagenet, embrace him.

KING HENRY.

And long live thou, and these thy forward sons!

YORK.

Now York and Lancaster are reconcil'd.

EXETER.

Accurs'd be he that seeks to make them foes!

[Sennet. Here they come down]

YORK.

Farewell, my gracious lord; I'll to my castle.

WARWICK.

And I'll keep London with my soldiers.

NORFOLK.

And I to Norfolk with my followers.

MONTAGUE.

And I unto the sea, from whence I came.

Exeunt the YORKISTS

KING HENRY.

And I, with grief and sorrow, to the court.

Enter QUEEN MARGARET and the PRINCE OF WALES

EXETER.

Here comes the Queen, whose looks bewray her anger.

I'll steal away.

KING HENRY.

Exeter, so will I.

QUEEN MARGARET.

Nay, go not from me; I will follow thee.

KING HENRY.

Be patient, gentle queen, and I will stay.

QUEEN MARGARET.

Who can be patient in such extremes?

Ah, wretched man! Would I had died a maid,

And never seen thee, never borne thee son,
Seeing thou hast prov'd so unnatural a father!

Hath he deserv'd to lose his birthright thus?
Hadst thou but lov'd him half so well as I,
Or felt that pain which I did for him once,
Or nourish'd him as I did with my blood,
Thou wouldst have left thy dearest heart-blood there
Rather than have made that savage duke thine heir,
And disinherited thine only son.

PRINCE OF WALES.
Father, you cannot disinherit me.

If you be King, why should not I succeed?

KING HENRY.
Pardon me, Margaret; pardon me, sweet son.

The Earl of Warwick and the Duke enforc'd me.

QUEEN MARGARET.

Enforc'd thee! Art thou King and wilt be forc'd?

I shame to hear thee speak. Ah, timorous wretch!
Thou hast undone thyself, thy son, and me;
And giv'n unto the house of York such head
As thou shalt reign but by their sufferance.
To entail him and his heirs unto the crown,
What is it but to make thy sepulchre
And creep into it far before thy time?
Warwick is Chancellor and the lord of Calais;
Stern Falconbridge commands the narrow seas;
The Duke is made Protector of the realm;
And yet shalt thou be safe? Such safety finds
The trembling lamb environed with wolves.
Had I been there, which am a silly woman,
The soldiers should have toss'd me on their pikes
Before I would have granted to that act.
But thou prefer'st thy life before thine honour;
And seeing thou dost, I here divorce myself,
Both from thy table, Henry, and thy bed,

Until that act of parliament be repeal'd
Whereby my son is disinherited.
The northern lords that have forsworn thy colours
Will follow mine, if once they see them spread;
And spread they shall be, to thy foul disgrace
And utter ruin of the house of York.
Thus do I leave thee. Come, son, let's away;
Our army is ready; come, we'll after them.

KING HENRY.

Stay, gentle Margaret, and hear me speak.

QUEEN MARGARET.
Thou hast spoke too much already; get thee gone.

KING HENRY.

Gentle son Edward, thou wilt stay with me?

QUEEN MARGARET.

Ay, to be murder'd by his enemies.

PRINCE OF WALES.

When I return with victory from the field
I'll see your Grace; till then I'll follow her.

QUEEN MARGARET.

Come, son, away; we may not linger thus.

Exeunt QUEEN MARGARET and the PRINCE

KING HENRY.

Poor queen! How love to me and to her son
Hath made her break out into terms of rage!
Reveng'd may she be on that hateful Duke,
Whose haughty spirit, winged with desire,
Will cost my crown, and like an empty eagle
Tire on the flesh of me and of my son!

The loss of those three lords torments my heart.
I'll write unto them, and entreat them fair;
Come, cousin, you shall be the messenger.

EXETER.

And I, I hope, shall reconcile them all. *Exeunt*

SCENE II. Sandal Castle, near Wakefield, in Yorkshire

Flourish. *Enter* EDWARD, RICHARD, and MONTAGUE

RICHARD.

Brother, though I be youngest, give me leave.

EDWARD.

No, I can better play the orator.

MONTAGUE.

But I have reasons strong and forcible.

Enter the DUKE OF YORK

YORK.

Why, how now, sons and brother! at a strife?

What is your quarrel? How began it first?

EDWARD.

No quarrel, but a slight contention.

YORK.

About what?

RICHARD.

About that which concerns your Grace and us-

The crown of England, father, which is yours.

YORK.

Mine, boy? Not till King Henry be dead.

RICHARD.

Your right depends not on his life or death.

EDWARD.

Now you are heir, therefore enjoy it now.

By giving the house of Lancaster leave to breathe,

It will outrun you, father, in the end.

YORK.

I took an oath that he should quietly reign.

EDWARD.

But for a kingdom any oath may be broken:

I would break a thousand oaths to reign one year.

RICHARD.

No; God forbid your Grace should be forsworn.

YORK.

I shall be, if I claim by open war.

RICHARD.

I'll prove the contrary, if you'll hear me speak.

YORK.

Thou canst not, son; it is impossible.

RICHARD.

An oath is of no moment, being not took
Before a true and lawful magistrate
That hath authority over him that swears.
Henry had none, but did usurp the place;
Then, seeing 'twas he that made you to depose,
Your oath, my lord, is vain and frivolous.
Therefore, to arms. And, father, do but think
How sweet a thing it is to wear a crown,
Within whose circuit is Elysium
And all that poets feign of bliss and joy.

Why do we linger thus? I cannot rest
Until the white rose that I wear be dy'd
Even in the lukewarm blood of Henry's heart.

YORK.

Richard, enough; I will be King, or die.
Brother, thou shalt to London presently
And whet on Warwick to this enterprise.
Thou, Richard, shalt to the Duke of Norfolk
And tell him privily of our intent.
You, Edward, shall unto my Lord Cobham,
With whom the Kentishmen will willingly rise;
In them I trust, for they are soldiers,
Witty, courteous, liberal, full of spirit.
While you are thus employ'd, what resteth more
But that I seek occasion how to rise,
And yet the King not privy to my drift,
Nor any of the house of Lancaster?

Enter a MESSENGER

But, stay. What news? Why com'st thou in such post?

MESSENGER.

The Queen with all the northern earls and lords

Intend here to besiege you in your castle.

She is hard by with twenty thousand men;

And therefore fortify your hold, my lord.

YORK.

Ay, with my sword. What! think'st thou that we fear them?

Edward and Richard, you shall stay with me;

My brother Montague shall post to London.

Let noble Warwick, Cobham, and the rest,

Whom we have left protectors of the King,

With pow'rful policy strengthen themselves

And trust not simple Henry nor his oaths.

MONTAGUE.

Brother, I go; I'll win them, fear it not.

And thus most humbly I do take my leave. *Exit*

Enter SIR JOHN and SIR HUGH MORTIMER

YORK.

Sir john and Sir Hugh Mortimer, mine uncles!

You are come to Sandal in a happy hour;

The army of the Queen mean to besiege us.

SIR JOHN.

She shall not need; we'll meet her in the field.

YORK.

What, with five thousand men?

RICHARD.

Ay, with five hundred, father, for a need.

A woman's general; what should we fear?

[A march afar off]

EDWARD.

I hear their drums. Let's set our men in order,

And issue forth and bid them battle straight.

YORK.

Five men to twenty! Though the odds be great,

I doubt not, uncle, of our victory.

Many a battle have I won in France,

When as the enemy hath been ten to one;

Why should I not now have the like success? *Exeunt*

SCENE III. Field of battle between Sandal Castle and Wakefield

Alarum. *Enter* RUTLAND and his TUTOR

RUTLAND.

Ah, whither shall I fly to scape their hands?

Ah, tutor, look where bloody Clifford comes!

Enter CLIFFORD and soldiers

CLIFFORD.

Chaplain, away! Thy priesthood saves thy life.

As for the brat of this accursed duke,

Whose father slew my father, he shall die.

TUTOR.

And I, my lord, will bear him company.

CLIFFORD.

Soldiers, away with him!

TUTOR.

Ah, Clifford, murder not this innocent child,

Lest thou be hated both of God and man.

Exit , forced off by soldiers

CLIFFORD.

How now, is he dead already? Or is it fear
That makes him close his eyes? I'll open them.

RUTLAND.
So looks the pent-up lion o'er the wretch
That trembles under his devouring paws;
And so he walks, insulting o'er his prey,
And so he comes, to rend his limbs asunder.
Ah, gentle Clifford, kill me with thy sword,
And not with such a cruel threat'ning look!

Sweet Clifford, hear me speak before I die.
I am too mean a subject for thy wrath;
Be thou reveng'd on men, and let me live.

CLIFFORD.
In vain thou speak'st, poor boy; my father's blood
Hath stopp'd the passage where thy words should enter.

RUTLAND.
Then let my father's blood open it again:

He is a man, and, Clifford, cope with him.

CLIFFORD.

Had I thy brethren here, their lives and thine

Were not revenge sufficient for me;

No, if I digg'd up thy forefathers' graves

And hung their rotten coffins up in chains,

It could not slake mine ire nor ease my heart.

The sight of any of the house of York

Is as a fury to torment my soul;

And till I root out their accursed line

And leave not one alive, I live in hell.

Therefore-

RUTLAND.

O, let me pray before I take my death!

To thee I pray: sweet Clifford, pity me.

CLIFFORD.

Such pity as my rapier's point affords.

RUTLAND.

I never did thee harm; why wilt thou slay me?

CLIFFORD.
Thy father hath.

RUTLAND.

But 'twas ere I was born.
Thou hast one son; for his sake pity me,
Lest in revenge thereof, sith God is just,
He be as miserably slain as I.
Ah, let me live in prison all my days;
And when I give occasion of offence
Then let me die, for now thou hast no cause.

CLIFFORD.
No cause!

Thy father slew my father; therefore, die. *[Stabs him]*

RUTLAND.

Di faciant laudis summa sit ista tuae! *[Dies]*

CLIFFORD.

Plantagenet, I come, Plantagenet;

And this thy son's blood cleaving to my blade

Shall rust upon my weapon, till thy blood,

Congeal'd with this, do make me wipe off both. *Exit*

SCENE IV. Another part of the field

Alarum.   *Enter* the DUKE OF YORK

YORK.

The army of the Queen hath got the field.

My uncles both are slain in rescuing me;

And all my followers to the eager foe

Turn back and fly, like ships before the wind,

Or lambs pursu'd by hunger-starved wolves.
My sons-God knows what hath bechanced them;
But this I know-they have demean'd themselves
Like men born to renown by life or death.
Three times did Richard make a lane to me,
And thrice cried 'Courage, father! fight it out.'
And full as oft came Edward to my side
With purple falchion, painted to the hilt
In blood of those that had encount'red him.
And when the hardiest warriors did retire,
Richard cried 'Charge, and give no foot of ground!'
And cried 'A crown, or else a glorious tomb!

A sceptre, or an earthly sepulchre!'
With this we charg'd again; but out alas!
We bodg'd again; as I have seen a swan
With bootless labour swim against the tide
And spend her strength with over-matching waves.
[A short alarum within]
Ah, hark! The fatal followers do pursue,
And I am faint and cannot fly their fury;

And were I strong, I would not shun their fury.

The sands are numb'red that make up my life;

Here must I stay, and here my life must end.

Enter QUEEN MARGARET, CLIFFORD, NORTHUMBERLAND,

the PRINCE OF WALES, and soldiers

Come, bloody Clifford, rough Northumberland,

I dare your quenchless fury to more rage;

I am your butt, and I abide your shot.

NORTHUMBERLAND.

Yield to our mercy, proud Plantagenet.

CLIFFORD.

Ay, to such mercy as his ruthless arm

With downright payment show'd unto my father.

Now Phaethon hath tumbled from his car,

And made an evening at the noontide prick.

YORK.

My ashes, as the phoenix, may bring forth
A bird that will revenge upon you all;
And in that hope I throw mine eyes to heaven,
Scorning whate'er you can afflict me with.
Why come you not? What! multitudes, and fear?

CLIFFORD.

So cowards fight when they can fly no further;
So doves do peck the falcon's piercing talons;
So desperate thieves, all hopeless of their lives,
Breathe out invectives 'gainst the officers.

YORK.

O Clifford, but bethink thee once again,
And in thy thought o'errun my former time;
And, if thou canst for blushing, view this face,
And bite thy tongue that slanders him with cowardice
Whose frown hath made thee faint and fly ere this!

CLIFFORD.

I will not bandy with thee word for word,
But buckler with thee blows, twice two for one.

QUEEN MARGARET.
Hold, valiant Clifford; for a thousand causes
I would prolong awhile the traitor's life.
Wrath makes him deaf; speak thou, Northumberland.

NORTHUMBERLAND.
Hold, Clifford! do not honour him so much
To prick thy finger, though to wound his heart.
What valour were it, when a cur doth grin,
For one to thrust his hand between his teeth,
When he might spurn him with his foot away?
It is war's prize to take all vantages;
And ten to one is no impeach of valour.
[They lay hands on YORK, who struggles]

CLIFFORD.

Ay, ay, so strives the woodcock with the gin.

NORTHUMBERLAND.

So doth the cony struggle in the net.

YORK.

So triumph thieves upon their conquer'd booty;
So true men yield, with robbers so o'er-match'd.

NORTHUMBERLAND.

What would your Grace have done unto him now?

QUEEN MARGARET.

Brave warriors, Clifford and Northumberland,
Come, make him stand upon this molehill here
That raught at mountains with outstretched arms,
Yet parted but the shadow with his hand.
What, was it you that would be England's king?
Was't you that revell'd in our parliament
And made a preachment of your high descent?

Where are your mess of sons to back you now?
The wanton Edward and the lusty George?
And where's that valiant crook-back prodigy,
Dicky your boy, that with his grumbling voice
Was wont to cheer his dad in mutinies?
Or, with the rest, where is your darling Rutland?
Look, York: I stain'd this napkin with the blood
That valiant Clifford with his rapier's point
Made issue from the bosom of the boy;
And if thine eyes can water for his death,
I give thee this to dry thy cheeks withal.
Alas, poor York! but that I hate thee deadly,
I should lament thy miserable state.
I prithee grieve to make me merry, York.
What, hath thy fiery heart so parch'd thine entrails
That not a tear can fall for Rutland's death?
Why art thou patient, man? Thou shouldst be mad;
And I to make thee mad do mock thee thus.

Stamp, rave, and fret, that I may sing and dance.
Thou wouldst be fee'd, I see, to make me sport;

York cannot speak unless he wear a crown.

A crown for York!-and, lords, bow low to him.

Hold you his hands whilst I do set it on.

[Putting a paper crown on his head]

Ay, marry, sir, now looks he like a king!

Ay, this is he that took King Henry's chair,

And this is he was his adopted heir.

But how is it that great Plantagenet

Is crown'd so soon and broke his solemn oath?

As I bethink me, you should not be King

Till our King Henry had shook hands with death.

And will you pale your head in Henry's glory,

And rob his temples of the diadem,

Now in his life, against your holy oath?

O, 'tis a fault too too

Off with the crown and with the crown his head;

And, whilst we breathe, take time to do him dead.

CLIFFORD.

That is my office, for my father's sake.

QUEEN MARGARET.

Nay, stay; let's hear the orisons he makes.

YORK.
She-wolf of France, but worse than wolves of France,
Whose tongue more poisons than the adder's tooth!
How ill-beseeming is it in thy sex
To triumph like an Amazonian trull
Upon their woes whom fortune captivates!
But that thy face is visard-like, unchanging,
Made impudent with use of evil deeds,
I would assay, proud queen, to make thee blush.
To tell thee whence thou cam'st, of whom deriv'd,
Were shame enough to shame thee, wert thou not shameless.
Thy father bears the type of King of Naples,
Of both the Sicils and Jerusalem,
Yet not so wealthy as an English yeoman.

Hath that poor monarch taught thee to insult?

It needs not, nor it boots thee not, proud queen;
Unless the adage must be verified,
That beggars mounted run their horse to death.
'Tis beauty that doth oft make women proud;
But, God He knows, thy share thereof is small.
'Tis virtue that doth make them most admir'd;
The contrary doth make thee wond'red at.
'Tis government that makes them seem divine;
The want thereof makes thee abominable.
Thou art as opposite to every good
As the Antipodes are unto us,
Or as the south to the septentrion.
O tiger's heart wrapp'd in a woman's hide!
How couldst thou drain the life-blood of the child,
To bid the father wipe his eyes withal,
And yet be seen to bear a woman's face?
Women are soft, mild, pitiful, and flexible:

Thou stern, obdurate, flinty, rough, remorseless.
Bid'st thou me rage? Why, now thou hast thy wish;
Wouldst have me weep? Why, now thou hast thy will;

For raging wind blows up incessant showers,

And when the rage allays, the rain begins.

These tears are my sweet Rutland's obsequies;

And every drop cries vengeance for his death

'Gainst thee, fell Clifford, and thee, false Frenchwoman.

NORTHUMBERLAND.

Beshrew me, but his passions move me so

That hardly can I check my eyes from tears.

YORK.

That face of his the hungry cannibals

Would not have touch'd, would not have stain'd with blood;

But you are more inhuman, more inexorable-

O, ten times more-than tigers of Hyrcania.

See, ruthless queen, a hapless father's tears.

This cloth thou dipp'dst in blood of my sweet boy,

And I with tears do wash the blood away.

Keep thou the napkin, and go boast of this;

And if thou tell'st the heavy story right,

Upon my soul, the hearers will shed tears;
Yea, even my foes will shed fast-falling tears
And say 'Alas, it was a piteous deed!'
There, take the crown, and with the crown my curse;
And in thy need such comfort come to thee
As now I reap at thy too cruel hand!
Hard-hearted Clifford, take me from the world;
My soul to heaven, my blood upon your heads!

NORTHUMBERLAND.
Had he been slaughter-man to all my kin,
I should not for my life but weep with him,
To see how inly sorrow gripes his soul.

QUEEN MARGARET.

What, weeping-ripe, my Lord Northumberland?
Think but upon the wrong he did us all,
And that will quickly dry thy melting tears.

CLIFFORD.

Here's for my oath, here's for my father's death.

[Stabbing him]

QUEEN MARGARET.

And here's to right our gentle-hearted king.

[Stabbing him]

YORK.
Open Thy gate of mercy, gracious God!

My soul flies through these wounds to seek out Thee.

[Dies]

QUEEN MARGARET.
Off with his head, and set it on York gates;
So York may overlook the town of York.
Flourish. Exeunt

ACT II.

SCENE I. A plain near Mortimer's Cross in Herefordshire

A march. *Enter* EDWARD, RICHARD, and their power

EDWARD.

I wonder how our princely father scap'd,
Or whether he be scap'd away or no
From Clifford's and Northumberland's pursuit.
Had he been ta'en, we should have heard the news;
Had he been slain, we should have heard the news;
Or had he scap'd, methinks we should have heard
The happy tidings of his good escape.
How fares my brother? Why is he so sad?

RICHARD.

I cannot joy until I be resolv'd
Where our right valiant father is become.
I saw him in the battle range about,
And watch'd him how he singled Clifford forth.
Methought he bore him in the thickest troop

As doth a lion in a herd of neat;

Or as a bear, encompass'd round with dogs,

Who having pinch'd a few and made them cry,

The rest stand all aloof and bark at him.

So far'd our father with his enemies;

So fled his enemies my warlike father.

Methinks 'tis prize enough to be his son.

See how the morning opes her golden gates

And takes her farewell of the glorious sun.

How well resembles it the prime of youth,

Trimm'd like a younker prancing to his love!

EDWARD.

Dazzle mine eyes, or do I see three suns?

RICHARD.

Three glorious suns, each one a perfect sun;

Not separated with the racking clouds,

But sever'd in a pale clear-shining sky.

See, see! they join, embrace, and seem to kiss, As if they vow'd some league inviolable.

Now are they but one lamp, one light, one sun.
In this the heaven figures some event.

EDWARD.

'Tis wondrous strange, the like yet never heard of.
I think it cites us, brother, to the field,
That we, the sons of brave Plantagenet,
Each one already blazing by our meeds,
Should notwithstanding join our lights together
And overshine the earth, as this the world.
Whate'er it bodes, henceforward will I bear
Upon my target three fair shining suns.

RICHARD.
Nay, bear three daughters-by your leave I speak it,
You love the breeder better than the male.

Enter a MESSENGER, blowing

But what art thou, whose heavy looks foretell
Some dreadful story hanging on thy tongue?

MESSENGER.
Ah, one that was a woeful looker-on
When as the noble Duke of York was slain,
Your princely father and my loving lord!

EDWARD.
O, speak no more! for I have heard too much.

RICHARD.

Say how he died, for I will hear it all.

MESSENGER.
Environed he was with many foes,
And stood against them as the hope of Troy
Against the Greeks that would have ent'red Troy.
But Hercules himself must yield to odds;

And many strokes, though with a little axe,
Hews down and fells the hardest-timber'd oak.
By many hands your father was subdu'd;
But only slaught'red by the ireful arm
Of unrelenting Clifford and the Queen,
Who crown'd the gracious Duke in high despite,
Laugh'd in his face; and when with grief he wept,
The ruthless Queen gave him to dry his cheeks
A napkin steeped in the harmless blood
Of sweet young Rutland, by rough Clifford slain;
And after many scorns, many foul taunts,
They took his head, and on the gates of York
They set the same; and there it doth remain,
The saddest spectacle that e'er I view'd.

EDWARD.
Sweet Duke of York, our prop to lean upon,
Now thou art gone, we have no staff, no stay.
O Clifford, boist'rous Clifford, thou hast slain
The flow'r of Europe for his chivalry;
And treacherously hast thou vanquish'd him,

For hand to hand he would have vanquish'd thee.
Now my soul's palace is become a prison.
Ah, would she break from hence, that this my body
Might in the ground be closed up in rest!
For never henceforth shall I joy again;
Never, O never, shall I see more joy.

RICHARD.
I cannot weep, for all my body's moisture
Scarce serves to quench my furnace-burning heart;
Nor can my tongue unload my heart's great burden,
For selfsame wind that I should speak withal
Is kindling coals that fires all my breast,
And burns me up with flames that tears would quench.

To weep is to make less the depth of grief.
Tears then for babes; blows and revenge for me!
Richard, I bear thy name; I'll venge thy death,
Or die renowned by attempting it.

EDWARD.

His name that valiant duke hath left with thee;
His dukedom and his chair with me is left.

RICHARD.

Nay, if thou be that princely eagle's bird,
Show thy descent by gazing 'gainst the sun;
For chair and dukedom, throne and kingdom, say:
Either that is thine, or else thou wert not his.

March. Enter WARWICK, MONTAGUE, and their army

WARWICK.

How now, fair lords! What fare? What news abroad?

RICHARD.

Great Lord of Warwick, if we should recount
Our baleful news and at each word's deliverance
Stab poinards in our flesh till all were told,
The words would add more anguish than the wounds.
O valiant lord, the Duke of York is slain!

EDWARD.

O Warwick, Warwick! that Plantagenet
Which held thee dearly as his soul's redemption
Is by the stern Lord Clifford done to death.

WARWICK.
Ten days ago I drown'd these news in tears;
And now, to add more measure to your woes,
I come to tell you things sith then befall'n.
After the bloody fray at Wakefield fought,
Where your brave father breath'd his latest gasp,
Tidings, as swiftly as the posts could run,
Were brought me of your loss and his depart.
I, then in London, keeper of the King,
Muster'd my soldiers, gathered flocks of friends,
And very well appointed, as I thought,
March'd toward Saint Albans to intercept the Queen,
Bearing the King in my behalf along;
For by my scouts I was advertised
That she was coming with a full intent
To dash our late decree in parliament
Touching King Henry's oath and your succession.

Short tale to make-we at Saint Albans met,

Our battles join'd, and both sides fiercely fought;

But whether 'twas the coldness of the King,

Who look'd full gently on his warlike queen,

That robb'd my soldiers of their heated spleen,

Or whether 'twas report of her success,

Or more than common fear of Clifford's rigour,

Who thunders to his captives blood and death,

I cannot judge; but, to conclude with truth,

Their weapons like to lightning came and went:

Our soldiers', like the night-owl's lazy flight

Or like an idle thresher with a flail,

Fell gently down, as if they struck their friends.

I cheer'd them up with justice of our cause,

With promise of high pay and great rewards,

But all in vain; they had no heart to fight,

And we in them no hope to win the day;

So that we fled: the King unto the Queen;

Lord George your brother, Norfolk, and myself,

In haste post-haste are come to join with you;

For in the marches here we heard you were

Making another head to fight again.

EDWARD.

Where is the Duke of Norfolk, gentle Warwick?

And when came George from Burgundy to England?

WARWICK.

Some six miles off the Duke is with the soldiers;

And for your brother, he was lately sent

From your kind aunt, Duchess of Burgundy,

With aid of soldiers to this needful war.

RICHARD.

'Twas odds, belike, when valiant Warwick fled.

Oft have I heard his praises in pursuit,

But ne'er till now his scandal of retire.

WARWICK.

Nor now my scandal, Richard, dost thou hear;

For thou shalt know this strong right hand of mine

Can pluck the diadem from faint Henry's head
And wring the awful sceptre from his fist,
Were he as famous and as bold in war
As he is fam'd for mildness, peace, and prayer.

RICHARD.

I know it well, Lord Warwick; blame me not.
'Tis love I bear thy glories makes me speak.

But in this troublous time what's to be done?
Shall we go throw away our coats of steel
And wrap our bodies in black mourning-gowns,
Numbering our Ave-Maries with our beads?
Or shall we on the helmets of our foes
Tell our devotion with revengeful arms?

If for the last, say 'Ay,' and to it, lords.

WARWICK.

Why, therefore Warwick came to seek you out;

And therefore comes my brother Montague.
Attend me, lords. The proud insulting Queen,
With Clifford and the haught Northumberland,
And of their feather many moe proud birds,
Have wrought the easy-melting King like wax.
He swore consent to your succession,
His oath enrolled in the parliament;
And now to London all the crew are gone
To frustrate both his oath and what beside
May make against the house of Lancaster.

Their power, I think, is thirty thousand strong.
Now if the help of Norfolk and myself,
With all the friends that thou, brave Earl of March,
Amongst the loving Welshmen canst procure,
Will but amount to five and twenty thousand,
Why, Via! to London will we march amain,
And once again bestride our foaming steeds,
And once again cry 'Charge upon our foes!'

But never once again turn back and fly.

RICHARD.

Ay, now methinks I hear great Warwick speak.

Ne'er may he live to see a sunshine day

That cries 'Retire!' if Warwick bid him stay.

EDWARD.

Lord Warwick, on thy shoulder will I lean;

And when thou fail'st-as God forbid the hour!-

Must Edward fall, which peril heaven forfend.

WARWICK.

No longer Earl of March, but Duke of York;

The next degree is England's royal throne,

For King of England shalt thou be proclaim'd

In every borough as we pass along;

And he that throws not up his cap for joy

Shall for the fault make forfeit of his head.

King Edward, valiant Richard, Montague,

Stay we no longer, dreaming of renown,

But sound the trumpets and about our task.

RICHARD.

Then, Clifford, were thy heart as hard as steel,

As thou hast shown it flinty by thy deeds,

I come to pierce it or to give thee mine.

EDWARD.

Then strike up drums. God and Saint George for us!

Enter a MESSENGER

WARWICK.

How now! what news?

MESSENGER.

The Duke of Norfolk sends you word by me

The Queen is coming with a puissant host,

And craves your company for speedy counsel.

WARWICK.

Why, then it sorts; brave warriors, let's away.

Exeunt

SCENE II. Before York

Flourish. *Enter* KING HENRY, QUEEN MARGARET, the PRINCE OF WALES,

CLIFFORD, NORTHUMBERLAND, with drum and trumpets

QUEEN MARGARET.

Welcome, my lord, to this brave town of York.

Yonder's the head of that arch-enemy

That sought to be encompass'd with your crown.

Doth not the object cheer your heart, my lord?

KING HENRY.

Ay, as the rocks cheer them that fear their wreck-

To see this sight, it irks my very soul.

Withhold revenge, dear God; 'tis not my fault,

Nor wittingly have I infring'd my vow.

CLIFFORD.

My gracious liege, this too much lenity
And harmful pity must be laid aside.

To whom do lions cast their gentle looks?
Not to the beast that would usurp their den.

Whose hand is that the forest bear doth lick?
Not his that spoils her young before her face.

Who scapes the lurking serpent's mortal sting?
Not he that sets his foot upon her back,
The smallest worm will turn, being trodden on,
And doves will peck in safeguard of their brood.
Ambitious York did level at thy crown,
Thou smiling while he knit his angry brows.
He, but a Duke, would have his son a king,
And raise his issue like a loving sire:
Thou, being a king, bless'd with a goodly son,
Didst yield consent to disinherit him,
Which argued thee a most unloving father.

Unreasonable creatures feed their young;

And though man's face be fearful to their eyes,

Yet, in protection of their tender ones,

Who hath not seen them-even with those wings

Which sometime they have us'd with fearful flight-

Make war with him that climb'd unto their nest,

Offering their own lives in their young's defence

For shame, my liege, make them your precedent!

Were it not pity that this goodly boy

Should lose his birthright by his father's fault,

And long hereafter say unto his child

'What my great-grandfather and grandsire got

My careless father fondly gave away'?

Ah, what a shame were this! Look on the boy;

And let his manly face, which promiseth

Successful fortune, steel thy melting heart

To hold thine own and leave thine own with him.

KING HENRY.

Full well hath Clifford play'd the orator,

Inferring arguments of mighty force.

But, Clifford, tell me, didst thou never hear
That things ill got had ever bad success?
And happy always was it for that son
Whose father for his hoarding went to hell?
I'll leave my son my virtuous deeds behind;
And would my father had left me no more!
For all the rest is held at such a rate
As brings a thousand-fold more care to keep
Than in possession any jot of pleasure.
Ah, cousin York! would thy best friends did know
How it doth grieve me that thy head is here!

QUEEN MARGARET.
My lord, cheer up your spirits; our foes are nigh,
And this soft courage makes your followers faint.
You promis'd knighthood to our forward son:

Unsheathe your sword and dub him presently.
Edward, kneel down.

KING HENRY.

Edward Plantagenet, arise a knight;

And learn this lesson: Draw thy sword in right.

PRINCE OF WALES.

My gracious father, by your kingly leave,

I'll draw it as apparent to the crown,

And in that quarrel use it to the death.

CLIFFORD.

Why, that is spoken like a toward prince.

Enter a MESSENGER

MESSENGER.

Royal commanders, be in readiness;

For with a band of thirty thousand men

Comes Warwick, backing of the Duke of York,

And in the towns, as they do march along,

Proclaims him king, and many fly to him.

Darraign your battle, for they are at hand.

CLIFFORD.

I would your Highness would depart the field:

The Queen hath best success when you are absent.

QUEEN MARGARET.

Ay, good my lord, and leave us to our fortune.

KING HENRY.

Why, that's my fortune too; therefore I'll stay.

NORTHUMBERLAND.

Be it with resolution, then, to fight.

PRINCE OF WALES.

My royal father, cheer these noble lords,
And hearten those that fight in your defence.

Unsheathe your sword, good father; cry 'Saint George!'

March. *Enter* EDWARD, GEORGE, RICHARD, WARWICK,
NORFOLK, MONTAGUE, and soldiers

EDWARD.

Now, perjur'd Henry, wilt thou kneel for grace
And set thy diadem upon my head,
Or bide the mortal fortune of the field?

QUEEN MARGARET.

Go rate thy minions, proud insulting boy.
Becomes it thee to be thus bold in terms
Before thy sovereign and thy lawful king?

EDWARD.

I am his king, and he should bow his knee.

I was adopted heir by his consent:
Since when, his oath is broke; for, as I hear,
You that are King, though he do wear the crown,
Have caus'd him by new act of parliament
To blot out me and put his own son in.

CLIFFORD.

And reason too:

Who should succeed the father but the son?

RICHARD.

Are you there, butcher? O, I cannot speak!

CLIFFORD.

Ay, crook-back, here I stand to answer thee,

Or any he, the proudest of thy sort.

RICHARD.

'Twas you that kill'd young Rutland, was it not?

CLIFFORD.

Ay, and old York, and yet not satisfied.

RICHARD.

For God's sake, lords, give signal to the fight.

WARWICK.

What say'st thou, Henry? Wilt thou yield the crown?

QUEEN MARGARET.

Why, how now, long-tongu'd Warwick! Dare you speak?
When you and I met at Saint Albans last
Your legs did better service than your hands.

WARWICK.

Then 'twas my turn to fly, and now 'tis thine.

CLIFFORD.

You said so much before, and yet you fled.

WARWICK.

'Twas not your valour, Clifford, drove me thence.

NORTHUMBERLAND.

No, nor your manhood that durst make you stay.

RICHARD.

Northumberland, I hold thee reverently.
Break off the parley; for scarce I can refrain
The execution of my big-swol'n heart
Upon that Clifford, that cruel child-killer.

CLIFFORD.

I slew thy father; call'st thou him a child?

RICHARD.

Ay, like a dastard and a treacherous coward,
As thou didst kill our tender brother Rutland;
But ere sunset I'll make thee curse the deed.

KING HENRY.

Have done with words, my lords, and hear me speak.

QUEEN MARGARET.

Defy them then, or else hold close thy lips.

KING HENRY.
I prithee give no limits to my tongue:

I am a king, and privileg'd to speak.

CLIFFORD.
My liege, the wound that bred this meeting here
Cannot be cur'd by words; therefore be still.

RICHARD.
Then, executioner, unsheathe thy sword.
By Him that made us all, I am resolv'd
That Clifford's manhood lies upon his tongue.

EDWARD.

Say, Henry, shall I have my right, or no?

A thousand men have broke their fasts to-day

That ne'er shall dine unless thou yield the crown.

WARWICK.

If thou deny, their blood upon thy head;

For York in justice puts his armour on.

PRINCE OF WALES.

If that be right which Warwick says is right,

There is no wrong, but every thing is right.

RICHARD.

Whoever got thee, there thy mother stands;

For well I wot thou hast thy mother's tongue.

QUEEN MARGARET.

But thou art neither like thy sire nor dam;

But like a foul misshapen stigmatic,

Mark'd by the destinies to be avoided,

As venom toads or lizards' dreadful stings.

RICHARD.

Iron of Naples hid with English gilt,

Whose father bears the title of a king-

As if a channel should be call'd the sea-

Sham'st thou not, knowing whence thou art extraught,

To let thy tongue detect thy base-born heart?

EDWARD.

A wisp of straw were worth a thousand crowns

To make this shameless callet know herself.

Helen of Greece was fairer far than thou,

Although thy husband may be Menelaus;

And ne'er was Agamemmon's brother wrong'd

By that false woman as this king by thee.

His father revell'd in the heart of France,

And tam'd the King, and made the Dauphin stoop;

And had he match'd according to his state,

He might have kept that glory to this day;

But when he took a beggar to his bed

And grac'd thy poor sire with his bridal day,

Even then that sunshine brew'd a show'r for him
That wash'd his father's fortunes forth of France
And heap'd sedition on his crown at home.
For what hath broach'd this tumult but thy pride?
Hadst thou been meek, our title still had slept;
And we, in pity of the gentle King,
Had slipp'd our claim until another age.

GEORGE.

But when we saw our sunshine made thy spring,
And that thy summer bred us no increase,
We set the axe to thy usurping root;
And though the edge hath something hit ourselves,
Yet know thou, since we have begun to strike,
We'll never leave till we have hewn thee down,
Or bath'd thy growing with our heated bloods.

EDWARD.

And in this resolution I defy thee;
Not willing any longer conference,
Since thou deniest the gentle King to speak.

Sound trumpets; let our bloody colours wave,

And either victory or else a grave!

QUEEN MARGARET.

Stay, Edward.

EDWARD.

No, wrangling woman, we'll no longer stay;

These words will cost ten thousand lives this day.

Exeunt

SCENE III. A field of battle between Towton and Saxton, in Yorkshire

Alarum; excursions. *Enter* WARWICK

WARWICK.

Forspent with toil, as runners with a race,

I lay me down a little while to breathe;

For strokes receiv'd and many blows repaid

Have robb'd my strong-knit sinews of their strength, And spite of spite needs must I rest awhile.

Enter EDWARD, running

EDWARD.

Smile, gentle heaven, or strike, ungentle death;

For this world frowns, and Edward's sun is clouded.

WARWICK.

How now, my lord. What hap? What hope of good?

Enter GEORGE

GEORGE.

Our hap is lost, our hope but sad despair;

Our ranks are broke, and ruin follows us.

What counsel give you? Whither shall we fly?

EDWARD.

Bootless is flight: they follow us with wings;

And weak we are, and cannot shun pursuit.

Enter RICHARD

RICHARD.

Ah, Warwick, why hast thou withdrawn thyself?
Thy brother's blood the thirsty earth hath drunk,
Broach'd with the steely point of Clifford's lance;
And in the very pangs of death he cried,
Like to a dismal clangor heard from far,
'Warwick, revenge! Brother, revenge my death.'
So, underneath the belly of their steeds,
That stain'd their fetlocks in his smoking blood,
The noble gentleman gave up the ghost.

WARWICK.

Then let the earth be drunken with our blood.
I'll kill my horse, because I will not fly.
Why stand we like soft-hearted women here,
Wailing our losses, whiles the foe doth rage,
And look upon, as if the tragedy

Were play'd in jest by counterfeiting actors?
Here on my knee I vow to God above
I'll never pause again, never stand still,
Till either death hath clos'd these eyes of mine
Or fortune given me measure of revenge.

EDWARD.
O Warwick, I do bend my knee with thine,
And in this vow do chain my soul to thine!
And ere my knee rise from the earth's cold face
I throw my hands, mine eyes, my heart to Thee,
Thou setter-up and plucker-down of kings,
Beseeching Thee, if with Thy will it stands
That to my foes this body must be prey,
Yet that Thy brazen gates of heaven may ope
And give sweet passage to my sinful soul.
Now, lords, take leave until we meet again,
Where'er it be, in heaven or in earth.

RICHARD.
Brother, give me thy hand; and, gentle Warwick,

Let me embrace thee in my weary arms.

I that did never weep now melt with woe

That winter should cut off our spring-time so.

WARWICK.

Away, away! Once more, sweet lords, farewell.

GEORGE.

Yet let us all together to our troops,

And give them leave to fly that will not stay,

And call them pillars that will stand to us;

And if we thrive, promise them such rewards

As victors wear at the Olympian games.

This may plant courage in their quailing breasts,

For yet is hope of life and victory.

Forslow no longer; make we hence amain. *Exeunt*

SCENE IV. Another part of the field

Excursions. *Enter* RICHARD and CLIFFORD

RICHARD.

Now, Clifford, I have singled thee alone.
Suppose this arm is for the Duke of York,
And this for Rutland; both bound to revenge,
Wert thou environ'd with a brazen wall.

CLIFFORD.

Now, Richard, I am with thee here alone.
This is the hand that stabbed thy father York;
And this the hand that slew thy brother Rutland;
And here's the heart that triumphs in their death
And cheers these hands that slew thy sire and brother
To execute the like upon thyself;
And so, have at thee! *[They fight]*

Enter WARWICK; CLIFFORD flies

RICHARD.

Nay, Warwick, single out some other chase;

For I myself will hunt this wolf to death. *Exeunt*

SCENE V. Another part of the field

Alarum. *Enter* KING HENRY alone

KING HENRY.

This battle fares like to the morning's war,

When dying clouds contend with growing light,

What time the shepherd, blowing of his nails,

Can neither call it perfect day nor night.

Now sways it this way, like a mighty sea

Forc'd by the tide to combat with the wind;

Now sways it that way, like the selfsame sea

Forc'd to retire by fury of the wind.

Sometime the flood prevails, and then the wind;

Now one the better, then another best;

Both tugging to be victors, breast to breast,

Yet neither conqueror nor conquered.

So is the equal poise of this fell war.

Here on this molehill will I sit me down.

To whom God will, there be the victory!
For Margaret my queen, and Clifford too,
Have chid me from the battle, swearing both
They prosper best of all when I am thence.

Would I were dead, if God's good will were so!
For what is in this world but grief and woe?
O God! methinks it were a happy life
To be no better than a homely swain;
To sit upon a hill, as I do now,
To carve out dials quaintly, point by point,
Thereby to see the minutes how they run-
How many makes the hour full complete,
How many hours brings about the day,
How many days will finish up the year,
How many years a mortal man may live.
When this is known, then to divide the times-
So many hours must I tend my flock;
So many hours must I take my rest;

So many hours must I contemplate;
So many hours must I sport myself;
So many days my ewes have been with young;
So many weeks ere the poor fools will can;
So many years ere I shall shear the fleece:
So minutes, hours, days, months, and years,
Pass'd over to the end they were created,
Would bring white hairs unto a quiet grave.

Ah, what a life were this! how sweet! how lovely!
Gives not the hawthorn bush a sweeter shade
To shepherds looking on their silly sheep,
Than doth a rich embroider'd canopy
To kings that fear their subjects' treachery?
O yes, it doth; a thousand-fold it doth.
And to conclude: the shepherd's homely curds,
His cold thin drink out of his leather bottle,
His wonted sleep under a fresh tree's shade,
All which secure and sweetly he enjoys,
Is far beyond a prince's delicates-
His viands sparkling in a golden cup,

His body couched in a curious bed,

When care, mistrust, and treason waits on him.

Alarum. *Enter* a son that hath kill'd his Father, at

one door; and a FATHER that hath kill'd his Son, at another door

SON.

Ill blows the wind that profits nobody.

This man whom hand to hand I slew in fight

May be possessed with some store of crowns;

And I, that haply take them from him now,

May yet ere night yield both my life and them

To some man else, as this dead man doth me.

Who's this? O God! It is my father's face,

Whom in this conflict I unwares have kill'd.

O heavy times, begetting such events!

From London by the King was I press'd forth;

My father, being the Earl of Warwick's man,

Came on the part of York, press'd by his master;

And I, who at his hands receiv'd my life,

Have by my hands of life bereaved him.

Pardon me, God, I knew not what I did.

And pardon, father, for I knew not thee.
My tears shall wipe away these bloody marks;
And no more words till they have flow'd their fill.

KING HENRY.
O piteous spectacle! O bloody times!
Whiles lions war and battle for their dens,
Poor harmless lambs abide their enmity.
Weep, wretched man; I'll aid thee tear for tear;
And let our hearts and eyes, like civil war,
Be blind with tears and break o'ercharg'd with grief.

Enter FATHER, bearing of his SON

FATHER.
Thou that so stoutly hath resisted me,
Give me thy gold, if thou hast any gold;
For I have bought it with an hundred blows.

But let me see. Is this our foeman's face?
Ah, no, no, no, no, it is mine only son!

Ah, boy, if any life be left in thee,
Throw up thine eye! See, see what show'rs arise,
Blown with the windy tempest of my heart
Upon thy wounds, that kills mine eye and heart!

O, pity, God, this miserable age!
What stratagems, how fell, how butcherly,
Erroneous, mutinous, and unnatural,
This deadly quarrel daily doth beget!
O boy, thy father gave thee life too soon,
And hath bereft thee of thy life too late!

KING HENRY.

Woe above woe! grief more than common grief!
O that my death would stay these ruthful deeds!

O pity, pity, gentle heaven, pity!
The red rose and the white are on his face,
The fatal colours of our striving houses:
The one his purple blood right well resembles;

The other his pale cheeks, methinks, presenteth.

Wither one rose, and let the other flourish!

If you contend, a thousand lives must perish.

SON.

How will my mother for a father's death

Take on with me, and ne'er be satisfied!

FATHER.

How will my wife for slaughter of my son

Shed seas of tears, and ne'er be satisfied!

KING HENRY.

How will the country for these woeful chances

Misthink the King, and not be satisfied!

SON.

Was ever son so rued a father's death?

FATHER.

Was ever father so bemoan'd his son?

KING HENRY.

Was ever king so griev'd for subjects' woe?

Much is your sorrow; mine ten times so much.

SON.

I'll bear thee hence, where I may weep my fill.

Exit with the body

FATHER.

These arms of mine shall be thy winding-sheet;
My heart, sweet boy, shall be thy sepulchre,
For from my heart thine image ne'er shall go;
My sighing breast shall be thy funeral bell;
And so obsequious will thy father be,
Even for the loss of thee, having no more,
As Priam was for all his valiant sons.

I'll bear thee hence; and let them fight that will,

For I have murdered where I should not kill.

Exit with the body

KING HENRY.

Sad-hearted men, much overgone with care,

Here sits a king more woeful than you are.

Alarums, excursions. *Enter* QUEEN MARGARET,

PRINCE OF WALES, and EXETER

PRINCE OF WALES.

Fly, father, fly; for all your friends are fled,

And Warwick rages like a chafed bull.

Away! for death doth hold us in pursuit.

QUEEN MARGARET.

Mount you, my lord; towards Berwick post amain.

Edward and Richard, like a brace of greyhounds

Having the fearful flying hare in sight,

With fiery eyes sparkling for very wrath,

And bloody steel grasp'd in their ireful hands,
Are at our backs; and therefore hence amain.

EXETER.

Away! for vengeance comes along with them.
Nay, stay not to expostulate; make speed;
Or else come after. I'll away before.

KING HENRY.
Nay, take me with thee, good sweet Exeter.
Not that I fear to stay, but love to go
Whither the Queen intends. Forward; away! *Exeunt*

SCENE VI. Another part of the field

A loud alarum. *Enter* CLIFFORD, wounded

CLIFFORD.
Here burns my candle out; ay, here it dies,
Which, whiles it lasted, gave King Henry light.

O Lancaster, I fear thy overthrow
More than my body's parting with my soul!
My love and fear glu'd many friends to thee;
And, now I fall, thy tough commixture melts,
Impairing Henry, strength'ning misproud York.
The common people swarm like summer flies;
And whither fly the gnats but to the sun?
And who shines now but Henry's enemies?
O Phoebus, hadst thou never given consent
That Phaethon should check thy fiery steeds,
Thy burning car never had scorch'd the earth!
And, Henry, hadst thou sway'd as kings should do,
Or as thy father and his father did,
Giving no ground unto the house of York,
They never then had sprung like summer flies;
I and ten thousand in this luckless realm
Had left no mourning widows for our death;
And thou this day hadst kept thy chair in peace.

For what doth cherish weeds but gentle air?
And what makes robbers bold but too much lenity?

Bootless are plaints, and cureless are my wounds.

No way to fly, nor strength to hold out flight.

The foe is merciless and will not pity;

For at their hands I have deserv'd no pity.

The air hath got into my deadly wounds,

And much effuse of blood doth make me faint.

Come, York and Richard, Warwick and the rest;

I stabb'd your fathers' bosoms: split my breast.

[He faints]

Alarum and retreat. *Enter* EDWARD, GEORGE, RICHARD

MONTAGUE, WARWICK, and soldiers

EDWARD.

Now breathe we, lords. Good fortune bids us pause

And smooth the frowns of war with peaceful looks.

Some troops pursue the bloody-minded Queen

That led calm Henry, though he were a king,

As doth a sail, fill'd with a fretting gust,

Command an argosy to stern the waves.

But think you, lords, that Clifford fled with them?

WARWICK.

No, 'tis impossible he should escape;

For, though before his face I speak the words,

Your brother Richard mark'd him for the grave;

And, whereso'er he is, he's surely dead.

[CLIFFORD groans, and dies]

RICHARD.

Whose soul is that which takes her heavy leave?

A deadly groan, like life and death's departing.

See who it is.

EDWARD.

And now the battle's ended,

If friend or foe, let him be gently used.

RICHARD.

Revoke that doom of mercy, for 'tis Clifford;

Who not contented that he lopp'd the branch

In hewing Rutland when his leaves put forth,

But set his murd'ring knife unto the root
From whence that tender spray did sweetly spring-
I mean our princely father, Duke of York.

WARWICK.

From off the gates of York fetch down the head,
Your father's head, which Clifford placed there;
Instead whereof let this supply the room.
Measure for measure must be answered.

EDWARD.

Bring forth that fatal screech-owl to our house,
That nothing sung but death to us and ours.
Now death shall stop his dismal threat'ning sound,
And his ill-boding tongue no more shall speak.

WARWICK.

I think his understanding is bereft.
Speak, Clifford, dost thou know who speaks to thee?
Dark cloudy death o'ershades his beams of life,

And he nor sees nor hears us what we say.

RICHARD.

O, would he did! and so, perhaps, he doth.
'Tis but his policy to counterfeit,
Because he would avoid such bitter taunts
Which in the time of death he gave our father.

GEORGE.

If so thou think'st, vex him with eager words.

RICHARD.

Clifford, ask mercy and obtain no grace.

EDWARD.

Clifford, repent in bootless penitence.

WARWICK.

Clifford, devise excuses for thy faults.

GEORGE.

While we devise fell tortures for thy faults.

RICHARD.

Thou didst love York, and I am son to York.

EDWARD.

Thou pitied'st Rutland, I will pity thee.

GEORGE.

Where's Captain Margaret, to fence you now?

WARWICK.

They mock thee, Clifford; swear as thou wast wont.

RICHARD.

What, not an oath? Nay, then the world goes hard
When Clifford cannot spare his friends an oath.
I know by that he's dead; and by my soul,
If this right hand would buy two hours' life,
That I in all despite might rail at him,
This hand should chop it off, and with the issuing blood
Stifle the villain whose unstanched thirst
York and young Rutland could not satisfy.

WARWICK.
Ay, but he's dead. Off with the traitor's head,
And rear it in the place your father's stands.
And now to London with triumphant march,
There to be crowned England's royal King;
From whence shall Warwick cut the sea to France,
And ask the Lady Bona for thy queen.
So shalt thou sinew both these lands together;
And, having France thy friend, thou shalt not dread
The scatt'red foe that hopes to rise again;
For though they cannot greatly sting to hurt,
Yet look to have them buzz to offend thine ears.

First will I see the coronation;
And then to Brittany I'll cross the sea
To effect this marriage, so it please my lord.

EDWARD.
Even as thou wilt, sweet Warwick, let it be;
For in thy shoulder do I build my seat,
And never will I undertake the thing
Wherein thy counsel and consent is wanting.
Richard, I will create thee Duke of Gloucester;
And George, of Clarence; Warwick, as ourself,
Shall do and undo as him pleaseth best.

RICHARD.
Let me be Duke of Clarence, George of Gloucester;
For Gloucester's dukedom is too ominous.

WARWICK.

Tut, that's a foolish observation.
Richard, be Duke of Gloucester. Now to London

To see these honours in possession. *Exeunt*

ACT III.
SCENE I. A chase in the north of England

Enter two KEEPERS, with cross-bows in their hands

FIRST KEEPER.

Under this thick-grown brake we'll shroud ourselves,
For through this laund anon the deer will come;
And in this covert will we make our stand,
Culling the principal of all the deer.

SECOND KEEPER.

I'll stay above the hill, so both may shoot.

FIRST KEEPER.

That cannot be; the noise of thy cross-bow

Will scare the herd, and so my shoot is lost.
Here stand we both, and aim we at the best;
And, for the time shall not seem tedious,
I'll tell thee what befell me on a day
In this self-place where now we mean to stand.

SECOND KEEPER.

Here comes a man; let's stay till he be past.

Enter KING HENRY, disguised, with a prayer-book

KING HENRY.
From Scotland am I stol'n, even of pure love,
To greet mine own land with my wishful sight.
No, Harry, Harry, 'tis no land of thine;
Thy place is fill'd, thy sceptre wrung from thee,
Thy balm wash'd off wherewith thou wast anointed.
No bending knee will call thee Caesar now,
No humble suitors press to speak for right,
No, not a man comes for redress of thee;

For how can I help them and not myself?

FIRST KEEPER.

Ay, here's a deer whose skin's a keeper's fee.
This is the quondam King; let's seize upon him.

KING HENRY.
Let me embrace thee, sour adversity,
For wise men say it is the wisest course.

SECOND KEEPER.

Why linger we? let us lay hands upon him.

FIRST KEEPER.
Forbear awhile; we'll hear a little more.

KING HENRY.
My Queen and son are gone to France for aid;
And, as I hear, the great commanding Warwick

Is thither gone to crave the French King's sister
To wife for Edward. If this news be true,
Poor queen and son, your labour is but lost;
For Warwick is a subtle orator,
And Lewis a prince soon won with moving words.
By this account, then, Margaret may win him;
For she's a woman to be pitied much.
Her sighs will make a batt'ry in his breast;
Her tears will pierce into a marble heart;
The tiger will be mild whiles she doth mourn;
And Nero will be tainted with remorse
To hear and see her plaints, her brinish tears.

Ay, but she's come to beg: Warwick, to give.
She, on his left side, craving aid for Henry:

He, on his right, asking a wife for Edward.
She weeps, and says her Henry is depos'd:
He smiles, and says his Edward is install'd;
That she, poor wretch, for grief can speak no more;
Whiles Warwick tells his title, smooths the wrong,

Inferreth arguments of mighty strength,

And in conclusion wins the King from her

With promise of his sister, and what else,

To strengthen and support King Edward's place.

O Margaret, thus 'twill be; and thou, poor soul,

Art then forsaken, as thou went'st forlorn!

SECOND KEEPER.

Say, what art thou that talk'st of kings and queens?

KING HENRY.

More than I seem, and less than I was born to:

A man at least, for less I should not be;

And men may talk of kings, and why not I?

SECOND KEEPER.

Ay, but thou talk'st as if thou wert a king.

KING HENRY.

Why, so I am-in mind; and that's enough.

SECOND KEEPER.

But, if thou be a king, where is thy crown?

KING HENRY.

My crown is in my heart, not on my head;
Not deck'd with diamonds and Indian stones,
Not to be seen. My crown is call'd content;
A crown it is that seldom kings enjoy.

SECOND KEEPER.

Well, if you be a king crown'd with content,
Your crown content and you must be contented
To go along with us; for as we think,
You are the king King Edward hath depos'd;
And we his subjects, sworn in all allegiance,
Will apprehend you as his enemy.

KING HENRY.

But did you never swear, and break an oath?

SECOND KEEPER.

No, never such an oath; nor will not now.

KING HENRY.

Where did you dwell when I was King of England?

SECOND KEEPER.

Here in this country, where we now remain.

KING HENRY.

I was anointed king at nine months old;
My father and my grandfather were kings;
And you were sworn true subjects unto me;
And tell me, then, have you not broke your oaths?

FIRST KEEPER.

No;
For we were subjects but while you were king.

KING HENRY.

Why, am I dead? Do I not breathe a man?
Ah, simple men, you know not what you swear!
Look, as I blow this feather from my face,
And as the air blows it to me again,
Obeying with my wind when I do blow,
And yielding to another when it blows,
Commanded always by the greater gust,
Such is the lightness of you common men.
But do not break your oaths; for of that sin
My mild entreaty shall not make you guilty.
Go where you will, the King shall be commanded;
And be you kings: command, and I'll obey.

FIRST KEEPER.

We are true subjects to the King, King Edward.

KING HENRY.

So would you be again to Henry,

If he were seated as King Edward is.

FIRST KEEPER.

We charge you, in God's name and the King's,

To go with us unto the officers.

KING HENRY.

In God's name, lead; your King's name be obey'd;

And what God will, that let your King perform;

And what he will, I humbly yield unto. *Exeunt*

SCENE II. London. The palace

Enter KING EDWARD, GLOUCESTER, CLARENCE, and LADY GREY

KING EDWARD.

Brother of Gloucester, at Saint Albans' field

This lady's husband, Sir Richard Grey, was slain, His land then seiz'd on by the conqueror.

Her suit is now to repossess those lands;

Which we in justice cannot well deny,

Because in quarrel of the house of York

The worthy gentleman did lose his life.

GLOUCESTER.

Your Highness shall do well to grant her suit;

It were dishonour to deny it her.

KING EDWARD.

It were no less; but yet I'll make a pause.

GLOUCESTER.

[Aside to CLARENCE] Yea, is it so?

I see the lady hath a thing to grant,

Before the King will grant her humble suit.

CLARENCE.

[Aside to GLOUCESTER] He knows the game; how true he keeps the wind!

GLOUCESTER.

[Aside to CLARENCE] Silence!

KING EDWARD.

Widow, we will consider of your suit;

And come some other time to know our mind.

LADY GREY.

Right gracious lord, I cannot brook delay.

May it please your Highness to resolve me now;

And what your pleasure is shall satisfy me.

GLOUCESTER.

[Aside] Ay, widow? Then I'll warrant you all your lands,

An if what pleases him shall pleasure you.

Fight closer or, good faith, you'll catch a blow.

CLARENCE.

[Aside to GLOUCESTER] I fear her not, unless she chance to fall.

GLOUCESTER.

[Aside to CLARENCE] God forbid that, for he'll take vantages.

KING EDWARD.

How many children hast thou, widow, tell me.

CLARENCE.

[Aside to GLOUCESTER] I think he means to beg a child of her.

GLOUCESTER.

[Aside to CLARENCE] Nay, then whip me; he'll rather give her two.

LADY GREY.

Three, my most gracious lord.

GLOUCESTER.

[Aside] You shall have four if you'll be rul'd by him.

KING EDWARD.

'Twere pity they should lose their father's lands.

LADY GREY.

Be pitiful, dread lord, and grant it, then.

KING EDWARD.

Lords, give us leave; I'll try this widow's wit.

GLOUCESTER.

[Aside] Ay, good leave have you; for you will have leave

Till youth take leave and leave you to the crutch.

[GLOUCESTER and CLARENCE withdraw]

KING EDWARD.

Now tell me, madam, do you love your children?

LADY GREY.

Ay, full as dearly as I love myself.

KING EDWARD.

And would you not do much to do them good?

LADY GREY.

To do them good I would sustain some harm.

KING EDWARD.

Then get your husband's lands, to do them good.

LADY GREY.

Therefore I came unto your Majesty.

KING EDWARD.

I'll tell you how these lands are to be got.

LADY GREY.

So shall you bind me to your Highness' service.

KING EDWARD.

What service wilt thou do me if I give them?

LADY GREY.

What you command that rests in me to do.

KING EDWARD.

But you will take exceptions to my boon.

LADY GREY.

No, gracious lord, except I cannot do it.

KING EDWARD.

Ay, but thou canst do what I mean to ask.

LADY GREY.

Why, then I will do what your Grace commands.

GLOUCESTER.

He plies her hard; and much rain wears the marble.

CLARENCE.

As red as fire! Nay, then her wax must melt.

LADY GREY.

Why stops my lord? Shall I not hear my task?

KING EDWARD.

An easy task; 'tis but to love a king.

LADY GREY.

That's soon perform'd, because I am a subject.

KING EDWARD.

Why, then, thy husband's lands I freely give thee.

LADY GREY.

I take my leave with many thousand thanks.

GLOUCESTER.

The match is made; she seals it with a curtsy.

KING EDWARD.

But stay thee- 'tis the fruits of love I mean.

LADY GREY.

The fruits of love I mean, my loving liege.

KING EDWARD.

Ay, but, I fear me, in another sense.
What love, thinkst thou, I sue so much to get?

LADY GREY.

My love till death, my humble thanks, my prayers;

That love which virtue begs and virtue grants.

KING EDWARD.

No, by my troth, I did not mean such love.

LADY GREY.
Why, then you mean not as I thought you did.

KING EDWARD.

But now you partly may perceive my mind.

LADY GREY.
My mind will never grant what I perceive
Your Highness aims at, if I aim aright.

KING EDWARD.
To tell thee plain, I aim to lie with thee.

LADY GREY.

To tell you plain, I had rather lie in prison.

KING EDWARD.

Why, then thou shalt not have thy husband's lands.

LADY GREY.

Why, then mine honesty shall be my dower;

For by that loss I will not purchase them.

KING EDWARD.

Therein thou wrong'st thy children mightily.

LADY GREY.

Herein your Highness wrongs both them and me.

But, mighty lord, this merry inclination

Accords not with the sadness of my suit.

Please you dismiss me, either with ay or no.

KING EDWARD.

Ay, if thou wilt say ay to my request;
No, if thou dost say no to my demand.

LADY GREY.

Then, no, my lord. My suit is at an end.

GLOUCESTER.

The widow likes him not; she knits her brows.

CLARENCE.

He is the bluntest wooer in Christendom.

KING EDWARD.

[Aside] Her looks doth argue her replete with modesty;
Her words doth show her wit incomparable;
All her perfections challenge sovereignty.
One way or other, she is for a king;
And she shall be my love, or else my queen.
Say that King Edward take thee for his queen?

LADY GREY.

'Tis better said than done, my gracious lord.
I am a subject fit to jest withal,
But far unfit to be a sovereign.

KING EDWARD.
Sweet widow, by my state I swear to thee
I speak no more than what my soul intends;
And that is to enjoy thee for my love.

LADY GREY.

And that is more than I will yield unto.
I know I am too mean to be your queen,
And yet too good to be your concubine.

KING EDWARD.
You cavil, widow; I did mean my queen.

LADY GREY.

'Twill grieve your Grace my sons should call you father.

KING EDWARD.No more than when my daughters call thee mother.
Thou art a widow, and thou hast some children;
And, by God's Mother, I, being but a bachelor,
Have other some. Why, 'tis a happy thing
To be the father unto many sons.
Answer no more, for thou shalt be my queen.

GLOUCESTER.

The ghostly father now hath done his shrift.

CLARENCE.
When he was made a shriver, 'twas for shrift.

KING EDWARD.

Brothers, you muse what chat we two have had.

GLOUCESTER.

The widow likes it not, for she looks very sad.

KING EDWARD.

You'd think it strange if I should marry her.

CLARENCE.

To who, my lord?

KING EDWARD.

Why, Clarence, to myself.

GLOUCESTER.

That would be ten days' wonder at the least.

CLARENCE.

That's a day longer than a wonder lasts.

GLOUCESTER.

By so much is the wonder in extremes.

KING EDWARD.

Well, jest on, brothers; I can tell you both

Her suit is granted for her husband's lands.

Enter a NOBLEMAN

NOBLEMAN.

My gracious lord, Henry your foe is taken

And brought your prisoner to your palace gate.

KING EDWARD.

See that he be convey'd unto the Tower.

And go we, brothers, to the man that took him

To question of his apprehension.

Widow, go you along. Lords, use her honourably.

Exeunt all but GLOUCESTER

GLOUCESTER.

Ay, Edward will use women honourably.
Would he were wasted, marrow, bones, and all,
That from his loins no hopeful branch may spring
To cross me from the golden time I look for!
And yet, between my soul's desire and me-
The lustful Edward's title buried-
Is Clarence, Henry, and his son young Edward,
And all the unlook'd for issue of their bodies,
To take their rooms ere I can place myself.
A cold premeditation for my purpose!
Why, then I do but dream on sovereignty;
Like one that stands upon a promontory
And spies a far-off shore where he would tread,
Wishing his foot were equal with his eye;
And chides the sea that sunders him from thence,
Saying he'll lade it dry to have his way-
So do I wish the crown, being so far off;
And so I chide the means that keeps me from it;
And so I say I'll cut the causes off,

Flattering me with impossibilities.

My eye's too quick, my heart o'erweens too much,

Unless my hand and strength could equal them.

Well, say there is no kingdom then for Richard;

What other pleasure can the world afford?

I'll make my heaven in a lady's lap,

And deck my body in gay ornaments,

And witch sweet ladies with my words and looks.

O miserable thought! and more unlikely

Than to accomplish twenty golden crowns.

Why, love forswore me in my mother's womb;

And, for I should not deal in her soft laws,

She did corrupt frail nature with some bribe

To shrink mine arm up like a wither'd shrub

To make an envious mountain on my back,

Where sits deformity to mock my body;

To shape my legs of an unequal size;

To disproportion me in every part,

Like to a chaos, or an unlick'd bear-whelp

That carries no impression like the dam.

And am I, then, a man to be belov'd?

O monstrous fault to harbour such a thought!
Then, since this earth affords no joy to me
But to command, to check, to o'erbear such
As are of better person than myself,
I'll make my heaven to dream upon the crown,
And whiles I live t' account this world but hell,
Until my misshap'd trunk that bear this head
Be round impaled with a glorious crown.
And yet I know not how to get the crown,
For many lives stand between me and home;
And I-like one lost in a thorny wood
That rents the thorns and is rent with the thorns,
Seeking a way and straying from the way
Not knowing how to find the open air,
But toiling desperately to find it out-
Torment myself to catch the English crown;
And from that torment I will free myself
Or hew my way out with a bloody axe.
Why, I can smile, and murder whiles I smile,
And cry 'Content!' to that which grieves my heart,

And wet my cheeks with artificial tears,
And frame my face to all occasions.
I'll drown more sailors than the mermaid shall;
I'll slay more gazers than the basilisk;
I'll play the orator as well as Nestor,
Deceive more slily than Ulysses could,
And, like a Sinon, take another Troy.
I can add colours to the chameleon,
Change shapes with Protheus for advantages,
And set the murderous Machiavel to school.

Can I do this, and cannot get a crown?
Tut, were it farther off, I'll pluck it down. *Exit*

SCENE III. France. The KING'S palace

Flourish. *Enter* LEWIS the French King, his sister BONA, his Admiral call'd BOURBON; PRINCE EDWARD, QUEEN MARGARET, and the EARL of OXFORD. LEWIS sits, and riseth up again

LEWIS.

Fair Queen of England, worthy Margaret,

Sit down with us. It ill befits thy state

And birth that thou shouldst stand while Lewis doth sit.

QUEEN MARGARET.

No, mighty King of France. Now Margaret

Must strike her sail and learn a while to serve

Where kings command. I was, I must confess,

Great Albion's Queen in former golden days;

But now mischance hath trod my title down

And with dishonour laid me on the ground,

Where I must take like seat unto my fortune,

And to my humble seat conform myself.

LEWIS.

Why, say, fair Queen, whence springs this deep despair?

QUEEN MARGARET.

From such a cause as fills mine eyes with tears
And stops my tongue, while heart is drown'd in cares.

LEWIS.

Whate'er it be, be thou still like thyself,
And sit thee by our side. *[Seats her by him]* Yield not thy neck
To fortune's yoke, but let thy dauntless mind
Still ride in triumph over all mischance.
Be plain, Queen Margaret, and tell thy grief;
It shall be eas'd, if France can yield relief.

QUEEN MARGARET.

Those gracious words revive my drooping thoughts
And give my tongue-tied sorrows leave to speak.
Now therefore be it known to noble Lewis

That Henry, sole possessor of my love,
Is, of a king, become a banish'd man,
And forc'd to live in Scotland a forlorn;
While proud ambitious Edward Duke of York
Usurps the regal title and the seat
Of England's true-anointed lawful King.
This is the cause that I, poor Margaret,
With this my son, Prince Edward, Henry's heir,
Am come to crave thy just and lawful aid;
And if thou fail us, all our hope is done.
Scotland hath will to help, but cannot help;
Our people and our peers are both misled,
Our treasure seiz'd, our soldiers put to flight,
And, as thou seest, ourselves in heavy plight.

LEWIS.

Renowned Queen, with patience calm the storm,
While we bethink a means to break it off.

QUEEN MARGARET.

The more we stay, the stronger grows our foe.

LEWIS.

The more I stay, the more I'll succour thee.

QUEEN MARGARET.

O, but impatience waiteth on true sorrow.
And see where comes the breeder of my sorrow!

Enter WARWICK

LEWIS.

What's he approacheth boldly to our presence?

QUEEN MARGARET.

Our Earl of Warwick, Edward's greatest friend.

LEWIS.

Welcome, brave Warwick! What brings thee to France?

[He descends. She ariseth]

QUEEN MARGARET.

Ay, now begins a second storm to rise;

For this is he that moves both wind and tide.

WARWICK.

From worthy Edward, King of Albion,

My lord and sovereign, and thy vowed friend,

I come, in kindness and unfeigned love,

First to do greetings to thy royal person,

And then to crave a league of amity,

And lastly to confirm that amity

With nuptial knot, if thou vouchsafe to grant

That virtuous Lady Bona, thy fair sister,

To England's King in lawful marriage.

QUEEN MARGARET.

[Aside] If that go forward, Henry's hope is done.

WARWICK.

[To BONA] And, gracious madam, in our king's behalf,
I am commanded, with your leave and favour,
Humbly to kiss your hand, and with my tongue
To tell the passion of my sovereign's heart;
Where fame, late ent'ring at his heedful ears,
Hath plac'd thy beauty's image and thy virtue.

QUEEN MARGARET.

King Lewis and Lady Bona, hear me speak
Before you answer Warwick. His demand
Springs not from Edward's well-meant honest love,
But from deceit bred by necessity;
For how can tyrants safely govern home
Unless abroad they purchase great alliance?
To prove him tyrant this reason may suffice,
That Henry liveth still; but were he dead,
Yet here Prince Edward stands, King Henry's son.
Look therefore, Lewis, that by this league and marriage
Thou draw not on thy danger and dishonour;
For though usurpers sway the rule a while

Yet heav'ns are just, and time suppresseth wrongs.

WARWICK.

Injurious Margaret!

PRINCE OF WALES.

And why not Queen?

WARWICK.

Because thy father Henry did usurp;
And thou no more art prince than she is queen.

OXFORD.

Then Warwick disannuls great John of Gaunt,
Which did subdue the greatest part of Spain;
And, after John of Gaunt, Henry the Fourth,
Whose wisdom was a mirror to the wisest;
And, after that wise prince, Henry the Fifth,
Who by his prowess conquered all France.
From these our Henry lineally descends.

WARWICK.

Oxford, how haps it in this smooth discourse
You told not how Henry the Sixth hath lost
All that which Henry the Fifth had gotten?
Methinks these peers of France should smile at that.
But for the rest: you tell a pedigree
Of threescore and two years-a silly time
To make prescription for a kingdom's worth.

OXFORD.

Why, Warwick, canst thou speak against thy liege,
Whom thou obeyed'st thirty and six years,
And not betray thy treason with a blush?

WARWICK.

Can Oxford that did ever fence the right
Now buckler falsehood with a pedigree?

For shame! Leave Henry, and call Edward king.

OXFORD.

Call him my king by whose injurious doom

My elder brother, the Lord Aubrey Vere,

Was done to death; and more than so, my father,

Even in the downfall of his mellow'd years,

When nature brought him to the door of death?

No, Warwick, no; while life upholds this arm,

This arm upholds the house of Lancaster.

WARWICK.

And I the house of York.

LEWIS.

Queen Margaret, Prince Edward, and Oxford,

Vouchsafe at our request to stand aside

While I use further conference with Warwick.

[They stand aloof]

QUEEN MARGARET.

Heavens grant that Warwick's words bewitch him not!

LEWIS.

Now, Warwick, tell me, even upon thy conscience,
Is Edward your true king? for I were loath
To link with him that were not lawful chosen.

WARWICK.

Thereon I pawn my credit and mine honour.

LEWIS.

But is he gracious in the people's eye?

WARWICK.

The more that Henry was unfortunate.

LEWIS.

Then further: all dissembling set aside, Tell me for truth the measure of his love

Unto our sister Bona.

WARWICK.

Such it seems

As may beseem a monarch like himself.

Myself have often heard him say and swear

That this his love was an eternal plant

Whereof the root was fix'd in virtue's ground,

The leaves and fruit maintain'd with beauty's sun,

Exempt from envy, but not from disdain,

Unless the Lady Bona quit his pain.

LEWIS.

Now, sister, let us hear your firm resolve.

BONA.

Your grant or your denial shall be mine.

[To WARWICK] Yet I confess that often ere this day,

When I have heard your king's desert recounted,
Mine ear hath tempted judgment to desire.

LEWIS.

Then, Warwick, thus: our sister shall be Edward's.
And now forthwith shall articles be drawn
Touching the jointure that your king must make,
Which with her dowry shall be counterpois'd.
Draw near, Queen Margaret, and be a witness
That Bona shall be wife to the English king.

PRINCE OF WALES.

To Edward, but not to the English king.

QUEEN MARGARET.

Deceitful Warwick, it was thy device
By this alliance to make void my suit.

Before thy coming, Lewis was Henry's friend.

LEWIS.

And still is friend to him and Margaret.

But if your title to the crown be weak,

As may appear by Edward's good success,

Then 'tis but reason that I be releas'd

From giving aid which late I promised.

Yet shall you have all kindness at my hand

That your estate requires and mine can yield.

WARWICK.

Henry now lives in Scotland at his case,

Where having nothing, nothing can he lose.

And as for you yourself, our quondam queen,

You have a father able to maintain you,

And better 'twere you troubled him than France.

QUEEN MARGARET.

Peace, impudent and shameless Warwick,

Proud setter up and puller down of kings!

I will not hence till with my talk and tears,

Both full of truth, I make King Lewis behold

Thy sly conveyance and thy lord's false love;

For both of you are birds of self-same feather.

[POST blowing a horn within]

LEWIS.

Warwick, this is some post to us or thee.

Enter the POST

POST.

My lord ambassador, these letters are for you,

Sent from your brother, Marquis Montague.

These from our King unto your Majesty.

And, madam, these for you; from whom I know not.

[They all read their letters]

OXFORD.

I like it well that our fair Queen and mistress

Smiles at her news, while Warwick frowns at his.

PRINCE OF WALES.

Nay, mark how Lewis stamps as he were nettled.
I hope all's for the best.

LEWIS.

Warwick, what are thy news? And yours, fair Queen?

QUEEN MARGARET.
Mine such as fill my heart with unhop'd joys.

WARWICK.

Mine, full of sorrow and heart's discontent.

LEWIS.
What, has your king married the Lady Grey?
And now, to soothe your forgery and his,
Sends me a paper to persuade me patience?

Is this th' alliance that he seeks with France?
Dare he presume to scorn us in this manner?

QUEEN MARGARET.

I told your Majesty as much before.
This proveth Edward's love and Warwick's honesty.

WARWICK.
King Lewis, I here protest in sight of heaven,
And by the hope I have of heavenly bliss,
That I am clear from this misdeed of Edward's-
No more my king, for he dishonours me,
But most himself, if he could see his shame.
Did I forget that by the house of York
My father came untimely to his death?
Did I let pass th' abuse done to my niece?

Did I impale him with the regal crown?
Did I put Henry from his native right?

And am I guerdon'd at the last with shame?
Shame on himself! for my desert is honour;
And to repair my honour lost for him
I here renounce him and return to Henry.
My noble Queen, let former grudges pass,
And henceforth I am thy true servitor.
I will revenge his wrong to Lady Bona,
And replant Henry in his former state.

QUEEN MARGARET.
Warwick, these words have turn'd my hate to love;
And I forgive and quite forget old faults,
And joy that thou becom'st King Henry's friend.

WARWICK.
So much his friend, ay, his unfeigned friend,
That if King Lewis vouchsafe to furnish us
With some few bands of chosen soldiers,
I'll undertake to land them on our coast
And force the tyrant from his seat by war.
'Tis not his new-made bride shall succour him;

And as for Clarence, as my letters tell me,
He's very likely now to fall from him
For matching more for wanton lust than honour
Or than for strength and safety of our country.

BONA.
Dear brother, how shall Bona be reveng'd
But by thy help to this distressed queen?

QUEEN MARGARET.
Renowned Prince, how shall poor Henry live
Unless thou rescue him from foul despair?

BONA.
My quarrel and this English queen's are one.

WARWICK.

And mine, fair Lady Bona, joins with yours.

LEWIS.

And mine with hers, and thine, and Margaret's.

Therefore, at last, I firmly am resolv'd

You shall have aid.

QUEEN MARGARET.

Let me give humble thanks for all at once.

LEWIS.

Then, England's messenger, return in post

And tell false Edward, thy supposed king,

That Lewis of France is sending over masquers

To revel it with him and his new bride.

Thou seest what's past; go fear thy king withal.

BONA.

Tell him, in hope he'll prove a widower shortly,

I'll wear the willow-garland for his sake.

QUEEN MARGARET.

Tell him my mourning weeds are laid aside, And I am ready to put armour on.

WARWICK.
Tell him from me that he hath done me wrong,
And therefore I'll uncrown him ere't be long.
There's thy reward; be gone. *Exit* POST
LEWIS.
But, Warwick,
Thou and Oxford, with five thousand men,
Shall cross the seas and bid false Edward battle:
And, as occasion serves, this noble Queen
And Prince shall follow with a fresh supply.
Yet, ere thou go, but answer me one doubt:

What pledge have we of thy firm loyalty?

WARWICK.
This shall assure my constant loyalty:
That if our Queen and this young Prince agree,
I'll join mine eldest daughter and my joy
To him forthwith in holy wedlock bands.

QUEEN MARGARET.

Yes, I agree, and thank you for your motion.

Son Edward, she is fair and virtuous,

Therefore delay not-give thy hand to Warwick;

And with thy hand thy faith irrevocable

That only Warwick's daughter shall be thine.

PRINCE OF WALES.

Yes, I accept her, for she well deserves it;

And here, to pledge my vow, I give my hand.

[He gives his hand to WARWICK]

LEWIS.

stay we now? These soldiers shall be levied;

And thou, Lord Bourbon, our High Admiral,

Shall waft them over with our royal fleet.

I long till Edward fall by war's mischance

For mocking marriage with a dame of France.

Exeunt all but WARWICK

WARWICK.

I came from Edward as ambassador,
But I return his sworn and mortal foe.
Matter of marriage was the charge he gave me,
But dreadful war shall answer his demand.

Had he none else to make a stale but me?
Then none but I shall turn his jest to sorrow.
I was the chief that rais'd him to the crown,
And I'll be chief to bring him down again;
Not that I pity Henry's misery,
But seek revenge on Edward's mockery. *Exit*

ACT IV.
SCENE I. London. The palace

Enter GLOUCESTER, CLARENCE, SOMERSET, and MONTAGUE

GLOUCESTER.

Now tell me, brother Clarence, what think you

Of this new marriage with the Lady Grey?

Hath not our brother made a worthy choice?

CLARENCE.

Alas, you know 'tis far from hence to France!

How could he stay till Warwick made return?

SOMERSET.

My lords, forbear this talk; here comes the King.

Flourish. *Enter* KING EDWARD, attended; LADY GREY, as Queen; PEMBROKE, STAFFORD, HASTINGS, and others. Four stand on one side, and four on the other GLOUCESTER. And his well-chosen bride.

CLARENCE.

I mind to tell him plainly what I think.

KING EDWARD.

Now, brother of Clarence, how like you our choice
That you stand pensive as half malcontent?

CLARENCE.
As well as Lewis of France or the Earl of Warwick,
Which are so weak of courage and in judgment
That they'll take no offence at our abuse.

KING EDWARD.
Suppose they take offence without a cause;
They are but Lewis and Warwick: I am Edward,
Your King and Warwick's and must have my will.

GLOUCESTER.

And shall have your will, because our King.
Yet hasty marriage seldom proveth well.

KING EDWARD.

Yea, brother Richard, are you offended too?

GLOUCESTER.

Not I.

No, God forbid that I should wish them sever'd

Whom God hath join'd together; ay, and 'twere pity

To sunder them that yoke so well together.

KING EDWARD.

Setting your scorns and your mislike aside,

Tell me some reason why the Lady Grey

Should not become my wife and England's Queen.

And you too, Somerset and Montague,

Speak freely what you think.

CLARENCE.

Then this is mine opinion: that King Lewis

Becomes your enemy for mocking him

About the marriage of the Lady Bona.

GLOUCESTER.

And Warwick, doing what you gave in charge, Is now dishonoured by this new marriage.

KING EDWARD.

What if both Lewis and Warwick be appeas'd

By such invention as I can devise?

MONTAGUE.

Yet to have join'd with France in such alliance

Would more have strength'ned this our commonwealth

'Gainst foreign storms than any home-bred marriage.

HASTINGS.

Why, knows not Montague that of itself

England is safe, if true within itself?

MONTAGUE.

But the safer when 'tis back'd with France.

HASTINGS.

'Tis better using France than trusting France.

Let us be back'd with God, and with the seas
Which He hath giv'n for fence impregnable,
And with their helps only defend ourselves.
In them and in ourselves our safety lies.

CLARENCE.
For this one speech Lord Hastings well deserves
To have the heir of the Lord Hungerford.

KING EDWARD.
Ay, what of that? it was my will and grant;
And for this once my will shall stand for law.

GLOUCESTER.
And yet methinks your Grace hath not done well
To give the heir and daughter of Lord Scales
Unto the brother of your loving bride.
She better would have fitted me or Clarence;
But in your bride you bury brotherhood.

CLARENCE.

Or else you would not have bestow'd the heir

Of the Lord Bonville on your new wife's son,

And leave your brothers to go speed elsewhere.

KING EDWARD.

Alas, poor Clarence! Is it for a wife

That thou art malcontent? I will provide thee.

CLARENCE.

In choosing for yourself you show'd your judgment,

Which being shallow, you shall give me leave

To play the broker in mine own behalf;

And to that end I shortly mind to leave you.

KING EDWARD.

Leave me or tarry, Edward will be King,

And not be tied unto his brother's will.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

My lords, before it pleas'd his Majesty

To raise my state to title of a queen,

Do me but right, and you must all confess
That I was not ignoble of descent:

And meaner than myself have had like fortune.
But as this title honours me and mine,
So your dislikes, to whom I would be pleasing,
Doth cloud my joys with danger and with sorrow.

KING EDWARD.

My love, forbear to fawn upon their frowns.
What danger or what sorrow can befall thee,
So long as Edward is thy constant friend
And their true sovereign whom they must obey?
Nay, whom they shall obey, and love thee too,
Unless they seek for hatred at my hands;
Which if they do, yet will I keep thee safe,
And they shall feel the vengeance of my wrath.

GLOUCESTER.

[Aside] I hear, yet say not much, but think the more.

Enter a POST

KING EDWARD.

Now, messenger, what letters or what news
From France?

MESSENGER.

My sovereign liege, no letters, and few words,
But such as I, without your special pardon,
Dare not relate.

KING EDWARD.

Go to, we pardon thee; therefore, in brief,
Tell me their words as near as thou canst guess them.

What answer makes King Lewis unto our letters?

MESSENGER.

At my depart, these were his very words:
'Go tell false Edward, the supposed king,

That Lewis of France is sending over masquers
To revel it with him and his new bride.'

KING EDWARD.
IS Lewis so brave? Belike he thinks me Henry.

But what said Lady Bona to my marriage?

MESSENGER.
These were her words, utt'red with mild disdain:
'Tell him, in hope he'll prove a widower shortly,
I'll wear the willow-garland for his sake.'

KING EDWARD.
I blame not her: she could say little less;
She had the wrong. But what said Henry's queen?

For I have heard that she was there in place.

MESSENGER.
'Tell him' quoth she 'my mourning weeds are done,

And I am ready to put armour on.'

KING EDWARD.
Belike she minds to play the Amazon.

But what said Warwick to these injuries?

MESSENGER.
He, more incens'd against your Majesty
Than all the rest, discharg'd me with these words:
'Tell him from me that he hath done me wrong;
And therefore I'll uncrown him ere't be long.'

KING EDWARD.
Ha! durst the traitor breathe out so proud words?

Well, I will arm me, being thus forewarn'd.
They shall have wars and pay for their presumption.

But say, is Warwick friends with Margaret?

MESSENGER.

Ay, gracious sovereign; they are so link'd in friendship

That young Prince Edward marries Warwick's daughter.

CLARENCE.

Belike the elder; Clarence will have the younger.

Now, brother king, farewell, and sit you fast,

For I will hence to Warwick's other daughter;

That, though I want a kingdom, yet in marriage

I may not prove inferior to yourself.

You that love me and Warwick, follow me.

Exit , and SOMERSET follows

GLOUCESTER.

[Aside] Not I.

My thoughts aim at a further matter; I

Stay not for the love of Edward but the crown.

KING EDWARD.

Clarence and Somerset both gone to Warwick!

Yet am I arm'd against the worst can happen;

And haste is needful in this desp'rate case.
Pembroke and Stafford, you in our behalf
Go levy men and make prepare for war;
They are already, or quickly will be landed.
Myself in person will straight follow you.
Exeunt PEMBROKE and STAFFORD
But ere I go, Hastings and Montague,
Resolve my doubt. You twain, of all the rest,
Are near to Warwick by blood and by alliance.

Tell me if you love Warwick more than me?
If it be so, then both depart to him:

I rather wish you foes than hollow friends.
But if you mind to hold your true obedience,
Give me assurance with some friendly vow,
That I may never have you in suspect.

MONTAGUE.

So God help Montague as he proves true!

HASTINGS.

And Hastings as he favours Edward's cause!

KING EDWARD.

Now, brother Richard, will you stand by us?

GLOUCESTER.

Ay, in despite of all that shall withstand you.

KING EDWARD.

Why, so! then am I sure of victory.
Now therefore let us hence, and lose no hour
Till we meet Warwick with his foreign pow'r. *Exeunt*

SCENE II. A plain in Warwickshire

Enter WARWICK and OXFORD, with French soldiers

WARWICK.

Trust me, my lord, all hitherto goes well;

The common people by numbers swarm to us.

Enter CLARENCE and SOMERSET

But see where Somerset and Clarence comes.

Speak suddenly, my lords-are we all friends?

CLARENCE.

Fear not that, my lord.

WARWICK.

Then, gentle Clarence, welcome unto Warwick;

And welcome, Somerset. I hold it cowardice

To rest mistrustful where a noble heart

Hath pawn'd an open hand in sign of love;

Else might I think that Clarence, Edward's brother,

Were but a feigned friend to our proceedings.

But welcome, sweet Clarence; my daughter shall be thine.
And now what rests but, in night's coverture,
Thy brother being carelessly encamp'd,
His soldiers lurking in the towns about,
And but attended by a simple guard,
We may surprise and take him at our pleasure?
Our scouts have found the adventure very easy;
That as Ulysses and stout Diomede
With sleight and manhood stole to Rhesus' tents,
And brought from thence the Thracian fatal steeds,
So we, well cover'd with the night's black mantle,
At unawares may beat down Edward's guard
And seize himself-I say not 'slaughter him,'

For I intend but only to surprise him.
You that will follow me to this attempt,
Applaud the name of Henry with your leader.
[They all cry 'Henry!']
Why then, let's on our way in silent sort.
For Warwick and his friends, God and Saint George! *Exeunt*

SCENE III. Edward's camp, near Warwick

Enter three WATCHMEN, to guard the KING'S tent

FIRST WATCHMAN.

Come on, my masters, each man take his stand;
The King by this is set him down to sleep.

SECOND WATCHMAN.

What, will he not to bed?

FIRST WATCHMAN.

Why, no; for he hath made a solemn vow
Never to lie and take his natural rest
Till Warwick or himself be quite suppress'd.

SECOND WATCHMAN.

To-morrow then, belike, shall be the day,
If Warwick be so near as men report.

THIRD WATCHMAN.

But say, I pray, what nobleman is that

That with the King here resteth in his tent?

FIRST WATCHMAN.

'Tis the Lord Hastings, the King's chiefest friend.

THIRD WATCHMAN.

O, is it So? But why commands the King

That his chief followers lodge in towns about him,

While he himself keeps in the cold field?

SECOND WATCHMAN.

'Tis the more honour, because more dangerous.

THIRD WATCHMAN.

Ay, but give me worship and quietness;

I like it better than dangerous honour.

If Warwick knew in what estate he stands,

'Tis to be doubted he would waken him.

FIRST WATCHMAN.

Unless our halberds did shut up his passage.

SECOND WATCHMAN.

Ay, wherefore else guard we his royal tent

But to defend his person from night-foes?

Enter WARWICK, CLARENCE, OXFORD, SOMERSET,

and French soldiers, silent all

WARWICK.

This is his tent; and see where stand his guard.

Courage, my masters! Honour now or never!

But follow me, and Edward shall be ours.

FIRST WATCHMAN.

Who goes there?

SECOND WATCHMAN.

Stay, or thou diest.

WARWICK and the rest cry all 'Warwick! Warwick!' and

set upon the guard, who fly, crying 'Arm! Arm!' WARWICK

and the rest following them

The drum playing and trumpet sounding, re-enter WARWICK

and the rest, bringing the KING out in his gown,

sitting in a chair. GLOUCESTER and HASTINGS fly over the stage

SOMERSET.

What are they that fly there?

WARWICK.

Richard and Hastings. Let them go; here is the Duke.

KING EDWARD.

The Duke! Why, Warwick, when we parted,

Thou call'dst me King?

WARWICK.

Ay, but the case is alter'd.

When you disgrac'd me in my embassade,

Then I degraded you from being King,

And come now to create you Duke of York.

Alas, how should you govern any kingdom

That know not how to use ambassadors,

Nor how to be contented with one wife,

Nor how to use your brothers brotherly,

Nor how to study for the people's welfare,

Nor how to shroud yourself from enemies?

KING EDWARD.

Yea, brother of Clarence, art thou here too?

Nay, then I see that Edward needs must down.

Yet, Warwick, in despite of all mischance,

Of thee thyself and all thy complices,

Edward will always bear himself as King.

Though fortune's malice overthrow my state,

My mind exceeds the compass of her wheel.

WARWICK.

Then, for his mind, be Edward England's king;

[Takes off his crown]

But Henry now shall wear the English crown

And be true King indeed; thou but the shadow.

My Lord of Somerset, at my request,

See that forthwith Duke Edward be convey'd

Unto my brother, Archbishop of York.

When I have fought with Pembroke and his fellows,

I'll follow you and tell what answer

Lewis and the Lady Bona send to him.

Now for a while farewell, good Duke of York.

KING EDWARD.

What fates impose, that men must needs abide;

It boots not to resist both wind and tide.

[They lead him out forcibly]

OXFORD.

What now remains, my lords, for us to do

But march to London with our soldiers?

WARWICK.

Ay, that's the first thing that we have to do;

To free King Henry from imprisonment,

And see him seated in the regal throne. *Exeunt*

SCENE IV. London. The palace

Enter QUEEN ELIZABETH and RIVERS

RIVERS.

Madam, what makes you in this sudden change?

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

Why, brother Rivers, are you yet to learn

What late misfortune is befall'n King Edward?

RIVERS.

What, loss of some pitch'd battle against Warwick?

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

No, but the loss of his own royal person.

RIVERS.

Then is my sovereign slain?

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

Ay, almost slain, for he is taken prisoner;

Either betray'd by falsehood of his guard

Or by his foe surpris'd at unawares;

And, as I further have to understand,

Is new committed to the Bishop of York,

Fell Warwick's brother, and by that our foe.

RIVERS.

These news, I must confess, are full of grief;

Yet, gracious madam, bear it as you may:

Warwick may lose that now hath won the day.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

Till then, fair hope must hinder life's decay.
And I the rather wean me from despair
For love of Edward's offspring in my womb.
This is it that makes me bridle passion
And bear with mildness my misfortune's cross;
Ay, ay, for this I draw in many a tear
And stop the rising of blood-sucking sighs,
Lest with my sighs or tears I blast or drown
King Edward's fruit, true heir to th' English crown.

RIVERS.

But, madam, where is Warwick then become?

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

I am inform'd that he comes towards London
To set the crown once more on Henry's head.

Guess thou the rest: King Edward's friends must down.

But to prevent the tyrant's violence-

For trust not him that hath once broken faith-

I'll hence forthwith unto the sanctuary

To save at least the heir of Edward's right.

There shall I rest secure from force and fraud.

Come, therefore, let us fly while we may fly:

If Warwick take us, we are sure to die. *Exeunt*

SCENE V. A park near Middleham Castle in Yorkshire

Enter GLOUCESTER, LORD HASTINGS, SIR WILLIAM STANLEY, and others

GLOUCESTER.

Now, my Lord Hastings and Sir William Stanley,

Leave off to wonder why I drew you hither

Into this chiefest thicket of the park.

Thus stands the case: you know our King, my brother, Is prisoner to the Bishop here, at whose hands

He hath good usage and great liberty;

And often but attended with weak guard

Comes hunting this way to disport himself.

I have advertis'd him by secret means

That if about this hour he make this way,

Under the colour of his usual game,

He shall here find his friends, with horse and men,

To set him free from his captivity.

Enter KING EDWARD and a HUNTSMAN with him

HUNTSMAN.

This way, my lord; for this way lies the game.

KING EDWARD.

Nay, this way, man. See where the huntsmen stand.

Now, brother of Gloucester, Lord Hastings, and the rest,

Stand you thus close to steal the Bishop's deer?

GLOUCESTER.

Brother, the time and case requireth haste;

Your horse stands ready at the park corner.

KING EDWARD.

But whither shall we then?

HASTINGS.

To Lynn, my lord; and shipt from thence to Flanders.

GLOUCESTER.

Well guess'd, believe me; for that was my meaning.

KING EDWARD.

Stanley, I will requite thy forwardness.

GLOUCESTER.

But wherefore stay we? 'Tis no time to talk.

KING EDWARD.

Huntsman, what say'st thou? Wilt thou go along?

HUNTSMAN.

Better do so than tarry and be hang'd.

GLOUCESTER.

Come then, away; let's ha' no more ado.

KING EDWARD.

Bishop, farewell. Shield thee from Warwick's frown,

And pray that I may repossess the crown. *Exeunt*

SCENE VI. London. The Tower

Flourish. *Enter* KING HENRY, CLARENCE, WARWICK, SOMERSET, young

HENRY, EARL OF RICHMOND, OXFORD, MONTAGUE, LIEUTENANT OF THE TOWER, and attendants

KING HENRY.

Master Lieutenant, now that God and friends
Have shaken Edward from the regal seat
And turn'd my captive state to liberty,
My fear to hope, my sorrows unto joys,
At our enlargement what are thy due fees?

LIEUTENANT.

Subjects may challenge nothing of their sov'reigns;
But if an humble prayer may prevail,
I then crave pardon of your Majesty.

KING HENRY.

For what, Lieutenant? For well using me?
Nay, be thou sure I'll well requite thy kindness,
For that it made my imprisonment a pleasure;
Ay, such a pleasure as incaged birds
Conceive when, after many moody thoughts,
At last by notes of household harmony

They quite forget their loss of liberty.
But, Warwick, after God, thou set'st me free,
And chiefly therefore I thank God and thee;
He was the author, thou the instrument.
Therefore, that I may conquer fortune's spite
By living low where fortune cannot hurt me,
And that the people of this blessed land
May not be punish'd with my thwarting stars,
Warwick, although my head still wear the crown,
I here resign my government to thee,
For thou art fortunate in all thy deeds.

WARWICK.
Your Grace hath still been fam'd for virtuous,
And now may seem as wise as virtuous
By spying and avoiding fortune's malice,
For few men rightly temper with the stars;
Yet in this one thing let me blame your Grace,
For choosing me when Clarence is in place.

CLARENCE.

No, Warwick, thou art worthy of the sway,
To whom the heav'ns in thy nativity
Adjudg'd an olive branch and laurel crown,
As likely to be blest in peace and war;
And therefore I yield thee my free consent.

WARWICK.

And I choose Clarence only for Protector.

KING HENRY.

Warwick and Clarence, give me both your hands.
Now join your hands, and with your hands your hearts,
That no dissension hinder government.
I make you both Protectors of this land,
While I myself will lead a private life
And in devotion spend my latter days,
To sin's rebuke and my Creator's praise.

WARWICK.

What answers Clarence to his sovereign's will?

CLARENCE.
That he consents, if Warwick yield consent,
For on thy fortune I repose myself.

WARWICK.
Why, then, though loath, yet must I be content.
We'll yoke together, like a double shadow
To Henry's body, and supply his place;
I mean, in bearing weight of government,
While he enjoys the honour and his ease.
And, Clarence, now then it is more than needful
Forthwith that Edward be pronounc'd a traitor,
And all his lands and goods confiscated.

CLARENCE.
What else? And that succession be determin'd.

WARWICK.

Ay, therein Clarence shall not want his part.

KING HENRY.

But, with the first of all your chief affairs,

Let me entreat-for I command no more-

That Margaret your Queen and my son Edward

Be sent for to return from France with speed;

For till I see them here, by doubtful fear

My joy of liberty is half eclips'd.

CLARENCE.

It shall be done, my sovereign, with all speed.

KING HENRY.

My Lord of Somerset, what youth is that,

Of whom you seem to have so tender care?

SOMERSET.

My liege, it is young Henry, Earl of Richmond.

KING HENRY.

Come hither, England's hope.

[Lays his hand on his head]

If secret powers

Suggest but truth to my divining thoughts,

This pretty lad will prove our country's bliss.

His looks are full of peaceful majesty;

His head by nature fram'd to wear a crown,

His hand to wield a sceptre; and himself

Likely in time to bless a regal throne.

Make much of him, my lords; for this is he

Must help you more than you are hurt by me.

Enter a POST

WARWICK.

What news, my friend?

POST.

That Edward is escaped from your brother

And fled, as he hears since, to Burgundy.

WARWICK.

Unsavoury news! But how made he escape?

POST.

He was convey'd by Richard Duke of Gloucester

And the Lord Hastings, who attended him

In secret ambush on the forest side

And from the Bishop's huntsmen rescu'd him;

For hunting was his daily exercise.

WARWICK.

My brother was too careless of his charge.

But let us hence, my sovereign, to provide

A salve for any sore that may betide.

Exeunt all but SOMERSET, RICHMOND, and OXFORD

SOMERSET.

My lord, I like not of this flight of Edward's;

For doubtless Burgundy will yield him help, And we shall have more wars befor't be long.

As Henry's late presaging prophecy

Did glad my heart with hope of this young Richmond,

So doth my heart misgive me, in these conflicts,

What may befall him to his harm and ours.

Therefore, Lord Oxford, to prevent the worst,

Forthwith we'll send him hence to Brittany,

Till storms be past of civil enmity.

OXFORD.

Ay, for if Edward repossess the crown,

'Tis like that Richmond with the rest shall down.

SOMERSET.

It shall be so; he shall to Brittany.

Come therefore, let's about it speedily. *Exeunt*

SCENE VII. Before York

Flourish. *Enter* KING EDWARD, GLOUCESTER, HASTINGS, and soldiers

KING EDWARD.

Now, brother Richard, Lord Hastings, and the rest,
Yet thus far fortune maketh us amends,
And says that once more I shall interchange
My waned state for Henry's regal crown.
Well have we pass'd and now repass'd the seas,
And brought desired help from Burgundy;
What then remains, we being thus arriv'd
From Ravenspurgh haven before the gates of York,
But that we enter, as into our dukedom?

GLOUCESTER.

The gates made fast! Brother, I like not this;
For many men that stumble at the threshold
Are well foretold that danger lurks within.

KING EDWARD.

Tush, man, abodements must not now affright us.
By fair or foul means we must enter in,

For hither will our friends repair to us.

HASTINGS.

My liege, I'll knock once more to summon them.

Enter , on the walls, the MAYOR OF YORK and
his BRETHREN
MAYOR.
My lords, we were forewarned of your coming
And shut the gates for safety of ourselves,
For now we owe allegiance unto Henry.

KING EDWARD.
But, Master Mayor, if Henry be your King,
Yet Edward at the least is Duke of York.

MAYOR.

True, my good lord; I know you for no less.

KING EDWARD.

Why, and I challenge nothing but my dukedom,

As being well content with that alone.

GLOUCESTER.

[Aside] But when the fox hath once got in his nose,

He'll soon find means to make the body follow.

HASTINGS.

Why, Master Mayor, why stand you in a doubt?

Open the gates; we are King Henry's friends.

MAYOR.

Ay, say you so? The gates shall then be open'd.

[He descends]

GLOUCESTER.

A wise stout captain, and soon persuaded!

HASTINGS.

The good old man would fain that all were well,

So 'twere not long of him; but being ent'red,

I doubt not, I, but we shall soon persuade

Both him and all his brothers unto reason.

Enter , below, the MAYOR and two ALDERMEN

KING EDWARD.

So, Master Mayor. These gates must not be shut

But in the night or in the time of war.

What! fear not, man, but yield me up the keys;

[Takes his keys]

For Edward will defend the town and thee,

And all those friends that deign to follow me.

March. *Enter* MONTGOMERY with drum and soldiers

GLOUCESTER.

Brother, this is Sir John Montgomery,

Our trusty friend, unless I be deceiv'd.

KING EDWARD.

Welcome, Sir john! But why come you in arms?

MONTGOMERY.

To help King Edward in his time of storm,
As every loyal subject ought to do.

KING EDWARD.

Thanks, good Montgomery; but we now forget
Our title to the crown, and only claim
Our dukedom till God please to send the rest.

MONTGOMERY.

Then fare you well, for I will hence again.
I came to serve a king and not a duke.

Drummer, strike up, and let us march away.

[The drum begins to march]

KING EDWARD.

Nay, stay, Sir John, a while, and we'll debate

By what safe means the crown may be recover'd.

MONTGOMERY.

What talk you of debating? In few words:

If you'll not here proclaim yourself our King,

I'll leave you to your fortune and be gone

To keep them back that come to succour you.

Why shall we fight, if you pretend no title?

GLOUCESTER.

Why, brother, wherefore stand you on nice points?

KING EDWARD.

When we grow stronger, then we'll make our claim;

Till then 'tis wisdom to conceal our meaning.

HASTINGS.

Away with scrupulous wit! Now arms must rule.

GLOUCESTER.

And fearless minds climb soonest unto crowns.
Brother, we will proclaim you out of hand;
The bruit thereof will bring you many friends.

KING EDWARD.
Then be it as you will; for 'tis my right,
And Henry but usurps the diadem.

MONTGOMERY.
Ay, now my sovereign speaketh like himself;
And now will I be Edward's champion.

HASTINGS.
Sound trumpet; Edward shall be here proclaim'd.

Come, fellow soldier, make thou proclamation.
[Gives him a paper. Flourish]

SOLDIER.

[Reads] 'Edward the Fourth, by the grace of God,
King of England and France, and Lord of Ireland, &c.'

MONTGOMERY.

And whoso'er gainsays King Edward's right,
By this I challenge him to single fight.

[Throws down gauntlet]

ALL.

Long live Edward the Fourth!

KING EDWARD.

Thanks, brave Montgomery, and thanks unto you all;
If fortune serve me, I'll requite this kindness.
Now for this night let's harbour here in York;
And when the morning sun shall raise his car
Above the border of this horizon,

We'll forward towards Warwick and his mates;
For well I wot that Henry is no soldier.
Ah, froward Clarence, how evil it beseems the
To flatter Henry and forsake thy brother!

Yet, as we may, we'll meet both thee and Warwick.
Come on, brave soldiers; doubt not of the day,
And, that once gotten, doubt not of large pay. *Exeunt*

SCENE VIII. London. The palace

Flourish. *Enter* KING HENRY, WARWICK, MONTAGUE, CLARENCE, OXFORD, and EXETER

WARWICK.

What counsel, lords? Edward from Belgia,
With hasty Germans and blunt Hollanders,
Hath pass'd in safety through the narrow seas
And with his troops doth march amain to London;
And many giddy people flock to him.

KING HENRY.

Let's levy men and beat him back again.

CLARENCE.

A little fire is quickly trodden out,

Which, being suffer'd, rivers cannot quench.

WARWICK.

In Warwickshire I have true-hearted friends,

Not mutinous in peace, yet bold in war;

Those will I muster up, and thou, son Clarence,

Shalt stir up in Suffolk, Norfolk, and in Kent,

The knights and gentlemen to come with thee.

Thou, brother Montague, in Buckingham,

Northampton, and in Leicestershire, shalt find

Men well inclin'd to hear what thou command'st.

And thou, brave Oxford, wondrous well belov'd,

In Oxfordshire shalt muster up thy friends.

My sovereign, with the loving citizens,

Like to his island girt in with the ocean

Or modest Dian circled with her nymphs,
Shall rest in London till we come to him.
Fair lords, take leave and stand not to reply.

Farewell, my sovereign.

KING HENRY.
Farewell, my Hector and my Troy's true hope.

CLARENCE.

In sign of truth, I kiss your Highness' hand.

KING HENRY.
Well-minded Clarence, be thou fortunate!

MONTAGUE.

Comfort, my lord; and so I take my leave.

OXFORD.

[Kissing the KING'S band] And thus I seal my truth and bid adieu.

KING HENRY.

Sweet Oxford, and my loving Montague,
And all at once, once more a happy farewell.

WARWICK.

Farewell, sweet lords; let's meet at Coventry.

Exeunt all but the KING and EXETER

KING HENRY.

Here at the palace will I rest a while.
Cousin of Exeter, what thinks your lordship?
Methinks the power that Edward hath in field
Should not be able to encounter mine.

EXETER.

The doubt is that he will seduce the rest.

KING HENRY.

That's not my fear; my meed hath got me fame:

I have not stopp'd mine ears to their demands,

Nor posted off their suits with slow delays;

My pity hath been balm to heal their wounds,

My mildness hath allay'd their swelling griefs,

My mercy dried their water-flowing tears;

I have not been desirous of their wealth,

Nor much oppress'd them with great subsidies,

Nor forward of revenge, though they much err'd.

Then why should they love Edward more than me?

No, Exeter, these graces challenge grace;

And, when the lion fawns upon the lamb,

The lamb will never cease to follow him.

[Shout within 'A Lancaster! A Lancaster!']

EXETER.

Hark, hark, my lord! What shouts are these?

Enter KING EDWARD, GLOUCESTER, and soldiers

KING EDWARD.
Seize on the shame-fac'd Henry, bear him hence;
And once again proclaim us King of England.
You are the fount that makes small brooks to flow.
Now stops thy spring; my sea shall suck them dry,
And swell so much the higher by their ebb.

Hence with him to the Tower: let him not speak.
Exeunt some with KING HENRY
And, lords, towards Coventry bend we our course,
Where peremptory Warwick now remains.
The sun shines hot; and, if we use delay,
Cold biting winter mars our hop'd-for hay.

GLOUCESTER.
Away betimes, before his forces join,
And take the great-grown traitor unawares.
Brave warriors, march amain towards Coventry. *Exeunt*

ACT V.
SCENE I. Coventry

Enter WARWICK, the MAYOR OF COVENTRY, two MESSENGERS, and others upon the walls

WARWICK.

Where is the post that came from valiant Oxford?

How far hence is thy lord, mine honest fellow?

FIRST MESSENGER.

By this at Dunsmore, marching hitherward.

WARWICK.

How far off is our brother Montague?

Where is the post that came from Montague?

SECOND MESSENGER.

By this at Daintry, with a puissant troop.

Enter SIR JOHN SOMERVILLE

WARWICK.

Say, Somerville, what says my loving son?

And by thy guess how nigh is Clarence now?

SOMERVILLE.

At Southam I did leave him with his forces,

And do expect him here some two hours hence.

[Drum heard]

WARWICK.

Then Clarence is at hand; I hear his drum.

SOMERVILLE.

It is not his, my lord; here Southam lies.

The drum your Honour hears marcheth from Warwick.

WARWICK.

Who should that be? Belike unlook'd for friends.

SOMERVILLE.

They are at hand, and you shall quickly know.

March. Flourish. *Enter* KING EDWARD, GLOUCESTER, and soldiers

KING EDWARD.

Go, trumpet, to the walls, and sound a parle.

GLOUCESTER.

See how the surly Warwick mans the wall.

WARWICK.

O unbid spite! Is sportful Edward come?

Where slept our scouts or how are they seduc'd

That we could hear no news of his repair?

KING EDWARD.

Now, Warwick, wilt thou ope the city gates,

Speak gentle words, and humbly bend thy knee,

Call Edward King, and at his hands beg mercy?

And he shall pardon thee these outrages.

WARWICK.

Nay, rather, wilt thou draw thy forces hence,

Confess who set thee up and pluck'd thee down,

Call Warwick patron, and be penitent?

And thou shalt still remain the Duke of York.

GLOUCESTER.

I thought, at least, he would have said the King;

Or did he make the jest against his will?

WARWICK.

Is not a dukedom, sir, a goodly gift?

GLOUCESTER.

Ay, by my faith, for a poor earl to give.

I'll do thee service for so good a gift.

WARWICK.

'Twas I that gave the kingdom to thy brother.

KING EDWARD.

Why then 'tis mine, if but by Warwick's gift.

WARWICK.

Thou art no Atlas for so great a weight;
And, weakling, Warwick takes his gift again;
And Henry is my King, Warwick his subject.

KING EDWARD.

But Warwick's king is Edward's prisoner.

And, gallant Warwick, do but answer this:

What is the body when the head is off?

GLOUCESTER.

Alas, that Warwick had no more forecast,

But, whiles he thought to steal the single ten,

The king was slily finger'd from the deck!

You left poor Henry at the Bishop's palace,

And ten to one you'll meet him in the Tower.

KING EDWARD.

'Tis even so; yet you are Warwick still.

GLOUCESTER.

Come, Warwick, take the time; kneel down, kneel down.

Nay, when? Strike now, or else the iron cools.

WARWICK.

I had rather chop this hand off at a blow,
And with the other fling it at thy face,
Than bear so low a sail to strike to thee.

KING EDWARD.

Sail how thou canst, have wind and tide thy friend,
This hand, fast wound about thy coal-black hair,
Shall, whiles thy head is warm and new cut off,
Write in the dust this sentence with thy blood:

'Wind-changing Warwick now can change no more.'

Enter OXFORD, with drum and colours

WARWICK.

O cheerful colours! See where Oxford comes.

OXFORD.

Oxford, Oxford, for Lancaster!

[He and his forces enter the city]

GLOUCESTER.

The gates are open, let us enter too.

KING EDWARD.

So other foes may set upon our backs.
Stand we in good array, for they no doubt
Will issue out again and bid us battle;
If not, the city being but of small defence,
We'll quietly rouse the traitors in the same.

WARWICK.

O, welcome, Oxford! for we want thy help.

Enter MONTAGUE, with drum and colours

MONTAGUE.

Montague, Montague, for Lancaster!

[He and his forces enter the city]

GLOUCESTER.

Thou and thy brother both shall buy this treason

Even with the dearest blood your bodies bear.

KING EDWARD.

The harder match'd, the greater victory.

My mind presageth happy gain and conquest.

Enter SOMERSET, with drum and colours

SOMERSET.

Somerset, Somerset, for Lancaster!

[He and his forces enter the city]

GLOUCESTER.

Two of thy name, both Dukes of Somerset,

Have sold their lives unto the house of York;

And thou shalt be the third, if this sword hold.

Enter CLARENCE, with drum and colours

WARWICK.

And lo where George of Clarence sweeps along,

Of force enough to bid his brother battle;

With whom an upright zeal to right prevails

More than the nature of a brother's love.

CLARENCE.

Clarence, Clarence, for Lancaster!

KING EDWARD.

Et tu Brute-wilt thou stab Caesar too?

A parley, sirrah, to George of Clarence.

[Sound a parley. RICHARD and CLARENCE whisper]

WARWICK.

Come, Clarence, come. Thou wilt if Warwick call.

CLARENCE.
[Taking the red rose from his hat and throwing
it at WARWICK]
Father of Warwick, know you what this means?

Look here, I throw my infamy at thee.
I will not ruinate my father's house,
Who gave his blood to lime the stones together,
And set up Lancaster. Why, trowest thou, Warwick,
That Clarence is so harsh, so blunt, unnatural,
To bend the fatal instruments of war
Against his brother and his lawful King?
Perhaps thou wilt object my holy oath.
To keep that oath were more impiety
Than Jephtha when he sacrific'd his daughter.
I am so sorry for my trespass made

That, to deserve well at my brother's hands,

I here proclaim myself thy mortal foe;

With resolution whereso'er I meet thee-

As I will meet thee, if thou stir abroad-

To plague thee for thy foul misleading me.

And so, proud-hearted Warwick, I defy thee,

And to my brother turn my blushing cheeks.

Pardon me, Edward, I will make amends;

And, Richard, do not frown upon my faults,

For I will henceforth be no more unconstant.

KING EDWARD.

Now welcome more, and ten times more belov'd,

Than if thou never hadst deserv'd our hate.

GLOUCESTER.

Welcome, good Clarence; this is brother-like.

WARWICK.

O passing traitor, perjur'd and unjust!

KING EDWARD.

What, Warwick, wilt thou leave die town and fight?

Or shall we beat the stones about thine ears?

WARWICK.

Alas, I am not coop'd here for defence!

I will away towards Barnet presently

And bid thee battle, Edward, if thou dar'st.

KING EDWARD.

Yes, Warwick, Edward dares and leads the way.

Lords, to the field; Saint George and victory!

Exeunt YORKISTS

[March. WARWICK and his company follow]

SCENE II. A field of battle near Barnet

Alarum and excursions. *Enter* KING EDWARD, bringing forth WARWICK, wounded

KING EDWARD.

So, lie thou there. Die thou, and die our fear;

For Warwick was a bug that fear'd us all.

Now, Montague, sit fast; I seek for thee,

That Warwick's bones may keep thine company. *Exit*

WARWICK. Ah, who is nigh? Come to me, friend or foe,

And tell me who is victor, York or Warwick?

Why ask I that? My mangled body shows,

My blood, my want of strength, my sick heart shows,

That I must yield my body to the earth

And, by my fall, the conquest to my foe.

Thus yields the cedar to the axe's edge,

Whose arms gave shelter to the princely eagle,

Under whose shade the ramping lion slept,

Whose top-branch overpeer'd Jove's spreading tree

And kept low shrubs from winter's pow'rful wind.

These eyes, that now are dimm'd with death's black veil,

Have been as piercing as the mid-day sun

To search the secret treasons of the world;
The wrinkles in my brows, now fill'd with blood,
Were lik'ned oft to kingly sepulchres;
For who liv'd King, but I could dig his grave?

And who durst smile when Warwick bent his brow?
Lo now my glory smear'd in dust and blood!
My parks, my walks, my manors, that I had,
Even now forsake me; and of all my lands
Is nothing left me but my body's length.
what is pomp, rule, reign, but earth and dust?

And live we how we can, yet die we must.

Enter OXFORD and SOMERSET

SOMERSET.
Ah, Warwick, Warwick! wert thou as we are,
We might recover all our loss again.
The Queen from France hath brought a puissant power;
Even now we heard the news. Ah, couldst thou fly!

WARWICK.

Why then, I would not fly. Ah, Montague,

If thou be there, sweet brother, take my hand,

And with thy lips keep in my soul a while!

Thou lov'st me not; for, brother, if thou didst,

Thy tears would wash this cold congealed blood

That glues my lips and will not let me speak.

Come quickly, Montague, or I am dead.

SOMERSET.

Ah, Warwick! Montague hath breath'd his last;

And to the latest gasp cried out for Warwick,

And said 'Commend me to my valiant brother.'

And more he would have said; and more he spoke,

Which sounded like a clamour in a vault,

That mought not be distinguish'd; but at last,

I well might hear, delivered with a groan,

'O farewell, Warwick!'

WARWICK.

Sweet rest his soul! Fly, lords, and save yourselves:

For Warwick bids you all farewell, to meet in heaven.

[Dies]

OXFORD.

Away, away, to meet the Queen's great power!

[Here they bear away his body]

SCENE III. Another part of the field

Flourish. *Enter* KING in triumph; with GLOUCESTER, CLARENCE, and the rest

KING EDWARD.

Thus far our fortune keeps an upward course,

And we are grac'd with wreaths of victory.

But in the midst of this bright-shining day

I spy a black, suspicious, threat'ning cloud
That will encounter with our glorious sun
Ere he attain his easeful western bed-
I mean, my lords, those powers that the Queen
Hath rais'd in Gallia have arriv'd our coast
And, as we hear, march on to fight with us.

CLARENCE.
A little gale will soon disperse that cloud
And blow it to the source from whence it came;
Thy very beams will dry those vapours up,
For every cloud engenders not a storm.

GLOUCESTER.
The Queen is valued thirty thousand strong,
And Somerset, with Oxford, fled to her.
If she have time to breathe, be well assur'd
Her faction will be full as strong as ours.

KING EDWARD.
are advertis'd by our loving friends

That they do hold their course toward Tewksbury;

We, having now the best at Barnet field,

Will thither straight, for willingness rids way;

And as we march our strength will be augmented

In every county as we go along.

Strike up the drum; cry 'Courage!' and away. *Exeunt*

SCENE IV. Plains wear Tewksbury

Flourish. March. *Enter* QUEEN MARGARET, PRINCE EDWARD, SOMERSET, OXFORD, and SOLDIERS

QUEEN MARGARET.

Great lords, wise men ne'er sit and wail their loss,

But cheerly seek how to redress their harms.

What though the mast be now blown overboard,

The cable broke, the holding-anchor lost,

And half our sailors swallow'd in the flood;

Yet lives our pilot still. Is't meet that he

Should leave the helm and, like a fearful lad,

With tearful eyes add water to the sea

And give more strength to that which hath too much;
Whiles, in his moan, the ship splits on the rock,
Which industry and courage might have sav'd?

Ah, what a shame! ah, what a fault were this!
Say Warwick was our anchor; what of that?

And Montague our top-mast; what of him?
Our slaught'red friends the tackles; what of these?

Why, is not Oxford here another anchor?
And Somerset another goodly mast?

The friends of France our shrouds and tacklings?
And, though unskilful, why not Ned and I
For once allow'd the skilful pilot's charge?
We will not from the helm to sit and weep,
But keep our course, though the rough wind say no,
From shelves and rocks that threaten us with wreck,
As good to chide the waves as speak them fair.
And what is Edward but a ruthless sea?

What Clarence but a quicksand of deceit?
And Richard but a ragged fatal rock?

All these the enemies to our poor bark.
Say you can swim; alas, 'tis but a while!

Tread on the sand; why, there you quickly sink.
Bestride the rock; the tide will wash you off,
Or else you famish-that's a threefold death.
This speak I, lords, to let you understand,
If case some one of you would fly from us,
That there's no hop'd-for mercy with the brothers
More than with ruthless waves, with sands, and rocks.
Why, courage then! What cannot be avoided
'Twere childish weakness to lament or fear.

PRINCE OF WALES.

Methinks a woman of this valiant spirit
Should, if a coward hear her speak these words,
Infuse his breast with magnanimity

And make him naked foil a man-at-arms.

I speak not this as doubting any here;

For did I but suspect a fearful man,

He should have leave to go away betimes,

Lest in our need he might infect another

And make him of the like spirit to himself.

If any such be here-as God forbid!-

Let him depart before we need his help.

OXFORD.

Women and children of so high a courage,

And warriors faint! Why, 'twere perpetual shame.

O brave young Prince! thy famous grandfather

Doth live again in thee. Long mayst thou Eve

To bear his image and renew his glories!

SOMERSET.

And he that will not fight for such a hope,

Go home to bed and, like the owl by day,

If he arise, be mock'd and wond'red at.

QUEEN MARGARET.

Thanks, gentle Somerset; sweet Oxford, thanks.

PRINCE OF WALES.

And take his thanks that yet hath nothing else.

Enter a MESSENGER

MESSENGER.

Prepare you, lords, for Edward is at hand

Ready to fight; therefore be resolute.

OXFORD.

I thought no less. It is his policy

To haste thus fast, to find us unprovided.

SOMERSET.

But he's deceiv'd; we are in readiness.

QUEEN MARGARET.

This cheers my heart, to see your forwardness.

OXFORD.

Here pitch our battle; hence we will not budge.

Flourish and march. *Enter* , at a distance, KING EDWARD,

GLOUCESTER, CLARENCE, and soldiers

KING EDWARD.

Brave followers, yonder stands the thorny wood

Which, by the heavens' assistance and your strength,

Must by the roots be hewn up yet ere night.

I need not add more fuel to your fire,

For well I wot ye blaze to burn them out.

Give signal to the fight, and to it, lords.

QUEEN MARGARET.

Lords, knights, and gentlemen, what I should say

My tears gainsay; for every word I speak,

Ye see, I drink the water of my eye.

Therefore, no more but this: Henry, your sovereign, Is prisoner to the foe; his state usurp'd,

His realm a slaughter-house, his subjects slain,

His statutes cancell'd, and his treasure spent;

And yonder is the wolf that makes this spoil.

You fight in justice. Then, in God's name, lords,

Be valiant, and give signal to the fight.

Alarum, retreat, excursions. *Exeunt*

SCENE V. Another part of the field

Flourish. *Enter* KING EDWARD, GLOUCESTER, CLARENCE, and forces,
With QUEEN MARGARET, OXFORD, and SOMERSET, prisoners

KING EDWARD.

Now here a period of tumultuous broils.

Away with Oxford to Hames Castle straight;

For Somerset, off with his guilty head.

Go, bear them hence; I will not hear them speak.

OXFORD.

For my part, I'll not trouble thee with words.

SOMERSET.

Nor I, but stoop with patience to my fortune.

Exeunt OXFORD and SOMERSET, guarded

QUEEN MARGARET.

So part we sadly in this troublous world,
To meet with joy in sweet Jerusalem.

KING EDWARD.
Is proclamation made that who finds Edward
Shall have a high reward, and he his life?

GLOUCESTER.

It is; and lo where youthful Edward comes.

Enter soldiers, with PRINCE EDWARD

KING EDWARD.
Bring forth the gallant; let us hear him speak.

What, can so young a man begin to prick?
Edward, what satisfaction canst thou make
For bearing arms, for stirring up my subjects,
And all the trouble thou hast turn'd me to?

PRINCE OF WALES.

Speak like a subject, proud ambitious York.
Suppose that I am now my father's mouth;
Resign thy chair, and where I stand kneel thou,
Whilst I propose the self-same words to the
Which, traitor, thou wouldst have me answer to.

QUEEN MARGARET.
Ah, that thy father had been so resolv'd!

GLOUCESTER.
That you might still have worn the petticoat
And ne'er have stol'n the breech from Lancaster.

PRINCE OF WALES.
Let Aesop fable in a winter's night;
His currish riddle sorts not with this place.

GLOUCESTER.

By heaven, brat, I'll plague ye for that word.

QUEEN MARGARET.

Ay, thou wast born to be a plague to men.

GLOUCESTER.

For God's sake, take away this captive scold.

PRINCE OF WALES.

Nay, take away this scolding crookback rather.

KING EDWARD.

Peace, wilful boy, or I will charm your tongue.

CLARENCE.

Untutor'd lad, thou art too malapert.

PRINCE OF WALES.

I know my duty; you are all undutiful.

Lascivious Edward, and thou perjur'd George,

And thou misshapen Dick, I tell ye all

I am your better, traitors as ye are;

And thou usurp'st my father's right and mine.

KING EDWARD.

Take that, the likeness of this railer here.

[Stabs him]

GLOUCESTER.

Sprawl'st thou? Take that, to end thy agony.

[Stabs him]

CLARENCE.

And there's for twitting me with perjury.

[Stabs him]

QUEEN MARGARET.

O, kill me too!

GLOUCESTER.

Marry, and shall. *[Offers to kill her]*

KING EDWARD.

Hold, Richard, hold; for we have done to much.

GLOUCESTER.

Why should she live to fill the world with words?

KING EDWARD.

What, doth she swoon? Use means for her recovery.

GLOUCESTER.

Clarence, excuse me to the King my brother.
I'll hence to London on a serious matter;
Ere ye come there, be sure to hear some news.

CLARENCE.

What? what?

GLOUCESTER.

The Tower! the Tower! *Exit*

QUEEN MARGARET. O Ned, sweet Ned, speak to thy mother, boy!
Canst thou not speak? O traitors! murderers!
They that stabb'd Caesar shed no blood at all,
Did not offend, nor were not worthy blame,
If this foul deed were by to equal it.
He was a man: this, in respect, a child;
And men ne'er spend their fury on a child.
What's worse than murderer, that I may name it?
No, no, my heart will burst, an if I speak-
And I will speak, that so my heart may burst.

Butchers and villains! bloody cannibals!
How sweet a plant have you untimely cropp'd!
You have no children, butchers, if you had,
The thought of them would have stirr'd up remorse.
But if you ever chance to have a child,
Look in his youth to have him so cut off

As, deathsmen, you have rid this sweet young prince!

KING EDWARD.

Away with her; go, bear her hence perforce.

QUEEN MARGARET.

Nay, never bear me hence; dispatch me here.

Here sheathe thy sword; I'll pardon thee my death.

What, wilt thou not? Then, Clarence, do it thou.

CLARENCE.

By heaven, I will not do thee so much ease.

QUEEN MARGARET.

Good Clarence, do; sweet Clarence, do thou do it.

CLARENCE.

Didst thou not hear me swear I would not do it?

QUEEN MARGARET.

Ay, but thou usest to forswear thyself.
'Twas sin before, but now 'tis charity.
What! wilt thou not? Where is that devil's butcher,
Hard-favour'd Richard? Richard, where art thou?
Thou art not here. Murder is thy alms-deed;
Petitioners for blood thou ne'er put'st back.

KING EDWARD.

Away, I say; I charge ye bear her hence.

QUEEN MARGARET.
So come to you and yours as to this prince.

Exit , led out forcibly

KING EDWARD.

Where's Richard gone?

CLARENCE.

To London, all in post; and, as I guess,

To make a bloody supper in the Tower.

KING EDWARD.

He's sudden, if a thing comes in his head.

Now march we hence. Discharge the common sort

With pay and thanks; and let's away to London

And see our gentle queen how well she fares.

By this, I hope, she hath a son for me. *Exeunt*

SCENE VI. London. The Tower

Enter KING HENRY and GLOUCESTER with the LIEUTENANT, on the walls

GLOUCESTER.

Good day, my lord. What, at your book so hard?

KING HENRY.

Ay, my good lord-my lord, I should say rather.

'Tis sin to flatter; 'good' was little better.

'Good Gloucester' and 'good devil' were alike,

And both preposterous; therefore, not 'good lord.'

GLOUCESTER.

Sirrah, leave us to ourselves; we must confer.

Exit LIEUTENANT

KING HENRY.

So flies the reckless shepherd from the wolf;

So first the harmless sheep doth yield his fleece,

And next his throat unto the butcher's knife.

What scene of death hath Roscius now to act?

GLOUCESTER.

Suspicion always haunts the guilty mind:

The thief doth fear each bush an officer.

KING HENRY.

The bird that hath been limed in a bush
With trembling wings misdoubteth every bush;
And I, the hapless male to one sweet bird,
Have now the fatal object in my eye
Where my poor young was lim'd, was caught, and kill'd.

GLOUCESTER.

Why, what a peevish fool was that of Crete
That taught his son the office of a fowl!

And yet, for all his wings, the fool was drown'd.

KING HENRY.

I, Daedalus; my poor boy, Icarus;
Thy father, Minos, that denied our course;
The sun that sear'd the wings of my sweet boy,
Thy brother Edward; and thyself, the sea
Whose envious gulf did swallow up his life.

Ah, kill me with thy weapon, not with words!

My breast can better brook thy dagger's point

Than can my ears that tragic history.

But wherefore dost thou come? Is't for my life?

GLOUCESTER.

Think'st thou I am an executioner?

KING HENRY.

A persecutor I am sure thou art.

If murdering innocents be executing,

Why, then thou are an executioner.

GLOUCESTER.

Thy son I kill'd for his presumption.

KING HENRY.

Hadst thou been kill'd when first thou didst presume, Thou hadst not liv'd to kill a son of mine.

And thus I prophesy, that many a thousand

Which now mistrust no parcel of my fear,

And many an old man's sigh, and many a widow's,

And many an orphan's water-standing eye-

Men for their sons, wives for their husbands,

Orphans for their parents' timeless death-

Shall rue the hour that ever thou wast born.

The owl shriek'd at thy birth-an evil sign;

The night-crow cried, aboding luckless time;

Dogs howl'd, and hideous tempest shook down trees;

The raven rook'd her on the chimney's top,

And chatt'ring pies in dismal discords sung;

Thy mother felt more than a mother's pain,

And yet brought forth less than a mother's hope,

To wit, an indigest deformed lump,

Not like the fruit of such a goodly tree.

Teeth hadst thou in thy head when thou wast born,

To signify thou cam'st to bite the world;

And if the rest be true which I have heard,

Thou cam'st-

GLOUCESTER.

I'll hear no more. Die, prophet, in thy speech.

[Stabs him]

For this, amongst the rest, was I ordain'd.

KING HENRY.

Ay, and for much more slaughter after this.

O, God forgive my sins and pardon thee! *[Dies]*

GLOUCESTER.

What, will the aspiring blood of Lancaster

Sink in the ground? I thought it would have mounted.

See how my sword weeps for the poor King's death.

O, may such purple tears be always shed

From those that wish the downfall of our house!

If any spark of life be yet remaining,

Down, down to hell; and say I sent thee thither-

[Stabs him again]

I, that have neither pity, love, nor fear.

Indeed, 'tis true that Henry told me of;

For I have often heard my mother say

I came into the world with my legs forward.

Had I not reason, think ye, to make haste

And seek their ruin that usurp'd our right?

The midwife wonder'd; and the women cried

'O, Jesus bless us, he is born with teeth!'

And so I was, which plainly signified

That I should snarl, and bite, and play the dog.

Then, since the heavens have shap'd my body so,

Let hell make crook'd my mind to answer it.

I have no brother, I am like no brother;

And this word 'love,' which greybeards call divine,

Be resident in men like one another,

And not in me! I am myself alone.

Clarence, beware; thou keep'st me from the light,

But I will sort a pitchy day for thee;

For I will buzz abroad such prophecies

That Edward shall be fearful of his life;

And then to purge his fear, I'll be thy death.

King Henry and the Prince his son are gone.

Clarence, thy turn is next, and then the rest;

Counting myself but bad till I be best.

I'll throw thy body in another room,

And triumph, Henry, in thy day of doom.

Exit with the body

SCENE VII. London. The palace

Flourish. *Enter* KING EDWARD, QUEEN ELIZABETH, CLARENCE, GLOUCESTER, HASTINGS, NURSE, with the Young PRINCE, and attendants

KING EDWARD.

Once more we sit in England's royal throne,

Repurchas'd with the blood of enemies.

What valiant foemen, like to autumn's corn,

Have we mow'd down in tops of all their pride!

Three Dukes of Somerset, threefold renown'd

For hardy and undoubted champions;

Two Cliffords, as the father and the son;

And two Northumberlands-two braver men

Ne'er spurr'd their coursers at the trumpet's sound;

With them the two brave bears, Warwick and Montague,

That in their chains fetter'd the kingly lion

And made the forest tremble when they roar'd.

Thus have we swept suspicion from our seat

And made our footstool of security.

Come hither, Bess, and let me kiss my boy.

Young Ned, for thee thine uncles and myself

Have in our armours watch'd the winter's night,

Went all afoot in summer's scalding heat,

That thou might'st repossess the crown in peace;

And of our labours thou shalt reap the gain.

GLOUCESTER.

[Aside] I'll blast his harvest if your head were laid;

For yet I am not look'd on in the world.

This shoulder was ordain'd so thick to heave;

And heave it shall some weight or break my back.

Work thou the way-and that shall execute.

KING EDWARD.

Clarence and Gloucester, love my lovely queen;

And kiss your princely nephew, brothers both.

CLARENCE.

The duty that I owe unto your Majesty

I seal upon the lips of this sweet babe.

KING EDWARD.

Thanks, noble Clarence; worthy brother, thanks.

GLOUCESTER.

And that I love the tree from whence thou sprang'st,

Witness the loving kiss I give the fruit.

[Aside] To say the truth, so Judas kiss'd his master

And cried 'All hail!' when as he meant all harm.

KING EDWARD.

Now am I seated as my soul delights,
Having my country's peace and brothers' loves.

CLARENCE.

What will your Grace have done with Margaret?
Reignier, her father, to the King of France
Hath pawn'd the Sicils and Jerusalem,
And hither have they sent it for her ransom.

KING EDWARD.

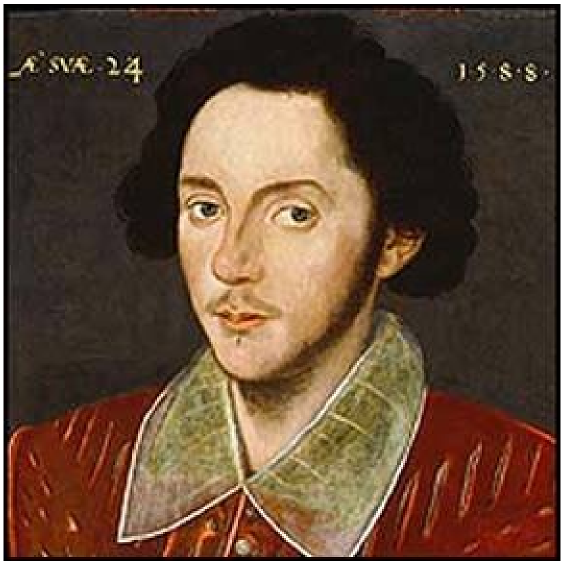
Away with her, and waft her hence to France.
And now what rests but that we spend the time
With stately triumphs, mirthful comic shows,
Such as befits the pleasure of the court?

Sound drums and trumpets. Farewell, sour annoy!
For here, I hope, begins our lasting joy. *Exeunt*

HENRY VI, PART 1

This play deals with the loss of England's French territories and the political machinations leading up to the Wars of the Roses, as the English political system is torn apart by personal squabbles and petty jealousy, and serves as a prequel to the two previous plays. *Henry VI, Part 1* is regarded by some as the weakest play in Shakespeare's oeuvre and there is evidence to suggest he collaborated with other dramatists while writing this play.

Shakespeare's main source text for this play is available via this link .



The Grafton Portrait - the inscription on the painting identifies the sitter as a 24-year-old man painted in 1588. Many experts claim this portrait represents Shakespeare as a young man.

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DRAMATIS PERSONAE

KING HENRY the Sixth

DUKE OF GLOUCESTER, uncle to the King, and Protector

DUKE OF BEDFORD, uncle to the King, and Regent of France

THOMAS BEAUFORT, Duke of Exeter, great-uncle to the King

HENRY BEAUFORT, great-uncle to the King, Bishop of Winchester,

and afterwards Cardinal

JOHN BEAUFORT, Earl, afterwards Duke, of Somerset

RICHARD PLANTAGENET, son of Richard, late Earl of Cambridge,

afterwards Duke of York

EARL OF WARWICK

EARL OF SALISBURY

EARL OF SUFFOLK

LORD TALBOT, afterwards Earl of Shrewbury

JOHN TALBOT, his son

EDMUND MORTIMER, Earl of March

SIR JOHN FASTOLFE

SIR WILLIAM LUCY

SIR WILLIAM GLANSDALE

SIR THOMAS GARGRAVE

Mayor of London

WOODVILE, Lieutenant of the Tower

VERNON, of the White-Rose or York faction

BASSET, of the Red-Rose or Lancaster faction

A Lawyer, Mortimer's Keepers

CHARLES, Dauphin, and afterwards King, of France

REIGNIER, Duke of Anjou, and titular King of Naples

DUKE OF BURGUNDY

DUKE OF ALENCON

BASTARD OF ORLEANS

Governor of Paris

Master-Gunner of Orleans and his Son

General of the French forces in Bordeaux

A French Sergeant A Porter

An old Shepherd, father to Joan la Pucelle

MARGARET, daughter to Reignier, afterwards married to

King Henry

COUNTESS OF AUVERGNE

JOAN LA PUCELLE, Commonly called Joan of Arc

Lords, Warders of the Tower, Heralds, Officers, Soldiers,

Messengers, and Attendants

Fiends appearing to La Pucelle

SCENE: Partly in England, and partly in France

ACT FIRST

SCENE I

Westminster Abbey.

Dead March. *Enter* the funeral of King Henry the Fifth, attended on by the Duke of Bedford, Regent of France; the Duke of Gloucester, Protector; the Duke of Exeter, the Earl of Warwick, the Bishop of Winchester, Heralds, &c.

BEDFORD.

Hung be the heavens with black, yield day to night!
Comets, importing change of times and states,
Brandish your crystal tresses in the sky,
And with them scourge the bad revolting stars
That have consented unto Henry's death!
King Henry the Fifth, too famous to live long!

England ne'er lost a king of so much worth.

GLOUCESTER.
England ne'er had a king until his time.

Virtue he had, deserving to command:
His brandish'd sword did blind men with his beams:
His arms spread wider than a dragon's wings;

His sparkling eyes, replete with wrathful fire,
More dazzled and drove back his enemies
Than mid-day sun fierce bent against their faces.

What should I say? his deeds exceed all speech:
He ne'er lift up his hand but conquered.

EXETER.

We mourn in black: why mourn we not in blood?
Henry is dead and never shall revive:
Upon a wooden coffin we attend,
And death's dishonourable victory
We with our stately presence glorify,
Like captives bound to a triumphant car.
What! shall we curse the planets of mishap
That plotted thus our glory's overthrow?
Or shall we think the subtle-witted French
Conjurers and sorcerers, that afraid of him
By magic verses have contriv'd his end?

WINCHESTER.

He was a king bless'd of the King of kings;

Unto the French the dreadful judgment-day

So dreadful will not be as was his sight.

The battles of the Lord of hosts he fought:

The Church's prayers made him so prosperous.

GLOUCESTER.

The church! where is it? Had not churchmen pray'd,

His thread of life had not so soon decay'd:

None do you like but an effeminate prince,

Whom, like a school-boy, you may over-awe.

WINCHESTER.

Gloucester, whate'er we like, thou art Protector,

And lookest to command the Prince and realm.

Thy wife is proud; she holdeth thee in awe,

More than God or religious churchmen may.

GLOUCESTER.

Name not religion, for thou lov'st the flesh,
And ne'er throughout the year to church thou go'st,
Except it be to pray against thy foes.

BEDFORD.
Cease, cease these jars and rest your minds in peace:

Let's to the altar: heralds, wait on us:
Instead of gold, we'll offer up our arms;
Since arms avail not, now that Henry's dead.
Posterity, await for wretched years,
When at their mothers' moist eyes babes shall suck,
Our isle be made a marish of salt tears,
And none but women left to wail the dead.
Henry the Fifth, thy ghost I invocate:
Prosper this realm, keep it from civil broils,
Combat with adverse planets in the heavens!
A far more glorious star thy soul will make
Than Julius Caesar or bright—

[Enter a Messenger.]

MESSENGER.

My honourable lords, health to you all!
Sad tidings bring I to you out of France,
Of loss, of slaughter, and discomfiture:
Guienne, Champagne, Rheims, Orleans,
Paris, Guysors, Poictiers, are all quite lost.

BEDFORD.
What say'st thou, man, before dead Henry's corse?
Speak softly; or the loss of those great towns
Will make him burst his lead and rise from death.

GLOUCESTER.
Is Paris lost? Is Rouen yielded up
If Henry were recall'd to life again,
These news would cause him once more yield the ghost.

EXETER.
How were they lost? What treachery was us'd?

MESSENGER.

No treachery; but want of men and money.
Amongst the soldiers this is muttered,
That here you maintain several factions,
And whilst a field should be dispatch'd and fought,
You are disputing of your generals:
One would have lingering wars with little cost;
Another would fly swift, but wanteth wings;
A third thinks, without expense at all,
By guileful fair words peace may be obtain'd.
Awake, awake, English nobility!

Let not sloth dim your honours new-begot:
Cropp'd are the flower-de-luces in your arms;
Of England's coat one half is cut away.

EXETER.

Were our tears wanting to this funeral,
These tidings would call forth their flowing tides.

BEDFORD.

Me they concern; Regent I am of France.

Give me my steeled coat. I'll fight for France.
Away with these disgraceful wailing robes!
Wounds will I lend the French instead of eyes,
To weep their intermissive miseries.

[Enter to them another Messenger.]

MESSENGER.

Lords, view these letters full of bad mischance.
France is revolted from the English quite,
Except some petty towns of no import:
The Dauphin Charles is crowned king in Rheims;
The Bastard of Orleans with him is join'd;
Reignier, Duke of Anjou, doth take his part;
The Duke of Alencon flieth to his side.

EXETER.

The Dauphin crowned king! all fly to him!

O, whither shall we fly from this reproach?

GLOUCESTER.

We will not fly, but to our enemies' throats.

Bedford, if thou be slack, I'll fight it out.

BEDFORD.

Gloucester, why doubt'st thou of my forwardness?

An army have I muster'd in my thoughts,

Wherewith already France is overrun.

[Enter another Messenger.]

MESSENGER.

My gracious lords, to add to your laments,

Wherewith you now bedew King Henry's hearse,

I must inform you of a dismal fight

Betwixt the stout Lord Talbot and the French.

WINCHESTER.

What! wherein Talbot overcame? is't so?

MESSENGER.
O, no; wherein Lord Talbot was o'erthrown:

The circumstance I'll tell you more at large.
The tenth of August last this dreadful lord,
Retiring from the siege of Orleans,
Having full scarce six thousand in his troop,
By three and twenty thousand of the French
Was round encompassed and set upon.
No leisure had he to enrank his men;
He wanted pikes to set before his archers;
Instead whereof sharp stakes pluck'd out of hedges
They pitched in the ground confusedly,
To keep the horsemen off from breaking in.
More than three hours the fight continued;

Where valiant Talbot above human thought

Enacted wonders with his sword and lance:

Hundreds he sent to hell, and none durst stand him;

Here, there, and every where, enrag'd he slew:

The French exclaim'd, the devil was in arms;

All the whole army stood agaz'd on him.

His soldiers spying his undaunted spirit

A Talbot! a Talbot! cried out amain,

And rush'd into the bowels of the battle.

Here had the conquest fully been seal'd up,

If Sir John Fastolfe had not play'd the coward.

He, being in the vaward, plac'd behind

With purpose to relieve and follow them,

Cowardly fled, not having struck one stroke.

Hence grew the general wreck and massacre;

Enclosed were they with their enemies:

A base Walloon, to win the Dauphin's grace,

Thrust Talbot with a spear into the back;

Whom all France with their chief assembled strength

Durst not presume to look once in the face.

BEDFORD.

Is Talbot slain? then I will slay myself,
For living idly here in pomp and ease,
Whilst such a worthy leader, wanting aid,
Unto his dastard foemen is betray'd.

MESSENGER.

O no, he lives; but is took prisoner,
And Lord Scales with him, and Lord Hungerford:

Most of the rest slaughter'd or took likewise.

BEDFORD.

His ransom there is none but I shall pay:

I'll hale the Dauphin headlong from his throne:
His crown shall be the ransom of my friend;
Four of their lords I'll change for one of ours.
Farewell, my masters; to my task will I;
Bonfires in France forthwith I am to make
To keep our great Saint George's feast withal:

Ten thousand soldiers with me I will take,

Whose bloody deeds shall make an Europe quake.

MESSENGER.

So you had need; for Orleans is besieg'd;

The English army is grown weak and faint:

The Earl of Salisbury craveth supply,

And hardly keeps his men from mutiny,

Since they, so few, watch such a multitude.

EXETER.

Remember, lords, your oaths to Henry sworn,

Either to quell the Dauphin utterly,

Or bring him in obedience to your yoke.

BEDFORD.

I do remember it, and here take my leave

To go about my preparation.

[Exit.]

GLOUCESTER.

I'll to the Tower with all the haste I can,
To view the artillery and munition;
And then I will proclaim young Henry king.

[Exit.]

EXETER.

To Eltham will I, where the young King is,
Being ordain'd his special governor;
And for his safety there I'll best devise.

[Exit.]

WINCHESTER.

Each hath his place and function to attend:
I am left out; for me nothing remains.

But long I will not be Jack out of office:
The King from Eltham I intend to steal,

And sit at chiefest stern of public weal.

[Exeunt.]

SCENE II.

France. Before Orleans

[Sound a Flourish. Enter Charles, Alencon, and Reignier, marching with Drum and Soldiers.]

CHARLES.

Mars his true moving, even as in the heavens

So in the earth, to this day is not known:

Late did he shine upon the English side;

Now we are victors; upon us he smiles.

What towns of any moment but we have?

At pleasure here we lie near Orleans;

Otherwhiles the famish'd English, like pale ghosts,

Faintly besiege us one hour in a month.

ALENCON.

They want their porridge and their fat bull beeves
Either they must be dieted like mules,
And have their provender tied to their mouths,
Or piteous they will look, like drowned mice.

REIGNIER.

Let's raise the siege: why live we idly here?

Talbot is taken, whom we wont to fear:
Remaineth none but mad-brain'd Salisbury;
And he may well in fretting spend his gall,
Nor men nor money hath he to make war.

CHARLES.

Sound, sound alarum! we will rush on them.
Now for the honour of the forlorn French!
Him I forgive my death that killeth me
When he sees me go back one foot or flee.

[Exeunt.]

Here alarum; they are beaten back by the English, with great loss. Re-enter Charles, Alencon, and Reignier.

CHARLES.

Who ever saw the like? what men have I!

Dogs! cowards! dastards! I would ne'er have fled,

But that they left me 'midst my enemies.

REIGNIER.

Salisbury is a desperate homicide;

He fighteth as one weary of his life.

The other lords, like lions wanting food,

Do rush upon us as their hungry prey.

ALENCON.

Froissart, a countryman of ours, records,

England all Olivers and Rowlands bred

During the time Edward the Third did reign.

More truly now may this be verified;

For none but Samsons and Goliases

It sendeth forth to skirmish. One to ten!
Lean raw-bon'd rascals! who would e'er suppose
They had such courage and audacity?

CHARLES.

Let's leave this town; for they are hare-brain'd slaves,
And hunger will enforce them to be more eager:
Of old I know them; rather with their teeth
The walls they'll tear down than forsake the siege.

REIGNIER.

I think by some odd gimmors or device
Their arms are set like clocks, still to strike on;
Else ne'er could they hold out so as they do.
By my consent, we'll even let them alone.

ALENCON.

Be it so.

[Enter the Bastard of Orleans.]

BASTARD.

Where's the Prince Dauphin? I have news for him.

CHARLES.

Bastard of Orleans, thrice welcome to us.

BASTARD.

Methinks your looks are sad, your cheer appall'd:

Hath the late overthrow wrought this offence?

Be not dismay'd, for succour is at hand:

A holy maid hither with me I bring,

Which by a vision sent to her from heaven

Ordained is to raise this tedious siege,

And drive the English forth the bounds of France.

The spirit of deep prophecy she hath,

Exceeding the nine sibyls of old Rome:

What's past and what's to come she can descry.

Speak, shall I call her in? Believe my words,

For they are certain and unfallible.

CHARLES.

Go, call her in. *[Exit Bastard.]*

But first, to try her skill,

Reignier, stand thou as Dauphin in my place;

Question her proudly; let thy looks be stern:

By this means shall we sound what skill she hath.

[Re-enter the Bastard of Orleans, with Joan La Pucelle.]

REIGNIER.

Fair maid, is 't thou wilt do these wondrous feats?

PUCELLE.

Reignier is 't thou that thinkest to beguile me?

Where is the Dauphin? Come, come from behind;

I know thee well, though never seen before.

Be not amazed, there's nothing hid from me.

In private will I talk with thee apart.

Stand back, you lords, and give us leave awhile.

REIGNIER.

She takes upon her bravely at first dash.

PUCELLE.

Dauphin, I am by birth a shepherd's daughter,

My wit untrain'd in any kind of art.

Heaven and our Lady gracious hath it pleased

To shine on my contemptible estate:

Lo, whilst I waited on my tender lambs

And to sun's parching heat display'd my cheeks,

God's mother deigned to appear to me,

And in a vision full of majesty

Will'd me to leave my base vocation,

And free my country from calamity:

Her aid she promised and assured success:

In complete glory she reveal'd herself;

And, whereas I was black and swart before,

With those clear rays which she infused on me

That beauty am I bless'd with which you may see.

Ask me what question thou canst possible,

And I will answer unpremeditated:

My courage try by combat, if thou dar'st,

And thou shalt find that I exceed my sex.

Resolve on this, thou shalt be fortunate,

If thou receive me for thy warlike mate.

CHARLES.

Thou hast astonish'd me with thy high terms;

Only this proof I 'll of thy valour make,

In single combat thou shalt buckle with me,

And if thou vanquishest, thy words are true;

Otherwise I renounce all confidence.

PUCELLE.

I am prepared: here is my keen-edg'd sword,

Deck'd with five flower-de-luces on each side,

The which at Touraine, in Saint Katharine's church-yard, Out of a great deal of old iron I chose forth.

CHARLES.

Then come, o' God's name; I fear no woman.

PUCELLE.

And while I live, I 'll ne'er fly from a man.

Here they fight, and Joan La Pucelle overcomes.

CHARLES.

Stay, stay thy hands; thou art an Amazon,
And fightest with the sword of Deborah.

PUCELLE.

Christ's Mother helps me, else I were too weak.

CHARLES.

Whoe'er helps thee, 'tis thou that must help me:
Impatiently I burn with thy desire;

My heart and hands thou hast at once subdued.

Excellent Pucelle, if thy name be so,

Let me thy servant and not sovereign be:

'Tis the French Dauphin sueth to thee thus.

PUCELLE.

I must not yield to any rites of love,

For my profession's sacred from above:

When I have chased all thy foes from hence,

Then will I think upon a recompense.

CHARLES.

Meantime look gracious on thy prostrate thrall.

REIGNIER.

My lord, methinks, is very long in talk.

ALENCON.

Doubtless he shrives this woman to her smock;

Else ne'er could he so long protract his speech.

REIGNIER.

Shall we disturb him, since he keeps no mean?

ALENCON.

He may mean more than we poor men do know:

These women are shrewd tempters with their tongues.

REIGNIER.

My lord, where are you? what devise you on?

Shall we give over Orleans, or no?

PUCELLE.

Why, no, I say; distrustful recreants!

Fight till the last gasp; I will be your guard.

CHARLES.

What she says I'll confirm: we'll fight it out:

PUCELLE.

Assign'd am I to be the English scourge.

This night the siege assuredly I 'll raise:
Expect Saint Martin's summer, halcyon days,
Since I have entered into these wars.
Glory is like a circle in the water,
Which never ceaseth to enlarge itself
Till by broad spreading it disperse to nought.
With Henry's death the English circle ends;
Dispersed are the glories it included.
Now am I like that proud insulting ship
Which Caesar and his fortune bare at once.

CHARLES.

Was Mahomet inspired with a dove?
Thou with an eagle art inspired then.

Helen, the mother of great Constantine,

Nor yet Saint Philip's daughters, were like thee.

Bright star of Venus, fall'n down on the earth,

How may I reverently worship thee enough?

ALENCON.

Leave off delays, and let us raise the siege.

REIGNIER.

Woman, do what thou canst to save our honors;

Drive them from Orleans and be immortalized.

CHARLES.

Presently we 'll try: come, let's away about it:

No prophet will I trust, if she prove false.

[Exeunt.]

SCENE III.

London. Before the Tower.

[Enter the Duke of Gloucester, with his Serving-men in blue coats.]

GLOUCESTER.

I am come to survey the Tower this day:

Since Henry's death, I fear, there is conveyance.

Where be these warders that they wait not here?

Open the gates; 'tis Gloucester that calls.

FIRST WARDER.

[Within] Who's there that knocks so imperiously?

FIRST SERVING-MAN.

It is the noble Duke of Gloucester.

SECOND WARDER.

[Within] Whoe'er he be, you may not be let in.

FIRST SERVING-MAN.

Villains, answer you so the lord protector?

FIRST WARDER.

[Within] The Lord protect him! so we answer him:

We do no otherwise than we are will'd.

GLOUCESTER.

Who willed you? or whose will stands but mine?

There's none protector of the realm but I.

Break up the gates, I 'll be your warrantize:

Shall I be flouted thus by dunghill grooms?

Gloucester's men rush at the Tower Gates, and Woodvile the

Lieutenant speaks within.

WOODVILE.

What noise is this? what traitors have we here?

GLOUCESTER.

Lieutenant, is it you whose voice I hear?

Open the gates; here's Gloucester that would enter.

WOODVILE.

Have patience, noble duke; I may not open;
The Cardinal of Winchester forbids:
From him I have express commandment
That thou nor none of thine shall be let in.

GLOUCESTER.

Faint-hearted Woodvile, prizest him 'fore me?
Arrogant Winchester, that haughty prelate
Whom Henry, our late sovereign, ne'er could brook?

Thou art no friend to God or to the King.

Open the gates, or I 'll shut thee out shortly.

SERVING-MEN.

Open the gates unto the lord protector,

Or we 'll burst them open, if that you come not quickly.

[Enter to the Protector at the Tower Gates Winchester and his men in tawny coats.]

WINCHESTER.

How now, ambitious Humphry! what means this?

GLOUCESTER.

Peel'd priest, dost thou command me to be shut out?

WINCHESTER.

I do, thou most usurping proditor,

And not protector, of the king or realm.

GLOUCESTER.

Stand back, thou manifest conspirator,

Thou that contrivedst to murder our dead lord;

Thou that givest whores indulgences to sin:

I 'll canvass thee in thy broad cardinal's hat,

If thou proceed in this thy insolence.

WINCHESTER.

Nay, stand thou back; I will not budge a foot:

This be Damascus, be thou cursed Cain,

To slay thy brother Abel, if thou wilt.

GLOUCESTER.

I will not slay thee, but I 'll drive thee back:

Thy scarlet robes as a child's bearing-cloth

I 'll use to carry thee out of this place.

WINCHESTER.

Do what thou darest; I beard thee to thy face.

GLOUCESTER.

What! am I dared and bearded to my face?

Draw, men, for all this privileged place;

Blue coats to tawny coats. Priest, beware your beard;

I mean to tug it and to cuff you soundly:

Under my feet I stamp thy cardinal's hat:

In spite of pope or dignities of church,

Here by the cheeks I 'll drag thee up and down.

WINCHESTER.

Gloucester, thou wilt answer this before the pope.

GLOUCESTER.

Winchester goose, I cry, a rope! a rope!

Now beat them hence; why do you let them stay?

Thee I 'll chase hence, thou wolf in sheep's array.

Out, tawny coats! out, scarlet hypocrite!

Here Gloucester's men beat out the Cardinal's men, and enter in the hurly-burly the Mayor of London and his Officers.

MAYOR.

Fie, lords! that you, being supreme magistrates,
Thus contumeliously should break the peace!

GLOUCESTER.

Peace, mayor! thou know'st little of my wrongs:
Here's Beaufort, that regards nor God nor king,
Hath here distrain'd the Tower to his use.

WINCHESTER.

Here's Gloucester, a foe to citizens,
One that still motions war and never peace,
O'ercharging your free purses with large fines,
That seeks to overthrow religion,
Because he is protector of the realm,

And would have armour here out of the Tower,

To crown himself king and suppress the prince.

GLOUCESTER.

I will not answer thee with words, but blows.

Here they skirmish again.

MAYOR.

Nought rests for me in this tumultuous strife

But to make open proclamation:

Come, officer; as loud as e'er thou canst:

Cry.

OFFICER.

All manner of men assembled here in arms this day against God's peace and the king's, we charge and command you, in his highness' name, to repair to your several dwelling-places; and not to wear, handle, or use any sword, weapon, or dagger, henceforward, upon pain of death.

GLOUCESTER.

Cardinal, I 'll be no breaker of the law;

But we shall meet, and break our minds at large.

WINCHESTER.

Gloucester, we will meet; to thy cost, be sure;

Thy heart-blood I will have for this day's work.

MAYOR.

I 'll call for clubs, if you will not away.

This Cardinal's more haughty than the devil.

GLOUCESTER.

Mayor, farewell: thou dost but what thou mayst.

WINCHESTER.

Abominable Gloucester, guard thy head;

For I intend to have it ere long.

[Exeunt , severally, Gloucester and Winchester with their

Serving-men.]

MAYOR.

See the coast clear'd, and then we will depart.
Good God, these nobles should such stomachs bear!

I myself fight not once in forty year.

[Exeunt.]

SCENE IV. Orleans.

[Enter, on the walls, a Master Gunner and his Boy.]

MASTER GUNNER.
Sirrah, thou know'st how Orleans is besieged,
And how the English have the suburbs won.

BOY.

Father, I know; and oft have shot at them,
Howe'er unfortunate I miss'd my aim.

MASTER GUNNER.
But now thou shalt not. Be thou ruled by me:
Chief master-gunner am I of this town;
Something I must do to procure me grace.
The prince's espials have informed me
How the English, in the suburbs close intrench'd,
Wont through a secret grate of iron bars
In yonder tower to overpeer the city,
And thence discover how with most advantage
They may vex us with shot or with assault.
To intercept this inconvenience,
A piece of ordnance 'gainst it I have placed;
And even these three days have I watch'd,
If I could see them.

Now do thou watch, for I can stay no longer.
If thou spy'st any, run and bring me word;
And thou shalt find me at the governor's.

[Exit.]

BOY.

Father, I warrant you; take you no care;

I'll never trouble you, if I may spy them.

[Exit.]

[Enter , on the turrets, the Lords Salisbury and Talbot,

Sir William Glansdale, Sir Thomas Gargrave, and others.]

SALISBURY.

Talbot, my life, my joy, again return'd!

How wert thou handled being prisoner?

Or by what means got'st thou to be releas'd?

Discourse, I prithee, on this turret's top.

TALBOT.

The Duke of Bedford had a prisoner
Call'd the brave Lord Ponton de Santrailles;
For him was I exchanged and ransomed.
But with a baser man of arms by far
Once in contempt they would have barter'd me:
Which I disdaining scorn'd, and craved death
Rather than I would be so vile-esteem'd.
In fine, redeem'd I was as I desired.
But, O! the treacherous Fastolfe wounds my heart,
Whom with my bare fists I would execute,
If I now had him brought into my power.

SALISBURY.

Yet tell'st thou not how thou wert entertain'd.

TALBOT.

With scoffs and scorns and contumelious taunts.
In open market-place produced they me,
To be a public spectacle to all:
Here, said they, is the terror of the French,

The scarecrow that affrights our children so.

Then broke I from the officers that led me,

And with my nails digg'd stones out of the ground

To hurl at the beholders of my shame;

My grisly countenance made others fly;

None durst come near for fear of sudden death.

In iron walls they deem'd me not secure;

So great fear of my name 'mongst them was spread

That they supposed I could rend bars of steel,

And spurn in pieces posts of adamant:

Wherefore a guard of chosen shot I had,

That walk'd about me every minute while;

And if I did but stir out of my bed,

Ready they were to shoot me to the heart.

[Enter the Boy with a linstock.]

SALISBURY.

I grieve to hear what torments you endured,

But we will be revenged sufficiently.

Now it is supper-time in Orleans:
Here, through this grate, I count each one,
And view the Frenchmen how they fortify:
Let us look in; the sight will much delight thee.
Sir Thomas Gargrave and Sir William Glansdale,
Let me have your express opinions
Where is best place to make our battery next.

GARGRAVE.
I think, at the north gate; for there stand lords.

GLANSDALE.

And I, here, at the bulwark of the bridge.

TALBOT.
For aught I see, this city must be famish'd,
Or with light skirmishes enfeebled.

[Here they shoot. Salisbury and Gargrave fall.]

SALISBURY.

O Lord, have mercy on us, wretched sinners!

GARGRAVE.

O Lord, have mercy on me, woful man!

TALBOT.

What chance is this that suddenly hath cross'd us?

Speak, Salisbury: at least, if thou canst speak:
How farest thou, mirror of all martial men?

One of thy eyes and thy cheek's side struck off!
Accursed tower! accursed fatal hand
That hath contrived this woful tragedy!
In thirteen battles Salisbury o'ercame;
Henry the Fifth he first train'd to the wars;
Whilst any trump did sound, or drum struck up,
His sword did ne'er leave striking in the field.
Yet liv'st thou, Salisbury? though thy speech doth fail,

One eye thou hast, to look to heaven for grace:
The sun with one eye vieweth all the world.
Heaven, be thou gracious to none alive,
If Salisbury wants mercy at thy hands!
Bear hence his body; I will help to bury it,
Sir Thomas Gargrave, hast thou any life?

Speak unto Talbot; nay, look up to him.
Salisbury, cheer thy spirit with this comfort,
Thou shalt not die whiles—
He beckons with his hand and smiles on me,
As who should say 'When I am dead and gone,
Remember to avenge me on the French.'
Plantagenet, I will; and like thee, Nero,
Play on the lute, beholding the towns burn;
Wretched shall France be only in thy name.

[Here an alarum, and it thunders and lightens.]
What stir is this? what tumult's in the heavens?

Whence cometh this alarum and the noise?

[Enter a Messenger.]

MESSENGER.

My lord, my lord, the French have gather'd head:

The Dauphin, with one Joan la Pucelle join'd,

A holy prophetess new risen up,

Is come with a great power to raise the siege.

[Here SALISBURY lifteth himself up and groans.]

TALBOT.

Hear, hear how dying Salisbury doth groan!

It irks his heart he cannot be revenged.

Frenchmen, I 'll be a Salisbury to you:

Pucelle or puzzel, dolphin or dogfish,

Your hearts I 'll stamp out with my horse's heels,

And make a quagmire of your mingled brains.

Convey me Salisbury into his tent,

And then we 'll try what these dastard Frenchmen dare.

[Alarum. Exeunt.]

SCENE V. The same.

[Here an alarum again: and Talbot pursueth the Dauphin, and driveth him: then enter Joan La Pucelle, driving Englishmen before her, and exit after them: then re-enter Talbot.]

TALBOT.

Where is my strength, my valor, and my force?

Our English troops retire, I cannot stay them:

A woman clad in armour chaseth them.

[Re-enter La Pucelle.]

Here, here she comes. I 'll have a bout with thee;

Devil or devil's dam, I 'll conjure thee:

Blood will I draw on thee, thou art a witch,

And straightway give thy soul to him thou servest.

PUCELLE.

Come, come, 'tis only I that must disgrace thee.

[Here they fight.]

TALBOT.

Heavens, can you suffer hell so to prevail?
My breast I 'll burst with straining of my courage,
And from my shoulders crack my arms asunder,
But I will chastise this high-minded strumpet.

[They fight again.]

PUCELLE.

Talbot, farewell; thy hour is not yet come:
I must go victual Orleans forthwith.

[A short alarum: then enter the town with soldiers.]
O'ertake me, if thou canst; I scorn thy strength.

Go, go, cheer up thy hungry-starved men;

Help Salisbury to make his testament:

This day is ours, as many more shall be.

[Exit.]

TALBOT.

My thoughts are whirled like a potter's wheel;

I know not where I am, nor what I do;

A witch, by fear, not force, like Hannibal,

Drives back our troops and conquers as she lists.

So bees with smoke and doves with noisome stench

Are from their hives and houses driven away.

They call'd us for our fierceness English dogs;

Now, like to whelps, we crying run away.

[A short alarum.]

Hark, countrymen! either renew the fight,

Or tear the lions out of England's coat;

Renounce your soil, give sheep in lions' stead:

Sheep run not half so treacherous from the wolf,

Or horse or oxen from the leopard,

As you fly from your oft-subdued slaves.

[Alarum. Here another skirmish.]

It will not be: retire into your trenches:

You all consented unto Salisbury's death,

For none would strike a stroke in his revenge.

Pucelle is ent'red into Orleans,

In spite of us or aught that we could do.

O, would I were to die with Salisbury!

The shame hereof will make me hide my head.

[Exit Talbot. Alarum; retreat; flourish.]

SCENE VI. The Same.

[*Enter* , on the walls, La Pucelle, Charles,

Reignier, Alencon, and Soldiers.]

PUCELLE.

Advance our waving colours on the walls;
Rescued is Orleans from the English:

Thus Joan la Pucelle hath perform'd her word.

CHARLES.

Divinest creature, Astraea's daughter,
How shall I honour thee for this success?
Thy promises are like Adonis' gardens
That one day bloom'd and fruitful were the next.
France, triumph in thy glorious prophetess!

Recover'd is the town of Orleans.
More blessed hap did ne'er befall our state.

REIGNIER.

Why ring not out the bells aloud throughout the town?
Dauphin, command the citizens make bonfires

And feast and banquet in the open streets,
To celebrate the joy that God hath given us.

ALENCON.
All France will be replete with mirth and joy,
When they shall hear how we have play'd the men.

CHARLES.
'Tis Joan, not we, by whom the day is won;
For which I will divide my crown with her;
And all the priests and friars in my realm
Shall in procession sing her endless praise.
A statelier pyramis to her I 'll rear
Than Rhodope's of Memphis ever was;
In memory of her when she is dead,
Her ashes, in an urn more precious
Than the rich-jewel'd coffer of Darius,
Transported shall be at high festivals
Before the kings and queens of France.
No longer on Saint Denis will we cry,
But Joan la Pucelle shall be France's saint.

Come in, and let us banquet royally

After this golden day of victory.

[Flourish. Exeunt.]

ACT SECOND

SCENE I. Before Orleans.

[Enter a Sergeant of a band, with two Sentinels.]

SERGEANT.

Sirs, take your places and be vigilant:

If any noise or soldier you perceive

Near to the walls, by some apparent sign

Let us have knowledge at the court of guard.

FIRST SENTINEL.

Sergeant, you shall. [*Exit* Sergeant.

Thus are poor servitors,

When others sleep upon their quiet beds,

Constrain'd to watch in darkness, rain and cold.

[Enter Talbot, Bedford, Burgundy, and forces, with scaling-ladders, their drums beating a dead march.]

TALBOT.

Lord Regent, and redoubted Burgundy,

By whose approach the regions of Artois,

Wallon and Picardy are friends to us,

This happy night the Frenchmen are secure,

Having all day caroused and banqueted:

Embrace we then this opportunity,

As fitting best to quittance their deceit

Contriv'd by art and baleful sorcery.

BEDFORD.

Coward of France, how much he wrongs his fame,

Despairing of his own arm's fortitude,

To join with witches and the help of hell!

BURGUNDY.

Traitors have never other company.
But what 's that Pucelle whom they term so pure?

TALBOT.

A maid, they say.

BEDFORD.
A maid! and be so martial!

BURGUNDY.
Pray God she prove not masculine ere long,
If underneath the standard of the French
She carry armour as she hath begun.

TALBOT.
Well, let them practice and converse with spirits:
God is our fortress, in whose conquering name

Let us resolve to scale their flinty bulwarks.

BEDFORD.

Ascend, brave Talbot; we will follow thee.

TALBOT.

Not all together: better far, I guess,

That we do make our entrance several ways;

That, if it chance the one of us do fail,

The other yet may rise against their force.

BEDFORD.

Agreed: I 'll to yond corner.

BURGUNDY.

And I to this.

TALBOT.

And here will Talbot mount, or make his grave.

Now, Salisbury, for thee, and for the right

Of English Henry, shall this night appear

How much in duty I am bound to both.

SENTINEL.

Arm! arm! the enemy doth make assault!

[Cry: 'St George,' 'A Talbot.']

[The French leap over the walls in their shirts.

Enter , several ways, the Bastard of Orleans, Alencon, and

Reignier, half ready, and half unready.]

ALENCON.

How now, my lords! what, all unready so?

BASTARD.

Unready! aye, and glad we 'scap'd so well.

REIGNIER.

'Twas time, I trow, to wake and leave our beds,

Hearing alarums at our chamber-doors.

ALENCON.

Of all exploits since first I follow'd arms,

Ne'er heard I of a warlike enterprise

More venturous or desperate than this.

BASTARD.

I think this Talbot be a fiend of hell.

REIGNIER.

If not of hell, the heavens, sure, favor him.

ALENCON.

Here cometh Charles: I marvel how he sped.

BASTARD.

Tut, holy Joan was his defensive guard.

[Enter Charles and La Pucelle.]

CHARLES.

Is this thy cunning, thou deceitful dame?

Didst thou at first, to flatter us withal,

Make us partakers of a little gain,

That now our loss might be ten times so much?

PUCELLE.

Wherefore is Charles impatient with his friend?

At all times will you have my power alike?

Sleeping or waking must I still prevail,

Or will you blame and lay the fault on me?

Improvident soldiers! had your watch been good,

This sudden mischief never could have fall'n.

CHARLES.

Duke of Alencon, this was your default,

That, being captain of the watch to-night,

Did look no better to that weighty charge.

ALENCON.

Had all your quarters been as safely kept

As that whereof I had the government,

We had not been thus shamefully surprised.

BASTARD.

Mine was secure.

REIGNIER.

And so was mine, my lord.

CHARLES.

And, for myself, most part of all this night,

Within her quarter and mine own precinct

I was employ'd in passing to and fro,

About relieving of the sentinels:

Then how or which way should they first break in?

PUCELLE.

Question, my lords, no further of the case,

How or which way: 'tis sure they found some place

But weakly guarded, where the breach was made.

And now there rests no other shift but this;

To gather our soldiers, scatter'd and dispersed,

And lay new platforms to endamage them.

[Alarum. *Enter* an English Soldier, crying 'A Talbot! a Talbot!' They fly, leaving their clothes behind.]

SOLDIER.

I 'll be so bold to take what they have left.

The cry of Talbot serves me for a sword;

For I have loaden me with many spoils,

Using no other weapon but his name.

[Exit.]

SCENE II. Orleans. Within the town.

[*Enter* Talbot, Bedford, Burgundy, a Captain, and others.]

BEDFORD.

The day begins to break, and night is fled,

Whose pitchy mantle over-veil'd the earth.

Here sound retreat, and cease our hot pursuit.

[Retreat sounded.]

TALBOT.

Bring forth the body of old Salisbury,

And here advance it in the market-place,

The middle centre of this cursed town.

Now have I paid my vow unto his soul;

For every drop of blood was drawn from him

There hath at least five Frenchmen died to-night.

And that hereafter ages may behold

What ruin happen'd in revenge of him,

Within their chiefest temple I 'll erect

A tomb, wherein his corpse shall be interr'd;

Upon the which, that every one may read,

Shall be engraved the sack of Orleans,

The treacherous manner of his mournful death

And what a terror he had been to France.

But, lords, in all our bloody massacre,

I muse we met not with the Dauphin's grace,

His new-come champion, virtuous Joan of Arc,

Nor any of his false confederates.

BEDFORD.

'Tis thought, Lord Talbot, when the fight began,

Rous'd on the sudden from their drowsy beds,

They did amongst the troops of armed men

Leap o'er the walls for refuge in the field.

BURGUNDY.

Myself, as far as I could well discern

For smoke and dusky vapors of the night,

Am sure I scared the Dauphin and his trull,

When arm in arm they both came swiftly running,

Like to a pair of loving turtle-doves

That could not live asunder day or night.

After that things are set in order here,

We'll follow them with all the power we have.

[Enter a Messenger.]

MESSENGER.

All hail, my lords! Which of this princely train

Call ye the warlike Talbot, for his acts

So much applauded through the realm of France?

TALBOT.

Here is the Talbot: who would speak with him?

MESSENGER.

The virtuous lady, Countess of Auvergne,

With modesty admiring thy renown,

By me entreats, great lord, thou wouldst vouchsafe

To visit her poor castle where she lies,

That she may boast she hath beheld the man

Whose glory fills the world with loud report.

BURGUNDY.

Is it even so? Nay, then I see our wars

Will turn into a peaceful comic sport,

When ladies crave to be encount'red with.

You may not, my lord, despise her gentle suit.

TALBOT.

Ne'er trust me then; for when a world of men

Could not prevail with all their oratory,

Yet hath a woman's kindness over-ruled:

And therefore tell her I return great thanks,

And in submission will attend on her.

Will not your honors bear me company?

BEDFORD.

No, truly; it is more than manners will:

And I have heard it said, unbidden guests

Are often welcomest when they are gone.

TALBOT.

Well then, alone, since there 's no remedy,

I mean to prove this lady's courtesy.

Come hither, Captain. *[Whispers]* You perceive my mind?

CAPTAIN.

I do, my lord, and mean accordingly.

[Exeunt.]

SCENE III. Auvergne. The Countess's castle.

[Enter the Countess and her Porter.]

COUNTESS.

Porter, remember what I gave in charge;

And when you have done so, bring the keys to me.

PORTER.

Madam, I will.

[Exit.]

COUNTESS.

The plot is laid: if all things fall out right,

I shall as famous be by this exploit

As Scythian Tomyris by Cyrus' death.

Great is the rumor of this dreadful knight,

And his achievements of no less account:

Fain would mine eyes be witness with mine ears,

To give their censure of these rare reports.

[Enter Messenger and Talbot.]

MESSENGER.

Madam,

according as your ladyship desired,

By message craved, so is Lord Talbot come.

COUNTESS.

And he is welcome. What! is this the man?

MESSENGER.

Madam, it is.

COUNTESS.

Is this the scourge of France?

Is this the Talbot, so much fear'd abroad

That with his name the mothers still their babes?
I see report is fabulous and false:
I thought I should have seen some Hercules,
A second Hector, for his grim aspect,
And large proportion of his strong-knit limbs.
Alas, this is a child, a silly dwarf!
It cannot be this weak and writhled shrimp
Should strike such terror to his enemies.

TALBOT.

Madam, I have been bold to trouble you;
But since your ladyship is not at leisure,
I 'll sort some other time to visit you.

COUNTESS.

What means he now? Go ask him whither he goes.

MESSENGER.

Stay, my Lord Talbot; for my lady craves
To know the cause of your abrupt departure.

TALBOT.

Marry, for that she's in a wrong belief,
I go to certify her Talbot's here.

[Re-enter Porter with keys.]

COUNTESS.

If thou be he, then art thou prisoner.

TALBOT.

Prisoner! to whom?

COUNTESS.

To me, blood-thirsty lord;
And for that cause I train'd thee to my house.
Long time thy shadow hath been thrall to me,
For in my gallery thy picture hangs:
But now the substance shall endure the like,
And I will chain these legs and arms of thine,
That hast by tyranny these many years

Wasted our country, slain our citizens,
And sent our sons and husbands captivate.

TALBOT.

Ha, ha, ha!

COUNTESS.
Laughest thou, wretch? Thy mirth shall turn to moan.

TALBOT.
I laugh to see your ladyship so fond
To think that you have aught but Talbot's shadow
Whereon to practice your severity.

COUNTESS.
Why, art not thou the man?

TALBOT.

I am indeed.

COUNTESS.

Then have I substance too.

TALBOT.

No, no, I am but shadow of myself:
You are deceived, my substance is not here;
For what you see is but the smallest part
And least proportion of humanity:
I tell you, madam, were the whole frame here,
It is of such a spacious lofty pitch,
Your roof were not sufficient to contain 't.

COUNTESS.

This is a riddling merchant for the nonce;
He will be here, and yet he is not here:
How can these contrarieties agree?

TALBOT.

That will I show you presently.

[Winds his horn. Drums strike up: a peal of ordnance. *Enter Soldiers.*]

How say you, madam? are you now persuaded
That Talbot is but shadow of himself?
These are his substance, sinews, arms and strength,
With which he yoketh your rebellious necks,
Razeth your cities and subverts your towns,
And in a moment makes them desolate.

COUNTESS.

Victorious Talbot! pardon my abuse:
I find thou art no less than fame hath bruited,
And more than may be gather'd by thy shape.
Let my presumption not provoke thy wrath;
For I am sorry that with reverence
I did not entertain thee as thou art.

TALBOT.

Be not dismay'd, fair lady; nor misconstrue

The mind of Talbot, as you did mistake

The outward composition of his body.

What you have done hath not offended me;

Nor other satisfaction do I crave,

But only, with your patience, that we may

Taste of your wine and see what cates you have;

For soldiers' stomachs always serve them well.

COUNTESS.

With all my heart, and think me honored

To feast so great a warrior in my house.

[Exeunt.]

SCENE IV. London. The Temple-garden.

[*Enter* the Earls of Somerset, Suffolk, and Warwick;

Richard Plantagenet, Vernon, and another Lawyer.]

PLANTAGENET.

Great lords and gentlemen,
what means this silence?

Dare no man answer in a case of truth?

SUFFOLK.
Within the Temple-hall we were too loud;
The garden here is more convenient.

PLANTAGENET.
Then say at once if I maintain'd the truth;
Or else was wrangling Somerset in the error?

SUFFOLK.
Faith, I have been a truant in the law,
And never yet could frame my will to it;
And therefore frame the law unto my will.

SOMERSET.

Judge you, my Lord of Warwick, then, between us.

WARWICK.

Between two hawks, which flies the higher pitch;
Between two dogs, which hath the deeper mouth;
Between two blades, which bears the better temper:
Between two horses, which doth bear him best;
Between two girls, which hath the merriest eye;
I have perhaps some shallow spirit of judgment:
But in these nice sharp quillets of the law,
Good faith, I am no wiser than a daw.

PLANTAGENET.

Tut, tut, here is a mannerly forbearance:
The truth appears so naked on my side
That any purblind eye may find it out.

SOMERSET.

And on my side it is so well apparell'd,
So clear, so shining and so evident,
That it will glimmer through a blind man's eye.

PLANTAGENET.

Since you are tongue-tied and so loath to speak,
In dumb significants proclaim your thoughts:
Let him that is a true-born gentleman
And stands upon the honor of his birth,
If he suppose that I have pleaded truth,
From off this brier pluck a white rose with me.

SOMERSET.

Let him that is no coward nor no flatterer,
But dare maintain the party of the truth,
Pluck a red rose from off this thorn with me.

WARWICK.

I love no colours, and without all colour
Of base insinuating flattery
I pluck this white rose with Plantagenet.

SUFFOLK.

I pluck this red rose with young Somerset,
And say withal I think he held the right.

VERNON.

Stay, lords and gentlemen, and pluck no more,

Till you conclude that he, upon whose side

The fewest roses are cropp'd from the tree

Shall yield the other in the right opinion.

SOMERSET.

Good Master Vernon, it is well objected:

If I have fewest, I subscribe in silence.

PLANTAGENET.

And I.

VERNON.

Then for the truth and plainness of the case,

I pluck this pale and maiden blossom here,

Giving my verdict on the white rose side.

SOMERSET.

Prick not your finger as you pluck it off,

Lest bleeding, you do paint the white rose red,

And fall on my side so, against your will.

VERNON.

If I, my lord, for my opinion bleed,

Opinion shall be surgeon to my hurt

And keep me on the side where still I am.

SOMERSET.

Well, well, come on: who else?

LAWYER.

Unless my study and my books be false,

The argument you held was wrong in you;

[To Somerset.]

In sign whereof I pluck a white rose too.

PLANTAGENET.

Now, Somerset, where is your argument?

SOMERSET.

Here in my scabbard, meditating that

Shall dye your white rose in a bloody red.

PLANTAGENET.

Meantime your cheeks do counterfeit our roses;

For pale they look with fear, as witnessing

The truth on our side.

SOMERSET.

No, Plantagenet,

'Tis not for fear but anger that thy cheeks

Blush for pure shame to counterfeit our roses,

And yet thy tongue will not confess thy error.

PLANTAGENET.

Hath not thy rose a canker, Somerset?

SOMERSET.

Hath not thy rose a thorn, Plantagenet?

PLANTAGENET.

Ay, sharp and piercing, to maintain his truth;

Whiles thy consuming canker eats his falsehood.

SOMERSET.

Well, I 'll find friends to wear my bleeding roses,

That shall maintain what I have said is true,

Where false Plantagenet dare not be seen.

PLANTAGENET.

Now, by this maiden blossom in my hand,

I scorn thee and thy fashion, peevish boy.

SUFFOLK.

Turn not thy scorns this way, Plantagenet.

PLANTAGENET.

Proud Pole, I will, and scorn both him and thee.

SUFFOLK.

I'll turn my part thereof into thy throat.

SOMERSET.

Away, away, good William de la Pole!

We grace the yeoman by conversing with him.

WARWICK.

Now, by God's will, thou wrong'st him, Somerset;
His grandfather was Lionel Duke of Clarence,
Third son to the third Edward King of England:

Spring crestless yeomen from so deep a root?

PLANTAGENET.

He bears him on the place's privilege,
Or durst not, for his craven heart, say thus.

SOMERSET.

By Him that made me, I'll maintain my words
On any plot of ground in Christendom.
Was not thy father, Richard Earl of Cambridge,
For treason executed in our late king's days?
And, by his treason, stand'st not thou attainted,
Corrupted, and exempt from ancient gentry?
His trespass yet lives guilty in thy blood;
And, till thou be restored, thou art a yeoman.

PLANTAGENET.

My father was attached, not attainted,
Condemn'd to die for treason, but no traitor;
And that I'll prove on better men than Somerset,
Were growing time once ripen'd to my will.
For your partaker Pole and you yourself,
I'll note you in my book of memory,
To scourge you for this apprehension:

Look to it well and say you are well warn'd.

SOMERSET.

Ay, thou shalt find us ready for thee still;

And know us by these colors for thy foes,

For these my friends in spite of thee shall wear.

PLANTAGENET.

And, by my soul, this pale and angry rose,

As cognizance of my blood-drinking hate,

Will I for ever and my faction wear,

Until it wither with me to my grave,

Or flourish to the height of my degree.

SUFFOLK.

Go forward, and be chok'd with thy ambition!

And so farewell until I meet thee next.

[Exit.]

SOMERSET.

Have with thee, Pole. Farewell, ambitious Richard.

[Exit.]

PLANTAGENET.

How I am braved and must perforce endure it!

WARWICK.

This blot that they object against your house
Shall be wiped out in the next parliament
Call'd for the truce of Winchester and Gloucester;
And if thou be not then created York,
I will not live to be accounted Warwick.
Meantime, in signal of my love to thee,
Against proud Somerset and William Pole,
Will I upon thy party wear this rose:
And here I prophesy: this brawl to-day,
Grown to this faction in the Temple-garden,
Shall send between the red rose and the white
A thousand souls to death and deadly night.

PLANTAGENET.

Good Master Vernon, I am bound to you,

That you on my behalf would pluck a flower.

VERNON.

In your behalf still will I wear the same.

LAWYER.

And so will I.

PLANTAGENET.

Thanks, gentle sir.

Come, let us four to dinner: I dare say

This quarrel will drink blood another day.

[Exeunt.]

SCENE V. The Tower of London.

[Enter Mortimer, brought in a chair, and Jailers.]

MORTIMER.

Kind keepers of my weak decaying age,

Let dying Mortimer here rest himself.

Even like a man new haled from the rack,

So fare my limbs with long imprisonment;

And these gray locks, the pursuivants of death,

Nestor-like aged in an age of care,

Argue the end of Edmund Mortimer.

These eyes, like lamps whose wasting oil is spent,

Wax dim, as drawing to their exigent;

Weak shoulders, overborne with burdening grief,

And pithless arms, like to a wither'd vine

That droops his sapless branches to the ground:

Yet are these feet, whose strengthless stay is numb,

Unable to support this lump of clay,

Swift-winged with desire to get a grave,

As witting I no other comfort have.

But tell me, keeper, will my nephew come?

FIRST JAILER.

Richard Plantagenet, my lord, will come:
We sent unto the Temple, unto his chamber;
And answer was return'd that he will come.

MORTIMER.

Enough: my soul shall then be satisfied.

Poor gentleman! his wrong doth equal mine.
Since Henry Monmouth first began to reign,
Before whose glory I was great in arms,
This loathsome sequestration have I had;
And even since then hath Richard been obscured,
Deprived of honour and inheritance.
But now the arbitrator of despairs,
Just Death, kind umpire of men's miseries,
With sweet enlargement doth dismiss me hence:
I would his troubles likewise were expired,
That so he might recover what was lost.

[Enter Richard Plantagenet.]

FIRST JAILER.

My lord, your loving nephew now is come.

MORTIMER.

Richard Plantagenet, my friend, is he come?

PLANTAGENET.

Aye, noble uncle, thus ignobly used,
Your nephew, late despised Richard, comes.

MORTIMER.

Direct mine arms I may embrace his neck,
And in his bosom spend my latter gasp:
O, tell me when my lips do touch his cheeks,
That I may kindly give one fainting kiss.
And now declare, sweet stem from York's great stock,
Why didst thou say of late thou wert despised?

PLANTAGENET.

First, lean thine aged back against mine arm;
And, in that case, I'll tell thee my disease.
This day, in argument upon a case,
Some words there grew 'twixt Somerset and me;
Among which terms he used his lavish tongue
And did upbraid me with my father's death:
Which obloquy set bars before my tongue,
Else with the like I had requited him.
Therefore, good uncle, for my father's sake,
In honor of a true Plantagenet
And for alliance sake, declare the cause
My father, Earl of Cambridge, lost his head.

MORTIMER.

That cause, fair nephew, that imprison'd me
And hath detain'd me all my flowering youth
Within a loathsome dungeon, there to pine,
Was cursed instrument of his decease.

PLANTAGENET.

Discover more at large what cause that was,

For I am ignorant and cannot guess.

MORTIMER.

I will, if that my fading breath permit,

And death approach not ere my tale be done.

Henry the Fourth, grandfather to this king,

Deposed his nephew Richard, Edward's son,

The first-begotten and the lawful heir

Of Edward king, the third of that descent;

During whose reign the Percies of the north,

Finding his usurpation most unjust,

Endeavour'd my advancement to the throne.

The reason moved these warlike lords to this

Was, for that—young King Richard thus removed,

Leaving no heir begotten of his body—

I was the next by birth and parentage;

For by my mother I derived am

From Lionel Duke of Clarence, third son

To King Edward the Third; whereas he

From John of Gaunt doth bring his pedigree, Being but fourth of that heroic line.

But mark: as in this haughty great attempt

They labored to plant the rightful heir,

I lost my liberty and they their lives.

Long after this, when Henry the Fifth,

Succeeding his father Bolingbroke, did reign,

Thy father, Earl of Cambridge, then derived

From famous Edmund Langley, Duke of York,

Marrying my sister that thy mother was,

Again in pity of my hard distress.

Levied an army, weening to redeem

And have install'd me in the diadem:

But, as the rest, so fell that noble earl

And was beheaded. Thus the Mortimers,

In whom the title rested, were suppress'd.

PLANTAGENET.

Of which, my lord, your honor is the last.

MORTIMER.

True; and thou seest that I no issue have, And that my fainting words do warrant death:

Thou art my heir; the rest I wish thee gather:
But yet be wary in thy studious care.

PLANTAGENET.

Thy grave admonishments prevail with me:
But yet, methinks, my father's execution
Was nothing less than bloody tyranny.

MORTIMER.
With silence, nephew, be thou politic:
Strong-fixed is the house of Lancaster,
And like a mountain not to be removed.
But now thy uncle is removing hence;
As princes do their courts, when they are cloy'd
With long continuance in a settled place.

PLANTAGENET.
O, uncle, would some part of my young years

Might but redeem the passage of your age!

MORTIMER.

Thou dost then wrong me, as that slaughterer doth

Which giveth many wounds when one will kill.

Mourn not, except thou sorrow for my good;

Only give order for my funeral:

And so farewell, and fair be all thy hopes,

And prosperous be thy life in peace and war!

[Dies.]

PLANTAGENET.

And peace, no war, befall thy parting soul!

In prison hast thou spent a pilgrimage,

And like a hermit overpass'd thy days.

Well, I will lock his counsel in my breast;

And what I do imagine let that rest.

Keepers, convey him hence; and I myself

Will see his burial better than his life.

[Exeunt Jailers, bearing out the body of Mortimer.]

Here dies the dusky torch of Mortimer,

Choked with ambition of the meaner sort:

And for those wrongs, those bitter injuries,

Which Somerset hath offer'd to my house,

I doubt not but with honour to redress;

And therefore haste I to the parliament,

Either to be restored to my blood,

Or make my ill the advantage of my good.

[Exit.]

ACT THIRD

SCENE I. London. The Parliament-house.

[Flourish. *Enter* King, Exeter, Gloucester, Warwick, Somerset, and Suffolk; the Bishop of Winchester, Richard Plantagenet, and others. Gloucester offers to put up a bill; Winchester snatches it, tears it.]

WINCHESTER.

Comest thou with deep premeditated lines,

With written pamphlets studiously devised,

Humphrey of Gloucester? If thou canst accuse,

Or aught intend'st to lay unto my charge.

Do it without invention, suddenly;

As I with sudden and extemporal speech

Purpose to answer what thou canst object.

GLOUCESTER.

Presumptuous priest! this place commands my patience,

Or thou shouldst find thou hast dishonor'd me.

Think not, although in writing I preferr'd

The manner of thy vile outrageous crimes,

That therefore I have forged, or am not able

Verbatim to rehearse the method of my pen:

No, prelate; such is thy audacious wickedness,

Thy lewd, pestiferous and dissentious pranks,

As very infants prattle of thy pride.

Thou art a most pernicious usurer,

Froward by nature, enemy to peace;
Lascivious, wanton, more than well beseems
A man of thy profession and degree;
And for thy treachery, what's more manifest
In that thou laid'st a trap to take my life,
As well at London-bridge as at the Tower.
Beside, I fear me, if thy thoughts are sifted
The king, thy sovereign, is not quite exempt
From envious malice of thy swelling heart.

WINCHESTER.

Gloucester, I do defy thee. Lords, vouchsafe
To give me hearing what I shall reply.
If I were covetous, ambitious, or perverse,
As he will have me, how am I so poor?
Or how haps it I seek not to advance
Or raise myself, but keep my wonted calling?
And for dissension, who preferreth peace
More than I do?—except I be provoked.
No, my good lords, it is not that offends;
It is not that that hath incensed the duke:

It is, because no one should sway but he;

No one but he should be about the king;

And that engenders thunder in his breast,

And makes him roar these accusations forth.

But he shall know I am as good—

GLOUCESTER.

As good!

Thou bastard of my grandfather!

WINCHESTER.

Aye, lordly sir; for what are you, I pray,

But one imperious in another's throne?

GLOUCESTER.

Am I not protector, saucy priest?

WINCHESTER.

And am not I a prelate of the church?

GLOUCESTER.

Yes, as an outlaw in a castle keeps
And useth it to patronage his theft.

WINCHESTER.

Unreverent Gloucester!

GLOUCESTER.

Thou art reverent
Touching thy spiritual function, not thy life.

WINCHESTER.

Rome shall remedy this.

WARWICK.

Roam thither, then.

SOMERSET.

My lord, it were your duty to forbear.

WARWICK.

Ay, see the bishop be not overborne.

SOMERSET.

Methinks my lord should be religious,

And know the office that belongs to such.

WARWICK.

Methinks his lordship should be humbler;

It fitteth not a prelate so to plead.

SOMERSET.

Yes, when his holy state is touch'd so near.

WARWICK.

State holy or unhallow'd, what of that?

Is not his grace protector to the king?

PLANTAGENET.

[Aside] Plantagenet, I see, must hold his tongue,
Lest it be said, 'Speak, sirrah, when you should:

Must your bold verdict enter talk with lords?'
Else would I have a fling at Winchester.

KING.
Uncles of Gloucester and of Winchester,
The special watchmen of our English weal,
I would prevail, if prayers might prevail,
To join your hearts in love and amity.
O, what a scandal is it to our crown,
That two such noble peers as ye should jar!
Believe me, lords, my tender years can tell
Civil dissension is a viperous worm
That gnaws the bowels of the commonwealth.

[A noise within, 'Down with the tawny-coats!'

What tumult's this?

WARWICK.

An uproar, I dare warrant,

Begun through malice of the bishop's men.

[A noise again, 'Stones! stones!'

Enter Mayor.]

MAYOR.

O, my good lords, and virtuous Henry,

Pity the city of London, pity us!

The bishop and the Duke of Gloucester's men,

Forbidden late to carry any weapon,

Have fill'd their pockets full of pebble stones,

And banding themselves in contrary parts

Do pelt so fast at one another's pate

That many have their giddy brains knock'd out:

Our windows are broke down in every street,

And we for fear compell'd to shut our shops.

[Enter Serving-men, in skirmish, with bloody pates.]

KING.

We charge you, on allegiance to ourself,

To hold your slaughtering hands and keep the peace.

Pray, uncle Gloucester, mitigate this strife.

FIRST SERVING-MAN. Nay, if we be forbidden stones, we 'll fall to it with our teeth.

SECOND SERVING-MAN.

Do what ye dare, we are as resolute.

[Skirmish again.]

GLOUCESTER.

You of my household, leave this peevish broil

And set this unaccustom'd fight aside.

THIRD SERVING-MAN.

My lord, we know your grace to be a man

Just and upright; and, for your royal birth,

Inferior to none but to his Majesty:

And ere that we will suffer such a prince,

So kind a father of the commonweal,

To be disgraced by an inkhorn mate,

We and our wives and children all will fight,

And have our bodies slaughter'd by thy foes.

FIRST SERVING-MAN.

Aye, and the very parings of our nails

Shall pitch a field when we are dead.

[Begin again.]

GLOUCESTER.

Stay, stay, I say!

And if you love me, as you say you do,

Let me persuade you to forbear awhile.

KING.

O, how this discord doth afflict my soul!
Can you, my Lord of Winchester, behold
My sighs and tears and will not once relent?
Who should be pitiful, if you be not?
Or who should study to prefer a peace,
If holy churchmen take delight in broils?

WARWICK.

Yield, my lord protector; yield, Winchester;
Except you mean with obstinate repulse
To slay your sovereign and destroy the realm.
You see what mischief and what murder too
Hath been enacted through your enmity;
Then be at peace, except ye thirst for blood.

WINCHESTER.

He shall submit, or I will never yield.

GLOUCESTER.

Compassion on the king commands me stoop;

Or I would see his heart out, ere the priest

Should ever get that privilege of me.

WARWICK.

Behold, my Lord of Winchester, the duke

Hath banish'd moody discontented fury,

As by his smoothed brows it doth appear:

Why look you still so stem and tragical?

GLOUCESTER.

Here, Winchester, I offer thee my hand.

KING.

Fie, uncle Beaufort! I have heard you preach

That malice was a great and grievous sin;

And will not you maintain the thing you teach,

But prove a chief offender in the same?

WARWICK.

Sweet king! the bishop hath a kindly gird.

For shame, my lord of Winchester, relent!

What, shall a child instruct you what to do?

WINCHESTER.

Well, Duke of Gloucester, I will yield to thee;

Love for thy love and hand for hand I give.

GLOUCESTER.

[Aside] Aye, but, I fear me, with a hollow heart.—

See here, my friends and loving countrymen;

This token serveth for a flag of truce

Betwixt ourselves and all our followers:

So help me God, as I dissemble not!

WINCHESTER.

[Aside] So help me God, as I intend it not!

KING.

O loving uncle, kind Duke of Gloucester,

How joyful am I made by this contract!

Away, my masters! trouble us no more;

But join in friendship, as your lords have done.

FIRST SERVING-MAN.

Content: I'll to the surgeon's.

SECOND SERVING-MAN.

And so will I.

THIRD SERVING-MAN.

And I will see what physic the tavern affords.

[Exeunt Serving-men, Mayor, &C.]

WARWICK.

Accept this scroll, most gracious sovereign;
Which in the right of Richard Plantagenet.
We do exhibit to your majesty.

GLOUCESTER.

Well urged, my Lord of Warwick: for, sweet prince,
An if your Grace mark every circumstance,
You have great reason to do Richard right:
Especially for those occasions
At Eltham place I told your majesty.

KING.

And those occasions, uncle, were of force;
Therefore, my loving lords, our pleasure is
That Richard be restored to his blood.

WARWICK.

Let Richard be restored to his blood;
So shall his father's wrongs be recompensed.

WINCHESTER.

As will the rest, so willeth Winchester.

KING.

If Richard will be true, not that alone

But all the whole inheritance I give

That doth belong unto the house of York,

From whence you spring by lineal descent.

PLANTAGENET.

Thy humble servant vows obedience

And humble service till the point of death.

KING.

Stoop then and set your knee against my foot;

And, in reguerdon of that duty done,

I girt thee with the valiant sword of York:

Rise, Richard, like a true Plantagenet,

And rise created princely Duke of York.

PLANTAGENET.

And so thrive Richard as thy foes may fall!
And as my duty springs, so perish they
That grudge one thought against your majesty!

ALL.
Welcome, high prince, the mighty Duke of York!

SOMERSET.

[Aside] Perish, base prince, ignoble Duke of York!

GLOUCESTER.
Now will it best avail your majesty
To cross the seas and to be crown'd in France:
The presence of a king engenders love
Amongst his subjects and his loyal friends,
As it disanimates his enemies.

KING.
When Gloucester says the word, King Henry goes;

For friendly counsel cuts off many foes.

GLOUCESTER.

Your ships already are in readiness.

[Sennet. Flourish. Exeunt all but Exeter.]

EXETER.

Aye, we may march in England or in France,

Not seeing what is likely to ensue.

This late dissension grown betwixt the peers

Burns under feigned ashes of forged love,

And will at last break out into a flame;

As fest'red members rot but by degree,

Till bones and flesh and sinews fall away,

So will this base and envious discord breed.

And now I fear that fatal prophecy

Which in the time of Henry named the fifth

Was in the mouth of every sucking babe;

That Henry born at Monmouth should win all

And Henry born at Windsor lose all:

Which is so plain, that Exeter doth wish

His days may finish ere that hapless time.

[Exit.]

SCENE II. France. Before Rouen.

[*Enter* La Pucelle disguised, with four Soldiers with sacks upon their backs.]

PUCELLE.

These are the city gates, the gates of Rouen,

Through which our policy must make a breach:

Take heed, be wary how you place your words;

Talk like the vulgar sort of market men

That come to gather money for their corn.

If we have entrance, as I hope we shall,

And that we find the slothful watch but weak,

I 'll by a sign give notice to our friends,

That Charles the Dauphin may encounter them.

FIRST SOLDIER.

Our sacks shall be a mean to sack the city,
And we be lords and rulers over Rouen;
Therefore we 'll knock. *[Knocks.]*

WATCH.

[Within] Qui est la?

PUCELLE.

Paysans, pauvres gens de France;
Poor market folks that come to sell their corn.

WATCH.

Enter , go in; the market bell is rung.

PUCELLE.

Now, Rouen, I 'll shake thy bulwarks to the ground.

[Exeunt.]

[Enter Charles, the Bastard of Orleans, Alencon,
Reignier, and forces.]

CHARLES.

Saint Denis bless this happy stratagem!
And once again we 'll sleep secure in Rouen.

BASTARD.
Here enter'd Pucelle and her practisants;
Now she is there, how will she specify
Here is the best and safest passage in?

REIGNIER.
By thrusting out a torch from yonder tower;
Which, once discern'd, shows that her meaning is,
No way to that, for weakness, which she enter'd.

[Enter La Pucelle, on the top, thrusting out a torch burning.]

PUCELLE.

Behold, this is the happy wedding torch

That joineth Rouen unto her countrymen,

But burning fatal to the Talbotites!

[Exit.]

BASTARD.

See, noble Charles, the beacon of our friend;

The burning torch in yonder turret stands.

CHARLES.

Now shine it like a comet of revenge,

A prophet to the fall of all our foes!

REIGNIER.

Defer no time, delays have dangerous ends;

Enter , and cry, 'The Dauphin!' presently,

And then do execution on the watch.

[Alarum. Exeunt.]

[An alarum. Enter Talbot in an excursion.]

TALBOT.

France, thou shalt rue this treason with thy tears,

If Talbot but survive thy treachery.

Pucelle, that witch, that damned sorceress,

Hath wrought this hellish mischief unawares,

That hardly we escaped the pride of France.

[Exit.]

[An alarum: excursions.]

[Bedford, brought in sick in a chair. *Enter* Talbot and Burgundy

without: within La Pucelle, Charles, Bastard, Alencon, and

Reignier, on the walls.]

PUCELLE.

Good morrow, gallants! want ye corn for bread?
I think the Duke of Burgundy will fast
Before he 'll buy again at such a rate:

'Twas full of darnel: do you like the taste?

BURGUNDY.
Scoff on, vile fiend and shameless courtezan!
I trust ere long to choke thee with thine own,
And make thee curse the harvest of that corn.

CHARLES.

Your Grace may starve perhaps before that time.

BEDFORD.
O, let no words, but deeds, revenge this treason!

PUCELLE.
What will you do, good graybeard? break a lance,
And run a tilt at death within a chair?

TALBOT.

Foul fiend of France, and hag of all despite,
Encompass'd with thy lustful paramours!
Becomes it thee to taunt his valiant age,
And twit with cowardice a man half dead?
Damsel, I 'll have a bout with you again,
Or else let Talbot perish with this shame.

PUCELLE.

Are ye so hot? yet, Pucelle, hold thy peace;
If Talbot do but thunder, rain will follow.

[The English party whisper together in council.]

God speed the parliament! who shall be the speaker?

TALBOT.

Dare ye come forth and meet us in the field?

PUCELLE.

Belike your lordship takes us then for fools, To try if that our own be ours or no.

TALBOT.

I speak not to that railing Hecate,

But unto thee, Alencon, and the rest;

Will ye, like soldiers, come and fight it out?

ALENCON.

Signior, no.

TALBOT.

Signior, hang! base muleters of France!

Like peasant foot-boys do they keep the walls,

And dare not take up arms like gentlemen.

PUCELLE.

Away, captains! let 's get us from the walls;

For Talbot means no goodness by his looks.

God be wi' you, my lord! we came but to tell you

That we are here.

[Exeunt from the walls.]

TALBOT.

And there will we be too, ere it be long,

Or else reproach be Talbot's greatest fame!

Vow, Burgundy, by honor of thy house,

Prick'd on by public wrongs sustain'd in France,

Either to get the town again or die:

And I, as sure as English Henry lives,

And as his father here was conqueror,

As sure as in this late-betrayed town

Great Coeur-de-lion's heart was buried,

So sure I swear to get the town or die.

BURGUNDY.

My vows are equal partners with thy vows.

TALBOT.

But, ere we go, regard this dying prince,

The valiant Duke of Bedford. Come, my lord,

We will bestow you in some better place,
Fitter for sickness and for crazy age.

BEDFORD.

Lord Talbot, do not so dishonor me:
Here will I sit before the walls of Rouen,
And will be partner of your weal or woe.

BURGUNDY.
Courageous Bedford, let us now persuade you.

BEDFORD.
Not to be gone from hence; for once I read
That stout Pendragon in his litter sick
Came to the field and vanquished his foes.
Methinks I should revive the soldiers' hearts,
Because I ever found them as myself.

TALBOT.
Undaunted spirit in a dying breast!

Then be it so: heavens keep old Bedford safe!

And now no more ado, brave Burgundy,

But gather we our forces out of hand

And set upon our boasting enemy.

[Exeunt all but Bedford and Attendants.]

[An alarum: excursions. *Enter* Sir John Fastolfe and a Captain.]

CAPTAIN.

Whither away, Sir John Fastolfe, in such haste?

FASTOLFE.

Whither away! to save myself by flight:

We are like to have the overthrow again.

CAPTAIN.

What! Will you fly, and leave Lord Talbot?

FASTOLFE.

Aye,

All the Talbots in the world, to save my life.

[Exit.]

CAPTAIN.

Cowardly knight! ill fortune follow thee!

[Exit.]

[Retreat: excursions. La Pucelle, Alencon, and Charles fly.]

BEDFORD.

Now, quiet soul, depart when heaven please,

For I have seen our enemies' overthrow.

What is the trust or strength of foolish man?

They that of late were daring with their scoffs

Are glad and fain by flight to save themselves.

[Bedford dies, and is carried in by two in his chair.]

[An alarum. Re-enter Talbot, Burgundy, and the rest.]

TALBOT.

Lost, and recover'd in a day again!

This is a double honor, Burgundy:

Yet heavens have glory for this victory!

BURGUNDY.

Warlike and martial Talbot, Burgundy

Enshrines thee in his heart, and there erects

Thy noble deeds as valor's monuments.

TALBOT.

Thanks, gentle duke. But where is Pucelle now?

I think her old familiar is asleep:

Now where 's the Bastard's braves, and Charles his gleeks?

What, all amort? Rouen hangs her head for grief

That such a valiant company are fled.

Now will we take some order in the town,

Placing therein some expert officers;

And then depart to Paris to the king,

For there young Henry with his nobles lie.

BURGUNDY.

What Lord Talbot pleaseth Burgundy.

TALBOT.

But yet, before we go, let 's not forget

The noble Duke of Bedford late deceased,

But see his exequies fulfill'd in Rouen:

A braver soldier never couched lance,

A gentler heart did never sway in court;

But kings and mightiest potentates must die,

For that's the end of human misery.

[Exeunt.]

SCENE III. The plains near Rouen.

[*Enter* Charles, the Bastard of Orleans, Alencon, La Pucelle, and forces.]

PUCELLE.

Dismay not, princes, at this accident,

Nor grieve that Rouen is so recovered:

Care is no cure, but rather corrosive,

For things that are not to be remedied.

Let frantic Talbot triumph for a while

And like a peacock sweep along his tail;

We 'll pull his plumes and take away his train,

If Dauphin and the rest will be but ruled.

CHARLES.

We have been guided by thee hitherto,

And of thy cunning had no diffidence:

One sudden foil shall never breed distrust

BASTARD.

Search out thy wit for secret policies,

And we will make thee famous through the world.

ALENCON.

We'll set thy statue in some holy place,

And have thee reverenced like a blessed saint.

Employ thee then, sweet virgin, for our good.

PUCELLE.

Then thus it must be; this doth Joan devise:

By fair persuasions mix'd with sugar'd words

We will entice the Duke of Burgundy

To leave the Talbot and to follow us.

CHARLES.

Aye, marry, sweeting, if we could do that,

France were no place for Henry's warriors;

Nor should that nation boast it so with us,

But be extirped from our provinces.

ALENCON.

For ever should they be expulsed from France,

And not have tide of an earldom here.

PUCELLE.

Your honours shall perceive how I will work

To bring this matter to the wished end.

[Drum sounds afar off.]

Hark! by the sound of drum you may perceive

Their powers are marching unto Paris-ward.

Here sound an English march. *Enter* , and pass over

at a distance, Talbot and his forces.

There goes the Talbot, with his colors spread,

And all the troops of English after him.

[French march. *Enter* the Duke of Burgundy and forces.]

Now in the rearward comes the duke and his:

Fortune in favor makes him lag behind.

Summon a parley; we will talk with him.

[Trumpets sound a parley.]

CHARLES.

A parley with the Duke of Burgundy!

BURGUNDY.
Who craves a parley with the Burgundy?

PUCELLE.

The princely Charles of France, thy countryman.

BURGUNDY.
What say'st thou, Charles? for I am marching hence.

CHARLES.

Speak, Pucelle, and enchant him with thy words.

PUCELLE.

Brave Burgundy, undoubted hope of France!

Stay, let thy humble handmaid speak to thee.

BURGUNDY.
Speak on; but be not over-tedious.

PUCELLE.
Look on thy country, look on fertile France,
And see the cities and the towns defaced
By wasting ruin of the cruel foe.
As looks the mother on her lowly babe
When death doth close his tender dying eyes,
See, see the pining malady of France;
Behold the wounds, the most unnatural wounds,
Which thou thyself hast given her woful breast.
O, turn thy edged sword another way;
Strike those that hurt, and hurt not those that help.
One drop of blood drawn from thy country's bosom
Should grieve thee more than streams of foreign gore:
Return thee therefore with a flood of tears,

And wash away thy country's stained spots.

BURGUNDY.

Either she hath bewitch'd me with her words,

Or nature makes me suddenly relent.

PUCELLE.

Besides, all French and France exclaims on thee,

Doubting thy birth and lawful progeny.

Who join'st thou with but with a lordly nation

That will not trust thee but for profit's sake?

When Talbot hath set footing once in France,

And fashion'd thee that instrument of ill,

Who then but English Henry will be lord,

And thou be thrust out like a fugitive?

Call we to mind, and mark but this for proof,

Was not the Duke of Orleans thy foe?

And was he not in England prisoner?

But when they heard he was thine enemy,

They set him free without his ransom paid, In spite of Burgundy and all his friends.

See, then, thou fight'st against thy countrymen

And join'st with them will be thy slaughtermen.

Come, come, return; return, thou wandering lord;

Charles and the rest will take thee in their arms.

BURGUNDY.

I am vanquished; these haughty words of hers

Have batt'red me like roaring cannon-shot,

And made me almost yield upon my knees.

Forgive me, country, and sweet countrymen,

And, lords, accept this hearty kind embrace:

My forces and my power of men are yours:

So, farewell, Talbot; I 'll no longer trust thee.

PUCELLE.

[Aside] Done like a Frenchman: turn and turn again!

CHARLES.

Welcome, brave duke; thy friendship makes us fresh.

BASTARD.

And doth beget new courage in our breasts.

ALENCON.

Pucelle hath bravely play'd her part in this,

And doth deserve a coronet of gold.

CHARLES.

Now let us on, my lords, and join our powers,

And seek how we may prejudice the foe.

[Exeunt.]

SCENE IV. Paris. The palace.

[*Enter* the King, Gloucester, Bishop of Winchester, York, Suffolk, Somerset, Warwick, Exeter: Vernon, Basset, and others. To them with his soldiers, Talbot.]

TALBOT.

My gracious Prince, and honourable peers,

Hearing of your arrival in this realm,

I have awhile given truce unto my wars,

To do my duty to my sovereign:

In sign whereof, this arm, that hath reclaim'd

To your obedience fifty fortresses,

Twelve cities and seven walled towns of strength,

Beside five hundred prisoners of esteem,

Lets fall his sword before your highness' feet,

And with submissive loyalty of heart

Ascribes the glory of his conquest got

First to my God and next unto your grace. *[Kneels.]*

KING.

Is this the Lord Talbot, uncle Gloucester,

That hath so long been resident in France?

GLOUCESTER.

Yes, if it please your majesty, my liege.

KING.

Welcome, brave captain and victorious lord!
When I was young, as yet I am not old.
I do remember how my father said
A stouter champion never handled sword.
Long since we were resolved of your truth,
Your faithful service and your toil in war;
Yet never have you tasted our reward,
Or been reguerdon'd with so much as thanks.

Because till now we never saw your face:
Therefore, stand up: and for these good deserts,
We here create you Earl of Shrewsbury;
And in our coronation take your place.

[Sennet. Flourish. *Exeunt* all but Vernon and Basset.]

VERNON.

Now, sir, to you, that were so hot at sea,
Disgracing of these colors that I wear
In honor of my noble Lord of York:—

Dar'st thou maintain the former words thou spakest?

BASSET.

Yes, sir; as well as you dare patronage

The envious barking of your saucy tongue

Against my lord the Duke of Somerset.

VERNON.

Sirrah, thy lord I honor as he is.

BASSET.

Why, what is he? as good a man as York.

VERNON.

Hark ye; not so: in witness, take ye that.

[Strikes him.]

BASSET.

Villain, thou know'st the law of arms is such

That whoso draws a sword, 'tis present death,

Or else this blow should broach thy dearest blood.

But I 'll unto his majesty, and crave

I may have liberty to venge this wrong;

When thou shalt see I 'll meet thee to thy cost.

VERNON.

Well, miscreant, I 'll be there as soon as you;

And, after, meet you sooner than you would.

[Exeunt.]

ACT FOURTH

SCENE I. Paris. A hall of state.

[*Enter* the King, Gloucester, Bishop of Winchester, York, Suffolk, Somerset, Warwick, Talbot, Exeter, the Governor of Paris, and others.]

GLOUCESTER.

Lord bishop, set the crown upon his head.

WINCHESTER.

God save King Henry, of that name the sixth!

GLOUCESTER.

Now, Governor of Paris, take your oath,
That you elect no other king but him;
Esteem none friends but such as are his friends,
And none your foes but such as shall pretend
Malicious practices against his state:

This shall ye do, so help you righteous God!

[Enter Sir John Fastolfe.]

FASTOLFE.

My gracious sovereign, as I rode from Calais, To haste unto your coronation,

A letter was deliver'd to my hands,

Writ to your Grace from the Duke of Burgundy.

TALBOT.

Shame to the Duke of Burgundy and thee!

I vow'd, base knight, when I did meet thee next,

To tear the garter from thy craven's leg, *[Plucking it off.]*

Which I have done, because unworthily

Thou wast installed in that high degree.

Pardon me, princely Henry, and the rest:

This dastard, at the battle of Patay,

When but in all I was six thousand strong

And that the French were almost ten to one,

Before we met or that a stroke was given,

Like to a trusty squire did run away:

In which assault we lost twelve hundred men;

Myself and divers gentlemen beside

Were there surprised and taken prisoners.

Then judge, great lords, if I have done amiss;

Or whether that such cowards ought to wear
This ornament of knighthood, yea or no.

GLOUCESTER.
To say the truth, this fact was infamous
And ill beseeming any common man,
Much more a knight, a captain, and a leader.

TALBOT.
When first this order was ordain'd, my lords,
Knights of the garter were of noble birth,
Valiant and virtuous, full of haughty courage,
Such as were grown to credit by the wars;
Not fearing death, nor shrinking for distress,
But always resolute in most extremes.
He then that is not furnish'd in this sort
Doth but usurp the sacred name of knight,
Profaning this most honorable order,
And should, if I were worthy to be judge,
Be quite degraded, like a hedge-born swain
That doth presume to boast of gentle blood.

KING.

Stain to thy countrymen, thou hear'st thy doom!

Be packing, therefore, thou that wast a knight;

Henceforth we banish thee, on pain of death.

[Exit Fastolfe.]

And now, my lord protector, view the letter

Sent from our uncle Duke of Burgundy.

GLOUCESTER.

What means his grace,

that he hath changed his style?

No more but, plain and bluntly, 'To the King!'

Hath he forgot he is his sovereign?

Or doth this churlish superscription

Pretend some alteration in good will?

What's here? *[Reads]* 'I have, upon especial cause,

Moved with compassion of my country's wreck,

Together with the pitiful complaints

Of such as your oppression feeds upon,

Forsaken your pernicious faction,

And join'd with Charles, the rightful King of France.'

O monstrous treachery! can this be so,

That in alliance, amity and oaths,

There should be found such false dissembling guile?

KING.

What! doth my uncle Burgundy revolt?

GLOUCESTER.

He doth, my lord, and is become your foe.

KING.

Is that the worst this letter doth contain?

GLOUCESTER.

It is the worst, and all, my lord, he writes.

KING.

Why, then, Lord Talbot there shall talk with him,

And give him chastisement for this abuse.

How say you, my lord? are you not content?

TALBOT.

Content, my liege! yes; but that I am prevented,

I should have begg'd I might have been employ'd.

KING.

Then gather strength, and march unto him straight:

Let him perceive how ill we brook his treason.

And what offence it is to flout his friends.

TALBOT.

I go, my lord, in heart desiring still

You may behold confusion of your foes.

[Exit.]

[Enter Vernon and Basset.]

VERNON.

Grant me the combat, gracious sovereign.

BASSET.

And me, my lord, grant me the combat too.

YORK.

This is my servant: hear him, noble prince.

SOMERSET.

And this is mine: sweet Henry, favor him.

KING.

Be patient, lords, and give them leave to speak.

Say, gentlemen, what makes you thus exclaim?

And wherefore crave you combat? or with whom?

VERNON.

With him, my lord; for he hath done me wrong.

BASSET.
And I with him; for he hath done me wrong.

KING.

What is that wrong whereof you both complain?
First let me know, and then I'll answer you.

BASSET.
Crossing the sea from England into France,
This fellow here, with envious carping tongue,
Upbraided me about the rose I wear;
Saying, the sanguine colour of the leaves
Did represent my master's blushing cheeks,
When stubbornly he did repugn the truth

About a certain question in the law
Argued betwixt the Duke of York and him;
With other vile and ignominious terms:
In confutation of which rude reproach,
And in defence of my lord's worthiness,
I crave the benefit of law of arms.

VERNON.

And that is my petition, noble lord:
For though he seem with forged quaint conceit
To set a gloss upon his bold intent,
Yet know, my lord, I was provoked by him;
And he first took exceptions at this badge,
Pronouncing that the paleness of this flower
Bewray'd the faintness of my master's heart.

YORK.
Will not this malice, Somerset, be left?

SOMERSET.

Your private grudge, my Lord of York, will out,
Though ne'er so cunningly you smother it.

KING.
Good Lord, what madness rules in brainsick men,
When for so slight and frivolous a cause
Such factious emulations shall arise!
Good cousins both, of York and Somerset,
Quiet yourselves, I pray, and be at peace.

YORK.
Let this dissension first be tried by fight,
And then your highness shall command a peace.

SOMERSET.
The quarrel toucheth none but us alone;
Betwixt ourselves let us decide it then.

YORK.
There is my pledge; accept it, Somerset.

VERNON.

Nay, let it rest where it began at first.

BASSET.

Confirm it so, mine honorable lord.

GLOUCESTER.

Confirm it so! Confounded be your strife!
And perish ye, with your audacious prate!
Presumptuous vassals, are you not ashamed
With this immodest clamorous outrage
To trouble and disturb the king and us?
And you, my lords, methinks you do not well
To bear with their perverse objections;
Much less to take occasion from their mouths
To raise a mutiny betwixt yourselves:
Let me persuade you take a better course.

EXETER.

It grieves his highness: good my lords, be friends.

KING.
Come hither, you that would be combatants:
Henceforth I charge you, as you love our favor,
Quite to forget this quarrel and the cause.

And you, my lords, remember where we are:
In France, amongst a fickle wavering nation;
If they perceive dissension in our looks
And that within ourselves we disagree,
How will their grudging stomachs be provoked
To willful disobedience, and rebel!
Beside, what infamy will there arise
When foreign princes shall be certified
That for a toy, a thing of no regard,
King Henry's peers and chief nobility
Destroy'd themselves and lost the realm of France
O, think upon the conquest of my father,
My tender years; and let us not forgo

That for a trifle that was bought with blood!

Let me be umpire in this doubtful strife.
I see no reason, if I wear this rose,

[Putting on a red rose.]
That any one should therefore be suspicious
I more incline to Somerset than York:

Both are my kinsmen, and I love them both:
As well they may upbraid me with my crown,
Because, forsooth, the king of Scots is crown'd.
But your discretions better can persuade
Than I am able to instruct or teach;
And, therefore, as we hither came in peace,
So let us still continue peace and love.
Cousin of York, we institute your grace
To be our Regent in these parts of France:
And, good my Lord of Somerset, unite
Your troops of horsemen with his bands of foot;
And, like true subjects, sons of your progenitors,

Go cheerfully together and digest

Your angry choler on your enemies.

Ourself, my lord protector and the rest

After some respite will return to Calais;

From thence to England; where I hope ere long

To be presented, by your victories,

With Charles, Alencon, and that traitorous rout.

[Flourish. Exeunt all but York, Warwick, Exeter and Vernon.]

WARWICK.

My Lord of York, I promise you, the king

Prettily, methought, did play the orator.

YORK.

And so he did; but yet I like it not,

In that he wears the badge of Somerset.

WARWICK.

Tush, that was but his fancy, blame him not;

I dare presume, sweet prince, he thought no harm.

YORK.

An if I wist he did,—but let it rest;

Other affairs must now be managed.

[Exeunt all but Exeter.]

EXETER.

Well didst thou, Richard, to suppress thy voice;

For, had the passions of thy heart burst out,

I fear we should have seen decipher'd there

More rancorous spite, more furious raging broils,

Than yet can be imagined or supposed.

But howsoe'er, no simple man that sees

This jarring discord of nobility,

This shouldering of each other in the court,

This factious bandying of their favorites,

But that it doth presage some ill event.

Tis much when scepters are in children's hands;

But more when envy breeds unkind division;

There comes the ruin, there begins confusion.

[Exit.]

SCENE II. Before Bordeaux.

[Enter Talbot, with trump and drum.]

TALBOT.

Go to the gates of Bordeaux, trumpeter:

Summon their general unto the wall.

[Trumpet sounds.   Enter General and others, aloft.]

English John Talbot, Captains, calls you forth,

Servant in arms to Harry King of England;

And thus he would: Open your city-gates,

Be humble to us; call my sovereign yours,

And do him homage as obedient subjects;

And I 'll withdraw me and my bloody power:

But, if you frown upon this proffer'd peace, You tempt the fury of my three attendants,

Lean famine, quartering steel, and climbing fire;

Who in a moment even with the earth

Shall lay your stately and air-braving towers,

If you forsake the offer of their love.

GENERAL.

Thou ominous and fearful owl of death,

Our nation's terror and their bloody scourge!

The period of thy tyranny approacheth.

On us thou canst not enter but by death;

For, I protest, we are well fortified

And strong enough to issue out and fight:

If thou retire, the Dauphin, well appointed,

Stands with the snares of war to tangle thee:

On either hand thee there are squadrons pitch'd

To wall thee from the liberty of flight;

And no way canst thou turn thee for redress,

But death doth front thee with apparent spoil,

And pale destruction meets thee in the face.

Ten thousand French have ta'en the sacrament

To rive their dangerous artillery

Upon no Christian soul but English Talbot.

Lo, there thou stand'st, a breathing valiant man,

Of an invincible unconquer'd spirit!

This is the latest glory of thy praise

That I, thy enemy, due thee withal;

For ere the glass, that now begins to run,

Finish the process of his sandy hour,

These eyes, that see thee now well colored,

Shall see thee wither'd, bloody, pale, and dead.

[Drum afar off.]

Hark! hark! the Dauphin's drum, a warning bell,

Sings heavy music to thy timorous soul;

And mine shall ring thy dire departure out.

[Exeunt General, etc.]

TALBOT.

He fables not; I hear the enemy:

Out, some light horsemen, and peruse their wings.

O, negligent and heedless discipline!
How are we park'd and bounded in a pale,
A little herd of England's timorous deer,
Mazed with a yelping kennel of French curs!
If we be English deer, be then in blood;
Not rascal-like, to fall down with a pinch,
But rather, moody-mad and desperate stags,
Turn on the bloody hounds with heads of steel
And make the cowards stand aloof at bay:
Sell every man his life as dear as mine,
And they shall find dear deer of us, my friends.
God and Saint George, Talbot and England's right,
Prosper our colors in this dangerous fight!

[Exeunt.]

SCENE III. Plains in Gascony.

[*Enter* a Messenger that meets York. *Enter* York with trumpet and many soldiers.]

YORK.

Are not the speedy scouts return'd again,

That dogg'd the mighty army of the Dauphin?

MESSENGER.

They are return'd, my lord, and give it out

That he is march'd to Bordeaux with his power,

To fight with Talbot: as he march'd along,

By your espials were discovered

Two mightier troops than that the Dauphin led,

Which join'd with him and made their march for Bordeaux.

YORK.

A plague upon that villain Somerset,

That thus delays my promised supply

Of horsemen, that were levied for this siege!

Renowned Talbot doth expect my aid,

And I am lowted by a traitor villain,

And cannot help the noble chevalier:
God comfort him in this necessity!

If he miscarry, farewell wars in France.

[Enter Sir William Lucy.]

LUCY.
Thou princely leader of our English strength,
Never so needful on the earth of France,
Spur to the rescue of the noble Talbot,
Who now is girdled with a waist of iron,
And hemm'd about with grim destruction.

To Bordeaux, warlike Duke! to Bordeaux, York!
Else, farewell, Talbot, France, and England's honor.

YORK.
O God, that Somerset, who in proud heart
Doth stop my cornets, were in Talbot's place!
So should we save a valiant gentleman

By forfeiting a traitor and a coward.
Mad ire and wrathful fury makes me weep,
That thus we die, while remiss traitors sleep.

LUCY.

O, send some succor to the distress'd lord!

YORK.
He dies; we lose; I break my warlike word;
We mourn, France smiles; we lose, they daily get;
All 'long of this vile traitor Somerset.

LUCY.
Then God take mercy on brave Talbot's soul;
And on his son young John, who two hours since
I met in travel toward his warlike father!
This seven years did not Talbot see his son;
And now they meet where both their lives are done.

YORK.

Alas, what joy shall noble Talbot have,
To bid his young son welcome to his grave?
Away! vexation almost stops my breath,
That sunder'd friends greet in the hour of death.
Lucy, farewell: no more my fortune can,
But curse the cause I cannot aid the man.
Maine, Blois, Poictiers, and Tours, are won away,
'Long all of Somerset and his delay.

[Exit, with his soldiers.]

LUCY.

Thus, while the vulture of sedition
Feeds in the bosom of such great commanders,
Sleeping neglection doth betray to loss
The conquest of our scarce cold conqueror,
That ever living man of memory,
Henry the Fifth: whiles they each other cross,
Lives, honors, lands and all hurry to loss.

[Exit.]

SCENE IV. Other plains in Gascony.

[*Enter* Somerset, with his army; a Captain of
Talbot's with him.]

SOMERSET.

It is too late; I cannot send them now:
This expedition was by York and Talbot
Too rashly plotted: all our general force
Might with a sally of the very town
Be buckled with: the over-daring Talbot
Hath sullied all his gloss of former honor
By this unheedful, desperate, wild adventure:
York set him on to fight and die in shame,
That, Talbot dead, great York might bear the name.

CAPTAIN.

Here is Sir William Lucy, who with me

Set from our o'er-match'd forces forth for aid.

[Enter Sir William Lucy.]

SOMERSET.

How now, Sir William! whither were you sent?

LUCY.

Whither, my lord? from bought and sold Lord Talbot;
Who, ring'd about with bold adversity,
Cries out for noble York and Somerset,
To beat assailing death from his weak legions;
And whiles the honorable captain there
Drops bloody sweat from his war-wearied limbs,
And, in advantage lingering, looks for rescue,
You, his false hopes, the trust of England's honor,
Keep off aloof with worthless emulation.
Let not your private discord keep away
The levied succors that should lend him aid,
While he, renowned noble gentleman,
Yield up his life unto a world of odds.

Orleans the Bastard, Charles, Burgundy,
Alencon, Reignier, compass him about,
And Talbot perisheth by your default.

SOMERSET.

York set him on; York should have sent him aid.

LUCY.
And York as fast upon your grace exclaims;
Swearing that you withhold his levied host,
Collected for this expedition.

SOMERSET.

York lies; he might have sent and had the horse:
I owe him little duty, and less love;
And take foul scorn to fawn on him by sending.

LUCY.
The fraud of England, not the force of France,

Hath now entrapp'd the noble-minded Talbot:

Never to England shall he bear his life;

But dies, betray'd to fortune by your strife.

SOMERSET.

Come, go; I will dispatch the horsemen straight:

Within six hours they will be at his aid.

LUCY.

Too late comes rescue; he is ta'en or slain;

For fly he could not, if he would have fled;

And fly would Talbot never, though he might.

SOMERSET.

If he be dead, brave Talbot, then adieu!

LUCY.

His fame lives in the world, his shame in you.

[Exeunt.]

SCENE V. The English camp near Bordeaux.

[Enter Talbot and John his son.]

TALBOT.

O young John Talbot! I did send for thee
To tutor thee in stratagems of war,
That Talbot's name might be in thee revived
When sapless age and weak unable limbs
Should bring thy father to his drooping chair.

But, O malignant and ill-boding stars!
Now thou art come unto a feast of death,
A terrible and unavoided danger:
Therefore, dear boy, mount on my swiftest horse;
And I'll direct thee how thou shalt escape
By sudden flight: come, dally not, be gone.

JOHN.

Is my name Talbot? and am I your son?
And shall I fly? O, if you love my mother,
Dishonor not her honorable name,
To make a bastard and a slave of me!
The world will say, he is not Talbot's blood,
That basely fled when noble Talbot stood.

TALBOT.

Fly, to revenge my death, if I be slain.

JOHN.
He that flies so will ne'er return again.

TALBOT.

If we both stay, we both are sure to die.

JOHN.

Then let me stay; and, father, do you fly;

Your loss is great, so your regard should be;

My worth unknown, no loss is known in me.

Upon my death the French can little boast;

In yours they will, in you all hopes are lost.

Flight cannot stain the honor you have won;

But mine it will, that no exploit have done;

You fled for vantage, every one will swear;

But, if I bow, they 'll say it was for fear.

There is no hope that ever I will stay,

If the first hour I shrink and run away.

Here on my knee I beg mortality,

Rather than life preserved with infamy.

TALBOT.

Shall all thy mother's hopes lie in one tomb?

JOHN.

Aye, rather than I 'll shame my mother's womb.

TALBOT.

Upon my blessing, I command thee go.

JOHN.

To fight I will, but not to fly the foe.

TALBOT.

Part of thy father may be saved in thee.

JOHN.

No part of him but will be shame in me.

TALBOT.

Thou never hadst renown, nor canst not lose it.

JOHN.

Yes, your renowned name: shall flight abuse it?

TALBOT.

Thy father's charge shall clear thee from that stain.

JOHN.

You cannot witness for me, being slain.

If death be so apparent, then both fly.

TALBOT.

And leave my followers here to fight and die;

My age was never tainted with such shame.

JOHN.

And shall my youth be guilty of such blame?

No more can I be sever'd from your side,

Than can yourself yourself in twain divide:

Stay, go, do what you will, the like do I;

For live I will not, if my father die.

TALBOT.

Then here I take my leave of thee, fair son,

Born to eclipse thy life this afternoon.

Come, side by side together live and die;

And soul with soul from France to heaven fly.

[Exeunt.]

SCENE VI. A field of battle.

[Alarum: excursions, wherein Talbot's Son is hemmed about, and Talbot rescues him.]

TALBOT.

Saint George and victory; fight, soldiers, fight:

The regent hath with Talbot broke his word,

And left us to the rage of France his sword.

Where is John Talbot? Pause, and take thy breath;

I gave thee life and rescued thee from death.

JOHN.

O, twice my father, twice am I thy son!
The life thou gavest me first was lost and done,
Till with thy warlike sword, despite of fate,
To my determined time thou gavest new date.

TALBOT.
When from the Dauphin's crest thy sword struck fire,
It warm'd thy father's heart with proud desire
Of bold-faced victory. Then leaden age,
Quicken'd with youthful spleen and warlike rage,
Beat down Alencon, Orleans, Burgundy,
And from the pride of Gallia rescued thee.
The ireful bastard Orleans, that drew blood
From thee, my boy, and had the maidenhood
Of thy first fight, I soon encountered,
And interchanging blows I quickly shed
Some of his bastard blood; and in disgrace
Bespoke him thus; 'Contaminated base
And misbegotten blood I spill of thine,
Mean and right poor, for that pure blood of mine,
Which thou didst force from Talbot, my brave boy:'

Here, purposing the Bastard to destroy,
Came in strong rescue. Speak, thy father's care,
Art thou not weary, John? how dost thou fare?
Wilt thou yet leave the battle, boy, and fly,
Now thou art seal'd the son of chivalry?

Fly, to revenge my death when I am dead:
The help of one stands me in little stead.
O, too much folly is it, well I wot,
To hazard all our lives in one small boat!
If I to-day die not with Frenchmen's rage,
To-morrow I shall die with mickle age:
By me they nothing gain an if I stay;
'Tis but the short'ning of my life one day:
In thee thy mother dies, our household's name,
My death's revenge, thy youth, and England's fame:
All these and more we hazard by thy stay;
All these are saved if thou wilt fly away.

JOHN.

The sword of Orleans hath not made me smart;

These words of yours draw life-blood from my heart:

On that advantage, bought with such a shame,

To save a paltry life and slay bright fame,

Before young Talbot from old Talbot fly,

The coward horse that bears me fall and die!

And like me to the peasant boys of France,

To be shame's scorn and subject of mischance!

Surely, by all the glory you have won,

An if I fly, I am not Talbot's son;

Then talk no more of flight, it is no boot;

If son to Talbot, die at Talbot's foot.

TALBOT.

Then follow thou thy desperate sire of Crete,

Thou Icarus; thy life to me is sweet:

If thou wilt fight, fight by thy father's side;

And, commendable proved, let 's die in pride.

[Exeunt.]

SCENE VII. Another part of the field.

[Alarum: excursions. *Enter* old Talbot led by a Servant.]

TALBOT.

Where is my other life? mine own is gone;
O, where's young Talbot? where is valiant John?
Triumphant death, smear'd with captivity,
Young Talbot's valor makes me smile at thee:
When he perceived me shrink and on my knee,
His bloody sword he brandish'd over me,
And, like a hungry lion, did commence
Rough deeds of rage and stern impatience;
But when my angry guardant stood alone,
Tendering my ruin and assail'd of none,
Dizzy-ey'd fury and great rage of heart
Suddenly made him from my side to start
Into the clustering battle of the French;
And in that sea of blood my boy did drench
His over-mounting spirit, and there died,

My Icarus, my blossom, in his pride.

SERVANT.

O my dear lord, lo where your son is borne!

[Enter soldiers, with the body of young Talbot.]

TALBOT.

Thou antic Death, which laugh'st us here to scorn,
Anon, from thy insulting tyranny,
Coupled in bonds of perpetuity,
Two Talbots, winged through the lither sky,
In thy despite shall 'scape mortality.
O thou, whose wounds become hard-favor'd death,
Speak to thy father ere thou yield thy breath!
Brave death by speaking, whether he will or no;
Imagine him a Frenchman and thy foe.
Poor boy! he smiles, methinks, as who should say,
Had death been French, then death had died to-day.
Come, come and lay him in his father's arms:

My spirit can no longer bear these harms.

Soldiers, adieu! I have what I would have,

Now my old arms are young John Talbot's grave.

[Dies.]

[Enter Charles, Alencon, Burgundy, Bastard,

La Pucelle, and forces.]

CHARLES.

Had York and Somerset brought rescue in,

We should have found a bloody day of this.

BASTARD.

How the young whelp of Talbot's, raging-wood,

Did flesh his puny sword in Frenchmen's blood!

PUCELLE.

Once I encounter'd him, and thus I said:

'Thou maiden youth, be vanquish'd by a maid.'

But, with a proud majestical high scorn,

He answer'd thus: 'Young Talbot was not born

To be the pillage of a giglot wench:'

So, rushing in the bowels of the French,

He left me proudly, as unworthy fight.

BURGUNDY.

Doubtless he would have made a noble knight:

See, where he lies inhearsed in the arms

Of the most bloody nurser of his harms!

BASTARD.

Hew them to pieces, hack their bones asunder,

Whose life was England's glory, Gallia's wonder.

CHARLES.

O, no, forbear! for that which we have fled

During the life, let us not wrong it dead.

[Enter Sir William Lucy, attended; Herald of the French preceding.]

LUCY.

Herald, conduct me to the Dauphin's tent,

To know who hath obtain'd the glory of the day.

CHARLES.

On what submissive message art thou sent?

LUCY.

Submission, Dauphin! 'tis a mere French word;

We English warriors wot not what it means.

I come to know what prisoners thou hast ta'en,

And to survey the bodies of the dead.

CHARLES.

For prisoners ask'st thou? hell our prison is.

But tell me whom thou seek'st.

LUCY.

But where's the great Alcides of the field,

Valiant Lord Talbot, Earl of Shrewsbury, Created for his rare success in arms,

Great Earl of Washford, Waterford, and Valence;

Lord Talbot of Goodrig and Urchinfield,

Lord Strange of Blackmere, Lord Verdun of Alton,

Lord Cromwell of Wingfield, Lord Furnival of Sheffield,

The thrice-victorious Lord of Falconbridge;

Knight of the noble order of Saint George,

Worthy Saint Michael, and the Golden Fleece;

Great marshal to Henry the Sixth

Of all his wars within the realm of France?

PUCELLE.

Here's a silly stately style indeed!

The Turk, that two and fifty kingdoms hath,

Writes not so tedious a style as this.

Him that thou magnifiest with all these titles

Stinking and fly-blown lies here at our feet.

LUCY.

Is Talbot slain, the Frenchman's only scourge, Your kingdom's terror and black Nemesis?

O, were mine eye-balls into bullets turn'd,

That I in rage might shoot them at your faces!

O, that I could but can these dead to life!

It were enough to fright the realm of France:

Were but his picture left amongst you here,

It would amaze the proudest of you all.

Give me their bodies, that I may bear them hence

And give them burial as beseems their worth.

PUCELLE.

I think this upstart is old Talbot's ghost,

He speaks with such a proud commanding spirit,

For God's sake, let him have 'em; to keep them here,

They would but stink, and putrify the air.

CHARLES.

Go, take their bodies hence.

LUCY.

I 'll bear them hence; but from their ashes shall be rear'd
A phoenix that shall make all France afeard.

CHARLES.

So we be rid of them, do with 'em what thou wilt.
And now to Paris, in this conquering vein:

All will be ours, now bloody Talbot's slain.

[Exeunt.]

ACT FIFTH

SCENE I. London. The palace.

[Sennet. Enter King, Gloucester, and Exeter.]

KING.

Have you perused the letters from the pope,

The emperor, and the Earl of Armagnac?

GLOUCESTER.

I have, my lord: and their intent is this:

They humbly sue unto your excellence

To have a godly peace concluded of

Between the realms of England and of France.

KING.

How doth your grace affect their motion?

GLOUCESTER.

Well, my good lord; and as the only means

To stop effusion of our Christian blood

And stablish quietness on every side.

KING.

Aye, marry, uncle; for I always thought

It was both impious and unnatural

That such immanity and bloody strife
Should reign among professors of one faith.

GLOUCESTER.
Beside, my lord, the sooner to effect
And surer bind this knot of amity,
The Earl of Armagnac, near knit to Charles,
A man of great authority in France,
Proffers his only daughter to your grace
In marriage, with a large and sumptuous dowry.

KING.
Marriage, uncle! alas, my years are young!
And fitter is my study and my books
Than wanton dalliance with a paramour.
Yet call the ambassadors; and, as you please,
So let them have their answers every one:
I shall be well content with any choice
Tends to God's glory and my country's weal.

[*Enter* Winchester in Cardinal's habit, a Legate and two Ambassadors.]

EXETER.

What! is my Lord of Winchester install'd
And call'd unto a cardinal's degree?
Then I perceive that will be verified
Henry the Fifth did sometime prophesy,
'If once he come to be a cardinal,
He'll make his cap co-equal with the crown.'

KING.

My lords ambassadors, your several suits
Have been consider'd and debated on.
Your purpose is both good and reasonable;
And therefore are we certainly resolved
To draw conditions of a friendly peace;
Which by my Lord of Winchester we mean
Shall be transported presently to France.

GLOUCESTER.

And for the proffer of my lord your master,
I have inform'd his highness so at large,

As liking of the lady's virtuous gifts,
Her beauty and the value of her dower,
He doth intend she shall be England's Queen.

KING.
In argument and proof of which contract,
Bear her this jewel, pledge of my affection.
And so, my lord protector, see them guarded
And safely brought to Dover; where inshipp'd,
Commit them to the fortune of the sea.

[Exeunt all but Winchester and Legate.]

WINCHESTER.
Stay my lord legate: you shall first receive
The sum of money which I promised
Should be deliver'd to his holiness
For clothing me in these grave ornaments.

LEGATE.

I will attend upon your lordship's leisure.

WINCHESTER.

[Aside] Now Winchester will not submit, I trow,
Or be inferior to the proudest peer.
Humphrey of Gloucester, thou shalt well perceive
That neither in birth or for authority,
The bishop will be overborne by thee:
I 'll either make thee stoop and bend thy knee,
Or sack this country with a mutiny.

[Exeunt.]

SCENE II. France. Plains in Anjou.

[*Enter* Charles, Burgundy, Alencon, Bastard,
Reignier, La Pucelle, and forces.]

CHARLES.

These news, my lords, may cheer our drooping spirits:

'Tis said the stout Parisians do revolt

And turn again unto the warlike French.

ALENCON.

Then march to Paris, royal Charles of France,

And keep not back your powers in dalliance.

PUCELLE.

Peace be amongst them, if they turn to us;

Else, ruin combat with their palaces!

[Enter Scout.]

SCOUT.

Success unto our valiant general,

And happiness to his accomplices!

CHARLES.

What tidings send our scouts? I prithee, speak.

SCOUT.

The English army, that divided was
Into two parties, is now conjoin'd in one,
And means to give you battle presently.

CHARLES.

Somewhat too sudden, sirs, the warning is;
But we will presently provide for them.

BURGUNDY.

I trust the ghost of Talbot is not there:

Now he is gone, my lord, you need not fear.

PUCELLE.

Of all base passions, fear is most accursed.
Command the conquest, Charles, it shall be thine,
Let Henry fret and all the world repine.

CHARLES.

Then on, my lords; and France be fortunate!

[Exeunt.]

SCENE III. Before Angiers.

[Alarum. Excursions. Enter La Pucelle.]

PUCELLE.

The regent conquers, and the Frenchmen fly.
Now help, ye charming spells and periapts;
And ye choice spirits that admonish me,
And give me signs of future accidents. *[Thunder]*
You speedy helpers, that are substitutes
Under the lordly monarch of the north,
Appear and aid me in this enterprise.

[Enter Fiends.]

This speedy and quick appearance argues proof

Of your accustom'd diligence to me.

Now, ye familiar spirits, that are cull'd

Out of the powerful regions under earth,

Help me this once, that France may get the field.

[They walk and speak not.]

O, hold me not with silence over-long!

Where I was wont to feed you with my blood,

I 'll lop a member off and give it you

In earnest of a further benefit,

So you do condescend to help me now.

[They hang their heads.]

No hope to have redress? My body shall

Pay recompense, if you will grant my suit.

[They shake their heads.]

Cannot my body nor blood-sacrifice

Entreat you to your wonted furtherance?

Then take my soul, my body, soul and all,

Before that England give the French the foil.

[They depart.]

See, they forsake me! Now the time is come

That France must vail her lofty-plumed crest,

And let her head fall into England's lap.

My ancient incantations are too weak,

And hell too strong for me to buckle with:

Now, France, thy glory droopeth to the dust.

[Exit.]

[Excursions. Re-enter La Pucelle fighting hand to hand with York: La Pucelle is taken. The French fly.]

YORK.

Damsel of France, I think I have you fast:

Unchain your spirits now with spelling charms,

And try if they can gain your liberty.

A goodly prize, fit for the devil's grace!

See, how the ugly witch doth bend her brows, As if with Circe she would change my shape!

PUCELLE.

Chang'd to a worser shape thou canst not be.

YORK.

O, Charles the Dauphin is a proper man;

No shape but his can please your dainty eye.

PUCELLE.

A plaguing mischief light on Charles and thee!

And may ye both be suddenly surprised

By bloody hands, in sleeping on your beds!

YORK.

Fell banning hag; enchantress, hold thy tongue!

PUCELLE.

I prithee, give me leave to curse awhile.

YORK.

Curse, miscreant, when thou comest to the stake.

[Exeunt.]

[Alarum. Enter Suffolk, with Margaret in his hand.]

SUFFOLK.

Be what thou wilt, thou art my prisoner.

[Gazes on her.]

O fairest beauty, do not fear nor fly!

For I will touch thee but with reverent hands;

I kiss these fingers for eternal peace,

And lay them gently on thy tender side.

Who art thou? say, that I may honor thee.

MARGARET.

Margaret my name, and daughter to a king, The King of Naples, whosoe'er thou art.

SUFFOLK.

An earl I am, and Suffolk am I call'd.

Be not offended, nature's miracle,

Thou art allotted to be ta'en by me.

So doth the swan her downy cygnets save,

Keeping them prisoner underneath her wings.

Yet, if this servile usage once offend,

Go and be free again as Suffolk's friend.

[She is going.]

O, stay! I have no power to let her pass;

My hand would free her, but my heart says no.

As plays the sun upon the glassy streams,

Twinkling another counterfeited beam,

So seems this gorgeous beauty to mine eyes.

Fain would I woo her, yet I dare not speak:

I'll call for pen and ink, and write my mind.

Fie, de la Pole! disable not thyself;

Hast not a tongue? is she not here?

Wilt thou be daunted at a woman's sight?

Aye, beauty's princely majesty is such,

Confounds the tongue and makes the senses rough.

MARGARET.

Say, Earl of Suffolk,—if thy name be so—

What ransom must I pay before I pass?

For I perceive I am thy prisoner.

SUFFOLK.

How canst thou tell she will deny thy suit,

Before thou make a trial of her love?

MARGARET.

Why speak'st thou not? what ransom must I pay?

SUFFOLK.

She's beautiful and therefore to be woo'd;

She is a woman, therefore to be won.

MARGARET.

Wilt thou accept of ransom? yea, or no.

SUFFOLK.

Fond man, remember that thou hast a wife;

Then how can Margaret be thy paramour?

MARGARET.

I were best leave him, for he will not hear.

SUFFOLK.

There all is marr'd; there lies a cooling card.

MARGARET.

He talks at random; sure, the man is mad.

SUFFOLK.

And yet a dispensation may be had.

MARGARET.

And yet I would that you would answer me.

SUFFOLK.

I'll win this Lady Margaret. For whom?
Why, for my king; tush, that 's a wooden thing!

MARGARET.

He talks of wood: it is some carpenter.

SUFFOLK.

Yet so my fancy may be satisfied,
And peace established between these realms.
But there remains a scruple in that too;
For though her father be the King of Naples,
Duke of Anjou and Maine, yet is he poor,
And our nobility will scorn the match.

MARGARET.

Hear ye, captain, are you not at leisure?

SUFFOLK.

It shall be so, disdain they ne'er so much:

Henry is youthful and will quickly yield.

Madam, I have a secret to reveal.

MARGARET.

What though I be enthrall'd? he seems a knight,

And will not any way dishonor me.

SUFFOLK.

Lady, vouchsafe to listen what I say.

MARGARET.

Perhaps I shall be rescued by the French;

And then I need not crave his courtesy.

SUFFOLK.

Sweet madam, give me hearing in a cause—

MARGARET.

Tush! women have been captivate ere now.

SUFFOLK.

Lady, wherefore talk you so?

MARGARET.

I cry you mercy, 'tis but Quid for Quo.

SUFFOLK.

Say, gentle princess, would you not suppose
Your bondage happy, to be made a queen?

MARGARET.

To be a queen in bondage is more vile
Than is a slave in base servility;

For princes should be free.

SUFFOLK.

And so shall you,

If happy England's royal king be free.

MARGARET.

Why, what concerns his freedom unto me?

SUFFOLK.

I'll undertake to make thee Henry's queen,

To put a golden scepter in thy hand

And set a precious crown upon thy head,

If thou wilt condescend to be my—

MARGARET.

What?

SUFFOLK.

His love.

MARGARET.

I am unworthy to be Henry's wife.

SUFFOLK.
No, gentle madam; I unworthy am
To woo so fair a dame to be his wife,
And have no portion in the choice myself.

How say you, madam, are ye so content?

MARGARET.
An if my father please, I am content.

SUFFOLK.

Then call our captain and our colors forth.
And, madam, at your father's castle walls
We'll crave a parley, to confer with him.

[A parley sounded.   Enter Reignier on the walls.]

See, Reignier, see, thy daughter prisoner!

REIGNIER.

To whom?

SUFFOLK.

To me.

REIGNIER.

Suffolk, what remedy?

I am a soldier, and unapt to weep,

Or to exclaim on fortune's fickleness.

SUFFOLK.

Yes, there is remedy enough, my lord:

Consent, and for thy honor give consent,

Thy daughter shall be wedded to my king;

Whom I with pain have woo'd and won thereto;

And this her easy-held imprisonment

Hath gain'd thy daughter princely liberty.

REIGNIER.

Speaks Suffolk as he thinks?

SUFFOLK.

Fair Margaret knows

That Suffolk doth not flatter, face, or feign.

REIGNIER.

Upon thy princely warrant, I descend

To give thee answer of thy just demand.

[Exit from the walls.]

SUFFOLK.

And here I will expect thy coming.

[Trumpets sound. Enter Reignier, below.]

REIGNIER.

Welcome, brave earl, into our territories:

Command in Anjou what your honor pleases.

SUFFOLK.

Thanks, Reignier, happy for so sweet a child,

Fit to be made companion with a king:

What answer makes your grace unto my suit?

REIGNIER.

Since thou dost deign to woo her little worth

To be the princely bride of such a lord;

Upon condition I may quietly

Enjoy mine own, the country Maine and Anjou,

Free from oppression or the stroke of war,

My daughter shall be Henry's, if he please.

SUFFOLK.

That is her ransom; I deliver her;

And those two counties I will undertake
Your Grace shall well and quietly enjoy.

REIGNIER.
And I again, in Henry's royal name,
As deputy unto that gracious king,
Give thee her hand, for sign of plighted faith.

SUFFOLK.
Reignier of France, I give thee kingly thanks,
Because this is in traffic of a king.

[Aside] And yet, methinks, I could be well content
To be mine own attorney in this case.
I 'll over then to England with this news,
And make this marriage to be solemnized.
So, farewell, Reignier; set this diamond safe
In golden palaces, as it becomes.

REIGNIER.
I do embrace thee as I would embrace

The Christian prince, King Henry, were he here.

MARGARET.

Farewell, my lord: good wishes, praise and prayers.
Shall Suffolk ever have of Margaret. [Going.

SUFFOLK.
Farewell, sweet madam: but hark you, Margaret;
No princely commendations to my king?

MARGARET.
Such commendations as becomes a maid,
A virgin and his servant, say to him.

SUFFOLK.

Words sweetly placed and modestly directed.
But, madam, I must trouble you again;
No loving token to his majesty?

MARGARET.

Yes, my good lord, a pure unspotted heart,
Never yet taint with love, I send the king.

SUFFOLK.

And this withal. *[Kisses her.]*

MARGARET.

That for thyself: I will not so presume
To send such peevish tokens to a king.

[Exeunt Reignier and Margaret.]

SUFFOLK.

O, wert thou for myself! But, Suffolk, stay;
Thou mayst not wander in that labyrinth;
There Minotaurs and ugly treasons lurk.
Solicit Henry with her wondrous praise:
Bethink thee on her virtues that surmount,
And natural graces that extinguish art;
Repeat their semblance often on the seas,

That, when thou comest to kneel at Henry's feet,
Thou mayst bereave him of his wits with wonder.

[Exit.]

SCENE IV. Camp of the Duke of York in Anjou.

[Enter York, Warwick, and others.]

YORK.
Bring forth that sorceress condemn'd to burn.

[Enter La Pucelle, guarded, and a Shepherd.]

SHEPHERD.

Ah, Joan, this kills thy father's heart outright!
Have I sought every country far and near,
And now it is my chance to find thee out,
Must I behold thy timeless cruel death?

Ah, Joan, sweet daughter Joan, I 'll die with thee!

PUCELLE.
Decrepit miser! base ignoble wretch!

I am descended of a gentler blood:
Thou art no father nor no friend of mine.

SHEPHERD.
Out, out! My lords, as please you, 'tis not so;
I did beget her, all the parish knows.
Her mother liveth yet, can testify
She was the first fruit of my bachelorship.

WARWICK.

Graceless! wilt thou deny thy parentage?

YORK.
This argues what her kind of life hath been,

Wicked and vile; and so her death concludes.

SHEPHERD.

Fie, Joan, that thou wilt be so obstacle!

God knows thou art a collop of my flesh;

And for thy sake have I shed many a tear:

Deny me not, I prithee, gentle Joan.

PUCELLE.

Peasant, avaunt! You have suborn'd this man,

Of purpose to obscure my noble birth.

SHEPHERD.

'Tis true, I gave a noble to the priest

The morn that I was wedded to her mother.

Kneel down and take my blessing, good my girl.

Wilt thou not stoop? Now cursed be the time

Of thy nativity! I would the milk

Thy mother gave thee when thou suck'dst her breast,

Had been a little ratsbane for thy sake!

Or else, when thou didst keep my lambs a-field,

I wish some ravenous wolf had eaten thee!

Dost thou deny thy father, cursed drab?

O, burn her, burn her! hanging is too good.

[Exit.]

YORK.

Take her away; for she hath lived too long,

To fill the world with vicious qualities.

PUCELLE.

First, let me tell you whom you have condemn'd:

Not me begotten of a shepherd swain,

But issued from the progeny of kings;

Virtuous and holy; chosen from above,

By inspiration of celestial grace,

To work exceeding miracles on earth.

I never had to do with wicked spirits:
But you, that are polluted with your lusts,
Stain'd with the guiltless blood of innocents,
Corrupt and tainted with a thousand vices,
Because you want the grace that others have,
You judge it straight a thing impossible
To compass wonders but by help of devils.
No, misconceived! Joan of Arc hath been
A virgin from her tender infancy,
Chaste and immaculate in very thought;
Whose maiden blood, thus rigorously effused,
Will cry for vengeance at the gates of heaven.

YORK.

Aye, aye: away with her to execution!

WARWICK.

And hark ye, sirs; because she is a maid,
Spare for no faggots, let there be enow:
Place barrels of pitch upon the fatal stake,

That so her torture may be shortened.

PUCELLE.
Will nothing turn your unrelenting hearts?
Then, Joan, discover thine infirmity,
That warranteth by law to be thy privilege.

I am with child, ye bloody homicides:
Murder not then the fruit within my womb,
Although ye hale me to a violent death.

YORK.
Now heaven forfend! the holy maid with child!

WARWICK.

The greatest miracle that e'er ye wrought:
Is all your strict preciseness come to this?

YORK.

She and the Dauphin have been juggling:
I did imagine what would be her refuge.

WARWICK.

Well, go to; we'll have no bastards live;
Especially since Charles must father it.

PUCELLE.

You are deceived; my child is none of his:
It was Alencon that enjoy'd my love.

YORK.

Alencon! that notorious Machiavel!
It dies, an if it had a thousand lives.

PUCELLE.

O, give me leave, I have deluded you:
'Twas neither Charles nor yet the duke I named,

But Reignier, king of Naples, that prevail'd.

WARWICK.

A married man! that's most intolerable.

YORK.

Why, here's a girl! I think she knows not well

There were so many, whom she may accuse.

WARWICK.

It's sign she hath been liberal and free.

YORK.

And yet, forsooth, she is a virgin pure.

Strumpet, thy words condemn thy brat and thee:

Use no entreaty, for it is in vain.

PUCELLE.

Then lead me hence; with whom I leave my curse:

May never glorious sun reflex his beams

Upon the country where you make abode:

But darkness and the gloomy shade of death

Environ you, till mischief and despair

Drive you to break your necks or hang yourselves!

[Exit, guarded.]

YORK.

Break thou in pieces and consume to ashes,

Thou foul accursed minister of hell!

[Enter Cardinal Beaufort, Bishop of Winchester, attended.]

CARDINAL.

Lord regent, I do greet your excellence

With letters of commission from the king.

For know, my lords, the states of Christendom,

Moved with remorse of these outrageous broils,

Have earnestly implored a general peace

Betwixt our nation and the aspiring French;
And here at hand the Dauphin and his train
Approacheth, to confer about some matter.

YORK.
Is all our travail turn'd to this effect?
After the slaughter of so many peers,
So many captains, gentlemen and soldiers,
That in this quarrel have been overthrown,
And sold their bodies for their country's benefit,
Shall we at last conclude effeminate peace?
Have we not lost most part of all the towns,
By treason, falsehood, and by treachery,
Our great progenitors had conquered?
O, Warwick, Warwick! I foresee with grief
The utter loss of all the realm of France.

WARWICK.
Be patient, York: if we conclude a peace,
It shall be with such strict and severe covenants
As little shall the Frenchmen gain thereby.

[Enter Charles, Alencon, Bastard, Reignier, and others.]

CHARLES.

Since, lords of England, it is thus agreed
That peaceful truce shall be proclaim'd in France,
We come to be informed by yourselves
What the conditions of that league must be.

YORK.

Speak, Winchester; for boiling choler chokes
The hollow passage of my poison'd voice,
By sight of these our baleful enemies.

CARDINAL.

Charles, and the rest, it is enacted thus:
That, in regard King Henry gives consent,
Of mere compassion and of lenity,
To ease your country of distressful war,
And suffer you to breathe in fruitful peace,

You shall become true liegemen to his crown:
And, Charles, upon condition thou wilt swear
To pay him tribute and submit thyself,
Thou shalt be placed as viceroy under him,
And still enjoy the regal dignity.

ALENCON.

Must he be then as shadow of himself?
Adorn his temples with a coronet,
And yet, in substance and authority,
Retain but privilege of a private man?

This proffer is absurd and reasonless.

CHARLES.
'Tis known already that I am possess'd
With more than half the Gallian territories,
And therein reverenced for their lawful king:
Shall I, for lucre of the rest unvanquish'd,
Detract so much from that prerogative,

As to be call'd but viceroy of the whole?
No, lord ambassador, I 'll rather keep
That which I have than, coveting for more,
Be cast from possibility of all.

YORK.
Insulting Charles! hast thou by secret means
Used intercession to obtain a league,
And, now the matter grows to compromise,
Stand'st thou aloof upon comparison?
Either accept the title thou usurp'st,
Of benefit proceeding from our king
And not of any challenge of desert,
Or we will plague thee with incessant wars.

REIGNIER.
My lord, you do not well in obstinacy
To cavil in the course of this contract:
If once it be neglected, ten to one
We shall not find like opportunity.

ALENCON.

To say the truth, it is your policy
To save your subjects from such massacre
And ruthless slaughters as are daily seen,
By our proceeding in hostility;
And therefore take this compact of a truce,
Although you break it when your pleasure serves.

WARWICK.

How say'st thou, Charles? shall our condition stand?

CHARLES.

It shall;
Only reserv'd, you claim no interest
In any of our towns of garrison.

YORK.

Then swear allegiance to his majesty,
As thou art knight, never to disobey
Nor be rebellious to the crown of England

Thou, nor thy nobles, to the crown of England.

So, now dismiss your army when ye please;

Hang up your ensigns, let your drums be still,

For here we entertain a solemn peace.

[Exeunt.]

SCENE V. London . The royal palace.

[*Enter* Suffolk in conference with the King,

Gloucester and Exeter.]

KING.

Your wondrous rare description, noble earl,

Of beauteous Margaret hath astonish'd me.

Her virtues graced with external gifts

Do breed love's settled passions in my heart:

And like as rigor of tempestuous gusts

Provokes the mightiest hulk against the tide,

So am I driven by breath of her renown,

Either to suffer shipwreck or arrive
Where I may have fruition of her love.

SUFFOLK.
Tush, my good lord, this superficial tale
Is but a preface of her worthy praise;
The chief perfections of that lovely dame,
Had I sufficient skill to utter them,
Would make a volume of enticing lines,
Able to ravish any dull conceit:
And, which is more, she is not so divine,
So full-replete with choice of all delights,
But with as humble lowliness of mind
She is content to be at your command;
Command, I mean, of virtuous intents,
To love and honor Henry as her lord.

KING.
And otherwise will Henry ne'er presume.
Therefore, my lord protector, give consent
That Margaret may be England's royal queen.

GLOUCESTER.

So should I give consent to flatter sin.
You know, my lord, your highness is betroth'd
Unto another lady of esteem:
How shall we then dispense with that contract,
And not deface your honor with reproach?

SUFFOLK.
As doth a ruler with unlawful oaths;
Or one that, at a triumph having vow'd
To try his strength, forsaketh yet the lists
By reason of his adversary's odds:
A poor earl's daughter is unequal odds,
And therefore may be broke without offense.

GLOUCESTER.
Why, what, I pray, is Margaret more than that?
Her father is no better than an earl,
Although in glorious titles he excel.

SUFFOLK.

Yes, my lord, her father is a king,

The King of Naples and Jerusalem;

And of such great authority in France,

As his alliance will confirm our peace,

And keep the Frenchmen in allegiance.

GLOUCESTER.

And so the Earl of Armagnac may do,

Because he is near kinsman unto Charles.

EXETER.

Beside, his wealth doth warrant a liberal dower,

Where Reignier sooner will receive than give.

SUFFOLK.

A dower, my lords! disgrace not so your king,

That he should be so abject, base and poor,

To choose for wealth and not for perfect love.

Henry is able to enrich his queen,

And not to seek a queen to make him rich:
So worthless peasants bargain for their wives,
As market-men for oxen, sheep, or horse.
Marriage is a matter of more worth
Than to be dealt in by attorneyship;
Not whom we will; but whom his grace affects,
Must be companion of his nuptial bed:
And therefore, lords, since he affects her most,
It most of all these reasons bindeth us,
In our opinions she should be preferr'd.
For what is wedlock forced but a hell,
An age of discord and continual strife?
Whereas the contrary bringeth bliss,
And is a pattern of celestial peace.
Whom should we match with Henry, being a king,
But Margaret, that is daughter to a king?
Her peerless feature, joined with her birth,
Approves her fit for none but for a king;
Her valiant courage and undaunted spirit,
More than in women commonly is seen,
Will answer our hope in issue of a king;

For Henry, son unto a conqueror,

Is likely to beget more conquerors,

If with a lady of so high resolve

As is fair Margaret he be link'd in love.

Then yield, my lords; and here conclude with me

That Margaret shall be queen, and none but she.

KING.

Whether it be through force of your report,

My noble Lord of Suffolk, or for that

My tender youth was never yet attaint

With any passion of inflaming love,

I cannot tell; but this I am assured,

I feel such sharp dissension in my breast,

Such fierce alarums both of hope and fear,

As I am sick with working of my thoughts.

Take, therefore, shipping; post, my lord, to France;

Agree to any covenants, and procure

That Lady Margaret do vouchsafe to come

To cross the seas to England, and be crown'd

King Henry's faithful and anointed queen:

For your expenses and sufficient charge,

Among the people gather up a tenth.

Be gone, I say; for till you do return,

I rest perplexed with a thousand cares.

And you, good uncle, banish all offense:

If you do censure me by what you were,

Not what you are, I know it will excuse

This sudden execution of my will.

And so, conduct me where, from company,

I may revolve and ruminate my grief.

[Exit.]

GLOUCESTER.

Aye, grief, I fear me, both at first and last.

[Exeunt Gloucester and Exeter.]

SUFFOLK.

Thus Suffolk hath prevail'd; and thus he goes,

As did the youthful Paris once to Greece, With hope to find the like event in love,

But prosper better than the Troyan did.

Margaret shall now be queen, and rule the king;

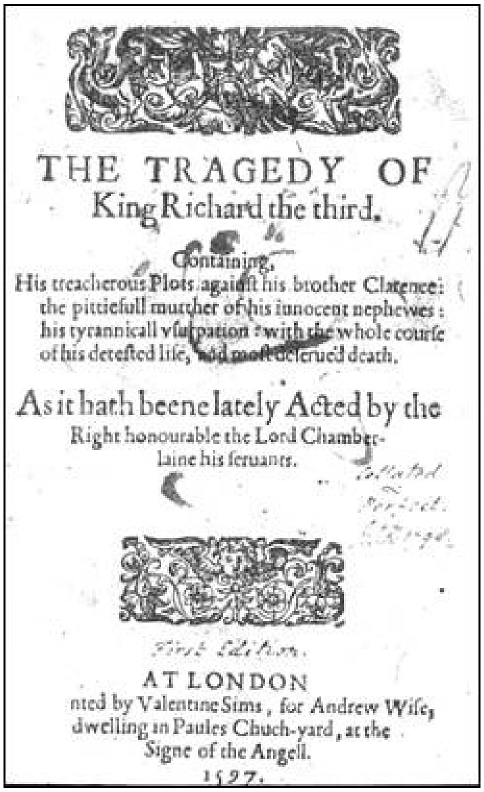
But I will rule both her, the king and realm.

[Exit.]

RICHARD III

This history play is believed to have been written in 1591 and depicts the Machiavellian rise to power of Richard III of England. *Richard III* concludes Shakespeare's first tetralogy and it is considered by many to be one of Shakespeare's greatest plays. After *Hamlet* , it is the longest play in Shakespeare’s canon, being rarely performed unabridged, with minor characters often being removed entirely from the drama.

The play begins with Richard describing his brother King Edward IV’s accession to the throne and his own devious schemes to usurp it from him. Shakespeare presents Richard III as a murderous and deformed hunchback, far exaggerating the real life person. The main source of the play is Hall’s chronicle known as *Union.*



THE TRAGEDY OF
King Richard the third.

Containing,
His treacherous Plots againſt his brother Clarence:
the pittiefull murther of his innocent nephewes:
his tyrannicall vſurpation: with the whole courſe
of his deteſted life, and moſt deſerued death.

As it hath beene lately Acted by the
Right honourable the Lord Chamber-
laine his ſeruants.

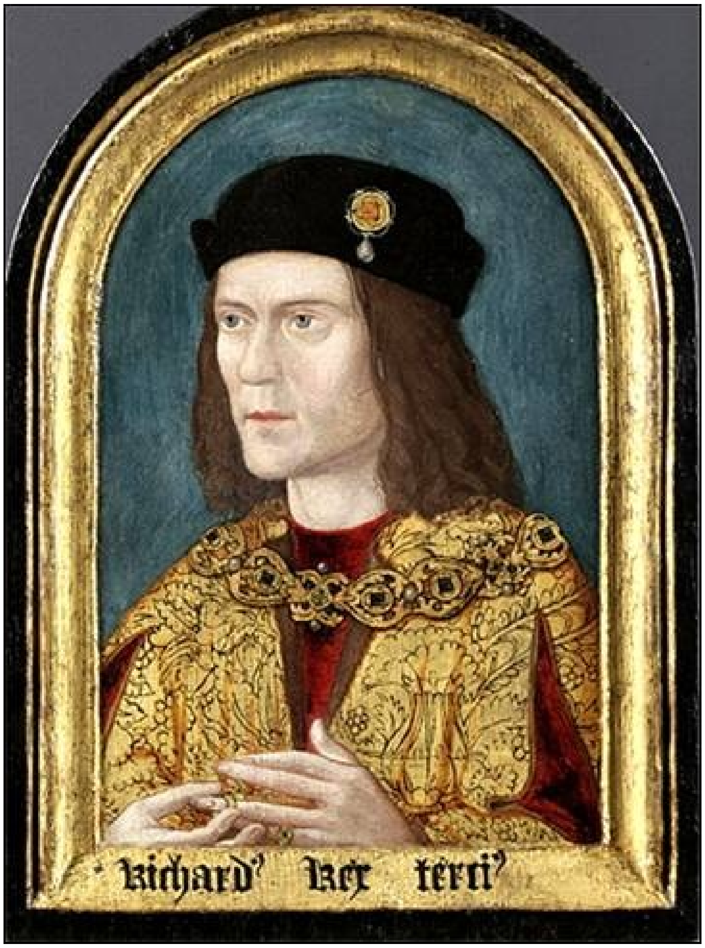
Collated
perfect.
[illegible]

First Edition.

AT LONDON
nted by Valentine Sims, for Andrew Wiſe,
dwelling in Paules Chuch-yard, at the
Signe of the Angell.
1597.

The front page of the first Quarto, 1597

SCENE 4.


Richard' Rex terti'

The ‘infamous’ Richard III

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SCENE 5.

Laurence Olivier in the 1955 film adaptation

IAN McKELLEN ANNETTE BENING JIM BROADBENT ROBERT DOWNEY, JR.
NIGEL HAWTHORNE KRISTIN SCOTT THOMAS MAGGIE SMITH and JOHN WOOD
RICHARD III
POWER CONQUERS ALL
SOUNDTRACK AVAILABLE ON

The 1995 film adaptation, with Sir Ian McKellen in the title role

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

EDWARD THE FOURTH

Sons to the King

EDWARD, PRINCE OF WALES afterwards KING EDWARD V

RICHARD, DUKE OF YORK,

Brothers to the King

GEORGE, DUKE OF CLARENCE,

RICHARD, DUKE OF GLOUCESTER, afterwards KING RICHARD III

A YOUNG SON OF CLARENCE (Edward, Earl of Warwick)

HENRY, EARL OF RICHMOND, afterwards KING HENRY VII

CARDINAL BOURCHIER, ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY

THOMAS ROTHERHAM, ARCHBISHOP OF YORK

JOHN MORTON, BISHOP OF ELY

DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM

DUKE OF NORFOLK

EARL OF SURREY, his son

EARL RIVERS, brother to King Edward's Queen

MARQUIS OF DORSET and LORD GREY, her sons

EARL OF OXFORD

LORD HASTINGS

LORD LOVEL

LORD STANLEY, called also EARL OF DERBY

SIR THOMAS VAUGHAN

SIR RICHARD RATCLIFF

SIR WILLIAM CATESBY

SIR JAMES TYRREL

SIR JAMES BLOUNT

SIR WALTER HERBERT

SIR WILLIAM BRANDON

SIR ROBERT BRAKENBURY, Lieutenant of the Tower

CHRISTOPHER URSWICK, a priest

LORD MAYOR OF LONDON

SHERIFF OF WILTSHIRE

HASTINGS, a pursuivant

TRESSEL and BERKELEY, gentlemen attending on Lady Anne

ELIZABETH, Queen to King Edward IV

MARGARET, widow of King Henry VI

DUCHESS OF YORK, mother to King Edward IV

LADY ANNE, widow of Edward, Prince of Wales, son to King Henry VI; afterwards married to the Duke of Gloucester

A YOUNG DAUGHTER OF CLARENCE (Margaret Plantagenet, Countess of Salisbury)

Ghosts, of Richard's victims

Lords, Gentlemen, and Attendants; Priest, Scrivener, Page,

Bishops,

Aldermen, Citizens, Soldiers, Messengers, Murderers, Keeper

ACT I. SCENE 1.

London. A street

Enter RICHARD, DUKE OF GLOUCESTER, solus

GLOUCESTER. Now is the winter of our discontent
Made glorious summer by this sun of York;
And all the clouds that lour'd upon our house
In the deep bosom of the ocean buried.
Now are our brows bound with victorious wreaths;
Our bruised arms hung up for monuments;
Our stern alarums chang'd to merry meetings,
Our dreadful marches to delightful measures.

Grim-visag'd war hath smooth'd his wrinkled front,

And now, instead of mounting barbed steeds

To fright the souls of fearful adversaries,

He capers nimbly in a lady's chamber

To the lascivious pleasing of a lute.

But I-that am not shap'd for sportive tricks,

Nor made to court an amorous looking-glass-

I-that am rudely stamp'd, and want love's majesty

To strut before a wanton ambling nymph-

I-that am curtail'd of this fair proportion,

Cheated of feature by dissembling nature,

Deform'd, unfinish'd, sent before my time

Into this breathing world scarce half made up,

And that so lamely and unfashionable

That dogs bark at me as I halt by them-

Why, I, in this weak piping time of peace,

Have no delight to pass away the time,

Unless to spy my shadow in the sun

And descant on mine own deformity.

And therefore, since I cannot prove a lover

To entertain these fair well-spoken days, I am determined to prove a villain

And hate the idle pleasures of these days.

Plots have I laid, inductions dangerous,

By drunken prophecies, libels, and dreams,

To set my brother Clarence and the King

In deadly hate the one against the other;

And if King Edward be as true and just

As I am subtle, false, and treacherous,

This day should Clarence closely be mew'd up-

About a prophecy which says that G

Of Edward's heirs the murderer shall be.

Dive, thoughts, down to my soul. Here Clarence comes.

Enter CLARENCE, guarded, and BRAKENBURY

Brother, good day. What means this armed guard

That waits upon your Grace?

CLARENCE.

His Majesty,

Tend'ring my person's safety, hath appointed

This conduct to convey me to th' Tower.

GLOUCESTER.

Upon what cause?

CLARENCE.

Because my name is George.

GLOUCESTER.

Alack, my lord, that fault is none of yours:

He should, for that, commit your godfathers.

O, belike his Majesty hath some intent

That you should be new-christ'ned in the Tower.

But what's the matter, Clarence? May I know?

CLARENCE.

Yea, Richard, when I know; for I protest

As yet I do not; but, as I can learn,

He hearkens after prophecies and dreams,
And from the cross-row plucks the letter G,
And says a wizard told him that by G
His issue disinherited should be;
And, for my name of George begins with G,
It follows in his thought that I am he.
These, as I learn, and such like toys as these
Hath mov'd his Highness to commit me now.

GLOUCESTER.

Why, this it is when men are rul'd by women:
'Tis not the King that sends you to the Tower;
My Lady Grey his wife, Clarence, 'tis she
That tempers him to this extremity.
Was it not she and that good man of worship,
Antony Woodville, her brother there,
That made him send Lord Hastings to the Tower,
From whence this present day he is delivered?

We are not safe, Clarence; we are not safe.

CLARENCE.

By heaven, I think there is no man is secure

But the Queen's kindred, and night-walking heralds

That trudge betwixt the King and Mistress Shore.

Heard you not what an humble suppliant

Lord Hastings was, for her delivery?

GLOUCESTER.

Humbly complaining to her deity

Got my Lord Chamberlain his liberty.

I'll tell you what-I think it is our way,

If we will keep in favour with the King,

To be her men and wear her livery:

The jealous o'er-worn widow, and herself,

Since that our brother dubb'd them gentlewomen,

Are mighty gossips in our monarchy.

BRAKENBURY.

I beseech your Graces both to pardon me:

His Majesty hath straitly given in charge
That no man shall have private conference,
Of what degree soever, with your brother.

GLOUCESTER.
Even so; an't please your worship, Brakenbury,
You may partake of any thing we say:
We speak no treason, man; we say the King
Is wise and virtuous, and his noble queen
Well struck in years, fair, and not jealous;
We say that Shore's wife hath a pretty foot,
A cherry lip, a bonny eye, a passing pleasing tongue;
And that the Queen's kindred are made gentlefolks.

How say you, sir? Can you deny all this?

BRAKENBURY.
With this, my lord, myself have naught to do.

GLOUCESTER.
Naught to do with Mistress Shore! I tell thee,

fellow,

He that doth naught with her, excepting one,

Were best to do it secretly alone.

BRAKENBURY.

What one, my lord?

GLOUCESTER.

Her husband, knave! Wouldst thou betray me?

BRAKENBURY.

I do beseech your Grace to pardon me, and withal

Forbear your conference with the noble Duke.

CLARENCE.

We know thy charge, Brakenbury, and will obey.

GLOUCESTER.

We are the Queen's abjects and must obey.

Brother, farewell; I will unto the King;

And whatsoe'er you will employ me in-

Were it to call King Edward's widow sister-

I will perform it to enfranchise you.

Meantime, this deep disgrace in brotherhood

Touches me deeper than you can imagine.

CLARENCE.

I know it pleaseth neither of us well.

GLOUCESTER.

Well, your imprisonment shall not be long;

I will deliver or else lie for you.

Meantime, have patience.

CLARENCE.

I must perforce. Farewell.

Exeunt CLARENCE, BRAKENBURY, and guard

GLOUCESTER.

Go tread the path that thou shalt ne'er return.
Simple, plain Clarence, I do love thee so
That I will shortly send thy soul to heaven,
If heaven will take the present at our hands.

But who comes here? The new-delivered Hastings?

Enter LORD HASTINGS

HASTINGS. Good time of day unto my gracious lord!

GLOUCESTER.
As much unto my good Lord Chamberlain!

Well are you welcome to the open air.
How hath your lordship brook'd imprisonment?

HASTINGS.
With patience, noble lord, as prisoners must;
But I shall live, my lord, to give them thanks

That were the cause of my imprisonment.

GLOUCESTER.

No doubt, no doubt; and so shall Clarence too;

For they that were your enemies are his,

And have prevail'd as much on him as you.

HASTINGS.

More pity that the eagles should be mew'd

Whiles kites and buzzards prey at liberty.

GLOUCESTER.

What news abroad?

HASTINGS.

No news so bad abroad as this at home:

The King is sickly, weak, and melancholy,

And his physicians fear him mightily.

GLOUCESTER.

Now, by Saint John, that news is bad indeed.

O, he hath kept an evil diet long

And overmuch consum'd his royal person!

'Tis very grievous to be thought upon.

Where is he? In his bed?

HASTINGS.

He is.

GLOUCESTER.

Go you before, and I will follow you.

Exit HASTINGS

He cannot live, I hope, and must not die

Till George be pack'd with posthorse up to heaven.

I'll in to urge his hatred more to Clarence

With lies well steel'd with weighty arguments;

And, if I fail not in my deep intent,
Clarence hath not another day to live;
Which done, God take King Edward to his mercy,
And leave the world for me to bustle in!

For then I'll marry Warwick's youngest daughter.
What though I kill'd her husband and her father?
The readiest way to make the wench amends
Is to become her husband and her father;
The which will I-not all so much for love
As for another secret close intent
By marrying her which I must reach unto.
But yet I run before my horse to market.
Clarence still breathes; Edward still lives and reigns;
When they are gone, then must I count my gains. *Exit*

SCENE 2.

London. Another street

Enter corpse of KING HENRY THE SIXTH, with halberds to guard it;

LADY ANNE being the mourner, attended by TRESSEL and BERKELEY

ANNE.

Set down, set down your honourable load-
If honour may be shrouded in a hearse;
Whilst I awhile obsequiously lament
Th' untimely fall of virtuous Lancaster.
Poor key-cold figure of a holy king!

Pale ashes of the house of Lancaster!
Thou bloodless remnant of that royal blood!
Be it lawful that I invocate thy ghost
To hear the lamentations of poor Anne,
Wife to thy Edward, to thy slaughtered son,

Stabb'd by the self-same hand that made these wounds.
Lo, in these windows that let forth thy life
I pour the helpless balm of my poor eyes.

O, cursed be the hand that made these holes!
Cursed the heart that had the heart to do it!

Cursed the blood that let this blood from hence!
More direful hap betide that hated wretch
That makes us wretched by the death of thee
Than I can wish to adders, spiders, toads,
Or any creeping venom'd thing that lives!
If ever he have child, abortive be it,
Prodigious, and untimely brought to light,
Whose ugly and unnatural aspect
May fright the hopeful mother at the view,
And that be heir to his unhappiness!
If ever he have wife, let her be made
More miserable by the death of him
Than I am made by my young lord and thee!
Come, now towards Chertsey with your holy load,

Taken from Paul's to be interred there;

And still as you are weary of this weight

Rest you, whiles I lament King Henry's corse.

[The bearers take up the coffin]

Enter GLOUCESTER

GLOUCESTER. Stay, you that bear the corse, and set it down.

ANNE.

What black magician conjures up this fiend

To stop devoted charitable deeds?

GLOUCESTER.

Villains, set down the corse; or, by Saint Paul,

I'll make a corse of him that disobeys!

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

My lord, stand back, and let the coffin pass.

GLOUCESTER.

Unmannerd dog! Stand thou, when I command.
Advance thy halberd higher than my breast,
Or, by Saint Paul, I'll strike thee to my foot
And spurn upon thee, beggar, for thy boldness.
[The bearers set down the coffin]

ANNE.
What, do you tremble? Are you all afraid?
Alas, I blame you not, for you are mortal,
And mortal eyes cannot endure the devil.

Avaunt, thou dreadful minister of hell!
Thou hadst but power over his mortal body,
His soul thou canst not have; therefore, be gone.

GLOUCESTER.
Sweet saint, for charity, be not so curst.

ANNE.

Foul devil, for God's sake, hence and trouble us not;

For thou hast made the happy earth thy hell

Fill'd it with cursing cries and deep exclaims.

If thou delight to view thy heinous deeds,

Behold this pattern of thy butcheries.

O, gentlemen, see, see! Dead Henry's wounds

Open their congeal'd mouths and bleed afresh.

Blush, blush, thou lump of foul deformity,

For 'tis thy presence that exhales this blood

From cold and empty veins where no blood dwells;

Thy deeds inhuman and unnatural

Provokes this deluge most unnatural.

O God, which this blood mad'st, revenge his death!

O earth, which this blood drink'st, revenge his death!

Either, heav'n, with lightning strike the murd'rer dead;

Or, earth, gape open wide and eat him quick,

As thou dost swallow up this good king's blood,

Which his hell-govern'd arm hath butchered.

GLOUCESTER.

Lady, you know no rules of charity,

Which renders good for bad, blessings for curses.

ANNE.

Villain, thou knowest nor law of God nor man:

No beast so fierce but knows some touch of pity.

GLOUCESTER.

But I know none, and therefore am no beast.

ANNE.

O wonderful, when devils tell the truth!

GLOUCESTER.

More wonderful when angels are so angry.

Vouchsafe, divine perfection of a woman,

Of these supposed crimes to give me leave

By circumstance but to acquit myself.

ANNE.

Vouchsafe, diffus'd infection of a man,

Of these known evils but to give me leave

By circumstance to accuse thy cursed self.

GLOUCESTER.

Fairer than tongue can name thee, let me have

Some patient leisure to excuse myself.

ANNE.

Fouler than heart can think thee, thou canst make

No excuse current but to hang thyself.

GLOUCESTER.

By such despair I should accuse myself.

ANNE.

And by despairing shalt thou stand excused

For doing worthy vengeance on thyself

That didst unworthy slaughter upon others.

GLOUCESTER.

Say that I slew them not?

ANNE.

Then say they were not slain.

But dead they are, and, devilish slave, by thee.

GLOUCESTER.

I did not kill your husband.

ANNE.

Why, then he is alive.

GLOUCESTER.

Nay, he is dead, and slain by Edward's hands.

ANNE.

In thy foul throat thou liest: Queen Margaret saw

Thy murd'rous falchion smoking in his blood;

The which thou once didst bend against her breast,

But that thy brothers beat aside the point.

GLOUCESTER.

I was provoked by her sland'rous tongue

That laid their guilt upon my guiltless shoulders.

ANNE.

Thou wast provoked by thy bloody mind,

That never dream'st on aught but butcheries.

Didst thou not kill this king?

GLOUCESTER.

I grant ye.

ANNE.

Dost grant me, hedgehog? Then, God grant me to

Thou mayst be damned for that wicked deed!

O, he was gentle, mild, and virtuous!

GLOUCESTER.

The better for the King of Heaven, that hath him.

ANNE.

He is in heaven, where thou shalt never come.

GLOUCESTER.

Let him thank me that holp to send him thither,

For he was fitter for that place than earth.

ANNE.

And thou unfit for any place but hell.

GLOUCESTER.

Yes, one place else, if you will hear me name it.

ANNE.

Some dungeon.

GLOUCESTER.

Your bed-chamber.

ANNE.

Ill rest betide the chamber where thou liest!

GLOUCESTER.

So will it, madam, till I lie with you.

ANNE.

I hope so.

GLOUCESTER.

I know so. But, gentle Lady Anne,

To leave this keen encounter of our wits,

And fall something into a slower method-

Is not the causer of the timeless deaths
Of these Plantagenets, Henry and Edward,
As blameful as the executioner?

ANNE.

Thou wast the cause and most accurs'd effect.

GLOUCESTER.

Your beauty was the cause of that effect-
Your beauty that did haunt me in my sleep
To undertake the death of all the world
So I might live one hour in your sweet bosom.

ANNE.

If I thought that, I tell thee, homicide,
These nails should rend that beauty from my cheeks.

GLOUCESTER.

These eyes could not endure that beauty's wreck;
You should not blemish it if I stood by.
As all the world is cheered by the sun,

So I by that; it is my day, my life.

ANNE.

Black night o'ershade thy day, and death thy life!

GLOUCESTER.

Curse not thyself, fair creature; thou art both.

ANNE.

I would I were, to be reveng'd on thee.

GLOUCESTER.

It is a quarrel most unnatural,

To be reveng'd on him that loveth thee.

ANNE.

It is a quarrel just and reasonable,

To be reveng'd on him that kill'd my husband.

GLOUCESTER.

He that bereft thee, lady, of thy husband

Did it to help thee to a better husband.

ANNE.

His better doth not breathe upon the earth.

GLOUCESTER.

He lives that loves thee better than he could.

ANNE.

Name him.

GLOUCESTER.

Plantagenet.

ANNE.

Why, that was he.

GLOUCESTER.

The self-same name, but one of better nature.

ANNE.

Where is he?

GLOUCESTER.

Here. [She spits at him] Why dost thou spit at me?

ANNE.

Would it were mortal poison, for thy sake!

GLOUCESTER.

Never came poison from so sweet a place.

ANNE.

Never hung poison on a fouler toad.

Out of my sight! Thou dost infect mine eyes.

GLOUCESTER.

Thine eyes, sweet lady, have infected mine.

ANNE.

Would they were basilisks to strike thee dead!

GLOUCESTER.

I would they were, that I might die at once;
For now they kill me with a living death.
Those eyes of thine from mine have drawn salt tears,
Sham'd their aspects with store of childish drops-
These eyes, which never shed remorseful tear,
No, when my father York and Edward wept
To hear the piteous moan that Rutland made
When black-fac'd Clifford shook his sword at him;
Nor when thy warlike father, like a child,
Told the sad story of my father's death,
And twenty times made pause to sob and weep
That all the standers-by had wet their cheeks

Like trees bedash'd with rain-in that sad time
My manly eyes did scorn an humble tear;
And what these sorrows could not thence exhale
Thy beauty hath, and made them blind with weeping.
I never sued to friend nor enemy;
My tongue could never learn sweet smoothing word;
But, now thy beauty is propos'd my fee,
My proud heart sues, and prompts my tongue to speak.
[She looks scornfully at him]
Teach not thy lip such scorn; for it was made
For kissing, lady, not for such contempt.
If thy revengeful heart cannot forgive,
Lo here I lend thee this sharp-pointed sword;
Which if thou please to hide in this true breast
And let the soul forth that adoreth thee,
I lay it naked to the deadly stroke,
And humbly beg the death upon my knee.

[He lays his breast open; she offers at it with his sword]
Nay, do not pause; for I did kill King Henry-
But 'twas thy beauty that provoked me.

Nay, now dispatch; 'twas I that stabb'd young Edward-

But 'twas thy heavenly face that set me on.

[She falls the sword]

Take up the sword again, or take up me.

ANNE.

Arise, dissembler; though I wish thy death,

I will not be thy executioner.

GLOUCESTER.

Then bid me kill myself, and I will do it;

ANNE.

I have already.

GLOUCESTER.

That was in thy rage.

Speak it again, and even with the word

This hand, which for thy love did kill thy love,

Shall for thy love kill a far truer love;

To both their deaths shalt thou be accessary.

ANNE.

I would I knew thy heart.

GLOUCESTER.

'Tis figur'd in my tongue.

ANNE.

I fear me both are false.

GLOUCESTER.

Then never was man true.

ANNE.

well put up your sword.

GLOUCESTER.

Say, then, my peace is made.

ANNE.

That shalt thou know hereafter.

GLOUCESTER.

But shall I live in hope?

ANNE.

All men, I hope, live so.

GLOUCESTER.

Vouchsafe to wear this ring.

ANNE.

To take is not to give. *[Puts on the ring]*

GLOUCESTER.

Look how my ring encompasseth thy finger,

Even so thy breast encloseth my poor heart;

Wear both of them, for both of them are thine.

And if thy poor devoted servant may

But beg one favour at thy gracious hand,

Thou dost confirm his happiness for ever.

ANNE.

What is it?

GLOUCESTER.

That it may please you leave these sad designs

To him that hath most cause to be a mourner,

And presently repair to Crosby House;

Where-after I have solemnly interr'd

At Chertsey monast'ry this noble king,

And wet his grave with my repentant tears-

I will with all expedient duty see you.

For divers unknown reasons, I beseech you,

Grant me this boon.

ANNE.

With all my heart; and much it joys me too

To see you are become so penitent.

Tressel and Berkeley, go along with me.

GLOUCESTER.

Bid me farewell.

ANNE.

'Tis more than you deserve;

But since you teach me how to flatter you,

Imagine I have said farewell already.

Exeunt two GENTLEMEN With LADY ANNE

GLOUCESTER.

Sirs, take up the corse.

GENTLEMEN.

Towards Chertsey, noble lord?

GLOUCESTER.

No, to White Friars; there attend my coming.

Exeunt all but GLOUCESTER

Was ever woman in this humour woo'd?

Was ever woman in this humour won?
I'll have her; but I will not keep her long.
What! I that kill'd her husband and his father-
To take her in her heart's extremest hate,
With curses in her mouth, tears in her eyes,
The bleeding witness of my hatred by;
Having God, her conscience, and these bars against me,
And I no friends to back my suit at all
But the plain devil and dissembling looks,
And yet to win her, all the world to nothing!

Ha!
Hath she forgot already that brave prince,
Edward, her lord, whom I, some three months since,
Stabb'd in my angry mood at Tewksbury?
A sweeter and a lovelier gentleman-

Fram'd in the prodigality of nature,
Young, valiant, wise, and no doubt right royal-
The spacious world cannot again afford;
And will she yet abase her eyes on me,
That cropp'd the golden prime of this sweet prince
And made her widow to a woeful bed?
On me, whose all not equals Edward's moiety?

On me, that halts and am misshapen thus?
My dukedom to a beggarly denier,
I do mistake my person all this while.
Upon my life, she finds, although I cannot,
Myself to be a marv'llous proper man.
I'll be at charges for a looking-glass,
And entertain a score or two of tailors
To study fashions to adorn my body.
Since I am crept in favour with myself,
I will maintain it with some little cost.
But first I'll turn yon fellow in his grave,
And then return lamenting to my love.
Shine out, fair sun, till I have bought a glass,

That I may see my shadow as I pass. *Exit*

SCENE 3.

London. The palace

Enter QUEEN ELIZABETH, LORD RIVERS, and LORD GREY

RIVERS. Have patience, madam; there's no doubt his Majesty
Will soon recover his accustom'd health.

GREY.
In that you brook it ill, it makes him worse;
Therefore, for God's sake, entertain good comfort,
And cheer his Grace with quick and merry eyes.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.
If he were dead, what would betide on me?

GREY.

No other harm but loss of such a lord.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

The loss of such a lord includes all harms.

GREY.

The heavens have bless'd you with a goodly son

To be your comforter when he is gone.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

Ah, he is young; and his minority

Is put unto the trust of Richard Gloucester,

A man that loves not me, nor none of you.

RIVER.

Is it concluded he shall be Protector?

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

It is determin'd, not concluded yet;

But so it must be, if the King miscarry.

Enter BUCKINGHAM and DERBY

GREY. Here come the Lords of Buckingham and Derby.

BUCKINGHAM.

Good time of day unto your royal Grace!

DERBY.

God make your Majesty joyful as you have been.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

The Countess Richmond, good my Lord

of Derby,

To your good prayer will scarcely say amen.

Yet, Derby, notwithstanding she's your wife

And loves not me, be you, good lord, assur'd

I hate not you for her proud arrogance.

DERBY.

I do beseech you, either not believe
The envious slanders of her false accusers;
Or, if she be accus'd on true report,
Bear with her weakness, which I think proceeds
From wayward sickness and no grounded malice.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

Saw you the King to-day, my Lord of Derby?

DERBY.

But now the Duke of Buckingham and I
Are come from visiting his Majesty.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

What likelihood of his amendment,
Lords?

BUCKINGHAM.

Madam, good hope; his Grace speaks cheerfully.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

God grant him health! Did you confer with him?

BUCKINGHAM.
Ay, madam; he desires to make atonement
Between the Duke of Gloucester and your brothers,
And between them and my Lord Chamberlain;
And sent to warn them to his royal presence.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.
Would all were well! But that will never be.

I fear our happiness is at the height.

Enter GLOUCESTER, HASTINGS, and DORSET

GLOUCESTER. They do me wrong, and I will not endure it.
Who is it that complains unto the King
That I, forsooth, am stern and love them not?
By holy Paul, they love his Grace but lightly

That fill his ears with such dissentious rumours.
Because I cannot flatter and look fair,
Smile in men's faces, smooth, deceive, and cog,
Duck with French nods and apish courtesy,
I must be held a rancorous enemy.
Cannot a plain man live and think no harm
But thus his simple truth must be abus'd
With silken, sly, insinuating Jacks?

GREY.

To who in all this presence speaks your Grace?

GLOUCESTER.
To thee, that hast nor honesty nor grace.
When have I injur'd thee? when done thee wrong,
Or thee, or thee, or any of your faction?
A plague upon you all! His royal Grace-
Whom God preserve better than you would wish!-
Cannot be quiet searce a breathing while
But you must trouble him with lewd complaints.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

Brother of Gloucester, you mistake the matter.
The King, on his own royal disposition
And not provok'd by any suitor else-
Aiming, belike, at your interior hatred
That in your outward action shows itself
Against my children, brothers, and myself-
Makes him to send that he may learn the ground.

GLOUCESTER.
I cannot tell; the world is grown so bad
That wrens make prey where eagles dare not perch.
Since every Jack became a gentleman,
There's many a gentle person made a Jack.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.
Come, come, we know your meaning,
brother Gloucester:
You envy my advancement and my friends';

God grant we never may have need of you!

GLOUCESTER.

Meantime, God grants that I have need of you.

Our brother is imprison'd by your means,

Myself disgrac'd, and the nobility

Held in contempt; while great promotions

Are daily given to ennoble those

That scarce some two days since were worth a noble.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

By Him that rais'd me to this careful height

From that contented hap which I enjoy'd,

I never did incense his Majesty

Against the Duke of Clarence, but have been

An earnest advocate to plead for him.

My lord, you do me shameful injury

Falsely to draw me in these vile suspects.

GLOUCESTER.

You may deny that you were not the mean

Of my Lord Hastings' late imprisonment.

RIVERS.

She may, my lord; for-

GLOUCESTER.

She may, Lord Rivers? Why, who knows not so?

She may do more, sir, than denying that:
She may help you to many fair preferments
And then deny her aiding hand therein,
And lay those honours on your high desert.
What may she not? She may-ay, marry, may she-

RIVERS.

What, marry, may she?

GLOUCESTER.

What, marry, may she? Marry with a king,
A bachelor, and a handsome stripling too.

Iwis your grandam had a worser match.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

My Lord of Gloucester, I have too long borne
Your blunt upbraidings and your bitter scoffs.
By heaven, I will acquaint his Majesty
Of those gross taunts that oft I have endur'd.
I had rather be a country servant-maid
Than a great queen with this condition-
To be so baited, scorn'd, and stormed at.

Enter old QUEEN MARGARET, behind

Small joy have I in being England's Queen.

QUEEN MARGARET.

And less'ned be that small, God, I
beseech Him!
Thy honour, state, and seat, is due to me.

GLOUCESTER.

What! Threat you me with telling of the King?
Tell him and spare not. Look what I have said
I will avouch't in presence of the King.
I dare adventure to be sent to th' Tow'r.

'Tis time to speak-my pains are quite forgot.

QUEEN MARGARET.

Out, devil! I do remember them to well:
Thou kill'dst my husband Henry in the Tower,
And Edward, my poor son, at Tewksbury.

GLOUCESTER.

Ere you were queen, ay, or your husband King,
I was a pack-horse in his great affairs,
A weeder-out of his proud adversaries,
A liberal rewarder of his friends;
To royalize his blood I spent mine own.

QUEEN MARGARET.

Ay, and much better blood than his or thine.

GLOUCESTER.

In all which time you and your husband Grey

Were factious for the house of Lancaster;

And, Rivers, so were you. Was not your husband

In Margaret's battle at Saint Albans slain?

Let me put in your minds, if you forget,

What you have been ere this, and what you are;

Withal, what I have been, and what I am.

QUEEN MARGARET.

A murd'rous villain, and so still thou art.

GLOUCESTER.

Poor Clarence did forsake his father, Warwick,

Ay, and forswore himself-which Jesu pardon!-

QUEEN MARGARET.

Which God revenge!

GLOUCESTER.

To fight on Edward's party for the crown;

And for his meed, poor lord, he is mewed up.

I would to God my heart were flint like Edward's,

Or Edward's soft and pitiful like mine.

I am too childish-foolish for this world.

QUEEN MARGARET.

Hie thee to hell for shame and leave this world,

Thou cacodemon; there thy kingdom is.

RIVERS.

My Lord of Gloucester, in those busy days

Which here you urge to prove us enemies,

We follow'd then our lord, our sovereign king.

So should we you, if you should be our king.

GLOUCESTER.

If I should be! I had rather be a pedlar.

Far be it from my heart, the thought thereof!

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

As little joy, my lord, as you suppose

You should enjoy were you this country's king,

As little joy you may suppose in me

That I enjoy, being the Queen thereof.

QUEEN MARGARET.

As little joy enjoys the Queen thereof;

For I am she, and altogether joyless.

I can no longer hold me patient. *[Advancing]*

Hear me, you wrangling pirates, that fall out

In sharing that which you have pill'd from me.

Which of you trembles not that looks on me?

If not that, I am Queen, you bow like subjects,

Yet that, by you depos'd, you quake like rebels?

Ah, gentle villain, do not turn away!

GLOUCESTER.

Foul wrinkled witch, what mak'st thou in my sight?

QUEEN MARGARET.
But repetition of what thou hast marr'd,
That will I make before I let thee go.

GLOUCESTER.

Wert thou not banished on pain of death?

QUEEN MARGARET.
I was; but I do find more pain in banishment
Than death can yield me here by my abode.
A husband and a son thou ow'st to me;
And thou a kingdom; all of you allegiance.
This sorrow that I have by right is yours;
And all the pleasures you usurp are mine.

GLOUCESTER.
The curse my noble father laid on thee,
When thou didst crown his warlike brows with paper

And with thy scorns drew'st rivers from his eyes,

And then to dry them gav'st the Duke a clout

Steep'd in the faultless blood of pretty Rutland-

His curses then from bitterness of soul

Denounc'd against thee are all fall'n upon thee;

And God, not we, hath plagu'd thy bloody deed.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

So just is God to right the innocent.

HASTINGS.

O, 'twas the foulest deed to slay that babe,

And the most merciless that e'er was heard of!

RIVERS.

Tyrants themselves wept when it was reported.

DORSET.

No man but prophesied revenge for it.

BUCKINGHAM.

Northumberland, then present, wept to see it.

QUEEN MARGARET.
What, were you snarling all before I came,
Ready to catch each other by the throat,
And turn you all your hatred now on me?
Did York's dread curse prevail so much with heaven
That Henry's death, my lovely Edward's death,
Their kingdom's loss, my woeful banishment,
Should all but answer for that peevish brat?

Can curses pierce the clouds and enter heaven?
Why then, give way, dull clouds, to my quick curses!
Though not by war, by surfeit die your king,
As ours by murder, to make him a king!
Edward thy son, that now is Prince of Wales,
For Edward our son, that was Prince of Wales,
Die in his youth by like untimely violence!
Thyself a queen, for me that was a queen,

Outlive thy glory, like my wretched self!

Long mayest thou live to wail thy children's death,

And see another, as I see thee now,

Deck'd in thy rights, as thou art stall'd in mine!

Long die thy happy days before thy death;

And, after many length'ned hours of grief,

Die neither mother, wife, nor England's Queen!

Rivers and Dorset, you were standers by,

And so wast thou, Lord Hastings, when my son

Was stabb'd with bloody daggers. God, I pray him,

That none of you may live his natural age,

But by some unlook'd accident cut off!

GLOUCESTER.

Have done thy charm, thou hateful wither'd hag.

QUEEN MARGARET.

And leave out thee? Stay, dog, for thou shalt hear me.

If heaven have any grievous plague in store

Exceeding those that I can wish upon thee, O, let them keep it till thy sins be ripe,

And then hurl down their indignation

On thee, the troubler of the poor world's peace!

The worm of conscience still be-gnaw thy soul!

Thy friends suspect for traitors while thou liv'st,

And take deep traitors for thy dearest friends!

No sleep close up that deadly eye of thine,

Unless it be while some tormenting dream

Affrights thee with a hell of ugly devils!

Thou elvish-mark'd, abortive, rooting hog,

Thou that wast seal'd in thy nativity

The slave of nature and the son of hell,

Thou slander of thy heavy mother's womb,

Thou loathed issue of thy father's loins,

Thou rag of honour, thou detested-

GLOUCESTER.

Margaret!

QUEEN MARGARET.

Richard!

GLOUCESTER.

Ha?

QUEEN MARGARET.

I call thee not.

GLOUCESTER.

I cry thee mercy then, for I did think

That thou hadst call'd me all these bitter names.

QUEEN MARGARET.

Why, so I did, but look'd for no reply.

O, let me make the period to my curse!

GLOUCESTER.

'Tis done by me, and ends in-Margaret.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

Thus have you breath'd your curse against yourself.

QUEEN MARGARET.
Poor painted queen, vain flourish of my fortune!
Why strew'st thou sugar on that bottled spider
Whose deadly web ensnareth thee about?

Fool, fool! thou whet'st a knife to kill thyself.
The day will come that thou shalt wish for me
To help thee curse this poisonous bunch-back'd toad.

HASTINGS.
False-boding woman, end thy frantic curse,
Lest to thy harm thou move our patience.

QUEEN MARGARET.
Foul shame upon you! you have all mov'd mine.

RIVERS.

Were you well serv'd, you would be taught your duty.

QUEEN MARGARET.

To serve me well you all should do me duty,

Teach me to be your queen and you my subjects.

O, serve me well, and teach yourselves that duty!

DORSET.

Dispute not with her; she is lunatic.

QUEEN MARGARET.

Peace, Master Marquis, you are malapert;

Your fire-new stamp of honour is scarce current.

O, that your young nobility could judge

What 'twere to lose it and be miserable!

They that stand high have many blasts to shake them,

And if they fall they dash themselves to pieces.

GLOUCESTER.

Good counsel, marry; learn it, learn it, Marquis.

DORSET.

It touches you, my lord, as much as me.

GLOUCESTER.
Ay, and much more; but I was born so high,
Our aery buildeth in the cedar's top,
And dallies with the wind, and scorns the sun.

QUEEN MARGARET.

And turns the sun to shade-alas! alas!
Witness my son, now in the shade of death,
Whose bright out-shining beams thy cloudy wrath
Hath in eternal darkness folded up.

Your aery buildeth in our aery's nest.
O God that seest it, do not suffer it;
As it is won with blood, lost be it so!

BUCKINGHAM.

Peace, peace, for shame, if not for charity!

QUEEN MARGARET.

Urge neither charity nor shame to me.
Uncharitably with me have you dealt,
And shamefully my hopes by you are butcher'd.
My charity is outrage, life my shame;
And in that shame still live my sorrow's rage!

BUCKINGHAM.

Have done, have done.

QUEEN MARGARET.

O princely Buckingham, I'll kiss thy hand
In sign of league and amity with thee.

Now fair befall thee and thy noble house!
Thy garments are not spotted with our blood,

Nor thou within the compass of my curse.

BUCKINGHAM.

Nor no one here; for curses never pass

The lips of those that breathe them in the air.

QUEEN MARGARET.

I will not think but they ascend the sky

And there awake God's gentle-sleeping peace.

O Buckingham, take heed of yonder dog!

Look when he fawns, he bites; and when he bites,

His venom tooth will rankle to the death:

Have not to do with him, beware of him;

Sin, death, and hell, have set their marks on him,

And all their ministers attend on him.

GLOUCESTER.

What doth she say, my Lord of Buckingham?

BUCKINGHAM.

Nothing that I respect, my gracious lord.

QUEEN MARGARET.

What, dost thou scorn me for my gentle counsel,

And soothe the devil that I warn thee from?

O, but remember this another day,

When he shall split thy very heart with sorrow,

And say poor Margaret was a prophetess!

Live each of you the subjects to his hate,

And he to yours, and all of you to God's! *Exit*

BUCKINGHAM. My hair doth stand an end to hear her curses.

RIVERS.

And so doth mine. I muse why she's at liberty.

GLOUCESTER.

I cannot blame her; by God's holy Mother,

She hath had too much wrong; and I repent

My part thereof that I have done to her.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

I never did her any to my knowledge.

GLOUCESTER.

Yet you have all the vantage of her wrong.
I was too hot to do somebody good
That is too cold in thinking of it now.
Marry, as for Clarence, he is well repaid;
He is frank'd up to fatting for his pains;
God pardon them that are the cause thereof!

RIVERS.

A virtuous and a Christian-like conclusion,
To pray for them that have done scathe to us!

GLOUCESTER.

So do I ever- *[Aside]* being well advis'd;
For had I curs'd now, I had curs'd myself.

Enter CATESBY

CATESBY. Madam, his Majesty doth can for you,
And for your Grace, and you, my gracious lords.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

Catesby, I come. Lords, will you go with me?

RIVERS.
We wait upon your Grace.
Exeunt all but GLOUCESTER
GLOUCESTER.

I do the wrong, and first begin to brawl.
The secret mischiefs that I set abroach
I lay unto the grievous charge of others.
Clarence, who I indeed have cast in darkness,
I do beweep to many simple gulls;
Namely, to Derby, Hastings, Buckingham;
And tell them 'tis the Queen and her allies

That stir the King against the Duke my brother.

Now they believe it, and withal whet me

To be reveng'd on Rivers, Dorset, Grey;

But then I sigh and, with a piece of Scripture,

Tell them that God bids us do good for evil.

And thus I clothe my naked villainy

With odd old ends stol'n forth of holy writ,

And seem a saint when most I play the devil.

Enter two MURDERERS

But, soft, here come my executioners.

How now, my hardy stout resolved mates!

Are you now going to dispatch this thing?

FIRST MURDERER.

We are, my lord, and come to have the warrant,

That we may be admitted where he is.

GLOUCESTER.

Well thought upon; I have it here about me.

[Gives the warrant]

When you have done, repair to Crosby Place.

But, sirs, be sudden in the execution,

Withal obdurate, do not hear him plead;

For Clarence is well-spoken, and perhaps

May move your hearts to pity, if you mark him.

FIRST MURDERER.

Tut, tut, my lord, we will not stand to prate;

Talkers are no good doers. Be assur'd

We go to use our hands and not our tongues.

GLOUCESTER.

Your eyes drop millstones when fools' eyes fall tears.

I like you, lads; about your business straight;

Go, go, dispatch.

FIRST MURDERER.

We will, my noble lord. *Exeunt*

SCENE 4.

London. The Tower

Enter CLARENCE and KEEPER

KEEPER. Why looks your Grace so heavily to-day?

CLARENCE.

O, I have pass'd a miserable night,

So full of fearful dreams, of ugly sights,

That, as I am a Christian faithful man,

I would not spend another such a night

Though 'twere to buy a world of happy days-

So full of dismal terror was the time!

KEEPER.

What was your dream, my lord? I pray you tell me.

CLARENCE.

Methoughts that I had broken from the Tower

And was embark'd to cross to Burgundy;

And in my company my brother Gloucester,

Who from my cabin tempted me to walk

Upon the hatches. Thence we look'd toward England,

And cited up a thousand heavy times,

During the wars of York and Lancaster,

That had befall'n us. As we pac'd along

Upon the giddy footing of the hatches,

Methought that Gloucester stumbled, and in falling

Struck me, that thought to stay him, overboard

Into the tumbling billows of the main.

O Lord, methought what pain it was to drown,

What dreadful noise of waters in my ears,

What sights of ugly death within my eyes!

Methoughts I saw a thousand fearful wrecks,

A thousand men that fishes gnaw'd upon,

Wedges of gold, great anchors, heaps of pearl,

Inestimable stones, unvalued jewels,

All scatt'red in the bottom of the sea;

Some lay in dead men's skulls, and in the holes

Where eyes did once inhabit there were crept, As 'twere in scorn of eyes, reflecting gems,

That woo'd the slimy bottom of the deep

And mock'd the dead bones that lay scatt'red by.

KEEPER.

Had you such leisure in the time of death

To gaze upon these secrets of the deep?

CLARENCE.

Methought I had; and often did I strive

To yield the ghost, but still the envious flood

Stopp'd in my soul and would not let it forth

To find the empty, vast, and wand'ring air;

But smother'd it within my panting bulk,

Who almost burst to belch it in the sea.

KEEPER.

Awak'd you not in this sore agony?

CLARENCE.

No, no, my dream was lengthen'd after life.
O, then began the tempest to my soul!
I pass'd, methought, the melancholy flood
With that sour ferryman which poets write of,
Unto the kingdom of perpetual night.
The first that there did greet my stranger soul
Was my great father-in-law, renowned Warwick,
Who spake aloud 'What scourge for perjury
Can this dark monarchy afford false Clarence?'
And so he vanish'd. Then came wand'ring by
A shadow like an angel, with bright hair
Dabbled in blood, and he shriek'd out aloud
'Clarence is come-false, fleeting, perjur'd Clarence,
That stabb'd me in the field by Tewksbury.

Seize on him, Furies, take him unto torment!'
With that, methoughts, a legion of foul fiends
Environ'd me, and howled in mine ears
Such hideous cries that, with the very noise,
I trembling wak'd, and for a season after
Could not believe but that I was in hell,

Such terrible impression made my dream.

KEEPER.

No marvel, lord, though it affrighted you;

I am afraid, methinks, to hear you tell it.

CLARENCE.

Ah, Keeper, Keeper, I have done these things

That now give evidence against my soul

For Edward's sake, and see how he requites me!

O God! If my deep prayers cannot appease Thee,

But Thou wilt be aveng'd on my misdeeds,

Yet execute Thy wrath in me alone;

O, spare my guiltless wife and my poor children!

KEEPER, I prithee sit by me awhile;

My soul is heavy, and I fain would sleep.

KEEPER.

I will, my lord. God give your Grace good rest.

[CLARENCE sleeps]

Enter BRAKENBURY the Lieutenant

BRAKENBURY. Sorrow breaks seasons and reposing hours,
Makes the night morning and the noontide night.
Princes have but their titles for their glories,
An outward honour for an inward toil;
And for unfelt imaginations
They often feel a world of restless cares,
So that between their tides and low name
There's nothing differs but the outward fame.

Enter the two MURDERERS

FIRST MURDERER. Ho! who's here?

BRAKENBURY.
What wouldst thou, fellow, and how cam'st thou hither?

FIRST MURDERER.

I would speak with Clarence, and I came hither on my legs.

BRAKENBURY.

What, so brief?

SECOND MURDERER.

'Tis better, sir, than to be tedious. Let

him see our commission and talk no more.

[BRAKENBURY reads it]

BRAKENBURY.

I am, in this, commanded to deliver

The noble Duke of Clarence to your hands.

I will not reason what is meant hereby,

Because I will be guiltless from the meaning.

There lies the Duke asleep; and there the keys.

I'll to the King and signify to him

That thus I have resign'd to you my charge.

FIRST MURDERER.

You may, sir; 'tis a point of wisdom. Fare you well. *Exeunt* BRAKENBURY and KEEPER

SECOND MURDERER.

What, shall I stab him as he sleeps?

FIRST MURDERER.

No; he'll say 'twas done cowardly, when he wakes.

SECOND MURDERER.

Why, he shall never wake until the great
judgment-day.

FIRST MURDERER.

Why, then he'll say we stabb'd him sleeping.

SECOND MURDERER.

The urging of that word judgment hath
bred a kind of remorse in me.

FIRST MURDERER.

What, art thou afraid?

SECOND MURDERER.

Not to kill him, having a warrant; but to

be damn'd for killing him, from the which no warrant can defend me.

FIRST MURDERER.

I thought thou hadst been resolute.

SECOND MURDERER.

So I am, to let him live.

FIRST MURDERER.

I'll back to the Duke of Gloucester and tell him so.

SECOND MURDERER.

Nay, I prithee, stay a little. I hope this

passionate humour of mine will change; it was wont to

hold me but while one tells twenty.

FIRST MURDERER.

How dost thou feel thyself now?

SECOND MURDERER.

Faith, some certain dregs of conscience are yet within me.

FIRST MURDERER.

Remember our reward, when the deed's done.

SECOND MURDERER.

Zounds, he dies; I had forgot the reward.

FIRST MURDERER.

Where's thy conscience now?

SECOND MURDERER.

O, in the Duke of Gloucester's purse!

FIRST MURDERER.

When he opens his purse to give us our

reward, thy conscience flies out.

SECOND MURDERER.

'Tis no matter; let it go; there's few or

none will entertain it.

FIRST MURDERER.

What if it come to thee again?

SECOND MURDERER.

I'll not meddle with it-it makes a man

coward: a man cannot steal, but it accuseth him; a man

cannot swear, but it checks him; a man cannot lie with his

neighbour's wife, but it detects him. 'Tis a blushing shame-

fac'd spirit that mutinies in a man's bosom; it fills a man

full of obstacles: it made me once restore a purse of gold

that-by chance I found. It beggars any man that keeps it.

It is turn'd out of towns and cities for a dangerous thing;
and every man that means to live well endeavours to trust
to himself and live without it.

FIRST MURDERER.
Zounds, 'tis even now at my elbow,
persuading me not to kill the Duke.

SECOND MURDERER.
Take the devil in thy mind and believe
him not; he would insinuate with thee but to make the sigh.

FIRST MURDERER.
I am strong-fram'd; he cannot prevail with me.

SECOND MURDERER.
Spoke like a tall man that respects thy
reputation. Come, shall we fall to work?

FIRST MURDERER.
Take him on the costard with the hilts of

thy sword, and then chop him in the malmsey-butt in the next room.

SECOND MURDERER.

O excellent device! and make a sop of him.

FIRST MURDERER.

Soft! he wakes.

SECOND MURDERER.

Strike!

FIRST MURDERER.

No, we'll reason with him.

CLARENCE.

Where art thou, Keeper? Give me a cup of wine.

SECOND MURDERER.

You shall have wine enough, my lord, anon.

CLARENCE.

In God's name, what art thou?

FIRST MURDERER.

A man, as you are.

CLARENCE.

But not as I am, royal.

SECOND MURDERER.

Nor you as we are, loyal.

CLARENCE.

Thy voice is thunder, but thy looks are humble.

FIRST MURDERER.

My voice is now the King's, my looks mine own.

CLARENCE.

How darkly and how deadly dost thou speak!
Your eyes do menace me. Why look you pale?

Who sent you hither? Wherefore do you come?

SECOND MURDERER.
To, to, to-

CLARENCE.

To murder me?

BOTH MURDERERS.
Ay, ay.

CLARENCE.
You scarcely have the hearts to tell me so,

And therefore cannot have the hearts to do it.

Wherein, my friends, have I offended you?

FIRST MURDERER.

Offended us you have not, but the King.

CLARENCE.

I shall be reconcil'd to him again.

SECOND MURDERER.

Never, my lord; therefore prepare to die.

CLARENCE.

Are you drawn forth among a world of men
To slay the innocent? What is my offence?

Where is the evidence that doth accuse me?
What lawful quest have given their verdict up
Unto the frowning judge, or who pronounc'd

The bitter sentence of poor Clarence' death?

Before I be convict by course of law,

To threaten me with death is most unlawful.

I charge you, as you hope to have redemption

By Christ's dear blood shed for our grievous sins,

That you depart and lay no hands on me.

The deed you undertake is damnable.

FIRST MURDERER.

What we will do, we do upon command.

SECOND MURDERER.

And he that hath commanded is our King.

CLARENCE.

Erroneous vassals! the great King of kings

Hath in the tables of his law commanded

That thou shalt do no murder. Will you then

Spurn at his edict and fulfil a man's?

Take heed; for he holds vengeance in his hand

To hurl upon their heads that break his law.

SECOND MURDERER.

And that same vengeance doth he hurl on thee

For false forswearing, and for murder too;

Thou didst receive the sacrament to fight

In quarrel of the house of Lancaster.

FIRST MURDERER.

And like a traitor to the name of God

Didst break that vow; and with thy treacherous blade

Unripp'dst the bowels of thy sov'reign's son.

SECOND MURDERER.

Whom thou wast sworn to cherish and defend.

FIRST MURDERER.

How canst thou urge God's dreadful law to us,

When thou hast broke it in such dear degree?

CLARENCE.

Alas! for whose sake did I that ill deed?
For Edward, for my brother, for his sake.
He sends you not to murder me for this,
For in that sin he is as deep as I.
If God will be avenged for the deed,
O, know you yet He doth it publicly.
Take not the quarrel from His pow'rful arm;
He needs no indirect or lawless course
To cut off those that have offended Him.

FIRST MURDERER.
Who made thee then a bloody minister
When gallant-springing brave Plantagenet,
That princely novice, was struck dead by thee?

CLARENCE.

My brother's love, the devil, and my rage.

FIRST MURDERER.

Thy brother's love, our duty, and thy faults,

Provoke us hither now to slaughter thee.

CLARENCE.

If you do love my brother, hate not me;

I am his brother, and I love him well.

If you are hir'd for meed, go back again,

And I will send you to my brother Gloucester,

Who shall reward you better for my life

Than Edward will for tidings of my death.

SECOND MURDERER.

You are deceiv'd: your brother Gloucester hates you.

CLARENCE.

O, no, he loves me, and he holds me dear.

Go you to him from me.

FIRST MURDERER.

Ay, so we will.

CLARENCE.

Tell him when that our princely father York

Bless'd his three sons with his victorious arm

And charg'd us from his soul to love each other,

He little thought of this divided friendship.

Bid Gloucester think of this, and he will weep.

FIRST MURDERER.

Ay, millstones; as he lesson'd us to weep.

CLARENCE.

O, do not slander him, for he is kind.

FIRST MURDERER.

Right, as snow in harvest. Come, you

deceive yourself:

'Tis he that sends us to destroy you here.

CLARENCE.

It cannot be; for he bewept my fortune
And hugg'd me in his arms, and swore with sobs
That he would labour my delivery.

FIRST MURDERER.

Why, so he doth, when he delivers you
From this earth's thraldom to the joys of heaven.

SECOND MURDERER.

Make peace with God, for you must die,
my lord.

CLARENCE.

Have you that holy feeling in your souls
To counsel me to make my peace with God,
And are you yet to your own souls so blind
That you will war with God by murd'ring me?
O, sirs, consider: they that set you on
To do this deed will hate you for the deed.

SECOND MURDERER.

What shall we do?

CLARENCE.

Relent, and save your souls.

FIRST MURDERER.

Relent! No, 'tis cowardly and womanish.

CLARENCE.

Not to relent is beastly, savage, devilish.
Which of you, if you were a prince's son,
Being pent from liberty as I am now,
If two such murderers as yourselves came to you,
Would not entreat for life?
My friend, I spy some pity in thy looks;
O, if thine eye be not a flatterer,
Come thou on my side and entreat for me-

As you would beg were you in my distress.

A begging prince what beggar pities not?

SECOND MURDERER.

Look behind you, my lord.

FIRST MURDERER.

[Stabbing him] Take that, and that. If all this will not do,

I'll drown you in the malmsey-butt within.

Exit with the body

SECOND MURDERER.

A bloody deed, and desperately dispatch'd!

How fain, like Pilate, would I wash my hands

Of this most grievous murder!

Re-enter FIRST MURDERER

FIRST MURDERER-How now, what mean'st thou that thou help'st me not?

By heavens, the Duke shall know how slack you have been!

SECOND MURDERER.

I would he knew that I had sav'd his brother!

Take thou the fee, and tell him what I say;

For I repent me that the Duke is slain. *Exit*

FIRST MURDERER. So do not I. Go, coward as thou art.

Well, I'll go hide the body in some hole,

Till that the Duke give order for his burial;

And when I have my meed, I will away;

For this will out, and then I must not stay. *Exit*

ACT II.
SCENE 1.

London . The palace

Flourish. *Enter* KING EDWARD sick, QUEEN ELIZABETH, DORSET, RIVERS, HASTINGS, BUCKINGHAM, GREY, and others

KING EDWARD.

Why, so. Now have I done a good day's work.

You peers, continue this united league.

I every day expect an embassage

From my Redeemer to redeem me hence;

And more at peace my soul shall part to heaven,

Since I have made my friends at peace on earth.

Hastings and Rivers, take each other's hand;

Dissemble not your hatred, swear your love.

RIVERS.

By heaven, my soul is purg'd from grudging hate;

And with my hand I seal my true heart's love.

HASTINGS.

So thrive I, as I truly swear the like!

KING EDWARD.

Take heed you dally not before your king;

Lest He that is the supreme King of kings

Confound your hidden falsehood and award

Either of you to be the other's end.

HASTINGS.

So prosper I, as I swear perfect love!

RIVERS.

And I, as I love Hastings with my heart!

KING EDWARD.

Madam, yourself is not exempt from this;

Nor you, son Dorset; Buckingham, nor you:

You have been factious one against the other.

Wife, love Lord Hastings, let him kiss your hand;

And what you do, do it unfeignedly.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

There, Hastings; I will never more remember

Our former hatred, so thrive I and mine!

KING EDWARD.

Dorset, embrace him; Hastings, love Lord Marquis.

DORSET.

This interchange of love, I here protest,

Upon my part shall be inviolable.

HASTINGS.

And so swear I. *[They embrace]*

KING EDWARD.

Now, princely Buckingham, seal thou this league

With thy embracements to my wife's allies,

And make me happy in your unity.

BUCKINGHAM.

[To the QUEEN] Whenever Buckingham doth turn his hate

Upon your Grace, but with all duteous love
Doth cherish you and yours, God punish me
With hate in those where I expect most love!
When I have most need to employ a friend
And most assured that he is a friend,
Deep, hollow, treacherous, and full of guile,
Be he unto me! This do I beg of God
When I am cold in love to you or yours.

[They embrace]

KING EDWARD.
A pleasing cordial, princely Buckingham,
Is this thy vow unto my sickly heart.
There wanteth now our brother Gloucester here
To make the blessed period of this peace.

BUCKINGHAM.
And, in good time,
Here comes Sir Richard Ratcliff and the Duke.

Enter GLOUCESTER, and RATCLIFF

GLOUCESTER. Good morrow to my sovereign king and
Queen;
And, princely peers, a happy time of day!

KING EDWARD.
Happy, indeed, as we have spent the day.
Gloucester, we have done deeds of charity,
Made peace of enmity, fair love of hate,
Between these swelling wrong-incensed peers.

GLOUCESTER.
A blessed labour, my most sovereign lord.
Among this princely heap, if any here,
By false intelligence or wrong surmise,
Hold me a foe-
If I unwittingly, or in my rage,
Have aught committed that is hardly borne
To any in this presence, I desire
To reconcile me to his friendly peace:

'Tis death to me to be at enmity;
I hate it, and desire all good men's love.
First, madam, I entreat true peace of you,
Which I will purchase with my duteous service;
Of you, my noble cousin Buckingham,
If ever any grudge were lodg'd between us;
Of you, and you, Lord Rivers, and of Dorset,
That all without desert have frown'd on me;
Of you, Lord Woodville, and, Lord Scales, of you;
Dukes, earls, lords, gentlemen-indeed, of all.
I do not know that Englishman alive
With whom my soul is any jot at odds
More than the infant that is born to-night.

I thank my God for my humility.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.
A holy day shall this be kept hereafter.

I would to God all strifes were well compounded.
My sovereign lord, I do beseech your Highness

To take our brother Clarence to your grace.

GLOUCESTER.

Why, madam, have I off'red love for this,

To be so flouted in this royal presence?

Who knows not that the gentle Duke is dead?

[They all start]

You do him injury to scorn his corse.

KING EDWARD.

Who knows not he is dead! Who knows he is?

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

All-seeing heaven, what a world is this!

BUCKINGHAM.

Look I so pale, Lord Dorset, as the rest?

DORSET.

Ay, my good lord; and no man in the presence

But his red colour hath forsook his cheeks.

KING EDWARD.

Is Clarence dead? The order was revers'd.

GLOUCESTER.

But he, poor man, by your first order died,

And that a winged Mercury did bear;

Some tardy cripple bare the countermand

That came too lag to see him buried.

God grant that some, less noble and less loyal,

Nearer in bloody thoughts, an not in blood,

Deserve not worse than wretched Clarence did,

And yet go current from suspicion!

Enter DERBY

DERBY. A boon, my sovereign, for my service done!

KING EDWARD.

I prithee, peace; my soul is full of sorrow.

DERBY.

I Will not rise unless your Highness hear me.

KING EDWARD.

Then say at once what is it thou requests.

DERBY.

The forfeit, sovereign, of my servant's life;
Who slew to-day a riotous gentleman
Lately attendant on the Duke of Norfolk.

KING EDWARD.

Have I a tongue to doom my brother's death,
And shall that tongue give pardon to a slave?
My brother killed no man-his fault was thought,
And yet his punishment was bitter death.
Who sued to me for him? Who, in my wrath,

Kneel'd at my feet, and bid me be advis'd?

Who spoke of brotherhood? Who spoke of love?

Who told me how the poor soul did forsake

The mighty Warwick and did fight for me?

Who told me, in the field at Tewksbury

When Oxford had me down, he rescued me

And said 'Dear Brother, live, and be a king'?

Who told me, when we both lay in the field

Frozen almost to death, how he did lap me

Even in his garments, and did give himself,

All thin and naked, to the numb cold night?

All this from my remembrance brutish wrath

Sinfully pluck'd, and not a man of you

Had so much race to put it in my mind.

But when your carters or your waiting-vassals

Have done a drunken slaughter and defac'd

The precious image of our dear Redeemer,

You straight are on your knees for pardon, pardon;

And I, unjustly too, must grant it you. *[DERBY rises]*

But for my brother not a man would speak;

Nor I, ungracious, speak unto myself

For him, poor soul. The proudest of you all
Have been beholding to him in his life;
Yet none of you would once beg for his life.
O God, I fear thy justice will take hold
On me, and you, and mine, and yours, for this!

Come, Hastings, help me to my closet. Ah, poor Clarence!
Exeunt some with KING and QUEEN
GLOUCESTER.
This is the fruits of rashness. Mark'd you not
How that the guilty kindred of the Queen
Look'd pale when they did hear of Clarence' death?
O, they did urge it still unto the King!
God will revenge it. Come, lords, will you go
To comfort Edward with our company?

BUCKINGHAM.
We wait upon your Grace. *Exeunt*

SCENE 2.

London. The palace

Enter the old DUCHESS OF YORK, with the SON and DAUGHTER of

CLARENCE

SON.

Good grandam, tell us, is our father dead?

DUCHESS.

No, boy.

DAUGHTER.

Why do you weep so oft, and beat your breast,

And cry 'O Clarence, my unhappy son!'?

SON.

Why do you look on us, and shake your head,
And call us orphans, wretches, castaways,
If that our noble father were alive?

DUCHESS.

My pretty cousins, you mistake me both;
I do lament the sickness of the King,
As loath to lose him, not your father's death;
It were lost sorrow to wail one that's lost.

SON.

Then you conclude, my grandam, he is dead.
The King mine uncle is to blame for it.
God will revenge it; whom I will importune
With earnest prayers all to that effect.

DAUGHTER.

And so will I.

DUCHESS.

Peace, children, peace! The King doth love you well.

Incapable and shallow innocents,

You cannot guess who caus'd your father's death.

SON.

Grandam, we can; for my good uncle Gloucester

Told me the King, provok'd to it by the Queen,

Devis'd impeachments to imprison him.

And when my uncle told me so, he wept,

And pitied me, and kindly kiss'd my cheek;

Bade me rely on him as on my father,

And he would love me dearly as a child.

DUCHESS.

Ah, that deceit should steal such gentle shape,

And with a virtuous vizor hide deep vice!

He is my son; ay, and therein my shame;

Yet from my dugs he drew not this deceit.

SON.

Think you my uncle did dissemble, grandam?

DUCHESS.

Ay, boy.

SON.

I cannot think it. Hark! what noise is this?

Enter QUEEN ELIZABETH, with her hair about her

ears; RIVERS and DORSET after her

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

Ah, who shall hinder me to wail and weep,
To chide my fortune, and torment myself?
I'll join with black despair against my soul
And to myself become an enemy.

DUCHESS.

What means this scene of rude impatience?

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

To make an act of tragic violence.

EDWARD, my lord, thy son, our king, is dead.
Why grow the branches when the root is gone?

Why wither not the leaves that want their sap?
If you will live, lament; if die, be brief,
That our swift-winged souls may catch the King's,
Or like obedient subjects follow him
To his new kingdom of ne'er-changing night.

DUCHESS.
Ah, so much interest have I in thy sorrow
As I had title in thy noble husband!
I have bewept a worthy husband's death,
And liv'd with looking on his images;
But now two mirrors of his princely semblance

Are crack'd in pieces by malignant death,

And I for comfort have but one false glass,

That grieves me when I see my shame in him.

Thou art a widow, yet thou art a mother

And hast the comfort of thy children left;

But death hath snatch'd my husband from mine arms

And pluck'd two crutches from my feeble hands-

Clarence and Edward. O, what cause have I-

Thine being but a moiety of my moan-

To overgo thy woes and drown thy cries?

SON.

Ah, aunt, you wept not for our father's death!

How can we aid you with our kindred tears?

DAUGHTER.

Our fatherless distress was left unmoan'd;

Your widow-dolour likewise be unwept!

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

Give me no help in lamentation;

I am not barren to bring forth complaints.

All springs reduce their currents to mine eyes

That I, being govern'd by the watery moon,

May send forth plenteous tears to drown the world!

Ah for my husband, for my dear Lord Edward!

CHILDREN.

Ah for our father, for our dear Lord Clarence!

DUCHESS.

Alas for both, both mine, Edward and Clarence!

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

What stay had I but Edward? and he's gone.

CHILDREN.

What stay had we but Clarence? and he's gone.

DUCHESS.

What stays had I but they? and they are gone.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

Was never widow had so dear a loss.

CHILDREN.

Were never orphans had so dear a loss.

DUCHESS.

Was never mother had so dear a loss.

Alas, I am the mother of these griefs!
Their woes are parcell'd, mine is general.

She for an Edward weeps, and so do I:
I for a Clarence weep, so doth not she.

These babes for Clarence weep, and so do I:

I for an Edward weep, so do not they.
Alas, you three on me, threefold distress'd,
Pour all your tears! I am your sorrow's nurse,
And I will pamper it with lamentation.

DORSET.
Comfort, dear mother. God is much displeas'd
That you take with unthankfulness his doing.
In common worldly things 'tis called ungrateful
With dull unwillingness to repay a debt
Which with a bounteous hand was kindly lent;
Much more to be thus opposite with heaven,
For it requires the royal debt it lent you.

RIVERS.
Madam, bethink you, like a careful mother,
Of the young prince your son. Send straight for him;
Let him be crown'd; in him your comfort lives.
Drown desperate sorrow in dead Edward's grave,
And plant your joys in living Edward's throne.

Enter GLOUCESTER, BUCKINGHAM, DERBY,

HASTINGS, and RATCLIFF

GLOUCESTER.

Sister, have comfort. All of us have cause
To wail the dimming of our shining star;
But none can help our harms by wailing them.
Madam, my mother, I do cry you mercy;
I did not see your Grace. Humbly on my knee
I crave your blessing.

DUCHESS.

God bless thee; and put meekness in thy breast,
Love, charity, obedience, and true duty!

GLOUCESTER.

Amen! *[Aside]* And make me die a good old man!
That is the butt end of a mother's blessing;
I marvel that her Grace did leave it out.

BUCKINGHAM.

You cloudy princes and heart-sorrowing peers,
That bear this heavy mutual load of moan,
Now cheer each other in each other's love.
Though we have spent our harvest of this king,
We are to reap the harvest of his son.
The broken rancour of your high-swol'n hearts,
But lately splinter'd, knit, and join'd together,
Must gently be preserv'd, cherish'd, and kept.
Me seemeth good that, with some little train,
Forthwith from Ludlow the young prince be fet
Hither to London, to be crown'd our King.

RIVERS.

Why with some little train, my Lord of Buckingham?

BUCKINGHAM.

Marry, my lord, lest by a multitude
The new-heal'd wound of malice should break out,
Which would be so much the more dangerous

By how much the estate is green and yet ungovern'd;
Where every horse bears his commanding rein
And may direct his course as please himself,
As well the fear of harm as harm apparent,
In my opinion, ought to be prevented.

GLOUCESTER.
I hope the King made peace with all of us;
And the compact is firm and true in me.

RIVERS.
And so in me; and so, I think, in an.
Yet, since it is but green, it should be put
To no apparent likelihood of breach,
Which haply by much company might be urg'd;
Therefore I say with noble Buckingham
That it is meet so few should fetch the Prince.

HASTINGS.
And so say I.

GLOUCESTER.

Then be it so; and go we to determine

Who they shall be that straight shall post to Ludlow.

Madam, and you, my sister, will you go

To give your censures in this business?

Exeunt all but BUCKINGHAM and GLOUCESTER

BUCKINGHAM.

My lord, whoever journeys to the Prince,

For God sake, let not us two stay at home;

For by the way I'll sort occasion,

As index to the story we late talk'd of,

To part the Queen's proud kindred from the Prince.

GLOUCESTER.

My other self, my counsel's consistory,

My oracle, my prophet, my dear cousin,

I, as a child, will go by thy direction.

Toward Ludlow then, for we'll not stay behind. *Exeunt*

SCENE 3.

London. A street

Enter one CITIZEN at one door, and another at the other

FIRST CITIZEN. Good morrow, neighbour. Whither away so fast?

SECOND CITIZEN.

I promise you, I scarcely know myself.

Hear you the news abroad?

FIRST CITIZEN.

Yes, that the King is dead.

SECOND CITIZEN.

Ill news, by'r lady; seldom comes the better.

I fear, I fear 'twill prove a giddy world.

Enter another CITIZEN

THIRD CITIZEN. Neighbours, God speed!

FIRST CITIZEN.

Give you good morrow, sir.

THIRD CITIZEN.

Doth the news hold of good King Edward's death?

SECOND CITIZEN.

Ay, sir, it is too true; God help the while!

THIRD CITIZEN.

Then, masters, look to see a troublous world.

FIRST CITIZEN.

No, no; by God's good grace, his son shall reign.

THIRD CITIZEN.

Woe to that land that's govern'd by a child.

SECOND CITIZEN.

In him there is a hope of government,

Which, in his nonage, council under him,

And, in his full and ripened years, himself,

No doubt, shall then, and till then, govern well.

FIRST CITIZEN.

So stood the state when Henry the Sixth

Was crown'd in Paris but at nine months old.

THIRD CITIZEN.

Stood the state so? No, no, good friends,

God wot;

For then this land was famously enrich'd

With politic grave counsel; then the King

Had virtuous uncles to protect his Grace.

FIRST CITIZEN.

Why, so hath this, both by his father and mother.

THIRD CITIZEN.

Better it were they all came by his father,

Or by his father there were none at all;

For emulation who shall now be nearest

Will touch us all too near, if God prevent not.

O, full of danger is the Duke of Gloucester!

And the Queen's sons and brothers haught and proud;

And were they to be rul'd, and not to rule,

This sickly land might solace as before.

FIRST CITIZEN.

Come, come, we fear the worst; all will be well.

THIRD CITIZEN.

When clouds are seen, wise men put on their cloaks;

When great leaves fall, then winter is at hand;

When the sun sets, who doth not look for night?

Untimely storms make men expect a dearth.

All may be well; but, if God sort it so,

'Tis more than we deserve or I expect.

SECOND CITIZEN.

Truly, the hearts of men are fun of fear.

You cannot reason almost with a man

That looks not heavily and fun of dread.

THIRD CITIZEN.

Before the days of change, still is it so;

By a divine instinct men's minds mistrust

Ensuing danger; as by proof we see

The water swell before a boist'rous storm.

But leave it all to God. Whither away?

SECOND CITIZEN.

Marry, we were sent for to the justices.

THIRD CITIZEN.

And so was I; I'll bear you company.

Exeunt

SCENE 4.

London. The palace

Enter the ARCHBISHOP OF YORK, the young DUKE OF YORK, QUEEN ELIZABETH, and the DUCHESS OF YORK

ARCHBISHOP. Last night, I hear, they lay at Stony Stratford,

And at Northampton they do rest to-night;

To-morrow or next day they will be here.

DUCHESS.

I long with all my heart to see the Prince.

I hope he is much grown since last I saw him.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

But I hear no; they say my son of York

Has almost overta'en him in his growth.

YORK.

Ay, mother; but I would not have it so.

DUCHESS.

Why, my good cousin, it is good to grow.

YORK.

Grandam, one night as we did sit at supper,

My uncle Rivers talk'd how I did grow

More than my brother. 'Ay,' quoth my uncle Gloucester

'Small herbs have grace: great weeds do grow apace.'

And since, methinks, I would not grow so fast,

Because sweet flow'rs are slow and weeds make haste.

DUCHESS.

Good faith, good faith, the saying did not hold

In him that did object the same to thee.

He was the wretched'st thing when he was young,

So long a-growing and so leisurely
That, if his rule were true, he should be gracious.

ARCHBISHOP.

And so no doubt he is, my gracious madam.

DUCHESS.
I hope he is; but yet let mothers doubt.

YORK.
Now, by my troth, if I had been remenb'red,
I could have given my uncle's Grace a flout
To touch his growth nearer than he touch'd mine.

DUCHESS.
How, my young York? I prithee let me hear it.

YORK.
Marry, they say my uncle grew so fast
That he could gnaw a crust at two hours old.

'Twas full two years ere I could get a tooth.

Grandam, this would have been a biting jest.

DUCHESS.

I prithee, pretty York, who told thee this?

YORK.

Grandam, his nurse.

DUCHESS.

His nurse! Why she was dead ere thou wast born.

YORK.

If 'twere not she, I cannot tell who told me.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

A parlous boy! Go to, you are too shrewd.

ARCHBISHOP.

Good madam, be not angry with the child.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

Pitchers have ears.

Enter a MESSENGER

ARCHBISHOP. Here comes a messenger. What news?

MESSENGER.

Such news, my lord, as grieves me to report.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

How doth the Prince?

MESSENGER.

Well, madam, and in health.

DUCHESS.

What is thy news?

MESSENGER.

Lord Rivers and Lord Grey
Are sent to Pomfret, and with them
Sir Thomas Vaughan, prisoners.

DUCHESS.

Who hath committed them?

MESSENGER.

The mighty Dukes, Gloucester and Buckingham.

ARCHBISHOP.

For what offence?

MESSENGER.

The sum of all I can, I have disclos'd.

Why or for what the nobles were committed

Is all unknown to me, my gracious lord.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

Ay me, I see the ruin of my house!

The tiger now hath seiz'd the gentle hind;

Insulting tyranny begins to jet

Upon the innocent and aweless throne.

Welcome, destruction, blood, and massacre!

I see, as in a map, the end of all.

DUCHESS.

Accursed and unquiet wrangling days,

How many of you have mine eyes beheld!

My husband lost his life to get the crown;

And often up and down my sons were toss'd

For me to joy and weep their gain and loss;

And being seated, and domestic broils

Clean over-blown, themselves the conquerors

Make war upon themselves-brother to brother,

Blood to blood, self against self. O, preposterous

And frantic outrage, end thy damned spleen,

Or let me die, to look on death no more!

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

Come, come, my boy; we will to sanctuary.

Madam, farewell.

DUCHESS.

Stay, I will go with you.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

You have no cause.

ARCHBISHOP.

[To the QUEEN] My gracious lady, go.

And thither bear your treasure and your goods.

For my part, I'll resign unto your Grace

The seal I keep; and so betide to me

As well I tender you and all of yours!

Go, I'll conduct you to the sanctuary. *Exeunt*

ACT III.
SCENE 1.

London. A street

The trumpets sound. *Enter* the PRINCE OF WALES, GLOUCESTER,

BUCKINGHAM,

CATESBY, CARDINAL BOURCHIER, and others

BUCKINGHAM.

Welcome, sweet Prince, to London, to your chamber.

GLOUCESTER.

Welcome, dear cousin, my thoughts' sovereign.

The weary way hath made you melancholy.

PRINCE.

No, uncle; but our crosses on the way

Have made it tedious, wearisome, and heavy.

I want more uncles here to welcome me.

GLOUCESTER.

Sweet Prince, the untainted virtue of your years

Hath not yet div'd into the world's deceit;

Nor more can you distinguish of a man

Than of his outward show; which, God He knows,

Seldom or never jumpeth with the heart.

Those uncles which you want were dangerous;

Your Grace attended to their sug'red words

But look'd not on the poison of their hearts.

God keep you from them and from such false friends!

PRINCE.

God keep me from false friends! but they were none.

GLOUCESTER.

My lord, the Mayor of London comes to greet you.

Enter the LORD MAYOR and his train

MAYOR. God bless your Grace with health and happy days!

PRINCE.

I thank you, good my lord, and thank you all.

I thought my mother and my brother York

Would long ere this have met us on the way.

Fie, what a slug is Hastings, that he comes not

To tell us whether they will come or no!

Enter LORD HASTINGS

BUCKINGHAM. And, in good time, here comes the sweating Lord.

PRINCE.

Welcome, my lord. What, will our mother come?

HASTINGS.

On what occasion, God He knows, not I,
The Queen your mother and your brother York
Have taken sanctuary. The tender Prince
Would fain have come with me to meet your Grace,
But by his mother was perforce withheld.

BUCKINGHAM.

Fie, what an indirect and peevish course
Is this of hers? Lord Cardinal, will your Grace
Persuade the Queen to send the Duke of York
Unto his princely brother presently?
If she deny, Lord Hastings, go with him
And from her jealous arms pluck him perforce.

CARDINAL.

My Lord of Buckingham, if my weak oratory

Can from his mother win the Duke of York,
Anon expect him here; but if she be obdurate
To mild entreaties, God in heaven forbid
We should infringe the holy privilege
Of blessed sanctuary! Not for all this land
Would I be guilty of so deep a sin.

BUCKINGHAM.

You are too senseless-obstinate, my lord,
Too ceremonious and traditional.
Weigh it but with the grossness of this age,
You break not sanctuary in seizing him.
The benefit thereof is always granted
To those whose dealings have deserv'd the place
And those who have the wit to claim the place.
This Prince hath neither claim'd it nor deserv'd it,
And therefore, in mine opinion, cannot have it.
Then, taking him from thence that is not there,
You break no privilege nor charter there.
Oft have I heard of sanctuary men;
But sanctuary children never till now.

CARDINAL.

My lord, you shall o'errule my mind for once.

Come on, Lord Hastings, will you go with me?

HASTINGS.

I go, my lord.

PRINCE.

Good lords, make all the speedy haste you may.

Exeunt CARDINAL and HASTINGS

Say, uncle Gloucester, if our brother come,
Where shall we sojourn till our coronation?

GLOUCESTER.

Where it seems best unto your royal self.
If I may counsel you, some day or two
Your Highness shall repose you at the Tower,
Then where you please and shall be thought most fit

For your best health and recreation.

PRINCE.

I do not like the Tower, of any place.
Did Julius Caesar build that place, my lord?

BUCKINGHAM.
He did, my gracious lord, begin that place,
Which, since, succeeding ages have re-edified.

PRINCE.
Is it upon record, or else reported
Successively from age to age, he built it?

BUCKINGHAM.

Upon record, my gracious lord.

PRINCE.
But say, my lord, it were not regist'red,

Methinks the truth should Eve from age to age,

As 'twere retail'd to all posterity,

Even to the general all-ending day.

GLOUCESTER.

[Aside] So wise so young, they say, do never live long.

PRINCE.

What say you, uncle?

GLOUCESTER.

I say, without characters, fame lives long.

[Aside] Thus, like the formal vice, Iniquity,

I moralize two meanings in one word.

PRINCE.

That Julius Caesar was a famous man;

With what his valour did enrich his wit,

His wit set down to make his valour live.

Death makes no conquest of this conqueror;

For now he lives in fame, though not in life.

I'll tell you what, my cousin Buckingham-

BUCKINGHAM.

What, my gracious lord?

PRINCE.

An if I live until I be a man,

I'll win our ancient right in France again,

Or die a soldier as I liv'd a king.

GLOUCESTER.

[Aside] Short summers lightly have a forward spring.

Enter HASTINGS, young YORK, and the CARDINAL

BUCKINGHAM. Now, in good time, here comes the Duke of York.

PRINCE.

Richard of York, how fares our loving brother?

YORK.

Well, my dread lord; so must I can you now.

PRINCE.

Ay brother, to our grief, as it is yours.

Too late he died that might have kept that title,

Which by his death hath lost much majesty.

GLOUCESTER.

How fares our cousin, noble Lord of York?

YORK.

I thank you, gentle uncle. O, my lord,

You said that idle weeds are fast in growth.

The Prince my brother hath outgrown me far.

GLOUCESTER.

He hath, my lord.

YORK.

And therefore is he idle?

GLOUCESTER.

O, my fair cousin, I must not say so.

YORK.

Then he is more beholding to you than I.

GLOUCESTER.

He may command me as my sovereign;

But you have power in me as in a kinsman.

YORK.

I pray you, uncle, give me this dagger.

GLOUCESTER.

My dagger, little cousin? With all my heart!

PRINCE.

A beggar, brother?

YORK.

Of my kind uncle, that I know will give,

And being but a toy, which is no grief to give.

GLOUCESTER.

A greater gift than that I'll give my cousin.

YORK.

A greater gift! O, that's the sword to it!

GLOUCESTER.

Ay, gentle cousin, were it light enough.

YORK.

O, then, I see you will part but with light gifts:
In weightier things you'll say a beggar nay.

GLOUCESTER.

It is too heavy for your Grace to wear.

YORK.
I weigh it lightly, were it heavier.

GLOUCESTER.

What, would you have my weapon, little Lord?

YORK.
I would, that I might thank you as you call me.

GLOUCESTER.

How?

YORK.

Little.

PRINCE.

My Lord of York will still be cross in talk.

Uncle, your Grace knows how to bear with him.

YORK.

You mean, to bear me, not to bear with me.

Uncle, my brother mocks both you and me;

Because that I am little, like an ape,

He thinks that you should bear me on your shoulders.

BUCKINGHAM.

With what a sharp-provided wit he reasons!

To mitigate the scorn he gives his uncle

He prettily and aptly taunts himself.
So cunning and so young is wonderful.

GLOUCESTER.

My lord, will't please you pass along?
Myself and my good cousin Buckingham
Will to your mother, to entreat of her
To meet you at the Tower and welcome you.

YORK.

What, will you go unto the Tower, my lord?

PRINCE.
My Lord Protector needs will have it so.

YORK.

I shall not sleep in quiet at the Tower.

GLOUCESTER.

Why, what should you fear?

YORK.

Marry, my uncle Clarence' angry ghost.
My grandam told me he was murder'd there.

PRINCE.

I fear no uncles dead.

GLOUCESTER.

Nor none that live, I hope.

PRINCE.

An if they live, I hope I need not fear.
But come, my lord; and with a heavy heart,
Thinking on them, go I unto the Tower.
A sennet.

Exeunt all but GLOUCESTER, BUCKINGHAM, and CATESBY

BUCKINGHAM.

Think you, my lord, this little prating York
Was not incensed by his subtle mother
To taunt and scorn you thus opprobriously?

GLOUCESTER.

No doubt, no doubt. O, 'tis a perilous boy;
Bold, quick, ingenious, forward, capable.
He is all the mother's, from the top to toe.

BUCKINGHAM.

Well, let them rest. Come hither, Catesby.
Thou art sworn as deeply to effect what we intend
As closely to conceal what we impart.
Thou know'st our reasons urg'd upon the way.
What think'st thou? Is it not an easy matter
To make William Lord Hastings of our mind,
For the instalment of this noble Duke
In the seat royal of this famous isle?

CATESBY.

He for his father's sake so loves the Prince

That he will not be won to aught against him.

BUCKINGHAM.

What think'st thou then of Stanley? Will not he?

CATESBY.

He will do all in all as Hastings doth.

BUCKINGHAM.

Well then, no more but this: go, gentle Catesby,

And, as it were far off, sound thou Lord Hastings

How he doth stand affected to our purpose;

And summon him to-morrow to the Tower,

To sit about the coronation.

If thou dost find him tractable to us,

Encourage him, and tell him all our reasons;

If he be leaden, icy, cold, unwilling,

Be thou so too, and so break off the talk,

And give us notice of his inclination;

For we to-morrow hold divided councils,

Wherein thyself shalt highly be employ'd.

GLOUCESTER.

Commend me to Lord William. Tell him,

Catesby,

His ancient knot of dangerous adversaries

To-morrow are let blood at Pomfret Castle;

And bid my lord, for joy of this good news,

Give Mistress Shore one gentle kiss the more.

BUCKINGHAM.

Good Catesby, go effect this business soundly.

CATESBY.

My good lords both, with all the heed I can.

GLOUCESTER.

Shall we hear from you, Catesby, ere we sleep?

CATESBY.

You shall, my lord.

GLOUCESTER.

At Crosby House, there shall you find us both.

Exit CATESBY

BUCKINGHAM.

Now, my lord, what shall we do if we perceive

Lord Hastings will not yield to our complots?

GLOUCESTER.

Chop off his head-something we will determine.

And, look when I am King, claim thou of me

The earldom of Hereford and all the movables

Whereof the King my brother was possess'd.

BUCKINGHAM.

I'll claim that promise at your Grace's hand.

GLOUCESTER.

And look to have it yielded with all kindness.
Come, let us sup betimes, that afterwards
We may digest our complots in some form. *Exeunt*

SCENE 2.

Before LORD HASTING'S house

Enter a MESSENGER to the door of HASTINGS

MESSENGER. My lord, my lord! *[Knocking]*

HASTINGS.

[Within] Who knocks?

MESSENGER.

One from the Lord Stanley.

HASTINGS.

[Within] What is't o'clock?

MESSENGER.

Upon the stroke of four.

Enter LORD HASTINGS

HASTINGS. Cannot my Lord Stanley sleep these tedious nights?

MESSENGER.

So it appears by that I have to say.

First, he commends him to your noble self.

HASTINGS.

What then?

MESSENGER.

Then certifies your lordship that this night

He dreamt the boar had razed off his helm.

Besides, he says there are two councils kept,

And that may be determin'd at the one

Which may make you and him to rue at th' other.

Therefore he sends to know your lordship's pleasure-

If you will presently take horse with him

And with all speed post with him toward the north

To shun the danger that his soul divines.

HASTINGS.

Go, fellow, go, return unto thy lord;

Bid him not fear the separated council:

His honour and myself are at the one,

And at the other is my good friend Catesby;

Where nothing can proceed that toucheth us

Whereof I shall not have intelligence.

Tell him his fears are shallow, without instance;

And for his dreams, I wonder he's so simple

To trust the mock'ry of unquiet slumbers.

To fly the boar before the boar pursues

Were to incense the boar to follow us

And make pursuit where he did mean no chase.

Go, bid thy master rise and come to me;

And we will both together to the Tower,

Where, he shall see, the boar will use us kindly.

MESSENGER.

I'll go, my lord, and tell him what you say.

Exit

Enter CATESBY

CATESBY. Many good morrows to my noble lord!

HASTINGS.

Good morrow, Catesby; you are early stirring.

What news, what news, in this our tott'ring state?

CATESBY.

It is a reeling world indeed, my lord;
And I believe will never stand upright
Till Richard wear the garland of the realm.

HASTINGS.

How, wear the garland! Dost thou mean the crown?

CATESBY.

Ay, my good lord.

HASTINGS.

I'll have this crown of mine cut from my shoulders
Before I'll see the crown so foul misplac'd.

But canst thou guess that he doth aim at it?

CATESBY.

Ay, on my life; and hopes to find you forward

Upon his party for the gain thereof;

And thereupon he sends you this good news,

That this same very day your enemies,

The kindred of the Queen, must die at Pomfret.

HASTINGS.

Indeed, I am no mourner for that news,

Because they have been still my adversaries;

But that I'll give my voice on Richard's side

To bar my master's heirs in true descent,

God knows I will not do it to the death.

CATESBY.

God keep your lordship in that gracious mind!

HASTINGS.

But I shall laugh at this a twelve month hence,

That they which brought me in my master's hate,

I live to look upon their tragedy.

Well, Catesby, ere a fortnight make me older,

I'll send some packing that yet think not on't.

CATESBY.

'Tis a vile thing to die, my gracious lord,
When men are unprepar'd and look not for it.

HASTINGS.

O monstrous, monstrous! And so falls it out
With Rivers, Vaughan, Grey; and so 'twill do
With some men else that think themselves as safe
As thou and I, who, as thou knowest, are dear
To princely Richard and to Buckingham.

CATESBY.

The Princes both make high account of you-

[Aside] For they account his head upon the bridge.

HASTINGS.

I know they do, and I have well deserv'd it.

Enter LORD STANLEY

Come on, come on; where is your boar-spear, man?

Fear you the boar, and go so unprovided?

STANLEY.

My lord, good morrow; good morrow, Catesby.

You may jest on, but, by the holy rood,

I do not like these several councils, I.

HASTINGS.

My lord, I hold my life as dear as yours,

And never in my days, I do protest,

Was it so precious to me as 'tis now.

Think you, but that I know our state secure,

I would be so triumphant as I am?

STANLEY.

The lords at Pomfret, when they rode from London,

Were jocund and suppos'd their states were sure,

And they indeed had no cause to mistrust;

But yet you see how soon the day o'ercast.
This sudden stab of rancour I misdoubt;
Pray God, I say, I prove a needless coward.

What, shall we toward the Tower? The day is spent.

HASTINGS.
Come, come, have with you. Wot you what, my Lord?

To-day the lords you talk'd of are beheaded.

STANLEY.
They, for their truth, might better wear their heads
Than some that have accus'd them wear their hats.
But come, my lord, let's away.

Enter HASTINGS, a pursuivant

HASTINGS. Go on before; I'll talk with this good fellow.

Exeunt STANLEY and CATESBY

How now, Hastings! How goes the world with thee?

PURSUIVANT.

The better that your lordship please to ask.

HASTINGS.
I tell thee, man, 'tis better with me now
Than when thou met'st me last where now we meet:
Then was I going prisoner to the Tower
By the suggestion of the Queen's allies;
But now, I tell thee-keep it to thyself-
This day those enernies are put to death,
And I in better state than e'er I was.

PURSUIVANT.

God hold it, to your honour's good content!

HASTINGS.
Gramercy, Hastings; there, drink that for me.

[Throws him his purse]

PURSUIVANT.

I thank your honour. *Exit*

Enter a PRIEST

PRIEST. Well met, my lord; I am glad to see your honour.

HASTINGS.

I thank thee, good Sir John, with all my heart.

I am in your debt for your last exercise;

Come the next Sabbath, and I will content you.

[He whispers in his ear]

PRIEST.

I'll wait upon your lordship.

Enter BUCKINGHAM

BUCKINGHAM. What, talking with a priest, Lord Chamberlain!

Your friends at Pomfret, they do need the priest:

Your honour hath no shriving work in hand.

HASTINGS.

Good faith, and when I met this holy man,

The men you talk of came into my mind.

What, go you toward the Tower?

BUCKINGHAM.

I do, my lord, but long I cannot stay there;

I shall return before your lordship thence.

HASTINGS.

Nay, like enough, for I stay dinner there.

BUCKINGHAM.

[Aside] And supper too, although thou

knowest it not.-

Come, will you go?

HASTINGS.

I'll wait upon your lordship. *Exeunt*

SCENE 3.

Pomfret Castle

Enter SIR RICHARD RATCLIFF, with halberds, carrying the Nobles,

RIVERS, GREY, and VAUGHAN, to death

RIVERS.

Sir Richard Ratcliff, let me tell thee this:

To-day shalt thou behold a subject die

For truth, for duty, and for loyalty.

GREY.

God bless the Prince from all the pack of you!
A knot you are of damned blood-suckers.

VAUGHAN.

You live that shall cry woe for this hereafter.

RATCLIFF.

Dispatch; the limit of your lives is out.

RIVERS.

O Pomfret, Pomfret! O thou bloody prison,
Fatal and ominous to noble peers!
Within the guilty closure of thy walls
RICHARD the Second here was hack'd to death;
And for more slander to thy dismal seat,
We give to thee our guiltless blood to drink.

GREY.

Now Margaret's curse is fall'n upon our heads, When she exclaim'd on Hastings, you, and I,

For standing by when Richard stabb'd her son.

RIVERS.

Then curs'd she Richard, then curs'd she Buckingham,

Then curs'd she Hastings. O, remember, God,

To hear her prayer for them, as now for us!

And for my sister, and her princely sons,

Be satisfied, dear God, with our true blood,

Which, as thou know'st, unjustly must be spilt.

RATCLIFF.

Make haste; the hour of death is expiate.

RIVERS.

Come, Grey; come, Vaughan; let us here embrace.

Farewell, until we meet again in heaven. *Exeunt*

SCENE 4

London. The Tower

Enter BUCKINGHAM, DERBY, HASTINGS, the BISHOP of ELY, RATCLIFF, LOVEL, with others and seat themselves at a table

HASTINGS. Now, noble peers, the cause why we are met

Is to determine of the coronation.

In God's name speak-when is the royal day?

BUCKINGHAM.

Is all things ready for the royal time?

DERBY.

It is, and wants but nomination.

BISHOP OF ELY.

To-morrow then I judge a happy day.

BUCKINGHAM.

Who knows the Lord Protector's mind herein?

Who is most inward with the noble Duke?

BISHOP OF ELY.

Your Grace, we think, should soonest know his mind.

BUCKINGHAM.

We know each other's faces; for our hearts,

He knows no more of mine than I of yours;

Or I of his, my lord, than you of mine.

Lord Hastings, you and he are near in love.

HASTINGS.

I thank his Grace, I know he loves me well;

But for his purpose in the coronation

I have not sounded him, nor he deliver'd

His gracious pleasure any way therein.

But you, my honourable lords, may name the time;
And in the Duke's behalf I'll give my voice,
Which, I presume, he'll take in gentle part.

Enter GLOUCESTER

BISHOP OF ELY. In happy time, here comes the Duke himself.

GLOUCESTER.
My noble lords and cousins an, good morrow.
I have been long a sleeper, but I trust
My absence doth neglect no great design
Which by my presence might have been concluded.

BUCKINGHAM.
Had you not come upon your cue, my lord,
WILLIAM Lord Hastings had pronounc'd your part-
I mean, your voice for crowning of the King.

GLOUCESTER.
Than my Lord Hastings no man might be bolder;

His lordship knows me well and loves me well.

My lord of Ely, when I was last in Holborn

I saw good strawberries in your garden there.

I do beseech you send for some of them.

BISHOP of ELY. Marry and will, my lord, with all my heart.

Exit

GLOUCESTER. Cousin of Buckingham, a word with you.

[Takes him aside]

Catesby hath sounded Hastings in our business,

And finds the testy gentleman so hot

That he will lose his head ere give consent

His master's child, as worshipfully he terms it,

Shall lose the royalty of England's throne.

BUCKINGHAM.

Withdraw yourself awhile; I'll go with you.

Exeunt GLOUCESTER and BUCKINGHAM

DERBY.

We have not yet set down this day of triumph.
To-morrow, in my judgment, is too sudden;
For I myself am not so well provided
As else I would be, were the day prolong'd.

Re-enter the BISHOP OF ELY

BISHOP OF ELY.

Where is my lord the Duke of Gloucester?
I have sent for these strawberries.

HASTINGS.
His Grace looks cheerfully and smooth this morning;
There's some conceit or other likes him well
When that he bids good morrow with such spirit.
I think there's never a man in Christendom
Can lesser hide his love or hate than he;
For by his face straight shall you know his heart.

DERBY.

What of his heart perceive you in his face

By any livelihood he show'd to-day?

HASTINGS.

Marry, that with no man here he is offended;

For, were he, he had shown it in his looks.

Re-enter GLOUCESTER and BUCKINGHAM

GLOUCESTER.

I pray you all, tell me what they deserve

That do conspire my death with devilish plots

Of damned witchcraft, and that have prevail'd

Upon my body with their hellish charms?

HASTINGS.

The tender love I bear your Grace, my lord,

Makes me most forward in this princely presence

To doom th' offenders, whosoe'er they be.

I say, my lord, they have deserved death.

GLOUCESTER.

Then be your eyes the witness of their evil.
Look how I am bewitch'd; behold, mine arm
Is like a blasted sapling wither'd up.
And this is Edward's wife, that monstrous witch,
Consorted with that harlot strumpet Shore,
That by their witchcraft thus have marked me.

HASTINGS.
If they have done this deed, my noble lord-

GLOUCESTER.
If?-thou protector of this damned strumpet,
Talk'st thou to me of ifs? Thou art a traitor.
Off with his head! Now by Saint Paul I swear
I will not dine until I see the same.
Lovel and Ratcliff, look that it be done.

The rest that love me, rise and follow me.

Exeunt all but HASTINGS, LOVEL, and RATCLIFF

HASTINGS.

Woe, woe, for England! not a whit for me;

For I, too fond, might have prevented this.

STANLEY did dream the boar did raze our helms,

And I did scorn it and disdain to fly.

Three times to-day my foot-cloth horse did stumble,

And started when he look'd upon the Tower,

As loath to bear me to the slaughter-house.

O, now I need the priest that spake to me!

I now repent I told the pursuivant,

As too triumphing, how mine enemies

To-day at Pomfret bloodily were butcher'd,

And I myself secure in grace and favour.

O Margaret, Margaret, now thy heavy curse

Is lighted on poor Hastings' wretched head!

RATCLIFF.

Come, come, dispatch; the Duke would be at dinner.

Make a short shrift; he longs to see your head.

HASTINGS.

O momentary grace of mortal men,
Which we more hunt for than the grace of God!
Who builds his hope in air of your good looks
Lives like a drunken sailor on a mast,
Ready with every nod to tumble down
Into the fatal bowels of the deep.

LOVEL.

Come, come, dispatch; 'tis bootless to exclaim.

HASTINGS.

O bloody Richard! Miserable England!
I prophesy the fearfull'st time to thee
That ever wretched age hath look'd upon.
Come, lead me to the block; bear him my head.

They smile at me who shortly shall be dead. *Exeunt*

SCENE 5.

London. The Tower-walls

Enter GLOUCESTER and BUCKINGHAM in rotten armour, marvellous ill-favoured

GLOUCESTER. Come, cousin, canst thou quake and change thy colour,

Murder thy breath in middle of a word,

And then again begin, and stop again,

As if thou were distraught and mad with terror?

BUCKINGHAM.

Tut, I can counterfeit the deep tragedian;

Speak and look back, and pry on every side,

Tremble and start at wagging of a straw,

Intending deep suspicion. Ghastly looks

Are at my service, like enforced smiles;

And both are ready in their offices

At any time to grace my stratagems.

But what, is Catesby gone?

GLOUCESTER.

He is; and, see, he brings the mayor along.

Enter the LORD MAYOR and CATESBY

BUCKINGHAM. Lord Mayor-

GLOUCESTER.

Look to the drawbridge there!

BUCKINGHAM.

Hark! a drum.

GLOUCESTER.

Catesby, o'erlook the walls.

BUCKINGHAM.

Lord Mayor, the reason we have sent-

GLOUCESTER.

Look back, defend thee; here are enemies.

BUCKINGHAM.

God and our innocence defend and guard us!

Enter LOVEL and RATCLIFF, with HASTINGS' head

GLOUCESTER. Be patient; they are friends-Ratcliff and Lovel.

LOVEL.

Here is the head of that ignoble traitor,
The dangerous and unsuspected Hastings.

GLOUCESTER.

So dear I lov'd the man that I must weep.
I took him for the plainest harmless creature

That breath'd upon the earth a Christian;

Made him my book, wherein my soul recorded

The history of all her secret thoughts.

So smooth he daub'd his vice with show of virtue

That, his apparent open guilt omitted,

I mean his conversation with Shore's wife-

He liv'd from all attainder of suspects.

BUCKINGHAM.

Well, well, he was the covert'st shelt'red traitor

That ever liv'd.

Would you imagine, or almost believe-

Were't not that by great preservation

We live to tell it-that the subtle traitor

This day had plotted, in the council-house,

To murder me and my good Lord of Gloucester.

MAYOR.

Had he done so?

GLOUCESTER.

What! think you we are Turks or Infidels?
Or that we would, against the form of law,
Proceed thus rashly in the villain's death
But that the extreme peril of the case,
The peace of England and our persons' safety,
Enforc'd us to this execution?

MAYOR.
Now, fair befall you! He deserv'd his death;
And your good Graces both have well proceeded
To warn false traitors from the like attempts.
I never look'd for better at his hands
After he once fell in with Mistress Shore.

BUCKINGHAM.
Yet had we not determin'd he should die
Until your lordship came to see his end-
Which now the loving haste of these our friends,
Something against our meanings, have prevented-
Because, my lord, I would have had you heard

The traitor speak, and timorously confess

The manner and the purpose of his treasons:

That you might well have signified the same

Unto the citizens, who haply may

Misconster us in him and wail his death.

MAYOR.

But, my good lord, your Grace's words shall serve

As well as I had seen and heard him speak;

And do not doubt, right noble Princes both,

But I'll acquaint our duteous citizens

With all your just proceedings in this cause.

GLOUCESTER.

And to that end we wish'd your lordship here,

T' avoid the the the censures of the carping world.

BUCKINGHAM.

Which since you come too late of our intent,

Yet witness what you hear we did intend.

And so, my good Lord Mayor, we bid farewell.

Exit LORD MAYOR

GLOUCESTER.

Go, after, after, cousin Buckingham.

The Mayor towards Guildhall hies him in an post.

There, at your meet'st advantage of the time,

Infer the bastardy of Edward's children.

Tell them how Edward put to death a citizen

Only for saying he would make his son

Heir to the crown-meaning indeed his house,

Which by the sign thereof was termed so.

Moreover, urge his hateful luxury

And bestial appetite in change of lust,

Which stretch'd unto their servants, daughters, wives,

Even where his raging eye or savage heart

Without control lusted to make a prey.

Nay, for a need, thus far come near my person:

Tell them, when that my mother went with child
Of that insatiate Edward, noble York
My princely father then had wars in France
And, by true computation of the time,
Found that the issue was not his begot;
Which well appeared in his lineaments,
Being nothing like the noble Duke my father.
Yet touch this sparingly, as 'twere far off;
Because, my lord, you know my mother lives.

BUCKINGHAM.
Doubt not, my lord, I'll play the orator
As if the golden fee for which I plead
Were for myself; and so, my lord, adieu.

GLOUCESTER.
If you thrive well, bring them to Baynard's
Castle;
Where you shall find me well accompanied
With reverend fathers and well learned bishops.

BUCKINGHAM.

I go; and towards three or four o'clock

Look for the news that the Guildhall affords. *Exit*

GLOUCESTER. Go, Lovel, with all speed to Doctor Shaw.

[To CATESBY] Go thou to Friar Penker. Bid them both

Meet me within this hour at Baynard's Castle.

Exeunt all but GLOUCESTER

Now will I go to take some privy order

To draw the brats of Clarence out of sight,

And to give order that no manner person

Have any time recourse unto the Princes. *Exit*

SCENE 6.

London . A street

Enter a SCRIVENER

SCRIVENER. Here is the indictment of the good Lord Hastings;

Which in a set hand fairly is engross'd

That it may be to-day read o'er in Paul's.

And mark how well the sequel hangs together:

Eleven hours I have spent to write it over,

For yesternight by Catesby was it sent me;

The precedent was full as long a-doing;

And yet within these five hours Hastings liv'd,

Untainted, unexamin'd, free, at liberty.

Here's a good world the while! Who is so gros

That cannot see this palpable device?

Yet who's so bold but says he sees it not?

Bad is the world; and all will come to nought,

When such ill dealing must be seen in thought. *Exit*

SCENE 7.

London . Baynard's Castle

Enter GLOUCESTER and BUCKINGHAM, at several doors

GLOUCESTER.

How now, how now! What say the citizens?

BUCKINGHAM.

Now, by the holy Mother of our Lord,
The citizens are mum, say not a word.

GLOUCESTER.

Touch'd you the bastardy of Edward's children?

BUCKINGHAM.

I did; with his contract with Lady Lucy,
And his contract by deputy in France;
Th' insatiate greediness of his desire,
And his enforcement of the city wives;
His tyranny for trifles; his own bastardy,
As being got, your father then in France,
And his resemblance, being not like the Duke.
Withal I did infer your lineaments,

Being the right idea of your father,
Both in your form and nobleness of mind;
Laid open all your victories in Scotland,
Your discipline in war, wisdom in peace,
Your bounty, virtue, fair humility;
Indeed, left nothing fitting for your purpose
Untouch'd or slightly handled in discourse.
And when mine oratory drew toward end
I bid them that did love their country's good
Cry 'God save Richard, England's royal King!'

GLOUCESTER.

And did they so?

BUCKINGHAM.

No, so God help me, they spake not a word;
But, like dumb statues or breathing stones,
Star'd each on other, and look'd deadly pale.
Which when I saw, I reprehended them,
And ask'd the Mayor what meant this wilfull silence.
His answer was, the people were not used

To be spoke to but by the Recorder.

Then he was urg'd to tell my tale again.

'Thus saith the Duke, thus hath the Duke inferr'd'-

But nothing spoke in warrant from himself.

When he had done, some followers of mine own

At lower end of the hall hurl'd up their caps,

And some ten voices cried 'God save King Richard!'

And thus I took the vantage of those few-

'Thanks, gentle citizens and friends,' quoth I

'This general applause and cheerful shout

Argues your wisdoms and your love to Richard.'

And even here brake off and came away.

GLOUCESTER.

What, tongueless blocks were they? Would they not speak?

Will not the Mayor then and his brethren come?

BUCKINGHAM.

The Mayor is here at hand. Intend some fear;

Be not you spoke with but by mighty suit;

And look you get a prayer-book in your hand,

And stand between two churchmen, good my lord;

For on that ground I'll make a holy descant;

And be not easily won to our requests.

Play the maid's part: still answer nay, and take it.

GLOUCESTER.

I go; and if you plead as well for them

As I can say nay to thee for myself,

No doubt we bring it to a happy issue.

BUCKINGHAM.

Go, go, up to the leads; the Lord Mayor

knocks. *Exit* GLOUCESTER

Enter the LORD MAYOR, ALDERMEN, and citizens

Welcome, my lord. I dance attendance here;

I think the Duke will not be spoke withal.

Enter CATESBY

Now, Catesby, what says your lord to my request?

CATESBY.

He doth entreat your Grace, my noble lord,

To visit him to-morrow or next day.

He is within, with two right reverend fathers,

Divinely bent to meditation;

And in no worldly suits would he be mov'd,

To draw him from his holy exercise.

BUCKINGHAM.

Return, good Catesby, to the gracious Duke;

Tell him, myself, the Mayor and Aldermen,

In deep designs, in matter of great moment,

No less importing than our general good,

Are come to have some conference with his Grace.

CATESBY.

I'll signify so much unto him straight. *Exit*

BUCKINGHAM. Ah ha, my lord, this prince is not an Edward!
He is not lolling on a lewd love-bed,
But on his knees at meditation;
Not dallying with a brace of courtezans,
But meditating with two deep divines;
Not sleeping, to engross his idle body,
But praying, to enrich his watchful soul.
Happy were England would this virtuous prince
Take on his Grace the sovereignty thereof;
But, sure, I fear we shall not win him to it.

MAYOR.

Marry, God defend his Grace should say us nay!

BUCKINGHAM.
I fear he will. Here Catesby comes again.

Re-enter CATESBY

Now, Catesby, what says his Grace?

CATESBY.

My lord,

He wonders to what end you have assembled

Such troops of citizens to come to him.

His Grace not being warn'd thereof before,

He fears, my lord, you mean no good to him.

BUCKINGHAM.

Sorry I am my noble cousin should

Suspect me that I mean no good to him.

By heaven, we come to him in perfect love;

And so once more return and tell his Grace.

Exit CATESBY

When holy and devout religious men

Are at their beads, 'tis much to draw them thence,

So sweet is zealous contemplation.

Enter GLOUCESTER aloft, between two BISHOPS.

CATESBY returns

MAYOR.

See where his Grace stands 'tween two clergymen!

BUCKINGHAM.

Two props of virtue for a Christian prince,
To stay him from the fall of vanity;
And, see, a book of prayer in his hand,
True ornaments to know a holy man.
Famous Plantagenet, most gracious Prince,
Lend favourable ear to our requests,
And pardon us the interruption
Of thy devotion and right Christian zeal.

GLOUCESTER.

My lord, there needs no such apology:
I do beseech your Grace to pardon me,

Who, earnest in the service of my God,
Deferr'd the visitation of my friends.

But, leaving this, what is your Grace's pleasure?

BUCKINGHAM.
Even that, I hope, which pleaseth God above,
And all good men of this ungovern'd isle.

GLOUCESTER.
I do suspect I have done some offence
That seems disgracious in the city's eye,
And that you come to reprehend my ignorance.

BUCKINGHAM.
You have, my lord. Would it might please
your Grace,
On our entreaties, to amend your fault!

GLOUCESTER.
Else wherefore breathe I in a Christian land?

BUCKINGHAM.

Know then, it is your fault that you resign

The supreme seat, the throne majestical,

The scept'red office of your ancestors,

Your state of fortune and your due of birth,

The lineal glory of your royal house,

To the corruption of a blemish'd stock;

Whiles in the mildness of your sleepy thoughts,

Which here we waken to our country's good,

The noble isle doth want her proper limbs;

Her face defac'd with scars of infamy,

Her royal stock graft with ignoble plants,

And almost should'red in the swallowing gulf

Of dark forgetfulness and deep oblivion.

Which to recure, we heartily solicit

Your gracious self to take on you the charge

And kingly government of this your land-

Not as protector, steward, substitute,

Or lowly factor for another's gain;

But as successively, from blood to blood,

Your right of birth, your empery, your own.
For this, consorted with the citizens,
Your very worshipful and loving friends,
And by their vehement instigation,
In this just cause come I to move your Grace.

GLOUCESTER.
I cannot tell if to depart in silence
Or bitterly to speak in your reproof
Best fitteth my degree or your condition.
If not to answer, you might haply think
Tongue-tied ambition, not replying, yielded
To bear the golden yoke of sovereignty,
Which fondly you would here impose on me;
If to reprove you for this suit of yours,
So season'd with your faithful love to me,
Then, on the other side, I check'd my friends.
Therefore-to speak, and to avoid the first,
And then, in speaking, not to incur the last-
Definitively thus I answer you:
Your love deserves my thanks, but my desert

Unmeritable shuns your high request.

First, if all obstacles were cut away,

And that my path were even to the crown,

As the ripe revenue and due of birth,

Yet so much is my poverty of spirit,

So mighty and so many my defects,

That I would rather hide me from my greatness-

Being a bark to brook no mighty sea-

Than in my greatness covet to be hid,

And in the vapour of my glory smother'd.

But, God be thank'd, there is no need of me-

And much I need to help you, were there need.

The royal tree hath left us royal fruit

Which, mellow'd by the stealing hours of time,

Will well become the seat of majesty

And make, no doubt, us happy by his reign.

On him I lay that you would lay on me-

The right and fortune of his happy stars,

Which God defend that I should wring from him.

BUCKINGHAM.

My lord, this argues conscience in your

Grace;

But the respects thereof are nice and trivial,

All circumstances well considered.

You say that Edward is your brother's son.

So say we too, but not by Edward's wife;

For first was he contract to Lady Lucy-

Your mother lives a witness to his vow-

And afterward by substitute betroth'd

To Bona, sister to the King of France.

These both put off, a poor petitioner,

A care-craz'd mother to a many sons,

A beauty-waning and distressed widow,

Even in the afternoon of her best days,

Made prize and purchase of his wanton eye,

Seduc'd the pitch and height of his degree

To base declension and loath'd bigamy.

By her, in his unlawful bed, he got

This Edward, whom our manners call the Prince.

More bitterly could I expostulate,

Save that, for reverence to some alive,

I give a sparing limit to my tongue.

Then, good my lord, take to your royal self

This proffer'd benefit of dignity;

If not to bless us and the land withal,

Yet to draw forth your noble ancestry

From the corruption of abusing times

Unto a lineal true-derived course.

MAYOR.

Do, good my lord; your citizens entreat you.

BUCKINGHAM.

Refuse not, mighty lord, this proffer'd love.

CATESBY.

O, make them joyful, grant their lawful suit!

GLOUCESTER.

Alas, why would you heap this care on me?

I am unfit for state and majesty.

I do beseech you, take it not amiss:
I cannot nor I will not yield to you.

BUCKINGHAM.
If you refuse it-as, in love and zeal,
Loath to depose the child, your brother's son;
As well we know your tenderness of heart
And gentle, kind, effeminate remorse,
Which we have noted in you to your kindred
And egally indeed to all estates-
Yet know, whe'er you accept our suit or no,
Your brother's son shall never reign our king;
But we will plant some other in the throne
To the disgrace and downfall of your house;
And in this resolution here we leave you.
Come, citizens. Zounds, I'll entreat no more.

GLOUCESTER.

O, do not swear, my lord of Buckingham.

Exeunt BUCKINGHAM, MAYOR, and citizens

CATESBY.

Call him again, sweet Prince, accept their suit.
If you deny them, all the land will rue it.

GLOUCESTER.

Will you enforce me to a world of cares?
Call them again. I am not made of stones,
But penetrable to your kind entreaties,
Albeit against my conscience and my soul.

Re-enter BUCKINGHAM and the rest

Cousin of Buckingham, and sage grave men,
Since you will buckle fortune on my back,
To bear her burden, whe'er I will or no,
I must have patience to endure the load;
But if black scandal or foul-fac'd reproach

Attend the sequel of your imposition,

Your mere enforcement shall acquittance me

From all the impure blots and stains thereof;

For God doth know, and you may partly see,

How far I am from the desire of this.

MAYOR.

God bless your Grace! We see it, and will say it.

GLOUCESTER.

In saying so, you shall but say the truth.

BUCKINGHAM.

Then I salute you with this royal title-

Long live King Richard, England's worthy King!

ALL.

Amen.

BUCKINGHAM.

To-morrow may it please you to be crown'd?

GLOUCESTER.

Even when you please, for you will have it so.

BUCKINGHAM.

To-morrow, then, we will attend your Grace;

And so, most joyfully, we take our leave.

GLOUCESTER.

[To the BISHOPS] Come, let us to our holy work again.

Farewell, my cousin; farewell, gentle friends. *Exeunt*

ACT IV.

SCENE 1.

London. Before the Tower

Enter QUEEN ELIZABETH, DUCHESS of YORK, and MARQUIS of DORSET, at

one door;

ANNE, DUCHESS of GLOUCESTER, leading LADY MARGARET PLANTAGENET,

CLARENCE's young daughter, at another door

DUCHESS.

Who meets us here? My niece Plantagenet,

Led in the hand of her kind aunt of Gloucester?

Now, for my life, she's wand'ring to the Tower,

On pure heart's love, to greet the tender Princes.

Daughter, well met.

ANNE.

God give your Graces both

A happy and a joyful time of day!

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

As much to you, good sister! Whither away?

ANNE.
No farther than the Tower; and, as I guess,
Upon the like devotion as yourselves,
To gratulate the gentle Princes there.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

Kind sister, thanks; we'll enter all together.

Enter BRAKENBURY

And in good time, here the lieutenant comes.
Master Lieutenant, pray you, by your leave,
How doth the Prince, and my young son of York?

BRAKENBURY.

Right well, dear madam. By your patience,

I may not suffer you to visit them.

The King hath strictly charg'd the contrary.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

The King! Who's that?

BRAKENBURY.

I mean the Lord Protector.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

The Lord protect him from that kingly title!

Hath he set bounds between their love and me?

I am their mother; who shall bar me from them?

DUCHESS.

I am their father's mother; I will see them.

ANNE.

Their aunt I am in law, in love their mother.
Then bring me to their sights; I'll bear thy blame,
And take thy office from thee on my peril.

BRAKENBURY.
No, madam, no. I may not leave it so;
I am bound by oath, and therefore pardon me. *Exit*

Enter STANLEY

STANLEY. Let me but meet you, ladies, one hour hence,
And I'll salute your Grace of York as mother
And reverend looker-on of two fair queens.

[To ANNE] Come, madam, you must straight to Westminster,
There to be crowned Richard's royal queen.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

Ah, cut my lace asunder

That my pent heart may have some scope to beat,

Or else I swoon with this dead-killing news!

ANNE.

Despiteful tidings! O unpleasing news!

DORSET.

Be of good cheer; mother, how fares your Grace?

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

O Dorset, speak not to me, get thee gone!

Death and destruction dogs thee at thy heels;

Thy mother's name is ominous to children.

If thou wilt outstrip death, go cross the seas,

And live with Richmond, from the reach of hell.

Go, hie thee, hie thee from this slaughter-house,

Lest thou increase the number of the dead,

And make me die the thrall of Margaret's curse,

Nor mother, wife, nor England's counted queen.

STANLEY.

Full of wise care is this your counsel, madam.
Take all the swift advantage of the hours;
You shall have letters from me to my son
In your behalf, to meet you on the way.

Be not ta'en tardy by unwise delay.

DUCHESS.
O ill-dispersing wind of misery!

O my accursed womb, the bed of death!
A cockatrice hast thou hatch'd to the world,
Whose unavoided eye is murderous.

STANLEY.
Come, madam, come; I in all haste was sent.

ANNE.

And I with all unwillingness will go.

O, would to God that the inclusive verge

Of golden metal that must round my brow

Were red-hot steel, to sear me to the brains!

Anointed let me be with deadly venom,

And die ere men can say 'God save the Queen!'

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

Go, go, poor soul; I envy not thy glory.

To feed my humour, wish thyself no harm.

ANNE.

No, why? When he that is my husband now

Came to me, as I follow'd Henry's corse;

When scarce the blood was well wash'd from his hands

Which issued from my other angel husband,

And that dear saint which then I weeping follow'd-

O, when, I say, I look'd on Richard's face,

This was my wish: 'Be thou' quoth I 'accurs'd

For making me, so young, so old a widow;

And when thou wed'st, let sorrow haunt thy bed;

And be thy wife, if any be so mad,

More miserable by the life of thee

Than thou hast made me by my dear lord's death.'

Lo, ere I can repeat this curse again,

Within so small a time, my woman's heart

Grossly grew captive to his honey words

And prov'd the subject of mine own soul's curse,

Which hitherto hath held my eyes from rest;

For never yet one hour in his bed

Did I enjoy the golden dew of sleep,

But with his timorous dreams was still awak'd.

Besides, he hates me for my father Warwick;

And will, no doubt, shortly be rid of me.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

Poor heart, adieu! I pity thy complaining.

ANNE.

No more than with my soul I mourn for yours.

DORSET.

Farewell, thou woeful welcomer of glory!

ANNE.
Adieu, poor soul, that tak'st thy leave of it!

DUCHESS.
[To DORSET] Go thou to Richmond, and good fortune guide thee!

[To ANNE] Go thou to Richard, and good angels tend
thee! *[To QUEEN ELIZABETH]* Go thou to sanctuary, and good
thoughts possess thee!

I to my grave, where peace and rest lie with me!
Eighty odd years of sorrow have I seen,
And each hour's joy wreck'd with a week of teen.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

Stay, yet look back with me unto the Tower.

Pity, you ancient stones, those tender babes

Whom envy hath immur'd within your walls,

Rough cradle for such little pretty ones.

Rude ragged nurse, old sullen playfellow

For tender princes, use my babies well.

So foolish sorrows bids your stones farewell. *Exeunt*

SCENE 2.

London. The palace

Sound a sennet. *Enter* RICHARD, in pomp, as KING; BUCKINGHAM,

CATESBY,

RATCLIFF, LOVEL, a PAGE, and others

KING RICHARD.

Stand all apart. Cousin of Buckingham!

BUCKINGHAM.

My gracious sovereign?

KING RICHARD.

Give me thy hand.

[Here he ascendeth the throne. Sound]

Thus high, by thy advice

And thy assistance, is King Richard seated.

But shall we wear these glories for a day;

Or shall they last, and we rejoice in them?

BUCKINGHAM.

Still live they, and for ever let them last!

KING RICHARD.

Ah, Buckingham, now do I play the touch,

To try if thou be current gold indeed.

Young Edward lives-think now what I would speak.

BUCKINGHAM.

Say on, my loving lord.

KING RICHARD.

Why, Buckingham, I say I would be King.

BUCKINGHAM.

Why, so you are, my thrice-renowned lord.

KING RICHARD.

Ha! am I King? 'Tis so; but Edward lives.

BUCKINGHAM.

True, noble Prince.

KING RICHARD.

O bitter consequence:

That Edward still should live-true noble Prince!

Cousin, thou wast not wont to be so dull.

Shall I be plain? I wish the bastards dead.

And I would have it suddenly perform'd.

What say'st thou now? Speak suddenly, be brief.

BUCKINGHAM.

Your Grace may do your pleasure.

KING RICHARD.

Tut, tut, thou art all ice; thy kindness freezes.

Say, have I thy consent that they shall die?

BUCKINGHAM.

Give me some little breath, some pause,

dear Lord,

Before I positively speak in this.

I will resolve you herein presently. *Exit*

CATESBY. *[Aside to another]* The King is angry; see, he gnaws his lip.

KING RICHARD.

I will converse with iron-witted fools

[Descends from the throne]

And unrespective boys; none are for me

That look into me with considerate eyes.

High-reaching Buckingham grows circumspect.

Boy!

PAGE.

My lord?

KING RICHARD.

Know'st thou not any whom corrupting gold

Will tempt unto a close exploit of death?

PAGE.

I know a discontented gentleman

Whose humble means match not his haughty spirit.

Gold were as good as twenty orators,

And will, no doubt, tempt him to anything.

KING RICHARD.

What is his name?

PAGE.

His name, my lord, is Tyrrel.

KING RICHARD.

I partly know the man. Go, call him hither,

boy. *Exit* PAGE

The deep-revolving witty Buckingham

No more shall be the neighbour to my counsels.

Hath he so long held out with me, untir'd,

And stops he now for breath? Well, be it so.

Enter STANLEY

How now, Lord Stanley! What's the news?

STANLEY.

Know, my loving lord,

The Marquis Dorset, as I hear, is fled

To Richmond, in the parts where he abides. *[Stands apart]*

KING RICHARD.

Come hither, Catesby. Rumour it abroad

That Anne, my wife, is very grievous sick;

I will take order for her keeping close.

Inquire me out some mean poor gentleman,

Whom I will marry straight to Clarence' daughter-

The boy is foolish, and I fear not him.

Look how thou dream'st! I say again, give out

That Anne, my queen, is sick and like to die.

About it; for it stands me much upon

To stop all hopes whose growth may damage me.

Exit CATESBY

I must be married to my brother's daughter,
Or else my kingdom stands on brittle glass.

Murder her brothers, and then marry her!
Uncertain way of gain! But I am in
So far in blood that sin will pluck on sin.
Tear-falling pity dwells not in this eye.

Re-enter PAGE, with TYRREL

Is thy name Tyrrel?

TYRREL.

James Tyrrel, and your most obedient subject.

KING RICHARD.
Art thou, indeed?

TYRREL.

Prove me, my gracious lord.

KING RICHARD.

Dar'st'thou resolve to kill a friend of mine?

TYRREL.

Please you;

But I had rather kill two enemies.

KING RICHARD.

Why, then thou hast it. Two deep enemies,

Foes to my rest, and my sweet sleep's disturbers,

Are they that I would have thee deal upon.

TYRREL, I mean those bastards in the Tower.

TYRREL.

Let me have open means to come to them,

And soon I'll rid you from the fear of them.

KING RICHARD.

Thou sing'st sweet music. Hark, come

hither, Tyrrel.

Go, by this token. Rise, and lend thine ear. *[Whispers]*

There is no more but so: say it is done,

And I will love thee and prefer thee for it.

TYRREL.

I will dispatch it straight. *Exit*

Re-enter BUCKINGHAM

BUCKINGHAM.

My lord, I have consider'd in my mind

The late request that you did sound me in.

KING RICHARD.

Well, let that rest. Dorset is fled to Richmond.

BUCKINGHAM.

I hear the news, my lord.

KING RICHARD.

Stanley, he is your wife's son: well, look unto it.

BUCKINGHAM.

My lord, I claim the gift, my due by promise,

For which your honour and your faith is pawn'd:

Th' earldom of Hereford and the movables

Which you have promised I shall possess.

KING RICHARD.

Stanley, look to your wife; if she convey

Letters to Richmond, you shall answer it.

BUCKINGHAM.

What says your Highness to my just request?

KING RICHARD.

I do remember me: Henry the Sixth

Did prophesy that Richmond should be King,

When Richmond was a little peevish boy.

A king!-perhaps-

BUCKINGHAM.

My lord-

KING RICHARD.

How chance the prophet could not at that time

Have told me, I being by, that I should kill him?

BUCKINGHAM.

My lord, your promise for the earldom-

KING RICHARD.

Richmond! When last I was at Exeter,

The mayor in courtesy show'd me the castle

And call'd it Rugemount, at which name I started,

Because a bard of Ireland told me once

I should not live long after I saw Richmond.

BUCKINGHAM.

My lord-

KING RICHARD.

Ay, what's o'clock?

BUCKINGHAM.

I am thus bold to put your Grace in mind
Of what you promis'd me.

KING RICHARD.

Well, but o'clock?

BUCKINGHAM.

Upon the stroke of ten.

KING RICHARD.

Well, let it strike.

BUCKINGHAM.

Why let it strike?

KING RICHARD.

Because that like a Jack thou keep'st the stroke
Betwixt thy begging and my meditation.

I am not in the giving vein to-day.

BUCKINGHAM.

May it please you to resolve me in my suit.

KING RICHARD.

Thou troublest me; I am not in the vein.

Exeunt all but Buckingham

BUCKINGHAM.

And is it thus? Repays he my deep service
With such contempt? Made I him King for this?
O, let me think on Hastings, and be gone
To Brecknock while my fearful head is on! *Exit*

SCENE 3.

London. The palace

Enter TYRREL

TYRREL. The tyrannous and bloody act is done,
The most arch deed of piteous massacre
That ever yet this land was guilty of.
Dighton and Forrest, who I did suborn
To do this piece of ruthless butchery,
Albeit they were flesh'd villains, bloody dogs,
Melted with tenderness and mild compassion,
Wept like two children in their deaths' sad story.
'O, thus' quoth Dighton 'lay the gentle babes'-
'Thus, thus,' quoth Forrest 'girdling one another
Within their alabaster innocent arms.
Their lips were four red roses on a stalk,
And in their summer beauty kiss'd each other.

A book of prayers on their pillow lay;

Which once,' quoth Forrest 'almost chang'd my mind;

But, O, the devil'-there the villain stopp'd;

When Dighton thus told on: 'We smothered

The most replenished sweet work of nature

That from the prime creation e'er she framed.'

Hence both are gone with conscience and remorse

They could not speak; and so I left them both,

To bear this tidings to the bloody King.

Enter KING RICHARD

And here he comes. All health, my sovereign lord!

KING RICHARD.

Kind Tyrrel, am I happy in thy news?

TYRREL.

If to have done the thing you gave in charge

Beget your happiness, be happy then,

For it is done.

KING RICHARD.

But didst thou see them dead?

TYRREL.

I did, my lord.

KING RICHARD.

And buried, gentle Tyrrel?

TYRREL.

The chaplain of the Tower hath buried them;
But where, to say the truth, I do not know.

KING RICHARD.

Come to me, Tyrrel, soon at after supper,
When thou shalt tell the process of their death.
Meantime, but think how I may do thee good
And be inheritor of thy desire.

Farewell till then.

TYRREL.

I humbly take my leave. *Exit*

KING RICHARD. The son of Clarence have I pent up close;

His daughter meanly have I match'd in marriage;

The sons of Edward sleep in Abraham's bosom,

And Anne my wife hath bid this world good night.

Now, for I know the Britaine Richmond aims

At young Elizabeth, my brother's daughter,

And by that knot looks proudly on the crown,

To her go I, a jolly thriving wooer.

Enter RATCLIFF

RATCLIFF. My lord!

KING RICHARD.

Good or bad news, that thou com'st in so bluntly?

RATCLIFF.

Bad news, my lord: Morton is fled to Richmond;
And Buckingham, back'd with the hardy Welshmen,
Is in the field, and still his power increaseth.

KING RICHARD.

Ely with Richmond troubles me more near
Than Buckingham and his rash-levied strength.
Come, I have learn'd that fearful commenting
Is leaden servitor to dull delay;
Delay leads impotent and snail-pac'd beggary.
Then fiery expedition be my wing,
Jove's Mercury, and herald for a king!

Go, muster men. My counsel is my shield.
We must be brief when traitors brave the field. *Exeunt*

SCENE 4.

London. Before the palace

Enter old QUEEN MARGARET

QUEEN MARGARET. So now prosperity begins to mellow
And drop into the rotten mouth of death.
Here in these confines slily have I lurk'd
To watch the waning of mine enemies.
A dire induction am I witness to,
And will to France, hoping the consequence
Will prove as bitter, black, and tragical.
Withdraw thee, wretched Margaret. Who comes here?
[Retires]

Enter QUEEN ELIZABETH and the DUCHESS OF YORK

QUEEN ELIZABETH. Ah, my poor princes! ah, my tender babes!
My unblown flowers, new-appearing sweets!
If yet your gentle souls fly in the air
And be not fix'd in doom perpetual,
Hover about me with your airy wings
And hear your mother's lamentation.

QUEEN MARGARET.

Hover about her; say that right for right
Hath dimm'd your infant morn to aged night.

DUCHESS.

So many miseries have craz'd my voice
That my woe-wearied tongue is still and mute.

Edward Plantagenet, why art thou dead?

QUEEN MARGARET.

Plantagenet doth quit Plantagenet,
Edward for Edward pays a dying debt.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

Wilt thou, O God, fly from such gentle lambs
And throw them in the entrails of the wolf?
When didst thou sleep when such a deed was done?

QUEEN MARGARET.

When holy Harry died, and my sweet son.

DUCHESS.

Dead life, blind sight, poor mortal living ghost,

Woe's scene, world's shame, grave's due by life usurp'd,

Brief abstract and record of tedious days,

Rest thy unrest on England's lawful earth, *[Sitting down]*

Unlawfully made drunk with innocent blood.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

Ah, that thou wouldst as soon afford a grave

As thou canst yield a melancholy seat!

Then would I hide my bones, not rest them here.

Ah, who hath any cause to mourn but we?

[Sitting down by her]

QUEEN MARGARET.

[Coming forward] If ancient sorrow be most reverend,

Give mine the benefit of seniory,

And let my griefs frown on the upper hand.

If sorrow can admit society, *[Sitting down with them]*

Tell o'er your woes again by viewing mine.

I had an Edward, till a Richard kill'd him;

I had a husband, till a Richard kill'd him:

Thou hadst an Edward, till a Richard kill'd him;

Thou hadst a Richard, till a Richard kill'd him.

DUCHESS.

I had a Richard too, and thou didst kill him;

I had a Rutland too, thou holp'st to kill him.

QUEEN MARGARET.

Thou hadst a Clarence too, and Richard kill'd him.

From forth the kennel of thy womb hath crept

A hell-hound that doth hunt us all to death.

That dog, that had his teeth before his eyes

To worry lambs and lap their gentle blood,

That foul defacer of God's handiwork,

That excellent grand tyrant of the earth

That reigns in galled eyes of weeping souls,

Thy womb let loose to chase us to our graves.
O upright, just, and true-disposing God,
How do I thank thee that this carnal cur
Preys on the issue of his mother's body
And makes her pew-fellow with others' moan!

DUCHESS.

O Harry's wife, triumph not in my woes!
God witness with me, I have wept for thine.

QUEEN MARGARET.

Bear with me; I am hungry for revenge,
And now I cloy me with beholding it.
Thy Edward he is dead, that kill'd my Edward;
The other Edward dead, to quit my Edward;
Young York he is but boot, because both they
Match'd not the high perfection of my loss.
Thy Clarence he is dead that stabb'd my Edward;
And the beholders of this frantic play,
Th' adulterate Hastings, Rivers, Vaughan, Grey,

Untimely smother'd in their dusky graves.

Richard yet lives, hell's black intelligencer;

Only reserv'd their factor to buy souls

And send them thither. But at hand, at hand,

Ensues his piteous and unpitied end.

Earth gapes, hell burns, fiends roar, saints pray,

To have him suddenly convey'd from hence.

Cancel his bond of life, dear God, I pray,

That I may live and say 'The dog is dead.'

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

O, thou didst prophesy the time would come

That I should wish for thee to help me curse

That bottled spider, that foul bunch-back'd toad!

QUEEN MARGARET.

I Call'd thee then vain flourish of my fortune;

I call'd thee then poor shadow, painted queen,

The presentation of but what I was,

The flattering index of a direful pageant,

One heav'd a-high to be hurl'd down below,

A mother only mock'd with two fair babes,
A dream of what thou wast, a garish flag
To be the aim of every dangerous shot,
A sign of dignity, a breath, a bubble,
A queen in jest, only to fill the scene.
Where is thy husband now? Where be thy brothers?

Where be thy two sons? Wherein dost thou joy?
Who sues, and kneels, and says 'God save the Queen'?

Where be the bending peers that flattered thee?
Where be the thronging troops that followed thee?

Decline an this, and see what now thou art:
For happy wife, a most distressed widow;
For joyful mother, one that wails the name;
For one being su'd to, one that humbly sues;
For Queen, a very caitiff crown'd with care;
For she that scorn'd at me, now scorn'd of me;
For she being fear'd of all, now fearing one;
For she commanding all, obey'd of none.

Thus hath the course of justice whirl'd about

And left thee but a very prey to time,

Having no more but thought of what thou wast

To torture thee the more, being what thou art.

Thou didst usurp my place, and dost thou not

Usurp the just proportion of my sorrow?

Now thy proud neck bears half my burden'd yoke,

From which even here I slip my weary head

And leave the burden of it all on thee.

Farewell, York's wife, and queen of sad mischance;

These English woes shall make me smile in France.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

O thou well skill'd in curses, stay awhile

And teach me how to curse mine enemies!

QUEEN MARGARET.

Forbear to sleep the nights, and fast the days;

Compare dead happiness with living woe;

Think that thy babes were sweeter than they were,

And he that slew them fouler than he is.

Bett'ring thy loss makes the bad-causer worse;

Revolving this will teach thee how to curse.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

My words are dull; O, quicken them with thine!

QUEEN MARGARET.

Thy woes will make them sharp and

pierce like mine. *Exit*

DUCHESS. Why should calamity be fun of words?

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

Windy attorneys to their client woes,

Airy succeeders of intestate joys,

Poor breathing orators of miseries,

Let them have scope; though what they will impart

Help nothing else, yet do they case the heart.

DUCHESS.

If so, then be not tongue-tied. Go with me,

And in the breath of bitter words let's smother
My damned son that thy two sweet sons smother'd.

The trumpet sounds; be copious in exclaims.

Enter KING RICHARD and his train, marching with drums and trumpets

KING RICHARD. Who intercepts me in my expedition?

DUCHESS.
O, she that might have intercepted thee,
By strangling thee in her accursed womb,
From all the slaughters, wretch, that thou hast done!

QUEEN ELIZABETH.
Hidest thou that forehead with a golden crown
Where't should be branded, if that right were right,
The slaughter of the Prince that ow'd that crown,
And the dire death of my poor sons and brothers?

Tell me, thou villain slave, where are my children?

DUCHESS.

Thou toad, thou toad, where is thy brother Clarence?

And little Ned Plantagenet, his son?

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

Where is the gentle Rivers, Vaughan,

Grey?

DUCHESS.

Where is kind Hastings?

KING RICHARD.

A flourish, trumpets! Strike alarum, drums!

Let not the heavens hear these tell-tale women

Rail on the Lord's anointed. Strike, I say!

[Flourish. Alarums]

Either be patient and entreat me fair,

Or with the clamorous report of war

Thus will I drown your exclamations.

DUCHESS.

Art thou my son?

KING RICHARD.

Ay, I thank God, my father, and yourself.

DUCHESS.

Then patiently hear my impatience.

KING RICHARD.

Madam, I have a touch of your condition
That cannot brook the accent of reproof.

DUCHESS.

O, let me speak!

KING RICHARD.

Do, then; but I'll not hear.

DUCHESS.

I will be mild and gentle in my words.

KING RICHARD.
And brief, good mother; for I am in haste.

DUCHESS.
Art thou so hasty? I have stay'd for thee,
God knows, in torment and in agony.

KING RICHARD.

And came I not at last to comfort you?

DUCHESS.
No, by the holy rood, thou know'st it well
Thou cam'st on earth to make the earth my hell.
A grievous burden was thy birth to me;

Tetchy and wayward was thy infancy;

Thy school-days frightful, desp'rate, wild, and furious;

Thy prime of manhood daring, bold, and venturous;

Thy age confirm'd, proud, subtle, sly, and bloody,

More mild, but yet more harmful-kind in hatred.

What comfortable hour canst thou name

That ever grac'd me with thy company?

KING RICHARD.

Faith, none but Humphrey Hour, that call'd

your Grace

To breakfast once forth of my company.

If I be so disgracious in your eye,

Let me march on and not offend you, madam.

Strike up the drum.

DUCHESS.

I prithee hear me speak.

KING RICHARD.

You speak too bitterly.

DUCHESS.

Hear me a word;

For I shall never speak to thee again.

KING RICHARD.

So.

DUCHESS.

Either thou wilt die by God's just ordinance

Ere from this war thou turn a conqueror;

Or I with grief and extreme age shall perish

And never more behold thy face again.

Therefore take with thee my most grievous curse,

Which in the day of battle tire thee more

Than all the complete armour that thou wear'st!

My prayers on the adverse party fight;

And there the little souls of Edward's children

Whisper the spirits of thine enemies

And promise them success and victory.

Bloody thou art; bloody will be thy end.

Shame serves thy life and doth thy death attend. *Exit*

QUEEN ELIZABETH. Though far more cause, yet much less spirit to curse

Abides in me; I say amen to her.

KING RICHARD.

Stay, madam, I must talk a word with you.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

I have no moe sons of the royal blood

For thee to slaughter. For my daughters, Richard,

They shall be praying nuns, not weeping queens;

And therefore level not to hit their lives.

KING RICHARD.

You have a daughter call'd Elizabeth.

Virtuous and fair, royal and gracious.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

And must she die for this? O, let her live,

And I'll corrupt her manners, stain her beauty,

Slander myself as false to Edward's bed,

Throw over her the veil of infamy;

So she may live unscarr'd of bleeding slaughter,

I will confess she was not Edward's daughter.

KING RICHARD.

Wrong not her birth; she is a royal Princess.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

To save her life I'll say she is not so.

KING RICHARD.

Her life is safest only in her birth.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

And only in that safety died her brothers.

KING RICHARD.

Lo, at their birth good stars were opposite.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

No, to their lives ill friends were contrary.

KING RICHARD.

All unavoided is the doom of destiny.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

True, when avoided grace makes destiny.
My babes were destin'd to a fairer death,
If grace had bless'd thee with a fairer life.

KING RICHARD.

You speak as if that I had slain my cousins.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

Cousins, indeed; and by their uncle cozen'd

Of comfort, kingdom, kindred, freedom, life.

Whose hand soever lanc'd their tender hearts,

Thy head, an indirectly, gave direction.

No doubt the murd'rous knife was dull and blunt

Till it was whetted on thy stone-hard heart

To revel in the entrails of my lambs.

But that stiff use of grief makes wild grief tame,

My tongue should to thy ears not name my boys

Till that my nails were anchor'd in thine eyes;

And I, in such a desp'rate bay of death,

Like a poor bark, of sails and tackling reft,

Rush all to pieces on thy rocky bosom.

KING RICHARD.

Madam, so thrive I in my enterprise

And dangerous success of bloody wars,

As I intend more good to you and yours

Than ever you or yours by me were harm'd!

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

What good is cover'd with the face of heaven,

To be discover'd, that can do me good?

KING RICHARD.

advancement of your children, gentle lady.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

Up to some scaffold, there to lose their heads?

KING RICHARD.

Unto the dignity and height of Fortune,

The high imperial type of this earth's glory.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

Flatter my sorrow with report of it;

Tell me what state, what dignity, what honour,

Canst thou demise to any child of mine?

KING RICHARD.

Even all I have-ay, and myself and all
Will I withal endow a child of thine;
So in the Lethe of thy angry soul
Thou drown the sad remembrance of those wrongs
Which thou supposest I have done to thee.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

Be brief, lest that the process of thy kindness
Last longer telling than thy kindness' date.

KING RICHARD.

Then know, that from my soul I love thy daughter.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

My daughter's mother thinks it with her soul.

KING RICHARD.

What do you think?

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

That thou dost love my daughter from thy soul.
So from thy soul's love didst thou love her brothers,
And from my heart's love I do thank thee for it.

KING RICHARD.
Be not so hasty to confound my meaning.
I mean that with my soul I love thy daughter
And do intend to make her Queen of England.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

Well, then, who dost thou mean shall be her king?

KING RICHARD.
Even he that makes her Queen. Who else should be?

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

What, thou?

KING RICHARD.

Even so. How think you of it?

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

How canst thou woo her?

KING RICHARD.

That would I learn of you,
As one being best acquainted with her humour.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

And wilt thou learn of me?

KING RICHARD.

Madam, with all my heart.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

Send to her, by the man that slew her brothers,
A pair of bleeding hearts; thereon engrave

'Edward' and 'York.' Then haply will she weep;

Therefore present to her-as sometimes Margaret

Did to thy father, steep'd in Rutland's blood-

A handkerchief; which, say to her, did drain

The purple sap from her sweet brother's body,

And bid her wipe her weeping eyes withal.

If this inducement move her not to love,

Send her a letter of thy noble deeds;

Tell her thou mad'st away her uncle Clarence,

Her uncle Rivers; ay, and for her sake

Mad'st quick conveyance with her good aunt Anne.

KING RICHARD.

You mock me, madam; this is not the way

To win your daughter.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

There is no other way;

Unless thou couldst put on some other shape

And not be Richard that hath done all this.

KING RICHARD.

Say that I did all this for love of her.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

Nay, then indeed she cannot choose but hate thee,

Having bought love with such a bloody spoil.

KING RICHARD.

Look what is done cannot be now amended.

Men shall deal unadvisedly sometimes,

Which after-hours gives leisure to repent.

If I did take the kingdom from your sons,

To make amends I'll give it to your daughter.

If I have kill'd the issue of your womb,

To quicken your increase I will beget

Mine issue of your blood upon your daughter.

A grandam's name is little less in love

Than is the doating title of a mother;

They are as children but one step below,

Even of your metal, of your very blood;

Of all one pain, save for a night of groans

Endur'd of her, for whom you bid like sorrow.

Your children were vexation to your youth;

But mine shall be a comfort to your age.

The loss you have is but a son being King,

And by that loss your daughter is made Queen.

I cannot make you what amends I would,

Therefore accept such kindness as I can.

Dorset your son, that with a fearful soul

Leads discontented steps in foreign soil,

This fair alliance quickly shall can home

To high promotions and great dignity.

The King, that calls your beauteous daughter wife,

Familiarly shall call thy Dorset brother;

Again shall you be mother to a king,

And all the ruins of distressful times

Repair'd with double riches of content.

What! we have many goodly days to see.

The liquid drops of tears that you have shed

Shall come again, transform'd to orient pearl,

Advantaging their loan with interest

Of ten times double gain of happiness.
Go, then, my mother, to thy daughter go;
Make bold her bashful years with your experience;
Prepare her ears to hear a wooer's tale;
Put in her tender heart th' aspiring flame
Of golden sovereignty; acquaint the Princes
With the sweet silent hours of marriage joys.
And when this arm of mine hath chastised
The petty rebel, dull-brain'd Buckingham,
Bound with triumphant garlands will I come,
And lead thy daughter to a conqueror's bed;
To whom I will retail my conquest won,
And she shall be sole victoress, Caesar's Caesar.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.
What were I best to say? Her father's brother
Would be her lord? Or shall I say her uncle?

Or he that slew her brothers and her uncles?
Under what title shall I woo for thee
That God, the law, my honour, and her love

Can make seem pleasing to her tender years?

KING RICHARD.

Infer fair England's peace by this alliance.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.
Which she shall purchase with
still-lasting war.

KING RICHARD.
Tell her the King, that may command, entreats.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.
That at her hands which the King's
King forbids.

KING RICHARD.

Say she shall be a high and mighty queen.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

To wail the title, as her mother doth.

KING RICHARD.

Say I will love her everlastingly.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

But how long shall that title 'ever' last?

KING RICHARD.

Sweetly in force unto her fair life's end.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

But how long fairly shall her sweet life last?

KING RICHARD.

As long as heaven and nature lengthens it.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

As long as hell and Richard likes of it.

KING RICHARD.

Say I, her sovereign, am her subject low.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

But she, your subject, loathes such sovereignty.

KING RICHARD.

Be eloquent in my behalf to her.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

An honest tale speeds best being plainly told.

KING RICHARD.

Then plainly to her tell my loving tale.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

Plain and not honest is too harsh a style.

KING RICHARD.

Your reasons are too shallow and too quick.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

O, no, my reasons are too deep and

dead-

Too deep and dead, poor infants, in their graves.

KING RICHARD.

Harp not on that string, madam; that is past.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

Harp on it still shall I till heartstrings break.

KING RICHARD.

Now, by my George, my garter, and my

crown-

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

Profan'd, dishonour'd, and the third usurp'd.

KING RICHARD.

I swear-

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

By nothing; for this is no oath:
Thy George, profan'd, hath lost his lordly honour;
Thy garter, blemish'd, pawn'd his knightly virtue;
Thy crown, usurp'd, disgrac'd his kingly glory.
If something thou wouldst swear to be believ'd,
Swear then by something that thou hast not wrong'd.

KING RICHARD.

Then, by my self-

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

Thy self is self-misus'd.

KING RICHARD.

Now, by the world-

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

'Tis full of thy foul wrongs.

KING RICHARD.

My father's death-

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

Thy life hath it dishonour'd.

KING RICHARD.

Why, then, by God-

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

God's wrong is most of all.

If thou didst fear to break an oath with Him,

The unity the King my husband made
Thou hadst not broken, nor my brothers died.
If thou hadst fear'd to break an oath by Him,
Th' imperial metal, circling now thy head,
Had grac'd the tender temples of my child;
And both the Princes had been breathing here,
Which now, two tender bedfellows for dust,
Thy broken faith hath made the prey for worms.
What canst thou swear by now?

KING RICHARD.

The time to come.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.
That thou hast wronged in the time
o'erpast;
For I myself have many tears to wash
Hereafter time, for time past wrong'd by thee.
The children live whose fathers thou hast slaughter'd,
Ungovern'd youth, to wail it in their age;

The parents live whose children thou hast butcheed,
Old barren plants, to wail it with their age.
Swear not by time to come; for that thou hast
Misus'd ere us'd, by times ill-us'd o'erpast.

KING RICHARD.
As I intend to prosper and repent,
So thrive I in my dangerous affairs
Of hostile arms! Myself myself confound!

Heaven and fortune bar me happy hours!
Day, yield me not thy light; nor, night, thy rest!
Be opposite all planets of good luck
To my proceeding!-if, with dear heart's love,
Immaculate devotion, holy thoughts,
I tender not thy beauteous princely daughter.
In her consists my happiness and thine;
Without her, follows to myself and thee,
Herself, the land, and many a Christian soul,
Death, desolation, ruin, and decay.
It cannot be avoided but by this;

It will not be avoided but by this.

Therefore, dear mother-I must call you so-

Be the attorney of my love to her;

Plead what I will be, not what I have been;

Not my deserts, but what I will deserve.

Urge the necessity and state of times,

And be not peevish-fond in great designs.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

Shall I be tempted of the devil thus?

KING RICHARD.

Ay, if the devil tempt you to do good.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

Shall I forget myself to be myself?

KING RICHARD.

Ay, if your self's remembrance wrong yourself.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

Yet thou didst kill my children.

KING RICHARD.
But in your daughter's womb I bury them;
Where, in that nest of spicery, they will breed
Selves of themselves, to your recomforture.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

Shall I go win my daughter to thy will?

KING RICHARD.
And be a happy mother by the deed.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.
I go. Write to me very shortly,
And you shall understand from me her mind.

KING RICHARD.

Bear her my true love's kiss; and so, farewell.

Kissing her. *Exit* QUEEN ELIZABETH

Relenting fool, and shallow, changing woman!

Enter RATCLIFF; CATESBY following

How now! what news?

RATCLIFF.

Most mighty sovereign, on the western coast

Rideth a puissant navy; to our shores

Throng many doubtful hollow-hearted friends,

Unarm'd, and unresolv'd to beat them back.

'Tis thought that Richmond is their admiral;

And there they hull, expecting but the aid

Of Buckingham to welcome them ashore.

KING RICHARD.

Some light-foot friend post to the Duke of Norfolk.

Ratcliff, thyself-or Catesby; where is he?

CATESBY.

Here, my good lord.

KING RICHARD.

Catesby, fly to the Duke.

CATESBY.

I will my lord, with all convenient haste.

KING RICHARD.

Ratcliff, come hither. Post to Salisbury;

When thou com'st thither- *[To CATESBY]* Dull,

unmindfull villain,

Why stay'st thou here, and go'st not to the Duke?

CATESBY.

First, mighty liege, tell me your Highness' pleasure,

What from your Grace I shall deliver to him.

KING RICHARD.

O, true, good Catesby. Bid him levy straight

The greatest strength and power that he can make

And meet me suddenly at Salisbury.

CATESBY.

I go. *Exit*

RATCLIFF. What, may it please you, shall I do at Salisbury?

KING RICHARD.

Why, what wouldst thou do there before I

go?

RATCLIFF.

Your Highness told me I should post before.

KING RICHARD.

My mind is chang'd.

Enter LORD STANLEY

STANLEY, what news with you?

STANLEY.

None good, my liege, to please you with the hearing;

Nor none so bad but well may be reported.

KING RICHARD.

Hoyday, a riddle! neither good nor bad!

What need'st thou run so many miles about,

When thou mayest tell thy tale the nearest way?

Once more, what news?

STANLEY.

Richmond is on the seas.

KING RICHARD.

There let him sink, and be the seas on him!
White-liver'd runagate, what doth he there?

STANLEY.

I know not, mighty sovereign, but by guess.

KING RICHARD.
Well, as you guess?

STANLEY.
Stirr'd up by Dorset, Buckingham, and Morton,
He makes for England here to claim the crown.

KING RICHARD.

Is the chair empty? Is the sword unsway'd?
Is the King dead, the empire unpossess'd?

What heir of York is there alive but we?
And who is England's King but great York's heir?

Then tell me what makes he upon the seas.

STANLEY.

Unless for that, my liege, I cannot guess.

KING RICHARD.

Unless for that he comes to be your liege,
You cannot guess wherefore the Welshman comes.

Thou wilt revolt and fly to him, I fear.

STANLEY.

No, my good lord; therefore mistrust me not.

KING RICHARD.

Where is thy power then, to beat him back?
Where be thy tenants and thy followers?

Are they not now upon the western shore,
Safe-conducting the rebels from their ships?

STANLEY.

No, my good lord, my friends are in the north.

KING RICHARD.
Cold friends to me. What do they in the north,
When they should serve their sovereign in the west?

STANLEY.
They have not been commanded, mighty King.
Pleaseth your Majesty to give me leave,
I'll muster up my friends and meet your Grace
Where and what time your Majesty shall please.

KING RICHARD.
Ay, ay, thou wouldst be gone to join with
Richmond;
But I'll not trust thee.

STANLEY.

Most mighty sovereign,

You have no cause to hold my friendship doubtful.

I never was nor never will be false.

KING RICHARD.

Go, then, and muster men. But leave behind

Your son, George Stanley. Look your heart be firm,

Or else his head's assurance is but frail.

STANLEY.

So deal with him as I prove true to you. *Exit*

Enter a MESSENGER

MESSENGER. My gracious sovereign, now in Devonshire,

As I by friends am well advertised,

Sir Edward Courtney and the haughty prelate,

Bishop of Exeter, his elder brother,

With many moe confederates, are in arms.

Enter another MESSENGER

SECOND MESSENGER. In Kent, my liege, the Guilfords are in arms;
And every hour more competitors
Flock to the rebels, and their power grows strong.

Enter another MESSENGER

THIRD MESSENGER. My lord, the army of great Buckingham-

KING RICHARD.
Out on you, owls! Nothing but songs of
death? *[He strikes him]*
There, take thou that till thou bring better news.

THIRD MESSENGER.
The news I have to tell your Majesty
Is that by sudden floods and fall of waters
Buckingham's army is dispers'd and scatter'd;

And he himself wand'red away alone,
No man knows whither.

KING RICHARD.
I cry thee mercy.

There is my purse to cure that blow of thine.
Hath any well-advised friend proclaim'd
Reward to him that brings the traitor in?

THIRD MESSENGER.
Such proclamation hath been made,
my Lord.

Enter another MESSENGER

FOURTH MESSENGER. Sir Thomas Lovel and Lord Marquis Dorset,
'Tis said, my liege, in Yorkshire are in arms.
But this good comfort bring I to your Highness-
The Britaine navy is dispers'd by tempest.
Richmond in Dorsetshire sent out a boat

Unto the shore, to ask those on the banks
If they were his assistants, yea or no;
Who answer'd him they came from Buckingham
Upon his party. He, mistrusting them,
Hois'd sail, and made his course again for Britaine.

KING RICHARD.
March on, march on, since we are up in arms;
If not to fight with foreign enemies,
Yet to beat down these rebels here at home.

Re-enter CATESBY

CATESBY.
My liege, the Duke of Buckingham is taken-
That is the best news. That the Earl of Richmond
Is with a mighty power landed at Milford
Is colder tidings, yet they must be told.

KING RICHARD.
Away towards Salisbury! While we reason here

A royal battle might be won and lost.

Some one take order Buckingham be brought

To Salisbury; the rest march on with me.

Flourish. Exeunt

SCENE 5.

LORD DERBY'S house

Enter STANLEY and SIR CHRISTOPHER URSWICK

STANLEY. Sir Christopher, tell Richmond this from me:

That in the sty of the most deadly boar

My son George Stanley is frank'd up in hold;

If I revolt, off goes young George's head;

The fear of that holds off my present aid.

So, get thee gone; commend me to thy lord.

Withal say that the Queen hath heartily consented

He should espouse Elizabeth her daughter.

But tell me, where is princely Richmond now?

CHRISTOPHER.
At Pembroke, or at Ha'rford west in Wales.

STANLEY.

What men of name resort to him?

CHRISTOPHER.
Sir Walter Herbert, a renowned soldier;
SIR Gilbert Talbot, Sir William Stanley,
OXFORD, redoubted Pembroke, Sir James Blunt,
And Rice ap Thomas, with a valiant crew;
And many other of great name and worth;
And towards London do they bend their power,
If by the way they be not fought withal.

STANLEY.
Well, hie thee to thy lord; I kiss his hand;
My letter will resolve him of my mind.

Farewell. Exeunt

ACT V.
SCENE 1.

Salisbury . An open place

Enter the SHERIFF and guard, with BUCKINGHAM, led to execution

BUCKINGHAM. Will not King Richard let me speak with him?

SHERIFF.

No, my good lord; therefore be patient.

BUCKINGHAM.

Hastings, and Edward's children, Grey, and Rivers,

Holy King Henry, and thy fair son Edward,

Vaughan, and all that have miscarried

By underhand corrupted foul injustice,

If that your moody discontented souls
Do through the clouds behold this present hour,
Even for revenge mock my destruction!
This is All-Souls' day, fellow, is it not?

SHERIFF.

It is, my lord.

BUCKINGHAM.

Why, then All-Souls' day is my body's doomsday.
This is the day which in King Edward's time
I wish'd might fall on me when I was found
False to his children and his wife's allies;
This is the day wherein I wish'd to fall
By the false faith of him whom most I trusted;
This, this All-Souls' day to my fearful soul
Is the determin'd respite of my wrongs;
That high All-Seer which I dallied with
Hath turn'd my feigned prayer on my head
And given in earnest what I begg'd in jest.

Thus doth He force the swords of wicked men

To turn their own points in their masters' bosoms.

Thus Margaret's curse falls heavy on my neck.

'When he' quoth she 'shall split thy heart with sorrow,

Remember Margaret was a prophetess.'

Come lead me, officers, to the block of shame;

Wrong hath but wrong, and blame the due of blame.

Exeunt

SCENE 2.

Camp near Tamworth

Enter RICHMOND, OXFORD, SIR JAMES BLUNT, SIR WALTER HERBERT, and others, with drum and colours

RICHMOND. Fellows in arms, and my most loving friends,

Bruis'd underneath the yoke of tyranny,

Thus far into the bowels of the land

Have we march'd on without impediment;

And here receive we from our father Stanley
Lines of fair comfort and encouragement.
The wretched, bloody, and usurping boar,
That spoil'd your summer fields and fruitful vines,
Swills your warm blood like wash, and makes his trough
In your embowell'd bosoms-this foul swine
Is now even in the centre of this isle,
Near to the town of Leicester, as we learn.

From Tamworth thither is but one day's march.
In God's name cheerly on, courageous friends,
To reap the harvest of perpetual peace
By this one bloody trial of sharp war.

OXFORD.
Every man's conscience is a thousand men,
To fight against this guilty homicide.

HERBERT.

I doubt not but his friends will turn to us.

BLUNT.

He hath no friends but what are friends for fear,

Which in his dearest need will fly from him.

RICHMOND.

All for our vantage. Then in God's name march.

True hope is swift and flies with swallow's wings;

Kings it makes gods, and meaner creatures kings. *Exeunt*

SCENE 3.

Bosworth Field

Enter KING RICHARD in arms, with NORFOLK, RATCLIFF, the EARL of SURREYS and others

KING RICHARD. Here pitch our tent, even here in Bosworth field.

My Lord of Surrey, why look you so sad?

SURREY.

My heart is ten times lighter than my looks.

KING RICHARD.

My Lord of Norfolk!

NORFOLK.

Here, most gracious liege.

KING RICHARD.

Norfolk, we must have knocks; ha! must we not?

NORFOLK.

We must both give and take, my loving lord.

KING RICHARD.

Up With my tent! Here will I lie to-night;

[Soldiers begin to set up the KING'S tent]

But where to-morrow? Well, all's one for that.

Who hath descried the number of the traitors?

NORFOLK.

Six or seven thousand is their utmost power.

KING RICHARD.

Why, our battalia trebles that account;

Besides, the King's name is a tower of strength,
Which they upon the adverse faction want.
Up with the tent! Come, noble gentlemen,
Let us survey the vantage of the ground.

Call for some men of sound direction.
Let's lack no discipline, make no delay;
For, lords, to-morrow is a busy day. *Exeunt*

Enter , on the other side of the field,
RICHMOND, SIR WILLIAM BRANDON, OXFORD, DORSET,
and others. Some pitch RICHMOND'S tent

RICHMOND.
The weary sun hath made a golden set,
And by the bright tract of his fiery car
Gives token of a goodly day to-morrow.

Sir William Brandon, you shall bear my standard.
Give me some ink and paper in my tent.
I'll draw the form and model of our battle,

Limit each leader to his several charge,
And part in just proportion our small power.
My Lord of Oxford-you, Sir William Brandon-
And you, Sir Walter Herbert-stay with me.
The Earl of Pembroke keeps his regiment;
Good Captain Blunt, bear my good night to him,
And by the second hour in the morning
Desire the Earl to see me in my tent.
Yet one thing more, good Captain, do for me-
Where is Lord Stanley quarter'd, do you know?

BLUNT.
Unless I have mista'en his colours much-
Which well I am assur'd I have not done-
His regiment lies half a mile at least
South from the mighty power of the King.

RICHMOND.
If without peril it be possible,
Sweet Blunt, make some good means to speak with him
And give him from me this most needful note.

BLUNT.

Upon my life, my lord, I'll undertake it;
And so, God give you quiet rest to-night!

RICHMOND.

Good night, good Captain Blunt. Come,
gentlemen,
Let us consult upon to-morrow's business.
In to my tent; the dew is raw and cold.
[They withdraw into the tent]

Enter , to his-tent, KING RICHARD, NORFOLK, RATCLIFF, and CATESBY

KING RICHARD.

What is't o'clock?

CATESBY.

It's supper-time, my lord;
It's nine o'clock.

KING RICHARD.

I will not sup to-night.
Give me some ink and paper.

What, is my beaver easier than it was?
And all my armour laid into my tent?

CATESBY.

It is, my liege; and all things are in readiness.

KING RICHARD.
Good Norfolk, hie thee to thy charge;
Use careful watch, choose trusty sentinels.

NORFOLK.
I go, my lord.

KING RICHARD.

Stir with the lark to-morrow, gentle Norfolk.

NORFOLK.

I warrant you, my lord. *Exit*

KING RICHARD. Catesby!

CATESBY.

My lord?

KING RICHARD.

Send out a pursuivant-at-arms
To Stanley's regiment; bid him bring his power
Before sunrising, lest his son George fall
Into the blind cave of eternal night. *Exit* CATESBY
Fill me a bowl of wine. Give me a watch.

Saddle white Surrey for the field to-morrow.
Look that my staves be sound, and not too heavy.

Ratcliff!

RATCLIFF.

My lord?

KING RICHARD.

Saw'st thou the melancholy Lord

Northumberland?

RATCLIFF.

Thomas the Earl of Surrey and himself,

Much about cock-shut time, from troop to troop

Went through the army, cheering up the soldiers.

KING RICHARD.

So, I am satisfied. Give me a bowl of wine.

I have not that alacrity of spirit

Nor cheer of mind that I was wont to have.

Set it down. Is ink and paper ready?

RATCLIFF.

It is, my lord.

KING RICHARD.

Bid my guard watch; leave me.

RATCLIFF, about the mid of night come to my tent

And help to arm me. Leave me, I say.

Exit RATCLIFF. RICHARD sleeps

Enter DERBY to RICHMOND in his tent;

LORDS attending

DERBY.

Fortune and victory sit on thy helm!

RICHMOND.

All comfort that the dark night can afford

Be to thy person, noble father-in-law!

Tell me, how fares our loving mother?

DERBY.

I, by attorney, bless thee from thy mother,
Who prays continually for Richmond's good.
So much for that. The silent hours steal on,
And flaky darkness breaks within the east.
In brief, for so the season bids us be,
Prepare thy battle early in the morning,
And put thy fortune to the arbitrement
Of bloody strokes and mortal-staring war.
I, as I may-that which I would I cannot-
With best advantage will deceive the time
And aid thee in this doubtful shock of arms;
But on thy side I may not be too forward,
Lest, being seen, thy brother, tender George,
Be executed in his father's sight.
Farewell; the leisure and the fearful time
Cuts off the ceremonious vows of love

And ample interchange of sweet discourse
Which so-long-sund'red friends should dwell upon.
God give us leisure for these rites of love!

Once more, adieu; be valiant, and speed well!

RICHMOND.
Good lords, conduct him to his regiment.
I'll strive with troubled thoughts to take a nap,
Lest leaden slumber peise me down to-morrow
When I should mount with wings of victory.
Once more, good night, kind lords and gentlemen.
Exeunt all but RICHMOND
O Thou, whose captain I account myself,
Look on my forces with a gracious eye;
Put in their hands Thy bruising irons of wrath,
That they may crush down with a heavy fall
The usurping helmets of our adversaries!
Make us Thy ministers of chastisement,
That we may praise Thee in the victory!
To Thee I do commend my watchful soul

Ere I let fall the windows of mine eyes.
Sleeping and waking, O, defend me still! *[Sleeps]*

Enter the GHOST Of YOUNG PRINCE EDWARD,

son to HENRY THE SIXTH

GHOST.
[To RICHARD] Let me sit heavy on thy soul to-morrow!
Think how thou stabb'dst me in my prime of youth
At Tewksbury; despair, therefore, and die!

[To RICHMOND] Be cheerful, Richmond; for the wronged souls
Of butcher'd princes fight in thy behalf.

King Henry's issue, Richmond, comforts thee.

Enter the GHOST of HENRY THE SIXTH

GHOST. *[To RICHARD]* When I was mortal, my anointed body
By thee was punched full of deadly holes.

Think on the Tower and me. Despair, and die.
Harry the Sixth bids thee despair and die.

[To RICHMOND] Virtuous and holy, be thou conqueror!
Harry, that prophesied thou shouldst be King,
Doth comfort thee in thy sleep. Live and flourish!

Enter the GHOST of CLARENCE

GHOST. *[To RICHARD]* Let me sit heavy in thy soul
to-morrow! I that was wash'd to death with fulsome wine,
Poor Clarence, by thy guile betray'd to death!
To-morrow in the battle think on me,
And fall thy edgeless sword. Despair and die!

[To RICHMOND] Thou offspring of the house of Lancaster,
The wronged heirs of York do pray for thee.

Good angels guard thy battle! Live and flourish!

Enter the GHOSTS of RIVERS, GREY, and VAUGHAN

GHOST OF RIVERS. *[To RICHARD]* Let me sit heavy in thy

soul to-morrow,

Rivers that died at Pomfret! Despair and die!

GHOST OF GREY.

[To RICHARD] Think upon Grey, and let thy soul despair!

GHOST OF VAUGHAN.

[To RICHARD] Think upon Vaughan,

and with guilty fear

Let fall thy lance. Despair and die!

ALL.

[To RICHMOND] Awake, and think our wrongs in

Richard's bosom

Will conquer him. Awake and win the day.

Enter the GHOST of HASTINGS

GHOST. *[To RICHARD]* Bloody and guilty, guiltily awake,
And in a bloody battle end thy days!

Think on Lord Hastings. Despair and die.

[To RICHMOND] Quiet untroubled soul, awake, awake!
Arm, fight, and conquer, for fair England's sake!

Enter the GHOSTS of the two young PRINCES

GHOSTS. *[To RICHARD]* Dream on thy cousins smothered in
the Tower.
Let us be lead within thy bosom, Richard,
And weigh thee down to ruin, shame, and death!

Thy nephews' souls bid thee despair and die.

[To RICHMOND] Sleep, Richmond, sleep in peace, and wake in joy;
Good angels guard thee from the boar's annoy!

Live, and beget a happy race of kings!

Edward's unhappy sons do bid thee flourish.

Enter the GHOST of LADY ANNE, his wife

GHOST. *[To RICHARD]* Richard, thy wife, that wretched
Anne thy wife
That never slept a quiet hour with thee
Now fills thy sleep with perturbations.
To-morrow in the battle think on me,
And fall thy edgeless sword. Despair and die.

[To RICHMOND] Thou quiet soul, sleep thou a quiet sleep;
Dream of success and happy victory.

Thy adversary's wife doth pray for thee.

Enter the GHOST of BUCKINGHAM

GHOST. *[To RICHARD]* The first was I that help'd thee to the crown;
The last was I that felt thy tyranny.
O, in the battle think on Buckingham,

And die in terror of thy guiltiness!
Dream on, dream on of bloody deeds and death;
Fainting, despair; despairing, yield thy breath!

[To RICHMOND] I died for hope ere I could lend thee aid;
But cheer thy heart and be thou not dismay'd:
God and good angels fight on Richmond's side;
And Richard falls in height of all his pride.

[The GHOSTS vanish. RICHARD starts out of his dream]

KING RICHARD.
Give me another horse. Bind up my wounds.

Have mercy, Jesu! Soft! I did but dream.
O coward conscience, how dost thou afflict me!

The lights burn blue. It is now dead midnight.
Cold fearful drops stand on my trembling flesh.

What do I fear? Myself? There's none else by.

Richard loves Richard; that is, I am I.

Is there a murderer here? No-yes, I am.
Then fly. What, from myself? Great reason why-
Lest I revenge. What, myself upon myself!
Alack, I love myself. Wherefore? For any good
That I myself have done unto myself?
O, no! Alas, I rather hate myself
For hateful deeds committed by myself!
I am a villain; yet I lie, I am not.

Fool, of thyself speak well. Fool, do not flatter.
My conscience hath a thousand several tongues,
And every tongue brings in a several tale,
And every tale condemns me for a villain.
Perjury, perjury, in the high'st degree;
Murder, stern murder, in the dir'st degree;
All several sins, all us'd in each degree,
Throng to the bar, crying all 'Guilty! guilty!'
I shall despair. There is no creature loves me;
And if I die no soul will pity me:

And wherefore should they, since that I myself
Find in myself no pity to myself?
Methought the souls of all that I had murder'd
Came to my tent, and every one did threat
To-morrow's vengeance on the head of Richard.

Enter RATCLIFF

RATCLIFF. My lord!

KING RICHARD.
Zounds, who is there?

RATCLIFF.
Ratcliff, my lord; 'tis I. The early village-cock
Hath twice done salutation to the morn;
Your friends are up and buckle on their armour.

KING RICHARD.
O Ratcliff, I have dream'd a fearful dream!

What think'st thou-will our friends prove all true?

RATCLIFF.

No doubt, my lord.

KING RICHARD.

O Ratcliff, I fear, I fear.

RATCLIFF.

Nay, good my lord, be not afraid of shadows.

KING RICHARD By the apostle Paul, shadows to-night
Have stuck more terror to the soul of Richard
Than can the substance of ten thousand soldiers
Armed in proof and led by shallow Richmond.
'Tis not yet near day. Come, go with me;
Under our tents I'll play the eaves-dropper,
To see if any mean to shrink from me. *Exeunt*

Enter the LORDS to RICHMOND sitting in his tent

LORDS. Good morrow, Richmond!

RICHMOND.

Cry mercy, lords and watchful gentlemen,

That you have ta'en a tardy sluggard here.

LORDS.

How have you slept, my lord?

RICHMOND.

The sweetest sleep and fairest-boding dreams

That ever ent'red in a drowsy head

Have I since your departure had, my lords.

Methought their souls whose bodies Richard murder'd

Came to my tent and cried on victory.

I promise you my soul is very jocund

In the remembrance of so fair a dream.

How far into the morning is it, lords?

LORDS.

Upon the stroke of four.

RICHMOND.

Why, then 'tis time to arm and give direction.

His ORATION to his SOLDIERS

More than I have said, loving countrymen,

The leisure and enforcement of the time

Forbids to dwell upon; yet remember this:

God and our good cause fight upon our side;

The prayers of holy saints and wronged souls,

Like high-rear'd bulwarks, stand before our faces;

Richard except, those whom we fight against

Had rather have us win than him they follow.

For what is he they follow? Truly, gentlemen,

A bloody tyrant and a homicide;

One rais'd in blood, and one in blood establish'd;

One that made means to come by what he hath,

And slaughtered those that were the means to help him;

A base foul stone, made precious by the foil
Of England's chair, where he is falsely set;
One that hath ever been God's enemy.
Then if you fight against God's enemy,
God will in justice ward you as his soldiers;
If you do sweat to put a tyrant down,
You sleep in peace, the tyrant being slain;
If you do fight against your country's foes,
Your country's foes shall pay your pains the hire;
If you do fight in safeguard of your wives,
Your wives shall welcome home the conquerors;
If you do free your children from the sword,
Your children's children quits it in your age.
Then, in the name of God and all these rights,
Advance your standards, draw your willing swords.
For me, the ransom of my bold attempt
Shall be this cold corpse on the earth's cold face;
But if I thrive, the gain of my attempt
The least of you shall share his part thereof.
Sound drums and trumpets boldly and cheerfully;
God and Saint George! Richmond and victory! *Exeunt*

Re-enter KING RICHARD, RATCLIFF, attendants,

and forces

KING RICHARD.

What said Northumberland as touching Richmond?

RATCLIFF.

That he was never trained up in arms.

KING RICHARD.

He said the truth; and what said Surrey then?

RATCLIFF.

He smil'd, and said 'The better for our purpose.'

KING He was in the right; and so indeed it is.

[Clock strikes]

Tell the clock there. Give me a calendar.

Who saw the sun to-day?

RATCLIFF.

Not I, my lord.

KING RICHARD.

Then he disdains to shine; for by the book

He should have brav'd the east an hour ago.

A black day will it be to somebody.

Ratcliff!

RATCLIFF.

My lord?

KING RICHARD.

The sun will not be seen to-day;

The sky doth frown and lour upon our army.

I would these dewy tears were from the ground.

Not shine to-day! Why, what is that to me

More than to Richmond? For the selfsame heaven

That frowns on me looks sadly upon him.

Enter NORFOLK

NORFOLK. Arm, arm, my lord; the foe vaunts in the field.

KING RICHARD.

Come, bustle, bustle; caparison my horse;

Call up Lord Stanley, bid him bring his power.

I will lead forth my soldiers to the plain,

And thus my battle shall be ordered:

My foreward shall be drawn out all in length,

Consisting equally of horse and foot;

Our archers shall be placed in the midst.

John Duke of Norfolk, Thomas Earl of Surrey,

Shall have the leading of this foot and horse.

They thus directed, we will follow

In the main battle, whose puissance on either side

Shall be well winged with our chiefest horse.

This, and Saint George to boot! What think'st thou,

Norfolk?

NORFOLK.

A good direction, warlike sovereign.

This found I on my tent this morning.

[He sheweth him a paper]

KING RICHARD.

[Reads]

'Jockey of Norfolk, be not so bold,

For Dickon thy master is bought and sold.'

A thing devised by the enemy.

Go, gentlemen, every man unto his charge.

Let not our babbling dreams affright our souls;

Conscience is but a word that cowards use,

Devis'd at first to keep the strong in awe.

Our strong arms be our conscience, swords our law.

March on, join bravely, let us to it pell-mell;

If not to heaven, then hand in hand to hell.

His ORATION to his ARMY

What shall I say more than I have inferr'd?

Remember whom you are to cope withal-

A sort of vagabonds, rascals, and runaways,

A scum of Britaines, and base lackey peasants,

Whom their o'er-cloyed country vomits forth

To desperate adventures and assur'd destruction.

You sleeping safe, they bring to you unrest;

You having lands, and bless'd with beauteous wives,

They would restrain the one, distain the other.

And who doth lead them but a paltry fellow,

Long kept in Britaine at our mother's cost?

A milk-sop, one that never in his life

Felt so much cold as over shoes in snow?

Let's whip these stragglers o'er the seas again;

Lash hence these over-weening rags of France,

These famish'd beggars, weary of their lives;

Who, but for dreaming on this fond exploit,
For want of means, poor rats, had hang'd themselves.
If we be conquered, let men conquer us,
And not these bastard Britaines, whom our fathers
Have in their own land beaten, bobb'd, and thump'd,
And, in record, left them the heirs of shame.
Shall these enjoy our lands? lie with our wives,
Ravish our daughters? *[Drum afar off]* Hark! I hear their drum.
Fight, gentlemen of England! Fight, bold yeomen!

Draw, archers, draw your arrows to the head!
Spur your proud horses hard, and ride in blood;
Amaze the welkin with your broken staves!

Enter a MESSENGER

What says Lord Stanley? Will he bring his power?

MESSENGER.
My lord, he doth deny to come.

KING RICHARD.

Off with his son George's head!

NORFOLK.

My lord, the enemy is pass'd the marsh.

After the battle let George Stanley die.

KING RICHARD.

A thousand hearts are great within my bosom.
Advance our standards, set upon our foes;
Our ancient word of courage, fair Saint George,
Inspire us with the spleen of fiery dragons!
Upon them! Victory sits on our helms. *Exeunt*

SCENE 4.

Another part of the field

Alarum; excursions. *Enter* NORFOLK and forces; to him CATESBY

CATESBY.

Rescue, my Lord of Norfolk, rescue, rescue!
The King enacts more wonders than a man,
Daring an opposite to every danger.
His horse is slain, and all on foot he fights,
Seeking for Richmond in the throat of death.

Rescue, fair lord, or else the day is lost.

Alarums. *Enter* KING RICHARD

KING RICHARD.

A horse! a horse! my kingdom for a horse!

CATESBY.

Withdraw, my lord! I'll help you to a horse.

KING RICHARD.

Slave, I have set my life upon a cast

And I Will stand the hazard of the die.

I think there be six Richmonds in the field;

Five have I slain to-day instead of him.

A horse! a horse! my kingdom for a horse! *Exeunt*

SCENE 5.

Another part of the field

Alarum. *Enter* RICHARD and RICHMOND; they fight; RICHARD is slain. Retreat and flourish. *Enter* RICHMOND, DERBY bearing the crown, with other LORDS

RICHMOND.

God and your arms be prais'd, victorious friends;

The day is ours, the bloody dog is dead.

DERBY.

Courageous Richmond, well hast thou acquit thee!

Lo, here, this long-usurped royalty

From the dead temples of this bloody wretch
Have I pluck'd off, to grace thy brows withal.
Wear it, enjoy it, and make much of it.

RICHMOND.

Great God of heaven, say Amen to all!
But, teLL me is young George Stanley living.

DERBY.
He is, my lord, and safe in Leicester town,
Whither, if it please you, we may now withdraw us.

RICHMOND.

What men of name are slain on either side?

DERBY.
John Duke of Norfolk, Walter Lord Ferrers,
Sir Robert Brakenbury, and Sir William Brandon.

RICHMOND.

Inter their bodies as becomes their births.

Proclaim a pardon to the soldiers fled

That in submission will return to us.

And then, as we have ta'en the sacrament,

We will unite the white rose and the red.

Smile heaven upon this fair conjunction,

That long have frown'd upon their emnity!

What traitor hears me, and says not Amen?

England hath long been mad, and scarr'd herself;

The brother blindly shed the brother's blood,

The father rashly slaughter'd his own son,

The son, compell'd, been butcher to the sire;

All this divided York and Lancaster,

Divided in their dire division,

O, now let Richmond and Elizabeth,

The true succeeders of each royal house,

By God's fair ordinance conjoin together!

And let their heirs, God, if thy will be so,

Enrich the time to come with smooth-fac'd peace, With smiling plenty, and fair prosperous days!

Abate the edge of traitors, gracious Lord,

That would reduce these bloody days again

And make poor England weep in streams of blood!

Let them not live to taste this land's increase

That would with treason wound this fair land's peace!

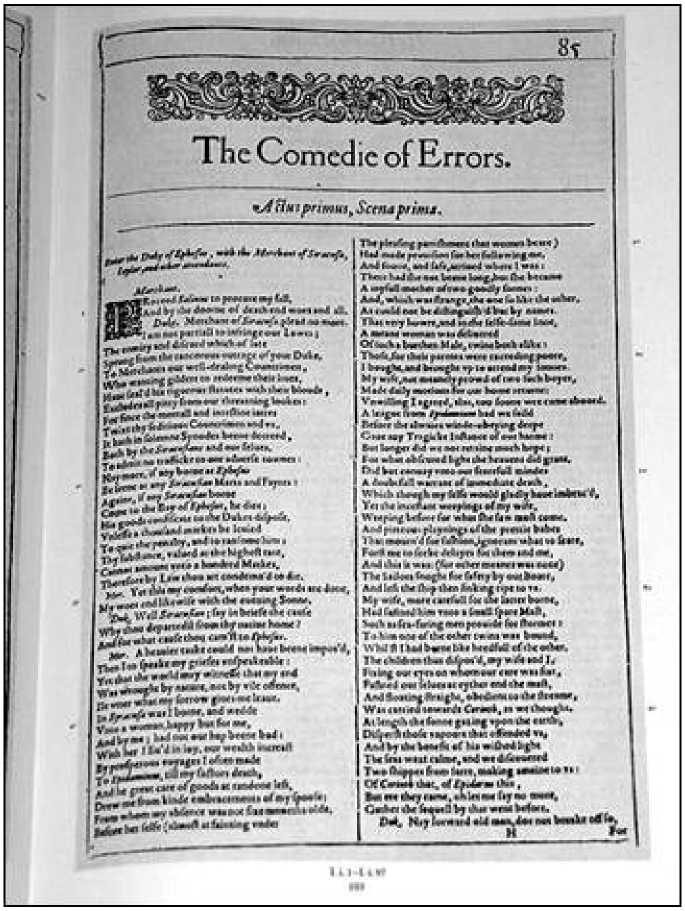
Now civil wounds are stopp'd, peace lives again-

That she may long live here, God say Amen! *Exeunt*

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

Written in 1592, this is Shakespeare’s shortest play, featuring slapstick humour and mistaken identity, in addition to puns and word play. *The Comedy of Errors* reveals the playwright’s interest in Roman drama, drawing plot elements from two of the Ancient writer Plautus’ works.

It tells the story of two sets of identical twins accidentally separated at birth. Antipholus of Syracuse and his servant, Dromio of Syracuse, arrive in Ephesus, which turns out to be the home of their twin brothers, Antipholus of Ephesus and his servant, Dromio of Ephesus. When the Syracusans encounter the friends and families of their twins, a series of wild mishaps based on mistaken identities lead to wrongful beatings, a near-seduction, the arrest of Antipholus of Ephesus, and accusations of infidelity, theft, madness, and demonic possession.



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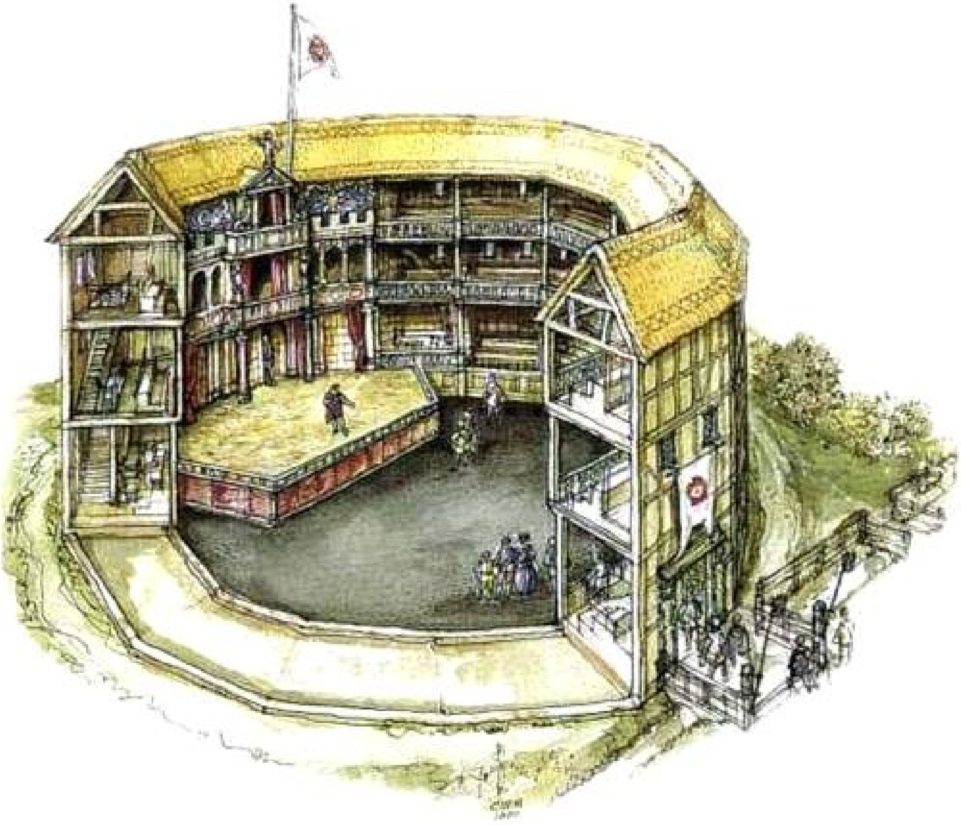
The Comedie of Errors.

Actus primus, Scena prima.

The first folio copy of the play



The Rose Theatre, Bankside, where Shakespeare’s early plays were first performed

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SCENE 1

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

SOLINUS, Duke of Ephesus

AEGEON, a merchant of Syracuse

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS twin brothers and sons to

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE Aegion and Aemelia

DROMIO OF EPHESUS twin brothers, and attendants on

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE the two Antipholuses

BALTHAZAR, a merchant

ANGELO, a goldsmith

FIRST MERCHANT, friend to Antipholus of Syracuse

SECOND MERCHANT, to whom Angelo is a debtor

PINCH, a schoolmaster

AEMILIA, wife to AEgeon; an abbess at Ephesus

ADRIANA, wife to Antipholus of Ephesus

LUCIANA, her sister

LUCE, servant to Adriana

A COURTEZAN

Gaoler, Officers, Attendants

SCENE: Ephesus

ACT I. SCENE 1

A hall in the DUKE'S palace

Enter the DUKE OF EPHESUS, AEGEON, the Merchant of Syracuse, GAOLER, OFFICERS, and other ATTENDANTS

AEGEON. Proceed, Solinus, to procure my fall,

And by the doom of death end woes and all.

DUKE.

Merchant of Syracuse, plead no more;

I am not partial to infringe our laws.

The enmity and discord which of late

Sprung from the rancorous outrage of your duke

To merchants, our well-dealing countrymen,

Who, wanting guilders to redeem their lives,

Have seal'd his rigorous statutes with their bloods,

Excludes all pity from our threat'ning looks.

For, since the mortal and intestine jars

'Twixt thy seditious countrymen and us,

It hath in solemn synods been decreed,

Both by the Syracusians and ourselves,

To admit no traffic to our adverse towns;

Nay, more: if any born at Ephesus

Be seen at any Syracusian marts and fairs;

Again, if any Syracusian born

Come to the bay of Ephesus-he dies,

His goods confiscate to the Duke's dispose,

Unless a thousand marks be levied,

To quit the penalty and to ransom him.

Thy substance, valued at the highest rate,

Cannot amount unto a hundred marks;

Therefore by law thou art condemn'd to die.

AEGEON.

Yet this my comfort: when your words are done,

My woes end likewise with the evening sun.

DUKE.

Well, Syracusian, say in brief the cause

Why thou departed'st from thy native home,

And for what cause thou cam'st to Ephesus.

AEGEON.

A heavier task could not have been impos'd

Than I to speak my griefs unspeakable;

Yet, that the world may witness that my end

Was wrought by nature, not by vile offence,

I'll utter what my sorrow gives me leave.

In Syracuse was I born, and wed

Unto a woman, happy but for me,

And by me, had not our hap been bad.

With her I liv'd in joy; our wealth increas'd

By prosperous voyages I often made

To Epidamnum; till my factor's death,

And the great care of goods at random left,

Drew me from kind embracements of my spouse:

From whom my absence was not six months old,

Before herself, almost at fainting under

The pleasing punishment that women bear,

Had made provision for her following me,

And soon and safe arrived where I was.

There had she not been long but she became

A joyful mother of two goodly sons;

And, which was strange, the one so like the other

As could not be disdnguish'd but by names.
That very hour, and in the selfsame inn,
A mean woman was delivered
Of such a burden, male twins, both alike.
Those, for their parents were exceeding poor,
I bought, and brought up to attend my sons.
My wife, not meanly proud of two such boys,
Made daily motions for our home return;
Unwilling, I agreed. Alas! too soon
We came aboard.
A league from Epidamnum had we sail'd
Before the always-wind-obeying deep
Gave any tragic instance of our harm:
But longer did we not retain much hope,
For what obscured light the heavens did grant
Did but convey unto our fearful minds
A doubtful warrant of immediate death;
Which though myself would gladly have embrac'd,
Yet the incessant weepings of my wife,
Weeping before for what she saw must come,
And piteous plainings of the pretty babes,

That mourn'd for fashion, ignorant what to fear,
Forc'd me to seek delays for them and me.

And this it was, for other means was none:
The sailors sought for safety by our boat,
And left the ship, then sinking-ripe, to us;
My wife, more careful for the latter-born,
Had fast'ned him unto a small spare mast,
Such as sea-faring men provide for storms;
To him one of the other twins was bound,
Whilst I had been like heedful of the other.
The children thus dispos'd, my wife and I,
Fixing our eyes on whom our care was fix'd,
Fast'ned ourselves at either end the mast,
And, floating straight, obedient to the stream,
Was carried towards Corinth, as we thought.
At length the sun, gazing upon the earth,
Dispers'd those vapours that offended us;
And, by the benefit of his wished light,
The seas wax'd calm, and we discovered
Two ships from far making amain to us-

Of Corinth that, of Epidaurus this.

But ere they came-O, let me say no more!

Gather the sequel by that went before.

DUKE.

Nay, forward, old man, do not break off so;

For we may pity, though not pardon thee.

AEGEON.

O, had the gods done so, I had not now

Worthily term'd them merciless to us!

For, ere the ships could meet by twice five leagues,

We were encount'red by a mighty rock,

Which being violently borne upon,

Our helpful ship was splitted in the midst;

So that, in this unjust divorce of us,

Fortune had left to both of us alike

What to delight in, what to sorrow for.

Her part, poor soul, seeming as burdened

With lesser weight, but not with lesser woe, Was carried with more speed before the wind;

And in our sight they three were taken up

By fishermen of Corinth, as we thought.

At length another ship had seiz'd on us;

And, knowing whom it was their hap to save,

Gave healthful welcome to their ship-wreck'd guests,

And would have reft the fishers of their prey,

Had not their bark been very slow of sail;

And therefore homeward did they bend their course.

Thus have you heard me sever'd from my bliss,

That by misfortunes was my life prolong'd,

To tell sad stories of my own mishaps.

DUKE.

And, for the sake of them thou sorrowest for,

Do me the favour to dilate at full

What have befall'n of them and thee till now.

AEGEON.

My youngest boy, and yet my eldest care,

At eighteen years became inquisitive

After his brother, and importun'd me
That his attendant-so his case was like,
Reft of his brother, but retain'd his name-
Might bear him company in the quest of him;
Whom whilst I laboured of a love to see,
I hazarded the loss of whom I lov'd.
Five summers have I spent in farthest Greece,
Roaming clean through the bounds of Asia,
And, coasting homeward, came to Ephesus;
Hopeless to find, yet loath to leave unsought
Or that or any place that harbours men.
But here must end the story of my life;
And happy were I in my timely death,
Could all my travels warrant me they live.

DUKE.
Hapless, Aegeon, whom the fates have mark'd
To bear the extremity of dire mishap!
Now, trust me, were it not against our laws,
Against my crown, my oath, my dignity,
Which princes, would they, may not disannul,

My soul should sue as advocate for thee.

But though thou art adjudged to the death,

And passed sentence may not be recall'd

But to our honour's great disparagement,

Yet will I favour thee in what I can.

Therefore, merchant, I'll limit thee this day

To seek thy help by beneficial hap.

Try all the friends thou hast in Ephesus;

Beg thou, or borrow, to make up the sum,

And live; if no, then thou art doom'd to die.

Gaoler, take him to thy custody.

GAOLER.

I will, my lord.

AEGEON.

Hopeless and helpless doth Aegeon wend,

But to procrastinate his lifeless end.

Exeunt

SCENE 2

The mart

Enter ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE, DROMIO OF SYRACUSE, and FIRST

MERCHANT

FIRST MERCHANT.

Therefore, give out you are of Epidamnum,

Lest that your goods too soon be confiscate.

This very day a Syracusian merchant

Is apprehended for arrival here;

And, not being able to buy out his life,

According to the statute of the town,

Dies ere the weary sun set in the west.

There is your money that I had to keep.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

Go bear it to the Centaur, where we host.

And stay there, Dromio, till I come to thee.

Within this hour it will be dinnertime;

Till that, I'll view the manners of the town,

Peruse the traders, gaze upon the buildings,

And then return and sleep within mine inn;

For with long travel I am stiff and weary.

Get thee away.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

Many a man would take you at your word,

And go indeed, having so good a mean.

Exit

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE. A trusty villain, sir, that very oft,

When I am dull with care and melancholy,

Lightens my humour with his merry jests.

What, will you walk with me about the town,

And then go to my inn and dine with me?

FIRST MERCHANT.

I am invited, sir, to certain merchants,

Of whom I hope to make much benefit;
I crave your pardon. Soon at five o'clock,
Please you, I'll meet with you upon the mart,
And afterward consort you till bed time.

My present business calls me from you now.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.
Farewell till then. I will go lose myself,
And wander up and down to view the city.

FIRST MERCHANT.
Sir, I commend you to your own content.

Exit FIRST MERCHANT

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.
He that commends me to mine own content
Commends me to the thing I cannot get.
I to the world am like a drop of water
That in the ocean seeks another drop,

Who, falling there to find his fellow forth,
Unseen, inquisitive, confounds himself.
So I, to find a mother and a brother,
In quest of them, unhappy, lose myself.

Enter DROMIO OF EPHESUS

Here comes the almanac of my true date.
What now? How chance thou art return'd so soon?

DROMIO OF EPHESUS.

Return'd so soon! rather approach'd too late.
The capon burns, the pig falls from the spit;
The clock hath strucken twelve upon the bell-
My mistress made it one upon my cheek;
She is so hot because the meat is cold,
The meat is cold because you come not home,
You come not home because you have no stomach,
You have no stomach, having broke your fast;
But we, that know what 'tis to fast and pray,

Are penitent for your default to-day.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

Stop in your wind, sir; tell me this, I

pray:

Where have you left the money that I gave you?

DROMIO OF EPHESUS.

O-Sixpence that I had a Wednesday last

To pay the saddler for my mistress' crupper?

The saddler had it, sir; I kept it not.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

I am not in a sportive humour now;

Tell me, and dally not, where is the money?

We being strangers here, how dar'st thou trust

So great a charge from thine own custody?

DROMIO OF EPHESUS.

I pray you jest, sir, as you sit at dinner.
I from my mistress come to you in post;
If I return, I shall be post indeed,
For she will score your fault upon my pate.
Methinks your maw, like mine, should be your clock,
And strike you home without a messenger.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

Come, Dromio, come, these jests are out of season;
Reserve them till a merrier hour than this.

Where is the gold I gave in charge to thee?

DROMIO OF EPHESUS.

To me, sir? Why, you gave no gold to me.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

Come on, sir knave, have done your foolishness,
And tell me how thou hast dispos'd thy charge.

DROMIO OF EPHESUS.

My charge was but to fetch you from the mart
Home to your house, the Phoenix, sir, to dinner.

My mistress and her sister stays for you.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.
Now, as I am a Christian, answer me
In what safe place you have bestow'd my money,
Or I shall break that merry sconce of yours,
That stands on tricks when I am undispos'd.
Where is the thousand marks thou hadst of me?

DROMIO OF EPHESUS.
I have some marks of yours upon my pate,
Some of my mistress' marks upon my shoulders,
But not a thousand marks between you both.
If I should pay your worship those again,
Perchance you will not bear them patiently.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.
Thy mistress' marks! What mistress,

slave, hast thou?

DROMIO OF EPHESUS.

Your worship's wife, my mistress at the

Phoenix;

She that doth fast till you come home to dinner,

And prays that you will hie you home to dinner.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

What, wilt thou flout me thus unto my face,

Being forbid? There, take you that, sir knave.

[Beats him]

DROMIO OF EPHESUS.

What mean you, sir? For God's sake hold your hands!

Nay, an you will not, sir, I'll take my heels.

Exit

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE. Upon my life, by some device or other

The villain is o'erraught of all my money.
They say this town is full of cozenage;
As, nimble jugglers that deceive the eye,
Dark-working sorcerers that change the mind,
Soul-killing witches that deform the body,
Disguised cheaters, prating mountebanks,
And many such-like liberties of sin;
If it prove so, I will be gone the sooner.

I'll to the Centaur to go seek this slave.
I greatly fear my money is not safe.

Exit

ACT Il.

SCENE 1

The house of ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS

Enter ADRIANA, wife to ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS, with LUCIANA, her sister

ADRIANA.

Neither my husband nor the slave return'd

That in such haste I sent to seek his master!

Sure, Luciana, it is two o'clock.

LUCIANA.

Perhaps some merchant hath invited him,

And from the mart he's somewhere gone to dinner;

Good sister, let us dine, and never fret.

A man is master of his liberty;

Time is their master, and when they see time,

They'll go or come. If so, be patient, sister.

ADRIANA.

Why should their liberty than ours be more?

LUCIANA.

Because their business still lies out o' door.

ADRIANA.

Look when I serve him so, he takes it ill.

LUCIANA.

O, know he is the bridle of your will.

ADRIANA.

There's none but asses will be bridled so.

LUCIANA.

Why, headstrong liberty is lash'd with woe.

There's nothing situate under heaven's eye

But hath his bound, in earth, in sea, in sky.

The beasts, the fishes, and the winged fowls,

Are their males' subjects, and at their controls.

Man, more divine, the master of all these,

Lord of the wide world and wild wat'ry seas,

Indu'd with intellectual sense and souls,

Of more pre-eminence than fish and fowls, Are masters to their females, and their lords;

Then let your will attend on their accords.

ADRIANA.

This servitude makes you to keep unwed.

LUCIANA.

Not this, but troubles of the marriage-bed.

ADRIANA.

But, were you wedded, you would bear some sway.

LUCIANA.

Ere I learn love, I'll practise to obey.

ADRIANA.

How if your husband start some other where?

LUCIANA.

Till he come home again, I would forbear.

ADRIANA.

Patience unmov'd! no marvel though she pause:
They can be meek that have no other cause.
A wretched soul, bruis'd with adversity,
We bid be quiet when we hear it cry;
But were we burd'ned with like weight of pain,
As much, or more, we should ourselves complain.
So thou, that hast no unkind mate to grieve thee,
With urging helpless patience would relieve me;
But if thou live to see like right bereft,
This fool-begg'd patience in thee will be left.

LUCIANA.

Well, I will marry one day, but to try.
Here comes your man, now is your husband nigh.

Enter DROMIO OF EPHESUS

ADRIANA.

Say, is your tardy master now at hand?

DROMIO OF EPHESUS.

Nay, he's at two hands with me, and that my two

ears can witness.

ADRIANA.

Say, didst thou speak with him? Know'st thou his mind?

DROMIO OF EPHESUS.

Ay, ay, he told his mind upon mine ear.

Beshrew his hand, I scarce could understand it.

LUCIANA.

Spake he so doubtfully thou could'st not feel his meaning?

DROMIO OF EPHESUS.

Nay, he struck so plainly I could to
well feel his blows; and withal so doubtfully that I could
scarce understand them.

ADRIANA.

But say, I prithee, is he coming home?

It seems he hath great care to please his wife.

DROMIO OF EPHESUS.

Why, mistress, sure my master is horn-mad.

ADRIANA.

Horn-mad, thou villain!

DROMIO OF EPHESUS.

I mean not cuckold-mad;
But, sure, he is stark mad.
When I desir'd him to come home to dinner,

He ask'd me for a thousand marks in gold.
''Tis dinner time' quoth I; 'My gold!' quoth he.

'Your meat doth burn' quoth I; 'My gold!' quoth he.
'Will you come home?' quoth I; 'My gold!' quoth he.

'Where is the thousand marks I gave thee, villain?'
'The pig' quoth I 'is burn'd'; 'My gold!' quoth he.
'My mistress, sir,' quoth I; 'Hang up thy mistress;
I know not thy mistress; out on thy mistress.'

LUCIANA.

Quoth who?

DROMIO OF EPHESUS.

Quoth my master.

'I know' quoth he 'no house, no wife, no mistress.'
So that my errand, due unto my tongue,
I thank him, I bare home upon my shoulders;

For, in conclusion, he did beat me there.

ADRIANA.

Go back again, thou slave, and fetch him home.

DROMIO OF EPHESUS.

Go back again, and be new beaten home?

For God's sake, send some other messenger.

ADRIANA.

Back, slave, or I will break thy pate across.

DROMIO OF EPHESUS.

And he will bless that cross with other beating;

Between you I shall have a holy head.

ADRIANA.

Hence, prating peasant! Fetch thy master home.

DROMIO OF EPHESUS.

Am I so round with you, as you with me,

That like a football you do spurn me thus?

You spurn me hence, and he will spurn me hither;

If I last in this service, you must case me in leather.

Exit

LUCIANA. Fie, how impatience loureth in your face!

ADRIANA.

His company must do his minions grace,

Whilst I at home starve for a merry look.

Hath homely age th' alluring beauty took

From my poor cheek? Then he hath wasted it.

Are my discourses dull? Barren my wit?

If voluble and sharp discourse be marr'd,

Unkindness blunts it more than marble hard.

Do their gay vestments his affections bait?

That's not my fault; he's master of my state.
What ruins are in me that can be found
By him not ruin'd? Then is he the ground
Of my defeatures. My decayed fair
A sunny look of his would soon repair.
But, too unruly deer, he breaks the pale,
And feeds from home; poor I am but his stale.

LUCIANA.

Self-harming jealousy! fie, beat it hence.

ADRIANA.

Unfeeling fools can with such wrongs dispense.
I know his eye doth homage otherwhere;
Or else what lets it but he would be here?
Sister, you know he promis'd me a chain;
Would that alone a love he would detain,
So he would keep fair quarter with his bed!
I see the jewel best enamelled
Will lose his beauty; yet the gold bides still

That others touch and, often touching, will
Where gold; and no man that hath a name
By falsehood and corruption doth it shame.
Since that my beauty cannot please his eye,
I'll weep what's left away, and weeping die.

LUCIANA.

How many fond fools serve mad jealousy!

Exeunt

SCENE 2

The mart

Enter ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

The gold I gave to Dromio is laid up
Safe at the Centaur, and the heedful slave
Is wand'red forth in care to seek me out.

By computation and mine host's report
I could not speak with Dromio since at first
I sent him from the mart. See, here he comes.

Enter DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

How now, sir, is your merry humour alter'd?
As you love strokes, so jest with me again.

You know no Centaur! You receiv'd no gold!
Your mistress sent to have me home to dinner!
My house was at the Phoenix! Wast thou mad,
That thus so madly thou didst answer me?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

What answer, sir? When spake I such a word?

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.
Even now, even here, not half an hour since.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

I did not see you since you sent me hence,

Home to the Centaur, with the gold you gave me.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

Villain, thou didst deny the gold's receipt,

And told'st me of a mistress and a dinner;

For which, I hope, thou felt'st I was displeas'd.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

I am glad to see you in this merry vein.

What means this jest? I pray you, master, tell me.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

Yea, dost thou jeer and flout me in the teeth?

Think'st thou I jest? Hold, take thou that, and that.

[Beating him]

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

Hold, sir, for God's sake! Now your jest is earnest.

Upon what bargain do you give it me?

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

Because that I familiarly sometimes

Do use you for my fool and chat with you,

Your sauciness will jest upon my love,

And make a common of my serious hours.

When the sun shines let foolish gnats make sport,

But creep in crannies when he hides his beams.

If you will jest with me, know my aspect,

And fashion your demeanour to my looks,

Or I will beat this method in your sconce.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

Sconce, call you it? So you would

leave battering, I had rather have it a head. An you use

these blows long, I must get a sconce for my head, and

insconce it too; or else I shall seek my wit in my shoulders.

But I pray, sir, why am I beaten?

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

Dost thou not know?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

Nothing, sir, but that I am beaten.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

Shall I tell you why?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

Ay, sir, and wherefore; for they say
every why hath a wherefore.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

Why, first for flouting me; and then wherefore,
For urging it the second time to me.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

Was there ever any man thus beaten out of season,

When in the why and the wherefore is neither rhyme nor reason?

Well, sir, I thank you.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

Thank me, sir! for what?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

Marry, sir, for this something that you gave me for nothing.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

I'll make you amends next, to

give you nothing for something. But say, sir, is it dinnertime?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

No, sir; I think the meat wants that I have.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

In good time, sir, what's that?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

Basting.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

Well, sir, then 'twill be dry.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

If it be, sir, I pray you eat none of it.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

Your reason?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

Lest it make you choleric, and purchase me another dry basting.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

Well, sir, learn to jest in good time;

there's a time for all things.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

I durst have denied that, before you were so choleric.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

By what rule, sir?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

Marry, sir, by a rule as plain as the

plain bald pate of Father Time himself.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

Let's hear it.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

There's no time for a man to recover

his hair that grows bald by nature.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

May he not do it by fine and recovery?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

Yes, to pay a fine for a periwig, and

recover the lost hair of another man.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

Why is Time such a niggard of

hair, being, as it is, so plentiful an excrement?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

Because it is a blessing that he bestows

on beasts, and what he hath scanted men in hair he hath given them in wit.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

Why, but there's many a man

hath more hair than wit.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

Not a man of those but he hath the
wit to lose his hair.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.
Why, thou didst conclude hairy
men plain dealers without wit.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.
The plainer dealer, the sooner lost;
yet he loseth it in a kind of jollity.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

For what reason?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.
For two; and sound ones too.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

Nay, not sound I pray you.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

Sure ones, then.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

Nay, not sure, in a thing falsing.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

Certain ones, then.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

Name them.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

The one, to save the money that he spends in

tiring; the other, that at dinner they should not drop in his porridge.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

You would all this time have prov'd there is no time for all things.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

Marry, and did, sir; namely, no time to recover

hair lost by nature.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

But your reason was not substantial, why

there is no time to recover.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

Thus I mend it: Time himself is bald,

and therefore to the world's end will have bald followers.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

I knew 't'would be a bald conclusion.

But,

soft, who wafts us yonder?

Enter ADRIANA and LUCIANA

ADRIANA.

Ay, ay, Antipholus, look strange and frown.

Some other mistress hath thy sweet aspects;

I am not Adriana, nor thy wife.

The time was once when thou unurg'd wouldst vow

That never words were music to thine ear,

That never object pleasing in thine eye,

That never touch well welcome to thy hand,

That never meat sweet-savour'd in thy taste,

Unless I spake, or look'd, or touch'd, or carv'd to thee.

How comes it now, my husband, O, how comes it,

That thou art then estranged from thyself?

Thyself I call it, being strange to me,

That, undividable, incorporate,

Am better than thy dear self's better part.

Ah, do not tear away thyself from me;

For know, my love, as easy mayst thou fall

A drop of water in the breaking gulf,

And take unmingled thence that drop again

Without addition or diminishing,

As take from me thyself, and not me too.

How dearly would it touch thee to the quick,
Should'st thou but hear I were licentious,
And that this body, consecrate to thee,
By ruffian lust should be contaminate!
Wouldst thou not spit at me and spurn at me,
And hurl the name of husband in my face,
And tear the stain'd skin off my harlot-brow,
And from my false hand cut the wedding-ring,
And break it with a deep-divorcing vow?

I know thou canst, and therefore see thou do it.
I am possess'd with an adulterate blot;
My blood is mingled with the crime of lust;
For if we two be one, and thou play false,
I do digest the poison of thy flesh,
Being strumpeted by thy contagion.
Keep then fair league and truce with thy true bed;
I live dis-stain'd, thou undishonoured.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

Plead you to me, fair dame? I know you not:
In Ephesus I am but two hours old,
As strange unto your town as to your talk,
Who, every word by all my wit being scann'd,
Wants wit in all one word to understand.

LUCIANA.

Fie, brother, how the world is chang'd with you!

When were you wont to use my sister thus?
She sent for you by Dromio home to dinner.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

By Dromio?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

By me?

ADRIANA.

By thee; and this thou didst return from him-

That he did buffet thee, and in his blows
Denied my house for his, me for his wife.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.
Did you converse, sir, with this gentlewoman?

What is the course and drift of your compact?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.
I, Sir? I never saw her till this time.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.
Villain, thou liest; for even her very words
Didst thou deliver to me on the mart.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

I never spake with her in all my life.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.
How can she thus, then, call us by our names,

Unless it be by inspiration?

ADRIANA.

How ill agrees it with your gravity

To counterfeit thus grossly with your slave,

Abetting him to thwart me in my mood!

Be it my wrong you are from me exempt,

But wrong not that wrong with a more contempt.

Come, I will fasten on this sleeve of thine;

Thou art an elm, my husband, I a vine,

Whose weakness, married to thy stronger state,

Makes me with thy strength to communicate.

If aught possess thee from me, it is dross,

Usurping ivy, brier, or idle moss;

Who all, for want of pruning, with intrusion

Infect thy sap, and live on thy confusion.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

To me she speaks; she moves me for her theme.

What, was I married to her in my dream?

Or sleep I now, and think I hear all this?
What error drives our eyes and ears amiss?
Until I know this sure uncertainty,
I'll entertain the offer'd fallacy.

LUCIANA.

Dromio, go bid the servants spread for dinner.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.
O, for my beads! I cross me for sinner.

This is the fairy land. O spite of spites!
We talk with goblins, owls, and sprites.

If we obey them not, this will ensue:
They'll suck our breath, or pinch us black and blue.

LUCIANA.

Why prat'st thou to thyself, and answer'st not?

Dromio, thou drone, thou snail, thou slug, thou sot!

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

I am transformed, master, am not I?

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

I think thou art in mind, and so am I.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

Nay, master, both in mind and in my shape.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

Thou hast thine own form.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

No, I am an ape.

LUCIANA.

If thou art chang'd to aught, 'tis to an ass.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

'Tis true; she rides me, and I long for grass.
'Tis so, I am an ass; else it could never be
But I should know her as well as she knows me.

ADRIANA.

Come, come, no longer will I be a fool,
To put the finger in the eye and weep,
Whilst man and master laughs my woes to scorn.

Come, sir, to dinner. Dromio, keep the gate.
Husband, I'll dine above with you to-day,
And shrive you of a thousand idle pranks.
Sirrah, if any ask you for your master,
Say he dines forth, and let no creature enter.
Come, sister. Dromio, play the porter well.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

Am I in earth, in heaven, or in hell?
Sleeping or waking, mad or well-advis'd?

Known unto these, and to myself disguis'd!
I'll say as they say, and persever so,
And in this mist at all adventures go.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.
Master, shall I be porter at the gate?

ADRIANA.

Ay; and let none enter, lest I break your pate.

LUCIANA.
Come, come, Antipholus, we dine too late.
Exeunt

ACT III.

SCENE 1

Before the house of ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS

Enter ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS, DROMIO OF EPHESUS, ANGELO, and

BALTHAZAR

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

Good Signior Angelo, you must excuse us all;

My wife is shrewish when I keep not hours.

Say that I linger'd with you at your shop

To see the making of her carcanet,

And that to-morrow you will bring it home.

But here's a villain that would face me down

He met me on the mart, and that I beat him,

And charg'd him with a thousand marks in gold,

And that I did deny my wife and house.

Thou drunkard, thou, what didst thou mean by this?

DROMIO OF EPHESUS.

Say what you will, sir, but I know what I know.

That you beat me at the mart I have your hand to show;

If the skin were parchment, and the blows you gave were ink,

Your own handwriting would tell you what I think.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

I think thou art an ass.

DROMIO OF EPHESUS.

Marry, so it doth appear

By the wrongs I suffer and the blows I bear.

I should kick, being kick'd; and being at that pass,

You would keep from my heels, and beware of an ass.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

Y'are sad, Signior Balthazar; pray God our cheer

May answer my good will and your good welcome here.

BALTHAZAR.

I hold your dainties cheap, sir, and your welcome dear.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

O, Signior Balthazar, either at flesh or fish,
A table full of welcome makes scarce one dainty dish.

BALTHAZAR.

Good meat, sir, is common; that every churl affords.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

And welcome more common; for that's nothing but words.

BALTHAZAR.

Small cheer and great welcome makes a merry feast.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

Ay, to a niggardly host and more sparing guest.

But though my cates be mean, take them in good part;
Better cheer may you have, but not with better heart.

But, soft, my door is lock'd; go bid them let us in.

DROMIO OF EPHESUS.
Maud, Bridget, Marian, Cicely, Gillian, Ginn!

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.
[Within] Mome, malt-horse, capon, coxcomb,
idiot, patch!

Either get thee from the door, or sit down at the hatch.
Dost thou conjure for wenches, that thou call'st for such store,
When one is one too many? Go get thee from the door.

DROMIO OF EPHESUS.
What patch is made our porter?

My master stays in the street.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

[Within] Let him walk from whence he came,

lest he catch cold on's feet.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

Who talks within there? Ho, open the door!

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

[Within] Right, sir; I'll tell you when,

an you'll tell me wherefore.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

Wherefore? For my dinner;

I have not din'd to-day.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

[Within] Nor to-day here you must not;

come again when you may.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

What art thou that keep'st me out
from the house I owe?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.
[Within] The porter for this time,
sir, and my name is Dromio.

DROMIO OF EPHESUS.

O Villain, thou hast stol'n both mine office and my name!
The one ne'er got me credit, the other mickle blame.
If thou hadst been Dromio to-day in my place,
Thou wouldst have chang'd thy face for a name, or thy name for an ass.

Enter LUCE, within

LUCE.
[Within] What a coil is there, Dromio? Who are those at the gate?

DROMIO OF EPHESUS.
Let my master in, Luce.

LUCE.

[Within] Faith, no, he comes too late;

And so tell your master.

DROMIO OF EPHESUS.

O Lord, I must laugh!

Have at you with a proverb: Shall I set in my staff?

LUCE.

[Within] Have at you with another: that's-when? can you tell?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

[Within] If thy name be called Luce

-Luce, thou hast answer'd him well.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

Do you hear, you minion? You'll let us in,

I hope?

LUCE.

[Within] I thought to have ask'd you.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

[Within] And you said no.

DROMIO OF EPHESUS.

SO, Come, help: well struck! there was blow for blow.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

Thou baggage, let me in.

LUCE.

[Within] Can you tell for whose sake?

DROMIO OF EPHESUS.

Master, knock the door hard.

LUCE.

[Within] Let him knock till it ache.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

You'll cry for this, minion, if beat the door down.

LUCE.

[Within] What needs all that, and a pair of stocks in the town?

Enter ADRIANA, within

ADRIANA.

[Within] Who is that at the door, that keeps all this noise?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

[Within] By my troth, your town is
troubled with unruly boys.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

Are you there, wife? You might have come before.

ADRIANA.

[Within] Your wife, sir knave! Go get you from the door.

DROMIO OF EPHESUS.

If YOU went in pain, master, this 'knave'

would go sore.

ANGELO.

Here is neither cheer, sir, nor welcome; we would fain have either.

BALTHAZAR.

In debating which was best, we shall part with neither.

DROMIO OF EPHESUS.

They stand at the door, master; bid them welcome hither.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

There is something in the wind, that we cannot get in.

DROMIO OF EPHESUS.

You would say so, master, if your garments were thin.

Your cake here is warm within; you stand here in the cold;

It would make a man mad as a buck to be so bought and sold.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

Go fetch me something; I'll break ope the gate.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

[Within] Break any breaking here,

and I'll break your knave's pate.

DROMIO OF EPHESUS.

A man may break a word with you,

sir; and words are but wind;

Ay, and break it in your face, so he break it not behind.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

[Within] It seems thou want'st breaking;

out upon thee, hind!

DROMIO OF EPHESUS.

Here's too much 'out upon thee!' pray thee let me in.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.
[Within] Ay, when fowls have no
feathers and fish have no fin.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

Well, I'll break in; go borrow me a crow.

DROMIO OF EPHESUS.
A crow without feather? Master, mean you so?
For a fish without a fin, there's a fowl without a feather;
If a crow help us in, sirrah, we'll pluck a crow together.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

Go get thee gone; fetch me an iron crow.

BALTHAZAR.

Have patience, sir; O, let it not be so!

Herein you war against your reputation,

And draw within the compass of suspect

Th' unviolated honour of your wife.

Once this-your long experience of her wisdom,

Her sober virtue, years, and modesty,

Plead on her part some cause to you unknown;

And doubt not, sir, but she will well excuse

Why at this time the doors are made against you.

Be rul'd by me: depart in patience,

And let us to the Tiger all to dinner;

And, about evening, come yourself alone

To know the reason of this strange restraint.

If by strong hand you offer to break in

Now in the stirring passage of the day,

A vulgar comment will be made of it,

And that supposed by the common rout

Against your yet ungalled estimation

That may with foul intrusion enter in

And dwell upon your grave when you are dead;
For slander lives upon succession,
For ever hous'd where it gets possession.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.
You have prevail'd. I will depart in quiet,
And in despite of mirth mean to be merry.
I know a wench of excellent discourse,
Pretty and witty; wild, and yet, too, gentle;
There will we dine. This woman that I mean,
My wife-but, I protest, without desert-
Hath oftentimes upbraided me withal;
To her will we to dinner. *[To ANGELO]* Get you home
And fetch the chain; by this I know 'tis made.
Bring it, I pray you, to the Porpentine;
For there's the house. That chain will I bestow-
Be it for nothing but to spite my wife-
Upon mine hostess there; good sir, make haste.
Since mine own doors refuse to entertain me,
I'll knock elsewhere, to see if they'll disdain me.

ANGELO.

I'll meet you at that place some hour hence.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

Do so; this jest shall cost me some expense.

Exeunt

SCENE 2

Before the house of ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS

Enter LUCIANA with ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE

LUCIANA.

And may it be that you have quite forgot
A husband's office? Shall, Antipholus,
Even in the spring of love, thy love-springs rot?

Shall love, in building, grow so ruinous?

If you did wed my sister for her wealth,
Then for her wealth's sake use her with more kindness;
Or, if you like elsewhere, do it by stealth;
Muffle your false love with some show of blindness;
Let not my sister read it in your eye;
Be not thy tongue thy own shame's orator;
Look sweet, speak fair, become disloyalty;
Apparel vice like virtue's harbinger;
Bear a fair presence, though your heart be tainted;
Teach sin the carriage of a holy saint;
Be secret-false. What need she be acquainted?

What simple thief brags of his own attaint?
'Tis double wrong to truant with your bed
And let her read it in thy looks at board;
Shame hath a bastard fame, well managed;
Ill deeds is doubled with an evil word.
Alas, poor women! make us but believe,
Being compact of credit, that you love us;
Though others have the arm, show us the sleeve;
We in your motion turn, and you may move us.

Then, gentle brother, get you in again;
Comfort my sister, cheer her, call her wife.
'Tis holy sport to be a little vain
When the sweet breath of flattery conquers strife.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.
Sweet mistress-what your name is else, I
know not,
Nor by what wonder you do hit of mine-
Less in your knowledge and your grace you show not
Than our earth's wonder-more than earth, divine.
Teach me, dear creature, how to think and speak;
Lay open to my earthy-gross conceit,
Smoth'red in errors, feeble, shallow, weak,
The folded meaning of your words' deceit.
Against my soul's pure truth why labour you
To make it wander in an unknown field?

Are you a god? Would you create me new?
Transform me, then, and to your pow'r I'll yield.
But if that I am I, then well I know

Your weeping sister is no wife of mine,

Nor to her bed no homage do I owe;

Far more, far more, to you do I decline.

O, train me not, sweet mermaid, with thy note,

To drown me in thy sister's flood of tears.

Sing, siren, for thyself, and I will dote;

Spread o'er the silver waves thy golden hairs,

And as a bed I'll take them, and there he;

And in that glorious supposition think

He gains by death that hath such means to die.

Let Love, being light, be drowned if she sink.

LUCIANA.

What, are you mad, that you do reason so?

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

Not mad, but mated; how, I do not know.

LUCIANA.

It is a fault that springeth from your eye.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

For gazing on your beams, fair sun, being by.

LUCIANA.

Gaze where you should, and that will clear your sight.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

As good to wink, sweet love, as look on night.

LUCIANA.

Why call you me love? Call my sister so.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

Thy sister's sister.

LUCIANA.

That's my sister.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

No;

It is thyself, mine own self's better part;

Mine eye's clear eye, my dear heart's dearer heart,

My food, my fortune, and my sweet hope's aim,

My sole earth's heaven, and my heaven's claim.

LUCIANA.

All this my sister is, or else should be.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

Call thyself sister, sweet, for I am thee;

Thee will I love, and with thee lead my life;

Thou hast no husband yet, nor I no wife.

Give me thy hand.

LUCIANA.

O, soft, sir, hold you still;
I'll fetch my sister to get her good will.

Exit LUCIANA

Enter DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.
Why, how now, Dromio! Where run'st thou so fast?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

Do you know me, sir? Am I Dromio?
Am I your man? Am I myself?

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.
Thou art Dromio, thou art my
man, thou art thyself.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

I am an ass, I am a woman's man, and besides myself.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

What woman's man, and how besides thyself?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

Marry, sir, besides myself, I am due
to a woman-one that claims me, one that haunts me, one that will have me.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

What claim lays she to thee?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

Marry, sir, such claim as you would
lay to your horse; and she would have me as a beast: not
that, I being a beast, she would have me; but that she,
being a very beastly creature, lays claim to me.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

What is she?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

A very reverent body; ay, such a one
as a man may not speak of without he say 'Sir-reverence.'
I have but lean luck in the match, and yet is she a
wondrous fat marriage.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

How dost thou mean a fat marriage?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

Marry, sir, she's the kitchen-wench,
and all grease; and I know not what use to put her to but
to make a lamp of her and run from her by her own light.
I warrant, her rags and the tallow in them will burn
Poland winter. If she lives till doomsday, she'll burn
week longer than the whole world.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

What complexion is she of?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

Swart, like my shoe; but her face
nothing like so clean kept; for why, she sweats, a man may
go over shoes in the grime of it.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

That's a fault that water will mend.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

No, sir, 'tis in grain; Noah's flood could not do it.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

What's her name?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

Nell, sir; but her name and three
quarters, that's an ell and three quarters, will not measure her from hip to hip.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

Then she bears some breadth?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

No longer from head to foot than

from hip to hip: she is spherical, like a globe; I could find

out countries in her.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

In what part of her body stands Ireland?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

Marry, sir, in her buttocks; I found it out by the bogs.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

Where Scotland?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

I found it by the barrenness, hard in

the palm of the hand.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.
Where France?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.
In her forehead, arm'd and reverted,
making war against her heir.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

Where England?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.
I look'd for the chalky cliffs, but I
could find no whiteness in them; but I guess it stood in her
chin, by the salt rheum that ran between France and it.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

Where Spain?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

Faith, I saw it not, but I felt it hot in her breath.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

Where America, the Indies?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

O, sir, upon her nose, an o'er embellished with

rubies, carbuncles, sapphires, declining their rich aspect to the

hot breath of Spain; who sent whole armadoes of caracks to be ballast at her nose.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

Where stood Belgia, the Netherlands?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

O, Sir, I did not look so low. To

conclude: this drudge or diviner laid claim to me; call'd me

Dromio; swore I was assur'd to her; told me what privy

marks I had about me, as, the mark of my shoulder, the

mole in my neck, the great wart on my left arm, that I,

amaz'd, ran from her as a witch.

And, I think, if my breast had not been made of faith,

and my heart of steel,

She had transform'd me to a curtal dog, and made me turn i' th' wheel.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

Go hie thee presently post to the road;

An if the wind blow any way from shore,

I will not harbour in this town to-night.

If any bark put forth, come to the mart,

Where I will walk till thou return to me.

If every one knows us, and we know none,

'Tis time, I think, to trudge, pack and be gone.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

As from a bear a man would run for life,

So fly I from her that would be my wife.

Exit

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE. There's none but witches do inhabit here,

And therefore 'tis high time that I were hence.

She that doth call me husband, even my soul

Doth for a wife abhor. But her fair sister,

Possess'd with such a gentle sovereign grace,

Of such enchanting presence and discourse,

Hath almost made me traitor to myself;

But, lest myself be guilty to self-wrong,

I'll stop mine ears against the mermaid's song.

Enter ANGELO with the chain

ANGELO.

Master Antipholus!

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

Ay, that's my name.

ANGELO.

I know it well, sir. Lo, here is the chain.

I thought to have ta'en you at the Porpentine;

The chain unfinish'd made me stay thus long.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

What is your will that I shall do with this?

ANGELO.

What please yourself, sir; I have made it for you.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

Made it for me, sir! I bespoke it not.

ANGELO.

Not once nor twice, but twenty times you have.

Go home with it, and please your wife withal;

And soon at supper-time I'll visit you,

And then receive my money for the chain.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

I pray you, sir, receive the money now,

For fear you ne'er see chain nor money more.

ANGELO.

You are a merry man, sir; fare you well.

Exit

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE. What I should think of this cannot tell:

But this I think, there's no man is so vain

That would refuse so fair an offer'd chain.

I see a man here needs not live by shifts,

When in the streets he meets such golden gifts.

I'll to the mart, and there for Dromio stay;

If any ship put out, then straight away.

Exit

ACT IV.
SCENE 1

A public place

Enter SECOND MERCHANT, ANGELO, and an OFFICER

SECOND MERCHANT.

You know since Pentecost the sum is due,
And since I have not much importun'd you;
Nor now I had not, but that I am bound
To Persia, and want guilders for my voyage.
Therefore make present satisfaction,
Or I'll attach you by this officer.

ANGELO.

Even just the sum that I do owe to you
Is growing to me by Antipholus;
And in the instant that I met with you
He had of me a chain; at five o'clock
I shall receive the money for the same.
Pleaseth you walk with me down to his house,
I will discharge my bond, and thank you too.

Enter ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS, and DROMIO OF EPHESUS, from the COURTEZAN'S

OFFICER.

That labour may you save; see where he comes.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

While I go to the goldsmith's house, go thou

And buy a rope's end; that will I bestow

Among my wife and her confederates,

For locking me out of my doors by day.

But, soft, I see the goldsmith. Get thee gone;

Buy thou a rope, and bring it home to me.

DROMIO OF EPHESUS.

I buy a thousand pound a year; I buy a rope.

Exit DROMIO

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

A man is well holp up that trusts to you!

I promised your presence and the chain;

But neither chain nor goldsmith came to me.

Belike you thought our love would last too long,

If it were chain'd together, and therefore came not.

ANGELO.

Saving your merry humour, here's the note

How much your chain weighs to the utmost carat,

The fineness of the gold, and chargeful fashion,

Which doth amount to three odd ducats more

Than I stand debted to this gentleman.

I pray you see him presently discharg'd,

For he is bound to sea, and stays but for it.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

I am not furnish'd with the present money;

Besides, I have some business in the town.

Good signior, take the stranger to my house,

And with you take the chain, and bid my wife

Disburse the sum on the receipt thereof.

Perchance I will be there as soon as you.

ANGELO.

Then you will bring the chain to her yourself?

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

No; bear it with you, lest I come not time enough.

ANGELO.

Well, sir, I will. Have you the chain about you?

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

An if I have not, sir, I hope you have;

Or else you may return without your money.

ANGELO.

Nay, come, I pray you, sir, give me the chain;

Both wind and tide stays for this gentleman, And I, to blame, have held him here too long.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

Good Lord! you use this dalliance to excuse

Your breach of promise to the Porpentine;

I should have chid you for not bringing it,

But, like a shrew, you first begin to brawl.

SECOND MERCHANT.

The hour steals on; I pray you, sir, dispatch.

ANGELO.

You hear how he importunes me-the chain!

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

Why, give it to my wife, and fetch your money.

ANGELO.

Come, come, you know I gave it you even now.

Either send the chain or send by me some token.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

Fie, now you run this humour out of breath!
Come, where's the chain? I pray you let me see it.

SECOND MERCHANT.

My business cannot brook this dalliance.
Good sir, say whe'r you'll answer me or no;
If not, I'll leave him to the officer.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.
I answer you! What should I answer you?

ANGELO.

The money that you owe me for the chain.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

I owe you none till I receive the chain.

ANGELO.

You know I gave it you half an hour since.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

You gave me none; you wrong me much to say so.

ANGELO.

You wrong me more, sir, in denying it.

Consider how it stands upon my credit.

SECOND MERCHANT.

Well, officer, arrest him at my suit.

OFFICER.

I do; and charge you in the Duke's name to obey me.

ANGELO.

This touches me in reputation.
Either consent to pay this sum for me,
Or I attach you by this officer.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.
Consent to pay thee that I never had!

Arrest me, foolish fellow, if thou dar'st.

ANGELO.
Here is thy fee; arrest him, officer.
I would not spare my brother in this case,
If he should scorn me so apparently.

OFFICER.

I do arrest you, sir; you hear the suit.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

I do obey thee till I give thee bail.

But, sirrah, you shall buy this sport as dear

As all the metal in your shop will answer.

ANGELO.

Sir, sir, I shall have law in Ephesus,

To your notorious shame, I doubt it not.

Enter DROMIO OF SYRACUSE, from the bay

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

Master, there's a bark of Epidamnum

That stays but till her owner comes aboard,

And then, sir, she bears away. Our fraughtage, sir,

I have convey'd aboard; and I have bought

The oil, the balsamum, and aqua-vitx.

The ship is in her trim; the merry wind

Blows fair from land; they stay for nought at an

But for their owner, master, and yourself.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

How now! a madman? Why, thou peevish sheep,

What ship of Epidamnum stays for me?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

A ship you sent me to, to hire waftage.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

THOU drunken slave! I sent the for a rope;

And told thee to what purpose and what end.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

YOU sent me for a rope's end as soon-

You sent me to the bay, sir, for a bark.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

I Will debate this matter at more leisure,

And teach your ears to list me with more heed.

To Adriana, villain, hie thee straight;

Give her this key, and tell her in the desk

That's cover'd o'er with Turkish tapestry

There is a purse of ducats; let her send it.

Tell her I am arrested in the street,
And that shall bail me; hie thee, slave, be gone.

On, officer, to prison till it come.

Exeunt all but DROMIO

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

To Adriana! that is where we din'd,
Where Dowsabel did claim me for her husband.

She is too big, I hope, for me to compass.
Thither I must, although against my will,
For servants must their masters' minds fulfil.

Exit

SCENE 2

The house of ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS

Enter ADRIANA and LUCIANA

ADRIANA.

Ah, Luciana, did he tempt thee so?

Might'st thou perceive austerely in his eye

That he did plead in earnest? Yea or no?

Look'd he or red or pale, or sad or merrily?

What observation mad'st thou in this case

Of his heart's meteors tilting in his face?

LUCIANA.

First he denied you had in him no right.

ADRIANA.

He meant he did me none-the more my spite.

LUCIANA.

Then swore he that he was a stranger here.

ADRIANA.

And true he swore, though yet forsworn he were.

LUCIANA.

Then pleaded I for you.

ADRIANA.

And what said he?

LUCIANA.

That love I begg'd for you he begg'd of me.

ADRIANA.

With what persuasion did he tempt thy love?

LUCIANA.

With words that in an honest suit might move.

First he did praise my beauty, then my speech.

ADRIANA.

Didst speak him fair?

LUCIANA.

Have patience, I beseech.

ADRIANA.

I cannot, nor I will not hold me still;
My tongue, though not my heart, shall have his will.
He is deformed, crooked, old, and sere,
Ill-fac'd, worse bodied, shapeless everywhere;
Vicious, ungentle, foolish, blunt, unkind;
Stigmatical in making, worse in mind.

LUCIANA.

Who would be jealous then of such a one?

No evil lost is wail'd when it is gone.

ADRIANA.

Ah, but I think him better than I say,

And yet would herein others' eyes were worse.

Far from her nest the lapwing cries away;

My heart prays for him, though my tongue do curse.

Enter DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE. Here go-the desk, the purse. Sweet now, make haste.

LUCIANA.

How hast thou lost thy breath?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

By running fast.

ADRIANA.

Where is thy master, Dromio? Is he well?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

No, he's in Tartar limbo, worse than hell.

A devil in an everlasting garment hath him;

One whose hard heart is button'd up with steel;

A fiend, a fairy, pitiless and rough;

A wolf, nay worse, a fellow all in buff;

A back-friend, a shoulder-clapper, one that countermands

The passages of alleys, creeks, and narrow lands;

A hound that runs counter, and yet draws dry-foot well;

One that, before the Judgment, carries poor souls to hell.

ADRIANA.

Why, man, what is the matter?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

I do not know the matter; he is rested on the case.

ADRIANA.

What, is he arrested? Tell me, at whose suit?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

I know not at whose suit he is arrested well;

But he's in a suit of buff which 'rested him, that can I tell.

Will you send him, mistress, redemption, the money in his desk?

ADRIANA.

Go fetch it, sister. *[Exit LUCIANA]* This I wonder at:

Thus he unknown to me should be in debt.

Tell me, was he arrested on a band?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

on a band, but on a stronger thing,

A chain, a chain. Do you not hear it ring?

ADRIANA.

What, the chain?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

No, no, the bell; 'tis time that I were gone.
It was two ere I left him, and now the clock strikes one.

ADRIANA.

The hours come back! That did I never hear.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.
O yes. If any hour meet a sergeant,
'a turns back for very fear.

ADRIANA.
As if Time were in debt! How fondly dost thou reason!

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.
Time is a very bankrupt, and owes
more than he's worth to season.
Nay, he's a thief too: have you not heard men say
That Time comes stealing on by night and day?
If 'a be in debt and theft, and a sergeant in the way,
Hath he not reason to turn back an hour in a day?

Re-enter LUCIANA with a purse

ADRIANA.

Go, Dromio, there's the money; bear it straight,

And bring thy master home immediately.

Come, sister; I am press'd down with conceit-

Conceit, my comfort and my injury.

Exeunt

SCENE 3

The mart

Enter ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

There's not a man I meet but doth salute me

As if I were their well-acquainted friend;

And every one doth call me by my name.

Some tender money to me, some invite me,

Some other give me thanks for kindnesses,

Some offer me commodities to buy;
Even now a tailor call'd me in his shop,
And show'd me silks that he had bought for me,
And therewithal took measure of my body.
Sure, these are but imaginary wiles,
And Lapland sorcerers inhabit here.

Enter DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.
Master, here's the gold you sent me
for. What, have you got the picture of old Adam new-apparell'd?

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.
What gold is this? What Adam dost thou mean?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.
Not that Adam that kept the Paradise,
but that Adam that keeps the prison; he that goes in the
calf's skin that was kill'd for the Prodigal; he that came behind
you, sir, like an evil angel, and bid you forsake your liberty.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

I understand thee not.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.
No? Why, 'tis a plain case: he that
went, like a bass-viol, in a case of leather; the man, sir,
that, when gentlemen are tired, gives them a sob, and rest
them; he, sir, that takes pity on decayed men, and give
them suits of durance; he that sets up his rest to do more
exploits with his mace than a morris-pike.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.
What, thou mean'st an officer?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.
Ay, sir, the sergeant of the band;
that brings any man to answer it that breaks his band; on
that thinks a man always going to bed, and says 'God give you good rest!'

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

Well, sir, there rest in your foolery. Is
there any ship puts forth to-night? May we be gone?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

Why, sir, I brought you word an
hour since that the bark Expedition put forth to-night; and
then were you hind'red by the sergeant, to tarry for the
boy Delay. Here are the angels that you sent for to deliver you.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

The fellow is distract, and so am I;
And here we wander in illusions.
Some blessed power deliver us from hence!

Enter a COURTEZAN

COURTEZAN.

Well met, well met, Master Antipholus.

I see, sir, you have found the goldsmith now.

Is that the chain you promis'd me to-day?

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

Satan, avoid! I charge thee, tempt me not.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

Master, is this Mistress Satan?

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

It is the devil.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

Nay, she is worse, she is the devil's
dam, and here she comes in the habit of a light wench; and
thereof comes that the wenches say 'God damn me!' That's
as much to say 'God make me a light wench!' It is written
they appear to men like angels of light; light is an effect
of fire, and fire will burn; ergo, light wenches will burn.
Come not near her.

COURTEZAN.

Your man and you are marvellous merry, sir.
Will you go with me? We'll mend our dinner here.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.
Master, if you do, expect spoon-meat,
or bespeak a long spoon.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

Why, Dromio?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.
Marry, he must have a long spoon
that must eat with the devil.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.
Avoid then, fiend! What tell'st thou me of supping?
Thou art, as you are all, a sorceress;

I conjure thee to leave me and be gone.

COURTEZAN.

Give me the ring of mine you had at dinner,

Or, for my diamond, the chain you promis'd,

And I'll be gone, sir, and not trouble you.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

Some devils ask but the parings of one's nail,

A rush, a hair, a drop of blood, a pin,

A nut, a cherry-stone;

But she, more covetous, would have a chain.

Master, be wise; an if you give it her,

The devil will shake her chain, and fright us with it.

COURTEZAN.

I pray you, sir, my ring, or else the chain;

I hope you do not mean to cheat me so.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

Avaunt, thou witch! Come, Dromio, let us go.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

'Fly pride' says the peacock. Mistress, that you know.

Exeunt ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE and DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

COURTEZAN.

Now, out of doubt, Antipholus is mad,
Else would he never so demean himself.
A ring he hath of mine worth forty ducats,
And for the same he promis'd me a chain;
Both one and other he denies me now.
The reason that I gather he is mad,
Besides this present instance of his rage,
Is a mad tale he told to-day at dinner
Of his own doors being shut against his entrance.
Belike his wife, acquainted with his fits,
On purpose shut the doors against his way.
My way is now to hie home to his house,
And tell his wife that, being lunatic,
He rush'd into my house and took perforce
My ring away. This course I fittest choose,

For forty ducats is too much to lose.

Exit

SCENE 4

A street

Enter ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS with the OFFICER

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

Fear me not, man; I will not break away.

I'll give thee, ere I leave thee, so much money,

To warrant thee, as I am 'rested for.

My wife is in a wayward mood to-day,

And will not lightly trust the messenger.

That I should be attach'd in Ephesus,

I tell you 'twill sound harshly in her cars.

Enter DROMIO OF EPHESUS, with a rope's-end

Here comes my man; I think he brings the money. How now, sir! Have you that I sent you for? DROMIO OF EPHESUS. Here's that, I warrant you, will pay them all. ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS. But where's the money? DROMIO OF EPHESUS. Why, sir, I gave the money for the rope. ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS. Five hundred ducats, villain, for rope? DROMIO OF EPHESUS. I'll serve you, sir, five hundred at the rate. ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS. To what end did I bid thee hie thee home? DROMIO OF EPHESUS. To a rope's-end, sir; and to that end am I return'd. ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS. And to that end, sir, I will welcome you. *[Beating him]* OFFICER. Good sir, be patient. DROMIO OF EPHESUS. Nay, 'tis for me to be patient; I am in adversity. OFFICER. Good now, hold thy tongue. DROMIO OF EPHESUS. Nay, rather persuade him to hold his hands. ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS. Thou whoreson, senseless villain! DROMIO OF EPHESUS. I would I were senseless, sir, that I might not feel your blows. ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS. Thou art sensible in nothing but blows, and so is an ass. DROMIO OF EPHESUS. I am an ass indeed; you may prove it by my long 'ears. I have served him from the hour of my nativity to this instant, and have nothing at his hands for my service but blows. When I am cold he heats me with beating; when I am warm he cools me with beating. I am wak'd with it when I sleep; rais'd with it when I sit; driven out of doors with it when I go from home; welcom'd home with it when I return; nay, I bear it on my shoulders as beggar wont her brat; and I think, when he hath lam'd me, I shall beg with it from door to door.

Enter ADRIANA, LUCIANA, the COURTEZAN, and a SCHOOLMASTER call'd PINCH

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

Come, go along; my wife is coming yonder.

DROMIO OF EPHESUS.

Mistress, 'respice finem,' respect your end; or rather, to prophesy like the parrot, 'Beware the rope's-end.'

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

Wilt thou still talk?

[Beating him]

COURTEZAN.

How say you now? Is not your husband mad?

ADRIANA.

His incivility confirms no less.
Good Doctor Pinch, you are a conjurer:
Establish him in his true sense again,
And I will please you what you will demand.

LUCIANA.

Alas, how fiery and how sharp he looks!

COURTEZAN.

Mark how he trembles in his ecstasy.

PINCH.

Give me your hand, and let me feel your pulse.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

There is my hand, and let it feel your ear.

[Striking him]

PINCH.

I charge thee, Satan, hous'd within this man,
To yield possession to my holy prayers,
And to thy state of darkness hie thee straight.
I conjure thee by all the saints in heaven.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

Peace, doting wizard, peace! I am not mad.

ADRIANA.

O, that thou wert not, poor distressed soul!

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

You minion, you, are these your customers?
Did this companion with the saffron face
Revel and feast it at my house to-day,
Whilst upon me the guilty doors were shut,
And I denied to enter in my house?

ADRIANA.

O husband, God doth know you din'd at home,
Where would you had remain'd until this time,
Free from these slanders and this open shame!

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

Din'd at home! Thou villain, what sayest thou?

DROMIO OF EPHESUS.

Sir, Sooth to say, you did not dine at home.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

Were not my doors lock'd up and I shut out?

DROMIO OF EPHESUS.

Perdie, your doors were lock'd and you shut out.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

And did not she herself revile me there?

DROMIO OF EPHESUS.

Sans fable, she herself revil'd you there.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

Did not her kitchen-maid rail, taunt, and scorn me?

DROMIO OF EPHESUS.

Certes, she did; the kitchen-vestal scorn'd you.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

And did not I in rage depart from thence?

DROMIO OF EPHESUS.

In verity, you did. My bones bear witness,
That since have felt the vigour of his rage.

ADRIANA.

Is't good to soothe him in these contraries?

PINCH.

It is no shame; the fellow finds his vein,
And, yielding to him, humours well his frenzy.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

Thou hast suborn'd the goldsmith to arrest me.

ADRIANA.

Alas, I sent you money to redeem you,

By Dromio here, who came in haste for it.

DROMIO OF EPHESUS.

Money by me! Heart and goodwill you might,

But surely, master, not a rag of money.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

Went'st not thou to her for purse of ducats?

ADRIANA.

He came to me, and I deliver'd it.

LUCIANA.

And I am witness with her that she did.

DROMIO OF EPHESUS.

God and the rope-maker bear me witness

That I was sent for nothing but a rope!

PINCH.

Mistress, both man and master is possess'd;

I know it by their pale and deadly looks.

They must be bound, and laid in some dark room.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

Say, wherefore didst thou lock me forth

to-day?

And why dost thou deny the bag of gold?

ADRIANA.

I did not, gentle husband, lock thee forth.

DROMIO OF EPHESUS.

And, gentle master, I receiv'd no gold;

But I confess, sir, that we were lock'd out.

ADRIANA.

Dissembling villain, thou speak'st false in both.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

Dissembling harlot, thou art false in all,
And art confederate with a damned pack
To make a loathsome abject scorn of me;
But with these nails I'll pluck out these false eyes
That would behold in me this shameful sport.

ADRIANA.

O, bind him, bind him; let him not come near me.

PINCH.

More company! The fiend is strong within him.

Enter three or four, and offer to bind him. He strives

LUCIANA.

Ay me, poor man, how pale and wan he looks!

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

What, will you murder me? Thou gaoler,

thou,

I am thy prisoner. Wilt thou suffer them

To make a rescue?

OFFICER.

Masters, let him go;

He is my prisoner, and you shall not have him.

PINCH.

Go bind this man, for he is frantic too.

[They bind DROMIO]

ADRIANA.

What wilt thou do, thou peevish officer?

Hast thou delight to see a wretched man

Do outrage and displeasure to himself?

OFFICER.

He is my prisoner; if I let him go,

The debt he owes will be requir'd of me.

ADRIANA.

I will discharge thee ere I go from thee;

Bear me forthwith unto his creditor,

And, knowing how the debt grows, I will pay it.

Good Master Doctor, see him safe convey'd

Home to my house. O most unhappy day!

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

O most unhappy strumpet!

DROMIO OF EPHESUS.

Master, I am here ent'red in bond for you.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

Out on thee, villian! Wherefore dost thou mad me?

DROMIO OF EPHESUS.

Will you be bound for nothing?

Be mad, good master; cry 'The devil!'

LUCIANA.

God help, poor souls, how idly do they talk!

ADRIANA.

Go bear him hence. Sister, go you with me.

Exeunt all but ADRIANA, LUCIANA, OFFICERS, and COURTEZAN

Say now, whose suit is he arrested at?

OFFICER.

One Angelo, a goldsmith; do you know him?

ADRIANA.

I know the man. What is the sum he owes?

OFFICER.

Two hundred ducats.

ADRIANA.

Say, how grows it due?

OFFICER.

Due for a chain your husband had of him.

ADRIANA.

He did bespeak a chain for me, but had it not.

COURTEZAN.

When as your husband, all in rage, to-day
Came to my house, and took away my ring-
The ring I saw upon his finger now-
Straight after did I meet him with a chain.

ADRIANA.

It may be so, but I did never see it.

Come, gaoler, bring me where the goldsmith is;

I long to know the truth hereof at large.

Enter ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE, with his rapier drawn, and

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

LUCIANA.

God, for thy mercy! they are loose again. ADRIANA. And come with naked swords. Let's call more help to have them bound again. OFFICER. Away, they'll kill us! *Exeunt* all but ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE and DROMIO OF SYRACUSE as fast as may be, frighted ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE. I see these witches are afraid of swords. DROMIO OF SYRACUSE. She that would be your wife now ran from you. ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE. Come to the Centaur; fetch our stuff from thence. I long that we were safe and sound aboard. DROMIO OF SYRACUSE. Faith, stay here this night; they will surely do us no harm; you saw they speak us fair, give us gold; methinks they are such a gentle nation that, but for the mountain of mad flesh that claims marriage of me, could find in my heart to stay here still and turn witch. ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE. I will not stay to-night for all the town; Therefore away, to get our stuff aboard. *Exeunt*

ACT V.

SCENE 1

A street before a priory

Enter SECOND MERCHANT and ANGELO

ANGELO.

I am sorry, sir, that I have hind'red you;

But I protest he had the chain of me,

Though most dishonestly he doth deny it.

SECOND MERCHANT.

How is the man esteem'd here in the city?

ANGELO.

Of very reverend reputation, sir,

Of credit infinite, highly belov'd,

Second to none that lives here in the city;

His word might bear my wealth at any time.

SECOND MERCHANT.

Speak softly; yonder, as I think, he walks.

Enter ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE and DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

ANGELO.

'Tis so; and that self chain about his neck

Which he forswore most monstrously to have.

Good sir, draw near to me, I'll speak to him.

Signior Andpholus, I wonder much

That you would put me to this shame and trouble;

And, not without some scandal to yourself,

With circumstance and oaths so to deny

This chain, which now you wear so openly.

Beside the charge, the shame, imprisonment,

You have done wrong to this my honest friend;

Who, but for staying on our controversy,

Had hoisted sail and put to sea to-day.

This chain you had of me; can you deny it?

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

I think I had; I never did deny it.

SECOND MERCHANT.

Yes, that you did, sir, and forswore it too.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

Who heard me to deny it or forswear it?

SECOND MERCHANT.

These ears of mine, thou know'st, did hear thee.
Fie on thee, wretch! 'tis pity that thou liv'st
To walk where any honest men resort.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

Thou art a villain to impeach me thus;
I'll prove mine honour and mine honesty
Against thee presently, if thou dar'st stand.

SECOND MERCHANT.

I dare, and do defy thee for a villain.

[They draw]

Enter ADRIANA, LUCIANA, the COURTEZAN, and OTHERS

ADRIANA.

Hold, hurt him not, for God's sake! He is mad.

Some get within him, take his sword away;

Bind Dromio too, and bear them to my house.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

Run, master, run; for God's sake take a house.

This is some priory. In, or we are spoil'd.

Exeunt ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE and DROMIO OF SYRACUSE to the priory

Enter the LADY ABBESS

ABBESS.

Be quiet, people. Wherefore throng you hither?

ADRIANA.

To fetch my poor distracted husband hence.
Let us come in, that we may bind him fast,
And bear him home for his recovery.

ANGELO.

I knew he was not in his perfect wits.

SECOND MERCHANT.

I am sorry now that I did draw on him.

ABBESS.

How long hath this possession held the man?

ADRIANA.

This week he hath been heavy, sour, sad,

And much different from the man he was;

But till this afternoon his passion

Ne'er brake into extremity of rage.

ABBESS.

Hath he not lost much wealth by wreck of sea?

Buried some dear friend? Hath not else his eye

Stray'd his affection in unlawful love?

A sin prevailing much in youthful men

Who give their eyes the liberty of gazing.

Which of these sorrows is he subject to?

ADRIANA.

To none of these, except it be the last;

Namely, some love that drew him oft from home.

ABBESS.

You should for that have reprehended him.

ADRIANA.

Why, so I did.

ABBESS.

Ay, but not rough enough.

ADRIANA.

As roughly as my modesty would let me.

ABBESS.

Haply in private.

ADRIANA.

And in assemblies too.

ABBESS.

Ay, but not enough.

ADRIANA.

It was the copy of our conference.

In bed, he slept not for my urging it;

At board, he fed not for my urging it;

Alone, it was the subject of my theme;

In company, I often glanced it;

Still did I tell him it was vile and bad.

ABBESS.

And thereof came it that the man was mad.

The venom clamours of a jealous woman

Poisons more deadly than a mad dog's tooth.

It seems his sleeps were hind'red by thy railing,

And thereof comes it that his head is light.

Thou say'st his meat was sauc'd with thy upbraidings:

Unquiet meals make ill digestions;

Thereof the raging fire of fever bred;

And what's a fever but a fit of madness?

Thou say'st his sports were hind'red by thy brawls.

Sweet recreation barr'd, what doth ensue

But moody and dull melancholy,

Kinsman to grim and comfortless despair,

And at her heels a huge infectious troop

Of pale distemperatures and foes to life?

In food, in sport, and life-preserving rest,

To be disturb'd would mad or man or beast.

The consequence is, then, thy jealous fits

Hath scar'd thy husband from the use of wits.

LUCIANA.

She never reprehended him but mildly,

When he demean'd himself rough, rude, and wildly.

Why bear you these rebukes, and answer not?

ADRIANA.

She did betray me to my own reproof.

Good people, enter, and lay hold on him.

ABBESS.

No, not a creature enters in my house.

ADRIANA.

Then let your servants bring my husband forth.

ABBESS.

Neither; he took this place for sanctuary,
And it shall privilege him from your hands
Till I have brought him to his wits again,
Or lose my labour in assaying it.

ADRIANA.

I will attend my husband, be his nurse,
Diet his sickness, for it is my office,
And will have no attorney but myself;
And therefore let me have him home with me.

ABBESS.

Be patient; for I will not let him stir

Till I have us'd the approved means I have,

With wholesome syrups, drugs, and holy prayers,

To make of him a formal man again.

It is a branch and parcel of mine oath,

A charitable duty of my order;

Therefore depart, and leave him here with me.

ADRIANA.

I will not hence and leave my husband here;

And ill it doth beseem your holiness

To separate the husband and the wife.

ABBESS.

Be quiet, and depart; thou shalt not have him.

Exit

LUCIANA. Complain unto the Duke of this indignity.

ADRIANA.

Come, go; I will fall prostrate at his feet, And never rise until my tears and prayers

Have won his Grace to come in person hither

And take perforce my husband from the Abbess.

SECOND MERCHANT.

By this, I think, the dial points at five;

Anon, I'm sure, the Duke himself in person

Comes this way to the melancholy vale,

The place of death and sorry execution,

Behind the ditches of the abbey here.

ANGELO.

Upon what cause?

SECOND MERCHANT.

To see a reverend Syracusian merchant,

Who put unluckily into this bay

Against the laws and statutes of this town,

Beheaded publicly for his offence.

ANGELO.

See where they come; we will behold his death.

LUCIANA.

Kneel to the Duke before he pass the abbey.

Enter the DUKE, attended; AEGEON, bareheaded; with the HEADSMAN and other OFFICERS

DUKE.

Yet once again proclaim it publicly,

If any friend will pay the sum for him,

He shall not die; so much we tender him.

ADRIANA.

Justice, most sacred Duke, against the Abbess!

DUKE.

She is a virtuous and a reverend lady;

It cannot be that she hath done thee wrong.

ADRIANA.

May it please your Grace, Antipholus, my husband,

Who I made lord of me and all I had

At your important letters-this ill day

A most outrageous fit of madness took him,

That desp'rately he hurried through the street,

With him his bondman all as mad as he,

Doing displeasure to the citizens

By rushing in their houses, bearing thence

Rings, jewels, anything his rage did like.

Once did I get him bound and sent him home,

Whilst to take order for the wrongs I went,

That here and there his fury had committed.

Anon, I wot not by what strong escape,

He broke from those that had the guard of him,

And with his mad attendant and himself,

Each one with ireful passion, with drawn swords,

Met us again and, madly bent on us,

Chas'd us away; till, raising of more aid, We came again to bind them. Then they fled

Into this abbey, whither we pursu'd them;

And here the Abbess shuts the gates on us,

And will not suffer us to fetch him out,

Nor send him forth that we may bear him hence.

Therefore, most gracious Duke, with thy command

Let him be brought forth and borne hence for help.

DUKE.

Long since thy husband serv'd me in my wars,

And I to thee engag'd a prince's word,

When thou didst make him master of thy bed,

To do him all the grace and good I could.

Go, some of you, knock at the abbey gate,

And bid the Lady Abbess come to me,

I will determine this before I stir.

Enter a MESSENGER

MESSENGER.

O mistress, mistress, shift and save yourself!

My master and his man are both broke loose,

Beaten the maids a-row and bound the doctor,

Whose beard they have sing'd off with brands of fire;

And ever, as it blaz'd, they threw on him

Great pails of puddled mire to quench the hair.

My master preaches patience to him, and the while

His man with scissors nicks him like a fool;

And sure, unless you send some present help,

Between them they will kill the conjurer.

ADRIANA.

Peace, fool! thy master and his man are here,

And that is false thou dost report to us.

MESSENGER.

Mistress, upon my life, I tell you true;

I have not breath'd almost since I did see it.

He cries for you, and vows, if he can take you,

To scorch your face, and to disfigure you.

[Cry within]

Hark, hark, I hear him, mistress; fly, be gone!

DUKE.

Come, stand by me; fear nothing. Guard with halberds.

ADRIANA.

Ay me, it is my husband! Witness you

That he is borne about invisible.

Even now we hous'd him in the abbey here,

And now he's there, past thought of human reason.

Enter ANTIPHOLUS OFEPHESUS and DROMIO OFEPHESUS

ANTIPHOLUS OFEPHESUS.

Justice, most gracious Duke; O, grant me justice!

Even for the service that long since I did thee,

When I bestrid thee in the wars, and took

Deep scars to save thy life; even for the blood

That then I lost for thee, now grant me justice.

AEGEON.

Unless the fear of death doth make me dote,

I see my son Antipholus, and Dromio.

ANTIPHOLUS OFEPHESUS.

Justice, sweet Prince, against that woman there!

She whom thou gav'st to me to be my wife,

That hath abused and dishonoured me

Even in the strength and height of injury.

Beyond imagination is the wrong

That she this day hath shameless thrown on me.

DUKE.

Discover how, and thou shalt find me just.

ANTIPHOLUS OFEPHESUS.

This day, great Duke, she shut the doors upon me,

While she with harlots feasted in my house.

DUKE.

A grievous fault. Say, woman, didst thou so?

ADRIANA.

No, my good lord. Myself, he, and my sister,

To-day did dine together. So befall my soul

As this is false he burdens me withal!

LUCIANA.

Ne'er may I look on day nor sleep on night

But she tells to your Highness simple truth!

ANGELO.

O peflur'd woman! They are both forsworn.

In this the madman justly chargeth them.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

My liege, I am advised what I say;

Neither disturbed with the effect of wine,

Nor heady-rash, provok'd with raging ire, Albeit my wrongs might make one wiser mad.

This woman lock'd me out this day from dinner;

That goldsmith there, were he not pack'd with her,

Could witness it, for he was with me then;

Who parted with me to go fetch a chain,

Promising to bring it to the Porpentine,

Where Balthazar and I did dine together.

Our dinner done, and he not coming thither,

I went to seek him. In the street I met him,

And in his company that gentleman.

There did this perjur'd goldsmith swear me down

That I this day of him receiv'd the chain,

Which, God he knows, I saw not; for the which

He did arrest me with an officer.

I did obey, and sent my peasant home

For certain ducats; he with none return'd.

Then fairly I bespoke the officer

To go in person with me to my house.

By th' way we met my wife, her sister, and a rabble more

Of vile confederates. Along with them

They brought one Pinch, a hungry lean-fac'd villain,

A mere anatomy, a mountebank,
A threadbare juggler, and a fortune-teller,
A needy, hollow-ey'd, sharp-looking wretch,
A living dead man. This pernicious slave,
Forsooth, took on him as a conjurer,
And gazing in mine eyes, feeling my pulse,
And with no face, as 'twere, outfacing me,
Cries out I was possess'd. Then all together
They fell upon me, bound me, bore me thence,
And in a dark and dankish vault at home
There left me and my man, both bound together;
Till, gnawing with my teeth my bonds in sunder,
I gain'd my freedom, and immediately
Ran hither to your Grace; whom I beseech
To give me ample satisfaction
For these deep shames and great indignities.

ANGELO.

My lord, in truth, thus far I witness with him,
That he din'd not at home, but was lock'd out.

DUKE.

But had he such a chain of thee, or no?

ANGELO.

He had, my lord, and when he ran in here,

These people saw the chain about his neck.

SECOND MERCHANT.

Besides, I will be sworn these ears of mine

Heard you confess you had the chain of him,

After you first forswore it on the mart;

And thereupon I drew my sword on you,

And then you fled into this abbey here,

From whence, I think, you are come by miracle.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

I never came within these abbey walls,

Nor ever didst thou draw thy sword on me;

I never saw the chain, so help me Heaven!

And this is false you burden me withal.

DUKE.

Why, what an intricate impeach is this!

I think you all have drunk of Circe's cup.

If here you hous'd him, here he would have been;

If he were mad, he would not plead so coldly.

You say he din'd at home: the goldsmith here

Denies that saying. Sirrah, what say you?

DROMIO OF EPHESUS.

Sir, he din'd with her there, at the Porpentine.

COURTEZAN.

He did; and from my finger snatch'd that ring.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

'Tis true, my liege; this ring I had of her.

DUKE.

Saw'st thou him enter at the abbey here?

COURTEZAN.

As sure, my liege, as I do see your Grace.

DUKE.
Why, this is strange. Go call the Abbess hither.

I think you are all mated or stark mad.

Exit one to the ABBESS

AEGEON.
Most mighty Duke, vouchsafe me speak a word:
Haply I see a friend will save my life
And pay the sum that may deliver me.

DUKE.

Speak freely, Syracusian, what thou wilt.

AEGEON.

Is not your name, sir, call'd Antipholus?

And is not that your bondman Dromio?

DROMIO OF EPHESUS.

Within this hour I was his bondman, sir,

But he, I thank him, gnaw'd in two my cords

Now am I Dromio and his man unbound.

AEGEON.

I am sure you both of you remember me.

DROMIO OF EPHESUS.

Ourselves we do remember, sir, by you;

For lately we were bound as you are now.

You are not Pinch's patient, are you, sir?

AEGEON.

Why look you strange on me? You know me well.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

I never saw you in my life till now.

AEGEON.

O! grief hath chang'd me since you saw me last;
And careful hours with time's deformed hand
Have written strange defeatures in my face.
But tell me yet, dost thou not know my voice?

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

Neither.

AEGEON.

Dromio, nor thou?

DROMIO OF EPHESUS.

No, trust me, sir, nor I.

AEGEON.

I am sure thou dost.

DROMIO OF EPHESUS.

Ay, sir, but I am sure I do not; and

whatsoever a man denies, you are now bound to believe him.

AEGEON.

Not know my voice! O time's extremity,

Hast thou so crack'd and splitted my poor tongue

In seven short years that here my only son

Knows not my feeble key of untun'd cares?

Though now this grained face of mine be hid

In sap-consuming winter's drizzled snow,

And all the conduits of my blood froze up,

Yet hath my night of life some memory,

My wasting lamps some fading glimmer left,

My dull deaf ears a little use to hear;

All these old witnesses-I cannot err-

Tell me thou art my son Antipholus.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

I never saw my father in my life.

AEGEON.
But seven years since, in Syracuse, boy,
Thou know'st we parted; but perhaps, my son,
Thou sham'st to acknowledge me in misery.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.
The Duke and all that know me in
the city Can witness with me that it is not so:

I ne'er saw Syracuse in my life.

DUKE.
I tell thee, Syracusian, twenty years
Have I been patron to Antipholus,
During which time he ne'er saw Syracuse.

I see thy age and dangers make thee dote.

Re-enter the ABBESS, with ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE and DROMIO OF

SYRACUSE

ABBESS.

Most mighty Duke, behold a man much wrong'd.

[All gather to see them]

ADRIANA.

I see two husbands, or mine eyes deceive me.

DUKE.

One of these men is genius to the other;

And so of these. Which is the natural man,

And which the spirit? Who deciphers them?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

I, sir, am Dromio; command him away.

DROMIO OF EPHESUS.

I, Sir, am Dromio; pray let me stay.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.
Aegeon, art thou not? or else his
DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.
O, my old master! who hath bound
ABBESS.
Whoever bound him, I will loose his bonds,
And gain a husband by his liberty.
Speak, old Aegeon, if thou be'st the man
That hadst a wife once call'd Aemilia,
That bore thee at a burden two fair sons.
O, if thou be'st the same Aegeon, speak,
And speak unto the same Aemilia!

AEGEON.

If I dream not, thou art Aemilia.

If thou art she, tell me where is that son
That floated with thee on the fatal raft?

ABBESS.
By men of Epidamnum he and I
And the twin Dromio, all were taken up;
But by and by rude fishermen of Corinth
By force took Dromio and my son from them,
And me they left with those of Epidamnum.
What then became of them I cannot tell;
I to this fortune that you see me in.

DUKE.

Why, here begins his morning story right.
These two Antipholus', these two so like,
And these two Dromios, one in semblance-
Besides her urging of her wreck at sea-
These are the parents to these children,
Which accidentally are met together.

Antipholus, thou cam'st from Corinth first?

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

No, sir, not I; I came from Syracuse.

DUKE.

Stay, stand apart; I know not which is which.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

I came from Corinth, my most gracious lord.

DROMIO OF EPHESUS.

And I with him.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

Brought to this town by that most famous warrior,
Duke Menaphon, your most renowned uncle.

ADRIANA.

Which of you two did dine with me to-day?

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

I, gentle mistress.

ADRIANA.

And are not you my husband?

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

No; I say nay to that.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

And so do I, yet did she call me so;
And this fair gentlewoman, her sister here,
Did call me brother. *[To LUCIANA]* What I told you then,
I hope I shall have leisure to make good;
If this be not a dream I see and hear.

ANGELO.

That is the chain, sir, which you had of me.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

I think it be, sir; I deny it not.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

And you, sir, for this chain arrested me.

ANGELO.

I think I did, sir; I deny it not.

ADRIANA.

I sent you money, sir, to be your bail,
By Dromio; but I think he brought it not.

DROMIO OF EPHESUS.

No, none by me.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

This purse of ducats I receiv'd from you,
And Dromio my man did bring them me.
I see we still did meet each other's man,
And I was ta'en for him, and he for me,
And thereupon these ERRORS are arose.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.
These ducats pawn I for my father here.

DUKE.

It shall not need; thy father hath his life.

COURTEZAN.
Sir, I must have that diamond from you.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

There, take it; and much thanks for my good cheer.

ABBESS.

Renowned Duke, vouchsafe to take the pains

To go with us into the abbey here,

And hear at large discoursed all our fortunes;

And all that are assembled in this place

That by this sympathized one day's error

Have suffer'd wrong, go keep us company,

And we shall make full satisfaction.

Thirty-three years have I but gone in travail

Of you, my sons; and till this present hour

My heavy burden ne'er delivered.

The Duke, my husband, and my children both,

And you the calendars of their nativity,

Go to a gossips' feast, and go with me;

After so long grief, such nativity!

DUKE.

With all my heart, I'll gossip at this feast.

Exeunt all but ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE, ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS, DROMIO OF SYRACUSE, and DROMIO OF EPHESUS

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

Master, shall I fetch your stuff from shipboard?

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

Dromio, what stuff of mine hast thou embark'd?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

Your goods that lay at host, sir, in the Centaur.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

He speaks to me. I am your master,

Dromio.

Come, go with us; we'll look to that anon.

Embrace thy brother there; rejoice with him.

Exeunt ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE and ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

There is a fat friend at your master's house,
That kitchen'd me for you to-day at dinner;
She now shall be my sister, not my wife.

DROMIO OF EPHESUS.

Methinks you are my glass, and not my brother;

I see by you I am a sweet-fac'd youth.

Will you walk in to see their gossiping?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

Not I, sir; you are my elder.

DROMIO OF EPHESUS.

That's a question; how shall we try it?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

We'll draw cuts for the senior; till then,

lead thou first.

DROMIO OF EPHESUS.

Nay, then, thus:

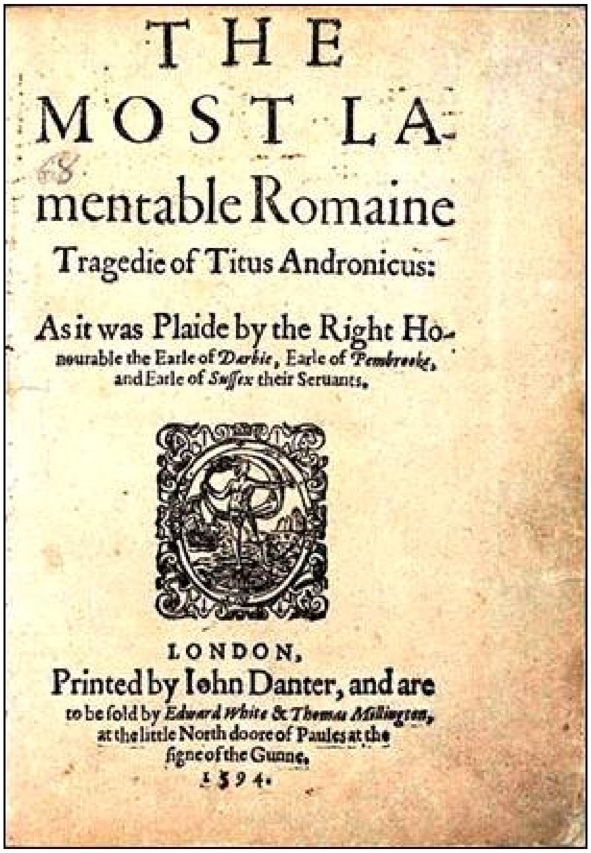
We came into the world like brother and brother,

And now let's go hand in hand, not one before another.

Exeunt

TITUS ANDRONICUS

Shakespeare’s first tragedy was written between 1588 and 1593 and reveals his attempt to emulate the violent and bloody revenge plays of his contemporaries and the Roman playwright Seneca, which were extremely popular with audiences throughout the sixteenth century. The play is set during the latter days of the Roman Empire, and tells the fictional story of Titus, a general in the Roman army, who is engaged in a cycle of revenge with Tamora, Queen of the Goths. It is Shakespeare's bloodiest and most violent work, and traditionally, is one of his least respected plays. Although very popular in its day, the play fell out of favour during the Victorian era, particurly due to its graphic violence.



THE

MOST LAMENTABLE ROMAINE

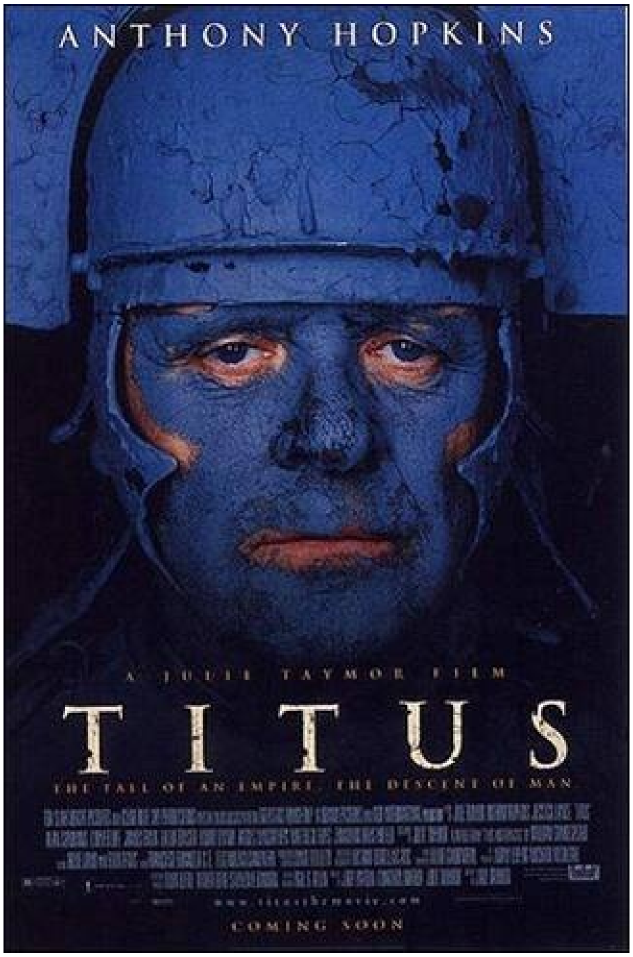
68

Tragedie of Titus Andronicus:

As it was Plaide by the Right Honourable the Earle of *Darbie*, Earle of *Pembrooke*,
and Earle of *Suſſex* their Seruants.

LONDON,
Printed by Iohn Danter, and are
to be ſold by *Edward White* & *Thomas Millington*,
at the little North doore of Paules at the
ſigne of the Gunne,
1594.

Title page of the first quarto


ANTHONY HOPKINS
A JULIE TAYMOR FILM
TITUS
THE FALL OF AN EMPIRE. THE DESCENT OF MAN
COMING SOON

The 1999 film adaptation

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DRAMATIS PERSONAE

SATURNINUS, son to the late Emperor of Rome, afterwards Emperor

BASSIANUS, brother to Saturninus

TITUS ANDRONICUS, a noble Roman

MARCUS ANDRONICUS, Tribune of the People, and brother to Titus

Sons to Titus Andronicus:

LUCIUS

QUINTUS

MARTIUS

MUTIUS

YOUNG LUCIUS, a boy, son to Lucius

PUBLIUS, son to Marcus Andronicus

Kinsmen to Titus:

SEMPRONIUS

CAIUS

VALENTINE

AEMILIUS, a noble Roman

Sons to Tamora:

ALARBUS

DEMETRIUS

CHIRON

AARON, a Moor, beloved by Tamora

A CAPTAIN

A MESSENGER

A CLOWN

TAMORA, Queen of the Goths

LAVINIA, daughter to Titus Andronicus

A NURSE, and a black CHILD

Romans and Goths, Senators, Tribunes, Officers, Soldiers, and Attendants

SCENE: Rome and the neighbourhood

ACT 1. SCENE I. Rome. Before the Capitol

Flourish. Enter the TRIBUNES and SENATORS aloft; and then enter below

SATURNINUS and his followers at one door, and BASSIANUS and his followers at the other, with drums and trumpets

SATURNINUS.

Noble patricians, patrons of my right,

Defend the justice of my cause with arms;

And, countrymen, my loving followers,

Plead my successive title with your swords.

I am his first born son that was the last

That ware the imperial diadem of Rome;

Then let my father's honours live in me,

Nor wrong mine age with this indignity.

BASSIANUS.

Romans, friends, followers, favourers of my right,

If ever Bassianus, Caesar's son,

Were gracious in the eyes of royal Rome,

Keep then this passage to the Capitol;

And suffer not dishonour to approach

The imperial seat, to virtue consecrate,

To justice, continence, and nobility;

But let desert in pure election shine;

And, Romans, fight for freedom in your choice.

Enter MARCUS ANDRONICUS aloft, with the crown

MARCUS. Princes, that strive by factions and by friends
Ambitiously for rule and empery,
Know that the people of Rome, for whom we stand
A special party, have by common voice
In election for the Roman empery
Chosen Andronicus, surnamed Pius
For many good and great deserts to Rome.
A nobler man, a braver warrior,
Lives not this day within the city walls.
He by the Senate is accited home,
From weary wars against the barbarous Goths,
That with his sons, a terror to our foes,
Hath yok'd a nation strong, train'd up in arms.
Ten years are spent since first he undertook
This cause of Rome, and chastised with arms
Our enemies' pride; five times he hath return'd
Bleeding to Rome, bearing his valiant sons

In coffins from the field; and at this day
To the monument of that Andronici
Done sacrifice of expiation,
And slain the noblest prisoner of the Goths.
And now at last, laden with honour's spoils,
Returns the good Andronicus to Rome,
Renowned Titus, flourishing in arms.
Let us entreat, by honour of his name
Whom worthily you would have now succeed,
And in the Capitol and Senate's right,
Whom you pretend to honour and adore,
That you withdraw you and abate your strength,
Dismiss your followers, and, as suitors should,
Plead your deserts in peace and humbleness.

SATURNINUS.
How fair the Tribune speaks to calm my thoughts.

BASSIANUS.
Marcus Andronicus, so I do affy
In thy uprightness and integrity,

And so I love and honour thee and thine,

Thy noble brother Titus and his sons,

And her to whom my thoughts are humbled all,

Gracious Lavinia, Rome's rich ornament,

That I will here dismiss my loving friends,

And to my fortunes and the people's favour

Commit my cause in balance to be weigh'd.

Exeunt the soldiers of BASSIANUS

SATURNINUS.

Friends, that have been thus forward in my right,

I thank you all and here dismiss you all,

And to the love and favour of my country

Commit myself, my person, and the cause.

Exeunt the soldiers of SATURNINUS

Rome, be as just and gracious unto me

As I am confident and kind to thee.

Open the gates and let me in.

BASSIANUS.

Tribunes, and me, a poor competitor.

[Flourish. They go up into the Senate House]

Enter a CAPTAIN

CAPTAIN. Romans, make way. The good Andronicus,

Patron of virtue, Rome's best champion,

Successful in the battles that he fights,

With honour and with fortune is return'd

From where he circumscribed with his sword

And brought to yoke the enemies of Rome.

Sound drums and trumpets, and then enter MARTIUS and MUTIUS, two of TITUS' sons; and then two men bearing a coffin covered with black; then LUCIUS and QUINTUS, two other sons; then TITUS ANDRONICUS; and then TAMORA the Queen of Goths, with her three sons, ALARBUS, DEMETRIUS, and CHIRON, with AARON the Moor, and others, as many as can be. Then set down the coffin and TITUS speaks

TITUS.

Hail, Rome, victorious in thy mourning weeds!

Lo, as the bark that hath discharg'd her fraught

Returns with precious lading to the bay

From whence at first she weigh'd her anchorage,

Cometh Andronicus, bound with laurel boughs,

To re-salute his country with his tears,

Tears of true joy for his return to Rome.

Thou great defender of this Capitol,

Stand gracious to the rites that we intend!

Romans, of five and twenty valiant sons,

Half of the number that King Priam had,

Behold the poor remains, alive and dead!

These that survive let Rome reward with love;

These that I bring unto their latest home,

With burial amongst their ancestors.

Here Goths have given me leave to sheathe my sword.

Titus, unkind, and careless of thine own,

Why suffer'st thou thy sons, unburied yet,

To hover on the dreadful shore of Styx?

Make way to lay them by their brethren.

[They open the tomb]

There greet in silence, as the dead are wont,

And sleep in peace, slain in your country's wars.

O sacred receptacle of my joys,
Sweet cell of virtue and nobility,
How many sons hast thou of mine in store
That thou wilt never render to me more!

LUCIUS.
Give us the proudest prisoner of the Goths,
That we may hew his limbs, and on a pile
Ad manes fratrum sacrifice his flesh
Before this earthy prison of their bones,
That so the shadows be not unappeas'd,
Nor we disturb'd with prodigies on earth.

TITUS.
I give him you-the noblest that survives,
The eldest son of this distressed queen.

TAMORA.
Stay, Roman brethen! Gracious conqueror,
Victorious Titus, rue the tears I shed,
A mother's tears in passion for her son;

And if thy sons were ever dear to thee,
O, think my son to be as dear to me!
Sufficeth not that we are brought to Rome
To beautify thy triumphs, and return
Captive to thee and to thy Roman yoke;
But must my sons be slaughtered in the streets
For valiant doings in their country's cause?
O, if to fight for king and commonweal
Were piety in thine, it is in these.

Andronicus, stain not thy tomb with blood.
Wilt thou draw near the nature of the gods?

Draw near them then in being merciful.
Sweet mercy is nobility's true badge.

Thrice-noble Titus, spare my first-born son.

TITUS.
Patient yourself, madam, and pardon me.
These are their brethren, whom your Goths beheld

Alive and dead; and for their brethren slain
Religiously they ask a sacrifice.
To this your son is mark'd, and die he must
T' appease their groaning shadows that are gone.

LUCIUS.
Away with him, and make a fire straight;
And with our swords, upon a pile of wood,
Let's hew his limbs till they be clean consum'd.
Exeunt TITUS' SONS, with ALARBUS
TAMORA.

O cruel, irreligious piety!

CHIRON.
Was never Scythia half so barbarous!

DEMETRIUS.

Oppose not Scythia to ambitious Rome.
Alarbus goes to rest, and we survive

To tremble under Titus' threat'ning look.
Then, madam, stand resolv'd, but hope withal
The self-same gods that arm'd the Queen of Troy
With opportunity of sharp revenge
Upon the Thracian tyrant in his tent
May favour Tamora, the Queen of Goths-
When Goths were Goths and Tamora was queen-
To quit the bloody wrongs upon her foes.

Re-enter LUCIUS, QUINTUS, MARTIUS, and
MUTIUS, the sons of ANDRONICUS, with their swords bloody

LUCIUS.
See, lord and father, how we have perform'd
Our Roman rites: Alarbus' limbs are lopp'd,
And entrails feed the sacrificing fire,
Whose smoke like incense doth perfume the sky.
Remaineth nought but to inter our brethren,
And with loud 'larums welcome them to Rome.

TITUS.

Let it be so, and let Andronicus

Make this his latest farewell to their souls.

[Sound trumpets and lay the coffin in the tomb]

In peace and honour rest you here, my sons;

Rome's readiest champions, repose you here in rest,

Secure from worldly chances and mishaps!

Here lurks no treason, here no envy swells,

Here grow no damned drugs, here are no storms,

No noise, but silence and eternal sleep.

In peace and honour rest you here, my sons!

Enter LAVINIA

LAVINIA. In peace and honour live Lord Titus long;

My noble lord and father, live in fame!

Lo, at this tomb my tributary tears

I render for my brethren's obsequies;

And at thy feet I kneel, with tears of joy

Shed on this earth for thy return to Rome.

O, bless me here with thy victorious hand, Whose fortunes Rome's best citizens applaud!

TITUS.

Kind Rome, that hast thus lovingly reserv'd

The cordial of mine age to glad my heart!

Lavinia, live; outlive thy father's days,

And fame's eternal date, for virtue's praise!

Enter , above, MARCUS ANDRONICUS and TRIBUNES;

re-enter SATURNINUS, BASSIANUS, and attendants

MARCUS.

Long live Lord Titus, my beloved brother,

Gracious triumpher in the eyes of Rome!

TITUS.

Thanks, gentle Tribune, noble brother Marcus.

MARCUS.

And welcome, nephews, from successful wars,

You that survive and you that sleep in fame.
Fair lords, your fortunes are alike in all
That in your country's service drew your swords;
But safer triumph is this funeral pomp
That hath aspir'd to Solon's happiness
And triumphs over chance in honour's bed.
Titus Andronicus, the people of Rome,
Whose friend in justice thou hast ever been,
Send thee by me, their Tribune and their trust,
This par]iament of white and spotless hue;
And name thee in election for the empire
With these our late-deceased Emperor's sons:
Be candidatus then, and put it on,
And help to set a head on headless Rome.

TITUS.
A better head her glorious body fits
Than his that shakes for age and feebleness.

What should I don this robe and trouble you?
Be chosen with proclamations to-day,

To-morrow yield up rule, resign my life,
And set abroad new business for you all?
Rome, I have been thy soldier forty years,
And led my country's strength successfully,
And buried one and twenty valiant sons,
Knighted in field, slain manfully in arms,
In right and service of their noble country.
Give me a staff of honour for mine age,
But not a sceptre to control the world.
Upright he held it, lords, that held it last.

MARCUS.

Titus, thou shalt obtain and ask the empery.

SATURNINUS.
Proud and ambitious Tribune, canst thou tell?

TITUS.

Patience, Prince Saturninus.

SATURNINUS.

Romans, do me right.

Patricians, draw your swords, and sheathe them not

Till Saturninus be Rome's Emperor.

Andronicus, would thou were shipp'd to hell

Rather than rob me of the people's hearts!

LUCIUS.

Proud Saturnine, interrupter of the good

That noble-minded Titus means to thee!

TITUS.

Content thee, Prince; I will restore to thee

The people's hearts, and wean them from themselves.

BASSIANUS.

Andronicus, I do not flatter thee,

But honour thee, and will do till I die.

My faction if thou strengthen with thy friends,

I will most thankful be; and thanks to men

Of noble minds is honourable meed.

TITUS.
People of Rome, and people's Tribunes here,
I ask your voices and your suffrages:
Will ye bestow them friendly on Andronicus?

TRIBUNES.
To gratify the good Andronicus,
And gratulate his safe return to Rome,
The people will accept whom he admits.

TITUS.
Tribunes, I thank you; and this suit I make,
That you create our Emperor's eldest son,
Lord Saturnine; whose virtues will, I hope,
Reflect on Rome as Titan's rays on earth,
And ripen justice in this commonweal.
Then, if you will elect by my advice,
Crown him, and say 'Long live our Emperor!'

MARCUS.

With voices and applause of every sort,
Patricians and plebeians, we create
Lord Saturninus Rome's great Emperor;
And say 'Long live our Emperor Saturnine!'

[A long flourish till they come down]

SATURNINUS.

Titus Andronicus, for thy favours done
To us in our election this day
I give thee thanks in part of thy deserts,
And will with deeds requite thy gentleness;
And for an onset, Titus, to advance
Thy name and honourable family,
Lavinia will I make my emperess,
Rome's royal mistress, mistress of my heart,
And in the sacred Pantheon her espouse.
Tell me, Andronicus, doth this motion please thee?

TITUS.

It doth, my worthy lord, and in this match

I hold me highly honoured of your Grace,

And here in sight of Rome, to Saturnine,

King and commander of our commonweal,

The wide world's Emperor, do I consecrate

My sword, my chariot, and my prisoners,

Presents well worthy Rome's imperious lord;

Receive them then, the tribute that I owe,

Mine honour's ensigns humbled at thy feet.

SATURNINUS.

Thanks, noble Titus, father of my life.

How proud I am of thee and of thy gifts

Rome shall record; and when I do forget

The least of these unspeakable deserts,

Romans, forget your fealty to me.

TITUS.

[To TAMORA] Now, madam, are you prisoner to an emperor;

To him that for your honour and your state

Will use you nobly and your followers.

SATURNINUS.

[Aside] A goodly lady, trust me; of the hue

That I would choose, were I to choose anew.-

Clear up, fair Queen, that cloudy countenance;

Though chance of war hath wrought this change of cheer,

Thou com'st not to be made a scorn in Rome-

Princely shall be thy usage every way.

Rest on my word, and let not discontent

Daunt all your hopes. Madam, he comforts you

Can make you greater than the Queen of Goths.

Lavinia, you are not displeas'd with this?

LAVINIA.

Not I, my lord, sith true nobility

Warrants these words in princely courtesy.

SATURNINUS.

Thanks, sweet Lavinia. Romans, let us go.

Ransomless here we set our prisoners free.

Proclaim our honours, lords, with trump and drum.

[Flourish]

BASSIANUS.

Lord Titus, by your leave, this maid is mine.

[Seizing LAVINIA]

TITUS.

How, sir! Are you in earnest then, my lord?

BASSIANUS.

Ay, noble Titus, and resolv'd withal
To do myself this reason and this right.

MARCUS.

Suum cuique is our Roman justice:
This prince in justice seizeth but his own.

LUCIUS.

And that he will and shall, if Lucius live.

TITUS.

Traitors, avaunt! Where is the Emperor's guard?

Treason, my lord-Lavinia is surpris'd!

SATURNINUS.

Surpris'd! By whom?

BASSIANUS.

By him that justly may

Bear his betroth'd from all the world away.

Exeunt BASSIANUS and MARCUS with LAVINIA

MUTIUS.

Brothers, help to convey her hence away,

And with my sword I'll keep this door safe.

Exeunt LUCIUS, QUINTUS, and MARTIUS

TITUS.

Follow, my lord, and I'll soon bring her back.

MUTIUS.

My lord, you pass not here.

TITUS.

What, villain boy!

Bar'st me my way in Rome?

MUTIUS.

Help, Lucius, help!

TITUS kills him. During the fray, exeunt SATURNINUS,

TAMORA, DEMETRIUS, CHIRON, and AARON

Re-enter Lucius

LUCIUS.

My lord, you are unjust, and more than so:

In wrongful quarrel you have slain your son.

TITUS.

Nor thou nor he are any sons of mine;

My sons would never so dishonour me.

Re-enter aloft the EMPEROR

with TAMORA and her two Sons, and AARON the Moor

Traitor, restore Lavinia to the Emperor.

LUCIUS.

Dead, if you will; but not to be his wife,

That is another's lawful promis'd love. *Exit*

SATURNINUS. No, Titus, no; the Emperor needs her not,

Nor her, nor thee, nor any of thy stock.

I'll trust by leisure him that mocks me once;

Thee never, nor thy traitorous haughty sons,
Confederates all thus to dishonour me.
Was there none else in Rome to make a stale
But Saturnine? Full well, Andronicus,
Agree these deeds with that proud brag of thine
That saidst I begg'd the empire at thy hands.

TITUS.
O monstrous! What reproachful words are these?

SATURNINUS.
But go thy ways; go, give that changing piece
To him that flourish'd for her with his sword.
A valiant son-in-law thou shalt enjoy;
One fit to bandy with thy lawless sons,
To ruffle in the commonwealth of Rome.

TITUS.
These words are razors to my wounded heart.

SATURNINUS.

And therefore, lovely Tamora, Queen of Goths,
That, like the stately Phoebe 'mongst her nymphs,
Dost overshine the gallant'st dames of Rome,
If thou be pleas'd with this my sudden choice,
Behold, I choose thee, Tamora, for my bride
And will create thee Emperess of Rome.

Speak, Queen of Goths, dost thou applaud my choice?
And here I swear by all the Roman gods-
Sith priest and holy water are so near,
And tapers burn so bright, and everything
In readiness for Hymenaeus stand-
I will not re-salute the streets of Rome,
Or climb my palace, till from forth this place
I lead espous'd my bride along with me.

TAMORA.
And here in sight of heaven to Rome I swear,
If Saturnine advance the Queen of Goths,
She will a handmaid be to his desires,
A loving nurse, a mother to his youth.

SATURNINUS.

Ascend, fair Queen, Pantheon. Lords, accompany

Your noble Emperor and his lovely bride,

Sent by the heavens for Prince Saturnine,

Whose wisdom hath her fortune conquered;

There shall we consummate our spousal rites.

Exeunt all but TITUS

TITUS.

I am not bid to wait upon this bride.

TITUS, when wert thou wont to walk alone,

Dishonoured thus, and challenged of wrongs?

Re-enter MARCUS,

and TITUS' SONS, LUCIUS, QUINTUS, and MARTIUS

MARCUS.

O Titus, see, O, see what thou hast done!

In a bad quarrel slain a virtuous son.

TITUS.

No, foolish Tribune, no; no son of mine-

Nor thou, nor these, confederates in the deed

That hath dishonoured all our family;

Unworthy brother and unworthy sons!

LUCIUS.

But let us give him burial, as becomes;

Give Mutius burial with our bretheren.

TITUS.

Traitors, away! He rests not in this tomb.

This monument five hundred years hath stood,

Which I have sumptuously re-edified;

Here none but soldiers and Rome's servitors

Repose in fame; none basely slain in brawls.

Bury him where you can, he comes not here.

MARCUS.

My lord, this is impiety in you.

My nephew Mutius' deeds do plead for him;

He must be buried with his bretheren.

QUINTUS & MARTIUS. And shall, or him we will accompany.

TITUS.

'And shall!' What villain was it spake that word?

QUINTUS.

He that would vouch it in any place but here.

TITUS.

What, would you bury him in my despite?

MARCUS.

No, noble Titus, but entreat of thee

To pardon Mutius and to bury him.

TITUS.

Marcus, even thou hast struck upon my crest,

And with these boys mine honour thou hast wounded.

My foes I do repute you every one;

So trouble me no more, but get you gone.

MARTIUS.

He is not with himself; let us withdraw.

QUINTUS.

Not I, till Mutius' bones be buried.

[The BROTHER and the SONS kneel]

MARCUS.

Brother, for in that name doth nature plead-

QUINTUS.

Father, and in that name doth nature speak-

TITUS.

Speak thou no more, if all the rest will speed.

MARCUS.

Renowned Titus, more than half my soul-

LUCIUS.

Dear father, soul and substance of us all-

MARCUS.

Suffer thy brother Marcus to inter
His noble nephew here in virtue's nest,
That died in honour and Lavinia's cause.
Thou art a Roman-be not barbarous.
The Greeks upon advice did bury Ajax,
That slew himself; and wise Laertes' son
Did graciously plead for his funerals.
Let not young Mutius, then, that was thy joy,
Be barr'd his entrance here.

TITUS.

Rise, Marcus, rise;
The dismal'st day is this that e'er I saw,
To be dishonoured by my sons in Rome!

Well, bury him, and bury me the next.
[They put MUTIUS in the tomb]

LUCIUS.

There lie thy bones, sweet Mutius, with thy friends,
Till we with trophies do adorn thy tomb.

ALL.

[Kneeling] No man shed tears for noble Mutius;
He lives in fame that died in virtue's cause.

MARCUS.

My lord-to step out of these dreary dumps-
How comes it that the subtle Queen of Goths
Is of a sudden thus advanc'd in Rome?

TITUS.

I know not, Marcus, but I know it is-

Whether by device or no, the heavens can tell.

Is she not, then, beholding to the man

That brought her for this high good turn so far?

MARCUS.

Yes, and will nobly him remunerate.

Flourish. Re-enter the EMPEROR, TAMORA and her two SONS, with the MOOR, at one door; at the other door, BASSIANUS and LAVINIA, with others

SATURNINUS.

So, Bassianus, you have play'd your prize:

God give you joy, sir, of your gallant bride!

BASSIANUS.

And you of yours, my lord! I say no more,

Nor wish no less; and so I take my leave.

SATURNINUS.

Traitor, if Rome have law or we have power,

Thou and thy faction shall repent this rape.

BASSIANUS.

Rape, call you it, my lord, to seize my own,

My true betrothed love, and now my wife?

But let the laws of Rome determine all;

Meanwhile am I possess'd of that is mine.

SATURNINUS.

'Tis good, sir. You are very short with us;

But if we live we'll be as sharp with you.

BASSIANUS.

My lord, what I have done, as best I may,

Answer I must, and shall do with my life.

Only thus much I give your Grace to know:

By all the duties that I owe to Rome,

This noble gentleman, Lord Titus here,

Is in opinion and in honour wrong'd,

That, in the rescue of Lavinia,

With his own hand did slay his youngest son,

In zeal to you, and highly mov'd to wrath

To be controll'd in that he frankly gave.

Receive him then to favour, Saturnine,

That hath express'd himself in all his deeds

A father and a friend to thee and Rome.

TITUS.

Prince Bassianus, leave to plead my deeds.

'Tis thou and those that have dishonoured me.

Rome and the righteous heavens be my judge

How I have lov'd and honoured Saturnine!

TAMORA.

My worthy lord, if ever Tamora

Were gracious in those princely eyes of thine,

Then hear me speak indifferently for all;

And at my suit, sweet, pardon what is past.

SATURNINUS.

What, madam! be dishonoured openly,
And basely put it up without revenge?

TAMORA.

Not so, my lord; the gods of Rome forfend
I should be author to dishonour you!
But on mine honour dare I undertake
For good Lord Titus' innocence in all,
Whose fury not dissembled speaks his griefs.
Then at my suit look graciously on him;
Lose not so noble a friend on vain suppose,
Nor with sour looks afflict his gentle heart.

[Aside to SATURNINUS] My lord, be rul'd by me,
be won at last;
Dissemble all your griefs and discontents.
You are but newly planted in your throne;
Lest, then, the people, and patricians too,
Upon a just survey take Titus' part,
And so supplant you for ingratitude,

Which Rome reputes to be a heinous sin,

Yield at entreats, and then let me alone:

I'll find a day to massacre them all,

And raze their faction and their family,

The cruel father and his traitorous sons,

To whom I sued for my dear son's life;

And make them know what 'tis to let a queen

Kneel in the streets and beg for grace in vain.-

Come, come, sweet Emperor; come, Andronicus.

Take up this good old man, and cheer the heart

That dies in tempest of thy angry frown.

SATURNINUS.

Rise, Titus, rise; my Empress hath prevail'd.

TITUS.

I thank your Majesty and her, my lord;

These words, these looks, infuse new life in me.

TAMORA.

Titus, I am incorporate in Rome,
A Roman now adopted happily,
And must advise the Emperor for his good.
This day all quarrels die, Andronicus;
And let it be mine honour, good my lord,
That I have reconcil'd your friends and you.
For you, Prince Bassianus, I have pass'd
My word and promise to the Emperor
That you will be more mild and tractable.

And fear not, lords-and you, Lavinia.
By my advice, all humbled on your knees,
You shall ask pardon of his Majesty.

LUCIUS.
We do, and vow to heaven and to his Highness
That what we did was mildly as we might,
Tend'ring our sister's honour and our own.

MARCUS.

That on mine honour here do I protest.

SATURNINUS.

Away, and talk not; trouble us no more.

TAMORA.

Nay, nay, sweet Emperor, we must all be friends.
The Tribune and his nephews kneel for grace.

I will not be denied. Sweet heart, look back.

SATURNINUS.

Marcus, for thy sake, and thy brother's here,
And at my lovely Tamora's entreats,
I do remit these young men's heinous faults.

Stand up.
Lavinia, though you left me like a churl,
I found a friend; and sure as death I swore
I would not part a bachelor from the priest.

Come, if the Emperor's court can feast two brides,

You are my guest, Lavinia, and your friends.

This day shall be a love-day, Tamora.

TITUS.

To-morrow, and it please your Majesty

To hunt the panther and the hart with me,

With horn and hound we'll give your Grace bonjour.

SATURNINUS.

Be it so, Titus, and gramercy too.

Exeunt. Sound trumpets

ACT II.
SCENE I. Rome. Before the palace

Enter AARON

AARON. Now climbeth Tamora Olympus' top,
Safe out of Fortune's shot, and sits aloft,
Secure of thunder's crack or lightning flash,
Advanc'd above pale envy's threat'ning reach.
As when the golden sun salutes the morn,
And, having gilt the ocean with his beams,
Gallops the zodiac in his glistening coach
And overlooks the highest-peering hills,
So Tamora.
Upon her wit doth earthly honour wait,
And virtue stoops and trembles at her frown.
Then, Aaron, arm thy heart and fit thy thoughts
To mount aloft with thy imperial mistress,
And mount her pitch whom thou in triumph long.
Hast prisoner held, fett'red in amorous chains,
And faster bound to Aaron's charming eyes
Than is Prometheus tied to Caucasus.

Away with slavish weeds and servile thoughts!
I will be bright and shine in pearl and gold,
To wait upon this new-made emperess.
To wait, said I? To wanton with this queen,
This goddess, this Semiramis, this nymph,
This siren that will charm Rome's Saturnine,
And see his shipwreck and his commonweal's.

Hullo! what storm is this?

Enter CHIRON and DEMETRIUS, braving

DEMETRIUS. Chiron, thy years wants wit, thy wits wants edge
And manners, to intrude where I am grac'd,
And may, for aught thou knowest, affected be.

CHIRON.
Demetrius, thou dost over-ween in all;
And so in this, to bear me down with braves.
'Tis not the difference of a year or two
Makes me less gracious or thee more fortunate:

I am as able and as fit as thou
To serve and to deserve my mistress' grace;
And that my sword upon thee shall approve,
And plead my passions for Lavinia's love.

AARON.
[Aside] Clubs, clubs! These lovers will not keep the peace.

DEMETRIUS.
Why, boy, although our mother, unadvis'd,
Gave you a dancing rapier by your side,
Are you so desperate grown to threat your friends?
Go to; have your lath glued within your sheath
Till you know better how to handle it.

CHIRON.
Meanwhile, sir, with the little skill I have,
Full well shalt thou perceive how much I dare.

DEMETRIUS.
Ay, boy, grow ye so brave? *[They draw]*

AARON.

[Coming forward] Why, how now, lords!

So near the Emperor's palace dare ye draw

And maintain such a quarrel openly?

Full well I wot the ground of all this grudge:

I would not for a million of gold

The cause were known to them it most concerns;

Nor would your noble mother for much more

Be so dishonoured in the court of Rome.

For shame, put up.

DEMETRIUS.

Not I, till I have sheath'd

My rapier in his bosom, and withal

Thrust those reproachful speeches down his throat

That he hath breath'd in my dishonour here.

CHIRON.

For that I am prepar'd and full resolv'd,

Foul-spoken coward, that thund'rest with thy tongue,
And with thy weapon nothing dar'st perform.

AARON.

Away, I say!
Now, by the gods that warlike Goths adore,
This pretty brabble will undo us all.
Why, lords, and think you not how dangerous
It is to jet upon a prince's right?
What, is Lavinia then become so loose,
Or Bassianus so degenerate,
That for her love such quarrels may be broach'd
Without controlment, justice, or revenge?
Young lords, beware; an should the Empress know
This discord's ground, the music would not please.

CHIRON.
I care not, I, knew she and all the world:

I love Lavinia more than all the world.

DEMETRIUS.

Youngling, learn thou to make some meaner choice:

Lavina is thine elder brother's hope.

AARON.

Why, are ye mad, or know ye not in Rome

How furious and impatient they be,

And cannot brook competitors in love?

I tell you, lords, you do but plot your deaths

By this device.

CHIRON.

Aaron, a thousand deaths

Would I propose to achieve her whom I love.

AARON.

To achieve her-how?

DEMETRIUS.

Why mak'st thou it so strange?
She is a woman, therefore may be woo'd;
She is a woman, therefore may be won;
She is Lavinia, therefore must be lov'd.
What, man! more water glideth by the mill
Than wots the miller of; and easy it is
Of a cut loaf to steal a shive, we know.
Though Bassianus be the Emperor's brother,
Better than he have worn Vulcan's badge.

AARON.

[Aside] Ay, and as good as Saturninus may.

DEMETRIUS.

Then why should he despair that knows to court it
With words, fair looks, and liberality?
What, hast not thou full often struck a doe,
And borne her cleanly by the keeper's nose?

AARON.

Why, then, it seems some certain snatch or so
Would serve your turns.

CHIRON.

Ay, so the turn were served.

DEMETRIUS.

Aaron, thou hast hit it.

AARON.

Would you had hit it too!

Then should not we be tir'd with this ado.
Why, hark ye, hark ye! and are you such fools
To square for this? Would it offend you, then,
That both should speed?

CHIRON.

Faith, not me.

DEMETRIUS.

Nor me, so I were one.

AARON.

For shame, be friends, and join for that you jar.
'Tis policy and stratagem must do
That you affect; and so must you resolve
That what you cannot as you would achieve,
You must perforce accomplish as you may.
Take this of me: Lucrece was not more chaste
Than this Lavinia, Bassianus' love.
A speedier course than ling'ring languishment
Must we pursue, and I have found the path.
My lords, a solemn hunting is in hand;
There will the lovely Roman ladies troop;
The forest walks are wide and spacious,
And many unfrequented plots there are
Fitted by kind for rape and villainy.
Single you thither then this dainty doe,

And strike her home by force if not by words.

This way, or not at all, stand you in hope.
Come, come, our Empress, with her sacred wit
To villainy and vengeance consecrate,
Will we acquaint with all what we intend;
And she shall file our engines with advice
That will not suffer you to square yourselves,
But to your wishes' height advance you both.
The Emperor's court is like the house of Fame,
The palace full of tongues, of eyes, and ears;
The woods are ruthless, dreadful, deaf, and dull.
There speak and strike, brave boys, and take your turns;
There serve your lust, shadowed from heaven's eye,
And revel in Lavinia's treasury.

CHIRON.
Thy counsel, lad, smells of no cowardice.

DEMETRIUS.
Sit fas aut nefas, till I find the stream

To cool this heat, a charm to calm these fits,

Per Styga, per manes vehor. *Exeunt*

SCENE II. A forest near Rome

Enter TITUS ANDRONICUS, and his three sons, LUCIUS, QUINTUS, MARTIUS, making a noise with hounds and horns; and MARCUS

TITUS. The hunt is up, the morn is bright and grey,

The fields are fragrant, and the woods are green.

Uncouple here, and let us make a bay,

And wake the Emperor and his lovely bride,

And rouse the Prince, and ring a hunter's peal,

That all the court may echo with the noise.

Sons, let it be your charge, as it is ours,

To attend the Emperor's person carefully.

I have been troubled in my sleep this night,

But dawning day new comfort hath inspir'd.

Here a cry of hounds, and wind horns in a peal.

Then enter SATURNINUS, TAMORA, BASSIANUS LAVINIA,

CHIRON, DEMETRIUS, and their attendants

Many good morrows to your Majesty!

Madam, to you as many and as good!

I promised your Grace a hunter's peal.

SATURNINUS.

And you have rung it lustily, my lords-

Somewhat too early for new-married ladies.

BASSIANUS.

Lavinia, how say you?

LAVINIA.

I say no;

I have been broad awake two hours and more.

SATURNINUS.

Come on then, horse and chariots let us have,

And to our sport. *[To TAMORA]* Madam, now shall ye see

Our Roman hunting.

MARCUS.

I have dogs, my lord,

Will rouse the proudest panther in the chase,

And climb the highest promontory top.

TITUS.

And I have horse will follow where the game

Makes way, and run like swallows o'er the plain.

DEMETRIUS.

Chiron, we hunt not, we, with horse nor hound,

But hope to pluck a dainty doe to ground. *Exeunt*

SCENE III. A lonely part of the forest

Enter AARON alone, with a bag of gold

AARON. He that had wit would think that I had none,

To bury so much gold under a tree

And never after to inherit it.

Let him that thinks of me so abjectly

Know that this gold must coin a stratagem,

Which, cunningly effected, will beget

A very excellent piece of villainy.

And so repose, sweet gold, for their unrest

[Hides the gold]

That have their alms out of the Empress' chest.

Enter TAMORA alone, to the Moor

TAMORA. My lovely Aaron, wherefore look'st thou sad

When everything does make a gleeful boast?

The birds chant melody on every bush;

The snakes lie rolled in the cheerful sun;

The green leaves quiver with the cooling wind

And make a chequer'd shadow on the ground;

Under their sweet shade, Aaron, let us sit,

And while the babbling echo mocks the hounds,

Replying shrilly to the well-tun'd horns,

As if a double hunt were heard at once,

Let us sit down and mark their yellowing noise;

And-after conflict such as was suppos'd

The wand'ring prince and Dido once enjoyed,

When with a happy storm they were surpris'd,

And curtain'd with a counsel-keeping cave-

We may, each wreathed in the other's arms,

Our pastimes done, possess a golden slumber,

Whiles hounds and horns and sweet melodious birds

Be unto us as is a nurse's song

Of lullaby to bring her babe asleep.

AARON.

Madam, though Venus govern your desires,
Saturn is dominator over mine.
What signifies my deadly-standing eye,
My silence and my cloudy melancholy,
My fleece of woolly hair that now uncurls
Even as an adder when she doth unroll
To do some fatal execution?
No, madam, these are no venereal signs.
Vengeance is in my heart, death in my hand,
Blood and revenge are hammering in my head.
Hark, Tamora, the empress of my soul,
Which never hopes more heaven than rests in thee-
This is the day of doom for Bassianus;
His Philomel must lose her tongue to-day,
Thy sons make pillage of her chastity,
And wash their hands in Bassianus' blood.
Seest thou this letter? Take it up, I pray thee,
And give the King this fatal-plotted scroll.

Now question me no more; we are espied.
Here comes a parcel of our hopeful booty,

Which dreads not yet their lives' destruction.

Enter BASSIANUS and LAVINIA

TAMORA. Ah, my sweet Moor, sweeter to me than life!

AARON.

No more, great Empress: Bassianus comes.
Be cross with him; and I'll go fetch thy sons
To back thy quarrels, whatsoe'er they be. *Exit*

BASSIANUS. Who have we here? Rome's royal Emperess,
Unfurnish'd of her well-beseeming troop?
Or is it Dian, habited like her,
Who hath abandoned her holy groves
To see the general hunting in this forest?

TAMORA.

Saucy controller of my private steps!
Had I the pow'r that some say Dian had,

Thy temples should be planted presently
With horns, as was Actaeon's; and the hounds
Should drive upon thy new-transformed limbs,
Unmannerly intruder as thou art!

LAVINIA.
Under your patience, gentle Emperess,
'Tis thought you have a goodly gift in horning,
And to be doubted that your Moor and you
Are singled forth to try thy experiments.

Jove shield your husband from his hounds to-day!
'Tis pity they should take him for a stag.

BASSIANUS.
Believe me, Queen, your swarth Cimmerian
Doth make your honour of his body's hue,
Spotted, detested, and abominable.
Why are you sequest'red from all your train,
Dismounted from your snow-white goodly steed,
And wand'red hither to an obscure plot,

Accompanied but with a barbarous Moor,
If foul desire had not conducted you?

LAVINIA.
And, being intercepted in your sport,
Great reason that my noble lord be rated
For sauciness. I pray you let us hence,
And let her joy her raven-coloured love;
This valley fits the purpose passing well.

BASSIANUS.
The King my brother shall have notice of this.

LAVINIA.

Ay, for these slips have made him noted long.
Good king, to be so mightily abused!

TAMORA.

Why, I have patience to endure all this.

Enter CHIRON and DEMETRIUS

DEMETRIUS. How now, dear sovereign, and our gracious mother!
Why doth your Highness look so pale and wan?

TAMORA.

Have I not reason, think you, to look pale?
These two have 'ticed me hither to this place.

A barren detested vale you see it is:
The trees, though summer, yet forlorn and lean,
Overcome with moss and baleful mistletoe;
Here never shines the sun; here nothing breeds,
Unless the nightly owl or fatal raven.
And when they show'd me this abhorred pit,
They told me, here, at dead time of the night,
A thousand fiends, a thousand hissing snakes,
Ten thousand swelling toads, as many urchins,
Would make such fearful and confused cries

As any mortal body hearing it

Should straight fall mad or else die suddenly.

No sooner had they told this hellish tale

But straight they told me they would bind me here

Unto the body of a dismal yew,

And leave me to this miserable death.

And then they call'd me foul adulteress,

Lascivious Goth, and all the bitterest terms

That ever ear did hear to such effect;

And had you not by wondrous fortune come,

This vengeance on me had they executed.

Revenge it, as you love your mother's life,

Or be ye not henceforth call'd my children.

DEMETRIUS.

This is a witness that I am thy son.

[Stabs BASSIANUS]

CHIRON.

And this for me, struck home to show my strength.

[Also stabs]

LAVINIA.

Ay, come, Semiramis-nay, barbarous Tamora,

For no name fits thy nature but thy own!

TAMORA.

Give me the poniard; you shall know, my boys,

Your mother's hand shall right your mother's wrong.

DEMETRIUS.

Stay, madam, here is more belongs to her;

First thrash the corn, then after burn the straw.

This minion stood upon her chastity,

Upon her nuptial vow, her loyalty,

And with that painted hope braves your mightiness;

And shall she carry this unto her grave?

CHIRON.

An if she do, I would I were an eunuch.
Drag hence her husband to some secret hole,
And make his dead trunk pillow to our lust.

TAMORA.

But when ye have the honey we desire,
Let not this wasp outlive, us both to sting.

CHIRON.

I warrant you, madam, we will make that sure.
Come, mistress, now perforce we will enjoy
That nice-preserved honesty of yours.

LAVINIA.

O Tamora! thou bearest a woman's face-

TAMORA.

I will not hear her speak; away with her!

LAVINIA.

Sweet lords, entreat her hear me but a word.

DEMETRIUS.

Listen, fair madam: let it be your glory

To see her tears; but be your heart to them

As unrelenting flint to drops of rain.

LAVINIA.

When did the tiger's young ones teach the dam?

O, do not learn her wrath-she taught it thee;

The milk thou suck'dst from her did turn to marble,

Even at thy teat thou hadst thy tyranny.

Yet every mother breeds not sons alike:

[To CHIRON] Do thou entreat her show a woman's pity.

CHIRON.

What, wouldst thou have me prove myself a bastard?

LAVINIA.

'Tis true, the raven doth not hatch a lark.
Yet have I heard-O, could I find it now!-
The lion, mov'd with pity, did endure
To have his princely paws par'd all away.
Some say that ravens foster forlorn children,
The whilst their own birds famish in their nests;
O, be to me, though thy hard heart say no,
Nothing so kind, but something pitiful!

TAMORA.

I know not what it means; away with her!

LAVINIA.
O, let me teach thee! For my father's sake,
That gave thee life when well he might have slain thee,
Be not obdurate, open thy deaf ears.

TAMORA.

Hadst thou in person ne'er offended me,

Even for his sake am I pitiless.

Remember, boys, I pour'd forth tears in vain

To save your brother from the sacrifice;

But fierce Andronicus would not relent.

Therefore away with her, and use her as you will;

The worse to her the better lov'd of me.

LAVINIA.

O Tamora, be call'd a gentle queen,

And with thine own hands kill me in this place!

For 'tis not life that I have begg'd so long;

Poor I was slain when Bassianus died.

TAMORA.

What beg'st thou, then? Fond woman, let me go.

LAVINIA.

'Tis present death I beg; and one thing more,

That womanhood denies my tongue to tell:

O, keep me from their worse than killing lust, And tumble me into some loathsome pit,

Where never man's eye may behold my body;

Do this, and be a charitable murderer.

TAMORA.

So should I rob my sweet sons of their fee;

No, let them satisfy their lust on thee.

DEMETRIUS.

Away! for thou hast stay'd us here too long.

LAVINIA.

No grace? no womanhood? Ah, beastly creature,

The blot and enemy to our general name!

Confusion fall-

CHIRON.

Nay, then I'll stop your mouth. Bring thou her husband.

This is the hole where Aaron bid us hide him.

DEMETRIUS throws the body
of BASSIANUS into the pit; then exeunt
DEMETRIUS and CHIRON, dragging off LAVINIA

TAMORA.
Farewell, my sons; see that you make her sure.
Ne'er let my heart know merry cheer indeed
Till all the Andronici be made away.
Now will I hence to seek my lovely Moor,
And let my spleenful sons this trull deflower. *Exit*

Re-enter AARON, with two
of TITUS' sons, QUINTUS and MARTIUS

AARON.
Come on, my lords, the better foot before;
Straight will I bring you to the loathsome pit
Where I espied the panther fast asleep.

QUINTUS.

My sight is very dull, whate'er it bodes.

MARTIUS.

And mine, I promise you; were it not for shame,
Well could I leave our sport to sleep awhile.

[Falls into the pit]

QUINTUS.

What, art thou fallen? What subtle hole is this,
Whose mouth is covered with rude-growing briers,
Upon whose leaves are drops of new-shed blood
As fresh as morning dew distill'd on flowers?
A very fatal place it seems to me.

Speak, brother, hast thou hurt thee with the fall?

MARTIUS.

O brother, with the dismal'st object hurt

That ever eye with sight made heart lament!

AARON.

[Aside] Now will I fetch the King to find them here,

That he thereby may have a likely guess

How these were they that made away his brother. *Exit*

MARTIUS. Why dost not comfort me, and help me out

From this unhallow'd and blood-stained hole?

QUINTUS.

I am surprised with an uncouth fear;

A chilling sweat o'er-runs my trembling joints;

My heart suspects more than mine eye can see.

MARTIUS.

To prove thou hast a true divining heart,

Aaron and thou look down into this den,

And see a fearful sight of blood and death.

QUINTUS.

Aaron is gone, and my compassionate heart
Will not permit mine eyes once to behold
The thing whereat it trembles by surmise;
O, tell me who it is, for ne'er till now
Was I a child to fear I know not what.

MARTIUS.
Lord Bassianus lies beray'd in blood,
All on a heap, like to a slaughtered lamb,
In this detested, dark, blood-drinking pit.

QUINTUS.

If it be dark, how dost thou know 'tis he?

MARTIUS.
Upon his bloody finger he doth wear
A precious ring that lightens all this hole,
Which, like a taper in some monument,
Doth shine upon the dead man's earthy cheeks,
And shows the ragged entrails of this pit;

So pale did shine the moon on Pyramus
When he by night lay bath'd in maiden blood.
O brother, help me with thy fainting hand-
If fear hath made thee faint, as me it hath-
Out of this fell devouring receptacle,
As hateful as Cocytus' misty mouth.

QUINTUS.
Reach me thy hand, that I may help thee out,
Or, wanting strength to do thee so much good,
I may be pluck'd into the swallowing womb
Of this deep pit, poor Bassianus' grave.

I have no strength to pluck thee to the brink.

MARTIUS.
Nor I no strength to climb without thy help.

QUINTUS.
Thy hand once more; I will not loose again,
Till thou art here aloft, or I below.

Thou canst not come to me-I come to thee. *[Falls in]*

Enter the EMPEROR and AARON the Moor

SATURNINUS. Along with me! I'll see what hole is here,

And what he is that now is leapt into it.

Say, who art thou that lately didst descend

Into this gaping hollow of the earth?

MARTIUS.

The unhappy sons of old Andronicus,

Brought hither in a most unlucky hour,

To find thy brother Bassianus dead.

SATURNINUS.

My brother dead! I know thou dost but jest:

He and his lady both are at the lodge

Upon the north side of this pleasant chase;

'Tis not an hour since I left them there.

MARTIUS.

We know not where you left them all alive;

But, out alas! here have we found him dead.

Re-enter TAMORA, with

attendants; TITUS ANDRONICUS and Lucius

TAMORA.

Where is my lord the King?

SATURNINUS.

Here, Tamora; though griev'd with killing grief.

TAMORA.

Where is thy brother Bassianus?

SATURNINUS.

Now to the bottom dost thou search my wound;

Poor Bassianus here lies murdered.

TAMORA.

Then all too late I bring this fatal writ,

The complot of this timeless tragedy;

And wonder greatly that man's face can fold

In pleasing smiles such murderous tyranny.

[She giveth SATURNINE a letter]

SATURNINUS.

[Reads] 'An if we miss to meet him handsomely,

Sweet huntsman-Bassianus 'tis we mean-

Do thou so much as dig the grave for him.

Thou know'st our meaning. Look for thy reward

Among the nettles at the elder-tree

Which overshades the mouth of that same pit

Where we decreed to bury Bassianus.

Do this, and purchase us thy lasting friends.'

O Tamora! was ever heard the like?

This is the pit and this the elder-tree.

Look, sirs, if you can find the huntsman out

That should have murdered Bassianus here.

AARON.

My gracious lord, here is the bag of gold.

SATURNINUS.

[To TITUS] Two of thy whelps, fell curs of bloody kind,

Have here bereft my brother of his life.

Sirs, drag them from the pit unto the prison;

There let them bide until we have devis'd

Some never-heard-of torturing pain for them.

TAMORA.

What, are they in this pit? O wondrous thing!

How easily murder is discovered!

TITUS.

High Emperor, upon my feeble knee

I beg this boon, with tears not lightly shed,

That this fell fault of my accursed sons-

Accursed if the fault be prov'd in them-

SATURNINUS.

If it be prov'd! You see it is apparent.

Who found this letter? Tamora, was it you?

TAMORA.

Andronicus himself did take it up.

TITUS.

I did, my lord, yet let me be their bail;

For, by my fathers' reverend tomb, I vow

They shall be ready at your Highness' will

To answer their suspicion with their lives.

SATURNINUS.

Thou shalt not bail them; see thou follow me.

Some bring the murdered body, some the murderers;

Let them not speak a word-the guilt is plain;

For, by my soul, were there worse end than death,

That end upon them should be executed.

TAMORA.

Andronicus, I will entreat the King.

Fear not thy sons; they shall do well enough.

TITUS.

Come, Lucius, come; stay not to talk with them.

Exeunt

SCENE IV. Another part of the forest

Enter the Empress' sons, DEMETRIUS and CHIRON, with LAVINIA, her hands cut off, and her tongue cut out, and ravish'd

DEMETRIUS. So, now go tell, an if thy tongue can speak,

Who 'twas that cut thy tongue and ravish'd thee.

CHIRON.

Write down thy mind, bewray thy meaning so,
An if thy stumps will let thee play the scribe.

DEMETRIUS.

See how with signs and tokens she can scrowl.

CHIRON.

Go home, call for sweet water, wash thy hands.

DEMETRIUS.

She hath no tongue to call, nor hands to wash;
And so let's leave her to her silent walks.

CHIRON.

An 'twere my cause, I should go hang myself.

DEMETRIUS.

If thou hadst hands to help thee knit the cord.

Exeunt DEMETRIUS and CHIRON

Wind horns. *Enter* MARCUS, from hunting

MARCUS.
Who is this?- my niece, that flies away so fast?

Cousin, a word: where is your husband?
If I do dream, would all my wealth would wake me!
If I do wake, some planet strike me down,
That I may slumber an eternal sleep!
Speak, gentle niece. What stern ungentle hands
Hath lopp'd, and hew'd, and made thy body bare
Of her two branches-those sweet ornaments
Whose circling shadows kings have sought to sleep in,
And might not gain so great a happiness
As half thy love? Why dost not speak to me?
Alas, a crimson river of warm blood,
Like to a bubbling fountain stirr'd with wind,
Doth rise and fall between thy rosed lips,
Coming and going with thy honey breath.

But sure some Tereus hath deflowered thee,
And, lest thou shouldst detect him, cut thy tongue.

Ah, now thou turn'st away thy face for shame!
And notwithstanding all this loss of blood-
As from a conduit with three issuing spouts-
Yet do thy cheeks look red as Titan's face
Blushing to be encount'red with a cloud.
Shall I speak for thee? Shall I say 'tis so?
O, that I knew thy heart, and knew the beast,
That I might rail at him to ease my mind!
Sorrow concealed, like an oven stopp'd,
Doth burn the heart to cinders where it is.
Fair Philomel, why she but lost her tongue,
And in a tedious sampler sew'd her mind;
But, lovely niece, that mean is cut from thee.
A craftier Tereus, cousin, hast thou met,
And he hath cut those pretty fingers off
That could have better sew'd than Philomel.
O, had the monster seen those lily hands
Tremble like aspen leaves upon a lute

And make the silken strings delight to kiss them,

He would not then have touch'd them for his life!

Or had he heard the heavenly harmony

Which that sweet tongue hath made,

He would have dropp'd his knife, and fell asleep,

As Cerberus at the Thracian poet's feet.

Come, let us go, and make thy father blind,

For such a sight will blind a father's eye;

One hour's storm will drown the fragrant meads,

What will whole months of tears thy father's eyes?

Do not draw back, for we will mourn with thee;

O, could our mourning case thy misery! *Exeunt*

ACT III.

SCENE I. Rome. A street

Enter the JUDGES, TRIBUNES, and SENATORS, with TITUS' two sons

MARTIUS and QUINTUS bound, passing on the stage to the place of execution,
and TITUS going before, pleading

TITUS.

Hear me, grave fathers; noble Tribunes, stay!
For pity of mine age, whose youth was spent
In dangerous wars whilst you securely slept;
For all my blood in Rome's great quarrel shed,
For all the frosty nights that I have watch'd,
And for these bitter tears, which now you see
Filling the aged wrinkles in my cheeks,
Be pitiful to my condemned sons,
Whose souls are not corrupted as 'tis thought.
For two and twenty sons I never wept,
Because they died in honour's lofty bed.

[ANDRONICUS lieth down, and the judges
pass by him with the prisoners, and exeunt]

For these, Tribunes, in the dust I write
My heart's deep languor and my soul's sad tears.
Let my tears stanch the earth's dry appetite;
My sons' sweet blood will make it shame and blush.
O earth, I will befriend thee more with rain
That shall distil from these two ancient urns,
Than youthful April shall with all his show'rs.
In summer's drought I'll drop upon thee still;
In winter with warm tears I'll melt the snow
And keep eternal spring-time on thy face,
So thou refuse to drink my dear sons' blood.

Enter Lucius with his weapon drawn

O reverend Tribunes! O gentle aged men!
Unbind my sons, reverse the doom of death,
And let me say, that never wept before,
My tears are now prevailing orators.

LUCIUS.

O noble father, you lament in vain;

The Tribunes hear you not, no man is by,

And you recount your sorrows to a stone.

TITUS.

Ah, Lucius, for thy brothers let me plead!

Grave Tribunes, once more I entreat of you.

LUCIUS.

My gracious lord, no tribune hears you speak.

TITUS.

Why, 'tis no matter, man: if they did hear,

They would not mark me; if they did mark,

They would not pity me; yet plead I must,

And bootless unto them.

Therefore I tell my sorrows to the stones;

Who though they cannot answer my distress,

Yet in some sort they are better than the Tribunes,

For that they will not intercept my tale.

When I do weep, they humbly at my feet

Receive my tears, and seem to weep with me;

And were they but attired in grave weeds,

Rome could afford no tribunes like to these.

A stone is soft as wax: tribunes more hard than stones.

A stone is silent and offendeth not,

And tribunes with their tongues doom men to death.

[Rises]

But wherefore stand'st thou with thy weapon drawn?

LUCIUS.

To rescue my two brothers from their death;

For which attempt the judges have pronounc'd

My everlasting doom of banishment.

TITUS.

O happy man! they have befriended thee.

Why, foolish Lucius, dost thou not perceive

That Rome is but a wilderness of tigers?

Tigers must prey, and Rome affords no prey

But me and mine; how happy art thou then
From these devourers to be banished!

But who comes with our brother Marcus here?

Enter MARCUS with LAVINIA

MARCUS. Titus, prepare thy aged eyes to weep,
Or if not so, thy noble heart to break.

I bring consuming sorrow to thine age.

TITUS.
Will it consume me? Let me see it then.

MARCUS.

This was thy daughter.

TITUS.
Why, Marcus, so she is.

LUCIUS.

Ay me! this object kills me.

TITUS.

Faint-hearted boy, arise, and look upon her.

Speak, Lavinia, what accursed hand

Hath made thee handless in thy father's sight?

What fool hath added water to the sea,

Or brought a fagot to bright-burning Troy?

My grief was at the height before thou cam'st,

And now like Nilus it disdaineth bounds.

Give me a sword, I'll chop off my hands too,

For they have fought for Rome, and all in vain;

And they have nurs'd this woe in feeding life;

In bootless prayer have they been held up,

And they have serv'd me to effectless use.

Now all the service I require of them

Is that the one will help to cut the other.

'Tis well, Lavinia, that thou hast no hands;

For hands to do Rome service is but vain.

LUCIUS.

Speak, gentle sister, who hath martyr'd thee?

MARCUS.

O, that delightful engine of her thoughts

That blabb'd them with such pleasing eloquence

Is torn from forth that pretty hollow cage,

Where like a sweet melodious bird it sung

Sweet varied notes, enchanting every ear!

LUCIUS.

O, say thou for her, who hath done this deed?

MARCUS.

O, thus I found her straying in the park,

Seeking to hide herself as doth the deer

That hath receiv'd some unrecuring wound.

TITUS.

It was my dear, and he that wounded her

Hath hurt me more than had he kill'd me dead;

For now I stand as one upon a rock,

Environ'd with a wilderness of sea,

Who marks the waxing tide grow wave by wave,

Expecting ever when some envious surge

Will in his brinish bowels swallow him.

This way to death my wretched sons are gone;

Here stands my other son, a banish'd man,

And here my brother, weeping at my woes.

But that which gives my soul the greatest spurn

Is dear Lavinia, dearer than my soul.

Had I but seen thy picture in this plight,

It would have madded me; what shall I do

Now I behold thy lively body so?

Thou hast no hands to wipe away thy tears,

Nor tongue to tell me who hath martyr'd thee;

Thy husband he is dead, and for his death

Thy brothers are condemn'd, and dead by this.

Look, Marcus! Ah, son Lucius, look on her!

When I did name her brothers, then fresh tears
Stood on her cheeks, as doth the honey dew
Upon a gath'red lily almost withered.

MARCUS.
Perchance she weeps because they kill'd her husband;
Perchance because she knows them innocent.

TITUS.
If they did kill thy husband, then be joyful,
Because the law hath ta'en revenge on them.
No, no, they would not do so foul a deed;
Witness the sorrow that their sister makes.
Gentle Lavinia, let me kiss thy lips,
Or make some sign how I may do thee ease.
Shall thy good uncle and thy brother Lucius
And thou and I sit round about some fountain,
Looking all downwards to behold our cheeks
How they are stain'd, like meadows yet not dry
With miry slime left on them by a flood?
And in the fountain shall we gaze so long,

Till the fresh taste be taken from that clearness,
And made a brine-pit with our bitter tears?

Or shall we cut away our hands like thine?
Or shall we bite our tongues, and in dumb shows
Pass the remainder of our hateful days?
What shall we do? Let us that have our tongues
Plot some device of further misery
To make us wonder'd at in time to come.

LUCIUS.
Sweet father, cease your tears; for at your grief
See how my wretched sister sobs and weeps.

MARCUS.

Patience, dear niece. Good Titus, dry thine eyes.

TITUS.
Ah, Marcus, Marcus! Brother, well I wot
Thy napkin cannot drink a tear of mine,

For thou, poor man, hast drown'd it with thine own.

LUCIUS.

Ah, my Lavinia, I will wipe thy cheeks.

TITUS.

Mark, Marcus, mark! I understand her signs.

Had she a tongue to speak, now would she say

That to her brother which I said to thee:

His napkin, with his true tears all bewet,

Can do no service on her sorrowful cheeks.

O, what a sympathy of woe is this

As far from help as Limbo is from bliss!

Enter AARON the Moor

AARON. Titus Andronicus, my lord the Emperor

Sends thee this word, that, if thou love thy sons,

Let Marcus, Lucius, or thyself, old Titus,

Or any one of you, chop off your hand

And send it to the King: he for the same

Will send thee hither both thy sons alive,

And that shall be the ransom for their fault.

TITUS.

O gracious Emperor! O gentle Aaron!

Did ever raven sing so like a lark

That gives sweet tidings of the sun's uprise?

With all my heart I'll send the Emperor my hand.

Good Aaron, wilt thou help to chop it off?

LUCIUS.

Stay, father! for that noble hand of thine,

That hath thrown down so many enemies,

Shall not be sent. My hand will serve the turn,

My youth can better spare my blood than you,

And therefore mine shall save my brothers' lives.

MARCUS.

Which of your hands hath not defended Rome

And rear'd aloft the bloody battle-axe,
Writing destruction on the enemy's castle?

O, none of both but are of high desert!
My hand hath been but idle; let it serve
To ransom my two nephews from their death;
Then have I kept it to a worthy end.

AARON.
Nay, come, agree whose hand shall go along,
For fear they die before their pardon come.

MARCUS.

My hand shall go.

LUCIUS.
By heaven, it shall not go!

TITUS.
Sirs, strive no more; such with'red herbs as these

Are meet for plucking up, and therefore mine.

LUCIUS.

Sweet father, if I shall be thought thy son,
Let me redeem my brothers both from death.

MARCUS.

And for our father's sake and mother's care,
Now let me show a brother's love to thee.

TITUS.

Agree between you; I will spare my hand.

LUCIUS.

Then I'll go fetch an axe.

MARCUS.

But I will use the axe.

Exeunt LUCIUS and MARCUS

TITUS.

Come hither, Aaron, I'll deceive them both;
Lend me thy hand, and I will give thee mine.

AARON.

[Aside] If that be call'd deceit, I will be honest,
And never whilst I live deceive men so;
But I'll deceive you in another sort,
And that you'll say ere half an hour pass.

[He cuts off TITUS' hand]

Re-enter LUCIUS and MARCUS

TITUS.

Now stay your strife. What shall be is dispatch'd.
Good Aaron, give his Majesty my hand;
Tell him it was a hand that warded him
From thousand dangers; bid him bury it.

More hath it merited-that let it have.
As for my sons, say I account of them
As jewels purchas'd at an easy price;
And yet dear too, because I bought mine own.

AARON.
I go, Andronicus; and for thy hand
Look by and by to have thy sons with thee.

[Aside] Their heads I mean. O, how this villainy
Doth fat me with the very thoughts of it!

Let fools do good, and fair men call for grace:
Aaron will have his soul black like his face. *Exit*

TITUS. O, here I lift this one hand up to heaven,
And bow this feeble ruin to the earth;
If any power pities wretched tears,
To that I call! *[To LAVINIA]* What, would'st thou kneel with me?
Do, then, dear heart; for heaven shall hear our prayers,
Or with our sighs we'll breathe the welkin dim

And stain the sun with fog, as sometime clouds

When they do hug him in their melting bosoms.

MARCUS.

O brother, speak with possibility,

And do not break into these deep extremes.

TITUS.

Is not my sorrow deep, having no bottom?

Then be my passions bottomless with them.

MARCUS.

But yet let reason govern thy lament.

TITUS.

If there were reason for these miseries,

Then into limits could I bind my woes.

When heaven doth weep, doth not the earth o'erflow?

If the winds rage, doth not the sea wax mad,

Threat'ning the welkin with his big-swol'n face?
And wilt thou have a reason for this coil?

I am the sea; hark how her sighs do blow.
She is the weeping welkin, I the earth;
Then must my sea be moved with her sighs;
Then must my earth with her continual tears
Become a deluge, overflow'd and drown'd;
For why my bowels cannot hide her woes,
But like a drunkard must I vomit them.
Then give me leave; for losers will have leave
To ease their stomachs with their bitter tongues.

Enter a MESSENGER, with two heads and a hand

MESSENGER. Worthy Andronicus, ill art thou repaid
For that good hand thou sent'st the Emperor.
Here are the heads of thy two noble sons;
And here's thy hand, in scorn to thee sent back-
Thy grief their sports, thy resolution mock'd,
That woe is me to think upon thy woes,

More than remembrance of my father's death. *Exit*

MARCUS. Now let hot Aetna cool in Sicily,
And be my heart an ever-burning hell!

These miseries are more than may be borne.
To weep with them that weep doth ease some deal,
But sorrow flouted at is double death.

LUCIUS.
Ah, that this sight should make so deep a wound,
And yet detested life not shrink thereat!
That ever death should let life bear his name,
Where life hath no more interest but to breathe!
[LAVINIA kisses TITUS]

MARCUS.
Alas, poor heart, that kiss is comfortless
As frozen water to a starved snake.

TITUS.

When will this fearful slumber have an end?

MARCUS.

Now farewell, flatt'ry; die, Andronicus.

Thou dost not slumber: see thy two sons' heads,

Thy warlike hand, thy mangled daughter here;

Thy other banish'd son with this dear sight

Struck pale and bloodless; and thy brother, I,

Even like a stony image, cold and numb.

Ah! now no more will I control thy griefs.

Rent off thy silver hair, thy other hand

Gnawing with thy teeth; and be this dismal sight

The closing up of our most wretched eyes.

Now is a time to storm; why art thou still?

TITUS.

Ha, ha, ha!

MARCUS.

Why dost thou laugh? It fits not with this hour.

TITUS.

Why, I have not another tear to shed;
Besides, this sorrow is an enemy,
And would usurp upon my wat'ry eyes
And make them blind with tributary tears.

Then which way shall I find Revenge's cave?
For these two heads do seem to speak to me,
And threat me I shall never come to bliss
Till all these mischiefs be return'd again
Even in their throats that have committed them.
Come, let me see what task I have to do.
You heavy people, circle me about,
That I may turn me to each one of you
And swear unto my soul to right your wrongs.
The vow is made. Come, brother, take a head,
And in this hand the other will I bear.
And, Lavinia, thou shalt be employ'd in this;
Bear thou my hand, sweet wench, between thy teeth.

As for thee, boy, go, get thee from my sight;

Thou art an exile, and thou must not stay.

Hie to the Goths and raise an army there;

And if ye love me, as I think you do,

Let's kiss and part, for we have much to do.

Exeunt all but Lucius

LUCIUS.

Farewell, Andronicus, my noble father,

The woefull'st man that ever liv'd in Rome.

Farewell, proud Rome; till Lucius come again,

He leaves his pledges dearer than his life.

Farewell, Lavinia, my noble sister;

O, would thou wert as thou tofore hast been!

But now nor Lucius nor Lavinia lives

But in oblivion and hateful griefs.

If Lucius live, he will requite your wrongs

And make proud Saturnine and his emperess

Beg at the gates like Tarquin and his queen.

Now will I to the Goths, and raise a pow'r

To be reveng'd on Rome and Saturnine. *Exit*

SCENE II. Rome. TITUS' house

A banquet.

Enter TITUS, MARCUS, LAVINIA, and the boy YOUNG LUCIUS

TITUS. So so, now sit; and look you eat no more
Than will preserve just so much strength in us
As will revenge these bitter woes of ours.
Marcus, unknit that sorrow-wreathen knot;
Thy niece and I, poor creatures, want our hands,
And cannot passionate our tenfold grief
With folded arms. This poor right hand of mine
Is left to tyrannize upon my breast;
Who, when my heart, all mad with misery,
Beats in this hollow prison of my flesh,
Then thus I thump it down.

[To LAVINIA] Thou map of woe, that thus dost talk in signs!

When thy poor heart beats with outrageous beating,
Thou canst not strike it thus to make it still.
Wound it with sighing, girl, kill it with groans;
Or get some little knife between thy teeth
And just against thy heart make thou a hole,
That all the tears that thy poor eyes let fall
May run into that sink and, soaking in,
Drown the lamenting fool in sea-salt tears.

MARCUS.
Fie, brother, fie! Teach her not thus to lay
Such violent hands upon her tender life.

TITUS.
How now! Has sorrow made thee dote already?

Why, Marcus, no man should be mad but I.
What violent hands can she lay on her life?

Ah, wherefore dost thou urge the name of hands?
To bid Aeneas tell the tale twice o'er

How Troy was burnt and he made miserable?
O, handle not the theme, to talk of hands,
Lest we remember still that we have none.
Fie, fie, how franticly I square my talk,
As if we should forget we had no hands,
If Marcus did not name the word of hands!

Come, let's fall to; and, gentle girl, eat this:
Here is no drink. Hark, Marcus, what she says-
I can interpret all her martyr'd signs;
She says she drinks no other drink but tears,
Brew'd with her sorrow, mesh'd upon her cheeks.
Speechless complainer, I will learn thy thought;
In thy dumb action will I be as perfect
As begging hermits in their holy prayers.
Thou shalt not sigh, nor hold thy stumps to heaven,
Nor wink, nor nod, nor kneel, nor make a sign,
But I of these will wrest an alphabet,
And by still practice learn to know thy meaning.

BOY.

Good grandsire, leave these bitter deep laments;

Make my aunt merry with some pleasing tale.

MARCUS.

Alas, the tender boy, in passion mov'd,

Doth weep to see his grandsire's heaviness.

TITUS.

Peace, tender sapling; thou art made of tears,

And tears will quickly melt thy life away.

[MARCUS strikes the dish with a knife]

What dost thou strike at, Marcus, with thy knife?

MARCUS.

At that that I have kill'd, my lord-a fly.

TITUS.

Out on thee, murderer, thou kill'st my heart!

Mine eyes are cloy'd with view of tyranny;

A deed of death done on the innocent

Becomes not Titus' brother. Get thee gone;

I see thou art not for my company.

MARCUS.

Alas, my lord, I have but kill'd a fly.

TITUS.

'But!' How if that fly had a father and mother?

How would he hang his slender gilded wings

And buzz lamenting doings in the air!

Poor harmless fly,

That with his pretty buzzing melody

Came here to make us merry! And thou hast kill'd him.

MARCUS.

Pardon me, sir; it was a black ill-favour'd fly,

Like to the Empress' Moor; therefore I kill'd him.

TITUS.

O, O, O!

Then pardon me for reprehending thee,

For thou hast done a charitable deed.

Give me thy knife, I will insult on him,

Flattering myself as if it were the Moor

Come hither purposely to poison me.

There's for thyself, and that's for Tamora.

Ah, sirrah!

Yet, I think, we are not brought so low

But that between us we can kill a fly

That comes in likeness of a coal-black Moor.

MARCUS.

Alas, poor man! grief has so wrought on him,

He takes false shadows for true substances.

TITUS.

Come, take away. Lavinia, go with me;

I'll to thy closet, and go read with thee

Sad stories chanced in the times of old.

Come, boy, and go with me; thy sight is young,

And thou shalt read when mine begin to dazzle. *Exeunt*

ACT IV.

SCENE I. Rome. TITUS' garden

Enter YOUNG LUCIUS and LAVINIA running after him, and the boy flies from her with his books under his arm.

Enter TITUS and MARCUS

BOY. Help, grandsire, help! my aunt Lavinia

Follows me everywhere, I know not why.

Good uncle Marcus, see how swift she comes!

Alas, sweet aunt, I know not what you mean.

MARCUS.

Stand by me, Lucius; do not fear thine aunt.

TITUS.
She loves thee, boy, too well to do thee harm.

BOY.

Ay, when my father was in Rome she did.

MARCUS.
What means my niece Lavinia by these signs?

TITUS.

Fear her not, Lucius; somewhat doth she mean.
See, Lucius, see how much she makes of thee.

Somewhither would she have thee go with her.

Ah, boy, Cornelia never with more care
Read to her sons than she hath read to thee
Sweet poetry and Tully's Orator.

MARCUS.

Canst thou not guess wherefore she plies thee thus?

BOY.
My lord, I know not, I, nor can I guess,
Unless some fit or frenzy do possess her;
For I have heard my grandsire say full oft
Extremity of griefs would make men mad;
And I have read that Hecuba of Troy
Ran mad for sorrow. That made me to fear;
Although, my lord, I know my noble aunt
Loves me as dear as e'er my mother did,
And would not, but in fury, fright my youth;
Which made me down to throw my books, and fly-
Causeless, perhaps. But pardon me, sweet aunt;
And, madam, if my uncle Marcus go,

I will most willingly attend your ladyship.

MARCUS.
Lucius, I will. [LAVINIA turns over with her
stumps the books which Lucius has let fall]

TITUS.

How now, Lavinia! Marcus, what means this?
Some book there is that she desires to see.
Which is it, girl, of these?- Open them, boy.-
But thou art deeper read and better skill'd;
Come and take choice of all my library,
And so beguile thy sorrow, till the heavens
Reveal the damn'd contriver of this deed.
Why lifts she up her arms in sequence thus?

MARCUS.
I think she means that there were more than one
Confederate in the fact; ay, more there was,
Or else to heaven she heaves them for revenge.

TITUS.

Lucius, what book is that she tosseth so?

BOY.

Grandsire, 'tis Ovid's Metamorphoses;

My mother gave it me.

MARCUS.

For love of her that's gone,

Perhaps she cull'd it from among the rest.

TITUS.

Soft! So busily she turns the leaves! Help her.

What would she find? Lavinia, shall I read?

This is the tragic tale of Philomel

And treats of Tereus' treason and his rape;

And rape, I fear, was root of thy annoy.

MARCUS.

See, brother, see! Note how she quotes the leaves.

TITUS.

Lavinia, wert thou thus surpris'd, sweet girl,

Ravish'd and wrong'd as Philomela was,

Forc'd in the ruthless, vast, and gloomy woods?

See, see!

Ay, such a place there is where we did hunt-

O, had we never, never hunted there!-

Pattern'd by that the poet here describes,

By nature made for murders and for rapes.

MARCUS.

O, why should nature build so foul a den,

Unless the gods delight in tragedies?

TITUS.

Give signs, sweet girl, for here are none but friends,

What Roman lord it was durst do the deed.

Or slunk not Saturnine, as Tarquin erst,

That left the camp to sin in Lucrece' bed?

MARCUS.

Sit down, sweet niece; brother, sit down by me.
Apollo, Pallas, Jove, or Mercury,
Inspire me, that I may this treason find!
My lord, look here! Look here, Lavinia!

[He writes his name with his
staff, and guides it with feet and mouth]
This sandy plot is plain; guide, if thou canst,
This after me. I have writ my name
Without the help of any hand at all.
Curs'd be that heart that forc'd us to this shift!
Write thou, good niece, and here display at last
What God will have discovered for revenge.
Heaven guide thy pen to print thy sorrows plain,
That we may know the traitors and the truth!
[She takes the staff in her mouth
and guides it with stumps, and writes]
O, do ye read, my lord, what she hath writ?

TITUS.

'Stuprum-Chiron- Demetrius.'

MARCUS.

What, what! the lustful sons of Tamora
Performers of this heinous bloody deed?

TITUS.

Magni Dominator poli,
Tam lentus audis scelera? tam lentus vides?

MARCUS.

O, calm thee, gentle lord! although I know
There is enough written upon this earth
To stir a mutiny in the mildest thoughts,
And arm the minds of infants to exclaims.
My lord, kneel down with me; Lavinia, kneel;
And kneel, sweet boy, the Roman Hector's hope;
And swear with me-as, with the woeful fere
And father of that chaste dishonoured dame,

Lord Junius Brutus sware for Lucrece' rape-

That we will prosecute, by good advice,

Mortal revenge upon these traitorous Goths,

And see their blood or die with this reproach.

TITUS.

'Tis sure enough, an you knew how;

But if you hunt these bear-whelps, then beware:

The dam will wake; and if she wind ye once,

She's with the lion deeply still in league,

And lulls him whilst she playeth on her back,

And when he sleeps will she do what she list.

You are a young huntsman, Marcus; let alone;

And come, I will go get a leaf of brass,

And with a gad of steel will write these words,

And lay it by. The angry northern wind

Will blow these sands like Sibyl's leaves abroad,

And where's our lesson, then? Boy, what say you?

BOY.

I say, my lord, that if I were a man

Their mother's bedchamber should not be safe
For these base bondmen to the yoke of Rome.

MARCUS.

Ay, that's my boy! Thy father hath full oft
For his ungrateful country done the like.

BOY.

And, uncle, so will I, an if I live.

TITUS.

Come, go with me into mine armoury.
Lucius, I'll fit thee; and withal my boy
Shall carry from me to the Empress' sons
Presents that I intend to send them both.

Come, come; thou'lt do my message, wilt thou not?

BOY.

Ay, with my dagger in their bosoms, grandsire.

TITUS.

No, boy, not so; I'll teach thee another course.

Lavinia, come. Marcus, look to my house.

Lucius and I'll go brave it at the court;

Ay, marry, will we, sir! and we'll be waited on.

Exeunt TITUS, LAVINIA, and YOUNG LUCIUS

MARCUS.

O heavens, can you hear a good man groan

And not relent, or not compassion him?

Marcus, attend him in his ecstasy,

That hath more scars of sorrow in his heart

Than foemen's marks upon his batt'red shield,

But yet so just that he will not revenge.

Revenge the heavens for old Andronicus! *Exit*

SCENE II. Rome. The palace

Enter AARON, DEMETRIUS and CHIRON, at one door; and at the other door,

YOUNG LUCIUS and another with a bundle of weapons, and verses writ upon them

CHIRON.

Demetrius, here's the son of Lucius;

He hath some message to deliver us.

AARON.

Ay, some mad message from his mad grandfather.

BOY.

My lords, with all the humbleness I may,

I greet your honours from Andronicus-

[Aside] And pray the Roman gods confound you both!

DEMETRIUS.

Gramercy, lovely Lucius. What's the news?

BOY.

[Aside] That you are both decipher'd, that's the news,

For villains mark'd with rape.- May it please you,

My grandsire, well advis'd, hath sent by me

The goodliest weapons of his armoury

To gratify your honourable youth,

The hope of Rome; for so he bid me say;

And so I do, and with his gifts present

Your lordships, that, whenever you have need,

You may be armed and appointed well.

And so I leave you both- *[Aside]* like bloody villains.

Exeunt YOUNG LUCIUS and attendant

DEMETRIUS.

What's here? A scroll, and written round about.

Let's see:

[Reads] 'Integer vitae, scelerisque purus,

Non eget Mauri iaculis, nec arcu.'

CHIRON.

O, 'tis a verse in Horace, I know it well;
I read it in the grammar long ago.

AARON.

Ay, just-a verse in Horace. Right, you have it.

[Aside] Now, what a thing it is to be an ass!
Here's no sound jest! The old man hath found their guilt,
And sends them weapons wrapp'd about with lines
That wound, beyond their feeling, to the quick.
But were our witty Empress well afoot,
She would applaud Andronicus' conceit.
But let her rest in her unrest awhile-
And now, young lords, was't not a happy star
Led us to Rome, strangers, and more than so,
Captives, to be advanced to this height?
It did me good before the palace gate
To brave the Tribune in his brother's hearing.

DEMETRIUS.

But me more good to see so great a lord
Basely insinuate and send us gifts.

AARON.

Had he not reason, Lord Demetrius?
Did you not use his daughter very friendly?

DEMETRIUS.
I would we had a thousand Roman dames
At such a bay, by turn to serve our lust.

CHIRON.

A charitable wish and full of love.

AARON.
Here lacks but your mother for to say amen.

CHIRON.

And that would she for twenty thousand more.

DEMETRIUS.

Come, let us go and pray to all the gods

For our beloved mother in her pains.

AARON.

[Aside] Pray to the devils; the gods have given us over.

[Trumpets sound]

DEMETRIUS.

Why do the Emperor's trumpets flourish thus?

CHIRON.

Belike, for joy the Emperor hath a son.

DEMETRIUS.

Soft! who comes here?

Enter NURSE, with a blackamoor CHILD

NURSE. Good morrow, lords.

O, tell me, did you see Aaron the Moor?

AARON.

Well, more or less, or ne'er a whit at all,

Here Aaron is; and what with Aaron now?

NURSE.

O gentle Aaron, we are all undone!

Now help, or woe betide thee evermore!

AARON.

Why, what a caterwauling dost thou keep!

What dost thou wrap and fumble in thy arms?

NURSE.

O, that which I would hide from heaven's eye:

Our Empress' shame and stately Rome's disgrace!

She is delivered, lord; she is delivered.

AARON.

To whom?

NURSE.

I mean she is brought a-bed.

AARON.

Well, God give her good rest! What hath he sent her?

NURSE.

A devil.

AARON.

Why, then she is the devil's dam;

A joyful issue.

NURSE.

A joyless, dismal, black, and sorrowful issue!

Here is the babe, as loathsome as a toad

Amongst the fair-fac'd breeders of our clime;

The Empress sends it thee, thy stamp, thy seal,

And bids thee christen it with thy dagger's point.

AARON.

Zounds, ye whore! Is black so base a hue?

Sweet blowse, you are a beauteous blossom sure.

DEMETRIUS.

Villain, what hast thou done?

AARON.

That which thou canst not undo.

CHIRON.

Thou hast undone our mother.

AARON.

Villain, I have done thy mother.

DEMETRIUS.

And therein, hellish dog, thou hast undone her.

Woe to her chance, and damn'd her loathed choice!

Accurs'd the offspring of so foul a fiend!

CHIRON.

It shall not live.

AARON.

It shall not die.

NURSE.

Aaron, it must; the mother wills it so.

AARON.

What, must it, nurse? Then let no man but I
Do execution on my flesh and blood.

DEMETRIUS.

I'll broach the tadpole on my rapier's point.
Nurse, give it me; my sword shall soon dispatch it.

AARON.

Sooner this sword shall plough thy bowels up.

[Takes the CHILD from the NURSE, and draws]

Stay, murderous villains, will you kill your brother!
Now, by the burning tapers of the sky
That shone so brightly when this boy was got,
He dies upon my scimitar's sharp point

That touches this my first-born son and heir.
I tell you, younglings, not Enceladus,
With all his threat'ning band of Typhon's brood,
Nor great Alcides, nor the god of war,
Shall seize this prey out of his father's hands.

What, what, ye sanguine, shallow-hearted boys!
Ye white-lim'd walls! ye alehouse painted signs!
Coal-black is better than another hue
In that it scorns to bear another hue;
For all the water in the ocean
Can never turn the swan's black legs to white,
Although she lave them hourly in the flood.
Tell the Empress from me I am of age
To keep mine own-excuse it how she can.

DEMETRIUS.

Wilt thou betray thy noble mistress thus?

AARON.

My mistress is my mistress: this my self, The vigour and the picture of my youth.

This before all the world do I prefer;

This maugre all the world will I keep safe,

Or some of you shall smoke for it in Rome.

DEMETRIUS.

By this our mother is for ever sham'd.

CHIRON.

Rome will despise her for this foul escape.

NURSE.

The Emperor in his rage will doom her death.

CHIRON.

I blush to think upon this ignomy.

AARON.

Why, there's the privilege your beauty bears:

Fie, treacherous hue, that will betray with blushing
The close enacts and counsels of thy heart!

Here's a young lad fram'd of another leer.
Look how the black slave smiles upon the father,
As who should say 'Old lad, I am thine own.'
He is your brother, lords, sensibly fed
Of that self-blood that first gave life to you;
And from your womb where you imprisoned were
He is enfranchised and come to light.
Nay, he is your brother by the surer side,
Although my seal be stamped in his face.

NURSE.
Aaron, what shall I say unto the Empress?

DEMETRIUS.
Advise thee, Aaron, what is to be done,
And we will all subscribe to thy advice.

Save thou the child, so we may all be safe.

AARON.

Then sit we down and let us all consult.

My son and I will have the wind of you:

Keep there; now talk at pleasure of your safety.

[They sit]

DEMETRIUS.

How many women saw this child of his?

AARON.

Why, so, brave lords! When we join in league

I am a lamb; but if you brave the Moor,

The chafed boar, the mountain lioness,

The ocean swells not so as Aaron storms.

But say, again, how many saw the child?

NURSE.

Cornelia the midwife and myself;

And no one else but the delivered Empress.

AARON.

The Emperess, the midwife, and yourself.

Two may keep counsel when the third's away:
Go to the Empress, tell her this I said. *[He kills her]*
Weeke weeke!
So cries a pig prepared to the spit.

DEMETRIUS.

What mean'st thou, Aaron? Wherefore didst thou this?

AARON.

O Lord, sir, 'tis a deed of policy.
Shall she live to betray this guilt of ours-
A long-tongu'd babbling gossip? No, lords, no.

And now be it known to you my full intent:
Not far, one Muliteus, my countryman-

His wife but yesternight was brought to bed;
His child is like to her, fair as you are.
Go pack with him, and give the mother gold,
And tell them both the circumstance of all,
And how by this their child shall be advanc'd,
And be received for the Emperor's heir
And substituted in the place of mine,
To calm this tempest whirling in the court;
And let the Emperor dandle him for his own.
Hark ye, lords. You see I have given her physic,

[Pointing to the NURSE]

And you must needs bestow her funeral;
The fields are near, and you are gallant grooms.
This done, see that you take no longer days,
But send the midwife presently to me.
The midwife and the nurse well made away,
Then let the ladies tattle what they please.

CHIRON.

Aaron, I see thou wilt not trust the air

With secrets.

DEMETRIUS.

For this care of Tamora,

Herself and hers are highly bound to thee.

Exeunt DEMETRIUS and CHIRON, bearing off the dead NURSE

AARON.

Now to the Goths, as swift as swallow flies,

There to dispose this treasure in mine arms,

And secretly to greet the Empress' friends.

Come on, you thick-lipp'd slave, I'll bear you hence;

For it is you that puts us to our shifts.

I'll make you feed on berries and on roots,

And feed on curds and whey, and suck the goat,

And cabin in a cave, and bring you up

To be a warrior and command a camp.

Exit with the CHILD

SCENE III. Rome. A public place

Enter TITUS, bearing arrows with letters on the ends of them; with him MARCUS, YOUNG LUCIUS, and other gentlemen, PUBLIUS, SEMPRONIUS, and CAIUS, with bows

TITUS. Come, Marcus, come; kinsmen, this is the way.

Sir boy, let me see your archery;

Look ye draw home enough, and 'tis there straight.

Terras Astrea reliquit,

Be you rememb'red, Marcus; she's gone, she's fled.

Sirs, take you to your tools. You, cousins, shall

Go sound the ocean and cast your nets;

Happily you may catch her in the sea;

Yet there's as little justice as at land.

No; Publius and Sempronius, you must do it;

'Tis you must dig with mattock and with spade,

And pierce the inmost centre of the earth;

Then, when you come to Pluto's region,

I pray you deliver him this petition.
Tell him it is for justice and for aid,
And that it comes from old Andronicus,
Shaken with sorrows in ungrateful Rome.
Ah, Rome! Well, well, I made thee miserable
What time I threw the people's suffrages
On him that thus doth tyrannize o'er me.
Go get you gone; and pray be careful all,
And leave you not a man-of-war unsearch'd.
This wicked Emperor may have shipp'd her hence;
And, kinsmen, then we may go pipe for justice.

MARCUS.
O Publius, is not this a heavy case,
To see thy noble uncle thus distract?

PUBLIUS.
Therefore, my lords, it highly us concerns
By day and night t' attend him carefully,
And feed his humour kindly as we may
Till time beget some careful remedy.

MARCUS.

Kinsmen, his sorrows are past remedy.
Join with the Goths, and with revengeful war
Take wreak on Rome for this ingratitude,
And vengeance on the traitor Saturnine.

TITUS.

Publius, how now? How now, my masters?
What, have you met with her?

PUBLIUS.
No, my good lord; but Pluto sends you word,
If you will have Revenge from hell, you shall.
Marry, for Justice, she is so employ'd,
He thinks, with Jove in heaven, or somewhere else,
So that perforce you must needs stay a time.

TITUS.

He doth me wrong to feed me with delays.

I'll dive into the burning lake below

And pull her out of Acheron by the heels.

Marcus, we are but shrubs, no cedars we,

No big-bon'd men fram'd of the Cyclops' size;

But metal, Marcus, steel to the very back,

Yet wrung with wrongs more than our backs can bear;

And, sith there's no justice in earth nor hell,

We will solicit heaven, and move the gods

To send down justice for to wreak our wrongs.

Come, to this gear. You are a good archer, Marcus.

[He gives them the arrows]

'Ad Jovem' that's for you; here 'Ad Apollinem.'

'Ad Martem' that's for myself.

Here, boy, 'To Pallas'; here 'To Mercury.'

'To Saturn,' Caius-not to Saturnine:

You were as good to shoot against the wind.

To it, boy. Marcus, loose when I bid.

Of my word, I have written to effect;

There's not a god left unsolicited.

MARCUS.

Kinsmen, shoot all your shafts into the court;

We will afflict the Emperor in his pride.

TITUS.

Now, masters, draw. *[They shoot]* O, well said, Lucius!

Good boy, in Virgo's lap! Give it Pallas.

MARCUS.

My lord, I aim a mile beyond the moon;

Your letter is with Jupiter by this.

TITUS.

Ha! ha!

Publius, Publius, hast thou done?

See, see, thou hast shot off one of Taurus' horns.

MARCUS.

This was the sport, my lord: when Publius shot,

The Bull, being gall'd, gave Aries such a knock

That down fell both the Ram's horns in the court;

And who should find them but the Empress' villain?

She laugh'd, and told the Moor he should not choose

But give them to his master for a present.

TITUS.

Why, there it goes! God give his lordship joy!

Enter the CLOWN, with a basket and two pigeons in it

News, news from heaven! Marcus, the post is come.

Sirrah, what tidings? Have you any letters?

Shall I have justice? What says Jupiter?

CLOWN.

Ho, the gibbet-maker? He says that he hath taken them down again, for the man must not be hang'd till the next week.

TITUS.

But what says Jupiter, I ask thee?

CLOWN.

Alas, sir, I know not Jupiter; I never drank with him in all my life.

TITUS.

Why, villain, art not thou the carrier?

CLOWN.

Ay, of my pigeons, sir; nothing else.

TITUS.

Why, didst thou not come from heaven?

CLOWN.

From heaven! Alas, sir, I never came there. God forbid I should be so bold to press to heaven in my young days. Why, I am going with my pigeons to the Tribunal Plebs, to take up a matter of brawl betwixt my uncle and one of the Emperal's men.

MARCUS.
Why, sir, that is as fit as can be to serve for your
oration; and let him deliver the pigeons to the Emperor from you.

TITUS.

Tell me, can you deliver an oration to the Emperor with a grace?

CLOWN.
Nay, truly, sir, I could never say grace in all my life.

TITUS.
Sirrah, come hither. Make no more ado,
But give your pigeons to the Emperor;
By me thou shalt have justice at his hands.
Hold, hold! Meanwhile here's money for thy charges.

Give me pen and ink. Sirrah, can you with a grace deliver up a supplication?

CLOWN.

Ay, sir.

TITUS.

Then here is a supplication for you. And when you come to

him, at the first approach you must kneel; then kiss his foot;

then deliver up your pigeons; and then look for your reward.

I'll

be at hand, sir; see you do it bravely.

CLOWN.

I warrant you, sir; let me alone.

TITUS.

Sirrah, hast thou a knife? Come let me see it.

Here, Marcus, fold it in the oration;

For thou hast made it like a humble suppliant.

And when thou hast given it to the Emperor, Knock at my door, and tell me what he says.

CLOWN.

God be with you, sir; I will.

TITUS.

Come, Marcus, let us go. Publius, follow me. *Exeunt*

SCENE IV. Rome. Before the palace

Enter the EMPEROR, and the EMPRESS and her two sons, DEMETRIUS

and CHIRON;

LORDS and others. The EMPEROR brings the arrows in his hand that

TITUS

shot at him

SATURNINUS.

Why, lords, what wrongs are these! Was ever seen

An emperor in Rome thus overborne,

Troubled, confronted thus; and, for the extent

Of egal justice, us'd in such contempt?

My lords, you know, as know the mightful gods,

However these disturbers of our peace

Buzz in the people's ears, there nought hath pass'd

But even with law against the wilful sons

Of old Andronicus. And what an if
His sorrows have so overwhelm'd his wits,
Shall we be thus afflicted in his wreaks,
His fits, his frenzy, and his bitterness?

And now he writes to heaven for his redress.
See, here's 'To Jove' and this 'To Mercury';
This 'To Apollo'; this 'To the God of War'-
Sweet scrolls to fly about the streets of Rome!
What's this but libelling against the Senate,
And blazoning our unjustice every where?

A goodly humour, is it not, my lords?
As who would say in Rome no justice were.
But if I live, his feigned ecstasies
Shall be no shelter to these outrages;
But he and his shall know that justice lives
In Saturninus' health; whom, if she sleep,
He'll so awake as he in fury shall
Cut off the proud'st conspirator that lives.

TAMORA.

My gracious lord, my lovely Saturnine,

Lord of my life, commander of my thoughts,

Calm thee, and bear the faults of Titus' age,

Th' effects of sorrow for his valiant sons

Whose loss hath pierc'd him deep and scarr'd his heart;

And rather comfort his distressed plight

Than prosecute the meanest or the best

For these contempts. *[Aside]* Why, thus it shall become

High-witted Tamora to gloze with all.

But, Titus, I have touch'd thee to the quick,

Thy life-blood out; if Aaron now be wise,

Then is all safe, the anchor in the port.

Enter CLOWN

How now, good fellow! Wouldst thou speak with us?

CLOWN.

Yes, forsooth, an your mistriship be Emperial.

TAMORA.

Empress I am, but yonder sits the Emperor.

CLOWN.

'Tis he.- God and Saint Stephen give you godden. I have

brought you a letter and a couple of pigeons here.

[SATURNINUS reads the letter]

SATURNINUS.

Go take him away, and hang him presently.

CLOWN.

How much money must I have?

TAMORA.

Come, sirrah, you must be hang'd.

CLOWN.

Hang'd! by'r lady, then I have brought up a neck to a fair
end. *[Exit guarded]*

SATURNINUS.
Despiteful and intolerable wrongs!

Shall I endure this monstrous villainy?
I know from whence this same device proceeds.
May this be borne-as if his traitorous sons
That died by law for murder of our brother
Have by my means been butchered wrongfully?
Go drag the villain hither by the hair;
Nor age nor honour shall shape privilege.
For this proud mock I'll be thy slaughterman,
Sly frantic wretch, that holp'st to make me great,
In hope thyself should govern Rome and me.

Enter NUNTIUS AEMILIUS

What news with thee, Aemilius?

AEMILIUS.

Arm, my lords! Rome never had more cause.

The Goths have gathered head; and with a power

Of high resolved men, bent to the spoil,

They hither march amain, under conduct

Of Lucius, son to old Andronicus;

Who threats in course of this revenge to do

As much as ever Coriolanus did.

SATURNINUS.

Is warlike Lucius general of the Goths?

These tidings nip me, and I hang the head

As flowers with frost, or grass beat down with storms.

Ay, now begins our sorrows to approach.

'Tis he the common people love so much;

Myself hath often heard them say-

When I have walked like a private man-

That Lucius' banishment was wrongfully,

And they have wish'd that Lucius were their emperor.

TAMORA.

Why should you fear? Is not your city strong?

SATURNINUS.

Ay, but the citizens favour Lucius,

And will revolt from me to succour him.

TAMORA.

King, be thy thoughts imperious like thy name!

Is the sun dimm'd, that gnats do fly in it?

The eagle suffers little birds to sing,

And is not careful what they mean thereby,

Knowing that with the shadow of his wings

He can at pleasure stint their melody;

Even so mayest thou the giddy men of Rome.

Then cheer thy spirit; for know thou, Emperor,

I will enchant the old Andronicus

With words more sweet, and yet more dangerous,

Than baits to fish or honey-stalks to sheep,

When as the one is wounded with the bait, The other rotted with delicious feed.

SATURNINUS.

But he will not entreat his son for us.

TAMORA.

If Tamora entreat him, then he will;

For I can smooth and fill his aged ears

With golden promises, that, were his heart

Almost impregnable, his old ears deaf,

Yet should both ear and heart obey my tongue.

[To AEMILIUS] Go thou before to be our ambassador;

Say that the Emperor requests a parley

Of warlike Lucius, and appoint the meeting

Even at his father's house, the old Andronicus.

SATURNINUS.

Aemilius, do this message honourably;

And if he stand on hostage for his safety,

Bid him demand what pledge will please him best.

AEMILIUS.

Your bidding shall I do effectually. *Exit*

TAMORA. Now will I to that old Andronicus,

And temper him with all the art I have,

To pluck proud Lucius from the warlike Goths.

And now, sweet Emperor, be blithe again,

And bury all thy fear in my devices.

SATURNINUS.

Then go successantly, and plead to him.

Exeunt

ACT V.
SCENE I. Plains near Rome

Enter LUCIUS with an army of GOTHS with drums and colours

LUCIUS. Approved warriors and my faithful friends,

I have received letters from great Rome

Which signifies what hate they bear their Emperor

And how desirous of our sight they are.

Therefore, great lords, be, as your titles witness,

Imperious and impatient of your wrongs;

And wherein Rome hath done you any scath,

Let him make treble satisfaction.

FIRST GOTH.

Brave slip, sprung from the great Andronicus,

Whose name was once our terror, now our comfort,

Whose high exploits and honourable deeds

Ingrateful Rome requites with foul contempt,

Be bold in us: we'll follow where thou lead'st,

Like stinging bees in hottest summer's day,

Led by their master to the flow'red fields, And be aveng'd on cursed Tamora.

ALL THE GOTHS.

And as he saith, so say we all with him.

LUCIUS.
I humbly thank him, and I thank you all.

But who comes here, led by a lusty Goth?

Enter a GOTH, leading AARON with his CHILD in his arms

SECOND GOTH. Renowned Lucius, from our troops I stray'd
To gaze upon a ruinous monastery;
And as I earnestly did fix mine eye
Upon the wasted building, suddenly
I heard a child cry underneath a wall.
I made unto the noise, when soon I heard
The crying babe controll'd with this discourse:
'Peace, tawny slave, half me and half thy dam!

Did not thy hue bewray whose brat thou art,

Had nature lent thee but thy mother's look,

Villain, thou mightst have been an emperor;

But where the bull and cow are both milk-white,

They never do beget a coal-black calf.

Peace, villain, peace!'- even thus he rates the babe-

'For I must bear thee to a trusty Goth,

Who, when he knows thou art the Empress' babe,

Will hold thee dearly for thy mother's sake.'

With this, my weapon drawn, I rush'd upon him,

Surpris'd him suddenly, and brought him hither

To use as you think needful of the man.

LUCIUS.

O worthy Goth, this is the incarnate devil

That robb'd Andronicus of his good hand;

This is the pearl that pleas'd your Empress' eye;

And here's the base fruit of her burning lust.

Say, wall-ey'd slave, whither wouldst thou convey

This growing image of thy fiend-like face?

Why dost not speak? What, deaf? Not a word?

A halter, soldiers! Hang him on this tree,

And by his side his fruit of bastardy.

AARON.

Touch not the boy, he is of royal blood.

LUCIUS.

Too like the sire for ever being good.

First hang the child, that he may see it sprawl-

A sight to vex the father's soul withal.

Get me a ladder.

[A ladder brought, which AARON is made to climb]

AARON.

Lucius, save the child,

And bear it from me to the Emperess.

If thou do this, I'll show thee wondrous things

That highly may advantage thee to hear;

If thou wilt not, befall what may befall,

I'll speak no more but 'Vengeance rot you all!'

LUCIUS.

Say on; an if it please me which thou speak'st,

Thy child shall live, and I will see it nourish'd.

AARON.

An if it please thee! Why, assure thee, Lucius,

'Twill vex thy soul to hear what I shall speak;

For I must talk of murders, rapes, and massacres,

Acts of black night, abominable deeds,

Complots of mischief, treason, villainies,

Ruthful to hear, yet piteously perform'd;

And this shall all be buried in my death,

Unless thou swear to me my child shall live.

LUCIUS.

Tell on thy mind; I say thy child shall live.

AARON.

Swear that he shall, and then I will begin.

LUCIUS.

Who should I swear by? Thou believest no god;

That granted, how canst thou believe an oath?

AARON.

What if I do not? as indeed I do not;

Yet, for I know thou art religious

And hast a thing within thee called conscience,

With twenty popish tricks and ceremonies

Which I have seen thee careful to observe,

Therefore I urge thy oath. For that I know

An idiot holds his bauble for a god,

And keeps the oath which by that god he swears,

To that I'll urge him. Therefore thou shalt vow

By that same god-what god soe'er it be

That thou adorest and hast in reverence-

To save my boy, to nourish and bring him up;

Or else I will discover nought to thee.

LUCIUS.

Even by my god I swear to thee I will.

AARON.

First know thou, I begot him on the Empress.

LUCIUS.

O most insatiate and luxurious woman!

AARON.

Tut, Lucius, this was but a deed of charity
To that which thou shalt hear of me anon.
'Twas her two sons that murdered Bassianus;
They cut thy sister's tongue, and ravish'd her,
And cut her hands, and trimm'd her as thou sawest.

LUCIUS.

O detestable villain! Call'st thou that trimming?

AARON.

Why, she was wash'd, and cut, and trimm'd, and 'twas

Trim sport for them which had the doing of it.

LUCIUS.

O barbarous beastly villains like thyself!

AARON.

Indeed, I was their tutor to instruct them.

That codding spirit had they from their mother,

As sure a card as ever won the set;

That bloody mind, I think, they learn'd of me,

As true a dog as ever fought at head.

Well, let my deeds be witness of my worth.

I train'd thy brethren to that guileful hole

Where the dead corpse of Bassianus lay;

I wrote the letter that thy father found,

And hid the gold within that letter mention'd,

Confederate with the Queen and her two sons;

And what not done, that thou hast cause to rue,

Wherein I had no stroke of mischief in it?

I play'd the cheater for thy father's hand,

And, when I had it, drew myself apart

And almost broke my heart with extreme laughter.

I pried me through the crevice of a wall,

When, for his hand, he had his two sons' heads;

Beheld his tears, and laugh'd so heartily

That both mine eyes were rainy like to his;

And when I told the Empress of this sport,

She swooned almost at my pleasing tale,

And for my tidings gave me twenty kisses.

GOTH.

What, canst thou say all this and never blush?

AARON.

Ay, like a black dog, as the saying is.

LUCIUS.

Art thou not sorry for these heinous deeds?

AARON.

Ay, that I had not done a thousand more.

Even now I curse the day-and yet, I think,

Few come within the compass of my curse-

Wherein I did not some notorious ill;

As kill a man, or else devise his death;

Ravish a maid, or plot the way to do it;

Accuse some innocent, and forswear myself;

Set deadly enmity between two friends;

Make poor men's cattle break their necks;

Set fire on barns and hay-stacks in the night,

And bid the owners quench them with their tears.

Oft have I digg'd up dead men from their graves,

And set them upright at their dear friends' door

Even when their sorrows almost was forgot,

And on their skins, as on the bark of trees,

Have with my knife carved in Roman letters

'Let not your sorrow die, though I am dead.'

Tut, I have done a thousand dreadful things
As willingly as one would kill a fly;
And nothing grieves me heartily indeed
But that I cannot do ten thousand more.

LUCIUS.
Bring down the devil, for he must not die
So sweet a death as hanging presently.

AARON.
If there be devils, would I were a devil,
To live and burn in everlasting fire,
So I might have your company in hell
But to torment you with my bitter tongue!

LUCIUS.

Sirs, stop his mouth, and let him speak no more.

Enter AEMILIUS

GOTH. My lord, there is a messenger from Rome
Desires to be admitted to your presence.

LUCIUS.

Let him come near.
Welcome, Aemilius. What's the news from Rome?

AEMILIUS.
Lord Lucius, and you Princes of the Goths,
The Roman Emperor greets you all by me;
And, for he understands you are in arms,
He craves a parley at your father's house,
Willing you to demand your hostages,
And they shall be immediately deliver'd.

FIRST GOTH.

What says our general?

LUCIUS.

Aemilius, let the Emperor give his pledges

Unto my father and my uncle Marcus.

And we will come. March away. *Exeunt*

SCENE II. Rome . Before TITUS' house

Enter TAMORA, and her two sons, DEMETRIUS and CHIRON, disguised

TAMORA. Thus, in this strange and sad habiliment,

I will encounter with Andronicus,

And say I am Revenge, sent from below

To join with him and right his heinous wrongs.

Knock at his study, where they say he keeps

To ruminate strange plots of dire revenge;

Tell him Revenge is come to join with him,

And work confusion on his enemies.

They knock and TITUS opens his study door, above

TITUS.

Who doth molest my contemplation?
Is it your trick to make me ope the door,
That so my sad decrees may fly away
And all my study be to no effect?
You are deceiv'd; for what I mean to do
See here in bloody lines I have set down;
And what is written shall be executed.

TAMORA.
Titus, I am come to talk with thee.

TITUS.
No, not a word. How can I grace my talk,
Wanting a hand to give it that accord?

Thou hast the odds of me; therefore no more.

TAMORA.
If thou didst know me, thou wouldst talk with me.

TITUS.

I am not mad, I know thee well enough:
Witness this wretched stump, witness these crimson lines;
Witness these trenches made by grief and care;
Witness the tiring day and heavy night;
Witness all sorrow that I know thee well
For our proud Empress, mighty Tamora.

Is not thy coming for my other hand?

TAMORA.
Know thou, sad man, I am not Tamora:

She is thy enemy and I thy friend.
I am Revenge, sent from th' infernal kingdom
To ease the gnawing vulture of thy mind
By working wreakful vengeance on thy foes.
Come down and welcome me to this world's light;
Confer with me of murder and of death;

There's not a hollow cave or lurking-place,

No vast obscurity or misty vale,

Where bloody murder or detested rape

Can couch for fear but I will find them out;

And in their ears tell them my dreadful name-

Revenge, which makes the foul offender quake.

TITUS.

Art thou Revenge? and art thou sent to me

To be a torment to mine enemies?

TAMORA.

I am; therefore come down and welcome me.

TITUS.

Do me some service ere I come to thee.

Lo, by thy side where Rape and Murder stands;

Now give some surance that thou art Revenge-

Stab them, or tear them on thy chariot wheels;

And then I'll come and be thy waggoner

And whirl along with thee about the globes.

Provide thee two proper palfreys, black as jet,

To hale thy vengeful waggon swift away,

And find out murderers in their guilty caves;

And when thy car is loaden with their heads,

I will dismount, and by thy waggon wheel

Trot, like a servile footman, all day long,

Even from Hyperion's rising in the east

Until his very downfall in the sea.

And day by day I'll do this heavy task,

So thou destroy Rapine and Murder there.

TAMORA.

These are my ministers, and come with me.

TITUS.

Are they thy ministers? What are they call'd?

TAMORA.

Rape and Murder; therefore called so

'Cause they take vengeance of such kind of men.

TITUS.
Good Lord, how like the Empress' sons they are!
And you the Empress! But we worldly men
Have miserable, mad, mistaking eyes.
O sweet Revenge, now do I come to thee;
And, if one arm's embracement will content thee,
I will embrace thee in it by and by.

TAMORA.
This closing with him fits his lunacy.
Whate'er I forge to feed his brain-sick humours,
Do you uphold and maintain in your speeches,
For now he firmly takes me for Revenge;
And, being credulous in this mad thought,
I'll make him send for Lucius his son,
And whilst I at a banquet hold him sure,
I'll find some cunning practice out of hand
To scatter and disperse the giddy Goths,
Or, at the least, make them his enemies.

See, here he comes, and I must ply my theme.

Enter TITUS, below

TITUS. Long have I been forlorn, and all for thee.
Welcome, dread Fury, to my woeful house.

Rapine and Murder, you are welcome too.
How like the Empress and her sons you are!

Well are you fitted, had you but a Moor.
Could not all hell afford you such a devil?
For well I wot the Empress never wags
But in her company there is a Moor;
And, would you represent our queen aright,
It were convenient you had such a devil.

But welcome as you are. What shall we do?

TAMORA.
What wouldst thou have us do, Andronicus?

DEMETRIUS.

Show me a murderer, I'll deal with him.

CHIRON.

Show me a villain that hath done a rape,

And I am sent to be reveng'd on him.

TAMORA.

Show me a thousand that hath done thee wrong,

And I will be revenged on them all.

TITUS.

Look round about the wicked streets of Rome,

And when thou find'st a man that's like thyself,

Good Murder, stab him; he's a murderer.

Go thou with him, and when it is thy hap

To find another that is like to thee,

Good Rapine, stab him; he is a ravisher.

Go thou with them; and in the Emperor's court

There is a queen, attended by a Moor;
Well shalt thou know her by thine own proportion,
For up and down she doth resemble thee.
I pray thee, do on them some violent death;
They have been violent to me and mine.

TAMORA.
Well hast thou lesson'd us; this shall we do.
But would it please thee, good Andronicus,
To send for Lucius, thy thrice-valiant son,
Who leads towards Rome a band of warlike Goths,
And bid him come and banquet at thy house;
When he is here, even at thy solemn feast,
I will bring in the Empress and her sons,
The Emperor himself, and all thy foes;
And at thy mercy shall they stoop and kneel,
And on them shalt thou ease thy angry heart.
What says Andronicus to this device?

TITUS.

Marcus, my brother! 'Tis sad Titus calls.

Enter MARCUS

Go, gentle Marcus, to thy nephew Lucius;
Thou shalt inquire him out among the Goths.
Bid him repair to me, and bring with him
Some of the chiefest princes of the Goths;
Bid him encamp his soldiers where they are.
Tell him the Emperor and the Empress too
Feast at my house, and he shall feast with them.
This do thou for my love; and so let him,
As he regards his aged father's life.

MARCUS.
This will I do, and soon return again. *Exit*

TAMORA. Now will I hence about thy business,
And take my ministers along with me.

TITUS.

Nay, nay, let Rape and Murder stay with me,

Or else I'll call my brother back again,

And cleave to no revenge but Lucius.

TAMORA.

[Aside to her sons] What say you, boys? Will you abide with him,

Whiles I go tell my lord the Emperor

How I have govern'd our determin'd jest?

Yield to his humour, smooth and speak him fair,

And tarry with him till I turn again.

TITUS.

[Aside] I knew them all, though they suppos'd me mad,

And will o'er reach them in their own devices,

A pair of cursed hell-hounds and their dam.

DEMETRIUS.

Madam, depart at pleasure; leave us here.

TAMORA.

Farewell, Andronicus, Revenge now goes

To lay a complot to betray thy foes.

TITUS.

I know thou dost; and, sweet Revenge, farewell.

Exit TAMORA

CHIRON.

Tell us, old man, how shall we be employ'd?

TITUS.

Tut, I have work enough for you to do.

Publius, come hither, Caius, and Valentine.

Enter PUBLIUS, CAIUS, and VALENTINE

PUBLIUS. What is your will?

TITUS.

Know you these two?

PUBLIUS.

The Empress' sons, I take them: Chiron, Demetrius.

TITUS.

Fie, Publius, fie! thou art too much deceiv'd.
The one is Murder, and Rape is the other's name;
And therefore bind them, gentle Publius-
Caius and Valentine, lay hands on them.
Oft have you heard me wish for such an hour,
And now I find it; therefore bind them sure,
And stop their mouths if they begin to cry. *Exit*
[They lay hold on CHIRON and DEMETRIUS]

CHIRON.

Villains, forbear! we are the Empress' sons.

PUBLIUS.

And therefore do we what we are commanded.
Stop close their mouths, let them not speak a word.

Is he sure bound? Look that you bind them fast.

Re-enter TITUS ANDRONICUS
with a knife, and LAVINIA, with a basin

TITUS.

Come, come, Lavinia; look, thy foes are bound.
Sirs, stop their mouths, let them not speak to me;
But let them hear what fearful words I utter.
O villains, Chiron and Demetrius!
Here stands the spring whom you have stain'd with mud;
This goodly summer with your winter mix'd.
You kill'd her husband; and for that vile fault
Two of her brothers were condemn'd to death,
My hand cut off and made a merry jest;
Both her sweet hands, her tongue, and that more dear
Than hands or tongue, her spotless chastity,

Inhuman traitors, you constrain'd and forc'd.

What would you say, if I should let you speak?
Villains, for shame you could not beg for grace.

Hark, wretches! how I mean to martyr you.
This one hand yet is left to cut your throats,
Whiles that Lavinia 'tween her stumps doth hold
The basin that receives your guilty blood.
You know your mother means to feast with me,
And calls herself Revenge, and thinks me mad.
Hark, villains! I will grind your bones to dust,
And with your blood and it I'll make a paste;
And of the paste a coffin I will rear,
And make two pasties of your shameful heads;
And bid that strumpet, your unhallowed dam,
Like to the earth, swallow her own increase.
This is the feast that I have bid her to,
And this the banquet she shall surfeit on;
For worse than Philomel you us'd my daughter,
And worse than Progne I will be reveng'd.

And now prepare your throats. Lavinia, come,

Receive the blood; and when that they are dead,

Let me go grind their bones to powder small,

And with this hateful liquor temper it;

And in that paste let their vile heads be bak'd.

Come, come, be every one officious

To make this banquet, which I wish may prove

More stern and bloody than the Centaurs' feast.

[He cuts their throats]

So.

Now bring them in, for I will play the cook,

And see them ready against their mother comes.

Exeunt , bearing the dead bodies

SCENE III. The court of TITUS' house

Enter Lucius, MARCUS, and the GOTHS, with AARON prisoner, and his CHILD in the arms of an attendant

LUCIUS. Uncle Marcus, since 'tis my father's mind

That I repair to Rome, I am content.

FIRST GOTH.

And ours with thine, befall what fortune will.

LUCIUS.
Good uncle, take you in this barbarous Moor,
This ravenous tiger, this accursed devil;
Let him receive no sust'nance, fetter him,
Till he be brought unto the Empress' face
For testimony of her foul proceedings.
And see the ambush of our friends be strong;
I fear the Emperor means no good to us.

AARON.
Some devil whisper curses in my ear,
And prompt me that my tongue may utter forth
The venomous malice of my swelling heart!

LUCIUS.

Away, inhuman dog, unhallowed slave!

Sirs, help our uncle to convey him in.

Exeunt GOTHS with AARON. Flourish within

The trumpets show the Emperor is at hand.

Sound trumpets.   *Enter* SATURNINUS and

TAMORA, with AEMILIUS, TRIBUNES, SENATORS, and others

SATURNINUS.

What, hath the firmament more suns than one?

LUCIUS.

What boots it thee to can thyself a sun?

MARCUS.

Rome's Emperor, and nephew, break the parle;

These quarrels must be quietly debated.

The feast is ready which the careful Titus

Hath ordain'd to an honourable end,

For peace, for love, for league, and good to Rome.

Please you, therefore, draw nigh and take your places.

SATURNINUS.

Marcus, we will.

[A table brought in. The company sit down]

Trumpets sounding, enter TITUS

like a cook, placing the dishes, and LAVINIA

with a veil over her face; also YOUNG LUCIUS, and others

TITUS.

Welcome, my lord; welcome, dread Queen;

Welcome, ye warlike Goths; welcome, Lucius;

And welcome all. Although the cheer be poor,

'Twill fill your stomachs; please you eat of it.

SATURNINUS.

Why art thou thus attir'd, Andronicus?

TITUS.

Because I would be sure to have all well
To entertain your Highness and your Empress.

TAMORA.

We are beholding to you, good Andronicus.

TITUS.

An if your Highness knew my heart, you were.

My lord the Emperor, resolve me this:
Was it well done of rash Virginius
To slay his daughter with his own right hand,
Because she was enforc'd, stain'd, and deflower'd?

SATURNINUS.

It was, Andronicus.

TITUS.

Your reason, mighty lord.

SATURNINUS.

Because the girl should not survive her shame,

And by her presence still renew his sorrows.

TITUS.

A reason mighty, strong, and effectual;

A pattern, precedent, and lively warrant

For me, most wretched, to perform the like.

Die, die, Lavinia, and thy shame with thee; *[He kills her]*

And with thy shame thy father's sorrow die!

SATURNINUS.

What hast thou done, unnatural and unkind?

TITUS.

Kill'd her for whom my tears have made me blind.

I am as woeful as Virginius was,

And have a thousand times more cause than he
To do this outrage; and it now is done.

SATURNINUS.

What, was she ravish'd? Tell who did the deed.

TITUS.
Will't please you eat? Will't please your Highness feed?

TAMORA.

Why hast thou slain thine only daughter thus?

TITUS.
Not I; 'twas Chiron and Demetrius.
They ravish'd her, and cut away her tongue;
And they, 'twas they, that did her all this wrong.

SATURNINUS.

Go, fetch them hither to us presently.

TITUS.

Why, there they are, both baked in this pie,

Whereof their mother daintily hath fed,

Eating the flesh that she herself hath bred.

'Tis true, 'tis true: witness my knife's sharp point.

[He stabs the EMPRESS]

SATURNINUS.

Die, frantic wretch, for this accursed deed!

[He stabs TITUS]

LUCIUS.

Can the son's eye behold his father bleed?

There's meed for meed, death for a deadly deed.

[He stabs SATURNINUS. A great tumult. LUCIUS,

MARCUS, and their friends go up into the balcony]

MARCUS.

You sad-fac'd men, people and sons of Rome,
By uproars sever'd, as a flight of fowl
Scatter'd by winds and high tempestuous gusts?
O, let me teach you how to knit again
This scattered corn into one mutual sheaf,
These broken limbs again into one body;
Lest Rome herself be bane unto herself,
And she whom mighty kingdoms curtsy to,
Like a forlorn and desperate castaway,
Do shameful execution on herself.
But if my frosty signs and chaps of age,
Grave witnesses of true experience,
Cannot induce you to attend my words,

[To Lucius] Speak, Rome's dear friend, as erst our ancestor,

When with his solemn tongue he did discourse
To love-sick Dido's sad attending ear
The story of that baleful burning night,

When subtle Greeks surpris'd King Priam's Troy.

Tell us what Sinon hath bewitch'd our ears,

Or who hath brought the fatal engine in

That gives our Troy, our Rome, the civil wound.

My heart is not compact of flint nor steel;

Nor can I utter all our bitter grief,

But floods of tears will drown my oratory

And break my utt'rance, even in the time

When it should move ye to attend me most,

And force you to commiseration.

Here's Rome's young Captain, let him tell the tale;

While I stand by and weep to hear him speak.

LUCIUS.

Then, gracious auditory, be it known to you

That Chiron and the damn'd Demetrius

Were they that murd'red our Emperor's brother;

And they it were that ravished our sister.

For their fell faults our brothers were beheaded,

Our father's tears despis'd, and basely cozen'd

Of that true hand that fought Rome's quarrel out

And sent her enemies unto the grave.

Lastly, myself unkindly banished,

The gates shut on me, and turn'd weeping out,

To beg relief among Rome's enemies;

Who drown'd their enmity in my true tears,

And op'd their arms to embrace me as a friend.

I am the turned forth, be it known to you,

That have preserv'd her welfare in my blood

And from her bosom took the enemy's point,

Sheathing the steel in my advent'rous body.

Alas! you know I am no vaunter, I;

My scars can witness, dumb although they are,

That my report is just and full of truth.

But, soft! methinks I do digress too much,

Citing my worthless praise. O, pardon me!

For when no friends are by, men praise themselves.

MARCUS.

Now is my turn to speak. Behold the child.

[Pointing to the CHILD in an attendant's arms]

Of this was Tamora delivered,

The issue of an irreligious Moor,

Chief architect and plotter of these woes.

The villain is alive in Titus' house,

Damn'd as he is, to witness this is true.

Now judge what cause had Titus to revenge

These wrongs unspeakable, past patience,

Or more than any living man could bear.

Now have you heard the truth: what say you, Romans?

Have we done aught amiss, show us wherein,

And, from the place where you behold us pleading,

The poor remainder of Andronici

Will, hand in hand, all headlong hurl ourselves,

And on the ragged stones beat forth our souls,

And make a mutual closure of our house.

Speak, Romans, speak; and if you say we shall,

Lo, hand in hand, Lucius and I will fall.

AEMILIUS.

Come, come, thou reverend man of Rome,

And bring our Emperor gently in thy hand,
Lucius our Emperor; for well I know
The common voice do cry it shall be so.

ALL.

Lucius, all hail, Rome's royal Emperor!

MARCUS.
Go, go into old Titus' sorrowful house,
And hither hale that misbelieving Moor
To be adjudg'd some direful slaught'ring death,
As punishment for his most wicked life. *Exeunt* some
attendants. LUCIUS, MARCUS, and the others descend
ALL.
Lucius, all hail, Rome's gracious governor!

LUCIUS.
Thanks, gentle Romans! May I govern so
To heal Rome's harms and wipe away her woe!
But, gentle people, give me aim awhile,

For nature puts me to a heavy task.

Stand all aloof; but, uncle, draw you near

To shed obsequious tears upon this trunk.

O, take this warm kiss on thy pale cold lips. *[Kisses TITUS]*

These sorrowful drops upon thy blood-stain'd face,

The last true duties of thy noble son!

MARCUS.

Tear for tear and loving kiss for kiss

Thy brother Marcus tenders on thy lips.

O, were the sum of these that I should pay

Countless and infinite, yet would I pay them!

LUCIUS.

Come hither, boy; come, come, come, and learn of us

To melt in showers. Thy grandsire lov'd thee well;

Many a time he danc'd thee on his knee,

Sung thee asleep, his loving breast thy pillow;

Many a story hath he told to thee,

And bid thee bear his pretty tales in mind

And talk of them when he was dead and gone.

MARCUS.

How many thousand times hath these poor lips,
When they were living, warm'd themselves on thine!

O, now, sweet boy, give them their latest kiss!
Bid him farewell; commit him to the grave;
Do them that kindness, and take leave of them.

BOY.

O grandsire, grandsire! ev'n with all my heart
Would I were dead, so you did live again!
O Lord, I cannot speak to him for weeping;
My tears will choke me, if I ope my mouth.

Re-enter attendants with AARON

A ROMAN. You sad Andronici, have done with woes;
Give sentence on the execrable wretch
That hath been breeder of these dire events.

LUCIUS.

Set him breast-deep in earth, and famish him;

There let him stand and rave and cry for food.

If any one relieves or pities him,

For the offence he dies. This is our doom.

Some stay to see him fast'ned in the earth.

AARON.

Ah, why should wrath be mute and fury dumb?

I am no baby, I, that with base prayers

I should repent the evils I have done;

Ten thousand worse than ever yet I did

Would I perform, if I might have my will.

If one good deed in all my life I did,

I do repent it from my very soul.

LUCIUS.

Some loving friends convey the Emperor hence,

And give him burial in his father's grave.

My father and Lavinia shall forthwith

Be closed in our household's monument.

As for that ravenous tiger, Tamora,

No funeral rite, nor man in mourning weed,

No mournful bell shall ring her burial;

But throw her forth to beasts and birds to prey.

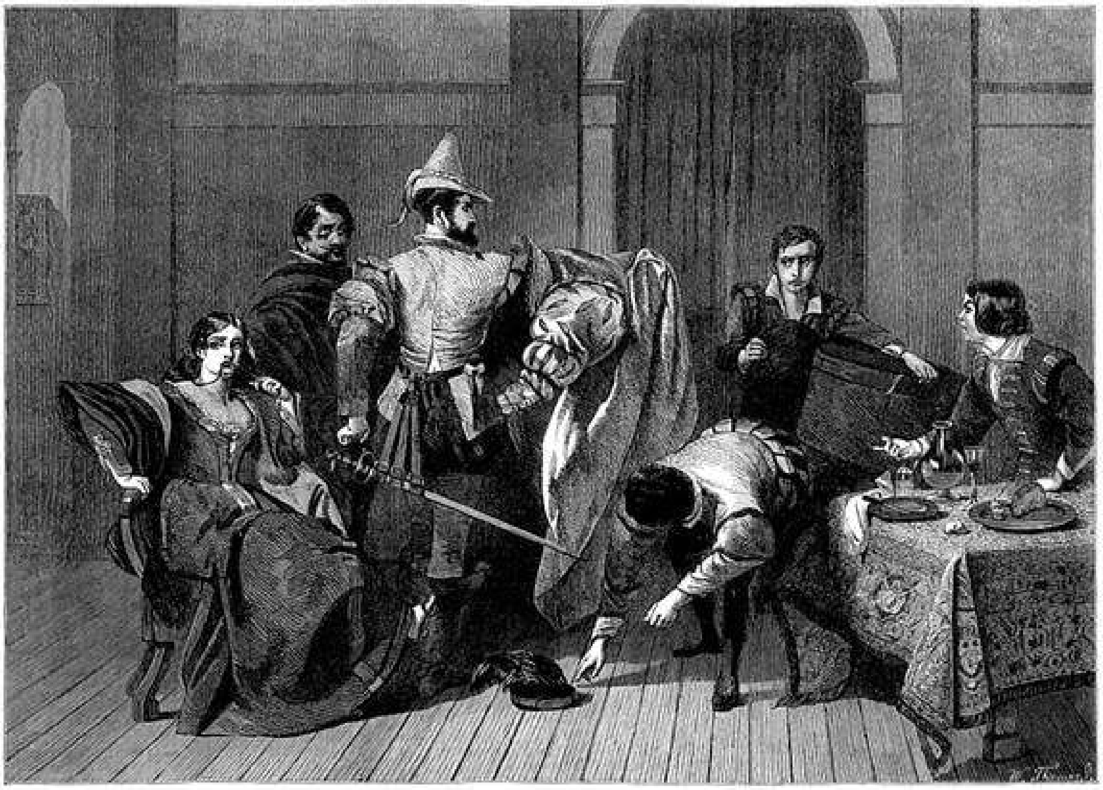
Her life was beastly and devoid of pity,

And being dead, let birds on her take pity. *Exeunt*

TAMING OF THE SHREW

This comedy was written in approximately 1592. The main plot depicts the courtship of Petruchio, a gentleman of Verona, and Katherina, the headstrong, obdurate shrew. Initially, Katherina is an unwilling participant in the relationship, but Petruchio tempers her with various psychological torments — the "taming" — until she is an obedient bride. The sub-plot features a competition between the suitors of Katherina's more polite sister, Bianca.

The play begins with a framing device, known as an Induction, in which a drunken tinker named Sly is tricked into thinking he is a nobleman by a mischievous Lord. The Lord then has a play performed for Sly's amusement, set in Padua with a primary and sub-plot.



An illustration of Act 4, Scene 3 from the Illustrated London News, 1886

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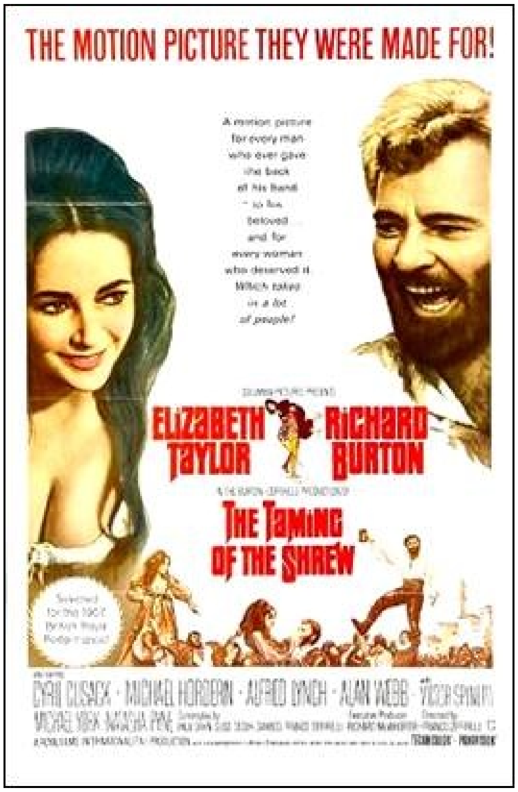
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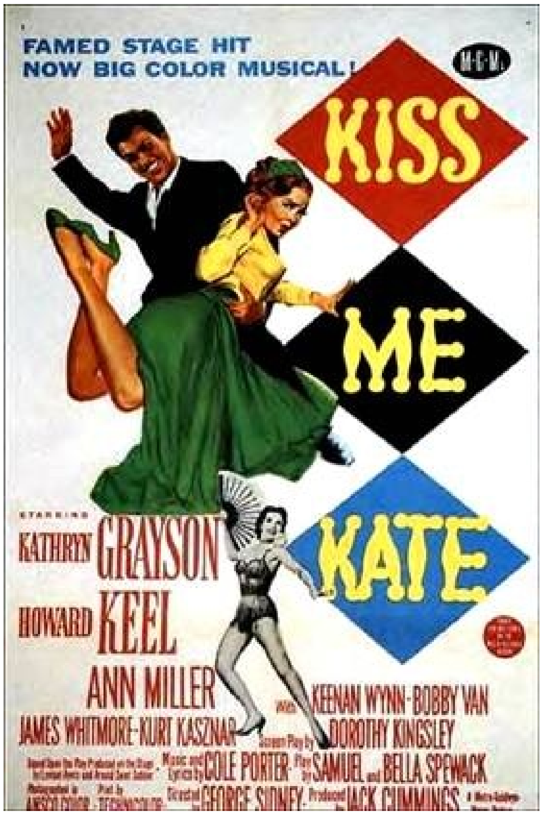
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M-G-M
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Screen Play by DOROTHY KINGSLEY
Music and Lyrics by COLE PORTER
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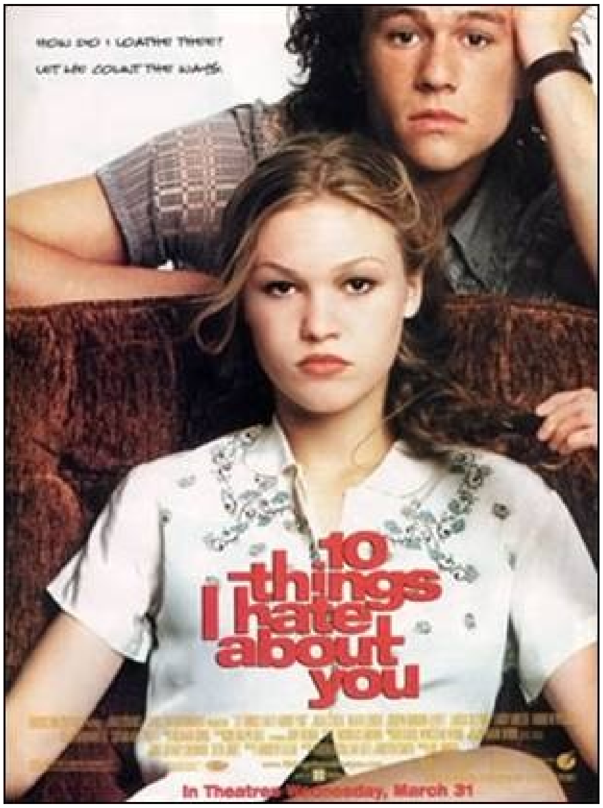
A musical inspired by the play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LET ME COUNT THE WAYS
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DRAMATIS PERSONAE

A LORD

CHRISTOPHER SLY, a tinker

HOSTESS

PAGE

PLAYERS

HUNTSMEN

SERVANTS

BAPTISTA MINOLA, a gentleman of Padua

VINCENTIO, a Merchant of Pisa

LUCENTIO, son to Vincentio, in love with Bianca

PETRUCHIO, a gentleman of Verona, a suitor to Katherina

Suitors to Bianca

GREMIO

HORTENSIO

Servants to Lucentio

TRANIO

BIONDELLO

Servants to Petruchio

GRUMIO

CURTIS

A PEDANT

Daughters to Baptista

KATHERINA, the shrew

BIANCA

A WIDOW

Tailor, Haberdasher, and Servants attending on Baptista and Petruchio

SCENE: Padua, and PETRUCHIO'S house in the country

INDUCTION. SCENE I.

Before an alehouse on a heath

Enter HOSTESS and SLY

SLY. I'll pheeze you, in faith.

HOSTESS.
A pair of stocks, you rogue!

SLY.
Y'are a baggage; the Slys are no rogues. Look in the
chronicles: we came in with Richard Conqueror. Therefore, paucas

pallabris; let the world slide. Sessa!

HOSTESS.

You will not pay for the glasses you have burst?

SLY.

No, not a denier. Go by, Saint Jeronimy, go to thy cold bed and warm thee.

HOSTESS.

I know my remedy; I must go fetch the third-borough.

Exit

SLY. Third, or fourth, or fifth borough, I'll answer him by law.

I'll not budge an inch, boy; let him come, and kindly.

[Falls asleep]

Wind horns.   *Enter* a LORD from bunting, with his train

LORD.

Huntsman, I charge thee, tender well my hounds;
Brach Merriman, the poor cur, is emboss'd;
And couple Clowder with the deep-mouth'd brach.
Saw'st thou not, boy, how Silver made it good
At the hedge corner, in the coldest fault?

I would not lose the dog for twenty pound.

FIRST HUNTSMAN.

Why, Belman is as good as he, my lord;
He cried upon it at the merest loss,
And twice to-day pick'd out the dullest scent;
Trust me, I take him for the better dog.

LORD.

Thou art a fool; if Echo were as fleet,
I would esteem him worth a dozen such.
But sup them well, and look unto them all;
To-morrow I intend to hunt again.

FIRST HUNTSMAN.

I will, my lord.

LORD.

What's here? One dead, or drunk?
See, doth he breathe?

SECOND HUNTSMAN.
He breathes, my lord. Were he not warm'd with ale,
This were a bed but cold to sleep so soundly.

LORD.

O monstrous beast, how like a swine he lies!
Grim death, how foul and loathsome is thine image!

Sirs, I will practise on this drunken man.
What think you, if he were convey'd to bed,
Wrapp'd in sweet clothes, rings put upon his fingers,
A most delicious banquet by his bed,
And brave attendants near him when he wakes,

Would not the beggar then forget himself?

FIRST HUNTSMAN.

Believe me, lord, I think he cannot choose.

SECOND HUNTSMAN.

It would seem strange unto him when he wak'd.

LORD.

Even as a flatt'ring dream or worthless fancy.
Then take him up, and manage well the jest:
Carry him gently to my fairest chamber,
And hang it round with all my wanton pictures;
Balm his foul head in warm distilled waters,
And burn sweet wood to make the lodging sweet;
Procure me music ready when he wakes,
To make a dulcet and a heavenly sound;
And if he chance to speak, be ready straight,
And with a low submissive reverence

Say 'What is it your honour will command?'
Let one attend him with a silver basin
Full of rose-water and bestrew'd with flowers;
Another bear the ewer, the third a diaper,
And say 'Will't please your lordship cool your hands?'
Some one be ready with a costly suit,
And ask him what apparel he will wear;
Another tell him of his hounds and horse,
And that his lady mourns at his disease;
Persuade him that he hath been lunatic,
And, when he says he is, say that he dreams,
For he is nothing but a mighty lord.
This do, and do it kindly, gentle sirs;
It will be pastime passing excellent,
If it be husbanded with modesty.

FIRST HUNTSMAN.

My lord, I warrant you we will play our part
As he shall think by our true diligence
He is no less than what we say he is.

LORD.

Take him up gently, and to bed with him;

And each one to his office when he wakes.

[SLY is carried out. A trumpet sounds]

Sirrah, go see what trumpet 'tis that sounds-

Exit SERVANT

Belike some noble gentleman that means,

Travelling some journey, to repose him here.

Re-enter a SERVINGMAN

How now! who is it?

SERVANT.

An't please your honour, players

That offer service to your lordship.

LORD.

Bid them come near.

Enter PLAYERS

Now, fellows, you are welcome.

PLAYERS.

We thank your honour.

LORD.

Do you intend to stay with me to-night?

PLAYER.

So please your lordship to accept our duty.

LORD.

With all my heart. This fellow I remember

Since once he play'd a farmer's eldest son;

'Twas where you woo'd the gentlewoman so well.

I have forgot your name; but, sure, that part
Was aptly fitted and naturally perform'd.

PLAYER.

I think 'twas Soto that your honour means.

LORD.

'Tis very true; thou didst it excellent.
Well, you are come to me in happy time,
The rather for I have some sport in hand
Wherein your cunning can assist me much.
There is a lord will hear you play to-night;
But I am doubtful of your modesties,
Lest, over-eying of his odd behaviour,
For yet his honour never heard a play,
You break into some merry passion
And so offend him; for I tell you, sirs,
If you should smile, he grows impatient.

PLAYER.

Fear not, my lord; we can contain ourselves,

Were he the veriest antic in the world.

LORD.

Go, sirrah, take them to the buttery,

And give them friendly welcome every one;

Let them want nothing that my house affords.

Exit one with the PLAYERS

Sirrah, go you to Bartholomew my page,

And see him dress'd in all suits like a lady;

That done, conduct him to the drunkard's chamber,

And call him 'madam,' do him obeisance.

Tell him from me-as he will win my love-

He bear himself with honourable action,

Such as he hath observ'd in noble ladies

Unto their lords, by them accomplished;

Such duty to the drunkard let him do,

With soft low tongue and lowly courtesy,

And say 'What is't your honour will command, Wherein your lady and your humble wife

May show her duty and make known her love?'

And then with kind embracements, tempting kisses,

And with declining head into his bosom,

Bid him shed tears, as being overjoyed

To see her noble lord restor'd to health,

Who for this seven years hath esteemed him

No better than a poor and loathsome beggar.

And if the boy have not a woman's gift

To rain a shower of commanded tears,

An onion will do well for such a shift,

Which, in a napkin being close convey'd,

Shall in despite enforce a watery eye.

See this dispatch'd with all the haste thou canst;

Anon I'll give thee more instructions. *Exit* a SERVINGMAN

I know the boy will well usurp the grace,

Voice, gait, and action, of a gentlewoman;

I long to hear him call the drunkard 'husband';

And how my men will stay themselves from laughter

When they do homage to this simple peasant.

I'll in to counsel them; haply my presence

May well abate the over-merry spleen,
Which otherwise would grow into extremes. *Exeunt*

SCENE II.

A bedchamber in the LORD'S house

Enter aloft SLY, with ATTENDANTS; some with apparel, basin

and ewer, and other appurtenances; and LORD

SLY.

For God's sake, a pot of small ale.

FIRST SERVANT.

Will't please your lordship drink a cup of sack?

SECOND SERVANT.

Will't please your honour taste of these conserves?

THIRD SERVANT.

What raiment will your honour wear to-day?

SLY.
I am Christophero Sly; call not me 'honour' nor
'lordship.' I
ne'er drank sack in my life; and if you give me any conserves,
give me conserves of beef. Ne'er ask me what raiment I'll wear,
for I have no more doublets than backs, no more stockings than
legs, nor no more shoes than feet-nay, sometime more feet than
shoes, or such shoes as my toes look through the overleather.

LORD.

Heaven cease this idle humour in your honour!
O, that a mighty man of such descent,
Of such possessions, and so high esteem,
Should be infused with so foul a spirit!

SLY.

What, would you make me mad? Am not I Christopher Sly, old Sly's son of Burton Heath; by birth a pedlar, by education a cardmaker, by transmutation a bear-herd, and now by present profession a tinker? Ask Marian Hacket, the fat ale-wife of Wincot, if she know me not; if she say I am not fourteen pence on the score for sheer ale, score me up for the lying'st knave in *Christendom.* What! I am not bestraught. [Taking a pot of ale]

Here's-

THIRD SERVANT.

O, this it is that makes your lady mourn!

SECOND SERVANT.

O, this is it that makes your servants droop!

LORD.

Hence comes it that your kindred shuns your house, As beaten hence by your strange lunacy.

O noble lord, bethink thee of thy birth!

Call home thy ancient thoughts from banishment,

And banish hence these abject lowly dreams.

Look how thy servants do attend on thee,

Each in his office ready at thy beck.

Wilt thou have music? Hark! Apollo plays, *[Music]*

And twenty caged nightingales do sing.

Or wilt thou sleep? We'll have thee to a couch

Softer and sweeter than the lustful bed

On purpose trimm'd up for Semiramis.

Say thou wilt walk: we will bestrew the ground.

Or wilt thou ride? Thy horses shall be trapp'd,

Their harness studded all with gold and pearl.

Dost thou love hawking? Thou hast hawks will soar

Above the morning lark. Or wilt thou hunt?

Thy hounds shall make the welkin answer them

And fetch shall echoes from the hollow earth.

FIRST SERVANT.

Say thou wilt course; thy greyhounds are as swift

As breathed stags; ay, fleeter than the roe.

SECOND SERVANT.

Dost thou love pictures? We will fetch thee straight

Adonis painted by a running brook,

And Cytherea all in sedges hid,

Which seem to move and wanton with her breath

Even as the waving sedges play wi' th' wind.

LORD.

We'll show thee lo as she was a maid

And how she was beguiled and surpris'd,

As lively painted as the deed was done.

THIRD SERVANT.

Or Daphne roaming through a thorny wood,

Scratching her legs, that one shall swear she bleeds

And at that sight shall sad Apollo weep,

So workmanly the blood and tears are drawn.

LORD.

Thou art a lord, and nothing but a lord.

Thou hast a lady far more beautiful

Than any woman in this waning age.

FIRST SERVANT.

And, till the tears that she hath shed for thee

Like envious floods o'er-run her lovely face,

She was the fairest creature in the world;

And yet she is inferior to none.

SLY.

Am I a lord and have I such a lady?

Or do I dream? Or have I dream'd till now?

I do not sleep: I see, I hear, I speak;

I smell sweet savours, and I feel soft things.

Upon my life, I am a lord indeed,

And not a tinker, nor Christopher Sly.

Well, bring our lady hither to our sight;

And once again, a pot o' th' smallest ale.

SECOND SERVANT.

Will't please your Mightiness to wash your hands?

O, how we joy to see your wit restor'd!
O, that once more you knew but what you are!
These fifteen years you have been in a dream;
Or, when you wak'd, so wak'd as if you slept.

SLY.

These fifteen years! by my fay, a goodly nap.
But did I never speak of all that time?

FIRST SERVANT.

O, yes, my lord, but very idle words;
For though you lay here in this goodly chamber,
Yet would you say ye were beaten out of door;
And rail upon the hostess of the house,
And say you would present her at the leet,
Because she brought stone jugs and no seal'd quarts.

Sometimes you would call out for Cicely Hacket.

SLY.

Ay, the woman's maid of the house.

THIRD SERVANT.

Why, sir, you know no house nor no such maid,
Nor no such men as you have reckon'd up,
As Stephen Sly, and old John Naps of Greece,
And Peter Turph, and Henry Pimpernell;
And twenty more such names and men as these,
Which never were, nor no man ever saw.

SLY.

Now, Lord be thanked for my good amends!

ALL.

Amen.

Enter the PAGE as a lady, with ATTENDANTS

SLY. I thank thee; thou shalt not lose by it.

PAGE.

How fares my noble lord?

SLY.

Marry, I fare well; for here is cheer enough.

Where is my wife?

PAGE.

Here, noble lord; what is thy will with her?

SLY.

Are you my wife, and will not call me husband?

My men should call me 'lord'; I am your goodman.

PAGE.

My husband and my lord, my lord and husband;

I am your wife in all obedience.

SLY.

I know it well. What must I call her?

LORD.

Madam.

SLY.

Al'ce madam, or Joan madam?

LORD.

Madam, and nothing else; so lords call ladies.

SLY.

Madam wife, they say that I have dream'd

And slept above some fifteen year or more.

PAGE.

Ay, and the time seems thirty unto me,

Being all this time abandon'd from your bed.

SLY.

'Tis much. Servants, leave me and her alone.

Exeunt SERVANTS

Madam, undress you, and come now to bed.

PAGE.

Thrice noble lord, let me entreat of you

To pardon me yet for a night or two;

Or, if not so, until the sun be set.

For your physicians have expressly charg'd,

In peril to incur your former malady,

That I should yet absent me from your bed.

I hope this reason stands for my excuse.

SLY.

Ay, it stands so that I may hardly tarry so long. But I would be loath to fall into my dreams again. I will therefore tarry in despite of the flesh and the blood.

Enter a MESSENGER

MESSENGER. Your honour's players, hearing your amendment,
Are come to play a pleasant comedy;
For so your doctors hold it very meet,
Seeing too much sadness hath congeal'd your blood,
And melancholy is the nurse of frenzy.
Therefore they thought it good you hear a play
And frame your mind to mirth and merriment,
Which bars a thousand harms and lengthens life.

SLY.

Marry, I will; let them play it. Is not a comonty a Christmas gambold or a tumbling-trick?

PAGE.

No, my good lord, it is more pleasing stuff.

SLY.

What, household stuff?

PAGE.

It is a kind of history.

SLY.

Well, we'll see't. Come, madam wife, sit by my side and let the world slip;-we shall ne'er be younger.

[They sit down]

A flourish of trumpets announces the play

ACT I.

SCENE I. Padua. A public place

Enter LUCENTIO and his man TRANIO

LUCENTIO. Tranio, since for the great desire I had

To see fair Padua, nursery of arts,

I am arriv'd for fruitful Lombardy,

The pleasant garden of great Italy,

And by my father's love and leave am arm'd

With his good will and thy good company,

My trusty servant well approv'd in all,

Here let us breathe, and haply institute

A course of learning and ingenious studies.

Pisa, renowned for grave citizens,

Gave me my being and my father first,

A merchant of great traffic through the world,

Vincentio, come of the Bentivolii;

Vincentio's son, brought up in Florence,

It shall become to serve all hopes conceiv'd,
To deck his fortune with his virtuous deeds.
And therefore, Tranio, for the time I study,
Virtue and that part of philosophy
Will I apply that treats of happiness
By virtue specially to be achiev'd.
Tell me thy mind; for I have Pisa left
And am to Padua come as he that leaves
A shallow plash to plunge him in the deep,
And with satiety seeks to quench his thirst.

TRANIO.
Mi perdonato, gentle master mine;
I am in all affected as yourself;
Glad that you thus continue your resolve
To suck the sweets of sweet philosophy.
Only, good master, while we do admire
This virtue and this moral discipline,
Let's be no Stoics nor no stocks, I pray,
Or so devote to Aristotle's checks
As Ovid be an outcast quite abjur'd.

Balk logic with acquaintance that you have,
And practise rhetoric in your common talk;
Music and poesy use to quicken you;
The mathematics and the metaphysics,
Fall to them as you find your stomach serves you.
No profit grows where is no pleasure ta'en;
In brief, sir, study what you most affect.

LUCENTIO.

Gramercies, Tranio, well dost thou advise.
If, Biondello, thou wert come ashore,
We could at once put us in readiness,
And take a lodging fit to entertain
Such friends as time in Padua shall beget.

Enter BAPTISTA with his two daughters, KATHERINA

and BIANCA; GREMIO, a pantaloon; HORTENSIO,
suitor to BIANCA. LUCENTIO and TRANIO stand by

But stay awhile; what company is this?

TRANIO.

Master, some show to welcome us to town.

BAPTISTA.
Gentlemen, importune me no farther,
For how I firmly am resolv'd you know;
That is, not to bestow my youngest daughter
Before I have a husband for the elder.
If either of you both love Katherina,
Because I know you well and love you well,
Leave shall you have to court her at your pleasure.

GREMIO.

To cart her rather. She's too rough for me.
There, there, Hortensio, will you any wife?

KATHERINA.

[To BAPTISTA] I pray you, sir, is it your will

To make a stale of me amongst these mates?

HORTENSIO.

Mates, maid! How mean you that? No mates for you,

Unless you were of gentler, milder mould.

KATHERINA.

I' faith, sir, you shall never need to fear;

Iwis it is not halfway to her heart;

But if it were, doubt not her care should be

To comb your noddle with a three-legg'd stool,

And paint your face, and use you like a fool.

HORTENSIO.

From all such devils, good Lord deliver us!

GREMIO.

And me, too, good Lord!

TRANIO.

Husht, master! Here's some good pastime toward;

That wench is stark mad or wonderful froward.

LUCENTIO.

But in the other's silence do I see

Maid's mild behaviour and sobriety.

Peace, Tranio!

TRANIO.

Well said, master; mum! and gaze your fill.

BAPTISTA.

Gentlemen, that I may soon make good

What I have said-Bianca, get you in;

And let it not displease thee, good Bianca,

For I will love thee ne'er the less, my girl.

KATHERINA.

A pretty peat! it is best

Put finger in the eye, an she knew why.

BIANCA.

Sister, content you in my discontent.

Sir, to your pleasure humbly I subscribe;

My books and instruments shall be my company,

On them to look, and practise by myself.

LUCENTIO.

Hark, Tranio, thou mayst hear Minerva speak!

HORTENSIO.

Signior Baptista, will you be so strange?

Sorry am I that our good will effects

Bianca's grief.

GREMIO.

Why will you mew her up,

Signior Baptista, for this fiend of hell,

And make her bear the penance of her tongue?

BAPTISTA.

Gentlemen, content ye; I am resolv'd.
Go in, Bianca. *Exit* BIANCA
And for I know she taketh most delight
In music, instruments, and poetry,
Schoolmasters will I keep within my house
Fit to instruct her youth. If you, Hortensio,
Or, Signior Gremio, you, know any such,
Prefer them hither; for to cunning men
I will be very kind, and liberal
To mine own children in good bringing-up;
And so, farewell. Katherina, you may stay;
For I have more to commune with Bianca. *Exit*

KATHERINA. Why, and I trust I may go too, may I not?
What! shall I be appointed hours, as though, belike,
I knew not what to take and what to leave? Ha! *Exit*

GREMIO. You may go to the devil's dam; your gifts are so good here's none will hold you. There! Love is not so great,

Hortensio, but we may blow our nails together, and fast it fairly

out; our cake's dough on both sides. Farewell; yet, for the love

I bear my sweet Bianca, if I can by any means light on a fit man

to teach her that wherein she delights, I will wish him to her father.

HORTENSIO.

SO Will I, Signior Gremio; but a word, I pray.

Though

the nature of our quarrel yet never brook'd parle, know now, upon

advice, it toucheth us both-that we may yet again have access to

our fair mistress, and be happy rivals in Bianca's love-to

labour and effect one thing specially.

GREMIO.

What's that, I pray?

HORTENSIO.

Marry, sir, to get a husband for her sister.

GREMIO.

A husband? a devil.

HORTENSIO.

I say a husband.

GREMIO.

I say a devil. Think'st thou, Hortensio, though her father

be very rich, any man is so very a fool to be married to hell?

HORTENSIO.

Tush, Gremio! Though it pass your patience and mine to

endure her loud alarums, why, man, there be good fellows in the

world, an a man could light on them, would take her with all

faults, and money enough.

GREMIO.

I cannot tell; but I had as lief take her dowry with this

condition: to be whipp'd at the high cross every morning.

HORTENSIO.

Faith, as you say, there's small choice in rotten
apples. But, come; since this bar in law makes us friends, it
shall be so far forth friendly maintain'd till by helping
Baptista's eldest daughter to a husband we set his youngest free
for a husband, and then have to't afresh. Sweet Bianca! Happy man
be his dole! He that runs fastest gets the ring. How say you,
Signior Gremio?

GREMIO.

I am agreed; and would I had given him the best horse in
Padua to begin his wooing that would thoroughly woo her, wed her,
and bed her, and rid the house of her! Come on.

Exeunt GREMIO and HORTENSIO

TRANIO.

I pray, sir, tell me, is it possible
That love should of a sudden take such hold?

LUCENTIO.

O Tranio, till I found it to be true,

I never thought it possible or likely.

But see! while idly I stood looking on,

I found the effect of love in idleness;

And now in plainness do confess to thee,

That art to me as secret and as dear

As Anna to the Queen of Carthage was-

Tranio, I burn, I pine, I perish, Tranio,

If I achieve not this young modest girl.

Counsel me, Tranio, for I know thou canst;

Assist me, Tranio, for I know thou wilt.

TRANIO.

Master, it is no time to chide you now;

Affection is not rated from the heart;

If love have touch'd you, nought remains but so:

'Redime te captum quam queas minimo.'

LUCENTIO.

Gramercies, lad. Go forward; this contents;

The rest will comfort, for thy counsel's sound.

TRANIO.

Master, you look'd so longly on the maid.

Perhaps you mark'd not what's the pith of all.

LUCENTIO.

O, yes, I saw sweet beauty in her face,
Such as the daughter of Agenor had,
That made great Jove to humble him to her hand,
When with his knees he kiss'd the Cretan strand.

TRANIO.

Saw you no more? Mark'd you not how her sister
Began to scold and raise up such a storm
That mortal ears might hardly endure the din?

LUCENTIO.

Tranio, I saw her coral lips to move,
And with her breath she did perfume the air;
Sacred and sweet was all I saw in her.

TRANIO.

Nay, then 'tis time to stir him from his trance.
I pray, awake, sir. If you love the maid,
Bend thoughts and wits to achieve her. Thus it stands:
Her elder sister is so curst and shrewd
That, till the father rid his hands of her,
Master, your love must live a maid at home;
And therefore has he closely mew'd her up,
Because she will not be annoy'd with suitors.

LUCENTIO.

Ah, Tranio, what a cruel father's he!
But art thou not advis'd he took some care
To get her cunning schoolmasters to instruct her?

TRANIO.

Ay, marry, am I, sir, and now 'tis plotted.

LUCENTIO.

I have it, Tranio.

TRANIO.

Master, for my hand,

Both our inventions meet and jump in one.

LUCENTIO.

Tell me thine first.

TRANIO.

You will be schoolmaster,

And undertake the teaching of the maid-

That's your device.

LUCENTIO.

It is. May it be done?

TRANIO.

Not possible; for who shall bear your part

And be in Padua here Vincentio's son;
Keep house and ply his book, welcome his friends,
Visit his countrymen, and banquet them?

LUCENTIO.
Basta, content thee, for I have it full.
We have not yet been seen in any house,
Nor can we be distinguish'd by our faces
For man or master. Then it follows thus:
Thou shalt be master, Tranio, in my stead,
Keep house and port and servants, as I should;
I will some other be-some Florentine,
Some Neapolitan, or meaner man of Pisa.
'Tis hatch'd, and shall be so. Tranio, at once
Uncase thee; take my colour'd hat and cloak.
When Biondello comes, he waits on thee;
But I will charm him first to keep his tongue.

TRANIO.
So had you need. *[They exchange habits]*
In brief, sir, sith it your pleasure is,

And I am tied to be obedient-
For so your father charg'd me at our parting:
'Be serviceable to my son' quoth he,
Although I think 'twas in another sense-
I am content to be Lucentio,
Because so well I love Lucentio.

LUCENTIO.
Tranio, be so because Lucentio loves;
And let me be a slave t' achieve that maid
Whose sudden sight hath thrall'd my wounded eye.

Enter BIONDELLO.

Here comes the rogue. Sirrah, where have you been?

BIONDELLO.
Where have I been! Nay, how now! where are you?

Master, has my fellow Tranio stol'n your clothes?
Or you stol'n his? or both? Pray, what's the news?

LUCENTIO.

Sirrah, come hither; 'tis no time to jest,

And therefore frame your manners to the time.

Your fellow Tranio here, to save my life,

Puts my apparel and my count'nance on,

And I for my escape have put on his;

For in a quarrel since I came ashore

I kill'd a man, and fear I was descried.

Wait you on him, I charge you, as becomes,

While I make way from hence to save my life.

You understand me?

BIONDELLO.

I, sir? Ne'er a whit.

LUCENTIO.

And not a jot of Tranio in your mouth:

Tranio is chang'd into Lucentio.

BIONDELLO.

The better for him; would I were so too!

TRANIO.

So could I, faith, boy, to have the next wish after,

That Lucentio indeed had Baptista's youngest daughter.

But, sirrah, not for my sake but your master's, I advise

You use your manners discreetly in all kind of companies.

When I am alone, why, then I am Tranio;

But in all places else your master Lucentio.

LUCENTIO.

Tranio, let's go.

One thing more rests, that thyself execute-

To make one among these wooers. If thou ask me why-

Sufficeth, my reasons are both good and weighty. *Exeunt*

The Presenters above speak

FIRST SERVANT.

My lord, you nod; you do not mind the play.

SLY.

Yes, by Saint Anne do I. A good matter, surely; comes there
any more of it?

PAGE.

My lord, 'tis but begun.

SLY.

'Tis a very excellent piece of work, madam lady
Would 'twere done! *[They sit and mark]*

SCENE II. Padua. Before HORTENSIO'S house

Enter PETRUCHIO and his man GRUMIO

PETRUCHIO. Verona, for a while I take my leave,
To see my friends in Padua; but of all
My best beloved and approved friend,
Hortensio; and I trow this is his house.

Here, sirrah Grumio, knock, I say.
GRUMIO.

Knock, sir! Whom should I knock?
Is there any man has rebus'd your worship?

PETRUCHIO.

Villain, I say, knock me here soundly.

GRUMIO.
Knock you here, sir? Why, sir, what am I, sir, that I
should knock you here, sir?

PETRUCHIO.
Villain, I say, knock me at this gate,

And rap me well, or I'll knock your knave's pate.

GRUMIO.

My master is grown quarrelsome. I should knock you first,

And then I know after who comes by the worst.

PETRUCHIO.

Will it not be?

Faith, sirrah, an you'll not knock I'll ring it;

I'll try how you can sol-fa, and sing it.

[He wrings him by the ears]

GRUMIO.

Help, masters, help! My master is mad.

PETRUCHIO.

Now knock when I bid you, sirrah villain!

Enter HORTENSIO

HORTENSIO. How now! what's the matter? My old friend Grumio and my good friend Petruchio! How do you all at Verona?

PETRUCHIO.

Signior Hortensio, come you to part the fray?
'Con tutto il cuore ben trovato' may I say.

HORTENSIO.
Alla nostra casa ben venuto,
Molto honorato signor mio Petruchio.

Rise, Grumio, rise; we will compound this quarrel.

GRUMIO.
Nay, 'tis no matter, sir, what he 'leges in Latin. If this
be not a lawful cause for me to leave his service-look you,
sir:
he bid me knock him and rap him soundly, sir. Well, was it fit
for a servant to use his master so; being, perhaps, for aught

I

see, two and thirty, a pip out?

Whom would to God I had well knock'd at first,

Then had not Grumio come by the worst.

PETRUCHIO.

A senseless villain! Good Hortensio,

I bade the rascal knock upon your gate,

And could not get him for my heart to do it.

GRUMIO.

Knock at the gate? O heavens! Spake you not these words

plain: 'Sirrah knock me here, rap me here, knock me well, and

knock me soundly'? And come you now with 'knocking at the gate'?

PETRUCHIO.

Sirrah, be gone, or talk not, I advise you.

HORTENSIO.

Petruchio, patience; I am Grumio's pledge;
Why, this's a heavy chance 'twixt him and you,
Your ancient, trusty, pleasant servant Grumio.
And tell me now, sweet friend, what happy gale
Blows you to Padua here from old Verona?

PETRUCHIO.
Such wind as scatters young men through the world
To seek their fortunes farther than at home,
Where small experience grows. But in a few,
Signior Hortensio, thus it stands with me:
Antonio, my father, is deceas'd,
And I have thrust myself into this maze,
Haply to wive and thrive as best I may;
Crowns in my purse I have, and goods at home,
And so am come abroad to see the world.

HORTENSIO.
Petruchio, shall I then come roundly to thee
And wish thee to a shrewd ill-favour'd wife?
Thou'dst thank me but a little for my counsel,

And yet I'll promise thee she shall be rich,
And very rich; but th'art too much my friend,
And I'll not wish thee to her.

PETRUCHIO.
Signior Hortensio, 'twixt such friends as we
Few words suffice; and therefore, if thou know
One rich enough to be Petruchio's wife,
As wealth is burden of my wooing dance,
Be she as foul as was Florentius' love,
As old as Sibyl, and as curst and shrewd
As Socrates' Xanthippe or a worse-
She moves me not, or not removes, at least,
Affection's edge in me, were she as rough
As are the swelling Adriatic seas.
I come to wive it wealthily in Padua;
If wealthily, then happily in Padua.

GRUMIO.
Nay, look you, sir, he tells you flatly what his mind is.
Why, give him gold enough and marry him to a puppet or an

aglet-baby, or an old trot with ne'er a tooth in her head, though she has as many diseases as two and fifty horses. Why, nothing comes amiss, so money comes withal.

HORTENSIO.

Petruchio, since we are stepp'd thus far in,
I will continue that I broach'd in jest.
I can, Petruchio, help thee to a wife
With wealth enough, and young and beauteous;
Brought up as best becomes a gentlewoman;
Her only fault, and that is faults enough,
Is-that she is intolerable curst,
And shrewd and froward so beyond all measure
That, were my state far worser than it is,
I would not wed her for a mine of gold.

PETRUCHIO.

Hortensio, peace! thou know'st not gold's effect.
Tell me her father's name, and 'tis enough;
For I will board her though she chide as loud

As thunder when the clouds in autumn crack.

HORTENSIO.
Her father is Baptista Minola,
An affable and courteous gentleman;
Her name is Katherina Minola,
Renown'd in Padua for her scolding tongue.

PETRUCHIO.
I know her father, though I know not her;
And he knew my deceased father well.
I will not sleep, Hortensio, till I see her;
And therefore let me be thus bold with you
To give you over at this first encounter,
Unless you will accompany me thither.

GRUMIO.
I pray you, sir, let him go while the humour lasts. O' my
word, and she knew him as well as I do, she would think scolding
would do little good upon him. She may perhaps call him half a
score knaves or so. Why, that's nothing; and he begin once,

he'll

rail in his rope-tricks. I'll tell you what, sir: an she stand

him but a little, he will throw a figure in her face, and so

disfigure her with it that she shall have no more eyes to see

withal than a cat. You know him not, sir.

HORTENSIO.

Tarry, Petruchio, I must go with thee,
For in Baptista's keep my treasure is.
He hath the jewel of my life in hold,
His youngest daughter, beautiful Bianca;
And her withholds from me, and other more,
Suitors to her and rivals in my love;
Supposing it a thing impossible-
For those defects I have before rehears'd-
That ever Katherina will be woo'd.
Therefore this order hath Baptista ta'en,
That none shall have access unto Bianca
Till Katherine the curst have got a husband.

GRUMIO.

Katherine the curst!

A title for a maid of all titles the worst.

HORTENSIO.

Now shall my friend Petruchio do me grace,
And offer me disguis'd in sober robes
To old Baptista as a schoolmaster
Well seen in music, to instruct Bianca;
That so I may by this device at least
Have leave and leisure to make love to her,
And unsuspected court her by herself.

Enter GREMIO with LUCENTIO disguised as CAMBIO

GRUMIO. Here's no knavery! See, to beguile the old folks, how the young folks lay their heads together! Master, master, look about you. Who goes there, ha?

HORTENSIO.

Peace, Grumio! It is the rival of my love.

Petruchio,

stand by awhile.

GRUMIO.

A proper stripling, and an amorous!

[They stand aside]

GREMIO.

O, very well; I have perus'd the note.

Hark you, sir; I'll have them very fairly bound-

All books of love, see that at any hand;

And see you read no other lectures to her.

You understand me-over and beside

Signior Baptista's liberality,

I'll mend it with a largess. Take your paper too,

And let me have them very well perfum'd;

For she is sweeter than perfume itself

To whom they go to. What will you read to her?

LUCENTIO.

Whate'er I read to her, I'll plead for you

As for my patron, stand you so assur'd,

As firmly as yourself were still in place;

Yea, and perhaps with more successful words

Than you, unless you were a scholar, sir.

GREMIO.

O this learning, what a thing it is!

GRUMIO.

O this woodcock, what an ass it is!

PETRUCHIO.

Peace, sirrah!

HORTENSIO.

Grumio, mum! *[Coming forward]*

God save you, Signior Gremio!

GREMIO.

And you are well met, Signior Hortensio.

Trow you whither I am going? To Baptista Minola.

I promis'd to enquire carefully

About a schoolmaster for the fair Bianca;

And by good fortune I have lighted well

On this young man; for learning and behaviour

Fit for her turn, well read in poetry

And other books-good ones, I warrant ye.

HORTENSIO.

'Tis well; and I have met a gentleman

Hath promis'd me to help me to another,

A fine musician to instruct our mistress;

So shall I no whit be behind in duty

To fair Bianca, so beloved of me.

GREMIO.

Beloved of me-and that my deeds shall prove.

GRUMIO.

And that his bags shall prove.

HORTENSIO.
Gremio, 'tis now no time to vent our love.
Listen to me, and if you speak me fair
I'll tell you news indifferent good for either.
Here is a gentleman whom by chance I met,
Upon agreement from us to his liking,
Will undertake to woo curst Katherine;
Yea, and to marry her, if her dowry please.

GREMIO.

So said, so done, is well.
Hortensio, have you told him all her faults?

PETRUCHIO.
I know she is an irksome brawling scold;
If that be all, masters, I hear no harm.

GREMIO.

No, say'st me so, friend? What countryman?

PETRUCHIO.
Born in Verona, old Antonio's son.
My father dead, my fortune lives for me;
And I do hope good days and long to see.

GREMIO.

O Sir, such a life with such a wife were strange!
But if you have a stomach, to't a God's name;
You shall have me assisting you in all.
But will you woo this wild-cat?

PETRUCHIO.

Will I live?

GRUMIO.

Will he woo her? Ay, or I'll hang her.

PETRUCHIO.

Why came I hither but to that intent?
Think you a little din can daunt mine ears?

Have I not in my time heard lions roar?
Have I not heard the sea, puff'd up with winds,
Rage like an angry boar chafed with sweat?
Have I not heard great ordnance in the field,
And heaven's artillery thunder in the skies?
Have I not in a pitched battle heard
Loud 'larums, neighing steeds, and trumpets' clang?
And do you tell me of a woman's tongue,
That gives not half so great a blow to hear
As will a chestnut in a fariner's fire?

Tush! tush! fear boys with bugs.

GRUMIO.

For he fears none.

GREMIO.

Hortensio, hark:

This gentleman is happily arriv'd,

My mind presumes, for his own good and ours.

HORTENSIO.

I promis'd we would be contributors

And bear his charge of wooing, whatsoe'er.

GREMIO.

And so we will-provided that he win her.

GRUMIO.

I would I were as sure of a good dinner.

Enter TRANIO, bravely apparelled as LUCENTIO, and BIONDELLO

TRANIO. Gentlemen, God save you! If I may be bold,

Tell me, I beseech you, which is the readiest way

To the house of Signior Baptista Minola?

BIONDELLO.

He that has the two fair daughters; is't he you mean?

TRANIO.

Even he, Biondello.

GREMIO.

Hark you, sir, you mean not her to-

TRANIO.

Perhaps him and her, sir; what have you to do?

PETRUCHIO.

Not her that chides, sir, at any hand, I pray.

TRANIO.

I love no chiders, sir. Biondello, let's away.

LUCENTIO.

[Aside] Well begun, Tranio.

HORTENSIO.

Sir, a word ere you go.

Are you a suitor to the maid you talk of, yea or no?

TRANIO.

And if I be, sir, is it any offence?

GREMIO.

No; if without more words you will get you hence.

TRANIO.

Why, sir, I pray, are not the streets as free

For me as for you?

GREMIO.

But so is not she.

TRANIO.

For what reason, I beseech you?

GREMIO.

For this reason, if you'll know,

That she's the choice love of Signior Gremio.

HORTENSIO.

That she's the chosen of Signior Hortensio.

TRANIO.

Softly, my masters! If you be gentlemen,

Do me this right-hear me with patience.

Baptista is a noble gentleman,

To whom my father is not all unknown,

And, were his daughter fairer than she is,

She may more suitors have, and me for one.

Fair Leda's daughter had a thousand wooers;

Then well one more may fair Bianca have;

And so she shall: Lucentio shall make one,

Though Paris came in hope to speed alone.

GREMIO.

What, this gentleman will out-talk us all!

LUCENTIO.

Sir, give him head; I know he'll prove a jade.

PETRUCHIO.

Hortensio, to what end are all these words?

HORTENSIO.

Sir, let me be so bold as ask you,

Did you yet ever see Baptista's daughter?

TRANIO.

No, sir, but hear I do that he hath two:

The one as famous for a scolding tongue

As is the other for beauteous modesty.

PETRUCHIO.

Sir, sir, the first's for me; let her go by.

GREMIO.

Yea, leave that labour to great Hercules,

And let it be more than Alcides' twelve.

PETRUCHIO.

Sir, understand you this of me, in sooth:

The youngest daughter, whom you hearken for,

Her father keeps from all access of suitors,

And will not promise her to any man

Until the elder sister first be wed.

The younger then is free, and not before.

TRANIO.

If it be so, sir, that you are the man

Must stead us all, and me amongst the rest;

And if you break the ice, and do this feat,

Achieve the elder, set the younger free

For our access-whose hap shall be to have her

Will not so graceless be to be ingrate.

HORTENSIO.

Sir, you say well, and well you do conceive;

And since you do profess to be a suitor,

You must, as we do, gratify this gentleman,

To whom we all rest generally beholding.

TRANIO.

Sir, I shall not be slack; in sign whereof,

Please ye we may contrive this afternoon,

And quaff carouses to our mistress' health;

And do as adversaries do in law-

Strive mightily, but eat and drink as friends.

GRUMIO, BIONDELLO. O excellent motion! Fellows, let's be gone.

HORTENSIO.

The motion's good indeed, and be it so.

Petruchio, I shall be your ben venuto. *Exeunt*

ACT Il.

SCENE I. Padua. BAPTISTA'S house

Enter KATHERINA and BIANCA

BIANCA. Good sister, wrong me not, nor wrong yourself,

To make a bondmaid and a slave of me-

That I disdain; but for these other gawds,
Unbind my hands, I'll pull them off myself,
Yea, all my raiment, to my petticoat;
Or what you will command me will I do,
So well I know my duty to my elders.

KATHERINA.
Of all thy suitors here I charge thee tell
Whom thou lov'st best. See thou dissemble not.

BIANCA.
Believe me, sister, of all the men alive
I never yet beheld that special face
Which I could fancy more than any other.

KATHERINA.

Minion, thou liest. Is't not Hortensio?

BIANCA.
If you affect him, sister, here I swear

I'll plead for you myself but you shall have him.

KATHERINA.

O then, belike, you fancy riches more:

You will have Gremio to keep you fair.

BIANCA.

Is it for him you do envy me so?

Nay, then you jest; and now I well perceive

You have but jested with me all this while.

I prithee, sister Kate, untie my hands.

KATHERINA.

[Strikes her] If that be jest, then an the rest was so.

Enter BAPTISTA

BAPTISTA. Why, how now, dame! Whence grows this insolence?

Bianca, stand aside-poor girl! she weeps.

[He unbinds her]

Go ply thy needle; meddle not with her.

For shame, thou hilding of a devilish spirit,

Why dost thou wrong her that did ne'er wrong thee?

When did she cross thee with a bitter word?

KATHERINA.

Her silence flouts me, and I'll be reveng'd.

[Flies after BIANCA]

BAPTISTA.

What, in my sight? Bianca, get thee in.

Exit BIANCA

KATHERINA.

What, will you not suffer me? Nay, now I see

She is your treasure, she must have a husband;

I must dance bare-foot on her wedding-day,

And for your love to her lead apes in hell.

Talk not to me; I will go sit and weep,

Till I can find occasion of revenge. *Exit* KATHERINA

BAPTISTA.

Was ever gentleman thus griev'd as I?

But who comes here?

Enter GREMIO, with LUCENTIO in the habit of a mean man;

PETRUCHIO, with HORTENSIO as a musician; and TRANIO,

as LUCENTIO, with his boy, BIONDELLO, bearing a lute and books

GREMIO.

Good morrow, neighbour Baptista.

BAPTISTA.

Good morrow, neighbour Gremio.

God save you, gentlemen!

PETRUCHIO.

And you, good sir! Pray, have you not a daughter

Call'd Katherina, fair and virtuous?

BAPTISTA.

I have a daughter, sir, call'd Katherina.

GREMIO.

You are too blunt; go to it orderly.

PETRUCHIO.

You wrong me, Signior Gremio; give me leave.

I am a gentleman of Verona, sir,

That, hearing of her beauty and her wit,

Her affability and bashful modesty,

Her wondrous qualities and mild behaviour,

Am bold to show myself a forward guest

Within your house, to make mine eye the witness

Of that report which I so oft have heard.

And, for an entrance to my entertainment,

I do present you with a man of mine,

[Presenting HORTENSIO]

Cunning in music and the mathematics,

To instruct her fully in those sciences,

Whereof I know she is not ignorant.

Accept of him, or else you do me wrong-

His name is Licio, born in Mantua.

BAPTISTA.

Y'are welcome, sir, and he for your good sake;

But for my daughter Katherine, this I know,

She is not for your turn, the more my grief.

PETRUCHIO.

I see you do not mean to part with her;

Or else you like not of my company.

BAPTISTA.

Mistake me not; I speak but as I find.

Whence are you, sir? What may I call your name?

PETRUCHIO.

Petruchio is my name, Antonio's son,

A man well known throughout all Italy.

BAPTISTA.

I know him well; you are welcome for his sake.

GREMIO.

Saving your tale, Petruchio, I pray,

Let us that are poor petitioners speak too.

Bacare! you are marvellous forward.

PETRUCHIO.

O, pardon me, Signior Gremio! I would fain be doing.

GREMIO.

I doubt it not, sir; but you will curse your wooing.

Neighbour, this is a gift very grateful, I am sure of it. To
express the like kindness, myself, that have been more kindly
beholding to you than any, freely give unto you this young
scholar *[Presenting LUCENTIO]* that hath been long studying at
Rheims; as cunning in Greek, Latin, and other languages, as the
other in music and mathematics. His name is Cambio. Pray accept his service.

BAPTISTA.

A thousand thanks, Signior Gremio. Welcome, good Cambio.

[To TRANIO] But, gentle sir, methinks you walk like a stranger.
May I be so bold to know the cause of your coming?

TRANIO.

Pardon me, sir, the boldness is mine own
That, being a stranger in this city here,
Do make myself a suitor to your daughter,
Unto Bianca, fair and virtuous.
Nor is your firm resolve unknown to me
In the preferment of the eldest sister.
This liberty is all that I request-

That, upon knowledge of my parentage,

I may have welcome 'mongst the rest that woo,

And free access and favour as the rest.

And toward the education of your daughters

I here bestow a simple instrument,

And this small packet of Greek and Latin books.

If you accept them, then their worth is great.

BAPTISTA.

Lucentio is your name? Of whence, I pray?

TRANIO.

Of Pisa, sir; son to Vincentio.

BAPTISTA.

A mighty man of Pisa. By report

I know him well. You are very welcome, sir.

Take you the lute, and you the set of books;

You shall go see your pupils presently.

Holla, within!

Enter a SERVANT

Sirrah, lead these gentlemen
To my daughters; and tell them both
These are their tutors. Bid them use them well.

Exit SERVANT leading HORTENSIO carrying the lute

and LUCENTIO with the books

We will go walk a little in the orchard,
And then to dinner. You are passing welcome,
And so I pray you all to think yourselves.

PETRUCHIO.
Signior Baptista, my business asketh haste,
And every day I cannot come to woo.
You knew my father well, and in him me,

Left solely heir to all his lands and goods,
Which I have bettered rather than decreas'd.
Then tell me, if I get your daughter's love,
What dowry shall I have with her to wife?

BAPTISTA.
After my death, the one half of my lands
And, in possession, twenty thousand crowns.

PETRUCHIO.
And for that dowry, I'll assure her of
Her widowhood, be it that she survive me,
In all my lands and leases whatsoever.
Let specialities be therefore drawn between us,
That covenants may be kept on either hand.

BAPTISTA.
Ay, when the special thing is well obtain'd,
That is, her love; for that is all in all.

PETRUCHIO.

Why, that is nothing; for I tell you, father,

I am as peremptory as she proud-minded;

And where two raging fires meet together,

They do consume the thing that feeds their fury.

Though little fire grows great with little wind,

Yet extreme gusts will blow out fire and all.

So I to her, and so she yields to me;

For I am rough, and woo not like a babe.

BAPTISTA.

Well mayst thou woo, and happy be thy speed

But be thou arm'd for some unhappy words.

PETRUCHIO.

Ay, to the proof, as mountains are for winds,

That shake not though they blow perpetually.

Re-enter HORTENSIO, with his head broke

BAPTISTA.

How now, my friend! Why dost thou look so pale?

HORTENSIO.

For fear, I promise you, if I look pale.

BAPTISTA.

What, will my daughter prove a good musician?

HORTENSIO.

I think she'll sooner prove a soldier:

Iron may hold with her, but never lutes.

BAPTISTA.

Why, then thou canst not break her to the lute?

HORTENSIO.

Why, no; for she hath broke the lute to me.

I did but tell her she mistook her frets,

And bow'd her hand to teach her fingering, When, with a most impatient devilish spirit,

'Frets, call you these?' quoth she 'I'll fume with them.'

And with that word she struck me on the head,

And through the instrument my pate made way;

And there I stood amazed for a while,

As on a pillory, looking through the lute,

While she did call me rascal fiddler

And twangling Jack, with twenty such vile terms,

As she had studied to misuse me so.

PETRUCHIO.

Now, by the world, it is a lusty wench;

I love her ten times more than e'er I did.

O, how I long to have some chat with her!

BAPTISTA.

Well, go with me, and be not so discomfited;

Proceed in practice with my younger daughter;

She's apt to learn, and thankful for good turns.

Signior Petruchio, will you go with us,

Or shall I send my daughter Kate to you?

PETRUCHIO.

I pray you do. *Exeunt* all but PETRUCHIO

I'll attend her here,

And woo her with some spirit when she comes.

Say that she rail; why, then I'll tell her plain

She sings as sweetly as a nightingale.

Say that she frown; I'll say she looks as clear

As morning roses newly wash'd with dew.

Say she be mute, and will not speak a word;

Then I'll commend her volubility,

And say she uttereth piercing eloquence.

If she do bid me pack, I'll give her thanks,

As though she bid me stay by her a week;

If she deny to wed, I'll crave the day

When I shall ask the banns, and when be married.

But here she comes; :Lnd.now, Petruchio, speak.

Enter KATHERINA

Good morrow, Kate-for that's your name, I hear.

KATHERINA.

Well have you heard, but something hard of hearing:

They call me Katherine that do talk of me.

PETRUCHIO.

You lie, in faith, for you are call'd plain Kate,

And bonny Kate, and sometimes Kate the curst;

But, Kate, the prettiest Kate in Christendom,

Kate of Kate Hall, my super-dainty Kate,

For dainties are all Kates, and therefore, Kate,

Take this of me, Kate of my consolation-

Hearing thy mildness prais'd in every town,

Thy virtues spoke of, and thy beauty sounded,

Yet not so deeply as to thee belongs,

Myself am mov'd to woo thee for my wife.

KATHERINA.

Mov'd! in good time! Let him that mov'd you hither

Remove you hence. I knew you at the first

You were a moveable.

PETRUCHIO.

Why, what's a moveable?

KATHERINA.

A join'd-stool.

PETRUCHIO.

Thou hast hit it. Come, sit on me.

KATHERINA.

Asses are made to bear, and so are you.

PETRUCHIO.

Women are made to bear, and so are you.

KATHERINA.

No such jade as you, if me you mean.

PETRUCHIO.

Alas, good Kate, I will not burden thee!

For, knowing thee to be but young and light-

KATHERINA.

Too light for such a swain as you to catch;

And yet as heavy as my weight should be.

PETRUCHIO.

Should be! should-buzz!

KATHERINA.

Well ta'en, and like a buzzard.

PETRUCHIO.

O, slow-wing'd turtle, shall a buzzard take thee?

KATHERINA.

Ay, for a turtle, as he takes a buzzard.

PETRUCHIO.

Come, come, you wasp; i' faith, you are too angry.

KATHERINA.

If I be waspish, best beware my sting.

PETRUCHIO.

My remedy is then to pluck it out.

KATHERINA.

Ay, if the fool could find it where it lies.

PETRUCHIO.

Who knows not where a wasp does wear his sting?

In his tail.

KATHERINA.

In his tongue.

PETRUCHIO.

Whose tongue?

KATHERINA.

Yours, if you talk of tales; and so farewell.

PETRUCHIO.

What, with my tongue in your tail? Nay, come again,
Good Kate; I am a gentleman.

KATHERINA.

That I'll try. *[She strikes him]*

PETRUCHIO.

I swear I'll cuff you, if you strike again.

KATHERINA.

So may you lose your arms.
If you strike me, you are no gentleman;
And if no gentleman, why then no arms.

PETRUCHIO.

A herald, Kate? O, put me in thy books!

KATHERINA.

What is your crest-a coxcomb?

PETRUCHIO.

A combless cock, so Kate will be my hen.

KATHERINA.

No cock of mine: you crow too like a craven.

PETRUCHIO.

Nay, come, Kate, come; you must not look so sour.

KATHERINA.

It is my fashion, when I see a crab.

PETRUCHIO.

Why, here's no crab; and therefore look not sour.

KATHERINA.

There is, there is.

PETRUCHIO.

Then show it me.

KATHERINA.

Had I a glass I would.

PETRUCHIO.

What, you mean my face?

KATHERINA.

Well aim'd of such a young one.

PETRUCHIO.

Now, by Saint George, I am too young for you.

KATHERINA.

Yet you are wither'd.

PETRUCHIO.

'Tis with cares.

KATHERINA.

I care not.

PETRUCHIO.

Nay, hear you, Kate-in sooth, you scape not so.

KATHERINA.
I chafe you, if I tarry; let me go.

PETRUCHIO.

No, not a whit; I find you passing gentle.
'Twas told me you were rough, and coy, and sullen,
And now I find report a very liar;
For thou art pleasant, gamesome, passing courteous,
But slow in speech, yet sweet as springtime flowers.
Thou canst not frown, thou canst not look askance,
Nor bite the lip, as angry wenches will,
Nor hast thou pleasure to be cross in talk;
But thou with mildness entertain'st thy wooers;
With gentle conference, soft and affable.

Why does the world report that Kate doth limp?

O sland'rous world! Kate like the hazel-twig

Is straight and slender, and as brown in hue

As hazel-nuts, and sweeter than the kernels.

O, let me see thee walk. Thou dost not halt.

KATHERINA.

Go, fool, and whom thou keep'st command.

PETRUCHIO.

Did ever Dian so become a grove

As Kate this chamber with her princely gait?

O, be thou Dian, and let her be Kate;

And then let Kate be chaste, and Dian sportful!

KATHERINA.

Where did you study all this goodly speech?

PETRUCHIO.

It is extempore, from my mother wit.

KATHERINA.

A witty mother! witless else her son.

PETRUCHIO.

Am I not wise?

KATHERINA.

Yes, keep you warm.

PETRUCHIO.

Marry, so I mean, sweet Katherine, in thy bed.
And therefore, setting all this chat aside,
Thus in plain terms: your father hath consented
That you shall be my wife your dowry greed on;
And will you, nill you, I will marry you.
Now, Kate, I am a husband for your turn;

For, by this light, whereby I see thy beauty,
Thy beauty that doth make me like thee well,
Thou must be married to no man but me;
For I am he am born to tame you, Kate,
And bring you from a wild Kate to a Kate
Conformable as other household Kates.

Re-enter BAPTISTA, GREMIO, and TRANIO

Here comes your father. Never make denial;
I must and will have Katherine to my wife.

BAPTISTA.

Now, Signior Petruchio, how speed you with my daughter?

PETRUCHIO.

How but well, sir? how but well?

It were impossible I should speed amiss.

BAPTISTA.

Why, how now, daughter Katherine, in your dumps?

KATHERINA.

Call you me daughter? Now I promise you

You have show'd a tender fatherly regard

To wish me wed to one half lunatic,

A mad-cap ruffian and a swearing Jack,

That thinks with oaths to face the matter out.

PETRUCHIO.

Father, 'tis thus: yourself and all the world

That talk'd of her have talk'd amiss of her.

If she be curst, it is for policy,

For,she's not froward, but modest as the dove;

She is not hot, but temperate as the morn;

For patience she will prove a second Grissel,

And Roman Lucrece for her chastity.

And, to conclude, we have 'greed so well together

That upon Sunday is the wedding-day.

KATHERINA.

I'll see thee hang'd on Sunday first.

GREMIO.

Hark, Petruchio; she says she'll see thee hang'd first.

TRANIO.

Is this your speeding? Nay, then good-night our part!

PETRUCHIO.

Be patient, gentlemen. I choose her for myself;
If she and I be pleas'd, what's that to you?
'Tis bargain'd 'twixt us twain, being alone,
That she shall still be curst in company.
I tell you 'tis incredible to believe.

How much she loves me-O, the kindest Kate!
She hung about my neck, and kiss on kiss
She vied so fast, protesting oath on oath,

That in a twink she won me to her love.

O, you are novices! 'Tis a world to see,

How tame, when men and women are alone,

A meacock wretch can make the curstest shrew.

Give me thy hand, Kate; I will unto Venice,

To buy apparel 'gainst the wedding-day.

Provide the feast, father, and bid the guests;

I will be sure my Katherine shall be fine.

BAPTISTA.

I know not what to say; but give me your hands.

God send you joy, Petruchio! 'Tis a match.

GREMIO, TRANIO. Amen, say we; we will be witnesses.

PETRUCHIO.

Father, and wife, and gentlemen, adieu.

I will to Venice; Sunday comes apace;

We will have rings and things, and fine array;

And kiss me, Kate; we will be married a Sunday.

Exeunt PETRUCHIO and KATHERINA severally

GREMIO.

Was ever match clapp'd up so suddenly?

BAPTISTA.

Faith, gentlemen, now I play a merchant's part,

And venture madly on a desperate mart.

TRANIO.

'Twas a commodity lay fretting by you;

'Twill bring you gain, or perish on the seas.

BAPTISTA.

The gain I seek is quiet in the match.

GREMIO.

No doubt but he hath got a quiet catch.

But now, Baptista, to your younger daughter:

Now is the day we long have looked for;

I am your neighbour, and was suitor first.

TRANIO.

And I am one that love Bianca more

Than words can witness or your thoughts can guess.

GREMIO.

Youngling, thou canst not love so dear as I.

TRANIO.

Greybeard, thy love doth freeze.

GREMIO.

But thine doth fry.

Skipper, stand back; 'tis age that nourisheth.

TRANIO.

But youth in ladies' eyes that flourisheth.

BAPTISTA.

Content you, gentlemen; I will compound this strife.
'Tis deeds must win the prize, and he of both
That can assure my daughter greatest dower
Shall have my Bianca's love.
Say, Signior Gremio, what can you assure her?

GREMIO.

First, as you know, my house within the city
Is richly furnished with plate and gold,
Basins and ewers to lave her dainty hands;
My hangings all of Tyrian tapestry;
In ivory coffers I have stuff'd my crowns;
In cypress chests my arras counterpoints,
Costly apparel, tents, and canopies,
Fine linen, Turkey cushions boss'd with pearl,
Valance of Venice gold in needle-work;
Pewter and brass, and all things that belongs
To house or housekeeping. Then at my farm
I have a hundred milch-kine to the pail,

Six score fat oxen standing in my stalls,

And all things answerable to this portion.

Myself am struck in years, I must confess;

And if I die to-morrow this is hers,

If whilst I live she will be only mine.

TRANIO.

That 'only' came well in. Sir, list to me:

I am my father's heir and only son;

If I may have your daughter to my wife,

I'll leave her houses three or four as good

Within rich Pisa's walls as any one

Old Signior Gremio has in Padua;

Besides two thousand ducats by the year

Of fruitful land, all which shall be her jointure.

What, have I pinch'd you, Signior Gremio?

GREMIO.

Two thousand ducats by the year of land!

[Aside] My land amounts not to so much in all.-

That she shall have, besides an argosy

That now is lying in Marseilles road.

What, have I chok'd you with an argosy?

TRANIO.

Gremio, 'tis known my father hath no less

Than three great argosies, besides two galliasses,

And twelve tight galleys. These I will assure her,

And twice as much whate'er thou off'rest next.

GREMIO.

Nay, I have off'red all; I have no more;

And she can have no more than all I have;

If you like me, she shall have me and mine.

TRANIO.

Why, then the maid is mine from all the world

By your firm promise; Gremio is out-vied.

BAPTISTA.

I must confess your offer is the best;

And let your father make her the assurance,

She is your own. Else, you must pardon me;

If you should die before him, where's her dower?

TRANIO.

That's but a cavil; he is old, I young.

GREMIO.

And may not young men die as well as old?

BAPTISTA.

Well, gentlemen,

I am thus resolv'd: on Sunday next you know

My daughter Katherine is to be married;

Now, on the Sunday following shall Bianca

Be bride to you, if you make this assurance;

If not, to Signior Gremio.

And so I take my leave, and thank you both.

GREMIO.

Adieu, good neighbour. *Exit* BAPTISTA

Now, I fear thee not.

Sirrah young gamester, your father were a fool

To give thee all, and in his waning age

Set foot under thy table. Tut, a toy!

An old Italian fox is not so kind, my boy. *Exit*

TRANIO. A vengeance on your crafty withered hide!

Yet I have fac'd it with a card of ten.

'Tis in my head to do my master good:

I see no reason but suppos'd Lucentio

Must get a father, call'd suppos'd Vincentio;

And that's a wonder-fathers commonly

Do get their children; but in this case of wooing

A child shall get a sire, if I fail not of my cunning.

Exit

ACT III.
SCENE I. Padua. BAPTISTA'S house

Enter LUCENTIO as CAMBIO, HORTENSIO as LICIO, and BIANCA

LUCENTIO. Fiddler, forbear; you grow too forward, sir.

Have you so soon forgot the entertainment

Her sister Katherine welcome'd you withal?

HORTENSIO.

But, wrangling pedant, this is

The patroness of heavenly harmony.

Then give me leave to have prerogative;

And when in music we have spent an hour,

Your lecture shall have leisure for as much.

LUCENTIO.

Preposterous ass, that never read so far

To know the cause why music was ordain'd!
Was it not to refresh the mind of man
After his studies or his usual pain?
Then give me leave to read philosophy,
And while I pause serve in your harmony.

HORTENSIO.

Sirrah, I will not bear these braves of thine.

BIANCA.
Why, gentlemen, you do me double wrong
To strive for that which resteth in my choice.
I arn no breeching scholar in the schools,
I'll not be tied to hours nor 'pointed times,
But learn my lessons as I please myself.
And to cut off all strife: here sit we down;
Take you your instrument, play you the whiles!

His lecture will be done ere you have tun'd.

HORTENSIO.

You'll leave his lecture when I am in tune?

LUCENTIO.

That will be never-tune your instrument.

BIANCA.

Where left we last?

LUCENTIO.

Here, madam:
'Hic ibat Simois, hic est Sigeia tellus,
Hic steterat Priami regia celsa senis.'

BIANCA.

Construe them.

LUCENTIO.

'Hic ibat' as I told you before- 'Simois' I am

Lucentio-
'hic est' son unto Vincentio of Pisa- 'Sigeia tellus' disguised
thus to get your love- 'Hic steterat' and that Lucentio that
comes a-wooing- 'Priami' is my man Tranio- 'regia' bearing my
port- 'celsa senis' that we might beguile the old pantaloon.

HORTENSIO.

Madam, my instrument's in tune.

BIANCA.

Let's hear. O fie! the treble jars.

LUCENTIO.

Spit in the hole, man, and tune again.

BIANCA.

Now let me see if I can construe it: 'Hic ibat Simois'

I

know you not- 'hic est Sigeia tellus' I trust you not- 'Hic steterat Priami' take heed he hear us not- 'regia' presume not-
'celsa senis' despair not.

HORTENSIO.

Madam, 'tis now in tune.

LUCENTIO.

All but the bass.

HORTENSIO.

The bass is right; 'tis the base knave that jars.

[Aside] How fiery and forward our pedant is!
Now, for my life, the knave doth court my love.

Pedascule, I'll watch you better yet.

BIANCA.

In time I may believe, yet I mistrust.

LUCENTIO.

Mistrust it not-for sure, AEacides

Was Ajax, call'd so from his grandfather.

BIANCA.

I must believe my master; else, I promise you,

I should be arguing still upon that doubt;

But let it rest. Now, Licio, to you.

Good master, take it not unkindly, pray,

That I have been thus pleasant with you both.

HORTENSIO.

[To LUCENTIO] You may go walk and give me leave awhile;

My lessons make no music in three Parts.

LUCENTIO.

Are you so formal, sir? Well, I must wait,

[Aside] And watch withal; for, but I be deceiv'd,

Our fine musician groweth amorous.

HORTENSIO.

Madam, before you touch the instrument
To learn the order of my fingering,
I must begin with rudiments of art,
To teach you gamut in a briefer sort,
More pleasant, pithy, and effectual,
Than hath been taught by any of my trade;
And there it is in writing fairly drawn.

BIANCA.

Why, I am past my gamut long ago.

HORTENSIO.

Yet read the gamut of Hortensio.

BIANCA.

[Reads]

'"Gamut" I am, the ground of all accord-

"A re" to plead Hortensio's passion-
"B mi" Bianca, take him for thy lord-
"C fa ut" that loves with all affection-
"D sol re" one clef, two notes have I-
"E la mi" show pity or I die.'

Call you this gamut? Tut, I like it not!
Old fashions please me best; I am not so nice
To change true rules for odd inventions.

Enter a SERVANT

SERVANT. Mistress, your father prays you leave your books
And help to dress your sister's chamber up.

You know to-morrow is the wedding-day.

BIANCA.
Farewell, sweet masters, both; I must be gone.
Exeunt BIANCA and SERVANT
LUCENTIO.

Faith, mistress, then I have no cause to stay.

Exit

HORTENSIO. But I have cause to pry into this pedant;

Methinks he looks as though he were in love.

Yet if thy thoughts, Bianca, be so humble

To cast thy wand'ring eyes on every stale-

Seize thee that list. If once I find thee ranging,

HORTENSIO will be quit with thee by changing. *Exit*

SCENE II. Padua. Before BAPTISTA'So house

Enter BAPTISTA, GREMIO, TRANIO as LUCENTIO, KATHERINA, BIANCA,

LUCENTIO as CAMBIO, and ATTENDANTS

BAPTISTA.

[To TRANIO] Signior Lucentio, this is the 'pointed day

That Katherine and Petruchio should be married,

And yet we hear not of our son-in-law.

What will be said? What mockery will it be

To want the bridegroom when the priest attends

To speak the ceremonial rites of marriage!

What says Lucentio to this shame of ours?

KATHERINA.

No shame but mine; I must, forsooth, be forc'd

To give my hand, oppos'd against my heart,

Unto a mad-brain rudesby, full of spleen,

Who woo'd in haste and means to wed at leisure.

I told you, I, he was a frantic fool,

Hiding his bitter jests in blunt behaviour;

And, to be noted for a merry man,

He'll woo a thousand, 'point the day of marriage,

Make friends invited, and proclaim the banns;

Yet never means to wed where he hath woo'd.

Now must the world point at poor Katherine,

And say 'Lo, there is mad Petruchio's wife,

If it would please him come and marry her!'

TRANIO.

Patience, good Katherine, and Baptista too.

Upon my life, Petruchio means but well,

Whatever fortune stays him from his word.

Though he be blunt, I know him passing wise;

Though he be merry, yet withal he's honest.

KATHERINA.

Would Katherine had never seen him though!

Exit , weeping, followed by BIANCA and others

BAPTISTA.

Go, girl, I cannot blame thee now to weep,

For such an injury would vex a very saint;

Much more a shrew of thy impatient humour.

Enter BIONDELLO

Master, master! News, and such old news as you never heard of!

BAPTISTA.

Is it new and old too? How may that be?

BIONDELLO.

Why, is it not news to hear of Petruchio's coming?

BAPTISTA.

Is he come?

BIONDELLO.

Why, no, sir.

BAPTISTA.

What then?

BIONDELLO.

He is coming.

BAPTISTA.

When will he be here?

BIONDELLO.

When he stands where I am and sees you there.

TRANIO.

But, say, what to thine old news?

BIONDELLO.

Why, Petruchio is coming-in a new hat and an old jerkin; a pair of old breeches thrice turn'd; a pair of boots that have been candle-cases, one buckled, another lac'd; an old rusty sword ta'en out of the town armoury, with a broken hilt, and chapeless; with two broken points; his horse hipp'd, with an old motley saddle and stirrups of no kindred; besides, possess'd with the glanders and like to mose in the chine, troubled with the lampass, infected with the fashions, full of windgalls, sped with spavins, rayed with the yellows, past cure of the fives, stark spoil'd with the staggers, begnawn with the bots, sway'd in the back and shoulder-shotten, near-legg'd before, and with a half-cheek'd bit, and a head-stall of sheep's leather which, being restrained to keep him from stumbling, hath been often burst, and now repaired with knots; one girth six times piec'd, and a woman's crupper of velure, which hath two letters for her name fairly set down in studs, and here and there piec'd with pack-thread.

BAPTISTA.

Who comes with him?

BIONDELLO.

O, sir, his lackey, for all the world caparison'd like

the horse-with a linen stock on one leg and a kersey

boot-hose

on the other, gart'red with a red and blue list; an old hat, and

the humour of forty fancies prick'd in't for a feather; a

monster, a very monster in apparel, and not like a Christian

footboy or a gentleman's lackey.

TRANIO.

'Tis some odd humour pricks him to this fashion;

Yet oftentimes lie goes but mean-apparell'd.

BAPTISTA.

I am glad he's come, howsoe'er he comes.

BIONDELLO.

Why, sir, he comes not.

BAPTISTA.

Didst thou not say he comes?

BIONDELLO.

Who? that Petruchio came?

BAPTISTA.

Ay, that Petruchio came.

BIONDELLO.

No, sir; I say his horse comes with him on his back.

BAPTISTA.

Why, that's all one.

BIONDELLO.

Nay, by Saint Jamy,

I hold you a penny,

A horse and a man

Is more than one,

And yet not many.

Enter PETRUCHIO and GRUMIO

PETRUCHIO. Come, where be these gallants? Who's at home?

BAPTISTA.

You are welcome, sir.

PETRUCHIO.

And yet I come not well.

BAPTISTA.

And yet you halt not.

TRANIO.

Not so well apparell'd
As I wish you were.

PETRUCHIO.

Were it better, I should rush in thus.
But where is Kate? Where is my lovely bride?
How does my father? Gentles, methinks you frown;
And wherefore gaze this goodly company
As if they saw some wondrous monument,
Some comet or unusual prodigy?

BAPTISTA.

Why, sir, you know this is your wedding-day.
First were we sad, fearing you would not come;
Now sadder, that you come so unprovided.
Fie, doff this habit, shame to your estate,
An eye-sore to our solemn festival!

TRANIO.

And tell us what occasion of import

Hath all so long detain'd you from your wife,

And sent you hither so unlike yourself?

PETRUCHIO.

Tedious it were to tell, and harsh to hear;

Sufficeth I am come to keep my word,

Though in some part enforced to digress,

Which at more leisure I will so excuse

As you shall well be satisfied withal.

But where is Kate? I stay too long from her;

The morning wears, 'tis time we were at church.

TRANIO.

See not your bride in these unreverent robes;

Go to my chamber, put on clothes of mine.

PETRUCHIO.

Not I, believe me; thus I'll visit her.

BAPTISTA.

But thus, I trust, you will not marry her.

PETRUCHIO.
Good sooth, even thus; therefore ha' done with words;
To me she's married, not unto my clothes.
Could I repair what she will wear in me
As I can change these poor accoutrements,
'Twere well for Kate and better for myself.
But what a fool am I to chat with you,
When I should bid good-morrow to my bride
And seal the title with a lovely kiss!
Exeunt PETRUCHIO and PETRUCHIO
TRANIO.

He hath some meaning in his mad attire.
We will persuade him, be it possible,
To put on better ere he go to church.

BAPTISTA.
I'll after him and see the event of this.

Exeunt BAPTISTA, GREMIO, BIONDELLO, and ATTENDENTS

TRANIO.

But to her love concerneth us to ad
Her father's liking; which to bring to pass,
As I before imparted to your worship,
I am to get a man-whate'er he be
It skills not much; we'll fit him to our turn-
And he shall be Vincentio of Pisa,
And make assurance here in Padua
Of greater sums than I have promised.
So shall you quietly enjoy your hope
And marry sweet Bianca with consent.

LUCENTIO.

Were it not that my fellow schoolmaster
Doth watch Bianca's steps so narrowly,
'Twere good, methinks, to steal our marriage;
Which once perform'd, let all the world say no,
I'll keep mine own despite of all the world.

TRANIO.

That by degrees we mean to look into

And watch our vantage in this business;

We'll over-reach the greybeard, Gremio,

The narrow-prying father, Minola,

The quaint musician, amorous Licio-

All for my master's sake, Lucentio.

Re-enter GREMIO

Signior Gremio, came you from the church?

GREMIO.

As willingly as e'er I came from school.

TRANIO.

And is the bride and bridegroom coming home?

GREMIO.

A bridegroom, say you? 'Tis a groom indeed,

A grumbling groom, and that the girl shall find.

TRANIO.

Curster than she? Why, 'tis impossible.

GREMIO.

Why, he's a devil, a devil, a very fiend.

TRANIO.

Why, she's a devil, a devil, the devil's dam.

GREMIO.

Tut, she's a lamb, a dove, a fool, to him!
I'll tell you, Sir Lucentio: when the priest
Should ask if Katherine should be his wife,
'Ay, by gogs-wouns' quoth he, and swore so loud
That, all amaz'd, the priest let fall the book;
And as he stoop'd again to take it up,
This mad-brain'd bridegroom took him such a cuff
That down fell priest and book, and book and priest.

'Now take them up,' quoth he 'if any list.'

TRANIO.

What said the wench, when he rose again?

GREMIO.

Trembled and shook, for why he stamp'd and swore

As if the vicar meant to cozen him.

But after many ceremonies done

He calls for wine: 'A health!' quoth he, as if

He had been abroad, carousing to his mates

After a storm; quaff'd off the muscadel,

And threw the sops all in the sexton's face,

Having no other reason

But that his beard grew thin and hungerly

And seem'd to ask him sops as he was drinking.

This done, he took the bride about the neck,

And kiss'd her lips with such a clamorous smack

That at the parting all the church did echo.

And I, seeing this, came thence for very shame;

And after me, I know, the rout is coming.
Such a mad marriage never was before.
Hark, hark! I hear the minstrels play. *[Music plays]*

Enter PETRUCHIO, KATHERINA, BIANCA, BAPTISTA, HORTENSIO,

GRUMIO, and train

PETRUCHIO.
Gentlemen and friends, I thank you for your pains.
I know you think to dine with me to-day,
And have prepar'd great store of wedding cheer
But so it is-my haste doth call me hence,
And therefore here I mean to take my leave.

BAPTISTA.

Is't possible you will away to-night?

PETRUCHIO.
I must away to-day before night come.

Make it no wonder; if you knew my business,
You would entreat me rather go than stay.
And, honest company, I thank you all
That have beheld me give away myself
To this most patient, sweet, and virtuous wife.
Dine with my father, drink a health to me.

For I must hence; and farewell to you all.

TRANIO.
Let us entreat you stay till after dinner.

PETRUCHIO.

It may not be.

GREMIO.
Let me entreat you.

PETRUCHIO.

It cannot be.

KATHERINA.

Let me entreat you.

PETRUCHIO.

I am content.

KATHERINA.

Are you content to stay?

PETRUCHIO.

I am content you shall entreat me stay;
But yet not stay, entreat me how you can.

KATHERINA.

Now, if you love me, stay.

PETRUCHIO.

Grumio, my horse.

GRUMIO.

Ay, sir, they be ready; the oats have eaten the horses.

KATHERINA.

Nay, then,

Do what thou canst, I will not go to-day;

No, nor to-morrow, not till I please myself.

The door is open, sir; there lies your way;

You may be jogging whiles your boots are green;

For me, I'll not be gone till I please myself.

'Tis like you'll prove a jolly surly groom

That take it on you at the first so roundly.

PETRUCHIO.

O Kate, content thee; prithee be not angry.

KATHERINA.

I will be angry; what hast thou to do?

Father, be quiet; he shall stay my leisure.

GREMIO.

Ay, marry, sir, now it begins to work.

KATHERINA.

Gentlemen, forward to the bridal dinner.

I see a woman may be made a fool

If she had not a spirit to resist.

PETRUCHIO.

They shall go forward, Kate, at thy command.

Obey the bride, you that attend on her;

Go to the feast, revel and domineer,

Carouse full measure to her maidenhead;

Be mad and merry, or go hang yourselves.

But for my bonny Kate, she must with me.

Nay, look not big, nor stamp, nor stare, nor fret;

I will be master of what is mine own-

She is my goods, my chattels, she is my house,

My household stuff, my field, my barn,

My horse, my ox, my ass, my any thing,

And here she stands; touch her whoever dare;

I'll bring mine action on the proudest he

That stops my way in Padua. Grumio,

Draw forth thy weapon; we are beset with thieves;

Rescue thy mistress, if thou be a man.

Fear not, sweet wench; they shall not touch thee, Kate;

I'll buckler thee against a million.

Exeunt PETRUCHIO, KATHERINA, and GRUMIO

BAPTISTA.

Nay, let them go, a couple of quiet ones.

GREMIO.

Went they not quickly, I should die with laughing.

TRANIO.

Of all mad matches, never was the like.

LUCENTIO.

Mistress, what's your opinion of your sister?

BIANCA.

That, being mad herself, she's madly mated.

GREMIO.

I warrant him, Petruchio is Kated.

BAPTISTA.

Neighbours and friends, though bride and bridegroom wants
For to supply the places at the table,
You know there wants no junkets at the feast.
Lucentio, you shall supply the bridegroom's place;
And let Bianca take her sister's room.

TRANIO.

Shall sweet Bianca practise how to bride it?

BAPTISTA.

She shall, Lucentio. Come, gentlemen, let's go.

Exeunt

ACT IV.
SCENE I. PETRUCHIO'S country house

Enter GRUMIO

GRUMIO. Fie, fie on all tired jades, on all mad masters, and all foul ways! Was ever man so beaten? Was ever man so ray'd? Was ever man so weary? I am sent before to make a fire, and they are coming after to warm them. Now were not I a little pot and soon hot, my very lips might freeze to my teeth, my tongue to the roof of my mouth, my heart in my belly, ere I should come by a fire to thaw me. But I with blowing the fire shall warm myself; for, considering the weather, a taller man than I will take cold.

Holla, ho! Curtis!

Enter CURTIS

CURTIS. Who is that calls so coldly?

GRUMIO.
A piece of ice. If thou doubt it, thou mayst slide from my shoulder to my heel with no greater a run but my head and my neck. A fire, good Curtis.

CURTIS.

Is my master and his wife coming, Grumio?

GRUMIO.
O, ay, Curtis, ay; and therefore fire, fire; cast on no water.

CURTIS.

Is she so hot a shrew as she's reported?

GRUMIO.
She was, good Curtis, before this frost; but thou know'st
winter tames man, woman, and beast; for it hath tam'd my old
master, and my new mistress, and myself, fellow Curtis.

CURTIS.

Away, you three-inch fool! I am no beast.

GRUMIO.
Am I but three inches? Why, thy horn is a foot, and so long
am I at the least. But wilt thou make a fire, or shall I complain
on thee to our mistress, whose hand-she being now at hand-thou
shalt soon feel, to thy cold comfort, for being slow in thy hot office?

CURTIS.

I prithee, good Grumio, tell me how goes the world?

GRUMIO.
A cold world, Curtis, in every office but thine; and
therefore fire. Do thy duty, and have thy duty, for my master and
mistress are almost frozen to death.

CURTIS.
There's fire ready; and therefore, good Grumio, the news?

GRUMIO.

Why, 'Jack boy! ho, boy!' and as much news as thou wilt.

CURTIS.
Come, you are so full of cony-catching!

GRUMIO.

Why, therefore, fire; for I have caught extreme cold.
Where's the cook? Is supper ready, the house trimm'd, rushes

strew'd, cobwebs swept, the serving-men in their new fustian,

their white stockings, and every officer his wedding-garment on?

Be the jacks fair within, the jills fair without, the carpets

laid, and everything in order?

CURTIS.

All ready; and therefore, I pray thee, news.

GRUMIO.

First know my horse is tired; my master and mistress fall'n out.

CURTIS.

How?

GRUMIO.

Out of their saddles into the dirt; and thereby hangs a tale.

CURTIS.

Let's ha't, good Grumio.

GRUMIO.

Lend thine ear.

CURTIS.

Here.

GRUMIO.

There. [Striking him]

CURTIS.

This 'tis to feel a tale, not to hear a tale.

GRUMIO.

And therefore 'tis call'd a sensible tale; and this cuff

was but to knock at your car and beseech list'ning. Now I

begin:

Imprimis, we came down a foul hill, my master riding behind my

mistress-

CURTIS.

Both of one horse?

GRUMIO.

What's that to thee?

CURTIS.

Why, a horse.

GRUMIO.

Tell thou the tale. But hadst thou not cross'd me, thou
shouldst have heard how her horse fell and she under her horse;
thou shouldst have heard in how miry a place, how she was
bemoil'd, how he left her with the horse upon her, how he beat me
because her horse stumbled, how she waded through the dirt to
pluck him off me, how he swore, how she pray'd that never pray'd
before, how I cried, how the horses ran away, how her bridle was
burst, how I lost my crupper-with many things of worthy memory,
which now shall die in oblivion, and thou return unexperienc'd to thy grave.

CURTIS.

By this reck'ning he is more shrew than she.

GRUMIO.

Ay, and that thou and the proudest of you all shall find when he comes home. But what talk I of this? Call forth Nathaniel, Joseph, Nicholas, Philip, Walter, Sugarsop, and the rest; let their heads be sleekly comb'd, their blue coats brush'd and their garters of an indifferent knit; let them curtsy with their left legs, and not presume to touch a hair of my mastcr's horse-tail till they kiss their hands. Are they all ready?

CURTIS.

They are.

GRUMIO.

Call them forth.

CURTIS.

Do you hear, ho? You must meet my master, to countenance my mistress.

GRUMIO.

Why, she hath a face of her own.

CURTIS.

Who knows not that?

GRUMIO.

Thou, it seems, that calls for company to countenance her.

CURTIS.

I call them forth to credit her.

GRUMIO.

Why, she comes to borrow nothing of them.

Enter four or five SERVINGMEN

NATHANIEL. Welcome home, Grumio!

PHILIP.
How now, Grumio!

JOSEPH.

What, Grumio!

NICHOLAS.
Fellow Grumio!

NATHANIEL.

How now, old lad!

GRUMIO.
Welcome, you!- how now, you!- what, you!- fellow, you!- and
thus much for greeting. Now, my spruce companions, is all ready,
and all things neat?

NATHANIEL.

All things is ready. How near is our master?

GRUMIO.
E'en at hand, alighted by this; and therefore be not-
Cock's passion, silence! I hear my master.

Enter PETRUCHIO and KATHERINA

PETRUCHIO. Where be these knaves? What, no man at door
To hold my stirrup nor to take my horse!

Where is Nathaniel, Gregory, Philip?

ALL SERVANTS.
Here, here, sir; here, sir.

PETRUCHIO.

Here, sir! here, sir! here, sir! here, sir!
You logger-headed and unpolish'd grooms!

What, no attendance? no regard? no duty?
Where is the foolish knave I sent before?

GRUMIO.

Here, sir; as foolish as I was before.

PETRUCHIO.

YOU peasant swain! you whoreson malt-horse drudge!
Did I not bid thee meet me in the park
And bring along these rascal knaves with thee?

GRUMIO.

Nathaniel's coat, sir, was not fully made,
And Gabriel's pumps were all unpink'd i' th' heel;
There was no link to colour Peter's hat,
And Walter's dagger was not come from sheathing;
There were none fine but Adam, Ralph, and Gregory;

The rest were ragged, old, and beggarly;

Yet, as they are, here are they come to meet you.

PETRUCHIO.

Go, rascals, go and fetch my supper in.

Exeunt some of the SERVINGMEN

[Sings] Where is the life that late I led?

Where are those-

Sit down, Kate, and welcome. Soud, soud, soud, soud!

Re-enter SERVANTS with supper

Why, when, I say? Nay, good sweet Kate, be merry.

Off with my boots, you rogues! you villains, when?

[Sings] It was the friar of orders grey,

As he forth walked on his way-

Out, you rogue! you pluck my foot awry;

Take that, and mend the plucking off the other.

[Strikes him]

Be merry, Kate. Some water, here, what, ho!

Enter one with water

Where's my spaniel Troilus? Sirrah, get you hence,

And bid my cousin Ferdinand come hither:

Exit SERVINGMAN

One, Kate, that you must kiss and be acquainted with.

Where are my slippers? Shall I have some water?

Come, Kate, and wash, and welcome heartily.

You whoreson villain! will you let it fall? *[Strikes him]*

KATHERINA.

Patience, I pray you; 'twas a fault unwilling.

PETRUCHIO.

A whoreson, beetle-headed, flap-ear'd knave!

Come, Kate, sit down; I know you have a stomach.

Will you give thanks, sweet Kate, or else shall I?

What's this? Mutton?

FIRST SERVANT.

Ay.

PETRUCHIO.

Who brought it?

PETER.

I.

PETRUCHIO.

'Tis burnt; and so is all the meat.
What dogs are these? Where is the rascal cook?
How durst you villains bring it from the dresser
And serve it thus to me that love it not?
There, take it to you, trenchers, cups, and all;

[Throws the meat, etc., at them]

You heedless joltheads and unmanner'd slaves!

What, do you grumble? I'll be with you straight.

Exeunt SERVANTS

KATHERINA.

I pray you, husband, be not so disquiet;
The meat was well, if you were so contented.

PETRUCHIO.

I tell thee, Kate, 'twas burnt and dried away,
And I expressly am forbid to touch it;

For it engenders choler, planteth anger;

And better 'twere that both of us did fast,

Since, of ourselves, ourselves are choleric,

Than feed it with such over-roasted flesh.

Be patient; to-morrow 't shall be mended.

And for this night we'll fast for company.

Come, I will bring thee to thy bridal chamber. *Exeunt*

Re-enter SERVANTS severally

NATHANIEL.

Peter, didst ever see the like?

PETER.

He kills her in her own humour.

Re-enter CURTIS

GRUMIO.

Where is he?

CURTIS.

In her chamber. Making a sermon of continency to her,

And rails, and swears, and rates, that she, poor soul,

Knows not which way to stand, to look, to speak.

And sits as one new risen from a dream.

Away, away! for he is coming hither. *Exeunt*

Re-enter PETRUCHIO

PETRUCHIO.

Thus have I politicly begun my reign,

And 'tis my hope to end successfully.

My falcon now is sharp and passing empty.

And till she stoop she must not be full-gorg'd,

For then she never looks upon her lure.

Another way I have to man my haggard,

To make her come, and know her keeper's call,

That is, to watch her, as we watch these kites

That bate and beat, and will not be obedient.

She eat no meat to-day, nor none shall eat;

Last night she slept not, nor to-night she shall not;

As with the meat, some undeserved fault

I'll find about the making of the bed;

And here I'll fling the pillow, there the bolster,

This way the coverlet, another way the sheets;

Ay, and amid this hurly I intend

That all is done in reverend care of her-

And, in conclusion, she shall watch all night;

And if she chance to nod I'll rail and brawl

And with the clamour keep her still awake.

This is a way to kill a wife with kindness,

And thus I'll curb her mad and headstrong humour.

He that knows better how to tame a shrew,

Now let him speak; 'tis charity to show. *Exit*

SCENE II. Padua. Before BAPTISTA'S house

Enter TRANIO as LUCENTIO, and HORTENSIO as LICIO

TRANIO. Is 't possible, friend Licio, that Mistress Bianca

Doth fancy any other but Lucentio?

I tell you, sir, she bears me fair in hand.

HORTENSIO.

Sir, to satisfy you in what I have said,

Stand by and mark the manner of his teaching.

[They stand aside]

Enter BIANCA, and LUCENTIO as CAMBIO

LUCENTIO. Now, mistress, profit you in what you read?

BIANCA.

What, master, read you, First resolve me that.

LUCENTIO.

I read that I profess, 'The Art to Love.'

BIANCA.

And may you prove, sir, master of your art!

LUCENTIO.

While you, sweet dear, prove mistress of my heart.

[They retire]

HORTENSIO.

Quick proceeders, marry! Now tell me, I pray,
You that durst swear that your Mistress Blanca
Lov'd none in the world so well as Lucentio.

TRANIO.

O despiteful love! unconstant womankind!
I tell thee, Licio, this is wonderful.

HORTENSIO.

Mistake no more; I am not Licio.

Nor a musician as I seem to be;

But one that scorn to live in this disguise

For such a one as leaves a gentleman

And makes a god of such a cullion.

Know, sir, that I am call'd Hortensio.

TRANIO.

Signior Hortensio, I have often heard

Of your entire affection to Bianca;

And since mine eyes are witness of her lightness,

I will with you, if you be so contented,

Forswear Bianca and her love for ever.

HORTENSIO.

See, how they kiss and court! Signior Lucentio,

Here is my hand, and here I firmly vow

Never to woo her more, but do forswear her,

As one unworthy all the former favours

That I have fondly flatter'd her withal.

TRANIO.

And here I take the like unfeigned oath,

Never to marry with her though she would entreat;

Fie on her! See how beastly she doth court him!

HORTENSIO.

Would all the world but he had quite forsworn!

For me, that I may surely keep mine oath,

I will be married to a wealtlly widow

Ere three days pass, which hath as long lov'd me

As I have lov'd this proud disdainful haggard.

And so farewell, Signior Lucentio.

Kindness in women, not their beauteous looks,

Shall win my love; and so I take my leave,

In resolution as I swore before. *Exit*

TRANIO. Mistress Bianca, bless you with such grace

As 'longeth to a lover's blessed case!

Nay, I have ta'en you napping, gentle love, And have forsworn you with Hortensio.

BIANCA.

Tranio, you jest; but have you both forsworn me?

TRANIO.

Mistress, we have.

LUCENTIO.

Then we are rid of Licio.

TRANIO.

I' faith, he'll have a lusty widow now,

That shall be woo'd and wedded in a day.

BIANCA.

God give him joy!

TRANIO.

Ay, and he'll tame her.

BIANCA.

He says so, Tranio.

TRANIO.
Faith, he is gone unto the taming-school.

BIANCA.

The taming-school! What, is there such a place?

TRANIO.
Ay, mistress; and Petruchio is the master,
That teacheth tricks eleven and twenty long,
To tame a shrew and charm her chattering tongue.

Enter BIONDELLO

BIONDELLO. O master, master, have watch'd so long

That I am dog-weary; but at last I spied
An ancient angel coming down the hill
Will serve the turn.

TRANIO.

What is he, Biondello?

BIONDELLO.
Master, a mercatante or a pedant,
I know not what; but formal in apparel,
In gait and countenance surely like a father.

LUCENTIO.

And what of him, Tranio?

TRANIO.
If he be credulous and trust my tale,
I'll make him glad to seem Vincentio,
And give assurance to Baptista Minola

As if he were the right Vincentio.

Take in your love, and then let me alone.

Exeunt LUCENTIO and BIANCA

Enter a PEDANT

PEDANT. God save you, sir!

TRANIO.

And you, sir; you are welcome.

Travel you far on, or are you at the farthest?

PEDANT.

Sir, at the farthest for a week or two;

But then up farther, and as far as Rome;

And so to Tripoli, if God lend me life.

TRANIO.

What countryman, I pray?

PEDANT.

Of Mantua.

TRANIO.

Of Mantua, sir? Marry, God forbid,
And come to Padua, careless of your life!

PEDANT.

My life, sir! How, I pray? For that goes hard.

TRANIO.

'Tis death for any one in Mantua
To come to Padua. Know you not the cause?
Your ships are stay'd at Venice; and the Duke,
For private quarrel 'twixt your Duke and him,
Hath publish'd and proclaim'd it openly.
'Tis marvel-but that you are but newly come,
You might have heard it else proclaim'd about.

PEDANT.

Alas, sir, it is worse for me than so!
For I have bills for money by exchange
From Florence, and must here deliver them.

TRANIO.
Well, sir, to do you courtesy,
This will I do, and this I will advise you-
First, tell me, have you ever been at Pisa?

PEDANT.
Ay, sir, in Pisa have I often been,
Pisa renowned for grave citizens.

TRANIO.

Among them know you one Vincentio?

PEDANT.
I know him not, but I have heard of him,

A merchant of incomparable wealth.

TRANIO.

He is my father, sir; and, sooth to say,

In count'nance somewhat doth resemble you.

BIONDELLO.

[Aside] As much as an apple doth an oyster, and all one.

TRANIO.

To save your life in this extremity,

This favour will I do you for his sake;

And think it not the worst of all your fortunes

That you are like to Sir Vincentio.

His name and credit shall you undertake,

And in my house you shall be friendly lodg'd;

Look that you take upon you as you should.

You understand me, sir. So shall you stay

Till you have done your business in the city.

If this be court'sy, sir, accept of it.

PEDANT.

O, sir, I do; and will repute you ever

The patron of my life and liberty.

TRANIO.

Then go with me to make the matter good.

This, by the way, I let you understand:

My father is here look'd for every day

To pass assurance of a dow'r in marriage

'Twixt me and one Baptista's daughter here.

In all these circumstances I'll instruct you.

Go with me to clothe you as becomes you. *Exeunt*

SCENE III. PETRUCHIO'S house

Enter KATHERINA and GRUMIO

GRUMIO. No, no, forsooth; I dare not for my life.

KATHERINA.

The more my wrong, the more his spite appears.

What, did he marry me to famish me?
Beggars that come unto my father's door
Upon entreaty have a present alms;
If not, elsewhere they meet with charity;
But I, who never knew how to entreat,
Nor never needed that I should entreat,
Am starv'd for meat, giddy for lack of sleep;
With oaths kept waking, and with brawling fed;
And that which spites me more than all these wants-
He does it under name of perfect love;
As who should say, if I should sleep or eat,
'Twere deadly sickness or else present death.
I prithee go and get me some repast;
I care not what, so it be wholesome food.

GRUMIO.

What say you to a neat's foot?

KATHERINA.

'Tis passing good; I prithee let me have it.

GRUMIO.

I fear it is too choleric a meat.

How say you to a fat tripe finely broil'd?

KATHERINA.

I like it well; good Grumio, fetch it me.

GRUMIO.

I cannot tell; I fear 'tis choleric.

What say you to a piece of beef and mustard?

KATHERINA.

A dish that I do love to feed upon.

GRUMIO.

Ay, but the mustard is too hot a little.

KATHERINA.

Why then the beef, and let the mustard rest.

GRUMIO.

Nay, then I will not; you shall have the mustard,
Or else you get no beef of Grumio.

KATHERINA.

Then both, or one, or anything thou wilt.

GRUMIO.

Why then the mustard without the beef.

KATHERINA.

Go, get thee gone, thou false deluding slave,

[Beats him]

That feed'st me with the very name of meat.

Sorrow on thee and all the pack of you

That triumph thus upon my misery!

Go, get thee gone, I say.

Enter PETRUCHIO, and HORTENSIO with meat

PETRUCHIO. How fares my Kate? What, sweeting, all amort?

HORTENSIO.

Mistress, what cheer?

KATHERINA.

Faith, as cold as can be.

PETRUCHIO.

Pluck up thy spirits, look cheerfully upon me.

Here, love, thou seest how diligent I am,

To dress thy meat myself, and bring it thee.

I am sure, sweet Kate, this kindness merits thanks.

What, not a word? Nay, then thou lov'st it not,

And all my pains is sorted to no proof.

Here, take away this dish.

KATHERINA.

I pray you, let it stand.

PETRUCHIO.

The poorest service is repaid with thanks;

And so shall mine, before you touch the meat.

KATHERINA.

I thank you, sir.

HORTENSIO.

Signior Petruchio, fie! you are to blame.
Come, Mistress Kate, I'll bear you company.

PETRUCHIO.
[Aside] Eat it up all, Hortensio, if thou lovest
me.-
Much good do it unto thy gentle heart!
Kate, eat apace. And now, my honey love,
Will we return unto thy father's house
And revel it as bravely as the best,
With silken coats and caps, and golden rings,
With ruffs and cuffs and farthingales and things,
With scarfs and fans and double change of brav'ry.
With amber bracelets, beads, and all this knav'ry.
What, hast thou din'd? The tailor stays thy leisure,
To deck thy body with his ruffling treasure.

Enter TAILOR

Come, tailor, let us see these ornaments;
Lay forth the gown.

Enter HABERDASHER

What news with you, sir?

HABERDASHER.

Here is the cap your worship did bespeak.

PETRUCHIO.

Why, this was moulded on a porringer;
A velvet dish. Fie, fie! 'tis lewd and filthy;
Why, 'tis a cockle or a walnut-shell,
A knack, a toy, a trick, a baby's cap.

Away with it. Come, let me have a bigger.

KATHERINA.

I'll have no bigger; this doth fit the time,
And gentlewomen wear such caps as these.

PETRUCHIO.

When you are gentle, you shall have one too,
And not till then.

HORTENSIO.

[Aside] That will not be in haste.

KATHERINA.

Why, sir, I trust I may have leave to speak;
And speak I will. I am no child, no babe.
Your betters have endur'd me say my mind,
And if you cannot, best you stop your ears.
My tongue will tell the anger of my heart,
Or else my heart, concealing it, will break;
And rather than it shall, I will be free
Even to the uttermost, as I please, in words.

PETRUCHIO.

Why, thou say'st true; it is a paltry cap,
A custard-coffin, a bauble, a silken pie;

I love thee well in that thou lik'st it not.

KATHERINA.
Love me or love me not, I like the cap;
And it I will have, or I will have none. *Exit* HABERDASHER
PETRUCHIO.

Thy gown? Why, ay. Come, tailor, let us see't.
O mercy, God! what masquing stuff is here?

What's this? A sleeve? 'Tis like a demi-cannon.
What, up and down, carv'd like an appletart?
Here's snip and nip and cut and slish and slash,
Like to a censer in a barber's shop.

Why, what a devil's name, tailor, call'st thou this?

HORTENSIO.
[Aside] I see she's like to have neither cap nor gown.

TAILOR.

You bid me make it orderly and well,

According to the fashion and the time.

PETRUCHIO.

Marry, and did; but if you be rememb'red,

I did not bid you mar it to the time.

Go, hop me over every kennel home,

For you shall hop without my custom, sir.

I'll none of it; hence! make your best of it.

KATHERINA.

I never saw a better fashion'd gown,

More quaint, more pleasing, nor more commendable;

Belike you mean to make a puppet of me.

PETRUCHIO.

Why, true; he means to make a puppet of thee.

TAILOR.

She says your worship means to make a puppet of her.

PETRUCHIO.

O monstrous arrogance! Thou liest, thou thread, thou thimble,
Thou yard, three-quarters, half-yard, quarter, nail,
Thou flea, thou nit, thou winter-cricket thou-
Brav'd in mine own house with a skein of thread!
Away, thou rag, thou quantity, thou remnant;
Or I shall so bemete thee with thy yard
As thou shalt think on prating whilst thou liv'st!

I tell thee, I, that thou hast marr'd her gown.

TAILOR.

Your worship is deceiv'd; the gown is made
Just as my master had direction.
Grumio gave order how it should be done.

GRUMIO.

I gave him no order; I gave him the stuff.

TAILOR.

But how did you desire it should be made?

GRUMIO.

Marry, sir, with needle and thread.

TAILOR.

But did you not request to have it cut?

GRUMIO.

Thou hast fac'd many things.

TAILOR.

I have.

GRUMIO.

Face not me. Thou hast brav'd many men; brave not me. I will neither be fac'd nor brav'd. I say unto thee, I bid thy master cut out the gown; but I did not bid him cut it to pieces.

Ergo, thou liest.

TAILOR.

Why, here is the note of the fashion to testify.

PETRUCHIO.

Read it.

GRUMIO.

The note lies in's throat, if he say I said so.

TAILOR.

[Reads] 'Imprimis, a loose-bodied gown'-

GRUMIO.

Master, if ever I said loose-bodied gown, sew me in the skirts of it and beat me to death with a bottom of brown bread; I said a gown.

PETRUCHIO.

Proceed.

TAILOR.

[Reads] 'With a small compass'd cape'-

GRUMIO.

I confess the cape.

TAILOR.

[Reads] 'With a trunk sleeve'-

GRUMIO.

I confess two sleeves.

TAILOR.

[Reads] 'The sleeves curiously cut.'

PETRUCHIO.

Ay, there's the villainy.

GRUMIO.

Error i' th' bill, sir; error i' th' bill! I commanded the
sleeves should be cut out, and sew'd up again; and that I'll
prove upon thee, though thy little finger be armed in a thimble.

TAILOR.

This is true that I say; an I had thee in place where,
thou shouldst know it.

GRUMIO.

I am for thee straight; take thou the bill, give me thy
meteyard, and spare not me.

HORTENSIO.

God-a-mercy, Grumio! Then he shall have no odds.

PETRUCHIO.

Well, sir, in brief, the gown is not for me.

GRUMIO.

You are i' th' right, sir; 'tis for my mistress.

PETRUCHIO.

Go, take it up unto thy master's use.

GRUMIO.

Villain, not for thy life! Take up my mistress' gown for
thy master's use!

PETRUCHIO.

Why, sir, what's your conceit in that?

GRUMIO.

O, sir, the conceit is deeper than you think for.

Take up my mistress' gown to his master's use!

O fie, fie, fie!

PETRUCHIO.

[Aside] Hortensio, say thou wilt see the tailor

paid.-

Go take it hence; be gone, and say no more.

HORTENSIO.

Tailor, I'll pay thee for thy gown to-morrow;

Take no unkindness of his hasty words.

Away, I say; commend me to thy master. *Exit* TAILOR

PETRUCHIO.

Well, come, my Kate; we will unto your father's

Even in these honest mean habiliments;

Our purses shall be proud, our garments poor;

For 'tis the mind that makes the body rich;

And as the sun breaks through the darkest clouds,

So honour peereth in the meanest habit.

What, is the jay more precious than the lark

Because his feathers are more beautiful?

Or is the adder better than the eel

Because his painted skin contents the eye?

O no, good Kate; neither art thou the worse

For this poor furniture and mean array.
If thou account'st it shame, lay it on me;
And therefore frolic; we will hence forthwith
To feast and sport us at thy father's house.
Go call my men, and let us straight to him;
And bring our horses unto Long-lane end;
There will we mount, and thither walk on foot.
Let's see; I think 'tis now some seven o'clock,
And well we may come there by dinner-time.

KATHERINA.

I dare assure you, sir, 'tis almost two,
And 'twill be supper-time ere you come there.

PETRUCHIO.

It shall be seven ere I go to horse.
Look what I speak, or do, or think to do,
You are still crossing it. Sirs, let 't alone;
I will not go to-day; and ere I do,
It shall be what o'clock I say it is.

HORTENSIO.

Why, so this gallant will command the sun.

Exeunt

SCENE IV. Padua. Before BAPTISTA'S house

Enter TRANIO as LUCENTIO, and the PEDANT dressed like VINCENTIO

TRANIO. Sir, this is the house; please it you that I call?

PEDANT.

Ay, what else? And, but I be deceived,
Signior Baptista may remember me
Near twenty years ago in Genoa,
Where we were lodgers at the Pegasus.

TRANIO.

'Tis well; and hold your own, in any case, With such austerity as longeth to a father.

Enter BIONDELLO

PEDANT. I warrant you. But, sir, here comes your boy;
'Twere good he were school'd.

TRANIO.
Fear you not him. Sirrah Biondello,
Now do your duty throughly, I advise you.

Imagine 'twere the right Vincentio.

BIONDELLO.
Tut, fear not me.

TRANIO.

But hast thou done thy errand to Baptista?

BIONDELLO.

I told him that your father was at Venice,

And that you look'd for him this day in Padua.

TRANIO.

Th'art a tall fellow; hold thee that to drink.

Here comes Baptista. Set your countenance, sir.

Enter BAPTISTA, and LUCENTIO as CAMBIO

Signior Baptista, you are happily met.

[To To the PEDANT] Sir, this is the gentleman I told you of;

I pray you stand good father to me now;

Give me Bianca for my patrimony.

PEDANT.

Soft, son!

Sir, by your leave: having come to Padua

To gather in some debts, my son Lucentio

Made me acquainted with a weighty cause

Of love between your daughter and himself;
And-for the good report I hear of you,
And for the love he beareth to your daughter,
And she to him-to stay him not too long,
I am content, in a good father's care,
To have him match'd; and, if you please to like
No worse than I, upon some agreement
Me shall you find ready and willing
With one consent to have her so bestow'd;
For curious I cannot be with you,
Signior Baptista, of whom I hear so well.

BAPTISTA.

Sir, pardon me in what I have to say.
Your plainness and your shortness please me well.
Right true it is your son Lucentio here
Doth love my daughter, and she loveth him,
Or both dissemble deeply their affections;
And therefore, if you say no more than this,
That like a father you will deal with him,

And pass my daughter a sufficient dower,

The match is made, and all is done-

Your son shall have my daughter with consent.

TRANIO.

I thank you, sir. Where then do you know best

We be affied, and such assurance ta'en

As shall with either part's agreement stand?

BAPTISTA.

Not in my house, Lucentio, for you know

Pitchers have ears, and I have many servants;

Besides, old Gremio is heark'ning still,

And happily we might be interrupted.

TRANIO.

Then at my lodging, an it like you.

There doth my father lie; and there this night

We'll pass the business privately and well.

Send for your daughter by your servant here;

My boy shall fetch the scrivener presently.

The worst is this, that at so slender warning
You are like to have a thin and slender pittance.

BAPTISTA.
It likes me well. Cambio, hie you home,
And bid Bianca make her ready straight;
And, if you will, tell what hath happened-
Lucentio's father is arriv'd in Padua,
And how she's like to be Lucentio's wife. *Exit* LUCENTIO
BIONDELLO.

I pray the gods she may, with all my heart.

TRANIO.
Dally not with the gods, but get thee gone.

Exit BIONDELLO

Signior Baptista, shall I lead the way?
Welcome! One mess is like to be your cheer;
Come, sir; we will better it in Pisa.

BAPTISTA.

I follow you. *Exeunt*

Re-enter LUCENTIO as CAMBIO, and BIONDELLO

BIONDELLO.

Cambio.

LUCENTIO.

What say'st thou, Biondello?

BIONDELLO.

You saw my master wink and laugh upon you?

LUCENTIO.

Biondello, what of that?

BIONDELLO.

Faith, nothing; but has left me here behind to expound
the meaning or moral of his signs and tokens.

LUCENTIO.

I pray thee moralize them.

BIONDELLO.
Then thus: Baptista is safe, talking with the deceiving
father of a deceitful son.

LUCENTIO.
And what of him?

BIONDELLO.

His daughter is to be brought by you to the supper.

LUCENTIO.
And then?

BIONDELLO.

The old priest at Saint Luke's church is at your command at all hours.

LUCENTIO.
And what of all this?

BIONDELLO.
I cannot tell, except they are busied about a
counterfeit assurance. Take your assurance of her, cum privilegio
ad imprimendum solum; to th' church take the priest, clerk, and
some sufficient honest witnesses.
If this be not that you look for, I have more to say,
But bid Bianca farewell for ever and a day.

LUCENTIO.

Hear'st thou, Biondello?

BIONDELLO.
I cannot tarry. I knew a wench married in an afternoon

as she went to the garden for parsley to stuff a rabbit; and so
may you, sir; and so adieu, sir. My master hath appointed me to
go to Saint Luke's to bid the priest be ready to come against you
come with your appendix.
Exit

LUCENTIO. I may and will, if she be so contented.
She will be pleas'd; then wherefore should I doubt?
Hap what hap may, I'll roundly go about her;
It shall go hard if Cambio go without her. *Exit*

SCENE V. A public road

Enter PETRUCHIO, KATHERINA, HORTENSIO, and SERVANTS

PETRUCHIO. Come on, a God's name; once more toward our father's.
Good Lord, how bright and goodly shines the moon!

KATHERINA.

The moon? The sun! It is not moonlight now.

PETRUCHIO.

I say it is the moon that shines so bright.

KATHERINA.

I know it is the sun that shines so bright.

PETRUCHIO.

Now by my mother's son, and that's myself,
It shall be moon, or star, or what I list,
Or ere I journey to your father's house.

Go on and fetch our horses back again.
Evermore cross'd and cross'd; nothing but cross'd!

HORTENSIO.

Say as he says, or we shall never go.

KATHERINA.

Forward, I pray, since we have come so far,

And be it moon, or sun, or what you please;

And if you please to call it a rush-candle,

Henceforth I vow it shall be so for me.

PETRUCHIO.

I say it is the moon.

KATHERINA.

I know it is the moon.

PETRUCHIO.

Nay, then you lie; it is the blessed sun.

KATHERINA.

Then, God be bless'd, it is the blessed sun;

But sun it is not, when you say it is not;

And the moon changes even as your mind.

What you will have it nam'd, even that it is,

And so it shall be so for Katherine.

HORTENSIO.

Petruchio, go thy ways, the field is won.

PETRUCHIO.

Well, forward, forward! thus the bowl should run,

And not unluckily against the bias.

But, soft! Company is coming here.

Enter VINCENTIO

[To VINCENTIO] Good-morrow, gentle mistress; where away?-

Tell me, sweet Kate, and tell me truly too,

Hast thou beheld a fresher gentlewoman?

Such war of white and red within her cheeks!

What stars do spangle heaven with such beauty

As those two eyes become that heavenly face?

Fair lovely maid, once more good day to thee.
Sweet Kate, embrace her for her beauty's sake.

HORTENSIO.

'A will make the man mad, to make a woman of him.

KATHERINA.
Young budding virgin, fair and fresh and sweet,
Whither away, or where is thy abode?
Happy the parents of so fair a child;
Happier the man whom favourable stars
Allots thee for his lovely bed-fellow.

PETRUCHIO.

Why, how now, Kate, I hope thou art not mad!
This is a man, old, wrinkled, faded, withered,
And not a maiden, as thou sayst he is.

KATHERINA.

Pardon, old father, my mistaking eyes,

That have been so bedazzled with the sun

That everything I look on seemeth green;

Now I perceive thou art a reverend father.

Pardon, I pray thee, for my mad mistaking.

PETRUCHIO.

Do, good old grandsire, and withal make known

Which way thou travellest-if along with us,

We shall be joyful of thy company.

VINCENTIO.

Fair sir, and you my merry mistress,

That with your strange encounter much amaz'd me,

My name is call'd Vincentio, my dwelling Pisa,

And bound I am to Padua, there to visit

A son of mine, which long I have not seen.

PETRUCHIO.

What is his name?

VINCENTIO.

Lucentio, gentle sir.

PETRUCHIO.

Happily met; the happier for thy son.
And now by law, as well as reverend age,
I may entitle thee my loving father:
The sister to my wife, this gentlewoman,
Thy son by this hath married. Wonder not,
Nor be not grieved-she is of good esteem,
Her dowry wealthy, and of worthy birth;
Beside, so qualified as may beseem
The spouse of any noble gentleman.
Let me embrace with old Vincentio;
And wander we to see thy honest son,
Who will of thy arrival be full joyous.

VINCENTIO.

But is this true; or is it else your pleasure,

Like pleasant travellers, to break a jest

Upon the company you overtake?

HORTENSIO.

I do assure thee, father, so it is.

PETRUCHIO.

Come, go along, and see the truth hereof;

For our first merriment hath made thee jealous.

Exeunt all but HORTENSIO

HORTENSIO.

Well, Petruchio, this has put me in heart.

Have to my widow; and if she be froward,

Then hast thou taught Hortensio to be untoward. *Exit*

ACT V.

SCENE I. Padua. Before LUCENTIO'S house

Enter BIONDELLO, LUCENTIO, and BIANCA; GREMIO is out before

BIONDELLO. Softly and swiftly, sir, for the priest is ready.

LUCENTIO.
I fly, Biondello; but they may chance to need the at
home, therefore leave us.

BIONDELLO.
Nay, faith, I'll see the church a your back, and then
come back to my master's as soon as I can.
Exeunt LUCENTIO, BIANCA, and BIONDELLO
GREMIO.

I marvel Cambio comes not all this while.

Enter PETRUCHIO, KATHERINA, VINCENTIO, GRUMIO,

and ATTENDANTS

PETRUCHIO.

Sir, here's the door; this is Lucentio's house;
My father's bears more toward the market-place;
Thither must I, and here I leave you, sir.

VINCENTIO.

You shall not choose but drink before you go;
I think I shall command your welcome here,
And by all likelihood some cheer is toward. *[Knocks]*

GREMIO.

They're busy within; you were best knock louder.

[PEDANT looks out of the window]

PEDANT.

What's he that knocks as he would beat down the gate?

VINCENTIO.

Is Signior Lucentio within, sir?

PEDANT.

He's within, sir, but not to be spoken withal.

VINCENTIO.

What if a man bring him a hundred pound or two to make merry withal?

PEDANT.

Keep your hundred pounds to yourself; he shall need none so
long as I live.

PETRUCHIO.

Nay, I told you your son was well beloved in Padua.
Do
you hear, sir? To leave frivolous circumstances, I pray you tell

Signior Lucentio that his father is come from Pisa, and is here at the door to speak with him.

PEDANT.

Thou liest: his father is come from Padua, and here looking out at the window.

VINCENTIO.

Art thou his father?

PEDANT.

Ay, sir; so his mother says, if I may believe her.

PETRUCHIO.

[To VINCENTIO] Why, how now, gentleman!

Why, this is flat knavery to take upon you another man's name.

PEDANT.

Lay hands on the villain; I believe 'a means to cozen somebody in this city under my countenance.

Re-enter BIONDELLO

BIONDELLO.

I have seen them in the church together. God send 'em

good shipping! But who is here? Mine old master, Vicentio!

Now we

are undone and brought to nothing.

VINCENTIO.

[Seeing BIONDELLO] Come hither, crack-hemp.

BIONDELLO.

I hope I may choose, sir.

VINCENTIO.

Come hither, you rogue. What, have you forgot me?

BIONDELLO.

Forgot you! No, sir. I could not forget you, for I never saw you before in all my life.

VINCENTIO.

What, you notorious villain, didst thou never see thy

master's father, Vincentio?

BIONDELLO.

What, my old worshipful old master? Yes, marry, sir; see

where he looks out of the window.

VINCENTIO.

Is't so, indeed? *[He beats BIONDELLO]*

BIONDELLO.

Help, help, help! Here's a madman will murder me.

Exit

PEDANT. Help, son! help, Signior Baptista! *Exit* from above

PETRUCHIO.

Prithee, Kate, let's stand aside and see the end of this controversy. *[They stand aside]*

Re-enter PEDANT below; BAPTISTA, TRANIO, and SERVANTS

TRANIO.

Sir, what are you that offer to beat my servant?

VINCENTIO.
What am I, sir? Nay, what are you, sir? O immortal gods!
O fine villain! A silken doublet, a velvet hose, a scarlet cloak,
and a copatain hat! O, I am undone! I am undone! While I play the
good husband at home, my son and my servant spend all at the university.

TRANIO.
How now! what's the matter?

BAPTISTA.

What, is the man lunatic?

TRANIO.

Sir, you seem a sober ancient gentleman by your habit, but

your words show you a madman. Why, sir, what 'cerns it you if

I

wear pearl and gold? I thank my good father, I am able to maintain it.

VINCENTIO.

Thy father! O villain! he is a sailmaker in Bergamo.

BAPTISTA.

You mistake, sir; you mistake, sir. Pray, what do you

think is his name?

VINCENTIO.

His name! As if I knew not his name! I have brought him

up ever since he was three years old, and his name is Tranio.

PEDANT.

Away, away, mad ass! His name is Lucentio; and he is mine

only son, and heir to the lands of me, Signior Vicentio.

VINCENTIO.

Lucentio! O, he hath murd'red his master! Lay hold on

him, I charge you, in the Duke's name. O, my son, my son!

Tell

me, thou villain, where is my son, Lucentio?

TRANIO.

Call forth an officer.

Enter one with an OFFICER

Carry this mad knave to the gaol. Father Baptista, I charge you

see that he be forthcoming.

VINCENTIO.

Carry me to the gaol!

GREMIO.

Stay, Officer; he shall not go to prison.

BAPTISTA.

Talk not, Signior Gremio; I say he shall go to prison.

GREMIO.

Take heed, Signior Baptista, lest you be cony-catch'd in this business; I dare swear this is the right Vincentio.

PEDANT.

Swear if thou dar'st.

GREMIO.

Nay, I dare not swear it.

TRANIO.

Then thou wert best say that I am not Lucentio.

GREMIO.

Yes, I know thee to be Signior Lucentio.

BAPTISTA.

Away with the dotard; to the gaol with him!

VINCENTIO.

Thus strangers may be hal'd and abus'd. O monstrous villain!

Re-enter BIONDELLO, with LUCENTIO and BIANCA

BIONDELLO.

O, we are spoil'd; and yonder he is! Deny him, forswear

him, or else we are all undone.

Exeunt BIONDELLO, TRANIO, and PEDANT, as fast as may be

LUCENTIO.

[Kneeling] Pardon, sweet father.

VINCENTIO.

Lives my sweet son?

BIANCA.

Pardon, dear father.

BAPTISTA.

How hast thou offended?

Where is Lucentio?

LUCENTIO.

Here's Lucentio,

Right son to the right Vincentio,

That have by marriage made thy daughter mine,

While counterfeit supposes blear'd thine eyne.

GREMIO.

Here's packing, with a witness, to deceive us all!

VINCENTIO.

Where is that damned villain, Tranio,
That fac'd and brav'd me in this matter so?

BAPTISTA.

Why, tell me, is not this my Cambio?

BIANCA.

Cambio is chang'd into Lucentio.

LUCENTIO.

Love wrought these miracles. Bianca's love
Made me exchange my state with Tranio,
While he did bear my countenance in the town;
And happily I have arrived at the last
Unto the wished haven of my bliss.
What Tranio did, myself enforc'd him to;
Then pardon him, sweet father, for my sake.

VINCENTIO.

I'll slit the villain's nose that would have sent me to the gaol.

BAPTISTA.

[To LUCENTIO] But do you hear, sir? Have you married my

daughter without asking my good will?

VINCENTIO.

Fear not, Baptista; we will content you, go to; but

I

will in to be revenged for this villainy. *Exit*

BAPTISTA. And I to sound the depth of this knavery. *Exit*

LUCENTIO. Look not pale, Bianca; thy father will not frown.

Exeunt LUCENTIO and BIANCA

GREMIO.

My cake is dough, but I'll in among the rest;

Out of hope of all but my share of the feast. *Exit*

KATHERINA. Husband, let's follow to see the end of this ado.

PETRUCHIO.

First kiss me, Kate, and we will.

KATHERINA.

What, in the midst of the street?

PETRUCHIO.

What, art thou asham'd of me?

KATHERINA.

No, sir; God forbid; but asham'd to kiss.

PETRUCHIO.

Why, then, let's home again. Come, sirrah, let's away.

KATHERINA.

Nay, I will give thee a kiss; now pray thee, love, stay.

PETRUCHIO.

Is not this well? Come, my sweet Kate:

Better once than never, for never too late. *Exeunt*

SCENE II. LUCENTIO'S house

Enter BAPTISTA, VINCENTIO, GREMIO, the PEDANT, LUCENTIO, BIANCA,

PETRUCHIO, KATHERINA, HORTENSIO, and WIDOW. The SERVINGMEN with

TRANIO,

BIONDELLO, and GRUMIO, bringing in a banquet

LUCENTIO.

At last, though long, our jarring notes agree;

And time it is when raging war is done

To smile at scapes and perils overblown.

My fair Bianca, bid my father welcome,
While I with self-same kindness welcome thine.
Brother Petruchio, sister Katherina,
And thou, Hortensio, with thy loving widow,
Feast with the best, and welcome to my house.
My banquet is to close our stomachs up
After our great good cheer. Pray you, sit down;
For now we sit to chat as well as eat. *[They sit]*

PETRUCHIO.

Nothing but sit and sit, and eat and eat!

BAPTISTA.
Padua affords this kindness, son Petruchio.

PETRUCHIO.

Padua affords nothing but what is kind.

HORTENSIO.

For both our sakes I would that word were true.

PETRUCHIO.

Now, for my life, Hortensio fears his widow.

WIDOW.

Then never trust me if I be afeard.

PETRUCHIO.

YOU are very sensible, and yet you miss my sense:

I mean Hortensio is afeard of you.

WIDOW.

He that is giddy thinks the world turns round.

PETRUCHIO.

Roundly replied.

KATHERINA.

Mistress, how mean you that?

WIDOW.

Thus I conceive by him.

PETRUCHIO.

Conceives by me! How likes Hortensio that?

HORTENSIO.

My widow says thus she conceives her tale.

PETRUCHIO.

Very well mended. Kiss him for that, good widow.

KATHERINA.

'He that is giddy thinks the world turns round.'

I pray you tell me what you meant by that.

WIDOW.

Your husband, being troubled with a shrew,

Measures my husband's sorrow by his woe;

And now you know my meaning.

KATHERINA.

A very mean meaning.

WIDOW.

Right, I mean you.

KATHERINA.

And I am mean, indeed, respecting you.

PETRUCHIO.

To her, Kate!

HORTENSIO.

To her, widow!

PETRUCHIO.

A hundred marks, my Kate does put her down.

HORTENSIO.

That's my office.

PETRUCHIO.

Spoke like an officer-ha' to thee, lad.

[Drinks to HORTENSIO]

BAPTISTA.

How likes Gremio these quick-witted folks?

GREMIO.

Believe me, sir, they butt together well.

BIANCA.

Head and butt! An hasty-witted body

Would say your head and butt were head and horn.

VINCENTIO.

Ay, mistress bride, hath that awakened you?

BIANCA.

Ay, but not frighted me; therefore I'll sleep again.

PETRUCHIO.

Nay, that you shall not; since you have begun,

Have at you for a bitter jest or two.

BIANCA.

Am I your bird? I mean to shift my bush,

And then pursue me as you draw your bow.

You are welcome all.

Exeunt BIANCA, KATHERINA, and WIDOW

PETRUCHIO.

She hath prevented me. Here, Signior Tranio,

This bird you aim'd at, though you hit her not;

Therefore a health to all that shot and miss'd.

TRANIO.

O, sir, Lucentio slipp'd me like his greyhound,

Which runs himself, and catches for his master.

PETRUCHIO.

A good swift simile, but something currish.

TRANIO.

'Tis well, sir, that you hunted for yourself;

'Tis thought your deer does hold you at a bay.

BAPTISTA.

O, O, Petruchio! Tranio hits you now.

LUCENTIO.

I thank thee for that gird, good Tranio.

HORTENSIO.

Confess, confess; hath he not hit you here?

PETRUCHIO.

'A has a little gall'd me, I confess;

And, as the jest did glance away from me,

'Tis ten to one it maim'd you two outright.

BAPTISTA.

Now, in good sadness, son Petruchio,

I think thou hast the veriest shrew of all.

PETRUCHIO.

Well, I say no; and therefore, for assurance,

Let's each one send unto his wife,

And he whose wife is most obedient,

To come at first when he doth send for her,

Shall win the wager which we will propose.

HORTENSIO.

Content. What's the wager?

LUCENTIO.

Twenty crowns.

PETRUCHIO.

Twenty crowns?
I'll venture so much of my hawk or hound,
But twenty times so much upon my wife.

LUCENTIO.

A hundred then.

HORTENSIO.

Content.

PETRUCHIO.

A match! 'tis done.

HORTENSIO.

Who shall begin?

LUCENTIO.

That will I.

Go, Biondello, bid your mistress come to me.

BIONDELLO.

I go. *Exit*

BAPTISTA. Son, I'll be your half Bianca comes.

LUCENTIO.

I'll have no halves; I'll bear it all myself.

Re-enter BIONDELLO

How now! what news?

BIONDELLO.

Sir, my mistress sends you word

That she is busy and she cannot come.

PETRUCHIO.

How! She's busy, and she cannot come!

Is that an answer?

GREMIO.

Ay, and a kind one too.

Pray God, sir, your wife send you not a worse.

PETRUCHIO.

I hope better.

HORTENSIO.

Sirrah Biondello, go and entreat my wife

To come to me forthwith. *Exit* BIONDELLO

PETRUCHIO.

O, ho! entreat her!

Nay, then she must needs come.

HORTENSIO.

I am afraid, sir,

Do what you can, yours will not be entreated.

Re-enter BIONDELLO

Now, where's my wife?

BIONDELLO.

She says you have some goodly jest in hand:

She will not come; she bids you come to her.

PETRUCHIO.

Worse and worse; she will not come! O vile,

Intolerable, not to be endur'd!

Sirrah Grumio, go to your mistress;

Say I command her come to me. *Exit* GRUMIO

HORTENSIO.

I know her answer.

PETRUCHIO.

What?

HORTENSIO.

She will not.

PETRUCHIO.

The fouler fortune mine, and there an end.

Re-enter KATHERINA

BAPTISTA.

Now, by my holidame, here comes Katherina!

KATHERINA.

What is your sir, that you send for me?

PETRUCHIO.

Where is your sister, and Hortensio's wife?

KATHERINA.

They sit conferring by the parlour fire.

PETRUCHIO.

Go, fetch them hither; if they deny to come.

Swinge me them soundly forth unto their husbands.

Away, I say, and bring them hither straight.

Exit KATHERINA

LUCENTIO.

Here is a wonder, if you talk of a wonder.

HORTENSIO.

And so it is. I wonder what it bodes.

PETRUCHIO.

Marry, peace it bodes, and love, and quiet life,
An awful rule, and right supremacy;
And, to be short, what not that's sweet and happy.

BAPTISTA.

Now fair befall thee, good Petruchio!
The wager thou hast won; and I will ad
Unto their losses twenty thousand crowns;
Another dowry to another daughter,
For she is chang'd, as she had never been.

PETRUCHIO.

Nay, I will win my wager better yet,

And show more sign of her obedience,

Her new-built virtue and obedience.

Re-enter KATHERINA with BIANCA and WIDOW

See where she comes, and brings your froward wives

As prisoners to her womanly persuasion.

Katherine, that cap of yours becomes you not:

Off with that bauble, throw it underfoot.

[KATHERINA complies]

WIDOW.

Lord, let me never have a cause to sigh

Till I be brought to such a silly pass!

BIANCA.

Fie! what a foolish duty call you this?

LUCENTIO.

I would your duty were as foolish too;

The wisdom of your duty, fair Bianca,

Hath cost me a hundred crowns since supper-time!

BIANCA.

The more fool you for laying on my duty.

PETRUCHIO.

Katherine, I charge thee, tell these headstrong women

What duty they do owe their lords and husbands.

WIDOW.

Come, come, you're mocking; we will have no telling.

PETRUCHIO.

Come on, I say; and first begin with her.

WIDOW.

She shall not.

PETRUCHIO.

I say she shall. And first begin with her.

KATHERINA.

Fie, fie! unknit that threatening unkind brow,
And dart not scornful glances from those eyes
To wound thy lord, thy king, thy governor.
It blots thy beauty as frosts do bite the meads,
Confounds thy fame as whirlwinds shake fair buds,
And in no sense is meet or amiable.
A woman mov'd is like a fountain troubled-
Muddy, ill-seeming, thick, bereft of beauty;
And while it is so, none so dry or thirsty
Will deign to sip or touch one drop of it.
Thy husband is thy lord, thy life, thy keeper,
Thy head, thy sovereign; one that cares for thee,
And for thy maintenance commits his body
To painful labour both by sea and land,

To watch the night in storms, the day in cold,

Whilst thou liest warm at home, secure and safe;

And craves no other tribute at thy hands

But love, fair looks, and true obedience-

Too little payment for so great a debt.

Such duty as the subject owes the prince,

Even such a woman oweth to her husband;

And when she is froward, peevish, sullen, sour,

And not obedient to his honest will,

What is she but a foul contending rebel

And graceless traitor to her loving lord?

I am asham'd that women are so simple

To offer war where they should kneel for peace;

Or seek for rule, supremacy, and sway,

When they are bound to serve, love, and obey.

Why are our bodies soft and weak and smooth,

Unapt to toll and trouble in the world,

But that our soft conditions and our hearts

Should well agree with our external parts?

Come, come, you froward and unable worins!

My mind hath been as big as one of yours, My heart as great, my reason haply more,

To bandy word for word and frown for frown;

But now I see our lances are but straws,

Our strength as weak, our weakness past compare,

That seeming to be most which we indeed least are.

Then vail your stomachs, for it is no boot,

And place your hands below your husband's foot;

In token of which duty, if he please,

My hand is ready, may it do him ease.

PETRUCHIO.

Why, there's a wench! Come on, and kiss me, Kate.

LUCENTIO.

Well, go thy ways, old lad, for thou shalt ha't.

VINCENTIO.

'Tis a good hearing when children are toward.

LUCENTIO.

But a harsh hearing when women are froward.

PETRUCHIO.

Come, Kate, we'll to bed.

We three are married, but you two are sped.

[To LUCENTIO] 'Twas I won the wager, though you hit the white;

And being a winner, God give you good night!

Exeunt PETRUCHIO and KATHERINA

HORTENSIO.

Now go thy ways; thou hast tam'd a curst shrow.

LUCENTIO.

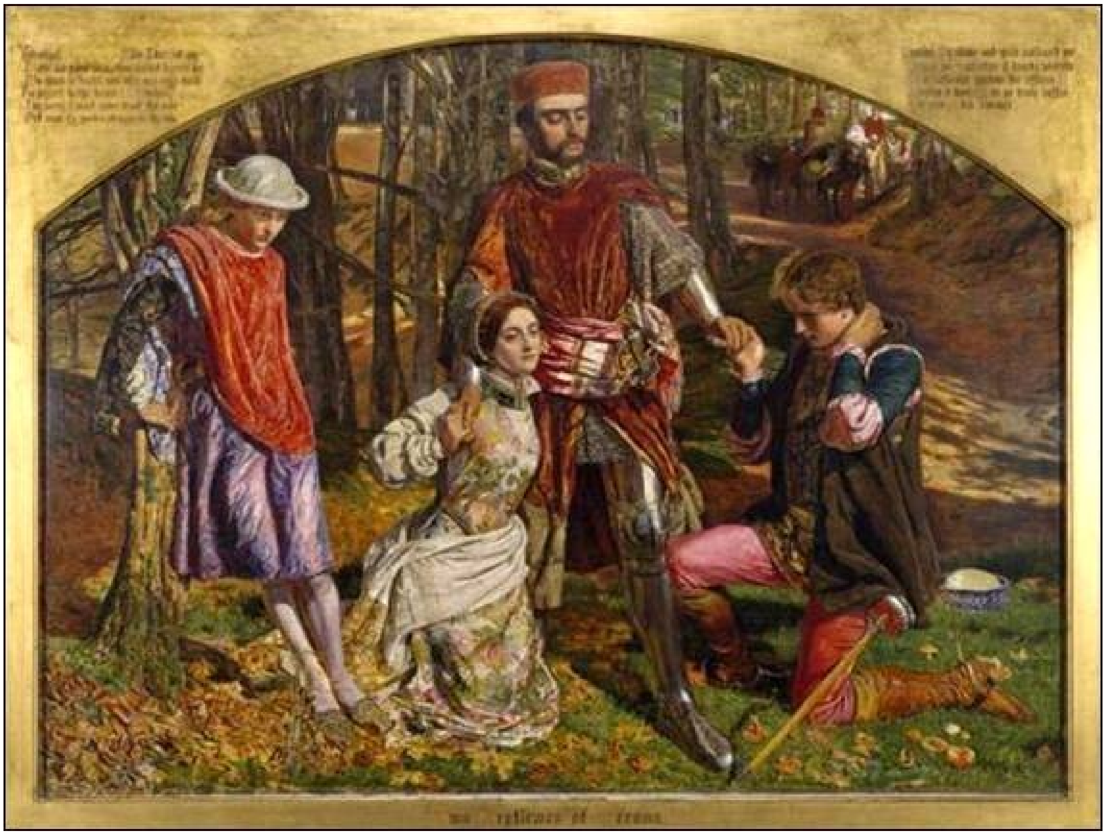
'Tis a wonder, by your leave, she will be tam'd so.

Exeunt

THE TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA

This comedy was written in 1590 or 1591 and is considered by some editors to be Shakespeare's first play, due to his more tentative handling of themes and stagecraft that would later be used so expertly. The play deals with the themes of friendship and infidelity, the conflict between friendship and love, and the foolish behaviour of people in love. The highlight of the play is considered by some to be Launce, the clownish servant of Proteus, and his dog Crab, to whom "the most scene-stealing non-speaking role in the canon" has been attributed. Interestingly, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* has the smallest cast of any play in Shakespeare’s canon.

Shakespeare's main source text for this play is available via this link .



A scene from the final act, by William Holman Hunt (1851)

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DRAMATIS PERSONAE

DUKE OF MILAN, father to Silvia

VALENTINE, one of the two gentlemen

PROTEUS, " " " " "

ANTONIO, father to Proteus

THURIO, a foolish rival to Valentine

EGLAMOUR, agent for Silvia in her escape

SPEED, a clownish servant to Valentine

LAUNCE, the like to Proteus

PANTHINO, servant to Antonio

HOST, where Julia lodges in Milan

OUTLAWS, with Valentine

JULIA, a lady of Verona, beloved of Proteus

SILVIA, the Duke's daughter, beloved of Valentine

LUCETTA, waiting-woman to Julia

SERVANTS MUSICIANS

SCENE: Verona; Milan; the frontiers of Mantua

ACT 1. SCENE I. Verona. An open place

Enter VALENTINE and PROTEUS

VALENTINE.

Cease to persuade, my loving Proteus:

Home-keeping youth have ever homely wits.
Were't not affection chains thy tender days
To the sweet glances of thy honour'd love,
I rather would entreat thy company
To see the wonders of the world abroad,
Than, living dully sluggardiz'd at home,
Wear out thy youth with shapeless idleness.
But since thou lov'st, love still, and thrive therein,
Even as I would, when I to love begin.

PROTEUS.

Wilt thou be gone? Sweet Valentine, adieu!
Think on thy Proteus, when thou haply seest
Some rare noteworthy object in thy travel.

Wish me partaker in thy happiness

When thou dost meet good hap; and in thy danger,

If ever danger do environ thee,

Commend thy grievance to my holy prayers,

For I will be thy headsman, Valentine.

VALENTINE.

And on a love-book pray for my success?

PROTEUS.

Upon some book I love I'll pray for thee.

VALENTINE.

That's on some shallow story of deep love:

How young Leander cross'd the Hellespont.

PROTEUS.

That's a deep story of a deeper love;

For he was more than over shoes in love.

VALENTINE.

'Tis true; for you are over boots in love,

And yet you never swum the Hellespont.

PROTEUS.

Over the boots! Nay, give me not the boots.

VALENTINE.

No, I will not, for it boots thee not.

PROTEUS.

What?

VALENTINE.

To be in love-where scorn is bought with groans,

Coy looks with heart-sore sighs, one fading moment's mirth

With twenty watchful, weary, tedious nights;

If haply won, perhaps a hapless gain;

If lost, why then a grievous labour won;

However, but a folly bought with wit,

Or else a wit by folly vanquished.

PROTEUS.

So, by your circumstance, you call me fool.

VALENTINE.

So, by your circumstance, I fear you'll prove.

PROTEUS.

'Tis love you cavil at; I am not Love.

VALENTINE.

Love is your master, for he masters you;

And he that is so yoked by a fool,

Methinks, should not be chronicled for wise.

PROTEUS.

Yet writers say, as in the sweetest bud

The eating canker dwells, so eating love

Inhabits in the finest wits of all.

VALENTINE.
And writers say, as the most forward bud
Is eaten by the canker ere it blow,
Even so by love the young and tender wit
Is turn'd to folly, blasting in the bud,
Losing his verdure even in the prime,
And all the fair effects of future hopes.
But wherefore waste I time to counsel the
That art a votary to fond desire?
Once more adieu. My father at the road
Expects my coming, there to see me shipp'd.

PROTEUS.

And thither will I bring thee, Valentine.

VALENTINE.
Sweet Proteus, no; now let us take our leave.
To Milan let me hear from thee by letters

Of thy success in love, and what news else
Betideth here in absence of thy friend;
And I likewise will visit thee with mine.

PROTEUS.

All happiness bechance to thee in Milan!

VALENTINE.
As much to you at home; and so farewell!

Exit VALENTINE

PROTEUS.
He after honour hunts, I after love;
He leaves his friends to dignify them more:
I leave myself, my friends, and all for love.
Thou, Julia, thou hast metamorphis'd me,
Made me neglect my studies, lose my time,
War with good counsel, set the world at nought;

Made wit with musing weak, heart sick with thought.

Enter SPEED

SPEED.

Sir Proteus, save you! Saw you my master?

PROTEUS.

But now he parted hence to embark for Milan.

SPEED.

Twenty to one then he is shipp'd already,

And I have play'd the sheep in losing him.

PROTEUS.

Indeed a sheep doth very often stray,

An if the shepherd be awhile away.

SPEED.

You conclude that my master is a shepherd then, and I a sheep?

PROTEUS.

I do.

SPEED.

Why then, my horns are his horns, whether I wake or sleep.

PROTEUS.

A silly answer, and fitting well a sheep.

SPEED.

This proves me still a sheep.

PROTEUS.

True; and thy master a shepherd.

SPEED.

Nay, that I can deny by a circumstance.

PROTEUS.

It shall go hard but I'll prove it by another.

SPEED.
The shepherd seeks the sheep, and not the sheep the
shepherd; but I seek my master, and my master seeks not me;
therefore, I am no sheep.

PROTEUS.
The sheep for fodder follow the shepherd; the shepherd for
food follows not the sheep: thou for wages followest thy master;
thy master for wages follows not thee. Therefore, thou art a sheep.

SPEED.
Such another proof will make me cry 'baa.'

PROTEUS.

But dost thou hear? Gav'st thou my letter to Julia?

SPEED.

Ay, sir; I, a lost mutton, gave your letter to her, a lac'd
mutton; and she, a lac'd mutton, gave me, a lost mutton,
nothing for my labour.

PROTEUS.

Here's too small a pasture for such store of muttons.

SPEED.

If the ground be overcharg'd, you were best stick her.

PROTEUS.

Nay, in that you are astray: 'twere best pound you.

SPEED.

Nay, sir, less than a pound shall serve me for carrying your letter.

PROTEUS.

You mistake; I mean the pound-a pinfold.

SPEED.

From a pound to a pin? Fold it over and over,

'Tis threefold too little for carrying a letter to your lover.

PROTEUS.

But what said she?

SPEED.

[Nodding] Ay.

PROTEUS.

Nod-ay. Why, that's 'noddy.'

SPEED.

You mistook, sir; I say she did nod; and you ask me if she

did nod; and I say 'Ay.'

PROTEUS.

And that set together is 'noddy.'

SPEED.

Now you have taken the pains to set it together, take it for your pains.

PROTEUS.

No, no; you shall have it for bearing the letter.

SPEED.

Well, I perceive I must be fain to bear with you.

PROTEUS.

Why, sir, how do you bear with me?

SPEED.

Marry, sir, the letter, very orderly; having nothing but the
word 'noddy' for my pains.

PROTEUS.

Beshrew me, but you have a quick wit.

SPEED.

And yet it cannot overtake your slow purse.

PROTEUS.

Come, come, open the matter; in brief, what said she?

SPEED.

Open your purse, that the money and the matter may be both at once delivered.

PROTEUS.

Well, sir, here is for your pains. What said she?

SPEED.

Truly, sir, I think you'll hardly win her.

PROTEUS.

Why, couldst thou perceive so much from her?

SPEED.

Sir, I could perceive nothing at all from her; no, not so
much as a ducat for delivering your letter; and being so hard to
me that brought your mind, I fear she'll prove as hard to you in
telling your mind. Give her no token but stones, for she's as hard as steel.

PROTEUS.

What said she? Nothing?

SPEED.

No, not so much as 'Take this for thy pains.' To testify
your bounty, I thank you, you have testern'd me; in requital
whereof, henceforth carry your letters yourself; and so, sir,
I'll commend you to my master.

PROTEUS.

Go, go, be gone, to save your ship from wreck, Which cannot perish, having thee aboard,

Being destin'd to a drier death on shore. *Exit* SPEED

I must go send some better messenger.

I fear my Julia would not deign my lines,

Receiving them from such a worthless post. *Exit*

SCENE 2. Verona. The garden Of JULIA'S house

Enter JULIA and LUCETTA

JULIA.

But say, Lucetta, now we are alone,

Wouldst thou then counsel me to fall in love?

LUCETTA.

Ay, madam; so you stumble not unheedfully.

JULIA.

Of all the fair resort of gentlemen

That every day with parle encounter me,

In thy opinion which is worthiest love?

LUCETTA.

Please you, repeat their names; I'll show my mind

According to my shallow simple skill.

JULIA.

What think'st thou of the fair Sir Eglamour?

LUCETTA.

As of a knight well-spoken, neat, and fine;

But, were I you, he never should be mine.

JULIA.

What think'st thou of the rich Mercatio?

LUCETTA.

Well of his wealth; but of himself, so so.

JULIA.

What think'st thou of the gentle Proteus?

LUCETTA.

Lord, Lord! to see what folly reigns in us!

JULIA.

How now! what means this passion at his name?

LUCETTA.

Pardon, dear madam; 'tis a passing shame

That I, unworthy body as I am,

Should censure thus on lovely gentlemen.

JULIA.

Why not on Proteus, as of all the rest?

LUCETTA.

Then thus: of many good I think him best.

JULIA.

Your reason?

LUCETTA.

I have no other but a woman's reason:

I think him so, because I think him so.

JULIA.

And wouldst thou have me cast my love on him?

LUCETTA.

Ay, if you thought your love not cast away.

JULIA.

Why, he, of all the rest, hath never mov'd me.

LUCETTA.

Yet he, of all the rest, I think, best loves ye.

JULIA.

His little speaking shows his love but small.

LUCETTA.

Fire that's closest kept burns most of all.

JULIA.

They do not love that do not show their love.

LUCETTA.

O, they love least that let men know their love.

JULIA.

I would I knew his mind.

LUCETTA.

Peruse this paper, madam.

JULIA.

'To Julia'- Say, from whom?

LUCETTA.

That the contents will show.

JULIA.

Say, say, who gave it thee?

LUCETTA.

Sir Valentine's page; and sent, I think, from Proteus.
He would have given it you; but I, being in the way,
Did in your name receive it; pardon the fault, I pray.

JULIA.

Now, by my modesty, a goodly broker!

Dare you presume to harbour wanton lines?
To whisper and conspire against my youth?
Now, trust me, 'tis an office of great worth,
And you an officer fit for the place.
There, take the paper; see it be return'd;
Or else return no more into my sight.

LUCETTA.

To plead for love deserves more fee than hate.

JULIA.
Will ye be gone?

LUCETTA.
That you may ruminate. *Exit*

JULIA. And yet, I would I had o'erlook'd the letter.
It were a shame to call her back again,
And pray her to a fault for which I chid her.
What fool is she, that knows I am a maid

And would not force the letter to my view!

Since maids, in modesty, say 'No' to that

Which they would have the profferer construe 'Ay.'

Fie, fie, how wayward is this foolish love,

That like a testy babe will scratch the nurse,

And presently, all humbled, kiss the rod!

How churlishly I chid Lucetta hence,

When willingly I would have had her here!

How angerly I taught my brow to frown,

When inward joy enforc'd my heart to smile!

My penance is to call Lucetta back

And ask remission for my folly past.

What ho! Lucetta!

Re-enter LUCETTA

LUCETTA.

What would your ladyship?

JULIA.

Is't near dinner time?

LUCETTA.

I would it were,
That you might kill your stomach on your meat
And not upon your maid.

JULIA.

What is't that you took up so gingerly?

LUCETTA.

Nothing.

JULIA.

Why didst thou stoop then?

LUCETTA.

To take a paper up that I let fall.

JULIA.

And is that paper nothing?

LUCETTA.

Nothing concerning me.

JULIA.

Then let it lie for those that it concerns.

LUCETTA.

Madam, it will not lie where it concerns,

Unless it have a false interpreter.

JULIA.

Some love of yours hath writ to you in rhyme.

LUCETTA.

That I might sing it, madam, to a tune.

Give me a note; your ladyship can set.

JULIA.

As little by such toys as may be possible.

Best sing it to the tune of 'Light o' Love.'

LUCETTA.

It is too heavy for so light a tune.

JULIA.

Heavy! belike it hath some burden then.

LUCETTA.

Ay; and melodious were it, would you sing it.

JULIA.

And why not you?

LUCETTA.

I cannot reach so high.

JULIA.

Let's see your song. *[LUCETTA withholds the letter]*

How now, minion!

LUCETTA.

Keep tune there still, so you will sing it out.

And yet methinks I do not like this tune.

JULIA.

You do not!

LUCETTA.

No, madam; 'tis too sharp.

JULIA.

You, minion, are too saucy.

LUCETTA.

Nay, now you are too flat
And mar the concord with too harsh a descant;
There wanteth but a mean to fill your song.

JULIA.

The mean is drown'd with your unruly bass.

LUCETTA.

Indeed, I bid the base for Proteus.

JULIA.

This babble shall not henceforth trouble me.
Here is a coil with protestation! *[Tears the letter]*
Go, get you gone; and let the papers lie.

You would be fing'ring them, to anger me.

LUCETTA.

She makes it strange; but she would be best pleas'd
To be so ang'red with another letter. *Exit*

JULIA. Nay, would I were so ang'red with the same!
O hateful hands, to tear such loving words!
Injurious wasps, to feed on such sweet honey
And kill the bees that yield it with your stings!

I'll kiss each several paper for amends.
Look, here is writ 'kind Julia.' Unkind Julia,
As in revenge of thy ingratitude,
I throw thy name against the bruising stones,
Trampling contemptuously on thy disdain.
And here is writ 'love-wounded Proteus.'
Poor wounded name! my bosom,,as a bed,
Shall lodge thee till thy wound be throughly heal'd;
And thus I search it with a sovereign kiss.
But twice or thrice was 'Proteus' written down.
Be calm, good wind, blow not a word away
Till I have found each letter in the letter-
Except mine own name; that some whirlwind bear

Unto a ragged, fearful, hanging rock,

And throw it thence into the raging sea.

Lo, here in one line is his name twice writ:

'Poor forlorn Proteus, passionate Proteus,

To the sweet Julia.' That I'll tear away;

And yet I will not, sith so prettily

He couples it to his complaining names.

Thus will I fold them one upon another;

Now kiss, embrace, contend, do what you will.

Re-enter LUCETTA

LUCETTA.

Madam,

Dinner is ready, and your father stays.

JULIA.

Well, let us go.

LUCETTA.

What, shall these papers lie like tell-tales here?

JULIA.

If you respect them, best to take them up.

LUCETTA.

Nay, I was taken up for laying them down;

Yet here they shall not lie for catching cold.

JULIA.

I see you have a month's mind to them.

LUCETTA.

Ay, madam, you may say what sights you see;

I see things too, although you judge I wink.

JULIA.

Come, come; will't please you go? *Exeunt*

SCENE 3. Verona. ANTONIO'S house

Enter ANTONIO and PANTHINO

ANTONIO.

Tell me, Panthino, what sad talk was that
Wherewith my brother held you in the cloister?

PANTHINO.

'Twas of his nephew Proteus, your son.

ANTONIO.

Why, what of him?

PANTHINO.

He wond'red that your lordship
Would suffer him to spend his youth at home,
While other men, of slender reputation,
Put forth their sons to seek preferment out:
Some to the wars, to try their fortune there;
Some to discover islands far away;
Some to the studious universities.
For any, or for all these exercises,

He said that Proteus, your son, was meet;
And did request me to importune you
To let him spend his time no more at home,
Which would be great impeachment to his age,
In having known no travel in his youth.

ANTONIO.
Nor need'st thou much importune me to that
Whereon this month I have been hammering.
I have consider'd well his loss of time,
And how he cannot be a perfect man,
Not being tried and tutor'd in the world:
Experience is by industry achiev'd,
And perfected by the swift course of time.
Then tell me whither were I best to send him.

PANTHINO.
I think your lordship is not ignorant
How his companion, youthful Valentine,
Attends the Emperor in his royal court.

ANTONIO.

I know it well.

PANTHINO.

'Twere good, I think, your lordship sent him thither:
There shall he practise tilts and tournaments,
Hear sweet discourse, converse with noblemen,
And be in eye of every exercise
Worthy his youth and nobleness of birth.

ANTONIO.

I like thy counsel; well hast thou advis'd;
And that thou mayst perceive how well I like it,
The execution of it shall make known:
Even with the speediest expedition
I will dispatch him to the Emperor's court.

PANTHINO.

To-morrow, may it please you, Don Alphonso
With other gentlemen of good esteem

Are journeying to salute the Emperor,
And to commend their service to his will.

ANTONIO.

Good company; with them shall Proteus go.

Enter PROTEUS

And-in good time!- now will we break with him.

PROTEUS.
Sweet love! sweet lines! sweet life!
Here is her hand, the agent of her heart;
Here is her oath for love, her honour's pawn.
O that our fathers would applaud our loves,
To seal our happiness with their consents!

O heavenly Julia!

ANTONIO.

How now! What letter are you reading there?

PROTEUS.

May't please your lordship, 'tis a word or two
Of commendations sent from Valentine,
Deliver'd by a friend that came from him.

ANTONIO.

Lend me the letter; let me see what news.

PROTEUS.

There is no news, my lord; but that he writes
How happily he lives, how well-belov'd
And daily graced by the Emperor;
Wishing me with him, partner of his fortune.

ANTONIO.

And how stand you affected to his wish?

PROTEUS.

As one relying on your lordship's will,
And not depending on his friendly wish.

ANTONIO.
My will is something sorted with his wish.
Muse not that I thus suddenly proceed;
For what I will, I will, and there an end.
I am resolv'd that thou shalt spend some time
With Valentinus in the Emperor's court;
What maintenance he from his friends receives,
Like exhibition thou shalt have from me.
To-morrow be in readiness to go-
Excuse it not, for I am peremptory.

PROTEUS.
My lord, I cannot be so soon provided;
Please you, deliberate a day or two.

ANTONIO.

Look what thou want'st shall be sent after thee.

No more of stay; to-morrow thou must go.

Come on, Panthino; you shall be employ'd

To hasten on his expedition.

Exeunt ANTONIO and PANTHINO

PROTEUS.

Thus have I shunn'd the fire for fear of burning,

And drench'd me in the sea, where I am drown'd.

I fear'd to show my father Julia's letter,

Lest he should take exceptions to my love;

And with the vantage of mine own excuse

Hath he excepted most against my love.

O, how this spring of love resembleth

The uncertain glory of an April day,

Which now shows all the beauty of the sun,

And by an by a cloud takes all away!

Re-enter PANTHINO

PANTHINO.

Sir Proteus, your father calls for you;

He is in haste; therefore, I pray you, go.

PROTEUS.

Why, this it is: my heart accords thereto;

And yet a thousand times it answers 'No.' *Exeunt*

ACT 2.

SCENE I. Milan. The DUKE'S palace

Enter VALENTINE and SPEED

SPEED.

Sir, your glove.

VALENTINE.

Not mine: my gloves are on.

SPEED.

Why, then, this may be yours; for this is but one.

VALENTINE.

Ha! let me see; ay, give it me, it's mine;
Sweet ornament that decks a thing divine!

Ah, Silvia! Silvia!

SPEED.

[Calling] Madam Silvia! Madam Silvia!

VALENTINE.

How now, sirrah?

SPEED.

She is not within hearing, sir.

VALENTINE.

Why, sir, who bade you call her?

SPEED.

Your worship, sir; or else I mistook.

VALENTINE.

Well, you'll still be too forward.

SPEED.

And yet I was last chidden for being too slow.

VALENTINE.

Go to, sir; tell me, do you know Madam Silvia?

SPEED.

She that your worship loves?

VALENTINE.

Why, how know you that I am in love?

SPEED.

Marry, by these special marks: first, you have learn'd, like
Sir Proteus, to wreath your arms like a malcontent; to relish a
love-song, like a robin redbreast; to walk alone, like one that
had the pestilence; to sigh, like a school-boy that had lost his
A B C; to weep, like a young wench that had buried her grandam;
to fast, like one that takes diet; to watch, like one that fears
robbing; to speak puling, like a beggar at Hallowmas. You were
wont, when you laughed, to crow like a cock; when you walk'd, to

walk like one of the lions; when you fasted, it was presently after dinner; when you look'd sadly, it was for want of money. And now you are metamorphis'd with a mistress, that, when I look on you, I can hardly think you my master.

VALENTINE.

Are all these things perceiv'd in me?

SPEED.
They are all perceiv'd without ye.

VALENTINE.

Without me? They cannot.

SPEED.
Without you! Nay, that's certain; for, without you were so simple, none else would; but you are so without these follies that these follies are within you, and shine through you like the water in an urinal, that not an eye that sees you but is a

physician to comment on your malady.

VALENTINE.

But tell me, dost thou know my lady Silvia?

SPEED.

She that you gaze on so, as she sits at supper?

VALENTINE.

Hast thou observ'd that? Even she, I mean.

SPEED.

Why, sir, I know her not.

VALENTINE.

Dost thou know her by my gazing on her, and yet know'st her not?

SPEED.

Is she not hard-favour'd, sir?

VALENTINE.

Not so fair, boy, as well-favour'd.

SPEED.

Sir, I know that well enough.

VALENTINE.

What dost thou know?

SPEED.

That she is not so fair as, of you, well-favour'd.

VALENTINE.

I mean that her beauty is exquisite, but her favour infinite.

SPEED.

That's because the one is painted, and the other out of all count.

VALENTINE.

How painted? and how out of count?

SPEED.

Marry, sir, so painted, to make her fair, that no man counts of her beauty.

VALENTINE.

How esteem'st thou me? I account of her beauty.

SPEED.

You never saw her since she was deform'd.

VALENTINE.

How long hath she been deform'd?

SPEED.

Ever since you lov'd her.

VALENTINE.

I have lov'd her ever since I saw her, and still

I see her beautiful.

SPEED.

If you love her, you cannot see her.

VALENTINE.

Why?

SPEED.

Because Love is blind. O that you had mine eyes; or your own

eyes had the lights they were wont to have when you chid at

Sir Proteus for going ungarter'd!

VALENTINE.

What should I see then?

SPEED.

Your own present folly and her passing deformity; for he,
being in love, could not see to garter his hose; and you, being
in love, cannot see to put on your hose.

VALENTINE.

Belike, boy, then you are in love; for last morning you
could not see to wipe my shoes.

SPEED.

True, sir; I was in love with my bed. I thank you, you
swing'd me for my love, which makes me the bolder to chide you for yours.

VALENTINE.

In conclusion, I stand affected to her.

SPEED.

I would you were set, so your affection would cease.

VALENTINE.

Last night she enjoin'd me to write some lines to one she loves.

SPEED.

And have you?

VALENTINE.

I have.

SPEED.

Are they not lamely writ?

VALENTINE.

No, boy, but as well as I can do them.

Enter SILVIA

Peace! here she comes.

SPEED.

[Aside] O excellent motion! O exceeding puppet!

Now will he interpret to her.

VALENTINE.

Madam and mistress, a thousand good morrows.

SPEED.

[Aside] O, give ye good ev'n!

Here's a million of manners.

SILVIA.

Sir Valentine and servant, to you two thousand.

SPEED.

[Aside] He should give her interest, and she gives it him.

VALENTINE.

As you enjoin'd me, I have writ your letter

Unto the secret nameless friend of yours;

Which I was much unwilling to proceed in,

But for my duty to your ladyship.

SILVIA.

I thank you, gentle servant. 'Tis very clerkly done.

VALENTINE.

Now trust me, madam, it came hardly off;

For, being ignorant to whom it goes,

I writ at random, very doubtfully.

SILVIA.

Perchance you think too much of so much pains?

VALENTINE.

No, madam; so it stead you, I will write,

Please you command, a thousand times as much;

And yet-

SILVIA.

A pretty period! Well, I guess the sequel;

And yet I will not name it-and yet I care not.

And yet take this again-and yet I thank you-

Meaning henceforth to trouble you no more.

SPEED.

[Aside] And yet you will; and yet another' yet.'

VALENTINE.

What means your ladyship? Do you not like it?

SILVIA.

Yes, yes; the lines are very quaintly writ;

But, since unwillingly, take them again.

Nay, take them. *[Gives hack the letter]*

VALENTINE.

Madam, they are for you.

SILVIA.

Ay, ay, you writ them, sir, at my request;

But I will none of them; they are for you:

I would have had them writ more movingly.

VALENTINE.

Please you, I'll write your ladyship another.

SILVIA.

And when it's writ, for my sake read it over;

And if it please you, so; if not, why, so.

VALENTINE.

If it please me, madam, what then?

SILVIA.

Why, if it please you, take it for your labour.

And so good morrow, servant. *Exit* SILVIA

SPEED.

O jest unseen, inscrutable, invisible,

As a nose on a man's face, or a weathercock on a steeple!

My master sues to her; and she hath taught her suitor, He being her pupil, to become her tutor.

O excellent device! Was there ever heard a better,

That my master, being scribe, to himself should write the letter?

VALENTINE.

How now, sir! What are you reasoning with yourself?

SPEED.

Nay, I was rhyming: 'tis you that have the reason.

VALENTINE.

To do what?

SPEED.

To be a spokesman from Madam Silvia?

VALENTINE.

To whom?

SPEED.

To yourself; why, she woos you by a figure.

VALENTINE.

What figure?

SPEED.

By a letter, I should say.

VALENTINE.

Why, she hath not writ to me.

SPEED.

What need she, when she hath made you write to yourself?

Why, do you not perceive the jest?

VALENTINE.

No, believe me.

SPEED.

No believing you indeed, sir. But did you perceive her earnest?

VALENTINE.

She gave me none except an angry word.

SPEED.

Why, she hath given you a letter.

VALENTINE.

That's the letter I writ to her friend.

SPEED.

And that letter hath she deliver'd, and there an end.

VALENTINE.

I would it were no worse.

SPEED.

I'll warrant you 'tis as well.

'For often have you writ to her; and she, in modesty,

Or else for want of idle time, could not again reply;

Or fearing else some messenger that might her mind discover,

Herself hath taught her love himself to write unto her lover.'

All this I speak in print, for in print I found it. Why muse you,

sir? 'Tis dinner time.

VALENTINE.

I have din'd.

SPEED.

Ay, but hearken, sir; though the chameleon Love can feed on

the air, I am one that am nourish'd by my victuals, and would

fain have meat. O, be not like your mistress! Be moved, be moved.

Exeunt

SCENE 2. Verona. JULIA'S house

Enter PROTEUS and JULIA

PROTEUS.

Have patience, gentle Julia.

JULIA.

I must, where is no remedy.

PROTEUS.

When possibly I can, I will return.

JULIA.

If you turn not, you will return the sooner.

Keep this remembrance for thy Julia's sake.

[Giving a ring]

PROTEUS.

Why, then, we'll make exchange. Here, take you this.

JULIA.

And seal the bargain with a holy kiss.

PROTEUS.

Here is my hand for my true constancy;

And when that hour o'erslips me in the day

Wherein I sigh not, Julia, for thy sake,

The next ensuing hour some foul mischance

Torment me for my love's forgetfulness!

My father stays my coming; answer not;

The tide is now-nay, not thy tide of tears:

That tide will stay me longer than I should.

Julia, farewell! *Exit* JULIA

What, gone without a word?

Ay, so true love should do: it cannot speak;

For truth hath better deeds than words to grace it.

Enter PANTHINO

PANTHINO.

Sir Proteus, you are stay'd for.

PROTEUS.

Go; I come, I come.

Alas! this parting strikes poor lovers dumb. *Exeunt*

SCENE 3. Verona. A street

Enter LAUNCE, leading a dog

LAUNCE.

Nay, 'twill be this hour ere I have done weeping; all the kind of the Launces have this very fault. I have receiv'd my proportion, like the Prodigious Son, and am going with Sir Proteus to the Imperial's court. I think Crab my dog be the sourest-natured dog that lives: my mother weeping, my father wailing, my sister crying, our maid howling, our cat wringing her hands, and all our house in a great perplexity; yet did not this cruel-hearted cur shed one tear. He is a stone, a very pebble stone, and has no more pity in him than a dog. A Jew would have wept to have seen our parting; why, my grandam having no eyes, look you, wept herself blind at my parting. Nay, I'll show you the manner of it. This shoe is my father; no, this left shoe is my father; no, no, left shoe is my mother; nay, that cannot be so neither; yes, it is so, it is so, it hath the worser sole.

This

shoe with the hole in it is my mother, and this my father. A vengeance on 't! There 'tis. Now, sir, this staff is my sister, for, look you, she is as white as a lily and as small as a wand; this hat is Nan our maid; I am the dog; no, the dog is himself, and I am the dog-O, the dog is me, and I am myself; ay, so, so. Now come I to my father: 'Father, your blessing.' Now should not the shoe speak a word for weeping; now should I kiss my father; well, he weeps on. Now come I to my mother. O that she could speak now like a wood woman! Well, I kiss her-why there

'tis;

here's my mother's breath up and down. Now come I to my sister; mark the moan she makes. Now the dog all this while sheds not a tear, nor speaks a word; but see how I lay the dust with my tears.

Enter PANTHINO

PANTHINO.

Launce, away, away, aboard! Thy master is shipp'd, and

thou art to post after with oars. What's the matter? Why weep'st

thou, man? Away, ass! You'll lose the tide if you tarry any longer.

LAUNCE.

It is no matter if the tied were lost; for it is the

unkindest tied that ever any man tied.

PANTHINO.

What's the unkindest tide?

LAUNCE.

Why, he that's tied here, Crab, my dog.

PANTHINO.

Tut, man, I mean thou'lt lose the flood, and, in losing the flood, lose thy voyage, and, in losing thy voyage, lose thy master, and, in losing thy master, lose thy service, and, in losing thy service-Why dost thou stop my mouth?

LAUNCE.

For fear thou shouldst lose thy tongue.

PANTHINO.

Where should I lose my tongue?

LAUNCE.

In thy tale.

PANTHINO.

In thy tail!

LAUNCE.

Lose the tide, and the voyage, and the master, and the service, and the tied! Why, man, if the river were dry, I am able to fill it with my tears; if the wind were down, I could drive

the boat with my sighs.

PANTHINO.

Come, come away, man; I was sent to call thee.

LAUNCE.

Sir, call me what thou dar'st.

PANTHINO.

Will thou go?

LAUNCE.

Well, I will go. *Exeunt*

SCENE 4. Milan. The DUKE'S palace

Enter SILVIA, VALENTINE, THURIO, and SPEED

SILVIA.

Servant!

VALENTINE.

Mistress?

SPEED.

Master, Sir Thurio frowns on you.

VALENTINE.

Ay, boy, it's for love.

SPEED.

Not of you.

VALENTINE.

Of my mistress, then.

SPEED.

'Twere good you knock'd him. *Exit*

SILVIA. Servant, you are sad.

VALENTINE.

Indeed, madam, I seem so.

THURIO.

Seem you that you are not?

VALENTINE.

Haply I do.

THURIO.

So do counterfeits.

VALENTINE.

So do you.

THURIO.

What seem I that I am not?

VALENTINE.

Wise.

THURIO.

What instance of the contrary?

VALENTINE.

Your folly.

THURIO.

And how quote you my folly?

VALENTINE.

I quote it in your jerkin.

THURIO.

My jerkin is a doublet.

VALENTINE.

Well, then, I'll double your folly.

THURIO.

How?

SILVIA.

What, angry, Sir Thurio! Do you change colour?

VALENTINE.

Give him leave, madam; he is a kind of chameleon.

THURIO.

That hath more mind to feed on your blood than live in your air.

VALENTINE.

You have said, sir.

THURIO.

Ay, sir, and done too, for this time.

VALENTINE.

I know it well, sir; you always end ere you begin.

SILVIA.

A fine volley of words, gentlemen, and quickly shot off.

VALENTINE.

'Tis indeed, madam; we thank the giver.

SILVIA.

Who is that, servant?

VALENTINE.

Yourself, sweet lady; for you gave the fire. Sir Thurio

borrows his wit from your ladyship's looks, and spends what he

borrows kindly in your company.

THURIO.

Sir, if you spend word for word with me, I shall make your wit bankrupt.

VALENTINE.

I know it well, sir; you have an exchequer of words,

and, I think, no other treasure to give your followers; for it

appears by their bare liveries that they live by your bare words.

Enter DUKE

SILVIA.

No more, gentlemen, no more. Here comes my father.

DUKE.

Now, daughter Silvia, you are hard beset.
Sir Valentine, your father is in good health.
What say you to a letter from your friends
Of much good news?

VALENTINE.
My lord, I will be thankful
To any happy messenger from thence.

DUKE.

Know ye Don Antonio, your countryman?

VALENTINE.
Ay, my good lord, I know the gentleman
To be of worth and worthy estimation,
And not without desert so well reputed.

DUKE.

Hath he not a son?

VALENTINE.

Ay, my good lord; a son that well deserves

The honour and regard of such a father.

DUKE.

You know him well?

VALENTINE.

I knew him as myself; for from our infancy

We have convers'd and spent our hours together;

And though myself have been an idle truant,

Omitting the sweet benefit of time

To clothe mine age with angel-like perfection,

Yet hath Sir Proteus, for that's his name,

Made use and fair advantage of his days:

His years but young, but his experience old;

His head unmellowed, but his judgment ripe;

And, in a word, for far behind his worth

Comes all the praises that I now bestow,

He is complete in feature and in mind,

With all good grace to grace a gentleman.

DUKE.

Beshrew me, sir, but if he make this good,

He is as worthy for an empress' love

As meet to be an emperor's counsellor.

Well, sir, this gentleman is come to me

With commendation from great potentates,

And here he means to spend his time awhile.

I think 'tis no unwelcome news to you.

VALENTINE.

Should I have wish'd a thing, it had been he.

DUKE.

Welcome him, then, according to his worth-

Silvia, I speak to you, and you, Sir Thurio;

For Valentine, I need not cite him to it.

I will send him hither to you presently. *Exit* DUKE

VALENTINE.

This is the gentleman I told your ladyship

Had come along with me but that his mistresss

Did hold his eyes lock'd in her crystal looks.

SILVIA.

Belike that now she hath enfranchis'd them

Upon some other pawn for fealty.

VALENTINE.

Nay, sure, I think she holds them prisoners still.

SILVIA.

Nay, then, he should be blind; and, being blind,

How could he see his way to seek out you?

VALENTINE.

Why, lady, Love hath twenty pair of eyes.

THURIO.

They say that Love hath not an eye at all.

VALENTINE.

To see such lovers, Thurio, as yourself;

Upon a homely object Love can wink. *Exit* THURIO

Enter PROTEUS

SILVIA.

Have done, have done; here comes the gentleman.

VALENTINE.

Welcome, dear Proteus! Mistress, I beseech you

Confirm his welcome with some special favour.

SILVIA.

His worth is warrant for his welcome hither,

If this be he you oft have wish'd to hear from.

VALENTINE.

Mistress, it is; sweet lady, entertain him

To be my fellow-servant to your ladyship.

SILVIA.

Too low a mistress for so high a servant.

PROTEUS.

Not so, sweet lady; but too mean a servant

To have a look of such a worthy mistress.

VALENTINE.

Leave off discourse of disability;

Sweet lady, entertain him for your servant.

PROTEUS.

My duty will I boast of, nothing else.

SILVIA.

And duty never yet did want his meed.

Servant, you are welcome to a worthless mistress.

PROTEUS.

I'll die on him that says so but yourself.

SILVIA.

That you are welcome?

PROTEUS.

That you are worthless.

Re-enter THURIO

THURIO.

Madam, my lord your father would speak with you.

SILVIA.

I wait upon his pleasure. Come, Sir Thurio,

Go with me. Once more, new servant, welcome.

I'll leave you to confer of home affairs;

When you have done we look to hear from you.

PROTEUS.

We'll both attend upon your ladyship.

Exeunt SILVIA and THURIO

VALENTINE.

Now, tell me, how do all from whence you came?

PROTEUS.

Your friends are well, and have them much commended.

VALENTINE.

And how do yours?

PROTEUS.

I left them all in health.

VALENTINE.

How does your lady, and how thrives your love?

PROTEUS.

My tales of love were wont to weary you;

I know you joy not in a love-discourse.

VALENTINE.

Ay, Proteus, but that life is alter'd now;

I have done penance for contemning Love,

Whose high imperious thoughts have punish'd me

With bitter fasts, with penitential groans,

With nightly tears, and daily heart-sore sighs;

For, in revenge of my contempt of love,

Love hath chas'd sleep from my enthralled eyes

And made them watchers of mine own heart's sorrow.

O gentle Proteus, Love's a mighty lord,

And hath so humbled me as I confess

There is no woe to his correction,

Nor to his service no such joy on earth.

Now no discourse, except it be of love;

Now can I break my fast, dine, sup, and sleep, Upon the very naked name of love.

PROTEUS.

Enough; I read your fortune in your eye.

Was this the idol that you worship so?

VALENTINE.

Even she; and is she not a heavenly saint?

PROTEUS.

No; but she is an earthly paragon.

VALENTINE.

Call her divine.

PROTEUS.

I will not flatter her.

VALENTINE.

O, flatter me; for love delights in praises!

PROTEUS.
When I was sick you gave me bitter pills,
And I must minister the like to you.

VALENTINE.
Then speak the truth by her; if not divine,
Yet let her be a principality,
Sovereign to all the creatures on the earth.

PROTEUS.

Except my mistress.

VALENTINE.
Sweet, except not any;
Except thou wilt except against my love.

PROTEUS.

Have I not reason to prefer mine own?

VALENTINE.

And I will help thee to prefer her too:
She shall be dignified with this high honour-
To bear my lady's train, lest the base earth
Should from her vesture chance to steal a kiss
And, of so great a favour growing proud,
Disdain to root the summer-swelling flow'r
And make rough winter everlastingly.

PROTEUS.

Why, Valentine, what braggardism is this?

VALENTINE.

Pardon me, Proteus; all I can is nothing
To her, whose worth makes other worthies nothing;
She is alone.

PROTEUS.

Then let her alone.

VALENTINE.

Not for the world! Why, man, she is mine own;

And I as rich in having such a jewel

As twenty seas, if all their sand were pearl,

The water nectar, and the rocks pure gold.

Forgive me that I do not dream on thee,

Because thou seest me dote upon my love.

My foolish rival, that her father likes

Only for his possessions are so huge,

Is gone with her along; and I must after,

For love, thou know'st, is full of jealousy.

PROTEUS.

But she loves you?

VALENTINE.

Ay, and we are betroth'd; nay more, our

marriage-hour,

With all the cunning manner of our flight,

Determin'd of-how I must climb her window,

The ladder made of cords, and all the means

Plotted and 'greed on for my happiness.

Good Proteus, go with me to my chamber,

In these affairs to aid me with thy counsel.

PROTEUS.

Go on before; I shall enquire you forth;

I must unto the road to disembark

Some necessaries that I needs must use;

And then I'll presently attend you.

VALENTINE.

Will you make haste?

PROTEUS.

I will. *Exit* VALENTINE

Even as one heat another heat expels

Or as one nail by strength drives out another, So the remembrance of my former love

Is by a newer object quite forgotten.

Is it my mind, or Valentinus' praise,

Her true perfection, or my false transgression,

That makes me reasonless to reason thus?

She is fair; and so is Julia that I love-

That I did love, for now my love is thaw'd;

Which like a waxen image 'gainst a fire

Bears no impression of the thing it was.

Methinks my zeal to Valentine is cold,

And that I love him not as I was wont.

O! but I love his lady too too much,

And that's the reason I love him so little.

How shall I dote on her with more advice

That thus without advice begin to love her!

'Tis but her picture I have yet beheld,

And that hath dazzled my reason's light;

But when I look on her perfections,

There is no reason but I shall be blind.

If I can check my erring love, I will;

If not, to compass her I'll use my skill. *Exit*

SCENE 5. Milan. A street

Enter SPEED and LAUNCE severally

SPEED.

Launce! by mine honesty, welcome to Padua.

LAUNCE.

Forswear not thyself, sweet youth, for I am not

welcome. I

reckon this always, that a man is never undone till he be hang'd,

nor never welcome to a place till some certain shot be paid, and

the hostess say 'Welcome!'

SPEED.

Come on, you madcap; I'll to the alehouse with you

presently; where, for one shot of five pence, thou shalt have

five thousand welcomes. But, sirrah, how did thy master part with

Madam Julia?

LAUNCE.

Marry, after they clos'd in earnest, they parted very fairly in jest.

SPEED.

But shall she marry him?

LAUNCE.

No.

SPEED.

How then? Shall he marry her?

LAUNCE.

No, neither.

SPEED.

What, are they broken?

LAUNCE.

No, they are both as whole as a fish.

SPEED.

Why then, how stands the matter with them?

LAUNCE.

Marry, thus: when it stands well with him, it stands well with her.

SPEED.

What an ass art thou! I understand thee not.

LAUNCE.

What a block art thou that thou canst not! My staff understands me.

SPEED.

What thou say'st?

LAUNCE.

Ay, and what I do too; look thee, I'll but lean, and my
staff understands me.

SPEED.

It stands under thee, indeed.

LAUNCE.

Why, stand-under and understand is all one.

SPEED.

But tell me true, will't be a match?

LAUNCE.

Ask my dog. If he say ay, it will; if he say no, it will;
if he shake his tail and say nothing, it will.

SPEED.

The conclusion is, then, that it will.

LAUNCE.

Thou shalt never get such a secret from me but by a parable.

SPEED.

'Tis well that I get it so. But, Launce, how say'st thou
that my master is become a notable lover?

LAUNCE.

I never knew him otherwise.

SPEED.

Than how?

LAUNCE.

A notable lubber, as thou reportest him to be.

SPEED.

Why, thou whoreson ass, thou mistak'st me.

LAUNCE.

Why, fool, I meant not thee, I meant thy master.

SPEED.
I tell thee my master is become a hot lover.

LAUNCE.

Why, I tell thee I care not though he burn himself in love.
If thou wilt, go with me to the alehouse; if not, thou art an
Hebrew, a Jew, and not worth the name of a Christian.

SPEED.
Why?

LAUNCE.
Because thou hast not so much charity in thee as to go to
the ale with a Christian. Wilt thou go?

SPEED.

At thy service. *Exeunt*

SCENE 6. Milan. The DUKE's palace

Enter PROTEUS

PROTEUS.

To leave my Julia, shall I be forsworn;

To love fair Silvia, shall I be forsworn;

To wrong my friend, I shall be much forsworn;

And ev'n that pow'r which gave me first my oath

Provokes me to this threefold perjury:

Love bade me swear, and Love bids me forswear.

O sweet-suggesting Love, if thou hast sinn'd,

Teach me, thy tempted subject, to excuse it!

At first I did adore a twinkling star,

But now I worship a celestial sun.

Unheedful vows may heedfully be broken;

And he wants wit that wants resolved will

To learn his wit t' exchange the bad for better.
Fie, fie, unreverend tongue, to call her bad
Whose sovereignty so oft thou hast preferr'd
With twenty thousand soul-confirming oaths!
I cannot leave to love, and yet I do;
But there I leave to love where I should love.
Julia I lose, and Valentine I lose;
If I keep them, I needs must lose myself;
If I lose them, thus find I by their loss:

For Valentine, myself; for Julia, Silvia.
I to myself am dearer than a friend;
For love is still most precious in itself;
And Silvia-witness heaven, that made her fair!-
Shows Julia but a swarthy Ethiope.
I will forget that Julia is alive,
Rememb'ring that my love to her is dead;
And Valentine I'll hold an enemy,
Aiming at Silvia as a sweeter friend.
I cannot now prove constant to myself
Without some treachery us'd to Valentine.

This night he meaneth with a corded ladder

To climb celestial Silvia's chamber window,

Myself in counsel, his competitor.

Now presently I'll give her father notice

Of their disguising and pretended flight,

Who, all enrag'd, will banish Valentine,

For Thurio, he intends, shall wed his daughter;

But, Valentine being gone, I'll quickly cross

By some sly trick blunt Thurio's dull proceeding.

Love, lend me wings to make my purpose swift,

As thou hast lent me wit to plot this drift. *Exit*

SCENE 7. Verona. JULIA'S house

Enter JULIA and LUCETTA

JULIA.

Counsel, Lucetta; gentle girl, assist me;

And, ev'n in kind love, I do conjure thee,

Who art the table wherein all my thoughts

Are visibly character'd and engrav'd,

To lesson me and tell me some good mean
How, with my honour, I may undertake
A journey to my loving Proteus.

LUCETTA.

Alas, the way is wearisome and long!

JULIA.

A true-devoted pilgrim is not weary
To measure kingdoms with his feeble steps;
Much less shall she that hath Love's wings to fly,
And when the flight is made to one so dear,
Of such divine perfection, as Sir Proteus.

LUCETTA.

Better forbear till Proteus make return.

JULIA.

O, know'st thou not his looks are my soul's food?

Pity the dearth that I have pined in
By longing for that food so long a time.

Didst thou but know the inly touch of love.
Thou wouldst as soon go kindle fire with snow
As seek to quench the fire of love with words.

LUCETTA.
I do not seek to quench your love's hot fire,
But qualify the fire's extreme rage,
Lest it should burn above the bounds of reason.

JULIA.

The more thou dam'st it up, the more it burns.
The current that with gentle murmur glides,
Thou know'st, being stopp'd, impatiently doth rage;
But when his fair course is not hindered,
He makes sweet music with th' enamell'd stones,
Giving a gentle kiss to every sedge
He overtaketh in his pilgrimage;

And so by many winding nooks he strays,

With willing sport, to the wild ocean.

Then let me go, and hinder not my course.

I'll be as patient as a gentle stream,

And make a pastime of each weary step,

Till the last step have brought me to my love;

And there I'll rest as, after much turmoil,

A blessed soul doth in Elysium.

LUCETTA.

But in what habit will you go along?

JULIA.

Not like a woman, for I would prevent

The loose encounters of lascivious men;

Gentle Lucetta, fit me with such weeds

As may beseem some well-reputed page.

LUCETTA.

Why then, your ladyship must cut your hair.

JULIA.

No, girl; I'll knit it up in silken strings
With twenty odd-conceited true-love knots-
To be fantastic may become a youth
Of greater time than I shall show to be.

LUCETTA.

What fashion, madam, shall I make your breeches?

JULIA.

That fits as well as 'Tell me, good my lord,
What compass will you wear your farthingale.'

Why ev'n what fashion thou best likes, Lucetta.

LUCETTA.

You must needs have them with a codpiece, madam.

JULIA.

Out, out, Lucetta, that will be ill-favour'd.

LUCETTA.

A round hose, madam, now's not worth a pin,
Unless you have a codpiece to stick pins on.

JULIA.

Lucetta, as thou lov'st me, let me have
What thou think'st meet, and is most mannerly.
But tell me, wench, how will the world repute me
For undertaking so unstaid a journey?
I fear me it will make me scandaliz'd.

LUCETTA.

If you think so, then stay at home and go not.

JULIA.

Nay, that I will not.

LUCETTA.

Then never dream on infamy, but go.

If Proteus like your journey when you come,

No matter who's displeas'd when you are gone.

I fear me he will scarce be pleas'd withal.

JULIA.

That is the least, Lucetta, of my fear:

A thousand oaths, an ocean of his tears,

And instances of infinite of love,

Warrant me welcome to my Proteus.

LUCETTA.

All these are servants to deceitful men.

JULIA.

Base men that use them to so base effect!

But truer stars did govern Proteus' birth;

His words are bonds, his oaths are oracles, His love sincere, his thoughts immaculate,

His tears pure messengers sent from his heart,

His heart as far from fraud as heaven from earth.

LUCETTA.

Pray heav'n he prove so when you come to him.

JULIA.

Now, as thou lov'st me, do him not that wrong

To bear a hard opinion of his truth;

Only deserve my love by loving him.

And presently go with me to my chamber,

To take a note of what I stand in need of

To furnish me upon my longing journey.

All that is mine I leave at thy dispose,

My goods, my lands, my reputation;

Only, in lieu thereof, dispatch me hence.

Come, answer not, but to it presently;

I am impatient of my tarriance. *Exeunt*

ACT 3.

SCENE I. Milan. The DUKE'S palace

Enter DUKE, THURIO, and PROTEUS

DUKE.

Sir Thurio, give us leave, I pray, awhile;
We have some secrets to confer about. *Exit* THURIO
Now tell me, Proteus, what's your will with me?

PROTEUS.

My gracious lord, that which I would discover
The law of friendship bids me to conceal;
But, when I call to mind your gracious favours
Done to me, undeserving as I am,
My duty pricks me on to utter that
Which else no worldly good should draw from me.
Know, worthy prince, Sir Valentine, my friend,
This night intends to steal away your daughter;
Myself am one made privy to the plot.
I know you have determin'd to bestow her
On Thurio, whom your gentle daughter hates;

And should she thus be stol'n away from you,
It would be much vexation to your age.
Thus, for my duty's sake, I rather chose
To cross my friend in his intended drift
Than, by concealing it, heap on your head
A pack of sorrows which would press you down,
Being unprevented, to your timeless grave.

DUKE.
Proteus, I thank thee for thine honest care,
Which to requite, command me while I live.
This love of theirs myself have often seen,
Haply when they have judg'd me fast asleep,
And oftentimes have purpos'd to forbid
Sir Valentine her company and my court;
But, fearing lest my jealous aim might err
And so, unworthily, disgrace the man,
A rashness that I ever yet have shunn'd,
I gave him gentle looks, thereby to find
That which thyself hast now disclos'd to me.
And, that thou mayst perceive my fear of this,

Knowing that tender youth is soon suggested,

I nightly lodge her in an upper tow'r,

The key whereof myself have ever kept;

And thence she cannot be convey'd away.

PROTEUS.

Know, noble lord, they have devis'd a mean

How he her chamber window will ascend

And with a corded ladder fetch her down;

For which the youthful lover now is gone,

And this way comes he with it presently;

Where, if it please you, you may intercept him.

But, good my lord, do it so cunningly

That my discovery be not aimed at;

For love of you, not hate unto my friend,

Hath made me publisher of this pretence.

DUKE.

Upon mine honour, he shall never know

That I had any light from thee of this.

PROTEUS.

Adieu, my lord; Sir Valentine is coming. *Exit*

Enter VALENTINE

DUKE.

Sir Valentine, whither away so fast?

VALENTINE.

Please it your Grace, there is a messenger

That stays to bear my letters to my friends,

And I am going to deliver them.

DUKE.

Be they of much import?

VALENTINE.

The tenour of them doth but signify

My health and happy being at your court.

DUKE.

Nay then, no matter; stay with me awhile;

I am to break with thee of some affairs

That touch me near, wherein thou must be secret.

'Tis not unknown to thee that I have sought

To match my friend Sir Thurio to my daughter.

VALENTINE.

I know it well, my lord; and, sure, the match

Were rich and honourable; besides, the gentleman

Is full of virtue, bounty, worth, and qualities

Beseeming such a wife as your fair daughter.

Cannot your grace win her to fancy him?

DUKE.

No, trust me; she is peevish, sullen, froward,

Proud, disobedient, stubborn, lacking duty;

Neither regarding that she is my child

Nor fearing me as if I were her father;

And, may I say to thee, this pride of hers,

Upon advice, hath drawn my love from her;

And, where I thought the remnant of mine age

Should have been cherish'd by her childlike duty,
I now am full resolv'd to take a wife
And turn her out to who will take her in.
Then let her beauty be her wedding-dow'r;
For me and my possessions she esteems not.

VALENTINE.

What would your Grace have me to do in this?

DUKE.

There is a lady, in Verona here,
Whom I affect; but she is nice, and coy,
And nought esteems my aged eloquence.
Now, therefore, would I have thee to my tutor-
For long agone I have forgot to court;
Besides, the fashion of the time is chang'd-
How and which way I may bestow myself
To be regarded in her sun-bright eye.

VALENTINE.

Win her with gifts, if she respect not words:
Dumb jewels often in their silent kind
More than quick words do move a woman's mind.

DUKE.

But she did scorn a present that I sent her.

VALENTINE.
A woman sometime scorns what best contents her.
Send her another; never give her o'er,
For scorn at first makes after-love the more.
If she do frown, 'tis not in hate of you,
But rather to beget more love in you;
If she do chide, 'tis not to have you gone,
For why, the fools are mad if left alone.
Take no repulse, whatever she doth say;
For 'Get you gone' she doth not mean 'Away!'
Flatter and praise, commend, extol their graces;
Though ne'er so black, say they have angels' faces.
That man that hath a tongue, I say, is no man,

If with his tongue he cannot win a woman.

DUKE.

But she I mean is promis'd by her friends

Unto a youthful gentleman of worth;

And kept severely from resort of men,

That no man hath access by day to her.

VALENTINE.

Why then I would resort to her by night.

DUKE.

Ay, but the doors be lock'd and keys kept safe,

That no man hath recourse to her by night.

VALENTINE.

What lets but one may enter at her window?

DUKE.

Her chamber is aloft, far from the ground,

And built so shelving that one cannot climb it
Without apparent hazard of his life.

VALENTINE.

Why then a ladder, quaintly made of cords,
To cast up with a pair of anchoring hooks,
Would serve to scale another Hero's tow'r,
So bold Leander would adventure it.

DUKE.

Now, as thou art a gentleman of blood,
Advise me where I may have such a ladder.

VALENTINE.

When would you use it? Pray, sir, tell me that.

DUKE.

This very night; for Love is like a child,
That longs for everything that he can come by.

VALENTINE.

By seven o'clock I'll get you such a ladder.

DUKE.

But, hark thee; I will go to her alone;

How shall I best convey the ladder thither?

VALENTINE.

It will be light, my lord, that you may bear it

Under a cloak that is of any length.

DUKE.

A cloak as long as thine will serve the turn?

VALENTINE.

Ay, my good lord.

DUKE.

Then let me see thy cloak.

I'll get me one of such another length.

VALENTINE.

Why, any cloak will serve the turn, my lord.

DUKE.

How shall I fashion me to wear a cloak?

I pray thee, let me feel thy cloak upon me.

What letter is this same? What's here? 'To Silvia'!

And here an engine fit for my proceeding!

I'll be so bold to break the seal for once. *[Reads]*

'My thoughts do harbour with my Silvia nightly,

And slaves they are to me, that send them flying.

O, could their master come and go as lightly,

Himself would lodge where, senseless, they are lying!

My herald thoughts in thy pure bosom rest them,

While I, their king, that thither them importune,

Do curse the grace that with such grace hath blest them,

Because myself do want my servants' fortune.

I curse myself, for they are sent by me,

That they should harbour where their lord should be.'

What's here?

'Silvia, this night I will enfranchise thee.'

'Tis so; and here's the ladder for the purpose.

Why, Phaethon-for thou art Merops' son-

Wilt thou aspire to guide the heavenly car,

And with thy daring folly burn the world?

Wilt thou reach stars because they shine on thee?

Go, base intruder, over-weening slave,

Bestow thy fawning smiles on equal mates;

And think my patience, more than thy desert,

Is privilege for thy departure hence.

Thank me for this more than for all the favours

Which, all too much, I have bestow'd on thee.

But if thou linger in my territories

Longer than swiftest expedition

Will give thee time to leave our royal court,

By heaven! my wrath shall far exceed the love

I ever bore my daughter or thyself.

Be gone; I will not hear thy vain excuse,

But, as thou lov'st thy life, make speed from hence. *Exit*

VALENTINE. And why not death rather than living torment?

To die is to be banish'd from myself,

And Silvia is myself; banish'd from her

Is self from self, a deadly banishment.

What light is light, if Silvia be not seen?

What joy is joy, if Silvia be not by?

Unless it be to think that she is by,

And feed upon the shadow of perfection.

Except I be by Silvia in the night,

There is no music in the nightingale;

Unless I look on Silvia in the day,

There is no day for me to look upon.

She is my essence, and I leave to be

If I be not by her fair influence

Foster'd, illumin'd, cherish'd, kept alive.

I fly not death, to fly his deadly doom:

Tarry I here, I but attend on death;

But fly I hence, I fly away from life.

Enter PROTEUS and LAUNCE

PROTEUS.

Run, boy, run, run, seek him out.

LAUNCE.

So-ho, so-ho!

PROTEUS.

What seest thou?

LAUNCE.

Him we go to find: there's not a hair on 's head but 'tis a Valentine.

PROTEUS.

Valentine?

VALENTINE.

No.

PROTEUS.

Who then? his spirit?

VALENTINE.

Neither.

PROTEUS.

What then?

VALENTINE.

Nothing.

LAUNCE.

Can nothing speak? Master, shall I strike?

PROTEUS.

Who wouldst thou strike?

LAUNCE.

Nothing.

PROTEUS.

Villain, forbear.

LAUNCE.

Why, sir, I'll strike nothing. I pray you-

PROTEUS.

Sirrah, I say, forbear. Friend Valentine, a word.

VALENTINE.

My ears are stopp'd and cannot hear good news,
So much of bad already hath possess'd them.

PROTEUS.

Then in dumb silence will I bury mine,

For they are harsh, untuneable, and bad.

VALENTINE.

Is Silvia dead?

PROTEUS.

No, Valentine.

VALENTINE.

No Valentine, indeed, for sacred Silvia.

Hath she forsworn me?

PROTEUS.

No, Valentine.

VALENTINE.

No Valentine, if Silvia have forsworn me.

What is your news?

LAUNCE.

Sir, there is a proclamation that you are vanished.

PROTEUS.

That thou art banished-O, that's the news!-

From hence, from Silvia, and from me thy friend.

VALENTINE.

O, I have fed upon this woe already,

And now excess of it will make me surfeit.

Doth Silvia know that I am banished?

PROTEUS.

Ay, ay; and she hath offered to the doom-

Which, unrevers'd, stands in effectual force-

A sea of melting pearl, which some call tears;

Those at her father's churlish feet she tender'd;

With them, upon her knees, her humble self,
Wringing her hands, whose whiteness so became them
As if but now they waxed pale for woe.
But neither bended knees, pure hands held up,
Sad sighs, deep groans, nor silver-shedding tears,
Could penetrate her uncompassionate sire-
But Valentine, if he be ta'en, must die.
Besides, her intercession chaf'd him so,
When she for thy repeal was suppliant,
That to close prison he commanded her,
With many bitter threats of biding there.

VALENTINE.
No more; unless the next word that thou speak'st
Have some malignant power upon my life:
If so, I pray thee breathe it in mine ear,
As ending anthem of my endless dolour.

PROTEUS.
Cease to lament for that thou canst not help,
And study help for that which thou lament'st.

Time is the nurse and breeder of all good.
Here if thou stay thou canst not see thy love;
Besides, thy staying will abridge thy life.
Hope is a lover's staff; walk hence with that,
And manage it against despairing thoughts.
Thy letters may be here, though thou art hence,
Which, being writ to me, shall be deliver'd
Even in the milk-white bosom of thy love.
The time now serves not to expostulate.
Come, I'll convey thee through the city gate;
And, ere I part with thee, confer at large
Of all that may concern thy love affairs.
As thou lov'st Silvia, though not for thyself,
Regard thy danger, and along with me.

VALENTINE.
I pray thee, Launce, an if thou seest my boy,
Bid him make haste and meet me at the Northgate.

PROTEUS.
Go, sirrah, find him out. Come, Valentine.

VALENTINE.

O my dear Silvia! Hapless Valentine!

Exeunt VALENTINE and PROTEUS

LAUNCE.

I am but a fool, look you, and yet I have the wit to think

my master is a kind of a knave; but that's all one if he be but

one knave. He lives not now that knows me to be in love; yet

I am in love; but a team of horse shall not pluck that from me; nor

who 'tis I love; and yet 'tis a woman; but what woman I will not

tell myself; and yet 'tis a milkmaid; yet 'tis not a maid, for

she hath had gossips; yet 'tis a maid, for she is her master's

maid and serves for wages. She hath more qualities than a

water-spaniel- which is much in a bare Christian. Here is the

cate-log *[Pulling out a paper]* of her condition. 'Inprimis:

She

can fetch and carry.' Why, a horse can do no more; nay, a horse

cannot fetch, but only carry; therefore is she better than a

jade. 'Item: She can milk.' Look you, a sweet virtue in a maid

with clean hands.

Enter SPEED

SPEED.

How now, Signior Launce! What news with your mastership?

LAUNCE.

With my master's ship? Why, it is at sea.

SPEED.

Well, your old vice still: mistake the word. What news, then, in your paper?

LAUNCE.

The black'st news that ever thou heard'st.

SPEED.

Why, man? how black?

LAUNCE.

Why, as black as ink.

SPEED.

Let me read them.

LAUNCE.

Fie on thee, jolt-head; thou canst not read.

SPEED.

Thou liest; I can.

LAUNCE.

I will try thee. Tell me this: Who begot thee?

SPEED.

Marry, the son of my grandfather.

LAUNCE.

O illiterate loiterer. It was the son of thy grandmother.

This proves that thou canst not read.

SPEED.

Come, fool, come; try me in thy paper.

LAUNCE.

[Handing over the paper] There; and Saint Nicholas be thy speed.

SPEED.

[Reads] 'Inprimis: She can milk.'

LAUNCE.

Ay, that she can.

SPEED.

'Item: She brews good ale.'

LAUNCE.

And thereof comes the proverb: Blessing of your heart, you brew good ale.

SPEED.

'Item: She can sew.'

LAUNCE.

That's as much as to say 'Can she so?'

SPEED.

'Item: She can knit.'

LAUNCE.

What need a man care for a stock with a wench, when she can knit him a stock.

SPEED.

'Item: She can wash and scour.'

LAUNCE.

A special virtue; for then she need not be wash'd and scour'd.

SPEED.

'Item: She can spin.'

LAUNCE.

Then may I set the world on wheels, when she can spin for her living.

SPEED.

'Item: She hath many nameless virtues.'

LAUNCE.

That's as much as to say 'bastard virtues'; that indeed

know not their fathers, and therefore have no names.

SPEED.

'Here follow her vices.'

LAUNCE.

Close at the heels of her virtues.

SPEED.

'Item: She is not to be kiss'd fasting, in respect of her breath.'

LAUNCE.

Well, that fault may be mended with a breakfast.

Read on.

SPEED.

'Item: She hath a sweet mouth.'

LAUNCE.

That makes amends for her sour breath.

SPEED.

'Item: She doth talk in her sleep.'

LAUNCE.

It's no matter for that, so she sleep not in her talk.

SPEED.

'Item: She is slow in words.'

LAUNCE.

O villain, that set this down among her vices! To be slow
in words is a woman's only virtue. I pray thee, out with't; and
place it for her chief virtue.

SPEED.

'Item: She is proud.'

LAUNCE.

Out with that too; it was Eve's legacy, and cannot be ta'en from her.

SPEED.

'Item: She hath no teeth.'

LAUNCE.

I care not for that neither, because I love crusts.

SPEED.

'Item: She is curst.'

LAUNCE.

Well, the best is, she hath no teeth to bite.

SPEED.

'Item: She will often praise her liquor.'

LAUNCE.

If her liquor be good, she shall; if she will not, I

will;
for good things should be praised.

SPEED.

'Item: She is too liberal.'

LAUNCE.
Of her tongue she cannot, for that's writ down she is slow
of; of her purse she shall not, for that I'll keep shut. Now of
another thing she may, and that cannot I help. Well, proceed.

SPEED.
'Item: She hath more hair than wit, and more faults
than hairs, and more wealth than faults.'

LAUNCE.
Stop there; I'll have her; she was mine, and not mine,
twice or thrice in that last article. Rehearse that once more.

SPEED.

'Item: She hath more hair than wit'-

LAUNCE.

More hair than wit. It may be; I'll prove it: the cover of the salt hides the salt, and therefore it is more than the salt; the hair that covers the wit is more than the wit, for the greater hides the less. What's next?

SPEED.

'And more faults than hairs'-

LAUNCE.

That's monstrous. O that that were out!

SPEED.

'And more wealth than faults.'

LAUNCE.

Why, that word makes the faults gracious. Well, I'll have her; an if it be a match, as nothing is impossible-

SPEED.

What then?

LAUNCE.

Why, then will I tell thee-that thy master stays for thee
at the Northgate.

SPEED.

For me?

LAUNCE.

For thee! ay, who art thou? He hath stay'd for a better man than thee.

SPEED.

And must I go to him?

LAUNCE.

Thou must run to him, for thou hast stay'd so long that going will scarce serve the turn.

SPEED.

Why didst not tell me sooner? Pox of your love letters!

Exit

LAUNCE. Now will he be swing'd for reading my letter. An unmannerly slave that will thrust himself into secrets! I'll after, to rejoice in the boy's correction. *Exit*

SCENE 2. Milan. The DUKE'S palace

Enter DUKE and THURIO

DUKE.

Sir Thurio, fear not but that she will love you
Now Valentine is banish'd from her sight.

THURIO.

Since his exile she hath despis'd me most, Forsworn my company and rail'd at me,

That I am desperate of obtaining her.

DUKE.

This weak impress of love is as a figure

Trenched in ice, which with an hour's heat

Dissolves to water and doth lose his form.

A little time will melt her frozen thoughts,

And worthless Valentine shall be forgot.

Enter PROTEUS

How now, Sir Proteus! Is your countryman,

According to our proclamation, gone?

PROTEUS.

Gone, my good lord.

DUKE.

My daughter takes his going grievously.

PROTEUS.

A little time, my lord, will kill that grief.

DUKE.
So I believe; but Thurio thinks not so.
Proteus, the good conceit I hold of thee-
For thou hast shown some sign of good desert-
Makes me the better to confer with thee.

PROTEUS.
Longer than I prove loyal to your Grace
Let me not live to look upon your Grace.

DUKE.
Thou know'st how willingly I would effect
The match between Sir Thurio and my daughter.

PROTEUS.
I do, my lord.

DUKE.

And also, I think, thou art not ignorant
How she opposes her against my will.

PROTEUS.

She did, my lord, when Valentine was here.

DUKE.

Ay, and perversely she persevers so.
What might we do to make the girl forget
The love of Valentine, and love Sir Thurio?

PROTEUS.

The best way is to slander Valentine
With falsehood, cowardice, and poor descent-
Three things that women highly hold in hate.

DUKE.

Ay, but she'll think that it is spoke in hate.

PROTEUS.

Ay, if his enemy deliver it;
Therefore it must with circumstance be spoken
By one whom she esteemeth as his friend.

DUKE.

Then you must undertake to slander him.

PROTEUS.

And that, my lord, I shall be loath to do:
'Tis an ill office for a gentleman,
Especially against his very friend.

DUKE.

Where your good word cannot advantage him,
Your slander never can endamage him;
Therefore the office is indifferent,
Being entreated to it by your friend.

PROTEUS.

You have prevail'd, my lord; if I can do it

By aught that I can speak in his dispraise,

She shall not long continue love to him.

But say this weed her love from Valentine,

It follows not that she will love Sir Thurio.

THURIO.

Therefore, as you unwind her love from him,

Lest it should ravel and be good to none,

You must provide to bottom it on me;

Which must be done by praising me as much

As you in worth dispraise Sir Valentine.

DUKE.

And, Proteus, we dare trust you in this kind,

Because we know, on Valentine's report,

You are already Love's firm votary

And cannot soon revolt and change your mind.

Upon this warrant shall you have access

Where you with Silvia may confer at large-

For she is lumpish, heavy, melancholy,
And, for your friend's sake, will be glad of you-
Where you may temper her by your persuasion
To hate young Valentine and love my friend.

PROTEUS.
As much as I can do I will effect.
But you, Sir Thurio, are not sharp enough;
You must lay lime to tangle her desires
By wailful sonnets, whose composed rhymes
Should be full-fraught with serviceable vows.

DUKE.
Ay,
Much is the force of heaven-bred poesy.

PROTEUS.
Say that upon the altar of her beauty
You sacrifice your tears, your sighs, your heart;
Write till your ink be dry, and with your tears
Moist it again, and frame some feeling line

That may discover such integrity;

For Orpheus' lute was strung with poets' sinews,

Whose golden touch could soften steel and stones,

Make tigers tame, and huge leviathans

Forsake unsounded deeps to dance on sands.

After your dire-lamenting elegies,

Visit by night your lady's chamber window

With some sweet consort; to their instruments

Tune a deploring dump-the night's dead silence

Will well become such sweet-complaining grievance.

This, or else nothing, will inherit her.

DUKE.

This discipline shows thou hast been in love.

THURIO.

And thy advice this night I'll put in practice;

Therefore, sweet Proteus, my direction-giver,

Let us into the city presently

To sort some gentlemen well skill'd in music.

I have a sonnet that will serve the turn

To give the onset to thy good advice.

DUKE.

About it, gentlemen!

PROTEUS.

We'll wait upon your Grace till after supper,

And afterward determine our proceedings.

DUKE.

Even now about it! I will pardon you. *Exeunt*

ACT_4|SC_1

ACT 4.
SCENE 1. The frontiers of Mantua. A forest

Enter certain OUTLAWS

FIRST OUTLAW.

Fellows, stand fast; I see a passenger.

SECOND OUTLAW.

If there be ten, shrink not, but down with 'em.

Enter VALENTINE and SPEED

THIRD OUTLAW.

Stand, sir, and throw us that you have about ye;

If not, we'll make you sit, and rifle you.

SPEED.

Sir, we are undone; these are the villains

That all the travellers do fear so much.

VALENTINE.

My friends-

FIRST OUTLAW.

That's not so, sir; we are your enemies.

SECOND OUTLAW.

Peace! we'll hear him.

THIRD OUTLAW.

Ay, by my beard, will we; for he is a proper man.

VALENTINE.

Then know that I have little wealth to lose;
A man I am cross'd with adversity;
My riches are these poor habiliments,
Of which if you should here disfurnish me,
You take the sum and substance that I have.

SECOND OUTLAW.

Whither travel you?

VALENTINE.

To Verona.

FIRST OUTLAW.

Whence came you?

VALENTINE.

From Milan.

THIRD OUTLAW.

Have you long sojourn'd there?

VALENTINE.

Some sixteen months, and longer might have stay'd,

If crooked fortune had not thwarted me.

FIRST OUTLAW.

What, were you banish'd thence?

VALENTINE.

I was.

SECOND OUTLAW.

For what offence?

VALENTINE.

For that which now torments me to rehearse:

I kill'd a man, whose death I much repent;

But yet I slew him manfully in fight,

Without false vantage or base treachery.

FIRST OUTLAW.

Why, ne'er repent it, if it were done so.

But were you banish'd for so small a fault?

VALENTINE.

I was, and held me glad of such a doom.

SECOND OUTLAW.

Have you the tongues?

VALENTINE.

My youthful travel therein made me happy,

Or else I often had been miserable.

THIRD OUTLAW.

By the bare scalp of Robin Hood's fat friar,

This fellow were a king for our wild faction!

FIRST OUTLAW.

We'll have him. Sirs, a word.

SPEED.

Master, be one of them; it's an honourable kind of thievery.

VALENTINE.

Peace, villain!

SECOND OUTLAW.

Tell us this: have you anything to take to?

VALENTINE.

Nothing but my fortune.

THIRD OUTLAW.

Know, then, that some of us are gentlemen,

Such as the fury of ungovern'd youth

Thrust from the company of awful men;

Myself was from Verona banished

For practising to steal away a lady,

An heir, and near allied unto the Duke.

SECOND OUTLAW.

And I from Mantua, for a gentleman

Who, in my mood, I stabb'd unto the heart.

FIRST OUTLAW.

And I for such-like petty crimes as these.

But to the purpose-for we cite our faults

That they may hold excus'd our lawless lives;

And, partly, seeing you are beautified

With goodly shape, and by your own report

A linguist, and a man of such perfection

As we do in our quality much want-

SECOND OUTLAW.

Indeed, because you are a banish'd man,

Therefore, above the rest, we parley to you.

Are you content to be our general-

To make a virtue of necessity,

And live as we do in this wilderness?

THIRD OUTLAW.

What say'st thou? Wilt thou be of our consort?

Say 'ay' and be the captain of us all.

We'll do thee homage, and be rul'd by thee, Love thee as our commander and our king.

FIRST OUTLAW.

But if thou scorn our courtesy thou diest.

SECOND OUTLAW.

Thou shalt not live to brag what we have offer'd.

VALENTINE.

I take your offer, and will live with you,
Provided that you do no outrages
On silly women or poor passengers.

THIRD OUTLAW.

No, we detest such vile base practices.
Come, go with us; we'll bring thee to our crews,
And show thee all the treasure we have got;
Which, with ourselves, all rest at thy dispose. *Exeunt*

SCENE 2. Milan. Outside the DUKE'S palace, under SILVIA'S window

Enter PROTEUS

PROTEUS.

Already have I been false to Valentine,

And now I must be as unjust to Thurio.

Under the colour of commending him

I have access my own love to prefer;

But Silvia is too fair, too true, too holy,

To be corrupted with my worthless gifts.

When I protest true loyalty to her,

She twits me with my falsehood to my friend;

When to her beauty I commend my vows,

She bids me think how I have been forsworn

In breaking faith with Julia whom I lov'd;

And notwithstanding all her sudden quips,

The least whereof would quell a lover's hope,

Yet, spaniel-like, the more she spurns my love

The more it grows and fawneth on her still.

Enter THURIO and MUSICIANS

But here comes Thurio. Now must we to her window,
And give some evening music to her ear.

THURIO.

How now, Sir Proteus, are you crept before us?

PROTEUS.

Ay, gentle Thurio; for you know that love
Will creep in service where it cannot go.

THURIO.

Ay, but I hope, sir, that you love not here.

PROTEUS.

Sir, but I do; or else I would be hence.

THURIO.

Who? Silvia?

PROTEUS.

Ay, Silvia-for your sake.

THURIO.

I thank you for your own. Now, gentlemen,

Let's tune, and to it lustily awhile.

Enter at a distance, HOST, and JULIA in boy's clothes

HOST.

Now, my young guest, methinks you're allycholly; I pray you,

why is it?

JULIA.

Marry, mine host, because I cannot be merry.

HOST.

Come, we'll have you merry; I'll bring you where you shall hear music, and see the gentleman that you ask'd for.

JULIA.

But shall I hear him speak?

HOST.

Ay, that you shall. *[Music plays]*

JULIA.

That will be music.

HOST.

Hark, hark!

JULIA.

Is he among these?

HOST.

Ay; but peace! let's hear 'em.

SONG

Who is Silvia? What is she,
That all our swains commend her?
Holy, fair, and wise is she;
The heaven such grace did lend her,
That she might admired be.

Is she kind as she is fair?
For beauty lives with kindness.
Love doth to her eyes repair,
To help him of his blindness;
And, being help'd, inhabits there.
Then to Silvia let us sing
That Silvia is excelling;
She excels each mortal thing
Upon the dull earth dwelling.
'To her let us garlands bring.

HOST.

How now, are you sadder than you were before?

How do you, man? The music likes you not.

JULIA.

You mistake; the musician likes me not.

HOST.

Why, my pretty youth?

JULIA.

He plays false, father.

HOST.

How, out of tune on the strings?

JULIA.

Not so; but yet so false that he grieves my very

heart-strings.

HOST.

You have a quick ear.

JULIA.

Ay, I would I were deaf; it makes me have a slow heart.

HOST.

I perceive you delight not in music.

JULIA.

Not a whit, when it jars so.

HOST.

Hark, what fine change is in the music!

JULIA.

Ay, that change is the spite.

HOST.

You would have them always play but one thing?

JULIA.

I would always have one play but one thing.

But, Host, doth this Sir Proteus, that we talk on,

Often resort unto this gentlewoman?

HOST.

I tell you what Launce, his man, told me: he lov'd her out of all nick.

JULIA.

Where is Launce?

HOST.

Gone to seek his dog, which to-morrow, by his master's command, he must carry for a present to his lady.

JULIA.

Peace, stand aside; the company parts.

PROTEUS.

Sir Thurio, fear not you; I will so plead

That you shall say my cunning drift excels.

THURIO.

Where meet we?

PROTEUS.

At Saint Gregory's well.

THURIO.

Farewell. Exeunt THURIO and MUSICIANS

Enter SILVIA above, at her window

PROTEUS.

Madam, good ev'n to your ladyship.

SILVIA.

I thank you for your music, gentlemen.
Who is that that spake?

PROTEUS.
One, lady, if you knew his pure heart's truth,
You would quickly learn to know him by his voice.

SILVIA.

Sir Proteus, as I take it.

PROTEUS.
Sir Proteus, gentle lady, and your servant.

SILVIA.

What's your will?

PROTEUS.

That I may compass yours.

SILVIA.

You have your wish; my will is even this,

That presently you hie you home to bed.

Thou subtle, perjur'd, false, disloyal man,

Think'st thou I am so shallow, so conceitless,

To be seduced by thy flattery

That hast deceiv'd so many with thy vows?

Return, return, and make thy love amends.

For me, by this pale queen of night I swear,

I am so far from granting thy request

That I despise thee for thy wrongful suit,

And by and by intend to chide myself

Even for this time I spend in talking to thee.

PROTEUS.

I grant, sweet love, that I did love a lady;

But she is dead.

JULIA.

[Aside] 'Twere false, if I should speak it;
For I am sure she is not buried.

SILVIA.

Say that she be; yet Valentine, thy friend,
Survives, to whom, thyself art witness,
I am betroth'd; and art thou not asham'd
To wrong him with thy importunacy?

PROTEUS.

I likewise hear that Valentine is dead.

SILVIA.

And so suppose am I; for in his grave
Assure thyself my love is buried.

PROTEUS.

Sweet lady, let me rake it from the earth.

SILVIA.

Go to thy lady's grave, and call hers thence;

Or, at the least, in hers sepulchre thine.

JULIA.

[Aside] He heard not that.

PROTEUS.

Madam, if your heart be so obdurate,

Vouchsafe me yet your picture for my love,

The picture that is hanging in your chamber;

To that I'll speak, to that I'll sigh and weep;

For, since the substance of your perfect self

Is else devoted, I am but a shadow;

And to your shadow will I make true love.

JULIA.

[Aside] If 'twere a substance, you would, sure,

deceive it

And make it but a shadow, as I am.

SILVIA.
I am very loath to be your idol, sir;
But since your falsehood shall become you well
To worship shadows and adore false shapes,
Send to me in the morning, and I'll send it;
And so, good rest.

PROTEUS.
As wretches have o'ernight
That wait for execution in the morn.
Exeunt PROTEUS and SILVIA
JULIA.

Host, will you go?

HOST.
By my halidom, I was fast asleep.

JULIA.

Pray you, where lies Sir Proteus?

HOST.

Marry, at my house. Trust me, I think 'tis almost day.

JULIA.

Not so; but it hath been the longest night
That e'er I watch'd, and the most heaviest. *Exeunt*

SCENE 3. Under SILVIA'S window

Enter EGLAMOUR

EGLAMOUR.

This is the hour that Madam Silvia
Entreated me to call and know her mind;
There's some great matter she'd employ me in.

Madam, madam!

Enter SILVIA above, at her window

SILVIA.

Who calls?

EGLAMOUR.

Your servant and your friend;

One that attends your ladyship's command.

SILVIA.

Sir Eglamour, a thousand times good morrow!

EGLAMOUR.

As many, worthy lady, to yourself!

According to your ladyship's impose,

I am thus early come to know what service

It is your pleasure to command me in.

SILVIA.

O Eglamour, thou art a gentleman-

Think not I flatter, for I swear I do not-

Valiant, wise, remorseful, well accomplish'd.

Thou art not ignorant what dear good will

I bear unto the banish'd Valentine;

Nor how my father would enforce me marry

Vain Thurio, whom my very soul abhors.

Thyself hast lov'd; and I have heard thee say

No grief did ever come so near thy heart

As when thy lady and thy true love died,

Upon whose grave thou vow'dst pure chastity.

Sir Eglamour, I would to Valentine,

To Mantua, where I hear he makes abode;

And, for the ways are dangerous to pass,

I do desire thy worthy company,

Upon whose faith and honour I repose.

Urge not my father's anger, Eglamour,

But think upon my grief, a lady's grief,

And on the justice of my flying hence

To keep me from a most unholy match,

Which heaven and fortune still rewards with plagues.

I do desire thee, even from a heart

As full of sorrows as the sea of sands,

To bear me company and go with me;

If not, to hide what I have said to thee,

That I may venture to depart alone.

EGLAMOUR.

Madam, I pity much your grievances;

Which since I know they virtuously are plac'd,

I give consent to go along with you,

Recking as little what betideth me

As much I wish all good befortune you.

When will you go?

SILVIA.

This evening coming.

EGLAMOUR.

Where shall I meet you?

SILVIA.

At Friar Patrick's cell,

Where I intend holy confession.

EGLAMOUR.

I will not fail your ladyship. Good morrow, gentle lady.

SILVIA.

Good morrow, kind Sir Eglamour. *Exeunt*

SCENE 4. Under SILVIA'S Window

Enter LAUNCE with his dog

LAUNCE.

When a man's servant shall play the cur with him, look you,
it goes hard-one that I brought up of a puppy; one that I
sav'd
from drowning, when three or four of his blind brothers and
sisters went to it. I have taught him, even as one would say
precisely 'Thus I would teach a dog.' I was sent to deliver him
as a present to Mistress Silvia from my master; and I came no
sooner into the dining-chamber, but he steps me to her trencher
and steals her capon's leg. O, 'tis a foul thing when a cur
cannot keep himself in all companies! I would have, as one should
say, one that takes upon him to be a dog indeed, to be, as it
were, a dog at all things. If I had not had more wit than he, to
take a fault upon me that he did, I think verily he had been
hang'd for't; sure as I live, he had suffer'd for't. You shall
judge. He thrusts me himself into the company of three or four
gentleman-like dogs under the Duke's table; he had not been

there, bless the mark, a pissing while but all the chamber smelt
him. 'Out with the dog' says one; 'What cur is that?' says
another; 'Whip him out' says the third; 'Hang him up' says the
Duke. I, having been acquainted with the smell before, knew it
was Crab, and goes me to the fellow that whips the dogs.
'Friend,' quoth I 'you mean to whip the dog.' 'Ay, marry do
I'
quoth he. 'You do him the more wrong,' quoth I; "twas I did the
thing you wot of.' He makes me no more ado, but whips me out of
the chamber. How many masters would do this for his servant?
Nay,
I'll be sworn, I have sat in the stock for puddings he hath
stol'n, otherwise he had been executed; I have stood on the
pillory for geese he hath kill'd, otherwise he had suffer'd
for't. Thou think'st not of this now. Nay, I remember the trick
you serv'd me when I took my leave of Madam Silvia. Did not I bid
thee still mark me and do as I do? When didst thou see me heave
up my leg and make water against a gentlewoman's farthingale?
Didst thou ever see me do such a trick?

Enter PROTEUS, and JULIA in boy's clothes

PROTEUS.

Sebastian is thy name? I like thee well,

And will employ thee in some service presently.

JULIA.

In what you please; I'll do what I can.

PROTEUS.

I hope thou wilt. *[To LAUNCE]* How now, you whoreson peasant!

Where have you been these two days loitering?

LAUNCE.

Marry, sir, I carried Mistress Silvia the dog you bade me.

PROTEUS.

And what says she to my little jewel?

LAUNCE.

Marry, she says your dog was a cur, and tells you currish thanks is good enough for such a present.

PROTEUS.

But she receiv'd my dog?

LAUNCE.

No, indeed, did she not; here have I brought him back again.

PROTEUS.

What, didst thou offer her this from me?

LAUNCE.

Ay, sir; the other squirrel was stol'n from me by the

hangman's boys in the market-place; and then I offer'd her mine

own, who is a dog as big as ten of yours, and therefore the gift the greater.

PROTEUS.

Go, get thee hence and find my dog again,

Or ne'er return again into my sight.

Away, I say. Stayest thou to vex me here? *Exit* LAUNCE

A slave that still an end turns me to shame!

Sebastian, I have entertained thee

Partly that I have need of such a youth

That can with some discretion do my business,

For 'tis no trusting to yond foolish lout,

But chiefly for thy face and thy behaviour,

Which, if my augury deceive me not,

Witness good bringing up, fortune, and truth;

Therefore, know thou, for this I entertain thee.

Go presently, and take this ring with thee,

Deliver it to Madam Silvia-

She lov'd me well deliver'd it to me.

JULIA.

It seems you lov'd not her, to leave her token.

She is dead, belike?

PROTEUS.

Not so; I think she lives.

JULIA.

Alas!

PROTEUS.

Why dost thou cry 'Alas'?

JULIA.

I cannot choose

But pity her.

PROTEUS.

Wherefore shouldst thou pity her?

JULIA.

Because methinks that she lov'd you as well

As you do love your lady Silvia.

She dreams on him that has forgot her love:

You dote on her that cares not for your love.

'Tis pity love should be so contrary;

And thinking on it makes me cry 'Alas!'

PROTEUS.

Well, give her that ring, and therewithal

This letter. That's her chamber. Tell my lady

I claim the promise for her heavenly picture.

Your message done, hie home unto my chamber,

Where thou shalt find me sad and solitary. *Exit* PROTEUS

JULIA.

How many women would do such a message?

Alas, poor Proteus, thou hast entertain'd

A fox to be the shepherd of thy lambs.

Alas, poor fool, why do I pity him

That with his very heart despiseth me?

Because he loves her, he despiseth me;

Because I love him, I must pity him.

This ring I gave him, when he parted from me,

To bind him to remember my good will;

And now am I, unhappy messenger,

To plead for that which I would not obtain,

To carry that which I would have refus'd,

To praise his faith, which I would have disprais'd.

I am my master's true confirmed love,

But cannot be true servant to my master

Unless I prove false traitor to myself.

Yet will I woo for him, but yet so coldly

As, heaven it knows, I would not have him speed.

Enter SILVIA, attended

Gentlewoman, good day! I pray you be my mean

To bring me where to speak with Madam Silvia.

SILVIA.

What would you with her, if that I be she?

JULIA.

If you be she, I do entreat your patience

To hear me speak the message I am sent on.

SILVIA.

From whom?

JULIA.

From my master, Sir Proteus, madam.

SILVIA.

O, he sends you for a picture?

JULIA.

Ay, madam.

SILVIA.

Ursula, bring my picture there.

Go, give your master this. Tell him from me,

One Julia, that his changing thoughts forget,

Would better fit his chamber than this shadow.

JULIA.

Madam, please you peruse this letter.
Pardon me, madam; I have unadvis'd
Deliver'd you a paper that I should not.

This is the letter to your ladyship.

SILVIA.

I pray thee let me look on that again.

JULIA.

It may not be; good madam, pardon me.

SILVIA.

There, hold!

I will not look upon your master's lines.
I know they are stuff'd with protestations,
And full of new-found oaths, which he will break

As easily as I do tear his paper.

JULIA.

Madam, he sends your ladyship this ring.

SILVIA.

The more shame for him that he sends it me;
For I have heard him say a thousand times
His Julia gave it him at his departure.
Though his false finger have profan'd the ring,
Mine shall not do his Julia so much wrong.

JULIA.

She thanks you.

SILVIA.

What say'st thou?

JULIA.

I thank you, madam, that you tender her.

Poor gentlewoman, my master wrongs her much.

SILVIA.

Dost thou know her?

JULIA.

Almost as well as I do know myself.

To think upon her woes, I do protest

That I have wept a hundred several times.

SILVIA.

Belike she thinks that Proteus hath forsook her.

JULIA.

I think she doth, and that's her cause of sorrow.

SILVIA.

Is she not passing fair?

JULIA.

She hath been fairer, madam, than she is.

When she did think my master lov'd her well,

She, in my judgment, was as fair as you;

But since she did neglect her looking-glass

And threw her sun-expelling mask away,

The air hath starv'd the roses in her cheeks

And pinch'd the lily-tincture of her face,

That now she is become as black as I.

SILVIA.

How tall was she?

JULIA.

About my stature; for at Pentecost,

When all our pageants of delight were play'd,

Our youth got me to play the woman's part,

And I was trimm'd in Madam Julia's gown;

Which served me as fit, by all men's judgments,

As if the garment had been made for me;

Therefore I know she is about my height.

And at that time I made her weep a good,

For I did play a lamentable part.

Madam, 'twas Ariadne passioning

For Theseus' perjury and unjust flight;

Which I so lively acted with my tears

That my poor mistress, moved therewithal,

Wept bitterly; and would I might be dead

If I in thought felt not her very sorrow.

SILVIA.

She is beholding to thee, gentle youth.

Alas, poor lady, desolate and left!

I weep myself, to think upon thy words.

Here, youth, there is my purse; I give thee this

For thy sweet mistress' sake, because thou lov'st her.

Farewell. Exit SILVIA with ATTENDANTS

JULIA.

And she shall thank you for't, if e'er you know her.
A virtuous gentlewoman, mild and beautiful!
I hope my master's suit will be but cold,
Since she respects my mistress' love so much.

Alas, how love can trifle with itself!
Here is her picture; let me see. I think,
If I had such a tire, this face of mine
Were full as lovely as is this of hers;
And yet the painter flatter'd her a little,
Unless I flatter with myself too much.
Her hair is auburn, mine is perfect yellow;
If that be all the difference in his love,
I'll get me such a colour'd periwig.
Her eyes are grey as glass, and so are mine;
Ay, but her forehead's low, and mine's as high.
What should it be that he respects in her
But I can make respective in myself,
If this fond Love were not a blinded god?
Come, shadow, come, and take this shadow up,

For 'tis thy rival. O thou senseless form,

Thou shalt be worshipp'd, kiss'd, lov'd, and ador'd!

And were there sense in his idolatry

My substance should be statue in thy stead.

I'll use thee kindly for thy mistress' sake,

That us'd me so; or else, by Jove I vow,

I should have scratch'd out your unseeing eyes,

To make my master out of love with thee. *Exit*

ACT 5.

SCENE I. Milan. An abbey

Enter EGLAMOUR

EGLAMOUR.

The sun begins to gild the western sky,

And now it is about the very hour

That Silvia at Friar Patrick's cell should meet me.

She will not fail, for lovers break not hours

Unless it be to come before their time,

So much they spur their expedition.

Enter SILVIA

See where she comes. Lady, a happy evening!

SILVIA.

Amen, amen! Go on, good Eglamour,

Out at the postern by the abbey wall;

I fear I am attended by some spies.

EGLAMOUR.

Fear not. The forest is not three leagues off;

If we recover that, we are sure enough. *Exeunt*

SCENE 2. Milan. The DUKE'S palace

Enter THURIO, PROTEUS, and JULIA as SEBASTIAN

THURIO.

Sir Proteus, what says Silvia to my suit?

PROTEUS.

O, sir, I find her milder than she was;

And yet she takes exceptions at your person.

THURIO.

What, that my leg is too long?

PROTEUS.

No; that it is too little.

THURIO.

I'll wear a boot to make it somewhat rounder.

JULIA.

[Aside] But love will not be spurr'd to what it loathes.

THURIO.

What says she to my face?

PROTEUS.

She says it is a fair one.

THURIO.

Nay, then, the wanton lies; my face is black.

PROTEUS.

But pearls are fair; and the old saying is:

Black men are pearls in beauteous ladies' eyes.

JULIA.

[Aside] 'Tis true, such pearls as put out ladies'

eyes;

For I had rather wink than look on them.

THURIO.

How likes she my discourse?

PROTEUS.

Ill, when you talk of war.

THURIO.

But well when I discourse of love and peace?

JULIA.

[Aside] But better, indeed, when you hold your peace.

THURIO.

What says she to my valour?

PROTEUS.

O, sir, she makes no doubt of that.

JULIA.

[Aside] She needs not, when she knows it cowardice.

THURIO.

What says she to my birth?

PROTEUS.

That you are well deriv'd.

JULIA.

[Aside] True; from a gentleman to a fool.

THURIO.

Considers she my possessions?

PROTEUS.

O, ay; and pities them.

THURIO.

Wherefore?

JULIA.

[Aside] That such an ass should owe them.

PROTEUS.

That they are out by lease.

JULIA.

Here comes the Duke.

Enter DUKE

DUKE.

How now, Sir Proteus! how now, Thurio!

Which of you saw Sir Eglamour of late?

THURIO.

Not I.

PROTEUS.

Nor I.

DUKE.

Saw you my daughter?

PROTEUS.

Neither.

DUKE.

Why then,
She's fled unto that peasant Valentine;
And Eglamour is in her company.
'Tis true; for Friar Lawrence met them both
As he in penance wander'd through the forest;
Him he knew well, and guess'd that it was she,
But, being mask'd, he was not sure of it;
Besides, she did intend confession
At Patrick's cell this even; and there she was not.
These likelihoods confirm her flight from hence;
Therefore, I pray you, stand not to discourse,
But mount you presently, and meet with me
Upon the rising of the mountain foot

That leads toward Mantua, whither they are fled.

Dispatch, sweet gentlemen, and follow me. *Exit*

THURIO. Why, this it is to be a peevish girl

That flies her fortune when it follows her.

I'll after, more to be reveng'd on Eglamour

Than for the love of reckless Silvia. *Exit*

PROTEUS. And I will follow, more for Silvia's love

Than hate of Eglamour, that goes with her. *Exit*

JULIA. And I will follow, more to cross that love

Than hate for Silvia, that is gone for love. *Exit*

SCENE 3. The frontiers of Mantua. The forest

Enter OUTLAWS with SILVA

FIRST OUTLAW.

Come, come.

Be patient; we must bring you to our captain.

SILVIA.

A thousand more mischances than this one

Have learn'd me how to brook this patiently.

SECOND OUTLAW.

Come, bring her away.

FIRST OUTLAW.

Where is the gentleman that was with her?

SECOND OUTLAW.

Being nimble-footed, he hath outrun us,

But Moyses and Valerius follow him.

Go thou with her to the west end of the wood;

There is our captain; we'll follow him that's fled.

The thicket is beset; he cannot 'scape.

FIRST OUTLAW.

Come, I must bring you to our captain's cave;

Fear not; he bears an honourable mind,

And will not use a woman lawlessly.

SILVIA.

O Valentine, this I endure for thee! *Exeunt*

SCENE 4. Another part of the forest

Enter VALENTINE

VALENTINE.

How use doth breed a habit in a man!

This shadowy desert, unfrequented woods,

I better brook than flourishing peopled towns.

Here can I sit alone, unseen of any,

And to the nightingale's complaining notes

Tune my distresses and record my woes.

O thou that dost inhabit in my breast,

Leave not the mansion so long tenantless,

Lest, growing ruinous, the building fall

And leave no memory of what it was!
Repair me with thy presence, Silvia:

Thou gentle nymph, cherish thy forlorn swain.
What halloing and what stir is this to-day?
These are my mates, that make their wills their law,
Have some unhappy passenger in chase.
They love me well; yet I have much to do
To keep them from uncivil outrages.

Withdraw thee, Valentine. Who's this comes here?
[Steps aside]

Enter PROTEUS, SILVIA, and JULIA as Sebastian

PROTEUS.
Madam, this service I have done for you,
Though you respect not aught your servant doth,
To hazard life, and rescue you from him
That would have forc'd your honour and your love.
Vouchsafe me, for my meed, but one fair look;

A smaller boon than this I cannot beg,

And less than this, I am sure, you cannot give.

VALENTINE.

[Aside] How like a dream is this I see and hear!

Love, lend me patience to forbear awhile.

SILVIA.

O miserable, unhappy that I am!

PROTEUS.

Unhappy were you, madam, ere I came;

But by my coming I have made you happy.

SILVIA.

By thy approach thou mak'st me most unhappy.

JULIA.

[Aside] And me, when he approacheth to your presence.

SILVIA.

Had I been seized by a hungry lion,
I would have been a breakfast to the beast
Rather than have false Proteus rescue me.
O, heaven be judge how I love Valentine,
Whose life's as tender to me as my soul!
And full as much, for more there cannot be,
I do detest false, perjur'd Proteus.

Therefore be gone; solicit me no more.

PROTEUS.

What dangerous action, stood it next to death,
Would I not undergo for one calm look?
O, 'tis the curse in love, and still approv'd,
When women cannot love where they're belov'd!

SILVIA.

When Proteus cannot love where he's belov'd!
Read over Julia's heart, thy first best love,
For whose dear sake thou didst then rend thy faith

Into a thousand oaths; and all those oaths
Descended into perjury, to love me.
Thou hast no faith left now, unless thou'dst two,
And that's far worse than none; better have none
Than plural faith, which is too much by one.
Thou counterfeit to thy true friend!

PROTEUS.
In love,
Who respects friend?

SILVIA.

All men but Proteus.

PROTEUS.
Nay, if the gentle spirit of moving words
Can no way change you to a milder form,
I'll woo you like a soldier, at arms' end,
And love you 'gainst the nature of love-force ye.

SILVIA.

O heaven!

PROTEUS.

I'll force thee yield to my desire.

VALENTINE.

Ruffian! let go that rude uncivil touch;
Thou friend of an ill fashion!

PROTEUS.

Valentine!

VALENTINE.

Thou common friend, that's without faith or love-
For such is a friend now; treacherous man,
Thou hast beguil'd my hopes; nought but mine eye
Could have persuaded me. Now I dare not say
I have one friend alive: thou wouldst disprove me.
Who should be trusted, when one's own right hand

Is perjured to the bosom? Proteus,

I am sorry I must never trust thee more,

But count the world a stranger for thy sake.

The private wound is deepest. O time most accurst!

'Mongst all foes that a friend should be the worst!

PROTEUS.

My shame and guilt confounds me.

Forgive me, Valentine; if hearty sorrow

Be a sufficient ransom for offence,

I tender 't here; I do as truly suffer

As e'er I did commit.

VALENTINE.

Then I am paid;

And once again I do receive thee honest.

Who by repentance is not satisfied

Is nor of heaven nor earth, for these are pleas'd;

By penitence th' Eternal's wrath's appeas'd.

And, that my love may appear plain and free, All that was mine in Silvia I give thee.

JULIA.

O me unhappy! *[Swoons]*

PROTEUS.

Look to the boy.

VALENTINE.

Why, boy! why, wag! how now!

What's the matter? Look up; speak.

JULIA.

O good sir, my master charg'd me to deliver a ring to

Madam Silvia, which, out of my neglect, was never done.

PROTEUS.

Where is that ring, boy?

JULIA.

Here 'tis; this is it.

PROTEUS.

How! let me see. Why, this is the ring I gave to Julia.

JULIA.

O, cry you mercy, sir, I have mistook;

This is the ring you sent to Silvia.

PROTEUS.

But how cam'st thou by this ring?

At my depart I gave this unto Julia.

JULIA.

And Julia herself did give it me;

And Julia herself have brought it hither.

PROTEUS.

How! Julia!

JULIA.

Behold her that gave aim to all thy oaths,

And entertain'd 'em deeply in her heart.

How oft hast thou with perjury cleft the root!

O Proteus, let this habit make thee blush!

Be thou asham'd that I have took upon me

Such an immodest raiment-if shame live

In a disguise of love.

It is the lesser blot, modesty finds,

Women to change their shapes than men their minds.

PROTEUS.

Than men their minds! 'tis true. O heaven, were man

But constant, he were perfect! That one error

Fills him with faults; makes him run through all th' sins:

Inconstancy falls off ere it begins.

What is in Silvia's face but I may spy

More fresh in Julia's with a constant eye?

VALENTINE.

Come, come, a hand from either.

Let me be blest to make this happy close;

'Twere pity two such friends should be long foes.

PROTEUS.

Bear witness, heaven, I have my wish for ever.

JULIA.

And I mine.

Enter OUTLAWS, with DUKE and THURIO

OUTLAW.

A prize, a prize, a prize!

VALENTINE.

Forbear, forbear, I say; it is my lord the Duke.

Your Grace is welcome to a man disgrac'd,

Banished Valentine.

DUKE.

Sir Valentine!

THURIO.

Yonder is Silvia; and Silvia's mine.

VALENTINE.

Thurio, give back, or else embrace thy death;

Come not within the measure of my wrath;

Do not name Silvia thine; if once again,

Verona shall not hold thee. Here she stands

Take but possession of her with a touch-

I dare thee but to breathe upon my love.

THURIO.

Sir Valentine, I care not for her, I;
I hold him but a fool that will endanger
His body for a girl that loves him not.

I claim her not, and therefore she is thine.

DUKE.
The more degenerate and base art thou
To make such means for her as thou hast done
And leave her on such slight conditions.
Now, by the honour of my ancestry,
I do applaud thy spirit, Valentine,
And think thee worthy of an empress' love.
Know then, I here forget all former griefs,
Cancel all grudge, repeal thee home again,
Plead a new state in thy unrivall'd merit,
To which I thus subscribe: Sir Valentine,
Thou art a gentleman, and well deriv'd;
Take thou thy Silvia, for thou hast deserv'd her.

VALENTINE.

I thank your Grace; the gift hath made me happy.

I now beseech you, for your daughter's sake,

To grant one boon that I shall ask of you.

DUKE.

I grant it for thine own, whate'er it be.

VALENTINE.

These banish'd men, that I have kept withal,

Are men endu'd with worthy qualities;

Forgive them what they have committed here,

And let them be recall'd from their exile:

They are reformed, civil, full of good,

And fit for great employment, worthy lord.

DUKE.

Thou hast prevail'd; I pardon them, and thee;

Dispose of them as thou know'st their deserts.

Come, let us go; we will include all jars

With triumphs, mirth, and rare solemnity.

VALENTINE.

And, as we walk along, I dare be bold

With our discourse to make your Grace to smile.

What think you of this page, my lord?

DUKE.

I think the boy hath grace in him; he blushes.

VALENTINE.

I warrant you, my lord-more grace than boy.

DUKE.

What mean you by that saying?

VALENTINE.

Please you, I'll tell you as we pass along,

That you will wonder what hath fortuned.

Come, Proteus, 'tis your penance but to hear

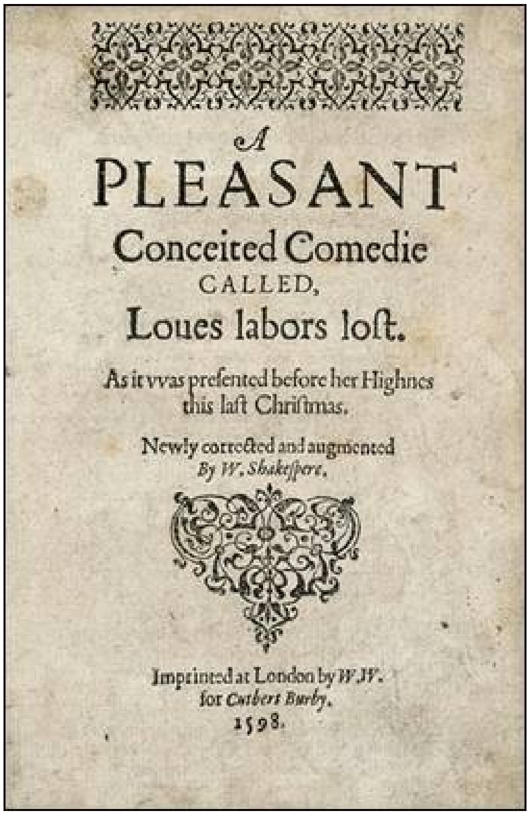
The story of your loves discovered.

That done, our day of marriage shall be yours;

One feast, one house, one mutual happiness! *Exeunt*

LOVE'S LABOUR'S LOST

Written in 1595 or 1596, this comedy was first published in quarto in 1598 by the bookseller Cuthbert Burby. Unlike many of Shakespeare's plays, *Love's Labour's Lost* has no direct source of inspiration, indicating that the concept was most likely developed by the playwright himself. The drama opens with the King of Navarre and three noble companions, Berowne, Dumaine, and Longaville, taking an oath to devote themselves to three years of study, promising not to give in to the company of women — Berowne somewhat more hesitantly than the others. Berowne reminds the king that the princess and her three ladies are coming to the kingdom and it would be suicidal for the King to agree to this law. The King denies what Berowne says, insisting that the ladies make their camp in the field outside of his court. The King and his men meet the princess and her ladies. Instantly, they all fall comically in love.



A
PLEASANT
Conceited Comedie
CALLED,
Loues labors loſt.
As it vvas preſented before her Highnes
this laſt Chriſtmas.
Newly corrected and augmented
By W. Shakeſpere.

Imprinted at London by *W.W.*
for *Cutbert Burby.*
1598.

The first page of the 1598 Quarto

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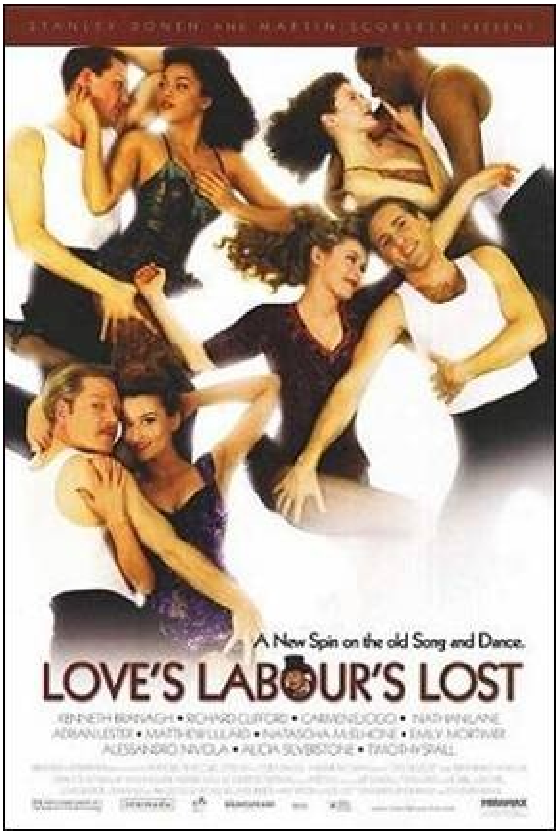
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A New Spin on the old Song and Dance.
LOVE'S LABOUR'S LOST
KENNETH BRANAGH • RICHARD CLIFFORD • CARMEN EJOGO • NATHAN LANE
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The 2000 film adaptation

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

FERDINAND, King of Navarre

BEROWNE, lord attending on the King

LONGAVILLE, " " " " "

DUMAIN, " " " " "

BOYET, lord attending on the Princess of France

MARCADE, " " " " " " "

DON ADRIANO DE ARMADO, fantastical Spaniard

SIR NATHANIEL, a curate

HOLOFERNES, a schoolmaster

DULL, a constable

COSTARD, a clown

MOTH, page to Armado

A FORESTER

THE PRINCESS OF FRANCE

ROSALINE, lady attending on the Princess

MARIA, " " " " "

KATHARINE, lady attending on the Princess

JAQUENETTA, a country wench

Lords, Attendants, *etc.*

SCENE: Navarre

ACT I.

SCENE I. Navarre. The King's park

[Enter the King, BEROWNE, LONGAVILLE, and DUMAIN.]

KING.

Let fame, that all hunt after in their lives,

Live regist'red upon our brazen tombs,

And then grace us in the disgrace of death;

When, spite of cormorant devouring Time,

Th' endeavour of this present breath may buy

That honour which shall bate his scythe's keen edge,

And make us heirs of all eternity.

Therefore, brave conquerors-for so you are

That war against your own affections

And the huge army of the world's desires-

Our late edict shall strongly stand in force:

Navarre shall be the wonder of the world;

Our court shall be a little Academe,

Still and contemplative in living art.

You three, Berowne, Dumain, and Longaville,

Have sworn for three years' term to live with me

My fellow-scholars, and to keep those statutes

That are recorded in this schedule here.

Your oaths are pass'd; and now subscribe your names,

That his own hand may strike his honour down
That violates the smallest branch herein.
If you are arm'd to do as sworn to do,
Subscribe to your deep oaths, and keep it too.

LONGAVILLE.
I am resolv'd; 'tis but a three years' fast.

The mind shall banquet, though the body pine.
Fat paunches have lean pates; and dainty bits
Make rich the ribs, but bankrupt quite the wits.

DUMAIN.
My loving lord, Dumain is mortified.
The grosser manner of these world's delights
He throws upon the gross world's baser slaves;
To love, to wealth, to pomp, I pine and die,
With all these living in philosophy.

BEROWNE.
I can but say their protestation over;

So much, dear liege, I have already sworn,

That is, to live and study here three years.

But there are other strict observances,

As: not to see a woman in that term,

Which I hope well is not enrolled there;

And one day in a week to touch no food,

And but one meal on every day beside,

The which I hope is not enrolled there;

And then to sleep but three hours in the night

And not be seen to wink of all the day-

When I was wont to think no harm all night,

And make a dark night too of half the day-

Which I hope well is not enrolled there.

O, these are barren tasks, too hard to keep,

Not to see ladies, study, fast, not sleep!

KING.

Your oath is pass'd to pass away from these.

BEROWNE.

Let me say no, my liege, an if you please:

I only swore to study with your Grace,

And stay here in your court for three years' space.

LONGAVILLE.

You swore to that, Berowne, and to the rest.

BEROWNE.

By yea and nay, sir, then I swore in jest.

What is the end of study, let me know.

KING.

Why, that to know which else we should not know.

BEROWNE.

Things hid and barr'd, you mean, from common sense?

KING.

Ay, that is study's god-like recompense.

BEROWNE.
Come on, then; I will swear to study so,
To know the thing I am forbid to know,
As thus: to study where I well may dine,
When I to feast expressly am forbid;
Or study where to meet some mistress fine,
When mistresses from common sense are hid;
Or, having sworn too hard-a-keeping oath,
Study to break it, and not break my troth.
If study's gain be thus, and this be so,
Study knows that which yet it doth not know.

Swear me to this, and I will ne'er say no.

KING.
These be the stops that hinder study quite,
And train our intellects to vain delight.

BEROWNE.

Why, all delights are vain; but that most vain

Which, with pain purchas'd, doth inherit pain,

As painfully to pore upon a book

To seek the light of truth; while truth the while

Doth falsely blind the eyesight of his look.

Light, seeking light, doth light of light beguile;

So, ere you find where light in darkness lies,

Your light grows dark by losing of your eyes.

Study me how to please the eye indeed,

By fixing it upon a fairer eye;

Who dazzling so, that eye shall be his heed,

And give him light that it was blinded by.

Study is like the heaven's glorious sun,

That will not be deep-search'd with saucy looks;

Small have continual plodders ever won,

Save base authority from others' books.

These earthly godfathers of heaven's lights

That give a name to every fixed star

Have no more profit of their shining nights

Than those that walk and wot not what they are.

Too much to know is to know nought but fame;

And every godfather can give a name.

KING.

How well he's read, to reason against reading!

DUMAIN.

Proceeded well, to stop all good proceeding!

LONGAVILLE.

He weeds the corn, and still lets grow the weeding.

BEROWNE.

The spring is near, when green geese are a-breeding.

DUMAIN.

How follows that?

BEROWNE.

Fit in his place and time.

DUMAIN.

In reason nothing.

BEROWNE.

Something then in rhyme.

LONGAVILLE.

Berowne is like an envious sneaping frost

That bites the first-born infants of the spring.

BEROWNE.

Well, say I am; why should proud summer boast

Before the birds have any cause to sing?

Why should I joy in any abortive birth?

At Christmas I no more desire a rose

Than wish a snow in May's new-fangled shows;

But like of each thing that in season grows;

So you, to study now it is too late,

Climb o'er the house to unlock the little gate.

KING.

Well, sit out; go home, Berowne; adieu.

BEROWNE.

No, my good lord; I have sworn to stay with you;

And though I have for barbarism spoke more

Than for that angel knowledge you can say,

Yet confident I'll keep what I have swore,

And bide the penance of each three years' day.

Give me the paper; let me read the same;

And to the strictest decrees I'll write my name.

KING.

How well this yielding rescues thee from shame!

BEROWNE.

[Reads] 'Item. That no woman shall come within a mile of

my court'- Hath this been proclaimed?

LONGAVILLE.

Four days ago.

BEROWNE.

Let's see the penalty. *[Reads]* '-on pain of losing her

tongue.' Who devis'd this penalty?

LONGAVILLE.

Marry, that did I.

BEROWNE.

Sweet lord, and why?

LONGAVILLE.

To fright them hence with that dread penalty.

BEROWNE.

A dangerous law against gentility.

[Reads] 'Item. If any man be seen to talk with a woman within the term of three years, he shall endure such public shame as the rest of the court can possibly devise.'
This article, my liege, yourself must break;
For well you know here comes in embassy
The French king's daughter, with yourself to speak-
A mild of grace and complete majesty-
About surrender up of Aquitaine
To her decrepit, sick, and bedrid father;
Therefore this article is made in vain,
Or vainly comes th' admired princess hither.

KING.

What say you, lords? Why, this was quite forgot.

BEROWNE.

So study evermore is over-shot.
While it doth study to have what it would,
It doth forget to do the thing it should;

And when it hath the thing it hunteth most,
'Tis won as towns with fire-so won, so lost.

KING.
We must of force dispense with this decree;
She must lie here on mere necessity.

BEROWNE.
Necessity will make us all forsworn
Three thousand times within this three years' space;
For every man with his affects is born,
Not by might mast'red, but by special grace.
If I break faith, this word shall speak for me:

I am forsworn on mere necessity.
So to the laws at large I write my name; *[Subscribes]*
And he that breaks them in the least degree
Stands in attainder of eternal shame.
Suggestions are to other as to me;
But I believe, although I seem so loath,
I am the last that will last keep his oath.

But is there no quick recreation granted?

KING.

Ay, that there is. Our court, you know, is haunted

With a refined traveller of Spain,

A man in all the world's new fashion planted,

That hath a mint of phrases in his brain;

One who the music of his own vain tongue

Doth ravish like enchanting harmony;

A man of complements, whom right and wrong

Have chose as umpire of their mutiny.

This child of fancy, that Armado hight,

For interim to our studies shall relate,

In high-born words, the worth of many a knight

From tawny Spain lost in the world's debate.

How you delight, my lords, I know not, I;

But I protest I love to hear him lie,

And I will use him for my minstrelsy.

BEROWNE.

Armado is a most illustrious wight,

A man of fire-new words, fashion's own knight.

LONGAVILLE.

Costard the swain and he shall be our sport;

And so to study three years is but short.

[Enter DULL, a constable, with a letter, and COSTARD.]

DULL.

Which is the Duke's own person?

BEROWNE.

This, fellow. What wouldst?

DULL.

I myself reprehend his own person, for I am his Grace's

farborough; but I would see his own person in flesh and blood.

BEROWNE.

This is he.

DULL.

Signior Arme-Arme- commends you. There's villainy abroad;
this letter will tell you more.

COSTARD.

Sir, the contempts thereof are as touching me.

KING.

A letter from the magnificent Armado.

BEROWNE.

How low soever the matter, I hope in God for high words.

LONGAVILLE.

A high hope for a low heaven. God grant us patience!

BEROWNE.

To hear, or forbear hearing?

LONGAVILLE.

To hear meekly, sir, and to laugh moderately; or,

to forbear both.

BEROWNE.

Well, sir, be it as the style shall give us cause to climb

in the merriness.

COSTARD.

The matter is to me, sir, as concerning Jaquenetta.

The manner of it is, I was taken with the manner.

BEROWNE.

In what manner?

COSTARD.

In manner and form following, sir; all those three: I was

seen with her in the manor-house, sitting with her upon the form, and taken following her into the park; which, put together,

is in

manner and form following. Now, sir, for the manner-it is the

manner of a man to speak to a woman. For the form-in some form.

BEROWNE.

For the following, sir?

COSTARD.

As it shall follow in my correction; and God defend the right!

KING.

Will you hear this letter with attention?

BEROWNE.

As we would hear an oracle.

COSTARD.

Such is the simplicity of man to hearken after the flesh.

KING.

[Reads] 'Great deputy, the welkin's vicegerent and sole dominator of Navarre, my soul's earth's god and body's fost'ring patron'-

COSTARD.

Not a word of Costard yet.

KING.

[Reads] 'So it is'-

COSTARD.

It may be so; but if he say it is so, he is, in telling true, but so.

KING.

Peace!

COSTARD.

Be to me, and every man that dares not fight!

KING.

No words!

COSTARD.
Of other men's secrets, I beseech you.

KING.
[Reads] 'So it is, besieged with sable-coloured
melancholy, I
did commend the black oppressing humour to the most wholesome
physic of thy health-giving air; and, as I am a gentleman, betook
myself to walk. The time When? About the sixth hour; when beasts
most graze, birds best peck, and men sit down to that nourishment
which is called supper. So much for the time When. Now for the
ground Which? which, I mean, I upon; it is ycleped thy park.
Then
for the place Where? where, I mean, I did encounter that obscene
and most prepost'rous event that draweth from my snow-white pen

the ebon-coloured ink which here thou viewest, beholdest,
surveyest, or seest. But to the place Where? It standeth
north-north-east and by east from the west corner of thy
curious-knotted garden. There did I see that low-spirited swain,
that base minnow of thy mirth,'

COSTARD.

Me?

KING.
'that unlettered small-knowing soul,'

COSTARD.

Me?

KING.
'that shallow vassal,'

COSTARD.

Still me?

KING.
'which, as I remember, hight Costard,'

COSTARD.

O, me!

KING.
'sorted and consorted, contrary to thy established proclaimed
edict and continent canon; which, with, O, with-but with
this I
passion to say wherewith-'

COSTARD.
With a wench.
King. 'with a child of our grandmother Eve, a female; or, for thy
more sweet understanding, a woman. Him I, as my ever-esteemed
duty pricks me on, have sent to thee, to receive the meed of

punishment, by thy sweet Grace's officer, Antony Dull, a man of
good repute, carriage, bearing, and estimation.'

DULL.
Me, an't shall please you; I am Antony Dull.

KING.
'For Jaquenetta-so is the weaker vessel called, which I
apprehended with the aforesaid swain-I keep her as a vessel of
thy law's fury; and shall, at the least of thy sweet notice,
bring her to trial. Thine, in all compliments of devoted and
heart-burning heat of duty,
DON ADRIANO DE ARMADO.'

BEROWNE.
This is not so well as I look'd for, but the best that
ever I heard.

KING.

Ay, the best for the worst. But, sirrah, what say you to this?

COSTARD.

Sir, I confess the wench.

KING.

Did you hear the proclamation?

COSTARD.

I do confess much of the hearing it, but little of the marking of it.

KING.

It was proclaimed a year's imprisonment to be taken with a wench.

COSTARD.

I was taken with none, sir; I was taken with a damsel.

KING.

Well, it was proclaimed damsel.

COSTARD.

This was no damsel neither, sir; she was a virgin.

KING.

It is so varied too, for it was proclaimed virgin.

COSTARD.

If it were, I deny her virginity; I was taken with a maid.

KING.

This 'maid' not serve your turn, sir.

COSTARD.

This maid will serve my turn, sir.

KING.

Sir, I will pronounce your sentence: you shall fast a week
with bran and water.

COSTARD.

I had rather pray a month with mutton and porridge.

KING.
And Don Armado shall be your keeper.
My Lord Berowne, see him delivered o'er;
And go we, lords, to put in practice that
Which each to other hath so strongly sworn.
[Exeunt KING, LONGAVILLE, and DUMAIN.]

BEROWNE.
I'll lay my head to any good man's hat
These oaths and laws will prove an idle scorn.

Sirrah, come on.

COSTARD.
I suffer for the truth, sir; for true it is I was taken
with Jaquenetta, and Jaquenetta is a true girl; and therefore

welcome the sour cup of prosperity! Affliction may one day smile again; and till then, sit thee down, sorrow.

[Exeunt]

SCENE II. The park

[Enter ARMADO and MOTH, his page.]

ARMADO.

Boy, what sign is it when a man of great spirit grows melancholy?

MOTH.

A great sign, sir, that he will look sad.

ARMADO.

Why, sadness is one and the self-same thing, dear imp.

MOTH.

No, no; O Lord, sir, no!

ARMADO.

How canst thou part sadness and melancholy, my tender juvenal?

MOTH.

By a familiar demonstration of the working, my tough signior.

ARMADO.

Why tough signior? Why tough signior?

MOTH.

Why tender juvenal? Why tender juvenal?

ARMADO.

I spoke it, tender juvenal, as a congruent epitheton
appertaining to thy young days, which we may nominate tender.

MOTH.

And I, tough signior, as an appertinent title to your old
time, which we may name tough.

ARMADO.

Pretty and apt.

MOTH.

How mean you, sir? I pretty, and my saying apt? or I apt,

and my saying pretty?

ARMADO.

Thou pretty, because little.

MOTH.

Little pretty, because little. Wherefore apt?

ARMADO.

And therefore apt, because quick.

MOTH.

Speak you this in my praise, master?

ARMADO.

In thy condign praise.

MOTH.

I will praise an eel with the same praise.

ARMADO.

That an eel is ingenious?

MOTH.

That an eel is quick.

ARMADO.

I do say thou art quick in answers; thou heat'st my blood.

MOTH.

I am answer'd, sir.

ARMADO.

I love not to be cross'd.

MOTH.

[Aside] He speaks the mere contrary: crosses love not him.

ARMADO.

I have promised to study three years with the Duke.

MOTH.

You may do it in an hour, sir.

ARMADO.

Impossible.

MOTH.

How many is one thrice told?

ARMADO.

I am ill at reck'ning; it fitteth the spirit of a tapster.

MOTH.

You are a gentleman and a gamester, sir.

ARMADO.

I confess both; they are both the varnish of a complete man.

MOTH.

Then I am sure you know how much the gross sum of
deuce-ace amounts to.

ARMADO.

It doth amount to one more than two.

MOTH.

Which the base vulgar do call three.

ARMADO.

True.

MOTH.

Why, sir, is this such a piece of study? Now here is three studied ere ye'll thrice wink; and how easy it is to put 'years' to the word 'three,' and study three years in two words, the dancing horse will tell you.

ARMADO.

A most fine figure!

MOTH.

[Aside] To prove you a cipher.

ARMADO.

I will hereupon confess I am in love. And as it is base for a soldier to love, so am I in love with a base wench. If drawing my sword against the humour of affection would deliver me from the reprobate thought of it, I would take Desire prisoner, and ransom him to any French courtier for a new-devis'd curtsy. I think scorn to sigh; methinks I should out-swear Cupid.

Comfort

me, boy; what great men have been in love?

MOTH.

Hercules, master.

ARMADO.

Most sweet Hercules! More authority, dear boy, name more;

and, sweet my child, let them be men of good repute and carriage.

MOTH.

Samson, master; he was a man of good carriage, great

carriage, for he carried the town gates on his back like a

porter; and he was in love.

ARMADO.

O well-knit Samson! strong-jointed Samson! I do excel thee

in my rapier as much as thou didst me in carrying gates. I am in

love too. Who was Samson's love, my dear Moth?

MOTH.

A woman, master.

ARMADO.

Of what complexion?

MOTH.

Of all the four, or the three, or the two, or one of the four.

ARMADO.

Tell me precisely of what complexion.

MOTH.

Of the sea-water green, sir.

ARMADO.

Is that one of the four complexions?

MOTH.

As I have read, sir; and the best of them too.

ARMADO.

Green, indeed, is the colour of lovers; but to have a love of that colour, methinks Samson had small reason for it. He surely affected her for her wit.

MOTH.

It was so, sir; for she had a green wit.

ARMADO.

My love is most immaculate white and red.

MOTH.

Most maculate thoughts, master, are mask'd under such colours.

ARMADO.

Define, define, well-educated infant.

MOTH.

My father's wit my mother's tongue assist me!

ARMADO.

Sweet invocation of a child; most pretty, and pathetical!

MOTH.

If she be made of white and red,

Her faults will ne'er be known;

For blushing cheeks by faults are bred,

And fears by pale white shown.

Then if she fear, or be to blame,

By this you shall not know;

For still her cheeks possess the same

Which native she doth owe.

A dangerous rhyme, master, against the reason of white and red.

ARMADO.

Is there not a ballad, boy, of the King and the Beggar?

MOTH.

The world was very guilty of such a ballad some three ages since; but I think now 'tis not to be found; or if it were, it would neither serve for the writing nor the tune.

ARMADO.

I will have that subject newly writ o'er, that I may example my digression by some mighty precedent. Boy, I do love that country girl that I took in the park with the rational hind Costard; she deserves well.

MOTH.

[Aside] To be whipt; and yet a better love than my master.

ARMADO.

Sing, boy; my spirit grows heavy in love.

MOTH.

And that's great marvel, loving a light wench.

ARMADO.

I say, sing.

MOTH.

Forbear till this company be past.

Enter DULL, COSTARD, and JAQUENETTA

DULL.

Sir, the Duke's pleasure is that you keep Costard safe; and
you must suffer him to take no delight nor no penance; but 'a
must fast three days a week. For this damsel, I must keep her at
the park; she is allow'd for the day-woman. Fare you well.

ARMADO.

I do betray myself with blushing. Maid!

JAQUENETTA.

Man!

ARMADO.

I will visit thee at the lodge.

JAQUENETTA.

That's hereby.

ARMADO.

I know where it is situate.

JAQUENETTA.

Lord, how wise you are!

ARMADO.

I will tell thee wonders.

JAQUENETTA.

With that face?

ARMADO.

I love thee.

JAQUENETTA.

So I heard you say.

ARMADO.

And so, farewell.

JAQUENETTA.

Fair weather after you!

DULL.

Come, Jaquenetta, away. *Exit* with JAQUENETTA

ARMADO.

Villain, thou shalt fast for thy offences ere thou be pardoned.

COSTARD.

Well, sir, I hope when I do it I shall do it on a full stomach.

ARMADO.

Thou shalt be heavily punished.

COSTARD.

I am more bound to you than your fellows, for they are but lightly rewarded.

ARMADO.

Take away this villain; shut him up.

MOTH.

Come, you transgressing slave, away.

COSTARD.

Let me not be pent up, sir; I will fast, being loose.

MOTH.

No, sir; that were fast, and loose. Thou shalt to prison.

COSTARD.
Well, if ever I do see the merry days of desolation
that I
have seen, some shall see.

MOTH.

What shall some see?

COSTARD.
Nay, nothing, Master Moth, but what they look upon. It is
not for prisoners to be too silent in their words, and therefore
I will say nothing. I thank God I have as little patience as
another man, and therefore I can be quiet.
Exeunt MOTH and COSTARD

ARMADO.

I do affect the very ground, which is base, where her shoe,

which is baser, guided by her foot, which is basest, doth tread.

I shall be forsworn-which is a great argument of falsehood-

if I

love. And how can that be true love which is falsely attempted?

Love is a familiar; Love is a devil. There is no evil angel but

Love. Yet was Samson so tempted, and he had an excellent

strength; yet was Solomon so seduced, and he had a very good wit.

Cupid's butt-shaft is too hard for Hercules' club, and therefore

too much odds for a Spaniard's rapier. The first and second cause

will not serve my turn; the passado he respects not, the duello

he regards not; his disgrace is to be called boy, but his glory

is to subdue men. Adieu, valour; rust, rapier; be still,

drum;

for your manager is in love; yea, he loveth. Assist me, some

extemporal god of rhyme, for I am sure I shall turn sonnet.

Devise, wit; write, pen; for I am for whole volumes in folio.

Exit

ACT II.
SCENE II. The park

Enter the PRINCESS OF FRANCE, with three attending ladies,

ROSALINE, MARIA, KATHARINE, BOYET, and two other LORDS

BOYET.

Now, madam, summon up your dearest spirits.
Consider who the King your father sends,
To whom he sends, and what's his embassy:
Yourself, held precious in the world's esteem,
To parley with the sole inheritor
Of all perfections that a man may owe,
Matchless Navarre; the plea of no less weight
Than Aquitaine, a dowry for a queen.
Be now as prodigal of all dear grace
As Nature was in making graces dear,
When she did starve the general world beside
And prodigally gave them all to you.

PRINCESS OF FRANCE.

Good Lord Boyet, my beauty, though but mean,

Needs not the painted flourish of your praise.

Beauty is bought by judgment of the eye,

Not utt'red by base sale of chapmen's tongues;

I am less proud to hear you tell my worth

Than you much willing to be counted wise

In spending your wit in the praise of mine.

But now to task the tasker: good Boyet,

You are not ignorant all-telling fame

Doth noise abroad Navarre hath made a vow,

Till painful study shall outwear three years,

No woman may approach his silent court.

Therefore to's seemeth it a needful course,

Before we enter his forbidden gates,

To know his pleasure; and in that behalf,

Bold of your worthiness, we single you

As our best-moving fair solicitor.

Tell him the daughter of the King of France,

On serious business, craving quick dispatch,

Importunes personal conference with his Grace.

Haste, signify so much; while we attend,

Like humble-visag'd suitors, his high will.

BOYET.

Proud of employment, willingly I go.

PRINCESS OF FRANCE.

All pride is willing pride, and yours is so.

[Exit BOYET]

Who are the votaries, my loving lords,

That are vow-fellows with this virtuous duke?

FIRST LORD.

Lord Longaville is one.

PRINCESS OF FRANCE.

Know you the man?

MARIA.

I know him, madam; at a marriage feast,

Between Lord Perigort and the beauteous heir

Of Jaques Falconbridge, solemnized

In Normandy, saw I this Longaville.

A man of sovereign parts, peerless esteem'd,

Well fitted in arts, glorious in arms;

Nothing becomes him ill that he would well.

The only soil of his fair virtue's gloss,

If virtue's gloss will stain with any soil,

Is a sharp wit match'd with too blunt a will,

Whose edge hath power to cut, whose will still wills

It should none spare that come within his power.

PRINCESS OF FRANCE.

Some merry mocking lord, belike; is't so?

MARIA.

They say so most that most his humours know.

PRINCESS OF FRANCE.

Such short-liv'd wits do wither as they grow.

Who are the rest?

KATHARINE.

The young Dumain, a well-accomplish'd youth,
Of all that virtue love for virtue loved;
Most power to do most harm, least knowing ill,
For he hath wit to make an ill shape good,
And shape to win grace though he had no wit.
I saw him at the Duke Alencon's once;
And much too little of that good I saw
Is my report to his great worthiness.

ROSALINE.

Another of these students at that time
Was there with him, if I have heard a truth.
Berowne they call him; but a merrier man,
Within the limit of becoming mirth,
I never spent an hour's talk withal.
His eye begets occasion for his wit,

For every object that the one doth catch
The other turns to a mirth-moving jest,
Which his fair tongue, conceit's expositor,
Delivers in such apt and gracious words
That aged ears play truant at his tales,
And younger hearings are quite ravished;
So sweet and voluble is his discourse.

PRINCESS OF FRANCE.

God bless my ladies! Are they all in love,
That every one her own hath garnished
With such bedecking ornaments of praise?

FIRST LORD.

Here comes Boyet.

Re-enter BOYET

PRINCESS OF FRANCE.

Now, what admittance, lord?

BOYET.

Navarre had notice of your fair approach,

And he and his competitors in oath

Were all address'd to meet you, gentle lady,

Before I came. Marry, thus much I have learnt:

He rather means to lodge you in the field,

Like one that comes here to besiege his court,

Than seek a dispensation for his oath,

To let you enter his unpeopled house.

[The LADIES-IN-WAITING mask]

Enter KING, LONGAVILLE, DUMAIN, BEROWNE,

and ATTENDANTS

Here comes Navarre.

KING.

Fair Princess, welcome to the court of Navarre.

PRINCESS OF FRANCE.

'Fair' I give you back again; and 'welcome'

I have not yet. The roof of this court is too high to be yours, and welcome to the wide fields too base to be mine.

KING.

You shall be welcome, madam, to my court.

PRINCESS OF FRANCE.

I will be welcome then; conduct me thither.

KING.

Hear me, dear lady: I have sworn an oath-

PRINCESS OF FRANCE.

Our Lady help my lord! He'll be forsworn.

KING.

Not for the world, fair madam, by my will.

PRINCESS OF FRANCE.

Why, will shall break it; will, and nothing else.

KING.

Your ladyship is ignorant what it is.

PRINCESS OF FRANCE.

Were my lord so, his ignorance were wise,

Where now his knowledge must prove ignorance.

I hear your Grace hath sworn out house-keeping.

'Tis deadly sin to keep that oath, my lord,

And sin to break it.

But pardon me, I am too sudden bold;

To teach a teacher ill beseemeth me.

Vouchsafe to read the purpose of my coming,

And suddenly resolve me in my suit. *[Giving a paper]*

KING.

Madam, I will, if suddenly I may.

PRINCESS OF FRANCE.

You will the sooner that I were away,
For you'll prove perjur'd if you make me stay.

BEROWNE.

Did not I dance with you in Brabant once?

KATHARINE.

Did not I dance with you in Brabant once?

BEROWNE.

I know you did.

KATHARINE.

How needless was it then to ask the question!

BEROWNE.

You must not be so quick.

KATHARINE.

'Tis long of you, that spur me with such questions.

BEROWNE.

Your wit 's too hot, it speeds too fast, 'twill tire.

KATHARINE.

Not till it leave the rider in the mire.

BEROWNE.

What time o' day?

KATHARINE.

The hour that fools should ask.

BEROWNE.

Now fair befall your mask!

KATHARINE.

Fair fall the face it covers!

BEROWNE.

And send you many lovers!

KATHARINE.

Amen, so you be none.

BEROWNE.

Nay, then will I be gone.

KING.

Madam, your father here doth intimate

The payment of a hundred thousand crowns;

Being but the one half of an entire sum

Disbursed by my father in his wars.

But say that he or we, as neither have,

Receiv'd that sum, yet there remains unpaid

A hundred thousand more, in surety of the which,

One part of Aquitaine is bound to us,

Although not valued to the money's worth.

If then the King your father will restore

But that one half which is unsatisfied,

We will give up our right in Aquitaine,

And hold fair friendship with his Majesty.

But that, it seems, he little purposeth,

For here he doth demand to have repaid

A hundred thousand crowns; and not demands,

On payment of a hundred thousand crowns,

To have his title live in Aquitaine;

Which we much rather had depart withal,

And have the money by our father lent,

Than Aquitaine so gelded as it is.

Dear Princess, were not his requests so far

From reason's yielding, your fair self should make

A yielding 'gainst some reason in my breast, And go well satisfied to France again.

PRINCESS OF FRANCE.

You do the King my father too much wrong,

And wrong the reputation of your name,

In so unseeming to confess receipt

Of that which hath so faithfully been paid.

KING.

I do protest I never heard of it;

And, if you prove it, I'll repay it back

Or yield up Aquitaine.

PRINCESS OF FRANCE.

We arrest your word.

Boyet, you can produce acquittances

For such a sum from special officers

Of Charles his father.

KING.

Satisfy me so.

BOYET.

So please your Grace, the packet is not come,

Where that and other specialties are bound;

To-morrow you shall have a sight of them.

KING.

It shall suffice me; at which interview

All liberal reason I will yield unto.

Meantime receive such welcome at my hand

As honour, without breach of honour, may

Make tender of to thy true worthiness.

You may not come, fair Princess, within my gates;

But here without you shall be so receiv'd

As you shall deem yourself lodg'd in my heart,

Though so denied fair harbour in my house.

Your own good thoughts excuse me, and farewell.

To-morrow shall we visit you again.

PRINCESS OF FRANCE.

Sweet health and fair desires consort your Grace!

KING.

Thy own wish wish I thee in every place.

[Exit with attendants]

BEROWNE.

Lady, I will commend you to mine own heart.

ROSALINE.

Pray you, do my commendations;

I would be glad to see it.

BEROWNE.

I would you heard it groan.

ROSALINE.

Is the fool sick?

BEROWNE.

Sick at the heart.

ROSALINE.

Alack, let it blood.

BEROWNE.

Would that do it good?

ROSALINE.

My physic says 'ay.'

BEROWNE.

Will YOU prick't with your eye?

ROSALINE.

No point, with my knife.

BEROWNE.

Now, God save thy life!

ROSALINE.

And yours from long living!

BEROWNE.

I cannot stay thanksgiving. *[Retiring]*

DUMAIN.

Sir, I pray you, a word: what lady is that same?

BOYET.

The heir of Alencon, Katharine her name.

DUMAIN.

A gallant lady! Monsieur, fare you well. *Exit*

LONGAVILLE. I beseech you a word: what is she in the white?

BOYET.

A woman sometimes, an you saw her in the light.

LONGAVILLE.

Perchance light in the light. I desire her name.

BOYET.

She hath but one for herself; to desire that were a shame.

LONGAVILLE.

Pray you, sir, whose daughter?

BOYET.

Her mother's, I have heard.

LONGAVILLE.

God's blessing on your beard!

BOYET.

Good sir, be not offended;

She is an heir of Falconbridge.

LONGAVILLE.

Nay, my choler is ended.

She is a most sweet lady.

BOYET.

Not unlike, sir; that may be. *Exit* LONGAVILLE

BEROWNE.

What's her name in the cap?

BOYET.

Rosaline, by good hap.

BEROWNE.

Is she wedded or no?

BOYET.

To her will, sir, or so.

BEROWNE.

You are welcome, sir; adieu!

BOYET.

Farewell to me, sir, and welcome to you.

Exit BEROWNE. LADIES Unmask

MARIA.

That last is Berowne, the merry mad-cap lord;

Not a word with him but a jest.

BOYET.

And every jest but a word.

PRINCESS OF FRANCE.

It was well done of you to take him at his word.

BOYET.

I was as willing to grapple as he was to board.

KATHARINE.

Two hot sheeps, marry!

BOYET.

And wherefore not ships?

No sheep, sweet lamb, unless we feed on your lips.

KATHARINE.

You sheep and I pasture-shall that finish the jest?

BOYET.

So you grant pasture for me. *[Offering to kiss her]*

KATHARINE.

Not so, gentle beast;
My lips are no common, though several they be.

BOYET.

Belonging to whom?

KATHARINE.

To my fortunes and me.

PRINCESS OF FRANCE.

Good wits will be jangling; but, gentles,
agree;
This civil war of wits were much better used
On Navarre and his book-men, for here 'tis abused.

BOYET.

If my observation, which very seldom lies,
By the heart's still rhetoric disclosed with eyes,

Deceive me not now, Navarre is infected.

PRINCESS OF FRANCE.

With what?

BOYET.

With that which we lovers entitle 'affected.'

PRINCESS OF FRANCE.

Your reason?

BOYET.

Why, all his behaviours did make their retire

To the court of his eye, peeping thorough desire.

His heart, like an agate, with your print impressed,

Proud with his form, in his eye pride expressed;

His tongue, all impatient to speak and not see,

Did stumble with haste in his eyesight to be;

All senses to that sense did make their repair, To feel only looking on fairest of fair.

Methought all his senses were lock'd in his eye,

As jewels in crystal for some prince to buy;

Who, tend'ring their own worth from where they were glass'd,

Did point you to buy them, along as you pass'd.

His face's own margent did quote such amazes

That all eyes saw his eyes enchanted with gazes.

I'll give you Aquitaine and all that is his,

An you give him for my sake but one loving kiss.

PRINCESS OF FRANCE.

Come, to our pavilion. Boyet is dispos'd.

BOYET.

But to speak that in words which his eye hath disclos'd;

I only have made a mouth of his eye,

By adding a tongue which I know will not lie.

MARIA.

Thou art an old love-monger, and speakest skilfully.

KATHARINE.

He is Cupid's grandfather, and learns news of him.

ROSALINE.

Then was Venus like her mother; for her father is but grim.

BOYET.

Do you hear, my mad wenches?

MARIA.

No.

BOYET.

What, then; do you see?

MARIA.

Ay, our way to be gone.

BOYET.

You are too hard for me. *Exeunt*

ACT III.

SCENE I. The park

Enter ARMADO and MOTH

ARMADO.

Warble, child; make passionate my sense of hearing.

[MOTH sings Concolinel]

ARMADO.

Sweet air! Go, tenderness of years, take this key, give enlargement to the swain, bring him festinately hither; I must employ him in a letter to my love.

MOTH.

Master, will you win your love with a French brawl?

ARMADO.

How meanest thou? Brawling in French?

MOTH.
No, my complete master; but to jig off a tune at the tongue's
end, canary to it with your feet, humour it with turning up your
eyelids, sigh a note and sing a note, sometime through the
throat, as if you swallowed love with singing love, sometime
through the nose, as if you snuff'd up love by smelling love,
with your hat penthouse-like o'er the shop of your eyes, with
your arms cross'd on your thin-belly doublet, like a rabbit on a
spit, or your hands in your pocket, like a man after the old
painting; and keep not too long in one tune, but a snip and away.
These are complements, these are humours; these betray nice
wenches, that would be betrayed without these; and make them men
of note-do you note me?- that most are affected to these.

ARMADO.
How hast thou purchased this experience?

MOTH.

By my penny of observation.

ARMADO.

But O-but O-

MOTH.

The hobby-horse is forgot.

ARMADO.

Call'st thou my love 'hobby-horse'?

MOTH.

No, master; the hobby-horse is but a colt, and your love
perhaps a hackney. But have you forgot your love?

ARMADO.

Almost I had.

MOTH.

Negligent student! learn her by heart.

ARMADO.

By heart and in heart, boy.

MOTH.

And out of heart, master; all those three I will prove.

ARMADO.

What wilt thou prove?

MOTH.

A man, if I live; and this, by, in, and without, upon the instant. By heart you love her, because your heart cannot come by her; in heart you love her, because your heart is in love with her; and out of heart you love her, being out of heart that you cannot enjoy her.

ARMADO.

I am all these three.

MOTH.

And three times as much more, and yet nothing at all.

ARMADO.

Fetch hither the swain; he must carry me a letter.

MOTH.

A message well sympathiz'd-a horse to be ambassador for an ass.

ARMADO.

Ha, ha, what sayest thou?

MOTH.

Marry, sir, you must send the ass upon the horse, for he is very slow-gaited. But I go.

ARMADO.

The way is but short; away.

MOTH.

As swift as lead, sir.

ARMADO.

The meaning, pretty ingenious?

Is not lead a metal heavy, dull, and slow?

MOTH.

Minime, honest master; or rather, master, no.

ARMADO.

I say lead is slow.

MOTH.

You are too swift, sir, to say so:

Is that lead slow which is fir'd from a gun?

ARMADO.

Sweet smoke of rhetoric!

He reputes me a cannon; and the bullet, that's he;

I shoot thee at the swain.

MOTH.

Thump, then, and I flee. *Exit*

ARMADO. A most acute juvenal; volable and free of grace!

By thy favour, sweet welkin, I must sigh in thy face;

Most rude melancholy, valour gives thee place.

My herald is return'd.

Re-enter MOTH with COSTARD

MOTH.

A wonder, master! here's a costard broken in a shin.

ARMADO.

Some enigma, some riddle; come, thy l'envoy; begin.

COSTARD.

No egma, no riddle, no l'envoy; no salve in the mail, sir.
O, sir, plantain, a plain plantain; no l'envoy, no l'envoy; no
salve, sir, but a plantain!

ARMADO.

By virtue thou enforcest laughter; thy silly thought, my
spleen; the heaving of my lungs provokes me to ridiculous
smiling. O, pardon me, my stars! Doth the inconsiderate take
salve for l'envoy, and the word 'l'envoy' for a salve?

MOTH.

Do the wise think them other? Is not l'envoy a salve?

ARMADO.

No, page; it is an epilogue or discourse to make plain

Some obscure precedence that hath tofore been sain.

I will example it:

The fox, the ape, and the humble-bee,

Were still at odds, being but three.

There's the moral. Now the l'envoy.

MOTH.

I will add the l'envoy. Say the moral again.

ARMADO.

The fox, the ape, and the humble-bee,

Were still at odds, being but three.

MOTH.

Until the goose came out of door,

And stay'd the odds by adding four.

Now will I begin your moral, and do you follow with my l'envoy.

The fox, the ape, and the humble-bee,

Were still at odds, being but three.

ARMADO.

Until the goose came out of door,
Staying the odds by adding four.

MOTH.

A good l'envoy, ending in the goose; would you desire more?

COSTARD.

The boy hath sold him a bargain, a goose, that's flat.

Sir, your pennyworth is good, an your goose be fat.
To sell a bargain well is as cunning as fast and loose;
Let me see: a fat l'envoy; ay, that's a fat goose.

ARMADO.

Come hither, come hither. How did this argument begin?

MOTH.

By saying that a costard was broken in a shin.

Then call'd you for the l'envoy.

COSTARD.

True, and I for a plantain. Thus came your argument in;

Then the boy's fat l'envoy, the goose that you bought;

And he ended the market.

ARMADO.

But tell me: how was there a costard broken in a shin?

MOTH.

I will tell you sensibly.

COSTARD.

Thou hast no feeling of it, Moth; I will speak that l'envoy.

I, Costard, running out, that was safely within,

Fell over the threshold and broke my shin.

ARMADO.

We will talk no more of this matter.

COSTARD.

Till there be more matter in the shin.

ARMADO.

Sirrah Costard. I will enfranchise thee.

COSTARD.

O, Marry me to one Frances! I smell some l'envoy, some goose, in this.

ARMADO.

By my sweet soul, I mean setting thee at liberty,
enfreedoming thy person; thou wert immured, restrained,
captivated, bound.

COSTARD.

True, true; and now you will be my purgation, and let me loose.

ARMADO.

I give thee thy liberty, set thee from durance; and, in

lieu thereof, impose on thee nothing but this: bear this

significant *[giving a letter]* to the country maid Jaquenetta;

there is remuneration, for the best ward of mine honour is

rewarding my dependents. Moth, follow. *Exit*

MOTH. Like the sequel, I. Signior Costard, adieu.

COSTARD.

My sweet ounce of man's flesh, my incony Jew!

[Exit MOTH]

Now will I look to his remuneration. Remuneration! O, that's the

Latin word for three farthings. Three farthings-remuneration.

'What's the price of this inkle?'- 'One penny.'- 'No, I'll give

you a remuneration.' Why, it carries it. Remuneration! Why,

it is

a fairer name than French crown. I will never buy and sell out of this word.

Enter BEROWNE

BEROWNE.

My good knave Costard, exceedingly well met!

COSTARD.

Pray you, sir, how much carnation ribbon may a man buy for
a remuneration?

BEROWNE.

What is a remuneration?

COSTARD.

Marry, sir, halfpenny farthing.

BEROWNE.

Why, then, three-farthing worth of silk.

COSTARD.

I thank your worship. God be wi' you!

BEROWNE.

Stay, slave; I must employ thee.
As thou wilt win my favour, good my knave,
Do one thing for me that I shall entreat.

COSTARD.

When would you have it done, sir?

BEROWNE.

This afternoon.

COSTARD.

Well, I will do it, sir; fare you well.

BEROWNE.

Thou knowest not what it is.

COSTARD.

I shall know, sir, when I have done it.

BEROWNE.

Why, villain, thou must know first.

COSTARD.

I will come to your worship to-morrow morning.

BEROWNE.

It must be done this afternoon.

Hark, slave, it is but this:

The Princess comes to hunt here in the park,

And in her train there is a gentle lady;

When tongues speak sweetly, then they name her name,

And Rosaline they call her. Ask for her,

And to her white hand see thou do commend

This seal'd-up counsel. There's thy guerdon; go.

[Giving him a shilling]

COSTARD.

Gardon, O sweet gardon! better than remuneration; a

'leven-pence farthing better; most sweet gardon! I will do it,

sir, in print. Gardon-remuneration! *Exit*

BEROWNE. And I, forsooth, in love; I, that have been love's whip;

A very beadle to a humorous sigh;

A critic, nay, a night-watch constable;

A domineering pedant o'er the boy,

Than whom no mortal so magnificent!

This wimpled, whining, purblind, wayward boy,

This senior-junior, giant-dwarf, Dan Cupid;

Regent of love-rhymes, lord of folded arms,

Th' anointed sovereign of sighs and groans,

Liege of all loiterers and malcontents,

Dread prince of plackets, king of codpieces,

Sole imperator, and great general

Of trotting paritors. O my little heart!

And I to be a corporal of his field,

And wear his colours like a tumbler's hoop!

What! I love, I sue, I seek a wife-
A woman, that is like a German clock,
Still a-repairing, ever out of frame,
And never going aright, being a watch,
But being watch'd that it may still go right!
Nay, to be perjur'd, which is worst of all;
And, among three, to love the worst of all,
A whitely wanton with a velvet brow,
With two pitch balls stuck in her face for eyes;
Ay, and, by heaven, one that will do the deed,
Though Argus were her eunuch and her guard.

And I to sigh for her! to watch for her!
To pray for her! Go to; it is a plague
That Cupid will impose for my neglect
Of his almighty dreadful little might.

Well, I will love, write, sigh, pray, sue, and groan:
Some men must love my lady, and some Joan. *Exit*

ACT IV.
SCENE I. The park

Enter the PRINCESS, ROSALINE, MARIA, KATHARINE, BOYET, LORDS, ATTENDANTS, and a FORESTER

PRINCESS OF FRANCE.

Was that the King that spurr'd his horse so hard

Against the steep uprising of the hill?

BOYET.

I know not; but I think it was not he.

PRINCESS OF FRANCE.

Whoe'er 'a was, 'a show'd a mounting mind.

Well, lords, to-day we shall have our dispatch;

On Saturday we will return to France.

Then, forester, my friend, where is the bush

That we must stand and play the murderer in?

FORESTER.

Hereby, upon the edge of yonder coppice;

A stand where you may make the fairest shoot.

PRINCESS OF FRANCE.

I thank my beauty I am fair that shoot,

And thereupon thou speak'st the fairest shoot.

FORESTER.

Pardon me, madam, for I meant not so.

PRINCESS OF FRANCE.

What, what? First praise me, and again say no?

O short-liv'd pride! Not fair? Alack for woe!

FORESTER.

Yes, madam, fair.

PRINCESS OF FRANCE.

Nay, never paint me now;

Where fair is not, praise cannot mend the brow.
Here, good my glass, take this for telling true:
[Giving him money]
Fair payment for foul words is more than due.

FORESTER.

Nothing but fair is that which you inherit.

PRINCESS OF FRANCE.
See, see, my beauty will be sav'd by merit.

O heresy in fair, fit for these days!
A giving hand, though foul, shall have fair praise.
But come, the bow. Now mercy goes to kill,
And shooting well is then accounted ill;
Thus will I save my credit in the shoot:
Not wounding, pity would not let me do't;
If wounding, then it was to show my skill,
That more for praise than purpose meant to kill.

And, out of question, so it is sometimes:

Glory grows guilty of detested crimes,

When, for fame's sake, for praise, an outward part,

We bend to that the working of the heart;

As I for praise alone now seek to spill

The poor deer's blood that my heart means no ill.

BOYET.

Do not curst wives hold that self-sovereignty

Only for praise sake, when they strive to be

Lords o'er their lords?

PRINCESS OF FRANCE.

Only for praise; and praise we may afford

To any lady that subdues a lord.

Enter COSTARD

BOYET.

Here comes a member of the commonwealth.

COSTARD.

God dig-you-den all! Pray you, which is the head lady?

PRINCESS OF FRANCE.

Thou shalt know her, fellow, by the rest that have no heads.

COSTARD.

Which is the greatest lady, the highest?

PRINCESS OF FRANCE.

The thickest and the tallest.

COSTARD.

The thickest and the tallest! It is so; truth is truth.
An your waist, mistress, were as slender as my wit,
One o' these maids' girdles for your waist should be fit.
Are not you the chief woman? You are the thickest here.

PRINCESS OF FRANCE.

What's your will, sir? What's your will?

COSTARD.
I have a letter from Monsieur Berowne to one
Lady Rosaline.

PRINCESS OF FRANCE.
O, thy letter, thy letter! He's a good friend of mine.

Stand aside, good bearer. Boyet, you can carve.
Break up this capon.

BOYET.

I am bound to serve.
This letter is mistook; it importeth none here.

It is writ to Jaquenetta.

PRINCESS OF FRANCE.

We will read it, I swear.

Break the neck of the wax, and every one give ear.

BOYET.

[Reads] 'By heaven, that thou art fair is most infallible;

true that thou art beauteous; truth itself that thou art lovely.

More fairer than fair, beautiful than beauteous, truer than truth

itself, have commiseration on thy heroical vassal. The

magnanimous and most illustrate king Cophetua set eye upon the

pernicious and indubitate beggar Zenelophon; and he it was that

might rightly say, 'Veni, vidi, vici'; which to annothanize in

the vulgar,- O base and obscure vulgar!- videlicet, He came,

saw,

and overcame. He came, one; saw, two; overcame, three. Who

came?-

the king. Why did he come?- to see. Why did he see?-to overcome.

To whom came he?- to the beggar. What saw he?- the beggar.

Who

overcame he?- the beggar. The conclusion is victory; on whose side?- the king's. The captive is enrich'd; on whose side?- the beggar's. The catastrophe is a nuptial; on whose side?- the king's. No, on both in one, or one in both. I am the king,

for so

stands the comparison; thou the beggar, for so witnesseth thy lowliness. Shall I command thy love? I may. Shall I enforce thy love? I could. Shall I entreat thy love? I will. What shalt thou exchange for rags?- robes, for tittles?- titles, for thyself?

-me. Thus expecting thy reply, I profane my lips on thy foot, my eyes on thy picture, and my heart on thy every part.

Thine in the dearest design of industry,

DON ADRIANO DE ARMADO.

'Thus dost thou hear the Nemean lion roar
'Gainst thee, thou lamb, that standest as his prey;
Submissive fall his princely feet before,
And he from forage will incline to play.
But if thou strive, poor soul, what are thou then?

Food for his rage, repasture for his den.'

PRINCESS OF FRANCE.

What plume of feathers is he that indited this letter?

What vane? What weathercock? Did you ever hear better?

BOYET.

I am much deceived but I remember the style.

PRINCESS OF FRANCE.

Else your memory is bad, going o'er it erewhile.

BOYET.

This Armado is a Spaniard, that keeps here in court;
A phantasime, a Monarcho, and one that makes sport
To the Prince and his book-mates.

PRINCESS OF FRANCE.

Thou fellow, a word.
Who gave thee this letter?

COSTARD.

I told you: my lord.

PRINCESS OF FRANCE.

To whom shouldst thou give it?

COSTARD.

From my lord to my lady.

PRINCESS OF FRANCE.

From which lord to which lady?

COSTARD.

From my Lord Berowne, a good master of mine,

To a lady of France that he call'd Rosaline.

PRINCESS OF FRANCE.

Thou hast mistaken his letter. Come, lords, away.

[To ROSALINE] Here, sweet, put up this; 'twill be thine another

day. *Exeunt* PRINCESS and TRAIN

BOYET.

Who is the shooter? who is the shooter?

ROSALINE.

Shall I teach you to know?

BOYET.

Ay, my continent of beauty.

ROSALINE.

Why, she that bears the bow.

Finely put off!

BOYET.

My lady goes to kill horns; but, if thou marry,

Hang me by the neck, if horns that year miscarry.

Finely put on!

ROSALINE.

Well then, I am the shooter.

BOYET.

And who is your deer?

ROSALINE.

If we choose by the horns, yourself come not near.

Finely put on indeed!

MARIA.

You Still wrangle with her, Boyet, and she strikes at the brow.

BOYET.

But she herself is hit lower. Have I hit her now?

ROSALINE.

Shall I come upon thee with an old saying, that was a man

when King Pepin of France was a little boy, as touching the hit it?

BOYET.

So I may answer thee with one as old, that was a woman when

Queen Guinever of Britain was a little wench, as touching the hit it.

ROSALINE.

[Singing]

Thou canst not hit it, hit it, hit it,

Thou canst not hit it, my good man.

BOYET.

An I cannot, cannot, cannot,

An I cannot, another can.

Exeunt ROSALINE and KATHARINE

COSTARD.

By my troth, most pleasant! How both did fit it!

MARIA.

A mark marvellous well shot; for they both did hit it.

BOYET.

A mark! O, mark but that mark! A mark, says my lady!
Let the mark have a prick in't, to mete at, if it may be.

MARIA.

Wide o' the bow-hand! I' faith, your hand is out.

COSTARD.

Indeed, 'a must shoot nearer, or he'll ne'er hit the clout.

BOYET.

An if my hand be out, then belike your hand is in.

COSTARD.

Then will she get the upshoot by cleaving the pin.

MARIA.

Come, come, you talk greasily; your lips grow foul.

COSTARD.

She's too hard for you at pricks, sir; challenge her to bowl.

BOYET.

I fear too much rubbing; good-night, my good owl.

Exeunt BOYET and MARIA

COSTARD.

By my soul, a swain, a most simple clown!
Lord, Lord! how the ladies and I have put him down!

O' my troth, most sweet jests, most incony vulgar wit!
When it comes so smoothly off, so obscenely, as it were, so fit.

Armado a th' t'one side-O, a most dainty man!

To see him walk before a lady and to bear her fan!

To see him kiss his hand, and how most sweetly 'a will swear!

And his page a t' other side, that handful of wit!

Ah, heavens, it is a most pathetical nit!

Sola, sola! *Exit* COSTARD

SCENE II. The park

From the shooting within, enter HOLOFERNES, SIR NATHANIEL, and

DULL

NATHANIEL.

Very reverent sport, truly; and done in the testimony of
a good conscience.

HOLOFERNES.

The deer was, as you know, sanguis, in blood; ripe as
the pomewater, who now hangeth like a jewel in the ear of caelo,
the sky, the welkin, the heaven; and anon falleth like a crab on
the face of terra, the soil, the land, the earth.

NATHANIEL.

Truly, Master Holofernes, the epithets are sweetly
varied, like a scholar at the least; but, sir, I assure ye it was
a buck of the first head.

HOLOFERNES.

Sir Nathaniel, haud credo.

DULL.

'Twas not a haud credo; 'twas a pricket.

HOLOFERNES.

Most barbarous intimation! yet a kind of insinuation,

as it were, in via, in way, of explication; facere, as it were,

replication, or rather, ostentare, to show, as it were, his

inclination, after his undressed, unpolished, uneducated,

unpruned, untrained, or rather unlettered, or ratherest

unconfirmed fashion, to insert again my haud credo for a deer.

DULL.

I Said the deer was not a haud credo; 'twas a pricket.

HOLOFERNES.

Twice-sod simplicity, bis coctus!

O thou monster Ignorance, how deformed dost thou look!

NATHANIEL.

Sir, he hath never fed of the dainties that are bred in a book;
He hath not eat paper, as it were; he hath not drunk ink; his
intellect is not replenished; he is only an animal, only sensible
in the duller parts;
And such barren plants are set before us that we thankful should
be-
Which we of taste and feeling are-for those parts that do
fructify in us more than he.
For as it would ill become me to be vain, indiscreet, or a fool,
So, were there a patch set on learning, to see him in a school.

But, omne bene, say I, being of an old father's mind:
Many can brook the weather that love not the wind.

DULL.

You two are book-men: can you tell me by your wit
What was a month old at Cain's birth that's not five weeks old as yet?

HOLOFERNES.

Dictynna, goodman Dull; Dictynna, goodman Dull.

DULL.

What is Dictynna?

NATHANIEL.

A title to Phoebe, to Luna, to the moon.

HOLOFERNES.

The moon was a month old when Adam was no more,
And raught not to five weeks when he came to five-score.
Th' allusion holds in the exchange.

DULL.

'Tis true, indeed; the collusion holds in the exchange.

HOLOFERNES.

God comfort thy capacity! I say th' allusion holds in the exchange.

DULL.

And I say the polusion holds in the exchange; for the moon is
never but a month old; and I say, beside, that 'twas a pricket
that the Princess kill'd.

HOLOFERNES.

Sir Nathaniel, will you hear an extemporal epitaph on
the death of the deer? And, to humour the ignorant, call the deer
the Princess kill'd a pricket.

NATHANIEL.

Perge, good Master Holofernes, perge, so it shall please
you to abrogate scurrility.

HOLOFERNES.

I Will something affect the letter, for it argues facility.
The preyful Princess pierc'd and prick'd a pretty pleasing pricket.

Some say a sore; but not a sore till now made sore with shooting.

The dogs did yell; put el to sore, then sorel jumps from
thicket-
Or pricket sore, or else sorel; the people fall a-hooting.

If sore be sore, then L to sore makes fifty sores o' sorel.
Of one sore I an hundred make by adding but one more L.

NATHANIEL.

A rare talent!

DULL.
[Aside] If a talent be a claw, look how he claws him with a talent.

HOLOFERNES.
This is a gift that I have, simple, simple; a foolish extravagant spirit, full of forms, figures, shapes, objects, ideas, apprehensions, motions, revolutions. These are begot in the ventricle of memory, nourish'd in the womb of pia mater, and delivered upon the mellowing of occasion. But the gift is good in those in whom it is acute, and I am thankful for it.

NATHANIEL.

Sir, I praise the Lord for you, and so may my

parishioners; for their sons are well tutor'd by you, and their

daughters profit very greatly under you. You are a good member of

the commonwealth.

HOLOFERNES.

Mehercle, if their sons be ingenious, they shall want

no instruction; if their daughters be capable, I will put it to

them; but, vir sapit qui pauca loquitur. A soul feminine saluteth us.

Enter JAQUENETTA and COSTARD

JAQUENETTA.

God give you good morrow, Master Person. HOLOFERNES. Master Person, quasi pers-one. And if one should be pierc'd which is the one? COSTARD. Marry, Master Schoolmaster, he that is likest to a hogshead. HOLOFERNES. Piercing a hogshead! A good lustre of conceit in a turf of earth; fire enough for a flint, pearl enough for a swine; 'tis pretty; it is well. JAQUENETTA. Good Master Parson, be so good as read me this letter; it was given me by Costard, and sent me from Don Armado. I beseech you read it. HOLOFERNES. Fauste, precor gelida quando pecus omne sub umbra Ruminat-and so forth. Ah, good old Mantuan! I may speak of thee as the traveller doth of Venice: Venetia, Venetia, Chi non ti vede, non ti pretia. Old Mantuan, old Mantuan! Who understandeth thee not, loves thee not-Ut, re, sol, la, mi, fa. Under pardon, sir, what are the contents? or rather as Horace says in his-What, my soul, verses? NATHANIEL. Ay, sir, and very learned. HOLOFERNES. Let me hear a staff, a stanze, a verse; lege, domine. NATHANIEL. *[Reads]* 'If love make me forsworn, how shall I swear to love? Ah, never faith could hold, if not to beauty vowed! Though to myself forsworn, to thee I'll faithful prove; Those thoughts to me were oaks, to thee like osiers bowed. Study his bias leaves, and makes his book thine eyes, Where all those pleasures live that art would comprehend. If knowledge be the mark, to know thee shall suffice; Well learned is that tongue that well can thee commend; All ignorant that soul that sees thee without wonder; Which is to me some praise that I thy parts admire. Thy eye Jove's lightning bears, thy voice his dreadful thunder, Which, not to anger bent, is music and sweet fire. Celestial as thou art, O, pardon love this wrong, That singes heaven's praise with such an earthly tongue.' HOLOFERNES. You find not the apostrophas, and so miss the accent: let me supervise the canzonet. Here are only numbers ratified; but, for the elegancy, facility, and golden cadence of poesy, caret. Ovidius Naso was the man. And why, indeed, 'Naso' but for smelling out the odoriferous flowers of fancy, the jerks of invention? Imitari is nothing: so doth the hound his master, the ape his keeper, the tired horse his rider. But, damosella virgin, was this directed to you? JAQUENETTA. Ay, sir, from one Monsieur Berowne, one of the strange queen's lords. HOLOFERNES. I will overglance the superscript: 'To the snow-white hand of the most beauteous Lady Rosaline.' I will look again on the intellect of the letter, for the nomination of the party writing to the person written unto: 'Your Ladyship's in all desired employment, Berowne.' Sir Nathaniel, this Berowne is one of the votaries with the King; and here he hath framed a letter to a sequent of the stranger queen's which accidentally, or by the way of progression, hath miscarried. Trip and go, my sweet; deliver this paper into the royal hand of the King; it may concern much. Stay not thy compliment; I forgive thy duty. Adieu. JAQUENETTA. Good Costard, go with me. Sir, God save your life! COSTARD. Have with thee, my girl. *Exeunt* COSTARD and JAQUENETTA NATHANIEL. Sir, you have done this in the fear of God, very religiously; and, as a certain father saith-HOLOFERNES. Sir, tell not me of the father; I do fear colourable colours. But to return to the verses: did they please you, Sir Nathaniel? NATHANIEL. Marvellous well for the pen. HOLOFERNES. I do dine to-day at the father's of a certain pupil of mine; where, if, before repast, it shall please you to gratify the table with a grace, I will, on my privilege I have with the parents of the foresaid child or pupil, undertake your ben venuto; where I will prove those verses to be very unlearned, neither savouring of poetry, wit, nor invention. I beseech your society. NATHANIEL. And thank you too; for society, saith the text, is the happiness of life. HOLOFERNES. And certes, the text most infallibly concludes it. *[To DULL]* Sir, I do invite you too; you shall not say me nay: pauca verba. Away; the gentles are at their game, and we will to our recreation. *Exeunt*

SCENE III. The park

Enter BEROWNE, with a paper his band, alone

BEROWNE.

The King he is hunting the deer: I am coursing myself.

They have pitch'd a toil: I am tolling in a pitch-pitch that

defiles. Defile! a foul word. Well, 'set thee down, sorrow!' for

so they say the fool said, and so say I, and I am the fool.

Well

proved, wit. By the Lord, this love is as mad as Ajax: it kills

sheep; it kills me-I a sheep. Well proved again o' my side.

I

will not love; if I do, hang me. I' faith, I will not. O, but her

eye! By this light, but for her eye, I would not love her-

yes,

for her two eyes. Well, I do nothing in the world but lie, and

lie in my throat. By heaven, I do love; and it hath taught me to

rhyme, and to be melancholy; and here is part of my rhyme, and
here my melancholy. Well, she hath one o' my sonnets already; the
clown bore it, the fool sent it, and the lady hath it: sweet
clown, sweeter fool, sweetest lady! By the world, I would not
care a pin if the other three were in. Here comes one with a
paper; God give him grace to groan!

[Climbs into a tree]

Enter the KING, with a paper

KING.
Ay me!

BEROWNE.
Shot, by heaven! Proceed, sweet Cupid; thou hast thump'd
him with thy bird-bolt under the left pap. In faith, secrets!

KING.
[Reads]
'So sweet a kiss the golden sun gives not

To those fresh morning drops upon the rose,

As thy eye-beams, when their fresh rays have smote

The night of dew that on my cheeks down flows;

Nor shines the silver moon one half so bright

Through the transparent bosom of the deep,

As doth thy face through tears of mine give light.

Thou shin'st in every tear that I do weep;

No drop but as a coach doth carry thee;

So ridest thou triumphing in my woe.

Do but behold the tears that swell in me,

And they thy glory through my grief will show.

But do not love thyself; then thou wilt keep

My tears for glasses, and still make me weep.

O queen of queens! how far dost thou excel

No thought can think nor tongue of mortal tell.'

How shall she know my griefs? I'll drop the paper-

Sweet leaves, shade folly. Who is he comes here?

[Steps aside]

[Enter LONGAVILLE, with a paper]

What, Longaville, and reading! Listen, ear.

BEROWNE.

Now, in thy likeness, one more fool appear!

LONGAVILLE.

Ay me, I am forsworn!

BEROWNE.

Why, he comes in like a perjure, wearing papers.

KING.

In love, I hope; sweet fellowship in shame!

BEROWNE.

One drunkard loves another of the name.

LONGAVILLE.

Am I the first that have been perjur'd so?

BEROWNE.

I could put thee in comfort: not by two that I know;

Thou makest the triumviry, the corner-cap of society,

The shape of Love's Tyburn that hangs up simplicity.

LONGAVILLE.

I fear these stubborn lines lack power to move.

O sweet Maria, empress of my love!

These numbers will I tear, and write in prose.

BEROWNE.

O, rhymes are guards on wanton Cupid's hose:

Disfigure not his slop.

LONGAVILLE.

This same shall go. *[He reads the sonnet]*

'Did not the heavenly rhetoric of thine eye, 'Gainst whom the world cannot hold argument,

Persuade my heart to this false perjury?

Vows for thee broke deserve not punishment.

A woman I forswore; but I will prove,

Thou being a goddess, I forswore not thee:

My vow was earthly, thou a heavenly love;

Thy grace being gain'd cures all disgrace in me.

Vows are but breath, and breath a vapour is;

Then thou, fair sun, which on my earth dost shine,

Exhal'st this vapour-vow; in thee it is.

If broken, then it is no fault of mine;

If by me broke, what fool is not so wise

To lose an oath to win a paradise?'

BEROWNE.

This is the liver-vein, which makes flesh a deity,

A green goose a goddess-pure, pure idolatry.

God amend us, God amend! We are much out o' th' way.

Enter DUMAIN, with a paper

LONGAVILLE.

By whom shall I send this?- Company! Stay.

[Steps aside]

BEROWNE.

'All hid, all hid'- an old infant play.

Like a demigod here sit I in the sky,

And wretched fools' secrets heedfully o'er-eye.

More sacks to the mill! O heavens, I have my wish!

Dumain transformed! Four woodcocks in a dish!

DUMAIN.

O most divine Kate!

BEROWNE.

O most profane coxcomb!

DUMAIN.

By heaven, the wonder in a mortal eye!

BEROWNE.

By earth, she is not, corporal: there you lie.

DUMAIN.

Her amber hairs for foul hath amber quoted.

BEROWNE.

An amber-colour'd raven was well noted.

DUMAIN.

As upright as the cedar.

BEROWNE.

Stoop, I say;

Her shoulder is with child.

DUMAIN.

As fair as day.

BEROWNE.

Ay, as some days; but then no sun must shine.

DUMAIN.

O that I had my wish!

LONGAVILLE.

And I had mine!

KING.

And I mine too, good Lord!

BEROWNE.

Amen, so I had mine! Is not that a good word?

DUMAIN.

I would forget her; but a fever she
Reigns in my blood, and will remembered be.

BEROWNE.

A fever in your blood? Why, then incision
Would let her out in saucers. Sweet misprision!

DUMAIN.

Once more I'll read the ode that I have writ.

BEROWNE.

Once more I'll mark how love can vary wit.

DUMAIN.

[Reads]

'On a day-alack the day!-
Love, whose month is ever May,
Spied a blossom passing fair
Playing in the wanton air.

Through the velvet leaves the wind,
All unseen, can passage find;
That the lover, sick to death,
Wish'd himself the heaven's breath.
"Air," quoth he "thy cheeks may blow;
Air, would I might triumph so!
But, alack, my hand is sworn
Ne'er to pluck thee from thy thorn;
Vow, alack, for youth unmeet,
Youth so apt to pluck a sweet.
Do not call it sin in me
That I am forsworn for thee;
Thou for whom Jove would swear
Juno but an Ethiope were;
And deny himself for Jove,
Turning mortal for thy love."'
This will I send; and something else more plain
That shall express my true love's fasting pain.
O, would the King, Berowne and Longaville,
Were lovers too! Ill, to example ill,
Would from my forehead wipe a perjur'd note;

For none offend where all alike do dote.

LONGAVILLE.

[Advancing] Dumain, thy love is far from charity,

That in love's grief desir'st society;

You may look pale, but I should blush, I know,

To be o'erheard and taken napping so.

KING.

[Advancing] Come, sir, you blush; as his, your case is such.

You chide at him, offending twice as much:

You do not love Maria! Longaville

Did never sonnet for her sake compile;

Nor never lay his wreathed arms athwart

His loving bosom, to keep down his heart.

I have been closely shrouded in this bush,

And mark'd you both, and for you both did blush.

I heard your guilty rhymes, observ'd your fashion,

Saw sighs reek from you, noted well your passion.

'Ay me!' says one. 'O Jove!' the other cries.

One, her hairs were gold; crystal the other's eyes.

[To LONGAVILLE] You would for paradise break faith and troth;

[To DUMAIN] And Jove for your love would infringe an oath.
What will Berowne say when that he shall hear
Faith infringed which such zeal did swear?
How will he scorn, how will he spend his wit!

How will he triumph, leap, and laugh at it!
For all the wealth that ever I did see,
I would not have him know so much by me.

BEROWNE.
[Descending] Now step I forth to whip hypocrisy,
Ah, good my liege, I pray thee pardon me.
Good heart, what grace hast thou thus to reprove
These worms for loving, that art most in love?
Your eyes do make no coaches; in your tears
There is no certain princess that appears;
You'll not be perjur'd; 'tis a hateful thing;

Tush, none but minstrels like of sonneting.

But are you not ashamed? Nay, are you not,

All three of you, to be thus much o'ershot?

You found his mote; the King your mote did see;

But I a beam do find in each of three.

O, what a scene of fool'ry have I seen,

Of sighs, of groans, of sorrow, and of teen!

O, me, with what strict patience have I sat,

To see a king transformed to a gnat!

To see great Hercules whipping a gig,

And profound Solomon to tune a jig,

And Nestor play at push-pin with the boys,

And critic Timon laugh at idle toys!

Where lies thy grief, O, tell me, good Dumain?

And, gentle Longaville, where lies thy pain?

And where my liege's? All about the breast.

A caudle, ho!

KING.

Too bitter is thy jest.

Are we betrayed thus to thy over-view?

BEROWNE.

Not you by me, but I betrayed to you.

I that am honest, I that hold it sin

To break the vow I am engaged in;

I am betrayed by keeping company

With men like you, men of inconstancy.

When shall you see me write a thing in rhyme?

Or groan for Joan? or spend a minute's time

In pruning me? When shall you hear that I

Will praise a hand, a foot, a face, an eye,

A gait, a state, a brow, a breast, a waist,

A leg, a limb-

KING.

Soft! whither away so fast?

A true man or a thief that gallops so?

BEROWNE.

I post from love; good lover, let me go.

Enter JAQUENETTA and COSTARD

JAQUENETTA.

God bless the King!

KING.

What present hast thou there?

COSTARD.

Some certain treason.

KING.

What makes treason here?

COSTARD.

Nay, it makes nothing, sir.

KING.

If it mar nothing neither,

The treason and you go in peace away together.

JAQUENETTA.

I beseech your Grace, let this letter be read;

Our person misdoubts it: 'twas treason, he said.

KING.

Berowne, read it over. *[BEROWNE reads the letter]*

Where hadst thou it?

JAQUENETTA.

Of Costard.

KING.

Where hadst thou it?

COSTARD.

Of Dun Adramadio, Dun Adramadio.

[BEROWNE tears the letter]

KING.

How now! What is in you? Why dost thou tear it?

BEROWNE.

A toy, my liege, a toy! Your Grace needs not fear it.

LONGAVILLE.

It did move him to passion, and therefore let's hear it.

DUMAIN.

It is Berowne's writing, and here is his name.

[Gathering up the pieces]

BEROWNE.

[To COSTARD] Ah, you whoreson loggerhead, you were born to do me shame.

Guilty, my lord, guilty! I confess, I confess.

KING.

What?

BEROWNE.

That you three fools lack'd me fool to make up the mess;

He, he, and you-and you, my liege!- and I

Are pick-purses in love, and we deserve to die.

O, dismiss this audience, and I shall tell you more.

DUMAIN.

Now the number is even.

BEROWNE.

True, true, we are four.

Will these turtles be gone?

KING.

Hence, sirs, away.

COSTARD.

Walk aside the true folk, and let the traitors stay.

[Exeunt COSTARD and JAQUENETTA]

BEROWNE.

Sweet lords, sweet lovers, O, let us embrace!

As true we are as flesh and blood can be.

The sea will ebb and flow, heaven show his face;

Young blood doth not obey an old decree.

We cannot cross the cause why we were born,

Therefore of all hands must we be forsworn.

KING.

What, did these rent lines show some love of thine?

BEROWNE.

'Did they?' quoth you. Who sees the heavenly Rosaline
That, like a rude and savage man of Inde
At the first op'ning of the gorgeous east,
Bows not his vassal head and, strucken blind,
Kisses the base ground with obedient breast?
What peremptory eagle-sighted eye
Dares look upon the heaven of her brow
That is not blinded by her majesty?

KING.

What zeal, what fury hath inspir'd thee now?
My love, her mistress, is a gracious moon;
She, an attending star, scarce seen a light.

BEROWNE.

My eyes are then no eyes, nor I Berowne.

O, but for my love, day would turn to night!
Of all complexions the cull'd sovereignty
Do meet, as at a fair, in her fair cheek,
Where several worthies make one dignity,
Where nothing wants that want itself doth seek.
Lend me the flourish of all gentle tongues-
Fie, painted rhetoric! O, she needs it not!
To things of sale a seller's praise belongs:

She passes praise; then praise too short doth blot.
A wither'd hermit, five-score winters worn,
Might shake off fifty, looking in her eye.
Beauty doth varnish age, as if new-born,
And gives the crutch the cradle's infancy.
O, 'tis the sun that maketh all things shine!

KING.

By heaven, thy love is black as ebony.

BEROWNE.

Is ebony like her? O wood divine!

A wife of such wood were felicity.

O, who can give an oath? Where is a book?

That I may swear beauty doth beauty lack,

If that she learn not of her eye to look.

No face is fair that is not full so black.

KING.

O paradox! Black is the badge of hell,

The hue of dungeons, and the school of night;

And beauty's crest becomes the heavens well.

BEROWNE.

Devils soonest tempt, resembling spirits of light.

O, if in black my lady's brows be deckt,

It mourns that painting and usurping hair

Should ravish doters with a false aspect;

And therefore is she born to make black fair.

Her favour turns the fashion of the days;

For native blood is counted painting now;

And therefore red that would avoid dispraise

Paints itself black, to imitate her brow.

DUMAIN.

To look like her are chimney-sweepers black.

LONGAVILLE.

And since her time are colliers counted bright.

KING.

And Ethiopes of their sweet complexion crack.

DUMAIN.

Dark needs no candles now, for dark is light.

BEROWNE.

Your mistresses dare never come in rain

For fear their colours should be wash'd away.

KING.

'Twere good yours did; for, sir, to tell you plain,

I'll find a fairer face not wash'd to-day.

BEROWNE.

I'll prove her fair, or talk till doomsday here.

KING.

No devil will fright thee then so much as she.

DUMAIN.

I never knew man hold vile stuff so dear.

LONGAVILLE.

Look, here's thy love: my foot and her face see.

[Showing his shoe]

BEROWNE.

O, if the streets were paved with thine eyes,

Her feet were much too dainty for such tread!

DUMAIN.

O vile! Then, as she goes, what upward lies

The street should see as she walk'd overhead.

KING.

But what of this? Are we not all in love?

BEROWNE.

Nothing so sure; and thereby all forsworn.

KING.

Then leave this chat; and, good Berowne, now prove

Our loving lawful, and our faith not torn.

DUMAIN.

Ay, marry, there; some flattery for this evil.

LONGAVILLE.

O, some authority how to proceed;

Some tricks, some quillets, how to cheat the devil!

DUMAIN.

Some salve for perjury.

BEROWNE.

'Tis more than need.

Have at you, then, affection's men-at-arms.

Consider what you first did swear unto:

To fast, to study, and to see no woman-

Flat treason 'gainst the kingly state of youth.

Say, can you fast? Your stomachs are too young,

And abstinence engenders maladies.

And, where that you you have vow'd to study, lords, In that each of you have forsworn his book,

Can you still dream, and pore, and thereon look?

For when would you, my lord, or you, or you,

Have found the ground of study's excellence

Without the beauty of a woman's face?

From women's eyes this doctrine I derive:

They are the ground, the books, the academes,

From whence doth spring the true Promethean fire.

Why, universal plodding poisons up

The nimble spirits in the arteries,

As motion and long-during action tires

The sinewy vigour of the traveller.

Now, for not looking on a woman's face,

You have in that forsworn the use of eyes,

And study too, the causer of your vow;

For where is author in the world

Teaches such beauty as a woman's eye?

Learning is but an adjunct to ourself,

And where we are our learning likewise is;

Then when ourselves we see in ladies' eyes,

With ourselves.

Do we not likewise see our learning there?
O, we have made a vow to study, lords,
And in that vow we have forsworn our books.
For when would you, my liege, or you, or you,
In leaden contemplation have found out
Such fiery numbers as the prompting eyes
Of beauty's tutors have enrich'd you with?
Other slow arts entirely keep the brain;
And therefore, finding barren practisers,
Scarce show a harvest of their heavy toil;
But love, first learned in a lady's eyes,
Lives not alone immured in the brain,
But with the motion of all elements
Courses as swift as thought in every power,
And gives to every power a double power,
Above their functions and their offices.
It adds a precious seeing to the eye:

A lover's eyes will gaze an eagle blind.
A lover's ear will hear the lowest sound,
When the suspicious head of theft is stopp'd.

Love's feeling is more soft and sensible
Than are the tender horns of cockled snails:
Love's tongue proves dainty Bacchus gross in taste.
For valour, is not Love a Hercules,
Still climbing trees in the Hesperides?
Subtle as Sphinx; as sweet and musical
As bright Apollo's lute, strung with his hair.
And when Love speaks, the voice of all the gods
Make heaven drowsy with the harmony.
Never durst poet touch a pen to write
Until his ink were temp'red with Love's sighs;
O, then his lines would ravish savage ears,
And plant in tyrants mild humility.

From women's eyes this doctrine I derive.
They sparkle still the right Promethean fire;
They are the books, the arts, the academes,
That show, contain, and nourish, all the world,
Else none at all in aught proves excellent.
Then fools you were these women to forswear;
Or, keeping what is sworn, you will prove fools.

For wisdom's sake, a word that all men love;

Or for Love's sake, a word that loves all men;

Or for men's sake, the authors of these women;

Or women's sake, by whom we men are men-

Let us once lose our oaths to find ourselves,

Or else we lose ourselves to keep our oaths.

It is religion to be thus forsworn;

For charity itself fulfils the law,

And who can sever love from charity?

KING.

Saint Cupid, then! and, soldiers, to the field!

BEROWNE.

Advance your standards, and upon them, lords;

Pell-mell, down with them! be first advis'd,

In conflict, that you get the sun of them.

LONGAVILLE.

Now to plain-dealing; lay these glozes by.

Shall we resolve to woo these girls of France?

KING.

And win them too; therefore let us devise

Some entertainment for them in their tents.

BEROWNE.

First, from the park let us conduct them thither;

Then homeward every man attach the hand

Of his fair mistress. In the afternoon

We will with some strange pastime solace them,

Such as the shortness of the time can shape;

For revels, dances, masks, and merry hours,

Forerun fair Love, strewing her way with flowers.

KING.

Away, away! No time shall be omitted

That will betime, and may by us be fitted.

BEROWNE.

Allons! allons! Sow'd cockle reap'd no corn,

And justice always whirls in equal measure.

Light wenches may prove plagues to men forsworn;

If so, our copper buys no better treasure. *Exeunt*

ACT V.
SCENE I. The park

Enter HOLOFERNES, SIR NATHANIEL, and DULL

HOLOFERNES.

Satis quod sufficit.

NATHANIEL.

I praise God for you, sir. Your reasons at dinner have

been sharp and sententious; pleasant without scurrility, witty

without affection, audacious without impudency, learned without

opinion, and strange without heresy. I did converse this quondam

day with a companion of the King's who is intituled,

nominated,

or called, Don Adriano de Armado.

HOLOFERNES.
Novi hominem tanquam te. His humour is lofty, his
discourse peremptory, his tongue filed, his eye ambitious, his
gait majestical and his general behaviour vain, ridiculous, and
thrasonical. He is too picked, too spruce, too affected, too odd,
as it were, too peregrinate, as I may call it.

NATHANIEL.

A most singular and choice epithet.

[Draws out his table-book]

HOLOFERNES.
He draweth out the thread of his verbosity finer than
the staple of his argument. I abhor such fanatical phantasimes,
such insociable and point-devise companions; such rackers of
orthography, as to speak 'dout' fine, when he should say
'doubt';
'det' when he should pronounce 'debt'- d, e, b, t, not d, e, t.

He clepeth a calf 'cauf,' half 'hauf'; neighbour vocatur

'nebour'; 'neigh' abbreviated 'ne.' This is abhominable-

which he
would call 'abbominable.' It insinuateth me of insanie: ne

intelligis, domine? to make frantic, lunatic.

NATHANIEL.

Laus Deo, bone intelligo.

HOLOFERNES.
'Bone'?- 'bone' for 'bene.' Priscian a little

scratch'd; 'twill serve.

Enter ARMADO, MOTH, and COSTARD

NATHANIEL.
Videsne quis venit?

HOLOFERNES.

Video, et gaudeo.

ARMADO.

[To MOTH] Chirrah!

HOLOFERNES.

Quare 'chirrah,' not 'sirrah'?

ARMADO.

Men of peace, well encount'red.

HOLOFERNES.

Most military sir, salutation.

MOTH.

[Aside to COSTARD] They have been at a great feast of

languages and stol'n the scraps.

COSTARD.

O, they have liv'd long on the alms-basket of words. I marvel thy master hath not eaten thee for a word, for thou are not so long by the head as honorificabilitudinitatibus; thou art easier swallowed than a flap-dragon.

MOTH.

Peace! the peal begins.

ARMADO.
[To HOLOFERNES] Monsieur, are you not lett'red?

MOTH.
Yes, yes; he teaches boys the hornbook. What is a, b, spelt backward with the horn on his head?

HOLOFERNES.
Ba, pueritia, with a horn added.

MOTH.

Ba, most silly sheep with a horn. You hear his learning.

HOLOFERNES.

Quis, quis, thou consonant?

MOTH.

The third of the five vowels, if You repeat them; or the
fifth, if I.

HOLOFERNES.

I will repeat them: a, e, i-

MOTH.

The sheep; the other two concludes it: o, u.

ARMADO.

Now, by the salt wave of the Mediterraneum, a sweet touch,
a quick venue of wit-snip, snap, quick and home. It rejoiceth my
intellect. True wit!

MOTH.

Offer'd by a child to an old man; which is wit-old.

HOLOFERNES.

What is the figure? What is the figure?

MOTH.
Horns.

HOLOFERNES.

Thou disputes like an infant; go whip thy gig.

MOTH.
Lend me your horn to make one, and I will whip about your
infamy circum circa-a gig of a cuckold's horn.

COSTARD.
An I had but one penny in the world, thou shouldst have it
to buy ginger-bread. Hold, there is the very remuneration I had
of thy master, thou halfpenny purse of wit, thou pigeon-egg of
discretion. O, an the heavens were so pleased that thou wert but

my bastard, what a joyful father wouldst thou make me! Go to;
thou hast it ad dunghill, at the fingers' ends, as they say.

HOLOFERNES.
O, I smell false Latin; 'dunghill' for unguem.

ARMADO.
Arts-man, preambulate; we will be singuled from the
barbarous. Do you not educate youth at the charge-house on the
top of the mountain?

HOLOFERNES.
Or mons, the hill.

ARMADO.

At your sweet pleasure, for the mountain.

HOLOFERNES.
I do, sans question.

ARMADO.

Sir, it is the King's most sweet pleasure and affection to congratulate the Princess at her pavilion, in the posteriors of this day; which the rude multitude call the afternoon.

HOLOFERNES.

The posterior of the day, most generous sir, is liable, congruent, and measurable, for the afternoon. The word is well cull'd, chose, sweet, and apt, I do assure you, sir, I do assure.

ARMADO.

Sir, the King is a noble gentleman, and my familiar, I do assure ye, very good friend. For what is inward between us, let it pass. I do beseech thee, remember thy courtesy. I beseech thee, apparel thy head. And among other importunate and most serious designs, and of great import indeed, too-but let that pass; for I must tell thee it will please his Grace, by the world, sometime to lean upon my poor shoulder, and with his royal finger thus dally with my excrement, with my mustachio; but, sweet heart, let that pass. By the world, I recount no fable: some certain special honours it pleaseth his greatness to impart to Armado, a soldier, a man of travel, that hath seen the world;

but let that pass. The very all of all is-but, sweet heart,

I do

implore secrecy-that the King would have me present the

Princess, sweet chuck, with some delightful ostentation, or show,

or pageant, or antic, or firework. Now, understanding that the

curate and your sweet self are good at such eruptions and sudden

breaking-out of mirth, as it were, I have acquainted you withal,

to the end to crave your assistance.

HOLOFERNES.

Sir, you shall present before her the Nine Worthies.

Sir Nathaniel, as concerning some entertainment of time, some

show in the posterior of this day, to be rend'red by our

assistance, the King's command, and this most gallant,

illustrate, and learned gentleman, before the Princess-I say

none so fit as to present the Nine Worthies.

NATHANIEL.

Where will you find men worthy enough to present them?

HOLOFERNES.

Joshua, yourself; myself, Alexander; this gallant
gentleman, Judas Maccabaeus; this swain, because of his great
limb or joint, shall pass Pompey the Great; the page,
Hercules.

ARMADO.

Pardon, sir; error: he is not quantity enough for that
Worthy's thumb; he is not so big as the end of his club.

HOLOFERNES.

Shall I have audience? He shall present Hercules in
minority: his enter and exit shall be strangling a snake; and

I

will have an apology for that purpose.

MOTH.

An excellent device! So, if any of the audience hiss, you may
cry 'Well done, Hercules; now thou crushest the snake!' That is
the way to make an offence gracious, though few have the grace to do it.

ARMADO.

For the rest of the Worthies?

HOLOFERNES.

I will play three myself.

MOTH.

Thrice-worthy gentleman!

ARMADO.

Shall I tell you a thing?

HOLOFERNES.

We attend.

ARMADO.

We will have, if this fadge not, an antic. I beseech you, follow.

HOLOFERNES.

Via, goodman Dull! Thou has spoken no word all this while.

DULL.

Nor understood none neither, sir.

HOLOFERNES.

Allons! we will employ thee.

DULL.

I'll make one in a dance, or so, or I will play
On the tabor to the Worthies, and let them dance the hay.

HOLOFERNES.

Most dull, honest Dull! To our sport, away.

Exeunt

SCENE II. The park

Enter the PRINCESS, MARIA, KATHARINE, and ROSALINE

PRINCESS OF FRANCE. Sweet hearts, we shall be rich ere we depart,
If fairings come thus plentifully in.

A lady wall'd about with diamonds!
Look you what I have from the loving King.

ROSALINE.

Madam, came nothing else along with that?

PRINCESS OF FRANCE.
Nothing but this! Yes, as much love in rhyme
As would be cramm'd up in a sheet of paper
Writ o' both sides the leaf, margent and all,
That he was fain to seal on Cupid's name.

ROSALINE.

That was the way to make his godhead wax;

For he hath been five thousand year a boy.

KATHARINE.

Ay, and a shrewd unhappy gallows too.

ROSALINE.

You'll ne'er be friends with him: 'a kill'd your sister.

KATHARINE.

He made her melancholy, sad, and heavy;

And so she died. Had she been light, like you,

Of such a merry, nimble, stirring spirit,

She might 'a been a grandam ere she died.

And so may you; for a light heart lives long.

ROSALINE.

What's your dark meaning, mouse, of this light word?

KATHARINE.

A light condition in a beauty dark.

ROSALINE.

We need more light to find your meaning out.

KATHARINE.

You'll mar the light by taking it in snuff;
Therefore I'll darkly end the argument.

ROSALINE.

Look what you do, you do it still i' th' dark.

KATHARINE.

So do not you; for you are a light wench.

ROSALINE.

Indeed, I weigh not you; and therefore light.

KATHARINE.

You weigh me not? O, that's you care not for me.

ROSALINE.

Great reason; for 'past cure is still past care.'

PRINCESS OF FRANCE.

Well bandied both; a set of wit well play'd.

But, Rosaline, you have a favour too?

Who sent it? and what is it?

ROSALINE.

I would you knew.

An if my face were but as fair as yours,

My favour were as great: be witness this.

Nay, I have verses too, I thank Berowne;

The numbers true, and, were the numb'ring too,

I were the fairest goddess on the ground.

I am compar'd to twenty thousand fairs.

O, he hath drawn my picture in his letter!

PRINCESS OF FRANCE.

Anything like?

ROSALINE.

Much in the letters; nothing in the praise.

PRINCESS OF FRANCE.

Beauteous as ink-a good conclusion.

KATHARINE.

Fair as a text B in a copy-book.

ROSALINE.

Ware pencils, ho! Let me not die your debtor,

My red dominical, my golden letter:

O that your face were not so full of O's!

KATHARINE.

A pox of that jest! and I beshrew all shrows!

PRINCESS OF FRANCE.

But, Katharine, what was sent to you from fair Dumain?

KATHARINE.

Madam, this glove.

PRINCESS OF FRANCE.

Did he not send you twain?

KATHARINE.

Yes, madam; and, moreover,

Some thousand verses of a faithful lover;

A huge translation of hypocrisy,

Vilely compil'd, profound simplicity.

MARIA.

This, and these pearl, to me sent Longaville;

The letter is too long by half a mile.

PRINCESS OF FRANCE.

I think no less. Dost thou not wish in heart

The chain were longer and the letter short?

MARIA.

Ay, or I would these hands might never part.

PRINCESS OF FRANCE.

We are wise girls to mock our lovers so.

ROSALINE.

They are worse fools to purchase mocking so.

That same Berowne I'll torture ere I go.

O that I knew he were but in by th' week!

How I would make him fawn, and beg, and seek,

And wait the season, and observe the times,

And spend his prodigal wits in bootless rhymes,

And shape his service wholly to my hests,

And make him proud to make me proud that jests!

So pertaunt-like would I o'ersway his state

That he should be my fool, and I his fate.

PRINCESS OF FRANCE.

None are so surely caught, when they are catch'd,

As wit turn'd fool; folly, in wisdom hatch'd,

Hath wisdom's warrant and the help of school,

And wit's own grace to grace a learned fool.

ROSALINE.

The blood of youth burns not with such excess

As gravity's revolt to wantonness.

MARIA.

Folly in fools bears not so strong a note

As fool'ry in the wise when wit doth dote,

Since all the power thereof it doth apply

To prove, by wit, worth in simplicity.

Enter BOYET

PRINCESS OF FRANCE.

Here comes Boyet, and mirth is in his face.

BOYET.

O, I am stabb'd with laughter! Where's her Grace?

PRINCESS OF FRANCE.

Thy news, Boyet?

BOYET.

Prepare, madam, prepare!

Arm, wenches, arm! Encounters mounted are

Against your peace. Love doth approach disguis'd,

Armed in arguments; you'll be surpris'd.
Muster your wits; stand in your own defence;
Or hide your heads like cowards, and fly hence.

PRINCESS OF FRANCE.
Saint Dennis to Saint Cupid! What are they
That charge their breath against us? Say, scout, say.

BOYET.
Under the cool shade of a sycamore
I thought to close mine eyes some half an hour;
When, lo, to interrupt my purpos'd rest,
Toward that shade I might behold addrest
The King and his companions; warily
I stole into a neighbour thicket by,
And overheard what you shall overhear-
That, by and by, disguis'd they will be here.
Their herald is a pretty knavish page,
That well by heart hath conn'd his embassage.

Action and accent did they teach him there:

'Thus must thou speak' and 'thus thy body bear,'
And ever and anon they made a doubt
Presence majestical would put him out;
'For' quoth the King 'an angel shalt thou see;
Yet fear not thou, but speak audaciously.'
The boy replied 'An angel is not evil;
I should have fear'd her had she been a devil.'
With that all laugh'd, and clapp'd him on the shoulder,
Making the bold wag by their praises bolder.
One rubb'd his elbow, thus, and fleer'd, and swore
A better speech was never spoke before.
Another with his finger and his thumb
Cried 'Via! we will do't, come what will come.'

The third he caper'd, and cried 'All goes well.'
The fourth turn'd on the toe, and down he fell.
With that they all did tumble on the ground,
With such a zealous laughter, so profound,
That in this spleen ridiculous appears,
To check their folly, passion's solemn tears.

PRINCESS OF FRANCE.

But what, but what, come they to visit us?

BOYET.

They do, they do, and are apparell'd thus,

Like Muscovites or Russians, as I guess.

Their purpose is to parley, court, and dance;

And every one his love-feat will advance

Unto his several mistress; which they'll know

By favours several which they did bestow.

PRINCESS OF FRANCE.

And will they so? The gallants shall be task'd,

For, ladies, we will every one be mask'd;

And not a man of them shall have the grace,

Despite of suit, to see a lady's face.

Hold, Rosaline, this favour thou shalt wear,

And then the King will court thee for his dear;

Hold, take thou this, my sweet, and give me thine,

So shall Berowne take me for Rosaline.

And change you favours too; so shall your loves
Woo contrary, deceiv'd by these removes.

ROSALINE.
Come on, then, wear the favours most in sight.

KATHARINE.

But, in this changing, what is your intent?

PRINCESS OF FRANCE.
The effect of my intent is to cross theirs.
They do it but in mocking merriment,
And mock for mock is only my intent.
Their several counsels they unbosom shall
To loves mistook, and so be mock'd withal
Upon the next occasion that we meet
With visages display'd to talk and greet.

ROSALINE.

But shall we dance, if they desire us to't?

PRINCESS OF FRANCE.

No, to the death, we will not move a foot,

Nor to their penn'd speech render we no grace;

But while 'tis spoke each turn away her face.

BOYET.

Why, that contempt will kill the speaker's heart,

And quite divorce his memory from his part.

PRINCESS OF FRANCE.

Therefore I do it; and I make no doubt

The rest will ne'er come in, if he be out.

There's no such sport as sport by sport o'erthrown,

To make theirs ours, and ours none but our own;

So shall we stay, mocking intended game,

And they well mock'd depart away with shame.

[Trumpet sounds within]

BOYET.

The trumpet sounds; be mask'd; the maskers come.

[The LADIES mask]

Enter BLACKAMOORS music, MOTH as Prologue, the

KING and his LORDS as maskers, in the guise of Russians

MOTH.

All hail, the richest heauties on the earth!

BOYET.

Beauties no richer than rich taffeta.

MOTH.

A holy parcel of the fairest dames

[The LADIES turn their backs to him]

That ever turn'd their-backs- to mortal views!

BEROWNE.

Their eyes, villain, their eyes.

MOTH.

That ever turn'd their eyes to mortal views!

Out-

BOYET.

True; out indeed.

MOTH.

Out of your favours, heavenly spirits, vouchsafe

Not to behold-

BEROWNE.

Once to behold, rogue.

MOTH.

Once to behold with your sun-beamed eyes-with your sun-beamed eyes-

BOYET.

They will not answer to that epithet;

You were best call it 'daughter-beamed eyes.'

MOTH.

They do not mark me, and that brings me out.

BEROWNE.

Is this your perfectness? Be gone, you rogue.

Exit MOTH

ROSALINE.

What would these strangers? Know their minds, Boyet.

If they do speak our language, 'tis our will

That some plain man recount their purposes.

Know what they would.

BOYET.

What would you with the Princess?

BEROWNE.

Nothing but peace and gentle visitation.

ROSALINE.

What would they, say they?

BOYET.

Nothing but peace and gentle visitation.

ROSALINE.

Why, that they have; and bid them so be gone.

BOYET.

She says you have it, and you may be gone.

KING.

Say to her we have measur'd many miles
To tread a measure with her on this grass.

BOYET.

They say that they have measur'd many a mile
To tread a measure with you on this grass.

ROSALINE.

It is not so. Ask them how many inches
Is in one mile? If they have measured many,
The measure, then, of one is eas'ly told.

BOYET.

If to come hither you have measur'd miles,
And many miles, the Princess bids you tell
How many inches doth fill up one mile.

BEROWNE.

Tell her we measure them by weary steps.

BOYET.

She hears herself.

ROSALINE.
How many weary steps
Of many weary miles you have o'ergone
Are numb'red in the travel of one mile?

BEROWNE.
We number nothing that we spend for you;
Our duty is so rich, so infinite,
That we may do it still without accompt.
Vouchsafe to show the sunshine of your face,
That we, like savages, may worship it.

ROSALINE.
My face is but a moon, and clouded too.

KING.

Blessed are clouds, to do as such clouds do.

Vouchsafe, bright moon, and these thy stars, to shine,

Those clouds removed, upon our watery eyne.

ROSALINE.

O vain petitioner! beg a greater matter;

Thou now requests but moonshine in the water.

KING.

Then in our measure do but vouchsafe one change.

Thou bid'st me beg; this begging is not strange.

ROSALINE.

Play, music, then. Nay, you must do it soon.

Not yet? No dance! Thus change I like the moon.

KING.

Will you not dance? How come you thus estranged?

ROSALINE.

You took the moon at full; but now she's changed.

KING.

Yet still she is the Moon, and I the Man.

The music plays; vouchsafe some motion to it.

ROSALINE.

Our ears vouchsafe it.

KING.

But your legs should do it.

ROSALINE.

Since you are strangers, and come here by chance,

We'll not be nice; take hands. We will not dance.

KING.

Why take we hands then?

ROSALINE.

Only to part friends.

Curtsy, sweet hearts; and so the measure ends.

KING.

More measure of this measure; be not nice.

ROSALINE.

We can afford no more at such a price.

KING.

Price you yourselves. What buys your company?

ROSALINE.

Your absence only.

KING.

That can never be.

ROSALINE.

Then cannot we be bought; and so adieu-

Twice to your visor and half once to you.

KING.

If you deny to dance, let's hold more chat.

ROSALINE.

In private then.

KING.

I am best pleas'd with that. *[They converse apart]*

BEROWNE.

White-handed mistress, one sweet word with thee.

PRINCESS OF FRANCE.

Honey, and milk, and sugar; there is three.

BEROWNE.

Nay, then, two treys, an if you grow so nice,

Metheglin, wort, and malmsey; well run dice!

There's half a dozen sweets.

PRINCESS OF FRANCE.

Seventh sweet, adieu!

Since you can cog, I'll play no more with you.

BEROWNE.

One word in secret.

PRINCESS OF FRANCE.

Let it not be sweet.

BEROWNE.

Thou grievest my gall.

PRINCESS OF FRANCE.

Gall! bitter.

BEROWNE.

Therefore meet. *[They converse apart]*

DUMAIN.

Will you vouchsafe with me to change a word?

MARIA.

Name it.

DUMAIN.

Fair lady-

MARIA.

Say you so? Fair lord-

Take that for your fair lady.

DUMAIN.

Please it you,

As much in private, and I'll bid adieu.

[They converse apart]

KATHARINE.

What, was your vizard made without a tongue?

LONGAVILLE.

I know the reason, lady, why you ask.

KATHARINE.

O for your reason! Quickly, sir; I long.

LONGAVILLE.

You have a double tongue within your mask,
And would afford my speechless vizard half.

KATHARINE.

'Veal' quoth the Dutchman. Is not 'veal' a calf?

LONGAVILLE.

A calf, fair lady!

KATHARINE.

No, a fair lord calf.

LONGAVILLE.

Let's part the word.

KATHARINE.

No, I'll not be your half.

Take all and wean it; it may prove an ox.

LONGAVILLE.

Look how you butt yourself in these sharp mocks!

Will you give horns, chaste lady? Do not so.

KATHARINE.

Then die a calf, before your horns do grow.

LONGAVILLE.

One word in private with you ere I die.

KATHARINE.

Bleat softly, then; the butcher hears you cry.

[They converse apart]

BOYET.

The tongues of mocking wenches are as keen

As is the razor's edge invisible,

Cutting a smaller hair than may be seen,

Above the sense of sense; so sensible

Seemeth their conference; their conceits have wings,

Fleeter than arrows, bullets, wind, thought, swifter things.

ROSALINE.

Not one word more, my maids; break off, break off.

BEROWNE.

By heaven, all dry-beaten with pure scoff!

KING.

Farewell, mad wenches; you have simple wits.

Exeunt KING, LORDS, and BLACKAMOORS

PRINCESS OF FRANCE.

Twenty adieus, my frozen Muscovits.

Are these the breed of wits so wondered at?

BOYET.

Tapers they are, with your sweet breaths puff'd out.

ROSALINE.

Well-liking wits they have; gross, gross; fat, fat.

PRINCESS OF FRANCE.

O poverty in wit, kingly-poor flout!

Will they not, think you, hang themselves to-night?

Or ever but in vizards show their faces?

This pert Berowne was out of count'nance quite.

ROSALINE.

They were all in lamentable cases!

The King was weeping-ripe for a good word.

PRINCESS OF FRANCE.

Berowne did swear himself out of all suit.

MARIA.

Dumain was at my service, and his sword.

'No point' quoth I; my servant straight was mute.

KATHARINE.

Lord Longaville said I came o'er his heart;

And trow you what he call'd me?

PRINCESS OF FRANCE.

Qualm, perhaps.

KATHARINE.

Yes, in good faith.

PRINCESS OF FRANCE.

Go, sickness as thou art!

ROSALINE.

Well, better wits have worn plain statute-caps.
But will you hear? The King is my love sworn.

PRINCESS OF FRANCE.

And quick Berowne hath plighted faith to me.

KATHARINE.
And Longaville was for my service born.

MARIA.

Dumain is mine, as sure as bark on tree.

BOYET.
Madam, and pretty mistresses, give ear:
Immediately they will again be here
In their own shapes; for it can never be
They will digest this harsh indignity.

PRINCESS OF FRANCE.

Will they return?

BOYET.

They will, they will, God knows,

And leap for joy, though they are lame with blows;

Therefore, change favours; and, when they repair,

Blow like sweet roses in this summer air.

PRINCESS OF FRANCE.

How blow? how blow? Speak to be understood.

BOYET.

Fair ladies mask'd are roses in their bud:

Dismask'd, their damask sweet commixture shown,

Are angels vailing clouds, or roses blown.

PRINCESS OF FRANCE.

Avaunt, perplexity! What shall we do

If they return in their own shapes to woo?

ROSALINE.

Good madam, if by me you'll be advis'd,

Let's mock them still, as well known as disguis'd.

Let us complain to them what fools were here,

Disguis'd like Muscovites, in shapeless gear;

And wonder what they were, and to what end

Their shallow shows and prologue vilely penn'd,

And their rough carriage so ridiculous,

Should be presented at our tent to us.

BOYET.

Ladies, withdraw; the gallants are at hand.

PRINCESS OF FRANCE.

Whip to our tents, as roes run o'er land.

Exeunt PRINCESS, ROSALINE, KATHARINE, and MARIA

Re-enter the KING, BEROWNE, LONGAVILLE, and DUMAIN,

in their proper habits

KING.

Fair sir, God save you! Where's the Princess?

BOYET.

Gone to her tent. Please it your Majesty

Command me any service to her thither?

KING.

That she vouchsafe me audience for one word.

BOYET.

I will; and so will she, I know, my lord. *Exit*

BEROWNE. This fellow pecks up wit as pigeons pease,

And utters it again when God doth please.

He is wit's pedlar, and retails his wares

At wakes, and wassails, meetings, markets, fairs;

And we that sell by gross, the Lord doth know,

Have not the grace to grace it with such show.

This gallant pins the wenches on his sleeve;

Had he been Adam, he had tempted Eve.

'A can carve too, and lisp; why this is he

That kiss'd his hand away in courtesy;

This is the ape of form, Monsieur the Nice,

That, when he plays at tables, chides the dice

In honourable terms; nay, he can sing

A mean most meanly; and in ushering,

Mend him who can. The ladies call him sweet;

The stairs, as he treads on them, kiss his feet.

This is the flow'r that smiles on every one,

To show his teeth as white as whales-bone;

And consciences that will not die in debt

Pay him the due of 'honey-tongued Boyet.'

KING.

A blister on his sweet tongue, with my heart,

That put Armado's page out of his part!

Re-enter the PRINCESS, ushered by BOYET; ROSALINE,

MARIA, and KATHARINE

BEROWNE.

See where it comes! Behaviour, what wert thou

Till this man show'd thee? And what art thou now?

KING.

All hail, sweet madam, and fair time of day!

PRINCESS OF FRANCE.

'Fair' in 'all hail' is foul, as I conceive.

KING.

Construe my speeches better, if you may.

PRINCESS OF FRANCE.

Then wish me better; I will give you leave.

KING.

We came to visit you, and purpose now
To lead you to our court; vouchsafe it then.

PRINCESS OF FRANCE.

This field shall hold me, and so hold your vow:

Nor God, nor I, delights in perjur'd men.

KING.
Rebuke me not for that which you provoke.

The virtue of your eye must break my oath.

PRINCESS OF FRANCE.
You nickname virtue: vice you should have spoke;
For virtue's office never breaks men's troth.
Now by my maiden honour, yet as pure
As the unsullied lily, I protest,
A world of torments though I should endure,
I would not yield to be your house's guest;
So much I hate a breaking cause to be
Of heavenly oaths, vowed with integrity.

KING.
O, you have liv'd in desolation here,

Unseen, unvisited, much to our shame.

PRINCESS OF FRANCE.
Not so, my lord; it is not so, I swear;
We have had pastimes here, and pleasant game;
A mess of Russians left us but of late.

KING.

How, madam! Russians!

PRINCESS OF FRANCE.
Ay, in truth, my lord;
Trim gallants, full of courtship and of state.

ROSALINE.
Madam, speak true. It is not so, my lord.
My lady, to the manner of the days,
In courtesy gives undeserving praise.
We four indeed confronted were with four
In Russian habit; here they stayed an hour

And talk'd apace; and in that hour, my lord,
They did not bless us with one happy word.
I dare not call them fools; but this I think,
When they are thirsty, fools would fain have drink.

BEROWNE.

This jest is dry to me. Fair gentle sweet,
Your wit makes wise things foolish; when we greet,
With eyes best seeing, heaven's fiery eye,
By light we lose light; your capacity
Is of that nature that to your huge store
Wise things seem foolish and rich things but poor.

ROSALINE.

This proves you wise and rich, for in my eye-

BEROWNE.

I am a fool, and full of poverty.

ROSALINE.

But that you take what doth to you belong, It were a fault to snatch words from my tongue.

BEROWNE.

O, I am yours, and all that I possess.

ROSALINE.

All the fool mine?

BEROWNE.

I cannot give you less.

ROSALINE.

Which of the vizards was it that you wore?

BEROWNE.

Where? when? what vizard? Why demand you this?

ROSALINE.

There, then, that vizard; that superfluous case
That hid the worse and show'd the better face.

KING.
We were descried; they'll mock us now downright.

DUMAIN.

Let us confess, and turn it to a jest.

PRINCESS OF FRANCE.
Amaz'd, my lord? Why looks your Highness sad?

ROSALINE.

Help, hold his brows! he'll swoon! Why look you pale?
Sea-sick, I think, coming from Muscovy.

BEROWNE.

Thus pour the stars down plagues for perjury.

Can any face of brass hold longer out?

Here stand I, lady-dart thy skill at me,

Bruise me with scorn, confound me with a flout,

Thrust thy sharp wit quite through my ignorance,

Cut me to pieces with thy keen conceit;

And I will wish thee never more to dance,

Nor never more in Russian habit wait.

O, never will I trust to speeches penn'd,

Nor to the motion of a school-boy's tongue,

Nor never come in vizard to my friend,

Nor woo in rhyme, like a blind harper's song.

Taffeta phrases, silken terms precise,

Three-pil'd hyperboles, spruce affectation,

Figures pedantical-these summer-flies

Have blown me full of maggot ostentation.

I do forswear them; and I here protest,

By this white glove-how white the hand, God knows!-

Henceforth my wooing mind shall be express'd

In russet yeas, and honest kersey noes.

And, to begin, wench-so God help me, law!-

My love to thee is sound, sans crack or flaw.

ROSALINE.

Sans 'sans,' I pray you.

BEROWNE.

Yet I have a trick
Of the old rage; bear with me, I am sick;
I'll leave it by degrees. Soft, let us see-
Write 'Lord have mercy on us' on those three;
They are infected; in their hearts it lies;
They have the plague, and caught it of your eyes.
These lords are visited; you are not free,
For the Lord's tokens on you do I see.

PRINCESS OF FRANCE.

No, they are free that gave these tokens to us.

BEROWNE.

Our states are forfeit; seek not to undo us.

ROSALINE.

It is not so; for how can this be true,

That you stand forfeit, being those that sue?

BEROWNE.

Peace; for I will not have to do with you.

ROSALINE.

Nor shall not, if I do as I intend.

BEROWNE.

Speak for yourselves; my wit is at an end.

KING.

Teach us, sweet madam, for our rude transgression

Some fair excuse.

PRINCESS OF FRANCE.

The fairest is confession.

Were not you here but even now, disguis'd?

KING.

Madam, I was.

PRINCESS OF FRANCE.

And were you well advis'd?

KING.

I was, fair madam.

PRINCESS OF FRANCE.

When you then were here,

What did you whisper in your lady's ear?

KING.

That more than all the world I did respect her.

PRINCESS OF FRANCE.

When she shall challenge this, you will reject her.

KING.

Upon mine honour, no.

PRINCESS OF FRANCE.

Peace, peace, forbear;
Your oath once broke, you force not to forswear.

KING.

Despise me when I break this oath of mine.

PRINCESS OF FRANCE.

I will; and therefore keep it. Rosaline,
What did the Russian whisper in your ear?

ROSALINE.

Madam, he swore that he did hold me dear

As precious eyesight, and did value me

Above this world; adding thereto, moreover,

That he would wed me, or else die my lover.

PRINCESS OF FRANCE.

God give thee joy of him! The noble lord

Most honourably doth uphold his word.

KING.

What mean you, madam? By my life, my troth,

I never swore this lady such an oath.

ROSALINE.

By heaven, you did; and, to confirm it plain,

You gave me this; but take it, sir, again.

KING.

My faith and this the Princess I did give;

I knew her by this jewel on her sleeve.

PRINCESS OF FRANCE.

Pardon me, sir, this jewel did she wear;
And Lord Berowne, I thank him, is my dear.
What, will you have me, or your pearl again?

BEROWNE.
Neither of either; I remit both twain.
I see the trick on't: here was a consent,
Knowing aforehand of our merriment,
To dash it like a Christmas comedy.
Some carry-tale, some please-man, some slight zany,
Some mumble-news, some trencher-knight, some Dick,
That smiles his cheek in years and knows the trick
To make my lady laugh when she's dispos'd,
Told our intents before; which once disclos'd,
The ladies did change favours; and then we,
Following the signs, woo'd but the sign of she.
Now, to our perjury to add more terror,
We are again forsworn in will and error.
Much upon this it is; *[To BOYET]* and might not you
Forestall our sport, to make us thus untrue?
Do not you know my lady's foot by th' squier,

And laugh upon the apple of her eye?
And stand between her back, sir, and the fire,
Holding a trencher, jesting merrily?
You put our page out. Go, you are allow'd;
Die when you will, a smock shall be your shroud.
You leer upon me, do you? There's an eye
Wounds like a leaden sword.

BOYET.

Full merrily
Hath this brave manage, this career, been run.

BEROWNE.

Lo, he is tilting straight! Peace; I have done.

Enter COSTARD

Welcome, pure wit! Thou part'st a fair fray.

COSTARD.

O Lord, sir, they would know

Whether the three Worthies shall come in or no?

BEROWNE.

What, are there but three?

COSTARD.

No, sir; but it is vara fine,

For every one pursents three.

BEROWNE.

And three times thrice is nine.

COSTARD.

Not so, sir; under correction, sir,

I hope it is not so.

You cannot beg us, sir, I can assure you, sir; we know what we know;

I hope, sir, three times thrice, sir-

BEROWNE.

Is not nine.

COSTARD.

Under correction, sir, we know whereuntil it doth amount.

BEROWNE.
By Jove, I always took three threes for nine.

COSTARD.
O Lord, sir, it were pity you should get your living by
reck'ning, sir.

BEROWNE.

How much is it?

COSTARD.
O Lord, sir, the parties themselves, the actors, sir, will
show whereuntil it doth amount. For mine own part, I am, as they
say, but to parfect one man in one poor man, Pompion the Great, sir.

BEROWNE.

Art thou one of the Worthies?

COSTARD.

It pleased them to think me worthy of Pompey the
Great;
for mine own part, I know not the degree of the Worthy; but I
am to stand for him.

BEROWNE.

Go, bid them prepare.

COSTARD.

We will turn it finely off, sir; we will take some care.

Exit COSTARD

KING.

Berowne, they will shame us; let them not approach.

BEROWNE.

We are shame-proof, my lord, and 'tis some policy

To have one show worse than the King's and his company.

KING.

I say they shall not come.

PRINCESS OF FRANCE.

Nay, my good lord, let me o'errule you now.

That sport best pleases that doth least know how;

Where zeal strives to content, and the contents

Dies in the zeal of that which it presents.

Their form confounded makes most form in mirth,

When great things labouring perish in their birth.

BEROWNE.

A right description of our sport, my lord.

Enter ARMADO

ARMADO.

Anointed, I implore so much expense of thy royal sweet

breath as will utter a brace of words.

[Converses apart with the KING, and delivers a paper]

PRINCESS OF FRANCE.

Doth this man serve God?

BEROWNE.

Why ask you?

PRINCESS OF FRANCE.

'A speaks not like a man of God his making.

ARMADO.

That is all one, my fair, sweet, honey monarch; for, I

protest, the schoolmaster is exceeding fantastical; too too vain, too too vain; but we will put it, as they say, to fortuna de la guerra. I wish you the peace of mind, most royal couplement!

Exit ARMADO

KING.

Here is like to be a good presence of Worthies. He presents Hector of Troy; the swain, Pompey the Great; the parish curate, Alexander; Arinado's page, Hercules; the pedant, Judas Maccabaeus.

And if these four Worthies in their first show thrive,

These four will change habits and present the other five.

BEROWNE.

There is five in the first show.

KING.

You are deceived, 'tis not so.

BEROWNE.

The pedant, the braggart, the hedge-priest, the fool, and the boy:

Abate throw at novum, and the whole world again

Cannot pick out five such, take each one in his vein.

KING.

The ship is under sail, and here she comes amain.

Enter COSTARD, armed for POMPEY

COSTARD.

I Pompey am-

BEROWNE.

You lie, you are not he.

COSTARD.

I Pompey am-

BOYET.

With libbard's head on knee.

BEROWNE.

Well said, old mocker; I must needs be friends with thee.

COSTARD.

I Pompey am, Pompey surnam'd the Big-

DUMAIN.

The Great.

COSTARD.

It is Great, sir.

Pompey surnam'd the Great,

That oft in field, with targe and shield, did make my foe to sweat;

And travelling along this coast, I here am come by chance,

And lay my arms before the legs of this sweet lass of France.

If your ladyship would say 'Thanks, Pompey,' I had done.

PRINCESS OF FRANCE.

Great thanks, great Pompey.

COSTARD.

'Tis not so much worth; but I hope I was perfect.
I made a little fault in Great.

BEROWNE.

My hat to a halfpenny, Pompey proves the best Worthy.

Enter SIR NATHANIEL, for ALEXANDER

NATHANIEL.
When in the world I liv'd, I was the world's commander;
By east, west, north, and south, I spread my conquering might.
My scutcheon plain declares that I am Alisander-

BOYET.

Your nose says, no, you are not; for it stands to right.

BEROWNE.

Your nose smells 'no' in this, most tender-smelling knight.

PRINCESS OF FRANCE.

The conqueror is dismay'd. Proceed, good Alexander.

NATHANIEL.

When in the world I liv'd, I was the world's
commander-

BOYET.

Most true, 'tis right, you were so, Alisander.

BEROWNE.

Pompey the Great!

COSTARD.

Your servant, and Costard.

BEROWNE.

Take away the conqueror, take away Alisander.

COSTARD.
[To Sir Nathaniel] O, Sir, you have overthrown Alisander
the conqueror! You will be scrap'd out of the painted cloth for
this. Your lion, that holds his poleaxe sitting on a
close-stool,
will be given to Ajax. He will be the ninth Worthy. A conqueror
and afeard to speak! Run away for shame, Alisander.

[Sir Nathaniel retires] There, an't shall please you, a foolish
mild man; an honest man, look you, and soon dash'd. He is a
marvellous good neighbour, faith, and a very good bowler; but for
Alisander-alas! you see how 'tis-a little o'erparted. But there
are Worthies a-coming will speak their mind in some other sort.

PRINCESS OF FRANCE.
Stand aside, good Pompey.

Enter HOLOFERNES, for JUDAS; and MOTH, for HERCULES

HOLOFERNES.

Great Hercules is presented by this imp,

Whose club kill'd Cerberus, that three-headed canus;

And when be was a babe, a child, a shrimp,

Thus did he strangle serpents in his manus.

Quoniam he seemeth in minority,

Ergo I come with this apology.

Keep some state in thy exit, and vanish. *[MOTH retires]*

Judas I am-

DUMAIN.

A Judas!

HOLOFERNES.

Not Iscariot, sir.

Judas I am, ycliped Maccabaeus.

DUMAIN.

Judas Maccabaeus clipt is plain Judas.

BEROWNE.

A kissing traitor. How art thou prov'd Judas?

HOLOFERNES.

Judas I am-

DUMAIN.

The more shame for you, Judas!

HOLOFERNES.

What mean you, sir?

BOYET.

To make Judas hang himself.

HOLOFERNES.

Begin, sir; you are my elder.

BEROWNE.

Well followed: Judas was hanged on an elder.

HOLOFERNES.

I will not be put out of countenance.

BEROWNE.

Because thou hast no face.

HOLOFERNES.

What is this?

BOYET.

A cittern-head.

DUMAIN.

The head of a bodkin.

BEROWNE.

A death's face in a ring.

LONGAVILLE.

The face of an old Roman coin, scarce seen.

BOYET.

The pommel of Caesar's falchion.

DUMAIN.

The carv'd-bone face on a flask.

BEROWNE.

Saint George's half-cheek in a brooch.

DUMAIN.

Ay, and in a brooch of lead.

BEROWNE.

Ay, and worn in the cap of a tooth-drawer. And now,
forward; for we have put thee in countenance.

HOLOFERNES.

You have put me out of countenance.

BEROWNE.

False: we have given thee faces.

HOLOFERNES.

But you have outfac'd them all.

BEROWNE.

An thou wert a lion we would do so.

BOYET.

Therefore, as he is an ass, let him go.

And so adieu, sweet Jude! Nay, why dost thou stay?

DUMAIN.

For the latter end of his name.

BEROWNE.

For the ass to the Jude; give it him-Jud-as, away.

HOLOFERNES.

This is not generous, not gentle, not humble.

BOYET.

A light for Monsieur Judas! It grows dark, he may stumble.

[HOLOFERNES retires]

PRINCESS OF FRANCE.

Alas, poor Maccabaeus, how hath he been baited!

Enter ARMADO, for HECTOR

BEROWNE.

Hide thy head, Achilles; here comes Hector in arms.

DUMAIN.

Though my mocks come home by me, I will now be merry.

KING.

Hector was but a Troyan in respect of this.

BOYET.

But is this Hector?

DUMAIN.

I think Hector was not so clean-timber'd.

LONGAVILLE.

His leg is too big for Hector's.

DUMAIN.

More calf, certain.

BOYET.

No; he is best indued in the small.

BEROWNE.

This cannot be Hector.

DUMAIN.

He's a god or a painter, for he makes faces.

ARMADO.

The armipotent Mars, of lances the almighty,

Gave Hector a gift-

DUMAIN.

A gilt nutmeg.

BEROWNE.

A lemon.

LONGAVILLE.

Stuck with cloves.

DUMAIN.

No, cloven.

ARMADO.

Peace!

The armipotent Mars, of lances the almighty,

Gave Hector a gift, the heir of Ilion;

A man so breathed that certain he would fight ye, From morn till night out of his pavilion.

I am that flower-

DUMAIN.

That mint.

LONGAVILLE.

That columbine.

ARMADO.

Sweet Lord Longaville, rein thy tongue.

LONGAVILLE.

I must rather give it the rein, for it runs against Hector.

DUMAIN.

Ay, and Hector's a greyhound.

ARMADO.

The sweet war-man is dead and rotten; sweet chucks, beat

not the bones of the buried; when he breathed, he was a man.

But

I will forward with my device. *[To the PRINCESS]* Sweet royalty,

bestow on me the sense of hearing.

[BEROWNE steps forth, and speaks to COSTARD]

PRINCESS OF FRANCE.

Speak, brave Hector; we are much delighted.

ARMADO.

I do adore thy sweet Grace's slipper.

BOYET.

[Aside to DUMAIN] Loves her by the foot.

DUMAIN.

[Aside to BOYET] He may not by the yard.

ARMADO.

This Hector far surmounted Hannibal-

COSTARD.

The party is gone, fellow Hector, she is gone; she is two

months on her way.

ARMADO.

What meanest thou?

COSTARD.

Faith, unless you play the honest Troyan, the poor wench

is cast away. She's quick; the child brags in her belly already;

'tis yours.

ARMADO.

Dost thou infamonize me among potentates? Thou shalt die.

COSTARD.

Then shall Hector be whipt for Jaquenetta that is quick by

him, and hang'd for Pompey that is dead by him.

DUMAIN.

Most rare Pompey!

BOYET.

Renowned Pompey!

BEROWNE.

Greater than Great! Great, great, great Pompey! Pompey the Huge!

DUMAIN.

Hector trembles.

BEROWNE.

Pompey is moved. More Ates, more Ates! Stir them on!

stir them on!

DUMAIN.

Hector will challenge him.

BEROWNE.

Ay, if 'a have no more man's blood in his belly than will sup a flea.

ARMADO.

By the North Pole, I do challenge thee.

COSTARD.

I will not fight with a pole, like a Northern man;

I'll

slash; I'll do it by the sword. I bepray you, let me borrow my arms again.

DUMAIN.

Room for the incensed Worthies!

COSTARD.

I'll do it in my shirt.

DUMAIN.

Most resolute Pompey!

MOTH.

Master, let me take you a buttonhole lower. Do you not see

Pompey is uncasing for the combat? What mean you? You will lose your reputation.

ARMADO.

Gentlemen and soldiers, pardon me; I will not combat in my shirt.

DUMAIN.

You may not deny it: Pompey hath made the challenge.

ARMADO.

Sweet bloods, I both may and will.

BEROWNE.

What reason have you for 't?

ARMADO.

The naked truth of it is: I have no shirt; I go woolward for penance.

BOYET.

True, and it was enjoined him in Rome for want of linen;
since when, I'll be sworn, he wore none but a dishclout of
Jaquenetta's, and that 'a wears next his heart for a favour.

Enter as messenger, MONSIEUR MARCADE

MARCADE.

God save you, madam!

PRINCESS OF FRANCE.

Welcome, Marcade;
But that thou interruptest our merriment.

MARCADE.

I am sorry, madam; for the news I bring

Is heavy in my tongue. The King your father-

PRINCESS OF FRANCE.

Dead, for my life!

MARCADE.

Even so; my tale is told.

BEROWNE.

Worthies away; the scene begins to cloud.

ARMADO.

For mine own part, I breathe free breath. I have seen the

day of wrong through the little hole of discretion, and I will

right myself like a soldier. *Exeunt* WORTHIES

KING.

How fares your Majesty?

PRINCESS OF FRANCE.

Boyet, prepare; I will away to-night.

KING.

Madam, not so; I do beseech you stay.

PRINCESS OF FRANCE.

Prepare, I say. I thank you, gracious lords,
For all your fair endeavours, and entreat,
Out of a new-sad soul, that you vouchsafe
In your rich wisdom to excuse or hide
The liberal opposition of our spirits,
If over-boldly we have borne ourselves
In the converse of breath-your gentleness
Was guilty of it. Farewell, worthy lord.
A heavy heart bears not a nimble tongue.
Excuse me so, coming too short of thanks
For my great suit so easily obtain'd.

KING.

The extreme parts of time extremely forms

All causes to the purpose of his speed;

And often at his very loose decides

That which long process could not arbitrate.

And though the mourning brow of progeny

Forbid the smiling courtesy of love

The holy suit which fain it would convince,

Yet, since love's argument was first on foot,

Let not the cloud of sorrow justle it

From what it purpos'd; since to wail friends lost

Is not by much so wholesome-profitable

As to rejoice at friends but newly found.

PRINCESS OF FRANCE.

I understand you not; my griefs are double.

BEROWNE.

Honest plain words best pierce the ear of grief;

And by these badges understand the King.

For your fair sakes have we neglected time,

Play'd foul play with our oaths; your beauty, ladies,

Hath much deformed us, fashioning our humours

Even to the opposed end of our intents;

And what in us hath seem'd ridiculous,

As love is full of unbefitting strains,

All wanton as a child, skipping and vain;

Form'd by the eye and therefore, like the eye,

Full of strange shapes, of habits, and of forms,

Varying in subjects as the eye doth roll

To every varied object in his glance;

Which parti-coated presence of loose love

Put on by us, if in your heavenly eyes

Have misbecom'd our oaths and gravities,

Those heavenly eyes that look into these faults

Suggested us to make. Therefore, ladies,

Our love being yours, the error that love makes

Is likewise yours. We to ourselves prove false,

By being once false for ever to be true

To those that make us both-fair ladies, you;

And even that falsehood, in itself a sin,

Thus purifies itself and turns to grace.

PRINCESS OF FRANCE.

We have receiv'd your letters, full of love;

Your favours, the ambassadors of love;

And, in our maiden council, rated them

At courtship, pleasant jest, and courtesy,

As bombast and as lining to the time;

But more devout than this in our respects

Have we not been; and therefore met your loves

In their own fashion, like a merriment.

DUMAIN.

Our letters, madam, show'd much more than jest.

LONGAVILLE.

So did our looks.

ROSALINE.

We did not quote them so.

KING.

Now, at the latest minute of the hour,

Grant us your loves.

PRINCESS OF FRANCE.

A time, methinks, too short

To make a world-without-end bargain in.

No, no, my lord, your Grace is perjur'd much,

Full of dear guiltiness; and therefore this,

If for my love, as there is no such cause,

You will do aught-this shall you do for me:

Your oath I will not trust; but go with speed

To some forlorn and naked hermitage,

Remote from all the pleasures of the world;

There stay until the twelve celestial signs

Have brought about the annual reckoning.

If this austere insociable life

Change not your offer made in heat of blood,

If frosts and fasts, hard lodging and thin weeds, Nip not the gaudy blossoms of your love,

But that it bear this trial, and last love,

Then, at the expiration of the year,

Come, challenge me, challenge me by these deserts;

And, by this virgin palm now kissing thine,

I will be thine; and, till that instant, shut

My woeful self up in a mournful house,

Raining the tears of lamentation

For the remembrance of my father's death.

If this thou do deny, let our hands part,

Neither intitled in the other's heart.

KING.

If this, or more than this, I would deny,

To flatter up these powers of mine with rest,

The sudden hand of death close up mine eye!

Hence hermit then, my heart is in thy breast.

BEROWNE.

And what to me, my love? and what to me?

ROSALINE.

You must he purged too, your sins are rack'd;

You are attaint with faults and perjury;

Therefore, if you my favour mean to get,

A twelvemonth shall you spend, and never rest,

But seek the weary beds of people sick.

DUMAIN.

But what to me, my love? but what to me?

A wife?

KATHARINE.

A beard, fair health, and honesty;

With threefold love I wish you all these three.

DUMAIN.

O, shall I say I thank you, gentle wife?

KATHARINE.

No so, my lord; a twelvemonth and a day
I'll mark no words that smooth-fac'd wooers say.
Come when the King doth to my lady come;
Then, if I have much love, I'll give you some.

DUMAIN.

I'll serve thee true and faithfully till then.

KATHARINE.

Yet swear not, lest ye be forsworn again.

LONGAVILLE.

What says Maria?

MARIA.

At the twelvemonth's end
I'll change my black gown for a faithful friend.

LONGAVILLE.

I'll stay with patience; but the time is long.

MARIA.

The liker you; few taller are so young.

BEROWNE.
Studies my lady? Mistress, look on me;
Behold the window of my heart, mine eye,
What humble suit attends thy answer there.

Impose some service on me for thy love.

ROSALINE.
Oft have I heard of you, my Lord Berowne,
Before I saw you; and the world's large tongue
Proclaims you for a man replete with mocks,
Full of comparisons and wounding flouts,
Which you on all estates will execute
That lie within the mercy of your wit.
To weed this wormwood from your fruitful brain,

And therewithal to win me, if you please,

Without the which I am not to be won,

You shall this twelvemonth term from day to day

Visit the speechless sick, and still converse

With groaning wretches; and your task shall be,

With all the fierce endeavour of your wit,

To enforce the pained impotent to smile.

BEROWNE.

To move wild laughter in the throat of death?

It cannot be; it is impossible;

Mirth cannot move a soul in agony.

ROSALINE.

Why, that's the way to choke a gibing spirit,

Whose influence is begot of that loose grace

Which shallow laughing hearers give to fools.

A jest's prosperity lies in the ear

Of him that hears it, never in the tongue

Of him that makes it; then, if sickly ears,

Deaf'd with the clamours of their own dear groans, Will hear your idle scorns, continue then,

And I will have you and that fault withal.

But if they will not, throw away that spirit,

And I shall find you empty of that fault,

Right joyful of your reformation.

BEROWNE.

A twelvemonth? Well, befall what will befall,

I'll jest a twelvemonth in an hospital.

PRINCESS OF FRANCE.

[To the King] Ay, sweet my lord, and so I

take my leave.

KING.

No, madam; we will bring you on your way.

BEROWNE.

Our wooing doth not end like an old play:

Jack hath not Jill. These ladies' courtesy

Might well have made our sport a comedy.

KING.

Come, sir, it wants a twelvemonth an' a day,

And then 'twill end.

BEROWNE.

That's too long for a play.

Re-enter ARMADO

ARMADO.

Sweet Majesty, vouchsafe me-

PRINCESS OF FRANCE.

Was not that not Hector?

DUMAIN.

The worthy knight of Troy.

ARMADO.

I will kiss thy royal finger, and take leave. I am a

votary: I have vow'd to Jaquenetta to hold the plough for her

sweet love three year. But, most esteemed greatness, will you

hear the dialogue that the two learned men have compiled in

praise of the Owl and the Cuckoo? It should have followed in the end of our show.

KING.

Call them forth quickly; we will do so.

ARMADO.

Holla! approach.

[Enter All]

This side is Hiems, Winter; this Ver, the Spring-the one

maintained by the Owl, th' other by the Cuckoo. Ver, begin.

SPRING

When daisies pied and violets blue

And lady-smocks all silver-white

And cuckoo-buds of yellow hue

Do paint the meadows with delight,

The cuckoo then on every tree

Mocks married men, for thus sings he:

'Cuckoo;

Cuckoo, cuckoo'- O word of fear,

Unpleasing to a married ear!

When shepherds pipe on oaten straws,

And merry larks are ploughmen's clocks;

When turtles tread, and rooks and daws,

And maidens bleach their summer smocks;

The cuckoo then on every tree

Mocks married men, for thus sings he:

'Cuckoo;

Cuckoo, cuckoo'- O word of fear,

Unpleasing to a married ear!

WINTER

When icicles hang by the wall,

And Dick the shepherd blows his nail,

And Tom bears logs into the hall,

And milk comes frozen home in pail,

When blood is nipp'd, and ways be foul,

Then nightly sings the staring owl:

'Tu-who;

Tu-whit, Tu-who'- A merry note,

While greasy Joan doth keel the pot.

When all aloud the wind doth blow,

And coughing drowns the parson's saw,

And birds sit brooding in the snow,

And Marian's nose looks red and raw,

When roasted crabs hiss in the bowl,

Then nightly sings the staring owl:

'Tu-who;

Tu-whit, To-who'- A merry note,

While greasy Joan doth keel the pot.

ARMADO.

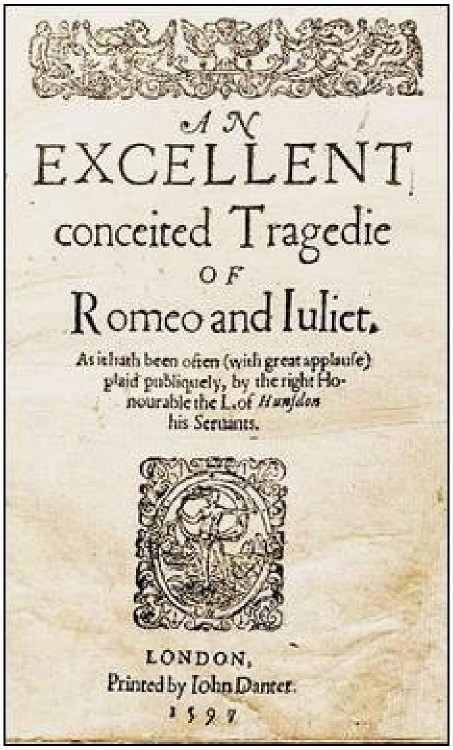
The words of Mercury are harsh after the songs of Apollo.

You that way: we this way. *Exeunt*

ROMEO AND JULIET

This tragedy was created by Shakespeare in 1592 and has become one of the most famous works of literature ever written. The plot is based on an Italian tale, translated into verse as *The Tragical History of Romeus and Juliet* by Arthur Brooke in 1562 and retold in prose in *Palace of Pleasure* by William Painter in 1582. Shakespeare borrowed heavily from both texts, but added the supporting characters Mercutio and Paris himself. Shakespeare's use of dramatic structure, especially switching between comedy and tragedy to heighten tension, his expansion of minor characters, and his use of sub-plots to complement the story, have been identified as an early sign of his dramatic skill. The play is well renowned for its eternal tale of forbidden love, which has inspired filmmakers and writers across the world for hundreds of years.

Shakespeare's main source text for this play is available via this link .



AN
EXCELLENT
conceited Tragedie
OF
Romeo and Iuliet.
As it hath been often (with great applauſe)
plaid publiquely, by the right Honourable
the L. of *Hunſdon*
his Seruants.

LONDON,
Printed by Iohn Danter.
1597

The Quarto first printing of the play

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Scene I. A lane by the wall of Capulet's orchard.

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Scene I. A public place.

Scene II. Capulet's orchard.

Scene III. Friar Laurence's cell.

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Scene III. Verona. A churchyard; in it the monument of the Capulets.

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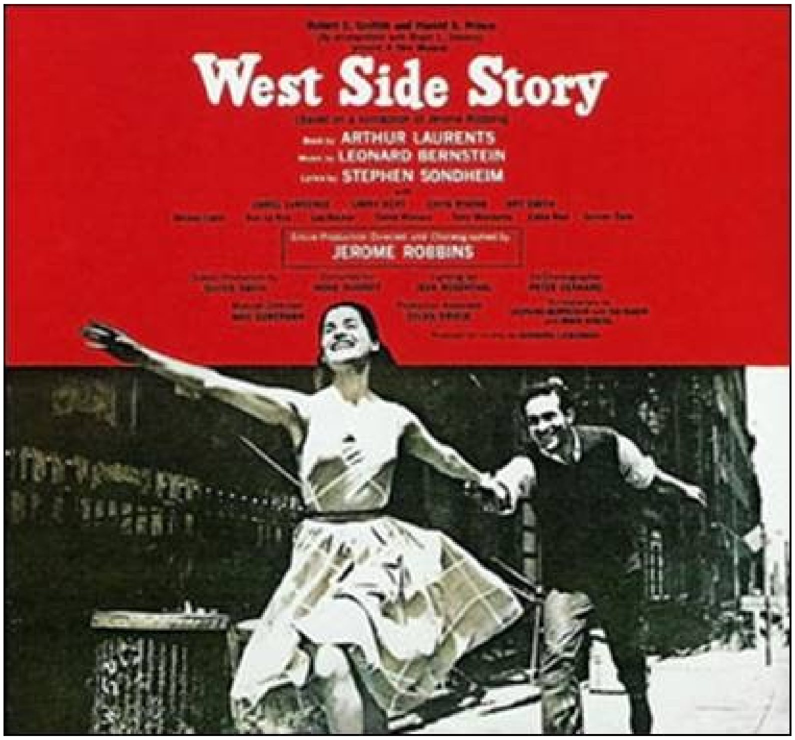
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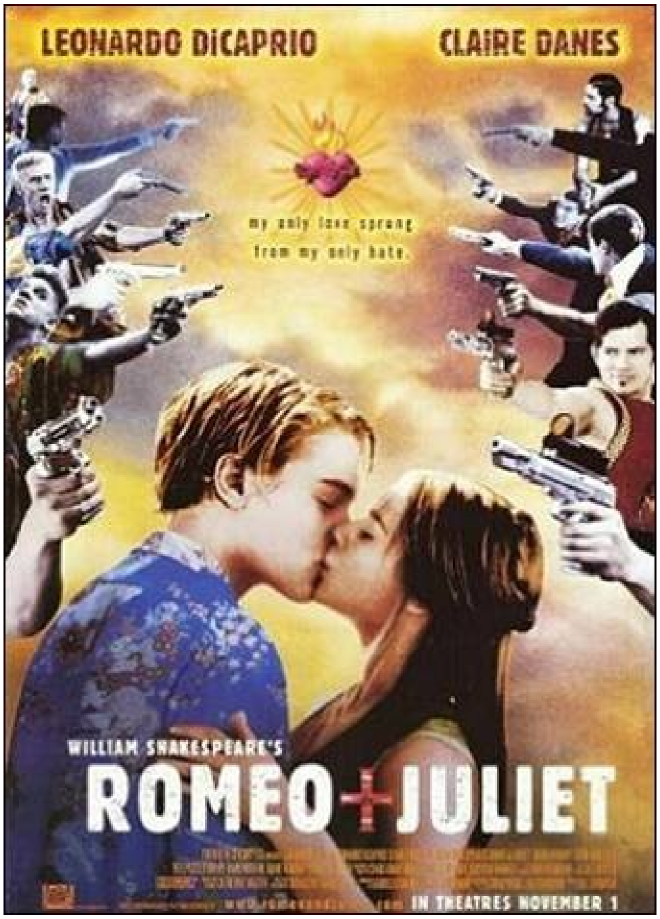
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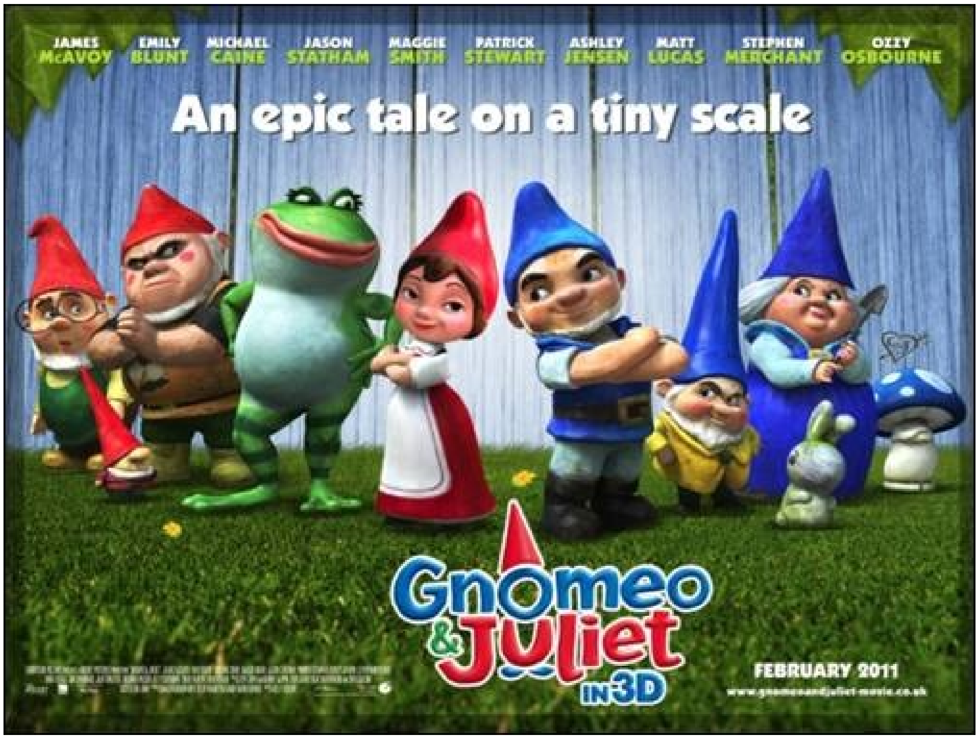
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An epic tale on a tiny scale
Gnomeo & Juliet IN 3D
FEBRUARY 2011

A 2010 animation film - an example of how wide-reaching Shakespeare's influence has been

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

Chorus .

Escalus, Prince of Verona.

Paris, a young Count, kinsman to the Prince.

Montague, heads of two houses at variance with each other.

Capulet, heads of two houses at variance with each other.

An old Man, of the Capulet family.

Romeo, son to Montague.

Tybalt, nephew to Lady Capulet.

Mercutio, kinsman to the Prince and friend to Romeo.

Benvolio, nephew to Montague, and friend to Romeo

Tybalt, nephew to Lady Capulet.

Friar Laurence, Franciscan.

Friar John, Franciscan.

Balthasar, servant to Romeo.

Abram, servant to Montague.

Sampson, servant to Capulet.

Gregory, servant to Capulet.

Peter, servant to Juliet's nurse.

An Apothecary.

Three Musicians.

An Officer.

Lady Montague, wife to Montague.

Lady Capulet, wife to Capulet.
Juliet, daughter to Capulet.

Nurse to Juliet.
Citizens of Verona; Gentlemen and Gentlewomen of both houses;
Maskers, Torchbearers, Pages, Guards, Watchmen, Servants, and Attendants.

SCENE.—Verona; Mantua.

THE PROLOGUE

Enter Chorus.

Chor. Two households, both alike in dignity,
In fair Verona, where we lay our scene,
From ancient grudge break to new mutiny,
Where civil blood makes civil hands unclean.
From forth the fatal loins of these two foes
A pair of star-cross'd lovers take their life;

Whose misadventur'd piteous overthrows

Doth with their death bury their parents' strife.

The fearful passage of their death-mark'd love,

And the continuance of their parents' rage,

Which, but their children's end, naught could remove,

Is now the two hours' traffic of our stage;

The which if you with patient ears attend,

What here shall miss, our toil shall strive to mend.

[Exit.]

ACT I.

Scene I. Verona. A public place.

Enter Sampson and Gregory (with swords and bucklers) of the house of Capulet.

Samp. Gregory, on my word, we'll not carry coals.

Greg. No, for then we should be colliers.

Samp. I mean, an we be in choler, we'll draw.

Greg. Ay, while you live, draw your neck out of collar.

Samp. I strike quickly, being moved.

Greg. But thou art not quickly moved to strike.

Samp. A dog of the house of Montague moves me.

Greg. To move is to stir, and to be valiant is to stand.
Therefore, if thou art moved, thou runn'st away.

Samp. A dog of that house shall move me to stand. I will take the
wall of any man or maid of Montague's.

Greg. That shows thee a weak slave; for the weakest goes to the wall.

Samp. 'Tis true; and therefore women, being the weaker vessels, are
ever thrust to the wall. Therefore I will push Montague's men
from the wall and thrust his maids to the wall.

Greg. The quarrel is between our masters and us their men.

Samp. 'Tis all one. I will show myself a tyrant. When I have fought
with the men, I will be cruel with the maids-I will cut off their heads.

Greg. The heads of the maids?

Samp. Ay, the heads of the maids, or their maidenheads.
Take it in what sense thou wilt.

Greg. They must take it in sense that feel it.

Samp. Me they shall feel while I am able to stand; and 'tis
known I
am a pretty piece of flesh.

Greg. 'Tis well thou art not fish; if thou hadst, thou hadst been
poor-John. Draw thy tool! Here comes two of the house of

Montagues.

Enter two other Servingmen *[Abram and Balthasar]* .

Samp. My naked weapon is out. Quarrel! I will back thee.

Greg. How? turn thy back and run?

Samp. Fear me not.

Greg. No, marry. I fear thee!

Samp. Let us take the law of our sides; let them begin.

Greg. I will frown as I pass by, and let them take it as they list.

Samp. Nay, as they dare. I will bite my thumb at them; which is disgrace to them, if they bear it.

Abr. Do you bite your thumb at us, sir?

Samp. I do bite my thumb, sir.

Abr. Do you bite your thumb at us, sir?

Samp. [aside to Gregory] Is the law of our side if I say ay?

Greg. [aside to Sampson] No.

Samp. No, sir, I do not bite my thumb at you, sir; but I bite my thumb, sir.

Greg. Do you quarrel, sir?

Abr. Quarrel, sir? No, sir.

Samp. But if you do, sir, am for you. I serve as good a man as you.

Abr. No better.

Samp. Well, sir.

Enter Benvolio.

Greg. [aside to Sampson] Say 'better.' Here comes one of my master's kinsmen.

Samp. Yes, better, sir.

Abr. You lie.

Samp. Draw, if you be men. Gregory, remember thy swashing blow.
They fight.

Ben. Part, fools! *[Beats down their swords.]*
Put up your swords. You know not what you do.

Enter Tybalt.

Tyb. What, art thou drawn among these heartless hinds?
Turn thee Benvolio! look upon thy death.

Ben. I do but keep the peace. Put up thy sword,
Or manage it to part these men with me.

Tyb. What, drawn, and talk of peace? I hate the word
As I hate hell, all Montagues, and thee.

Have at thee, coward! They fight.

Enter an officer, and three or four Citizens with clubs or partisans.

Officer. Clubs, bills, and partisans! Strike! beat them down!

Citizens. Down with the Capulets! Down with the Montagues!

Enter Old Capulet in his gown, and his Wife.

Cap. What noise is this? Give me my long sword, ho!

Wife. A crutch, a crutch! Why call you for a sword?

Cap. My sword, I say! Old Montague is come
And flourishes his blade in spite of me.

Enter Old Montague and his Wife.

Mon. Thou villain Capulet!- Hold me not, let me go.
M. Wife. Thou shalt not stir one foot to seek a foe.

Enter Prince Escalus, with his Train.

Prince. Rebellious subjects, enemies to peace,

Profaners of this neighbour-stained steel-

Will they not hear? What, ho! you men, you beasts,

That quench the fire of your pernicious rage

With purple fountains issuing from your veins!

On pain of torture, from those bloody hands

Throw your mistempered weapons to the ground

And hear the sentence of your moved prince.

Three civil brawls, bred of an airy word

By thee, old Capulet, and Montague,

Have thrice disturb'd the quiet of our streets

And made Verona's ancient citizens

Cast by their grave beseeming ornaments

To wield old partisans, in hands as old,

Cank'red with peace, to part your cank'red hate.

If ever you disturb our streets again,

Your lives shall pay the forfeit of the peace.

For this time all the rest depart away.

You, Capulet, shall go along with me;
And, Montague, come you this afternoon,
To know our farther pleasure in this case,
To old Freetown, our common judgment place.

Once more, on pain of death, all men depart.
Exeunt [all but Montague, his Wife, and Benvolio] .

Mon. Who set this ancient quarrel new abroach?
Speak, nephew, were you by when it began?

Ben. Here were the servants of your adversary
And yours, close fighting ere I did approach.
I drew to part them. In the instant came
The fiery Tybalt, with his sword prepar'd;
Which, as he breath'd defiance to my ears,
He swung about his head and cut the winds,
Who, nothing hurt withal, hiss'd him in scorn.
While we were interchanging thrusts and blows,
Came more and more, and fought on part and part,
Till the Prince came, who parted either part.

M. Wife. O, where is Romeo? Saw you him to-day?
Right glad I am he was not at this fray.

Ben. Madam, an hour before the worshipp'd sun
Peer'd forth the golden window of the East,
A troubled mind drave me to walk abroad;
Where, underneath the grove of sycamore
That westward rooteth from the city's side,
So early walking did I see your son.
Towards him I made; but he was ware of me
And stole into the covert of the wood.
I-measuring his affections by my own,
Which then most sought where most might not be found,
Being one too many by my weary self-
Pursu'd my humour, not Pursuing his,
And gladly shunn'd who gladly fled from me.

Mon. Many a morning hath he there been seen,
With tears augmenting the fresh morning's dew,
Adding to clouds more clouds with his deep sighs;

But all so soon as the all-cheering sun
Should in the farthest East bean to draw
The shady curtains from Aurora's bed,
Away from light steals home my heavy son
And private in his chamber pens himself,
Shuts up his windows, locks fair daylight out
And makes himself an artificial night.
Black and portentous must this humour prove
Unless good counsel may the cause remove.

Ben. My noble uncle, do you know the cause?

Mon. I neither know it nor can learn of him.

Ben. Have you importun'd him by any means?

Mon. Both by myself and many other friends;
But he, his own affections' counsellor,
Is to himself-I will not say how true-
But to himself so secret and so close,
So far from sounding and discovery,

As is the bud bit with an envious worm
Ere he can spread his sweet leaves to the air
Or dedicate his beauty to the sun.
Could we but learn from whence his sorrows grow,
We would as willingly give cure as know.

Enter Romeo.

Ben. See, where he comes. So please you step aside,
I'll know his grievance, or be much denied.

Mon. I would thou wert so happy by thy stay
To hear true shrift. Come, madam, let's away,
Exeunt [Montague and Wife] .

Ben. Good morrow, cousin.

Rom. Is the day so young?

Ben. But new struck nine.

Rom. Ah me! sad hours seem long.
Was that my father that went hence so fast?

Ben. It was. What sadness lengthens Romeo's hours?

Rom. Not having that which having makes them short.

Ben. In love?

Rom. Out-

Ben. Of love?

Rom. Out of her favour where I am in love.

Ben. Alas that love, so gentle in his view,
Should be so tyrannous and rough in proof!

Rom. Alas that love, whose view is muffled still,
Should without eyes see pathways to his will!

Where shall we dine? O me! What fray was here?

Yet tell me not, for I have heard it all.

Here's much to do with hate, but more with love.

Why then, O brawling love! O loving hate!

O anything, of nothing first create!

O heavy lightness! serious vanity!

Misshapen chaos of well-seeming forms!

Feather of lead, bright smoke, cold fire, sick health!

Still-waking sleep, that is not what it is

This love feel I, that feel no love in this.

Dost thou not laugh?

Ben. No, coz, I rather weep.

Rom. Good heart, at what?

Ben. At thy good heart's oppression.

Rom. Why, such is love's transgression.
Griefs of mine own lie heavy in my breast,
Which thou wilt propagate, to have it prest
With more of thine. This love that thou hast shown
Doth add more grief to too much of mine own.
Love is a smoke rais'd with the fume of sighs;
Being purg'd, a fire sparkling in lovers' eyes;
Being vex'd, a sea nourish'd with lovers' tears.
What is it else? A madness most discreet,
A choking gall, and a preserving sweet.

Farewell, my coz.

Ben. Soft! I will go along.
An if you leave me so, you do me wrong.

Rom. Tut! I have lost myself; I am not here:
This is not Romeo, he's some other where.

Ben. Tell me in sadness, who is that you love?

Rom. What, shall I groan and tell thee?

Ben. Groan? Why, no;
But sadly tell me who.

Rom. Bid a sick man in sadness make his will.
Ah, word ill urg'd to one that is so ill!

In sadness, cousin, I do love a woman.

Ben. I aim'd so near when I suppos'd you lov'd.

Rom. A right good markman! And she's fair I love.

Ben. A right fair mark, fair coz, is soonest hit.

Rom. Well, in that hit you miss. She'll not be hit
With Cupid's arrow. She hath Dian's wit,
And, in strong proof of chastity well arm'd,
From Love's weak childish bow she lives unharm'd.

She will not stay the siege of loving terms,

Nor bide th' encounter of assailing eyes,

Nor ope her lap to saint-seducing gold.

O, she's rich in beauty; only poor

That, when she dies, with beauty dies her store.

Ben. Then she hath sworn that she will still live chaste?

Rom. She hath, and in that sparing makes huge waste;

For beauty, starv'd with her severity,

Cuts beauty off from all posterity.

She is too fair, too wise, wisely too fair,

To merit bliss by making me despair.

She hath forsworn to love, and in that vow

Do I live dead that live to tell it now.

Ben. Be rul'd by me: forget to think of her.

Rom. O, teach me how I should forget to think!

Ben. By giving liberty unto thine eyes.

Examine other beauties.

Rom. 'Tis the way
To call hers (exquisite) in question more.
These happy masks that kiss fair ladies' brows,
Being black puts us in mind they hide the fair.
He that is strucken blind cannot forget
The precious treasure of his eyesight lost.
Show me a mistress that is passing fair,
What doth her beauty serve but as a note
Where I may read who pass'd that passing fair?

Farewell. Thou canst not teach me to forget.

Ben. I'll pay that doctrine, or else die in debt. *Exeunt* .

Scene II. A Street.

Enter Capulet, County Paris, and *[Servant]* -the Clown.

Cap. But Montague is bound as well as I,

In penalty alike; and 'tis not hard, I think,
For men so old as we to keep the peace.

Par. Of honourable reckoning are you both,
And pity 'tis you liv'd at odds so long.

But now, my lord, what say you to my suit?

Cap. But saying o'er what I have said before:
My child is yet a stranger in the world,
She hath not seen the change of fourteen years;
Let two more summers wither in their pride
Ere we may think her ripe to be a bride.

Par. Younger than she are happy mothers made.

Cap. And too soon marr'd are those so early made.
The earth hath swallowed all my hopes but she;
She is the hopeful lady of my earth.
But woo her, gentle Paris, get her heart;
My will to her consent is but a part.

An she agree, within her scope of choice
Lies my consent and fair according voice.
This night I hold an old accustom'd feast,
Whereto I have invited many a guest,
Such as I love; and you among the store,
One more, most welcome, makes my number more.
At my poor house look to behold this night
Earth-treading stars that make dark heaven light.
Such comfort as do lusty young men feel
When well apparell'd April on the heel
Of limping Winter treads, even such delight
Among fresh female buds shall you this night
Inherit at my house. Hear all, all see,
And like her most whose merit most shall be;
Which, on more view of many, mine, being one,
May stand in number, though in reck'ning none.
Come, go with me. *[To Servant, giving him a paper]* Go,
sirrah,
trudge about
Through fair Verona; find those persons out
Whose names are written there, and to them say,

My house and welcome on their pleasure stay-
Exeunt [Capulet and Paris] .

Serv. Find them out whose names are written here? It is written that the shoemaker should meddle with his yard and the tailor with his last, the fisher with his pencil and the painter with his nets; but I am sent to find those persons whose names are here writ, and can never find what names the writing person hath here writ. I must to the learned. In good time!

Enter Benvolio and Romeo.

Ben. Tut, man, one fire burns out another's burning;
One pain is lessened by another's anguish;
Turn giddy, and be holp by backward turning;
One desperate grief cures with another's languish.
Take thou some new infection to thy eye,
And the rank poison of the old will die.

Rom. Your plantain leaf is excellent for that.

Ben. For what, I pray thee?

Rom. For your broken shin.

Ben. Why, Romeo, art thou mad?

Rom. Not mad, but bound more than a madman is;
Shut up in prison, kept without my food,
Whipp'd and tormented and-God-den, good fellow.

Serv. God gi' go-den. I pray, sir, can you read?

Rom. Ay, mine own fortune in my misery.

Serv. Perhaps you have learned it without book. But I pray, can you read anything you see?

Rom. Ay, If I know the letters and the language.

Serv. Ye say honestly. Rest you merry!

Rom. Stay, fellow; I can read. He reads.

'Signior Martino and his wife and daughters;

County Anselmo and his beauteous sisters;

The lady widow of Vitruvio;

Signior Placentio and His lovely nieces;

Mercutio and his brother Valentine;

Mine uncle Capulet, his wife, and daughters;

My fair niece Rosaline and Livia;

Signior Valentio and his cousin Tybalt;

Lucio and the lively Helena.'

[Gives back the paper.] A fair assembly. Whither should they come?

Serv. Up.

Rom. Whither?

Serv. To supper, to our house.

Rom. Whose house?

Serv. My master's.

Rom. Indeed I should have ask'd you that before.

Serv. Now I'll tell you without asking. My master is the great rich Capulet; and if you be not of the house of Montagues, I pray come and crush a cup of wine. Rest you merry! *Exit* .

Ben. At this same ancient feast of Capulet's
Sups the fair Rosaline whom thou so lov'st;
With all the admired beauties of Verona.
Go thither, and with unattainted eye
Compare her face with some that I shall show,
And I will make thee think thy swan a crow.

Rom. When the devout religion of mine eye
Maintains such falsehood, then turn tears to fires;
And these, who, often drown'd, could never die,
Transparent heretics, be burnt for liars!
One fairer than my love? The all-seeing sun
Ne'er saw her match since first the world begun.

Ben. Tut! you saw her fair, none else being by,

Herself pois'd with herself in either eye;

But in that crystal scales let there be weigh'd

Your lady's love against some other maid

That I will show you shining at this feast,

And she shall scant show well that now seems best.

Rom. I'll go along, no such sight to be shown,

But to rejoice in splendour of my own. *[Exeunt.]*

Scene III. Capulet's house.

Enter Capulet's Wife, and Nurse.

Wife. Nurse, where's my daughter? Call her forth to me.

Nurse. Now, by my maidenhead at twelve year old,

I bade her come. What, lamb! what ladybird!

God forbid! Where's this girl? What, Juliet!

Enter Juliet.

Jul. How now? Who calls?

Nurse. Your mother.

Jul. Madam, I am here.
What is your will?

Wife. This is the matter-Nurse, give leave awhile,
We must talk in secret. Nurse, come back again;
I have rememb'red me, thou's hear our counsel.
Thou knowest my daughter's of a pretty age.

Nurse. Faith, I can tell her age unto an hour.

Wife. She's not fourteen.

Nurse. I'll lay fourteen of my teeth-
And yet, to my teen be it spoken, I have but four-

She is not fourteen. How long is it now
To Lammastide?

Wife. A fortnight and odd days.

Nurse. Even or odd, of all days in the year,
Come Lammas Eve at night shall she be fourteen.
Susan and she (God rest all Christian souls!)
Were of an age. Well, Susan is with God;
She was too good for me. But, as I said,
On Lammas Eve at night shall she be fourteen;
That shall she, marry; I remember it well.
'Tis since the earthquake now eleven years;
And she was wean'd (I never shall forget it),
Of all the days of the year, upon that day;
For I had then laid wormwood to my dug,
Sitting in the sun under the dovehouse wall.

My lord and you were then at Mantua.
Nay, I do bear a brain. But, as I said,
When it did taste the wormwood on the nipple

Of my dug and felt it bitter, pretty fool,

To see it tetchy and fall out with the dug!

Shake, quoth the dovehouse! 'Twas no need, I trow,

To bid me trudge.

And since that time it is eleven years,

For then she could stand alone; nay, by th' rood,

She could have run and waddled all about;

For even the day before, she broke her brow;

And then my husband (God be with his soul!

'A was a merry man) took up the child.

'Yea,' quoth he, 'dost thou fall upon thy face?

Thou wilt fall backward when thou hast more wit;

Wilt thou not, Jule?' and, by my holidam,

The pretty wretch left crying, and said 'Ay.'

To see now how a jest shall come about!

I warrant, an I should live a thousand yeas,

I never should forget it. 'Wilt thou not, Jule?' quoth he,

And, pretty fool, it stinted, and said 'Ay.'

Wife. Enough of this. I pray thee hold thy peace.

Nurse. Yes, madam. Yet I cannot choose but laugh
To think it should leave crying and say 'Ay.'
And yet, I warrant, it had upon its brow
A bump as big as a young cock'rel's stone;
A perilous knock; and it cried bitterly.
'Yea,' quoth my husband, 'fall'st upon thy face?
Thou wilt fall backward when thou comest to age;
Wilt thou not, Jule?' It stinted, and said 'Ay.'

Jul. And stint thou too, I pray thee, nurse, say I.

Nurse. Peace, I have done. God mark thee to his grace!
Thou wast the prettiest babe that e'er I nurs'd.

An I might live to see thee married once, I have my wish.

Wife. Marry, that 'marry' is the very theme
I came to talk of. Tell me, daughter Juliet,
How stands your disposition to be married?

Jul. It is an honour that I dream not of.

Nurse. An honour? Were not I thine only nurse,

I would say thou hadst suck'd wisdom from thy teat.

Wife. Well, think of marriage now. Younger than you,

Here in Verona, ladies of esteem,

Are made already mothers. By my count,

I was your mother much upon these years

That you are now a maid. Thus then in brief:

The valiant Paris seeks you for his love.

Nurse. A man, young lady! lady, such a man

As all the world-why he's a man of wax.

Wife. Verona's summer hath not such a flower.

Nurse. Nay, he's a flower, in faith-a very flower.

Wife. What say you? Can you love the gentleman?

This night you shall behold him at our feast.

Read o'er the volume of young Paris' face,
And find delight writ there with beauty's pen;
Examine every married lineament,
And see how one another lends content;
And what obscur'd in this fair volume lies
Find written in the margent of his eyes,
This precious book of love, this unbound lover,
To beautify him only lacks a cover.
The fish lives in the sea, and 'tis much pride
For fair without the fair within to hide.
That book in many's eyes doth share the glory,
That in gold clasps locks in the golden story;
So shall you share all that he doth possess,
By having him making yourself no less.

Nurse. No less? Nay, bigger! Women grow by men

Wife. Speak briefly, can you like of Paris' love?

Jul. I'll look to like, if looking liking move;
But no more deep will I endart mine eye

Than your consent gives strength to make it fly.

Enter Servingman.

Serv. Madam, the guests are come, supper serv'd up, you call'd, my
young lady ask'd for, the nurse curs'd in the pantry, and
everything in extremity. I must hence to wait. I beseech you follow straight.

Wife. We follow thee. *Exit [Servingman]* .
Juliet, the County stays.

Nurse. Go, girl, seek happy nights to happy days.
Exeunt.

Scene IV. A street.

Enter Romeo, Mercutio, Benvolio, with five or six other Maskers;

Torchbearers.

Rom. What, shall this speech be spoke for our excuse?

Or shall we on without apology?

Ben. The date is out of such prolixity.
We'll have no Cupid hoodwink'd with a scarf,
Bearing a Tartar's painted bow of lath,
Scaring the ladies like a crowkeeper;
Nor no without-book prologue, faintly spoke
After the prompter, for our entrance;
But, let them measure us by what they will,
We'll measure them a measure, and be gone.

Rom. Give me a torch. I am not for this ambling.
Being but heavy, I will bear the light.

Mer. Nay, gentle Romeo, we must have you dance.

Rom. Not I, believe me. You have dancing shoes
With nimble soles; I have a soul of lead
So stakes me to the ground I cannot move.

Mer. You are a lover. Borrow Cupid's wings

And soar with them above a common bound.

Rom. I am too sore enpierced with his shaft
To soar with his light feathers; and so bound
I cannot bound a pitch above dull woe.
Under love's heavy burthen do I sink.

Mer. And, to sink in it, should you burthen love-
Too great oppression for a tender thing.

Rom. Is love a tender thing? It is too rough,
Too rude, too boist'rous, and it pricks like thorn.

Mer. If love be rough with you, be rough with love.
Prick love for pricking, and you beat love down.

Give me a case to put my visage in.
A visor for a visor! What care I
What curious eye doth quote deformities?
Here are the beetle brows shall blush for me.

Ben. Come, knock and enter; and no sooner in
But every man betake him to his legs.

Rom. A torch for me! Let wantons light of heart
Tickle the senseless rushes with their heels;
For I am proverb'd with a grandsire phrase,
I'll be a candle-holder and look on;
The game was ne'er so fair, and I am done.

Mer. Tut! dun's the mouse, the constable's own word!
If thou art Dun, we'll draw thee from the mire
Of this sir-reverence love, wherein thou stick'st
Up to the ears. Come, we burn daylight, ho!

Rom. Nay, that's not so.

Mer. I mean, sir, in delay
We waste our lights in vain, like lamps by day.
Take our good meaning, for our judgment sits
Five times in that ere once in our five wits.

Rom. And we mean well, in going to this masque;
But 'tis no wit to go.

Mer. Why, may one ask?

Rom. I dreamt a dream to-night.

Mer. And so did I.

Rom. Well, what was yours?

Mer. That dreamers often lie.

Rom. In bed asleep, while they do dream things true.

Mer. O, then I see Queen Mab hath been with you.
She is the fairies' midwife, and she comes
In shape no bigger than an agate stone
On the forefinger of an alderman,
Drawn with a team of little atomies
Athwart men's noses as they lie asleep;

Her wagon spokes made of long spinners' legs,
The cover, of the wings of grasshoppers;
Her traces, of the smallest spider's web;
Her collars, of the moonshine's wat'ry beams;
Her whip, of cricket's bone; the lash, of film;
Her wagoner, a small grey-coated gnat,
Not half so big as a round little worm
Prick'd from the lazy finger of a maid;
Her chariot is an empty hazelnut,
Made by the joiner squirrel or old grub,
Time out o' mind the fairies' coachmakers.
And in this state she gallops night by night
Through lovers' brains, and then they dream of love;
O'er courtiers' knees, that dream on cursies straight;
O'er lawyers' fingers, who straight dream on fees;
O'er ladies' lips, who straight on kisses dream,
Which oft the angry Mab with blisters plagues,
Because their breaths with sweetmeats tainted are.
Sometime she gallops o'er a courtier's nose,
And then dreams he of smelling out a suit;
And sometime comes she with a tithe-pig's tail

Tickling a parson's nose as 'a lies asleep,

Then dreams he of another benefice.

Sometimes she driveth o'er a soldier's neck,

And then dreams he of cutting foreign throats,

Of breaches, ambuscadoes, Spanish blades,

Of healths five fadom deep; and then anon

Drums in his ear, at which he starts and wakes,

And being thus frighted, swears a prayer or two

And sleeps again. This is that very Mab

That plats the manes of horses in the night

And bakes the elflocks in foul sluttish, hairs,

Which once untangled much misfortune bodes

This is the hag, when maids lie on their backs,

That presses them and learns them first to bear,

Making them women of good carriage.

This is she-

Rom. Peace, peace, Mercutio, peace!

Thou talk'st of nothing.

Mer. True, I talk of dreams;

Which are the children of an idle brain,

Begot of nothing but vain fantasy;

Which is as thin of substance as the air,

And more inconstant than the wind, who wooes

Even now the frozen bosom of the North

And, being anger'd, puffs away from thence,

Turning his face to the dew-dropping South.

Ben. This wind you talk of blows us from ourselves.

Supper is done, and we shall come too late.

Rom. I fear, too early; for my mind misgives

Some consequence, yet hanging in the stars,

Shall bitterly begin his fearful date

With this night's revels and expire the term

Of a despised life, clos'd in my breast,

By some vile forfeit of untimely death.

But he that hath the steerage of my course

Direct my sail! On, lusty gentlemen!

Ben. Strike, drum.

They march about the stage. *[Exeunt.]*

Scene V. Capulet's house.

Servingmen come forth with napkins.

1. Serv. Where's Potpan, that he helps not to take away?

He shift a trencher! he scrape a trencher!

2. Serv. When good manners shall lie all in one or two men's hands,

and they unwash'd too, 'tis a foul thing.

1. Serv. Away with the join-stools, remove the court-cubbert, look

to the plate. Good thou, save me a piece of marchpane and, as

thou loves me, let the porter let in Susan Grindstone and

Nell.

Anthony, and Potpan!

2. Serv. Ay, boy, ready.

1. Serv. You are look'd for and call'd for, ask'd for and sought

for, in the great chamber.

3. Serv. We cannot be here and there too. Cheerly, boys!

Be brisk awhile, and the longer liver take all. *Exeunt* .

Enter the Maskers, *Enter* , *[with Servants,]* Capulet, his Wife,

Juliet, Tybalt, and all the Guests
and Gentlewomen to the Maskers.

Cap. Welcome, gentlemen! Ladies that have their toes
Unplagu'd with corns will have a bout with you.
Ah ha, my mistresses! which of you all
Will now deny to dance? She that makes dainty,
She I'll swear hath corns. Am I come near ye now?
Welcome, gentlemen! I have seen the day
That I have worn a visor and could tell
A whispering tale in a fair lady's ear,
Such as would please. 'Tis gone, 'tis gone, 'tis gone!
You are welcome, gentlemen! Come, musicians, play.

A hall, a hall! give room! and foot it, girls.
Music plays, and they dance.
More light, you knaves! and turn the tables up,

And quench the fire, the room is grown too hot.

Ah, sirrah, this unlook'd-for sport comes well.
Nay, sit, nay, sit, good cousin Capulet,
For you and I are past our dancing days.
How long is't now since last yourself and I
Were in a mask?
2. Cap. By'r Lady, thirty years.

Cap. What, man? 'Tis not so much, 'tis not so much!
'Tis since the nuptial of Lucentio,
Come Pentecost as quickly as it will,
Some five-and-twenty years, and then we mask'd.
2. Cap. 'Tis more, 'tis more! His son is elder, sir;
His son is thirty.

Cap. Will you tell me that?
His son was but a ward two years ago.

Rom. [to a Servingman] What lady's that, which doth enrich the hand
Of yonder knight?

Serv. I know not, sir.

Rom. O, she doth teach the torches to burn bright!
It seems she hangs upon the cheek of night
Like a rich jewel in an Ethiop's ear-
Beauty too rich for use, for earth too dear!
So shows a snowy dove trooping with crows
As yonder lady o'er her fellows shows.
The measure done, I'll watch her place of stand
And, touching hers, make blessed my rude hand.

Did my heart love till now? Forswear it, sight!
For I ne'er saw true beauty till this night.

Tyb. This, by his voice, should be a Montague.
Fetch me my rapier, boy. What, dares the slave
Come hither, cover'd with an antic face,
To fleer and scorn at our solemnity?
Now, by the stock and honour of my kin,
To strike him dead I hold it not a sin.

Cap. Why, how now, kinsman? Wherefore storm you so?

Tyb. Uncle, this is a Montague, our foe;
A villain, that is hither come in spite
To scorn at our solemnity this night.

Cap. Young Romeo is it?

Tyb. 'Tis he, that villain Romeo.

Cap. Content thee, gentle coz, let him alone.
'A bears him like a portly gentleman,
And, to say truth, Verona brags of him
To be a virtuous and well-govern'd youth.
I would not for the wealth of all this town
Here in my house do him disparagement.

Therefore be patient, take no note of him.
It is my will; the which if thou respect,
Show a fair presence and put off these frowns,

An ill-beseeming semblance for a feast.

Tyb. It fits when such a villain is a guest.
I'll not endure him.

Cap. He shall be endur'd.
What, goodman boy? I say he shall. Go to!

Am I the master here, or you? Go to!
You'll not endure him? God shall mend my soul!

You'll make a mutiny among my guests!
You will set cock-a-hoop! you'll be the man!

Tyb. Why, uncle, 'tis a shame.

Cap. Go to, go to!
You are a saucy boy. Is't so, indeed?

This trick may chance to scathe you. I know what.
You must contrary me! Marry, 'tis time.-

Well said, my hearts!- You are a princox-go!
Be quiet, or-More light, more light!- For shame!

I'll make you quiet; what!- Cheerly, my hearts!

Tyb. Patience perforce with wilful choler meeting
Makes my flesh tremble in their different greeting.
I will withdraw; but this intrusion shall,
Now seeming sweet, convert to bitt'rest gall. *Exit* .

Rom. If I profane with my unworthiest hand
This holy shrine, the gentle fine is this:
My lips, two blushing pilgrims, ready stand
To smooth that rough touch with a tender kiss.

Jul. Good pilgrim, you do wrong your hand too much,
Which mannerly devotion shows in this;
For saints have hands that pilgrims' hands do touch,
And palm to palm is holy palmers' kiss.

Rom. Have not saints lips, and holy palmers too?

Jul. Ay, pilgrim, lips that they must use in pray'r.

Rom. O, then, dear saint, let lips do what hands do!
They pray; grant thou, lest faith turn to despair.

Jul. Saints do not move, though grant for prayers' sake.

Rom. Then move not while my prayer's effect I take.
Thus from my lips, by thine my sin is purg'd. *[Kisses her.]*

Jul. Then have my lips the sin that they have took.

Rom. Sin from my lips? O trespass sweetly urg'd!
Give me my sin again. *[Kisses her.]*

Jul. You kiss by th' book.

Nurse. Madam, your mother craves a word with you.

Rom. What is her mother?

Nurse. Marry, bachelor,
Her mother is the lady of the house.

And a good lady, and a wise and virtuous.
I nurs'd her daughter that you talk'd withal.
I tell you, he that can lay hold of her
Shall have the chinks.

Rom. Is she a Capulet?
O dear account! my life is my foe's debt.

Ben. Away, be gone; the sport is at the best.

Rom. Ay, so I fear; the more is my unrest.

Cap. Nay, gentlemen, prepare not to be gone;
We have a trifling foolish banquet towards.

Is it e'en so? Why then, I thank you all.
I thank you, honest gentlemen. Good night.

More torches here! *[Exeunt Maskers.]* Come on then, let's to bed.

Ah, sirrah, by my fay, it waxes late;

I'll to my rest.

Exeunt [all but Juliet and Nurse] .

Jul. Come hither, nurse. What is yond gentleman?

Nurse. The son and heir of old Tiberio.

Jul. What's he that now is going out of door?

Nurse. Marry, that, I think, be young Petruchio.

Jul. What's he that follows there, that would not dance?

Nurse. I know not.

Jul. Go ask his name.- If he be married,

My grave is like to be my wedding bed.

Nurse. His name is Romeo, and a Montague, The only son of your great enemy.

Jul. My only love, sprung from my only hate!
Too early seen unknown, and known too late!
Prodigious birth of love it is to me
That I must love a loathed enemy.

Nurse. What's this? what's this?

Jul. A rhyme I learnt even now
Of one I danc'd withal.

One calls within, 'Juliet.'

Nurse. Anon, anon!
Come, let's away; the strangers all are gone. *Exeunt* .

PROLOGUE

Enter Chorus.

Chor. Now old desire doth in his deathbed lie,

And young affection gapes to be his heir;

That fair for which love groan'd for and would die,

With tender Juliet match'd, is now not fair.

Now Romeo is belov'd, and loves again,

Alike bewitched by the charm of looks;

But to his foe suppos'd he must complain,

And she steal love's sweet bait from fearful hooks.

Being held a foe, he may not have access

To breathe such vows as lovers use to swear,

And she as much in love, her means much less

To meet her new beloved anywhere;

But passion lends them power, time means, to meet,

Temp'ring extremities with extreme sweet.

Exit.

ACT II.
Scene I. A lane by the wall of Capulet's orchard.

Enter Romeo alone.

Rom. Can I go forward when my heart is here?

Turn back, dull earth, and find thy centre out.

[Climbs the wall and leaps down within it.]

Enter Benvolio with Mercutio.

Ben. Romeo! my cousin Romeo! Romeo!

Mer. He is wise,

And, on my life, hath stol'n him home to bed.

Ben. He ran this way, and leapt this orchard wall.

Call, good Mercutio.

Mer. Nay, I'll conjure too.

Romeo! humours! madman! passion! lover!
Appear thou in the likeness of a sigh;
Speak but one rhyme, and I am satisfied!
Cry but 'Ah me!' pronounce but 'love' and 'dove';
Speak to my gossip Venus one fair word,
One nickname for her purblind son and heir,
Young auburn Cupid, he that shot so trim
When King Cophetua lov'd the beggar maid!
He heareth not, he stirreth not, be moveth not;
The ape is dead, and I must conjure him.
I conjure thee by Rosaline's bright eyes.
By her high forehead and her scarlet lip,
By her fine foot, straight leg, and quivering thigh,
And the demesnes that there adjacent lie,
That in thy likeness thou appear to us!

Ben. An if he hear thee, thou wilt anger him.

Mer. This cannot anger him. 'Twould anger him
To raise a spirit in his mistress' circle
Of some strange nature, letting it there stand

Till she had laid it and conjur'd it down.
That were some spite; my invocation
Is fair and honest: in his mistress' name,
I conjure only but to raise up him.

Ben. Come, he hath hid himself among these trees
To be consorted with the humorous night.

Blind is his love and best befits the dark.

Mer. If love be blind, love cannot hit the mark.
Now will he sit under a medlar tree
And wish his mistress were that kind of fruit
As maids call medlars when they laugh alone.
O, Romeo, that she were, O that she were
An open et cetera, thou a pop'rin pear!
Romeo, good night. I'll to my truckle-bed;
This field-bed is too cold for me to sleep.

Come, shall we go?

Ben. Go then, for 'tis in vain

'To seek him here that means not to be found.

Exeunt.

Scene II. Capulet's orchard.

Enter Romeo.

Rom. He jests at scars that never felt a wound.

Enter Juliet above at a window.

But soft! What light through yonder window breaks?
It is the East, and Juliet is the sun!
Arise, fair sun, and kill the envious moon,
Who is already sick and pale with grief
That thou her maid art far more fair than she.
Be not her maid, since she is envious.
Her vestal livery is but sick and green,
And none but fools do wear it. Cast it off.

It is my lady; O, it is my love!
O that she knew she were!

She speaks, yet she says nothing. What of that?

Her eye discourses; I will answer it.

I am too bold; 'tis not to me she speaks.
Two of the fairest stars in all the heaven,
Having some business, do entreat her eyes
To twinkle in their spheres till they return.

What if her eyes were there, they in her head?
The brightness of her cheek would shame those stars
As daylight doth a lamp; her eyes in heaven
Would through the airy region stream so bright
That birds would sing and think it were not night.
See how she leans her cheek upon her hand!
O that I were a glove upon that hand,
That I might touch that cheek!

Jul. Ah me!

Rom. She speaks.
O, speak again, bright angel! for thou art
As glorious to this night, being o'er my head,

As is a winged messenger of heaven

Unto the white-upturned wond'ring eyes

Of mortals that fall back to gaze on him

When he bestrides the lazy-pacing clouds

And sails upon the bosom of the air.

Jul. O Romeo, Romeo! wherefore art thou Romeo?

Deny thy father and refuse thy name!

Or, if thou wilt not, be but sworn my love,

And I'll no longer be a Capulet.

Rom. [aside] Shall I hear more, or shall I speak at this?

Jul. 'Tis but thy name that is my enemy.

Thou art thyself, though not a Montague.

What's Montague? it is nor hand, nor foot,

Nor arm, nor face, nor any other part

Belonging to a man. O, be some other name!

What's in a name? That which we call a rose

By any other name would smell as sweet.

So Romeo would, were he not Romeo call'd,

Retain that dear perfection which he owes
Without that title. Romeo, doff thy name;
And for that name, which is no part of thee,
Take all myself.

Rom. I take thee at thy word.
Call me but love, and I'll be new baptiz'd;
Henceforth I never will be Romeo.

Jul. What man art thou that, thus bescreen'd in night,
So stumblest on my counsel?

Rom. By a name
I know not how to tell thee who I am.
My name, dear saint, is hateful to myself,
Because it is an enemy to thee.

Had I it written, I would tear the word.

Jul. My ears have yet not drunk a hundred words
Of that tongue's utterance, yet I know the sound.

Art thou not Romeo, and a Montague?

Rom. Neither, fair saint, if either thee dislike.

Jul. How cam'st thou hither, tell me, and wherefore?
The orchard walls are high and hard to climb,
And the place death, considering who thou art,
If any of my kinsmen find thee here.

Rom. With love's light wings did I o'erperch these walls;
For stony limits cannot hold love out,
And what love can do, that dares love attempt.
Therefore thy kinsmen are no let to me.

Jul. If they do see thee, they will murther thee.

Rom. Alack, there lies more peril in thine eye
Than twenty of their swords! Look thou but sweet,
And I am proof against their enmity.

Jul. I would not for the world they saw thee here.

Rom. I have night's cloak to hide me from their sight;
And but thou love me, let them find me here.
My life were better ended by their hate
Than death prorogued, wanting of thy love.

Jul. By whose direction found'st thou out this place?

Rom. By love, that first did prompt me to enquire.
He lent me counsel, and I lent him eyes.
I am no pilot; yet, wert thou as far
As that vast shore wash'd with the farthest sea,
I would adventure for such merchandise.

Jul. Thou knowest the mask of night is on my face;
Else would a maiden blush bepaint my cheek
For that which thou hast heard me speak to-night.
Fain would I dwell on form-fain, fain deny
What I have spoke; but farewell compliment!
Dost thou love me, I know thou wilt say 'Ay';

And I will take thy word. Yet, if thou swear'st,
Thou mayst prove false. At lovers' perjuries,
They say Jove laughs. O gentle Romeo,
If thou dost love, pronounce it faithfully.
Or if thou thinkest I am too quickly won,
I'll frown, and be perverse, and say thee nay,
So thou wilt woo; but else, not for the world.
In truth, fair Montague, I am too fond,
And therefore thou mayst think my haviour light;
But trust me, gentleman, I'll prove more true
Than those that have more cunning to be strange.
I should have been more strange, I must confess,
But that thou overheard'st, ere I was ware,
My true-love passion. Therefore pardon me,
And not impute this yielding to light love,
Which the dark night hath so discovered.

Rom. Lady, by yonder blessed moon I swear,
That tips with silver all these fruit-tree tops-

Jul. O, swear not by the moon, th' inconstant moon, That monthly changes in her circled orb,

Lest that thy love prove likewise variable.

Rom. What shall I swear by?

Jul. Do not swear at all;

Or if thou wilt, swear by thy gracious self,

Which is the god of my idolatry,

And I'll believe thee.

Rom. If my heart's dear love-

Jul. Well, do not swear. Although I joy in thee,

I have no joy of this contract to-night.

It is too rash, too unadvis'd, too sudden;

Too like the lightning, which doth cease to be

Ere one can say 'It lightens.' Sweet, good night!

This bud of love, by summer's ripening breath,

May prove a beauteous flow'r when next we meet.

Good night, good night! As sweet repose and rest

Come to thy heart as that within my breast!

Rom. O, wilt thou leave me so unsatisfied?

Jul. What satisfaction canst thou have to-night?

Rom. Th' exchange of thy love's faithful vow for mine.

Jul. I gave thee mine before thou didst request it;
And yet I would it were to give again.

Rom. Would'st thou withdraw it? For what purpose, love?

Jul. But to be frank and give it thee again.
And yet I wish but for the thing I have.
My bounty is as boundless as the sea,
My love as deep; the more I give to thee,
The more I have, for both are infinite.
I hear some noise within. Dear love, adieu!
[Nurse] calls within.
Anon, good nurse! Sweet Montague, be true.
Stay but a little, I will come again. *[Exit.]*

Rom. O blessed, blessed night! I am afeard,
Being in night, all this is but a dream,
Too flattering-sweet to be substantial.

Enter Juliet above.

Jul. Three words, dear Romeo, and good night indeed.
If that thy bent of love be honourable,
Thy purpose marriage, send me word to-morrow,
By one that I'll procure to come to thee,
Where and what time thou wilt perform the rite;
And all my fortunes at thy foot I'll lay
And follow thee my lord throughout the world.

Nurse. (within) Madam!

Jul. I come, anon.- But if thou meanest not well,
I do beseech thee-

Nurse. (within) Madam!

Jul. By-and-by I come.-
To cease thy suit and leave me to my grief.

To-morrow will I send.

Rom. So thrive my soul-

Jul. A thousand times good night! *Exit* .

Rom. A thousand times the worse, to want thy light!
Love goes toward love as schoolboys from their books;
But love from love, towards school with heavy looks.

Enter Juliet again, *[above]* .

Jul. Hist! Romeo, hist! O for a falconer's voice
To lure this tassel-gentle back again!
Bondage is hoarse and may not speak aloud;
Else would I tear the cave where Echo lies,
And make her airy tongue more hoarse than mine

With repetition of my Romeo's name.

Romeo!

Rom. It is my soul that calls upon my name.
How silver-sweet sound lovers' tongues by night,
Like softest music to attending ears!

Jul. Romeo!

Rom. My dear?

Jul. At what o'clock to-morrow
Shall I send to thee?

Rom. By the hour of nine.

Jul. I will not fail. 'Tis twenty years till then.
I have forgot why I did call thee back.

Rom. Let me stand here till thou remember it.

Jul. I shall forget, to have thee still stand there,

Rememb'ring how I love thy company.

Rom. And I'll still stay, to have thee still forget,

Forgetting any other home but this.

Jul. 'Tis almost morning. I would have thee gone-

And yet no farther than a wanton's bird,

That lets it hop a little from her hand,

Like a poor prisoner in his twisted gyves,

And with a silk thread plucks it back again,

So loving-jealous of his liberty.

Rom. I would I were thy bird.

Jul. Sweet, so would I.

Yet I should kill thee with much cherishing.

Good night, good night! Parting is such sweet sorrow,

That I shall say good night till it be morrow.

[Exit.]

Rom. Sleep dwell upon thine eyes, peace in thy breast!

Would I were sleep and peace, so sweet to rest!

Hence will I to my ghostly father's cell,

His help to crave and my dear hap to tell.

Exit

Scene III. Friar Laurence's cell.

Enter Friar, *[Laurence]* alone, with a basket.

Friar. The grey-ey'd morn smiles on the frowning night,

Check'ring the Eastern clouds with streaks of light;

And flecked darkness like a drunkard reels

From forth day's path and Titan's fiery wheels.

Non, ere the sun advance his burning eye

The day to cheer and night's dank dew to dry,

I must up-fill this osier cage of ours

With baleful weeds and precious-juiced flowers.

The earth that's nature's mother is her tomb.

What is her burying gave, that is her womb;
And from her womb children of divers kind
We sucking on her natural bosom find;
Many for many virtues excellent,
None but for some, and yet all different.
O, mickle is the powerful grace that lies
In plants, herbs, stones, and their true qualities;
For naught so vile that on the earth doth live
But to the earth some special good doth give;
Nor aught so good but, strain'd from that fair use,
Revolts from true birth, stumbling on abuse.
Virtue itself turns vice, being misapplied,
And vice sometime's by action dignified.
Within the infant rind of this small flower
Poison hath residence, and medicine power;
For this, being smelt, with that part cheers each part;
Being tasted, slays all senses with the heart.
Two such opposed kings encamp them still
In man as well as herbs-grace and rude will;
And where the worser is predominant,
Full soon the canker death eats up that plant.

Enter Romeo.

Rom. Good morrow, father.

Friar. Benedicite!
What early tongue so sweet saluteth me?
Young son, it argues a distempered head
So soon to bid good morrow to thy bed.
Care keeps his watch in every old man's eye,
And where care lodges sleep will never lie;
But where unbruised youth with unstuff'd brain
Doth couch his limbs, there golden sleep doth reign.
Therefore thy earliness doth me assure
Thou art uprous'd with some distemp'rature;
Or if not so, then here I hit it right-
Our Romeo hath not been in bed to-night.

Rom. That last is true-the sweeter rest was mine.

Friar. God pardon sin! Wast thou with Rosaline?

Rom. With Rosaline, my ghostly father? No.
I have forgot that name, and that name's woe.

Friar. That's my good son! But where hast thou been then?

Rom. I'll tell thee ere thou ask it me again.
I have been feasting with mine enemy,
Where on a sudden one hath wounded me
That's by me wounded. Both our remedies
Within thy help and holy physic lies.
I bear no hatred, blessed man, for, lo,
My intercession likewise steads my foe.

Friar. Be plain, good son, and homely in thy drift
Riddling confession finds but riddling shrift.

Rom. Then plainly know my heart's dear love is set
On the fair daughter of rich Capulet;
As mine on hers, so hers is set on mine,
And all combin'd, save what thou must combine

By holy marriage. When, and where, and how
We met, we woo'd, and made exchange of vow,
I'll tell thee as we pass; but this I pray,
That thou consent to marry us to-day.

Friar. Holy Saint Francis! What a change is here!
Is Rosaline, that thou didst love so dear,
So soon forsaken? Young men's love then lies
Not truly in their hearts, but in their eyes.
Jesu Maria! What a deal of brine
Hath wash'd thy sallow cheeks for Rosaline!
How much salt water thrown away in waste,
To season love, that of it doth not taste!
The sun not yet thy sighs from heaven clears,
Thy old groans ring yet in mine ancient ears.
Lo, here upon thy cheek the stain doth sit
Of an old tear that is not wash'd off yet.
If e'er thou wast thyself, and these woes thine,
Thou and these woes were all for Rosaline.

And art thou chang'd? Pronounce this sentence then:

Women may fall when there's no strength in men.

Rom. Thou chid'st me oft for loving Rosaline.

Friar. For doting, not for loving, pupil mine.

Rom. And bad'st me bury love.

Friar. Not in a grave
To lay one in, another out to have.

Rom. I pray thee chide not. She whom I love now
Doth grace for grace and love for love allow.

The other did not so.

Friar. O, she knew well
Thy love did read by rote, that could not spell.

But come, young waverer, come go with me.
In one respect I'll thy assistant be;

For this alliance may so happy prove
To turn your households' rancour to pure love.

Rom. O, let us hence! I stand on sudden haste.

Friar. Wisely, and slow. They stumble that run fast.
Exeunt.

Scene IV. A street.

Enter Benvolio and Mercutio.

Mer. Where the devil should this Romeo be?
Came he not home to-night?

Ben. Not to his father's. I spoke with his man.

Mer. Why, that same pale hard-hearted wench, that Rosaline,
Torments him so that he will sure run mad.

Ben. Tybalt, the kinsman to old Capulet, Hath sent a letter to his father's house.

Mer. A challenge, on my life.

Ben. Romeo will answer it.

Mer. Any man that can write may answer a letter.

Ben. Nay, he will answer the letter's master, how he dares,
being dared.

Mer. Alas, poor Romeo, he is already dead! stabb'd with a white
wench's black eye; shot through the ear with a love song; the
very pin of his heart cleft with the blind bow-boy's
butt-shaft;
and is he a man to encounter Tybalt?

Ben. Why, what is Tybalt?

Mer. More than Prince of Cats, I can tell you. O, he's the
courageous captain of compliments. He fights as you sing

pricksong-keeps time, distance, and proportion; rests me his minim rest, one, two, and the third in your bosom! the very butcher of a silk button, a duellist, a duellist! a gentleman of the very first house, of the first and second cause. Ah, the immortal passado! the punto reverse! the hay.

Ben. The what?

Mer. The pox of such antic, lisping, affecting fantasticoes-these new tuners of accent! 'By Jesu, a very good blade! a very tall man! a very good whore!' Why, is not this a lamentable thing, grandsir, that we should be thus afflicted with these strange flies, these fashion-mongers, these pardona-mi's, who stand so much on the new form that they cannot sit at ease on the old bench? O, their bones, their bones!

Enter Romeo.

Ben. Here comes Romeo! here comes Romeo!

Mer. Without his roe, like a dried herring. O flesh, flesh, how art thou fishified! Now is he for the numbers that Petrarch flowed in. Laura, to his lady, was but a kitchen wench (marry, she had a better love to berhyme her), Dido a dowdy, Cleopatra a gypsy, Helen and Hero hildings and harlots, This be a gray eye or so, but not to the purpose. Signior Romeo, bon jour! There's a French salutation to your French slop. You gave us the counterfeit fairly last night.

Rom. Good morrow to you both. What counterfeit did I give you?

Mer. The slip, sir, the slip. Can you not conceive?

Rom. Pardon, good Mercutio. My business was great, and in such a case as mine a man may strain courtesy.

Mer. That's as much as to say, such a case as yours constrains a man to bow in the hams.

Rom. Meaning, to cursy.

Mer. Thou hast most kindly hit it.

Rom. A most courteous exposition.

Mer. Nay, I am the very pink of courtesy.

Rom. Pink for flower.

Mer. Right.

Rom. Why, then is my pump well-flower'd.

Mer. Well said! Follow me this jest now till thou hast worn out thy pump, that, when the single sole of it is worn, the jest may remain, after the wearing, solely singular.

Rom. O single-sold jest, solely singular for the singleness!

Mer. Come between us, good Benvolio! My wits faint.

Rom. Swits and spurs, swits and spurs! or I'll cry a match.

Mer. Nay, if our wits run the wild-goose chase, I am done; for thou hast more of the wild goose in one of thy wits than, I am

sure, I

have in my whole five. Was I with you there for the goose?

Rom. Thou wast never with me for anything when thou wast not there for the goose.

Mer. I will bite thee by the ear for that jest.

Rom. Nay, good goose, bite not!

Mer. Thy wit is a very bitter sweeting; it is a most sharp sauce.

Rom. And is it not, then, well serv'd in to a sweet goose?

Mer. O, here's a wit of cheveril, that stretches from an inch

narrow to an ell broad!

Rom. I stretch it out for that word 'broad,' which, added to the

goose, proves thee far and wide a broad goose.

Mer. Why, is not this better now than groaning for love? Now art thou sociable, now art thou Romeo; now art thou what thou art, by art as well as by nature. For this drivelling love is like a great natural that runs lolling up and down to hide his bauble in a hole.

Ben. Stop there, stop there!

Mer. Thou desirest me to stop in my tale against the hair.

Ben. Thou wouldst else have made thy tale large.

Mer. O, thou art deceiv'd! I would have made it short; for I was come to the whole depth of my tale, and meant indeed to occupy the argument no longer.

Rom. Here's goodly gear!

Enter Nurse and her Man *[Peter]* .

Mer. A sail, a sail!

Ben. Two, two! a shirt and a smock.

Nurse. Peter!

Peter. Anon.

Nurse. My fan, Peter.

Mer. Good Peter, to hide her face; for her fan's the fairer face of the two.

Nurse. God ye good morrow, gentlemen.

Mer. God ye good-den, fair gentlewoman.

Nurse. Is it good-den?

Mer. 'Tis no less, I tell ye; for the bawdy hand of the dial is now
upon the prick of noon.

Nurse. Out upon you! What a man are you!

Rom. One, gentlewoman, that God hath made for himself to mar.

Nurse. By my troth, it is well said. 'For himself to mar,' quoth
'a? Gentlemen, can any of you tell me where I may find the young Romeo?

Rom. I can tell you; but young Romeo will be older when you have
found him than he was when you sought him. I am the youngest of
that name, for fault of a worse.

Nurse. You say well.

Mer. Yea, is the worst well? Very well took, i' faith! wisely, wisely.

Nurse. If you be he, sir, I desire some confidence with you.

Ben. She will endite him to some supper.

Mer. A bawd, a bawd, a bawd! So ho!

Rom. What hast thou found?

Mer. No hare, sir; unless a hare, sir, in a lenten pie, that is something stale and hoar ere it be spent

He walks by them and sings.

An old hare hoar,
And an old hare hoar,
Is very good meat in Lent;
But a hare that is hoar
Is too much for a score
When it hoars ere it be spent.

Romeo, will you come to your father's? We'll to dinner thither.

Rom. I will follow you.

Mer. Farewell, ancient lady. Farewell,

[sings] lady, lady, lady.

Exeunt Mercutio, Benvolio.

Nurse. Marry, farewell! I Pray you, Sir, what saucy merchant was this that was so full of his ropery?

Rom. A gentleman, nurse, that loves to hear himself talk and will
speak more in a minute than he will stand to in a month.

Nurse. An 'a speak anything against me, I'll take him down, an 'a
were lustier than he is, and twenty such jacks; and if I
cannot,
I'll find those that shall. Scurvy knave! I am none of his
flirt-gills; I am none of his skains-mates. And thou must stand
by too, and suffer every knave to use me at his pleasure!

Peter. I saw no man use you at his pleasure. If I had, my weapon
should quickly have been out, I warrant you. I dare draw as soon
as another man, if I see occasion in a good quarrel, and the law on my side.

Nurse. Now, afore God, I am so vexed that every part about me
quivers. Scurvy knave! Pray you, sir, a word; and, as I told you,
my young lady bid me enquire you out. What she bid me say, I will
keep to myself; but first let me tell ye, if ye should lead her
into a fool's paradise, as they say, it were a very gross kind of
behaviour, as they say; for the gentlewoman is young; and
therefore, if you should deal double with her, truly it were an

ill thing to be off'red to any gentlewoman, and very weak dealing.

Rom. Nurse, commend me to thy lady and mistress. I protest unto thee-

Nurse. Good heart, and i' faith I will tell her as much. Lord, Lord! she will be a joyful woman.

Rom. What wilt thou tell her, nurse? Thou dost not mark me.

Nurse. I will tell her, sir, that you do protest, which, as I take it, is a gentlemanlike offer.

Rom. Bid her devise
Some means to come to shrift this afternoon;
And there she shall at Friar Laurence' cell
Be shriv'd and married. Here is for thy pains.

Nurse. No, truly, sir; not a penny.

Rom. Go to! I say you shall.

Nurse. This afternoon, sir? Well, she shall be there.

Rom. And stay, good nurse, behind the abbey wall.
Within this hour my man shall be with thee
And bring thee cords made like a tackled stair,
Which to the high topgallant of my joy
Must be my convoy in the secret night.

Farewell. Be trusty, and I'll quit thy pains.

Farewell. Commend me to thy mistress.

Nurse. Now God in heaven bless thee! Hark you, sir.

Rom. What say'st thou, my dear nurse?

Nurse. Is your man secret? Did you ne'er hear say,
Two may keep counsel, putting one away?

Rom. I warrant thee my man's as true as steel.

Nurse. Well, sir, my mistress is the sweetest lady. Lord, Lord!

when 'twas a little prating thing-O, there is a nobleman in

town, one Paris, that would fain lay knife aboard; but she, good

soul, had as lieve see a toad, a very toad, as see him. I anger

her sometimes, and tell her that Paris is the properer man; but

I'll warrant you, when I say so, she looks as pale as any clout

in the versal world. Doth not rosemary and Romeo begin both with a letter?

Rom. Ay, nurse; what of that? Both with an R.

Nurse. Ah, mocker! that's the dog's name. R is for the-No; I know

it begins with some other letter; and she hath the prettiest

sententious of it, of you and rosemary, that it would do you good to hear it.

Rom. Commend me to thy lady.

Nurse. Ay, a thousand times. *[Exit Romeo.]* Peter!

Peter. Anon.

Nurse. Peter, take my fan, and go before, and apace.

Exeunt.

Scene V. Capulet's orchard.

Enter Juliet.

Jul. The clock struck nine when I did send the nurse;
In half an hour she promis'd to return.

Perchance she cannot meet him. That's not so.
O, she is lame! Love's heralds should be thoughts,
Which ten times faster glide than the sun's beams
Driving back shadows over low'ring hills.
Therefore do nimble-pinion'd doves draw Love,
And therefore hath the wind-swift Cupid wings.
Now is the sun upon the highmost hill
Of this day's journey, and from nine till twelve
Is three long hours; yet she is not come.
Had she affections and warm youthful blood,
She would be as swift in motion as a ball;

My words would bandy her to my sweet love,

And his to me,

But old folks, many feign as they were dead-

Unwieldy, slow, heavy and pale as lead.

Enter Nurse *[and Peter]* .

O God, she comes! O honey nurse, what news?

Hast thou met with him? Send thy man away.

Nurse. Peter, stay at the gate.

[Exit Peter.]

Jul. Now, good sweet nurse-O Lord, why look'st thou sad?

Though news be sad, yet tell them merrily;

If good, thou shamest the music of sweet news

By playing it to me with so sour a face.

Nurse. I am aweary, give me leave awhile.

Fie, how my bones ache! What a jaunce have I had!

Jul. I would thou hadst my bones, and I thy news.
Nay, come, I pray thee speak. Good, good nurse, speak.

Nurse. Jesu, what haste! Can you not stay awhile?
Do you not see that I am out of breath?

Jul. How art thou out of breath when thou hast breath
To say to me that thou art out of breath?
The excuse that thou dost make in this delay
Is longer than the tale thou dost excuse.

Is thy news good or bad? Answer to that.
Say either, and I'll stay the circumstance.

Let me be satisfied, is't good or bad?

Nurse. Well, you have made a simple choice; you know not how to choose a man. Romeo? No, not he. Though his face be better than any man's, yet his leg excels all men's; and for a hand and a foot, and a body, though they be not to be talk'd on, yet they are past compare. He is not the flower of courtesy, but, I'll warrant him, as gentle as a lamb. Go thy ways, wench; serve

God.

What, have you din'd at home?

Jul. No, no. But all this did I know before.
What says he of our marriage? What of that?

Nurse. Lord, how my head aches! What a head have I!
It beats as it would fall in twenty pieces.

My back o' t' other side,- ah, my back, my back!
Beshrew your heart for sending me about
To catch my death with jauncing up and down!

Jul. I' faith, I am sorry that thou art not well.
Sweet, sweet, sweet nurse, tell me, what says my love?

Nurse. Your love says, like an honest gentleman, and a courteous,
and a kind, and a handsome; and, I warrant, a virtuous-Where is your mother?

Jul. Where is my mother? Why, she is within.
Where should she be? How oddly thou repliest!
'Your love says, like an honest gentleman,
"Where is your mother?"'

Nurse. O God's Lady dear!
Are you so hot? Marry come up, I trow.

Is this the poultice for my aching bones?
Henceforward do your messages yourself.

Jul. Here's such a coil! Come, what says Romeo?

Nurse. Have you got leave to go to shrift to-day?

Jul. I have.

Nurse. Then hie you hence to Friar Laurence' cell;
There stays a husband to make you a wife.

Now comes the wanton blood up in your cheeks:

They'll be in scarlet straight at any news.

Hie you to church; I must another way,

To fetch a ladder, by the which your love

Must climb a bird's nest soon when it is dark.

I am the drudge, and toil in your delight;

But you shall bear the burthen soon at night.

Go; I'll to dinner; hie you to the cell.

Jul. Hie to high fortune! Honest nurse, farewell.

Exeunt.

Scene VI. Friar Laurence's cell.

Enter Friar *[Laurence]* and Romeo.

Friar. So smile the heavens upon this holy act

That after-hours with sorrow chide us not!

Rom. Amen, amen! But come what sorrow can,

It cannot countervail the exchange of joy

That one short minute gives me in her sight.
Do thou but close our hands with holy words,
Then love-devouring death do what he dare-
It is enough I may but call her mine.

Friar. These violent delights have violent ends
And in their triumph die, like fire and powder,
Which, as they kiss, consume. The sweetest honey
Is loathsome in his own deliciousness
And in the taste confounds the appetite.
Therefore love moderately: long love doth so;
Too swift arrives as tardy as too slow.

Enter Juliet.

Here comes the lady. O, so light a foot
Will ne'er wear out the everlasting flint.
A lover may bestride the gossamer
That idles in the wanton summer air,
And yet not fall; so light is vanity.

Jul. Good even to my ghostly confessor.

Friar. Romeo shall thank thee, daughter, for us both.

Jul. As much to him, else is his thanks too much.

Rom. Ah, Juliet, if the measure of thy joy
Be heap'd like mine, and that thy skill be more
To blazon it, then sweeten with thy breath
This neighbour air, and let rich music's tongue
Unfold the imagin'd happiness that both
Receive in either by this dear encounter.

Jul. Conceit, more rich in matter than in words,
Brags of his substance, not of ornament.
They are but beggars that can count their worth;
But my true love is grown to such excess
cannot sum up sum of half my wealth.

Friar. Come, come with me, and we will make short work;
For, by your leaves, you shall not stay alone

Till Holy Church incorporate two in one.

[Exeunt.]

ACT III.
Scene I. A public place.

Enter Mercutio, Benvolio, and Men.

Ben. I pray thee, good Mercutio, let's retire.
The day is hot, the Capulets abroad.
And if we meet, we shall not scape a brawl,
For now, these hot days, is the mad blood stirring.

Mer. Thou art like one of these fellows that, when he enters the confines of a tavern, claps me his sword upon the table and says 'God send me no need of thee!' and by the operation of the second cup draws him on the drawer, when indeed there is no need.

Ben. Am I like such a fellow?

Mer. Come, come, thou art as hot a jack in thy mood as any in
Italy; and as soon moved to be moody, and as soon moody to be moved.

Ben. And what to?

Mer. Nay, an there were two such, we should have none shortly, for
one would kill the other. Thou! why, thou wilt quarrel with a man
that hath a hair more or a hair less in his beard than thou hast.
Thou wilt quarrel with a man for cracking nuts, having no other
reason but because thou hast hazel eyes. What eye but such an eye
would spy out such a quarrel? Thy head is as full of quarrels as
an egg is full of meat; and yet thy head hath been beaten as
addle as an egg for quarrelling. Thou hast quarrell'd with a man
for coughing in the street, because he hath wakened thy dog that
hath lain asleep in the sun. Didst thou not fall out with a
tailor for wearing his new doublet before Easter, with another
for tying his new shoes with an old riband? And yet thou wilt
tutor me from quarrelling!

Ben. An I were so apt to quarrel as thou art, any man should buy
the fee simple of my life for an hour and a quarter.

Mer. The fee simple? O simple!

Enter Tybalt and others.

Ben. By my head, here come the Capulets.

Mer. By my heel, I care not.

Tyb. Follow me close, for I will speak to them.
Gentlemen, good den. A word with one of you.

Mer. And but one word with one of us?
Couple it with something; make it a word and a blow.

Tyb. You shall find me apt enough to that, sir, an you will give me occasion.

Mer. Could you not take some occasion without giving?

Tyb. Mercutio, thou consortest with Romeo.

Mer. Consort? What, dost thou make us minstrels? An thou make minstrels of us, look to hear nothing but discords. Here's my fiddlestick; here's that shall make you dance. Zounds, consort!

Ben. We talk here in the public haunt of men.
Either withdraw unto some private place
And reason coldly of your grievances,
Or else depart. Here all eyes gaze on us.

Mer. Men's eyes were made to look, and let them gaze.
I will not budge for no man's pleasure,

Enter Romeo.

Tyb. Well, peace be with you, sir. Here comes my man.

Mer. But I'll be hang'd, sir, if he wear your livery.
Marry, go before to field, he'll be your follower!

Your worship in that sense may call him man.

Tyb. Romeo, the love I bear thee can afford
No better term than this: thou art a villain.

Rom. Tybalt, the reason that I have to love thee
Doth much excuse the appertaining rage
To such a greeting. Villain am I none.
Therefore farewell. I see thou knowest me not.

Tyb. Boy, this shall not excuse the injuries
That thou hast done me; therefore turn and draw.

Rom. I do protest I never injur'd thee,
But love thee better than thou canst devise
Till thou shalt know the reason of my love;
And so good Capulet, which name I tender
As dearly as mine own, be satisfied.

Mer. O calm, dishonourable, vile submission!
Alla stoccata carries it away. *[Draws.]*
Tybalt, you ratcatcher, will you walk?

Tyb. What wouldst thou have with me?

Mer. Good King of Cats, nothing but one of your nine lives.
That I
mean to make bold withal, and, as you shall use me hereafter,
dry-beat the rest of the eight. Will you pluck your sword out of
his pitcher by the ears? Make haste, lest mine be about your ears ere it be out.

Tyb. I am for you. *[Draws.]*

Rom. Gentle Mercutio, put thy rapier up.

Mer. Come, sir, your passado!
[They fight.]

Rom. Draw, Benvolio; beat down their weapons.
Gentlemen, for shame! forbear this outrage!
Tybalt, Mercutio, the Prince expressly hath
Forbid this bandying in Verona streets.

Hold, Tybalt! Good Mercutio!

Tybalt under Romeo's arm thrusts Mercutio in, and flies

[with his Followers] .

Mer. I am hurt.

A plague o' both your houses! I am sped.

Is he gone and hath nothing?

Ben. What, art thou hurt?

Mer. Ay, ay, a scratch, a scratch. Marry, 'tis enough.

Where is my page? Go, villain, fetch a surgeon.

[Exit Page.]

Rom. Courage, man. The hurt cannot be much.

Mer. No, 'tis not so deep as a well, nor so wide as a church door;

but 'tis enough, 'twill serve. Ask for me to-morrow, and you

shall find me a grave man. I am peppered, I warrant, for this

world. A plague o' both your houses! Zounds, a dog, a rat, a mouse, a cat, to scratch a man to death! a braggart, a rogue, a villain, that fights by the book of arithmetic! Why the devil came you between us? I was hurt under your arm.

Rom. I thought all for the best.

Mer. Help me into some house, Benvolio,
Or I shall faint. A plague o' both your houses!
They have made worms' meat of me. I have it,
And soundly too. Your houses!

[Exit . [supported by Benvolio] .

Rom. This gentleman, the Prince's near ally,
My very friend, hath got this mortal hurt
In my behalf-my reputation stain'd
With Tybalt's slander-Tybalt, that an hour
Hath been my kinsman. O sweet Juliet,
Thy beauty hath made me effeminate
And in my temper soft'ned valour's steel.

Enter Benvolio.

Ben. O Romeo, Romeo, brave Mercutio's dead!

That gallant spirit hath aspir'd the clouds,

Which too untimely here did scorn the earth.

Rom. This day's black fate on moe days doth depend;

This but begins the woe others must end.

Enter Tybalt.

Ben. Here comes the furious Tybalt back again.

Rom. Alive in triumph, and Mercutio slain?

Away to heaven respective lenity,

And fire-ey'd fury be my conduct now!

Now, Tybalt, take the 'villain' back again

That late thou gavest me; for Mercutio's soul

Is but a little way above our heads,

Staying for thine to keep him company.

Either thou or I, or both, must go with him.

Tyb. Thou, wretched boy, that didst consort him here,

Shalt with him hence.

Rom. This shall determine that.

They fight. Tybalt falls.

Ben. Romeo, away, be gone!

The citizens are up, and Tybalt slain.

Stand not amaz'd. The Prince will doom thee death

If thou art taken. Hence, be gone, away!

Rom. O, I am fortune's fool!

Ben. Why dost thou stay?

Exit Romeo.

Enter Citizens.

Citizen. Which way ran he that kill'd Mercutio?

Tybalt, that murtherer, which way ran he?

Ben. There lies that Tybalt.

Citizen. Up, sir, go with me.
I charge thee in the Prince's name obey.

Enter Prince *[attended]* , Old Montague, Capulet, their Wives,

and *[others]* .

Prince. Where are the vile beginners of this fray?

Ben. O noble Prince. I can discover all
The unlucky manage of this fatal brawl.
There lies the man, slain by young Romeo,
That slew thy kinsman, brave Mercutio.

Cap. Wife. Tybalt, my cousin! O my brother's child!
O Prince! O husband! O, the blood is spill'd
Of my dear kinsman! Prince, as thou art true,

For blood of ours shed blood of Montague.

O cousin, cousin!

Prince. Benvolio, who began this bloody fray?

Ben. Tybalt, here slain, whom Romeo's hand did stay.
Romeo, that spoke him fair, bid him bethink
How nice the quarrel was, and urg'd withal
Your high displeasure. All this-uttered
With gentle breath, calm look, knees humbly bow'd-
Could not take truce with the unruly spleen
Of Tybalt deaf to peace, but that he tilts
With piercing steel at bold Mercutio's breast;
Who, all as hot, turns deadly point to point,
And, with a martial scorn, with one hand beats
Cold death aside and with the other sends
It back to Tybalt, whose dexterity
Retorts it. Romeo he cries aloud,
'Hold, friends! friends, part!' and swifter than his tongue,
His agile arm beats down their fatal points,

And 'twixt them rushes; underneath whose arm
An envious thrust from Tybalt hit the life
Of stout Mercutio, and then Tybalt fled;
But by-and-by comes back to Romeo,
Who had but newly entertain'd revenge,
And to't they go like lightning; for, ere I
Could draw to part them, was stout Tybalt slain;
And, as he fell, did Romeo turn and fly.
This is the truth, or let Benvolio die.

Cap. Wife. He is a kinsman to the Montague;
Affection makes him false, he speaks not true.
Some twenty of them fought in this black strife,
And all those twenty could but kill one life.

I beg for justice, which thou, Prince, must give.
Romeo slew Tybalt; Romeo must not live.

Prince. Romeo slew him; he slew Mercutio.
Who now the price of his dear blood doth owe?

Mon. Not Romeo, Prince; he was Mercutio's friend;
His fault concludes but what the law should end,
The life of Tybalt.

Prince. And for that offence
Immediately we do exile him hence.
I have an interest in your hate's proceeding,
My blood for your rude brawls doth lie a-bleeding;
But I'll amerce you with so strong a fine
That you shall all repent the loss of mine.
I will be deaf to pleading and excuses;
Nor tears nor prayers shall purchase out abuses.
Therefore use none. Let Romeo hence in haste,
Else, when he is found, that hour is his last.

Bear hence this body, and attend our will.
Mercy but murders, pardoning those that kill.

Exeunt.

Scene II. Capulet's orchard.

Enter Juliet alone.

Jul. Gallop apace, you fiery-footed steeds,
Towards Phoebus' lodging! Such a wagoner
As Phaeton would whip you to the West
And bring in cloudy night immediately.
Spread thy close curtain, love-performing night,
That runaway eyes may wink, and Romeo
Leap to these arms untalk'd of and unseen.
Lovers can see to do their amorous rites
By their own beauties; or, if love be blind,
It best agrees with night. Come, civil night,
Thou sober-suited matron, all in black,
And learn me how to lose a winning match,
Play'd for a pair of stainless maidenhoods.
Hood my unmann'd blood, bating in my cheeks,
With thy black mantle till strange love, grown bold,
Think true love acted simple modesty.
Come, night; come, Romeo; come, thou day in night;
For thou wilt lie upon the wings of night

Whiter than new snow upon a raven's back.

Come, gentle night; come, loving, black-brow'd night;

Give me my Romeo; and, when he shall die,

Take him and cut him out in little stars,

And he will make the face of heaven so fine

That all the world will be in love with night

And pay no worship to the garish sun.

O, I have bought the mansion of a love,

But not possess'd it; and though I am sold,

Not yet enjoy'd. So tedious is this day

As is the night before some festival

To an impatient child that hath new robes

And may not wear them. O, here comes my nurse,

Enter Nurse, with cords.

And she brings news; and every tongue that speaks

But Romeo's name speaks heavenly eloquence.

Now, nurse, what news? What hast thou there? the cords

That Romeo bid thee fetch?

Nurse. Ay, ay, the cords.

[Throws them down.]

Jul. Ah me! what news? Why dost thou wring thy hands?

Nurse. Ah, weraday! he's dead, he's dead, he's dead!
We are undone, lady, we are undone!

Alack the day! he's gone, he's kill'd, he's dead!

Jul. Can heaven be so envious?

Nurse. Romeo can,
Though heaven cannot. O Romeo, Romeo!

Who ever would have thought it? Romeo!

Jul. What devil art thou that dost torment me thus?
This torture should be roar'd in dismal hell.

Hath Romeo slain himself? Say thou but 'I,'
And that bare vowel 'I' shall poison more
Than the death-darting eye of cockatrice.
I am not I, if there be such an 'I';
Or those eyes shut that make thee answer 'I.'
If he be slain, say 'I'; or if not, 'no.'

Brief sounds determine of my weal or woe.

Nurse. I saw the wound, I saw it with mine eyes,
(God save the mark!) here on his manly breast.
A piteous corse, a bloody piteous corse;
Pale, pale as ashes, all bedaub'd in blood,
All in gore-blood. I swounded at the sight.

Jul. O, break, my heart! poor bankrout, break at once!
To prison, eyes; ne'er look on liberty!
Vile earth, to earth resign; end motion here,
And thou and Romeo press one heavy bier!

Nurse. O Tybalt, Tybalt, the best friend I had!

O courteous Tybalt! honest gentleman
That ever I should live to see thee dead!

Jul. What storm is this that blows so contrary?
Is Romeo slaught'red, and is Tybalt dead?

My dear-lov'd cousin, and my dearer lord?
Then, dreadful trumpet, sound the general doom!

For who is living, if those two are gone?

Nurse. Tybalt is gone, and Romeo banished;
Romeo that kill'd him, he is banished.

Jul. O God! Did Romeo's hand shed Tybalt's blood?

Nurse. It did, it did! alas the day, it did!

Jul. O serpent heart, hid with a flow'ring face!
Did ever dragon keep so fair a cave?

Beautiful tyrant! fiend angelical!
Dove-feather'd raven! wolvish-ravening lamb!

Despised substance of divinest show!
Just opposite to what thou justly seem'st-
A damned saint, an honourable villain!
O nature, what hadst thou to do in hell
When thou didst bower the spirit of a fiend
In mortal paradise of such sweet flesh?
Was ever book containing such vile matter
So fairly bound? O, that deceit should dwell
In such a gorgeous palace!

Nurse. There's no trust,
No faith, no honesty in men; all perjur'd,
All forsworn, all naught, all dissemblers.
Ah, where's my man? Give me some aqua vitae.

These griefs, these woes, these sorrows make me old.
Shame come to Romeo!

Jul. Blister'd be thy tongue
For such a wish! He was not born to shame.
Upon his brow shame is asham'd to sit;
For 'tis a throne where honour may be crown'd
Sole monarch of the universal earth.
O, what a beast was I to chide at him!

Nurse. Will you speak well of him that kill'd your cousin?

Jul. Shall I speak ill of him that is my husband?
Ah, poor my lord, what tongue shall smooth thy name
When I, thy three-hours wife, have mangled it?
But wherefore, villain, didst thou kill my cousin?

That villain cousin would have kill'd my husband.
Back, foolish tears, back to your native spring!
Your tributary drops belong to woe,
Which you, mistaking, offer up to joy.
My husband lives, that Tybalt would have slain;
And Tybalt's dead, that would have slain my husband.

All this is comfort; wherefore weep I then?
Some word there was, worser than Tybalt's death,
That murd'red me. I would forget it fain;
But O, it presses to my memory
Like damned guilty deeds to sinners' minds!
'Tybalt is dead, and Romeo-banished.'

That 'banished,' that one word 'banished,'
Hath slain ten thousand Tybalts. Tybalt's death
Was woe enough, if it had ended there;
Or, if sour woe delights in fellowship
And needly will be rank'd with other griefs,
Why followed not, when she said 'Tybalt's dead,'
Thy father, or thy mother, nay, or both,
Which modern lamentation might have mov'd?
But with a rearward following Tybalt's death,
'Romeo is banished'- to speak that word
Is father, mother, Tybalt, Romeo, Juliet,
All slain, all dead. 'Romeo is banished'-
There is no end, no limit, measure, bound,
In that word's death; no words can that woe sound.

Where is my father and my mother, nurse?

Nurse. Weeping and wailing over Tybalt's corse.
Will you go to them? I will bring you thither.

Jul. Wash they his wounds with tears? Mine shall be spent,
When theirs are dry, for Romeo's banishment.
Take up those cords. Poor ropes, you are beguil'd,
Both you and I, for Romeo is exil'd.
He made you for a highway to my bed;
But I, a maid, die maiden-widowed.
Come, cords; come, nurse. I'll to my wedding bed;
And death, not Romeo, take my maidenhead!

Nurse. Hie to your chamber. I'll find Romeo
To comfort you. I wot well where he is.

Hark ye, your Romeo will be here at night.
I'll to him; he is hid at Laurence' cell.

Jul. O, find him! give this ring to my true knight
And bid him come to take his last farewell.

Exeunt.

Scene III. Friar Laurence's cell.

Enter Friar *[Laurence]* .

Friar. Romeo, come forth; come forth, thou fearful man.

Affliction is enanmour'd of thy parts,

And thou art wedded to calamity.

Enter Romeo.

Rom. Father, what news? What is the Prince's doom

What sorrow craves acquaintance at my hand

That I yet know not?

Friar. Too familiar

Is my dear son with such sour company.

I bring thee tidings of the Prince's doom.

Rom. What less than doomsday is the Prince's doom?

Friar. A gentler judgment vanish'd from his lips-
Not body's death, but body's banishment.

Rom. Ha, banishment? Be merciful, say 'death';
For exile hath more terror in his look,
Much more than death. Do not say 'banishment.'

Friar. Hence from Verona art thou banished.
Be patient, for the world is broad and wide.

Rom. There is no world without Verona walls,
But purgatory, torture, hell itself.
Hence banished is banish'd from the world,
And world's exile is death. Then 'banishment'

Is death misterm'd. Calling death 'banishment,'
Thou cut'st my head off with a golden axe
And smilest upon the stroke that murders me.

Friar. O deadly sin! O rude unthankfulness!
Thy fault our law calls death; but the kind Prince,

Taking thy part, hath brush'd aside the law,
And turn'd that black word death to banishment.

This is dear mercy, and thou seest it not.

Rom. 'Tis torture, and not mercy. Heaven is here,
Where Juliet lives; and every cat and dog
And little mouse, every unworthy thing,
Live here in heaven and may look on her;
But Romeo may not. More validity,
More honourable state, more courtship lives
In carrion flies than Romeo. They may seize
On the white wonder of dear Juliet's hand
And steal immortal blessing from her lips,
Who, even in pure and vestal modesty,
Still blush, as thinking their own kisses sin;
But Romeo may not-he is banished.
This may flies do, when I from this must fly;
They are free men, but I am banished.

And sayest thou yet that exile is not death?

Hadst thou no poison mix'd, no sharp-ground knife,
No sudden mean of death, though ne'er so mean,
But 'banished' to kill me- 'banished'?
O friar, the damned use that word in hell;
Howling attends it! How hast thou the heart,
Being a divine, a ghostly confessor,
A sin-absolver, and my friend profess'd,
To mangle me with that word 'banished'?

Friar. Thou fond mad man, hear me a little speak.

Rom. O, thou wilt speak again of banishment.

Friar. I'll give thee armour to keep off that word;
Adversity's sweet milk, philosophy,
To comfort thee, though thou art banished.

Rom. Yet 'banished'? Hang up philosophy!
Unless philosophy can make a Juliet,
Displant a town, reverse a prince's doom,
It helps not, it prevails not. Talk no more.

Friar. O, then I see that madmen have no ears.

Rom. How should they, when that wise men have no eyes?

Friar. Let me dispute with thee of thy estate.

Rom. Thou canst not speak of that thou dost not feel.
Wert thou as young as I, Juliet thy love,
An hour but married, Tybalt murdered,
Doting like me, and like me banished,
Then mightst thou speak, then mightst thou tear thy hair,
And fall upon the ground, as I do now,
Taking the measure of an unmade grave.
Knock *[within]* .

Friar. Arise; one knocks. Good Romeo, hide thyself.

Rom. Not I; unless the breath of heartsick groans,
Mist-like infold me from the search of eyes. Knock.

Friar. Hark, how they knock! Who's there? Romeo, arise;

Thou wilt be taken.- Stay awhile!- Stand up; Knock.

Run to my study.- By-and-by!- God's will,

What simpleness is this.- I come, I come! Knock.

Who knocks so hard? Whence come you? What's your will?

Nurse. [within] Let me come in, and you shall know my errand.

I come from Lady Juliet.

Friar. Welcome then.

Enter Nurse.

Nurse. O holy friar, O, tell me, holy friar,

Where is my lady's lord, where's Romeo?

Friar. There on the ground, with his own tears made drunk.

Nurse. O, he is even in my mistress' case,

Just in her case!

Friar. O woeful sympathy!
Piteous predicament!

Nurse. Even so lies she,
Blubb'ring and weeping, weeping and blubbering.

Stand up, stand up! Stand, an you be a man.
For Juliet's sake, for her sake, rise and stand!

Why should you fall into so deep an O?

Rom. (rises) Nurse-

Nurse. Ah sir! ah sir! Well, death's the end of all.

Rom. Spakest thou of Juliet? How is it with her?
Doth not she think me an old murtherer,
Now I have stain'd the childhood of our joy
With blood remov'd but little from her own?
Where is she? and how doth she! and what says

My conceal'd lady to our cancell'd love?

Nurse. O, she says nothing, sir, but weeps and weeps;
And now falls on her bed, and then starts up,
And Tybalt calls; and then on Romeo cries,
And then down falls again.

Rom. As if that name,
Shot from the deadly level of a gun,
Did murther her; as that name's cursed hand
Murder'd her kinsman. O, tell me, friar, tell me,
In what vile part of this anatomy
Doth my name lodge? Tell me, that I may sack
The hateful mansion. *[Draws his dagger.]*

Friar. Hold thy desperate hand.
Art thou a man? Thy form cries out thou art;
Thy tears are womanish, thy wild acts denote
The unreasonable fury of a beast.

Unseemly woman in a seeming man!

Or ill-beseeming beast in seeming both!
Thou hast amaz'd me. By my holy order,
I thought thy disposition better temper'd.

Hast thou slain Tybalt? Wilt thou slay thyself?
And slay thy lady that in thy life lives,
By doing damned hate upon thyself?
Why railest thou on thy birth, the heaven, and earth?
Since birth and heaven and earth, all three do meet
In thee at once; which thou at once wouldst lose.
Fie, fie, thou shamest thy shape, thy love, thy wit,
Which, like a usurer, abound'st in all,
And usest none in that true use indeed
Which should bedeck thy shape, thy love, thy wit.
Thy noble shape is but a form of wax
Digressing from the valour of a man;
Thy dear love sworn but hollow perjury,
Killing that love which thou hast vow'd to cherish;
Thy wit, that ornament to shape and love,
Misshapen in the conduct of them both,
Like powder in a skilless soldier's flask,

Is set afire by thine own ignorance,

And thou dismemb'red with thine own defence.

What, rouse thee, man! Thy Juliet is alive,

For whose dear sake thou wast but lately dead.

There art thou happy. Tybalt would kill thee,

But thou slewest Tybalt. There art thou happy too.

The law, that threat'ned death, becomes thy friend

And turns it to exile. There art thou happy.

A pack of blessings light upon thy back;

Happiness courts thee in her best array;

But, like a misbehav'd and sullen wench,

Thou pout'st upon thy fortune and thy love.

Take heed, take heed, for such die miserable.

Go get thee to thy love, as was decreed,

Ascend her chamber, hence and comfort her.

But look thou stay not till the watch be set,

For then thou canst not pass to Mantua,

Where thou shalt live till we can find a time

To blaze your marriage, reconcile your friends,

Beg pardon of the Prince, and call thee back

With twenty hundred thousand times more joy

Than thou went'st forth in lamentation.

Go before, nurse. Commend me to thy lady,

And bid her hasten all the house to bed,

Which heavy sorrow makes them apt unto.

Romeo is coming.

Nurse. O Lord, I could have stay'd here all the night

To hear good counsel. O, what learning is!

My lord, I'll tell my lady you will come.

Rom. Do so, and bid my sweet prepare to chide.

Nurse. Here is a ring she bid me give you, sir.

Hie you, make haste, for it grows very late. *Exit* .

Rom. How well my comfort is reviv'd by this!

Friar. Go hence; good night; and here stands all your state:

Either be gone before the watch be set,

Or by the break of day disguis'd from hence.
Sojourn in Mantua. I'll find out your man,
And he shall signify from time to time
Every good hap to you that chances here.

Give me thy hand. 'Tis late. Farewell; good night.

Rom. But that a joy past joy calls out on me,
It were a grief so brief to part with thee.

Farewell.

Exeunt.

Scene IV. Capulet's house

Enter Old Capulet, his Wife, and Paris.

Cap. Things have fall'n out, sir, so unluckily
That we have had no time to move our daughter.
Look you, she lov'd her kinsman Tybalt dearly,
And so did I. Well, we were born to die.

'Tis very late; she'll not come down to-night.
I promise you, but for your company,
I would have been abed an hour ago.

Par. These times of woe afford no tune to woo.
Madam, good night. Commend me to your daughter.

Lady. I will, and know her mind early to-morrow;
To-night she's mew'd up to her heaviness.

Cap. Sir Paris, I will make a desperate tender
Of my child's love. I think she will be rul'd
In all respects by me; nay more, I doubt it not.
Wife, go you to her ere you go to bed;
Acquaint her here of my son Paris' love
And bid her (mark you me?) on Wednesday next-
But, soft! what day is this?

Par. Monday, my lord.

Cap. Monday! ha, ha! Well, Wednesday is too soon.

Thursday let it be-a Thursday, tell her

She shall be married to this noble earl.

Will you be ready? Do you like this haste?

We'll keep no great ado-a friend or two;

For hark you, Tybalt being slain so late,

It may be thought we held him carelessly,

Being our kinsman, if we revel much.

Therefore we'll have some half a dozen friends,

And there an end. But what say you to Thursday?

Par. My lord, I would that Thursday were to-morrow.

Cap. Well, get you gone. A Thursday be it then.

Go you to Juliet ere you go to bed;

Prepare her, wife, against this wedding day.

Farewell, my lord.- Light to my chamber, ho!

Afore me, It is so very very late

That we may call it early by-and-by.

Good night.

Exeunt

Scene V. Capulet's orchard.

Enter Romeo and Juliet aloft, at the Window.

Jul. Wilt thou be gone? It is not yet near day.
It was the nightingale, and not the lark,
That pierc'd the fearful hollow of thine ear.
Nightly she sings on yond pomegranate tree.

Believe me, love, it was the nightingale.

Rom. It was the lark, the herald of the morn;
No nightingale. Look, love, what envious streaks
Do lace the severing clouds in yonder East.
Night's candles are burnt out, and jocund day
Stands tiptoe on the misty mountain tops.
I must be gone and live, or stay and die.

Jul. Yond light is not daylight; I know it, I.

It is some meteor that the sun exhales
To be to thee this night a torchbearer
And light thee on the way to Mantua.

Therefore stay yet; thou need'st not to be gone.

Rom. Let me be ta'en, let me be put to death.
I am content, so thou wilt have it so.
I'll say yon grey is not the morning's eye,
'Tis but the pale reflex of Cynthia's brow;
Nor that is not the lark whose notes do beat
The vaulty heaven so high above our heads.

I have more care to stay than will to go.
Come, death, and welcome! Juliet wills it so.

How is't, my soul? Let's talk; it is not day.

Jul. It is, it is! Hie hence, be gone, away!
It is the lark that sings so out of tune,
Straining harsh discords and unpleasing sharps.

Some say the lark makes sweet division;
This doth not so, for she divideth us.
Some say the lark and loathed toad chang'd eyes;
O, now I would they had chang'd voices too,
Since arm from arm that voice doth us affray,
Hunting thee hence with hunt's-up to the day!
O, now be gone! More light and light it grows.

Rom. More light and light-more dark and dark our woes!

Enter Nurse.

Nurse. Madam!

Jul. Nurse?

Nurse. Your lady mother is coming to your chamber.
The day is broke; be wary, look about.

Jul. Then, window, let day in, and let life out.
[Exit.]

Rom. Farewell, farewell! One kiss, and I'll descend.

He goeth down.

Jul. Art thou gone so, my lord, my love, my friend?

I must hear from thee every day in the hour,

For in a minute there are many days.

O, by this count I shall be much in years

Ere I again behold my Romeo!

Rom. Farewell!

I will omit no opportunity

That may convey my greetings, love, to thee.

Jul. O, think'st thou we shall ever meet again?

Rom. I doubt it not; and all these woes shall serve

For sweet discourses in our time to come.

Jul. O God, I have an ill-divining soul!

Methinks I see thee, now thou art below, As one dead in the bottom of a tomb.

Either my eyesight fails, or thou look'st pale.

Rom. And trust me, love, in my eye so do you.

Dry sorrow drinks our blood. Adieu, adieu!

Exit.

Jul. O Fortune, Fortune! all men call thee fickle.

If thou art fickle, what dost thou with him

That is renown'd for faith? Be fickle, Fortune,

For then I hope thou wilt not keep him long

But send him back.

Lady. [within] Ho, daughter! are you up?

Jul. Who is't that calls? It is my lady mother.

Is she not down so late, or up so early?

What unaccustom'd cause procures her hither?

Enter Mother.

Lady. Why, how now, Juliet?

Jul. Madam, I am not well.

Lady. Evermore weeping for your cousin's death?
What, wilt thou wash him from his grave with tears?

An if thou couldst, thou couldst not make him live.
Therefore have done. Some grief shows much of love;
But much of grief shows still some want of wit.

Jul. Yet let me weep for such a feeling loss.

Lady. So shall you feel the loss, but not the friend
Which you weep for.

Jul. Feeling so the loss,
I cannot choose but ever weep the friend.

Lady. Well, girl, thou weep'st not so much for his death
As that the villain lives which slaughter'd him.

Jul. What villain, madam?

Lady. That same villain Romeo.

Jul. [aside] Villain and he be many miles asunder.-
God pardon him! I do, with all my heart;
And yet no man like he doth grieve my heart.

Lady. That is because the traitor murderer lives.

Jul. Ay, madam, from the reach of these my hands.
Would none but I might venge my cousin's death!

Lady. We will have vengeance for it, fear thou not.
Then weep no more. I'll send to one in Mantua,
Where that same banish'd runagate doth live,
Shall give him such an unaccustom'd dram
That he shall soon keep Tybalt company;

And then I hope thou wilt be satisfied.

Jul. Indeed I never shall be satisfied
With Romeo till I behold him-dead-
Is my poor heart so for a kinsman vex'd.
Madam, if you could find out but a man
To bear a poison, I would temper it;
That Romeo should, upon receipt thereof,
Soon sleep in quiet. O, how my heart abhors
To hear him nam'd and cannot come to him,
To wreak the love I bore my cousin Tybalt
Upon his body that hath slaughter'd him!

Lady. Find thou the means, and I'll find such a man.
But now I'll tell thee joyful tidings, girl.

Jul. And joy comes well in such a needy time.
What are they, I beseech your ladyship?

Lady. Well, well, thou hast a careful father, child;
One who, to put thee from thy heaviness,

Hath sorted out a sudden day of joy
That thou expects not nor I look'd not for.

Jul. Madam, in happy time! What day is that?

Lady. Marry, my child, early next Thursday morn
The gallant, young, and noble gentleman,
The County Paris, at Saint Peter's Church,
Shall happily make thee there a joyful bride.

Jul. Now by Saint Peter's Church, and Peter too,
He shall not make me there a joyful bride!
I wonder at this haste, that I must wed
Ere he that should be husband comes to woo.
I pray you tell my lord and father, madam,
I will not marry yet; and when I do, I swear
It shall be Romeo, whom you know I hate,
Rather than Paris. These are news indeed!

Lady. Here comes your father. Tell him so yourself,
And see how he will take it at your hands.

Enter Capulet and Nurse.

Cap. When the sun sets the air doth drizzle dew,
But for the sunset of my brother's son
It rains downright.
How now? a conduit, girl? What, still in tears?
Evermore show'ring? In one little body
Thou counterfeit'st a bark, a sea, a wind:
For still thy eyes, which I may call the sea,
Do ebb and flow with tears; the bark thy body is
Sailing in this salt flood; the winds, thy sighs,
Who, raging with thy tears and they with them,
Without a sudden calm will overset
Thy tempest-tossed body. How now, wife?

Have you delivered to her our decree?

Lady. Ay, sir; but she will none, she gives you thanks.
I would the fool were married to her grave!

Cap. Soft! take me with you, take me with you, wife.
How? Will she none? Doth she not give us thanks?
Is she not proud? Doth she not count her blest,
Unworthy as she is, that we have wrought
So worthy a gentleman to be her bridegroom?

Jul. Not proud you have, but thankful that you have.
Proud can I never be of what I hate,
But thankful even for hate that is meant love.

Cap. How now, how now, choplogic? What is this?
'Proud'- and 'I thank you'- and 'I thank you not'-
And yet 'not proud'? Mistress minion you,
Thank me no thankings, nor proud me no prouds,
But fettle your fine joints 'gainst Thursday next
To go with Paris to Saint Peter's Church,
Or I will drag thee on a hurdle thither.
Out, you green-sickness carrion I out, you baggage!

You tallow-face!

Lady. Fie, fie! what, are you mad?

Jul. Good father, I beseech you on my knees,
Hear me with patience but to speak a word.

Cap. Hang thee, young baggage! disobedient wretch!
I tell thee what-get thee to church a Thursday
Or never after look me in the face.
Speak not, reply not, do not answer me!
My fingers itch. Wife, we scarce thought us blest
That God had lent us but this only child;
But now I see this one is one too much,
And that we have a curse in having her.

Out on her, hilding!

Nurse. God in heaven bless her!
You are to blame, my lord, to rate her so.

Cap. And why, my Lady Wisdom? Hold your tongue,
Good Prudence. Smatter with your gossips, go!

Nurse. I speak no treason.

Cap. O, God-i-god-en!

Nurse. May not one speak?

Cap. Peace, you mumbling fool!
Utter your gravity o'er a gossip's bowl,
For here we need it not.

Lady. You are too hot.

Cap. God's bread I it makes me mad. Day, night, late, early,
At home, abroad, alone, in company,
Waking or sleeping, still my care hath been
To have her match'd; and having now provided
A gentleman of princely parentage,
Of fair demesnes, youthful, and nobly train'd,
Stuff'd, as they say, with honourable parts,
Proportion'd as one's thought would wish a man-

And then to have a wretched puling fool,
A whining mammet, in her fortune's tender,
To answer 'I'll not wed, I cannot love;
I am too young, I pray you pardon me'!

But, an you will not wed, I'll pardon you.
Graze where you will, you shall not house with me.

Look to't, think on't; I do not use to jest.
Thursday is near; lay hand on heart, advise:
An you be mine, I'll give you to my friend;
An you be not, hang, beg, starve, die in the streets,
For, by my soul, I'll ne'er acknowledge thee,
Nor what is mine shall never do thee good.
Trust to't. Bethink you. I'll not be forsworn. *Exit* .

Jul. Is there no pity sitting in the clouds
That sees into the bottom of my grief?

O sweet my mother, cast me not away!
Delay this marriage for a month, a week;

Or if you do not, make the bridal bed
In that dim monument where Tybalt lies.

Lady. Talk not to me, for I'll not speak a word.
Do as thou wilt, for I have done with thee. *Exit* .

Jul. O God!- O nurse, how shall this be prevented?
My husband is on earth, my faith in heaven.
How shall that faith return again to earth
Unless that husband send it me from heaven
By leaving earth? Comfort me, counsel me.
Alack, alack, that heaven should practise stratagems
Upon so soft a subject as myself!
What say'st thou? Hast thou not a word of joy?

Some comfort, nurse.

Nurse. Faith, here it is.
Romeo is banish'd; and all the world to nothing
That he dares ne'er come back to challenge you;
Or if he do, it needs must be by stealth.

Then, since the case so stands as now it doth,

I think it best you married with the County.

O, he's a lovely gentleman!

Romeo's a dishclout to him. An eagle, madam,

Hath not so green, so quick, so fair an eye

As Paris hath. Beshrew my very heart,

I think you are happy in this second match,

For it excels your first; or if it did not,

Your first is dead-or 'twere as good he were

As living here and you no use of him.

Jul. Speak'st thou this from thy heart?

Nurse. And from my soul too; else beshrew them both.

Jul. Amen!

Nurse. What?

Jul. Well, thou hast comforted me marvellous much.

Go in; and tell my lady I am gone,

Having displeas'd my father, to Laurence' cell,

To make confession and to be absolv'd.

Nurse. Marry, I will; and this is wisely done. *Exit* .

Jul. Ancient damnation! O most wicked fiend!

Is it more sin to wish me thus forsworn,

Or to dispraise my lord with that same tongue

Which she hath prais'd him with above compare

So many thousand times? Go, counsellor!

Thou and my bosom henceforth shall be twain.

I'll to the friar to know his remedy.

If all else fail, myself have power to die. *Exit* .

ACT IV.

Scene I. Friar Laurence's cell.

Enter Friar, *[Laurence]* and County Paris.

Friar. On Thursday, sir? The time is very short.

Par. My father Capulet will have it so,
And I am nothing slow to slack his haste.

Friar. You say you do not know the lady's mind.
Uneven is the course; I like it not.

Par. Immoderately she weeps for Tybalt's death,
And therefore have I little talk'd of love;
For Venus smiles not in a house of tears.
Now, sir, her father counts it dangerous
That she do give her sorrow so much sway,
And in his wisdom hastes our marriage
To stop the inundation of her tears,
Which, too much minded by herself alone,
May be put from her by society.
Now do you know the reason of this haste.

Friar. [aside] I would I knew not why it should be slow'd.-
Look, sir, here comes the lady toward my cell.

Enter Juliet.

Par. Happily met, my lady and my wife!

Jul. That may be, sir, when I may be a wife.

Par. That may be must be, love, on Thursday next.

Jul. What must be shall be.

Friar. That's a certain text.

Par. Come you to make confession to this father?

Jul. To answer that, I should confess to you.

Par. Do not deny to him that you love me.

Jul. I will confess to you that I love him.

Par. So will ye, I am sure, that you love me.

Jul. If I do so, it will be of more price,
Being spoke behind your back, than to your face.

Par. Poor soul, thy face is much abus'd with tears.

Jul. The tears have got small victory by that,
For it was bad enough before their spite.

Par. Thou wrong'st it more than tears with that report.

Jul. That is no slander, sir, which is a truth;
And what I spake, I spake it to my face.

Par. Thy face is mine, and thou hast sland'red it.

Jul. It may be so, for it is not mine own.
Are you at leisure, holy father, now,
Or shall I come to you at evening mass?

Friar. My leisure serves me, pensive daughter, now.
My lord, we must entreat the time alone.

Par. God shield I should disturb devotion!
Juliet, on Thursday early will I rouse ye.
Till then, adieu, and keep this holy kiss. *Exit* .

Jul. O, shut the door! and when thou hast done so,
Come weep with me-past hope, past cure, past help!

Friar. Ah, Juliet, I already know thy grief;
It strains me past the compass of my wits.
I hear thou must, and nothing may prorogue it,
On Thursday next be married to this County.

Jul. Tell me not, friar, that thou hear'st of this,
Unless thou tell me how I may prevent it.
If in thy wisdom thou canst give no help,
Do thou but call my resolution wise
And with this knife I'll help it presently.
God join'd my heart and Romeo's, thou our hands;

And ere this hand, by thee to Romeo's seal'd,
Shall be the label to another deed,
Or my true heart with treacherous revolt
Turn to another, this shall slay them both.
Therefore, out of thy long-experienc'd time,
Give me some present counsel; or, behold,
'Twixt my extremes and me this bloody knife
Shall play the empire, arbitrating that
Which the commission of thy years and art
Could to no issue of true honour bring.
Be not so long to speak. I long to die
If what thou speak'st speak not of remedy.

Friar. Hold, daughter. I do spy a kind of hope,
Which craves as desperate an execution
As that is desperate which we would prevent.
If, rather than to marry County Paris
Thou hast the strength of will to slay thyself,
Then is it likely thou wilt undertake
A thing like death to chide away this shame,
That cop'st with death himself to scape from it;

And, if thou dar'st, I'll give thee remedy.

Jul. O, bid me leap, rather than marry Paris,
From off the battlements of yonder tower,
Or walk in thievish ways, or bid me lurk
Where serpents are; chain me with roaring bears,
Or shut me nightly in a charnel house,
O'ercover'd quite with dead men's rattling bones,
With reeky shanks and yellow chapless skulls;
Or bid me go into a new-made grave
And hide me with a dead man in his shroud-
Things that, to hear them told, have made me tremble-
And I will do it without fear or doubt,
To live an unstain'd wife to my sweet love.

Friar. Hold, then. Go home, be merry, give consent
To marry Paris. Wednesday is to-morrow.
To-morrow night look that thou lie alone;
Let not the nurse lie with thee in thy chamber.
Take thou this vial, being then in bed,
And this distilled liquor drink thou off;

When presently through all thy veins shall run

A cold and drowsy humour; for no pulse

Shall keep his native progress, but surcease;

No warmth, no breath, shall testify thou livest;

The roses in thy lips and cheeks shall fade

To paly ashes, thy eyes' windows fall

Like death when he shuts up the day of life;

Each part, depriv'd of supple government,

Shall, stiff and stark and cold, appear like death;

And in this borrowed likeness of shrunk death

Thou shalt continue two-and-forty hours,

And then awake as from a pleasant sleep.

Now, when the bridegroom in the morning comes

To rouse thee from thy bed, there art thou dead.

Then, as the manner of our country is,

In thy best robes uncovered on the bier

Thou shalt be borne to that same ancient vault

Where all the kindred of the Capulets lie.

In the mean time, against thou shalt awake,

Shall Romeo by my letters know our drift;

And hither shall he come; and he and I

Will watch thy waking, and that very night

Shall Romeo bear thee hence to Mantua.

And this shall free thee from this present shame,

If no inconstant toy nor womanish fear

Abate thy valour in the acting it.

Jul. Give me, give me! O, tell not me of fear!

Friar. Hold! Get you gone, be strong and prosperous

In this resolve. I'll send a friar with speed

To Mantua, with my letters to thy lord.

Jul. Love give me strength! and strength shall help afford.

Farewell, dear father.

Exeunt.

Scene II. Capulet's house.

Enter Father Capulet, Mother, Nurse, and Servingmen, two or three.

Cap. So many guests invite as here are writ.

[Exit a Servingman.]

Sirrah, go hire me twenty cunning cooks.

Serv. You shall have none ill, sir; for I'll try if they can lick their fingers.

Cap. How canst thou try them so?

Serv. Marry, sir, 'tis an ill cook that cannot lick his own

fingers. Therefore he that cannot lick his fingers goes not with me.

Cap. Go, begone.

Exit Servingman.

We shall be much unfurnish'd for this time.

What, is my daughter gone to Friar Laurence?

Nurse. Ay, forsooth.

Cap. Well, be may chance to do some good on her.
A peevish self-will'd harlotry it is.

Enter Juliet.

Nurse. See where she comes from shrift with merry look.

Cap. How now, my headstrong? Where have you been gadding?

Jul. Where I have learnt me to repent the sin
Of disobedient opposition
To you and your behests, and am enjoin'd
By holy Laurence to fall prostrate here
To beg your pardon. Pardon, I beseech you!
Henceforward I am ever rul'd by you.

Cap. Send for the County. Go tell him of this.
I'll have this knot knit up to-morrow morning.

Jul. I met the youthful lord at Laurence' cell
And gave him what becomed love I might,
Not stepping o'er the bounds of modesty.

Cap. Why, I am glad on't. This is well. Stand up.
This is as't should be. Let me see the County.

Ay, marry, go, I say, and fetch him hither.
Now, afore God, this reverend holy friar,
All our whole city is much bound to him.

Jul. Nurse, will you go with me into my closet
To help me sort such needful ornaments
As you think fit to furnish me to-morrow?

Mother. No, not till Thursday. There is time enough.

Cap. Go, nurse, go with her. We'll to church to-morrow.
Exeunt Juliet and Nurse.

Mother. We shall be short in our provision.

'Tis now near night.

Cap. Tush, I will stir about,
And all things shall be well, I warrant thee, wife.

Go thou to Juliet, help to deck up her.
I'll not to bed to-night; let me alone.

I'll play the housewife for this once. What, ho!
They are all forth; well, I will walk myself
To County Paris, to prepare him up
Against to-morrow. My heart is wondrous light,
Since this same wayward girl is so reclaim'd.
Exeunt.

Scene III. Juliet's chamber.

Enter Juliet and Nurse.

Jul. Ay, those attires are best; but, gentle nurse,
I pray thee leave me to myself to-night;

For I have need of many orisons

To move the heavens to smile upon my state,

Which, well thou knowest, is cross and full of sin.

Enter Mother.

Mother. What, are you busy, ho? Need you my help?

Jul. No, madam; we have cull'd such necessaries

As are behoveful for our state to-morrow.

So please you, let me now be left alone,

And let the nurse this night sit up with you;

For I am sure you have your hands full all

In this so sudden business.

Mother. Good night.

Get thee to bed, and rest; for thou hast need.

Exeunt [Mother and Nurse.]

Jul. Farewell! God knows when we shall meet again.

I have a faint cold fear thrills through my veins

That almost freezes up the heat of life.
I'll call them back again to comfort me.

Nurse!- What should she do here?
My dismal scene I needs must act alone.

Come, vial.
What if this mixture do not work at all?

Shall I be married then to-morrow morning?
No, No! This shall forbid it. Lie thou there.

Lays down a dagger.
What if it be a poison which the friar
Subtilly hath minist'red to have me dead,
Lest in this marriage he should be dishonour'd
Because he married me before to Romeo?
I fear it is; and yet methinks it should not,
For he hath still been tried a holy man.
I will not entertain so bad a thought.
How if, when I am laid into the tomb,

I wake before the time that Romeo
Come to redeem me? There's a fearful point!
Shall I not then be stifled in the vault,
To whose foul mouth no healthsome air breathes in,
And there die strangled ere my Romeo comes?
Or, if I live, is it not very like
The horrible conceit of death and night,
Together with the terror of the place-
As in a vault, an ancient receptacle
Where for this many hundred years the bones
Of all my buried ancestors are pack'd;
Where bloody Tybalt, yet but green in earth,
Lies fest'ring in his shroud; where, as they say,
At some hours in the night spirits resort-
Alack, alack, is it not like that I,
So early waking-what with loathsome smells,
And shrieks like mandrakes torn out of the earth,
That living mortals, hearing them, run mad-
O, if I wake, shall I not be distraught,
Environed with all these hideous fears,
And madly play with my forefathers' joints,

And pluck the mangled Tybalt from his shroud,
And, in this rage, with some great kinsman's bone
As with a club dash out my desp'rate brains?
O, look! methinks I see my cousin's ghost
Seeking out Romeo, that did spit his body
Upon a rapier's point. Stay, Tybalt, stay!

Romeo, I come! this do I drink to thee.
She *[drinks and]* falls upon her bed within the curtains.

Scene IV. Capulet's house.

Enter Lady of the House and Nurse.

Lady. Hold, take these keys and fetch more spices, nurse.

Nurse. They call for dates and quinces in the pastry.

Enter Old Capulet.

Cap. Come, stir, stir, stir! The second cock hath crow'd, The curfew bell hath rung, 'tis three o'clock.

Look to the bak'd meats, good Angelica;

Spare not for cost.

Nurse. Go, you cot-quean, go,

Get you to bed! Faith, you'll be sick to-morrow

For this night's watching.

Cap. No, not a whit. What, I have watch'd ere now

All night for lesser cause, and ne'er been sick.

Lady. Ay, you have been a mouse-hunt in your time;

But I will watch you from such watching now.

Exeunt Lady and Nurse.

Cap. A jealous hood, a jealous hood!

Enter three or four [Fellows, with spits and logs and baskets.

What is there? Now, fellow,

Fellow. Things for the cook, sir; but I know not what.

Cap. Make haste, make haste. *[Exit Fellow.]* Sirrah, fetch drier logs.
Call Peter; he will show thee where they are.

Fellow. I have a head, sir, that will find out logs
And never trouble Peter for the matter.

Cap. Mass, and well said; a merry whoreson, ha!
Thou shalt be loggerhead. *[Exit Fellow.]* Good faith, 'tis day.
The County will be here with music straight,
For so he said he would. Play music.
I hear him near.

Nurse! Wife! What, ho! What, nurse, I say!

Enter Nurse.

Go waken Juliet; go and trim her up.
I'll go and chat with Paris. Hie, make haste,
Make haste! The bridegroom he is come already:

Make haste, I say.

[Exeunt.]

Scene V. Juliet's chamber.

[Enter Nurse.]

Nurse. Mistress! what, mistress! Juliet! Fast, I warrant her, she.
Why, lamb! why, lady! Fie, you slug-abed!

Why, love, I say! madam! sweetheart! Why, bride!
What, not a word? You take your pennyworths now!
Sleep for a week; for the next night, I warrant,
The County Paris hath set up his rest
That you shall rest but little. God forgive me!
Marry, and amen. How sound is she asleep!

I needs must wake her. Madam, madam, madam!
Ay, let the County take you in your bed!

He'll fright you up, i' faith. Will it not be?

[Draws aside the curtains.]

What, dress'd, and in your clothes, and down again?

I must needs wake you. Lady! lady! lady!

Alas, alas! Help, help! My lady's dead!

O weraday that ever I was born!

Some aqua-vitae, ho! My lord! my lady!

Enter Mother.

Mother. What noise is here?

Nurse. O lamentable day!

Mother. What is the matter?

Nurse. Look, look! O heavy day!

Mother. O me, O me! My child, my only life!

Revive, look up, or I will die with thee!

Help, help! Call help.

Enter Father.

Father. For shame, bring Juliet forth; her lord is come.

Nurse. She's dead, deceas'd; she's dead! Alack the day!

Mother. Alack the day, she's dead, she's dead, she's dead!

Cap. Ha! let me see her. Out alas! she's cold,
Her blood is settled, and her joints are stiff;
Life and these lips have long been separated.
Death lies on her like an untimely frost
Upon the sweetest flower of all the field.

Nurse. O lamentable day!

Mother. O woful time!

Cap. Death, that hath ta'en her hence to make me wail,

Ties up my tongue and will not let me speak.

Enter Friar *[Laurence]* and the County *[Paris]* , with Musicians.

Friar. Come, is the bride ready to go to church?

Cap. Ready to go, but never to return.

O son, the night before thy wedding day

Hath Death lain with thy wife. See, there she lies,

Flower as she was, deflowered by him.

Death is my son-in-law, Death is my heir;

My daughter he hath wedded. I will die

And leave him all. Life, living, all is Death's.

Par. Have I thought long to see this morning's face,

And doth it give me such a sight as this?

Mother. Accurs'd, unhappy, wretched, hateful day!

Most miserable hour that e'er time saw

In lasting labour of his pilgrimage!
But one, poor one, one poor and loving child,
But one thing to rejoice and solace in,
And cruel Death hath catch'd it from my sight!

Nurse. O woe? O woful, woful, woful day!
Most lamentable day, most woful day
That ever ever I did yet behold!
O day! O day! O day! O hateful day!

Never was seen so black a day as this.
O woful day! O woful day!

Par. Beguil'd, divorced, wronged, spited, slain!
Most detestable Death, by thee beguil'd,
By cruel cruel thee quite overthrown!
O love! O life! not life, but love in death!

Cap. Despis'd, distressed, hated, martyr'd, kill'd!
Uncomfortable time, why cam'st thou now
To murther, murther our solemnity?

O child! O child! my soul, and not my child!
Dead art thou, dead! alack, my child is dead,
And with my child my joys are buried!

Friar. Peace, ho, for shame! Confusion's cure lives not
In these confusions. Heaven and yourself
Had part in this fair maid! now heaven hath all,
And all the better is it for the maid.
Your part in her you could not keep from death,
But heaven keeps his part in eternal life.
The most you sought was her promotion,
For 'twas your heaven she should be advanc'd;
And weep ye now, seeing she is advanc'd
Above the clouds, as high as heaven itself?
O, in this love, you love your child so ill
That you run mad, seeing that she is well.
She's not well married that lives married long,
But she's best married that dies married young.
Dry up your tears and stick your rosemary
On this fair corse, and, as the custom is,
In all her best array bear her to church;

For though fond nature bids us all lament,

Yet nature's tears are reason's merriment.

Cap. All things that we ordained festival

Turn from their office to black funeral-

Our instruments to melancholy bells,

Our wedding cheer to a sad burial feast;

Our solemn hymns to sullen dirges change;

Our bridal flowers serve for a buried corse;

And all things change them to the contrary.

Friar. Sir, go you in; and, madam, go with him;

And go, Sir Paris. Every one prepare

To follow this fair corse unto her grave.

The heavens do low'r upon you for some ill;

Move them no more by crossing their high will.

Exeunt. Manent Musicians *[and Nurse]* .

1. Mus. Faith, we may put up our pipes and be gone.

Nurse. Honest good fellows, ah, put up, put up!

For well you know this is a pitiful case. *[Exit.]*

1. Mus. Ay, by my troth, the case may be amended.

Enter Peter.

Pet. Musicians, O, musicians, 'Heart's ease,' 'Heart's ease'!
O, an you will have me live, play 'Heart's ease.'

1. Mus. Why 'Heart's ease'?

Pet. O, musicians, because my heart itself plays 'My heart is full
of woe.' O, play me some merry dump to comfort me.

1. Mus. Not a dump we! 'Tis no time to play now.

Pet. You will not then?
1. Mus. No.

Pet. I will then give it you soundly.
1. Mus. What will you give us?

Pet. No money, on my faith, but the gleek. I will give you the minstrel.

1. Mus. Then will I give you the serving-creature.

Pet. Then will I lay the serving-creature's dagger on your pate.
I will carry no crotchets. I'll re you, I'll fa you. Do you note me?

1. Mus. An you re us and fa us, you note us.
2. Mus. Pray you put up your dagger, and put out your wit.

Pet. Then have at you with my wit! I will dry-beat you with an iron wit, and put up my iron dagger. Answer me like men.
'When griping grief the heart doth wound,
And doleful dumps the mind oppress,
Then music with her silver sound'-
Why 'silver sound'? Why 'music with her silver sound'?

What say you, Simon Catling?
1. Mus. Marry, sir, because silver hath a sweet sound.

Pet. Pretty! What say you, Hugh Rebeck?
2. Mus. I say 'silver sound' because musicians sound for silver.

Pet. Pretty too! What say you, James Soundpost?

3. Mus. Faith, I know not what to say.

Pet. O, I cry you mercy! you are the singer. I will say for

you. It

is 'music with her silver sound' because musicians have no gold for sounding.

'Then music with her silver sound

With speedy help doth lend redress.' [*Exit* .

1. Mus. What a pestilent knave is this same?

2. Mus. Hang him, Jack! Come, we'll in here, tarry for the

mourners, and stay dinner.

Exeunt.

ACT V.

Scene I. Mantua. A street.

Enter Romeo.

Rom. If I may trust the flattering truth of sleep

My dreams presage some joyful news at hand.

My bosom's lord sits lightly in his throne,

And all this day an unaccustom'd spirit
Lifts me above the ground with cheerful thoughts.
I dreamt my lady came and found me dead
(Strange dream that gives a dead man leave to think!)
And breath'd such life with kisses in my lips
That I reviv'd and was an emperor.
Ah me! how sweet is love itself possess'd,
When but love's shadows are so rich in joy!

Enter Romeo's Man Balthasar, booted.

News from Verona! How now, Balthasar?
Dost thou not bring me letters from the friar?

How doth my lady? Is my father well?
How fares my Juliet? That I ask again,
For nothing can be ill if she be well.

Man. Then she is well, and nothing can be ill.
Her body sleeps in Capel's monument,
And her immortal part with angels lives.

I saw her laid low in her kindred's vault
And presently took post to tell it you.
O, pardon me for bringing these ill news,
Since you did leave it for my office, sir.

Rom. Is it e'en so? Then I defy you, stars!
Thou knowest my lodging. Get me ink and paper
And hire posthorses. I will hence to-night.

Man. I do beseech you, sir, have patience.
Your looks are pale and wild and do import
Some misadventure.

Rom. Tush, thou art deceiv'd.
Leave me and do the thing I bid thee do.

Hast thou no letters to me from the friar?

Man. No, my good lord.

Rom. No matter. Get thee gone

And hire those horses. I'll be with thee straight.

Exit [Balthasar] .

Well, Juliet, I will lie with thee to-night.
Let's see for means. O mischief, thou art swift
To enter in the thoughts of desperate men!
I do remember an apothecary,
And hereabouts 'a dwells, which late I noted
In tatt'red weeds, with overwhelming brows,
Culling of simples. Meagre were his looks,
Sharp misery had worn him to the bones;
And in his needy shop a tortoise hung,
An alligator stuff'd, and other skins
Of ill-shaped fishes; and about his shelves
A beggarly account of empty boxes,
Green earthen pots, bladders, and musty seeds,
Remnants of packthread, and old cakes of roses
Were thinly scattered, to make up a show.
Noting this penury, to myself I said,
'An if a man did need a poison now

Whose sale is present death in Mantua,

Here lives a caitiff wretch would sell it him.'

O, this same thought did but forerun my need,

And this same needy man must sell it me.

As I remember, this should be the house.

Being holiday, the beggar's shop is shut. What, ho! apothecary!

Enter Apothecary.

Apoth. Who calls so loud?

Rom. Come hither, man. I see that thou art poor.

Hold, there is forty ducats. Let me have

A dram of poison, such soon-speeding gear

As will disperse itself through all the veins

That the life-weary taker mall fall dead,

And that the trunk may be discharg'd of breath

As violently as hasty powder fir'd

Doth hurry from the fatal cannon's womb.

Apoth. Such mortal drugs I have; but Mantua's law
Is death to any he that utters them.

Rom. Art thou so bare and full of wretchedness
And fearest to die? Famine is in thy cheeks,
Need and oppression starveth in thine eyes,
Contempt and beggary hangs upon thy back:
The world is not thy friend, nor the world's law;
The world affords no law to make thee rich;
Then be not poor, but break it and take this.

Apoth. My poverty but not my will consents.

Rom. I pay thy poverty and not thy will.

Apoth. Put this in any liquid thing you will
And drink it off, and if you had the strength
Of twenty men, it would dispatch you straight.

Rom. There is thy gold-worse poison to men's souls,
Doing more murther in this loathsome world,

Than these poor compounds that thou mayst not sell.

I sell thee poison; thou hast sold me none.

Farewell. Buy food and get thyself in flesh.

Come, cordial and not poison, go with me

To Juliet's grave; for there must I use thee.

Exeunt.

Scene II. Verona. Friar Laurence's cell.

Enter Friar John to Friar Laurence.

John. Holy Franciscan friar, brother, ho!

Enter Friar Laurence.

Laur. This same should be the voice of Friar John.

Welcome from Mantua. What says Romeo?

Or, if his mind be writ, give me his letter.

John. Going to find a barefoot brother out,
One of our order, to associate me
Here in this city visiting the sick,
And finding him, the searchers of the town,
Suspecting that we both were in a house
Where the infectious pestilence did reign,
Seal'd up the doors, and would not let us forth,
So that my speed to Mantua there was stay'd.

Laur. Who bare my letter, then, to Romeo?

John. I could not send it-here it is again-
Nor get a messenger to bring it thee,
So fearful were they of infection.

Laur. Unhappy fortune! By my brotherhood,
The letter was not nice, but full of charge,
Of dear import; and the neglecting it
May do much danger. Friar John, go hence,
Get me an iron crow and bring it straight
Unto my cell.

John. Brother, I'll go and bring it thee. *Exit* .

Laur. Now, must I to the monument alone.
Within this three hours will fair Juliet wake.
She will beshrew me much that Romeo
Hath had no notice of these accidents;
But I will write again to Mantua,
And keep her at my cell till Romeo come-
Poor living corse, clos'd in a dead man's tomb! *Exit* .

Scene III. Verona. A churchyard; in it the monument of the Capulets.

Enter Paris and his Page with flowers and *[a torch]* .

Par. Give me thy torch, boy. Hence, and stand aloof.

Yet put it out, for I would not be seen.

Under yond yew tree lay thee all along,

Holding thine ear close to the hollow ground.

So shall no foot upon the churchyard tread

(Being loose, unfirm, with digging up of graves)

But thou shalt hear it. Whistle then to me,

As signal that thou hear'st something approach.

Give me those flowers. Do as I bid thee, go.

Page. [aside] I am almost afraid to stand alone

Here in the churchyard; yet I will adventure. *[Retires.]*

Par. Sweet flower, with flowers thy bridal bed I strew

(O woe! thy canopy is dust and stones)

Which with sweet water nightly I will dew;
Or, wanting that, with tears distill'd by moans.
The obsequies that I for thee will keep
Nightly shall be to strew thy grave and weep.

Whistle Boy.
The boy gives warning something doth approach.
What cursed foot wanders this way to-night
To cross my obsequies and true love's rite?
What, with a torch? Muffle me, night, awhile. *[Retires.]*

Enter Romeo, and Balthasar with a torch, a mattock,

and a crow of iron.

Rom. Give me that mattock and the wrenching iron.
Hold, take this letter. Early in the morning
See thou deliver it to my lord and father.
Give me the light. Upon thy life I charge thee,
Whate'er thou hearest or seest, stand all aloof
And do not interrupt me in my course.

Why I descend into this bed of death
Is partly to behold my lady's face,
But chiefly to take thence from her dead finger
A precious ring-a ring that I must use
In dear employment. Therefore hence, be gone.
But if thou, jealous, dost return to pry
In what I farther shall intend to do,
By heaven, I will tear thee joint by joint
And strew this hungry churchyard with thy limbs.
The time and my intents are savage-wild,
More fierce and more inexorable far
Than empty tigers or the roaring sea.

Bal. I will be gone, sir, and not trouble you.

Rom. So shalt thou show me friendship. Take thou that.
Live, and be prosperous; and farewell, good fellow.

Bal. *[aside]* For all this same, I'll hide me hereabout.
His looks I fear, and his intents I doubt. *[Retires.]*

Rom. Thou detestable maw, thou womb of death,
Gorg'd with the dearest morsel of the earth,
Thus I enforce thy rotten jaws to open,
And in despite I'll cram thee with more food.

Romeo opens the tomb.

Par. This is that banish'd haughty Montague
That murd'red my love's cousin-with which grief
It is supposed the fair creature died-
And here is come to do some villanous shame
To the dead bodies. I will apprehend him.
Stop thy unhallowed toil, vile Montague!

Can vengeance be pursu'd further than death?
Condemned villain, I do apprehend thee.

Obey, and go with me; for thou must die.

Rom. I must indeed; and therefore came I hither.
Good gentle youth, tempt not a desp'rate man.

Fly hence and leave me. Think upon these gone;

Let them affright thee. I beseech thee, youth,

Put not another sin upon my head

By urging me to fury. O, be gone!

By heaven, I love thee better than myself,

For I come hither arm'd against myself.

Stay not, be gone. Live, and hereafter say

A madman's mercy bid thee run away.

Par. I do defy thy conjuration

And apprehend thee for a felon here.

Rom. Wilt thou provoke me? Then have at thee, boy!

They fight.

Page. O Lord, they fight! I will go call the watch.

[Exit. Paris falls.]

Par. O, I am slain! If thou be merciful,

Open the tomb, lay me with Juliet. *[Dies.]*

Rom. In faith, I will. Let me peruse this face.

Mercutio's kinsman, noble County Paris!

What said my man when my betossed soul

Did not attend him as we rode? I think

He told me Paris should have married Juliet.

Said he not so? or did I dream it so?

Or am I mad, hearing him talk of Juliet

To think it was so? O, give me thy hand,

One writ with me in sour misfortune's book!

I'll bury thee in a triumphant grave.

A grave? O, no, a lanthorn, slaught'red youth,

For here lies Juliet, and her beauty makes

This vault a feasting presence full of light.

Death, lie thou there, by a dead man interr'd.

[Lays him in the tomb.]

How oft when men are at the point of death

Have they been merry! which their keepers call

A lightning before death. O, how may I

Call this a lightning? O my love! my wife!

Death, that hath suck'd the honey of thy breath,

Hath had no power yet upon thy beauty.

Thou art not conquer'd. Beauty's ensign yet

Is crimson in thy lips and in thy cheeks,

And death's pale flag is not advanced there.

Tybalt, liest thou there in thy bloody sheet?

O, what more favour can I do to thee

Than with that hand that cut thy youth in twain

To sunder his that was thine enemy?

Forgive me, cousin. Ah, dear Juliet,

Why art thou yet so fair? Shall I believe

That unsubstantial Death is amorous,

And that the lean abhorred monster keeps

Thee here in dark to be his paramour?

For fear of that I still will stay with thee

And never from this palace of dim night

Depart again. Here, here will I remain

With worms that are thy chambermaids. O, here

Will I set up my everlasting rest

And shake the yoke of inauspicious stars

From this world-wearied flesh. Eyes, look your last!

Arms, take your last embrace! and, lips, O you
The doors of breath, seal with a righteous kiss
A dateless bargain to engrossing death!

Come, bitter conduct; come, unsavoury guide!
Thou desperate pilot, now at once run on
The dashing rocks thy seasick weary bark!
Here's to my love! *[Drinks.]* O true apothecary!
Thy drugs are quick. Thus with a kiss I die. Falls.

Enter Friar *[Laurence]* , with lanthorn, crow, and spade.

Friar. Saint Francis be my speed! how oft to-night
Have my old feet stumbled at graves! Who's there?

Bal. Here's one, a friend, and one that knows you well.

Friar. Bliss be upon you! Tell me, good my friend,
What torch is yond that vainly lends his light
To grubs and eyeless skulls? As I discern,
It burneth in the Capels' monument.

Bal. It doth so, holy sir; and there's my master,
One that you love.

Friar. Who is it?

Bal. Romeo.

Friar. How long hath he been there?

Bal. Full half an hour.

Friar. Go with me to the vault.

Bal. I dare not, sir.
My master knows not but I am gone hence,
And fearfully did menace me with death
If I did stay to look on his intents.

Friar. Stay then; I'll go alone. Fear comes upon me.
O, much I fear some ill unthrifty thing.

Bal. As I did sleep under this yew tree here,

I dreamt my master and another fought,

And that my master slew him.

Friar. Romeo!

Alack, alack, what blood is this which stains

The stony entrance of this sepulchre?

What mean these masterless and gory swords

To lie discolour'd by this place of peace? *[Enters the tomb.]*

Romeo! O, pale! Who else? What, Paris too?

And steep'd in blood? Ah, what an unkind hour

Is guilty of this lamentable chance! The lady stirs.

Juliet rises.

Jul. O comfortable friar! where is my lord?

I do remember well where I should be,

And there I am. Where is my Romeo?

Friar. I hear some noise. Lady, come from that nest

Of death, contagion, and unnatural sleep.
A greater power than we can contradict
Hath thwarted our intents. Come, come away.
Thy husband in thy bosom there lies dead;
And Paris too. Come, I'll dispose of thee
Among a sisterhood of holy nuns.
Stay not to question, for the watch is coming.

Come, go, good Juliet. I dare no longer stay.

Jul. Go, get thee hence, for I will not away.

Exit [Friar] .

What's here? A cup, clos'd in my true love's hand?
Poison, I see, hath been his timeless end.
O churl! drunk all, and left no friendly drop
To help me after? I will kiss thy lips.
Haply some poison yet doth hang on them
To make me die with a restorative. *[Kisses him.]*
Thy lips are warm!

Chief Watch. *[within]* Lead, boy. Which way?

Yea, noise? Then I'll be brief. O happy dagger!

[Snatches Romeo's dagger.]

This is thy sheath; there rest, and let me die.

She stabs herself and falls *[on Romeo's body]* .

Enter [Paris's] Boy and Watch.

Boy. This is the place. There, where the torch doth burn.

Chief Watch. 'the ground is bloody. Search about the churchyard.

Go, some of you; whoe'er you find attach.

[Exeunt some of the Watch.]

Pitiful sight! here lies the County slain;

And Juliet bleeding, warm, and newly dead,

Who here hath lain this two days buried.

Go, tell the Prince; run to the Capulets;

Raise up the Montagues; some others search.

[Exeunt others of the Watch.]

We see the ground whereon these woes do lie,

But the true ground of all these piteous woes

We cannot without circumstance descry.

Enter [some of the Watch,] with Romeo's Man *[Balthasar]* .

2. Watch. Here's Romeo's man. We found him in the churchyard. Chief Watch. Hold him in safety till the Prince come hither.

Enter Friar *[Laurence]* and another Watchman.

3. Watch. Here is a friar that trembles, sighs, and weeps.

We took this mattock and this spade from him

As he was coming from this churchyard side.

Chief Watch. A great suspicion! Stay the friar too.

Enter the Prince *[and Attendants]* .

Prince. What misadventure is so early up,

That calls our person from our morning rest?

Enter Capulet and his Wife *[with others]* .

Cap. What should it be, that they so shriek abroad?

Wife. The people in the street cry 'Romeo,'
Some 'Juliet,' and some 'Paris'; and all run,
With open outcry, toward our monument.

Prince. What fear is this which startles in our ears?
Chief Watch. Sovereign, here lies the County Paris slain;
And Romeo dead; and Juliet, dead before,
Warm and new kill'd.

Prince. Search, seek, and know how this foul murder comes.
Chief Watch. Here is a friar, and slaughter'd Romeo's man,
With instruments upon them fit to open
These dead men's tombs.

Cap. O heavens! O wife, look how our daughter bleeds!
This dagger hath mista'en, for, lo, his house
Is empty on the back of Montague,

And it missheathed in my daughter's bosom!

Wife. O me! this sight of death is as a bell
That warns my old age to a sepulchre.

Enter Montague *[and others]* .

Prince. Come, Montague; for thou art early up
To see thy son and heir more early down.

Mon. Alas, my liege, my wife is dead to-night!
Grief of my son's exile hath stopp'd her breath.

What further woe conspires against mine age?

Prince. Look, and thou shalt see.

Mon. O thou untaught! what manners is in this,
To press before thy father to a grave?

Prince. Seal up the mouth of outrage for a while,

Till we can clear these ambiguities
And know their spring, their head, their true descent;
And then will I be general of your woes
And lead you even to death. Meantime forbear,
And let mischance be slave to patience.

Bring forth the parties of suspicion.

Friar. I am the greatest, able to do least,
Yet most suspected, as the time and place
Doth make against me, of this direful murther;
And here I stand, both to impeach and purge
Myself condemned and myself excus'd.

Prince. Then say at once what thou dost know in this.

Friar. I will be brief, for my short date of breath
Is not so long as is a tedious tale.
Romeo, there dead, was husband to that Juliet;
And she, there dead, that Romeo's faithful wife.
I married them; and their stol'n marriage day

Was Tybalt's doomsday, whose untimely death

Banish'd the new-made bridegroom from this city;

For whom, and not for Tybalt, Juliet pin'd.

You, to remove that siege of grief from her,

Betroth'd and would have married her perforce

To County Paris. Then comes she to me

And with wild looks bid me devise some mean

To rid her from this second marriage,

Or in my cell there would she kill herself.

Then gave I her (so tutored by my art)

A sleeping potion; which so took effect

As I intended, for it wrought on her

The form of death. Meantime I writ to Romeo

That he should hither come as this dire night

To help to take her from her borrowed grave,

Being the time the potion's force should cease.

But he which bore my letter, Friar John,

Was stay'd by accident, and yesternight

Return'd my letter back. Then all alone

At the prefixed hour of her waking

Came I to take her from her kindred's vault;

Meaning to keep her closely at my cell
Till I conveniently could send to Romeo.
But when I came, some minute ere the time
Of her awaking, here untimely lay
The noble Paris and true Romeo dead.
She wakes; and I entreated her come forth
And bear this work of heaven with patience;
But then a noise did scare me from the tomb,
And she, too desperate, would not go with me,
But, as it seems, did violence on herself.
All this I know, and to the marriage
Her nurse is privy; and if aught in this
Miscarried by my fault, let my old life
Be sacrific'd, some hour before his time,
Unto the rigour of severest law.

Prince. We still have known thee for a holy man.
Where's Romeo's man? What can he say in this?

Bal. I brought my master news of Juliet's death;
And then in post he came from Mantua

To this same place, to this same monument.
This letter he early bid me give his father,
And threat'ned me with death, going in the vault,
If I departed not and left him there.

Prince. Give me the letter. I will look on it.
Where is the County's page that rais'd the watch?

Sirrah, what made your master in this place?

Boy. He came with flowers to strew his lady's grave;
And bid me stand aloof, and so I did.
Anon comes one with light to ope the tomb;
And by-and-by my master drew on him;
And then I ran away to call the watch.

Prince. This letter doth make good the friar's words,
Their course of love, the tidings of her death;
And here he writes that he did buy a poison
Of a poor pothecary, and therewithal
Came to this vault to die, and lie with Juliet.

Where be these enemies? Capulet, Montague,
See what a scourge is laid upon your hate,
That heaven finds means to kill your joys with love!
And I, for winking at you, discords too,
Have lost a brace of kinsmen. All are punish'd.

Cap. O brother Montague, give me thy hand.
This is my daughter's jointure, for no more
Can I demand.

Mon. But I can give thee more;
For I will raise her statue in pure gold,
That whiles Verona by that name is known,
There shall no figure at such rate be set
As that of true and faithful Juliet.

Cap. As rich shall Romeo's by his lady's lie-
Poor sacrifices of our enmity!

Prince. A glooming peace this morning with it brings.
The sun for sorrow will not show his head.

Go hence, to have more talk of these sad things;

Some shall be pardon'd, and some punished;

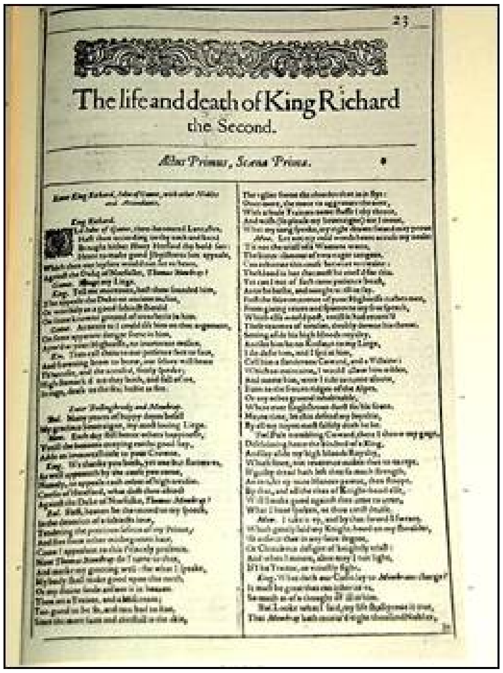
For never was a story of more woe

Than this of Juliet and her Romeo.

Exeunt omnes.

RICHARD II

Written in 1595, this history play is the first part of a tetralogy, along with *Henry IV, Part 1* , *Henry IV, part 2* , and *Henry V* . Although the 1623 First Folio lists the play as a history play, the earlier Quarto edition of 1597 calls itself *The Tragedie Of King Richard The Second* . The play tells the story of Henry Bolingbroke, who deposes the corrupt King Richard. Themes and moral questions concerning divine right and the power of language dominate the play. Although lesser known than Shakespeare's more famous history plays, *Richard II* boasts some of the playwright's finest poetry, with Gaunt's ‘This England' speech being a particular highlight.



23

The life and death of King Richard
the Second.

Actus Primus, Scæna Prima.

The first page of the First Folio , 1623

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DRAMATIS PERSONAE

KING RICHARD THE SECOND

JOHN OF GAUNT, Duke of Lancaster - uncle to the King

EDMUND LANGLEY, Duke of York - uncle to the King

HENRY, surnamed BOLINGBROKE, Duke of Hereford, son of

John of Gaunt, afterwards King Henry IV

DUKE OF AUMERLE, son of the Duke of York

THOMAS MOWBRAY, Duke of Norfolk

DUKE OF SURREY

EARL OF SALISBURY

EARL BERKELEY

BUSHY - favourites of King Richard

BAGOT - " " " "

GREEN - " " " "

EARL OF NORTHUMBERLAND

HENRY PERCY, surnamed HOTSPUR, his son

LORD Ross LORD WILLOUGHBY

LORD FITZWATER BISHOP OF CARLISLE

ABBOT OF WESTMINSTER LORD MARSHAL

SIR STEPHEN SCROOP SIR PIERCE OF EXTON

CAPTAIN of a band of Welshmen TWO GARDENERS

QUEEN to King Richard

DUCHESS OF YORK

DUCHESS OF GLOUCESTER, widow of Thomas of Woodstock,

Duke of Gloucester

LADY attending on the Queen

Lords, Heralds, Officers, Soldiers, Keeper, Messenger,

Groom, and other Attendants

SCENE: England and Wales

ACT I. SCENE I. London. The palace

Enter RICHARD, JOHN OF GAUNT, with other NOBLES and attendants

KING RICHARD.

Old John of Gaunt, time-honoured Lancaster,
Hast thou, according to thy oath and band,
Brought hither Henry Hereford, thy bold son,
Here to make good the boist'rous late appeal,
Which then our leisure would not let us hear,
Against the Duke of Norfolk, Thomas Mowbray?

GAUNT.

I have, my liege.

KING RICHARD.

Tell me, moreover, hast thou sounded him

If he appeal the Duke on ancient malice,

Or worthily, as a good subject should,

On some known ground of treachery in him?

GAUNT.

As near as I could sift him on that argument,

On some apparent danger seen in him

Aim'd at your Highness-no inveterate malice.

KING RICHARD.

Then call them to our presence: face to face

And frowning brow to brow, ourselves will hear

The accuser and the accused freely speak.

High-stomach'd are they both and full of ire,

In rage, deaf as the sea, hasty as fire.

Enter BOLINGBROKE and MOWBRAY

BOLINGBROKE.

Many years of happy days befall

My gracious sovereign, my most loving liege!

MOWBRAY.

Each day still better other's happiness

Until the heavens, envying earth's good hap,

Add an immortal title to your crown!

KING RICHARD.

We thank you both; yet one but flatters us,

As well appeareth by the cause you come;

Namely, to appeal each other of high treason.

Cousin of Hereford, what dost thou object

Against the Duke of Norfolk, Thomas Mowbray?

BOLINGBROKE.

First-heaven be the record to my speech!

In the devotion of a subject's love,

Tend'ring the precious safety of my prince,

And free from other misbegotten hate,

Come I appellant to this princely presence.

Now, Thomas Mowbray, do I turn to thee,

And mark my greeting well; for what I speak

My body shall make good upon this earth,

Or my divine soul answer it in heaven-

Thou art a traitor and a miscreant,

Too good to be so, and too bad to live,

Since the more fair and crystal is the sky,

The uglier seem the clouds that in it fly.

Once more, the more to aggravate the note,

With a foul traitor's name stuff I thy throat;

And wish-so please my sovereign-ere I move,

What my tongue speaks, my right drawn sword may prove.

MOWBRAY.

Let not my cold words here accuse my zeal.

'Tis not the trial of a woman's war,

The bitter clamour of two eager tongues,

Can arbitrate this cause betwixt us twain;

The blood is hot that must be cool'd for this.

Yet can I not of such tame patience boast

As to be hush'd and nought at an to say.

First, the fair reverence of your Highness curbs me

From giving reins and spurs to my free speech;

Which else would post until it had return'd

These terms of treason doubled down his throat.

Setting aside his high blood's royalty,

And let him be no kinsman to my liege,

I do defy him, and I spit at him,

Call him a slanderous coward and a villain;

Which to maintain, I would allow him odds

And meet him, were I tied to run afoot

Even to the frozen ridges of the Alps,

Or any other ground inhabitable

Where ever Englishman durst set his foot.

Meantime let this defend my loyalty-

By all my hopes, most falsely doth he lie

BOLINGBROKE.

Pale trembling coward, there I throw my gage,
Disclaiming here the kindred of the King;
And lay aside my high blood's royalty,
Which fear, not reverence, makes thee to except.
If guilty dread have left thee so much strength
As to take up mine honour's pawn, then stoop.
By that and all the rites of knighthood else
Will I make good against thee, arm to arm,
What I have spoke or thou canst worst devise.

MOWBRAY.
I take it up; and by that sword I swear
Which gently laid my knighthood on my shoulder
I'll answer thee in any fair degree
Or chivalrous design of knightly trial;
And when I mount, alive may I not light
If I be traitor or unjustly fight!

KING RICHARD.

What doth our cousin lay to Mowbray's charge?

It must be great that can inherit us

So much as of a thought of ill in him.

BOLINGBROKE.

Look what I speak, my life shall prove it true-

That Mowbray hath receiv'd eight thousand nobles

In name of lendings for your Highness' soldiers,

The which he hath detain'd for lewd employments

Like a false traitor and injurious villain.

Besides, I say and will in battle prove-

Or here, or elsewhere to the furthest verge

That ever was survey'd by English eye-

That all the treasons for these eighteen years

Complotted and contrived in this land

Fetch from false Mowbray their first head and spring.

Further I say, and further will maintain

Upon his bad life to make all this good,

That he did plot the Duke of Gloucester's death,

Suggest his soon-believing adversaries,

And consequently, like a traitor coward,

Sluic'd out his innocent soul through streams of blood;

Which blood, like sacrificing Abel's, cries,
Even from the tongueless caverns of the earth,
To me for justice and rough chastisement;
And, by the glorious worth of my descent,
This arm shall do it, or this life be spent.

KING RICHARD.
How high a pitch his resolution soars!

Thomas of Norfolk, what say'st thou to this?

MOWBRAY.
O, let my sovereign turn away his face
And bid his ears a little while be deaf,
Till I have told this slander of his blood
How God and good men hate so foul a liar.

KING RICHARD.
Mowbray, impartial are our eyes and cars.
Were he my brother, nay, my kingdom's heir,
As he is but my father's brother's son,

Now by my sceptre's awe I make a vow,

Such neighbour nearness to our sacred blood

Should nothing privilege him nor partialize

The unstooping firmness of my upright soul.

He is our subject, Mowbray; so art thou:

Free speech and fearless I to thee allow.

MOWBRAY.

Then, Bolingbroke, as low as to thy heart,

Through the false passage of thy throat, thou liest.

Three parts of that receipt I had for Calais

Disburs'd I duly to his Highness' soldiers;

The other part reserv'd I by consent,

For that my sovereign liege was in my debt

Upon remainder of a dear account

Since last I went to France to fetch his queen:

Now swallow down that lie. For Gloucester's death-

I slew him not, but to my own disgrace

Neglected my sworn duty in that case.

For you, my noble Lord of Lancaster,

The honourable father to my foe,

Once did I lay an ambush for your life,

A trespass that doth vex my grieved soul;

But ere I last receiv'd the sacrament

I did confess it, and exactly begg'd

Your Grace's pardon; and I hope I had it.

This is my fault. As for the rest appeal'd,

It issues from the rancour of a villain,

A recreant and most degenerate traitor;

Which in myself I boldly will defend,

And interchangeably hurl down my gage

Upon this overweening traitor's foot

To prove myself a loyal gentleman

Even in the best blood chamber'd in his bosom.

In haste whereof, most heartily I pray

Your Highness to assign our trial day.

KING RICHARD.

Wrath-kindled gentlemen, be rul'd by me;

Let's purge this choler without letting blood-

This we prescribe, though no physician;

Deep malice makes too deep incision.

Forget, forgive; conclude and be agreed:
Our doctors say this is no month to bleed.
Good uncle, let this end where it begun;
We'll calm the Duke of Norfolk, you your son.

GAUNT.

To be a make-peace shall become my age.
Throw down, my son, the Duke of Norfolk's gage.

KING RICHARD.

And, Norfolk, throw down his.

GAUNT.
When, Harry, when?

Obedience bids I should not bid again.

KING RICHARD.

Norfolk, throw down; we bid.

There is no boot.

MOWBRAY.

Myself I throw, dread sovereign, at thy foot;

My life thou shalt command, but not my shame:

The one my duty owes; but my fair name,

Despite of death, that lives upon my grave

To dark dishonour's use thou shalt not have.

I am disgrac'd, impeach'd, and baffl'd here;

Pierc'd to the soul with slander's venom'd spear,

The which no balm can cure but his heart-blood

Which breath'd this poison.

KING RICHARD.

Rage must be withstood:

Give me his gage-lions make leopards tame.

MOWBRAY.

Yea, but not change his spots. Take but my shame,

And I resign my gage. My dear dear lord,

The purest treasure mortal times afford

Is spotless reputation; that away,

Men are but gilded loam or painted clay.

A jewel in a ten-times barr'd-up chest

Is a bold spirit in a loyal breast.

Mine honour is my life; both grow in one;

Take honour from me, and my life is done:

Then, dear my liege, mine honour let me try;

In that I live, and for that will I die.

KING RICHARD.

Cousin, throw up your gage; do you begin.

BOLINGBROKE.

O, God defend my soul from such deep sin!

Shall I seem crest-fallen in my father's sight?

Or with pale beggar-fear impeach my height

Before this outdar'd dastard? Ere my tongue

Shall wound my honour with such feeble wrong

Or sound so base a parle, my teeth shall tear

The slavish motive of recanting fear,

And spit it bleeding in his high disgrace,

Where shame doth harbour, even in Mowbray's face.

Exit GAUNT

KING RICHARD.

We were not born to sue, but to command;

Which since we cannot do to make you friends,

Be ready, as your lives shall answer it,

At Coventry, upon Saint Lambert's day.

There shall your swords and lances arbitrate

The swelling difference of your settled hate;

Since we can not atone you, we shall see

Justice design the victor's chivalry.

Lord Marshal, command our officers-at-arms

Be ready to direct these home alarms. *Exeunt*

SCENE 2. London. The DUKE OF LANCASTER'S palace

Enter JOHN OF GAUNT with the DUCHESS OF GLOUCESTER

GAUNT. Alas, the part I had in Woodstock's blood

Doth more solicit me than your exclaims

To stir against the butchers of his life!

But since correction lieth in those hands

Which made the fault that we cannot correct,

Put we our quarrel to the will of heaven;

Who, when they see the hours ripe on earth,

Will rain hot vengeance on offenders' heads.

DUCHESS.

Finds brotherhood in thee no sharper spur?

Hath love in thy old blood no living fire?

Edward's seven sons, whereof thyself art one,

Were as seven vials of his sacred blood,

Or seven fair branches springing from one root.

Some of those seven are dried by nature's course, Some of those branches by the Destinies cut;

But Thomas, my dear lord, my life, my Gloucester,

One vial full of Edward's sacred blood,

One flourishing branch of his most royal root,

Is crack'd, and all the precious liquor spilt;

Is hack'd down, and his summer leaves all faded,

By envy's hand and murder's bloody axe.

Ah, Gaunt, his blood was thine! That bed, that womb,

That mettle, that self mould, that fashion'd thee,

Made him a man; and though thou livest and breathest,

Yet art thou slain in him. Thou dost consent

In some large measure to thy father's death

In that thou seest thy wretched brother die,

Who was the model of thy father's life.

Call it not patience, Gaunt-it is despair;

In suff'ring thus thy brother to be slaught'red,

Thou showest the naked pathway to thy life,

Teaching stern murder how to butcher thee.

That which in mean men we entitle patience

Is pale cold cowardice in noble breasts.

What shall I say? To safeguard thine own life

The best way is to venge my Gloucester's death.

GAUNT.

God's is the quarrel; for God's substitute,
His deputy anointed in His sight,
Hath caus'd his death; the which if wrongfully,
Let heaven revenge; for I may never lift
An angry arm against His minister.

DUCHESS.

Where then, alas, may I complain myself?

GAUNT.

To God, the widow's champion and defence.

DUCHESS.

Why then, I will. Farewell, old Gaunt.
Thou goest to Coventry, there to behold
Our cousin Hereford and fell Mowbray fight.
O, sit my husband's wrongs on Hereford's spear,

That it may enter butcher Mowbray's breast!
Or, if misfortune miss the first career,
Be Mowbray's sins so heavy in his bosom
That they may break his foaming courser's back
And throw the rider headlong in the lists,
A caitiff recreant to my cousin Hereford!
Farewell, old Gaunt; thy sometimes brother's wife,
With her companion, Grief, must end her life.

GAUNT.
Sister, farewell; I must to Coventry.

As much good stay with thee as go with me!

DUCHESS.
Yet one word more-grief boundeth where it falls,
Not with the empty hollowness, but weight.
I take my leave before I have begun,
For sorrow ends not when it seemeth done.
Commend me to thy brother, Edmund York.
Lo, this is all-nay, yet depart not so;

Though this be all, do not so quickly go;

I shall remember more. Bid him-ah, what?-

With all good speed at Plashy visit me.

Alack, and what shall good old York there see

But empty lodgings and unfurnish'd walls,

Unpeopled offices, untrodden stones?

And what hear there for welcome but my groans?

Therefore commend me; let him not come there

To seek out sorrow that dwells every where.

Desolate, desolate, will I hence and die;

The last leave of thee takes my weeping eye. *Exeunt*

SCENE 3. The lists at Coventry

Enter the LORD MARSHAL and the DUKE OF AUMERLE

MARSHAL. My Lord Aumerle, is Harry Hereford arm'd?

AUMERLE.

Yea, at all points; and longs to enter in.

MARSHAL.

The Duke of Norfolk, spightfully and bold,

Stays but the summons of the appelant's trumpet.

AUMERLE.

Why then, the champions are prepar'd, and stay

For nothing but his Majesty's approach.

The trumpets sound, and the KING enters with his nobles,

GAUNT, BUSHY, BAGOT, GREEN, and others. When they are set,

Enter MOWBRAY, Duke of Nor folk, in arms, defendant, and

a HERALD

KING RICHARD.

Marshal, demand of yonder champion

The cause of his arrival here in arms;

Ask him his name; and orderly proceed

To swear him in the justice of his cause.

MARSHAL.

In God's name and the King's, say who thou art,

And why thou comest thus knightly clad in arms;

Against what man thou com'st, and what thy quarrel.
Speak truly on thy knighthood and thy oath;
As so defend thee heaven and thy valour!

MOWBRAY.
My name is Thomas Mowbray, Duke of Norfolk;
Who hither come engaged by my oath-
Which God defend a knight should violate!-
Both to defend my loyalty and truth
To God, my King, and my succeeding issue,
Against the Duke of Hereford that appeals me;
And, by the grace of God and this mine arm,
To prove him, in defending of myself,
A traitor to my God, my King, and me.
And as I truly fight, defend me heaven!
The trumpets sound. *Enter* BOLINGBROKE, Duke of Hereford,
appellant, in armour, and a HERALD
KING RICHARD.
Marshal, ask yonder knight in arms,
Both who he is and why he cometh hither
Thus plated in habiliments of war;

And formally, according to our law,

Depose him in the justice of his cause.

MARSHAL.

What is thy name? and wherefore com'st thou hither

Before King Richard in his royal lists?

Against whom comest thou? and what's thy quarrel?

Speak like a true knight, so defend thee heaven!

BOLINGBROKE.

Harry of Hereford, Lancaster, and Derby,

Am I; who ready here do stand in arms

To prove, by God's grace and my body's valour,

In lists on Thomas Mowbray, Duke of Norfolk,

That he is a traitor, foul and dangerous,

To God of heaven, King Richard, and to me.

And as I truly fight, defend me heaven!

MARSHAL.

On pain of death, no person be so bold
Or daring-hardy as to touch the lists,
Except the Marshal and such officers
Appointed to direct these fair designs.

BOLINGBROKE.
Lord Marshal, let me kiss my sovereign's hand,
And bow my knee before his Majesty;
For Mowbray and myself are like two men
That vow a long and weary pilgrimage.
Then let us take a ceremonious leave
And loving farewell of our several friends.

MARSHAL.
The appellant in all duty greets your Highness,
And craves to kiss your hand and take his leave.

KING RICHARD.
We will descend and fold him in our arms.
Cousin of Hereford, as thy cause is right,
So be thy fortune in this royal fight!

Farewell, my blood; which if to-day thou shed,
Lament we may, but not revenge thee dead.

BOLINGBROKE.
O, let no noble eye profane a tear
For me, if I be gor'd with Mowbray's spear.
As confident as is the falcon's flight
Against a bird, do I with Mowbray fight.
My loving lord, I take my leave of you;
Of you, my noble cousin, Lord Aumerle;
Not sick, although I have to do with death,
But lusty, young, and cheerly drawing breath.
Lo, as at English feasts, so I regreet
The daintiest last, to make the end most sweet.
O thou, the earthly author of my blood,
Whose youthful spirit, in me regenerate,
Doth with a twofold vigour lift me up
To reach at victory above my head,
Add proof unto mine armour with thy prayers,
And with thy blessings steel my lance's point,
That it may enter Mowbray's waxen coat

And furbish new the name of John o' Gaunt,
Even in the lusty haviour of his son.

GAUNT.
God in thy good cause make thee prosperous!
Be swift like lightning in the execution,
And let thy blows, doubly redoubled,
Fall like amazing thunder on the casque
Of thy adverse pernicious enemy.

Rouse up thy youthful blood, be valiant, and live.

BOLINGBROKE.
Mine innocence and Saint George to thrive!

MOWBRAY.
However God or fortune cast my lot,
There lives or dies, true to King Richard's throne,
A loyal, just, and upright gentleman.
Never did captive with a freer heart
Cast off his chains of bondage, and embrace

His golden uncontroll'd enfranchisement,
More than my dancing soul doth celebrate
This feast of battle with mine adversary.
Most mighty liege, and my companion peers,
Take from my mouth the wish of happy years.
As gentle and as jocund as to jest
Go I to fight: truth hath a quiet breast.

KING RICHARD.

Farewell, my lord, securely I espy
Virtue with valour couched in thine eye.

Order the trial, Marshal, and begin.

MARSHAL.

Harry of Hereford, Lancaster, and Derby,
Receive thy lance; and God defend the right!

BOLINGBROKE.

Strong as a tower in hope, I cry amen.

MARSHAL.

[To an officer] Go bear this lance to Thomas,

Duke of Norfolk.

FIRST HERALD.

Harry of Hereford, Lancaster, and Derby,

Stands here for God, his sovereign, and himself,

On pain to be found false and recreant,

To prove the Duke of Norfolk, Thomas Mowbray,

A traitor to his God, his King, and him;

And dares him to set forward to the fight.

SECOND HERALD.

Here standeth Thomas Mowbray, Duke of Norfolk,

On pain to be found false and recreant,

Both to defend himself, and to approve

Henry of Hereford, Lancaster, and Derby,

To God, his sovereign, and to him disloyal,

Courageously and with a free desire

Attending but the signal to begin.

MARSHAL.

Sound trumpets; and set forward, combatants.

[A charge sounded]

Stay, the King hath thrown his warder down.

KING RICHARD.

Let them lay by their helmets and their spears,

And both return back to their chairs again.

Withdraw with us; and let the trumpets sound

While we return these dukes what we decree.

A long flourish, while the KING consults his Council Draw near,

And list what with our council we have done.

For that our kingdom's earth should not be soil'd

With that dear blood which it hath fostered;

And for our eyes do hate the dire aspect

Of civil wounds plough'd up with neighbours' sword;

And for we think the eagle-winged pride

Of sky-aspiring and ambitious thoughts,

With rival-hating envy, set on you

To wake our peace, which in our country's cradle

Draws the sweet infant breath of gentle sleep;

Which so rous'd up with boist'rous untun'd drums,

With harsh-resounding trumpets' dreadful bray,

And grating shock of wrathful iron arms,

Might from our quiet confines fright fair peace

And make us wade even in our kindred's blood-

Therefore we banish you our territories.

You, cousin Hereford, upon pain of life,

Till twice five summers have enrich'd our fields

Shall not regreet our fair dominions,

But tread the stranger paths of banishment.

BOLINGBROKE.

Your will be done. This must my comfort be-

That sun that warms you here shall shine on me,

And those his golden beams to you here lent

Shall point on me and gild my banishment.

KING RICHARD.

Norfolk, for thee remains a heavier doom,

Which I with some unwillingness pronounce:

The sly slow hours shall not determinate

The dateless limit of thy dear exile;
The hopeless word of 'never to return'

Breathe I against thee, upon pain of life.

MOWBRAY.
A heavy sentence, my most sovereign liege,
And all unlook'd for from your Highness' mouth.
A dearer merit, not so deep a maim
As to be cast forth in the common air,
Have I deserved at your Highness' hands.
The language I have learnt these forty years,
My native English, now I must forgo;
And now my tongue's use is to me no more
Than an unstringed viol or a harp;
Or like a cunning instrument cas'd up
Or, being open, put into his hands
That knows no touch to tune the harmony.
Within my mouth you have engaol'd my tongue,
Doubly portcullis'd with my teeth and lips;
And dull, unfeeling, barren ignorance

Is made my gaoler to attend on me.
I am too old to fawn upon a nurse,
Too far in years to be a pupil now.
What is thy sentence, then, but speechless death,
Which robs my tongue from breathing native breath?

KING RICHARD.
It boots thee not to be compassionate;
After our sentence plaining comes too late.

MOWBRAY.
Then thus I turn me from my countrv's light,
To dwell in solemn shades of endless night.

KING RICHARD.
Return again, and take an oath with thee.
Lay on our royal sword your banish'd hands;
Swear by the duty that you owe to God,
Our part therein we banish with yourselves,
To keep the oath that we administer:
You never shall, so help you truth and God,

Embrace each other's love in banishment;

Nor never look upon each other's face;

Nor never write, regreet, nor reconcile

This louring tempest of your home-bred hate;

Nor never by advised purpose meet

To plot, contrive, or complot any ill,

'Gainst us, our state, our subjects, or our land.

BOLINGBROKE.

I swear.

MOWBRAY.

And I, to keep all this.

BOLINGBROKE.

Norfolk, so far as to mine enemy.

By this time, had the King permitted us,

One of our souls had wand'red in the air,

Banish'd this frail sepulchre of our flesh, As now our flesh is banish'd from this land-

Confess thy treasons ere thou fly the realm;

Since thou hast far to go, bear not along

The clogging burden of a guilty soul.

MOWBRAY.

No, Bolingbroke; if ever I were traitor,

My name be blotted from the book of life,

And I from heaven banish'd as from hence!

But what thou art, God, thou, and I, do know;

And all too soon, I fear, the King shall rue.

Farewell, my liege. Now no way can I stray:

Save back to England, an the world's my way. *Exit*

KING RICHARD. Uncle, even in the glasses of thine eyes

I see thy grieved heart. Thy sad aspect

Hath from the number of his banish'd years

Pluck'd four away. *[To BOLINGBROKE]* Six frozen winters spent,

Return with welcome home from banishment.

BOLINGBROKE.

How long a time lies in one little word!
Four lagging winters and four wanton springs
End in a word: such is the breath of Kings.

GAUNT.
I thank my liege that in regard of me
He shortens four years of my son's exile;
But little vantage shall I reap thereby,
For ere the six years that he hath to spend
Can change their moons and bring their times about,
My oil-dried lamp and time-bewasted light
Shall be extinct with age and endless night;
My inch of taper will be burnt and done,
And blindfold death not let me see my son.

KING RICHARD.

Why, uncle, thou hast many years to live.

GAUNT.

But not a minute, King, that thou canst give:
Shorten my days thou canst with sullen sorrow
And pluck nights from me, but not lend a morrow;
Thou can'st help time to furrow me with age,
But stop no wrinkle in his pilgrimage;
Thy word is current with him for my death,
But dead, thy kingdom cannot buy my breath.

KING RICHARD.
Thy son is banish'd upon good advice,
Whereto thy tongue a party-verdict gave.

Why at our justice seem'st thou then to lour?

GAUNT.
Things sweet to taste prove in digestion sour.
You urg'd me as a judge; but I had rather
You would have bid me argue like a father.
O, had it been a stranger, not my child,
To smooth his fault I should have been more mild.
A partial slander sought I to avoid,

And in the sentence my own life destroy'd.
Alas, I look'd when some of you should say
I was too strict to make mine own away;
But you gave leave to my unwilling tongue
Against my will to do myself this wrong.

KING RICHARD.

Cousin, farewell; and, uncle, bid him so.
Six years we banish him, and he shall go.

Flourish. Exit KING with train

AUMERLE.
Cousin, farewell; what presence must not know,
From where you do remain let paper show.

MARSHAL.
My lord, no leave take I, for I will ride
As far as land will let me by your side.

GAUNT.

O, to what purpose dost thou hoard thy words,

That thou returnest no greeting to thy friends?

BOLINGBROKE.

I have too few to take my leave of you,

When the tongue's office should be prodigal

To breathe the abundant dolour of the heart.

GAUNT.

Thy grief is but thy absence for a time.

BOLINGBROKE.

Joy absent, grief is present for that time.

GAUNT.

What is six winters? They are quickly gone.

BOLINGBROKE.

To men in joy; but grief makes one hour ten.

GAUNT.

Call it a travel that thou tak'st for pleasure.

BOLINGBROKE.

My heart will sigh when I miscall it so,

Which finds it an enforced pilgrimage.

GAUNT.

The sullen passage of thy weary steps

Esteem as foil wherein thou art to set

The precious jewel of thy home return.

BOLINGBROKE.

Nay, rather, every tedious stride I make

Will but remember me what a deal of world

I wander from the jewels that I love.

Must I not serve a long apprenticehood

To foreign passages; and in the end,

Having my freedom, boast of nothing else

But that I was a journeyman to grief?

GAUNT.
All places that the eye of heaven visits
Are to a wise man ports and happy havens.

Teach thy necessity to reason thus:
There is no virtue like necessity.
Think not the King did banish thee,
But thou the King. Woe doth the heavier sit
Where it perceives it is but faintly home.
Go, say I sent thee forth to purchase honour,
And not the King exil'd thee; or suppose
Devouring pestilence hangs in our air
And thou art flying to a fresher clime.
Look what thy soul holds dear, imagine it
To lie that way thou goest, not whence thou com'st.
Suppose the singing birds musicians,
The grass whereon thou tread'st the presence strew'd,
The flowers fair ladies, and thy steps no more
Than a delightful measure or a dance;

For gnarling sorrow hath less power to bite
The man that mocks at it and sets it light.

BOLINGBROKE.

O, who can hold a fire in his hand
By thinking on the frosty Caucasus?
Or cloy the hungry edge of appetite
By bare imagination of a feast?
Or wallow naked in December snow
By thinking on fantastic summer's heat?
O, no! the apprehension of the good
Gives but the greater feeling to the worse.
Fell sorrow's tooth doth never rankle more
Than when he bites, but lanceth not the sore.

GAUNT.

Come, come, my son, I'll bring thee on thy way.

Had I thy youth and cause, I would not stay.

BOLINGBROKE.

Then, England's ground, farewell; sweet soil,

adieu;

My mother, and my nurse, that bears me yet!

Where'er I wander, boast of this I can:

Though banish'd, yet a trueborn English man. *Exeunt*

SCENE 4. London. The court

Enter the KING, with BAGOT and GREEN, at one door; and the DUKE OF AUMERLE at another

KING RICHARD. We did observe. Cousin Aumerle,

How far brought you high Hereford on his way?

AUMERLE.

I brought high Hereford, if you call him so,

But to the next high way, and there I left him.

KING RICHARD.

And say, what store of parting tears were shed?

AUMERLE.

Faith, none for me; except the north-east wind,

Which then blew bitterly against our faces,

Awak'd the sleeping rheum, and so by chance

Did grace our hollow parting with a tear.

KING RICHARD.

What said our cousin when you parted with him?

AUMERLE.

'Farewell.'

And, for my heart disdained that my tongue

Should so profane the word, that taught me craft

To counterfeit oppression of such grief

That words seem'd buried in my sorrow's grave.

Marry, would the word 'farewell' have length'ned hours

And added years to his short banishment,

He should have had a volume of farewells;

But since it would not, he had none of me.

KING RICHARD.

He is our cousin, cousin; but 'tis doubt,

When time shall call him home from banishment,

Whether our kinsman come to see his friends.

Ourself, and Bushy, Bagot here, and Green,

Observ'd his courtship to the common people;

How he did seem to dive into their hearts

With humble and familiar courtesy;

What reverence he did throw away on slaves,

Wooing poor craftsmen with the craft of smiles

And patient underbearing of his fortune,

As 'twere to banish their affects with him.

Off goes his bonnet to an oyster-wench;

A brace of draymen bid God speed him well

And had the tribute of his supple knee,

With 'Thanks, my countrymen, my loving friends';

As were our England in reversion his,

And he our subjects' next degree in hope.

GREEN.

Well, he is gone; and with him go these thoughts!
Now for the rebels which stand out in Ireland,
Expedient manage must be made, my liege,
Ere further leisure yicld them further means
For their advantage and your Highness' loss.

KING RICHARD.
We will ourself in person to this war;
And, for our coffers, with too great a court
And liberal largess, are grown somewhat light,
We are enforc'd to farm our royal realm;
The revenue whereof shall furnish us
For our affairs in hand. If that come short,
Our substitutes at home shall have blank charters;
Whereto, when they shall know what men are rich,
They shall subscribe them for large sums of gold,
And send them after to supply our wants;
For we will make for Ireland presently.

Enter BUSHY

Bushy, what news?

BUSHY.

Old John of Gaunt is grievous sick, my lord,

Suddenly taken; and hath sent poste-haste

To entreat your Majesty to visit him.

KING RICHARD.

Where lies he?

BUSHY.

At Ely House.

KING RICHARD.

Now put it, God, in the physician's mind

To help him to his grave immediately!

The lining of his coffers shall make coats

To deck our soldiers for these Irish wars.

Come, gentlemen, let's all go visit him.

Pray God we may make haste, and come too late!

ALL.

Amen. Exeunt

ACT II. SCENE I. London. Ely House

Enter JOHN OF GAUNT, sick, with the DUKE OF YORK, *etc.*

GAUNT.

Will the King come, that I may breathe my last

In wholesome counsel to his unstaid youth?

YORK.

Vex not yourself, nor strive not with your breath;

For all in vain comes counsel to his ear.

GAUNT.

O, but they say the tongues of dying men

Enforce attention like deep harmony.

Where words are scarce, they are seldom spent in vain;

For they breathe truth that breathe their words -in pain.

He that no more must say is listen'd more

Than they whom youth and ease have taught to glose;

More are men's ends mark'd than their lives before.

The setting sun, and music at the close,

As the last taste of sweets, is sweetest last,

Writ in remembrance more than things long past.

Though Richard my life's counsel would not hear,

My death's sad tale may yet undeaf his ear.

YORK.

No; it is stopp'd with other flattering sounds,

As praises, of whose taste the wise are fond,

Lascivious metres, to whose venom sound

The open ear of youth doth always listen;

Report of fashions in proud Italy,

Whose manners still our tardy apish nation

Limps after in base imitation.

Where doth the world thrust forth a vanity-

So it be new, there's no respect how vile-

That is not quickly buzz'd into his ears?

Then all too late comes counsel to be heard

Where will doth mutiny with wit's regard.

Direct not him whose way himself will choose.

'Tis breath thou lack'st, and that breath wilt thou lose.

GAUNT.

Methinks I am a prophet new inspir'd,

And thus expiring do foretell of him:

His rash fierce blaze of riot cannot last,

For violent fires soon burn out themselves;

Small showers last long, but sudden storms are short;

He tires betimes that spurs too fast betimes;

With eager feeding food doth choke the feeder;

Light vanity, insatiate cormorant,

Consuming means, soon preys upon itself.

This royal throne of kings, this scept'red isle,

This earth of majesty, this seat of Mars,

This other Eden, demi-paradise,

This fortress built by Nature for herself

Against infection and the hand of war,

This happy breed of men, this little world,

This precious stone set in the silver sea,

Which serves it in the office of a wall,

Or as a moat defensive to a house,

Against the envy of less happier lands;

This blessed plot, this earth, this realm, this England,

This nurse, this teeming womb of royal kings,

Fear'd by their breed, and famous by their birth,

Renowned for their deeds as far from home,

For Christian service and true chivalry,

As is the sepulchre in stubborn Jewry

Of the world's ransom, blessed Mary's Son;

This land of such dear souls, this dear dear land,

Dear for her reputation through the world,

Is now leas'd out-I die pronouncing it-

Like to a tenement or pelting farm.

England, bound in with the triumphant sea,

Whose rocky shore beats back the envious siege

Of wat'ry Neptune, is now bound in with shame,

With inky blots and rotten parchment bonds;

That England, that was wont to conquer others,

Hath made a shameful conquest of itself.

Ah, would the scandal vanish with my life,

How happy then were my ensuing death!

Enter KING and QUEEN, AUMERLE, BUSHY, GREEN, BAGOT,

Ross, and WILLOUGHBY

YORK.

The King is come; deal mildly with his youth,
For young hot colts being rag'd do rage the more.

QUEEN.

How fares our noble uncle Lancaster?

KING RICHARD.

What comfort, man? How is't with aged Gaunt?

GAUNT.

O, how that name befits my composition!
Old Gaunt, indeed; and gaunt in being old.
Within me grief hath kept a tedious fast;
And who abstains from meat that is not gaunt?
For sleeping England long time have I watch'd;

Watching breeds leanness, leanness is an gaunt.

The pleasure that some fathers feed upon

Is my strict fast-I mean my children's looks;

And therein fasting, hast thou made me gaunt.

Gaunt am I for the grave, gaunt as a grave,

Whose hollow womb inherits nought but bones.

KING RICHARD.

Can sick men play so nicely with their names?

GAUNT.

No, misery makes sport to mock itself:

Since thou dost seek to kill my name in me,

I mock my name, great king, to flatter thee.

KING RICHARD.

Should dying men flatter with those that live?

GAUNT.

No, no; men living flatter those that die.

KING RICHARD.

Thou, now a-dying, sayest thou flatterest me.

GAUNT.

O, no! thou diest, though I the sicker be.

KING RICHARD.

I am in health, I breathe, and see thee ill.

GAUNT.

Now He that made me knows I see thee ill;
Ill in myself to see, and in thee seeing ill.
Thy death-bed is no lesser than thy land
Wherein thou liest in reputation sick;
And thou, too careless patient as thou art,
Commit'st thy anointed body to the cure
Of those physicians that first wounded thee:
A thousand flatterers sit within thy crown,

Whose compass is no bigger than thy head;
And yet, incaged in so small a verge,
The waste is no whit lesser than thy land.
O, had thy grandsire with a prophet's eye
Seen how his son's son should destroy his sons,
From forth thy reach he would have laid thy shame,
Deposing thee before thou wert possess'd,
Which art possess'd now to depose thyself.
Why, cousin, wert thou regent of the world,
It were a shame to let this land by lease;
But for thy world enjoying but this land,
Is it not more than shame to shame it so?

Landlord of England art thou now, not King.
Thy state of law is bondslave to the law;
And thou-

KING RICHARD.
A lunatic lean-witted fool,
Presuming on an ague's privilege,
Darest with thy frozen admonition

Make pale our cheek, chasing the royal blood
With fury from his native residence.
Now by my seat's right royal majesty,
Wert thou not brother to great Edward's son,
This tongue that runs so roundly in thy head
Should run thy head from thy unreverent shoulders.

GAUNT.

O, Spare me not, my brother Edward's son,
For that I was his father Edward's son;
That blood already, like the pelican,
Hast thou tapp'd out, and drunkenly carous'd.
My brother Gloucester, plain well-meaning soul-
Whom fair befall in heaven 'mongst happy souls!-
May be a precedent and witness good
That thou respect'st not spilling Edward's blood.
Join with the present sickness that I have;
And thy unkindness be like crooked age,
To crop at once a too long withered flower.
Live in thy shame, but die not shame with thee!

These words hereafter thy tormentors be!

Convey me to my bed, then to my grave.

Love they to live that love and honour have.

Exit , borne out by his attendants

KING RICHARD.

And let them die that age and sullens have;

For both hast thou, and both become the grave.

YORK.

I do beseech your Majesty impute his words

To wayward sickliness and age in him.

He loves you, on my life, and holds you dear

As Harry Duke of Hereford, were he here.

KING RICHARD.

Right, you say true: as Hereford's love, so his;

As theirs, so mine; and all be as it is.

Enter NORTHUMBERLAND

NORTHUMBERLAND.

My liege, old Gaunt commends him to your Majesty.

KING RICHARD.

What says he?

NORTHUMBERLAND.

Nay, nothing; all is said.
His tongue is now a stringless instrument;
Words, life, and all, old Lancaster hath spent.

YORK.

Be York the next that must be bankrupt so!
Though death be poor, it ends a mortal woe.

KING RICHARD.

The ripest fruit first falls, and so doth he;
His time is spent, our pilgrimage must be.

So much for that. Now for our Irish wars.

We must supplant those rough rug-headed kerns,

Which live like venom where no venom else

But only they have privilege to live.

And for these great affairs do ask some charge,

Towards our assistance we do seize to us

The plate, coin, revenues, and moveables,

Whereof our uncle Gaunt did stand possess'd.

YORK.

How long shall I be patient? Ah, how long

Shall tender duty make me suffer wrong?

Not Gloucester's death, nor Hereford's banishment,

Nor Gaunt's rebukes, nor England's private wrongs,

Nor the prevention of poor Bolingbroke

About his marriage, nor my own disgrace,

Have ever made me sour my patient cheek

Or bend one wrinkle on my sovereign's face.

I am the last of noble Edward's sons,

Of whom thy father, Prince of Wales, was first.

In war was never lion rag'd more fierce, In peace was never gentle lamb more mild,

Than was that young and princely gentleman.

His face thou hast, for even so look'd he,

Accomplish'd with the number of thy hours;

But when he frown'd, it was against the French

And not against his friends. His noble hand

Did win what he did spend, and spent not that

Which his triumphant father's hand had won.

His hands were guilty of no kindred blood,

But bloody with the enemies of his kin.

O Richard! York is too far gone with grief,

Or else he never would compare between-

KING RICHARD.

Why, uncle, what's the matter?

YORK.

O my liege,

Pardon me, if you please; if not, I, pleas'd

Not to be pardoned, am content withal.

Seek you to seize and gripe into your hands

The royalties and rights of banish'd Hereford?
Is not Gaunt dead? and doth not Hereford live?

Was not Gaunt just? and is not Harry true?
Did not the one deserve to have an heir?

Is not his heir a well-deserving son?
Take Hereford's rights away, and take from Time
His charters and his customary rights;
Let not to-morrow then ensue to-day;
Be not thyself-for how art thou a king
But by fair sequence and succession?
Now, afore God-God forbid I say true!-
If you do wrongfully seize Hereford's rights,
Call in the letters patents that he hath
By his attorneys-general to sue
His livery, and deny his off'red homage,
You pluck a thousand dangers on your head,
You lose a thousand well-disposed hearts,
And prick my tender patience to those thoughts
Which honour and allegiance cannot think.

KING RICHARD.

Think what you will, we seize into our hands

His plate, his goods, his money, and his lands.

YORK.

I'll not be by the while. My liege, farewell.

What will ensue hereof there's none can tell;

But by bad courses may be understood

That their events can never fall out good. *Exit*

KING RICHARD. Go, Bushy, to the Earl of Wiltshire straight;

Bid him repair to us to Ely House

To see this business. To-morrow next

We will for Ireland; and 'tis time, I trow.

And we create, in absence of ourself,

Our Uncle York Lord Governor of England;

For he is just, and always lov'd us well.

Come on, our queen; to-morrow must we part;

Be merry, for our time of stay is short.

Flourish. Exeunt KING, QUEEN, BUSHY, AUMERLE, GREEN, and BAGOT

NORTHUMBERLAND.

Well, lords, the Duke of Lancaster is dead.

Ross. And living too; for now his son is Duke.

WILLOUGHBY.

Barely in title, not in revenues.

NORTHUMBERLAND.

Richly in both, if justice had her right.

ROSS.

My heart is great; but it must break with silence,

Ere't be disburdened with a liberal tongue.

NORTHUMBERLAND.

Nay, speak thy mind; and let him ne'er speak more

That speaks thy words again to do thee harm!

WILLOUGHBY.

Tends that thou wouldst speak to the Duke of Hereford?

If it be so, out with it boldly, man;

Quick is mine ear to hear of good towards him.

ROSS.

No good at all that I can do for him;

Unless you call it good to pity him,

Bereft and gelded of his patrimony.

NORTHUMBERLAND.

Now, afore God, 'tis shame such wrongs are borne

In him, a royal prince, and many moe

Of noble blood in this declining land.

The King is not himself, but basely led

By flatterers; and what they will inform,

Merely in hate, 'gainst any of us an,

That will the King severely prosecute

'Gainst us, our lives, our children, and our heirs.

ROSS.

The commons hath he pill'd with grievous taxes;

And quite lost their hearts; the nobles hath he find
For ancient quarrels and quite lost their hearts.

WILLOUGHBY.
And daily new exactions are devis'd,
As blanks, benevolences, and I wot not what;
But what, a God's name, doth become of this?

NORTHUMBERLAND.
Wars hath not wasted it, for warr'd he hath not,
But basely yielded upon compromise
That which his noble ancestors achiev'd with blows.

More hath he spent in peace than they in wars.

ROSS.
The Earl of Wiltshire hath the realm in farm.

WILLOUGHBY.

The King's grown bankrupt like a broken man.

NORTHUMBERLAND.

Reproach and dissolution hangeth over him.

ROSS.

He hath not money for these Irish wars,
His burdenous taxations notwithstanding,
But by the robbing of the banish'd Duke.

NORTHUMBERLAND.

His noble kinsman-most degenerate king!
But, lords, we hear this fearful tempest sing,
Yet seek no shelter to avoid the storm;
We see the wind sit sore upon our sails,
And yet we strike not, but securely perish.

ROSS.

We see the very wreck that we must suffer;
And unavoided is the danger now
For suffering so the causes of our wreck.

NORTHUMBERLAND.

Not so; even through the hollow eyes of death

I spy life peering; but I dare not say

How near the tidings of our comfort is.

WILLOUGHBY.

Nay, let us share thy thoughts as thou dost ours.

ROSS.

Be confident to speak, Northumberland.

We three are but thyself, and, speaking so,

Thy words are but as thoughts; therefore be bold.

NORTHUMBERLAND.

Then thus: I have from Le Port Blanc, a bay

In Brittany, receiv'd intelligence

That Harry Duke of Hereford, Rainold Lord Cobham,

That late broke from the Duke of Exeter,

His brother, Archbishop late of Canterbury,

Sir Thomas Erpingham, Sir John Ramston,

Sir John Norbery, Sir Robert Waterton, and Francis Quoint-

All these, well furnish'd by the Duke of Britaine,

With eight tall ships, three thousand men of war,

Are making hither with all due expedience,

And shortly mean to touch our northern shore.

Perhaps they had ere this, but that they stay

The first departing of the King for Ireland.

If then we shall shake off our slavish yoke,

Imp out our drooping country's broken wing,

Redeem from broking pawn the blemish'd crown,

Wipe off the dust that hides our sceptre's gilt,

And make high majesty look like itself,

Away with me in post to Ravenspurgh;

But if you faint, as fearing to do so,

Stay and be secret, and myself will go.

ROSS.

To horse, to horse! Urge doubts to them that fear.

WILLOUGHBY.

Hold out my horse, and I will first be there.

Exeunt

SCENE 2. Windsor Castle

Enter QUEEN, BUSHY, and BAGOT

BUSHY. Madam, your Majesty is too much sad.
You promis'd, when you parted with the King,
To lay aside life-harming heaviness
And entertain a cheerful disposition.

QUEEN.
To please the King, I did; to please myself
I cannot do it; yet I know no cause
Why I should welcome such a guest as grief,
Save bidding farewell to so sweet a guest
As my sweet Richard. Yet again methinks
Some unborn sorrow, ripe in fortune's womb,
Is coming towards me, and my inward soul
With nothing trembles. At some thing it grieves

More than with parting from my lord the King.

BUSHY.

Each substance of a grief hath twenty shadows,

Which shows like grief itself, but is not so;

For sorrow's eye, glazed with blinding tears,

Divides one thing entire to many objects,

Like perspectives which, rightly gaz'd upon,

Show nothing but confusion-ey'd awry,

Distinguish form. So your sweet Majesty,

Looking awry upon your lord's departure,

Find shapes of grief more than himself to wail;

Which, look'd on as it is, is nought but shadows

Of what it is not. Then, thrice-gracious Queen,

More than your lord's departure weep not-more is not seen;

Or if it be, 'tis with false sorrow's eye,

Which for things true weeps things imaginary.

QUEEN.

It may be so; but yet my inward soul

Persuades me it is otherwise. Howe'er it be,

I cannot but be sad; so heavy sad
As-though, on thinking, on no thought I think-
Makes me with heavy nothing faint and shrink.

BUSHY.

'Tis nothing but conceit, my gracious lady.

QUEEN.
'Tis nothing less: conceit is still deriv'd
From some forefather grief; mine is not so,
For nothing hath begot my something grief,
Or something hath the nothing that I grieve;
'Tis in reversion that I do possess-
But what it is that is not yet known what,
I cannot name; 'tis nameless woe, I wot.

Enter GREEN

GREEN.
God save your Majesty! and well met, gentlemen.

I hope the King is not yet shipp'd for Ireland.

QUEEN.

Why hopest thou so? 'Tis better hope he is;

For his designs crave haste, his haste good hope.

Then wherefore dost thou hope he is not shipp'd?

GREEN.

That he, our hope, might have retir'd his power

And driven into despair an enemy's hope

Who strongly hath set footing in this land.

The banish'd Bolingbroke repeals himself,

And with uplifted arms is safe arriv'd

At Ravenspurgh.

QUEEN.

Now God in heaven forbid!

GREEN.

Ah, madam, 'tis too true; and that is worse,
The Lord Northumberland, his son young Henry Percy,
The Lords of Ross, Beaumond, and Willoughby,
With all their powerful friends, are fled to him.

BUSHY.
Why have you not proclaim'd Northumberland
And all the rest revolted faction traitors?

GREEN.
We have; whereupon the Earl of Worcester
Hath broken his staff, resign'd his stewardship,
And all the household servants fled with him
To Bolingbroke.

QUEEN.
So, Green, thou art the midwife to my woe,
And Bolingbroke my sorrow's dismal heir.
Now hath my soul brought forth her prodigy;
And I, a gasping new-deliver'd mother,
Have woe to woe, sorrow to sorrow join'd.

BUSHY.

Despair not, madam.

QUEEN.

Who shall hinder me?
I will despair, and be at enmity
With cozening hope-he is a flatterer,
A parasite, a keeper-back of death,
Who gently would dissolve the bands of life,
Which false hope lingers in extremity.

Enter YORK

GREEN.

Here comes the Duke of York.

QUEEN.

With signs of war about his aged neck.

O, full of careful business are his looks!

Uncle, for God's sake, speak comfortable words.

YORK.

Should I do so, I should belie my thoughts.

Comfort's in heaven; and we are on the earth,

Where nothing lives but crosses, cares, and grief.

Your husband, he is gone to save far off,

Whilst others come to make him lose at home.

Here am I left to underprop his land,

Who, weak with age, cannot support myself.

Now comes the sick hour that his surfeit made;

Now shall he try his friends that flatter'd him.

Enter a SERVINGMAN

SERVINGMAN.

My lord, your son was gone before I came.

YORK.

He was-why so go all which way it will!
The nobles they are fled, the commons they are cold
And will, I fear, revolt on Hereford's side.
Sirrah, get thee to Plashy, to my sister Gloucester;
Bid her send me presently a thousand pound.
Hold, take my ring.

SERVINGMAN.
My lord, I had forgot to tell your lordship,
To-day, as I came by, I called there-
But I shall grieve you to report the rest.

YORK.
What is't, knave?

SERVINGMAN.

An hour before I came, the Duchess died.

YORK.

God for his mercy! what a tide of woes
Comes rushing on this woeful land at once!
I know not what to do. I would to God,
So my untruth had not provok'd him to it,
The King had cut off my head with my brother's.

What, are there no posts dispatch'd for Ireland?
How shall we do for money for these wars?

Come, sister-cousin, I would say-pray, pardon me.
Go, fellow, get thee home, provide some carts,
And bring away the armour that is there.

Exit SERVINGMAN

Gentlemen, will you go muster men?
If I know how or which way to order these affairs
Thus disorderly thrust into my hands,
Never believe me. Both are my kinsmen.
T'one is my sovereign, whom both my oath
And duty bids defend; t'other again

Is my kinsman, whom the King hath wrong'd,
Whom conscience and my kindred bids to right.
Well, somewhat we must do.-Come, cousin,
I'll dispose of you. Gentlemen, go muster up your men
And meet me presently at Berkeley.
I should to Plashy too,
But time will not permit. All is uneven,
And everything is left at six and seven.
Exeunt YORK and QUEEN
BUSHY.

The wind sits fair for news to go to Ireland.
But none returns. For us to levy power
Proportionable to the enemy
Is all unpossible.

GREEN.
Besides, our nearness to the King in love
Is near the hate of those love not the King.

BAGOT.

And that is the wavering commons; for their love
Lies in their purses; and whoso empties them,
By so much fills their hearts with deadly hate.

BUSHY.
Wherein the King stands generally condemn'd.

BAGOT.
If judgment lie in them, then so do we,
Because we ever have been near the King.

GREEN.

Well, I will for refuge straight to Bristow Castle.
The Earl of Wiltshire is already there.

BUSHY.
Thither will I with you; for little office
Will the hateful commons perform for us,
Except Eke curs to tear us all to pieces.
Will you go along with us?

BAGOT.

No; I will to Ireland to his Majesty.

Farewell. If heart's presages be not vain,

We three here part that ne'er shall meet again.

BUSHY.

That's as York thrives to beat back Bolingbroke.

GREEN.

Alas, poor Duke! the task he undertakes

Is numb'ring sands and drinking oceans dry.

Where one on his side fights, thousands will fly.

Farewell at once-for once, for all, and ever.

BUSHY.

Well, we may meet again.

BAGOT.

I fear me, never. *Exeunt*

SCENE 3. Gloucestershire

Enter BOLINGBROKE and NORTHUMBERLAND, forces

BOLINGBROKE. How far is it, my lord, to Berkeley now?

NORTHUMBERLAND.

Believe me, noble lord,
I am a stranger here in Gloucestershire.
These high wild hills and rough uneven ways
Draws out our miles, and makes them wearisome;
And yet your fair discourse hath been as sugar,
Making the hard way sweet and delectable.
But I bethink me what a weary way
From Ravenspurgh to Cotswold will be found
In Ross and Willoughby, wanting your company,
Which, I protest, hath very much beguil'd
The tediousness and process of my travel.

But theirs is sweet'ned with the hope to have
The present benefit which I possess;
And hope to joy is little less in joy
Than hope enjoy'd. By this the weary lords
Shall make their way seem short, as mine hath done
By sight of what I have, your noble company.

BOLINGBROKE.
Of much less value is my company
Than your good words. But who comes here?

Enter HARRY PERCY

NORTHUMBERLAND.
It is my son, young Harry Percy,
Sent from my brother Worcester, whencesoever.
Harry, how fares your uncle?

PERCY.

I had thought, my lord, to have learn'd his health of you.

NORTHUMBERLAND.

Why, is he not with the Queen?

PERCY.

No, my good lord; he hath forsook the court,

Broken his staff of office, and dispers'd

The household of the King.

NORTHUMBERLAND.

What was his reason?

He was not so resolv'd when last we spake together.

PERCY.

Because your lordship was proclaimed traitor.

But he, my lord, is gone to Ravenspurgh,

To offer service to the Duke of Hereford;

And sent me over by Berkeley, to discover

What power the Duke of York had levied there;

Then with directions to repair to Ravenspurgh.

NORTHUMBERLAND.

Have you forgot the Duke of Hereford, boy?

PERCY.

No, my good lord; for that is not forgot

Which ne'er I did remember; to my knowledge,

I never in my life did look on him.

NORTHUMBERLAND.

Then learn to know him now; this is the Duke.

PERCY.

My gracious lord, I tender you my service,

Such as it is, being tender, raw, and young;

Which elder days shall ripen, and confirm

To more approved service and desert.

BOLINGBROKE.

I thank thee, gentle Percy; and be sure

I count myself in nothing else so happy

As in a soul rememb'ring my good friends;

And as my fortune ripens with thy love,

It shall be still thy true love's recompense.

My heart this covenant makes, my hand thus seals it.

NORTHUMBERLAND.

How far is it to Berkeley? And what stir

Keeps good old York there with his men of war?

PERCY.

There stands the castle, by yon tuft of trees,

Mann'd with three hundred men, as I have heard;

And in it are the Lords of York, Berkeley, and Seymour-

None else of name and noble estimate.

Enter Ross and WILLOUGHBY

NORTHUMBERLAND.

Here come the Lords of Ross and Willoughby,

Bloody with spurring, fiery-red with haste.

BOLINGBROKE.

Welcome, my lords. I wot your love pursues

A banish'd traitor. All my treasury

Is yet but unfelt thanks, which, more enrich'd,

Shall be your love and labour's recompense.

ROSS.

Your presence makes us rich, most noble lord.

WILLOUGHBY.

And far surmounts our labour to attain it.

BOLINGBROKE.

Evermore thanks, the exchequer of the poor;

Which, till my infant fortune comes to years,

Stands for my bounty. But who comes here?

Enter BERKELEY

NORTHUMBERLAND.

It is my Lord of Berkeley, as I guess.

BERKELEY.

My Lord of Hereford, my message is to you.

BOLINGBROKE.

My lord, my answer is-'to Lancaster';
And I am come to seek that name in England;
And I must find that title in your tongue
Before I make reply to aught you say.

BERKELEY.

Mistake me not, my lord; 'tis not my meaning
To raze one title of your honour out.
To you, my lord, I come-what lord you will-
From the most gracious regent of this land,
The Duke of York, to know what pricks you on
To take advantage of the absent time,
And fright our native peace with self-borne arms.

Enter YORK, attended

BOLINGBROKE.

I shall not need transport my words by you;

Here comes his Grace in person. My noble uncle!

[Kneels]

YORK.

Show me thy humble heart, and not thy knee,

Whose duty is deceivable and false.

BOLINGBROKE.

My gracious uncle!-

YORK.

Tut, tut!

Grace me no grace, nor uncle me no uncle.

I am no traitor's uncle; and that word 'grace'

In an ungracious mouth is but profane.

Why have those banish'd and forbidden legs
Dar'd once to touch a dust of England's ground?
But then more 'why?'-why have they dar'd to march
So many miles upon her peaceful bosom,
Frighting her pale-fac'd villages with war
And ostentation of despised arms?
Com'st thou because the anointed King is hence?
Why, foolish boy, the King is left behind,
And in my loyal bosom lies his power.
Were I but now lord of such hot youth
As when brave Gaunt, thy father, and myself
Rescued the Black Prince, that young Mars of men,
From forth the ranks of many thousand French,
O, then how quickly should this arm of mine,
Now prisoner to the palsy, chastise the
And minister correction to thy fault!

BOLINGBROKE My gracious uncle, let me know my fault;
On what condition stands it and wherein?

YORK.

Even in condition of the worst degree-
In gross rebellion and detested treason.
Thou art a banish'd man, and here art come
Before the expiration of thy time,
In braving arms against thy sovereign.

BOLINGBROKE.
As I was banish'd, I was banish'd Hereford;
But as I come, I come for Lancaster.
And, noble uncle, I beseech your Grace
Look on my wrongs with an indifferent eye.
You are my father, for methinks in you
I see old Gaunt alive. O, then, my father,
Will you permit that I shall stand condemn'd
A wandering vagabond; my rights and royalties
Pluck'd from my arms perforce, and given away
To upstart unthrifts? Wherefore was I born?
If that my cousin king be King in England,
It must be granted I am Duke of Lancaster.
You have a son, Aumerle, my noble cousin;
Had you first died, and he been thus trod down,

He should have found his uncle Gaunt a father

To rouse his wrongs and chase them to the bay.

I am denied to sue my livery here,

And yet my letters patents give me leave.

My father's goods are all distrain'd and sold;

And these and all are all amiss employ'd.

What would you have me do? I am a subject,

And I challenge law-attorneys are denied me;

And therefore personally I lay my claim

To my inheritance of free descent.

NORTHUMBERLAND.

The noble Duke hath been too much abused.

ROSS.

It stands your Grace upon to do him right.

WILLOUGHBY.

Base men by his endowments are made great.

YORK.

My lords of England, let me tell you this:
I have had feeling of my cousin's wrongs,
And labour'd all I could to do him right;
But in this kind to come, in braving arms,
Be his own carver and cut out his way,
To find out right with wrong-it may not be;
And you that do abet him in this kind
Cherish rebellion, and are rebels all.

NORTHUMBERLAND.
The noble Duke hath sworn his coming is
But for his own; and for the right of that
We all have strongly sworn to give him aid;
And let him never see joy that breaks that oath!

YORK.

Well, well, I see the issue of these arms.
I cannot mend it, I must needs confess,

Because my power is weak and all ill left;
But if I could, by Him that gave me life,
I would attach you all and make you stoop
Unto the sovereign mercy of the King;
But since I cannot, be it known unto you
I do remain as neuter. So, fare you well;
Unless you please to enter in the castle,
And there repose you for this night.

BOLINGBROKE.

An offer, uncle, that we will accept.
But we must win your Grace to go with us
To Bristow Castle, which they say is held
By Bushy, Bagot, and their complices,
The caterpillars of the commonwealth,
Which I have sworn to weed and pluck away.

YORK.

It may be I will go with you; but yet I'll pause,
For I am loath to break our country's laws.

Nor friends nor foes, to me welcome you are.

Things past redress are now with me past care. *Exeunt*

SCENE 4. A camp in Wales

Enter EARL OF SALISBURY and a WELSH CAPTAIN

CAPTAIN. My Lord of Salisbury, we have stay'd ten days

And hardly kept our countrymen together,

And yet we hear no tidings from the King;

Therefore we will disperse ourselves. Farewell.

SALISBURY.

Stay yet another day, thou trusty Welshman;

The King reposeth all his confidence in thee.

CAPTAIN.

'Tis thought the King is dead; we will not stay.

The bay trees in our country are all wither'd,

And meteors fright the fixed stars of heaven;
The pale-fac'd moon looks bloody on the earth,
And lean-look'd prophets whisper fearful change;
Rich men look sad, and ruffians dance and leap-
The one in fear to lose what they enjoy,
The other to enjoy by rage and war.

These signs forerun the death or fall of kings.
Farewell. Our countrymen are gone and fled,
As well assur'd Richard their King is dead. *Exit*

SALISBURY. Ah, Richard, with the eyes of heavy mind,
I see thy glory like a shooting star
Fall to the base earth from the firmament!
The sun sets weeping in the lowly west,
Witnessing storms to come, woe, and unrest;
Thy friends are fled, to wait upon thy foes;
And crossly to thy good all fortune goes. *Exit*

ACT III. SCENE I. BOLINGBROKE'S camp at Bristol

Enter BOLINGBROKE, YORK, NORTHUMBERLAND, PERCY, ROSS, WILLOUGHBY,

BUSHY and GREEN, prisoners

BOLINGBROKE.

Bring forth these men.

Bushy and Green, I will not vex your souls-

Since presently your souls must part your bodies-

With too much urging your pernicious lives,

For 'twere no charity; yet, to wash your blood

From off my hands, here in the view of men

I will unfold some causes of your deaths:

You have misled a prince, a royal king,

A happy gentleman in blood and lineaments,

By you unhappied and disfigured clean;

You have in manner with your sinful hours

Made a divorce betwixt his queen and him;

Broke the possession of a royal bed,

And stain'd the beauty of a fair queen's cheeks

With tears drawn from her eyes by your foul wrongs;

Myself-a prince by fortune of my birth,

Near to the King in blood, and near in love

Till you did make him misinterpret me-

Have stoop'd my neck under your injuries

And sigh'd my English breath in foreign clouds,

Eating the bitter bread of banishment,

Whilst you have fed upon my signories,

Dispark'd my parks and fell'd my forest woods,

From my own windows torn my household coat,

Raz'd out my imprese, leaving me no sign

Save men's opinions and my living blood

To show the world I am a gentleman.

This and much more, much more than twice all this,

Condemns you to the death. See them delivered over

To execution and the hand of death.

BUSHY.

More welcome is the stroke of death to me

Than Bolingbroke to England. Lords, farewell.

GREEN.

My comfort is that heaven will take our souls,

And plague injustice with the pains of hell.

BOLINGBROKE.

My Lord Northumberland, see them dispatch'd.

Exeunt NORTHUMBERLAND, and others, with the prisoners

Uncle, you say the Queen is at your house;

For God's sake, fairly let her be entreated.

Tell her I send to her my kind commends;

Take special care my greetings be delivered.

YORK.

A gentleman of mine I have dispatch'd

With letters of your love to her at large.

BOLINGBROKE.

Thanks, gentle uncle. Come, lords, away,

To fight with Glendower and his complices.

Awhile to work, and after holiday. *Exeunt*

SCENE 2. The coast of Wales. A castle in view

Drums. Flourish and colours. *Enter* the KING, the BISHOP OF

CARLISLE,

AUMERLE, and soldiers

KING RICHARD.

Barkloughly Castle can they this at hand?

AUMERLE.

Yea, my lord. How brooks your Grace the air

After your late tossing on the breaking seas?

KING RICHARD.

Needs must I like it well. I weep for joy

To stand upon my kingdom once again.

Dear earth, I do salute thee with my hand,

Though rebels wound thee with their horses' hoofs.

As a long-parted mother with her child

Plays fondly with her tears and smiles in meeting,
So weeping-smiling greet I thee, my earth,
And do thee favours with my royal hands.
Feed not thy sovereign's foe, my gentle earth,
Nor with thy sweets comfort his ravenous sense;
But let thy spiders, that suck up thy venom,
And heavy-gaited toads, lie in their way,
Doing annoyance to the treacherous feet
Which with usurping steps do trample thee;
Yield stinging nettles to mine enemies;
And when they from thy bosom pluck a flower,
Guard it, I pray thee, with a lurking adder,
Whose double tongue may with a mortal touch
Throw death upon thy sovereign's enemies.

Mock not my senseless conjuration, lords.
This earth shall have a feeling, and these stones
Prove armed soldiers, ere her native king
Shall falter under foul rebellion's arms.

CARLISLE.

Fear not, my lord; that Power that made you king
Hath power to keep you king in spite of all.
The means that heaven yields must be embrac'd
And not neglected; else, if heaven would,
And we will not, heaven's offer we refuse,
The proffered means of succour and redress.

AUMERLE.
He means, my lord, that we are too remiss;
Whilst Bolingbroke, through our security,
Grows strong and great in substance and in power.

KING RICHARD.
Discomfortable cousin! know'st thou not
That when the searching eye of heaven is hid,
Behind the globe, that lights the lower world,
Then thieves and robbers range abroad unseen
In murders and in outrage boldly here;
But when from under this terrestrial ball
He fires the proud tops of the eastern pines
And darts his light through every guilty hole,

Then murders, treasons, and detested sins,
The cloak of night being pluck'd from off their backs,
Stand bare and naked, trembling at themselves?
So when this thief, this traitor, Bolingbroke,
Who all this while hath revell'd in the night,
Whilst we were wand'ring with the Antipodes,
Shall see us rising in our throne, the east,
His treasons will sit blushing in his face,
Not able to endure the sight of day,
But self-affrighted tremble at his sin.
Not all the water in the rough rude sea
Can wash the balm off from an anointed king;
The breath of worldly men cannot depose
The deputy elected by the Lord.
For every man that Bolingbroke hath press'd
To lift shrewd steel against our golden crown,
God for his Richard hath in heavenly pay
A glorious angel. Then, if angels fight,
Weak men must fall; for heaven still guards the right.

Enter SALISBURY

Welcome, my lord. How far off lies your power?

SALISBURY.

Nor near nor farther off, my gracious lord,

Than this weak arm. Discomfort guides my tongue,

And bids me speak of nothing but despair.

One day too late, I fear me, noble lord,

Hath clouded all thy happy days on earth.

O, call back yesterday, bid time return,

And thou shalt have twelve thousand fighting men!

To-day, to-day, unhappy day, too late,

O'erthrows thy joys, friends, fortune, and thy state;

For all the Welshmen, hearing thou wert dead,

Are gone to Bolingbroke, dispers'd, and fled.

AUMERLE.

Comfort, my liege, why looks your Grace so pale?

KING RICHARD.

But now the blood of twenty thousand men
Did triumph in my face, and they are fled;
And, till so much blood thither come again,
Have I not reason to look pale and dead?
All souls that will be safe, fly from my side;
For time hath set a blot upon my pride.

AUMERLE.
Comfort, my liege; remember who you are.

KING RICHARD.

I had forgot myself; am I not King?
Awake, thou coward majesty! thou sleepest.

Is not the King's name twenty thousand names?
Arm, arm, my name! a puny subject strikes
At thy great glory. Look not to the ground,
Ye favourites of a king; are we not high?
High be our thoughts. I know my uncle York
Hath power enough to serve our turn. But who comes here?

Enter SCROOP

SCROOP.

More health and happiness betide my liege

Than can my care-tun'd tongue deliver him.

KING RICHARD.

Mine ear is open and my heart prepar'd.

The worst is worldly loss thou canst unfold.

Say, is my kingdom lost? Why, 'twas my care,

And what loss is it to be rid of care?

Strives Bolingbroke to be as great as we?

Greater he shall not be; if he serve God,

We'll serve him too, and be his fellow so.

Revolt our subjects? That we cannot mend;

They break their faith to God as well as us.

Cry woe, destruction, ruin, and decay-

The worst is death, and death will have his day.

SCROOP.

Glad am I that your Highness is so arm'd
To bear the tidings of calamity.
Like an unseasonable stormy day
Which makes the silver rivers drown their shores,
As if the world were all dissolv'd to tears,
So high above his limits swells the rage
Of Bolingbroke, covering your fearful land
With hard bright steel and hearts harder than steel.
White-beards have arm'd their thin and hairless scalps
Against thy majesty; boys, with women's voices,
Strive to speak big, and clap their female joints
In stiff unwieldy arms against thy crown;
Thy very beadsmen learn to bend their bows
Of double-fatal yew against thy state;
Yea, distaff-women manage rusty bills
Against thy seat: both young and old rebel,
And all goes worse than I have power to tell.

KING RICHARD.

Too well, too well thou tell'st a tale so in.

Where is the Earl of Wiltshire? Where is Bagot?
What is become of Bushy? Where is Green?
That they have let the dangerous enemy
Measure our confines with such peaceful steps?

If we prevail, their heads shall pay for it.
I warrant they have made peace with Bolingbroke.

SCROOP.

Peace have they made with him indeed, my lord.

KING RICHARD.
O villains, vipers, damn'd without redemption!

Dogs, easily won to fawn on any man!
Snakes, in my heart-blood warm'd, that sting my heart!

Three Judases, each one thrice worse than Judas!
Would they make peace? Terrible hell make war

Upon their spotted souls for this offence!

SCROOP.

Sweet love, I see, changing his property,

Turns to the sourest and most deadly hate.

Again uncurse their souls; their peace is made

With heads, and not with hands; those whom you curse

Have felt the worst of death's destroying wound

And lie full low, grav'd in the hollow ground.

AUMERLE.

Is Bushy, Green, and the Earl of Wiltshire dead?

SCROOP.

Ay, all of them at Bristow lost their heads.

AUMERLE.

Where is the Duke my father with his power?

KING RICHARD.

No matter where-of comfort no man speak.

Let's talk of graves, of worms, and epitaphs;

Make dust our paper, and with rainy eyes

Write sorrow on the bosom of the earth.

Let's choose executors and talk of wills;

And yet not so-for what can we bequeath

Save our deposed bodies to the ground?

Our lands, our lives, and an, are Bolingbroke's.

And nothing can we can our own but death

And that small model of the barren earth

Which serves as paste and cover to our bones.

For God's sake let us sit upon the ground

And tell sad stories of the death of kings:

How some have been depos'd, some slain in war,

Some haunted by the ghosts they have depos'd,

Some poison'd by their wives, some sleeping kill'd,

All murder'd-for within the hollow crown

That rounds the mortal temples of a king

Keeps Death his court; and there the antic sits,

Scoffing his state and grinning at his pomp;

Allowing him a breath, a little scene,

To monarchize, be fear'd, and kill with looks;

Infusing him with self and vain conceit,

As if this flesh which walls about our life

Were brass impregnable; and, humour'd thus,

Comes at the last, and with a little pin

Bores through his castle wall, and farewell, king!

Cover your heads, and mock not flesh and blood

With solemn reverence; throw away respect,

Tradition, form, and ceremonious duty;

For you have but mistook me all this while.

I live with bread like you, feel want,

Taste grief, need friends: subjected thus,

How can you say to me I am a king?

CARLISLE.

My lord, wise men ne'er sit and wail their woes,

But presently prevent the ways to wail.

To fear the foe, since fear oppresseth strength,

Gives, in your weakness, strength unto your foe,

And so your follies fight against yourself.

Fear and be slain-no worse can come to fight;
And fight and die is death destroying death,
Where fearing dying pays death servile breath.

AUMERLE.
My father hath a power; inquire of him,
And learn to make a body of a limb.

KING RICHARD.
Thou chid'st me well. Proud Bolingbroke, I come
To change blows with thee for our day of doom.
This ague fit of fear is over-blown;
An easy task it is to win our own.

Say, Scroop, where lies our uncle with his power?
Speak sweetly, man, although thy looks be sour.

SCROOP.
Men judge by the complexion of the sky
The state in inclination of the day;
So may you by my dull and heavy eye,

My tongue hath but a heavier tale to say.
I play the torturer, by small and small
To lengthen out the worst that must be spoken:
Your uncle York is join'd with Bolingbroke;
And all your northern castles yielded up,
And all your southern gentlemen in arms
Upon his party.

KING RICHARD.

Thou hast said enough.

[To AUMERLE] Beshrew thee, cousin, which didst lead me forth
Of that sweet way I was in to despair!

What say you now? What comfort have we now?
By heaven, I'll hate him everlastingly
That bids me be of comfort any more.
Go to Flint Castle; there I'll pine away;
A king, woe's slave, shall kingly woe obey.
That power I have, discharge; and let them go

To ear the land that hath some hope to grow,

For I have none. Let no man speak again

To alter this, for counsel is but vain.

AUMERLE.

My liege, one word.

KING RICHARD.

He does me double wrong

That wounds me with the flatteries of his tongue.

Discharge my followers; let them hence away,

From Richard's night to Bolingbroke's fair day. *Exeunt*

SCENE 3. Wales. Before Flint Castle

Enter , with drum and colours, BOLINGBROKE, YORK, NORTHUMBERLAND, and forces

BOLINGBROKE.

So that by this intelligence we learn

The Welshmen are dispers'd; and Salisbury

Is gone to meet the King, who lately landed

With some few private friends upon this coast.

NORTHUMBERLAND.

The news is very fair and good, my lord.

Richard not far from hence hath hid his head.

YORK.

It would beseem the Lord Northumberland

To say 'King Richard.' Alack the heavy day

When such a sacred king should hide his head!

NORTHUMBERLAND.

Your Grace mistakes; only to be brief,

Left I his title out.

YORK.

The time hath been,

Would you have been so brief with him, he would

Have been so brief with you to shorten you,

For taking so the head, your whole head's length.

BOLINGBROKE.

Mistake not, uncle, further than you should.

YORK.

Take not, good cousin, further than you should,

Lest you mistake. The heavens are over our heads.

BOLINGBROKE.

I know it, uncle; and oppose not myself

Against their will. But who comes here?

Enter PERCY

Welcome, Harry. What, will not this castle yield?

PIERCY.

The castle royally is mann'd, my lord,

Against thy entrance.

BOLINGBROKE.

Royally!

Why, it contains no king?

PERCY.

Yes, my good lord,

It doth contain a king; King Richard lies

Within the limits of yon lime and stone;

And with him are the Lord Aumerle, Lord Salisbury,

Sir Stephen Scroop, besides a clergyman

Of holy reverence; who, I cannot learn.

NORTHUMBERLAND.

O, belike it is the Bishop of Carlisle.

BOLINGBROKE.

[To NORTHUMBERLAND] Noble lord,

Go to the rude ribs of that ancient castle;

Through brazen trumpet send the breath of parley

Into his ruin'd ears, and thus deliver:

Henry Bolingbroke

On both his knees doth kiss King Richard's hand,

And sends allegiance and true faith of heart

To his most royal person; hither come

Even at his feet to lay my arms and power,

Provided that my banishment repeal'd

And lands restor'd again be freely granted;

If not, I'll use the advantage of my power

And lay the summer's dust with showers of blood

Rain'd from the wounds of slaughtered Englishmen;

The which how far off from the mind of Bolingbroke

It is such crimson tempest should bedrench

The fresh green lap of fair King Richard's land,

My stooping duty tenderly shall show.

Go, signify as much, while here we march
Upon the grassy carpet of this plain.
[NORTHUMBERLAND advances to the Castle, with a
trumpet]
Let's march without the noise of threat'ning drum,
That from this castle's tottered battlements
Our fair appointments may be well perus'd.
Methinks King Richard and myself should meet
With no less terror than the elements
Of fire and water, when their thund'ring shock
At meeting tears the cloudy cheeks of heaven.
Be he the fire, I'll be the yielding water;
The rage be his, whilst on the earth I rain
My waters-on the earth, and not on him.

March on, and mark King Richard how he looks.
Parle without, and answer within; then a flourish.

Enter on the walls, the KING, the BISHOP OF CARLISLE,

AUMERLE, SCROOP, and SALISBURY

See, see, King Richard doth himself appear,
As doth the blushing discontented sun
From out the fiery portal of the east,
When he perceives the envious clouds are bent
To dim his glory and to stain the track
Of his bright passage to the occident.

YORK.
Yet he looks like a king. Behold, his eye,
As bright as is the eagle's, lightens forth
Controlling majesty. Alack, alack, for woe,
That any harm should stain so fair a show!

KING RICHARD.
[To NORTHUMBERLAND] We are amaz'd; and thus long have we stood
To watch the fearful bending of thy knee,
Because we thought ourself thy lawful King;
And if we be, how dare thy joints forget
To pay their awful duty to our presence?
If we be not, show us the hand of God
That hath dismiss'd us from our stewardship;

For well we know no hand of blood and bone

Can gripe the sacred handle of our sceptre,

Unless he do profane, steal, or usurp.

And though you think that all, as you have done,

Have torn their souls by turning them from us,

And we are barren and bereft of friends,

Yet know-my master, God omnipotent,

Is mustering in his clouds on our behalf

Armies of pestilence; and they shall strike

Your children yet unborn and unbegot,

That lift your vassal hands against my head

And threat the glory of my precious crown.

Tell Bolingbroke, for yon methinks he stands,

That every stride he makes upon my land

Is dangerous treason; he is come to open

The purple testament of bleeding war;

But ere the crown he looks for live in peace,

Ten thousand bloody crowns of mothers' sons

Shall ill become the flower of England's face,

Change the complexion of her maid-pale peace

To scarlet indignation, and bedew

Her pastures' grass with faithful English blood.

NORTHUMBERLAND.

The King of Heaven forbid our lord the King
Should so with civil and uncivil arms
Be rush'd upon! Thy thrice noble cousin,
Harry Bolingbroke, doth humbly kiss thy hand;
And by the honourable tomb he swears
That stands upon your royal grandsire's bones,
And by the royalties of both your bloods,
Currents that spring from one most gracious head,
And by the buried hand of warlike Gaunt,
And by the worth and honour of himself,
Comprising all that may be sworn or said,
His coming hither hath no further scope
Than for his lineal royalties, and to beg
Enfranchisement immediate on his knees;
Which on thy royal party granted once,
His glittering arms he will commend to rust,
His barbed steeds to stables, and his heart
To faithful service of your Majesty.

This swears he, as he is a prince, is just;
And as I am a gentleman I credit him.

KING RICHARD.
Northumberland, say thus the King returns:
His noble cousin is right welcome hither;
And all the number of his fair demands
Shall be accomplish'd without contradiction.
With all the gracious utterance thou hast
Speak to his gentle hearing kind commends.

[To AUMERLE] We do debase ourselves, cousin, do we not,
To look so poorly and to speak so fair?
Shall we call back Northumberland, and send
Defiance to the traitor, and so die?

AUMERLE.
No, good my lord; let's fight with gentle words
Till time lend friends, and friends their helpful swords.

KING RICHARD.

O God, O God! that e'er this tongue of mine
That laid the sentence of dread banishment
On yon proud man should take it off again
With words of sooth! O that I were as great
As is my grief, or lesser than my name!
Or that I could forget what I have been!

Or not remember what I must be now!
Swell'st thou, proud heart? I'll give thee scope to beat,
Since foes have scope to beat both thee and me.

AUMERLE.
Northumberland comes back from Bolingbroke.

KING RICHARD.

What must the King do now? Must he submit?
The King shall do it. Must he be depos'd?
The King shall be contented. Must he lose
The name of king? A God's name, let it go.
I'll give my jewels for a set of beads,

My gorgeous palace for a hermitage,
My gay apparel for an almsman's gown,
My figur'd goblets for a dish of wood,
My sceptre for a palmer's walking staff,
My subjects for a pair of carved saints,
And my large kingdom for a little grave,
A little little grave, an obscure grave-
Or I'll be buried in the king's high way,
Some way of common trade, where subjects' feet
May hourly trample on their sovereign's head;
For on my heart they tread now whilst I live,
And buried once, why not upon my head?
Aumerle, thou weep'st, my tender-hearted cousin!
We'll make foul weather with despised tears;
Our sighs and they shall lodge the summer corn
And make a dearth in this revolting land.
Or shall we play the wantons with our woes
And make some pretty match with shedding tears?
As thus: to drop them still upon one place
Till they have fretted us a pair of graves
Within the earth; and, therein laid-there lies

Two kinsmen digg'd their graves with weeping eyes.
Would not this ill do well? Well, well, I see
I talk but idly, and you laugh at me.
Most mighty prince, my Lord Northumberland,
What says King Bolingbroke? Will his Majesty
Give Richard leave to live till Richard die?

You make a leg, and Bolingbroke says ay.

NORTHUMBERLAND.
My lord, in the base court he doth attend
To speak with you; may it please you to come down?

KING RICHARD.
Down, down I come, like glist'ring Phaethon,
Wanting the manage of unruly jades.
In the base court? Base court, where kings grow base,
To come at traitors' calls, and do them grace.
In the base court? Come down? Down, court! down, king!

For night-owls shriek where mounting larks should sing.

Exeunt from above

BOLINGBROKE.

What says his Majesty?

NORTHUMBERLAND.

Sorrow and grief of heart

Makes him speak fondly, like a frantic man;

Yet he is come.

Enter the KING, and his attendants, below

BOLINGBROKE.

Stand all apart,

And show fair duty to his Majesty. *[He kneels down]*

My gracious lord-

KING RICHARD.

Fair cousin, you debase your princely knee

To make the base earth proud with kissing it.

Me rather had my heart might feel your love

Than my unpleas'd eye see your courtesy.
Up, cousin, up; your heart is up, I know,

[Touching his own head] Thus high at least, although your knee be low.

BOLINGBROKE.
My gracious lord, I come but for mine own.

KING RICHARD.

Your own is yours, and I am yours, and all.

BOLINGBROKE.
So far be mine, my most redoubted lord,
As my true service shall deserve your love.

KING RICHARD.
Well you deserve. They well deserve to have
That know the strong'st and surest way to get.
Uncle, give me your hands; nay, dry your eyes:

Tears show their love, but want their remedies.

Cousin, I am too young to be your father,

Though you are old enough to be my heir.

What you will have, I'll give, and willing too;

For do we must what force will have us do.

Set on towards London. Cousin, is it so?

BOLINGBROKE.

Yea, my good lord.

KING RICHARD.

Then I must not say no. Flourish. *Exeunt*

SCENE 4. The DUKE OF YORK 's garden

Enter the QUEEN and two LADIES

QUEEN. What sport shall we devise here in this garden

To drive away the heavy thought of care?

LADY.

Madam, we'll play at bowls.

QUEEN.

'Twill make me think the world is full of rubs

And that my fortune runs against the bias.

LADY.

Madam, we'll dance.

QUEEN.

My legs can keep no measure in delight,

When my poor heart no measure keeps in grief;

Therefore no dancing, girl; some other sport.

LADY.

Madam, we'll tell tales.

QUEEN.

Of sorrow or of joy?

LADY.

Of either, madam.

QUEEN.

Of neither, girl;

For if of joy, being altogether wanting,

It doth remember me the more of sorrow;

Or if of grief, being altogether had,

It adds more sorrow to my want of joy;

For what I have I need not to repeat,

And what I want it boots not to complain.

LADY.

Madam, I'll sing.

QUEEN.

'Tis well' that thou hast cause;

But thou shouldst please me better wouldst thou weep.

LADY.

I could weep, madam, would it do you good.

QUEEN.
And I could sing, would weeping do me good,
And never borrow any tear of thee.

Enter a GARDENER and two SERVANTS

But stay, here come the gardeners.
Let's step into the shadow of these trees.
My wretchedness unto a row of pins,
They will talk of state, for every one doth so
Against a change: woe is forerun with woe.

[QUEEN and LADIES retire]

GARDENER.
Go, bind thou up yon dangling apricocks,
Which, like unruly children, make their sire

Stoop with oppression of their prodigal weight;
Give some supportance to the bending twigs.
Go thou, and Eke an executioner
Cut off the heads of too fast growing sprays
That look too lofty in our commonwealth:

All must be even in our government.
You thus employ'd, I will go root away
The noisome weeds which without profit suck
The soil's fertility from wholesome flowers.

SERVANT.
Why should we, in the compass of a pale,
Keep law and form and due proportion,
Showing, as in a model, our firm estate,
When our sea-walled garden, the whole land,
Is full of weeds; her fairest flowers chok'd up,
Her fruit trees all unprun'd, her hedges ruin'd,
Her knots disordered, and her wholesome herbs
Swarming with caterpillars?

GARDENER.

Hold thy peace.
He that hath suffer'd this disorder'd spring
Hath now himself met with the fall of leaf;
The weeds which his broad-spreading leaves did shelter,
That seem'd in eating him to hold him up,
Are pluck'd up root and all by Bolingbroke-
I mean the Earl of Wiltshire, Bushy, Green.

SERVANT.
What, are they dead?

GARDENER.
They are; and Bolingbroke
Hath seiz'd the wasteful King. O, what pity is it
That he had not so trimm'd and dress'd his land
As we this garden! We at time of year
Do wound the bark, the skin of our fruit trees,
Lest, being over-proud in sap and blood,
With too much riches it confound itself;

Had he done so to great and growing men,
They might have Ev'd to bear, and he to taste
Their fruits of duty. Superfluous branches
We lop away, that bearing boughs may live;
Had he done so, himself had home the crown,
Which waste of idle hours hath quite thrown down.

SERVANT.
What, think you the King shall be deposed?

GARDENER.
Depress'd he is already, and depos'd
'Tis doubt he will be. Letters came last night
To a dear friend of the good Duke of York's
That tell black tidings.

QUEEN.

O, I am press'd to death through want of speaking!
[Coming forward]
Thou, old Adam's likeness, set to dress this garden,

How dares thy harsh rude tongue sound this unpleasing news?
What Eve, what serpent, hath suggested the
To make a second fall of cursed man?

Why dost thou say King Richard is depos'd?
Dar'st thou, thou little better thing than earth,
Divine his downfall? Say, where, when, and how,
Cam'st thou by this ill tidings? Speak, thou wretch.

GARDENER.
Pardon me, madam; little joy have
To breathe this news; yet what I say is true.
King Richard, he is in the mighty hold
Of Bolingbroke. Their fortunes both are weigh'd.
In your lord's scale is nothing but himself,
And some few vanities that make him light;
But in the balance of great Bolingbroke,
Besides himself, are all the English peers,
And with that odds he weighs King Richard down.
Post you to London, and you will find it so;
I speak no more than every one doth know.

QUEEN.

Nimble mischance, that art so light of foot,

Doth not thy embassage belong to me,

And am I last that knows it? O, thou thinkest

To serve me last, that I may longest keep

Thy sorrow in my breast. Come, ladies, go

To meet at London London's King in woe.

What, was I born to this, that my sad look

Should grace the triumph of great Bolingbroke?

Gard'ner, for telling me these news of woe,

Pray God the plants thou graft'st may never grow!

Exeunt QUEEN and LADIES

GARDENER.

Poor Queen, so that thy state might be no worse,

I would my skill were subject to thy curse.

Here did she fall a tear; here in this place

I'll set a bank of rue, sour herb of grace.

Rue, even for ruth, here shortly shall be seen,

In the remembrance of a weeping queen. *Exeunt*

ACT IV. SCENE 1. Westminster Hall

Enter , as to the Parliament, BOLINGBROKE, AUMERLE,

NORTHUMBERLAND, PERCY,

FITZWATER, SURREY, the BISHOP OF CARLISLE, the ABBOT OF

WESTMINSTER,

and others; HERALD, OFFICERS, and BAGOT

BOLINGBROKE.

Call forth Bagot.
Now, Bagot, freely speak thy mind-
What thou dost know of noble Gloucester's death;
Who wrought it with the King, and who perform'd
The bloody office of his timeless end.

BAGOT.

Then set before my face the Lord Aumerle.

BOLINGBROKE.

Cousin, stand forth, and look upon that man.

BAGOT.

My Lord Aumerle, I know your daring tongue

Scorns to unsay what once it hath deliver'd.

In that dead time when Gloucester's death was plotted

I heard you say 'Is not my arm of length,

That reacheth from the restful English Court

As far as Calais, to mine uncle's head?'

Amongst much other talk that very time

I heard you say that you had rather refuse

The offer of an hundred thousand crowns

Than Bolingbroke's return to England;

Adding withal, how blest this land would be

In this your cousin's death.

AUMERLE.

Princes, and noble lords,

What answer shall I make to this base man?

Shall I so much dishonour my fair stars

On equal terms to give him chastisement?

Either I must, or have mine honour soil'd
With the attainder of his slanderous lips.
There is my gage, the manual seal of death
That marks thee out for hell. I say thou liest,
And will maintain what thou hast said is false
In thy heart-blood, through being all too base
To stain the temper of my knightly sword.

BOLINGBROKE.

Bagot, forbear; thou shalt not take it up.

AUMERLE.
Excepting one, I would he were the best
In all this presence that hath mov'd me so.

FITZWATER.
If that thy valour stand on sympathy,
There is my gage, Aumerle, in gage to thine.
By that fair sun which shows me where thou stand'st,
I heard thee say, and vauntingly thou spak'st it,

That thou wert cause of noble Gloucester's death.

If thou deniest it twenty times, thou liest;

And I will turn thy falsehood to thy heart,

Where it was forged, with my rapier's point.

AUMERLE.

Thou dar'st not, coward, live to see that day.

FITZWATER.

Now, by my soul, I would it were this hour.

AUMERLE.

Fitzwater, thou art damn'd to hell for this.

PERCY.

Aumerle, thou liest; his honour is as true

In this appeal as thou art an unjust;

And that thou art so, there I throw my gage,

To prove it on thee to the extremest point

Of mortal breathing. Seize it, if thou dar'st.

AUMERLE.

An if I do not, may my hands rot of

And never brandish more revengeful steel

Over the glittering helmet of my foe!

ANOTHER LORD.

I task the earth to the like, forsworn Aumerle;

And spur thee on with fun as many lies

As may be halloa'd in thy treacherous ear

From sun to sun. There is my honour's pawn;

Engage it to the trial, if thou darest.

AUMERLE.

Who sets me else? By heaven, I'll throw at all!

I have a thousand spirits in one breast

To answer twenty thousand such as you.

SURREY.

My Lord Fitzwater, I do remember well

The very time Aumerle and you did talk.

FITZWATER.

'Tis very true; you were in presence then,

And you can witness with me this is true.

SURREY.

As false, by heaven, as heaven itself is true.

FITZWATER.

Surrey, thou liest.

SURREY.

Dishonourable boy!

That lie shall lie so heavy on my sword

That it shall render vengeance and revenge

Till thou the lie-giver and that lie do he

In earth as quiet as thy father's skull.

In proof whereof, there is my honour's pawn;

Engage it to the trial, if thou dar'st.

FITZWATER.

How fondly dost thou spur a forward horse!

If I dare eat, or drink, or breathe, or live,

I dare meet Surrey in a wilderness,

And spit upon him whilst I say he lies,

And lies, and lies. There is my bond of faith,

To tie thee to my strong correction.

As I intend to thrive in this new world,

Aumerle is guilty of my true appeal.

Besides, I heard the banish'd Norfolk say

That thou, Aumerle, didst send two of thy men

To execute the noble Duke at Calais.

AUMERLE.

Some honest Christian trust me with a gage

That Norfolk lies. Here do I throw down this,

If he may be repeal'd to try his honour.

BOLINGBROKE.

These differences shall all rest under gage

Till Norfolk be repeal'd-repeal'd he shall be
And, though mine enemy, restor'd again
To all his lands and signories. When he is return'd,
Against Aumerle we will enforce his trial.

CARLISLE.

That honourable day shall never be seen.
Many a time hath banish'd Norfolk fought
For Jesu Christ in glorious Christian field,
Streaming the ensign of the Christian cross
Against black pagans, Turks, and Saracens;
And, toil'd with works of war, retir'd himself
To Italy; and there, at Venice, gave
His body to that pleasant country's earth,
And his pure soul unto his captain, Christ,
Under whose colours he had fought so long.

BOLINGBROKE.

Why, Bishop, is Norfolk dead?

CARLISLE.

As surely as I live, my lord.

BOLINGBROKE.

Sweet peace conduct his sweet soul to the bosom
Of good old Abraham! Lords appellants,
Your differences shall all rest under gage
Till we assign you to your days of trial

Enter YORK, attended

YORK.

Great Duke of Lancaster, I come to the
From plume-pluck'd Richard, who with willing soul
Adopts thee heir, and his high sceptre yields
To the possession of thy royal hand.
Ascend his throne, descending now from him-
And long live Henry, fourth of that name!

BOLINGBROKE.

In God's name, I'll ascend the regal throne.

CARLISLE.

Marry, God forbid!
Worst in this royal presence may I speak,
Yet best beseeming me to speak the truth.
Would God that any in this noble presence
Were enough noble to be upright judge
Of noble Richard! Then true noblesse would
Learn him forbearance from so foul a wrong.
What subject can give sentence on his king?

And who sits here that is not Richard's subject?
Thieves are not judg'd but they are by to hear,
Although apparent guilt be seen in them;
And shall the figure of God's majesty,
His captain, steward, deputy elect,
Anointed, crowned, planted many years,
Be judg'd by subject and inferior breath,
And he himself not present? O, forfend it, God,

That in a Christian climate souls refin'd

Should show so heinous, black, obscene a deed!

I speak to subjects, and a subject speaks,

Stirr'd up by God, thus boldly for his king.

My Lord of Hereford here, whom you call king,

Is a foul traitor to proud Hereford's king;

And if you crown him, let me prophesy-

The blood of English shall manure the ground,

And future ages groan for this foul act;

Peace shall go sleep with Turks and infidels,

And in this seat of peace tumultuous wars

Shall kin with kin and kind with kind confound;

Disorder, horror, fear, and mutiny,

Shall here inhabit, and this land be call'd

The field of Golgotha and dead men's skulls.

O, if you raise this house against this house,

It will the woefullest division prove

That ever fell upon this cursed earth.

Prevent it, resist it, let it not be so,

Lest child, child's children, cry against you woe.

NORTHUMBERLAND.

Well have you argued, sir; and, for your pains,
Of capital treason we arrest you here.
My Lord of Westminster, be it your charge
To keep him safely till his day of trial.

May it please you, lords, to grant the commons' suit?

BOLINGBROKE.

Fetch hither Richard, that in common view
He may surrender; so we shall proceed
Without suspicion.

YORK.

I will be his conduct. *Exit*

BOLINGBROKE. Lords, you that here are under our arrest,
Procure your sureties for your days of answer.
Little are we beholding to your love,
And little look'd for at your helping hands.
Re-enter YORK, with KING RICHARD, and OFFICERS

bearing the regalia

KING RICHARD.

Alack, why am I sent for to a king,

Before I have shook off the regal thoughts

Wherewith I reign'd? I hardly yet have learn'd

To insinuate, flatter, bow, and bend my knee.

Give sorrow leave awhile to tutor me

To this submission. Yet I well remember

The favours of these men. Were they not mine?

Did they not sometime cry 'All hail!' to me?

So Judas did to Christ; but he, in twelve,

Found truth in all but one; I, in twelve thousand, none.

God save the King! Will no man say amen?

Am I both priest and clerk? Well then, amen.

God save the King! although I be not he;

And yet, amen, if heaven do think him me.

To do what service am I sent for hither?

YORK.

To do that office of thine own good will

Which tired majesty did make thee offer-

The resignation of thy state and crown

To Henry Bolingbroke.

KING RICHARD.

Give me the crown. Here, cousin, seize the crown.

Here, cousin,

On this side my hand, and on that side thine.

Now is this golden crown like a deep well

That owes two buckets, filling one another;

The emptier ever dancing in the air,

The other down, unseen, and full of water.

That bucket down and fun of tears am I,

Drinking my griefs, whilst you mount up on high.

BOLINGBROKE.

I thought you had been willing to resign.

KING RICHARD.

My crown I am; but still my griefs are mine.
You may my glories and my state depose,
But not my griefs; still am I king of those.

BOLINGBROKE.
Part of your cares you give me with your crown.

KING RICHARD.

Your cares set up do not pluck my cares down.
My care is loss of care, by old care done;
Your care is gain of care, by new care won.
The cares I give I have, though given away;
They tend the crown, yet still with me they stay.

BOLINGBROKE.
Are you contented to resign the crown?

KING RICHARD.
Ay, no; no, ay; for I must nothing be;

Therefore no no, for I resign to thee.

Now mark me how I will undo myself:
I give this heavy weight from off my head,
And this unwieldy sceptre from my hand,
The pride of kingly sway from out my heart;
With mine own tears I wash away my balm,
With mine own hands I give away my crown,
With mine own tongue deny my sacred state,
With mine own breath release all duteous oaths;
All pomp and majesty I do forswear;
My manors, rents, revenues, I forgo;
My acts, decrees, and statutes, I deny.
God pardon all oaths that are broke to me!

God keep all vows unbroke are made to thee!
Make me, that nothing have, with nothing griev'd,
And thou with all pleas'd, that hast an achiev'd.
Long mayst thou live in Richard's seat to sit,
And soon lie Richard in an earthly pit.
God save King Henry, unking'd Richard says,

And send him many years of sunshine days!
What more remains?

NORTHUMBERLAND.
No more; but that you read
These accusations, and these grievous crimes
Committed by your person and your followers
Against the state and profit of this land;
That, by confessing them, the souls of men
May deem that you are worthily depos'd.

KING RICHARD.
Must I do so? And must I ravel out
My weav'd-up follies? Gentle Northumberland,
If thy offences were upon record,
Would it not shame thee in so fair a troop
To read a lecture of them? If thou wouldst,
There shouldst thou find one heinous article,
Containing the deposing of a king
And cracking the strong warrant of an oath,
Mark'd with a blot, damn'd in the book of heaven.

Nay, all of you that stand and look upon me
Whilst that my wretchedness doth bait myself,
Though some of you, with Pilate, wash your hands,
Showing an outward pity-yet you Pilates
Have here deliver'd me to my sour cross,
And water cannot wash away your sin.

NORTHUMBERLAND.
My lord, dispatch; read o'er these articles.

KING RICHARD.

Mine eyes are full of tears; I cannot see.
And yet salt water blinds them not so much
But they can see a sort of traitors here.
Nay, if I turn mine eyes upon myself,
I find myself a traitor with the rest;
For I have given here my soul's consent
T'undeck the pompous body of a king;
Made glory base, and sovereignty a slave,
Proud majesty a subject, state a peasant.

NORTHUMBERLAND.

My lord-

KING RICHARD.

No lord of thine, thou haught insulting man,

Nor no man's lord; I have no name, no tide-

No, not that name was given me at the font-

But 'tis usurp'd. Alack the heavy day,

That I have worn so many winters out,

And know not now what name to call myself!

O that I were a mockery king of snow,

Standing before the sun of Bolingbroke

To melt myself away in water drops!

Good king, great king, and yet not greatly good,

An if my word be sterling yet in England,

Let it command a mirror hither straight,

That it may show me what a face I have

Since it is bankrupt of his majesty.

BOLINGBROKE.

Go some of you and fetch a looking-glass.

Exit an attendant

NORTHUMBERLAND.

Read o'er this paper while the glass doth come.

KING RICHARD.

Fiend, thou torments me ere I come to hell.

BOLINGBROKE.

Urge it no more, my Lord Northumberland.

NORTHUMBERLAND.

The Commons will not, then, be satisfied.

KING RICHARD.

They shall be satisfied. I'll read enough, When I do see the very book indeed

Where all my sins are writ, and that's myself.

Re-enter attendant with glass

Give me that glass, and therein will I read.

No deeper wrinkles yet? Hath sorrow struck

So many blows upon this face of mine

And made no deeper wounds? O flatt'ring glass,

Like to my followers in prosperity,

Thou dost beguile me! Was this face the face

That every day under his household roof

Did keep ten thousand men? Was this the face

That like the sun did make beholders wink?

Is this the face which fac'd so many follies

That was at last out-fac'd by Bolingbroke?

A brittle glory shineth in this face;

As brittle as the glory is the face;

[Dashes the glass against the ground]

For there it is, crack'd in a hundred shivers.

Mark, silent king, the moral of this sport-

How soon my sorrow hath destroy'd my face.

BOLINGBROKE.

The shadow of your sorrow hath destroy'd

The shadow of your face.

KING RICHARD.

Say that again.

The shadow of my sorrow? Ha! let's see.

'Tis very true: my grief lies all within;

And these external manner of laments

Are merely shadows to the unseen grief

That swells with silence in the tortur'd soul.

There lies the substance; and I thank thee, king,

For thy great bounty, that not only giv'st

Me cause to wail, but teachest me the way

How to lament the cause. I'll beg one boon,

And then be gone and trouble you no more.

Shall I obtain it?

BOLINGBROKE.

Name it, fair cousin.

KING RICHARD.

Fair cousin! I am greater than a king;

For when I was a king, my flatterers

Were then but subjects; being now a subject,

I have a king here to my flatterer.

Being so great, I have no need to beg.

BOLINGBROKE.

Yet ask.

KING RICHARD.

And shall I have?

BOLINGBROKE.

You shall.

KING RICHARD.

Then give me leave to go.

BOLINGBROKE.

Whither?

KING RICHARD.

Whither you will, so I were from your sights.

BOLINGBROKE.

Go, some of you convey him to the Tower.

KING RICHARD.

O, good! Convey! Conveyers are you all,

That rise thus nimbly by a true king's fall.

Exeunt KING RICHARD, some Lords and a Guard

BOLINGBROKE.

On Wednesday next we solemnly set down

Our coronation. Lords, prepare yourselves.

Exeunt all but the ABBOT OF WESTMINSTER, the

BISHOP OF CARLISLE, and AUMERLE

ABBOT.

A woeful pageant have we here beheld.

CARLISLE.

The woe's to come; the children yet unborn

Shall feel this day as sharp to them as thorn.

AUMERLE.

You holy clergymen, is there no plot

To rid the realm of this pernicious blot?

ABBOT.

My lord,

Before I freely speak my mind herein,

You shall not only take the sacrament

To bury mine intents, but also to effect

Whatever I shall happen to devise.

I see your brows are full of discontent,

Your hearts of sorrow, and your eyes of tears.

Come home with me to supper; I will lay

A plot shall show us all a merry day. *Exeunt*

ACT V. SCENE 1. London. A street leading to the Tower

Enter the QUEEN, with her attendants

QUEEN. This way the King will come; this is the way

To Julius Caesar's ill-erected tower,

To whose flint bosom my condemned lord

Is doom'd a prisoner by proud Bolingbroke.

Here let us rest, if this rebellious earth

Have any resting for her true King's queen.

Enter KING RICHARD and Guard

But soft, but see, or rather do not see,

My fair rose wither. Yet look up, behold,

That you in pity may dissolve to dew,

And wash him fresh again with true-love tears.

Ah, thou, the model where old Troy did stand;

Thou map of honour, thou King Richard's tomb,

And not King Richard; thou most beauteous inn,

Why should hard-favour'd grief be lodg'd in thee,

When triumph is become an alehouse guest?

KING RICHARD.

Join not with grief, fair woman, do not so,

To make my end too sudden. Learn, good soul,

To think our former state a happy dream;

From which awak'd, the truth of what we are

Shows us but this: I am sworn brother, sweet,

To grim Necessity; and he and

Will keep a league till death. Hie thee to France,

And cloister thee in some religious house.

Our holy lives must win a new world's crown,

Which our profane hours here have thrown down.

QUEEN.

What, is my Richard both in shape and mind

Transform'd and weak'ned? Hath Bolingbroke depos'd

Thine intellect? Hath he been in thy heart?

The lion dying thrusteth forth his paw
And wounds the earth, if nothing else, with rage
To be o'erpow'r'd; and wilt thou, pupil-like,
Take the correction mildly, kiss the rod,
And fawn on rage with base humility,
Which art a lion and the king of beasts?

KING RICHARD.
A king of beasts, indeed! If aught but beasts,
I had been still a happy king of men.

Good sometimes queen, prepare thee hence for France.
Think I am dead, and that even here thou takest,
As from my death-bed, thy last living leave.
In winter's tedious nights sit by the fire
With good old folks, and let them tell thee tales
Of woeful ages long ago betid;
And ere thou bid good night, to quit their griefs
Tell thou the lamentable tale of me,
And send the hearers weeping to their beds;
For why, the senseless brands will sympathize

The heavy accent of thy moving tongue,

And in compassion weep the fire out;

And some will mourn in ashes, some coal-black,

For the deposing of a rightful king.

Enter NORTHUMBERLAND attended

NORTHUMBERLAND.

My lord, the mind of Bolingbroke is chang'd;

You must to Pomfret, not unto the Tower.

And, madam, there is order ta'en for you:

With all swift speed you must away to France.

KING RICHARD.

Northumberland, thou ladder wherewithal

The mounting Bolingbroke ascends my throne,

The time shall not be many hours of age

More than it is, ere foul sin gathering head

Shall break into corruption. Thou shalt think

Though he divide the realm and give thee half

It is too little, helping him to all;
And he shall think that thou, which knowest the way
To plant unrightful kings, wilt know again,
Being ne'er so little urg'd, another way
To pluck him headlong from the usurped throne.
The love of wicked men converts to fear;
That fear to hate; and hate turns one or both
To worthy danger and deserved death.

NORTHUMBERLAND.
My guilt be on my head, and there an end.

Take leave, and part; for you must part forthwith.

KING RICHARD.
Doubly divorc'd! Bad men, you violate
A twofold marriage-'twixt my crown and me,
And then betwixt me and my married wife.
Let me unkiss the oath 'twixt thee and me;
And yet not so, for with a kiss 'twas made.
Part us, Northumberland; I towards the north,

Where shivering cold and sickness pines the clime;
My wife to France, from whence set forth in pomp,
She came adorned hither like sweet May,
Sent back like Hallowmas or short'st of day.

QUEEN.

And must we be divided? Must we part?

KING RICHARD.

Ay, hand from hand, my love, and heart from heart.

QUEEN.

Banish us both, and send the King with me.

NORTHUMBERLAND.

That were some love, but little policy.

QUEEN.

Then whither he goes thither let me go.

KING RICHARD.

So two, together weeping, make one woe.

Weep thou for me in France, I for thee here;

Better far off than near, be ne'er the near.

Go, count thy way with sighs; I mine with groans.

QUEEN.

So longest way shall have the longest moans.

KING RICHARD.

Twice for one step I'll groan, the way being short,

And piece the way out with a heavy heart.

Come, come, in wooing sorrow let's be brief,

Since, wedding it, there is such length in grief.

One kiss shall stop our mouths, and dumbly part;

Thus give I mine, and thus take I thy heart.

QUEEN.

Give me mine own again; 'twere no good part

To take on me to keep and kill thy heart.

So, now I have mine own again, be gone.

That I may strive to kill it with a groan.

KING RICHARD.

We make woe wanton with this fond delay.

Once more, adieu; the rest let sorrow say. *Exeunt*

SCENE 2. The DUKE OF YORK's palace

Enter the DUKE OF YORK and the DUCHESS

DUCHESS. My Lord, you told me you would tell the rest,

When weeping made you break the story off,

Of our two cousins' coming into London.

YORK.

Where did I leave?

DUCHESS.

At that sad stop, my lord,

Where rude misgoverned hands from windows' tops

Threw dust and rubbish on King Richard's head.

YORK.

Then, as I said, the Duke, great Bolingbroke,

Mounted upon a hot and fiery steed

Which his aspiring rider seem'd to know,

With slow but stately pace kept on his course,

Whilst all tongues cried 'God save thee, Bolingbroke!'

You would have thought the very windows spake,

So many greedy looks of young and old

Through casements darted their desiring eyes

Upon his visage; and that all the walls

With painted imagery had said at once

'Jesu preserve thee! Welcome, Bolingbroke!'

Whilst he, from the one side to the other turning,

Bareheaded, lower than his proud steed's neck,

Bespake them thus, 'I thank you, countrymen.'

And thus still doing, thus he pass'd along.

DUCHESS.

Alack, poor Richard! where rode he the whilst?

YORK.

As in a theatre the eyes of men
After a well-grac'd actor leaves the stage
Are idly bent on him that enters next,
Thinking his prattle to be tedious;
Even so, or with much more contempt, men's eyes
Did scowl on gentle Richard; no man cried 'God save him!'
No joyful tongue gave him his welcome home;
But dust was thrown upon his sacred head;
Which with such gentle sorrow he shook off,
His face still combating with tears and smiles,
The badges of his grief and patience,
That had not God, for some strong purpose, steel'd
The hearts of men, they must perforce have melted,
And barbarism itself have pitied him.
But heaven hath a hand in these events,

To whose high will we bound our calm contents.

To Bolingbroke are we sworn subjects now,

Whose state and honour I for aye allow.

DUCHESS.

Here comes my son Aumerle.

YORK.

Aumerle that was

But that is lost for being Richard's friend,

And madam, you must call him Rudand now.

I am in Parliament pledge for his truth

And lasting fealty to the new-made king.

Enter AUMERLE

DUCHESS.

Welcome, my son. Who are the violets now

That strew the green lap of the new come spring?

AUMERLE.

Madam, I know not, nor I greatly care not.

God knows I had as lief be none as one.

YORK.

Well, bear you well in this new spring of time,
Lest you be cropp'd before you come to prime.
What news from Oxford? Do these justs and triumphs hold?

AUMERLE.

For aught I know, my lord, they do.

YORK.

You will be there, I know.

AUMERLE.

If God prevent not, I purpose so.

YORK.

What seal is that that without thy bosom?

Yea, look'st thou pale? Let me see the writing.

AUMERLE.

My lord, 'tis nothing.

YORK.

No matter, then, who see it.

I will be satisfied; let me see the writing.

AUMERLE.

I do beseech your Grace to pardon me;

It is a matter of small consequence

Which for some reasons I would not have seen.

YORK.

Which for some reasons, sir, I mean to see.

I fear, I fear-

DUCHESS.

What should you fear?

'Tis nothing but some bond that he is ent'red into

For gay apparel 'gainst the triumph-day.

YORK.

Bound to himself! What doth he with a bond

That he is bound to? Wife, thou art a fool.

Boy, let me see the writing.

AUMERLE.

I do beseech you, pardon me; I may not show it.

YORK.

I will be satisfied; let me see it, I say.

[He plucks it out of his bosom, and reads it]

Treason, foul treason! Villain! traitor! slave!

DUCHESS.

What is the matter, my lord?

YORK.

Ho! who is within there?

Enter a servant

Saddle my horse.

God for his mercy, what treachery is here!

DUCHESS.

Why, York, what is it, my lord?

YORK.

Give me my boots, I say; saddle my horse.

Exit servant

Now, by mine honour, by my life, my troth,

I will appeach the villain.

DUCHESS.

What is the matter?

YORK.

Peace, foolish woman.

DUCHESS.

I will not peace. What is the matter, Aumerle?

AUMERLE.

Good mother, be content; it is no more

Than my poor life must answer.

DUCHESS.

Thy life answer!

YORK.

Bring me my boots. I will unto the King.

His man enters with his boots

DUCHESS.

Strike him, Aumerle. Poor boy, thou art amaz'd.

Hence, villain! never more come in my sight.

YORK.

Give me my boots, I say.

DUCHESS.

Why, York, what wilt thou do?

Wilt thou not hide the trespass of thine own?

Have we more sons? or are we like to have?

Is not my teeming date drunk up with time?

And wilt thou pluck my fair son from mine age

And rob me of a happy mother's name?

Is he not like thee? Is he not thine own?

YORK.

Thou fond mad woman,

Wilt thou conceal this dark conspiracy?

A dozen of them here have ta'en the sacrament,

And interchangeably set down their hands

To kill the King at Oxford.

DUCHESS.

He shall be none;

We'll keep him here. Then what is that to him?

YORK.

Away, fond woman! were he twenty times my son

I would appeach him.

DUCHESS.

Hadst thou groan'd for him

As I have done, thou wouldst be more pitiful.

But now I know thy mind: thou dost suspect

That I have been disloyal to thy bed

And that he is a bastard, not thy son.

Sweet York, sweet husband, be not of that mind.

He is as like thee as a man may be

Not like to me, or any of my kin,

And yet I love him.

YORK.

Make way, unruly woman! *Exit*

DUCHESS. After, Aumerle! Mount thee upon his horse;

Spur post, and get before him to the King,

And beg thy pardon ere he do accuse thee.

I'll not be long behind; though I be old,

I doubt not but to ride as fast as York;

And never will I rise up from the ground

Till Bolingbroke have pardon'd thee. Away, be gone.

Exeunt

SCENE 3. Windsor Castle

Enter BOLINGBROKE as King, PERCY, and other LORDS

BOLINGBROKE. Can no man tell me of my unthrifty son?
'Tis full three months since I did see him last.

If any plague hang over us, 'tis he.
I would to God, my lords, he might be found.
Inquire at London, 'mongst the taverns there,
For there, they say, he daily doth frequent
With unrestrained loose companions,
Even such, they say, as stand in narrow lanes
And beat our watch and rob our passengers,
Which he, young wanton and effeminate boy,
Takes on the point of honour to support
So dissolute a crew.

PERCY.
My lord, some two days since I saw the Prince,
And told him of those triumphs held at Oxford.

BOLINGBROKE.

And what said the gallant?

PERCY.

His answer was, he would unto the stews,

And from the common'st creature pluck a glove

And wear it as a favour; and with that

He would unhorse the lustiest challenger.

BOLINGBROKE.

As dissolute as desperate; yet through both

I see some sparks of better hope, which elder years

May happily bring forth. But who comes here?

Enter AUMERLE amazed

AUMERLE.

Where is the King?

BOLINGBROKE.

What means our cousin that he stares and looks So wildly?

AUMERLE.

God save your Grace! I do beseech your Majesty,

To have some conference with your Grace alone.

BOLINGBROKE.

Withdraw yourselves, and leave us here alone.

Exeunt PERCY and LORDS

What is the matter with our cousin now?

AUMERLE.

For ever may my knees grow to the earth,

[Kneels]

My tongue cleave to my roof within my mouth,

Unless a pardon ere I rise or speak.

BOLINGBROKE.

Intended or committed was this fault?

If on the first, how heinous e'er it be,

To win thy after-love I pardon thee.

AUMERLE.

Then give me leave that I may turn the key,

That no man enter till my tale be done.

BOLINGBROKE.

Have thy desire.

[The DUKE OF YORK knocks at the door and crieth]

YORK.

[Within] My liege, beware; look to thyself;

Thou hast a traitor in thy presence there.

BOLINGBROKE.

[Drawing] Villain, I'll make thee safe.

AUMERLE.

Stay thy revengeful hand; thou hast no cause to fear.

YORK.

[Within] Open the door, secure, foolhardy King.

Shall I, for love, speak treason to thy face?

Open the door, or I will break it open.

Enter YORK

BOLINGBROKE.

What is the matter, uncle? Speak;

Recover breath; tell us how near is danger,

That we may arm us to encounter it.

YORK.

Peruse this writing here, and thou shalt know

The treason that my haste forbids me show.

AUMERLE.

Remember, as thou read'st, thy promise pass'd.

I do repent me; read not my name there;

My heart is not confederate with my hand.

YORK.

It was, villain, ere thy hand did set it down.

I tore it from the traitor's bosom, King;

Fear, and not love, begets his penitence.

Forget to pity him, lest thy pity prove

A serpent that will sting thee to the heart.

BOLINGBROKE.

O heinous, strong, and bold conspiracy!

O loyal father of a treacherous son!

Thou sheer, immaculate, and silver fountain,

From whence this stream through muddy passages

Hath held his current and defil'd himself!

Thy overflow of good converts to bad;

And thy abundant goodness shall excuse

This deadly blot in thy digressing son.

YORK.

So shall my virtue be his vice's bawd;

And he shall spend mine honour with his shame,

As thriftless sons their scraping fathers' gold.

Mine honour lives when his dishonour dies,

Or my sham'd life in his dishonour lies.

Thou kill'st me in his life; giving him breath,

The traitor lives, the true man's put to death.

DUCHESS.

[Within] I What ho, my liege, for God's sake, let me in.

BOLINGBROKE.

What shrill-voic'd suppliant makes this eager cry?

DUCHESS.

[Within] A woman, and thine aunt, great King; 'tis I.

Speak with me, pity me, open the door.

A beggar begs that never begg'd before.

BOLINGBROKE.

Our scene is alt'red from a serious thing,

And now chang'd to 'The Beggar and the King.'

My dangerous cousin, let your mother in.

I know she is come to pray for your foul sin.

YORK.

If thou do pardon whosoever pray,

More sins for this forgiveness prosper may.

This fest'red joint cut off, the rest rest sound;

This let alone will all the rest confound.

Enter DUCHESS

DUCHESS.

O King, believe not this hard-hearted man!

Love loving not itself, none other can.

YORK.

Thou frantic woman, what dost thou make here?

Shall thy old dugs once more a traitor rear?

DUCHESS.

Sweet York, be patient. Hear me, gentle liege.

[Kneels]

BOLINGBROKE.

Rise up, good aunt.

DUCHESS.

Not yet, I thee beseech.

For ever will I walk upon my knees,

And never see day that the happy sees

Till thou give joy; until thou bid me joy

By pardoning Rutland, my transgressing boy.

AUMERLE.

Unto my mother's prayers I bend my knee.

[Kneels]

YORK.

Against them both, my true joints bended be.

[Kneels]

Ill mayst thou thrive, if thou grant any grace!

DUCHESS.

Pleads he in earnest? Look upon his face;

His eyes do drop no tears, his prayers are in jest;

His words come from his mouth, ours from our breast.

He prays but faintly and would be denied;

We pray with heart and soul, and all beside.

His weary joints would gladly rise, I know;

Our knees still kneel till to the ground they grow.

His prayers are full of false hypocrisy;

Ours of true zeal and deep integrity.

Our prayers do out-pray his; then let them have

That mercy which true prayer ought to have.

BOLINGBROKE.

Good aunt, stand up.

DUCHESS.

do not say 'stand up';

Say 'pardon' first, and afterwards 'stand up.'

An if I were thy nurse, thy tongue to teach,

'Pardon' should be the first word of thy speech.

I never long'd to hear a word till now;

Say 'pardon,' King; let pity teach thee how.

The word is short, but not so short as sweet;

No word like 'pardon' for kings' mouths so meet.

YORK.

Speak it in French, King, say 'pardonne moy.'

DUCHESS.

Dost thou teach pardon pardon to destroy?

Ah, my sour husband, my hard-hearted lord,

That sets the word itself against the word!
Speak 'pardon' as 'tis current in our land;
The chopping French we do not understand.
Thine eye begins to speak, set thy tongue there;
Or in thy piteous heart plant thou thine ear,
That hearing how our plaints and prayers do pierce,
Pity may move thee 'pardon' to rehearse.

BOLINGBROKE.

Good aunt, stand up.

DUCHESS.

I do not sue to stand;
Pardon is all the suit I have in hand.

BOLINGBROKE.

I pardon him, as God shall pardon me.

DUCHESS.

O happy vantage of a kneeling knee!

Yet am I sick for fear. Speak it again.

Twice saying 'pardon' doth not pardon twain,

But makes one pardon strong.

BOLINGBROKE.

With all my heart

I pardon him.

DUCHESS.

A god on earth thou art.

BOLINGBROKE.

But for our trusty brother-in-law and the Abbot,

With all the rest of that consorted crew,

Destruction straight shall dog them at the heels.

Good uncle, help to order several powers

To Oxford, or where'er these traitors are.

They shall not live within this world, I swear,

But I will have them, if I once know where.

Uncle, farewell; and, cousin, adieu;

Your mother well hath pray'd, and prove you true.

DUCHESS.

Come, my old son; I pray God make thee new.

Exeunt

SCENE 4. Windsor Castle

Enter SIR PIERCE OF EXTON and a servant

EXTON. Didst thou not mark the King, what words he spake?

'Have I no friend will rid me of this living fear?'

Was it not so?

SERVANT.

These were his very words.

EXTON.

'Have I no friend?' quoth he. He spake it twice
And urg'd it twice together, did he not?

SERVANT.

He did.

EXTON.
And, speaking it, he wishtly look'd on me,
As who should say 'I would thou wert the man
That would divorce this terror from my heart';
Meaning the King at Pomfret. Come, let's go.
I am the King's friend, and will rid his foe. *Exeunt*

SCENE 5. Pomfret Castle. The dungeon of the Castle

Enter KING RICHARD

KING RICHARD. I have been studying how I may compare
This prison where I live unto the world
And, for because the world is populous

And here is not a creature but myself,

I cannot do it. Yet I'll hammer it out.

My brain I'll prove the female to my soul,

My soul the father; and these two beget

A generation of still-breeding thoughts,

And these same thoughts people this little world,

In humours like the people of this world,

For no thought is contented. The better sort,

As thoughts of things divine, are intermix'd

With scruples, and do set the word itself

Against the word,

As thus: 'Come, little ones'; and then again,

'It is as hard to come as for a camel

To thread the postern of a small needle's eye.'

Thoughts tending to ambition, they do plot

Unlikely wonders: how these vain weak nails

May tear a passage through the flinty ribs

Of this hard world, my ragged prison walls;

And, for they cannot, die in their own pride.

Thoughts tending to content flatter themselves

That they are not the first of fortune's slaves,

Nor shall not be the last; like silly beggars
Who, sitting in the stocks, refuge their shame,
That many have and others must sit there;
And in this thought they find a kind of ease,
Bearing their own misfortunes on the back
Of such as have before endur'd the like.
Thus play I in one person many people,
And none contented. Sometimes am I king;
Then treasons make me wish myself a beggar,
And so I am. Then crushing penury
Persuades me I was better when a king;
Then am I king'd again; and by and by
Think that I am unking'd by Bolingbroke,
And straight am nothing. But whate'er I be,
Nor I, nor any man that but man is,
With nothing shall be pleas'd till he be eas'd
With being nothing. *[The music plays]*
Music do I hear?
Ha, ha! keep time. How sour sweet music is
When time is broke and no proportion kept!

So is it in the music of men's lives.

And here have I the daintiness of ear

To check time broke in a disorder'd string;

But, for the concord of my state and time,

Had not an ear to hear my true time broke.

I wasted time, and now doth time waste me;

For now hath time made me his numb'ring clock:

My thoughts are minutes; and with sighs they jar

Their watches on unto mine eyes, the outward watch,

Whereto my finger, like a dial's point,

Is pointing still, in cleansing them from tears.

Now sir, the sound that tells what hour it is

Are clamorous groans which strike upon my heart,

Which is the bell. So sighs, and tears, and groans,

Show minutes, times, and hours; but my time

Runs posting on in Bolingbroke's proud joy,

While I stand fooling here, his Jack of the clock.

This music mads me. Let it sound no more;

For though it have holp madmen to their wits,

In me it seems it will make wise men mad.

Yet blessing on his heart that gives it me!

For 'tis a sign of love; and love to Richard

Is a strange brooch in this all-hating world.

Enter a GROOM of the stable

GROOM.

Hail, royal Prince!

KING RICHARD.

Thanks, noble peer!

The cheapest of us is ten groats too dear.

What art thou? and how comest thou hither,

Where no man never comes but that sad dog

That brings me food to make misfortune live?

GROOM.

I was a poor groom of thy stable, King,

When thou wert king; who, travelling towards York,

With much ado at length have gotten leave

To look upon my sometimes royal master's face.

O, how it ern'd my heart, when I beheld,

In London streets, that coronation-day,

When Bolingbroke rode on roan Barbary-

That horse that thou so often hast bestrid,

That horse that I so carefully have dress'd!

KING RICHARD.

Rode he on Barbary? Tell me, gentle friend,

How went he under him?

GROOM.

So proudly as if he disdain'd the ground.

KING RICHARD.

So proud that Bolingbroke was on his back!

That jade hath eat bread from my royal hand;

This hand hath made him proud with clapping him.

Would he not stumble? would he not fall down,

Since pride must have a fall, and break the neck

Of that proud man that did usurp his back?

Forgiveness, horse! Why do I rail on thee,

Since thou, created to be aw'd by man,

Wast born to bear? I was not made a horse;

And yet I bear a burden like an ass,

Spurr'd, gall'd, and tir'd, by jauncing Bolingbroke.

Enter KEEPER with meat

KEEPER.

Fellow, give place; here is no longer stay.

KING RICHARD.

If thou love me, 'tis time thou wert away.

GROOM.

my tongue dares not, that my heart shall say.

Exit

KEEPER. My lord, will't please you to fall to?

KING RICHARD.

Taste of it first as thou art wont to do.

KEEPER.

My lord, I dare not. Sir Pierce of Exton,

Who lately came from the King, commands the contrary.

KING RICHARD.

The devil take Henry of Lancaster and thee!

Patience is stale, and I am weary of it.

[Beats the KEEPER]

KEEPER.

Help, help, help!

The murderers, EXTON and servants, rush in, armed

KING RICHARD.

How now! What means death in this rude assault?

Villain, thy own hand yields thy death's instrument.

[Snatching a weapon and killing one]

Go thou and fill another room in hell.

[He kills another, then EXTON strikes him down]

That hand shall burn in never-quenching fire

That staggers thus my person. Exton, thy fierce hand

Hath with the King's blood stain'd the King's own land.

Mount, mount, my soul! thy seat is up on high;

Whilst my gross flesh sinks downward, here to die.

[Dies]

EXTON.

As full of valour as of royal blood.

Both have I spill'd. O, would the deed were good!

For now the devil, that told me I did well,

Says that this deed is chronicled in hell.

This dead King to the living King I'll bear.

Take hence the rest, and give them burial here. *Exeunt*

SCENE 6. Windsor Castle

Flourish. *Enter* BOLINGBROKE, the DUKE OF YORK, With other LORDS and attendants

BOLINGBROKE.

Kind uncle York, the latest news we hear

Is that the rebels have consum'd with fire

Our town of Ciceter in Gloucestershire;

But whether they be ta'en or slain we hear not.

Enter NORTHUMBERLAND

Welcome, my lord. What is the news?

NORTHUMBERLAND.

First, to thy sacred state wish I all happiness.

The next news is, I have to London sent

The heads of Salisbury, Spencer, Blunt, and Kent.

The manner of their taking may appear

At large discoursed in this paper here.

BOLINGBROKE.

We thank thee, gentle Percy, for thy pains;
And to thy worth will add right worthy gains.

Enter FITZWATER

FITZWATER.
My lord, I have from Oxford sent to London
The heads of Brocas and Sir Bennet Seely;
Two of the dangerous consorted traitors
That sought at Oxford thy dire overthrow.

BOLINGBROKE.
Thy pains, Fitzwater, shall not be forgot;
Right noble is thy merit, well I wot.

Enter PERCY, With the BISHOP OF CARLISLE

PERCY.
The grand conspirator, Abbot of Westminster,
With clog of conscience and sour melancholy,
Hath yielded up his body to the grave;

But here is Carlisle living, to abide
Thy kingly doom, and sentence of his pride.

BOLINGBROKE.

Carlisle, this is your doom:
Choose out some secret place, some reverend room,
More than thou hast, and with it joy thy life;
So as thou liv'st in peace, die free from strife;
For though mine enemy thou hast ever been,
High sparks of honour in thee have I seen.

Enter EXTON, with attendants, hearing a coffin

EXTON.
Great King, within this coffin I present
Thy buried fear. Herein all breathless lies
The mightiest of thy greatest enemies,
Richard of Bordeaux, by me hither brought.

BOLINGBROKE.

Exton, I thank thee not; for thou hast wrought

A deed of slander with thy fatal hand

Upon my head and all this famous land.

EXTON.

From your own mouth, my lord, did I this deed.

BOLINGBROKE.

They love not poison that do poison need,

Nor do I thee. Though I did wish him dead,

I hate the murderer, love him murdered.

The guilt of conscience take thou for thy labour,

But neither my good word nor princely favour;

With Cain go wander thorough shades of night,

And never show thy head by day nor light.

Lords, I protest my soul is full of woe

That blood should sprinkle me to make me grow.

Come, mourn with me for what I do lament,

And put on sullen black incontinent.

I'll make a voyage to the Holy Land,

To wash this blood off from my guilty hand.

March sadly after; grace my mournings here

In weeping after this untimely bier. *Exeunt*

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

This famous comedy was written in approximately 1595 and concerns the mythical marriage of Theseus, Duke of Athens, and the Queen of the Amazons, Hippolyta. The comedy also features the adventures of four young Athenian lovers and a group of amateur actors, who are manipulated by the fairies inhabiting the forest in which most of the play is set.

'Study for The Quarrel of Oberon and Titania' by Joseph Noel Paton

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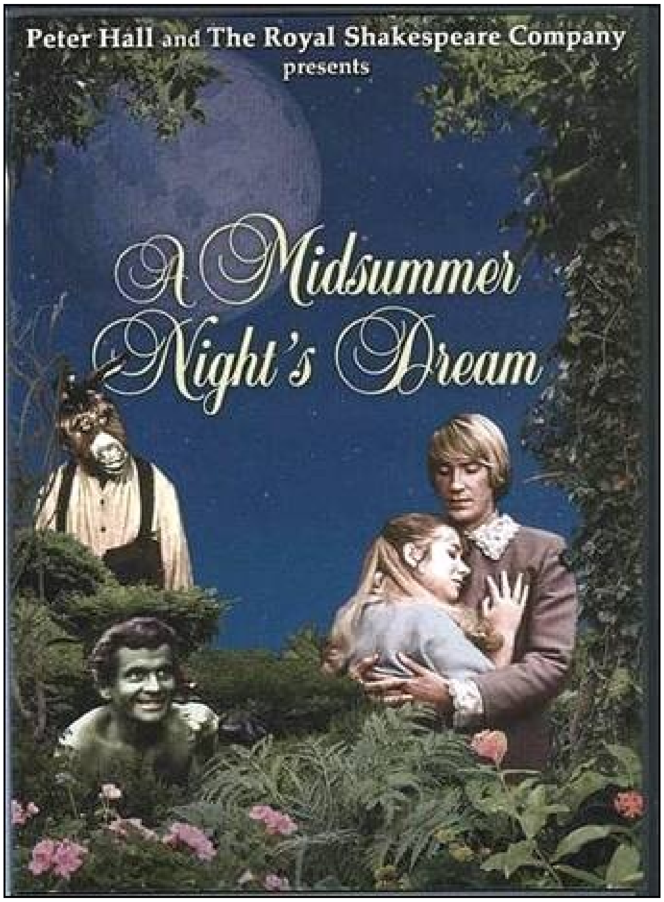
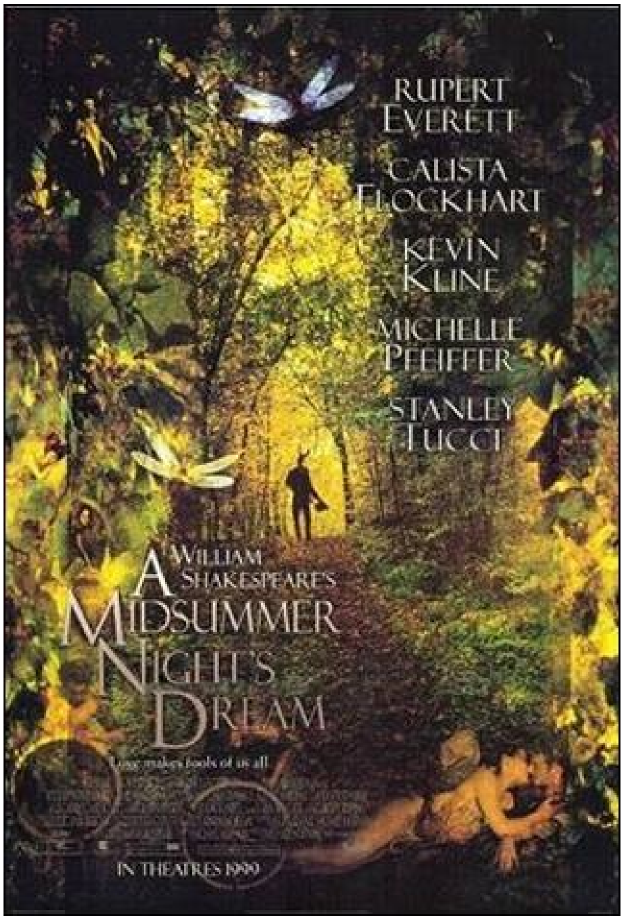

Peter Hall and The Royal Shakespeare Company
presents
A Midsummer Night's Dream

The 1968 film adaptation by the Royal Shakespeare Company


RUPERT
EVERETT
CALISTA
FLOCKHART
KEVIN
KLINE
MICHELLE
PFEIFFER
STANLEY
TUCCI
WILLIAM
SHAKESPEARE'S
A
MIDSUMMER
NIGHT'S
DREAM
Love makes fools of us all
IN THEATRES 1999

The 1999 film adaptation

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

THESEUS , Duke of Athens

EGEUS , Father to Hermia

LYSANDER , in love with Hermia

EMETRIUS , in love with Hermia

PHILOSTRATE , Master of the Revels to Theseus

QUINCE , the Carpenter

SNUG , the Joiner

BOTTOM , the Weaver

FLUTE , the Bellows-mender

SNOUT , the Tinker

STARVELING , the Tailor

HIPPOLYTA , Queen of the Amazons, bethrothed to Theseus

HERMIA , daughter to Egeus, in love with Lysander

HELENA , in love with Demetrius

OBERON , King of the Fairies

TITANIA , Queen of the Fairies

PUCK , or ROBIN GOODFELLOW , a Fairy

PEASBLOSSOM , Fairy

COBWEB , Fairy

MOTH , Fairy

MUSTARDSEED , Fairy

PYRAMUS , THISBE , WALL , MOONSHINE , LION ; Characters in the Interlude performed by the Clowns

Other Fairies attending their King and Queen

Attendants on Theseus and Hippolyta

SCENE: Athens, and a wood not far from it

ACT I SCENE I.   Athens. A room in the Palace of THESEUS

[Enter THESEUS, HIPPOLYTA, PHILOSTRATE, and Attendants.]

THESEUS

Now, fair Hippolyta, our nuptial hour

Draws on apace; four happy days bring in

Another moon; but, oh, methinks, how slow

This old moon wanes! She lingers my desires,

Like to a step-dame or a dowager,

Long withering out a young man's revenue.

HIPPOLYTA

Four days will quickly steep themselves in nights;

Four nights will quickly dream away the time;

And then the moon, like to a silver bow

New bent in heaven, shall behold the night

Of our solemnities.

THESEUS

Go, Philostrate,

Stir up the Athenian youth to merriments;

Awake the pert and nimble spirit of mirth;

Turn melancholy forth to funerals—

The pale companion is not for our pomp.—

[Exit PHILOSTRATE.]

Hippolyta, I woo'd thee with my sword,

And won thy love doing thee injuries;

But I will wed thee in another key,

With pomp, with triumph, and with revelling.

[Enter EGEUS, HERMIA, LYSANDER, and DEMETRIUS.]

EGEUS

Happy be Theseus, our renownèd duke!

THESEUS

Thanks, good Egeus: what's the news with thee?

EGEUS

Full of vexation come I, with complaint

Against my child, my daughter Hermia.—

Stand forth, Demetrius.—My noble lord,

This man hath my consent to marry her:—

Stand forth, Lysander;—and, my gracious duke,

This man hath bewitch'd the bosom of my child.

Thou, thou, Lysander, thou hast given her rhymes,

And interchang'd love-tokens with my child:

Thou hast by moonlight at her window sung,

With feigning voice, verses of feigning love;

And stol'n the impression of her fantasy

With bracelets of thy hair, rings, gawds, conceits, Knacks, trifles, nosegays, sweetmeats,—messengers

Of strong prevailment in unharden'd youth;—

With cunning hast thou filch'd my daughter's heart;

Turned her obedience, which is due to me,

To stubborn harshness.—And, my gracious duke,

Be it so she will not here before your grace

Consent to marry with Demetrius,

I beg the ancient privilege of Athens,—

As she is mine I may dispose of her:

Which shall be either to this gentleman

Or to her death; according to our law

Immediately provided in that case.

THESEUS

What say you, Hermia? be advis'd, fair maid:

To you your father should be as a god;

One that compos'd your beauties: yea, and one

To whom you are but as a form in wax,

By him imprinted, and within his power

To leave the figure, or disfigure it.

Demetrius is a worthy gentleman.

HERMIA

So is Lysander.

THESEUS

In himself he is:

But, in this kind, wanting your father's voice,

The other must be held the worthier.

HERMIA

I would my father look'd but with my eyes.

THESEUS

Rather your eyes must with his judgment look.

HERMIA

I do entreat your grace to pardon me.

I know not by what power I am made bold,

Nor how it may concern my modesty

In such a presence here to plead my thoughts:

But I beseech your grace that I may know

The worst that may befall me in this case

If I refuse to wed Demetrius.

THESEUS

Either to die the death, or to abjure

For ever the society of men.

Therefore, fair Hermia, question your desires,

Know of your youth, examine well your blood,

Whether, if you yield not to your father's choice,

You can endure the livery of a nun;

For aye to be shady cloister mew'd,

To live a barren sister all your life,

Chanting faint hymns to the cold, fruitless moon.

Thrice-blessèd they that master so their blood

To undergo such maiden pilgrimage:

But earthlier happy is the rose distill'd

Than that which, withering on the virgin thorn,
Grows, lives, and dies, in single blessedness.

HERMIA

So will I grow, so live, so die, my lord,
Ere I will yield my virgin patent up
Unto his lordship, whose unwishèd yoke
My soul consents not to give sovereignty.

THESEUS

Take time to pause; and by the next new moon,—
The sealing-day betwixt my love and me
For everlasting bond of fellowship,—
Upon that day either prepare to die
For disobedience to your father's will;
Or else to wed Demetrius, as he would;
Or on Diana's altar to protest
For aye austerity and single life.

DEMETRIUS

DEMETRIUS

Relent, sweet Hermia;—and, Lysander, yield

Thy crazèd title to my certain right.

LYSANDER

You have her father's love, Demetrius;

Let me have Hermia's: do you marry him.

EGEUS

Scornful Lysander! true, he hath my love;

And what is mine my love shall render him;

And she is mine; and all my right of her

I do estate unto Demetrius.

LYSANDER

I am, my lord, as well deriv'd as he,

As well possess'd; my love is more than his;

My fortunes every way as fairly rank'd,

If not with vantage, as Demetrius's;

And, which is more than all these boasts can be,

I am belov'd of beauteous Hermia:

Why should not I then prosecute my right?

Demetrius, I'll avouch it to his head,

Made love to Nedar's daughter, Helena,

And won her soul; and she, sweet lady, dotes,

Devoutly dotes, dotes in idolatry,

Upon this spotted and inconstant man.

THESEUS

I must confess that I have heard so much,

And with Demetrius thought to have spoke thereof;

But, being over-full of self-affairs,

My mind did lose it.—But, Demetrius, come;

And come, Egeus; you shall go with me;

I have some private schooling for you both.—

For you, fair Hermia, look you arm yourself

To fit your fancies to your father's will,

Or else the law of Athens yields you up,—

Which by no means we may extenuate,—

To death, or to a vow of single life.—

Come, my Hippolyta: what cheer, my love?

Demetrius, and Egeus, go along;

I must employ you in some business

Against our nuptial, and confer with you

Of something nearly that concerns yourselves.

EGEUS

With duty and desire we follow you.

[Exeunt THESEUS, HIPPOLYTA, EGEUS, DEMETRIUS, and Train.]

LYSANDER

How now, my love! why is your cheek so pale?

How chance the roses there do fade so fast?

HERMIA

Belike for want of rain, which I could well

Beteem them from the tempest of my eyes.

LYSANDER

Ah me! for aught that I could ever read,

Could ever hear by tale or history,

The course of true love never did run smooth:

But either it was different in blood,—

HERMIA

O cross! Too high to be enthrall'd to low!

LYSANDER

Or else misgraffèd in respect of years;—

HERMIA

O spite! Too old to be engag'd to young!

LYSANDER

Or else it stood upon the choice of friends:

HERMIA

O hell! to choose love by another's eye!

LYSANDER

Or, if there were a sympathy in choice,
War, death, or sickness, did lay siege to it,
Making it momentary as a sound,
Swift as a shadow, short as any dream;
Brief as the lightning in the collied night
That, in a spleen, unfolds both heaven and earth,
And ere a man hath power to say, Behold!

The jaws of darkness do devour it up:
So quick bright things come to confusion.

HERMIA

If then true lovers have ever cross'd,

It stands as an edict in destiny:

Then let us teach our trial patience,

Because it is a customary cross;

As due to love as thoughts, and dreams, and sighs,

Wishes and tears, poor fancy's followers.

LYSANDER

A good persuasion; therefore, hear me, Hermia.

I have a widow aunt, a dowager

Of great revenue, and she hath no child:

From Athens is her house remote seven leagues;

And she respects me as her only son.

There, gentle Hermia, may I marry thee;

And to that place the sharp Athenian law

Cannot pursue us. If thou lovest me then,

Steal forth thy father's house tomorrow night;

And in the wood, a league without the town,

Where I did meet thee once with Helena,

To do observance to a morn of May,

There will I stay for thee.

HERMIA

My good Lysander!

I swear to thee by Cupid's strongest bow,

By his best arrow, with the golden head,

By the simplicity of Venus' doves,

By that which knitteth souls and prospers loves,

And by that fire which burn'd the Carthage queen,

When the false Trojan under sail was seen,—

By all the vows that ever men have broke,

In number more than ever women spoke,—

In that same place thou hast appointed me,

Tomorrow truly will I meet with thee.

LYSANDER

Keep promise, love. Look, here comes Helena.

[Enter HELENA.]

HERMIA

HERMIA

God speed fair Helena! Whither away?

HELENA

Call you me fair? that fair again unsay.

Demetrius loves your fair. O happy fair!
Your eyes are lode-stars; and your tongue's sweet air
More tuneable than lark to shepherd's ear,
When wheat is green, when hawthorn buds appear.
Sickness is catching: O, were favour so,
Yours would I catch, fair Hermia, ere I go;
My ear should catch your voice, my eye your eye,
My tongue should catch your tongue's sweet melody.
Were the world mine, Demetrius being bated,
The rest I'd give to be to you translated.
O, teach me how you look; and with what art
You sway the motion of Demetrius' heart!

HERMIA

I frown upon him, yet he loves me still.

HELENA

O that your frowns would teach my smiles such skill!

HERMIA

I give him curses, yet he gives me love.

HELENA

O that my prayers could such affection move!

HERMIA

The more I hate, the more he follows me.

HELENA

The more I love, the more he hateth me.

HERMIA

His folly, Helena, is no fault of mine.

HELENA

None, but your beauty: would that fault were mine!

HERMIA

Take comfort; he no more shall see my face;

Lysander and myself will fly this place.—

Before the time I did Lysander see,

Seem'd Athens as a paradise to me:

O, then, what graces in my love do dwell,

That he hath turn'd a heaven unto hell!

LYSANDER

Helen, to you our minds we will unfold:

Tomorrow night, when Phoebe doth behold

Her silver visage in the watery glass,

Decking with liquid pearl the bladed grass,—

A time that lovers' flights doth still conceal,—
Through Athens' gates have we devis'd to steal.

HERMIA

And in the wood where often you and I
Upon faint primrose beds were wont to lie,
Emptying our bosoms of their counsel sweet,
There my Lysander and myself shall meet:
And thence from Athens turn away our eyes,
To seek new friends and stranger companies.
Farewell, sweet playfellow: pray thou for us,
And good luck grant thee thy Demetrius!—
Keep word, Lysander: we must starve our sight
From lovers' food, till morrow deep midnight.

LYSANDER

I will, my Hermia.

[Exit HERMIA.]

Helena, adieu:

As you on him, Demetrius dote on you!

[Exit LYSANDER.]

HELENA

How happy some o'er other some can be!

Through Athens I am thought as fair as she.
But what of that? Demetrius thinks not so;
He will not know what all but he do know.
And as he errs, doting on Hermia's eyes,
So I, admiring of his qualities.
Things base and vile, holding no quantity,
Love can transpose to form and dignity.
Love looks not with the eyes, but with the mind;
And therefore is wing'd Cupid painted blind.
Nor hath love's mind of any judgment taste;
Wings and no eyes figure unheedy haste:
And therefore is love said to be a child,

Because in choice he is so oft beguil'd.

As waggish boys in game themselves forswear,

So the boy Love is perjur'd everywhere:

For ere Demetrius look'd on Hermia's eyne,

He hail'd down oaths that he was only mine;

And when this hail some heat from Hermia felt,

So he dissolv'd, and showers of oaths did melt.

I will go tell him of fair Hermia's flight;

Then to the wood will he tomorrow night

Pursue her; and for this intelligence

If I have thanks, it is a dear expense:

But herein mean I to enrich my pain,

To have his sight thither and back again.

[Exit HELENA.]

SCENE II.   The Same. A Room in a Cottage

[Enter SNUG, BOTTOM, FLUTE, SNOUT, QUINCE, and STARVELING.]

QUINCE

Is all our company here?

BOTTOM

You were best to call them generally, man by man, according to the scrip.

QUINCE

Here is the scroll of every man's name, which is thought fit, through all Athens, to play in our interlude before the duke and duchess on his wedding-day at night.

BOTTOM

First, good Peter Quince, say what the play treats on; then read the names of the actors; and so grow to a point.

QUINCE

Marry, our play is—*The most lamentable comedy and most cruel death of Pyramus and Thisby* .

BOTTOM

A very good piece of work, I assure you, and a merry.— Now, good Peter Quince, call forth your actors by the scroll.— Masters, spread yourselves.

QUINCE

Answer, as I call you.—Nick Bottom, the weaver.

BOTTOM

Ready. Name what part I am for, and proceed.

QUINCE

You, Nick Bottom, are set down for Pyramus.

BOTTOM

What is Pyramus? a lover, or a tyrant?

QUINCE

A lover, that kills himself most gallantly for love.

BOTTOM

That will ask some tears in the true performing of it. If I do it, let the audience look to their eyes; I will move storms; I will condole in some measure. To the rest:—yet my chief humour is for a tyrant: I could play Ercles rarely, or a part to tear a cat in, to make all split.

The raging rocks

And shivering shocks

Shall break the locks

Of prison gates:

And Phibbus' car

Shall shine from far,

And make and mar

The foolish Fates.

This was lofty.—Now name the rest of the players.—This is Ercles' vein, a tyrant's vein;—a lover is more condoling.

QUINCE

Francis Flute, the bellows-mender.

FLUTE

Here, Peter Quince.

QUINCE

Flute, you must take Thisby on you.

FLUTE

What is Thisby? a wandering knight?

QUINCE

It is the lady that Pyramus must love.

FLUTE

Nay, faith, let not me play a woman; I have a beard coming.

QUINCE

That's all one; you shall play it in a mask, and you may speak as small as you will.

BOTTOM

An I may hide my face, let me play Thisby too: I'll speak in a monstrous little voice;—'Thisne, Thisne!'— 'Ah, Pyramus, my lover dear; thy Thisby dear! and lady dear!'

QUINCE

No, no, you must play Pyramus; and, Flute, you Thisby.

BOTTOM

Well, proceed.

QUINCE

Robin Starveling, the tailor.

STARVELING

Here, Peter Quince.

QUINCE

Robin Starveling, you must play Thisby's mother.—

Tom Snout, the tinker.

SNOUT

Here, Peter Quince.

QUINCE

You, Pyramus' father; myself, Thisby's father;—

Snug, the joiner, you, the lion's part:—and, I hope, here is a play fitted.

SNUG

Have you the lion's part written? pray you, if it be, give it me, for I am slow of study.

QUINCE

You may do it extempore, for it is nothing but roaring.

BOTTOM

Let me play the lion too: I will roar that I will do any man's heart good to hear me; I will roar that I will make the duke say 'Let him roar again, let him roar again.'

QUINCE

An you should do it too terribly, you would fright the duchess and the ladies, that they would shriek; and that were enough to hang us all.

ALL

That would hang us every mother's son.

BOTTOM

I grant you, friends, if you should fright the ladies out of their wits, they would have no more discretion but to hang us: but I will aggravate my voice so, that I will roar you as gently as any sucking dove; I will roar you an 'twere any nightingale.

QUINCE

You can play no part but Pyramus; for Pyramus is a sweet-faced man; a proper man, as one shall see in a summer's day; a most lovely gentleman-like man; therefore you must needs play Pyramus.

BOTTOM

Well, I will undertake it. What beard were I best to play it in?

QUINCE

Why, what you will.

BOTTOM

I will discharge it in either your straw-colour beard, your orange-tawny beard, your purple-in-grain beard, or your French-crown-colour beard, your perfect yellow.

QUINCE

Some of your French crowns have no hair at all, and then you will play bare-faced.— But, masters, here are your parts: and I am to entreat you, request you, and desire you, to con them by tomorrow night; and meet me in the palace wood, a mile without the town, by moonlight; there will we rehearse: for if we meet in the city, we shall be dogg'd with company, and our devices known. In the meantime I will draw a bill of properties, such as our play wants. I pray you, fail me not.

BOTTOM

We will meet; and there we may rehearse most obscenely and courageously.
Take pains; be perfect; adieu.

QUINCE

At the duke's oak we meet.

BOTTOM

Enough; hold, or cut bow-strings.

[Exeunt.]

ACT II SCENE I. A wood near Athens

[Enter a FAIRY at One door, and PUCK at another.]

PUCK

How now, spirit! whither wander you?

FAIRY

Over hill, over dale,

Thorough bush, thorough brier,

Over park, over pale,

Thorough flood, thorough fire,

I do wander everywhere,

Swifter than the moon's sphere;

And I serve the fairy queen,

To dew her orbs upon the green.

The cowslips tall her pensioners be:
In their gold coats spots you see;
Those be rubies, fairy favours,
In those freckles live their savours;
I must go seek some dew-drops here,
And hang a pearl in every cowslip's ear.
Farewell, thou lob of spirits; I'll be gone:

Our queen and all her elves come here anon.

PUCK

The king doth keep his revels here to-night;
Take heed the Queen come not within his sight.
For Oberon is passing fell and wrath,
Because that she, as her attendant, hath
A lovely boy, stol'n from an Indian king;
She never had so sweet a changeling:
And jealous Oberon would have the child
Knight of his train, to trace the forests wild:
But she perforce withholds the lovèd boy,

Crowns him with flowers, and makes him all her joy:

And now they never meet in grove or green,

By fountain clear, or spangled starlight sheen,

But they do square; that all their elves for fear

Creep into acorn cups, and hide them there.

FAIRY

Either I mistake your shape and making quite,

Or else you are that shrewd and knavish sprite

Call'd Robin Goodfellow: are not you he

That frights the maidens of the villagery;

Skim milk, and sometimes labour in the quern,

And bootless make the breathless housewife churn;

And sometime make the drink to bear no barm;

Mislead night-wanderers, laughing at their harm?

Those that Hobgoblin call you, and sweet Puck,

You do their work, and they shall have good luck:

Are not you he?

PUCK

Thou speak'st aright;

I am that merry wanderer of the night.

I jest to Oberon, and make him smile,

When I a fat and bean-fed horse beguile,

Neighing in likeness of a filly foal;

And sometime lurk I in a gossip's bowl,

In very likeness of a roasted crab;

And, when she drinks, against her lips I bob,

And on her withered dewlap pour the ale.

The wisest aunt, telling the saddest tale,

Sometime for three-foot stool mistaketh me;

Then slip I from her bum, down topples she,

And 'tailor' cries, and falls into a cough;

And then the whole quire hold their hips and loffe,

And waxen in their mirth, and neeze, and swear

A merrier hour was never wasted there.—

But room, fairy, here comes Oberon.

FAIRY

And here my mistress.—Would that he were gone!

[Enter OBERON at one door, with his Train, and TITANIA, at another, with hers.]

OBERON

Ill met by moonlight, proud Titania.

TITANIA

What, jealous Oberon! Fairies, skip hence;

I have forsworn his bed and company.

OBERON

Tarry, rash wanton: am not I thy lord?

TITANIA

Then I must be thy lady; but I know

When thou hast stol'n away from fairy-land,

And in the shape of Corin sat all day,

Playing on pipes of corn, and versing love

To amorous Phillida. Why art thou here,

Come from the farthest steep of India,

But that, forsooth, the bouncing Amazon,

Your buskin'd mistress and your warrior love,

To Theseus must be wedded; and you come

To give their bed joy and prosperity.

OBERON

How canst thou thus, for shame, Titania,

Glance at my credit with Hippolyta,

Knowing I know thy love to Theseus?

Didst not thou lead him through the glimmering night

From Perigenia, whom he ravish'd?

And make him with fair Aegle break his faith,

With Ariadne and Antiopa?

TITANIA

These are the forgeries of jealousy:

And never, since the middle summer's spring,

Met we on hill, in dale, forest, or mead,

By pavèd fountain, or by rushy brook,
Or on the beachèd margent of the sea,
To dance our ringlets to the whistling wind,
But with thy brawls thou hast disturb'd our sport.
Therefore the winds, piping to us in vain,
As in revenge, have suck'd up from the sea
Contagious fogs; which, falling in the land,
Hath every pelting river made so proud
That they have overborne their continents:
The ox hath therefore stretch'd his yoke in vain,
The ploughman lost his sweat; and the green corn
Hath rotted ere his youth attain'd a beard:
The fold stands empty in the drownèd field,
And crows are fatted with the murrion flock;
The nine men's morris is fill'd up with mud;
And the quaint mazes in the wanton green,
For lack of tread, are undistinguishable:
The human mortals want their winter here;
No night is now with hymn or carol blest:—
Therefore the moon, the governess of floods,
Pale in her anger, washes all the air,

That rheumatic diseases do abound:

And thorough this distemperature we see

The seasons alter: hoary-headed frosts

Fall in the fresh lap of the crimson rose;

And on old Hyem's thin and icy crown

An odorous chaplet of sweet summer buds

Is, as in mockery, set: the spring, the summer,

The childing autumn, angry winter, change

Their wonted liveries; and the maz'd world,

By their increase, now knows not which is which:

And this same progeny of evils comes

From our debate, from our dissension:

We are their parents and original.

OBERON

Do you amend it, then: it lies in you:

Why should Titania cross her Oberon?

I do but beg a little changeling boy

To be my henchman.

TITANIA

Set your heart at rest;

The fairy-land buys not the child of me.

His mother was a vot'ress of my order:

And, in the spicèd Indian air, by night,

Full often hath she gossip'd by my side;

And sat with me on Neptune's yellow sands,

Marking the embarkèd traders on the flood;

When we have laugh'd to see the sails conceive,

And grow big-bellied with the wanton wind;

Which she, with pretty and with swimming gait

Following,—her womb then rich with my young squire,—

Would imitate; and sail upon the land,

To fetch me trifles, and return again,

As from a voyage, rich with merchandise.

But she, being mortal, of that boy did die;

And for her sake do I rear up her boy:

And for her sake I will not part with him.

OBERON

How long within this wood intend you stay?

TITANIA

Perchance till after Theseus' wedding-day.

If you will patiently dance in our round,

And see our moonlight revels, go with us;

If not, shun me, and I will spare your haunts.

OBERON

Give me that boy and I will go with thee.

TITANIA

Not for thy fairy kingdom. Fairies, away:

We shall chide downright if I longer stay.

[Exit TITANIA with her Train.]

OBERON

Well, go thy way: thou shalt not from this grove

Till I torment thee for this injury.—

My gentle Puck, come hither: thou remember'st

Since once I sat upon a promontory,

And heard a mermaid, on a dolphin's back,

Uttering such dulcet and harmonious breath,

That the rude sea grew civil at her song,

And certain stars shot madly from their spheres

To hear the sea-maid's music.

PUCK

I remember.

OBERON

That very time I saw,—but thou couldst not,—

Flying between the cold moon and the earth,

Cupid, all arm'd: a certain aim he took

At a fair vestal, thronèd by the west;

And loos'd his love-shaft smartly from his bow,

As it should pierce a hundred thousand hearts;

But I might see young Cupid's fiery shaft

Quench'd in the chaste beams of the watery moon;

And the imperial votaress passed on,

In maiden meditation, fancy-free.

Yet mark'd I where the bolt of Cupid fell:

It fell upon a little western flower,—

Before milk-white, now purple with love's wound,—

And maidens call it love-in-idleness.

Fetch me that flower, the herb I showed thee once:

The juice of it on sleeping eyelids laid

Will make or man or woman madly dote

Upon the next live creature that it sees.

Fetch me this herb: and be thou here again

Ere the leviathan can swim a league.

PUCK

I'll put a girdle round about the earth

In forty minutes.

[Exit PUCK.]

OBERON

Having once this juice,

I'll watch Titania when she is asleep,

And drop the liquor of it in her eyes:

The next thing then she waking looks upon,—

Be it on lion, bear, or wolf, or bull,

On meddling monkey, or on busy ape,—

She shall pursue it with the soul of love.

And ere I take this charm from off her sight,—

As I can take it with another herb,

I'll make her render up her page to me.

But who comes here? I am invisible;

And I will overhear their conference.

[Enter DEMETRIUS, HELENA following him.]

DEMETRIUS

I love thee not, therefore pursue me not.

Where is Lysander and fair Hermia?
The one I'll slay, the other slayeth me.
Thou told'st me they were stol'n into this wood,
And here am I, and wode within this wood,
Because I cannot meet with Hermia.
Hence, get thee gone, and follow me no more.

HELENA

You draw me, you hard-hearted adamant;
But yet you draw not iron, for my heart
Is true as steel. Leave you your power to draw,
And I shall have no power to follow you.

DEMETRIUS

Do I entice you? Do I speak you fair?
Or, rather, do I not in plainest truth
Tell you I do not, nor I cannot love you?

HELENA

And even for that do I love you the more.

I am your spaniel; and, Demetrius,

The more you beat me, I will fawn on you:

Use me but as your spaniel, spurn me, strike me,

Neglect me, lose me; only give me leave,

Unworthy as I am, to follow you.

What worser place can I beg in your love,

And yet a place of high respect with me,—

Than to be usèd as you use your dog?

DEMETRIUS

Tempt not too much the hatred of my spirit;

For I am sick when I do look on thee.

HELENA

And I am sick when I look not on you.

DEMETRIUS

You do impeach your modesty too much,

To leave the city, and commit yourself

Into the hands of one that loves you not;

To trust the opportunity of night,

And the ill counsel of a desert place,

With the rich worth of your virginity.

HELENA

Your virtue is my privilege for that.

It is not night when I do see your face,

Therefore I think I am not in the night;

Nor doth this wood lack worlds of company;

For you, in my respect, are all the world:

Then how can it be said I am alone

When all the world is here to look on me?

DEMETRIUS

I'll run from thee, and hide me in the brakes,

And leave thee to the mercy of wild beasts.

HELENA

The wildest hath not such a heart as you.

Run when you will, the story shall be chang'd;

Apollo flies, and Daphne holds the chase;

The dove pursues the griffin; the mild hind

Makes speed to catch the tiger,—bootless speed,

When cowardice pursues and valour flies.

DEMETRIUS

I will not stay thy questions; let me go:

Or, if thou follow me, do not believe

But I shall do thee mischief in the wood.

HELENA

Ay, in the temple, in the town, the field,

You do me mischief. Fie, Demetrius!

Your wrongs do set a scandal on my sex:

We cannot fight for love as men may do:

We should be woo'd, and were not made to woo.

I'll follow thee, and make a heaven of hell,

To die upon the hand I love so well.

[Exeunt DEMETRIUS and HELENA.]

OBERON

Fare thee well, nymph: ere he do leave this grove,

Thou shalt fly him, and he shall seek thy love.—

[Re-enter PUCK.]

Hast thou the flower there? Welcome, wanderer.

PUCK

Ay, there it is.

OBERON

I pray thee give it me.

I know a bank whereon the wild thyme blows, Where ox-lips and the nodding violet grows;

Quite over-canopied with luscious woodbine,

With sweet musk-roses, and with eglantine:

There sleeps Titania sometime of the night,

Lulled in these flowers with dances and delight;

And there the snake throws her enamell'd skin,

Weed wide enough to wrap a fairy in:

And with the juice of this I'll streak her eyes,

And make her full of hateful fantasies.

Take thou some of it, and seek through this grove:

A sweet Athenian lady is in love

With a disdainful youth: anoint his eyes;

But do it when the next thing he espies

May be the lady: thou shalt know the man

By the Athenian garments he hath on.

Effect it with some care, that he may prove

More fond on her than she upon her love:

And look thou meet me ere the first cock crow.

PUCK

Fear not, my lord; your servant shall do so.

[Exeunt.]

SCENE II. Another part of the wood

[Enter TITANIA, with her Train.]

TITANIA

Come, now a roundel and a fairy song;

Then, for the third part of a minute, hence;

Some to kill cankers in the musk-rose buds;

Some war with rere-mice for their leathern wings,

To make my small elves coats; and some keep back

The clamorous owl, that nightly hoots and wonders

At our quaint spirits. Sing me now asleep;

Then to your offices, and let me rest.

SONG I

FIRST FAIRY

You spotted snakes, with double tongue,

Thorny hedgehogs, be not seen;

Newts and blind-worms do no wrong;

Come not near our fairy queen:

CHORUS.

Philomel, with melody,

Sing in our sweet lullaby:

Lulla, lulla, lullaby; lulla, lulla, lullaby:

Never harm, nor spell, nor charm,

Come our lovely lady nigh;

So good-night, with lullaby.

SONG II

SECOND FAIRY

Weaving spiders, come not here;

Hence, you long-legg'd spinners, hence;

Beetles black, approach not near;

Worm nor snail do no offence.

CHORUS

Philomel with melody, &c.

FIRST FAIRY

Hence away; now all is well.

One, aloof, stand sentinel.

[Exeunt Fairies. TITANIA sleeps.]

[Enter OBERON.]

OBERON

What thou seest when thou dost wake,

[Squeezes the flower on TITANIA'S eyelids.]

Do it for thy true-love take;

Love and languish for his sake;

Be it ounce, or cat, or bear,

Pard, or boar with bristled hair,

In thy eye that shall appear

When thou wak'st, it is thy dear;

Wake when some vile thing is near.

[Exit.]

[Enter LYSANDER and HERMIA.]

LYSANDER

Fair love, you faint with wandering in the wood;

And, to speak troth, I have forgot our way;

We'll rest us, Hermia, if you think it good,

And tarry for the comfort of the day.

HERMIA

Be it so, Lysander: find you out a bed,

For I upon this bank will rest my head.

LYSANDER

One turf shall serve as pillow for us both;

One heart, one bed, two bosoms, and one troth.

HERMIA

Nay, good Lysander; for my sake, my dear,

Lie farther off yet, do not lie so near.

LYSANDER

O, take the sense, sweet, of my innocence;

Love takes the meaning in love's conference.

I mean that my heart unto yours is knit;

So that but one heart we can make of it:

Two bosoms interchainèd with an oath;

So then two bosoms and a single troth.

Then by your side no bed-room me deny;

For lying so, Hermia, I do not lie.

HERMIA

Lysander riddles very prettily:—

Now much beshrew my manners and my pride

If Hermia meant to say Lysander lied!

But, gentle friend, for love and courtesy

Lie further off; in human modesty,

Such separation as may well be said

Becomes a virtuous bachelor and a maid:

So far be distant; and good night, sweet friend:

Thy love ne'er alter till thy sweet life end!

LYSANDER

Amen, amen, to that fair prayer say I;

And then end life when I end loyalty!

Here is my bed: Sleep give thee all his rest!

HERMIA

With half that wish the wisher's eyes be pressed!

[They sleep.]

[Enter PUCK.]

PUCK

Through the forest have I gone,

But Athenian found I none,

On whose eyes I might approve

This flower's force in stirring love.

Night and silence! Who is here?

Weeds of Athens he doth wear:

This is he, my master said,

Despisèd the Athenian maid;

And here the maiden, sleeping sound,

On the dank and dirty ground.

Pretty soul! she durst not lie

Near this lack-love, this kill-courtesy.

Churl, upon thy eyes I throw

All the power this charm doth owe;

When thou wak'st let love forbid

Sleep his seat on thy eyelid:

So awake when I am gone;

For I must now to Oberon.

[Exit.]

[Enter DEMETRIUS and HELENA, running.]

HELENA

Stay, though thou kill me, sweet Demetrius.

DEMETRIUS

I charge thee, hence, and do not haunt me thus.

HELENA

O, wilt thou darkling leave me? do not so.

DEMETRIUS.

Stay on thy peril; I alone will go.

[Exit DEMETRIUS.]

HELENA

O, I am out of breath in this fond chase!

The more my prayer, the lesser is my grace.
Happy is Hermia, wheresoe'er she lies,
For she hath blessèd and attractive eyes.
How came her eyes so bright? Not with salt tears:

If so, my eyes are oftener wash'd than hers.
No, no, I am as ugly as a bear;
For beasts that meet me run away for fear:

Therefore no marvel though Demetrius
Do, as a monster, fly my presence thus.
What wicked and dissembling glass of mine
Made me compare with Hermia's sphery eyne?—
But who is here?—Lysander! on the ground!

Dead? or asleep? I see no blood, no wound.
Lysander, if you live, good sir, awake.

LYSANDER

[Waking.]
And run through fire I will for thy sweet sake.
Transparent Helena! Nature shows art,
That through thy bosom makes me see thy heart.
Where is Demetrius? O, how fit a word
Is that vile name to perish on my sword!

HELENA

Do not say so, Lysander; say not so:

What though he love your Hermia? Lord, what though?

Yet Hermia still loves you: then be content.

LYSANDER.

Content with Hermia? No: I do repent

The tedious minutes I with her have spent.

Not Hermia but Helena I love:

Who will not change a raven for a dove?

The will of man is by his reason sway'd;

And reason says you are the worthier maid.

Things growing are not ripe until their season;

So I, being young, till now ripe not to reason;

And touching now the point of human skill,

Reason becomes the marshal to my will,

And leads me to your eyes, where I o'erlook

Love's stories, written in love's richest book.

HELENA

Wherefore was I to this keen mockery born?

When at your hands did I deserve this scorn?
Is't not enough, is't not enough, young man,
That I did never, no, nor never can
Deserve a sweet look from Demetrius' eye,
But you must flout my insufficiency?
Good troth, you do me wrong,—good sooth, you do—
In such disdainful manner me to woo.
But fare you well: perforce I must confess,
I thought you lord of more true gentleness.
O, that a lady of one man refus'd
Should of another therefore be abus'd!

[Exit.]

LYSANDER

She sees not Hermia:—Hermia, sleep thou there;
And never mayst thou come Lysander near!
For, as a surfeit of the sweetest things

The deepest loathing to the stomach brings;

Or, as the heresies that men do leave

Are hated most of those they did deceive;

So thou, my surfeit and my heresy,

Of all be hated, but the most of me!

And, all my powers, address your love and might

To honour Helen, and to be her knight!

[Exit.]

HERMIA

[Starting.]

Help me, Lysander, help me! do thy best

To pluck this crawling serpent from my breast!

Ay me, for pity!—What a dream was here!

Lysander, look how I do quake with fear!

Methought a serpent eat my heart away,

And you sat smiling at his cruel prey.—

Lysander! what, removed? Lysander! lord!

What, out of hearing? gone? no sound, no word?
Alack, where are you? speak, an if you hear;
Speak, of all loves! I swoon almost with fear.
No?—then I well perceive you are not nigh:

Either death or you I'll find immediately.

[Exit.]

ACT III SCENE I. The Wood. The Queen of Fairies lying asleep

[Enter QUINCE, SNUG, BOTTOM, FLUTE, SNOUT, and STARVELING.]

BOTTOM

Are we all met?

QUINCE

Pat, pat; and here's a marvellous convenient place for our rehearsal. This green plot shall be our stage, this hawthorn brake our tiring-house; and we will do it in action, as we will do it before the duke.

BOTTOM

Peter Quince,—

QUINCE

What sayest thou, bully Bottom?

BOTTOM

There are things in this comedy of 'Pyramus and Thisby' that will never please. First, Pyramus must draw a sword to kill himself; which the ladies cannot abide. How answer you that?

SNOUT

By'r lakin, a parlous fear.

STARVELING

I believe we must leave the killing out, when all is done.

BOTTOM

Not a whit: I have a device to make all well. Write me a prologue; and let the prologue seem to say we will do no harm with our swords, and that Pyramus is not killed indeed; and for the more better assurance, tell them that I Pyramus am not Pyramus but Bottom the weaver: this will put them out of fear.

QUINCE

Well, we will have such a prologue; and it shall be written in eight and six.

BOTTOM

No, make it two more; let it be written in eight and eight.

SNOUT

Will not the ladies be afeard of the lion?

STARVELING

I fear it, I promise you.

BOTTOM

Masters, you ought to consider with yourselves: to bring in, God shield us! a lion among ladies is a most dreadful thing: for there is not a more fearful wild-fowl than your lion living; and we ought to look to it.

SNOUT

Therefore another prologue must tell he is not a lion.

BOTTOM

Nay, you must name his name, and half his face must be seen through the lion's neck; and he himself must speak through, saying thus, or to the same defect, —'Ladies,' or, 'Fair ladies, I would wish you, or, I would request you, or, I would entreat you, not to fear, not to tremble: my life for yours. If you think I come hither as a lion, it were pity of my life. No, I am no such thing; I am a man as other men are:'—and there, indeed, let him name his name, and tell them plainly he is Snug the joiner.

QUINCE

Well, it shall be so. But there is two hard things; that is, to bring the moonlight into a chamber: for, you know, Pyramus and Thisbe meet by moonlight.

SNOUT

Doth the moon shine that night we play our play?

BOTTOM

A calendar, a calendar! look in the almanack; find out moonshine, find out moonshine.

QUINCE

Yes, it doth shine that night.

BOTTOM

Why, then may you leave a casement of the great chamber-window, where we play, open; and the moon may shine in at the casement.

QUINCE

Ay; or else one must come in with a bush of thorns and a lantern, and say he comes to disfigure or to present the person of moonshine. Then there is another thing: we must have a wall in the great chamber; for Pyramus and Thisby, says the story, did talk through the chink of a wall.

SNOUT

You can never bring in a wall.—What say you, Bottom?

BOTTOM

Some man or other must present wall: and let him have some plaster, or some loam, or some rough-cast about him, to signify wall; and let him hold his fingers thus, and through that cranny shall Pyramus and Thisby whisper.

QUINCE

If that may be, then all is well. Come, sit down, every mother's son, and rehearse your parts. Pyramus, you begin: when you have spoken your speech, enter into that brake; and so every one according to his cue.

[Enter PUCK behind.]

PUCK

What hempen homespuns have we swaggering here,

So near the cradle of the fairy queen?
What, a play toward! I'll be an auditor;
An actor too perhaps, if I see cause.

QUINCE

Speak, Pyramus.—Thisby, stand forth.

PYRAMUS

'Thisby, the flowers of odious savours sweet,'

QUINCE

Odours, odours.

PYRAMUS

'—odours savours sweet:
So hath thy breath, my dearest Thisby dear.—
But hark, a voice! stay thou but here awhile,
And by and by I will to thee appear.'

[Exit.]

PUCK

A stranger Pyramus than e'er played here!

[Aside.—Exit.]

THISBE

Must I speak now?

QUINCE

Ay, marry, must you: for you must understand he goes but to see a noise that he heard, and is to come again.

THISBE

'Most radiant Pyramus, most lily white of hue,

Of colour like the red rose on triumphant brier,

Most brisky juvenal, and eke most lovely Jew, As true as truest horse, that would never tire,

I'll meet thee, Pyramus, at Ninny's tomb.'

QUINCE

Ninus' tomb, man: why, you must not speak that yet: that you answer to Pyramus. You speak all your part at once, cues, and all.—Pyramus enter: your cue is past; it is 'never tire.'

THISBE

O,—'As true as truest horse, that yet would never tire.'

[Re-enter PUCK, and BOTTOM with an ass's head.]

PYRAMUS

'If I were fair, Thisby, I were only thine:—'

QUINCE

O monstrous! O strange! we are haunted. Pray, masters! fly, masters! Help!

[Exeunt Clowns.]

PUCK

I'll follow you; I'll lead you about a round,

Through bog, through bush, through brake, through brier;

Sometime a horse I'll be, sometime a hound,

A hog, a headless bear, sometime a fire;

And neigh, and bark, and grunt, and roar, and burn,

Like horse, hound, hog, bear, fire, at every turn.

[Exit.]

BOTTOM

Why do they run away? This is a knavery of them to make me afeard.

[Re-enter SNOUT.]

SNOUT

O Bottom, thou art changed! What do I see on thee?

BOTTOM

What do you see? you see an ass-head of your own, do you?

[Re-enter QUINCE.]

QUINCE

Bless thee, Bottom! bless thee! thou art translated.

[Exit.]

BOTTOM

I see their knavery: this is to make an ass of me; to fright me, if they could. But I will not stir from this place, do what they can: I will walk up and down here, and I will sing, that they shall hear I am not afraid.

[Sings.]

The ousel cock, so black of hue,

With orange-tawny bill,

The throstle with his note so true,

The wren with little quill.

TITANIA

[Waking.]

What angel wakes me from my flowery bed?

BOTTOM

[Sings.]

The finch, the sparrow, and the lark,

The plain-song cuckoo gray,

Whose note full many a man doth mark,

And dares not answer nay;—

for, indeed, who would set his wit to so foolish a bird? Who would give a bird the lie, though he cry 'cuckoo' never so?

TITANIA

I pray thee, gentle mortal, sing again;

Mine ear is much enamour'd of thy note.

So is mine eye enthrallèd to thy shape;

And thy fair virtue's force perforce doth move me,

On the first view, to say, to swear, I love thee.

BOTTOM

Methinks, mistress, you should have little reason for that: and yet, to say the truth, reason and love keep little company together now-a-days: the more the pity that some honest neighbours will not make them friends. Nay, I can gleek upon occasion.

TITANIA

Thou art as wise as thou art beautiful.

BOTTOM

Not so, neither: but if I had wit enough to get out of this wood, I have enough to serve mine own turn.

TITANIA

Out of this wood do not desire to go;

Thou shalt remain here whether thou wilt or no.

I am a spirit of no common rate,—

The summer still doth tend upon my state;

And I do love thee: therefore, go with me,

I'll give thee fairies to attend on thee;

And they shall fetch thee jewels from the deep,

And sing, while thou on pressèd flowers dost sleep:

And I will purge thy mortal grossness so

That thou shalt like an airy spirit go.—

Peasblossom! Cobweb! Moth! and Mustardseed!

[Enter Four Fairies.]

FIRST FAIRY

Ready.

SECOND FAIRY

And I.

THIRD FAIRY

THIRD FAIRY

And I.

FOURTH FAIRY

Where shall we go?

TITANIA

Be kind and courteous to this gentleman;

Hop in his walks and gambol in his eyes;

Feed him with apricocks and dewberries,

With purple grapes, green figs, and mulberries;

The honey bags steal from the humble-bees,

And, for night-tapers, crop their waxen thighs,

And light them at the fiery glow-worm's eyes,

To have my love to bed and to arise;

And pluck the wings from painted butterflies,

To fan the moonbeams from his sleeping eyes:

Nod to him, elves, and do him courtesies.

FIRST FAIRY

Hail, mortal!

SECOND FAIRY

Hail!

THIRD FAIRY

Hail!

FOURTH FAIRY

Hail!

BOTTOM

I cry your worships mercy, heartily.—I beseech your worship's name.

COBWEB

Cobweb.

BOTTOM

I shall desire you of more acquaintance, good Master Cobweb. If I cut my finger, I shall make bold with you.—Your name, honest gentleman?

PEASBLOSSOM

Peasblossom.

BOTTOM

I pray you, commend me to Mistress Squash, your mother, and to Master Peascod, your father. Good Master Peasblossom, I shall desire you of more acquaintance too.—Your name, I beseech you, sir?

MUSTARDSEED

Mustardseed.

BOTTOM

Good Master Mustardseed, I know your patience well: That same cowardly giant-like ox-beef hath devoured many a gentleman of your house: I promise you your kindred hath made my eyes water ere now. I desire you of more acquaintance, good Master Mustardseed.

TITANIA

Come, wait upon him; lead him to my bower.

The moon, methinks, looks with a watery eye;

And when she weeps, weeps every little flower;

Lamenting some enforced chastity.

Tie up my love's tongue, bring him silently.

[Exeunt.]

SCENE II. Another part of the wood

[Enter OBERON.]

OBERON

I wonder if Titania be awak'd;

Then, what it was that next came in her eye,

Which she must dote on in extremity.

[Enter PUCK.]

Here comes my messenger.—How now, mad spirit?

What night-rule now about this haunted grove?

PUCK

My mistress with a monster is in love.

Near to her close and consecrated bower,

While she was in her dull and sleeping hour,

A crew of patches, rude mechanicals,

That work for bread upon Athenian stalls,
Were met together to rehearse a play
Intended for great Theseus' nuptial day.
The shallowest thickskin of that barren sort
Who Pyramus presented in their sport,
Forsook his scene and enter'd in a brake;
When I did him at this advantage take,
An ass's nowl I fixed on his head;
Anon, his Thisbe must be answerèd,
And forth my mimic comes. When they him spy,
As wild geese that the creeping fowler eye,
Or russet-pated choughs, many in sort,
Rising and cawing at the gun's report,
Sever themselves and madly sweep the sky,
So at his sight away his fellows fly:
And at our stamp here, o'er and o'er one falls;
He murder cries, and help from Athens calls.
Their sense thus weak, lost with their fears, thus strong,
Made senseless things begin to do them wrong;
For briers and thorns at their apparel snatch;
Some sleeves, some hats: from yielders all things catch.

I led them on in this distracted fear,

And left sweet Pyramus translated there:

When in that moment,—so it came to pass,—

Titania wak'd, and straightway lov'd an ass.

OBERON

This falls out better than I could devise.

But hast thou yet latch'd the Athenian's eyes

With the love-juice, as I did bid thee do?

PUCK

I took him sleeping,—that is finish'd too,—

And the Athenian woman by his side;

That, when he wak'd, of force she must be ey'd.

[Enter DEMETRIUS and HERMIA.]

OBERON

Stand close; this is the same Athenian.

PUCK

This is the woman, but not this the man.

DEMETRIUS

O, why rebuke you him that loves you so?

Lay breath so bitter on your bitter foe.

HERMIA

Now I but chide, but I should use thee worse;
For thou, I fear, hast given me cause to curse.
If thou hast slain Lysander in his sleep,
Being o'er shoes in blood, plunge in the deep,
And kill me too.
The sun was not so true unto the day
As he to me: would he have stol'n away
From sleeping Hermia? I'll believe as soon
This whole earth may be bor'd; and that the moon
May through the centre creep and so displease
Her brother's noontide with the antipodes.
It cannot be but thou hast murder'd him;
So should a murderer look; so dead, so grim.

DEMETRIUS

So should the murder'd look; and so should I,

Pierc'd through the heart with your stern cruelty:

Yet you, the murderer, look as bright, as clear,

As yonder Venus in her glimmering sphere.

HERMIA

What's this to my Lysander? where is he?

Ah, good Demetrius, wilt thou give him me?

DEMETRIUS

I had rather give his carcass to my hounds.

HERMIA

Out, dog! out, cur! thou driv'st me past the bounds

Of maiden's patience. Hast thou slain him, then?

Henceforth be never number'd among men!

Oh! once tell true; tell true, even for my sake;

Durst thou have look'd upon him, being awake,

And hast thou kill'd him sleeping? O brave touch!

Could not a worm, an adder, do so much?

An adder did it; for with doubler tongue

Than thine, thou serpent, never adder stung.

DEMETRIUS

You spend your passion on a mispris'd mood:

I am not guilty of Lysander's blood;

Nor is he dead, for aught that I can tell.

HERMIA

I pray thee, tell me, then, that he is well.

DEMETRIUS

An if I could, what should I get therefore?

HERMIA

A privilege never to see me more.—

And from thy hated presence part I so:

See me no more whether he be dead or no.

[Exit.]

DEMETRIUS

There is no following her in this fierce vein:

Here, therefore, for a while I will remain.
So sorrow's heaviness doth heavier grow
For debt that bankrupt sleep doth sorrow owe;
Which now in some slight measure it will pay,
If for his tender here I make some stay.

[Lies down.]

OBERON

What hast thou done? thou hast mistaken quite,
And laid the love-juice on some true-love's sight:
Of thy misprision must perforce ensue
Some true love turn'd, and not a false turn'd true.

PUCK

Then fate o'er-rules, that, one man holding troth,
A million fail, confounding oath on oath.

OBERON

About the wood go, swifter than the wind,

And Helena of Athens look thou find:

All fancy-sick she is, and pale of cheer,

With sighs of love, that costs the fresh blood dear.

By some illusion see thou bring her here;

I'll charm his eyes against she do appear.

PUCK

I go, I go; look how I go,—

Swifter than arrow from the Tartar's bow.

[Exit.]

OBERON

Flower of this purple dye,

Hit with Cupid's archery,

Sink in apple of his eye!

When his love he doth espy,

Let her shine as gloriously

As the Venus of the sky.—

When thou wak'st, if she be by,

Beg of her for remedy.

[Re-enter PUCK.]

PUCK

Captain of our fairy band,

Helena is here at hand,

And the youth mistook by me

Pleading for a lover's fee;

Shall we their fond pageant see?

Lord, what fools these mortals be!

OBERON

Stand aside: the noise they make

Will cause Demetrius to awake.

PUCK

Then will two at once woo one,—

That must needs be sport alone;

And those things do best please me

That befall preposterously.

[Enter LYSANDER and HELENA.]

LYSANDER

Why should you think that I should woo in scorn?

Scorn and derision never come in tears.

Look when I vow, I weep; and vows so born,

In their nativity all truth appears.

How can these things in me seem scorn to you,

Bearing the badge of faith, to prove them true?

HELENA

You do advance your cunning more and more.

When truth kills truth, O devilish-holy fray!

These vows are Hermia's: will you give her o'er?

Weigh oath with oath, and you will nothing weigh:

Your vows to her and me, put in two scales,

Will even weigh; and both as light as tales.

LYSANDER

I had no judgment when to her I swore.

HELENA

Nor none, in my mind, now you give her o'er.

LYSANDER

Demetrius loves her, and he loves not you.

DEMETRIUS

[Awaking.]

O Helen, goddess, nymph, perfect, divine!

To what, my love, shall I compare thine eyne?

Crystal is muddy. O, how ripe in show

Thy lips, those kissing cherries, tempting grow!

That pure congealèd white, high Taurus' snow,

Fann'd with the eastern wind, turns to a crow

When thou hold'st up thy hand: O, let me kiss

This princess of pure white, this seal of bliss!

HELENA

O spite! O hell! I see you all are bent

To set against me for your merriment.

If you were civil, and knew courtesy,

You would not do me thus much injury.

Can you not hate me, as I know you do,

But you must join in souls to mock me too?

If you were men, as men you are in show,

You would not use a gentle lady so;

To vow, and swear, and superpraise my parts,

When I am sure you hate me with your hearts.

You both are rivals, and love Hermia;

And now both rivals, to mock Helena:

A trim exploit, a manly enterprise,

To conjure tears up in a poor maid's eyes

With your derision! None of noble sort

Would so offend a virgin, and extort

A poor soul's patience, all to make you sport.

LYSANDER

You are unkind, Demetrius; be not so;

For you love Hermia: this you know I know:

And here, with all good will, with all my heart,

In Hermia's love I yield you up my part;

And yours of Helena to me bequeath,

Whom I do love and will do till my death.

HELENA

Never did mockers waste more idle breath.

DEMETRIUS

Lysander, keep thy Hermia; I will none:

If e'er I lov'd her, all that love is gone.

My heart to her but as guest-wise sojourn'd;

And now to Helen is it home return'd,

There to remain.

LYSANDER

Helen, it is not so.

DEMETRIUS

Disparage not the faith thou dost not know,

Lest, to thy peril, thou aby it dear.—

Look where thy love comes; yonder is thy dear.

[Enter HERMIA.]

HERMIA

Dark night, that from the eye his function takes,

The ear more quick of apprehension makes;

Wherein it doth impair the seeing sense,

It pays the hearing double recompense:—

Thou art not by mine eye, Lysander, found;

Mine ear, I thank it, brought me to thy sound.

But why unkindly didst thou leave me so?

LYSANDER

Why should he stay whom love doth press to go?

HERMIA

What love could press Lysander from my side?

LYSANDER

Lysander's love, that would not let him bide,—

Fair Helena,—who more engilds the night

Than all yon fiery oes and eyes of light.

Why seek'st thou me? could not this make thee know

The hate I bare thee made me leave thee so?

HERMIA

You speak not as you think; it cannot be.

HELENA

Lo, she is one of this confederacy!

Now I perceive they have conjoin'd all three

To fashion this false sport in spite of me.

Injurious Hermia! most ungrateful maid!

Have you conspir'd, have you with these contriv'd,

To bait me with this foul derision?

Is all the counsel that we two have shar'd,
The sisters' vows, the hours that we have spent,
When we have chid the hasty-footed time
For parting us,—O, is all forgot?

All school-days' friendship, childhood innocence?
We, Hermia, like two artificial gods,
Have with our needles created both one flower,
Both on one sampler, sitting on one cushion,
Both warbling of one song, both in one key;
As if our hands, our sides, voices, and minds,
Had been incorporate. So we grew together,
Like to a double cherry, seeming parted;
But yet a union in partition,
Two lovely berries moulded on one stem:
So, with two seeming bodies, but one heart;
Two of the first, like coats in heraldry,
Due but to one, and crownèd with one crest.
And will you rent our ancient love asunder,
To join with men in scorning your poor friend?
It is not friendly, 'tis not maidenly:

Our sex, as well as I, may chide you for it,

Though I alone do feel the injury.

HERMIA

I am amazèd at your passionate words:

I scorn you not; it seems that you scorn me.

HELENA

Have you not set Lysander, as in scorn,

To follow me, and praise my eyes and face?

And made your other love, Demetrius,—

Who even but now did spurn me with his foot,—

To call me goddess, nymph, divine, and rare,

Precious, celestial? Wherefore speaks he this

To her he hates? and wherefore doth Lysander

Deny your love, so rich within his soul,

And tender me, forsooth, affection,

But by your setting on, by your consent?

What though I be not so in grace as you,

So hung upon with love, so fortunate;

But miserable most, to love unlov'd?

This you should pity rather than despise.

HERMIA

I understand not what you mean by this.

HELENA

Ay, do persever, counterfeit sad looks,

Make mows upon me when I turn my back;

Wink each at other; hold the sweet jest up:

This sport, well carried, shall be chronicled.

If you have any pity, grace, or manners,

You would not make me such an argument.

But fare ye well: 'tis partly my own fault;

Which death, or absence, soon shall remedy.

LYSANDER

Stay, gentle Helena; hear my excuse;

My love, my life, my soul, fair Helena!

HELENA

O excellent!

HERMIA

Sweet, do not scorn her so.

DEMETRIUS

If she cannot entreat, I can compel.

LYSANDER

Thou canst compel no more than she entreat;

Thy threats have no more strength than her weak prayers.—

Helen, I love thee; by my life I do;

I swear by that which I will lose for thee

To prove him false that says I love thee not.

DEMETRIUS

I say I love thee more than he can do.

LYSANDER

If thou say so, withdraw, and prove it too.

DEMETRIUS

Quick, come,—

HERMIA

Lysander, whereto tends all this?

LYSANDER

Away, you Ethiope!

DEMETRIUS

No, no, sir:—he will

Seem to break loose; take on as you would follow:

But yet come not. You are a tame man; go!

LYSANDER

Hang off, thou cat, thou burr: vile thing, let loose,

Or I will shake thee from me like a serpent.

HERMIA

Why are you grown so rude? what change is this,

Sweet love?

LYSANDER

Thy love! out, tawny Tartar, out!

Out, loathèd medicine! hated potion, hence!

HERMIA

Do you not jest?

HELENA

Yes, sooth; and so do you.

LYSANDER

Demetrius, I will keep my word with thee.

DEMETRIUS

I would I had your bond; for I perceive

A weak bond holds you; I'll not trust your word.

LYSANDER

What! should I hurt her, strike her, kill her dead?
Although I hate her, I'll not harm her so.

HERMIA
What! can you do me greater harm than hate?
Hate me! wherefore? O me! what news, my love?

Am not I Hermia? Are not you Lysander?
I am as fair now as I was erewhile.

Since night you lov'd me; yet since night you left me:
Why then, you left me,—O, the gods forbid!—
In earnest, shall I say?

LYSANDER
Ay, by my life;
And never did desire to see thee more.
Therefore be out of hope, of question, doubt,
Be certain, nothing truer; 'tis no jest
That I do hate thee and love Helena.

HERMIA

O me! you juggler! you cankerblossom!

You thief of love! What! have you come by night,

And stol'n my love's heart from him?

HELENA

Fine, i' faith!

Have you no modesty, no maiden shame,

No touch of bashfulness? What! will you tear

Impatient answers from my gentle tongue?

Fie, fie! you counterfeit, you puppet, you!

HERMIA

Puppet! why so? Ay, that way goes the game.

Now I perceive that she hath made compare

Between our statures; she hath urg'd her height;

And with her personage, her tall personage,

Her height, forsooth, she hath prevail'd with him.—

And are you grown so high in his esteem

Because I am so dwarfish and so low?

How low am I, thou painted maypole? speak;

How low am I? I am not yet so low

But that my nails can reach unto thine eyes.

HELENA

I pray you, though you mock me, gentlemen,

Let her not hurt me. I was never curst;

I have no gift at all in shrewishness;

I am a right maid for my cowardice;

Let her not strike me. You perhaps may think,

Because she is something lower than myself,

That I can match her.

HERMIA

Lower! hark, again.

HELENA

Good Hermia, do not be so bitter with me.

I evermore did love you, Hermia;

Did ever keep your counsels; never wrong'd you;

Save that, in love unto Demetrius,

I told him of your stealth unto this wood:

He follow'd you; for love I follow'd him;

But he hath chid me hence, and threaten'd me

To strike me, spurn me, nay, to kill me too:

And now, so you will let me quiet go,

To Athens will I bear my folly back,

And follow you no farther. Let me go:

You see how simple and how fond I am.

HERMIA

Why, get you gone: who is't that hinders you?

HELENA

A foolish heart that I leave here behind.

HERMIA

What! with Lysander?

HELENA

With Demetrius.

LYSANDER

Be not afraid; she shall not harm thee, Helena.

DEMETRIUS

No, sir, she shall not, though you take her part.

HELENA

O, when she's angry, she is keen and shrewd:

She was a vixen when she went to school;

And, though she be but little, she is fierce.

HERMIA

Little again! nothing but low and little!—

Why will you suffer her to flout me thus?

Let me come to her.

LYSANDER

Get you gone, you dwarf;

You minimus, of hind'ring knot-grass made;

You bead, you acorn.

DEMETRIUS

You are too officious

In her behalf that scorns your services.

Let her alone: speak not of Helena;

Take not her part; for if thou dost intend

Never so little show of love to her,

Thou shalt aby it.

LYSANDER

Now she holds me not;

Now follow, if thou dar'st, to try whose right,

Of thine or mine, is most in Helena.

DEMETRIUS

Follow! nay, I'll go with thee, cheek by jole.

[Exeunt LYSANDER and DEMETRIUS.]

HERMIA

You, mistress, all this coil is 'long of you:

Nay, go not back.

HELENA

I will not trust you, I;

Nor longer stay in your curst company.

Your hands than mine are quicker for a fray;

My legs are longer though, to run away.

[Exit.]

HERMIA

I am amaz'd, and know not what to say.

[Exit, pursuing HELENA.]

OBERON

This is thy negligence: still thou mistak'st,

Or else commit'st thy knaveries willfully.

PUCK

Believe me, king of shadows, I mistook.

Did not you tell me I should know the man

By the Athenian garments he had on?
And so far blameless proves my enterprise
That I have 'nointed an Athenian's eyes:
And so far am I glad it so did sort,
As this their jangling I esteem a sport.

OBERON

Thou seest these lovers seek a place to fight;
Hie therefore, Robin, overcast the night;
The starry welkin cover thou anon
With drooping fog, as black as Acheron,
And lead these testy rivals so astray
As one come not within another's way.
Like to Lysander sometime frame thy tongue,
Then stir Demetrius up with bitter wrong;
And sometime rail thou like Demetrius;
And from each other look thou lead them thus,
Till o'er their brows death-counterfeiting sleep
With leaden legs and batty wings doth creep:
Then crush this herb into Lysander's eye;
Whose liquor hath this virtuous property,

To take from thence all error with his might

And make his eyeballs roll with wonted sight.

When they next wake, all this derision

Shall seem a dream and fruitless vision;

And back to Athens shall the lovers wend

With league whose date till death shall never end.

Whiles I in this affair do thee employ,

I'll to my queen, and beg her Indian boy;

And then I will her charmèd eye release

From monster's view, and all things shall be peace.

PUCK

My fairy lord, this must be done with haste,

For night's swift dragons cut the clouds full fast;

And yonder shines Aurora's harbinger,

At whose approach ghosts, wandering here and there,

Troop home to churchyards: damnèd spirits all,

That in cross-ways and floods have burial,

Already to their wormy beds are gone;

For fear lest day should look their shames upon

They wilfully exile themselves from light, And must for aye consort with black-brow'd night.

OBERON

But we are spirits of another sort:

I with the morning's love have oft made sport;

And, like a forester, the groves may tread

Even till the eastern gate, all fiery-red,

Opening on Neptune with fair blessèd beams,

Turns into yellow gold his salt-green streams.

But, notwithstanding, haste; make no delay:

We may effect this business yet ere day.

[Exit OBERON.]

PUCK

Up and down, up and down;

I will lead them up and down:

I am fear'd in field and town.

Goblin, lead them up and down.

Here comes one.

[Enter LYSANDER.]

LYSANDER

Where art thou, proud Demetrius? speak thou now.

PUCK

Here, villain; drawn and ready. Where art thou?

LYSANDER

I will be with thee straight.

PUCK

Follow me, then,

To plainer ground.

[Exit LYSANDER as following the voice.]

[Enter DEMETRIUS.]

DEMETRIUS

Lysander! speak again.

Thou runaway, thou coward, art thou fled?

Speak. In some bush? where dost thou hide thy head?

PUCK

Thou coward, art thou bragging to the stars,

Telling the bushes that thou look'st for wars,

And wilt not come? Come, recreant; come, thou child;

I'll whip thee with a rod: he is defiled

That draws a sword on thee.

DEMETRIUS

Yea, art thou there?

PUCK

Follow my voice; we'll try no manhood here.

[Exeunt.]

[Re-enter LYSANDER.]

LYSANDER

He goes before me, and still dares me on;

When I come where he calls, then he is gone.

The villain is much lighter heeled than I:

I follow'd fast, but faster he did fly;

That fallen am I in dark uneven way,

And here will rest me. Come, thou gentle day!

[Lies down.]

For if but once thou show me thy grey light,

I'll find Demetrius, and revenge this spite.

[Sleeps.]

[Re-enter PUCK and DEMETRIUS.]

PUCK

Ho, ho, ho, ho! Coward, why com'st thou not?

DEMETRIUS

Abide me, if thou dar'st; for well I wot

Thou runn'st before me, shifting every place;

And dar'st not stand, nor look me in the face.

Where art thou?

PUCK

Come hither; I am here.

DEMETRIUS

Nay, then, thou mock'st me.

Thou shalt buy this dear,

If ever I thy face by daylight see:

Now, go thy way. Faintness constraineth me

To measure out my length on this cold bed.—

By day's approach look to be visited.

[Lies down and sleeps.]

[Enter HELENA.]

HELENA

O weary night, O long and tedious night,

Abate thy hours! Shine comforts from the east,

That I may back to Athens by daylight,

From these that my poor company detest:—

And sleep, that sometimes shuts up sorrow's eye,

Steal me awhile from mine own company.

[Sleeps.]

PUCK

Yet but three? Come one more;

Two of both kinds makes up four.

Here she comes, curst and sad:—

Cupid is a knavish lad,

Thus to make poor females mad.

[Enter HERMIA.]

HERMIA

Never so weary, never so in woe,

Bedabbled with the dew, and torn with briers;
I can no further crawl, no further go;
My legs can keep no pace with my desires.
Here will I rest me till the break of day.

Heavens shield Lysander, if they mean a fray!

[Lies down.]

PUCK
On the ground
Sleep sound:
I'll apply To your eye,
Gentle lover, remedy.

[Squeezing the juice on LYSANDER'S eye.]
When thou wak'st,
Thou tak'st True delight
In the sight
Of thy former lady's eye:
And the country proverb known,

That every man should take his own,

In your waking shall be shown:

Jack shall have Jill;

Nought shall go ill;

The man shall have his mare again, and all shall be well.

[Exit PUCK.—DEMETRIUS, HELENA &c, sleep.]

ACT IV SCENE I. The Wood

[Enter TITANIA and BOTTOM; PEASBLOSSOM, COBWEB, MOTH, MUSTARDSEED, and other FAIRIES attending; OBERON behind, unseen.]

TITANIA

Come, sit thee down upon this flowery bed, While I thy amiable cheeks do coy,

And stick musk-roses in thy sleek smooth head,

And kiss thy fair large ears, my gentle joy.

BOTTOM

Where's Peasblossom?

PEASBLOSSOM

Ready.

BOTTOM

Scratch my head, Peasblossom.— Where's Monsieur Cobweb?

COBWEB

Ready.

BOTTOM

Monsieur Cobweb; good monsieur, get you your weapons in your hand and kill me a red-hipped humble-bee on the top of a thistle; and, good monsieur, bring me the honey-bag. Do not fret yourself too much in the action, monsieur; and, good monsieur, have a care the honey-bag break not; I would be loath to have you overflown with a honey-bag, signior.— Where's Monsieur Mustardseed?

MUSTARDSEED

Ready.

BOTTOM

Give me your neif, Monsieur Mustardseed. Pray you, leave your curtsy, good monsieur.

MUSTARDSEED

What's your will?

BOTTOM

Nothing, good monsieur, but to help Cavalero Cobweb to scratch. I must to the barber's, monsieur; for methinks I am marvellous hairy about the face; and I am such a tender ass, if my hair do but tickle me I must scratch.

TITANIA

What, wilt thou hear some music, my sweet love?

BOTTOM

I have a reasonable good ear in music; let us have the tongs and the bones.

TITANIA

Or say, sweet love, what thou desirest to eat.

BOTTOM

Truly, a peck of provender; I could munch your good dry oats. Methinks I have a great desire to a bottle of hay: good hay, sweet hay, hath no fellow.

TITANIA

I have a venturous fairy that shall seek

The squirrel's hoard, and fetch thee new nuts.

BOTTOM

I had rather have a handful or two of dried peas. But, I pray you, let none of your people stir me; I have an exposition of sleep come upon me.

TITANIA

Sleep thou, and I will wind thee in my arms.

Fairies, be gone, and be all ways away.

So doth the woodbine the sweet honeysuckle

Gently entwist,—the female ivy so

Enrings the barky fingers of the elm.

O, how I love thee! how I dote on thee!

[They sleep.]

[OBERON advances. Enter PUCK.]

OBERON

Welcome, good Robin. Seest thou this sweet sight?

Her dotage now I do begin to pity.
For, meeting her of late behind the wood,
Seeking sweet favours for this hateful fool,
I did upbraid her and fall out with her:
For she his hairy temples then had rounded
With coronet of fresh and fragrant flowers;
And that same dew, which sometime on the buds
Was wont to swell like round and orient pearls,
Stood now within the pretty flow'rets' eyes,
Like tears that did their own disgrace bewail.
When I had, at my pleasure, taunted her,

And she, in mild terms, begg'd my patience,
I then did ask of her her changeling child;
Which straight she gave me, and her fairy sent
To bear him to my bower in fairy-land.
And now I have the boy, I will undo
This hateful imperfection of her eyes.
And, gentle Puck, take this transformèd scalp
From off the head of this Athenian swain,
That he awaking when the other do,
May all to Athens back again repair,
And think no more of this night's accidents
But as the fierce vexation of a dream.
But first I will release the fairy queen.
Be as thou wast wont to be;

[Touching her eyes with an herb.]
See as thou was wont to see.
Dian's bud o'er Cupid's flower
Hath such force and blessed power.

Now, my Titania; wake you, my sweet queen.

TITANIA

My Oberon! what visions have I seen!

Methought I was enamour'd of an ass.

OBERON

There lies your love.

TITANIA

How came these things to pass?
O, how mine eyes do loathe his visage now!

OBERON

Silence awhile.—Robin, take off this head.
Titania, music call; and strike more dead
Than common sleep, of all these five, the sense.

TITANIA

Music, ho! music; such as charmeth sleep.

PUCK

Now when thou wak'st, with thine own fool's eyes peep.

OBERON

Sound, music.

[Still music.]

Come, my queen, take hands with me,

And rock the ground whereon these sleepers be.

Now thou and I are new in amity,

And will to-morrow midnight solemnly

Dance in Duke Theseus' house triumphantly,

And bless it to all fair prosperity:

There shall the pairs of faithful lovers be

Wedded, with Theseus, all in jollity.

PUCK

Fairy king, attend and mark;

I do hear the morning lark.

OBERON

Then, my queen, in silence sad,

Trip we after night's shade.

We the globe can compass soon,

Swifter than the wand'ring moon.

TITANIA

Come, my lord; and in our flight,

Tell me how it came this night

That I sleeping here was found

With these mortals on the ground.

[Exeunt. Horns sound within.]

[Enter THESEUS, HIPPOLYTA, EGEUS, and Train.]

THESEUS

Go, one of you, find out the forester;—

For now our observation is perform'd;

And since we have the vaward of the day,

My love shall hear the music of my hounds,—

Uncouple in the western valley; go:—

Despatch, I say, and find the forester.—

[Exit an ATTENDANT.]

We will, fair queen, up to the mountain's top,

And mark the musical confusion

Of hounds and echo in conjunction.

HIPPOLYTA

I was with Hercules and Cadmus once

When in a wood of Crete they bay'd the bear

With hounds of Sparta: never did I hear

Such gallant chiding; for, besides the groves,

The skies, the fountains, every region near

Seem'd all one mutual cry: I never heard

So musical a discord, such sweet thunder.

THESEUS

My hounds are bred out of the Spartan kind,

So flew'd, so sanded; and their heads are hung

With ears that sweep away the morning dew;

Crook-knee'd and dew-lap'd like Thessalian bulls;
Slow in pursuit, but match'd in mouth like bells,
Each under each. A cry more tuneable
Was never holla'd to, nor cheer'd with horn,
In Crete, in Sparta, nor in Thessaly.
Judge when you hear.—But, soft, what nymphs are these?

EGEUS

My lord, this is my daughter here asleep;
And this Lysander; this Demetrius is;
This Helena, old Nedar's Helena:
I wonder of their being here together.

THESEUS

No doubt they rose up early to observe
The rite of May; and, hearing our intent,
Came here in grace of our solemnity.—
But speak, Egeus; is not this the day
That Hermia should give answer of her choice?

EGEUS

It is, my lord.

THESEUS

Go, bid the huntsmen wake them with their horns.

[Horns, and shout within. DEMETRIUS, LYSANDER,HERMIA, and HELENA awake and start up.]

Good-morrow, friends. Saint Valentine is past;

Begin these wood-birds but to couple now?

LYSANDER

Pardon, my lord.

[He and the rest kneel to THESEUS.]

THESEUS

I pray you all, stand up.

I know you two are rival enemies;

How comes this gentle concord in the world,

That hatred is so far from jealousy

To sleep by hate, and fear no enmity?

LYSANDER

My lord, I shall reply amazedly,

Half 'sleep, half waking; but as yet, I swear,

I cannot truly say how I came here:

But, as I think,—for truly would I speak—

And now I do bethink me, so it is,—

I came with Hermia hither: our intent

Was to be gone from Athens, where we might be,

Without the peril of the Athenian law.

EGEUS

Enough, enough, my lord; you have enough;

I beg the law, the law upon his head.—

They would have stol'n away, they would, Demetrius,

Thereby to have defeated you and me:

You of your wife, and me of my consent,—

Of my consent that she should be your wife.

DEMETRIUS

My lord, fair Helen told me of their stealth, Of this their purpose hither to this wood;

And I in fury hither follow'd them,

Fair Helena in fancy following me.

But, my good lord, I wot not by what power,—

But by some power it is,—my love to Hermia,

Melted as the snow—seems to me now

As the remembrance of an idle gawd

Which in my childhood I did dote upon:

And all the faith, the virtue of my heart,

The object and the pleasure of mine eye,

Is only Helena. To her, my lord,

Was I betroth'd ere I saw Hermia:

But, like a sickness, did I loathe this food;

But, as in health, come to my natural taste,

Now I do wish it, love it, long for it,

And will for evermore be true to it.

THESEUS

Fair lovers, you are fortunately met:

Of this discourse we more will hear anon.—

Egeus, I will overbear your will;

For in the temple, by and by with us,

These couples shall eternally be knit.

And, for the morning now is something worn,

Our purpos'd hunting shall be set aside.—

Away with us to Athens, three and three,

We'll hold a feast in great solemnity.—

Come, Hippolyta.

[Exeunt THESEUS, HIPPOLYTA, EGEUS, and Train.]

DEMETRIUS

These things seem small and undistinguishable,

Like far-off mountains turnèd into clouds.

HERMIA

Methinks I see these things with parted eye,

When every thing seems double.

HELENA

So methinks:

And I have found Demetrius like a jewel.

Mine own, and not mine own.

DEMETRIUS

It seems to me

That yet we sleep, we dream.—Do not you think

The duke was here, and bid us follow him?

HERMIA

Yea, and my father.

HELENA

And Hippolyta.

LYSANDER

And he did bid us follow to the temple.

DEMETRIUS

Why, then, we are awake: let's follow him;

And by the way let us recount our dreams.

[Exeunt.]

[As they go out, BOTTOM awakes.]

BOTTOM

When my cue comes, call me, and I will answer. My next is 'Most fair Pyramus.'—Heigh-ho!—Peter Quince! Flute, the bellows-mender! Snout, the tinker! Starveling! God's my life, stol'n hence, and left me asleep! I have had a most rare vision. I have had a dream—past the wit of man to say what dream it was.—Man is but an ass if he go about to expound this dream. Methought I was—there is no man can tell what. Methought I was, and methought I had,—but man is but a patched fool, if he will offer to say what methought I had. The eye of man hath not heard, the ear of man hath not seen; man's hand is not able to taste, his tongue to conceive, nor his heart to report, what my dream was. I will get Peter Quince to write a ballad of this dream: it shall be called Bottom's Dream, because it hath no bottom; and I will sing it in the latter end of a play, before the duke: peradventure, to make it the more gracious, I shall sing it at her death.

[Exit.]

SCENE II. Athens. A Room in QUINCE'S House

[Enter QUINCE, FLUTE, SNOUT, and STARVELING.]

QUINCE

Have you sent to Bottom's house? is he come home yet?

STARVELING

He cannot be heard of. Out of doubt, he is transported.

FLUTE

If he come not, then the play is marred; it goes not forward, doth it?

QUINCE

It is not possible: you have not a man in all Athens able to discharge Pyramus but he.

FLUTE

No; he hath simply the best wit of any handicraft man in Athens.

QUINCE

Yea, and the best person too: and he is a very paramour for a sweet voice.

FLUTE

You must say paragon: a paramour is, God bless us, a thing of naught.

[Enter SNUG.]

SNUG

Masters, the duke is coming from the temple; and there is two or three lords and ladies more married: if our sport had gone forward, we had all been made men.

FLUTE

O sweet bully Bottom! Thus hath he lost sixpence a day during his life; he could not have 'scaped sixpence a-day; an the duke had not given him sixpence a-day for playing Pyramus, I'll be hanged; he would have deserved it: sixpence a-day in Pyramus, or nothing.

[Enter BOTTOM.]

BOTTOM

Where are these lads? where are these hearts?

QUINCE

Bottom!—O most courageous day! O most happy hour!

BOTTOM

Masters, I am to discourse wonders: but ask me not what; for if I tell you, I am not true Athenian. I will tell you everything, right as it fell out.

QUINCE

Let us hear, sweet Bottom.

BOTTOM

Not a word of me. All that I will tell you is, that the duke hath dined. Get your apparel together; good strings to your beards, new ribbons to your pumps; meet presently at the palace; every man look over his part; for the short and the long is, our play is preferred. In any case, let Thisby have clean linen; and let not him that plays the lion pare his nails, for they shall hang out for the lion's claws. And, most dear actors, eat no onions nor garlick, for we are to utter sweet breath; and I do not doubt but to hear them say it is a sweet comedy. No more words: away! go; away!

[Exeunt.]

ACT V SCENE I. Athens. An Apartment in the Palace of THESEUS

[Enter THESEUS, HIPPOLYTA, PHILOSTRATE, Lords, and Attendants.]

HIPPOLYTA

'Tis strange, my Theseus, that these lovers speak of.

THESEUS

More strange than true. I never may believe

These antique fables, nor these fairy toys.

Lovers and madmen have such seething brains,

Such shaping fantasies, that apprehend

More than cool reason ever comprehends.

The lunatic, the lover, and the poet

Are of imagination all compact:

One sees more devils than vast hell can hold;

That is the madman: the lover, all as frantic,

Sees Helen's beauty in a brow of Egypt:

The poet's eye, in a fine frenzy rolling,

Doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven;

And as imagination bodies forth

The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen

Turns them to shapes, and gives to airy nothing

A local habitation and a name.

Such tricks hath strong imagination,

That, if it would but apprehend some joy,

It comprehends some bringer of that joy;

Or in the night, imagining some fear,

How easy is a bush supposed a bear?

HIPPOLYTA

But all the story of the night told over,

And all their minds transfigur'd so together,

More witnesseth than fancy's images,

And grows to something of great constancy;

But, howsoever, strange and admirable.

[Enter LYSANDER, DEMETRIUS, HERMIA, and HELENA.]

THESEUS

Here come the lovers, full of joy and mirth.—
Joy, gentle friends! joy and fresh days of love
Accompany your hearts!

LYSANDER

More than to us
Wait in your royal walks, your board, your bed!

THESEUS

Come now; what masques, what dances shall we have,
To wear away this long age of three hours
Between our after-supper and bed-time?
Where is our usual manager of mirth?
What revels are in hand? Is there no play
To ease the anguish of a torturing hour?

Call Philostrate.

PHILOSTRATE

Here, mighty Theseus.

THESEUS

Say, what abridgment have you for this evening?

What masque? what music? How shall we beguile

The lazy time, if not with some delight?

PHILOSTRATE

There is a brief how many sports are ripe;

Make choice of which your highness will see first.

[Giving a paper]

THESEUS

[Reads]

'The battle with the Centaurs, to be sung

By an Athenian eunuch to the harp.'

We'll none of that: that have I told my love,

In glory of my kinsman Hercules.

'The riot of the tipsy Bacchanals,

Tearing the Thracian singer in their rage.'

That is an old device, and it was play'd

When I from Thebes came last a conqueror.

'The thrice three Muses mourning for the death

Of learning, late deceas'd in beggary.'

That is some satire, keen and critical,

Not sorting with a nuptial ceremony.

'A tedious brief scene of young Pyramus

And his love Thisbe; very tragical mirth.'

Merry and tragical! tedious and brief!

That is hot ice and wondrous strange snow.

How shall we find the concord of this discord?

PHILOSTRATE

A play there is, my lord, some ten words long,

Which is as brief as I have known a play;

But by ten words, my lord, it is too long,

Which makes it tedious: for in all the play

There is not one word apt, one player fitted:

And tragical, my noble lord, it is;

For Pyramus therein doth kill himself:

Which when I saw rehears'd, I must confess,

Made mine eyes water; but more merry tears

The passion of loud laughter never shed.

THESEUS

What are they that do play it?

PHILOSTRATE

Hard-handed men that work in Athens here,

Which never labour'd in their minds till now;

And now have toil'd their unbreath'd memories

With this same play against your nuptial.

THESEUS

And we will hear it.

PHILOSTRATE

No, my noble lord,

It is not for you: I have heard it over,

And it is nothing, nothing in the world;

Unless you can find sport in their intents, Extremely stretch'd and conn'd with cruel pain,

To do you service.

THESEUS

I will hear that play;

For never anything can be amiss

When simpleness and duty tender it.

Go, bring them in: and take your places, ladies.

[Exit PHILOSTRATE.]

HIPPOLYTA

I love not to see wretchedness o'er-charged,

And duty in his service perishing.

THESEUS

Why, gentle sweet, you shall see no such thing.

HIPPOLYTA

He says they can do nothing in this kind.

THESEUS

The kinder we, to give them thanks for nothing.

Our sport shall be to take what they mistake:

And what poor duty cannot do,

Noble respect takes it in might, not merit.

Where I have come, great clerks have purposed

To greet me with premeditated welcomes;

Where I have seen them shiver and look pale,

Make periods in the midst of sentences,

Throttle their practis'd accent in their fears,

And, in conclusion, dumbly have broke off,

Not paying me a welcome. Trust me, sweet,

Out of this silence yet I pick'd a welcome;

And in the modesty of fearful duty

I read as much as from the rattling tongue

Of saucy and audacious eloquence.

Love, therefore, and tongue-tied simplicity

In least speak most to my capacity.

[Enter PHILOSTRATE.]

PHILOSTRATE

So please your grace, the prologue is address'd.

THESEUS

Let him approach.

[Flourish of trumpets.   Enter PROLOGUE.]

PROLOGUE

'If we offend, it is with our good will.

That you should think, we come not to offend,

But with good will. To show our simple skill,

That is the true beginning of our end.

Consider then, we come but in despite.

We do not come, as minding to content you,

Our true intent is. All for your delight

We are not here. That you should here repent you,

The actors are at hand: and, by their show,

You shall know all that you are like to know,'

THESEUS

This fellow doth not stand upon points.

LYSANDER

He hath rid his prologue like a rough colt; he knows not the stop. A good moral, my lord: it is not enough to speak, but to speak true.

HIPPOLYTA

Indeed he hath played on this prologue like a child on a recorder; a sound, but not in government.

THESEUS

His speech was like a tangled chain; nothing impaired, but all disordered. Who is next?

[Enter PYRAMUS and THISBE, WALL, MOONSHINE, and LION, as in dumb show.]

PROLOGUE

Gentles, perchance you wonder at this show;

But wonder on, till truth make all things plain.

This man is Pyramus, if you would know;

This beauteous lady Thisby is certain.

This man, with lime and rough-cast, doth present

Wall, that vile Wall which did these lovers sunder;

And through Wall's chink, poor souls, they are content

To whisper, at the which let no man wonder.

This man, with lanthorn, dog, and bush of thorn,

Presenteth Moonshine: for, if you will know,

By moonshine did these lovers think no scorn

To meet at Ninus' tomb, there, there to woo.

This grisly beast, which by name Lion hight,

The trusty Thisby, coming first by night,

Did scare away, or rather did affright;

And as she fled, her mantle she did fall;

Which Lion vile with bloody mouth did stain:

Anon comes Pyramus, sweet youth, and tall,

And finds his trusty Thisby's mantle slain;

Whereat with blade, with bloody blameful blade,

He bravely broach'd his boiling bloody breast;

And Thisby, tarrying in mulberry shade,

His dagger drew, and died. For all the rest,

Let Lion, Moonshine, Wall, and lovers twain,

At large discourse while here they do remain.

[Exeunt PROLOGUE, THISBE, LION, and MOONSHINE.]

THESEUS

I wonder if the lion be to speak.

DEMETRIUS

No wonder, my lord: one lion may, when many asses do.

WALL

In this same interlude it doth befall

That I, one Snout by name, present a wall:

And such a wall as I would have you think

That had in it a crannied hole or chink,

Through which the lovers, Pyramus and Thisby, Did whisper often very secretly.

This loam, this rough-cast, and this stone, doth show

That I am that same wall; the truth is so:

And this the cranny is, right and sinister,

Through which the fearful lovers are to whisper.

THESEUS

Would you desire lime and hair to speak better?

DEMETRIUS

It is the wittiest partition that ever I heard discourse, my lord.

THESEUS

Pyramus draws near the wall; silence.

[Enter PYRAMUS.]

PYRAMUS

O grim-look'd night! O night with hue so black!

O night, which ever art when day is not!

O night, O night, alack, alack, alack,

I fear my Thisby's promise is forgot!—

And thou, O wall, O sweet, O lovely wall,

That stand'st between her father's ground and mine;

Thou wall, O wall, O sweet and lovely wall,

Show me thy chink, to blink through with mine eyne.

[WALL holds up his fingers.]

Thanks, courteous wall: Jove shield thee well for this!

But what see what see I? No Thisby do I see.

O wicked wall, through whom I see no bliss,

Curs'd be thy stones for thus deceiving me!

THESEUS

The wall, methinks, being sensible, should curse again.

PYRAMUS

No, in truth, sir, he should not. 'Deceiving me' is Thisby's cue: she is to enter now, and I am to spy her through the wall. You shall see it will fall pat as I told you.—Yonder she comes.

[Enter THISBE.]

THISBE

O wall, full often hast thou heard my moans,

For parting my fair Pyramus and me:

My cherry lips have often kiss'd thy stones:

Thy stones with lime and hair knit up in thee.

PYRAMUS

I see a voice; now will I to the chink,

To spy an I can hear my Thisby's face.

Thisby!

THISBE

My love! thou art my love, I think.

PYRAMUS

Think what thou wilt, I am thy lover's grace;

And like Limander am I trusty still.

THISBE

And I like Helen, till the fates me kill.

PYRAMUS

Not Shafalus to Procrus was so true.

THISBE

As Shafalus to Procrus, I to you.

PYRAMUS

O, kiss me through the hole of this vile wall .

THISBE

I kiss the wall's hole, not your lips at all.

PYRAMUS

Wilt thou at Ninny's tomb meet me straightway?

THISBE

'Tide life, 'tide death, I come without delay.

WALL

Thus have I, wall, my part discharged so;

And, being done, thus Wall away doth go.

[Exeunt WALL, PYRAMUS and THISBE.]

THESEUS

Now is the mural down between the two neighbours.

DEMETRIUS

No remedy, my lord, when walls are so wilful to hear without warning.

HIPPOLYTA

This is the silliest stuff that ever I heard.

THESEUS

The best in this kind are but shadows; and the worst are no worse, if imagination amend them.

HIPPOLYTA

It must be your imagination then, and not theirs.

THESEUS

If we imagine no worse of them than they of themselves, they may pass for excellent men. Here come two noble beasts in, a moon and a lion.

[Enter LION and MOONSHINE.]

LION

You, ladies, you, whose gentle hearts do fear

The smallest monstrous mouse that creeps on floor,

May now, perchance, both quake and tremble here,

When lion rough in wildest rage doth roar.

Then know that I, one Snug the joiner, am

A lion fell, nor else no lion's dam:

For, if I should as lion come in strife

Into this place, 'twere pity on my life.

THESEUS

A very gentle beast, and of a good conscience.

DEMETRIUS

The very best at a beast, my lord, that e'er I saw.

LYSANDER

This lion is a very fox for his valour.

THESEUS

True; and a goose for his discretion.

DEMETRIUS

Not so, my lord; for his valour cannot carry his discretion, and the fox carries the goose.

THESEUS

His discretion, I am sure, cannot carry his valour; for the goose carries not the fox. It is well; leave it to his discretion, and let us listen to the moon.

MOONSHINE

This lanthorn doth the hornèd moon present:

DEMETRIUS

He should have worn the horns on his head.

THESEUS

He is no crescent, and his horns are invisible within the circumference.

MOONSHINE

This lanthorn doth the hornèd moon present;

Myself the man i' the moon do seem to be.

THESEUS

This is the greatest error of all the rest: the man should be put into the lantern. How is it else the man i' the moon?

DEMETRIUS

He dares not come there for the candle: for, you see, it is already in snuff.

HIPPOLYTA

I am aweary of this moon: would he would change!

THESEUS

It appears, by his small light of discretion, that he is in the wane: but yet, in courtesy, in all reason, we must stay the time.

LYSANDER

Proceed, moon.

MOON

All that I have to say, is to tell you that the lantern is the moon; I, the man i' the moon; this thorn-bush, my thorn-bush; and this dog, my dog.

DEMETRIUS

Why, all these should be in the lantern; for all these are in the moon. But silence; here comes Thisbe.

[Enter THISBE.]

THISBE

This is old Ninny's tomb. Where is my love?

LION

Oh!

[The LION roars.—THISBE runs off.]

DEMETRIUS

Well roared, lion.

THESEUS

Well run, Thisbe.

HIPPOLYTA

Well shone, moon.—Truly, the moon shines with a good grace.

[The LION tears THISBE'S Mantle, and exit.]

THESEUS

Well moused, lion.

DEMETRIUS

And so comes Pyramus.

LYSANDER

And then the lion vanishes.

[Enter PYRAMUS.]

PYRAMUS

Sweet moon, I thank thee for thy sunny beams;

I thank thee, moon, for shining now so bright:

For, by thy gracious golden, glittering streams,

I trust to take of truest Thisby's sight.

But stay;—O spite!

But mark,—poor knight,

What dreadful dole is here!

Eyes, do you see?

How can it be?

O dainty duck! O dear!

Thy mantle good,

What! stained with blood?

Approach, ye furies fell!

O fates! come, come;

Cut thread and thrum;

Quail, rush, conclude, and quell!

THESEUS

This passion, and the death of a dear friend, would go near to make a man look sad.

HIPPOLYTA

Beshrew my heart, but I pity the man.

PYRAMUS

O wherefore, nature, didst thou lions frame?
Since lion vile hath here deflower'd my dear;
Which is—no, no—which was the fairest dame
That liv'd, that lov'd, that lik'd, that look'd with cheer.
Come, tears, confound;
Out, sword, and wound
The pap of Pyramus:
Ay, that left pap,
Where heart doth hop:—
Thus die I, thus, thus, thus.
Now am I dead,
Now am I fled;
My soul is in the sky:

Tongue, lose thy light!
Moon, take thy flight!

Now die, die, die, die, die.

[Dies. Exit MOONSHINE.]

DEMETRIUS

No die, but an ace, for him; for he is but one.

LYSANDER

Less than an ace, man; for he is dead; he is nothing.

THESEUS

With the help of a surgeon he might yet recover and prove an ass.

HIPPOLYTA

How chance moonshine is gone before Thisbe comes back and finds her lover?

THESEUS

She will find him by starlight.—Here she comes; and her passion ends the play.

[Enter THISBE.]

HIPPOLYTA

Methinks she should not use a long one for such a Pyramus: I hope she will be brief.

DEMETRIUS

A mote will turn the balance, which Pyramus, which Thisbe, is the better.

LYSANDER

She hath spied him already with those sweet eyes.

DEMETRIUS

And thus she moans, videlicet.—

THISBE

Asleep, my love?

What, dead, my dove?

O Pyramus, arise,

Speak, speak. Quite dumb?

Dead, dead? A tomb

Must cover thy sweet eyes.
These lily lips,
This cherry nose,
These yellow cowslip cheeks,
Are gone, are gone:
Lovers, make moan!

His eyes were green as leeks.
O Sisters Three,
Come, come to me,
With hands as pale as milk;
Lay them in gore,
Since you have shore
With shears his thread of silk.
Tongue, not a word:—
Come, trusty sword;
Come, blade, my breast imbrue;
And farewell, friends:—
Thus Thisbe ends;
Adieu, adieu, adieu.

[Dies.]

THESEUS

Moonshine and lion are left to bury the dead.

DEMETRIUS

Ay, and wall too.

BOTTOM

No, I assure you; the wall is down that parted their fathers. Will it please you to see the epilogue, or to hear a Bergomask dance between two of our company?

THESEUS

No epilogue, I pray you; for your play needs no excuse. Never excuse; for when the players are all dead there need none to be blamed. Marry, if he that writ it had played Pyramus, and hang'd himself in Thisbe's garter, it would have been a fine tragedy: and so it is, truly; and very notably discharged. But come, your Bergomask; let your epilogue alone.

[Here a dance of Clowns.]

The iron tongue of midnight hath told twelve:—

Lovers, to bed; 'tis almost fairy time.

I fear we shall out-sleep the coming morn, As much as we this night have overwatch'd.

This palpable-gross play hath well beguil'd

The heavy gait of night.—Sweet friends, to bed.—

A fortnight hold we this solemnity,

In nightly revels and new jollity.

[Exeunt.]

KING JOHN

This history play was written in 1596 and depicts the reign of the ‘*Magna Carta’* king, who ruled England from 1199 to 1216. The play has similarities to another medieval play, *The Troublesome Reign of King John* , and many modern scholars believe it was a source and model for Shakespeare. Holinshed's *Chronicles* , John Foxe's *Acts and Monuments* and Matthew Paris's *Historia Maior* are also likely sources of the play.

JOHANNES REX

King John

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DRAMATIS PERSONAE

KING JOHN

PRINCE HENRY, his son

ARTHUR, DUKE OF BRITAINE, son of Geffrey, late Duke of

Britaine, the elder brother of King John

EARL OF PEMBROKE

EARL OF ESSEX

EARL OF SALISBURY

LORD BIGOT

HUBERT DE BURGH

ROBERT FAULCONBRIDGE, son to Sir Robert Faulconbridge

PHILIP THE BASTARD, his half-brother

JAMES GURNEY, servant to Lady Faulconbridge

PETER OF POMFRET, a prophet

KING PHILIP OF FRANCE

LEWIS, the Dauphin

LYMOGES, Duke of Austria

CARDINAL PANDULPH, the Pope's legate

MELUN, a French lord

CHATILLON, ambassador from France to King John

QUEEN ELINOR, widow of King Henry II and mother to

King John

CONSTANCE, Mother to Arthur

BLANCH OF SPAIN, daughter to the King of Castile

and niece to King John

LADY FAULCONBRIDGE, widow of Sir Robert Faulconbridge

Lords, Citizens of Angiers, Sheriff, Heralds, Officers, Soldiers, Executioners, Messengers, Attendants

ACT I. SCENE 1

KING JOHN's palace

Enter KING JOHN, QUEEN ELINOR, PEMBROKE, ESSEX, SALISBURY, and others, with CHATILLON

KING JOHN. Now, say, Chatillon, what would France with us?

CHATILLON.

Thus, after greeting, speaks the King of France

In my behaviour to the majesty,

The borrowed majesty, of England here.

ELINOR.

A strange beginning- 'borrowed majesty'!

KING JOHN.

Silence, good mother; hear the embassy.

CHATILLON.

Philip of France, in right and true behalf

Of thy deceased brother Geffrey's son,

Arthur Plantagenet, lays most lawful claim

To this fair island and the territories,

To Ireland, Poictiers, Anjou, Touraine, Maine,

Desiring thee to lay aside the sword

Which sways usurpingly these several titles,

And put the same into young Arthur's hand,

Thy nephew and right royal sovereign.

KING JOHN.

What follows if we disallow of this?

CHATILLON.

The proud control of fierce and bloody war,

To enforce these rights so forcibly withheld.

KING JOHN.

Here have we war for war, and blood for blood,
Controlment for controlment-so answer France.

CHATILLON.
Then take my king's defiance from my mouth-
The farthest limit of my embassy.

KING JOHN.
Bear mine to him, and so depart in peace;
Be thou as lightning in the eyes of France;
For ere thou canst report I will be there,
The thunder of my cannon shall be heard.
So hence! Be thou the trumpet of our wrath
And sullen presage of your own decay.
An honourable conduct let him have-
Pembroke, look to 't. Farewell, Chatillon.
Exeunt CHATILLON and PEMBROKE

ELINOR.
What now, my son! Have I not ever said
How that ambitious Constance would not cease

Till she had kindled France and all the world

Upon the right and party of her son?

This might have been prevented and made whole

With very easy arguments of love,

Which now the manage of two kingdoms must

With fearful bloody issue arbitrate.

KING JOHN.

Our strong possession and our right for us!

ELINOR.

Your strong possession much more than your right,

Or else it must go wrong with you and me;

So much my conscience whispers in your ear,

Which none but heaven and you and I shall hear.

Enter a SHERIFF

ESSEX.

My liege, here is the strangest controversy

Come from the country to be judg'd by you

That e'er I heard. Shall I produce the men?

KING JOHN.

Let them approach. *Exit*

SHERIFF

Our abbeys and our priories shall pay

This expedition's charge.

Enter ROBERT FAULCONBRIDGE and PHILIP, his bastard brother

What men are you?

BASTARD.

Your faithful subject I, a gentleman

Born in Northamptonshire, and eldest son,

As I suppose, to Robert Faulconbridge-

A soldier by the honour-giving hand

Of Coeur-de-lion knighted in the field.

KING JOHN.

What art thou?

ROBERT.

The son and heir to that same Faulconbridge.

KING JOHN.

Is that the elder, and art thou the heir?

You came not of one mother then, it seems.

BASTARD.

Most certain of one mother, mighty king-

That is well known-and, as I think, one father;

But for the certain knowledge of that truth

I put you o'er to heaven and to my mother.

Of that I doubt, as all men's children may.

ELINOR.

Out on thee, rude man! Thou dost shame thy mother, And wound her honour with this diffidence.

BASTARD.

I, madam? No, I have no reason for it-

That is my brother's plea, and none of mine;

The which if he can prove, 'a pops me out

At least from fair five hundred pound a year.

Heaven guard my mother's honour and my land!

KING JOHN.

A good blunt fellow. Why, being younger born,

Doth he lay claim to thine inheritance?

BASTARD.

I know not why, except to get the land.

But once he slander'd me with bastardy;

But whe'er I be as true begot or no,

That still I lay upon my mother's head;

But that I am as well begot, my liege-

Fair fall the bones that took the pains for me!-

Compare our faces and be judge yourself.
If old Sir Robert did beget us both
And were our father, and this son like him-
O old Sir Robert, father, on my knee
I give heaven thanks I was not like to thee!

KING JOHN.
Why, what a madcap hath heaven lent us here!

ELINOR.
He hath a trick of Coeur-de-lion's face;
The accent of his tongue affecteth him.
Do you not read some tokens of my son
In the large composition of this man?

KING JOHN.
Mine eye hath well examined his parts
And finds them perfect Richard. Sirrah, speak,
What doth move you to claim your brother's land?

BASTARD.

Because he hath a half-face, like my father.

With half that face would he have all my land:
A half-fac'd groat five hundred pound a year!

ROBERT.
My gracious liege, when that my father liv'd,
Your brother did employ my father much-

BASTARD.

Well, sir, by this you cannot get my land:
Your tale must be how he employ'd my mother.

ROBERT.
And once dispatch'd him in an embassy
To Germany, there with the Emperor
To treat of high affairs touching that time.
Th' advantage of his absence took the King,
And in the meantime sojourn'd at my father's;
Where how he did prevail I shame to speak-

But truth is truth: large lengths of seas and shores
Between my father and my mother lay,
As I have heard my father speak himself,
When this same lusty gentleman was got.
Upon his death-bed he by will bequeath'd
His lands to me, and took it on his death
That this my mother's son was none of his;
And if he were, he came into the world
Full fourteen weeks before the course of time.
Then, good my liege, let me have what is mine,
My father's land, as was my father's will.

KING JOHN.
Sirrah, your brother is legitimate:
Your father's wife did after wedlock bear him,
And if she did play false, the fault was hers;
Which fault lies on the hazards of all husbands
That marry wives. Tell me, how if my brother,
Who, as you say, took pains to get this son,
Had of your father claim'd this son for his?
In sooth, good friend, your father might have kept

This calf, bred from his cow, from all the world;
In sooth, he might; then, if he were my brother's,
My brother might not claim him; nor your father,
Being none of his, refuse him. This concludes:
My mother's son did get your father's heir;
Your father's heir must have your father's land.

ROBERT.
Shall then my father's will be of no force
To dispossess that child which is not his?

BASTARD.
Of no more force to dispossess me, sir,
Than was his will to get me, as I think.

ELINOR.
Whether hadst thou rather be a Faulconbridge,
And like thy brother, to enjoy thy land,
Or the reputed son of Coeur-de-lion,
Lord of thy presence and no land beside?

BASTARD.

Madam, an if my brother had my shape
And I had his, Sir Robert's his, like him;
And if my legs were two such riding-rods,
My arms such eel-skins stuff'd, my face so thin
That in mine ear I durst not stick a rose
Lest men should say 'Look where three-farthings goes!'
And, to his shape, were heir to all this land-
Would I might never stir from off this place,
I would give it every foot to have this face!

I would not be Sir Nob in any case.

ELINOR.

I like thee well. Wilt thou forsake thy fortune,
Bequeath thy land to him and follow me?
I am a soldier and now bound to France.

BASTARD.

Brother, take you my land, I'll take my chance.

Your face hath got five hundred pound a year,

Yet sell your face for fivepence and 'tis dear.

Madam, I'll follow you unto the death.

ELINOR.

Nay, I would have you go before me thither.

BASTARD.

Our country manners give our betters way.

KING JOHN.

What is thy name?

BASTARD.

Philip, my liege, so is my name begun:

Philip, good old Sir Robert's wife's eldest son.

KING JOHN.

From henceforth bear his name whose form thou bearest:
Kneel thou down Philip, but rise more great-
Arise Sir Richard and Plantagenet.

BASTARD.

Brother by th' mother's side, give me your hand;
My father gave me honour, yours gave land.
Now blessed be the hour, by night or day,
When I was got, Sir Robert was away!

ELINOR.

The very spirit of Plantagenet!
I am thy grandam, Richard: call me so.

BASTARD.

Madam, by chance, but not by truth; what though?
Something about, a little from the right,
In at the window, or else o'er the hatch;
Who dares not stir by day must walk by night;

And have is have, however men do catch.

Near or far off, well won is still well shot;

And I am I, howe'er I was begot.

KING JOHN.

Go, Faulconbridge; now hast thou thy desire:

A landless knight makes thee a landed squire.

Come, madam, and come, Richard, we must speed

For France, for France, for it is more than need.

BASTARD.

Brother, adieu. Good fortune come to thee!

For thou wast got i' th' way of honesty.

Exeunt all but the

BASTARD

A foot of honour better than I was;

But many a many foot of land the worse.

Well, now can I make any Joan a lady.

'Good den, Sir Richard!'-'God-a-mercy, fellow!'

And if his name be George, I'll call him Peter;

For new-made honour doth forget men's names:

'Tis too respective and too sociable

For your conversion. Now your traveller,

He and his toothpick at my worship's mess-

And when my knightly stomach is suffic'd,

Why then I suck my teeth and catechize

My picked man of countries: 'My dear sir,'

Thus leaning on mine elbow I begin

'I shall beseech you'-That is question now;

And then comes answer like an ABC book:

'O sir,' says answer 'at your best command,

At your employment, at your service, sir!'

'No, sir,' says question 'I, sweet sir, at yours.'

And so, ere answer knows what question would,

Saving in dialogue of compliment,

And talking of the Alps and Apennines,

The Pyrenean and the river Po-

It draws toward supper in conclusion so.

But this is worshipful society,

And fits the mounting spirit like myself;
For he is but a bastard to the time
That doth not smack of observation-
And so am I, whether I smack or no;
And not alone in habit and device,
Exterior form, outward accoutrement,
But from the inward motion to deliver
Sweet, sweet, sweet poison for the age's tooth;
Which, though I will not practise to deceive,
Yet, to avoid deceit, I mean to learn;
For it shall strew the footsteps of my rising.
But who comes in such haste in riding-robes?
What woman-post is this? Hath she no husband
That will take pains to blow a horn before her?

Enter LADY FAULCONBRIDGE, and JAMES GURNEY

O me, 'tis my mother! How now, good lady!
What brings you here to court so hastily?

LADY FAULCONBRIDGE.

Where is that slave, thy brother?

Where is he

That holds in chase mine honour up and down?

BASTARD.

My brother Robert, old Sir Robert's son?

Colbrand the giant, that same mighty man?

Is it Sir Robert's son that you seek so?

LADY FAULCONBRIDGE.

Sir Robert's son! Ay, thou unreverend boy,

Sir Robert's son! Why scorn'st thou at Sir Robert?

He is Sir Robert's son, and so art thou.

BASTARD.

James Gurney, wilt thou give us leave awhile?

GURNEY.

Good leave, good Philip.

BASTARD.

Philip-Sparrow! James,

There's toys abroad-anon I'll tell thee more.

Exit

GURNEY

Madam, I was not old Sir Robert's son;

Sir Robert might have eat his part in me

Upon Good Friday, and ne'er broke his fast.

Sir Robert could do: well-marry, to confess-

Could he get me? Sir Robert could not do it:

We know his handiwork. Therefore, good mother,

To whom am I beholding for these limbs?

Sir Robert never holp to make this leg.

LADY FAULCONBRIDGE.

Hast thou conspired with thy brother too,

That for thine own gain shouldst defend mine honour?

What means this scorn, thou most untoward knave?

BASTARD.

Knight, knight, good mother, Basilisco-like.

What! I am dubb'd; I have it on my shoulder.

But, mother, I am not Sir Robert's son:

I have disclaim'd Sir Robert and my land;

Legitimation, name, and all is gone.

Then, good my mother, let me know my father-

Some proper man, I hope. Who was it, mother?

LADY FAULCONBRIDGE.

Hast thou denied thyself a Faulconbridge?

BASTARD.

As faithfully as I deny the devil.

LADY FAULCONBRIDGE.

King Richard Coeur-de-lion was thy father.
By long and vehement suit I was seduc'd
To make room for him in my husband's bed.
Heaven lay not my transgression to my charge!
Thou art the issue of my dear offence,
Which was so strongly urg'd past my defence.

BASTARD.
Now, by this light, were I to get again,
Madam, I would not wish a better father.
Some sins do bear their privilege on earth,
And so doth yours: your fault was not your folly;
Needs must you lay your heart at his dispose,
Subjected tribute to commanding love,
Against whose fury and unmatched force
The aweless lion could not wage the fight
Nor keep his princely heart from Richard's hand.
He that perforce robs lions of their hearts
May easily win a woman's. Ay, my mother,
With all my heart I thank thee for my father!

Who lives and dares but say thou didst not well

When I was got, I'll send his soul to hell.

Come, lady, I will show thee to my kin;

And they shall say when Richard me begot,

If thou hadst said him nay, it had been sin.

Who says it was, he lies; I say 'twas not.

Exeunt

ACT II.

SCENE 1

France. Before Angiers

Enter , on one side, AUSTRIA and forces; on the other, KING PHILIP

OF FRANCE,

LEWIS the Dauphin, CONSTANCE, ARTHUR, and forces

KING PHILIP.

Before Angiers well met, brave Austria.
Arthur, that great forerunner of thy blood,
Richard, that robb'd the lion of his heart
And fought the holy wars in Palestine,
By this brave duke came early to his grave;
And for amends to his posterity,
At our importance hither is he come
To spread his colours, boy, in thy behalf;
And to rebuke the usurpation
Of thy unnatural uncle, English John.

Embrace him, love him, give him welcome hither.

ARTHUR.

God shall forgive you Coeur-de-lion's death
The rather that you give his offspring life,
Shadowing their right under your wings of war.
I give you welcome with a powerless hand,
But with a heart full of unstained love;
Welcome before the gates of Angiers, Duke.

KING PHILIP.

A noble boy! Who would not do thee right?

AUSTRIA.

Upon thy cheek lay I this zealous kiss
As seal to this indenture of my love:
That to my home I will no more return
Till Angiers and the right thou hast in France,
Together with that pale, that white-fac'd shore,
Whose foot spurns back the ocean's roaring tides
And coops from other lands her islanders-
Even till that England, hedg'd in with the main,

That water-walled bulwark, still secure
And confident from foreign purposes-
Even till that utmost corner of the west
Salute thee for her king. Till then, fair boy,
Will I not think of home, but follow arms.

CONSTANCE.
O, take his mother's thanks, a widow's thanks,
Till your strong hand shall help to give him strength
To make a more requital to your love!

AUSTRIA.
The peace of heaven is theirs that lift their swords
In such a just and charitable war.

KING PHILIP.
Well then, to work! Our cannon shall be bent
Against the brows of this resisting town;
Call for our chiefest men of discipline,
To cull the plots of best advantages.
We'll lay before this town our royal bones,

Wade to the market-place in Frenchmen's blood,

But we will make it subject to this boy.

CONSTANCE.

Stay for an answer to your embassy,

Lest unadvis'd you stain your swords with blood;

My Lord Chatillon may from England bring

That right in peace which here we urge in war,

And then we shall repent each drop of blood

That hot rash haste so indirectly shed.

Enter CHATILLON

KING PHILIP.

A wonder, lady! Lo, upon thy wish,

Our messenger Chatillon is arriv'd.

What England says, say briefly, gentle lord;

We coldly pause for thee. Chatillon, speak.

CHATILLON.

Then turn your forces from this paltry siege

And stir them up against a mightier task.

England, impatient of your just demands,

Hath put himself in arms. The adverse winds,

Whose leisure I have stay'd, have given him time

To land his legions all as soon as I;

His marches are expedient to this town,

His forces strong, his soldiers confident.

With him along is come the mother-queen,

An Ate, stirring him to blood and strife;

With her the Lady Blanch of Spain;

With them a bastard of the king's deceas'd;

And all th' unsettled humours of the land-

Rash, inconsiderate, fiery voluntaries,

With ladies' faces and fierce dragons' spleens-

Have sold their fortunes at their native homes,

Bearing their birthrights proudly on their backs,

To make a hazard of new fortunes here.

In brief, a braver choice of dauntless spirits

Than now the English bottoms have waft o'er

Did never float upon the swelling tide

To do offence and scathe in Christendom. [Drum beats]

The interruption of their churlish drums

Cuts off more circumstance: they are at hand;

To parley or to fight, therefore prepare.

KING PHILIP.

How much unlook'd for is this expedition!

AUSTRIA.

By how much unexpected, by so much

We must awake endeavour for defence,

For courage mounteth with occasion.

Let them be welcome then; we are prepar'd.

Enter KING JOHN, ELINOR, BLANCH, the BASTARD,

PEMBROKE, and others

KING JOHN.

Peace be to France, if France in peace permit

Our just and lineal entrance to our own!

If not, bleed France, and peace ascend to heaven,

Whiles we, God's wrathful agent, do correct
Their proud contempt that beats His peace to heaven!

KING PHILIP.
Peace be to England, if that war return
From France to England, there to live in peace!
England we love, and for that England's sake
With burden of our armour here we sweat.
This toil of ours should be a work of thine;
But thou from loving England art so far
That thou hast under-wrought his lawful king,
Cut off the sequence of posterity,
Outfaced infant state, and done a rape
Upon the maiden virtue of the crown.
Look here upon thy brother Geffrey's face:
These eyes, these brows, were moulded out of his;
This little abstract doth contain that large
Which died in Geffrey, and the hand of time
Shall draw this brief into as huge a volume.
That Geffrey was thy elder brother born,
And this his son; England was Geffrey's right,

And this is Geffrey's. In the name of God,

How comes it then that thou art call'd a king,

When living blood doth in these temples beat

Which owe the crown that thou o'er-masterest?

KING JOHN.

From whom hast thou this great commission, France,

To draw my answer from thy articles?

KING PHILIP.

From that supernal judge that stirs good thoughts

In any breast of strong authority

To look into the blots and stains of right.

That judge hath made me guardian to this boy,

Under whose warrant I impeach thy wrong,

And by whose help I mean to chastise it.

KING JOHN.

Alack, thou dost usurp authority.

KING PHILIP.

Excuse it is to beat usurping down.

ELINOR.

Who is it thou dost call usurper, France?

CONSTANCE.

Let me make answer: thy usurping son.

ELINOR.

Out, insolent! Thy bastard shall be king,
That thou mayst be a queen and check the world!

CONSTANCE.

My bed was ever to thy son as true
As thine was to thy husband; and this boy
Liker in feature to his father Geffrey
Than thou and John in manners-being as like
As rain to water, or devil to his dam.
My boy a bastard! By my soul, I think

His father never was so true begot;

It cannot be, an if thou wert his mother.

ELINOR.

There's a good mother, boy, that blots thy father.

CONSTANCE.

There's a good grandam, boy, that would blot thee.

AUSTRIA.

Peace!

BASTARD.

Hear the crier.

AUSTRIA.

What the devil art thou?

BASTARD.

One that will play the devil, sir, with you,

An 'a may catch your hide and you alone.

You are the hare of whom the proverb goes,

Whose valour plucks dead lions by the beard;

I'll smoke your skin-coat an I catch you right;

Sirrah, look to 't; i' faith I will, i' faith.

BLANCH.

O, well did he become that lion's robe

That did disrobe the lion of that robe!

BASTARD.

It lies as sightly on the back of him

As great Alcides' shows upon an ass;

But, ass, I'll take that burden from your back,

Or lay on that shall make your shoulders crack.

AUSTRIA.

What cracker is this same that deafs our ears

With this abundance of superfluous breath?

King Philip, determine what we shall do straight.

KING PHILIP.

Women and fools, break off your conference.
King John, this is the very sum of all:
England and Ireland, Anjou, Touraine, Maine,
In right of Arthur, do I claim of thee;
Wilt thou resign them and lay down thy arms?

KING JOHN.
My life as soon. I do defy thee, France.
Arthur of Britaine, yield thee to my hand,
And out of my dear love I'll give thee more
Than e'er the coward hand of France can win.
Submit thee, boy.

ELINOR.

Come to thy grandam, child.

CONSTANCE.

Do, child, go to it grandam, child;
Give grandam kingdom, and it grandam will
Give it a plum, a cherry, and a fig.

There's a good grandam!

ARTHUR.

Good my mother, peace!

I would that I were low laid in my grave:
I am not worth this coil that's made for me.

ELINOR.

His mother shames him so, poor boy, he weeps.

CONSTANCE.

Now shame upon you, whe'er she does or no!
His grandam's wrongs, and not his mother's shames,
Draws those heaven-moving pearls from his poor eyes,

Which heaven shall take in nature of a fee;
Ay, with these crystal beads heaven shall be brib'd
To do him justice and revenge on you.

ELINOR.
Thou monstrous slanderer of heaven and earth!

CONSTANCE.
Thou monstrous injurer of heaven and earth,
Call not me slanderer! Thou and thine usurp
The dominations, royalties, and rights,
Of this oppressed boy; this is thy eldest son's son,
Infortunate in nothing but in thee.
Thy sins are visited in this poor child;
The canon of the law is laid on him,
Being but the second generation
Removed from thy sin-conceiving womb.

KING JOHN.
Bedlam, have done.

CONSTANCE.

I have but this to say-

That he is not only plagued for her sin,

But God hath made her sin and her the plague

On this removed issue, plagued for her

And with her plague; her sin his injury,

Her injury the beadle to her sin;

All punish'd in the person of this child,

And all for her-a plague upon her!

ELINOR.

Thou unadvised scold, I can produce

A will that bars the title of thy son.

CONSTANCE.

Ay, who doubts that? A will, a wicked will;

A woman's will; a cank'red grandam's will!

KING PHILIP.

Peace, lady! pause, or be more temperate.

It ill beseems this presence to cry aim
To these ill-tuned repetitions.
Some trumpet summon hither to the walls
These men of Angiers; let us hear them speak
Whose title they admit, Arthur's or John's.
Trumpet sounds. *Enter* citizens upon the walls
CITIZEN.

Who is it that hath warn'd us to the walls?

KING PHILIP.
'Tis France, for England.

KING JOHN.

England for itself.
You men of Angiers, and my loving subjects-

KING PHILIP.
You loving men of Angiers, Arthur's subjects,
Our trumpet call'd you to this gentle parle-

KING JOHN.

For our advantage; therefore hear us first.

These flags of France, that are advanced here

Before the eye and prospect of your town,

Have hither march'd to your endamagement;

The cannons have their bowels full of wrath,

And ready mounted are they to spit forth

Their iron indignation 'gainst your walls;

All preparation for a bloody siege

And merciless proceeding by these French

Confront your city's eyes, your winking gates;

And but for our approach those sleeping stones

That as a waist doth girdle you about

By the compulsion of their ordinance

By this time from their fixed beds of lime

Had been dishabited, and wide havoc made

For bloody power to rush upon your peace.

But on the sight of us your lawful king,

Who painfully with much expedient march

Have brought a countercheck before your gates,
To save unscratch'd your city's threat'ned cheeks-
Behold, the French amaz'd vouchsafe a parle;
And now, instead of bullets wrapp'd in fire,
To make a shaking fever in your walls,
They shoot but calm words folded up in smoke,
To make a faithless error in your ears;
Which trust accordingly, kind citizens,
And let us in-your King, whose labour'd spirits,
Forwearied in this action of swift speed,
Craves harbourage within your city walls.

KING PHILIP.

When I have said, make answer to us both.
Lo, in this right hand, whose protection
Is most divinely vow'd upon the right
Of him it holds, stands young Plantagenet,
Son to the elder brother of this man,
And king o'er him and all that he enjoys;
For this down-trodden equity we tread
In warlike march these greens before your town,

Being no further enemy to you

Than the constraint of hospitable zeal

In the relief of this oppressed child

Religiously provokes. Be pleased then

To pay that duty which you truly owe

To him that owes it, namely, this young prince;

And then our arms, like to a muzzled bear,

Save in aspect, hath all offence seal'd up;

Our cannons' malice vainly shall be spent

Against th' invulnerable clouds of heaven;

And with a blessed and unvex'd retire,

With unhack'd swords and helmets all unbruis'd,

We will bear home that lusty blood again

Which here we came to spout against your town,

And leave your children, wives, and you, in peace.

But if you fondly pass our proffer'd offer,

'Tis not the roundure of your old-fac'd walls

Can hide you from our messengers of war,

Though all these English and their discipline

Were harbour'd in their rude circumference.

Then tell us, shall your city call us lord

In that behalf which we have challeng'd it;
Or shall we give the signal to our rage,
And stalk in blood to our possession?

CITIZEN.
In brief: we are the King of England's subjects;
For him, and in his right, we hold this town.

KING JOHN.
Acknowledge then the King, and let me in.

CITIZEN.
That can we not; but he that proves the King,
To him will we prove loyal. Till that time
Have we ramm'd up our gates against the world.

KING JOHN.
Doth not the crown of England prove the King?

And if not that, I bring you witnesses:
Twice fifteen thousand hearts of England's breed-

BASTARD.

Bastards and else.

KING JOHN.

To verify our title with their lives.

KING PHILIP.

As many and as well-born bloods as those-

BASTARD.

Some bastards too.

KING PHILIP.

Stand in his face to contradict his claim.

CITIZEN.

Till you compound whose right is worthiest,

We for the worthiest hold the right from both.

KING JOHN.

Then God forgive the sin of all those souls

That to their everlasting residence,

Before the dew of evening fall shall fleet

In dreadful trial of our kingdom's king!

KING PHILIP.

Amen, Amen! Mount, chevaliers; to arms!

BASTARD.

Saint George, that swing'd the dragon, and e'er since

Sits on's horse back at mine hostess' door,

Teach us some fence! *[To AUSTRIA]* Sirrah, were I at home,

At your den, sirrah, with your lioness,

I would set an ox-head to your lion's hide,

And make a monster of you.

AUSTRIA.

Peace! no more.

BASTARD.

O, tremble, for you hear the lion roar!

KING JOHN.

Up higher to the plain, where we'll set forth

In best appointment all our regiments.

BASTARD.

Speed then to take advantage of the field.

KING PHILIP.

It shall be so; and at the other hill

Command the rest to stand. God and our right!

Exeunt

Here, after excursions, enter the HERALD OF FRANCE,

with trumpets, to the gates

FRENCH HERALD.

You men of Angiers, open wide your gates

And let young Arthur, Duke of Britaine, in,

Who by the hand of France this day hath made
Much work for tears in many an English mother,
Whose sons lie scattered on the bleeding ground;
Many a widow's husband grovelling lies,
Coldly embracing the discoloured earth;
And victory with little loss doth play
Upon the dancing banners of the French,
Who are at hand, triumphantly displayed,
To enter conquerors, and to proclaim
Arthur of Britaine England's King and yours.

Enter ENGLISH HERALD, with trumpet

ENGLISH HERALD.

Rejoice, you men of Angiers, ring your bells:
King John, your king and England's, doth approach,
Commander of this hot malicious day.
Their armours that march'd hence so silver-bright
Hither return all gilt with Frenchmen's blood.
There stuck no plume in any English crest
That is removed by a staff of France;

Our colours do return in those same hands
That did display them when we first march'd forth;
And like a jolly troop of huntsmen come
Our lusty English, all with purpled hands,
Dy'd in the dying slaughter of their foes.
Open your gates and give the victors way.

CITIZEN.
Heralds, from off our tow'rs we might behold
From first to last the onset and retire
Of both your armies, whose equality
By our best eyes cannot be censured.
Blood hath bought blood, and blows have answer'd blows;
Strength match'd with strength, and power confronted power;
Both are alike, and both alike we like.
One must prove greatest. While they weigh so even,
We hold our town for neither, yet for both.

Enter the two KINGS, with their powers, at several doors

KING JOHN.

France, hast thou yet more blood to cast away?

Say, shall the current of our right run on?
Whose passage, vex'd with thy impediment,
Shall leave his native channel and o'erswell
With course disturb'd even thy confining shores,
Unless thou let his silver water keep
A peaceful progress to the ocean.

KING PHILIP.
England, thou hast not sav'd one drop of blood
In this hot trial more than we of France;
Rather, lost more. And by this hand I swear,
That sways the earth this climate overlooks,
Before we will lay down our just-borne arms,
We'll put thee down, 'gainst whom these arms we bear,
Or add a royal number to the dead,
Gracing the scroll that tells of this war's loss
With slaughter coupled to the name of kings.

BASTARD.

Ha, majesty! how high thy glory tow'rs

When the rich blood of kings is set on fire!

O, now doth Death line his dead chaps with steel;

The swords of soldiers are his teeth, his fangs;

And now he feasts, mousing the flesh of men,

In undetermin'd differences of kings.

Why stand these royal fronts amazed thus?

Cry 'havoc!' kings; back to the stained field,

You equal potents, fiery kindled spirits!

Then let confusion of one part confirm

The other's peace. Till then, blows, blood, and death!

KING JOHN.

Whose party do the townsmen yet admit?

KING PHILIP.

Speak, citizens, for England; who's your king?

CITIZEN.

The King of England, when we know the King.

KING PHILIP.

Know him in us that here hold up his right.

KING JOHN.

In us that are our own great deputy

And bear possession of our person here,

Lord of our presence, Angiers, and of you.

CITIZEN.

A greater pow'r than we denies all this;

And till it be undoubted, we do lock

Our former scruple in our strong-barr'd gates;

King'd of our fears, until our fears, resolv'd,

Be by some certain king purg'd and depos'd.

BASTARD.

By heaven, these scroyles of Angiers flout you, kings,

And stand securely on their battlements

As in a theatre, whence they gape and point

At your industrious scenes and acts of death.

Your royal presences be rul'd by me:
Do like the mutines of Jerusalem,
Be friends awhile, and both conjointly bend
Your sharpest deeds of malice on this town.
By east and west let France and England mount
Their battering cannon, charged to the mouths,
Till their soul-fearing clamours have brawl'd down
The flinty ribs of this contemptuous city.
I'd play incessantly upon these jades,
Even till unfenced desolation
Leave them as naked as the vulgar air.
That done, dissever your united strengths
And part your mingled colours once again,
Turn face to face and bloody point to point;
Then in a moment Fortune shall cull forth
Out of one side her happy minion,
To whom in favour she shall give the day,
And kiss him with a glorious victory.

How like you this wild counsel, mighty states?
Smacks it not something of the policy?

KING JOHN.
Now, by the sky that hangs above our heads,
I like it well. France, shall we knit our pow'rs
And lay this Angiers even with the ground;
Then after fight who shall be king of it?

BASTARD.
An if thou hast the mettle of a king,
Being wrong'd as we are by this peevish town,
Turn thou the mouth of thy artillery,
As we will ours, against these saucy walls;
And when that we have dash'd them to the ground,
Why then defy each other, and pell-mell
Make work upon ourselves, for heaven or hell.

KING PHILIP.
Let it be so. Say, where will you assault?

KING JOHN.

We from the west will send destruction

Into this city's bosom.

AUSTRIA.

I from the north.

KING PHILIP.

Our thunder from the south

Shall rain their drift of bullets on this town.

BASTARD.

[Aside] O prudent discipline! From north to south,

Austria and France shoot in each other's mouth.

I'll stir them to it.-Come, away, away!

CITIZEN.

Hear us, great kings: vouchsafe awhile to stay,

And I shall show you peace and fair-fac'd league;

Win you this city without stroke or wound;
Rescue those breathing lives to die in beds
That here come sacrifices for the field.

Persever not, but hear me, mighty kings.

KING JOHN.
Speak on with favour; we are bent to hear.

CITIZEN.
That daughter there of Spain, the Lady Blanch,
Is niece to England; look upon the years
Of Lewis the Dauphin and that lovely maid.
If lusty love should go in quest of beauty,
Where should he find it fairer than in Blanch?
If zealous love should go in search of virtue,
Where should he find it purer than in Blanch?
If love ambitious sought a match of birth,
Whose veins bound richer blood than Lady Blanch?
Such as she is, in beauty, virtue, birth,
Is the young Dauphin every way complete-

If not complete of, say he is not she;

And she again wants nothing, to name want,

If want it be not that she is not he.

He is the half part of a blessed man,

Left to be finished by such as she;

And she a fair divided excellence,

Whose fulness of perfection lies in him.

O, two such silver currents, when they join,

Do glorify the banks that bound them in;

And two such shores to two such streams made one,

Two such controlling bounds, shall you be, Kings,

To these two princes, if you marry them.

This union shall do more than battery can

To our fast-closed gates; for at this match

With swifter spleen than powder can enforce,

The mouth of passage shall we fling wide ope

And give you entrance; but without this match,

The sea enraged is not half so deaf,

Lions more confident, mountains and rocks

More free from motion-no, not Death himself

In mortal fury half so peremptory

As we to keep this city.

BASTARD.

Here's a stay

That shakes the rotten carcass of old Death

Out of his rags! Here's a large mouth, indeed,

That spits forth death and mountains, rocks and seas;

Talks as familiarly of roaring lions

As maids of thirteen do of puppy-dogs!

What cannoneer begot this lusty blood?

He speaks plain cannon-fire, and smoke and bounce;

He gives the bastinado with his tongue;

Our ears are cudgell'd; not a word of his

But buffets better than a fist of France.

Zounds! I was never so bethump'd with words

Since I first call'd my brother's father dad.

ELINOR.

Son, list to this conjunction, make this match;

Give with our niece a dowry large enough;

For by this knot thou shalt so surely tie

Thy now unsur'd assurance to the crown
That yon green boy shall have no sun to ripe
The bloom that promiseth a mighty fruit.
I see a yielding in the looks of France;
Mark how they whisper. Urge them while their souls
Are capable of this ambition,
Lest zeal, now melted by the windy breath
Of soft petitions, pity, and remorse,
Cool and congeal again to what it was.

CITIZEN.
Why answer not the double majesties
This friendly treaty of our threat'ned town?

KING PHILIP.
Speak England first, that hath been forward first
To speak unto this city: what say you?

KING JOHN.
If that the Dauphin there, thy princely son,
Can in this book of beauty read 'I love,'

Her dowry shall weigh equal with a queen;

For Anjou, and fair Touraine, Maine, Poictiers,

And all that we upon this side the sea-

Except this city now by us besieg'd-

Find liable to our crown and dignity,

Shall gild her bridal bed, and make her rich

In titles, honours, and promotions,

As she in beauty, education, blood,

Holds hand with any princess of the world.

KING PHILIP.

What say'st thou, boy? Look in the lady's face.

LEWIS.

I do, my lord, and in her eye I find

A wonder, or a wondrous miracle,

The shadow of myself form'd in her eye;

Which, being but the shadow of your son,

Becomes a sun, and makes your son a shadow.

I do protest I never lov'd myself

Till now infixed I beheld myself

Drawn in the flattering table of her eye.

[Whispers with
BLANCH]

BASTARD.
[Aside] Drawn in the flattering table of her eye,
Hang'd in the frowning wrinkle of her brow,
And quarter'd in her heart-he doth espy
Himself love's traitor. This is pity now,
That hang'd and drawn and quarter'd there should be
In such a love so vile a lout as he.

BLANCH.

My uncle's will in this respect is mine.
If he see aught in you that makes him like,
That anything he sees which moves his liking
I can with ease translate it to my will;
Or if you will, to speak more properly,
I will enforce it eas'ly to my love.

Further I will not flatter you, my lord,

That all I see in you is worthy love,

Than this: that nothing do I see in you-

Though churlish thoughts themselves should be your judge-

That I can find should merit any hate.

KING JOHN.

What say these young ones? What say you, my niece?

BLANCH.

That she is bound in honour still to do

What you in wisdom still vouchsafe to say.

KING JOHN.

Speak then, Prince Dauphin; can you love this lady?

LEWIS.

Nay, ask me if I can refrain from love;

For I do love her most unfeignedly.

KING JOHN.

Then do I give Volquessen, Touraine, Maine,

Poictiers, and Anjou, these five provinces,

With her to thee; and this addition more,

Full thirty thousand marks of English coin.

Philip of France, if thou be pleas'd withal,

Command thy son and daughter to join hands.

KING PHILIP.

It likes us well; young princes, close your hands.

AUSTRIA.

And your lips too; for I am well assur'd

That I did so when I was first assur'd.

KING PHILIP.

Now, citizens of Angiers, ope your gates,

Let in that amity which you have made;

For at Saint Mary's chapel presently

The rites of marriage shall be solemniz'd.

Is not the Lady Constance in this troop?

I know she is not; for this match made up

Her presence would have interrupted much.

Where is she and her son? Tell me, who knows.

LEWIS.

She is sad and passionate at your Highness' tent.

KING PHILIP.

And, by my faith, this league that we have made

Will give her sadness very little cure.

Brother of England, how may we content

This widow lady? In her right we came;

Which we, God knows, have turn'd another way,

To our own vantage.

KING JOHN.

We will heal up all,

For we'll create young Arthur Duke of Britaine,

And Earl of Richmond; and this rich fair town

We make him lord of. Call the Lady Constance;

Some speedy messenger bid her repair

To our solemnity. I trust we shall,

If not fill up the measure of her will,

Yet in some measure satisfy her so

That we shall stop her exclamation.

Go we as well as haste will suffer us

To this unlook'd-for, unprepared pomp.

Exeunt all but the

BASTARD

BASTARD.

Mad world! mad kings! mad composition!

John, to stop Arthur's tide in the whole,

Hath willingly departed with a part;

And France, whose armour conscience buckled on,

Whom zeal and charity brought to the field

As God's own soldier, rounded in the ear

With that same purpose-changer, that sly devil,

That broker that still breaks the pate of faith,

That daily break-vow, he that wins of all,
Of kings, of beggars, old men, young men, maids,
Who having no external thing to lose
But the word 'maid,' cheats the poor maid of that;
That smooth-fac'd gentleman, tickling commodity,
Commodity, the bias of the world-
The world, who of itself is peised well,
Made to run even upon even ground,
Till this advantage, this vile-drawing bias,
This sway of motion, this commodity,
Makes it take head from all indifferency,
From all direction, purpose, course, intent-
And this same bias, this commodity,
This bawd, this broker, this all-changing word,
Clapp'd on the outward eye of fickle France,
Hath drawn him from his own determin'd aid,
From a resolv'd and honourable war,
To a most base and vile-concluded peace.

And why rail I on this commodity?
But for because he hath not woo'd me yet;

Not that I have the power to clutch my hand

When his fair angels would salute my palm,

But for my hand, as unattempted yet,

Like a poor beggar raileth on the rich.

Well, whiles I am a beggar, I will rail

And say there is no sin but to be rich;

And being rich, my virtue then shall be

To say there is no vice but beggary.

Since kings break faith upon commodity,

Gain, be my lord, for I will worship thee.

Exit

ACT III.
SCENE 1.

France. The FRENCH KING'S camp

Enter CONSTANCE, ARTHUR, and SALISBURY

CONSTANCE.

Gone to be married! Gone to swear a peace!

False blood to false blood join'd! Gone to be friends!
Shall Lewis have Blanch, and Blanch those provinces?
It is not so; thou hast misspoke, misheard;
Be well advis'd, tell o'er thy tale again.
It cannot be; thou dost but say 'tis so;
I trust I may not trust thee, for thy word
Is but the vain breath of a common man:
Believe me I do not believe thee, man;
I have a king's oath to the contrary.
Thou shalt be punish'd for thus frighting me,
For I am sick and capable of fears,
Oppress'd with wrongs, and therefore full of fears;
A widow, husbandless, subject to fears;
A woman, naturally born to fears;
And though thou now confess thou didst but jest,
With my vex'd spirits I cannot take a truce,
But they will quake and tremble all this day.
What dost thou mean by shaking of thy head?

Why dost thou look so sadly on my son?

What means that hand upon that breast of thine?
Why holds thine eye that lamentable rheum,
Like a proud river peering o'er his bounds?

Be these sad signs confirmers of thy words?
Then speak again-not all thy former tale,
But this one word, whether thy tale be true.

SALISBURY.
As true as I believe you think them false
That give you cause to prove my saying true.

CONSTANCE.
O, if thou teach me to believe this sorrow,
Teach thou this sorrow how to make me die;
And let belief and life encounter so
As doth the fury of two desperate men
Which in the very meeting fall and die!

Lewis marry Blanch! O boy, then where art thou?
France friend with England; what becomes of me?

Fellow, be gone: I cannot brook thy sight;

This news hath made thee a most ugly man.

SALISBURY.

What other harm have I, good lady, done

But spoke the harm that is by others done?

CONSTANCE.

Which harm within itself so heinous is

As it makes harmful all that speak of it.

ARTHUR.

I do beseech you, madam, be content.

CONSTANCE.

If thou that bid'st me be content wert grim,

Ugly, and sland'rous to thy mother's womb,

Full of unpleasing blots and sightless stains,

Lame, foolish, crooked, swart, prodigious,

Patch'd with foul moles and eye-offending marks,

I would not care, I then would be content;
For then I should not love thee; no, nor thou
Become thy great birth, nor deserve a crown.
But thou art fair, and at thy birth, dear boy,
Nature and Fortune join'd to make thee great:
Of Nature's gifts thou mayst with lilies boast,
And with the half-blown rose; but Fortune, O!
She is corrupted, chang'd, and won from thee;
Sh' adulterates hourly with thine uncle John,
And with her golden hand hath pluck'd on France
To tread down fair respect of sovereignty,
And made his majesty the bawd to theirs.
France is a bawd to Fortune and King John-
That strumpet Fortune, that usurping John!

Tell me, thou fellow, is not France forsworn?
Envenom him with words, or get thee gone
And leave those woes alone which I alone
Am bound to under-bear.

SALISBURY.

Pardon me, madam,
I may not go without you to the kings.

CONSTANCE.
Thou mayst, thou shalt; I will not go with thee;
I will instruct my sorrows to be proud,
For grief is proud, and makes his owner stoop.
To me, and to the state of my great grief,
Let kings assemble; for my grief's so great
That no supporter but the huge firm earth
Can hold it up. [Seats herself on the
ground]
Here I and sorrows sit;
Here is my throne, bid kings come bow to it.

Enter KING JOHN, KING PHILIP, LEWIS, BLANCH,

ELINOR, the BASTARD, AUSTRIA, and attendants
KING PHILIP.
'Tis true, fair daughter, and this blessed day
Ever in France shall be kept festival.

To solemnize this day the glorious sun

Stays in his course and plays the alchemist,

Turning with splendour of his precious eye

The meagre cloddy earth to glittering gold.

The yearly course that brings this day about

Shall never see it but a holiday.

CONSTANCE.

[Rising] A wicked day, and not a holy day!

What hath this day deserv'd? what hath it done

That it in golden letters should be set

Among the high tides in the calendar?

Nay, rather turn this day out of the week,

This day of shame, oppression, perjury;

Or, if it must stand still, let wives with child

Pray that their burdens may not fall this day,

Lest that their hopes prodigiously be cross'd;

But on this day let seamen fear no wreck;

No bargains break that are not this day made;

This day, all things begun come to ill end,

Yea, faith itself to hollow falsehood change!

KING PHILIP.

By heaven, lady, you shall have no cause
To curse the fair proceedings of this day.
Have I not pawn'd to you my majesty?

CONSTANCE.

You have beguil'd me with a counterfeit
Resembling majesty, which, being touch'd and tried,
Proves valueless; you are forsworn, forsworn;
You came in arms to spill mine enemies' blood,
But now in arms you strengthen it with yours.
The grappling vigour and rough frown of war
Is cold in amity and painted peace,
And our oppression hath made up this league.

Arm, arm, you heavens, against these perjur'd kings!
A widow cries: Be husband to me, heavens!
Let not the hours of this ungodly day
Wear out the day in peace; but, ere sunset,
Set armed discord 'twixt these perjur'd kings!

Hear me, O, hear me!

AUSTRIA.

Lady Constance, peace!

CONSTANCE.
War! war! no peace! Peace is to me a war.
O Lymoges! O Austria! thou dost shame
That bloody spoil. Thou slave, thou wretch, thou coward!

Thou little valiant, great in villainy!
Thou ever strong upon the stronger side!
Thou Fortune's champion that dost never fight
But when her humorous ladyship is by
To teach thee safety! Thou art perjur'd too,
And sooth'st up greatness. What a fool art thou,
A ramping fool, to brag and stamp and swear
Upon my party! Thou cold-blooded slave,
Hast thou not spoke like thunder on my side,
Been sworn my soldier, bidding me depend

Upon thy stars, thy fortune, and thy strength,

And dost thou now fall over to my foes?

Thou wear a lion's hide! Doff it for shame,

And hang a calf's-skin on those recreant limbs.

AUSTRIA.

O that a man should speak those words to me!

BASTARD.

And hang a calf's-skin on those recreant limbs.

AUSTRIA.

Thou dar'st not say so, villain, for thy life.

BASTARD.

And hang a calf's-skin on those recreant limbs.

KING JOHN.

We like not this: thou dost forget thyself.

Enter PANDULPH

KING PHILIP.

Here comes the holy legate of the Pope.

PANDULPH.

Hail, you anointed deputies of heaven!

To thee, King John, my holy errand is.

I Pandulph, of fair Milan cardinal,

And from Pope Innocent the legate here,

Do in his name religiously demand

Why thou against the Church, our holy mother,

So wilfully dost spurn; and force perforce

Keep Stephen Langton, chosen Archbishop

Of Canterbury, from that holy see?

This, in our foresaid holy father's name,

Pope Innocent, I do demand of thee.

KING JOHN.

What earthly name to interrogatories

Can task the free breath of a sacred king?

Thou canst not, Cardinal, devise a name

So slight, unworthy, and ridiculous,

To charge me to an answer, as the Pope.

Tell him this tale, and from the mouth of England

Add thus much more, that no Italian priest

Shall tithe or toll in our dominions;

But as we under heaven are supreme head,

So, under Him that great supremacy,

Where we do reign we will alone uphold,

Without th' assistance of a mortal hand.

So tell the Pope, all reverence set apart

To him and his usurp'd authority.

KING PHILIP.

Brother of England, you blaspheme in this.

KING JOHN.

Though you and all the kings of Christendom

Are led so grossly by this meddling priest,

Dreading the curse that money may buy out,

And by the merit of vile gold, dross, dust,

Purchase corrupted pardon of a man,

Who in that sale sells pardon from himself-

Though you and all the rest, so grossly led,

This juggling witchcraft with revenue cherish;

Yet I alone, alone do me oppose

Against the Pope, and count his friends my foes.

PANDULPH.

Then by the lawful power that I have

Thou shalt stand curs'd and excommunicate;

And blessed shall he be that doth revolt

From his allegiance to an heretic;

And meritorious shall that hand be call'd,

Canonized, and worshipp'd as a saint,

That takes away by any secret course

Thy hateful life.

CONSTANCE.

O, lawful let it be
That I have room with Rome to curse awhile!

Good father Cardinal, cry thou 'amen'
To my keen curses; for without my wrong
There is no tongue hath power to curse him right.

PANDULPH.
There's law and warrant, lady, for my curse.

CONSTANCE.
And for mine too; when law can do no right,
Let it be lawful that law bar no wrong;
Law cannot give my child his kingdom here,
For he that holds his kingdom holds the law;
Therefore, since law itself is perfect wrong,
How can the law forbid my tongue to curse?

PANDULPH.
Philip of France, on peril of a curse,
Let go the hand of that arch-heretic,

And raise the power of France upon his head,

Unless he do submit himself to Rome.

ELINOR.

Look'st thou pale, France? Do not let go thy hand.

CONSTANCE.

Look to that, devil, lest that France repent

And by disjoining hands hell lose a soul.

AUSTRIA.

King Philip, listen to the Cardinal.

BASTARD.

And hang a calf's-skin on his recreant limbs.

AUSTRIA.

Well, ruffian, I must pocket up these wrongs,

Because-

BASTARD.

Your breeches best may carry them.

KING JOHN.

Philip, what say'st thou to the Cardinal?

CONSTANCE.

What should he say, but as the Cardinal?

LEWIS.

Bethink you, father; for the difference
Is purchase of a heavy curse from Rome
Or the light loss of England for a friend.
Forgo the easier.

BLANCH.

That's the curse of Rome.

CONSTANCE.

O Lewis, stand fast! The devil tempts thee here
In likeness of a new untrimmed bride.

BLANCH.

The Lady Constance speaks not from her faith,
But from her need.

CONSTANCE.

O, if thou grant my need,
Which only lives but by the death of faith,
That need must needs infer this principle-
That faith would live again by death of need.
O then, tread down my need, and faith mounts up:

Keep my need up, and faith is trodden down!

KING JOHN.

The King is mov'd, and answers not to this.

CONSTANCE.

O be remov'd from him, and answer well!

AUSTRIA.

Do so, King Philip; hang no more in doubt.

BASTARD.

Hang nothing but a calf's-skin, most sweet lout.

KING PHILIP.

I am perplex'd and know not what to say.

PANDULPH.

What canst thou say but will perplex thee more,
If thou stand excommunicate and curs'd?

KING PHILIP.

Good reverend father, make my person yours,
And tell me how you would bestow yourself.
This royal hand and mine are newly knit,

And the conjunction of our inward souls
Married in league, coupled and link'd together
With all religious strength of sacred vows;
The latest breath that gave the sound of words
Was deep-sworn faith, peace, amity, true love,
Between our kingdoms and our royal selves;
And even before this truce, but new before,
No longer than we well could wash our hands,
To clap this royal bargain up of peace,
Heaven knows, they were besmear'd and overstain'd
With slaughter's pencil, where revenge did paint
The fearful difference of incensed kings.
And shall these hands, so lately purg'd of blood,
So newly join'd in love, so strong in both,
Unyoke this seizure and this kind regreet?
Play fast and loose with faith? so jest with heaven,
Make such unconstant children of ourselves,
As now again to snatch our palm from palm,
Unswear faith sworn, and on the marriage-bed
Of smiling peace to march a bloody host,
And make a riot on the gentle brow

Of true sincerity? O, holy sir,

My reverend father, let it not be so!

Out of your grace, devise, ordain, impose,

Some gentle order; and then we shall be blest

To do your pleasure, and continue friends.

PANDULPH.

All form is formless, order orderless,

Save what is opposite to England's love.

Therefore, to arms! be champion of our church,

Or let the church, our mother, breathe her curse-

A mother's curse-on her revolting son.

France, thou mayst hold a serpent by the tongue,

A chafed lion by the mortal paw,

A fasting tiger safer by the tooth,

Than keep in peace that hand which thou dost hold.

KING PHILIP.

I may disjoin my hand, but not my faith.

PANDULPH.

So mak'st thou faith an enemy to faith;

And like a civil war set'st oath to oath.

Thy tongue against thy tongue. O, let thy vow

First made to heaven, first be to heaven perform'd,

That is, to be the champion of our Church.

What since thou swor'st is sworn against thyself

And may not be performed by thyself,

For that which thou hast sworn to do amiss

Is not amiss when it is truly done;

And being not done, where doing tends to ill,

The truth is then most done not doing it;

The better act of purposes mistook

Is to mistake again; though indirect,

Yet indirection thereby grows direct,

And falsehood cures, as fire cools fire

Within the scorched veins of one new-burn'd.

It is religion that doth make vows kept;

But thou hast sworn against religion

By what thou swear'st against the thing thou swear'st,

And mak'st an oath the surety for thy truth

Against an oath; the truth thou art unsure

To swear swears only not to be forsworn;

Else what a mockery should it be to swear!

But thou dost swear only to be forsworn;

And most forsworn to keep what thou dost swear.

Therefore thy later vows against thy first

Is in thyself rebellion to thyself;

And better conquest never canst thou make

Than arm thy constant and thy nobler parts

Against these giddy loose suggestions;

Upon which better part our pray'rs come in,

If thou vouchsafe them. But if not, then know

The peril of our curses fight on thee

So heavy as thou shalt not shake them off,

But in despair die under the black weight.

AUSTRIA.

Rebellion, flat rebellion!

BASTARD.

Will't not be?

Will not a calf's-skin stop that mouth of thine?

LEWIS.
Father, to arms!

BLANCH.

Upon thy wedding-day?
Against the blood that thou hast married?

What, shall our feast be kept with slaughtered men?
Shall braying trumpets and loud churlish drums,
Clamours of hell, be measures to our pomp?
O husband, hear me! ay, alack, how new
Is 'husband' in my mouth! even for that name,
Which till this time my tongue did ne'er pronounce,
Upon my knee I beg, go not to arms
Against mine uncle.

CONSTANCE.

O, upon my knee,

Made hard with kneeling, I do pray to thee,

Thou virtuous Dauphin, alter not the doom

Forethought by heaven!

BLANCH.

Now shall I see thy love. What motive may

Be stronger with thee than the name of wife?

CONSTANCE.

That which upholdeth him that thee upholds,

His honour. O, thine honour, Lewis, thine honour!

LEWIS.

I muse your Majesty doth seem so cold,

When such profound respects do pull you on.

PANDULPH.

I will denounce a curse upon his head.

KING PHILIP.

Thou shalt not need. England, I will fall from thee.

CONSTANCE.

O fair return of banish'd majesty!

ELINOR.

O foul revolt of French inconstancy!

KING JOHN.

France, thou shalt rue this hour within this hour.

BASTARD.

Old Time the clock-setter, that bald sexton Time,
Is it as he will? Well then, France shall rue.

BLANCH.

The sun's o'ercast with blood. Fair day, adieu!

Which is the side that I must go withal?

I am with both: each army hath a hand;

And in their rage, I having hold of both,

They whirl asunder and dismember me.

Husband, I cannot pray that thou mayst win;

Uncle, I needs must pray that thou mayst lose;

Father, I may not wish the fortune thine;

Grandam, I will not wish thy wishes thrive.

Whoever wins, on that side shall I lose:

Assured loss before the match be play'd.

LEWIS.

Lady, with me, with me thy fortune lies.

BLANCH.

There where my fortune lives, there my life dies.

KING JOHN.

Cousin, go draw our puissance together.

Exit

BASTARD

France, I am burn'd up with inflaming wrath,

A rage whose heat hath this condition

That nothing can allay, nothing but blood,

The blood, and dearest-valu'd blood, of France.

KING PHILIP.

Thy rage shall burn thee up, and thou shalt turn

To ashes, ere our blood shall quench that fire.

Look to thyself, thou art in jeopardy.

KING JOHN.

No more than he that threats. To arms let's hie!

Exeunt severally

SCENE 2.

France. Plains near Angiers

Alarums, excursions. *Enter* the BASTARD with AUSTRIA'S head

BASTARD.

Now, by my life, this day grows wondrous hot;

Some airy devil hovers in the sky

And pours down mischief. Austria's head lie there,

While Philip breathes.

Enter KING JOHN, ARTHUR, and HUBERT

KING JOHN.

Hubert, keep this boy. Philip, make up:

My mother is assailed in our tent,

And ta'en, I fear.

BASTARD.

My lord, I rescued her;

Her Highness is in safety, fear you not;

But on, my liege, for very little pains

Will bring this labour to an happy end.

Exeunt

SCENE 3.

France. Plains near Angiers

Alarums, excursions, retreat. *Enter* KING JOHN, ELINOR, ARTHUR, the BASTARD, HUBERT, and LORDS

KING JOHN.

[To ELINOR] So shall it be; your Grace shall stay behind,

So strongly guarded. *[To ARTHUR]* Cousin, look not sad;

Thy grandam loves thee, and thy uncle will

As dear be to thee as thy father was.

ARTHUR.

O, this will make my mother die with grief!

KING JOHN.

[To the BASTARD] Cousin, away for England! haste before,

And, ere our coming, see thou shake the bags

Of hoarding abbots; imprisoned angels

Set at liberty; the fat ribs of peace

Must by the hungry now be fed upon.

Use our commission in his utmost force.

BASTARD.

Bell, book, and candle, shall not drive me back,

When gold and silver becks me to come on.

I leave your Highness. Grandam, I will pray,

If ever I remember to be holy,

For your fair safety. So, I kiss your hand.

ELINOR.

Farewell, gentle cousin.

KING JOHN.

Coz, farewell.

Exit

BASTARD

ELINOR.

Come hither, little kinsman; hark, a word.

KING JOHN.

Come hither, Hubert. O my gentle Hubert,

We owe thee much! Within this wall of flesh

There is a soul counts thee her creditor,

And with advantage means to pay thy love;

And, my good friend, thy voluntary oath

Lives in this bosom, dearly cherished.

Give me thy hand. I had a thing to say-

But I will fit it with some better time.

By heaven, Hubert, I am almost asham'd

To say what good respect I have of thee.

HUBERT.

I am much bounden to your Majesty.

KING JOHN.

Good friend, thou hast no cause to say so yet,

But thou shalt have; and creep time ne'er so slow,

Yet it shall come for me to do thee good.

I had a thing to say-but let it go:

The sun is in the heaven, and the proud day,
Attended with the pleasures of the world,
Is all too wanton and too full of gawds
To give me audience. If the midnight bell
Did with his iron tongue and brazen mouth
Sound on into the drowsy race of night;
If this same were a churchyard where we stand,
And thou possessed with a thousand wrongs;
Or if that surly spirit, melancholy,
Had bak'd thy blood and made it heavy-thick,
Which else runs tickling up and down the veins,
Making that idiot, laughter, keep men's eyes
And strain their cheeks to idle merriment,
A passion hateful to my purposes;
Or if that thou couldst see me without eyes,
Hear me without thine ears, and make reply
Without a tongue, using conceit alone,
Without eyes, ears, and harmful sound of words-
Then, in despite of brooded watchful day,
I would into thy bosom pour my thoughts.
But, ah, I will not! Yet I love thee well;

And, by my troth, I think thou lov'st me well.

HUBERT.

So well that what you bid me undertake,

Though that my death were adjunct to my act,

By heaven, I would do it.

KING JOHN.

Do not I know thou wouldst?

Good Hubert, Hubert, Hubert, throw thine eye

On yon young boy. I'll tell thee what, my friend,

He is a very serpent in my way;

And wheresoe'er this foot of mine doth tread,

He lies before me. Dost thou understand me?

Thou art his keeper.

HUBERT.

And I'll keep him so

That he shall not offend your Majesty.

KING JOHN.

Death.

HUBERT.

My lord?

KING JOHN.

A grave.

HUBERT.

He shall not live.

KING JOHN.

Enough!

I could be merry now. Hubert, I love thee.

Well, I'll not say what I intend for thee.

Remember. Madam, fare you well;

I'll send those powers o'er to your Majesty.

ELINOR.

My blessing go with thee!

KING JOHN.

[To ARTHUR] For England, cousin, go;

Hubert shall be your man, attend on you

With all true duty. On toward Calais, ho!

Exeunt

SCENE 4.

France. The FRENCH KING's camp

Enter KING PHILIP, LEWIS, PANDULPH, and attendants

KING PHILIP.

So by a roaring tempest on the flood

A whole armado of convicted sail

Is scattered and disjoin'd from fellowship.

PANDULPH.

Courage and comfort! All shall yet go well.

KING PHILIP.
What can go well, when we have run so ill.

Are we not beaten? Is not Angiers lost?
Arthur ta'en prisoner? Divers dear friends slain?
And bloody England into England gone,
O'erbearing interruption, spite of France?

LEWIS.
he hath won, that hath he fortified;
So hot a speed with such advice dispos'd,
Such temperate order in so fierce a cause,
Doth want example; who hath read or heard
Of any kindred action like to this?

KING PHILIP.

Well could I bear that England had this praise,
So we could find some pattern of our shame.

Enter CONSTANCE

Look who comes here! a grave unto a soul;
Holding th' eternal spirit, against her will,
In the vile prison of afflicted breath.
I prithee, lady, go away with me.

CONSTANCE.

Lo now! now see the issue of your peace!

KING PHILIP.
Patience, good lady! Comfort, gentle Constance!

CONSTANCE.
No, I defy all counsel, all redress,
But that which ends all counsel, true redress-
Death, death; O amiable lovely death!

Thou odoriferous stench! sound rottenness!

Arise forth from the couch of lasting night,

Thou hate and terror to prosperity,

And I will kiss thy detestable bones,

And put my eyeballs in thy vaulty brows,

And ring these fingers with thy household worms,

And stop this gap of breath with fulsome dust,

And be a carrion monster like thyself.

Come, grin on me, and I will think thou smil'st,

And buss thee as thy wife. Misery's love,

O, come to me!

KING PHILIP.

O fair affliction, peace!

CONSTANCE.

No, no, I will not, having breath to cry.

O that my tongue were in the thunder's mouth!

Then with a passion would I shake the world,

And rouse from sleep that fell anatomy
Which cannot hear a lady's feeble voice,
Which scorns a modern invocation.

PANDULPH.
Lady, you utter madness and not sorrow.

CONSTANCE.

Thou art not holy to belie me so.
I am not mad: this hair I tear is mine;
My name is Constance; I was Geffrey's wife;
Young Arthur is my son, and he is lost.

I am not mad-I would to heaven I were!
For then 'tis like I should forget myself.

O, if I could, what grief should I forget!
Preach some philosophy to make me mad,
And thou shalt be canoniz'd, Cardinal;
For, being not mad, but sensible of grief,

My reasonable part produces reason

How I may be deliver'd of these woes,

And teaches me to kill or hang myself.

If I were mad I should forget my son,

Or madly think a babe of clouts were he.

I am not mad; too well, too well I feel

The different plague of each calamity.

KING PHILIP.

Bind up those tresses. O, what love I note

In the fair multitude of those her hairs!

Where but by a chance a silver drop hath fall'n,

Even to that drop ten thousand wiry friends

Do glue themselves in sociable grief,

Like true, inseparable, faithful loves,

Sticking together in calamity.

CONSTANCE.

To England, if you will.

KING PHILIP.

Bind up your hairs.

CONSTANCE.

Yes, that I will; and wherefore will I do it?
I tore them from their bonds, and cried aloud
'O that these hands could so redeem my son,
As they have given these hairs their liberty!'
But now I envy at their liberty,
And will again commit them to their bonds,
Because my poor child is a prisoner.
And, father Cardinal, I have heard you say
That we shall see and know our friends in heaven;
If that be true, I shall see my boy again;
For since the birth of Cain, the first male child,
To him that did but yesterday suspire,
There was not such a gracious creature born.
But now will canker sorrow eat my bud
And chase the native beauty from his cheek,
And he will look as hollow as a ghost,

As dim and meagre as an ague's fit;
And so he'll die; and, rising so again,
When I shall meet him in the court of heaven
I shall not know him. Therefore never, never
Must I behold my pretty Arthur more.

PANDULPH.
You hold too heinous a respect of grief.

CONSTANCE.

He talks to me that never had a son.

KING PHILIP.
You are as fond of grief as of your child.

CONSTANCE.
Grief fills the room up of my absent child,
Lies in his bed, walks up and down with me,
Puts on his pretty looks, repeats his words,
Remembers me of all his gracious parts,

Stuffs out his vacant garments with his form;

Then have I reason to be fond of grief.

Fare you well; had you such a loss as I,

I could give better comfort than you do.

I will not keep this form upon my head,

[Tearing her

hair]

When there is such disorder in my wit.

O Lord! my boy, my Arthur, my fair son!

My life, my joy, my food, my ail the world!

My widow-comfort, and my sorrows' cure!

Exit

KING PHILIP. I fear some outrage, and I'll follow her.

Exit

LEWIS. There's nothing in this world can make me joy.

Life is as tedious as a twice-told tale

Vexing the dull ear of a drowsy man;

And bitter shame hath spoil'd the sweet world's taste,

That it yields nought but shame and bitterness.

PANDULPH.

Before the curing of a strong disease,

Even in the instant of repair and health,

The fit is strongest; evils that take leave

On their departure most of all show evil;

What have you lost by losing of this day?

LEWIS.

All days of glory, joy, and happiness.

PANDULPH.

If you had won it, certainly you had.

No, no; when Fortune means to men most good,

She looks upon them with a threat'ning eye.

'Tis strange to think how much King John hath lost

In this which he accounts so clearly won.

Are not you griev'd that Arthur is his prisoner?

LEWIS.

As heartily as he is glad he hath him.

PANDULPH.

Your mind is all as youthful as your blood.
Now hear me speak with a prophetic spirit;
For even the breath of what I mean to speak
Shall blow each dust, each straw, each little rub,
Out of the path which shall directly lead
Thy foot to England's throne. And therefore mark:
John hath seiz'd Arthur; and it cannot be
That, whiles warm life plays in that infant's veins,
The misplac'd John should entertain an hour,
One minute, nay, one quiet breath of rest.
A sceptre snatch'd with an unruly hand
Must be boisterously maintain'd as gain'd,
And he that stands upon a slipp'ry place
Makes nice of no vile hold to stay him up;

That John may stand then, Arthur needs must fall;

So be it, for it cannot be but so.

LEWIS.

But what shall I gain by young Arthur's fall?

PANDULPH.

You, in the right of Lady Blanch your wife,

May then make all the claim that Arthur did.

LEWIS.

And lose it, life and all, as Arthur did.

PANDULPH.

How green you are and fresh in this old world!

John lays you plots; the times conspire with you;

For he that steeps his safety in true blood

Shall find but bloody safety and untrue.

This act, so evilly borne, shall cool the hearts

Of all his people and freeze up their zeal,
That none so small advantage shall step forth
To check his reign but they will cherish it;
No natural exhalation in the sky,
No scope of nature, no distemper'd day,
No common wind, no customed event,
But they will pluck away his natural cause
And call them meteors, prodigies, and signs,
Abortives, presages, and tongues of heaven,
Plainly denouncing vengeance upon John.

LEWIS.
May be he will not touch young Arthur's life,
But hold himself safe in his prisonment.

PANDULPH.
O, Sir, when he shall hear of your approach,
If that young Arthur be not gone already,
Even at that news he dies; and then the hearts
Of all his people shall revolt from him,
And kiss the lips of unacquainted change,

And pick strong matter of revolt and wrath

Out of the bloody fingers' ends of john.

Methinks I see this hurly all on foot;

And, O, what better matter breeds for you

Than I have nam'd! The bastard Faulconbridge

Is now in England ransacking the Church,

Offending charity; if but a dozen French

Were there in arms, they would be as a can

To train ten thousand English to their side;

Or as a little snow, tumbled about,

Anon becomes a mountain. O noble Dauphin,

Go with me to the King. 'Tis wonderful

What may be wrought out of their discontent,

Now that their souls are topful of offence.

For England go; I will whet on the King.

LEWIS.

Strong reasons makes strong actions. Let us go;

If you say ay, the King will not say no.

Exeunt

ACT IV.
SCENE 1.

England. A castle

Enter HUBERT and EXECUTIONERS

HUBERT.

Heat me these irons hot; and look thou stand
Within the arras. When I strike my foot
Upon the bosom of the ground, rush forth
And bind the boy which you shall find with me
Fast to the chair. Be heedful; hence, and watch.

EXECUTIONER.

I hope your warrant will bear out the deed.

HUBERT.

Uncleanly scruples! Fear not you. Look to't.

Exeunt

EXECUTIONERS

Young lad, come forth; I have to say with you.

Enter ARTHUR

ARTHUR.

Good morrow, Hubert.

HUBERT.

Good morrow, little Prince.

ARTHUR.

As little prince, having so great a title
To be more prince, as may be. You are sad.

HUBERT.

Indeed I have been merrier.

ARTHUR.

Mercy on me!
Methinks no body should be sad but I;
Yet, I remember, when I was in France,
Young gentlemen would be as sad as night,
Only for wantonness. By my christendom,
So I were out of prison and kept sheep,
I should be as merry as the day is long;
And so I would be here but that I doubt
My uncle practises more harm to me;
He is afraid of me, and I of him.

Is it my fault that I was Geffrey's son?
No, indeed, is't not; and I would to heaven
I were your son, so you would love me, Hubert.

HUBERT.
[Aside] If I talk to him, with his innocent prate
He will awake my mercy, which lies dead;
Therefore I will be sudden and dispatch.

ARTHUR.

Are you sick, Hubert? You look pale to-day;
In sooth, I would you were a little sick,
That I might sit all night and watch with you.

I warrant I love you more than you do me.

HUBERT.

[Aside] His words do take possession of my bosom.-
Read here, young Arthur. [Showing a
paper]

[Aside] How now, foolish rheum!
Turning dispiteous torture out of door!
I must be brief, lest resolution drop
Out at mine eyes in tender womanish tears.-
Can you not read it? Is it not fair writ?

ARTHUR.

Too fairly, Hubert, for so foul effect.

Must you with hot irons burn out both mine eyes?

HUBERT.

Young boy, I must.

ARTHUR.

And will you?

HUBERT.

And I will.

ARTHUR.

Have you the heart? When your head did but ache,

I knit my handkerchief about your brows-

The best I had, a princess wrought it me-

And I did never ask it you again;

And with my hand at midnight held your head;

And, like the watchful minutes to the hour,

Still and anon cheer'd up the heavy time, Saying 'What lack you?' and 'Where lies your grief?'

Or 'What good love may I perform for you?'
Many a poor man's son would have lyen still,
And ne'er have spoke a loving word to you;
But you at your sick service had a prince.
Nay, you may think my love was crafty love,
And call it cunning. Do, an if you will.
If heaven be pleas'd that you must use me ill,
Why, then you must. Will you put out mine eyes,
These eyes that never did nor never shall
So much as frown on you?

HUBERT.
I have sworn to do it;
And with hot irons must I burn them out.

ARTHUR.

Ah, none but in this iron age would do it!
The iron of itself, though heat red-hot,

Approaching near these eyes would drink my tears,

And quench his fiery indignation

Even in the matter of mine innocence;

Nay, after that, consume away in rust

But for containing fire to harm mine eye.

Are you more stubborn-hard than hammer'd iron?

An if an angel should have come to me

And told me Hubert should put out mine eyes,

I would not have believ'd him-no tongue but Hubert's.

HUBERT.

[Stamps] Come forth.

Re-enter EXECUTIONERS, With cord, irons, *etc*.

Do as I bid you do.

ARTHUR.

O, save me, Hubert, save me! My eyes are out

Even with the fierce looks of these bloody men.

HUBERT.

Give me the iron, I say, and bind him here.

ARTHUR.

Alas, what need you be so boist'rous rough?
I will not struggle, I will stand stone-still.

For heaven sake, Hubert, let me not be bound!
Nay, hear me, Hubert! Drive these men away,
And I will sit as quiet as a lamb;
I will not stir, nor wince, nor speak a word,
Nor look upon the iron angrily;
Thrust but these men away, and I'll forgive you,
Whatever torment you do put me to.

HUBERT.
Go, stand within; let me alone with him.

EXECUTIONER.

I am best pleas'd to be from such a deed.
Exeunt

EXECUTIONERS

ARTHUR.

Alas, I then have chid away my friend!

He hath a stern look but a gentle heart.

Let him come back, that his compassion may

Give life to yours.

HUBERT.

Come, boy, prepare yourself.

ARTHUR.

Is there no remedy?

HUBERT.

None, but to lose your eyes.

ARTHUR.

O heaven, that there were but a mote in yours,
A grain, a dust, a gnat, a wandering hair,
Any annoyance in that precious sense!
Then, feeling what small things are boisterous there,
Your vile intent must needs seem horrible.

HUBERT.

Is this your promise? Go to, hold your tongue.

ARTHUR.

Hubert, the utterance of a brace of tongues
Must needs want pleading for a pair of eyes.
Let me not hold my tongue, let me not, Hubert;
Or, Hubert, if you will, cut out my tongue,
So I may keep mine eyes. O, spare mine eyes,
Though to no use but still to look on you!
Lo, by my troth, the instrument is cold
And would not harm me.

HUBERT.

I can heat it, boy.

ARTHUR.

No, in good sooth; the fire is dead with grief,

Being create for comfort, to be us'd

In undeserved extremes. See else yourself:

There is no malice in this burning coal;

The breath of heaven hath blown his spirit out,

And strew'd repentant ashes on his head.

HUBERT.

But with my breath I can revive it, boy.

ARTHUR.

An if you do, you will but make it blush

And glow with shame of your proceedings, Hubert.

Nay, it perchance will sparkle in your eyes,

And, like a dog that is compell'd to fight,

Snatch at his master that doth tarre him on.

All things that you should use to do me wrong

Deny their office; only you do lack

That mercy which fierce fire and iron extends,

Creatures of note for mercy-lacking uses.

HUBERT.

Well, see to live; I will not touch thine eye

For all the treasure that thine uncle owes.

Yet I am sworn, and I did purpose, boy,

With this same very iron to burn them out.

ARTHUR.

O, now you look like Hubert! All this while

You were disguis'd.

HUBERT.

Peace; no more. Adieu.

Your uncle must not know but you are dead:

I'll fill these dogged spies with false reports;

And, pretty child, sleep doubtless and secure

That Hubert, for the wealth of all the world, Will not offend thee.

ARTHUR.

O heaven! I thank you, Hubert.

HUBERT.

Silence; no more. Go closely in with me.

Much danger do I undergo for thee.

Exeunt

SCENE 2.

England. KING JOHN'S palace

Enter KING JOHN, PEMBROKE, SALISBURY, and other LORDS

KING JOHN.

Here once again we sit, once again crown'd,
And look'd upon, I hope, with cheerful eyes.

PEMBROKE.

This once again, but that your Highness pleas'd,
Was once superfluous: you were crown'd before,
And that high royalty was ne'er pluck'd off,
The faiths of men ne'er stained with revolt;
Fresh expectation troubled not the land
With any long'd-for change or better state.

SALISBURY.

Therefore, to be possess'd with double pomp,
To guard a title that was rich before,
To gild refined gold, to paint the lily,
To throw a perfume on the violet,
To smooth the ice, or add another hue
Unto the rainbow, or with taper-light
To seek the beauteous eye of heaven to garnish,
Is wasteful and ridiculous excess.

PEMBROKE.

But that your royal pleasure must be done,

This act is as an ancient tale new told
And, in the last repeating, troublesome,
Being urged at a time unseasonable.

SALISBURY.
In this the antique and well-noted face
Of plain old form is much disfigured;
And like a shifted wind unto a sail
It makes the course of thoughts to fetch about,
Startles and frights consideration,
Makes sound opinion sick, and truth suspected,
For putting on so new a fashion'd robe.

PEMBROKE.
When workmen strive to do better than well,
They do confound their skill in covetousness;
And oftentimes excusing of a fault
Doth make the fault the worse by th' excuse,
As patches set upon a little breach
Discredit more in hiding of the fault
Than did the fault before it was so patch'd.

SALISBURY.

To this effect, before you were new-crown'd,

We breath'd our counsel; but it pleas'd your Highness

To overbear it; and we are all well pleas'd,

Since all and every part of what we would

Doth make a stand at what your Highness will.

KING JOHN.

Some reasons of this double coronation

I have possess'd you with, and think them strong;

And more, more strong, when lesser is my fear,

I shall indue you with. Meantime but ask

What you would have reform'd that is not well,

And well shall you perceive how willingly

I will both hear and grant you your requests.

PEMBROKE.

Then I, as one that am the tongue of these,

To sound the purposes of all their hearts,

Both for myself and them-but, chief of all,

Your safety, for the which myself and them
Bend their best studies, heartily request
Th' enfranchisement of Arthur, whose restraint
Doth move the murmuring lips of discontent
To break into this dangerous argument:
If what in rest you have in right you hold,
Why then your fears-which, as they say, attend
The steps of wrong-should move you to mew up
Your tender kinsman, and to choke his days
With barbarous ignorance, and deny his youth
The rich advantage of good exercise?
That the time's enemies may not have this
To grace occasions, let it be our suit
That you have bid us ask his liberty;
Which for our goods we do no further ask
Than whereupon our weal, on you depending,
Counts it your weal he have his liberty.

KING JOHN.

Let it be so. I do commit his youth
To your direction.

Enter HUBERT

[Aside] Hubert, what news with you?

PEMBROKE.

This is the man should do the bloody deed:

He show'd his warrant to a friend of mine;

The image of a wicked heinous fault

Lives in his eye; that close aspect of his

Doth show the mood of a much troubled breast,

And I do fearfully believe 'tis done

What we so fear'd he had a charge to do.

SALISBURY.

The colour of the King doth come and go

Between his purpose and his conscience,

Like heralds 'twixt two dreadful battles set.

His passion is so ripe it needs must break.

PEMBROKE.

And when it breaks, I fear will issue thence
The foul corruption of a sweet child's death.

KING JOHN.

We cannot hold mortality's strong hand.
Good lords, although my will to give is living,
The suit which you demand is gone and dead:
He tells us Arthur is deceas'd to-night.

SALISBURY.

Indeed, we fear'd his sickness was past cure.

PEMBROKE.
Indeed, we heard how near his death he was,
Before the child himself felt he was sick.
This must be answer'd either here or hence.

KING JOHN.

Why do you bend such solemn brows on me?
Think you I bear the shears of destiny?

Have I commandment on the pulse of life?

SALISBURY.
It is apparent foul-play; and 'tis shame
That greatness should so grossly offer it.
So thrive it in your game! and so, farewell.

PEMBROKE.
Stay yet, Lord Salisbury, I'll go with thee
And find th' inheritance of this poor child,
His little kingdom of a forced grave.
That blood which ow'd the breadth of all this isle
Three foot of it doth hold-bad world the while!
This must not be thus borne: this will break out
To all our sorrows, and ere long I doubt. *Exeunt*

LORDS

KING JOHN.

They burn in indignation. I repent.
There is no sure foundation set on blood,
No certain life achiev'd by others' death.

Enter a MESSENGER

A fearful eye thou hast; where is that blood
That I have seen inhabit in those cheeks?

So foul a sky clears not without a storm.
Pour down thy weather-how goes all in France?

MESSENGER.
From France to England. Never such a pow'r
For any foreign preparation
Was levied in the body of a land.
The copy of your speed is learn'd by them,
For when you should be told they do prepare,
The tidings comes that they are all arriv'd.

KING JOHN.

O, where hath our intelligence been drunk?
Where hath it slept? Where is my mother's care,
That such an army could be drawn in France,
And she not hear of it?

MESSENGER.

My liege, her ear
Is stopp'd with dust: the first of April died
Your noble mother; and as I hear, my lord,
The Lady Constance in a frenzy died
Three days before; but this from rumour's tongue
I idly heard-if true or false I know not.

KING JOHN.

Withhold thy speed, dreadful occasion!
O, make a league with me, till I have pleas'd
My discontented peers! What! mother dead!
How wildly then walks my estate in France!

Under whose conduct came those pow'rs of France

That thou for truth giv'st out are landed here?

MESSENGER.

Under the Dauphin.

KING JOHN.

Thou hast made me giddy

With these in tidings.

Enter the BASTARD and PETER OF POMFRET

Now! What says the world

To your proceedings? Do not seek to stuff

My head with more ill news, for it is full.

BASTARD.

But if you be afear'd to hear the worst,

Then let the worst, unheard, fall on your head.

KING JOHN.

Bear with me, cousin, for I was amaz'd

Under the tide; but now I breathe again

Aloft the flood, and can give audience

To any tongue, speak it of what it will.

BASTARD.

How I have sped among the clergymen

The sums I have collected shall express.

But as I travell'd hither through the land,

I find the people strangely fantasied;

Possess'd with rumours, full of idle dreams.

Not knowing what they fear, but full of fear;

And here's a prophet that I brought with me

From forth the streets of Pomfret, whom I found

With many hundreds treading on his heels;

To whom he sung, in rude harsh-sounding rhymes,

That, ere the next Ascension-day at noon,

Your Highness should deliver up your crown.

KING JOHN.

Thou idle dreamer, wherefore didst thou so?

PETER.

Foreknowing that the truth will fall out so.

KING JOHN.

Hubert, away with him; imprison him;

And on that day at noon whereon he says

I shall yield up my crown let him be hang'd.

Deliver him to safety; and return,

For I must use thee.

Exit HUBERT with

PETER

O my gentle cousin,

Hear'st thou the news abroad, who are arriv'd?

BASTARD.

The French, my lord; men's mouths are full of it;
Besides, I met Lord Bigot and Lord Salisbury,
With eyes as red as new-enkindled fire,
And others more, going to seek the grave
Of Arthur, whom they say is kill'd to-night
On your suggestion.

KING JOHN.
Gentle kinsman, go
And thrust thyself into their companies.
I have a way to will their loves again;
Bring them before me.

BASTARD.
I will seek them out.

KING JOHN.

Nay, but make haste; the better foot before.
O, let me have no subject enemies
When adverse foreigners affright my towns

With dreadful pomp of stout invasion!
Be Mercury, set feathers to thy heels,
And fly like thought from them to me again.

BASTARD.

The spirit of the time shall teach me speed.

KING JOHN.

Spoke like a sprightful noble gentleman.

Exit

BASTARD

Go after him; for he perhaps shall need
Some messenger betwixt me and the peers;
And be thou he.

MESSENGER.

With all my heart, my liege.

Exit

KING JOHN. My mother dead!

Re-enter HUBERT

HUBERT.

My lord, they say five moons were seen to-night;

Four fixed, and the fifth did whirl about

The other four in wondrous motion.

KING JOHN.

Five moons!

HUBERT.

Old men and beldams in the streets

Do prophesy upon it dangerously;

Young Arthur's death is common in their mouths;

And when they talk of him, they shake their heads,

And whisper one another in the ear;

And he that speaks doth gripe the hearer's wrist,

Whilst he that hears makes fearful action

With wrinkled brows, with nods, with rolling eyes.

I saw a smith stand with his hammer, thus,

The whilst his iron did on the anvil cool,

With open mouth swallowing a tailor's news;

Who, with his shears and measure in his hand,

Standing on slippers, which his nimble haste

Had falsely thrust upon contrary feet,

Told of a many thousand warlike French

That were embattailed and rank'd in Kent.

Another lean unwash'd artificer

Cuts off his tale, and talks of Arthur's death.

KING JOHN.

Why seek'st thou to possess me with these fears?

Why urgest thou so oft young Arthur's death?

Thy hand hath murd'red him. I had a mighty cause

To wish him dead, but thou hadst none to kill him.

HUBERT.

No had, my lord! Why, did you not provoke me?

KING JOHN.

It is the curse of kings to be attended

By slaves that take their humours for a warrant

To break within the bloody house of life,

And on the winking of authority

To understand a law; to know the meaning

Of dangerous majesty, when perchance it frowns

More upon humour than advis'd respect.

HUBERT.

Here is your hand and seal for what I did.

KING JOHN.

O, when the last account 'twixt heaven and earth

Is to be made, then shall this hand and seal

Witness against us to damnation!

How oft the sight of means to do ill deeds

Make deeds ill done! Hadst not thou been by,

A fellow by the hand of nature mark'd,

Quoted and sign'd to do a deed of shame,

This murder had not come into my mind;

But, taking note of thy abhorr'd aspect,

Finding thee fit for bloody villainy,

Apt, liable to be employ'd in danger,

I faintly broke with thee of Arthur's death;

And thou, to be endeared to a king,

Made it no conscience to destroy a prince.

HUBERT.

My lord-

KING JOHN.

Hadst thou but shook thy head or made pause,

When I spake darkly what I purposed,

Or turn'd an eye of doubt upon my face,

As bid me tell my tale in express words,

Deep shame had struck me dumb, made me break off,

And those thy fears might have wrought fears in me.

But thou didst understand me by my signs,

And didst in signs again parley with sin;

Yea, without stop, didst let thy heart consent,

And consequently thy rude hand to act

The deed which both our tongues held vile to name.

Out of my sight, and never see me more!

My nobles leave me; and my state is braved,

Even at my gates, with ranks of foreign pow'rs;

Nay, in the body of the fleshly land,

This kingdom, this confine of blood and breath,

Hostility and civil tumult reigns

Between my conscience and my cousin's death.

HUBERT.

Arm you against your other enemies,

I'll make a peace between your soul and you.

Young Arthur is alive. This hand of mine

Is yet a maiden and an innocent hand,

Not painted with the crimson spots of blood.

Within this bosom never ent'red yet

The dreadful motion of a murderous thought

And you have slander'd nature in my form,

Which, howsoever rude exteriorly,

Is yet the cover of a fairer mind
Than to be butcher of an innocent child.

KING JOHN.

Doth Arthur live? O, haste thee to the peers,
Throw this report on their incensed rage
And make them tame to their obedience!
Forgive the comment that my passion made
Upon thy feature; for my rage was blind,
And foul imaginary eyes of blood
Presented thee more hideous than thou art.
O, answer not; but to my closet bring
The angry lords with all expedient haste.

I conjure thee but slowly; run more fast.

Exeunt

SCENE 3.

England. Before the castle

Enter ARTHUR, on the walls

ARTHUR.

The wall is high, and yet will I leap down.

Good ground, be pitiful and hurt me not!

There's few or none do know me; if they did,

This ship-boy's semblance hath disguis'd me quite.

I am afraid; and yet I'll venture it.

If I get down and do not break my limbs,

I'll find a thousand shifts to get away.

As good to die and go, as die and stay. [Leaps

down]

O me! my uncle's spirit is in these stones.

Heaven take my soul, and England keep my bones!

[Dies]

Enter PEMBROKE, SALISBURY, and BIGOT

SALISBURY.

Lords, I will meet him at Saint Edmundsbury;

It is our safety, and we must embrace

This gentle offer of the perilous time.

PEMBROKE.

Who brought that letter from the Cardinal?

SALISBURY.

The Count Melun, a noble lord of France,

Whose private with me of the Dauphin's love

Is much more general than these lines import.

BIGOT.

To-morrow morning let us meet him then.

SALISBURY.

Or rather then set forward; for 'twill be

Two long days' journey, lords, or ere we meet.

Enter the BASTARD

BASTARD.

Once more to-day well met, distemper'd lords!

The King by me requests your presence straight.

SALISBURY.

The King hath dispossess'd himself of us.

We will not line his thin bestained cloak

With our pure honours, nor attend the foot

That leaves the print of blood where'er it walks.

Return and tell him so. We know the worst.

BASTARD.

Whate'er you think, good words, I think, were best.

SALISBURY.

Our griefs, and not our manners, reason now.

BASTARD.

But there is little reason in your grief;
Therefore 'twere reason you had manners now.

PEMBROKE.

Sir, sir, impatience hath his privilege.

BASTARD.

'Tis true-to hurt his master, no man else.

SALISBURY.

This is the prison. What is he lies here?

PEMBROKE.

O death, made proud with pure and princely beauty!

The earth had not a hole to hide this deed.

SALISBURY.

Murder, as hating what himself hath done,
Doth lay it open to urge on revenge.

BIGOT.
Or, when he doom'd this beauty to a grave,
Found it too precious-princely for a grave.

SALISBURY.
Sir Richard, what think you? Have you beheld,
Or have you read or heard, or could you think?
Or do you almost think, although you see,
That you do see? Could thought, without this object,
Form such another? This is the very top,
The height, the crest, or crest unto the crest,
Of murder's arms; this is the bloodiest shame,
The wildest savagery, the vilest stroke,
That ever wall-ey'd wrath or staring rage
Presented to the tears of soft remorse.

PEMBROKE.
All murders past do stand excus'd in this;

And this, so sole and so unmatchable,
Shall give a holiness, a purity,
To the yet unbegotten sin of times,
And prove a deadly bloodshed but a jest,
Exampled by this heinous spectacle.

BASTARD.
It is a damned and a bloody work;
The graceless action of a heavy hand,
If that it be the work of any hand.

SALISBURY.

If that it be the work of any hand!
We had a kind of light what would ensue.
It is the shameful work of Hubert's hand;
The practice and the purpose of the King;
From whose obedience I forbid my soul
Kneeling before this ruin of sweet life,
And breathing to his breathless excellence
The incense of a vow, a holy vow,

Never to taste the pleasures of the world,

Never to be infected with delight,

Nor conversant with ease and idleness,

Till I have set a glory to this hand

By giving it the worship of revenge.

PEMBROKE.

and BIGOT. Our souls religiously confirm thy words.

Enter HUBERT

HUBERT.

Lords, I am hot with haste in seeking you.

Arthur doth live; the King hath sent for you.

SALISBURY.

O, he is bold, and blushes not at death!

Avaunt, thou hateful villain, get thee gone!

HUBERT.

I am no villain.

SALISBURY.

Must I rob the law? [Drawing his
sword]

BASTARD.

Your sword is bright, sir; put it up again.

SALISBURY.

Not till I sheathe it in a murderer's skin.

HUBERT.

Stand back, Lord Salisbury, stand back, I say;
By heaven, I think my sword's as sharp as yours.
I would not have you, lord, forget yourself,
Nor tempt the danger of my true defence;
Lest I, by marking of your rage, forget
Your worth, your greatness and nobility.

BIGOT.

Out, dunghill! Dar'st thou brave a nobleman?

HUBERT.

Not for my life; but yet I dare defend
My innocent life against an emperor.

SALISBURY.

Thou art a murderer.

HUBERT.

Do not prove me so.
Yet I am none. Whose tongue soe'er speaks false,
Not truly speaks; who speaks not truly, lies.

PEMBROKE.

Cut him to pieces.

BASTARD.

Keep the peace, I say.

SALISBURY.

Stand by, or I shall gall you, Faulconbridge.

BASTARD.

Thou wert better gall the devil, Salisbury.

If thou but frown on me, or stir thy foot,

Or teach thy hasty spleen to do me shame,

I'll strike thee dead. Put up thy sword betime;

Or I'll so maul you and your toasting-iron

That you shall think the devil is come from hell.

BIGOT.

What wilt thou do, renowned Faulconbridge?

Second a villain and a murderer?

HUBERT.

Lord Bigot, I am none.

BIGOT.
Who kill'd this prince?

HUBERT.

'Tis not an hour since I left him well.
I honour'd him, I lov'd him, and will weep
My date of life out for his sweet life's loss.

SALISBURY.
Trust not those cunning waters of his eyes,
For villainy is not without such rheum;
And he, long traded in it, makes it seem
Like rivers of remorse and innocency.
Away with me, all you whose souls abhor
Th' uncleanly savours of a slaughter-house;
For I am stifled with this smell of sin.

BIGOT.

Away toward Bury, to the Dauphin there!

PEMBROKE.

There tell the King he may inquire us out.

Exeunt

LORDS

BASTARD.

Here's a good world! Knew you of this fair work?
Beyond the infinite and boundless reach
Of mercy, if thou didst this deed of death,
Art thou damn'd, Hubert.

HUBERT.

Do but hear me, sir.

BASTARD.

Ha! I'll tell thee what:

Thou'rt damn'd as black-nay, nothing is so black-

Thou art more deep damn'd than Prince Lucifer;

There is not yet so ugly a fiend of hell

As thou shalt be, if thou didst kill this child.

HUBERT.

Upon my soul-

BASTARD.

If thou didst but consent

To this most cruel act, do but despair;

And if thou want'st a cord, the smallest thread

That ever spider twisted from her womb

Will serve to strangle thee; a rush will be a beam

To hang thee on; or wouldst thou drown thyself,

Put but a little water in a spoon

And it shall be as all the ocean,

Enough to stifle such a villain up

I do suspect thee very grievously.

HUBERT.

If I in act, consent, or sin of thought,
Be guilty of the stealing that sweet breath
Which was embounded in this beauteous clay,
Let hell want pains enough to torture me!
I left him well.

BASTARD.

Go, bear him in thine arms.
I am amaz'd, methinks, and lose my way
Among the thorns and dangers of this world.
How easy dost thou take all England up!
From forth this morsel of dead royalty
The life, the right, and truth of all this realm
Is fled to heaven; and England now is left
To tug and scamble, and to part by th' teeth
The unowed interest of proud-swelling state.
Now for the bare-pick'd bone of majesty
Doth dogged war bristle his angry crest

And snarleth in the gentle eyes of peace;

Now powers from home and discontents at home

Meet in one line; and vast confusion waits,

As doth a raven on a sick-fall'n beast,

The imminent decay of wrested pomp.

Now happy he whose cloak and cincture can

Hold out this tempest. Bear away that child,

And follow me with speed. I'll to the King;

A thousand businesses are brief in hand,

And heaven itself doth frown upon the land.

Exeunt

ACT V.
SCENE 1. England. KING JOHN'S palace

Enter KING JOHN, PANDULPH, and attendants

KING JOHN.

Thus have I yielded up into your hand

The circle of my glory.

PANDULPH.

[Gives back the crown] Take again

From this my hand, as holding of the Pope,

Your sovereign greatness and authority.

KING JOHN.

Now keep your holy word; go meet the French;

And from his Holiness use all your power

To stop their marches fore we are inflam'd.

Our discontented counties do revolt;

Our people quarrel with obedience,

Swearing allegiance and the love of soul

To stranger blood, to foreign royalty.

This inundation of mistemp'red humour

Rests by you only to be qualified.

Then pause not; for the present time's so sick

That present med'cine must be minist'red

Or overthrow incurable ensues.

PANDULPH.

It was my breath that blew this tempest up, Upon your stubborn usage of the Pope;

But since you are a gentle convertite,

My tongue shall hush again this storm of war

And make fair weather in your blust'ring land.

On this Ascension-day, remember well,

Upon your oath of service to the Pope,

Go I to make the French lay down their arms.

Exit

KING JOHN. Is this Ascension-day? Did not the prophet

Say that before Ascension-day at noon

My crown I should give off? Even so I have.

I did suppose it should be on constraint;

But, heaven be thank'd, it is but voluntary.

Enter the BASTARD

BASTARD.

All Kent hath yielded; nothing there holds out

But Dover Castle. London hath receiv'd,

Like a kind host, the Dauphin and his powers.

Your nobles will not hear you, but are gone
To offer service to your enemy;
And wild amazement hurries up and down
The little number of your doubtful friends.

KING JOHN.
Would not my lords return to me again
After they heard young Arthur was alive?

BASTARD.
They found him dead, and cast into the streets,
An empty casket, where the jewel of life
By some damn'd hand was robbed and ta'en away.

KING JOHN.
That villain Hubert told me he did live.

BASTARD.

So, on my soul, he did, for aught he knew.
But wherefore do you droop? Why look you sad?

Be great in act, as you have been in thought;

Let not the world see fear and sad distrust

Govern the motion of a kingly eye.

Be stirring as the time; be fire with fire;

Threaten the threat'ner, and outface the brow

Of bragging horror; so shall inferior eyes,

That borrow their behaviours from the great,

Grow great by your example and put on

The dauntless spirit of resolution.

Away, and glister like the god of war

When he intendeth to become the field;

Show boldness and aspiring confidence.

What, shall they seek the lion in his den,

And fright him there, and make him tremble there?

O, let it not be said! Forage, and run

To meet displeasure farther from the doors

And grapple with him ere he come so nigh.

KING JOHN.

The legate of the Pope hath been with me,

And I have made a happy peace with him;

And he hath promis'd to dismiss the powers
Led by the Dauphin.

BASTARD.
O inglorious league!
Shall we, upon the footing of our land,
Send fair-play orders, and make compromise,
Insinuation, parley, and base truce,
To arms invasive? Shall a beardless boy,
A cock'red silken wanton, brave our fields
And flesh his spirit in a warlike soil,
Mocking the air with colours idly spread,
And find no check? Let us, my liege, to arms.
Perchance the Cardinal cannot make your peace;
Or, if he do, let it at least be said
They saw we had a purpose of defence.

KING JOHN.
Have thou the ordering of this present time.

BASTARD.

Away, then, with good courage!

Yet, I know

Our party may well meet a prouder foe.

Exeunt

SCENE 2. England. The DAUPHIN'S camp at Saint Edmundsbury

Enter , in arms, LEWIS, SALISBURY, MELUN, PEMBROKE, BIGOT, and soldiers

LEWIS.

My Lord Melun, let this be copied out

And keep it safe for our remembrance;

Return the precedent to these lords again,

That, having our fair order written down,

Both they and we, perusing o'er these notes,

May know wherefore we took the sacrament,

And keep our faiths firm and inviolable.

SALISBURY.

Upon our sides it never shall be broken.

And, noble Dauphin, albeit we swear

A voluntary zeal and an unurg'd faith

To your proceedings; yet, believe me, Prince,

I am not glad that such a sore of time

Should seek a plaster by contemn'd revolt,

And heal the inveterate canker of one wound
By making many. O, it grieves my soul
That I must draw this metal from my side
To be a widow-maker! O, and there
Where honourable rescue and defence
Cries out upon the name of Salisbury!
But such is the infection of the time
That, for the health and physic of our right,
We cannot deal but with the very hand
Of stern injustice and confused wrong.
And is't not pity, O my grieved friends!
That we, the sons and children of this isle,
Were born to see so sad an hour as this;
Wherein we step after a stranger-march
Upon her gentle bosom, and fill up
Her enemies' ranks-I must withdraw and weep
Upon the spot of this enforced cause-
To grace the gentry of a land remote
And follow unacquainted colours here?

What, here? O nation, that thou couldst remove!

That Neptune's arms, who clippeth thee about,

Would bear thee from the knowledge of thyself

And grapple thee unto a pagan shore,

Where these two Christian armies might combine

The blood of malice in a vein of league,

And not to spend it so unneighbourly!

LEWIS.

A noble temper dost thou show in this;

And great affections wrestling in thy bosom

Doth make an earthquake of nobility.

O, what a noble combat hast thou fought

Between compulsion and a brave respect!

Let me wipe off this honourable dew

That silverly doth progress on thy cheeks.

My heart hath melted at a lady's tears,

Being an ordinary inundation;

But this effusion of such manly drops,

This show'r, blown up by tempest of the soul,

Startles mine eyes and makes me more amaz'd

Than had I seen the vaulty top of heaven

Figur'd quite o'er with burning meteors.

Lift up thy brow, renowned Salisbury,

And with a great heart heave away this storm;

Commend these waters to those baby eyes

That never saw the giant world enrag'd,

Nor met with fortune other than at feasts,

Full of warm blood, of mirth, of gossiping.

Come, come; for thou shalt thrust thy hand as deep

Into the purse of rich prosperity

As Lewis himself. So, nobles, shall you all,

That knit your sinews to the strength of mine.

Enter PANDULPH

And even there, methinks, an angel spake:

Look where the holy legate comes apace,

To give us warrant from the hand of heaven

And on our actions set the name of right

With holy breath.

PANDULPH.

Hail, noble prince of France!

The next is this: King John hath reconcil'd

Himself to Rome; his spirit is come in,

That so stood out against the holy Church,

The great metropolis and see of Rome.

Therefore thy threat'ning colours now wind up

And tame the savage spirit of wild war,

That, like a lion fostered up at hand,

It may lie gently at the foot of peace

And be no further harmful than in show.

LEWIS.

Your Grace shall pardon me, I will not back:

I am too high-born to be propertied,

To be a secondary at control,

Or useful serving-man and instrument

To any sovereign state throughout the world.

Your breath first kindled the dead coal of wars

Between this chastis'd kingdom and myself

And brought in matter that should feed this fire;

And now 'tis far too huge to be blown out

With that same weak wind which enkindled it.

You taught me how to know the face of right,

Acquainted me with interest to this land,

Yea, thrust this enterprise into my heart;

And come ye now to tell me John hath made

His peace with Rome? What is that peace to me?

I, by the honour of my marriage-bed,

After young Arthur, claim this land for mine;

And, now it is half-conquer'd, must I back

Because that John hath made his peace with Rome?

Am I Rome's slave? What penny hath Rome borne,

What men provided, what munition sent,

To underprop this action? Is 't not I

That undergo this charge? Who else but I,

And such as to my claim are liable,

Sweat in this business and maintain this war?

Have I not heard these islanders shout out

'Vive le roi!' as I have bank'd their towns?

Have I not here the best cards for the game

To will this easy match, play'd for a crown?

And shall I now give o'er the yielded set?
No, no, on my soul, it never shall be said.

PANDULPH.

You look but on the outside of this work.

LEWIS.
Outside or inside, I will not return
Till my attempt so much be glorified
As to my ample hope was promised
Before I drew this gallant head of war,
And cull'd these fiery spirits from the world
To outlook conquest, and to will renown
Even in the jaws of danger and of death.
[Trumpet
sounds]
What lusty trumpet thus doth summon us?

Enter the BASTARD, attended

BASTARD.

According to the fair play of the world,

Let me have audience: I am sent to speak.

My holy lord of Milan, from the King

I come, to learn how you have dealt for him;

And, as you answer, I do know the scope

And warrant limited unto my tongue.

PANDULPH.

The Dauphin is too wilful-opposite,

And will not temporize with my entreaties;

He flatly says he'll not lay down his arms.

BASTARD.

By all the blood that ever fury breath'd,

The youth says well. Now hear our English King;

For thus his royalty doth speak in me.

He is prepar'd, and reason too he should.

This apish and unmannerly approach,

This harness'd masque and unadvised revel

This unhair'd sauciness and boyish troops,

The King doth smile at; and is well prepar'd
To whip this dwarfish war, these pigmy arms,
From out the circle of his territories.

That hand which had the strength, even at your door.
To cudgel you and make you take the hatch,
To dive like buckets in concealed wells,
To crouch in litter of your stable planks,
To lie like pawns lock'd up in chests and trunks,
To hug with swine, to seek sweet safety out
In vaults and prisons, and to thrill and shake
Even at the crying of your nation's crow,
Thinking this voice an armed Englishman-
Shall that victorious hand be feebled here
That in your chambers gave you chastisement?
No. Know the gallant monarch is in arms
And like an eagle o'er his aery tow'rs
To souse annoyance that comes near his nest.
And you degenerate, you ingrate revolts,
You bloody Neroes, ripping up the womb
Of your dear mother England, blush for shame;

For your own ladies and pale-visag'd maids,
Like Amazons, come tripping after drums,
Their thimbles into armed gauntlets change,
Their needles to lances, and their gentle hearts
To fierce and bloody inclination.

LEWIS.

There end thy brave, and turn thy face in peace;
We grant thou canst outscold us. Fare thee well;
We hold our time too precious to be spent
With such a brabbler.

PANDULPH.

Give me leave to speak.

BASTARD.

No, I will speak.

LEWIS.

We will attend to neither.

Strike up the drums; and let the tongue of war,

Plead for our interest and our being here.

BASTARD.

Indeed, your drums, being beaten, will cry out;

And so shall you, being beaten. Do but start

And echo with the clamour of thy drum,

And even at hand a drum is ready brac'd

That shall reverberate all as loud as thine:

Sound but another, and another shall,

As loud as thine, rattle the welkin's ear

And mock the deep-mouth'd thunder; for at hand-

Not trusting to this halting legate here,

Whom he hath us'd rather for sport than need-

Is warlike John; and in his forehead sits

A bare-ribb'd death, whose office is this day

To feast upon whole thousands of the French.

LEWIS.

Strike up our drums to find this danger out.

BASTARD.

And thou shalt find it, Dauphin, do not doubt.

Exeunt

SCENE 3.

England. The field of battle

Alarums. *Enter* KING JOHN and HUBERT

KING JOHN.

How goes the day with us? O, tell me, Hubert.

HUBERT.

Badly, I fear. How fares your Majesty?

KING JOHN.

This fever that hath troubled me so long

Lies heavy on me. O, my heart is sick!

Enter a MESSENGER

MESSENGER.

My lord, your valiant kinsman, Faulconbridge,

Desires your Majesty to leave the field

And send him word by me which way you go.

KING JOHN.

Tell him, toward Swinstead, to the abbey there.

MESSENGER.

Be of good comfort; for the great supply

That was expected by the Dauphin here

Are wreck'd three nights ago on Goodwin Sands;

This news was brought to Richard but even now.

The French fight coldly, and retire themselves.

KING JOHN.

Ay me, this tyrant fever burns me up

And will not let me welcome this good news.

Set on toward Swinstead; to my litter straight;

Weakness possesseth me, and I am faint.

Exeunt

SCENE 4.

England. Another part of the battlefield

Enter SALISBURY, PEMBROKE, and BIGOT

SALISBURY.

I did not think the King so stor'd with friends.

PEMBROKE.

Up once again; put spirit in the French;

If they miscarry, we miscarry too.

SALISBURY.

That misbegotten devil, Faulconbridge,

In spite of spite, alone upholds the day.

PEMBROKE.

They say King John, sore sick, hath left the field.

Enter MELUN, wounded

MELUN.

Lead me to the revolts of England here.

SALISBURY.

When we were happy we had other names.

PEMBROKE.

It is the Count Melun.

SALISBURY.

Wounded to death.

MELUN.

Fly, noble English, you are bought and sold;

Unthread the rude eye of rebellion,
And welcome home again discarded faith.
Seek out King John, and fall before his feet;
For if the French be lords of this loud day,
He means to recompense the pains you take
By cutting off your heads. Thus hath he sworn,
And I with him, and many moe with me,
Upon the altar at Saint Edmundsbury;
Even on that altar where we swore to you
Dear amity and everlasting love.

SALISBURY.

May this be possible? May this be true?

MELUN.
Have I not hideous death within my view,
Retaining but a quantity of life,
Which bleeds away even as a form of wax
Resolveth from his figure 'gainst the fire?
What in the world should make me now deceive,

Since I must lose the use of all deceit?

Why should I then be false, since it is true

That I must die here, and live hence by truth?

I say again, if Lewis do will the day,

He is forsworn if e'er those eyes of yours

Behold another day break in the east;

But even this night, whose black contagious breath

Already smokes about the burning crest

Of the old, feeble, and day-wearied sun,

Even this ill night, your breathing shall expire,

Paying the fine of rated treachery

Even with a treacherous fine of all your lives.

If Lewis by your assistance win the day.

Commend me to one Hubert, with your King;

The love of him-and this respect besides,

For that my grandsire was an Englishman-

Awakes my conscience to confess all this.

In lieu whereof, I pray you, bear me hence

From forth the noise and rumour of the field,

Where I may think the remnant of my thoughts

In peace, and part this body and my soul

With contemplation and devout desires.

SALISBURY .

We do believe thee; and beshrew my soul

But I do love the favour and the form

Of this most fair occasion, by the which

We will untread the steps of damned flight,

And like a bated and retired flood,

Leaving our rankness and irregular course,

Stoop low within those bounds we have o'erlook'd,

And calmly run on in obedience

Even to our ocean, to great King John.

My arm shall give thee help to bear thee hence;

For I do see the cruel pangs of death

Right in thine eye. Away, my friends! New flight,

And happy newness, that intends old right.

Exeunt , leading off

MELUN

SCENE 5.

England. The French camp

Enter LEWIS and his train

LEWIS.

The sun of heaven, methought, was loath to set,

But stay'd and made the western welkin blush,

When English measure backward their own ground

In faint retire. O, bravely came we off,

When with a volley of our needless shot,

After such bloody toil, we bid good night;

And wound our tott'ring colours clearly up,

Last in the field and almost lords of it!

Enter a MESSENGER

MESSENGER.

Where is my prince, the Dauphin?

LEWIS.

Here; what news?

MESSENGER.

The Count Melun is slain; the English lords
By his persuasion are again fall'n off,
And your supply, which you have wish'd so long,
Are cast away and sunk on Goodwin Sands.

LEWIS.

Ah, foul shrewd news! Beshrew thy very heart!
I did not think to be so sad to-night
As this hath made me. Who was he that said
King John did fly an hour or two before
The stumbling night did part our weary pow'rs?

MESSENGER.

Whoever spoke it, it is true, my lord.

LEWIS.

keep good quarter and good care to-night;

The day shall not be up so soon as I

To try the fair adventure of to-morrow.

Exeunt

SCENE 6.

An open place near Swinstead Abbey

Enter the BASTARD and HUBERT, severally

HUBERT.

Who's there? Speak, ho! speak quickly, or I shoot.

BASTARD.

A friend. What art thou?

HUBERT.

Of the part of England.

BASTARD.

Whither dost thou go?

HUBERT.

What's that to thee? Why may I not demand

Of thine affairs as well as thou of mine?

BASTARD.

Hubert, I think.

HUBERT.

Thou hast a perfect thought.

I will upon all hazards well believe

Thou art my friend that know'st my tongue so well.

Who art thou?

BASTARD.

Who thou wilt. And if thou please,

Thou mayst befriend me so much as to think

I come one way of the Plantagenets.

HUBERT.
Unkind remembrance! thou and eyeless night
Have done me shame. Brave soldier, pardon me
That any accent breaking from thy tongue
Should scape the true acquaintance of mine ear.

BASTARD.
Come, come; sans compliment, what news abroad?

HUBERT.
Why, here walk I in the black brow of night
To find you out.

BASTARD.

Brief, then; and what's the news?

HUBERT.
O, my sweet sir, news fitting to the night,

Black, fearful, comfortless, and horrible.

BASTARD.

Show me the very wound of this ill news;

I am no woman, I'll not swoon at it.

HUBERT.

The King, I fear, is poison'd by a monk;

I left him almost speechless and broke out

To acquaint you with this evil, that you might

The better arm you to the sudden time

Than if you had at leisure known of this.

BASTARD.

How did he take it; who did taste to him?

HUBERT.

A monk, I tell you; a resolved villain,

Whose bowels suddenly burst out. The King

Yet speaks, and peradventure may recover.

BASTARD.

Who didst thou leave to tend his Majesty?

HUBERT.

Why, know you not? The lords are all come back,
And brought Prince Henry in their company;
At whose request the King hath pardon'd them,
And they are all about his Majesty.

BASTARD.

Withhold thine indignation, mighty heaven,
And tempt us not to bear above our power!
I'll tell thee, Hubert, half my power this night,
Passing these flats, are taken by the tide-
These Lincoln Washes have devoured them;
Myself, well-mounted, hardly have escap'd.
Away, before! conduct me to the King;
I doubt he will be dead or ere I come.

Exeunt

SCENE 7.

The orchard at Swinstead Abbey

Enter PRINCE HENRY, SALISBURY, and BIGOT

PRINCE HENRY.

It is too late; the life of all his blood
Is touch'd corruptibly, and his pure brain.
Which some suppose the soul's frail dwelling-house,
Doth by the idle comments that it makes
Foretell the ending of mortality.

Enter PEMBROKE

PEMBROKE.

His Highness yet doth speak, and holds belief
That, being brought into the open air,
It would allay the burning quality
Of that fell poison which assaileth him.

PRINCE HENRY.

Let him be brought into the orchard here.

Doth he still rage? *Exit*

BIGOT

PEMBROKE.

He is more patient

Than when you left him; even now he sung.

PRINCE HENRY.

O vanity of sickness! Fierce extremes

In their continuance will not feel themselves.

Death, having prey'd upon the outward parts,

Leaves them invisible, and his siege is now

Against the mind, the which he pricks and wounds

With many legions of strange fantasies,

Which, in their throng and press to that last hold,

Confound themselves. 'Tis strange that death should sing.

I am the cygnet to this pale faint swan

Who chants a doleful hymn to his own death,
And from the organ-pipe of frailty sings
His soul and body to their lasting rest.

SALISBURY .

Be of good comfort, Prince; for you are born
To set a form upon that indigest
Which he hath left so shapeless and so rude.

Re-enter BIGOT and attendants, who bring in KING JOHN in a chair

KING JOHN.

Ay, marry, now my soul hath elbow-room;
It would not out at windows nor at doors.
There is so hot a summer in my bosom
That all my bowels crumble up to dust.
I am a scribbled form drawn with a pen
Upon a parchment, and against this fire
Do I shrink up.

PRINCE HENRY.

How fares your Majesty?

KING JOHN.

Poison'd-ill-fare! Dead, forsook, cast off;
And none of you will bid the winter come
To thrust his icy fingers in my maw,
Nor let my kingdom's rivers take their course
Through my burn'd bosom, nor entreat the north
To make his bleak winds kiss my parched lips
And comfort me with cold. I do not ask you much;
I beg cold comfort; and you are so strait
And so ingrateful you deny me that.

PRINCE HENRY.

O that there were some virtue in my tears,
That might relieve you!

KING JOHN.

The salt in them is hot.
Within me is a hell; and there the poison

Is as a fiend confin'd to tyrannize
On unreprievable condemned blood.

Enter the BASTARD

BASTARD.
O, I am scalded with my violent motion
And spleen of speed to see your Majesty!

KING JOHN.
O cousin, thou art come to set mine eye!
The tackle of my heart is crack'd and burnt,
And all the shrouds wherewith my life should sail
Are turned to one thread, one little hair;
My heart hath one poor string to stay it by,
Which holds but till thy news be uttered;
And then all this thou seest is but a clod
And module of confounded royalty.

BASTARD.
The Dauphin is preparing hitherward,

Where God He knows how we shall answer him;
For in a night the best part of my pow'r,
As I upon advantage did remove,
Were in the Washes all unwarily
Devoured by the unexpected flood. [The KING
dies]

SALISBURY .
You breathe these dead news in as dead an ear.

My liege! my lord! But now a king-now thus.

PRINCE HENRY.
Even so must I run on, and even so stop.
What surety of the world, what hope, what stay,
When this was now a king, and now is clay?

BASTARD.
Art thou gone so? I do but stay behind
To do the office for thee of revenge,
And then my soul shall wait on thee to heaven,

As it on earth hath been thy servant still.
Now, now, you stars that move in your right spheres,
Where be your pow'rs? Show now your mended faiths,
And instantly return with me again
To push destruction and perpetual shame
Out of the weak door of our fainting land.
Straight let us seek, or straight we shall be sought;
The Dauphin rages at our very heels.

SALISBURY .

It seems you know not, then, so much as we:
The Cardinal Pandulph is within at rest,
Who half an hour since came from the Dauphin,
And brings from him such offers of our peace
As we with honour and respect may take,
With purpose presently to leave this war.

BASTARD.

He will the rather do it when he sees
Ourselves well sinewed to our defence.

SALISBURY.

Nay, 'tis in a manner done already;

For many carriages he hath dispatch'd

To the sea-side, and put his cause and quarrel

To the disposing of the Cardinal;

With whom yourself, myself, and other lords,

If you think meet, this afternoon will post

To consummate this business happily.

BASTARD.

Let it be so. And you, my noble Prince,

With other princes that may best be spar'd,

Shall wait upon your father's funeral.

PRINCE HENRY.

At Worcester must his body be interr'd;

For so he will'd it.

BASTARD.

Thither shall it, then;

And happily may your sweet self put on

The lineal state and glory of the land!

To whom, with all submission, on my knee

I do bequeath my faithful services

And true subjection everlastingly.

SALISBURY .

And the like tender of our love we make,

To rest without a spot for evermore.

PRINCE HENRY.

I have a kind soul that would give you thanks,

And knows not how to do it but with tears.

BASTARD.

O, let us pay the time but needful woe,

Since it hath been beforehand with our griefs.

This England never did, nor never shall,

Lie at the proud foot of a conqueror,

But when it first did help to wound itself.

Now these her princes are come home again,

Come the three corners of the world in arms, And we shall shock them. Nought shall make us rue,

If England to itself do rest but true.

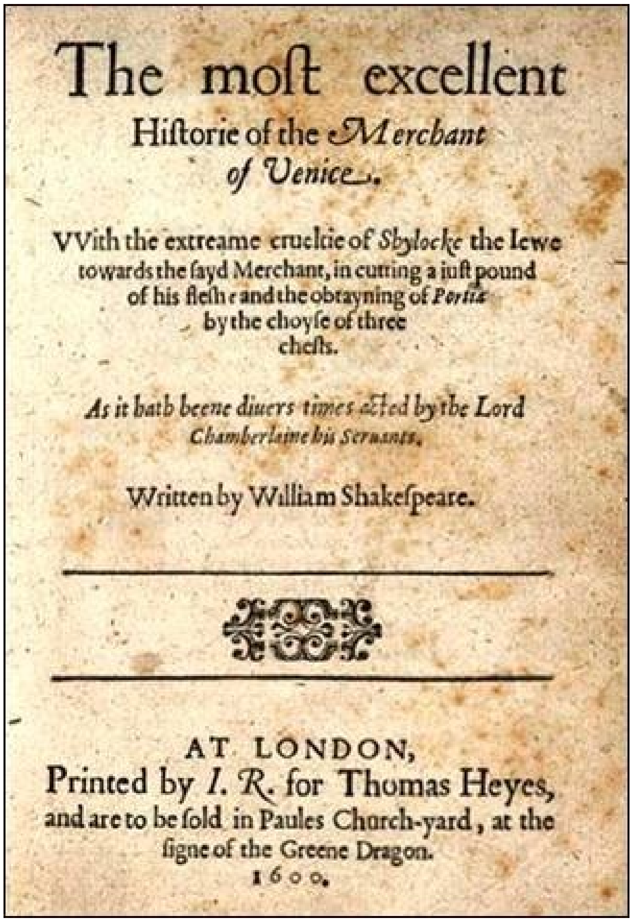
Exeunt

THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

This tragic comedy is believed to have been written between 1596 and 1598. Though classified as a comedy in the First Folio and sharing certain aspects with Shakespeare's other romantic comedies, the play is best known for its controversial elements, such as Shylock and the prejudiced treatment of Jews.

The story is set in the 14th century, when the city of Venice was one of the richest of the world. Among the wealthiest of its merchants is Antonio. Among the Christian community, he is known as a kind and generous person. Bassanio, a young Venetian, of noble rank but having squandered his estate, wishes to travel to Belmont to woo the beautiful and wealthy heiress Portia. He approaches his friend Antonio, who has previously and repeatedly bailed him out, for three thousand ducats needed to subsidise his travelling expenditures as a suitor for three months. Antonio agrees, but he is cash-poor; his ships and merchandise are busy at sea. He promises to cover a bond if Bassanio can find a lender, so Bassanio turns to the Jewish moneylender Shylock and names Antonio as the loan’s guarantor.

Shakespeare's main source text for this play is available via this link .



The moſt excellent
Hiſtorie of the *Merchant*
of Venice.

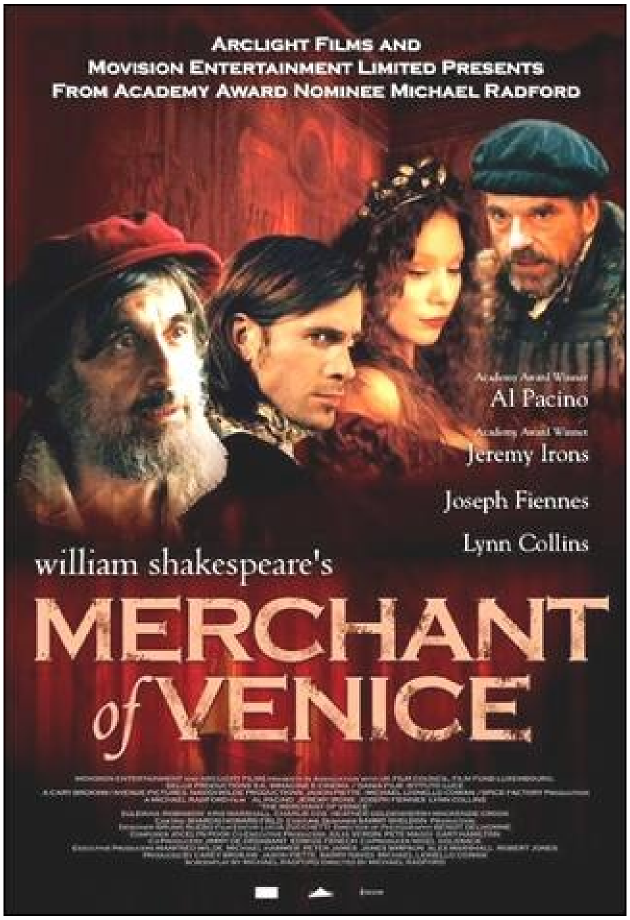
VVith the extreame crueltie of *Shylocke* the Iewe
towards the ſayd Merchant, in cutting a iuſt pound
of his fleſh: and the obtayning of *Portia*
by the choyſe of three
cheſts.

As it hath beene diuers times acted by the Lord
Chamberlaine his Seruants.

Written by William Shakeſpeare.

AT LONDON,
Printed by *I. R.* for Thomas Heyes,
and are to be ſold in Paules Church-yard, at the
ſigne of the Greene Dragon.
1600.

Title page of the 1600 first quarto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william shakespeare's
MERCHANT of VENICE

The 2004 film adaptation

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DRAMATIS PERSONAE

THE DUKE OF VENICE

THE PRINCE OF MOROCCO, suitor to Portia

THE PRINCE OF ARRAGON, " " "

ANTONIO, a merchant of Venice

BASSANIO, his friend, suitor to Portia

SOLANIO, friend to Antonio and Bassanio

SALERIO,

GRATIANO,

LORENZO, in love with Jessica

SHYLOCK, a rich Jew

TUBAL, a Jew, his friend

LAUNCELOT GOBBO, a clown, servant to Shylock

OLD GOBBO, father to Launcelot

LEONARDO, servant to Bassanio

BALTHASAR, servant to Portia

STEPHANO

PORTIA, a rich heiress

NERISSA, her waiting-maid

JESSICA, daughter to Shylock

Magnificoes of Venice, Officers of the Court of Justice,

Gaoler, Servants, and other Attendants

SCENE: Venice, and PORTIA'S house at Belmont

ACT I. SCENE I. Venice. A street

Enter ANTONIO, SALERIO, and SOLANIO

ANTONIO.

In sooth, I know not why I am so sad.
It wearies me; you say it wearies you;
But how I caught it, found it, or came by it,
What stuff 'tis made of, whereof it is born,
I am to learn;
And such a want-wit sadness makes of me
That I have much ado to know myself.

SALERIO.

Your mind is tossing on the ocean;
There where your argosies, with portly sail-
Like signiors and rich burghers on the flood,
Or as it were the pageants of the sea-

Do overpeer the petty traffickers,

That curtsy to them, do them reverence,

As they fly by them with their woven wings.

SOLANIO.

Believe me, sir, had I such venture forth,

The better part of my affections would

Be with my hopes abroad. I should be still

Plucking the grass to know where sits the wind,

Peering in maps for ports, and piers, and roads;

And every object that might make me fear

Misfortune to my ventures, out of doubt,

Would make me sad.

SALERIO.

My wind, cooling my broth,

Would blow me to an ague when I thought

What harm a wind too great might do at sea.

I should not see the sandy hour-glass run

But I should think of shallows and of flats,

And see my wealthy Andrew dock'd in sand,

Vailing her high top lower than her ribs
To kiss her burial. Should I go to church
And see the holy edifice of stone,
And not bethink me straight of dangerous rocks,
Which, touching but my gentle vessel's side,
Would scatter all her spices on the stream,
Enrobe the roaring waters with my silks,
And, in a word, but even now worth this,
And now worth nothing? Shall I have the thought
To think on this, and shall I lack the thought
That such a thing bechanc'd would make me sad?
But tell not me; I know Antonio
Is sad to think upon his merchandise.

ANTONIO.

Believe me, no; I thank my fortune for it,
My ventures are not in one bottom trusted,
Nor to one place; nor is my whole estate
Upon the fortune of this present year;
Therefore my merchandise makes me not sad.

SOLANIO.

Why then you are in love.

ANTONIO.

Fie, fie!

SOLANIO.

Not in love neither? Then let us say you are sad
Because you are not merry; and 'twere as easy
For you to laugh and leap and say you are merry,
Because you are not sad. Now, by two-headed Janus,
Nature hath fram'd strange fellows in her time:
Some that will evermore peep through their eyes,
And laugh like parrots at a bag-piper;
And other of such vinegar aspect
That they'll not show their teeth in way of smile
Though Nestor swear the jest be laughable.

Enter BASSANIO, LORENZO, and GRATIANO

Here comes Bassanio, your most noble kinsman,

Gratiano and Lorenzo. Fare ye well;

We leave you now with better company.

SALERIO.

I would have stay'd till I had made you merry,

If worthier friends had not prevented me.

ANTONIO.

Your worth is very dear in my regard.

I take it your own business calls on you,

And you embrace th' occasion to depart.

SALERIO.

Good morrow, my good lords.

BASSANIO.

Good signiors both, when shall we laugh? Say when.

You grow exceeding strange; must it be so?

SALERIO.

We'll make our leisures to attend on yours.

Exeunt SALERIO and SOLANIO

LORENZO.

My Lord Bassanio, since you have found Antonio,

We two will leave you; but at dinner-time,

I pray you, have in mind where we must meet.

BASSANIO.

I will not fail you.

GRATIANO.

You look not well, Signior Antonio;

You have too much respect upon the world;

They lose it that do buy it with much care.

Believe me, you are marvellously chang'd.

ANTONIO.

I hold the world but as the world, Gratiano-

A stage, where every man must play a part, And mine a sad one.

GRATIANO.

Let me play the fool.

With mirth and laughter let old wrinkles come;

And let my liver rather heat with wine

Than my heart cool with mortifying groans.

Why should a man whose blood is warm within

Sit like his grandsire cut in alabaster,

Sleep when he wakes, and creep into the jaundice

By being peevish? I tell thee what, Antonio-

I love thee, and 'tis my love that speaks-

There are a sort of men whose visages

Do cream and mantle like a standing pond,

And do a wilful stillness entertain,

With purpose to be dress'd in an opinion

Of wisdom, gravity, profound conceit;

As who should say 'I am Sir Oracle,

And when I ope my lips let no dog bark.'

O my Antonio, I do know of these

That therefore only are reputed wise

For saying nothing; when, I am very sure,

If they should speak, would almost damn those ears

Which, hearing them, would call their brothers fools.

I'll tell thee more of this another time.

But fish not with this melancholy bait

For this fool gudgeon, this opinion.

Come, good Lorenzo. Fare ye well awhile;

I'll end my exhortation after dinner.

LORENZO.

Well, we will leave you then till dinner-time.

I must be one of these same dumb wise men,

For Gratiano never lets me speak.

GRATIANO.

Well, keep me company but two years moe,

Thou shalt not know the sound of thine own tongue.

ANTONIO.

Fare you well; I'll grow a talker for this gear.

GRATIANO.

Thanks, i' faith, for silence is only commendable

In a neat's tongue dried, and a maid not vendible.

Exeunt GRATIANO and LORENZO

ANTONIO.

Is that anything now?

BASSANIO.

Gratiano speaks an infinite deal of nothing, more than

any man in all Venice. His reasons are as two grains of wheat hid

in, two bushels of chaff: you shall seek all day ere you find

them, and when you have them they are not worth the search.

ANTONIO.

Well; tell me now what lady is the same

To whom you swore a secret pilgrimage,

That you to-day promis'd to tell me of?

BASSANIO.

'Tis not unknown to you, Antonio,
How much I have disabled mine estate
By something showing a more swelling port
Than my faint means would grant continuance;
Nor do I now make moan to be abridg'd
From such a noble rate; but my chief care
Is to come fairly off from the great debts
Wherein my time, something too prodigal,
Hath left me gag'd. To you, Antonio,
I owe the most, in money and in love;
And from your love I have a warranty
To unburden all my plots and purposes
How to get clear of all the debts I owe.

ANTONIO.

I pray you, good Bassanio, let me know it;
And if it stand, as you yourself still do,
Within the eye of honour, be assur'd
My purse, my person, my extremest means,
Lie all unlock'd to your occasions.

BASSANIO.

In my school-days, when I had lost one shaft,
I shot his fellow of the self-same flight
The self-same way, with more advised watch,
To find the other forth; and by adventuring both
I oft found both. I urge this childhood proof,
Because what follows is pure innocence.
I owe you much; and, like a wilful youth,
That which I owe is lost; but if you please
To shoot another arrow that self way
Which you did shoot the first, I do not doubt,
As I will watch the aim, or to find both,
Or bring your latter hazard back again
And thankfully rest debtor for the first.

ANTONIO.

You know me well, and herein spend but time
To wind about my love with circumstance;
And out of doubt you do me now more wrong
In making question of my uttermost

Than if you had made waste of all I have.
Then do but say to me what I should do
That in your knowledge may by me be done,
And I am prest unto it; therefore, speak.

BASSANIO.
In Belmont is a lady richly left,
And she is fair and, fairer than that word,
Of wondrous virtues. Sometimes from her eyes
I did receive fair speechless messages.
Her name is Portia-nothing undervalu'd
To Cato's daughter, Brutus' Portia.
Nor is the wide world ignorant of her worth;
For the four winds blow in from every coast
Renowned suitors, and her sunny locks
Hang on her temples like a golden fleece,
Which makes her seat of Belmont Colchos' strond,
And many Jasons come in quest of her.
O my Antonio, had I but the means
To hold a rival place with one of them,
I have a mind presages me such thrift

That I should questionless be fortunate.

ANTONIO.

Thou know'st that all my fortunes are at sea;

Neither have I money nor commodity

To raise a present sum; therefore go forth,

Try what my credit can in Venice do;

That shall be rack'd, even to the uttermost,

To furnish thee to Belmont to fair Portia.

Go presently inquire, and so will I,

Where money is; and I no question make

To have it of my trust or for my sake. *Exeunt*

SCENE II. Belmont. PORTIA'S house

Enter PORTIA with her waiting-woman, NERISSA

PORTIA.

By my troth, Nerissa, my little body is aweary of this great world. NERISSA. You would be, sweet madam, if your miseries were in the same abundance as your good fortunes are; and yet, for aught I see, they are as sick that surfeit with too much as they that starve with nothing. It is no mean happiness, therefore, to be seated in the mean: superfluity come sooner by white hairs, but competency lives longer. PORTIA. Good sentences, and well pronounc'd. NERISSA. They would be better, if well followed. PORTIA. If to do were as easy as to know what were good to do, chapels had been churches, and poor men's cottages princes' palaces. It is a good divine that follows his own instructions; I can easier teach twenty what were good to be done than to be one of the twenty to follow mine own teaching. The brain may devise laws for the blood, but a hot temper leaps o'er a cold decree; such a hare is madness the youth, to skip o'er the meshes of good counsel the cripple. But this reasoning is not in the fashion to choose me a husband. O me, the word 'choose'! I may neither choose who I would nor refuse who I dislike; so is the will of a living daughter curb'd by the will of a dead father. Is it not hard, Nerissa, that I cannot choose one, nor refuse none? NERISSA. Your father was ever virtuous, and holy men at their death have good inspirations; therefore the lott'ry that he hath devised in these three chests, of gold, silver, and lead-whereof who chooses his meaning chooses you-will no doubt never be chosen by any rightly but one who you shall rightly love. But what warmth is there in your affection towards any of these princely suitors that are already come? PORTIA. I pray thee over-name them; and as thou namest them, I will describe them; and according to my description, level at my affection. NERISSA. First, there is the Neapolitan prince. PORTIA. Ay, that's a colt indeed, for he doth nothing but talk of his horse; and he makes it a great appropriation to his own good parts that he can shoe him himself; I am much afear'd my lady his mother play'd false with a smith. NERISSA. Then is there the County Palatine. PORTIA. He doth nothing but frown, as who should say 'An you will not have me, choose.' He hears merry tales and smiles not. I fear he will prove the weeping philosopher when he grows old, being so full of unmannerly sadness in his youth. I had rather be married to a death's-head with a bone in his mouth than to either of these. God defend me from these two! NERISSA. How say you by the French lord, Monsieur Le Bon? PORTIA. God made him, and therefore let him pass for a man. In truth, I know it is a sin to be a mocker, but he-why, he hath a horse better than the Neapolitan's, a better bad habit of frowning than the Count Palatine; he is every man in no man. If a throstle sing he falls straight a-cap'ring; he will fence with his own shadow; if I should marry him, I should marry twenty husbands. If he would despise me, I would forgive him; for if he love me to madness, I shall never requite him. NERISSA. What say you then to Falconbridge, the young baron of England? PORTIA. You know I say nothing to him, for he understands not me, nor I him: he hath neither Latin, French, nor Italian, and you will come into the court and swear that I have a poor pennyworth in the English. He is a proper man's picture; but alas, who can converse with a dumb-show? How oddly he is suited! I think he bought his doublet in Italy, his round hose in France, his bonnet in Germany, and his behaviour everywhere. NERISSA. What think you of the Scottish lord, his neighbour? PORTIA. That he hath a neighbourly charity in him, for he borrowed a box of the ear of the Englishman, and swore he would pay him again when he was able; I think the Frenchman became his surety, and seal'd under for another. NERISSA. How like you the young German, the Duke of Saxony's nephew? PORTIA. Very vilely in the morning when he is sober; and most vilely in the afternoon when he is drunk. When he is best, he is a little worse than a man, and when he is worst, he is little better than a beast. An the worst fall that ever fell, I hope I shall make shift to go without him. NERISSA. If he should offer to choose, and choose the right casket, you should refuse to perform your father's will, if you should refuse to accept him. PORTIA. Therefore, for fear of the worst, I pray thee set a deep glass of Rhenish wine on the contrary casket; for if the devil be within and that temptation without, I know he will choose it. I will do anything, Nerissa, ere I will be married to a sponge. NERISSA. You need not fear, lady, the having any of these lords; they have acquainted me with their determinations, which is indeed to return to their home, and to trouble you with no more suit, unless you may be won by some other sort than your father's imposition, depending on the caskets. PORTIA. If I live to be as old as Sibylla, I will die as chaste as Diana, unless I be obtained by the manner of my father's will. I am glad this parcel of wooers are so reasonable; for there is not one among them but I dote on his very absence, and I pray God grant them a fair departure. NERISSA. Do you not remember, lady, in your father's time, a Venetian, a scholar and a soldier, that came hither in company of the Marquis of Montferrat? PORTIA. Yes, yes, it was Bassanio; as I think, so was he call'd. NERISSA. True, madam; he, of all the men that ever my foolish eyes look'd upon, was the best deserving a fair lady. PORTIA. I remember him well, and I remember him worthy of thy praise.

Enter a SERVINGMAN

How now! what news?

SERVINGMAN.

The four strangers seek for you, madam, to take their

leave; and there is a forerunner come from a fifth, the Prince of

Morocco, who brings word the Prince his master will be here

to-night.

PORTIA.

If I could bid the fifth welcome with so good heart as

I

can bid the other four farewell, I should be glad of his

approach; if he have the condition of a saint and the complexion

of a devil, I had rather he should shrive me than wive me.

Come, Nerissa. Sirrah, go before.

Whiles we shut the gate upon one wooer, another knocks at the

door. *Exeunt*

SCENE III. Venice. A public place

Enter BASSANIO With SHYLOCK the Jew

SHYLOCK.

Three thousand ducats-well.

BASSANIO.

Ay, sir, for three months.

SHYLOCK.

For three months-well.

BASSANIO.

For the which, as I told you, Antonio shall be bound.

SHYLOCK.

Antonio shall become bound-well.

BASSANIO.

May you stead me? Will you pleasure me? Shall I know your answer?

SHYLOCK.

Three thousand ducats for three months, and Antonio bound.

BASSANIO.

Your answer to that.

SHYLOCK.
Antonio is a good man.

BASSANIO.

Have you heard any imputation to the contrary?

SHYLOCK.
Ho, no, no, no, no; my meaning in saying he is a good man
is to have you understand me that he is sufficient; yet his means
are in supposition: he hath an argosy bound to Tripolis, another
to the Indies; I understand, moreover, upon the Rialto, he hath a
third at Mexico, a fourth for England-and other ventures he
hath, squand'red abroad. But ships are but boards, sailors but
men; there be land-rats and water-rats, water-thieves and

land-thieves- I mean pirates; and then there is the peril of

waters, winds, and rocks. The man is, notwithstanding,

sufficient. Three thousand ducats-I think I may take his bond.

BASSANIO.

Be assur'd you may.

SHYLOCK.

I will be assur'd I may; and, that I may be assured, I

will bethink me. May I speak with Antonio?

BASSANIO.

If it please you to dine with us.

SHYLOCK.

Yes, to smell pork, to eat of the habitation which your

prophet, the Nazarite, conjured the devil into! I will buy with

you, sell with you, talk with you, walk with you, and so

following; but I will not eat with you, drink with you, nor pray

with you. What news on the Rialto? Who is he comes here?

Enter ANTONIO

BASSANIO.

This is Signior Antonio.

SHYLOCK.

[Aside] How like a fawning publican he looks!

I hate him for he is a Christian;

But more for that in low simplicity

He lends out money gratis, and brings down

The rate of usance here with us in Venice.

If I can catch him once upon the hip,

I will feed fat the ancient grudge I bear him.

He hates our sacred nation; and he rails,

Even there where merchants most do congregate,

On me, my bargains, and my well-won thrift,

Which he calls interest. Cursed be my tribe

If I forgive him!

BASSANIO.

Shylock, do you hear?

SHYLOCK.

I am debating of my present store,

And, by the near guess of my memory,

I cannot instantly raise up the gross

Of full three thousand ducats. What of that?

Tubal, a wealthy Hebrew of my tribe,

Will furnish me. But soft! how many months

Do you desire? *[To ANTONIO]* Rest you fair, good signior;

Your worship was the last man in our mouths.

ANTONIO.

Shylock, albeit I neither lend nor borrow

By taking nor by giving of excess,

Yet, to supply the ripe wants of my friend,

I'll break a custom. *[To BASSANIO]* Is he yet possess'd

How much ye would?

SHYLOCK.

Ay, ay, three thousand ducats.

ANTONIO.

And for three months.

SHYLOCK.

I had forgot-three months; you told me so.

Well then, your bond; and, let me see-but hear you,

Methoughts you said you neither lend nor borrow

Upon advantage.

ANTONIO.

I do never use it.

SHYLOCK.

When Jacob graz'd his uncle Laban's sheep-

This Jacob from our holy Abram was,

As his wise mother wrought in his behalf, The third possessor; ay, he was the third-

ANTONIO.

And what of him? Did he take interest?

SHYLOCK.

No, not take interest; not, as you would say,
Directly int'rest; mark what Jacob did:
When Laban and himself were compromis'd
That all the eanlings which were streak'd and pied
Should fall as Jacob's hire, the ewes, being rank,
In end of autumn turned to the rams;
And when the work of generation was
Between these woolly breeders in the act,
The skilful shepherd pill'd me certain wands,
And, in the doing of the deed of kind,
He stuck them up before the fulsome ewes,
Who, then conceiving, did in eaning time
Fall parti-colour'd lambs, and those were Jacob's.
This was a way to thrive, and he was blest;
And thrift is blessing, if men steal it not.

ANTONIO.

This was a venture, sir, that Jacob serv'd for;
A thing not in his power to bring to pass,
But sway'd and fashion'd by the hand of heaven.

Was this inserted to make interest good?
Or is your gold and silver ewes and rams?

SHYLOCK.

I cannot tell; I make it breed as fast.
But note me, signior.

ANTONIO.

[Aside] Mark you this, Bassanio,
The devil can cite Scripture for his purpose.
An evil soul producing holy witness
Is like a villain with a smiling cheek,
A goodly apple rotten at the heart.
O, what a goodly outside falsehood hath!

SHYLOCK.

Three thousand ducats- 'tis a good round sum.
Three months from twelve; then let me see, the rate-

ANTONIO.

Well, Shylock, shall we be beholding to you?

SHYLOCK.
Signior Antonio, many a time and oft
In the Rialto you have rated me
About my moneys and my usances;
Still have I borne it with a patient shrug,
For suff'rance is the badge of all our tribe;
You call me misbeliever, cut-throat dog,
And spit upon my Jewish gaberdine,
And all for use of that which is mine own.
Well then, it now appears you need my help;
Go to, then; you come to me, and you say

'Shylock, we would have moneys.' You say so-

You that did void your rheum upon my beard

And foot me as you spurn a stranger cur

Over your threshold; moneys is your suit.

What should I say to you? Should I not say

'Hath a dog money? Is it possible

A cur can lend three thousand ducats?' Or

Shall I bend low and, in a bondman's key,

With bated breath and whisp'ring humbleness,

Say this:

'Fair sir, you spit on me on Wednesday last,

You spurn'd me such a day; another time

You call'd me dog; and for these courtesies

I'll lend you thus much moneys'?

ANTONIO.

I am as like to call thee so again,

To spit on thee again, to spurn thee too.

If thou wilt lend this money, lend it not

As to thy friends-for when did friendship take

A breed for barren metal of his friend?-

But lend it rather to thine enemy,
Who if he break thou mayst with better face
Exact the penalty.

SHYLOCK.

Why, look you, how you storm!
I would be friends with you, and have your love,
Forget the shames that you have stain'd me with,
Supply your present wants, and take no doit
Of usance for my moneys, and you'll not hear me.

This is kind I offer.

BASSANIO.

This were kindness.

SHYLOCK.

This kindness will I show.
Go with me to a notary, seal me there
Your single bond, and, in a merry sport,

If you repay me not on such a day,

In such a place, such sum or sums as are

Express'd in the condition, let the forfeit

Be nominated for an equal pound

Of your fair flesh, to be cut off and taken

In what part of your body pleaseth me.

ANTONIO.

Content, in faith; I'll seal to such a bond,

And say there is much kindness in the Jew.

BASSANIO.

You shall not seal to such a bond for me;

I'll rather dwell in my necessity.

ANTONIO.

Why, fear not, man; I will not forfeit it;

Within these two months-that's a month before

This bond expires-I do expect return

Of thrice three times the value of this bond.

SHYLOCK.

O father Abram, what these Christians are,
Whose own hard dealings teaches them suspect
The thoughts of others! Pray you, tell me this:
If he should break his day, what should I gain
By the exaction of the forfeiture?
A pound of man's flesh taken from a man
Is not so estimable, profitable neither,
As flesh of muttons, beefs, or goats. I say,
To buy his favour, I extend this friendship;
If he will take it, so; if not, adieu;
And, for my love, I pray you wrong me not.

ANTONIO.

Yes, Shylock, I will seal unto this bond.

SHYLOCK.

Then meet me forthwith at the notary's;
Give him direction for this merry bond,
And I will go and purse the ducats straight,

See to my house, left in the fearful guard

Of an unthrifty knave, and presently

I'll be with you.

ANTONIO.

Hie thee, gentle Jew. *Exit* SHYLOCK

The Hebrew will turn Christian: he grows kind.

BASSANIO.

I like not fair terms and a villain's mind.

ANTONIO.

Come on; in this there can be no dismay;

My ships come home a month before the day. *Exeunt*

ACT II. SCENE I. Belmont. PORTIA'S house

Flourish of cornets. *Enter* the PRINCE of MOROCCO, a tawny Moor all in white, and three or four FOLLOWERS accordingly, with PORTIA, NERISSA, and train

PRINCE OF Morocco. Mislike me not for my complexion,

The shadowed livery of the burnish'd sun,

To whom I am a neighbour, and near bred.

Bring me the fairest creature northward born,

Where Phoebus' fire scarce thaws the icicles,

And let us make incision for your love

To prove whose blood is reddest, his or mine.

I tell thee, lady, this aspect of mine

Hath fear'd the valiant; by my love, I swear

The best-regarded virgins of our clime

Have lov'd it too. I would not change this hue,

Except to steal your thoughts, my gentle queen.

PORTIA.

In terms of choice I am not solely led

By nice direction of a maiden's eyes;

Besides, the lott'ry of my destiny

Bars me the right of voluntary choosing.

But, if my father had not scanted me,

And hedg'd me by his wit to yield myself

His wife who wins me by that means I told you,

Yourself, renowned Prince, then stood as fair
As any comer I have look'd on yet
For my affection.

PRINCE OF MOROCCO.
Even for that I thank you.
Therefore, I pray you, lead me to the caskets
To try my fortune. By this scimitar,
That slew the Sophy and a Persian prince,
That won three fields of Sultan Solyman,
I would o'erstare the sternest eyes that look,
Outbrave the heart most daring on the earth,
Pluck the young sucking cubs from the she-bear,
Yea, mock the lion when 'a roars for prey,
To win thee, lady. But, alas the while!
If Hercules and Lichas play at dice
Which is the better man, the greater throw
May turn by fortune from the weaker band.
So is Alcides beaten by his page;
And so may I, blind Fortune leading me,
Miss that which one unworthier may attain,

And die with grieving.

PORTIA.

You must take your chance,

And either not attempt to choose at all,

Or swear before you choose, if you choose wrong,

Never to speak to lady afterward

In way of marriage; therefore be advis'd.

PRINCE OF MOROCCO.

Nor will not; come, bring me unto my chance.

PORTIA.

First, forward to the temple. After dinner

Your hazard shall be made.

PRINCE OF MOROCCO.

Good fortune then,

To make me blest or cursed'st among men!

[Cornets, and exeunt]

SCENE II. Venice. A street

Enter LAUNCELOT GOBBO

LAUNCELOT.

Certainly my conscience will serve me to run from this
Jew my master. The fiend is at mine elbow and tempts me, saying
to me 'Gobbo, Launcelot Gobbo, good Launcelot' or 'good
Gobbo' or
'good Launcelot Gobbo, use your legs, take the start, run away.'
My conscience says 'No; take heed, honest Launcelot, take heed,
honest Gobbo' or, as aforesaid, 'honest Launcelot Gobbo, do not
run; scorn running with thy heels.' Well, the most courageous
fiend bids me pack. 'Via!' says the fiend; 'away!' says the
fiend. 'For the heavens, rouse up a brave mind' says the fiend
'and run.' Well, my conscience, hanging about the neck of my
heart, says very wisely to me 'My honest friend Launcelot, being
an honest man's son' or rather 'an honest woman's son'; for
indeed my father did something smack, something grow to, he had a
kind of taste-well, my conscience says 'Launcelot, budge not.'

'Budge,' says the fiend. 'Budge not,' says my conscience.

'Conscience,' say I, (you counsel well.' 'Fiend,' say I, 'you

counsel well.' To be rul'd by my conscience, I should stay with

the Jew my master, who-God bless the mark!- is a kind of devil;

and, to run away from the Jew, I should be ruled by the fiend,

who-saving your reverence!- is the devil himself. Certainly the

Jew is the very devil incarnation; and, in my conscience, my

conscience is but a kind of hard conscience to offer to counsel

me to stay with the Jew. The fiend gives the more friendly

counsel. I will run, fiend; my heels are at your commandment;

I

will run.

Enter OLD GOBBO, with a basket

GOBBO.

Master young man, you, I pray you, which is the way to master Jew's? LAUNCELOT. *[Aside]* O heavens! This is my true-begotten father, who, being more than sand-blind, high-gravel blind, knows me not. I will try confusions with him. GOBBO. Master young gentleman, I pray you, which is the way to master Jew's? LAUNCELOT. Turn up on your right hand at the next turning, but, at the next turning of all, on your left; marry, at the very next turning, turn of no hand, but turn down indirectly to the Jew's house. GOBBO. Be God's sonties, 'twill be a hard way to hit! Can you tell me whether one Launcelot, that dwells with him, dwell with him or no? LAUNCELOT. Talk you of young Master Launcelot? *[Aside]* Mark me now; now will I raise the waters.- Talk you of young Master Launcelot? GOBBO. No master, sir, but a poor man's son; his father, though I say't, is an honest exceeding poor man, and, God be thanked, well to live. LAUNCELOT. Well, let his father be what 'a will, we talk of young Master Launcelot. GOBBO. Your worship's friend, and Launcelot, sir. LAUNCELOT. But I pray you, ergo, old man, ergo, I beseech you, talk you of young Master Launcelot? GOBBO. Of Launcelot, an't please your mastership. LAUNCELOT. Ergo, Master Launcelot. Talk not of Master Launcelot, father; for the young gentleman, according to Fates and Destinies and such odd sayings, the Sisters Three and such branches of learning, is indeed deceased; or, as you would say in plain terms, gone to heaven. GOBBO. Marry, God forbid! The boy was the very staff of my age, my very prop. LAUNCELOT. Do I look like a cudgel or a hovel-post, a staff or a prop? Do you know me, father? GOBBO. Alack the day, I know you not, young gentleman; but I pray you tell me, is my boy-God rest his soul!- alive or dead? LAUNCELOT. Do you not know me, father? GOBBO. Alack, sir, I am sand-blind; I know you not. LAUNCELOT. Nay, indeed, if you had your eyes, you might fail of the knowing me: it is a wise father that knows his own child. Well, old man, I will tell you news of your son. Give me your blessing; truth will come to light; murder cannot be hid long; a man's son may, but in the end truth will out. GOBBO. Pray you, sir, stand up; I am sure you are not Launcelot my boy. LAUNCELOT. Pray you, let's have no more fooling about it, but give me your blessing; I am Launcelot, your boy that was, your son that is, your child that shall be. GOBBO. I cannot think you are my son. LAUNCELOT. I know not what I shall think of that; but I am Launcelot, the Jew's man, and I am sure Margery your wife is my mother. GOBBO. Her name is Margery, indeed. I'll be sworn, if thou be Launcelot, thou art mine own flesh and blood. Lord worshipp'd might he be, what a beard hast thou got! Thou hast got more hair on thy chin than Dobbin my fill-horse has on his tail. LAUNCELOT. It should seem, then, that Dobbin's tail grows backward; I am sure he had more hair of his tail than I have of my face when I last saw him. GOBBO. Lord, how art thou chang'd! How dost thou and thy master agree? I have brought him a present. How 'gree you now? LAUNCELOT. Well, well; but, for mine own part, as I have set up my rest to run away, so I will not rest till I have run some ground. My master's a very Jew. Give him a present! Give him a halter. I am famish'd in his service; you may tell every finger I have with my ribs. Father, I am glad you are come; give me your present to one Master Bassanio, who indeed gives rare new liveries; if I serve not him, I will run as far as God has any ground. O rare fortune! Here comes the man. To him, father, for

I am a Jew, if I serve the Jew any longer.

Enter BASSANIO, with LEONARDO, with a FOLLOWER or two

BASSANIO.
You may do so; but let it be so hasted that supper be
ready at the farthest by five of the clock. See these letters
delivered, put the liveries to making, and desire Gratiano to
come anon to my lodging. *Exit* a SERVANT
LAUNCELOT.

To him, father.

GOBBO.
God bless your worship!

BASSANIO.

Gramercy; wouldst thou aught with me?

GOBBO.

Here's my son, sir, a poor boy-

LAUNCELOT.

Not a poor boy, sir, but the rich Jew's man, that would,

sir, as my father shall specify-

GOBBO.

He hath a great infection, sir, as one would say, to

serve-

LAUNCELOT.

Indeed the short and the long is, I serve the Jew, and

have a desire, as my father shall specify-

GOBBO.

His master and he, saving your worship's reverence, are

scarce cater-cousins-

LAUNCELOT.

To be brief, the very truth is that the Jew, having done

me wrong, doth cause me, as my father, being I hope an old man, shall frutify unto you-

GOBBO.

I have here a dish of doves that I would bestow upon your
worship; and my suit is-

LAUNCELOT.

In very brief, the suit is impertinent to myself, as
your worship shall know by this honest old man; and, though I say
it, though old man, yet poor man, my father.

BASSANIO.

One speak for both. What would you?

LAUNCELOT.

Serve you, sir.

GOBBO.

That is the very defect of the matter, sir.

BASSANIO.

I know thee well; thou hast obtain'd thy suit.

Shylock thy master spoke with me this day,

And hath preferr'd thee, if it be preferment

To leave a rich Jew's service to become

The follower of so poor a gentleman.

LAUNCELOT.

The old proverb is very well parted between my master

Shylock and you, sir: you have the grace of God, sir, and he hath enough.

BASSANIO.

Thou speak'st it well. Go, father, with thy son.

Take leave of thy old master, and inquire

My lodging out. *[To a SERVANT]* Give him a livery

More guarded than his fellows'; see it done.

LAUNCELOT.

Father, in. I cannot get a service, no! I have ne'er a tongue in my head! *[Looking on his palm]* Well; if any man in

Italy have a fairer table which doth offer to swear upon a

book-I

shall have good fortune. Go to, here's a simple line of life;

here's a small trifle of wives; alas, fifteen wives is nothing;

a'leven widows and nine maids is a simple coming-in for one man.

And then to scape drowning thrice, and to be in peril of my life

with the edge of a feather-bed-here are simple scapes. Well, if

Fortune be a woman, she's a good wench for this gear. Father,

come; I'll take my leave of the Jew in the twinkling.

Exeunt LAUNCELOT and OLD GOBBO

BASSANIO.

I pray thee, good Leonardo, think on this.

These things being bought and orderly bestowed,

Return in haste, for I do feast to-night

My best esteem'd acquaintance; hie thee, go.

LEONARDO.

My best endeavours shall be done herein.

Enter GRATIANO

GRATIANO.

Where's your master?

LEONARDO.

Yonder, sir, he walks. *Exit*

GRATIANO. Signior Bassanio!

BASSANIO.

Gratiano!

GRATIANO.

I have suit to you.

BASSANIO.

You have obtain'd it.

GRATIANO.

You must not deny me: I must go with you to Belmont.

BASSANIO.

Why, then you must. But hear thee, Gratiano:

Thou art too wild, too rude, and bold of voice-

Parts that become thee happily enough,

And in such eyes as ours appear not faults;

But where thou art not known, why there they show

Something too liberal. Pray thee, take pain

To allay with some cold drops of modesty

Thy skipping spirit; lest through thy wild behaviour

I be misconst'red in the place I go to

And lose my hopes.

GRATIANO.

Signior Bassanio, hear me:

If I do not put on a sober habit,

Talk with respect, and swear but now and then,

Wear prayer-books in my pocket, look demurely,
Nay more, while grace is saying hood mine eyes
Thus with my hat, and sigh, and say amen,
Use all the observance of civility
Like one well studied in a sad ostent
To please his grandam, never trust me more.

BASSANIO.

Well, we shall see your bearing.

GRATIANO.
Nay, but I bar to-night; you shall not gauge me
By what we do to-night.

BASSANIO.
No, that were pity;
I would entreat you rather to put on
Your boldest suit of mirth, for we have friends
That purpose merriment. But fare you well;
I have some business.

GRATIANO.

And I must to Lorenzo and the rest;

But we will visit you at suppertime. *Exeunt*

SCENE III. Venice. SHYLOCK'S house

Enter JESSICA and LAUNCELOT

JESSICA.

I am sorry thou wilt leave my father so.

Our house is hell; and thou, a merry devil,

Didst rob it of some taste of tediousness.

But fare thee well; there is a ducat for thee;

And, Launcelot, soon at supper shalt thou see

Lorenzo, who is thy new master's guest.

Give him this letter; do it secretly.

And so farewell. I would not have my father

See me in talk with thee.

LAUNCELOT.

Adieu! tears exhibit my tongue. Most beautiful pagan,

most sweet Jew! If a Christian do not play the knave and get

thee, I am much deceived. But, adieu! these foolish drops do

something drown my manly spirit; adieu!

JESSICA.

Farewell, good Launcelot. *Exit* LAUNCELOT

Alack, what heinous sin is it in me

To be asham'd to be my father's child!

But though I am a daughter to his blood,

I am not to his manners. O Lorenzo,

If thou keep promise, I shall end this strife,

Become a Christian and thy loving wife. *Exit*

SCENE IV. Venice. A street

Enter GRATIANO, LORENZO, SALERIO, and SOLANIO

LORENZO.

Nay, we will slink away in suppertime,

Disguise us at my lodging, and return

All in an hour.

GRATIANO.

We have not made good preparation.

SALERIO.

We have not spoke us yet of torch-bearers.

SOLANIO.

'Tis vile, unless it may be quaintly ordered;

And better in my mind not undertook.

LORENZO.

'Tis now but four o'clock; we have two hours

To furnish us.

Enter LAUNCELOT, With a letter

Friend Launcelot, what's the news?

LAUNCELOT.

An it shall please you to break up this, it shall seem to signify.

LORENZO.

I know the hand; in faith, 'tis a fair hand,

And whiter than the paper it writ on

Is the fair hand that writ.

GRATIANO.

Love-news, in faith!

LAUNCELOT.

By your leave, sir.

LORENZO.

Whither goest thou?

LAUNCELOT.

Marry, sir, to bid my old master, the Jew, to sup

to-night with my new master, the Christian.

LORENZO.

Hold, here, take this. Tell gentle Jessica

I will not fail her; speak it privately.

Go, gentlemen, *Exit* LAUNCELOT

Will you prepare you for this masque to-night?

I am provided of a torch-bearer.

SALERIO.

Ay, marry, I'll be gone about it straight.

SOLANIO.

And so will I.

LORENZO.

Meet me and Gratiano

At Gratiano's lodging some hour hence.

SALERIO.

'Tis good we do so. *Exeunt* SALERIO and SOLANIO

GRATIANO.

Was not that letter from fair Jessica?

LORENZO.

I must needs tell thee all. She hath directed

How I shall take her from her father's house;

What gold and jewels she is furnish'd with;

What page's suit she hath in readiness.

If e'er the Jew her father come to heaven,

It will be for his gentle daughter's sake;

And never dare misfortune cross her foot,

Unless she do it under this excuse,

That she is issue to a faithless Jew.

Come, go with me, peruse this as thou goest;

Fair Jessica shall be my torch-bearer. *Exeunt*

SCENE V. Venice. Before SHYLOCK'S house

Enter SHYLOCK and LAUNCELOT

SHYLOCK.

Well, thou shalt see; thy eyes shall be thy judge,
The difference of old Shylock and Bassanio.-
What, Jessica!- Thou shalt not gormandize
As thou hast done with me-What, Jessica!-
And sleep and snore, and rend apparel out-
Why, Jessica, I say!

LAUNCELOT.

Why, Jessica!

SHYLOCK.

Who bids thee call? I do not bid thee call.

LAUNCELOT.

Your worship was wont to tell me I could do nothing without bidding.

Enter JESSICA

JESSICA.

Call you? What is your will?

SHYLOCK.

I am bid forth to supper, Jessica;

There are my keys. But wherefore should I go?

I am not bid for love; they flatter me;

But yet I'll go in hate, to feed upon

The prodigal Christian. Jessica, my girl,

Look to my house. I am right loath to go;

There is some ill a-brewing towards my rest,

For I did dream of money-bags to-night.

LAUNCELOT.

I beseech you, sir, go; my young master doth expect your reproach.

SHYLOCK.

So do I his.

LAUNCELOT.

And they have conspired together; I will not say you
shall see a masque, but if you do, then it was not for nothing
that my nose fell a-bleeding on Black Monday last at six o'clock
i' th' morning, falling out that year on Ash Wednesday was four
year, in th' afternoon.

SHYLOCK.
What, are there masques? Hear you me, Jessica:
Lock up my doors, and when you hear the drum,
And the vile squealing of the wry-neck'd fife,
Clamber not you up to the casements then,
Nor thrust your head into the public street
To gaze on Christian fools with varnish'd faces;
But stop my house's ears-I mean my casements;
Let not the sound of shallow fopp'ry enter
My sober house. By Jacob's staff, I swear
I have no mind of feasting forth to-night;
But I will go. Go you before me, sirrah;
Say I will come.

LAUNCELOT.

I will go before, sir. Mistress, look out at window for all this.

There will come a Christian by

Will be worth a Jewess' eye. *Exit*

SHYLOCK. What says that fool of Hagar's offspring, ha?

JESSICA.

His words were 'Farewell, mistress'; nothing else.

SHYLOCK.

The patch is kind enough, but a huge feeder,

Snail-slow in profit, and he sleeps by day

More than the wild-cat; drones hive not with me,

Therefore I part with him; and part with him

To one that I would have him help to waste

His borrowed purse. Well, Jessica, go in;

Perhaps I will return immediately.

Do as I bid you, shut doors after you.

Fast bind, fast find-

A proverb never stale in thrifty mind. *Exit*

JESSICA. Farewell; and if my fortune be not crost,
I have a father, you a daughter, lost. *Exit*

SCENE VI. Venice. Before SHYLOCK'S house

Enter the maskers, GRATIANO and SALERIO

GRATIANO.

This is the pent-house under which Lorenzo
Desired us to make stand.

SALERIO.

His hour is almost past.

GRATIANO.

And it is marvel he out-dwells his hour,
For lovers ever run before the clock.

SALERIO.

O, ten times faster Venus' pigeons fly

To seal love's bonds new made than they are wont

To keep obliged faith unforfeited!

GRATIANO.

That ever holds: who riseth from a feast

With that keen appetite that he sits down?

Where is the horse that doth untread again

His tedious measures with the unbated fire

That he did pace them first? All things that are

Are with more spirit chased than enjoyed.

How like a younker or a prodigal

The scarfed bark puts from her native bay,

Hugg'd and embraced by the strumpet wind;

How like the prodigal doth she return,

With over-weather'd ribs and ragged sails,

Lean, rent, and beggar'd by the strumpet wind!

Enter LORENZO

SALERIO.

Here comes Lorenzo; more of this hereafter.

LORENZO.

Sweet friends, your patience for my long abode!

Not I, but my affairs, have made you wait.

When you shall please to play the thieves for wives,

I'll watch as long for you then. Approach;

Here dwells my father Jew. Ho! who's within?

Enter JESSICA, above, in boy's clothes

JESSICA.

Who are you? Tell me, for more certainty,

Albeit I'll swear that I do know your tongue.

LORENZO.

Lorenzo, and thy love.

JESSICA.

Lorenzo, certain; and my love indeed;

For who love I so much? And now who knows

But you, Lorenzo, whether I am yours?

LORENZO.

Heaven and thy thoughts are witness that thou art.

JESSICA.

Here, catch this casket; it is worth the pains.

I am glad 'tis night, you do not look on me,

For I am much asham'd of my exchange;

But love is blind, and lovers cannot see

The pretty follies that themselves commit,

For, if they could, Cupid himself would blush

To see me thus transformed to a boy.

LORENZO.

Descend, for you must be my torch-bearer.

JESSICA.

What! must I hold a candle to my shames?

They in themselves, good sooth, are too too light.

Why, 'tis an office of discovery, love,

And I should be obscur'd.

LORENZO.

So are you, sweet,

Even in the lovely garnish of a boy.

But come at once,

For the close night doth play the runaway,

And we are stay'd for at Bassanio's feast.

JESSICA.

I will make fast the doors, and gild myself

With some moe ducats, and be with you straight.

Exit above

GRATIANO.

Now, by my hood, a gentle, and no Jew.

LORENZO.

Beshrew me, but I love her heartily,

For she is wise, if I can judge of her,

And fair she is, if that mine eyes be true,

And true she is, as she hath prov'd herself;

And therefore, like herself, wise, fair, and true,

Shall she be placed in my constant soul.

Enter JESSICA, below

What, art thou come? On, gentlemen, away;

Our masquing mates by this time for us stay.

Exit with JESSICA and SALERIO

Enter ANTONIO

ANTONIO.

Who's there?

GRATIANO.

Signior Antonio?

ANTONIO.

Fie, fie, Gratiano, where are all the rest?

'Tis nine o'clock; our friends all stay for you;

No masque to-night; the wind is come about;

Bassanio presently will go aboard;

I have sent twenty out to seek for you.

GRATIANO.

I am glad on't; I desire no more delight

Than to be under sail and gone to-night. *Exeunt*

SCENE VII. Belmont. PORTIA's house

Flourish of cornets. *Enter* PORTIA, with the PRINCE OF MOROCCO, and their trains

PORTIA.

Go draw aside the curtains and discover

The several caskets to this noble Prince.

Now make your choice.

PRINCE OF MOROCCO.

The first, of gold, who this inscription bears:

'Who chooseth me shall gain what many men desire.'

The second, silver, which this promise carries:

'Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves.'

This third, dull lead, with warning all as blunt:

'Who chooseth me must give and hazard all he hath.'

How shall I know if I do choose the right?

PORTIA.

The one of them contains my picture, Prince;

If you choose that, then I am yours withal.

PRINCE OF MOROCCO.

Some god direct my judgment! Let me see;

I will survey th' inscriptions back again.

What says this leaden casket?

'Who chooseth me must give and hazard all he hath.'

Must give-for what? For lead? Hazard for lead!

This casket threatens; men that hazard all

Do it in hope of fair advantages.

A golden mind stoops not to shows of dross;

I'll then nor give nor hazard aught for lead.

What says the silver with her virgin hue?

'Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves.'

As much as he deserves! Pause there, Morocco,

And weigh thy value with an even hand.

If thou beest rated by thy estimation,

Thou dost deserve enough, and yet enough

May not extend so far as to the lady;

And yet to be afeard of my deserving

Were but a weak disabling of myself.

As much as I deserve? Why, that's the lady!

I do in birth deserve her, and in fortunes,
In graces, and in qualities of breeding;
But more than these, in love I do deserve.

What if I stray'd no farther, but chose here?
Let's see once more this saying grav'd in gold:

'Who chooseth me shall gain what many men desire.'
Why, that's the lady! All the world desires her;
From the four corners of the earth they come
To kiss this shrine, this mortal-breathing saint.
The Hyrcanian deserts and the vasty wilds
Of wide Arabia are as throughfares now
For princes to come view fair Portia.
The watery kingdom, whose ambitious head
Spits in the face of heaven, is no bar
To stop the foreign spirits, but they come
As o'er a brook to see fair Portia.
One of these three contains her heavenly picture.
Is't like that lead contains her? 'Twere damnation
To think so base a thought; it were too gross

To rib her cerecloth in the obscure grave.
Or shall I think in silver she's immur'd,
Being ten times undervalued to tried gold?
O sinful thought! Never so rich a gem
Was set in worse than gold. They have in England
A coin that bears the figure of an angel
Stamp'd in gold; but that's insculp'd upon.
But here an angel in a golden bed
Lies all within. Deliver me the key;
Here do I choose, and thrive I as I may!

PORTIA.
There, take it, Prince, and if my form lie there,
Then I am yours. *[He opens the golden casket]*

PRINCE OF MOROCCO.

O hell! what have we here?
A carrion Death, within whose empty eye
There is a written scroll! I'll read the writing.
'All that glisters is not gold,

Often have you heard that told;

Many a man his life hath sold

But my outside to behold.

Gilded tombs do worms infold.

Had you been as wise as bold,

Young in limbs, in judgment old,

Your answer had not been inscroll'd.

Fare you well, your suit is cold.'

Cold indeed, and labour lost,

Then farewell, heat, and welcome, frost.

Portia, adieu! I have too griev'd a heart

To take a tedious leave; thus losers part.

Exit with his train. Flourish of cornets

PORTIA.

A gentle riddance. Draw the curtains, go.

Let all of his complexion choose me so. *Exeunt*

SCENE VIII. Venice. A street

Enter SALERIO and SOLANIO

SALERIO.

Why, man, I saw Bassanio under sail;

With him is Gratiano gone along;

And in their ship I am sure Lorenzo is not.

SOLANIO.

The villain Jew with outcries rais'd the Duke,

Who went with him to search Bassanio's ship.

SALERIO.

He came too late, the ship was under sail;

But there the Duke was given to understand

That in a gondola were seen together

Lorenzo and his amorous Jessica;

Besides, Antonio certified the Duke

They were not with Bassanio in his ship.

SOLANIO.

I never heard a passion so confus'd,

So strange, outrageous, and so variable,
As the dog Jew did utter in the streets.
'My daughter! O my ducats! O my daughter!

Fled with a Christian! O my Christian ducats!
Justice! the law! My ducats and my daughter!
A sealed bag, two sealed bags of ducats,
Of double ducats, stol'n from me by my daughter!
And jewels-two stones, two rich and precious stones,
Stol'n by my daughter! Justice! Find the girl;
She hath the stones upon her and the ducats.'

SALERIO.
Why, all the boys in Venice follow him,
Crying, his stones, his daughter, and his ducats.

SOLANIO.
Let good Antonio look he keep his day,
Or he shall pay for this.

SALERIO.

Marry, well remem b'red;

I reason'd with a Frenchman yesterday,

Who told me, in the narrow seas that part

The French and English, there miscarried

A vessel of our country richly fraught.

I thought upon Antonio when he told me,

And wish'd in silence that it were not his.

SOLANIO.

You were best to tell Antonio what you hear;

Yet do not suddenly, for it may grieve him.

SALERIO.

A kinder gentleman treads not the earth.

I saw Bassanio and Antonio part.

Bassanio told him he would make some speed

Of his return. He answered 'Do not so;

Slubber not business for my sake, Bassanio,

But stay the very riping of the time;

And for the Jew's bond which he hath of me, Let it not enter in your mind of love;

Be merry, and employ your chiefest thoughts

To courtship, and such fair ostents of love

As shall conveniently become you there.'

And even there, his eye being big with tears,

Turning his face, he put his hand behind him,

And with affection wondrous sensible

He wrung Bassanio's hand; and so they parted.

SOLANIO.

I think he only loves the world for him.

I pray thee, let us go and find him out,

And quicken his embraced heaviness

With some delight or other.

SALERIO.

Do we so. *Exeunt*

SCENE IX. Belmont. PORTIA'S house

Enter NERISSA, and a SERVITOR

NERISSA.

Quick, quick, I pray thee, draw the curtain straight;

The Prince of Arragon hath ta'en his oath,

And comes to his election presently.

Flourish of cornets. *Enter* the PRINCE OF ARRAGON,

PORTIA, and their trains

PORTIA.

Behold, there stand the caskets, noble Prince.

If you choose that wherein I am contain'd,

Straight shall our nuptial rites be solemniz'd;

But if you fail, without more speech, my lord,

You must be gone from hence immediately.

ARRAGON.

I am enjoin'd by oath to observe three things:

First, never to unfold to any one

Which casket 'twas I chose; next, if I fail

Of the right casket, never in my life

To woo a maid in way of marriage;

Lastly,

If I do fail in fortune of my choice,

Immediately to leave you and be gone.

PORTIA.

To these injunctions every one doth swear

That comes to hazard for my worthless self.

ARRAGON.

And so have I address'd me. Fortune now

To my heart's hope! Gold, silver, and base lead.

'Who chooseth me must give and hazard all he hath.'

You shall look fairer ere I give or hazard.

What says the golden chest? Ha! let me see:

'Who chooseth me shall gain what many men desire.'

What many men desire-that 'many' may be meant

By the fool multitude, that choose by show,

Not learning more than the fond eye doth teach;

Which pries not to th' interior, but, like the martlet,

Builds in the weather on the outward wall,
Even in the force and road of casualty.
I will not choose what many men desire,
Because I will not jump with common spirits
And rank me with the barbarous multitudes.
Why, then to thee, thou silver treasure-house!

Tell me once more what title thou dost bear.
'Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves.'
And well said too; for who shall go about
To cozen fortune, and be honourable
Without the stamp of merit? Let none presume
To wear an undeserved dignity.
O that estates, degrees, and offices,
Were not deriv'd corruptly, and that clear honour
Were purchas'd by the merit of the wearer!
How many then should cover that stand bare!

How many be commanded that command!
How much low peasantry would then be gleaned
From the true seed of honour! and how much honour

Pick'd from the chaff and ruin of the times,

To be new varnish'd! Well, but to my choice.

'Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves.'

I will assume desert. Give me a key for this,

And instantly unlock my fortunes here.

[He opens the silver casket]

PORTIA.

[Aside] Too long a pause for that which you find there.

ARRAGON.

What's here? The portrait of a blinking idiot

Presenting me a schedule! I will read it.

How much unlike art thou to Portia!

How much unlike my hopes and my deservings!

'Who chooseth me shall have as much as he deserves.'

Did I deserve no more than a fool's head?

Is that my prize? Are my deserts no better?

PORTIA.

To offend and judge are distinct offices

And of opposed natures.

ARRAGON.

What is here? *[Reads]*

'The fire seven times tried this;

Seven times tried that judgment is

That did never choose amiss.

Some there be that shadows kiss,

Such have but a shadow's bliss.

There be fools alive iwis

Silver'd o'er, and so was this.

Take what wife you will to bed,

I will ever be your head.

So be gone; you are sped.'

Still more fool I shall appear

By the time I linger here.

With one fool's head I came to woo,

But I go away with two.

Sweet, adieu! I'll keep my oath,

Patiently to bear my wroth. *Exit* with his train

PORTIA.

Thus hath the candle sing'd the moth.

O, these deliberate fools! When they do choose,

They have the wisdom by their wit to lose.

NERISSA.

The ancient saying is no heresy:

Hanging and wiving goes by destiny.

PORTIA.

Come, draw the curtain, Nerissa.

Enter a SERVANT

SERVANT.

Where is my lady?

PORTIA.

Here; what would my lord?

SERVANT.

Madam, there is alighted at your gate

A young Venetian, one that comes before

To signify th' approaching of his lord,

From whom he bringeth sensible regreets;

To wit, besides commends and courteous breath,

Gifts of rich value. Yet I have not seen

So likely an ambassador of love.

A day in April never came so sweet

To show how costly summer was at hand

As this fore-spurrer comes before his lord.

PORTIA.

No more, I pray thee; I am half afeard

Thou wilt say anon he is some kin to thee,

Thou spend'st such high-day wit in praising him.

Come, come, Nerissa, for I long to see

Quick Cupid's post that comes so mannerly.

NERISSA.

Bassanio, Lord Love, if thy will it be! *Exeunt*

ACT III. SCENE I. Venice. A street

Enter SOLANIO and SALERIO

SOLANIO.

Now, what news on the Rialto?

SALERIO.

Why, yet it lives there uncheck'd that Antonio hath a ship
of rich lading wreck'd on the narrow seas; the Goodwins I think
they call the place, a very dangerous flat and fatal, where the
carcases of many a tall ship lie buried, as they say, if my
gossip Report be an honest woman of her word.

SOLANIO.

I would she were as lying a gossip in that as ever knapp'd
ginger or made her neighbours believe she wept for the death of a
third husband. But it is true, without any slips of prolixity or
crossing the plain highway of talk, that the good Antonio, the
honest Antonio-O that I had a title good enough to keep his name
company!-

SALERIO.
Come, the full stop.

SOLANIO.

Ha! What sayest thou? Why, the end is, he hath lost a ship.

SALERIO.
I would it might prove the end of his losses.

SOLANIO.
Let me say amen betimes, lest the devil cross my prayer,
for here he comes in the likeness of a Jew.

Enter SHYLOCK

How now, Shylock? What news among the merchants?

SHYLOCK.

You knew, none so well, none so well as you, of my daughter's flight.

SALERIO.

That's certain; I, for my part, knew the tailor that made

the wings she flew withal.

SOLANIO.

And Shylock, for his own part, knew the bird was flidge;

and then it is the complexion of them all to leave the dam.

SHYLOCK.

She is damn'd for it.

SALERIO.

That's certain, if the devil may be her judge.

SHYLOCK.

My own flesh and blood to rebel!

SOLANIO.

Out upon it, old carrion! Rebels it at these years?

SHYLOCK.

I say my daughter is my flesh and my blood.

SALERIO.

There is more difference between thy flesh and hers than between jet and ivory; more between your bloods than there is between red wine and Rhenish. But tell us, do you hear whether Antonio have had any loss at sea or no?

SHYLOCK.

There I have another bad match: a bankrupt, a prodigal, who dare scarce show his head on the Rialto; a beggar, that was

us'd to come so smug upon the mart. Let him look to his bond.
He
was wont to call me usurer; let him look to his bond. He was wont
to lend money for a Christian courtesy; let him look to his bond.

SALERIO.
Why, I am sure, if he forfeit, thou wilt not take his
flesh. What's that good for?

SHYLOCK.
To bait fish withal. If it will feed nothing else, it will
feed my revenge. He hath disgrac'd me and hind'red me half a
million; laugh'd at my losses, mock'd at my gains, scorned my
nation, thwarted my bargains, cooled my friends, heated mine
enemies. And what's his reason? I am a Jew. Hath not a Jew eyes?
Hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections,
passions, fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons,
subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed
and cooled by the same winter and summer, as a Christian is?
If
you prick us, do we not bleed? If you tickle us, do we not laugh?

If you poison us, do we not die? And if you wrong us, shall we not revenge? If we are like you in the rest, we will resemble you in that. If a Jew wrong a Christian, what is his humility? *Revenge*. If a Christian wrong a Jew, what should his sufferance be by Christian example? Why, revenge. The villainy you teach me I will execute; and itshall go hard but I will better the instruction.

Enter a MAN from ANTONIO

MAN.
Gentlemen, my master Antonio is at his house, and desires to speak with you both.

SALERIO.
We have been up and down to seek him.

Enter TUBAL

SOLANIO.
Here comes another of the tribe; a third cannot be match'd, unless the devil himself turn Jew.

Exeunt SOLANIO, SALERIO, and MAN

SHYLOCK.

How now, Tubal, what news from Genoa? Hast thou found my daughter?

TUBAL.

I often came where I did hear of her, but cannot find her.

SHYLOCK.

Why there, there, there, there! A diamond gone, cost me
two thousand ducats in Frankfort! The curse never fell upon our
nation till now; I never felt it till now. Two thousand ducats in
that, and other precious, precious jewels. I would my daughter
were dead at my foot, and the jewels in her ear; would she were
hears'd at my foot, and the ducats in her coffin! No news of
them? Why, so-and I know not what's spent in the search.
Why,
thou-loss upon loss! The thief gone with so much, and so much to
find the thief; and no satisfaction, no revenge; nor no ill luck
stirring but what lights o' my shoulders; no sighs but o' my
breathing; no tears but o' my shedding!

TUBAL.

Yes, other men have ill luck too: Antonio, as I heard in

Genoa-

SHYLOCK.

What, what, what? Ill luck, ill luck?

TUBAL.

Hath an argosy cast away coming from Tripolis.

SHYLOCK.

I thank God, I thank God. Is it true, is it true?

TUBAL.

I spoke with some of the sailors that escaped the wreck.

SHYLOCK.

I thank thee, good Tubal. Good news, good news-ha, ha!-

heard in Genoa.

TUBAL.

Your daughter spent in Genoa, as I heard, one night,

fourscore ducats.

SHYLOCK.

Thou stick'st a dagger in me-I shall never see my gold

again. Fourscore ducats at a sitting! Fourscore ducats!

TUBAL.

There came divers of Antonio's creditors in my company to

Venice that swear he cannot choose but break.

SHYLOCK.

I am very glad of it; I'll plague him, I'll torture

him; I

am glad of it.

TUBAL.

One of them showed me a ring that he had of your daughter for a monkey.

SHYLOCK.

Out upon her! Thou torturest me, Tubal. It was my
turquoise; I had it of Leah when I was a bachelor; I would not
have given it for a wilderness of monkeys.

TUBAL.

But Antonio is certainly undone.

SHYLOCK.

Nay, that's true; that's very true. Go, Tubal, fee me an
officer; bespeak him a fortnight before. I will have the heart of
him, if he forfeit; for, were he out of Venice, I can make what
merchandise I will. Go, Tubal, and meet me at our synagogue;
go,
good Tubal; at our synagogue, Tubal. *Exeunt*

SCENE II. Belmont. PORTIA'S house

Enter BASSANIO, PORTIA, GRATIANO, NERISSA, and all their trains

PORTIA.

I pray you tarry; pause a day or two

Before you hazard; for, in choosing wrong,

I lose your company; therefore forbear a while.

There's something tells me-but it is not love-

I would not lose you; and you know yourself

Hate counsels not in such a quality.

But lest you should not understand me well-

And yet a maiden hath no tongue but thought-

I would detain you here some month or two

Before you venture for me. I could teach you

How to choose right, but then I am forsworn;

So will I never be; so may you miss me;

But if you do, you'll make me wish a sin,

That I had been forsworn. Beshrew your eyes!

They have o'erlook'd me and divided me;

One half of me is yours, the other half yours-

Mine own, I would say; but if mine, then yours,

And so all yours. O! these naughty times
Puts bars between the owners and their rights;
And so, though yours, not yours. Prove it so,
Let fortune go to hell for it, not I.
I speak too long, but 'tis to peize the time,
To eke it, and to draw it out in length,
To stay you from election.

BASSANIO.
Let me choose;
For as I am, I live upon the rack.

PORTIA.
Upon the rack, Bassanio? Then confess
What treason there is mingled with your love.

BASSANIO.
None but that ugly treason of mistrust
Which makes me fear th' enjoying of my love;
There may as well be amity and life
'Tween snow and fire as treason and my love.

PORTIA.

Ay, but I fear you speak upon the rack,
Where men enforced do speak anything.

BASSANIO.

Promise me life, and I'll confess the truth.

PORTIA.

Well then, confess and live.

BASSANIO.

'Confess' and 'love'

Had been the very sum of my confession.
O happy torment, when my torturer
Doth teach me answers for deliverance!
But let me to my fortune and the caskets.

PORTIA.

Away, then; I am lock'd in one of them.

If you do love me, you will find me out.

Nerissa and the rest, stand all aloof;

Let music sound while he doth make his choice;

Then, if he lose, he makes a swan-like end,

Fading in music. That the comparison

May stand more proper, my eye shall be the stream

And wat'ry death-bed for him. He may win;

And what is music then? Then music is

Even as the flourish when true subjects bow

To a new-crowned monarch; such it is

As are those dulcet sounds in break of day

That creep into the dreaming bridegroom's ear

And summon him to marriage. Now he goes,

With no less presence, but with much more love,

Than young Alcides when he did redeem

The virgin tribute paid by howling Troy

To the sea-monster. I stand for sacrifice;

The rest aloof are the Dardanian wives,

With bleared visages come forth to view

The issue of th' exploit. Go, Hercules!

Live thou, I live. With much much more dismay

I view the fight than thou that mak'st the fray.

A SONG the whilst BASSANIO comments on the caskets to himself

Tell me where is fancy bred,

Or in the heart or in the head,

How begot, how nourished?

Reply, reply.

It is engend'red in the eyes,

With gazing fed; and fancy dies

In the cradle where it lies.

Let us all ring fancy's knell:

I'll begin it-Ding, dong, bell.

ALL.

Ding, dong, bell.

BASSANIO.

So may the outward shows be least themselves;
The world is still deceiv'd with ornament.
In law, what plea so tainted and corrupt
But, being season'd with a gracious voice,
Obscures the show of evil? In religion,
What damned error but some sober brow
Will bless it, and approve it with a text,
Hiding the grossness with fair ornament?
There is no vice so simple but assumes
Some mark of virtue on his outward parts.
How many cowards, whose hearts are all as false
As stairs of sand, wear yet upon their chins
The beards of Hercules and frowning Mars;
Who, inward search'd, have livers white as milk!
And these assume but valour's excrement
To render them redoubted. Look on beauty
And you shall see 'tis purchas'd by the weight,
Which therein works a miracle in nature,
Making them lightest that wear most of it;
So are those crisped snaky golden locks
Which make such wanton gambols with the wind

Upon supposed fairness often known

To be the dowry of a second head-

The skull that bred them in the sepulchre.

Thus ornament is but the guiled shore

To a most dangerous sea; the beauteous scarf

Veiling an Indian beauty; in a word,

The seeming truth which cunning times put on

To entrap the wisest. Therefore, thou gaudy gold,

Hard food for Midas, I will none of thee;

Nor none of thee, thou pale and common drudge

'Tween man and man; but thou, thou meagre lead,

Which rather threaten'st than dost promise aught,

Thy plainness moves me more than eloquence,

And here choose I. Joy be the consequence!

PORTIA.

[Aside] How all the other passions fleet to air,

As doubtful thoughts, and rash-embrac'd despair,

And shudd'ring fear, and green-ey'd jealousy!

O love, be moderate, allay thy ecstasy,

In measure rain thy joy, scant this excess!

I feel too much thy blessing. Make it less,

For fear I surfeit.

BASSANIO.

[Opening the leaden casket] What find I here?

Fair Portia's counterfeit! What demi-god

Hath come so near creation? Move these eyes?

Or whether riding on the balls of mine

Seem they in motion? Here are sever'd lips,

Parted with sugar breath; so sweet a bar

Should sunder such sweet friends. Here in her hairs

The painter plays the spider, and hath woven

A golden mesh t' entrap the hearts of men

Faster than gnats in cobwebs. But her eyes-

How could he see to do them? Having made one,

Methinks it should have power to steal both his,

And leave itself unfurnish'd. Yet look how far

The substance of my praise doth wrong this shadow

In underprizing it, so far this shadow

Doth limp behind the substance. Here's the scroll,

The continent and summary of my fortune.

'You that choose not by the view,

Chance as fair and choose as true!

Since this fortune falls to you,

Be content and seek no new.

If you be well pleas'd with this,

And hold your fortune for your bliss,

Turn to where your lady is

And claim her with a loving kiss.'

A gentle scroll. Fair lady, by your leave;

I come by note, to give and to receive.

Like one of two contending in a prize,

That thinks he hath done well in people's eyes,

Hearing applause and universal shout,

Giddy in spirit, still gazing in a doubt

Whether those peals of praise be his or no;

So, thrice-fair lady, stand I even so,

As doubtful whether what I see be true,

Until confirm'd, sign'd, ratified by you.

PORTIA.

You see me, Lord Bassanio, where I stand, Such as I am. Though for myself alone

I would not be ambitious in my wish

To wish myself much better, yet for you

I would be trebled twenty times myself,

A thousand times more fair, ten thousand times more rich,

That only to stand high in your account

I might in virtues, beauties, livings, friends,

Exceed account. But the full sum of me

Is sum of something which, to term in gross,

Is an unlesson'd girl, unschool'd, unpractis'd;

Happy in this, she is not yet so old

But she may learn; happier than this,

She is not bred so dull but she can learn;

Happiest of all is that her gentle spirit

Commits itself to yours to be directed,

As from her lord, her governor, her king.

Myself and what is mine to you and yours

Is now converted. But now I was the lord

Of this fair mansion, master of my servants,

Queen o'er myself; and even now, but now,

This house, these servants, and this same myself,

Are yours-my lord's. I give them with this ring,
Which when you part from, lose, or give away,
Let it presage the ruin of your love,
And be my vantage to exclaim on you.

BASSANIO.
Madam, you have bereft me of all words;
Only my blood speaks to you in my veins;
And there is such confusion in my powers
As, after some oration fairly spoke
By a beloved prince, there doth appear
Among the buzzing pleased multitude,
Where every something, being blent together,
Turns to a wild of nothing, save of joy
Express'd and not express'd. But when this ring
Parts from this finger, then parts life from hence;
O, then be bold to say Bassanio's dead!

NERISSA.
My lord and lady, it is now our time
That have stood by and seen our wishes prosper

To cry 'Good joy.' Good joy, my lord and lady!

GRATIANO.

My Lord Bassanio, and my gentle lady,

I wish you all the joy that you can wish,

For I am sure you can wish none from me;

And, when your honours mean to solemnize

The bargain of your faith, I do beseech you

Even at that time I may be married too.

BASSANIO.

With all my heart, so thou canst get a wife.

GRATIANO.

I thank your lordship, you have got me one.

My eyes, my lord, can look as swift as yours:

You saw the mistress, I beheld the maid;

You lov'd, I lov'd; for intermission

No more pertains to me, my lord, than you.

Your fortune stood upon the caskets there, And so did mine too, as the matter falls;

For wooing here until I sweat again,

And swearing till my very roof was dry

With oaths of love, at last-if promise last-

I got a promise of this fair one here

To have her love, provided that your fortune

Achiev'd her mistress.

PORTIA.

Is this true, Nerissa?

NERISSA.

Madam, it is, so you stand pleas'd withal.

BASSANIO.

And do you, Gratiano, mean good faith?

GRATIANO.

Yes, faith, my lord.

BASSANIO.

Our feast shall be much honoured in your marriage.

GRATIANO.

We'll play with them: the first boy for a thousand ducats.

NERISSA.

What, and stake down?

GRATIANO.

No; we shall ne'er win at that sport, and stake down-

But who comes here? Lorenzo and his infidel?

What, and my old Venetian friend, Salerio!

Enter LORENZO, JESSICA, and SALERIO, a messenger

from Venice

BASSANIO.

Lorenzo and Salerio, welcome hither,

If that the youth of my new int'rest here

Have power to bid you welcome. By your leave,

I bid my very friends and countrymen,

Sweet Portia, welcome.

PORTIA.

So do I, my lord;

They are entirely welcome.

LORENZO.

I thank your honour. For my part, my lord,

My purpose was not to have seen you here;

But meeting with Salerio by the way,

He did entreat me, past all saying nay,

To come with him along.

SALERIO.

I did, my lord,

And I have reason for it. Signior Antonio

Commends him to you. *[Gives BASSANIO a letter]*

BASSANIO.

Ere I ope his letter,

I pray you tell me how my good friend doth.

SALERIO.

Not sick, my lord, unless it be in mind;

Nor well, unless in mind; his letter there

Will show you his estate. *[BASSANIO opens the letter]*

GRATIANO.

Nerissa, cheer yond stranger; bid her welcome.

Your hand, Salerio. What's the news from Venice?

How doth that royal merchant, good Antonio?

I know he will be glad of our success:

We are the Jasons, we have won the fleece.

SALERIO.

I would you had won the fleece that he hath lost.

PORTIA.

There are some shrewd contents in yond same paper

That steals the colour from Bassanio's cheek:

Some dear friend dead, else nothing in the world

Could turn so much the constitution

Of any constant man. What, worse and worse!

With leave, Bassanio: I am half yourself,

And I must freely have the half of anything

That this same paper brings you.

BASSANIO.

O sweet Portia,

Here are a few of the unpleasant'st words

That ever blotted paper! Gentle lady,

When I did first impart my love to you,

I freely told you all the wealth I had

Ran in my veins-I was a gentleman;

And then I told you true. And yet, dear lady,

Rating myself at nothing, you shall see

How much I was a braggart. When I told you

My state was nothing, I should then have told you

That I was worse than nothing; for indeed

I have engag'd myself to a dear friend,

Engag'd my friend to his mere enemy,

To feed my means. Here is a letter, lady,

The paper as the body of my friend,

And every word in it a gaping wound

Issuing life-blood. But is it true, Salerio?

Hath all his ventures fail'd? What, not one hit?

From Tripolis, from Mexico, and England,

From Lisbon, Barbary, and India,

And not one vessel scape the dreadful touch

Of merchant-marring rocks?

SALERIO.

Not one, my lord.

Besides, it should appear that, if he had

The present money to discharge the Jew,

He would not take it. Never did I know

A creature that did bear the shape of man
So keen and greedy to confound a man.
He plies the Duke at morning and at night,
And doth impeach the freedom of the state,
If they deny him justice. Twenty merchants,
The Duke himself, and the magnificoes
Of greatest port, have all persuaded with him;
But none can drive him from the envious plea
Of forfeiture, of justice, and his bond.

JESSICA.

When I was with him, I have heard him swear
To Tubal and to Chus, his countrymen,
That he would rather have Antonio's flesh
Than twenty times the value of the sum
That he did owe him; and I know, my lord,
If law, authority, and power, deny not,
It will go hard with poor Antonio.

PORTIA.

Is it your dear friend that is thus in trouble?

BASSANIO.
The dearest friend to me, the kindest man,
The best condition'd and unwearied spirit
In doing courtesies; and one in whom
The ancient Roman honour more appears
Than any that draws breath in Italy.

PORTIA.

What sum owes he the Jew?

BASSANIO.
For me, three thousand ducats.

PORTIA.

What! no more?
Pay him six thousand, and deface the bond;
Double six thousand, and then treble that,

Before a friend of this description
Shall lose a hair through Bassanio's fault.
First go with me to church and call me wife,
And then away to Venice to your friend;
For never shall you lie by Portia's side
With an unquiet soul. You shall have gold
To pay the petty debt twenty times over.

When it is paid, bring your true friend along.
My maid Nerissa and myself meantime
Will live as maids and widows. Come, away;
For you shall hence upon your wedding day.
Bid your friends welcome, show a merry cheer;
Since you are dear bought, I will love you dear.

But let me hear the letter of your friend.

BASSANIO.
[Reads] 'Sweet Bassanio, my ships have all miscarried,
my creditors grow cruel, my estate is very low, my bond to the
Jew is forfeit; and since, in paying it, it is impossible I

should live, all debts are clear'd between you and I, if I might but see you at my death. Notwithstanding, use your pleasure; if your love do not persuade you to come, let not my letter.'

PORTIA.

O love, dispatch all business and be gone!

BASSANIO.

Since I have your good leave to go away,
I will make haste; but, till I come again,
No bed shall e'er be guilty of my stay,
Nor rest be interposer 'twixt us twain. *Exeunt*

SCENE III. Venice. A street

Enter SHYLOCK, SOLANIO, ANTONIO, and GAOLER

SHYLOCK.

Gaoler, look to him. Tell not me of mercy-
This is the fool that lent out money gratis.

Gaoler, look to him.

ANTONIO.

Hear me yet, good Shylock.

SHYLOCK.
I'll have my bond; speak not against my bond.

I have sworn an oath that I will have my bond.
Thou call'dst me dog before thou hadst a cause,
But, since I am a dog, beware my fangs;
The Duke shall grant me justice. I do wonder,
Thou naughty gaoler, that thou art so fond
To come abroad with him at his request.

ANTONIO.

I pray thee hear me speak.

SHYLOCK.

I'll have my bond. I will not hear thee speak;

I'll have my bond; and therefore speak no more.

I'll not be made a soft and dull-ey'd fool,

To shake the head, relent, and sigh, and yield,

To Christian intercessors. Follow not;

I'll have no speaking; I will have my bond. *Exit*

SOLANIO. It is the most impenetrable cur

That ever kept with men.

ANTONIO.

Let him alone;

I'll follow him no more with bootless prayers.

He seeks my life; his reason well I know:

I oft deliver'd from his forfeitures

Many that have at times made moan to me;

Therefore he hates me.

SOLANIO.

I am sure the Duke

Will never grant this forfeiture to hold.

ANTONIO.

The Duke cannot deny the course of law;

For the commodity that strangers have

With us in Venice, if it be denied,

Will much impeach the justice of the state,

Since that the trade and profit of the city

Consisteth of all nations. Therefore, go;

These griefs and losses have so bated me

That I shall hardly spare a pound of flesh

To-morrow to my bloody creditor.

Well, gaoler, on; pray God Bassanio come

To see me pay his debt, and then I care not. *Exeunt*

SCENE IV. Belmont. PORTIA'S house

Enter PORTIA, NERISSA, LORENZO, JESSICA, and BALTHASAR

LORENZO.

Madam, although I speak it in your presence,

You have a noble and a true conceit

Of godlike amity, which appears most strongly

In bearing thus the absence of your lord.

But if you knew to whom you show this honour,

How true a gentleman you send relief,

How dear a lover of my lord your husband,

I know you would be prouder of the work

Than customary bounty can enforce you.

PORTIA.

I never did repent for doing good,

Nor shall not now; for in companions

That do converse and waste the time together,

Whose souls do bear an equal yoke of love,

There must be needs a like proportion

Of lineaments, of manners, and of spirit,

Which makes me think that this Antonio,

Being the bosom lover of my lord,

Must needs be like my lord. If it be so,

How little is the cost I have bestowed

In purchasing the semblance of my soul

From out the state of hellish cruelty!

This comes too near the praising of myself;

Therefore, no more of it; hear other things.

Lorenzo, I commit into your hands

The husbandry and manage of my house

Until my lord's return; for mine own part,

I have toward heaven breath'd a secret vow

To live in prayer and contemplation,

Only attended by Nerissa here,

Until her husband and my lord's return.

There is a monastery two miles off,

And there we will abide. I do desire you

Not to deny this imposition,

The which my love and some necessity

Now lays upon you.

LORENZO.

Madam, with all my heart

I shall obey you in an fair commands.

PORTIA.

My people do already know my mind,

And will acknowledge you and Jessica

In place of Lord Bassanio and myself.

So fare you well till we shall meet again.

LORENZO.

Fair thoughts and happy hours attend on you!

JESSICA.

I wish your ladyship all heart's content.

PORTIA.

I thank you for your wish, and am well pleas'd

To wish it back on you. Fare you well, Jessica.

Exeunt JESSICA and LORENZO

Now, Balthasar,

As I have ever found thee honest-true,

So let me find thee still. Take this same letter,

And use thou all th' endeavour of a man

In speed to Padua; see thou render this

Into my cousin's hands, Doctor Bellario;

And look what notes and garments he doth give thee,

Bring them, I pray thee, with imagin'd speed

Unto the traject, to the common ferry

Which trades to Venice. Waste no time in words,

But get thee gone; I shall be there before thee.

BALTHASAR.

Madam, I go with all convenient speed. *Exit*

PORTIA. Come on, Nerissa, I have work in hand

That you yet know not of; we'll see our husbands

Before they think of us.

NERISSA.

Shall they see us?

PORTIA.

They shall, Nerissa; but in such a habit

That they shall think we are accomplished

With that we lack. I'll hold thee any wager,

When we are both accoutred like young men,

I'll prove the prettier fellow of the two,

And wear my dagger with the braver grace,

And speak between the change of man and boy

With a reed voice; and turn two mincing steps

Into a manly stride; and speak of frays

Like a fine bragging youth; and tell quaint lies,

How honourable ladies sought my love,

Which I denying, they fell sick and died-

I could not do withal. Then I'll repent,

And wish for all that, that I had not kill'd them.

And twenty of these puny lies I'll tell,

That men shall swear I have discontinued school

About a twelvemonth. I have within my mind

A thousand raw tricks of these bragging Jacks, Which I will practise.

NERISSA.

Why, shall we turn to men?

PORTIA.

Fie, what a question's that,

If thou wert near a lewd interpreter!

But come, I'll tell thee all my whole device

When I am in my coach, which stays for us

At the park gate; and therefore haste away,

For we must measure twenty miles to-day. *Exeunt*

SCENE V. Belmont. The garden

Enter LAUNCELOT and JESSICA

LAUNCELOT.

Yes, truly; for, look you, the sins of the father are to

be laid upon the children; therefore, I promise you, I fear you.

I was always plain with you, and so now I speak my agitation of the matter; therefore be o' good cheer, for truly I think you are damn'd. There is but one hope in it that can do you any good, and that is but a kind of bastard hope, neither.

JESSICA.

And what hope is that, I pray thee?

LAUNCELOT.

Marry, you may partly hope that your father got you not-

that you are not the Jew's daughter.

JESSICA.

That were a kind of bastard hope indeed; so the sins of my mother should be visited upon me.

LAUNCELOT.

Truly then I fear you are damn'd both by father and mother; thus when I shun Scylla, your father, I fall into Charybdis, your mother; well, you are gone both ways.

JESSICA.

I shall be sav'd by my husband; he hath made me a Christian.

LAUNCELOT.

Truly, the more to blame he; we were Christians enow
before, e'en as many as could well live one by another. This
making of Christians will raise the price of hogs; if we grow all
to be pork-eaters, we shall not shortly have a rasher on the coals for money.

Enter LORENZO

JESSICA.

I'll tell my husband, Launcelot, what you say; here he comes.

LORENZO.

I shall grow jealous of you shortly, Launcelot, if you
thus get my wife into corners.

JESSICA.

Nay, you need nor fear us, Lorenzo; Launcelot and I are out; he tells me flatly there's no mercy for me in heaven,

because I am a Jew's daughter; and he says you are no good member

of the commonwealth, for in converting Jews to Christians you

raise the price of pork.

LORENZO.

I shall answer that better to the commonwealth than you

can the getting up of the negro's belly; the Moor is with child

by you, Launcelot.

LAUNCELOT.

It is much that the Moor should be more than reason; but

if she be less than an honest woman, she is indeed more than

I

took her for.

LORENZO.

How every fool can play upon the word! I think the best

grace of wit will shortly turn into silence, and discourse grow

commendable in none only but parrots. Go in, sirrah; bid them prepare for dinner.

LAUNCELOT.

That is done, sir; they have all stomachs.

LORENZO.

Goodly Lord, what a wit-snapper are you! Then bid them prepare dinner.

LAUNCELOT.

That is done too, sir, only 'cover' is the word.

LORENZO.

Will you cover, then, sir?

LAUNCELOT.

Not so, sir, neither; I know my duty.

LORENZO.

Yet more quarrelling with occasion! Wilt thou show the
whole wealth of thy wit in an instant? I pray thee understand a

plain man in his plain meaning: go to thy fellows, bid them cover

the table, serve in the meat, and we will come in to dinner.

LAUNCELOT.

For the table, sir, it shall be serv'd in; for the meat,

sir, it shall be cover'd; for your coming in to dinner, sir,

why,

let it be as humours and conceits shall govern.

Exit

LORENZO. O dear discretion, how his words are suited!

The fool hath planted in his memory

An army of good words; and I do know

A many fools that stand in better place,

Garnish'd like him, that for a tricksy word

Defy the matter. How cheer'st thou, Jessica?

And now, good sweet, say thy opinion,

How dost thou like the Lord Bassanio's wife?

JESSICA.

Past all expressing. It is very meet

The Lord Bassanio live an upright life,

For, having such a blessing in his lady,

He finds the joys of heaven here on earth;

And if on earth he do not merit it,

In reason he should never come to heaven.

Why, if two gods should play some heavenly match,

And on the wager lay two earthly women,

And Portia one, there must be something else

Pawn'd with the other; for the poor rude world

Hath not her fellow.

LORENZO.

Even such a husband

Hast thou of me as she is for a wife.

JESSICA.

Nay, but ask my opinion too of that.

LORENZO.

I will anon; first let us go to dinner.

JESSICA.

Nay, let me praise you while I have a stomach.

LORENZO.

No, pray thee, let it serve for table-talk;

Then howsome'er thou speak'st, 'mong other things

I shall digest it.

JESSICA.

Well, I'll set you forth. *Exeunt*

ACT IV. SCENE I. Venice. The court of justice

Enter the DUKE, the MAGNIFICOES, ANTONIO, BASSANIO, GRATIANO, SALERIO, and OTHERS

DUKE OF VENICE.

What, is Antonio here?

ANTONIO.

Ready, so please your Grace.

DUKE OF VENICE.

I am sorry for thee; thou art come to answer

A stony adversary, an inhuman wretch,

Uncapable of pity, void and empty

From any dram of mercy.

ANTONIO.

I have heard

Your Grace hath ta'en great pains to qualify

His rigorous course; but since he stands obdurate,

And that no lawful means can carry me

Out of his envy's reach, I do oppose

My patience to his fury, and am arm'd

To suffer with a quietness of spirit

The very tyranny and rage of his.

DUKE OF VENICE.

Go one, and call the Jew into the court.

SALERIO.

He is ready at the door; he comes, my lord.

Enter SHYLOCK

DUKE OF VENICE.

Make room, and let him stand before our face.
Shylock, the world thinks, and I think so too,
That thou but leadest this fashion of thy malice
To the last hour of act; and then, 'tis thought,
Thou'lt show thy mercy and remorse, more strange
Than is thy strange apparent cruelty;
And where thou now exacts the penalty,
Which is a pound of this poor merchant's flesh,
Thou wilt not only loose the forfeiture,
But, touch'd with human gentleness and love,
Forgive a moiety of the principal,
Glancing an eye of pity on his losses,
That have of late so huddled on his back-
Enow to press a royal merchant down,

And pluck commiseration of his state

From brassy bosoms and rough hearts of flint,

From stubborn Turks and Tartars, never train'd

To offices of tender courtesy.

We all expect a gentle answer, Jew.

SHYLOCK.

I have possess'd your Grace of what I purpose,

And by our holy Sabbath have I sworn

To have the due and forfeit of my bond.

If you deny it, let the danger light

Upon your charter and your city's freedom.

You'll ask me why I rather choose to have

A weight of carrion flesh than to receive

Three thousand ducats. I'll not answer that,

But say it is my humour-is it answer'd?

What if my house be troubled with a rat,

And I be pleas'd to give ten thousand ducats

To have it ban'd? What, are you answer'd yet?

Some men there are love not a gaping pig;

Some that are mad if they behold a cat;

And others, when the bagpipe sings i' th' nose,

Cannot contain their urine; for affection,

Mistress of passion, sways it to the mood

Of what it likes or loathes. Now, for your answer:

As there is no firm reason to be rend'red

Why he cannot abide a gaping pig;

Why he, a harmless necessary cat;

Why he, a woollen bagpipe, but of force

Must yield to such inevitable shame

As to offend, himself being offended;

So can I give no reason, nor I will not,

More than a lodg'd hate and a certain loathing

I bear Antonio, that I follow thus

A losing suit against him. Are you answered?

BASSANIO.

This is no answer, thou unfeeling man,

To excuse the current of thy cruelty.

SHYLOCK.

I am not bound to please thee with my answers.

BASSANIO.

Do all men kill the things they do not love?

SHYLOCK.

Hates any man the thing he would not kill?

BASSANIO.

Every offence is not a hate at first.

SHYLOCK.

What, wouldst thou have a serpent sting thee twice?

ANTONIO.

I pray you, think you question with the Jew.
You may as well go stand upon the beach
And bid the main flood bate his usual height;
You may as well use question with the wolf,

Why he hath made the ewe bleat for the lamb;
You may as well forbid the mountain pines
To wag their high tops and to make no noise
When they are fretten with the gusts of heaven;
You may as well do anything most hard
As seek to soften that-than which what's harder?-
His jewish heart. Therefore, I do beseech you,
Make no moe offers, use no farther means,
But with all brief and plain conveniency
Let me have judgment, and the Jew his will.

BASSANIO.

For thy three thousand ducats here is six.

SHYLOCK.

If every ducat in six thousand ducats
Were in six parts, and every part a ducat,
I would not draw them; I would have my bond.

DUKE OF VENICE.

How shalt thou hope for mercy, rend'ring none?

SHYLOCK.

What judgment shall I dread, doing no wrong?
You have among you many a purchas'd slave,
Which, fike your asses and your dogs and mules,
You use in abject and in slavish parts,
Because you bought them; shall I say to you
'Let them be free, marry them to your heirs-
Why sweat they under burdens?- let their beds
Be made as soft as yours, and let their palates
Be season'd with such viands'? You will answer
'The slaves are ours.' So do I answer you:
The pound of flesh which I demand of him
Is dearly bought, 'tis mine, and I will have it.

If you deny me, fie upon your law!
There is no force in the decrees of Venice.

I stand for judgment; answer; shall I have it?

DUKE OF VENICE.

Upon my power I may dismiss this court,

Unless Bellario, a learned doctor,

Whom I have sent for to determine this,

Come here to-day.

SALERIO.

My lord, here stays without

A messenger with letters from the doctor,

New come from Padua.

DUKE OF VENICE.

Bring us the letters; call the messenger.

BASSANIO.

Good cheer, Antonio! What, man, courage yet!

The Jew shall have my flesh, blood, bones, and all,

Ere thou shalt lose for me one drop of blood.

ANTONIO.

I am a tainted wether of the flock,

Meetest for death; the weakest kind of fruit

Drops earliest to the ground, and so let me.

You cannot better be employ'd, Bassanio,

Than to live still, and write mine epitaph.

Enter NERISSA dressed like a lawyer's clerk

DUKE OF VENICE.

Came you from Padua, from Bellario?

NERISSA.

From both, my lord. Bellario greets your Grace.

[Presents a letter]

BASSANIO.

Why dost thou whet thy knife so earnestly?

SHYLOCK.

To cut the forfeiture from that bankrupt there.

GRATIANO.

Not on thy sole, but on thy soul, harsh Jew,

Thou mak'st thy knife keen; but no metal can,

No, not the hangman's axe, bear half the keenness

Of thy sharp envy. Can no prayers pierce thee?

SHYLOCK.

No, none that thou hast wit enough to make.

GRATIANO.

O, be thou damn'd, inexecrable dog!

And for thy life let justice be accus'd.

Thou almost mak'st me waver in my faith,

To hold opinion with Pythagoras

That souls of animals infuse themselves

Into the trunks of men. Thy currish spirit

Govern'd a wolf who, hang'd for human slaughter, Even from the gallows did his fell soul fleet,

And, whilst thou layest in thy unhallowed dam,

Infus'd itself in thee; for thy desires

Are wolfish, bloody, starv'd and ravenous.

SHYLOCK.

Till thou canst rail the seal from off my bond,

Thou but offend'st thy lungs to speak so loud;

Repair thy wit, good youth, or it will fall

To cureless ruin. I stand here for law.

DUKE OF VENICE.

This letter from Bellario doth commend

A young and learned doctor to our court.

Where is he?

NERISSA.

He attendeth here hard by

To know your answer, whether you'll admit him.

DUKE OF VENICE.

With all my heart. Some three or four of you
Go give him courteous conduct to this place.

Meantime, the court shall hear Bellario's letter.

CLERK.
[Reads] 'Your Grace shall understand that at the receipt
of your letter I am very sick; but in the instant that your
messenger came, in loving visitation was with me a young doctor
of Rome-his name is Balthazar. I acquainted him with the cause
in controversy between the Jew and Antonio the merchant; we
turn'd o'er many books together; he is furnished with my opinion
which, bettered with his own learning-the greatness whereof I
cannot enough commend-comes with him at my importunity to fill
up your Grace's request in my stead. I beseech you let his lack
of years be no impediment to let him lack a reverend estimation,
for I never knew so young a body with so old a head. I leave him
to your gracious acceptance, whose trial shall better publish his commendation.'

Enter PORTIA for BALTHAZAR, dressed like a Doctor of Laws

DUKE OF VENICE.

YOU hear the learn'd Bellario, what he writes;
And here, I take it, is the doctor come.
Give me your hand; come you from old Bellario?

PORTIA.

I did, my lord.

DUKE OF VENICE.

You are welcome; take your place.
Are you acquainted with the difference
That holds this present question in the court?

PORTIA.

I am informed throughly of the cause.
Which is the merchant here, and which the Jew?

DUKE OF VENICE.

Antonio and old Shylock, both stand forth.

PORTIA.

Is your name Shylock?

SHYLOCK.

Shylock is my name.

PORTIA.

Of a strange nature is the suit you follow;

Yet in such rule that the Venetian law

Cannot impugn you as you do proceed.

You stand within his danger, do you not?

ANTONIO.

Ay, so he says.

PORTIA.

Do you confess the bond?

ANTONIO.

I do.

PORTIA.

Then must the Jew be merciful.

SHYLOCK.

On what compulsion must I? Tell me that.

PORTIA.

The quality of mercy is not strain'd;
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
Upon the place beneath. It is twice blest:
It blesseth him that gives and him that takes.
'Tis mightiest in the mightiest; it becomes
The throned monarch better than his crown;
His sceptre shows the force of temporal power,
The attribute to awe and majesty,

Wherein doth sit the dread and fear of kings;

But mercy is above this sceptred sway,

It is enthroned in the hearts of kings,

It is an attribute to God himself;

And earthly power doth then show likest God's

When mercy seasons justice. Therefore, Jew,

Though justice be thy plea, consider this-

That in the course of justice none of us

Should see salvation; we do pray for mercy,

And that same prayer doth teach us all to render

The deeds of mercy. I have spoke thus much

To mitigate the justice of thy plea,

Which if thou follow, this strict court of Venice

Must needs give sentence 'gainst the merchant there.

SHYLOCK.

My deeds upon my head! I crave the law,

The penalty and forfeit of my bond.

BASSANIO.

Yes; here I tender it for him in the court;

Yea, twice the sum; if that will not suffice,

I will be bound to pay it ten times o'er

On forfeit of my hands, my head, my heart;

If this will not suffice, it must appear

That malice bears down truth. And, I beseech you,

Wrest once the law to your authority;

To do a great right do a little wrong,

And curb this cruel devil of his will.

PORTIA.

It must not be; there is no power in Venice

Can alter a decree established;

'Twill be recorded for a precedent,

And many an error, by the same example,

Will rush into the state; it cannot be.

SHYLOCK.

A Daniel come to judgment! Yea, a Daniel!

O wise young judge, how I do honour thee!

PORTIA.

I pray you, let me look upon the bond.

SHYLOCK.
Here 'tis, most reverend Doctor; here it is.

PORTIA.

Shylock, there's thrice thy money off'red thee.

SHYLOCK.
An oath, an oath! I have an oath in heaven.

Shall I lay perjury upon my soul?
No, not for Venice.

PORTIA.
Why, this bond is forfeit;
And lawfully by this the Jew may claim
A pound of flesh, to be by him cut off

Nearest the merchant's heart. Be merciful.

Take thrice thy money; bid me tear the bond.

SHYLOCK.

When it is paid according to the tenour.

It doth appear you are a worthy judge;

You know the law; your exposition

Hath been most sound; I charge you by the law,

Whereof you are a well-deserving pillar,

Proceed to judgment. By my soul I swear

There is no power in the tongue of man

To alter me. I stay here on my bond.

ANTONIO.

Most heartily I do beseech the court

To give the judgment.

PORTIA.

Why then, thus it is:

You must prepare your bosom for his knife.

SHYLOCK.

O noble judge! O excellent young man!

PORTIA.

For the intent and purpose of the law

Hath full relation to the penalty,

Which here appeareth due upon the bond.

SHYLOCK.

'Tis very true. O wise and upright judge,

How much more elder art thou than thy looks!

PORTIA.

Therefore, lay bare your bosom.

SHYLOCK.

Ay, his breast-

So says the bond; doth it not, noble judge?

'Nearest his heart,' those are the very words.

PORTIA.

It is so. Are there balance here to weigh The flesh?

SHYLOCK.

I have them ready.

PORTIA.

Have by some surgeon, Shylock, on your charge,

To stop his wounds, lest he do bleed to death.

SHYLOCK.

Is it so nominated in the bond?

PORTIA.

It is not so express'd, but what of that?

'Twere good you do so much for charity.

SHYLOCK.

I cannot find it; 'tis not in the bond.

PORTIA.

You, merchant, have you anything to say?

ANTONIO.

But little: I am arm'd and well prepar'd.
Give me your hand, Bassanio; fare you well.
Grieve not that I am fall'n to this for you,
For herein Fortune shows herself more kind
Than is her custom. It is still her use
To let the wretched man outlive his wealth,
To view with hollow eye and wrinkled brow
An age of poverty; from which ling'ring penance
Of such misery doth she cut me off.
Commend me to your honourable wife;
Tell her the process of Antonio's end;
Say how I lov'd you; speak me fair in death;

And, when the tale is told, bid her be judge
Whether Bassanio had not once a love.
Repent but you that you shall lose your friend,
And he repents not that he pays your debt;
For if the Jew do cut but deep enough,
I'll pay it instantly with all my heart.

BASSANIO.

Antonio, I am married to a wife
Which is as dear to me as life itself;
But life itself, my wife, and all the world,
Are not with me esteem'd above thy life;
I would lose all, ay, sacrifice them all
Here to this devil, to deliver you.

PORTIA.

Your wife would give you little thanks for that,
If she were by to hear you make the offer.

GRATIANO.

I have a wife who I protest I love;

I would she were in heaven, so she could
Entreat some power to change this currish Jew.

NERISSA.
'Tis well you offer it behind her back;
The wish would make else an unquiet house.

SHYLOCK.
[Aside] These be the Christian husbands! I have a
daughter-
Would any of the stock of Barrabas
Had been her husband, rather than a Christian!-
We trifle time; I pray thee pursue sentence.

PORTIA.
A pound of that same merchant's flesh is thine.

The court awards it and the law doth give it.

SHYLOCK.
Most rightful judge!

PORTIA.

And you must cut this flesh from off his breast.
The law allows it and the court awards it.

SHYLOCK.

Most learned judge! A sentence! Come, prepare.

PORTIA.
Tarry a little; there is something else.

This bond doth give thee here no jot of blood:
The words expressly are 'a pound of flesh.'
Take then thy bond, take thou thy pound of flesh;
But, in the cutting it, if thou dost shed
One drop of Christian blood, thy lands and goods
Are, by the laws of Venice, confiscate
Unto the state of Venice.

GRATIANO.

O upright judge! Mark, Jew. O learned judge!

SHYLOCK.

Is that the law?

PORTIA.

Thyself shalt see the act;
For, as thou urgest justice, be assur'd
Thou shalt have justice, more than thou desir'st.

GRATIANO.

O learned judge! Mark, Jew. A learned judge!

SHYLOCK.

I take this offer then: pay the bond thrice,
And let the Christian go.

BASSANIO.

Here is the money.

PORTIA.

Soft!

The Jew shall have all justice. Soft! No haste.

He shall have nothing but the penalty.

GRATIANO.

O Jew! an upright judge, a learned judge!

PORTIA.

Therefore, prepare thee to cut off the flesh.

Shed thou no blood, nor cut thou less nor more

But just a pound of flesh; if thou tak'st more

Or less than a just pound-be it but so much

As makes it light or heavy in the substance,

Or the division of the twentieth part

Of one poor scruple; nay, if the scale do turn

But in the estimation of a hair-

Thou diest, and all thy goods are confiscate.

GRATIANO.

A second Daniel, a Daniel, Jew!

Now, infidel, I have you on the hip.

PORTIA.

Why doth the Jew pause? Take thy forfeiture.

SHYLOCK.

Give me my principal, and let me go.

BASSANIO.

I have it ready for thee; here it is.

PORTIA.

He hath refus'd it in the open court;

He shall have merely justice, and his bond.

GRATIANO.

A Daniel still say I, a second Daniel!
I thank thee, Jew, for teaching me that word.

SHYLOCK.

Shall I not have barely my principal?

PORTIA.
Thou shalt have nothing but the forfeiture
To be so taken at thy peril, Jew.

SHYLOCK.
Why, then the devil give him good of it!

I'll stay no longer question.

PORTIA.
Tarry, Jew.

The law hath yet another hold on you.

It is enacted in the laws of Venice,

If it be proved against an alien

That by direct or indirect attempts

He seek the life of any citizen,

The party 'gainst the which he doth contrive

Shall seize one half his goods; the other half

Comes to the privy coffer of the state;

And the offender's life lies in the mercy

Of the Duke only, 'gainst all other voice.

In which predicament, I say, thou stand'st;

For it appears by manifest proceeding

That indirectly, and directly too,

Thou hast contrived against the very life

Of the defendant; and thou hast incurr'd

The danger formerly by me rehears'd.

Down, therefore, and beg mercy of the Duke.

GRATIANO.

Beg that thou mayst have leave to hang thyself;
And yet, thy wealth being forfeit to the state,
Thou hast not left the value of a cord;
Therefore thou must be hang'd at the state's charge.

DUKE OF VENICE.
That thou shalt see the difference of our spirit,
I pardon thee thy life before thou ask it.
For half thy wealth, it is Antonio's;
The other half comes to the general state,
Which humbleness may drive unto a fine.

PORTIA.

Ay, for the state; not for Antonio.

SHYLOCK.
Nay, take my life and all, pardon not that.
You take my house when you do take the prop
That doth sustain my house; you take my life
When you do take the means whereby I live.

PORTIA.

What mercy can you render him, Antonio?

GRATIANO.

A halter gratis; nothing else, for God's sake!

ANTONIO.

So please my lord the Duke and all the court
To quit the fine for one half of his goods;
I am content, so he will let me have
The other half in use, to render it
Upon his death unto the gentleman
That lately stole his daughter-
Two things provided more; that, for this favour,
He presently become a Christian;
The other, that he do record a gift,
Here in the court, of all he dies possess'd
Unto his son Lorenzo and his daughter.

DUKE OF VENICE.

He shall do this, or else I do recant
The pardon that I late pronounced here.

PORTIA.

Art thou contented, Jew? What dost thou say?

SHYLOCK.

I am content.

PORTIA.

Clerk, draw a deed of gift.

SHYLOCK.

I pray you, give me leave to go from hence;
I am not well; send the deed after me
And I will sign it.

DUKE OF VENICE.

Get thee gone, but do it.

GRATIANO.

In christ'ning shalt thou have two god-fathers;

Had I been judge, thou shouldst have had ten more,

To bring thee to the gallows, not to the font.

Exit SHYLOCK

DUKE OF VENICE.

Sir, I entreat you home with me to dinner.

PORTIA.

I humbly do desire your Grace of pardon;

I must away this night toward Padua,

And it is meet I presently set forth.

DUKE OF VENICE.

I am sorry that your leisure serves you not.

Antonio, gratify this gentleman,

For in my mind you are much bound to him.

Exeunt DUKE, MAGNIFICOES, and train

BASSANIO.

Most worthy gentleman, I and my friend
Have by your wisdom been this day acquitted
Of grievous penalties; in lieu whereof
Three thousand ducats, due unto the Jew,
We freely cope your courteous pains withal.

ANTONIO.

And stand indebted, over and above,
In love and service to you evermore.

PORTIA.

He is well paid that is well satisfied,
And I, delivering you, am satisfied,
And therein do account myself well paid.

My mind was never yet more mercenary.
I pray you, know me when we meet again;
I wish you well, and so I take my leave.

BASSANIO.

Dear sir, of force I must attempt you further;

Take some remembrance of us, as a tribute,

Not as fee. Grant me two things, I pray you,

Not to deny me, and to pardon me.

PORTIA.

You press me far, and therefore I will yield.

[To ANTONIO] Give me your gloves, I'll wear them for your sake.

[To BASSANIO] And, for your love, I'll take this ring from you.

Do not draw back your hand; I'll take no more,

And you in love shall not deny me this.

BASSANIO.

This ring, good sir-alas, it is a trifle;

I will not shame myself to give you this.

PORTIA.

I will have nothing else but only this;

And now, methinks, I have a mind to it.

BASSANIO.. There's more depends on this than on the value.

The dearest ring in Venice will I give you,

And find it out by proclamation;

Only for this, I pray you, pardon me.

PORTIA.

I see, sir, you are liberal in offers;

You taught me first to beg, and now, methinks,

You teach me how a beggar should be answer'd.

BASSANIO.

Good sir, this ring was given me by my wife;

And, when she put it on, she made me vow

That I should neither sell, nor give, nor lose it.

PORTIA.

That 'scuse serves many men to save their gifts.

And if your wife be not a mad woman,

And know how well I have deserv'd this ring,

She would not hold out enemy for ever

For giving it to me. Well, peace be with you!

Exeunt PORTIA and NERISSA

ANTONIO.

My Lord Bassanio, let him have the ring.

Let his deservings, and my love withal,

Be valued 'gainst your wife's commandment.

BASSANIO.

Go, Gratiano, run and overtake him;

Give him the ring, and bring him, if thou canst,

Unto Antonio's house. Away, make haste. *Exit* GRATIANO

Come, you and I will thither presently;

And in the morning early will we both

Fly toward Belmont. Come, Antonio. *Exeunt*

SCENE II. Venice . A street

Enter PORTIA and NERISSA

PORTIA.

Inquire the Jew's house out, give him this deed,

And let him sign it; we'll away tonight,

And be a day before our husbands home.

This deed will be well welcome to Lorenzo.

Enter GRATIANO

GRATIANO.

Fair sir, you are well o'erta'en.

My Lord Bassanio, upon more advice,

Hath sent you here this ring, and doth entreat

Your company at dinner.

PORTIA.

That cannot be.

His ring I do accept most thankfully,

And so, I pray you, tell him. Furthermore, I pray you show my youth old Shylock's house.

GRATIANO.

That will I do.

NERISSA.

Sir, I would speak with you.

[Aside to PORTIA] I'll See if I can get my husband's ring,

Which I did make him swear to keep for ever.

PORTIA.

[To NERISSA] Thou Mayst, I warrant. We shall have old swearing

That they did give the rings away to men;

But we'll outface them, and outswear them too.

[Aloud] Away, make haste, thou know'st where I will tarry.

NERISSA.

Come, good sir, will you show me to this house?

Exeunt

ACT V. SCENE I. Belmont. The garden before PORTIA'S house

Enter LORENZO and JESSICA

LORENZO.

The moon shines bright. In such a night as this,

When the sweet wind did gently kiss the trees,

And they did make no noise-in such a night,

Troilus methinks mounted the Troyan walls,

And sigh'd his soul toward the Grecian tents,

Where Cressid lay that night.

JESSICA.

In such a night

Did Thisby fearfully o'ertrip the dew,

And saw the lion's shadow ere himself,

And ran dismayed away.

LORENZO.

In such a night
Stood Dido with a willow in her hand
Upon the wild sea-banks, and waft her love
To come again to Carthage.

JESSICA.
In such a night
Medea gathered the enchanted herbs
That did renew old AEson.

LORENZO.
In such a night
Did Jessica steal from the wealthy Jew,
And with an unthrift love did run from Venice
As far as Belmont.

JESSICA.
In such a night
Did young Lorenzo swear he lov'd her well,
Stealing her soul with many vows of faith,
And ne'er a true one.

LORENZO.

In such a night

Did pretty Jessica, like a little shrew,

Slander her love, and he forgave it her.

JESSICA.

I would out-night you, did no body come;

But, hark, I hear the footing of a man.

Enter STEPHANO

LORENZO.

Who comes so fast in silence of the night?

STEPHANO.

A friend.

LORENZO.

A friend! What friend? Your name, I pray you, friend?

STEPHANO.

Stephano is my name, and I bring word

My mistress will before the break of day

Be here at Belmont; she doth stray about

By holy crosses, where she kneels and prays

For happy wedlock hours.

LORENZO.

Who comes with her?

STEPHANO.

None but a holy hermit and her maid.

I pray you, is my master yet return'd?

LORENZO.

He is not, nor we have not heard from him.

But go we in, I pray thee, Jessica,

And ceremoniously let us prepare

Some welcome for the mistress of the house.

Enter LAUNCELOT

LAUNCELOT.

Sola, sola! wo ha, ho! sola, sola!

LORENZO.

Who calls?

LAUNCELOT.

Sola! Did you see Master Lorenzo? Master Lorenzo!

Sola, sola!

LORENZO.

Leave holloaing, man. Here!

LAUNCELOT.

Sola! Where, where?

LORENZO.

Here!

LAUNCELOT.

Tell him there's a post come from my master with his

horn full of good news; my master will be here ere morning.

Exit

LORENZO. Sweet soul, let's in, and there expect their coming.

And yet no matter-why should we go in?

My friend Stephano, signify, I pray you,

Within the house, your mistress is at hand;

And bring your music forth into the air. *Exit* STEPHANO

How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank!

Here will we sit and let the sounds of music

Creep in our ears; soft stillness and the night

Become the touches of sweet harmony.

Sit, Jessica. Look how the floor of heaven

Is thick inlaid with patines of bright gold;

There's not the smallest orb which thou behold'st

But in his motion like an angel sings,

Still quiring to the young-ey'd cherubins;

Such harmony is in immortal souls,

But whilst this muddy vesture of decay

Doth grossly close it in, we cannot hear it.

Enter MUSICIANS

Come, ho, and wake Diana with a hymn;

With sweetest touches pierce your mistress' ear.

And draw her home with music. *[Music]*

JESSICA.

I am never merry when I hear sweet music.

LORENZO.

The reason is your spirits are attentive;

For do but note a wild and wanton herd,

Or race of youthful and unhandled colts,

Fetching mad bounds, bellowing and neighing loud,
Which is the hot condition of their blood-
If they but hear perchance a trumpet sound,
Or any air of music touch their ears,
You shall perceive them make a mutual stand,
Their savage eyes turn'd to a modest gaze
By the sweet power of music. Therefore the poet
Did feign that Orpheus drew trees, stones, and floods;
Since nought so stockish, hard, and full of rage,
But music for the time doth change his nature.
The man that hath no music in himself,
Nor is not mov'd with concord of sweet sounds,
Is fit for treasons, stratagems, and spoils;
The motions of his spirit are dull:as night,
And his affections dark as Erebus.

Let no such man be trusted. Mark the music.

Enter PORTIA and NERISSA

PORTIA.

That light we see is burning in my hall.

How far that little candle throws his beams!
So shines a good deed in a naughty world.

NERISSA.

When the moon shone, we did not see the candle.

PORTIA.
So doth the greater glory dim the less:
A substitute shines brightly as a king
Until a king be by, and then his state
Empties itself, as doth an inland brook
Into the main of waters. Music! hark!

NERISSA.

It is your music, madam, of the house.

PORTIA.

Nothing is good, I see, without respect;

Methinks it sounds much sweeter than by day.

NERISSA.

Silence bestows that virtue on it, madam.

PORTIA.

The crow doth sing as sweetly as the lark

When neither is attended; and I think

ne nightingale, if she should sing by day,

When every goose is cackling, would be thought

No better a musician than the wren.

How many things by season season'd are

To their right praise and true perfection!

Peace, ho! The moon sleeps with Endymion,

And would not be awak'd. *[Music ceases]*

LORENZO.

That is the voice,

Or I am much deceiv'd, of Portia.

PORTIA.

He knows me as the blind man knows the cuckoo,
By the bad voice.

LORENZO.

Dear lady, welcome home.

PORTIA.

We have been praying for our husbands' welfare,
Which speed, we hope, the better for our words.

Are they return'd?

LORENZO.

Madam, they are not yet;
But there is come a messenger before,
To signify their coming.

PORTIA.. Go in, Nerissa;
Give order to my servants that they take
No note at all of our being absent hence;

Nor you, Lorenzo; Jessica, nor you. *[A tucket sounds]*

LORENZO.

Your husband is at hand; I hear his trumpet.

We are no tell-tales, madam, fear you not.

PORTIA.

This night methinks is but the daylight sick;

It looks a little paler; 'tis a day

Such as the day is when the sun is hid.

Enter BASSANIO, ANTONIO, GRATIANO, and their followers

BASSANIO.

We should hold day with the Antipodes,

If you would walk in absence of the sun.

PORTIA.

Let me give light, but let me not be light,

For a light wife doth make a heavy husband,

And never be Bassanio so for me;

But God sort all! You are welcome home, my lord.

BASSANIO.

I thank you, madam; give welcome to my friend.

This is the man, this is Antonio,

To whom I am so infinitely bound.

PORTIA.

You should in all sense be much bound to him,

For, as I hear, he was much bound for you.

ANTONIO.

No more than I am well acquitted of.

PORTIA.

Sir, you are very welcome to our house.

It must appear in other ways than words,

Therefore I scant this breathing courtesy.

GRATIANO.

[To NERISSA] By yonder moon I swear you do me wrong;

In faith, I gave it to the judge's clerk.

Would he were gelt that had it, for my part,

Since you do take it, love, so much at heart.

PORTIA.

A quarrel, ho, already! What's the matter?

GRATIANO.

About a hoop of gold, a paltry ring

That she did give me, whose posy was

For all the world like cutler's poetry

Upon a knife, 'Love me, and leave me not.'

NERISSA.

What talk you of the posy or the value?

You swore to me, when I did give it you,

That you would wear it till your hour of death,

And that it should lie with you in your grave;

Though not for me, yet for your vehement oaths,

You should have been respective and have kept it.

Gave it a judge's clerk! No, God's my judge,

The clerk will ne'er wear hair on's face that had it.

GRATIANO.

He will, an if he live to be a man.

NERISSA.

Ay, if a woman live to be a man.

GRATIANO.

Now by this hand I gave it to a youth,

A kind of boy, a little scrubbed boy

No higher than thyself, the judge's clerk;

A prating boy that begg'd it as a fee;

I could not for my heart deny it him.

PORTIA.

You were to blame, I must be plain with you, To part so slightly with your wife's first gift,

A thing stuck on with oaths upon your finger

And so riveted with faith unto your flesh.

I gave my love a ring, and made him swear

Never to part with it, and here he stands;

I dare be sworn for him he would not leave it

Nor pluck it from his finger for the wealth

That the world masters. Now, in faith, Gratiano,

You give your wife too unkind a cause of grief;

An 'twere to me, I should be mad at it.

BASSANIO.

[Aside] Why, I were best to cut my left hand off,

And swear I lost the ring defending it.

GRATIANO.

My Lord Bassanio gave his ring away

Unto the judge that begg'd it, and indeed

Deserv'd it too; and then the boy, his clerk,

That took some pains in writing, he begg'd mine;

And neither man nor master would take aught

But the two rings.

PORTIA.

What ring gave you, my lord?
Not that, I hope, which you receiv'd of me.

BASSANIO.
If I could add a lie unto a fault,
I would deny it; but you see my finger
Hath not the ring upon it; it is gone.

PORTIA.
Even so void is your false heart of truth;
By heaven, I will ne'er come in your bed
Until I see the ring.

NERISSA.
Nor I in yours
Till I again see mine.

BASSANIO.

Sweet Portia,

If you did know to whom I gave the ring,

If you did know for whom I gave the ring,

And would conceive for what I gave the ring,

And how unwillingly I left the ring,

When nought would be accepted but the ring,

You would abate the strength of your displeasure.

PORTIA.

If you had known the virtue of the ring,

Or half her worthiness that gave the ring,

Or your own honour to contain the ring,

You would not then have parted with the ring.

What man is there so much unreasonable,

If you had pleas'd to have defended it

With any terms of zeal, wanted the modesty

To urge the thing held as a ceremony?

Nerissa teaches me what to believe:

I'll die for't but some woman had the ring.

BASSANIO.

No, by my honour, madam, by my soul,
No woman had it, but a civil doctor,
Which did refuse three thousand ducats of me,
And begg'd the ring; the which I did deny him,
And suffer'd him to go displeas'd away-
Even he that had held up the very life
Of my dear friend. What should I say, sweet lady?
I was enforc'd to send it after him;
I was beset with shame and courtesy;
My honour would not let ingratitude
So much besmear it. Pardon me, good lady;
For by these blessed candles of the night,
Had you been there, I think you would have begg'd
The ring of me to give the worthy doctor.

PORTIA.

Let not that doctor e'er come near my house;
Since he hath got the jewel that I loved,
And that which you did swear to keep for me,

I will become as liberal as you;

I'll not deny him anything I have,

No, not my body, nor my husband's bed.

Know him I shall, I am well sure of it.

Lie not a night from home; watch me like Argus;

If you do not, if I be left alone,

Now, by mine honour which is yet mine own,

I'll have that doctor for mine bedfellow.

NERISSA.

And I his clerk; therefore be well advis'd

How you do leave me to mine own protection.

GRATIANO.

Well, do you so, let not me take him then;

For, if I do, I'll mar the young clerk's pen.

ANTONIO.

I am th' unhappy subject of these quarrels.

PORTIA.

Sir, grieve not you; you are welcome not withstanding.

BASSANIO.

Portia, forgive me this enforced wrong;

And in the hearing of these many friends

I swear to thee, even by thine own fair eyes,

Wherein I see myself-

PORTIA.

Mark you but that!

In both my eyes he doubly sees himself,

In each eye one; swear by your double self,

And there's an oath of credit.

BASSANIO.

Nay, but hear me.

Pardon this fault, and by my soul I swear

I never more will break an oath with thee.

ANTONIO.

I once did lend my body for his wealth,

Which, but for him that had your husband's ring,

Had quite miscarried; I dare be bound again,

My soul upon the forfeit, that your lord

Will never more break faith advisedly.

PORTIA.

Then you shall be his surety. Give him this,

And bid him keep it better than the other.

ANTONIO.

Here, Lord Bassanio, swear to keep this ring.

BASSANIO.

By heaven, it is the same I gave the doctor!

PORTIA.

I had it of him. Pardon me, Bassanio,

For, by this ring, the doctor lay with me.

NERISSA.

And pardon me, my gentle Gratiano,

For that same scrubbed boy, the doctor's clerk,

In lieu of this, last night did lie with me.

GRATIANO.

Why, this is like the mending of highways

In summer, where the ways are fair enough.

What, are we cuckolds ere we have deserv'd it?

PORTIA.

Speak not so grossly. You are all amaz'd.

Here is a letter; read it at your leisure;

It comes from Padua, from Bellario;

There you shall find that Portia was the doctor,

Nerissa there her clerk. Lorenzo here

Shall witness I set forth as soon as you,

And even but now return'd; I have not yet

Enter 'd my house. Antonio, you are welcome;

And I have better news in store for you

Than you expect. Unseal this letter soon;

There you shall find three of your argosies

Are richly come to harbour suddenly.

You shall not know by what strange accident

I chanced on this letter.

ANTONIO.

I am dumb.

BASSANIO.

Were you the doctor, and I knew you not?

GRATIANO.

Were you the clerk that is to make me cuckold?

NERISSA.

Ay, but the clerk that never means to do it, Unless he live until he be a man.

BASSANIO.

Sweet doctor, you shall be my bedfellow;

When I am absent, then lie with my wife.

ANTONIO.

Sweet lady, you have given me life and living;

For here I read for certain that my ships

Are safely come to road.

PORTIA.

How now, Lorenzo!

My clerk hath some good comforts too for you.

NERISSA.

Ay, and I'll give them him without a fee.

There do I give to you and Jessica,

From the rich Jew, a special deed of gift,

After his death, of all he dies possess'd of.

LORENZO.

Fair ladies, you drop manna in the way

Of starved people.

PORTIA.

It is almost morning,

And yet I am sure you are not satisfied

Of these events at full. Let us go in,

And charge us there upon inter'gatories,

And we will answer all things faithfully.

GRATIANO.

Let it be so. The first inter'gatory

That my Nerissa shall be sworn on is,

Whether till the next night she had rather stay,

Or go to bed now, being two hours to day.

But were the day come, I should wish it dark,

Till I were couching with the doctor's clerk.

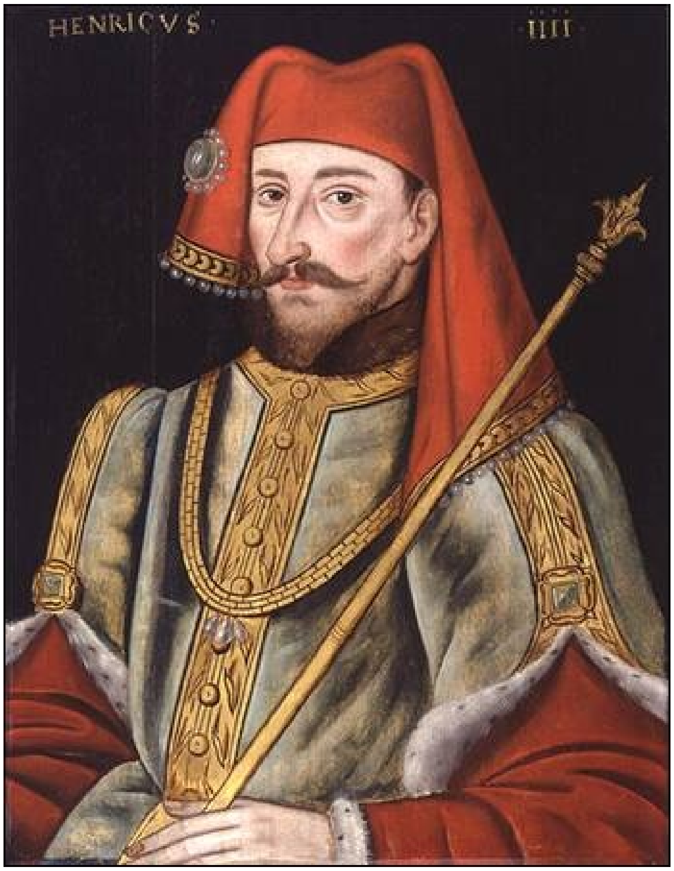
Well, while I live, I'll fear no other thing

So sore as keeping safe Nerissa's ring. *Exeunt*

HENRY IV, PART I

Believed to have been written no later than 1597, this is the second play in Shakespeare's tetralogy dealing with the successive reigns of Richard II, Henry IV and Henry V. This popular play covers events that begin with Hotspur's battle at Homildon against Douglas late in 1402 and culminates with the defeat of the rebels at Shrewsbury in the middle of 1403. However, the play is most treasured for its ‘show-stealing’ comedic character Sir John Falstaff, who would become Shakespeare’s most popular creation. Though used for comedic effect, Falstaff’s famous comments on honour and his criticism of contemporary society are telling signs of the playwright’s more serious genius.

Shakespeare's primary source for *Henry IV, Part 1* was the 1587 edition of Raphael Holinshed's *Chronicles* , which in turn drew on Edward Hall's The *Union of the Two Illustrious Families of Lancaster and York* .



The real life Henry IV

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DRAMATIS PERSONAE

King Henry the Fourth.

Henry, Prince of Wales, son to the King.

Prince John of Lancaster, son to the King.

Earl of Westmoreland.

Sir Walter Blunt.

Thomas Percy, Earl of Worcester.

Henry Percy, Earl of Northumberland.

Henry Percy, surnamed Hotspur, his son.

Edmund Mortimer, Earl of March.

Richard Scroop, Archbishop of York.

Archibald, Earl of Douglas.

Owen Glendower.

Sir Richard Vernon.

Sir John Falstaff.

Sir Michael, a friend to the Archbishop of York.

Poins.

Gadshill Peto.

Bardolph.

Lady Percy, wife to Hotspur, and sister to Mortimer.

Lady Mortimer, daughter to Glendower, and wife to Mortimer.

Mistress Quickly, hostess of the Boar's Head in Eastcheap.

Lords, Officers, Sheriff, Vintner, Chamberlain, Drawers, two

Carriers, Travellers, and Attendants.

SCENE.—England and Wales.

ACT I. Scene I. London . The Palace.

Enter the King, Lord John of Lancaster, Earl of Westmoreland,

[Sir Walter Blunt,] with others.

King. So shaken as we are, so wan with care,
Find we a time for frighted peace to pant
And breathe short-winded accents of new broils
To be commenc'd in stronds afar remote.
No more the thirsty entrance of this soil
Shall daub her lips with her own children's blood.
No more shall trenching war channel her fields,
Nor Bruise her flow'rets with the armed hoofs
Of hostile paces. Those opposed eyes
Which, like the meteors of a troubled heaven,
All of one nature, of one substance bred,
Did lately meet in the intestine shock
And furious close of civil butchery,
Shall now in mutual well-beseeming ranks
March all one way and be no more oppos'd
Against acquaintance, kindred, and allies.
The edge of war, like an ill-sheathed knife,

No more shall cut his master. Therefore, friends,

As far as to the sepulchre of Christ-

Whose soldier now, under whose blessed cross

We are impressed and engag'd to fight-

Forthwith a power of English shall we levy,

Whose arms were moulded in their mother's womb

To chase these pagans in those holy fields

Over whose acres walk'd those blessed feet

Which fourteen hundred years ago were nail'd

For our advantage on the bitter cross.

But this our purpose now is twelvemonth old,

And bootless 'tis to tell you we will go.

Therefore we meet not now. Then let me hear

Of you, my gentle cousin Westmoreland,

What yesternight our Council did decree

In forwarding this dear expedience.

West. My liege, this haste was hot in question

And many limits of the charge set down

But yesternight; when all athwart there came

A post from Wales, loaden with heavy news;

Whose worst was that the noble Mortimer,
Leading the men of Herefordshire to fight
Against the irregular and wild Glendower,
Was by the rude hands of that Welshman taken,
A thousand of his people butchered;
Upon whose dead corpse there was such misuse,
Such beastly shameless transformation,
By those Welshwomen done as may not be
Without much shame retold or spoken of.

King. It seems then that the tidings of this broil
Brake off our business for the Holy Land.

West. This, match'd with other, did, my gracious lord;
For more uneven and unwelcome news
Came from the North, and thus it did import:
On Holy-rood Day the gallant Hotspur there,
Young Harry Percy, and brave Archibald,
That ever-valiant and approved Scot,
At Holmedon met,
Where they did spend a sad and bloody hour;

As by discharge of their artillery
And shape of likelihood the news was told;
For he that brought them, in the very heat
And pride of their contention did take horse,
Uncertain of the issue any way.

King. Here is a dear, a true-industrious friend,
Sir Walter Blunt, new lighted from his horse,
Stain'd with the variation of each soil
Betwixt that Holmedon and this seat of ours,
And he hath brought us smooth and welcome news.
The Earl of Douglas is discomfited;
Ten thousand bold Scots, two-and-twenty knights,
Balk'd in their own blood did Sir Walter see
On Holmedon's plains. Of prisoners, Hotspur took
Mordake Earl of Fife and eldest son
To beaten Douglas, and the Earl of Athol,
Of Murray, Angus, and Menteith.

And is not this an honourable spoil?
A gallant prize? Ha, cousin, is it not?

West. In faith,

It is a conquest for a prince to boast of.

King. Yea, there thou mak'st me sad, and mak'st me sin

In envy that my Lord Northumberland

Should be the father to so blest a son-

A son who is the theme of honour's tongue,

Amongst a grove the very straightest plant;

Who is sweet Fortune's minion and her pride;

Whilst I, by looking on the praise of him,

See riot and dishonour stain the brow

Of my young Harry. O that it could be prov'd

That some night-tripping fairy had exchang'd

In cradle clothes our children where they lay,

And call'd mine Percy, his Plantagenet!

Then would I have his Harry, and he mine.

But let him from my thoughts. What think you, coz,

Of this young Percy's pride? The prisoners

Which he in this adventure hath surpris'd

To his own use he keeps, and sends me word
I shall have none but Mordake Earl of Fife.

West. This is his uncle's teaching, this Worcester,
Malevolent to you In all aspects,
Which makes him prune himself and bristle up
The crest of youth against your dignity.

King. But I have sent for him to answer this;
And for this cause awhile we must neglect
Our holy purpose to Jerusalem.
Cousin, on Wednesday next our council we
Will hold at Windsor. So inform the lords;
But come yourself with speed to us again;
For more is to be said and to be done
Than out of anger can be uttered.

West. I will my liege. *Exeunt* .

Scene II. London. An apartment of the Prince's.

Enter Prince of Wales and Sir John Falstaff.

Fal. Now, Hal, what time of day is it, lad? Prince. Thou art so fat-witted with drinking of old sack, and unbuttoning thee after supper, and sleeping upon benches after noon, that thou hast forgotten to demand that truly which thou wouldest truly know. What a devil hast thou to do with the time of the day, Unless hours were cups of sack, and minutes capons, and clocks the tongues of bawds, and dials the signs of leaping houses, and the blessed sun himself a fair hot wench in flame-coloured taffeta, I see no reason why thou shouldst be so superfluous to demand the time of the day. Fal. Indeed you come near me now, Hal; for we that take purses go by the moon And the seven stars, and not by Phoebus, he, that wand'ring knight so fair. And I prithee, sweet wag, when thou art king, as, God save thy Grace-Majesty I should say, for grace thou wilt have none-Prince. What, none? Fal. No, by my troth; not so much as will serve to be prologue to an egg and butter. Prince. Well, how then? Come, roundly, roundly. Fal. Marry, then, sweet wag, when thou art king, let not us that are squires of the night's body be called thieves of the day's beauty. Let us be Diana's Foresters, Gentlemen of the Shade, Minions of the Moon; and let men say we be men of good government, being governed as the sea is, by our noble and chaste mistress the moon, under whose countenance we steal. Prince. Thou sayest well, and it holds well too; for the fortune of us that are the moon's men doth ebb and flow like the sea, being governed, as the sea is, by the moon. As, for proof now: a purse of gold most resolutely snatch'd on Monday night and most dissolutely spent on Tuesday morning; got with swearing 'Lay by,' and spent with crying 'Bring in'; now ill as low an ebb as the foot of the ladder, and by-and-by in as high a flow as the ridge of the gallows. Fal. By the Lord, thou say'st true, lad-and is not my hostess of the tavern a most sweet wench? Prince. As the honey of Hybla, my old lad of the castle-and is not a buff jerkin a most sweet robe of durance? Fal. How now, how now, mad wag? What, in thy quips and thy quiddities? What a plague have I to do with a buff jerkin? Prince. Why, what a pox have I to do with my hostess of the tavern? Fal. Well, thou hast call'd her to a reckoning many a time and oft. Prince. Did I ever call for thee to pay thy part? Fal. No; I'll give thee thy due, thou hast paid all there. Prince. Yea, and elsewhere, so far as my coin would stretch; and where it would not, I have used my credit. Fal. Yea, and so us'd it that, were it not here apparent that thou art heir apparent-But I prithee, sweet wag, shall there be gallows standing in England when thou art king? and resolution thus fubb'd as it is with the rusty curb of old father antic the law? Do not thou, when thou art king, hang a thief. Prince. No; thou shalt. Fal. Shall I? O rare! By the Lord, I'll be a brave judge. Prince. Thou judgest false already. I mean, thou shalt have the hanging of the thieves and so become a rare hangman. Fal. Well, Hal, well; and in some sort it jumps with my humour as well as waiting in the court, I can tell you. Prince. For obtaining of suits? Fal. Yea, for obtaining of suits, whereof the hangman hath no lean wardrobe. 'Sblood, I am as melancholy as a gib-cat or a lugg'd bear. Prince. Or an old lion, or a lover's lute. Fal. Yea, or the drone of a Lincolnshire bagpipe. Prince. What sayest thou to a hare, or the melancholy of Moor Ditch? Fal. Thou hast the most unsavoury similes, and art indeed the most comparative, rascalliest, sweet young prince. But, Hal, I prithee trouble me no more with vanity. I would to God thou and I knew where a commodity of good names were to be bought. An old lord of the Council rated me the other day in the street about you, sir, but I mark'd him not; and yet he talked very wisely, but I regarded him not; and yet he talk'd wisely, and in the street too. Prince. Thou didst well; for wisdom cries out in the streets, and no man regards it. Fal. O, thou hast damnable iteration, and art indeed able to corrupt a saint. Thou hast done much harm upon me, Hal-God forgive thee for it! Before I knew thee, Hal, I knew nothing; and now am I, if a man should speak truly, little better than one of the wicked. I must give over this life, and I will give it over! By the Lord, an I do not, I am a villain! I'll be damn'd for never a king's son in Christendom. Prince. Where shall we take a purse tomorrow, Jack? Fal. Zounds, where thou wilt, lad! I'll make one. An I do not, call me villain and baffle me. Prince. I see a good amendment of life in thee-from praying to purse-taking. Fal. Why, Hal, 'tis my vocation, Hal. 'Tis no sin for a man to labour in his vocation.

Enter Poins.

Poins! Now shall we know if Gadshill have set a match. O, if men

were to be saved by merit, what hole in hell were hot enough for

him? This is the most omnipotent villain that ever cried

'Stand!' to a true man.

Prince. Good morrow, Ned.

Poins. Good morrow, sweet Hal. What says Monsieur Remorse? What says Sir John Sack and Sugar? Jack, how agrees the devil and thee about thy soul, that thou soldest him on Good Friday last for a cup of Madeira and a cold capon's leg?

Prince. Sir John stands to his word, the devil shall have his bargain; for he was never yet a breaker of proverbs. He will give the devil his due.

Poins. Then art thou damn'd for keeping thy word with the devil.

Prince. Else he had been damn'd for cozening the devil.

Poins. But, my lads, my lads, tomorrow morning, by four o'clock early, at Gadshill! There are pilgrims gong to Canterbury with rich offerings, and traders riding to London with fat purses.

I

have vizards for you all; you have horses for yourselves.
Gadshill lies to-night in Rochester. I have bespoke supper
tomorrow night in Eastcheap. We may do it as secure as
sleep. If
you will go, I will stuff your purses full of crowns; if you will
not, tarry at home and be hang'd!

Fal. Hear ye, Yedward: if I tarry at home and go not, I'll hang you for going.

Poins. You will, chops?

Fal. Hal, wilt thou make one?

Prince. Who, I rob? I a thief? Not I, by my faith.

Fal. There's neither honesty, manhood, nor good fellowship in thee,
nor thou cam'st not of the blood royal if thou darest not stand
for ten shillings.

Prince. Well then, once in my days I'll be a madcap.

Fal. Why, that's well said.

Prince. Well, come what will, I'll tarry at home.

Fal. By the Lord, I'll be a traitor then, when thou art king.

Prince. I care not.

Poins. Sir John, I prithee, leave the Prince and me alone. I will lay him down such reasons for this adventure that he shall go.

Fal. Well, God give thee the spirit of persuasion and him the ears of profiting, that what thou speakest may move and what he hears may be believed, that the true prince may (for recreation sake) prove a false thief; for the poor abuses of the time want countenance. Farewell; you shall find me in Eastcheap.

Prince. Farewell, thou latter spring! farewell, All-hallown summer!

Exit Falstaff.

Poins. Now, my good sweet honey lord, ride with us tomorrow. I have a jest to execute that I cannot manage alone. Falstaff, Bardolph, Peto, and Gadshill shall rob those men that we have already waylaid; yourself and I will not be there; and when they have the booty, if you and I do not rob them, cut this head off from my shoulders.

Prince. How shall we part with them in setting forth?

Poins. Why, we will set forth before or after them and appoint them a place of meeting, wherein it is at our pleasure to fail; and then will they adventure upon the exploit themselves; which they shall have no sooner achieved, but we'll set upon them.

Prince. Yea, but 'tis like that they will know us by our horses, by our habits, and by every other appointment, to be ourselves.

Poins. Tut! our horses they shall not see-I'll tie them in the wood; our wizards we will change after we leave them; and, sirrah, I have cases of buckram for the nonce, to immask our noted outward garments.

Prince. Yea, but I doubt they will be too hard for us.

Poins. Well, for two of them, I know them to be as true-bred cowards as ever turn'd back; and for the third, if he fight longer than he sees reason, I'll forswear arms. The virtue of this jest will lie the incomprehensible lies that this same fat rogue will tell us when we meet at supper: how thirty, at least, he fought with; what wards, what blows, what extremities he endured; and in the reproof of this lies the jest.

Prince. Well, I'll go with thee. Provide us all things necessary and meet me to-night in Eastcheap. There I'll sup. Farewell.

Poins. Farewell, my lord. *Exit* .

Prince. I know you all, and will awhile uphold
The unyok'd humour of your idleness.
Yet herein will I imitate the sun,

Who doth permit the base contagious clouds

To smother up his beauty from the world,

That, when he please again to lie himself,

Being wanted, he may be more wond'red at

By breaking through the foul and ugly mists

Of vapours that did seem to strangle him.

If all the year were playing holidays,

To sport would be as tedious as to work;

But when they seldom come, they wish'd-for come,

And nothing pleaseth but rare accidents.

So, when this loose behaviour I throw off

And pay the debt I never promised,

By how much better than my word I am,

By so much shall I falsify men's hopes;

And, like bright metal on a sullen ground,

My reformation, glitt'ring o'er my fault,

Shall show more goodly and attract more eyes

Than that which hath no foil to set it off.

I'll so offend to make offence a skill,

Redeeming time when men think least I will. *Exit* .

Scene III. London. The Palace.

Enter the King, Northumberland, Worcester, Hotspur, Sir Walter Blunt, with others.

King. My blood hath been too cold and temperate,

Unapt to stir at these indignities,

And you have found me, for accordingly

You tread upon my patience; but be sure

I will from henceforth rather be myself,

Mighty and to be fear'd, than my condition,

Which hath been smooth as oil, soft as young down,

And therefore lost that title of respect

Which the proud soul ne'er pays but to the proud.

Wor. Our house, my sovereign liege, little deserves

The scourge of greatness to be us'd on it-

And that same greatness too which our own hands

Have holp to make so portly.

North. My lord-

King. Worcester, get thee gone; for I do see

Danger and disobedience in thine eye.

O, sir, your presence is too bold and peremptory,

And majesty might never yet endure

The moody frontier of a servant brow.

Tou have good leave to leave us. When we need

'Your use and counsel, we shall send for you.

Exit Worcester.

You were about to speak.

North. Yea, my good lord.

Those prisoners in your Highness' name demanded

Which Harry Percy here at Holmedon took,

Were, as he says, not with such strength denied

As is delivered to your Majesty.

Either envy, therefore, or misprision

Is guilty of this fault, and not my son.

Hot. My liege, I did deny no prisoners.

But I remember, when the fight was done,

When I was dry with rage and extreme toll,

Breathless and faint, leaning upon my sword,

Came there a certain lord, neat and trimly dress'd,

Fresh as a bridegroom; and his chin new reap'd

Show'd like a stubble land at harvest home.

He was perfumed like a milliner,

And 'twixt his finger and his thumb he held

A pouncet box, which ever and anon

He gave his nose, and took't away again;

Who therewith angry, when it next came there,

Took it in snuff; and still he smil'd and talk'd;

And as the soldiers bore dead bodies by,

He call'd them untaught knaves, unmannerly,

To bring a slovenly unhandsome corse

Betwixt the wind and his nobility.

With many holiday and lady terms

He questioned me, amongst the rest demanded

My prisoners in your Majesty's behalf.

I then, all smarting with my wounds being cold,

To be so pest'red with a popingay,

Out of my grief and my impatience

Answer'd neglectingly, I know not what-

He should, or he should not; for he made me mad

To see him shine so brisk, and smell so sweet,

And talk so like a waiting gentlewoman

Of guns and drums and wounds-God save the mark!-

And telling me the sovereignest thing on earth

Was parmacity for an inward bruise;

And that it was great pity, so it was,

This villanous saltpetre should be digg'd

Out of the bowels of the harmless earth,

Which many a good tall fellow had destroy'd

So cowardly; and but for these vile 'guns,

He would himself have been a soldier.

This bald unjointed chat of his, my lord,

I answered indirectly, as I said,

And I beseech you, let not his report

Come current for an accusation

Betwixt my love and your high majesty.

Blunt. The circumstance considered, good my lord,

Whate'er Lord Harry Percy then had said
To such a person, and in such a place,
At such a time, with all the rest retold,
May reasonably die, and never rise
To do him wrong, or any way impeach
What then he said, so he unsay it now.

King. Why, yet he doth deny his prisoners,
But with proviso and exception,
That we at our own charge shall ransom straight
His brother-in-law, the foolish Mortimer;
Who, on my soul, hath wilfully betray'd
The lives of those that he did lead to fight
Against that great magician, damn'd Glendower,
Whose daughter, as we hear, the Earl of March
Hath lately married. Shall our coffers, then,
Be emptied to redeem a traitor home?
Shall we buy treason? and indent with fears
When they have lost and forfeited themselves?

No, on the barren mountains let him starve!

For I shall never hold that man my friend
Whose tongue shall ask me for one penny cost
To ransom home revolted Mortimer.

Hot. Revolted Mortimer?
He never did fall off, my sovereign liege,
But by the chance of war. To prove that true
Needs no more but one tongue for all those wounds,
Those mouthed wounds, which valiantly he took
When on the gentle Severn's sedgy bank,
In single opposition hand to hand,
He did confound the best part of an hour
In changing hardiment with great Glendower.
Three times they breath'd, and three times did they drink,
Upon agreement, of swift Severn's flood;
Who then, affrighted with their bloody looks,
Ran fearfully among the trembling reeds
And hid his crisp head in the hollow bank,
Bloodstained with these valiant cohabitants.
Never did base and rotten policy
Colour her working with such deadly wounds;

Nor never could the noble Mortimer

Receive so many, and all willingly.

Then let not him be slandered with revolt.

King. Thou dost belie him, Percy, thou dost belie him!

He never did encounter with Glendower.

I tell thee

He durst as well have met the devil alone

As Owen Glendower for an enemy.

Art thou not asham'd? But, sirrah, henceforth

Let me not hear you speak of Mortimer.

Send me your prisoners with the speediest means,

Or you shall hear in such a kind from me

As will displease you. My Lord Northumberland,

We license your departure with your son.-

Send us your prisoners, or you will hear of it.

Exeunt King, *[Blunt, and Train]*

Hot. An if the devil come and roar for them,

I will not send them. I will after straight

And tell him so; for I will else my heart, Albeit I make a hazard of my head.

North. What, drunk with choler? Stay, and pause awhile.
Here comes your uncle.

Enter Worcester.

Hot. Speak of Mortimer?
Zounds, I will speak of him, and let my soul
Want mercy if I do not join with him!
Yea, on his part I'll empty all these veins,
And shed my dear blood drop by drop in the dust,
But I will lift the downtrod Mortimer
As high in the air as this unthankful king,
As this ingrate and cank'red Bolingbroke.

North. Brother, the King hath made your nephew mad.

Wor. Who struck this heat up after I was gone?

Hot. He will (forsooth) have all my prisoners;

And when I urg'd the ransom once again
Of my wive's brother, then his cheek look'd pale,
And on my face he turn'd an eye of death,
Trembling even at the name of Mortimer.

Wor. I cannot blame him. Was not he proclaim'd
By Richard that dead is, the next of blood?

North. He was; I heard the proclamation.
And then it was when the unhappy King
(Whose wrongs in us God pardon!) did set forth
Upon his Irish expedition;
From whence he intercepted did return
To be depos'd, and shortly murdered.

Wor. And for whose death we in the world's wide mouth
Live scandaliz'd and foully spoken of.

Hot. But soft, I pray you. Did King Richard then
Proclaim my brother Edmund Mortimer
Heir to the crown?

North. He did; myself did hear it.

Hot. Nay, then I cannot blame his cousin king,
That wish'd him on the barren mountains starve.
But shall it be that you, that set the crown
Upon the head of this forgetful man,
And for his sake wear the detested blot
Of murtherous subornation-shall it be
That you a world of curses undergo,
Being the agents or base second means,
The cords, the ladder, or the hangman rather?
O, pardon me that I descend so low
To show the line and the predicament
Wherein you range under this subtile king!
Shall it for shame be spoken in these days,
Or fill up chronicles in time to come,
That men of your nobility and power
Did gage them both in an unjust behalf
(As both of you, God pardon it! have done)
To put down Richard, that sweet lovely rose,

And plant this thorn, this canker, Bolingbroke?
And shall it in more shame be further spoken
That you are fool'd, discarded, and shook off
By him for whom these shames ye underwent?
No! yet time serves wherein you may redeem
Your banish'd honours and restore yourselves
Into the good thoughts of the world again;
Revenge the jeering and disdain'd contempt
Of this proud king, who studies day and night
To answer all the debt he owes to you
Even with the bloody payment of your deaths.
Therefore I say-

Wor. Peace, cousin, say no more;
And now, I will unclasp a secret book,
And to your quick-conceiving discontents
I'll read you matter deep and dangerous,
As full of peril and adventurous spirit
As to o'erwalk a current roaring loud
On the unsteadfast footing of a spear.

Hot. If he fall in, good night, or sink or swim!
Send danger from the east unto the west,
So honour cross it from the north to south,
And let them grapple. O, the blood more stirs
To rouse a lion than to start a hare!

North. Imagination of some great exploit
Drives him beyond the bounds of patience.

Hot. By heaven, methinks it were an easy leap
To pluck bright honour from the pale-fac'd moon,
Or dive into the bottom of the deep,
Where fadom line could never touch the ground,
And pluck up drowned honour by the locks,
So he that doth redeem her thence might wear
Without corrival all her dignities;
But out upon this half-fac'd fellowship!

Wor. He apprehends a world of figures here,
But not the form of what he should attend.

Good cousin, give me audience for a while.

Hot. I cry you mercy.

Wor. Those same noble Scots
That are your prisoners-

Hot. I'll keep them all.
By God, he shall not have a Scot of them!

No, if a Scot would save his soul, he shall not.
I'll keep them, by this hand!

Wor. You start away.
And lend no ear unto my purposes.

Those prisoners you shall keep.

Hot. Nay, I will! That is flat!
He said he would not ransom Mortimer,
Forbade my tongue to speak of Mortimer,

But I will find him when he lies asleep,
And in his ear I'll holloa 'Mortimer.'
Nay;
I'll have a starling shall be taught to speak
Nothing but 'Mortimer,' and give it him
To keep his anger still in motion.

Wor. Hear you, cousin, a word.

Hot. All studies here I solemnly defy
Save how to gall and pinch this Bolingbroke;
And that same sword-and-buckler Prince of Wales-
But that I think his father loves him not
And would be glad he met with some mischance,
I would have him poisoned with a pot of ale.

Wor. Farewell, kinsman. I will talk to you
When you are better temper'd to attend.

North. Why, what a wasp-stung and impatient fool
Art thou to break into this woman's mood,

Tying thine ear to no tongue but thine own!

Hot. Why, look you, I am whipp'd and scourg'd with rods,
Nettled, and stung with pismires when I hear
Of this vile politician, Bolingbroke.
In Richard's time-what do you call the place-
A plague upon it! it is in GIoucestershire-
'Twas where the madcap Duke his uncle kept-
His uncle York-where I first bow'd my knee
Unto this king of smiles, this Bolingbroke-
'S blood!
When you and he came back from Ravenspurgh-

North. At Berkeley Castle.

Hot. You say true.
Why, what a candy deal of courtesy
This fawning greyhound then did proffer me!
Look, 'when his infant fortune came to age,'
And 'gentle Harry Percy,' and 'kind cousin'-
O, the devil take such cozeners!- God forgive me!

Good uncle, tell your tale, for I have done.

Wor. Nay, if you have not, to it again.
We will stay your leisure.

Hot. I have done, i' faith.

Wor. Then once more to your Scottish prisoners.
Deliver them up without their ransom straight,
And make the Douglas' son your only mean
For powers In Scotland; which, for divers reasons
Which I shall send you written, be assur'd
Will easily be granted. *[To Northumberland]* You, my lord,
Your son in Scotland being thus employ'd,
Shall secretly into the bosom creep
Of that same noble prelate well-belov'd,
The Archbishop.

Hot. Of York, is it not?

Wor. True; who bears hard

His brother's death at Bristow, the Lord Scroop.

I speak not this in estimation,

As what I think might be, but what I know

Is ruminated, plotted, and set down,

And only stays but to behold the face

Of that occasion that shall bring it on.

Hot. I smell it. Upon my life, it will do well.

North. Before the game is afoot thou still let'st slip.

Hot. Why, it cannot choose but be a noble plot.

And then the power of Scotland and of York

To join with Mortimer, ha?

Wor. And so they shall.

Hot. In faith, it is exceedingly well aim'd.

Wor. And 'tis no little reason bids us speed,

To save our heads by raising of a head;
For, bear ourselves as even as we can,
The King will always think him in our debt,
And think we think ourselves unsatisfied,
Till he hath found a time to pay us home.
And see already how he doth begin
To make us strangers to his looks of love.

Hot. He does, he does! We'll be reveng'd on him.

Wor. Cousin, farewell. No further go in this
Than I by letters shall direct your course.
When time is ripe, which will be suddenly,
I'll steal to Glendower and Lord Mortimer,
Where you and Douglas, and our pow'rs at once,
As I will fashion it, shall happily meet,
To bear our fortunes in our own strong arms,
Which now we hold at much uncertainty.

North. Farewell, good brother. We shall thrive, I trust.

Hot. Uncle, adieu. O, let the hours be short

Till fields and blows and groans applaud our sport!

Exeunt.

ACT II. Scene I. Rochester. An inn yard.

Enter a Carrier with a lantern in his hand.

1. Car. Heigh-ho! an it be not four by the day, I'll be hang'd.

Charles' wain is over the new chimney, and yet our horse not

pack'd.- What, ostler!

Ost. [within] Anon, anon.

1. Car. I prithee, Tom, beat Cut's saddle, put a few flocks in the

point. Poor jade is wrung in the withers out of all cess.

Enter another Carrier.

2. Car. Peas and beans are as dank here as a dog, and that is the

next way to give poor jades the bots. This house is turned upside down since Robin Ostler died.

1. Car. Poor fellow never joyed since the price of oats rose.

It

was the death of him.

2. Car. I think this be the most villanous house in all London road for fleas. I am stung like a tench.

1. Car. Like a tench I By the mass, there is ne'er a king christen could be better bit than I have been since the first cock.

2. Car. Why, they will allow us ne'er a jordan, and then we leak in your chimney, and your chamber-lye breeds fleas like a loach.

1. Car. What, ostler! come away and be hang'd! come away!

2. Car. I have a gammon of bacon and two razes of ginger, to be delivered as far as Charing Cross.

1. Car. God's body! the turkeys in my pannier are quite starved. What, ostler! A plague on thee! hast thou never an eye in thy head? Canst not hear? An 'twere not as good deed as drink to break the pate on thee, I am a very villain. Come, and be hang'd! Hast no faith in thee?

Enter Gadshill.

Gads. Good morrow, carriers. What's o'clock?

1. Car. I think it be two o'clock.

Gads. I prithee lend me this lantern to see my gelding in the stable.

1. Car. Nay, by God, soft! I know a trick worth two of that,
i' faith.

Gads. I pray thee lend me thine.

2. Car. Ay, when? canst tell? Lend me thy lantern, quoth he?
Marry,
I'll see thee hang'd first!

Gads. Sirrah carrier, what time do you mean to come to London?

2. Car. Time enough to go to bed with a candle, I warrant thee.
Come, neighbour Mugs, we'll call up the gentlemen. They will
along with company, for they have great charge.
Exeunt [Carriers] .

Gads. What, ho! chamberlain!

Enter Chamberlain.

Cham. At hand, quoth pickpurse.

Gads. That's even as fair as- 'at hand, quoth the chamberlain'; for
thou variest no more from picking of purses than giving direction
doth from labouring: thou layest the plot how.

Cham. Good morrow, Master Gadshill. It holds current that I told
you yesternight. There's a franklin in the Wild of Kent hath
brought three hundred marks with him in gold. I heard him tell it
to one of his company last night at supper-a kind of auditor;
one that hath abundance of charge too, God knows what. They are
up already and call for eggs and butter. They will away presently.

Gads. Sirrah, if they meet not with Saint Nicholas' clerks,
I'll give thee this neck.

Cham. No, I'll none of it. I pray thee keep that for the hangman;
for I know thou worshippest Saint Nicholas as truly as a man of falsehood may.

Gads. What talkest thou to me of the hangman? If I hang, I'll make
a fat pair of gallows; for if I hang, old Sir John hangs with me,
and thou knowest he is no starveling. Tut! there are other
Troyans that thou dream'st not of, the which for sport sake are
content to do the profession some grace; that would (if matters
should be look'd into) for their own credit sake make all whole.
I am joined with no foot land-rakers, no long-staff sixpenny
strikers, none of these mad mustachio purple-hued maltworms; but
with nobility, and tranquillity, burgomasters and great oneyers,
such as can hold in, such as will strike sooner than speak, and
speak sooner than drink, and drink sooner than pray; and yet,
zounds, I lie; for they pray continually to their saint, the
commonwealth, or rather, not pray to her, but prey on her, for
they ride up and down on her and make her their boots.

Cham. What, the commonwealth their boots? Will she hold out water in foul way?

Gads. She will, she will! Justice hath liquor'd her. We steal as in
a castle, cocksure. We have the receipt of fernseed, we walk invisible.

Cham. Nay, by my faith, I think you are more beholding to the night than to fernseed for your walking invisible.

Gads. Give me thy hand. Thou shalt have a share in our purchase, as I and a true man.

Cham. Nay, rather let me have it, as you are a false thief.

Gads. Go to; 'homo' is a common name to all men. Bid the ostler bring my gelding out of the stable. Farewell, you muddy knave.

Exeunt.

Scene II. The highway near Gadshill.

Enter Prince and Poins.

Poins. Come, shelter, shelter! I have remov'd Falstaff's horse, and he frets like a gumm'd velvet.

Prince. Stand close. *[They step aside.]*

Enter Falstaff.

Fal. Poins! Poins, and be hang'd! Poins!

Prince. I comes forward I Peace, ye fat-kidney'd rascal! What a brawling dost thou keep!

Fal. Where's Poins, Hal?

Prince. He is walk'd up to the top of the hill. I'll go seek him.

[Steps aside.]

Fal. I am accurs'd to rob in that thief's company. The rascal hath removed my horse and tied him I know not where. If I travel but four foot by the squire further afoot, I shall break my wind.
Well, I doubt not but to die a fair death for all this, if I
scape hanging for killing that rogue. I have forsworn his company hourly any time this two-and-twenty years, and yet I am bewitch'd

with the rogue's company. If the rascal have not given me medicines to make me love him, I'll be hang'd. It could not be else. I have drunk medicines. Poins! Hal! A plague upon you both! Bardolph! Peto! I'll starve ere I'll rob a foot further. An 'twere not as good a deed as drink to turn true man and to leave these rogues, I am the veriest varlet that ever chewed with a tooth. Eight yards of uneven ground is threescore and ten miles afoot with me, and the stony-hearted villains know it well enough. A plague upon it when thieves cannot be true one to another! (They whistle.) Whew! A plague upon you all! Give me my horse, you rogues! give me my horse and be hang'd!

Prince. [comes forward] Peace, ye fat-guts! Lie down, lay thine ear close to the ground, and list if thou canst hear the tread of travellers.

Fal. Have you any levers to lift me up again, being down?
'Sblood,
I'll not bear mine own flesh so far afoot again for all the coin in thy father's exchequer. What a plague mean ye to colt me thus?

Prince. Thou liest; thou art not colted, thou art uncolted.

Fal. I prithee, good Prince Hal, help me to my horse, good king's son.

Prince. Out, ye rogue! Shall I be your ostler?

Fal. Go hang thyself in thine own heir-apparent garters! If I be ta'en, I'll peach for this. An I have not ballads made on you all, and sung to filthy tunes, let a cup of sack be my poison. When a jest is so forward-and afoot too-I hate it.

Enter Gadshill, *[Bardolph and Peto with him]* .

Gads. Stand!

Fal. So I do, against my will.

Poins. [comes fortward] O, 'tis our setter. I know his voice. Bardolph, what news?

Bar. Case ye, case ye! On with your vizards! There's money of the King's coming down the hill; 'tis going to the King's exchequer.

Fal. You lie, ye rogue! 'Tis going to the King's tavern.

Gads. There's enough to make us all.

Fal. To be hang'd.

Prince. Sirs, you four shall front them in the narrow lane; Ned Poins and I will walk lower. If they scape from your encounter, then they light on us.

Peto. How many be there of them?

Gads. Some eight or ten.

Fal. Zounds, will they not rob us?

Prince. What, a coward, Sir John Paunch?

Fal. Indeed, I am not John of Gaunt, your grandfather; but yet no coward, Hal.

Prince. Well, we leave that to the proof.

Poins. Sirrah Jack, thy horse stands behind the hedge. When thou need'st him, there thou shalt find him. Farewell and stand fast.

Fal. Now cannot I strike him, if I should be hang'd.

Prince. [aside to Poins] Ned, where are our disguises?

Poins. [aside to Prince] Here, hard by. Stand close.

[Exeunt Prince and Poins.]

Fal. Now, my masters, happy man be his dole, say I. Every man to his business.

Enter the Travellers.

Traveller. Come, neighbour.
The boy shall lead our horses down the hill;
We'll walk afoot awhile and ease our legs.

Thieves. Stand!

Traveller. Jesus bless us!

Fal. Strike! down with them! cut the villains' throats! Ah,

whoreson caterpillars! bacon-fed knaves! they hate us youth.

Down

with them! fleece them!

Traveller. O, we are undone, both we and ours for ever!

Fal. Hang ye, gorbellied knaves, are ye undone? No, ye fat chuffs;

I would your store were here! On, bacons on! What, ye knaves!

young men must live. You are grandjurors, are ye? We'll jure ye, faith!

Here they rob and bind them. *Exeunt* .

Enter the Prince and Poins *[in buckram suits]* .

Prince. The thieves have bound the true men. Now could thou and

I

rob the thieves and go merrily to London, it would be argument
for a week, laughter for a month, and a good jest for ever.

Poins. Stand close! I hear them coming.

[They stand aside.]

Enter the Thieves again.

Fal. Come, my masters, let us share, and then to horse before day.
An the Prince and Poins be not two arrant cowards, there's no
equity stirring. There's no more valour in that Poins than in a wild duck.
[As they are sharing, the Prince and Poins set upon
them. THey all run away, and Falstaff, after a blow or
two, runs awasy too, leaving the booty behind them.]

Prince. Your money!

Poins. Villains!

Prince. Got with much ease. Now merrily to horse.
The thieves are scattered, and possess'd with fear
So strongly that they dare not meet each other.
Each takes his fellow for an officer.
Away, good Ned. Falstaff sweats to death
And lards the lean earth as he walks along.

Were't not for laughing, I should pity him.

Poins. How the rogue roar'd! *Exeunt* .

Scene III. Warkworth Castle.

Enter Hotspur solus, reading a letter.

Hot. 'But, for mine own part, my lord, I could be well contented to be there, in respect of the love I bear your house.' He could be contented-why is he not then? In respect of the love he bears our house! He shows in this he loves his own barn better than he loves our house. Let me see some more. 'The purpose you undertake

is dangerous'- Why, that's certain! 'Tis dangerous to take a
cold, to sleep, to drink; but I tell you, my lord fool, out of
this nettle, danger, we pluck this flower, safety. 'The purpose
you undertake is dangerous, the friends you have named uncertain,
the time itself unsorted, and your whole plot too light for the
counterpoise of so great an opposition.' Say you so, say you so?
I say unto you again, you are a shallow, cowardly hind, and you
lie. What a lack-brain is this! By the Lord, our plot is a good
plot as ever was laid; our friends true and constant: a good
plot, good friends, and full of expectation; an excellent plot,
very good friends. What a frosty-spirited rogue is this! Why, my
Lord of York commends the plot and the general course of the
action. Zounds, an I were now by this rascal, I could brain him
with his lady's fan. Is there not my father, my uncle, and
myself; Lord Edmund Mortimer, my Lord of York, and Owen
Glendower? Is there not, besides, the Douglas? Have I not all
their letters to meet me in arms by the ninth of the next month,
and are they not some of them set forward already? What a pagan
rascal is this! an infidel! Ha! you shall see now, in very
sincerity of fear and cold heart will he to the King and lay open
all our proceedings. O, I could divide myself and go to buffets

for moving such a dish of skim milk with so honourable an action!
Hang him, let him tell the King! we are prepared. I will set
forward to-night.

Enter his Lady.

How now, Kate? I must leave you within these two hours.

Lady. O my good lord, why are you thus alone?
For what offence have I this fortnight been
A banish'd woman from my Harry's bed,
Tell me, sweet lord, what is't that takes from thee
Thy stomach, pleasure, and thy golden sleep?
Why dost thou bend thine eyes upon the earth,
And start so often when thou sit'st alone?
Why hast thou lost the fresh blood in thy cheeks
And given my treasures and my rights of thee
To thick-ey'd musing and curs'd melancholy?
In thy faint slumbers I by thee have watch'd,
And heard thee murmur tales of iron wars,
Speak terms of manage to thy bounding steed,

Cry 'Courage! to the field!' And thou hast talk'd

Of sallies and retires, of trenches, tent,

Of palisadoes, frontiers, parapets,

Of basilisks, of cannon, culverin,

Of prisoners' ransom, and of soldiers slain,

And all the currents of a heady fight.

Thy spirit within thee hath been so at war,

And thus hath so bestirr'd thee in thy sleep,

That beads of sweat have stood upon thy brow

Like bubbles ill a late-disturbed stream,

And in thy face strange motions have appear'd,

Such as we see when men restrain their breath

On some great sudden hest. O, what portents are these?

Some heavy business hath my lord in hand,

And I must know it, else he loves me not.

Hot. What, ho!

[Enter a Servant.]

Is Gilliams with the packet gone?

Serv. He is, my lord, an hour ago.

Hot. Hath Butler brought those horses from the sheriff?

Serv. One horse, my lord, he brought even now.

Hot. What horse? A roan, a crop-ear, is it not?

Serv. It is, my lord.

Hot. That roan shall be my throne.
Well, I will back him straight. O esperance!

Bid Butler lead him forth into the park.

[Exit Servant.]

Lady. But hear you, my lord.

Hot. What say'st thou, my lady?

Lady. What is it carries you away?

Hot. Why, my horse, my love-my horse!

Lady. Out, you mad-headed ape!
A weasel hath not such a deal of spleen
As you are toss'd with. In faith,
I'll know your business, Harry; that I will!
I fear my brother Mortimer doth stir
About his title and hath sent for you
To line his enterprise; but if you go-

Hot. So far afoot, I shall be weary, love.

Lady. Come, come, you paraquito, answer me
Directly unto this question that I ask.
I'll break thy little finger, Harry,
An if thou wilt not tell my all things true.

Hot. Away.
Away, you trifler! Love? I love thee not;

I care not for thee, Kate. This is no world
To play with mammets and to tilt with lips.
We must have bloody noses and crack'd crowns,
And pass them current too. Gods me, my horse!

What say'st thou, Kate? What wouldst thou have with me?

Lady. Do you not love me? do you not indeed?
Well, do not then; for since you love me not,
I will not love myself. Do you not love me?
Nay, tell me if you speak in jest or no.

Hot. Come, wilt thou see me ride?
And when I am a-horseback, I will swear
I love thee infinitely. But hark you. Kate:
I must not have you henceforth question me
Whither I go, nor reason whereabout.
Whither I must, I must; and to conclude,
This evening must I leave you, gentle Kate.
I know you wise; but yet no farther wise
Than Harry Percy's wife; constant you are,

But yet a woman; and for secrecy,

No lady closer, for I well believe

Thou wilt not utter what thou dost not know,

And so far will I trust thee, gentle Kate.

Lady. How? so far?

Hot. Not an inch further. But hark you, Kate:

Whither I go, thither shall you go too;

To-day will I set forth, tomorrow you.

Will this content you, Kate,?

Lady. It must of force. *Exeunt* .

Scene IV. Eastcheap. The Boar's Head Tavern.

Enter Prince and Poins.

Prince. Ned, prithee come out of that fat-room and lend me thy hand to laugh a little.

Poins. Where hast been, Hal?

Prince,. With three or four loggerheads amongst three or fourscore hogsheads. I have sounded the very bass-string of humility. Sirrah, I am sworn brother to a leash of drawers and can call them all by their christen names, as Tom, Dick, and

Francis. They take it already upon their salvation that, though I be but Prince of Wales, yet I am the king of courtesy; and tell me flatly I am no proud Jack like Falstaff, but a Corinthian, a lad of mettle, a good boy (by the Lord, so they call me!), and when I am King of England I shall command all the good lads

Eastcheap. They call drinking deep, dying scarlet; and when you breathe in your watering, they cry 'hem!' and bid you play it off. To conclude, I am so good a proficient in one quarter of an hour that I can drink with any tinker in his own language during my life. I tell thee, Ned, thou hast lost much honour that thou wert not with me in this action. But, sweet Ned-to sweeten which name of Ned, I give thee this pennyworth of sugar, clapp'd even now into my hand by an under-skinker, one that never spake other English in his life than 'Eight shillings and sixpence,' and 'You are welcome,' with this shrill addition, 'Anon, anon, sir! Score a pint of bastard in the Half-moon,' or so-but, Ned, to drive away the time till Falstaff come, I prithee do thou stand in some by-room while I question my puny drawer to what end be gave me the sugar; and do thou never leave calling 'Francis!' that his tale to me may be nothing but 'Anon!' Step aside, and I'll show thee a precedent.

Poins. Francis!

Prince. Thou art perfect.

Poins. Francis! *[Exit Poins.]*

Enter [Francis, a] Drawer.

Fran. Anon, anon, sir.- Look down into the Pomgarnet, Ralph.

Prince. Come hither, Francis.

Fran. My lord?

Prince. How long hast thou to serve, Francis?

Fran. Forsooth, five years, and as much as to-

Poins. [within] Francis!

Fran. Anon, anon, sir.

Prince. Five year! by'r Lady, a long lease for the clinking of

Pewter. But, Francis, darest thou be so valiant as to play the coward with thy indenture and show it a fair pair of heels and run from it?

Fran. O Lord, sir, I'll be sworn upon all the books in England

I

could find in my heart-

Poins. [within] Francis!

Fran. Anon, sir.

Prince. How old art thou, Francis?

Fran. Let me see. About Michaelmas next I shall be-

Poins. [within] Francis!

Fran. Anon, sir. Pray stay a little, my lord.

Prince. Nay, but hark you, Francis. For the sugar thou gavest

me-

'twas a pennyworth, wast not?

Fran. O Lord! I would it had been two!

Prince. I will give thee for it a thousand pound. Ask me when thou wilt, and, thou shalt have it.

Poins. [within] Francis!

Fran. Anon, anon.

Prince. Anon, Francis? No, Francis; but to-morrow, Francis; or, Francis, a Thursday; or indeed, Francis, when thou wilt. But Francis-

Fran. My lord?

Prince. Wilt thou rob this leathern-jerkin, crystal-button, not-pated, agate-ring, puke-stocking, caddis-garter, smooth-tongue, Spanish-pouch-

Fran. O Lord, sir, who do you mean?

Prince. Why then, your brown bastard is your only drink; for look
you, Francis, your white canvas doublet will sully. In Barbary,
sir, it cannot come to so much.

Fran. What, sir?

Poins. *[within]* Francis!

Prince. Away, you rogue! Dost thou not hear them call?
Here they both call him. The Drawer stands amazed,
not knowing which way to go.

Enter Vintner.

Vint. What, stand'st thou still, and hear'st such a calling?
Look
to the guests within. *[Exit Francis.]* My lord, old Sir John, with
half-a-dozen more, are at the door. Shall I let them in?

Prince. Let them alone awhile, and then open the door.

[Exit Vintner.]

Poins!

Poins. [within] Anon, anon, sir.

Enter Poins.

Prince. Sirrah, Falstaff and the rest of the thieves are at the
door. Shall we be merry?

Poins. As merry as crickets, my lad. But hark ye; what cunning
match have you made with this jest of the drawer? Come,
what's the issue?

Prince. I am now of all humours that have showed themselves humours
since the old days of goodman Adam to the pupil age of this
present this twelve o'clock at midnight.

[Enter Francis.]

What's o'clock, Francis?

Fran. Anon, anon, sir. *[Exit.]*

Prince. That ever this fellow should have fewer words than a parrot, and yet the son of a woman! His industry is upstairs and downstairs, his eloquence the parcel of a reckoning. I am not yet of Percy's mind, the Hotspur of the North; he that kills me some six or seven dozen of Scots at a breakfast, washes his hands, and says to his wife, 'Fie upon this quiet life! I want work.' 'O my sweet Harry,' says she, 'how many hast thou kill'd to-day?' 'Give my roan horse a drench,' says he, and answers 'Some fourteen,' an hour after, 'a trifle, a trifle.' I prithee call in

Falstaff. I'll play Percy, and that damn'd brawn shall play Dame Mortimer his wife. 'Rivo!' says the drunkard. Call in ribs, call in tallow.

Enter Falstaff, [Gadshill, Bardolph, and Peto;

Francis follows with wine].

Poins. Welcome, Jack. Where hast thou been? Fal. A plague of all cowards, I say, and a vengeance too! Marry and amen! Give me a cup of sack, boy. Ere I lead this life long, I'll sew nether-stocks, and mend them and foot them too. A plague of all cowards! Give me a cup of sack, rogue. Is there no virtue extant? He drinketh. Prince. Didst thou never see Titan kiss a dish of butter? Pitiful-hearted butter, that melted at the sweet tale of the sun! If thou didst, then behold that compound. Fal. You rogue, here's lime in this sack too! There is nothing but roguery to be found in villanous man. Yet a coward is worse than a cup of sack with lime in it-a villanous coward! Go thy ways, old Jack, die when thou wilt; if manhood, good manhood, be not forgot upon the face of the earth, then am I a shotten herring. There lives not three good men unhang'd in England; and one of them is fat, and grows old. God help the while! A bad world, I say. I would I were a weaver; I could sing psalms or anything. A plague of all cowards I say still! Prince. How now, woolsack? What mutter you? Fal. A king's son! If I do not beat thee out of thy kingdom with a dagger of lath and drive all thy subjects afore thee like a flock of wild geese, I'll never wear hair on my face more. You Prince of Wales? Prince. Why, you whoreson round man, what's the matter? Fal. Are not you a coward? Answer me to that-and Poins there? Poins. Zounds, ye fat paunch, an ye call me coward, by the Lord, I'll stab thee. Fal. I call thee coward? I'll see thee damn'd ere I call thee coward, but I would give a thousand pound I could run as fast as thou canst. You are straight enough in the shoulders; you care not who sees Your back. Call you that backing of your friends? A plague upon such backing! Give me them that will face me. Give me a cup of sack. I am a rogue if I drunk to-day. Prince. O villain! thy lips are scarce wip'd since thou drunk'st last. Fal. All is one for that. (He drinketh.) A plague of all cowards still say I. Prince. What's the matter? Fal. What's the matter? There be four of us here have ta'en a thousand pound this day morning. Prince. Where is it, Jack? Where is it? Fal. Where is it, Taken from us it is. A hundred upon poor four of us! Prince. What, a hundred, man? Fal. I am a rogue if I were not at half-sword with a dozen of them two hours together. I have scap'd by miracle. I am eight times thrust through the doublet, four through the hose; my buckler cut through and through; my sword hack'd like a handsaw-ecce signum! I never dealt better since I was a man. All would not do. A plague of all cowards! Let them speak, If they speak more or less than truth, they are villains and the sons of darkness. Prince. Speak, sirs. How was it? Gads. We four set upon some dozen-Fal. Sixteen at least, my lord. Gads. And bound them. Peto. No, no, they were not bound. Fal. You rogue, they were bound, every man of them, or I am a Jew else-an Ebrew

Jew. Gads. As we were sharing, some six or seven fresh men sea upon us-Fal. And unbound the rest, and then come in the other. Prince. What, fought you with them all? Fal. All? I know not what you call all, but if I fought not with fifty of them, I am a bunch of radish! If there were not two or three and fifty upon poor old Jack, then am I no two-legg'd creature. Prince. Pray God you have not murd'red some of them. Fal. Nay, that's past praying for. I have pepper'd two of them. Two I am sure I have paid, two rogues in buckram suits. I tell thee what, Hal-if I tell thee a lie, spit in my face, call me horse. Thou knowest my old ward. Here I lay, and thus I bore my point. Four rogues in buckram let drive at me. Prince. What, four? Thou saidst but two even now. Fal. Four, Hal. I told thee four. Poins. Ay, ay, he said four. Fal. These four came all afront and mainly thrust at me. I made me no more ado but took all their seven points in my target, thus. Prince. Seven? Why, there were but four even now. Fal. In buckram? Poins. Ay, four, in buckram suits. Fal. Seven, by these hilts, or I am a villain else. Prince. *[aside to Poins]* Prithee let him alone. We shall have more anon. Fal. Dost thou hear me, Hal? Prince. Ay, and mark thee too, Jack. Fal. Do so, for it is worth the list'ning to. These nine in buckram that I told thee of-Prince. So, two more already. Fal. Their points being broken-Poins. Down fell their hose. Fal. Began to give me ground; but I followed me close, came in, foot and hand, and with a thought seven of the eleven I paid. Prince. O monstrous! Eleven buckram men grown out of two! Fal. But, as the devil would have it, three misbegotten knaves in Kendal green came at my back and let drive at me; for it was so dark, Hal, that thou couldst not see thy hand. Prince. These lies are like their father that begets them-gross as a mountain, open, palpable. Why, thou clay-brain'd guts, thou knotty-pated fool, thou whoreson obscene greasy tallow-catch- Fal. What, art thou mad? art thou mad? Is not the truth the truth? Prince. Why, how couldst thou know these men in Kendal green when it was so dark thou couldst not see thy hand? Come, tell us your reason. What sayest thou to this? Poins. Come, your reason, Jack, your reason. Fal. What, upon compulsion? Zounds, an I were at the strappado or all the racks in the world, I would not tell you on compulsion. Give you a reason on compulsion? If reasons were as plentiful as blackberries, I would give no man a reason upon compulsion, I. Prince. I'll be no longer guilty, of this sin; this sanguine coward, this bed-presser, this horseback-breaker, this huge hill of flesh-Fal. 'Sblood, you starveling, you elf-skin, you dried neat's-tongue, you bull's sizzle, you stockfish-O for breath to utter what is like thee!- you tailor's yard, you sheath, you bowcase, you vile standing tuck! Prince. Well, breathe awhile, and then to it again; and when thou hast tired thyself in base comparisons, hear me speak but this. Poins. Mark, Jack. Prince. We two saw you four set on four, and bound them and were masters of their wealth. Mark now how a plain tale shall put you down. Then did we two set on you four and, with a word, outfac'd you from your prize, and have it; yea, and can show it you here in the house. And, Falstaff, you carried your guts away as nimbly, with as quick dexterity, and roar'd for mercy, and still run and roar'd, as ever I heard bullcalf. What a slave art thou to hack thy sword as thou hast done, and then say it was in fight! What trick, what device, what starting hole canst thou now find out to hide thee from this open and apparent shame? Poins. Come, let's hear, Jack. What trick hast thou now? Fal. By the Lord, I knew ye as well as he that made ye. Why, hear you, my masters. Was it for me to kill the heir apparent? Should I turn upon the true prince? Why, thou knowest I am as valiant as Hercules; but beware instinct. The lion will not touch the true prince. Instinct is a great matter. I was now a coward on instinct. I shall think the better of myself, and thee, during my life-I for a valiant lion, and thou for a true prince. But, by the Lord, lads, I am glad you have the money. Hostess, clap to the doors. Watch to-night, pray to-morrow. Gallants, lads, boys, hearts of gold, all the titles of good fellowship come to you! What, shall we be merry? Shall we have a play extempore? Prince. Content-and the argument shall be thy running away. Fal. Ah, no more of that, Hal, an thou lovest me!

Enter Hostess.

Host. O Jesu, my lord the Prince!

Prince. How now, my lady the hostess? What say'st thou to me?

Host. Marry, my lord, there is a nobleman of the court at door

would speak with you. He says he comes from your father.

Prince. Give him as much as will make him a royal man, and send him back again to my mother.

Fal. What manner of man is he?

Host. An old man.

Fal. What doth gravity out of his bed at midnight? Shall I give him his answer?

Prince. Prithee do, Jack.

Fal. Faith, and I'll send him packing.
Exit.

Prince. Now, sirs. By'r Lady, you fought fair; so did you,
Peto; so
did you, Bardolph. You are lions too, you ran away upon instinct,
you will not touch the true prince; no-fie!

Bard. Faith, I ran when I saw others run.

Prince. Tell me now in earnest, how came Falstaff's sword so hack'd?

Peto. Why, he hack'd it with his dagger, and said he would swear truth out of England but he would make you believe it was done in fight, and persuaded us to do the like.

Bard. Yea, and to tickle our noses with speargrass to make them bleed, and then to beslubber our garments with it and swear it was the blood of true men. I did that I did not this seven year before-I blush'd to hear his monstrous devices.

Prince. O villain! thou stolest a cup of sack eighteen years ago and wert taken with the manner, and ever since thou hast blush'd extempore. Thou hadst fire and sword on thy side, and yet thou ran'st away. What instinct hadst thou for it?

Bard. My lord, do you see these meteors? Do you behold these exhalations?

Prince. I do.

Bard. What think you they portend?

Prince. Hot livers and cold purses.

Bard. Choler, my lord, if rightly taken.

Prince. No, if rightly taken, halter.

Enter Falstaff.

Here comes lean Jack; here comes bare-bone. How now, my sweet creature of bombast? How long is't ago, Jack, since thou sawest thine own knee? Fal. My own knee? When I was about thy years, Hal, I was not an eagle's talent in the waist; I could have crept into any alderman's thumb-ring. A plague of sighing and grief! It blows a man up like a bladder. There's villanous news abroad. Here was Sir John Bracy from your father. You must to the court in the morning. That same mad fellow of the North, Percy, and he of Wales that gave Amamon the bastinado, and made Lucifer cuckold, and swore the devil his true liegeman upon the cross of a Welsh hook-what a plague call you him? Poins. O, Glendower. Fal. Owen, Owen-the same; and his son-in-law Mortimer, and old Northumberland, and that sprightly Scot of Scots, Douglas, that runs a-horseback up a hill perpendicular-Prince. He that rides at high speed and with his pistol kills a sparrow flying. Fal. You have hit it. Prince. So did he never the sparrow. Fal. Well, that rascal hath good metal in him; he will not run. Prince. Why, what a rascal art thou then, to praise him so for running! Fal. A-horseback, ye cuckoo! but afoot he will not budge a foot. Prince. Yes, Jack, upon instinct. Fal. I grant ye, upon instinct. Well, he is there too, and one Mordake, and a thousand bluecaps more. Worcester is stol'n away to-night; thy father's beard is turn'd white with the news; you may buy land now as cheap as stinking mack'rel. Prince. Why then, it is like, if there come a hot June, and this civil buffeting hold, we shall buy maidenheads as they buy hobnails, by the hundreds. Fal. By the mass, lad, thou sayest true; it is like we shall have good trading that way. But tell me, Hal, art not thou horrible afeard? Thou being heir apparent, could the world pick thee out three such enemies again as that fiend Douglas, that spirit

Percy, and that devil Glendower? Art thou not horribly afraid? Doth not thy blood thrill at it? Prince. Not a whit, i' faith. I lack some of thy instinct. Fal. Well, thou wilt be horribly chid to-morrow when thou comest to thy father. If thou love file, practise an answer. Prince. Do thou stand for my father and examine me upon the particulars of my life. Fal. Shall I? Content. This chair shall be my state, this dagger my sceptre, and this cushion my, crown. Prince. Thy state is taken for a join'd-stool, thy golden sceptre for a leaden dagger, and thy precious rich crown for a pitiful bald crown. Fal. Well, an the fire of grace be not quite out of thee, now shalt thou be moved. Give me a cup of sack to make my eyes look red, that it may be thought I have wept; for I must speak in passion, and I will do it in King Cambyses' vein. Prince. Well, here is my leg. Fal. And here is my speech. Stand aside, nobility. Host. O Jesu, this is excellent sport, i' faith! Fal. Weep not, sweet queen, for trickling tears are vain. Host. O, the Father, how he holds his countenance! Fal. For God's sake, lords, convey my tristful queen! For tears do stop the floodgates of her eyes. Host. O Jesu, he doth it as like one of these harlotry players as ever I see! Fal. Peace, good pintpot. Peace, good tickle-brain.- Harry, I do not only marvel where thou spendest thy time, but also how thou art accompanied. For though the camomile, the more it is trodden on, the faster it grows, yet youth, the more it is wasted, the sooner it wears. That thou art my son I have partly thy mother's word, partly my own opinion, but chiefly a villanous trick of thine eye and a foolish hanging of thy nether lip that doth warrant me. If then thou be son to me, here lies the point: why, being son to me, art thou so pointed at? Shall the blessed sun of heaven prove a micher and eat blackberries? A question not to be ask'd. Shall the son of England prove a thief and take purses? A question to be ask'd. There is a thing, Harry, which thou hast often heard of, and it is known to many in our land by the name of pitch. This pitch, as ancient writers do report, doth defile; so doth the company thou keepest. For, Harry, now I do not speak to thee in drink, but in tears; not in pleasure, but in passion; not in words only, but in woes also: and yet there is a virtuous man whom I have often noted in thy company, but I know not his name. Prince. What manner of man, an it like your Majesty? Fal. A goodly portly man, i' faith, and a corpulent; of a cheerful look, a pleasing eye, and a most noble carriage; and, as I think, his age some fifty, or, by'r Lady, inclining to threescore; and now I remember me, his name is Falstaff. If that man should be lewdly, given, he deceiveth me; for, Harry, I see virtue in his looks. If then the tree may be known by the fruit, as the fruit by the tree, then, peremptorily I speak it, there is virtue in that Falstaff. Him keep with, the rest banish. And tell me now, thou naughty varlet, tell me where hast thou been this month? Prince. Dost thou speak like a king? Do thou stand for me, and I'll play my father. Fal.

Depose me? If thou dost it half so gravely, so majestically, both in word and matter, hang me up by the heels for a rabbit-sucker or a poulter's hare. Prince. Well, here I am set. Fal. And here I stand. Judge, my masters. Prince. Now, Harry, whence come you? Fal. My noble lord, from Eastcheap. Prince. The complaints I hear of thee are grievous. Fal. 'Sblood, my lord, they are false! Nay, I'll tickle ye for a young prince, i' faith. Prince. Swearest thou, ungracious boy? Henceforth ne'er look on me. Thou art violently carried away from grace. There is a devil haunts thee in the likeness of an old fat man; a tun of man is thy companion. Why dost thou converse with that trunk of humours, that bolting hutch of beastliness, that swoll'n parcel of dropsies, that huge bombard of sack, that stuff'd cloakbag of guts, that roasted Manningtree ox with the pudding in his belly, that reverend vice, that grey iniquity, that father ruffian, that vanity in years? Wherein is he good, but to taste sack and drink it? wherein neat and cleanly, but to carve a capon and eat it? wherein cunning, but in craft? wherein crafty, but in villany? wherein villanous, but in all things? wherein worthy, but in nothing? Fal. I would your Grace would take me with you. Whom means your Grace? Prince. That villanous abominable misleader of youth, Falstaff, that old white-bearded Satan. Fal. My lord, the man I know. Prince. I know thou dost. Fal. But to say I know more harm in him than in myself were to say more than I know. That he is old (the more the pity) his white hairs do witness it; but that he is (saving your reverence) a whoremaster, that I utterly deny. If sack and sugar be a fault, God help the wicked! If to be old and merry be a sin, then many an old host that I know is damn'd. If to be fat be to be hated, then Pharaoh's lean kine are to be loved. No, my good lord. Banish Peto, banish Bardolph, banish Poins; but for sweet Jack Falstaff, kind Jack Falstaff, true Jack Falstaff, valiant Jack Falstaff, and therefore more valiant being, as he is, old Jack Falstaff, banish not him thy Harry's company, banish not him thy Harry's company. Banish plump Jack, and banish all the world! Prince. I do, I will. *[A knocking heard.] [Exeunt Hostess, Francis, and Bardolph.]*

Enter Bardolph, running.

Bard. O, my lord, my lord! the sheriff with a most monstrous watch is at the door.

Fal. Out, ye rogue! Play out the play. I have much to say in the behalf of that Falstaff.

Enter the Hostess.

Host. O Jesu, my lord, my lord!

Prince. Heigh, heigh, the devil rides upon a fiddlestick!
What's the matter?

Host. The sheriff and all the watch are at the door. They are come to search the house. Shall I let them in?

Fal. Dost thou hear, Hal? Never call a true piece of gold a counterfeit. Thou art essentially mad without seeming so.

Prince. And thou a natural coward without instinct.

Fal. I deny your major. If you will deny the sheriff, so; if not, let him enter. If I become not a cart as well as another man, a plague on my bringing up! I hope I shall as soon be strangled

with a halter as another.

Prince. Go hide thee behind the arras. The rest walk, up above.

Now, my masters, for a true face and good conscience.

Fal. Both which I have had; but their date is out, and therefore

I'll hide me. *Exit* .

Prince. Call in the sheriff.

[Exeunt Manent the Prince and Peto.]

Enter Sheriff and the Carrier.

Now, Master Sheriff, what is your will with me?

Sher. First, pardon me, my lord. A hue and cry

Hath followed certain men unto this house.

Prince. What men?

Sher. One of them is well known, my gracious lord-
A gross fat man.

Carrier. As fat as butter.

Prince. The man, I do assure you, is not here,
For I myself at this time have employ'd him.
And, sheriff, I will engage my word to thee
That I will by to-morrow dinner time
Send him to answer thee, or any man,
For anything he shall be charg'd withal;
And so let me entreat you leave the house.

Sher. I will, my lord. There are two gentlemen
Have in this robbery lost three hundred marks.

Prince. It may be so. If he have robb'd these men,
He shall be answerable; and so farewell.

Sher. Good night, my noble lord.

Prince. I think it is good morrow, is it not?

Sher. Indeed, my lord, I think it be two o'clock.

Exit [with Carrier] .

Prince. This oily rascal is known as well as Paul's. Go call him forth.

Peto. Falstaff! Fast asleep behind the arras, and snorting like a horse.

Prince. Hark how hard he fetches breath. Search his pockets.

He searcheth his pockets and findeth certain papers.

What hast thou found?

Peto. Nothing but papers, my lord.

Prince. Let's see whit they be. Read them.

Peto. [reads] 'Item. A capon. . . . . ii s. ii d.

Item, Sauce. . . . . iiii d.

Item, Sack two gallons . . . . v s. viii d.

Item, Anchovies and sack after supper. ii s. vi d.

Item, Bread. . . . .

ob.'

Prince. O monstrous! but one halfpennyworth of bread to this intolerable deal of sack! What there is else, keep close; we'll read it at more advantage. There let him sleep till day. I'll to the court in the morning . We must all to the wars. and thy place shall be honourable. I'll procure this fat rogue a charge of foot; and I know, his death will be a march of twelve score. The money shall be paid back again with advantage. Be with me betimes in the morning, and so good morrow, Peto.

Peto. Good morrow, good my lord.

Exeunt.

ACT III. Scene I. Bangor. The Archdeacon's house.

Enter Hotspur, Worcester, Lord Mortimer, Owen Glendower.

Mort. These promises are fair, the parties sure,
And our induction full of prosperous hope.

Hot. Lord Mortimer, and cousin Glendower,
Will you sit down?

And uncle Worcester. A plague upon it!
I have forgot the map.

Glend. No, here it is.
Sit, cousin Percy; sit, good cousin Hotspur,
For by that name as oft as Lancaster
Doth speak of you, his cheek looks pale, and with
A rising sigh he wisheth you in heaven.

Hot. And you in hell, as oft as he hears
Owen Glendower spoke of.

Glend. I cannot blame him. At my nativity
The front of heaven was full of fiery shapes
Of burning cressets, and at my birth
The frame and huge foundation of the earth
Shak'd like a coward.

Hot. Why, so it would have done at the same season, if your mother's cat had but kitten'd, though yourself had never been born.

Glend. I say the earth did shake when I was born.

Hot. And I say the earth was not of my mind,
If you suppose as fearing you it shook.

Glend. The heavens were all on fire, the earth did tremble.

Hot. O, then the earth shook to see the heavens on fire,
And not in fear of your nativity.

Diseased nature oftentimes breaks forth
In strange eruptions; oft the teeming earth
Is with a kind of colic pinch'd and vex'd
By the imprisoning of unruly wind
Within her womb, which, for enlargement striving,
Shakes the old beldame earth and topples down
Steeples and mossgrown towers. At your birth
Our grandam earth, having this distemp'rature,
In passion shook.

Glend. Cousin, of many men
I do not bear these crossings. Give me leave
To tell you once again that at my birth
The front of heaven was full of fiery shapes,
The goats ran from the mountains, and the herds
Were strangely clamorous to the frighted fields.
These signs have mark'd me extraordinary,
And all the courses of my life do show
I am not in the roll of common men.
Where is he living, clipp'd in with the sea
That chides the banks of England, Scotland, Wales,

Which calls me pupil or hath read to me?
And bring him out that is but woman's son
Can trace me in the tedious ways of art
And hold me pace in deep experiments.

Hot. I think there's no man speaks better Welsh. I'll to dinner.

Mort. Peace, cousin Percy; you will make him mad.

Glend. I can call spirits from the vasty deep.

Hot. Why, so can I, or so can any man;
But will they come when you do call for them?

Glend. Why, I can teach you, cousin, to command the devil.

Hot. And I can teach thee, coz, to shame the devil-
By telling truth. Tell truth and shame the devil.
If thou have power to raise him, bring him hither,
And I'll be sworn I have power to shame him hence.

O, while you live, tell truth and shame the devil!

Mort. Come, come, no more of this unprofitable chat.

Glend. Three times hath Henry Bolingbroke made head
Against my power; thrice from the banks of Wye
And sandy-bottom'd Severn have I sent him
Bootless home and weather-beaten back.

Hot. Home without boots, and in foul weather too?
How scapes he agues, in the devil's name

Glend. Come, here's the map. Shall we divide our right
According to our threefold order ta'en?

Mort. The Archdeacon hath divided it
Into three limits very equally.
England, from Trent and Severn hitherto,
By south and east is to my part assign'd;
All westward, Wales beyond the Severn shore,
And all the fertile land within that bound,

To Owen Glendower; and, dear coz, to you
The remnant northward lying off from Trent.
And our indentures tripartite are drawn;
Which being sealed interchangeably
(A business that this night may execute),
To-morrow, cousin Percy, you and I
And my good Lord of Worcester will set forth
To meet your father and the Scottish bower,
As is appointed us, at Shrewsbury.
My father Glendower is not ready yet,
Nor shall we need his help these fourteen days.

[To Glend.] Within that space you may have drawn together
Your tenants, friends, and neighbouring gentlemen.

Glend. A shorter time shall send me to you, lords;
And in my conduct shall your ladies come,
From whom you now must steal and take no leave,
For there will be a world of water shed
Upon the parting of your wives and you.

Hot. Methinks my moiety, north from Burton here,
In quantity equals not one of yours.
See how this river comes me cranking in
And cuts me from the best of all my land
A huge half-moon, a monstrous cantle out.
I'll have the current ill this place damm'd up,
And here the smug and sliver Trent shall run
In a new channel fair and evenly.
It shall not wind with such a deep indent
To rob me of so rich a bottom here.

Glend. Not wind? It shall, it must! You see it doth.

Mort. Yea, but
Mark how he bears his course, and runs me up
With like advantage on the other side,
Gelding the opposed continent as much
As on the other side it takes from you.

Wor. Yea, but a little charge will trench him here
And on this north side win this cape of land;

And then he runs straight and even.

Hot. I'll have it so. A little charge will do it.

Glend. I will not have it alt'red.

Hot. Will not you?

Glend. No, nor you shall not.

Hot. Who shall say me nay?

Glend. No, that will I.

Hot. Let me not understand you then; speak it in Welsh.

Glend. I can speak English, lord, as well as you;
For I was train'd up in the English court,
Where, being but young, I framed to the harp
Many an English ditty lovely well,
And gave the tongue a helpful ornament-

A virtue that was never seen in you.

Hot. Marry,
And I am glad of it with all my heart!
I had rather be a kitten and cry mew
Than one of these same metre ballet-mongers.
I had rather hear a brazen canstick turn'd
Or a dry wheel grate on the axletree,
And that would set my teeth nothing on edge,
Nothing so much as mincing poetry.
'Tis like the forc'd gait of a shuffling nag,

Glend. Come, you shall have Trent turn'd.

Hot. I do not care. I'll give thrice so much land
To any well-deserving friend;
But in the way of bargain, mark ye me,
I'll cavil on the ninth part of a hair
Are the indentures drawn? Shall we be gone?

Glend. The moon shines fair; you may away by night.

I'll haste the writer, and withal

Break with your wives of your departure hence.

I am afraid my daughter will run mad,

So much she doteth on her Mortimer. *Exit* .

Mort. Fie, cousin Percy! how you cross my father!

Hot. I cannot choose. Sometimes he angers me

With telling me of the moldwarp and the ant,

Of the dreamer Merlin and his prophecies,

And of a dragon and a finless fish,

A clip-wing'd griffin and a moulten raven,

A couching lion and a ramping cat,

And such a deal of skimble-skamble stuff

As puts me from my faith. I tell you what-

He held me last night at least nine hours

In reckoning up the several devils' names

That were his lackeys. I cried 'hum,' and 'Well, go to!'

But mark'd him not a word. O, he is as tedious

As a tired horse, a railing wife;

Worse than a smoky house. I had rather live

With cheese and garlic in a windmill far
Than feed on cates and have him talk to me
In any summer house in Christendom).

Mort. In faith, he is a worthy gentleman,
Exceedingly well read, and profited
In strange concealments, valiant as a lion,
And wondrous affable, and as bountiful
As mines of India. Shall I tell you, cousin?
He holds your temper in a high respect
And curbs himself even of his natural scope
When you come 'cross his humour. Faith, he does.
I warrant you that man is not alive
Might so have tempted him as you have done
Without the taste of danger and reproof.
But do not use it oft, let me entreat you.

Wor. In faith, my lord, you are too wilful-blame,
And since your coming hither have done enough
To put him quite besides his patience.
You must needs learn, lord, to amend this fault.

Though sometimes it show greatness, courage, blood-

And that's the dearest grace it renders you-

Yet oftentimes it doth present harsh rage,

Defect of manners, want of government,

Pride, haughtiness, opinion, and disdain;

The least of which haunting a nobleman

Loseth men's hearts, and leaves behind a stain

Upon the beauty of all parts besides,

Beguiling them of commendation.

Hot. Well, I am school'd. Good manners be your speed!

Here come our wives, and let us take our leave.

Enter Glendower with the Ladies.

Mort. This is the deadly spite that angers me-

My wife can speak no English, I no Welsh.

Glend. My daughter weeps; she will not part with you;

She'll be a soldier too, she'll to the wars.

Mort. Good father, tell her that she and my aunt Percy
Shall follow in your conduct speedily.

Glendower speaks to her in Welsh, and she answers him in the same.

Glend. She is desperate here. A peevish self-will'd harlotry,
One that no persuasion can do good upon.

The Lady speaks in Welsh.

Mort. I understand thy looks. That pretty Welsh
Which thou pourest down from these swelling heavens
I am too perfect in; and, but for shame,
In such a Barley should I answer thee.

The Lady again in Welsh.
I understand thy kisses, and thou mine,
And that's a feeling disputation.
But I will never be a truant, love,
Till I have learnt thy language: for thy tongue
Makes Welsh as sweet as ditties highly penn'd,

Sung by a fair queen in a summer's bow'r,
With ravishing division, to her lute.

Glend. Nay, if you melt, then will she run mad.
The Lady speaks again in Welsh.

Mort. O, I am ignorance itself in this!

Glend. She bids you on the wanton rushes lay you down
And rest your gentle head upon her lap,
And she will sing the song that pleaseth you
And on your eyelids crown the god of sleep,
Charming your blood with pleasing heaviness,
Making such difference 'twixt wake and sleep
As is the difference betwixt day and night
The hour before the heavenly-harness'd team
Begins his golden progress in the East.

Mort. With all my heart I'll sit and hear her sing.
By that time will our book, I think, be drawn.

Glend. Do so,

And those musicians that shall play to you

Hang in the air a thousand leagues from hence,

And straight they shall be here. Sit, and attend.

Hot. Come, Kate, thou art perfect in lying down. Come, quick, quick, that I may lay my head in thy lap.

Lady P. Go, ye giddy goose.

The music plays.

Hot. Now I perceive the devil understands Welsh;

And 'tis no marvel, be is so humorous.

By'r Lady, he is a good musician.

Lady P. Then should you be nothing but musical; for you are altogether govern'd by humours. Lie still, ye thief, and hear the lady sing in Welsh.

Hot. I had rather hear Lady, my brach, howl in Irish.

Lady P. Wouldst thou have thy head broken?

Hot. No.

Lady P. Then be still.

Hot. Neither! 'Tis a woman's fault.

Lady P. Now God help thee!

Hot. To the Welsh lady's bed.

Lady P. What's that?

Hot. Peace! she sings.

Here the Lady sings a Welsh song.

Come, Kate, I'll have your song too.

Lady P. Not mine, in good sooth.

Hot. Not yours, in good sooth? Heart! you swear like a
comfit-maker's wife. 'Not you, in good sooth!' and 'as true
as I
live!' and 'as God shall mend me!' and 'as sure as day!'
And givest such sarcenet surety for thy oaths

As if thou ne'er walk'st further than Finsbury.
Swear me, Kate, like a lady as thou art,
A good mouth-filling oath; and leave 'in sooth'
And such protest of pepper gingerbread
To velvet guards and Sunday citizens. Come, sing.

Lady P. I will not sing.

Hot. 'Tis the next way to turn tailor or be redbreast-teacher.
An
the indentures be drawn, I'll away within these two hours;
and so
come in when ye will. *Exit* .

Glend. Come, come, Lord Mortimer. You are as slow
As hot Lord Percy is on fire to go.
By this our book is drawn; we'll but seal,
And then to horse immediately.

Mort. With all my heart.
Exeunt.

Scene II. London . The Palace.

Enter the King, Prince of Wales, and others.

King. Lords, give us leave. The Prince of Wales and I

Must have some private conference; but be near at hand,

For we shall presently have need of you.

Exeunt Lords.

I know not whether God will have it so,

For some displeasing service I have done,

That, in his secret doom, out of my blood

He'll breed revengement and a scourge for me;

But thou dost in thy passages of life

Make me believe that thou art only mark'd

For the hot vengeance and the rod of heaven

To punish my mistreadings. Tell me else,

Could such inordinate and low desires,

Such poor, such bare, such lewd, such mean attempts,

Such barren pleasures, rude society,

As thou art match'd withal and grafted to,

Accompany the greatness of thy blood
And hold their level with thy princely heart?

Prince. So please your Majesty, I would I could
Quit all offences with as clear excuse
As well as I am doubtless I can purge
Myself of many I am charged withal.
Yet such extenuation let me beg
As, in reproof of many tales devis'd,
Which oft the ear of greatness needs must bear
By, smiling pickthanks and base newsmongers,
I may, for some things true wherein my youth
Hath faulty wand'red and irregular,
And pardon on lily true submission.

King. God pardon thee! Yet let me wonder, Harry,
At thy affections, which do hold a wing,
Quite from the flight of all thy ancestors.
Thy place in Council thou hast rudely lost,
Which by thy younger brother is supplied,
And art almost an alien to the hearts

Of all the court and princes of my blood.
The hope and expectation of thy time
Is ruin'd, and the soul of every man
Prophetically do forethink thy fall.
Had I so lavish of my presence been,
So common-hackney'd in the eyes of men,
So stale and cheap to vulgar company,
Opinion, that did help me to the crown,
Had still kept loyal to possession
And left me in reputeless banishment,
A fellow of no mark nor likelihood.
By being seldom seen, I could not stir
But, like a comet, I Was wond'red at;
That men would tell their children, 'This is he!'

Others would say, 'Where? Which is Bolingbroke?'
And then I stole all courtesy from heaven,
And dress'd myself in such humility
That I did pluck allegiance from men's hearts,
Loud shouts and salutations from their mouths
Even in the presence of the crowned King.

Thus did I keep my person fresh and new,

My presence, like a robe pontifical,

Ne'er seen but wond'red at; and so my state,

Seldom but sumptuous, show'd like a feast

And won by rareness such solemnity.

The skipping King, he ambled up and down

With shallow jesters and rash bavin wits,

Soon kindled and soon burnt; carded his state;

Mingled his royalty with cap'ring fools;

Had his great name profaned with their scorns

And gave his countenance, against his name,

To laugh at gibing boys and stand the push

Of every beardless vain comparative;

Grew a companion to the common streets,

Enfeoff'd himself to popularity;

That, being dally swallowed by men's eyes,

They surfeited with honey and began

To loathe the taste of sweetness, whereof a little

More than a little is by much too much.

So, when he had occasion to be seen,

He was but as the cuckoo is in June,

Heard, not regarded-seen, but with such eyes

As, sick and blunted with community,

Afford no extraordinary gaze,

Such as is bent on unlike majesty

When it shines seldom in admiring eyes;

But rather drows'd and hung their eyelids down,

Slept in his face, and rend'red such aspect

As cloudy men use to their adversaries,

Being with his presence glutted, gorg'd, and full.

And in that very line, Harry, standest thou;

For thou hast lost thy princely privilege

With vile participation. Not an eye

But is aweary of thy common sight,

Save mine, which hath desir'd to see thee more;

Which now doth that I would not have it do-

Make blind itself with foolish tenderness.

Prince. I shall hereafter, my thrice-gracious lord,

Be more myself.

King. For all the world,

As thou art to this hour, was Richard then

When I from France set foot at Ravenspurgh;

And even as I was then is Percy now.

Now, by my sceptre, and my soul to boot,

He hath more worthy interest to the state

Than thou, the shadow of succession;

For of no right, nor colour like to right,

He doth fill fields with harness in the realm,

Turns head against the lion's armed jaws,

And, Being no more in debt to years than thou,

Leads ancient lords and reverend Bishops on

To bloody battles and to bruising arms.

What never-dying honour hath he got

Against renowmed Douglas! whose high deeds,

Whose hot incursions and great name in arms

Holds from all soldiers chief majority

And military title capital

Through all the kingdoms that acknowledge Christ.

Thrice hath this Hotspur, Mars in swathling clothes,

This infant warrior, in his enterprises

Discomfited great Douglas; ta'en him once,

Enlarged him, and made a friend of him,
To fill the mouth of deep defiance up
And shake the peace and safety of our throne.
And what say you to this? Percy, Northumberland,
The Archbishop's Grace of York, Douglas, Mortimer
Capitulate against us and are up.
But wherefore do I tell these news to thee
Why, Harry, do I tell thee of my foes,
Which art my nearest and dearest enemy'
Thou that art like enough, through vassal fear,
Base inclination, and the start of spleen,
To fight against me under Percy's pay,
To dog his heels and curtsy at his frowns,
To show how much thou art degenerate.

Prince. Do not think so. You shall not find it so.
And God forgive them that so much have sway'd
Your Majesty's good thoughts away from me!
I will redeem all this on Percy's head
And, in the closing of some glorious day,
Be bold to tell you that I am your son,

When I will wear a garment all of blood,

And stain my favours in a bloody mask,

Which, wash'd away, shall scour my shame with it.

And that shall be the day, whene'er it lights,

That this same child of honour and renown,

This gallant Hotspur, this all-praised knight,

And your unthought of Harry chance to meet.

For every honour sitting on his helm,

Would they were multitudes, and on my head

My shames redoubled! For the time will come

That I shall make this Northern youth exchange

His glorious deeds for my indignities.

Percy is but my factor, good my lord,

To engross up glorious deeds on my behalf;

And I will call hall to so strict account

That he shall render every glory up,

Yea, even the slightest worship of his time,

Or I will tear the reckoning from his heart.

This in the name of God I promise here;

The which if he be pleas'd I shall perform,

I do beseech your Majesty may salve

The long-grown wounds of my intemperance.

If not, the end of life cancels all bands,

And I will die a hundred thousand deaths

Ere break the smallest parcel of this vow.

King. A hundred thousand rebels die in this!

Thou shalt have charge and sovereign trust herein.

Enter Blunt.

How now, good Blunt? Thy looks are full of speed.

Blunt. So hath the business that I come to speak of.

Lord Mortimer of Scotland hath sent word

That Douglas and the English rebels met

The eleventh of this month at Shrewsbury.

A mighty and a fearful head they are,

If promises be kept oil every hand,

As ever off'red foul play in a state.

King. The Earl of Westmoreland set forth to-day;

With him my son, Lord John of Lancaster;

For this advertisement is five days old.

On Wednesday next, Harry, you shall set forward;

On Thursday we ourselves will march. Our meeting

Is Bridgenorth; and, Harry, you shall march

Through Gloucestershire; by which account,

Our business valued, some twelve days hence

Our general forces at Bridgenorth shall meet.

Our hands are full of business. Let's away.

Advantage feeds him fat while men delay. *Exeunt* .

Scene III. Eastcheap. The Boar's Head Tavern.

Enter Falstaff and Bardolph.

Fal. Bardolph, am I not fall'n away vilely since this last action? Do I not bate? Do I not dwindle? Why, my skin hangs about me like an old lady's loose gown! I am withered like an old apple John. Well, I'll repent, and that suddenly, while I am in some liking. I shall be out of heart shortly, and then I shall have no strength to repent. An I have not forgotten what the inside of a church is made of, I am a peppercorn, a brewer's horse. The inside of a church! Company, villanous company, hath been the spoil of me. Bard. Sir John, you are so fretful you cannot live long. Fal. Why, there is it! Come, sing me a bawdy song; make me merry. I was as virtuously given as a gentleman need to be, virtuous enough: swore little, dic'd not above seven times a week, went to a bawdy house not above once in a quarter-of an hour, paid money that I borrowed-three or four times, lived well, and in good compass; and now I live out of all order, out of all compass. Bard. Why, you are so fat, Sir John, that you must needs be out of all compass-out of all reasonable compass, Sir John. Fal. Do thou amend thy face, and I'll amend my life. Thou art our admiral, thou bearest the lantern in the poop-but 'tis in the nose of thee. Thou art the Knight of the Burning Lamp. Bard. Why, Sir John, my face does you no harm. Fal. No, I'll be sworn. I make as good use of it as many a man doth of a death's-head or a memento mori. I never see thy face but I think upon hellfire and Dives that lived in purple; for there he is in his robes, burning, burning. if thou wert any way given to virtue, I would swear by thy face; my oath should be 'By this fire, that's God's angel.' But thou art altogether given over, and wert indeed, but for the light in thy face, the son of utter darkness. When thou ran'st up Gadshill in the night to catch my horse, if I did not think thou hadst been an ignis fatuus or a ball of wildfire, there's no purchase in money. O, thou art a perpetual triumph, an everlasting bonfire-light! Thou hast saved me a thousand marks in links and torches, walking with thee in the night betwixt tavern and tavern; but the sack that thou hast drunk me would have bought me lights as good cheap at the dearest chandler's in Europe. I have maintained that salamander of yours with fire any time this two-and-thirty years. God reward me for it! Bard. 'Sblood, I would my face were in your belly! Fal. God-a-mercy! so should I be sure to be heart-burn'd.

Enter Hostess.

How now, Dame Partlet the hen? Have you enquir'd yet who pick'd my pocket?

Host. Why, Sir John, what do you think, Sir John? Do you think

I

keep thieves in my house? I have search'd, I have enquired, so

has my husband, man by man, boy by boy, servant by servant.

The

tithe of a hair was never lost in my house before.

Fal. Ye lie, hostess. Bardolph was shav'd and lost many a hair, and I'll be sworn my pocket was pick'd. Go to, you are a woman, go!

Host. Who, I? No; I defy thee! God's light, I was never call'd so in mine own house before!

Fal. Go to, I know you well enough.

Host. No, Sir John; you do not know me, Sir John. I know you, Sir

John. You owe me money, Sir John, and now you pick a quarrel to beguile me of it. I bought you a dozen of shirts to your back.

Fal. Dowlas, filthy dowlas! I have given them away to bakers' wives; they have made bolters of them.

Host. Now, as I am a true woman, holland of eight shillings an ell. You owe money here besides, Sir John, for your diet and by-drinkings, and money lent you, four-and-twenty pound.

Fal. He had his part of it; let him pay.

Host. He? Alas, he is poor; he hath nothing.

Fal. How? Poor? Look upon his face. What call you rich? Let them
coin his nose, let them coin his cheeks. I'll not pay a denier.
What, will you make a younker of me? Shall I not take mine ease
in mine inn but I shall have my pocket pick'd? I have lost a
seal-ring of my grandfather's worth forty mark.

Host. O Jesu, I have heard the Prince tell him, I know not how oft,
that that ring was copper!

Fal. How? the Prince is a Jack, a sneak-cup. 'Sblood, an he were
here, I would cudgel him like a dog if he would say so.

Enter the Prince *[and Poins]* , marching; and Falstaff meets

them, playing upon his truncheon like a fife.

How now, lad? Is the wind in that door, i' faith? Must we all march?

Bard. Yea, two and two, Newgate fashion.

Host. My lord, I pray you hear me.

Prince. What say'st thou, Mistress Quickly? How doth thy husband?
I love him well; he is an honest man.

Host. Good my lord, hear me.

Fal. Prithee let her alone and list to me.

Prince. What say'st thou, Jack?

Fal. The other night I fell asleep here behind the arras and had my pocket pick'd. This house is turn'd bawdy house; they pick pockets.

Prince. What didst thou lose, Jack?

Fal. Wilt thou believe me, Hal? Three or four bonds of forty pound apiece and a seal-ring of my grandfather's.

Prince. A trifle, some eightpenny matter.

Host. So I told him, my lord, and I said I heard your Grace say so;
and, my lord, he speaks most vilely of you, like a
foul-mouth'd
man as he is, and said he would cudgel you.

Prince. What! he did not?

Host. There's neither faith, truth, nor womanhood in me else.

Fal. There's no more faith in thee than in a stewed prune, nor no
more truth in thee than in a drawn fox; and for womanhood,
Maid
Marian may be the deputy's wife of the ward to thee. Go, you thing, go!

Host. Say, what thing? what thing?

Fal. What thing? Why, a thing to thank God on.

Host. I am no thing to thank God on, I would thou shouldst know it!
I am an honest man's wife, and, setting thy knight-hood aside,
thou art a knave to call me so.

Fal. Setting thy womanhood aside, thou art a beast to say otherwise.

Host. Say, what beast, thou knave, thou?

Fal. What beast? Why, an otter.

Prince. An otter, Sir John? Why an otter?

Fal. Why, she's neither fish nor flesh; a man knows not where to have her.

Host. Thou art an unjust man in saying so. Thou or any man knows
where to have me, thou knave, thou!

Prince. Thou say'st true, hostess, and he slanders thee most grossly.

Host. So he doth you, my lord, and said this other day you ought him a thousand pound.

Prince. Sirrah, do I owe you a thousand pound?

Fal. A thousand pound, Hal? A million! Thy love is worth a million; thou owest me thy love.

Host. Nay, my lord, he call'd you Jack and said he would cudgel you.

Fal. Did I, Bardolph?

Bard. Indeed, Sir John, you said so.

Fal. Yea. if he said my ring was copper.

Prince. I say, 'tis copper. Darest thou be as good as thy word now?

Fal. Why, Hal, thou knowest, as thou art but man, I dare; but as thou art Prince, I fear thee as I fear the roaring of the lion's whelp.

Prince. And why not as the lion?

Fal. The King himself is to be feared as the lion. Dost thou think
I'll fear thee as I fear thy father? Nay, an I do, I pray God my girdle break.

Prince. O, if it should, how would thy guts fall about thy knees!
But, sirrah, there's no room for faith, truth, nor honesty in
this bosom of thine. It is all fill'd up with guts and midriff.
Charge an honest woman with picking thy pocket? Why, thou
whoreson, impudent, emboss'd rascal, if there were anything in
thy pocket but tavern reckonings, memorandums of bawdy houses,
and one poor pennyworth of sugar candy to make thee
long-winded-
if thy pocket were enrich'd with any other injuries but
these, I
am a villain. And yet you will stand to it; you will not pocket
up wrong. Art thou not ashamed?

Fal. Dost thou hear, Hal? Thou knowest in the state of innocency
Adam fell; and what should poor Jack Falstaff do in the days of
villany? Thou seest I have more flesh than another man, and
therefore more frailty. You confess then, you pick'd my pocket?

Prince. It appears so by the story.

Fal. Hostess, I forgive thee. Go make ready breakfast. Love thy husband, look to thy servants, cherish thy guests. Thou shalt find me tractable to any honest reason. Thou seest I am pacified. -Still?- Nay, prithee be gone. *[Exit Hostess.]* Now, Hal, to the news at court. For the robbery, lad-how is that answered?

Prince. O my sweet beef, I must still be good angel to thee. The money is paid back again.

Fal. O, I do not like that paying back! 'Tis a double labour.

Prince. I am good friends with my father, and may do anything.

Fal. Rob me the exchequer the first thing thou doest, and do it with unwash'd hands too.

Bard. Do, my lord.

Prince. I have procured thee, Jack, a charge of foot.

Fal. I would it had been of horse. Where shall I find one that can
steal well? O for a fine thief of the age of two-and-twenty or
thereabouts! I am heinously unprovided. Well, God be thanked for
these rebels. They offend none but the virtuous. I laud them,

I

praise them.

Prince. Bardolph!

Bard. My lord?

Prince. Go bear this letter to Lord John of Lancaster,
To my brother John; this to my Lord of Westmoreland.
[Exit Bardolph.]
Go, Poins, to horse, to horse; for thou and I
Have thirty miles to ride yet ere dinner time.
[Exit Poins.]
Jack, meet me to-morrow in the Temple Hall

At two o'clock in the afternoon.

There shalt thou know thy charge. and there receive

Money and order for their furniture.

The land is burning; Percy stands on high;

And either they or we must lower lie. *[Exit.]*

Fal. Rare words! brave world! Hostess, my breakfast, come.

O, I could wish this tavern were my drum!

Exit.

ACT IV. Scene I. The rebel camp near Shrewsbury.

Enter Harry Hotspur, Worcester, and Douglas.

Hot. Well said, my noble Scot. If speaking truth

In this fine age were not thought flattery,

Such attribution should the Douglas have

As not a soldier of this season's stamp

Should go so general current through the world.

By God, I cannot flatter, I defy

The tongues of soothers! but a braver place

In my heart's love hath no man than yourself.

Nay, task me to my word; approve me, lord.

Doug. Thou art the king of honour.

No man so potent breathes upon the ground

But I will beard him.

Enter one with letters.

Hot. Do so, and 'tis well.-

What letters hast thou there?- I can but thank you.

Messenger. These letters come from your father.

Hot. Letters from him? Why comes he not himself?

Mess. He cannot come, my lord; he is grievous sick.

Hot. Zounds! how has he the leisure to be sick
In such a justling time? Who leads his power?

Under whose government come they along?

Mess. His letters bears his mind, not I, my lord.

Wor. I prithee tell me, doth he keep his bed?

Mess. He did, my lord, four days ere I set forth,
And at the time of my departure thence
He was much fear'd by his physicians.

Wor. I would the state of time had first been whole
Ere he by sickness had been visited.

His health was never better worth than now.

Hot. Sick now? droop now? This sickness doth infect
The very lifeblood of our enterprise.

'Tis catching hither, even to our camp.

He writes me here that inward sickness-

And that his friends by deputation could not

So soon be drawn; no did he think it meet

To lay so dangerous and dear a trust

On any soul remov'd but on his own.

Yet doth he give us bold advertisement,

That with our small conjunction we should on,

To see how fortune is dispos'd to us;

For, as he writes, there is no quailing now,

Because the King is certainly possess'd

Of all our purposes. What say you to it?

Wor. Your father's sickness is a maim to us.

Hot. A perilous gash, a very limb lopp'd off.

And yet, in faith, it is not! His present want

Seems more than we shall find it. Were it good

To set the exact wealth of all our states

All at one cast? to set so rich a man

On the nice hazard of one doubtful hour?

It were not good; for therein should we read
The very bottom and the soul of hope,
The very list, the very utmost bound
Of all our fortunes.

Doug. Faith, and so we should;
Where now remains a sweet reversion.
We may boldly spend upon the hope of what
Is to come in.

A comfort of retirement lives in this.

Hot. A rendezvous, a home to fly unto,
If that the devil and mischance look big
Upon the maidenhead of our affairs.

Wor. But yet I would your father had been here.
The quality and hair of our attempt
Brooks no division. It will be thought
By some that know not why he is away,
That wisdom, loyalty, and mere dislike

Of our proceedings kept the Earl from hence.
And think how such an apprehension
May turn the tide of fearful faction
And breed a kind of question in our cause.
For well you know we of the off'ring side
Must keep aloof from strict arbitrement,
And stop all sight-holes, every loop from whence
The eye of reason may pry in upon us.
This absence of your father's draws a curtain
That shows the ignorant a kind of fear
Before not dreamt of.

Hot. You strain too far.
I rather of his absence make this use:
It lends a lustre and more great opinion,
A larger dare to our great enterprise,
Than if the Earl were here; for men must think,
If we, without his help, can make a head
To push against a kingdom, with his help
We shall o'erturn it topsy-turvy down.

Yet all goes well; yet all our joints are whole.

Doug. As heart can think. There is not such a word
Spoke of in Scotland as this term of fear.

Enter Sir Richard Vernon.

Hot. My cousin Vernon! welcome, by my soul.

Ver. Pray God my news be worth a welcome, lord.
The Earl of Westmoreland, seven thousand strong,
Is marching hitherwards; with him Prince John.

Hot. No harm. What more?

Ver. And further, I have learn'd
The King himself in person is set forth,
Or hitherwards intended speedily,
With strong and mighty preparation.

Hot. He shall be welcome too. Where is his son,

The nimble-footed madcap Prince of Wales,
And his comrades, that daff'd the world aside
And bid it pass?

Ver. All furnish'd, all in arms;
All plum'd like estridges that with the wind
Bated like eagles having lately bath'd;
Glittering in golden coats like images;
As full of spirit as the month of May
And gorgeous as the sun at midsummer;
Wanton as youthful goats, wild as young bulls.
I saw young Harry with his beaver on
His cushes on his thighs, gallantly arm'd,
Rise from the ground like feathered Mercury,
And vaulted with such ease into his seat
As if an angel dropp'd down from the clouds
To turn and wind a fiery Pegasus
And witch the world with noble horsemanship.

Hot. No more, no more! Worse than the sun in March,
This praise doth nourish agues. Let them come.

They come like sacrifices in their trim,

And to the fire-ey'd maid of smoky war

All hot and bleeding Will we offer them.

The mailed Mars Shall on his altar sit

Up to the ears in blood. I am on fire

To hear this rich reprisal is so nigh,

And yet not ours. Come, let me taste my horse,

Who is to bear me like a thunderbolt

Against the bosom of the Prince of Wales.

Harry to Harry shall, hot horse to horse,

Meet, and ne'er part till one drop down a corse.

that Glendower were come!

Ver. There is more news.

I learn'd in Worcester, as I rode along,

He cannot draw his power this fourteen days.

Doug. That's the worst tidings that I hear of yet.

Wor. Ay, by my faith, that bears a frosty sound.

Hot. What may the King's whole battle reach unto?

Ver. To thirty thousand.

Hot. Forty let it be.
My father and Glendower being both away,
The powers of us may serve so great a day.
Come, let us take a muster speedily.

Doomsday is near. Die all, die merrily.

Doug. Talk not of dying. I am out of fear
Of death or death's hand for this one half-year.

Exeunt.

Scene II. A public road near Coventry.

Enter Falstaff and Bardolph.

Fal. Bardolph, get thee before to Coventry; fill me a bottle of sack. Our soldiers shall march through. We'll to Sutton Co'fil' to-night.

Bard. Will you give me money, Captain?

Fal. Lay out, lay out.

Bald. This bottle makes an angel.

Fal. An if it do, take it for thy labour; an if it make twenty, take them all; I'll answer the coinage. Bid my lieutenant Peto meet me at town's end.

Bard. I Will, Captain. Farewell. *Exit* .

Fal. If I be not ashamed of my soldiers, I am a sous'd gurnet.

I have misused the King's press damnably. I have got in exchange of a hundred and fifty soldiers, three hundred and odd pounds. I

press me none but good householders, yeomen's sons; inquire me
out contracted bachelors, such as had been ask'd twice on the
banes-such a commodity of warm slaves as had as lieve hear the
devil as a drum; such as fear the report of a caliver worse than
a struck fowl or a hurt wild duck. I press'd me none but such
toasts-and-butter, with hearts in their bellies no bigger than
pins' heads, and they have bought out their services; and now my
whole charge consists of ancients, corporals, lieutenants,
gentlemen of companies-slaves as ragged as Lazarus in the
painted cloth, where the glutton's dogs licked his sores; and
such as indeed were never soldiers, but discarded unjust
serving-men, younger sons to Younger brothers, revolted tapsters,
and ostlers trade-fall'n; the cankers of a calm world and a long
peace; ten times more dishonourable ragged than an old fac'd
ancient; and such have I to fill up the rooms of them that have
bought out their services that you would think that I had a
hundred and fifty tattered Prodigals lately come from
swine-keeping, from eating draff and husks. A mad fellow met me
on the way, and told me I had unloaded all the gibbets and
press'd the dead bodies. No eye hath seen such scarecrows.
I'll

not march through Coventry with them, that's flat. Nay, and the villains march wide betwixt the legs, as if they had gyves on; for indeed I had the most of them out of prison. There's but a shirt and a half in all my company; and the half-shirt is two napkins tack'd together and thrown over the shoulders like a herald's coat without sleeves; and the shirt, to say the truth, stol'n from my host at Saint Alban's, or the red-nose innkeeper of Daventry. But that's all one; they'll find linen enough on every hedge.

Enter the Prince and the Lord of Westmoreland.

Prince. How now, blown Jack? How now, quilt?

Fal. What, Hal? How now, mad wag? What a devil dost thou in Warwickshire? My good Lord of Westmoreland, I cry you mercy.

I thought your honour had already been at Shrewsbury.

West. Faith, Sir John, 'tis more than time that I were there, and you too; but my powers are there already. The King, I can tell you, looks for us all. We must away all, to-night.

Fal. Tut, never fear me. I am as vigilant as a cat to steal cream.

Prince. I think, to steal cream indeed, for thy theft hath already
made thee butter. But tell me, Jack, whose fellows are these that come after?

Fal. Mine, Hal, mine.

Prince. I did never see such pitiful rascals.

Fal. Tut, tut! good enough to toss; food for powder, food for
powder. They'll fill a pit as well as better. Tush, man,
mortal men, mortal men.

West. Ay, but, Sir John, methinks they are exceeding poor and
bare-
too beggarly.

Fal. Faith, for their poverty, I know, not where they had that; and
for their bareness, I am surd they never learn'd that of me.

Prince. No, I'll be sworn, unless you call three fingers on the ribs bare. But, sirrah, make haste. Percy 's already in the field.

Exit.

Fal. What, is the King encamp'd?

West. He is, Sir John. I fear we shall stay too long.

[Exit.]

Fal. Well,
To the latter end of a fray and the beginning of a feast
Fits a dull fighter and a keen guest. *Exit* .

Scene III. The rebel camp near Shrewsbury.

Enter Hotspur, Worcester, Douglas, Vernon.

Hot. We'll fight with him to-night.

Wor. It may not be.

Doug. You give him then advantage.

Ver. Not a whit.

Hot. Why say you so? Looks he no for supply?

Ver. So do we.

Hot. His is certain, ours 's doubtful.

Wor. Good cousin, be advis'd; stir not to-night.

Ver. Do not, my lord.

Doug. You do not counsel well.
You speak it out of fear and cold heart.

Ver. Do me no slander, Douglas. By my life-
And I dare well maintain it with my life-
If well-respected honour bid me on
I hold as little counsel with weak fear
As you, my lord, or any Scot that this day lives.
Let it be seen to-morrow in the battle
Which of us fears.

Doug. Yea, or to-night.

Ver. Content.

Hot. To-night, say I.
Come, come, it may not be. I wonder much,
Being men of such great leading as you are,
That you foresee not what impediments
Drag back our expedition. Certain horse

Of my cousin Vernon's are not yet come up.
Your uncle Worcester's horse came but to-day;
And now their pride and mettle is asleep,
Their courage with hard labour tame and dull,
That not a horse is half the half of himself.

Hot. So are the horses of the enemy,
In general journey-bated and brought low.

The better part of ours are full of rest.

Wor. The number of the King exceedeth ours.
For God's sake, cousin, stay till all come in.

The trumpet sounds a parley.

Enter Sir Walter Blunt.

Blunt. I come with gracious offers from the King,
If you vouchsafe me hearing and respect.

Hot. Welcome, Sir Walter Blunt, and would to God
You were of our determination!
Some of us love you well; and even those some
Envy your great deservings and good name,
Because you are not of our quality,
But stand against us like an enemy.

Blunt. And God defend but still I should stand so,
So long as out of limit and true rule
You stand against anointed majesty!
But to my charge. The King hath sent to know
The nature of your griefs; and whereupon
You conjure from the breast of civil peace
Such bold hostility, teaching his duteous land
Audacious cruelty. If that the King
Have any way your good deserts forgot,
Which he confesseth to be manifold,
He bids you name your griefs, and with all speed
You shall have your desires with interest,
And pardon absolute for yourself and these
Herein misled by your suggestion.

Hot. The King is kind; and well we know the King

Knows at what time to promise, when to pay.

My father and my uncle and myself

Did give him that same royalty he wears;

And when he was not six-and-twenty strong,

Sick in the world's regard, wretched and low,

A poor unminded outlaw sneaking home,

My father gave him welcome to the shore;

And when he heard him swear and vow to God

He came but to be Duke of Lancaster,

To sue his livery and beg his peace,

With tears of innocency and terms of zeal,

My father, in kind heart and pity mov'd,

Swore him assistance, and performed it too.

Now, when the lords and barons of the realm

Perceiv'd Northumberland did lean to him,

The more and less came in with cap and knee;

Met him on boroughs, cities, villages,

Attended him on bridges, stood in lanes,

Laid gifts before him, proffer'd him their oaths, Give him their heirs as pages, followed him

Even at the heels in golden multitudes.

He presently, as greatness knows itself,

Steps me a little higher than his vow

Made to my father, while his blood was poor,

Upon the naked shore at Ravenspurgh;

And now, forsooth, takes on him to reform

Some certain edicts and some strait decrees

That lie too heavy on the commonwealth;

Cries out upon abuses, seems to weep

Over his country's wrongs; and by this face,

This seeming brow of justice, did he win

The hearts of all that he did angle for;

Proceeded further-cut me off the heads

Of all the favourites that the absent King

In deputation left behind him here

When he was personal in the Irish war.

But. Tut! I came not to hear this.

Hot. Then to the point.

In short time after lie depos'd the King;
Soon after that depriv'd him of his life;
And in the neck of that task'd the whole state;
To make that worse, suff'red his kinsman March
(Who is, if every owner were well placid,
Indeed his king) to be engag'd in Wales,
There without ransom to lie forfeited;
Disgrac'd me in my happy victories,
Sought to entrap me by intelligence;
Rated mine uncle from the Council board;
In rage dismiss'd my father from the court;
Broke an oath on oath, committed wrong on wrong;
And in conclusion drove us to seek out
This head of safety, and withal to pry
Into his title, the which we find
Too indirect for long continuance.

Blunt. Shall I return this answer to the King?

Hot. Not so, Sir Walter. We'll withdraw awhile.
Go to the King; and let there be impawn'd

Some surety for a safe return again,
And In the morning early shall mine uncle
Bring him our purposes; and so farewell.

Blunt. I would you would accept of grace and love.

Hot. And may be so we shall.

Blunt. Pray God you do.

Exeunt.

Scene IV. York. The Archbishop's Palace.

Enter the Archbishop of York and Sir Michael.

Arch. Hie, good Sir Michael; bear this sealed brief
With winged haste to the Lord Marshal;
This to my cousin Scroop; and all the rest
To whom they are directed. If you knew
How much they do import, you would make haste.
Sir M. My good lord,

I guess their tenour.

Arch. Like enough you do.
To-morrow, good Sir Michael, is a day
Wherein the fortune of ten thousand men
Must bide the touch; for, sir, at Shrewsbury,
As I am truly given to understand,
The King with mighty and quick-raised power
Meets with Lord Harry; and I fear, Sir Michael,
What with the sickness of Northumberland,
Whose power was in the first proportion,
And what with Owen Glendower's absence thence,
Who with them was a rated sinew too
And comes not in, overrul'd by prophecies-
I fear the power of Percy is too weak
To wage an instant trial with the King.
Sir M. Why, my good lord, you need not fear;
There is Douglas and Lord Mortimer.

Arch. No, Mortimer is not there.
Sir M. But there is Mordake, Vernon, Lord Harry Percy,

And there is my Lord of Worcester, and a head
Of gallant warriors, noble gentlemen.

Arch. And so there is; but yet the King hath drawn
The special head of all the land together-
The Prince of Wales, Lord John of Lancaster,
The noble Westmoreland and warlike Blunt,
And many moe corrivals and dear men
Of estimation and command in arms.

Sir M. Doubt not, my lord, they shall be well oppos'd.

Arch. I hope no less, yet needful 'tis to fear;
And, to prevent the worst, Sir Michael, speed.
For if Lord Percy thrive not, ere the King
Dismiss his power, he means to visit us,
For he hath heard of our confederacy,
And 'tis but wisdom to make strong against him.
Therefore make haste. I must go write again
To other friends; and so farewell, Sir Michael.

Exeunt.

ACT V. Scene I. The King's camp near Shrewsbury.

Enter the King, Prince of Wales, Lord John of Lancaster, Sir

Walter Blunt,

Falstaff.

King. How bloodily the sun begins to peer
Above yon busky hill! The day looks pale
At his distemp'rature.

Prince. The southern wind
Doth play the trumpet to his purposes
And by his hollow whistling in the leaves
Foretells a tempest and a blust'ring day.

King. Theft with the losers let it sympathize,

For nothing can seem foul to those that win.
The trumpet sounds. *Enter* Worcester *[and Vernon]* .
How, now, my Lord of Worcester? 'Tis not well
That you and I should meet upon such terms
As now we meet. You have deceiv'd our trust
And made us doff our easy robes of peace
To crush our old limbs in ungentle steel.

This is not well, my lord; this is not well.
What say you to it? Will you again unknit
This churlish knot of all-abhorred war,
And move in that obedient orb again
Where you did give a fair and natural light,
And be no more an exhal'd meteor,
A prodigy of fear, and a portent
Of broached mischief to the unborn times?

Wor. Hear me, my liege.
For mine own part, I could be well content
To entertain the lag-end of my life
With quiet hours; for I do protest

I have not sought the day of this dislike.

King. You have not sought it! How comes it then,

Fal. Rebellion lay in his way, and he found it.

Prince. Peace, chewet, peace!

Wor. It pleas'd your Majesty to turn your looks
Of favour from myself and all our house;
And yet I must remember you, my lord,
We were the first and dearest of your friends.
For you my staff of office did I break
In Richard's time, and posted day and night
To meet you on the way and kiss your hand
When yet you were in place and in account
Nothing so strong and fortunate as I.
It was myself, my brother, and his son
That brought you home and boldly did outdare
The dangers of the time. You swore to us,
And you did swear that oath at Doncaster,

That you did nothing purpose 'gainst the state,

Nor claim no further than your new-fall'n right,

The seat of Gaunt, dukedom of Lancaster.

To this we swore our aid. But in short space

It it rain'd down fortune show'ring on your head,

And such a flood of greatness fell on you-

What with our help, what with the absent King,

What with the injuries of a wanton time,

The seeming sufferances that you had borne,

And the contrarious winds that held the King

So long in his unlucky Irish wars

That all in England did repute him dead-

And from this swarm of fair advantages

You took occasion to be quickly woo'd

To gripe the general sway into your hand;

Forgot your oath to us at Doncaster;

And, being fed by us, you us'd us so

As that ungentle gull, the cuckoo's bird,

Useth the sparrow-did oppress our nest;

Grew, by our feeding to so great a bulk

That even our love thirst not come near your sight

For fear of swallowing; but with nimble wing
We were enforc'd for safety sake to fly
Out of your sight and raise this present head;
Whereby we stand opposed by such means
As you yourself have forg'd against yourself
By unkind usage, dangerous countenance,
And violation of all faith and troth
Sworn to tis in your younger enterprise.

King. These things, indeed, you have articulate,
Proclaim'd at market crosses, read in churches,
To face the garment of rebellion
With some fine colour that may please the eye
Of fickle changelings and poor discontents,
Which gape and rub the elbow at the news
Of hurlyburly innovation.
And never yet did insurrection want
Such water colours to impaint his cause,
Nor moody beggars, starving for a time
Of pell-mell havoc and confusion.

Prince. In both our armies there is many a soul

Shall pay full dearly for this encounter,

If once they join in trial. Tell your nephew

The Prince of Wales doth join with all the world

In praise of Henry Percy. By my hopes,

This present enterprise set off his head,

I do not think a braver gentleman,

More active-valiant or more valiant-young,

More daring or more bold, is now alive

To grace this latter age with noble deeds.

For my part, I may speak it to my shame,

I have a truant been to chivalry;

And so I hear he doth account me too.

Yet this before my father's Majesty-

I am content that he shall take the odds

Of his great name and estimation,

And will to save the blood on either side,

Try fortune with him in a single fight.

King. And, Prince of Wales, so dare we venture thee,

Albeit considerations infinite

Do make against it. No, good Worcester, no!
We love our people well; even those we love
That are misled upon your cousin's part;
And, will they take the offer of our grace,
Both he, and they, and you, yea, every man
Shall be my friend again, and I'll be his.
So tell your cousin, and bring me word
What he will do. But if he will not yield,
Rebuke and dread correction wait on us,
And they shall do their office. So be gone.

We will not now be troubled with reply.
We offer fair; take it advisedly.

Exit Worcester *[with Vernon]*

Prince. It will not be accepted, on my life.
The Douglas and the Hotspur both together
Are confident against the world in arms.

King. Hence, therefore, every leader to his charge;
For, on their answer, will we set on them,
And God befriend us as our cause is just!
Exeunt. Manent Prince, Falstaff.

Fal. Hal, if thou see me down in the battle and bestride me, so!
'Tis a point of friendship.

Prince. Nothing but a Colossus can do thee that friendship.
Say thy prayers, and farewell.

Fal. I would 'twere bedtime, Hal, and all well.

Prince. Why, thou owest God a death.
Exit.

Fal. 'Tis not due yet. I would be loath to pay him before his day.
What need I be so forward with him that calls not on me?
Well,
'tis no matter; honour pricks me on. Yea, but how if honour prick
me off when I come on? How then? Can honor set to a leg? No.

Or

an arm? No. Or take away the grief of a wound? No. Honour hath no

skill in surgery then? No. What is honour? A word. What is that

word honour? Air. A trim reckoning! Who hath it? He that died a

Wednesday. Doth he feel it? No. Doth be bear it? No. 'Tis

insensible then? Yea, to the dead. But will it not live with the

living? No. Why? Detraction will not suffer it. Therefore

I'll

none of it. Honour is a mere scutcheon-and so ends my catechism.

Exit.

Scene II. The rebel camp.

Enter Worcester and Sir Richard Vernon.

Wor. O no, my nephew must not know, Sir Richard,

The liberal and kind offer of the King.

Ver. 'Twere best he did.

Wor. Then are we all undone.

It is not possible, it cannot be

The King should keep his word in loving us.

He will suspect us still and find a time

To punish this offence in other faults.

Suspicion all our lives shall be stuck full of eyes;

For treason is but trusted like the fox

Who, ne'er so tame, so cherish'd and lock'd up,

Will have a wild trick of his ancestors.

Look how we can, or sad or merrily,

Interpretation will misquote our looks,

And we shall feed like oxen at a stall,

The better cherish'd, still the nearer death.

My nephew's trespass may be well forgot;

It hath the excuse of youth and heat of blood,

And an adopted name of privilege-

A hare-brained Hotspur govern'd by a spleen.

All his offences live upon my head

And on his father's. We did train him on;

And, his corruption being taken from us,

We, as the spring of all, shall pay for all.

Therefore, good cousin, let not Harry know,

In any case, the offer of the King.

Enter Hotspur *[and Douglas]* .

Ver. Deliver what you will, I'll say 'tis so.

Here comes your cousin.

Hot. My uncle is return'd.

Deliver up my Lord of Westmoreland.

Uncle, what news?

Wor. The King will bid you battle presently.

Doug. Defy him by the Lord Of Westmoreland.

Hot. Lord Douglas, go you and tell him so.

Doug. Marry, and shall, and very willingly.

Exit.

Wor. There is no seeming mercy in the King.

Hot. Did you beg any, God forbid!

Wor. I told him gently of our grievances,
Of his oath-breaking; which he mended thus,
By now forswearing that he is forsworn.
He calls us rebels, traitors, aid will scourge
With haughty arms this hateful name in us.

Enter Douglas.

Doug. Arm, gentlemen! to arms! for I have thrown
A brave defiance in King Henry's teeth,
And Westmoreland, that was engag'd, did bear it;
Which cannot choose but bring him quickly on.

Wor. The Prince of Wales stepp'd forth before the King
And, nephew, challeng'd you to single fight.

Hot. O, would the quarrel lay upon our heads,
And that no man might draw short breath to-day
But I and Harry Monmouth! Tell me, tell me,
How show'd his tasking? Seem'd it in contempt?
No, by my soul. I never in my life
Did hear a challenge urg'd more modestly,
Unless a brother should a brother dare
To gentle exercise and proof of arms.
He gave you all the duties of a man;
Trimm'd up your praises with a princely tongue;
Spoke your deservings like a chronicle;
Making you ever better than his praise
By still dispraising praise valued with you;
And, which became him like a prince indeed,
He made a blushing cital of himself,
And chid his truant youth with such a grace
As if lie mast'red there a double spirit
Of teaching and of learning instantly.
There did he pause; but let me tell the world,
If he outlive the envy of this day,
England did never owe so sweet a hope,

So much misconstrued in his wantonness.

Hot. Cousin, I think thou art enamoured
Upon his follies. Never did I hear
Of any prince so wild a libertine.
But be he as he will, yet once ere night
I will embrace him with a soldier's arm,
That he shall shrink under my courtesy.
Arm, arm with speed! and, fellows, soldiers, friends,
Better consider what you have to do
Than I, that have not well the gift of tongue,
Can lift your blood up with persuasion.

Enter a Messenger.

Mess. My lord, here are letters for you.

Hot. I cannot read them now.-
O gentlemen, the time of life is short!
To spend that shortness basely were too long
If life did ride upon a dial's point,

Still ending at the arrival of an hour.
An if we live, we live to tread on kings;
If die, brave death, when princes die with us!
Now for our consciences, the arms are fair,
When the intent of bearing them is just.

Enter another Messenger.

Mess. My lord, prepare. The King comes on apace.

Hot. I thank him that he cuts me from my tale,
For I profess not talking. Only this-
Let each man do his best; and here draw I
A sword whose temper I intend to stain
With the best blood that I can meet withal
In the adventure of this perilous day.

Now, Esperance! Percy! and set on.
Sound all the lofty instruments of war,
And by that music let us all embrace;
For, heaven to earth, some of us never shall

A second time do such a courtesy.

Here they embrace. The trumpets sound.

[Exeunt.]

Scene III. Plain between the camps.

The King enters with his Power. Alarum to the battle. Then enter Douglas and Sir Walter Blunt.

Blunt. What is thy name, that in the battle thus

Thou crossest me? What honour dost thou seek

Upon my head?

Doug. Know then my name is Douglas,

And I do haunt thee in the battle thus

Because some tell me that thou art a king.

Blunt. They tell thee true.

Doug. The Lord of Stafford dear to-day hath bought

Thy likeness; for instead of thee, King Harry,

This sword hath ended him. So shall it thee,
Unless thou yield thee as my prisoner.

Blunt. I was not born a yielder, thou proud Scot;
And thou shalt find a king that will revenge
Lord Stafford's death.
They fight. Douglas kills Blunt. Then enter Hotspur.

Hot. O Douglas, hadst thou fought at Holmedon thus,
I never had triumph'd upon a Scot.

Doug. All's done, all's won. Here breathless lies the King.

Hot. Where?

Doug. Here.

Hot. This, Douglas? No. I know this face full well.
A gallant knight he was, his name was Blunt;
Semblably furnish'd like the King himself.

Doug. A fool go with thy soul, whither it goes!
A borrowed title hast thou bought too dear:

Why didst thou tell me that thou wert a king?

Hot. The King hath many marching in his coats.

Doug. Now, by my sword, I will kill all his coats;
I'll murder all his wardrop, piece by piece,
Until I meet the King.

Hot. Up and away!
Our soldiers stand full fairly for the day.

Exeunt.

Alarum. *Enter* Falstaff solus.

Fal. Though I could scape shot-free at London, I fear the shot here. Here's no scoring but upon the pate. Soft! who are you? Sir Walter Blunt. There's honour for you! Here's no vanity! I am

as hot as molten lead, and as heavy too. God keep lead out of me!
I need no more weight than mine own bowels. I have led my
rag-of-muffins where they are pepper'd. There's not three of my
hundred and fifty left alive; and they are for the town's end, to
beg during life. But who comes here?

Enter the Prince.

Prince. What, stand'st thou idle here? Lend me thy sword.
Many a nobleman lies stark and stiff
Under the hoofs of vaunting enemies,
Whose deaths are yet unreveng'd. I prithee
Rend me thy sword.

Fal. O Hal, I prithee give me leave to breathe awhile. Turk Gregory
never did such deeds in arms as I have done this day. I have paid
Percy; I have made him sure.

Prince. He is indeed, and living to kill thee.
I prithee lend me thy sword.

Fal. Nay, before God, Hal, if Percy be alive, thou get'st not my sword; but take my pistol, if thou wilt.

Prince. Give it me. What, is it in the case?

Fal. Ay, Hal. 'Tis hot, 'tis hot. There's that will sack a city.
The Prince draws it out and finds it to he a bottle of sack.

What, is it a time to jest and dally now?
He throws the bottle at him. *Exit* .

Fal. Well, if Percy be alive, I'll pierce him. If he do come in my way, so; if he do not, if I come in his willingly, let him make a carbonado of me. I like not such grinning honour as Sir Walter hath. Give me life; which if I can save, so; if not, honour comes unlook'd for, and there's an end. *Exit* .

Scene IV. Another part of the field.

Alarum. Excursions. *Enter* the King, the Prince, Lord John of Lancaster, Earl of Westmoreland

King. I prithee,

Harry, withdraw thyself; thou bleedest too much.

Lord John of Lancaster, go you unto him.

John. Not I, my lord, unless I did bleed too.

Prince. I do beseech your Majesty make up,

Lest Your retirement do amaze your friends.

King. I will do so.

My Lord of Westmoreland, lead him to his tent.

West. Come, my lord, I'll lead you to your tent.

Prince. Lead me, my lord, I do not need your help;

And God forbid a shallow scratch should drive

The Prince of Wales from such a field as this,

Where stain'd nobility lies trodden on,

And rebels' arms triumph in massacres!

John. We breathe too long. Come, cousin Westmoreland,
Our duty this way lies. For God's sake, come.

[Exeunt Prince John and Westmoreland.]

Prince. By God, thou hast deceiv'd me, Lancaster!
I did not think thee lord of such a spirit.
Before, I lov'd thee as a brother, John;
But now, I do respect thee as my soul.

King. I saw him hold Lord Percy at the point
With lustier maintenance than I did look for
Of such an ungrown warrior.

Prince. O, this boy
Lends mettle to us all! *Exit* .

Enter Douglas.

Doug. Another king? They grow like Hydra's heads.

I am the Douglas, fatal to all those
That wear those colours on them. What art thou
That counterfeit'st the person of a king?

King. The King himself, who, Douglas, grieves at heart
So many of his shadows thou hast met,
And not the very King. I have two boys
Seek Percy and thyself about the field;
But, seeing thou fall'st on me so luckily,
I will assay thee. So defend thyself.

Doug. I fear thou art another counterfeit;
And yet, in faith, thou bearest thee like a king.
But mine I am sure thou art, whoe'er thou be,
And thus I win thee.

They fight. The King being in danger, enter Prince of Wales.

Prince. Hold up thy head, vile Scot, or thou art like
Never to hold it up again! The spirits
Of valiant Shirley, Stafford, Blunt are in my arms.

It is the Prince of Wales that threatens thee,
Who never promiseth but he means to pay.
They fight. Douglas flieth.

Cheerly, my lord. How fares your Grace?
Sir Nicholas Gawsey hath for succour sent,
And so hath Clifton. I'll to Clifton straight.

King. Stay and breathe awhile.
Thou hast redeem'd thy lost opinion,
And show'd thou mak'st some tender of my life,
In this fair rescue thou hast brought to me.

Prince. O God! they did me too much injury
That ever said I heark'ned for your death.
If it were so, I might have let alone
The insulting hand of Douglas over you,
Which would have been as speedy in your end
As all the poisonous potions in the world,
And sav'd the treacherous labour of your son.

King. Make up to Clifton; I'll to Sir Nicholas Gawsey.

Exit.

Enter Hotspur.

Hot. If I mistake not, thou art Harry Monmouth.

Prince. Thou speak'st as if I would deny my name.

Hot. My name is Harry Percy.

Prince. Why, then I see
A very valiant rebel of the name.
I am the Prince of Wales; and think not, Percy,
To share with me in glory any more.
Two stars keep not their motion in one sphere,
Nor can one England brook a double reign
Of Harry Percy and the Prince of Wales.

Hot. Nor shall it, Harry; for the hour is come
To end the one of us and would to God

Thy name in arms were now as great as mine!

Prince. I'll make it greater ere I part from thee,
And all the budding honours on thy crest
I'll crop to make a garland for my head.

Hot. I can no longer brook thy vanities.
They fight.

Enter Falstaff.

Fal. Well said, Hal! to it, Hal! Nay, you shall find no boy's play here, I can tell you.

Enter Douglas. He fighteth with Falstaff, who falls down as if

he were dead. *[Exit Douglas.]* The Prince killeth Percy.

Hot. O Harry, thou hast robb'd me of my youth!
I better brook the loss of brittle life
Than those proud titles thou hast won of me.

They wound my thoughts worse than thy sword my flesh.
But thoughts the slave, of life, and life time's fool,
And time, that takes survey of all the world,
Must have a stop. O, I could prophesy,
But that the earthy and cold hand of death
Lies on my tongue. No, Percy, thou art dust,
And food for- *[Dies.]*

Prince. For worms, brave Percy. Fare thee well, great heart!
Ill-weav'd ambition, how much art thou shrunk!
When that this body did contain a spirit,
A kingdom for it was too small a bound;
But now two paces of the vilest earth
Is room enough. This earth that bears thee dead
Bears not alive so stout a gentleman.
If thou wert sensible of courtesy,
I should not make so dear a show of zeal.
But let my favours hide thy mangled face;
And, even in thy behalf, I'll thank myself
For doing these fair rites of tenderness.

Adieu, and take thy praise with thee to heaven!
Thy ignominy sleep with thee in the grave,
But not rememb'red in thy epitaph!
He spieth Falstaff on the ground.
What, old acquaintance? Could not all this flesh
Keep in a little life? Poor Jack, farewell!

I could have better spar'd a better man.
O, I should have a heavy miss of thee
If I were much in love with vanity!
Death hath not struck so fat a deer to-day,
Though many dearer, in this bloody fray.
Embowell'd will I see thee by-and-by;
Till then in blood by noble Percy lie. *Exit* .
Falstaff riseth up.

Fal. Embowell'd? If thou embowel me to-day, I'll give you leave to powder me and eat me too to-morrow. 'Sblood, 'twas time to counterfeit, or that hot termagant Scot had paid me scot and lot too. Counterfeit? I lie; I am no counterfeit. To die is to be a counterfeit; for he is but the counterfeit of a man who hath not

the life of a man; but to counterfeit dying when a man thereby
liveth, is to be no counterfeit, but the true and perfect image
of life indeed. The better part of valour is discretion; in the
which better part I have saved my life. Zounds, I am afraid of
this gunpowder Percy, though he be dead. How if he should
counterfeit too, and rise? By my faith, I am afraid he would
prove the better counterfeit. Therefore I'll make him sure;
yea,
and I'll swear I kill'd him. Why may not he rise as well as I?
Nothing confutes me but eyes, and nobody sees me. Therefore,
sirrah *[stabs him]* , with a new wound in your thigh, come you along with me.
He takes up Hotspur on his hack. [*Enter* Prince, and John of Lancaster.

Prince. Come, brother John; full bravely hast thou flesh'd
Thy maiden sword.

John. But, soft! whom have we here?
Did you not tell me this fat man was dead?

Prince. I did; I saw him dead,
Breathless and bleeding on the ground. Art thou alive,

Or is it fantasy that plays upon our eyesight?

I prithee speak. We will not trust our eyes

Without our ears. Thou art not what thou seem'st.

Fal. No, that's certain! I am not a double man; but if I be not

Jack Falstaff, then am I a Jack. There 's Percy. If your father

will do me any honour, so; if not, let him kill the next Percy

himself. I look to be either earl or duke, I can assure you.

Prince. Why, Percy I kill'd myself, and saw thee dead!

Fal. Didst thou? Lord, Lord, how this world is given to lying!

I grant you I was down, and out of breath, and so was he; but we

rose both at an instant and fought a long hour by Shrewsbury

clock. If I may be believ'd, so; if not, let them that should

reward valour bear the sin upon their own heads. I'll take it

upon my death, I gave him this wound in the thigh. If the man

were alive and would deny it, zounds! I would make him eat a piece of my sword.

John. This is the strangest tale that ever I beard.

Prince. This is the strangest fellow, brother John.

Come, bring your luggage nobly on your back.

For my part, if a lie may do thee grace,

I'll gild it with the happiest terms I have.

A retreat is sounded.

The trumpet sounds retreat; the day is ours.

Come, brother, let's to the highest of the field,

To see what friends are living, who are dead.

Exeunt [Prince Henry and Prince John] .

Fal. I'll follow, as they say, for reward. He that rewards me, God

reward him! If I do grow great, I'll grow less; for I'll purge,

and leave sack, and live cleanly, as a nobleman should do.

Exit [bearing off the body] .

Scene V. Another part of the field.

The trumpets sound. [*Enter* the King, Prince of Wales, Lord John

of Lancaster,

Earl of Westmoreland, with Worcester and Vernon prisoners.

King. Thus ever did rebellion find rebuke.
Ill-spirited Worcester! did not we send grace,
Pardon, and terms of love to all of you?
And wouldst thou turn our offers contrary?

Misuse the tenour of thy kinsman's trust?
Three knights upon our party slain to-day,
A noble earl, and many a creature else
Had been alive this hour,
If like a Christian thou hadst truly borne
Betwixt our armies true intelligence.

Wor. What I have done my safety urg'd me to;
And I embrace this fortune patiently,
Since not to be avoided it fails on me.

King. Bear Worcester to the death, and Vernon too;

Other offenders we will pause upon.

Exeunt Worcester and Vernon, *[guarded]* .

How goes the field?

Prince. The noble Scot, Lord Douglas, when he saw

The fortune of the day quite turn'd from him,

The Noble Percy slain and all his men

Upon the foot of fear, fled with the rest;

And falling from a hill,he was so bruis'd

That the pursuers took him. At my tent

The Douglas is, and I beseech Your Grace

I may dispose of him.

King. With all my heart.

Prince. Then brother John of Lancaster, to you

This honourable bounty shall belong.

Go to the Douglas and deliver him

Up to his pleasure, ransomless and free.

His valour shown upon our crests today

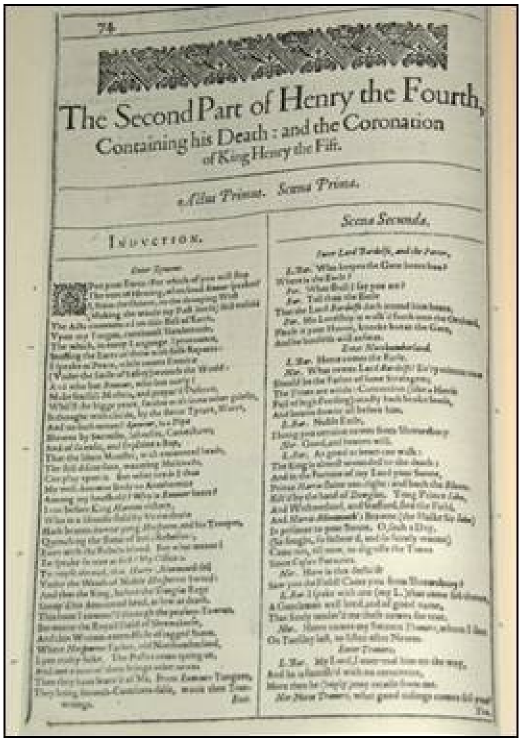
Hath taught us how to cherish such high deeds,
Even in the bosom of our adversaries.

John. I thank your Grace for this high courtesy,
Which I shall give away immediately.

King. Then this remains, that we divide our power.
You, son John, and my cousin Westmoreland,
Towards York shall bend you with your dearest speed
To meet Northumberland and the prelate Scroop,
Who, as we hear, are busily in arms.
Myself and you, son Harry, will towards Wales
To fight with Glendower and the Earl of March.
Rebellion in this laud shall lose his sway,
Meeting the check of such another day;
And since this business so fair is done,
Let us not leave till all our own be won.
Exeunt.

HENRY IV, PART II

Believed to have been written between 1596 and 1599, this is the third part of a tetralogy, preceded by *Richard II* and *Henry IV, Part 1* and succeeded by *Henry V* . Shakespeare's primary source for *Henry IV, Part 2* is Raphael Holinshed's *Chronicles* and Edward Hall's *The Union of the Two Illustrious Families of Lancaster and York.* The play was published in quarto the same year (printing by Valentine Simmes). Less popular than *Henry IV, Part 1* , this was the only quarto edition. The play next saw print in the First Folio in 1623.



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The Second Part of Henry the Fourth,
Containing his Death: and the Coronation
of King Henry the Fift.

Actus Primus. Scœna Prima.

INDUCTION.

Scena Secunda.

The first page of the First Folio, published in 1623

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ACT IV. SCENE I. Yorkshire. Within the Forest of Gaultree

SCENE II. Another part of the forest

SCENE III. Another part of the forest

SCENE IV. Westminster. The Jerusalem Chamber

SCENE V. Westminster. Another chamber

ACT V. SCENE I. Gloucestershire. SHALLOW'S house

SCENE II. Westminster. The palace

SCENE III. Gloucestershire. SHALLOW'S orchard

SCENE IV. London. A street

SCENE V. Westminster. Near the Abbey

EPILOGUE

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

RUMOUR, the Presenter

KING HENRY THE FOURTH

HENRY, PRINCE OF WALES, afterwards HENRY

PRINCE JOHN OF LANCASTER

PRINCE HUMPHREY OF GLOUCESTER

THOMAS, DUKE OF CLARENCE

Sons of Henry IV

EARL OF NORTHUMBERLAND

SCROOP, ARCHBISHOP OF YORK

LORD MOWBRAY

LORD HASTINGS

LORD BARDOLPH

SIR JOHN COLVILLE

TRAVERS and MORTON, retainers of Northumberland

Opposites against King Henry IV

EARL OF WARWICK

EARL OF WESTMORELAND

EARL OF SURREY

EARL OF KENT

GOWER

HARCOURT

BLUNT

Of the King's party

LORD CHIEF JUSTICE

SERVANT, to Lord Chief Justice

SIR JOHN FALSTAFF

EDWARD POINS

BARDOLPH

PISTOL

PETO

Irregular humourists

PAGE, to Falstaff

ROBERT SHALLOW and SILENCE, country Justices

DAVY, servant to Shallow

FANG and SNARE, Sheriff's officers

RALPH MOULDY

SIMON SHADOW

THOMAS WART

FRANCIS FEEBLE

PETER BULLCALF

Country soldiers

FRANCIS, a drawer

LADY NORTHUMBERLAND

LADY PERCY, Percy's widow

HOSTESS QUICKLY, of the Boar's Head, Eastcheap

DOLL TEARSHEET

LORDS, Attendants, Porter, Drawers, Beadles, Grooms, Servants,

Speaker of the Epilogue

SCENE: England

INDUCTION

Warkworth. Before NORTHUMBERLAND'S Castle

Enter RUMOUR, painted full of tongues

RUMOUR.

Open your ears; for which of you will stop
The vent of hearing when loud Rumour speaks?
I, from the orient to the drooping west,
Making the wind my post-horse, still unfold
The acts commenced on this ball of earth.
Upon my tongues continual slanders ride,
The which in every language I pronounce,

Stuffing the ears of men with false reports.

I speak of peace while covert emnity,

Under the smile of safety, wounds the world;

And who but Rumour, who but only I,

Make fearful musters and prepar'd defence,

Whiles the big year, swoln with some other grief,

Is thought with child by the stern tyrant war,

And no such matter? Rumour is a pipe

Blown by surmises, jealousies, conjectures,

And of so easy and so plain a stop

That the blunt monster with uncounted heads,

The still-discordant wav'ring multitude,

Can play upon it. But what need I thus

My well-known body to anatomize

Among my household? Why is Rumour here?

I run before King Harry's victory,

Who, in a bloody field by Shrewsbury,

Hath beaten down young Hotspur and his troops,

Quenching the flame of bold rebellion

Even with the rebels' blood. But what mean I

To speak so true at first? My office is

To noise abroad that Harry Monmouth fell

Under the wrath of noble Hotspur's sword,

And that the King before the Douglas' rage

Stoop'd his anointed head as low as death.

This have I rumour'd through the peasant towns

Between that royal field of Shrewsbury

And this worm-eaten hold of ragged stone,

Where Hotspur's father, old Northumberland,

Lies crafty-sick. The posts come tiring on,

And not a man of them brings other news

Than they have learnt of me. From Rumour's tongues

They bring smooth comforts false, worse than true wrongs.

Exit

ACT I. SCENE I. Warkworth. Before NORTHUMBERLAND'S Castle

Enter LORD BARDOLPH

LORD BARDOLPH.

Who keeps the gate here, ho?

The PORTER opens the gate

Where is the Earl?

PORTER.

What shall I say you are?

LORD BARDOLPH.

Tell thou the Earl

That the Lord Bardolph doth attend him here.

PORTER.

His lordship is walk'd forth into the orchard.

Please it your honour knock but at the gate,

And he himself will answer.

Enter NORTHUMBERLAND

LORD BARDOLPH.

Here comes the Earl. *Exit* PORTER

NORTHUMBERLAND.

What news, Lord Bardolph? Every minute now
Should be the father of some stratagem.
The times are wild; contention, like a horse
Full of high feeding, madly hath broke loose
And bears down all before him.

LORD BARDOLPH.
Noble Earl,
I bring you certain news from Shrewsbury.

NORTHUMBERLAND.
Good, an God will!

LORD BARDOLPH.

As good as heart can wish.
The King is almost wounded to the death;
And, in the fortune of my lord your son,
Prince Harry slain outright; and both the Blunts
Kill'd by the hand of Douglas; young Prince John,
And Westmoreland, and Stafford, fled the field;

And Harry Monmouth's brawn, the hulk Sir John,
Is prisoner to your son. O, such a day,
So fought, so followed, and so fairly won,
Came not till now to dignify the times,
Since Cxsar's fortunes!

NORTHUMBERLAND.
How is this deriv'd?

Saw you the field? Came you from Shrewsbury?

LORD BARDOLPH.
I spake with one, my lord, that came from thence;
A gentleman well bred and of good name,
That freely rend'red me these news for true.

Enter TRAVERS

NORTHUMBERLAND. Here comes my servant Travers, whom I sent
On Tuesday last to listen after news.

LORD BARDOLPH.

My lord, I over-rode him on the way;

And he is furnish'd with no certainties

More than he haply may retail from me.

NORTHUMBERLAND.

Now, Travers, what good tidings comes with you?

TRAVERS.

My lord, Sir John Umfrevile turn'd me back

With joyful tidings; and, being better hors'd,

Out-rode me. After him came spurring hard

A gentleman, almost forspent with speed,

That stopp'd by me to breathe his bloodied horse.

He ask'd the way to Chester; and of him

I did demand what news from Shrewsbury.

He told me that rebellion had bad luck,

And that young Harry Percy's spur was cold.

With that he gave his able horse the head

And, bending forward, struck his armed heels

Against the panting sides of his poor jade

Up to the rowel-head; and starting so,

He seem'd in running to devour the way,

Staying no longer question.

NORTHUMBERLAND.

Ha! Again:

Said he young Harry Percy's spur was cold?

Of Hotspur, Coldspur? that rebellion

Had met ill luck?

LORD BARDOLPH.

My lord, I'll tell you what:

If my young lord your son have not the day,

Upon mine honour, for a silken point

I'll give my barony. Never talk of it.

NORTHUMBERLAND.

Why should that gentleman that rode by Travers

Give then such instances of loss?

LORD BARDOLPH.

Who-he?

He was some hilding fellow that had stol'n

The horse he rode on and, upon my life,

Spoke at a venture. Look, here comes more news.

Enter Morton

NORTHUMBERLAND.

Yea, this man's brow, like to a title-leaf,

Foretells the nature of a tragic volume.

So looks the strand whereon the imperious flood

Hath left a witness'd usurpation.

Say, Morton, didst thou come from Shrewsbury?

MORTON.

I ran from Shrewsbury, my noble lord;

Where hateful death put on his ugliest mask

To fright our party.

NORTHUMBERLAND.

How doth my son and brother?

Thou tremblest; and the whiteness in thy cheek

Is apter than thy tongue to tell thy errand.

Even such a man, so faint, so spiritless,

So dull, so dread in look, so woe-begone,

Drew Priam's curtain in the dead of night

And would have told him half his Troy was burnt;

But Priam found the fire ere he his tongue,

And I my Percy's death ere thou report'st it.

This thou wouldst say: 'Your son did thus and thus;

Your brother thus; so fought the noble Douglas'-

Stopping my greedy ear with their bold deeds;

But in the end, to stop my ear indeed,

Thou hast a sigh to blow away this praise,

Ending with 'Brother, son, and all, are dead.'

MORTON.

Douglas is living, and your brother, yet;

But for my lord your son-

NORTHUMBERLAND.

Why, he is dead.

See what a ready tongue suspicion hath!

He that but fears the thing he would not know

Hath by instinct knowledge from others' eyes

That what he fear'd is chanced. Yet speak, Morton;

Tell thou an earl his divination lies,

And I will take it as a sweet disgrace

And make thee rich for doing me such wrong.

MORTON.

You are too great to be by me gainsaid;

Your spirit is too true, your fears too certain.

NORTHUMBERLAND.

Yet, for all this, say not that Percy's dead.

I see a strange confession in thine eye;

Thou shak'st thy head, and hold'st it fear or sin

To speak a truth. If he be slain, say so:

The tongue offends not that reports his death;

And he doth sin that doth belie the dead,
Not he which says the dead is not alive.
Yet the first bringer of unwelcome news
Hath but a losing office, and his tongue
Sounds ever after as a sullen bell,
Rememb'red tolling a departing friend.

LORD BARDOLPH.
I cannot think, my lord, your son is dead.

MORTON.
I am sorry I should force you to believe
That which I would to God I had not seen;
But these mine eyes saw him in bloody state,
Rend'ring faint quittance, wearied and out-breath'd,
To Harry Monmouth, whose swift wrath beat down
The never-daunted Percy to the earth,
From whence with life he never more sprung up.
In few, his death-whose spirit lent a fire
Even to the dullest peasant in his camp-
Being bruited once, took fire and heat away

From the best-temper'd courage in his troops;

For from his metal was his party steeled;

Which once in him abated, an the rest

Turn'd on themselves, like dull and heavy lead.

And as the thing that's heavy in itself

Upon enforcement flies with greatest speed,

So did our men, heavy in Hotspur's loss,

Lend to this weight such lightness with their fear

That arrows fled not swifter toward their aim

Than did our soldiers, aiming at their safety,

Fly from the field. Then was that noble Worcester

Too soon ta'en prisoner; and that furious Scot,

The bloody Douglas, whose well-labouring sword

Had three times slain th' appearance of the King,

Gan vail his stomach and did grace the shame

Of those that turn'd their backs, and in his flight,

Stumbling in fear, was took. The sum of all

Is that the King hath won, and hath sent out

A speedy power to encounter you, my lord,

Under the conduct of young Lancaster

And Westmoreland. This is the news at full.

NORTHUMBERLAND.

For this I shall have time enough to mourn.

In poison there is physic; and these news,

Having been well, that would have made me sick,

Being sick, have in some measure made me well;

And as the wretch whose fever-weak'ned joints,

Like strengthless hinges, buckle under life,

Impatient of his fit, breaks like a fire

Out of his keeper's arms, even so my limbs,

Weak'ned with grief, being now enrag'd with grief,

Are thrice themselves. Hence, therefore, thou nice crutch!

A scaly gauntlet now with joints of steel

Must glove this hand; and hence, thou sickly coif!

Thou art a guard too wanton for the head

Which princes, flesh'd with conquest, aim to hit.

Now bind my brows with iron; and approach

The ragged'st hour that time and spite dare bring

To frown upon th' enrag'd Northumberland!

Let heaven kiss earth! Now let not Nature's hand

Keep the wild flood confin'd! Let order die!

And let this world no longer be a stage
To feed contention in a ling'ring act;
But let one spirit of the first-born Cain
Reign in all bosoms, that, each heart being set
On bloody courses, the rude scene may end
And darkness be the burier of the dead!

LORD BARDOLPH.

This strained passion doth you wrong, my lord.

MORTON.
Sweet Earl, divorce not wisdom from your honour.
The lives of all your loving complices
Lean on your health; the which, if you give o'er
To stormy passion, must perforce decay.
You cast th' event of war, my noble lord,
And summ'd the account of chance before you said
'Let us make head.' It was your pre-surmise
That in the dole of blows your son might drop.
You knew he walk'd o'er perils on an edge,

More likely to fall in than to get o'er;
You were advis'd his flesh was capable
Of wounds and scars, and that his forward spirit
Would lift him where most trade of danger rang'd;
Yet did you say 'Go forth'; and none of this,
Though strongly apprehended, could restrain
The stiff-borne action. What hath then befall'n,
Or what hath this bold enterprise brought forth
More than that being which was like to be?

LORD BARDOLPH.

We all that are engaged to this loss
Knew that we ventured on such dangerous seas
That if we wrought out life 'twas ten to one;
And yet we ventur'd, for the gain propos'd
Chok'd the respect of likely peril fear'd;
And since we are o'erset, venture again.
Come, we will put forth, body and goods.

MORTON.

'Tis more than time. And, my most noble lord, I hear for certain, and dare speak the truth:

The gentle Archbishop of York is up

With well-appointed pow'rs. He is a man

Who with a double surety binds his followers.

My lord your son had only but the corpse,

But shadows and the shows of men, to fight;

For that same word 'rebellion' did divide

The action of their bodies from their souls;

And they did fight with queasiness, constrain'd,

As men drink potions; that their weapons only

Seem'd on our side, but for their spirits and souls

This word 'rebellion'- it had froze them up,

As fish are in a pond. But now the Bishop

Turns insurrection to religion.

Suppos'd sincere and holy in his thoughts,

He's follow'd both with body and with mind;

And doth enlarge his rising with the blood

Of fair King Richard, scrap'd from Pomfret stones;

Derives from heaven his quarrel and his cause;

Tells them he doth bestride a bleeding land,

Gasping for life under great Bolingbroke;

And more and less do flock to follow him.

NORTHUMBERLAND.

I knew of this before; but, to speak truth,

This present grief had wip'd it from my mind.

Go in with me; and counsel every man

The aptest way for safety and revenge.

Get posts and letters, and make friends with speed-

Never so few, and never yet more need. *Exeunt*

SCENE II. London. A street

Enter SIR JOHN FALSTAFF, with his PAGE bearing his sword and buckler

FALSTAFF.

Sirrah, you giant, what says the doctor to my water? PAGE. He said, sir, the water itself was a good healthy water; but for the party that owed it, he might have moe diseases than he knew for. FALSTAFF. Men of all sorts take a pride to gird at me. The brain of this foolish-compounded clay, man, is not able to invent anything that intends to laughter, more than I invent or is invented on me. I am not only witty in myself, but the cause that wit is in other men. I do here walk before thee like a sow that hath overwhelm'd all her litter but one. If the Prince put thee into my service for any other reason than to set me off, why then I have no judgment. Thou whoreson mandrake, thou art fitter to be worn in my cap than to wait at my heels. I was never mann'd with an agate till now; but I will inset you neither in gold nor silver, but in vile apparel, and send you back again to your master, for a jewel-the juvenal, the Prince your master, whose chin is not yet fledge. I will sooner have a beard grow in the palm of my hand than he shall get one off his cheek; and yet he will not stick to say his face is a face-royal. God may finish it when he will, 'tis not a hair amiss yet. He may keep it still at a face-royal, for a barber shall never earn sixpence out of it; and yet he'll be crowing as if he had writ man ever since his father was a bachelor. He may keep his own grace, but he's almost out of mine, I can assure him. What said Master Dommelton about the satin for my short cloak and my slops? PAGE. He said, sir, you should procure him better assurance than Bardolph. He would not take his band and yours; he liked not the security. FALSTAFF. Let him be damn'd, like the Glutton; pray God his tongue be hotter! A whoreson Achitophel! A rascal-yea-forsooth knave, to bear a gentleman in hand, and then stand upon security! The whoreson smooth-pates do now wear nothing but high shoes, and bunches of keys at their girdles; and if a man is through with them in honest taking-up, then they must stand upon security. I had as lief they would put ratsbane in my mouth as offer to stop it with security. I look'd 'a should have sent me two and twenty yards of satin, as I am a true knight, and he sends me security. Well, he may sleep in security; for he hath the horn of abundance, and the lightness of his wife shines through it; and yet cannot he see, though he have his own lanthorn to light him. Where's Bardolph? PAGE. He's gone into Smithfield to buy your worship horse. FALSTAFF. I bought him in Paul's, and he'll buy me a horse in Smithfield. An I could get me but a wife in the stews, I were mann'd, hors'd, and wiv'd.

Enter the LORD CHIEF JUSTICE and SERVANT

PAGE.

Sir, here comes the nobleman that committed the Prince for striking him about Bardolph. FALSTAFF. Wait close; I will not see him. CHIEF JUSTICE. What's he that goes there? SERVANT. Falstaff, an't please your lordship. CHIEF JUSTICE. He that was in question for the robb'ry? SERVANT. He, my lord; but he hath since done good service at Shrewsbury, and, as I hear, is now going with some charge to the Lord John of Lancaster. CHIEF JUSTICE. What, to York? Call him back again. SERVANT. Sir John Falstaff! FALSTAFF. Boy, tell him I am deaf. PAGE. You must speak louder; my master is deaf. CHIEF JUSTICE. I am sure he is, to the hearing of anything good. Go, pluck him by the elbow; I must speak with him. SERVANT. Sir John! FALSTAFF. What! a young knave, and begging! Is there not wars? Is there not employment? Doth not the King lack subjects? Do not the rebels need soldiers? Though it be a shame to be on any side but one, it is worse shame to beg than to be on the worst side, were it worse than the name of rebellion can tell how to make it. SERVANT. You mistake me, sir. FALSTAFF. Why, sir, did I say you were an honest man? Setting my knighthood and my soldiership aside, I had lied in my throat if I had said so. SERVANT. I pray you, sir, then set your knighthood and your soldiership aside; and give me leave to tell you you in your throat, if you say I am any other than an honest man. FALSTAFF. I give thee leave to tell me so! I lay aside that which grows to me! If thou get'st any leave of me, hang me; if thou tak'st leave, thou wert better be hang'd. You hunt counter. Hence! Avaunt! SERVANT. Sir, my lord would speak with you. CHIEF JUSTICE. Sir John Falstaff, a word with you. FALSTAFF. My good lord! God give your lordship good time of day. I am glad to see your lordship abroad. I heard say your lordship was sick; I hope your lordship goes abroad by advice. Your lordship, though not clean past your youth, hath yet some smack of age in you, some relish of the saltness of time; and I most humbly beseech your lordship to have a reverend care of your health. CHIEF JUSTICE. Sir John, I sent for you before your expedition to Shrewsbury. FALSTAFF. An't please your lordship, I hear his Majesty is return'd with some discomfort from Wales. CHIEF JUSTICE. I talk not of his Majesty. You would not come when I sent for you. FALSTAFF. And I hear, moreover, his Highness is fall'n into this same whoreson apoplexy. CHIEF JUSTICE. Well God mend him! I pray you let me speak with you. FALSTAFF. This apoplexy, as I take it, is a kind of lethargy, an't please your lordship, a kind of sleeping in the blood, a whoreson tingling. CHIEF JUSTICE. What tell you me of it? Be it as it is. FALSTAFF. It hath it original from much grief, from study, and perturbation of the brain. I have read the cause of his effects in Galen; it is a kind of deafness. CHIEF JUSTICE. I think you are fall'n into the disease, for you hear not what I say to you. FALSTAFF. Very well, my lord, very well. Rather an't please you, it is the disease of not listening, the malady of not marking, that I am troubled withal. CHIEF JUSTICE. To punish you by the heels would amend the attention of your ears; and I care not if I do become your physician. FALSTAFF. I am as poor as Job, my lord, but not so patient. Your lordship may minister the potion of imprisonment to me in respect of poverty; but how I should be your patient to follow your prescriptions, the wise may make some dram of a scruple, or indeed a scruple itself. CHIEF JUSTICE. I sent for you, when there were matters against you for your life, to come speak with me. FALSTAFF. As I was then advis'd by my learned counsel in the laws of this land-service, I did not come. CHIEF JUSTICE. Well, the truth is, Sir John, you live in great infamy. FALSTAFF. He that buckles himself in my belt cannot live in less. CHIEF JUSTICE. Your means are very slender, and your waste is great. FALSTAFF. I would it were otherwise; I would my means were greater and my waist slenderer. CHIEF JUSTICE. You have misled the youthful Prince. FALSTAFF. The young Prince hath misled me. I am the fellow with the great belly, and he my dog. CHIEF JUSTICE. Well, I am loath to gall a new-heal'd wound. Your day's service at Shrewsbury hath a little gilded over your night's exploit on Gadshill. You may thank th' unquiet time for your quiet o'erposting that action. FALSTAFF. My lord-CHIEF JUSTICE. But since all is well, keep it so: wake not a sleeping wolf. FALSTAFF. To wake a wolf is as bad as smell a fox. CHIEF JUSTICE. What! you are as a candle, the better part burnt out. FALSTAFF. A wassail candle, my lord-all tallow; if I did say of wax, my growth would approve the truth. CHIEF JUSTICE. There is not a white hair in your face but should have his effect of gravity. FALSTAFF. His effect of gravy, gravy, CHIEF JUSTICE. You follow the young Prince up and down, like his ill angel. FALSTAFF. Not so, my lord. Your ill angel is light; but hope he that looks upon me will take me without weighing. And yet in some respects, I grant, I cannot go-I cannot tell. Virtue is of so little regard in these costermongers' times that true valour is turn'd berod; pregnancy is made a tapster, and his quick wit wasted in giving reckonings; all the other gifts appertinent to man, as the malice of this age shapes them, are not worth a gooseberry. You that are old consider not the capacities of us that are young; you do measure the heat of our livers with the bitterness of your galls; and we that are in the vaward of our youth, must confess, are wags too. CHIEF JUSTICE. Do you set down your name in the scroll of youth, that are written down old with all the characters of age? Have you not a moist eye, a dry hand, a yellow cheek, a white beard, a decreasing leg, an increasing belly? Is not your voice broken, your wind short, your chin double, your wit single, and every part about you blasted with antiquity? And will you yet call yourself young? Fie, fie, fie, Sir John! FALSTAFF. My lord, I was born about three of the clock in the afternoon, with a white head and something a round belly. For my voice-I have lost it with hallooing and singing of anthems. To approve my youth further, I will not. The truth is, I am only old in judgment and understanding; and he that will caper with me for a thousand marks, let him lend me the money, and have at him. For the box of the ear that the Prince gave you-he gave it like a rude prince, and you took it like a sensible lord. I have check'd him for it; and the young lion repents-marry, not in ashes and sackcloth, but in new silk and old sack. CHIEF

JUSTICE. Well, God send the Prince a better companion! FALSTAFF. God send the companion a better prince! I cannot rid my hands of him. CHIEF JUSTICE. Well, the King hath sever'd you. I hear you are going with Lord John of Lancaster against the Archbishop and the Earl of Northumberland. FALSTAFF. Yea; I thank your pretty sweet wit for it. But look you pray, all you that kiss my Lady Peace at home, that our armies join not in a hot day; for, by the Lord, I take but two shirts out with me, and I mean not to sweat extraordinarily. If it be a hot day, and I brandish anything but a bottle, I would I might never spit white again. There is not a dangerous action can peep out his head but I am thrust upon it. Well, I cannot last ever; but it was alway yet the trick of our English nation, if they have a good thing, to make it too common. If ye will needs say I am an old man, you should give me rest. I would to God my name were not so terrible to the enemy as it is. I were better to be eaten to death with a rust than to be scoured to nothing with perpetual motion. CHIEF JUSTICE. Well, be honest, be honest; and God bless your expedition! FALSTAFF. Will your lordship lend me a thousand pound to furnish me forth? CHIEF JUSTICE. Not a penny, not a penny; you are too impatient to bear crosses. Fare you well. Commend me to my cousin Westmoreland. *Exeunt* CHIEF JUSTICE and SERVANT FALSTAFF. If I do, fillip me with a three-man beetle. A man can no more separate age and covetousness than 'a can part young limbs and lechery; but the gout galls the one, and the pox pinches the other; and so both the degrees prevent my curses. Boy! PAGE. Sir? FALSTAFF. What money is in my purse? PAGE. Seven groats and two pence. FALSTAFF. I can get no remedy against this consumption of the purse; borrowing only lingers and lingers it out, but the disease is incurable. Go bear this letter to my Lord of Lancaster; this to the Prince; this to the Earl of Westmoreland; and this to old Mistress Ursula, whom I have weekly sworn to marry since I perceiv'd the first white hair of my chin. About it; you know

where to find me. *[Exit PAGE]* A pox of this gout! or, a gout of

this pox! for the one or the other plays the rogue with my great

toe. 'Tis no matter if I do halt; I have the wars for my colour,

and my pension shall seem the more reasonable. A good wit will

make use of anything. I will turn diseases to commodity.

Exit

SCENE III. York. The ARCHBISHOP'S palace

Enter the ARCHBISHOP, THOMAS MOWBRAY the EARL MARSHAL, LORD HASTINGS, and LORD BARDOLPH

ARCHBISHOP.

Thus have you heard our cause and known our means;
And, my most noble friends, I pray you all
Speak plainly your opinions of our hopes-
And first, Lord Marshal, what say you to it?

MOWBRAY.

I well allow the occasion of our amis;
But gladly would be better satisfied
How, in our means, we should advance ourselves
To look with forehead bold and big enough
Upon the power and puissance of the King.

HASTINGS.

Our present musters grow upon the file
To five and twenty thousand men of choice;

And our supplies live largely in the hope
Of great Northumberland, whose bosom burns
With an incensed fire of injuries.

LORD BARDOLPH.
The question then, Lord Hastings, standeth thus:
Whether our present five and twenty thousand
May hold up head without Northumberland?

HASTINGS.

With him, we may.

LORD BARDOLPH.
Yea, marry, there's the point;
But if without him we be thought too feeble,
My judgment is we should not step too far
Till we had his assistance by the hand;
For, in a theme so bloody-fac'd as this,
Conjecture, expectation, and surmise
Of aids incertain, should not be admitted.

ARCHBISHOP.

'Tis very true, Lord Bardolph; for indeed

It was young Hotspur's case at Shrewsbury.

LORD BARDOLPH.

It was, my lord; who lin'd himself with hope,

Eating the air and promise of supply,

Flatt'ring himself in project of a power

Much smaller than the smallest of his thoughts;

And so, with great imagination

Proper to madmen, led his powers to death,

And, winking, leapt into destruction.

HASTINGS.

But, by your leave, it never yet did hurt

To lay down likelihoods and forms of hope.

LORD BARDOLPH.

Yes, if this present quality of war-

Indeed the instant action, a cause on foot-

Lives so in hope, as in an early spring

We see th' appearing buds; which to prove fruit

Hope gives not so much warrant, as despair

That frosts will bite them. When we mean to build,

We first survey the plot, then draw the model;

And when we see the figure of the house,

Then we must rate the cost of the erection;

Which if we find outweighs ability,

What do we then but draw anew the model

In fewer offices, or at least desist

To build at all? Much more, in this great work-

Which is almost to pluck a kingdom down

And set another up-should we survey

The plot of situation and the model,

Consent upon a sure foundation,

Question surveyors, know our own estate

How able such a work to undergo-

To weigh against his opposite; or else

We fortify in paper and in figures,

Using the names of men instead of men;

Like one that draws the model of a house

Beyond his power to build it; who, half through,
Gives o'er and leaves his part-created cost
A naked subject to the weeping clouds
And waste for churlish winter's tyranny.

HASTINGS.
Grant that our hopes-yet likely of fair birth-
Should be still-born, and that we now possess'd
The utmost man of expectation,
I think we are so a body strong enough,
Even as we are, to equal with the King.

LORD BARDOLPH.
What, is the King but five and twenty thousand?

HASTINGS.
To us no more; nay, not so much, Lord Bardolph;
For his divisions, as the times do brawl,
Are in three heads: one power against the French,
And one against Glendower; perforce a third
Must take up us. So is the unfirm King

In three divided; and his coffers sound

With hollow poverty and emptiness.

ARCHBISHOP.

That he should draw his several strengths together

And come against us in full puissance

Need not be dreaded.

HASTINGS.

If he should do so,

He leaves his back unarm'd, the French and Welsh

Baying at his heels. Never fear that.

LORD BARDOLPH.

Who is it like should lead his forces hither?

HASTINGS.

The Duke of Lancaster and Westmoreland;

Against the Welsh, himself and Harry Monmouth;

But who is substituted against the French

I have no certain notice.

ARCHBISHOP.

Let us on,

And publish the occasion of our arms.

The commonwealth is sick of their own choice;

Their over-greedy love hath surfeited.

An habitation giddy and unsure

Hath he that buildeth on the vulgar heart.

O thou fond many, with what loud applause

Didst thou beat heaven with blessing Bolingbroke

Before he was what thou wouldst have him be!

And being now trimm'd in thine own desires,

Thou, beastly feeder, art so full of him

That thou provok'st thyself to cast him up.

So, so, thou common dog, didst thou disgorge

Thy glutton bosom of the royal Richard;

And now thou wouldst eat thy dead vomit up,

And howl'st to find it. What trust is in these times?

They that, when Richard liv'd, would have him die

Are now become enamour'd on his grave.

Thou that threw'st dust upon his goodly head,

When through proud London he came sighing on
After th' admired heels of Bolingbroke,
Criest now 'O earth, yield us that king again,
And take thou this!' O thoughts of men accurs'd!
Past and to come seems best; things present, worst.

MOWBRAY.

Shall we go draw our numbers, and set on?

HASTINGS.

We are time's subjects, and time bids be gone.

Exeunt

ACT II. SCENE I. London. A street

Enter HOSTESS with two officers, FANG and SNARE

HOSTESS.

Master Fang, have you ent'red the action?

FANG.

It is ent'red.

HOSTESS.

Where's your yeoman? Is't a lusty yeoman? Will 'a stand
to't?

FANG.

Sirrah, where's Snare?

HOSTESS.

O Lord, ay! good Master Snare.

SNARE.

Here, here.

FANG.

Snare, we must arrest Sir John Falstaff.

HOSTESS.

Yea, good Master Snare; I have ent'red him and all.

SNARE.

It may chance cost some of our lives, for he will stab.

HOSTESS.

Alas the day! take heed of him; he stabb'd me in mine own house, and that most beastly. In good faith, 'a cares not what mischief he does, if his weapon be out; he will foin like any devil; he will spare neither man, woman, nor child.

FANG.

If I can close with him, I care not for his thrust.

HOSTESS.

No, nor I neither; I'll be at your elbow.

FANG.

An I but fist him once; an 'a come but within my vice!

HOSTESS.

I am undone by his going; I warrant you, he's an

infinitive thing upon my score. Good Master Fang, hold him sure.

Good Master Snare, let him not scape. 'A comes continuantly to

Pie-corner- saving your manhoods-to buy a saddle; and he is

indited to dinner to the Lubber's Head in Lumbert Street, to

Master Smooth's the silkman. I pray you, since my exion is

ent'red, and my case so openly known to the world, let him be

brought in to his answer. A hundred mark is a long one for a poor

lone woman to bear; and I have borne, and borne, and borne; and

have been fubb'd off, and fubb'd off, and fubb'd off, from this

day to that day, that it is a shame to be thought on. There is no

honesty in such dealing; unless a woman should be made an ass and

a beast, to bear every knave's wrong.

Enter SIR JOHN FALSTAFF, PAGE, and BARDOLPH

Yonder he comes; and that arrant malmsey-nose knave, Bardolph,

with him. Do your offices, do your offices, Master Fang and

Master Snare; do me, do me, do me your offices.

FALSTAFF.

How now! whose mare's dead? What's the matter?

FANG.

Sir John, I arrest you at the suit of Mistress Quickly.

FALSTAFF.

Away, varlets! Draw, Bardolph. Cut me off the villian's

head. Throw the quean in the channel.

HOSTESS.

Throw me in the channel! I'll throw thee in the channel.

Wilt thou? wilt thou? thou bastardly rogue! Murder, murder!

Ah,

thou honeysuckle villain! wilt thou kill God's officers and the

King's? Ah, thou honey-seed rogue! thou art a honey-seed; a
man-queller and a woman-queller.

FALSTAFF.

Keep them off, Bardolph.

FANG.
A rescue! a rescue!

HOSTESS.

Good people, bring a rescue or two. Thou wot, wot thou!
thou wot, wot ta? Do, do, thou rogue! do, thou hemp-seed!

PAGE.

Away, you scullion! you rampallian! you fustilarian!
I'll tickle your catastrophe.

Enter the LORD CHIEF JUSTICE and his men

CHIEF JUSTICE.

What is the matter? Keep the peace here, ho!

HOSTESS.

Good my lord, be good to me. I beseech you, stand to me.

CHIEF JUSTICE.

How now, Sir John! what, are you brawling here?

Doth this become your place, your time, and business?

You should have been well on your way to York.

Stand from him, fellow; wherefore hang'st thou upon him?

HOSTESS.

O My most worshipful lord, an't please your Grace, I

am a

poor widow of Eastcheap, and he is arrested at my suit.

CHIEF JUSTICE.

For what sum?

HOSTESS.

It is more than for some, my lord; it is for all-all

I

have. He hath eaten me out of house and home; he hath put all my

substance into that fat belly of his. But I will have some of it

out again, or I will ride thee a nights like a mare.

FALSTAFF.

I think I am as like to ride the mare, if I have any

vantage of ground to get up.

CHIEF JUSTICE.

How comes this, Sir John? Fie! What man of good

temper would endure this tempest of exclamation? Are you not

ashamed to enforce a poor widow to so rough a course to come by her own?

FALSTAFF.

What is the gross sum that I owe thee?

HOSTESS.

Marry, if thou wert an honest man, thyself and the money

too. Thou didst swear to me upon a parcel-gilt goblet,

sitting in

my Dolphin chamber, at the round table, by a sea-coal fire, upon

Wednesday in Wheeson week, when the Prince broke thy head for

liking his father to singing-man of Windsor-thou didst swear to

me then, as I was washing thy wound, to marry me and make me my

lady thy wife. Canst thou deny it? Did not goodwife Keech, the

butcher's wife, come in then and call me gossip Quickly?

Coming

in to borrow a mess of vinegar, telling us she had a good dish of

prawns, whereby thou didst desire to eat some, whereby I told

thee they were ill for green wound? And didst thou not, when she

was gone down stairs, desire me to be no more so familiarity with

such poor people, saying that ere long they should call me madam?

And didst thou not kiss me, and bid me fetch the thirty

shillings? I put thee now to thy book-oath. Deny it, if thou canst.

FALSTAFF.

My lord, this is a poor mad soul, and she says up and
down the town that her eldest son is like you. She hath been in
good case, and, the truth is, poverty hath distracted her.
But
for these foolish officers, I beseech you I may have redress against them.

CHIEF JUSTICE.

Sir John, Sir John, I am well acquainted with your
manner of wrenching the true cause the false way. It is not a
confident brow, nor the throng of words that come with such more
than impudent sauciness from you, can thrust me from a level
consideration. You have, as it appears to me, practis'd upon the
easy yielding spirit of this woman, and made her serve your uses
both in purse and in person.

HOSTESS.

Yea, in truth, my lord.

CHIEF JUSTICE.

Pray thee, peace. Pay her the debt you owe her, and
unpay the villainy you have done with her; the one you may do
with sterling money, and the other with current repentance.

FALSTAFF.
My lord, I will not undergo this sneap without reply.
You
call honourable boldness impudent sauciness; if a man will make
curtsy and say nothing, he is virtuous. No, my lord, my humble
duty remembr'red, I will not be your suitor. I say to you I do
desire deliverance from these officers, being upon hasty
employment in the King's affairs.

CHIEF JUSTICE.
You speak as having power to do wrong; but answer in
th' effect of your reputation, and satisfy the poor woman.

FALSTAFF.

Come hither, hostess.

Enter GOWER

CHIEF JUSTICE.

Now, Master Gower, what news?

GOWER.

The King, my lord, and Harry Prince of Wales
Are near at hand. The rest the paper tells. *[Gives a letter]*

FALSTAFF.

As I am a gentleman!

HOSTESS.

Faith, you said so before.

FALSTAFF.

As I am a gentleman! Come, no more words of it.

HOSTESS.

By this heavenly ground I tread on, I must be fain to pawn
both my plate and the tapestry of my dining-chambers.

FALSTAFF.
Glasses, glasses, is the only drinking; and for thy
walls, a pretty slight drollery, or the story of the Prodigal, or
the German hunting, in water-work, is worth a thousand of these
bed-hangers and these fly-bitten tapestries. Let it be ten pound,
if thou canst. Come, and 'twere not for thy humours, there's not
a better wench in England. Go, wash thy face, and draw the
action. Come, thou must not be in this humour with me; dost not
know me? Come, come, I know thou wast set on to this.

HOSTESS.
Pray thee, Sir John, let it be but twenty nobles;
i' faith, I am loath to pawn my plate, so God save me, la!

FALSTAFF.
Let it alone; I'll make other shift. You'll be a fool still.

HOSTESS.

Well, you shall have it, though I pawn my gown.

I hope you'll come to supper. you'll pay me all together?

FALSTAFF.

Will I live? *[To BARDOLPH]* Go, with her, with her;

hook on, hook on.

HOSTESS.

Will you have Doll Tearsheet meet you at supper?

FALSTAFF.

No more words; let's have her.

Exeunt HOSTESS, BARDOLPH, and OFFICERS

CHIEF JUSTICE.

I have heard better news.

FALSTAFF.

What's the news, my lord?

CHIEF JUSTICE.

Where lay the King to-night?

GOWER.

At Basingstoke, my lord.

FALSTAFF.

I hope, my lord, all's well. What is the news, my lord?

CHIEF JUSTICE.

Come all his forces back?

GOWER.

No; fifteen hundred foot, five hundred horse,
Are march'd up to my Lord of Lancaster,
Against Northumberland and the Archbishop.

FALSTAFF.

Comes the King back from Wales, my noble lord?

CHIEF JUSTICE.

You shall have letters of me presently.
Come, go along with me, good Master Gower.

FALSTAFF.

My lord!

CHIEF JUSTICE.
What's the matter?

FALSTAFF.

Master Gower, shall I entreat you with me to dinner?

GOWER.
I must wait upon my good lord here, I thank you, good Sir
John.

CHIEF JUSTICE.

Sir John, you loiter here too long, being you are to
take soldiers up in counties as you go.

FALSTAFF.

Will you sup with me, Master Gower?

CHIEF JUSTICE.

What foolish master taught you these manners,
Sir John?

FALSTAFF.

Master Gower, if they become me not, he was a fool that
taught them me. This is the right fencing grace, my lord; tap for
tap, and so part fair.

CHIEF JUSTICE.

Now, the Lord lighten thee! Thou art a great fool.

Exeunt

SCENE II. London. Another street

Enter PRINCE HENRY and POINS

PRINCE.

Before God, I am exceeding weary. POINS. Is't come to that? I had thought weariness durst not have attach'd one of so high blood. PRINCE. Faith, it does me; though it discolours the complexion of my greatness to acknowledge it. Doth it not show vilely in me to desire small beer? POINS. Why, a prince should not be so loosely studied as to remember so weak a composition. PRINCE. Belike then my appetite was not-princely got; for, by my troth, I do now remember the poor creature, small beer. But indeed these humble considerations make me out of love with my greatness. What a disgrace is it to me to remember thy name, or to know thy face to-morrow, or to take note how many pair of silk stockings thou hast-viz., these, and those that were thy peach-colour'd ones-or to bear the inventory of thy shirts-as, one for superfluity, and another for use! But that the tennis-court-keeper knows better than I; for it is a low ebb of linen with thee when thou keepest not racket there; as thou hast not done a great while, because the rest of thy low countries have made a shift to eat up thy holland. And God knows whether those that bawl out of the ruins of thy linen shall inherit his kingdom; but the midwives say the children are not in the fault; whereupon the world increases, and kindreds are mightily strengthened. POINS. How ill it follows, after you have laboured so hard, you should talk so idly! Tell me, how many good young princes would do so, their fathers being so sick as yours at this time is? PRINCE. Shall I tell thee one thing, Poins? POINS. Yes, faith; and let it be an excellent good thing. PRINCE. It shall serve among wits of no higher breeding than thine. POINS. Go to; I stand the push of your one thing that you will tell. PRINCE. Marry, I tell thee it is not meet that I should be sad, now my father is sick; albeit I could tell to thee-as to one it pleases me, for fault of a better, to call my friend-I could be sad and sad indeed too. POINS. Very hardly upon such a subject. PRINCE. By this hand, thou thinkest me as far in the devil's book as thou and Falstaff for obduracy and persistency: let the end try the man. But I tell thee my heart bleeds inwardly that my father is so sick; and keeping such vile company as thou art hath in reason taken from me all ostentation of sorrow. POINS. The reason? PRINCE. What wouldst thou think of me if I should weep? POINS. I would think thee a most princely hypocrite.

PRINCE. It would be every man's thought; and thou art a blessed fellow to think as every man thinks. Never a man's thought in the world keeps the road-way better than thine. Every man would think me an hypocrite indeed. And what accites your most worshipful thought to think so? POINS. Why, because you have been so lewd and so much engraffed to Falstaff. PRINCE. And to thee. POINS. By this light, I am well spoke on; I can hear it with mine own ears. The worst that they can say of me is that I am a second brother and that I am a proper fellow of my hands; and those two things, I confess, I cannot help. By the mass, here comes Bardolph.

Enter BARDOLPH and PAGE

PRINCE.

And the boy that I gave Falstaff. 'A had him from me

Christian; and look if the fat villain have not transform'd him ape.

BARDOLPH.

God save your Grace!

PRINCE.

And yours, most noble Bardolph!

POINS.

Come, you virtuous ass, you bashful fool, must you be

blushing? Wherefore blush you now? What a maidenly
man-at-arms
are you become! Is't such a matter to get a pottle-pot's maidenhead?

PAGE.
'A calls me e'en now, my lord, through a red lattice, and

I

could discern no part of his face from the window. At last I
spied his eyes; and methought he had made two holes in the
alewife's new petticoat, and so peep'd through.

PRINCE.

Has not the boy profited?

BARDOLPH.
Away, you whoreson upright rabbit, away!

PAGE.

Away, you rascally Althaea's dream, away!

PRINCE.

Instruct us, boy; what dream, boy?

PAGE.

Marry, my lord, Althaea dreamt she was delivered of a firebrand; and therefore I call him her dream.

PRINCE.

A crown's worth of good interpretation. There 'tis, boy.

[Giving a crown]

POINS.

O that this blossom could be kept from cankers!

Well, there is sixpence to preserve thee.

BARDOLPH.

An you do not make him be hang'd among you, the gallows shall have wrong.

PRINCE.

And how doth thy master, Bardolph?

BARDOLPH.
Well, my lord. He heard of your Grace's coming to town.

There's a letter for you.

POINS.
Deliver'd with good respect. And how doth the martlemas,
your master?

BARDOLPH.
In bodily health, sir.

POINS.
Marry, the immortal part needs a physician; but that moves
not him. Though that be sick, it dies not.

PRINCE.

I do allow this well to be as familiar with me as my dog;
and he holds his place, for look you how he writes.

POINS.

[Reads] 'John Falstaff, knight'- Every man must know that
as oft as he has occasion to name himself, even like those that
are kin to the King; for they never prick their finger but they
say 'There's some of the King's blood spilt.' 'How comes that?'
says he that takes upon him not to conceive. The answer is as
ready as a borrower's cap: 'I am the King's poor cousin,
sir.'

PRINCE.

Nay, they will be kin to us, or they will fetch it from
Japhet. But the letter: *[Reads]* 'Sir John Falstaff, knight, to
the son of the King nearest his father, Harry Prince of Wales,
greeting.'

POINS.

Why, this is a certificate.

PRINCE.

Peace! *[Reads]* 'I will imitate the honourable Romans in brevity.'-

POINS.

He sure means brevity in breath, short-winded.

PRINCE.

[Reads] 'I commend me to thee, I commend thee, and I leave thee. Be not too familiar with Poins; for he misuses thy favours so much that he swears thou art to marry his sister Nell. Repent at idle times as thou mayst, and so farewell.
Thine, by yea and no-which is as much as to say as thou usest him-JACK FALSTAFF with my familiars, JOHN with my brothers and sisters, and SIR JOHN with all Europe.'

POINS.

My lord, I'll steep this letter in sack and make him eat it.

PRINCE.

That's to make him eat twenty of his words. But do you use
me thus, Ned? Must I marry your sister?

POINS.

God send the wench no worse fortune! But I never said so.

PRINCE.

Well, thus we play the fools with the time, and the spirits
of the wise sit in the clouds and mock us. Is your master here in London?

BARDOLPH.

Yea, my lord.

PRINCE.

Where sups he? Doth the old boar feed in the old frank?

BARDOLPH.

At the old place, my lord, in Eastcheap.

PRINCE.

What company?

PAGE.

Ephesians, my lord, of the old church.

PRINCE.

Sup any women with him?

PAGE.

None, my lord, but old Mistress Quickly and Mistress Doll Tearsheet.

PRINCE.

What pagan may that be?

PAGE.

A proper gentlewoman, sir, and a kinswoman of my master's.

PRINCE.

Even such kin as the parish heifers are to the town bull.

Shall we steal upon them, Ned, at supper?

POINS.

I am your shadow, my lord; I'll follow you.

PRINCE.

Sirrah, you boy, and Bardolph, no word to your master that

I am yet come to town. There's for your silence.

BARDOLPH.

I have no tongue, sir.

PAGE.

And for mine, sir, I will govern it.

PRINCE.

Fare you well; go. *Exeunt* BARDOLPH and PAGE

This Doll Tearsheet should be some road.

POINS.

I warrant you, as common as the way between Saint Albans and London.

PRINCE.

How might we see Falstaff bestow himself to-night in his

true colours, and not ourselves be seen?

POINS.

Put on two leathern jerkins and aprons, and wait upon him at

his table as drawers.

PRINCE.

From a god to a bull? A heavy descension! It was Jove's

case. From a prince to a prentice? A low transformation! That shall be mine; for in everything the purpose must weigh with the

folly. Follow me, Ned.

Exeunt

SCENE III. Warkworth. Before the castle

Enter NORTHUMBERLAND, LADY NORTHUMBERLAND, and LADY PERCY

NORTHUMBERLAND.

I pray thee, loving wife, and gentle daughter,
Give even way unto my rough affairs;
Put not you on the visage of the times
And be, like them, to Percy troublesome.

LADY NORTHUMBERLAND.

I have given over, I will speak no more.

Do what you will; your wisdom be your guide.

NORTHUMBERLAND.

Alas, sweet wife, my honour is at pawn;

And but my going nothing can redeem it.

LADY PERCY.

O, yet, for God's sake, go not to these wars!

The time was, father, that you broke your word,

When you were more endear'd to it than now;

When your own Percy, when my heart's dear Harry,

Threw many a northward look to see his father

Bring up his powers; but he did long in vain.

Who then persuaded you to stay at home?

There were two honours lost, yours and your son's.

For yours, the God of heaven brighten it!

For his, it stuck upon him as the sun

In the grey vault of heaven; and by his light

Did all the chivalry of England move

To do brave acts. He was indeed the glass

Wherein the noble youth did dress themselves.

He had no legs that practis'd not his gait;

And speaking thick, which nature made his blemish,

Became the accents of the valiant;

For those who could speak low and tardily
Would turn their own perfection to abuse
To seem like him: so that in speech, in gait,
In diet, in affections of delight,
In military rules, humours of blood,
He was the mark and glass, copy and book,
That fashion'd others. And him-O wondrous him!
O miracle of men!- him did you leave-
Second to none, unseconded by you-
To look upon the hideous god of war
In disadvantage, to abide a field
Where nothing but the sound of Hotspur's name
Did seem defensible. So you left him.
Never, O never, do his ghost the wrong
To hold your honour more precise and nice
With others than with him! Let them alone.

The Marshal and the Archbishop are strong.
Had my sweet Harry had but half their numbers,
To-day might I, hanging on Hotspur's neck,
Have talk'd of Monmouth's grave.

NORTHUMBERLAND.

Beshrew your heart,

Fair daughter, you do draw my spirits from me

With new lamenting ancient oversights.

But I must go and meet with danger there,

Or it will seek me in another place,

And find me worse provided.

LADY NORTHUMBERLAND.

O, fly to Scotland

Till that the nobles and the armed commons

Have of their puissance made a little taste.

LADY PERCY.

If they get ground and vantage of the King,

Then join you with them, like a rib of steel,

To make strength stronger; but, for all our loves,

First let them try themselves. So did your son;

He was so suff'red; so came I a widow;

And never shall have length of life enough

To rain upon remembrance with mine eyes,

That it may grow and sprout as high as heaven,

For recordation to my noble husband.

NORTHUMBERLAND.

Come, come, go in with me. 'Tis with my mind

As with the tide swell'd up unto his height,

That makes a still-stand, running neither way.

Fain would I go to meet the Archbishop,

But many thousand reasons hold me back.

I will resolve for Scotland. There am I,

Till time and vantage crave my company. *Exeunt*

SCENE IV. London. The Boar's Head Tavern in Eastcheap

Enter FRANCIS and another DRAWER

FRANCIS.

What the devil hast thou brought there-apple-johns?

Thou

knowest Sir John cannot endure an apple-john.

SECOND DRAWER.

Mass, thou say'st true. The Prince once set a dish
of apple-johns before him, and told him there were five more Sir
Johns; and, putting off his hat, said 'I will now take my leave
of these six dry, round, old, withered knights.' It ang'red him
to the heart; but he hath forgot that.

FRANCIS.

Why, then, cover and set them down; and see if thou canst
find out Sneak's noise; Mistress Tearsheet would fain hear some music.

Enter third DRAWER

THIRD DRAWER.

Dispatch! The room where they supp'd is too hot;
they'll come in straight.

FRANCIS.

Sirrah, here will be the Prince and Master Poins anon; and
they will put on two of our jerkins and aprons; and Sir John must
not know of it. Bardolph hath brought word.

THIRD DRAWER.

By the mass, here will be old uds; it will be an excellent stratagem.

SECOND DRAWER.

I'll see if I can find out Sneak.

Exeunt second and third DRAWERS

Enter HOSTESS and DOLL TEARSHEET

HOSTESS.

I' faith, sweetheart, methinks now you are in an excellent
good temperality. Your pulsidge beats as extraordinarily as heart
would desire; and your colour, I warrant you, is as red as any
rose, in good truth, la! But, i' faith, you have drunk too much
canaries; and that's a marvellous searching wine, and it perfumes
the blood ere one can say 'What's this?' How do you now?

DOLL.

Better than I was-hem.

HOSTESS.

Why, that's well said; a good heart's worth gold.

Lo, here comes Sir John.

Enter FALSTAFF

FALSTAFF.

[Singing] 'When Arthur first in court'- Empty the

jordan. *[Exit FRANCIS]* - *[Singing]* 'And was a worthy king'-

How

now, Mistress Doll!

HOSTESS.

Sick of a calm; yea, good faith.

FALSTAFF.

So is all her sect; and they be once in a calm, they are sick.

DOLL.

A pox damn you, you muddy rascal! Is that all the comfort you give me?

FALSTAFF.

You make fat rascals, Mistress Doll.

DOLL.

I make them! Gluttony and diseases make them: I make them not.

FALSTAFF.

If the cook help to make the gluttony, you help to make
the diseases, Doll. We catch of you, Doll, we catch of you; grant
that, my poor virtue, grant that.

DOLL.

Yea, joy, our chains and our jewels.

FALSTAFF.

'Your brooches, pearls, and ouches.' For to serve bravely
is to come halting off; you know, to come off the breach with his

pike bent bravely, and to surgery bravely; to venture upon the
charg'd chambers bravely-

DOLL.

Hang yourself, you muddy conger, hang yourself!

HOSTESS.
By my troth, this is the old fashion; you two never meet
but you fall to some discord. You are both, i' good truth, as
rheumatic as two dry toasts; you cannot one bear with another's
confirmities. What the good-year! one must bear, and that must be
you. You are the weaker vessel, as as they say, the emptier vessel.

DOLL.

Can a weak empty vessel bear such a huge full hogs-head?
There's a whole merchant's venture of Bourdeaux stuff in him; you
have not seen a hulk better stuff'd in the hold. Come, I'll be
friends with thee, Jack. Thou art going to the wars; and whether
I shall ever see thee again or no, there is nobody cares.

Re-enter FRANCIS

FRANCIS.

Sir, Ancient Pistol's below and would speak with you.

DOLL.

Hang him, swaggering rascal! Let him not come hither; it is
the foul-mouth'dst rogue in England.

HOSTESS.

If he swagger, let him not come here. No, by my faith!

I must live among my neighbours; I'll no swaggerers. I am in good
name and fame with the very best. Shut the door. There comes no
swaggerers here; I have not liv'd all this while to have
swaggering now. Shut the door, I pray you.

FALSTAFF.

Dost thou hear, hostess?

HOSTESS.

Pray ye, pacify yourself, Sir John; there comes no swaggerers here.

FALSTAFF.
Dost thou hear? It is mine ancient.

HOSTESS.
Tilly-fally, Sir John, ne'er tell me; and your ancient
swagg'rer comes not in my doors. I was before Master Tisick, the
debuty, t' other day; and, as he said to me- 'twas no longer ago
than Wednesday last, i' good faith!- 'Neighbour Quickly,' says
he-Master Dumbe, our minister, was by then- 'Neighbour
Quickly,'
says he 'receive those that are civil, for' said he 'you are in
an ill name.' Now 'a said so, I can tell whereupon. 'For'
says he
'you are an honest woman and well thought on, therefore take heed
what guests you receive. Receive' says he 'no swaggering
companions.' There comes none here. You would bless you to hear
what he said. No, I'll no swagg'rers.

FALSTAFF.

He's no swagg'rer, hostess; a tame cheater, i' faith; you
may stroke him as gently as a puppy greyhound. He'll not swagger
with a Barbary hen, if her feathers turn back in any show of
resistance. Call him up, drawer.

Exit FRANCIS

HOSTESS.

Cheater, call you him? I will bar no honest man my house,
nor no cheater; but I do not love swaggering, by my troth. I am
the worse when one says 'swagger.' Feel, masters, how I
shake;
look you, I warrant you.

DOLL.

So you do, hostess.

HOSTESS.

Do I? Yea, in very truth, do I, an 'twere an aspen

leaf. I

cannot abide swagg'rers.

Enter PISTOL, BARDOLPH, and PAGE

PISTOL.

God save you, Sir John!

FALSTAFF.

Welcome, Ancient Pistol. Here, Pistol, I charge you with

a cup of sack; do you discharge upon mine hostess.

PISTOL.

I will discharge upon her, Sir John, with two bullets.

FALSTAFF.

She is pistol-proof, sir; you shall not hardly offend her.

HOSTESS.

Come, I'll drink no proofs nor no bullets. I'll drink no
more than will do me good, for no man's pleasure, I.

PISTOL.

Then to you, Mistress Dorothy; I will charge you.

DOLL.
Charge me! I scorn you, scurvy companion. What! you poor,
base, rascally, cheating, lack-linen mate! Away, you mouldy
rogue, away! I am meat for your master.

PISTOL.

I know you, Mistress Dorothy.

DOLL.
Away, you cut-purse rascal! you filthy bung, away! By this
wine, I'll thrust my knife in your mouldy chaps, an you play the
saucy cuttle with me. Away, you bottle-ale rascal! you
basket-hilt stale juggler, you! Since when, I pray you, sir?

God's light, with two points on your shoulder? Much!

PISTOL.

God let me not live but I will murder your ruff for this.

FALSTAFF.

No more, Pistol; I would not have you go off here.

Discharge yourself of our company, Pistol.

HOSTESS.

No, good Captain Pistol; not here, sweet captain.

DOLL.

Captain! Thou abominable damn'd cheater, art thou not ashamed to be called captain? An captains were of my mind, they would truncheon you out, for taking their names upon you before you have earn'd them. You a captain! you slave, for what? For tearing a poor whore's ruff in a bawdy-house? He a captain! hang him, rogue! He lives upon mouldy stew'd prunes and dried cakes. A captain! God's light, these villains will make the word as odious as the word 'occupy'; which was an excellent good word before it was ill sorted. Therefore captains had need look to't.

BARDOLPH.

Pray thee go down, good ancient.

FALSTAFF.

Hark thee hither, Mistress Doll.

PISTOL.

Not I! I tell thee what, Corporal Bardolph, I could tear her; I'll be reveng'd of her.

PAGE.

Pray thee go down.

PISTOL.

I'll see her damn'd first; to Pluto's damn'd lake, by this hand, to th' infernal deep, with Erebus and tortures vile also.

Hold hook and line, say I. Down, down, dogs! down, faitors!
Have
we not Hiren here?

HOSTESS.
Good Captain Peesel, be quiet; 'tis very late, i'
faith; I
beseek you now, aggravate your choler.

PISTOL.
These be good humours, indeed! Shall packhorses,
And hollow pamper'd jades of Asia,
Which cannot go but thirty mile a day,
Compare with Caesars, and with Cannibals,
And Troiant Greeks? Nay, rather damn them with
King Cerberus; and let the welkin roar.

Shall we fall foul for toys?

HOSTESS.

By my troth, Captain, these are very bitter words.

BARDOLPH.

Be gone, good ancient; this will grow to a brawl anon.

PISTOL.
Die men like dogs! Give crowns like pins! Have we not Hiren here?

HOSTESS.
O' my word, Captain, there's none such here. What the
good-year! do you think I would deny her? For God's sake, be quiet.

PISTOL.

Then feed and be fat, my fair Calipolis.
Come, give's some sack.

'Si fortune me tormente sperato me contento.'
Fear we broadsides? No, let the fiend give fire.

Give me some sack; and, sweetheart, lie thou there.

[Laying down his sword]

Come we to full points here, and are etceteras nothings?

FALSTAFF.

Pistol, I would be quiet.

PISTOL.

Sweet knight, I kiss thy neaf. What! we have seen the seven stars.

DOLL.

For God's sake thrust him down stairs; I cannot endure such a fustian rascal.

PISTOL.

Thrust him down stairs! Know we not Galloway nags?

FALSTAFF.

Quoit him down, Bardolph, like a shove-groat shilling.

Nay, an 'a do nothing but speak nothing, 'a shall be nothing here.

BARDOLPH.

Come, get you down stairs.

PISTOL.

What! shall we have incision? Shall we imbrue?

[Snatching up his sword]

Then death rock me asleep, abridge my doleful days!

Why, then, let grievous, ghastly, gaping wounds

Untwine the Sisters Three! Come, Atropos, I say!

HOSTESS.

Here's goodly stuff toward!

FALSTAFF.

Give me my rapier, boy.

DOLL.

I pray thee, Jack, I pray thee, do not draw.

FALSTAFF.

Get you down stairs.

[Drawing and driving PISTOL out]

HOSTESS.

Here's a goodly tumult! I'll forswear keeping house afore

I'll be in these tirrits and frights. So; murder, I warrant now.

Alas, alas! put up your naked weapons, put up your naked weapons.

Exeunt PISTOL and BARDOLPH

DOLL.

I pray thee, Jack, be quiet; the rascal's gone. Ah, you

whoreson little valiant villain, you!

HOSTESS.

Are you not hurt i' th' groin? Methought 'a made a shrewd thrust at your belly.

Re-enter BARDOLPH

FALSTAFF.

Have you turn'd him out a doors?

BARDOLPH.

Yea, sir. The rascal's drunk. You have hurt him, sir, i'

th' shoulder.

FALSTAFF.

A rascal! to brave me!

DOLL.

Ah, you sweet little rogue, you! Alas, poor ape, how thou sweat'st! Come, let me wipe thy face. Come on, you whoreson chops. Ah, rogue! i' faith, I love thee. Thou art as valorous as Hector of Troy, worth five of Agamemnon, and ten times better than the Nine Worthies. Ah, villain!

FALSTAFF.

A rascally slave! I will toss the rogue in a blanket.

DOLL.

Do, an thou dar'st for thy heart. An thou dost, I'll canvass thee between a pair of sheets.

Enter musicians

PAGE.

The music is come, sir.

FALSTAFF.

Let them play. Play, sirs. Sit on my knee, Don. A rascal bragging slave! The rogue fled from me like quick-silver.

DOLL.

I' faith, and thou follow'dst him like a church. Thou whoreson little tidy Bartholomew boar-pig, when wilt thou leave fighting a days and foining a nights, and begin to patch up thine old body for heaven?

Enter , behind, PRINCE HENRY and POINS disguised as drawers

FALSTAFF.

Peace, good Doll! Do not speak like a death's-head; do
not bid me remember mine end.

DOLL.

Sirrah, what humour's the Prince of?

FALSTAFF.

A good shallow young fellow. 'A would have made a good
pantler; 'a would ha' chipp'd bread well.

DOLL.

They say Poins has a good wit.

FALSTAFF.

He a good wit! hang him, baboon! His wit's as thick as
Tewksbury mustard; there's no more conceit in him than is in a mallet.

DOLL.

Why does the Prince love him so, then?

FALSTAFF.
Because their legs are both of a bigness, and 'a plays at
quoits well, and eats conger and fennel, and drinks off candles'
ends for flap-dragons, and rides the wild mare with the boys, and
jumps upon join'd-stools, and swears with a good grace, and wears
his boots very smooth, like unto the sign of the Leg, and breeds
no bate with telling of discreet stories; and such other gambol
faculties 'a has, that show a weak mind and an able body, for the
which the Prince admits him. For the Prince himself is such
another; the weight of a hair will turn the scales between their avoirdupois.

PRINCE.

Would not this nave of a wheel have his ears cut off?

POINS.
Let's beat him before his whore.

PRINCE.

Look whe'er the wither'd elder hath not his poll claw'd like a parrot.

POINS.

Is it not strange that desire should so many years outlive performance?

FALSTAFF.

Kiss me, Doll.

PRINCE.

Saturn and Venus this year in conjunction! What says th'

almanac to that?

POINS.

And look whether the fiery Trigon, his man, be not lisping

to his master's old tables, his note-book, his

counsel-keeper.

FALSTAFF.

Thou dost give me flattering busses.

DOLL.

By my troth, I kiss thee with a most constant heart.

FALSTAFF.

I am old, I am old.

DOLL.

I love thee better than I love e'er a scurvy young boy of them all.

FALSTAFF.

What stuff wilt have a kirtle of? I shall receive money a *Thursday*. Shalt have a cap to-morrow. A merry song, come. 'A grows late; we'll to bed. Thou't forget me when I am gone.

DOLL.

By my troth, thou't set me a-weeping, an thou say'st so.

Prove that ever I dress myself handsome till thy return.

Well,

hearken a' th' end.

FALSTAFF.

Some sack, Francis.

PRINCE & POINS. Anon, anon, sir. *[Advancing]*

FALSTAFF.

Ha! a bastard son of the King's? And art thou not

Poins his brother?

PRINCE.

Why, thou globe of sinful continents, what a life dost thou lead!

FALSTAFF.

A better than thou. I am a gentleman: thou art a drawer.

PRINCE.

Very true, sir, and I come to draw you out by the ears.

HOSTESS.

O, the Lord preserve thy Grace! By my troth, welcome to *London.* Now the Lord bless that sweet face of thine. O Jesu, are you come from Wales?

FALSTAFF.

Thou whoreson mad compound of majesty, by this light flesh and corrupt blood, thou art welcome.

[Leaning his band upon DOLL]

DOLL.

How, you fat fool! I scorn you.

POINS.

My lord, he will drive you out of your revenge and turn all to a merriment, if you take not the heat.

PRINCE.

YOU whoreson candle-mine, you, how vilely did you speak of

me even now before this honest, virtuous, civil gentlewoman!

HOSTESS.

God's blessing of your good heart! and so she is, by my troth.

FALSTAFF.

Didst thou hear me?

PRINCE.

Yea; and you knew me, as you did when you ran away by

Gadshill. You knew I was at your back, and spoke it on purpose to try my patience.

FALSTAFF.

No, no, no; not so; I did not think thou wast within hearing.

PRINCE.

I shall drive you then to confess the wilful abuse, and
then I know how to handle you.

FALSTAFF.

No abuse, Hal, o' mine honour; no abuse.

PRINCE.
Not-to dispraise me, and call me pander, and
bread-chipper, and I know not what!

FALSTAFF.
No abuse, Hal.

POINS.

No abuse!

FALSTAFF.
No abuse, Ned, i' th' world; honest Ned, none. I
disprais'd him before the wicked-that the wicked might not fall

in love with thee; in which doing, I have done the part of a
careful friend and a true subject; and thy father is to give me
thanks for it. No abuse, Hal; none, Ned, none; no, faith,
boys, none.

PRINCE.
See now, whether pure fear and entire cowardice doth not
make thee wrong this virtuous gentlewoman to close with us?
Is
she of the wicked? Is thine hostess here of the wicked? Or is thy
boy of the wicked? Or honest Bardolph, whose zeal burns in his
nose, of the wicked?

POINS.
Answer, thou dead elm, answer.

FALSTAFF.
The fiend hath prick'd down Bardolph irrecoverable; and
his face is Lucifer's privy-kitchen, where he doth nothing but
roast malt-worms. For the boy-there is a good angel about him;
but the devil outbids him too.

PRINCE.

For the women?

FALSTAFF.
For one of them-she's in hell already, and burns poor
souls. For th' other-I owe her money; and whether she be damn'd
for that, I know not.

HOSTESS.

No, I warrant you.

FALSTAFF.
No, I think thou art not; I think thou art quit for that.
Marry, there is another indictment upon thee for suffering flesh
to be eaten in thy house, contrary to the law; for the which

I

think thou wilt howl.

HOSTESS.

All vict'lers do so. What's a joint of mutton or two in a whole Lent?

PRINCE.

You, gentlewoman-

DOLL.

What says your Grace?

FALSTAFF.

His Grace says that which his flesh rebels against.

[Knocking within]

HOSTESS.

Who knocks so loud at door? Look to th' door there, *Francis.*

Enter PETO

PRINCE.

Peto, how now! What news?

PETO.

The King your father is at Westminster;

And there are twenty weak and wearied posts

Come from the north; and as I came along

I met and overtook a dozen captains,

Bare-headed, sweating, knocking at the taverns,

And asking every one for Sir John Falstaff.

PRINCE.

By heaven, Poins, I feel me much to blame

So idly to profane the precious time,

When tempest of commotion, like the south,

Borne with black vapour, doth begin to melt

And drop upon our bare unarmed heads.

Give me my sword and cloak. Falstaff, good night.

Exeunt PRINCE, POINS, PETO, and BARDOLPH

FALSTAFF.

Now comes in the sweetest morsel of the night, and we
must hence, and leave it unpick'd. *[Knocking within]* More
knocking at the door!

Re-enter BARDOLPH

How now! What's the matter?

BARDOLPH.

You must away to court, sir, presently;
A dozen captains stay at door for you.

FALSTAFF.

[To the PAGE] . Pay the musicians, sirrah.- Farewell,
hostess; farewell, Doll. You see, my good wenches, how men of
merit are sought after; the undeserver may sleep, when the man of
action is call'd on. Farewell, good wenches. If I be not sent
away post, I will see you again ere I go.

DOLL.

I cannot speak. If my heart be not ready to burst!

Well, sweet Jack, have a care of thyself.

FALSTAFF.

Farewell, farewell.

Exeunt FALSTAFF and BARDOLPH

HOSTESS.

Well, fare thee well. I have known thee these

twenty-nine

years, come peascod-time; but an honester and truer-hearted man

-well fare thee well.

BARDOLPH.

[Within] Mistress Tearsheet!

HOSTESS.

What's the matter?

BARDOLPH.

[Within] Bid Mistress Tearsheet come to my master.

HOSTESS.

O, run Doll, run, run, good Come. *[To BARDOLPH]* She

comes blubber'd.- Yea, will you come, Doll? *Exeunt*

ACT III. SCENE I. Westminster. The palace

Enter the KING in his nightgown, with a page

KING.

Go call the Earls of Surrey and of Warwick;

But, ere they come, bid them o'er-read these letters

And well consider of them. Make good speed. *Exit* page

How many thousands of my poorest subjects

Are at this hour asleep! O sleep, O gentle sleep,

Nature's soft nurse, how have I frightened thee,

That thou no more will weigh my eyelids down,

And steep my senses in forgetfulness?

Why rather, sleep, liest thou in smoky cribs,

Upon uneasy pallets stretching thee,

And hush'd with buzzing night-flies to thy slumber,

Than in the perfum'd chambers of the great,

Under the canopies of costly state,

And lull'd with sound of sweetest melody?
O thou dull god, why liest thou with the vile
In loathsome beds, and leav'st the kingly couch
A watch-case or a common 'larum-bell?
Wilt thou upon the high and giddy mast
Seal up the ship-boy's eyes, and rock his brains
In cradle of the rude imperious surge,
And in the visitation of the winds,
Who take the ruffian billows by the top,
Curling their monstrous heads, and hanging them
With deafing clamour in the slippery clouds,
That with the hurly death itself awakes?
Canst thou, O partial sleep, give thy repose
To the wet sea-boy in an hour so rude;
And in the calmest and most stillest night,
With all appliances and means to boot,
Deny it to a king? Then, happy low, lie down!

Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown.

Enter WARWICK and Surrey

WARWICK.

Many good morrows to your Majesty!

KING.

Is it good morrow, lords?

WARWICK.

'Tis one o'clock, and past.

KING.

Why then, good morrow to you all, my lords.

Have you read o'er the letters that I sent you?

WARWICK.

We have, my liege.

KING.

Then you perceive the body of our kingdom

How foul it is; what rank diseases grow,

And with what danger, near the heart of it.

WARWICK.

It is but as a body yet distempered;

Which to his former strength may be restored

With good advice and little medicine.

My Lord Northumberland will soon be cool'd.

KING.

O God! that one might read the book of fate,

And see the revolution of the times

Make mountains level, and the continent,

Weary of solid firmness, melt itself

Into the sea; and other times to see

The beachy girdle of the ocean

Too wide for Neptune's hips; how chances mock,

And changes fill the cup of alteration

With divers liquors! O, if this were seen,

The happiest youth, viewing his progress through,

What perils past, what crosses to ensue,
Would shut the book and sit him down and die.
'Tis not ten years gone
Since Richard and Northumberland, great friends,
Did feast together, and in two years after
Were they at wars. It is but eight years since
This Percy was the man nearest my soul;
Who like a brother toil'd in my affairs
And laid his love and life under my foot;
Yea, for my sake, even to the eyes of Richard
Gave him defiance. But which of you was by-

[To WARWICK] You, cousin Nevil, as I may remember-
When Richard, with his eye brim full of tears,
Then check'd and rated by Northumberland,
Did speak these words, now prov'd a prophecy?
'Northumberland, thou ladder by the which
My cousin Bolingbroke ascends my throne'-
Though then, God knows, I had no such intent
But that necessity so bow'd the state
That I and greatness were compell'd to kiss-

'The time shall come'- thus did he follow it-
'The time will come that foul sin, gathering head,
Shall break into corruption' so went on,
Foretelling this same time's condition
And the division of our amity.

WARWICK.
There is a history in all men's lives,
Figuring the natures of the times deceas'd;
The which observ'd, a man may prophesy,
With a near aim, of the main chance of things
As yet not come to life, who in their seeds
And weak beginning lie intreasured.
Such things become the hatch and brood of time;
And, by the necessary form of this,
King Richard might create a perfect guess
That great Northumberland, then false to him,
Would of that seed grow to a greater falseness;
Which should not find a ground to root upon
Unless on you.

KING.

Are these things then necessities?

Then let us meet them like necessities;

And that same word even now cries out on us.

They say the Bishop and Northumberland

Are fifty thousand strong.

WARWICK.

It cannot be, my lord.

Rumour doth double, like the voice and echo,

The numbers of the feared. Please it your Grace

To go to bed. Upon my soul, my lord,

The powers that you already have sent forth

Shall bring this prize in very easily.

To comfort you the more, I have receiv'd

A certain instance that Glendower is dead.

Your Majesty hath been this fortnight ill;

And these unseasoned hours perforce must ad

Unto your sickness.

KING.

I will take your counsel.

And, were these inward wars once out of hand,

We would, dear lords, unto the Holy Land. *Exeunt*

SCENE II. Gloucestershire. Before Justice, SHALLOW'S house

Enter SHALLOW and SILENCE, meeting; MOULDY, SHADOW, WART, FEEBLE, BULLCALF, and servants behind

SHALLOW.

Come on, come on, come on; give me your hand, sir;

give me

your hand, sir. An early stirrer, by the rood! And how doth my

good cousin Silence?

SILENCE.

Good morrow, good cousin Shallow.

SHALLOW.

And how doth my cousin, your bed-fellow? and your fairest

daughter and mine, my god-daughter Ellen?

SILENCE.

Alas, a black ousel, cousin Shallow!

SHALLOW.

By yea and no, sir. I dare say my cousin William is become
a good scholar; he is at Oxford still, is he not?

SILENCE.

Indeed, sir, to my cost.

SHALLOW.

'A must, then, to the Inns o' Court shortly. I was once of
Clement's Inn; where I think they will talk of mad Shallow yet.

SILENCE.

You were call'd 'lusty Shallow' then, cousin.

SHALLOW.

By the mass, I was call'd anything; and I would have done
anything indeed too, and roundly too. There was I, and little
John Doit of Staffordshire, and black George Barnes, and Francis
Pickbone, and Will Squele a Cotsole man-you had not four such

swinge-bucklers in all the Inns of Court again. And I may say to

you we knew where the bona-robas were, and had the best of them

all at commandment. Then was Jack Falstaff, now Sir John,

boy,

and page to Thomas Mowbray, Duke of Norfolk.

SILENCE.

This Sir John, cousin, that comes hither anon about soldiers?

SHALLOW.

The same Sir John, the very same. I see him break

Scoggin's head at the court gate, when 'a was a crack not thus

high; and the very same day did I fight with one Sampson

Stockfish, a fruiterer, behind Gray's Inn. Jesu, Jesu, the mad

days that I have spent! and to see how many of my old

acquaintance are dead!

SILENCE.

We shall all follow, cousin.

SHALLOW.

Certain, 'tis certain; very sure, very sure. Death, as the
Psalmist saith, is certain to all; all shall die. How a good yoke
of bullocks at Stamford fair?

SILENCE.

By my troth, I was not there.

SHALLOW.

Death is certain. Is old Double of your town living yet?

SILENCE.

Dead, sir.

SHALLOW.

Jesu, Jesu, dead! drew a good bow; and dead! 'A shot a
fine shoot. John a Gaunt loved him well, and betted much money on
his head. Dead! 'A would have clapp'd i' th' clout at twelve
score, and carried you a forehand shaft a fourteen and fourteen
and a half, that it would have done a man's heart good to see.

How a score of ewes now?

SILENCE.

Thereafter as they be-a score of good ewes may be worth ten pounds.

SHALLOW.

And is old Double dead?

Enter BARDOLPH, and one with him

SILENCE.

Here come two of Sir John Falstaffs men, as I think.

SHALLOW.

Good morrow, honest gentlemen.

BARDOLPH.

I beseech you, which is Justice Shallow?

SHALLOW.

I am Robert Shallow, sir, a poor esquire of this county,
and one of the King's justices of the peace. What is your good
pleasure with me?

BARDOLPH.

My captain, sir, commends him to you; my captain, Sir
John Falstaff-a tall gentleman, by heaven, and a most gallant leader.

SHALLOW.

He greets me well, sir; I knew him a good back-sword man.

How doth the good knight? May I ask how my lady his wife doth?

BARDOLPH.

Sir, pardon; a soldier is better accommodated than with a wife.

SHALLOW.

It is well said, in faith, sir; and it is well said indeed
too. 'Better accommodated!' It is good; yea, indeed, is it.
Good

phrases are surely, and ever were, very commendable.

'Accommodated!' It comes of accommodo. Very good; a good phrase.

BARDOLPH.
Pardon, sir; I have heard the word. 'Phrase' call you it?
By this day, I know not the phrase; but I will maintain the word
with my sword to be a soldier-like word, and a word of exceeding
good command, by heaven. Accommodated: that is, when a man is, as
they say, accommodated; or, when a man is being-whereby 'a may be
thought to be accommodated; which is an excellent thing.

Enter FALSTAFF

SHALLOW.
It is very just. Look, here comes good Sir John. Give me
your good hand, give me your worship's good hand. By my troth,
you like well and bear your years very well. Welcome, good Sir
John.

FALSTAFF.

I am glad to see you well, good Master Robert Shallow.

Master Surecard, as I think?

SHALLOW.

No, Sir John; it is my cousin Silence, in commission with me.

FALSTAFF.

Good Master Silence, it well befits you should be of the peace.

SILENCE.

Your good worship is welcome.

FALSTAFF.

Fie! this is hot weather. Gentlemen, have you provided me
here half a dozen sufficient men?

SHALLOW.

Marry, have we, sir. Will you sit?

FALSTAFF.

Let me see them, I beseech you.

SHALLOW.

Where's the roll? Where's the roll? Where's the roll?

Let

me see, let me see, let me see. So, so, so, so,- so, so-yea,

marry, sir. Rafe Mouldy! Let them appear as I call; let them do

so, let them do so. Let me see; where is Mouldy?

MOULDY.

Here, an't please you.

SHALLOW.

What think you, Sir John? A good-limb'd fellow; young,

strong, and of good friends.

FALSTAFF.

Is thy name Mouldy?

MOULDY.

Yea, an't please you.

FALSTAFF.

'Tis the more time thou wert us'd.

SHALLOW.

Ha, ha, ha! most excellent, i' faith! Things that are mouldy lack use. Very singular good! In faith, well said, Sir John; very well said.

FALSTAFF.

Prick him.

MOULDY.

I was prick'd well enough before, an you could have let me alone. My old dame will be undone now for one to do her husbandry and her drudgery. You need not to have prick'd me; there are

other men fitter to go out than I.

FALSTAFF.

Go to; peace, Mouldy; you shall go. Mouldy, it is time you were spent.

MOULDY.

Spent!

SHALLOW.

Peace, fellow, peace; stand aside; know you where you are?

For th' other, Sir John-let me see. Simon Shadow!

FALSTAFF.

Yea, marry, let me have him to sit under. He's like to be a cold soldier.

SHALLOW.

Where's Shadow?

SHADOW.

Here, sir.

FALSTAFF.

Shadow, whose son art thou?

SHADOW.

My mother's son, sir.

FALSTAFF.

Thy mother's son! Like enough; and thy father's shadow.
So the son of the female is the shadow of the male. It is often
so indeed; but much of the father's substance!

SHALLOW.

Do you like him, Sir John?

FALSTAFF.

Shadow will serve for summer. Prick him; for we have a number of shadows fill up the muster-book.

SHALLOW.

Thomas Wart!

FALSTAFF.

Where's he?

WART.

Here, sir.

FALSTAFF.

Is thy name Wart?

WART.

Yea, sir.

FALSTAFF.

Thou art a very ragged wart.

SHALLOW.

Shall I prick him, Sir John?

FALSTAFF.

It were superfluous; for his apparel is built upon his
back, and the whole frame stands upon pins. Prick him no more.

SHALLOW.

Ha, ha, ha! You can do it, sir; you can do it. I commend
you well. Francis Feeble!

FEEBLE.

Here, sir.

FALSTAFF.

What trade art thou, Feeble?

FEEBLE.

A woman's tailor, sir.

SHALLOW.

Shall I prick him, sir?

FALSTAFF.

You may; but if he had been a man's tailor, he'd ha'
prick'd you. Wilt thou make as many holes in an enemy's battle as
thou hast done in a woman's petticoat?

FEEBLE.

I will do my good will, sir; you can have no more.

FALSTAFF.

Well said, good woman's tailor! well said, courageous
Feeble! Thou wilt be as valiant as the wrathful dove or most
magnanimous mouse. Prick the woman's tailor-well, Master

Shallow, deep, Master Shallow.

FEEBLE.

I would Wart might have gone, sir.

FALSTAFF.

I would thou wert a man's tailor, that thou mightst mend him and make him fit to go. I cannot put him to a private soldier, that is the leader of so many thousands. Let that suffice, most forcible Feeble.

FEEBLE.

It shall suffice, sir.

FALSTAFF.

I am bound to thee, reverend Feeble. Who is next?

SHALLOW.

Peter Bullcalf o' th' green!

FALSTAFF.

Yea, marry, let's see Bullcalf.

BULLCALF.

Here, sir.

FALSTAFF.

Fore God, a likely fellow! Come, prick me Bullcalf till he roar again.

BULLCALF.

O Lord! good my lord captain-

FALSTAFF.

What, dost thou roar before thou art prick'd?

BULLCALF.

O Lord, sir! I am a diseased man.

FALSTAFF.

What disease hast thou?

BULLCALF.

A whoreson cold, sir, a cough, sir, which I caught with

ringing in the King's affairs upon his coronation day, sir.

FALSTAFF.

Come, thou shalt go to the wars in a gown. We will have

away thy cold; and I will take such order that thy friends shall

ring for thee. Is here all?

SHALLOW.

Here is two more call'd than your number. You must have

but four here, sir; and so, I pray you, go in with me to dinner.

FALSTAFF.

Come, I will go drink with you, but I cannot tarry

dinner. I am glad to see you, by my troth, Master Shallow.

SHALLOW.

O, Sir John, do you remember since we lay all night in the
windmill in Saint George's Field?

FALSTAFF.
No more of that, Master Shallow, no more of that.

SHALLOW.

Ha, 'twas a merry night. And is Jane Nightwork alive?

FALSTAFF.
She lives, Master Shallow.

SHALLOW.

She never could away with me.

FALSTAFF.
Never, never; she would always say she could not abide
Master Shallow.

SHALLOW.

By the mass, I could anger her to th' heart. She was then
a bona-roba. Doth she hold her own well?

FALSTAFF.

Old, old, Master Shallow.

SHALLOW.

Nay, she must be old; she cannot choose but be old;
certain she's old; and had Robin Nightwork, by old Nightwork,
before I came to Clement's Inn.

SILENCE.

That's fifty-five year ago.

SHALLOW.

Ha, cousin Silence, that thou hadst seen that that this
knight and I have seen! Ha, Sir John, said I well?

FALSTAFF.

We have heard the chimes at midnight, Master Shallow.

SHALLOW.

That we have, that we have, that we have; in faith,

Sir

John, we have. Our watchword was 'Hem, boys!' Come, let's to

dinner; come, let's to dinner. Jesus, the days that we have seen!

Come, come.

Exeunt FALSTAFF and the JUSTICES

BULLCALF.

Good Master Corporate Bardolph, stand my friend; and

here's four Harry ten shillings in French crowns for you. In very

truth, sir, I had as lief be hang'd, sir, as go. And yet, for

mine own part, sir, I do not care; but rather because I am

unwilling and, for mine own part, have a desire to stay with my

friends; else, sir, I did not care for mine own part so much.

BARDOLPH.

Go to; stand aside.

MOULDY.

And, good Master Corporal Captain, for my old dame's sake,
stand my friend. She has nobody to do anything about her when

I

am gone; and she is old, and cannot help herself. You shall have forty, sir.

BARDOLPH.

Go to; stand aside.

FEEBLE.

By my troth, I care not; a man can die but once; we owe God
a death. I'll ne'er bear a base mind. An't be my destiny, so;
an't be not, so. No man's too good to serve 's Prince; and, let
it go which way it will, he that dies this year is quit for the next.

BARDOLPH.

Well said; th'art a good fellow.

FEEBLE.

Faith, I'll bear no base mind.

Re-enter FALSTAFF and the JUSTICES

FALSTAFF.

Come, sir, which men shall I have?

SHALLOW.

Four of which you please.

BARDOLPH.

Sir, a word with you. I have three pound to free Mouldy

and Bullcalf.

FALSTAFF.

Go to; well.

SHALLOW.

Come, Sir John, which four will you have?

FALSTAFF.

Do you choose for me.

SHALLOW.

Marry, then-Mouldy, Bullcalf, Feeble, and Shadow.

FALSTAFF.

Mouldy and Bullcalf: for you, Mouldy, stay at home till
you are past service; and for your part, Bullcalf, grow you come
unto it. I will none of you.

SHALLOW.

Sir John, Sir John, do not yourself wrong. They are your
likeliest men, and I would have you serv'd with the best.

FALSTAFF.

Will you tell me, Master Shallow, how to choose a man?
Care I for the limb, the thews, the stature, bulk, and big
assemblance of a man! Give me the spirit, Master Shallow.

Here's

Wart; you see what a ragged appearance it is. 'A shall charge you

and discharge you with the motion of a pewterer's hammer, come

off and on swifter than he that gibbets on the brewer's bucket.

And this same half-fac'd fellow, Shadow-give me this man. He

presents no mark to the enemy; the foeman may with as great aim

level at the edge of a penknife. And, for a retreat-how swiftly

will this Feeble, the woman's tailor, run off! O, give me the

spare men, and spare me the great ones. Put me a caliver into

Wart's hand, Bardolph.

BARDOLPH.

Hold, Wart. Traverse-thus, thus, thus.

FALSTAFF.

Come, manage me your caliver. So-very well. Go to; very

good; exceeding good. O, give me always a little, lean, old,

chopt, bald shot. Well said, i' faith, Wart; th'art a good scab.

Hold, there's a tester for thee.

SHALLOW.

He is not his craft's master, he doth not do it right.

I

remember at Mile-end Green, when I lay at Clement's Inn-I was

then Sir Dagonet in Arthur's show-there was a little quiver

fellow, and 'a would manage you his piece thus; and 'a would

about and about, and come you in and come you in. 'Rah, tah,

tah!' would 'a say; 'Bounce!' would 'a say; and away again would

'a go, and again would 'a come. I shall ne'er see such a fellow.

FALSTAFF.

These fellows will do well. Master Shallow, God keep you!

Master Silence, I will not use many words with you: Fare you

well! Gentlemen both, I thank you. I must a dozen mile to-night. Bardolph, give the soldiers coats. SHALLOW. Sir John, the Lord bless you; God prosper your affairs; God send us peace! At your return, visit our house; let our old acquaintance be renewed. Peradventure I will with ye to the court. FALSTAFF. Fore God, would you would. SHALLOW. Go to; I have spoke at a word. God keep you. FALSTAFF. Fare you well, gentle gentlemen. *[Exeunt JUSTICES]* On, Bardolph; lead the men away. *[Exeunt all but FALSTAFF]* As I return, I will fetch off these justices. I do see the bottom of justice Shallow. Lord, Lord, how subject we old men are to this vice of lying! This same starv'd justice hath done nothing but prate to me of the wildness of his youth and the feats he hath done about Turnbull Street; and every third word a lie, duer paid to the hearer than the Turk's tribute. I do remember him at Clement's Inn, like a man made after supper of a cheese-paring. When 'a was naked, he was for all the world like a fork'd radish, with a head fantastically carved upon it with a knife. 'A was so forlorn that his dimensions to any thick sight were invisible. 'A was the very genius of famine; yet lecherous as a monkey, and the whores call'd him mandrake. 'A came ever in the rearward of the fashion, and sung those tunes to the overscutch'd huswifes that he heard the carmen whistle, and sware they were his fancies or his good-nights. And now is this Vice's dagger become a squire, and talks as familiarly of John a Gaunt as if he had been sworn brother to him; and I'll be sworn 'a ne'er saw him but once in the Tiltyard; and then he burst his head for crowding among the marshal's men. I saw it, and told John a Gaunt he beat his own name; for you might have thrust him and all his apparel into an eel-skin; the case of a treble hautboy was a mansion for him, a court-and now has he land and beeves. Well, I'll be acquainted with him if I return; and 't shall go hard but I'll make him a philosopher's two stones to me. If the young dace be a bait for the old pike, I see no reason in the law of nature but I may snap at him. Let time shape, and there an end. *Exit*

ACT IV. SCENE I. Yorkshire. Within the Forest of Gaultree

Enter the ARCHBISHOP OF YORK, MOWBRAY, HASTINGS, and others

ARCHBISHOP.

What is this forest call'd

HASTINGS.

'Tis Gaultree Forest, an't shall please your Grace.

ARCHBISHOP.

Here stand, my lords, and send discoverers forth

To know the numbers of our enemies.

HASTINGS.

We have sent forth already.

ARCHBISHOP.
'Tis well done.
My friends and brethren in these great affairs,
I must acquaint you that I have receiv'd
New-dated letters from Northumberland;
Their cold intent, tenour, and substance, thus:
Here doth he wish his person, with such powers
As might hold sortance with his quality,
The which he could not levy; whereupon
He is retir'd, to ripe his growing fortunes,
To Scotland; and concludes in hearty prayers
That your attempts may overlive the hazard
And fearful meeting of their opposite.

MOWBRAY.

Thus do the hopes we have in him touch ground
And dash themselves to pieces.

Enter A MESSENGER

HASTINGS.
Now, what news?

MESSENGER.
West of this forest, scarcely off a mile,
In goodly form comes on the enemy;
And, by the ground they hide, I judge their number
Upon or near the rate of thirty thousand.

MOWBRAY.

The just proportion that we gave them out.
Let us sway on and face them in the field.

Enter WESTMORELAND

ARCHBISHOP.

What well-appointed leader fronts us here?

MOWBRAY.

I think it is my Lord of Westmoreland.

WESTMORELAND.

Health and fair greeting from our general,

The Prince, Lord John and Duke of Lancaster.

ARCHBISHOP.

Say on, my Lord of Westmoreland, in peace,

What doth concern your coming.

WESTMORELAND.

Then, my lord,

Unto your Grace do I in chief address

The substance of my speech. If that rebellion

Came like itself, in base and abject routs,

Led on by bloody youth, guarded with rags, And countenanc'd by boys and beggary-

I say, if damn'd commotion so appear'd

In his true, native, and most proper shape,

You, reverend father, and these noble lords,

Had not been here to dress the ugly form

Of base and bloody insurrection

With your fair honours. You, Lord Archbishop,

Whose see is by a civil peace maintain'd,

Whose beard the silver hand of peace hath touch'd,

Whose learning and good letters peace hath tutor'd,

Whose white investments figure innocence,

The dove, and very blessed spirit of peace-

Wherefore you do so ill translate yourself

Out of the speech of peace, that bears such grace,

Into the harsh and boist'rous tongue of war;

Turning your books to graves, your ink to blood,

Your pens to lances, and your tongue divine

To a loud trumpet and a point of war?

ARCHBISHOP.

Wherefore do I this? So the question stands.

Briefly to this end: we are all diseas'd

And with our surfeiting and wanton hours

Have brought ourselves into a burning fever,

And we must bleed for it; of which disease

Our late King, Richard, being infected, died.

But, my most noble Lord of Westmoreland,

I take not on me here as a physician;

Nor do I as an enemy to peace

Troop in the throngs of military men;

But rather show awhile like fearful war

To diet rank minds sick of happiness,

And purge th' obstructions which begin to stop

Our very veins of life. Hear me more plainly.

I have in equal balance justly weigh'd

What wrongs our arms may do, what wrongs we suffer,

And find our griefs heavier than our offences.

We see which way the stream of time doth run

And are enforc'd from our most quiet there

By the rough torrent of occasion;

And have the summary of all our griefs,

When time shall serve, to show in articles;
Which long ere this we offer'd to the King,
And might by no suit gain our audience:
When we are wrong'd, and would unfold our griefs,
We are denied access unto his person,
Even by those men that most have done us wrong.
The dangers of the days but newly gone,
Whose memory is written on the earth
With yet appearing blood, and the examples
Of every minute's instance, present now,
Hath put us in these ill-beseeming arms;
Not to break peace, or any branch of it,
But to establish here a peace indeed,
Concurring both in name and quality.

WESTMORELAND.
When ever yet was your appeal denied;
Wherein have you been galled by the King;
What peer hath been suborn'd to grate on you
That you should seal this lawless bloody book
Of forg'd rebellion with a seal divine,

And consecrate commotion's bitter edge?

ARCHBISHOP.
My brother general, the commonwealth,
To brother horn an household cruelty,
I make my quarrel in particular.

WESTMORELAND.
There is no need of any such redress;
Or if there were, it not belongs to you.

MOWBRAY.
Why not to him in part, and to us all
That feel the bruises of the days before,
And suffer the condition of these times
To lay a heavy and unequal hand
Upon our honours?

WESTMORELAND.
O my good Lord Mowbray,
Construe the times to their necessities,

And you shall say, indeed, it is the time,
And not the King, that doth you injuries.
Yet, for your part, it not appears to me,
Either from the King or in the present time,
That you should have an inch of any ground
To build a grief on. Were you not restor'd
To all the Duke of Norfolk's signiories,
Your noble and right well-rememb'red father's?

MOWBRAY.

What thing, in honour, had my father lost
That need to be reviv'd and breath'd in me?
The King that lov'd him, as the state stood then,
Was force perforce compell'd to banish him,
And then that Henry Bolingbroke and he,
Being mounted and both roused in their seats,
Their neighing coursers daring of the spur,
Their armed staves in charge, their beavers down,
Their eyes of fire sparkling through sights of steel,
And the loud trumpet blowing them together-
Then, then, when there was nothing could have stay'd

My father from the breast of Bolingbroke,
O, when the King did throw his warder down-
His own life hung upon the staff he threw-
Then threw he down himself, and all their lives
That by indictment and by dint of sword
Have since miscarried under Bolingbroke.

WESTMORELAND.

You speak, Lord Mowbray, now you know not what.
The Earl of Hereford was reputed then
In England the most valiant gentleman.
Who knows on whom fortune would then have smil'd?
But if your father had been victor there,
He ne'er had borne it out of Coventry;
For all the country, in a general voice,
Cried hate upon him; and all their prayers and love
Were set on Hereford, whom they doted on,
And bless'd and grac'd indeed more than the King.

But this is mere digression from my purpose.

Here come I from our princely general
To know your griefs; to tell you from his Grace
That he will give you audience; and wherein
It shall appear that your demands are just,
You shall enjoy them, everything set off
That might so much as think you enemies.

MOWBRAY.
But he hath forc'd us to compel this offer;
And it proceeds from policy, not love.

WESTMORELAND.
Mowbray. you overween to take it so.
This offer comes from mercy, not from fear;
For, lo! within a ken our army lies-
Upon mine honour, all too confident
To give admittance to a thought of fear.
Our battle is more full of names than yours,
Our men more perfect in the use of arms,
Our armour all as strong, our cause the best;
Then reason will our hearts should be as good.

Say you not, then, our offer is compell'd.

MOWBRAY.

Well, by my will we shall admit no parley.

WESTMORELAND.
That argues but the shame of your offence:

A rotten case abides no handling.

HASTINGS.
Hath the Prince John a full commission,
In very ample virtue of his father,
To hear and absolutely to determine
Of what conditions we shall stand upon?

WESTMORELAND.
That is intended in the general's name.

I muse you make so slight a question.

ARCHBISHOP.

Then take, my Lord of Westmoreland, this schedule,

For this contains our general grievances.

Each several article herein redress'd,

All members of our cause, both here and hence,

That are insinewed to this action,

Acquitted by a true substantial form,

And present execution of our wills

To us and to our purposes confin'd-

We come within our awful banks again,

And knit our powers to the arm of peace.

WESTMORELAND.

This will I show the general. Please you, lords,

In sight of both our battles we may meet;

And either end in peace-which God so frame!-

Or to the place of diff'rence call the swords

Which must decide it.

ARCHBISHOP.

My lord, we will do so. *Exit* WESTMORELAND

MOWBRAY.

There is a thing within my bosom tells me

That no conditions of our peace can stand.

HASTINGS.

Fear you not that: if we can make our peace

Upon such large terms and so absolute

As our conditions shall consist upon,

Our peace shall stand as firm as rocky mountains.

MOWBRAY.

Yea, but our valuation shall be such

That every slight and false-derived cause,

Yea, every idle, nice, and wanton reason,

Shall to the King taste of this action;

That, were our royal faiths martyrs in love,

We shall be winnow'd with so rough a wind

That even our corn shall seem as light as chaff,

And good from bad find no partition.

ARCHBISHOP.

No, no, my lord. Note this: the King is weary

Of dainty and such picking grievances;

For he hath found to end one doubt by death

Revives two greater in the heirs of life;

And therefore will he wipe his tables clean,

And keep no tell-tale to his memory

That may repeat and history his los

To new remembrance. For full well he knows

He cannot so precisely weed this land

As his misdoubts present occasion:

His foes are so enrooted with his friends

That, plucking to unfix an enemy,

He doth unfasten so and shake a friend.

So that this land, like an offensive wife

That hath enrag'd him on to offer strokes,

As he is striking, holds his infant up,

And hangs resolv'd correction in the arm

That was uprear'd to execution.

HASTINGS.

Besides, the King hath wasted all his rods

On late offenders, that he now doth lack

The very instruments of chastisement;

So that his power, like to a fangless lion,

May offer, but not hold.

ARCHBISHOP.

'Tis very true;

And therefore be assur'd, my good Lord Marshal,

If we do now make our atonement well,

Our peace will, like a broken limb united,

Grow stronger for the breaking.

MOWBRAY.

Be it so.

Here is return'd my Lord of Westmoreland.

Re-enter WESTMORELAND

WESTMORELAND.

The Prince is here at hand. Pleaseth your lordship

To meet his Grace just distance 'tween our armies?

MOWBRAY.

Your Grace of York, in God's name then, set forward.

ARCHBISHOP.

Before, and greet his Grace. My lord, we come.

Exeunt

SCENE II. Another part of the forest

Enter , from one side, MOWBRAY, attended; afterwards, the

ARCHBISHOP,

HASTINGS, and others; from the other side, PRINCE JOHN of

LANCASTER,

WESTMORELAND, OFFICERS, and others

PRINCE JOHN.

You are well encount'red here, my cousin Mowbray.

Good day to you, gentle Lord Archbishop;

And so to you, Lord Hastings, and to all.

My Lord of York, it better show'd with you

When that your flock, assembled by the bell,

Encircled you to hear with reverence

Your exposition on the holy text

Than now to see you here an iron man,

Cheering a rout of rebels with your drum,

Turning the word to sword, and life to death.

That man that sits within a monarch's heart

And ripens in the sunshine of his favour,

Would he abuse the countenance of the king,

Alack, what mischiefs might he set abroach

In shadow of such greatness! With you, Lord Bishop,

It is even so. Who hath not heard it spoken

How deep you were within the books of God?

To us the speaker in His parliament,

To us th' imagin'd voice of God himself,

The very opener and intelligencer

Between the grace, the sanctities of heaven,

And our dull workings. O, who shall believe

But you misuse the reverence of your place,

Employ the countenance and grace of heav'n

As a false favourite doth his prince's name, In deeds dishonourable? You have ta'en up,

Under the counterfeited zeal of God,

The subjects of His substitute, my father,

And both against the peace of heaven and him

Have here up-swarm'd them.

ARCHBISHOP.

Good my Lord of Lancaster,

I am not here against your father's peace;

But, as I told my Lord of Westmoreland,

The time misord'red doth, in common sense,

Crowd us and crush us to this monstrous form

To hold our safety up. I sent your Grace

The parcels and particulars of our grief,

The which hath been with scorn shov'd from the court,

Whereon this hydra son of war is born;

Whose dangerous eyes may well be charm'd asleep

With grant of our most just and right desires;

And true obedience, of this madness cur'd,

Stoop tamely to the foot of majesty.

MOWBRAY.

If not, we ready are to try our fortunes

To the last man.

HASTINGS.

And though we here fall down,

We have supplies to second our attempt.

If they miscarry, theirs shall second them;

And so success of mischief shall be born,

And heir from heir shall hold this quarrel up

Whiles England shall have generation.

PRINCE JOHN.

YOU are too shallow, Hastings, much to shallow,

To sound the bottom of the after-times.

WESTMORELAND.

Pleaseth your Grace to answer them directly

How far forth you do like their articles.

PRINCE JOHN.

I like them all and do allow them well;

And swear here, by the honour of my blood,

My father's purposes have been mistook;

And some about him have too lavishly

Wrested his meaning and authority.

My lord, these griefs shall be with speed redress'd;

Upon my soul, they shall. If this may please you,

Discharge your powers unto their several counties,

As we will ours; and here, between the armies,

Let's drink together friendly and embrace,

That all their eyes may bear those tokens home

Of our restored love and amity.

ARCHBISHOP.

I take your princely word for these redresses.

PRINCE JOHN.

I give it you, and will maintain my word;

And thereupon I drink unto your Grace.

HASTINGS.

Go, Captain, and deliver to the army
This news of peace. Let them have pay, and part.

I know it will please them. Hie thee, Captain.

Exit Officer

ARCHBISHOP.
To you, my noble Lord of Westmoreland.

WESTMORELAND.
I pledge your Grace; and if you knew what pains
I have bestow'd to breed this present peace,
You would drink freely; but my love to ye
Shall show itself more openly hereafter.

ARCHBISHOP.

I do not doubt you.

WESTMORELAND.

I am glad of it.

Health to my lord and gentle cousin, Mowbray.

MOWBRAY.

You wish me health in very happy season,

For I am on the sudden something ill.

ARCHBISHOP.

Against ill chances men are ever merry;

But heaviness foreruns the good event.

WESTMORELAND.

Therefore be merry, coz; since sudden sorrow

Serves to say thus, 'Some good thing comes to-morrow.'

ARCHBISHOP.

Believe me, I am passing light in spirit.

MOWBRAY.

So much the worse, if your own rule be true.

[Shouts within]

PRINCE JOHN.

The word of peace is rend'red. Hark, how they shout!

MOWBRAY.

This had been cheerful after victory.

ARCHBISHOP.

A peace is of the nature of a conquest;

For then both parties nobly are subdu'd,

And neither party loser.

PRINCE JOHN.

Go, my lord,

And let our army be discharged too.

Exit WESTMORELAND

And, good my lord, so please you let our trains
March by us, that we may peruse the men
We should have cop'd withal.

ARCHBISHOP.
Go, good Lord Hastings,
And, ere they be dismiss'd, let them march by.

Exit HASTINGS

PRINCE JOHN.
I trust, lords, we shall lie to-night together.
Re-enter WESTMORELAND
Now, cousin, wherefore stands our army still?

WESTMORELAND.
The leaders, having charge from you to stand,
Will not go off until they hear you speak.

PRINCE JOHN.

They know their duties.

Re-enter HASTINGS

HASTINGS.

My lord, our army is dispers'd already.

Like youthful steers unyok'd, they take their courses

East, west, north, south; or like a school broke up,

Each hurries toward his home and sporting-place.

WESTMORELAND.

Good tidings, my Lord Hastings; for the which

I do arrest thee, traitor, of high treason;

And you, Lord Archbishop, and you, Lord Mowbray,

Of capital treason I attach you both.

MOWBRAY.

Is this proceeding just and honourable?

WESTMORELAND.

Is your assembly so?

ARCHBISHOP.

Will you thus break your faith?

PRINCE JOHN.

I pawn'd thee none:

I promis'd you redress of these same grievances

Whereof you did complain; which, by mine honour,

I will perform with a most Christian care.

But for you, rebels-look to taste the due

Meet for rebellion and such acts as yours.

Most shallowly did you these arms commence,

Fondly brought here, and foolishly sent hence.

Strike up our drums, pursue the scatt'red stray.

God, and not we, hath safely fought to-day.

Some guard these traitors to the block of death,

Treason's true bed and yielder-up of breath. *Exeunt*

SCENE III. Another part of the forest

Alarum; excursions. *Enter* FALSTAFF and COLVILLE, meeting

FALSTAFF.

What's your name, sir? Of what condition are you, and of what place, I pray?

COLVILLE.

I am a knight sir; and my name is Colville of the Dale.

FALSTAFF.

Well then, Colville is your name, a knight is your degree, and your place the Dale. Colville shall still be your name, a traitor your degree, and the dungeon your place-a place deep enough; so shall you be still Colville of the Dale.

COLVILLE.

Are not you Sir John Falstaff?

FALSTAFF.

As good a man as he, sir, whoe'er I am. Do you yield, sir, or shall I sweat for you? If I do sweat, they are the drops

of thy lovers, and they weep for thy death; therefore rouse up
fear and trembling, and do observance to my mercy.

COLVILLE.

I think you are Sir John Falstaff, and in that thought yield me.

FALSTAFF.
I have a whole school of tongues in this belly of mine;
and not a tongue of them all speaks any other word but my name.
An I had but a belly of any indifferency, I were simply the most
active fellow in Europe. My womb, my womb, my womb undoes me.
Here comes our general.

Enter PRINCE JOHN OF LANCASTER, WESTMORELAND,

BLUNT, and others
PRINCE JOHN.

The heat is past; follow no further now.
Call in the powers, good cousin Westmoreland.

Exit WESTMORELAND

Now, Falstaff, where have you been all this while?
When everything is ended, then you come.
These tardy tricks of yours will, on my life,
One time or other break some gallows' back.

FALSTAFF.
I would be sorry, my lord, but it should be thus: I never
knew yet but rebuke and check was the reward of valour. Do you
think me a swallow, an arrow, or a bullet? Have I, in my poor and
old motion, the expedition of thought? I have speeded hither with
the very extremest inch of possibility; I have found'red nine
score and odd posts; and here, travel tainted as I am, have, in
my pure and immaculate valour, taken Sir John Colville of the
Dale,a most furious knight and valorous enemy. But what of that?
He saw me, and yielded; that I may justly say with the
hook-nos'd
fellow of Rome-I came, saw, and overcame.

PRINCE JOHN.

It was more of his courtesy than your deserving.

FALSTAFF.

I know not. Here he is, and here I yield him; and I
beseech your Grace, let it be book'd with the rest of this day's
deeds; or, by the Lord, I will have it in a particular ballad
else, with mine own picture on the top on't, Colville kissing my
foot; to the which course if I be enforc'd, if you do not all
show like gilt twopences to me, and I, in the clear sky of fame,
o'ershine you as much as the full moon doth the cinders of the
element, which show like pins' heads to her, believe not the word
of the noble. Therefore let me have right, and let desert mount.

PRINCE JOHN.

Thine's too heavy to mount.

FALSTAFF.

Let it shine, then.

PRINCE JOHN.

Thine's too thick to shine.

FALSTAFF.

Let it do something, my good lord, that may do me good,

and call it what you will.

PRINCE JOHN.

Is thy name Colville?

COLVILLE.

It is, my lord.

PRINCE JOHN.

A famous rebel art thou, Colville.

FALSTAFF.

And a famous true subject took him.

COLVILLE.

I am, my lord, but as my betters are

That led me hither. Had they been rul'd by me,

You should have won them dearer than you have.

FALSTAFF.

I know not how they sold themselves; but thou, like a

kind fellow, gavest thyself away gratis; and I thank thee for thee.

Re-enter WESTMORELAND

PRINCE JOHN.

Now, have you left pursuit? WESTMORELAND. Retreat is made, and execution stay'd. PRINCE JOHN. Send Colville, with his confederates, To York, to present execution. Blunt, lead him hence; and see you guard him sure. *Exeunt* BLUNT and others And now dispatch we toward the court, my lords. I hear the King my father is sore sick. Our news shall go before us to his Majesty, Which, cousin, you shall bear to comfort him And we with sober speed will follow you. FALSTAFF. My lord, I beseech you, give me leave to go through Gloucestershire; and, when you come to court, stand my good lord, pray, in your good report. PRINCE JOHN. Fare you well, Falstaff. I, in my condition, Shall better speak of you than you deserve. *Exeunt* all but FALSTAFF FALSTAFF. I would you had but the wit; 'twere better than your dukedom. Good faith, this same young sober-blooded boy doth not love me; nor a man cannot make him laugh-but that's no marvel; he drinks no wine. There's never none of these demure boys come to any proof; for thin drink doth so over-cool their blood, and making many fish-meals, that they fall into a kind of male green-sickness; and then, when they marry, they get wenches. They are generally fools and cowards-which some of us should be too, but for inflammation. A good sherris-sack hath a two-fold operation in it. It ascends me into the brain; dries me there all the foolish and dull and crudy vapours which environ it; makes it apprehensive, quick, forgetive, full of nimble, fiery, and delectable shapes; which delivered o'er to the voice, the tongue, which is the birth, becomes excellent wit. The second property of your excellent sherris is the warming of the blood; which before, cold and settled, left the liver white and pale, which is the badge of pusillanimity and cowardice; but the sherris warms it, and makes it course from the inwards to the parts extremes. It illumineth the face, which, as a beacon, gives warning to all the rest of this little kingdom, man, to arm; and then the vital commoners and inland petty spirits muster me all to their captain, the heart, who, great and puff'd up with this retinue, doth any deed of courage-and this valour comes of sherris. So that skill in the weapon is nothing without sack, for that sets it a-work; and learning, a mere hoard of gold kept by a devil till sack commences it and sets it in act and use. Hereof comes it that Prince Harry is valiant; for the cold blood he did naturally inherit of his father, he hath, like lean, sterile, and bare land, manured, husbanded, and till'd, with excellent endeavour of drinking good and good store of fertile sherris, that he is become very hot and valiant. If I had a thousand sons, the first humane principle I would teach them should be to forswear thin potations and to addict themselves to sack.

Enter BARDOLPH

How now, Bardolph!

BARDOLPH.

The army is discharged all and gone.

FALSTAFF.

Let them go. I'll through Gloucestershire, and there will

I visit Master Robert Shallow, Esquire. I have him already

temp'ring between my finger and my thumb, and shortly will I seal with him. Come away. *Exeunt*

SCENE IV. Westminster. The Jerusalem Chamber

Enter the KING, PRINCE THOMAS OF CLARENCE, PRINCE HUMPHREY OF

GLOUCESTER,

WARWICK, and others

KING.

Now, lords, if God doth give successful end

To this debate that bleedeth at our doors,

We will our youth lead on to higher fields,

And draw no swords but what are sanctified.

Our navy is address'd, our power connected,

Our substitutes in absence well invested,

And everything lies level to our wish.

Only we want a little personal strength;

And pause us till these rebels, now afoot,

Come underneath the yoke of government.

WARWICK.

Both which we doubt not but your Majesty

Shall soon enjoy.

KING.

Humphrey, my son of Gloucester,

Where is the Prince your brother?

PRINCE HUMPHREY.

I think he's gone to hunt, my lord, at Windsor.

KING.

And how accompanied?

PRINCE HUMPHREY.

I do not know, my lord.

KING.

Is not his brother, Thomas of Clarence, with him?

PRINCE HUMPHREY.

No, my good lord, he is in presence here.

CLARENCE.

What would my lord and father?

KING.

Nothing but well to thee, Thomas of Clarence.

How chance thou art not with the Prince thy brother?
He loves thee, and thou dost neglect him, Thomas.
Thou hast a better place in his affection
Than all thy brothers; cherish it, my boy,
And noble offices thou mayst effect
Of mediation, after I am dead,
Between his greatness and thy other brethren.
Therefore omit him not; blunt not his love,
Nor lose the good advantage of his grace
By seeming cold or careless of his will;
For he is gracious if he be observ'd.

He hath a tear for pity and a hand
Open as day for melting charity;
Yet notwithstanding, being incens'd, he is flint;
As humorous as winter, and as sudden
As flaws congealed in the spring of day.

His temper, therefore, must be well observ'd.
Chide him for faults, and do it reverently,
When you perceive his blood inclin'd to mirth;
But, being moody, give him line and scope
Till that his passions, like a whale on ground,
Confound themselves with working. Learn this, Thomas,
And thou shalt prove a shelter to thy friends,
A hoop of gold to bind thy brothers in,
That the united vessel of their blood,
Mingled with venom of suggestion-
As, force perforce, the age will pour it in-
Shall never leak, though it do work as strong
As aconitum or rash gunpowder.

CLARENCE.

I shall observe him with all care and love.

KING.

Why art thou not at Windsor with him, Thomas?

CLARENCE.

He is not there to-day; he dines in London.

KING.

And how accompanied? Canst thou tell that?

CLARENCE.

With Poins, and other his continual followers.

KING.

Most subject is the fattest soil to weeds;

And he, the noble image of my youth,

Is overspread with them; therefore my grief

Stretches itself beyond the hour of death.

The blood weeps from my heart when I do shape,

In forms imaginary, th'unguided days

And rotten times that you shall look upon

When I am sleeping with my ancestors.

For when his headstrong riot hath no curb,

When rage and hot blood are his counsellors

When means and lavish manners meet together,

O, with what wings shall his affections fly

Towards fronting peril and oppos'd decay!

WARWICK.

My gracious lord, you look beyond him quite.

The Prince but studies his companions

Like a strange tongue, wherein, to gain the language,

'Tis needful that the most immodest word

Be look'd upon and learnt; which once attain'd,

Your Highness knows, comes to no further use

But to be known and hated. So, like gross terms,

The Prince will, in the perfectness of time,

Cast off his followers; and their memory

Shall as a pattern or a measure live

By which his Grace must mete the lives of other,

Turning past evils to advantages.

KING.

'Tis seldom when the bee doth leave her comb

In the dead carrion.

Enter WESTMORELAND

Who's here? Westmoreland?

WESTMORELAND.

Health to my sovereign, and new happiness

Added to that that am to deliver!

Prince John, your son, doth kiss your Grace's hand.

Mowbray, the Bishop Scroop, Hastings, and all,

Are brought to the correction of your law.

There is not now a rebel's sword unsheath'd,

But Peace puts forth her olive everywhere.

The manner how this action hath been borne

Here at more leisure may your Highness read, With every course in his particular.

KING.

O Westmoreland, thou art a summer bird,

Which ever in the haunch of winter sings

The lifting up of day.

Enter HARCOURT

Look here's more news.

HARCOURT.

From enemies heaven keep your Majesty;

And, when they stand against you, may they fall

As those that I am come to tell you of!

The Earl Northumberland and the Lord Bardolph,

With a great power of English and of Scots,

Are by the shrieve of Yorkshire overthrown.

The manner and true order of the fight

This packet, please it you, contains at large.

KING.

And wherefore should these good news make me sick?

Will Fortune never come with both hands full,

But write her fair words still in foulest letters?

She either gives a stomach and no food-

Such are the poor, in health-or else a feast,

And takes away the stomach-such are the rich

That have abundance and enjoy it not.

I should rejoice now at this happy news;

And now my sight fails, and my brain is giddy.

O me! come near me now I am much ill.

PRINCE HUMPHREY.

Comfort, your Majesty!

CLARENCE.

O my royal father!

WESTMORELAND.

My sovereign lord, cheer up yourself, look up.

WARWICK.

Be patient, Princes; you do know these fits

Are with his Highness very ordinary.

Stand from him, give him air; he'll straight be well.

CLARENCE.

No, no; he cannot long hold out these pangs.

Th' incessant care and labour of his mind

Hath wrought the mure that should confine it in

So thin that life looks through, and will break out.

PRINCE HUMPHREY.

The people fear me; for they do observe

Unfather'd heirs and loathly births of nature.

The seasons change their manners, as the year

Had found some months asleep, and leapt them over.

CLARENCE.

The river hath thrice flow'd, no ebb between;

And the old folk, Time's doting chronicles,

Say it did so a little time before

That our great grandsire, Edward, sick'd and died.

WARWICK.

Speak lower, Princes, for the King recovers.

PRINCE HUMPHREY.

This apoplexy will certain be his end.

KING.

I pray you take me up, and bear me hence

Into some other chamber. Softly, pray. *Exeunt*

SCENE V. Westminster. Another chamber

The KING lying on a bed; CLARENCE, GLOUCESTER, WARWICK, and others in attendance

KING.

Let there be no noise made, my gentle friends;

Unless some dull and favourable hand

Will whisper music to my weary spirit.

WARWICK.

Call for the music in the other room.

KING.

Set me the crown upon my pillow here.

CLARENCE.

His eye is hollow, and he changes much.

WARWICK.

Less noise! less noise!

Enter PRINCE HENRY

PRINCE.

Who saw the Duke of Clarence?

CLARENCE.

I am here, brother, full of heaviness.

PRINCE.

How now! Rain within doors, and none abroad!

How doth the King?

PRINCE HUMPHREY.

Exceeding ill.

PRINCE.

Heard he the good news yet? Tell it him.

PRINCE HUMPHREY.

He alt'red much upon the hearing it.

PRINCE.

If he be sick with joy, he'll recover without physic.

WARWICK.

Not so much noise, my lords. Sweet Prince, speak low;

The King your father is dispos'd to sleep.

CLARENCE.

Let us withdraw into the other room.

WARWICK.

Will't please your Grace to go along with us?

PRINCE.

No; I will sit and watch here by the King.

Exeunt all but the PRINCE

Why doth the crown lie there upon his pillow,

Being so troublesome a bedfellow?

O polish'd perturbation! golden care!

That keep'st the ports of slumber open wide

To many a watchful night! Sleep with it now!

Yet not so sound and half so deeply sweet

As he whose brow with homely biggen bound

Snores out the watch of night. O majesty!

When thou dost pinch thy bearer, thou dost sit

Like a rich armour worn in heat of day

That scald'st with safety. By his gates of breath

There lies a downy feather which stirs not.

Did he suspire, that light and weightless down

Perforce must move. My gracious lord! my father!

This sleep is sound indeed; this is a sleep

That from this golden rigol hath divorc'd

So many English kings. Thy due from me

Is tears and heavy sorrows of the blood

Which nature, love, and filial tenderness, Shall, O dear father, pay thee plenteously.

My due from thee is this imperial crown,

Which, as immediate from thy place and blood,

Derives itself to me. *[Putting on the crown]* Lo where it

sits-

Which God shall guard; and put the world's whole strength

Into one giant arm, it shall not force

This lineal honour from me. This from thee

Will I to mine leave as 'tis left to me. *Exit*

KING. Warwick! Gloucester! Clarence!

Re-enter WARWICK, GLOUCESTER, CLARENCE

CLARENCE.

Doth the King call?

WARWICK.

What would your Majesty? How fares your Grace?

KING.

Why did you leave me here alone, my lords?

CLARENCE.

We left the Prince my brother here, my liege,

Who undertook to sit and watch by you.

KING.

The Prince of Wales! Where is he? Let me see him.

He is not here.

WARWICK.

This door is open; he is gone this way.

PRINCE HUMPHREY.

He came not through the chamber where we stay'd.

KING.

Where is the crown? Who took it from my pillow?

WARWICK.

When we withdrew, my liege, we left it here.

KING.
The Prince hath ta'en it hence. Go, seek him out.
Is he so hasty that he doth suppose
My sleep my death?

Find him, my lord of Warwick; chide him hither.

Exit WARWICK

This part of his conjoins with my disease
And helps to end me. See, sons, what things you are!
How quickly nature falls into revolt
When gold becomes her object!
For this the foolish over-careful fathers
Have broke their sleep with thoughts,
Their brains with care, their bones with industry;
For this they have engrossed and pil'd up

The cank'red heaps of strange-achieved gold;
For this they have been thoughtful to invest
Their sons with arts and martial exercises;
When, like the bee, tolling from every flower
The virtuous sweets,
Our thighs with wax, our mouths with honey pack'd,
We bring it to the hive, and, like the bees,
Are murd'red for our pains. This bitter taste
Yields his engrossments to the ending father.
Re-enter WARWICK
Now where is he that will not stay so long
Till his friend sickness hath determin'd me?

WARWICK.
My lord, I found the Prince in the next room,
Washing with kindly tears his gentle cheeks,
With such a deep demeanour in great sorrow,
That tyranny, which never quaff'd but blood,
Would, by beholding him, have wash'd his knife
With gentle eye-drops. He is coming hither.

KING.

But wherefore did he take away the crown?
Re-enter PRINCE HENRY
Lo where he comes. Come hither to me, Harry.
Depart the chamber, leave us here alone.
Exeunt all but the KING and the PRINCE
PRINCE.

I never thought to hear you speak again.

KING.
Thy wish was father, Harry, to that thought.

I stay too long by thee, I weary thee.
Dost thou so hunger for mine empty chair
That thou wilt needs invest thee with my honours
Before thy hour be ripe? O foolish youth!

Thou seek'st the greatness that will overwhelm thee.
Stay but a little, for my cloud of dignity

Is held from falling with so weak a wind
That it will quickly drop; my day is dim.
Thou hast stol'n that which, after some few hours,
Were thine without offense; and at my death
Thou hast seal'd up my expectation.
Thy life did manifest thou lov'dst me not,
And thou wilt have me die assur'd of it.
Thou hid'st a thousand daggers in thy thoughts,
Which thou hast whetted on thy stony heart,
To stab at half an hour of my life.

What, canst thou not forbear me half an hour?
Then get thee gone, and dig my grave thyself;
And bid the merry bells ring to thine ear
That thou art crowned, not that I am dead.
Let all the tears that should bedew my hearse
Be drops of balm to sanctify thy head;
Only compound me with forgotten dust;
Give that which gave thee life unto the worms.
Pluck down my officers, break my decrees;
For now a time is come to mock at form-

Harry the Fifth is crown'd. Up, vanity:
Down, royal state. All you sage counsellors, hence.
And to the English court assemble now,
From every region, apes of idleness.

Now, neighbour confines, purge you of your scum.
Have you a ruffian that will swear, drink, dance,
Revel the night, rob, murder, and commit
The oldest sins the newest kind of ways?

Be happy, he will trouble you no more.
England shall double gild his treble guilt;
England shall give him office, honour, might;
For the fifth Harry from curb'd license plucks
The muzzle of restraint, and the wild dog
Shall flesh his tooth on every innocent.

O my poor kingdom, sick with civil blows!
When that my care could not withhold thy riots,
What wilt thou do when riot is thy care?
O, thou wilt be a wilderness again.

Peopled with wolves, thy old inhabitants!

PRINCE.

O, pardon me, my liege! But for my tears,

The moist impediments unto my speech,

I had forestall'd this dear and deep rebuke

Ere you with grief had spoke and I had heard

The course of it so far. There is your crown,

And he that wears the crown immortally

Long guard it yours! *[Kneeling]* If I affect it more

Than as your honour and as your renown,

Let me no more from this obedience rise,

Which my most inward true and duteous spirit

Teacheth this prostrate and exterior bending!

God witness with me, when I here came in

And found no course of breath within your Majesty,

How cold it struck my heart! If I do feign,

O, let me in my present wildness die,

And never live to show th' incredulous world

The noble change that I have purposed!

Coming to look on you, thinking you dead-

And dead almost, my liege, to think you were-

I spake unto this crown as having sense,

And thus upbraided it: 'The care on thee depending

Hath fed upon the body of my father;

Therefore thou best of gold art worst of gold.

Other, less fine in carat, is more precious,

Preserving life in med'cine potable;

But thou, most fine, most honour'd, most renown'd,

Hast eat thy bearer up.' Thus, my most royal liege,

Accusing it, I put it on my head,

To try with it-as with an enemy

That had before my face murd'red my father-

The quarrel of a true inheritor.

But if it did infect my blood with joy,

Or swell my thoughts to any strain of pride;

If any rebel or vain spirit of mine

Did with the least affection of a welcome

Give entertainment to the might of it,

Let God for ever keep it from my head,

And make me as the poorest vassal is,

That doth with awe and terror kneel to it!

KING.

O my son,

God put it in thy mind to take it hence,

That thou mightst win the more thy father's love,

Pleading so wisely in excuse of it!

Come hither, Harry; sit thou by my bed,

And hear, I think, the very latest counsel

That ever I shall breathe. God knows, my son,

By what by-paths and indirect crook'd ways

I met this crown; and I myself know well

How troublesome it sat upon my head:

To thee it shall descend with better quiet,

Better opinion, better confirmation;

For all the soil of the achievement goes

With me into the earth. It seem'd in me

But as an honour snatch'd with boist'rous hand;

And I had many living to upbraid

My gain of it by their assistances;

Which daily grew to quarrel and to bloodshed, Wounding supposed peace. All these bold fears

Thou seest with peril I have answered;

For all my reign hath been but as a scene

Acting that argument. And now my death

Changes the mood; for what in me was purchas'd

Falls upon thee in a more fairer sort;

So thou the garland wear'st successively.

Yet, though thou stand'st more sure than I could do,

Thou art not firm enough, since griefs are green;

And all my friends, which thou must make thy friends,

Have but their stings and teeth newly ta'en out;

By whose fell working I was first advanc'd,

And by whose power I well might lodge a fear

To be again displac'd; which to avoid,

I cut them off; and had a purpose now

To lead out many to the Holy Land,

Lest rest and lying still might make them look

Too near unto my state. Therefore, my Harry,

Be it thy course to busy giddy minds

With foreign quarrels, that action, hence borne out,

May waste the memory of the former days.

More would I, but my lungs are wasted so

That strength of speech is utterly denied me.

How I came by the crown, O God, forgive;

And grant it may with thee in true peace live!

PRINCE.

My gracious liege,

You won it, wore it, kept it, gave it me;

Then plain and right must my possession be;

Which I with more than with a common pain

'Gainst all the world will rightfully maintain.

Enter PRINCE JOHN OF LANCASTER, WARWICK, LORDS, and others

KING.

Look, look, here comes my John of Lancaster.

PRINCE JOHN.

Health, peace, and happiness, to my royal father!

KING.

Thou bring'st me happiness and peace, son John;

But health, alack, with youthful wings is flown

From this bare wither'd trunk. Upon thy sight

My worldly business makes a period.

Where is my Lord of Warwick?

PRINCE.

My Lord of Warwick!

KING.

Doth any name particular belong

Unto the lodging where I first did swoon?

WARWICK.

'Tis call'd Jerusalem, my noble lord.

KING.

Laud be to God! Even there my life must end.

It hath been prophesied to me many years,

I should not die but in Jerusalem;

Which vainly I suppos'd the Holy Land.

But bear me to that chamber; there I'll lie;

In that Jerusalem shall Harry die. *Exeunt*

ACT V. SCENE I. Gloucestershire. SHALLOW'S house

Enter SHALLOW, FALSTAFF, BARDOLPH, and PAGE

SHALLOW.

By cock and pie, sir, you shall not away to-night.

What, Davy, I say!

FALSTAFF.

You must excuse me, Master Robert Shallow.

SHALLOW.

I will not excuse you; you shall not be excus'd; excuses

shall not be admitted; there is no excuse shall serve; you shall not be excus'd. Why, Davy!

Enter DAVY

DAVY.

Here, sir. SHALLOW. Davy, Davy, Davy, Davy; let me see, Davy; let me see, Davy; let me see-yea, marry, William cook, bid him come hither. Sir John, you shall not be excus'd. DAVY. Marry, sir, thus: those precepts cannot be served; and, again, sir-shall we sow the headland with wheat? SHALLOW. With red wheat, Davy. But for William cook-are there no young pigeons? DAVY. Yes, sir. Here is now the smith's note for shoeing and plough-irons. SHALLOW. Let it be cast, and paid. Sir John, you shall not be excused. DAVY. Now, sir, a new link to the bucket must needs be had; and, sir, do you mean to stop any of William's wages about the sack he lost the other day at Hinckley fair? SHALLOW. 'A shall answer it. Some pigeons, Davy, a couple of short-legg'd hens, a joint of mutton, and any pretty little tiny kickshaws, tell William cook. DAVY. Doth the man of war stay all night, sir? SHALLOW. Yea, Davy; I will use him well. A friend i' th' court is better than a penny in purse. Use his men well, Davy; for they are arrant knaves and will backbite. DAVY. No worse than they are backbitten, sir; for they have marvellous foul linen. SHALLOW. Well conceited, Davy-about thy business, Davy. DAVY. I beseech you, sir, to countenance William Visor of Woncot against Clement Perkes o' th' hill. SHALLOW. There, is many complaints, Davy, against that Visor. That Visor is an arrant knave, on my knowledge. DAVY. I grant your worship that he is a knave, sir; but yet God forbid, sir, but a knave should have some countenance at his friend's request. An honest man, sir, is able to speak for himself, when a knave is not. I have serv'd your worship truly, sir, this eight years; an I cannot once or twice in a quarter bear out a knave against an honest man, I have but a very little credit with your worship. The knave is mine honest friend, sir; therefore, I beseech you, let him be countenanc'd. SHALLOW. Go to; I say he shall have no wrong. Look about, DAVY. *[Exit DAVY]* Where are you, Sir John? Come, come, come, off with your boots. Give me your hand, Master Bardolph. BARDOLPH. I am glad to see your worship. SHALLOW. I thank thee with all my heart, kind Master Bardolph. *[To the PAGE]* And welcome, my tall fellow. Come, Sir John. FALSTAFF. I'll follow you, good Master Robert Shallow. *[Exit SHALLOW]* Bardolph, look to our horses. *[Exeunt BARDOLPH and PAGE]* If I were sawed into quantities, I should make four dozen of such bearded hermits' staves as Master Shallow. It is a wonderful thing to see the semblable coherence of his men's spirits and his. They, by observing of him, do bear themselves like foolish justices: he, by conversing with them, is turned into a justice-like serving-man. Their spirits are so married in conjunction with the participation of society that they flock together in consent, like so many wild geese. If I had a suit to Master Shallow, I would humour his men with the imputation of being near their master; if to his men, I would curry with Master Shallow that no man could better command his servants. It is certain that either wise bearing or ignorant carriage is caught, as men take diseases, one of another; therefore let men take heed of their company. I will devise matter enough out of this Shallow to keep Prince Harry in continual laughter the wearing out of six fashions, which is four terms, or two actions; and 'a shall laugh without intervallums. O, it is much that a lie with a slight oath, and a jest with a sad brow will do with a fellow that never had the ache in his shoulders! O, you shall see him laugh till his face be like a wet cloak ill laid up! SHALLOW. *[Within]* Sir John! FALSTAFF. I come, Master Shallow; I come, Master Shallow. *Exit*

SCENE II. Westminster. The palace

Enter , severally, WARWICK, and the LORD CHIEF JUSTICE

WARWICK.

How now, my Lord Chief Justice; whither away?

CHIEF JUSTICE.

How doth the King?

WARWICK.

Exceeding well; his cares are now all ended.

CHIEF JUSTICE.

I hope, not dead.

WARWICK.

He's walk'd the way of nature;

And to our purposes he lives no more.

CHIEF JUSTICE.

I would his Majesty had call'd me with him.

The service that I truly did his life

Hath left me open to all injuries.

WARWICK.

Indeed, I think the young king loves you not.

CHIEF JUSTICE.

I know he doth not, and do arm myself
To welcome the condition of the time,
Which cannot look more hideously upon me
Than I have drawn it in my fantasy.

Enter LANCASTER, CLARENCE, GLOUCESTER,

WESTMORELAND, and others

WARWICK.

Here comes the heavy issue of dead Harry.
O that the living Harry had the temper
Of he, the worst of these three gentlemen!
How many nobles then should hold their places
That must strike sail to spirits of vile sort!

CHIEF JUSTICE.
O God, I fear all will be overturn'd.

PRINCE JOHN.

Good morrow, cousin Warwick, good morrow.

GLOUCESTER & CLARENCE. Good morrow, cousin.

PRINCE JOHN.

We meet like men that had forgot to speak.

WARWICK.

We do remember; but our argument

Is all too heavy to admit much talk.

PRINCE JOHN.

Well, peace be with him that hath made us heavy!

CHIEF JUSTICE.

Peace be with us, lest we be heavier!

PRINCE HUMPHREY.

O, good my lord, you have lost a friend indeed;

And I dare swear you borrow not that face

Of seeming sorrow-it is sure your own.

PRINCE JOHN.

Though no man be assur'd what grace to find,

You stand in coldest expectation.

I am the sorrier; would 'twere otherwise.

CLARENCE.

Well, you must now speak Sir John Falstaff fair;

Which swims against your stream of quality.

CHIEF JUSTICE.

Sweet Princes, what I did, I did in honour,

Led by th' impartial conduct of my soul;

And never shall you see that I will beg

A ragged and forestall'd remission.

If truth and upright innocency fail me,

I'll to the King my master that is dead,

And tell him who hath sent me after him.

WARWICK.

Here comes the Prince.

Enter KING HENRY THE FIFTH, attended

CHIEF JUSTICE.

Good morrow, and God save your Majesty!

KING.

This new and gorgeous garment, majesty,

Sits not so easy on me as you think.

Brothers, you mix your sadness with some fear.

This is the English, not the Turkish court;

Not Amurath an Amurath succeeds,

But Harry Harry. Yet be sad, good brothers,

For, by my faith, it very well becomes you.

Sorrow so royally in you appears

That I will deeply put the fashion on,

And wear it in my heart. Why, then, be sad;

But entertain no more of it, good brothers,

Than a joint burden laid upon us all.

For me, by heaven, I bid you be assur'd,
I'll be your father and your brother too;
Let me but bear your love, I'll bear your cares.
Yet weep that Harry's dead, and so will I;
But Harry lives that shall convert those tears
By number into hours of happiness.

BROTHERS.

We hope no otherwise from your Majesty.

KING.
You all look strangely on me; and you most.

You are, I think, assur'd I love you not.

CHIEF JUSTICE.
I am assur'd, if I be measur'd rightly,
Your Majesty hath no just cause to hate me.

KING.

No?
How might a prince of my great hopes forget
So great indignities you laid upon me?
What, rate, rebuke, and roughly send to prison,
Th' immediate heir of England! Was this easy?

May this be wash'd in Lethe and forgotten?

CHIEF JUSTICE.
I then did use the person of your father;
The image of his power lay then in me;
And in th' administration of his law,
Whiles I was busy for the commonwealth,
Your Highness pleased to forget my place,
The majesty and power of law and justice,
The image of the King whom I presented,
And struck me in my very seat of judgment;
Whereon, as an offender to your father,
I gave bold way to my authority
And did commit you. If the deed were ill,
Be you contented, wearing now the garland,

To have a son set your decrees at nought,

To pluck down justice from your awful bench,

To trip the course of law, and blunt the sword

That guards the peace and safety of your person;

Nay, more, to spurn at your most royal image,

And mock your workings in a second body.

Question your royal thoughts, make the case yours;

Be now the father, and propose a son;

Hear your own dignity so much profan'd,

See your most dreadful laws so loosely slighted,

Behold yourself so by a son disdain'd;

And then imagine me taking your part

And, in your power, soft silencing your son.

After this cold considerance, sentence me;

And, as you are a king, speak in your state

What I have done that misbecame my place,

My person, or my liege's sovereignty.

KING.

You are right, Justice, and you weigh this well;

Therefore still bear the balance and the sword;

And I do wish your honours may increase

Till you do live to see a son of mine

Offend you, and obey you, as I did.

So shall I live to speak my father's words:

'Happy am I that have a man so bold

That dares do justice on my proper son;

And not less happy, having such a son

That would deliver up his greatness so

Into the hands of justice.' You did commit me;

For which I do commit into your hand

Th' unstained sword that you have us'd to bear;

With this remembrance-that you use the same

With the like bold, just, and impartial spirit

As you have done 'gainst me. There is my hand.

You shall be as a father to my youth;

My voice shall sound as you do prompt mine ear;

And I will stoop and humble my intents

To your well-practis'd wise directions.

And, Princes all, believe me, I beseech you,

My father is gone wild into his grave,

For in his tomb lie my affections;

And with his spirits sadly I survive,

To mock the expectation of the world,

To frustrate prophecies, and to raze out

Rotten opinion, who hath writ me down

After my seeming. The tide of blood in me

Hath proudly flow'd in vanity till now.

Now doth it turn and ebb back to the sea,

Where it shall mingle with the state of floods,

And flow henceforth in formal majesty.

Now call we our high court of parliament;

And let us choose such limbs of noble counsel,

That the great body of our state may go

In equal rank with the best govern'd nation;

That war, or peace, or both at once, may be

As things acquainted and familiar to us;

In which you, father, shall have foremost hand.

Our coronation done, we will accite,

As I before rememb'red, all our state;

And-God consigning to my good intents-

No prince nor peer shall have just cause to say,

God shorten Harry's happy life one day. *Exeunt*

SCENE III. Gloucestershire. SHALLOW'S orchard

Enter FALSTAFF, SHALLOW, SILENCE, BARDOLPH, the PAGE, and DAVY

SHALLOW.

Nay, you shall see my orchard, where, in an arbour, we

will eat a last year's pippin of mine own graffing, with a dish

of caraways, and so forth. Come, cousin Silence. And then to bed.

FALSTAFF.

Fore God, you have here a goodly dwelling and rich.

SHALLOW.

Barren, barren, barren; beggars all, beggars all, Sir John

-marry, good air. Spread, Davy, spread, Davy; well said,

Davy.

FALSTAFF.

This Davy serves you for good uses; he is your serving-man and your husband.

SHALLOW.

A good varlet, a good varlet, a very good varlet, Sir *John.* By the mass, I have drunk too much sack at supper. A good varlet. Now sit down, now sit down; come, cousin.

SILENCE.

Ah, sirrah! quoth-a- we shall *[Singing]*

Do nothing but eat and make good cheer,

And praise God for the merry year;

When flesh is cheap and females dear,

And lusty lads roam here and there,

So merrily,

And ever among so merrily.

FALSTAFF.

There's a merry heart! Good Master Silence, I'll give you a health for that anon.

SHALLOW.

Give Master Bardolph some wine, Davy.

DAVY.

Sweet sir, sit; I'll be with you anon; most sweet sir, sit.
Master Page, good Master Page, sit. Proface! What you want in
meat, we'll have in drink. But you must bear; the heart's all.
Exit

SHALLOW. Be merry, Master Bardolph; and, my little soldier there,
be merry.

SILENCE.
[Singing]
Be merry, be merry, my wife has all;
For women are shrews, both short and tall;
'Tis merry in hall when beards wag an;
And welcome merry Shrove-tide.

Be merry, be merry.

FALSTAFF.

I did not think Master Silence had been a man of this mettle.

SILENCE.

Who, I? I have been merry twice and once ere now.

Re-enter DAVY

DAVY.

[To BARDOLPH] There's a dish of leather-coats for you.

SHALLOW.

Davy!

DAVY.

Your worship! I'll be with you straight. *[To BARDOLPH]*

A cup of wine, sir?

SILENCE.

[Singing]

A cup of wine that's brisk and fine,

And drink unto the leman mine;

And a merry heart lives long-a.

FALSTAFF.

Well said, Master Silence.

SILENCE.

An we shall be merry, now comes in the sweet o' th' night.

FALSTAFF.

Health and long life to you, Master Silence!

SILENCE.

[Singing]

Fill the cup, and let it come,

I'll pledge you a mile to th' bottom.

SHALLOW.

Honest Bardolph, welcome; if thou want'st anything and

wilt not call, beshrew thy heart. Welcome, my little tiny thief and welcome indeed too. I'll drink to Master Bardolph, and to all

the cabileros about London.

DAVY.

I hope to see London once ere I die.

BARDOLPH.

An I might see you there, Davy!

SHALLOW.

By the mass, you'R crack a quart together-ha! will you

not, Master Bardolph?

BARDOLPH.

Yea, sir, in a pottle-pot.

SHALLOW.

By God's liggens, I thank thee. The knave will stick by

thee, I can assure thee that. 'A will not out, 'a; 'tis true bred.

BARDOLPH.

And I'll stick by him, sir.

SHALLOW.

Why, there spoke a king. Lack nothing; be merry.

[One knocks at door] Look who's at door there, ho! Who knocks?

Exit DAVY

FALSTAFF.

[To SILENCE, who has drunk a bumper] Why, now you have done me right.

SILENCE.

[Singing]

Do me right,

And dub me knight.

Samingo.

Is't not so?

FALSTAFF.

'Tis so.

SILENCE.

Is't so? Why then, say an old man can do somewhat.

Re-enter DAVY

DAVY.

An't please your worship, there's one Pistol come from the court with news.

FALSTAFF.

From the court? Let him come in.

Enter PISTOL

How now, Pistol?

PISTOL.

Sir John, God save you!

FALSTAFF.

What wind blew you hither, Pistol?

PISTOL.

Not the ill wind which blows no man to good. Sweet knight,
thou art now one of the greatest men in this realm.

SILENCE.

By'r lady, I think 'a be, but goodman Puff of Barson.

PISTOL.

Puff!
Puff in thy teeth, most recreant coward base!
Sir John, I am thy Pistol and thy friend,
And helter-skelter have I rode to thee;
And tidings do I bring, and lucky joys,
And golden times, and happy news of price.

FALSTAFF.

I pray thee now, deliver them like a man of this world.

PISTOL.

A foutra for the world and worldlings base!

I speak of Africa and golden joys.

FALSTAFF.

O base Assyrian knight, what is thy news?

Let King Cophetua know the truth thereof.

SILENCE.

[Singing] And Robin Hood, Scarlet, and John.

PISTOL.

Shall dunghill curs confront the Helicons?

And shall good news be baffled?

Then, Pistol, lay thy head in Furies' lap.

SHALLOW.

Honest gentleman, I know not your breeding.

PISTOL.

Why, then, lament therefore.

SHALLOW.

Give me pardon, sir. If, sir, you come with news from the court, I take it there's but two ways-either to utter them or conceal them. I am, sir, under the King, in some authority.

PISTOL.

Under which king, Bezonian? Speak, or die.

SHALLOW.

Under King Harry.

PISTOL.

Harry the Fourth-or Fifth?

SHALLOW.

Harry the Fourth.

PISTOL.

A foutra for thine office!
Sir John, thy tender lambkin now is King;
Harry the Fifth's the man. I speak the truth.
When Pistol lies, do this; and fig me, like
The bragging Spaniard.

FALSTAFF.

What, is the old king dead?

PISTOL.

As nail in door. The things I speak are just.

FALSTAFF.

Away, Bardolph! saddle my horse. Master Robert Shallow,
choose what office thou wilt in the land, 'tis thine. Pistol,

I

will double-charge thee with dignities.

BARDOLPH.

O joyful day!
I would not take a knighthood for my fortune.

PISTOL.

What, I do bring good news?

FALSTAFF.

Carry Master Silence to bed. Master Shallow, my Lord
Shallow, be what thou wilt-I am Fortune's steward. Get on thy
boots; we'll ride all night. O sweet Pistol! Away, Bardolph!

[Exit BARDOLPH] Come, Pistol, utter more to me; and withal
devise something to do thyself good. Boot, boot, Master Shallow!
I know the young King is sick for me. Let us take any man's
horses: the laws of England are at my commandment. Blessed are
they that have been my friends; and woe to my Lord Chief Justice!

PISTOL.
Let vultures vile seize on his lungs also!

'Where is the life that late I led?' say they.
Why, here it is; welcome these pleasant days! *Exeunt*

SCENE IV. London. A street

Enter BEADLES, dragging in HOSTESS QUICKLY and DOLL TEARSHEET

HOSTESS.
No, thou arrant knave; I would to God that I might die,
that I might have thee hang'd. Thou hast drawn my shoulder out of joint.

FIRST BEADLE.

The constables have delivered her over to me; and she
shall have whipping-cheer enough, I warrant her. There hath been
a man or two lately kill'd about her.

DOLL.
Nut-hook, nut-hook, you lie. Come on; I'll tell thee what,
thou damn'd tripe-visag'd rascal, an the child I now go with do
miscarry, thou wert better thou hadst struck thy mother, thou
paper-fac'd villain.

HOSTESS.
O the Lord, that Sir John were come! He would make this a
bloody day to somebody. But I pray God the fruit of her womb miscarry!

FIRST BEADLE.
If it do, you shall have a dozen of cushions again;
you have but eleven now. Come, I charge you both go with me; for
the man is dead that you and Pistol beat amongst you.

DOLL.
I'll tell you what, you thin man in a censer, I will have you

as soundly swing'd for this-you blue-bottle rogue, you filthy

famish'd correctioner, if you be not swing'd, I'll forswear

half-kirtles.

FIRST BEADLE.

Come, come, you she knight-errant, come.

HOSTESS.

O God, that right should thus overcome might!

Well, of sufferance comes ease.

DOLL.

Come, you rogue, come; bring me to a justice.

HOSTESS.

Ay, come, you starv'd bloodhound.

DOLL.

Goodman death, goodman bones!

HOSTESS.

Thou atomy, thou!

DOLL.

Come, you thin thing! come, you rascal!

FIRST BEADLE.

Very well. *Exeunt*

SCENE V. Westminster. Near the Abbey

Enter GROOMS, strewing rushes

FIRST GROOM.

More rushes, more rushes!

SECOND GROOM.

The trumpets have sounded twice.

THIRD GROOM.

'Twill be two o'clock ere they come from the
coronation. Dispatch, dispatch. *Exeunt*

Trumpets sound, and the KING and his train pass
over the stage. After them enter FALSTAFF, SHALLOW,
PISTOL, BARDOLPH, and page

FALSTAFF.

Stand here by me, Master Robert Shallow; I will make the
King do you grace. I will leer upon him, as 'a comes by; and do
but mark the countenance that he will give me.

PISTOL.

God bless thy lungs, good knight!

FALSTAFF.

Come here, Pistol; stand behind me. *[To SHALLOW]* O, if
I had had to have made new liveries, I would have bestowed the
thousand pound I borrowed of you. But 'tis no matter; this poor
show doth better; this doth infer the zeal I had to see him.

SHALLOW.

It doth so.

FALSTAFF.

It shows my earnestness of affection-

SHALLOW.

It doth so.

FALSTAFF.

My devotion-

SHALLOW.

It doth, it doth, it doth.

FALSTAFF.

As it were, to ride day and night; and not to deliberate, not to remember, not to have patience to shift me-

SHALLOW.

It is best, certain.

FALSTAFF.

But to stand stained with travel, and sweating with

desire to see him; thinking of nothing else, putting all affairs

else in oblivion, as if there were nothing else to be done but to see him.

PISTOL.

'Tis 'semper idem' for 'obsque hoc nihil est.' 'Tis all in every part.

SHALLOW.

'Tis so, indeed.

PISTOL.

My knight, I will inflame thy noble liver

And make thee rage.

Thy Doll, and Helen of thy noble thoughts, Is in base durance and contagious prison;

Hal'd thither

By most mechanical and dirty hand.

Rouse up revenge from ebon den with fell Alecto's snake,

For Doll is in. Pistol speaks nought but truth.

FALSTAFF.

I will deliver her.

[Shouts,within, and the trumpets sound]

PISTOL.

There roar'd the sea, and trumpet-clangor sounds.

Enter the KING and his train, the LORD CHIEF JUSTICE

among them

FALSTAFF.

God save thy Grace, King Hal; my royal Hal!

PISTOL.

The heavens thee guard and keep, most royal imp of fame!

FALSTAFF.

God save thee, my sweet boy!

KING.
My Lord Chief Justice, speak to that vain man.

CHIEF JUSTICE.

Have you your wits? Know you what 'tis you speak?

FALSTAFF.
My king! my Jove! I speak to thee, my heart!

KING.

I know thee not, old man. Fall to thy prayers.
How ill white hairs become a fool and jester!
I have long dreamt of such a kind of man,

So surfeit-swell'd, so old, and so profane;
But being awak'd, I do despise my dream.
Make less thy body hence, and more thy grace;
Leave gormandizing; know the grave doth gape
For thee thrice wider than for other men-
Reply not to me with a fool-born jest;
Presume not that I am the thing I was,
For God doth know, so shall the world perceive,
That I have turn'd away my former self;
So will I those that kept me company.
When thou dost hear I am as I have been,
Approach me, and thou shalt be as thou wast,
The tutor and the feeder of my riots.
Till then I banish thee, on pain of death,
As I have done the rest of my misleaders,
Not to come near our person by ten mile.
For competence of life I will allow you,
That lack of means enforce you not to evils;
And, as we hear you do reform yourselves,
We will, according to your strengths and qualities,
Give you advancement. Be it your charge, my lord,

To see perform'd the tenour of our word.

Set on. *Exeunt* the KING and his train

FALSTAFF.

Master Shallow, I owe you a thousand pounds.

SHALLOW.

Yea, marry, Sir John; which I beseech you to let me have home with me.

FALSTAFF.

That can hardly be, Master Shallow. Do not you grieve at
this; I shall be sent for in private to him. Look you, he must
seem thus to the world. Fear not your advancements; I will be the
man yet that shall make you great.

SHALLOW.

I cannot perceive how, unless you give me your doublet,
and stuff me out with straw. I beseech you, good Sir John,
let me
have five hundred of my thousand.

FALSTAFF.

Sir, I will be as good as my word. This that you heard

was but a colour.

SHALLOW.

A colour that I fear you will die in, Sir John.

FALSTAFF.

Fear no colours; go with me to dinner. Come,

Lieutenant

Pistol; come, Bardolph. I shall be sent for soon at night.

Re-enter PRINCE JOHN, the LORD CHIEF JUSTICE,

with officers

CHIEF JUSTICE.

Go, carry Sir John Falstaff to the Fleet;

Take all his company along with him.

FALSTAFF.

My lord, my lord-

CHIEF JUSTICE.

I cannot now speak. I will hear you soon.
Take them away.

PISTOL.

Si fortuna me tormenta, spero me contenta.

Exeunt all but PRINCE JOHN and the LORD CHIEF JUSTICE

PRINCE JOHN.

I like this fair proceeding of the King's.
He hath intent his wonted followers
Shall all be very well provided for;
But all are banish'd till their conversations
Appear more wise and modest to the world.

CHIEF JUSTICE.

And so they are.

PRINCE JOHN.

The King hath call'd his parliament, my lord.

CHIEF JUSTICE.

He hath.

PRINCE JOHN.

I will lay odds that, ere this year expire,

We bear our civil swords and native fire

As far as France. I heard a bird so sing,

Whose music, to my thinking, pleas'd the King.

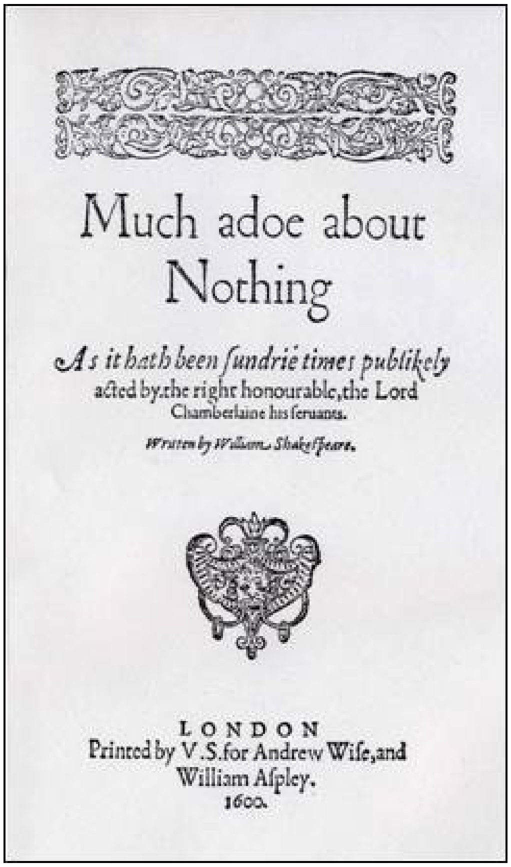
Come, will you hence? *Exeunt*

EPILOGUE

First my fear, then my curtsy, last my speech. My fear, is your displeasure; my curtsy, my duty; and my speech, to beg your pardons. If you look for a good speech now, you undo me; for what I have to say is of mine own making; and what, indeed, I should say will, I doubt, prove mine own marring. But to the purpose, and so to the venture. Be it known to you, as it is very well, I was lately here in the end of a displeasing play, to pray your patience for it and to promise you a better. I meant, indeed, to pay you with this; which if like an ill venture it come unluckily home, I break, and you, my gentle creditors, lose. Here I promis'd you I would be, and here I commit my body to your mercies. Bate me some, and I will pay you some, and, as most debtors do, promise you infinitely; and so I kneel down before you-but, indeed, to pray for the Queen. If my tongue cannot entreat you to acquit me, will you command me to use my legs? And yet that were but light payment-to dance out of your debt. But a good conscience will make any possible satisfaction, and so would I. All the gentlewomen here have forgiven me. If the gentlemen will not, then the gentlemen do not agree with the gentlewomen, which was never seen before in such an assembly. One word more, I beseech you. If you be not too much cloy'd with fat meat, our humble author will continue the story, with Sir John in it, and make you merry with fair Katherine of France; where, for anything I know, Falstaff shall die of a sweat, unless already 'a be killed with your hard opinions; for Oldcastle died a martyr and this is not the man. My tongue is weary; when my legs are too, I will bid you good night.

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

Written in 1600, this comedy tells the story of two pairs of lovers, Benedick and Beatrice, and Claudio and Hero, but it is most famous for the love-hate battling between the former pair. Benedick and Beatrice are engaged in a "merry war", proclaiming their scorn of love, marriage, and each other. In contrast, Claudio and Hero are peaceful couple, who are rendered practically speechless by their love for one another. Both couples are sorely tested in their love until the play’s eventual happy conclusion.



Much adoe about
Nothing

As it hath been ſundrie times publikely
acted by.the right honourable,the Lord
Chamberlaine his ſeruants.

Written by William Shakeſpeare.

LONDON
Printed by V.S.for Andrew Wiſe,and
William Aſpley.
1600.

Title page of the Quarto version

Romance • Mischief • Seduction • Revenge • Remarkable
KENNETH BRANAGH
MICHAEL KEATON
ROBERT SEAN LEONARD
KEANU REEVES
and
EMMA THOMPSON
DENZEL WASHINGTON
MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING
A KENNETH BRANAGH FILM

The 1993 film adaptation

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DRAMATIS PERSONAE

Don Pedro, Prince of Arragon.

Don John, his bastard brother.

Claudio, a young lord of Florence.

Benedick, a Young lord of Padua.

Leonato, Governor of Messina.

Antonio, an old man, his brother.

Balthasar, attendant on Don Pedro.

Borachio, follower of Don John.

Conrade, follower of Don John.

Friar Francis.

Dogberry, a Constable.

Verges, a Headborough.

A Sexton.

A Boy.

Hero, daughter to Leonato.

Beatrice, niece to Leonato.

Margaret, waiting gentlewoman attending on Hero.

Ursula, waiting gentlewoman attending on Hero.

Messengers, Watch, Attendants, *etc.*

SCENE.—Messina.

ACT I. Scene I. An orchard before Leonato's house.

Enter Leonato (Governor of Messina), Hero (his Daughter), and Beatrice (his Niece), with a Messenger.

Leon . I learn in this letter that Don Pedro of Arragon comes this

night to Messina.

Mess. He is very near by this. He was not three leagues off when I

left him.

Leon . How many gentlemen have you lost in this action?

Mess. But few of any sort, and none of name.

Leon . A victory is twice itself when the achiever brings home full numbers. I find here that Don Pedro hath bestowed much honour on a young Florentine called Claudio.

Mess. Much deserv'd on his part, and equally rememb'red by Don Pedro. He hath borne himself beyond the promise of his age, doing in the figure of a lamb the feats of a lion. He hath indeed better bett'red expectation than you must expect of me to tell you how.

Leon . He hath an uncle here in Messina will be very much glad of it.

Mess. I have already delivered him letters, and there appears much joy in him; even so much that joy could not show itself modest enough without a badge of bitterness.

Leon . Did he break out into tears?

Mess. In great measure.

Leon . A kind overflow of kindness. There are no faces truer than those that are so wash'd. How much better is it to weep at joy than to joy at weeping!

Beat. I pray you, is Signior Mountanto return'd from the wars or no?

Mess. I know none of that name, lady. There was none such in the army of any sort.

Leon . What is he that you ask for, niece?

Hero. My cousin means Signior Benedick of Padua.

Mess. O, he's return'd, and as pleasant as ever he was.

Beat. He set up his bills here in Messina and challeng'd Cupid at the flight, and my uncle's fool, reading the challenge, subscrib'd for Cupid and challeng'd him at the burbolt. I pray you, how many hath he kill'd and eaten in these wars? But how many hath he kill'd? For indeed I promised to eat all of his killing.

Leon . Faith, niece, you tax Signior Benedick too much; but he'll be meet with you, I doubt it not.

Mess. He hath done good service, lady, in these wars.

Beat. You had musty victual, and he hath holp to eat it. He is a very valiant trencherman; he hath an excellent stomach.

Mess. And a good soldier too, lady.

Beat. And a good soldier to a lady; but what is he to a lord?

Mess. A lord to a lord, a man to a man; stuff'd with all honourable virtues.

Beat. It is so indeed. He is no less than a stuff'd man; but for

the stuffing—well, we are all mortal.

Leon. You must not, sir, mistake my niece. There is a kind of merry war betwixt Signior Benedick and her. They never meet but there's a skirmish of wit between them.

Beat. Alas, he gets nothing by that! In our last conflict four of his five wits went halting off, and now is the whole man govern'd with one; so that if he have wit enough to keep himself warm, let him bear it for a difference between himself and his horse; for it is all the wealth that he hath left to be known a reasonable creature. Who is his companion now? He hath every month a new sworn brother.

Mess. Is't possible?

Beat. Very easily possible. He wears his faith but as the fashion of his hat; it ever changes with the next block.

Mess. I see, lady, the gentleman is not in your books.

Beat. No. An he were, I would burn my study. But I pray you, who is his companion? Is there no young squarer now that will make a voyage with him to the devil?

Mess. He is most in the company of the right noble Claudio.

Beat. O Lord, he will hang upon him like a disease! He is sooner caught than the pestilence, and the taker runs presently mad. God help the noble Claudio! If he have caught the Benedick, it will cost him a thousand pound ere 'a be cured.

Mess. I will hold friends with you, lady.

Beat. Do, good friend.

Leon. You will never run mad, niece.

Beat. No, not till a hot January.

Mess. Don Pedro is approach'd.

Enter Don Pedro, Claudio, Benedick, Balthasar, and John the Bastard.

Pedro. Good Signior Leonato, are you come to meet your trouble? The fashion of the world is to avoid cost, and you encounter it.

Leon. Never came trouble to my house in the likeness of your Grace; for trouble being gone, comfort should remain; but when you depart from me, sorrow abides and happiness takes his leave.

Pedro. You embrace your charge too willingly. I think this is your daughter.

Leon. Her mother hath many times told me so.

Bene. Were you in doubt, sir, that you ask'd her?

Leon. Signior Benedick, no; for then were you a child.

Pedro. You have it full, Benedick. We may guess by this what you are, being a man. Truly the lady fathers herself. Be happy, lady; for you are like an honourable father.

Bene. If Signior Leonato be her father, she would not have his head

on her shoulders for all Messina, as like him as she is.

Beat. I wonder that you will still be talking, Signior Benedick.

Nobody marks you.

Bene. What, my dear Lady Disdain! are you yet living?

Beat. Is it possible Disdain should die while she hath such meet food to feed it as Signior Benedick? Courtesy itself must convert to disdain if you come in her presence.

Bene. Then is courtesy a turncoat. But it is certain I am loved of all ladies, only you excepted; and I would I could find in my heart that I had not a hard heart, for truly I love none.

Beat. A dear happiness to women! They would else have been troubled with a pernicious suitor. I thank God and my cold blood, I am of your humour for that. I had rather hear my dog bark at a crow than a man swear he loves me.

Bene. God keep your ladyship still in that mind! So some gentleman or other shall scape a predestinate scratch'd face.

Beat. Scratching could not make it worse an 'twere such a face as yours were.

Bene. Well, you are a rare parrot-teacher.

Beat. A bird of my tongue is better than a beast of yours.

Bene. I would my horse had the speed of your tongue, and so good a continuer. But keep your way, a God's name! I have done.

Beat. You always end with a jade's trick. I know you of old.

Pedro. That is the sum of all, Leonato. Signior Claudio and Signior Benedick, my dear friend Leonato hath invited you all. I tell him we shall stay here at the least a month, and he heartly prays some occasion may detain us longer. I dare swear he is no hypocrite, but prays from his heart.

Leon. If you swear, my lord, you shall not be forsworn. [To Don

John] Let me bid you welcome, my lord. Being reconciled to the

Prince your brother, I owe you all duty.

John. I thank you. I am not of many words, but I thank you.

Leon. Please it your Grace lead on?

Pedro. Your hand, Leonato. We will go together.

Exeunt. Manent Benedick and Claudio.

Claud. Benedick, didst thou note the daughter of Signior Leonato?

Bene. I noted her not, but I look'd on her.

Claud. Is she not a modest young lady?

Bene. Do you question me, as an honest man should do, for my simple true judgment? or would you have me speak after my custom, as being a professed tyrant to their sex?

Claud. No. I pray thee speak in sober judgment.

Bene. Why, i' faith, methinks she's too low for a high praise, too brown for a fair praise, and too little for a great praise. Only this commendation I can afford her, that were she other than she is, she were unhandsome, and being no other but as she is, I do not like her.

Claud. Thou thinkest I am in sport. I pray thee tell me truly how thou lik'st her.

Bene. Would you buy her, that you enquire after her?

Claud. Can the world buy such a jewel?

Bene. Yea, and a case to put it into. But speak you this with a sad brow? or do you play the flouting Jack, to tell us Cupid is a good hare-finder and Vulcan a rare carpenter? Come, in what key shall a man take you to go in the song?

Claud. In mine eye she is the sweetest lady that ever I look'd on.

Bene. I can see yet without spectacles, and I see no such matter. There's her cousin, an she were not possess'd with a fury,exceeds her as much in beauty as the first of May doth the last of December. But I hope you have no intent to turn husband, have you?

Claud. I would scarce trust myself, though I had sworn the contrary, if Hero would be my wife.

Bene. Is't come to this? In faith, hath not the world one man but he will wear his cap with suspicion? Shall I never see a bachelor of threescore again? Go to, i' faith! An thou wilt needs thrust thy neck into a yoke, wear the print of it and sigh away Sundays.

Enter Don Pedro.

Look! Don Pedro is returned to seek you.

Pedro. What secret hath held you here, that you followed not to

Leonato's?

Bene. I would your Grace would constrain me to tell.

Pedro. I charge thee on thy allegiance.

Bene. You hear, Count Claudio. I can be secret as a dumb man, I would have you think so; but, on my allegiance—mark you this-on my allegiance! he is in love. With who? Now that is your Grace's part. Mark how short his answer is: With Hero, Leonato's short daughter.

Claud. If this were so, so were it utt'red.

Bene. Like the old tale, my lord: 'It is not so, nor 'twas not so;

but indeed, God forbid it should be so!'

Claud. If my passion change not shortly, God forbid it should be otherwise.

Pedro. Amen, if you love her; for the lady is very well worthy.

Claud. You speak this to fetch me in, my lord.

Pedro. By my troth, I speak my thought.

Claud. And, in faith, my lord, I spoke mine.

Bene. And, by my two faiths and troths, my lord, I spoke mine.

Claud. That I love her, I feel.

Pedro. That she is worthy, I know.

Bene. That I neither feel how she should be loved, nor know how she should be worthy, is the opinion that fire cannot melt out of me.

I will die in it at the stake.

Pedro. Thou wast ever an obstinate heretic in the despite of beauty.

Claud. And never could maintain his part but in the force of his will.

Bene. That a woman conceived me, I thank her; that she brought me up, I likewise give her most humble thanks; but that I will have a rechate winded in my forehead, or hang my bugle in an invisible baldrick, all women shall pardon me. Because I will not do them the wrong to mistrust any, I will do myself the right to trust none; and the fine is (for the which I may go the finer), I will live a bachelor.

Pedro. I shall see thee, ere I die, look pale with love.

Bene. With anger, with sickness, or with hunger, my lord; not with love. Prove that ever I lose more blood with love than I will get again with drinking, pick out mine eyes with a ballad-maker's pen and hang me up at the door of a brothel house for the sign of blind Cupid.

Pedro. Well, if ever thou dost fall from this faith, thou wilt prove a notable argument.

Bene. If I do, hang me in a bottle like a cat and shoot at me; and

he that hits me, let him be clapp'd on the shoulder and call'd Adam.

Pedro. Well, as time shall try.

'In time the savage bull doth bear the yoke.'

Bene. The savage bull may; but if ever the sensible Benedick bear

it, pluck off the bull's horns and set them in my forehead, and

let me be vilely painted, and in such great letters as they write

'Here is good horse to hire,' let them signify under my sign

'Here you may see Benedick the married man.'

Claud. If this should ever happen, thou wouldst be horn-mad.

Pedro. Nay, if Cupid have not spent all his quiver in Venice, thou wilt quake for this shortly.

Bene. I look for an earthquake too then.

Pedro. Well, you will temporize with the hours. In the meantime, good Signior Benedick, repair to Leonato's, commend me to him and tell him I will not fail him at supper; for indeed he hath made great preparation.

Bene. I have almost matter enough in me for such an embassage; and so I commit you—

Claud. To the tuition of God. From my house—if I had it—

Pedro. The sixth of July. Your loving friend, Benedick.

Bene. Nay, mock not, mock not. The body of your discourse is sometime guarded with fragments, and the guards are but slightly basted on neither. Ere you flout old ends any further, examine your conscience. And so I leave you. *Exit* .

Claud. My liege, your Highness now may do me good.

Pedro. My love is thine to teach. Teach it but how,
And thou shalt see how apt it is to learn
Any hard lesson that may do thee good.

Claud. Hath Leonato any son, my lord?

Pedro. No child but Hero; she's his only heir.
Dost thou affect her, Claudio?

Claud. O my lord,
When you went onward on this ended action,
I look'd upon her with a soldier's eye,
That lik'd, but had a rougher task in hand
Than to drive liking to the name of love;
But now I am return'd and that war-thoughts
Have left their places vacant, in their rooms
Come thronging soft and delicate desires,
All prompting me how fair young Hero is,
Saying I lik'd her ere I went to wars.

Pedro. Thou wilt be like a lover presently

And tire the hearer with a book of words.
If thou dost love fair Hero, cherish it,
And I will break with her and with her father,
And thou shalt have her. Wast not to this end
That thou began'st to twist so fine a story?

Claud. How sweetly you do minister to love,
That know love's grief by his complexion!
But lest my liking might too sudden seem,
I would have salv'd it with a longer treatise.

Pedro. What need the bridge much broader than the flood?
The fairest grant is the necessity.
Look, what will serve is fit. 'Tis once, thou lovest,
And I will fit thee with the remedy.

I know we shall have revelling to-night.
I will assume thy part in some disguise
And tell fair Hero I am Claudio,
And in her bosom I'll unclasp my heart
And take her hearing prisoner with the force

And strong encounter of my amorous tale.

Then after to her father will I break,

And the conclusion is, she shall be thine.

In practice let us put it presently. *Exeunt* .

Scene II. A room in Leonato's house.

Enter [at one door] Leonato and *[at another door, Antonio]* an old man, brother to Leonato.

Leon. How now, brother? Where is my cousin your son? Hath he provided this music?

Ant. He is very busy about it. But, brother, I can tell you strange

news that you yet dreamt not of.

Leon. Are they good?

Ant. As the event stamps them; but they have a good cover, they show well outward. The Prince and Count Claudio, walking in a thick-pleached alley in mine orchard, were thus much overheard by a man of mine: the Prince discovered to Claudio that he loved my niece your daughter and meant to acknowledge it this night in a dance, and if he found her accordant, he meant to take the present time by the top and instantly break with you of it.

Leon. Hath the fellow any wit that told you this?

Ant. A good sharp fellow. I will send for him, and question him yourself.

Leon. No, no. We will hold it as a dream till it appear itself; but I will acquaint my daughter withal, that she may be the better prepared for an answer, if peradventure this be true. Go you and tell her of it. *[Exit Antonio.]*

[Enter Antonio's Son with a Musician, and others.]

[To the Son] Cousin, you know what you have to do. —*[To the Musician]* O, I cry you mercy, friend. Go you with me, and I will use your skill.—Good cousin, have a care this busy time. *Exeunt* .

Scene III. Another room in Leonato's house.]

Enter Sir John the Bastard and Conrade, his companion.

Con. What the goodyear, my lord! Why are you thus out of measure sad?

John. There is no measure in the occasion that breeds; therefore

the sadness is without limit.

Con. You should hear reason.

John. And when I have heard it, what blessings brings it?

Con. If not a present remedy, at least a patient sufferance.

John. I wonder that thou (being, as thou say'st thou art, born under Saturn) goest about to apply a moral medicine to a mortifying mischief. I cannot hide what I am: I must be sad when I have cause, and smile at no man's jests; eat when I have stomach, and wait for no man's leisure; sleep when I am drowsy, and tend on no man's business; laugh when I am merry, and claw no man in his humour.

Con. Yea, but you must not make the full show of this till you may do it without controlment. You have of late stood out against your brother, and he hath ta'en you newly into his grace, where it is impossible you should take true root but by the fair weather that you make yourself. It is needful that you frame the season for your own harvest.

John. I had rather be a canker in a hedge than a rose in his grace, and it better fits my blood to be disdain'd of all than to fashion a carriage to rob love from any. In this, though I cannot be said to be a flattering honest man, it must not be denied but I am a plain-dealing villain. I am trusted with a muzzle and enfranchis'd with a clog; therefore I have decreed not to sing in my cage. If I had my mouth, I would bite; if I had my liberty, I would do my liking. In the meantime let me be that I am, and seek not to alter me.

Con. Can you make no use of your discontent?

John. I make all use of it, for I use it only.

Enter Borachio.

Who comes here? What news, Borachio?

Bora. I came yonder from a great supper. The Prince your brother is royally entertain'd by Leonato, and I can give you intelligence of an intended marriage.

John. Will it serve for any model to build mischief on?

What is he for a fool that betroths himself to unquietness?

Bora. Marry, it is your brother's right hand.

John. Who? the most exquisite Claudio?

Bora. Even he.

John. A proper squire! And who? and who? which way looks he?

Bora. Marry, on Hero, the daughter and heir of Leonato.

John. A very forward March-chick! How came you to this?

Bora. Being entertain'd for a perfumer, as I was smoking a musty room, comes me the Prince and Claudio, hand in hand in sad conference. I whipt me behind the arras and there heard it agreed upon that the Prince should woo Hero for himself, and having obtain'd her, give her to Count Claudio.

John. Come, come, let us thither. This may prove food to my displeasure. That young start-up hath all the glory of my overthrow. If I can cross him any way, I bless myself every way. You are both sure, and will assist me?

Con. To the death, my lord.

John. Let us to the great supper. Their cheer is the greater that

I am subdued. Would the cook were o' my mind! Shall we go prove what's to be done?

Bora. We'll wait upon your lordship.

Exeunt.

ACT II. Scene I. A hall in Leonato's house.

Enter Leonato, *[Antonio]* his Brother, Hero his Daughter, and Beatrice his Niece, and a Kinsman; *[also Margaret and Ursula]* .

Leon. Was not Count John here at supper?

Ant. I saw him not.

Beat. How tartly that gentleman looks! I never can see him but I am heart-burn'd an hour after.

Hero. He is of a very melancholy disposition.

Beat. He were an excellent man that were made just in the midway between him and Benedick. The one is too like an image and says nothing, and the other too like my lady's eldest son, evermore tattling.

Leon. Then half Signior Benedick's tongue in Count John's mouth, and half Count John's melancholy in Signior Benedick's face—

Beat. With a good leg and a good foot, uncle, and money enough in his purse, such a man would win any woman in the world—if 'a could get her good will.

Leon. By my troth, niece, thou wilt never get thee a husband if thou be so shrewd of thy tongue.

Ant. In faith, she's too curst.

Beat. Too curst is more than curst. I shall lessen God's sending that way, for it is said, 'God sends a curst cow short horns,' but to a cow too curst he sends none.

Leon. So, by being too curst, God will send you no horns.

Beat. Just, if he send me no husband; for the which blessing I am at him upon my knees every morning and evening. Lord, I could not endure a husband with a beard on his face. I had rather lie in the woollen!

Leon. You may light on a husband that hath no beard.

Beat. What should I do with him? dress him in my apparel and make him my waiting gentlewoman? He that hath a beard is more than a youth, and he that hath no beard is less than a man; and he that is more than a youth is not for me; and he that is less than a man, I am not for him. Therefore I will even take sixpence in earnest of the berrord and lead his apes into hell.

Leon. Well then, go you into hell?

Beat. No; but to the gate, and there will the devil meet me like an old cuckold with horns on his head, and say 'Get you to heaven, Beatrice, get you to heaven. Here's no place for you maids.' So deliver I up my apes, and away to Saint Peter—for the heavens. He shows me where the bachelors sit, and there live we as merry as the day is long.

Ant. [to Hero] Well, niece, I trust you will be rul'd by your father.

Beat. Yes faith. It is my cousin's duty to make cursy and say,

'Father, as it please you.' But yet for all that, cousin, let him

be a handsome fellow, or else make another cursy, and say,

'Father, as it please me.'

Leon. Well, niece, I hope to see you one day fitted with a husband.

Beat. Not till God make men of some other metal than earth. Would it not grieve a woman to be overmaster'd with a piece of valiant dust? to make an account of her life to a clod of wayward marl? No, uncle, I'll none. Adam's sons are my brethren, and truly I hold it a sin to match in my kinred.

Leon. Daughter, remember what I told you. If the Prince do solicit you in that kind, you know your answer.

Beat. The fault will be in the music, cousin, if you be not wooed in good time. If the Prince be too important, tell him there is measure in everything, and so dance out the answer. For, hear me, Hero: wooing, wedding, and repenting is as a Scotch jig, a measure, and a cinque-pace: the first suit is hot and hasty like a Scotch jig—and full as fantastical; the wedding, mannerly modest, as a measure, full of state and ancientry; and then comes Repentance and with his bad legs falls into the cinque-pace faster and faster, till he sink into his grave.

Leon. Cousin, you apprehend passing shrewdly.

Beat. I have a good eye, uncle; I can see a church by daylight.

Leon. The revellers are ent'ring, brother. Make good room.

[Exit Antonio.]

Enter , [masked,] Don Pedro, Claudio, Benedick, and Balthasar.

[With them enter Antonio, also masked. After them enter]

Don John [and Borachio (without masks), who stand aside and look on during the dance].

Pedro. Lady, will you walk a bout with your friend?

Hero. So you walk softly and look sweetly and say nothing,
I am yours for the walk; and especially when I walk away.

Pedro. With me in your company?

Hero. I may say so when I please.

Pedro. And when please you to say so?

Hero. When I like your favour, for God defend the lute should be like the case!

Pedro. My visor is Philemon's roof; within the house is Jove.

Hero. Why then, your visor should be thatch'd.

Pedro. Speak low if you speak love. *[Takes her aside.]*

Balth. Well, I would you did like me.

Marg. So would not I for your own sake, for I have many ill qualities.

Balth. Which is one?

Marg. I say my prayers aloud.

Balth. I love you the better. The hearers may cry Amen.

Marg. God match me with a good dancer!

Balth. Amen.

Marg. And God keep him out of my sight when the dance is done!
Answer, clerk.

Balth. No more words. The clerk is answered.
[Takes her aside.]

Urs. I know you well enough. You are Signior Antonio.

Ant. At a word, I am not.

Urs. I know you by the waggling of your head.

Ant. To tell you true, I counterfeit him.

Urs. You could never do him so ill-well unless you were the very man. Here's his dry hand up and down. You are he, you are he!

Ant. At a word, I am not.

Urs. Come, come, do you think I do not know you by your excellent wit? Can virtue hide itself? Go to, mum you are he. Graces will appear, and there's an end. *[They step aside.]*

Beat. Will you not tell me who told you so?

Bene. No, you shall pardon me.

Beat. Nor will you not tell me who you are?

Bene. Not now.

Beat. That I was disdainful, and that I had my good wit out of the 'Hundred Merry Tales.' Well, this was Signior Benedick that said so.

Bene. What's he?

Beat. I am sure you know him well enough.

Bene. Not I, believe me.

Beat. Did he never make you laugh?

Bene. I pray you, what is he?

Beat. Why, he is the Prince's jester, a very dull fool. Only his gift is in devising impossible slanders. None but libertines delight in him; and the commendation is not in his wit, but in his villany; for he both pleases men and angers them, and then they laugh at him and beat him. I am sure he is in the fleet. I would he had boarded me.

Bene. When I know the gentleman, I'll tell him what you say.

Beat. Do, do. He'll but break a comparison or two on me; which peradventure, not marked or not laugh'd at, strikes him into melancholy; and then there's a partridge wing saved, for the fool will eat no supper that night. *[Music.]* We must follow the leaders.

Bene. In every good thing.

Beat. Nay, if they lead to any ill, I will leave them at the next turning.

Dance. Exeunt (all but Don John, Borachio, and Claudio].

John. Sure my brother is amorous on Hero and hath withdrawn her

father to break with him about it. The ladies follow her and but one visor remains.

Bora. And that is Claudio. I know him by his bearing.

John. Are you not Signior Benedick?

Claud. You know me well. I am he.

John. Signior, you are very near my brother in his love. He is enamour'd on Hero. I pray you dissuade him from her; she is no equal for his birth. You may do the part of an honest man in it.

Claud. How know you he loves her?

John. I heard him swear his affection.

Bora. So did I too, and he swore he would marry her tonight.

John. Come, let us to the banquet.
Exeunt. Manet Claudio.

Claud. Thus answer I in name of Benedick
But hear these ill news with the ears of Claudio.
[Unmasks.]
'Tis certain so. The Prince wooes for himself.
Friendship is constant in all other things
Save in the office and affairs of love.
Therefore all hearts in love use their own tongues;
Let every eye negotiate for itself
And trust no agent; for beauty is a witch
Against whose charms faith melteth into blood.
This is an accident of hourly proof,
Which I mistrusted not. Farewell therefore Hero!

Enter Benedick *[unmasked]* .

Bene. Count Claudio?

Claud. Yea, the same.

Bene. Come, will you go with me?

Claud. Whither?

Bene. Even to the next willow, about your own business, County. What fashion will you wear the garland of? about your neck, like an usurer's chain? or under your arm, like a lieutenant's scarf? You must wear it one way, for the Prince hath got your Hero.

Claud. I wish him joy of her.

Bene. Why, that's spoken like an honest drovier. So they sell bullocks. But did you think the Prince would have served you thus?

Claud. I pray you leave me.

Bene. Ho! now you strike like the blind man! 'Twas the boy that stole your meat, and you'll beat the post.

Claud. If it will not be, I'll leave you. *Exit* .

Bene. Alas, poor hurt fowl! now will he creep into sedges. But, that my Lady Beatrice should know me, and not know me! The Prince's fool! Ha! it may be I go under that title because I am merry. Yea, but so I am apt to do myself wrong. I am not so reputed. It is the base (though bitter) disposition of Beatrice that puts the world into her person and so gives me out. Well, I'll be revenged as I may.

Enter Don Pedro.

Pedro. Now, signior, where's the Count? Did you see him?

Bene. Troth, my lord, I have played the part of Lady Fame, I found him here as melancholy as a lodge in a warren. I told him, and I think I told him true, that your Grace had got the good will of this young lady, and I off'red him my company to a willow tree, either to make him a garland, as being forsaken, or to bind him up a rod, as being worthy to be whipt.

Pedro. To be whipt? What's his fault?

Bene. The flat transgression of a schoolboy who, being overjoyed with finding a bird's nest, shows it his companion, and he steals it.

Pedro. Wilt thou make a trust a transgression? The transgression is in the stealer.

Bene. Yet it had not been amiss the rod had been made, and the garland too; for the garland he might have worn himself, and the rod he might have bestowed on you, who, as I take it, have stol'n his bird's nest.

Pedro. I will but teach them to sing and restore them to the owner.

Bene. If their singing answer your saying, by my faith you say honestly.

Pedro. The Lady Beatrice hath a quarrel to you. The gentleman that

danc'd with her told her she is much wrong'd by you.

Bene. O, she misus'd me past the endurance of a block! An oak but with one green leaf on it would have answered her; my very visor began to assume life and scold with her. She told me, not thinking I had been myself, that I was the Prince's jester, that I was duller than a great thaw; huddling jest upon jest with such impossible conveyance upon me that I stood like a man at a mark, with a whole army shooting at me. She speaks poniards, and every word stabs. If her breath were as terrible as her terminations, there were no living near her; she would infect to the North Star. I would not marry her though she were endowed with all that Adam had left him before he transgress'd. She would have made Hercules have turn'd spit, yea, and have cleft his club to make the fire too. Come, talk not of her. You shall find her the infernal Ate in good apparel. I would to God some scholar would conjure her, for certainly, while she is here, a man may live as quiet in hell as in a sanctuary; and people sin upon purpose, because they would go thither; so indeed all disquiet, horror, and perturbation follows her.

Enter Claudio and Beatrice, Leonato, Hero.

Pedro. Look, here she comes.

Bene. Will your Grace command me any service to the world's end? I will go on the slightest errand now to the Antipodes that you can devise to send me on; I will fetch you a toothpicker now from the furthest inch of Asia; bring you the length of Prester John's foot; fetch you a hair off the great Cham's beard; do you any embassage to the Pygmies—rather than hold three words' conference with this harpy. You have no employment for me?

Pedro. None, but to desire your good company.

Bene. O God, sir, here's a dish I love not! I cannot endure my Lady

Tongue. [Exit.]

Pedro. Come, lady, come; you have lost the heart of Signior

Benedick.

Beat. Indeed, my lord, he lent it me awhile, and I gave him use for it—a double heart for his single one. Marry, once before he won it of me with false dice;

therefore your Grace may well say I have lost it.

Pedro. You have put him down, lady; you have put him down.

Beat. So I would not he should do me, my lord, lest I should prove the mother of fools. I have brought Count Claudio, whom you sent me to seek.

Pedro. Why, how now, Count? Wherefore are you sad?

Claud. Not sad, my lord.

Pedro. How then? sick?

Claud. Neither, my lord.

Beat. The Count is neither sad, nor sick, nor merry, nor well; but civil count—civil as an orange, and something of that jealous complexion.

Pedro. I' faith, lady, I think your blazon to be true; though I'll be sworn, if he be so, his conceit is false. Here, Claudio, I have wooed in thy name, and fair Hero is won. I have broke with her father, and his good will obtained. Name the day of marriage, and God give thee joy!

Leon. Count, take of me my daughter, and with her my fortunes. His

Grace hath made the match, and all grace say Amen to it!

Beat. Speak, Count, 'tis your cue.

Claud. Silence is the perfectest herald of joy. I were but little happy if I could say how much. Lady, as you are mine, I am yours. I give away myself for you and dote upon the exchange.

Beat. Speak, cousin; or, if you cannot, stop his mouth with a kiss and let not him speak neither.

Pedro. In faith, lady, you have a merry heart.

Beat. Yea, my lord; I thank it, poor fool, it keeps on the windy side of care. My cousin tells him in his ear that he is in her heart.

Claud. And so she doth, cousin.

Beat. Good Lord, for alliance! Thus goes every one to the world but I, and I am sunburnt. I may sit in a corner and cry 'Heigh-ho for a husband!'

Pedro. Lady Beatrice, I will get you one.

Beat. I would rather have one of your father's getting. Hath your Grace ne'er a brother like you? Your father got excellent husbands, if a maid could come by them.

Pedro. Will you have me, lady?

Beat. No, my lord, unless I might have another for working days: your Grace is too costly to wear every day. But I beseech your Grace pardon me. I was born to speak all mirth and no matter.

Pedro. Your silence most offends me, and to be merry best becomes

you, for out o' question you were born in a merry hour.

Beat. No, sure, my lord, my mother cried; but then there was a star

danc'd, and under that was I born. Cousins, God give you joy!

Leon. Niece, will you look to those things I told you of?

Beat. I cry you mercy, uncle, By your Grace's pardon. *Exit* .

Pedro. By my troth, a pleasant-spirited lady.

Leon. There's little of the melancholy element in her, my lord. She is never sad but when she sleeps, and not ever sad then; for I have heard my daughter say she hath often dreamt of unhappiness and wak'd herself with laughing.

Pedro. She cannot endure to hear tell of a husband.

Leon. O, by no means! She mocks all her wooers out of suit.

Pedro. She were an excellent wife for Benedick.

Leon. O Lord, my lord! if they were but a week married, they would talk themselves mad.

Pedro. County Claudio, when mean you to go to church?

Claud. Tomorrow, my lord. Time goes on crutches till love have all his rites.

Leon. Not till Monday, my dear son, which is hence a just sevennight; and a time too brief too, to have all things answer my mind.

Pedro. Come, you shake the head at so long a breathing; but I warrant thee, Claudio, the time shall not go dully by us. I will in the interim undertake one of Hercules' labours, which is, to bring Signior Benedick and the Lady Beatrice into a mountain of affection th' one with th' other. I would fain have it a match, and I doubt not but to fashion it if you three will but minister such assistance as I shall give you direction.

Leon. My lord, I am for you, though it cost me ten nights' watchings.

Claud. And I, my lord.

Pedro. And you too, gentle Hero?

Hero. I will do any modest office, my lord, to help my cousin to a good husband.

Pedro. And Benedick is not the unhopefullest husband that I know. Thus far can I praise him: he is of a noble strain, of approved valour, and confirm'd honesty. I will teach you how to humour your cousin, that she shall fall in love with Benedick; and I, *[to Leonato and Claudio]* with your two helps, will so practise on Benedick that, in despite of his quick wit and his queasy stomach, he shall fall in love with Beatrice. If we can do this, Cupid is no longer an archer; his glory shall be ours, for we are the only love-gods. Go in with me, and I will tell you my drift. *Exeunt* .

Scene II. A hall in Leonato's house.

Enter [Don] John and Borachio.

John. It is so. The Count Claudio shall marry the daughter of

Leonato.

Bora. Yea, my lord; but I can cross it.

John. Any bar, any cross, any impediment will be med'cinable to me. I am sick in displeasure to him, and whatsoever comes athwart his affection ranges evenly with mine. How canst thou cross this marriage?

Bora. Not honestly, my lord, but so covertly that no dishonesty shall appear in me.

John. Show me briefly how.

Bora. I think I told your lordship, a year since, how much I am in the favour of Margaret, the waiting gentlewoman to Hero.

John. I remember.

Bora. I can, at any unseasonable instant of the night, appoint her to look out at her lady's chamber window.

John. What life is in that to be the death of this marriage?

Bora. The poison of that lies in you to temper. Go you to the Prince your brother; spare not to tell him that he hath wronged his honour in marrying the renowned Claudio (whose estimation do you mightily hold up) to a contaminated stale, such a one as Hero.

John. What proof shall I make of that?

Bora. Proof enough to misuse the Prince, to vex Claudio, to undo

Hero, and kill Leonato. Look you for any other issue?

John. Only to despite them I will endeavour anything.

Bora. Go then; find me a meet hour to draw Don Pedro and the Count Claudio alone; tell them that you know that Hero loves me; intend a kind of zeal both to the Prince and Claudio, as—in love of your brother's honour, who hath made this match, and his friend's reputation, who is thus like to be cozen'd with the semblance of a maid—that you have discover'd thus. They will scarcely believe this without trial. Offer them instances; which shall bear no less likelihood than to see me at her chamber window, hear me call Margaret Hero, hear Margaret term me Claudio; and bring them to see this the very night before the intended wedding (for in the meantime I will so fashion the matter that Hero shall be absent) and there shall appear such seeming truth of Hero's disloyalty that jealousy shall be call'd assurance and all the preparation overthrown.

John. Grow this to what adverse issue it can, I will put it in practice. Be cunning in the working this, and thy fee is a thousand ducats.

Bora. Be you constant in the accusation, and my cunning shall not shame me.

John. I will presently go learn their day of marriage.

Exeunt.

Scene III. Leonato's orchard.

Enter Benedick alone.

Bene. Boy!

[Enter Boy.]

Boy. Signior?

Bene. In my chamber window lies a book. Bring it hither to me in the orchard.

Boy. I am here already, sir.

Bene. I know that, but I would have thee hence and here again. (*Exit* Boy.) I do much wonder that one man, seeing how much another man is a fool when he dedicates his behaviours to love, will, after he hath laugh'd at such shallow follies in others, become the argument of his own scorn by falling in love; and such a man is Claudio. I have known when there was no music with him but the drum and the fife; and now had he rather hear the tabor and the pipe. I have known when he would have walk'd ten mile afoot to see a good armour; and now will he lie ten nights awake carving the fashion of a new doublet. He was wont to speak plain and to the purpose, like an honest man and a soldier; and now is he turn'd orthography; his words are a very fantastical banquet— just so many strange dishes. May I be so converted and see with these eyes? I cannot tell; I think not. I will not be sworn but love may transform me to an oyster; but I'll take my oath on it, till he have made an oyster of me he shall never make me such a fool. One woman is fair, yet I am well; another is wise, yet I am well; another virtuous, yet I am well; but till all graces be in one woman, one woman shall not come in my grace. Rich she shall be, that's certain; wise, or I'll none; virtuous, or I'll never cheapen her; fair, or I'll never look on her; mild, or come not near me; noble, or not I for an angel; of good discourse, an excellent musician, and her hair shall be of what colour it please God. Ha, the Prince and Monsieur Love! I will hide me in the arbour. *[Hides.]*

Enter Don Pedro, Leonato, Claudio.

Music *[within]* .

Pedro. Come, shall we hear this music?

Claud. Yea, my good lord. How still the evening is,

As hush'd on purpose to grace harmony!

Pedro. See you where Benedick hath hid himself?

Claud. O, very well, my lord. The music ended,
We'll fit the kid-fox with a pennyworth.

Enter Balthasar with Music.

Pedro. Come, Balthasar, we'll hear that song again.

Balth. O, good my lord, tax not so bad a voice
To slander music any more than once.

Pedro. It is the witness still of excellency
To put a strange face on his own perfection.

I pray thee sing, and let me woo no more.

Balth. Because you talk of wooing, I will sing,
Since many a wooer doth commence his suit
To her he thinks not worthy, yet he wooes,
Yet will he swear he loves.

Pedro. Nay, pray thee come;

Or if thou wilt hold longer argument,
Do it in notes.

Balth. Note this before my notes:
There's not a note of mine that's worth the noting.

Pedro. Why, these are very crotchets that he speaks!
Note notes, forsooth, and nothing! *[Music.]*

Bene. *[aside]* Now divine air! Now is his soul ravish'd! Is it not strange that sheep's guts should hale souls out of men's bodies?

Well, a horn for my money, when all's done.
[Balthasar sings.]
The Song.
Sigh no more, ladies, sigh no more!
Men were deceivers ever,
One foot in sea, and one on shore;
To one thing constant never.
Then sigh not so,
But let them go,

And be you blithe and bonny,

Converting all your sounds of woe

Into Hey nonny, nonny.

Sing no more ditties, sing no moe,

Of dumps so dull and heavy!

The fraud of men was ever so,

Since summer first was leavy.

Then sigh not so, &c.

Pedro. By my troth, a good song.

Balth. And an ill singer, my lord.

Pedro. Ha, no, no, faith! Thou sing'st well enough for a shift.

Bene. [aside] An he had been a dog that should have howl'd thus, they would have hang'd him; and I pray God his bad voice bode no mischief. I had as live have heard the night raven, come what plague could have come after it.

Pedro. Yea, marry. Dost thou hear, Balthasar? I pray thee get us some excellent music; for tomorrow night we would have it at the Lady Hero's chamber window.

Balth. The best I can, my lord.

Pedro. Do so. Farewell.

Exit Balthasar *[with Musicians]* .

Come hither, Leonato. What was it you told me of to-day? that

your niece Beatrice was in love with Signior Benedick?

Claud. O, ay!-*[Aside to Pedro]* Stalk on, stalk on; the fowl sits.

—I did never think that lady would have loved any man.

Leon. No, nor I neither; but most wonderful that she should so dote on Signior Benedick, whom she hath in all outward behaviours seem'd ever to abhor.

Bene. [aside] Is't possible? Sits the wind in that corner?

Leon. By my troth, my lord, I cannot tell what to think of it, but that she loves him with an enraged affection. It is past the infinite of thought.

Pedro. May be she doth but counterfeit.

Claud. Faith, like enough.

Leon. O God, counterfeit? There was never counterfeit of passion came so near the life of passion as she discovers it.

Pedro. Why, what effects of passion shows she?

Claud. [aside] Bait the hook well! This fish will bite.

Leon. What effects, my lord? She will sit you—you heard my daughter tell you how.

Claud. She did indeed.

Pedro. How, how, I pray you? You amaze me. I would have thought her spirit had been invincible against all assaults of affection.

Leon. I would have sworn it had, my lord—especially against

Benedick.

Bene. [aside] I should think this a gull but that the white-bearded fellow speaks it. Knavery cannot, sure, hide himself in such reverence.

Claud. [aside] He hath ta'en th' infection. Hold it up.

Pedro. Hath she made her affection known to Benedick?

Leon. No, and swears she never will. That's her torment.

Claud. 'Tis true indeed. So your daughter says. 'Shall I,' says

she, 'that have so oft encount'red him with scorn, write to him

that I love him?'"

Leon. This says she now when she is beginning to write to him; for she'll be up twenty times a night, and there will she sit in her smock till she have writ a sheet of paper. My daughter tells us all.

Claud. Now you talk of a sheet of paper, I remember a pretty jest

your daughter told us of.

Leon. O, when she had writ it, and was reading it over, she found

'Benedick' and 'Beatrice' between the sheet?

Claud. That.

Leon. O, she tore the letter into a thousand halfpence, rail'd at herself that she should be so immodest to write to one that she knew would flout her. 'I measure him,' says she, 'by my own spirit; for I should flout him if he writ to me. Yea, though I love him, I should.'

Claud. Then down upon her knees she falls, weeps, sobs, beats her

heart, tears her hair, prays, curses—'O sweet Benedick! God give me patience!'

Leon. She doth indeed; my daughter says so. And the ecstasy hath so

much overborne her that my daughter is sometime afeard she will

do a desperate outrage to herself. It is very true.

Pedro. It were good that Benedick knew of it by some other, if she

will not discover it.

Claud. To what end? He would make but a sport of it and torment the poor lady worse.

Pedro. An he should, it were an alms to hang him! She's an

excellent sweet lady, and (out of all suspicion) she is virtuous.

Claud. And she is exceeding wise.

Pedro. In everything but in loving Benedick.

Leon. O, my lord, wisdom and blood combating in so tender a body,

we have ten proofs to one that blood hath the victory. I am sorry

for her, as I have just cause, being her uncle and her guardian.

Pedro. I would she had bestowed this dotage on me. I would have

daff'd all other respects and made her half myself. I pray you

tell Benedick of it and hear what 'a will say.

Leon. Were it good, think you?

Claud. Hero thinks surely she will die; for she says she will die if he love her not, and she will die ere she make her love known, and she will die, if he woo her, rather than she will bate one breath of her accustomed crossness.

Pedro. She doth well. If she should make tender of her love,

'tis

very possible he'll scorn it; for the man (as you know all) hath a contemptible spirit.

Claud. He is a very proper man.

Pedro. He hath indeed a good outward happiness.

Claud. Before God! and in my mind, very wise.

Pedro. He doth indeed show some sparks that are like wit.

Claud. And I take him to be valiant.

Pedro. As Hector, I assure you; and in the managing of quarrels you
may say he is wise, for either he avoids them with great
discretion, or undertakes them with a most Christianlike fear.

Leon. If he do fear God, 'a must necessarily keep peace. If he
break the peace, he ought to enter into a quarrel with fear and trembling.

Pedro. And so will he do; for the man doth fear God, howsoever it
seems not in him by some large jests he will make. Well, I am

sorry for your niece. Shall we go seek Benedick and tell him of her love?

Claud. Never tell him, my lord. Let her wear it out with good counsel.

Leon. Nay, that's impossible; she may wear her heart out first.

Pedro. Well, we will hear further of it by your daughter. Let it cool the while. I love Benedick well, and I could wish he would modestly examine himself to see how much he is unworthy so good a lady.

Leon. My lord, will you .walk? Dinner is ready.

[They walk away.]

Claud. If he dote on her upon this, I will never trust my expectation.

Pedro. Let there be the same net spread for her, and that must your daughter and her gentlewomen carry. The sport will be, when they hold one an opinion of another's dotage, and no such matter. That's the scene that I would see, which will be merely a dumb show. Let us send her to call him in to dinner. *Exeunt [Don Pedro, Claudio, and Leonato]* .

[Benedick advances from the arbour.]

Bene. This can be no trick. The conference was sadly borne; they have the truth of this from Hero; they seem to pity the lady. It seems her affections have their full bent. Love me? Why, it must be requited. I hear how I am censur'd. They say I will bear myself proudly if I perceive the love come from her. They say too that she will rather die than give any sign of affection. I did never think to marry. I must not seem proud. Happy are they that hear their detractions and can put them to mending. They say the lady is fair—'tis a truth, I can bear them witness; and virtuous —'tis so, I cannot reprove it; and wise, but for loving me—by my troth, it is no addition to her wit, nor no great argument of her folly, for I will be horribly in love with her. I may chance have some odd quirks and remnants of wit broken on me because I have railed so long against marriage. But doth not the appetite alters? A man loves the meat in his youth that he cannot endure in his age. Shall quips and sentences and these paper bullets of the brain awe a man from the career of his humour? No, the world must be peopled. When I said I would die a bachelor, I did not think I should live till I were married.

Enter Beatrice.

Here comes Beatrice. By this day, she's a fair lady! I do spy some marks of love in her.

Beat. Against my will I am sent to bid You come in to dinner.

Bene. Fair Beatrice, I thank you for your pains.

Beat. I took no more pains for those thanks than you take pains to thank me. If it had been painful, I would not have come.

Bene. You take pleasure then in the message?

Beat. Yea, just so much as you may take upon a knives point, and choke a daw withal. You have no stomach, signior. Fare you well. *Exit* .

Bene. Ha! 'Against my will I am sent to bid you come in to dinner.' There's a double meaning in that. 'I took no more pains for those thanks than you took pains to thank me.' That's as much as to say, 'Any pains that I take for you is as easy as thanks.' If I do not take pity of her, I am a villain; if I do not love her, I am a Jew. I will go get her picture. *Exit* .

ACT III. Scene I. Leonato's orchard.

Enter Hero and two Gentlewomen, Margaret and Ursula.

Hero. Good Margaret, run thee to the parlour.

There shalt thou find my cousin Beatrice

Proposing with the Prince and Claudio.

Whisper her ear and tell her, I and Ursley

Walk in the orchard, and our whole discourse

Is all of her. Say that thou overheard'st us;

And bid her steal into the pleached bower,

Where honeysuckles, ripened by the sun,

Forbid the sun to enter—like favourites,
Made proud by princes, that advance their pride
Against that power that bred it. There will she hide her
To listen our propose. This is thy office.

Bear thee well in it and leave us alone.

Marg. I'll make her come, I warrant you, presently. *[Exit.]*

Hero. Now, Ursula, when Beatrice doth come,
As we do trace this alley up and down,
Our talk must only be of Benedick.
When I do name him, let it be thy part
To praise him more than ever man did merit.
My talk to thee must be how Benedick
Is sick in love with Beatrice. Of this matter
Is little Cupid's crafty arrow made,
That only wounds by hearsay.

[Enter Beatrice.]
Now begin;

For look where Beatrice like a lapwing runs
Close by the ground, to hear our conference.

[Beatrice hides in the arbour] .

Urs. The pleasant'st angling is to see the fish
Cut with her golden oars the silver stream
And greedily devour the treacherous bait.
So angle we for Beatrice, who even now
Is couched in the woodbine coverture.
Fear you not my part of the dialogue.

Hero. Then go we near her, that her ear lose nothing
Of the false sweet bait that we lay for it.
[They approach the arbour.]
No, truly, Ursula, she is too disdainful.
I know her spirits are as coy and wild
As haggards of the rock.

Urs. But are you sure
That Benedick loves Beatrice so entirely?

Hero. So says the Prince, and my new-trothed lord.

Urs. And did they bid you tell her of it, madam?

Hero. They did entreat me to acquaint her of it;
But I persuaded them, if they lov'd Benedick,
To wish him wrestle with affection
And never to let Beatrice know of it.

Urs. Why did you so? Doth not the gentleman
Deserve as full, as fortunate a bed
As ever Beatrice shall couch upon?

Hero. O god of love! I know he doth deserve
As much as may be yielded to a man:
But Nature never fram'd a woman's heart
Of prouder stuff than that of Beatrice.
Disdain and scorn ride sparkling in her eyes,
Misprizing what they look on; and her wit
Values itself so highly that to her

All matter else seems weak. She cannot love,
Nor take no shape nor project of affection,
She is so self-endeared.

Urs. Sure I think so;
And therefore certainly it were not good
She knew his love, lest she'll make sport at it.

Hero. Why, you speak truth. I never yet saw man,
How wise, how noble, young, how rarely featur'd,
But she would spell him backward. If fair-fac'd,
She would swear the gentleman should be her sister;
If black, why, Nature, drawing of an antic,
Made a foul blot; if tall, a lance ill-headed;
If low, an agate very vilely cut;
If speaking, why, a vane blown with all winds;
If silent, why, a block moved with none.
So turns she every man the wrong side out
And never gives to truth and virtue that
Which simpleness and merit purchaseth.

Urs. Sure, sure, such carping is not commendable.

Hero. No, not to be so odd, and from all fashions,
As Beatrice is, cannot be commendable.
But who dare tell her so? If I should speak,
She would mock me into air; O, she would laugh me
Out of myself, press me to death with wit!
Therefore let Benedick, like cover'd fire,
Consume away in sighs, waste inwardly.
It were a better death than die with mocks,
Which is as bad as die with tickling.

Urs. Yet tell her of it. Hear what she will say.

Hero. No; rather I will go to Benedick
And counsel him to fight against his passion.
And truly, I'll devise some honest slanders
To stain my cousin with. One doth not know
How much an ill word may empoison liking.

Urs. O, do not do your cousin such a wrong!

She cannot be so much without true judgment
(Having so swift and excellent a wit
As she is priz'd to have) as to refuse
So rare a gentleman as Signior Benedick.

Hero. He is the only man of Italy,
Always excepted my dear Claudio.

Urs. I pray you be not angry with me, madam,
Speaking my fancy: Signior Benedick,
For shape, for bearing, argument, and valour,
Goes foremost in report through Italy.

Hero. Indeed he hath an excellent good name.

Urs. His excellence did earn it ere he had it.
When are you married, madam?

Hero. Why, every day tomorrow! Come, go in.
I'll show thee some attires, and have thy counsel
Which is the best to furnish me tomorrow.

[They walk away.]

Urs. She's lim'd, I warrant you! We have caught her, madam.

Hero. If it prove so, then loving goes by haps;
Some Cupid kills with arrows, some with traps.
Exeunt [Hero and Ursula] .

[Beatrice advances from the arbour.]

Beat. What fire is in mine ears? Can this be true?
Stand I condemn'd for pride and scorn so much?

Contempt, farewell! and maiden pride, adieu!
No glory lives behind the back of such.
And, Benedick, love on; I will requite thee,
Taming my wild heart to thy loving hand.
If thou dost love, my kindness shall incite thee
To bind our loves up in a holy band;
For others say thou dost deserve, and I

Believe it better than reportingly. *Exit* .

Scene II. A room in Leonato's house.

Enter Don Pedro, Claudio, Benedick, and Leonato.

Pedro. I do but stay till your marriage be consummate, and then go

I toward Arragon.

Claud. I'll bring you thither, my lord, if you'll vouchsafe me.

Pedro. Nay, that would be as great a soil in the new gloss of your marriage as to show a child his new coat and forbid him to wear it. I will only be bold with Benedick for his company; for, from the crown of his head to the sole of his foot, he is all mirth. He hath twice or thrice cut Cupid's bowstring, and the little hangman dare not shoot at him. He hath a heart as sound as a bell; and his tongue is the clapper, for what his heart thinks, his tongue speaks.

Bene. Gallants, I am not as I have been.

Leon. So say I. Methinks you are sadder.

Claud. I hope he be in love.

Pedro. Hang him, truant! There's no true drop of blood in him to be truly touch'd with love. If he be sad, he wants money.

Bene. I have the toothache.

Pedro. Draw it.

Bene. Hang it!

Claud. You must hang it first and draw it afterwards.

Pedro. What? sigh for the toothache?

Leon. Where is but a humour or a worm.

Bene. Well, every one can master a grief but he that has it.

Claud. Yet say I he is in love.

Pedro. There is no appearance of fancy in him, unless it be a fancy that he hath to strange disguises; as to be a Dutchman to-day, a Frenchman tomorrow; or in the shape of two countries at once, as a German from the waist downward, all slops, and a Spaniard from the hip upward, no doublet. Unless he have a fancy to this foolery, as it appears he hath, he is no fool for fancy, as you would have it appear he is.

Claud. If he be not in love with some woman, there is no believing old signs. 'A brushes his hat o' mornings. What should that bode?

Pedro. Hath any man seen him at the barber's?

Claud. No, but the barber's man hath been seen with him, and the old ornament of his cheek hath already stuff'd tennis balls.

Leon. Indeed he looks younger than he did, by the loss of a beard.

Pedro. Nay, 'a rubs himself with civet. Can you smell him out by that?

Claud. That's as much as to say, the sweet youth's in love.

Pedro. The greatest note of it is his melancholy.

Claud. And when was he wont to wash his face?

Pedro. Yea, or to paint himself? for the which I hear what they say of him.

Claud. Nay, but his jesting spirit, which is new-crept into a lutestring, and now govern'd by stops.

Pedro. Indeed that tells a heavy tale for him. Conclude, conclude, he is in love.

Claud. Nay, but I know who loves him.

Pedro. That would I know too. I warrant, one that knows him not.

Claud. Yes, and his ill conditions; and in despite of all, dies for him.

Pedro. She shall be buried with her face upwards.

Bene. Yet is this no charm for the toothache. Old signior, walk aside with me. I have studied eight or nine wise words to speak to you, which these hobby-horses must not hear.
[Exeunt Benedick and Leonato.]

Pedro. For my life, to break with him about Beatrice!

Claud. 'Tis even so. Hero and Margaret have by this played their parts with Beatrice, and then the two bears will not bite one another when they meet.

Enter John the Bastard.

John. My lord and brother, God save you.

Pedro. Good den, brother.

John. If your leisure serv'd, I would speak with you.

Pedro. In private?

John. If it please you. Yet Count Claudio may hear, for what I would speak of concerns him.

Pedro. What's the matter?

John. [to Claudio] Means your lordship to be married tomorrow?

Pedro. You know he does.

John. I know not that, when he knows what I know.

Claud. If there be any impediment, I pray you discover it.

John. You may think I love you not. Let that appear hereafter, and aim better at me by that I now will manifest. For my brother, I think he holds you well and in dearness of heart hath holp to effect your ensuing marriage—surely suit ill spent and labour ill bestowed!

Pedro. Why, what's the matter?

John. I came hither to tell you, and, circumstances short'ned (for she has been too long a-talking of), the lady is disloyal.

Claud. Who? Hero?

John. Even she—Leonato's Hero, your Hero, every man's Hero.

Claud. Disloyal?

John. The word is too good to paint out her wickedness. I could say she were worse; think you of a worse title, and I will fit her to it. Wonder not till further warrant. Go but with me tonight, you shall see her chamber window ent'red, even the night before her wedding day. If you love her then, tomorrow wed her. But it would better fit your honour to change your mind.

Claud. May this be so?

Pedro. I will not think it.

John. If you dare not trust that you see, confess not that you know. If you will follow me, I will show you enough; and when you have seen more and heard more, proceed accordingly.

Claud. If I see anything tonight why I should not marry her tomorrow, in the congregation where I should wed, there will I shame her.

Pedro. And, as I wooed for thee to obtain her, I will join with thee to disgrace her.

John. I will disparage her no farther till you are my witnesses. Bear it coldly but till midnight, and let the issue show itself.

Pedro. O day untowardly turned!

Claud. O mischief strangely thwarting!

John. O plague right well prevented!
So will you say when you have seen the Sequel.

Exeunt.

Scene III. A street.

Enter Dogberry and his compartner *[Verges]* , with the Watch.

Dog. Are you good men and true?

Verg. Yea, or else it were pity but they should suffer salvation, body and soul.

Dog. Nay, that were a punishment too good for them if they should have any allegiance in them, being chosen for the Prince's watch.

Verg. Well, give them their charge, neighbour Dogberry.

Dog. First, who think you the most desartless man to be constable?

1. Watch. Hugh Oatcake, sir, or George Seacoal; for they can write and read.

Dog. Come hither, neighbour Seacoal. God hath bless'd you with a good name. To be a well-favoured man is the gift of fortune, but to write and read comes by nature.

2. Watch. Both which, Master Constable—

Dog. You have. I knew it would be your answer. Well, for your favour, sir, why, give God thanks and make no boast of it; and for your writing and reading, let that appear when there is no need of such vanity. You are thought here to be the most senseless and fit man for the constable of the watch. Therefore bear you the lanthorn. This is your charge: you shall comprehend all vagrom men; you are to bid any man stand, in the Prince's name.

2. Watch. How if 'a will not stand?

Dog. Why then, take no note of him, but let him go, and presently call the rest of the watch together and thank God you are rid of a knave.

Verg. If he will not stand when he is bidden, he is none of the

Prince's subjects.

Dog. True, and they are to meddle with none but the Prince's subjects. You shall also make no noise in the streets; for for the watch to babble and to talk is most tolerable, and not to be endured.

2. Watch. We will rather sleep than talk. We know what belongs to a watch.

Dog. Why, you speak like an ancient and most quiet watchman, for I cannot see how sleeping should offend. Only have a care that your bills be not stol'n. Well, you are to call at all the alehouses and bid those that are drunk get them to bed.

2. Watch. How if they will not?

Dog. Why then, let them alone till they are sober. If they make you not then the better answer, You may say they are not the men you took them for.

2. Watch. Well, sir.

Dog. If you meet a thief, you may suspect him, by virtue of your office, to be no true man; and for such kind of men, the less you meddle or make with them, why, the more your honesty.

2. Watch. If we know him to be a thief, shall we not lay hands on him?

Dog. Truly, by your office you may; but I think they that touch pitch will be defil'd. The most peaceable way for you, if you do take a thief, is to let him show himself what he is, and steal out of your company.

Verg. You have been always called a merciful man, partner.

Dog. Truly, I would not hang a dog by my will, much more a man who

hath any honesty in him.

Verg. If you hear a child cry in the night, you must call to the

nurse and bid her still it.

2. Watch. How if the nurse be asleep and will not hear us?

Dog. Why then, depart in peace and let the child wake her with crying; for the ewe that will not hear her lamb when it baes will never answer a calf when he bleats.

Verg. 'Tis very true.

Dog. This is the end of the charge: you, constable, are to present the Prince's own person. If you meet the Prince in the night, you may stay him.

Verg. Nay, by'r lady, that I think 'a cannot.

Dog. Five shillings to one on't with any man that knows the statutes, he may stay him! Marry, not without the Prince be willing; for indeed the watch ought to offend no man, and it is an offence to stay a man against his will.

Verg. By'r lady, I think it be so.

Dog. Ha, ah, ha! Well, masters, good night. An there be any matter of weight chances, call up me. Keep your fellows' counsels and your own, and good night. Come, neighbour.

2. Watch. Well, masters, we hear our charge. Let us go sit here

upon the church bench till two, and then all to bed.

Dog. One word more, honest neighbours. I pray you watch about

Signior Leonato's door; for the wedding being there tomorrow,

there is a great coil tonight. Adieu. Be vigitant, I beseech

you. *Exeunt [Dogberry and Verges]* .

Enter Borachio and Conrade.

Bora. What, Conrade!

2. Watch. *[aside]* Peace! stir not!

Bora. Conrade, I say!

Con. Here, man. I am at thy elbow.

Bora. Mass, and my elbow itch'd! I thought there would a scab follow.

Con. I will owe thee an answer for that; and now forward with thy tale.

Bora. Stand thee close then under this penthouse, for it drizzles

rain, and I will, like a true drunkard, utter all to thee.

2. Watch. *[aside]* Some treason, masters. Yet stand close.

Bora. Therefore know I have earned of Don John a thousand ducats.

Con. Is it possible that any villany should be so dear?

Bora. Thou shouldst rather ask if it were possible any villany should be so rich; for when rich villains have need of poor ones, poor ones may make what price they will.

Con. I wonder at it.

Bora. That shows thou art unconfirm'd. Thou knowest that the fashion of a doublet, or a hat, or a cloak, is nothing to a man.

Con. Yes, it is apparel.

Bora. I mean the fashion.

Con. Yes, the fashion is the fashion.

Bora. Tush! I may as well say the fool's the fool. But seest thou not what a deformed thief this fashion is?

2. Watch. *[aside]* I know that Deformed. 'A bas been a vile thief this seven year; 'a goes up and down like a gentleman. I remember his name.

Bora. Didst thou not hear somebody?

Con. No; 'twas the vane on the house.

Bora. Seest thou not, I say, what a deformed thief this fashion is? how giddily 'a turns about all the hot-bloods between fourteen and five-and-thirty? sometimes fashioning them like Pharaoh's soldiers in the reechy painting, sometime like god Bel's priests in the old church window, sometime like the shaven Hercules in the smirch'd worm-eaten tapestry, where his codpiece seems as massy as his club?

Con. All this I see; and I see that the fashion wears out more apparel than the man. But art not thou thyself giddy with the fashion too, that thou hast shifted out of thy tale into telling me of the fashion?

Bora. Not so neither. But know that I have tonight wooed Margaret, the Lady Hero's gentlewoman, by the name of Hero. She leans me out at her mistress' chamber window, bids me a thousand times good night—I tell this tale vilely; I should first tell thee how the Prince, Claudio and my master, planted and placed and possessed by my master Don John, saw afar off in the orchard this amiable encounter.

Con. And thought they Margaret was Hero?

Bora. Two of them did, the Prince and Claudio; but the devil my master knew she was Margaret; and partly by his oaths, which first possess'd them, partly by the dark night, which did deceive them, but chiefly by my villany, which did confirm any slander that Don John had made, away went Claudio enrag'd; swore he would meet her, as he was appointed, next morning at the temple, and there, before the whole congregation, shame her with what he saw o'ernight and send her home again without a husband.

2. Watch. We charge you in the Prince's name stand!

1. Watch. Call up the right Master Constable. We have here recover'd the most dangerous piece of lechery that ever was known in the commonwealth.

2. Watch. And one Deformed is one of them. I know him; 'a wears a lock.

Con. Masters, masters—

1. Watch. You'll be made bring Deformed forth, I warrant you.

Con. Masters—

2. Watch. Never speak, we charge you. Let us obey you to go with us.

Bora. We are like to prove a goodly commodity, being taken up of these men's bills.

Con. A commodity in question, I warrant you. Come, we'll obey you.

Exeunt.

Scene IV. A Room in Leonato's house.

Enter Hero, and Margaret and Ursula.

Hero. Good Ursula, wake my cousin Beatrice and desire her to rise.

Urs. I will, lady.

Hero. And bid her come hither.

Urs. Well. *[Exit.]*

Marg. Troth, I think your other rebato were better.

Hero. No, pray thee, good Meg, I'll wear this.

Marg. By my troth, 's not so good, and I warrant your cousin will say so.

Hero. My cousin's a fool, and thou art another. I'll wear none but this.

Marg. I like the new tire within excellently, if the hair were a

thought browner; and your gown's a most rare fashion, i' faith.

I saw the Duchess of Milan's gown that they praise so.

Hero. O, that exceeds, they say.

Marg. By my troth, 's but a nightgown in respect of yours— cloth-o'-gold and cuts, and lac'd with silver, set with pearls down sleeves, side-sleeves, and skirts, round underborne with

a blush tinsel. But for a fine, quaint, graceful, and excellent fashion, yours is worth ten on't.

Hero. God give me joy to wear it! for my heart is exceeding heavy.

Marg. 'Twill be heavier soon by the weight of a man.

Hero. Fie upon thee! art not ashamed?

Marg. Of what, lady? of speaking honourably? Is not marriage honourable in a beggar? Is not your lord honourable without marriage? I think you would have me say, 'saving your reverence, a husband.' An bad thinking do not wrest true speaking, I'll offend nobody. Is there any harm in 'the heavier for a husband'? None, I think, an it be the right husband and the right wife. Otherwise 'tis light, and not heavy. Ask my Lady Beatrice else. Here she comes.

Enter Beatrice.

Hero. Good morrow, coz.

Beat. Good morrow, sweet Hero.

Hero. Why, how now? Do you speak in the sick tune?

Beat. I am out of all other tune, methinks.

Marg. Clap's into 'Light o' love.' That goes without a burden. Do

you sing it, and I'll dance it.

Beat. Yea, 'Light o' love' with your heels! then, if your husband

have stables enough, you'll see he shall lack no barnes.

Marg. O illegitimate construction! I scorn that with my heels.

Beat. 'Tis almost five o'clock, cousin; 'tis time you were ready.

By my troth, I am exceeding ill. Hey-ho!

Marg. For a hawk, a horse, or a husband?

Beat. For the letter that begins them all, H.

Marg. Well, an you be not turn'd Turk, there's no more sailing by the star.

Beat. What means the fool, trow?

Marg. Nothing I; but God send every one their heart's desire!

Hero. These gloves the Count sent me, they are an excellent perfume.

Beat. I am stuff'd, cousin; I cannot smell.

Marg. A maid, and stuff'd! There's goodly catching of cold.

Beat. O, God help me! God help me! How long have you profess'd apprehension?

Marg. Ever since you left it. Doth not my wit become me rarely?

Beat. It is not seen enough. You should wear it in your cap. By my troth, I am sick.

Marg. Get you some of this distill'd carduus benedictus and lay it to your heart. It is the only thing for a qualm.

Hero. There thou prick'st her with a thistle.

Beat. Benedictus? why benedictus? You have some moral in this 'benedictus.'

Marg. Moral? No, by my troth, I have no moral meaning; I meant plain holy thistle. You may think perchance that I think you are in love. Nay, by'r lady, I am not such a fool to think what I list; nor I list not to think what I can; nor indeed I cannot think, if I would think my heart out of thinking, that you are in love, or that you will be in love, or that you can be in love. Yet Benedick was such another, and now is he become a man. He swore he would never marry; and yet now in despite of his heart he eats his meat without grudging; and how you may be converted I know not, but methinks you look with your eyes as other women do.

Beat. What pace is this that thy tongue keeps?

Marg. Not a false gallop.

Enter Ursula.

Urs. Madam, withdraw. The Prince, the Count, Signior Benedick, Don

John, and all the gallants of the town are come to fetch you to church.

Hero. Help to dress me, good coz, good Meg, good Ursula.

[Exeunt.]

Scene V. The hall in Leonato's house.

Enter Leonato and the Constable *[Dogberry]* and the Headborough *[verges]* .

Leon. What would you with me, honest neighbour?

Dog. Marry, sir, I would have some confidence with you that decerns you nearly.

Leon. Brief, I pray you; for you see it is a busy time with me.

Dog. Marry, this it is, sir.

Verg. Yes, in truth it is, sir.

Leon. What is it, my good friends?

Dog. Goodman Verges, sir, speaks a little off the matter—an old man, sir, and his wits are not so blunt as, God help, I would desire they were; but, in faith, honest as the skin between his brows.

Verg. Yes, I thank God I am as honest as any man living that is an old man and no honester than I.

Dog. Comparisons are odorous. Palabras, neighbour Verges.

Leon. Neighbours, you are tedious.

Dog. It pleases your worship to say so, but we are the poor Duke's officers; but truly, for mine own part, if I were as tedious as a king, I could find in my heart to bestow it all of your worship.

Leon. All thy tediousness on me, ah?

Dog. Yea, in 'twere a thousand pound more than 'tis; for I hear as good exclamation on your worship as of any man in the city; and though I be but a poor man, I am glad to hear it.

Verg. And so am I.

Leon. I would fain know what you have to say.

Verg. Marry, sir, our watch tonight, excepting your worship's

presence, ha' ta'en a couple of as arrant knaves as any in

Messina.

Dog. A good old man, sir; he will be talking. As they say,

'When

the age is in, the wit is out.' God help us! it is a world to

see! Well said, i' faith, neighbour Verges. Well, God's a good

man. An two men ride of a horse, one must ride behind. An honest

soul, i' faith, sir, by my troth he is, as ever broke bread; but

God is to be worshipp'd; all men are not alike, alas, good neighbour!

Leon. Indeed, neighbour, he comes too short of you.

Dog. Gifts that God gives.

Leon. I must leave you.

Dog. One word, sir. Our watch, sir, have indeed comprehended two aspicious persons, and we would have them this morning examined before your worship.

Leon. Take their examination yourself and bring it me. I am now in great haste, as it may appear unto you.

Dog. It shall be suffigance.

Leon. Drink some wine ere you go. Fare you well.

[Enter a Messenger.]

Mess. My lord, they stay for you to give your daughter to her husband.

Leon. I'll wait upon them. I am ready.

[Exeunt Leonato and Messenger.]

Dog. Go, good partner, go get you to Francis Seacoal; bid him bring his pen and inkhorn to the jail. We are now to examination these men.

Verg. And we must do it wisely.

Dog. We will spare for no wit, I warrant you. Here's that shall
drive some of them to a non-come. Only get the learned writer to
set down our excommunication, and meet me at the jail.

[Exeunt.]

ACT IV. Scene I. A church.

Enter Don Pedro, *[John the]* Bastard, Leonato, Friar *[Francis]* ,

Claudio,

Benedick, Hero, Beatrice, *[and Attendants]* .

Leon. Come, Friar Francis, be brief. Only to the plain form of marriage, and you shall recount their particular duties afterwards.

Friar. You come hither, my lord, to marry this lady?

Claud. No.

Leon. To be married to her. Friar, you come to marry her.

Friar. Lady, you come hither to be married to this count?

Hero. I do.

Friar. If either of you know any inward impediment why you should not be conjoined, I charge you on your souls to utter it.

Claud. Know you any, Hero?

Hero. None, my lord.

Friar. Know you any, Count?

Leon. I dare make his answer—none.

Claud. O, what men dare do! what men may do! what men daily do, not knowing what they do!

Bene. How now? interjections? Why then, some be of laughing, as, ah, ha, he!

Claud. Stand thee by, friar. Father, by your leave:
Will you with free and unconstrained soul
Give me this maid your daughter?

Leon. As freely, son, as God did give her me.

Claud. And what have I to give you back whose worth
May counterpoise this rich and precious gift?

Pedro. Nothing, unless you render her again.

Claud. Sweet Prince, you learn me noble thankfulness.
There, Leonato, take her back again.

Give not this rotten orange to your friend.
She's but the sign and semblance of her honour.

Behold how like a maid she blushes here!
O, what authority and show of truth
Can cunning sin cover itself withal!
Comes not that blood as modest evidence
To witness simple virtue, Would you not swear,
All you that see her, that she were a maid
By these exterior shows? But she is none:
She knows the heat of a luxurious bed;
Her blush is guiltiness, not modesty.

Leon. What do you mean, my lord?

Claud. Not to be married,
Not to knit my soul to an approved wanton.

Leon. Dear my lord, if you, in your own proof,
Have vanquish'd the resistance of her youth
And made defeat of her virginity—

Claud. I know what you would say. If I have known her,
You will say she did embrace me as a husband,
And so extenuate the forehand sin.
No, Leonato,
I never tempted her with word too large,
But, as a brother to his sister, show'd
Bashful sincerity and comely love.

Hero. And seem'd I ever otherwise to you?

Claud. Out on the seeming! I will write against it.

You seem to me as Dian in her orb,
As chaste as is the bud ere it be blown;
But you are more intemperate in your blood
Than Venus, or those pamp'red animals
That rage in savage sensuality.

Hero. Is my lord well that he doth speak so wide?

Leon. Sweet Prince, why speak not you?

Pedro. What should I speak?
I stand dishonour'd that have gone about
To link my dear friend to a common stale.

Leon. Are these things spoken, or do I but dream?

John. Sir, they are spoken, and these things are true.

Bene. This looks not like a nuptial.

Hero. 'True!' O God!

Claud. Leonato, stand I here?

Is this the Prince, Is this the Prince's brother?

Is this face Hero's? Are our eyes our own?

Leon. All this is so; but what of this, my lord?

Claud. Let me but move one question to your daughter,

And by that fatherly and kindly power

That you have in her, bid her answer truly.

Leon. I charge thee do so, as thou art my child.

Hero. O, God defend me! How am I beset!

What kind of catechising call you this?

Claud. To make you answer truly to your name.

Hero. Is it not Hero? Who can blot that name

With any just reproach?

Claud. Marry, that can Hero!
Hero itself can blot out Hero's virtue.
What man was he talk'd with you yesternight,
Out at your window betwixt twelve and one?

Now, if you are a maid, answer to this.

Hero. I talk'd with no man at that hour, my lord.

Pedro. Why, then are you no maiden. Leonato,
I am sorry you must hear. Upon my honour,
Myself, my brother, and this grieved Count
Did see her, hear her, at that hour last night
Talk with a ruffian at her chamber window,
Who hath indeed, most like a liberal villain,
Confess'd the vile encounters they have had
A thousand times in secret.

John. Fie, fie! they are not to be nam'd, my lord—
Not to be spoke of;

There is not chastity, enough in language
Without offence to utter them. Thus, pretty lady,
I am sorry for thy much misgovernment.

Claud. O Hero! what a Hero hadst thou been
If half thy outward graces had been plac'd
About thy thoughts and counsels of thy heart!
But fare thee well, most foul, most fair! Farewell,
Thou pure impiety and impious purity!
For thee I'll lock up all the gates of love,
And on my eyelids shall conjecture hang,
To turn all beauty into thoughts of harm,
And never shall it more be gracious.

Leon. Hath no man's dagger here a point for me?

[Hero swoons.]

Beat. Why, how now, cousin? Wherefore sink you down?

John. Come let us go. These things, come thus to light, Smother her spirits up.

[Exeunt Don Pedro, Don Juan, and Claudio.]

Bene. How doth the lady?

Beat. Dead, I think. Help, uncle!

Hero! why, Hero! Uncle! Signior Benedick! Friar!

Leon. O Fate, take not away thy heavy hand!

Death is the fairest cover for her shame

That may be wish'd for.

Beat. How now, cousin Hero?

Friar. Have comfort, lady.

Leon. Dost thou look up?

Friar. Yea, wherefore should she not?

Leon. Wherefore? Why, doth not every earthly thing

Cry shame upon her? Could she here deny
The story that is printed in her blood?
Do not live, Hero; do not ope thine eyes;
For, did I think thou wouldst not quickly die,
Thought I thy spirits were stronger than thy shames,
Myself would on the rearward of reproaches
Strike at thy life. Griev'd I, I had but one?

Child I for that at frugal nature's frame?
O, one too much by thee! Why had I one?

Why ever wast thou lovely in my eyes?
Why had I not with charitable hand
Took up a beggar's issue at my gates,
Who smirched thus and mir'd with infamy,
I might have said, 'No part of it is mine;
This shame derives itself from unknown loins'?
But mine, and mine I lov'd, and mine I prais'd,
And mine that I was proud on—mine so much
That I myself was to myself not mine,
Valuing of her—why, she, O, she is fall'n

Into a pit of ink, that the wide sea
Hath drops too few to wash her clean again,
And salt too little which may season give
To her foul tainted flesh!

Bene. Sir, sir, be patient.
For my part, I am so attir'd in wonder,
I know not what to say.

Beat. O, on my soul, my cousin is belied!

Bene. Lady, were you her bedfellow last night?

Beat. No, truly, not; although, until last night,
I have this twelvemonth been her bedfellow.

Leon. Confirm'd, confirm'd! O, that is stronger made
Which was before barr'd up with ribs of iron!
Would the two princes lie? and Claudio lie,
Who lov'd her so that, speaking of her foulness,
Wash'd it with tears? Hence from her! let her die.

Friar. Hear me a little;
For I have only been silent so long,
And given way unto this course of fortune,
By noting of the lady. I have mark'd
A thousand blushing apparitions
To start into her face, a thousand innocent shames
In angel whiteness beat away those blushes,
And in her eye there hath appear'd a fire
To burn the errors that these princes hold
Against her maiden truth. Call me a fool;
Trust not my reading nor my observation,
Which with experimental seal doth warrant
The tenure of my book; trust not my age,
My reverence, calling, nor divinity,
If this sweet lady lie not guiltless here
Under some biting error.

Leon. Friar, it cannot be.
Thou seest that all the grace that she hath left
Is that she will not add to her damnation

A sin of perjury: she not denies it.
Why seek'st thou then to cover with excuse
That which appears in proper nakedness?

Friar. Lady, what man is he you are accus'd of?

Hero. They know that do accuse me; I know none.
If I know more of any man alive
Than that which maiden modesty doth warrant,
Let all my sins lack mercy! O my father,
Prove you that any man with me convers'd
At hours unmeet, or that I yesternight
Maintain'd the change of words with any creature,
Refuse me, hate me, torture me to death!

Friar. There is some strange misprision in the princes.

Bene. Two of them have the very bent of honour;
And if their wisdoms be misled in this,
The practice of it lives in John the bastard,
Whose spirits toil in frame of villanies.

Leon. I know not. If they speak but truth of her,

These hands shall tear her. If they wrong her honour,

The proudest of them shall well hear of it.

Time hath not yet so dried this blood of mine,

Nor age so eat up my invention,

Nor fortune made such havoc of my means,

Nor my bad life reft me so much of friends,

But they shall find awak'd in such a kind

Both strength of limb and policy of mind,

Ability in means, and choice of friends,

To quit me of them throughly.

Friar. Pause awhile

And let my counsel sway you in this case.

Your daughter here the princes left for dead,

Let her awhile be secretly kept in,

And publish it that she is dead indeed;

Maintain a mourning ostentation,

And on your family's old monument

Hang mournful epitaphs, and do all rites

That appertain unto a burial.

Leon. What shall become of this? What will this do?

Friar. Marry, this well carried shall on her behalf
Change slander to remorse. That is some good.
But not for that dream I on this strange course,
But on this travail look for greater birth.
She dying, as it must be so maintain'd,
Upon the instant that she was accus'd,
Shall be lamented, pitied, and excus'd
Of every hearer; for it so falls out
That what we have we prize not to the worth
Whiles we enjoy it, but being lack'd and lost,
Why, then we rack the value, then we find
The virtue that possession would not show us
Whiles it was ours. So will it fare with Claudio.
When he shall hear she died upon his words,
Th' idea of her life shall sweetly creep
Into his study of imagination,
And every lovely organ of her life

Shall come apparell'd in more precious habit,
More moving, delicate, and full of life,
Into the eye and prospect of his soul
Than when she liv'd indeed. Then shall he mourn
(If ever love had interest in his liver)
And wish he had not so accused her—
No, though be thought his accusation true.
Let this be so, and doubt not but success
Will fashion the event in better shape
Than I can lay it down in likelihood.
But if all aim but this be levell'd false,
The supposition of the lady's death
Will quench the wonder of her infamy.
And if it sort not well, you may conceal her,
As best befits her wounded reputation,
In some reclusive and religious life,
Out of all eyes, tongues, minds, and injuries.

Bene. Signior Leonato, let the friar advise you;
And though you know my inwardness and love
Is very much unto the Prince and Claudio,

Yet, by mine honour, I will deal in this
As secretly and justly as your soul
Should with your body.

Leon. Being that I flow in grief,
The smallest twine may lead me.

Friar. 'Tis well consented. Presently away;
For to strange sores strangely they strain the cure.
Come, lady, die to live. This wedding day
Perhaps is but prolong'd. Have patience and endure.
Exeunt [all but Benedick and Beatrice] .

Bene. Lady Beatrice, have you wept all this while?

Beat. Yea, and I will weep a while longer.

Bene. I will not desire that.

Beat. You have no reason. I do it freely.

Bene. Surely I do believe your fair cousin is wronged.

Beat. Ah, how much might the man deserve of me that would right her!

Bene. Is there any way to show such friendship?

Beat. A very even way, but no such friend.

Bene. May a man do it?

Beat. It is a man's office, but not yours.

Bene. I do love nothing in the world so well as you. Is not that strange?

Beat. As strange as the thing I know not. It were as possible for me to say I loved nothing so well as you. But believe me not; and yet I lie not. I confess nothing, nor I deny nothing. I am sorry for my cousin.

Bene. By my sword, Beatrice, thou lovest me.

Beat. Do not swear, and eat it.

Bene. I will swear by it that you love me, and I will make him eat it that says I love not you.

Beat. Will you not eat your word?

Bene. With no sauce that can be devised to it. I protest I love thee.

Beat. Why then, God forgive me!

Bene. What offence, sweet Beatrice?

Beat. You have stayed me in a happy hour. I was about to protest I loved you.

Bene. And do it with all thy heart.

Beat. I love you with so much of my heart that none is left to protest.

Bene. Come, bid me do anything for thee.

Beat. Kill Claudio.

Bene. Ha! not for the wide world!

Beat. You kill me to deny it. Farewell.

Bene. Tarry, sweet Beatrice.

Beat. I am gone, though I am here. There is no love in you. Nay, I pray you let me go.

Bene. Beatrice—

Beat. In faith, I will go.

Bene. We'll be friends first.

Beat. You dare easier be friends with me than fight with mine enemy.

Bene. Is Claudio thine enemy?

Beat. Is 'a not approved in the height a villain, that hath slandered, scorned, dishonoured my kinswoman? O that I were a man! What? bear her in hand until they come to take hands, and then with public accusation, uncover'd slander, unmitigated rancour—O God, that I were a man! I would eat his heart in the market place.

Bene. Hear me, Beatrice!

Beat. Talk with a man out at a window!-a proper saying!

Bene. Nay but Beatrice—

Beat. Sweet Hero! she is wrong'd, she is sland'red, she is undone.

Bene. Beat—

Beat. Princes and Counties! Surely a princely testimony, a goodly count, Count Comfect, a sweet gallant surely! O that I were a man for his sake! or that I had any friend would be a man for my sake! But manhood is melted into cursies, valour into compliment, and men are only turn'd into tongue, and trim ones too. He is now as valiant as Hercules that only tells a lie,and swears it. I cannot be a man with wishing; therefore I will die a woman with grieving.

Bene. Tarry, good Beatrice. By this hand, I love thee.

Beat. Use it for my love some other way than swearing by it.

Bene. Think you in your soul the Count Claudio hath wrong'd Hero?

Beat. Yea, as sure is I have a thought or a soul.

Bene. Enough, I am engag'd, I will challenge him. I will kiss your hand, and so I leave you. By this hand, Claudio shall render me a dear account. As you hear of me, so think of me. Go comfort your cousin. I must say she is dead-and so farewell.

[Exeunt.]

Scene II. A prison.

Enter the Constables *[Dogberry and Verges]* and the Sexton, in gowns, *[and the Watch, with Conrade and]* Borachio.

Dog. Is our whole dissembly appear'd?

Verg. O, a stool and a cushion for the sexton.

Sex. Which be the malefactors?

Dog. Marry, that am I and my partner.

Verg. Nay, that's certain. We have the exhibition to examine.

Sex. But which are the offenders that are to be examined? let them come before Master Constable.

Dog. Yea, marry, let them come before me. What is your name, friend?

Bor. Borachio.

Dog. Pray write down Borachio. Yours, sirrah?

Con. I am a gentleman, sir, and my name is Conrade.

Dog. Write down Master Gentleman Conrade. Masters, do you serve God?

Both. Yea, sir, we hope.

Dog. Write down that they hope they serve God; and write God first, for God defend but God should go before such villains! Masters, it is proved already that you are little better than false knaves, and it will go near to be thought so shortly. How answer you for yourselves?

Con. Marry, sir, we say we are none.

Dog. A marvellous witty fellow, I assure you; but I will go about with him. Come you hither, sirrah. A word in your ear. Sir, I say to you, it is thought you are false knaves.

Bora. Sir, I say to you we are none.

Dog. Well, stand aside. Fore God, they are both in a tale.

Have you writ down that they are none?

Sex. Master Constable, you go not the way to examine. You must call

forth the watch that are their accusers.

Dog. Yea, marry, that's the eftest way. Let the watch come forth.

Masters, I charge you in the Prince's name accuse these men.

1. Watch. This man said, sir, that Don John the Prince's brother was a villain.

Dog. Write down Prince John a villain. Why, this is flat perjury,

to call a prince's brother villain.

Bora. Master Constable—

Dog. Pray thee, fellow, peace. I do not like thy look, I promise thee.

Sex. What heard you him say else?

2. Watch. Marry, that he had received a thousand ducats of Don John for accusing the Lady Hero wrongfully.

Dog. Flat burglary as ever was committed.

Verg. Yea, by th' mass, that it is.

Sex. What else, fellow?

1. Watch. And that Count Claudio did mean, upon his words, to

disgrace Hero before the whole assembly, and not marry her.

Dog. O villain! thou wilt be condemn'd into everlasting redemption for this.

Sex. What else?

Watchmen. This is all.

Sex. And this is more, masters, than you can deny. Prince John is this morning secretly stol'n away. Hero was in this manner accus'd, in this manner refus'd, and upon the grief of this suddenly died. Master Constable, let these men be bound and brought to Leonato's. I will go before and show him their examination. *[Exit.]*

Dog. Come, let them be opinion'd.

Verg. Let them be in the hands—

Con. Off, coxcomb!

Dog. God's my life, where's the sexton? Let him write down the Prince's officer coxcomb. Come, bind them.—Thou naughty varlet!

Con. Away! you are an ass, you are an ass.

Dog. Dost thou not suspect my place? Dost thou not suspect my years? O that he were here to write me down an ass! But, masters, remember that I am an ass. Though it be not written down, yet forget not that I am an ass. No, thou villain, thou art full of piety, as shall be prov'd upon thee by good witness. I am a wise fellow; and which is more, an officer; and which is more, a householder; and which is more, as pretty a piece of flesh as any is in Messina, and one that knows the law, go to! and a rich fellow enough, go to! and a fellow that hath had losses; and one that hath two gowns and everything handsome about him. Bring him away. O that I had been writ down an ass! *Exeunt* .

ACT V. Scene I. The street, near Leonato's house.

Enter Leonato and his brother *[Antonio]* .

Ant. If you go on thus, you will kill yourself,

And 'tis not wisdom thus to second grief

Against yourself.

Leon. I pray thee cease thy counsel,

Which falls into mine ears as profitless

As water in a sieve. Give not me counsel,

Nor let no comforter delight mine ear

But such a one whose wrongs do suit with mine.

Bring me a father that so lov'd his child,
Whose joy of her is overwhelm'd like mine,
And bid him speak to me of patience.
Measure his woe the length and breadth of mine,
And let it answer every strain for strain,
As thus for thus, and such a grief for such,
In every lineament, branch, shape, and form.
If such a one will smile and stroke his beard,
Bid sorrow wag, cry 'hem' when he should groan,
Patch grief with proverbs, make misfortune drunk
With candle-wasters—bring him yet to me,
And I of him will gather patience.
But there is no such man; for, brother, men
Can counsel and speak comfort to that grief
Which they themselves not feel; but, tasting it,
Their counsel turns to passion, which before
Would give preceptial medicine to rage,
Fetter strong madness in a silken thread,
Charm ache with air and agony with words.
No, no! 'Tis all men's office to speak patience
To those that wring under the load of sorrow,

But no man's virtue nor sufficiency
To be so moral when he shall endure
The like himself. Therefore give me no counsel.
My griefs cry louder than advertisement.

Ant. Therein do men from children nothing differ.

Leon. I pray thee peace. I will be flesh and blood;
For there was never yet philosopher
That could endure the toothache patiently,
However they have writ the style of gods
And made a push at chance and sufferance.

Ant. Yet bend not all the harm upon yourself.
Make those that do offend you suffer too.

Leon. There thou speak'st reason. Nay, I will do so.
My soul doth tell me Hero is belied;
And that shall Claudio know; so shall the Prince,
And all of them that thus dishonour her.

Enter Don Pedro and Claudio.

Ant. Here comes the Prince and Claudio hastily.

Pedro. Good den, Good den.

Claud. Good day to both of you.

Leon. Hear you, my lords!

Pedro. We have some haste, Leonato.

Leon. Some haste, my lord! well, fare you well, my lord.
Are you so hasty now? Well, all is one.

Pedro. Nay, do not quarrel with us, good old man.

Ant. If he could right himself with quarrelling,
Some of us would lie low.

Claud. Who wrongs him?

Leon. Marry, thou dost wrong me, thou dissembler, thou!
Nay, never lay thy hand upon thy sword;
I fear thee not.

Claud. Mary, beshrew my hand
If it should give your age such cause of fear.

In faith, my hand meant nothing to my sword.

Leon. Tush, tush, man! never fleer and jest at me
I speak not like a dotard nor a fool,
As under privilege of age to brag
What I have done being young, or what would do,
Were I not old. Know, Claudio, to thy head,
Thou hast so wrong'd mine innocent child and me
That I am forc'd to lay my reverence by
And, with grey hairs and bruise of many days,
Do challenge thee to trial of a man.
I say thou hast belied mine innocent child;
Thy slander hath gone through and through her heart,

And she lied buried with her ancestors-
O, in a tomb where never scandal slept,
Save this of hers, fram'd by thy villany!

Claud. My villany?

Leon. Thine, Claudio; thine I say.

Pedro. You say not right, old man.

Leon. My lord, my lord,
I'll prove it on his body if he dare,
Despite his nice fence and his active practice,
His May of youth and bloom of lustihood.

Claud. Away! I will not have to do with you.

Leon. Canst thou so daff me? Thou hast kill'd my child.
If thou kill'st me, boy, thou shalt kill a man.

And. He shall kill two of us, and men indeed

But that's no matter; let him kill one first.

Win me and wear me! Let him answer me.
Come, follow me, boy,. Come, sir boy, come follow me.

Sir boy, I'll whip you from your foining fence!
Nay, as I am a gentleman, I will.

Leon. Brother—

Ant. Content yourself. God knows I lov'd my niece,
And she is dead, slander'd to death by villains,
That dare as well answer a man indeed
As I dare take a serpent by the tongue.

Boys, apes, braggarts, jacks, milksops!

Leon. Brother Anthony—

Ant. Hold you content. What, man! I know them, yea,
And what they weigh, even to the utmost scruple,

Scambling, outfacing, fashion-monging boys,
That lie and cog and flout, deprave and slander,
Go anticly, show outward hideousness,
And speak off half a dozen dang'rous words,
How they might hurt their enemies, if they durst;
And this is all.

Leon. But, brother Anthony—

Ant. Come, 'tis no matter.
Do not you meddle; let me deal in this.

Pedro. Gentlemen both, we will not wake your patience.
My heart is sorry for your daughter's death;
But, on my honour, she was charg'd with nothing
But what was true, and very full of proof.

Leon. My lord, my lord—

Pedro. I will not hear you.

Leon. No? Come, brother, away!—I will be heard.

Ant. And shall, or some of us will smart for it.
Exeunt ambo.

Enter Benedick.

Pedro. See, see! Here comes the man we went to seek.

Claud. Now, signior, what news?

Bene. Good day, my lord.

Pedro. Welcome, signior. You are almost come to part almost a fray.

Claud. We had lik'd to have had our two noses snapp'd off with two
old men without teeth.

Pedro. Leonato and his brother. What think'st thou? Had we fought,
I doubt we should have been too young for them.

Bene. In a false quarrel there is no true valour. I came to seek you both.

Claud. We have been up and down to seek thee; for we are high-proof melancholy, and would fain have it beaten away. Wilt thou use thy wit?

Bene. It is in my scabbard. Shall I draw it?

Pedro. Dost thou wear thy wit by thy side?

Claud. Never any did so, though very many have been beside their wit. I will bid thee draw, as we do the minstrel—draw to pleasure us.

Pedro. As I am an honest man, he looks pale. Art thou sick or angry?

Claud. What, courage, man! What though care kill'd a cat, thou hast

mettle enough in thee to kill care.

Bene. Sir, I shall meet your wit in the career an you charge it

against me. I pray you choose another subject.

Claud. Nay then, give him another staff; this last was broke cross.

Pedro. By this light, he changes more and more. I think he be angry indeed.

Claud. If he be, he knows how to turn his girdle.

Bene. Shall I speak a word in your ear?

Claud. God bless me from a challenge!

Bene. [aside to Claudio] You are a villain. I jest not; I will make it good how you dare, with what you dare, and when you dare. Do me right, or I will protest your cowardice. You have kill'd a sweet lady, and her death shall fall heavy on you. Let me hear from you.

Claud. Well, I will meet you, so I may have good cheer.

Pedro. What, a feast, a feast?

Claud. I' faith, I thank him, he hath bid me to a calve's head and a capon, the which if I do not carve most curiously, say my knife's naught. Shall I not find a woodcock too?

Bene. Sir, your wit ambles well; it goes easily.

Pedro. I'll tell thee how Beatrice prais'd thy wit the other day. I said thou hadst a fine wit: 'True,' said she, 'a fine little one.' 'No,' said I, 'a great wit.' 'Right,' says she, 'a great gross one.' 'Nay,' said I, 'a good wit.' 'Just,' said she, 'it hurts nobody.' 'Nay,' said I, 'the gentleman is wise.'

'Certain,' said she, a wise gentleman.' 'Nay,' said I, 'he hath the tongues.' 'That I believe' said she, 'for he swore a thing to me on Monday night which he forswore on Tuesday morning. There's a double tongue; there's two tongues.' Thus did she an hour together transshape thy particular virtues. Yet at last she concluded with a sigh, thou wast the proper'st man in Italy.

Claud. For the which she wept heartily and said she cared not.

Pedro. Yea, that she did; but yet, for all that, an if she did not hate him deadly, she would love him dearly. The old man's daughter told us all.

Claud. All, all! and moreover, God saw him when he was hid in the garden.

Pedro. But when shall we set the savage bull's horns on the

sensible Benedick's head?

Claud. Yea, and text underneath, 'Here dwells Benedick, the married man'?

Bene. Fare you well, boy; you know my mind. I will leave you now to your gossiplike humour. You break jests as braggards do their blades, which God be thanked hurt not. My lord, for your many courtesies I thank you. I must discontinue your company. Your brother the bastard is fled from Messina. You have among you kill'd a sweet and innocent lady. For my Lord Lackbeard there, he and I shall meet; and till then peace be with him. *[Exit.]*

Pedro. He is in earnest.

Claud. In most profound earnest; and, I'll warrant you, for the

love of Beatrice.

Pedro. And hath challeng'd thee.

Claud. Most sincerely.

Pedro. What a pretty thing man is when he goes in his doublet and hose and leaves off his wit!

Enter Constables *[Dogberry and Verges, with the Watch, leading]*

Conrade and Borachio.

Claud. He is then a giant to an ape; but then is an ape a doctor to such a man.

Pedro. But, soft you, let me be! Pluck up, my heart, and be sad!

Did he not say my brother was fled?

Dog. Come you, sir. If justice cannot tame you, she shall ne'er weigh more reasons in her balance. Nay, an you be a cursing hypocrite once, you must be look'd to.

Pedro. How now? two of my brother's men bound? Borachio one.

Claud. Hearken after their offence, my lord.

Pedro. Officers, what offence have these men done?

Dog. Marry, sir, they have committed false report; moreover, they have spoken untruths; secondarily, they are slanders; sixth and lastly, they have belied a lady; thirdly, they have verified unjust things; and to conclude, they are lying knaves.

Pedro. First, I ask thee what they have done; thirdly, I ask thee what's their offence; sixth and lastly, why they are committed; and to conclude, what you lay to their charge.

Claud. Rightly reasoned, and in his own division; and by my troth there's one meaning well suited.

Pedro. Who have you offended, masters, that you are thus bound to your answer? This learned constable is too cunning to be understood. What's your offence?

Bora. Sweet Prince, let me go no farther to mine answer. Do you hear me, and let this Count kill me. I have deceived even your very eyes. What your wisdoms could not discover, these shallow fools have brought to light, who in the night overheard me confessing to this man, how Don John your brother incensed me to slander the Lady Hero; how you were brought into the orchard and saw me court Margaret in Hero's garments; how you disgrac'd her when you should marry her. My villany they have upon record, which I had rather seal with my death than repeat over to my shame. The lady is dead upon mine and my master's false accusation; and briefly, I desire nothing but the reward of a villain.

Pedro. Runs not this speech like iron through your blood?

Claud. I have drunk poison whiles he utter'd it.

Pedro. But did my brother set thee on to this?

Bora. Yea, and paid me richly for the practice of it.

Pedro. He is compos'd and fram'd of treachery,

And fled he is upon this villany.

Claud. Sweet Hero, now thy image doth appear

In the rare semblance that I lov'd it first.

Dog. Come, bring away the plaintiffs. By this time our sexton hath reformed Signior Leonato of the matter. And, masters, do not forget to specify, when time and place shall serve, that I am an ass.

Verg. Here, here comes Master Signior Leonato, and the sexton too.

Enter Leonato, his brother *[Antonio]* , and the Sexton.

Leon. Which is the villain? Let me see his eyes,

That, when I note another man like him,

I may avoid him. Which of these is he?

Bora. If you would know your wronger, look on me.

Leon. Art thou the slave that with thy breath hast kill'd
Mine innocent child?

Bora. Yea, even I alone.

Leon. No, not so, villain! thou beliest thyself.
Here stand a pair of honourable men—
A third is fled—that had a hand in it.
I thank you princes for my daughter's death.

Record it with your high and worthy deeds.
'Twas bravely done, if you bethink you of it.

Claud. I know not how to pray your patience;
Yet I must speak. Choose your revenge yourself;
Impose me to what penance your invention
Can lay upon my sin. Yet sinn'd I not
But in mistaking.

Pedro. By my soul, nor I!
And yet, to satisfy this good old man,
I would bend under any heavy weight
That he'll enjoin me to.

Leon. I cannot bid you bid my daughter live-
That were impossible; but I pray you both,
Possess the people in Messina here
How innocent she died; and if your love
Can labour aught in sad invention,
Hang her an epitaph upon her tomb,
And sing it to her bones—sing it to-night.
To-morrow morning come you to my house,
And since you could not be my son-in-law,
Be yet my nephew. My brother hath a daughter,
Almost the copy of my child that's dead,
And she alone is heir to both of us.
Give her the right you should have giv'n her cousin,
And so dies my revenge.

Claud. O noble sir!

Your over-kindness doth wring tears from me.

I do embrace your offer; and dispose

For henceforth of poor Claudio.

Leon. To-morrow then I will expect your coming;

To-night I take my leave. This naughty man

Shall fact to face be brought to Margaret,

Who I believe was pack'd in all this wrong,

Hir'd to it by your brother.

Bora. No, by my soul, she was not;

Nor knew not what she did when she spoke to me;

But always hath been just and virtuous

In anything that I do know by her.

Dog. Moreover, sir, which indeed is not under white and black, this plaintiff here, the offender, did call me ass. I beseech you let it be rememb'red in his punishment. And also the watch heard them talk of one Deformed. They say he wears a key in his ear, and a lock hanging by it, and borrows money in God's name, the which he hath us'd so long and never paid that now men grow hard-hearted and will lend nothing for God's sake. Pray you examine him upon that point.

Leon. I thank thee for thy care and honest pains.

Dog. Your worship speaks like a most thankful and reverent youth, and I praise God for you.

Leon. There's for thy pains. *[Gives money.]*

Dog. God save the foundation!

Leon. Go, I discharge thee of thy prisoner, and I thank thee.

Dog. I leave an arrant knave with your worship, which I beseech your worship to correct yourself, for the example of others. God keep your worship! I wish your worship well. God restore you to health! I humbly give you leave to depart; and if a merry meeting may be wish'd, God prohibit it! Come, neighbour. *Exeunt [Dogberry and Verges]* .

Leon. Until to-morrow morning, lords, farewell.

Ant. Farewell, my lords. We look for you to-morrow.

Pedro. We will not fail.

Claud. To-night I'll mourn with Hero.

[Exeunt Don Pedro and Claudio.]

Leon. [to the Watch] Bring you these fellows on.—We'll talk with Margaret,

How her acquaintance grew with this lewd fellow.

Exeunt.

Scene II. Leonato's orchard.

Enter Benedick and Margaret *[meeting]* .

Bene. Pray thee, sweet Mistress Margaret, deserve well at my hands by helping me to the speech of Beatrice.

Marg. Will you then write me a sonnet in praise of my beauty?

Bene. In so high a style, Margaret, that no man living shall come

over it; for in most comely truth thou deservest it.

Marg. To have no man come over me? Why, shall I always keep below stairs?

Bene. Thy wit is as quick as the greyhound's mouth—it catches.

Marg. And yours as blunt as the fencer's foils, which hit but hurt not.

Bene. A most manly wit, Margaret: it will not hurt a woman.

And so I pray thee call Beatrice. I give thee the bucklers.

Marg. Give us the swords; we have bucklers of our own.

Bene. If you use them, Margaret, you must put in the pikes with a vice, and they are dangerous weapons for maids.

Marg. Well, I will call Beatrice to you, who I think hath legs.

Bene. And therefore will come.

Exit Margaret.

[Sings] The god of love,

That sits above

And knows me, and knows me,
How pitiful I deserve—
I mean in singing; but in loving Leander the good swimmer,
Troilus the first employer of panders, and a whole book full of
these quondam carpet-mongers, whose names yet run smoothly in the
even road of a blank verse—why, they were never so truly turn'd
over and over as my poor self in love. Marry, I cannot show it in
rhyme. I have tried. I can find out no rhyme to 'lady' but 'baby'
—an innocent rhyme; for 'scorn,' 'horn'—a hard rhyme; for
'school', 'fool'—a babbling rhyme: very ominous endings! No, I
was not born under a rhyming planet, nor cannot woo in festival terms.

Enter Beatrice.

Sweet Beatrice, wouldst thou come when I call'd thee?

Beat. Yea, signior, and depart when you bid me.

Bene. O, stay but till then!

Beat. 'Then' is spoken. Fare you well now. And yet, ere I go, let me go with that

I came for, which is, with knowing what hath pass'd between you and Claudio.

Bene. Only foul words; and thereupon I will kiss thee.

Beat. Foul words is but foul wind, and foul wind is but foul breath, and foul breath is noisome. Therefore I will depart unkiss'd.

Bene. Thou hast frighted the word out of his right sense, so forcible is thy wit. But I must tell thee plainly, Claudio undergoes my challenge; and either I must shortly hear from him or I will subscribe him a coward. And I pray thee now tell me, for which of my bad parts didst thou first fall in love with me?

Beat. For them all together, which maintain'd so politic a state of evil that they will not admit any good part to intermingle with them. But for which of my good parts did you first suffer love for me?

Bene. Suffer love!—a good epithet. I do suffer love indeed, for I love thee against my will.

Beat. In spite of your heart, I think. Alas, poor heart! If you spite it for my sake, I will spite it for yours, for I will never love that which my friend hates.

Bene. Thou and I are too wise to woo peaceably.

Beat. It appears not in this confession. There's not one wise man among twenty, that will praise himself.

Bene. An old, an old instance, Beatrice, that liv'd in the time of good neighbours. If a man do not erect in this age his own tomb ere he dies, he shall live no longer in monument than the bell rings and the widow weeps.

Beat. And how long is that, think you?

Bene. Question: why, an hour in clamour and a quarter in rheum. Therefore is it most expedient for the wise, if Don Worm (his conscience) find no impediment to the contrary, to be the trumpet of his own virtues, as I am to myself. So much for praising myself, who, I myself will bear witness, is praiseworthy. And now tell me, how doth your cousin?

Beat. Very ill.

Bene. And how do you?

Beat. Very ill too.

Bene. Serve God, love me, and mend. There will I leave you too, for here comes one in haste.

Enter Ursula.

Urs. Madam, you must come to your uncle. Yonder's old coil at home. It is proved my Lady Hero hath been falsely accus'd, the Prince and Claudio mightily abus'd, and Don John is the author of all, who is fled and gone. Will you come presently?

Beat. Will you go hear this news, signior?

Bene. I will live in thy heart, die in thy lap, and be buried thy

eyes; and moreover, I will go with thee to thy uncle's.

Exeunt.

Scene III. A churchyard.

Enter Claudio, Don Pedro, and three or four with tapers, *[followed by Musicians]* .

Claud. Is this the monument of Leonato?

Lord. It is, my lord.

Claud. [reads from a scroll]

Epitaph.

Done to death by slanderous tongues

Was the Hero that here lies.

Death, in guerdon of her wrongs,

Gives her fame which never dies.

So the life that died with shame

Lives in death with glorious fame.

Hang thou there upon the tomb,

[Hangs up the scroll.]

Praising her when I am dumb.

Now, music, sound, and sing your solemn hymn.

Song.

Pardon, goddess of the night,

Those that slew thy virgin knight;

For the which, with songs of woe,

Round about her tomb they go.

Midnight, assist our moan,

Help us to sigh and groan

Heavily, heavily,

Graves, yawn and yield your dead,

Till death be uttered

Heavily, heavily.

Claud. Now unto thy bones good night!

Yearly will I do this rite.

Pedro. Good morrow, masters. Put your torches out.

The wolves have prey'd, and look, the gentle day,

Before the wheels of Phoebus, round about

Dapples the drowsy east with spots of grey.

Thanks to you all, and leave us. Fare you well.

Claud. Good morrow, masters. Each his several way.

Pedro. Come, let us hence and put on other weeds,

And then to Leonato's we will go.

Claud. And Hymen now with luckier issue speeds

Than this for whom we rend'red up this woe. *Exeunt* .

Scene IV The hall in Leonato's house.

Enter Leonato, Benedick, *[Beatrice,]* Margaret, Ursula, Antonio,

Friar *[Francis]* , Hero.

Friar. Did I not tell you she was innocent?

Leon. So are the Prince and Claudio, who accus'd her
Upon the error that you heard debated.
But Margaret was in some fault for this,
Although against her will, as it appears
In the true course of all the question.

Ant. Well, I am glad that all things sort so well.

Bene. And so am I, being else by faith enforc'd
To call young Claudio to a reckoning for it.

Leon. Well, daughter, and you gentlewomen all,
Withdraw into a chamber by yourselves,

And when I send for you, come hither mask'd.

Exeunt Ladies.

The Prince and Claudio promis'd by this hour

To visit me. You know your office, brother:

You must be father to your brother's daughter,

And give her to young Claudio.

Ant. Which I will do with confirm'd countenance.

Bene. Friar, I must entreat your pains, I think.

Friar. To do what, signior?

Bene. To bind me, or undo me—one of them.

Signior Leonato, truth it is, good signior,

Your niece regards me with an eye of favour.

Leon. That eye my daughter lent her. 'Tis most true.

Bene. And I do with an eye of love requite her.

Leon. The sight whereof I think you had from me,
From Claudio, and the Prince; but what's your will?

Bene. Your answer, sir, is enigmatical;
But, for my will, my will is, your good will
May stand with ours, this day to be conjoin'd
In the state of honourable marriage;
In which, good friar, I shall desire your help.

Leon. My heart is with your liking.

Friar. And my help.

Enter Don Pedro and Claudio and two or three other.

Here comes the Prince and Claudio.

Pedro. Good morrow to this fair assembly.

Leon. Good morrow, Prince; good morrow, Claudio.
We here attend you. Are you yet determin'd

To-day to marry with my brother's daughter?

Claud. I'll hold my mind, were she an Ethiope.

Leon. Call her forth, brother. Here's the friar ready.

[Exit Antonio.]

Pedro. Good morrow, Benedick. Why, what's the matter
That you have such a February face,
So full of frost, of storm, and cloudiness?

Claud. I think he thinks upon the savage bull.
Tush, fear not, man! We'll tip thy horns with gold,
And all Europa shall rejoice at thee,
As once Europa did at lusty Jove
When he would play the noble beast in love.

Bene. Bull Jove, sir, had an amiable low,
And some such strange bull leap'd your father's cow
And got a calf in that same noble feat

Much like to you, for you have just his bleat.

Enter [Leonato's] brother *[Antonio]* , Hero, Beatrice,

Margaret, Ursula, *[the ladies wearing masks]* .

Claud. For this I owe you. Here comes other reckonings.
Which is the lady I must seize upon?

Ant. This same is she, and I do give you her.

Claud. Why then, she's mine. Sweet, let me see your face.

Leon. No, that you shall not till you take her hand
Before this friar and swear to marry her.

Claud. Give me your hand before this holy friar.
I am your husband if you like of me.

Hero. And when I liv'd I was your other wife; *[Unmasks.]*
And when you lov'd you were my other husband.

Claud. Another Hero!

Hero. Nothing certainer.
One Hero died defil'd; but I do live,
And surely as I live, I am a maid.

Pedro. The former Hero! Hero that is dead!

Leon. She died, my lord, but whiles her slander liv'd.

Friar. All this amazement can I qualify,
When, after that the holy rites are ended,
I'll tell you largely of fair Hero's death.
Meantime let wonder seem familiar,
And to the chapel let us presently.

Bene. Soft and fair, friar. Which is Beatrice?

Beat. [unmasks] I answer to that name. What is your will?

Bene. Do not you love me?

Beat. Why, no; no more than reason.

Bene. Why, then your uncle, and the Prince, and Claudio
Have been deceived; for they swore you did.

Beat. Do not you love me?

Bene. Troth, no; no more than reason.

Beat. Why, then my cousin, Margaret, and Ursula
Are much deceiv'd; for they did swear you did.

Bene. They swore that you were almost sick for me.

Beat. They swore that you were well-nigh dead for me.

Bene. 'Tis no such matter. Then you do not love me?

Beat. No, truly, but in friendly recompense.

Leon. Come, cousin, I am sure you love the gentleman.

Claud. And I'll be sworn upon't that he loves her;

For here's a paper written in his hand,

A halting sonnet of his own pure brain,

Fashion'd to Beatrice.

Hero. And here's another,

Writ in my cousin's hand, stol'n from her pocket,

Containing her affection unto Benedick.

Bene. A miracle! Here's our own hands against our hearts.

Come, I will have thee; but, by this light, I take thee for pity.

Beat. I would not deny you; but, by this good day, I yield upon great persuasion, and partly to save your life, for I was told you were in a consumption.

Bene. Peace! I will stop your mouth. *[Kisses her.]*

Beat. I'll tell thee what, Prince: a college of wit-crackers cannot flout me out of my humour. Dost thou think I care for a satire or an epigram? No. If a man will be beaten with brains, 'a shall wear nothing handsome about him. In brief, since I do purpose to marry, I will think nothing to any purpose that the world can say against it; and therefore never flout at me for what I have said against it; for man is a giddy thing, and this is my conclusion. For thy part, Claudio, I did think to have beaten thee; but in that thou art like to be my kinsman, live unbruis'd, and love my cousin.

Claud. I had well hop'd thou wouldst have denied Beatrice, that I might have cudgell'd thee out of thy single life, to make thee a double-dealer, which out of question thou wilt be if my cousin do not look exceeding narrowly to thee.

Bene. Come, come, we are friends. Let's have a dance ere we are married, that we may lighten our own hearts and our wives' heels.

Leon. We'll have dancing afterward.

Bene. First, of my word! Therefore play, music. Prince, thou art sad. Get thee a wife, get thee a wife! There is no staff more reverent than one tipp'd with horn.

Enter Messenger.

Mess. My lord, your brother John is ta'en in flight,

And brought with armed men back to Messina.

Bene. Think not on him till to-morrow. I'll devise thee brave punishments for him. Strike up, pipers!

Dance. [Exeunt.]

HENRY V

This famous history play is believed to have been written in 1599 and tells the story of England’s great warrior King, focusing on events immediately before and after the Battle of Agincourt in 1415, during the Hundred Years' War. *Henry V* is the final part of a tetralogy, preceded by *Richard II* , *Henry IV, part 1 and Henry IV, part 2* . The original audiences would have already been familiar with the title character, who was depicted in the *Henry IV* plays as a wild, undisciplined lad known as "Prince Hal." In *Henry V* the eponymous prince has become a mature man, embarking on a successful conquest of France.

The early scenes deal with the embarkation of Henry's fleet for France, and include a real-life incident in which the Earl of Cambridge and two others plotted to assassinate Henry at Southampton. Henry's clever uncovering of the plot and ruthless treatment of the plotters is one indication that he has changed from the earlier plays in which he appeared.

As with all of Shakespeare's serious plays, there are also a number of minor comic characters whose activities contrast with and sometimes comment on the main plot. In this case, they are mostly common soldiers in Henry's army, and they include Pistol, Nym, and Bardolph from the Henry IV plays. The army also includes a Scot, an Irishman, an Englishman and Fluellen, a comically stereotyped Welsh soldier, whose name is an attempt at a phonetic rendition of "Llywelyn”. The play also deals briefly with the death of Sir John Falstaff, Henry's one time friend from the *Henry IV* plays.

Shakespeare's primary source for *Henry V* is Raphael Holinshed's *Chronicles* and Edward Hall's *The Union of the Two Illustrious Families of Lancaster and York* .

The play’s strong national theme has made it popular over the centuries, with diverse examples such as supporting the British war effort in the 1940’s or introducing the England football team in promotional advertisements and TV spots.

Henry V

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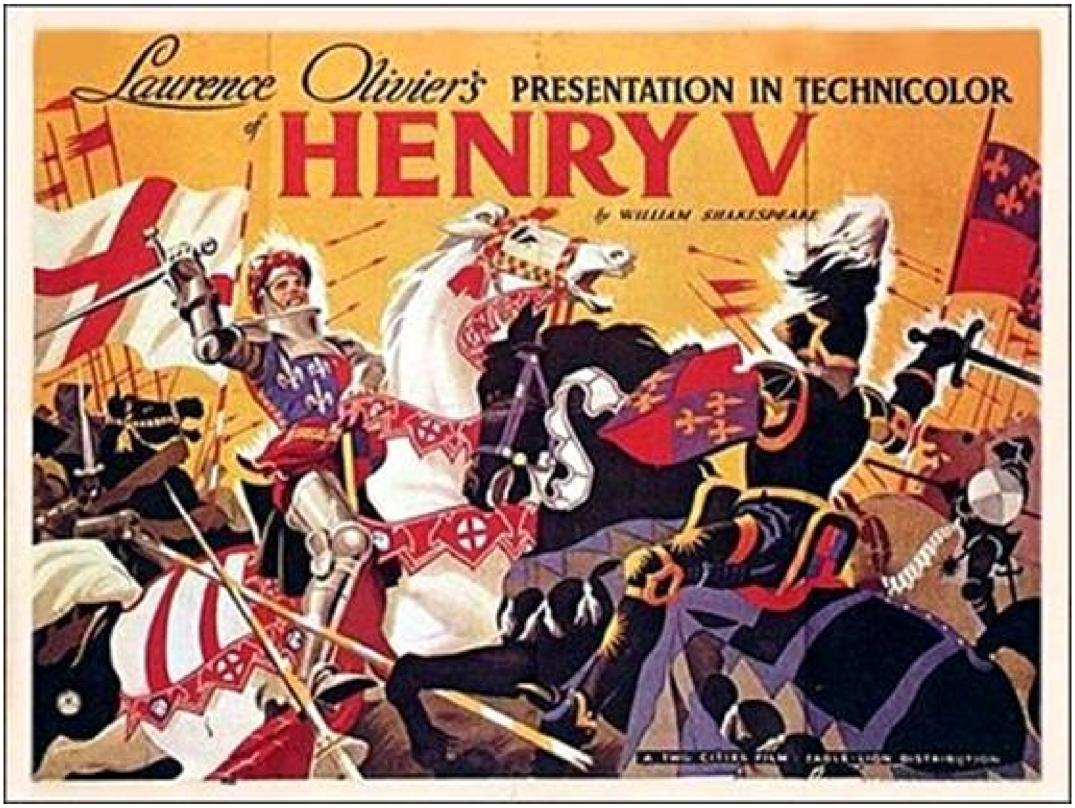
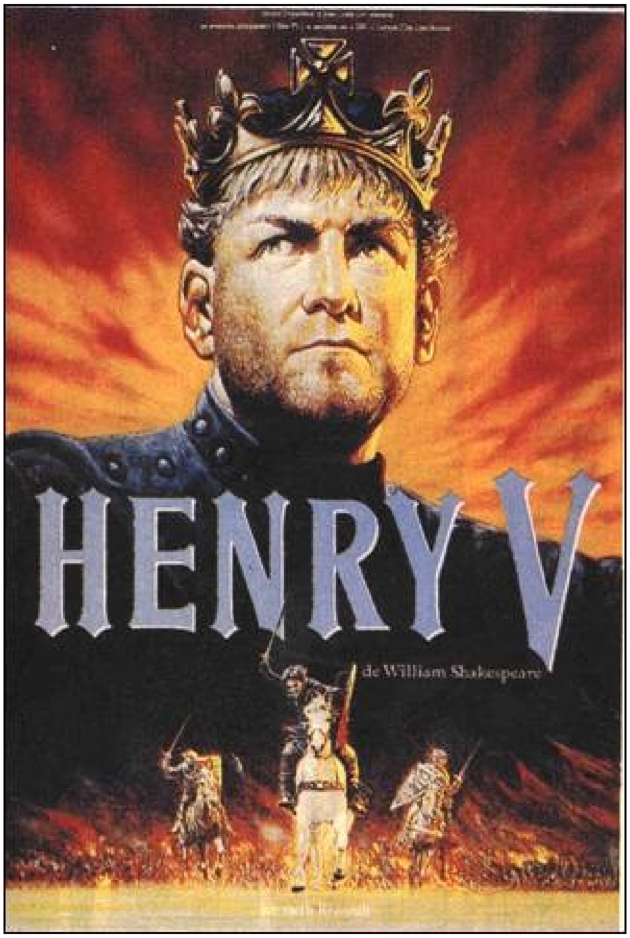

Laurence Olivier's PRESENTATION IN TECHNICOLOR
of HENRY V
by WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

Laurence Olivier’s 1944 film version


HENRY V
de William Shakespeare

The 1998 film adaptation

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

CHORUS

KING HENRY THE FIFTH

DUKE OF GLOUCESTER, brother to the King

DUKE OF BEDFORD, " " " "

DUKE OF EXETER, Uncle to the King

DUKE OF YORK, cousin to the King

EARL OF SALISBURY

EARL OF WESTMORELAND

EARL OF WARWICK

ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY

BISHOP OF ELY

EARL OF CAMBRIDGE, conspirator against the King

LORD SCROOP

SIR THOMAS GREY

SIR THOMAS ERPINGHAM, officer in the King's army

GOWER

FLUELLEN

MACMORRIS

JAMY

BATES, soldier in the King's army

COURT

WILLIAMS

NYM,

BARDOLPH

PISTOL

BOY A HERALD

CHARLES THE SIXTH, King of France

LEWIS, the Dauphin DUKE OF BURGUNDY

DUKE OF ORLEANS DUKE OF BRITAINE

DUKE OF BOURBON THE CONSTABLE OF FRANCE

RAMBURES, French Lord

GRANDPRE, " "

GOVERNOR OF HARFLEUR MONTJOY, a French herald

AMBASSADORS to the King of England

ISABEL, Queen of France

KATHERINE, daughter to Charles and Isabel

ALICE, a lady attending her

HOSTESS of the Boar's Head, Eastcheap; formerly Mrs. Quickly,

nowmarried to Pistol

Lords, Ladies, Officers, Soldiers, Messengers, Attendants

SCENE: England and France

PROLOGUE

Enter CHORUS

CHORUS.

O for a Muse of fire, that would ascend

The brightest heaven of invention,

A kingdom for a stage, princes to act,

And monarchs to behold the swelling scene!

Then should the warlike Harry, like himself,

Assume the port of Mars; and at his heels,

Leash'd in like hounds, should famine, sword, and fire,

Crouch for employment. But pardon, gentles all,

The flat unraised spirits that hath dar'd

On this unworthy scaffold to bring forth

So great an object. Can this cockpit hold

The vasty fields of France? Or may we cram

Within this wooden O the very casques

That did affright the air at Agincourt?

O, pardon! since a crooked figure may

Attest in little place a million;

And let us, ciphers to this great accompt,

On your imaginary forces work.

Suppose within the girdle of these walls

Are now confin'd two mighty monarchies,

Whose high upreared and abutting fronts

The perilous narrow ocean parts asunder.

Piece out our imperfections with your thoughts:

Into a thousand parts divide one man,

And make imaginary puissance;

Think, when we talk of horses, that you see them

Printing their proud hoofs i' th' receiving earth;

For 'tis your thoughts that now must deck our kings,

Carry them here and there, jumping o'er times,

Turning th' accomplishment of many years

Into an hour-glass; for the which supply,

Admit me Chorus to this history;

Who prologue-like, your humble patience pray

Gently to hear, kindly to judge, our play. *Exit*

ACT I. SCENE I. London. An ante-chamber in the KING'S palace

Enter the ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY and the BISHOP OF ELY

CANTERBURY.

My lord, I'll tell you: that self bill is urg'd

Which in th' eleventh year of the last king's reign

Was like, and had indeed against us pass'd

But that the scambling and unquiet time

Did push it out of farther question.

ELY.

But how, my lord, shall we resist it now?

CANTERBURY.

It must be thought on. If it pass against us,

We lose the better half of our possession;

For all the temporal lands which men devout

By testament have given to the church

Would they strip from us; being valu'd thus-

As much as would maintain, to the King's honour,
Full fifteen earls and fifteen hundred knights,
Six thousand and two hundred good esquires;
And, to relief of lazars and weak age,
Of indigent faint souls, past corporal toil,
A hundred alms-houses right well supplied;
And to the coffers of the King, beside,
A thousand pounds by th' year: thus runs the bill.

ELY.

This would drink deep.

CANTERBURY.

'T would drink the cup and all.

ELY.

But what prevention?

CANTERBURY.

The King is full of grace and fair regard.

ELY.

And a true lover of the holy Church.

CANTERBURY.

The courses of his youth promis'd it not.

The breath no sooner left his father's body

But that his wildness, mortified in him,

Seem'd to die too; yea, at that very moment,

Consideration like an angel came

And whipp'd th' offending Adam out of him,

Leaving his body as a paradise

T'envelop and contain celestial spirits.

Never was such a sudden scholar made;

Never came reformation in a flood,

With such a heady currance, scouring faults;

Nor never Hydra-headed wilfulnes

So soon did lose his seat, and all at once,

As in this king.

ELY.

We are blessed in the change.

CANTERBURY.

Hear him but reason in divinity,

And, all-admiring, with an inward wish

You would desire the King were made a prelate;

Hear him debate of commonwealth affairs,

You would say it hath been all in all his study;

List his discourse of war, and you shall hear

A fearful battle rend'red you in music.

Turn him to any cause of policy,

The Gordian knot of it he will unloose,

Familiar as his garter; that, when he speaks,

The air, a charter'd libertine, is still,

And the mute wonder lurketh in men's ears

To steal his sweet and honey'd sentences;

So that the art and practic part of life

Must be the mistress to this theoric;

Which is a wonder how his Grace should glean it,

Since his addiction was to courses vain,

His companies unletter'd, rude, and shallow,

His hours fill'd up with riots, banquets, sports;

And never noted in him any study,

Any retirement, any sequestration
From open haunts and popularity.

ELY.
The strawberry grows underneath the nettle,
And wholesome berries thrive and ripen best
Neighbour'd by fruit of baser quality;
And so the Prince obscur'd his contemplation
Under the veil of wildness; which, no doubt,
Grew like the summer grass, fastest by night,
Unseen, yet crescive in his faculty.

CANTERBURY.
It must be so; for miracles are ceas'd;
And therefore we must needs admit the means
How things are perfected.

ELY.
But, my good lord,
How now for mitigation of this bill
Urg'd by the Commons? Doth his Majesty

Incline to it, or no?

CANTERBURY.

He seems indifferent

Or rather swaying more upon our part

Than cherishing th' exhibiters against us;

For I have made an offer to his Majesty-

Upon our spiritual convocation

And in regard of causes now in hand,

Which I have open'd to his Grace at large,

As touching France-to give a greater sum

Than ever at one time the clergy yet

Did to his predecessors part withal.

ELY.

How did this offer seem receiv'd, my lord?

CANTERBURY.

With good acceptance of his Majesty;

Save that there was not time enough to hear,

As I perceiv'd his Grace would fain have done,

The severals and unhidden passages

Of his true tides to some certain dukedoms,

And generally to the crown and seat of France,

Deriv'd from Edward, his great-grandfather.

ELY.

What was th' impediment that broke this off?

CANTERBURY.

The French ambassador upon that instant

Crav'd audience; and the hour, I think, is come

To give him hearing: is it four o'clock?

ELY.

It is.

CANTERBURY.

Then go we in, to know his embassy;

Which I could with a ready guess declare,

Before the Frenchman speak a word of it.

ELY.

I'll wait upon you, and I long to hear it. *Exeunt*

SCENE II. London. The Presence Chamber in the KING'S palace

Enter the KING, GLOUCESTER, BEDFORD, EXETER, WARWICK, WESTMORELAND, and attendants

KING HENRY.

Where is my gracious Lord of Canterbury?

EXETER.

Not here in presence.

KING HENRY.

Send for him, good uncle.

WESTMORELAND.

Shall we call in th' ambassador, my liege?

KING HENRY.

Not yet, my cousin; we would be resolv'd,
Before we hear him, of some things of weight
That task our thoughts, concerning us and France.

Enter the ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY and

the BISHOP OF ELY

CANTERBURY.

God and his angels guard your sacred throne,
And make you long become it!

KING HENRY.

Sure, we thank you.
My learned lord, we pray you to proceed,
And justly and religiously unfold
Why the law Salique, that they have in France,
Or should or should not bar us in our claim;
And God forbid, my dear and faithful lord,
That you should fashion, wrest, or bow your reading,
Or nicely charge your understanding soul

With opening titles miscreate whose right

Suits not in native colours with the truth;

For God doth know how many, now in health,

Shall drop their blood in approbation

Of what your reverence shall incite us to.

Therefore take heed how you impawn our person,

How you awake our sleeping sword of war-

We charge you, in the name of God, take heed;

For never two such kingdoms did contend

Without much fall of blood; whose guiltless drops

Are every one a woe, a sore complaint,

'Gainst him whose wrongs gives edge unto the swords

That makes such waste in brief mortality.

Under this conjuration speak, my lord;

For we will hear, note, and believe in heart,

That what you speak is in your conscience wash'd

As pure as sin with baptism.

CANTERBURY.

Then hear me, gracious sovereign, and you peers,

That owe yourselves, your lives, and services,

To this imperial throne. There is no bar
To make against your Highness' claim to France
But this, which they produce from Pharamond:
'In terram Salicam mulieres ne succedant'-
'No woman shall succeed in Salique land';
Which Salique land the French unjustly gloze
To be the realm of France, and Pharamond
The founder of this law and female bar.
Yet their own authors faithfully affirm
That the land Salique is in Germany,
Between the floods of Sala and of Elbe;
Where Charles the Great, having subdu'd the Saxons,
There left behind and settled certain French;
Who, holding in disdain the German women
For some dishonest manners of their life,
Establish'd then this law: to wit, no female
Should be inheritrix in Salique land;
Which Salique, as I said, 'twixt Elbe and Sala,
Is at this day in Germany call'd Meisen.
Then doth it well appear the Salique law
Was not devised for the realm of France;

Nor did the French possess the Salique land

Until four hundred one and twenty years

After defunction of King Pharamond,

Idly suppos'd the founder of this law;

Who died within the year of our redemption

Four hundred twenty-six; and Charles the Great

Subdu'd the Saxons, and did seat the French

Beyond the river Sala, in the year

Eight hundred five. Besides, their writers say,

King Pepin, which deposed Childeric,

Did, as heir general, being descended

Of Blithild, which was daughter to King Clothair,

Make claim and title to the crown of France.

Hugh Capet also, who usurp'd the crown

Of Charles the Duke of Lorraine, sole heir male

Of the true line and stock of Charles the Great,

To find his title with some shows of truth-

Though in pure truth it was corrupt and naught-

Convey'd himself as th' heir to th' Lady Lingare,

Daughter to Charlemain, who was the son

To Lewis the Emperor, and Lewis the son

Of Charles the Great. Also King Lewis the Tenth,

Who was sole heir to the usurper Capet,

Could not keep quiet in his conscience,

Wearing the crown of France, till satisfied

That fair Queen Isabel, his grandmother,

Was lineal of the Lady Ermengare,

Daughter to Charles the foresaid Duke of Lorraine;

By the which marriage the line of Charles the Great

Was re-united to the Crown of France.

So that, as clear as is the summer's sun,

King Pepin's title, and Hugh Capet's claim,

King Lewis his satisfaction, all appear

To hold in right and tide of the female;

So do the kings of France unto this day,

Howbeit they would hold up this Salique law

To bar your Highness claiming from the female;

And rather choose to hide them in a net

Than amply to imbar their crooked tides

Usurp'd from you and your progenitors.

KING HENRY.

May I with right and conscience make this claim?

CANTERBURY.

The sin upon my head, dread sovereign!

For in the book of Numbers is it writ,

When the man dies, let the inheritance

Descend unto the daughter. Gracious lord,

Stand for your own, unwind your bloody flag,

Look back into your mighty ancestors.

Go, my dread lord, to your great-grandsire's tomb,

From whom you claim; invoke his warlike spirit,

And your great-uncle's, Edward the Black Prince,

Who on the French ground play'd a tragedy,

Making defeat on the fun power of France,

Whiles his most mighty father on a hill

Stood smiling to behold his lion's whelp

Forage in blood of French nobility.

O noble English, that could entertain

With half their forces the full pride of France,

And let another half stand laughing by,

All out of work and cold for action!

ELY.

Awake remembrance of these valiant dead,

And with your puissant arm renew their feats.

You are their heir; you sit upon their throne;

The blood and courage that renowned them

Runs in your veins; and my thrice-puissant liege

Is in the very May-morn of his youth,

Ripe for exploits and mighty enterprises.

EXETER.

Your brother kings and monarchs of the earth

Do all expect that you should rouse yourself,

As did the former lions of your blood.

WESTMORELAND.

They know your Grace hath cause and means and

might-

So hath your Highness; never King of England

Had nobles richer and more loyal subjects,

Whose hearts have left their bodies here in England
And lie pavilion'd in the fields of France.

CANTERBURY.
O, let their bodies follow, my dear liege,
With blood and sword and fire to win your right!
In aid whereof we of the spiritualty
Will raise your Highness such a mighty sum
As never did the clergy at one time
Bring in to any of your ancestors.

KING HENRY.
We must not only arm t' invade the French,
But lay down our proportions to defend
Against the Scot, who will make road upon us
With all advantages.

CANTERBURY.
They of those marches, gracious sovereign,
Shall be a wall sufficient to defend
Our inland from the pilfering borderers.

KING HENRY.

We do not mean the coursing snatchers only,

But fear the main intendment of the Scot,

Who hath been still a giddy neighbour to us;

For you shall read that my great-grandfather

Never went with his forces into France

But that the Scot on his unfurnish'd kingdom

Came pouring, like the tide into a breach,

With ample and brim fulness of his force,

Galling the gleaned land with hot assays,

Girdling with grievous siege castles and towns;

That England, being empty of defence,

Hath shook and trembled at th' ill neighbourhood.

CANTERBURY.

She hath been then more fear'd than harm'd, my liege;

For hear her but exampled by herself:

When all her chivalry hath been in France,

And she a mourning widow of her nobles,

She hath herself not only well defended

But taken and impounded as a stray
The King of Scots; whom she did send to France,
To fill King Edward's fame with prisoner kings,
And make her chronicle as rich with praise
As is the ooze and bottom of the sea
With sunken wreck and sumless treasuries.

WESTMORELAND.
But there's a saying, very old and true:
'If that you will France win,
Then with Scotland first begin.'
For once the eagle England being in prey,
To her unguarded nest the weasel Scot
Comes sneaking, and so sucks her princely eggs,
Playing the mouse in absence of the cat,
To tear and havoc more than she can eat.

EXETER.
It follows, then, the cat must stay at home;
Yet that is but a crush'd necessity,
Since we have locks to safeguard necessaries

And pretty traps to catch the petty thieves.

While that the armed hand doth fight abroad,

Th' advised head defends itself at home;

For government, though high, and low, and lower,

Put into parts, doth keep in one consent,

Congreeing in a full and natural close,

Like music.

CANTERBURY.

Therefore doth heaven divide

The state of man in divers functions,

Setting endeavour in continual motion;

To which is fixed as an aim or but

Obedience; for so work the honey bees,

Creatures that by a rule in nature teach

The act of order to a peopled kingdom.

They have a king, and officers of sorts,

Where some like magistrates correct at home;

Others like merchants venture trade abroad;

Others like soldiers, armed in their stings,

Make boot upon the summer's velvet buds, Which pillage they with merry march bring home

To the tent-royal of their emperor;

Who, busied in his majesty, surveys

The singing masons building roofs of gold,

The civil citizens kneading up the honey,

The poor mechanic porters crowding in

Their heavy burdens at his narrow gate,

The sad-ey'd justice, with his surly hum,

Delivering o'er to executors pale

The lazy yawning drone. I this infer,

That many things, having full reference

To one consent, may work contrariously;

As many arrows loosed several ways

Come to one mark, as many ways meet in one town,

As many fresh streams meet in one salt sea,

As many lines close in the dial's centre;

So many a thousand actions, once afoot,

End in one purpose, and be all well home

Without defeat. Therefore to France, my liege.

Divide your happy England into four;

Whereof take you one quarter into France, And you withal shall make all Gallia shake.

If we, with thrice such powers left at home,

Cannot defend our own doors from the dog,

Let us be worried, and our nation lose

The name of hardiness and policy.

KING HENRY.

Call in the messengers sent from the Dauphin.

Exeunt some attendants

Now are we well resolv'd; and, by God's help

And yours, the noble sinews of our power,

France being ours, we'll bend it to our awe,

Or break it all to pieces; or there we'll sit,

Ruling in large and ample empery

O'er France and all her almost kingly dukedoms,

Or lay these bones in an unworthy urn,

Tombless, with no remembrance over them.

Either our history shall with full mouth

Speak freely of our acts, or else our grave,

Like Turkish mute, shall have a tongueless mouth,

Not worshipp'd with a waxen epitaph.

Enter AMBASSADORS of France

Now are we well prepar'd to know the pleasure
Of our fair cousin Dauphin; for we hear
Your greeting is from him, not from the King.

AMBASSADOR.
May't please your Majesty to give us leave
Freely to render what we have in charge;
Or shall we sparingly show you far of
The Dauphin's meaning and our embassy?

KING HENRY.
We are no tyrant, but a Christian king,
Unto whose grace our passion is as subject
As are our wretches fett'red in our prisons;
Therefore with frank and with uncurbed plainness
Tell us the Dauphin's mind.

AMBASSADOR.

Thus then, in few.

Your Highness, lately sending into France,

Did claim some certain dukedoms in the right

Of your great predecessor, King Edward the Third.

In answer of which claim, the Prince our master

Says that you savour too much of your youth,

And bids you be advis'd there's nought in France

That can be with a nimble galliard won;

You cannot revel into dukedoms there.

He therefore sends you, meeter for your spirit,

This tun of treasure; and, in lieu of this,

Desires you let the dukedoms that you claim

Hear no more of you. This the Dauphin speaks.

KING HENRY.

What treasure, uncle?

EXETER.

Tennis-balls, my liege.

KING HENRY.

We are glad the Dauphin is so pleasant with us;

His present and your pains we thank you for.

When we have match'd our rackets to these balls,

We will in France, by God's grace, play a set

Shall strike his father's crown into the hazard.

Tell him he hath made a match with such a wrangler

That all the courts of France will be disturb'd

With chaces. And we understand him well,

How he comes o'er us with our wilder days,

Not measuring what use we made of them.

We never valu'd this poor seat of England;

And therefore, living hence, did give ourself

To barbarous licence; as 'tis ever common

That men are merriest when they are from home.

But tell the Dauphin I will keep my state,

Be like a king, and show my sail of greatness,

When I do rouse me in my throne of France;

For that I have laid by my majesty

And plodded like a man for working-days;

But I will rise there with so full a glory

That I will dazzle all the eyes of France,

Yea, strike the Dauphin blind to look on us.

And tell the pleasant Prince this mock of his

Hath turn'd his balls to gun-stones, and his soul

Shall stand sore charged for the wasteful vengeance

That shall fly with them; for many a thousand widows

Shall this his mock mock of their dear husbands;

Mock mothers from their sons, mock castles down;

And some are yet ungotten and unborn

That shall have cause to curse the Dauphin's scorn.

But this lies all within the will of God,

To whom I do appeal; and in whose name,

Tell you the Dauphin, I am coming on,

To venge me as I may and to put forth

My rightful hand in a well-hallow'd cause.

So get you hence in peace; and tell the Dauphin

His jest will savour but of shallow wit,

When thousands weep more than did laugh at it.

Convey them with safe conduct. Fare you well.

Exeunt AMBASSADORS

EXETER.

This was a merry message.

KING HENRY.

We hope to make the sender blush at it.

Therefore, my lords, omit no happy hour

That may give furth'rance to our expedition;

For we have now no thought in us but France,

Save those to God, that run before our business.

Therefore let our proportions for these wars

Be soon collected, and all things thought upon

That may with reasonable swiftness ad

More feathers to our wings; for, God before,

We'll chide this Dauphin at his father's door.

Therefore let every man now task his thought

That this fair action may on foot be brought. *Exeunt*

ACT II. PROLOGUE.

Flourish. *Enter* CHORUS

CHORUS.

Now all the youth of England are on fire,

And silken dalliance in the wardrobe lies;

Now thrive the armourers, and honour's thought

Reigns solely in the breast of every man;

They sell the pasture now to buy the horse,

Following the mirror of all Christian kings

With winged heels, as English Mercuries.

For now sits Expectation in the air,

And hides a sword from hilts unto the point

With crowns imperial, crowns, and coronets,

Promis'd to Harry and his followers.

The French, advis'd by good intelligence

Of this most dreadful preparation,

Shake in their fear and with pale policy

Seek to divert the English purposes.

O England! model to thy inward greatness,

Like little body with a mighty heart,

What mightst thou do that honour would thee do,

Were all thy children kind and natural!

But see thy fault! France hath in thee found out

A nest of hollow bosoms, which he fills

With treacherous crowns; and three corrupted men-

One, Richard Earl of Cambridge, and the second,

Henry Lord Scroop of Masham, and the third,

Sir Thomas Grey, knight, of Northumberland,

Have, for the gilt of France-O guilt indeed!-

Confirm'd conspiracy with fearful France;

And by their hands this grace of kings must die-

If hell and treason hold their promises,

Ere he take ship for France-and in Southampton.

Linger your patience on, and we'll digest

Th' abuse of distance, force a play.

The sum is paid, the traitors are agreed,

The King is set from London, and the scene

Is now transported, gentles, to Southampton;

There is the play-house now, there must you sit,

And thence to France shall we convey you safe

And bring you back, charming the narrow seas

To give you gentle pass; for, if we may,

We'll not offend one stomach with our play.

But, till the King come forth, and not till then, Unto Southampton do we shift our scene. *Exit*

SCENE I. London. Before the Boar's Head Tavern, Eastcheap

Enter CORPORAL NYM and LIEUTENANT BARDOLPH

BARDOLPH.

Well met, Corporal Nym.

NYM.

Good morrow, Lieutenant Bardolph.

BARDOLPH.

What, are Ancient Pistol and you friends yet?

NYM.

For my part, I care not; I say little, but when time shall
serve, there shall be smiles-but that shall be as it may. I dare
not fight; but I will wink and hold out mine iron. It is a simple
one; but what though? It will toast cheese, and it will endure
cold as another man's sword will; and there's an end.

BARDOLPH.

I will bestow a breakfast to make you friends; and we'll

be all three sworn brothers to France. Let't be so, good Corporal

Nym.

NYM.

Faith, I will live so long as I may, that's the certain of it;

and when I cannot live any longer, I will do as I may. That is my

rest, that is the rendezvous of it.

BARDOLPH.

It is certain, Corporal, that he is married to Nell

Quickly; and certainly she did you wrong, for you were

troth-plight to her.

NYM.

I cannot tell; things must be as they may. Men may sleep, and

they may have their throats about them at that time; and some say

knives have edges. It must be as it may; though patience be a

tired mare, yet she will plod. There must be conclusions.

Well, I

cannot tell.

Enter PISTOL and HOSTESS

BARDOLPH.

Here comes Ancient Pistol and his wife. Good

Corporal, be patient here.

NYM.

How now, mine host Pistol!

PISTOL.

Base tike, call'st thou me host?

Now by this hand, I swear I scorn the term;

Nor shall my Nell keep lodgers.

HOSTESS.

No, by my troth, not long; for we cannot lodge and board a

dozen or fourteen gentlewomen that live honestly by the prick of their needles, but it will be thought we keep a bawdy-house

straight. *[Nym draws]* O well-a-day, Lady, if he be not drawn!

Now

we shall see wilful adultery and murder committed.

BARDOLPH.

Good Lieutenant, good Corporal, offer nothing here.

NYM.

Pish!

PISTOL.

Pish for thee, Iceland dog! thou prick-ear'd cur of Iceland!

HOSTESS.

Good Corporal Nym, show thy valour, and put up your sword.

NYM.

Will you shog off? I would have you solus.

PISTOL.

'Solus,' egregious dog? O viper vile!
The 'solus' in thy most mervailous face;
The 'solus' in thy teeth, and in thy throat,
And in thy hateful lungs, yea, in thy maw, perdy;
And, which is worse, within thy nasty mouth!
I do retort the 'solus' in thy bowels;
For I can take, and Pistol's cock is up,
And flashing fire will follow.

NYM.
I am not Barbason: you cannot conjure me. I have an humour to
knock you indifferently well. If you grow foul with me,
Pistol, I
will scour you with my rapier, as I may, in fair terms; if you
would walk off I would prick your guts a little, in good terms,
as I may, and thaes the humour of it.

PISTOL.

O braggart vile and damned furious wight!

The grave doth gape and doting death is near;

Therefore exhale. *[PISTOL draws]*

BARDOLPH.

Hear me, hear me what I say: he that strikes the first

stroke I'll run him up to the hilts, as I am a soldier.

[Draws]

PISTOL.

An oath of mickle might; and fury shall abate.

[PISTOL and Nym sheathe their swords]

Give me thy fist, thy fore-foot to me give;

Thy spirits are most tall.

NYM.

I will cut thy throat one time or other, in fair terms;

that is the humour of it.

PISTOL.

'Couple a gorge!'

That is the word. I thee defy again.
O hound of Crete, think'st thou my spouse to get?
No; to the spital go,
And from the powd'ring tub of infamy
Fetch forth the lazar kite of Cressid's kind,
Doll Tearsheet she by name, and her espouse.
I have, and I will hold, the quondam Quickly
For the only she; and-pauca, there's enough.

Go to.

Enter the Boy

BOY.

Mine host Pistol, you must come to my master; and your hostess-he is very sick, and would to bed. Good Bardolph, put thy face between his sheets, and do the office of a warming-pan.

Faith, he's very ill.

BARDOLPH.

Away, you rogue.

HOSTESS.

By my troth, he'll yield the crow a pudding one of these

days: the King has kill'd his heart. Good husband, come home

presently. *Exeunt* HOSTESS and BOY

BARDOLPH.

Come, shall I make you two friends? We must to France

together; why the devil should we keep knives to cut one another's throats?

PISTOL.

Let floods o'erswell, and fiends for food howl on!

NYM.

You'll pay me the eight shillings I won of you at betting?

PISTOL.

Base is the slave that pays.

NYM.

That now I will have; that's the humour of it.

PISTOL.

As manhood shall compound: push home.

[PISTOL and Nym draw]

BARDOLPH.

By this sword, he that makes the first thrust I'll kill him; by this sword, I will.

PISTOL.

Sword is an oath, and oaths must have their course.

[Sheathes his sword]

BARDOLPH.

Corporal Nym, an thou wilt be friends, be friends; an

thou wilt not, why then be enemies with me too. Prithee put up.

NYM.

I shall have my eight shillings I won of you at betting?

PISTOL.

A noble shalt thou have, and present pay;

And liquor likewise will I give to thee,

And friendship shall combine, and brotherhood.

I'll live by Nym and Nym shall live by me.

Is not this just? For I shall sutler be

Unto the camp, and profits will accrue.

Give me thy hand.

NYM.

[Sheathing his sword] I shall have my noble?

PISTOL.

In cash most justly paid.

NYM.

[Shaking hands] Well, then, that's the humour of't.

Re-enter HOSTESS

HOSTESS.

As ever you come of women, come in quickly to Sir John.
Ah, poor heart! he is so shak'd of a burning quotidian tertian
that it is most lamentable to behold. Sweet men, come to him.

NYM.

The King hath run bad humours on the knight; that's the even of it.

PISTOL.

Nym, thou hast spoke the right;
His heart is fracted and corroborate.

NYM.

The King is a good king, but it must be as it may; he passes

some humours and careers.

PISTOL.

Let us condole the knight; for, lambkins, we will live.

Exeunt

SCENE II. Southampton. A council-chamber

Enter EXETER, BEDFORD, and WESTMORELAND

BEDFORD.

Fore God, his Grace is bold, to trust these traitors.

EXETER.

They shall be apprehended by and by.

WESTMORELAND.

How smooth and even they do bear themselves,
As if allegiance in their bosoms sat,
Crowned with faith and constant loyalty!

BEDFORD.

The King hath note of all that they intend,

By interception which they dream not of.

EXETER.

Nay, but the man that was his bedfellow,

Whom he hath dull'd and cloy'd with gracious favours-

That he should, for a foreign purse, so sell

His sovereign's life to death and treachery!

Trumpets sound. *Enter* the KING, SCROOP,

CAMBRIDGE, GREY, and attendants

KING HENRY.

Now sits the wind fair, and we will aboard.

My Lord of Cambridge, and my kind Lord of Masham,

And you, my gentle knight, give me your thoughts.

Think you not that the pow'rs we bear with us

Will cut their passage through the force of France,

Doing the execution and the act

For which we have in head assembled them?

SCROOP.

No doubt, my liege, if each man do his best.

KING HENRY.
I doubt not that, since we are well persuaded
We carry not a heart with us from hence
That grows not in a fair consent with ours;
Nor leave not one behind that doth not wish
Success and conquest to attend on us.

CAMBRIDGE.
Never was monarch better fear'd and lov'd
Than is your Majesty. There's not, I think, a subject
That sits in heart-grief and uneasines
Under the sweet shade of your government.

GREY.
True: those that were your father's enemies
Have steep'd their galls in honey, and do serve you
With hearts create of duty and of zeal.

KING HENRY.

We therefore have great cause of thankfulness,

And shall forget the office of our hand

Sooner than quittance of desert and merit

According to the weight and worthiness.

SCROOP.

So service shall with steeled sinews toil,

And labour shall refresh itself with hope,

To do your Grace incessant services.

KING HENRY.

We judge no less. Uncle of Exeter,

Enlarge the man committed yesterday

That rail'd against our person. We consider

It was excess of wine that set him on;

And on his more advice we pardon him.

SCROOP.

That's mercy, but too much security.

Let him be punish'd, sovereign, lest example
Breed, by his sufferance, more of such a kind.

KING HENRY.

O, let us yet be merciful!

CAMBRIDGE.
So may your Highness, and yet punish too.

GREY.
Sir,
You show great mercy if you give him life,
After the taste of much correction.

KING HENRY.
Alas, your too much love and care of me
Are heavy orisons 'gainst this poor wretch!
If little faults proceeding on distemper
Shall not be wink'd at, how shall we stretch our eye
When capital crimes, chew'd, swallow'd, and digested,

Appear before us? We'll yet enlarge that man,
Though Cambridge, Scroop, and Grey, in their dear care
And tender preservation of our person,
Would have him punish'd. And now to our French causes:

Who are the late commissioners?

CAMBRIDGE.

I one, my lord.

Your Highness bade me ask for it to-day.

SCROOP.

So did you me, my liege.

GREY.

And I, my royal sovereign.

KING HENRY.

Then, Richard Earl of Cambridge, there is yours;

There yours, Lord Scroop of Masham; and, Sir Knight,
Grey of Northumberland, this same is yours.

Read them, and know I know your worthiness.
My Lord of Westmoreland, and uncle Exeter,
We will aboard to-night. Why, how now, gentlemen?
What see you in those papers, that you lose
So much complexion? Look ye how they change!
Their cheeks are paper. Why, what read you there
That have so cowarded and chas'd your blood
Out of appearance?

CAMBRIDGE.
I do confess my fault,
And do submit me to your Highness' mercy.

GREY, SCROOP. To which we all appeal.

KING HENRY.
The mercy that was quick in us but late
By your own counsel is suppress'd and kill'd.

You must not dare, for shame, to talk of mercy;

For your own reasons turn into your bosoms

As dogs upon their masters, worrying you.

See you, my princes and my noble peers,

These English monsters! My Lord of Cambridge here-

You know how apt our love was to accord

To furnish him with an appertinents

Belonging to his honour; and this man

Hath, for a few light crowns, lightly conspir'd,

And sworn unto the practices of France

To kill us here in Hampton; to the which

This knight, no less for bounty bound to us

Than Cambridge is, hath likewise sworn. But, O,

What shall I say to thee, Lord Scroop, thou cruel,

Ingrateful, savage, and inhuman creature?

Thou that didst bear the key of all my counsels,

That knew'st the very bottom of my soul,

That almost mightst have coin'd me into gold,

Wouldst thou have practis'd on me for thy use-

May it be possible that foreign hire

Could out of thee extract one spark of evil

That might annoy my finger? 'Tis so strange

That, though the truth of it stands off as gross

As black and white, my eye will scarcely see it.

Treason and murder ever kept together,

As two yoke-devils sworn to either's purpose,

Working so grossly in a natural cause

That admiration did not whoop at them;

But thou, 'gainst all proportion, didst bring in

Wonder to wait on treason and on murder;

And whatsoever cunning fiend it was

That wrought upon thee so preposterously

Hath got the voice in hell for excellence;

And other devils that suggest by treasons

Do botch and bungle up damnation

With patches, colours, and with forms, being fetch'd

From glist'ring semblances of piety;

But he that temper'd thee bade thee stand up,

Gave thee no instance why thou shouldst do treason,

Unless to dub thee with the name of traitor.

If that same demon that hath gull'd thee thus

Should with his lion gait walk the whole world,

He might return to vasty Tartar back,
And tell the legions 'I can never win
A soul so easy as that Englishman's.'
O, how hast thou with jealousy infected
The sweetness of affiance! Show men dutiful?
Why, so didst thou. Seem they grave and learned?

Why, so didst thou. Come they of noble family?
Why, so didst thou. Seem they religious?
Why, so didst thou. Or are they spare in diet,
Free from gross passion or of mirth or anger,
Constant in spirit, not swerving with the blood,
Garnish'd and deck'd in modest complement,
Not working with the eye without the ear,
And but in purged judgment trusting neither?
Such and so finely bolted didst thou seem;
And thus thy fall hath left a kind of blot
To mark the full-fraught man and best indued
With some suspicion. I will weep for thee;
For this revolt of thine, methinks, is like
Another fall of man. Their faults are open.

Arrest them to the answer of the law;
And God acquit them of their practices!

EXETER.
I arrest thee of high treason, by the name of Richard Earl
of Cambridge.
I arrest thee of high treason, by the name of Henry Lord Scroop
of Masham.
I arrest thee of high treason, by the name of Thomas Grey,
knight, of Northumberland.

SCROOP.
Our purposes God justly hath discover'd,
And I repent my fault more than my death;
Which I beseech your Highness to forgive,
Although my body pay the price of it.

CAMBRIDGE.
For me, the gold of France did not seduce,
Although I did admit it as a motive
The sooner to effect what I intended;

But God be thanked for prevention,
Which I in sufferance heartily will rejoice,
Beseeching God and you to pardon me.

GREY.
Never did faithful subject more rejoice
At the discovery of most dangerous treason
Than I do at this hour joy o'er myself,
Prevented from a damned enterprise.

My fault, but not my body, pardon, sovereign.

KING HENRY.
God quit you in his mercy! Hear your sentence.
You have conspir'd against our royal person,
Join'd with an enemy proclaim'd, and from his coffers
Receiv'd the golden earnest of our death;
Wherein you would have sold your king to slaughter,
His princes and his peers to servitude,
His subjects to oppression and contempt,
And his whole kingdom into desolation.

Touching our person seek we no revenge;

But we our kingdom's safety must so tender,

Whose ruin you have sought, that to her laws

We do deliver you. Get you therefore hence,

Poor miserable wretches, to your death;

The taste whereof God of his mercy give

You patience to endure, and true repentance

Of all your dear offences. Bear them hence.

Exeunt CAMBRIDGE, SCROOP, and GREY, guarded

Now, lords, for France; the enterprise whereof

Shall be to you as us like glorious.

We doubt not of a fair and lucky war,

Since God so graciously hath brought to light

This dangerous treason, lurking in our way

To hinder our beginnings; we doubt not now

But every rub is smoothed on our way.

Then, forth, dear countrymen; let us deliver

Our puissance into the hand of God,

Putting it straight in expedition.

Cheerly to sea; the signs of war advance;

No king of England, if not king of France!

Flourish. Exeunt

SCENE III. Eastcheap. Before the Boar's Head tavern

Enter PISTOL, HOSTESS, NYM, BARDOLPH, and Boy

HOSTESS.

Prithee, honey-sweet husband, let me bring thee to Staines.

PISTOL.

No; for my manly heart doth earn.

Bardolph, be blithe; Nym, rouse thy vaunting veins;

Boy, bristle thy courage up. For Falstaff he is dead,

And we must earn therefore.

BARDOLPH.

Would I were with him, wheresome'er he is, either in heaven or in hell!

HOSTESS.

Nay, sure, he's not in hell: he's in Arthur's bosom, if

ever man went to Arthur's bosom. 'A made a finer end, and went
away an it had been any christom child; 'a parted ev'n just
between twelve and one, ev'n at the turning o' th' tide; for
after I saw him fumble with the sheets, and play with flowers,
and smile upon his fingers' end, I knew there was but one way;
for his nose was as sharp as a pen, and 'a babbl'd of green
fields. 'How now, Sir John!' quoth I 'What, man, be o' good
cheer.' So 'a cried out 'God, God, God!' three or four times.
Now
I, to comfort him, bid him 'a should not think of God; I
hop'd
there was no need to trouble himself with any such thoughts yet.
So 'a bade me lay more clothes on his feet; I put my hand into
the bed and felt them, and they were as cold as any stone;
then I
felt to his knees, and so upward and upward, and all was as cold as any stone.

NYM.

They say he cried out of sack.

HOSTESS.

Ay, that 'a did.

BARDOLPH.

And of women.

HOSTESS.

Nay, that 'a did not.

BOY.

Yes, that 'a did, and said they were devils incarnate.

HOSTESS.

'A could never abide carnation; 'twas a colour he never liked.

BOY.

'A said once the devil would have him about women.

HOSTESS.

'A did in some sort, indeed, handle women; but then he was

rheumatic, and talk'd of the Whore of Babylon.

BOY.

Do you not remember 'a saw a flea stick upon Bardolph's nose,

and 'a said it was a black soul burning in hell?

BARDOLPH.

Well, the fuel is gone that maintain'd that fire:

that's

all the riches I got in his service.

NYM.

Shall we shog? The King will be gone from Southampton.

PISTOL.

Come, let's away. My love, give me thy lips.

Look to my chattles and my moveables;

Let senses rule. The word is 'Pitch and Pay.'

Trust none;

For oaths are straws, men's faiths are wafer-cakes,

And Holdfast is the only dog, my duck.

Therefore, Caveto be thy counsellor.

Go, clear thy crystals. Yoke-fellows in arms,

Let us to France, like horse-leeches, my boys,

To suck, to suck, the very blood to suck.

BOY.

And that's but unwholesome food, they say.

PISTOL.

Touch her soft mouth and march.

BARDOLPH.

Farewell, hostess. *[Kissing her]*

NYM.

I cannot kiss, that is the humour of it; but adieu.

PISTOL.

Let housewifery appear; keep close, I thee command.

HOSTESS.

Farewell; adieu. *Exeunt*

SCENE IV. France. The KING'S palace

Flourish. *Enter* the FRENCH KING, the DAUPHIN, the DUKES OF BERRI and BRITAINE, the CONSTABLE, and others

FRENCH KING.

Thus comes the English with full power upon us;

And more than carefully it us concerns

To answer royally in our defences.

Therefore the Dukes of Berri and of Britaine,

Of Brabant and of Orleans, shall make forth,

And you, Prince Dauphin, with all swift dispatch,

To line and new repair our towns of war

With men of courage and with means defendant;

For England his approaches makes as fierce

As waters to the sucking of a gulf.

It fits us, then, to be as provident

As fear may teach us, out of late examples

Left by the fatal and neglected English

Upon our fields.

DAUPHIN.

My most redoubted father,

It is most meet we arm us 'gainst the foe;

For peace itself should not so dull a kingdom,

Though war nor no known quarrel were in question,

But that defences, musters, preparations,

Should be maintain'd, assembled, and collected,

As were a war in expectation.

Therefore, I say, 'tis meet we all go forth

To view the sick and feeble parts of France;

And let us do it with no show of fear-

No, with no more than if we heard that England

Were busied with a Whitsun morris-dance;

For, my good liege, she is so idly king'd,

Her sceptre so fantastically borne

By a vain, giddy, shallow, humorous youth, That fear attends her not.

CONSTABLE.

O peace, Prince Dauphin!
You are too much mistaken in this king.
Question your Grace the late ambassadors
With what great state he heard their embassy,
How well supplied with noble counsellors,
How modest in exception, and withal
How terrible in constant resolution,
And you shall find his vanities forespent
Were but the outside of the Roman Brutus,
Covering discretion with a coat of folly;
As gardeners do with ordure hide those roots
That shall first spring and be most delicate.

DAUPHIN.
Well, 'tis not so, my Lord High Constable;
But though we think it so, it is no matter.
In cases of defence 'tis best to weigh

The enemy more mighty than he seems;
So the proportions of defence are fill'd;
Which of a weak and niggardly projection
Doth like a miser spoil his coat with scanting
A little cloth.

FRENCH KING.
Think we King Harry strong;
And, Princes, look you strongly arm to meet him.
The kindred of him hath been flesh'd upon us;
And he is bred out of that bloody strain
That haunted us in our familiar paths.
Witness our too much memorable shame
When Cressy battle fatally was struck,
And all our princes capdv'd by the hand
Of that black name, Edward, Black Prince of Wales;
Whiles that his mountain sire-on mountain standing,
Up in the air, crown'd with the golden sun-
Saw his heroical seed, and smil'd to see him,
Mangle the work of nature, and deface
The patterns that by God and by French fathers

Had twenty years been made. This is a stern
Of that victorious stock; and let us fear
The native mightiness and fate of him.

Enter a MESSENGER

MESSENGER.
Ambassadors from Harry King of England
Do crave admittance to your Majesty.

FRENCH KING.
We'll give them present audience. Go and bring them.
Exeunt MESSENGER and certain LORDS
You see this chase is hotly followed, friends.

DAUPHIN.
Turn head and stop pursuit; for coward dogs
Most spend their mouths when what they seem to threaten
Runs far before them. Good my sovereign,
Take up the English short, and let them know
Of what a monarchy you are the head.

Self-love, my liege, is not so vile a sin

As self-neglecting.

Re-enter LORDS, with EXETER and train

FRENCH KING.

From our brother of England?

EXETER.

From him, and thus he greets your Majesty:

He wills you, in the name of God Almighty,

That you divest yourself, and lay apart

The borrowed glories that by gift of heaven,

By law of nature and of nations, 'longs

To him and to his heirs-namely, the crown,

And all wide-stretched honours that pertain,

By custom and the ordinance of times,

Unto the crown of France. That you may know

'Tis no sinister nor no awkward claim,

Pick'd from the worm-holes of long-vanish'd days,

Nor from the dust of old oblivion rak'd,

He sends you this most memorable line, *[Gives a paper]*

In every branch truly demonstrative;
Willing you overlook this pedigree.
And when you find him evenly deriv'd
From his most fam'd of famous ancestors,
Edward the Third, he bids you then resign
Your crown and kingdom, indirectly held
From him, the native and true challenger.

FRENCH KING.

Or else what follows?

EXETER.
Bloody constraint; for if you hide the crown
Even in your hearts, there will he rake for it.
Therefore in fierce tempest is he coming,
In thunder and in earthquake, like a Jove,
That if requiring fail, he will compel;
And bids you, in the bowels of the Lord,
Deliver up the crown; and to take mercy
On the poor souls for whom this hungry war

Opens his vasty jaws; and on your head

Turning the widows' tears, the orphans' cries,

The dead men's blood, the privy maidens' groans,

For husbands, fathers, and betrothed lovers,

That shall be swallowed in this controversy.

This is his claim, his threat'ning, and my message;

Unless the Dauphin be in presence here,

To whom expressly I bring greeting too.

FRENCH KING.

For us, we will consider of this further;

To-morrow shall you bear our full intent

Back to our brother of England.

DAUPHIN.

For the Dauphin:

I stand here for him. What to him from England?

EXETER.

Scorn and defiance, slight regard, contempt, And anything that may not misbecome

The mighty sender, doth he prize you at.

Thus says my king: an if your father's Highness

Do not, in grant of all demands at large,

Sweeten the bitter mock you sent his Majesty,

He'll call you to so hot an answer of it

That caves and womby vaultages of France

Shall chide your trespass and return your mock

In second accent of his ordinance.

DAUPHIN.

Say, if my father render fair return,

It is against my will; for I desire

Nothing but odds with England. To that end,

As matching to his youth and vanity,

I did present him with the Paris balls.

EXETER.

He'll make your Paris Louvre shake for it,

Were it the mistress court of mighty Europe;

And be assur'd you'll find a difference, As we his subjects have in wonder found,

Between the promise of his greener days

And these he masters now. Now he weighs time

Even to the utmost grain; that you shall read

In your own losses, if he stay in France.

FRENCH KING.

To-morrow shall you know our mind at full.

EXETER.

Dispatch us with all speed, lest that our king

Come here himself to question our delay;

For he is footed in this land already.

FRENCH KING.

You shall be soon dispatch'd with fair conditions.

A night is but small breath and little pause

To answer matters of this consequence. Flourish. *Exeunt*

ACT III. PROLOGUE.

Flourish. *Enter* CHORUS

CHORUS.

Thus with imagin'd wing our swift scene flies,

In motion of no less celerity

Than that of thought. Suppose that you have seen

The well-appointed King at Hampton pier

Embark his royalty; and his brave fleet

With silken streamers the young Phorbus fanning.

Play with your fancies; and in them behold

Upon the hempen tackle ship-boys climbing;

Hear the shrill whistle which doth order give

To sounds confus'd; behold the threaden sails,

Borne with th' invisible and creeping wind,

Draw the huge bottoms through the furrowed sea,

Breasting the lofty surge. O, do but think

You stand upon the rivage and behold

A city on th' inconstant billows dancing;

For so appears this fleet majestical,

Holding due course to Harfleur. Follow, follow!

Grapple your minds to sternage of this navy

And leave your England as dead midnight still, Guarded with grandsires, babies, and old women,

Either past or not arriv'd to pith and puissance;

For who is he whose chin is but enrich'd

With one appearing hair that will not follow

These cull'd and choice-drawn cavaliers to France?

Work, work your thoughts, and therein see a siege;

Behold the ordnance on their carriages,

With fatal mouths gaping on girded Harfleur.

Suppose th' ambassador from the French comes back;

Tells Harry that the King doth offer him

Katherine his daughter, and with her to dowry

Some petty and unprofitable dukedoms.

The offer likes not; and the nimble gunner

With linstock now the devilish cannon touches,

[Alarum, and chambers go off]

And down goes an before them. Still be kind,

And eke out our performance with your mind. *Exit*

SCENE I. France. Before Harfleur

Alarum. *Enter* the KING, EXETER, BEDFORD, GLOUCESTER, and soldiers with scaling-ladders

KING.

Once more unto the breach, dear friends, once more;

Or close the wall up with our English dead.

In peace there's nothing so becomes a man

As modest stillness and humility;

But when the blast of war blows in our ears,

Then imitate the action of the tiger:

Stiffen the sinews, summon up the blood,

Disguise fair nature with hard-favour'd rage;

Then lend the eye a terrible aspect;

Let it pry through the portage of the head

Like the brass cannon: let the brow o'erwhelm it

As fearfully as doth a galled rock

O'erhang and jutty his confounded base,

Swill'd with the wild and wasteful ocean.

Now set the teeth and stretch the nostril wide;

Hold hard the breath, and bend up every spirit

To his full height. On, on, you noblest English,

Whose blood is fet from fathers of war-proof-

Fathers that like so many Alexanders

Have in these parts from morn till even fought,

And sheath'd their swords for lack of argument.

Dishonour not your mothers; now attest

That those whom you call'd fathers did beget you.

Be copy now to men of grosser blood,

And teach them how to war. And you, good yeomen,

Whose limbs were made in England, show us here

The mettle of your pasture; let us swear

That you are worth your breeding-which I doubt not;

For there is none of you so mean and base

That hath not noble lustre in your eyes.

I see you stand like greyhounds in the slips,

Straining upon the start. The game's afoot:

Follow your spirit; and upon this charge

Cry 'God for Harry, England, and Saint George!'

[Exeunt. Alarum, and chambers go off]

SCENE II. Before Harfleur

Enter NYM, BARDOLPH, PISTOL, and BOY

BARDOLPH.

On, on, on, on, on! to the breach, to the breach!

NYM.

Pray thee, Corporal, stay; the knocks are too hot, and for
mine own part I have not a case of lives. The humour of it is too
hot; that is the very plain-song of it.

PISTOL.

The plain-song is most just; for humours do abound:
Knocks go and come; God's vassals drop and die;
And sword and shield
In bloody field
Doth win immortal fame.

BOY.

Would I were in an alehouse in London! I wouid give all my fame for a pot of ale and safety.

PISTOL.

And I:

If wishes would prevail with me,

My purpose should not fail with me,

But thither would I hie.

BOY.

As duly, but not as truly,

As bird doth sing on bough.

Enter FLUELLEN

FLUELLEN.

Up to the breach, you dogs!

Avaunt, you cullions! *[Driving them forward]*

PISTOL.

Be merciful, great duke, to men of mould.

Abate thy rage, abate thy manly rage;

Abate thy rage, great duke.

Good bawcock, bate thy rage. Use lenity, sweet chuck.

NYM.

These be good humours. Your honour wins bad humours.

Exeunt all but BOY

BOY.

As young as I am, I have observ'd these three swashers. I am boy to them all three; but all they three, though they would serve me, could not be man to me; for indeed three such antics do not amount to a man. For Bardolph, he is white-liver'd and red-fac'd; by the means whereof 'a faces it out, but fights not. For Pistol, he hath a killing tongue and a quiet sword; by the means whereof 'a breaks words and keeps whole weapons. For Nym, he hath heard that men of few words are the best men, and therefore he scorns to say his prayers lest 'a should be thought a coward; but his few bad words are match'd with as few good deeds; for 'a never broke any man's head but his own, and that was against a post when he was drunk. They will steal anything, and call it purchase. Bardolph stole a lute-case, bore it twelve leagues, and sold it for three halfpence. Nym and Bardolph are sworn brothers in filching, and in Calais they stole a fire-shovel; I knew by that piece of service the men would carry coals. They would have me as familiar with men's pockets as their gloves or their handkerchers; which makes much against my manhood, if I should take from another's pocket to put into mine; for it is plain pocketing up of wrongs. I must leave them and seek some better service; their villainy goes against my weak stomach, and therefore I must cast it up. *Exit*

Re-enter FLUELLEN, GOWER following

GOWER.

Captain Fluellen, you must come presently to the mines; the Duke of Gloucester would speak with you.

FLUELLEN.

To the mines! Tell you the Duke it is not so good to come to the mines; for, look you, the mines is not according to the disciplines of the war; the concavities of it is not sufficient. For, look you, th' athversary-you may discuss unto the Duke, look you-is digt himself four yard under the countermines; by

Cheshu, I think 'a will plow up all, if there is not better directions.

GOWER.

The Duke of Gloucester, to whom the order of the siege is

given, is altogether directed by an Irishman-a very vallant gentleman, i' faith.

FLUELLEN.

It is Captain Macmorris, is it not?

GOWER.

I think it be.

FLUELLEN.

By Cheshu, he is an ass, as in the world: I will verify

as much in his beard; he has no more directions in the true

disciplines of the wars, look you, of the Roman disciplines, than

is a puppy-dog.

Enter MACMORRIS and CAPTAIN JAMY

GOWER.

Here 'a comes; and the Scots captain, Captain Jamy, with him.

FLUELLEN.

Captain Jamy is a marvellous falorous gentleman, that is

certain, and of great expedition and knowledge in th' aunchient

wars, upon my particular knowledge of his directions. By Cheshu,

he will maintain his argument as well as any military man in the

world, in the disciplines of the pristine wars of the Romans.

JAMY.

I say gud day, Captain Fluellen.

FLUELLEN.

God-den to your worship, good Captain James.

GOWER.

How now, Captain Macmorris! Have you quit the mines?

Have

the pioneers given o'er?

MACMORRIS.

By Chrish, la, tish ill done! The work ish give over,
the trompet sound the retreat. By my hand, I swear, and my
father's soul, the work ish ill done; it ish give over; I would
have blowed up the town, so Chrish save me, la, in an hour.
O,
tish ill done, tish ill done; by my hand, tish ill done!

FLUELLEN.

Captain Macmorris, I beseech you now, will you voutsafe
me, look you, a few disputations with you, as partly touching or
concerning the disciplines of the war, the Roman wars, in the way
of argument, look you, and friendly communication; partly to
satisfy my opinion, and partly for the satisfaction, look you, of
my mind, as touching the direction of the military discipline,
that is the point.

JAMY.

It sall be vary gud, gud feith, gud captains bath; and I sall
quit you with gud leve, as I may pick occasion; that sall I, marry.

MACMORRIS.

It is no time to discourse, so Chrish save me. The day
is hot, and the weather, and the wars, and the King, and the
Dukes; it is no time to discourse. The town is beseech'd, and the
trumpet call us to the breach; and we talk and, be Chrish, do
nothing. 'Tis shame for us all, so God sa' me, 'tis shame to
stand still; it is shame, by my hand; and there is throats to be
cut, and works to be done; and there ish nothing done, so
Chrish sa' me, la.

JAMY.

By the mess, ere theise eyes of mine take themselves to
slomber, ay'll de gud service, or I'll lig i' th' grund for it;
ay, or go to death. And I'll pay't as valorously as I may, that
sall I suerly do, that is the breff and the long. Marry, I wad
full fain heard some question 'tween you tway.

FLUELLEN.

Captain Macmorris, I think, look you, under your
correction, there is not many of your nation-

MACMORRIS.

Of my nation? What ish my nation? Ish a villain, and a

bastard, and a knave, and a rascal. What ish my nation? Who talks of my nation?

FLUELLEN.

Look you, if you take the matter otherwise than is meant,

Captain Macmorris, peradventure I shall think you do not use me

with that affability as in discretion you ought to use me, look

you; being as good a man as yourself, both in the disciplines of

war and in the derivation of my birth, and in other particularities.

MACMORRIS.

I do not know you so good a man as myself; so

Chrish save me, I will cut off your head.

GOWER.

Gentlemen both, you will mistake each other.

JAMY.

Ah! that's a foul fault. *[A parley sounded]*

GOWER.

The town sounds a parley.

FLUELLEN.

Captain Macmorris, when there is more better opportunity

to be required, look you, I will be so bold as to tell you I know

the disciplines of war; and there is an end. *Exeunt*

SCENE III. Before the gates of Harfleur

Enter the GOVERNOR and some citizens on the walls. *Enter* the KING and all his train before the gates

KING HENRY.

How yet resolves the Governor of the town?

This is the latest parle we will admit;

Therefore to our best mercy give yourselves

Or, like to men proud of destruction,

Defy us to our worst; for, as I am a soldier,

A name that in my thoughts becomes me best,

If I begin the batt'ry once again,

I will not leave the half-achieved Harfleur
Till in her ashes she lie buried.
The gates of mercy shall be all shut up,
And the flesh'd soldier, rough and hard of heart,
In liberty of bloody hand shall range
With conscience wide as hell, mowing like grass
Your fresh fair virgins and your flow'ring infants.
What is it then to me if impious war,
Array'd in flames, like to the prince of fiends,
Do, with his smirch'd complexion, all fell feats
Enlink'd to waste and desolation?
What is't to me when you yourselves are cause,
If your pure maidens fall into the hand
Of hot and forcing violation?
What rein can hold licentious wickednes
When down the hill he holds his fierce career?
We may as bootless spend our vain command
Upon th' enraged soldiers in their spoil,
As send precepts to the Leviathan
To come ashore. Therefore, you men of Harfleur,
Take pity of your town and of your people

Whiles yet my soldiers are in my command;
Whiles yet the cool and temperate wind of grace
O'erblows the filthy and contagious clouds
Of heady murder, spoil, and villainy.
If not-why, in a moment look to see
The blind and bloody with foul hand
Defile the locks of your shrill-shrieking daughters;
Your fathers taken by the silver beards,
And their most reverend heads dash'd to the walls;
Your naked infants spitted upon pikes,
Whiles the mad mothers with their howls confus'd
Do break the clouds, as did the wives of Jewry
At Herod's bloody-hunting slaughtermen.

What say you? Will you yield, and this avoid?
Or, guilty in defence, be thus destroy'd?

GOVERNOR.

Our expectation hath this day an end:
The Dauphin, whom of succours we entreated,

Returns us that his powers are yet not ready

To raise so great a siege. Therefore, great King,

We yield our town and lives to thy soft mercy.

Enter our gates; dispose of us and ours;

For we no longer are defensible.

KING HENRY.

Open your gates. *[Exit GOVERNOR]* Come, uncle Exeter,

Go you and enter Harfleur; there remain,

And fortify it strongly 'gainst the French;

Use mercy to them all. For us, dear uncle,

The winter coming on, and sickness growing

Upon our soldiers, we will retire to Calais.

To-night in Harfleur will we be your guest;

To-morrow for the march are we addrest.

[Flourish. The KING and his train enter the town]

SCENE IV. Rouen. The FRENCH KING'S palace

Enter KATHERINE and ALICE

KATHERINE.

Alice, tu as ete en Angleterre, et tu parles bien le langage.

ALICE.

Un peu, madame.

KATHERINE.

Je te prie, m'enseignez; il faut que j'apprenne a

parler. Comment appelez-vous la main en Anglais?

ALICE.

La main? Elle est appelee de hand.

KATHERINE.

De hand. Et les doigts?

ALICE.

Les doigts? Ma foi, j'oublie les doigts; mais je me

souviendrai. Les doigts? Je pense qu'ils sont appeles de fingres;

oui, de fingres.

KATHERINE.

La main, de hand; les doigts, de fingres. Je pense que

je suis le bon ecolier; j'ai gagne deux mots d'Anglais vitement.

Comment appelez-vous les ongles?

ALICE.

Les ongles? Nous les appelons de nails.

KATHERINE.

De nails. Ecoutez; dites-moi si je parle bien: de hand,

de fingres, et de nails.

ALICE.

C'est bien dit, madame; il est fort bon Anglais.

KATHERINE.

Dites-moi l'Anglais pour le bras.

ALICE.

De arm, madame.

KATHERINE.

Et le coude?

ALICE.

D'elbow.

KATHERINE.

D'elbow. Je m'en fais la repetition de tous les mots que vous m'avez appris des a present.

ALICE.

Il est trop difficile, madame, comme je pense.

KATHERINE.

Excusez-moi, Alice; ecoutez: d'hand, de fingre, de

nails, d'arma, de bilbow.

ALICE.

D'elbow, madame.

KATHERINE.

O Seigneur Dieu, je m'en oublie! D'elbow.

Comment appelez-vous le col?

ALICE.

De nick, madame.

KATHERINE.

De nick. Et le menton?

ALICE.

De chin.

KATHERINE.

De sin. Le col, de nick; le menton, de sin.

ALICE.
Oui. Sauf votre honneur, en verite, vous prononcez les mots
aussi droit que les natifs d'Angleterre.

KATHERINE.
Je ne doute point d'apprendre, par la grace de Dieu,
et en peu de temps.

ALICE.

N'avez-vous pas deja oublie ce que je vous ai enseigne?

KATHERINE.
Non, je reciterai a vous promptement: d'hand, de fingre,
de mails-

ALICE.

De nails, madame.

KATHERINE.

De nails, de arm, de ilbow.

ALICE.

Sauf votre honneur, d'elbow.

KATHERINE.

Ainsi dis-je; d'elbow, de nick, et de sin. Comment appelez-vous le pied et la robe?

ALICE.

Le foot, madame; et le count.

KATHERINE.

Le foot et le count. O Seigneur Dieu! ils sont mots de

son mauvais, corruptible, gros, et impudique, et non pour les

dames d'honneur d'user: je ne voudrais prononcer ces mots devant

les seigneurs de France pour tout le monde. Foh! le foot et le

count! Neanmoins, je reciterai une autre fois ma lecon ensemble:

d'hand, de fingre, de nails, d'arm, d'elbow, de nick, de sin,

de foot, le count.

ALICE.

Excellent, madame!

KATHERINE.

C'est assez pour une fois: allons-nous a diner.

Exeunt

SCENE V. The FRENCH KING'S palace

Enter the KING OF FRANCE, the DAUPHIN, DUKE OF BRITAINE, the CONSTABLE OF FRANCE, and others

FRENCH KING.

'Tis certain he hath pass'd the river Somme.

CONSTABLE.

And if he be not fought withal, my lord,

Let us not live in France; let us quit an,

And give our vineyards to a barbarous people.

DAUPHIN.

O Dieu vivant! Shall a few sprays of us,

The emptying of our fathers' luxury,

Our scions, put in wild and savage stock,

Spirt up so suddenly into the clouds,

And overlook their grafters?

BRITAINE.

Normans, but bastard Normans, Norman bastards!

Mort Dieu, ma vie! if they march along

Unfought withal, but I will sell my dukedom

To buy a slobb'ry and a dirty farm

In that nook-shotten isle of Albion.

CONSTABLE.

Dieu de batailles! where have they this mettle?

Is not their climate foggy, raw, and dull;

On whom, as in despite, the sun looks pale,

Killing their fruit with frowns? Can sodden water,

A drench for sur-rein'd jades, their barley-broth,

Decoct their cold blood to such valiant heat?

And shall our quick blood, spirited with wine,

Seem frosty? O, for honour of our land,

Let us not hang like roping icicles

Upon our houses' thatch, whiles a more frosty people

Sweat drops of gallant youth in our rich fields-

Poor we call them in their native lords!

DAUPHIN.

By faith and honour,

Our madams mock at us and plainly say

Our mettle is bred out, and they will give

Their bodies to the lust of English youth

To new-store France with bastard warriors.

BRITAINE.

They bid us to the English dancing-schools

And teach lavoltas high and swift corantos,

Saying our grace is only in our heels

And that we are most lofty runaways.

FRENCH KING.

Where is Montjoy the herald? Speed him hence;

Let him greet England with our sharp defiance.

Up, Princes, and, with spirit of honour edged

More sharper than your swords, hie to the field:

Charles Delabreth, High Constable of France;

You Dukes of Orleans, Bourbon, and of Berri,

Alengon, Brabant, Bar, and Burgundy;

Jaques Chatillon, Rambures, Vaudemont,

Beaumont, Grandpre, Roussi, and Fauconbridge,

Foix, Lestrake, Bouciqualt, and Charolois;

High dukes, great princes, barons, lords, and knights,

For your great seats now quit you of great shames.

Bar Harry England, that sweeps through our land

With pennons painted in the blood of Harfleur.

Rush on his host as doth the melted snow
Upon the valleys, whose low vassal seat
The Alps doth spit and void his rheum upon;
Go down upon him, you have power enough,
And in a captive chariot into Rouen
Bring him our prisoner.

CONSTABLE.

This becomes the great.
Sorry am I his numbers are so few,
His soldiers sick and famish'd in their march;
For I am sure, when he shall see our army,
He'll drop his heart into the sink of fear,
And for achievement offer us his ransom.

FRENCH KING.
Therefore, Lord Constable, haste on Montjoy,
And let him say to England that we send
To know what willing ransom he will give.
Prince Dauphin, you shall stay with us in Rouen.

DAUPHIN.

Not so, I do beseech your Majesty.

FRENCH KING.
Be patient, for you shall remain with us.
Now forth, Lord Constable and Princes all,
And quickly bring us word of England's fall. *Exeunt*

SCENE VI. The English camp in Picardy

Enter CAPTAINS, English and Welsh, GOWER and FLUELLEN

GOWER.
How now, Captain Fluellen! Come you from the bridge?

FLUELLEN.

I assure you there is very excellent services committed at the bridge.

GOWER.

Is the Duke of Exeter safe?

FLUELLEN.

The Duke of Exeter is as magnanimous as Agamemnon;

and a

man that I love and honour with my soul, and my heart, and my

duty, and my live, and my living, and my uttermost power. He is

not-God be praised and blessed!- any hurt in the world, but

keeps the bridge most valiantly, with excellent discipline.

There

is an aunchient Lieutenant there at the bridge-I think in my

very conscience he is as valiant a man as Mark Antony; and he is

man of no estimation in the world; but I did see him do as gallant service.

GOWER.

What do you call him?

FLUELLEN.

He is call'd Aunchient Pistol.

GOWER.

I know him not.

Enter PISTOL

FLUELLEN.

Here is the man.

PISTOL.

Captain, I thee beseech to do me favours.

The Duke of Exeter doth love thee well.

FLUELLEN.

Ay, I praise God; and I have merited some love at his hands.

PISTOL.

Bardolph, a soldier, firm and sound of heart,

And of buxom valour, hath by cruel fate

And giddy Fortune's furious fickle wheel,
That goddess blind,
That stands upon the rolling restless stone-

FLUELLEN.

By your patience, Aunchient Pistol. Fortune is painted blind, with a muffler afore her eyes, to signify to you that Fortune is blind; and she is painted also with a wheel, to signify to you, which is the moral of it, that she is turning, and inconstant, and mutability, and variation; and her foot, look you, is fixed upon a spherical stone, which rolls, and rolls, and rolls. In good truth, the poet makes a most excellent description of it: Fortune is an excellent moral.

PISTOL.

Fortune is Bardolph's foe, and frowns on him;
For he hath stol'n a pax, and hanged must 'a be-
A damned death!
Let gallows gape for dog; let man go free,
And let not hemp his windpipe suffocate.
But Exeter hath given the doom of death

For pax of little price.
Therefore, go speak-the Duke will hear thy voice;
And let not Bardolph's vital thread be cut
With edge of penny cord and vile reproach.

Speak, Captain, for his life, and I will thee requite.

FLUELLEN.
Aunchient Pistol, I do partly understand your meaning.

PISTOL.

Why then, rejoice therefore.

FLUELLEN.
Certainly, Aunchient, it is not a thing to rejoice at;
for if, look you, he were my brother, I would desire the Duke to
use his good pleasure, and put him to execution; for discipline
ought to be used.

PISTOL.

Die and be damn'd! and figo for thy friendship!

FLUELLEN.

It is well.

PISTOL.

The fig of Spain! *Exit*

FLUELLEN. Very good.

GOWER.

Why, this is an arrant counterfeit rascal; I remember him

now-a bawd, a cutpurse.

FLUELLEN.

I'll assure you, 'a utt'red as prave words at the pridge

as you shall see in a summer's day. But it is very well; what he

has spoke to me, that is well, I warrant you, when time is serve.

GOWER.

Why, 'tis a gull a fool a rogue, that now and then goes to
the wars to grace himself, at his return into London, under the
form of a soldier. And such fellows are perfect in the great
commanders' names; and they will learn you by rote where services
were done-at such and such a sconce, at such a breach, at such a
convoy; who came off bravely, who was shot, who disgrac'd, what
terms the enemy stood on; and this they con perfectly in the
phrase of war, which they trick up with new-tuned oaths; and what
a beard of the General's cut and a horrid suit of the camp will
do among foaming bottles and ale-wash'd wits is wonderful to be
thought on. But you must learn to know such slanders of the age,
or else you may be marvellously mistook.

FLUELLEN.
I tell you what, Captain Gower, I do perceive he is not
the man that he would gladly make show to the world he is; if

I

find a hole in his coat I will tell him my mind. [Drum
within]
Hark you, the King is coming; and I must speak with him from the pridge.

Drum and colours. *Enter* the KING and his poor soldiers, and GLOUCESTER

God pless your Majesty!

KING HENRY.

How now, Fluellen! Cam'st thou from the bridge?

FLUELLEN.

Ay, so please your Majesty. The Duke of Exeter has very gallantly maintain'd the pridge; the French is gone off, look you, and there is gallant and most prave passages. Marry, th' athversary was have possession of the pridge; but he is enforced to retire, and the Duke of Exeter is master of the pridge; I can tell your Majesty the Duke is a prave man.

KING HENRY.

What men have you lost, Fluellen!

FLUELLEN.

The perdition of th' athversary hath been very great, reasonable great; marry, for my part, I think the Duke hath lost never a man, but one that is like to be executed for robbing a church-one Bardolph, if your Majesty know the man; his face is all bubukles, and whelks, and knobs, and flames o' fire; and his lips blows at his nose, and it is like a coal of fire, sometimes plue and sometimes red; but his nose is executed and his fire's out.

KING HENRY.

We would have all such offenders so cut off. And we give express charge that in our marches through the country there be nothing compell'd from the villages, nothing taken but paid for, none of the French upbraided or abused in disdainful language; for when lenity and cruelty play for a kingdom the gentler gamester is the soonest winner.

Tucket.   *Enter* MONTJOY

MONTJOY.

You know me by my habit.

KING HENRY.

Well then, I know thee; what shall I know of thee?

MONTJOY.

My master's mind.

KING HENRY.
Unfold it.

MONTJOY.

Thus says my king. Say thou to Harry of England:
Though we
seem'd dead we did but sleep; advantage is a better soldier than
rashness. Tell him we could have rebuk'd him at Harfleur, but
that we thought not good to bruise an injury till it were full
ripe. Now we speak upon our cue, and our voice is imperial:
England shall repent his folly, see his weakness, and admire our
sufferance. Bid him therefore consider of his ransom, which must
proportion the losses we have borne, the subjects we have lost,
the disgrace we have digested; which, in weight to re-answer, his
pettiness would bow under. For our losses his exchequer is too

poor; for th' effusion of our blood, the muster of his kingdom too faint a number; and for our disgrace, his own person kneeling at our feet but a weak and worthless satisfaction. To this add defiance; and tell him, for conclusion, he hath betrayed his followers, whose condemnation is pronounc'd. So far my king and master; so much my office.

KING HENRY.
What is thy name? I know thy quality.

MONTJOY.

Montjoy.

KING HENRY.
Thou dost thy office fairly. Turn thee back,
And tell thy king I do not seek him now,
But could be willing to march on to Calais
Without impeachment; for, to say the sooth-
Though 'tis no wisdom to confess so much
Unto an enemy of craft and vantage-

My people are with sickness much enfeebled;

My numbers lessen'd; and those few I have

Almost no better than so many French;

Who when they were in health, I tell thee, herald,

I thought upon one pair of English legs

Did march three Frenchmen. Yet forgive me, God,

That I do brag thus; this your air of France

Hath blown that vice in me; I must repent.

Go, therefore, tell thy master here I am;

My ransom is this frail and worthless trunk;

My army but a weak and sickly guard;

Yet, God before, tell him we will come on,

Though France himself and such another neighbour

Stand in our way. There's for thy labour, Montjoy.

Go, bid thy master well advise himself.

If we may pass, we will; if we be hind'red,

We shall your tawny ground with your red blood

Discolour; and so, Montjoy, fare you well.

The sum of all our answer is but this:

We would not seek a battle as we are;

Nor as we are, we say, we will not shun it.

So tell your master.

MONTJOY.

I shall deliver so. Thanks to your Highness. *Exit*

GLOUCESTER. I hope they will not come upon us now.

KING HENRY.

We are in God's hand, brother, not in theirs.

March to the bridge, it now draws toward night;

Beyond the river we'll encamp ourselves,

And on to-morrow bid them march away. *Exeunt*

SCENE VII. The French camp near Agincourt

Enter the CONSTABLE OF FRANCE, the LORD RAMBURES, the DUKE OF ORLEANS, the DAUPHIN, with others

CONSTABLE.

Tut! I have the best armour of the world.

Would it were day!

ORLEANS.

You have an excellent armour; but let my horse have his due.

CONSTABLE.

It is the best horse of Europe.

ORLEANS.

Will it never be morning?

DAUPHIN.

My Lord of Orleans and my Lord High Constable, you talk of horse and armour?

ORLEANS.

You are as well provided of both as any prince in the world.

DAUPHIN.

What a long night is this! I will not change my horse with
any that treads but on four pasterns. Ca, ha! he bounds from the
earth as if his entrails were hairs; le cheval volant, the
Pegasus, chez les narines de feu! When I bestride him I soar,

I

am a hawk. He trots the air; the earth sings when he touches it;
the basest horn of his hoof is more musical than the pipe of Hermes.

ORLEANS.

He's of the colour of the nutmeg.

DAUPHIN.

And of the heat of the ginger. It is a beast for
Perseus:
he is pure air and fire; and the dull elements of earth and water
never appear in him, but only in patient stillness while his
rider mounts him; he is indeed a horse, and all other jades you may call beasts.

CONSTABLE.

Indeed, my lord, it is a most absolute and excellent horse.

DAUPHIN.

It is the prince of palfreys; his neigh is like the
bidding of a monarch, and his countenance enforces homage.

ORLEANS.

No more, cousin.

DAUPHIN.

Nay, the man hath no wit that cannot, from the rising of
the lark to the lodging of the lamb, vary deserved praise on my
palfrey. It is a theme as fluent as the sea: turn the sands into
eloquent tongues, and my horse is argument for them all: 'tis a
subject for a sovereign to reason on, and for a sovereign's
sovereign to ride on; and for the world-familiar to us and
unknown-to lay apart their particular functions and wonder at
him. I once writ a sonnet in his praise and began thus:
'Wonder
of nature'-

ORLEANS.

I have heard a sonnet begin so to one's mistress.

DAUPHIN.

Then did they imitate that which I compos'd to my courser;
for my horse is my mistress.

ORLEANS.

Your mistress bears well.

DAUPHIN.

Me well; which is the prescript praise and perfection of a
good and particular mistress.

CONSTABLE.

Nay, for methought yesterday your mistress shrewdly shook your back.

DAUPHIN.

So perhaps did yours.

CONSTABLE.

Mine was not bridled.

DAUPHIN.

O, then belike she was old and gentle; and you rode like a

kern of Ireland, your French hose off and in your strait strossers.

CONSTABLE.

You have good judgment in horsemanship.

DAUPHIN.

Be warn'd by me, then: they that ride so, and ride not

warily, fall into foul bogs. I had rather have my horse to my mistress.

CONSTABLE.

I had as lief have my mistress a jade.

DAUPHIN.

I tell thee, Constable, my mistress wears his own hair.

CONSTABLE.

I could make as true a boast as that, if I had a sow to my mistress.

DAUPHIN.

'Le chien est retourne a son propre vomissement, et la

truie lavee au bourbier.' Thou mak'st use of anything.

CONSTABLE.

Yet do I not use my horse for my mistress, or any such

proverb so little kin to the purpose.

RAMBURES.

My Lord Constable, the armour that I saw in your tent

to-night- are those stars or suns upon it?

CONSTABLE.

Stars, my lord.

DAUPHIN.

Some of them will fall to-morrow, I hope.

CONSTABLE.

And yet my sky shall not want.

DAUPHIN.

That may be, for you bear a many superfluously, and 'twere more honour some were away.

CONSTABLE.

Ev'n as your horse bears your praises, who would trot as well were some of your brags dismounted.

DAUPHIN.

Would I were able to load him with his desert! Will it never be day? I will trot to-morrow a mile, and my way shall be paved with English faces.

CONSTABLE.

I will not say so, for fear I should be fac'd out of my

way; but I would it were morning, for I would fain be about the

ears of the English.

RAMBURES.

Who will go to hazard with me for twenty prisoners?

CONSTABLE.

You must first go yourself to hazard ere you have them.

DAUPHIN.

'Tis midnight; I'll go arm myself. *Exit*

ORLEANS. The Dauphin longs for morning.

RAMBURES.

He longs to eat the English.

CONSTABLE.

I think he will eat all he kills.

ORLEANS.

By the white hand of my lady, he's a gallant prince.

CONSTABLE.

Swear by her foot, that she may tread out the oath.

ORLEANS.

He is simply the most active gentleman of France.

CONSTABLE.

Doing is activity, and he will still be doing.

ORLEANS.

He never did harm that I heard of.

CONSTABLE.

Nor will do none to-morrow: he will keep that good name still.

ORLEANS.

I know him to be valiant.

CONSTABLE.

I was told that by one that knows him better than you.

ORLEANS.

What's he?

CONSTABLE.

Marry, he told me so himself; and he said he car'd not who knew it.

ORLEANS.

He needs not; it is no hidden virtue in him.

CONSTABLE.

By my faith, sir, but it is; never anybody saw it but his lackey.

'Tis a hooded valour, and when it appears it will bate.

ORLEANS.

Ill-wind never said well.

CONSTABLE.

I will cap that proverb with 'There is flattery in friendship.'

ORLEANS.

And I will take up that with 'Give the devil his due.'

CONSTABLE.

Well plac'd! There stands your friend for the devil;

have at the very eye of that proverb with 'A pox of the devil!'

ORLEANS.

You are the better at proverbs by how much 'A fool's bolt is soon shot.'

CONSTABLE.

You have shot over.

ORLEANS.

'Tis not the first time you were overshot.

Enter a MESSENGER

MESSENGER.

My Lord High Constable, the English lie within fifteen

hundred paces of your tents.

CONSTABLE.

Who hath measur'd the ground?

MESSENGER.

The Lord Grandpre.

CONSTABLE.

A valiant and most expert gentleman. Would it were day!

Alas, poor Harry of England! he longs not for the dawning as we do.

ORLEANS.

What a wretched and peevish fellow is this King of
England, to mope with his fat-brain'd followers so far out of his knowledge!

CONSTABLE.

If the English had any apprehension, they would run away.

ORLEANS.

That they lack; for if their heads had any intellectual
armour, they could never wear such heavy head-pieces.

RAMBURES.

That island of England breeds very valiant creatures;
their mastiffs are of unmatchable courage.

ORLEANS.

Foolish curs, that run winking into the mouth of a Russian
bear, and have their heads crush'd like rotten apples! You may as
well say that's a valiant flea that dare eat his breakfast on the lip of a lion.

CONSTABLE.

Just, just! and the men do sympathise with the mastiffs
in robustious and rough coming on, leaving their wits with their
wives; and then give them great meals of beef and iron and steel;
they will eat like wolves and fight like devils.

ORLEANS.

Ay, but these English are shrewdly out of beef.

CONSTABLE.

Then shall we find to-morrow they have only stomachs to
eat, and none to fight. Now is it time to arm. Come, shall we about it?

ORLEANS.

It is now two o'clock; but let me see-by ten
We shall have each a hundred Englishmen. *Exeunt*

ACT IV. PROLOGUE.

Enter CHORUS

CHORUS.

Now entertain conjecture of a time

When creeping murmur and the poring dark

Fills the wide vessel of the universe.

From camp to camp, through the foul womb of night,

The hum of either army stilly sounds,

That the fix'd sentinels almost receive

The secret whispers of each other's watch.

Fire answers fire, and through their paly flames

Each battle sees the other's umber'd face;

Steed threatens steed, in high and boastful neighs

Piercing the night's dull ear; and from the tents

The armourers accomplishing the knights,

With busy hammers closing rivets up,

Give dreadful note of preparation.

The country cocks do crow, the clocks do ton, And the third hour of drowsy morning name.

Proud of their numbers and secure in soul,

The confident and over-lusty French

Do the low-rated English play at dice;

And chide the cripple tardy-gaited night

Who like a foul and ugly witch doth limp

So tediously away. The poor condemned English,

Like sacrifices, by their watchful fires

Sit patiently and inly ruminate

The morning's danger; and their gesture sad

Investing lank-lean cheeks and war-worn coats

Presenteth them unto the gazing moon

So many horrid ghosts. O, now, who will behold

The royal captain of this ruin'd band

Walking from watch to watch, from tent to tent,

Let him cry 'Praise and glory on his head!'

For forth he goes and visits all his host;

Bids them good morrow with a modest smile,

And calls them brothers, friends, and countrymen.

Upon his royal face there is no note

How dread an army hath enrounded him;

Nor doth he dedicate one jot of colour
Unto the weary and all-watched night;
But freshly looks, and over-bears attaint
With cheerful semblance and sweet majesty;
That every wretch, pining and pale before,
Beholding him, plucks comfort from his looks;
A largess universal, like the sun,
His liberal eye doth give to every one,
Thawing cold fear, that mean and gentle all
Behold, as may unworthiness define,
A little touch of Harry in the night.
And so our scene must to the battle fly;
Where-O for pity!- we shall much disgrace
With four or five most vile and ragged foils,
Right ill-dispos'd in brawl ridiculous,
The name of Agincourt. Yet sit and see,
Minding true things by what their mock'ries be. *Exit*

SCENE I. France. The English camp at Agincourt

Enter the KING, BEDFORD, and GLOUCESTER

KING HENRY.

Gloucester, 'tis true that we are in great danger;

The greater therefore should our courage be.

Good morrow, brother Bedford. God Almighty!

There is some soul of goodness in things evil,

Would men observingly distil it out;

For our bad neighbour makes us early stirrers,

Which is both healthful and good husbandry.

Besides, they are our outward consciences

And preachers to us all, admonishing

That we should dress us fairly for our end.

Thus may we gather honey from the weed,

And make a moral of the devil himself.

Enter ERPINGHAM

Good morrow, old Sir Thomas Erpingham:

A good soft pillow for that good white head

Were better than a churlish turf of France.

ERPINGHAM.

Not so, my liege; this lodging likes me better,
Since I may say 'Now lie I like a king.'

KING HENRY.
'Tis good for men to love their present pains
Upon example; so the spirit is eased;
And when the mind is quick'ned, out of doubt
The organs, though defunct and dead before,
Break up their drowsy grave and newly move
With casted slough and fresh legerity.
Lend me thy cloak, Sir Thomas. Brothers both,
Commend me to the princes in our camp;
Do my good morrow to them, and anon
Desire them all to my pavilion.

GLOUCESTER.
We shall, my liege.

ERPINGHAM.

Shall I attend your Grace?

KING HENRY.

No, my good knight:

Go with my brothers to my lords of England;

I and my bosom must debate awhile,

And then I would no other company.

ERPINGHAM.

The Lord in heaven bless thee, noble Harry!

Exeunt all but the KING

KING HENRY.

God-a-mercy, old heart! thou speak'st cheerfully.

Enter PISTOL

PISTOL.

Qui va la?

KING HENRY.

A friend.

PISTOL.

Discuss unto me: art thou officer,

Or art thou base, common, and popular?

KING HENRY.

I am a gentleman of a company.

PISTOL.

Trail'st thou the puissant pike?

KING HENRY.

Even so. What are you?

PISTOL.

As good a gentleman as the Emperor.

KING HENRY.

Then you are a better than the King.

PISTOL.

The King's a bawcock and a heart of gold,

A lad of life, an imp of fame;

Of parents good, of fist most valiant.

I kiss his dirty shoe, and from heart-string

I love the lovely bully. What is thy name?

KING HENRY.

Harry le Roy.

PISTOL.

Le Roy! a Cornish name; art thou of Cornish crew?

KING HENRY.

No, I am a Welshman.

PISTOL.

Know'st thou Fluellen?

KING HENRY.

Yes.

PISTOL.

Tell him I'll knock his leek about his pate

Upon Saint Davy's day.

KING HENRY.

Do not you wear your dagger in your cap that day, lest

he knock that about yours.

PISTOL.

Art thou his friend?

KING HENRY.

And his kinsman too.

PISTOL.

The figo for thee, then!

KING HENRY.

I thank you; God be with you!

PISTOL.

My name is Pistol call'd. *Exit*

KING HENRY. It sorts well with your fierceness.

Enter FLUELLEN and GOWER

GOWER.

Captain Fluellen!

FLUELLEN.

So! in the name of Jesu Christ, speak fewer. It is the

greatest admiration in the universal world, when the true and

aunchient prerogatifes and laws of the wars is not kept: if you

would take the pains but to examine the wars of Pompey the Great,

you shall find, I warrant you, that there is no tiddle-taddle nor
pibble-pabble in Pompey's camp; I warrant you, you shall find the
ceremonies of the wars, and the cares of it, and the forms of it,
and the sobriety of it, and the modesty of it, to be otherwise.

GOWER.

Why, the enemy is loud; you hear him all night.

FLUELLEN.
If the enemy is an ass, and a fool, and a prating
coxcomb, is it meet, think you, that we should also, look you, be
an ass, and a fool, and a prating coxcomb? In your own conscience, now?

GOWER.

I will speak lower.

FLUELLEN.
I pray you and beseech you that you will.

Exeunt GOWER and FLUELLEN

KING HENRY.

Though it appear a little out of fashion,

There is much care and valour in this Welshman.

Enter three soldiers: JOHN BATES, ALEXANDER COURT,

and MICHAEL WILLIAMS

COURT.

Brother John Bates, is not that the morning which breaks yonder? BATES. I think it be; but we have no great cause to desire the approach of day. WILLIAMS. We see yonder the beginning of the day, but I think we shall never see the end of it. Who goes there? KING HENRY. A friend. WILLIAMS. Under what captain serve you? KING HENRY. Under Sir Thomas Erpingham. WILLIAMS. A good old commander and a most kind gentleman. I pray you, what thinks he of our estate? KING HENRY. Even as men wreck'd upon a sand, that look to be wash'd off the next tide. BATES. He hath not told his thought to the King? KING HENRY. No; nor it is not meet he should. For though I speak it to you, I think the King is but a man as I am: the violet smells to him as it doth to me; the element shows to him as it doth to me; all his senses have but human conditions; his ceremonies laid by, in his nakedness he appears but a man; and though his affections are higher mounted than ours, yet, when they stoop, they stoop with the like wing. Therefore, when he sees reason of fears, as we do, his fears, out of doubt, be of the same relish as ours are; yet, in reason, no man should possess him with any appearance of fear, lest he, by showing it, should dishearten his army. BATES. He may show what outward courage he will; but I believe, as cold a night as 'tis, he could wish himself in Thames up to the neck; and so I would he were, and I by him, at all adventures, so we were quit here. KING HENRY. By my troth, I will speak my conscience of the King: I think he would not wish himself anywhere but where he is. BATES. Then I would he were here alone; so should he be sure to be ransomed, and a many poor men's lives saved. KING HENRY. I dare say you love him not so ill to wish him here alone, howsoever you speak this, to feel other men's minds; methinks I could not die anywhere so contented as in the King's company, his cause being just and his quarrel honourable. WILLIAMS. That's more than we know. BATES. Ay, or more than we should seek after; for we know enough if we know we are the King's subjects. If his cause be wrong, our obedience to the King wipes the crime of it out of us. WILLIAMS. But if the cause be not good, the King himself hath a heavy reckoning to make when all those legs and arms and heads, chopp'd off in a battle, shall join together at the latter day and cry all 'We died at such a place'- some swearing, some crying for a surgeon, some upon their wives left poor behind them, some upon the debts they owe, some upon their children rawly left. I am afeard there are few die well that die in a battle; for how can they charitably dispose of anything when blood is their argument? Now, if these men do not die well, it will be a black matter for the King that led them to it; who to disobey were against all proportion of subjection. KING HENRY. So, if a son that is by his father sent about merchandise do sinfully miscarry upon the sea, the imputation of his wickedness, by your rule, should be imposed upon his father that sent him; or if a servant, under his master's command transporting a sum of money, be assailed by robbers and die in many irreconcil'd iniquities, you may call the business of the master the author of the servant's damnation. But this is not so: the King is not bound to answer the particular endings of his

soldiers, the father of his son, nor the master of his servant;

for they purpose not their death when they purpose their

services. Besides, there is no king, be his cause never so

spotless, if it come to the arbitrement of swords, can try it out

with all unspotted soldiers: some peradventure have on them the

guilt of premeditated and contrived murder; some, of beguiling

virgins with the broken seals of perjury; some, making the wars

their bulwark, that have before gored the gentle bosom of peace

with pillage and robbery. Now, if these men have defeated the law

and outrun native punishment, though they can outstrip men they

have no wings to fly from God: war is His beadle, war is His vengeance; so that here men are punish'd for before-breach of the King's laws in now the King's quarrel. Where they feared the death they have borne life away; and where they would be safe they perish. Then if they die unprovided, no more is the King guilty of their damnation than he was before guilty of those impieties for the which they are now visited. Every subject's duty is the King's; but every subject's soul is his own.
Therefore should every soldier in the wars do as every sick man in his bed-wash every mote out of his conscience; and dying so, death is to him advantage; or not dying, the time was blessedly lost wherein such preparation was gained; and in him that escapes it were not sin to think that, making God so free an offer,
He
let him outlive that day to see His greatness, and to teach others how they should prepare.

WILLIAMS.
'Tis certain, every man that dies ill, the ill upon his own head-the King is not to answer for it.

BATES.

I do not desire he should answer for me, and yet I determine to fight lustily for him.

KING HENRY.

I myself heard the King say he would not be ransom'd.

WILLIAMS.

Ay, he said so, to make us fight cheerfully; but when our throats are cut he may be ransom'd, and we ne'er the wiser.

KING HENRY.

If I live to see it, I will never trust his word after.

WILLIAMS.

You pay him then! That's a perilous shot out of an elder-gun, that a poor and a private displeasure can do against a monarch! You may as well go about to turn the sun to ice with fanning in his face with a peacock's feather. You'll never trust his word after! Come, 'tis a foolish saying.

KING HENRY.

Your reproof is something too round; I should be angry
with you, if the time were convenient.

WILLIAMS.

Let it be a quarrel between us if you live.

KING HENRY.

I embrace it.

WILLIAMS.

How shall I know thee again?

KING HENRY.

Give me any gage of thine, and I will wear it in my
bonnet; then if ever thou dar'st acknowledge it, I will make it my quarrel.

WILLIAMS.

Here's my glove; give me another of thine.

KING HENRY.

There.

WILLIAMS.
This will I also wear in my cap; if ever thou come to me
and say, after to-morrow, 'This is my glove,' by this hand I will
take thee a box on the ear.

KING HENRY.

If ever I live to see it, I will challenge it.

WILLIAMS.
Thou dar'st as well be hang'd.

KING HENRY.
Well, I will do it, though I take thee in the
King's company.

WILLIAMS.

Keep thy word. Fare thee well.

BATES.

Be friends, you English fools, be friends; we have

French quarrels enow, if you could tell how to reckon.

KING HENRY.

Indeed, the French may lay twenty French crowns to one

they will beat us, for they bear them on their shoulders; but it

is no English treason to cut French crowns, and to-morrow the

King himself will be a clipper.

Exeunt soldiers

Upon the King! Let us our lives, our souls,

Our debts, our careful wives,

Our children, and our sins, lay on the King!

We must bear all. O hard condition,

Twin-born with greatness, subject to the breath

Of every fool, whose sense no more can feel

But his own wringing! What infinite heart's ease
Must kings neglect that private men enjoy!
And what have kings that privates have not too,
Save ceremony-save general ceremony?
And what art thou, thou idol Ceremony?
What kind of god art thou, that suffer'st more
Of mortal griefs than do thy worshippers?

What are thy rents? What are thy comings-in?
O Ceremony, show me but thy worth!

What is thy soul of adoration?
Art thou aught else but place, degree, and form,
Creating awe and fear in other men?
Wherein thou art less happy being fear'd
Than they in fearing.
What drink'st thou oft, instead of homage sweet,
But poison'd flattery? O, be sick, great greatness,
And bid thy ceremony give thee cure!
Thinks thou the fiery fever will go out
With titles blown from adulation?

Will it give place to flexure and low bending?

Canst thou, when thou command'st the beggar's knee,

Command the health of it? No, thou proud dream,

That play'st so subtly with a king's repose.

I am a king that find thee; and I know

'Tis not the balm, the sceptre, and the ball,

The sword, the mace, the crown imperial,

The intertissued robe of gold and pearl,

The farced tide running fore the king,

The throne he sits on, nor the tide of pomp

That beats upon the high shore of this world-

No, not all these, thrice gorgeous ceremony,

Not all these, laid in bed majestical,

Can sleep so soundly as the wretched slave

Who, with a body fill'd and vacant mind,

Gets him to rest, cramm'd with distressful bread;

Never sees horrid night, the child of hell;

But, like a lackey, from the rise to set

Sweats in the eye of Pheebus, and all night

Sleeps in Elysium; next day, after dawn, Doth rise and help Hyperion to his horse;

And follows so the ever-running year

With profitable labour, to his grave.

And but for ceremony, such a wretch,

Winding up days with toil and nights with sleep,

Had the fore-hand and vantage of a king.

The slave, a member of the country's peace,

Enjoys it; but in gross brain little wots

What watch the king keeps to maintain the peace

Whose hours the peasant best advantages.

Enter ERPINGHAM

ERPINGHAM.

My lord, your nobles, jealous of your absence,

Seek through your camp to find you.

KING.

Good old knight,

Collect them all together at my tent:

I'll be before thee.

ERPINGHAM.

I shall do't, my lord. *Exit*

KING. O God of battles, steel my soldiers' hearts,
Possess them not with fear! Take from them now
The sense of reck'ning, if th' opposed numbers
Pluck their hearts from them! Not to-day, O Lord,
O, not to-day, think not upon the fault
My father made in compassing the crown!
I Richard's body have interred new,
And on it have bestowed more contrite tears
Than from it issued forced drops of blood;
Five hundred poor I have in yearly pay,
Who twice a day their wither'd hands hold up
Toward heaven, to pardon blood; and I have built
Two chantries, where the sad and solemn priests
Sing still for Richard's soul. More will I do;
Though all that I can do is nothing worth,
Since that my penitence comes after all,
Imploring pardon.

Enter GLOUCESTER

GLOUCESTER.

My liege!

KING HENRY.

My brother Gloucester's voice? Ay;

I know thy errand, I will go with thee;

The day, my friends, and all things, stay for me. *Exeunt*

SCENE II. The French camp

Enter the DAUPHIN, ORLEANS, RAMBURES, and others

ORLEANS.

The sun doth gild our armour; up, my lords!

DAUPHIN.

Montez a cheval! My horse! Varlet, laquais! Ha!

ORLEANS.

O brave spirit!

DAUPHIN.

Via! Les eaux et la terre-

ORLEANS.

Rien puis? L'air et le feu.

DAUPHIN.

Ciel! cousin Orleans.

Enter CONSTABLE

Now, my Lord Constable!

CONSTABLE.

Hark how our steeds for present service neigh!

DAUPHIN.

Mount them, and make incision in their hides,

That their hot blood may spin in English eyes,
And dout them with superfluous courage, ha!

RAMBURES.
What, will you have them weep our horses' blood?

How shall we then behold their natural tears?

Enter a MESSENGER

MESSENGER.
The English are embattl'd, you French peers.

CONSTABLE.

To horse, you gallant Princes! straight to horse!
Do but behold yon poor and starved band,
And your fair show shall suck away their souls,
Leaving them but the shales and husks of men.
There is not work enough for all our hands;
Scarce blood enough in all their sickly veins

To give each naked curtle-axe a stain

That our French gallants shall to-day draw out,

And sheathe for lack of sport. Let us but blow on them,

The vapour of our valour will o'erturn them.

'Tis positive 'gainst all exceptions, lords,

That our superfluous lackeys and our peasants-

Who in unnecessary action swarm

About our squares of battle-were enow

To purge this field of, such a hilding foe;

Though we upon this mountain's basis by

Took stand for idle speculation-

But that our honours must not. What's to say?

A very little little let us do,

And all is done. Then let the trumpets sound

The tucket sonance and the note to mount;

For our approach shall so much dare the field

That England shall couch down in fear and yield.

Enter GRANDPRE

GRANDPRE.

Why do you stay so long, my lords of France?

Yond island carrions, desperate of their bones,

Ill-favouredly become the morning field;

Their ragged curtains poorly are let loose,

And our air shakes them passing scornfully;

Big Mars seems bankrupt in their beggar'd host,

And faintly through a rusty beaver peeps.

The horsemen sit like fixed candlesticks

With torch-staves in their hand; and their poor jades

Lob down their heads, dropping the hides and hips,

The gum down-roping from their pale-dead eyes,

And in their pale dull mouths the gimmal'd bit

Lies foul with chaw'd grass, still and motionless;

And their executors, the knavish crows,

Fly o'er them, all impatient for their hour.

Description cannot suit itself in words

To demonstrate the life of such a battle

In life so lifeless as it shows itself.

CONSTABLE.

They have said their prayers and they stay for death.

DAUPHIN.

Shall we go send them dinners and fresh suits,

And give their fasting horses provender,

And after fight with them?

CONSTABLE.

I stay but for my guidon. To the field!

I will the banner from a trumpet take,

And use it for my haste. Come, come, away!

The sun is high, and we outwear the day. *Exeunt*

SCENE III. The English camp

Enter GLOUCESTER, BEDFORD, EXETER, ERPINGHAM, with all his host;

SALISBURY and WESTMORELAND

GLOUCESTER.

Where is the King?

BEDFORD.

The King himself is rode to view their battle.

WESTMORELAND.

Of fighting men they have full three-score thousand.

EXETER.

There's five to one; besides, they all are fresh.

SALISBURY.

God's arm strike with us! 'tis a fearful odds.
God bye you, Princes all; I'll to my charge.
If we no more meet till we meet in heaven,
Then joyfully, my noble Lord of Bedford,
My dear Lord Gloucester, and my good Lord Exeter,
And my kind kinsman-warriors all, adieu!

BEDFORD.

Farewell, good Salisbury; and good luck go with thee!

EXETER.

Farewell, kind lord. Fight valiantly to-day;
And yet I do thee wrong to mind thee of it,
For thou art fram'd of the firm truth of valour.

Exit SALISBURY

BEDFORD.

He is as full of valour as of kindness;
Princely in both.

Enter the KING

WESTMORELAND.

O that we now had here

But one ten thousand of those men in England

That do no work to-day!

KING.

What's he that wishes so?

My cousin Westmoreland? No, my fair cousin;

If we are mark'd to die, we are enow

To do our country loss; and if to live,

The fewer men, the greater share of honour.

God's will! I pray thee, wish not one man more.

By Jove, I am not covetous for gold,

Nor care I who doth feed upon my cost;

It yearns me not if men my garments wear;

Such outward things dwell not in my desires.

But if it be a sin to covet honour,

I am the most offending soul alive.

No, faith, my coz, wish not a man from England.
God's peace! I would not lose so great an honour
As one man more methinks would share from me
For the best hope I have. O, do not wish one more!
Rather proclaim it, Westmoreland, through my host,
That he which hath no stomach to this fight,
Let him depart; his passport shall be made,
And crowns for convoy put into his purse;
We would not die in that man's company
That fears his fellowship to die with us.

This day is call'd the feast of Crispian.
He that outlives this day, and comes safe home,
Will stand a tip-toe when this day is nam'd,
And rouse him at the name of Crispian.
He that shall live this day, and see old age,
Will yearly on the vigil feast his neighbours,
And say 'To-morrow is Saint Crispian.'
Then will he strip his sleeve and show his scars,

And say 'These wounds I had on Crispian's day.'

Old men forget; yet all shall be forgot,

But he'll remember, with advantages,

What feats he did that day. Then shall our names,

Familiar in his mouth as household words-

Harry the King, Bedford and Exeter,

Warwick and Talbot, Salisbury and Gloucester-

Be in their flowing cups freshly rememb'red.

This story shall the good man teach his son;

And Crispin Crispian shall ne'er go by,

From this day to the ending of the world,

But we in it shall be remembered-

We few, we happy few, we band of brothers;

For he to-day that sheds his blood with me

Shall be my brother; be he ne'er so vile,

This day shall gentle his condition;

And gentlemen in England now-a-bed

Shall think themselves accurs'd they were not here,

And hold their manhoods cheap whiles any speaks

That fought with us upon Saint Crispin's day.

Re-enter SALISBURY

SALISBURY.

My sovereign lord, bestow yourself with speed:
The French are bravely in their battles set,
And will with all expedience charge on us.

KING HENRY.
All things are ready, if our minds be so.

WESTMORELAND.

Perish the man whose mind is backward now!

KING HENRY.
Thou dost not wish more help from England, coz?

WESTMORELAND.
God's will, my liege! would you and I alone,
Without more help, could fight this royal battle!

KING HENRY.

Why, now thou hast unwish'd five thousand men;
Which likes me better than to wish us one.

You know your places. God be with you all!

Tucket. Enter MONTJOY

MONTJOY.

Once more I come to know of thee, King Harry,
If for thy ransom thou wilt now compound,
Before thy most assured overthrow;
For certainly thou art so near the gulf
Thou needs must be englutted. Besides, in mercy,
The constable desires thee thou wilt mind
Thy followers of repentance, that their souls
May make a peaceful and a sweet retire
From off these fields, where, wretches, their poor bodies
Must lie and fester.

KING HENRY.

Who hath sent thee now?

MONTJOY.

The Constable of France.

KING HENRY.

I pray thee bear my former answer back:
Bid them achieve me, and then sell my bones.

Good God! why should they mock poor fellows thus?
The man that once did sell the lion's skin
While the beast liv'd was kill'd with hunting him.
A many of our bodies shall no doubt
Find native graves; upon the which, I trust,
Shall witness live in brass of this day's work.
And those that leave their valiant bones in France,
Dying like men, though buried in your dunghills,
They shall be fam'd; for there the sun shall greet them
And draw their honours reeking up to heaven,
Leaving their earthly parts to choke your clime,
The smell whereof shall breed a plague in France.
Mark then abounding valour in our English,

That, being dead, like to the bullet's grazing
Break out into a second course of mischief,
Killing in relapse of mortality.
Let me speak proudly: tell the Constable
We are but warriors for the working-day;
Our gayness and our gilt are all besmirch'd
With rainy marching in the painful field;
There's not a piece of feather in our host-
Good argument, I hope, we will not fly-
And time hath worn us into slovenry.
But, by the mass, our hearts are in the trim;
And my poor soldiers tell me yet ere night
They'll be in fresher robes, or they will pluck
The gay new coats o'er the French soldiers' heads
And turn them out of service. If they do this-
As, if God please, they shall-my ransom then
Will soon be levied. Herald, save thou thy labour;
Come thou no more for ransom, gentle herald;
They shall have none, I swear, but these my joints;
Which if they have, as I will leave 'em them,
Shall yield them little, tell the Constable.

MONTJOY.

I shall, King Harry. And so fare thee well:

Thou never shalt hear herald any more. *Exit*

KING HENRY. I fear thou wilt once more come again for a ransom.

Enter the DUKE OF YORK

YORK.

My lord, most humbly on my knee I beg

The leading of the vaward.

KING HENRY.

Take it, brave York. Now, soldiers, march away;

And how thou pleasest, God, dispose the day! *Exeunt*

SCENE IV. The field of battle

Alarum. Excursions. *Enter* FRENCH SOLDIER, PISTOL, and BOY

PISTOL.

Yield, cur!

FRENCH SOLDIER.

Je pense que vous etes le gentilhomme de bonne qualite.

PISTOL.

Cality! Calen o custure me! Art thou a gentleman?

What is thy name? Discuss.

FRENCH SOLDIER.

O Seigneur Dieu!

PISTOL.

O, Signieur Dew should be a gentleman.

Perpend my words, O Signieur Dew, and mark:

O Signieur Dew, thou diest on point of fox,

Except, O Signieur, thou do give to me

Egregious ransom.

FRENCH SOLDIER.

O, prenez misericorde; ayez pitie de moi!

PISTOL.

Moy shall not serve; I will have forty moys;

Or I will fetch thy rim out at thy throat

In drops of crimson blood.

FRENCH SOLDIER.

Est-il impossible d'echapper la force de ton bras?

PISTOL.

Brass, cur?

Thou damned and luxurious mountain-goat,

Offer'st me brass?

FRENCH SOLDIER.

O, pardonnez-moi!

PISTOL.

Say'st thou me so? Is that a ton of moys?

Come hither, boy; ask me this slave in French

What is his name.

BOY.

Ecoutez: comment etes-vous appele?

FRENCH SOLDIER.

Monsieur le Fer.

BOY.

He says his name is Master Fer.

PISTOL.

Master Fer! I'll fer him, and firk him, and ferret him-discuss the same in French unto him.

BOY.

I do not know the French for fer, and ferret, and firk.

PISTOL.

Bid him prepare; for I will cut his throat.

FRENCH SOLDIER.

Que dit-il, monsieur?

BOY.

Il me commande a vous dire que vous faites vous pret; car ce soldat ici est dispose tout a cette heure de couper votre gorge.

PISTOL.

Owy, cuppele gorge, permafoy!
Peasant, unless thou give me crowns, brave crowns;
Or mangled shalt thou be by this my sword.

FRENCH SOLDIER.

O, je vous supplie, pour l'amour de Dieu, me

pardonner! Je suis gentilhomme de bonne maison. Gardez ma vie, et

je vous donnerai deux cents ecus.

PISTOL.

What are his words?

BOY.

He prays you to save his life; he is a gentleman of a good

house, and for his ransom he will give you two hundred crowns.

PISTOL.

Tell him my fury shall abate, and I

The crowns will take.

FRENCH SOLDIER.

Petit monsieur, que dit-il?

BOY.

Encore qu'il est contre son jurement de pardonner aucun
prisonnier, neamnoins, pour les ecus que vous l'avez promis, il
est content a vous donner la liberte, le franchisement.

FRENCH SOLDIER.

Sur mes genoux je vous donne mille remercimens; et
je m'estime heureux que je suis tombe entre les mains d'un
chevalier, je pense, le plus brave, vaillant, et tres distingue
seigneur d'Angleterre.

PISTOL.

Expound unto me, boy.

BOY.

He gives you, upon his knees, a thousand thanks; and he
esteems himself happy that he hath fall'n into the hands of
one-
as he thinks-the most brave, valorous, and thrice-worthy
signieur of England.

PISTOL.

As I suck blood, I will some mercy show.

Follow me. *Exit*

BOY. Suivez-vous le grand capitaine. *Exit* FRENCH SOLDIER

I did never know so full a voice issue from so empty a heart; but

the saying is true-the empty vessel makes the greatest sound.

Bardolph and Nym had ten times more valour than this roaring

devil i' th' old play, that every one may pare his nails with a

wooden dagger; and they are both hang'd; and so would this be, if

he durst steal anything adventurously. I must stay with the

lackeys, with the luggage of our camp. The French might have a

good prey of us, if he knew of it; for there is none to guard it

but boys. *Exit*

SCENE V. Another part of the field of battle

Enter CONSTABLE, ORLEANS, BOURBON, DAUPHIN, and RAMBURES

CONSTABLE.

O diable!

ORLEANS.

O Seigneur! le jour est perdu, tout est perdu!

DAUPHIN.

Mort Dieu, ma vie! all is confounded, all!

Reproach and everlasting shame

Sits mocking in our plumes. *[A short alarum]*

O mechante fortune! Do not run away.

CONSTABLE.

Why, an our ranks are broke.

DAUPHIN.

O perdurable shame! Let's stab ourselves.

Be these the wretches that we play'd at dice for?

ORLEANS.

Is this the king we sent to for his ransom?

BOURBON.

Shame, and eternal shame, nothing but shame!

Let us die in honour: once more back again;

And he that will not follow Bourbon now,

Let him go hence and, with his cap in hand

Like a base pander, hold the chamber-door

Whilst by a slave, no gender than my dog,

His fairest daughter is contaminated.

CONSTABLE.

Disorder, that hath spoil'd us, friend us now!

Let us on heaps go offer up our lives.

ORLEANS.

We are enow yet living in the field

To smother up the English in our throngs,

If any order might be thought upon.

BOURBON.

The devil take order now! I'll to the throng.

Let life be short, else shame will be too long. *Exeunt*

SCENE VI. Another part of the field

Alarum. *Enter* the KING and his train, with prisoners; EXETER, and others

KING HENRY.

Well have we done, thrice-valiant countrymen;

But all's not done-yet keep the French the field.

EXETER.

The Duke of York commends him to your Majesty.

KING HENRY.

Lives he, good uncle? Thrice within this hour

I saw him down; thrice up again, and fighting;

From helmet to the spur all blood he was.

EXETER.

In which array, brave soldier, doth he lie

Larding the plain; and by his bloody side, Yoke-fellow to his honour-owing wounds,

The noble Earl of Suffolk also lies.

Suffolk first died; and York, all haggled over,

Comes to him, where in gore he lay insteeped,

And takes him by the beard, kisses the gashes

That bloodily did yawn upon his face,

He cries aloud 'Tarry, my cousin Suffolk.

My soul shall thine keep company to heaven;

Tarry, sweet soul, for mine, then fly abreast;

As in this glorious and well-foughten field

We kept together in our chivalry.'

Upon these words I came and cheer'd him up;

He smil'd me in the face, raught me his hand,

And, with a feeble grip, says 'Dear my lord,

Commend my service to my sovereign.'

So did he turn, and over Suffolk's neck

He threw his wounded arm and kiss'd his lips;

And so, espous'd to death, with blood he seal'd

A testament of noble-ending love.

The pretty and sweet manner of it forc'd

Those waters from me which I would have stopp'd;

But I had not so much of man in me,

And all my mother came into mine eyes

And gave me up to tears.

KING HENRY.

I blame you not;

For, hearing this, I must perforce compound

With mistful eyes, or they will issue too. *[Alarum]*

But hark! what new alarum is this same?

The French have reinforc'd their scatter'd men.

Then every soldier kill his prisoners;

Give the word through. *Exeunt*

SCENE VII. Another part of the field

Enter FLUELLEN and GOWER

FLUELLEN.

Kill the poys and the luggage! 'Tis expressly against the

law of arms; 'tis as arrant a piece of knavery, mark you now, as

can be offert; in your conscience, now, is it not?

GOWER.

'Tis certain there's not a boy left alive; and the cowardly rascals that ran from the battle ha' done this slaughter; besides, they have burned and carried away all that was in the King's tent; wherefore the King most worthily hath caus'd every soldier to cut his prisoner's throat. O, 'tis a gallant King!

FLUELLEN.

Ay, he was porn at Monmouth, Captain Gower. What call you the town's name where Alexander the Pig was born?

GOWER.

Alexander the Great.

FLUELLEN.

Why, I pray you, is not 'pig' great? The pig, or great, or the mighty, or the huge, or the magnanimous, are all one reckonings, save the phrase is a little variations.

GOWER.

I think Alexander the Great was born in Macedon; his father
was called Philip of Macedon, as I take it.

FLUELLEN.
I think it is in Macedon where Alexander is porn. I tell
you, Captain, if you look in the maps of the 'orld, I warrant you
sall find, in the comparisons between Macedon and Monmouth, that
the situations, look you, is both alike. There is a river in
Macedon; and there is also moreover a river at Monmouth; it is
call'd Wye at Monmouth, but it is out of my prains what is the
name of the other river; but 'tis all one, 'tis alike as my
fingers is to my fingers, and there is salmons in both. If you
mark Alexander's life well, Harry of Monmouth's life is come
after it indifferent well; for there is figures in all things.
Alexander-God knows, and you know-in his rages, and his furies,
and his wraths, and his cholers, and his moods, and his
displeasures, and his indignations, and also being a little
intoxicates in his prains, did, in his ales and his angers, look
you, kill his best friend, Cleitus.

GOWER.

Our king is not like him in that: he never kill'd any of his friends.

FLUELLEN.

It is not well done, mark you now, to take the tales out
of my mouth ere it is made and finished. I speak but in the
figures and comparisons of it; as Alexander kill'd his friend
Cleitus, being in his ales and his cups, so also Harry Monmouth,
being in his right wits and his good judgments, turn'd away the
fat knight with the great belly doublet; he was full of jests,
and gipes, and knaveries, and mocks; I have forgot his name.

GOWER.

Sir John Falstaff.

FLUELLEN.

That is he. I'll tell you there is good men porn at Monmouth.

GOWER.

Here comes his Majesty.

Alarum. *Enter* the KING, WARWICK, GLOUCESTER,

EXETER, and others, with prisoners. Flourish

KING HENRY.

I was not angry since I came to France
Until this instant. Take a trumpet, herald,
Ride thou unto the horsemen on yond hill;
If they will fight with us, bid them come down
Or void the field; they do offend our sight.
If they'll do neither, we will come to them
And make them skirr away as swift as stones
Enforced from the old Assyrian slings;
Besides, we'll cut the throats of those we have,
And not a man of them that we shall take
Shall taste our mercy. Go and tell them so.

Enter MONTJOY

EXETER.

Here comes the herald of the French, my liege.

GLOUCESTER.

His eyes are humbler than they us'd to be.

KING HENRY.
How now! What means this, herald? know'st thou not
That I have fin'd these bones of mine for ransom?
Com'st thou again for ransom?

MONTJOY.
No, great King;
I come to thee for charitable licence,
That we may wander o'er this bloody field
To book our dead, and then to bury them;
To sort our nobles from our common men;
For many of our princes-woe the while!-
Lie drown'd and soak'd in mercenary blood;
So do our vulgar drench their peasant limbs
In blood of princes; and their wounded steeds
Fret fetlock deep in gore, and with wild rage
Yerk out their armed heels at their dead masters,

Killing them twice. O, give us leave, great King,

To view the field in safety, and dispose

Of their dead bodies!

KING HENRY.

I tell thee truly, herald,

I know not if the day be ours or no;

For yet a many of your horsemen peer

And gallop o'er the field.

MONTJOY.

The day is yours.

KING HENRY.

Praised be God, and not our strength, for it!

What is this castle call'd that stands hard by?

MONTJOY.

They call it Agincourt.

KING HENRY.

Then call we this the field of Agincourt,

Fought on the day of Crispin Crispianus.

FLUELLEN.

Your grandfather of famous memory, an't please your

Majesty, and your great-uncle Edward the Plack Prince of Wales,

as I have read in the chronicles, fought a most prave pattle here

in France.

KING HENRY.

They did, Fluellen.

FLUELLEN.

Your Majesty says very true; if your Majesties is

remembʼred of it, the Welshmen did good service in garden where

leeks did grow, wearing leeks in their Monmouth caps; which your

Majesty know to this hour is an honourable badge of the service;

and I do believe your Majesty takes no scorn to wear the leek upon Saint Tavy's day.

KING HENRY.
I wear it for a memorable honour;
For I am Welsh, you know, good countryman.

FLUELLEN.
All the water in Wye cannot wash your Majesty's Welsh
plood out of your pody, I can tell you that. Got pless it and
preserve it as long as it pleases his Grace and his Majesty too!

KING HENRY.

Thanks, good my countryman.

FLUELLEN.
By Jeshu, I am your Majesty's countryman, care not who
know it; I will confess it to all the 'orld: I need not be
asham'd of your Majesty, praised be Got, so long as your
Majesty is an honest man.

Enter WILLIAMS

KING HENRY.

God keep me so! Our heralds go with him:
Bring me just notice of the numbers dead
On both our parts. Call yonder fellow hither.

Exeunt heralds with MONTJOY

EXETER.

Soldier, you must come to the King.

KING HENRY.

Soldier, why wear'st thou that glove in thy cap?

WILLIAMS.

An't please your Majesty, 'tis the gage of one that I
should fight withal, if he be alive.

KING HENRY.

An Englishman?

WILLIAMS.

An't please your Majesty, a rascal that swagger'd with me last night; who, if 'a live and ever dare to challenge this glove, I have sworn to take him a box o' th' ear; or if I can see my glove in his cap-which he swore, as he was a soldier, he would wear if alive-I will strike it out soundly.

KING HENRY.

What think you, Captain Fluellen, is it fit this soldier keep his oath?

FLUELLEN.

He is a craven and a villain else, an't please your Majesty, in my conscience.

KING HENRY.

It may be his enemy is a gentlemen of great sort, quite from the answer of his degree.

FLUELLEN.

Though he be as good a gentleman as the Devil is, as Lucifier and Belzebub himself, it is necessary, look your Grace, that he keep his vow and his oath; if he be perjur'd, see you now, his reputation is as arrant a villain and a Jacksauce as ever his black shoe trod upon God's ground and his earth, in my conscience, la.

KING HENRY.

Then keep thy vow, sirrah, when thou meet'st the fellow.

WILLIAMS.

So I Will, my liege, as I live.

KING HENRY.

Who serv'st thou under?

WILLIAMS.

Under Captain Gower, my liege.

FLUELLEN.

Gower is a good captain, and is good knowledge and literatured in the wars.

KING HENRY.

Call him hither to me, soldier.

WILLIAMS.

I will, my liege. *Exit*

KING HENRY. Here, Fluellen; wear thou this favour for me, and stick it in thy cap; when Alencon and myself were down together, I pluck'd this glove from his helm. If any man challenge this, he is a friend to Alencon and an enemy to our person; if thou encounter any such, apprehend him, an thou dost me love.

FLUELLEN.

Your Grace does me as great honours as can be desir'd in the hearts of his subjects. I would fain see the man that has but two legs that shall find himself aggrief'd at this glove, that is

all; but I would fain see it once, an please God of his grace

that I might see.

KING HENRY.

Know'st thou Gower?

FLUELLEN.

He is my dear friend, an please you.

KING HENRY.

Pray thee, go seek him, and bring him to my tent.

FLUELLEN.

I will fetch him. *Exit*

KING HENRY. My Lord of Warwick and my brother Gloucester,

Follow Fluellen closely at the heels;

The glove which I have given him for a favour

May haply purchase him a box o' th' ear.

It is the soldier's: I, by bargain, should

Wear it myself. Follow, good cousin Warwick;

If that the soldier strike him, as I judge

By his blunt bearing he will keep his word,

Some sudden mischief may arise of it;

For I do know Fluellen valiant,

And touch'd with choler, hot as gunpowder,

And quickly will return an injury;

Follow, and see there be no harm between them.

Go you with me, uncle of Exeter. *Exeunt*

SCENE VIII. Before KING HENRY'S PAVILION

Enter GOWER and WILLIAMS

WILLIAMS.

I warrant it is to knight you, Captain.

Enter FLUELLEN

FLUELLEN.

God's will and his pleasure, Captain, I beseech you now,
come apace to the King: there is more good toward you
peradventure than is in your knowledge to dream of.

WILLIAMS.

Sir, know you this glove?

FLUELLEN.
Know the glove? I know the glove is a glove.

WILLIAMS.
I know this; and thus I challenge it. *[Strikes him]*

FLUELLEN.
'Sblood, an arrant traitor as any's in the universal
world, or in France, or in England!

GOWER.
How now, sir! you villain!

WILLIAMS.

Do you think I'll be forsworn?

FLUELLEN.

Stand away, Captain Gower; I will give treason his

payment into plows, I warrant you.

WILLIAMS.

I am no traitor.

FLUELLEN.

That's a lie in thy throat. I charge you in his

Majesty's

name, apprehend him: he's a friend of the Duke Alencon's.

Enter WARWICK and GLOUCESTER

WARWICK.

How now! how now! what's the matter?

FLUELLEN.

My Lord of Warwick, here ispraised be God for it!- a

most contagious treason come to light, look you, as you shall

desire in a summer's day. Here is his Majesty.

Enter the KING and EXETER

KING HENRY.

How now! what's the matter?

FLUELLEN.

My liege, here is a villain and a traitor, that, look

your Grace, has struck the glove which your Majesty is take out

of the helmet of Alencon.

WILLIAMS.

My liege, this was my glove: here is the fellow of it;

and he that I gave it to in change promis'd to wear it in his

cap; I promis'd to strike him if he did; I met this man with my

glove in his cap, and I have been as good as my word.

FLUELLEN.

Your Majesty hear now, saving your Majesty's manhood,

what an arrant, rascally, beggarly, lousy knave it is; I hope

your Majesty is pear me testimony and witness, and will

avouchment, that this is the glove of Alencon that your Majesty

is give me; in your conscience, now.

KING HENRY.

Give me thy glove, soldier; look, here is the fellow of it.

'Twas I, indeed, thou promised'st to strike,

And thou hast given me most bitter terms.

FLUELLEN.

An please your Majesty, let his neck answer for it, if

there is any martial law in the world.

KING HENRY.

How canst thou make me satisfaction?

WILLIAMS.

All offences, my lord, come from the heart; never came any from mine that might offend your Majesty.

KING HENRY.

It was ourself thou didst abuse.

WILLIAMS.

Your Majesty came not like yourself: you appear'd to me but as a common man; witness the night, your garments, your lowliness; and what your Highness suffer'd under that shape I beseech you take it for your own fault, and not mine; for had you been as I took you for, I made no offence; therefore, I beseech your Highness pardon me.

KING HENRY.

Here, uncle Exeter, fill this glove with crowns,
And give it to this fellow. Keep it, fellow;
And wear it for an honour in thy cap
Till I do challenge it. Give him the crowns;
And, Captain, you must needs be friends with him.

FLUELLEN.

By this day and this light, the fellow has mettle enough
in his belly: hold, there is twelve pence for you; and I pray you
to serve God, and keep you out of prawls, and prabbles, and
quarrels, and dissensions, and, I warrant you, it is the better for you.

WILLIAMS.

I will none of your money.

FLUELLEN.

It is with a good will; I can tell you it will serve you
to mend your shoes. Come, wherefore should you be so pashful?
Your shoes is not so good. 'Tis a good silling, I warrant you, or
I will change it.

Enter an ENGLISH HERALD

KING HENRY.

Now, herald, are the dead numb'red?

HERALD.

Here is the number of the slaught'red French.

[Gives a paper]

KING HENRY.

What prisoners of good sort are taken, uncle?

EXETER.

Charles Duke of Orleans, nephew to the King;

John Duke of Bourbon, and Lord Bouciqualt;

Of other lords and barons, knights and squires,

Full fifteen hundred, besides common men.

KING HENRY.

This note doth tell me of ten thousand French

That in the field lie slain; of princes in this number,

And nobles bearing banners, there lie dead

One hundred twenty-six; added to these,

Of knights, esquires, and gallant gentlemen,

Eight thousand and four hundred; of the which

Five hundred were but yesterday dubb'd knights.

So that, in these ten thousand they have lost,

There are but sixteen hundred mercenaries;

The rest are princes, barons, lords, knights, squires,

And gentlemen of blood and quality.

The names of those their nobles that lie dead:

Charles Delabreth, High Constable of France;

Jaques of Chatillon, Admiral of France;

The master of the cross-bows, Lord Rambures;

Great Master of France, the brave Sir Guichard Dolphin;

John Duke of Alencon; Antony Duke of Brabant,

The brother to the Duke of Burgundy;

And Edward Duke of Bar. Of lusty earls,

Grandpre and Roussi, Fauconbridge and Foix,

Beaumont and Marle, Vaudemont and Lestrake.

Here was a royal fellowship of death!

Where is the number of our English dead?

[HERALD presents another paper]

Edward the Duke of York, the Earl of Suffolk,

Sir Richard Kikely, Davy Gam, Esquire;

None else of name; and of all other men

But five and twenty. O God, thy arm was here!

And not to us, but to thy arm alone,

Ascribe we all. When, without stratagem,

But in plain shock and even play of battle,

Was ever known so great and little los

On one part and on th' other? Take it, God,

For it is none but thine.

EXETER.

'Tis wonderful!

KING HENRY.

Come, go we in procession to the village;

And be it death proclaimed through our host

To boast of this or take that praise from God

Which is his only.

FLUELLEN.

Is it not lawful, an please your Majesty, to tell how many is kill'd?

KING HENRY.

Yes, Captain; but with this acknowledgment,

That God fought for us.

FLUELLEN.

Yes, my conscience, he did us great good.

KING HENRY.

Do we all holy rites:

Let there be sung 'Non nobis' and 'Te Deum';

The dead with charity enclos'd in clay-

And then to Calais; and to England then;

Where ne'er from France arriv'd more happy men. *Exeunt*

ACT V. PROLOGUE.

Enter CHORUS

CHORUS.

Vouchsafe to those that have not read the story

That I may prompt them; and of such as have,

I humbly pray them to admit th' excuse

Of time, of numbers, and due course of things,

Which cannot in their huge and proper life

Be here presented. Now we bear the King

Toward Calais. Grant him there. There seen,

Heave him away upon your winged thoughts

Athwart the sea. Behold, the English beach

Pales in the flood with men, with wives, and boys,

Whose shouts and claps out-voice the deep-mouth'd sea,

Which, like a mighty whiffler, fore the King

Seems to prepare his way. So let him land,

And solemnly see him set on to London.

So swift a pace hath thought that even now

You may imagine him upon Blackheath;

Where that his lords desire him to have borne

His bruised helmet and his bended sword

Before him through the city. He forbids it,

Being free from vainness and self-glorious pride;

Giving full trophy, signal, and ostent,

Quite from himself to God. But now behold

In the quick forge and working-house of thought,

How London doth pour out her citizens!

The mayor and all his brethren in best sort-

Like to the senators of th' antique Rome,

With the plebeians swarming at their heels-

Go forth and fetch their conqu'ring Caesar in;

As, by a lower but loving likelihood,

Were now the General of our gracious Empress-

As in good time he may-from Ireland coming,

Bringing rebellion broached on his sword,

How many would the peaceful city quit

To welcome him! Much more, and much more cause,

Did they this Harry. Now in London place him-

As yet the lamentation of the French

Invites the King of England's stay at home;

The Emperor's coming in behalf of France

To order peace between them; and omit

All the occurrences, whatever chanc'd,

Till Harry's back-return again to France.

There must we bring him; and myself have play'd

The interim, by rememb'ring you 'tis past.

Then brook abridgment; and your eyes advance,

After your thoughts, straight back again to France. *Exit*

SCENE I. France. The English camp

Enter FLUELLEN and GOWER

GOWER.

Nay, that's right; but why wear you your leek to-day?

Saint

Davy's day is past.

FLUELLEN.

There is occasions and causes why and wherefore in all

things. I will tell you, ass my friend, Captain Gower: the

rascally, scald, beggarly, lousy, pragging knave, Pistol-which

you and yourself and all the world know to be no petter than a

fellow, look you now, of no merits-he is come to me, and prings

me pread and salt yesterday, look you, and bid me eat my leek; it
was in a place where I could not breed no contendon with him; but
I will be so bold as to wear it in my cap till I see him once
again, and then I will tell him a little piece of my desires.

Enter PISTOL

GOWER.

Why, here he comes, swelling like a turkey-cock.

FLUELLEN.

'Tis no matter for his swellings nor his
turkey-cocks.

God pless you, Aunchient Pistol! you scurvy, lousy knave, God pless you!

PISTOL.

Ha! art thou bedlam? Dost thou thirst, base Troyan,
To have me fold up Parca's fatal web?
Hence! I am qualmish at the smell of leek.

FLUELLEN.

I peseech you heartily, scurvy, lousy knave, at my
desires, and my requests, and my petitions, to eat, look you,
this leek; because, look you, you do not love it, nor your
affections, and your appetites, and your digestions, does not
agree with it, I would desire you to eat it.

PISTOL.

Not for Cadwallader and all his goats.

FLUELLEN.

There is one goat for you. *[Strikes him]* Will you be so
good, scald knave, as eat it?

PISTOL.

Base Troyan, thou shalt die.

FLUELLEN.

You say very true, scald knave-when God's will is. I
will desire you to live in the meantime, and eat your victuals;

come, there is sauce for it. *[Striking him again]* You call'd me
yesterday mountain-squire; but I will make you to-day a squire of
low degree. I pray you fall to; if you can mock a leek, you can eat a leek.

GOWER.
Enough, Captain, you have astonish'd him.

FLUELLEN.
I say I will make him eat some part of my leek, or I will
peat his pate four days. Bite, I pray you, it is good for your
green wound and your ploody coxcomb.

PISTOL.
Must I bite?

FLUELLEN.

Yes, certainly, and out of doubt, and out of question too, and ambiguides.

PISTOL.
By this leek, I will most horribly revenge-I eat and eat,

I swear-

FLUELLEN.

Eat, I pray you; will you have some more sauce to your

leek? There is not enough leek to swear by.

PISTOL.

Quiet thy cudgel: thou dost see I eat.

FLUELLEN.

Much good do you, scald knave, heartily. Nay, pray you

throw none away; the skin is good for your broken coxcomb.

When

you take occasions to see leeks hereafter, I pray you mock at

'em; that is all.

PISTOL.

Good.

FLUELLEN.

Ay, leeks is good. Hold you, there is a groat to heal your pate.

PISTOL.

Me a groat!

FLUELLEN.

Yes, verily and in truth, you shall take it; or I have
another leek in my pocket which you shall eat.

PISTOL.

I take thy groat in earnest of revenge.

FLUELLEN.

If I owe you anything I will pay you in cudgels; you
shall be a woodmonger, and buy nothing of me but cudgels. God bye
you, and keep you, and heal your pate.

Exit

PISTOL. All hell shall stir for this.

GOWER.

Go, go: you are a couterfeit cowardly knave. Will you mock at an ancient tradition, begun upon an honourable respect, and worn as a memorable trophy of predeceased valour, and dare not avouch in your deeds any of your words? I have seen you gleeking and galling at this gentleman twice or thrice. You thought, because he could not speak English in the native garb, he could not therefore handle an English cudgel; you find it otherwise, and henceforth let a Welsh correction teach you a good English condition. Fare ye well. *Exit*

PISTOL. Doth Fortune play the huswife with me now?
News have I that my Nell is dead i' th' spital
Of malady of France;
And there my rendezvous is quite cut off.
Old I do wax; and from my weary limbs
Honour is cudgell'd. Well, bawd I'll turn,
And something lean to cutpurse of quick hand.
To England will I steal, and there I'll steal;
And patches will I get unto these cudgell'd scars,
And swear I got them in the Gallia wars. *Exit*

SCENE II. France. The FRENCH KING'S palace

Enter at one door, KING HENRY, EXETER, BEDFORD, GLOUCESTER, WARWICK, WESTMORELAND, and other LORDS; at another, the FRENCH KING, QUEEN ISABEL, the PRINCESS KATHERINE, ALICE, and other LADIES; the DUKE OF BURGUNDY, and his train

KING HENRY.

Peace to this meeting, wherefore we are met!

Unto our brother France, and to our sister,

Health and fair time of day; joy and good wishes

To our most fair and princely cousin Katherine.

And, as a branch and member of this royalty,

By whom this great assembly is contriv'd,

We do salute you, Duke of Burgundy.

And, princes French, and peers, health to you all!

FRENCH KING.

Right joyous are we to behold your face,

Most worthy brother England; fairly met!

So are you, princes English, every one.

QUEEN ISABEL.

So happy be the issue, brother England,

Of this good day and of this gracious meeting

As we are now glad to behold your eyes-

Your eyes, which hitherto have home in them,

Against the French that met them in their bent,

The fatal balls of murdering basilisks;

The venom of such looks, we fairly hope,

Have lost their quality; and that this day

Shall change all griefs and quarrels into love.

KING HENRY.

To cry amen to that, thus we appear.

QUEEN ISABEL.

You English princes an, I do salute you.

BURGUNDY.

My duty to you both, on equal love,

Great Kings of France and England! That I have labour'd
With all my wits, my pains, and strong endeavours,
To bring your most imperial Majesties
Unto this bar and royal interview,
Your mightiness on both parts best can witness.
Since then my office hath so far prevail'd
That face to face and royal eye to eye
You have congreeted, let it not disgrace me
If I demand, before this royal view,
What rub or what impediment there is
Why that the naked, poor, and mangled Peace,
Dear nurse of arts, plenties, and joyful births,
Should not in this best garden of the world,
Our fertile France, put up her lovely visage?

Alas, she hath from France too long been chas'd!
And all her husbandry doth lie on heaps,
Corrupting in it own fertility.
Her vine, the merry cheerer of the heart,
Unpruned dies; her hedges even-pleach'd,
Like prisoners wildly overgrown with hair,

Put forth disorder'd twigs; her fallow leas

The darnel, hemlock, and rank fumitory,

Doth root upon, while that the coulter rusts

That should deracinate such savagery;

The even mead, that erst brought sweetly forth

The freckled cowslip, burnet, and green clover,

Wanting the scythe, all uncorrected, rank,

Conceives by idleness, and nothing teems

But hateful docks, rough thistles, kecksies, burs,

Losing both beauty and utility.

And as our vineyards, fallows, meads, and hedges,

Defective in their natures, grow to wildness;

Even so our houses and ourselves and children

Have lost, or do not learn for want of time,

The sciences that should become our country;

But grow, like savages-as soldiers will,

That nothing do but meditate on blood-

To swearing and stern looks, diffus'd attire,

And everything that seems unnatural.

Which to reduce into our former favout

You are assembled; and my speech entreats

That I may know the let why gentle Peace
Should not expel these inconveniences
And bless us with her former qualities.

KING HENRY.
If, Duke of Burgundy, you would the peace
Whose want gives growth to th' imperfections
Which you have cited, you must buy that peace
With full accord to all our just demands;
Whose tenours and particular effects
You have, enschedul'd briefly, in your hands.

BURGUNDY.
The King hath heard them; to the which as yet
There is no answer made.

KING HENRY.
Well then, the peace,
Which you before so urg'd, lies in his answer.

FRENCH KING.

I have but with a cursorary eye

O'erglanced the articles; pleaseth your Grace

To appoint some of your council presently

To sit with us once more, with better heed

To re-survey them, we will suddenly

Pass our accept and peremptory answer.

KING HENRY.

Brother, we shall. Go, uncle Exeter,

And brother Clarence, and you, brother Gloucester,

Warwick, and Huntington, go with the King;

And take with you free power to ratify,

Augment, or alter, as your wisdoms best

Shall see advantageable for our dignity,

Any thing in or out of our demands;

And we'll consign thereto. Will you, fair sister,

Go with the princes or stay here with us?

QUEEN ISABEL.

Our gracious brother, I will go with them;

Haply a woman's voice may do some good,

When articles too nicely urg'd be stood on.

KING HENRY.

Yet leave our cousin Katherine here with us;

She is our capital demand, compris'd

Within the fore-rank of our articles.

QUEEN ISABEL.

She hath good leave.

Exeunt all but the KING, KATHERINE, and ALICE

KING HENRY.

Fair Katherine, and most fair,

Will you vouchsafe to teach a soldier terms

Such as will enter at a lady's ear,

And plead his love-suit to her gentle heart?

KATHERINE.

Your Majesty shall mock me; I cannot speak your England.

KING HENRY.

O fair Katherine, if you will love me soundly with your French heart, I will be glad to hear you confess it brokenly with your English tongue. Do you like me, Kate?

KATHERINE.

Pardonnez-moi, I cannot tell vat is like me.

KING HENRY.

An angel is like you, Kate, and you are like an angel.

KATHERINE.

Que dit-il? que je suis semblable a les anges?

ALICE.

Oui, vraiment, sauf votre grace, ainsi dit-il.

KING HENRY.

I said so, dear Katherine, and I must not blush to affirm it. KATHERINE. O bon Dieu! les langues des hommes sont pleines de tromperies. KING HENRY. What says she, fair one? that the tongues of men are full of deceits? ALICE. Oui, dat de tongues of de mans is be full of deceits-dat is de Princess. KING HENRY. The Princess is the better English-woman. I' faith, Kate, my wooing is fit for thy understanding: I am glad thou canst speak no better English; for if thou couldst, thou wouldst find me such a plain king that thou wouldst think I had sold my farm to buy my crown. I know no ways to mince it in love, but directly to say 'I love you.' Then, if you urge me farther than to say 'Do you in faith?' I wear out my suit. Give me your answer; i' faith, do; and so clap hands and a bargain. How say you, lady? KATHERINE. Sauf votre honneur, me understand well. KING HENRY. Marry, if you would put me to verses or to dance for your sake, Kate, why you undid me; for the one I have neither words nor measure, and for the other I have no strength in measure, yet a reasonable measure in strength. If I could win a lady at leap-frog, or by vaulting into my saddle with my armour on my back, under the correction of bragging be it spoken, I should quickly leap into wife. Or if I might buffet for my love, or bound my horse for her favours, I could lay on like a butcher, and sit like a jack-an-apes, never off. But, before God, Kate, I cannot look greenly, nor gasp out my cloquence, nor I have no cunning in protestation; only downright oaths, which I never use till urg'd, nor never break for urging. If thou canst love a fellow of this temper, Kate, whose face is not worth sunburning, that never looks in his glass for love of anything he sees there, let thine eye be thy cook. I speak to thee plain soldier. If thou canst love me for this, take me; if not, to say to thee that I shall die is true-but for thy love, by the Lord, no; yet I love thee too. And while thou liv'st, dear Kate, take a fellow of plain and uncoined constancy; for he perforce must do thee right, because he hath not the gift to woo in other places; for these fellows of infinite tongue, that can rhyme themselves into ladies' favours, they do always reason themselves out again. What! a speaker is but a prater: a rhyme is but a ballad. A good leg will fall; a straight back will stoop; a black beard will turn white; a curl'd pate will grow bald; a fair face will wither; a full eye will wax hollow. But a good heart, Kate, is the sun and the moon; or, rather, the sun, and not the moon-for it shines bright and never changes, but keeps his course truly. If thou would have such a one, take me; and take me, take a soldier; take a soldier, take a king. And what say'st thou, then, to my love? Speak, my fair, and fairly, I pray thee. KATHERINE. Is it possible dat I sould love de enemy of France? KING HENRY. No, it is not possible you should love the enemy of France, Kate, but in loving me you should love the friend of France; for I love France so well that I will not part with a village of it; I will have it all mine. And, Kate, when France is mine and I am yours, then yours is France and you are mine. KATHERINE. I cannot tell vat is dat. KING HENRY.

No, Kate? I will tell thee in French, which I am sure will hang upon my tongue like a new-married wife about her husband's neck, hardly to be shook off. Je quand sur le possession de France, et quand vous avez le possession de moi-let me see, what then? Saint Denis be my speed!- donc votre est France et vous etes mienne. It is as easy for me, Kate, to conquer the kingdom as to speak so much more French: I shall never move thee in French, unless it be to laugh at me. KATHERINE. Sauf votre honneur, le Francais que vous parlez, il est meilleur que l'Anglais lequel je parle. KING HENRY. No, faith, is't not, Kate; but thy speaking of my tongue, and I thine, most truly falsely, must needs be granted to be much at one. But, Kate, dost thou understand thus much English-Canst thou love me? KATHERINE. I cannot tell. KING HENRY. Can any of your neighbours tell, Kate? I'll ask them. Come, I know thou lovest me; and at night, when you come into your closet, you'll question this gentlewoman about me; and I know, Kate, you will to her dispraise those parts in me that you love with your heart. But, good Kate, mock me mercifully; the rather, gentle Princess, because I love thee cruelly. If ever thou beest mine, Kate, as I have a saving faith within me tells me thou shalt, I get thee with scambling, and thou must therefore needs prove a good soldier-breeder. Shall not thou and I, between Saint Denis and Saint George, compound a boy, half French, half English, that shall go to Constantinople and take the Turk by the beard? Shall we not? What say'st thou, my fair flower-de-luce? KATHERINE. I do not know dat. KING HENRY. No: 'tis hereafter to know, but now to promise; do but now promise, Kate, you will endeavour for your French part of such a boy; and for my English moiety take the word of a king and a bachelor. How answer you, la plus belle Katherine du monde, mon tres cher et divin deesse? KATHERINE. Your Majestee ave fausse French enough to deceive de most sage damoiselle dat is en France. KING HENRY. Now, fie upon my false French! By mine honour, in true English, I love thee, Kate; by which honour I dare not swear thou lovest me; yet my blood begins to flatter me that thou dost, notwithstanding the poor and untempering effect of my visage. Now beshrew my father's ambition! He was thinking of civil wars when he got me; therefore was I created with a stubborn outside, with an aspect of iron, that when I come to woo ladies I fright them. But, in faith, Kate, the elder I wax, the better I shall appear: my comfort is, that old age, that in layer-up of beauty, can do no more spoil upon my face; thou hast me, if thou hast me, at the worst; and thou shalt wear me, if thou wear me, better and better. And therefore tell me, most fair Katherine, will you have me? Put off your maiden blushes; avouch the thoughts of your heart with the looks of an empress; take me by the hand and say 'Harry of England, I am thine.' Which word thou shalt no sooner bless mine ear withal but I will tell thee aloud 'England is thine, Ireland is thine, France is thine, and Henry Plantagenet is thine'; who, though I speak it before his face, if he be not fellow with the best king, thou shalt find the best king of good fellows. Come, your answer in broken music-for thy voice is music and thy English broken; therefore, Queen of all, Katherine, break thy mind to me in broken English, wilt thou have me? KATHERINE. Dat is as it shall please de roi mon pere. KING HENRY. Nay, it will please him well, Kate-it shall please him, Kate. KATHERINE. Den it sall also content me. KING HENRY. Upon that I kiss your hand, and I can you my queen. KATHERINE. Laissez, mon seigneur, laissez, laissez! Ma foi, je ne veux point que vous abaissiez votre grandeur en baisant la main d'une, notre seigneur, indigne serviteur; excusez-moi, je vous supplie, mon tres puissant seigneur. KING HENRY. Then I will kiss your lips, Kate. KATHERINE. Les dames et demoiselles pour etre baisees devant leur noces, il n'est pas la coutume de France. KING HENRY. Madame my interpreter, what says she? ALICE. Dat it is not be de fashion pour le ladies of France-I cannot tell vat is baiser en Anglish. KING HENRY. To kiss. ALICE. Your Majestee entendre bettre que moi. KING HENRY. It is not a fashion for the maids in France to kiss before they are married, would she say? ALICE. Oui, vraiment. KING HENRY. O Kate, nice customs curtsy to great kings. Dear Kate, you and I cannot be confin'd within the weak list of a country's fashion; we are the makers of manners, Kate; and the liberty that follows our places stops the mouth of all find-faults- as I will do yours for upholding the nice fashion of your country in denying me a kiss; therefore, patiently and yielding. *[Kissing her]* You have witchcraft in your lips, Kate: there is more eloquence in a sugar touch of them than in the tongues of the

French council; and they should sooner persuade Henry of England

than a general petition of monarchs. Here comes your father.

Enter the FRENCH POWER and the ENGLISH LORDS

BURGUNDY.

God save your Majesty! My royal cousin,

Teach you our princess English?

KING HENRY.

I would have her learn, my fair cousin, how

perfectly I
love her; and that is good English.

BURGUNDY.

Is she not apt?

KING HENRY.

Our tongue is rough, coz, and my condition is not

smooth; so that, having neither the voice nor the heart of

flattery about me, I cannot so conjure up the spirit of love in

her that he will appear in his true likeness.

BURGUNDY.

Pardon the frankness of my mirth, if I answer you for

that. If you would conjure in her, you must make a circle; if

conjure up love in her in his true likeness, he must appear naked

and blind. Can you blame her, then, being a maid yet ros'd over with the virgin crimson of modesty, if she deny the appearance of a naked blind boy in her naked seeing self? It were, my lord, a hard condition for a maid to consign to.

KING HENRY.

Yet they do wink and yield, as love is blind and enforces.

BURGUNDY.
They are then excus'd, my lord, when they see not what they do.

KING HENRY.

Then, good my lord, teach your cousin to consent winking.

BURGUNDY.
I will wink on her to consent, my lord, if you will teach her to know my meaning; for maids well summer'd and warm kept are like flies at Bartholomew-tide, blind, though they have their eyes; and then they will endure handling, which before would not abide looking on.

KING HENRY.

This moral ties me over to time and a hot summer; and so I shall catch the fly, your cousin, in the latter end, and she must be blind too.

BURGUNDY.

As love is, my lord, before it loves.

KING HENRY.

It is so; and you may, some of you, thank love for my blindness, who cannot see many a fair French city for one fair French maid that stands in my way.

FRENCH KING.

Yes, my lord, you see them perspectively, the cities turned into a maid; for they are all girdled with maiden walls that war hath never ent'red.

KING HENRY.

Shall Kate be my wife?

FRENCH KING.

So please you.

KING HENRY.

I am content, so the maiden cities you talk of may wait

on her; so the maid that stood in the way for my wish shall show

me the way to my will.

FRENCH KING.

We have consented to all terms of reason.

KING HENRY.

Is't so, my lords of England?

WESTMORELAND.

The king hath granted every article:

His daughter first; and then in sequel, all,

According to their firm proposed natures.

EXETER.

Only he hath not yet subscribed this:
Where your Majesty demands that the King of France, having any
occasion to write for matter of grant, shall name your Highness
in this form and with this addition, in French, Notre tres cher
fils Henri, Roi d'Angleterre, Heritier de France; and thus in
Latin, Praeclarissimus filius noster Henricus, Rex Angliae et
Haeres Franciae.

FRENCH KING.
Nor this I have not, brother, so denied
But our request shall make me let it pass.

KING HENRY.
I pray you, then, in love and dear alliance,
Let that one article rank with the rest;
And thereupon give me your daughter.

FRENCH KING.

Take her, fair son, and from her blood raise up
Issue to me; that the contending kingdoms
Of France and England, whose very shores look pale
With envy of each other's happiness,
May cease their hatred; and this dear conjunction
Plant neighbourhood and Christian-like accord
In their sweet bosoms, that never war advance
His bleeding sword 'twixt England and fair France.

LORDS.

Amen!

KING HENRY.
Now, welcome, Kate; and bear me witness all,
That here I kiss her as my sovereign queen. *[Floulish]*

QUEEN ISABEL.
God, the best maker of all marriages,
Combine your hearts in one, your realms in one!
As man and wife, being two, are one in love,

So be there 'twixt your kingdoms such a spousal

That never may ill office or fell jealousy,

Which troubles oft the bed of blessed marriage,

Thrust in between the paction of these kingdoms,

To make divorce of their incorporate league;

That English may as French, French Englishmen,

Receive each other. God speak this Amen!

ALL.

Amen!

KING HENRY.

Prepare we for our marriage; on which day,

My Lord of Burgundy, we'll take your oath,

And all the peers', for surety of our leagues.

Then shall I swear to Kate, and you to me,

And may our oaths well kept and prosp'rous be!

Sennet. Exeunt

EPILOGUE

Enter CHORUS

CHORUS.

Thus far, with rough and all-unable pen,

Our bending author hath pursu'd the story,

In little room confining mighty men,

Mangling by starts the full course of their glory.

Small time, but, in that small, most greatly lived

This star of England. Fortune made his sword;

By which the world's best garden he achieved,

And of it left his son imperial lord.

Henry the Sixth, in infant bands crown'd king

Of France and England, did this king succeed;

Whose state so many had the managing

That they lost France and made his England bleed;

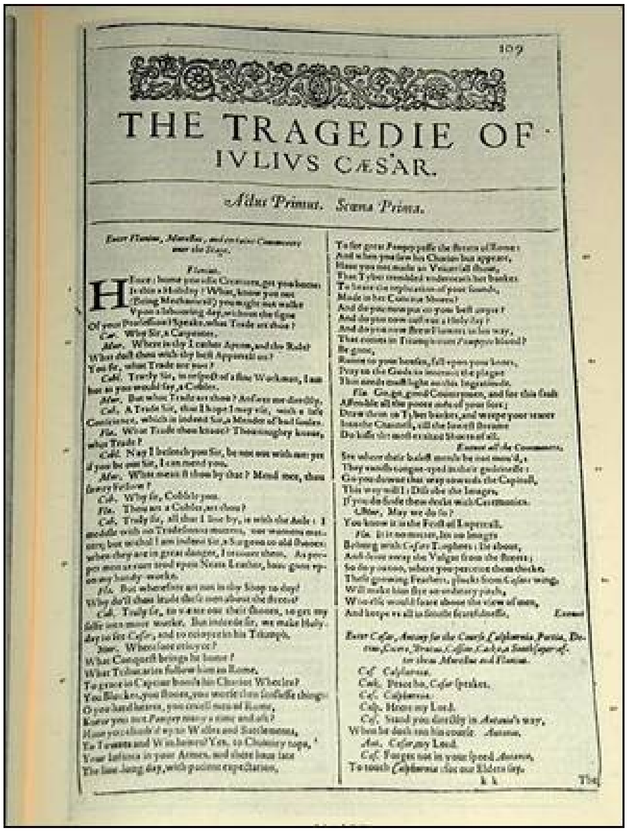
Which oft our stage hath shown; and, for their sake,

In your fair minds let this acceptance take. *Exit*

JULIUS CAESAR

Most likely written in 1599, this famous Roman play portrays the 44 BC conspiracy against Caesar, his assassination and the defeat of the conspirators at the Battle of Philippi. In spite of the play's title, Caesar is not the central character, appearing in only three scenes, and then he is killed at the beginning of the third act. The protagonist of the play is Marcus Brutus, whose struggle between the conflicting demands of honour, patriotism, and friendship is the play's central psychological drama.

Some believe the play reflects the general anxiety over succession of leadership of England at the time of composition. Queen Elizabeth, a strong ruler, was elderly and had refused to name a successor, leading to worries that a civil war similar to that of Rome in the play might break out after her death.



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THE TRAGEDIE OF
IVLIVS CÆSAR.

Actus Primus. Scœna Prima.

The 1623 First Folio title page of the play

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M-G-M's ACCLAIMED PRODUCTION of WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S
JULIUS CAESAR
Starring
MARLON BRANDO as MARK ANTONY
JAMES MASON as BRUTUS
JOHN GIELGUD as CASSIUS
LOUIS CALHERN as JULIUS CAESAR
EDMOND O'BRIEN as CASCA
GREER GARSON as CALPURNIA
DEBORAH KERR as PORTIA
Directed by JOSEPH L. MANKIEWICZ · Produced by JOHN HOUSEMAN

The 1953 film adaptation

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

JULIUS CAESAR, Roman statesman and general

OCTAVIUS, Triumvir after Caesar's death, later Augustus Caesar, first emperor of Rome

MARK ANTONY, general and friend of Caesar, a Triumvir after his death

LEPIDUS, third member of the Triumvirate

MARCUS BRUTUS, leader of the conspiracy against Caesar

CASSIUS, instigator of the conspiracy

CASCA, conspirator against Caesar

TREBONIUS, " " "

CAIUS LIGARIUS, " " "

DECIUS BRUTUS, " " "

METELLUS CIMBER, " " "

CINNA, " " "

CALPURNIA, wife of Caesar

PORTIA, wife of Brutus

CICERO, senator

POPILIUS, "

POPILIUS LENA, "

FLAVIUS, tribune

MARULLUS, tribune

CATO, supportor of Brutus

LUCILIUS, " " "

TITINIUS, " " "

MESSALA, " " "

VOLUMNIUS, " " "

ARTEMIDORUS, a teacher of rhetoric

CINNA, a poet

VARRO, servant to Brutus

CLITUS, " " "

CLAUDIO, " " "

STRATO, " " "

LUCIUS, " " "

DARDANIUS, " " "

PINDARUS, servant to Cassius

The Ghost of Caesar

A Soothsayer

A Poet

Senators, Citizens, Soldiers, Commoners, Messengers, and Servants

SCENE: Rome, the conspirators' camp near Sardis, and the plains of Philippi.

ACT I. SCENE I. Rome. A street.

Enter Flavius, Marullus, and certain Commoners.

FLAVIUS. Hence, home, you idle creatures, get you home.
Is this a holiday? What, know you not,
Being mechanical, you ought not walk
Upon a laboring day without the sign
Of your profession? Speak, what trade art thou?

FIRST COMMONER.
Why, sir, a carpenter.

MARULLUS.

Where is thy leather apron and thy rule?
What dost thou with thy best apparel on?

You, sir, what trade are you?

SECOND COMMONER.

Truly, sir, in respect of a fine workman, I am

but, as you would say, a cobbler.

MARULLUS.

But what trade art thou? Answer me directly.

SECOND COMMONER.

A trade, sir, that, I hope, I may use with a safe

conscience, which is indeed, sir, a mender of bad soles.

MARULLUS.

What trade, thou knave? Thou naughty knave, what trade?

SECOND COMMONER.

Nay, I beseech you, sir, be not out with me;

yet,

if you be out, sir, I can mend you.

MARULLUS.

What mean'st thou by that? Mend me, thou saucy fellow!

SECOND COMMONER.

Why, sir, cobble you.

FLAVIUS.

Thou art a cobbler, art thou?

SECOND COMMONER.

Truly, Sir, all that I live by is with the

awl; I

meddle with no tradesman's matters, nor women's matters, but with

awl. I am indeed, sir, a surgeon to old shoes; when they are in

great danger, I recover them. As proper men as ever trod upon

neat's leather have gone upon my handiwork.

FLAVIUS.

But wherefore art not in thy shop today?

Why dost thou lead these men about the streets?

SECOND COMMONER.

Truly, sir, to wear out their shoes to get myself
into more work. But indeed, sir, we make holiday to see Caesar
and to rejoice in his triumph.

MARULLUS.

Wherefore rejoice? What conquest brings he home?
What tributaries follow him to Rome
To grace in captive bonds his chariot wheels?
You blocks, you stones, you worse than senseless things!
O you hard hearts, you cruel men of Rome,
Knew you not Pompey? Many a time and oft
Have you climb'd up to walls and battlements,
To towers and windows, yea, to chimney tops,
Your infants in your arms, and there have sat
The livelong day with patient expectation
To see great Pompey pass the streets of Rome.
And when you saw his chariot but appear,
Have you not made an universal shout

That Tiber trembled underneath her banks
To hear the replication of your sounds
Made in her concave shores?

And do you now put on your best attire?
And do you now cull out a holiday?
And do you now strew flowers in his way
That comes in triumph over Pompey's blood?

Be gone!
Run to your houses, fall upon your knees,
Pray to the gods to intermit the plague
That needs must light on this ingratitude.

FLAVIUS.
Go, go, good countrymen, and, for this fault,
Assemble all the poor men of your sort,
Draw them to Tiber banks, and weep your tears
Into the channel, till the lowest stream
Do kiss the most exalted shores of all.
Exeunt all Commoners.

See whether their basest metal be not moved;

They vanish tongue-tied in their guiltiness.

Go you down that way towards the Capitol;

This way will I. Disrobe the images

If you do find them deck'd with ceremonies.

MARULLUS.

May we do so?

You know it is the feast of Lupercal.

FLAVIUS.

It is no matter; let no images

Be hung with Caesar's trophies. I'll about

And drive away the vulgar from the streets;

So do you too, where you perceive them thick.

These growing feathers pluck'd from Caesar's wing

Will make him fly an ordinary pitch,

Who else would soar above the view of men

And keep us all in servile fearfulness. *Exeunt* .

SCENE II. A public place.

Flourish. *Enter* Caesar; Antony, for the course; Calpurnia,

Portia,

Decius, Cicero, Brutus, Cassius, and Casca; a great crowd follows,

among them a Soothsayer.

CAESAR.

Calpurnia!

CASCA.

Peace, ho! Caesar speaks.

Music ceases.

CAESAR.

Calpurnia!

CALPURNIA.

Here, my lord.

CAESAR.

Stand you directly in Antonio's way,
When he doth run his course. Antonio!

ANTONY.

Caesar, my lord?

CAESAR.

Forget not in your speed, Antonio,
To touch Calpurnia, for our elders say
The barren, touched in this holy chase,
Shake off their sterile curse.

ANTONY.

I shall remember.
When Caesar says "Do this," it is perform'd.

CAESAR.

Set on, and leave no ceremony out. Flourish.

SOOTHSAYER.

Caesar!

CAESAR.

Ha! Who calls?

CASCA.

Bid every noise be still. Peace yet again!

CAESAR.

Who is it in the press that calls on me?
I hear a tongue, shriller than all the music,
Cry "Caesar." Speak, Caesar is turn'd to hear.

SOOTHSAYER.

Beware the ides of March.

CAESAR.

What man is that?

BRUTUS.

A soothsayer you beware the ides of March.

CAESAR.

Set him before me let me see his face.

CASSIUS.

Fellow, come from the throng; look upon Caesar.

CAESAR.

What say'st thou to me now? Speak once again.

SOOTHSAYER.

Beware the ides of March.

CAESAR.

He is a dreamer; let us leave him. Pass.

Sennet. Exeunt all but Brutus and Cassius.

CASSIUS.

Will you go see the order of the course?

BRUTUS.

Not I.

CASSIUS.

I pray you, do.

BRUTUS.

I am not gamesome; I do lack some part

Of that quick spirit that is in Antony.

Let me not hinder, Cassius, your desires;

I'll leave you.

CASSIUS.

Brutus, I do observe you now of late;
I have not from your eyes that gentleness
And show of love as I was wont to have;
You bear too stubborn and too strange a hand
Over your friend that loves you.

BRUTUS.
Cassius,
Be not deceived; if I have veil'd my look,
I turn the trouble of my countenance
Merely upon myself. Vexed I am
Of late with passions of some difference,
Conceptions only proper to myself,
Which give some soil perhaps to my behaviors;
But let not therefore my good friends be grieved-
Among which number, Cassius, be you one-
Nor construe any further my neglect
Than that poor Brutus with himself at war
Forgets the shows of love to other men.

CASSIUS.

Then, Brutus, I have much mistook your passion,
By means whereof this breast of mine hath buried
Thoughts of great value, worthy cogitations.

Tell me, good Brutus, can you see your face?

BRUTUS.
No, Cassius, for the eye sees not itself
But by reflection, by some other things.

CASSIUS.
'Tis just,
And it is very much lamented, Brutus,
That you have no such mirrors as will turn
Your hidden worthiness into your eye
That you might see your shadow. I have heard
Where many of the best respect in Rome,
Except immortal Caesar, speaking of Brutus
And groaning underneath this age's yoke,
Have wish'd that noble Brutus had his eyes.

BRUTUS.

Into what dangers would you lead me, Cassius,

That you would have me seek into myself

For that which is not in me?

CASSIUS.

Therefore, good Brutus, be prepared to hear,

And since you know you cannot see yourself

So well as by reflection, I your glass

Will modestly discover to yourself

That of yourself which you yet know not of.

And be not jealous on me, gentle Brutus;

Were I a common laugher, or did use

To stale with ordinary oaths my love

To every new protester, if you know

That I do fawn on men and hug them hard

And after scandal them, or if you know

That I profess myself in banqueting

To all the rout, then hold me dangerous.

Flourish and shout.

BRUTUS.

What means this shouting? I do fear the people

Choose Caesar for their king.

CASSIUS.

Ay, do you fear it?

Then must I think you would not have it so.

BRUTUS.

I would not, Cassius, yet I love him well.

But wherefore do you hold me here so long?

What is it that you would impart to me?

If it be aught toward the general good,

Set honor in one eye and death i' the other

And I will look on both indifferently.

For let the gods so speed me as I love

The name of honor more than I fear death.

CASSIUS.

I know that virtue to be in you, Brutus,

As well as I do know your outward favor.

Well, honor is the subject of my story.

I cannot tell what you and other men

Think of this life, but, for my single self,

I had as lief not be as live to be

In awe of such a thing as I myself.

I was born free as Caesar, so were you;

We both have fed as well, and we can both

Endure the winter's cold as well as he.

For once, upon a raw and gusty day,

The troubled Tiber chafing with her shores,

Caesar said to me, "Darest thou, Cassius, now

Leap in with me into this angry flood

And swim to yonder point?" Upon the word,

Accoutred as I was, I plunged in

And bade him follow. So indeed he did.

The torrent roar'd, and we did buffet it

With lusty sinews, throwing it aside

And stemming it with hearts of controversy.

But ere we could arrive the point proposed,

Caesar cried, "Help me, Cassius, or I sink!

I, as Aeneas our great ancestor

Did from the flames of Troy upon his shoulder

The old Anchises bear, so from the waves of Tiber

Did I the tired Caesar. And this man

Is now become a god, and Cassius is

A wretched creature and must bend his body

If Caesar carelessly but nod on him.

He had a fever when he was in Spain,

And when the fit was on him I did mark

How he did shake. 'Tis true, this god did shake;

His coward lips did from their color fly,

And that same eye whose bend doth awe the world

Did lose his luster. I did hear him groan.

Ay, and that tongue of his that bade the Romans

Mark him and write his speeches in their books,

Alas, it cried, "Give me some drink, Titinius,"

As a sick girl. Ye gods! It doth amaze me

A man of such a feeble temper should

So get the start of the majestic world

And bear the palm alone. Shout. Flourish.

BRUTUS.

Another general shout!

I do believe that these applauses are

For some new honors that are heap'd on Caesar.

CASSIUS.

Why, man, he doth bestride the narrow world

Like a Colossus, and we petty men

Walk under his huge legs and peep about

To find ourselves dishonorable graves.

Men at some time are masters of their fates:

The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars,

But in ourselves that we are underlings.

Brutus and Caesar: what should be in that "Caesar"?

Why should that name be sounded more than yours?

Write them together, yours is as fair a name;

Sound them, it doth become the mouth as well;

Weigh them, it is as heavy; conjure with 'em,
"Brutus" will start a spirit as soon as "Caesar."
Now, in the names of all the gods at once,
Upon what meat doth this our Caesar feed
That he is grown so great? Age, thou art shamed!

Rome, thou hast lost the breed of noble bloods!
When went there by an age since the great flood
But it was famed with more than with one man?
When could they say till now that talk'd of Rome
That her wide walls encompass'd but one man?
Now is it Rome indeed, and room enough,
When there is in it but one only man.
O, you and I have heard our fathers say
There was a Brutus once that would have brook'd
The eternal devil to keep his state in Rome
As easily as a king.

BRUTUS.

That you do love me, I am nothing jealous;
What you would work me to, I have some aim.

How I have thought of this and of these times,

I shall recount hereafter; for this present,

I would not, so with love I might entreat you,

Be any further moved. What you have said

I will consider; what you have to say

I will with patience hear, and find a time

Both meet to hear and answer such high things.

Till then, my noble friend, chew upon this:

Brutus had rather be a villager

Than to repute himself a son of Rome

Under these hard conditions as this time

Is like to lay upon us.

CASSIUS.

I am glad that my weak words

Have struck but thus much show of fire from Brutus.

Re-enter Caesar and his Train.

BRUTUS.

The games are done, and Caesar is returning.

CASSIUS.

As they pass by, pluck Casca by the sleeve,
And he will, after his sour fashion, tell you
What hath proceeded worthy note today.

BRUTUS.

I will do so. But, look you, Cassius,
The angry spot doth glow on Caesar's brow,
And all the rest look like a chidden train:
Calpurnia's cheek is pale, and Cicero
Looks with such ferret and such fiery eyes
As we have seen him in the Capitol,
Being cross'd in conference by some senators.

CASSIUS.

Casca will tell us what the matter is.

CAESAR.

Antonio!

ANTONY.

Caesar?

CAESAR.

Let me have men about me that are fat,

Sleek-headed men, and such as sleep o' nights:

Yond Cassius has a lean and hungry look;

He thinks too much; such men are dangerous.

ANTONY.

Fear him not, Caesar; he's not dangerous;

He is a noble Roman and well given.

CAESAR.

Would he were fatter! But I fear him not,

Yet if my name were liable to fear,

I do not know the man I should avoid

So soon as that spare Cassius. He reads much,

He is a great observer, and he looks

Quite through the deeds of men. He loves no plays,
As thou dost, Antony; he hears no music;
Seldom he smiles, and smiles in such a sort
As if he mock'd himself and scorn'd his spirit
That could be moved to smile at anything.
Such men as he be never at heart's ease
Whiles they behold a greater than themselves,
And therefore are they very dangerous.
I rather tell thee what is to be fear'd
Than what I fear, for always I am Caesar.
Come on my right hand, for this ear is deaf,
And tell me truly what thou think'st of him.

Sennet. Exeunt Caesar and all his Train but Casca.

CASCA.

You pull'd me by the cloak; would you speak with me?

BRUTUS.

Ay, Casca, tell us what hath chanced today
That Caesar looks so sad.

CASCA.

Why, you were with him, were you not?

BRUTUS.
I should not then ask Casca what had chanced.

CASCA.
Why, there was a crown offered him, and being offered him,
he put it by with the back of his hand, thus, and then the
people fell ashouting.

BRUTUS.
What was the second noise for?

CASCA.

Why, for that too.

CASSIUS.
They shouted thrice. What was the last cry for?

CASCA.

Why, for that too.

BRUTUS.

Was the crown offered him thrice?

CASCA.

Ay, marry, wast, and he put it by thrice, every time gentler

than other, and at every putting by mine honest neighbors shouted.

CASSIUS.

Who offered him the crown?

CASCA.

Why, Antony.

BRUTUS.

Tell us the manner of it, gentle Casca.

CASCA.

I can as well be hang'd as tell the manner of it. It was

mere foolery; I did not mark it. I saw Mark Antony offer him a

crown (yet 'twas not a crown neither, 'twas one of these

coronets) and, as I told you, he put it by once. But for all

that, to my thinking, he would fain have had it. Then he offered

it to him again; then he put it by again. But, to my thinking, he

was very loath to lay his fingers off it. And then he offered it

the third time; he put it the third time by; and still as he

refused it, the rabblement hooted and clapped their chopped hands

and threw up their sweaty nightcaps and uttered such a deal of

stinking breath because Caesar refused the crown that it had

almost choked Caesar, for he swounded and fell down at it.

And

for mine own part, I durst not laugh for fear of opening my lips

and receiving the bad air.

CASSIUS.

But, soft, I pray you, what, did Caesars wound?

CASCA.
He fell down in the marketplace and foamed at mouth and was speechless.

BRUTUS.

'Tis very like. He hath the falling sickness.

CASSIUS.
No, Caesar hath it not, but you, and I,
And honest Casca, we have the falling sickness.

CASCA.
I know not what you mean by that, but I am sure Caesar fell
down. If the tagrag people did not clap him and hiss him
according as he pleased and displeased them, as they use to do
the players in the theatre, I am no true man.

BRUTUS.
What said he when he came unto himself?

CASCA.

Marry, before he fell down, when he perceived the common
herd was glad he refused the crown, he plucked me ope his doublet
and offered them his throat to cut. An had been a man of any
occupation, if I would not have taken him at a word, I would

I

might go to hell among the rogues. And so he fell. When he came
to himself again, he said, if he had done or said anything amiss,
he desired their worships to think it was his infirmity.
Three or
four wenches where I stood cried, "Alas, good soul!" and forgave
him with all their hearts. But there's no heed to be taken of
them; if Caesar had stabbed their mothers, they would have done no less.

BRUTUS.

And after that he came, thus sad, away?

CASCA.

Ay.

CASSIUS.

Did Cicero say anything?

CASCA.

Ay, he spoke Greek.

CASSIUS.

To what effect?

CASCA.

Nay, an I tell you that, I'll ne'er look you i' the face
again; but those that understood him smiled at one another and
shook their heads; but for mine own part, it was Greek to me.

I could tell you more news too: Marullus and Flavius, for pulling
scarfs off Caesar's images, are put to silence. Fare you well.

There was more foolery yet, if could remember it.

CASSIUS.

Will you sup with me tonight, Casca?

CASCA.

No, I am promised forth.

CASSIUS.

Will you dine with me tomorrow?

CASCA.

Ay, if I be alive, and your mind hold, and your dinner worth the eating.

CASSIUS.

Good, I will expect you.

CASCA.

Do so, farewell, both. *Exit* .

BRUTUS.

What a blunt fellow is this grown to be!

He was quick mettle when he went to school.

CASSIUS.

So is he now in execution

Of any bold or noble enterprise,

However he puts on this tardy form.

This rudeness is a sauce to his good wit,

Which gives men stomach to digest his words

With better appetite.

BRUTUS.

And so it is. For this time I will leave you.

Tomorrow, if you please to speak with me,

I will come home to you, or, if you will,

Come home to me and I will wait for you.

CASSIUS.

I will do so. Till then, think of the world.

Exit Brutus.

Well, Brutus, thou art noble; yet, I see

Thy honorable mettle may be wrought

From that it is disposed; therefore it is meet

That noble minds keep ever with their likes;

For who so firm that cannot be seduced?

Caesar doth bear me hard, but he loves Brutus.

If I were Brutus now and he were Cassius,

He should not humor me. I will this night,

In several hands, in at his windows throw,

As if they came from several citizens,

Writings, all tending to the great opinion

That Rome holds of his name, wherein obscurely

Caesar's ambition shall be glanced at.

And after this let Caesar seat him sure;

For we will shake him, or worse days endure. *Exit* .

SCENE III. A street. Thunder and lightning.

Enter , from opposite sides, Casca, with his sword drawn, and Cicero.

CICERO.

Good even, Casca. Brought you Caesar home?

Why are you breathless, and why stare you so?

CASCA.

Are not you moved, when all the sway of earth
Shakes like a thing unfirm? O Cicero,
I have seen tempests when the scolding winds
Have rived the knotty oaks, and I have seen
The ambitious ocean swell and rage and foam
To be exalted with the threatening clouds,
But never till tonight, never till now,
Did I go through a tempest dropping fire.
Either there is a civil strife in heaven,
Or else the world too saucy with the gods
Incenses them to send destruction.

CICERO.

Why, saw you anything more wonderful?

CASCA.

A common slave-you know him well by sight-

Held up his left hand, which did flame and burn

Like twenty torches join'd, and yet his hand

Not sensible of fire remain'd unscorch'd.

Besides-I ha' not since put up my sword-

Against the Capitol I met a lion,

Who glaz'd upon me and went surly by

Without annoying me. And there were drawn

Upon a heap a hundred ghastly women

Transformed with their fear, who swore they saw

Men all in fire walk up and down the streets.

And yesterday the bird of night did sit

Even at noonday upon the marketplace,

Howling and shrieking. When these prodigies

Do so conjointly meet, let not men say

"These are their reasons; they are natural":

For I believe they are portentous things

Unto the climate that they point upon.

CICERO.

Indeed, it is a strange-disposed time.

But men may construe things after their fashion,

Clean from the purpose of the things themselves.

Comes Caesar to the Capitol tomorrow?

CASCA.

He doth, for he did bid Antonio

Send word to you he would be there tomorrow.

CICERO.

Good then, Casca. This disturbed sky

Is not to walk in.

CASCA.

Farewell, Cicero. *Exit* Cicero.

Enter Cassius.

CASSIUS. Who's there?

CASCA.

A Roman.

CASSIUS.

Casca, by your voice.

CASCA.

Your ear is good. Cassius, what night is this!

CASSIUS.

A very pleasing night to honest men.

CASCA.

Who ever knew the heavens menace so?

CASSIUS.

Those that have known the earth so full of faults.
For my part, I have walk'd about the streets,
Submitting me unto the perilous night,
And thus unbraced, Casca, as you see,
Have bared my bosom to the thunderstone;
And when the cross blue lightning seem'd to open
The breast of heaven, I did present myself
Even in the aim and very flash of it.

CASCA.

But wherefore did you so much tempt the heavens?
It is the part of men to fear and tremble
When the most mighty gods by tokens send
Such dreadful heralds to astonish us.

CASSIUS.
You are dull, Casca, and those sparks of life
That should be in a Roman you do want,

Or else you use not. You look pale and gaze

And put on fear and cast yourself in wonder

To see the strange impatience of the heavens.

But if you would consider the true cause

Why all these fires, why all these gliding ghosts,

Why birds and beasts from quality and kind,

Why old men, fools, and children calculate,

Why all these things change from their ordinance,

Their natures, and preformed faculties

To monstrous quality, why, you shall find

That heaven hath infused them with these spirits

To make them instruments of fear and warning

Unto some monstrous state.

Now could I, Casca, name to thee a man

Most like this dreadful night,

That thunders, lightens, opens graves, and roars

As doth the lion in the Capitol,

A man no mightier than thyself or me

In personal action, yet prodigious grown

And fearful, as these strange eruptions are.

CASCA.

'Tis Caesar that you mean, is it not, Cassius?

CASSIUS.
Let it be who it is, for Romans now
Have thews and limbs like to their ancestors.
But, woe the while! Our fathers' minds are dead,
And we are govern'd with our mothers' spirits;
Our yoke and sufferance show us womanish.

CASCA.
Indeed they say the senators tomorrow
Mean to establish Caesar as a king,
And he shall wear his crown by sea and land
In every place save here in Italy.

CASSIUS.

I know where I will wear this dagger then:
Cassius from bondage will deliver Cassius.

Therein, ye gods, you make the weak most strong;
Therein, ye gods, you tyrants do defeat.
Nor stony tower, nor walls of beaten brass,
Nor airless dungeon, nor strong links of iron
Can be retentive to the strength of spirit;
But life, being weary of these worldly bars,
Never lacks power to dismiss itself.
If I know this, know all the world besides,
That part of tyranny that I do bear
I can shake off at pleasure. Thunder still.

CASCA.

So can I.
So every bondman in his own hand bears
The power to cancel his captivity.

CASSIUS.
And why should Caesar be a tyrant then?
Poor man! I know he would not be a wolf
But that he sees the Romans are but sheep.

He were no lion, were not Romans hinds.

Those that with haste will make a mighty fire

Begin it with weak straws. What trash is Rome,

What rubbish, and what offal, when it serves

For the base matter to illuminate

So vile a thing as Caesar? But, O grief,

Where hast thou led me? I perhaps speak this

Before a willing bondman; then I know

My answer must be made. But I am arm'd,

And dangers are to me indifferent.

CASCA.

You speak to Casca, and to such a man

That is no fleering tell-tale. Hold, my hand.

Be factious for redress of all these griefs,

And I will set this foot of mine as far

As who goes farthest.

CASSIUS.

There's a bargain made.

Now know you, Casca, I have moved already

Some certain of the noblest-minded Romans

To undergo with me an enterprise

Of honorable-dangerous consequence;

And I do know by this, they stay for me

In Pompey's Porch. For now, this fearful night,

There is no stir or walking in the streets,

And the complexion of the element

In favor's like the work we have in hand,

Most bloody, fiery, and most terrible.

Enter Cinna.

CASCA. Stand close awhile, for here comes one in haste.

CASSIUS.

'Tis Cinna, I do know him by his gait;

He is a friend. Cinna, where haste you so?

CINNA.

To find out you. Who's that? Metellus Cimber?

CASSIUS.

No, it is Casca, one incorporate

To our attempts. Am I not stay'd for, Cinna?

CINNA.

I am glad on't. What a fearful night is this!

There's two or three of us have seen strange sights.

CASSIUS.

Am I not stay'd for? Tell me.

CINNA.

Yes, you are.

O Cassius, if you could

But win the noble Brutus to our party-

CASSIUS.

Be you content. Good Cinna, take this paper, And look you lay it in the praetor's chair,

Where Brutus may but find it; and throw this

In at his window; set this up with wax

Upon old Brutus' statue. All this done,

Repair to Pompey's Porch, where you shall find us.

Is Decius Brutus and Trebonius there?

CINNA.

All but Metellus Cimber, and he's gone

To seek you at your house. Well, I will hie

And so bestow these papers as you bade me.

CASSIUS.

That done, repair to Pompey's Theatre.

Exit Cinna.

Come, Casca, you and I will yet ere day

See Brutus at his house. Three parts of him

Is ours already, and the man entire

Upon the next encounter yields him ours.

CASCA.

O, he sits high in all the people's hearts,

And that which would appear offense in us,

His countenance, like richest alchemy,

Will change to virtue and to worthiness.

CASSIUS.

Him and his worth and our great need of him

You have right well conceited. Let us go,

For it is after midnight, and ere day

We will awake him and be sure of him. *Exeunt* .

ACT II. SCENE I.

Enter Brutus in his orchard.

BRUTUS. What, Lucius, ho!

I cannot, by the progress of the stars,

Give guess how near to day. Lucius, I say!

I would it were my fault to sleep so soundly.

When, Lucius, when? Awake, I say! What, Lucius!

Enter Lucius.

LUCIUS. Call'd you, my lord?

BRUTUS.

Get me a taper in my study, Lucius.

When it is lighted, come and call me here.

LUCIUS.

I will, my lord. *Exit* .

BRUTUS.

It must be by his death, and, for my part,

I know no personal cause to spurn at him,

But for the general. He would be crown'd:

How that might change his nature, there's the question.

It is the bright day that brings forth the adder

And that craves wary walking. Crown him that,

And then, I grant, we put a sting in him

That at his will he may do danger with.

The abuse of greatness is when it disjoins

Remorse from power, and, to speak truth of Caesar,

I have not known when his affections sway'd

More than his reason. But 'tis a common proof

That lowliness is young ambition's ladder,

Whereto the climber-upward turns his face;

But when he once attains the upmost round,

He then unto the ladder turns his back,

Looks in the clouds, scorning the base degrees

By which he did ascend. So Caesar may;

Then, lest he may, prevent. And, since the quarrel

Will bear no color for the thing he is,

Fashion it thus, that what he is, augmented,

Would run to these and these extremities;

And therefore think him as a serpent's egg

Which hatch'd would as his kind grow mischievous,
And kill him in the shell.

Re-enter Lucius.

LUCIUS.
The taper burneth in your closet, sir.
Searching the window for a flint I found
This paper thus seal'd up, and I am sure
It did not lie there when I went to bed.
Gives him the letter.

BRUTUS.

Get you to bed again, it is not day.
Is not tomorrow, boy, the ides of March?

LUCIUS.

I know not, sir.

BRUTUS.

Look in the calendar and bring me word.

LUCIUS.

I will, sir. *Exit* .

BRUTUS.

The exhalations whizzing in the air

Give so much light that I may read by them.

Opens the letter and reads.

"Brutus, thou sleep'st: awake and see thyself!

Shall Rome, *etc.* Speak, strike, redress!"

"Brutus, thou sleep'st: awake!"

Such instigations have been often dropp'd

Where I have took them up.

"Shall Rome, etc." Thus must I piece it out.

Shall Rome stand under one man's awe? What, Rome?

My ancestors did from the streets of Rome

The Tarquin drive, when he was call'd a king.

"Speak, strike, redress!" Am I entreated
To speak and strike? O Rome, I make thee promise,
If the redress will follow, thou receivest
Thy full petition at the hand of Brutus!
Re-enter Lucius.

LUCIUS.

Sir, March is wasted fifteen days.
Knocking within.

BRUTUS.

'Tis good. Go to the gate, somebody knocks.

Exit Lucius.

Since Cassius first did whet me against Caesar
I have not slept.
Between the acting of a dreadful thing
And the first motion, all the interim is

Like a phantasma or a hideous dream;
The genius and the mortal instruments
Are then in council, and the state of man,
Like to a little kingdom, suffers then
The nature of an insurrection.
Re-enter Lucius.

LUCIUS.
Sir, 'tis your brother Cassius at the door,
Who doth desire to see you.

BRUTUS.

Is he alone?

LUCIUS.
No, sir, there are more with him.

BRUTUS.

Do you know them?

LUCIUS.

No, sir, their hats are pluck'd about their ears,

And half their faces buried in their cloaks,

That by no means I may discover them

By any mark of favor.

BRUTUS.

Let 'em enter. *Exit* Lucius.

They are the faction. O Conspiracy,

Shamest thou to show thy dangerous brow by night,

When evils are most free? O, then, by day

Where wilt thou find a cavern dark enough

To mask thy monstrous visage? Seek none, Conspiracy;

Hide it in smiles and affability;

For if thou path, thy native semblance on,

Not Erebus itself were dim enough

To hide thee from prevention.

Enter the conspirators, Cassius, Casca, Decius, Cinna, Metellus Cimber, and Trebonius.

CASSIUS.

I think we are too bold upon your rest.

Good morrow, Brutus, do we trouble you?

BRUTUS.

I have been up this hour, awake all night.

Know I these men that come along with you?

CASSIUS.

Yes, every man of them, and no man here
But honors you, and every one doth wish
You had but that opinion of yourself
Which every noble Roman bears of you.
This is Trebonius.

BRUTUS.

He is welcome hither.

CASSIUS.

This, Decius Brutus.

BRUTUS.

He is welcome too.

CASSIUS.

This, Casca; this, Cinna; and this, Metellus Cimber.

BRUTUS.

They are all welcome.

What watchful cares do interpose themselves

Betwixt your eyes and night?

CASSIUS.

Shall I entreat a word? They whisper.

DECIUS.

Here lies the east. Doth not the day break here?

CASCA.
No.

CINNA.
O, pardon, sir, it doth, and yongrey lines
That fret the clouds are messengers of day.

CASCA.

You shall confess that you are both deceived.
Here, as I point my sword, the sun arises,
Which is a great way growing on the south,
Weighing the youthful season of the year.
Some two months hence up higher toward the north
He first presents his fire, and the high east
Stands as the Capitol, directly here.

BRUTUS.

Give me your hands all over, one by one.

CASSIUS.

And let us swear our resolution.

BRUTUS.

No, not an oath. If not the face of men,
The sufferance of our souls, the time's abuse-
If these be motives weak, break off betimes,
And every man hence to his idle bed;
So let high-sighted tyranny range on
Till each man drop by lottery. But if these,
As I am sure they do, bear fire enough
To kindle cowards and to steel with valor
The melting spirits of women, then, countrymen,
What need we any spur but our own cause
To prick us to redress? What other bond
Than secret Romans that have spoke the word
And will not palter? And what other oath

Than honesty to honesty engaged
That this shall be or we will fall for it?
Swear priests and cowards and men cautelous,
Old feeble carrions and such suffering souls
That welcome wrongs; unto bad causes swear
Such creatures as men doubt; but do not stain
The even virtue of our enterprise,
Nor the insuppressive mettle of our spirits,
To think that or our cause or our performance
Did need an oath; when every drop of blood
That every Roman bears, and nobly bears,
Is guilty of a several bastardy
If he do break the smallest particle
Of any promise that hath pass'd from him.

CASSIUS.

But what of Cicero? Shall we sound him?
I think he will stand very strong with us.

CASCA.

Let us not leave him out.

CINNA.

No, by no means.

METELLUS.

O, let us have him, for his silver hairs
Will purchase us a good opinion,
And buy men's voices to commend our deeds.
It shall be said his judgement ruled our hands;
Our youths and wildness shall no whit appear,
But all be buried in his gravity.

BRUTUS.

O, name him not; let us not break with him,
For he will never follow anything
That other men begin.

CASSIUS.

Then leave him out.

CASCA.

Indeed he is not fit.

DECIUS.

Shall no man else be touch'd but only Caesar?

CASSIUS.

Decius, well urged. I think it is not meet

Mark Antony, so well beloved of Caesar,

Should outlive Caesar. We shall find of him

A shrewd contriver; and you know his means,

If he improve them, may well stretch so far

As to annoy us all, which to prevent,

Let Antony and Caesar fall together.

BRUTUS.

Our course will seem too bloody, Caius Cassius,

To cut the head off and then hack the limbs

Like wrath in death and envy afterwards;

For Antony is but a limb of Caesar.

Let us be sacrificers, but not butchers, Caius.

We all stand up against the spirit of Caesar,

And in the spirit of men there is no blood.

O, that we then could come by Caesar's spirit,

And not dismember Caesar! But, alas,

Caesar must bleed for it! And, gentle friends,

Let's kill him boldly, but not wrathfully;

Let's carve him as a dish fit for the gods,

Not hew him as a carcass fit for hounds;

And let our hearts, as subtle masters do,

Stir up their servants to an act of rage

And after seem to chide 'em. This shall make

Our purpose necessary and not envious,

Which so appearing to the common eyes,

We shall be call'd purgers, not murderers.

And for Mark Antony, think not of him,

For he can do no more than Caesar's arm

When Caesar's head is off.

CASSIUS.

Yet I fear him,

For in the ingrated love he bears to Caesar-

BRUTUS.

Alas, good Cassius, do not think of him.

If he love Caesar, all that he can do

Is to himself, take thought and die for Caesar.

And that were much he should, for he is given

To sports, to wildness, and much company.

TREBONIUS.

There is no fear in him-let him not die,

For he will live and laugh at this hereafter.

Clock strikes.

BRUTUS.

Peace, count the clock.

CASSIUS.

The clock hath stricken three.

TREBONIUS.

'Tis time to part.

CASSIUS.

But it is doubtful yet

Whether Caesar will come forth today or no,

For he is superstitious grown of late,

Quite from the main opinion he held once

Of fantasy, of dreams, and ceremonies.

It may be these apparent prodigies,

The unaccustom'd terror of this night,

And the persuasion of his augurers

May hold him from the Capitol today.

DECIUS.

Never fear that. If he be so resolved,

I can o'ersway him, for he loves to hear

That unicorns may be betray'd with trees,

And bears with glasses, elephants with holes, Lions with toils, and men with flatterers;

But when I tell him he hates flatterers,

He says he does, being then most flattered.

Let me work;

For I can give his humor the true bent,

And I will bring him to the Capitol.

CASSIUS.

Nay, we will all of us be there to fetch him.

BRUTUS.

By the eighth hour. Is that the utter most?

CINNA.

Be that the uttermost, and fail not then.

METELLUS.

Caius Ligarius doth bear Caesar hard,

Who rated him for speaking well of Pompey.

I wonder none of you have thought of him.

BRUTUS.

Now, good Metellus, go along by him.

He loves me well, and I have given him reasons;

Send him but hither, and I'll fashion him.

CASSIUS.

The morning comes upon 's. We'll leave you, Brutus,

And, friends, disperse yourselves, but all remember

What you have said and show yourselves true Romans.

BRUTUS.

Good gentlemen, look fresh and merrily;

Let not our looks put on our purposes,

But bear it as our Roman actors do,

With untired spirits and formal constancy.

And so, good morrow to you every one.

Exeunt all but Brutus.

Boy! Lucius! Fast asleep? It is no matter.

Enjoy the honey-heavy dew of slumber;

Thou hast no figures nor no fantasies,
Which busy care draws in the brains of men;
Therefore thou sleep'st so sound.

Enter Portia.

PORTIA. Brutus, my lord!

BRUTUS.
Portia, what mean you? Wherefore rise you now?
It is not for your health thus to commit
Your weak condition to the raw cold morning.

PORTIA.
Nor for yours neither. have ungently, Brutus,
Stole from my bed; and yesternight at supper
You suddenly arose and walk'd about,
Musing and sighing, with your arms across;
And when I ask'd you what the matter was,
You stared upon me with ungentle looks.
I urged you further; then you scratch'd your head,

And too impatiently stamp'd with your foot.

Yet I insisted, yet you answer'd not,

But with an angry waiter of your hand

Gave sign for me to leave you. So I did,

Fearing to strengthen that impatience

Which seem'd too much enkindled, and withal

Hoping it was but an effect of humor,

Which sometime hath his hour with every man.

It will not let you eat, nor talk, nor sleep,

And, could it work so much upon your shape

As it hath much prevail'd on your condition,

I should not know you, Brutus. Dear my lord,

Make me acquainted with your cause of grief.

BRUTUS.

I am not well in health, and that is all.

PORTIA.

Brutus is wise, and, were he not in health,

He would embrace the means to come by it.

BRUTUS.

Why, so I do. Good Portia, go to bed.

PORTIA.

Is Brutus sick, and is it physical
To walk unbraced and suck up the humors
Of the dank morning? What, is Brutus sick,
And will he steal out of his wholesome bed
To dare the vile contagion of the night
And tempt the rheumy and unpurged air
To add unto his sickness? No, my Brutus,
You have some sick offense within your mind,
Which by the right and virtue of my place
I ought to know of; and, upon my knees,
I charm you, by my once commended beauty,
By all your vows of love and that great vow
Which did incorporate and make us one,
That you unfold to me, yourself, your half,
Why you are heavy and what men tonight
Have had resort to you; for here have been

Some six or seven, who did hide their faces
Even from darkness.

BRUTUS.

Kneel not, gentle Portia.

PORTIA.
I should not need, if you were gentle Brutus.
Within the bond of marriage, tell me, Brutus,
Is it excepted I should know no secrets
That appertain to you? Am I yourself
But, as it were, in sort or limitation,
To keep with you at meals, comfort your bed,
And talk to you sometimes? Dwell I but in the suburbs
Of your good pleasure? If it be no more,
Portia is Brutus' harlot, not his wife.

BRUTUS.
You are my true and honorable wife,
As dear to me as are the ruddy drops

That visit my sad heart.

PORTIA.

If this were true, then should I know this secret.

I grant I am a woman, but withal

A woman that Lord Brutus took to wife.

I grant I am a woman, but withal

A woman well reputed, Cato's daughter.

Think you I am no stronger than my sex,

Being so father'd and so husbanded?

Tell me your counsels, I will not disclose 'em.

I have made strong proof of my constancy,

Giving myself a voluntary wound

Here in the thigh. Can I bear that with patience

And not my husband's secrets?

BRUTUS.

O ye gods,

Render me worthy of this noble wife! Knocking within.

Hark, hark, one knocks. Portia, go in awhile, And by and by thy bosom shall partake

The secrets of my heart.

All my engagements I will construe to thee,

All the charactery of my sad brows.

Leave me with haste. *[Exit Portia.]* Lucius, who's that knocks?

Re-enter Lucius with Ligarius.

LUCIUS.

Here is a sick man that would speak with you.

BRUTUS.

Caius Ligarius, that Metellus spake of.

Boy, stand aside. Caius Ligarius, how?

LIGARIUS.

Vouchsafe good morrow from a feeble tongue.

BRUTUS.

O, what a time have you chose out, brave Caius, To wear a kerchief! Would you were not sick!

LIGARIUS.

I am not sick, if Brutus have in hand

Any exploit worthy the name of honor.

BRUTUS.

Such an exploit have I in hand, Ligarius,

Had you a healthful ear to hear of it.

LIGARIUS.

By all the gods that Romans bow before,

I here discard my sickness! Soul of Rome!

Brave son, derived from honorable loins!

Thou, like an exorcist, hast conjured up

My mortified spirit. Now bid me run,

And I will strive with things impossible,

Yea, get the better of them. What's to do?

BRUTUS.

A piece of work that will make sick men whole.

LIGARIUS.

But are not some whole that we must make sick?

BRUTUS.

That must we also. What it is, my Caius,

I shall unfold to thee, as we are going

To whom it must be done.

LIGARIUS.

Set on your foot,

And with a heart new-fired I follow you,

To do I know not what; but it sufficeth

That Brutus leads me on.

BRUTUS.

Follow me then. *Exeunt* .

SCENE II. Caesar's house. Thunder and lightning.

Enter Caesar, in his nightgown.

CAESAR. Nor heaven nor earth have been at peace tonight.

Thrice hath Calpurnia in her sleep cried out,

"Help, ho! They murther Caesar!" Who's within?

Enter a Servant.

SERVANT. My lord?

CAESAR.

Go bid the priests do present sacrifice,

And bring me their opinions of success.

SERVANT.

I will, my lord. *Exit* .

Enter Calpurnia.

CALPURNIA. What mean you, Caesar? Think you to walk forth?

You shall not stir out of your house today.

CAESAR.

Caesar shall forth: the things that threaten'd me

Ne'er look'd but on my back; when they shall see

The face of Caesar, they are vanished.

CALPURNIA.

Caesar, I I stood on ceremonies,

Yet now they fright me. There is one within,

Besides the things that we have heard and seen,

Recounts most horrid sights seen by the watch.

A lioness hath whelped in the streets;

And graves have yawn'd, and yielded up their dead;

Fierce fiery warriors fight upon the clouds,

In ranks and squadrons and right form of war,

Which drizzled blood upon the Capitol;

The noise of battle hurtled in the air,

Horses did neigh and dying men did groan,

And ghosts did shriek and squeal about the streets.

O Caesar! These things are beyond all use,

And I do fear them.

CAESAR.

What can be avoided

Whose end is purposed by the mighty gods?

Yet Caesar shall go forth, for these predictions

Are to the world in general as to Caesar.

CALPURNIA.

When beggars die, there are no comets seen;

The heavens themselves blaze forth the death of princes.

CAESAR.

Cowards die many times before their deaths;

The valiant never taste of death but once.

Of all the wonders that I yet have heard,

It seems to me most strange that men should fear

Seeing that death, a necessary end,

Will come when it will come.

Re-enter Servant.

What say the augurers?

SERVANT.

They would not have you to stir forth today.

Plucking the entrails of an offering forth,

They could not find a heart within the beast.

CAESAR.

The gods do this in shame of cowardice.

Caesar should be a beast without a heart

If he should stay at home today for fear.

No, Caesar shall not. Danger knows full well

That Caesar is more dangerous than he.

We are two lions litter'd in one day,

And I the elder and more terrible.

And Caesar shall go forth.

CALPURNIA.

Alas, my lord,

Your wisdom is consumed in confidence.

Do not go forth today. Call it my fear

That keeps you in the house and not your own.
We'll send Mark Antony to the Senate House,
And he shall say you are not well today.

Let me, upon my knee, prevail in this.

CAESAR.
Mark Antony shall say I am not well,
And, for thy humor, I will stay at home.

Enter Decius.

Here's Decius Brutus, he shall tell them so.

DECIUS.
Caesar, all hail! Good morrow, worthy Caesar!

I come to fetch you to the Senate House.

CAESAR.
And you are come in very happy time

To bear my greeting to the senators
And tell them that I will not come today.

Cannot, is false, and that I dare not, falser:
I will not come today. Tell them so, Decius.

CALPURNIA.

Say he is sick.

CAESAR.
Shall Caesar send a lie?
Have I in conquest stretch'd mine arm so far
To be afeard to tell greybeards the truth?

Decius, go tell them Caesar will not come.

DECIUS.
Most mighty Caesar, let me know some cause,
Lest I be laugh'd at when I tell them so.

CAESAR.

The cause is in my will: I will not come,

That is enough to satisfy the Senate.

But, for your private satisfaction,

Because I love you, I will let you know.

Calpurnia here, my wife, stays me at home;

She dreamt tonight she saw my statue,

Which, like a fountain with an hundred spouts,

Did run pure blood, and many lusty Romans

Came smiling and did bathe their hands in it.

And these does she apply for warnings and portents

And evils imminent, and on her knee

Hath begg'd that I will stay at home today.

DECIUS.

This dream is all amiss interpreted;

It was a vision fair and fortunate.

Your statue spouting blood in many pipes,

In which so many smiling Romans bathed,

Signifies that from you great Rome shall suck

Reviving blood, and that great men shall press

For tinctures, stains, relics, and cognizance.

This by Calpurnia's dream is signified.

CAESAR.

And this way have you well expounded it.

DECIUS.

I have, when you have heard what I can say.

And know it now, the Senate have concluded

To give this day a crown to mighty Caesar.

If you shall send them word you will not come,

Their minds may change. Besides, it were a mock

Apt to be render'd, for someone to say

"Break up the Senate till another time,

When Caesar's wife shall meet with better dreams."

If Caesar hide himself, shall they not whisper

"Lo, Caesar is afraid"?

Pardon me, Caesar, for my dear dear love

To your proceeding bids me tell you this, And reason to my love is liable.

CAESAR.

How foolish do your fears seem now, Calpurnia!

I am ashamed I did yield to them.

Give me my robe, for I will go.

Enter Publius, Brutus, Ligarius, Metellus, Casca,

Trebonius, and Cinna.

And look where Publius is come to fetch me.

PUBLIUS.

Good morrow,Caesar.

CAESAR.

Welcome, Publius.

What, Brutus, are you stirr'd so early too?

Good morrow, Casca. Caius Ligarius,
Caesar was ne'er so much your enemy
As that same ague which hath made you lean.

What is't o'clock?

BRUTUS.
Caesar, 'tis strucken eight.

CAESAR.

I thank you for your pains and courtesy.

Enter Antony.

See, Antony, that revels long o' nights,
Is notwithstanding up. Good morrow, Antony.

ANTONY.

So to most noble Caesar.

CAESAR.

Bid them prepare within.

I am to blame to be thus waited for.

Now, Cinna; now, Metellus; what, Trebonius,

I have an hour's talk in store for you;

Remember that you call on me today;

Be near me, that I may remember you.

TREBONIUS.

Caesar, I will. *[Aside.]* And so near will I be

That your best friends shall wish I had been further.

CAESAR.

Good friends, go in and taste some wine with me,

And we like friends will straightway go together.

BRUTUS.

[Aside.] That every like is not the same, O Caesar,

The heart of Brutus yearns to think upon! *Exeunt* .

SCENE III. A street near the Capitol.

Enter Artemidorus, reading paper.

ARTEMIDORUS. "Caesar, beware of Brutus; take heed of Cassius; come
not near Casca; have an eye to Cinna; trust not Trebonius; mark
well Metellus Cimber; Decius Brutus loves thee not; thou hast
wronged Caius Ligarius. There is but one mind in all these men,
and it is bent against Caesar. If thou beest not immortal, look
about you. Security gives way to conspiracy. The mighty gods defend thee!
Thy lover, Artemidorus."
Here will I stand till Caesar pass along,
And as a suitor will I give him this.
My heart laments that virtue cannot live
Out of the teeth of emulation.
If thou read this, O Caesar, thou mayest live;
If not, the Fates with traitors do contrive. *Exit* .

SCENE IV. Another part of the same street, before the house of Brutus.

Enter Portia and Lucius.

PORTIA. I prithee, boy, run to the Senate House;

Stay not to answer me, but get thee gone.

Why dost thou stay?

LUCIUS.

To know my errand, madam.

PORTIA.

I would have had thee there, and here again,

Ere I can tell thee what thou shouldst do there.

O constancy, be strong upon my side!

Set a huge mountain 'tween my heart and tongue!

I have a man's mind, but a woman's might.

How hard it is for women to keep counsel!

Art thou here yet?

LUCIUS.

Madam, what should I do?

Run to the Capitol, and nothing else?
And so return to you, and nothing else?

PORTIA.

Yes, bring me word, boy, if thy lord look well,
For he went sickly forth; and take good note
What Caesar doth, what suitors press to him.
Hark, boy, what noise is that?

LUCIUS.

I hear none, madam.

PORTIA.

Prithee, listen well.
I heard a bustling rumor like a fray,
And the wind brings it from the Capitol.

LUCIUS.

Sooth, madam, I hear nothing.

Enter the Soothsayer.

PORTIA. Come hither, fellow;
Which way hast thou been?

SOOTHSAYER.

At mine own house, good lady.

PORTIA.
What is't o'clock?

SOOTHSAYER.

About the ninth hour, lady.

PORTIA.

Is Caesar yet gone to the Capitol?

SOOTHSAYER.

Madam, not yet. I go to take my stand

To see him pass on to the Capitol.

PORTIA.

Thou hast some suit to Caesar, hast thou not?

SOOTHSAYER.

That I have, lady. If it will please Caesar

To be so good to Caesar as to hear me,

I shall beseech him to befriend himself.

PORTIA.

Why, know'st thou any harm's intended towards him?

SOOTHSAYER.

None that I know will be, much that I fear may chance.

Good morrow to you. Here the street is narrow,

The throng that follows Caesar at the heels,

Of senators, of praetors, common suitors,

Will crowd a feeble man almost to death.

I'll get me to a place more void and there

Speak to great Caesar as he comes along. *Exit* .

PORTIA.

I must go in. Ay me, how weak a thing

The heart of woman is! O Brutus,

The heavens speed thee in thine enterprise!

Sure, the boy heard me. Brutus hath a suit

That Caesar will not grant. O, I grow faint.

Run, Lucius, and commend me to my lord;

Say I am merry. Come to me again,

And bring me word what he doth say to thee.

Exeunt severally.

ACT III. SCENE I. Rome. Before the Capitol; the Senate sitting above. A crowd of people, among them Artemidorus and the Soothsayer.

Flourish. *Enter* Caesar, Brutus, Cassius, Casca, Decius, Metellus,

Trebonius, Cinna, Antony, Lepidus, Popilius, Publius, and others.

CAESAR.

The ides of March are come.

SOOTHSAYER.

Ay, Caesar, but not gone.

A Hail, Caesar! Read this schedule.

DECIUS.

Trebonius doth desire you to o'er read,
At your best leisure, this his humble suit.

ARTEMIDORUS.

O Caesar, read mine first, for mine's a suit

That touches Caesar nearer. Read it, great Caesar.

CAESAR.

What touches us ourself shall be last served.

ARTEMIDORUS.

Delay not, Caesar; read it instantly.

CAESAR.

What, is the fellow mad?

PUBLIUS.

Sirrah, give place.

CASSIUS.

What, urge you your petitions in the street?

Come to the Capitol.

Caesar goes up to the Senate House, the rest follow.

POPILIUS.

I wish your enterprise today may thrive.

CASSIUS.

What enterprise, Popilius?

POPILIUS.

Fare you well.

Advances to Caesar.

BRUTUS.

What said Popilius Lena?

CASSIUS.

He wish'd today our enterprise might thrive.

I fear our purpose is discovered.

BRUTUS.

Look, how he makes to Caesar. Mark him.

CASSIUS.

Casca,

Be sudden, for we fear prevention.

Brutus, what shall be done? If this be known,

Cassius or Caesar never shall turn back,

For I will slay myself.

BRUTUS.

Cassius, be constant.

Popilius Lena speaks not of our purposes;

For, look, he smiles, and Caesar doth not change.

CASSIUS.

Trebonius knows his time, for, look you, Brutus,

He draws Mark Antony out of the way.

Exeunt Antony and Trebonius.

DECIUS.

Where is Metellus Cimber? Let him

And presently prefer his suit to Caesar.

BRUTUS.

He is address'd; press near and second him.

CINNA.

Casca, you are the first that rears your hand.

CAESAR.

Are we all ready? What is now amiss

That Caesar and his Senate must redress?

METELLUS.

Most high, most mighty, and most puissant Caesar,

Metellus Cimber throws before thy seat

An humble heart. Kneels.

CAESAR.

I must prevent thee, Cimber.

These couchings and these lowly courtesies

Might fire the blood of ordinary men

And turn preordinance and first decree

Into the law of children. Be not fond

To think that Caesar bears such rebel blood

That will be thaw'd from the true quality

With that which melteth fools-I mean sweet words,

Low-crooked court'sies, and base spaniel-fawning.

Thy brother by decree is banished.

If thou dost bend and pray and fawn for him,

I spurn thee like a cur out of my way.

Know, Caesar doth not wrong, nor without cause

Will he be satisfied.

METELLUS.

Is there no voice more worthy than my own,

To sound more sweetly in great Caesar's ear

For the repealing of my banish'd brother?

BRUTUS.

I kiss thy hand, but not in flattery, Caesar,

Desiring thee that Publius Cimber may

Have an immediate freedom of repeal.

CAESAR.

What, Brutus?

CASSIUS.

Pardon, Caesar! Caesar, pardon!

As low as to thy foot doth Cassius fall

To beg enfranchisement for Publius Cimber.

CAESAR.

I could be well moved, if I were as you;

If I could pray to move, prayers would move me;

But I am constant as the northern star,

Of whose true-fix'd and resting quality

There is no fellow in the firmament.

The skies are painted with unnumber'd sparks;

They are all fire and every one doth shine;

But there's but one in all doth hold his place.

So in the world, 'tis furnish'd well with men,

And men are flesh and blood, and apprehensive;

Yet in the number I do know but one

That unassailable holds on his rank,

Unshaked of motion; and that I am he,

Let me a little show it, even in this;

That I was constant Cimber should be banish'd,

And constant do remain to keep him so.

CINNA.

O Caesar-

CAESAR.

Hence! Wilt thou lift up Olympus?

DECIUS.

Great Caesar-

CAESAR.

Doth not Brutus bootless kneel?

CASCA.

Speak, hands, for me!

Casca first, then the other Conspirators

and Marcus Brutus stab Caesar.

CAESAR.

Et tu, Brute?- Then fall, Caesar! Dies.

CINNA.

Liberty! Freedom! Tyranny is dead!

Run hence, proclaim, cry it about the streets.

CASSIUS.

Some to the common pulpits and cry out

"Liberty, freedom, and enfranchisement!"

BRUTUS.

People and senators, be not affrighted,

Fly not, stand still; ambition's debt is paid.

CASCA.

Go to the pulpit, Brutus.

DECIUS.

And Cassius too.

BRUTUS.

Where's Publius?

CINNA.

Here, quite confounded with this mutiny.

METELLUS.

Stand fast together, lest some friend of Caesar's

Should chance-

BRUTUS.

Talk not of standing. Publius, good cheer,

There is no harm intended to your person,

Nor to no Roman else. So tell them, Publius.

CASSIUS.

And leave us, Publius, lest that the people

Rushing on us should do your age some mischief.

BRUTUS.

Do so, and let no man abide this deed

But we the doers.

Re-enter Trebonius.

CASSIUS.

Where is Antony?

TREBONIUS.

Fled to his house amazed.

Men, wives, and children stare, cry out, and run

As it were doomsday.

BRUTUS.

Fates, we will know your pleasures.

That we shall die, we know; 'tis but the time

And drawing days out that men stand upon.

CASSIUS.

Why, he that cuts off twenty years of life

Cuts off so many years of fearing death.

BRUTUS.

Grant that, and then is death a benefit;

So are we Caesar's friends that have abridged

His time of fearing death. Stoop, Romans, stoop,

And let us bathe our hands in Caesar's blood

Up to the elbows, and besmear our swords;

Then walk we forth, even to the marketplace,

And waving our red weapons o'er our heads, Let's all cry, "Peace, freedom, and liberty!"

CASSIUS.

Stoop then, and wash. How many ages hence

Shall this our lofty scene be acted over

In states unborn and accents yet unknown!

BRUTUS.

How many times shall Caesar bleed in sport,

That now on Pompey's basis lies along

No worthier than the dust!

CASSIUS.

So oft as that shall be,

So often shall the knot of us be call'd

The men that gave their country liberty.

DECIUS.

What, shall we forth?

CASSIUS.

Ay, every man away.
Brutus shall lead, and we will grace his heels
With the most boldest and best hearts of Rome.

Enter a Servant.

BRUTUS. Soft, who comes here? A friend of Antony's.

SERVANT.
Thus, Brutus, did my master bid me kneel,
Thus did Mark Antony bid me fall down,
And, being prostrate, thus he bade me say:
Brutus is noble, wise, valiant, and honest;
Caesar was mighty, bold, royal, and loving.
Say I love Brutus and I honor him;
Say I fear'd Caesar, honor'd him, and loved him.
If Brutus will vouchsafe that Antony
May safely come to him and be resolved
How Caesar hath deserved to lie in death,
Mark Antony shall not love Caesar dead

So well as Brutus living, but will follow
The fortunes and affairs of noble Brutus
Thorough the hazards of this untrod state
With all true faith. So says my master Antony.

BRUTUS.

Thy master is a wise and valiant Roman;
I never thought him worse.
Tell him, so please him come unto this place,
He shall be satisfied and, by my honor,
Depart untouch'd.

SERVANT.

I'll fetch him presently. *Exit* .

BRUTUS.

I know that we shall have him well to friend.

CASSIUS.

I wish we may, but yet have I a mind
That fears him much, and my misgiving still

Falls shrewdly to the purpose.

Re-enter Antony.

BRUTUS.

But here comes Antony. Welcome, Mark Antony.

ANTONY.

O mighty Caesar! Dost thou lie so low?
Are all thy conquests, glories, triumphs, spoils,
Shrunk to this little measure? Fare thee well.
I know not, gentlemen, what you intend,
Who else must be let blood, who else is rank.
If I myself, there is no hour so fit
As Caesar's death's hour, nor no instrument
Of half that worth as those your swords, made rich
With the most noble blood of all this world.
I do beseech ye, if you bear me hard,
Now, whilst your purpled hands do reek and smoke,
Fulfill your pleasure. Live a thousand years,
I shall not find myself so apt to die;

No place will please me so, no means of death,
As here by Caesar, and by you cut off,
The choice and master spirits of this age.

BRUTUS.
O Antony, beg not your death of us!
Though now we must appear bloody and cruel,
As, by our hands and this our present act
You see we do, yet see you but our hands
And this the bleeding business they have done.
Our hearts you see not; they are pitiful;
And pity to the general wrong of Rome-
As fire drives out fire, so pity pity-
Hath done this deed on Caesar. For your part,
To you our swords have leaden points, Mark Antony;
Our arms in strength of malice, and our hearts
Of brothers' temper, do receive you in
With all kind love, good thoughts, and reverence.

CASSIUS.
Your voice shall be as strong as any man's

In the disposing of new dignities.

BRUTUS.

Only be patient till we have appeased
The multitude, beside themselves with fear,
And then we will deliver you the cause
Why I, that did love Caesar when I struck him,
Have thus proceeded.

ANTONY.

I doubt not of your wisdom.

Let each man render me his bloody hand.
First, Marcus Brutus, will I shake with you;
Next, Caius Cassius, do I take your hand;
Now, Decius Brutus, yours; now yours, Metellus;
Yours, Cinna; and, my valiant Casca, yours;
Though last, not least in love, yours, good Trebonius.

Gentlemen all-alas, what shall I say?
My credit now stands on such slippery ground,

That one of two bad ways you must conceit me,
Either a coward or a flatterer.

That I did love thee, Caesar, O, 'tis true!
If then thy spirit look upon us now,
Shall it not grieve thee dearer than thy death
To see thy Antony making his peace,
Shaking the bloody fingers of thy foes,
Most noble! In the presence of thy corse?
Had I as many eyes as thou hast wounds,
Weeping as fast as they stream forth thy blood,
It would become me better than to close
In terms of friendship with thine enemies.
Pardon me, Julius! Here wast thou bay'd, brave hart,
Here didst thou fall, and here thy hunters stand,
Sign'd in thy spoil, and crimson'd in thy Lethe.
O world, thou wast the forest to this hart,
And this, indeed, O world, the heart of thee.
How like a deer strucken by many princes
Dost thou here lie!

CASSIUS.

Mark Antony-

ANTONY.

Pardon me, Caius Cassius.

The enemies of Caesar shall say this:

Then, in a friend, it is cold modesty.

CASSIUS.

I blame you not for praising Caesar so;

But what compact mean you to have with us?

Will you be prick'd in number of our friends,

Or shall we on, and not depend on you?

ANTONY.

Therefore I took your hands, but was indeed

Sway'd from the point by looking down on Caesar.

Friends am I with you all and love you all,

Upon this hope that you shall give me reasons

Why and wherein Caesar was dangerous.

BRUTUS.

Or else were this a savage spectacle.
Our reasons are so full of good regard
That were you, Antony, the son of Caesar,
You should be satisfied.

ANTONY.
That's all I seek;
And am moreover suitor that I may
Produce his body to the marketplace,
And in the pulpit, as becomes a friend,
Speak in the order of his funeral.

BRUTUS.
You shall, Mark Antony.

CASSIUS.

Brutus, a word with you.

[Aside to Brutus.] You know not what you do. Do not consent

That Antony speak in his funeral.

Know you how much the people may be moved

By that which he will utter?

BRUTUS.

By your pardon,

I will myself into the pulpit first,

And show the reason of our Caesar's death.

What Antony shall speak, I will protest

He speaks by leave and by permission,

And that we are contented Caesar shall

Have all true rites and lawful ceremonies.

It shall advantage more than do us wrong.

CASSIUS.

I know not what may fall; I like it not.

BRUTUS.

Mark Antony, here, take you Caesar's body.

You shall not in your funeral speech blame us,

But speak all good you can devise of Caesar,

And say you do't by our permission,

Else shall you not have any hand at all

About his funeral. And you shall speak

In the same pulpit whereto I am going,

After my speech is ended.

ANTONY.

Be it so,

I do desire no more.

BRUTUS.

Prepare the body then, and follow us.

Exeunt all but Antony.

ANTONY.

O, pardon me, thou bleeding piece of earth,

That I am meek and gentle with these butchers!

Thou art the ruins of the noblest man

That ever lived in the tide of times.

Woe to the hand that shed this costly blood!

Over thy wounds now do I prophesy

(Which like dumb mouths do ope their ruby lips

To beg the voice and utterance of my tongue)

A curse shall light upon the limbs of men;

Domestic fury and fierce civil strife

Shall cumber all the parts of Italy;

Blood and destruction shall be so in use,

And dreadful objects so familiar,

That mothers shall but smile when they behold

Their infants quarter'd with the hands of war;

All pity choked with custom of fell deeds,

And Caesar's spirit ranging for revenge,

With Ate by his side come hot from hell,

Shall in these confines with a monarch's voice

Cry "Havoc!" and let slip the dogs of war,

That this foul deed shall smell above the earth

With carrion men, groaning for burial.

Enter a Servant.

You serve Octavius Caesar, do you not?

SERVANT.

I do, Mark Antony.

ANTONY.

Caesar did write for him to come to Rome.

SERVANT.

He did receive his letters, and is coming,

And bid me say to you by word of mouth-

O Caesar! Sees the body.

ANTONY.

Thy heart is big; get thee apart and weep.

Passion, I see, is catching, for mine eyes,

Seeing those beads of sorrow stand in thine, Began to water. Is thy master coming?

SERVANT.

He lies tonight within seven leagues of Rome.

ANTONY.
Post back with speed and tell him what hath chanced.
Here is a mourning Rome, a dangerous Rome,
No Rome of safety for Octavius yet;
Hie hence, and tell him so. Yet stay awhile,
Thou shalt not back till I have borne this corse
Into the marketplace. There shall I try,
In my oration, how the people take
The cruel issue of these bloody men,
According to the which thou shalt discourse
To young Octavius of the state of things.
Lend me your hand. *Exeunt* with Caesar's body.

SCENE II. The Forum.

Enter Brutus and Cassius, and a throng of Citizens.

CITIZENS. We will be satisfied! Let us be satisfied!

BRUTUS.

Then follow me and give me audience, friends.

Cassius, go you into the other street

And part the numbers.

Those that will hear me speak, let 'em stay here;

Those that will follow Cassius, go with him;

And public reasons shall be rendered

Of Caesar's death.

FIRST CITIZEN.

I will hear Brutus speak.

SECOND CITIZEN.

I will hear Cassius and compare their reasons,

When severally we hear them rendered.

Exit Cassius, with some Citizens.

Brutus goes into the pulpit.

THIRD CITIZEN.

The noble Brutus is ascended. Silence!

BRUTUS.

Be patient till the last.

Romans, countrymen, and lovers! Hear me for my cause, and be silent, that you may hear. Believe me for mine honor, and have respect to mine honor, that you may believe. Censure me in your wisdom, and awake your senses, that you may the better judge.

If

there be any in this assembly, any dear friend of Caesar's, to him I say that Brutus' love to Caesar was no less than his.

If

then that friend demand why Brutus rose against Caesar, this is my answer: Not that I loved Caesar less, but that I loved Rome more. Had you rather Caesar were living and die all slaves, than that Caesar were dead to live all freemen? As Caesar loved me, I weep for him; as he was fortunate, I rejoice at it; as he was valiant, I honor him; but as he was ambitious, I slew him. There is tears for his love, joy for his fortune, honor for his valor, and death for his ambition. Who is here so base that would be a bondman? If any, speak, for him have I offended. Who is here so rude that would not be a Roman? If any, speak, for him have I offended. Who is here so vile that will not love his country? If any, speak, for him have I offended. I pause for a reply.

ALL.

None, Brutus, none.

BRUTUS.

Then none have I offended. I have done no more to Caesar than you shall do to Brutus. The question of his death is enrolled in the Capitol, his glory not extenuated, wherein he was worthy, nor his offenses enforced, for which he suffered death.

Enter Antony and others, with Caesar's body.

Here comes his body, mourned by Mark Antony, who, though he had
no hand in his death, shall receive the benefit of his dying, a
place in the commonwealth, as which of you shall not? With
this I
depart-that, as I slew my best lover for the good of Rome, I
have the same dagger for myself, when it shall please my country
to need my death.

ALL.
Live, Brutus, live, live!

FIRST CITIZEN.

Bring him with triumph home unto his house.

SECOND CITIZEN.
Give him a statue with his ancestors.

THIRD CITIZEN.

Let him be Caesar.

FOURTH CITIZEN.

Caesar's better parts

Shall be crown'd in Brutus.

FIRST CITIZEN.

We'll bring him to his house with shouts and clamors.

BRUTUS.

My countrymen-

SECOND CITIZEN.

Peace! Silence! Brutus speaks.

FIRST CITIZEN.

Peace, ho!

BRUTUS.

Good countrymen, let me depart alone,

And, for my sake, stay here with Antony.

Do grace to Caesar's corse, and grace his speech

Tending to Caesar's glories, which Mark Antony,

By our permission, is allow'd to make.

I do entreat you, not a man depart,

Save I alone, till Antony have spoke. *Exit* .

FIRST CITIZEN.

Stay, ho, and let us hear Mark Antony.

THIRD CITIZEN.

Let him go up into the public chair;

We'll hear him. Noble Antony, go up.

ANTONY.

For Brutus' sake, I am beholding to you.

Goes into the pulpit.

FOURTH CITIZEN.

What does he say of Brutus?

THIRD CITIZEN.

He says, for Brutus' sake,

He finds himself beholding to us all.

FOURTH CITIZEN.

'Twere best he speak no harm of Brutus here.

FIRST CITIZEN.

This Caesar was a tyrant.

THIRD CITIZEN.

Nay, that's certain.

We are blest that Rome is rid of him.

SECOND CITIZEN.

Peace! Let us hear what Antony can say.

ANTONY.

You gentle Romans-

ALL.

Peace, ho! Let us hear him.

ANTONY.

Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears!

I come to bury Caesar, not to praise him.

The evil that men do lives after them,

The good is oft interred with their bones;

So let it be with Caesar. The noble Brutus

Hath told you Caesar was ambitious;

If it were so, it was a grievous fault,

And grievously hath Caesar answer'd it.

Here, under leave of Brutus and the rest-

For Brutus is an honorable man;

So are they all, all honorable men-

Come I to speak in Caesar's funeral.

He was my friend, faithful and just to me;

But Brutus says he was ambitious,

And Brutus is an honorable man.

He hath brought many captives home to Rome,

Whose ransoms did the general coffers fill.

Did this in Caesar seem ambitious?

When that the poor have cried, Caesar hath wept;

Ambition should be made of sterner stuff:

Yet Brutus says he was ambitious,

And Brutus is an honorable man.

You all did see that on the Lupercal

I thrice presented him a kingly crown,

Which he did thrice refuse. Was this ambition?

Yet Brutus says he was ambitious,

And sure he is an honorable man.

I speak not to disprove what Brutus spoke,

But here I am to speak what I do know.

You all did love him once, not without cause;

What cause withholds you then to mourn for him?

O judgement, thou art fled to brutish beasts, And men have lost their reason. Bear with me;

My heart is in the coffin there with Caesar,

And I must pause till it come back to me.

FIRST CITIZEN.

Methinks there is much reason in his sayings.

SECOND CITIZEN.

If thou consider rightly of the matter,

Caesar has had great wrong.

THIRD CITIZEN.

Has he, masters?

I fear there will a worse come in his place.

FOURTH CITIZEN.

Mark'd ye his words? He would not take the crown;

Therefore 'tis certain he was not ambitious.

FIRST CITIZEN.

If it be found so, some will dear abide it.

SECOND CITIZEN.

Poor soul, his eyes are red as fire with weeping.

THIRD CITIZEN.

There's not a nobler man in Rome than Antony.

FOURTH CITIZEN.

Now mark him, he begins again to speak.

ANTONY.

But yesterday the word of Caesar might
Have stood against the world. Now lies he there,
And none so poor to do him reverence.
O masters! If I were disposed to stir
Your hearts and minds to mutiny and rage,
I should do Brutus wrong and Cassius wrong,
Who, you all know, are honorable men.

I will not do them wrong; I rather choose
To wrong the dead, to wrong myself and you,
Than I will wrong such honorable men.
But here's a parchment with the seal of Caesar;
I found it in his closet, 'tis his will.
Let but the commons hear this testament-
Which, pardon me, I do not mean to read-
And they would go and kiss dead Caesar's wounds
And dip their napkins in his sacred blood,
Yea, beg a hair of him for memory,
And, dying, mention it within their wills,
Bequeathing it as a rich legacy
Unto their issue.

FOURTH CITIZEN.

We'll hear the will. Read it, Mark Antony.

ALL.

The will, the will! We will hear Caesar's will.

ANTONY.

Have patience, gentle friends, I must not read it;

It is not meet you know how Caesar loved you.

You are not wood, you are not stones, but men;

And, being men, hearing the will of Caesar,

It will inflame you, it will make you mad.

'Tis good you know not that you are his heirs,

For if you should, O, what would come of it!

FOURTH CITIZEN.

Read the will; we'll hear it, Antony.

You shall read us the will, Caesar's will.

ANTONY.

Will you be patient? Will you stay awhile?

I have o'ershot myself to tell you of it.

I fear I wrong the honorable men

Whose daggers have stabb'd Caesar; I do fear it.

FOURTH CITIZEN.

They were traitors. Honorable men!

ALL.

The will! The testament!

SECOND CITIZEN.

They were villains, murtherers. The will!

Read the will!

ANTONY.

You will compel me then to read the will?
Then make a ring about the corse of Caesar,
And let me show you him that made the will.

Shall I descend? And will you give me leave?

ALL.

Come down.

SECOND CITIZEN.

Descend.

He comes down from the pulpit.

THIRD CITIZEN.

You shall have leave.

FOURTH CITIZEN.

A ring, stand round.

FIRST CITIZEN.

Stand from the hearse, stand from the body.

SECOND CITIZEN.

Room for Antony, most noble Antony.

ANTONY.

Nay, press not so upon me, stand far off.

ALL.

Stand back; room, bear back!

ANTONY.

If you have tears, prepare to shed them now.
You all do know this mantle. I remember
The first time ever Caesar put it on;
'Twas on a summer's evening, in his tent,
That day he overcame the Nervii.
Look, in this place ran Cassius' dagger through;
See what a rent the envious Casca made;
Through this the well-beloved Brutus stabb'd;
And as he pluck'd his cursed steel away,
Mark how the blood of Caesar follow'd it,
As rushing out of doors, to be resolved
If Brutus so unkindly knock'd, or no;
For Brutus, as you know, was Caesar's angel.

Judge, O you gods, how dearly Caesar loved him!

This was the most unkindest cut of all;

For when the noble Caesar saw him stab,

Ingratitude, more strong than traitors' arms,

Quite vanquish'd him. Then burst his mighty heart,

And, in his mantle muffling up his face,

Even at the base of Pompey's statue,

Which all the while ran blood, great Caesar fell.

O, what a fall was there, my countrymen!

Then I, and you, and all of us fell down,

Whilst bloody treason flourish'd over us.

O, now you weep, and I perceive you feel

The dint of pity. These are gracious drops.

Kind souls, what weep you when you but behold

Our Caesar's vesture wounded? Look you here,

Here is himself, marr'd, as you see, with traitors.

FIRST CITIZEN.

O piteous spectacle!

SECOND CITIZEN.

O noble Caesar!

THIRD CITIZEN.

O woeful day!

FOURTH CITIZEN.

O traitors villains!

FIRST CITIZEN.

O most bloody sight!

SECOND CITIZEN.

We will be revenged.

ALL.

Revenge! About! Seek! Burn! Fire! Kill!

Slay! Let not a traitor live!

ANTONY.

Stay, countrymen.

FIRST CITIZEN.

Peace there! Hear the noble Antony.

SECOND CITIZEN.

We'll hear him, we'll follow him, we'll die with him.

ANTONY.

Good friends, sweet friends, let me not stir you up
To such a sudden flood of mutiny.

They that have done this deed are honorable.
What private griefs they have, alas, I know not,
That made them do it. They are wise and honorable,
And will, no doubt, with reasons answer you.

I come not, friends, to steal away your hearts.

I am no orator, as Brutus is;
But, as you know me all, a plain blunt man,
That love my friend, and that they know full well
That gave me public leave to speak of him.
For I have neither wit, nor words, nor worth,
Action, nor utterance, nor the power of speech,
To stir men's blood. I only speak right on;
I tell you that which you yourselves do know;
Show you sweet Caesar's wounds, poor dumb mouths,
And bid them speak for me. But were I Brutus,
And Brutus Antony, there were an Antony
Would ruffle up your spirits and put a tongue
In every wound of Caesar that should move
The stones of Rome to rise and mutiny.

ALL.

We'll mutiny.

FIRST CITIZEN.

We'll burn the house of Brutus.

THIRD CITIZEN.

Away, then! Come, seek the conspirators.

ANTONY.

Yet hear me, countrymen; yet hear me speak.

ALL.

Peace, ho! Hear Antony, most noble Antony!

ANTONY.

Why, friends, you go to do you know not what.
Wherein hath Caesar thus deserved your loves?

Alas, you know not; I must tell you then.
You have forgot the will I told you of.

ALL.

Most true, the will! Let's stay and hear the will.

ANTONY.

Here is the will, and under Caesar's seal.

To every Roman citizen he gives,

To every several man, seventy-five drachmas.

SECOND CITIZEN.

Most noble Caesar! We'll revenge his death.

THIRD CITIZEN.

O royal Caesar!

ANTONY.

Hear me with patience.

ALL.

Peace, ho!

ANTONY.

Moreover, he hath left you all his walks,

His private arbors, and new-planted orchards,

On this side Tiber; he hath left them you,

And to your heirs forever-common pleasures,

To walk abroad and recreate yourselves.

Here was a Caesar! When comes such another?

FIRST CITIZEN.

Never, never. Come, away, away!

We'll burn his body in the holy place

And with the brands fire the traitors' houses.

Take up the body.

SECOND CITIZEN.

Go fetch fire.

THIRD CITIZEN.

Pluck down benches.

FOURTH CITIZEN.

Pluck down forms, windows, anything.

Exeunt Citizens with the body.

ANTONY.

Now let it work. Mischief, thou art afoot,

Take thou what course thou wilt.

Enter a Servant.

How now, fellow?

SERVANT.

Sir, Octavius is already come to Rome.

ANTONY.

Where is he?

SERVANT.

He and Lepidus are at Caesar's house.

ANTONY.

And thither will I straight to visit him.
He comes upon a wish. Fortune is merry,
And in this mood will give us anything.

SERVANT.

I heard him say Brutus and Cassius
Are rid like madmen through the gates of Rome.

ANTONY.

Be like they had some notice of the people,
How I had moved them. Bring me to Octavius. *Exeunt* .

SCENE III. A street.

Enter Cinna the poet.

CINNA. I dreamt tonight that I did feast with Caesar, And things unluckily charge my fantasy.

I have no will to wander forth of doors,

Yet something leads me forth.

Enter Citizens.

FIRST CITIZEN. What is your name?

SECOND CITIZEN.

Whither are you going?

THIRD CITIZEN.

Where do you dwell?

FOURTH CITIZEN.

Are you a married man or a bachelor?

SECOND CITIZEN.

Answer every man directly.

FIRST CITIZEN.

Ay, and briefly.

FOURTH CITIZEN.

Ay, and wisely.

THIRD CITIZEN.

Ay, and truly, you were best.

CINNA.

What is my name? Whither am I going? Where do I dwell?
Am I
a married man or a bachelor? Then, to answer every man directly
and briefly, wisely and truly: wisely I say, I am a bachelor.

SECOND CITIZEN.

That's as much as to say they are fools that marry.

You'll bear me a bang for that, I fear. Proceed directly.

CINNA.

Directly, I am going to Caesar's funeral.

FIRST CITIZEN.

As a friend or an enemy?

CINNA.

As a friend.

SECOND CITIZEN.

That matter is answered directly.

FOURTH CITIZEN.

For your dwelling, briefly.

CINNA.

Briefly, I dwell by the Capitol.

THIRD CITIZEN.

Your name, sir, truly.

CINNA.

Truly, my name is Cinna.

FIRST CITIZEN.

Tear him to pieces, he's a conspirator.

CINNA.

I am Cinna the poet, I am Cinna the poet.

FOURTH CITIZEN.

Tear him for his bad verses, tear him for his bad verses.

CINNA.

I am not Cinna the conspirator.

FOURTH CITIZEN.

It is no matter, his name's Cinna. Pluck but his

name out of his heart, and turn him going.

THIRD CITIZEN.

Tear him, tear him! Come, brands, ho,

firebrands. To

Brutus', to Cassius'; burn all. Some to Decius' house, and some

to Casca's, some to Ligarius'. Away, go! *Exeunt* .

ACT IV. SCENE I. A house in Rome. Antony, Octavius, and Lepidus, seated at a table.

ANTONY. These many then shall die, their names are prick'd.

OCTAVIUS.

Your brother too must die; consent you, Lepidus?

LEPIDUS.

I do consent-

OCTAVIUS.

Prick him down, Antony.

LEPIDUS.

Upon condition Publius shall not live,
Who is your sister's son, Mark Antony.

ANTONY.

He shall not live; look, with a spot I damn him.
But, Lepidus, go you to Caesar's house,
Fetch the will hither, and we shall determine
How to cut off some charge in legacies.

LEPIDUS.

What, shall I find you here?

OCTAVIUS.

Or here, or at the Capitol. *Exit* Lepidus.

ANTONY.

This is a slight unmeritable man,

Meet to be sent on errands. Is it fit,

The three-fold world divided, he should stand

One of the three to share it?

OCTAVIUS.

So you thought him,

And took his voice who should be prick'd to die

In our black sentence and proscription.

ANTONY.

Octavius, I have seen more days than you,

And though we lay these honors on this man

To ease ourselves of divers slanderous loads,

He shall but bear them as the ass bears gold,

To groan and sweat under the business,

Either led or driven, as we point the way;

And having brought our treasure where we will,

Then take we down his load and turn him off,
Like to the empty ass, to shake his ears
And graze in commons.

OCTAVIUS.
You may do your will,
But he's a tried and valiant soldier.

ANTONY.
So is my horse, Octavius, and for that
I do appoint him store of provender.
It is a creature that I teach to fight,
To wind, to stop, to run directly on,
His corporal motion govern'd by my spirit.
And, in some taste, is Lepidus but so:
He must be taught, and train'd, and bid go forth;
A barren-spirited fellow, one that feeds
On objects, arts, and imitations,
Which, out of use and staled by other men,
Begin his fashion. Do not talk of him
But as a property. And now, Octavius,

Listen great things. Brutus and Cassius
Are levying powers; we must straight make head;
Therefore let our alliance be combined,
Our best friends made, our means stretch'd;
And let us presently go sit in council,
How covert matters may be best disclosed,
And open perils surest answered.

OCTAVIUS.
Let us do so, for we are at the stake,
And bay'd about with many enemies;
And some that smile have in their hearts, I fear,
Millions of mischiefs. *Exeunt* .

SCENE II. Camp near Sardis. Before Brutus' tent. Drum.

Enter Brutus, Lucilius, Lucius, and Soldiers; Titinius and

Pindarus meet them.

BRUTUS.
Stand, ho!

LUCILIUS.

Give the word, ho, and stand.

BRUTUS.

What now, Lucilius, is Cassius near?

LUCILIUS.

He is at hand, and Pindarus is come

To do you salutation from his master.

BRUTUS.

He greets me well. Your master, Pindarus,

In his own change, or by ill officers,

Hath given me some worthy cause to wish

Things done undone; but if he be at hand,

I shall be satisfied.

PINDARUS.

I do not doubt

But that my noble master will appear
Such as he is, full of regard and honor.

BRUTUS.
He is not doubted. A word, Lucilius,
How he received you. Let me be resolved.

LUCILIUS.
With courtesy and with respect enough,
But not with such familiar instances,
Nor with such free and friendly conference,
As he hath used of old.

BRUTUS.
Thou hast described
A hot friend cooling. Ever note, Lucilius,
When love begins to sicken and decay
It useth an enforced ceremony.
There are no tricks in plain and simple faith;
But hollow men, like horses hot at hand,
Make gallant show and promise of their mettle;

But when they should endure the bloody spur,

They fall their crests and like deceitful jades

Sink in the trial. Comes his army on?

LUCILIUS.

They meant his night in Sard is to be quarter'd;

The greater part, the horse in general,

Are come with Cassius. Low march within.

BRUTUS.

Hark, he is arrived.

March gently on to meet him.

Enter Cassius and his Powers.

CASSIUS. Stand, ho!

BRUTUS.

Stand, ho! Speak the word along.

FIRST SOLDIER.

Stand!

SECOND SOLDIER.

Stand!

THIRD SOLDIER.

Stand!

CASSIUS.

Most noble brother, you have done me wrong.

BRUTUS.

Judge me, you gods! Wrong I mine enemies?

And, if not so, how should I wrong a brother?

CASSIUS.

Brutus, this sober form of yours hides wrongs, And when you do them-

BRUTUS.

Cassius, be content,

Speak your griefs softly, I do know you well.

Before the eyes of both our armies here,

Which should perceive nothing but love from us,

Let us not wrangle. Bid them move away;

Then in my tent, Cassius, enlarge your griefs,

And I will give you audience.

CASSIUS.

Pindarus,

Bid our commanders lead their charges off

A little from this ground.

BRUTUS.

Lucilius, do you the like, and let no man

Come to our tent till we have done our conference.

Let Lucius and Titinius guard our door. *Exeunt* .

SCENE III. Brutus' tent.

Enter Brutus and Cassius.

CASSIUS. That you have wrong'd me doth appear in this:
You have condemn'd and noted Lucius Pella
For taking bribes here of the Sardians,
Wherein my letters, praying on his side,
Because I knew the man, were slighted off.

BRUTUS.
You wrong'd yourself to write in such a case.

CASSIUS.
In such a time as this it is not meet
That every nice offense should bear his comment.

BRUTUS.
Let me tell you, Cassius, you yourself
Are much condemn'd to have an itching palm,
To sell and mart your offices for gold
To undeservers.

CASSIUS.

I an itching palm?
You know that you are Brutus that speaks this,
Or, by the gods, this speech were else your last.

BRUTUS.
The name of Cassius honors this corruption,
And chastisement doth therefore hide his head.

CASSIUS.
Chastisement?

BRUTUS.

Remember March, the ides of March remember.
Did not great Julius bleed for justice' sake?
What villain touch'd his body, that did stab,
And not for justice? What, shall one of us,
That struck the foremost man of all this world

But for supporting robbers, shall we now
Contaminate our fingers with base bribes
And sell the mighty space of our large honors
For so much trash as may be grasped thus?
I had rather be a dog, and bay the moon,
Than such a Roman.

CASSIUS.

Brutus, bait not me,
I'll not endure it. You forget yourself
To hedge me in. I am a soldier, I,
Older in practice, abler than yourself
To make conditions.

BRUTUS.

Go to, you are not, Cassius.

CASSIUS.

I am.

BRUTUS.

I say you are not.

CASSIUS.

Urge me no more, I shall forget myself;

Have mind upon your health, tempt me no farther.

BRUTUS.

Away, slight man!

CASSIUS.

Is't possible?

BRUTUS.

Hear me, for I will speak.

Must I give way and room to your rash choler?

Shall I be frighted when a madman stares?

CASSIUS.

O gods, ye gods! Must I endure all this?

BRUTUS.
All this? Ay, more. Fret till your proud heart break.
Go show your slaves how choleric you are,
And make your bondmen tremble. Must I bouge?
Must I observe you? Must I stand and crouch
Under your testy humor? By the gods,
You shall digest the venom of your spleen,
Though it do split you, for, from this day forth,
I'll use you for my mirth, yea, for my laughter,
When you are waspish.

CASSIUS.

Is it come to this?

BRUTUS.
You say you are a better soldier:

Let it appear so, make your vaunting true,
And it shall please me well. For mine own part,
I shall be glad to learn of noble men.

CASSIUS.
You wrong me every way, you wrong me, Brutus.

I said, an elder soldier, not a better.
Did I say "better"?

BRUTUS.

If you did, I care not.

CASSIUS.
When Caesar lived, he durst not thus have moved me.

BRUTUS.

Peace, peace! You durst not so have tempted him.

CASSIUS.

I durst not?

BRUTUS.

No.

CASSIUS.

What, durst not tempt him?

BRUTUS.

For your life you durst not.

CASSIUS.

Do not presume too much upon my love;

I may do that I shall be sorry for.

BRUTUS.

You have done that you should be sorry for.

There is no terror, Cassius, in your threats,

For I am arm'd so strong in honesty,
That they pass by me as the idle wind
Which I respect not. I did send to you
For certain sums of gold, which you denied me,
For I can raise no money by vile means.
By heaven, I had rather coin my heart
And drop my blood for drachmas than to wring
From the hard hands of peasants their vile trash
By any indirection. I did send
To you for gold to pay my legions,
Which you denied me. Was that done like Cassius?

Should I have answer'd Caius Cassius so?
When Marcus Brutus grows so covetous
To lock such rascal counters from his friends,
Be ready, gods, with all your thunderbolts,
Dash him to pieces!

CASSIUS.
I denied you not.

BRUTUS.

You did.

CASSIUS.

I did not. He was but a fool
That brought my answer back. Brutus hath rived my heart.
A friend should bear his friend's infirmities,
But Brutus makes mine greater than they are.

BRUTUS.

I do not, till you practise them on me.

CASSIUS.

You love me not.

BRUTUS.

I do not like your faults.

CASSIUS.

A friendly eye could never see such faults.

BRUTUS.

A flatterer's would not, though they do appear
As huge as high Olympus.

CASSIUS.

Come, Antony, and young Octavius, come,
Revenge yourselves alone on Cassius,
For Cassius is aweary of the world:
Hated by one he loves; braved by his brother;
Check'd like a bondman; all his faults observed,
Set in a notebook, learn'd and conn'd by rote,
To cast into my teeth. O, I could weep
My spirit from mine eyes! There is my dagger,
And here my naked breast; within, a heart
Dearer than Pluto's mine, richer than gold.
If that thou best a Roman, take it forth;
I, that denied thee gold, will give my heart.
Strike, as thou didst at Caesar, for I know,

When thou didst hate him worst, thou lovedst him better
Than ever thou lovedst Cassius.

BRUTUS.

Sheathe your dagger.
Be angry when you will, it shall have scope;
Do what you will, dishonor shall be humor.
O Cassius, you are yoked with a lamb,
That carries anger as the flint bears fire,
Who, much enforced, shows a hasty spark
And straight is cold again.

CASSIUS.
Hath Cassius lived
To be but mirth and laughter to his Brutus,
When grief and blood ill-temper'd vexeth him?

BRUTUS.

When I spoke that, I was ill-temper'd too.

CASSIUS.

Do you confess so much? Give me your hand.

BRUTUS.

And my heart too.

CASSIUS.

O Brutus!

BRUTUS.

What's the matter?

CASSIUS.

Have not you love enough to bear with me
When that rash humor which my mother gave me
Makes me forgetful?

BRUTUS.

Yes, Cassius, and from henceforth,

When you are overearnest with your Brutus,

He'll think your mother chides, and leave you so.

POET.

[Within.] Let me go in to see the generals.

There is some grudge between 'em, 'tis not meet

They be alone.

LUCILIUS.

[Within.] You shall not come to them.

POET.

[Within.] Nothing but death shall stay me.

Enter Poet, followed by Lucilius, Titinius, and Lucius.

CASSIUS. How now, what's the matter?

POET.

For shame, you generals! What do you mean?

Love, and be friends, as two such men should be;

For I have seen more years, I'm sure, than ye.

CASSIUS.

Ha, ha! How vilely doth this cynic rhyme!

BRUTUS.

Get you hence, sirrah; saucy fellow, hence!

CASSIUS.

Bear with him, Brutus; 'tis his fashion.

BRUTUS.

I'll know his humor when he knows his time.

What should the wars do with these jigging fools?

Companion, hence!

CASSIUS.

Away, away, be gone! *Exit* Poet.

BRUTUS.

Lucilius and Titinius, bid the commanders

Prepare to lodge their companies tonight.

CASSIUS.

And come yourselves and bring Messala with you

Immediately to us. *Exeunt* Lucilius and Titinius.

BRUTUS.

Lucius, a bowl of wine! *Exit* Lucius.

CASSIUS.

I did not think you could have been so angry.

BRUTUS.

O Cassius, I am sick of many griefs.

CASSIUS.

Of your philosophy you make no use,

If you give place to accidental evils.

BRUTUS.

No man bears sorrow better. Portia is dead.

CASSIUS.

Ha? Portia?

BRUTUS.

She is dead.

CASSIUS.

How 'scaped killing when I cross'd you so?

O insupportable and touching loss!

Upon what sickness?

BRUTUS.

Impatient of my absence,

And grief that young Octavius with Mark Antony

Have made themselves so strong-for with her death

That tidings came-with this she fell distract,

And (her attendants absent) swallow'd fire.

CASSIUS.

And died so?

BRUTUS.

Even so.

CASSIUS.

O ye immortal gods!

Re-enter Lucius, with wine and taper.

BRUTUS.

Speak no more of her. Give me a bowl of wine.

In this I bury all unkindness, Cassius. Drinks.

CASSIUS.

My heart is thirsty for that noble pledge.
Fill, Lucius, till the wine o'erswell the cup;
I cannot drink too much of Brutus' love. Drinks.

BRUTUS.
Come in, Titinius! *Exit* Lucius.
Re-enter Titinius, with Messala.

Welcome, good Messala.
Now sit we close about this taper here,
And call in question our necessities.

CASSIUS.
Portia, art thou gone?

BRUTUS.

No more, I pray you.
Messala, I have here received letters
That young Octavius and Mark Antony
Come down upon us with a mighty power,
Bending their expedition toward Philippi.

MESSALA.
Myself have letters of the selfsame tenure.

BRUTUS.

With what addition?

MESSALA.
That by proscription and bills of outlawry
Octavius, Antony, and Lepidus
Have put to death an hundred senators.

BRUTUS.
There in our letters do not well agree;
Mine speak of seventy senators that died

By their proscriptions, Cicero being one.

CASSIUS.

Cicero one!

MESSALA.

Cicero is dead,

And by that order of proscription.

Had you your letters from your wife, my lord?

BRUTUS.

No, Messala.

MESSALA.

Nor nothing in your letters writ of her?

BRUTUS.

Nothing, Messala.

MESSALA.

That, methinks, is strange.

BRUTUS.

Why ask you? Hear you aught of her in yours?

MESSALA.

No, my lord.

BRUTUS.

Now, as you are a Roman, tell me true.

MESSALA.

Then like a Roman bear the truth I tell:

For certain she is dead, and by strange manner.

BRUTUS.

Why, farewell, Portia. We must die, Messala.

With meditating that she must die once

I have the patience to endure it now.

MESSALA.

Even so great men great losses should endure.

CASSIUS.

I have as much of this in art as you,

But yet my nature could not bear it so.

BRUTUS.

Well, to our work alive. What do you think

Of marching to Philippi presently?

CASSIUS.

I do not think it good.

BRUTUS.

Your reason?

CASSIUS.

This it is:
'Tis better that the enemy seek us;
So shall he waste his means, weary his soldiers,
Doing himself offense, whilst we lying still
Are full of rest, defense, and nimbleness.

BRUTUS.
Good reasons must of force give place to better.
The people 'twixt Philippi and this ground
Do stand but in a forced affection,
For they have grudged us contribution.
The enemy, marching along by them,
By them shall make a fuller number up,
Come on refresh'd, new-added, and encouraged;
From which advantage shall we cut him off
If at Philippi we do face him there,
These people at our back.

CASSIUS.

Hear me, good brother.

BRUTUS.

Under your pardon. You must note beside
That we have tried the utmost of our friends,
Our legions are brim-full, our cause is ripe:
The enemy increaseth every day;
We, at the height, are ready to decline.
There is a tide in the affairs of men
Which taken at the flood leads on to fortune;
Omitted, all the voyage of their life
Is bound in shallows and in miseries.
On such a full sea are we now afloat,
And we must take the current when it serves,
Or lose our ventures.

CASSIUS.

Then, with your will, go on;
We'll along ourselves and meet them at Philippi.

BRUTUS.

The deep of night is crept upon our talk,

And nature must obey necessity,

Which we will niggard with a little rest.

There is no more to say?

CASSIUS.

No more. Good night.

Early tomorrow will we rise and hence.

BRUTUS.

Lucius!

Re-enter Lucius.

My gown. *Exit* Lucius.

Farewell, good Messala;

Good night, Titinius; noble, noble Cassius,

Good night and good repose.

CASSIUS.

O my dear brother!

This was an ill beginning of the night.

Never come such division 'tween our souls!

Let it not, Brutus.

BRUTUS.

Everything is well.

CASSIUS.

Good night, my lord.

BRUTUS.

Good night, good brother.

TITINIUS.

MESSALA. Good night, Lord Brutus.

BRUTUS.

Farewell, everyone.

Exeunt all but Brutus.

Re-enter Lucius, with the gown.

Give me the gown. Where is thy instrument?

LUCIUS.

Here in the tent.

BRUTUS.

What, thou speak'st drowsily?

Poor knave, I blame thee not, thou art o'erwatch'd.

Call Claudio and some other of my men,

I'll have them sleep on cushions in my tent.

LUCIUS.

Varro and Claudio!

Enter Varro and Claudio.

VARRO. Calls my lord?

BRUTUS.

I pray you, sirs, lie in my tent and sleep;

It may be I shall raise you by and by

On business to my brother Cassius.

VARRO.

So please you, we will stand and watch your pleasure.

BRUTUS.

I would not have it so. Lie down, good sirs.

It may be I shall otherwise bethink me.

Look Lucius, here's the book I sought for so;

I put it in the pocket of my gown.

Varro and Claudio lie down.

LUCIUS.

I was sure your lordship did not give it me.

BRUTUS.
Bear with me, good boy, I am much forgetful.
Canst thou hold up thy heavy eyes awhile,
And touch thy instrument a strain or two?

LUCIUS.

Ay, my lord, an't please you.

BRUTUS.
It does, my boy.

I trouble thee too much, but thou art willing.

LUCIUS.
It is my duty, sir.

BRUTUS.

I should not urge thy duty past thy might;
I know young bloods look for a time of rest.

LUCIUS.

I have slept, my lord, already.

BRUTUS.

It was well done, and thou shalt sleep again;
I will not hold thee long. If I do live,
I will be good to thee. Music, and a song.
This is a sleepy tune. O murtherous slumber,
Layest thou thy leaden mace upon my boy
That plays thee music? Gentle knave, good night.
I will not do thee so much wrong to wake thee.
If thou dost nod, thou break'st thy instrument;
I'll take it from thee; and, good boy, good night.
Let me see, let me see; is not the leaf turn'd down
Where I left reading? Here it is, I think. Sits down.

Enter the Ghost of Caesar.

How ill this taper burns! Ha, who comes here?
I think it is the weakness of mine eyes
That shapes this monstrous apparition.
It comes upon me. Art thou anything?
Art thou some god, some angel, or some devil
That makest my blood cold and my hair to stare?

Speak to me what thou art.

GHOST.
Thy evil spirit, Brutus.

BRUTUS.

Why comest thou?

GHOST.
To tell thee thou shalt see me at Philippi.

BRUTUS.

Well, then I shall see thee again?

GHOST.

Ay, at Philippi.

BRUTUS.

Why, I will see thee at Philippi then. *Exit* Ghost.

Now I have taken heart thou vanishest.

Ill spirit, I would hold more talk with thee.

Boy! Lucius! Varro! Claudio! Sirs, awake!

Claudio!

LUCIUS.

The strings, my lord, are false.

BRUTUS.

He thinks he still is at his instrument.

Lucius, awake!

LUCIUS.

My lord?

BRUTUS.

Didst thou dream, Lucius, that thou so criedst out?

LUCIUS.

My lord, I do not know that I did cry.

BRUTUS.

Yes, that thou didst. Didst thou see anything?

LUCIUS.

Nothing, my lord.

BRUTUS.

Sleep again, Lucius. Sirrah Claudio!

[To Varro.] Fellow thou, awake!

VARRO.

My lord?

CLAUDIO.

My lord?

BRUTUS.

Why did you so cry out, sirs, in your sleep?

VARRO.

CLAUDIO. Did we, my lord?

BRUTUS.

Ay, saw you anything?

VARRO.

No, my lord, I saw nothing.

CLAUDIO.

Nor I, my lord.

BRUTUS.

Go and commend me to my brother Cassius;

Bid him set on his powers betimes before,

And we will follow.

VARRO.

CLAUDIO. It shall be done, my lord. *Exeunt* .

ACT V. SCENE I. The plains of Philippi.

Enter Octavius, Antony, and their Army.

OCTAVIUS. Now, Antony, our hopes are answered.

You said the enemy would not come down,

But keep the hills and upper regions.

It proves not so. Their battles are at hand;

They mean to warn us at Philippi here,

Answering before we do demand of them.

ANTONY.

Tut, I am in their bosoms, and I know

Wherefore they do it. They could be content

To visit other places, and come down

With fearful bravery, thinking by this face

To fasten in our thoughts that they have courage;

But 'tis not so.

Enter a Messenger.

MESSENGER. Prepare you, generals.

The enemy comes on in gallant show;

Their bloody sign of battle is hung out,

And something to be done immediately.

ANTONY.

Octavius, lead your battle softly on,

Upon the left hand of the even field.

OCTAVIUS.

Upon the right hand I, keep thou the left.

ANTONY.

Why do you cross me in this exigent?

OCTAVIUS.

I do not cross you, but I will do so.

March. Drum. *Enter* Brutus, Cassius, and their Army;

Lucilius, Titinius, Messala, and others.

BRUTUS.

They stand, and would have parley.

CASSIUS.

Stand fast, Titinius; we must out and talk.

OCTAVIUS.

Mark Antony, shall we give sign of battle?

ANTONY.

No, Caesar, we will answer on their charge.

Make forth, the generals would have some words.

OCTAVIUS.

Stir not until the signal not until the signal.

BRUTUS.

Words before blows. Is it so, countrymen?

OCTAVIUS.

Not that we love words better, as you do.

BRUTUS.

Good words are better than bad strokes, Octavius.

ANTONY.

In your bad strokes, Brutus, you give good words.

Witness the hole you made in Caesar's heart,

Crying "Long live! Hail, Caesar!"

CASSIUS.

Antony,

The posture of your blows are yet unknown;

But for your words, they rob the Hybla bees,

And leave them honeyless.

ANTONY.

Not stingless too.

BRUTUS.
O, yes, and soundless too,
For you have stol'n their buzzing, Antony,
And very wisely threat before you sting.

ANTONY.
Villains! You did not so when your vile daggers
Hack'd one another in the sides of Caesar.
You show'd your teeth like apes, and fawn'd like hounds,
And bow'd like bondmen, kissing Caesar's feet;
Whilst damned Casca, like a cur, behind
Strooke Caesar on the neck. O you flatterers!

CASSIUS.

Flatterers? Now, Brutus, thank yourself.
This tongue had not offended so today,

If Cassius might have ruled.

OCTAVIUS.

Come, come, the cause. If arguing make us sweat,

The proof of it will turn to redder drops.

Look,

I draw a sword against conspirators;

When think you that the sword goes up again?

Never, till Caesar's three and thirty wounds

Be well avenged, or till another Caesar

Have added slaughter to the sword of traitors.

BRUTUS.

Caesar, thou canst not die by traitors' hands,

Unless thou bring'st them with thee.

OCTAVIUS.

So I hope,

I was not born to die on Brutus' sword.

BRUTUS.

O, if thou wert the noblest of thy strain,

Young man, thou couldst not die more honorable.

CASSIUS.

A peevish school boy, worthless of such honor,

Join'd with a masker and a reveler!

ANTONY.

Old Cassius still!

OCTAVIUS.

Come, Antony, away!

Defiance, traitors, hurl we in your teeth.

If you dare fight today, come to the field;

If not, when you have stomachs.

Exeunt Octavius, Antony, and their Army.

CASSIUS.

Why, now, blow and, swell billow, and swim bark!

The storm is up, and all is on the hazard.

BRUTUS.

Ho, Lucilius! Hark, a word with you.

LUCILIUS.

[Stands forth.] My lord?

Brutus and Lucilius converse apart.

CASSIUS.

Messala!

MESSALA.

[Stands forth.] What says my general?

CASSIUS.

Messala,

This is my birthday, as this very day

Was Cassius born. Give me thy hand, Messala.

Be thou my witness that, against my will,

As Pompey was, am I compell'd to set
Upon one battle all our liberties.
You know that I held Epicurus strong,
And his opinion. Now I change my mind,
And partly credit things that do presage.
Coming from Sardis, on our former ensign
Two mighty eagles fell, and there they perch'd,
Gorging and feeding from our soldiers' hands,
Who to Philippi here consorted us.
This morning are they fled away and gone,
And in their steads do ravens, crows, and kites
Fly o'er our heads and downward look on us,
As we were sickly prey. Their shadows seem
A canopy most fatal, under which
Our army lies, ready to give up the ghost.

MESSALA.

Believe not so.

CASSIUS.

I but believe it partly,

For I am fresh of spirit and resolved

To meet all perils very constantly.

BRUTUS.

Even so, Lucilius.

CASSIUS.

Now, most noble Brutus,

The gods today stand friendly that we may,

Lovers in peace, lead on our days to age!

But, since the affairs of men rest still incertain,

Let's reason with the worst that may befall.

If we do lose this battle, then is this

The very last time we shall speak together.

What are you then determined to do?

BRUTUS.

Even by the rule of that philosophy

By which I did blame Cato for the death
Which he did give himself-I know not how,
But I do find it cowardly and vile,
For fear of what might fall, so to prevent
The time of life-arming myself with patience
To stay the providence of some high powers
That govern us below.

CASSIUS.
Then, if we lose this battle,
You are contented to be led in triumph
Thorough the streets of Rome?

BRUTUS.
No, Cassius, no. Think not, thou noble Roman,
That ever Brutus will go bound to Rome;
He bears too great a mind. But this same day
Must end that work the ides of March begun.

And whether we shall meet again I know not.
Therefore our everlasting farewell take.

Forever, and forever, farewell, Cassius!

If we do meet again, why, we shall smile;

If not, why then this parting was well made.

CASSIUS.

Forever and forever farewell, Brutus!

If we do meet again, we'll smile indeed;

If not, 'tis true this parting was well made.

BRUTUS.

Why then, lead on. O, that a man might know

The end of this day's business ere it come!

But it sufficeth that the day will end,

And then the end is known. Come, ho! Away! *Exeunt* .

SCENE II. The field of battle.

Alarum. *Enter* Brutus and Messala.

BRUTUS.

Ride, ride, Messala, ride, and give these bills

Unto the legions on the other side. Loud alarum.

Let them set on at once, for I perceive

But cold demeanor in Octavia's wing,

And sudden push gives them the overthrow.

Ride, ride, Messala. Let them all come down. *Exeunt* .

SCENE III. Another part of the field.

Alarums. *Enter* Cassius and Titinius.

CASSIUS.

O, look, Titinius, look, the villains fly!

Myself have to mine own turn'd enemy.

This ensign here of mine was turning back;

I slew the coward, and did take it from him.

TITINIUS.

O Cassius, Brutus gave the word too early,

Who, having some advantage on Octavius,

Took it too eagerly. His soldiers fell to spoil,

Whilst we by Antony are all enclosed.

Enter Pindarus.

PINDARUS. Fly further off, my lord, fly further off;
Mark Antony is in your tents, my lord;
Fly, therefore, noble Cassius, fly far off.

CASSIUS.
This hill is far enough. Look, look, Titinius:

Are those my tents where I perceive the fire?

TITINIUS.
They are, my lord.

CASSIUS.
Titinius, if thou lovest me,
Mount thou my horse and hide thy spurs in him,
Till he have brought thee up to yonder troops
And here again, that I may rest assured
Whether yond troops are friend or enemy.

TITINIUS.

I will be here again, even with a thought. *Exit* .

CASSIUS.

Go, Pindarus, get higher on that hill;

My sight was ever thick; regard Titinius,

And tell me what thou notest about the field.

Pindarus ascends the hill.

This day I breathed first: time is come round,

And where I did begin, there shall I end;

My life is run his compass. Sirrah, what news?

PINDARUS.

[Above.] O my lord!

CASSIUS.

What news?

PINDARUS.

[Above.] Titinius is enclosed round about

With horsemen, that make to him on the spur;

Yet he spurs on. Now they are almost on him.

Now, Titinius! Now some light. O, he lights too.

He's ta'en *[Shout.]* And, hark! They shout for joy.

CASSIUS.

Come down; behold no more.

O, coward that I am, to live so long,

To see my best friend ta'en before my face!

Pindarus descends.

Come hither, sirrah.

In Parthia did I take thee prisoner,

And then I swore thee, saving of thy life,

That whatsoever I did bid thee do,

Thou shouldst attempt it. Come now, keep thine oath;

Now be a freeman, and with this good sword,

That ran through Caesar's bowels, search this bosom.

Stand not to answer: here, take thou the hilts;

And when my face is cover'd, as 'tis now, Guide thou the sword. *[Pindarus stabs him.]* Caesar, thou art revenged,

Even with the sword that kill'd thee. Dies.

PINDARUS.

So, I am free, yet would not so have been,

Durst I have done my will. O Cassius!

Far from this country Pindarus shall run,

Where never Roman shall take note of him. *Exit* .

Re-enter Titinius with Messala.

MESSALA.

It is but change, Titinius, for Octavius

Is overthrown by noble Brutus' power,

As Cassius' legions are by Antony.

TITINIUS.

These tidings would well comfort Cassius.

MESSALA.

Where did you leave him?

TITINIUS.

All disconsolate,
With Pindarus his bondman, on this hill.

MESSALA.

Is not that he that lies upon the ground?

TITINIUS.

He lies not like the living. O my heart!

MESSALA.

Is not that he?

TITINIUS.

No, this was he, Messala,
But Cassius is no more. O setting sun,
As in thy red rays thou dost sink to night,
So in his red blood Cassius' day is set,
The sun of Rome is set! Our day is gone;

Clouds, dews, and dangers come; our deeds are done!

Mistrust of my success hath done this deed.

MESSALA.

Mistrust of good success hath done this deed.

O hateful error, melancholy's child,

Why dost thou show to the apt thoughts of men

The things that are not? O error, soon conceived,

Thou never comest unto a happy birth,

But kill'st the mother that engender'd thee!

TITINIUS.

What, Pindarus! Where art thou, Pindarus?

MESSALA.

Seek him, Titinius, whilst I go to meet

The noble Brutus, thrusting this report

Into his ears. I may say "thrusting" it,

For piercing steel and darts envenomed

Shall be as welcome to the ears of Brutus

As tidings of this sight.

TITINIUS.

Hie you, Messala,

And I will seek for Pindarus the while. *Exit* Messala.

Why didst thou send me forth, brave Cassius?

Did I not meet thy friends? And did not they

Put on my brows this wreath of victory,

And bid me give it thee? Didst thou not hear their shouts?

Alas, thou hast misconstrued everything!

But, hold thee, take this garland on thy brow;

Thy Brutus bid me give it thee, and I

Will do his bidding. Brutus, come apace,

And see how I regarded Caius Cassius.

By your leave, gods, this is a Roman's part.

Come, Cassius' sword, and find Titinius' heart.

Kills himself.

Alarum. Re-enter Messala, with Brutus, young Cato,

and others.

BRUTUS.

Where, where, Messala, doth his body lie?

MESSALA.

Lo, yonder, and Titinius mourning it.

BRUTUS.

Titinius' face is upward.

CATO.

He is slain.

BRUTUS.

O Julius Caesar, thou art mighty yet!
Thy spirit walks abroad, and turns our swords
In our own proper entrails. Low alarums.

CATO.

Brave Titinius!

Look whe'er he have not crown'd dead Cassius!

BRUTUS.

Are yet two Romans living such as these?

The last of all the Romans, fare thee well!
It is impossible that ever Rome
Should breed thy fellow. Friends, I owe moe tears
To this dead man than you shall see me pay.

I shall find time, Cassius, I shall find time.
Come therefore, and to Thasos send his body;
His funerals shall not be in our camp,
Lest it discomfort us. Lucilius, come,
And come, young Cato; let us to the field.
Labio and Flavio, set our battles on.
'Tis three o'clock, and Romans, yet ere night
We shall try fortune in a second fight. *Exeunt* .

SCENE IV. Another part of the field.

Alarum. *Enter* , fighting, Soldiers of both armies; then Brutus,

young Cato,

Lucilius, and others.

BRUTUS.

Yet, countrymen, O, yet hold up your heads!

CATO.

What bastard doth not? Who will go with me?

I will proclaim my name about the field.

I am the son of Marcus Cato, ho!

A foe to tyrants, and my country's friend.

I am the son of Marcus Cato, ho!

BRUTUS.

And I am Brutus, Marcus Brutus, I;

Brutus, my country's friend; know me for Brutus! *Exit* .

LUCILIUS.

O young and noble Cato, art thou down?

Why, now thou diest as bravely as Titinius,

And mayst be honor'd, being Cato's son.

FIRST SOLDIER.

Yield, or thou diest.

LUCILIUS.

Only I yield to die.

[Offers money.] There is so much that thou wilt kill me straight:

Kill Brutus, and be honor'd in his death.

FIRST SOLDIER.

We must not. A noble prisoner!

SECOND SOLDIER.

Room, ho! Tell Antony, Brutus is ta'en.

FIRST SOLDIER.

I'll tell the news. Here comes the general.

Enter Antony.

Brutus is ta'en, Brutus is ta'en, my lord.

ANTONY.

Where is he?

LUCILIUS.

Safe, Antony, Brutus is safe enough.
I dare assure thee that no enemy
Shall ever take alive the noble Brutus;
The gods defend him from so great a shame!
When you do find him, or alive or dead,

He will be found like Brutus, like himself.

ANTONY.

This is not Brutus, friend, but, I assure you,
A prize no less in worth. Keep this man safe,
Give him all kindness; I had rather have
Such men my friends than enemies. Go on,
And see wheer Brutus be alive or dead,
And bring us word unto Octavius' tent
How everything is chanced. *Exeunt* .

SCENE V. Another part of the field.

Enter Brutus, Dardanius, Clitus, Strato, and Volumnius.

BRUTUS. Come, poor remains of friends, rest on this rock.

CLITUS.

Statilius show'd the torchlight, but, my lord,
He came not back. He is or ta'en or slain.

BRUTUS.

Sit thee down, Clitus. Slaying is the word:

It is a deed in fashion. Hark thee, Clitus. Whispers.

CLITUS.

What, I, my lord? No, not for all the world.

BRUTUS.

Peace then, no words.

CLITUS.

I'll rather kill myself.

BRUTUS.

Hark thee, Dardanius. Whispers.

DARDANIUS.

Shall I do such a deed?

CLITUS.

O Dardanius!

DARDANIUS.

O Clitus!

CLITUS.

What ill request did Brutus make to thee?

DARDANIUS.

To kill him, Clitus. Look, he meditates.

CLITUS.

Now is that noble vessel full of grief,

That it runs over even at his eyes.

BRUTUS.

Come hither, good Volumnius, list a word.

VOLUMNIUS.

What says my lord?

BRUTUS.

Why, this, Volumnius:
The ghost of Caesar hath appear'd to me
Two several times by night; at Sardis once,
And this last night here in Philippi fields.

I know my hour is come.

VOLUMNIUS.

Not so, my lord.

BRUTUS.

Nay I am sure it is, Volumnius.
Thou seest the world, Volumnius, how it goes;
Our enemies have beat us to the pit; Low alarums.

It is more worthy to leap in ourselves
Than tarry till they push us. Good Volumnius,
Thou know'st that we two went to school together;
Even for that our love of old, I prithee,
Hold thou my sword-hilts, whilst I run on it.

VOLUMNIUS.

That's not an office for a friend, my lord.

Alarum still.

CLITUS.

Fly, fly, my lord, there is no tarrying here.

BRUTUS.

Farewell to you, and you, and you, Volumnius.
Strato, thou hast been all this while asleep;
Farewell to thee too, Strato. Countrymen,
My heart doth joy that yet in all my life
I found no man but he was true to me.

I shall have glory by this losing day,

More than Octavius and Mark Antony

By this vile conquest shall attain unto.

So, fare you well at once, for Brutus' tongue

Hath almost ended his life's history.

Night hangs upon mine eyes, my bones would rest

That have but labor'd to attain this hour.

Alarum. Cry within, "Fly, fly, fly!"

CLITUS.

Fly, my lord, fly.

BRUTUS.

Hence! I will follow.

Exeunt Clitus, Dardanius, and Volumnius.

I prithee, Strato, stay thou by thy lord.

Thou art a fellow of a good respect;

Thy life hath had some smatch of honor in it.

Hold then my sword, and turn away thy face,

While I do run upon it. Wilt thou, Strato?

STRATO.

Give me your hand first. Fare you well, my lord.

BRUTUS.

Farewell, good Strato. Runs on his sword.

Caesar, now be still;

I kill'd not thee with half so good a will. Dies.

Alarum. Retreat.   *Enter* Octavius, Antony, Messala,

Lucilius, and the Army.

OCTAVIUS.

What man is that?

MESSALA.

My master's man. Strato, where is thy master?

STRATO.

Free from the bondage you are in, Messala:

The conquerors can but make a fire of him;

For Brutus only overcame himself,

And no man else hath honor by his death.

LUCILIUS.

So Brutus should be found. I thank thee, Brutus,

That thou hast proved Lucilius' saying true.

OCTAVIUS.

All that served Brutus, I will entertain them.

Fellow, wilt thou bestow thy time with me?

STRATO.

Ay, if Messala will prefer me to you.

OCTAVIUS.

Do so, good Messala.

MESSALA.

How died my master, Strato?

STRATO.

I held the sword, and he did run on it.

MESSALA.

Octavius, then take him to follow thee

That did the latest service to my master.

ANTONY.

This was the noblest Roman of them all.

All the conspirators, save only he,

Did that they did in envy of great Caesar;

He only, in a general honest thought

And common good to all, made one of them.

His life was gentle, and the elements

So mix'd in him that Nature might stand up

And say to all the world, "This was a man!"

OCTAVIUS.

According to his virtue let us use him

With all respect and rites of burial.

Within my tent his bones tonight shall lie,

Most like a soldier, ordered honorably.

So call the field to rest, and let's away,

To part the glories of this happy day. *Exeunt* .

AS YOU LIKE IT

This comedy is believed to have been written in 1599 and its first performance is recorded at Wilton House in 1603. The play concerns the heroine Rosalind as she flees persecution at her uncle's court, accompanied by her cousin Celia and Touchstone the court jester, to find safety and eventually love in the Forest of Arden. The play features one of Shakespeare's most famous and often-quoted speeches, “All the world's a stage”, and is also the origin of the phrases “too much of a good thing” and “Sweet are the uses of adversity”. The play remains a favourite among audiences and has been adapted for radio, film and musical theatre many times.

The wrestling scene from the play, Francis Hayman, 1750

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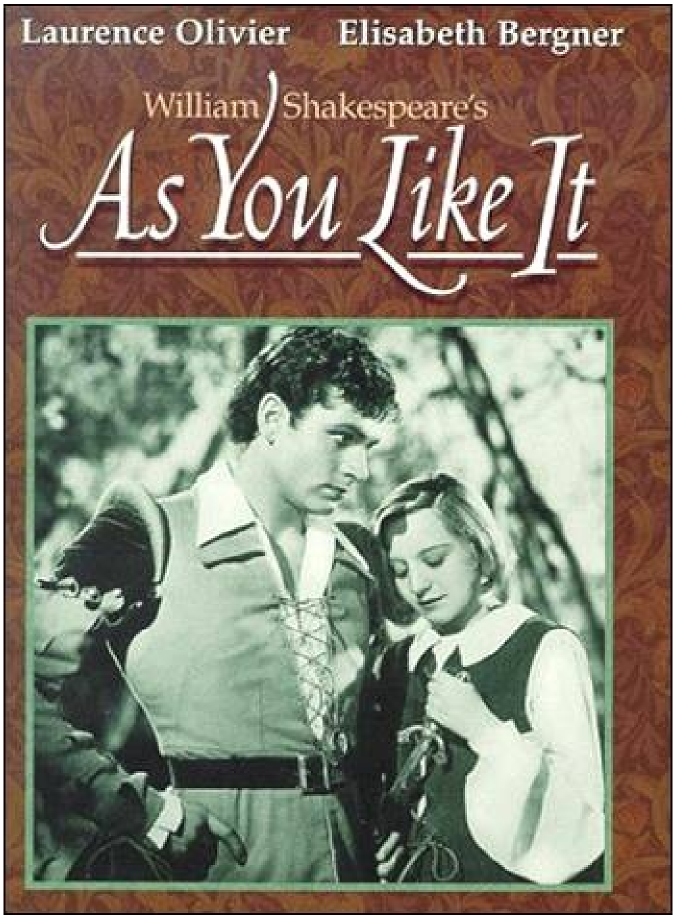
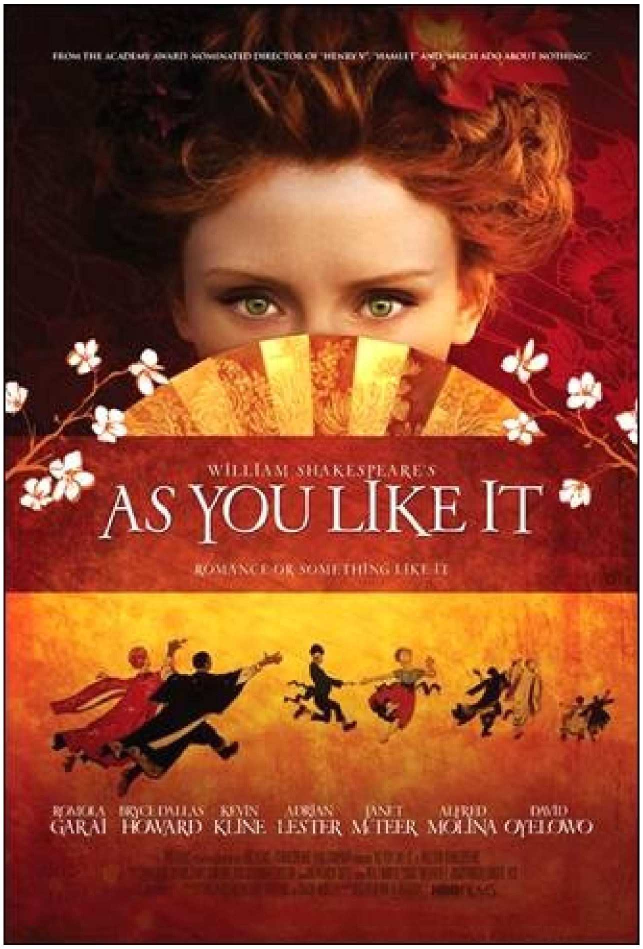

Laurence Olivier
Elisabeth Bergner
William Shakespeare's
As You Like It

The 1936 film version – Olivier's first Shakespeare film


FROM THE ACADEMY AWARD NOMINATED DIRECTOR OF "HENRY V", "HAMLET" AND "MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING"
WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S
AS YOU LIKE IT
ROMANCE OR SOMETHING LIKE IT
ROMOLA GARAI
BRYCE DALLAS HOWARD
KEVIN KLINE
ADRIAN LESTER
JANET McTEER
ALFRED MOLINA
DAVID OYELOWO

The unique 2006 movie adaptation, set in Japan

DRAMATIS PERSONAE.

DUKE, living in exile

FREDERICK, his brother, and usurper of his dominions

AMIENS, lord attending on the banished Duke

JAQUES, " " " " " "

LE BEAU, a courtier attending upon Frederick

CHARLES, wrestler to Frederick

OLIVER, son of Sir Rowland de Boys

JAQUES, " " " " " "

ORLANDO, " " " " " "

ADAM, servant to Oliver

DENNIS, " " "

TOUCHSTONE, the court jester

SIR OLIVER MARTEXT, a vicar

CORIN, shepherd

SILVIUS, "

WILLIAM, a country fellow, in love with Audrey

A person representing HYMEN

ROSALIND, daughter to the banished Duke

CELIA, daughter to Frederick

PHEBE, a shepherdes

AUDREY, a country wench

Lords, Pages, Foresters, and Attendants

SCENE: OLIVER'S house; FREDERICK'S court; and the Forest of Arden

ACT I. SCENE I.

Orchard of OLIVER'S house

Enter ORLANDO and ADAM

ORLANDO. As I remember, Adam, it was upon this fashion bequeathed me by will but poor a thousand crowns, and, as thou say'st, charged my brother, on his blessing, to breed me well; and there begins my sadness. My brother Jaques he keeps at school, and report speaks goldenly of his profit. For my part, he keeps me rustically at home, or, to speak more properly, stays me here at home unkept; for call you that keeping for a gentleman of my birth that differs not from the stalling of an ox? His horses are bred better; for, besides that they are fair with their feeding, they are taught their manage, and to that end riders dearly hir'd; but I, his brother, gain nothing under him but growth; for the which his animals on his dunghills are as much bound to him as I. Besides this nothing that he so plentifully gives me, the something that nature gave me his countenance seems to take from me. He lets me feed with his hinds, bars me the place of a brother, and as much as in him lies, mines my gentility with my education. This is it, Adam, that grieves me; and the spirit of my father, which I think is within me, begins to mutiny against this servitude. I will no longer endure it, though yet I know no wise remedy how to avoid it.

Enter OLIVER

ADAM. Yonder comes my master, your brother.

ORLANDO.

Go apart, Adam, and thou shalt hear how he will shake me up. *[ADAM retires]*

OLIVER.

Now, sir! what make you here?

ORLANDO.

Nothing; I am not taught to make any thing.

OLIVER.

What mar you then, sir?

ORLANDO.

Marry, sir, I am helping you to mar that which God made, a poor unworthy brother of yours, with idleness.

OLIVER.

Marry, sir, be better employed, and be nought awhile.

ORLANDO.

Shall I keep your hogs, and eat husks with them? What prodigal portion have I spent that I should come to such penury?

OLIVER.

Know you where you are, sir?

ORLANDO.

O, sir, very well; here in your orchard.

OLIVER.

Know you before whom, sir?

ORLANDO.

Ay, better than him I am before knows me. I know you are my eldest brother; and in the gentle condition of blood, you should so know me. The courtesy of nations allows you my better in that you are the first-born; but the same tradition takes not away my blood, were there twenty brothers betwixt us. I have as much of my father in me as you, albeit I confess your coming before me is nearer to his reverence.

OLIVER.

What, boy! *[Strikes him]*

ORLANDO.

Come, come, elder brother, you are too young in this.

OLIVER.

Wilt thou lay hands on me, villain?

ORLANDO.

I am no villain; I am the youngest son of Sir Rowland de Boys. He was my father; and he is thrice a villain that says such a father begot villains. Wert thou not my brother, I would not take this hand from thy throat till this other had pull'd out thy tongue for saying so. Thou has rail'd on thyself.

ADAM.

[Coming forward] Sweet masters, be patient; for your father's remembrance, be at accord.

OLIVER.

Let me go, I say.

ORLANDO.

I will not, till I please; you shall hear me. My father charg'd you in his will to give me good education: you have train'd me like a peasant, obscuring and hiding from me all gentleman-like qualities. The spirit of my father grows strong in me, and I will no longer endure it; therefore allow me such exercises as may become a gentleman, or give me the poor allottery my father left me by testament; with that I will go buy my fortunes.

OLIVER.

And what wilt thou do? Beg, when that is spent? Well, sir, get you in. I will not long be troubled with you; you shall have some part of your will. I pray you leave me.

ORLANDO.

I no further offend you than becomes me for my good.

OLIVER.

Get you with him, you old dog.

ADAM.

Is 'old dog' my reward? Most true, I have lost my teeth in

your service. God be with my old master! He would not have spoke such a word.

Exeunt ORLANDO and ADAM

OLIVER.

Is it even so? Begin you to grow upon me? I will physic

your rankness, and yet give no thousand crowns neither.

Holla, Dennis!

Enter DENNIS

DENNIS.

Calls your worship?

OLIVER.

not Charles, the Duke's wrestler, here to speak with me?

DENNIS.

So please you, he is here at the door and importunes access to you.

OLIVER.

Call him in. *[Exit DENNIS]* 'Twill be a good way; and

to-morrow the wrestling is.

Enter CHARLES

CHARLES.

Good morrow to your worship.

OLIVER.

Good Monsieur Charles! What's the new news at the new court?

CHARLES.

There's no news at the court, sir, but the old news; that is, the old Duke is banished by his younger brother the new Duke; and three or four loving lords have put themselves into voluntary exile with him, whose lands and revenues enrich the new Duke; therefore he gives them good leave to wander.

OLIVER.

Can you tell if Rosalind, the Duke's daughter, be banished with her father?

CHARLES.

O, no; for the Duke's daughter, her cousin, so loves her, being ever from their cradles bred together, that she would have followed her exile, or have died to stay behind her. She is at the court, and no less beloved of her uncle than his own daughter; and never two ladies loved as they do.

OLIVER.

Where will the old Duke live?

CHARLES.

They say he is already in the Forest of Arden, and a many merry men with him; and there they live like the old Robin Hood of England. They say many young gentlemen flock to him every day, and fleet the time carelessly, as they did in the golden world.

OLIVER.

What, you wrestle to-morrow before the new Duke?

CHARLES.

Marry, do I, sir; and I came to acquaint you with a matter. I am given, sir, secretly to understand that your younger brother, Orlando, hath a disposition to come in disguis'd against me to try a fall. To-morrow, sir, I wrestle for my credit; and he that escapes me without some broken limb shall acquit him well. Your brother is but young and tender; and, for your love, I would be loath to foil him, as I must, for my own honour, if he come in; therefore, out of my love to you, I came hither to acquaint you withal, that either you might stay him from his intendment, or brook such disgrace well as he shall run into, in that it is thing of his own search and altogether against my will.

OLIVER.

Charles, I thank thee for thy love to me, which thou shalt find I will most kindly requite. I had myself notice of my brother's purpose herein, and have by underhand means laboured to dissuade him from it; but he is resolute. I'll tell thee, Charles, it is the stubbornest young fellow of France; full of ambition, an envious emulator of every man's good parts, a secret and villainous contriver against me his natural brother. Therefore use thy discretion: I had as lief thou didst break his neck as his finger. And thou wert best look to't; for if thou dost him any slight disgrace, or if he do not mightily grace himself on thee, he will practise against thee by poison, entrap thee by some treacherous device, and never leave thee till he hath ta'en thy life by some indirect means or other; for, I assure thee, and almost with tears I speak it, there is not one so young and so villainous this day living. I speak but brotherly of him; but should I anatomize him to thee as he is, I must blush and weep, and thou must look pale and wonder.

CHARLES.

I am heartily glad I came hither to you. If he come to-morrow I'll give him his payment. If ever he go alone again, I'll never wrestle for prize more. And so, God keep your worship!

Exit

OLIVER. Farewell, good Charles. Now will I stir this gamester. I hope I shall see an end of him; for my soul, yet I know not why, hates nothing more than he. Yet he's gentle; never school'd and yet learned; full of noble device; of all sorts enchantingly beloved; and, indeed, so much in the heart of the world, and especially of my own people, who best know him, that I am altogether misprised. But it shall not be so long; this wrestler shall clear all. Nothing remains but that I kindle the boy thither, which now I'll go about. *Exit*

SCENE II.

A lawn before the DUKE'S palace

Enter ROSALIND and CELIA

CELIA.

I pray thee, Rosalind, sweet my coz, be merry.

ROSALIND.

Dear Celia, I show more mirth than I am mistress of; and would you yet I were merrier? Unless you could teach me to forget a banished father, you must not learn me how to remember any extraordinary pleasure.

CELIA.

Herein I see thou lov'st me not with the full weight that I love thee. If my uncle, thy banished father, had banished thy uncle, the Duke my father, so thou hadst been still with me, I could have taught my love to take thy father for mine; so wouldst thou, if the truth of thy love to me were so righteously temper'd as mine is to thee.

ROSALIND.

Well, I will forget the condition of my estate, to rejoice in yours.

CELIA.

You know my father hath no child but I, nor none is like to have; and, truly, when he dies thou shalt be his heir; for what he hath taken away from thy father perforce, I will render thee again in affection. By mine honour, I will; and when I break that oath, let me turn monster; therefore, my sweet Rose, my dear Rose, be merry.

ROSALIND.

From henceforth I will, coz, and devise sports.

Let me see; what think you of falling in love?

CELIA.

Marry, I prithee, do, to make sport withal; but love no man in good earnest, nor no further in sport neither than with safety of a pure blush thou mayst in honour come off again.

ROSALIND.

What shall be our sport, then?

CELIA.

Let us sit and mock the good housewife Fortune from her wheel, that her gifts may henceforth be bestowed equally.

ROSALIND.

I would we could do so; for her benefits are mightily

misplaced; and the bountiful blind woman doth most mistake in her gifts to women.

CELIA.

'Tis true; for those that she makes fair she scarce makes

honest; and those that she makes honest she makes very

ill-favouredly.

ROSALIND.

Nay; now thou goest from Fortune's office to Nature's:

Fortune reigns in gifts of the world, not in the lineaments of Nature.

Enter TOUCHSTONE

CELIA.

No; when Nature hath made a fair creature, may she not by Fortune fall into the fire? Though Nature hath given us wit to flout at Fortune, hath not Fortune sent in this fool to cut off the argument?

ROSALIND.

Indeed, there is Fortune too hard for Nature, when

Fortune makes Nature's natural the cutter-off of Nature's wit.

CELIA.

Peradventure this is not Fortune's work neither, but

Nature's, who perceiveth our natural wits too dull to reason of

such goddesses, and hath sent this natural for our whetstone; for

always the dullness of the fool is the whetstone of the wits.

How now, wit! Whither wander you?

TOUCHSTONE.

Mistress, you must come away to your father.

CELIA.

Were you made the messenger?

TOUCHSTONE.

No, by mine honour; but I was bid to come for you.

ROSALIND.

Where learned you that oath, fool?

TOUCHSTONE.

Of a certain knight that swore by his honour they were good pancakes, and swore by his honour the mustard was naught. Now I'll stand to it, the pancakes were naught and the mustard was good, and yet was not the knight forsworn.

CELIA.

How prove you that, in the great heap of your knowledge?

ROSALIND.

Ay, marry, now unmuzzle your wisdom.

TOUCHSTONE.

Stand you both forth now: stroke your chins, and swear by your beards that I am a knave.

CELIA.

By our beards, if we had them, thou art.

TOUCHSTONE.

By my knavery, if I had it, then I were. But if you swear by that that not, you are not forsworn; no more was this knight, swearing by his honour, for he never had any; or if he had, he had sworn it away before ever he saw those pancackes or that mustard.

CELIA.

Prithee, who is't that thou mean'st?

TOUCHSTONE.

One that old Frederick, your father, loves.

CELIA.

My father's love is enough to honour him. Enough, speak no

more of him; you'll be whipt for taxation one of these days.

TOUCHSTONE.

The more pity that fools may not speak wisely what wise men do foolishly.

CELIA.

By my troth, thou sayest true; for since the little wit that fools have was silenced, the little foolery that wise men have makes a great show. Here comes Monsieur Le Beau.

Enter LE BEAU

ROSALIND.

With his mouth full of news.

CELIA.

Which he will put on us as pigeons feed their young.

ROSALIND.

Then shall we be news-cramm'd.

CELIA.

All the better; we shall be the more marketable. Bon jour,

Monsieur Le Beau. What's the news?

LE BEAU.

Fair Princess, you have lost much good sport.

CELIA.

Sport! of what colour?

LE BEAU.

What colour, madam? How shall I answer you?

ROSALIND.

As wit and fortune will.

TOUCHSTONE.

Or as the Destinies decrees.

CELIA.

Well said; that was laid on with a trowel.

TOUCHSTONE.

Nay, if I keep not my rank-

ROSALIND.

Thou losest thy old smell.

LE BEAU.

You amaze me, ladies. I would have told you of good wrestling, which you have lost the sight of.

ROSALIND.

Yet tell us the manner of the wrestling.

LE BEAU.

I will tell you the beginning, and, if it please your ladyships, you may see the end; for the best is yet to do; and here, where you are, they are coming to perform it.

CELIA.

Well, the beginning, that is dead and buried.

LE BEAU.

There comes an old man and his three sons-

CELIA.

I could match this beginning with an old tale.

LE BEAU.

Three proper young men, of excellent growth and presence.

ROSALIND.

With bills on their necks: 'Be it known unto all men by these presents'-

LE BEAU.

The eldest of the three wrestled with Charles, the Duke's wrestler; which Charles in a moment threw him, and broke three of his ribs, that there is little hope of life in him. So he serv'd the second, and so the third. Yonder they lie; the poor old man, their father, making such pitiful dole over them that all the beholders take his part with weeping.

ROSALIND.

Alas!

TOUCHSTONE.

But what is the sport, monsieur, that the ladies have lost?

LE BEAU.

Why, this that I speak of.

TOUCHSTONE.

Thus men may grow wiser every day. It is the first time that ever I heard breaking of ribs was sport for ladies.

CELIA.

Or I, I promise thee.

ROSALIND.

But is there any else longs to see this broken music in his sides? Is there yet another dotes upon rib-breaking? Shall we see this wrestling, cousin?

LE BEAU.

You must, if you stay here; for here is the place appointed for the wrestling, and they are ready to perform it.

CELIA.

Yonder, sure, they are coming. Let us now stay and see it.

Flourish. *Enter* DUKE FREDERICK, LORDS, ORLANDO,

CHARLES, and ATTENDANTS

FREDERICK.

Come on; since the youth will not be entreated, his own

peril on his forwardness.

ROSALIND.

Is yonder the man?

LE BEAU.

Even he, madam.

CELIA.

Alas, he is too young; yet he looks successfully.

FREDERICK.

How now, daughter and cousin! Are you crept hither to see the wrestling?

ROSALIND.

Ay, my liege; so please you give us leave.

FREDERICK.

You will take little delight in it, I can tell you,

there is such odds in the man. In pity of the challenger's youth I would fain dissuade him, but he will not be entreated. Speak to him, ladies; see if you can move him.

CELIA.

Call him hither, good Monsieur Le Beau.

FREDERICK.

Do so; I'll not be by.

[DUKE FREDERICK goes apart]

LE BEAU.

Monsieur the Challenger, the Princess calls for you.

ORLANDO.

I attend them with all respect and duty.

ROSALIND.

Young man, have you challeng'd Charles the wrestler?

ORLANDO.

No, fair Princess; he is the general challenger. I come but in, as others do, to try with him the strength of my youth.

CELIA.

Young gentleman, your spirits are too bold for your years. You have seen cruel proof of this man's strength; if you saw yourself with your eyes, or knew yourself with your judgment, the fear of your adventure would counsel you to a more equal enterprise. We pray you, for your own sake, to embrace your own safety and give over this attempt.

ROSALIND.

Do, young sir; your reputation shall not therefore be misprised: we will make it our suit to the Duke that the wrestling might not go forward.

ORLANDO.

I beseech you, punish me not with your hard thoughts, wherein I confess me much guilty to deny so fair and excellent ladies any thing. But let your fair eyes and gentle wishes go with me to my trial; wherein if I be foil'd there is but one sham'd that was never gracious; if kill'd, but one dead that is willing to be so. I shall do my friends no wrong, for I have none to lament me; the world no injury, for in it I have nothing; only in the world I fill up a place, which may be better supplied when I have made it empty.

ROSALIND.

The little strength that I have, I would it were with you.

CELIA.

And mine to eke out hers.

ROSALIND.

Fare you well. Pray heaven I be deceiv'd in you!

CELIA.

Your heart's desires be with you!

CHARLES.

Come, where is this young gallant that is so desirous to lie with his mother earth?

ORLANDO.

Ready, sir; but his will hath in it a more modest working.

FREDERICK.

You shall try but one fall.

CHARLES.

No, I warrant your Grace, you shall not entreat him to a second, that have so mightily persuaded him from a first.

ORLANDO.

You mean to mock me after; you should not have mock'd me

before; but come your ways.

ROSALIND.

Now, Hercules be thy speed, young man!

CELIA.

I would I were invisible, to catch the strong fellow by the leg. *[They wrestle]*

ROSALIND.

O excellent young man!

CELIA.

If I had a thunderbolt in mine eye, I can tell who should down.

[CHARLES is thrown. Shout]

FREDERICK.

No more, no more.

ORLANDO.

Yes, I beseech your Grace; I am not yet well breath'd.

FREDERICK.

How dost thou, Charles?

LE BEAU.

He cannot speak, my lord.

FREDERICK.

Bear him away. What is thy name, young man?

ORLANDO.

Orlando, my liege; the youngest son of Sir Rowland de Boys.

FREDERICK.

I would thou hadst been son to some man else.

The world esteem'd thy father honourable,

But I did find him still mine enemy.

Thou shouldst have better pleas'd me with this deed,

Hadst thou descended from another house.

But fare thee well; thou art a gallant youth;

I would thou hadst told me of another father.

Exeunt DUKE, train, and LE BEAU

CELIA.

Were I my father, coz, would I do this?

ORLANDO.

I am more proud to be Sir Rowland's son,

His youngest son-and would not change that calling

To be adopted heir to Frederick.

ROSALIND.

My father lov'd Sir Rowland as his soul,

And all the world was of my father's mind;

Had I before known this young man his son,

I should have given him tears unto entreaties

Ere he should thus have ventur'd.

CELIA.

Gentle cousin,

Let us go thank him, and encourage him;

My father's rough and envious disposition

Sticks me at heart. Sir, you have well deserv'd;

If you do keep your promises in love

But justly as you have exceeded all promise,

Your mistress shall be happy.

ROSALIND.

Gentleman, *[Giving him a chain from her neck]*

Wear this for me; one out of suits with fortune,

That could give more, but that her hand lacks means.

Shall we go, coz?

CELIA.

Ay. Fare you well, fair gentleman.

ORLANDO.

Can I not say 'I thank you'? My better parts

Are all thrown down; and that which here stands up

Is but a quintain, a mere lifeless block.

ROSALIND.

He calls us back. My pride fell with my fortunes;

I'll ask him what he would. Did you call, sir?

Sir, you have wrestled well, and overthrown

More than your enemies.

CELIA.

Will you go, coz?

ROSALIND.

Have with you. Fare you well.

Exeunt ROSALIND and CELIA

ORLANDO.

What passion hangs these weights upon my tongue?
I cannot speak to her, yet she urg'd conference.

O poor Orlando, thou art overthrown!
Or Charles or something weaker masters thee.

Re-enter LE BEAU

LE BEAU.

Good sir, I do in friendship counsel you
To leave this place. Albeit you have deserv'd
High commendation, true applause, and love,
Yet such is now the Duke's condition
That he misconstrues all that you have done.
The Duke is humorous; what he is, indeed,
More suits you to conceive than I to speak of.

ORLANDO.

I thank you, sir; and pray you tell me this:
Which of the two was daughter of the Duke
That here was at the wrestling?

LE BEAU.

Neither his daughter, if we judge by manners;

But yet, indeed, the smaller is his daughter;

The other is daughter to the banish'd Duke,

And here detain'd by her usurping uncle,

To keep his daughter company; whose loves

Are dearer than the natural bond of sisters.

But I can tell you that of late this Duke

Hath ta'en displeasure 'gainst his gentle niece,

Grounded upon no other argument

But that the people praise her for her virtues

And pity her for her good father's sake;

And, on my life, his malice 'gainst the lady

Will suddenly break forth. Sir, fare you well.

Hereafter, in a better world than this,

I shall desire more love and knowledge of you.

ORLANDO.

I rest much bounden to you; fare you well.

Exit LE BEAU

Thus must I from the smoke into the smother;

From tyrant Duke unto a tyrant brother.

But heavenly Rosalind! *Exit*

SCENE III.

The DUKE's palace

Enter CELIA and ROSALIND

CELIA.

Why, cousin! why, Rosalind! Cupid have mercy!

Not a word?

ROSALIND.

Not one to throw at a dog.

CELIA.

No, thy words are too precious to be cast away upon curs;

throw some of them at me; come, lame me with reasons.

ROSALIND.

Then there were two cousins laid up, when the one should

be lam'd with reasons and the other mad without any.

CELIA.

But is all this for your father?

ROSALIND.

No, some of it is for my child's father. O, how full of briers is this working-day world!

CELIA.

They are but burs, cousin, thrown upon thee in holiday foolery; if we walk not in the trodden paths, our very petticoats will catch them.

ROSALIND.

I could shake them off my coat: these burs are in my heart.

CELIA.

Hem them away.

ROSALIND.

I would try, if I could cry 'hem' and have him.

CELIA.

Come, come, wrestle with thy affections.

ROSALIND.

O, they take the part of a better wrestler than myself.

CELIA.

O, a good wish upon you! You will try in time, in despite of a fall. But, turning these jests out of service, let us talk in good earnest. Is it possible, on such a sudden, you should fall into so strong a liking with old Sir Rowland's youngest son?

ROSALIND.

The Duke my father lov'd his father dearly.

CELIA.

Doth it therefore ensue that you should love his son dearly? By this kind of chase I should hate him, for my father hated his father dearly; yet I hate not Orlando.

ROSALIND.

No, faith, hate him not, for my sake.

CELIA.

Why should I not? Doth he not deserve well?

Enter DUKE FREDERICK, with LORDS

ROSALIND.

Let me love him for that; and do you love him because I do. Look, here comes the Duke.

CELIA.

With his eyes full of anger.

FREDERICK.

Mistress, dispatch you with your safest haste,

And get you from our court.

ROSALIND.

Me, uncle?

FREDERICK.

You, cousin.

Within these ten days if that thou beest found

So near our public court as twenty miles,

Thou diest for it.

ROSALIND.

I do beseech your Grace,

Let me the knowledge of my fault bear with me.

If with myself I hold intelligence,

Or have acquaintance with mine own desires;

If that I do not dream, or be not frantic-

As I do trust I am not-then, dear uncle,

Never so much as in a thought unborn

Did I offend your Highness.

FREDERICK.

Thus do all traitors;

If their purgation did consist in words,

They are as innocent as grace itself.

Let it suffice thee that I trust thee not.

ROSALIND.

Yet your mistrust cannot make me a traitor.

Tell me whereon the likelihood depends.

FREDERICK.

Thou art thy father's daughter; there's enough.

ROSALIND.

SO was I when your Highness took his dukedom;

So was I when your Highness banish'd him.

Treason is not inherited, my lord;

Or, if we did derive it from our friends,

What's that to me? My father was no traitor.

Then, good my liege, mistake me not so much

To think my poverty is treacherous.

CELIA.

Dear sovereign, hear me speak.

FREDERICK.

Ay, Celia; we stay'd her for your sake,

Else had she with her father rang'd along.

CELIA.

I did not then entreat to have her stay;

It was your pleasure, and your own remorse;

I was too young that time to value her,

But now I know her. If she be a traitor,

Why so am I: we still have slept together, Rose at an instant, learn'd, play'd, eat together;

And wheresoe'er we went, like Juno's swans,

Still we went coupled and inseparable.

FREDERICK.

She is too subtle for thee; and her smoothness,

Her very silence and her patience,

Speak to the people, and they pity her.

Thou art a fool. She robs thee of thy name;

And thou wilt show more bright and seem more virtuous

When she is gone. Then open not thy lips.

Firm and irrevocable is my doom

Which I have pass'd upon her; she is banish'd.

CELIA.

Pronounce that sentence, then, on me, my liege;

I cannot live out of her company.

FREDERICK.

You are a fool. You, niece, provide yourself.

If you outstay the time, upon mine honour, And in the greatness of my word, you die.

Exeunt DUKE and LORDS

CELIA.

O my poor Rosalind! Whither wilt thou go?
Wilt thou change fathers? I will give thee mine.

I charge thee be not thou more griev'd than I am.

ROSALIND.

I have more cause.

CELIA.

Thou hast not, cousin.
Prithee be cheerful. Know'st thou not the Duke
Hath banish'd me, his daughter?

ROSALIND.

That he hath not.

CELIA.

No, hath not? Rosalind lacks, then, the love
Which teacheth thee that thou and I am one.

Shall we be sund'red? Shall we part, sweet girl?
No; let my father seek another heir.
Therefore devise with me how we may fly,
Whither to go, and what to bear with us;
And do not seek to take your charge upon you,
To bear your griefs yourself, and leave me out;
For, by this heaven, now at our sorrows pale,
Say what thou canst, I'll go along with thee.

ROSALIND.

Why, whither shall we go?

CELIA.

To seek my uncle in the Forest of Arden.

ROSALIND.

Alas, what danger will it be to us,

Maids as we are, to travel forth so far!

Beauty provoketh thieves sooner than gold.

CELIA.

I'll put myself in poor and mean attire,

And with a kind of umber smirch my face;

The like do you; so shall we pass along,

And never stir assailants.

ROSALIND.

Were it not better,

Because that I am more than common tall,

That I did suit me all points like a man?

A gallant curtle-axe upon my thigh,

A boar spear in my hand; and-in my heart

Lie there what hidden woman's fear there will-

We'll have a swashing and a martial outside,

As many other mannish cowards have

That do outface it with their semblances.

CELIA.

What shall I call thee when thou art a man?

ROSALIND.
I'll have no worse a name than Jove's own page,
And therefore look you call me Ganymede.
But what will you be call'd?

CELIA.

Something that hath a reference to my state:
No longer Celia, but Aliena.

ROSALIND.
But, cousin, what if we assay'd to steal
The clownish fool out of your father's court?

Would he not be a comfort to our travel?

CELIA.

He'll go along o'er the wide world with me;

Leave me alone to woo him. Let's away,

And get our jewels and our wealth together;

Devise the fittest time and safest way

To hide us from pursuit that will be made

After my flight. Now go we in content

To liberty, and not to banishment. *Exeunt*

ACT II. SCENE I.

The Forest of Arden

Enter DUKE SENIOR, AMIENS, and two or three LORDS, like foresters

DUKE SENIOR.

Now, my co-mates and brothers in exile,

Hath not old custom made this life more sweet

Than that of painted pomp? Are not these woods

More free from peril than the envious court?

Here feel we not the penalty of Adam,

The seasons' difference; as the icy fang

And churlish chiding of the winter's wind,

Which when it bites and blows upon my body,

Even till I shrink with cold, I smile and say

'This is no flattery; these are counsellors

That feelingly persuade me what I am.'

Sweet are the uses of adversity,

Which, like the toad, ugly and venomous,

Wears yet a precious jewel in his head;

And this our life, exempt from public haunt,

Finds tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,

Sermons in stones, and good in everything.

I would not change it.

AMIENS.

Happy is your Grace,

That can translate the stubbornness of fortune

Into so quiet and so sweet a style.

DUKE SENIOR.

Come, shall we go and kill us venison?

And yet it irks me the poor dappled fools,

Being native burghers of this desert city,

Should, in their own confines, with forked heads

Have their round haunches gor'd.

FIRST LORD.

Indeed, my lord,

The melancholy Jaques grieves at that;

And, in that kind, swears you do more usurp

Than doth your brother that hath banish'd you.

To-day my Lord of Amiens and myself

Did steal behind him as he lay along

Under an oak whose antique root peeps out

Upon the brook that brawls along this wood!

To the which place a poor sequest'red stag,

That from the hunter's aim had ta'en a hurt,

Did come to languish; and, indeed, my lord,

The wretched animal heav'd forth such groans

That their discharge did stretch his leathern coat

Almost to bursting; and the big round tears
Cours'd one another down his innocent nose
In piteous chase; and thus the hairy fool,
Much marked of the melancholy Jaques,
Stood on th' extremest verge of the swift brook,
Augmenting it with tears.

DUKE SENIOR.

But what said Jaques?
Did he not moralize this spectacle?

FIRST LORD.

O, yes, into a thousand similes.
First, for his weeping into the needless stream:
'Poor deer,' quoth he 'thou mak'st a testament
As worldlings do, giving thy sum of more
To that which had too much.' Then, being there alone,
Left and abandoned of his velvet friends:
''Tis right'; quoth he 'thus misery doth part

The flux of company.' Anon, a careless herd,

Full of the pasture, jumps along by him

And never stays to greet him. 'Ay,' quoth Jaques

'Sweep on, you fat and greasy citizens;

'Tis just the fashion. Wherefore do you look

Upon that poor and broken bankrupt there?'

Thus most invectively he pierceth through

The body of the country, city, court,

Yea, and of this our life; swearing that we

Are mere usurpers, tyrants, and what's worse,

To fright the animals, and to kill them up

In their assign'd and native dwelling-place.

DUKE SENIOR.

And did you leave him in this contemplation?

SECOND LORD.

We did, my lord, weeping and commenting

Upon the sobbing deer.

DUKE SENIOR.

Show me the place;

I love to cope him in these sullen fits,

For then he's full of matter.

FIRST LORD.

I'll bring you to him straight. *Exeunt*

SCENE II.

The DUKE'S palace

Enter DUKE FREDERICK, with LORDS

FREDERICK.

Can it be possible that no man saw them?

It cannot be; some villains of my court

Are of consent and sufferance in this.

FIRST LORD.

I cannot hear of any that did see her.

The ladies, her attendants of her chamber,

Saw her abed, and in the morning early
They found the bed untreasur'd of their mistress.

SECOND LORD.
My lord, the roynish clown, at whom so oft
Your Grace was wont to laugh, is also missing.
Hisperia, the Princess' gentlewoman,
Confesses that she secretly o'erheard
Your daughter and her cousin much commend
The parts and graces of the wrestler
That did but lately foil the sinewy Charles;
And she believes, wherever they are gone,
That youth is surely in their company.

FREDERICK.
Send to his brother; fetch that gallant hither.
If he be absent, bring his brother to me;
I'll make him find him. Do this suddenly;
And let not search and inquisition quail
To bring again these foolish runaways. *Exeunt*

SCENE III.

Before OLIVER'S house

Enter ORLANDO and ADAM, meeting

ORLANDO.

Who's there?

ADAM.

What, my young master? O my gentle master!
O my sweet master! O you memory
Of old Sir Rowland! Why, what make you here?
Why are you virtuous? Why do people love you?

And wherefore are you gentle, strong, and valiant?
Why would you be so fond to overcome
The bonny prizer of the humorous Duke?
Your praise is come too swiftly home before you.
Know you not, master, to some kind of men
Their graces serve them but as enemies?

No more do yours. Your virtues, gentle master,

Are sanctified and holy traitors to you.

O, what a world is this, when what is comely

Envenoms him that bears it!

ORLANDO.

Why, what's the matter?

ADAM.

O unhappy youth!

Come not within these doors; within this roof

The enemy of all your graces lives.

Your brother-no, no brother; yet the son-

Yet not the son; I will not call him son

Of him I was about to call his father-

Hath heard your praises; and this night he means

To burn the lodging where you use to lie,

And you within it. If he fail of that,

He will have other means to cut you off;

I overheard him and his practices.

This is no place; this house is but a butchery;

Abhor it, fear it, do not enter it.

ORLANDO.

Why, whither, Adam, wouldst thou have me go?

ADAM.

No matter whither, so you come not here.

ORLANDO.

What, wouldst thou have me go and beg my food,
Or with a base and boist'rous sword enforce
A thievish living on the common road?
This I must do, or know not what to do;
Yet this I will not do, do how I can.
I rather will subject me to the malice
Of a diverted blood and bloody brother.

ADAM.

But do not so. I have five hundred crowns, The thrifty hire I sav'd under your father,

Which I did store to be my foster-nurse,

When service should in my old limbs lie lame,

And unregarded age in corners thrown.

Take that, and He that doth the ravens feed,

Yea, providently caters for the sparrow,

Be comfort to my age! Here is the gold;

All this I give you. Let me be your servant;

Though I look old, yet I am strong and lusty;

For in my youth I never did apply

Hot and rebellious liquors in my blood,

Nor did not with unbashful forehead woo

The means of weakness and debility;

Therefore my age is as a lusty winter,

Frosty, but kindly. Let me go with you;

I'll do the service of a younger man

In all your business and necessities.

ORLANDO.

O good old man, how well in thee appears

The constant service of the antique world, When service sweat for duty, not for meed!

Thou art not for the fashion of these times,

Where none will sweat but for promotion,

And having that do choke their service up

Even with the having; it is not so with thee.

But, poor old man, thou prun'st a rotten tree

That cannot so much as a blossom yield

In lieu of all thy pains and husbandry.

But come thy ways, we'll go along together,

And ere we have thy youthful wages spent

We'll light upon some settled low content.

ADAM.

Master, go on; and I will follow the

To the last gasp, with truth and loyalty.

From seventeen years till now almost fourscore

Here lived I, but now live here no more.

At seventeen years many their fortunes seek,

But at fourscore it is too late a week;

Yet fortune cannot recompense me better

Than to die well and not my master's debtor. *Exeunt*

SCENE IV.

The Forest of Arden

Enter ROSALIND for GANYMEDE, CELIA for ALIENA, and CLOWN alias TOUCHSTONE

ROSALIND.

O Jupiter, how weary are my spirits!

TOUCHSTONE.

I Care not for my spirits, if my legs were not weary.

ROSALIND.

I could find in my heart to disgrace my man's apparel, and to cry like a woman; but I must comfort the weaker vessel, as doublet and hose ought to show itself courageous to petticoat; therefore, courage, good Aliena.

CELIA.

I pray you bear with me; I cannot go no further.

TOUCHSTONE.

For my part, I had rather bear with you than bear you; yet I should bear no cross if I did bear you; for I think you have no money in your purse.

ROSALIND.

Well,. this is the Forest of Arden.

TOUCHSTONE.

Ay, now am I in Arden; the more fool I; when I was at home I was in a better place; but travellers must be content.

Enter CORIN and SILVIUS

ROSALIND.

Ay, be so, good Touchstone. Look you, who comes here, a young man and an old in solemn talk.

CORIN.

That is the way to make her scorn you still.

SILVIUS.

O Corin, that thou knew'st how I do love her!

CORIN.

I partly guess; for I have lov'd ere now.

SILVIUS.

No, Corin, being old, thou canst not guess,
Though in thy youth thou wast as true a lover
As ever sigh'd upon a midnight pillow.
But if thy love were ever like to mine,
As sure I think did never man love so,
How many actions most ridiculous
Hast thou been drawn to by thy fantasy?

CORIN.

Into a thousand that I have forgotten.

SILVIUS.

O, thou didst then never love so heartily!

If thou rememb'rest not the slightest folly

That ever love did make thee run into,

Thou hast not lov'd;

Or if thou hast not sat as I do now,

Wearing thy hearer in thy mistress' praise,

Thou hast not lov'd;

Or if thou hast not broke from company

Abruptly, as my passion now makes me,

Thou hast not lov'd.

O Phebe, Phebe, Phebe! *Exit* Silvius

ROSALIND.

Alas, poor shepherd! searching of thy wound,

I have by hard adventure found mine own.

TOUCHSTONE.

And I mine. I remember, when I was in love, I broke my sword upon a stone, and bid him take that for coming a-night to Jane Smile; and I remember the kissing of her batler, and the cow's dugs that her pretty chopt hands had milk'd; and I remember the wooing of peascod instead of her; from whom I took two cods, and giving her them again, said with weeping tears 'Wear these for my sake.' We that are true lovers run into strange capers; but as all is mortal in nature, so is all nature in love mortal in folly.

ROSALIND.

Thou speak'st wiser than thou art ware of.

TOUCHSTONE.

Nay, I shall ne'er be ware of mine own wit till I break my shins against it.

ROSALIND.

Jove, Jove! this shepherd's passion

Is much upon my fashion.

TOUCHSTONE.

And mine; but it grows something stale with me.

CELIA.

I pray you, one of you question yond man

If he for gold will give us any food;

I faint almost to death.

TOUCHSTONE.

Holla, you clown!

ROSALIND.

Peace, fool; he's not thy Ensman.

CORIN.

Who calls?

TOUCHSTONE.

Your betters, sir.

CORIN.

Else are they very wretched.

ROSALIND.

Peace, I say. Good even to you, friend.

CORIN.

And to you, gentle sir, and to you all.

ROSALIND.

I prithee, shepherd, if that love or gold
Can in this desert place buy entertainment,
Bring us where we may rest ourselves and feed.
Here's a young maid with travel much oppress'd,
And faints for succour.

CORIN.

Fair sir, I pity her,
And wish, for her sake more than for mine own,
My fortunes were more able to relieve her;
But I am shepherd to another man,
And do not shear the fleeces that I graze.
My master is of churlish disposition,
And little recks to find the way to heaven
By doing deeds of hospitality.
Besides, his cote, his flocks, and bounds of feed,

Are now on sale; and at our sheepcote now,
By reason of his absence, there is nothing
That you will feed on; but what is, come see,
And in my voice most welcome shall you be.

ROSALIND.

What is he that shall buy his flock and pasture?

CORIN.

That young swain that you saw here but erewhile,
That little cares for buying any thing.

ROSALIND.

I pray thee, if it stand with honesty,
Buy thou the cottage, pasture, and the flock,
And thou shalt have to pay for it of us.

CELIA.

And we will mend thy wages. I like this place,
And willingly could waste my time in it.

CORIN.

Assuredly the thing is to be sold.

Go with me; if you like upon report

The soil, the profit, and this kind of life,

I will your very faithful feeder be,

And buy it with your gold right suddenly. *Exeunt*

SCENE V.

Another part of the forest

Enter AMIENS, JAQUES, and OTHERS

SONG

AMIENS.

Under the greenwood tree

Who loves to lie with me,

And turn his merry note

Unto the sweet bird's throat,

Come hither, come hither, come hither.

Here shall he see No enemy

But winter and rough weather.

JAQUES.

More, more, I prithee, more.

AMIENS.

It will make you melancholy, Monsieur Jaques.

JAQUES.

I thank it. More, I prithee, more. I can suck melancholy out of a song, as a weasel sucks eggs. More, I prithee, more.

AMIENS.

My voice is ragged; I know I cannot please you.

JAQUES.

I do not desire you to please me; I do desire you to sing.

Come, more; another stanzo. Call you 'em stanzos?

AMIENS.

What you will, Monsieur Jaques.

JAQUES.

Nay, I care not for their names; they owe me nothing.

Will you sing?

AMIENS.

More at your request than to please myself.

JAQUES.

Well then, if ever I thank any man, I'll thank you; but that they call compliment is like th' encounter of two dog-apes; and when a man thanks me heartily, methinks have given him a penny, and he renders me the beggarly thanks. Come, sing; and you that will not, hold your tongues.

AMIENS.

Well, I'll end the song. Sirs, cover the while; the Duke will drink under this tree. He hath been all this day to look you.

JAQUES.

And I have been all this day to avoid him. He is to disputable for my company. I think of as many matters as he; but I give heaven thanks, and make no boast of them. Come, warble, come.

SONG

[All together here]

Who doth ambition shun,

And loves to live i' th' sun,

Seeking the food he eats,

And pleas'd with what he gets,

Come hither, come hither, come hither.

Here shall he see No enemy

But winter and rough weather.

JAQUES.

I'll give you a verse to this note that I made yesterday in

despite of my invention.

AMIENS.

And I'll sing it.

JAQUES.

Thus it goes:

If it do come to pass

That any man turn ass,

Leaving his wealth and ease

A stubborn will to please,

Ducdame, ducdame, ducdame;

Here shall he see

Gross fools as he,

An if he will come to me.

AMIENS.

What's that 'ducdame'?

JAQUES.

'Tis a Greek invocation, to call fools into a circle.

I'll go sleep, if I can; if I cannot, I'll rail against all the

first-born of Egypt.

AMIENS.

And I'll go seek the Duke; his banquet is prepar'd.

Exeunt severally

SCENE VI.

The forest

Enter ORLANDO and ADAM

ADAM.

Dear master, I can go no further. O, I die for food! Here lie

I down, and measure out my grave. Farewell, kind master.

ORLANDO.

Why, how now, Adam! No greater heart in thee? Live a little; comfort a little; cheer thyself a little. If this uncouth forest yield anything savage, I will either be food for it or bring it for food to thee. Thy conceit is nearer death than thy powers. For my sake be comfortable; hold death awhile at the arm's end. I will here be with the presently; and if I bring thee not something to eat, I will give thee leave to die; but if thou diest before I come, thou art a mocker of my labour. Well said! thou look'st cheerly; and I'll be with thee quickly. Yet thou liest in the bleak air. Come, I will bear thee to some shelter; and thou shalt not die for lack of a dinner, if there live anything in this desert. Cheerly, good Adam! *Exeunt*

SCENE VII.

The forest

A table set out. *Enter* DUKE SENIOR, AMIENS, and LORDS, like outlaws

DUKE SENIOR.

I think he be transform'd into a beast;

For I can nowhere find him like a man.

FIRST LORD.

My lord, he is but even now gone hence;

Here was he merry, hearing of a song.

DUKE SENIOR.

If he, compact of jars, grow musical,

We shall have shortly discord in the spheres.

Go seek him; tell him I would speak with him.

Enter JAQUES

FIRST LORD.

He saves my labour by his own approach.

DUKE SENIOR.

Why, how now, monsieur! what a life is this,

That your poor friends must woo your company?

What, you look merrily!

JAQUES.

A fool, a fool! I met a fool i' th' forest,

A motley fool. A miserable world!

As I do live by food, I met a fool,

Who laid him down and bask'd him in the sun,

And rail'd on Lady Fortune in good terms,

In good set terms-and yet a motley fool.

'Good morrow, fool,' quoth I; 'No, sir,' quoth he,

'Call me not fool till heaven hath sent me fortune.'

And then he drew a dial from his poke,

And, looking on it with lack-lustre eye,
Says very wisely, 'It is ten o'clock;
Thus we may see,' quoth he, 'how the world wags;
'Tis but an hour ago since it was nine;
And after one hour more 'twill be eleven;
And so, from hour to hour, we ripe and ripe,
And then, from hour to hour, we rot and rot;
And thereby hangs a tale.' When I did hear
The motley fool thus moral on the time,
My lungs began to crow like chanticleer
That fools should be so deep contemplative;
And I did laugh sans intermission
An hour by his dial. O noble fool!
A worthy fool! Motley's the only wear.

DUKE SENIOR.

What fool is this?

JAQUES.

O worthy fool! One that hath been a courtier,

And says, if ladies be but young and fair,
They have the gift to know it; and in his brain,
Which is as dry as the remainder biscuit
After a voyage, he hath strange places cramm'd
With observation, the which he vents
In mangled forms. O that I were a fool!

I am ambitious for a motley coat.

DUKE SENIOR.

Thou shalt have one.

JAQUES.

It is my only suit,
Provided that you weed your better judgments
Of all opinion that grows rank in them
That I am wise. I must have liberty
Withal, as large a charter as the wind,
To blow on whom I please, for so fools have;
And they that are most galled with my folly,
They most must laugh. And why, sir, must they so?

The why is plain as way to parish church:

He that a fool doth very wisely hit

Doth very foolishly, although he smart,

Not to seem senseless of the bob; if not,

The wise man's folly is anatomiz'd

Even by the squand'ring glances of the fool.

Invest me in my motley; give me leave

To speak my mind, and I will through and through

Cleanse the foul body of th' infected world,

If they will patiently receive my medicine.

DUKE SENIOR.

Fie on thee! I can tell what thou wouldst do.

JAQUES.

What, for a counter, would I do but good?

DUKE SENIOR.

Most Mischievous foul sin, in chiding sin;

For thou thyself hast been a libertine,

As sensual as the brutish sting itself;

And all th' embossed sores and headed evils

That thou with license of free foot hast caught

Wouldst thou disgorge into the general world.

JAQUES.

Why, who cries out on pride

That can therein tax any private party?

Doth it not flow as hugely as the sea,

Till that the wearer's very means do ebb?

What woman in the city do I name

When that I say the city-woman bears

The cost of princes on unworthy shoulders?

Who can come in and say that I mean her,

When such a one as she such is her neighbour?

Or what is he of basest function

That says his bravery is not on my cost,

Thinking that I mean him, but therein suits

His folly to the mettle of my speech?

There then! how then? what then? Let me see wherein

My tongue hath wrong'd him: if it do him right,

Then he hath wrong'd himself; if he be free,

Why then my taxing like a wild-goose flies,

Unclaim'd of any man. But who comes here?

Enter ORLANDO with his sword drawn

ORLANDO.

Forbear, and eat no more.

JAQUES.

Why, I have eat none yet.

ORLANDO.

Nor shalt not, till necessity be serv'd.

JAQUES.

Of what kind should this cock come of?

DUKE SENIOR.

Art thou thus bolden'd, man, by thy distress?

Or else a rude despiser of good manners,

That in civility thou seem'st so empty?

ORLANDO.

You touch'd my vein at first: the thorny point

Of bare distress hath ta'en from me the show

Of smooth civility; yet arn I inland bred,

And know some nurture. But forbear, I say;

He dies that touches any of this fruit

Till I and my affairs are answered.

JAQUES.

An you will not be answer'd with reason, I must die.

DUKE SENIOR.

What would you have? Your gentleness shall force

More than your force move us to gentleness.

ORLANDO.

I almost die for food, and let me have it.

DUKE SENIOR.

Sit down and feed, and welcome to our table.

ORLANDO.

Speak you so gently? Pardon me, I pray you;
I thought that all things had been savage here,
And therefore put I on the countenance
Of stern commandment. But whate'er you are
That in this desert inaccessible,
Under the shade of melancholy boughs,
Lose and neglect the creeping hours of time;
If ever you have look'd on better days,
If ever been where bells have knoll'd to church,
If ever sat at any good man's feast,
If ever from your eyelids wip'd a tear,
And know what 'tis to pity and be pitied,
Let gentleness my strong enforcement be;

In the which hope I blush, and hide my sword.

DUKE SENIOR.

True is it that we have seen better days,

And have with holy bell been knoll'd to church,

And sat at good men's feasts, and wip'd our eyes

Of drops that sacred pity hath engend'red;

And therefore sit you down in gentleness,

And take upon command what help we have

That to your wanting may be minist'red.

ORLANDO.

Then but forbear your food a little while,

Whiles, like a doe, I go to find my fawn,

And give it food. There is an old poor man

Who after me hath many a weary step

Limp'd in pure love; till he be first suffic'd,

Oppress'd with two weak evils, age and hunger,

I will not touch a bit.

DUKE SENIOR.

Go find him out.

And we will nothing waste till you return.

ORLANDO.

I thank ye; and be blest for your good comfort!

Exit

DUKE SENIOR. Thou seest we are not all alone unhappy:

This wide and universal theatre

Presents more woeful pageants than the scene

Wherein we play in.

JAQUES.

All the world's a stage,

And all the men and women merely players;

They have their exits and their entrances;

And one man in his time plays many parts,

His acts being seven ages. At first the infant,

Mewling and puking in the nurse's arms;

Then the whining school-boy, with his satchel

And shining morning face, creeping like snail

Unwillingly to school. And then the lover,

Sighing like furnace, with a woeful ballad

Made to his mistress' eyebrow. Then a soldier,

Full of strange oaths, and bearded like the pard,

Jealous in honour, sudden and quick in quarrel,

Seeking the bubble reputation

Even in the cannon's mouth. And then the justice,

In fair round belly with good capon lin'd,

With eyes severe and beard of formal cut,

Full of wise saws and modern instances;

And so he plays his part. The sixth age shifts

Into the lean and slipper'd pantaloon,

With spectacles on nose and pouch on side,

His youthful hose, well sav'd, a world too wide

For his shrunk shank; and his big manly voice,

Turning again toward childish treble, pipes

And whistles in his sound. Last scene of all,

That ends this strange eventful history,

Is second childishness and mere oblivion;

Sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans every thing.

Re-enter ORLANDO with ADAM

DUKE SENIOR.

Welcome. Set down your venerable burden.

And let him feed.

ORLANDO.

I thank you most for him.

ADAM.

So had you need;

I scarce can speak to thank you for myself.

DUKE SENIOR.

Welcome; fall to. I will not trouble you

As yet to question you about your fortunes.

Give us some music; and, good cousin, sing.

SONG

Blow, blow, thou winter wind,

Thou art not so unkind

As man's ingratitude;
Thy tooth is not so keen,
Because thou art not seen,
Although thy breath be rude.
Heigh-ho! sing heigh-ho! unto the green holly.

Most friendship is feigning, most loving mere folly.
Then, heigh-ho, the holly!

This life is most jolly.
Freeze, freeze, thou bitter sky,
That dost not bite so nigh
As benefits forgot;
Though thou the waters warp,
Thy sting is not so sharp
As friend rememb'red not.
Heigh-ho! sing, &c.

DUKE SENIOR.

If that you were the good Sir Rowland's son,
As you have whisper'd faithfully you were,

And as mine eye doth his effigies witness
Most truly limn'd and living in your face,
Be truly welcome hither. I am the Duke
That lov'd your father. The residue of your fortune,
Go to my cave and tell me. Good old man,
Thou art right welcome as thy master is.
Support him by the arm. Give me your hand,
And let me all your fortunes understand. *Exeunt*

ACT III. SCENE I.

The palace

Enter DUKE FREDERICK, OLIVER, and LORDS

FREDERICK.

Not see him since! Sir, sir, that cannot be.
But were I not the better part made mercy,
I should not seek an absent argument
Of my revenge, thou present. But look to it:
Find out thy brother wheresoe'er he is;
Seek him with candle; bring him dead or living

Within this twelvemonth, or turn thou no more

To seek a living in our territory.

Thy lands and all things that thou dost call thine

Worth seizure do we seize into our hands,

Till thou canst quit thee by thy brother's mouth

Of what we think against thee.

OLIVER.

O that your Highness knew my heart in this!

I never lov'd my brother in my life.

FREDERICK.

More villain thou. Well, push him out of doors;

And let my officers of such a nature

Make an extent upon his house and lands.

Do this expediently, and turn him going. *Exeunt*

SCENE II.

The forest

Enter ORLANDO, with a paper

ORLANDO.

Hang there, my verse, in witness of my love;
And thou, thrice-crowned Queen of Night, survey
With thy chaste eye, from thy pale sphere above,
Thy huntress' name that my full life doth sway.
O Rosalind! these trees shall be my books,
And in their barks my thoughts I'll character,
That every eye which in this forest looks
Shall see thy virtue witness'd every where.
Run, run, Orlando; carve on every tree,
The fair, the chaste, and unexpressive she. *Exit*

Enter CORIN and TOUCHSTONE

CORIN.

And how like you this shepherd's life, Master Touchstone?

TOUCHSTONE.

Truly, shepherd, in respect of itself, it is a good life; but in respect that it is a shepherd's life, it is nought. In respect that it is solitary, I like it very well; but in respect that it is private, it is a very vile life. Now in respect it is in the fields, it pleaseth me well; but in respect it is not in the court, it is tedious. As it is a spare life, look you, it fits my humour well; but as there is no more plenty in it, it goes much against my stomach. Hast any philosophy in thee, shepherd?

CORIN.

No more but that I know the more one sickens the worse at ease he is; and that he that wants money, means, and content, is without three good friends; that the property of rain is to wet, and fire to burn; that good pasture makes fat sheep; and that a great cause of the night is lack of the sun; that he that hath learned no wit by nature nor art may complain of good breeding, or comes of a very dull kindred.

TOUCHSTONE.

Such a one is a natural philosopher. Wast ever in court, shepherd?

CORIN.

No, truly.

TOUCHSTONE.

Then thou art damn'd.

CORIN.

Nay, I hope.

TOUCHSTONE.

Truly, thou art damn'd, like an ill-roasted egg, all on one side.

CORIN.

For not being at court? Your reason.

TOUCHSTONE.

Why, if thou never wast at court thou never saw'st good manners; if thou never saw'st good manners, then thy manners must be wicked; and wickedness is sin, and sin is damnation. Thou art in a parlous state, shepherd.

CORIN.

Not a whit, Touchstone. Those that are good manners at the court are as ridiculous in the country as the behaviour of the country is most mockable at the court. You told me you salute not at the court, but you kiss your hands; that courtesy would be uncleanly if courtiers were shepherds.

TOUCHSTONE.

Instance, briefly; come, instance.

CORIN.

Why, we are still handling our ewes; and their fells, you know, are greasy.

TOUCHSTONE.

Why, do not your courtier's hands sweat? And is not the grease of a mutton as wholesome as the sweat of a man? Shallow, shallow. A better instance, I say; come.

CORIN.

Besides, our hands are hard.

TOUCHSTONE.

Your lips will feel them the sooner. Shallow again.

A more sounder instance; come.

CORIN.

And they are often tarr'd over with the surgery of our sheep; and would you have us kiss tar? The courtier's hands are perfum'd with civet.

TOUCHSTONE.

Most shallow man! thou worm's meat in respect of a good piece of flesh indeed! Learn of the wise, and perpend: civet is of a baser birth than tar-the very uncleanly flux of a cat. Mend the instance, shepherd.

CORIN.

You have too courtly a wit for me; I'll rest.

TOUCHSTONE.

Wilt thou rest damn'd? God help thee, shallow man!

God make incision in thee! thou art raw.

CORIN.

Sir, I am a true labourer: I earn that I eat, get that I wear; owe no man hate, envy no man's happiness; glad of other men's good, content with my harm; and the greatest of my pride is to see my ewes graze and my lambs suck.

TOUCHSTONE.

That is another simple sin in you: to bring the ewes and the rams together, and to offer to get your living by the copulation of cattle; to be bawd to a bell-wether, and to betray a she-lamb of a twelvemonth to crooked-pated, old, cuckoldly ram, out of all reasonable match. If thou beest not damn'd for this, the devil himself will have no shepherds; I cannot see else how thou shouldst scape.

CORIN.

Here comes young Master Ganymede, my new mistress's brother.

Enter ROSALIND, reading a paper

ROSALIND.

'From the east to western Inde,

No jewel is like Rosalinde.

Her worth, being mounted on the wind,

Through all the world bears Rosalinde.

All the pictures fairest lin'd

Are but black to Rosalinde.

Let no face be kept in mind

But the fair of Rosalinde.'

TOUCHSTONE.

I'll rhyme you so eight years together, dinners, and suppers, and sleeping hours, excepted. It is the right butter-women's rank to market.

ROSALIND.

Out, fool!

TOUCHSTONE.

For a taste:

If a hart do lack a hind,

Let him seek out Rosalinde.

If the cat will after kind,

So be sure will Rosalinde.

Winter garments must be lin'd,

So must slender Rosalinde.

They that reap must sheaf and bind,

Then to cart with Rosalinde.

Sweetest nut hath sourest rind,

Such a nut is Rosalinde.

He that sweetest rose will find

Must find love's prick and Rosalinde.

This is the very false gallop of verses; why do you infect yourself with them?

ROSALIND.

Peace, you dull fool! I found them on a tree.

TOUCHSTONE.

Truly, the tree yields bad fruit.

ROSALIND.

I'll graff it with you, and then I shall graff it with a medlar. Then it will be the earliest fruit i' th' country; for you'll be rotten ere you be half ripe, and that's the right virtue of the medlar.

TOUCHSTONE.

You have said; but whether wisely or no, let the forest judge.

Enter CELIA, with a writing

ROSALIND.

Peace!

Here comes my sister, reading; stand aside.

CELIA.

'Why should this a desert be?

For it is unpeopled? No;

Tongues I'll hang on every tree

That shall civil sayings show.

Some, how brief the life of man

Runs his erring pilgrimage,

That the streching of a span

Buckles in his sum of age;

Some, of violated vows

'Twixt the souls of friend and friend;

But upon the fairest boughs,

Or at every sentence end,

Will I Rosalinda write,

Teaching all that read to know

The quintessence of every sprite

Heaven would in little show.

Therefore heaven Nature charg'd

That one body should be fill'd

With all graces wide-enlarg'd.

Nature presently distill'd

Helen's cheek, but not her heart,

Cleopatra's majesty,

Atalanta's better part,

Sad Lucretia's modesty.

Thus Rosalinde of many parts

By heavenly synod was devis'd,

Of many faces, eyes, and hearts,

To have the touches dearest priz'd.

Heaven would that she these gifts should have,

And I to live and die her slave.'

ROSALIND.

O most gentle pulpiter! What tedious homily of love have you wearied your parishioners withal, and never cried 'Have patience, good people.'

CELIA.

How now! Back, friends; shepherd, go off a little; go with him, sirrah.

TOUCHSTONE.

Come, shepherd, let us make an honourable retreat;

though not with bag and baggage, yet with scrip and scrippage. *Exeunt* CORIN and TOUCHSTONE

CELIA.

Didst thou hear these verses?

ROSALIND.

O, yes, I heard them all, and more too; for some of them had in them more feet than the verses would bear.

CELIA.

That's no matter; the feet might bear the verses.

ROSALIND.

Ay, but the feet were lame, and could not bear themselves

without the verse, and therefore stood lamely in the verse.

CELIA.

But didst thou hear without wondering how thy name should be

hang'd and carved upon these trees?

ROSALIND.

I was seven of the nine days out of the wonder before you came; for look here what I found on a palm-tree. I was never so berhym'd since Pythagoras' time that I was an Irish rat, which I can hardly remember.

CELIA.

Trow you who hath done this?

ROSALIND.

Is it a man?

CELIA.

And a chain, that you once wore, about his neck.

Change you colour?

ROSALIND.

I prithee, who?

CELIA.

O Lord, Lord! it is a hard matter for friends to meet; but mountains may be remov'd with earthquakes, and so encounter.

ROSALIND.

Nay, but who is it?

CELIA.

Is it possible?

ROSALIND.

Nay, I prithee now, with most petitionary vehemence, tell me who it is.

CELIA.

O wonderful, wonderful, most wonderful wonderful, and yet

again wonderful, and after that, out of all whooping!

ROSALIND.

Good my complexion! dost thou think, though I am caparison'd like a man, I have a doublet and hose in my disposition? One inch of delay more is a South Sea of discovery. I prithee tell me who is it quickly, and speak apace. I would thou could'st stammer, that thou mightst pour this conceal'd man out of thy mouth, as wine comes out of narrow-mouth'd bottle-either too much at once or none at all. I prithee take the cork out of thy mouth that I may drink thy tidings.

CELIA.

So you may put a man in your belly.

ROSALIND.

Is he of God's making? What manner of man?

Is his head worth a hat or his chin worth a beard?

CELIA.

Nay, he hath but a little beard.

ROSALIND.

Why, God will send more if the man will be thankful. Let me stay the growth of his beard, if thou delay me not the knowledge of his chin.

CELIA.

It is young Orlando, that tripp'd up the wrestler's heels

and your heart both in an instant.

ROSALIND.

Nay, but the devil take mocking! Speak sad brow and true maid.

CELIA.

I' faith, coz, 'tis he.

ROSALIND.

Orlando?

CELIA.

Orlando.

ROSALIND.

Alas the day! what shall I do with my doublet and hose? What did he when thou saw'st him? What said he? How look'd he? Wherein went he? What makes he here? Did he ask for me? Where remains he? How parted he with thee? And when shalt thou see him again? Answer me in one word.

CELIA.

You must borrow me Gargantua's mouth first; 'tis a word too great for any mouth of this age's size. To say ay and no to these particulars is more than to answer in a catechism.

ROSALIND.

But doth he know that I am in this forest, and in man's apparel? Looks he as freshly as he did the day he wrestled?

CELIA.

It is as easy to count atomies as to resolve the propositions of a lover; but take a taste of my finding him, and relish it with good observance. I found him under a tree, like a dropp'd acorn.

ROSALIND.

It may well be call'd Jove's tree, when it drops forth such fruit.

CELIA.

Give me audience, good madam.

ROSALIND.

Proceed.

CELIA.

There lay he, stretch'd along like a wounded knight.

ROSALIND.

Though it be pity to see such a sight, it well becomes the ground.

CELIA.

Cry 'Holla' to thy tongue, I prithee; it curvets
unseasonably. He was furnish'd like a hunter.

ROSALIND.

O, ominous! he comes to kill my heart.

CELIA.

I would sing my song without a burden; thou bring'st me out of tune.

ROSALIND.

Do you not know I am a woman? When I think, I must speak.

Sweet, say on.

CELIA.

You bring me out. Soft! comes he not here?

Enter ORLANDO and JAQUES

ROSALIND.

'Tis he; slink by, and note him.

JAQUES.

I thank you for your company; but, good faith, I had as

lief have been myself alone.

ORLANDO.

And so had I; but yet, for fashion sake, I thank you too for your society.

JAQUES.

God buy you; let's meet as little as we can.

ORLANDO.

I do desire we may be better strangers.

JAQUES.

I pray you mar no more trees with writing love songs in their barks.

ORLANDO.

I pray you mar no more of my verses with reading them
ill-favouredly.

JAQUES.

Rosalind is your love's name?

ORLANDO.

Yes, just.

JAQUES.

I do not like her name.

ORLANDO.

There was no thought of pleasing you when she was christen'd.

JAQUES.

What stature is she of?

ORLANDO.

Just as high as my heart.

JAQUES.

You are full of pretty answers. Have you not been acquainted with goldsmiths' wives, and conn'd them out of rings?

ORLANDO.

Not so; but I answer you right painted cloth, from whence

you have studied your questions.

JAQUES.

You have a nimble wit; I think 'twas made of Atalanta's heels. Will you sit down with me? and we two will rail against our mistress the world, and all our misery.

ORLANDO.

I will chide no breather in the world but myself, against whom I know most faults.

JAQUES.

The worst fault you have is to be in love.

ORLANDO.

'Tis a fault I will not change for your best virtue. I am weary of you.

JAQUES.

By my troth, I was seeking for a fool when I found you.

ORLANDO.

He is drown'd in the brook; look but in, and you shall see him.

JAQUES.

There I shall see mine own figure.

ORLANDO.

Which I take to be either a fool or a cipher.

JAQUES.

I'll tarry no longer with you; farewell, good Signior Love.

ORLANDO.

I am glad of your departure; adieu, good Monsieur Melancholy.

Exit JAQUES

ROSALIND.

[Aside to CELIA] I will speak to him like a saucy lackey,

and under that habit play the knave with him.- Do you hear,

forester?

ORLANDO.

Very well; what would you?

ROSALIND.

I pray you, what is't o'clock?

ORLANDO.

You should ask me what time o' day; there's no clock in the forest.

ROSALIND.

Then there is no true lover in the forest, else sighing every minute and groaning every hour would detect the lazy foot of Time as well as a clock.

ORLANDO.

And why not the swift foot of Time? Had not that been as proper?

ROSALIND.

By no means, sir. Time travels in divers paces with divers persons. I'll tell you who Time ambles withal, who Time trots withal, who Time gallops withal, and who he stands still withal.

ORLANDO.

I prithee, who doth he trot withal?

ROSALIND.

Marry, he trots hard with a young maid between the contract of her marriage and the day it is solemniz'd; if the interim be but a se'nnight, Time's pace is so hard that it seems the length of seven year.

ORLANDO.

Who ambles Time withal?

ROSALIND.

With a priest that lacks Latin and a rich man that hath not the gout; for the one sleeps easily because he cannot study, and the other lives merrily because he feels no pain; the one lacking the burden of lean and wasteful learning, the other knowing no burden of heavy tedious penury. These Time ambles withal.

ORLANDO.

Who doth he gallop withal?

ROSALIND.

With a thief to the gallows; for though he go as softly as foot can fall, he thinks himself too soon there.

ORLANDO.

Who stays it still withal?

ROSALIND.

With lawyers in the vacation; for they sleep between term and term, and then they perceive not how Time moves.

ORLANDO.

Where dwell you, pretty youth?

ROSALIND.

With this shepherdess, my sister; here in the skirts of the forest, like fringe upon a petticoat.

ORLANDO.

Are you native of this place?

ROSALIND.

As the coney that you see dwell where she is kindled.

ORLANDO.

Your accent is something finer than you could purchase in so removed a dwelling.

ROSALIND.

I have been told so of many; but indeed an old religious uncle of mine taught me to speak, who was in his youth an inland man; one that knew courtship too well, for there he fell in love. I have heard him read many lectures against it; and I thank God I am not a woman, to be touch'd with so many giddy offences as he hath generally tax'd their whole sex withal.

ORLANDO.

Can you remember any of the principal evils that he laid to the charge of women?

ROSALIND.

There were none principal; they were all like one another as halfpence are; every one fault seeming monstrous till his fellow-fault came to match it.

ORLANDO.

I prithee recount some of them.

ROSALIND.

No; I will not cast away my physic but on those that are sick. There is a man haunts the forest that abuses our young plants with carving 'Rosalind' on their barks; hangs odes upon hawthorns and elegies on brambles; all, forsooth, deifying the name of Rosalind. If I could meet that fancy-monger, I would give him some good counsel, for he seems to have the quotidian of love upon him.

ORLANDO.

I am he that is so love-shak'd; I pray you tell me your remedy.

ROSALIND.

There is none of my uncle's marks upon you; he taught me how to know a man in love; in which cage of rushes I am sure you are not prisoner.

ORLANDO.

What were his marks?

ROSALIND.

A lean cheek, which you have not; a blue eye and sunken, which you have not; an unquestionable spirit, which you have not; a beard neglected, which you have not; but I pardon you for that, for simply your having in beard is a younger brother's revenue. Then your hose should be ungarter'd, your bonnet unbanded, your sleeve unbutton'd, your shoe untied, and every thing about you demonstrating a careless desolation. But you are no such man; you are rather point-device in your accoutrements, as loving yourself than seeming the lover of any other.

ORLANDO.

Fair youth, I would I could make thee believe I love.

ROSALIND.

Me believe it! You may as soon make her that you love believe it; which, I warrant, she is apter to do than to confess she does. That is one of the points in the which women still give the lie to their consciences. But, in good sooth, are you he that hangs the verses on the trees wherein Rosalind is so admired?

ORLANDO.

I swear to thee, youth, by the white hand of Rosalind, I am that he, that unfortunate he.

ROSALIND.

But are you so much in love as your rhymes speak?

ORLANDO.

Neither rhyme nor reason can express how much.

ROSALIND.

Love is merely a madness; and, I tell you, deserves as well a dark house and a whip as madmen do; and the reason why they are not so punish'd and cured is that the lunacy is so ordinary that the whippers are in love too. Yet I profess curing it by counsel.

ORLANDO.

Did you ever cure any so?

ROSALIND.

Yes, one; and in this manner. He was to imagine me his love, his mistress; and I set him every day to woo me; at which time would I, being but a moonish youth, grieve, be effeminate, changeable, longing and liking, proud, fantastical, apish, shallow, inconstant, full of tears, full of smiles; for every passion something and for no passion truly anything, as boys and women are for the most part cattle of this colour; would now like him, now loathe him; then entertain him, then forswear him; now weep for him, then spit at him; that I drave my suitor from his mad humour of love to a living humour of madness; which was, to forswear the full stream of the world and to live in a nook merely monastic. And thus I cur'd him; and this way will I take upon me to wash your liver as clean as a sound sheep's heart, that there shall not be one spot of love in 't.

ORLANDO.

I would not be cured, youth.

ROSALIND.

I would cure you, if you would but call me Rosalind, and come every day to my cote and woo me.

ORLANDO.

Now, by the faith of my love, I will. Tell me where it is.

ROSALIND.

Go with me to it, and I'll show it you; and, by the way, you shall tell me where in the forest you live. Will you go?

ORLANDO.

With all my heart, good youth.

ROSALIND.

Nay, you must call me Rosalind. Come, sister, will you go? *Exeunt*

SCENE III.

The forest

Enter TOUCHSTONE and AUDREY; JAQUES behind

TOUCHSTONE.

Come apace, good Audrey; I will fetch up your goats, Audrey. And how, Audrey, am I the man yet? Doth my simple feature content you?

AUDREY.

Your features! Lord warrant us! What features?

TOUCHSTONE.

I am here with thee and thy goats, as the most

capricious poet, honest Ovid, was among the Goths.

JAQUES.

[Aside] O knowledge ill-inhabited, worse than Jove in a thatch'd house!

TOUCHSTONE.

When a man's verses cannot be understood, nor a man's good wit seconded with the forward child understanding, it strikes a man more dead than a great reckoning in a little room. Truly, I would the gods had made thee poetical.

AUDREY.

I do not know what 'poetical' is. Is it honest in deed and word? Is it a true thing?

TOUCHSTONE.

No, truly; for the truest poetry is the most feigning, and lovers are given to poetry; and what they swear in poetry may be said as lovers they do feign.

AUDREY.

Do you wish, then, that the gods had made me poetical?

TOUCHSTONE.

I do, truly, for thou swear'st to me thou art honest; now, if thou wert a poet, I might have some hope thou didst feign.

AUDREY.

Would you not have me honest?

TOUCHSTONE.

No, truly, unless thou wert hard-favour'd; for honesty coupled to beauty is to have honey a sauce to sugar.

JAQUES.

[Aside] A material fool!

AUDREY.

Well, I am not fair; and therefore I pray the gods make me honest.

TOUCHSTONE.

Truly, and to cast away honesty upon a foul slut were

to put good meat into an unclean dish.

AUDREY.

I am not a slut, though I thank the gods I am foul.

TOUCHSTONE.

Well, praised be the gods for thy foulness; sluttishness may come hereafter. But be it as it may be, I will marry thee; and to that end I have been with Sir Oliver Martext, the vicar of the next village, who hath promis'd to meet me in this place of the forest, and to couple us.

JAQUES.

[Aside] I would fain see this meeting.

AUDREY.

Well, the gods give us joy!

TOUCHSTONE.

Amen. A man may, if he were of a fearful heart, stagger in this attempt; for here we have no temple but the wood, no assembly but horn-beasts. But what though? Courage! As horns are odious, they are necessary. It is said: 'Many a man knows no end of his goods.' Right! Many a man has good horns and knows no end of them. Well, that is the dowry of his wife; 'tis none of his own getting. Horns? Even so. Poor men alone? No, no; the noblest deer hath them as huge as the rascal. Is the single man therefore blessed? No; as a wall'd town is more worthier than a village, so is the forehead of a married man more honourable than the bare brow of a bachelor; and by how much defence is better than no skill, by so much is horn more precious than to want. Here comes Sir Oliver.

Enter SIR OLIVER MARTEXT

Sir Oliver Martext, you are well met. Will you dispatch us here under this tree, or shall we go with you to your chapel?

MARTEXT.

Is there none here to give the woman?

TOUCHSTONE.

I will not take her on gift of any man.

MARTEXT.

Truly, she must be given, or the marriage is not lawful.

JAQUES.

[Discovering himself] Proceed, proceed; I'll give her.

TOUCHSTONE.

Good even, good Master What-ye-call't; how do you, sir? You are very well met. Goddild you for your last company. I am very glad to see you. Even a toy in hand here, sir. Nay; pray be cover'd.

JAQUES.

Will you be married, motley?

TOUCHSTONE.

As the ox hath his bow, sir, the horse his curb, and the falcon her bells, so man hath his desires; and as pigeons bill, so wedlock would be nibbling.

JAQUES.

And will you, being a man of your breeding, be married under a bush, like a beggar? Get you to church and have a good priest that can tell you what marriage is; this fellow will but join you together as they join wainscot; then one of you will prove a shrunk panel, and like green timber warp, warp.

TOUCHSTONE.

[Aside] I am not in the mind but I were better to be married of him than of another; for he is not like to marry me well; and not being well married, it will be a good excuse for me hereafter to leave my wife.

JAQUES.

Go thou with me, and let me counsel thee.

TOUCHSTONE.

Come, sweet Audrey;

We must be married or we must live in bawdry.

Farewell, good Master Oliver. Not-

O sweet Oliver,

O brave Oliver,

Leave me not behind thee.

But-

Wind away,

Begone, I say,

I will not to wedding with thee.

Exeunt JAQUES, TOUCHSTONE, and AUDREY

MARTEXT.

'Tis no matter; ne'er a fantastical knave of them all shall flout me out of my calling. *Exit*

SCENE IV.

The forest

Enter ROSALIND and CELIA

ROSALIND.

Never talk to me; I will weep.

CELIA.

Do, I prithee; but yet have the grace to consider that tears do not become a man.

ROSALIND.

But have I not cause to weep?

CELIA.

As good cause as one would desire; therefore weep.

ROSALIND.

His very hair is of the dissembling colour.

CELIA.

Something browner than Judas's.

Marry, his kisses are Judas's own children.

ROSALIND.

I' faith, his hair is of a good colour.

CELIA.

An excellent colour: your chestnut was ever the only colour.

ROSALIND.

And his kissing is as full of sanctity as the touch of holy bread.

CELIA.

He hath bought a pair of cast lips of Diana. A nun of winter's sisterhood kisses not more religiously; the very ice of chastity is in them.

ROSALIND.

But why did he swear he would come this morning, and comes not?

CELIA.
Nay, certainly, there is no truth in him.

ROSALIND.

Do you think so?

CELIA.
Yes; I think he is not a pick-purse nor a horse-stealer; but
for his verity in love, I do think him as concave as covered
goblet or a worm-eaten nut.

ROSALIND.

Not true in love?

CELIA.

Yes, when he is in; but I think he is not in.

ROSALIND.

You have heard him swear downright he was.

CELIA.

'Was' is not 'is'; besides, the oath of a lover is no stronger than the word of a tapster; they are both the confirmer of false reckonings. He attends here in the forest on the Duke, your father.

ROSALIND.

I met the Duke yesterday, and had much question with him. He asked me of what parentage I was; I told him, of as good as he; so he laugh'd and let me go. But what talk we of fathers when there is such a man as Orlando?

CELIA.

O, that's a brave man! He writes brave verses, speaks brave words, swears brave oaths, and breaks them bravely, quite traverse, athwart the heart of his lover; as a puny tilter, that spurs his horse but on one side, breaks his staff like a noble goose. But all's brave that youth mounts and folly guides. Who comes here?

Enter CORIN

CORIN.

Mistress and master, you have oft enquired

After the shepherd that complain'd of love,

Who you saw sitting by me on the turf,

Praising the proud disdainful shepherdess

That was his mistress.

CELIA.

Well, and what of him?

CORIN.

If you will see a pageant truly play'd

Between the pale complexion of true love

And the red glow of scorn and proud disdain, Go hence a little, and I shall conduct you,

If you will mark it.

ROSALIND.

O, come, let us remove!

The sight of lovers feedeth those in love.

Bring us to this sight, and you shall say

I'll prove a busy actor in their play. *Exeunt*

SCENE V.

Another part of the forest

Enter SILVIUS and PHEBE

SILVIUS.

Sweet Phebe, do not scorn me; do not, Phebe.

Say that you love me not; but say not so

In bitterness. The common executioner,

Whose heart th' accustom'd sight of death makes hard,

Falls not the axe upon the humbled neck

But first begs pardon. Will you sterner be

Than he that dies and lives by bloody drops?

Enter ROSALIND, CELIA, and CORIN, at a distance

PHEBE.

I would not be thy executioner;

I fly thee, for I would not injure thee.

Thou tell'st me there is murder in mine eye.

'Tis pretty, sure, and very probable,

That eyes, that are the frail'st and softest things,

Who shut their coward gates on atomies,

Should be call'd tyrants, butchers, murderers!

Now I do frown on thee with all my heart;

And if mine eyes can wound, now let them kill thee.

Now counterfeit to swoon; why, now fall down;

Or, if thou canst not, O, for shame, for shame,

Lie not, to say mine eyes are murderers.

Now show the wound mine eye hath made in thee.

Scratch thee but with a pin, and there remains

Some scar of it; lean upon a rush,

The cicatrice and capable impressure

Thy palm some moment keeps; but now mine eyes,

Which I have darted at thee, hurt thee not;

Nor, I am sure, there is not force in eyes

That can do hurt.

SILVIUS.

O dear Phebe,

If ever-as that ever may be near-

You meet in some fresh cheek the power of fancy,

Then shall you know the wounds invisible

That love's keen arrows make.

PHEBE.

But till that time

Come not thou near me; and when that time comes,

Afflict me with thy mocks, pity me not;

As till that time I shall not pity thee.

ROSALIND.

[Advancing] And why, I pray you? Who might be your mother,

That you insult, exult, and all at once,
Over the wretched? What though you have no beauty-
As, by my faith, I see no more in you
Than without candle may go dark to bed-
Must you be therefore proud and pitiless?

Why, what means this? Why do you look on me?
I see no more in you than in the ordinary
Of nature's sale-work. 'Od's my little life,
I think she means to tangle my eyes too!
No faith, proud mistress, hope not after it;
'Tis not your inky brows, your black silk hair,
Your bugle eyeballs, nor your cheek of cream,
That can entame my spirits to your worship.
You foolish shepherd, wherefore do you follow her,
Like foggy south, puffing with wind and rain?
You are a thousand times a properer man
Than she a woman. 'Tis such fools as you
That makes the world full of ill-favour'd children.
'Tis not her glass, but you, that flatters her;
And out of you she sees herself more proper

Than any of her lineaments can show her.

But, mistress, know yourself. Down on your knees,

And thank heaven, fasting, for a good man's love;

For I must tell you friendly in your ear:

Sell when you can; you are not for all markets.

Cry the man mercy, love him, take his offer;

Foul is most foul, being foul to be a scoffer.

So take her to thee, shepherd. Fare you well.

PHEBE.

Sweet youth, I pray you chide a year together;

I had rather hear you chide than this man woo.

ROSALIND.

He's fall'n in love with your foulness, and she'll fall

in love with my anger. If it be so, as fast as she answers thee

with frowning looks, I'll sauce her with bitter words. Why look you so upon me?

PHEBE.

For no ill will I bear you.

ROSALIND.

I pray you do not fall in love with me,

For I am falser than vows made in wine;

Besides, I like you not. If you will know my house,

'Tis at the tuft of olives here hard by.

Will you go, sister? Shepherd, ply her hard.

Come, sister. Shepherdess, look on him better,

And be not proud; though all the world could see,

None could be so abus'd in sight as he.

Come, to our flock. *Exeunt* ROSALIND, CELIA, and CORIN

PHEBE.

Dead shepherd, now I find thy saw of might:

'Who ever lov'd that lov'd not at first sight?'

SILVIUS.

Sweet Phebe.

PHEBE.

Ha! what say'st thou, Silvius?

SILVIUS.

Sweet Phebe, pity me.

PHEBE.

Why, I arn sorry for thee, gentle Silvius.

SILVIUS.

Wherever sorrow is, relief would be.
If you do sorrow at my grief in love,
By giving love, your sorrow and my grief
Were both extermin'd.

PHEBE.

Thou hast my love; is not that neighbourly?

SILVIUS.

I would have you.

PHEBE.

Why, that were covetousness.

Silvius, the time was that I hated thee;

And yet it is not that I bear thee love;

But since that thou canst talk of love so well,

Thy company, which erst was irksome to me,

I will endure; and I'll employ thee too.

But do not look for further recompense

Than thine own gladness that thou art employ'd.

SILVIUS.

So holy and so perfect is my love,

And I in such a poverty of grace,

That I shall think it a most plenteous crop

To glean the broken ears after the man

That the main harvest reaps; loose now and then

A scatt'red smile, and that I'll live upon.

PHEBE.

Know'st thou the youth that spoke to me erewhile?

SILVIUS.

Not very well; but I have met him oft;

And he hath bought the cottage and the bounds

That the old carlot once was master of.

PHEBE.

Think not I love him, though I ask for him;

'Tis but a peevish boy; yet he talks well.

But what care I for words? Yet words do well

When he that speaks them pleases those that hear.

It is a pretty youth-not very pretty;

But, sure, he's proud; and yet his pride becomes him.

He'll make a proper man. The best thing in him

Is his complexion; and faster than his tongue

Did make offence, his eye did heal it up.

He is not very tall; yet for his years he's tall;

His leg is but so-so; and yet 'tis well.

There was a pretty redness in his lip,

A little riper and more lusty red

Than that mix'd in his cheek; 'twas just the difference

Betwixt the constant red and mingled damask.

There be some women, Silvius, had they mark'd him

In parcels as I did, would have gone near

To fall in love with him; but, for my part,

I love him not, nor hate him not; and yet

I have more cause to hate him than to love him;

For what had he to do to chide at me?

He said mine eyes were black, and my hair black,

And, now I am rememb'red, scorn'd at me.

I marvel why I answer'd not again;

But that's all one: omittance is no quittance.

I'll write to him a very taunting letter,

And thou shalt bear it; wilt thou, Silvius?

SILVIUS.

Phebe, with all my heart.

PHEBE.

I'll write it straight;

The matter's in my head and in my heart;

I will be bitter with him and passing short.

Go with me, Silvius. *Exeunt*

ACT IV. SCENE I.

The forest

Enter ROSALIND, CELIA, and JAQUES

JAQUES.

I prithee, pretty youth, let me be better acquainted with thee.

ROSALIND.

They say you are a melancholy fellow.

JAQUES.

I am so; I do love it better than laughing.

ROSALIND.

Those that are in extremity of either are abominable fellows, and betray themselves to every modern censure worse than drunkards.

JAQUES.

Why, 'tis good to be sad and say nothing.

ROSALIND.

Why then, 'tis good to be a post.

JAQUES.

I have neither the scholar's melancholy, which is emulation; nor the musician's, which is fantastical; nor the courtier's, which is proud; nor the soldier's, which is ambitious; nor the lawyer's, which is politic; nor the lady's, which is nice; nor the lover's, which is all these; but it is a melancholy of mine own, compounded of many simples, extracted from many objects, and, indeed, the sundry contemplation of my travels; in which my often rumination wraps me in a most humorous sadness.

ROSALIND.

A traveller! By my faith, you have great reason to be sad. I fear you have sold your own lands to see other men's; then to have seen much and to have nothing is to have rich eyes and poor hands.

JAQUES.

Yes, I have gain'd my experience.

Enter ORLANDO

ROSALIND.

And your experience makes you sad. I had rather have a

fool to make me merry than experience to make me sad-and to travel for it too.

ORLANDO.

Good day, and happiness, dear Rosalind!

JAQUES.

Nay, then, God buy you, an you talk in blank verse.

ROSALIND.

Farewell, Monsieur Traveller; look you lisp and wear strange suits, disable all the benefits of your own country, be out of love with your nativity, and almost chide God for making you that countenance you are; or I will scarce think you have swam in a gondola. *[Exit JAQUES]* Why, how now, Orlando! where have you been all this while? You a lover! An you serve me such another trick, never come in my sight more.

ORLANDO.

My fair Rosalind, I come within an hour of my promise.

ROSALIND.

Break an hour's promise in love! He that will divide a minute into a thousand parts, and break but a part of the thousand part of a minute in the affairs of love, it may be said of him that Cupid hath clapp'd him o' th' shoulder, but I'll warrant him heart-whole.

ORLANDO.

Pardon me, dear Rosalind.

ROSALIND.

Nay, an you be so tardy, come no more in my sight. I had as lief be woo'd of a snail.

ORLANDO.

Of a snail!

ROSALIND.

Ay, of a snail; for though he comes slowly, he carries his house on his head-a better jointure, I think, than you make a woman; besides, he brings his destiny with him.

ORLANDO.

What's that?

ROSALIND.

Why, horns; which such as you are fain to be beholding to your wives for; but he comes armed in his fortune, and prevents the slander of his wife.

ORLANDO.

Virtue is no horn-maker; and my Rosalind is virtuous.

ROSALIND.

And I am your Rosalind.

CELIA.

It pleases him to call you so; but he hath a Rosalind of a better leer than you.

ROSALIND.

Come, woo me, woo me; for now I am in a holiday humour, and like enough to consent. What would you say to me now, an I were your very very Rosalind?

ORLANDO.

I would kiss before I spoke.

ROSALIND.

Nay, you were better speak first; and when you were gravell'd for lack of matter, you might take occasion to kiss. Very good orators, when they are out, they will spit; and for lovers lacking-God warn us!- matter, the cleanliest shift is to kiss.

ORLANDO.

How if the kiss be denied?

ROSALIND.

Then she puts you to entreaty, and there begins new matter.

ORLANDO.

Who could be out, being before his beloved mistress?

ROSALIND.

Marry, that should you, if I were your mistress; or I should think my honesty ranker than my wit.

ORLANDO.

What, of my suit?

ROSALIND.

Not out of your apparel, and yet out of your suit.

Am not I your Rosalind?

ORLANDO.

I take some joy to say you are, because I would be talking of her.

ROSALIND.

Well, in her person, I say I will not have you.

ORLANDO.

Then, in mine own person, I die.

ROSALIND.

No, faith, die by attorney. The poor world is almost six thousand years old, and in all this time there was not any man died in his own person, videlicet, in a love-cause. Troilus had his brains dash'd out with a Grecian club; yet he did what he could to die before, and he is one of the patterns of love. Leander, he would have liv'd many a fair year, though Hero had turn'd nun, if it had not been for a hot midsummer night; for, good youth, he went but forth to wash him in the Hellespont, and, being taken with the cramp, was drown'd; and the foolish chroniclers of that age found it was-Hero of Sestos. But these are all lies: men have died from time to time, and worms have eaten them, but not for love.

ORLANDO.

I would not have my right Rosalind of this mind; for,

I protest, her frown might kill me.

ROSALIND.

By this hand, it will not kill a fly. But come, now I will be your Rosalind in a more coming-on disposition; and ask me what you will, I will grant it.

ORLANDO.

Then love me, Rosalind.

ROSALIND.

Yes, faith, will I, Fridays and Saturdays, and all.

ORLANDO.

And wilt thou have me?

ROSALIND.

Ay, and twenty such.

ORLANDO.

What sayest thou?

ROSALIND.

Are you not good?

ORLANDO.

I hope so.

ROSALIND.

Why then, can one desire too much of a good thing?

Come, sister, you shall be the priest, and marry us. Give me your hand,

Orlando. What do you say, sister?

ORLANDO.

Pray thee, marry us.

CELIA.

I cannot say the words.

ROSALIND.

You must begin 'Will you, Orlando'-

CELIA.

Go to. Will you, Orlando, have to wife this Rosalind?

ORLANDO.

I will.

ROSALIND.

Ay, but when?

ORLANDO.

Why, now; as fast as she can marry us.

ROSALIND.

Then you must say 'I take thee, Rosalind, for wife.'

ORLANDO.

I take thee, Rosalind, for wife.

ROSALIND.

I might ask you for your commission; but-I do take thee, Orlando, for my husband. There's a girl goes before the priest; and, certainly, a woman's thought runs before her actions.

ORLANDO.

So do all thoughts; they are wing'd.

ROSALIND.

Now tell me how long you would have her, after you have possess'd her.

ORLANDO.

For ever and a day.

ROSALIND.

Say 'a day' without the 'ever.' No, no, Orlando; men are April when they woo, December when they wed: maids are May when they are maids, but the sky changes when they are wives. I will be more jealous of thee than a Barbary cock-pigeon over his hen, more clamorous than a parrot against rain, more new-fangled than an ape, more giddy in my desires than a monkey. I will weep for nothing, like Diana in the fountain, and I will do that when you are dispos'd to be merry; I will laugh like a hyen, and that when thou are inclin'd to sleep.

ORLANDO.

But will my Rosalind do so?

ROSALIND.

By my life, she will do as I do.

ORLANDO.

O, but she is wise.

ROSALIND.

Or else she could not have the wit to do this. The wiser, the waywarder. Make the doors upon a woman's wit, and it will out at the casement; shut that, and 'twill out at the key-hole; stop that, 'twill fly with the smoke out at the chimney.

ORLANDO.

A man that had a wife with such a wit, he might say 'Wit, whither wilt?' ROSALIND. Nay, you might keep that check for it, till you met your wife's wit going to your neighbour's bed.

ORLANDO.

And what wit could wit have to excuse that?

ROSALIND.

Marry, to say she came to seek you there. You shall never take her without her answer, unless you take her without her tongue. O, that woman that cannot make her fault her husband's occasion, let her never nurse her child herself, for she will breed it like a fool!

ORLANDO.

For these two hours, Rosalind, I will leave thee.

ROSALIND.

Alas, dear love, I cannot lack thee two hours!

ORLANDO.

I must attend the Duke at dinner; by two o'clock I will be with thee again.

ROSALIND.

Ay, go your ways, go your ways. I knew what you would prove; my friends told me as much, and I thought no less. That flattering tongue of yours won me. 'Tis but one cast away, and so, come death! Two o'clock is your hour?

ORLANDO.

Ay, sweet Rosalind.

ROSALIND.

By my troth, and in good earnest, and so God mend me, and by all pretty oaths that are not dangerous, if you break one jot of your promise, or come one minute behind your hour, I will think you the most pathetical break-promise, and the most hollow lover, and the most unworthy of her you call Rosalind, that may be chosen out of the gross band of the unfaithful. Therefore beware my censure, and keep your promise.

ORLANDO.

With no less religion than if thou wert indeed my

Rosalind; so, adieu.

ROSALIND.

Well, Time is the old justice that examines all such offenders, and let Time try. Adieu. *Exit* ORLANDO

CELIA.

You have simply misus'd our sex in your love-prate. We must

have your doublet and hose pluck'd over your head, and show the

world what the bird hath done to her own nest.

ROSALIND.

O coz, coz, coz, my pretty little coz, that thou didst

know how many fathom deep I am in love! But it cannot be sounded;

my affection hath an unknown bottom, like the Bay of Portugal.

CELIA.

Or rather, bottomless; that as fast as you pour affection in, it runs out.

ROSALIND.

No; that same wicked bastard of Venus, that was begot of thought, conceiv'd of spleen, and born of madness; that blind rascally boy, that abuses every one's eyes, because his own are out-let him be judge how deep I am in love. I'll tell thee, Aliena, I cannot be out of the sight of Orlando. I'll go find a shadow, and sigh till he come.

CELIA.

And I'll sleep. *Exeunt*

SCENE II.

The forest

Enter JAQUES and LORDS, in the habit of foresters

JAQUES.

Which is he that killed the deer?

LORD.

Sir, it was I.

JAQUES.

Let's present him to the Duke, like a Roman conqueror; and it would do well to set the deer's horns upon his head for a branch of victory. Have you no song, forester, for this purpose?

LORD.

Yes, sir.

JAQUES.

Sing it; 'tis no matter how it be in tune, so it make noise enough.

SONG.

What shall he have that kill'd the deer?

His leather skin and horns to wear.

[The rest shall hear this burden:]

Then sing him home.

Take thou no scorn to wear the horn;

It was a crest ere thou wast born.

Thy father's father wore it;

And thy father bore it.

The horn, the horn, the lusty horn,

Is not a thing to laugh to scorn. *Exeunt*

SCENE III.

The forest

Enter ROSALIND and CELIA

ROSALIND.

How say you now? Is it not past two o'clock?

And here much Orlando!

CELIA.

I warrant you, with pure love and troubled brain, he hath ta'en his bow and arrows, and is gone forth-to sleep. Look, who comes here.

Enter SILVIUS

SILVIUS.

My errand is to you, fair youth;

My gentle Phebe did bid me give you this.

I know not the contents; but, as I guess

By the stern brow and waspish action

Which she did use as she was writing of it,

It bears an angry tenour. Pardon me,

I am but as a guiltless messenger.

ROSALIND.

Patience herself would startle at this letter,

And play the swaggerer. Bear this, bear all.

She says I am not fair, that I lack manners;

She calls me proud, and that she could not love me,

Were man as rare as Phoenix. 'Od's my will!

Her love is not the hare that I do hunt;

Why writes she so to me? Well, shepherd, well,

This is a letter of your own device.

SILVIUS.

No, I protest, I know not the contents;

Phebe did write it.

ROSALIND.

Come, come, you are a fool,

And turn'd into the extremity of love.
I saw her hand; she has a leathern hand,
A freestone-colour'd hand; I verily did think
That her old gloves were on, but 'twas her hands;
She has a huswife's hand-but that's no matter.

I say she never did invent this letter:
This is a man's invention, and his hand.

SILVIUS.

Sure, it is hers.

ROSALIND.
Why, 'tis a boisterous and a cruel style;
A style for challengers. Why, she defies me,
Like Turk to Christian. Women's gentle brain
Could not drop forth such giant-rude invention,
Such Ethiope words, blacker in their effect
Than in their countenance. Will you hear the letter?

SILVIUS.

So please you, for I never heard it yet;

Yet heard too much of Phebe's cruelty.

ROSALIND.

She Phebes me: mark how the tyrant writes.

[Reads]

'Art thou god to shepherd turn'd,

That a maiden's heart hath burn'd?'

Can a woman rail thus?

SILVIUS.

Call you this railing?

ROSALIND.

'Why, thy godhead laid apart,

Warr'st thou with a woman's heart?'

Did you ever hear such railing?

'Whiles the eye of man did woo me,

That could do no vengeance to me.'

Meaning me a beast.

'If the scorn of your bright eyne

Have power to raise such love in mine,

Alack, in me what strange effect

Would they work in mild aspect!

Whiles you chid me, I did love;

How then might your prayers move!

He that brings this love to the

Little knows this love in me;

And by him seal up thy mind,

Whether that thy youth and kind

Will the faithful offer take

Of me and all that I can make;

Or else by him my love deny,

And then I'll study how to die.'

SILVIUS.

Call you this chiding?

CELIA.

Alas, poor shepherd!

ROSALIND.

Do you pity him? No, he deserves no pity. Wilt thou love such a woman? What, to make thee an instrument, and play false strains upon thee! Not to be endur'd! Well, go your way to her, for I see love hath made thee tame snake, and say this to her-that if she love me, I charge her to love thee; if she will not, I will never have her unless thou entreat for her. If you be a true lover, hence, and not a word; for here comes more company. *Exit* SILVIUS

Enter OLIVER

OLIVER.

Good morrow, fair ones; pray you, if you know,

Where in the purlieus of this forest stands

A sheep-cote fenc'd about with olive trees?

CELIA.

West of this place, down in the neighbour bottom.

The rank of osiers by the murmuring stream

Left on your right hand brings you to the place.

But at this hour the house doth keep itself;

There's none within.

OLIVER.

If that an eye may profit by a tongue,

Then should I know you by description-

Such garments, and such years: 'The boy is fair,

Of female favour, and bestows himself

Like a ripe sister; the woman low,

And browner than her brother.' Are not you

The owner of the house I did inquire for?

CELIA.

It is no boast, being ask'd, to say we are.

OLIVER.

Orlando doth commend him to you both;

And to that youth he calls his Rosalind

He sends this bloody napkin. Are you he?

ROSALIND.

I am. What must we understand by this?

OLIVER.

Some of my shame; if you will know of me
What man I am, and how, and why, and where,
This handkercher was stain'd.

CELIA.

I pray you, tell it.

OLIVER.

When last the young Orlando parted from you,
He left a promise to return again
Within an hour; and, pacing through the forest,
Chewing the food of sweet and bitter fancy,
Lo, what befell! He threw his eye aside,
And mark what object did present itself.
Under an oak, whose boughs were moss'd with age,

And high top bald with dry antiquity,

A wretched ragged man, o'ergrown with hair,

Lay sleeping on his back. About his neck

A green and gilded snake had wreath'd itself,

Who with her head nimble in threats approach'd

The opening of his mouth; but suddenly,

Seeing Orlando, it unlink'd itself,

And with indented glides did slip away

Into a bush; under which bush's shade

A lioness, with udders all drawn dry,

Lay couching, head on ground, with catlike watch,

When that the sleeping man should stir; for 'tis

The royal disposition of that beast

To prey on nothing that doth seem as dead.

This seen, Orlando did approach the man,

And found it was his brother, his elder brother.

CELIA.

O, I have heard him speak of that same brother;

And he did render him the most unnatural

That liv'd amongst men.

OLIVER.

And well he might so do,

For well I know he was unnatural.

ROSALIND.

But, to Orlando: did he leave him there,

Food to the suck'd and hungry lioness?

OLIVER.

Twice did he turn his back, and purpos'd so;

But kindness, nobler ever than revenge,

And nature, stronger than his just occasion,

Made him give battle to the lioness,

Who quickly fell before him; in which hurtling

From miserable slumber I awak'd.

CELIA.

Are you his brother?

ROSALIND.

Was't you he rescu'd?

CELIA.

Was't you that did so oft contrive to kill him?

OLIVER.

'Twas I; but 'tis not I. I do not shame

To tell you what I was, since my conversion

So sweetly tastes, being the thing I am.

ROSALIND.

But for the bloody napkin?

OLIVER.

By and by.

When from the first to last, betwixt us two,

Tears our recountments had most kindly bath'd,

As how I came into that desert place-

In brief, he led me to the gentle Duke,

Who gave me fresh array and entertainment,

Committing me unto my brother's love;

Who led me instantly unto his cave,

There stripp'd himself, and here upon his arm

The lioness had torn some flesh away,

Which all this while had bled; and now he fainted,

And cried, in fainting, upon Rosalind.

Brief, I recover'd him, bound up his wound,

And, after some small space, being strong at heart,

He sent me hither, stranger as I am,

To tell this story, that you might excuse

His broken promise, and to give this napkin,

Dy'd in his blood, unto the shepherd youth

That he in sport doth call his Rosalind.

[ROSALIND swoons]

CELIA.

Why, how now, Ganymede! sweet Ganymede!

OLIVER.

Many will swoon when they do look on blood.

CELIA.

There is more in it. Cousin Ganymede!

OLIVER.

Look, he recovers.

ROSALIND.

I would I were at home.

CELIA.

We'll lead you thither.

I pray you, will you take him by the arm?

OLIVER.

Be of good cheer, youth. You a man!

You lack a man's heart.

ROSALIND.

I do so, I confess it. Ah, sirrah, a body would think this was well counterfeited. I pray you tell your brother how well I counterfeited. Heigh-ho!

OLIVER.

This was not counterfeit; there is too great testimony in your complexion that it was a passion of earnest.

ROSALIND.

Counterfeit, I assure you.

OLIVER.

Well then, take a good heart and counterfeit to be a man.

ROSALIND.

So I do; but, i' faith, I should have been a woman by right.

CELIA.

Come, you look paler and paler; pray you draw homewards.

Good sir, go with us.

OLIVER.

That will I, for I must bear answer back
How you excuse my brother, Rosalind.

ROSALIND.

I shall devise something; but, I pray you, commend my
counterfeiting to him. Will you go? *Exeunt*

ACT V. SCENE I.

The forest

Enter TOUCHSTONE and AUDREY

TOUCHSTONE.

We shall find a time, Audrey; patience, gentle Audrey.

AUDREY.

Faith, the priest was good enough, for all the old gentleman's saying.

TOUCHSTONE.

A most wicked Sir Oliver, Audrey, a most vile Martext.

But, Audrey, there is a youth here in the forest lays claim to you.

AUDREY.

Ay, I know who 'tis; he hath no interest in me in the

world; here comes the man you mean.

Enter WILLIAM

TOUCHSTONE.

It is meat and drink to me to see a clown. By my troth, we that have good wits have much to answer for: we shall be flouting; we cannot hold.

WILLIAM.

Good ev'n, Audrey.

AUDREY.

God ye good ev'n, William.

WILLIAM.

And good ev'n to you, sir.

TOUCHSTONE.

Good ev'n, gentle friend. Cover thy head, cover thy head; nay, prithee be cover'd. How old are you, friend?

WILLIAM.

Five and twenty, sir.

TOUCHSTONE.

A ripe age. Is thy name William?

WILLIAM.

William, sir.

TOUCHSTONE.

A fair name. Wast born i' th' forest here?

WILLIAM.

Ay, sir, I thank God.

TOUCHSTONE.

'Thank God.' A good answer.

Art rich?

WILLIAM.

Faith, sir, so so.

TOUCHSTONE.

'So so' is good, very good, very excellent good; and yet it is not; it is but so so. Art thou wise?

WILLIAM.

Ay, sir, I have a pretty wit.

TOUCHSTONE.

Why, thou say'st well. I do now remember a saying:

'The

fool doth think he is wise, but the wise man knows himself to be

a fool.' The heathen philosopher, when he had a desire to eat a

grape, would open his lips when he put it into his mouth; meaning

thereby that grapes were made to eat and lips to open. You do love this maid?

WILLIAM.

I do, sir.

TOUCHSTONE.

Give me your hand. Art thou learned?

WILLIAM.

No, sir.

TOUCHSTONE.

Then learn this of me: to have is to have; for it is a figure in rhetoric that drink, being pour'd out of cup into a glass, by filling the one doth empty the other; for all your writers do consent that ipse is he; now, you are not ipse, for I am he.

WILLIAM.

Which he, sir?

TOUCHSTONE.

He, sir, that must marry this woman. Therefore, you clown, abandon-which is in the vulgar leave-the society-which in the boorish is company-of this female-which in the common is woman-which together is: abandon the society of this female; or, clown, thou perishest; or, to thy better understanding, diest; or, to wit, I kill thee, make thee away, translate thy life into death, thy liberty into bondage. I will deal in poison with thee, or in bastinado, or in steel; I will bandy with thee in faction; will o'er-run thee with policy; I will kill thee a hundred and fifty ways; therefore tremble and depart.

AUDREY.

Do, good William.

WILLIAM.

God rest you merry, sir. *Exit*

Enter CORIN

CORIN.

Our master and mistress seeks you; come away, away.

TOUCHSTONE.

Trip, Audrey, trip, Audrey. I attend, I attend.

Exeunt

SCENE II.

The forest

Enter ORLANDO and OLIVER

ORLANDO.

Is't possible that on so little acquaintance you should like her? that but seeing you should love her? and loving woo? and, wooing, she should grant? and will you persever to enjoy her?

OLIVER.

Neither call the giddiness of it in question, the poverty of her, the small acquaintance, my sudden wooing, nor her sudden consenting; but say with me, I love Aliena; say with her that she loves me; consent with both that we may enjoy each other. It shall be to your good; for my father's house and all the revenue that was old Sir Rowland's will I estate upon you, and here live and die a shepherd.

ORLANDO.

You have my consent. Let your wedding be to-morrow.

Thither will I invite the Duke and all's contented followers.

Go you and prepare Aliena; for, look you, here comes my Rosalind.

Enter ROSALIND

ROSALIND.

God save you, brother.

OLIVER.

And you, fair sister. *Exit*

ROSALIND. O, my dear Orlando, how it grieves me to see thee wear thy heart in a scarf!

ORLANDO.

It is my arm.

ROSALIND.

I thought thy heart had been wounded with the claws of a lion.

ORLANDO.

Wounded it is, but with the eyes of a lady.

ROSALIND.

Did your brother tell you how I counterfeited to swoon when he show'd me your handkercher?

ORLANDO.

Ay, and greater wonders than that.

ROSALIND.

O, I know where you are. Nay, 'tis true. There was never any thing so sudden but the fight of two rams and Caesar's thrasonical brag of 'I came, saw, and overcame.' For your brother and my sister no sooner met but they look'd; no sooner look'd but they lov'd; no sooner lov'd but they sigh'd; no sooner sigh'd but they ask'd one another the reason; no sooner knew the reason but they sought the remedy-and in these degrees have they made pair of stairs to marriage, which they will climb incontinent, or else be incontinent before marriage. They are in the very wrath of

love, and they will together. Clubs cannot part them.

ORLANDO.

They shall be married to-morrow; and I will bid the Duke to the nuptial. But, O, how bitter a thing it is to look into happiness through another man's eyes! By so much the more shall I to-morrow be at the height of heart-heaviness, by how much I shall think my brother happy in having what he wishes for.

ROSALIND.

Why, then, to-morrow I cannot serve your turn for Rosalind?

ORLANDO.

I can live no longer by thinking.

ROSALIND.

I will weary you, then, no longer with idle talking. Know of me then-for now I speak to some purpose-that I know you are a gentleman of good conceit. I speak not this that you should bear a good opinion of my knowledge, insomuch I say I know you are; neither do I labour for a greater esteem than may in some little measure draw a belief from you, to do yourself good, and not to grace me. Believe then, if you please, that I can do strange things. I have, since I was three year old, convers'd with a magician, most profound in his art and yet not damnable. If you do love Rosalind so near the heart as your gesture cries it out, when your brother marries Aliena shall you marry her. I know into what straits of fortune she is driven; and it is not impossible to me, if it appear not inconvenient to you, to set her before your eyes to-morrow, human as she is, and without any danger.

ORLANDO.

Speak'st thou in sober meanings?

ROSALIND.

By my life, I do; which I tender dearly, though I say I am a magician. Therefore put you in your best array, bid your friends; for if you will be married to-morrow, you shall; and to Rosalind, if you will.

Enter SILVIUS and PHEBE

Look, here comes a lover of mine, and a lover of hers.

PHEBE.

Youth, you have done me much ungentleness

To show the letter that I writ to you.

ROSALIND.

I care not if I have. It is my study

To seem despiteful and ungentle to you.

You are there follow'd by a faithful shepherd;

Look upon him, love him; he worships you.

PHEBE.

Good shepherd, tell this youth what 'tis to love.

SILVIUS.

It is to be all made of sighs and tears;

And so am I for Phebe.

PHEBE.

And I for Ganymede.

ORLANDO.

And I for Rosalind.

ROSALIND.

And I for no woman.

SILVIUS.

It is to be all made of faith and service;

And so am I for Phebe.

PHEBE.

And I for Ganymede.

ORLANDO.

And I for Rosalind.

ROSALIND.

And I for no woman.

SILVIUS.

It is to be all made of fantasy,

All made of passion, and all made of wishes;

All adoration, duty, and observance,

All humbleness, all patience, and impatience,

All purity, all trial, all obedience;

And so am I for Phebe.

PHEBE.

And so am I for Ganymede.

ORLANDO.

And so am I for Rosalind.

ROSALIND.

And so am I for no woman.

PHEBE.

If this be so, why blame you me to love you?

SILVIUS.

If this be so, why blame you me to love you?

ORLANDO.

If this be so, why blame you me to love you?

ROSALIND.

Why do you speak too, 'Why blame you me to love you?'

ORLANDO.

To her that is not here, nor doth not hear.

ROSALIND.

Pray you, no more of this; 'tis like the howling of Irish wolves against the moon. *[To SILVIUS]* I will help you if I can. *[To PHEBE]* I would love you if I could.- To-morrow meet me all together. *[To PHEBE]* I will marry you if ever I marry woman, and I'll be married to-morrow. *[To ORLANDO]* I will satisfy you if ever I satisfied man, and you shall be married to-morrow. *[To Silvius]* I will content you if what pleases you contents you, and you shall be married to-morrow. *[To ORLANDO]* As you love Rosalind, meet. *[To SILVIUS]* As you love Phebe, meet;- and as I love no woman, I'll meet. So, fare you well; I have left you commands.

SILVIUS.

I'll not fail, if I live.

PHEBE.

Nor I.

ORLANDO.

Nor I. *Exeunt*

SCENE III.

The forest

Enter TOUCHSTONE and AUDREY

TOUCHSTONE.

To-morrow is the joyful day, Audre'y; to-morrow will we be married.

AUDREY.

I do desire it with all my heart; and I hope it is no dishonest desire to desire to be a woman of the world. Here come two of the banish'd Duke's pages.

Enter two PAGES

FIRST PAGE.

Well met, honest gentleman.

TOUCHSTONE.

By my troth, well met. Come sit, sit, and a song.

SECOND PAGE.

We are for you; sit i' th' middle.

FIRST PAGE.

Shall we clap into't roundly, without hawking, or spitting, or saying we are hoarse, which are the only prologues to a bad voice?

SECOND PAGE.

I'faith, i'faith; and both in a tune, like two gipsies on a horse.

SONG.

It was a lover and his lass,
With a hey, and a ho, and a hey nonino,
That o'er the green corn-field did pass
In the spring time, the only pretty ring time,
When birds do sing, hey ding a ding, ding.

Sweet lovers love the spring.
Between the acres of the rye,
With a hey, and a ho, and a hey nonino,
These pretty country folks would lie,
In the spring time, &c.
This carol they began that hour,
With a hey, and a ho, and a hey nonino,
How that a life was but a flower,
In the spring time, &c.
And therefore take the present time,
With a hey, and a ho, and a hey nonino,

For love is crowned with the prime,

In the spring time, &c.

TOUCHSTONE.

Truly, young gentlemen, though there was no great matter in the ditty, yet the note was very untuneable.

FIRST PAGE.

YOU are deceiv'd, sir; we kept time, we lost not our time.

TOUCHSTONE.

By my troth, yes; I count it but time lost to hear such a foolish song. God buy you; and God mend your voices. Come, *Audrey*. *Exeunt*

SCENE IV.

The forest

Enter DUKE SENIOR, AMIENS, JAQUES, ORLANDO, OLIVER, and CELIA

DUKE SENIOR.

Dost thou believe, Orlando, that the boy

Can do all this that he hath promised?

ORLANDO.

I sometimes do believe and sometimes do not:

As those that fear they hope, and know they fear.

Enter ROSALIND, SILVIUS, and PHEBE

ROSALIND.

Patience once more, whiles our compact is urg'd:

You say, if I bring in your Rosalind,

You will bestow her on Orlando here?

DUKE SENIOR.

That would I, had I kingdoms to give with her.

ROSALIND.

And you say you will have her when I bring her?

ORLANDO.

That would I, were I of all kingdoms king.

ROSALIND.

You say you'll marry me, if I be willing?

PHEBE.

That will I, should I die the hour after.

ROSALIND.

But if you do refuse to marry me,
You'll give yourself to this most faithful shepherd?

PHEBE.

So is the bargain.

ROSALIND.

You say that you'll have Phebe, if she will?

SILVIUS.

Though to have her and death were both one thing.

ROSALIND.

I have promis'd to make all this matter even.

Keep you your word, O Duke, to give your daughter;

You yours, Orlando, to receive his daughter;

Keep your word, Phebe, that you'll marry me,

Or else, refusing me, to wed this shepherd;

Keep your word, Silvius, that you'll marry her

If she refuse me; and from hence I go,

To make these doubts all even.

Exeunt ROSALIND and CELIA

DUKE SENIOR.

I do remember in this shepherd boy

Some lively touches of my daughter's favour.

ORLANDO.

My lord, the first time that I ever saw him

Methought he was a brother to your daughter.

But, my good lord, this boy is forest-born,

And hath been tutor'd in the rudiments

Of many desperate studies by his uncle,

Whom he reports to be a great magician,

Obscured in the circle of this forest.

Enter TOUCHSTONE and AUDREY

JAQUES.

There is, sure, another flood toward, and these couples are coming to the ark. Here comes a pair of very strange beasts which in all tongues are call'd fools.

TOUCHSTONE.

Salutation and greeting to you all!

JAQUES.

Good my lord, bid him welcome. This is the motley-minded gentleman that I have so often met in the forest. He hath been a courtier, he swears.

TOUCHSTONE.

If any man doubt that, let him put me to my purgation. I have trod a measure; I have flatt'red a lady; I have been politic with my friend, smooth with mine enemy; I have undone three tailors; I have had four quarrels, and like to have fought one.

JAQUES.

And how was that ta'en up?

TOUCHSTONE.

Faith, we met, and found the quarrel was upon the seventh cause.

JAQUES.

How seventh cause? Good my lord, like this fellow.

DUKE SENIOR.

I like him very well.

TOUCHSTONE.

God 'ild you, sir; I desire you of the like. I press in here, sir, amongst the rest of the country copulatives, to swear and to forswear, according as marriage binds and blood breaks. A poor virgin, sir, an ill-favour'd thing, sir, but mine own; a poor humour of mine, sir, to take that that man else will. Rich honesty dwells like a miser, sir, in a poor house; as your pearl in your foul oyster.

DUKE SENIOR.

By my faith, he is very swift and sententious.

TOUCHSTONE.

According to the fool's bolt, sir, and such dulcet diseases.

JAQUES.

But, for the seventh cause: how did you find the quarrel on the seventh cause?

TOUCHSTONE.

Upon a lie seven times removed-bear your body more seeming, Audrey-as thus, sir. I did dislike the cut of a certain courtier's beard; he sent me word, if I said his beard was not cut well, he was in the mind it was. This is call'd the Retort Courteous. If I sent him word again it was not well cut, he would send me word he cut it to please himself. This is call'd the Quip Modest. If again it was not well cut, he disabled my judgment. This is call'd the Reply Churlish. If again it was not well cut, he would answer I spake not true. This is call'd the Reproof Valiant. If again it was not well cut, he would say I lie. This is call'd the Countercheck

Quarrelsome. And so to the Lie Circumstantial and the Lie Direct.

JAQUES.

And how oft did you say his beard was not well cut?

TOUCHSTONE.

I durst go no further than the Lie Circumstantial, nor he durst not give me the Lie Direct; and so we measur'd swords and parted.

JAQUES.

Can you nominate in order now the degrees of the lie?

TOUCHSTONE.

O, sir, we quarrel in print by the book, as you have books for good manners. I will name you the degrees. The first, the Retort Courteous; the second, the Quip Modest; the third, the Reply Churlish; the fourth, the Reproof Valiant; the fifth, the Countercheck Quarrelsome; the sixth, the Lie with Circumstance; the seventh, the Lie Direct. All these you may avoid but the Lie Direct; and you may avoid that too with an If. I knew when seven justices could not take up a quarrel; but when the parties were met themselves, one of them thought but of an If, as: 'If you said so, then I said so.' And they shook hands, and swore brothers. Your If is the only peace-maker; much virtue in If.

JAQUES.

Is not this a rare fellow, my lord?
He's as good at any thing, and yet a fool.

DUKE SENIOR.
He uses his folly like a stalking-horse, and under the
presentation of that he shoots his wit:

Enter HYMEN, ROSALIND, and CELIA. Still MUSIC

HYMEN.
Then is there mirth in heaven,
When earthly things made even
Atone together.
Good Duke, receive thy daughter;
Hymen from heaven brought her,
Yea, brought her hither,
That thou mightst join her hand with his,
Whose heart within his bosom is.

ROSALIND.

[To DUKE] To you I give myself, for I am yours.

[To ORLANDO] To you I give myself, for I am yours.

DUKE SENIOR.

If there be truth in sight, you are my daughter.

ORLANDO.

If there be truth in sight, you are my Rosalind.

PHEBE.

If sight and shape be true,
Why then, my love adieu!

ROSALIND.

I'll have no father, if you be not he;
I'll have no husband, if you be not he;
Nor ne'er wed woman, if you be not she.

HYMEN.

Peace, ho! I bar confusion;

'Tis I must make conclusion

Of these most strange events.

Here's eight that must take hands

To join in Hymen's bands,

If truth holds true contents.

You and you no cross shall part;

You and you are heart in heart;

You to his love must accord,

Or have a woman to your lord;

You and you are sure together,

As the winter to foul weather.

Whiles a wedlock-hymn we sing,

Feed yourselves with questioning,

That reason wonder may diminish,

How thus we met, and these things finish.

SONG

Wedding is great Juno's crown;

O blessed bond of board and bed!

'Tis Hymen peoples every town;

High wedlock then be honoured.

Honour, high honour, and renown,

To Hymen, god of every town!

DUKE SENIOR.

O my dear niece, welcome thou art to me!

Even daughter, welcome in no less degree.

PHEBE.

I will not eat my word, now thou art mine;

Thy faith my fancy to thee doth combine.

Enter JAQUES de BOYS

JAQUES de BOYS. Let me have audience for a word or two.

I am the second son of old Sir Rowland,

That bring these tidings to this fair assembly.

Duke Frederick, hearing how that every day

Men of great worth resorted to this forest,

Address'd a mighty power; which were on foot,

In his own conduct, purposely to take

His brother here, and put him to the sword;

And to the skirts of this wild wood he came,

Where, meeting with an old religious man,

After some question with him, was converted

Both from his enterprise and from the world;

His crown bequeathing to his banish'd brother,

And all their lands restor'd to them again

That were with him exil'd. This to be true

I do engage my life.

DUKE SENIOR.

Welcome, young man.

Thou offer'st fairly to thy brothers' wedding:

To one, his lands withheld; and to the other,

A land itself at large, a potent dukedom.

First, in this forest let us do those ends

That here were well begun and well begot;

And after, every of this happy number,
That have endur'd shrewd days and nights with us,
Shall share the good of our returned fortune,
According to the measure of their states.
Meantime, forget this new-fall'n dignity,
And fall into our rustic revelry.
Play, music; and you brides and bridegrooms all,
With measure heap'd in joy, to th' measures fall.

JAQUES.
Sir, by your patience. If I heard you rightly,
The Duke hath put on a religious life,
And thrown into neglect the pompous court.

JAQUES DE BOYS.
He hath.

JAQUES.
To him will I. Out of these convertites
There is much matter to be heard and learn'd.

[To DUKE] You to your former honour I bequeath;

Your patience and your virtue well deserves it.

[To ORLANDO] You to a love that your true faith doth merit;

[To OLIVER] You to your land, and love, and great allies

[To SILVIUS] You to a long and well-deserved bed;

[To TOUCHSTONE] And you to wrangling; for thy loving voyage

Is but for two months victuall'd.- So to your pleasures;

I am for other than for dancing measures.

DUKE SENIOR.

Stay, Jaques, stay.

JAQUES.

To see no pastime I. What you would have

I'll stay to know at your abandon'd cave. *Exit*

DUKE SENIOR. Proceed, proceed. We will begin these rites, As we do trust they'll end, in true delights. *[A dance]*

Exeunt

EPILOGUE.

ROSALIND. It is not the fashion to see the lady the epilogue; but it is no more unhandsome than to see the lord the prologue. If it be true that good wine needs no bush, 'tis true that a good play needs no epilogue. Yet to good wine they do use good bushes; and good plays prove the better by the help of good epilogues. What a case am I in then, that am neither a good epilogue, nor cannot insinuate with you in the behalf of a good play! I am not furnish'd like a beggar; therefore to beg will not become me. My way is to conjure you; and I'll begin with the women. I charge you, O women, for the love you bear to men, to like as much of this play as please you; and I charge you, O men, for the love you bear to women-as I perceive by your simp'ring none of you hates them-that between you and the women the play may please. If I were a woman, I would kiss as many of you as had beards that pleas'd me, complexions that lik'd me, and breaths that I defied not; and, I am sure, as many as have good beards, or good faces, or sweet breaths, will, for my kind offer, when I make curtsy, bid me farewell.

TWELFTH NIGHT

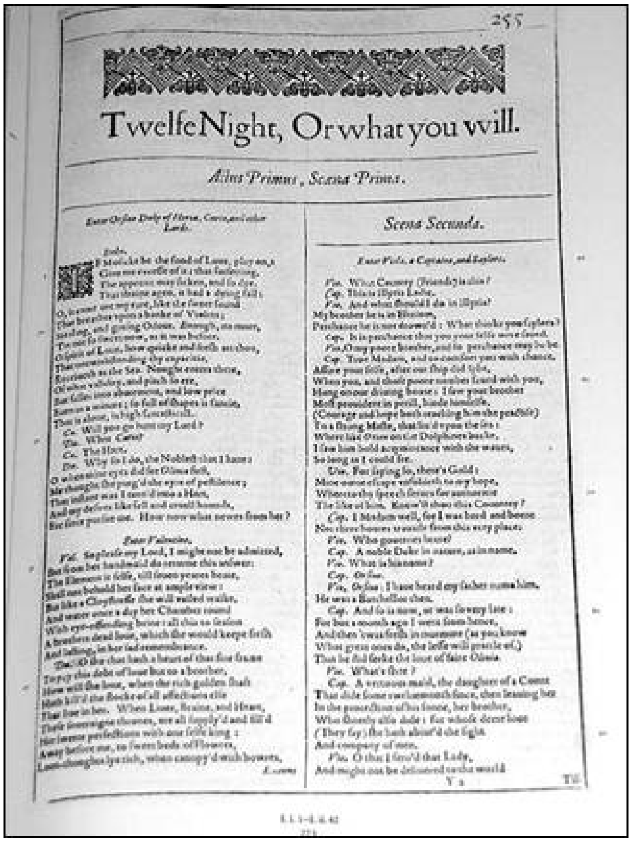
OR

WHAT YOU WILL

Most likely written in 1601 as a Twelfth Night's entertainment for the close of the Christmas season, this comedy features plot elements drawn from the short story *Of Apollonius and Silla* by Barnabe Rich, based on a story by Matteo Bandello. The first recorded performance of the play was on 2 February 1602, at Candlemas, the formal end of Christmastide in the year's calendar.

Twelfth Night is set in Illyria, an ancient region on the eastern coast of the Adriatic Sea covering parts of modern Albania, Croatia, and Montenegro. Illyria may have been suggested by the Roman comedy Menæchmi, the plot of which also involves a pair of twins who are mistaken for each other. The leading character, Viola, is shipwrecked on the shores of Illyria during the opening scenes. She loses contact with her twin brother, Sebastian, whom she believes to be dead. Masquerading as a young page under the name Cesario, she enters the service of Duke Orsino through the help of the sea captain who rescues her. Orsino has convinced himself that he is in love with the bereaved Lady Olivia, whose father and brother have recently died, and who will have nothing to do with any suitors, the Duke included. Orsino decides to use "Cesario" as an intermediary to tell Olivia about his love for her. Olivia, believing Viola to be a man, falls in love with this handsome and eloquent messenger. Much of the play is taken up with the comic subplot, in which characters conspire to make Olivia's pompous head steward, Malvolio, believe that his lady Olivia wishes to marry him.

Shakespeare's main source text for this play is available via this link .



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Twelfe Night, Or what you will.

Actus Primus, Scæna Prima.

Scena Secunda.

The front page of the First Folio

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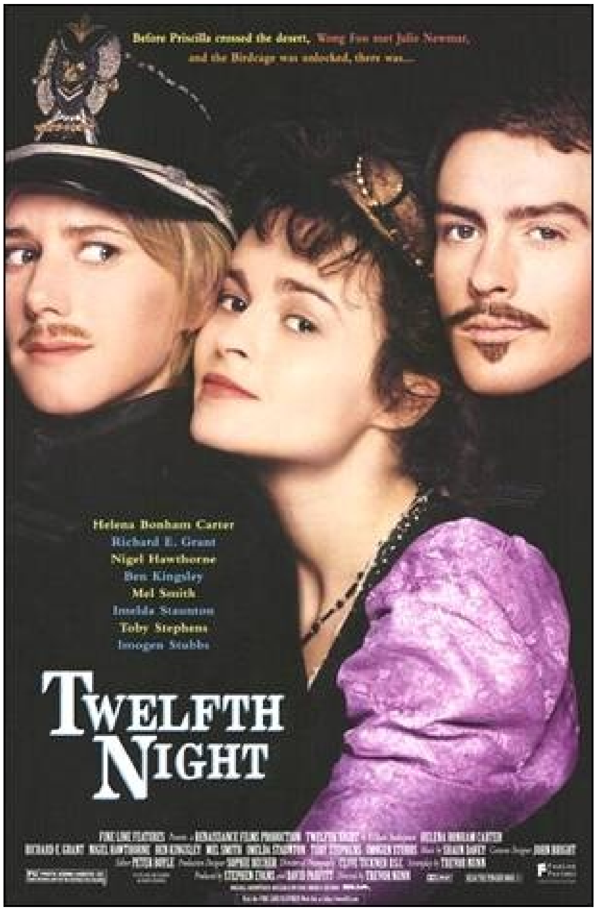

Before Priscilla crossed the desert, Wong Foo met Julie Newmar,
and the Birdcage was unlocked, there was...
Helena Bonham Carter
Richard E. Grant
Nigel Hawthorne
Ben Kingsley
Mel Smith
Imelda Staunton
Toby Stephens
Imogen Stubbs
TWELFTH NIGHT

The 1996 film adaptation

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

ORSINO, Duke of Illyria

SEBASTIAN, brother of Viola

ANTONIO, a sea captain, friend of Sebastian

A SEA CAPTAIN, friend of Viola

VALENTINE, gentleman attending on the Duke

CURIO, gentleman attending on the Duke

SIR TOBY BELCH, uncle of Olivia

SIR ANDREW AGUECHEEK

MALVOLIO, steward to Olivia

FABIAN, servant to Olivia

FESTE, a clown, servant to Olivia

OLIVIA, a rich countess

VIOLA, sister of Sebastian

MARIA, Olivia's waiting woman

Lords, Priests, Sailors, Officers, Musicians, and Attendants

SCENE: A city in Illyria; and the sea-coast near it

ACT I. SCENE I. The DUKE'S palace

Enter ORSINO, Duke of Illyria, CURIO, and other LORDS; MUSICIANS attending

DUKE.

If music be the food of love, play on,

Give me excess of it, that, surfeiting,

The appetite may sicken and so die.

That strain again! It had a dying fall;

O, it came o'er my ear like the sweet sound
That breathes upon a bank of violets,
Stealing and giving odour! Enough, no more;
'Tis not so sweet now as it was before.
O spirit of love, how quick and fresh art thou!
That, notwithstanding thy capacity
Receiveth as the sea, nought enters there,
Of what validity and pitch soe'er,
But falls into abatement and low price
Even in a minute. So full of shapes is fancy,
That it alone is high fantastical.

CURIO.

Will you go hunt, my lord?

DUKE.
What, Curio?

CURIO.

The hart.

DUKE.

Why, so I do, the noblest that I have.

O, when mine eyes did see Olivia first,

Methought she purg'd the air of pestilence!

That instant was I turn'd into a hart,

And my desires, like fell and cruel hounds,

E'er since pursue me.

Enter VALENTINE

How now! what news from her?

VALENTINE.

So please my lord, I might not be admitted,

But from her handmaid do return this answer:

The element itself, till seven years' heat,

Shall not behold her face at ample view;

But like a cloistress she will veiled walk,

And water once a day her chamber round

With eye-offending brine; all this to season

A brother's dead love, which she would keep fresh

And lasting in her sad remembrance.

DUKE.

O, she that hath a heart of that fine frame

To pay this debt of love but to a brother,

How will she love when the rich golden shaft

Hath kill'd the flock of all affections else

That live in her; when liver, brain, and heart,

These sovereign thrones, are all supplied and fill'd,

Her sweet perfections, with one self king!

Away before me to sweet beds of flow'rs:

Love-thoughts lie rich when canopied with bow'rs.

Exeunt

SCENE II. The sea-coast

Enter VIOLA, a CAPTAIN, and SAILORS

VIOLA.

What country, friends, is this?

CAPTAIN.

This is Illyria, lady.

VIOLA.
And what should I do in Illyria?

My brother he is in Elysium.
Perchance he is not drown'd-what think you, sailors?

CAPTAIN.

It is perchance that you yourself were saved.

VIOLA.
O my poor brother! and so perchance may he be.

CAPTAIN.
True, madam, and, to comfort you with chance,

Assure yourself, after our ship did split,

When you, and those poor number saved with you,

Hung on our driving boat, I saw your brother,

Most provident in peril, bind himself-

Courage and hope both teaching him the practice-

To a strong mast that liv'd upon the sea;

Where, like Arion on the dolphin's back,

I saw him hold acquaintance with the waves

So long as I could see.

VIOLA.

For saying so, there's gold.

Mine own escape unfoldeth to my hope,

Whereto thy speech serves for authority,

The like of him. Know'st thou this country?

CAPTAIN.

Ay, madam, well; for I was bred and born

Not three hours' travel from this very place.

VIOLA.

Who governs here?

CAPTAIN.

A noble duke, in nature as in name.

VIOLA.

What is his name?

CAPTAIN.

Orsino.

VIOLA.

Orsino! I have heard my father name him.

He was a bachelor then.

CAPTAIN.

And so is now, or was so very late;

For but a month ago I went from hence,

And then 'twas fresh in murmur-as, you know,

What great ones do the less will prattle of-

That he did seek the love of fair Olivia.

VIOLA.

What's she?

CAPTAIN.

A virtuous maid, the daughter of a count

That died some twelvemonth since, then leaving her

In the protection of his son, her brother,

Who shortly also died; for whose dear love,

They say, she hath abjur'd the company

And sight of men.

VIOLA.

O that I serv'd that lady,

And might not be delivered to the world,

Till I had made mine own occasion mellow,

What my estate is!

CAPTAIN.

That were hard to compass,

Because she will admit no kind of suit-

No, not the Duke's.

VIOLA.

There is a fair behaviour in thee, Captain;

And though that nature with a beauteous wall

Doth oft close in pollution, yet of thee

I will believe thou hast a mind that suits

With this thy fair and outward character.

I prithee, and I'll pay thee bounteously,

Conceal me what I am, and be my aid

For such disguise as haply shall become

The form of my intent. I'll serve this duke:

Thou shalt present me as an eunuch to him;

It may be worth thy pains, for I can sing

And speak to him in many sorts of music,

That will allow me very worth his service.

What else may hap to time I will commit;

Only shape thou silence to my wit.

CAPTAIN.

Be you his eunuch and your mute I'll be;

When my tongue blabs, then let mine eyes not see.

VIOLA.

I thank thee. Lead me on. *Exeunt*

SCENE III. OLIVIA'S house

Enter SIR TOBY BELCH and MARIA

SIR TOBY.

What a plague means my niece to take the death of her

brother thus? I am sure care's an enemy to life.

MARIA.

By my troth, Sir Toby, you must come in earlier o'

nights;

your cousin, my lady, takes great exceptions to your ill hours.

SIR TOBY.

Why, let her except before excepted.

MARIA.

Ay, but you must confine yourself within the modest limits of order.

SIR TOBY.

Confine! I'll confine myself no finer than I am.

These

clothes are good enough to drink in, and so be these boots too;

an they be not, let them hang themselves in their own straps.

MARIA.

That quaffing and drinking will undo you; I heard my lady

talk of it yesterday, and of a foolish knight that you brought in

one night here to be her wooer.

SIR TOBY.

Who? Sir Andrew Aguecheek?

MARIA.

Ay, he.

SIR TOBY.

He's as tall a man as any's in Illyria.

MARIA.

What's that to th' purpose?

SIR TOBY.

Why, he has three thousand ducats a year.

MARIA.

Ay, but he'll have but a year in all these ducats; he's a

very fool and a prodigal.

SIR TOBY.

Fie that you'll say so! He plays o' th'

viol-de-gamboys,

and speaks three or four languages word for word without book,

and hath all the good gifts of nature.

MARIA.

He hath indeed, almost natural; for, besides that he's a

fool, he's a great quarreller; and but that he hath the gift of a

coward to allay the gust he hath in quarrelling, 'tis thought

among the prudent he would quickly have the gift of a grave.

SIR TOBY.

By this hand, they are scoundrels and subtractors that

say so of him. Who are they?

MARIA.

They that add, moreover, he's drunk nightly in your company.

SIR TOBY.

With drinking healths to my niece; I'll drink to her as long as there is a passage in my throat and drink in Illyria.

He's a coward and a coystrill that will not drink to my niece

till his brains turn o' th' toe like a parish-top. What, wench!

Castiliano vulgo! for here comes Sir Andrew Agueface.

Enter SIR ANDREW AGUECHEEK

AGUECHEEK.

Sir Toby Belch! How now, Sir Toby Belch!

SIR TOBY.

Sweet Sir Andrew!

AGUECHEEK.

Bless you, fair shrew.

MARIA.

And you too, sir.

SIR TOBY.

Accost, Sir Andrew, accost.

AGUECHEEK.

What's that?

SIR TOBY.

My niece's chambermaid.

AGUECHEEK.

Good Mistress Accost, I desire better acquaintance.

MARIA.

My name is Mary, sir.

AGUECHEEK.

Good Mistress Mary Accost-

SIR Toby. You mistake, knight. 'Accost' is front her, board her, woo her, assail her.

AGUECHEEK.

By my troth, I would not undertake her in this company.
Is that the meaning of 'accost'?

MARIA.

Fare you well, gentlemen.

SIR TOBY.
An thou let part so, Sir Andrew, would thou mightst never
draw sword again!

AGUECHEEK.
An you part so, mistress, I would I might never draw
sword again. Fair lady, do you think you have fools in hand?

MARIA.
Sir, I have not you by th' hand.

AGUECHEEK.

Marry, but you shall have; and here's my hand.

MARIA.

Now, sir, thought is free. I pray you, bring your hand to th' buttry-bar and let it drink.

AGUECHEEK.

Wherefore, sweetheart? What's your metaphor?

MARIA.

It's dry, sir.

AGUECHEEK.

Why, I think so; I am not such an ass but I can keep my hand dry. But what's your jest?

MARIA.

A dry jest, sir.

AGUECHEEK.

Are you full of them?

MARIA.

Ay, sir, I have them at my fingers' ends; marry, now I let

go your hand, I am barren. *Exit* MARIA

SIR TOBY.

O knight, thou lack'st a cup of canary! When did I

see thee so put down?

AGUECHEEK.

Never in your life, I think; unless you see canary put

me down. Methinks sometimes I have no more wit than a Christian

or an ordinary man has; but I am great eater of beef, and I

believe that does harm to my wit.

SIR TOBY.

No question.

AGUECHEEK.

An I thought that, I'd forswear it. I'll ride home

to-morrow, Sir Toby.

SIR TOBY.

Pourquoi, my dear knight?

AGUECHEEK.

What is 'pourquoi'- do or not do? I would I had bestowed

that time in the tongues that I have in fencing, dancing, and

bear-baiting. Oh, had I but followed the arts!

SIR TOBY.

Then hadst thou had an excellent head of hair.

AGUECHEEK.

Why, would that have mended my hair?

SIR TOBY.

Past question; for thou seest it will not curl by nature.

AGUECHEEK.

But it becomes me well enough, does't not?

SIR TOBY.

Excellent; it hangs like flax on a distaff, and I

hope to

see a huswife take thee between her legs and spin it off.

AGUECHEEK.

Faith, I'll home to-morrow, Sir Toby. Your niece will

not be seen, or if she be, it's four to one she'll none of me;

the Count himself here hard by woos her.

SIR TOBY.

She'll none o' th' Count; she'll not match above her

degree, neither in estate, years, nor wit; I have heard her

swear't. Tut, there's life in't, man.

AGUECHEEK.

I'll stay a month longer. I am a fellow o' th' strangest
mind i' th' world; I delight in masques and revels sometimes altogether.

SIR TOBY.

Art thou good at these kickshawses, knight?

AGUECHEEK.

As any man in Illyria, whatsoever he be, under the
degree of my betters; and yet I will not compare with an old man.

SIR TOBY.

What is thy excellence in a galliard, knight?

AGUECHEEK.

Faith, I can cut a caper.

SIR TOBY.

And I can cut the mutton to't.

AGUECHEEK.

And I think I have the back-trick simply as strong as
any man in Illyria.

SIR TOBY.

Wherefore are these things hid? Wherefore have these
gifts a curtain before 'em? Are they like to take dust, like
Mistress Mall's picture? Why dost thou not go to church in a
galliard and come home in a coranto? My very walk should be a
jig; I would not so much as make water but in a sink-a-pace.
What
dost thou mean? Is it a world to hide virtues in? I did think, by
the excellent constitution of thy leg, it was form'd under the
star of a galliard.

AGUECHEEK.

Ay, 'tis strong, and it does indifferent well in
flame-colour'd stock. Shall we set about some revels?

SIR TOBY.

What shall we do else? Were we not born under Taurus?

AGUECHEEK.

Taurus? That's sides and heart.

SIR TOBY.

No, sir; it is legs and thighs. Let me see the caper.

Ha,

higher! Ha, ha, excellent! *Exeunt*

SCENE IV. The DUKE'S palace

Enter VALENTINE, and VIOLA in man's attire

VALENTINE.

If the Duke continue these favours towards you,

Cesario,

you are like to be much advanc'd; he hath known you but three

days, and already you are no stranger.

VIOLA.

You either fear his humour or my negligence, that you call

in question the continuance of his love. Is he inconstant,

sir,

in his favours?

VALENTINE.

No, believe me.

Enter DUKE, CURIO, and ATTENDANTS

VIOLA.

I thank you. Here comes the Count.

DUKE.

Who saw Cesario, ho?

VIOLA.

On your attendance, my lord, here.

DUKE.

Stand you awhile aloof. Cesario,

Thou know'st no less but all; I have unclasp'd

To thee the book even of my secret soul.

Therefore, good youth, address thy gait unto her;

Be not denied access, stand at her doors,

And tell them there thy fixed foot shall grow

Till thou have audience.

VIOLA.

Sure, my noble lord,

If she be so abandon'd to her sorrow

As it is spoke, she never will admit me.

DUKE.

Be clamorous and leap all civil bounds,

Rather than make unprofited return.

VIOLA.

Say I do speak with her, my lord, what then?

DUKE.

O, then unfold the passion of my love,
Surprise her with discourse of my dear faith!
It shall become thee well to act my woes:
She will attend it better in thy youth
Than in a nuncio's of more grave aspect.

VIOLA.

I think not so, my lord.

DUKE.

Dear lad, believe it,
For they shall yet belie thy happy years
That say thou art a man: Diana's lip
Is not more smooth and rubious; thy small pipe
Is as the maiden's organ, shrill and sound,
And all is semblative a woman's part.
I know thy constellation is right apt
For this affair. Some four or five attend him-

All, if you will, for I myself am best

When least in company. Prosper well in this,

And thou shalt live as freely as thy lord

To call his fortunes thine.

VIOLA.

I'll do my best

To woo your lady. *[Aside]* Yet, a barful strife!

Whoe'er I woo, myself would be his wife.

SCENE V. OLIVIA'S house

Enter MARIA and CLOWN

MARIA.

Nay, either tell me where thou hast been, or I will not open my lips so wide as a bristle may enter in way of thy excuse; my lady will hang thee for thy absence.

CLOWN.

Let her hang me. He that is well hang'd in this world needs to fear no colours.

MARIA.

Make that good.

CLOWN.

He shall see none to fear.

MARIA.

A good lenten answer. I can tell thee where that saying was born, of 'I fear no colours.'

CLOWN.

Where, good Mistress Mary?

MARIA.

In the wars; and that may you be bold to say in your foolery.

CLOWN.

Well, God give them wisdom that have it; and those that are fools, let them use their talents.

MARIA.

Yet you will be hang'd for being so long absent; or to be turn'd away-is not that as good as a hanging to you?

CLOWN.

Many a good hanging prevents a bad marriage; and for turning away, let summer bear it out.

MARIA.

You are resolute, then?

CLOWN.

Not so, neither; but I am resolv'd on two points.

MARIA.

That if one break, the other will hold; or if both break,

your gaskins fall.

CLOWN.

Apt, in good faith, very apt! Well, go thy way; if Sir Toby

would leave drinking, thou wert as witty a piece of Eve's flesh

as any in Illyria.

MARIA.

Peace, you rogue, no more o' that. Here comes my lady.

Make

your excuse wisely, you were best. *Exit*

Enter OLIVIA and MALVOLIO

CLOWN.

Wit, an't be thy will, put me into good fooling! Those wits

that think they have thee do very oft prove fools; and I that am

sure I lack thee may pass for a wise man. For what says

Quinapalus? 'Better a witty fool than a foolish wit.' God bless thee, lady!

OLIVIA.

Take the fool away.

CLOWN.

Do you not hear, fellows? Take away the lady.

OLIVIA.

Go to, y'are a dry fool; I'll no more of you. Besides,

you grow dishonest.

CLOWN.

Two faults, madonna, that drink and good counsel will amend;
for give the dry fool drink, then is the fool not dry. Bid the
dishonest man mend himself: if he mend, he is no longer
dishonest; if he cannot, let the botcher mend him. Anything
that's mended is but patch'd; virtue that transgresses is but
patch'd with sin, and sin that amends is but patch'd with virtue.
If that this simple syllogism will serve, so; if it will not,
what remedy? As there is no true cuckold but calamity, so
beauty's a flower. The lady bade take away the fool;
therefore, I
say again, take her away.

OLIVIA.

Sir, I bade them take away you.

CLOWN.
Misprision in the highest degree! Lady, 'Cucullus non facit
monachum'; that's as much to say as I wear not motley in my
brain. Good madonna, give me leave to prove you a fool.

OLIVIA.

Can you do it?

CLOWN.

Dexteriously, good madonna.

OLIVIA.

Make your proof.

CLOWN.

I must catechize you for it, madonna.

Good my mouse of virtue, answer me.

OLIVIA.

Well, sir, for want of other idleness, I'll bide your proof.

CLOWN.

Good madonna, why mourn'st thou?

OLIVIA.

Good fool, for my brother's death.

CLOWN.

I think his soul is in hell, madonna.

OLIVIA.

I know his soul is in heaven, fool.

CLOWN.

The more fool, madonna, to mourn for your brother's soul
being in heaven. Take away the fool, gentlemen.

OLIVIA.

What think you of this fool, Malvolio? Doth he not mend?

MALVOLIO.

Yes, and shall do, till the pangs of death shake him.

Infirmity, that decays the wise, doth ever make the better fool.

CLOWN.
God send you, sir, a speedy infirmity, for the better
increasing your folly! Sir Toby will be sworn that I am no fox;
but he will not pass his word for twopence that you are no fool.

OLIVIA.

How say you to that, Malvolio?

MALVOLIO.
I marvel your ladyship takes delight in such a barren
rascal; I saw him put down the other day with an ordinary fool
that has no more brain than a stone. Look you now, he's out of
his guard already; unless you laugh and minister occasion to him,
he is gagg'd. I protest I take these wise men that crow so at
these set kind of fools no better than the fools' zanies.

OLIVIA.

O, you are sick of self-love, Malvolio, and taste with a

distemper'd appetite. To be generous, guiltless, and of free

disposition, is to take those things for bird-bolts that you deem

cannon bullets. There is no slander in an allow'd fool,

though he

do nothing but rail; nor no railing in known discreet man, though

he do nothing but reprove.

CLOWN.

Now Mercury endue thee with leasing, for thou speak'st well of fools!

Re-enter MARIA

MARIA.

Madam, there is at the gate a young gentleman much desires

to speak with you.

OLIVIA.

From the Count Orsino, is it?

MARIA.

I know not, madam; 'tis a fair young man, and well attended.

OLIVIA.

Who of my people hold him in delay?

MARIA.

Sir Toby, madam, your kinsman.

OLIVIA.

Fetch him off, I pray you; he speaks nothing but madman.

Fie on him! *[Exit MARIA]* Go you, Malvolio: if it be a suit from

the Count, I am sick, or not at home-what you will to dismiss

it. *[Exit MALVOLIO]* Now you see, sir, how your fooling grows old,

and people dislike it.

CLOWN.

Thou hast spoke for us, madonna, as if thy eldest son should

be a fool; whose skull Jove cram with brains! For-here he

comes-one of thy kin has a most weak pia mater.

Enter SIR TOBY

OLIVIA.

By mine honour, half drunk! What is he at the gate, cousin?

SIR TOBY.

A gentleman.

OLIVIA.

A gentleman! What gentleman?

SIR TOBY.

'Tis a gentleman here. *[Hiccups]* A plague o' these pickle-herring! How now, sot!

CLOWN.

Good Sir Toby!

OLIVIA.

Cousin, cousin, how have you come so early by this lethargy?

SIR TOBY.

Lechery! I defy lechery. There's one at the gate.

OLIVIA.

Ay, marry; what is he?

SIR TOBY.

Let him be the devil an he will, I care not; give me
faith, say I. Well, it's all one. *Exit*

OLIVIA. What's a drunken man like, fool?

CLOWN.

Like a drown'd man, a fool, and a madman: one draught above
heat makes him a fool; the second mads him; and a third drowns him.

OLIVIA.

Go thou and seek the crowner, and let him sit o' my coz;

for he's in the third degree of drink, he's drown'd; go look after him.

CLOWN.

He is but mad yet, madonna, and the fool shall look to the

madman. *Exit*

Re-enter MALVOLIO

MALVOLIO.

Madam, yond young fellow swears he will speak with

you. I

told him you were sick; he takes on him to understand so much,

and therefore comes to speak with you. I told him you were

asleep; he seems to have a foreknowledge of that too, and

therefore comes to speak with you. What is to be said to him,

lady? He's fortified against any denial.

OLIVIA.

Tell him he shall not speak with me.

MALVOLIO.

Has been told so; and he says he'll stand at your door

like a sheriff's post, and be the supporter to a bench, but he'll speak with you.

OLIVIA.

What kind o' man is he?

MALVOLIO.

Why, of mankind.

OLIVIA.

What manner of man?

MALVOLIO.

Of very ill manner; he'll speak with you, will you or no.

OLIVIA.

Of what personage and years is he?

MALVOLIO.

Not yet old enough for a man, nor young enough for a boy;
as a squash is before 'tis a peascod, or a codling when 'tis
almost an apple; 'tis with him in standing water, between boy and
man. He is very well-favour'd, and he speaks very shrewishly; one
would think his mother's milk were scarce out of him.

OLIVIA.

Let him approach. Call in my gentlewoman.

MALVOLIO.

Gentlewoman, my lady calls. *Exit*

Re-enter MARIA

OLIVIA.

Give me my veil; come, throw it o'er my face;
We'll once more hear Orsino's embassy.

Enter VIOLA

VIOLA.

The honourable lady of the house, which is she?

OLIVIA.

Speak to me; I shall answer for her. Your will?

VIOLA.

Most radiant, exquisite, and unmatchable beauty-I pray you
tell me if this be the lady of the house, for I never saw
her. I
would be loath to cast away my speech; for, besides that it is
excellently well penn'd, I have taken great pains to con it.
Good
beauties, let me sustain no scorn; I am very comptible, even to
the least sinister usage.

OLIVIA.

Whence came you, sir?

VIOLA.

I can say little more than I have studied, and that
question's out of my part. Good gentle one, give me modest
assurance if you be the lady of the house, that I may proceed in my speech.

OLIVIA.
Are you a comedian?

VIOLA.
No, my profound heart; and yet, by the very fangs of malice
I swear, I am not that I play. Are you the lady of the house?

OLIVIA.

If I do not usurp myself, I am.

VIOLA.
Most certain, if you are she, you do usurp yourself; for
what is yours to bestow is not yours to reserve. But this is from
my commission. I will on with my speech in your praise, and then
show you the heart of my message.

OLIVIA.

Come to what is important in't. I forgive you the praise.

VIOLA.

Alas, I took great pains to study it, and 'tis poetical.

OLIVIA.

It is the more like to be feigned; I pray you keep it
in. I
heard you were saucy at my gates, and allow'd your approach
rather to wonder at you than to hear you. If you be not mad, be
gone; if you have reason, be brief; 'tis not that time of moon
with me to make one in so skipping dialogue.

MARIA.

Will you hoist sail, sir? Here lies your way.

VIOLA.

No, good swabber, I am to hull here a little longer.

Some mollification for your giant, sweet lady.

OLIVIA.

Tell me your mind.

VIOLA.
I am a messenger.

OLIVIA.
Sure, you have some hideous matter to deliver, when the courtesy of it is so fearful. Speak your office.

VIOLA.
It alone concerns your ear. I bring no overture of war, no taxation of homage: I hold the olive in my hand; my words are as full of peace as matter.

OLIVIA.
Yet you began rudely. What are you? What would you?

VIOLA.

The rudeness that hath appear'd in me have I learn'd from my entertainment. What I am and what I would are as secret as maidenhead-to your cars, divinity; to any other's, profanation.

OLIVIA.

Give us the place alone; we will hear this divinity.

[Exeunt MARIA and ATTENDANTS] Now, sir, what is your text?

VIOLA.

Most sweet lady-

OLIVIA.

A comfortable doctrine, and much may be said of it.

Where lies your text?

VIOLA.

In Orsino's bosom.

OLIVIA.

In his bosom! In what chapter of his bosom?

VIOLA.

To answer by the method: in the first of his heart.

OLIVIA.

O, I have read it; it is heresy. Have you no more to say?

VIOLA.

Good madam, let me see your face.

OLIVIA.

Have you any commission from your lord to negotiate with my
face? You are now out of your text; but we will draw the curtain
and show you the picture. *[Unveiling]* Look you, sir, such a
one I
was this present. Is't not well done?

VIOLA.

Excellently done, if God did all.

OLIVIA.

'Tis in grain, sir; 'twill endure wind and weather.

VIOLA.

'Tis beauty truly blent, whose red and white
Nature's own sweet and cunning hand laid on.
Lady, you are the cruell'st she alive,
If you will lead these graces to the grave,
And leave the world no copy.

OLIVIA.

O, sir, I will not be so hard-hearted; I will give out
divers schedules of my beauty. It shall be inventoried, and every
particle and utensil labell'd to my will: as-item, two lips
indifferent red; item, two grey eyes with lids to them; item, one
neck, one chin, and so forth. Were you sent hither to praise me?

VIOLA.

I see you what you are: you are too proud;

But, if you were the devil, you are fair.

My lord and master loves you-O, such love

Could be but recompens'd though you were crown'd

The nonpareil of beauty!

OLIVIA.

How does he love me?

VIOLA.

With adorations, fertile tears,

With groans that thunder love, with sighs of fire.

OLIVIA.

Your lord does know my mind; I cannot love him.

Yet I suppose him virtuous, know him noble,

Of great estate, of fresh and stainless youth;

In voices well divulg'd, free, learn'd, and valiant,

And in dimension and the shape of nature
A gracious person; but yet I cannot love him.
He might have took his answer long ago.

VIOLA.
If I did love you in my master's flame,
With such a suff'ring, such a deadly life,
In your denial I would find no sense;
I would not understand it.

OLIVIA.

Why, what would you?

VIOLA.
Make me a willow cabin at your gate,
And call upon my soul within the house;
Write loyal cantons of contemned love
And sing them loud even in the dead of night;
Halloo your name to the reverberate hals,
And make the babbling gossip of the air

Cry out 'Olivia!' O, you should not rest
Between the elements of air and earth
But you should pity me!

OLIVIA.

You might do much.
What is your parentage?

VIOLA.

Above my fortunes, yet my state is well:
I am a gentleman.

OLIVIA.

Get you to your lord.
I cannot love him; let him send no more-
Unless perchance you come to me again
To tell me how he takes it. Fare you well.

I thank you for your pains; spend this for me.

VIOLA.

I am no fee'd post, lady; keep your purse;

My master, not myself, lacks recompense.

Love make his heart of flint that you shall love;

And let your fervour, like my master's, be

Plac'd in contempt! Farewell, fair cruelty. *Exit*

OLIVIA. 'What is your parentage?'

'Above my fortunes, yet my state is well:

I am a gentleman.' I'll be sworn thou art;

Thy tongue, thy face, thy limbs, actions, and spirit,

Do give thee five-fold blazon. Not too fast! Soft, soft!

Unless the master were the man. How now!

Even so quickly may one catch the plague?

Methinks I feel this youth's perfections

With an invisible and subtle stealth

To creep in at mine eyes. Well, let it be.

What ho, Malvolio!

Re-enter MALVOLIO

MALVOLIO.

Here, madam, at your service.

OLIVIA.

Run after that same peevish messenger,

The County's man. He left this ring behind him,

Would I or not. Tell him I'll none of it.

Desire him not to flatter with his lord,

Nor hold him up with hopes; I am not for him.

If that the youth will come this way to-morrow,

I'll give him reasons for't. Hie thee, Malvolio.

MALVOLIO.

Madam, I will. *Exit*

OLIVIA. I do I know not what, and fear to find

Mine eye too great a flatterer for my mind.

Fate, show thy force: ourselves we do not owe;

What is decreed must be; and be this so! *Exit*

ACT II. SCENE I. The sea-coast

Enter ANTONIO and SEBASTIAN

ANTONIO.

Will you stay no longer; nor will you not that I go with you?

SEBASTIAN.

By your patience, no. My stars shine darkly over me; the
malignancy of my fate might perhaps distemper yours;
therefore I
shall crave of you your leave that I may bear my evils alone.
It
were a bad recompense for your love to lay any of them on you.

ANTONIO.

Let me know of you whither you are bound.

SEBASTIAN.

No, sooth, sir; my determinate voyage is mere
extravagancy. But I perceive in you so excellent a touch of
modesty that you will not extort from me what I am willing to
keep in; therefore it charges me in manners the rather to express
myself. You must know of me then, Antonio, my name is Sebastian,
which I call'd Roderigo; my father was that Sebastian of
Messaline whom I know you have heard of. He left behind him
myself and a sister, both born in an hour; if the heavens had
been pleas'd, would we had so ended! But you, sir, alter'd that;
for some hour before you took me from the breach of the sea was
my sister drown'd.

ANTONIO.

Alas the day!

SEBASTIAN.

A lady, sir, though it was said she much resembled me,
was yet of many accounted beautiful; but though I could not with
such estimable wonder overfar believe that, yet thus far I will

boldly publish her: she bore mind that envy could not but call

fair. She is drown'd already, sir, with salt water, though I seem

to drown her remembrance again with more.

ANTONIO.

Pardon me, sir, your bad entertainment.

SEBASTIAN.

O good Antonio, forgive me your trouble.

ANTONIO.

If you will not murder me for my love, let me be your servant.

SEBASTIAN.

If you will not undo what you have done-that is, kill

him whom you have recover'd-desire it not. Fare ye well at once;

my bosom is full of kindness, and I am yet so near the manners of

my mother that, upon the least occasion more, mine eyes will tell

tales of me. I am bound to the Count Orsino's court.

Farewell.

Exit

ANTONIO. The gentleness of all the gods go with thee!

I have many cnemies in Orsino's court,

Else would I very shortly see thee there.

But come what may, I do adore thee so

That danger shall seem sport, and I will go. *Exit*

SCENE II. A street

Enter VIOLA and MALVOLIO at several doors

MALVOLIO.

Were you not ev'n now with the Countess Olivia?

VIOLA.

Even now, sir; on a moderate pace I have since arriv'd but hither.

MALVOLIO.

She returns this ring to you, sir; you might have saved

me my pains, to have taken it away yourself. She adds, moreover,

that you should put your lord into a desperate assurance she will

none of him. And one thing more: that you be never so hardy to

come again in his affairs, unless it be to report your lord's

taking of this. Receive it so.

VIOLA.

She took the ring of me; I'll none of it.

MALVOLIO.

Come, sir, you peevishly threw it to her; and her will is

it should be so return'd. If it be worth stooping for, there it

lies in your eye; if not, be it his that finds it.

Exit

VIOLA. I left no ring with her; what means this lady?

Fortune forbid my outside have not charm'd her!

She made good view of me; indeed, so much

That methought her eyes had lost her tongue,

For she did speak in starts distractedly.

She loves me, sure: the cunning of her passion
Invites me in this churlish messenger.
None of my lord's ring! Why, he sent her none.
I am the man. If it be so-as 'tis-
Poor lady, she were better love a dream.
Disguise, I see thou art a wickedness
Wherein the pregnant enemy does much.
How easy is it for the proper-false
In women's waxen hearts to set their forms!

Alas, our frailty is the cause, not we!
For such as we are made of, such we be.
How will this fadge? My master loves her dearly,
And I, poor monster, fond as much on him;
And she, mistaken, seems to dote on me.
What will become of this? As I am man,
My state is desperate for my master's love;
As I am woman-now alas the day!-
What thriftless sighs shall poor Olivia breathe!
O Time, thou must untangle this, not I;
It is too hard a knot for me t' untie! *Exit*

SCENE III. OLIVIA'S house

Enter SIR TOBY and SIR ANDREW

SIR TOBY.

Approach, Sir Andrew. Not to be abed after midnight is to

be up betimes; and 'diluculo surgere' thou know'st-

AGUECHEEK.

Nay, by my troth, I know not; but I know to be up late

is to be up late.

SIR TOBY.

A false conclusion! I hate it as an unfill'd can. To be

up after midnight and to go to bed then is early; so that to go

to bed after midnight is to go to bed betimes. Does not our lives

consist of the four elements?

AGUECHEEK.

Faith, so they say; but I think it rather consists of

eating and drinking.

SIR TOBY.

Th'art a scholar; let us therefore eat and drink.

Marian, I say! a stoup of wine.

Enter CLOWN

AGUECHEEK.

Here comes the fool, i' faith.

CLOWN.

How now, my hearts! Did you never see the picture of 'we three'?

SIR TOBY.

Welcome, ass. Now let's have a catch.

AGUECHEEK.

By my troth, the fool has an excellent breast. I had

rather than forty shillings I had such a leg, and so sweet a

breath to sing, as the fool has. In sooth, thou wast in very
gracious fooling last night, when thou spok'st of
Pigrogromitus,
of the Vapians passing the equinoctial of Queubus; 'twas very
good, i' faith. I sent thee sixpence for thy leman; hadst it?

CLOWN.
I did impeticos thy gratillity; for Malvolio's nose is no
whipstock. My lady has a white hand, and the Myrmidons are no
bottle-ale houses.

AGUECHEEK.
Excellent! Why, this is the best fooling, when all is
done. Now, a song.

SIR TOBY.

Come on, there is sixpence for you. Let's have a song.

AGUECHEEK.
There's a testril of me too; if one knight give a-

CLOWN.

Would you have a love-song, or a song of good life?

SIR TOBY.

A love-song, a love-song.

AGUECHEEK.

Ay, ay; I care not for good life.

CLOWN sings

O mistress mine, where are you roaming?
O, stay and hear; your true love's coming,
That can sing both high and low.
Trip no further, pretty sweeting;
Journeys end in lovers meeting,
Every wise man's son doth know.

AGUECHEEK.

Excellent good, i' faith!

SIR TOBY.

Good, good!

CLOWN sings
What is love? 'Tis not hereafter;
Present mirth hath present laughter;
What's to come is still unsure.
In delay there lies no plenty,
Then come kiss me, sweet and twenty;
Youth's a stuff will not endure.

AGUECHEEK.
A mellifluous voice, as I am true knight.

SIR TOBY.

A contagious breath.

AGUECHEEK.

Very sweet and contagious, i' faith.

SIR TOBY.

To hear by the nose, it is dulcet in contagion. But shall

we make the welkin dance indeed? Shall we rouse the night-owl in

a catch that will draw three souls out of one weaver? Shall we do that?

AGUECHEEK.

An you love me, let's do't. I am dog at a catch.

CLOWN.

By'r lady, sir, and some dogs will catch well.

AGUECHEEK.

Most certain. Let our catch be 'Thou knave.'

CLOWN.

'Hold thy peace, thou knave' knight? I shall be constrain'd

in't to call thee knave, knight.

AGUECHEEK.

'Tis not the first time I have constrained one to call

me knave. Begin, fool: it begins 'Hold thy peace.'

CLOWN.

I shall never begin if I hold my peace.

AGUECHEEK.

Good, i' faith! Come, begin. *[Catch sung]*

Enter MARIA

MARIA.

What a caterwauling do you keep here! If my lady have not

call'd up her steward Malvolio, and bid him turn you out of

doors, never trust me.

SIR TOBY.

My lady's a Cataian, we are politicians, Malvolio's a

Peg-a-Ramsey, and *[Sings]*

Three merry men be we.

Am not I consanguineous? Am I not of her blood? Tilly-vally,

lady. *[Sings]*

There dwelt a man in Babylon,

Lady, lady.

CLOWN.

Beshrew me, the knight's in admirable fooling.

AGUECHEEK.

Ay, he does well enough if he be dispos'd, and so do

I

too; he does it with a better grace, but I do it more natural.

SIR TOBY.

[Sings] O' the twelfth day of December-

MARIA.

For the love o' God, peace!

Enter MALVOLIO

MALVOLIO.
My masters, are you mad? Or what are you? Have you no
wit, manners, nor honesty, but to gabble like tinkers at this
time of night? Do ye make an ale-house of my lady's house, that
ye squeak out your coziers' catches without any mitigation or
remorse of voice? Is there no respect of place, persons, nor time, in you?

SIR TOBY.

We did keep time, sir, in our catches. Sneck up!

MALVOLIO.
Sir Toby, I must be round with you. My lady bade me tell
you that, though she harbours you as her kinsman, she's nothing
allied to your disorders. If you can separate yourself and your
misdemeanours, you are welcome to the house; if not, and it would
please you to take leave of her, she is very willing to bid you farewell.

SIR TOBY.

[Sings] Farewell, dear heart, since I must needs be gone.

MARIA.

Nay, good Sir Toby.

CLOWN.

[Sings] His eyes do show his days are almost done.

MALVOLIO.

Is't even so?

SIR TOBY.

[Sings] But I will never die. *[Falls down]*

CLOWN.

[Sings] Sir Toby, there you lie.

MALVOLIO.

This is much credit to you.

SIR TOBY.

[Sings] Shall I bid him go?

CLOWN.

[Sings] What an if you do?

SIR TOBY.

[Sings] Shall I bid him go, and spare not?

CLOWN.

[Sings] O, no, no, no, no, you dare not.

SIR TOBY.

[Rising] Out o' tune, sir! Ye lie. Art any more than a steward? Dost thou think, because thou art virtuous, there shall be no more cakes and ale?

CLOWN.

Yes, by Saint Anne; and ginger shall be hot i' th' mouth too.

SIR TOBY.

Th' art i' th' right. Go, sir, rub your chain with crumbs.

A stoup of wine, Maria!

MALVOLIO.
Mistress Mary, if you priz'd my lady's favour at anything
more than contempt, you would not give means for this uncivil
rule; she shall know of it, by this hand.
Exit

MARIA. Go shake your ears.

AGUECHEEK.
'Twere as good a deed as to drink when a man's ahungry,
to challenge him the field, and then to break promise with him
and make a fool of him.

SIR TOBY.
Do't, knight. I'll write thee a challenge; or I'll
deliver thy indignation to him by word of mouth.

MARIA.

Sweet Sir Toby, be patient for to-night; since the youth of
the Count's was to-day with my lady, she is much out of quiet.
For Monsieur Malvolio, let me alone with him; if I do not gull
him into a nayword, and make him a common recreation, do not
think I have wit enough to lie straight in my bed. I know I
can do it.

SIR TOBY.

Possess us, possess us; tell us something of him.

MARIA.

Marry, sir, sometimes he is a kind of Puritan.

AGUECHEEK.

O, if I thought that, I'd beat him like a dog.

SIR TOBY.

What, for being a Puritan? Thy exquisite reason, dear knight?

AGUECHEEK.

I have no exquisite reason for't, but I have reason good enough.

MARIA.
The devil a Puritan that he is, or anything constantly but a
time-pleaser; an affection'd ass that cons state without book and
utters it by great swarths; the best persuaded of himself, so
cramm'd, as he thinks, with excellencies that it is his grounds
of faith that all that look on him love him; and on that vice in
him will my revenge find notable cause to work.

SIR TOBY.
What wilt thou do?

MARIA.
I will drop in his way some obscure epistles of love;
wherein, by the colour of his beard, the shape of his leg, the
manner of his gait, the expressure of his eye, forehead, and
complexion, he shall find himself most feelingly personated.

I

can write very like my lady, your niece; on forgotten matter we
can hardly make distinction of our hands.

SIR TOBY.

Excellent! I smell a device.

AGUECHEEK.

I have't in my nose too.

SIR TOBY.

He shall think, by the letters that thou wilt drop, that
they come from my niece, and that she's in love with him.

MARIA.

My purpose is, indeed, a horse of that colour.

AGUECHEEK.

And your horse now would make him an ass.

MARIA.

Ass, I doubt not.

AGUECHEEK.

O, 'twill be admirable!

MARIA.

Sport royal, I warrant you. I know my physic will work with him. I will plant you two, and let the fool make a third, where he shall find the letter; observe his construction of it. For this night, to bed, and dream on the event. Farewell.

Exit

SIR TOBY. Good night, Penthesilea.

AGUECHEEK.

Before me, she's a good wench.

SIR TOBY.

She's a beagle true-bred, and one that adores me.

What o' that?

AGUECHEEK.

I was ador'd once too.

SIR TOBY.

Let's to bed, knight. Thou hadst need send for more money.

AGUECHEEK.

If I cannot recover your niece, I am a foul way out.

SIR TOBY.

Send for money, knight; if thou hast her not i' th'

end,

call me Cut.

AGUECHEEK.

If I do not, never trust me; take it how you will.

SIR TOBY.

Come, come, I'll go burn some sack; 'tis too late to go
to bed now. Come, knight; come, knight.

Exeunt

SCENE IV. The DUKE'S palace

Enter DUKE, VIOLA, CURIO, and OTHERS

DUKE.

Give me some music. Now, good morrow, friends.
Now, good Cesario, but that piece of song,
That old and antique song we heard last night;
Methought it did relieve my passion much,
More than light airs and recollected terms
Of these most brisk and giddy-paced times.
Come, but one verse.

CURIO.

He is not here, so please your lordship, that should sing it.

DUKE.

Who was it?

CURIO.

Feste, the jester, my lord; a fool that the Lady

Olivia's

father took much delight in. He is about the house.

DUKE.

Seek him out, and play the tune the while.

Exit CURIO. *[Music plays]*

Come hither, boy. If ever thou shalt love,

In the sweet pangs of it remember me;

For such as I am all true lovers are,

Unstaid and skittish in all motions else

Save in the constant image of the creature

That is belov'd. How dost thou like this tune?

VIOLA.

It gives a very echo to the seat

Where Love is thron'd.

DUKE.

Thou dost speak masterly.

My life upon't, young though thou art, thine eye

Hath stay'd upon some favour that it loves;

Hath it not, boy?

VIOLA.

A little, by your favour.

DUKE.

What kind of woman is't?

VIOLA.

Of your complexion.

DUKE.

She is not worth thee, then. What years, i' faith?

VIOLA.

About your years, my lord.

DUKE.

Too old, by heaven! Let still the woman take
An elder than herself; so wears she to him,
So sways she level in her husband's heart.
For, boy, however we do praise ourselves,
Our fancies are more giddy and unfirm,
More longing, wavering, sooner lost and won,
Than women's are.

VIOLA.

I think it well, my lord.

DUKE.

Then let thy love be younger than thyself,

Or thy affection cannot hold the bent;

For women are as roses, whose fair flow'r

Being once display'd doth fall that very hour.

VIOLA.

And so they are; alas, that they are so!

To die, even when they to perfection grow!

Re-enter CURIO and CLOWN

DUKE.

O, fellow, come, the song we had last night.

Mark it, Cesario; it is old and plain;

The spinsters and the knitters in the sun,

And the free maids that weave their thread with bones,

Do use to chant it; it is silly sooth,

And dallies with the innocence of love,

Like the old age.

CLOWN.

Are you ready, sir?

DUKE.

Ay; prithee, sing. *[Music]*

FESTE'S SONG

Come away, come away, death;
And in sad cypress let me be laid;
Fly away, fly away, breath,
I am slain by a fair cruel maid.
My shroud of white, stuck all with yew,
O, prepare it!
My part of death no one so true
Did share it.
Not a flower, not a flower sweet,
On my black coffin let there be strown;
Not a friend, not a friend greet

My poor corpse where my bones shall be thrown;
A thousand thousand sighs to save,
Lay me, O, where
Sad true lover never find my grave,
To weep there!

DUKE.

There's for thy pains.

CLOWN.

No pains, sir; I take pleasure in singing, sir.

DUKE.

I'll pay thy pleasure, then.

CLOWN.

Truly, sir, and pleasure will be paid one time or another.

DUKE.

Give me now leave to leave thee.

CLOWN.

Now the melancholy god protect thee; and the tailor make thy doublet of changeable taffeta, for thy mind is a very opal. I would have men of such constancy put to sea, that their business might be everything, and their intent everywhere: for that's it that always makes a good voyage of nothing. Farewell.

Exit CLOWN

DUKE.

Let all the rest give place.

Exeunt CURIO and ATTENDANTS

Once more, Cesario,
Get thee to yond same sovereign cruelty.
Tell her my love, more noble than the world,
Prizes not quantity of dirty lands;
The parts that fortune hath bestow'd upon her,
Tell her I hold as giddily as Fortune;

But 'tis that miracle and queen of gems
That Nature pranks her in attracts my soul.

VIOLA.
But if she cannot love you, sir?

DUKE.

I cannot be so answer'd.

VIOLA.
Sooth, but you must.
Say that some lady, as perhaps there is,
Hath for your love as great a pang of heart
As you have for Olivia. You cannot love her;
You tell her so. Must she not then be answer'd?

DUKE.
There is no woman's sides
Can bide the beating of so strong a passion
As love doth give my heart; no woman's heart

So big to hold so much; they lack retention.
Alas, their love may be call'd appetite-
No motion of the liver, but the palate-
That suffer surfeit, cloyment, and revolt;
But mine is all as hungry as the sea,
And can digest as much. Make no compare
Between that love a woman can bear me
And that I owe Olivia.

VIOLA.

Ay, but I know-

DUKE.

What dost thou know?

VIOLA.

Too well what love women to men may owe.

In faith, they are as true of heart as we.
My father had a daughter lov'd a man,

As it might be perhaps, were I a woman,
I should your lordship.

DUKE.

And what's her history?

VIOLA.
A blank, my lord. She never told her love,
But let concealment, like a worm i' th' bud,
Feed on her damask cheek. She pin'd in thought;
And with a green and yellow melancholy
She sat like Patience on a monument,
Smiling at grief. Was not this love indeed?
We men may say more, swear more, but indeed
Our shows are more than will; for still we prove
Much in our vows, but little in our love.

DUKE.

But died thy sister of her love, my boy?

VIOLA.

I am all the daughters of my father's house,

And all the brothers too-and yet I know not.

Sir, shall I to this lady?

DUKE.

Ay, that's the theme.

To her in haste. Give her this jewel; say

My love can give no place, bide no denay. *Exeunt*

SCENE V. OLIVIA'S garden

Enter SIR TOBY, SIR ANDREW, and FABIAN

SIR TOBY.

Come thy ways, Signior Fabian.

FABIAN.

Nay, I'll come; if I lose a scruple of this sport let me be

boil'd to death with melancholy.

SIR TOBY.

Wouldst thou not be glad to have the niggardly rascally sheep-biter come by some notable shame?

FABIAN.

I would exult, man; you know he brought me out o' favour with my lady about a bear-baiting here.

SIR TOBY.

To anger him we'll have the bear again; and we will fool him black and blue-shall we not, Sir Andrew?

AGUECHEEK.

And we do not, it is pity of our lives.

Enter MARIA

SIR TOBY.

Here comes the little villain.

How now, my metal of India!

MARIA.
Get ye all three into the box-tree. Malvolio's coming down
this walk. He has been yonder i' the sun practising behaviour to
his own shadow this half hour. Observe him, for the love of
mockery, for I know this letter will make a contemplative idiot
of him. Close, in the name of jesting! [As the men hide she drops
a letter] Lie thou there; for here comes the trout that must be
caught with tickling.
Exit

Enter MALVOLIO

MALVOLIO.
'Tis but fortune; all is fortune. Maria once told me she
did affect me; and I have heard herself come thus near, that,
should she fancy, it should be one of my complexion. Besides, she
uses me with a more exalted respect than any one else that
follows her. What should I think on't?

SIR TOBY.

Here's an overweening rogue!

FABIAN.
O, peace! Contemplation makes a rare turkey-cock of him;
how he jets under his advanc'd plumes!

AGUECHEEK.
'Slight, I could so beat the rogue-

SIR TOBY.

Peace, I say.

MALVOLIO.
To be Count Malvolio!

SIR TOBY.

Ah, rogue!

AGUECHEEK.

Pistol him, pistol him.

SIR TOBY.

Peace, peace!

MALVOLIO.

There is example for't: the Lady of the Strachy married
the yeoman of the wardrobe.

AGUECHEEK.

Fie on him, Jezebel!

FABIAN.

O, peace! Now he's deeply in; look how imagination blows him.

MALVOLIO.

Having been three months married to her, sitting in my
state-

SIR TOBY.
O, for a stone-bow to hit him in the eye!

MALVOLIO.
Calling my officers about me, in my branch'd velvet gown,
having come from a day-bed- where I have left Olivia
sleeping-

SIR TOBY.
Fire and brimstone!

FABIAN.

O, peace, peace!

MALVOLIO.
And then to have the humour of state; and after a demure
travel of regard, telling them I know my place as I would they

should do theirs, to ask for my kinsman Toby-

SIR TOBY.

Bolts and shackles!

FABIAN.

O, peace, peace, peace! Now, now.

MALVOLIO.

Seven of my people, with an obedient start, make out for

him. I frown the while, and perchance wind up my watch, or play

with my-some rich jewel. Toby approaches; curtsies there to

me-

SIR TOBY.

Shall this fellow live?

FABIAN.

Though our silence be drawn from us with cars, yet peace.

MALVOLIO.

I extend my hand to him thus, quenching my familiar smile

with an austere regard of control-

SIR TOBY.

And does not Toby take you a blow o' the lips then?

MALVOLIO.

Saying 'Cousin Toby, my fortunes having cast me on your

niece give me this prerogative of speech'-

SIR TOBY.

What, what?

MALVOLIO.

'You must amend your drunkenness'-

SIR TOBY.

Out, scab!

FABIAN.

Nay, patience, or we break the sinews of our plot.

MALVOLIO.

'Besides, you waste the treasure of your time with a

foolish knight'-

AGUECHEEK.

That's me, I warrant you.

MALVOLIO.

'One Sir Andrew.'

AGUECHEEK.

I knew 'twas I; for many do call me fool.

MALVOLIO.

What employment have we here?

[Taking up the letter]

FABIAN.

Now is the woodcock near the gin.

SIR TOBY.

O, peace! And the spirit of humours intimate reading aloud to him!

MALVOLIO.

By my life, this is my lady's hand: these be her very

C's, her U's, and her T's; and thus makes she her great P's.

It

is, in contempt of question, her hand.

AGUECHEEK.

Her C's, her U's, and her T's. Why that?

MALVOLIO.

[Reads] 'To the unknown belov'd, this, and my good wishes.' Her very phrases! By your leave, wax. Soft! And the impressure her Lucrece with which she uses to seal; 'tis my lady. To whom should this be?

FABIAN.

This wins him, liver and all.

MALVOLIO.

[Reads]

Jove knows I love,

But who?

Lips, do not move;

No man must know.'

'No man must know.' What follows? The numbers alter'd!

'No man must know.' If this should be thee, Malvolio?

SIR TOBY.

Marry, hang thee, brock!

MALVOLIO.

[Reads]

'I may command where I adore;

But silence, like a Lucrece knife,

With bloodless stroke my heart doth gore;

M. O. A. I. doth sway my life.'

FABIAN.

A fustian riddle!

SIR TOBY.

Excellent wench, say I.

MALVOLIO.

'M. O. A. I. doth sway my life.'

Nay, but first let me see, let me see, let me see.

FABIAN.

What dish o' poison has she dress'd him!

SIR TOBY.

And with what wing the staniel checks at it!

MALVOLIO.

'I may command where I adore.' Why, she may command

me: I

serve her; she is my lady. Why, this is evident to any formal

capacity; there is no obstruction in this. And the end-what

should that alphabetical position portend? If I could make that

resemble something in me. Softly! M. O. A. I.-

SIR TOBY.

O, ay, make up that! He is now at a cold scent.

FABIAN.

Sowter will cry upon't for all this, though it be as rank as a fox.

MALVOLIO.

M-Malvolio; M-why, that begins my name.

FABIAN.

Did not I say he would work it out?

The cur is excellent at faults.

MALVOLIO.

M-But then there is no consonancy in the sequel; that suffers under probation: A should follow, but O does.

FABIAN.

And O shall end, I hope.

SIR TOBY.

Ay, or I'll cudgel him, and make him cry 'O!'

MALVOLIO.

And then I comes behind.

FABIAN.

Ay, an you had any eye behind you, you might see more
detraction at your heels than fortunes before you.

MALVOLIO.

M. O. A. I. This simulation is not as the former; and
yet, to crush this a little, it would bow to me, for every one of
these letters are in my name. Soft! here follows prose.

[Reads]

'If this fall into thy hand, revolve. In my stars I am above
thee; but be not afraid of greatness. Some are born great, some
achieve greatness, and some have greatness thrust upon 'em.
Thy
Fates open their hands; let thy blood and spirit embrace them;
and, to inure thyself to what thou art like to be, cast thy
humble slough and appear fresh. Be opposite with a kinsman, surly
with servants; let thy tongue tang arguments of state; put
thyself into the trick of singularity. She thus advises thee that

sighs for thee. Remember who commended thy yellow stockings, and wish'd to see thee ever cross-garter'd. I say, remember, Go to, thou art made, if thou desir'st to be so; if not, let me see thee a steward still, the fellow of servants, and not worthy to touch Fortune's fingers. Farewell. She that would alter services with thee,

THE FORTUNATE-UNHAPPY.'

Daylight and champain discovers not more. This is open. I will be proud, I will read politic authors, I will baffle Sir Toby, I will wash off gross acquaintance, I will be point-devise the very man. I do not now fool myself to let imagination jade me; for every reason excites to this, that my lady loves me. She did commend my yellow stockings of late, she did praise my leg being cross-garter'd; and in this she manifests herself to my love, and with a kind of injunction drives me to these habits of her liking. I thank my stars I am happy. I will be strange, stout, in yellow stockings, and cross-garter'd, even with the swiftness of putting on. Jove and my stars be praised! Here is yet a postscript.

[Reads] 'Thou canst not choose but know who I am. If thou

entertain'st my love, let it appear in thy smiling; thy smiles become thee well. Therefore in my presence still smile, dear my sweet, I prithee.'

Jove, I thank thee. I will smile; I will do everything that thou wilt have me. *Exit*

FABIAN. I will not give my part of this sport for a pension of thousands to be paid from the Sophy.

SIR TOBY.

I could marry this wench for this device.

AGUECHEEK.

So could I too.

SIR TOBY.

And ask no other dowry with her but such another jest.

Enter MARIA

AGUECHEEK.

Nor I neither.

FABIAN.

Here comes my noble gull-catcher.

SIR TOBY.

Wilt thou set thy foot o' my neck?

AGUECHEEK.

Or o' mine either?

SIR TOBY.

Shall I play my freedom at tray-trip, and become thy bond-slave?

AGUECHEEK.

I' faith, or I either?

SIR TOBY.

Why, thou hast put him in such a dream that when the image of it leaves him he must run mad.

MARIA.

Nay, but say true; does it work upon him?

SIR TOBY.

Like aqua-vita! with a midwife.

AIARIA.

If you will then see the fruits of the sport, mark his first approach before my lady. He will come to her in yellow stockings, and 'tis a colour she abhors, and cross-garter'd, a fashion she detests; and he will smile upon her, which will now be so unsuitable to her disposition, being addicted to a melancholy as she is, that it cannot but turn him into a notable contempt. If you will see it, follow me.

SIR TOBY.

To the gates of Tartar, thou most excellent devil of wit!

AGUECHEEK.

I'll make one too. *Exeunt*

ACT III. SCENE I. OLIVIA'S garden

Enter VIOLA, and CLOWN with a tabor

VIOLA.

Save thee, friend, and thy music!

Dost thou live by thy tabor?

CLOWN.

No, sir, I live by the church.

VIOLA.

Art thou a churchman?

CLOWN.

No such matter, sir: I do live by the church; for I do live
at my house, and my house doth stand by the church.

VIOLA.

So thou mayst say the king lies by a beggar, if a beggar
dwell near him; or the church stands by thy tabor, if thy tabor
stand by the church.

CLOWN.

You have said, sir. To see this age! A sentence is but a
chev'ril glove to a good wit. How quickly the wrong side may be turn'd outward!

VIOLA.

Nay, that's certain; they that dally nicely with words may
quickly make them wanton.

CLOWN.

I would, therefore, my sister had had name, sir.

VIOLA.

Why, man?

CLOWN.

Why, sir, her name's a word; and to dally with that word

might make my sister wanton. But indeed words are very rascals

since bonds disgrac'd them.

VIOLA.

Thy reason, man?

CLOWN.

Troth, sir, I can yield you none without words, and words

are grown so false I am loath to prove reason with them.

VIOLA.

I warrant thou art a merry fellow and car'st for nothing.

CLOWN.

Not so, sir; I do care for something; but in my conscience, sir, I do not care for you. If that be to care for nothing,

sir,

I would it would make you invisible.

VIOLA.

Art not thou the Lady Olivia's fool?

CLOWN.

No, indeed, sir; the Lady Olivia has no folly; she will keep

no fool, sir, till she be married; and fools are as like husbands

as pilchers are to herrings-the husband's the bigger. I am

indeed not her fool, but her corrupter of words.

VIOLA.

I saw thee late at the Count Orsino's.

CLOWN.

Foolery, sir, does walk about the orb like the sun-it

shines everywhere. I would be sorry, sir, but the fool should be

as oft with your master as with my mistress: think I saw your wisdom there.

VIOLA.

Nay, an thou pass upon me, I'll no more with thee.

Hold, there's expenses for thee. *[Giving a coin]*

CLOWN.

Now Jove, in his next commodity of hair, send the a beard!

VIOLA.

By my troth, I'll tell thee, I am almost sick for one;

[Aside] though I would not have it grow on my chin.- Is thy lady within?

CLOWN.

Would not a pair of these have bred, sir?

VIOLA.

Yes, being kept together and put to use.

CLOWN.

I would play Lord Pandarus of Phrygia, sir, to bring a

Cressida to this Troilus.

VIOLA.

I understand you, sir; 'tis well begg'd.

[Giving another coin]

CLOWN.

The matter, I hope, is not great, sir, begging but a beggar:

Cressida was a beggar. My lady is within, sir. I will construe to

them whence you come; who you are and what you would are out of

my welkin-I might say 'element' but the word is overworn.

Exit CLOWN

VIOLA.

This fellow is wise enough to play the fool;

And to do that well craves a kind of wit.

He must observe their mood on whom he jests, The quality of persons, and the time;

And, like the haggard, check at every feather

That comes before his eye. This is a practice

As full of labour as a wise man's art;

For folly that he wisely shows is fit;

But wise men, folly-fall'n, quite taint their wit.

Enter SIR TOBY and SIR ANDREW

SIR TOBY.

Save you, gentleman!

VIOLA.

And you, sir.

AGUECHEEK.

Dieu vous garde, monsieur.

VIOLA.

Et vous aussi; votre serviteur.

AGUECHEEK.

I hope, sir, you are; and I am yours.

SIR TOBY.

Will you encounter the house? My niece is desirous you
should enter, if your trade be to her.

VIOLA.

I am bound to your niece, sir; I mean, she is the list of my voyage.

SIR TOBY.

Taste your legs, sir; put them to motion.

VIOLA.

My legs do better understand me, sir, than I understand what
you mean by bidding me taste my legs.

SIR TOBY.

I mean, to go, sir, to enter.

VIOLA.

I will answer you with gait and entrance. But we are prevented.

Enter OLIVIA and MARIA

Most excellent accomplish'd lady, the heavens rain odours on you!

AGUECHEEK.

That youth's a rare courtier- 'Rain odours' well!

VIOLA.

My matter hath no voice, lady, but to your own most pregnant
and vouchsafed car.

AGUECHEEK.

'Odours,' 'pregnant,' and 'vouchsafed'- I'll get 'em all three all ready.

OLIVIA.

Let the garden door be shut, and leave me to my hearing.

[Exeunt all but OLIVIA and VIOLA] Give me your hand, sir.

VIOLA.

My duty, madam, and most humble service.

OLIVIA.

What is your name?

VIOLA.

Cesario is your servant's name, fair Princess.

OLIVIA.

My servant, sir! 'Twas never merry world
Since lowly feigning was call'd compliment.

Y'are servant to the Count Orsino, youth.

VIOLA.

And he is yours, and his must needs be yours:

Your servant's servant is your servant, madam.

OLIVIA.

For him, I think not on him; for his thoughts,

Would they were blanks rather than fill'd with me!

VIOLA.

Madam, I come to whet your gentle thoughts

On his behalf.

OLIVIA.

O, by your leave, I pray you:

I bade you never speak again of him;

But, would you undertake another suit,

I had rather hear you to solicit that

Than music from the spheres.

VIOLA.

Dear lady-

OLIVIA.

Give me leave, beseech you. I did send,

After the last enchantment you did here,

A ring in chase of you; so did I abuse

Myself, my servant, and, I fear me, you.

Under your hard construction must I sit,

To force that on you in a shameful cunning

Which you knew none of yours. What might you think?

Have you not set mine honour at the stake,

And baited it with all th' unmuzzled thoughts

That tyrannous heart can think? To one of your receiving

Enough is shown: a cypress, not a bosom,

Hides my heart. So, let me hear you speak.

VIOLA.

I Pity YOU.

OLIVIA.

That's a degree to love.

VIOLA.

No, not a grize; for 'tis a vulgar proof

That very oft we pity enemies.

OLIVIA.

Why, then, methinks 'tis time to smile again.

O world, how apt the poor are to be proud!

If one should be a prey, how much the better

To fall before the lion than the wolf! *[Clock strikes]*

The clock upbraids me with the waste of time.

Be not afraid, good youth; I will not have you;

And yet, when wit and youth is come to harvest,

Your wife is like to reap a proper man.

There lies your way, due west.

VIOLA.

Then westward-ho!

Grace and good disposition attend your ladyship!

You'll nothing, madam, to my lord by me?

OLIVIA.

Stay.

I prithee tell me what thou think'st of me.

VIOLA.

That you do think you are not what you are.

OLIVIA.

If I think so, I think the same of you.

VIOLA.

Then think you right: I am not what I am.

OLIVIA.

I would you were as I would have you be!

VIOLA.

Would it be better, madam, than I am?

I wish it might, for now I am your fool.

OLIVIA.

O, what a deal of scorn looks beautiful

In the contempt and anger of his lip!

A murd'rous guilt shows not itself more soon

Than love that would seem hid: love's night is noon.

Cesario, by the roses of the spring,

By maidhood, honour, truth, and every thing,

I love thee so that, maugre all thy pride,

Nor wit nor reason can my passion hide.

Do not extort thy reasons from this clause,

For that I woo, thou therefore hast no cause;

But rather reason thus with reason fetter:

Love sought is good, but given unsought is better.

VIOLA.

By innocence I swear, and by my youth,

I have one heart, one bosom, and one truth,

And that no woman has; nor never none

Shall mistress be of it, save I alone.

And so adieu, good madam; never more

Will I my master's tears to you deplore.

OLIVIA.

Yet come again; for thou perhaps mayst move

That heart which now abhors to like his love. *Exeunt*

SCENE II. OLIVIA'S house

Enter SIR TOBY, SIR ANDREW and FABIAN

AGUECHEEK.

No, faith, I'll not stay a jot longer.

SIR TOBY.

Thy reason, dear venom, give thy reason.

FABIAN.

You must needs yield your reason, Sir Andrew.

AGUECHEEK.

Marry, I saw your niece do more favours to the

Count's

servingman than ever she bestow'd upon me; I saw't i' th' orchard.

SIR TOBY.

Did she see thee the while, old boy? Tell me that.

AGUECHEEK.

As plain as I see you now.

FABIAN.

This was a great argument of love in her toward you.

AGUECHEEK.

'Slight! will you make an ass o' me?

FABIAN.

I will prove it legitimate, sir, upon the oaths of judgment and reason.

SIR TOBY.

And they have been grand-jurymen since before Noah was a sailor.

FABIAN.

She did show favour to the youth in your sight only to exasperate you, to awake your dormouse valour, to put fire in your heart and brimstone in your liver. You should then have accosted her; and with some excellent jests, fire-new from the mint, you should have bang'd the youth into dumbness. This was look'd for at your hand, and this was baulk'd. The double gilt of this opportunity you let time wash off, and you are now sail'd into the north of my lady's opinion; where you will hang like an icicle on Dutchman's beard, unless you do redeem it by some laudable attempt either of valour or policy.

AGUECHEEK.

An't be any way, it must be with valour, for policy

I

hate; I had as lief be a Brownist as a politician.

SIR TOBY.

Why, then, build me thy fortunes upon the basis of valour. Challenge me the Count's youth to fight with him; hurt him in eleven places. My niece shall take note of it; and assure thyself there is no love-broker in the world can more prevail in man's commendation with woman than report of valour.

FABIAN.

There is no way but this, Sir Andrew.

AGUECHEEK.

Will either of you bear me a challenge to him?

SIR TOBY.

Go, write it in a martial hand; be curst and brief;

it is

no matter how witty, so it be eloquent and full of invention.

Taunt him with the license of ink; if thou thou'st him some

thrice, it shall not be amiss; and as many lies as will lie in

thy sheet of paper, although the sheet were big enough for the

bed of Ware in England, set 'em down; go about it. Let there be

gall enough in thy ink, though thou write with a goose-pen, no

matter. About it.

AGUECHEEK.

Where shall I find you?

SIR TOBY.

We'll call thee at the cubiculo. Go.

Exit SIR ANDREW

FABIAN.

This is a dear manakin to you, Sir Toby.

SIR TOBY.

I have been dear to him, lad-some two thousand strong, or so.

FABIAN.

We shall have a rare letter from him; but you'll not deliver't?

SIR TOBY.

Never trust me then; and by all means stir on the youth

to an answer. I think oxen and wainropes cannot hale them together. For Andrew, if he were open'd and you find so much blood in his liver as will clog the foot of a flea, I'll eat the rest of th' anatomy.

FABIAN.
And his opposite, the youth, bears in his visage no great presage of cruelty.

Enter MARIA

SIR TOBY.
Look where the youngest wren of nine comes.

MARIA.
If you desire the spleen, and will laugh yourselves into stitches, follow me. Yond gull Malvolio is turned heathen, a very renegado; for there is no Christian that means to be saved by believing rightly can ever believe such impossible passages of grossness. He's in yellow stockings.

SIR TOBY.

And cross-garter'd?

MARIA.

Most villainously; like a pedant that keeps a school i' th' church. I have dogg'd him like his murderer. He does obey every point of the letter that I dropp'd to betray him. He does smile his face into more lines than is in the new map with the augmentation of the Indies. You have not seen such a thing as 'tis; I can hardly forbear hurling things at him. I know my lady will strike him; if she do, he'll smile and take't for a great favour.

SIR TOBY.

Come, bring us, bring us where he is. *Exeunt*

SCENE III. A street

Enter SEBASTIAN and ANTONIO

SEBASTIAN.

I would not by my will have troubled you;

But since you make your pleasure of your pains, I will no further chide you.

ANTONIO.

I could not stay behind you: my desire,

More sharp than filed steel, did spur me forth;

And not all love to see you-though so much

As might have drawn one to a longer voyage-

But jealousy what might befall your travel,

Being skilless in these parts; which to a stranger,

Unguided and unfriended, often prove

Rough and unhospitable. My willing love,

The rather by these arguments of fear,

Set forth in your pursuit.

SEBASTIAN.

My kind Antonio,

I can no other answer make but thanks,

And thanks, and ever thanks; and oft good turns

Are shuffl'd off with such uncurrent pay;

But were my worth as is my conscience firm,

You should find better dealing. What's to do?

Shall we go see the reliques of this town?

ANTONIO.

To-morrow, sir; best first go see your lodging.

SEBASTIAN.

I am not weary, and 'tis long to night;
I pray you, let us satisfy our eyes
With the memorials and the things of fame
That do renown this city.

ANTONIO.

Would you'd pardon me.
I do not without danger walk these streets:
Once in a sea-fight 'gainst the Count his galleys
I did some service; of such note, indeed,
That, were I ta'en here, it would scarce be answer'd.

SEBASTIAN.

Belike you slew great number of his people.

ANTONIO.Th' offence is not of such a bloody nature;

Albeit the quality of the time and quarrel

Might well have given us bloody argument.

It might have since been answer'd in repaying

What we took from them; which, for traffic's sake,

Most of our city did. Only myself stood out;

For which, if I be lapsed in this place,

I shall pay dear.

SEBASTIAN.

Do not then walk too open.

ANTONIO.

It doth not fit me. Hold, sir, here's my purse;

In the south suburbs, at the Elephant,

Is best to lodge. I will bespeak our diet,

Whiles you beguile the time and feed your knowledge

With viewing of the town; there shall you have me.

SEBASTIAN.

Why I your purse?

ANTONIO.

Haply your eye shall light upon some toy

You have desire to purchase; and your store,

I think, is not for idle markets, sir.

SEBASTIAN.

I'll be your purse-bearer, and leave you for An hour.

ANTONIO.

To th' Elephant.

SEBASTIAN.

I do remember. *Exeunt*

SCENE IV. OLIVIA'S garden

Enter OLIVIA and MARIA

OLIVIA.

I have sent after him; he says he'll come.

How shall I feast him? What bestow of him?
For youth is bought more oft than begg'd or borrow'd.

I speak too loud.
Where's Malvolio? He is sad and civil,
And suits well for a servant with my fortunes.
Where is Malvolio?

MARIA.

He's coming, madam; but in very strange manner.
He is sure possess'd, madam.

OLIVIA.

Why, what's the matter? Does he rave?

MARIA.

No, madam, he does nothing but smile. Your ladyship were
best to have some guard about you if he come; for sure the man is
tainted in's wits.

OLIVIA.
Go call him hither. *Exit* MARIA
I am as mad as he,
If sad and merry madness equal be.
Re-enter MARIA with MALVOLIO
How now, Malvolio!

MALVOLIO.
Sweet lady, ho, ho.

OLIVIA.

Smil'st thou?
I sent for thee upon a sad occasion.

MALVOLIO.
Sad, lady? I could be sad. This does make some

obstruction in the blood, this cross-gartering; but what of that?
If it please the eye of one, it is with me as the very true
sonnet is: 'Please one and please all.'

OLIVIA.

Why, how dost thou, man? What is the matter with thee?

MALVOLIO.
Not black in my mind, though yellow in my legs.

It did come to his hands, and commands shall be executed.
I think we do know the sweet Roman hand.

OLIVIA.

Wilt thou go to bed, Malvolio?

MALVOLIO.
To bed? Ay, sweetheart, and I'll come to thee.

OLIVIA.

God comfort thee! Why dost thou smile so, and kiss thy hand so oft?

MARIA.

How do you, Malvolio?

MALVOLIO.

At your request? Yes, nightingales answer daws!

MARIA.

Why appear you with this ridiculous boldness before my lady?

MALVOLIO.

'Be not afraid of greatness.' 'Twas well writ.

OLIVIA.

What mean'st thou by that, Malvolio?

AIALVOLIO.

'Some are born great,'-

OLIVIA.

Ha?

MALVOLIO.

'Some achieve greatness,'-

OLIVIA.

What say'st thou?

MALVOLIO.

'And some have greatness thrust upon them.'

OLIVIA.

Heaven restore thee!

MALVOLIO.

'Remember who commended thy yellow stockings,'-

OLIVIA.

'Thy yellow stockings?'

MALVOLIO.

'And wish'd to see thee cross-garterd.'

OLIVIA.

'Cross-garter'd?'

MALVOLIO.

'Go to, thou an made, if thou desir'st to be so';-

OLIVIA.

Am I made?

MALVOLIO.

'If not, let me see thee a servant still.'

OLIVIA.

Why, this is very midsummer madness.

Enter SERVANT

SERVANT.

Madam, the young gentleman of the Count Orsino's is

return'd; I could hardly entreat him back; he attends your ladyship's pleasure.

OLIVIA.

I'll come to him. *[Exit SERVANT]* Good Maria, let this

fellow be look'd to. Where's my cousin Toby? Let some of my

people have a special care of him; I would not have him miscarry

for the half of my dowry.

Exeunt OLIVIA and MARIA

MALVOLIO.

O, ho! do you come near me now? No worse man than Sir

Toby to look to me! This concurs directly with the letter: she

sends him on purpose, that I may appear stubborn to him; for she

incites me to that in the letter. 'Cast thy humble slough,' says

she. 'Be opposite with kinsman, surly with servants; let thy tongue tang with arguments of state; put thyself into the trick

of singularity' and consequently sets down the manner how,

as: a

sad face, a reverend carriage, a slow tongue, in the habit of

some sir of note, and so forth. I have lim'd her; but it is

Jove's doing, and Jove make me thankful! And when she went away

now- 'Let this fellow be look'd to.' 'Fellow,' not 'Malvolio' nor

after my degree, but 'fellow.' Why, everything adheres together,

that no dram of a scruple, no scruple of a scruple, no obstacle,

no incredulous or unsafe circumstance-What can be said?

Nothing

that can be can come between me and the full prospect of my

hopes. Well, Jove, not I, is the doer of this, and he is to be thanked.

Re-enter MARIA, with SIR TOBY and FABIAN

SIR TOBY.

Which way is he, in the name of sanctity? If all the

devils of hell be drawn in little, and Legion himself possess'd

him, yet I'll speak to him.

FABIAN.

Here he is, here he is. How is't with you, sir?

SIR TOBY.

How is't with you, man?

MALVOLIO.

Go off; I discard you. Let me enjoy my private; go off.

MARIA.

Lo, how hollow the fiend speaks within him! Did not I tell

you? Sir Toby, my lady prays you to have a care of him.

MALVOLIO.

Ah, ha! does she so?

SIR TOBY.

Go to, go to; peace, peace; we must deal gently with him.

Let me alone. How do you, Malvolio? How is't with you? What,

man,

defy the devil; consider, he's an enemy to mankind.

MALVOLIO.

Do you know what you say?

MARIA.

La you, an you speak ill of the devil, how he takes it at heart! Pray God he be not bewitched.

FABIAN.

Carry his water to th' wise woman.

MARIA.

Marry, and it shall be done to-morrow morning, if I live. My
lady would not lose him for more than I'll say.

MALVOLIO.

How now, mistress!

MARIA.

O Lord!

SIR TOBY.

Prithee hold thy peace; this is not the way. Do you not see you move him? Let me alone with him.

FABIAN.

No way but gentleness-gently, gently. The fiend is rough, and will not be roughly us'd.

SIR TOBY.

Why, how now, my bawcock!
How dost thou, chuck?

MALVOLIO.

Sir!

SIR TOBY.

Ay, Biddy, come with me. What, man, 'tis not for gravity

to play at cherrypit with Satan. Hang him, foul collier!

MARIA.

Get him to say his prayers, good Sir Toby, get him to pray.

MALVOLIO.

My prayers, minx!

MARIA.

No, I warrant you, he will not hear of godliness.

MALVOLIO.

Go, hang yourselves all! You are idle shallow things;

I

am not of your element; you shall know more hereafter.

Exit

SIR TOBY. Is't possible?

FABIAN.

If this were play'd upon a stage now, I could condemn it as an improbable fiction.

SIR TOBY.

His very genius hath taken the infection of the device, man.

MARIA.

Nay, pursue him now, lest the device take air and taint.

FABIAN.

Why, we shall make him mad indeed.

MARIA.

The house will be the quieter.

SIR TOBY.

Come, we'll have him in a dark room and bound. My niece is already in the belief that he's mad. We may carry it thus, for our pleasure and his penance, till our very pastime, tired out of breath, prompt us to have mercy on him; at which time we will bring the device to the bar and crown thee for a finder of madmen. But see, but see.

Enter SIR ANDREW

FABIAN.
More matter for a May morning.

AGUECHEEK.

Here's the challenge; read it. I warrant there's vinegar and pepper in't.

FABIAN.
Is't so saucy?

AGUECHEEK.

Ay, is't, I warrant him; do but read.

SIR TOBY.

Give me. *[Reads]* 'Youth, whatsoever thou art, thou art but a scurvy fellow.'

FABIAN.

Good and valiant.

SIR TOBY.

[Reads] 'Wonder not, nor admire not in thy mind, why I do call thee so, for I will show thee no reason for't.'

FABIAN.

A good note; that keeps you from the blow of the law.

SIR TOBY.

[Reads] 'Thou com'st to the Lady Olivia, and in my sight she uses thee kindly; but thou liest in thy throat; that is not the matter I challenge thee for.'

FABIAN.

Very brief, and to exceeding good sense-less.

SIR TOBY.

[Reads] 'I will waylay thee going home; where if it be

thy chance to kill me'-

FABIAN.

Good.

SIR TOBY.

'Thou kill'st me like a rogue and a villain.'

FABIAN.

Still you keep o' th' windy side of the law. Good!

SIR TOBY.

[Reads] 'Fare thee well; and God have mercy upon one of

our souls! He may have mercy upon mine; but my hope is better,
and so look to thyself. Thy friend, as thou usest him, and thy sworn enemy,
ANDREW AGUECHEEK.'

If this letter move him not, his legs cannot. I'll give't him.

MARIA.
You may have very fit occasion for't; he is now in some
commerce with my lady, and will by and by depart.

SIR TOBY.
Go, Sir Andrew; scout me for him at the corner of the
orchard, like a bum-baily; so soon as ever thou seest him,
draw;
and as thou draw'st, swear horrible; for it comes to pass oft
that a terrible oath, with a swaggering accent sharply twang'd
off, gives manhood more approbation than ever proof itself would
have earn'd him. Away.

AGUECHEEK.
Nay, let me alone for swearing. *Exit*

SIR TOBY. Now will not I deliver his letter; for the behaviour of

the young gentleman gives him out to be of good capacity and

breeding; his employment between his lord and my niece confirms

no less. Therefore this letter, being so excellently ignorant,

will breed no terror in the youth: he will find it comes from a

clodpole. But, sir, I will deliver his challenge by word of

mouth, set upon Aguecheek notable report of valour, and drive the

gentleman-as know his youth will aptly receive it-into a most

hideous opinion of his rage, skill, fury, and impetuosity.
This
will so fright them both that they will kill one another by the

look, like cockatrices.
Re-enter OLIVIA. With VIOLA
FABIAN.
Here he comes with your niece; give them way till he take

leave, and presently after him.

SIR TOBY.

I will meditate the while upon some horrid message for a challenge.

Exeunt SIR TOBY, FABIAN, and MARIA

OLIVIA.

I have said too much unto a heart of stone,

And laid mine honour too unchary out;

There's something in me that reproves my fault;

But such a headstrong potent fault it is

That it but mocks reproof.

VIOLA.

With the same haviour that your passion bears

Goes on my master's griefs.

OLIVIA.

Here, wear this jewel for me; 'tis my picture.

Refuse it not; it hath no tongue to vex you.

And I beseech you come again to-morrow.

What shall you ask of me that I'll deny,

That honour sav'd may upon asking give?

VIOLA.

Nothing but this-your true love for my master.

OLIVIA.

How with mine honour may I give him that

Which I have given to you?

VIOLA.

I will acquit you.

OLIVIA.

Well, come again to-morrow. Fare thee well;

A fiend like thee might bear my soul to hell. *Exit*

Re-enter SIR TOBY and SIR FABIAN

SIR TOBY.

Gentleman, God save thee.

VIOLA.

And you, sir.

SIR TOBY.

That defence thou hast, betake thee tot. Of what nature

the wrongs are thou hast done him, I know not; but thy

intercepter, full of despite, bloody as the hunter, attends

thee at the orchard end. Dismount thy tuck, be yare in thy

preparation, for thy assailant is quick, skilful, and deadly.

VIOLA.

You mistake, sir; I am sure no man hath any quarrel to me;

my remembrance is very free and clear from any image of offence done to any man.

SIR TOBY.

You'll find it otherwise, I assure you; therefore, if you

hold your life at any price, betake you to your guard; for your

opposite hath in him what youth, strength, skill, and wrath,

can furnish man withal.

VIOLA.

I pray you, sir, what is he?

SIR TOBY.

He is knight, dubb'd with unhatch'd rapier and on carpet
consideration; but he is a devil in private brawl. Souls and
bodies hath he divorc'd three; and his incensement at this moment
is so implacable that satisfaction can be none but by pangs of
death and sepulchre. Hob-nob is his word-give't or take't.

VIOLA.

I will return again into the house and desire some conduct
of the lady. I am no fighter. I have heard of some kind of men
that put quarrels purposely on others to taste their valour;
belike this is a man of that quirk.

SIR TOBY.

Sir, no; his indignation derives itself out of a very
competent injury; therefore, get you on and give him his desire.
Back you shall not to the house, unless you undertake that with
me which with as much safety you might answer him; therefore on,
or strip your sword stark naked; for meddle you must, that's
certain, or forswear to wear iron about you.

VIOLA.

This is as uncivil as strange. I beseech you do me this
courteous office as to know of the knight what my offence to him
is: it is something of my negligence, nothing of my purpose.

SIR TOBY.

I Will do so. Signior Fabian, stay you by this gentleman
till my return. *Exit* SIR TOBY

VIOLA.

Pray you, sir, do you know of this matter?

FABIAN.

I know the knight is incens'd against you, even to a mortal
arbitrement; but nothing of the circumstance more.

VIOLA.

I beseech you, what manner of man is he?

FABIAN.

Nothing of that wonderful promise, to read him by his form,

as you are like to find him in the proof of his valour. He is
indeed, sir, the most skilful, bloody, and fatal opposite that
you could possibly have found in any part of Illyria. Will you
walk towards him? I will make your peace with him if I can.

VIOLA.
I shall be much bound to you for't. I am one that would
rather go with sir priest than sir knight. I care not who knows
so much of my mettle. *Exeunt*
Re-enter SIR TOBY With SIR ANDREW
SIR TOBY.
Why, man, he's a very devil; I have not seen such a
firago. I had a pass with him, rapier, scabbard, and all, and he
gives me the stuck in with such a mortal motion that it is
inevitable; and on the answer, he pays you as surely as your feet
hit the ground they step on. They say he has been fencer to the Sophy.

AGUECHEEK.
Pox on't, I'll not meddle with him.

SIR TOBY.

Ay, but he will not now be pacified; Fabian can scarce hold him yonder.

AGUECHEEK.

Plague on't; an I thought he had been valiant, and so

cunning in fence, I'd have seen him damn'd ere I'd have

challeng'd him. Let him let the matter slip, and I'll give him

my horse, grey Capilet.

SIR TOBY.

I'll make the motion. Stand here, make a good show

on't;

this shall end without the perdition of souls. *[Aside]* Marry,

I'll ride your horse as well as I ride you.

Re-enter FABIAN and VIOLA

[To FABIAN] I have his horse to take up the quarrel; I have

persuaded him the youth's a devil.

FABIAN.

[To SIR TOBY] He is as horribly conceited of him; and pants

and looks pale, as if a bear were at his heels.

SIR TOBY.

[To VIOLA] There's no remedy, sir: he will fight with you
for's oath sake. Marry, he hath better bethought him of his
quarrel, and he finds that now scarce to be worth talking of.
Therefore draw for the supportance of his vow; he protests he will not hurt you.

VIOLA.

[Aside] Pray God defend me! A little thing would make me
tell them how much I lack of a man.

FABIAN.

Give ground if you see him furious.

SIR TOBY.

Come, Sir Andrew, there's no remedy; the gentleman will,
for his honour's sake, have one bout with you; he cannot by the
duello avoid it; but he has promis'd me, as he is a gentleman and
a soldier, he will not hurt you. Come on; to't.

AGUECHEEK.

Pray God he keep his oath! [They

draw]

Enter ANTONIO

VIOLA.

I do assure you 'tis against my will.

ANTONIO.

Put up your sword. If this young gentleman

Have done offence, I take the fault on me:

If you offend him, I for him defy you.

SIR TOBY.

You, sir! Why, what are you?

ANTONIO.

One, sir, that for his love dares yet do more

Than you have heard him brag to you he will.

SIR TOBY.

Nay, if you be an undertaker, I am for you.

[They draw]

Enter OFFICERS

FABIAN.

O good Sir Toby, hold! Here come the officers.

SIR TOBY.

[To ANTONIO] I'll be with you anon.

VIOLA.

Pray, sir, put your sword up, if you please.

AGUECHEEK.

Marry, will I, sir; and for that I promis'd you,

I'll be

as good as my word. He will bear you easily and reins well.

FIRST OFFICER.

This is the man; do thy office.

SECOND OFFICER.

Antonio, I arrest thee at the suit

Of Count Orsino.

ANTONIO.

You do mistake me, sir.

FIRST OFFICER.

No, sir, no jot; I know your favour well,

Though now you have no sea-cap on your head.

Take him away; he knows I know him well.

ANTONIO.

I Must obey. *[To VIOLA]* This comes with seeking you;

But there's no remedy; I shall answer it.

What will you do, now my necessity
Makes me to ask you for my purse? It grieves me
Much more for what I cannot do for you
Than what befalls myself. You stand amaz'd;
But be of comfort.

SECOND OFFICER.
Come, sir, away.

ANTONIO.

I must entreat of you some of that money.

VIOLA.
What money, sir?
For the fair kindness you have show'd me here,
And part being prompted by your present trouble,
Out of my lean and low ability
I'll lend you something. My having is not much;
I'll make division of my present with you;
Hold, there's half my coffer.

ANTONIO.

Will you deny me now?
Is't possible that my deserts to you
Can lack persuasion? Do not tempt my misery,
Lest that it make me so unsound a man
As to upbraid you with those kindnesses
That I have done for you.

VIOLA.
I know of none,
Nor know I you by voice or any feature.
I hate ingratitude more in a man
Than lying, vainness, babbling drunkenness,
Or any taint of vice whose strong corruption
Inhabits our frail blood.

ANTONIO.

O heavens themselves!

SECOND OFFICER.

Come, sir, I pray you go.

ANTONIO.

Let me speak a little. This youth that you see here

I snatch'd one half out of the jaws of death,

Reliev'd him with such sanctity of love,

And to his image, which methought did promise

Most venerable worth, did I devotion.

FIRST OFFICER.

What's that to us? The time goes by; away.

ANTONIO.

But, O, how vile an idol proves this god!

Thou hast, Sebastian, done good feature shame.

In nature there's no blemish but the mind:

None can be call'd deform'd but the unkind.

Virtue is beauty; but the beauteous evil

Are empty trunks, o'erflourish'd by the devil.

FIRST OFFICER.

The man grows mad. Away with him.

Come, come, sir.

ANTONIO.

Lead me on. *Exit* with OFFICERS

VIOLA.

Methinks his words do from such passion fly

That he believes himself; so do not I.

Prove true, imagination, O, prove true,

That I, dear brother, be now ta'en for you!

SIR TOBY.

Come hither, knight; come hither, Fabian; we'll whisper

o'er a couplet or two of most sage saws.

VIOLA.

He nam'd Sebastian. I my brother know
Yet living in my glass; even such and so
In favour was my brother; and he went
Still in this fashion, colour, ornament,
For him I imitate. O, if it prove,
Tempests are kind, and salt waves fresh in love! *Exit*

SIR TOBY. A very dishonest paltry boy, and more a coward than a hare. His dishonesty appears in leaving his friend here in necessity and denying him; and for his cowardship, ask Fabian.

FABIAN.

A coward, a most devout coward, religious in it.

AGUECHEEK.
'Slid, I'll after him again and beat him.

SIR TOBY.

Do; cuff him soundly, but never draw thy sword.

AGUECHEEK.

And I do not- *Exit*

FABIAN. Come, let's see the event.

SIR TOBY.

I dare lay any money 'twill be nothing yet.

Exeunt

ACT IV. SCENE I. Before OLIVIA'S house

Enter SEBASTIAN and CLOWN

CLOWN.

Will you make me believe that I am not sent for you?

SEBASTIAN.

Go to, go to, thou art a foolish fellow; let me be clear of thee.

CLOWN.

Well held out, i' faith! No, I do not know you; nor I am not
sent to you by my lady, to bid you come speak with her; nor your
name is not Master Cesario; nor this is not my nose neither.

Nothing that is so is so.

SEBASTIAN.

I prithee vent thy folly somewhere else.

Thou know'st not me.

CLOWN.

Vent my folly! He has heard that word of some great man, and
now applies it to a fool. Vent my folly! I am afraid this great
lubber, the world, will prove a cockney. I prithee now, ungird
thy strangeness, and tell me what I shall vent to my lady.
Shall
I vent to her that thou art coming?

SEBASTIAN.

I prithee, foolish Greek, depart from me;

There's money for thee; if you tarry longer

I shall give worse payment.

CLOWN.

By my troth, thou hast an open hand. These wise men that

give fools money get themselves a good report after fourteen years' purchase.

Enter SIR ANDREW, SIR TOBY, and FABIAN

AGUECHEEK.

Now, sir, have I met you again?

[Striking SEBASTIAN] There's for you.

SEBASTIAN.

Why, there's for thee, and there, and there.

Are all the people mad?

SIR TOBY.

Hold, sir, or I'll throw your dagger o'er the house.

[Holding SEBASTIAN]

CLOWN.

This will I tell my lady straight. I would not be in some of
your coats for two-pence. *Exit*

SIR TOBY. Come on, sir; hold.

AGUECHEEK.

Nay, let him alone. I'll go another way to work with
him; I'll have an action of battery against him, if there be any
law in Illyria; though I struck him first, yet it's no matter for that.

SEBASTIAN.

Let go thy hand.

SIR TOBY.

Come, sir, I will not let you go. Come, my young soldier, put up your iron; you are well flesh'd. Come on.

SEBASTIAN.

I will be free from thee. What wouldst thou now?
If thou dar'st tempt me further, draw thy sword. *[Draws]*

SIR TOBY.
What, what? Nay, then I must have an ounce or two of this
malapert blood from you. *[Draws]*

Enter OLIVIA

OLIVIA.
Hold, Toby; on thy life, I charge thee hold.

SIR TOBY.

Madam!

OLIVIA.

Will it be ever thus? Ungracious wretch,

Fit for the mountains and the barbarous caves,

Where manners ne'er were preach'd! Out of my sight!

Be not offended, dear Cesario-

Rudesby, be gone!

Exeunt SIR TOBY, SIR ANDREW, and FABIAN

I prithee, gentle friend,

Let thy fair wisdom, not thy passion, sway

In this uncivil and unjust extent

Against thy peace. Go with me to my house,

And hear thou there how many fruitless pranks

This ruffian hath botch'd up, that thou thereby

Mayst smile at this. Thou shalt not choose but go;

Do not deny. Beshrew his soul for me!

He started one poor heart of mine in thee.

SEBASTIAN.

What relish is in this? How runs the stream?

Or I am mad, or else this is a dream.

Let fancy still my sense in Lethe steep;

If it be thus to dream, still let me sleep!

OLIVIA.

Nay, come, I prithee. Would thou'dst be rul'd by me!

SEBASTIAN.

Madam, I will.

OLIVIA.

O, say so, and so be! *Exeunt*

SCENE II. OLIVIA'S house

Enter MARIA and CLOWN

MARIA.

Nay, I prithee, put on this gown and this beard; make him
believe thou art Sir Topas the curate; do it quickly. I'll call
Sir Toby the whilst. *Exit*

CLOWN. Well, I'll put it on, and I will dissemble myself in't; and

I would I were the first that ever dissembled in such a gown.

I am not tall enough to become the function well nor lean enough to be thought a good student; but to be said an honest man and a good housekeeper goes as fairly as to say a careful man and a great scholar. The competitors enter.

Enter SIR TOBY and MARIA

SIR TOBY.

Jove bless thee, Master Parson.

CLOWN.

Bonos dies, Sir Toby; for as the old hermit of Prague, that never saw pen and ink, very wittily said to niece of King Gorboduc 'That that is is'; so I, being Master Parson, am Master Parson; for what is 'that' but that, and 'is' but is?

SIR TOBY.

To him, Sir Topas.

CLOWN.

What ho, I say! Peace in this prison!

SIR TOBY.

The knave counterfeits well; a good knave.

MALVOLIO.

[Within] Who calls there?

CLOWN.

Sir Topas the curate, who comes to visit Malvolio the lunatic.

MALVOLIO.

Sir Topas, Sir Topas, good Sir Topas, go to my lady.

CLOWN.

Out, hyperbolical fiend! How vexest thou this man!

Talkest thou nothing but of ladies?

SIR TOBY.

Well said, Master Parson.

MALVOLIO.

Sir Topas, never was man thus wronged. Good Sir Topas, do not think I am mad; they have laid me here in hideous darkness.

CLOWN.

Fie, thou dishonest Satan! I call thee by the most modest terms, for I am one of those gentle ones that will use the devil himself with courtesy. Say'st thou that house is dark?

MALVOLIO.

As hell, Sir Topas.

CLOWN.

Why, it hath bay windows transparent as barricadoes, and the clerestories toward the south north are as lustrous as ebony; and yet complainest thou of obstruction?

MALVOLIO.

I am not mad, Sir Topas. I say to you this house is dark.

CLOWN.

Madman, thou errest. I say there is no darkness but
ignorance; in which thou art more puzzled than the Egyptians in their fog.

MALVOLIO.

I say this house is as dark as ignorance, though
ignorance were as dark as hell; and I say there was never man
thus abus'd. I am no more mad than you are; make the trial of it
in any constant question.

CLOWN.

What is the opinion of Pythagoras concerning wild fowl?

MALVOLIO.

That the soul of our grandam might haply inhabit a bird.

CLOWN.

What think'st thou of his opinion?

MALVOLIO.
I think nobly of the soul, and no way approve his opinion.

CLOWN.
Fare thee well. Remain thou still in darkness: thou shalt
hold th' opinion of Pythagoras ere I will allow of thy wits; and
fear to kill a woodcock, lest thou dispossess the soul of thy
grandam. Fare thee well.

MALVOLIO.

Sir Topas, Sir Topas!

SIR TOBY.
My most exquisite Sir Topas!

CLOWN.

Nay, I am for all waters.

MARIA.

Thou mightst have done this without thy beard and gown:

he sees thee not.

SIR TOBY.

To him in thine own voice, and bring me word how thou find'st him. I would we were well rid of this knavery. If he may be conveniently deliver'd, I would he were; for I am now so far in offence with my niece that I cannot pursue with any safety this sport to the upshot. Come by and by to my chamber.

Exit with MARIA

CLOWN.

[Sings] Hey, Robin, jolly Robin,
Tell me how thy lady does.

MALVOLIO.

Fool!

CLOWN.

[Sings] My lady is unkind, perdy.

MALVOLIO.

Fool!

CLOWN.

[Sings] Alas, why is she so?

MALVOLIO.

Fool I say!

CLOWN.

[Sings] She loves another-Who calls, ha?

MALVOLIO.

Good fool, as ever thou wilt deserve well at my hand,
help me to a candle, and pen, ink, and paper; as I am a
gentleman, I will live to be thankful to thee for't.

CLOWN.

Master Malvolio?

MALVOLIO.
Ay, good fool.

CLOWN.

Alas, sir, how fell you besides your five wits?

MALVOLIO.
Fool, there was never man so notoriously abus'd;
I am as well in my wits, fool, as thou art.

CLOWN.
But as well? Then you are mad indeed, if you be no better in

your wits than a fool.

MALVOLIO.

They have here propertied me; keep me in darkness, send

ministers to me, asses, and do all they can to face me out of my wits.

CLOWN.

Advise you what. you say: the minister is here.

[Speaking as SIR TOPAS] Malvolio, thy wits the heavens restore!

Endeavour thyself to sleep, and leave thy vain bibble-babble.

MALVOLIO.

Sir Topas!

CLOWN.

Maintain no words with him, good fellow.- Who, I, sir?

Not

I, sir. God buy you, good Sir Topas.- Marry, amen.- I will

sir, I will.

MALVOLIO.

Fool, fool, fool, I say!

CLOWN.

Alas, sir, be patient. What say you, sir? I am shent for speaking to you.

MALVOLIO.

Good fool, help me to some light and some paper.

I tell thee I am as well in my wits as any man in Illyria.

CLOWN.

Well-a-day that you were, sir!

MALVOLIO.

By this hand, I am. Good fool, some ink, paper, and
light; and convey what I will set down to my lady. It shall
advantage thee more than ever the bearing of letter did.

CLOWN.

I will help you to't. But tell me true, are you not mad
indeed, or do you but counterfeit?

MALVOLIO.

Believe me, I am not; I tell thee true.

CLOWN.

Nay, I'll ne'er believe a madman till I see his brains.
I will fetch you light and paper and ink.

MALVOLIO.

Fool, I'll requite it in the highest degree; I prithe be gone.

CLOWN.

[Singing]
I am gone, sir,
And anon, sir,
I'll be with you again,

In a trice,

Like to the old Vice,

Your need to sustain;

Who with dagger of lath,

In his rage and his wrath,

Cries, Ah, ha! to the devil,

Like a mad lad,

Pare thy nails, dad.

Adieu, goodman devil. *Exit*

SCENE III. OLIVIA'S garden

Enter SEBASTIAN

SEBASTIAN.

This is the air; that is the glorious sun;

This pearl she gave me, I do feel't and see't;

And though 'tis wonder that enwraps me thus,

Yet 'tis not madness. Where's Antonio, then?

I could not find him at the Elephant;

Yet there he was; and there I found this credit,

That he did range the town to seek me out.

His counsel now might do me golden service;

For though my soul disputes well with my sense

That this may be some error, but no madness,

Yet doth this accident and flood of fortune

So far exceed all instance, all discourse,

That I am ready to distrust mine eyes

And wrangle with my reason, that persuades me

To any other trust but that I am mad,

Or else the lady's mad; yet if 'twere so,

She could not sway her house, command her followers,

Take and give back affairs and their dispatch

With such a smooth, discreet, and stable bearing,

As I perceive she does. There's something in't

That is deceivable. But here the lady comes.

Enter OLIVIA and PRIEST

OLIVIA.

Blame not this haste of mine. If you mean well,

Now go with me and with this holy man

Into the chantry by; there, before him

And underneath that consecrated roof,
Plight me the fun assurance of your faith,
That my most jealous and too doubtful soul
May live at peace. He shall conceal it
Whiles you are willing it shall come to note,
What time we will our celebration keep
According to my birth. What do you say?

SEBASTIAN.
I'll follow this good man, and go with you;
And, having sworn truth, ever will be true.

OLIVIA.
Then lead the way, good father; and heavens so shine
That they may fairly note this act of mine! *Exeunt*

ACT V. SCENE I. Before OLIVIA's house

Enter CLOWN and FABIAN

FABIAN.

Now, as thou lov'st me, let me see his letter.

CLOWN.

Good Master Fabian, grant me another request.

FABIAN.

Anything.

CLOWN.

Do not desire to see this letter.

FABIAN.

This is to give a dog, and in recompense desire my dog again.

Enter DUKE, VIOLA, CURIO, and LORDS

DUKE.

Belong you to the Lady Olivia, friends?

CLOWN.

Ay, sir, we are some of her trappings.

DUKE.

I know thee well. How dost thou, my good fellow?

CLOWN.

Truly, sir, the better for my foes and the worse for my friends.

DUKE.

Just the contrary: the better for thy friends.

CLOWN.

No, sir, the worse.

DUKE.

How can that be?

CLOWN.

Marry, sir, they praise me and make an ass of me. Now my
foes tell me plainly I am an ass; so that by my foes, sir, I
profit in the knowledge of myself, and by my friends I am abused;
so that, conclusions to be as kisses, if your four negatives make
your two affirmatives, why then, the worse for my friends, and
the better for my foes.

DUKE.

Why, this is excellent.

CLOWN.

By my troth, sir, no; though it please you to be one of my friends.

DUKE.

Thou shalt not be the worse for me. There's gold.

CLOWN.

But that it would be double-dealing, sir, I would you could make it another.

DUKE.

O, you give me ill counsel.

CLOWN.

Put your grace in your pocket, sir, for this once, and let

your flesh and blood obey it.

DUKE.

Well, I will be so much a sinner to be a double-dealer.

There's another.

CLOWN.

Primo, secundo, tertio, is a good play; and the old saying is 'The third pays for all.' The triplex, sir, is a good tripping

measure; or the bells of Saint Bennet, sir, may put you in

mind-

one, two, three.

DUKE.

You can fool no more money out of me at this throw; if you

will let your lady know I am here to speak with her, and bring

her along with you, it may awake my bounty further.

CLOWN.

Marry, sir, lullaby to your bounty till I come again. I

go,

sir; but I would not have you to think that my desire of having

is the sin of covetousness. But, as you say, sir, let your bounty

take a nap; I will awake it anon. *Exit*

Enter ANTONIO and OFFICERS

VIOLA.

Here comes the man, sir, that did rescue me.

DUKE.

That face of his I do remember well;

Yet when I saw it last it was besmear'd

As black as Vulcan in the smoke of war.

A baubling vessel was he captain of,

For shallow draught and bulk unprizable,

With which such scathful grapple did he make

With the most noble bottom of our fleet

That very envy and the tongue of los

Cried fame and honour on him. What's the matter?

FIRST OFFICER.

Orsino, this is that Antonio

That took the Phoenix and her fraught from Candy;

And this is he that did the Tiger board

When your young nephew Titus lost his leg.

Here in the streets, desperate of shame and state,

In private brabble did we apprehend him.

VIOLA.

He did me kindness, sir; drew on my side;

But in conclusion put strange speech upon me.

I know not what 'twas but distraction.

DUKE.

Notable pirate, thou salt-water thief!

What foolish boldness brought thee to their mercies

Whom thou, in terms so bloody and so dear,

Hast made thine enemies?

ANTONIO.

Orsino, noble sir,

Be pleas'd that I shake off these names you give me:

Antonio never yet was thief or pirate,

Though I confess, on base and ground enough,

Orsino's enemy. A witchcraft drew me hither:

That most ingrateful boy there by your side

From the rude sea's enrag'd and foamy mouth

Did I redeem; a wreck past hope he was.

His life I gave him, and did thereto ad

My love without retention or restraint,

All his in dedication; for his sake,

Did I expose myself, pure for his love,

Into the danger of this adverse town;

Drew to defend him when he was beset;

Where being apprehended, his false cunning,

Not meaning to partake with me in danger,

Taught him to face me out of his acquaintance,

And grew a twenty years removed thing

While one would wink; denied me mine own purse,

Which I had recommended to his use

Not half an hour before.

VIOLA.

How can this be?

DUKE.

When came he to this town?

ANTONIO.

To-day, my lord; and for three months before,

No int'rim, not a minute's vacancy,

Both day and night did we keep company.

Enter OLIVIA and ATTENDANTS

DUKE.

Here comes the Countess; now heaven walks on earth.

But for thee, fellow-fellow, thy words are madness.

Three months this youth hath tended upon me-

But more of that anon. Take him aside.

OLIVIA.

What would my lord, but that he may not have,

Wherein Olivia may seem serviceable?

Cesario, you do not keep promise with me.

VIOLA.

Madam?

DUKE.

Gracious Olivia-

OLIVIA.

What do you say, Cesario? Good my lord-

VIOLA.

My lord would speak; my duty hushes me.

OLIVIA.

If it be aught to the old tune, my lord,
It is as fat and fulsome to mine ear
As howling after music.

DUKE.

Still so cruel?

OLIVIA.

Still so constant, lord.

DUKE.

What, to perverseness? You uncivil lady,

To whose ingrate and unauspicious altars

My soul the faithfull'st off'rings hath breath'd out

That e'er devotion tender'd! What shall I do?

OLIVIA.

Even what it please my lord, that shall become him.

DUKE.

Why should I not, had I the heart to do it,

Like to the Egyptian thief at point of death,

Kill what I love?- a savage jealousy

That sometime savours nobly. But hear me this:

Since you to non-regardance cast my faith,

And that I partly know the instrument

That screws me from my true place in your favour,

Live you the marble-breasted tyrant still;

But this your minion, whom I know you love,

And whom, by heaven I swear, I tender dearly,

Him will I tear out of that cruel eye
Where he sits crowned in his master's spite.

Come, boy, with me; my thoughts are ripe in mischief:
I'll sacrifice the lamb that I do love
To spite a raven's heart within a dove.

VIOLA.
And I, most jocund, apt, and willingly,
To do you rest, a thousand deaths would die.

OLIVIA.
Where goes Cesario?

VIOLA.
After him I love
More than I love these eyes, more than my life,
More, by all mores, than e'er I shall love wife.
If I do feign, you witnesses above
Punish my life for tainting of my love!

OLIVIA.

Ay me, detested! How am I beguil'd!

VIOLA.

Who does beguile you? Who does do you wrong?

OLIVIA.

Hast thou forgot thyself? Is it so long?

Call forth the holy father. *Exit* an ATTENDANT

DUKE.

Come, away!

OLIVIA.

Whither, my lord? Cesario, husband, stay.

DUKE.

Husband?

OLIVIA.

Ay, husband; can he that deny?

DUKE.

Her husband, sirrah?

VIOLA.

No, my lord, not I.

OLIVIA.

Alas, it is the baseness of thy fear

That makes thee strangle thy propriety.

Fear not, Cesario, take thy fortunes up;

Be that thou know'st thou art, and then thou art

As great as that thou fear'st.

Enter PRIEST

O, welcome, father!

Father, I charge thee, by thy reverence,

Here to unfold-though lately we intended
To keep in darkness what occasion now
Reveals before 'tis ripe-what thou dost know
Hath newly pass'd between this youth and me.

PRIEST.
A contract of eternal bond of love,
Confirm'd by mutual joinder of your hands,
Attested by the holy close of lips,
Strength'ned by interchangement of your rings;
And all the ceremony of this compact
Seal'd in my function, by my testimony;
Since when, my watch hath told me, toward my grave,
I have travell'd but two hours.

DUKE.
O thou dissembling cub! What wilt thou be,
When time hath sow'd a grizzle on thy case?
Or will not else thy craft so quickly grow
That thine own trip shall be thine overthrow?
Farewell, and take her; but direct thy feet

Where thou and I henceforth may never meet.

VIOLA.

My lord, I do protest-

OLIVIA.

O, do not swear!

Hold little faith, though thou has too much fear.

Enter SIR ANDREW

AGUECHEEK.

For the love of God, a surgeon!

Send one presently to Sir Toby.

OLIVIA.

What's the matter?

AGUECHEEK.

Has broke my head across, and has given Sir Toby a

bloody coxcomb too. For the love of God, your help! I had rather

than forty pound I were at home.

OLIVIA.

Who has done this, Sir Andrew?

AGUECHEEK.

The Count's gentleman, one Cesario. We took him for a

coward, but he's the very devil incardinate.

DUKE.

My gentleman, Cesario?

AGUECHEEK.

Od's lifelings, here he is! You broke my head for

nothing; and that that did, I was set on to do't by Sir Toby.

VIOLA.

Why do you speak to me? I never hurt you.

You drew your sword upon me without cause;

But I bespake you fair and hurt you not.

Enter SIR TOBY and CLOWN

AGUECHEEK.

If a bloody coxcomb be a hurt, you have hurt me; I think

you set nothing by a bloody coxcomb. Here comes Sir Toby halting;

you shall hear more; but if he had not been in drink, he would

have tickl'd you othergates than he did.

DUKE.

How now, gentleman? How is't with you?

SIR TOBY.

That's all one; has hurt me, and there's th' end on't.

Sot, didst see Dick Surgeon, sot?

CLOWN.

O, he's drunk, Sir Toby, an hour agone; his eyes were set at eight i' th' morning.

SIR TOBY.

Then he's a rogue and a passy measures pavin. I hate a drunken rogue.

OLIVIA.
Away with him. Who hath made this havoc with them?

AGUECHEEK.

I'll help you, Sir Toby, because we'll be dress'd together.

SIR TOBY.
Will you help-an ass-head and a coxcomb and a knave, a
thin fac'd knave, a gull?

OLIVIA.
Get him to bed, and let his hurt be look'd to.
Exeunt CLOWN, FABIAN, SIR TOBY, and SIR ANDREW

Enter SEBASTIAN

SEBASTIAN.

I am sorry, madam, I have hurt your kinsman;
But, had it been the brother of my blood,
I must have done no less with wit and safety.
You throw a strange regard upon me, and by that
I do perceive it hath offended you.
Pardon me, sweet one, even for the vows
We made each other but so late ago.

DUKE.

One face, one voice, one habit, and two persons!
A natural perspective, that is and is not.

SEBASTIAN.

Antonio, O my dear Antonio!
How have the hours rack'd and tortur'd me
Since I have lost thee!

ANTONIO.

Sebastian are you?

SEBASTIAN.

Fear'st thou that, Antonio?

ANTONIO.

How have you made division of yourself?

An apple cleft in two is not more twin

Than these two creatures. Which is Sebastian?

OLIVIA.

Most wonderful!

SEBASTIAN.

Do I stand there? I never had a brother;

Nor can there be that deity in my nature

Of here and everywhere. I had a sister

Whom the blind waves and surges have devour'd.
Of charity, what kin are you to me?

What countryman, what name, what parentage?

VIOLA.
Of Messaline; Sebastian was my father.
Such a Sebastian was my brother too;
So went he suited to his watery tomb;
If spirits can assume both form and suit,
You come to fright us.

SEBASTIAN.
A spirit I am indeed,
But am in that dimension grossly clad
Which from the womb I did participate.
Were you a woman, as the rest goes even,
I should my tears let fall upon your cheek,
And say 'Thrice welcome, drowned Viola!'

VIOLA.

My father had a mole upon his brow.

SEBASTIAN.

And so had mine.

VIOLA.

And died that day when Viola from her birth

Had numb'red thirteen years.

SEBASTIAN.

O, that record is lively in my soul!

He finished indeed his mortal act

That day that made my sister thirteen years.

VIOLA.

If nothing lets to make us happy both

But this my masculine usurp'd attire,

Do not embrace me till each circumstance

Of place, time, fortune, do cohere and jump

That I am Viola; which to confirm,

I'll bring you to a captain in this town,

Where lie my maiden weeds; by whose gentle help

I was preserv'd to serve this noble Count.

All the occurrence of my fortune since

Hath been between this lady and this lord.

SEBASTIAN.

[To OLIVIA] So Comes it, lady, you have been mistook;

But nature to her bias drew in that.

You would have been contracted to a maid;

Nor are you therein, by my life, deceiv'd;

You are betroth'd both to a maid and man.

DUKE.

Be not amaz'd; right noble is his blood.

If this be so, as yet the glass seems true,

I shall have share in this most happy wreck.

[To VIOLA] Boy, thou hast said to me a thousand times

Thou never shouldst love woman like to me.

VIOLA.

And all those sayings will I overswear;

And all those swearings keep as true in soul

As doth that orbed continent the fire

That severs day from night.

DUKE.

Give me thy hand;

And let me see thee in thy woman's weeds.

VIOLA.

The captain that did bring me first on shore

Hath my maid's garments. He, upon some action,

Is now in durance, at Malvolio's suit,

A gentleman and follower of my lady's.

OLIVIA.

He shall enlarge him. Fetch Malvolio hither;

And yet, alas, now I remember me,

They say, poor gentleman, he's much distract.

Re-enter CLOWN, with a letter, and FABIAN

A most extracting frenzy of mine own
From my remembrance clearly banish'd his.

How does he, sirrah?

CLOWN.

Truly, madam, he holds Belzebub at the stave's end as well as a man in his case may do. Has here writ a letter to you; I should have given 't you to-day morning, but as a madman's epistles are no gospels, so it skills not much when they are deliver'd.

OLIVIA.

Open't, and read it.

CLOWN.

Look then to be well edified when the fool delivers the madman. *[Reads madly]* 'By the Lord, madam-'

OLIVIA.

How now! Art thou mad?

CLOWN.

No, madam, I do but read madness. An your ladyship will have it as it ought to be, you must allow vox.

OLIVIA.

Prithee read i' thy right wits.

CLOWN.

So I do, madonna; but to read his right wits is to read thus; therefore perpend, my Princess, and give ear.

OLIVIA.

[To FABIAN] Read it you, sirrah.

FABIAN.

[Reads] 'By the Lord, madam, you wrong me, and the world shall know it. Though you have put me into darkness and given your drunken cousin rule over me, yet have I the benefit of my senses as well as your ladyship. I have your own letter that

induced me to the semblance I put on, with the which I doubt not

but to do myself much right or you much shame. Think of me as you

please. I leave my duty a little unthought of, and speak out of my injury.

THE MADLY-US'D MALVOLIO'

OLIVIA.

Did he write this?

CLOWN.

Ay, Madam.

DUKE.

This savours not much of distraction.

OLIVIA.

See him deliver'd, Fabian; bring him hither.

Exit FABIAN

My lord, so please you, these things further thought on,
To think me as well a sister as a wife,
One day shall crown th' alliance on't, so please you,
Here at my house, and at my proper cost.

DUKE.

Madam, I am most apt t' embrace your offer.

[To VIOLA] Your master quits you; and, for your service done him,
So much against the mettle of your sex,
So far beneath your soft and tender breeding,
And since you call'd me master for so long,
Here is my hand; you shall from this time be
You master's mistress.

OLIVIA.

A sister! You are she.

Re-enter FABIAN, with MALVOLIO

DUKE.

Is this the madman?

OLIVIA.

Ay, my lord, this same.

How now, Malvolio!

MALVOLIO.

Madam, you have done me wrong,

Notorious wrong.

OLIVIA.

Have I, Malvolio? No.

MALVOLIO.

Lady, you have. Pray you peruse that letter.

You must not now deny it is your hand;

Write from it if you can, in hand or phrase;

Or say 'tis not your seal, not your invention;

You can say none of this. Well, grant it then, And tell me, in the modesty of honour,

Why you have given me such clear lights of favour,

Bade me come smiling and cross-garter'd to you,

To put on yellow stockings, and to frown

Upon Sir Toby and the lighter people;

And, acting this in an obedient hope,

Why have you suffer'd me to be imprison'd,

Kept in a dark house, visited by the priest,

And made the most notorious geck and gul

That e'er invention play'd on? Tell me why.

OLIVIA.

Alas, Malvolio, this is not my writing,

Though, I confess, much like the character;

But out of question 'tis Maria's hand.

And now I do bethink me, it was she

First told me thou wast mad; then cam'st in smiling,

And in such forms which here were presuppos'd

Upon thee in the letter. Prithee, be content;

This practice hath most shrewdly pass'd upon thee,

But, when we know the grounds and authors of it,

Thou shalt be both the plaintiff and the judge
Of thine own cause.

FABIAN.
Good madam, hear me speak,
And let no quarrel nor no brawl to come
Taint the condition of this present hour,
Which I have wond'red at. In hope it shall not,
Most freely I confess myself and Toby
Set this device against Malvolio here,
Upon some stubborn and uncourteous parts
We had conceiv'd against him. Maria writ
The letter, at Sir Toby's great importance,
In recompense whereof he hath married her.
How with a sportful malice it was follow'd
May rather pluck on laughter than revenge,
If that the injuries be justly weigh'd
That have on both sides pass'd.

OLIVIA.
Alas, poor fool, how have they baffl'd thee!

CLOWN.

Why, 'Some are born great, some achieve greatness, and some
have greatness thrown upon them.' I was one, sir, in this
interlude-one Sir Topas, sir; but that's all one. 'By the Lord,
fool, I am not mad!' But do you remember- 'Madam, why laugh you
at such a barren rascal? An you smile not, he's gagg'd'? And thus
the whirligig of time brings in his revenges.

MALVOLIO.

I'll be reveng'd on the whole pack of you.

Exit

OLIVIA. He hath been most notoriously abus'd.

DUKE.

Pursue him, and entreat him to a peace;
He hath not told us of the captain yet.
When that is known, and golden time convents,
A solemn combination shall be made

Of our dear souls. Meantime, sweet sister,

We will not part from hence. Cesario, come;

For so you shall be while you are a man;

But when in other habits you are seen,

Orsino's mistress, and his fancy's queen.

Exeunt all but the CLOWN

CLOWN sings

When that I was and a little tiny boy,

With hey, ho, the wind and the rain,

A foolish thing was but a toy,

For the rain it raineth every day.

But when I came to man's estate,

With hey, ho, the wind and the rain,

'Gainst knaves and thieves men shut their gate,

For the rain it raineth every day.

But when I came, alas! to wive,

With hey, ho, the wind and the rain,

By swaggering could I never thrive,

For the rain it raineth every day.

But when I came unto my beds,

With hey, ho, the wind and the rain,

With toss-pots still had drunken heads,

For the rain it raineth every day.

A great while ago the world begun,

With hey, ho, the wind and the rain,

But that's all one, our play is done,

And we'll strive to please you every day.

Exit

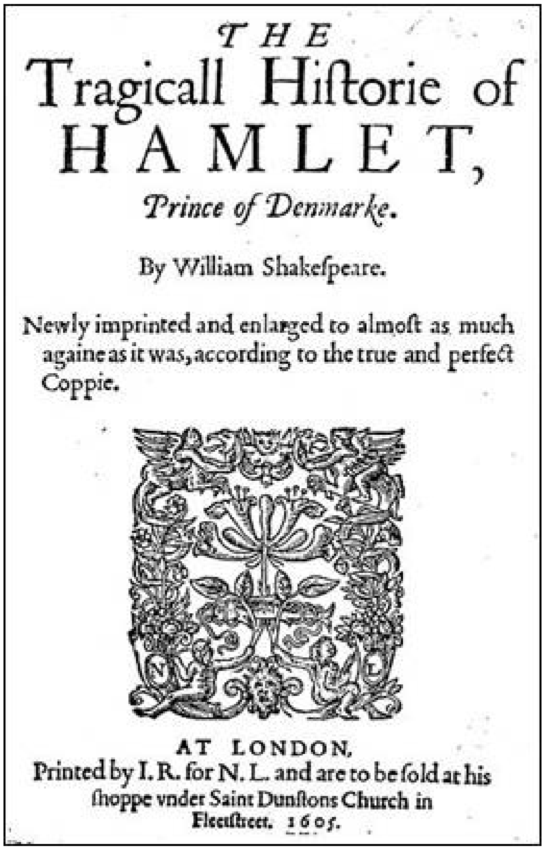
HAMLET

This famous tragedy was written between 1599 and 1601 and is set in the Kingdom of Denmark, recounting how Prince Hamlet exacts revenge on his uncle Claudius for murdering his father, the previous King. The play vividly deals with many forms of madness and explores themes of treachery, revenge, incest and moral corruption, to name but a few.

Shakespeare based *Hamlet* on the legend of Amleth, preserved by 13th-century chronicler Saxo Grammaticus in his *Gesta Danorum* as subsequently retold by 16th-century scholar François de Belleforest. He may have also drawn on an earlier Elizabethan play known today as the *Ur-Hamlet* . The title role was likely created for Richard Burbage, the leading tragedian of Shakespeare's time. In the four hundred years since, it has been performed by highly acclaimed actors and actresses from each successive age. It is considered by many actors to be the most challenging role to perform, the achievement of which could be called the pinnacle of an actor’s career.

Hamlet is Shakespeare's longest play and regarded as one of the most powerful and influential tragedies in the English language. The immortal line “To be or not to be”, as Hamlet considers suicide, has leant to the play’s immense fame. The story has inspired countless film, TV and operatic versions, influencing writers of many nations over the centuries.

One of Shakespeare's main source texts for this play is available via this link .



THE
Tragicall Hiſtorie of
HAMLET,
Prince of Denmarke.

By William Shakeſpeare.

Newly imprinted and enlarged to almoſt as much
againe as it was, according to the true and perfect
Coppie.

AT LONDON,
Printed by I. R. for N. L. and are to be ſold at his
ſhoppe vnder Saint Dunſtons Church in
Fleetſtreet. 1605.

Title page of the 1605 Quarto

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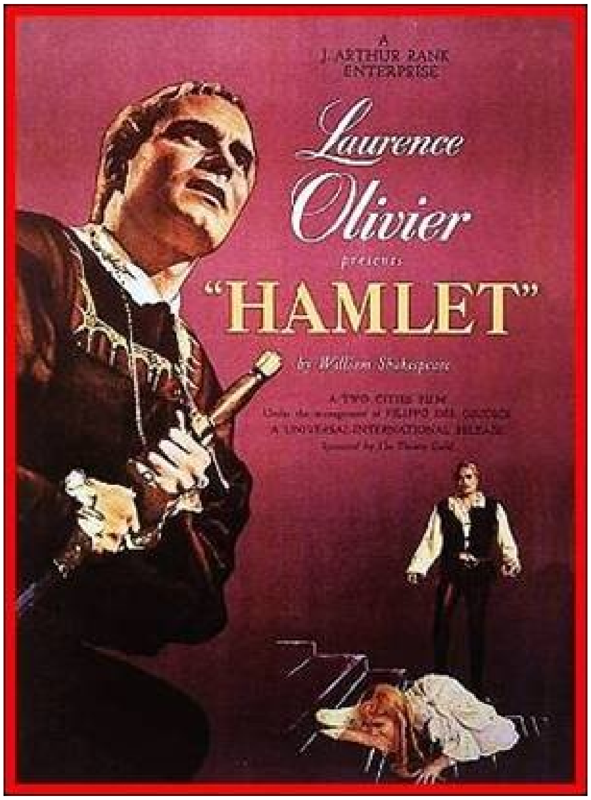
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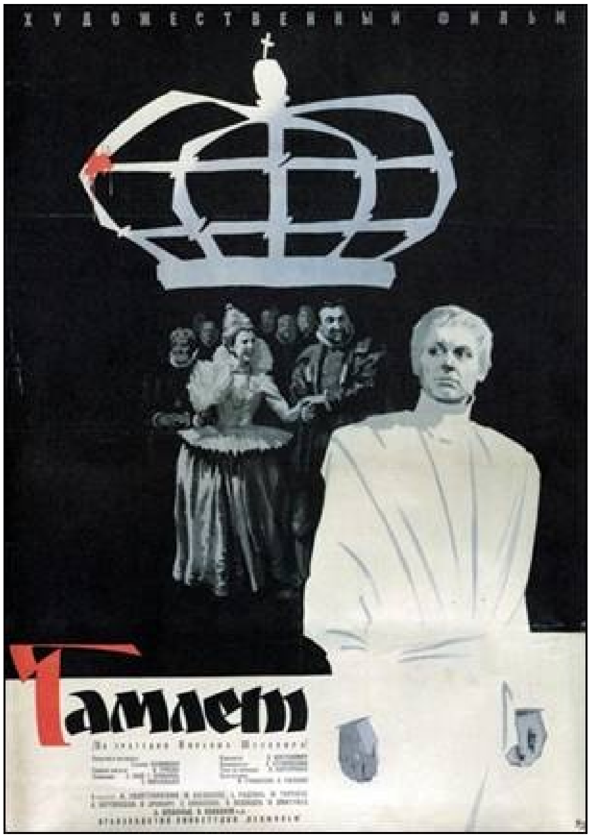
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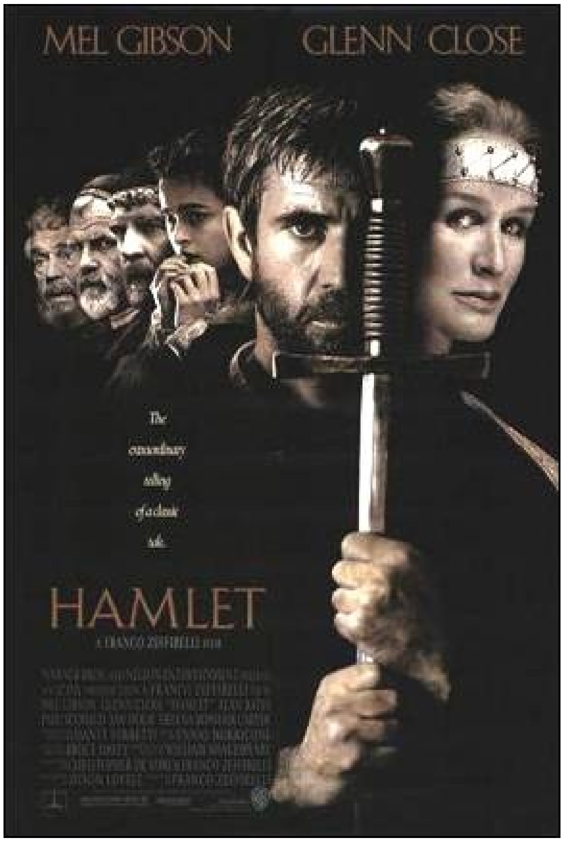
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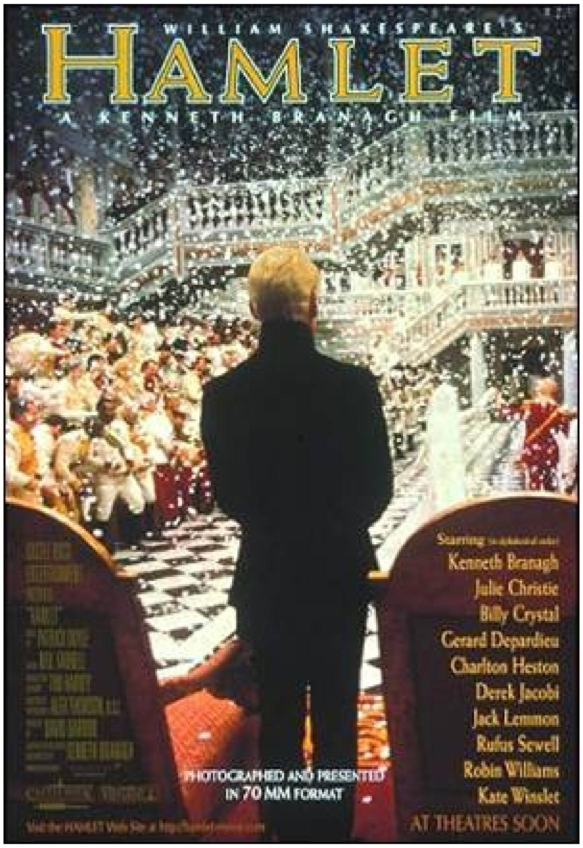

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DRAMATIS PERSONAE

Claudius, King of Denmark.

Marcellus, Officer.

Hamlet, son to the former, and nephew to the present king.

Polonius, Lord Chamberlain.

Horatio, friend to Hamlet.

Laertes, son to Polonius.

Voltemand, courtier.

Cornelius, courtier.

Rosencrantz, courtier.

Guildenstern, courtier.

Osric, courtier.

A Gentleman, courtier.

A Priest.

Marcellus, officer.

Bernardo, officer.

Francisco, a soldier

Reynaldo, servant to Polonius.

Players.

Two Clowns, gravediggers.

Fortinbras, Prince of Norway.

A Norwegian Captain.

English Ambassadors.

Getrude, Queen of Denmark, mother to Hamlet.

Ophelia, daughter to Polonius.

Ghost of Hamlet's Father.

Lords, ladies, Officers, Soldiers, Sailors, Messengers,

Attendants.

SCENE.- Elsinore, Denmark

ACT I. Scene I. Elsinore . A platform before the Castle.

Enter two Sentinels-*[first,]* Francisco, [who paces up and down at his post; then] Bernardo, *[who approaches him]* .

Ber. Who's there.?

Fran. Nay, answer me. Stand and unfold yourself.

Ber. Long live the King!

Fran. Bernardo?

Ber. He.

Fran. You come most carefully upon your hour.

Ber. 'Tis now struck twelve. Get thee to bed, Francisco.

Fran. For this relief much thanks. 'Tis bitter cold,
And I am sick at heart.

Ber. Have you had quiet guard?

Fran. Not a mouse stirring.

Ber. Well, good night.
If you do meet Horatio and Marcellus,
The rivals of my watch, bid them make haste.

Enter Horatio and Marcellus.

Fran. I think I hear them. Stand, ho! Who is there?

Hor. Friends to this ground.

Mar. And liegemen to the Dane.

Fran. Give you good night.

Mar. O, farewell, honest soldier.
Who hath reliev'd you?

Fran. Bernardo hath my place.
Give you good night. *Exit* .

Mar. Holla, Bernardo!

Ber. Say-
What, is Horatio there ?

Hor. A piece of him.

Ber. Welcome, Horatio. Welcome, good Marcellus.

Mar. What, has this thing appear'd again to-night?

Ber. I have seen nothing.

Mar. Horatio says 'tis but our fantasy,
And will not let belief take hold of him
Touching this dreaded sight, twice seen of us.
Therefore I have entreated him along,
With us to watch the minutes of this night,
That, if again this apparition come,
He may approve our eyes and speak to it.

Hor. Tush, tush, 'twill not appear.

Ber. Sit down awhile,
And let us once again assail your ears,

That are so fortified against our story,

What we two nights have seen.

Hor. Well, sit we down,

And let us hear Bernardo speak of this.

Ber. Last night of all,

When yond same star that's westward from the pole

Had made his course t' illume that part of heaven

Where now it burns, Marcellus and myself,

The bell then beating one-

Enter Ghost.

Mar. Peace! break thee off! Look where it comes again!

Ber. In the same figure, like the King that's dead.

Mar. Thou art a scholar; speak to it, Horatio.

Ber. Looks it not like the King? Mark it, Horatio.

Hor. Most like. It harrows me with fear and wonder.

Ber. It would be spoke to.

Mar. Question it, Horatio.

Hor. What art thou that usurp'st this time of night
Together with that fair and warlike form
In which the majesty of buried Denmark
Did sometimes march? By heaven I charge thee speak!

Mar. It is offended.

Ber. See, it stalks away!

Hor. Stay! Speak, speak! I charge thee speak!

Exit Ghost.

Mar. 'Tis gone and will not answer.

Ber. How now, Horatio? You tremble and look pale.
Is not this something more than fantasy?

What think you on't?

Hor. Before my God, I might not this believe
Without the sensible and true avouch
Of mine own eyes.

Mar. Is it not like the King?

Hor. As thou art to thyself.
Such was the very armour he had on
When he th' ambitious Norway combated.
So frown'd he once when, in an angry parle,
He smote the sledded Polacks on the ice.
'Tis strange.

Mar. Thus twice before, and jump at this dead hour, With martial stalk hath he gone by our watch.

Hor. In what particular thought to work I know not;
But, in the gross and scope of my opinion,
This bodes some strange eruption to our state.

Mar. Good now, sit down, and tell me he that knows,
Why this same strict and most observant watch
So nightly toils the subject of the land,
And why such daily cast of brazen cannon
And foreign mart for implements of war;
Why such impress of shipwrights, whose sore task
Does not divide the Sunday from the week.
What might be toward, that this sweaty haste
Doth make the night joint-labourer with the day?
Who is't that can inform me?

Hor. That can I.
At least, the whisper goes so. Our last king,
Whose image even but now appear'd to us,
Was, as you know, by Fortinbras of Norway,

Thereto prick'd on by a most emulate pride,

Dar'd to the combat; in which our valiant Hamlet

(For so this side of our known world esteem'd him)

Did slay this Fortinbras; who, by a seal'd compact,

Well ratified by law and heraldry,

Did forfeit, with his life, all those his lands

Which he stood seiz'd of, to the conqueror;

Against the which a moiety competent

Was gaged by our king; which had return'd

To the inheritance of Fortinbras,

Had he been vanquisher, as, by the same comart

And carriage of the article design'd,

His fell to Hamlet. Now, sir, young Fortinbras,

Of unimproved mettle hot and full,

Hath in the skirts of Norway, here and there,

Shark'd up a list of lawless resolutes,

For food and diet, to some enterprise

That hath a stomach in't; which is no other,

As it doth well appear unto our state,

But to recover of us, by strong hand

And terms compulsatory, those foresaid lands

So by his father lost; and this, I take it,
Is the main motive of our preparations,
The source of this our watch, and the chief head
Of this post-haste and romage in the land.

Ber. I think it be no other but e'en so.
Well may it sort that this portentous figure
Comes armed through our watch, so like the King
That was and is the question of these wars.

Hor. A mote it is to trouble the mind's eye.
In the most high and palmy state of Rome,
A little ere the mightiest Julius fell,
The graves stood tenantless, and the sheeted dead
Did squeak and gibber in the Roman streets;
As stars with trains of fire, and dews of blood,
Disasters in the sun; and the moist star
Upon whose influence Neptune's empire stands
Was sick almost to doomsday with eclipse.
And even the like precurse of fierce events,
As harbingers preceding still the fates

And prologue to the omen coming on,

Have heaven and earth together demonstrated

Unto our climature and countrymen.

Enter Ghost again.

But soft! behold! Lo, where it comes again!

I'll cross it, though it blast me.- Stay illusion!

Spreads his arms.

If thou hast any sound, or use of voice,

Speak to me.

If there be any good thing to be done,

That may to thee do ease, and, race to me,

Speak to me.

If thou art privy to thy country's fate,

Which happily foreknowing may avoid,

O, speak!

Or if thou hast uphoarded in thy life

Extorted treasure in the womb of earth

(For which, they say, you spirits oft walk in death), The cock crows.

Speak of it! Stay, and speak!- Stop it, Marcellus!

Mar. Shall I strike at it with my partisan?

Hor. Do, if it will not stand.

Ber. 'Tis here!

Hor. 'Tis here!

Mar. 'Tis gone!

Exit Ghost.

We do it wrong, being so majestical,
To offer it the show of violence;
For it is as the air, invulnerable,
And our vain blows malicious mockery.

Ber. It was about to speak, when the cock crew.

Hor. And then it started, like a guilty thing
Upon a fearful summons. I have heard
The cock, that is the trumpet to the morn,
Doth with his lofty and shrill-sounding throat
Awake the god of day; and at his warning,
Whether in sea or fire, in earth or air,
Th' extravagant and erring spirit hies
To his confine; and of the truth herein
This present object made probation.

Mar. It faded on the crowing of the cock.
Some say that ever, 'gainst that season comes
Wherein our Saviour's birth is celebrated,
The bird of dawning singeth all night long;
And then, they say, no spirit dare stir abroad,
The nights are wholesome, then no planets strike,
No fairy takes, nor witch hath power to charm,
So hallow'd and so gracious is the time.

Hor. So have I heard and do in part believe it.

But look, the morn, in russet mantle clad,

Walks o'er the dew of yon high eastward hill.

Break we our watch up; and by my advice

Let us impart what we have seen to-night

Unto young Hamlet; for, upon my life,

This spirit, dumb to us, will speak to him.

Do you consent we shall acquaint him with it,

As needful in our loves, fitting our duty?

Let's do't, I pray; and I this morning know

Where we shall find him most conveniently. *Exeunt* .

Scene II. Elsinore . A room of state in the Castle.

Flourish. [*Enter* Claudius, King of Denmark, Gertrude the Queen,

Hamlet, Polonius, Laertes and his sister Ophelia, *[Voltemand, Cornelius,]*

Lords Attendant.

King. Though yet of Hamlet our dear brother's death

The memory be green, and that it us befitted

To bear our hearts in grief, and our whole kingdom

To be contracted in one brow of woe,

Yet so far hath discretion fought with nature

That we with wisest sorrow think on him

Together with remembrance of ourselves.

Therefore our sometime sister, now our queen,

Th' imperial jointress to this warlike state,

Have we, as 'twere with a defeated joy,

With an auspicious, and a dropping eye,

With mirth in funeral, and with dirge in marriage,

In equal scale weighing delight and dole,

Taken to wife; nor have we herein barr'd

Your better wisdoms, which have freely gone

With this affair along. For all, our thanks.

Now follows, that you know, young Fortinbras,

Holding a weak supposal of our worth,

Or thinking by our late dear brother's death

Our state to be disjoint and out of frame,

Colleagued with this dream of his advantage,

He hath not fail'd to pester us with message

Importing the surrender of those lands

Lost by his father, with all bands of law,

To our most valiant brother. So much for him.

Now for ourself and for this time of meeting.

Thus much the business is: we have here writ

To Norway, uncle of young Fortinbras,

Who, impotent and bedrid, scarcely hears

Of this his nephew's purpose, to suppress

His further gait herein, in that the levies,

The lists, and full proportions are all made

Out of his subject; and we here dispatch

You, good Cornelius, and you, Voltemand,

For bearers of this greeting to old Norway,

Giving to you no further personal power

To business with the King, more than the scope

Of these dilated articles allow. *[Gives a paper.]*

Farewell, and let your haste commend your duty.

Cor. , Volt. In that, and all things, will we show our duty.

King. We doubt it nothing. Heartily farewell.

Exeunt Voltemand and Cornelius.

And now, Laertes, what's the news with you?

You told us of some suit. What is't, Laertes?

You cannot speak of reason to the Dane
And lose your voice. What wouldst thou beg, Laertes,
That shall not be my offer, not thy asking?
The head is not more native to the heart,
The hand more instrumental to the mouth,
Than is the throne of Denmark to thy father.
What wouldst thou have, Laertes?

Laer. My dread lord,
Your leave and favour to return to France;
From whence though willingly I came to Denmark
To show my duty in your coronation,
Yet now I must confess, that duty done,
My thoughts and wishes bend again toward France
And bow them to your gracious leave and pardon.

King. Have you your father's leave? What says Polonius?

Pol. He hath, my lord, wrung from me my slow leave
By laboursome petition, and at last
Upon his will I seal'd my hard consent.

I do beseech you give him leave to go.

King. Take thy fair hour, Laertes. Time be thine,
And thy best graces spend it at thy will!
But now, my cousin Hamlet, and my son-

Ham. [aside] A little more than kin, and less than kind!

King. How is it that the clouds still hang on you?

Ham. Not so, my lord. I am too much i' th' sun.

Queen. Good Hamlet, cast thy nighted colour off,
And let thine eye look like a friend on Denmark.
Do not for ever with thy vailed lids
Seek for thy noble father in the dust.
Thou know'st 'tis common. All that lives must die,
Passing through nature to eternity.

Ham. Ay, madam, it is common.

Queen. If it be,

Why seems it so particular with thee?

Ham. Seems, madam, Nay, it is. I know not 'seems.'

'Tis not alone my inky cloak, good mother,

Nor customary suits of solemn black,

Nor windy suspiration of forc'd breath,

No, nor the fruitful river in the eye,

Nor the dejected havior of the visage,

Together with all forms, moods, shapes of grief,

'That can denote me truly. These indeed seem,

For they are actions that a man might play;

But I have that within which passeth show-

These but the trappings and the suits of woe.

King. 'Tis sweet and commendable in your nature, Hamlet,

To give these mourning duties to your father;

But you must know, your father lost a father;

That father lost, lost his, and the survivor bound

In filial obligation for some term

To do obsequious sorrow. But to persever

In obstinate condolement is a course
Of impious stubbornness. 'Tis unmanly grief;
It shows a will most incorrect to heaven,
A heart unfortified, a mind impatient,
An understanding simple and unschool'd;
For what we know must be, and is as common
As any the most vulgar thing to sense,
Why should we in our peevish opposition
Take it to heart? Fie! 'tis a fault to heaven,
A fault against the dead, a fault to nature,
To reason most absurd, whose common theme
Is death of fathers, and who still hath cried,
From the first corse till he that died to-day,
'This must be so.' We pray you throw to earth
This unprevailing woe, and think of us
As of a father; for let the world take note
You are the most immediate to our throne,
And with no less nobility of love
Than that which dearest father bears his son
Do I impart toward you. For your intent
In going back to school in Wittenberg,

It is most retrograde to our desire;
And we beseech you, bend you to remain
Here in the cheer and comfort of our eye,
Our chiefest courtier, cousin, and our son.

Queen. Let not thy mother lose her prayers, Hamlet.
I pray thee stay with us, go not to Wittenberg.

Ham. I shall in all my best obey you, madam.

King. Why, 'tis a loving and a fair reply.
Be as ourself in Denmark. Madam, come.
This gentle and unforc'd accord of Hamlet
Sits smiling to my heart; in grace whereof,
No jocund health that Denmark drinks to-day
But the great cannon to the clouds shall tell,
And the King's rouse the heaven shall bruit again,
Respeaking earthly thunder. Come away.
Flourish. Exeunt all but Hamlet.

Ham. O that this too too solid flesh would melt, Thaw, and resolve itself into a dew!

Or that the Everlasting had not fix'd

His canon 'gainst self-slaughter! O God! God!

How weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable

Seem to me all the uses of this world!

Fie on't! ah, fie! 'Tis an unweeded garden

That grows to seed; things rank and gross in nature

Possess it merely. That it should come to this!

But two months dead! Nay, not so much, not two.

So excellent a king, that was to this

Hyperion to a satyr; so loving to my mother

That he might not beteem the winds of heaven

Visit her face too roughly. Heaven and earth!

Must I remember? Why, she would hang on him

As if increase of appetite had grown

By what it fed on; and yet, within a month-

Let me not think on't! Frailty, thy name is woman!-

A little month, or ere those shoes were old

With which she followed my poor father's body

Like Niobe, all tears-why she, even she

(O God! a beast that wants discourse of reason

Would have mourn'd longer) married with my uncle;
My father's brother, but no more like my father
Than I to Hercules. Within a month,
Ere yet the salt of most unrighteous tears
Had left the flushing in her galled eyes,
She married. O, most wicked speed, to post
With such dexterity to incestuous sheets!
It is not, nor it cannot come to good.

But break my heart, for I must hold my tongue!

Enter Horatio, Marcellus, and Bernardo.

Hor. Hail to your lordship!

Ham. I am glad to see you well.
Horatio!- or I do forget myself.

Hor. The same, my lord, and your poor servant ever.

Ham. Sir, my good friend-I'll change that name with you.

And what make you from Wittenberg, Horatio?

Marcellus?

Mar. My good lord!

Ham. I am very glad to see you.- *[To Bernardo]* Good even, sir.-
But what, in faith, make you from Wittenberg?

Hor. A truant disposition, good my lord.

Ham. I would not hear your enemy say so,
Nor shall you do my ear that violence
To make it truster of your own report
Against yourself. I know you are no truant.

But what is your affair in Elsinore?
We'll teach you to drink deep ere you depart.

Hor. My lord, I came to see your father's funeral.

Ham. I prithee do not mock me, fellow student.
I think it was to see my mother's wedding.

Hor. Indeed, my lord, it followed hard upon.

Ham. Thrift, thrift, Horatio! The funeral bak'd meats
Did coldly furnish forth the marriage tables.
Would I had met my dearest foe in heaven
Or ever I had seen that day, Horatio!

My father-methinks I see my father.

Hor. O, where, my lord?

Ham. In my mind's eye, Horatio.

Hor. I saw him once. He was a goodly king.

Ham. He was a man, take him for all in all.
I shall not look upon his like again.

Hor. My lord, I think I saw him yesternight.

Ham. Saw? who?

Hor. My lord, the King your father.

Ham. The King my father?

Hor. Season your admiration for a while
With an attent ear, till I may deliver
Upon the witness of these gentlemen,
This marvel to you.

Ham. For God's love let me hear!

Hor. Two nights together had these gentlemen
(Marcellus and Bernardo) on their watch
In the dead vast and middle of the night
Been thus encount'red. A figure like your father,
Armed at point exactly, cap-a-pe,
Appears before them and with solemn march

Goes slow and stately by them. Thrice he walk'd
By their oppress'd and fear-surprised eyes,
Within his truncheon's length; whilst they distill'd
Almost to jelly with the act of fear,
Stand dumb and speak not to him. This to me
In dreadful secrecy impart they did,
And I with them the third night kept the watch;
Where, as they had deliver'd, both in time,
Form of the thing, each word made true and good,
The apparition comes. I knew your father.

These hands are not more like.

Ham. But where was this?

Mar. My lord, upon the platform where we watch'd.

Ham. Did you not speak to it?

Hor. My lord, I did;
But answer made it none. Yet once methought

It lifted up it head and did address
Itself to motion, like as it would speak;
But even then the morning cock crew loud,
And at the sound it shrunk in haste away
And vanish'd from our sight.

Ham. 'Tis very strange.

Hor. As I do live, my honour'd lord, 'tis true;
And we did think it writ down in our duty
To let you know of it.

Ham. Indeed, indeed, sirs. But this troubles me.
Hold you the watch to-night?
Both *[Mar. and Ber.]* We do, my lord.

Ham. Arm'd, say you?

Both. Arm'd, my lord.

Ham. From top to toe?

Both. My lord, from head to foot.

Ham. Then saw you not his face?

Hor. O, yes, my lord! He wore his beaver up.

Ham. What, look'd he frowningly.

Hor. A countenance more in sorrow than in anger.

Ham. Pale or red?

Hor. Nay, very pale.

Ham. And fix'd his eyes upon you?

Hor. Most constantly.

Ham. I would I had been there.

Hor. It would have much amaz'd you.

Ham. Very like, very like. Stay'd it long?

Hor. While one with moderate haste might tell a hundred.

Both. Longer, longer.

Hor. Not when I saw't.

Ham. His beard was grizzled-no?

Hor. It was, as I have seen it in his life,
A sable silver'd.

Ham. I will watch to-night.
Perchance 'twill walk again.

Hor. I warr'nt it will.

Ham. If it assume my noble father's person, I'll speak to it, though hell itself should gape

And bid me hold my peace. I pray you all,

If you have hitherto conceal'd this sight,

Let it be tenable in your silence still;

And whatsoever else shall hap to-night,

Give it an understanding but no tongue.

I will requite your loves. So, fare you well.

Upon the platform, 'twixt eleven and twelve,

I'll visit you.

All. Our duty to your honour.

Ham. Your loves, as mine to you. Farewell.

Exeunt [all but Hamlet] .

My father's spirit-in arms? All is not well.

I doubt some foul play. Would the night were come!

Till then sit still, my soul. Foul deeds will rise,

Though all the earth o'erwhelm them, to men's eyes.

Exit.

Scene III. Elsinore . A room in the house of Polonius.

Enter Laertes and Ophelia.

Laer. My necessaries are embark'd. Farewell.
And, sister, as the winds give benefit
And convoy is assistant, do not sleep,
But let me hear from you.

Oph. Do you doubt that?

Laer. For Hamlet, and the trifling of his favour,
Hold it a fashion, and a toy in blood;
A violet in the youth of primy nature,
Forward, not permanent-sweet, not lasting;
The perfume and suppliance of a minute;
No more.

Oph. No more but so?

Laer. Think it no more.
For nature crescent does not grow alone

In thews and bulk; but as this temple waxes,
The inward service of the mind and soul
Grows wide withal. Perhaps he loves you now,
And now no soil nor cautel doth besmirch
The virtue of his will; but you must fear,
His greatness weigh'd, his will is not his own;
For he himself is subject to his birth.
He may not, as unvalued persons do,
Carve for himself, for on his choice depends
The safety and health of this whole state,
And therefore must his choice be circumscrib'd
Unto the voice and yielding of that body
Whereof he is the head. Then if he says he loves you,
It fits your wisdom so far to believe it
As he in his particular act and place
May give his saying deed; which is no further
Than the main voice of Denmark goes withal.
Then weigh what loss your honour may sustain
If with too credent ear you list his songs,
Or lose your heart, or your chaste treasure open
To his unmast'red importunity.

Fear it, Ophelia, fear it, my dear sister,
And keep you in the rear of your affection,
Out of the shot and danger of desire.
The chariest maid is prodigal enough
If she unmask her beauty to the moon.

Virtue itself scopes not calumnious strokes.
The canker galls the infants of the spring
Too oft before their buttons be disclos'd,
And in the morn and liquid dew of youth
Contagious blastments are most imminent.
Be wary then; best safety lies in fear.

Youth to itself rebels, though none else near.

Oph. I shall th' effect of this good lesson keep
As watchman to my heart. But, good my brother,
Do not as some ungracious pastors do,
Show me the steep and thorny way to heaven,
Whiles, like a puff'd and reckless libertine,
Himself the primrose path of dalliance treads

And recks not his own rede.

Laer. O, fear me not!

Enter Polonius.

I stay too long. But here my father comes.
A double blessing is a double grace;
Occasion smiles upon a second leave.

Pol. Yet here, Laertes? Aboard, aboard, for shame!
The wind sits in the shoulder of your sail,
And you are stay'd for. There-my blessing with thee!
And these few precepts in thy memory
Look thou character. Give thy thoughts no tongue,
Nor any unproportion'd thought his act.

Be thou familiar, but by no means vulgar:
Those friends thou hast, and their adoption tried,
Grapple them unto thy soul with hoops of steel;
But do not dull thy palm with entertainment

Of each new-hatch'd, unfledg'd comrade. Beware
Of entrance to a quarrel; but being in,
Bear't that th' opposed may beware of thee.
Give every man thine ear, but few thy voice;
Take each man's censure, but reserve thy judgment.
Costly thy habit as thy purse can buy,
But not express'd in fancy; rich, not gaudy;
For the apparel oft proclaims the man,
And they in France of the best rank and station
Are most select and generous, chief in that.
Neither a borrower nor a lender be;
For loan oft loses both itself and friend,
And borrowing dulls the edge of husbandry.
This above all-to thine own self be true,
And it must follow, as the night the day,
Thou canst not then be false to any man.
Farewell. My blessing season this in thee!

Laer. Most humbly do I take my leave, my lord.

Pol. The time invites you. Go, your servants tend.

Laer. Farewell, Ophelia, and remember well
What I have said to you.

Oph. 'Tis in my memory lock'd,
And you yourself shall keep the key of it.

Laer. Farewell. *Exit* .

Pol. What is't, Ophelia, he hath said to you?

Oph. So please you, something touching the Lord Hamlet.

Pol. Marry, well bethought!
'Tis told me he hath very oft of late
Given private time to you, and you yourself
Have of your audience been most free and bounteous.
If it be so-as so 'tis put on me,
And that in way of caution-I must tell you
You do not understand yourself so clearly
As it behooves my daughter and your honour.

What is between you? Give me up the truth.

Oph. He hath, my lord, of late made many tenders
Of his affection to me.

Pol. Affection? Pooh! You speak like a green girl,
Unsifted in such perilous circumstance.

Do you believe his tenders, as you call them?

Oph. I do not know, my lord, what I should think,

Pol. Marry, I will teach you! Think yourself a baby
That you have ta'en these tenders for true pay,
Which are not sterling. Tender yourself more dearly,
Or (not to crack the wind of the poor phrase,
Running it thus) you'll tender me a fool.

Oph. My lord, he hath importun'd me with love
In honourable fashion.

Pol. Ay, fashion you may call it. Go to, go to!

Oph. And hath given countenance to his speech, my lord,
With almost all the holy vows of heaven.

Pol. Ay, springes to catch woodcocks! I do know,
When the blood burns, how prodigal the soul
Lends the tongue vows. These blazes, daughter,
Giving more light than heat, extinct in both
Even in their promise, as it is a-making,
You must not take for fire. From this time
Be something scanter of your maiden presence.
Set your entreatments at a higher rate
Than a command to parley. For Lord Hamlet,
Believe so much in him, that he is young,
And with a larger tether may he walk
Than may be given you. In few, Ophelia,
Do not believe his vows; for they are brokers,
Not of that dye which their investments show,
But mere implorators of unholy suits,

Breathing like sanctified and pious bawds,

The better to beguile. This is for all:

I would not, in plain terms, from this time forth

Have you so slander any moment leisure

As to give words or talk with the Lord Hamlet.

Look to't, I charge you. Come your ways.

Oph. I shall obey, my lord.

Exeunt.

Scene IV. Elsinore. The platform before the Castle.

Enter Hamlet, Horatio, and Marcellus.

Ham. The air bites shrewdly; it is very cold.

Hor. It is a nipping and an eager air.

Ham. What hour now?

Hor. I think it lacks of twelve.

Mar. No, it is struck.

Hor. Indeed? I heard it not. It then draws near the season
Wherein the spirit held his wont to walk.

A flourish of trumpets, and two pieces go off.
What does this mean, my lord?

Ham. The King doth wake to-night and takes his rouse,
Keeps wassail, and the swagg'ring upspring reels,
And, as he drains his draughts of Rhenish down,
The kettledrum and trumpet thus bray out
The triumph of his pledge.

Hor. Is it a custom?

Ham. Ay, marry, is't;
But to my mind, though I am native here
And to the manner born, it is a custom
More honour'd in the breach than the observance.

This heavy-headed revel east and west

Makes us traduc'd and tax'd of other nations;

They clip us drunkards and with swinish phrase

Soil our addition; and indeed it takes

From our achievements, though perform'd at height,

The pith and marrow of our attribute.

So oft it chances in particular men

That, for some vicious mole of nature in them,

As in their birth,- wherein they are not guilty,

Since nature cannot choose his origin,-

By the o'ergrowth of some complexion,

Oft breaking down the pales and forts of reason,

Or by some habit that too much o'erleavens

The form of plausive manners, that these men

Carrying, I say, the stamp of one defect,

Being nature's livery, or fortune's star,

Their virtues else-be they as pure as grace,

As infinite as man may undergo-

Shall in the general censure take corruption

From that particular fault. The dram of e'il

Doth all the noble substance often dout To his own scandal.

Enter Ghost.

Hor. Look, my lord, it comes!

Ham. Angels and ministers of grace defend us!
Be thou a spirit of health or goblin damn'd,
Bring with thee airs from heaven or blasts from hell,
Be thy intents wicked or charitable,
Thou com'st in such a questionable shape
That I will speak to thee. I'll call thee Hamlet,
King, father, royal Dane. O, answer me?
Let me not burst in ignorance, but tell
Why thy canoniz'd bones, hearsed in death,
Have burst their cerements; why the sepulchre
Wherein we saw thee quietly inurn'd,
Hath op'd his ponderous and marble jaws
To cast thee up again. What may this mean
That thou, dead corse, again in complete steel,
Revisits thus the glimpses of the moon,
Making night hideous, and we fools of nature

So horridly to shake our disposition
With thoughts beyond the reaches of our souls?

Say, why is this? wherefore? What should we do?
Ghost beckons Hamlet.

Hor. It beckons you to go away with it,
As if it some impartment did desire
To you alone.

Mar. Look with what courteous action
It waves you to a more removed ground.

But do not go with it!

Hor. No, by no means!

Ham. It will not speak. Then will I follow it.

Hor. Do not, my lord!

Ham. Why, what should be the fear?
I do not set my life at a pin's fee;
And for my soul, what can it do to that,
Being a thing immortal as itself?

It waves me forth again. I'll follow it.

Hor. What if it tempt you toward the flood, my lord,
Or to the dreadful summit of the cliff
That beetles o'er his base into the sea,
And there assume some other, horrible form
Which might deprive your sovereignty of reason
And draw you into madness? Think of it.
The very place puts toys of desperation,
Without more motive, into every brain
That looks so many fadoms to the sea
And hears it roar beneath.

Ham. It waves me still.
Go on. I'll follow thee.

Mar. You shall not go, my lord.

Ham. Hold off your hands!

Hor. Be rul'd. You shall not go.

Ham. My fate cries out
And makes each petty artire in this body
As hardy as the Nemean lion's nerve.
[Ghost beckons.]
Still am I call'd. Unhand me, gentlemen.
By heaven, I'll make a ghost of him that lets me!-
I say, away!- Go on. I'll follow thee.
Exeunt Ghost and Hamlet.

Hor. He waxes desperate with imagination.

Mar. Let's follow. 'Tis not fit thus to obey him.

Hor. Have after. To what issue wail this come?

Mar. Something is rotten in the state of Denmark.

Hor. Heaven will direct it.

Mar. Nay, let's follow him.

Exeunt.

Scene V. Elsinore . The Castle. Another part of the fortifications.

Enter Ghost and Hamlet.

Ham. Whither wilt thou lead me? Speak! I'll go no further.

Ghost. Mark me.

Ham. I will.

Ghost. My hour is almost come,

When I to sulph'rous and tormenting flames

Must render up myself.

Ham. Alas, poor ghost!

Ghost. Pity me not, but lend thy serious hearing

To what I shall unfold.

Ham. Speak. I am bound to hear.

Ghost. So art thou to revenge, when thou shalt hear.

Ham. What?

Ghost. I am thy father's spirit,
Doom'd for a certain term to walk the night,
And for the day confin'd to fast in fires,
Till the foul crimes done in my days of nature
Are burnt and purg'd away. But that I am forbid
To tell the secrets of my prison house,
I could a tale unfold whose lightest word
Would harrow up thy soul, freeze thy young blood,
Make thy two eyes, like stars, start from their spheres,
Thy knotted and combined locks to part,
And each particular hair to stand an end
Like quills upon the fretful porpentine.
But this eternal blazon must not be
To ears of flesh and blood. List, list, O, list!
If thou didst ever thy dear father love-

Ham. O God!

Ghost. Revenge his foul and most unnatural murther.

Ham. Murther?

Ghost. Murther most foul, as in the best it is;
But this most foul, strange, and unnatural.

Ham. Haste me to know't, that I, with wings as swift
As meditation or the thoughts of love,
May sweep to my revenge.

Ghost. I find thee apt;
And duller shouldst thou be than the fat weed
That rots itself in ease on Lethe wharf,
Wouldst thou not stir in this. Now, Hamlet, hear.
'Tis given out that, sleeping in my orchard,
A serpent stung me. So the whole ear of Denmark
Is by a forged process of my death
Rankly abus'd. But know, thou noble youth,
The serpent that did sting thy father's life

Now wears his crown.

Ham. O my prophetic soul!
My uncle?

Ghost. Ay, that incestuous, that adulterate beast,
With witchcraft of his wit, with traitorous gifts-
O wicked wit and gifts, that have the power
So to seduce!- won to his shameful lust
The will of my most seeming-virtuous queen.
O Hamlet, what a falling-off was there,
From me, whose love was of that dignity
That it went hand in hand even with the vow
I made to her in marriage, and to decline
Upon a wretch whose natural gifts were poor
To those of mine!
But virtue, as it never will be mov'd,
Though lewdness court it in a shape of heaven,
So lust, though to a radiant angel link'd,
Will sate itself in a celestial bed
And prey on garbage.

But soft! methinks I scent the morning air.

Brief let me be. Sleeping within my orchard,

My custom always of the afternoon,

Upon my secure hour thy uncle stole,

With juice of cursed hebona in a vial,

And in the porches of my ears did pour

The leperous distilment; whose effect

Holds such an enmity with blood of man

That swift as quicksilverr it courses through

The natural gates and alleys of the body,

And with a sudden vigour it doth posset

And curd, like eager droppings into milk,

The thin and wholesome blood. So did it mine;

And a most instant tetter bark'd about,

Most lazar-like, with vile and loathsome crust

All my smooth body.

Thus was I, sleeping, by a brother's hand

Of life, of crown, of queen, at once dispatch'd;

Cut off even in the blossoms of my sin,

Unhous'led, disappointed, unanel'd,

No reckoning made, but sent to my account
With all my imperfections on my head.

Ham. O, horrible! O, horrible! most horrible!

Ghost. If thou hast nature in thee, bear it not.
Let not the royal bed of Denmark be
A couch for luxury and damned incest.
But, howsoever thou pursuest this act,
Taint not thy mind, nor let thy soul contrive
Against thy mother aught. Leave her to heaven,
And to those thorns that in her bosom lodge
To prick and sting her. Fare thee well at once.
The glowworm shows the matin to be near
And gins to pale his uneffectual fire.
Adieu, adieu, adieu! Remember me. *Exit* .

Ham. O all you host of heaven! O earth! What else?
And shall I couple hell? Hold, hold, my heart!
And you, my sinews, grow not instant old,
But bear me stiffly up. Remember thee?

Ay, thou poor ghost, while memory holds a seat
In this distracted globe. Remember thee?
Yea, from the table of my memory
I'll wipe away all trivial fond records,
All saws of books, all forms, all pressures past
That youth and observation copied there,
And thy commandment all alone shall live
Within the book and volume of my brain,
Unmix'd with baser matter. Yes, by heaven!
O most pernicious woman!

O villain, villain, smiling, damned villain!
My tables! Meet it is I set it down
That one may smile, and smile, and be a villain;
At least I am sure it may be so in Denmark. *[Writes.]*
So, uncle, there you are. Now to my word:
It is 'Adieu, adieu! Remember me.'

I have sworn't.

Hor. (within) My lord, my lord!

Enter Horatio and Marcellus.

Mar. Lord Hamlet!

Hor. Heaven secure him!

Ham. So be it!

Mar. Illo, ho, ho, my lord!

Ham. Hillo, ho, ho, boy! Come, bird, come.

Mar. How is't, my noble lord?

Hor. What news, my lord?

Mar. O, wonderful!

Hor. Good my lord, tell it.

Ham. No, you will reveal it.

Hor. Not I, my lord, by heaven!

Mar. Nor I, my lord.

Ham. How say you then? Would heart of man once think it?
But you'll be secret?

Both. Ay, by heaven, my lord.

Ham. There's neer a villain dwelling in all Denmark
But he's an arrant knave.

Hor. There needs no ghost, my lord, come from the grave
To tell us this.

Ham. Why, right! You are in the right!
And so, without more circumstance at all,
I hold it fit that we shake hands and part;
You, as your business and desires shall point you,

For every man hath business and desire,
Such as it is; and for my own poor part,
Look you, I'll go pray.

Hor. These are but wild and whirling words, my lord.

Ham. I am sorry they offend you, heartily;
Yes, faith, heartily.

Hor. There's no offence, my lord.

Ham. Yes, by Saint Patrick, but there is, Horatio,
And much offence too. Touching this vision here,
It is an honest ghost, that let me tell you.
For your desire to know what is between us,
O'ermaster't as you may. And now, good friends,
As you are friends, scholars, and soldiers,
Give me one poor request.

Hor. What is't, my lord? We will.

Ham. Never make known what you have seen to-night.

Both. My lord, we will not.

Ham. Nay, but swear't.

Hor. In faith,

My lord, not I.

Mar. Nor I, my lord-in faith.

Ham. Upon my sword.

Mar. We have sworn, my lord, already.

Ham. Indeed, upon my sword, indeed.

Ghost cries under the stage.

Ghost. Swear.

Ham. Aha boy, say'st thou so? Art thou there, truepenny?

Come on! You hear this fellow in the cellarage.

Consent to swear.

Hor. Propose the oath, my lord.

Ham. Never to speak of this that you have seen.
Swear by my sword.

Ghost. [beneath] Swear.

Ham. Hic et ubique? Then we'll shift our ground.
Come hither, gentlemen,
And lay your hands again upon my sword.
Never to speak of this that you have heard:

Swear by my sword.

Ghost. [beneath] Swear by his sword.

Ham. Well said, old mole! Canst work i' th' earth so fast?

A worthy pioner! Once more remove, good friends."

Hor. O day and night, but this is wondrous strange!

Ham. And therefore as a stranger give it welcome.
There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy.
But come!
Here, as before, never, so help you mercy,
How strange or odd soe'er I bear myself
(As I perchance hereafter shall think meet
To put an antic disposition on),
That you, at such times seeing me, never shall,
With arms encumb'red thus, or this head-shake,
Or by pronouncing of some doubtful phrase,
As 'Well, well, we know,' or 'We could, an if we would,'

Or 'If we list to speak,' or 'There be, an if they might,'
Or such ambiguous giving out, to note
That you know aught of me-this is not to do,
So grace and mercy at your most need help you,

Swear.

Ghost. [beneath] Swear.

[They swear.]

Ham. Rest, rest, perturbed spirit! So, gentlemen,

With all my love I do commend me to you;

And what so poor a man as Hamlet is

May do t' express his love and friending to you,

God willing, shall not lack. Let us go in together;

And still your fingers on your lips, I pray.

The time is out of joint. O cursed spite

That ever I was born to set it right!

Nay, come, let's go together.

Exeunt.

Act II. Scene I. Elsinore. A room in the house of Polonius.

Enter Polonius and Reynaldo.

Pol. Give him this money and these notes, Reynaldo.

Rey. I will, my lord.

Pol. You shall do marvell's wisely, good Reynaldo,
Before You visit him, to make inquire
Of his behaviour.

Rey. My lord, I did intend it.

Pol. Marry, well said, very well said. Look you, sir,
Enquire me first what Danskers are in Paris;
And how, and who, what means, and where they keep,
What company, at what expense; and finding
By this encompassment and drift of question
That they do know my son, come you more nearer
Than your particular demands will touch it.
Take you, as 'twere, some distant knowledge of him;
As thus, 'I know his father and his friends,
And in part him.' Do you mark this, Reynaldo?

Rey. Ay, very well, my lord.

Pol. 'And in part him, but,' you may say, 'not well.
But if't be he I mean, he's very wild
Addicted so and so'; and there put on him
What forgeries you please; marry, none so rank
As may dishonour him-take heed of that;
But, sir, such wanton, wild, and usual slips
As are companions noted and most known
To youth and liberty.

Rey. As gaming, my lord.

Pol. Ay, or drinking, fencing, swearing, quarrelling,
Drabbing. You may go so far.

Rey. My lord, that would dishonour him.

Pol. Faith, no, as you may season it in the charge.
You must not put another scandal on him,

That he is open to incontinency.
That's not my meaning. But breathe his faults so quaintly
That they may seem the taints of liberty,
The flash and outbreak of a fiery mind,
A savageness in unreclaimed blood,
Of general assault.

Rey. But, my good lord-

Pol. Wherefore should you do this?

Rey. Ay, my lord,
I would know that.

Pol. Marry, sir, here's my drift,
And I believe it is a fetch of warrant.
You laying these slight sullies on my son
As 'twere a thing a little soil'd i' th' working,
Mark you,
Your party in converse, him you would sound,
Having ever seen in the prenominate crimes

The youth you breathe of guilty, be assur'd
He closes with you in this consequence:
'Good sir,' or so, or 'friend,' or 'gentleman'-
According to the phrase or the addition
Of man and country-

Rey. Very good, my lord.

Pol. And then, sir, does 'a this- 'a does-What was I about to say?
By the mass, I was about to say something! Where did I leave?

Rey. At 'closes in the consequence,' at 'friend or so,' and gentleman.'

Pol. At 'closes in the consequence'- Ay, marry!
He closes thus: 'I know the gentleman.
I saw him yesterday, or t'other day,
Or then, or then, with such or such; and, as you say,
There was 'a gaming; there o'ertook in's rouse;
There falling out at tennis'; or perchance,
'I saw him enter such a house of sale,'
Videlicet, a brothel, or so forth.

See you now-

Your bait of falsehood takes this carp of truth;

And thus do we of wisdom and of reach,

With windlasses and with assays of bias,

By indirections find directions out.

So, by my former lecture and advice,

Shall you my son. You have me, have you not

Rey. My lord, I have.

Pol. God b' wi' ye, fare ye well!

Rey. Good my lord! *[Going.]*

Pol. Observe his inclination in yourself.

Rey. I shall, my lord.

Pol. And let him ply his music.

Rey. Well, my lord.

Pol. Farewell!

Exit Reynaldo.

Enter Ophelia.

How now, Ophelia? What's the matter?

Oph. O my lord, my lord, I have been so affrighted!

Pol. With what, i' th' name of God I

Oph. My lord, as I was sewing in my closet,
Lord Hamlet, with his doublet all unbrac'd,
No hat upon his head, his stockings foul'd,
Ungart'red, and down-gyved to his ankle;
Pale as his shirt, his knees knocking each other,
And with a look so piteous in purport
As if he had been loosed out of hell
To speak of horrors-he comes before me.

Pol. Mad for thy love?

Oph. My lord, I do not know,
But truly I do fear it.

Pol. What said he?

Oph. He took me by the wrist and held me hard;
Then goes he to the length of all his arm,
And, with his other hand thus o'er his brow,
He falls to such perusal of my face
As he would draw it. Long stay'd he so.
At last, a little shaking of mine arm,
And thrice his head thus waving up and down,
He rais'd a sigh so piteous and profound
As it did seem to shatter all his bulk
And end his being. That done, he lets me go,
And with his head over his shoulder turn'd
He seem'd to find his way without his eyes,
For out o' doors he went without their help
And to the last bended their light on me.

Pol. Come, go with me. I will go seek the King.
This is the very ecstasy of love,
Whose violent property fordoes itself
And leads the will to desperate undertakings
As oft as any passion under heaven
That does afflict our natures. I am sorry.

What, have you given him any hard words of late?

Oph. No, my good lord; but, as you did command,
I did repel his letters and denied
His access to me.

Pol. That hath made him mad.
I am sorry that with better heed and judgment
I had not quoted him. I fear'd he did but trifle
And meant to wrack thee; but beshrew my jealousy!
By heaven, it is as proper to our age
To cast beyond ourselves in our opinions
As it is common for the younger sort

To lack discretion. Come, go we to the King.

This must be known; which, being kept close, might move

More grief to hide than hate to utter love.

Come.

Exeunt.

Scene II. Elsinore . A room in the Castle.

Flourish. [*Enter* King and Queen, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, cum aliis.

King. Welcome, dear Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.

Moreover that we much did long to see you,

The need we have to use you did provoke

Our hasty sending. Something have you heard

Of Hamlet's transformation. So I call it,

Sith nor th' exterior nor the inward man

Resembles that it was. What it should be,

More than his father's death, that thus hath put him

So much from th' understanding of himself,

I cannot dream of. I entreat you both

That, being of so young clays brought up with him,
And since so neighbour'd to his youth and haviour,
That you vouchsafe your rest here in our court
Some little time; so by your companies
To draw him on to pleasures, and to gather
So much as from occasion you may glean,
Whether aught to us unknown afflicts him thus
That, open'd, lies within our remedy.

Queen. Good gentlemen, he hath much talk'd of you,
And sure I am two men there are not living
To whom he more adheres. If it will please you
To show us so much gentry and good will
As to expend your time with us awhile
For the supply and profit of our hope,
Your visitation shall receive such thanks
As fits a king's remembrance.

Ros. Both your Majesties
Might, by the sovereign power you have of us,
Put your dread pleasures more into command

Than to entreaty.

Guil. But we both obey,
And here give up ourselves, in the full bent,
To lay our service freely at your feet,
To be commanded.

King. Thanks, Rosencrantz and gentle Guildenstern.

Queen. Thanks, Guildenstern and gentle Rosencrantz.
And I beseech you instantly to visit
My too much changed son.- Go, some of you,
And bring these gentlemen where Hamlet is.

Guil. Heavens make our presence and our practices
Pleasant and helpful to him!

Queen. Ay, amen!
Exeunt Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, [with some
Attendants].

Enter Polonius.

Pol. Th' ambassadors from Norway, my good lord,
Are joyfully return'd.

King. Thou still hast been the father of good news.

Pol. Have I, my lord? Assure you, my good liege,
I hold my duty as I hold my soul,
Both to my God and to my gracious king;
And I do think-or else this brain of mine
Hunts not the trail of policy so sure
As it hath us'd to do-that I have found
The very cause of Hamlet's lunacy.

King. O, speak of that! That do I long to hear.

Pol. Give first admittance to th' ambassadors.
My news shall be the fruit to that great feast.

King. Thyself do grace to them, and bring them in.

[Exit Polonius.]

He tells me, my dear Gertrude, he hath found

The head and source of all your son's distemper.

Queen. I doubt it is no other but the main,

His father's death and our o'erhasty marriage.

King. Well, we shall sift him.

Enter Polonius, Voltemand, and Cornelius.

Welcome, my good friends.

Say, Voltemand, what from our brother Norway?

Volt. Most fair return of greetings and desires.

Upon our first, he sent out to suppress

His nephew's levies; which to him appear'd

To be a preparation 'gainst the Polack,

But better look'd into, he truly found

It was against your Highness; whereat griev'd,

That so his sickness, age, and impotence

Was falsely borne in hand, sends out arrests
On Fortinbras; which he, in brief, obeys,
Receives rebuke from Norway, and, in fine,
Makes vow before his uncle never more
To give th' assay of arms against your Majesty.
Whereon old Norway, overcome with joy,
Gives him three thousand crowns in annual fee
And his commission to employ those soldiers,
So levied as before, against the Polack;
With an entreaty, herein further shown,
[Gives a paper.]
That it might please you to give quiet pass
Through your dominions for this enterprise,
On such regards of safety and allowance
As therein are set down.

King. It likes us well;
And at our more consider'd time we'll read,
Answer, and think upon this business.
Meantime we thank you for your well-took labour.

Go to your rest; at night we'll feast together.
Most welcome home! *Exeunt* Ambassadors.

Pol. This business is well ended.
My liege, and madam, to expostulate
What majesty should be, what duty is,
Why day is day, night is night, and time is time.

Were nothing but to waste night, day, and time.
Therefore, since brevity is the soul of wit,
And tediousness the limbs and outward flourishes,
I will be brief. Your noble son is mad.
Mad call I it; for, to define true madness,
What is't but to be nothing else but mad?

But let that go.

Queen. More matter, with less art.

Pol. Madam, I swear I use no art at all.
That he is mad, 'tis true: 'tis true 'tis pity;

And pity 'tis 'tis true. A foolish figure!

But farewell it, for I will use no art.

Mad let us grant him then. And now remains

That we find out the cause of this effect-

Or rather say, the cause of this defect,

For this effect defective comes by cause.

Thus it remains, and the remainder thus.

Perpend.

I have a daughter (have while she is mine),

Who in her duty and obedience, mark,

Hath given me this. Now gather, and surmise.

[Reads] the letter.

'To the celestial, and my soul's idol, the most beautified

Ophelia,'-

That's an ill phrase, a vile phrase; 'beautified' is a vile phrase.

But you shall hear. Thus:

[Reads.]

'In her excellent white bosom, these, &c.'

Queen. Came this from Hamlet to her?

Pol. Good madam, stay awhile. I will be faithful. *[Reads.]*

'Doubt thou the stars are fire;

Doubt that the sun doth move;

Doubt truth to be a liar;

But never doubt I love.

'O dear Ophelia, I am ill at these numbers; I have not art to reckon my groans; but that I love thee best, O most best, believe it. Adieu.

'Thine evermore, most dear lady, whilst this machine is to him, HAMLET.'

This, in obedience, hath my daughter shown me;

And more above, hath his solicitings,

As they fell out by time, by means, and place,

All given to mine ear.

King. But how hath she

Receiv'd his love?

Pol. What do you think of me?

King. As of a man faithful and honourable.

Pol. I would fain prove so. But what might you think,
When I had seen this hot love on the wing
(As I perceiv'd it, I must tell you that,
Before my daughter told me), what might you,
Or my dear Majesty your queen here, think,
If I had play'd the desk or table book,
Or given my heart a winking, mute and dumb,
Or look'd upon this love with idle sight?
What might you think? No, I went round to work
And my young mistress thus I did bespeak:

'Lord Hamlet is a prince, out of thy star.
This must not be.' And then I prescripts gave her,
That she should lock herself from his resort,
Admit no messengers, receive no tokens.

Which done, she took the fruits of my advice,

And he, repulsed, a short tale to make,

Fell into a sadness, then into a fast,

Thence to a watch, thence into a weakness,

Thence to a lightness, and, by this declension,

Into the madness wherein now he raves,

And all we mourn for.

King. Do you think 'tis this?

Queen. it may be, very like.

Pol. Hath there been such a time-I would fain know that-

That I have Positively said ''Tis so,'

When it prov'd otherwise.?

King. Not that I know.

Pol. [points to his head and shoulder] Take this from this, if this be otherwise.

If circumstances lead me, I will find

Where truth is hid, though it were hid indeed
Within the centre.

King. How may we try it further?

Pol. You know sometimes he walks four hours together
Here in the lobby.

Queen. So he does indeed.

Pol. At such a time I'll loose my daughter to him.
Be you and I behind an arras then.
Mark the encounter. If he love her not,
And he not from his reason fall'n thereon
Let me be no assistant for a state,
But keep a farm and carters.

King. We will try it.

Enter Hamlet, reading on a book.

Queen. But look where sadly the poor wretch comes reading.

Pol. Away, I do beseech you, both away
I'll board him presently. O, give me leave.
Exeunt King and Queen, *[with Attendants]* .
How does my good Lord Hamlet?

Ham. Well, God-a-mercy.

Pol. Do you know me, my lord?

Ham. Excellent well. You are a fishmonger.

Pol. Not I, my lord.

Ham. Then I would you were so honest a man.

Pol. Honest, my lord?

Ham. Ay, sir. To be honest, as this world goes, is to be one man pick'd out of ten thousand.

Pol. That's very true, my lord.

Ham. For if the sun breed maggots in a dead dog, being a god
kissing carrion-Have you a daughter?

Pol. I have, my lord.

Ham. Let her not walk i' th' sun. Conception is a blessing, but not
as your daughter may conceive. Friend, look to't.

Pol. [aside] How say you by that? Still harping on my daughter.
Yet
he knew me not at first. He said I was a fishmonger. He is far
gone, far gone! And truly in my youth I suff'red much extremity
for love-very near this. I'll speak to him again.- What do you read, my lord?

Ham. Words, words, words.

Pol. What is the matter, my lord?

Ham. Between who?

Pol. I mean, the matter that you read, my lord.

Ham. Slanders, sir; for the satirical rogue says here that old men
have grey beards; that their faces are wrinkled; their eyes
purging thick amber and plum-tree gum; and that they have a
plentiful lack of wit, together with most weak hams. All which,
sir, though I most powerfully and potently believe, yet I
hold it
not honesty to have it thus set down; for you yourself, sir,
should be old as I am if, like a crab, you could go backward.

Pol. [aside] Though this be madness, yet there is a method
in't.-
Will You walk out of the air, my lord?

Ham. Into my grave?

Pol. Indeed, that is out o' th' air. *[Aside]* How pregnant sometimes
his replies are! a happiness that often madness hits on, which

reason and sanity could not so prosperously be delivered of.

I will leave him and suddenly contrive the means of meeting between

him and my daughter.- My honourable lord, I will most humbly take my leave of you.

Ham. You cannot, sir, take from me anything that I will more

willingly part withal-except my life, except my life, except my life,

Enter Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.

Pol. Fare you well, my lord.

Ham. These tedious old fools!

Pol. You go to seek the Lord Hamlet. There he is.

Ros. [to Polonius] God save you, sir!

Exit [Polonius] .

Guil. My honour'd lord! Ros. My most dear lord! Ham. My excellent good friends! How dost thou, Guildenstern? Ah, Rosencrantz! Good lads, how do ye both? Ros. As the indifferent children of the earth. Guil. Happy in that we are not over-happy. On Fortune's cap we are not the very button. Ham. Nor the soles of her shoe? Ros. Neither, my lord. Ham. Then you live about her waist, or in the middle of her favours? Guil. Faith, her privates we. Ham. In the secret parts of Fortune? O! most true! she is a strumpet. What news ? Ros. None, my lord, but that the world's grown honest. Ham. Then is doomsday near! But your news is not true. Let me question more in particular. What have you, my good friends, deserved at the hands of Fortune that she sends you to prison hither? Guil. Prison, my lord? Ham. Denmark's a prison. Ros. Then is the world one. Ham. A goodly one; in which there are many confines, wards, and dungeons, Denmark being one o' th' worst. Ros. We think not so, my lord. Ham. Why, then 'tis none to you; for there is nothing either good or bad but thinking makes it so. To me it is a prison. Ros. Why, then your ambition makes it one. 'Tis too narrow for your mind. Ham. O God, I could be bounded in a nutshell and count myself a king of infinite space, were it not that I have bad dreams. Guil. Which dreams indeed are ambition; for the very substance of the ambitious is merely the shadow of a dream. Ham. A dream itself is but a shadow. Ros. Truly, and I hold ambition of so airy and light a quality that it is but a shadow's shadow. Ham. Then are our beggars bodies, and our monarchs and outstretch'd heroes the beggars' shadows. Shall we to th' court? for, by my fay, I cannot reason. Both. We'll wait upon you. Ham. No such matter! I will not sort you with the rest of my servants; for, to speak to you like an honest man, I am most dreadfully attended. But in the beaten way of friendship, what make you at Elsinore? Ros. To visit you, my lord; no other occasion. Ham. Beggar that I am, I am even poor in thanks; but I thank you; and sure, dear friends, my thanks are too dear a halfpenny. Were you not sent for? Is it your own inclining? Is it a free visitation? Come, deal justly with me. Come, come! Nay, speak. Guil. What should we say, my lord? Ham. Why, anything-but to th' purpose. You were sent for; and there is a kind of confession in your looks, which your modesties have not craft enough to colour. I know the good King and Queen have sent for you. Ros. To what end, my lord? Ham. That you must teach me. But let me conjure you by the rights of our fellowship, by the consonancy of our youth, by the obligation of our ever-preserved love, and by what more dear a better proposer could charge you withal, be even and direct with me, whether you were sent for or no. Ros. *[aside to Guildenstern]* What say you? Ham. *[aside]* Nay then, I have an eye of you.- If you love me, hold not off. Guil. My lord, we were sent for. Ham. I will tell you why. So shall my anticipation prevent your discovery, and your secrecy to the King and Queen moult no feather. I have of late-but wherefore I know not-lost all my mirth, forgone all custom of exercises; and indeed, it goes so heavily with my disposition that this goodly frame, the earth, seems to me a sterile promontory; this most excellent canopy, the air, look you, this brave o'erhanging firmament, this majestical roof fretted with golden fire-why, it appeareth no other thing to me than a foul and pestilent congregation of vapours. What a piece of work is a man! how noble in reason! how infinite in faculties! in form and moving how express and admirable! in action how like an angel! in apprehension how like a god! the beauty of the world, the paragon of animals! And yet to me what is this quintessence of dust? Man delights not me-no, nor woman neither, though by your smiling you seem to say so. Ros. My lord, there was no such stuff in my thoughts. Ham. Why did you laugh then, when I said 'Man delights not me'? Ros. To think, my lord, if you delight not in man, what lenten entertainment the players shall receive from you. We coted them on the way, and hither are they coming to offer you service. Ham. He that plays the king shall be welcome-his Majesty shall have tribute of me; the adventurous knight shall use his foil and target; the lover shall not sigh gratis; the humorous man shall end his part in peace; the clown shall make those laugh whose lungs are tickle o' th' sere; and the lady shall say her mind freely, or the blank verse shall halt fort. What players are they? Ros. Even those you were wont to take such delight in, the tragedians of the city. Ham. How chances it they travel? Their residence, both in reputation and profit, was better both ways. Ros. I think their inhibition comes by the means of the late innovation. Ham. Do they hold the same estimation they did when I was in the city? Are they so follow'd? Ros. No indeed are they not. Ham. How comes it? Do they grow rusty? Ros. Nay, their endeavour keeps in the wonted pace; but there is, sir, an eyrie of children, little eyases, that cry out on the top of question and are most tyrannically clapp'd fort. These are now the fashion, and so berattle the common stages (so they call them) that many wearing rapiers are afraid of goosequills and dare scarce come thither. Ham. What, are they children? Who maintains 'em? How are they escoted? Will they pursue the quality no longer than they can sing? Will they not say afterwards, if they should grow themselves to common players (as it is most like, if their means are no better), their writers do them wrong to make them exclaim against their own succession. Ros. Faith, there has been much to do on both sides; and the nation holds it no sin to tarre them to controversy. There was, for a while, no money bid for argument unless the poet and the player went to cuffs in the question. Ham. Is't possible? Guil. O, there has been much throwing about of brains. Ham. Do the boys carry it away? Ros. Ay, that they do, my lord- Hercules and his load too. Ham. It is not very strange; for my uncle is King of Denmark, and those that would make mows at him while my father lived give twenty, forty, fifty, a hundred ducats apiece for his picture in little. 'Sblood, there is something in this more than natural, if philosophy could find it out.

Flourish for the Players.

Guil. There are the players.

Ham. Gentlemen, you are welcome to Elsinore. Your hands, come!

Th'

appurtenance of welcome is fashion and ceremony. Let me comply

with you in this garb, lest my extent to the players (which I

tell you must show fairly outwards) should more appear like

entertainment than yours. You are welcome. But my

uncle-father

and aunt-mother are deceiv'd.

Guil. In what, my dear lord?

Ham. I am but mad north-north-west. When the wind is southerly

I

know a hawk from a handsaw.

Enter Polonius.

Pol. Well be with you, gentlemen!

Ham. Hark you, Guildenstern-and you too-at each ear a hearer!
That great baby you see there is not yet out of his swaddling clouts.

Ros. Happily he's the second time come to them; for they say an old man is twice a child.

Ham. I will prophesy he comes to tell me of the players. Mark it.-
You say right, sir; a Monday morning; twas so indeed.

Pol. My lord, I have news to tell you.

Ham. My lord, I have news to tell you. When Roscius was an actor in Rome-

Pol. The actors are come hither, my lord.

Ham. Buzz, buzz!

Pol. Upon my honour-

Ham. Then came each actor on his ass-

Pol. The best actors in the world, either for tragedy, comedy, history, pastoral, pastoral-comical, historical-pastoral, tragical-historical, tragical-comical-historical-pastoral; scene individable, or poem unlimited. Seneca cannot be too heavy, nor Plautus too light. For the law of writ and the liberty, these are the only men.

Ham. O Jephthah, judge of Israel, what a treasure hadst thou!

Pol. What treasure had he, my lord?

Ham. Why,
'One fair daughter, and no more,
The which he loved passing well.'

Pol. [aside] Still on my daughter.

Ham. Am I not i' th' right, old Jephthah?

Pol. If you call me Jephthah, my lord, I have a daughter that I love passing well.

Ham. Nay, that follows not.

Pol. What follows then, my lord?

Ham. Why,
'As by lot, God wot,'
and then, you know,
'It came to pass, as most like it was.'
The first row of the pious chanson will show you more; for look where my abridgment comes.

Enter four or five Players.

You are welcome, masters; welcome, all.- I am glad to see thee well.- Welcome, good friends.- O, my old friend? Why, thy face is valanc'd since I saw thee last. Com'st' thou to' beard me in Denmark?- What, my young lady and mistress? By'r Lady, your ladyship is nearer to heaven than when I saw you last by the altitude of a chopine. Pray God your voice, like a piece of uncurrent gold, be not crack'd within the ring.- Masters, you are all welcome. We'll e'en to't like French falconers, fly at anything we see. We'll have a speech straight. Come, give us a taste of your quality. Come, a passionate speech.

1. Play. What speech, my good lord?

Ham. I heard thee speak me a speech once, but it was never acted; or if it was, not above once; for the play, I remember, pleas'd not the million, 'twas caviary to the general; but it was (as

I

receiv'd it, and others, whose judgments in such matters cried in the top of mine) an excellent play, well digested in the scenes,

set down with as much modesty as cunning. I remember one said
there were no sallets in the lines to make the matter savoury,
nor no matter in the phrase that might indict the author of
affectation; but call'd it an honest method, as wholesome as
sweet, and by very much more handsome than fine. One speech in't
I chiefly lov'd. 'Twas AEneas' tale to Dido, and thereabout of it
especially where he speaks of Priam's slaughter. If it live in
your memory, begin at this line-let me see, let me see:
'The rugged Pyrrhus, like th' Hyrcanian beast-'

'Tis not so; it begins with Pyrrhus:
'The rugged Pyrrhus, he whose sable arms,
Black as his purpose, did the night resemble
When he lay couched in the ominous horse,
Hath now this dread and black complexion smear'd
With heraldry more dismal. Head to foot
Now is be total gules, horridly trick'd
With blood of fathers, mothers, daughters, sons,
Bak'd and impasted with the parching streets,
That lend a tyrannous and a damned light
To their lord's murther. Roasted in wrath and fire,

And thus o'ersized with coagulate gore,

With eyes like carbuncles, the hellish Pyrrhus

Old grandsire Priam seeks.'

So, proceed you.

Pol. Fore God, my lord, well spoken, with good accent and good discretion.

1. Play. 'Anon he finds him,

Striking too short at Greeks. His antique sword,

Rebellious to his arm, lies where it falls,

Repugnant to command. Unequal match'd,

Pyrrhus at Priam drives, in rage strikes wide;

But with the whiff and wind of his fell sword

Th' unnerved father falls. Then senseless Ilium,

Seeming to feel this blow, with flaming top

Stoops to his base, and with a hideous crash

Takes prisoner Pyrrhus' ear. For lo! his sword,

Which was declining on the milky head

Of reverend Priam, seem'd i' th' air to stick.

So, as a painted tyrant, Pyrrhus stood,

And, like a neutral to his will and matter, Did nothing.

But, as we often see, against some storm,

A silence in the heavens, the rack stand still,

The bold winds speechless, and the orb below

As hush as death-anon the dreadful thunder

Doth rend the region; so, after Pyrrhus' pause,

Aroused vengeance sets him new awork;

And never did the Cyclops' hammers fall

On Mars's armour, forg'd for proof eterne,

With less remorse than Pyrrhus' bleeding sword

Now falls on Priam.

Out, out, thou strumpet Fortune! All you gods,

In general synod take away her power;

Break all the spokes and fellies from her wheel,

And bowl the round nave down the hill of heaven,

As low as to the fiends!

Pol. This is too long.

Ham. It shall to the barber's, with your beard.- Prithee say on.

He's for a jig or a tale of bawdry, or he sleeps. Say on;

come to

Hecuba.

1. Play. 'But who, O who, had seen the mobled queen-'

Ham. 'The mobled queen'?

Pol. That's good! 'Mobled queen' is good.

1. Play. 'Run barefoot up and down, threat'ning the flames
With bisson rheum; a clout upon that head
Where late the diadem stood, and for a robe,
About her lank and all o'erteemed loins,
A blanket, in the alarm of fear caught up-
Who this had seen, with tongue in venom steep'd
'Gainst Fortune's state would treason have pronounc'd.
But if the gods themselves did see her then,
When she saw Pyrrhus make malicious sport
In Mincing with his sword her husband's limbs,
The instant burst of clamour that she made
(Unless things mortal move them not at all)
Would have made milch the burning eyes of heaven

And passion in the gods.'

Pol. Look, whe'r he has not turn'd his colour, and has tears in's eyes. Prithee no more!

Ham. 'Tis well. I'll have thee speak out the rest of this soon.-
Good my lord, will you see the players well bestow'd? Do you hear? Let them be well us'd; for they are the abstract and brief chronicles of the time. After your death you were better have a bad epitaph than their ill report while you live.

Pol. My lord, I will use them according to their desert.

Ham. God's bodykins, man, much better! Use every man after his desert, and who should scape whipping? Use them after your own honour and dignity. The less they deserve, the more merit is in your bounty. Take them in.

Pol. Come, sirs.

Ham. Follow him, friends. We'll hear a play to-morrow.

Exeunt Polonius and Players *[except the First]* .

Dost thou hear me, old friend? Can you play 'The Murther of Gonzago'?

1. Play. Ay, my lord.

Ham. We'll ha't to-morrow night. You could, for a need, study a speech of some dozen or sixteen lines which I would set down and insert in't, could you not?

1. Play. Ay, my lord.

Ham. Very well. Follow that lord-and look you mock him not.

[Exit First Player.]

My good friends, I'll leave you till night. You are welcome to Elsinore.

Ros. Good my lord!

Ham. Ay, so, God b' wi' ye!

[Exeunt Rosencrantz and Guildenstern

Now I am alone.

O what a rogue and peasant slave am I!
Is it not monstrous that this player here,
But in a fiction, in a dream of passion,
Could force his soul so to his own conceit
That, from her working, all his visage wann'd,
Tears in his eyes, distraction in's aspect,
A broken voice, and his whole function suiting
With forms to his conceit? And all for nothing!

For Hecuba!
What's Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba,
That he should weep for her? What would he do,
Had he the motive and the cue for passion
That I have? He would drown the stage with tears
And cleave the general ear with horrid speech;
Make mad the guilty and appal the free,
Confound the ignorant, and amaze indeed
The very faculties of eyes and ears.
Yet I,

A dull and muddy-mettled rascal, peak

Like John-a-dreams, unpregnant of my cause,

And can say nothing! No, not for a king,

Upon whose property and most dear life

A damn'd defeat was made. Am I a coward?

Who calls me villain? breaks my pate across?

Plucks off my beard and blows it in my face?

Tweaks me by th' nose? gives me the lie i' th' throat

As deep as to the lungs? Who does me this, ha?

'Swounds, I should take it! for it cannot be

But I am pigeon-liver'd and lack gall

To make oppression bitter, or ere this

I should have fatted all the region kites

With this slave's offal. Bloody bawdy villain!

Remorseless, treacherous, lecherous, kindless villain!

O, vengeance!

Why, what an ass am I! This is most brave,

That I, the son of a dear father murther'd,

Prompted to my revenge by heaven and hell, Must (like a whore) unpack my heart with words

And fall a-cursing like a very drab,

A scullion!

Fie upon't! foh! About, my brain! Hum, I have heard

That guilty creatures, sitting at a play,

Have by the very cunning of the scene

Been struck so to the soul that presently

They have proclaim'd their malefactions;

For murther, though it have no tongue, will speak

With most miraculous organ, I'll have these Players

Play something like the murther of my father

Before mine uncle. I'll observe his looks;

I'll tent him to the quick. If he but blench,

I know my course. The spirit that I have seen

May be a devil; and the devil hath power

T' assume a pleasing shape; yea, and perhaps

Out of my weakness and my melancholy,

As he is very potent with such spirits,

Abuses me to damn me. I'll have grounds

More relative than this. The play's the thing

Wherein I'll catch the conscience of the King. *Exit* .

ACT III. Scene I. Elsinore. A room in the Castle.

Enter King, Queen, Polonius, Ophelia, Rosencrantz, Guildenstern, and Lords.

King. And can you by no drift of circumstance
Get from him why he puts on this confusion,
Grating so harshly all his days of quiet
With turbulent and dangerous lunacy?

Ros. He does confess he feels himself distracted,
But from what cause he will by no means speak.

Guil. Nor do we find him forward to be sounded,
But with a crafty madness keeps aloof
When we would bring him on to some confession
Of his true state.

Queen. Did he receive you well?

Ros. Most like a gentleman.

Guil. But with much forcing of his disposition.

Ros. Niggard of question, but of our demands
Most free in his reply.

Queen. Did you assay him
To any pastime?

Ros. Madam, it so fell out that certain players
We o'erraught on the way. Of these we told him,
And there did seem in him a kind of joy
To hear of it. They are here about the court,
And, as I think, they have already order
This night to play before him.

Pol. 'Tis most true;
And he beseech'd me to entreat your Majesties
To hear and see the matter.

King. With all my heart, and it doth much content me

To hear him so inclin'd.

Good gentlemen, give him a further edge

And drive his purpose on to these delights.

Ros. We shall, my lord.

Exeunt Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.

King. Sweet Gertrude, leave us too;

For we have closely sent for Hamlet hither,

That he, as 'twere by accident, may here

Affront Ophelia.

Her father and myself (lawful espials)

Will so bestow ourselves that, seeing unseen,

We may of their encounter frankly judge

And gather by him, as he is behav'd,

If't be th' affliction of his love, or no,

That thus he suffers for.

Queen. I shall obey you;

And for your part, Ophelia, I do wish

That your good beauties be the happy cause

Of Hamlet's wildness. So shall I hope your virtues
Will bring him to his wonted way again,
To both your honours.

Oph. Madam, I wish it may.
[Exit Queen.]

Pol. Ophelia, walk you here.- Gracious, so please you,
We will bestow ourselves.- *[To Ophelia]* Read on this book,
That show of such an exercise may colour
Your loneliness.- We are oft to blame in this,
'Tis too much prov'd, that with devotion's visage
And pious action we do sugar o'er
The Devil himself.

King. [aside] O, 'tis too true!
How smart a lash that speech doth give my conscience!
The harlot's cheek, beautied with plast'ring art,
Is not more ugly to the thing that helps it
Than is my deed to my most painted word.
O heavy burthen!

Pol. I hear him coming. Let's withdraw, my lord.

Exeunt King and Polonius].

Enter Hamlet.

Ham. To be, or not to be-that is the question:

Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer

The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune

Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,

And by opposing end them. To die-to sleep-

No more; and by a sleep to say we end

The heartache, and the thousand natural shocks

That flesh is heir to. 'Tis a consummation

Devoutly to be wish'd. To die-to sleep.

To sleep-perchance to dream: ay, there's the rub!

For in that sleep of death what dreams may come

When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,

Must give us pause. There's the respect

That makes calamity of so long life.

For who would bear the whips and scorns of time, Th' oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,

The pangs of despis'd love, the law's delay,

The insolence of office, and the spurns

That patient merit of th' unworthy takes,

When he himself might his quietus make

With a bare bodkin? Who would these fardels bear,

To grunt and sweat under a weary life,

But that the dread of something after death-

The undiscover'd country, from whose bourn

No traveller returns-puzzles the will,

And makes us rather bear those ills we have

Than fly to others that we know not of?

Thus conscience does make cowards of us all,

And thus the native hue of resolution

Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought,

And enterprises of great pith and moment

With this regard their currents turn awry

And lose the name of action.- Soft you now!

The fair Ophelia!- Nymph, in thy orisons

Be all my sins rememb'red.

Oph. Good my lord,

How does your honour for this many a day?

Ham. I humbly thank you; well, well, well.

Oph. My lord, I have remembrances of yours

That I have longed long to re-deliver.

I pray you, now receive them.

Ham. No, not I!

I never gave you aught.

Oph. My honour'd lord, you know right well you did,

And with them words of so sweet breath compos'd

As made the things more rich. Their perfume lost,

Take these again; for to the noble mind

Rich gifts wax poor when givers prove unkind.

There, my lord.

Ham. Ha, ha! Are you honest?

Oph. My lord?

Ham. Are you fair?

Oph. What means your lordship?

Ham. That if you be honest and fair, your honesty should admit no discourse to your beauty.

Oph. Could beauty, my lord, have better commerce than with honesty?

Ham. Ay, truly; for the power of beauty will sooner transform honesty from what it is to a bawd than the force of honesty can translate beauty into his likeness. This was sometime a paradox, but now the time gives it proof. I did love you once.

Oph. Indeed, my lord, you made me believe so.

Ham. You should not have believ'd me; for virtue cannot so inoculate our old stock but we shall relish of it. I loved you not.

Oph. I was the more deceived.

Ham. Get thee to a nunnery! Why wouldst thou be a breeder of sinners? I am myself indifferent honest, but yet I could accuse me of such things that it were better my mother had not borne me. I am very proud, revengeful, ambitious; with more offences at my beck than I have thoughts to put them in, imagination to give them shape, or time to act them in. What should such fellows as I do, crawling between earth and heaven? We are arrant knaves all; believe none of us. Go thy ways to a nunnery. Where's your father?

Oph. At home, my lord.

Ham. Let the doors be shut upon him, that he may play the fool nowhere but in's own house. Farewell.

Oph. O, help him, you sweet heavens!

Ham. If thou dost marry, I'll give thee this plague for thy dowry:

be thou as chaste as ice, as pure as snow, thou shalt not escape calumny. Get thee to a nunnery. Go, farewell. Or if thou wilt needs marry, marry a fool; for wise men know well enough what monsters you make of them. To a nunnery, go; and quickly too. *Farewell.*

Oph. O heavenly powers, restore him!

Ham. I have heard of your paintings too, well enough. God hath given you one face, and you make yourselves another. You jig, you amble, and you lisp; you nickname God's creatures and make your wantonness your ignorance. Go to, I'll no more on't! it hath made me mad. I say, we will have no more marriages. Those that are married already-all but one-shall live; the rest shall keep as they are. To a nunnery, go. *Exit* .

Oph. O, what a noble mind is here o'erthrown!
The courtier's, scholar's, soldier's, eye, tongue, sword,
Th' expectancy and rose of the fair state,
The glass of fashion and the mould of form,
Th' observ'd of all observers-quite, quite down!

And I, of ladies most deject and wretched,
That suck'd the honey of his music vows,
Now see that noble and most sovereign reason,
Like sweet bells jangled, out of tune and harsh;
That unmatch'd form and feature of blown youth
Blasted with ecstasy. O, woe is me
T' have seen what I have seen, see what I see!

Enter King and Polonius.

King. Love? his affections do not that way tend;
Nor what he spake, though it lack'd form a little,
Was not like madness. There's something in his soul
O'er which his melancholy sits on brood;
And I do doubt the hatch and the disclose
Will be some danger; which for to prevent,
I have in quick determination
Thus set it down: he shall with speed to England
For the demand of our neglected tribute.
Haply the seas, and countries different,
With variable objects, shall expel

This something-settled matter in his heart,
Whereon his brains still beating puts him thus
From fashion of himself. What think you on't?

Pol. It shall do well. But yet do I believe
The origin and commencement of his grief
Sprung from neglected love.- How now, Ophelia?
You need not tell us what Lord Hamlet said.
We heard it all.- My lord, do as you please;
But if you hold it fit, after the play
Let his queen mother all alone entreat him
To show his grief. Let her be round with him;
And I'll be plac'd so please you, in the ear
Of all their conference. If she find him not,
To England send him; or confine him where
Your wisdom best shall think.

King. It shall be so.
Madness in great ones must not unwatch'd go. *Exeunt* .

Scene II. Elsinore. hall in the Castle.

Enter Hamlet and three of the Players.

Ham. Speak the speech, I pray you, as I pronounc'd it to you, trippingly on the tongue. But if you mouth it, as many of our players do, I had as live the town crier spoke my lines. Nor do not saw the air too much with your hand, thus, but use all gently; for in the very torrent, tempest, and (as I may say) whirlwind of your passion, you must acquire and beget a temperance that may give it smoothness. O, it offends me to the soul to hear a robustious periwig-pated fellow tear a passion to tatters, to very rags, to split the cars of the groundlings, who (for the most part) are capable of nothing but inexplicable dumb shows and noise. I would have such a fellow whipp'd for o'erdoing Termagant. It out-herods Herod. Pray you avoid it. Player. I warrant your honour. Ham. Be not too tame neither; but let your own discretion be your tutor. Suit the action to the word, the word to the action; with this special observance, that you o'erstep not the modesty of nature: for anything so overdone is from the purpose of playing, whose end, both at the first and now, was and is, to hold, as 'twere, the mirror up to nature; to show Virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure. Now this overdone, or come tardy off, though it make the unskilful laugh, cannot but make the judicious grieve; the censure of the which one must in your allowance o'erweigh a whole theatre of others. O, there be players that I have seen play, and heard others praise, and that highly (not to speak it profanely), that, neither having the accent of Christians, nor the gait of Christian, pagan, nor man, have so strutted and bellowed that I have thought some of Nature's journeymen had made men, and not made them well, they imitated humanity so abominably. Player. I hope we have reform'd that indifferently with us, sir. Ham. O, reform it altogether! And let those that play your clowns speak no more than is set down for them. For there be of them that will themselves laugh, to set on some quantity of barren spectators to laugh too, though in the mean time some necessary question of the play be then to be considered. That's villanous and shows a most pitiful ambition in the fool that uses it. Go make you ready. *Exeunt* Players.

Enter Polonius, Rosencrantz, and Guildenstern.

How now, my lord? Will the King hear this piece of work?

Pol. And the Queen too, and that presently.

Ham. Bid the players make haste, *[Exit Polonius.]* Will you two help to hasten them?

Both. We will, my lord. *Exeunt* they two.

Ham. What, ho, Horatio!

Enter Horatio.

Hor. Here, sweet lord, at your service.

Ham. Horatio, thou art e'en as just a man

As e'er my conversation cop'd withal.

Hor. O, my dear lord!

Ham. Nay, do not think I flatter;

For what advancement may I hope from thee,

That no revenue hast but thy good spirits

To feed and clothe thee? Why should the poor be flatter'd?

No, let the candied tongue lick absurd pomp,

And crook the pregnant hinges of the knee

Where thrift may follow fawning. Dost thou hear?

Since my dear soul was mistress of her choice

And could of men distinguish, her election

Hath scald thee for herself. For thou hast been

As one, in suff'ring all, that suffers nothing;

A man that Fortune's buffets and rewards

Hast ta'en with equal thanks; and blest are those

Whose blood and judgment are so well commingled

That they are not a pipe for Fortune's finger

To sound what stop she please. Give me that man

That is not passion's slave, and I will wear him

In my heart's core, ay, in my heart of heart,

As I do thee. Something too much of this I

There is a play to-night before the King.

One scene of it comes near the circumstance,
Which I have told thee, of my father's death.
I prithee, when thou seest that act afoot,
Even with the very comment of thy soul
Observe my uncle. If his occulted guilt
Do not itself unkennel in one speech,
It is a damned ghost that we have seen,
And my imaginations are as foul
As Vulcan's stithy. Give him heedful note;
For I mine eyes will rivet to his face,
And after we will both our judgments join
In censure of his seeming.

Hor. Well, my lord.
If he steal aught the whilst this play is playing,
And scape detecting, I will pay the theft.
Sound a flourish. [*Enter* Trumpets and Kettledrums. Danish
march. [*Enter* King, Queen, Polonius, Ophelia, Rosencrantz,
Guildenstern, and other Lords attendant, with the Guard carrying torches.

Ham. They are coming to the play. I must be idle.

Get you a place.

King. How fares our cousin Hamlet?

Ham. Excellent, i' faith; of the chameleon's dish. I eat the air,
promise-cramm'd. You cannot feed capons so.

King. I have nothing with this answer, Hamlet. These words are not mine.

Ham. No, nor mine now. *[To Polonius]* My lord, you play'd once
i' th' university, you say?

Pol. That did I, my lord, and was accounted a good actor.

Ham. What did you enact?

Pol. I did enact Julius Caesar; I was kill'd i' th' Capitol;
Brutus kill'd me.

Ham. It was a brute part of him to kill so capital a calf
there. Be the players ready.

Ros. Ay, my lord. They stay upon your patience.

Queen. Come hither, my dear Hamlet, sit by me.

Ham. No, good mother. Here's metal more attractive.

Pol. [to the King] O, ho! do you mark that?

Ham. Lady, shall I lie in your lap?

[Sits down at Ophelia's feet.]

Oph. No, my lord.

Ham. I mean, my head upon your lap?

Oph. Ay, my lord.

Ham. Do you think I meant country matters?

Oph. I think nothing, my lord.

Ham. That's a fair thought to lie between maids' legs.

Oph. What is, my lord?

Ham. Nothing.

Oph. You are merry, my lord.

Ham. Who, I?

Oph. Ay, my lord.

Ham. O God, your only jig-maker! What should a man do but be merry? For look you how cheerfully my mother looks, and my father died within 's two hours.

Oph. Nay 'tis twice two months, my lord.

Ham. So long? Nay then, let the devil wear black, for I'll have a suit of sables. O heavens! die two months ago, and not forgotten yet? Then there's hope a great man's memory may outlive his life half a year. But, by'r Lady, he must build churches then; or else shall he suffer not thinking on, with the hobby-horse, whose epitaph is 'For O, for O, the hobby-horse is forgot!'

Hautboys play. The dumb show enters.

Enter a King and a Queen very lovingly; the Queen embracing

him and he her. She kneels, and makes show of protestation unto him. He takes her up, and declines his head upon her neck. He lays him down upon a bank of flowers. She, seeing him asleep, leaves him. Anon comes in a fellow, takes off his crown, kisses it, pours poison in the sleeper's ears, and leaves him. The Queen returns, finds the King dead, and makes passionate action. The Poisoner with some three or four Mutes, comes in again, seem to condole with her. The dead body is carried away. The Poisoner wooes the Queen with gifts; she seems harsh and unwilling awhile, but in the end accepts his love.

Exeunt.

Oph. What means this, my lord?

Ham. Marry, this is miching malhecho; it means mischief.

Oph. Belike this show imports the argument of the play.

Enter Prologue.

Ham. We shall know by this fellow. The players cannot keep counsel; they'll tell all.

Oph. Will he tell us what this show meant?

Ham. Ay, or any show that you'll show him. Be not you asham'd to show, he'll not shame to tell you what it means.

Oph. You are naught, you are naught! I'll mark the play.

Pro. For us, and for our tragedy,
Here stooping to your clemency,

We beg your hearing patiently. *[Exit.]*

Ham. Is this a prologue, or the posy of a ring?

Oph. 'Tis brief, my lord.

Ham. As woman's love.

Enter [two Players as] King and Queen.

King. Full thirty times hath Phoebus' cart gone round
Neptune's salt wash and Tellus' orbed ground,
And thirty dozed moons with borrowed sheen
About the world have times twelve thirties been,
Since love our hearts, and Hymen did our hands,
Unite comutual in most sacred bands.

Queen. So many journeys may the sun and moon
Make us again count o'er ere love be done!
But woe is me! you are so sick of late,
So far from cheer and from your former state.

That I distrust you. Yet, though I distrust,
Discomfort you, my lord, it nothing must;
For women's fear and love holds quantity,
In neither aught, or in extremity.
Now what my love is, proof hath made you know;
And as my love is siz'd, my fear is so.
Where love is great, the littlest doubts are fear;
Where little fears grow great, great love grows there.

King. Faith, I must leave thee, love, and shortly too;
My operant powers their functions leave to do.
And thou shalt live in this fair world behind,
Honour'd, belov'd, and haply one as kind
For husband shalt thou-

Queen. O, confound the rest!
Such love must needs be treason in my breast.

When second husband let me be accurst!
None wed the second but who killed the first.

Ham. [aside] Wormwood, wormwood!

Queen. The instances that second marriage move
Are base respects of thrift, but none of love.
A second time I kill my husband dead
When second husband kisses me in bed.

King. I do believe you think what now you speak;
But what we do determine oft we break.
Purpose is but the slave to memory,
Of violent birth, but poor validity;
Which now, like fruit unripe, sticks on the tree,
But fill unshaken when they mellow be.
Most necessary 'tis that we forget
To pay ourselves what to ourselves is debt.
What to ourselves in passion we propose,
The passion ending, doth the purpose lose.
The violence of either grief or joy
Their own enactures with themselves destroy.
Where joy most revels, grief doth most lament;
Grief joys, joy grieves, on slender accident.

This world is not for aye, nor 'tis not strange
That even our loves should with our fortunes change;
For 'tis a question left us yet to prove,
Whether love lead fortune, or else fortune love.
The great man down, you mark his favourite flies,
The poor advanc'd makes friends of enemies;
And hitherto doth love on fortune tend,
For who not needs shall never lack a friend,
And who in want a hollow friend doth try,
Directly seasons him his enemy.
But, orderly to end where I begun,
Our wills and fates do so contrary run
That our devices still are overthrown;
Our thoughts are ours, their ends none of our own.
So think thou wilt no second husband wed;
But die thy thoughts when thy first lord is dead.

Queen. Nor earth to me give food, nor heaven light,
Sport and repose lock from me day and night,
To desperation turn my trust and hope,
An anchor's cheer in prison be my scope,

Each opposite that blanks the face of joy

Meet what I would have well, and it destroy,

Both here and hence pursue me lasting strife,

If, once a widow, ever I be wife!

Ham. If she should break it now!

King. 'Tis deeply sworn. Sweet, leave me here awhile.

My spirits grow dull, and fain I would beguile

The tedious day with sleep.

Queen. Sleep rock thy brain,

[He] sleeps.

And never come mischance between us twain!

Exit.

Ham. Madam, how like you this play?

Queen. The lady doth protest too much, methinks.

Ham. O, but she'll keep her word.

King. Have you heard the argument? Is there no offence in't?

Ham. No, no! They do but jest, poison in jest; no offence i' th' world.

King. What do you call the play?

Ham. 'The Mousetrap.' Marry, how? Tropically. This play is the image of a murther done in Vienna. Gonzago is the duke's name; his wife, Baptista. You shall see anon. 'Tis a knavish piece of work; but what o' that? Your Majesty, and we that have free souls, it touches us not. Let the gall'd jade winch; our withers are unwrung.

Enter Lucianus.

This is one Lucianus, nephew to the King.

Oph. You are as good as a chorus, my lord.

Ham. I could interpret between you and your love, if I could see

the puppets dallying.

Oph. You are keen, my lord, you are keen.

Ham. It would cost you a groaning to take off my edge.

Oph. Still better, and worse.

Ham. So you must take your husbands.- Begin, murtherer. Pox, leave

thy damnable faces, and begin! Come, the croaking raven doth bellow for revenge.

Luc. Thoughts black, hands apt, drugs fit, and time agreeing;

Confederate season, else no creature seeing;

Thou mixture rank, of midnight weeds collected,

With Hecate's ban thrice blasted, thrice infected,

Thy natural magic and dire property

On wholesome life usurp immediately.

Pours the poison in his ears.

Ham. He poisons him i' th' garden for's estate. His name's

Gonzago.
The story is extant, and written in very choice Italian. You
shall see anon how the murtherer gets the love of Gonzago's wife.

Oph. The King rises.

Ham. What, frighted with false fire?

Queen. How fares my lord?

Pol. Give o'er the play.

King. Give me some light! Away!

All. Lights, lights, lights!
Exeunt all but Hamlet and Horatio.

Ham. Why, let the strucken deer go weep,
The hart ungalled play;
For some must watch, while some must sleep:
Thus runs the world away.
Would not this, sir, and a forest of feathers-if the rest of my fortunes turn Turk with me-with two Provincial roses on my raz'd shoes, get me a fellowship in a cry of players, sir?

Hor. Half a share.

Ham. A whole one I!
For thou dost know, O Damon dear,
This realm dismantled was
Of Jove himself; and now reigns here
A very, very-pajock.

Hor. You might have rhym'd.

Ham. O good Horatio, I'll take the ghost's word for a thousand pound! Didst perceive?

Hor. Very well, my lord.

Ham. Upon the talk of the poisoning?

Hor. I did very well note him.

Ham. Aha! Come, some music! Come, the recorders!
For if the King like not the comedy,
Why then, belike he likes it not, perdy.
Come, some music!

Enter Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.

Guil. Good my lord, vouchsafe me a word with you.

Ham. Sir, a whole history.

Guil. The King, sir-

Ham. Ay, sir, what of him?

Guil. Is in his retirement, marvellous distemper'd.

Ham. With drink, sir?

Guil. No, my lord; rather with choler.

Ham. Your wisdom should show itself more richer to signify this to the doctor; for me to put him to his purgation would perhaps plunge him into far more choler.

Guil. Good my lord, put your discourse into some frame, and start not so wildly from my affair.

Ham. I am tame, sir; pronounce.

Guil. The Queen, your mother, in most great affliction of spirit hath sent me to you.

Ham. You are welcome.

Guil. Nay, good my lord, this courtesy is not of the right breed.

If it shall please you to make me a wholesome answer, I will do
your mother's commandment; if not, your pardon and my return
shall be the end of my business.

Ham. Sir, I cannot.

Guil. What, my lord?

Ham. Make you a wholesome answer; my wit's diseas'd. But, sir, such
answer is I can make, you shall command; or rather, as you say,
my mother. Therefore no more, but to the matter! My mother, you
say-

Ros. Then thus she says: your behaviour hath struck her into
amazement and admiration.

Ham. O wonderful son, that can so stonish a mother! But is there no
sequel at the heels of this mother's admiration? Impart.

Ros. She desires to speak with you in her closet ere you go to bed.

Ham. We shall obey, were she ten times our mother. Have you any
further trade with us?

Ros. My lord, you once did love me.

Ham. And do still, by these pickers and stealers!

Ros. Good my lord, what is your cause of distemper? You do surely
bar the door upon your own liberty, if you deny your griefs to your friend.

Ham. Sir, I lack advancement.

Ros. How can that be, when you have the voice of the King himself
for your succession in Denmark?

Ham. Ay, sir, but 'while the grass grows'- the proverb is something musty.

Enter the Players with recorders.

O, the recorders! Let me see one. To withdraw with you-why do
you go about to recover the wind of me, as if you would drive me into a toil?

Guil. O my lord, if my duty be too bold, my love is too unmannerly.

Ham. I do not well understand that. Will you play upon this pipe?

Guil. My lord, I cannot.

Ham. I pray you.

Guil. Believe me, I cannot.

Ham. I do beseech you.

Guil. I know, no touch of it, my lord.

Ham. It is as easy as lying. Govern these ventages with your fingers and thumbs, give it breath with your mouth, and it will discourse most eloquent music. Look you, these are the stops.

Guil. But these cannot I command to any utt'rance of harmony. I have not the skill.

Ham. Why, look you now, how unworthy a thing you make of me!
You
would play upon me; you would seem to know my stops; you would
pluck out the heart of my mystery; you would sound me from my
lowest note to the top of my compass; and there is much music,
excellent voice, in this little organ, yet cannot you make it
speak. 'Sblood, do you think I am easier to be play'd on than a
pipe? Call me what instrument you will, though you can fret me,
you cannot play upon me.

Enter Polonius.

God bless you, sir!

Pol. My lord, the Queen would speak with you, and presently.

Ham. Do you see yonder cloud that's almost in shape of a camel?

Pol. By th' mass, and 'tis like a camel indeed.

Ham. Methinks it is like a weasel.

Pol. It is back'd like a weasel.

Ham. Or like a whale.

Pol. Very like a whale.

Ham. Then will I come to my mother by-and-by.- They fool me to the top of my bent.- I will come by-and-by.

Pol. I will say so. *Exit* .

Ham. 'By-and-by' is easily said.- Leave me, friends.
[Exeunt all but Hamlet.]
'Tis now the very witching time of night,
When churchyards yawn, and hell itself breathes out
Contagion to this world. Now could I drink hot blood
And do such bitter business as the day
Would quake to look on. Soft! now to my mother!
O heart, lose not thy nature; let not ever

The soul of Nero enter this firm bosom.

Let me be cruel, not unnatural;

I will speak daggers to her, but use none.

My tongue and soul in this be hypocrites-

How in my words somever she be shent,

To give them seals never, my soul, consent! *Exit* .

Scene III. A room in the Castle.

Enter King, Rosencrantz, and Guildenstern.

King. I like him not, nor stands it safe with us

To let his madness range. Therefore prepare you;

I your commission will forthwith dispatch,

And he to England shall along with you.

The terms of our estate may not endure

Hazard so near us as doth hourly grow

Out of his lunacies.

Guil. We will ourselves provide.

Most holy and religious fear it is

To keep those many many bodies safe

That live and feed upon your Majesty.

Ros. The single and peculiar life is bound
With all the strength and armour of the mind
To keep itself from noyance; but much more
That spirit upon whose weal depends and rests
The lives of many. The cesse of majesty
Dies not alone, but like a gulf doth draw
What's near it with it. It is a massy wheel,
Fix'd on the summit of the highest mount,
To whose huge spokes ten thousand lesser things
Are mortis'd and adjoin'd; which when it falls,
Each small annexment, petty consequence,
Attends the boist'rous ruin. Never alone
Did the king sigh, but with a general groan.

King. Arm you, I pray you, to th', speedy voyage;
For we will fetters put upon this fear,
Which now goes too free-footed.

Both. We will haste us.

Exeunt Gentlemen.

Enter Polonius.

Pol. My lord, he's going to his mother's closet.
Behind the arras I'll convey myself
To hear the process. I'll warrant she'll tax him home;
And, as you said, and wisely was it said,
'Tis meet that some more audience than a mother,
Since nature makes them partial, should o'erhear
The speech, of vantage. Fare you well, my liege.
I'll call upon you ere you go to bed
And tell you what I know.

King. Thanks, dear my lord.

Exit [Polonius] .

O, my offence is rank, it smells to heaven;
It hath the primal eldest curse upon't,
A brother's murther! Pray can I not,

Though inclination be as sharp as will.
My stronger guilt defeats my strong intent,
And, like a man to double business bound,
I stand in pause where I shall first begin,
And both neglect. What if this cursed hand
Were thicker than itself with brother's blood,
Is there not rain enough in the sweet heavens
To wash it white as snow? Whereto serves mercy
But to confront the visage of offence?
And what's in prayer but this twofold force,
To be forestalled ere we come to fall,
Or pardon'd being down? Then I'll look up;
My fault is past. But, O, what form of prayer
Can serve my turn? 'Forgive me my foul murther'?
That cannot be; since I am still possess'd
Of those effects for which I did the murther-
My crown, mine own ambition, and my queen.

May one be pardon'd and retain th' offence?
In the corrupted currents of this world
Offence's gilded hand may shove by justice,

And oft 'tis seen the wicked prize itself
Buys out the law; but 'tis not so above.
There is no shuffling; there the action lies
In his true nature, and we ourselves compell'd,
Even to the teeth and forehead of our faults,
To give in evidence. What then? What rests?
Try what repentance can. What can it not?

Yet what can it when one cannot repent?
O wretched state! O bosom black as death!
O limed soul, that, struggling to be free,
Art more engag'd! Help, angels! Make assay.
Bow, stubborn knees; and heart with strings of steel,
Be soft as sinews of the new-born babe!

All may be well. He kneels.

Enter Hamlet.

Ham. Now might I do it pat, now he is praying;
And now I'll do't. And so he goes to heaven,

And so am I reveng'd. That would be scann'd.
A villain kills my father; and for that,
I, his sole son, do this same villain send To heaven.
Why, this is hire and salary, not revenge!
He took my father grossly, full of bread,
With all his crimes broad blown, as flush as May;
And how his audit stands, who knows save heaven?
But in our circumstance and course of thought,
'Tis heavy with him; and am I then reveng'd,
To take him in the purging of his soul,
When he is fit and seasoned for his passage?

No.

Up, sword, and know thou a more horrid hent.
When he is drunk asleep; or in his rage;
Or in th' incestuous pleasure of his bed;
At gaming, swearing, or about some act
That has no relish of salvation in't-
Then trip him, that his heels may kick at heaven,
And that his soul may be as damn'd and black
As hell, whereto it goes. My mother stays.

This physic but prolongs thy sickly days. *Exit* .

King. [rises] My words fly up, my thoughts remain below.
Words without thoughts never to heaven go. *Exit* .

Scene IV. The Queen's closet.

Enter Queen and Polonius.

Pol. He will come straight. Look you lay home to him.
Tell him his pranks have been too broad to bear with,
And that your Grace hath screen'd and stood between
Much heat and him. I'll silence me even here.

Pray you be round with him.

Ham. (within) Mother, mother, mother!

Queen. I'll warrant you; fear me not. Withdraw; I hear him coming.

[Polonius hides behind the arras.]

Enter Hamlet.

Ham. Now, mother, what's the matter?

Queen. Hamlet, thou hast thy father much offended.

Ham. Mother, you have my father much offended.

Queen. Come, come, you answer with an idle tongue.

Ham. Go, go, you question with a wicked tongue.

Queen. Why, how now, Hamlet?

Ham. What's the matter now?

Queen. Have you forgot me?

Ham. No, by the rood, not so!
You are the Queen, your husband's brother's wife,
And (would it were not so!) you are my mother.

Queen. Nay, then I'll set those to you that can speak.

Ham. Come, come, and sit you down. You shall not budge I

You go not till I set you up a glass

Where you may see the inmost part of you.

Queen. What wilt thou do? Thou wilt not murther me?

Help, help, ho!

Pol. [behind] What, ho! help, help, help!

Ham. [draws] How now? a rat? Dead for a ducat, dead!

[Makes a pass through the arras and] kills Polonius.

Pol. [behind] O, I am slain!

Queen. O me, what hast thou done?

Ham. Nay, I know not. Is it the King?

Queen. O, what a rash and bloody deed is this!

Ham. A bloody deed-almost as bad, good mother,
As kill a king, and marry with his brother.

Queen. As kill a king?

Ham. Ay, lady, it was my word.
[Lifts up the arras and sees Polonius.]
Thou wretched, rash, intruding fool, farewell!
I took thee for thy better. Take thy fortune.

Thou find'st to be too busy is some danger.
Leave wringing of your hinds. Peace! sit you down
And let me wring your heart; for so I shall
If it be made of penetrable stuff;
If damned custom have not braz'd it so
That it is proof and bulwark against sense.

Queen. What have I done that thou dar'st wag thy tongue

In noise so rude against me?

Ham. Such an act
That blurs the grace and blush of modesty;
Calls virtue hypocrite; takes off the rose
From the fair forehead of an innocent love,
And sets a blister there; makes marriage vows
As false as dicers' oaths. O, such a deed
As from the body of contraction plucks
The very soul, and sweet religion makes
A rhapsody of words! Heaven's face doth glow;
Yea, this solidity and compound mass,
With tristful visage, as against the doom,
Is thought-sick at the act.

Queen. Ay me, what act,
That roars so loud and thunders in the index?

Ham. Look here upon th's picture, and on this,
The counterfeit presentment of two brothers.
See what a grace was seated on this brow;

Hyperion's curls; the front of Jove himself;
An eye like Mars, to threaten and command;
A station like the herald Mercury
New lighted on a heaven-kissing hill:
A combination and a form indeed
Where every god did seem to set his seal
To give the world assurance of a man.

This was your husband. Look you now what follows.
Here is your husband, like a mildew'd ear
Blasting his wholesome brother. Have you eyes?
Could you on this fair mountain leave to feed,
And batten on this moor? Ha! have you eyes
You cannot call it love; for at your age
The heyday in the blood is tame, it's humble,
And waits upon the judgment; and what judgment
Would step from this to this? Sense sure you have,
Else could you not have motion; but sure that sense
Is apoplex'd; for madness would not err,
Nor sense to ecstacy was ne'er so thrall'd
But it reserv'd some quantity of choice

To serve in such a difference. What devil was't
That thus hath cozen'd you at hoodman-blind?
Eyes without feeling, feeling without sight,
Ears without hands or eyes, smelling sans all,
Or but a sickly part of one true sense
Could not so mope.
O shame! where is thy blush? Rebellious hell,
If thou canst mutine in a matron's bones,
To flaming youth let virtue be as wax
And melt in her own fire. Proclaim no shame
When the compulsive ardour gives the charge,
Since frost itself as actively doth burn,
And reason panders will.

Queen. O Hamlet, speak no more!
Thou turn'st mine eyes into my very soul,
And there I see such black and grained spots
As will not leave their tinct.

Ham. Nay, but to live
In the rank sweat of an enseamed bed,

Stew'd in corruption, honeying and making love
Over the nasty sty!

Queen. O, speak to me no more!
These words like daggers enter in mine ears.

No more, sweet Hamlet!

Ham. A murtherer and a villain!
A slave that is not twentieth part the tithe
Of your precedent lord; a vice of kings;
A cutpurse of the empire and the rule,
That from a shelf the precious diadem stole
And put it in his pocket!

Queen. No more!

Enter the Ghost in his nightgown.

Ham. A king of shreds and patches!-
Save me and hover o'er me with your wings,

You heavenly guards! What would your gracious figure?

Queen. Alas, he's mad!

Ham. Do you not come your tardy son to chide,
That, laps'd in time and passion, lets go by
Th' important acting of your dread command?
O, say!

Ghost. Do not forget. This visitation
Is but to whet thy almost blunted purpose.

But look, amazement on thy mother sits.
O, step between her and her fighting soul
Conceit in weakest bodies strongest works.
Speak to her, Hamlet.

Ham. How is it with you, lady?

Queen. Alas, how is't with you,
That you do bend your eye on vacancy,

And with th' encorporal air do hold discourse?
Forth at your eyes your spirits wildly peep;
And, as the sleeping soldiers in th' alarm,
Your bedded hairs, like life in excrements,
Start up and stand an end. O gentle son,
Upon the beat and flame of thy distemper
Sprinkle cool patience! Whereon do you look?

Ham. On him, on him! Look you how pale he glares!
His form and cause conjoin'd, preaching to stones,
Would make them capable.- Do not look upon me,
Lest with this piteous action you convert
My stern effects. Then what I have to do
Will want true colour-tears perchance for blood.

Queen. To whom do you speak this?

Ham. Do you see nothing there?

Queen. Nothing at all; yet all that is I see.

Ham. Nor did you nothing hear?

Queen. No, nothing but ourselves.

Ham. Why, look you there! Look how it steals away!
My father, in his habit as he liv'd!

Look where he goes even now out at the portal!

Exit Ghost.

Queen. This is the very coinage of your brain.
This bodiless creation ecstasy
Is very cunning in.

Ham. Ecstasy?
My pulse as yours doth temperately keep time
And makes as healthful music. It is not madness
That I have utt'red. Bring me to the test,
And I the matter will reword; which madness

Would gambol from. Mother, for love of grace,
Lay not that flattering unction to your soul
That not your trespass but my madness speaks.
It will but skin and film the ulcerous place,
Whiles rank corruption, mining all within,
Infects unseen. Confess yourself to heaven;
Repent what's past; avoid what is to come;
And do not spread the compost on the weeds
To make them ranker. Forgive me this my virtue;
For in the fatness of these pursy times
Virtue itself of vice must pardon beg-
Yea, curb and woo for leave to do him good.

Queen. O Hamlet, thou hast cleft my heart in twain.

Ham. O, throw away the worser part of it,
And live the purer with the other half,
Good night-but go not to my uncle's bed.
Assume a virtue, if you have it not.
That monster, custom, who all sense doth eat
Of habits evil, is angel yet in this,

That to the use of actions fair and good
He likewise gives a frock or livery,
That aptly is put on. Refrain to-night,
And that shall lend a kind of easiness
To the next abstinence; the next more easy;
For use almost can change the stamp of nature,
And either *[master]* the devil, or throw him out
With wondrous potency. Once more, good night;
And when you are desirous to be blest,
I'll blessing beg of you.- For this same lord,
I do repent; but heaven hath pleas'd it so,
To punish me with this, and this with me,
That I must be their scourge and minister.
I will bestow him, and will answer well
The death I gave him. So again, good night.
I must be cruel, only to be kind;
Thus bad begins, and worse remains behind.
One word more, good lady.

Queen. What shall I do?

Ham. Not this, by no means, that I bid you do:
Let the bloat King tempt you again to bed;
Pinch wanton on your cheek; call you his mouse;
And let him, for a pair of reechy kisses,
Or paddling in your neck with his damn'd fingers,
Make you to ravel all this matter out,
That I essentially am not in madness,
But mad in craft. 'Twere good you let him know;
For who that's but a queen, fair, sober, wise,
Would from a paddock, from a bat, a gib
Such dear concernings hide? Who would do so?
No, in despite of sense and secrecy,
Unpeg the basket on the house's top,
Let the birds fly, and like the famous ape,
To try conclusions, in the basket creep
And break your own neck down.

Queen. Be thou assur'd, if words be made of breath,
And breath of life, I have no life to breathe
What thou hast said to me.

Ham. I must to England; you know that?

Queen. Alack,
I had forgot! 'Tis so concluded on.

Ham. There's letters seal'd; and my two schoolfellows,
Whom I will trust as I will adders fang'd,
They bear the mandate; they must sweep my way
And marshal me to knavery. Let it work;
For 'tis the sport to have the enginer
Hoist with his own petar; and 't shall go hard
But I will delve one yard below their mines
And blow them at the moon. O, 'tis most sweet
When in one line two crafts directly meet.
This man shall set me packing.
I'll lug the guts into the neighbour room.-
Mother, good night.- Indeed, this counsellor
Is now most still, most secret, and most grave,
Who was in life a foolish peating knave.

Come, sir, to draw toward an end with you.

Good night, mother.

[Exit the Queen. Then] Exit Hamlet, tugging in Polonius.

ACT IV. Scene I. Elsinore. A room in the Castle.

Enter King and Queen, with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.

King. There's matter in these sighs. These profound heaves

You must translate; 'tis fit we understand them.

Where is your son?

Queen. Bestow this place on us a little while.

[Exeunt Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.]

Ah, mine own lord, what have I seen to-night!

King. What, Gertrude? How does Hamlet?

Queen. Mad as the sea and wind when both contend

Which is the mightier. In his lawless fit
Behind the arras hearing something stir,
Whips out his rapier, cries 'A rat, a rat!'
And in this brainish apprehension kills
The unseen good old man.

King. O heavy deed!
It had been so with us, had we been there.
His liberty is full of threats to all-
To you yourself, to us, to every one.

Alas, how shall this bloody deed be answer'd?
It will be laid to us, whose providence
Should have kept short, restrain'd, and out of haunt
This mad young man. But so much was our love
We would not understand what was most fit,
But, like the owner of a foul disease,
To keep it from divulging, let it feed
Even on the pith of life. Where is he gone?

Queen. To draw apart the body he hath kill'd;

O'er whom his very madness, like some ore
Among a mineral of metals base,
Shows itself pure. He weeps for what is done.

King. O Gertrude, come away!
The sun no sooner shall the mountains touch
But we will ship him hence; and this vile deed
We must with all our majesty and skill
Both countenance and excuse. Ho, Guildenstern!

Enter Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.

Friends both, go join you with some further aid.
Hamlet in madness hath Polonius slain,
And from his mother's closet hath he dragg'd him.
Go seek him out; speak fair, and bring the body
Into the chapel. I pray you haste in this.
Exeunt [Rosencrantz and Guildenstern] .
Come, Gertrude, we'll call up our wisest friends
And let them know both what we mean to do
And what's untimely done. [So haply slander-]

Whose whisper o'er the world's diameter,

As level as the cannon to his blank,

Transports his poisoned shot-may miss our name

And hit the woundless air.- O, come away!

My soul is full of discord and dismay.

Exeunt.

Scene II. Elsinore. A passage in the Castle.

Enter Hamlet.

Ham. Safely stow'd.

Gentlemen. (within) Hamlet! Lord Hamlet!

Ham. But soft! What noise? Who calls on Hamlet? O, here they come.

Enter Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.

Ros. What have you done, my lord, with the dead body?

Ham. Compounded it with dust, whereto 'tis kin.

Ros. Tell us where 'tis, that we may take it thence
And bear it to the chapel.

Ham. Do not believe it.

Ros. Believe what?

Ham. That I can keep your counsel, and not mine own. Besides,
to be
demanded of a sponge, what replication should be made by the son of a king?

Ros. Take you me for a sponge, my lord?

Ham. Ay, sir; that soaks up the King's countenance, his rewards,
his authorities. But such officers do the King best service in
the end. He keeps them, like an ape, in the corner of his jaw;
first mouth'd, to be last Swallowed. When he needs what you have
glean'd, it is but squeezing you and, sponge, you shall be dry again.

Ros. I understand you not, my lord.

Ham. I am glad of it. A knavish speech sleeps in a foolish ear.

Ros. My lord, you must tell us where the body is and go with us to the King.

Ham. The body is with the King, but the King is not with the body.
The King is a thing-

Guil. A thing, my lord?

Ham. Of nothing. Bring me to him. Hide fox, and all after.
Exeunt.

Scene III. Elsinore. A room in the Castle.

Enter King.

King. I have sent to seek him and to find the body.
How dangerous is it that this man goes loose!

Yet must not we put the strong law on him.

He's lov'd of the distracted multitude,
Who like not in their judgment, but their eyes;
And where 'tis so, th' offender's scourge is weigh'd,
But never the offence. To bear all smooth and even,
This sudden sending him away must seem
Deliberate pause. Diseases desperate grown
By desperate appliance are reliev'd,
Or not at all.

Enter Rosencrantz.

How now O What hath befall'n?

Ros. Where the dead body is bestow'd, my lord,
We cannot get from him.

King. But where is he?

Ros. Without, my lord; guarded, to know your pleasure.

King. Bring him before us.

Ros. Ho, Guildenstern! Bring in my lord.

Enter Hamlet and Guildenstern *[with Attendants]* .

King. Now, Hamlet, where's Polonius?

Ham. At supper.

King. At supper? Where?

Ham. Not where he eats, but where he is eaten. A certain
convocation of politic worms are e'en at him. Your worm is your
only emperor for diet. We fat all creatures else to fat us, and
we fat ourselves for maggots. Your fat king and your lean beggar
is but variable service-two dishes, but to one table. That's the end.

King. Alas, alas!

Ham. A man may fish with the worm that hath eat of a king, and eat
of the fish that hath fed of that worm.

King. What dost thou mean by this?

Ham. Nothing but to show you how a king may go a progress through
the guts of a beggar.

King. Where is Polonius?

Ham. In heaven. Send thither to see. If your messenger find him not
there, seek him i' th' other place yourself. But indeed, if you
find him not within this month, you shall nose him as you go up
the stair, into the lobby.

King. Go seek him there. *[To Attendants.]*

Ham. He will stay till you come.

[Exeunt Attendants.]

King. Hamlet, this deed, for thine especial safety,-
Which we do tender as we dearly grieve

For that which thou hast done,- must send thee hence
With fiery quickness. Therefore prepare thyself.
The bark is ready and the wind at help,
Th' associates tend, and everything is bent
For England.

Ham. For England?

King. Ay, Hamlet.

Ham. Good.

King. So is it, if thou knew'st our purposes.

Ham. I see a cherub that sees them. But come, for England!
Farewell, dear mother.

King. Thy loving father, Hamlet.

Ham. My mother! Father and mother is man and wife; man and wife is one flesh; and so, my mother. Come, for England!

Exit.

King. Follow him at foot; tempt him with speed aboard.

Delay it not; I'll have him hence to-night.

Away! for everything is seal'd and done

That else leans on th' affair. Pray you make haste.

Exeunt Rosencrantz and Guildenstern]

And, England, if my love thou hold'st at aught,-

As my great power thereof may give thee sense,

Since yet thy cicatrice looks raw and red

After the Danish sword, and thy free awe

Pays homage to us,- thou mayst not coldly set

Our sovereign process, which imports at full,

By letters congruing to that effect,

The present death of Hamlet. Do it, England;

For like the hectic in my blood he rages,

And thou must cure me. Till I know 'tis done,

Howe'er my haps, my joys were ne'er begun. *Exit* .

Scene IV. Near Elsinore.

Enter Fortinbras with his Army over the stage.

For. Go, Captain, from me greet the Danish king.

Tell him that by his license Fortinbras

Craves the conveyance of a promis'd march

Over his kingdom. You know the rendezvous.

if that his Majesty would aught with us,

We shall express our duty in his eye;

And let him know so.

Capt. I will do't, my lord.

For. Go softly on.

Exeunt [all but the Captain] .

Enter Hamlet, Rosencrantz, *[Guildenstern,]* and others.

Ham. Good sir, whose powers are these?

Capt. They are of Norway, sir.

Ham. How purpos'd, sir, I pray you?

Capt. Against some part of Poland.

Ham. Who commands them, sir?

Capt. The nephew to old Norway, Fortinbras.

Ham. Goes it against the main of Poland, sir,
Or for some frontier?

Capt. Truly to speak, and with no addition,
We go to gain a little patch of ground
That hath in it no profit but the name.
To pay five ducats, five, I would not farm it;
Nor will it yield to Norway or the Pole
A ranker rate, should it be sold in fee.

Ham. Why, then the Polack never will defend it.

Capt. Yes, it is already garrison'd.

Ham. Two thousand souls and twenty thousand ducats
Will not debate the question of this straw.
This is th' imposthume of much wealth and peace,
That inward breaks, and shows no cause without
Why the man dies.- I humbly thank you, sir.

Capt. God b' wi' you, sir. *[Exit.]*

Ros. Will't please you go, my lord?

Ham. I'll be with you straight. Go a little before.
[Exeunt all but Hamlet.]
How all occasions do inform against me
And spur my dull revenge! What is a man,
If his chief good and market of his time
Be but to sleep and feed? A beast, no more.
Sure he that made us with such large discourse,
Looking before and after, gave us not
That capability and godlike reason

To fust in us unus'd. Now, whether it be
Bestial oblivion, or some craven scruple
Of thinking too precisely on th' event,-
A thought which, quarter'd, hath but one part wisdom
And ever three parts coward,- I do not know
Why yet I live to say 'This thing's to do,'
Sith I have cause, and will, and strength, and means
To do't. Examples gross as earth exhort me.
Witness this army of such mass and charge,
Led by a delicate and tender prince,
Whose spirit, with divine ambition puff'd,
Makes mouths at the invisible event,
Exposing what is mortal and unsure
To all that fortune, death, and danger dare,
Even for an eggshell. Rightly to be great
Is not to stir without great argument,
But greatly to find quarrel in a straw
When honour's at the stake. How stand I then,
That have a father klll'd, a mother stain'd,
Excitements of my reason and my blood,
And let all sleep, while to my shame I see

The imminent death of twenty thousand men

That for a fantasy and trick of fame

Go to their graves like beds, fight for a plot

Whereon the numbers cannot try the cause,

Which is not tomb enough and continent

To hide the slain? O, from this time forth,

My thoughts be bloody, or be nothing worth! *Exit* .

Scene V. Elsinore. A room in the Castle.

Enter Horatio, Queen, and a Gentleman.

Queen. I will not speak with her.

Gent. She is importunate, indeed distract.

Her mood will needs be pitied.

Queen. What would she have?

Gent. She speaks much of her father; says she hears

There's tricks i' th' world, and hems, and beats her heart;

Spurns enviously at straws; speaks things in doubt,
That carry but half sense. Her speech is nothing,
Yet the unshaped use of it doth move
The hearers to collection; they aim at it,
And botch the words up fit to their own thoughts;
Which, as her winks and nods and gestures yield them,
Indeed would make one think there might be thought,
Though nothing sure, yet much unhappily.

Hor. 'Twere good she were spoken with; for she may strew
Dangerous conjectures in ill-breeding minds.

Queen. Let her come in.

[Exit Gentleman.]

[Aside] To my sick soul (as sin's true nature is)
Each toy seems Prologue to some great amiss.
So full of artless jealousy is guilt
It spills itself in fearing to be spilt.

Enter Ophelia distracted.

Oph. Where is the beauteous Majesty of Denmark?

Queen. How now, Ophelia?

Oph. (sings)
How should I your true-love know
From another one?
By his cockle bat and' staff
And his sandal shoon.

Queen. Alas, sweet lady, what imports this song?

Oph. Say you? Nay, pray You mark.
(Sings) He is dead and gone, lady,
He is dead and gone;
At his head a grass-green turf,
At his heels a stone.
O, ho!

Queen. Nay, but Ophelia-

Oph. Pray you mark.

(Sings) White his shroud as the mountain snow-

Enter King.

Queen. Alas, look here, my lord!

Oph. (Sings)

Larded all with sweet flowers;

Which bewept to the grave did not go

With true-love showers.

King. How do you, pretty lady?

Oph. Well, God dild you! They say the owl was a baker's daughter.

Lord, we know what we are, but know not what we may be. God be at your table!

King. Conceit upon her father.

Oph. Pray let's have no words of this; but when they ask, you what it means, say you this:

(Sings) To-morrow is Saint Valentine's day,
All in the morning bedtime,
And I a maid at your window,
To be your Valentine.
Then up he rose and donn'd his clo'es
And dupp'd the chamber door,
Let in the maid, that out a maid
Never departed more.

King. Pretty Ophelia!

Oph. Indeed, la, without an oath, I'll make an end on't!

[Sings] By Gis and by Saint Charity,
Alack, and fie for shame!
Young men will do't if they come to't
By Cock, they are to blame.
Quoth she, 'Before you tumbled me,

You promis'd me to wed.'

He answers:
'So would I 'a' done, by yonder sun,
An thou hadst not come to my bed.'

King. How long hath she been thus?

Oph. I hope all will be well. We must be patient; but I cannot choose but weep to think they would lay him i' th' cold ground. My brother shall know of it; and so I thank you for your good counsel. Come, my coach! Good night, ladies. Good night, sweet ladies. Good night, good night. *Exit*

King. Follow her close; give her good watch, I pray you.

[Exit Horatio.]
O, this is the poison of deep grief; it springs
All from her father's death. O Gertrude, Gertrude,
When sorrows come, they come not single spies.
But in battalions! First, her father slain;

Next, Your son gone, and he most violent author
Of his own just remove; the people muddied,
Thick and and unwholesome in their thoughts and whispers
For good Polonius' death, and we have done but greenly
In hugger-mugger to inter him; Poor Ophelia
Divided from herself and her fair-judgment,
Without the which we are Pictures or mere beasts;
Last, and as such containing as all these,
Her brother is in secret come from France;
And wants not buzzers to infect his ear
Feeds on his wonder, keep, himself in clouds,
With pestilent speeches of his father's death,
Wherein necessity, of matter beggar'd,
Will nothing stick Our person to arraign
In ear and ear. O my dear Gertrude, this,
Like to a murd'ring piece, in many places
Give, me superfluous death. A noise within.

Queen. Alack, what noise is this?

King. Where are my Switzers? Let them guard the door.

Enter a Messenger.

What is the matter?

Mess. Save Yourself, my lord:
The ocean, overpeering of his list,
Eats not the flats with more impetuous haste
Than Young Laertes, in a riotous head,
O'erbears Your offices. The rabble call him lord;
And, as the world were now but to begin,
Antiquity forgot, custom not known,
The ratifiers and props of every word,
They cry 'Choose we! Laertes shall be king!'
Caps, hands, and tongues applaud it to the clouds,
'Laertes shall be king! Laertes king!'
A noise within.

Queen. How cheerfully on the false trail they cry!
O, this is counter, you false Danish dogs!

King. The doors are broke.

Enter Laertes with others.

Laer. Where is this king?- Sirs, staid you all without.

All. No, let's come in!

Laer. I pray you give me leave.

All. We will, we will!

Laer. I thank you. Keep the door. *[Exeunt his Followers.]*
O thou vile king,
Give me my father!

Queen. Calmly, good Laertes.

Laer. That drop of blood that's calm proclaims me bastard;
Cries cuckold to my father; brands the harlot
Even here between the chaste unsmirched brows

Of my true mother.

King. What is the cause, Laertes,
That thy rebellion looks so giantlike?

Let him go, Gertrude. Do not fear our person.
There's such divinity doth hedge a king
That treason can but peep to what it would,
Acts little of his will. Tell me, Laertes,
Why thou art thus incens'd. Let him go, Gertrude.
Speak, man.

Laer. Where is my father?

King. Dead.

Queen. But not by him!

King. Let him demand his fill.

Laer. How came he dead? I'll not be juggled with:

To hell, allegiance! vows, to the blackest devil
Conscience and grace, to the profoundest pit!
I dare damnation. To this point I stand,
That both the world, I give to negligence,
Let come what comes; only I'll be reveng'd
Most throughly for my father.

King. Who shall stay you?

Laer. My will, not all the world!
And for my means, I'll husband them so well
They shall go far with little.

King. Good Laertes,
If you desire to know the certainty
Of your dear father's death, is't writ in Your revenge
That swoopstake you will draw both friend and foe,
Winner and loser?

Laer. None but his enemies.

King. Will you know them then?

Laer. To his good friends thus wide I'll ope my arms
And, like the kind life-rend'ring pelican,
Repast them with my blood.

King. Why, now You speak
Like a good child and a true gentleman.
That I am guiltless of your father's death,
And am most sensibly in grief for it,
It shall as level to your judgment pierce
As day does to your eye.

A noise within: 'Let her come in.'

Laer. How now? What noise is that?

Enter Ophelia.

O heat, dry up my brains! Tears seven times salt
Burn out the sense and virtue of mine eye!

By heaven, thy madness shall be paid by weight
Till our scale turn the beam. O rose of May!

Dear maid, kind sister, sweet Ophelia!
O heavens! is't possible a young maid's wits
Should be as mortal as an old man's life?
Nature is fine in love, and where 'tis fine,
It sends some precious instance of itself
After the thing it loves.

Oph. (sings)
They bore him barefac'd on the bier
(Hey non nony, nony, hey nony)
And in his grave rain'd many a tear.

Fare you well, my dove!

Laer. Hadst thou thy wits, and didst persuade revenge,
It could not move thus.

Oph. You must sing 'A-down a-down, and you call him a-down-a.'

O, how the wheel becomes it! It is the false steward, that stole his master's daughter.

Laer. This nothing's more than matter.

Oph. There's rosemary, that's for remembrance. Pray you, love, remember. And there is pansies, that's for thoughts.

Laer. A document in madness! Thoughts and remembrance fitted.

Oph. There's fennel for you, and columbines. There's rue for you, and here's some for me. We may call it herb of grace o' *Sundays.*

O, you must wear your rue with a difference! There's a daisy.

I would give you some violets, but they wither'd all when my father died. They say he made a good end.

[Sings] For bonny sweet Robin is all my joy.

Laer. Thought and affliction, passion, hell itself,
She turns to favour and to prettiness.

Oph. (sings)
And will he not come again?

And will he not come again?
No, no, he is dead;
Go to thy deathbed;
He never will come again.
His beard was as white as snow,
All flaxen was his poll.
He is gone, he is gone,
And we cast away moan.

God 'a'mercy on his soul!
And of all Christian souls, I pray God. God b' wi', you.

Exit.

Laer. Do you see this, O God?

King. Laertes, I must commune with your grief,

Or you deny me right. Go but apart,

Make choice of whom your wisest friends you will,

And they shall hear and judge 'twixt you and me.

If by direct or by collateral hand

They find us touch'd, we will our kingdom give,

Our crown, our life, and all that we call ours,

To you in satisfaction; but if not,

Be you content to lend your patience to us,

And we shall jointly labour with your soul

To give it due content.

Laer. Let this be so.

His means of death, his obscure funeral-

No trophy, sword, nor hatchment o'er his bones,

No noble rite nor formal ostentation,-

Cry to be heard, as 'twere from heaven to earth, That I must call't in question.

King. So you shall;

And where th' offence is let the great axe fall.

I pray you go with me.

Exeunt

Scene VI. Elsinore. Another room in the Castle.

Enter Horatio with an Attendant.

Hor. What are they that would speak with me?

Servant. Seafaring men, sir. They say they have letters for you.

Hor. Let them come in.

[Exit Attendant.]

I do not know from what part of the world

I should be greeted, if not from Lord Hamlet.

Enter Sailors.

Sailor. God bless you, sir.

Hor. Let him bless thee too.

Sailor. 'A shall, sir, an't please him. There's a letter for you,
sir,- it comes from th' ambassador that was bound for
England-if
your name be Horatio, as I am let to know it is.

Hor. (reads the letter) 'Horatio, when thou shalt have overlook'd
this, give these fellows some means to the King. They have
letters for him. Ere we were two days old at sea, a pirate of
very warlike appointment gave us chase. Finding ourselves too
slow of sail, we put on a compelled valour, and in the
grapple I
boarded them. On the instant they got clear of our ship; so I
alone became their prisoner. They have dealt with me like thieves
of mercy; but they knew what they did: I am to do a good turn for

them. Let the King have the letters I have sent, and repair thou to me with as much speed as thou wouldst fly death. I have words to speak in thine ear will make thee dumb; yet are they much too light for the bore of the matter. These good fellows will bring thee where I am. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern hold their course for England. Of them I have much to tell thee. Farewell.

'He that thou knowest thine, HAMLET.'

Come, I will give you way for these your letters,
And do't the speedier that you may direct me
To him from whom you brought them. *Exeunt* .

Scene VII. Elsinore. Another room in the Castle.

Enter King and Laertes.

King. Now must your conscience my acquittance seal,

And You must put me in your heart for friend,

Sith you have heard, and with a knowing ear,

That he which hath your noble father slain

Pursued my life.

Laer. It well appears. But tell me

Why you proceeded not against these feats

So crimeful and so capital in nature,

As by your safety, wisdom, all things else,

You mainly were stirr'd up.

King. O, for two special reasons,

Which may to you, perhaps, seein much unsinew'd,

But yet to me they are strong. The Queen his mother

Lives almost by his looks; and for myself,-

My virtue or my plague, be it either which,-

She's so conjunctive to my life and soul
That, as the star moves not but in his sphere,
I could not but by her. The other motive
Why to a public count I might not go
Is the great love the general gender bear him,
Who, dipping all his faults in their affection,
Would, like the spring that turneth wood to stone,
Convert his gives to graces; so that my arrows,
Too slightly timber'd for so loud a wind,
Would have reverted to my bow again,
And not where I had aim'd them.

Laer. And so have I a noble father lost;
A sister driven into desp'rate terms,
Whose worth, if praises may go back again,
Stood challenger on mount of all the age
For her perfections. But my revenge will come.

King. Break not your sleeps for that. You must not think
That we are made of stuff so flat and dull
That we can let our beard be shook with danger,

And think it pastime. You shortly shall hear more.
I lov'd your father, and we love ourself,
And that, I hope, will teach you to imagine-

Enter a Messenger with letters.

How now? What news?

Mess. Letters, my lord, from Hamlet:
This to your Majesty; this to the Queen.

King. From Hamlet? Who brought them?

Mess. Sailors, my lord, they say; I saw them not.
They were given me by Claudio; he receiv'd them
Of him that brought them.

King. Laertes, you shall hear them.
Leave us.

Exit Messenger.

[Reads] 'High and Mighty,-You shall know I am set naked on your kingdom. To-morrow shall I beg leave to see your kingly eyes; when I shall (first asking your pardon thereunto) recount the occasion of my sudden and more strange return.

'HAMLET.'
What should this mean? Are all the rest come back?

Or is it some abuse, and no such thing?

Laer. Know you the hand?

King. 'Tis Hamlet's character. 'Naked!'
And in a postscript here, he says 'alone.'

Can you advise me?

Laer. I am lost in it, my lord. But let him come!
It warms the very sickness in my heart

That I shall live and tell him to his teeth,
'Thus didest thou.'

King. If it be so, Laertes
(As how should it be so? how otherwise?),
Will you be rul'd by me?

Laer. Ay my lord,
So you will not o'errule me to a peace.

King. To thine own peace. If he be now return'd
As checking at his voyage, and that he means
No more to undertake it, I will work him
To exploit now ripe in my device,
Under the which he shall not choose but fall;
And for his death no wind
But even his mother shall uncharge the practice
And call it accident.

Laer. My lord, I will be rul'd;
The rather, if you could devise it so

That I might be the organ.

King. It falls right.
You have been talk'd of since your travel much,
And that in Hamlet's hearing, for a quality
Wherein they say you shine, Your sun of parts
Did not together pluck such envy from him
As did that one; and that, in my regard,
Of the unworthiest siege.

Laer. What part is that, my lord?

King. A very riband in the cap of youth-
Yet needfull too; for youth no less becomes
The light and careless livery that it wears
Thin settled age his sables and his weeds,
Importing health and graveness. Two months since
Here was a gentleman of Normandy.
I have seen myself, and serv'd against, the French,
And they can well on horseback; but this gallant
Had witchcraft in't. He grew unto his seat,

And to such wondrous doing brought his horse
As had he been incorps'd and demi-natur'd
With the brave beast. So far he topp'd my thought
That I, in forgery of shapes and tricks,
Come short of what he did.

Laer. A Norman was't?

King. A Norman.

Laer. Upon my life, Lamound.

King. The very same.

Laer. I know him well. He is the broach indeed
And gem of all the nation.

King. He made confession of you;
And gave you such a masterly report
For art and exercise in your defence,
And for your rapier most especially,

That he cried out 'twould be a sight indeed

If one could match you. The scrimers of their nation

He swore had neither motion, guard, nor eye,

If you oppos'd them. Sir, this report of his

Did Hamlet so envenom with his envy

That he could nothing do but wish and beg

Your sudden coming o'er to play with you.

Now, out of this-

Laer. What out of this, my lord?

King. Laertes, was your father dear to you?

Or are you like the painting of a sorrow,

A face without a heart,'

Laer. Why ask you this?

King. Not that I think you did not love your father;

But that I know love is begun by time,

And that I see, in passages of proof,

Time qualifies the spark and fire of it.

There lives within the very flame of love

A kind of wick or snuff that will abate it;

And nothing is at a like goodness still;

For goodness, growing to a plurisy,

Dies in his own too-much. That we would do,

We should do when we would; for this 'would' changes,

And hath abatements and delays as many

As there are tongues, are hands, are accidents;

And then this 'should' is like a spendthrift sigh,

That hurts by easing. But to the quick o' th' ulcer!

Hamlet comes back. What would you undertake

To show yourself your father's son in deed

More than in words?

Laer. To cut his throat i' th' church!

King. No place indeed should murther sanctuarize;

Revenge should have no bounds. But, good Laertes,

Will you do this? Keep close within your chamber.

Will return'd shall know you are come home.

We'll put on those shall praise your excellence

And set a double varnish on the fame
The Frenchman gave you; bring you in fine together
And wager on your heads. He, being remiss,
Most generous, and free from all contriving,
Will not peruse the foils; so that with ease,
Or with a little shuffling, you may choose
A sword unbated, and, in a pass of practice,
Requite him for your father.

Laer. I will do't!
And for that purpose I'll anoint my sword.
I bought an unction of a mountebank,
So mortal that, but dip a knife in it,
Where it draws blood no cataplasm so rare,
Collected from all simples that have virtue
Under the moon, can save the thing from death
This is but scratch'd withal. I'll touch my point
With this contagion, that, if I gall him slightly,
It may be death.

King. Let's further think of this,

Weigh what convenience both of time and means

May fit us to our shape. If this should fall,

And that our drift look through our bad performance.

'Twere better not assay'd. Therefore this project

Should have a back or second, that might hold

If this did blast in proof. Soft! let me see.

We'll make a solemn wager on your cunnings-

I ha't!

When in your motion you are hot and dry-

As make your bouts more violent to that end-

And that he calls for drink, I'll have prepar'd him

A chalice for the nonce; whereon but sipping,

If he by chance escape your venom'd stuck,

Our purpose may hold there.- But stay, what noise,

Enter Queen.

How now, sweet queen?

Queen. One woe doth tread upon another's heel,

So fast they follow. Your sister's drown'd, Laertes.

Laer. Drown'd! O, where?

Queen. There is a willow grows aslant a brook,

That shows his hoar leaves in the glassy stream.

There with fantastic garlands did she come

Of crowflowers, nettles, daisies, and long purples,

That liberal shepherds give a grosser name,

But our cold maids do dead men's fingers call them.

There on the pendant boughs her coronet weeds

Clamb'ring to hang, an envious sliver broke,

When down her weedy trophies and herself

Fell in the weeping brook. Her clothes spread wide

And, mermaid-like, awhile they bore her up;

Which time she chaunted snatches of old tunes,

As one incapable of her own distress,

Or like a creature native and indued

Unto that element; but long it could not be

Till that her garments, heavy with their drink,

Pull'd the poor wretch from her melodious lay

To muddy death.

Laer. Alas, then she is drown'd?

Queen. Drown'd, drown'd.

Laer. Too much of water hast thou, poor Ophelia,

And therefore I forbid my tears; but yet

It is our trick; nature her custom holds,

Let shame say what it will. When these are gone,

The woman will be out. Adieu, my lord.

I have a speech of fire, that fain would blaze

But that this folly douts it. *Exit* .

King. Let's follow, Gertrude.

How much I had to do to calm his rage I

Now fear I this will give it start again;

Therefore let's follow.

Exeunt.

ACT V. Scene I. Elsinore . A churchyard.

Enter two Clowns, *[with spades and pickaxes]* .

Clown. Is she to be buried in Christian burial when she wilfully
seeks her own salvation?

Other. I tell thee she is; therefore make her grave straight.
The crowner hath sate on her, and finds it Christian burial.

Clown. How can that be, unless she drown'd herself in her own defence?

Other. Why, 'tis found so.

Clown. It must be se offendendo; it cannot be else. For here lies
the point: if I drown myself wittingly, it argues an act; and an
act hath three branches-it is to act, to do, and to perform;
argal, she drown'd herself wittingly.

Other. Nay, but hear you, Goodman Delver!

Clown. Give me leave. Here lies the water; good. Here stands the man; good. If the man go to this water and drown himself, it is, will he nill he, he goes-mark you that. But if the water come to him and drown him, he drowns not himself. Argal, he that is not guilty of his own death shortens not his own life.

Other. But is this law?

Clown. Ay, marry, is't-crowner's quest law.

Other. Will you ha' the truth an't? If this had not been a gentlewoman, she should have been buried out o' Christian burial.

Clown. Why, there thou say'st! And the more pity that great folk should have count'nance in this world to drown or hang themselves more than their even-Christen. Come, my spade! There is no ancient gentlemen but gard'ners, ditchers, and grave-makers. They hold up Adam's profession.

Other. Was he a gentleman?

Clown. 'A was the first that ever bore arms.

Other. Why, he had none.

Clown. What, art a heathen? How dost thou understand the Scripture?
The Scripture says Adam digg'd. Could he dig without arms?
I'll
put another question to thee. If thou answerest me not to the
purpose, confess thyself-

Other. Go to!

Clown. What is he that builds stronger than either the mason, the
shipwright, or the carpenter?

Other. The gallows-maker; for that frame outlives a thousand tenants.

Clown. I like thy wit well, in good faith. The gallows does well.
But how does it well? It does well to those that do ill. Now,
thou dost ill to say the gallows is built stronger than the
church. Argal, the gallows may do well to thee. To't again, come!

Other. Who builds stronger than a mason, a shipwright, or a carpenter?

Clown. Ay, tell me that, and unyoke.

Other. Marry, now I can tell!

Clown. To't.

Other. Mass, I cannot tell.

Enter Hamlet and Horatio afar off.

Clown. Cudgel thy brains no more about it, for your dull ass will
not mend his pace with beating; and when you are ask'd this
question next, say 'a grave-maker.' The houses he makes lasts
till doomsday. Go, get thee to Yaughan; fetch me a stoup of liquor.

[Exit Second Clown.]

[Clown digs and] sings.

In youth when I did love, did love,
Methought it was very sweet;
To contract-O- the time for-a- my behove,
O, methought there-a- was nothing-a- meet.

Ham. Has this fellow no feeling of his business, that he sings at grave-making?

Hor. Custom hath made it in him a Property of easiness.

Ham. 'Tis e'en so. The hand of little employment hath the daintier sense.

Clown. (sings)
But age with his stealing steps
Hath clawed me in his clutch,
And hath shipped me intil the land,
As if I had never been such.

[Throws up a skull.]

Ham. That skull had a tongue in it, and could sing once. How the knave jowls it to the ground,as if 'twere Cain's jawbone, that did the first murther! This might be the pate of a Politician, which this ass now o'erreaches; one that would circumvent God, might it not?

Hor. It might, my lord.

Ham. Or of a courtier, which could say 'Good morrow, sweet lord! How dost thou, good lord?' This might be my Lord Such-a-one, that prais'd my Lord Such-a-one's horse when he meant to beg it- might it not?

Hor. Ay, my lord.

Ham. Why, e'en so! and now my Lady Worm's, chapless, and knock'd about the mazzard with a sexton's spade. Here's fine revolution, and we had the trick to see't. Did these bones cost no more the breeding but to play at loggets with 'em? Mine ache to think on't.

Clown. (Sings)
A pickaxe and a spade, a spade,

For and a shrouding sheet;
O, a Pit of clay for to be made
For such a guest is meet.
Throws up *[another skull]* .

Ham. There's another. Why may not that be the skull of a lawyer? Where be his quiddits now, his quillets, his cases, his tenures, and his tricks? Why does he suffer this rude knave now to knock him about the sconce with a dirty shovel, and will not tell him of his action of battery? Hum! This fellow might be in's time a great buyer of land, with his statutes, his recognizances, his fines, his double vouchers, his recoveries. Is this the fine of his fines, and the recovery of his recoveries, to have his fine pate full of fine dirt? Will his vouchers vouch him no more of his purchases, and double ones too, than the length and breadth of a pair of indentures? The very conveyances of his lands will scarcely lie in this box; and must th' inheritor himself have no more, ha?

Hor. Not a jot more, my lord.

Ham. Is not parchment made of sheepskins?

Hor. Ay, my lord, And of calveskins too.

Ham. They are sheep and calves which seek out assurance in

that. I

will speak to this fellow. Whose grave's this, sirrah?

Clown. Mine, sir.

[Sings] O, a pit of clay for to be made

For such a guest is meet.

Ham. I think it be thine indeed, for thou liest in't.

Clown. You lie out on't, sir, and therefore 'tis not yours.

For my part, I do not lie in't, yet it is mine.

Ham. Thou dost lie in't, to be in't and say it is thine. 'Tis for

the dead, not for the quick; therefore thou liest.

Clown. 'Tis a quick lie, sir; 'twill away again from me to you.

Ham. What man dost thou dig it for?

Clown. For no man, sir.

Ham. What woman then?

Clown. For none neither.

Ham. Who is to be buried in't?

Clown. One that was a woman, sir; but, rest her soul, she's dead.

Ham. How absolute the knave is! We must speak by the card, or equivocation will undo us. By the Lord, Horatio, this three years I have taken note of it, the age is grown so picked that the toe of the peasant comes so near the heel of the courtier he galls his kibe.- How long hast thou been a grave-maker?

Clown. Of all the days i' th' year, I came to't that day that our last king Hamlet overcame Fortinbras.

Ham. How long is that since?

Clown. Cannot you tell that? Every fool can tell that. It was the very day that young Hamlet was born-he that is mad, and sent into England.

Ham. Ay, marry, why was be sent into England?

Clown. Why, because 'a was mad. 'A shall recover his wits there; or, if 'a do not, 'tis no great matter there.

Ham. Why?

Clown. 'Twill not he seen in him there. There the men are as mad as he.

Ham. How came he mad?

Clown. Very strangely, they say.

Ham. How strangely?

Clown. Faith, e'en with losing his wits.

Ham. Upon what ground?

Clown. Why, here in Denmark. I have been sexton here, man and boy thirty years.

Ham. How long will a man lie i' th' earth ere he rot?

Clown. Faith, if 'a be not rotten before 'a die (as we have many
pocky corses now-a-days that will scarce hold the laying in,

I

will last you some eight year or nine year. A tanner will last you nine year.

Ham. Why he more than another?

Clown. Why, sir, his hide is so tann'd with his trade that 'a will
keep out water a great while; and your water is a sore decayer of
your whoreson dead body. Here's a skull now. This skull hath lien
you i' th' earth three-and-twenty years.

Ham. Whose was it?

Clown. A whoreson, mad fellow's it was. Whose do you think it was?

Ham. Nay, I know not.

Clown. A pestilence on him for a mad rogue! 'A pour'd a flagon of Rhenish on my head once. This same skull, sir, was Yorick's skull, the King's jester.

Ham. This?

Clown. E'en that.

Ham. Let me see. *[Takes the skull.]* Alas, poor Yorick! I knew him,

Horatio. A fellow of infinite jest, of most excellent fancy.

He

hath borne me on his back a thousand tunes. And now how abhorred in my imagination it is! My gorge rises at it. Here hung those

lips that I have kiss'd I know not how oft. Where be your gibes now? your gambols? your songs? your flashes of merriment that were wont to set the table on a roar? Not one now, to mock your own grinning? Quite chap-fall'n? Now get you to my lady's chamber, and tell her, let her paint an inch thick, to this favour she must come. Make her laugh at that. Prithee,
Horatio,
tell me one thing.

Hor. What's that, my lord?

Ham. Dost thou think Alexander look'd o' this fashion i' th' earth?

Hor. E'en so.

Ham. And smelt so? Pah!
[Puts down the skull.]

Hor. E'en so, my lord.

Ham. To what base uses we may return, Horatio! Why may not

imagination trace the noble dust of Alexander till he find it stopping a bunghole?

Hor. 'Twere to consider too curiously, to consider so.

Ham. No, faith, not a jot; but to follow him thither with modesty
enough, and likelihood to lead it; as thus: Alexander died,
Alexander was buried, Alexander returneth into dust; the dust is
earth; of earth we make loam; and why of that loam (whereto he
was converted) might they not stop a beer barrel?
Imperious Caesar, dead and turn'd to clay,
Might stop a hole to keep the wind away.
O, that that earth which kept the world in awe
Should patch a wall t' expel the winter's flaw!
But soft! but soft! aside! Here comes the King-

Enter [priests with] a coffin *[in funeral procession]* , King,

Queen, Laertes, with Lords attendant.]
The Queen, the courtiers. Who is this they follow?
And with such maimed rites? This doth betoken

The corse they follow did with desp'rate hand
Fordo it own life. 'Twas of some estate.
Couch we awhile, and mark.

[Retires with Horatio.]

Laer. What ceremony else?

Ham. That is Laertes,
A very noble youth. Mark.

Laer. What ceremony else?

Priest. Her obsequies have been as far enlarg'd
As we have warranty. Her death was doubtful;
And, but that great command o'ersways the order,
She should in ground unsanctified have lodg'd
Till the last trumpet. For charitable prayers,
Shards, flints, and pebbles should be thrown on her.
Yet here she is allow'd her virgin crants,
Her maiden strewments, and the bringing home

Of bell and burial.

Laer. Must there no more be done?

Priest. No more be done.
We should profane the service of the dead
To sing a requiem and such rest to her
As to peace-parted souls.

Laer. Lay her i' th' earth;
And from her fair and unpolluted flesh
May violets spring! I tell thee, churlish priest,
A minist'ring angel shall my sister be
When thou liest howling.

Ham. What, the fair Ophelia?

Queen. Sweets to the sweet! Farewell.

[Scatters flowers.]
I hop'd thou shouldst have been my Hamlet's wife;

I thought thy bride-bed to have deck'd, sweet maid,
And not have strew'd thy grave.

Laer. O, treble woe
Fall ten times treble on that cursed head
Whose wicked deed thy most ingenious sense
Depriv'd thee of! Hold off the earth awhile,
Till I have caught her once more in mine arms.
Leaps in the grave.
Now pile your dust upon the quick and dead
Till of this flat a mountain you have made
T' o'ertop old Pelion or the skyish head
Of blue Olympus.

Ham. [comes forward] What is he whose grief
Bears such an emphasis? whose phrase of sorrow
Conjures the wand'ring stars, and makes them stand
Like wonder-wounded hearers? This is I,
Hamlet the Dane. [Leaps in after Laertes.

Laer. The devil take thy soul!

[Grapples with him] .

Ham. Thou pray'st not well.
I prithee take thy fingers from my throat;
For, though I am not splenitive and rash,
Yet have I in me something dangerous,
Which let thy wisdom fear. Hold off thy hand!

King. Pluck thein asunder.

Queen. Hamlet, Hamlet!

All. Gentlemen!

Hor. Good my lord, be quiet.
[The Attendants part them, and they come out of the
grave.]

Ham. Why, I will fight with him upon this theme
Until my eyelids will no longer wag.

Queen. O my son, what theme?

Ham. I lov'd Ophelia. Forty thousand brothers
Could not (with all their quantity of love)
Make up my sum. What wilt thou do for her?

King. O, he is mad, Laertes.

Queen. For love of God, forbear him!

Ham. 'Swounds, show me what thou't do.
Woo't weep? woo't fight? woo't fast? woo't tear thyself?

Woo't drink up esill? eat a crocodile?
I'll do't. Dost thou come here to whine?

To outface me with leaping in her grave?
Be buried quick with her, and so will I.
And if thou prate of mountains, let them throw
Millions of acres on us, till our ground,

Singeing his pate against the burning zone,
Make Ossa like a wart! Nay, an thou'lt mouth,
I'll rant as well as thou.

Queen. This is mere madness;
And thus a while the fit will work on him.
Anon, as patient as the female dove
When that her golden couplets are disclos'd,
His silence will sit drooping.

Ham. Hear you, sir!
What is the reason that you use me thus?

I lov'd you ever. But it is no matter.
Let Hercules himself do what he may,
The cat will mew, and dog will have his day.
Exit.

King. I pray thee, good Horatio, wait upon him.

Exit Horatio.

[To Laertes] Strengthen your patience in our last night's speech.

We'll put the matter to the present push.-

Good Gertrude, set some watch over your son.-

This grave shall have a living monument.

An hour of quiet shortly shall we see;

Till then in patience our proceeding be.

Exeunt.

Scene II. Elsinore. A hall in the Castle.

Enter Hamlet and Horatio.

Ham. So much for this, sir; now shall you see the other.

You do remember all the circumstance?

Hor. Remember it, my lord!

Ham. Sir, in my heart there was a kind of fighting

That would not let me sleep. Methought I lay

Worse than the mutinies in the bilboes. Rashly-
And prais'd be rashness for it; let us know,
Our indiscretion sometime serves us well
When our deep plots do pall; and that should learn us
There's a divinity that shapes our ends,
Rough-hew them how we will-

Hor. That is most certain.

Ham. Up from my cabin,
My sea-gown scarf'd about me, in the dark
Grop'd I to find out them; had my desire,
Finger'd their packet, and in fine withdrew
To mine own room again; making so bold
(My fears forgetting manners) to unseal
Their grand commission; where I found, Horatio
(O royal knavery!), an exact command,
Larded with many several sorts of reasons,
Importing Denmark's health, and England's too,
With, hoo! such bugs and goblins in my life-
That, on the supervise, no leisure bated,

No, not to stay the finding of the axe,
My head should be struck off.

Hor. Is't possible?

Ham. Here's the commission; read it at more leisure.
But wilt thou bear me how I did proceed?

Hor. I beseech you.

Ham. Being thus benetted round with villanies,
Or I could make a prologue to my brains,
They had begun the play. I sat me down;
Devis'd a new commission; wrote it fair.
I once did hold it, as our statists do,
A baseness to write fair, and labour'd much
How to forget that learning; but, sir, now
It did me yeoman's service. Wilt thou know
Th' effect of what I wrote?

Hor. Ay, good my lord.

Ham. An earnest conjuration from the King,
As England was his faithful tributary,
As love between them like the palm might flourish,
As peace should still her wheaten garland wear
And stand a comma 'tween their amities,
And many such-like as's of great charge,
That, on the view and knowing of these contents,
Without debatement further, more or less,
He should the bearers put to sudden death,
Not shriving time allow'd.

Hor. How was this seal'd?

Ham. Why, even in that was heaven ordinant.
I had my father's signet in my purse,
which was the model of that Danish seal;
Folded the writ up in the form of th' other,
Subscrib'd it, gave't th' impression, plac'd it safely,
The changeling never known. Now, the next day
Was our sea-fight; and what to this was sequent

Thou know'st already.

Hor. So Guildenstern and Rosencrantz go to't.

Ham. Why, man, they did make love to this employment!
They are not near my conscience; their defeat
Does by their own insinuation grow.
'Tis dangerous when the baser nature comes
Between the pass and fell incensed points
Of mighty opposites.

Hor. Why, what a king is this!

Ham. Does it not, thinks't thee, stand me now upon-
He that hath kill'd my king, and whor'd my mother;
Popp'd in between th' election and my hopes;
Thrown out his angle for my Proper life,
And with such coz'nage-is't not perfect conscience
To quit him with this arm? And is't not to be damn'd
To let this canker of our nature come
In further evil?

Hor. It must be shortly known to him from England
What is the issue of the business there.

Ham. It will be short; the interim is mine,
And a man's life is no more than to say 'one.'
But I am very sorry, good Horatio,
That to Laertes I forgot myself,
For by the image of my cause I see
The portraiture of his. I'll court his favours.
But sure the bravery of his grief did put me
Into a tow'ring passion.

Hor. Peace! Who comes here?

Enter young Osric, a courtier.

Osr. Your lordship is right welcome back to Denmark.

Ham. I humbly thank you, sir. *[Aside to Horatio]* Dost know this waterfly?

Hor. [aside to Hamlet] No, my good lord.

Ham. [aside to Horatio] Thy state is the more gracious; for 'tis a vice to know him. He hath much land, and fertile. Let a beast be lord of beasts, and his crib shall stand at the king's mess.

'Tis

a chough; but, as I say, spacious in the possession of dirt.

Osr. Sweet lord, if your lordship were at leisure, I should impart a thing to you from his Majesty.

Ham. I will receive it, sir, with all diligence of spirit. Put your bonnet to his right use. 'Tis for the head.

Osr. I thank your lordship, it is very hot.

Ham. No, believe me, 'tis very cold; the wind is northerly.

Osr. It is indifferent cold, my lord, indeed.

Ham. But yet methinks it is very sultry and hot for my complexion.

Osr. Exceedingly, my lord; it is very sultry, as 'twere-I cannot tell how. But, my lord, his Majesty bade me signify to you that he has laid a great wager on your head. Sir, this is the matter-

Ham. I beseech you remember.

[Hamlet moves him to put on his hat.]

Osr. Nay, good my lord; for mine ease, in good faith. Sir, here is newly come to court Laertes; believe me, an absolute gentleman, full of most excellent differences, of very soft society and great showing. Indeed, to speak feelingly of him, he is the card or calendar of gentry; for you shall find in him the continent of what part a gentleman would see.

Ham. Sir, his definement suffers no perdition in you; though, I know, to divide him inventorially would dozy th' arithmetic of memory, and yet but yaw neither in respect of his quick sail. But, in the verity of extolment, I take him to be a soul of great article, and his infusion of such dearth and rareness as, to make

true diction of him, his semblable is his mirror, and who else

would trace him, his umbrage, nothing more.

Osr. Your lordship speaks most infallibly of him.

Ham. The concernancy, sir? Why do we wrap the gentleman in our more rawer breath

Osr. Sir?

Hor *[aside to Hamlet]* Is't not possible to understand in another

tongue? You will do't, sir, really.

Ham. What imports the nomination of this gentleman

Osr. Of Laertes?

Hor. [aside] His purse is empty already. All's golden words are spent.

Ham. Of him, sir.

Osr. I know you are not ignorant-

Ham. I would you did, sir; yet, in faith, if you did, it would not much approve me. Well, sir?

Osr. You are not ignorant of what excellence Laertes is-

Ham. I dare not confess that, lest I should compare with him in excellence; but to know a man well were to know himself.

Osr. I mean, sir, for his weapon; but in the imputation laid on him by them, in his meed he's unfellowed.

Ham. What's his weapon?

Osr. Rapier and dagger.

Ham. That's two of his weapons-but well.

Osr. The King, sir, hath wager'd with him six Barbary horses; against the which he has impon'd, as I take it, six French

rapiers and poniards, with their assigns, as girdle, hangers, and
so. Three of the carriages, in faith, are very dear to fancy,
very responsive to the hilts, most delicate carriages, and of
very liberal conceit.

Ham. What call you the carriages?

Hor. [aside to Hamlet] I knew you must be edified by the margent
ere you had done.

Osr. The carriages, sir, are the hangers.

Ham. The phrase would be more germane to the matter if we could
carry cannon by our sides. I would it might be hangers till then.
But on! Six Barbary horses against six French swords, their
assigns, and three liberal-conceited carriages: that's the French
bet against the Danish. Why is this all impon'd, as you call it?

Osr. The King, sir, hath laid that, in a dozen passes between
yourself and him, he shall not exceed you three hits; he hath
laid on twelve for nine, and it would come to immediate trial

if your lordship would vouchsafe the answer.

Ham. How if I answer no?

Osr. I mean, my lord, the opposition of your person in trial.

Ham. Sir, I will walk here in the hall. If it please his Majesty, it is the breathing time of day with me. Let the foils be brought, the gentleman willing, and the King hold his purpose, I will win for him if I can; if not, I will gain nothing but my shame and the odd hits.

Osr. Shall I redeliver you e'en so?

Ham. To this effect, sir, after what flourish your nature will.

Osr. I commend my duty to your lordship.

Ham. Yours, yours. *[Exit Osric.]* He does well to commend it himself; there are no tongues else for's turn.

Hor. This lapwing runs away with the shell on his head.

Ham. He did comply with his dug before he suck'd it. Thus has he, and many more of the same bevy that I know the drossy age dotes on, only got the tune of the time and outward habit of encounter-
a kind of yesty collection, which carries them through and through the most fann'd and winnowed opinions; and do but blow them to their trial-the bubbles are out,

Enter a Lord.

Lord. My lord, his Majesty commended him to you by young Osric, who brings back to him, that you attend him in the hall. He sends to know if your pleasure hold to play with Laertes, or that you will take longer time.

Ham. I am constant to my purposes; they follow the King's pleasure. If his fitness speaks, mine is ready; now or whensoever, provided I be so able as now.

Lord. The King and Queen and all are coming down.

Ham. In happy time.

Lord. The Queen desires you to use some gentle entertainment to Laertes before you fall to play.

Ham. She well instructs me.

[Exit Lord.]

Hor. You will lose this wager, my lord.

Ham. I do not think so. Since he went into France I have been in continual practice. I shall win at the odds. But thou wouldst not think how ill all's here about my heart. But it is no matter.

Hor. Nay, good my lord -

Ham. It is but foolery; but it is such a kind of gaingiving as would perhaps trouble a woman.

Hor. If your mind dislike anything, obey it. I will forestall their
repair hither and say you are not fit.

Ham. Not a whit, we defy augury; there's a special providence in
the fall of a sparrow. If it be now, 'tis not to come', if it be
not to come, it will be now; if it be not now, yet it will come:
the readiness is all. Since no man knows aught of what he leaves,
what is't to leave betimes? Let be.

Enter King, Queen, Laertes, Osric, and Lords, with other

Attendants with foils and gauntlets.
A table and flagons of wine on it.

King. Come, Hamlet, come, and take this hand from me.

[The King puts Laertes' hand into Hamlet's.]

Ham. Give me your pardon, sir. I have done you wrong;
But pardon't, as you are a gentleman.

This presence knows,

And you must needs have heard, how I am punish'd

With sore distraction. What I have done

That might your nature, honour, and exception

Roughly awake, I here proclaim was madness.

Was't Hamlet wrong'd Laertes? Never Hamlet.

If Hamlet from himself be taken away,

And when he's not himself does wrong Laertes,

Then Hamlet does it not, Hamlet denies it.

Who does it, then? His madness. If't be so,

Hamlet is of the faction that is wrong'd;

His madness is poor Hamlet's enemy.

Sir, in this audience,

Let my disclaiming from a purpos'd evil

Free me so far in your most generous thoughts

That I have shot my arrow o'er the house

And hurt my brother.

Laer. I am satisfied in nature,

Whose motive in this case should stir me most

To my revenge. But in my terms of honour

I stand aloof, and will no reconcilement
Till by some elder masters of known honour
I have a voice and precedent of peace
To keep my name ungor'd. But till that time
I do receive your offer'd love like love,
And will not wrong it.

Ham. I embrace it freely,
And will this brother's wager frankly play.

Give us the foils. Come on.

Laer. Come, one for me.

Ham. I'll be your foil, Laertes. In mine ignorance
Your skill shall, like a star i' th' darkest night,
Stick fiery off indeed.

Laer. You mock me, sir.

Ham. No, by this bad.

King. Give them the foils, young Osric. Cousin Hamlet,
You know the wager?

Ham. Very well, my lord.
Your Grace has laid the odds o' th' weaker side.

King. I do not fear it, I have seen you both;
But since he is better'd, we have therefore odds.

Laer. This is too heavy; let me see another.

Ham. This likes me well. These foils have all a length?
Prepare to play.

Osr. Ay, my good lord.

King. Set me the stoups of wine upon that table.
If Hamlet give the first or second hit,
Or quit in answer of the third exchange,
Let all the battlements their ordnance fire;

The King shall drink to Hamlet's better breath,
And in the cup an union shall he throw
Richer than that which four successive kings
In Denmark's crown have worn. Give me the cups;
And let the kettle to the trumpet speak,
The trumpet to the cannoneer without,
The cannons to the heavens, the heaven to earth,
'Now the King drinks to Hamlet.' Come, begin.

And you the judges, bear a wary eye.

Ham. Come on, sir.

Laer. Come, my lord. They play.

Ham. One.

Laer. No.

Ham. Judgment!

Osr. A hit, a very palpable hit.

Laer. Well, again!

King. Stay, give me drink. Hamlet, this pearl is thine;

Here's to thy health.

[Drum; trumpets sound; a piece goes off *[within]* .

Give him the cup.

Ham. I'll play this bout first; set it by awhile.

Come. (They play.) Another hit. What say you?

Laer. A touch, a touch; I do confess't.

King. Our son shall win.

Queen. He's fat, and scant of breath.

Here, Hamlet, take my napkin, rub thy brows.

The Queen carouses to thy fortune, Hamlet.

Ham. Good madam!

King. Gertrude, do not drink.

Queen. I will, my lord; I pray you pardon me. Drinks.

King. *[aside]* It is the poison'd cup; it is too late.

Ham. I dare not drink yet, madam; by-and-by.

Queen. Come, let me wipe thy face.

Laer. My lord, I'll hit him now.

King. I do not think't.

Laer. *[aside]* And yet it is almost against my conscience.

Ham. Come for the third, Laertes! You but dally.

pray You Pass with your best violence;

I am afeard You make a wanton of me.

Laer. Say you so? Come on. Play.

Osr. Nothing neither way.

Laer. Have at you now!

[Laertes wounds Hamlet; then] in scuffling, they change rapiers, *[and Hamlet wounds Laertes]* .

King. Part them! They are incens'd.

Ham. Nay come! again! The Queen falls.

Osr. Look to the Queen there, ho!

Hor. They bleed on both sides. How is it, my lord?

Osr. How is't, Laertes?

Laer. Why, as a woodcock to mine own springe, Osric.
I am justly kill'd with mine own treachery.

Ham. How does the Queen?

King. She sounds to see them bleed.

Queen. No, no! the drink, the drink! O my dear Hamlet!
The drink, the drink! I am poison'd. *[Dies.]*

Ham. O villany! Ho! let the door be lock'd.
Treachery! Seek it out.
[Laertes falls.]

Laer. It is here, Hamlet. Hamlet, thou art slain;
No medicine in the world can do thee good.

In thee there is not half an hour of life.
The treacherous instrument is in thy hand,
Unbated and envenom'd. The foul practice

Hath turn'd itself on me. Lo, here I lie,
Never to rise again. Thy mother's poison'd.
I can no more. The King, the King's to blame.

Ham. The point envenom'd too?
Then, venom, to thy work. Hurts the King.

All. Treason! treason!

King. O, yet defend me, friends! I am but hurt.

Ham. Here, thou incestuous, murd'rous, damned Dane,
Drink off this potion! Is thy union here?

Follow my mother. King dies.

Laer. He is justly serv'd.
It is a poison temper'd by himself.

Exchange forgiveness with me, noble Hamlet.
Mine and my father's death come not upon thee,

Nor thine on me! Dies.

Ham. Heaven make thee free of it! I follow thee.
I am dead, Horatio. Wretched queen, adieu!
You that look pale and tremble at this chance,
That are but mutes or audience to this act,
Had I but time (as this fell sergeant, Death,
Is strict in his arrest) O, I could tell you-
But let it be. Horatio, I am dead;
Thou liv'st; report me and my cause aright
To the unsatisfied.

Hor. Never believe it.
I am more an antique Roman than a Dane.

Here's yet some liquor left.

Ham. As th'art a man,
Give me the cup. Let go! By heaven, I'll ha't.
O good Horatio, what a wounded name
(Things standing thus unknown) shall live behind me!

If thou didst ever hold me in thy heart,

Absent thee from felicity awhile,

And in this harsh world draw thy breath in pain,

To tell my story. *[March afar off, and shot within.]*

What warlike noise is this?

Osr. Young Fortinbras, with conquest come from Poland,

To the ambassadors of England gives

This warlike volley.

Ham. O, I die, Horatio!

The potent poison quite o'ercrows my spirit.

I cannot live to hear the news from England,

But I do prophesy th' election lights

On Fortinbras. He has my dying voice.

So tell him, with th' occurrents, more and less,

Which have solicited-the rest is silence. Dies.

Hor. Now cracks a noble heart. Good night, sweet prince,

And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest!

[March within.]

Why does the drum come hither?

Enter Fortinbras and English Ambassadors, with Drum,

Colours, and Attendants.

Fort. Where is this sight?

Hor. What is it you will see?

If aught of woe or wonder, cease your search.

Fort. This quarry cries on havoc. O proud Death,

What feast is toward in thine eternal cell

That thou so many princes at a shot

So bloodily hast struck.

Ambassador. The sight is dismal;

And our affairs from England come too late.

The ears are senseless that should give us bearing

To tell him his commandment is fulfill'd

That Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are dead.

Where should We have our thanks?

Hor. Not from his mouth,
Had it th' ability of life to thank you.

He never gave commandment for their death.
But since, so jump upon this bloody question,
You from the Polack wars, and you from England,
Are here arriv'd, give order that these bodies
High on a stage be placed to the view;
And let me speak to the yet unknowing world
How these things came about. So shall You hear
Of carnal, bloody and unnatural acts;
Of accidental judgments, casual slaughters;
Of deaths put on by cunning and forc'd cause;
And, in this upshot, purposes mistook
Fall'n on th' inventors' heads. All this can I
Truly deliver.

Fort. Let us haste to hear it,
And call the noblest to the audience.

For me, with sorrow I embrace my fortune.
I have some rights of memory in this kingdom
Which now, to claim my vantage doth invite me.

Hor. Of that I shall have also cause to speak,
And from his mouth whose voice will draw on more.
But let this same be presently perform'd,
Even while men's minds are wild, lest more mischance
On plots and errors happen.

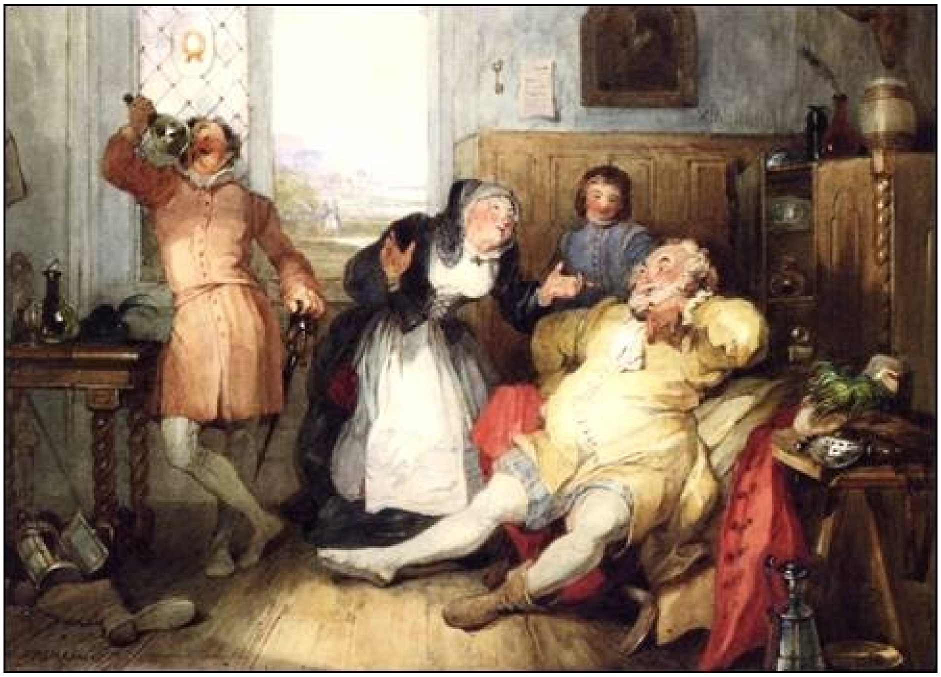
Fort. Let four captains
Bear Hamlet like a soldier to the stage;
For he was likely, had he been put on,
To have prov'd most royally; and for his passage
The soldiers' music and the rites of war
Speak loudly for him.
Take up the bodies. Such a sight as this
Becomes the field but here shows much amiss.

Go, bid the soldiers shoot.

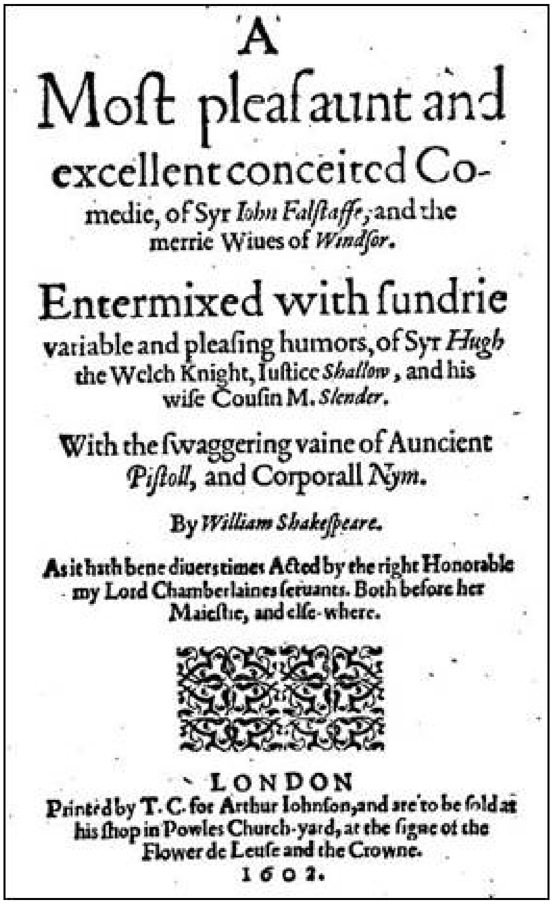
Exeunt marching; after the which a peal of ordnance are shot off.

THE MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR

This comedy boasts the distinction of being the only played solely sourced by Shakespeare.   Believed to have been written prior to 1597, it features the bard’s popular character the stout knight Sir John Falstaff, and *The Merry Wives of Windsor* is Shakespeare's only play to deal exclusively with contemporary Elizabethan life. It is believed that Elizabeth I herself requested Shakespeare to write another play featuring Falstaff and this hilarious comedy is the result of that request.



‘Falstaff and Mistress Quickly’ by Francis Philip Stephanoff, 1840



A
Moſt pleaſaunt and
excellent conceited
Comedie, of Syr *Iohn Falſtaffe*, and the
merrie Wiues of *Windſor*.

Entermixed with ſundrie
variable and pleaſing humors, of Syr *Hugh*
the Welch Knight, Iuſtice *Shallow*, and his
wiſe Couſin M. *Slender*.

With the ſwaggering vaine of Auncient
Piſtoll, and Corporall *Nym*.

By *William Shakeſpeare*.

As it hath bene diuers times Acted by the right Honorable
my Lord Chamberlaines ſeruants. Both before her
Maieſtie, and elſe-where.

LONDON
Printed by T. C. for Arthur Iohnſon, and are to be ſold at
his ſhop in Powles Church-yard, at the ſigne of the
Flower de Leuſe and the Crowne.
1602.

The 1602 Quarto version title page

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DRAMATIS PERSONAE

SIR JOHN FALSTAFF

FENTON, a young gentleman

SHALLOW, a country justice

SLENDER, cousin to Shallow

Gentlemen of Windsor

FORD

PAGE

WILLIAM PAGE, a boy, son to Page

SIR HUGH EVANS, a Welsh parson

DOCTOR CAIUS, a French physician

HOST of the Garter Inn

Followers of Falstaff

BARDOLPH

PISTOL

NYM

ROBIN, page to Falstaff

SIMPLE, servant to Slender

RUGBY, servant to Doctor Caius

MISTRESS FORD

MISTRESS PAGE

MISTRESS ANNE PAGE, her daughter

MISTRESS QUICKLY, servant to Doctor Caius

SERVANTS to Page, Ford, *etc.*

SCENE: Windsor, and the neighbourhood

ACT I. SCENE 1.

Windsor. Before PAGE'S house

Enter JUSTICE SHALLOW, SLENDER, and SIR HUGH EVANS

SHALLOW.

Sir Hugh, persuade me not; I will make a Star
Chamber matter of it; if he were twenty Sir John Falstaffs,
he shall not abuse Robert Shallow, esquire.

SLENDER.

In the county of Gloucester, Justice of Peace, and Coram.

SHALLOW.

Ay, cousin Slender, and Custalorum.

SLENDER.

Ay, and Ratolorum too; and a gentleman born,
Master Parson, who writes himself 'Armigero' in any bill,

warrant, quittance, or obligation-'Armigero.'

SHALLOW.

Ay, that I do; and have done any time these three hundred years.

SLENDER.

All his successors, gone before him, hath done't;

and all his ancestors, that come after him, may: they may

give the dozen white luces in their coat.

SHALLOW.

It is an old coat.

EVANS.

The dozen white louses do become an old coat well;

it agrees well, passant; it is a familiar beast to man, and signifies love.

SHALLOW.

The luce is the fresh fish; the salt fish is an old coat.

SLENDER.

I may quarter, coz.

SHALLOW.

You may, by marrying.

EVANS.

It is marring indeed, if he quarter it.

SHALLOW.

Not a whit.

EVANS.

Yes, py'r lady! If he has a quarter of your coat, there
is but three skirts for yourself, in my simple conjectures;
but that is all one. If Sir John Falstaff have committed
disparagements unto you, I am of the church, and will be
glad to do my benevolence, to make atonements and
compremises between you.

SHALLOW.

The Council shall hear it; it is a riot.

EVANS.

It is not meet the Council hear a riot; there is no
fear of Got in a riot; the Council, look you, shall desire
to hear the fear of Got, and not to hear a riot; take your vizaments in that.

SHALLOW.

Ha! o' my life, if I were young again, the sword should end it.

EVANS.

It is petter that friends is the sword and end it;
and there is also another device in my prain, which
peradventure prings goot discretions with it. There is Anne
Page, which is daughter to Master George Page, which is pretty virginity.

SLENDER.

Mistress Anne Page? She has brown hair, and
speaks small like a woman.

EVANS.

It is that fery person for all the orld, as just as you will desire; and seven hundred pounds of moneys, and gold, and silver, is her grandsire upon his death's-bed-Got deliver to a joyful resurrections!-give, when she is able to overtake seventeen years old. It were a goot motion if we leave our pribbles and prabbles, and desire a marriage between Master Abraham and Mistress Anne Page.

SHALLOW.

Did her grandsire leave her seven hundred pound?

EVANS.

Ay, and her father is make her a petter penny.

SHALLOW.

I know the young gentlewoman; she has good gifts.

EVANS.

Seven hundred pounds, and possibilities, is goot gifts.

SHALLOW.

Well, let us see honest Master Page. Is Falstaff there?

EVANS.

Shall I tell you a lie? I do despise a liar as I do

despise one that is false; or as I despise one that is not

true. The knight Sir John is there; and, I beseech you, be

ruled by your well-willers. I will peat the door for Master Page.

[Knocks] What, hoa! Got pless your house here!

PAGE.

[Within] Who's there?

Enter PAGE

EVANS.

Here is Got's plessing, and your friend, and Justice

Shallow; and here young Master Slender, that peradventures

shall tell you another tale, if matters grow to your likings.

PAGE.

I am glad to see your worships well. I thank you for

my venison, Master Shallow.

SHALLOW.

Master Page, I am glad to see you; much good do

it your good heart! I wish'd your venison better; it was ill

kill'd. How doth good Mistress Page?-and I thank you

always with my heart, la! with my heart.

PAGE.

Sir, I thank you.

SHALLOW.

Sir, I thank you; by yea and no, I do.

PAGE.

I am glad to see you, good Master Slender.

SLENDER.

How does your fallow greyhound, sir? I heard say

he was outrun on Cotsall.

PAGE.

It could not be judg'd, sir.

SLENDER.

You'll not confess, you'll not confess.

SHALLOW.

That he will not. 'Tis your fault; 'tis your fault;

'tis a good dog.

PAGE.

A cur, sir.

SHALLOW.

Sir, he's a good dog, and a fair dog. Can there be
more said? He is good, and fair. Is Sir John Falstaff here?

PAGE.

Sir, he is within; and I would I could do a good office between you.

EVANS.

It is spoke as a Christians ought to speak.

SHALLOW.

He hath wrong'd me, Master Page.

PAGE.

Sir, he doth in some sort confess it.

SHALLOW.

If it be confessed, it is not redressed; is not that
so, Master Page? He hath wrong'd me; indeed he hath; at a

word, he hath, believe me; Robert Shallow, esquire, saith he is wronged.

PAGE.

Here comes Sir John.

Enter SIR JOHN FALSTAFF, BARDOLPH, NYM, and PISTOL

FALSTAFF.

Now, Master Shallow, you'll complain of me to
the King?

SHALLOW.

Knight, you have beaten my men, kill'd my deer,
and broke open my lodge.

FALSTAFF.

But not kiss'd your keeper's daughter.

SHALLOW.

Tut, a pin! this shall be answer'd.

FALSTAFF.

I will answer it straight: I have done all this.

That is now answer'd.

SHALLOW.

The Council shall know this.

FALSTAFF.

'Twere better for you if it were known in counsel:

you'll be laugh'd at.

EVANS.

Pauca verba, Sir John; goot worts.

FALSTAFF.

Good worts! good cabbage! Slender, I broke your

head; what matter have you against me?

SLENDER.

Marry, sir, I have matter in my head against you;
and against your cony-catching rascals, Bardolph, Nym,
and Pistol. They carried me to the tavern, and made me
drunk, and afterwards pick'd my pocket.

BARDOLPH.

You Banbury cheese!

SLENDER.

Ay, it is no matter.

PISTOL.

How now, Mephostophilus!

SLENDER.

Ay, it is no matter.

NYM.

Slice, I say! pauca, pauca; slice! That's my humour.

SLENDER.

Where's Simple, my man? Can you tell, cousin?

EVANS.

Peace, I pray you. Now let us understand. There is
three umpires in this matter, as I understand: that is,
Master Page, fidelicet Master Page; and there is myself,
fidelicet myself; and the three party is, lastly and
finally, mine host of the Garter.

PAGE.

We three to hear it and end it between them.

EVANS.

Fery goot. I will make a prief of it in my note-book;
and we will afterwards ork upon the cause with as great

discreetly as we can.

FALSTAFF.

Pistol!

PISTOL.

He hears with ears.

EVANS.

The tevil and his tam! What phrase is this, 'He hears with ear'? Why, it is affectations.

FALSTAFF.

Pistol, did you pick Master Slender's purse?

SLENDER.

Ay, by these gloves, did he-or I would I might never come in mine own great chamber again else!-of seven groats in mill-sixpences, and two Edward

shovel-boards that cost me two shilling and two pence apiece
of Yead Miller, by these gloves.

FALSTAFF.

Is this true, Pistol?

EVANS.
No, it is false, if it is a pick-purse.

PISTOL.
Ha, thou mountain-foreigner! Sir John and master mine,
I combat challenge of this latten bilbo.

Word of denial in thy labras here!
Word of denial! Froth and scum, thou liest.

SLENDER.

By these gloves, then, 'twas he.

NYM.

Be avis'd, sir, and pass good humours; I will say
'marry trap' with you, if you run the nuthook's humour on
me; that is the very note of it.

SLENDER.

By this hat, then, he in the red face had it; for
though I cannot remember what I did when you made me
drunk, yet I am not altogether an ass.

FALSTAFF.

What say you, Scarlet and John?

BARDOLPH.

Why, sir, for my part, I say the gentleman had
drunk himself out of his five sentences.

EVANS.

It is his five senses; fie, what the ignorance is!

BARDOLPH.

And being fap, sir, was, as they say, cashier'd;
and so conclusions pass'd the careers.

SLENDER.

Ay, you spake in Latin then too; but 'tis no matter;
I'll ne'er be drunk whilst I live again, but in honest,
civil, godly company, for this trick. If I be drunk, I'll be
drunk with those that have the fear of God, and not with drunken knaves.

EVANS.

So Got udge me, that is a virtuous mind.

FALSTAFF.

You hear all these matters deni'd, gentlemen; you hear it.

Enter MISTRESS ANNE PAGE with wine; MISTRESS

FORD and MISTRESS PAGE, following

PAGE.

Nay, daughter, carry the wine in; we'll drink within.

Exit ANNE PAGE

SLENDER.

O heaven! this is Mistress Anne Page.

PAGE.

How now, Mistress Ford!

FALSTAFF.

Mistress Ford, by my troth, you are very well
met; by your leave, good mistress. *[Kisses her]*

PAGE.

Wife, bid these gentlemen welcome. Come, we have a
hot venison pasty to dinner; come, gentlemen, I hope we
shall drink down all unkindness.

Exeunt all but SHALLOW, SLENDER, and EVANS

SLENDER.

I had rather than forty shillings I had my Book of

Songs and Sonnets here.

Enter SIMPLE

How, Simple! Where have you been? I must wait on

myself, must I? You have not the Book of Riddles about you,

have you?

SIMPLE.

Book of Riddles! Why, did you not lend it to Alice

Shortcake upon Allhallowmas last, a fortnight afore Michaelmas?

SHALLOW.

Come, coz; come, coz; we stay for you. A word

with you, coz; marry, this, coz: there is, as 'twere, a

tender, a kind of tender, made afar off by Sir Hugh here. Do you understand me?

SLENDER.

Ay, sir, you shall find me reasonable; if it be so, I shall do that that is reason.

SHALLOW.

Nay, but understand me.

SLENDER.

So I do, sir.

EVANS.

Give ear to his motions: Master Slender, I will
description the matter to you, if you be capacity of it.

SLENDER.

Nay, I will do as my cousin Shallow says; I pray
you pardon me; he's a justice of peace in his country,
simple though I stand here.

EVANS.

But that is not the question. The question is
concerning your marriage.

SHALLOW.

Ay, there's the point, sir.

EVANS.

Marry is it; the very point of it; to Mistress Anne Page.

SLENDER.

Why, if it be so, I will marry her upon any reasonable demands.

EVANS.

But can you affection the oman? Let us command to
know that of your mouth or of your lips; for divers philosophers
hold that the lips is parcel of the mouth. Therefore,
precisely, can you carry your good will to the maid?

SHALLOW.

Cousin Abraham Slender, can you love her?

SLENDER.

I hope, sir, I will do as it shall become one that would do reason.

EVANS.

Nay, Got's lords and his ladies! you must speak possitable,

if you can carry her your desires towards her.

SHALLOW.

That you must. Will you, upon good dowry,

marry her?

SLENDER.

I will do a greater thing than that upon your request,

cousin, in any reason.

SHALLOW.

Nay, conceive me, conceive me, sweet coz; what

I do is to pleasure you, coz. Can you love the maid?

SLENDER.

I will marry her, sir, at your request; but if there

be no great love in the beginning, yet heaven may decrease
it upon better acquaintance, when we are married and
have more occasion to know one another. I hope upon
familiarity will grow more contempt. But if you say
'marry her,' I will marry her; that I am freely dissolved,
and dissolutely.

EVANS.
It is a fery discretion answer, save the fall is in the
ord 'dissolutely': the ort is, according to our meaning,
'resolutely'; his meaning is good.

SHALLOW.

Ay, I think my cousin meant well.

SLENDER.
Ay, or else I would I might be hang'd, la!
Re-enter ANNE PAGE
SHALLOW.
Here comes fair Mistress Anne. Would I were

young for your sake, Mistress Anne!

ANNE.

The dinner is on the table; my father desires your worships' company.

SHALLOW.

I will wait on him, fair Mistress Anne!

EVANS.

Od's plessed will! I will not be absence at the grace.

Exeunt SHALLOW and EVANS

ANNE.

Will't please your worship to come in, sir?

SLENDER.

No, I thank you, forsooth, heartily; I am very well.

ANNE.

The dinner attends you, sir.

SLENDER.

I am not a-hungry, I thank you, forsooth. Go,
sirrah, for all you are my man, go wait upon my cousin
Shallow. [Exit SIMPLE] A justice of peace sometime may
be beholding to his friend for a man. I keep but three men
and a boy yet, till my mother be dead. But what though?
Yet I live like a poor gentleman born.

ANNE.

I may not go in without your worship; they will not sit till you come.

SLENDER.

I' faith, I'll eat nothing; I thank you as much as
though I did.

ANNE.

I pray you, sir, walk in.

SLENDER.

I had rather walk here, I thank you. I bruis'd my
shin th' other day with playing at sword and dagger with
a master of fence-three veneys for a dish of stew'd prunes
-and, I with my ward defending my head, he hot my shin,
and, by my troth, I cannot abide the smell of hot meat
since. Why do your dogs bark so? Be there bears i' th'

town?

ANNE.

I think there are, sir; I heard them talk'd of.

SLENDER.

I love the sport well; but I shall as soon quarrel at
it as any man in England. You are afraid, if you see the
bear loose, are you not?

ANNE.

Ay, indeed, sir.

SLENDER.

That's meat and drink to me now. I have seen

Sackerson loose twenty times, and have taken him by the

chain; but I warrant you, the women have so cried and

shriek'd at it that it pass'd; but women, indeed, cannot

abide 'em; they are very ill-favour'd rough things.

Re-enter PAGE

PAGE.

Come, gentle Master Slender, come; we stay for you.

SLENDER.

I'll eat nothing, I thank you, sir.

PAGE.

By cock and pie, you shall not choose, sir! Come, come.

SLENDER.

Nay, pray you lead the way.

PAGE.

Come on, sir.

SLENDER.

Mistress Anne, yourself shall go first.

ANNE.

Not I, sir; pray you keep on.

SLENDER.

Truly, I will not go first; truly, la! I will not do you that wrong.

ANNE.

I pray you, sir.

SLENDER.

I'll rather be unmannerly than troublesome. You
do yourself wrong indeed, la! *Exeunt*

SCENE 2.

Before PAGE'S house

Enter SIR HUGH EVANS and SIMPLE

EVANS.

Go your ways, and ask of Doctor Caius' house which
is the way; and there dwells one Mistress Quickly, which
is in the manner of his nurse, or his dry nurse, or his cook,
or his laundry, his washer, and his wringer.

SIMPLE.

Well, sir.

EVANS.

Nay, it is petter yet. Give her this letter; for it is a
oman that altogether's acquaintance with Mistress Anne
Page; and the letter is to desire and require her to solicit
your master's desires to Mistress Anne Page. I pray you
be gone. I will make an end of my dinner; there's pippins

and cheese to come. *Exeunt*

SCENE 3.

The Garter Inn

Enter FALSTAFF, HOST, BARDOLPH, NYM, PISTOL, and ROBIN

FALSTAFF.

Mine host of the Garter!

HOST.

What says my bully rook? Speak scholarly and wisely.

FALSTAFF.

Truly, mine host, I must turn away some of my followers.

HOST.

Discard, bully Hercules; cashier; let them wag; trot, trot.

FALSTAFF.

I sit at ten pounds a week.

HOST.

Thou'rt an emperor-Caesar, Keiser, and Pheazar. I
will entertain Bardolph; he shall draw, he shall tap; said I
well, bully Hector?

FALSTAFF.

Do so, good mine host.

HOST.

I have spoke; let him follow. *[To BARDOLPH]* Let me
see thee froth and lime. I am at a word; follow. *Exit* HOST

FALSTAFF.

Bardolph, follow him. A tapster is a good trade;
an old cloak makes a new jerkin; a wither'd serving-man a
fresh tapster. Go; adieu.

BARDOLPH.

It is a life that I have desir'd; I will thrive.

PISTOL.

O base Hungarian wight! Wilt thou the spigot

wield? *Exit* BARDOLPH

NYM.

He was gotten in drink. Is not the humour conceited?

FALSTAFF.

I am glad I am so acquit of this tinder-box: his

thefts were too open; his filching was like an unskilful

singer-he kept not time.

NYM.

The good humour is to steal at a minute's rest.

PISTOL.

'Convey' the wise it call. 'Steal' foh! A fico for the phrase!

FALSTAFF.

Well, sirs, I am almost out at heels.

PISTOL.

Why, then, let kibes ensue.

FALSTAFF.

There is no remedy; I must cony-catch; I must shift.

PISTOL.

Young ravens must have food.

FALSTAFF.

Which of you know Ford of this town?

PISTOL.

I ken the wight; he is of substance good.

FALSTAFF.

My honest lads, I will tell you what I am about.

PISTOL.

Two yards, and more.

FALSTAFF.

No quips now, Pistol. Indeed, I am in the waist

two yards about; but I am now about no waste; I am about

thrift. Briefly, I do mean to make love to Ford's wife; I

spy entertainment in her; she discourses, she carves, she

gives the leer of invitation; I can construe the action of her

familiar style; and the hardest voice of her behaviour, to be

English'd rightly, is 'I am Sir John Falstaff's.'

PISTOL.

He hath studied her well, and translated her will out

of honesty into English.

NYM.

The anchor is deep; will that humour pass?

FALSTAFF.

Now, the report goes she has all the rule of her
husband's purse; he hath a legion of angels.

PISTOL.

As many devils entertain; and 'To her, boy,' say I.

NYM.

The humour rises; it is good; humour me the angels.

FALSTAFF.

I have writ me here a letter to her; and here
another to Page's wife, who even now gave me good eyes
too, examin'd my parts with most judicious oeillades;
sometimes the beam of her view gilded my foot, sometimes my portly belly.

PISTOL.

Then did the sun on dunghill shine.

NYM.

I thank thee for that humour.

FALSTAFF.

O, she did so course o'er my exteriors with such
a greedy intention that the appetite of her eye did seem to
scorch me up like a burning-glass! Here's another letter to
her. She bears the purse too; she is a region in Guiana, all
gold and bounty. I will be cheaters to them both, and they
shall be exchequers to me; they shall be my East and West
Indies, and I will trade to them both. Go, bear thou this
letter to Mistress Page; and thou this to Mistress Ford. We
will thrive, lads, we will thrive.

PISTOL.

Shall I Sir Pandarus of Troy become,
And by my side wear steel? Then Lucifer take all!

NYM.

I will run no base humour. Here, take the humour-letter; I will keep the haviour of reputation.

FALSTAFF.

[To ROBIN] Hold, sirrah; bear you these letters tightly;

Sail like my pinnace to these golden shores.

Rogues, hence, avaunt! vanish like hailstones, go;

Trudge, plod away i' th' hoof; seek shelter, pack!

Falstaff will learn the humour of the age;

French thrift, you rogues; myself, and skirted page.

Exeunt FALSTAFF and ROBIN

PISTOL.

Let vultures gripe thy guts! for gourd and fullam holds,

And high and low beguiles the rich and poor;

Tester I'll have in pouch when thou shalt lack,

Base Phrygian Turk!

NYM.

I have operations in my head which be humours of revenge.

PISTOL.

Wilt thou revenge?

NYM.

By welkin and her star!

PISTOL.

With wit or steel?

NYM.

With both the humours, I.

I will discuss the humour of this love to Page.

PISTOL.

And I to Ford shall eke unfold

How Falstaff, varlet vile,

His dove will prove, his gold will hold,

And his soft couch defile.

NYM.

My humour shall not cool; I will incense Page to deal with poison; I will possess him with yellowness; for the revolt of mine is dangerous. That is my true humour.

PISTOL.
Thou art the Mars of malcontents; I second thee; troop on. *Exeunt*

SCENE 4.

DOCTOR CAIUS'S house

Enter MISTRESS QUICKLY, SIMPLE, and RUGBY

QUICKLY.
What, John Rugby! I pray thee go to the casement and see if you can see my master, Master Doctor Caius, coming. If he do, i' faith, and find anybody in the house, here will be an old abusing of God's patience and the King's English.

RUGBY.

I'll go watch.

QUICKLY.

Go; and we'll have a posset for't soon at night, in

faith, at the latter end of a sea-coal fire. *[Exit RUGBY]*

An

honest, willing, kind fellow, as ever servant shall come in

house withal; and, I warrant you, no tell-tale nor no

breed-bate; his worst fault is that he is given to prayer; he is

something peevish that way; but nobody but has his fault;

but let that pass. Peter Simple you say your name is?

SIMPLE.

Ay, for fault of a better.

QUICKLY.

And Master Slender's your master?

SIMPLE.

Ay, forsooth.

QUICKLY.

Does he not wear a great round beard, like a
glover's paring-knife?

SIMPLE.

No, forsooth; he hath but a little whey face, with a
little yellow beard, a Cain-colour'd beard.

QUICKLY.

A softly-sprighted man, is he not?

SIMPLE.

Ay, forsooth; but he is as tall a man of his hands as
any is between this and his head; he hath fought with a warrener.

QUICKLY.

How say you? O, I should remember him. Does
he not hold up his head, as it were, and strut in his gait?

SIMPLE.

Yes, indeed, does he.

QUICKLY.

Well, heaven send Anne Page no worse fortune!

Tell Master Parson Evans I will do what I can for your

master. Anne is a good girl, and I wish-

Re-enter RUGBY

RUGBY.

Out, alas! here comes my master.

QUICKLY.

We shall all be shent. Run in here, good young

man; go into this closet. *[Shuts SIMPLE in the closet]* He

will not stay long. What, John Rugby! John! what, John,

I say! Go, John, go inquire for my master; I doubt he be

not well that he comes not home. *[Singing]*

And down, down, adown-a, *etc*.

Enter DOCTOR CAIUS

CAIUS.

Vat is you sing? I do not like des toys. Pray you, go
and vetch me in my closet un boitier vert-a box, a green-a
box. Do intend vat I speak? A green-a box.

QUICKLY.

Ay, forsooth, I'll fetch it you. *[Aside]* I am glad
he went not in himself; if he had found the young man,
he would have been horn-mad.

CAIUS.

Fe, fe, fe fe! ma foi, il fait fort chaud. Je m'en vais a
la cour-la grande affaire.

QUICKLY.

Is it this, sir?

CAIUS.

Oui; mette le au mon pocket: depeche, quickly. Vere is dat knave, Rugby?

QUICKLY.

What, John Rugby? John!

RUGBY.

Here, sir.

CAIUS.

You are John Rugby, and you are Jack Rugby.

Come, take-a your rapier, and come after my heel to the court.

RUGBY.

'Tis ready, sir, here in the porch.

CAIUS.

By my trot, I tarry too long. Od's me! Qu'ai j'oublie?

Dere is some simples in my closet dat I vill not for the varld I shall leave behind.

QUICKLY.

Ay me, he'll find the young man there, and be mad!

CAIUS.

O diable, diable! vat is in my closet? Villainy! larron!

[Pulling SIMPLE out] Rugby, my rapier!

QUICKLY.

Good master, be content.

CAIUS.

Wherefore shall I be content-a?

QUICKLY.

The young man is an honest man.

CAIUS.

What shall de honest man do in my closet? Dere is
no honest man dat shall come in my closet.

QUICKLY.

I beseech you, be not so phlegmatic; hear the
truth of it. He came of an errand to me from Parson Hugh.

CAIUS.

Vell?

SIMPLE.

Ay, forsooth, to desire her to-

QUICKLY.

Peace, I pray you.

CAIUS.

Peace-a your tongue. Speak-a your tale.

SIMPLE.

To desire this honest gentlewoman, your maid, to
speak a good word to Mistress Anne Page for my master,
in the way of marriage.

QUICKLY.

This is all, indeed, la! but I'll ne'er put my finger
in the fire, and need not.

CAIUS.

Sir Hugh send-a you? Rugby, baillez me some paper.
Tarry you a little-a-while. *[Writes]*

QUICKLY.

[Aside to SIMPLE] I am glad he is so quiet; if he
had been throughly moved, you should have heard him
so loud and so melancholy. But notwithstanding, man, I'll
do you your master what good I can; and the very yea and
the no is, the French doctor, my master-I may call him
my master, look you, for I keep his house; and I wash,

wring, brew, bake, scour, dress meat and drink, make the
beds, and do all myself-

SIMPLE.
[Aside to QUICKLY] 'Tis a great charge to come
under one body's hand.

QUICKLY.
[Aside to SIMPLE] Are you avis'd o' that? You
shall find it a great charge; and to be up early and down
late; but notwithstanding-to tell you in your ear, I would
have no words of it-my master himself is in love with
Mistress Anne Page; but notwithstanding that, I know
Anne's mind-that's neither here nor there.

CAIUS.
You jack'nape; give-a this letter to Sir Hugh; by gar,
it is a shallenge; I will cut his troat in de park; and I will
teach a scurvy jack-a-nape priest to meddle or make. You
may be gone; it is not good you tarry here. By gar, I will
cut all his two stones; by gar, he shall not have a stone

to throw at his dog. *Exit* SIMPLE

QUICKLY.

Alas, he speaks but for his friend.

CAIUS.

It is no matter-a ver dat. Do not you tell-a me dat I

shall have Anne Page for myself? By gar, I vill kill de Jack

priest; and I have appointed mine host of de Jarteer to

measure our weapon. By gar, I will myself have Anne Page.

QUICKLY.

Sir, the maid loves you, and all shall be well. We

must give folks leave to prate. What the good-year!

CAIUS.

Rugby, come to the court with me. By gar, if I have

not Anne Page, I shall turn your head out of my door.

Follow my heels, Rugby. *Exeunt* CAIUS and RUGBY

QUICKLY.

You shall have-An fool's-head of your own. No, I know Anne's mind for that; never a woman in Windsor

knows more of Anne's mind than I do; nor can do more

than I do with her, I thank heaven.

FENTON.

[Within] Who's within there? ho!

QUICKLY.

Who's there, I trow? Come near the house, I pray you.

Enter FENTON

FENTON.

How now, good woman, how dost thou?

QUICKLY.

The better that it pleases your good worship to ask.

FENTON.

What news? How does pretty Mistress Anne?

QUICKLY.

In truth, sir, and she is pretty, and honest, and
gentle; and one that is your friend, I can tell you that by
the way; I praise heaven for it.

FENTON.

Shall I do any good, think'st thou? Shall I not lose my suit?

QUICKLY.

Troth, sir, all is in His hands above; but
notwithstanding, Master Fenton, I'll be sworn on a book
she loves you. Have not your worship a wart above your eye?

FENTON.

Yes, marry, have I; what of that?

QUICKLY.

Well, thereby hangs a tale; good faith, it is such
another Nan; but, I detest, an honest maid as ever broke
bread. We had an hour's talk of that wart; I shall never

laugh but in that maid's company! But, indeed, she is
given too much to allicholy and musing; but for you-well,
go to.

FENTON.
Well, I shall see her to-day. Hold, there's money
for thee; let me have thy voice in my behalf. If thou seest
her before me, commend me.

QUICKLY.
Will I? I' faith, that we will; and I will tell your
worship more of the wart the next time we have confidence;
and of other wooers.

FENTON.

Well, farewell; I am in great haste now.

QUICKLY.
Farewell to your worship. *[Exit FENTON]* Truly,
an honest gentleman; but Anne loves him not; for I know

Anne's mind as well as another does. Out upon 't, what

have I forgot? *Exit*

ACT II. SCENE 1.

Before PAGE'S house

Enter MISTRESS PAGE, with a letter

MRS.

PAGE. What! have I scap'd love-letters in the holiday-time

of my beauty, and am I now a subject for them? Let

me see. *[Reads]*

'Ask me no reason why I love you; for though Love use

Reason for his precisian, he admits him not for his counsellor.

You are not young, no more am I; go to, then, there's

sympathy. You are merry, so am I; ha! ha! then there's

more sympathy. You love sack, and so do I; would you

desire better sympathy? Let it suffice thee, Mistress Page

at the least, if the love of soldier can suffice-that I love

thee. I will not say, Pity me: 'tis not a soldier-like phrase;

but I say, Love me. By me,

Thine own true knight,

By day or night,

Or any kind of light,

With all his might,

For thee to fight,

JOHN FALSTAFF.'

What a Herod of Jewry is this! O wicked, wicked world!

One that is well-nigh worn to pieces with age to show

himself a young gallant! What an unweighed behaviour

hath this Flemish drunkard pick'd-with the devil's name!

-out of my conversation, that he dares in this manner

assay me? Why, he hath not been thrice in my company!

What should I say to him? I was then frugal of my mirth.

Heaven forgive me! Why, I'll exhibit a bill in the parliament

for the putting down of men. How shall I be

reveng'd on him? for reveng'd I will be, as sure as his guts

are made of puddings.

Enter MISTRESS FORD

MRS.

FORD. Mistress Page! trust me, I was going to your house.

MRS.

PAGE. And, trust me, I was coming to you. You look very ill.

MRS.

FORD. Nay, I'll ne'er believe that; I have to show to the contrary.

MRS.

PAGE. Faith, but you do, in my mind.

MRS.

FORD. Well, I do, then; yet, I say, I could show you to
the contrary. O Mistress Page, give me some counsel.

MRS.

PAGE. What's the matter, woman?

MRS.

FORD. O woman, if it were not for one trifling respect,

I could come to such honour!

MRS.

PAGE. Hang the trifle, woman; take the honour. What

is it? Dispense with trifles; what is it?

MRS.

FORD. If I would but go to hell for an eternal moment

or so, I could be knighted.

MRS.

PAGE. What? Thou liest. Sir Alice Ford! These knights

will hack; and so thou shouldst not alter the article of thy gentry.

MRS.

FORD. We burn daylight. Here, read, read; perceive

how I might be knighted. I shall think the worse of fat

men as long as I have an eye to make difference of men's

liking. And yet he would not swear; prais'd women's modesty, and gave such orderly and well-behaved reproof to all uncomeliness that I would have sworn his disposition would have gone to the truth of his words; but they do no more adhere and keep place together than the Hundredth Psalm to the tune of 'Greensleeves.' What tempest, I trow, threw this whale, with so many tuns of oil in his belly, ashore at Windsor? How shall I be revenged on him? I think the best way were to entertain him with hope, till the wicked fire of lust have melted him in his own grease. Did you ever hear the like?

MRS.
PAGE. Letter for letter, but that the name of Page and Ford differs. To thy great comfort in this mystery of ill opinions, here's the twin-brother of thy letter; but let thine inherit first, for, I protest, mine never shall. I warrant he hath a thousand of these letters, writ with blank space for different names-sure, more!-and these are of the second edition. He will print them, out of doubt; for he cares not what he puts into the press when he would put us two. I had rather be a giantess and lie under Mount Pelion. Well,

I will find you twenty lascivious turtles ere one chaste man.

MRS.

FORD. Why, this is the very same; the very hand, the
very words. What doth he think of us?

MRS.

PAGE. Nay, I know not; it makes me almost ready to
wrangle with mine own honesty. I'll entertain myself like
one that I am not acquainted withal; for, sure, unless he
know some strain in me that I know not myself, he would
never have boarded me in this fury.

MRS.

FORD. 'Boarding' call you it? I'll be sure to keep him above deck.

MRS.

PAGE. So will I; if he come under my hatches, I'll never
to sea again. Let's be reveng'd on him; let's appoint him a
meeting, give him a show of comfort in his suit, and lead
him on with a fine-baited delay, till he hath pawn'd his

horses to mine host of the Garter.

MRS.

FORD. Nay, I will consent to act any villainy against

him that may not sully the chariness of our honesty. O

that my husband saw this letter! It would give eternal food to his jealousy.

MRS.

PAGE. Why, look where he comes; and my good man

too; he's as far from jealousy as I am from giving him

cause; and that, I hope, is an unmeasurable distance.

MRS.

FORD. You are the happier woman.

MRS.

PAGE. Let's consult together against this greasy knight.

Come hither. *[They retire]*

Enter FORD with PISTOL, and PAGE with Nym

FORD.

Well, I hope it be not so.

PISTOL.

Hope is a curtal dog in some affairs.
Sir John affects thy wife.

FORD.

Why, sir, my wife is not young.

PISTOL.

He woos both high and low, both rich and poor,
Both young and old, one with another, Ford;
He loves the gallimaufry. Ford, perpend.

FORD.

Love my wife!

PISTOL.

With liver burning hot. Prevent, or go thou,

Like Sir Actaeon he, with Ringwood at thy heels.

O, odious is the name!

FORD.

What name, sir?

PISTOL.

The horn, I say. Farewell.

Take heed, have open eye, for thieves do foot by night;

Take heed, ere summer comes, or cuckoo birds do sing.

Away, Sir Corporal Nym.

Believe it, Page; he speaks sense. *Exit* PISTOL

FORD.

[Aside] I will be patient; I will find out this.

NYM.

[To PAGE] And this is true; I like not the humour of

lying. He hath wronged me in some humours; I should

have borne the humour'd letter to her; but I have a sword,

and it shall bite upon my necessity. He loves your wife;

there's the short and the long.

My name is Corporal Nym; I speak, and I avouch;

'Tis true. My name is Nym, and Falstaff loves your wife.

Adieu! I love not the humour of bread and cheese; and

there's the humour of it. Adieu. *Exit* Nym

PAGE.

'The humour of it,' quoth 'a! Here's a fellow frights

English out of his wits.

FORD.

I will seek out Falstaff.

PAGE.

I never heard such a drawling, affecting rogue.

FORD.

If I do find it-well.

PAGE.

I will not believe such a Cataian though the priest o'

th' town commended him for a true man.

FORD.

'Twas a good sensible fellow. Well.

MISTRESS PAGE and MISTRESS FORD come forward

PAGE.

How now, Meg!

MRS.

PAGE. Whither go you, George? Hark you.

MRS.

FORD. How now, sweet Frank, why art thou melancholy?

FORD.

I melancholy! I am not melancholy. Get you home; go.

MRS.
FORD. Faith, thou hast some crotchets in thy head now.

Will you go, Mistress Page?

Enter MISTRESS QUICKLY

MRS.
PAGE. Have with you. You'll come to dinner, George?

[Aside to MRS. FORD] Look who comes yonder; she shall
be our messenger to this paltry knight.

MRS.
FORD. *[Aside to MRS. PAGE]* Trust me, I thought on
her; she'll fit it.

MRS.

PAGE. You are come to see my daughter Anne?

QUICKLY.

Ay, forsooth; and, I pray, how does good Mistress Anne?

MRS.

PAGE. Go in with us and see; we have an hour's talk

with you. *Exeunt* MISTRESS PAGE, MISTRESS FORD, and

MISTRESS QUICKLY

PAGE.

How now, Master Ford!

FORD.

You heard what this knave told me, did you not?

PAGE.

Yes; and you heard what the other told me?

FORD.

Do you think there is truth in them?

PAGE.

Hang 'em, slaves! I do not think the knight would offer it;

but these that accuse him in his intent towards our

wives are a yoke of his discarded men; very rogues, now

they be out of service.

FORD.

Were they his men?

PAGE.

Marry, were they.

FORD.

I like it never the better for that. Does he lie at the Garter?

PAGE.

Ay, marry, does he. If he should intend this voyage
toward my wife, I would turn her loose to him; and what
he gets more of her than sharp words, let it lie on my head.

FORD.

I do not misdoubt my wife; but I would be loath to
turn them together. A man may be too confident. I would
have nothing lie on my head. I cannot be thus satisfied.

Enter HOST

PAGE.

Look where my ranting host of the Garter comes.
There is either liquor in his pate or money in his purse
when he looks so merrily. How now, mine host!

HOST.

How now, bully rook! Thou'rt a gentleman. [To

SHALLOW following] Cavaleiro Justice, I say.

Enter SHALLOW

SHALLOW.

I follow, mine host, I follow. Good even and
twenty, good Master Page! Master Page, will you go with
us? We have sport in hand.

HOST.

Tell him, Cavaleiro Justice; tell him, bully rook.

SHALLOW.

Sir, there is a fray to be fought between Sir Hugh
the Welsh priest and Caius the French doctor.

FORD.

Good mine host o' th' Garter, a word with you.

HOST.

What say'st thou, my bully rook? *[They go aside]*

SHALLOW.

[To PAGE] Will you go with us to behold it? My
merry host hath had the measuring of their weapons; and,
I think, hath appointed them contrary places; for, believe
me, I hear the parson is no jester. Hark, I will tell you
what our sport shall be. *[They converse apart]*

HOST.

Hast thou no suit against my knight, my guest-cavaleiro.

FORD.

None, I protest; but I'll give you a pottle of burnt
sack to give me recourse to him, and tell him my name is
Brook-only for a jest.

HOST.

My hand, bully; thou shalt have egress and regress-
said I well?-and thy name shall be Brook. It is a merry
knight. Will you go, Mynheers?

SHALLOW.

Have with you, mine host.

PAGE.

I have heard the Frenchman hath good skill in his rapier.

SHALLOW.

Tut, sir, I could have told you more. In these
times you stand on distance, your passes, stoccadoes, and
I know not what. 'Tis the heart, Master Page; 'tis here,
'tis here. I have seen the time with my long sword I would
have made you four tall fellows skip like rats.

HOST.

Here, boys, here, here! Shall we wag?

PAGE.

Have with you. I had rather hear them scold than
fight. *Exeunt* all but FORD

FORD.

Though Page be a secure fool, and stands so firmly on
his wife's frailty, yet I cannot put off my opinion so
easily. She was in his company at Page's house, and what
they made there I know not. Well, I will look further into
't, and I have a disguise to sound Falstaff. If I find her
honest, I lose not my labour; if she be otherwise, 'tis labour
well bestowed. *Exit*

SCENE 2.

A room in the Garter Inn

Enter FALSTAFF and PISTOL

FALSTAFF.

I will not lend thee a penny.

PISTOL.

I will retort the sum in equipage.

FALSTAFF.

Not a penny.

PISTOL.

Why, then the world's mine oyster. Which I with sword will open.

FALSTAFF.

Not a penny. I have been content, sir, you should
lay my countenance to pawn. I have grated upon my good
friends for three reprieves for you and your coach-fellow,
Nym; or else you had look'd through the grate, like a
geminy of baboons. I am damn'd in hell for swearing to
gentlemen my friends you were good soldiers and tall fellows;
and when Mistress Bridget lost the handle of her fan,
I took 't upon mine honour thou hadst it not.

PISTOL.

Didst not thou share? Hadst thou not fifteen pence?

FALSTAFF.

Reason, you rogue, reason. Think'st thou I'll
endanger my soul gratis? At a word, hang no more about me,
I am no gibbet for you. Go-a short knife and a throng!-
to your manor of Pickt-hatch; go. You'll not bear a letter
for me, you rogue! You stand upon your honour! Why,
thou unconfinable baseness, it is as much as I can do to
keep the terms of my honour precise. I, I, I myself
sometimes, leaving the fear of God on the left hand, and hiding
mine honour in my necessity, am fain to shuffle, to hedge,
and to lurch; and yet you, rogue, will ensconce your rags,
your cat-a-mountain looks, your red-lattice phrases, and
your bold-beating oaths, under the shelter of your honour!

You will not do it, you!

PISTOL.
I do relent; what would thou more of man?

Enter ROBIN

ROBIN.

Sir, here's a woman would speak with you.

FALSTAFF.

Let her approach.

Enter MISTRESS QUICKLY

QUICKLY.

Give your worship good morrow.

FALSTAFF.

Good morrow, good wife.

QUICKLY.

Not so, an't please your worship.

FALSTAFF.

Good maid, then.

QUICKLY.

I'll be sworn;

As my mother was, the first hour I was born.

FALSTAFF.

I do believe the swearer. What with me?

QUICKLY.

Shall I vouchsafe your worship a word or two?

FALSTAFF.

Two thousand, fair woman; and I'll vouchsafe thee the hearing.

QUICKLY.

There is one Mistress Ford, sir-I pray, come a little

nearer this ways. I myself dwell with Master Doctor Caius.

FALSTAFF.

Well, on: Mistress Ford, you say-

QUICKLY.

Your worship says very true. I pray your worship
come a little nearer this ways.

FALSTAFF.

I warrant thee nobody hears-mine own people,
mine own people.

QUICKLY.

Are they so? God bless them, and make them his servants!

FALSTAFF.

Well; Mistress Ford, what of her?

QUICKLY.

Why, sir, she's a good creature. Lord, Lord, your
worship's a wanton! Well, heaven forgive you, and all of
us, I pray.

FALSTAFF.

Mistress Ford; come, Mistress Ford-

QUICKLY.

Marry, this is the short and the long of it: you

have brought her into such a canaries as 'tis wonderful.

The best courtier of them all, when the court lay at Windsor,

could never have brought her to such a canary. Yet

there has been knights, and lords, and gentlemen, with

their coaches; I warrant you, coach after coach, letter after

letter, gift after gift; smelling so sweetly, all musk, and so

rushling, I warrant you, in silk and gold; and in such alligant

terms; and in such wine and sugar of the best and the

fairest, that would have won any woman's heart; and I

warrant you, they could never get an eye-wink of her.

I had myself twenty angels given me this morning; but I

defy all angels, in any such sort, as they say, but in the

way of honesty; and, I warrant you, they could never get

her so much as sip on a cup with the proudest of them all;

and yet there has been earls, nay, which is more,

pensioners; but, I warrant you, all is one with her.

FALSTAFF.

But what says she to me? Be brief, my good she-
Mercury.

QUICKLY.

Marry, she hath receiv'd your letter; for the
which she thanks you a thousand times; and she gives you
to notify that her husband will be absence from his house
between ten and eleven.

FALSTAFF.

Ten and eleven?

QUICKLY.

Ay, forsooth; and then you may come and see
the picture, she says, that you wot of. Master Ford, her
husband, will be from home. Alas, the sweet woman leads
an ill life with him! He's a very jealousy man; she leads a
very frampold life with him, good heart.

FALSTAFF.

Ten and eleven. Woman, commend me to her; I
will not fail her.

QUICKLY.

Why, you say well. But I have another messenger
to your worship. Mistress Page hath her hearty commendations
to you too; and let me tell you in your ear, she's as
fartuous a civil modest wife, and one, I tell you, that will
not miss you morning nor evening prayer, as any is in
Windsor, whoe'er be the other; and she bade me tell your
worship that her husband is seldom from home, but she
hopes there will come a time. I never knew a woman so
dote upon a man: surely I think you have charms, la! Yes,
in truth.

FALSTAFF.

Not I, I assure thee; setting the attraction of my
good parts aside, I have no other charms.

QUICKLY.

Blessing on your heart for 't!

FALSTAFF.

But, I pray thee, tell me this: has Ford's wife and Page's wife acquainted each other how they love me?

QUICKLY.

That were a jest indeed! They have not so little grace, I hope-that were a trick indeed! But Mistress Page would desire you to send her your little page of all loves. Her husband has a marvellous infection to the little page; and truly Master Page is an honest man. Never a wife in Windsor leads a better life than she does; do what she will, say what she will, take all, pay all, go to bed when she list, rise when she list, all is as she will; and truly she deserves it; for if there be a kind woman in Windsor, she is one. You must send her your page; no remedy.

FALSTAFF.

Why, I will.

QUICKLY.

Nay, but do so then; and, look you, he may come
and go between you both; and in any case have a
nay-word, that you may know one another's mind, and the boy
never need to understand any thing; for 'tis not good that
children should know any wickedness. Old folks, you
know, have discretion, as they say, and know the world.

FALSTAFF.

Fare thee well; commend me to them both.
There's my purse; I am yet thy debtor. Boy, go along with
this woman. *[Exeunt QUICKLY and ROBIN]* This news distracts me.

PISTOL.

[Aside] This punk is one of Cupid's carriers;
Clap on more sails; pursue; up with your fights;
Give fire; she is my prize, or ocean whelm them all! *Exit*

FALSTAFF. Say'st thou so, old Jack; go thy ways; I'll make more of thy old body than I have done. Will they yet look after thee? Wilt thou, after the expense of so much money, be now a gainer? Good body, I thank thee. Let them say 'tis grossly done; so it be fairly done, no matter.

Enter BARDOLPH

BARDOLPH.
Sir John, there's one Master Brook below would fain speak with you, and be acquainted with you; and hath sent your worship a moming's draught of sack.

FALSTAFF.

Brook is his name?

BARDOLPH.
Ay, sir.

FALSTAFF.

Call him in. *[Exit BARDOLPH]* Such Brooks are

welcome to me, that o'erflows such liquor. Ah, ha! Mistress

Ford and Mistress Page, have I encompass'd you? Go to; via!

Re-enter BARDOLPH, with FORD disguised

FORD.

Bless you, sir! FALSTAFF. And you, sir! Would you speak with me? FORD. I make bold to press with so little preparation upon you. FALSTAFF. You're welcome. What's your will? Give us leave, drawer. *Exit* BARDOLPH FORD. Sir, I am a gentleman that have spent much; my name is Brook. FALSTAFF. Good Master Brook, I desire more acquaintance of you. FORD. Good Sir John, I sue for yours-not to charge you; for I must let you understand I think myself in better plight for a lender than you are; the which hath something embold'ned me to this unseason'd intrusion; for they say, if money go before, all ways do lie open. FALSTAFF. Money is a good soldier, sir, and will on. FORD. Troth, and I have a bag of money here troubles me; if you will help to bear it, Sir John, take all, or half, for easing me of the carriage. FALSTAFF. Sir, I know not how I may deserve to be your porter. FORD. I will tell you, sir, if you will give me the hearing. FALSTAFF. Speak, good Master Brook; I shall be glad to be your servant. FORD. Sir, I hear you are a scholar-I will be brief with you -and you have been a man long known to me, though I had never so good means as desire to make myself acquainted with you. I shall discover a thing to you, wherein I must very much lay open mine own imperfection; but, good Sir John, as you have one eye upon my follies, as you hear them unfolded, turn another into the register of your own, that I may pass with a reproof the easier, sith you yourself know how easy is it to be such an offender. FALSTAFF. Very well, sir; proceed. FORD. There is a gentlewoman in this town, her husband's name is Ford. FALSTAFF. Well, sir. FORD. I have long lov'd her, and, I protest to you, bestowed much on her; followed her with a doting observance; engross'd opportunities to meet her; fee'd every slight occasion that could but niggardly give me sight of her; not only bought many presents to give her, but have given largely to many to know what she would have given; briefly, I have pursu'd her as love hath pursued me; which hath been on the wing of all occasions. But whatsoever I have merited, either in my mind or in my means, meed, I am sure, I have received none, unless experience be a jewel; that I have purchased at an infinite rate, and that hath taught me to say this: 'Love like a shadow flies when substance love pursues; Pursuing that that flies, and flying what pursues.' FALSTAFF. Have you receiv'd no promise of satisfaction at her hands? FORD. Never. FALSTAFF. Have you importun'd her to such a purpose? FORD. Never. FALSTAFF. Of what quality was your love, then? FORD. Like a fair house built on another man's ground; so that I have lost my edifice by mistaking the place where erected it. FALSTAFF. To what purpose have you unfolded this to me? FORD. When I have told you that, I have told you all. Some say that though she appear honest to me, yet in other places she enlargeth her mirth so far that there is shrewd construction made of her. Now, Sir John, here is the heart of my purpose: you are a gentleman of excellent breeding, admirable discourse, of great admittance, authentic in your place and person, generally allow'd for your many war-like, courtlike, and learned preparations. FALSTAFF. O, sir! FORD. Believe it, for you know it. There is money; spend it, spend it; spend more; spend all I have; only give me so much of your time in exchange of it as to lay an amiable siege to the honesty of this Ford's wife; use your art of wooing, win her to consent to you; if any man may, you may as soon as any. FALSTAFF. Would it apply well to the vehemency of your affection, that I should win what you would enjoy? Methinks you prescribe to yourself very preposterously. FORD. O, understand my drift. She dwells so securely on the excellency of her honour that the folly of my soul dares not present itself; she is too bright to be look'd against. Now, could I come to her with any detection in my hand, my desires had instance and argument to commend themselves; I could drive her then from the ward of her purity, her reputation, her marriage vow, and a thousand other her defences, which now are too too strongly embattl'd against me. What say you to't, Sir John? FALSTAFF. Master Brook, I will first make bold with your money; next, give me your hand; and last, as I am a gentleman, you shall, if you will, enjoy Ford's wife. FORD. O good sir! FALSTAFF. I say you shall. FORD. Want no money, Sir John; you shall want none. FALSTAFF. Want no Mistress Ford, Master Brook; you shall want none. I shall be with her, I may tell you, by her own appointment; even as you came in to me her assistant, or go-between, parted from me; I say I shall be with her between ten and eleven; for at that time the jealous rascally knave, her husband, will be forth. Come you to me at night; you shall know how I speed. FORD. I am blest in your acquaintance. Do you know Ford, Sir? FALSTAFF. Hang him, poor cuckoldly knave! I know him not; yet I wrong him to call him poor; they say the jealous wittolly knave hath masses of money; for the which his wife seems to me well-favour'd. I will use her as the key of the cuckoldly rogue's coffer; and there's my harvest-home. FORD. I would you knew Ford, sir, that you might avoid him if you saw him. FALSTAFF. Hang him, mechanical salt-butter rogue! I will stare him out of his wits; I will awe him with my cudgel; it shall hang like a meteor o'er the cuckold's horns. Master Brook, thou shalt know I will predominate over the peasant, and thou shalt lie with his wife. Come to me soon at night. Ford's a knave, and I will aggravate his style; thou, Master Brook, shalt know him for knave and cuckold. Come to me soon at night. *Exit* FORD. What a damn'd Epicurean rascal is this! My heart is ready to crack with impatience. Who says this is improvident jealousy? My wife hath sent to him; the hour is fix'd; the match is made. Would any man have thought this? See the hell of having a false woman! My bed shall be abus'd, my coffers ransack'd, my reputation gnawn at; and I shall not only receive this villainous wrong, but stand under the adoption of abominable terms, and by him that does me this wrong. Terms! names! Amaimon sounds well; Lucifer, well; Barbason, well; yet they are devils' additions, the names of fiends. But cuckold! Wittol! Cuckold! the devil himself hath not such a name. Page is an ass, a secure ass; he will trust his wife; he will not be jealous; I will rather trust a Fleming with my butter, Parson Hugh the Welshman with my cheese, an Irishman with my aqua-vitae bottle, or a thief to walk my ambling gelding, than my wife with herself. Then she plots, then she ruminates, then she devises; and what they think in their hearts they may effect, they will break their hearts but they will effect. God be prais'd for my jealousy! Eleven o'clock the hour. I will prevent this, detect my wife, be reveng'd on Falstaff, and laugh at Page. I will about it; better three hours too soon than a minute too late. Fie, fie, fie! cuckold! cuckold! cuckold! *Exit*

SCENE 3.

A field near Windsor

Enter CAIUS and RUGBY

CAIUS.

Jack Rugby!

RUGBY.

Sir?

CAIUS.
Vat is de clock, Jack?

RUGBY.

'Tis past the hour, sir, that Sir Hugh promis'd to meet.

CAIUS.
By gar, he has save his soul dat he is no come; he has
pray his Pible well dat he is no come; by gar, Jack Rugby,
he is dead already, if he be come.

RUGBY.

He is wise, sir; he knew your worship would kill him if he came.

CAIUS.

By gar, de herring is no dead so as I vill kill him.

Take

your rapier, Jack; I vill tell you how I vill kill him.

RUGBY.

Alas, sir, I cannot fence!

CAIUS.

Villainy, take your rapier.

RUGBY.

Forbear; here's company.

Enter HOST, SHALLOW, SLENDER, and PAGE

HOST.

Bless thee, bully doctor!

SHALLOW.

Save you, Master Doctor Caius!

PAGE.

Now, good Master Doctor!

SLENDER.

Give you good morrow, sir.

CAIUS.

Vat be all you, one, two, tree, four, come for?

HOST.

To see thee fight, to see thee foin, to see thee traverse;
to see thee here, to see thee there; to see thee pass thy
punto, thy stock, thy reverse, thy distance, thy montant.
Is he dead, my Ethiopian? Is he dead, my Francisco? Ha,
bully! What says my Aesculapius? my Galen? my heart
of elder? Ha! is he dead, bully stale? Is he dead?

CAIUS.

By gar, he is de coward Jack priest of de world; he is not show his face.

HOST.
Thou art a Castalion-King-Urinal. Hector of Greece,
my boy!

CAIUS.
I pray you, bear witness that me have stay six or
seven, two tree hours for him, and he is no come.

SHALLOW.
He is the wiser man, Master Doctor: he is a curer
of souls, and you a curer of bodies; if you should fight,
you go against the hair of your professions. Is it not true,
Master Page?

PAGE.
Master Shallow, you have yourself been a great fighter,

though now a man of peace.

SHALLOW.
Bodykins, Master Page, though I now be old, and
of the peace, if I see a sword out, my finger itches to make
one. Though we are justices, and doctors, and churchmen,
Master Page, we have some salt of our youth in us; we are
the sons of women, Master Page.

PAGE.

'Tis true, Master Shallow.

SHALLOW.
It will be found so, Master Page. Master Doctor
CAIUS, I come to fetch you home. I am sworn of the peace;
you have show'd yourself a wise physician, and Sir Hugh
hath shown himself a wise and patient churchman. You
must go with me, Master Doctor.

HOST.

Pardon, Guest Justice. A word, Mounseur Mockwater.

CAIUS.

Mockvater! Vat is dat?

HOST.

Mockwater, in our English tongue, is valour, bully.

CAIUS.

By gar, then I have as much mockvater as de Englishman.

Scurvy jack-dog priest! By gar, me vill cut his ears.

HOST.

He will clapper-claw thee tightly, bully.

CAIUS.

Clapper-de-claw! Vat is dat?

HOST.

That is, he will make thee amends.

CAIUS.

By gar, me do look he shall clapper-de-claw me; for,

by gar, me vill have it.

HOST.

And I will provoke him to't, or let him wag.

CAIUS.

Me tank you for dat.

HOST.

And, moreover, bully-but first: *[Aside to the others]*

Master Guest, and Master Page, and eke Cavaleiro Slender,

go you through the town to Frogmore.

PAGE.

[Aside] Sir Hugh is there, is he?

HOST.

[Aside] He is there. See what humour he is in; and

I will bring the doctor about by the fields. Will it do well?

SHALLOW.

[Aside] We will do it.

PAGE, SHALLOW, and SLENDER. Adieu, good Master Doctor.

Exeunt PAGE, SHALLOW, and SLENDER

CAIUS.

By gar, me vill kill de priest; for he speak for a jack-

an-ape to Anne Page.

HOST.

Let him die. Sheathe thy impatience; throw cold water

on thy choler; go about the fields with me through Frogmore;

I will bring thee where Mistress Anne Page is, at a a

farm-house, a-feasting; and thou shalt woo her. Cried

game! Said I well?

CAIUS.

By gar, me dank you vor dat; by gar, I love you; and
I shall procure-a you de good guest, de earl, de knight, de
lords, de gentlemen, my patients.

HOST.

For the which I will be thy adversary toward Anne
Page. Said I well?

CAIUS.

By gar, 'tis good; vell said.

HOST.

Let us wag, then.

CAIUS.

Come at my heels, Jack Rugby. *Exeunt*

ACT III SCENE 1.

A field near Frogmore

Enter SIR HUGH EVANS and SIMPLE

EVANS.

I pray you now, good Master Slender's serving-man,

and friend Simple by your name, which way have you

look'd for Master Caius, that calls himself Doctor of Physic?

SIMPLE.

Marry, sir, the pittie-ward, the park-ward; every

way; old Windsor way, and every way but the town way.

EVANS.

I most fehemently desire you you will also look that way.

SIMPLE.

I will, Sir. *Exit*

EVANS. Pless my soul, how full of chollors I am, and trempling of mind! I shall be glad if he have deceived me. How melancholies I am! I will knog his urinals about his knave's costard when I have goot opportunities for the ork. Pless my soul! *[Sings]*

To shallow rivers, to whose falls
Melodious birds sings madrigals;
There will we make our peds of roses,
And a thousand fragrant posies.
To shallow-

Mercy on me! I have a great dispositions to cry. *[Sings]*

Melodious birds sing madrigals-
Whenas I sat in Pabylon-
And a thousand vagram posies.
To shallow, *etc.*

Re-enter SIMPLE

SIMPLE.

Yonder he is, coming this way, Sir Hugh.

EVANS.

He's welcome. *[Sings]*

To shallow rivers, to whose falls-

Heaven prosper the right! What weapons is he?

SIMPLE.

No weapons, sir. There comes my master, Master

Shallow, and another gentleman, from Frogmore, over the stile, this way.

EVANS.

Pray you give me my gown; or else keep it in your

arms. *[Takes out a book]*

Enter PAGE, SHALLOW, and SLENDER

SHALLOW.

How now, Master Parson! Good morrow, good

Sir Hugh. Keep a gamester from the dice, and a good student

from his book, and it is wonderful.

SLENDER.

[Aside] Ah, sweet Anne Page!

PAGE.

Save you, good Sir Hugh!

EVANS.

Pless you from his mercy sake, all of you!

SHALLOW.

What, the sword and the word! Do you study

them both, Master Parson?

PAGE.

And youthful still, in your doublet and hose, this raw rheumatic day!

EVANS.

There is reasons and causes for it.

PAGE.

We are come to you to do a good office, Master Parson.

EVANS.

Fery well; what is it?

PAGE.

Yonder is a most reverend gentleman, who, belike having
received wrong by some person, is at most odds with
his own gravity and patience that ever you saw.

SHALLOW.

I have lived fourscore years and upward; I never
heard a man of his place, gravity, and learning, so wide of his own respect.

EVANS.

What is he?

PAGE.

I think you know him: Master Doctor Caius, the renowned French physician.

EVANS.

Got's will and his passion of my heart! I had as lief
you would tell me of a mess of porridge.

PAGE.

Why?

EVANS.

He has no more knowledge in Hibocrates and
Galen, and he is a knave besides-a cowardly knave as you
would desires to be acquainted withal.

PAGE.

I warrant you, he's the man should fight with him.

SLENDER.

[Aside] O sweet Anne Page!

SHALLOW.

It appears so, by his weapons. Keep them asunder;
here comes Doctor Caius.

Enter HOST, CAIUS, and RUGBY

PAGE.
Nay, good Master Parson, keep in your weapon.

SHALLOW.

So do you, good Master Doctor.

HOST.
Disarm them, and let them question; let them keep
their limbs whole and hack our English.

CAIUS.
I pray you, let-a me speak a word with your ear.

Verefore will you not meet-a me?

EVANS.

[Aside to CAIUS] Pray you use your patience; in good time.

CAIUS.

By gar, you are de coward, de Jack dog, John ape.

EVANS.

[Aside to CAIUS] Pray you, let us not be
laughing-stocks to other men's humours; I desire you in
friendship, and I will one way or other make you amends.

[Aloud] I will knog your urinals about your knave's cogscomb
for missing your meetings and appointments.

CAIUS.

Diable! Jack Rugby-mine Host de Jarteer-have I
not stay for him to kill him? Have I not, at de place I did appoint?

EVANS.

As I am a Christians soul, now, look you, this is the
place appointed. I'll be judgment by mine host of the Garter.

HOST.

Peace, I say, Gallia and Gaul, French and Welsh,
soul-curer and body-curer.

CAIUS.

Ay, dat is very good! excellent!

HOST.

Peace, I say. Hear mine host of the Garter. Am I
politic? am I subtle? am I a Machiavel? Shall I lose my
doctor? No; he gives me the potions and the motions. Shall I
lose my parson, my priest, my Sir Hugh? No; he gives me
the proverbs and the noverbs. Give me thy hand, terrestrial;
so. Give me thy hand, celestial; so. Boys of art, I have
deceiv'd you both; I have directed you to wrong places;
your hearts are mighty, your skins are whole, and let burnt
sack be the issue. Come, lay their swords to pawn. Follow
me, lads of peace; follow, follow, follow.

SHALLOW.

Trust me, a mad host. Follow, gentlemen, follow.

SLENDER.

[Aside] O sweet Anne Page!

Exeunt all but CAIUS and EVANS

CAIUS.

Ha, do I perceive dat? Have you make-a de sot of us,
ha, ha?

EVANS.

This is well; he has made us his vlouting-stog. I
desire you that we may be friends; and let us knog our prains
together to be revenge on this same scall, scurvy, cogging
companion, the host of the Garter.

CAIUS.

By gar, with all my heart. He promise to bring me
where is Anne Page; by gar, he deceive me too.

EVANS.

Well, I will smite his noddles. Pray you follow.

Exeunt

SCENE 2.

The street in Windsor

Enter MISTRESS PAGE and ROBIN

MRS.

PAGE. Nay, keep your way, little gallant; you were wont to be a follower, but now you are a leader. Whether had you rather lead mine eyes, or eye your master's heels?

ROBIN.

I had rather, forsooth, go before you like a man than follow him like a dwarf.

MRS.

PAGE. O, you are a flattering boy; now I see you'll be a courtier.

Enter FORD

FORD.

Well met, Mistress Page. Whither go you?

MRS.

PAGE. Truly, sir, to see your wife. Is she at home?

FORD.

Ay; and as idle as she may hang together, for want of

company. I think, if your husbands were dead, you two would marry.

MRS.

PAGE. Be sure of that-two other husbands.

FORD.

Where had you this pretty weathercock?

MRS.

PAGE. I cannot tell what the dickens his name is my

husband had him of. What do you call your knight's name, sirrah?

ROBIN.

Sir John Falstaff.

FORD.

Sir John Falstaff!

MRS.

PAGE. He, he; I can never hit on's name. There is such

a league between my good man and he! Is your wife at home indeed?

FORD.

Indeed she is.

MRS.

PAGE. By your leave, sir. I am sick till I see her.

Exeunt MRS. PAGE and ROBIN

FORD.

Has Page any brains? Hath he any eyes? Hath he any
thinking? Sure, they sleep; he hath no use of them. Why,
this boy will carry a letter twenty mile as easy as a cannon
will shoot pointblank twelve score. He pieces out his wife's
inclination; he gives her folly motion and advantage; and
now she's going to my wife, and Falstaff's boy with her. A
man may hear this show'r sing in the wind. And Falstaff's
boy with her! Good plots! They are laid; and our revolted
wives share damnation together. Well; I will take him,
then torture my wife, pluck the borrowed veil of modesty
from the so seeming Mistress Page, divulge Page himself
for a secure and wilful Actaeon; and to these violent proceedings
all my neighbours shall cry aim. *[Clock strikes]*
The clock gives me my cue, and my assurance bids me
search; there I shall find Falstaff. I shall be rather prais'd
for this than mock'd; for it is as positive as the earth is firm
that Falstaff is there. I will go.

Enter PAGE, SHALLOW, SLENDER, HOST, SIR HUGH EVANS,

CAIUS, and RUGBY

SHALLOW, PAGE, &C. Well met, Master Ford.

FORD.

Trust me, a good knot; I have good cheer at home,
and I pray you all go with me.

SHALLOW.

I must excuse myself, Master Ford.

SLENDER.

And so must I, sir; we have appointed to dine with
Mistress Anne, and I would not break with her for more
money than I'll speak of.

SHALLOW.

We have linger'd about a match between Anne
Page and my cousin Slender, and this day we shall have our answer.

SLENDER.

I hope I have your good will, father Page.

PAGE.

You have, Master Slender; I stand wholly for you. But
my wife, Master Doctor, is for you altogether.

CAIUS.

Ay, be-gar; and de maid is love-a me; my nursh-a
Quickly tell me so mush.

HOST.

What say you to young Master Fenton? He capers,
he dances, he has eyes of youth, he writes verses, he speaks
holiday, he smells April and May; he will carry 't, he will
carry 't; 'tis in his buttons; he will carry 't.

PAGE.

Not by my consent, I promise you. The gentleman is

of no having: he kept company with the wild Prince and
Poins; he is of too high a region, he knows too much. No,
he shall not knit a knot in his fortunes with the finger of
my substance; if he take her, let him take her simply; the
wealth I have waits on my consent, and my consent goes not that way.

FORD.
I beseech you, heartily, some of you go home with me
to dinner: besides your cheer, you shall have sport; I will
show you a monster. Master Doctor, you shall go; so shall
you, Master Page; and you, Sir Hugh.

SHALLOW.
Well, fare you well; we shall have the freer
wooing at Master Page's. *Exeunt* SHALLOW and SLENDER
CAIUS.
Go home, John Rugby; I come anon. *Exit* RUGBY
HOST.
Farewell, my hearts; I will to my honest knight
Falstaff, and drink canary with him. *Exit* HOST
FORD.

[Aside] I think I shall drink in pipe-wine first with

him. I'll make him dance. Will you go, gentles?

ALL.

Have with you to see this monster. *Exeunt*

SCENE 3.

FORD'S house

Enter MISTRESS FORD and MISTRESS PAGE

MRS.

FORD. What, John! what, Robert!

MRS.

PAGE. Quickly, quickly! Is the buck-basket-

MRS.

FORD. I warrant. What, Robin, I say!

Enter SERVANTS with a basket

MRS.

PAGE. Come, come, come.

MRS.

FORD. Here, set it down.

MRS.

PAGE. Give your men the charge; we must be brief.

MRS.

FORD. Marry, as I told you before, John and Robert, be ready here hard by in the brew-house; and when I suddenly call you, come forth, and, without any pause or staggering, take this basket on your shoulders. That done, trudge with it in all haste, and carry it among the whitsters in Datchet Mead, and there empty it in the muddy ditch close by the Thames side.

Mrs. PAGE. You will do it?

MRS.

FORD. I ha' told them over and over; they lack no

direction. Be gone, and come when you are call'd.

Exeunt SERVANTS

MRS.

PAGE. Here comes little Robin.

Enter ROBIN

MRS.

FORD. How now, my eyas-musket, what news with you?

ROBIN.

My Master Sir John is come in at your back-door,

Mistress Ford, and requests your company.

MRS.

PAGE. You little Jack-a-Lent, have you been true to us?

ROBIN.

Ay, I'll be sworn. My master knows not of your
being here, and hath threat'ned to put me into everlasting
liberty, if I tell you of it; for he swears he'll turn me away.

MRS.

PAGE. Thou 'rt a good boy; this secrecy of thine shall
be a tailor to thee, and shall make thee a new doublet and
hose. I'll go hide me.

MRS.

FORD. Do so. Go tell thy master I am alone. [*Exit*

ROBIN] Mistress Page, remember you your cue.

MRS.

PAGE. I warrant thee; if I do not act it, hiss me.

Exit MRS. PAGE

MRS.

FORD. Go to, then; we'll use this unwholesome humidity, this gross wat'ry pumpion; we'll teach him to know turtles from jays.

Enter FALSTAFF

FALSTAFF.

Have I caught thee, my heavenly jewel?

Why, now let me die, for I have liv'd long enough; this is the period of my ambition. O this blessed hour!

MRS.

FORD. O sweet Sir John!

FALSTAFF.

Mistress Ford, I cannot cog, I cannot prate,

Mistress Ford. Now shall I sin in my wish; I would thy husband were dead; I'll speak it before the best lord, I would make thee my lady.

MRS.

FORD. I your lady, Sir John? Alas, I should be a pitiful lady.

FALSTAFF.

Let the court of France show me such another. I
see how thine eye would emulate the diamond; thou hast
the right arched beauty of the brow that becomes the
ship-tire, the tire-valiant, or any tire of Venetian admittance.

MRS.

FORD. A plain kerchief, Sir John; my brows become
nothing else, nor that well neither.

FALSTAFF.

By the Lord, thou art a tyrant to say so; thou
wouldst make an absolute courtier, and the firm fixture of
thy foot would give an excellent motion to thy gait in a
semi-circled farthingale. I see what thou wert, if Fortune
thy foe were, not Nature, thy friend. Come, thou canst not hide it.

MRS.

FORD. Believe me, there's no such thing in me.

FALSTAFF.

What made me love thee? Let that persuade thee

there's something extra-ordinary in thee. Come, I cannot

cog, and say thou art this and that, like a many of these

lisping hawthorn-buds that come like women in men's

apparel, and smell like Bucklersbury in simple time; I

cannot; but I love thee, none but thee; and thou deserv'st it.

MRS.

FORD. Do not betray me, sir; I fear you love Mistress Page.

FALSTAFF.

Thou mightst as well say I love to walk by the

Counter-gate, which is as hateful to me as the reek of a

lime-kiln.

MRS.

FORD. Well, heaven knows how I love you; and you
shall one day find it.

FALSTAFF.

Keep in that mind; I'll deserve it.

MRS.

FORD. Nay, I must tell you, so you do; or else I could not be in that mind.

ROBIN.

[Within] Mistress Ford, Mistress Ford! here's
Mistress Page at the door, sweating and blowing and looking
wildly, and would needs speak with you presently.

FALSTAFF.

She shall not see me; I will ensconce me behind the arras.

MRS.

FORD. Pray you, do so; she's a very tattling woman.

[FALSTAFF hides himself]

Re-enter MISTRESS PAGE and ROBIN

What's the matter? How now!

MRS.

PAGE. O Mistress Ford, what have you done? You're

sham'd, y'are overthrown, y'are undone for ever.

MRS.

FORD. What's the matter, good Mistress Page?

MRS.

PAGE. O well-a-day, Mistress Ford, having an honest

man to your husband, to give him such cause of suspicion!

MRS.

FORD. What cause of suspicion?

MRS.

PAGE. What cause of suspicion? Out upon you, how am I mistook in you!

MRS.

FORD. Why, alas, what's the matter?

MRS.

PAGE. Your husband's coming hither, woman, with all the officers in Windsor, to search for a gentleman that he says is here now in the house, by your consent, to take an ill advantage of his absence. You are undone.

MRS.

FORD. 'Tis not so, I hope.

MRS.

PAGE. Pray heaven it be not so that you have such a man here; but 'tis most certain your husband's coming, with half Windsor at his heels, to search for such a one. I come before to tell you. If you know yourself clear, why,

I am glad of it; but if you have a friend here, convey,

convey him out. Be not amaz'd; call all your senses to you;

defend your reputation, or bid farewell to your good life for ever.

MRS.

FORD. What shall I do? There is a gentleman, my dear

friend; and I fear not mine own shame as much as his peril.

I had rather than a thousand pound he were out of the house.

MRS.

PAGE. For shame, never stand 'you had rather' and 'you

had rather'! Your husband's here at hand; bethink you of

some conveyance; in the house you cannot hide him. O,

how have you deceiv'd me! Look, here is a basket; if he be

of any reasonable stature, he may creep in here; and throw

foul linen upon him, as if it were going to bucking, or-it is

whiting-time-send him by your two men to Datchet Mead.

MRS.

FORD. He's too big to go in there. What shall I do?

FALSTAFF.

[Coming forward] Let me see 't, let me see 't. O,

let me see 't! I'll in, I'll in; follow your friend's counsel;

I'll in.

MRS.

PAGE. What, Sir John Falstaff! *[Aside to FALSTAFF]*

Are these your letters, knight?

FALSTAFF.

[Aside to MRS. PAGE] I love thee and none but

thee; help me away.-Let me creep in here; I'll never-

[Gets into the basket; they cover him with foul linen]

MRS.

PAGE. Help to cover your master, boy. Call your men,

Mistress Ford. You dissembling knight!

MRS.

FORD. What, John! Robert! John! *Exit* ROBIN

Re-enter SERVANTS

Go, take up these clothes here, quickly; where's the cowl-staff? Look how you drumble. Carry them to the laundress in Datchet Mead; quickly, come.

Enter FORD, PAGE, CAIUS, and SIR HUGH EVANS

FORD.

Pray you come near. If I suspect without cause, why

then make sport at me, then let me be your jest; I deserve

it. How now, whither bear you this?

SERVANT.

To the laundress, forsooth.

MRS.

FORD. Why, what have you to do whither they bear it?

You were best meddle with buck-washing.

FORD.

Buck? I would I could wash myself of the buck!

Buck, buck, buck! ay, buck! I warrant you, buck; and of

the season too, it shall appear. [*Exeunt* SERVANTS with

basket] Gentlemen, I have dream'd to-night; I'll tell you my

dream. Here, here, here be my keys; ascend my chambers,

search, seek, find out. I'll warrant we'll unkennel the fox.

Let me stop this way first. *[Locking the door]* So, now uncape.

PAGE.

Good Master Ford, be contented; you wrong yourself too much.

FORD.

True, Master Page. Up, gentlemen, you shall see sport

anon; follow me, gentlemen. *Exit*

EVANS. This is fery fantastical humours and jealousies.

CAIUS.

By gar, 'tis no the fashion of France; it is not jealous
in France.

PAGE.
Nay, follow him, gentlemen; see the issue of his
search. *Exeunt* EVANS, PAGE, and CAIUS
MRS.

PAGE. Is there not a double excellency in this?

MRS.
FORD. I know not which pleases me better, that my
husband is deceived, or Sir John.

MRS.
PAGE. What a taking was he in when your husband
ask'd who was in the basket!

MRS.
FORD. I am half afraid he will have need of washing; so
throwing him into the water will do him a benefit.

MRS.

PAGE. Hang him, dishonest rascal! I would all of the
same strain were in the same distress.

MRS.

FORD. I think my husband hath some special suspicion
of Falstaff's being here, for I never saw him so gross in his jealousy till now.

MRS.

PAGE. I Will lay a plot to try that, and we will yet have
more tricks with Falstaff. His dissolute disease will scarce obey this medicine.

MRS.

FORD. Shall we send that foolish carrion, Mistress
Quickly, to him, and excuse his throwing into the water,
and give him another hope, to betray him to another punishment?

MRS.

PAGE. We will do it; let him be sent for to-morrow
eight o'clock, to have amends.

Re-enter FORD, PAGE, CAIUS, and SIR HUGH EVANS

FORD.

I cannot find him; may be the knave bragg'd of that

he could not compass.

MRS.

PAGE. *[Aside to MRS. FORD]* Heard you that?

MRS.

FORD. You use me well, Master Ford, do you?

FORD.

Ay, I do so.

MRS.

FORD. Heaven make you better than your thoughts!

FORD.

Amen.

MRS.

PAGE. You do yourself mighty wrong, Master Ford.

FORD.

Ay, ay; I must bear it.

EVANS.

If there be any pody in the house, and in the
chambers, and in the coffers, and in the presses, heaven forgive
my sins at the day of judgment!

CAIUS.

Be gar, nor I too; there is no bodies.

PAGE.

Fie, fie, Master Ford, are you not asham'd? What
spirit, what devil suggests this imagination? I would not ha'
your distemper in this kind for the wealth of Windsor Castle.

FORD.

'Tis my fault, Master Page; I suffer for it.

EVANS.
You suffer for a pad conscience. Your wife is as
honest a omans as I will desires among five thousand, and five hundred too.

CAIUS.
By gar, I see 'tis an honest woman.

FORD.
Well, I promis'd you a dinner. Come, come, walk in
the Park. I pray you pardon me; I will hereafter make
known to you why I have done this. Come, wife, come,
Mistress Page; I pray you pardon me; pray heartly,
pardon me.

PAGE.
Let's go in, gentlemen; but, trust me, we'll mock him.

I do invite you to-morrow morning to my house to breakfast;
after, we'll a-birding together; I have a fine hawk for
the bush. Shall it be so?

FORD.
Any thing.

EVANS.

If there is one, I shall make two in the company.

CAIUS.
If there be one or two, I shall make-a the turd.

FORD.

Pray you go, Master Page.

EVANS.
I pray you now, remembrance to-morrow on the
lousy knave, mine host.

CAIUS.

Dat is good; by gar, with all my heart.

EVANS.

A lousy knave, to have his gibes and his mockeries!

Exeunt

SCENE 4.

Before PAGE'S house

Enter FENTON and ANNE PAGE

FENTON.

I see I cannot get thy father's love;

Therefore no more turn me to him, sweet Nan.

ANNE.

Alas, how then?

FENTON.

Why, thou must be thyself.
He doth object I am too great of birth;
And that, my state being gall'd with my expense,
I seek to heal it only by his wealth.
Besides these, other bars he lays before me,
My riots past, my wild societies;
And tells me 'tis a thing impossible
I should love thee but as a property.

ANNE.. May be he tells you true.

FENTON.

No, heaven so speed me in my time to come!
Albeit I will confess thy father's wealth
Was the first motive that I woo'd thee, Anne;
Yet, wooing thee, I found thee of more value
Than stamps in gold, or sums in sealed bags;
And 'tis the very riches of thyself

That now I aim at.

ANNE.

Gentle Master Fenton,

Yet seek my father's love; still seek it, sir.

If opportunity and humblest suit

Cannot attain it, why then-hark you hither.

[They converse apart]

Enter SHALLOW, SLENDER, and MISTRESS QUICKLY

SHALLOW.

Break their talk, Mistress Quickly; my kinsman

shall speak for himself.

SLENDER.

I'll make a shaft or a bolt on 't; 'slid, 'tis but venturing.

SHALLOW.

Be not dismay'd.

SLENDER.

No, she shall not dismay me. I care not for that,

but that I am afeard.

QUICKLY.

Hark ye, Master Slender would speak a word with you.

ANNE.

I come to him. *[Aside]* This is my father's choice.

O, what a world of vile ill-favour'd faults

Looks handsome in three hundred pounds a year!

QUICKLY.

And how does good Master Fenton? Pray you, a word with you.

SHALLOW.

She's coming; to her, coz. O boy, thou hadst a father!

SLENDER.

I had a father, Mistress Anne; my uncle can tell
you good jests of him. Pray you, uncle, tell Mistress Anne
the jest how my father stole two geese out of a pen, good uncle.

SHALLOW.

Mistress Anne, my cousin loves you.

SLENDER.
Ay, that I do; as well as I love any woman in
Gloucestershire.

SHALLOW.
He will maintain you like a gentlewoman.

SLENDER.

Ay, that I will come cut and longtail, under the degree of a squire.

SHALLOW.
He will make you a hundred and fifty pounds jointure.

ANNE.

Good Master Shallow, let him woo for himself.

SHALLOW.

Marry, I thank you for it; I thank you for that
good comfort. She calls you, coz; I'll leave you.

ANNE.

Now, Master Slender-

SLENDER.

Now, good Mistress Anne-

ANNE.

What is your will?

SLENDER.

My Will! 'Od's heartlings, that's a pretty jest
indeed! I ne'er made my will yet, I thank heaven; I am not

such a sickly creature, I give heaven praise.

ANNE.

I mean, Master Slender, what would you with me?

SLENDER.

Truly, for mine own part I would little or nothing

with you. Your father and my uncle hath made motions;

if it be my luck, so; if not, happy man be his dole! They

can tell you how things go better than I can. You may ask

your father; here he comes.

Enter PAGE and MISTRESS PAGE

PAGE.

Now, Master Slender! Love him, daughter Anne-

Why, how now, what does Master Fenton here?

You wrong me, sir, thus still to haunt my house.

I told you, sir, my daughter is dispos'd of.

FENTON.

Nay, Master Page, be not impatient.

MRS.

PAGE. Good Master Fenton, come not to my child.

PAGE.

She is no match for you.

FENTON.

Sir, will you hear me?

PAGE.

No, good Master Fenton.

Come, Master Shallow; come, son Slender; in.

Knowing my mind, you wrong me, Master Fenton.

Exeunt PAGE, SHALLOW, and SLENDER

QUICKLY.

Speak to Mistress Page.

FENTON.

Good Mistress Page, for that I love your daughter

In such a righteous fashion as I do,

Perforce, against all checks, rebukes, and manners,

I must advance the colours of my love,

And not retire. Let me have your good will.

ANNE.

Good mother, do not marry me to yond fool.

MRS.

PAGE. I mean it not; I seek you a better husband.

QUICKLY.

That's my master, Master Doctor.

ANNE.

Alas, I had rather be set quick i' th' earth.

And bowl'd to death with turnips.

MRS.

PAGE. Come, trouble not yourself. Good Master Fenton,

I will not be your friend, nor enemy;

My daughter will I question how she loves you,

And as I find her, so am I affected;

Till then, farewell, sir; she must needs go in;

Her father will be angry.

FENTON.

Farewell, gentle mistress; farewell, Nan.

Exeunt MRS. PAGE and ANNE

QUICKLY.

This is my doing now: 'Nay,' said I 'will you cast

away your child on a fool, and a physician? Look on

Master Fenton.' This is my doing.

FENTON.

I thank thee; and I pray thee, once to-night
Give my sweet Nan this ring. There's for thy pains.

QUICKLY.

Now Heaven send thee good fortune! [*Exit*

FENTON] A kind heart he hath; a woman would run through fire and water for such a kind heart. But yet I would my master had Mistress Anne; or I would Master Slender had her; or, in sooth, I would Master Fenton had her; I will do what I can for them all three, for so I have promis'd, and I'll be as good as my word; but speciously for Master *Fenton.* Well, I must of another errand to Sir John Falstaff from my two mistresses. What a beast am I to slack it!
Exit

SCENE 5.

The Garter Inn

Enter FALSTAFF and BARDOLPH

FALSTAFF.

Bardolph, I say!

BARDOLPH.

Here, sir.

FALSTAFF.

Go fetch me a quart of sack; put a toast in 't.

Exit BARDOLPH

Have I liv'd to be carried in a basket, like a barrow of butcher's offal, and to be thrown in the Thames? Well, if I be serv'd such another trick, I'll have my brains ta'en out and butter'd, and give them to a dog for a new-year's gift. The rogues slighted me into the river with as little remorse as they would have drown'd a blind bitch's puppies, fifteen i' th' litter; and you may know by my size that I have a kind of alacrity in sinking; if the bottom were as deep as

hell I should down. I had been drown'd but that the shore
was shelvy and shallow-a death that I abhor; for the water
swells a man; and what a thing should I have been when
had been swell'd! I should have been a mountain of mummy.

Re-enter BARDOLPH, with sack

BARDOLPH.

Here's Mistress Quickly, sir, to speak with you

FALSTAFF.

Come, let me pour in some sack to the Thames
water; for my belly's as cold as if I had swallow'd
snowballs for pills to cool the reins. Call her in.

BARDOLPH.

Come in, woman.

Enter MISTRESS QUICKLY

QUICKLY.

By your leave; I cry you mercy. Give your worship good morrow.

FALSTAFF.

Take away these chalices. Go, brew me a pottle of sack finely.

BARDOLPH.

With eggs, sir?

FALSTAFF.

Simple of itself; I'll no pullet-sperm in my
brewage. *[Exit BARDOLPH]* How now!

QUICKLY.

Marry, sir, I come to your worship from Mistress Ford.

FALSTAFF.

Mistress Ford! I have had ford enough; I was
thrown into the ford; I have my belly full of ford.

QUICKLY.

Alas the day, good heart, that was not her fault!
She does so take on with her men; they mistook their erection.

FALSTAFF.

So did I mine, to build upon a foolish woman's promise.

QUICKLY.
Well, she laments, sir, for it, that it would yearn
your heart to see it. Her husband goes this morning
a-birding; she desires you once more to come to her between
eight and nine; I must carry her word quickly. She'll make
you amends, I warrant you.

FALSTAFF.
Well, I Will visit her. Tell her so; and bid her
think what a man is. Let her consider his frailty, and then judge of my merit.

QUICKLY.

I will tell her.

FALSTAFF.

Do so. Between nine and ten, say'st thou?

QUICKLY.

Eight and nine, sir.

FALSTAFF.

Well, be gone; I will not miss her.

QUICKLY.

Peace be with you, sir. *Exit*

FALSTAFF. I marvel I hear not of Master Brook; he sent me word to stay within. I like his money well. O, here he comes.

Enter FORD disguised

FORD.

Bless you, sir!

FALSTAFF.

Now, Master Brook, you come to know what

hath pass'd between me and Ford's wife?

FORD.

That, indeed, Sir John, is my business.

FALSTAFF.

Master Brook, I will not lie to you; I was at her

house the hour she appointed me.

FORD.

And sped you, sir?

FALSTAFF.

Very ill-favouredly, Master Brook.

FORD.

How so, sir; did she change her determination?

FALSTAFF.

No. Master Brook; but the peaking cornuto her
husband, Master Brook, dwelling in a continual 'larum of
jealousy, comes me in the instant of our, encounter, after
we had embrac'd, kiss'd, protested, and, as it were, spoke
the prologue of our comedy; and at his heels a rabble of his
companions, thither provoked and instigated by his
distemper, and, forsooth, to search his house for his wife's love.

FORD.

What, while you were there?

FALSTAFF.

While I was there.

FORD.

And did he search for you, and could not find you?

FALSTAFF.

You shall hear. As good luck would have it, comes in one Mistress Page, gives intelligence of Ford's approach; and, in her invention and Ford's wife's distraction, they convey'd me into a buck-basket.

FORD.

A buck-basket!

FALSTAFF.
By the Lord, a buck-basket! Ramm'd me in with foul shirts and smocks, socks, foul stockings, greasy napkins, that, Master Brook, there was the rankest compound of villainous smell that ever offended nostril.

FORD.
And how long lay you there?

FALSTAFF.
Nay, you shall hear, Master Brook, what I have suffer'd to bring this woman to evil for your good. Being thus cramm'd in the basket, a couple of Ford's knaves, his

hinds, were call'd forth by their mistress to carry me in
the name of foul clothes to Datchet Lane; they took me on
their shoulders; met the jealous knave their master in the
door; who ask'd them once or twice what they had in their
basket. I quak'd for fear lest the lunatic knave would have
search'd it; but Fate, ordaining he should be a cuckold,
held his hand. Well, on went he for a search, and away
went I for foul clothes. But mark the sequel, Master
Brook-I suffered the pangs of three several deaths: first,
an intolerable fright to be detected with a jealous rotten
bell-wether; next, to be compass'd like a good bilbo in the
circumference of a peck, hilt to point, heel to head; and
then, to be stopp'd in, like a strong distillation, with
stinking clothes that fretted in their own grease. Think of that
-a man of my kidney. Think of that-that am as subject to
heat as butter; a man of continual dissolution and thaw. It
was a miracle to scape suffocation. And in the height of
this bath, when I was more than half-stew'd in grease, like
a Dutch dish, to be thrown into the Thames, and cool'd,
glowing hot, in that surge, like a horse-shoe; think of that
-hissing hot. Think of that, Master Brook.

FORD.

In good sadness, sir, I am sorry that for my sake you
have suffer'd all this. My suit, then, is desperate;
you'll undertake her no more.

FALSTAFF.

Master Brook, I will be thrown into Etna, as I
have been into Thames, ere I will leave her thus. Her
husband is this morning gone a-birding; I have received from
her another embassy of meeting; 'twixt eight and nine is
the hour, Master Brook.

FORD.

'Tis past eight already, sir.

FALSTAFF.

Is it? I Will then address me to my appointment.
Come to me at your convenient leisure, and you shall
know how I speed; and the conclusion shall be crowned

with your enjoying her. Adieu. You shall have her, Master Brook; Master Brook, you shall cuckold Ford. *Exit*

FORD. Hum! ha! Is this a vision? Is this a dream? Do I sleep? Master Ford, awake; awake, Master Ford. There's a hole made in your best coat, Master Ford. This 'tis to be married; this 'tis to have linen and buck-baskets! Well, I will proclaim myself what I am; I will now take the lecher; he is at my house. He cannot scape me; 'tis impossible he should; he cannot creep into a halfpenny purse nor into a pepper box. But, lest the devil that guides him should aid him, I will search impossible places. Though what I am I cannot avoid, yet to be what I would not shall not make me tame. If I have horns to make one mad, let the proverb go with me-I'll be horn mad. *Exit*

ACT IV. SCENE I.

Windsor. A street

Enter MISTRESS PAGE, MISTRESS QUICKLY, and WILLIAM

MRS.

PAGE. Is he at Master Ford's already, think'st thou?

QUICKLY.

Sure he is by this; or will be presently; but truly
he is very courageous mad about his throwing into the
water. Mistress Ford desires you to come suddenly.

MRS.

PAGE. I'll be with her by and by; I'll but bring my
young man here to school. Look where his master comes;
'tis a playing day, I see.

Enter SIR HUGH EVANS

How now, Sir Hugh, no school to-day?

EVANS.

No; Master Slender is let the boys leave to play.

QUICKLY.

Blessing of his heart!

MRS.
PAGE. Sir Hugh, my husband says my son profits
nothing in the world at his book; I pray you ask him some
questions in his accidence.

EVANS.

Come hither, William; hold up your head; come.

MRS.
PAGE. Come on, sirrah; hold up your head; answer your
master; be not afraid.

EVANS.
William, how many numbers is in nouns?

WILLIAM.

Two.

QUICKLY.

Truly, I thought there had been one number

more, because they say 'Od's nouns.'

EVANS.

Peace your tattlings. What is 'fair,' William?

WILLIAM.

Pulcher.

QUICKLY.

Polecats! There are fairer things than polecats, sure.

EVANS.

You are a very simplicity oman; I pray you, peace.

What is 'lapis,' William?

WILLIAM.

A stone.

EVANS.

And what is 'a stone,' William?

WILLIAM.

A pebble.

EVANS.

No, it is 'lapis'; I pray you remember in your prain.

WILLIAM.

Lapis.

EVANS.

That is a good William. What is he, William, that does lend articles?

WILLIAM.

Articles are borrowed of the pronoun, and be
thus declined: Singulariter, nominativo; hic, haec, hoc.

EVANS.

Nominativo, hig, hag, hog; pray you, mark: genitivo,
hujus. Well, what is your accusative case?

WILLIAM.

Accusativo, hinc.

EVANS.

I pray you, have your remembrance, child.

Accusativo, hung, hang, hog.

QUICKLY.

'Hang-hog' is Latin for bacon, I warrant you.

EVANS.

Leave your prabbles, oman. What is the focative
case, William?

WILLIAM.

O-vocativo, O.

EVANS.

Remember, William: focative is caret.

QUICKLY.

And that's a good root.

EVANS.

Oman, forbear.

MRS.

PAGE. Peace.

EVANS.

What is your genitive case plural, William?

WILLIAM.

Genitive case?

EVANS.

Ay.

WILLIAM.

Genitive: horum, harum, horum.

QUICKLY.

Vengeance of Jenny's case; fie on her! Never
name her, child, if she be a whore.

EVANS.

For shame, oman.

QUICKLY.

YOU do ill to teach the child such words. He
teaches him to hick and to hack, which they'll do fast
enough of themselves; and to call 'horum'; fie upon you!

EVANS.

Oman, art thou lunatics? Hast thou no understandings
for thy cases, and the numbers of the genders? Thou
art as foolish Christian creatures as I would desires.

MRS.

PAGE. Prithee hold thy peace.

EVANS.

Show me now, William, some declensions of your pronouns.

WILLIAM.

Forsooth, I have forgot.

EVANS.

It is qui, quae, quod; if you forget your qui's, your

quae's, and your quod's, you must be preeches. Go your

ways and play; go.

MRS.

PAGE. He is a better scholar than I thought he was.

EVANS.

He is a good sprag memory. Farewell, Mistress Page.

MRS.

PAGE. Adieu, good Sir Hugh. *Exit* SIR HUGH

Get you home, boy. Come, we stay too long. *Exeunt*

SCENE 2.

FORD'S house

Enter FALSTAFF and MISTRESS FORD

FALSTAFF.

Mistress Ford, your sorrow hath eaten up my
sufferance. I see you are obsequious in your love, and I
profess requital to a hair's breadth; not only, Mistress Ford, in
the simple office of love, but in all the accoutrement,
complement, and ceremony of it. But are you sure of your husband now?

MRS.

FORD. He's a-birding, sweet Sir John.

MRS.

PAGE. *[Within]* What hoa, gossip Ford, what hoa!

MRS.

FORD. Step into th' chamber, Sir John. *Exit* FALSTAFF

Enter MISTRESS PAGE

MRS.

PAGE. How now, sweetheart, who's at home besides yourself?

MRS.

FORD. Why, none but mine own people.

MRS.

PAGE. Indeed?

MRS.

FORD. No, certainly. *[Aside to her]* Speak louder.

MRS.

PAGE. Truly, I am so glad you have nobody here.

MRS.

FORD. Why?

MRS.

PAGE. Why, woman, your husband is in his old lunes

again. He so takes on yonder with my husband; so rails
against all married mankind; so curses an Eve's daughters,
of what complexion soever; and so buffets himself on the
forehead, crying 'Peer-out, peer-out!' that any madness I
ever yet beheld seem'd but tameness, civility, and patience,
to this his distemper he is in now. I am glad the fat knight is not here.

MRS.

FORD. Why, does he talk of him?

MRS.
PAGE. Of none but him; and swears he was carried out,
the last time he search'd for him, in a basket; protests to
my husband he is now here; and hath drawn him and the
rest of their company from their sport, to make another
experiment of his suspicion. But I am glad the knight is not
here; now he shall see his own foolery.

MRS.
FORD. How near is he, Mistress Page?

MRS.

PAGE. Hard by, at street end; he will be here anon.

MRS.
FORD. I am undone: the knight is here.

MRS.
PAGE. Why, then, you are utterly sham'd, and he's but
a dead man. What a woman are you! Away with him,
away with him; better shame than murder.

MRS.
FORD. Which way should he go? How should I bestow
him? Shall I put him into the basket again?
Re-enter FALSTAFF
FALSTAFF.
No, I'll come no more i' th' basket. May I not go out ere he come?

MRS.

PAGE. Alas, three of Master Ford's brothers watch the door with pistols, that none shall issue out; otherwise you might slip away ere he came. But what make you here?

FALSTAFF.

What shall I do? I'll creep up into the chimney.

MRS.

FORD. There they always use to discharge their birding-pieces.

MRS.

PAGE. Creep into the kiln-hole.

FALSTAFF.

Where is it?

MRS.

FORD. He will seek there, on my word. Neither press, coffer, chest, trunk, well, vault, but he hath an abstract for the remembrance of such places, and goes to them by his

note. There is no hiding you in the house.

FALSTAFF.

I'll go out then.

MRS.

PAGE. If you go out in your own semblance, you die,

Sir John. Unless you go out disguis'd.

MRS.

FORD. How might we disguise him?

MRS.

PAGE. Alas the day, I know not! There is no woman's

gown big enough for him; otherwise he might put on a

hat, a muffler, and a kerchief, and so escape.

FALSTAFF.

Good hearts, devise something; any extremity rather than a mischief.

MRS.

FORD. My Maid's aunt, the fat woman of Brainford, has a gown above.

MRS.

PAGE. On my word, it will serve him; she's as big as he

is; and there's her thrumm'd hat, and her muffler too. Run

up, Sir John.

MRS.

FORD. Go, go, sweet Sir John. Mistress Page and I will

look some linen for your head.

MRS.

PAGE. Quick, quick; we'll come dress you straight. Put

on the gown the while. *Exit* FALSTAFF

MRS.

FORD. I would my husband would meet him in this

shape; he cannot abide the old woman of Brainford; he

swears she's a witch, forbade her my house, and hath threat'ned to beat her.

MRS.

PAGE. Heaven guide him to thy husband's cudgel; and

the devil guide his cudgel afterwards!

MRS.

FORD. But is my husband coming?

MRS.

PAGE. Ay, in good sadness is he; and talks of the basket

too, howsoever he hath had intelligence.

MRS.

FORD. We'll try that; for I'll appoint my men to carry

the basket again, to meet him at the door with it as they did last time.

MRS.

PAGE. Nay, but he'll be here presently; let's go dress

him like the witch of Brainford.

MRS.

FORD. I'll first direct my men what they shall do with

the basket. Go up; I'll bring linen for him straight. *Exit*

MRS. PAGE. Hang him, dishonest varlet! we cannot misuse him enough.

We'll leave a proof, by that which we will do,

Wives may be merry and yet honest too.

We do not act that often jest and laugh;

'Tis old but true: Still swine eats all the draff. *Exit*

Re-enter MISTRESS FORD, with two SERVANTS

MRS.

FORD. Go, sirs, take the basket again on your shoulders;

your master is hard at door; if he bid you set it down, obey

him; quickly, dispatch. *Exit*

FIRST SERVANT. Come, come, take it up.

SECOND SERVANT.

Pray heaven it be not full of knight again.

FIRST SERVANT.

I hope not; I had lief as bear so much lead.

Enter FORD, PAGE, SHALLOW, CAIUS, and SIR HUGH EVANS

FORD.

Ay, but if it prove true, Master Page, have you any

way then to unfool me again? Set down the basket, villain!

Somebody call my wife. Youth in a basket! O you panderly

rascals, there's a knot, a ging, a pack, a conspiracy

against me. Now shall the devil be sham'd. What, wife, I

say! Come, come forth; behold what honest clothes you

send forth to bleaching.

PAGE.

Why, this passes, Master Ford; you are not to go loose

any longer; you must be pinion'd.

EVANS.

Why, this is lunatics. This is mad as a mad dog.

SHALLOW.

Indeed, Master Ford, this is not well, indeed.

FORD.

So say I too, sir.

Re-enter MISTRESS FORD

Come hither, Mistress Ford; Mistress Ford, the honest woman, the modest wife, the virtuous creature, that hath the jealous fool to her husband! I suspect without cause, Mistress, do I?

MRS.

FORD. Heaven be my witness, you do, if you suspect me in any dishonesty.

FORD.

Well said, brazen-face; hold it out. Come forth, sirrah.

[Pulling clothes out of the basket]

PAGE.

This passes!

MRS.

FORD. Are you not asham'd? Let the clothes alone.

FORD.

I shall find you anon.

EVANS.

'Tis unreasonable. Will you take up your wife's

clothes? Come away.

FORD.

Empty the basket, I say.

MRS.

FORD. Why, man, why?

FORD.

Master Page, as I am a man, there was one convey'd

out of my house yesterday in this basket. Why may not

he be there again? In my house I am sure he is; my

intelligence is true; my jealousy is reasonable.

Pluck me out all the linen.

MRS.

FORD. If you find a man there, he shall die a flea's death.

PAGE.

Here's no man.

SHALLOW.

By my fidelity, this is not well, Master Ford; this wrongs you.

EVANS.

Master Ford, you must pray, and not follow the

imaginations of your own heart; this is jealousies.

FORD.

Well, he's not here I seek for.

PAGE.

No, nor nowhere else but in your brain.

FORD.

Help to search my house this one time. If I find not

what I seek, show no colour for my extremity; let me for

ever be your table sport; let them say of me 'As jealous as

Ford, that search'd a hollow walnut for his wife's leman.'

Satisfy me once more; once more search with me.

MRS.

FORD. What, hoa, Mistress Page! Come you and the old woman down; my husband will come into the chamber.

FORD.

Old woman? what old woman's that?

MRS.

FORD. Why, it is my maid's aunt of Brainford.

FORD.

A witch, a quean, an old cozening quean! Have I not forbid her my house? She comes of errands, does she? We are simple men; we do not know what's brought to pass under the profession of fortune-telling. She works by charms, by spells, by th' figure, and such daub'ry as this is, beyond our element. We know nothing. Come down, you witch, you hag you; come down, I say.

MRS.

FORD. Nay, good sweet husband! Good gentlemen, let him not strike the old woman.

Re-enter FALSTAFF in woman's clothes, and MISTRESS PAGE

MRS.

PAGE. Come, Mother Prat; come. give me your hand.

FORD.

I'll prat her. *[Beating him]* Out of my door, you

witch, you hag, you. baggage, you polecat, you ronyon!

Out, out! I'll conjure you, I'll fortune-tell you.

Exit FALSTAFF

MRS.

PAGE. Are you not asham'd? I think you have kill'd the poor woman.

MRS.

FORD. Nay, he will do it. 'Tis a goodly credit for you.

FORD.

Hang her, witch!

EVANS.

By yea and no, I think the oman is a witch indeed; I

like not when a oman has a great peard; I spy a great peard under his muffler.

FORD.

Will you follow, gentlemen? I beseech you follow;

see but the issue of my jealousy; if I cry out thus upon no

trail, never trust me when I open again.

PAGE.

Let's obey his humour a little further. Come,

gentlemen. *Exeunt* all but MRS. FORD and MRS. PAGE

MRS.

PAGE. Trust me, he beat him most pitifully.

MRS.

FORD. Nay, by th' mass, that he did not; he beat him

most unpitifully methought.

MRS.

PAGE. I'll have the cudgel hallow'd and hung o'er the altar; it hath done meritorious service.

MRS.

FORD. What think you? May we, with the warrant of womanhood and the witness of a good conscience, pursue him with any further revenge?

MRS.

PAGE. The spirit of wantonness is sure scar'd out of him; if the devil have him not in fee-simple, with fine and recovery, he will never, I think, in the way of waste, attempt us again.

MRS.

FORD. Shall we tell our husbands how we have serv'd him?

MRS.

PAGE. Yes, by all means; if it be but to scrape the

figures out of your husband's brains. If they can find in their

hearts the poor unvirtuous fat knight shall be any further

afflicted, we two will still be the ministers.

MRS.

FORD. I'll warrant they'll have him publicly sham'd;

and methinks there would be no period to the jest, should

he not be publicly sham'd.

MRS.

PAGE. Come, to the forge with it then; shape it. I

would not have things cool. *Exeunt*

SCENE 3.

The Garter Inn

Enter HOST and BARDOLPH

BARDOLPH.

Sir, the Germans desire to have three of your

horses; the Duke himself will be to-morrow at court, and
they are going to meet him.

HOST.
What duke should that be comes so secretly? I hear
not of him in the court. Let me speak with the gentlemen;
they speak English?

BARDOLPH.
Ay, sir; I'll call them to you.

HOST.
They shall have my horses, but I'll make them pay;
I'll sauce them; they have had my house a week at
command; I have turn'd away my other guests. They must
come off; I'll sauce them. Come. *Exeunt*

SCENE 4

FORD'S house

Enter PAGE, FORD, MISTRESS PAGE, MISTRESS FORD, and SIR HUGH

EVANS

EVANS.

'Tis one of the best discretions of a oman as ever did look upon.

PAGE.

And did he send you both these letters at an instant?

MRS.

PAGE. Within a quarter of an hour.

FORD.

Pardon me, wife. Henceforth, do what thou wilt;

I rather will suspect the sun with cold

Than thee with wantonness. Now doth thy honour stand,

In him that was of late an heretic,

As firm as faith.

PAGE.

'Tis well, 'tis well; no more.
Be not as extreme in submission as in offence;
But let our plot go forward. Let our wives
Yet once again, to make us public sport,
Appoint a meeting with this old fat fellow,
Where we may take him and disgrace him for it.

FORD.

There is no better way than that they spoke of.

PAGE.
How? To send him word they'll meet him in the Park
at midnight? Fie, fie! he'll never come!

EVANS.
You say he has been thrown in the rivers; and has
been grievously peaten as an old oman; methinks there
should be terrors in him, that he should not come;

methinks his flesh is punish'd; he shall have no desires.

PAGE.

So think I too.

MRS.

FORD. Devise but how you'll use him when he comes,

And let us two devise to bring him thither.

MRS.

PAGE. There is an old tale goes that Heme the Hunter,

Sometime a keeper here in Windsor Forest,

Doth all the winter-time, at still midnight,

Walk round about an oak, with great ragg'd horns;

And there he blasts the tree, and takes the cattle,

And makes milch-kine yield blood, and shakes a chain

In a most hideous and dreadful manner.

You have heard of such a spirit, and well you know

The superstitious idle-headed eld

Receiv'd, and did deliver to our age,

This tale of Heme the Hunter for a truth.

PAGE.

Why yet there want not many that do fear

In deep of night to walk by this Herne's oak.

But what of this?

MRS.

FORD. Marry, this is our device-

That Falstaff at that oak shall meet with us,

Disguis'd, like Heme, with huge horns on his head.

PAGE.

Well, let it not be doubted but he'll come,

And in this shape. When you have brought him thither,

What shall be done with him? What is your plot?

MRS.

PAGE. That likewise have we thought upon, and thus:

Nan Page my daughter, and my little son,

And three or four more of their growth, we'll dress

Like urchins, ouphes, and fairies, green and white,
With rounds of waxen tapers on their heads,
And rattles in their hands; upon a sudden,
As Falstaff, she, and I, are newly met,
Let them from forth a sawpit rush at once
With some diffused song; upon their sight
We two in great amazedness will fly.
Then let them all encircle him about,
And fairy-like, to pinch the unclean knight;
And ask him why, that hour of fairy revel,
In their so sacred paths he dares to tread
In shape profane.

MRS.
FORD. And till he tell the truth,
Let the supposed fairies pinch him sound,
And burn him with their tapers.

MRS.
PAGE. The truth being known,
We'll all present ourselves; dis-horn the spirit,

And mock him home to Windsor.

FORD.

The children must

Be practis'd well to this or they'll nev'r do 't.

EVANS.

I will teach the children their behaviours; and I will

be like a jack-an-apes also, to burn the knight with my taber.

FORD.

That will be excellent. I'll go buy them vizards.

MRS.

PAGE. My Nan shall be the Queen of all the Fairies,

Finely attired in a robe of white.

PAGE.

That silk will I go buy. *[Aside]* And in that time

Shall Master Slender steal my Nan away,

And marry her at Eton.-Go, send to Falstaff straight.

FORD.

Nay, I'll to him again, in name of Brook;

He'll tell me all his purpose. Sure, he'll come.

MRS.

PAGE. Fear not you that. Go get us properties

And tricking for our fairies.

EVANS.

Let us about it. It is admirable pleasures, and fery

honest knaveries. *Exeunt* PAGE, FORD, and EVANS

MRS.

PAGE. Go, Mistress Ford.

Send Quickly to Sir John to know his mind.

Exit MRS. FORD

I'll to the Doctor; he hath my good will,

And none but he, to marry with Nan Page.

That Slender, though well landed, is an idiot;

And he my husband best of all affects.

The Doctor is well money'd, and his friends

Potent at court; he, none but he, shall have her,

Though twenty thousand worthier come to crave her. *Exit*

SCENE 5.

The Garter Inn

Enter HOST and SIMPLE

HOST.

What wouldst thou have, boor? What, thick-skin?

Speak, breathe, discuss; brief, short, quick, snap.

SIMPLE.

Marry, sir, I come to speak with Sir John Falstaff

from Master Slender.

HOST.

There's his chamber, his house, his castle, his

standing-bed and truckle-bed; 'tis painted about with the

story of the Prodigal, fresh and new. Go, knock and can;

he'll

speak like an Anthropophaginian unto thee. Knock, I say.

SIMPLE.

There's an old woman, a fat woman, gone up into

his chamber; I'll be so bold as stay, sir, till she come down;

I come to speak with her, indeed.

HOST.

Ha! a fat woman? The knight may be robb'd. I'll call.

Bully knight! Bully Sir John! Speak from thy lungs

military. Art thou there? It is thine host, thine Ephesian, calls.

FALSTAFF.

[Above] How now, mine host?

HOST.

Here's a Bohemian-Tartar tarries the coming down of

thy fat woman. Let her descend, bully, let her descend;

my chambers are honourible. Fie, privacy, fie!

Enter FALSTAFF

FALSTAFF.

There was, mine host, an old fat woman even
now with, me; but she's gone.

SIMPLE.

Pray you, sir, was't not the wise woman of Brainford?

FALSTAFF.

Ay, marry was it, mussel-shell. What would you with her?

SIMPLE.

My master, sir, my Master Slender, sent to her,
seeing her go thorough the streets, to know, sir, whether one
Nym, sir, that beguil'd him of a chain, had the chain or no.

FALSTAFF.

I spake with the old woman about it.

SIMPLE.

And what says she, I pray, sir?

FALSTAFF Marry, she says that the very same man that

beguil'd Master Slender of his chain cozen'd him of it.

SIMPLE.

I would I could have spoken with the woman

herself; I had other things to have spoken with her too,

from him.

FALSTAFF.

What are they? Let us know.

HOST.

Ay, come; quick.

SIMPLE.

I may not conceal them, sir.

FALSTAFF.

Conceal them, or thou diest.

SIMPLE.. Why, sir, they were nothing but about Mistress

Anne Page: to know if it were my master's fortune to have her or no.

FALSTAFF.

'Tis, 'tis his fortune.

SIMPLE.

What sir?

FALSTAFF.

To have her, or no. Go; say the woman told me so.

SIMPLE.

May I be bold to say so, sir?

FALSTAFF.

Ay, sir, like who more bold?

SIMPLE., I thank your worship; I shall make my master glad
with these tidings. *Exit* SIMPLE
HOST.
Thou art clerkly, thou art clerkly, Sir John. Was
there a wise woman with thee?

FALSTAFF.
Ay, that there was, mine host; one that hath
taught me more wit than ever I learn'd before in my life;
and I paid nothing for it neither, but was paid for my learning.

Enter BARDOLPH

BARDOLPH.
Out, alas, sir, cozenage, mere cozenage!

HOST.

Where be my horses? Speak well of them, varletto.

BARDOLPH.

Run away with the cozeners; for so soon as I
came beyond Eton, they threw me off from behind one of
them, in a slough of mire; and set spurs and away, like
three German devils, three Doctor Faustuses.

HOST.

They are gone but to meet the Duke, villain; do not
say they be fled. Germans are honest men.

Enter SIR HUGH EVANS

EVANS.

Where is mine host?

HOST.

What is the matter, sir?

EVANS.

Have a care of your entertainments. There is a friend
of mine come to town tells me there is three
cozen-germans that has cozen'd all the hosts of Readins,
of Maidenhead, of Colebrook, of horses and money. I tell you for
good will, look you; you are wise, and full of gibes and
vlouting-stogs, and 'tis not convenient you should be
cozened. Fare you well. *Exit*

Enter DOCTOR CAIUS

CAIUS.
Vere is mine host de Jarteer?

HOST.

Here, Master Doctor, in perplexity and doubtful dilemma.

CAIUS.
I cannot tell vat is dat; but it is tell-a me dat you
make grand preparation for a Duke de Jamany. By my
trot, dere is no duke that the court is know to come; I

tell you for good will. Adieu. *Exit*

HOST. Hue and cry, villain, go! Assist me, knight; I am
undone. Fly, run, hue and cry, villain; I am undone.
Exeunt HOST and BARDOLPH
FALSTAFF.
I would all the world might be cozen'd, for I have
been cozen'd and beaten too. If it should come to the car
of the court how I have been transformed, and how my
transformation hath been wash'd and cudgell'd, they
would melt me out of my fat, drop by drop, and liquor
fishermen's boots with me; I warrant they would whip me
with their fine wits till I were as crestfall'n as a dried pear.
I never prosper'd since I forswore myself at primero. Well,
if my wind were but long enough to say my prayers,
would repent.

Enter MISTRESS QUICKLY

Now! whence come you?

QUICKLY.

From the two parties, forsooth.

FALSTAFF.

The devil take one party and his dam the other!

And so they shall be both bestowed. I have suffer'd more

for their sakes, more than the villainous inconstancy of

man's disposition is able to bear.

QUICKLY.

And have not they suffer'd? Yes, I warrant;

speciously one of them; Mistress Ford, good heart, is beaten

black and blue, that you cannot see a white spot about her.

FALSTAFF.

What tell'st thou me of black and blue? I was

beaten myself into all the colours of the rainbow; and

was like to be apprehended for the witch of Brainford. But

that my admirable dexterity of wit, my counterfeiting the

action of an old woman, deliver'd me, the knave constable had set me i' th' stocks, i' th' common stocks, for a witch.

QUICKLY.

Sir, let me speak with you in your chamber; you
shall hear how things go, and, I warrant, to your content.
Here is a letter will say somewhat. Good hearts, what ado
here is to bring you together! Sure, one of you does not
serve heaven well, that you are so cross'd.

FALSTAFF.

Come up into my chamber. *Exeunt*

SCENE 6.

The Garter Inn

Enter FENTON and HOST

HOST.

Master Fenton, talk not to me; my mind is heavy; I
will give over all.

FENTON.

Yet hear me speak. Assist me in my purpose,
And, as I am a gentleman, I'll give the
A hundred pound in gold more than your loss.

HOST.

I will hear you, Master Fenton; and I will, at the least,
keep your counsel.

FENTON.

From time to time I have acquainted you
With the dear love I bear to fair Anne Page;
Who, mutually, hath answer'd my affection,
So far forth as herself might be her chooser,
Even to my wish. I have a letter from her
Of such contents as you will wonder at;
The mirth whereof so larded with my matter
That neither, singly, can be manifested
Without the show of both. Fat Falstaff
Hath a great scene. The image of the jest
I'll show you here at large. Hark, good mine host:

Tonight at Heme's oak, just 'twixt twelve and one,

Must my sweet Nan present the Fairy Queen-

The purpose why is here-in which disguise,

While other jests are something rank on foot,

Her father hath commanded her to slip

Away with Slender, and with him at Eton

Immediately to marry; she hath consented.

Now, sir,

Her mother, even strong against that match

And firm for Doctor Caius, hath appointed

That he shall likewise shuffle her away

While other sports are tasking of their minds,

And at the dean'ry, where a priest attends,

Straight marry her. To this her mother's plot

She seemingly obedient likewise hath

Made promise to the doctor. Now thus it rests:

Her father means she shall be all in white;

And in that habit, when Slender sees his time

To take her by the hand and bid her go,

She shall go with him; her mother hath intended

The better to denote her to the doctor-

For they must all be mask'd and vizarded-

That quaint in green she shall be loose enrob'd,

With ribands pendent, flaring 'bout her head;

And when the doctor spies his vantage ripe,

To pinch her by the hand, and, on that token,

The maid hath given consent to go with him.

HOST.

Which means she to deceive, father or mother?

FENTON.

Both, my good host, to go along with me.

And here it rests-that you'll procure the vicar

To stay for me at church, 'twixt twelve and one,

And in the lawful name of marrying,

To give our hearts united ceremony.

HOST.

Well, husband your device; I'll to the vicar.

Bring you the maid, you shall not lack a priest.

FENTON.

So shall I evermore be bound to thee;

Besides, I'll make a present recompense. *Exeunt*

ACT V. SCENE 1.

The Garter Inn

Enter FALSTAFF and MISTRESS QUICKLY

FALSTAFF.

Prithee, no more prattling; go. I'll, hold. This is

the third time; I hope good luck lies in odd numbers.

Away, go; they say there is divinity in odd numbers, either

in nativity, chance, or death. Away.

QUICKLY.

I'll provide you a chain, and I'll do what I can to

get you a pair of horns.

FALSTAFF.

Away, I say; time wears; hold up your head, and

mince. *Exit* MRS. QUICKLY

Enter FORD disguised

How now, Master Brook. Master Brook, the matter will

be known tonight or never. Be you in the Park about

midnight, at Herne's oak, and you shall see wonders.

FORD.

Went you not to her yesterday, sir, as you told me you had appointed?

FALSTAFF.

I went to her, Master Brook, as you see, like a

poor old man; but I came from her, Master Brook, like a

poor old woman. That same knave Ford, her husband, hath

the finest mad devil of jealousy in him, Master Brook, that

ever govern'd frenzy. I will tell you-he beat me grievously

in the shape of a woman; for in the shape of man, Master

Brook, I fear not Goliath with a weaver's beam; because I know also life is a shuttle. I am in haste; go along with me; I'll. tell you all, Master Brook. Since I pluck'd geese, play'd truant, and whipp'd top, I knew not what 'twas to be beaten till lately. Follow me. I'll tell you strange things of this knave-Ford, on whom tonight I will be revenged, and I will deliver his wife into your hand. Follow. Strange things in hand, Master Brook! Follow. *Exeunt*

SCENE 2.

Windsor Park

Enter PAGE, SHALLOW, and SLENDER

PAGE.

Come, come; we'll couch i' th' Castle ditch till we see the light of our fairies. Remember, son Slender, my daughter.

SLENDER.

Ay, forsooth; I have spoke with her, and we have a nay-word how to know one another. I come to her in white and cry 'mum'; she cries 'budget,' and by that we know one another.

SHALLOW.

That's good too; but what needs either your mum

or her budget? The white will decipher her well enough.

It hath struck ten o'clock.

PAGE.

The night is dark; light and spirits will become it well.

Heaven prosper our sport! No man means evil but the

devil, and we shall know him by his horns. Let's away;

follow me. *Exeunt*

SCENE 3.

A street leading to the Park

Enter MISTRESS PAGE, MISTRESS FORD, and DOCTOR CAIUS

MRS.

PAGE. Master Doctor, my daughter is in green; when

you see your time, take her by the hand, away with her to
the deanery, and dispatch it quickly. Go before into the
Park; we two must go together.

CAIUS.
I know vat I have to do; adieu.

MRS.
PAGE. Fare you well, sir. *[Exit CAIUS]* My husband
will not rejoice so much at the abuse of Falstaff as he will
chafe at the doctor's marrying my daughter; but 'tis no
matter; better a little chiding than a great deal of heartbreak.

MRS.
FORD. Where is Nan now, and her troop of fairies, and
the Welsh devil, Hugh?

MRS.
PAGE. They are all couch'd in a pit hard by Heme's
oak, with obscur'd lights; which, at the very instant of
Falstaff's and our meeting, they will at once display to the night.

SCENE 4.

MRS.

FORD. That cannot choose but amaze him.

MRS.

PAGE. If he be not amaz'd, he will be mock'd; if he be

amaz'd, he will every way be mock'd.

MRS.

FORD. We'll betray him finely.

MRS.

PAGE. Against such lewdsters and their lechery,

Those that betray them do no treachery.

MRS.

FORD. The hour draws on. To the oak, to the oak!

Exeunt

SCENE 4.

Windsor Park

Enter SIR HUGH EVANS like a satyr, with OTHERS as fairies

EVANS.

Trib, trib, fairies; come; and remember your parts. Be pold, I pray you; follow me into the pit; and when I give the watch-ords, do as I pid you. Come, come; trib, trib. *Exeunt*

SCENE 5.

Another part of the Park

Enter FALSTAFF disguised as HERNE

FALSTAFF.

The Windsor bell hath struck twelve; the minute

draws on. Now the hot-blooded gods assist me!

Remember, Jove, thou wast a bull for thy Europa; love set on thy

horns. O powerful love! that in some respects makes a

beast a man; in some other a man a beast. You were also,

Jupiter, a swan, for the love of Leda. O omnipotent love!

how near the god drew to the complexion of a goose! A

fault done first in the form of a beast-O Jove, a beastly
fault!-and then another fault in the semblance of a fowl-
think on't, Jove, a foul fault! When gods have hot backs
what shall poor men do? For me, I am here a Windsor
stag; and the fattest, I think, i' th' forest. Send me a cool
rut-time, Jove, or who can blame me to piss my tallow?

Who comes here? my doe?

Enter MISTRESS FORD and MISTRESS PAGE

MRS.
FORD. Sir John! Art thou there, my deer, my male deer.

FALSTAFF.
My doe with the black scut! Let the sky rain
potatoes; let it thunder to the tune of Greensleeves, hail
kissing-comfits, and snow eringoes; let there come a tempest
of provocation, I will shelter me here. *[Embracing her]*

MRS.

FORD. Mistress Page is come with me, sweetheart.

FALSTAFF.

Divide me like a brib'd buck, each a haunch; I

will keep my sides to myself, my shoulders for the fellow

of this walk, and my horns I bequeath your husbands. Am

I a woodman, ha? Speak I like Heme the Hunter? Why,

now is Cupid a child of conscience; he makes restitution.

As I am a true spirit, welcome! *[A noise of horns]*

MRS.

PAGE. Alas, what noise?

MRS.

FORD. Heaven forgive our sins!

FALSTAFF.

What should this be?

MRS.

FORD. } Away, away.

MRS.

PAGE. } Away, away. *[They run off]*

FALSTAFF.

I think the devil will not have me damn'd, lest the

oil that's in me should set hell on fire; he would never else cross me thus.

Enter SIR HUGH EVANS like a satyr, ANNE PAGE as

a fairy, and OTHERS as the Fairy Queen, fairies, and

Hobgoblin; all with tapers

FAIRY QUEEN.

Fairies, black, grey, green, and white,

You moonshine revellers, and shades of night,

You orphan heirs of fixed destiny,

Attend your office and your quality.

Crier Hobgoblin, make the fairy oyes.

PUCK.

Elves, list your names; silence, you airy toys.
Cricket, to Windsor chimneys shalt thou leap;
Where fires thou find'st unrak'd, and hearths unswept,
There pinch the maids as blue as bilberry;
Our radiant Queen hates sluts and sluttery.

FALSTAFF.
They are fairies; he that speaks to them shall die.

I'll wink and couch; no man their works must eye.

[Lies down upon his face]

EVANS.
Where's Pede? Go you, and where you find a maid
That, ere she sleep, has thrice her prayers said,
Raise up the organs of her fantasy
Sleep she as sound as careless infancy;

But those as sleep and think not on their sins,
Pinch them, arms, legs, backs, shoulders, sides, and shins.

FAIRY QUEEN.
About, about;
Search Windsor castle, elves, within and out;
Strew good luck, ouphes, on every sacred room,
That it may stand till the perpetual doom
In state as wholesome as in state 'tis fit,
Worthy the owner and the owner it.
The several chairs of order look you scour
With juice of balm and every precious flower;
Each fair instalment, coat, and sev'ral crest,
With loyal blazon, evermore be blest!
And nightly, meadow-fairies, look you sing,
Like to the Garter's compass, in a ring;
Th' expressure that it bears, green let it be,
More fertile-fresh than all the field to see;
And 'Honi soit qui mal y pense' write
In em'rald tufts, flow'rs purple, blue and white;
Like sapphire, pearl, and rich embroidery,

Buckled below fair knighthood's bending knee.
Fairies use flow'rs for their charactery.
Away, disperse; but till 'tis one o'clock,
Our dance of custom round about the oak
Of Herne the Hunter let us not forget.

EVANS.
Pray you, lock hand in hand; yourselves in order set;
And twenty glow-worms shall our lanterns be,
To guide our measure round about the tree.

But, stay. I smell a man of middle earth.

FALSTAFF.
Heavens defend me from that Welsh fairy, lest he
transform me to a piece of cheese!

PUCK.
Vile worm, thou wast o'erlook'd even in thy birth.

FAIRY QUEEN.

With trial-fire touch me his finger-end;
If he be chaste, the flame will back descend,
And turn him to no pain; but if he start,
It is the flesh of a corrupted heart.

PUCK.

A trial, come.

EVANS.

Come, will this wood take fire?

[They put the tapers to his fingers, and he starts]

FALSTAFF.

Oh, oh, oh!

FAIRY QUEEN.

Corrupt, corrupt, and tainted in desire!
About him, fairies; sing a scornful rhyme;
And, as you trip, still pinch him to your time.

THE SONG.

Fie on sinful fantasy!

Fie on lust and luxury!
Lust is but a bloody fire,
Kindled with unchaste desire,
Fed in heart, whose flames aspire,
As thoughts do blow them, higher and higher.
Pinch him, fairies, mutually;
Pinch him for his villainy;
Pinch him and burn him and turn him about,
Till candles and star-light and moonshine be out.

During this song they pinch FALSTAFF. DOCTOR CAIUS comes one way, and steals away a fairy in green; SLENDER another way, and takes off a fairy in white; and FENTON steals away ANNE PAGE. A noise of hunting is heard within. All the fairies run away. FALSTAFF pulls off his buck's head, and rises

Enter PAGE, FORD, MISTRESS PAGE, MISTRESS FORD, and

SIR HUGH EVANS

PAGE.

Nay, do not fly; I think we have watch'd you now.

Will none but Heme the Hunter serve your turn?

MRS.

PAGE. I pray you, come, hold up the jest no higher.

Now, good Sir John, how like you Windsor wives?

See you these, husband? Do not these fair yokes

Become the forest better than the town?

FORD.

Now, sir, who's a cuckold now? Master Brook,

Falstaff's a knave, a cuckoldly knave; here are his horns,

Master Brook; and, Master Brook, he hath enjoyed nothing of

Ford's but his buck-basket, his cudgel, and twenty pounds

of money, which must be paid to Master Brook; his horses are arrested for it, Master Brook.

MRS.

FORD. Sir John, we have had ill luck; we could never meet. I will never take you for my love again; but I will always count you my deer.

FALSTAFF.

I do begin to perceive that I am made an ass.

FORD.

Ay, and an ox too; both the proofs are extant.

FALSTAFF.

And these are not fairies? I was three or four times in the thought they were not fairies; and yet the guiltiness of my mind, the sudden surprise of my powers, drove the grossness of the foppery into a receiv'd belief, in despite of the teeth of all rhyme and reason, that they were fairies. See now how wit may be made a Jack-a-Lent when 'tis upon ill employment.

EVANS.

Sir John Falstaff, serve Got, and leave your desires,

and fairies will not pinse you.

FORD.

Well said, fairy Hugh.

EVANS.

And leave you your jealousies too, I pray you.

FORD.

I will never mistrust my wife again, till thou art able

to woo her in good English.

FALSTAFF.

Have I laid my brain in the sun, and dried it, that

it wants matter to prevent so gross, o'er-reaching as this?

Am I ridden with a Welsh goat too? Shall I have a cox-comb of frieze? 'Tis time I were chok'd with a piece of toasted cheese.

EVANS.

Seese is not good to give putter; your belly is all putter.

FALSTAFF.
'Seese' and 'putter'! Have I liv'd to stand at the
taunt of one that makes fritters of English? This is enough
to be the decay of lust and late-walking through the realm.

MRS.
PAGE. Why, Sir John, do you think, though we would
have thrust virtue out of our hearts by the head and
shoulders, and have given ourselves without scruple to hell,
that ever the devil could have made you our delight?

FORD.

What, a hodge-pudding? a bag of flax?

MRS.

PAGE. A puff'd man?

PAGE.

Old, cold, wither'd, and of intolerable entrails?

FORD.

And one that is as slanderous as Satan?

PAGE.

And as poor as Job?

FORD.

And as wicked as his wife?

EVANS.

And given to fornications, and to taverns, and sack,
and wine, and metheglins, and to drinkings, and swearings,
and starings, pribbles and prabbles?

FALSTAFF.

Well, I am your theme; you have the start of me;

I am dejected; I am not able to answer the Welsh flannel;

ignorance itself is a plummet o'er me; use me as you will.

FORD.

Marry, sir, we'll bring you to Windsor, to one Master

Brook, that you have cozen'd of money, to whom you

should have been a pander. Over and above that you have

suffer'd, I think to repay that money will be a biting affliction.

PAGE.

Yet be cheerful, knight; thou shalt eat a posset

tonight at my house, where I will desire thee to laugh at my

wife, that now laughs at thee. Tell her Master Slender hath

married her daughter.

MRS.

PAGE. *[Aside]* Doctors doubt that; if Anne Page be

my daughter, she is, by this, Doctor Caius' wife.

Enter SLENDER

SLENDER.

Whoa, ho, ho, father Page!

PAGE.

Son, how now! how now, son! Have you dispatch'd'?

SLENDER.

Dispatch'd! I'll make the best in Gloucestershire
know on't; would I were hang'd, la, else!

PAGE.

Of what, son?

SLENDER.

I came yonder at Eton to marry Mistress Anne
Page, and she's a great lubberly boy. If it had not been i'
th' church, I would have swing'd him, or he should have

swing'd me. If I did not think it had been Anne Page,
would I might never stir!-and 'tis a postmaster's boy.

PAGE.
Upon my life, then, you took the wrong.

SLENDER.
What need you tell me that? I think so, when I
took a boy for a girl. If I had been married to him, for all
he was in woman's apparel, I would not have had him.

PAGE.
Why, this is your own folly. Did not I tell you how
you should know my daughter by her garments?

SLENDER.
I went to her in white and cried 'mum' and she
cried 'budget' as Anne and I had appointed; and yet it was
not Anne, but a postmaster's boy.

MRS.

PAGE. Good George, be not angry. I knew of your

purpose; turn'd my daughter into green; and, indeed, she

is now with the Doctor at the dean'ry, and there married.

Enter CAIUS

CAIUS.

Vere is Mistress Page? By gar, I am cozened; I ha'

married un garcon, a boy; un paysan, by gar, a boy; it is

not Anne Page; by gar, I am cozened.

MRS.

PAGE. Why, did you take her in green?

CAIUS.

Ay, be gar, and 'tis a boy; be gar, I'll raise all

Windsor. Exit CAIUS

FORD.

This is strange. Who hath got the right Anne?

PAGE.

My heart misgives me; here comes Master Fenton.

Enter FENTON and ANNE PAGE

How now, Master Fenton!

ANNE.

Pardon, good father. Good my mother, pardon.

PAGE.

Now, Mistress, how chance you went not with Master Slender?

MRS.

PAGE. Why went you not with Master Doctor, maid?

FENTON.

You do amaze her. Hear the truth of it.

You would have married her most shamefully,
Where there was no proportion held in love.
The truth is, she and I, long since contracted,
Are now so sure that nothing can dissolve us.
Th' offence is holy that she hath committed;
And this deceit loses the name of craft,
Of disobedience, or unduteous title,
Since therein she doth evitate and shun
A thousand irreligious cursed hours,
Which forced marriage would have brought upon her.

FORD.

Stand not amaz'd; here is no remedy.
In love, the heavens themselves do guide the state;
Money buys lands, and wives are sold by fate.

FALSTAFF.

I am glad, though you have ta'en a special stand
to strike at me, that your arrow hath glanc'd.

PAGE.

Well, what remedy? Fenton, heaven give thee joy!
What cannot be eschew'd must be embrac'd.

FALSTAFF.

When night-dogs run, all sorts of deer are chas'd.

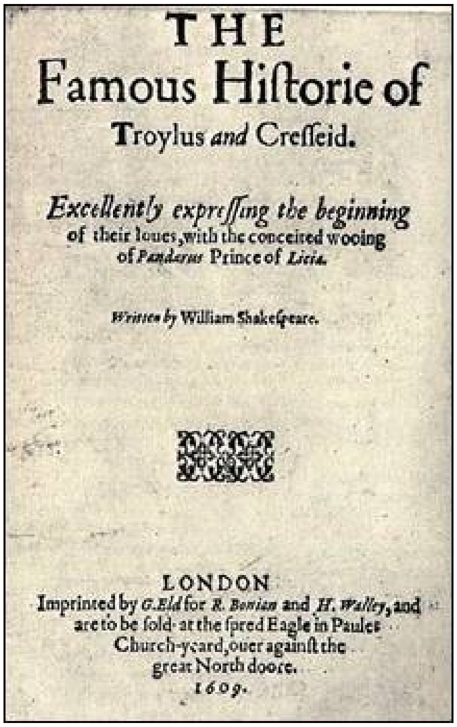
MRS.
PAGE. Well, I will muse no further. Master Fenton,
Heaven give you many, many merry days!
Good husband, let us every one go home,
And laugh this sport o'er by a country fire;
Sir John and all.

FORD.
Let it be so. Sir John,
To Master Brook you yet shall hold your word;
For he, tonight, shall lie with Mistress Ford. *Exeunt*

TROILUS AND CRESSIDA

This tragedy is believed to have been written in 1602. Throughout the play, the tone alternates between bawdy comedy and tragic gloom, proving problematic for the audience to respond to the characters. For many critics, *Troilus and Cressida* is the most ambiguous of Shakespeare's plays, appearing on one level a simple narration of stories based on the Greek myths of Troy, while on another level, it offers a parody of Elizabethan society, with subtle undertones probing public morality of the time. The original source of the play is Chaucer's famous poem, which deals with the tragic love, betrayal and deaths of Troilus and Criseyde.

Shakespeare's main source text for this play is available via this link .



THE
Famous Hiſtorie of
Troylus *and* Creſſeid.

Excellently expreſſing the beginning
of their loues, with the conceited wooing
of *Pandarus* Prince of *Licia*.

Written by William Shakeſpeare.

LONDON
Imprinted by *G.Eld* for *R. Bonian* and *H. Walley*, and
are to be ſold at the ſpred Eagle in Paules
Church-yeard, ouer againſt the
great North doore.
1609.

The 1609 Quarto title page

Matthew Kelly as Pandarus in a recent Globe production of the play

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DRAMATIS PERSONAE

PRIAM, King of Troy

His sons:

HECTOR

TROILUS

PARIS

DEIPHOBUS

HELENUS

MARGARELON, a bastard son of Priam

Trojan commanders:

AENEAS

ANTENOR

CALCHAS, a Trojan priest, taking part with the Greeks

PANDARUS, uncle to Cressida

AGAMEMNON, the Greek general

MENELAUS, his brother

Greek commanders:

ACHILLES

AJAX

ULYSSES

NESTOR

DIOMEDES

PATROCLUS

THERSITES, a deformed and scurrilous Greek

ALEXANDER, servant to Cressida

SERVANT to Troilus

SERVANT to Paris

SERVANT to Diomedes

HELEN, wife to Menelaus

ANDROMACHE, wife to Hector

CASSANDRA, daughter to Priam, a prophetess

CRESSIDA, daughter to Calchas

Trojan and Greek Soldiers, and Attendants

SCENE: Troy and the Greek camp before it

PROLOGUE TROILUS AND CRESSIDA PROLOGUE

In Troy, there lies the scene. From isles of Greece
The princes orgillous, their high blood chaf'd,
Have to the port of Athens sent their ships
Fraught with the ministers and instruments
Of cruel war. Sixty and nine that wore
Their crownets regal from th' Athenian bay
Put forth toward Phrygia; and their vow is made
To ransack Troy, within whose strong immures
The ravish'd Helen, Menelaus' queen,
With wanton Paris sleeps-and that's the quarrel.
To Tenedos they come,
And the deep-drawing barks do there disgorge
Their war-like fraughtage. Now on Dardan plains
The fresh and yet unbruised Greeks do pitch
Their brave pavilions: Priam's six-gated city,
Dardan, and Tymbria, Helias, Chetas, Troien,
And Antenorides, with massy staples
And corresponsive and fulfilling bolts,
Sperr up the sons of Troy.
Now expectation, tickling skittish spirits
On one and other side, Troyan and Greek,

Sets all on hazard-and hither am I come

A Prologue arm'd, but not in confidence

Of author's pen or actor's voice, but suited

In like conditions as our argument,

To tell you, fair beholders, that our play

Leaps o'er the vaunt and firstlings of those broils,

Beginning in the middle; starting thence away,

To what may be digested in a play.

Like or find fault; do as your pleasures are;

Now good or bad, 'tis but the chance of war.

ACT I. SCENE 1. Troy. Before PRIAM'S palace

Enter TROILUS armed, and PANDARUS

TROILUS.

Call here my varlet; I'll unarm again.

Why should I war without the walls of Troy

That find such cruel battle here within?

Each Troyan that is master of his heart,

Let him to field; Troilus, alas, hath none!

PANDARUS.

Will this gear ne'er be mended?

TROILUS.
The Greeks are strong, and skilful to their strength,
Fierce to their skill, and to their fierceness valiant;
But I am weaker than a woman's tear,
Tamer than sleep, fonder than ignorance,
Less valiant than the virgin in the night,
And skilless as unpractis'd infancy.

PANDARUS.
Well, I have told you enough of this; for my part,
I'll not meddle nor make no farther. He that will have a cake
out of the wheat must needs tarry the grinding.

TROILUS.

Have I not tarried?

PANDARUS.

Ay, the grinding; but you must tarry the bolting.

TROILUS.

Have I not tarried?

PANDARUS.

Ay, the bolting; but you must tarry the leavening.

TROILUS.

Still have I tarried.

PANDARUS.

Ay, to the leavening; but here's yet in the word
'hereafter' the kneading, the making of the cake, the heating
of the oven, and the baking; nay, you must stay the cooling too,
or you may chance to burn your lips.

TROILUS.

Patience herself, what goddess e'er she be,

Doth lesser blench at suff'rance than I do.

At Priam's royal table do I sit;

And when fair Cressid comes into my thoughts-

So, traitor, then she comes when she is thence.

PANDARUS.

Well, she look'd yesternight fairer than ever I saw her look, or any woman else.

TROILUS.

I was about to tell thee: when my heart,

As wedged with a sigh, would rive in twain,

Lest Hector or my father should perceive me,

I have, as when the sun doth light a storm,

Buried this sigh in wrinkle of a smile.

But sorrow that is couch'd in seeming gladness

Is like that mirth fate turns to sudden sadness.

PANDARUS.

An her hair were not somewhat darker than Helen's-

well,

go to-there were no more comparison between the women. But, for

my part, she is my kinswoman; I would not, as they term it,

praise her, but I would somebody had heard her talk yesterday, as

I did. I will not dispraise your sister Cassandra's wit;

but-

TROILUS.

O Pandarus! I tell thee, Pandarus-

When I do tell thee there my hopes lie drown'd,

Reply not in how many fathoms deep

They lie indrench'd. I tell thee I am mad

In Cressid's love. Thou answer'st 'She is fair'-

Pourest in the open ulcer of my heart-

Her eyes, her hair, her cheek, her gait, her voice,

Handlest in thy discourse. O, that her hand,

In whose comparison all whites are ink

Writing their own reproach; to whose soft seizure

The cygnet's down is harsh, and spirit of sense

Hard as the palm of ploughman! This thou tell'st me,

As true thou tell'st me, when I say I love her;
But, saying thus, instead of oil and balm,
Thou lay'st in every gash that love hath given me
The knife that made it.

PANDARUS.

I speak no more than truth.

TROILUS.

Thou dost not speak so much.

PANDARUS.

Faith, I'll not meddle in it. Let her be as she is: if she be fair, 'tis the better for her; an she be not, she has the mends in her own hands.

TROILUS.

Good Pandarus! How now, Pandarus!

PANDARUS.

I have had my labour for my travail, ill thought on of
her and ill thought on of you; gone between and between, but
small thanks for my labour.

TROILUS.
What, art thou angry, Pandarus? What, with me?

PANDARUS.
Because she's kin to me, therefore she's not so fair as
Helen. An she were not kin to me, she would be as fair a Friday
as Helen is on Sunday. But what care I? I care not an she were a
blackamoor; 'tis all one to me.

TROILUS.
Say I she is not fair?

PANDARUS.
I do not care whether you do or no. She's a fool to stay
behind her father. Let her to the Greeks; and so I'll tell her
the next time I see her. For my part, I'll meddle nor make no more i' th' matter.

TROILUS.

Pandarus!

PANDARUS.

Not I.

TROILUS.

Sweet Pandarus!

PANDARUS.

Pray you, speak no more to me: I will leave all
as I found it, and there an end. *Exit* . Sound alarum
TROILUS.

Peace, you ungracious clamours! Peace, rude sounds!
Fools on both sides! Helen must needs be fair,
When with your blood you daily paint her thus.
I cannot fight upon this argument;
It is too starv'd a subject for my sword.
But Pandarus-O gods, how do you plague me!

I cannot come to Cressid but by Pandar;
And he's as tetchy to be woo'd to woo
As she is stubborn-chaste against all suit.
Tell me, Apollo, for thy Daphne's love,
What Cressid is, what Pandar, and what we?
Her bed is India; there she lies, a pearl;
Between our Ilium and where she resides
Let it be call'd the wild and wand'ring flood;
Ourself the merchant, and this sailing Pandar
Our doubtful hope, our convoy, and our bark.

Alarum. *Enter* AENEAS

AENEAS.

How now, Prince Troilus! Wherefore not afield?

TROILUS.

Because not there. This woman's answer sorts,
For womanish it is to be from thence.
What news, Aeneas, from the field to-day?

AENEAS.

That Paris is returned home, and hurt.

TROILUS.

By whom, Aeneas?

AENEAS.

Troilus, by Menelaus.

TROILUS.

Let Paris bleed: 'tis but a scar to scorn;

Paris is gor'd with Menelaus' horn.

[Alarum]

AENEAS.

Hark what good sport is out of town to-day!

TROILUS.

Better at home, if 'would I might' were 'may.'

But to the sport abroad. Are you bound thither?

AENEAS.

In all swift haste.

TROILUS.

Come, go we then together.

Exeunt

ACT I. SCENE 2. Troy. A street

Enter CRESSIDA and her man ALEXANDER

CRESSIDA.

Who were those went by?

ALEXANDER.

Queen Hecuba and Helen.

CRESSIDA.

And whither go they?

ALEXANDER.

Up to the eastern tower,
Whose height commands as subject all the vale,
To see the battle. Hector, whose patience
Is as a virtue fix'd, to-day was mov'd.
He chid Andromache, and struck his armourer;
And, like as there were husbandry in war,
Before the sun rose he was harness'd light,
And to the field goes he; where every flower
Did as a prophet weep what it foresaw
In Hector's wrath.

CRESSIDA.

What was his cause of anger?

ALEXANDER.

The noise goes, this: there is among the Greeks

A lord of Troyan blood, nephew to Hector;
They call him Ajax.

CRESSIDA.

Good; and what of him?

ALEXANDER.
They say he is a very man per se,
And stands alone.

CRESSIDA.
So do all men, unless they are drunk, sick, or have no legs.

ALEXANDER.
This man, lady, hath robb'd many beasts of their
particular additions: he is as valiant as a lion, churlish as the
bear, slow as the elephant-a man into whom nature hath so crowded
humours that his valour is crush'd into folly, his folly sauced
with discretion. There is no man hath a virtue that he hath not a
glimpse of, nor any man an attaint but he carries some stain of

it; he is melancholy without cause and merry against the hair; he hath the joints of every thing; but everything so out of joint that he is a gouty Briareus, many hands and no use, or purblind Argus, all eyes and no sight.

CRESSIDA.

But how should this man, that makes me smile, make Hector angry?

ALEXANDER.

They say he yesterday cop'd Hector in the battle and struck him down, the disdain and shame whereof hath ever since kept Hector fasting and waking.

Enter PANDARUS

CRESSIDA.

Who comes here?

ALEXANDER.

Madam, your uncle Pandarus.

CRESSIDA.

Hector's a gallant man.

ALEXANDER.

As may be in the world, lady.

PANDARUS.

What's that? What's that?

CRESSIDA.

Good morrow, uncle Pandarus.

PANDARUS.

Good morrow, cousin Cressid. What do you talk of?-

Good

morrow, Alexander.-How do you, cousin? When were you at Ilium?

CRESSIDA.

This morning, uncle.

PANDARUS.

What were you talking of when I came? Was Hector arm'd and gone ere you came to Ilium? Helen was not up, was she?

CRESSIDA.

Hector was gone; but Helen was not up.

PANDARUS.

E'en so. Hector was stirring early.

CRESSIDA.

That were we talking of, and of his anger.

PANDARUS.

Was he angry?

CRESSIDA.

So he says here.

PANDARUS.

True, he was so; I know the cause too; he'll lay about
him today, I can tell them that. And there's Troilus will not
come far behind him; let them take heed of Troilus, I can tell them that too.

CRESSIDA.

What, is he angry too?

PANDARUS.

Who, Troilus? Troilus is the better man of the two.

CRESSIDA.

O Jupiter! there's no comparison.

PANDARUS.

What, not between Troilus and Hector? Do you know a man if you see him?

CRESSIDA.

Ay, if I ever saw him before and knew him.

PANDARUS.

Well, I say Troilus is Troilus.

CRESSIDA.

Then you say as I say, for I am sure he is not Hector.

PANDARUS.

No, nor Hector is not Troilus in some degrees.

CRESSIDA.

'Tis just to each of them: he is himself.

PANDARUS.

Himself! Alas, poor Troilus! I would he were!

CRESSIDA.

So he is.

PANDARUS.

Condition I had gone barefoot to India.

CRESSIDA.

He is not Hector.

PANDARUS.

Himself! no, he's not himself. Would 'a were himself!

Well, the gods are above; time must friend or end. Well,

Troilus,

well! I would my heart were in her body! No, Hector is not a

better man than Troilus.

CRESSIDA.

Excuse me.

PANDARUS.

He is elder.

CRESSIDA.

Pardon me, pardon me.

PANDARUS.

Th' other's not come to't; you shall tell me another tale

when th' other's come to't. Hector shall not have his wit this year.

CRESSIDA.

He shall not need it if he have his own.

PANDARUS.

Nor his qualities.

CRESSIDA.

No matter.

PANDARUS.

Nor his beauty.

CRESSIDA.

'Twould not become him: his own's better.

PANDARUS.

YOU have no judgment, niece. Helen herself swore th' other day that Troilus, for a brown favour, for so 'tis, I must confess-not brown neither-

CRESSIDA.

No, but brown.

PANDARUS.

Faith, to say truth, brown and not brown.

CRESSIDA.

To say the truth, true and not true.

PANDARUS.

She prais'd his complexion above Paris.

CRESSIDA.

Why, Paris hath colour enough.

PANDARUS.

So he has.

CRESSIDA.

Then Troilus should have too much. If she prais'd him
above, his complexion is higher than his; he having colour
enough, and the other higher, is too flaming praise for a good
complexion. I had as lief Helen's golden tongue had commended

Troilus for a copper nose.

PANDARUS.

I swear to you I think Helen loves him better than Paris.

CRESSIDA.
Then she's a merry Greek indeed.

PANDARUS.
Nay, I am sure she does. She came to him th' other day
into the compass'd window-and you know he has not past three or
four hairs on his chin-

CRESSIDA.
Indeed a tapster's arithmetic may soon bring his
particulars therein to a total.

PANDARUS.
Why, he is very young, and yet will he within three pound
lift as much as his brother Hector.

CRESSIDA.

Is he so young a man and so old a lifter?

PANDARUS.

But to prove to you that Helen loves him: she came and
puts me her white hand to his cloven chin-

CRESSIDA.

Juno have mercy! How came it cloven?

PANDARUS.

Why, you know, 'tis dimpled. I think his smiling becomes
him better than any man in all Phrygia.

CRESSIDA.

O, he smiles valiantly!

PANDARUS.

Does he not?

CRESSIDA.

O yes, an 'twere a cloud in autumn!

PANDARUS.

Why, go to, then! But to prove to you that Helen loves

Troilus-

CRESSIDA.

Troilus will stand to the proof, if you'll prove it so.

PANDARUS.

Troilus! Why, he esteems her no more than I esteem an addle egg.

CRESSIDA.

If you love an addle egg as well as you love an idle

head, you would eat chickens i' th' shell.

PANDARUS.

I cannot choose but laugh to think how she tickled his
chin. Indeed, she has a marvell's white hand, I must needs confess.

CRESSIDA.

Without the rack.

PANDARUS.

And she takes upon her to spy a white hair on his chin.

CRESSIDA.

Alas, poor chin! Many a wart is richer.

PANDARUS.

But there was such laughing! Queen Hecuba laugh'd that
her eyes ran o'er.

CRESSIDA.

With millstones.

PANDARUS.

And Cassandra laugh'd.

CRESSIDA.

But there was a more temperate fire under the pot of her
eyes. Did her eyes run o'er too?

PANDARUS.

And Hector laugh'd.

CRESSIDA.

At what was all this laughing?

PANDARUS.

Marry, at the white hair that Helen spied on Troilus' chin.

CRESSIDA.

An't had been a green hair I should have laugh'd too.

PANDARUS.

They laugh'd not so much at the hair as at his pretty answer.

CRESSIDA.

What was his answer?

PANDARUS.

Quoth she 'Here's but two and fifty hairs on your chin,
and one of them is white.'

CRESSIDA.

This is her question.

PANDARUS.

That's true; make no question of that. 'Two and fifty
hairs,' quoth he 'and one white. That white hair is my father,
and all the rest are his sons.' 'Jupiter!' quoth she 'which of
these hairs is Paris my husband?' 'The forked one,' quoth he,
'pluck't out and give it him.' But there was such laughing! and

Helen so blush'd, and Paris so chaf'd; and all the rest so laugh'd that it pass'd.

CRESSIDA.

So let it now; for it has been a great while going by.

PANDARUS.

Well, cousin, I told you a thing yesterday; think on't.

CRESSIDA.

So I do.

PANDARUS.

I'll be sworn 'tis true; he will weep you, and 'twere a man born in April.

CRESSIDA.

And I'll spring up in his tears, an 'twere a nettle against May. [Sound a retreat]

PANDARUS.

Hark! they are coming from the field. Shall we stand up here and see them as they pass toward Ilium? Good niece, do, sweet niece Cressida.

CRESSIDA.

At your pleasure.

PANDARUS.

Here, here, here's an excellent place; here we may see most bravely. I'll tell you them all by their names as they pass by; but mark Troilus above the rest.

AENEAS passes

CRESSIDA.

Speak not so loud.

PANDARUS.

That's Aeneas. Is not that a brave man? He's one of the flowers of Troy, I can tell you. But mark Troilus; you shall see anon.

ANTENOR passes

CRESSIDA.

Who's that?

PANDARUS.

That's Antenor. He has a shrewd wit, I can tell you; and

he's a man good enough; he's one o' th' soundest judgments in

Troy, whosoever, and a proper man of person. When comes Troilus?

I'll show you Troilus anon. If he see me, you shall see him nod at me.

CRESSIDA.

Will he give you the nod?

PANDARUS.

You shall see.

CRESSIDA.

If he do, the rich shall have more.

HECTOR passes

PANDARUS.

That's Hector, that, that, look you, that; there's a

fellow! Go thy way, Hector! There's a brave man, niece. O brave

Hector! Look how he looks. There's a countenance! Is't not a brave man?

CRESSIDA.

O, a brave man!

PANDARUS.

Is 'a not? It does a man's heart good. Look you what

hacks are on his helmet! Look you yonder, do you see? Look you

there. There's no jesting; there's laying on; take't off who

will, as they say. There be hacks.

CRESSIDA.

Be those with swords?

PANDARUS.

Swords! anything, he cares not; an the devil come to him,
it's all one. By God's lid, it does one's heart good. Yonder
comes Paris, yonder comes Paris.

PARIS passes

Look ye yonder, niece; is't not a gallant man too, is't not?
Why,
this is brave now. Who said he came hurt home to-day? He's not
hurt. Why, this will do Helen's heart good now, ha! Would I could
see Troilus now! You shall see Troilus anon.

HELENUS passes

CRESSIDA.

Who's that?

PANDARUS.

That's Helenus. I marvel where Troilus is. That's
Helenus. I think he went not forth to-day. That's Helenus.

CRESSIDA.

Can Helenus fight, uncle?

PANDARUS.

Helenus! no. Yes, he'll fight indifferent well. I marvel

where Troilus is. Hark! do you not hear the people cry

'Troilus'?

Helenus is a priest.

CRESSIDA.

What sneaking fellow comes yonder?

TROILUS passes

PANDARUS.

Where? yonder? That's Deiphobus. 'Tis Troilus.

There's a

man, niece. Hem! Brave Troilus, the prince of chivalry!

CRESSIDA.

Peace, for shame, peace!

PANDARUS.

Mark him; note him. O brave Troilus! Look well upon him, niece; look you how his sword is bloodied, and his helm more hack'd than Hector's; and how he looks, and how he goes! O admirable youth! he never saw three and twenty. Go thy way, Troilus, go thy way. Had I a sister were a grace or a daughter a goddess, he should take his choice. O admirable man! Paris?

Paris

is dirt to him; and, I warrant, Helen, to change, would give an eye to boot.

CRESSIDA.

Here comes more.

Common soldiers pass

PANDARUS.

Asses, fools, dolts! chaff and bran, chaff and bran!

porridge after meat! I could live and die in the eyes of Troilus.

Ne'er look, ne'er look; the eagles are gone. Crows and daws,

crows and daws! I had rather be such a man as Troilus than
Agamemnon and all Greece.

CRESSIDA.

There is amongst the Greeks Achilles, a better man than Troilus.

PANDARUS.
Achilles? A drayman, a porter, a very camel!

CRESSIDA.

Well, well.

PANDARUS.
Well, well! Why, have you any discretion? Have you any
eyes? Do you know what a man is? Is not birth, beauty, good
shape, discourse, manhood, learning, gentleness, virtue,
youth,
liberality, and such like, the spice and salt that season a man?

CRESSIDA.

Ay, a minc'd man; and then to be bak'd with no date in
the pie, for then the man's date is out.

PANDARUS.

You are such a woman! A man knows not at what ward you lie.

CRESSIDA.

Upon my back, to defend my belly; upon my wit, to defend
my wiles; upon my secrecy, to defend mine honesty; my mask, to
defend my beauty; and you, to defend all these; and at all these
wards I lie at, at a thousand watches.

PANDARUS.

Say one of your watches.

CRESSIDA.

Nay, I'll watch you for that; and that's one of the
chiefest of them too. If I cannot ward what I would not have hit,
I can watch you for telling how I took the blow; unless it swell

past hiding, and then it's past watching

PANDARUS.

You are such another!

Enter TROILUS' BOY

BOY.

Sir, my lord would instantly speak with you.

PANDARUS.

Where?

BOY.

At your own house; there he unarms him.

PANDARUS.

Good boy, tell him I come. *Exit* Boy

I doubt he be hurt. Fare ye well, good niece.

CRESSIDA.

Adieu, uncle.

PANDARUS.

I will be with you, niece, by and by.

CRESSIDA.

To bring, uncle.

PANDARUS.

Ay, a token from Troilus.

CRESSIDA.

By the same token, you are a bawd.

Exit

PANDARUS

Words, vows, gifts, tears, and love's full sacrifice,

He offers in another's enterprise;
But more in Troilus thousand-fold I see
Than in the glass of Pandar's praise may be,
Yet hold I off. Women are angels, wooing:

Things won are done; joy's soul lies in the doing.
That she belov'd knows nought that knows not this:

Men prize the thing ungain'd more than it is.
That she was never yet that ever knew
Love got so sweet as when desire did sue;
Therefore this maxim out of love I teach:

Achievement is command; ungain'd, beseech.
Then though my heart's content firm love doth bear,
Nothing of that shall from mine eyes appear.
Exit

ACT I. SCENE 3. The Grecian camp. Before AGAMEMNON'S tent

Sennet. *Enter* AGAMEMNON, NESTOR, ULYSSES, DIOMEDES, MENELAUS, and others

AGAMEMNON.

Princes,

What grief hath set these jaundies o'er your cheeks?

The ample proposition that hope makes

In all designs begun on earth below

Fails in the promis'd largeness; checks and disasters

Grow in the veins of actions highest rear'd,

As knots, by the conflux of meeting sap,

Infects the sound pine, and diverts his grain

Tortive and errant from his course of growth.

Nor, princes, is it matter new to us

That we come short of our suppose so far

That after seven years' siege yet Troy walls stand;

Sith every action that hath gone before,

Whereof we have record, trial did draw

Bias and thwart, not answering the aim,

And that unbodied figure of the thought

That gave't surmised shape. Why then, you princes,
Do you with cheeks abash'd behold our works
And call them shames, which are, indeed, nought else
But the protractive trials of great Jove
To find persistive constancy in men;
The fineness of which metal is not found
In fortune's love? For then the bold and coward,
The wise and fool, the artist and unread,
The hard and soft, seem all affin'd and kin.
But in the wind and tempest of her frown
Distinction, with a broad and powerful fan,
Puffing at all, winnows the light away;
And what hath mass or matter by itself
Lies rich in virtue and unmingled.

NESTOR.

With due observance of thy godlike seat,
Great Agamemnon, Nestor shall apply
Thy latest words. In the reproof of chance
Lies the true proof of men. The sea being smooth,
How many shallow bauble boats dare sail

Upon her patient breast, making their way

With those of nobler bulk!

But let the ruffian Boreas once enrage

The gentle Thetis, and anon behold

The strong-ribb'd bark through liquid mountains cut,

Bounding between the two moist elements

Like Perseus' horse. Where's then the saucy boat,

Whose weak untimber'd sides but even now

Co-rivall'd greatness? Either to harbour fled

Or made a toast for Neptune. Even so

Doth valour's show and valour's worth divide

In storms of fortune; for in her ray and brightness

The herd hath more annoyance by the breeze

Than by the tiger; but when the splitting wind

Makes flexible the knees of knotted oaks,

And flies fled under shade-why, then the thing of courage

As rous'd with rage, with rage doth sympathise,

And with an accent tun'd in self-same key

Retorts to chiding fortune.

ULYSSES.

Agamemnon,

Thou great commander, nerve and bone of Greece,

Heart of our numbers, soul and only spirit

In whom the tempers and the minds of all

Should be shut up-hear what Ulysses speaks.

Besides the applause and approbation

The which, *[To AGAMEMNON]* most mighty, for thy place and sway,

[To NESTOR] And, thou most reverend, for thy stretch'd-out life,

I give to both your speeches-which were such

As Agamemnon and the hand of Greece

Should hold up high in brass; and such again

As venerable Nestor, hatch'd in silver,

Should with a bond of air, strong as the axle-tree

On which heaven rides, knit all the Greekish ears

To his experienc'd tongue-yet let it please both,

Thou great, and wise, to hear Ulysses speak.

AGAMEMNON.

Speak, Prince of Ithaca; and be't of less expect

That matter needless, of importless burden, Divide thy lips than we are confident,

When rank Thersites opes his mastic jaws,

We shall hear music, wit, and oracle.

ULYSSES.

Troy, yet upon his basis, had been down,

And the great Hector's sword had lack'd a master,

But for these instances:

The specialty of rule hath been neglected;

And look how many Grecian tents do stand

Hollow upon this plain, so many hollow factions.

When that the general is not like the hive,

To whom the foragers shall all repair,

What honey is expected? Degree being vizarded,

Th' unworthiest shows as fairly in the mask.

The heavens themselves, the planets, and this centre,

Observe degree, priority, and place,

Insisture, course, proportion, season, form,

Office, and custom, in all line of order;

And therefore is the glorious planet Sol

In noble eminence enthron'd and spher'd

Amidst the other, whose med'cinable eye
Corrects the ill aspects of planets evil,
And posts, like the commandment of a king,
Sans check, to good and bad. But when the planets
In evil mixture to disorder wander,
What plagues and what portents, what mutiny,
What raging of the sea, shaking of earth,
Commotion in the winds! Frights, changes, horrors,
Divert and crack, rend and deracinate,
The unity and married calm of states
Quite from their fixture! O, when degree is shak'd,
Which is the ladder of all high designs,
The enterprise is sick! How could communities,
Degrees in schools, and brotherhoods in cities,
Peaceful commerce from dividable shores,
The primogenity and due of birth,
Prerogative of age, crowns, sceptres, laurels,
But by degree, stand in authentic place?
Take but degree away, untune that string,
And hark what discord follows! Each thing melts
In mere oppugnancy: the bounded waters

Should lift their bosoms higher than the shores,

And make a sop of all this solid globe;

Strength should be lord of imbecility,

And the rude son should strike his father dead;

Force should be right; or, rather, right and wrong-

Between whose endless jar justice resides-

Should lose their names, and so should justice too.

Then everything includes itself in power,

Power into will, will into appetite;

And appetite, an universal wolf,

So doubly seconded with will and power,

Must make perforce an universal prey,

And last eat up himself. Great Agamemnon,

This chaos, when degree is suffocate,

Follows the choking.

And this neglection of degree it is

That by a pace goes backward, with a purpose

It hath to climb. The general's disdain'd

By him one step below, he by the next,

That next by him beneath; so ever step,

Exampl'd by the first pace that is sick

Of his superior, grows to an envious fever

Of pale and bloodless emulation.

And 'tis this fever that keeps Troy on foot,

Not her own sinews. To end a tale of length,

Troy in our weakness stands, not in her strength.

NESTOR.

Most wisely hath Ulysses here discover'd

The fever whereof all our power is sick.

AGAMEMNON.

The nature of the sickness found, Ulysses,

What is the remedy?

ULYSSES.

The great Achilles, whom opinion crowns

The sinew and the forehand of our host,

Having his ear full of his airy fame,

Grows dainty of his worth, and in his tent

Lies mocking our designs; with him Patroclus

Upon a lazy bed the livelong day

Breaks scurril jests;

And with ridiculous and awkward action-

Which, slanderer, he imitation calls-

He pageants us. Sometime, great Agamemnon,

Thy topless deputation he puts on;

And like a strutting player whose conceit

Lies in his hamstring, and doth think it rich

To hear the wooden dialogue and sound

'Twixt his stretch'd footing and the scaffoldage-

Such to-be-pitied and o'er-wrested seeming

He acts thy greatness in; and when he speaks

'Tis like a chime a-mending; with terms unsquar'd,

Which, from the tongue of roaring Typhon dropp'd,

Would seem hyperboles. At this fusty stuff

The large Achilles, on his press'd bed lolling,

From his deep chest laughs out a loud applause;

Cries 'Excellent! 'tis Agamemnon just.

Now play me Nestor; hem, and stroke thy beard,

As he being drest to some oration.'

That's done-as near as the extremest ends

Of parallels, as like Vulcan and his wife;

Yet god Achilles still cries 'Excellent!
'Tis Nestor right. Now play him me, Patroclus,
Arming to answer in a night alarm.'
And then, forsooth, the faint defects of age
Must be the scene of mirth: to cough and spit
And, with a palsy-fumbling on his gorget,
Shake in and out the rivet. And at this sport
Sir Valour dies; cries 'O, enough, Patroclus;
Or give me ribs of steel! I shall split all
In pleasure of my spleen.' And in this fashion
All our abilities, gifts, natures, shapes,
Severals and generals of grace exact,
Achievements, plots, orders, preventions,
Excitements to the field or speech for truce,
Success or loss, what is or is not, serves
As stuff for these two to make paradoxes.

NESTOR.

And in the imitation of these twain-
Who, as Ulysses says, opinion crowns
With an imperial voice-many are infect.

Ajax is grown self-will'd and bears his head
In such a rein, in full as proud a place
As broad Achilles; keeps his tent like him;
Makes factious feasts; rails on our state of war
Bold as an oracle, and sets Thersites,
A slave whose gall coins slanders like a mint,
To match us in comparisons with dirt,
To weaken and discredit our exposure,
How rank soever rounded in with danger.

ULYSSES.

They tax our policy and call it cowardice,
Count wisdom as no member of the war,
Forestall prescience, and esteem no act
But that of hand. The still and mental parts
That do contrive how many hands shall strike
When fitness calls them on, and know, by measure
Of their observant toil, the enemies' weight-
Why, this hath not a finger's dignity:
They call this bed-work, mapp'ry, closet-war;
So that the ram that batters down the wall,

For the great swinge and rudeness of his poise,
They place before his hand that made the engine,
Or those that with the fineness of their souls
By reason guide his execution.

NESTOR.

Let this be granted, and Achilles' horse
Makes many Thetis' sons.

[Tucket]

AGAMEMNON.

What trumpet? Look, Menelaus.

MENELAUS.

From Troy.

Enter AENEAS

AGAMEMNON.

What would you fore our tent?

AENEAS.

Is this great Agamemnon's tent, I pray you?

AGAMEMNON.

Even this.

AENEAS.

May one that is a herald and a prince

Do a fair message to his kingly eyes?

AGAMEMNON.

With surety stronger than Achilles' an

Fore all the Greekish heads, which with one voice

Call Agamemnon head and general.

AENEAS.

Fair leave and large security. How may

A stranger to those most imperial looks

Know them from eyes of other mortals?

AGAMEMNON.

How?

AENEAS.
Ay;
I ask, that I might waken reverence,
And bid the cheek be ready with a blush
Modest as Morning when she coldly eyes
The youthful Phoebus.

Which is that god in office, guiding men?
Which is the high and mighty Agamemnon?

AGAMEMNON.
This Troyan scorns us, or the men of Troy
Are ceremonious courtiers.

AENEAS.

Courtiers as free, as debonair, unarm'd,

As bending angels; that's their fame in peace.

But when they would seem soldiers, they have galls,

Good arms, strong joints, true swords; and, Jove's accord,

Nothing so full of heart. But peace, Aeneas,

Peace, Troyan; lay thy finger on thy lips.

The worthiness of praise distains his worth,

If that the prais'd himself bring the praise forth;

But what the repining enemy commends,

That breath fame blows; that praise, sole pure, transcends.

AGAMEMNON.

Sir, you of Troy, call you yourself Aeneas?

AENEAS.

Ay, Greek, that is my name.

AGAMEMNON.

What's your affair, I pray you?

AENEAS.

Sir, pardon; 'tis for Agamemnon's ears.

AGAMEMNON.

He hears nought privately that comes from Troy.

AENEAS.

Nor I from Troy come not to whisper with him;
I bring a trumpet to awake his ear,
To set his sense on the attentive bent,
And then to speak.

AGAMEMNON.

Speak frankly as the wind;
It is not Agamemnon's sleeping hour.
That thou shalt know, Troyan, he is awake,
He tells thee so himself.

AENEAS.

Trumpet, blow loud,

Send thy brass voice through all these lazy tents;

And every Greek of mettle, let him know

What Troy means fairly shall be spoke aloud.

[Sound

trumpet]

We have, great Agamemnon, here in Troy

A prince called Hector-Priam is his father-

Who in this dull and long-continued truce

Is resty grown; he bade me take a trumpet

And to this purpose speak: Kings, princes, lords!

If there be one among the fair'st of Greece

That holds his honour higher than his ease,

That seeks his praise more than he fears his peril,

That knows his valour and knows not his fear,

That loves his mistress more than in confession

With truant vows to her own lips he loves,

And dare avow her beauty and her worth

In other arms than hers-to him this challenge.

Hector, in view of Troyans and of Greeks,

Shall make it good or do his best to do it:

He hath a lady wiser, fairer, truer,

Than ever Greek did couple in his arms;

And will to-morrow with his trumpet call

Mid-way between your tents and walls of Troy

To rouse a Grecian that is true in love.

If any come, Hector shall honour him;

If none, he'll say in Troy, when he retires,

The Grecian dames are sunburnt and not worth

The splinter of a lance. Even so much.

AGAMEMNON.

This shall be told our lovers, Lord Aeneas.

If none of them have soul in such a kind,

We left them all at home. But we are soldiers;

And may that soldier a mere recreant prove

That means not, hath not, or is not in love.

If then one is, or hath, or means to be,

That one meets Hector; if none else, I am he.

NESTOR.

Tell him of Nestor, one that was a man

When Hector's grandsire suck'd. He is old now;

But if there be not in our Grecian mould

One noble man that hath one spark of fire

To answer for his love, tell him from me

I'll hide my silver beard in a gold beaver,

And in my vantbrace put this wither'd brawn,

And, meeting him, will tell him that my lady

Was fairer than his grandame, and as chaste

As may be in the world. His youth in flood,

I'll prove this truth with my three drops of blood.

AENEAS.

Now heavens forfend such scarcity of youth!

ULYSSES.

Amen.

AGAMEMNON.

Fair Lord Aeneas, let me touch your hand;

To our pavilion shall I lead you, first.

Achilles shall have word of this intent;

So shall each lord of Greece, from tent to tent.

Yourself shall feast with us before you go,

And find the welcome of a noble foe.

Exeunt all but ULYSSES and

NESTOR

ULYSSES.

Nestor!

NESTOR.

What says Ulysses?

ULYSSES.

I have a young conception in my brain;

Be you my time to bring it to some shape.

NESTOR.

What is't?

ULYSSES.

This 'tis:

Blunt wedges rive hard knots. The seeded pride

That hath to this maturity blown up

In rank Achilles must or now be cropp'd

Or, shedding, breed a nursery of like evil

To overbulk us all.

NESTOR.

Well, and how?

ULYSSES.

This challenge that the gallant Hector sends,

However it is spread in general name,

Relates in purpose only to Achilles.

NESTOR.

True. The purpose is perspicuous even as substance

Whose grossness little characters sum up;

And, in the publication, make no strain

But that Achilles, were his brain as barren

As banks of Libya-though, Apollo knows,

'Tis dry enough-will with great speed of judgment,

Ay, with celerity, find Hector's purpose

Pointing on him.

ULYSSES.

And wake him to the answer, think you?

NESTOR.

Why, 'tis most meet. Who may you else oppose

That can from Hector bring those honours off,

If not Achilles? Though 't be a sportful combat,

Yet in this trial much opinion dwells;

For here the Troyans taste our dear'st repute

With their fin'st palate; and trust to me, Ulysses,

Our imputation shall be oddly pois'd

In this vile action; for the success,

Although particular, shall give a scantling

Of good or bad unto the general;

And in such indexes, although small pricks
To their subsequent volumes, there is seen
The baby figure of the giant mas
Of things to come at large. It is suppos'd
He that meets Hector issues from our choice;
And choice, being mutual act of all our souls,
Makes merit her election, and doth boil,
As 'twere from forth us all, a man distill'd
Out of our virtues; who miscarrying,
What heart receives from hence a conquering part,
To steel a strong opinion to themselves?
Which entertain'd, limbs are his instruments,
In no less working than are swords and bows
Directive by the limbs.

ULYSSES.
Give pardon to my speech.

Therefore 'tis meet Achilles meet not Hector.
Let us, like merchants, show our foulest wares
And think perchance they'll sell; if not, the lustre

Of the better yet to show shall show the better,
By showing the worst first. Do not consent
That ever Hector and Achilles meet;
For both our honour and our shame in this
Are dogg'd with two strange followers.

NESTOR.

I see them not with my old eyes. What are they?

ULYSSES.

What glory our Achilles shares from Hector,
Were he not proud, we all should wear with him;
But he already is too insolent;
And it were better parch in Afric sun
Than in the pride and salt scorn of his eyes,
Should he scape Hector fair. If he were foil'd,
Why, then we do our main opinion crush
In taint of our best man. No, make a lott'ry;
And, by device, let blockish Ajax draw
The sort to fight with Hector. Among ourselves

Give him allowance for the better man;
For that will physic the great Myrmidon,
Who broils in loud applause, and make him fall
His crest, that prouder than blue Iris bends.
If the dull brainless Ajax come safe off,
We'll dress him up in voices; if he fail,
Yet go we under our opinion still
That we have better men. But, hit or miss,
Our project's life this shape of sense assumes-
Ajax employ'd plucks down Achilles' plumes.

NESTOR.

Now, Ulysses, I begin to relish thy advice;
And I will give a taste thereof forthwith
To Agamemnon. Go we to him straight.
Two curs shall tame each other: pride alone
Must tarre the mastiffs on, as 'twere their bone.

Exeunt

ACT II. SCENE 1. The Grecian camp

Enter Ajax and THERSITES

AJAX.

Thersites!

THERSITES.

Agamemnon-how if he had boils full, an over,

generally?

AJAX.

Thersites!

THERSITES.

And those boils did run-say so. Did not the general run

then? Were not that a botchy core?

AJAX.

Dog!

THERSITES.

Then there would come some matter from him;

I see none now.

AJAX.

Thou bitch-wolf's son, canst thou not hear? Feel, then.

[Strikes

him]

THERSITES.

The plague of Greece upon thee, thou mongrel

beef-witted lord!

AJAX.

Speak, then, thou whinid'st leaven, speak. I will beat thee

into handsomeness.

THERSITES.

I shall sooner rail thee into wit and holiness; but

I

think thy horse will sooner con an oration than thou learn a prayer without book. Thou canst strike, canst thou? A red murrain o' thy jade's tricks!

AJAX.

Toadstool, learn me the proclamation.

THERSITES.
Dost thou think I have no sense, thou strikest me thus?

AJAX.

The proclamation!

THERSITES.
Thou art proclaim'd, a fool, I think.

AJAX.

Do not, porpentine, do not; my fingers itch.

THERSITES.

I would thou didst itch from head to foot and I had the

scratching of thee; I would make thee the loathsomest scab in

Greece. When thou art forth in the incursions, thou strikest as slow as another.

AJAX.

I say, the proclamation.

THERSITES.

Thou grumblest and railest every hour on Achilles; and

thou art as full of envy at his greatness as Cerberus is at

Proserpina's beauty-ay, that thou bark'st at him.

AJAX.

Mistress Thersites!

THERSITES.

Thou shouldst strike him.

AJAX.

Cobloaf!

THERSITES.

He would pun thee into shivers with his fist, as a
sailor breaks a biscuit.

AJAX.

You whoreson cur! [Strikes
him]

THERSITES.

Do, do.

AJAX.

Thou stool for a witch!

THERSITES.

Ay, do, do; thou sodden-witted lord! Thou hast no more brain than I have in mine elbows; an assinico may tutor thee.

You

scurvy valiant ass! Thou art here but to thrash Troyans, and thou

art bought and sold among those of any wit like a barbarian

slave. If thou use to beat me, I will begin at thy heel and tell

what thou art by inches, thou thing of no bowels, thou!

AJAX.

You dog!

THERSITES.

You scurvy lord!

AJAX.

You cur! [Strikes

him]

THERSITES.

Mars his idiot! Do, rudeness; do, camel; do, do.

Enter ACHILLES and PATROCLUS

ACHILLES.

Why, how now, Ajax! Wherefore do you thus?

How now, Thersites! What's the matter, man?

THERSITES.

You see him there, do you?

ACHILLES.

Ay; what's the matter?

THERSITES.

Nay, look upon him.

ACHILLES.

So I do. What's the matter?

THERSITES.

Nay, but regard him well.

ACHILLES.

Well! why, so I do.

THERSITES.

But yet you look not well upon him; for who some ever you take him to be, he is Ajax.

ACHILLES.

I know that, fool.

THERSITES.

Ay, but that fool knows not himself.

AJAX.

Therefore I beat thee.

THERSITES.

Lo, lo, lo, lo, what modicums of wit he utters! His
evasions have ears thus long. I have bobb'd his brain more than
he has beat my bones. I will buy nine sparrows for a penny, and
his pia mater is not worth the ninth part of a sparrow. This
lord, Achilles, Ajax-who wears his wit in his belly and his guts
in his head-I'll tell you what I say of him.

ACHILLES.

What?

THERSITES.

I say this Ajax- [AJAX offers to strike
him]

ACHILLES.

Nay, good Ajax.

THERSITES.

Has not so much wit-

ACHILLES.

Nay, I must hold you.

THERSITES.

As will stop the eye of Helen's needle, for whom he comes to fight.

ACHILLES.

Peace, fool.

THERSITES.

I would have peace and quietness, but the fool will

not-

he there; that he; look you there.

AJAX.

O thou damned cur! I shall-

ACHILLES.

Will you set your wit to a fool's?

THERSITES.

No, I warrant you, the fool's will shame it.

PATROCLUS.

Good words, Thersites.

ACHILLES.

What's the quarrel?

AJAX.

I bade the vile owl go learn me the tenour of the proclamation, and he rails upon me.

THERSITES.

I serve thee not.

AJAX.

Well, go to, go to.

THERSITES.

I serve here voluntary.

ACHILLES.

Your last service was suff'rance; 'twas not
voluntary. No
man is beaten voluntary. Ajax was here the voluntary, and you as
under an impress.

THERSITES.

E'en so; a great deal of your wit too lies in your
sinews, or else there be liars. Hector shall have a great catch
an he knock out either of your brains: 'a were as good crack a
fusty nut with no kernel.

ACHILLES.

What, with me too, Thersites?

THERSITES.

There's Ulysses and old Nestor-whose wit was mouldy ere your grandsires had nails on their toes-yoke you like draught oxen, and make you plough up the wars.

ACHILLES.

What, what?

THERSITES.

Yes, good sooth. To Achilles, to Ajax, to-

AJAX.

I shall cut out your tongue.

THERSITES.

'Tis no matter; I shall speak as much as thou afterwards.

PATROCLUS.

No more words, Thersites; peace!

THERSITES.

I will hold my peace when Achilles' brach bids me, shall I?

ACHILLES.
There's for you, Patroclus.

THERSITES.
I will see you hang'd like clotpoles ere I come any more
to your tents. I will keep where there is wit stirring, and leave
the faction of fools.
Exit

PATROCLUS. A good riddance.

ACHILLES.
Marry, this, sir, is proclaim'd through all our host,
That Hector, by the fifth hour of the sun,
Will with a trumpet 'twixt our tents and Troy,
To-morrow morning, call some knight to arms
That hath a stomach; and such a one that dare

Maintain I know not what; 'tis trash. Farewell.

AJAX.

Farewell. Who shall answer him?

ACHILLES.

I know not; 'tis put to lott'ry. Otherwise. He knew his man.

AJAX.

O, meaning you! I will go learn more of it.

Exeunt

ACT II. SCENE 2. Troy. PRIAM'S palace

Enter PRIAM, HECTOR, TROILUS, PARIS, and HELENUS

PRIAM.

After so many hours, lives, speeches, spent,

Thus once again says Nestor from the Greeks:

'Deliver Helen, and all damage else-

As honour, loss of time, travail, expense, Wounds, friends, and what else dear that is consum'd

In hot digestion of this cormorant war-

Shall be struck off.' Hector, what say you to't?

HECTOR.

Though no man lesser fears the Greeks than I,

As far as toucheth my particular,

Yet, dread Priam,

There is no lady of more softer bowels,

More spongy to suck in the sense of fear,

More ready to cry out 'Who knows what follows?'

Than Hector is. The wound of peace is surety,

Surety secure; but modest doubt is call'd

The beacon of the wise, the tent that searches

To th' bottom of the worst. Let Helen go.

Since the first sword was drawn about this question,

Every tithe soul 'mongst many thousand dismes

Hath been as dear as Helen-I mean, of ours.

If we have lost so many tenths of ours

To guard a thing not ours, nor worth to us,

Had it our name, the value of one ten,

What merit's in that reason which denies
The yielding of her up?

TROILUS.

Fie, fie, my brother!
Weigh you the worth and honour of a king,
So great as our dread father's, in a scale
Of common ounces? Will you with counters sum
The past-proportion of his infinite,
And buckle in a waist most fathomless
With spans and inches so diminutive
As fears and reasons? Fie, for godly shame!

HELENUS.
No marvel though you bite so sharp at reasons,
You are so empty of them. Should not our father
Bear the great sway of his affairs with reasons,
Because your speech hath none that tells him so?

TROILUS.

You are for dreams and slumbers, brother priest;

You fur your gloves with reason. Here are your reasons:

You know an enemy intends you harm;

You know a sword employ'd is perilous,

And reason flies the object of all harm.

Who marvels, then, when Helenus beholds

A Grecian and his sword, if he do set

The very wings of reason to his heels

And fly like chidden Mercury from Jove,

Or like a star disorb'd? Nay, if we talk of reason,

Let's shut our gates and sleep. Manhood and honour

Should have hare hearts, would they but fat their thoughts

With this cramm'd reason. Reason and respect

Make livers pale and lustihood deject.

HECTOR.

Brother, she is not worth what she doth, cost The keeping.

TROILUS.

What's aught but as 'tis valued?

HECTOR.

But value dwells not in particular will:

It holds his estimate and dignity

As well wherein 'tis precious of itself

As in the prizer. 'Tis mad idolatry

To make the service greater than the god-I

And the will dotes that is attributive

To what infectiously itself affects,

Without some image of th' affected merit.

TROILUS.

I take to-day a wife, and my election

Is led on in the conduct of my will;

My will enkindled by mine eyes and ears,

Two traded pilots 'twixt the dangerous shores

Of will and judgment: how may I avoid,

Although my will distaste what it elected,

The wife I chose? There can be no evasion

To blench from this and to stand firm by honour.

We turn not back the silks upon the merchant

When we have soil'd them; nor the remainder viands

We do not throw in unrespective sieve,

Because we now are full. It was thought meet

Paris should do some vengeance on the Greeks;

Your breath with full consent benied his sails;

The seas and winds, old wranglers, took a truce,

And did him service. He touch'd the ports desir'd;

And for an old aunt whom the Greeks held captive

He brought a Grecian queen, whose youth and freshness

Wrinkles Apollo's, and makes stale the morning.

Why keep we her? The Grecians keep our aunt.

Is she worth keeping? Why, she is a pearl

Whose price hath launch'd above a thousand ships,

And turn'd crown'd kings to merchants.

If you'll avouch 'twas wisdom Paris went-

As you must needs, for you all cried 'Go, go'-

If you'll confess he brought home worthy prize-

As you must needs, for you all clapp'd your hands,

And cried 'Inestimable!' -why do you now

The issue of your proper wisdoms rate,

And do a deed that never fortune did-

Beggar the estimation which you priz'd

Richer than sea and land? O theft most base,

That we have stol'n what we do fear to keep!

But thieves unworthy of a thing so stol'n

That in their country did them that disgrace

We fear to warrant in our native place!

CASSANDRA.

[Within] Cry, Troyans, cry.

PRIAM.

What noise, what shriek is this?

TROILUS.

'Tis our mad sister; I do know her voice.

CASSANDRA.

[Within] Cry, Troyans.

HECTOR.

It is Cassandra.

Enter CASSANDRA, raving

CASSANDRA.

Cry, Troyans, cry. Lend me ten thousand eyes,
And I will fill them with prophetic tears.

HECTOR.

Peace, sister, peace.

CASSANDRA.

Virgins and boys, mid-age and wrinkled eld,
Soft infancy, that nothing canst but cry,
Add to my clamours. Let us pay betimes
A moiety of that mass of moan to come.

Cry, Troyans, cry. Practise your eyes with tears.
Troy must not be, nor goodly Ilion stand;
Our firebrand brother, Paris, burns us all.

Cry, Troyans, cry, A Helen and a woe!

Cry, cry. Troy burns, or else let Helen go.
Exit

HECTOR. Now, youthful Troilus, do not these high strains
Of divination in our sister work
Some touches of remorse, or is your blood
So madly hot that no discourse of reason,
Nor fear of bad success in a bad cause,
Can qualify the same?

TROILUS.
Why, brother Hector,
We may not think the justness of each act
Such and no other than event doth form it;
Nor once deject the courage of our minds
Because Cassandra's mad. Her brain-sick raptures
Cannot distaste the goodness of a quarrel
Which hath our several honours all engag'd
To make it gracious. For my private part,

I am no more touch'd than all Priam's sons;
And Jove forbid there should be done amongst us
Such things as might offend the weakest spleen
To fight for and maintain.

PARIS.
Else might the world convince of levity
As well my undertakings as your counsels;
But I attest the gods, your full consent
Gave wings to my propension, and cut of
All fears attending on so dire a project.

For what, alas, can these my single arms?
What propugnation is in one man's valour
To stand the push and enmity of those
This quarrel would excite? Yet, I protest,
Were I alone to pass the difficulties,
And had as ample power as I have will,
Paris should ne'er retract what he hath done
Nor faint in the pursuit.

PRIAM.

Paris, you speak

Like one besotted on your sweet delights.

You have the honey still, but these the gall;

So to be valiant is no praise at all.

PARIS.

Sir, I propose not merely to myself

The pleasures such a beauty brings with it;

But I would have the soil of her fair rape

Wip'd off in honourable keeping her.

What treason were it to the ransack'd queen,

Disgrace to your great worths, and shame to me,

Now to deliver her possession up

On terms of base compulsion! Can it be

That so degenerate a strain as this

Should once set footing in your generous bosoms?

There's not the meanest spirit on our party

Without a heart to dare or sword to draw

When Helen is defended; nor none so noble

Whose life were ill bestow'd or death unfam'd

Where Helen is the subject. Then, I say,

Well may we fight for her whom we know well

The world's large spaces cannot parallel.

HECTOR.

Paris and Troilus, you have both said well;

And on the cause and question now in hand

Have gloz'd, but superficially; not much

Unlike young men, whom Aristode thought

Unfit to hear moral philosophy.

The reasons you allege do more conduce

To the hot passion of distemp'red blood

Than to make up a free determination

'Twixt right and wrong; for pleasure and revenge

Have ears more deaf than adders to the voice

Of any true decision. Nature craves

All dues be rend'red to their owners. Now,

What nearer debt in all humanity

Than wife is to the husband? If this law

Of nature be corrupted through affection;

And that great minds, of partial indulgence

To their benumbed wills, resist the same;
There is a law in each well-order'd nation
To curb those raging appetites that are
Most disobedient and refractory.
If Helen, then, be wife to Sparta's king-
As it is known she is-these moral laws
Of nature and of nations speak aloud
To have her back return'd. Thus to persist
In doing wrong extenuates not wrong,
But makes it much more heavy. Hector's opinion
Is this, in way of truth. Yet, ne'er the less,
My spritely brethren, I propend to you
In resolution to keep Helen still;
For 'tis a cause that hath no mean dependence
Upon our joint and several dignities.

TROILUS.

Why, there you touch'd the life of our design.
Were it not glory that we more affected
Than the performance of our heaving spleens,

I would not wish a drop of Troyan blood
Spent more in her defence. But, worthy Hector,
She is a theme of honour and renown,
A spur to valiant and magnanimous deeds,
Whose present courage may beat down our foes,
And fame in time to come canonize us;
For I presume brave Hector would not lose
So rich advantage of a promis'd glory
As smiles upon the forehead of this action
For the wide world's revenue.

HECTOR.
I am yours,
You valiant offspring of great Priamus.
I have a roisting challenge sent amongst
The dull and factious nobles of the Greeks
Will strike amazement to their drowsy spirits.
I was advertis'd their great general slept,
Whilst emulation in the army crept.

This, I presume, will wake him.

Exeunt

ACT II. SCENE 3. The Grecian camp. Before the tent of ACHILLES

Enter THERSITES, solus

THERSITES.

How now, Thersites! What, lost in the labyrinth of thy
fury? Shall the elephant Ajax carry it thus? He beats me, and

I

rail at him. O worthy satisfaction! Would it were otherwise: that
I could beat him, whilst he rail'd at me! 'Sfoot, I'll learn to
conjure and raise devils, but I'll see some issue of my spiteful
execrations. Then there's Achilles, a rare engineer! If Troy be
not taken till these two undermine it, the walls will stand till
they fall of themselves. O thou great thunder-darter of Olympus,
forget that thou art Jove, the king of gods, and, Mercury, lose
all the serpentine craft of thy caduceus, if ye take not that
little little less-than-little wit from them that they have!
which short-arm'd ignorance itself knows is so abundant scarce,

it will not in circumvention deliver a fly from a spider without drawing their massy irons and cutting the web. After this, the vengeance on the whole camp! or, rather, the Neapolitan bone-ache! for that, methinks, is the curse depending on those that war for a placket. I have said my prayers; and devil Envy say 'Amen.' What ho! my Lord Achilles!

Enter PATROCLUS

PATROCLUS.
Who's there? Thersites! Good Thersites, come in and rail.

THERSITES.
If I could 'a rememb'red a gilt counterfeit, thou wouldst not have slipp'd out of my contemplation; but it is no matter; thyself upon thyself! The common curse of mankind, folly and ignorance, be thine in great revenue! Heaven bless thee from a tutor, and discipline come not near thee! Let thy blood be thy direction till thy death. Then if she that lays thee out says thou art a fair corse, I'll be sworn and sworn upon't she never shrouded any but lazars. Amen. Where's Achilles?

PATROCLUS.

What, art thou devout? Wast thou in prayer?

THERSITES.

Ay, the heavens hear me!

PATROCLUS.

Amen.

Enter ACHILLES

ACHILLES.

Who's there?

PATROCLUS.

Thersites, my lord.

ACHILLES.

Where, where? O, where? Art thou come? Why, my cheese, my digestion, why hast thou not served thyself in to my table so many meals? Come, what's Agamemnon?

THERSITES.

Thy commander, Achilles. Then tell me, Patroclus, what's Achilles?

PATROCLUS.

Thy lord, Thersites. Then tell me, I pray thee, what's Thersites?

THERSITES.

Thy knower, Patroclus. Then tell me, Patroclus, what art thou?

PATROCLUS.

Thou must tell that knowest.

ACHILLES.

O, tell, tell,

THERSITES.

I'll decline the whole question. Agamemnon commands Achilles; Achilles is my lord; I am Patroclus' knower; and Patroclus is a fool.

PATROCLUS.

You rascal!

THERSITES.

Peace, fool! I have not done.

ACHILLES.

He is a privileg'd man. Proceed, Thersites.

THERSITES.

Agamemnon is a fool; Achilles is a fool; Thersites is a fool; and, as aforesaid, Patroclus is a fool.

ACHILLES.

Derive this; come.

THERSITES.

Agamemnon is a fool to offer to command Achilles;

Achilles is a fool to be commanded of Agamemnon; Thersites is a

fool to serve such a fool; and this Patroclus is a fool positive.

PATROCLUS.

Why am I a fool?

THERSITES.

Make that demand of the Creator. It suffices me thou

art. Look you, who comes here?

ACHILLES.

Come, Patroclus, I'll speak with nobody. Come in with me,

Thersites.

Exit

THERSITES. Here is such patchery, such juggling, and such knavery.
All the argument is a whore and a cuckold-a good quarrel to draw
emulous factions and bleed to death upon. Now the dry serpigo on
the subject, and war and lechery confound all!
Exit

Enter AGAMEMNON, ULYSSES, NESTOR, DIOMEDES,

AJAX, and CALCHAS
AGAMEMNON.

Where is Achilles?

PATROCLUS.
Within his tent; but ill-dispos'd, my lord.

AGAMEMNON.

Let it be known to him that we are here.
He shent our messengers; and we lay by
Our appertainings, visiting of him.

Let him be told so; lest, perchance, he think
We dare not move the question of our place
Or know not what we are.

PATROCLUS.

I shall say so to him.

Exit

ULYSSES. We saw him at the opening of his tent.

He is not sick.

AJAX.

Yes, lion-sick, sick of proud heart. You may call it
melancholy, if you will favour the man; but, by my head, 'tis
pride. But why, why? Let him show us a cause. A word, my lord.
[Takes AGAMEMNON
aside]

NESTOR.

What moves Ajax thus to bay at him?

ULYSSES.

Achilles hath inveigled his fool from him.

NESTOR.Who, Thersites?

ULYSSES.

He.

NESTOR.

Then will Ajax lack matter, if he have lost his argument

ULYSSES.

No; you see he is his argument that has his argument-

Achilles.

NESTOR.

All the better; their fraction is more our wish than their

faction. But it was a strong composure a fool could disunite!

ULYSSES.

The amity that wisdom knits not, folly may easily untie.

Re-enter PATROCLUS

Here comes Patroclus.

NESTOR.

No Achilles with him.

ULYSSES.

The elephant hath joints, but none for courtesy; his legs
are legs for necessity, not for flexure.

PATROCLUS.

Achilles bids me say he is much sorry
If any thing more than your sport and pleasure
Did move your greatness and this noble state
To call upon him; he hopes it is no other
But for your health and your digestion sake,
An after-dinner's breath.

AGAMEMNON.

Hear you, Patroclus.

We are too well acquainted with these answers;

But his evasion, wing'd thus swift with scorn,

Cannot outfly our apprehensions.

Much attribute he hath, and much the reason

Why we ascribe it to him. Yet all his virtues,

Not virtuously on his own part beheld,

Do in our eyes begin to lose their gloss;

Yea, like fair fruit in an unwholesome dish,

Are like to rot untasted. Go and tell him

We come to speak with him; and you shall not sin

If you do say we think him over-proud

And under-honest, in self-assumption greater

Than in the note of judgment; and worthier than himself

Here tend the savage strangeness he puts on,

Disguise the holy strength of their command,

And underwrite in an observing kind

His humorous predominance; yea, watch

His pettish lunes, his ebbs, his flows, as if

The passage and whole carriage of this action

Rode on his tide. Go tell him this, and ad

That if he overhold his price so much

We'll none of him, but let him, like an engine

Not portable, lie under this report:

Bring action hither; this cannot go to war.

A stirring dwarf we do allowance give

Before a sleeping giant. Tell him so.

PATROCLUS.

I shall, and bring his answer presently.

Exit

AGAMEMNON. In second voice we'll not be satisfied;

We come to speak with him. Ulysses, enter you.

Exit

ULYSSES

AJAX.

What is he more than another?

AGAMEMNON.

No more than what he thinks he is.

AJAX.

Is he so much? Do you not think he thinks himself a better
man than I am?

AGAMEMNON.

No question.

AJAX.

Will you subscribe his thought and say he is?

AGAMEMNON.

No, noble Ajax; you are as strong, as valiant, as wise,
no less noble, much more gentle, and altogether more tractable.

AJAX.

Why should a man be proud? How doth pride grow? I know not what pride is.

AGAMEMNON.

Your mind is the clearer, Ajax, and your virtues the
fairer. He that is proud eats up himself. Pride is his own glass,
his own trumpet, his own chronicle; and whatever praises itself
but in the deed devours the deed in the praise.

Re-enter ULYSSES

AJAX.

I do hate a proud man as I do hate the engend'ring of toads.

NESTOR.

[Aside] And yet he loves himself: is't not strange?

ULYSSES.

Achilles will not to the field to-morrow.

AGAMEMNON.

What's his excuse?

ULYSSES.

He doth rely on none;

But carries on the stream of his dispose,

Without observance or respect of any,

In will peculiar and in self-admission.

AGAMEMNON.

Why will he not, upon our fair request,

Untent his person and share the air with us?

ULYSSES.

Things small as nothing, for request's sake only,

He makes important; possess'd he is with greatness,

And speaks not to himself but with a pride

That quarrels at self-breath. Imagin'd worth

Holds in his blood such swol'n and hot discourse

That 'twixt his mental and his active parts

Kingdom'd Achilles in commotion rages,

And batters down himself. What should I say?

He is so plaguy proud that the death tokens of it

Cry 'No recovery.'

AGAMEMNON.

Let Ajax go to him.

Dear lord, go you and greet him in his tent.

'Tis said he holds you well; and will be led

At your request a little from himself.

ULYSSES.

O Agamemnon, let it not be so!

We'll consecrate the steps that Ajax makes

When they go from Achilles. Shall the proud lord

That bastes his arrogance with his own seam

And never suffers matter of the world

Enter his thoughts, save such as doth revolve

And ruminate himself-shall he be worshipp'd

Of that we hold an idol more than he?

No, this thrice-worthy and right valiant lord

Shall not so stale his palm, nobly acquir'd,

Nor, by my will, assubjugate his merit,

As amply titled as Achilles is,

By going to Achilles.

That were to enlard his fat-already pride,

And add more coals to Cancer when he burns

With entertaining great Hyperion.

This lord go to him! Jupiter forbid,

And say in thunder 'Achilles go to him.'

NESTOR.

[Aside] O, this is well! He rubs the vein of him.

DIOMEDES.

[Aside] And how his silence drinks up this applause!

AJAX.

If I go to him, with my armed fist I'll pash him o'er the face.

AGAMEMNON.

O, no, you shall not go.

AJAX.

An 'a be proud with me I'll pheeze his pride.

Let me go to him.

ULYSSES.

Not for the worth that hangs upon our quarrel.

AJAX.

A paltry, insolent fellow!

NESTOR.

[Aside] How he describes himself!

AJAX.

Can he not be sociable?

ULYSSES.

[Aside] The raven chides blackness.

AJAX.

I'll let his humours blood.

AGAMEMNON.

[Aside] He will be the physician that should be the patient.

AJAX.

An all men were a my mind-

ULYSSES.

[Aside] Wit would be out of fashion.

AJAX.

'A should not bear it so, 'a should eat's words first.

Shall pride carry it?

NESTOR.

[Aside] An 'twould, you'd carry half.

ULYSSES.

[Aside] 'A would have ten shares.

AJAX.

I will knead him, I'll make him supple.

NESTOR.

[Aside] He's not yet through warm. Force him with praises;

pour in, pour in; his ambition is dry.

ULYSSES.

[To AGAMEMNON] My lord, you feed too much on this dislike.

NESTOR.

Our noble general, do not do so.

DIOMEDES.

You must prepare to fight without Achilles.

ULYSSES.

Why 'tis this naming of him does him harm.

Here is a man-but 'tis before his face;

I will be silent.

NESTOR.

Wherefore should you so?

He is not emulous, as Achilles is.

ULYSSES.

Know the whole world, he is as valiant.

AJAX.

A whoreson dog, that shall palter with us thus!

Would he were a Troyan!

NESTOR.

What a vice were it in Ajax now-

ULYSSES.

If he were proud.

DIOMEDES.

Or covetous of praise.

ULYSSES.

Ay, or surly borne.

DIOMEDES.

Or strange, or self-affected.

ULYSSES.

Thank the heavens, lord, thou art of sweet composure
Praise him that gat thee, she that gave thee suck;
Fam'd be thy tutor, and thy parts of nature
Thrice-fam'd beyond, beyond all erudition;

But he that disciplin'd thine arms to fight-

Let Mars divide eternity in twain

And give him half; and, for thy vigour,

Bull-bearing Milo his addition yield

To sinewy Ajax. I will not praise thy wisdom,

Which, like a bourn, a pale, a shore, confines

Thy spacious and dilated parts. Here's Nestor,

Instructed by the antiquary times-

He must, he is, he cannot but be wise;

But pardon, father Nestor, were your days

As green as Ajax' and your brain so temper'd,

You should not have the eminence of him,

But be as Ajax.

AJAX.

Shall I call you father?

NESTOR.

Ay, my good son.

DIOMEDES.

Be rul'd by him, Lord Ajax.

ULYSSES.

There is no tarrying here; the hart Achilles

Keeps thicket. Please it our great general

To call together all his state of war;

Fresh kings are come to Troy. To-morrow

We must with all our main of power stand fast;

And here's a lord-come knights from east to west

And cull their flower, Ajax shall cope the best.

AGAMEMNON.

Go we to council. Let Achilles sleep.

Light boats sail swift, though greater hulks draw deep.

Exeunt

ACT III. SCENE 1. Troy. PRIAM'S palace

Music sounds within. *Enter* PANDARUS and a SERVANT

PANDARUS.

Friend, you-pray you, a word. Do you not follow the young
Lord Paris?

SERVANT.

Ay, sir, when he goes before me.

PANDARUS.

You depend upon him, I mean?

SERVANT.

Sir, I do depend upon the lord.

PANDARUS.

You depend upon a notable gentleman; I must needs praise him.

SERVANT.

The lord be praised!

PANDARUS.

You know me, do you not?

SERVANT.

Faith, sir, superficially.

PANDARUS.

Friend, know me better: I am the Lord Pandarus.

SERVANT.

I hope I shall know your honour better.

PANDARUS.

I do desire it.

SERVANT.

You are in the state of grace.

PANDARUS.

Grace! Not so, friend; honour and lordship are my titles.

What music is this?

SERVANT.

I do but partly know, sir; it is music in parts.

PANDARUS.

Know you the musicians?

SERVANT.

Wholly, sir.

PANDARUS.

Who play they to?

SERVANT.

To the hearers, sir.

PANDARUS.

At whose pleasure, friend?

SERVANT.

At mine, sir, and theirs that love music.

PANDARUS.

Command, I mean, friend.

SERVANT.

Who shall I command, sir?

PANDARUS.

Friend, we understand not one another: I am to courtly,
and thou art too cunning. At whose request do these men play?

SERVANT.

That's to't, indeed, sir. Marry, sir, at the request of

Paris my lord, who is there in person; with him the mortal Venus,

the heart-blood of beauty, love's invisible soul-

PANDARUS.

Who, my cousin, Cressida?

SERVANT.

No, sir, Helen. Could not you find out that by her attributes?

PANDARUS.

It should seem, fellow, that thou hast not seen the Lady

Cressida. I come to speak with Paris from the Prince Troilus;

I

will make a complimental assault upon him, for my business seethes.

SERVANT.

Sodden business! There's a stew'd phrase indeed!

Enter PARIS and HELEN, attended

PANDARUS.

Fair be to you, my lord, and to all this fair company!

Fair desires, in all fair measure, fairly guide them-especially

to you, fair queen! Fair thoughts be your fair pillow.

HELEN.

Dear lord, you are full of fair words.

PANDARUS.

You speak your fair pleasure, sweet queen. Fair prince,

here is good broken music.

PARIS.

You have broke it, cousin; and by my life, you shall make it

whole again; you shall piece it out with a piece of your performance.

HELEN.

He is full of harmony.

PANDARUS.

Truly, lady, no.

HELEN.

O, sir-

PANDARUS.

Rude, in sooth; in good sooth, very rude.

PARIS.

Well said, my lord. Well, you say so in fits.

PANDARUS.

I have business to my lord, dear queen. My lord, will you vouchsafe me a word?

HELEN.

Nay, this shall not hedge us out. We'll hear you sing,

certainly-

PANDARUS.

Well sweet queen, you are pleasant with me. But,

marry,

thus, my lord: my dear lord and most esteemed friend, your

brother Troilus-

HELEN.

My Lord Pandarus, honey-sweet lord-

PANDARUS.

Go to, sweet queen, go to-commends himself most

affectionately to you-

HELEN.

You shall not bob us out of our melody. If you do, our

melancholy upon your head!

PANDARUS.

Sweet queen, sweet queen; that's a sweet queen, i' faith.

HELEN.

And to make a sweet lady sad is a sour offence.

PANDARUS.

Nay, that shall not serve your turn; that shall it not, in truth, la. Nay, I care not for such words; no, no. -And, my lord, he desires you that, if the King call for him at supper, you will make his excuse.

HELEN.

My Lord Pandarus!

PANDARUS.

What says my sweet queen, my very very sweet queen?

PARIS.

What exploit's in hand? Where sups he to-night?

HELEN.

Nay, but, my lord-

PANDARUS.

What says my sweet queen?-My cousin will fall out with you.

HELEN.

You must not know where he sups.

PARIS.

I'll lay my life, with my disposer Cressida.

PANDARUS.

No, no, no such matter; you are wide. Come, your disposer is sick.

PARIS.

Well, I'll make's excuse.

PANDARUS.

Ay, good my lord. Why should you say Cressida?

No, your poor disposer's sick.

PARIS.

I spy.

PANDARUS.

You spy! What do you spy?-Come, give me an instrument.

Now, sweet queen.

HELEN.

Why, this is kindly done.

PANDARUS.

My niece is horribly in love with a thing you have,

sweet queen.

HELEN.

She shall have it, my lord, if it be not my Lord Paris.

PANDARUS.

He! No, she'll none of him; they two are twain.

HELEN.

Falling in, after falling out, may make them three.

PANDARUS.

Come, come. I'll hear no more of this; I'll sing you a song now.

HELEN.

Ay, ay, prithee now. By my troth, sweet lord, thou hast a fine forehead.

PANDARUS.

Ay, you may, you may.

HELEN.

Let thy song be love. This love will undo us all. O

Cupid,

Cupid, Cupid!

PANDARUS.

Love! Ay, that it shall, i' faith.

PARIS.

Ay, good now, love, love, nothing but love.

PANDARUS.

In good troth, it begins so.

[Sings]

Love, love, nothing but love, still love, still more!

For, oh, love's bow

Shoots buck and doe;

The shaft confounds

Not that it wounds,

But tickles still the sore.

These lovers cry, O ho, they die!
Yet that which seems the wound to kill
Doth turn O ho! to ha! ha! he!
So dying love lives still.

O ho! a while, but ha! ha! ha!
O ho! groans out for ha! ha! ha!-hey ho!

HELEN.

In love, i' faith, to the very tip of the nose.

PARIS.

He eats nothing but doves, love; and that breeds hot blood, and hot blood begets hot thoughts, and hot thoughts beget hot deeds, and hot deeds is love.

PANDARUS.

Is this the generation of love: hot blood, hot thoughts, and hot deeds? Why, they are vipers. Is love a generation of vipers? Sweet lord, who's a-field today?

PARIS.
Hector, Deiphobus, Helenus, Antenor, and all the gallantry of Troy. I would fain have arm'd to-day, but my Nell would not have it so. How chance my brother Troilus went not?

HELEN.

He hangs the lip at something. You know all, Lord Pandarus.

PANDARUS.
Not I, honey-sweet queen. I long to hear how they spend to-day. You'll remember your brother's excuse?

PARIS.
To a hair.

PANDARUS.

Farewell, sweet queen.

HELEN.

Commend me to your niece.

PANDARUS.

I will, sweet queen. *Exit* . Sound a retreat

PARIS.

They're come from the field. Let us to Priam's hall

To greet the warriors. Sweet Helen, I must woo you

To help unarm our Hector. His stubborn buckles,

With these your white enchanting fingers touch'd,

Shall more obey than to the edge of steel

Or force of Greekish sinews; you shall do more

Than all the island kings-disarm great Hector.

HELEN.

'Twill make us proud to be his servant, Paris;

Yea, what he shall receive of us in duty

Gives us more palm in beauty than we have,

Yea, overshines ourself.

PARIS.

Sweet, above thought I love thee.

Exeunt

ACT III. SCENE 2. Troy. PANDARUS' orchard

Enter PANDARUS and TROILUS' BOY, meeting

PANDARUS.

How now! Where's thy master? At my cousin Cressida's?

BOY.

No, sir; he stays for you to conduct him thither.

Enter TROILUS

PANDARUS.

O, here he comes. How now, how now!

TROILUS.

Sirrah, walk off. *Exit* Boy

PANDARUS.

Have you seen my cousin?

TROILUS.

No, Pandarus. I stalk about her door
Like a strange soul upon the Stygian banks
Staying for waftage. O, be thou my Charon,
And give me swift transportance to these fields
Where I may wallow in the lily beds
Propos'd for the deserver! O gentle Pandar,
From Cupid's shoulder pluck his painted wings,
And fly with me to Cressid!

PANDARUS.

Walk here i' th' orchard, I'll bring her straight.

Exit

TROILUS. I am giddy; expectation whirls me round.
Th' imaginary relish is so sweet
That it enchants my sense; what will it be
When that the wat'ry palate tastes indeed
Love's thrice-repured nectar? Death, I fear me;
Swooning destruction; or some joy too fine,

Too subtle-potent, tun'd too sharp in sweetness,

For the capacity of my ruder powers.

I fear it much; and I do fear besides

That I shall lose distinction in my joys;

As doth a battle, when they charge on heaps

The enemy flying.

Re-enter PANDARUS

PANDARUS.

She's making her ready, she'll come straight; you must be

witty now. She does so blush, and fetches her wind so short, as

if she were fray'd with a sprite. I'll fetch her. It is the

prettiest villain; she fetches her breath as short as a

new-ta'en sparrow.

Exit

TROILUS. Even such a passion doth embrace my bosom.

My heart beats thicker than a feverous pulse,

And all my powers do their bestowing lose,

Like vassalage at unawares encount'ring

The eye of majesty.

Re-enter PANDARUS With CRESSIDA

PANDARUS.

Come, come, what need you blush? Shame's a baby.-Here she is now; swear the oaths now to her that you have sworn to me.-

What, are you gone again? You must be watch'd ere you be made tame, must you? Come your ways, come your ways; an you draw backward, we'll put you i' th' fills.-Why do you not speak to her?-Come, draw this curtain and let's see your picture.

Alas the day, how loath you are to offend daylight! An 'twere dark, you'd close sooner. So, so; rub on, and kiss the mistress

How now, a kiss in fee-farm! Build there, carpenter; the air is sweet. Nay, you shall fight your hearts out ere I part you.

The

falcon as the tercel, for all the ducks i' th' river. Go to, go to.

TROILUS.

You have bereft me of all words, lady.

PANDARUS.

Words pay no debts, give her deeds; but she'll bereave

you o' th' deeds too, if she call your activity in question.

What, billing again? Here's 'In witness whereof the parties

interchangeably.' Come in, come in; I'll go get a fire.

Exit

CRESSIDA. Will you walk in, my lord?

TROILUS.

O Cressid, how often have I wish'd me thus!

CRESSIDA.

Wish'd, my lord! The gods grant-O my lord!

TROILUS.

What should they grant? What makes this pretty abruption?

What too curious dreg espies my sweet lady in the fountain of our love?

CRESSIDA.

More dregs than water, if my fears have eyes.

TROILUS.

Fears make devils of cherubims; they never see truly.

CRESSIDA.

Blind fear, that seeing reason leads, finds safer footing

than blind reason stumbling without fear. To fear the worst oft cures the worse.

TROILUS.

O, let my lady apprehend no fear! In all Cupid's pageant

there is presented no monster.

CRESSIDA.

Nor nothing monstrous neither?

TROILUS.

Nothing, but our undertakings when we vow to weep seas,

live in fire, cat rocks, tame tigers; thinking it harder for our mistress to devise imposition enough than for us to undergo any difficulty imposed. This is the monstruosity in love, lady, that the will is infinite, and the execution confin'd; that the desire is boundless, and the act a slave to limit.

CRESSIDA.
They say all lovers swear more performance than they are able, and yet reserve an ability that they never perform; vowing more than the perfection of ten, and discharging less than the tenth part of one. They that have the voice of lions and the act of hares, are they not monsters?

TROILUS.
Are there such? Such are not we. Praise us as we are tasted, allow us as we prove; our head shall go bare till merit crown it. No perfection in reversion shall have a praise in present. We will not name desert before his birth; and, being born, his addition shall be humble. Few words to fair faith: Troilus shall be such to Cressid as what envy can say worst shall be a mock for his truth; and what truth can speak truest not truer than Troilus.

CRESSIDA.

Will you walk in, my lord?

Re-enter PANDARUS

PANDARUS.

What, blushing still? Have you not done talking yet?

CRESSIDA.

Well, uncle, what folly I commit, I dedicate to you.

PANDARUS.

I thank you for that; if my lord get a boy of you,

you'll

give him me. Be true to my lord; if he flinch, chide me for it.

TROILUS.

You know now your hostages: your uncle's word and my firm faith.

PANDARUS.

Nay, I'll give my word for her too: our kindred, though

they be long ere they are wooed, they are constant being won;

they are burs, I can tell you; they'll stick where they are thrown.

CRESSIDA.

Boldness comes to me now and brings me heart.

Prince Troilus, I have lov'd you night and day

For many weary months.

TROILUS.

Why was my Cressid then so hard to win?

CRESSIDA.

Hard to seem won; but I was won, my lord,

With the first glance that ever-pardon me.

If I confess much, you will play the tyrant.

I love you now; but till now not so much

But I might master it. In faith, I lie;

My thoughts were like unbridled children, grown
Too headstrong for their mother. See, we fools!
Why have I blabb'd? Who shall be true to us,
When we are so unsecret to ourselves?
But, though I lov'd you well, I woo'd you not;
And yet, good faith, I wish'd myself a man,
Or that we women had men's privilege
Of speaking first. Sweet, bid me hold my tongue,
For in this rapture I shall surely speak
The thing I shall repent. See, see, your silence,
Cunning in dumbness, from my weakness draws
My very soul of counsel. Stop my mouth.

TROILUS.

And shall, albeit sweet music issues thence.

PANDARUS.

Pretty, i' faith.

CRESSIDA.

My lord, I do beseech you, pardon me;

'Twas not my purpose thus to beg a kiss.

I am asham'd. O heavens! what have I done?

For this time will I take my leave, my lord.

TROILUS.

Your leave, sweet Cressid!

PANDARUS.

Leave! An you take leave till to-morrow morning-

CRESSIDA.

Pray you, content you.

TROILUS.

What offends you, lady?

CRESSIDA.

Sir, mine own company.

TROILUS.

You cannot shun yourself.

CRESSIDA.
Let me go and try.
I have a kind of self resides with you;
But an unkind self, that itself will leave
To be another's fool. I would be gone.
Where is my wit? I know not what I speak.

TROILUS.

Well know they what they speak that speak so wisely.

CRESSIDA.
Perchance, my lord, I show more craft than love;
And fell so roundly to a large confession
To angle for your thoughts; but you are wise-
Or else you love not; for to be wise and love

Exceeds man's might; that dwells with gods above.

TROILUS.

O that I thought it could be in a woman-

As, if it can, I will presume in you-

To feed for aye her lamp and flames of love;

To keep her constancy in plight and youth,

Outliving beauty's outward, with a mind

That doth renew swifter than blood decays!

Or that persuasion could but thus convince me

That my integrity and truth to you

Might be affronted with the match and weight

Of such a winnowed purity in love.

How were I then uplifted! but, alas,

I am as true as truth's simplicity,

And simpler than the infancy of truth.

CRESSIDA.

In that I'll war with you.

TROILUS.

O virtuous fight,

When right with right wars who shall be most right!

True swains in love shall in the world to come

Approve their truth by Troilus, when their rhymes,

Full of protest, of oath, and big compare,

Want similes, truth tir'd with iteration-

As true as steel, as plantage to the moon,

As sun to day, as turtle to her mate,

As iron to adamant, as earth to th' centre-

Yet, after all comparisons of truth,

As truth's authentic author to be cited,

'As true as Troilus' shall crown up the verse

And sanctify the numbers.

CRESSIDA.

Prophet may you be!

If I be false, or swerve a hair from truth,

When time is old and hath forgot itself,

When waterdrops have worn the stones of Troy,

And blind oblivion swallow'd cities up,

And mighty states characterless are grated

To dusty nothing-yet let memory

From false to false, among false maids in love,

Upbraid my falsehood when th' have said 'As false

As air, as water, wind, or sandy earth,

As fox to lamb, or wolf to heifer's calf,

Pard to the hind, or stepdame to her son'-

Yea, let them say, to stick the heart of falsehood,

'As false as Cressid.'

PANDARUS.

Go to, a bargain made; seal it, seal it; I'll be the witness. Here I hold your hand; here my cousin's. If ever you prove false one to another, since I have taken such pains to bring you together, let all pitiful goers-between be call'd to the world's end after my name-call them all Pandars; let all constant men be Troiluses, all false women Cressids, and all brokers between Pandars. Say 'Amen.'

TROILUS.

Amen.

CRESSIDA.

Amen.

PANDARUS.

Amen. Whereupon I will show you a chamber

and a bed; which bed, because it shall not speak of your

pretty encounters, press it to death. Away!

And Cupid grant all tongue-tied maidens here,

Bed, chamber, pander, to provide this gear!

Exeunt

ACT III. SCENE 3. The Greek camp

Flourish. *Enter* AGAMEMNON, ULYSSES, DIOMEDES, NESTOR, AJAX, MENELAUS, and CALCHAS

CALCHAS.

Now, Princes, for the service I have done,

Th' advantage of the time prompts me aloud

To call for recompense. Appear it to your mind

That, through the sight I bear in things to come,

I have abandon'd Troy, left my possession,

Incurr'd a traitor's name, expos'd myself
From certain and possess'd conveniences
To doubtful fortunes, sequest'ring from me all
That time, acquaintance, custom, and condition,
Made tame and most familiar to my nature;
And here, to do you service, am become
As new into the world, strange, unacquainted-
I do beseech you, as in way of taste,
To give me now a little benefit
Out of those many regist'red in promise,
Which you say live to come in my behalf.

AGAMEMNON.

What wouldst thou of us, Troyan? Make demand.

CALCHAS.

You have a Troyan prisoner call'd Antenor,
Yesterday took; Troy holds him very dear.
Oft have you-often have you thanks therefore-
Desir'd my Cressid in right great exchange,

Whom Troy hath still denied; but this Antenor,
I know, is such a wrest in their affairs
That their negotiations all must slack
Wanting his manage; and they will almost
Give us a prince of blood, a son of Priam,
In change of him. Let him be sent, great Princes,
And he shall buy my daughter; and her presence
Shall quite strike off all service I have done
In most accepted pain.

AGAMEMNON.
Let Diomedes bear him,
And bring us Cressid hither. Calchas shall have
What he requests of us. Good Diomed,
Furnish you fairly for this interchange;
Withal, bring word if Hector will to-morrow
Be answer'd in his challenge. Ajax is ready.

DIOMEDES.
This shall I undertake; and 'tis a burden
Which I am proud to bear.

Exeunt DIOMEDES and

CALCHAS

ACHILLES and PATROCLUS stand in their tent

ULYSSES.

Achilles stands i' th' entrance of his tent.
Please it our general pass strangely by him,
As if he were forgot; and, Princes all,
Lay negligent and loose regard upon him.
I will come last. 'Tis like he'll question me
Why such unplausive eyes are bent, why turn'd on him?
If so, I have derision med'cinable
To use between your strangeness and his pride,
Which his own will shall have desire to drink.
It may do good. Pride hath no other glass
To show itself but pride; for supple knees
Feed arrogance and are the proud man's fees.

AGAMEMNON.

We'll execute your purpose, and put on
A form of strangeness as we pass along.

So do each lord; and either greet him not,
Or else disdainfully, which shall shake him more
Than if not look'd on. I will lead the way.

ACHILLES.

What comes the general to speak with me?
You know my mind. I'll fight no more 'gainst Troy.

AGAMEMNON.

What says Achilles? Would he aught with us?

NESTOR.

Would you, my lord, aught with the general?

ACHILLES.

No.

NESTOR.

Nothing, my lord.

AGAMEMNON.

The better.

Exeunt AGAMEMNON and

NESTOR

ACHILLES.

Good day, good day.

MENELAUS.

How do you? How do you?

Exit

ACHILLES. What, does the cuckold scorn me?

AJAX.

How now, Patroclus?

ACHILLES.

Good morrow, Ajax.

AJAX.

Ha?

ACHILLES.

Good morrow.

AJAX.

Ay, and good next day too.

Exit

ACHILLES. What mean these fellows? Know they not Achilles?

PATROCLUS.

They pass by strangely. They were us'd to bend,

To send their smiles before them to Achilles,

To come as humbly as they us'd to creep

To holy altars.

ACHILLES.

What, am I poor of late?

'Tis certain, greatness, once fall'n out with fortune,

Must fall out with men too. What the declin'd is,

He shall as soon read in the eyes of others

As feel in his own fall; for men, like butterflies,

Show not their mealy wings but to the summer;

And not a man for being simply man

Hath any honour, but honour for those honours

That are without him, as place, riches, and favour,

Prizes of accident, as oft as merit;

Which when they fall, as being slippery standers,

The love that lean'd on them as slippery too,

Doth one pluck down another, and together

Die in the fall. But 'tis not so with me:

Fortune and I are friends; I do enjoy

At ample point all that I did possess

Save these men's looks; who do, methinks, find out

Something not worth in me such rich beholding

As they have often given. Here is Ulysses.

I'll interrupt his reading.

How now, Ulysses!

ULYSSES.

Now, great Thetis' son!

ACHILLES.

What are you reading?

ULYSSES.

A strange fellow here

Writes me that man-how dearly ever parted,

How much in having, or without or in-

Cannot make boast to have that which he hath,

Nor feels not what he owes, but by reflection;

As when his virtues shining upon others

Heat them, and they retort that heat again

To the first giver.

ACHILLES.

This is not strange, Ulysses.
The beauty that is borne here in the face
The bearer knows not, but commends itself
To others' eyes; nor doth the eye itself-
That most pure spirit of sense-behold itself,
Not going from itself; but eye to eye opposed
Salutes each other with each other's form;
For speculation turns not to itself
Till it hath travell'd, and is mirror'd there
Where it may see itself. This is not strange at all.

ULYSSES.
I do not strain at the position-
It is familiar-but at the author's drift;
Who, in his circumstance, expressly proves
That no man is the lord of anything,
Though in and of him there be much consisting,
Till he communicate his parts to others;

Nor doth he of himself know them for aught
Till he behold them formed in th' applause
Where th' are extended; who, like an arch, reverb'rate
The voice again; or, like a gate of steel
Fronting the sun, receives and renders back
His figure and his heat. I was much rapt in this;
And apprehended here immediately
Th' unknown Ajax. Heavens, what a man is there!

A very horse that has he knows not what!
Nature, what things there are
Most abject in regard and dear in use!
What things again most dear in the esteem
And poor in worth! Now shall we see to-morrow-
An act that very chance doth throw upon him-
Ajax renown'd. O heavens, what some men do,
While some men leave to do!
How some men creep in skittish Fortune's-hall,
Whiles others play the idiots in her eyes!
How one man eats into another's pride,
While pride is fasting in his wantonness!

To see these Grecian lords!-why, even already

They clap the lubber Ajax on the shoulder,

As if his foot were on brave Hector's breast,

And great Troy shrinking.

ACHILLES.

I do believe it; for they pass'd by me

As misers do by beggars-neither gave to me

Good word nor look. What, are my deeds forgot?

ULYSSES.

Time hath, my lord, a wallet at his back,

Wherein he puts alms for oblivion,

A great-siz'd monster of ingratitudes.

Those scraps are good deeds past, which are devour'd

As fast as they are made, forgot as soon

As done. Perseverance, dear my lord,

Keeps honour bright. To have done is to hang

Quite out of fashion, like a rusty mail

In monumental mock'ry. Take the instant way;

For honour travels in a strait so narrow -

Where one but goes abreast. Keep then the path,
For emulation hath a thousand sons
That one by one pursue; if you give way,
Or hedge aside from the direct forthright,
Like to an ent'red tide they all rush by
And leave you hindmost;
Or, like a gallant horse fall'n in first rank,
Lie there for pavement to the abject rear,
O'er-run and trampled on. Then what they do in present,
Though less than yours in past, must o'ertop yours;
For Time is like a fashionable host,
That slightly shakes his parting guest by th' hand;
And with his arms out-stretch'd, as he would fly,
Grasps in the corner. The welcome ever smiles,
And farewell goes out sighing. O, let not virtue seek
Remuneration for the thing it was;
For beauty, wit,
High birth, vigour of bone, desert in service,
Love, friendship, charity, are subjects all
To envious and calumniating Time.
One touch of nature makes the whole world kin-

That all with one consent praise new-born gawds,
Though they are made and moulded of things past,
And give to dust that is a little gilt
More laud than gilt o'er-dusted.

The present eye praises the present object.
Then marvel not, thou great and complete man,
That all the Greeks begin to worship Ajax,
Since things in motion sooner catch the eye
Than what stirs not. The cry went once on thee,
And still it might, and yet it may again,
If thou wouldst not entomb thyself alive
And case thy reputation in thy tent,
Whose glorious deeds but in these fields of late
Made emulous missions 'mongst the gods themselves,
And drave great Mars to faction.

ACHILLES.
Of this my privacy
I have strong reasons.

ULYSSES.

But 'gainst your privacy

The reasons are more potent and heroical.

'Tis known, Achilles, that you are in love

With one of Priam's daughters.

ACHILLES.

Ha! known!

ULYSSES.

Is that a wonder?

The providence that's in a watchful state

Knows almost every grain of Plutus' gold;

Finds bottom in th' uncomprehensive deeps;

Keeps place with thought, and almost, like the gods,

Do thoughts unveil in their dumb cradles.

There is a mystery-with whom relation

Durst never meddle-in the soul of state,

Which hath an operation more divine

Than breath or pen can give expressure to.

All the commerce that you have had with Troy

As perfectly is ours as yours, my lord;

And better would it fit Achilles much

To throw down Hector than Polyxena.

But it must grieve young Pyrrhus now at home,

When fame shall in our island sound her trump,

And all the Greekish girls shall tripping sing

'Great Hector's sister did Achilles win;

But our great Ajax bravely beat down him.'

Farewell, my lord. I as your lover speak.

The fool slides o'er the ice that you should break.

Exit

PATROCLUS. To this effect, Achilles, have I mov'd you.

A woman impudent and mannish grown

Is not more loath'd than an effeminate man

In time of action. I stand condemn'd for this;

They think my little stomach to the war

And your great love to me restrains you thus.

Sweet, rouse yourself; and the weak wanton Cupid

Shall from your neck unloose his amorous fold,

And, like a dew-drop from the lion's mane,

Be shook to airy air.

ACHILLES.

Shall Ajax fight with Hector?

PATROCLUS.

Ay, and perhaps receive much honour by him.

ACHILLES.

I see my reputation is at stake;

My fame is shrewdly gor'd.

PATROCLUS.

O, then, beware:

Those wounds heal ill that men do give themselves;

Omission to do what is necessary

Seals a commission to a blank of danger;

And danger, like an ague, subtly taints

Even then when they sit idly in the sun.

ACHILLES.

Go call Thersites hither, sweet Patroclus.

I'll send the fool to Ajax, and desire him

T' invite the Troyan lords, after the combat,

To see us here unarm'd. I have a woman's longing,

An appetite that I am sick withal,

To see great Hector in his weeds of peace;

To talk with him, and to behold his visage,

Even to my full of view.

Enter THERSITES

A labour sav'd!

THERSITES.

A wonder!

ACHILLES.

What?

THERSITES.

Ajax goes up and down the field asking for himself.

ACHILLES.

How so?

THERSITES.

He must fight singly to-morrow with Hector, and is so prophetically proud of an heroical cudgelling that he raves in saying nothing.

ACHILLES.

How can that be?

THERSITES.

Why, 'a stalks up and down like a peacock-a stride and a stand; ruminaies like an hostess that hath no arithmetic but her brain to set down her reckoning, bites his lip with a politic regard, as who should say 'There were wit in this head, an

'twould out'; and so there is; but it lies as coldly in him as
fire in a flint, which will not show without knocking. The man's
undone for ever; for if Hector break not his neck i' th'
combat,
he'll break't himself in vainglory. He knows not me. I said
'Good
morrow, Ajax'; and he replies 'Thanks, Agamemnon.' What think you
of this man that takes me for the general? He's grown a very land
fish, languageless, a monster. A plague of opinion! A man may
wear it on both sides, like leather jerkin.

ACHILLES.

Thou must be my ambassador to him, Thersites.

THERSITES.
Who, I? Why, he'll answer nobody; he professes not
answering. Speaking is for beggars: he wears his tongue in's
arms. I will put on his presence. Let Patroclus make his demands
to me, you shall see the pageant of Ajax.

ACHILLES.

To him, Patroclus. Tell him I humbly desire the valiant
Ajax to invite the most valorous Hector to come unarm'd to my
tent; and to procure safe conduct for his person of the
magnanimous and most illustrious six-or-seven-times-honour'd
Captain General of the Grecian army, et cetera, Agamemnon. Do this.

PATROCLUS.

Jove bless great Ajax!

THERSITES.

Hum!

PATROCLUS.

I come from the worthy Achilles-

THERSITES.

Ha!

PATROCLUS.

Who most humbly desires you to invite Hector to his

tent-

THERSITES.

Hum!

PATROCLUS.

And to procure safe conduct from Agamemnon.

THERSITES.

Agamemnon!

PATROCLUS.

Ay, my lord.

THERSITES.

Ha!

PATROCLUS.

What you say to't?

THERSITES.

God buy you, with all my heart.

PATROCLUS.

Your answer, sir.

THERSITES.

If to-morrow be a fair day, by eleven of the clock it

will go one way or other. Howsoever, he shall pay for me ere he has me.

PATROCLUS.

Your answer, sir.

THERSITES.

Fare ye well, with all my heart.

ACHILLES.

Why, but he is not in this tune, is he?

THERSITES.
No, but he's out a tune thus. What music will be in him
when Hector has knock'd out his brains I know not; but, I am sure,
none; unless the fiddler Apollo get his sinews to make catlings on.

ACHILLES.

Come, thou shalt bear a letter to him straight.

THERSITES.
Let me carry another to his horse; for that's the more
capable creature.

ACHILLES.
My mind is troubled, like a fountain stirr'd;
And I myself see not the bottom of it.
Exeunt ACHILLES and

PATROCLUS

THERSITES.

Would the fountain of your mind were clear again,

that I

might water an ass at it. I had rather be a tick in a sheep than

such a valiant ignorance.

Exit

ACT IV. SCENE 1. Troy. A street

Enter , at one side, AENEAS, and servant with a torch; at another, PARIS, DEIPHOBUS, ANTENOR, DIOMEDES the Grecian, and others, with torches

PARIS.

See, ho! Who is that there?

DEIPHOBUS.

It is the Lord Aeneas.

AENEAS.

Is the Prince there in person?

Had I so good occasion to lie long

As you, Prince Paris, nothing but heavenly business

Should rob my bed-mate of my company.

DIOMEDES.

That's my mind too. Good morrow, Lord Aeneas.

PARIS.

A valiant Greek, Aeneas -take his hand:

Witness the process of your speech, wherein

You told how Diomed, a whole week by days,

Did haunt you in the field.

AENEAS.

Health to you, valiant sir,

During all question of the gentle truce;

But when I meet you arm'd, as black defiance

As heart can think or courage execute.

DIOMEDES.

The one and other Diomed embraces.

Our bloods are now in calm; and so long health!
But when contention and occasion meet,
By Jove, I'll play the hunter for thy life
With all my force, pursuit, and policy.

AENEAS.

And thou shalt hunt a lion, that will fly
With his face backward. In humane gentleness,
Welcome to Troy! now, by Anchises' life,
Welcome indeed! By Venus' hand I swear
No man alive can love in such a sort
The thing he means to kill, more excellently.

DIOMEDES.

We sympathise. Jove let Aeneas live,
If to my sword his fate be not the glory,
A thousand complete courses of the sun!
But in mine emulous honour let him die

With every joint a wound, and that to-morrow!

AENEAS.

We know each other well.

DIOMEDES.We do; and long to know each other worse.

PARIS.

This is the most despiteful'st gentle greeting

The noblest hateful love, that e'er I heard of.

What business, lord, so early?

AENEAS.

I was sent for to the King; but why, I know not.

PARIS.

His purpose meets you: 'twas to bring this Greek

To Calchas' house, and there to render him,

For the enfreed Antenor, the fair Cressid.

Let's have your company; or, if you please, Haste there before us. I constantly believe-

Or rather call my thought a certain knowledge-

My brother Troilus lodges there to-night.

Rouse him and give him note of our approach,

With the whole quality wherefore; I fear

We shall be much unwelcome.

AENEAS.

That I assure you:

Troilus had rather Troy were borne to Greece

Than Cressid borne from Troy.

PARIS.

There is no help;

The bitter disposition of the time

Will have it so. On, lord; we'll follow you.

AENEAS.

Good morrow, all. *Exit* with servant

PARIS.

And tell me, noble Diomed-faith, tell me true,
Even in the soul of sound good-fellowship-
Who in your thoughts deserves fair Helen best,
Myself or Menelaus?

DIOMEDES.

Both alike:
He merits well to have her that doth seek her,
Not making any scruple of her soilure,
With such a hell of pain and world of charge;
And you as well to keep her that defend her,
Not palating the taste of her dishonour,
With such a costly loss of wealth and friends.
He like a puling cuckold would drink up
The lees and dregs of a flat tamed piece;
You, like a lecher, out of whorish loins
Are pleas'd to breed out your inheritors.
Both merits pois'd, each weighs nor less nor more;
But he as he, the heavier for a whore.

PARIS.

You are too bitter to your country-woman.

DIOMEDES.

She's bitter to her country. Hear me, Paris:
For every false drop in her bawdy veins
A Grecian's life hath sunk; for every scruple
Of her contaminated carrion weight
A Troyan hath been slain; since she could speak,
She hath not given so many good words breath
As for her Greeks and Troyans suff'red death.

PARIS.

Fair Diomed, you do as chapmen do,
Dispraise the thing that you desire to buy;
But we in silence hold this virtue well:

We'll not commend what we intend to sell.
Here lies our way.

Exeunt

ACT IV. SCENE 2. Troy. The court of PANDARUS' house

Enter TROILUS and CRESSIDA

TROILUS.

Dear, trouble not yourself; the morn is cold.

CRESSIDA.

Then, sweet my lord, I'll call mine uncle down;

He shall unbolt the gates.

TROILUS.

Trouble him not;

To bed, to bed! Sleep kill those pretty eyes,

And give as soft attachment to thy senses

As infants' empty of all thought!

CRESSIDA.

Good morrow, then.

TROILUS.

I prithee now, to bed.

CRESSIDA.

Are you aweary of me?

TROILUS.

O Cressida! but that the busy day,
Wak'd by the lark, hath rous'd the ribald crows,
And dreaming night will hide our joys no longer,
I would not from thee.

CRESSIDA.

Night hath been too brief.

TROILUS.

Beshrew the witch! with venomous wights she stays
As tediously as hell, but flies the grasps of love
With wings more momentary-swift than thought.
You will catch cold, and curse me.

CRESSIDA.

Prithee tarry.

You men will never tarry.

O foolish Cressid! I might have still held off,

And then you would have tarried. Hark! there's one up.

PANDARUS.

[Within] What's all the doors open here?

TROILUS.

It is your uncle.

Enter PANDARUS

CRESSIDA.

A pestilence on him! Now will he be mocking.

I shall have such a life!

PANDARUS.

How now, how now! How go maidenheads?

Here, you maid! Where's my cousin Cressid?

CRESSIDA.

Go hang yourself, you naughty mocking uncle.

You bring me to do, and then you flout me too.

PANDARUS.

To do what? to do what? Let her say what.

What have I brought you to do?

CRESSIDA.

Come, come, beshrew your heart! You'll ne'er be good,

Nor suffer others.

PANDARUS.

Ha, ha! Alas, poor wretch! a poor capocchia! hast not slept to-night? Would he not, a naughty man, let it sleep? A bugbear take him!

CRESSIDA.

Did not I tell you? Would he were knock'd i' th' head!

[One knocks]

Who's that at door? Good uncle, go and see.

My lord, come you again into my chamber.

You smile and mock me, as if I meant naughtily.

TROILUS.

Ha! ha!

CRESSIDA.

Come, you are deceiv'd, I think of no such thing.

[Knock]

How earnestly they knock! Pray you come in:

I would not for half Troy have you seen here.

Exeunt TROILUS and

CRESSIDA

PANDARUS.

Who's there? What's the matter? Will you beat down the

door? How now? What's the matter?

Enter AENEAS

AENEAS.

Good morrow, lord, good morrow.

PANDARUS.

Who's there? My lord Aeneas? By my troth,

I knew you not. What news with you so early?

AENEAS.

Is not Prince Troilus here?

PANDARUS.

Here! What should he do here?

AENEAS.

Come, he is here, my lord; do not deny him.

It doth import him much to speak with me.

PANDARUS.

Is he here, say you? It's more than I know, I'll be sworn. For my own part, I came in late. What should he do here?

AENEAS.

Who!-nay, then. Come, come, you'll do him wrong ere you are ware; you'll be so true to him to be false to him. Do not you know of him, but yet go fetch him hither; go.

Re-enter TROILUS

TROILUS.

How now! What's the matter?

AENEAS.

My lord, I scarce have leisure to salute you,
My matter is so rash. There is at hand
Paris your brother, and Deiphobus,
The Grecian Diomed, and our Antenor
Deliver'd to us; and for him forthwith,
Ere the first sacrifice, within this hour,
We must give up to Diomedes' hand
The Lady Cressida.

TROILUS.

Is it so concluded?

AENEAS.

By Priam, and the general state of Troy.

They are at hand and ready to effect it.

TROILUS.

How my achievements mock me!

I will go meet them; and, my lord Aeneas,

We met by chance; you did not find me here.

AENEAS.

Good, good, my lord, the secrets of neighbour Pandar

Have not more gift in taciturnity.

Exeunt TROILUS and

AENEAS

PANDARUS.

Is't possible? No sooner got but lost? The devil take

Antenor! The young prince will go mad. A plague upon Antenor!

I

would they had broke's neck.

Re-enter CRESSIDA

CRESSIDA.

How now! What's the matter? Who was here?

PANDARUS.

Ah, ah!

CRESSIDA.

Why sigh you so profoundly? Where's my lord? Gone?

Tell

me, sweet uncle, what's the matter?

PANDARUS.

Would I were as deep under the earth as I am above!

CRESSIDA.

O the gods! What's the matter?

PANDARUS.

Pray thee, get thee in. Would thou hadst ne'er been born!

I knew thou wouldst be his death! O, poor gentleman! A plague

upon Antenor!

CRESSIDA.

Good uncle, I beseech you, on my knees I beseech you, what's the matter?

PANDARUS.

Thou must be gone, wench, thou must be gone; thou art chang'd for Antenor; thou must to thy father, and be gone from *Troilus.* 'Twill be his death; 'twill be his bane; he cannot bear it.

CRESSIDA.

O you immortal gods! I will not go.

PANDARUS.

Thou must.

CRESSIDA.

I will not, uncle. I have forgot my father;
I know no touch of consanguinity,
No kin, no love, no blood, no soul so near me
As the sweet Troilus. O you gods divine,
Make Cressid's name the very crown of falsehood,
If ever she leave Troilus! Time, force, and death,

Do to this body what extremes you can,

But the strong base and building of my love

Is as the very centre of the earth,

Drawing all things to it. I'll go in and weep-

PANDARUS.

Do, do.

CRESSIDA.

Tear my bright hair, and scratch my praised cheeks,

Crack my clear voice with sobs and break my heart,

With sounding 'Troilus.' I will not go from Troy.

Exeunt

ACT IV. SCENE 3. Troy. A street before PANDARUS' house

Enter PARIS, TROILUS, AENEAS, DEIPHOBUS, ANTENOR, and DIOMEDES

PARIS.

It is great morning; and the hour prefix'd

For her delivery to this valiant Greek

Comes fast upon. Good my brother Troilus,

Tell you the lady what she is to do

And haste her to the purpose.

TROILUS.

Walk into her house.

I'll bring her to the Grecian presently;

And to his hand when I deliver her,

Think it an altar, and thy brother Troilus

A priest, there off'ring to it his own heart.

Exit

PARIS. I know what 'tis to love,

And would, as I shall pity, I could help!

Please you walk in, my lords.

Exeunt

ACT IV. SCENE 4. Troy. PANDARUS' house

Enter PANDARUS and CRESSIDA

PANDARUS.

Be moderate, be moderate.

CRESSIDA.

Why tell you me of moderation?
The grief is fine, full, perfect, that I taste,
And violenteth in a sense as strong
As that which causeth it. How can I moderate it?
If I could temporize with my affections
Or brew it to a weak and colder palate,
The like allayment could I give my grief.
My love admits no qualifying dross;
No more my grief, in such a precious loss.

Enter TROILUS

PANDARUS.

Here, here, here he comes. Ah, sweet ducks!

CRESSIDA.

O Troilus! Troilus! *[Embracing him]*

PANDARUS.

What a pair of spectacles is here! Let me embrace

too. 'O

heart,' as the goodly saying is,

O heart, heavy heart,

Why sigh'st thou without breaking?

where he answers again

Because thou canst not ease thy smart

By friendship nor by speaking.

There was never a truer rhyme. Let us cast away nothing, for we

may live to have need of such a verse. We see it, we see it.

How now, lambs!

TROILUS.

Cressid, I love thee in so strain'd a purity

That the bless'd gods, as angry with my fancy,

More bright in zeal than the devotion which

Cold lips blow to their deities, take thee from me.

CRESSIDA.

Have the gods envy?

PANDARUS.

Ay, ay, ay; 'tis too plain a case.

CRESSIDA.

And is it true that I must go from Troy?

TROILUS.

A hateful truth.

CRESSIDA.

What, and from Troilus too?

TROILUS.

From Troy and Troilus.

CRESSIDA.

Is't possible?

TROILUS.

And suddenly; where injury of chance

Puts back leave-taking, justles roughly by

All time of pause, rudely beguiles our lips

Of all rejoindure, forcibly prevents

Our lock'd embrasures, strangles our dear vows

Even in the birth of our own labouring breath.

We two, that with so many thousand sighs

Did buy each other, must poorly sell ourselves

With the rude brevity and discharge of one.

Injurious time now with a robber's haste

Crams his rich thievery up, he knows not how.

As many farewells as be stars in heaven,

With distinct breath and consign'd kisses to them,

He fumbles up into a loose adieu,

And scants us with a single famish'd kiss,

Distasted with the salt of broken tears.

AENEAS.

[Within] My lord, is the lady ready?

TROILUS.

Hark! you are call'd. Some say the Genius so

Cries 'Come' to him that instantly must die.

Bid them have patience; she shall come anon.

PANDARUS.

Where are my tears? Rain, to lay this wind, or my heart

will be blown up by th' root?

Exit

CRESSIDA. I must then to the Grecians?

TROILUS.

No remedy.

CRESSIDA.

A woeful Cressid 'mongst the merry Greeks!

When shall we see again?

TROILUS.

Hear me, my love. Be thou but true of heart-

CRESSIDA.

I true! how now! What wicked deem is this?

TROILUS.

Nay, we must use expostulation kindly,

For it is parting from us.

I speak not 'Be thou true' as fearing thee,

For I will throw my glove to Death himself

That there's no maculation in thy heart;

But 'Be thou true' say I to fashion in

My sequent protestation: be thou true,

And I will see thee.

CRESSIDA.

O, you shall be expos'd, my lord, to dangers

As infinite as imminent! But I'll be true.

TROILUS.

And I'll grow friend with danger. Wear this sleeve.

CRESSIDA.

And you this glove. When shall I see you?

TROILUS.

I will corrupt the Grecian sentinels

To give thee nightly visitation.

But yet be true.

CRESSIDA.

O heavens! 'Be true' again!

TROILUS.

Hear why I speak it, love.

The Grecian youths are full of quality;

They're loving, well compos'd with gifts of nature,

And flowing o'er with arts and exercise.

How novelties may move, and parts with person,

Alas, a kind of godly jealousy,

Which I beseech you call a virtuous sin,

Makes me afeard.

CRESSIDA.

O heavens! you love me not.

TROILUS.

Die I a villain, then!

In this I do not call your faith in question

So mainly as my merit. I cannot sing,

Nor heel the high lavolt, nor sweeten talk,

Nor play at subtle games-fair virtues all,

To which the Grecians are most prompt and pregnant;

But I can tell that in each grace of these

There lurks a still and dumb-discoursive devil

That tempts most cunningly. But be not tempted.

CRESSIDA.

Do you think I will?

TROILUS.

No.

But something may be done that we will not;

And sometimes we are devils to ourselves,

When we will tempt the frailty of our powers,

Presuming on their changeful potency.

AENEAS.

[Within] Nay, good my lord!

TROILUS.

Come, kiss; and let us part.

PARIS.

[Within] Brother Troilus!

TROILUS.

Good brother, come you hither;

And bring Aeneas and the Grecian with you.

CRESSIDA.

My lord, will you be true?

TROILUS.

Who, I? Alas, it is my vice, my fault!

Whiles others fish with craft for great opinion,

I with great truth catch mere simplicity;

Whilst some with cunning gild their copper crowns,

With truth and plainness I do wear mine bare.

Enter AENEAS, PARIS, ANTENOR, DEIPHOBUS, and DIOMEDES

Fear not my truth: the moral of my wit

Is 'plain and true'; there's all the reach of it.

Welcome, Sir Diomed! Here is the lady

Which for Antenor we deliver you;
At the port, lord, I'll give her to thy hand,
And by the way possess thee what she is.
Entreat her fair; and, by my soul, fair Greek,
If e'er thou stand at mercy of my sword,
Name Cressid, and thy life shall be as safe
As Priam is in Ilion.

DIOMEDES.
Fair Lady Cressid,
So please you, save the thanks this prince expects.
The lustre in your eye, heaven in your cheek,
Pleads your fair usage; and to Diomed
You shall be mistress, and command him wholly.

TROILUS.
Grecian, thou dost not use me courteously
To shame the zeal of my petition to the
In praising her. I tell thee, lord of Greece,
She is as far high-soaring o'er thy praises
As thou unworthy to be call'd her servant.

I charge thee use her well, even for my charge;
For, by the dreadful Pluto, if thou dost not,
Though the great bulk Achilles be thy guard,
I'll cut thy throat.

DIOMEDES.

O, be not mov'd, Prince Troilus.
Let me be privileg'd by my place and message
To be a speaker free: when I am hence
I'll answer to my lust. And know you, lord,
I'll nothing do on charge: to her own worth
She shall be priz'd. But that you say 'Be't so,'

I speak it in my spirit and honour, 'No.'

TROILUS.
Come, to the port. I'll tell thee, Diomed,
This brave shall oft make thee to hide thy head.
Lady, give me your hand; and, as we walk,
To our own selves bend we our needful talk.

Exeunt TROILUS, CRESSIDA, and

DIOMEDES

[Sound

trumpet]

PARIS.

Hark! Hector's trumpet.

AENEAS.

How have we spent this morning!

The Prince must think me tardy and remiss,

That swore to ride before him to the field.

PARIS.

'Tis Troilus' fault. Come, come to field with him.

DEIPHOBUS.

Let us make ready straight.

AENEAS.

Yea, with a bridegroom's fresh alacrity

Let us address to tend on Hector's heels.

The glory of our Troy doth this day lie

On his fair worth and single chivalry.

Exeunt

ACT IV. SCENE 5. The Grecian camp. Lists set out

Enter AJAX, armed; AGAMEMNON, ACHILLES, PATROCLUS, MENELAUS,

ULYSSES,

NESTOR, and others

AGAMEMNON.

Here art thou in appointment fresh and fair,

Anticipating time with starting courage.

Give with thy trumpet a loud note to Troy,

Thou dreadful Ajax, that the appalled air

May pierce the head of the great combatant,

And hale him hither.

AJAX.

Thou, trumpet, there's my purse.

Now crack thy lungs and split thy brazen pipe;

Blow, villain, till thy sphered bias cheek

Out-swell the colic of puff Aquilon'd.

Come, stretch thy chest, and let thy eyes spout blood:

Thou blowest for Hector. [Trumpet

sounds]

ULYSSES.

No trumpet answers.

ACHILLES.

'Tis but early days.

Enter DIOMEDES, with CRESSIDA

AGAMEMNON.

Is not yond Diomed, with Calchas' daughter?

ULYSSES.

'Tis he, I ken the manner of his gait:

He rises on the toe. That spirit of his

In aspiration lifts him from the earth.

AGAMEMNON.

Is this the lady Cressid?

DIOMEDES.

Even she.

AGAMEMNON.

Most dearly welcome to the Greeks, sweet lady.

NESTOR.

Our general doth salute you with a kiss.

ULYSSES.

Yet is the kindness but particular;
'Twere better she were kiss'd in general.

NESTOR.

And very courtly counsel: I'll begin.

So much for Nestor.

ACHILLES.

I'll take that winter from your lips, fair lady.

Achilles bids you welcome.

MENELAUS.

I had good argument for kissing once.

PATROCLUS.

But that's no argument for kissing now;

For thus popp'd Paris in his hardiment,

And parted thus you and your argument.

ULYSSES.

O deadly gall, and theme of all our scorns!

For which we lose our heads to gild his horns.

PATROCLUS.

The first was Menelaus' kiss; this, mine-

[Kisses her

again]

Patroclus kisses you.

MENELAUS.

O, this is trim!

PATROCLUS.

Paris and I kiss evermore for him.

MENELAUS.

I'll have my kiss, sir. Lady, by your leave.

CRESSIDA.

In kissing, do you render or receive?

PATROCLUS.

Both take and give.

CRESSIDA.

I'll make my match to live,

The kiss you take is better than you give;

Therefore no kiss.

MENELAUS.

I'll give you boot; I'll give you three for one.

CRESSIDA.

You are an odd man; give even or give none.

MENELAUS.

An odd man, lady? Every man is odd.

CRESSIDA.

No, Paris is not; for you know 'tis true

That you are odd, and he is even with you.

MENELAUS.

You fillip me o' th' head.

CRESSIDA.

No, I'll be sworn.

ULYSSES.

It were no match, your nail against his horn.

May I, sweet lady, beg a kiss of you?

CRESSIDA.

You may.

ULYSSES.

I do desire it.

CRESSIDA.

Why, beg then.

ULYSSES.

Why then, for Venus' sake give me a kiss

When Helen is a maid again, and his.

CRESSIDA.

I am your debtor; claim it when 'tis due.

ULYSSES.

Never's my day, and then a kiss of you.

DIOMEDES.

Lady, a word. I'll bring you to your father.

Exit with

CRESSIDA

NESTOR.

A woman of quick sense.

ULYSSES.

Fie, fie upon her!

There's language in her eye, her cheek, her lip,

Nay, her foot speaks; her wanton spirits look out

At every joint and motive of her body.

O these encounters so glib of tongue

That give a coasting welcome ere it comes,

And wide unclasp the tables of their thoughts

To every ticklish reader! Set them down

For sluttish spoils of opportunity,

And daughters of the game. [Trumpet

within]

ALL.

The Troyans' trumpet.

Enter HECTOR, armed; AENEAS, TROILUS, PARIS, HELENUS, and other Trojans, with attendants

AGAMEMNON.

Yonder comes the troop.

AENEAS.

Hail, all the state of Greece! What shall be done

To him that victory commands? Or do you purpose

A victor shall be known? Will you the knights

Shall to the edge of all extremity

Pursue each other, or shall they be divided

By any voice or order of the field?

Hector bade ask.

AGAMEMNON.

Which way would Hector have it?

AENEAS.

He cares not; he'll obey conditions.

ACHILLES.

'Tis done like Hector; but securely done,
A little proudly, and great deal misprizing
The knight oppos'd.

AENEAS.

If not Achilles, sir,
What is your name?

ACHILLES.

If not Achilles, nothing.

AENEAS.

Therefore Achilles. But whate'er, know this:
In the extremity of great and little
Valour and pride excel themselves in Hector;
The one almost as infinite as all,
The other blank as nothing. Weigh him well,
And that which looks like pride is courtesy.
This Ajax is half made of Hector's blood;

In love whereof half Hector stays at home;

Half heart, half hand, half Hector comes to seek

This blended knight, half Troyan and half Greek.

ACHILLES.

A maiden battle then? O, I perceive you!

Re-enter DIOMEDES

AGAMEMNON.

Here is Sir Diomed. Go, gentle knight,

Stand by our Ajax. As you and Lord]Eneas

Consent upon the order of their fight,

So be it; either to the uttermost,

Or else a breath. The combatants being kin

Half stints their strife before their strokes begin.

[AJAX and HECTOR enter the

lists]

ULYSSES.

They are oppos'd already.

AGAMEMNON.

What Troyan is that same that looks so heavy?

ULYSSES.

The youngest son of Priam, a true knight;

Not yet mature, yet matchless; firm of word;

Speaking in deeds and deedless in his tongue;

Not soon provok'd, nor being provok'd soon calm'd;

His heart and hand both open and both free;

For what he has he gives, what thinks he shows,

Yet gives he not till judgment guide his bounty,

Nor dignifies an impair thought with breath;

Manly as Hector, but more dangerous;

For Hector in his blaze of wrath subscribes

To tender objects, but he in heat of action

Is more vindicative than jealous love.

They call him Troilus, and on him erect

A second hope as fairly built as Hector.

Thus says Aeneas, one that knows the youth

Even to his inches, and, with private soul, Did in great Ilion thus translate him to me.

[Alarum. HECTOR and AJAX

fight]

AGAMEMNON.

They are in action.

NESTOR.

Now, Ajax, hold thine own!

TROILUS.

Hector, thou sleep'st;

Awake thee.

AGAMEMNON.

His blows are well dispos'd. There, Ajax!

[Trumpets

cease]

DIOMEDES.

You must no more.

AENEAS.

Princes, enough, so please you.

AJAX.

I am not warm yet; let us fight again.

DIOMEDES.

As Hector pleases.

HECTOR.

Why, then will I no more.

Thou art, great lord, my father's sister's son,

A cousin-german to great Priam's seed;

The obligation of our blood forbids

A gory emulation 'twixt us twain:

Were thy commixtion Greek and Troyan so
That thou could'st say 'This hand is Grecian all,
And this is Troyan; the sinews of this leg
All Greek, and this all Troy; my mother's blood
Runs on the dexter cheek, and this sinister
Bounds in my father's'; by Jove multipotent,
Thou shouldst not bear from me a Greekish member
Wherein my sword had not impressure made
Of our rank feud; but the just gods gainsay
That any drop thou borrow'dst from thy mother,
My sacred aunt, should by my mortal sword
Be drained! Let me embrace thee, Ajax.
By him that thunders, thou hast lusty arms;
Hector would have them fall upon him thus.

Cousin, all honour to thee!

AJAX.
I thank thee, Hector.

Thou art too gentle and too free a man.

I came to kill thee, cousin, and bear hence
A great addition earned in thy death.

HECTOR.
Not Neoptolemus so mirable,
On whose bright crest Fame with her loud'st Oyes
Cries 'This is he' could promise to himself
A thought of added honour torn from Hector.

AENEAS.
There is expectance here from both the sides
What further you will do.

HECTOR.
We'll answer it:

The issue is embracement. Ajax, farewell.

AJAX.
If I might in entreaties find success,
As seld I have the chance, I would desire

My famous cousin to our Grecian tents.

DIOMEDES.
'Tis Agamemnon's wish; and great Achilles
Doth long to see unarm'd the valiant Hector.

HECTOR.
Aeneas, call my brother Troilus to me,
And signify this loving interview
To the expecters of our Troyan part;
Desire them home. Give me thy hand, my cousin;
I will go eat with thee, and see your knights.

AGAMEMNON and the rest of the Greeks come forward
AJAX.

Great Agamemnon comes to meet us here.

HECTOR.
The worthiest of them tell me name by name;
But for Achilles, my own searching eyes

Shall find him by his large and portly size.

AGAMEMNON.Worthy all arms! as welcome as to one
That would be rid of such an enemy.
But that's no welcome. Understand more clear,
What's past and what's to come is strew'd with husks
And formless ruin of oblivion;
But in this extant moment, faith and troth,
Strain'd purely from all hollow bias-drawing,
Bids thee with most divine integrity,
From heart of very heart, great Hector, welcome.

HECTOR.

I thank thee, most imperious Agamemnon.

AGAMEMNON.

[To Troilus] My well-fam'd lord of Troy, no less to you.

MENELAUS.

Let me confirm my princely brother's greeting.

You brace of warlike brothers, welcome hither.

HECTOR.

Who must we answer?

AENEAS.

The noble Menelaus.

HECTOR.

O you, my lord? By Mars his gauntlet, thanks!

Mock not that I affect the untraded oath;

Your quondam wife swears still by Venus' glove.

She's well, but bade me not commend her to you.

MENELAUS.

Name her not now, sir; she's a deadly theme.

HECTOR.

O, pardon; I offend.

NESTOR.

I have, thou gallant Troyan, seen thee oft,

Labouring for destiny, make cruel way

Through ranks of Greekish youth; and I have seen thee,

As hot as Perseus, spur thy Phrygian steed,

Despising many forfeits and subduements,

When thou hast hung thy advanced sword i' th' air,

Not letting it decline on the declined;

That I have said to some my standers-by

'Lo, Jupiter is yonder, dealing life!'

And I have seen thee pause and take thy breath,

When that a ring of Greeks have hemm'd thee in,

Like an Olympian wrestling. This have I seen;

But this thy countenance, still lock'd in steel,

I never saw till now. I knew thy grandsire,

And once fought with him. He was a soldier good,

But, by great Mars, the captain of us all,

Never like thee. O, let an old man embrace thee;

And, worthy warrior, welcome to our tents.

AENEAS.
'Tis the old Nestor.

HECTOR.
Let me embrace thee, good old chronicle,
That hast so long walk'd hand in hand with time.

Most reverend Nestor, I am glad to clasp thee.

NESTOR.
I would my arms could match thee in contention
As they contend with thee in courtesy.

HECTOR.
I would they could.

NESTOR.

Ha!

By this white beard, I'd fight with thee to-morrow.

Well, welcome, welcome! I have seen the time.

ULYSSES.

I wonder now how yonder city stands,
When we have here her base and pillar by us.

HECTOR.

I know your favour, Lord Ulysses, well.
Ah, sir, there's many a Greek and Troyan dead,
Since first I saw yourself and Diomed
In Ilion on your Greekish embassy.

ULYSSES.

Sir, I foretold you then what would ensue.
My prophecy is but half his journey yet;
For yonder walls, that pertly front your town,
Yond towers, whose wanton tops do buss the clouds,
Must kiss their own feet.

HECTOR.

I must not believe you.
There they stand yet; and modestly I think
The fall of every Phrygian stone will cost
A drop of Grecian blood. The end crowns all;
And that old common arbitrator, Time,
Will one day end it.

ULYSSES.

So to him we leave it.
Most gentle and most valiant Hector, welcome.
After the General, I beseech you next
To feast with me and see me at my tent.

ACHILLES.

I shall forestall thee, Lord Ulysses, thou!
Now, Hector, I have fed mine eyes on thee;
I have with exact view perus'd thee, Hector,

And quoted joint by joint.

HECTOR.

Is this Achilles?

ACHILLES.
I am Achilles.

HECTOR.

Stand fair, I pray thee; let me look on thee.

ACHILLES.
Behold thy fill.

HECTOR.

Nay, I have done already.

ACHILLES.

Thou art too brief. I will the second time,

As I would buy thee, view thee limb by limb.

HECTOR.

O, like a book of sport thou'lt read me o'er;

But there's more in me than thou understand'st.

Why dost thou so oppress me with thine eye?

ACHILLES.

Tell me, you heavens, in which part of his body

Shall I destroy him? Whether there, or there, or there?

That I may give the local wound a name,

And make distinct the very breach whereout

Hector's great spirit flew. Answer me, heavens.

HECTOR.

It would discredit the blest gods, proud man,

To answer such a question. Stand again.

Think'st thou to catch my life so pleasantly

As to prenominate in nice conjecture

Where thou wilt hit me dead?

ACHILLES.

I tell thee yea.

HECTOR.
Wert thou an oracle to tell me so,
I'd not believe thee. Henceforth guard thee well;
For I'll not kill thee there, nor there, nor there;
But, by the forge that stithied Mars his helm,
I'll kill thee everywhere, yea, o'er and o'er.

You wisest Grecians, pardon me this brag.
His insolence draws folly from my lips;
But I'll endeavour deeds to match these words,
Or may I never-

AJAX.
Do not chafe thee, cousin;
And you, Achilles, let these threats alone
Till accident or purpose bring you to't.

You may have every day enough of Hector,

If you have stomach. The general state, I fear,

Can scarce entreat you to be odd with him.

HECTOR.

I pray you let us see you in the field;

We have had pelting wars since you refus'd

The Grecians' cause.

ACHILLES.

Dost thou entreat me, Hector?

To-morrow do I meet thee, fell as death;

To-night all friends.

HECTOR.

Thy hand upon that match.

AGAMEMNON.

First, all you peers of Greece, go to my tent;

There in the full convive we; afterwards,

As Hector's leisure and your bounties shall
Concur together, severally entreat him.
Beat loud the tambourines, let the trumpets blow,
That this great soldier may his welcome know.

Exeunt all but TROILUS and

ULYSSES

TROILUS.

My Lord Ulysses, tell me, I beseech you,
In what place of the field doth Calchas keep?

ULYSSES.

At Menelaus' tent, most princely Troilus.
There Diomed doth feast with him to-night,
Who neither looks upon the heaven nor earth,
But gives all gaze and bent of amorous view
On the fair Cressid.

TROILUS.

Shall I, sweet lord, be bound to you so much, After we part from Agamemnon's tent,

To bring me thither?

ULYSSES.

You shall command me, sir.

As gentle tell me of what honour was

This Cressida in Troy? Had she no lover there

That wails her absence?

TROILUS.

O, sir, to such as boasting show their scars

A mock is due. Will you walk on, my lord?

She was belov'd, she lov'd; she is, and doth;

But still sweet love is food for fortune's tooth.

Exeunt

ACT V. SCENE 1. The Grecian camp. Before the tent of ACHILLES

Enter ACHILLES and PATROCLUS

ACHILLES.

I'll heat his blood with Greekish wine to-night,
Which with my scimitar I'll cool to-morrow.
Patroclus, let us feast him to the height.

PATROCLUS.

Here comes Thersites.

Enter THERSITES

ACHILLES.

How now, thou core of envy!

Thou crusty batch of nature, what's the news?

THERSITES.

Why, thou picture of what thou seemest, and idol of idiot worshippers, here's a letter for thee.

ACHILLES.

From whence, fragment?

THERSITES.

Why, thou full dish of fool, from Troy.

PATROCLUS.

Who keeps the tent now?

THERSITES.

The surgeon's box or the patient's wound.

PATROCLUS.

Well said, Adversity! and what needs these tricks?

THERSITES.

Prithee, be silent, boy; I profit not by thy talk; thou
art said to be Achilles' male varlet.

PATROCLUS.

Male varlet, you rogue! What's that?

THERSITES.

Why, his masculine whore. Now, the rotten diseases of
the south, the guts-griping ruptures, catarrhs, loads o' gravel
in the back, lethargies, cold palsies, raw eyes, dirt-rotten
livers, wheezing lungs, bladders full of imposthume,
sciaticas,
limekilns i' th' palm, incurable bone-ache, and the rivelled
fee-
simple of the tetter, take and take again such preposterous discoveries!

PATROCLUS.

Why, thou damnable box of envy, thou, what meanest thou to curse thus?

THERSITES.

Do I curse thee?

PATROCLUS.

Why, no, you ruinous butt; you whoreson
indistinguishable cur, no.

THERSITES.

No! Why art thou, then, exasperate, thou idle immaterial
skein of sleid silk, thou green sarcenet flap for a sore eye,
thou tassel of a prodigal's purse, thou? Ah, how the poor world is
pest'red with such water-flies-diminutives of nature!

PATROCLUS.

Out, gall!

THERSITES.

Finch egg!

ACHILLES.

My sweet Patroclus, I am thwarted quite
From my great purpose in to-morrow's battle.
Here is a letter from Queen Hecuba,

A token from her daughter, my fair love,
Both taxing me and gaging me to keep
An oath that I have sworn. I will not break it.
Fall Greeks; fail fame; honour or go or stay;
My major vow lies here, this I'll obey.
Come, come, Thersites, help to trim my tent;
This night in banqueting must all be spent.
Away, Patroclus! *Exit* with

PATROCLUS

THERSITES.

With too much blood and too little brain these two may
run mad; but, if with too much brain and to little blood they do,
I'll be a curer of madmen. Here's Agamemnon, an honest fellow
enough, and one that loves quails, but he has not so much brain
as ear-wax; and the goodly transformation of Jupiter there, his
brother, the bull, the primitive statue and oblique memorial of
cuckolds, a thrifty shoeing-horn in a chain, hanging at his
brother's leg-to what form but that he is, should wit larded with
malice, and malice forced with wit, turn him to? To an ass, were
nothing: he is both ass and ox. To an ox, were nothing: he is both

ox and ass. To be a dog, a mule, a cat, a fitchew, a toad, a
lizard, an owl, a put-tock, or a herring without a roe, I would
not care; but to be Menelaus, I would conspire against destiny.
Ask me not what I would be, if I were not Thersites; for I care
not to be the louse of a lazar, so I were not Menelaus.
Hey-day!

sprites and fires!

Enter HECTOR, TROILUS, AJAX, AGAMEMNON, ULYSSES,

NESTOR, MENELAUS, and DIOMEDES, with lights
AGAMEMNON.

We go wrong, we go wrong.

AJAX.
No, yonder 'tis;
There, where we see the lights.

HECTOR.

I trouble you.

AJAX.

No, not a whit.

Re-enter ACHILLES

ULYSSES.

Here comes himself to guide you.

ACHILLES.

Welcome, brave Hector; welcome, Princes all.

AGAMEMNON.

So now, fair Prince of Troy, I bid good night;

Ajax commands the guard to tend on you.

HECTOR.

Thanks, and good night to the Greeks' general.

MENELAUS.

Good night, my lord.

HECTOR.

Good night, sweet Lord Menelaus.

THERSITES.

Sweet draught! 'Sweet' quoth 'a?

Sweet sink, sweet sewer!

ACHILLES.

Good night and welcome, both at once, to those

That go or tarry.

AGAMEMNON.

Good night.

Exeunt AGAMEMNON and

MENELAUS

ACHILLES.

Old Nestor tarries; and you too, Diomed,

Keep Hector company an hour or two.

DIOMEDES.

I cannot, lord; I have important business,

The tide whereof is now. Good night, great Hector.

HECTOR.

Give me your hand.

ULYSSES.

[Aside to TROILUS] Follow his torch; he goes to

Calchas' tent; I'll keep you company.

TROILUS.

Sweet sir, you honour me.

HECTOR.

And so, good night.

Exit DIOMEDES; ULYSSES and TROILUS

following

ACHILLES.

Come, come, enter my tent.

Exeunt all but

THERSITES

THERSITES.

That same Diomed's a false-hearted rogue, a most unjust

knave; I will no more trust him when he leers than I will a

serpent when he hisses. He will spend his mouth and promise, like

Brabbler the hound; but when he performs, astronomers foretell

it: it is prodigious, there will come some change; the sun

borrows of the moon when Diomed keeps his word. I will rather

leave to see Hector than not to dog him. They say he keeps a

Troyan drab, and uses the traitor Calchas' tent. I'll after.

Nothing but lechery! All incontinent varlets!

Exit

ACT V. SCENE 2. The Grecian camp. Before CALCHAS' tent

Enter DIOMEDES

DIOMEDES.

What, are you up here, ho? Speak.

CALCHAS.

[Within] Who calls?

DIOMEDES.

Diomed. Calchas, I think. Where's your daughter?

CALCHAS.

[Within] She comes to you.

Enter TROILUS and ULYSSES, at a distance; after them

THERSITES

ULYSSES.

Stand where the torch may not discover us.

Enter CRESSIDA

TROILUS.

Cressid comes forth to him.

DIOMEDES.

How now, my charge!

CRESSIDA.

Now, my sweet guardian! Hark, a word with you.

[Whispers]

TROILUS.

Yea, so familiar!

ULYSSES.

She will sing any man at first sight.

THERSITES.

And any man may sing her, if he can take her cliff;

she's noted.

DIOMEDES.

Will you remember?

CRESSIDA.

Remember? Yes.

DIOMEDES.

Nay, but do, then;

And let your mind be coupled with your words.

TROILUS.

What shall she remember?

ULYSSES.

List!

CRESSIDA.

Sweet honey Greek, tempt me no more to folly.

THERSITES.

Roguery!

DIOMEDES.

Nay, then-

CRESSIDA.

I'll tell you what-

DIOMEDES.

Fo, fo! come, tell a pin; you are a forsworn-

CRESSIDA.

In faith, I cannot. What would you have me do?

THERSITES.

A juggling trick, to be secretly open.

DIOMEDES.

What did you swear you would bestow on me?

CRESSIDA.

I prithee, do not hold me to mine oath;
Bid me do anything but that, sweet Greek.

DIOMEDES.

Good night.

TROILUS.

Hold, patience!

ULYSSES.

How now, Troyan!

CRESSIDA.

Diomed!

DIOMEDES.

No, no, good night; I'll be your fool no more.

TROILUS.

Thy better must.

CRESSIDA.

Hark! a word in your ear.

TROILUS.

O plague and madness!

ULYSSES.

You are moved, Prince; let us depart, I pray,
Lest your displeasure should enlarge itself
To wrathful terms. This place is dangerous;
The time right deadly; I beseech you, go.

TROILUS.

Behold, I pray you.

ULYSSES.

Nay, good my lord, go off;
You flow to great distraction; come, my lord.

TROILUS.

I prithee stay.

ULYSSES.

You have not patience; come.

TROILUS.

I pray you, stay; by hell and all hell's torments,
I will not speak a word.

DIOMEDES.

And so, good night.

CRESSIDA.

Nay, but you part in anger.

TROILUS.

Doth that grieve thee? O withered truth!

ULYSSES.

How now, my lord?

TROILUS.

By Jove, I will be patient.

CRESSIDA.

Guardian! Why, Greek!

DIOMEDES.

Fo, fo! adieu! you palter.

CRESSIDA.

In faith, I do not. Come hither once again.

ULYSSES.

You shake, my lord, at something; will you go?

You will break out.

TROILUS.

She strokes his cheek.

ULYSSES.

Come, come.

TROILUS.

Nay, stay; by Jove, I will not speak a word:

There is between my will and all offences

A guard of patience. Stay a little while.

THERSITES.

How the devil luxury, with his fat rump and potato

finger, tickles these together! Fry, lechery, fry!

DIOMEDES.

But will you, then?

CRESSIDA.

In faith, I will, lo; never trust me else.

DIOMEDES.

Give me some token for the surety of it.

CRESSIDA.

I'll fetch you one.

Exit

ULYSSES. You have sworn patience.

TROILUS.

Fear me not, my lord;

I will not be myself, nor have cognition

Of what I feel. I am all patience.

Re-enter CRESSIDA

THERSITES.

Now the pledge; now, now, now!

CRESSIDA.

Here, Diomed, keep this sleeve.

TROILUS.

O beauty! where is thy faith?

ULYSSES.

My lord!

TROILUS.

I will be patient; outwardly I will.

CRESSIDA.

You look upon that sleeve; behold it well.

He lov'd me-O false wench!-Give't me again.

DIOMEDES.

Whose was't?

CRESSIDA.

It is no matter, now I ha't again.

I will not meet with you to-morrow night.

I prithee, Diomed, visit me no more.

THERSITES.

Now she sharpens. Well said, whetstone.

DIOMEDES.

I shall have it.

CRESSIDA.

What, this?

DIOMEDES.

Ay, that.

CRESSIDA.

O all you gods! O pretty, pretty pledge!
Thy master now lies thinking on his bed
Of thee and me, and sighs, and takes my glove,

And gives memorial dainty kisses to it,

As I kiss thee. Nay, do not snatch it from me;

He that takes that doth take my heart withal.

DIOMEDES.

I had your heart before; this follows it.

TROILUS.

I did swear patience.

CRESSIDA.

You shall not have it, Diomed; faith, you shall not;

I'll give you something else.

DIOMEDES.

I will have this. Whose was it?

CRESSIDA.

It is no matter.

DIOMEDES.

Come, tell me whose it was.

CRESSIDA.

'Twas one's that lov'd me better than you will.
But, now you have it, take it.

DIOMEDES.

Whose was it?

CRESSIDA.

By all Diana's waiting women yond,
And by herself, I will not tell you whose.

DIOMEDES.

To-morrow will I wear it on my helm,
And grieve his spirit that dares not challenge it.

TROILUS.

Wert thou the devil and wor'st it on thy horn,

It should be challeng'd.

CRESSIDA.

Well, well, 'tis done, 'tis past; and yet it is not;

I will not keep my word.

DIOMEDES.

Why, then farewell;

Thou never shalt mock Diomed again.

CRESSIDA.

You shall not go. One cannot speak a word

But it straight starts you.

DIOMEDES.

I do not like this fooling.

THERSITES.

Nor I, by Pluto; but that that likes not you

Pleases me best.

DIOMEDES.

What, shall I come? The hour-

CRESSIDA.

Ay, come-O Jove! Do come. I shall be plagu'd.

DIOMEDES.

Farewell till then.

CRESSIDA.

Good night. I prithee come. *Exit*

DIOMEDES

Troilus, farewell! One eye yet looks on thee;

But with my heart the other eye doth see.

Ah, poor our sex! this fault in us I find,

The error of our eye directs our mind.

What error leads must err; O, then conclude,
Minds sway'd by eyes are full of turpitude.
Exit

THERSITES. A proof of strength she could not publish more,
Unless she said 'My mind is now turn'd whore.'

ULYSSES.
All's done, my lord.

TROILUS.

It is.

ULYSSES.
Why stay we, then?

TROILUS.
To make a recordation to my soul
Of every syllable that here was spoke.
But if I tell how these two did coact,

Shall I not lie in publishing a truth?
Sith yet there is a credence in my heart,
An esperance so obstinately strong,
That doth invert th' attest of eyes and ears;
As if those organs had deceptious functions
Created only to calumniate.
Was Cressid here?

ULYSSES.

I cannot conjure, Troyan.

TROILUS.

She was not, sure.

ULYSSES.

Most sure she was.

TROILUS.

Why, my negation hath no taste of madness.

ULYSSES.

Nor mine, my lord. Cressid was here but now.

TROILUS.

Let it not be believ'd for womanhood.

Think, we had mothers; do not give advantage

To stubborn critics, apt, without a theme,

For depravation, to square the general sex

By Cressid's rule. Rather think this not Cressid.

ULYSSES.

What hath she done, Prince, that can soil our mothers?

TROILUS.

Nothing at all, unless that this were she.

THERSITES.

Will 'a swagger himself out on's own eyes?

TROILUS.

This she? No; this is Diomed's Cressida.

If beauty have a soul, this is not she;

If souls guide vows, if vows be sanctimonies,

If sanctimony be the god's delight,

If there be rule in unity itself,

This was not she. O madness of discourse,

That cause sets up with and against itself!

Bifold authority! where reason can revolt

Without perdition, and loss assume all reason

Without revolt: this is, and is not, Cressid.

Within my soul there doth conduce a fight

Of this strange nature, that a thing inseparate

Divides more wider than the sky and earth;

And yet the spacious breadth of this division

Admits no orifex for a point as subtle

As Ariachne's broken woof to enter.

Instance, O instance! strong as Pluto's gates:

Cressid is mine, tied with the bonds of heaven.
Instance, O instance! strong as heaven itself:
The bonds of heaven are slipp'd, dissolv'd, and loos'd;
And with another knot, five-finger-tied,
The fractions of her faith, orts of her love,
The fragments, scraps, the bits, and greasy relics
Of her o'er-eaten faith, are bound to Diomed.

ULYSSES.
May worthy Troilus be half-attach'd
With that which here his passion doth express?

TROILUS.
Ay, Greek; and that shall be divulged well
In characters as red as Mars his heart
Inflam'd with Venus. Never did young man fancy
With so eternal and so fix'd a soul.
Hark, Greek: as much as I do Cressid love,
So much by weight hate I her Diomed.
That sleeve is mine that he'll bear on his helm;
Were it a casque compos'd by Vulcan's skill

My sword should bite it. Not the dreadful spout
Which shipmen do the hurricano call,
Constring'd in mass by the almighty sun,
Shall dizzy with more clamour Neptune's ear
In his descent than shall my prompted sword
Falling on Diomed.

THERSITES.

He'll tickle it for his concupy.

TROILUS.

O Cressid! O false Cressid! false, false, false!
Let all untruths stand by thy stained name,
And they'll seem glorious.

ULYSSES.

O, contain yourself;
Your passion draws ears hither.

Enter AENEAS

AENEAS.

I have been seeking you this hour, my lord.

Hector, by this, is arming him in Troy;

Ajax, your guard, stays to conduct you home.

TROILUS.

Have with you, Prince. My courteous lord, adieu.

Fairwell, revolted fair!-and, Diomed,

Stand fast and wear a castle on thy head.

ULYSSES.

I'll bring you to the gates.

TROILUS.

Accept distracted thanks.

Exeunt TROILUS, AENEAS. and ULYSSES

THERSITES.

Would I could meet that rogue Diomed! I would croak like a raven; I would bode, I would bode. Patroclus will give me anything for the intelligence of this whore; the parrot will not do more for an almond than he for a commodious drab. Lechery, lechery! Still wars and lechery! Nothing else holds fashion.

A

burning devil take them!

Exit

ACT V. SCENE 3. Troy. Before PRIAM'S palace

Enter HECTOR and ANDROMACHE

ANDROMACHE.

When was my lord so much ungently temper'd
To stop his ears against admonishment?
Unarm, unarm, and do not fight to-day.

HECTOR.

You train me to offend you; get you in.
By all the everlasting gods, I'll go.

ANDROMACHE.

My dreams will, sure, prove ominous to the day.

HECTOR.

No more, I say.

Enter CASSANDRA

CASSANDRA.

Where is my brother Hector?

ANDROMACHE.

Here, sister, arm'd, and bloody in intent.
Consort with me in loud and dear petition,
Pursue we him on knees; for I have dreamt
Of bloody turbulence, and this whole night
Hath nothing been but shapes and forms of slaughter.

CASSANDRA.

O, 'tis true!

HECTOR.

Ho! bid my trumpet sound.

CASSANDRA.

No notes of sally, for the heavens, sweet brother!

HECTOR.

Be gone, I say. The gods have heard me swear.

CASSANDRA.

The gods are deaf to hot and peevish vows;
They are polluted off'rings, more abhorr'd
Than spotted livers in the sacrifice.

ANDROMACHE.

O, be persuaded! Do not count it holy

To hurt by being just. It is as lawful,

For we would give much, to use violent thefts

And rob in the behalf of charity.

CASSANDRA.

It is the purpose that makes strong the vow;

But vows to every purpose must not hold.

Unarm, sweet Hector.

HECTOR.

Hold you still, I say.

Mine honour keeps the weather of my fate.

Life every man holds dear; but the dear man

Holds honour far more precious dear than life.

Enter TROILUS

How now, young man! Mean'st thou to fight to-day?

ANDROMACHE.

Cassandra, call my father to persuade.

Exit

CASSANDRA

HECTOR.

No, faith, young Troilus; doff thy harness, youth;

I am to-day i' th' vein of chivalry.

Let grow thy sinews till their knots be strong,

And tempt not yet the brushes of the war.

Unarm thee, go; and doubt thou not, brave boy,

I'll stand to-day for thee and me and Troy.

TROILUS.

Brother, you have a vice of mercy in you

Which better fits a lion than a man.

HECTOR.

What vice is that, good Troilus?

Chide me for it.

TROILUS.

When many times the captive Grecian falls,

Even in the fan and wind of your fair sword,

You bid them rise and live.

HECTOR.

O, 'tis fair play!

TROILUS.

Fool's play, by heaven, Hector.

HECTOR.

How now! how now!

TROILUS.

For th' love of all the gods,

Let's leave the hermit Pity with our mother;

And when we have our armours buckled on,

The venom'd vengeance ride upon our swords,
Spur them to ruthful work, rein them from ruth!

HECTOR.

Fie, savage, fie!

TROILUS.

Hector, then 'tis wars.

HECTOR.

Troilus, I would not have you fight to-day.

TROILUS.

Who should withhold me?
Not fate, obedience, nor the hand of Mars
Beck'ning with fiery truncheon my retire;
Not Priamus and Hecuba on knees,
Their eyes o'ergalled with recourse of tears;
Nor you, my brother, with your true sword drawn,

Oppos'd to hinder me, should stop my way,

But by my ruin.

Re-enter CASSANDRA, with PRIAM

CASSANDRA.

Lay hold upon him, Priam, hold him fast;

He is thy crutch; now if thou lose thy stay,

Thou on him leaning, and all Troy on thee,

Fall all together.

PRIAM.

Come, Hector, come, go back.

Thy wife hath dreamt; thy mother hath had visions;

Cassandra doth foresee; and I myself

Am like a prophet suddenly enrapt

To tell thee that this day is ominous.

Therefore, come back.

HECTOR.

Aeneas is a-field;

And I do stand engag'd to many Greeks,

Even in the faith of valour, to appear
This morning to them.

PRIAM.

Ay, but thou shalt not go.

HECTOR.
I must not break my faith.
You know me dutiful; therefore, dear sir,
Let me not shame respect; but give me leave
To take that course by your consent and voice
Which you do here forbid me, royal Priam.

CASSANDRA.

O Priam, yield not to him!

ANDROMACHE.
Do not, dear father.

HECTOR.

Andromache, I am offended with you.
Upon the love you bear me, get you in.
Exit

ANDROMACHE

TROILUS.

This foolish, dreaming, superstitious girl
Makes all these bodements.

CASSANDRA.

O, farewell, dear Hector!
Look how thou diest. Look how thy eye turns pale.

Look how thy wounds do bleed at many vents.
Hark how Troy roars; how Hecuba cries out;
How poor Andromache shrills her dolours forth;
Behold distraction, frenzy, and amazement,

Like witless antics, one another meet,

And all cry, Hector! Hector's dead! O Hector!

TROILUS.

Away, away!

CASSANDRA.

Farewell!-yet, soft! Hector, I take my leave.

Thou dost thyself and all our Troy deceive.

Exit

HECTOR. You are amaz'd, my liege, at her exclaim.

Go in, and cheer the town; we'll forth, and fight,

Do deeds worth praise and tell you them at night.

PRIAM.

Farewell. The gods with safety stand about thee!

Exeunt severally PRIAM and HECTOR.

Alarums

TROILUS.

They are at it, hark! Proud Diomed, believe,
I come to lose my arm or win my sleeve.

Enter PANDARUS

PANDARUS.

Do you hear, my lord? Do you hear?

TROILUS.

What now?

PANDARUS.

Here's a letter come from yond poor girl.

TROILUS.

Let me read.

PANDARUS.

A whoreson tisick, a whoreson rascally tisick so troubles
me, and the foolish fortune of this girl, and what one thing,
what another, that I shall leave you one o' th's days; and I have
a rheum in mine eyes too, and such an ache in my bones that
unless a man were curs'd I cannot tell what to think on't.

What says she there?

TROILUS.
Words, words, mere words, no matter from the heart;
Th' effect doth operate another way.

[Tearing the
letter]
Go, wind, to wind, there turn and change together.
My love with words and errors still she feeds,
But edifies another with her deeds. *Exeunt* severally

ACT V. SCENE 4. The plain between Troy and the Grecian camp

Enter THERSITES. Excursions

THERSITES.

Now they are clapper-clawing one another; I'll go look on. That dissembling abominable varlet, Diomed, has got that same scurvy doting foolish young knave's sleeve of Troy there in his helm. I would fain see them meet, that that same young Troyan ass that loves the whore there might send that Greekish whoremasterly villain with the sleeve back to the dissembling luxurious drab of a sleeve-less errand. A th' t'other side, the policy of those crafty swearing rascals-that stale old mouse-eaten dry cheese, Nestor, and that same dog-fox, Ulysses -is not prov'd worth a blackberry. They set me up, in policy, that mongrel cur, Ajax, against that dog of as bad a kind, Achilles; and now is the cur, Ajax prouder than the cur Achilles, and will not arm to-day; whereupon the Grecians begin to proclaim barbarism, and policy grows into an ill opinion.

Enter DIOMEDES, TROILUS following

Soft! here comes sleeve, and t'other.

TROILUS.

Fly not; for shouldst thou take the river Styx
I would swim after.

DIOMEDES.

Thou dost miscall retire.
I do not fly; but advantageous care
Withdrew me from the odds of multitude.

Have at thee.

THERSITES.

Hold thy whore, Grecian; now for thy whore,
Troyan-now the sleeve, now the sleeve!

Exeunt TROILUS and DIOMEDES fighting

Enter HECTOR

HECTOR.

What art thou, Greek? Art thou for Hector's match?

Art thou of blood and honour?

THERSITES.

No, no-I am a rascal; a scurvy railing knave; a very filthy rogue.

HECTOR.

I do believe thee. Live.

Exit

THERSITES. God-a-mercy, that thou wilt believe me; but a plague break thy neck for frighting me! What's become of the wenching rogues? I think they have swallowed one another. I would laugh at that miracle. Yet, in a sort, lechery eats itself. I'll seek them.

Exit

ACT V. SCENE 5. Another part of the plain

Enter DIOMEDES and A SERVANT

DIOMEDES.

Go, go, my servant, take thou Troilus' horse;

Present the fair steed to my lady Cressid.

Fellow, commend my service to her beauty;

Tell her I have chastis'd the amorous Troyan,

And am her knight by proof.

SERVANT.

I go, my lord.

Exit

Enter AGAMEMNON

AGAMEMNON.

Renew, renew! The fierce Polydamus

Hath beat down enon; bastard Margarelon

Hath Doreus prisoner,

And stands colossus-wise, waving his beam,

Upon the pashed corses of the kings

Epistrophus and Cedius. Polixenes is slain;

Amphimacus and Thoas deadly hurt;

Patroclus ta'en, or slain; and Palamedes

Sore hurt and bruis'd. The dreadful Sagittary
Appals our numbers. Haste we, Diomed,
To reinforcement, or we perish all.

Enter NESTOR

NESTOR.
Go, bear Patroclus' body to Achilles,
And bid the snail-pac'd Ajax arm for shame.
There is a thousand Hectors in the field;
Now here he fights on Galathe his horse,
And there lacks work; anon he's there afoot,
And there they fly or die, like scaled sculls
Before the belching whale; then is he yonder,
And there the strawy Greeks, ripe for his edge,
Fall down before him like the mower's swath.
Here, there, and everywhere, he leaves and takes;
Dexterity so obeying appetite
That what he will he does, and does so much
That proof is call'd impossibility.

Enter ULYSSES

ULYSSES.

O, courage, courage, courage, Princes! Great

Achilles Is arming, weeping, cursing, vowing vengeance.

Patroclus' wounds have rous'd his drowsy blood,

Together with his mangled Myrmidons,

That noseless, handless, hack'd and chipp'd, come to

him, Crying on Hector. Ajax hath lost a friend

And foams at mouth, and he is arm'd and at it,

Roaring for Troilus; who hath done to-day

Mad and fantastic execution,

Engaging and redeeming of himself

With such a careless force and forceless care

As if that luck, in very spite of cunning,

Bade him win all.

Enter AJAX

AJAX.

Troilus! thou coward Troilus!

Exit

DIOMEDES. Ay, there, there.

NESTOR.

So, so, we draw together.

Exit

Enter ACHILLES

ACHILLES.

Where is this Hector?

Come, come, thou boy-queller, show thy face;

Know what it is to meet Achilles angry.

Hector! where's Hector? I will none but Hector.

Exeunt

ACT V. SCENE 6. Another part of the plain

Enter AJAX

AJAX.

Troilus, thou coward Troilus, show thy head.

Enter DIOMEDES

DIOMEDES.

Troilus, I say! Where's Troilus?

AJAX.

What wouldst thou?

DIOMEDES.

I would correct him.

AJAX.

Were I the general, thou shouldst have my office
Ere that correction. Troilus, I say! What, Troilus!

Enter TROILUS

TROILUS.

O traitor Diomed! Turn thy false face, thou traitor,
And pay thy life thou owest me for my horse.

DIOMEDES.

Ha! art thou there?

AJAX.

I'll fight with him alone. Stand, Diomed.

DIOMEDES.

He is my prize. I will not look upon.

TROILUS.

Come, both, you cogging Greeks; have at you

Exeunt fighting

Enter HECTOR

HECTOR.

Yea, Troilus? O, well fought, my youngest brother!

Enter ACHILLES

ACHILLES.

Now do I see thee, ha! Have at thee, Hector!

HECTOR.

Pause, if thou wilt.

ACHILLES.

I do disdain thy courtesy, proud Troyan.

Be happy that my arms are out of use;

My rest and negligence befriends thee now,

But thou anon shalt hear of me again;

Till when, go seek thy fortune.

Exit

HECTOR. Fare thee well.

I would have been much more a fresher man, Had I expected thee.

Re-enter TROILUS

How now, my brother!

TROILUS.

Ajax hath ta'en Aeneas. Shall it be?

No, by the flame of yonder glorious heaven,

He shall not carry him; I'll be ta'en too,

Or bring him off. Fate, hear me what I say:

I reck not though thou end my life to-day.

Exit

Enter one in armour

HECTOR.

Stand, stand, thou Greek; thou art a goodly mark.

No? wilt thou not? I like thy armour well;

I'll frush it and unlock the rivets all

But I'll be master of it. Wilt thou not, beast, abide?

Why then, fly on; I'll hunt thee for thy hide.

Exeunt

ACT V. SCENE 7. Another part of the plain

Enter ACHILLES, with Myrmidons

ACHILLES.

Come here about me, you my Myrmidons;

Mark what I say. Attend me where I wheel;

Strike not a stroke, but keep yourselves in breath;

And when I have the bloody Hector found,

Empale him with your weapons round about;

In fellest manner execute your arms.

Follow me, sirs, and my proceedings eye.

It is decreed Hector the great must die.

Exeunt

Enter MENELAUS and PARIS, fighting; then THERSITES

THERSITES.

The cuckold and the cuckold-maker are at it. Now, bull!

now, dog! 'Loo, Paris, 'loo! now my double-horn'd Spartan!

'loo,

Paris, 'loo! The bull has the game. Ware horns, ho!

Exeunt PARIS and

MENELAUS

Enter MARGARELON

MARGARELON.

Turn, slave, and fight.

THERSITES.

What art thou?

MARGARELON.

A bastard son of Priam's.

THERSITES.

I am a bastard too; I love bastards. I am a bastard begot, bastard instructed, bastard in mind, bastard in valour, in everything illegitimate. One bear will not bite another, and wherefore should one bastard? Take heed, the quarrel's most ominous to us: if the son of a whore fight for a whore, he tempts judgment. Farewell, bastard.

Exit

MARGARELON. The devil take thee, coward!

Exit

ACT V. SCENE 8. Another part of the plain

Enter HECTOR

HECTOR.

Most putrified core so fair without,
Thy goodly armour thus hath cost thy life.
Now is my day's work done; I'll take good breath:

Rest, sword; thou hast thy fill of blood and death!
[Disarms]

Enter ACHILLES and his Myrmidons

ACHILLES.

Look, Hector, how the sun begins to set;

How ugly night comes breathing at his heels;

Even with the vail and dark'ning of the sun,

To close the day up, Hector's life is done.

HECTOR.

I am unarm'd; forego this vantage, Greek.

ACHILLES.

Strike, fellows, strike; this is the man I seek.

[HECTOR

falls]

So, Ilion, fall thou next! Come, Troy, sink down;

Here lies thy heart, thy sinews, and thy bone.

On, Myrmidons, and cry you an amain

'Achilles hath the mighty Hector slain.'

[A retreat

sounded]

Hark! a retire upon our Grecian part.

MYRMIDON.

The Troyan trumpets sound the like, my lord.

ACHILLES.

The dragon wing of night o'erspreads the earth

And, stickler-like, the armies separates.

My half-supp'd sword, that frankly would have fed,

Pleas'd with this dainty bait, thus goes to bed.

[Sheathes his

sword]

Come, tie his body to my horse's tail;

Along the field I will the Troyan trail.

Exeunt

ACT V. SCENE 9. Another part of the plain

Sound retreat. Shout. *Enter* AGAMEMNON, AJAX, MENELAUS, NESTOR, DIOMEDES, and the rest, marching

AGAMEMNON.

Hark! hark! what shout is this?

NESTOR.

Peace, drums!

SOLDIERS.

[Within] Achilles! Achilles! Hector's slain.

Achilles!

DIOMEDES.

The bruit is Hector's slain, and by Achilles.

AJAX.

If it be so, yet bragless let it be;

Great Hector was as good a man as he.

AGAMEMNON.

March patiently along. Let one be sent

To pray Achilles see us at our tent.

If in his death the gods have us befriended;

Great Troy is ours, and our sharp wars are ended.

Exeunt

ACT V. SCENE 10. Another part of the plain

Enter AENEAS, PARIS, ANTENOR, and DEIPHOBUS

AENEAS.

Stand, ho! yet are we masters of the field.

Never go home; here starve we out the night.

Enter TROILUS

TROILUS.

Hector is slain.

ALL.

Hector! The gods forbid!

TROILUS.

He's dead, and at the murderer's horse's tail,
In beastly sort, dragg'd through the shameful field.
Frown on, you heavens, effect your rage with speed.

Sit, gods, upon your thrones, and smile at Troy.
I say at once let your brief plagues be mercy,
And linger not our sure destructions on.

AENEAS.

My lord, you do discomfort all the host.

TROILUS.

You understand me not that tell me so.
I do not speak of flight, of fear of death,
But dare all imminence that gods and men
Address their dangers in. Hector is gone.

Who shall tell Priam so, or Hecuba?

Let him that will a screech-owl aye be call'd

Go in to Troy, and say there 'Hector's dead.'

There is a word will Priam turn to stone;

Make wells and Niobes of the maids and wives,

Cold statues of the youth; and, in a word,

Scare Troy out of itself. But, march away;

Hector is dead; there is no more to say.

Stay yet. You vile abominable tents,

Thus proudly pight upon our Phrygian plains,

Let Titan rise as early as he dare,

I'll through and through you. And, thou great-siz'd coward,

No space of earth shall sunder our two hates;

I'll haunt thee like a wicked conscience still,

That mouldeth goblins swift as frenzy's thoughts.

Strike a free march to Troy. With comfort go;

Hope of revenge shall hide our inward woe.

Enter PANDARUS

PANDARUS.

But hear you, hear you!

TROILUS.

Hence, broker-lackey. Ignominy and shame

Pursue thy life and live aye with thy name!

Exeunt all but

PANDARUS

PANDARUS.

A goodly medicine for my aching bones! world! world! thus

is the poor agent despis'd! traitors and bawds, how earnestly are

you set a work, and how ill requited! Why should our endeavour be

so lov'd, and the performance so loathed? What verse for it?

What

instance for it? Let me see-

Full merrily the humble-bee doth sing

Till he hath lost his honey and his sting;

And being once subdu'd in armed trail,

Sweet honey and sweet notes together fail.

Good traders in the flesh, set this in your painted cloths. As many as be here of pander's hall,

Your eyes, half out, weep out at Pandar's fall;

Or, if you cannot weep, yet give some groans,

Though not for me, yet for your aching bones.

Brethren and sisters of the hold-door trade,

Some two months hence my will shall here be made.

It should be now, but that my fear is this,

Some galled goose of Winchester would hiss.

Till then I'll sweat and seek about for eases,

And at that time bequeath you my diseases.

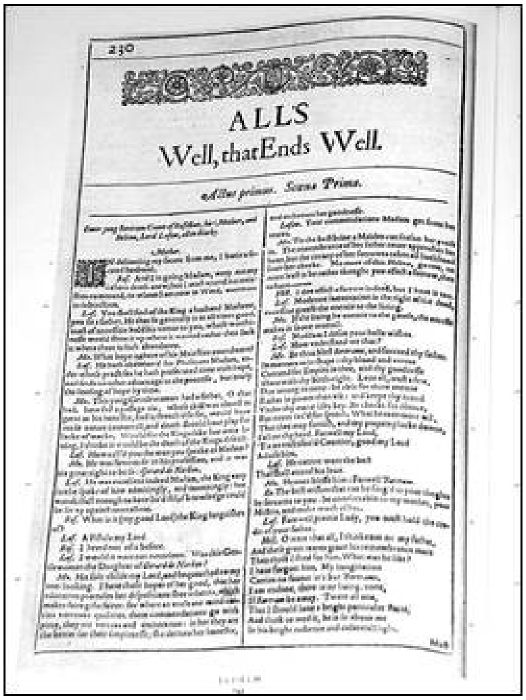
Exit

ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

This comedy is believed to have been written between 1604 and 1605 and tells the story of Helena, the orphan daughter of a famous physician, who is the ward of the Countess of Rousillon. Helena is hopelessly in love with the son of the Countess, Count Bertram, who has been sent to the court of the King of France. Despite her beauty and worth, Helena has no hope of attracting Bertram, since she is of low birth and he is a nobleman. However, when word comes that the King is ill, she goes to Paris and, using her father's arts, cures the fistula from which he suffers. In return, she is given the hand of any man in the realm; she chooses Bertram. Her new husband is appalled at the match, however, and shortly after their marriage flees France, accompanied only by a scoundrel named Parolles, to fight in the army of the Duke of Florence.

The play is based on a tale of Boccaccio's *The Decameron* and Shakespeare was likely to have read an English translation of the tale in William Painter's *Palace of Pleasure* . The name of the play comes from a well known English proverb.

Shakespeare's main source text for this play is available via this link .



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ALLS
Well, that Ends Well.

Actus primus. Scœna Prima.

The First Folio, 1623

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DRAMATIS PERSONAE

KING OF FRANCE

THE DUKE OF FLORENCE

BERTRAM, Count of Rousillon

LAFEU, an old lord

PAROLLES, a follower of Bertram

TWO FRENCH LORDS, serving with Bertram

STEWARD, Servant to the Countess of Rousillon

LAVACHE, a clown and Servant to the Countess of Rousillon

A PAGE, Servant to the Countess of Rousillon

COUNTESS OF ROUSILLON, mother to Bertram

HELENA, a gentlewoman protected by the Countess

A WIDOW OF FLORENCE.

DIANA, daughter to the Widow

VIOLENTA, neighbour and friend to the Widow

MARIANA, neighbour and friend to the Widow

Lords, Officers, Soldiers, etc., French and Florentine

SCENE: Rousillon; Paris; Florence; Marseilles

ACT I. SCENE 1. Rousillon. The COUNT'S palace

Enter BERTRAM, the COUNTESS OF ROUSILLON, HELENA, and LAFEU, all in black

COUNTESS.

In delivering my son from me, I bury a second husband.

BERTRAM.

And I in going, madam, weep o'er my father's death anew;

but I must attend his Majesty's command, to whom I am now in

ward, evermore in subjection.

LAFEU.

You shall find of the King a husband, madam; you, sir, a
father. He that so generally is at all times good must of
necessity hold his virtue to you, whose worthiness would stir it
up where it wanted, rather than lack it where there is such abundance.

COUNTESS.

What hope is there of his Majesty's amendment?

LAFEU.

He hath abandon'd his physicians, madam; under whose
practices he hath persecuted time with hope, and finds no other
advantage in the process but only the losing of hope by time.

COUNTESS.

This young gentlewoman had a father-O, that 'had,' how
sad a passage 'tis!-whose skill was almost as great as his
honesty; had it stretch'd so far, would have made nature
immortal, and death should have play for lack of work. Would, for
the King's sake, he were living! I think it would be the death of
the King's disease.

LAFEU.

How call'd you the man you speak of, madam?

COUNTESS.

He was famous, sir, in his profession, and it was his
great right to be so-Gerard de Narbon.

LAFEU.

He was excellent indeed, madam; the King very lately spoke
of him admiringly and mourningly; he was skilful enough to have
liv'd still, if knowledge could be set up against mortality.

BERTRAM.

What is it, my good lord, the King languishes of?

LAFEU.

A fistula, my lord.

BERTRAM.

I heard not of it before.

LAFEU.

I would it were not notorious. Was this gentlewoman the

daughter of Gerard de Narbon?

COUNTESS.

His sole child, my lord, and bequeathed to my

overlooking. I have those hopes of her good that her education

promises; her dispositions she inherits, which makes fair gifts

fairer; for where an unclean mind carries virtuous qualities,

there commendations go with pity-they are virtues and traitors

too. In her they are the better for their simpleness; she derives

her honesty, and achieves her goodness.

LAFEU.

Your commendations, madam, get from her tears.

COUNTESS.

'Tis the best brine a maiden can season her praise in.

The remembrance of her father never approaches her heart but the

tyranny of her sorrows takes all livelihood from her cheek.

No

more of this, Helena; go to, no more, lest it be rather thought

you affect a sorrow than to have-

HELENA.

I do affect a sorrow indeed, but I have it too.

LAFEU.

Moderate lamentation is the right of the dead: excessive

grief the enemy to the living.

COUNTESS.

If the living be enemy to the grief, the excess makes it soon mortal.

BERTRAM.

Madam, I desire your holy wishes.

LAFEU.

How understand we that?

COUNTESS.

Be thou blest, Bertram, and succeed thy father
In manners, as in shape! Thy blood and virtue
Contend for empire in thee, and thy goodness
Share with thy birthright! Love all, trust a few,
Do wrong to none; be able for thine enemy
Rather in power than use, and keep thy friend
Under thy own life's key; be check'd for silence,
But never tax'd for speech. What heaven more will,
That thee may furnish, and my prayers pluck down,
Fall on thy head! Farewell. My lord,
'Tis an unseason'd courtier; good my lord,
Advise him.

LAFEU.

He cannot want the best
That shall attend his love.

COUNTESS.

Heaven bless him! Farewell, Bertram. *Exit*

BERTRAM. The best wishes that can be forg'd in your thoughts be servants to you! *[To HELENA]* Be comfortable to my mother, your mistress, and make much of her.

LAFEU.

Farewell, pretty lady; you must hold the credit of your father. *Exeunt* BERTRAM and LAFEU

HELENA.

O, were that all! I think not on my father;
And these great tears grace his remembrance more
Than those I shed for him. What was he like?
I have forgot him; my imagination
Carries no favour in't but Bertram's.
I am undone; there is no living, none,
If Bertram be away. 'Twere all one
That I should love a bright particular star
And think to wed it, he is so above me.
In his bright radiance and collateral light

Must I be comforted, not in his sphere.

Th' ambition in my love thus plagues itself:

The hind that would be mated by the lion

Must die for love. 'Twas pretty, though a plague,

To see him every hour; to sit and draw

His arched brows, his hawking eye, his curls,

In our heart's table-heart too capable

Of every line and trick of his sweet favour.

But now he's gone, and my idolatrous fancy

Must sanctify his relics. Who comes here?

Enter PAROLLES

[Aside] One that goes with him. I love him for his sake;

And yet I know him a notorious liar,

Think him a great way fool, solely a coward;

Yet these fix'd evils sit so fit in him

That they take place when virtue's steely bones

Looks bleak i' th' cold wind; withal, full oft we see

Cold wisdom waiting on superfluous folly.

PAROLLES.

Save you, fair queen!

HELENA.

And you, monarch!

PAROLLES.

No.

HELENA.

And no.

PAROLLES.

Are you meditating on virginity?

HELENA.

Ay. You have some stain of soldier in you; let me ask you a question. Man is enemy to virginity; how may we barricado it against him?

PAROLLES.

Keep him out.

HELENA.

But he assails; and our virginity, though valiant in the
defence, yet is weak. Unfold to us some warlike resistance.

PAROLLES.

There is none. Man, setting down before you, will
undermine you and blow you up.

HELENA.

Bless our poor virginity from underminers and
blowers-up!
Is there no military policy how virgins might blow up men?

PAROLLES.

Virginity being blown down, man will quicklier be blown
up; marry, in blowing him down again, with the breach yourselves
made, you lose your city. It is not politic in the commonwealth

of nature to preserve virginity. Loss of virginity is rational
increase; and there was never virgin got till virginity was first
lost. That you were made of is metal to make virgins.
Virginity
by being once lost may be ten times found; by being ever kept, it
is ever lost. 'Tis too cold a companion; away with't.

HELENA.
I will stand for 't a little, though therefore I die a virgin.

PAROLLES.
There's little can be said in 't; 'tis against the rule
of nature. To speak on the part of virginity is to accuse your
mothers; which is most infallible disobedience. He that hangs
himself is a virgin; virginity murders itself, and should be
buried in highways, out of all sanctified limit, as a desperate
offendress against nature. Virginity breeds mites, much like a
cheese; consumes itself to the very paring, and so dies with
feeding his own stomach. Besides, virginity is peevish,
proud,
idle, made of self-love, which is the most inhibited sin in the

canon. Keep it not; you cannot choose but lose by't. Out with't.
Within ten year it will make itself ten, which is a goodly
increase; and the principal itself not much the worse. Away with't.

HELENA.
How might one do, sir, to lose it to her own liking?

PAROLLES.

Let me see. Marry, ill to like him that ne'er it likes.
'Tis a commodity will lose the gloss with lying; the longer kept,
the less worth. Off with't while 'tis vendible; answer the time
of request. Virginity, like an old courtier, wears her cap out of
fashion, richly suited but unsuitable; just like the brooch and
the toothpick, which wear not now. Your date is better in your
pie and your porridge than in your cheek. And your virginity,
your old virginity, is like one of our French wither'd pears: it
looks ill, it eats drily; marry, 'tis a wither'd pear; it was
formerly better; marry, yet 'tis a wither'd pear. Will you anything with it?

HELENA.

Not my virginity yet.

There shall your master have a thousand loves,

A mother, and a mistress, and a friend,

A phoenix, captain, and an enemy,

A guide, a goddess, and a sovereign,

A counsellor, a traitress, and a dear;

His humble ambition, proud humility,

His jarring concord, and his discord dulcet,

His faith, his sweet disaster; with a world

Of pretty, fond, adoptious christendoms

That blinking Cupid gossips. Now shall he-

I know not what he shall. God send him well!

The court's a learning-place, and he is one-

PAROLLES.

What one, i' faith?

HELENA.

That I wish well. 'Tis pity-

PAROLLES.

What's pity?

HELENA.

That wishing well had not a body in't
Which might be felt; that we, the poorer born,
Whose baser stars do shut us up in wishes,
Might with effects of them follow our friends
And show what we alone must think, which never
Returns us thanks.

Enter PAGE

PAGE.

Monsieur Parolles, my lord calls for you. *Exit* PAGE

PAROLLES.

Little Helen, farewell; if I can remember thee, I will
think of thee at court.

HELENA.

Monsieur Parolles, you were born under a charitable star.

PAROLLES.

Under Mars, I.

HELENA.

I especially think, under Mars.

PAROLLES.

Why under Man?

HELENA.

The wars hath so kept you under that you must needs be born under Mars.

PAROLLES.

When he was predominant.

HELENA.

When he was retrograde, I think, rather.

PAROLLES.

Why think you so?

HELENA.
You go so much backward when you fight.

PAROLLES.

That's for advantage.

HELENA.
So is running away, when fear proposes the safety: but the
composition that your valour and fear makes in you is a virtue of
a good wing, and I like the wear well.

PAROLLES.
I am so full of business I cannot answer thee
acutely. I

will return perfect courtier; in the which my instruction shall serve to naturalize thee, so thou wilt be capable of a courtier's counsel, and understand what advice shall thrust upon thee; else thou diest in thine unthankfulness, and thine ignorance makes thee away. Farewell. When thou hast leisure, say thy prayers; when thou hast none, remember thy friends. Get thee a good husband and use him as he uses thee. So, farewell.

Exit

HELENA. Our remedies oft in ourselves do lie,
Which we ascribe to heaven. The fated sky
Gives us free scope; only doth backward pull
Our slow designs when we ourselves are dull.
What power is it which mounts my love so high,
That makes me see, and cannot feed mine eye?
The mightiest space in fortune nature brings
To join like likes, and kiss like native things.
Impossible be strange attempts to those
That weigh their pains in sense, and do suppose
What hath been cannot be. Who ever strove
To show her merit that did miss her love?

The King's disease-my project may deceive me,

But my intents are fix'd, and will not leave me. *Exit*

ACT I. SCENE 2. Paris. The KING'S palace

Flourish of cornets. *Enter* the KING OF FRANCE, with letters, and divers ATTENDANTS

KING.

The Florentines and Senoys are by th' ears;

Have fought with equal fortune, and continue

A braving war.

FIRST LORD.

So 'tis reported, sir.

KING.

Nay, 'tis most credible. We here receive it,

A certainty, vouch'd from our cousin Austria,

With caution, that the Florentine will move us

For speedy aid; wherein our dearest friend

Prejudicates the business, and would seem

To have us make denial.

FIRST LORD.

His love and wisdom,

Approv'd so to your Majesty, may plead

For amplest credence.

KING.

He hath arm'd our answer,

And Florence is denied before he comes;

Yet, for our gentlemen that mean to see

The Tuscan service, freely have they leave

To stand on either part.

SECOND LORD.

It well may serve

A nursery to our gentry, who are sick

For breathing and exploit.

KING.

What's he comes here?

Enter BERTRAM, LAFEU, and PAROLLES

FIRST LORD.

It is the Count Rousillon, my good lord,
Young Bertram.

KING.

Youth, thou bear'st thy father's face;
Frank nature, rather curious than in haste,
Hath well compos'd thee. Thy father's moral parts
Mayst thou inherit too! Welcome to Paris.

BERTRAM.

My thanks and duty are your Majesty's.

KING.

I would I had that corporal soundness now,
As when thy father and myself in friendship
First tried our soldiership. He did look far
Into the service of the time, and was
Discipled of the bravest. He lasted long;

But on us both did haggish age steal on,

And wore us out of act. It much repairs me

To talk of your good father. In his youth

He had the wit which I can well observe

To-day in our young lords; but they may jest

Till their own scorn return to them unnoted

Ere they can hide their levity in honour.

So like a courtier, contempt nor bitterness

Were in his pride or sharpness; if they were,

His equal had awak'd them; and his honour,

Clock to itself, knew the true minute when

Exception bid him speak, and at this time

His tongue obey'd his hand. Who were below him

He us'd as creatures of another place;

And bow'd his eminent top to their low ranks,

Making them proud of his humility

In their poor praise he humbled. Such a man

Might be a copy to these younger times;

Which, followed well, would demonstrate them now

But goers backward.

BERTRAM.

His good remembrance, sir,

Lies richer in your thoughts than on his tomb;

So in approof lives not his epitaph

As in your royal speech.

KING.

Would I were with him! He would always say-

Methinks I hear him now; his plausive words

He scatter'd not in ears, but grafted them

To grow there, and to bear- 'Let me not live'-

This his good melancholy oft began,

On the catastrophe and heel of pastime,

When it was out-'Let me not live' quoth he

'After my flame lacks oil, to be the snuff

Of younger spirits, whose apprehensive senses

All but new things disdain; whose judgments are

Mere fathers of their garments; whose constancies

Expire before their fashions.' This he wish'd.

I, after him, do after him wish too,

Since I nor wax nor honey can bring home, I quickly were dissolved from my hive,

To give some labourers room.

SECOND LORD.

You're loved, sir;

They that least lend it you shall lack you first.

KING.

I fill a place, I know't. How long is't, Count,

Since the physician at your father's died?

He was much fam'd.

BERTRAM.

Some six months since, my lord.

KING.

If he were living, I would try him yet-

Lend me an arm-the rest have worn me out

With several applications. Nature and sickness

Debate it at their leisure. Welcome, Count;

My son's no dearer.

BERTRAM.

Thank your Majesty. *Exeunt [Flourish]*

ACT I. SCENE 3. Rousillon. The COUNT'S palace

Enter COUNTESS, STEWARD, and CLOWN

COUNTESS.

I will now hear; what say you of this gentlewoman?

STEWARD.

Madam, the care I have had to even your content I wish

might be found in the calendar of my past endeavours; for then we

wound our modesty, and make foul the clearness of our deservings,

when of ourselves we publish them.

COUNTESS.

What does this knave here? Get you gone, sirrah. The

complaints I have heard of you I do not all believe; 'tis my

slowness that I do not, for I know you lack not folly to commit them and have ability enough to make such knaveries yours.

CLOWN.

'Tis not unknown to you, madam, I am a poor fellow.

COUNTESS.
Well, sir.

CLOWN.
No, madam, 'tis not so well that I am poor, though many of
the rich are damn'd; but if I may have your ladyship's good will
to go to the world, Isbel the woman and I will do as we may.

COUNTESS.
Wilt thou needs be a beggar?

CLOWN.

I do beg your good will in this case.

COUNTESS.

In what case?

CLOWN.

In Isbel's case and mine own. Service is no heritage;

and I

think I shall never have the blessing of God till I have issue o'

my body; for they say bames are blessings.

COUNTESS.

Tell me thy reason why thou wilt marry.

CLOWN.

My poor body, madam, requires it. I am driven on by the

flesh; and he must needs go that the devil drives.

COUNTESS.

Is this all your worship's reason?

CLOWN.

Faith, madam, I have other holy reasons, such as they are.

COUNTESS.

May the world know them?

CLOWN.

I have been, madam, a wicked creature, as you and all flesh
and blood are; and, indeed, I do marry that I may repent.

COUNTESS.

Thy marriage, sooner than thy wickedness.

CLOWN.

I am out o' friends, madam, and I hope to have friends for my wife's sake.

COUNTESS.

Such friends are thine enemies, knave.

CLOWN.

Y'are shallow, madam-in great friends; for the knaves come to do that for me which I am aweary of. He that ears my land spares my team, and gives me leave to in the crop. If I be his cuckold, he's my drudge. He that comforts my wife is the cherisher of my flesh and blood; he that cherishes my flesh and blood loves my flesh and blood; he that loves my flesh and blood is my friend; ergo, he that kisses my wife is my friend. If men could be contented to be what they are, there were no fear in marriage; for young Charbon the puritan and old Poysam the papist, howsome'er their hearts are sever'd in religion, their heads are both one; they may jowl horns together like any deer i' th' herd.

COUNTESS.

Wilt thou ever be a foul-mouth'd and calumnious knave?

CLOWN.

A prophet I, madam; and I speak the truth the next way:

For I the ballad will repeat,

Which men full true shall find:

Your marriage comes by destiny,
Your cuckoo sings by kind.

COUNTESS.

Get you gone, sir; I'll talk with you more anon.

STEWARD.

May it please you, madam, that he bid Helen come to you.

Of her I am to speak.

COUNTESS.

Sirrah, tell my gentlewoman I would speak with her;
Helen I mean.

CLOWN.

[Sings]

'Was this fair face the cause' quoth she
'Why the Grecians sacked Troy?
Fond done, done fond,

Was this King Priam's joy?'
With that she sighed as she stood,
With that she sighed as she stood,
And gave this sentence then:
'Among nine bad if one be good,
Among nine bad if one be good,
There's yet one good in ten.'

COUNTESS.

What, one good in ten? You corrupt the song, sirrah.

CLOWN.

One good woman in ten, madam, which is a purifying o' th' song. Would God would serve the world so all the year! We'd find no fault with the tithe-woman, if I were the parson. One in ten, quoth 'a! An we might have a good woman born before every blazing star, or at an earthquake, 'twould mend the lottery well: a man may draw his heart out ere 'a pluck one.

COUNTESS.

You'll be gone, sir knave, and do as I command you.

CLOWN.

That man should be at woman's command, and yet no hurt done!
Though honesty be no puritan, yet it will do no hurt; it will
wear the surplice of humility over the black gown of a big heart.
I am going, forsooth. The business is for Helen to come hither.
Exit

COUNTESS. Well, now.

STEWARD.
I know, madam, you love your gentlewoman entirely.

COUNTESS.
Faith I do. Her father bequeath'd her to me; and she
herself, without other advantage, may lawfully make title to as
much love as she finds. There is more owing her than is paid; and
more shall be paid her than she'll demand.

STEWARD.

Madam, I was very late more near her than I think she
wish'd me. Alone she was, and did communicate to herself her own
words to her own ears; she thought, I dare vow for her, they
touch'd not any stranger sense. Her matter was, she loved your
son. Fortune, she said, was no goddess, that had put such
difference betwixt their two estates; Love no god, that would not
extend his might only where qualities were level; Diana no queen
of virgins, that would suffer her poor knight surpris'd without
rescue in the first assault, or ransom afterward. This she
deliver'd in the most bitter touch of sorrow that e'er I heard
virgin exclaim in; which I held my duty speedily to acquaint you
withal; sithence, in the loss that may happen, it concerns you
something to know it.

COUNTESS.

YOU have discharg'd this honestly; keep it to yourself.
Many likelihoods inform'd me of this before, which hung so
tott'ring in the balance that I could neither believe nor
misdoubt. Pray you leave me. Stall this in your bosom; and I
thank you for your honest care. I will speak with you further

anon. *Exit* STEWARD

Enter HELENA

Even so it was with me when I was young.
If ever we are nature's, these are ours; this thorn
Doth to our rose of youth rightly belong;
Our blood to us, this to our blood is born.
It is the show and seal of nature's truth,
Where love's strong passion is impress'd in youth.
By our remembrances of days foregone,
Such were our faults, or then we thought them none.

Her eye is sick on't; I observe her now.

HELENA.

What is your pleasure, madam?

COUNTESS.

You know, Helen,
I am a mother to you.

HELENA.

Mine honourable mistress.

COUNTESS.
Nay, a mother.

Why not a mother? When I said 'a mother,'
Methought you saw a serpent. What's in 'mother'
That you start at it? I say I am your mother,
And put you in the catalogue of those
That were enwombed mine. 'Tis often seen
Adoption strives with nature, and choice breeds
A native slip to us from foreign seeds.
You ne'er oppress'd me with a mother's groan,
Yet I express to you a mother's care.
God's mercy, maiden! does it curd thy blood
To say I am thy mother? What's the matter,
That this distempered messenger of wet,
The many-colour'd Iris, rounds thine eye?

Why, that you are my daughter?

HELENA.

That I am not.

COUNTESS.

I say I am your mother.

HELENA.

Pardon, madam.

The Count Rousillon cannot be my brother:

I am from humble, he from honoured name;

No note upon my parents, his all noble.

My master, my dear lord he is; and I

His servant live, and will his vassal die.

He must not be my brother.

COUNTESS.

Nor I your mother?

HELENA.

You are my mother, madam; would you were-

So that my lord your son were not my brother-

Indeed my mother! Or were you both our mothers,

I care no more for than I do for heaven,

So I were not his sister. Can't no other,

But, I your daughter, he must be my brother?

COUNTESS.

Yes, Helen, you might be my daughter-in-law.

God shield you mean it not! 'daughter' and 'mother'

So strive upon your pulse. What! pale again?

My fear hath catch'd your fondness. Now I see

The myst'ry of your loneliness, and find

Your salt tears' head. Now to all sense 'tis gross

You love my son; invention is asham'd,

Against the proclamation of thy passion, To say thou dost not. Therefore tell me true;

But tell me then, 'tis so; for, look, thy cheeks

Confess it, th' one to th' other; and thine eyes

See it so grossly shown in thy behaviours

That in their kind they speak it; only sin

And hellish obstinacy tie thy tongue,

That truth should be suspected. Speak, is't so?

If it be so, you have wound a goodly clew;

If it be not, forswear't; howe'er, I charge thee,

As heaven shall work in me for thine avail,

To tell me truly.

HELENA.

Good madam, pardon me.

COUNTESS.

Do you love my son?

HELENA.

Your pardon, noble mistress.

COUNTESS.

Love you my son?

HELENA.
Do not you love him, madam?

COUNTESS.
Go not about; my love hath in't a bond
Whereof the world takes note. Come, come, disclose
The state of your affection; for your passions
Have to the full appeach'd.

HELENA.
Then I confess,
Here on my knee, before high heaven and you,
That before you, and next unto high heaven,
I love your son.

My friends were poor, but honest; so's my love.

Be not offended, for it hurts not him
That he is lov'd of me; I follow him not
By any token of presumptuous suit,
Nor would I have him till I do deserve him;
Yet never know how that desert should be.
I know I love in vain, strive against hope;
Yet in this captious and intenible sieve
I still pour in the waters of my love,
And lack not to lose still. Thus, Indian-like,
Religious in mine error, I adore
The sun that looks upon his worshipper
But knows of him no more. My dearest madam,
Let not your hate encounter with my love,
For loving where you do; but if yourself,
Whose aged honour cites a virtuous youth,
Did ever in so true a flame of liking
Wish chastely and love dearly that your Dian
Was both herself and Love; O, then, give pity
To her whose state is such that cannot choose
But lend and give where she is sure to lose;
That seeks not to find that her search implies,

But, riddle-like, lives sweetly where she dies!

COUNTESS.

Had you not lately an intent-speak truly-

To go to Paris?

HELENA.

Madam, I had.

COUNTESS.

Wherefore? Tell true.

HELENA.

I will tell truth; by grace itself I swear.

You know my father left me some prescriptions

Of rare and prov'd effects, such as his reading

And manifest experience had collected

For general sovereignty; and that he will'd me

In heedfull'st reservation to bestow them,

As notes whose faculties inclusive were

More than they were in note. Amongst the rest
There is a remedy, approv'd, set down,
To cure the desperate languishings whereof
The King is render'd lost.

COUNTESS.
This was your motive
For Paris, was it? Speak.

HELENA.
My lord your son made me to think of this,
Else Paris, and the medicine, and the King,
Had from the conversation of my thoughts
Haply been absent then.

COUNTESS.
But think you, Helen,
If you should tender your supposed aid,
He would receive it? He and his physicians
Are of a mind: he, that they cannot help him;
They, that they cannot help. How shall they credit

A poor unlearned virgin, when the schools,

Embowell'd of their doctrine, have let off

The danger to itself?

HELENA.

There's something in't

More than my father's skill, which was the great'st

Of his profession, that his good receipt

Shall for my legacy be sanctified

By th' luckiest stars in heaven; and, would your honour

But give me leave to try success, I'd venture

The well-lost life of mine on his Grace's cure.

By such a day and hour.

COUNTESS.

Dost thou believe't?

HELENA.

Ay, madam, knowingly.

COUNTESS.

Why, Helen, thou shalt have my leave and love,

Means and attendants, and my loving greetings

To those of mine in court. I'll stay at home,

And pray God's blessing into thy attempt.

Be gone to-morrow; and be sure of this,

What I can help thee to thou shalt not miss. *Exeunt*

ACT II. SCENE 1. Paris. The KING'S palace

Flourish of cornets. *Enter* the KING with divers young LORDS taking leave for the Florentine war; BERTRAM and PAROLLES; ATTENDANTS

KING.

Farewell, young lords; these warlike principles

Do not throw from you. And you, my lords, farewell;

Share the advice betwixt you; if both gain all,

The gift doth stretch itself as 'tis receiv'd,

And is enough for both.

FIRST LORD.

'Tis our hope, sir,

After well-ent'red soldiers, to return
And find your Grace in health.

KING.

No, no, it cannot be; and yet my heart
Will not confess he owes the malady
That doth my life besiege. Farewell, young lords;
Whether I live or die, be you the sons
Of worthy Frenchmen; let higher Italy-
Those bated that inherit but the fall
Of the last monarchy-see that you come
Not to woo honour, but to wed it; when
The bravest questant shrinks, find what you seek,
That fame may cry you aloud. I say farewell.

SECOND LORD.

Health, at your bidding, serve your Majesty!

KING.

Those girls of Italy, take heed of them;

They say our French lack language to deny,

If they demand; beware of being captives

Before you serve.

BOTH.

Our hearts receive your warnings.

KING.

Farewell. [To ATTENDANTS] Come hither to me.

The KING retires attended

FIRST LORD.

O my sweet lord, that you will stay behind us!

PAROLLES.

'Tis not his fault, the spark.

SECOND LORD.

O, 'tis brave wars!

PAROLLES.

Most admirable! I have seen those wars.

BERTRAM.

I am commanded here and kept a coil with

'Too young' and next year' and ''Tis too early.'

PAROLLES.

An thy mind stand to 't, boy, steal away bravely.

BERTRAM.

I shall stay here the forehorse to a smock,

Creaking my shoes on the plain masonry,

Till honour be bought up, and no sword worn

But one to dance with. By heaven, I'll steal away.

FIRST LORD.

There's honour in the theft.

PAROLLES.

Commit it, Count.

SECOND LORD.

I am your accessary; and so farewell.

BERTRAM.

I grow to you, and our parting is a tortur'd body.

FIRST LORD.

Farewell, Captain.

SECOND LORD.

Sweet Monsieur Parolles!

PAROLLES.

Noble heroes, my sword and yours are kin. Good sparks and lustrous, a word, good metals: you shall find in the regiment of the Spinii one Captain Spurio, with his cicatrice, an emblem of war, here on his sinister cheek; it was this very sword entrench'd it. Say to him I live; and observe his reports for me.

FIRST LORD.

We shall, noble Captain.

PAROLLES.

Mars dote on you for his novices! *Exeunt* LORDS

What will ye do?

Re-enter the KING

BERTRAM.

Stay; the King!

PAROLLES.

Use a more spacious ceremony to the noble lords; you have restrain'd yourself within the list of too cold an adieu. Be more expressive to them; for they wear themselves in the cap of the time; there do muster true gait; eat, speak, and move, under the influence of the most receiv'd star; and though the devil lead the measure, such are to be followed. After them, and take a more dilated farewell.

BERTRAM.

And I will do so.

PAROLLES.

Worthy fellows; and like to prove most sinewy

sword-men.

Exeunt BERTRAM and PAROLLES

Enter LAFEU

LAFEU.

[Kneeling] Pardon, my lord, for me and for my tidings.

KING.

I'll fee thee to stand up.

LAFEU.

Then here's a man stands that has brought his pardon.

I would you had kneel'd, my lord, to ask me mercy;
And that at my bidding you could so stand up.

KING.
I would I had; so I had broke thy pate,
And ask'd thee mercy for't.

LAFEU.
Good faith, across!
But, my good lord, 'tis thus: will you be cur'd
Of your infirmity?

KING.

No.

LAFEU.
O, will you eat
No grapes, my royal fox? Yes, but you will
My noble grapes, an if my royal fox
Could reach them: I have seen a medicine

That's able to breathe life into a stone,

Quicken a rock, and make you dance canary

With spritely fire and motion; whose simple touch

Is powerful to araise King Pepin, nay,

To give great Charlemain a pen in's hand

And write to her a love-line.

KING.

What her is this?

LAFEU.

Why, Doctor She! My lord, there's one arriv'd,

If you will see her. Now, by my faith and honour,

If seriously I may convey my thoughts

In this my light deliverance, I have spoke

With one that in her sex, her years, profession,

Wisdom, and constancy, hath amaz'd me more

Than I dare blame my weakness. Will you see her,

For that is her demand, and know her business?

That done, laugh well at me.

KING.

Now, good Lafeu,

Bring in the admiration, that we with the

May spend our wonder too, or take off thine

By wond'ring how thou took'st it.

LAFEU.

Nay, I'll fit you,

And not be all day neither. *Exit* LAFEU

KING.

Thus he his special nothing ever prologues.

Re-enter LAFEU with HELENA

LAFEU.

Nay, come your ways.

KING.

This haste hath wings indeed.

LAFEU.

Nay, come your ways;

This is his Majesty; say your mind to him.

A traitor you do look like; but such traitors

His Majesty seldom fears. I am Cressid's uncle,

That dare leave two together. Fare you well. *Exit*

KING. Now, fair one, does your business follow us?

HELENA.

Ay, my good lord.

Gerard de Narbon was my father,

In what he did profess, well found.

KING.

I knew him.

HELENA.

The rather will I spare my praises towards him;

Knowing him is enough. On's bed of death

Many receipts he gave me; chiefly one,

Which, as the dearest issue of his practice,

And of his old experience th' only darling,

He bade me store up as a triple eye,

Safer than mine own two, more dear. I have so:

And, hearing your high Majesty is touch'd

With that malignant cause wherein the honour

Of my dear father's gift stands chief in power,

I come to tender it, and my appliance,

With all bound humbleness.

KING.

We thank you, maiden;

But may not be so credulous of cure,

When our most learned doctors leave us, and

The congregated college have concluded

That labouring art can never ransom nature

From her inaidable estate-I say we must not

So stain our judgment, or corrupt our hope,

To prostitute our past-cure malady

To empirics; or to dissever so

Our great self and our credit to esteem
A senseless help, when help past sense we deem.

HELENA.
My duty then shall pay me for my pains.
I will no more enforce mine office on you;
Humbly entreating from your royal thoughts
A modest one to bear me back again.

KING.
I cannot give thee less, to be call'd grateful.
Thou thought'st to help me; and such thanks I give
As one near death to those that wish him live.
But what at full I know, thou know'st no part;
I knowing all my peril, thou no art.

HELENA.
What I can do can do no hurt to try,
Since you set up your rest 'gainst remedy.
He that of greatest works is finisher
Oft does them by the weakest minister.

So holy writ in babes hath judgment shown,
When judges have been babes. Great floods have flown
From simple sources, and great seas have dried
When miracles have by the greatest been denied.
Oft expectation fails, and most oft there
Where most it promises; and oft it hits
Where hope is coldest, and despair most fits.

KING.
I must not hear thee. Fare thee well, kind maid;
Thy pains, not us'd, must by thyself be paid;
Proffers not took reap thanks for their reward.

HELENA.

Inspired merit so by breath is barr'd.
It is not so with Him that all things knows,
As 'tis with us that square our guess by shows;
But most it is presumption in us when
The help of heaven we count the act of men.
Dear sir, to my endeavours give consent;

Of heaven, not me, make an experiment.

I am not an impostor, that proclaim

Myself against the level of mine aim;

But know I think, and think I know most sure,

My art is not past power nor you past cure.

KING.

Art thou so confident? Within what space

Hop'st thou my cure?

HELENA.

The greatest Grace lending grace.

Ere twice the horses of the sun shall bring

Their fiery torcher his diurnal ring,

Ere twice in murk and occidental damp

Moist Hesperus hath quench'd his sleepy lamp,

Or four and twenty times the pilot's glass

Hath told the thievish minutes how they pass,

What is infirm from your sound parts shall fly,

Health shall live free, and sickness freely die.

KING.

Upon thy certainty and confidence

What dar'st thou venture?

HELENA.

Tax of impudence,

A strumpet's boldness, a divulged shame,

Traduc'd by odious ballads; my maiden's name

Sear'd otherwise; ne worse of worst-extended

With vilest torture let my life be ended.

KING.

Methinks in thee some blessed spirit doth speak

His powerful sound within an organ weak;

And what impossibility would slay

In common sense, sense saves another way.

Thy life is dear; for all that life can rate

Worth name of life in thee hath estimate:

Youth, beauty, wisdom, courage, all

That happiness and prime can happy call.

Thou this to hazard needs must intimate

Skill infinite or monstrous desperate.

Sweet practiser, thy physic I will try,

That ministers thine own death if I die.

HELENA.

If I break time, or flinch in property

Of what I spoke, unpitied let me die;

And well deserv'd. Not helping, death's my fee;

But, if I help, what do you promise me?

KING.

Make thy demand.

HELENA.

But will you make it even?

KING.

Ay, by my sceptre and my hopes of heaven.

HELENA.

Then shalt thou give me with thy kingly hand
What husband in thy power I will command.
Exempted be from me the arrogance
To choose from forth the royal blood of France,
My low and humble name to propagate
With any branch or image of thy state;
But such a one, thy vassal, whom I know
Is free for me to ask, thee to bestow.

KING.
Here is my hand; the premises observ'd,
Thy will by my performance shall be serv'd.
So make the choice of thy own time, for I,
Thy resolv'd patient, on thee still rely.
More should I question thee, and more I must,
Though more to know could not be more to trust,
From whence thou cam'st, how tended on. But rest
Unquestion'd welcome and undoubted blest.
Give me some help here, ho! If thou proceed
As high as word, my deed shall match thy deed.
[Flourish. Exeunt]

ACT II. SCENE 2. Rousillon. The COUNT'S palace

Enter COUNTESS and CLOWN

COUNTESS.

Come on, sir; I shall now put you to the height of your breeding.

CLOWN.

I will show myself highly fed and lowly taught. I know my

business is but to the court.

COUNTESS.

To the court! Why, what place make you special, when you

put off that with such contempt? But to the court!

CLOWN.

Truly, madam, if God have lent a man any manners, he may

easily put it off at court. He that cannot make a leg, put off's

cap, kiss his hand, and say nothing, has neither leg, hands,

lip,

nor cap; and indeed such a fellow, to say precisely, were not for the court; but for me, I have an answer will serve all men.

COUNTESS.

Marry, that's a bountiful answer that fits all questions.

CLOWN.

It is like a barber's chair, that fits all buttocks-the pin buttock, the quatch buttock, the brawn buttock, or any buttock.

COUNTESS.

Will your answer serve fit to all questions?

CLOWN.

As fit as ten groats is for the hand of an attorney, as your French crown for your taffety punk, as Tib's rush for Tom's forefinger, as a pancake for Shrove Tuesday, a morris for Mayday, as the nail to his hole, the cuckold to his horn, as a scolding quean to a wrangling knave, as the nun's lip to the friar's mouth; nay, as the pudding to his skin.

COUNTESS.

Have you, I, say, an answer of such fitness for all questions?

CLOWN.

From below your duke to beneath your constable, it will fit any question.

COUNTESS.

It must be an answer of most monstrous size that must fit all demands.

CLOWN.

But a trifle neither, in good faith, if the learned should
speak truth of it. Here it is, and all that belongs to't. Ask me
if I am a courtier: it shall do you no harm to learn.

COUNTESS.

To be young again, if we could, I will be a fool in
question, hoping to be the wiser by your answer. I pray you,
sir,
are you a courtier?

CLOWN.

O Lord, sir!-There's a simple putting off. More, more, a hundred of them.

COUNTESS.

Sir, I am a poor friend of yours, that loves you.

CLOWN.

O Lord, sir!-Thick, thick; spare not me.

COUNTESS.

I think, sir, you can eat none of this homely meat.

CLOWN.

O Lord, sir!-Nay, put me to't, I warrant you.

COUNTESS.

You were lately whipp'd, sir, as I think.

CLOWN.

O Lord, sir!-Spare not me.

COUNTESS.

Do you cry 'O Lord, sir!' at your whipping, and 'spare

not me'? Indeed your 'O Lord, sir!' is very sequent to your

whipping. You would answer very well to a whipping, if you were but bound to't.

CLOWN.

I ne'er had worse luck in my life in my 'O Lord, sir!' I see

thing's may serve long, but not serve ever.

COUNTESS.

I play the noble housewife with the time,

To entertain it so merrily with a fool.

CLOWN.

O Lord, sir!-Why, there't serves well again.

COUNTESS.

An end, sir! To your business: give Helen this,

And urge her to a present answer back;

Commend me to my kinsmen and my son. This is not much.

CLOWN.

Not much commendation to them?

COUNTESS.

Not much employment for you. You understand me?

CLOWN.

Most fruitfully; I am there before my legs.

COUNTESS.

Haste you again. *Exeunt*

ACT II. SCENE 3. Paris. The KING'S palace

Enter BERTRAM, LAFEU, and PAROLLES

LAFEU.

They say miracles are past; and we have our philosophical
persons to make modern and familiar things supernatural and
causeless. Hence is it that we make trifles of terrors,
ensconcing ourselves into seeming knowledge when we should submit
ourselves to an unknown fear.

PAROLLES.

Why, 'tis the rarest argument of wonder that hath shot
out in our latter times.

BERTRAM.

And so 'tis.

LAFEU.

To be relinquish'd of the artists-

PAROLLES.

So I say-both of Galen and Paracelsus.

LAFEU.

Of all the learned and authentic fellows-

PAROLLES.

Right; so I say.

LAFEU.

That gave him out incurable-

PAROLLES.

Why, there 'tis; so say I too.

LAFEU.

Not to be help'd-

PAROLLES.

Right; as 'twere a man assur'd of a-

LAFEU.

Uncertain life and sure death.

PAROLLES.

Just; you say well; so would I have said.

LAFEU.

I may truly say it is a novelty to the world.

PAROLLES.

It is indeed. If you will have it in showing, you shall read it in what-do-ye-call't here.

LAFEU.

[Reading the ballad title] 'A Showing of a Heavenly Effect in an Earthly Actor.'

PAROLLES.

That's it; I would have said the very same.

LAFEU.

Why, your dolphin is not lustier. 'Fore me, I speak in

respect-

PAROLLES.

Nay, 'tis strange, 'tis very strange; that is the brief

and the tedious of it; and he's of a most facinerious spirit that

will not acknowledge it to be the-

LAFEU.

Very hand of heaven.

PAROLLES.

Ay; so I say.

LAFEU.

In a most weak-

PAROLLES.

And debile minister, great power, great transcendence;

which should, indeed, give us a further use to be made than alone

the recov'ry of the King, as to be-

LAFEU.

Generally thankful.

Enter KING, HELENA, and ATTENDANTS

PAROLLES.

I would have said it; you say well. Here comes the King.

LAFEU.

Lustig, as the Dutchman says. I'll like a maid the better,

whilst I have a tooth in my head. Why, he's able to lead her a coranto.

PAROLLES.

Mort du vinaigre! Is not this Helen?

LAFEU.

'Fore God, I think so.

KING.

Go, call before me all the lords in court.

Exit an ATTENDANT

Sit, my preserver, by thy patient's side;
And with this healthful hand, whose banish'd sense
Thou has repeal'd, a second time receive
The confirmation of my promis'd gift,
Which but attends thy naming.

Enter three or four LORDS

Fair maid, send forth thine eye. This youthful parcel

Of noble bachelors stand at my bestowing,

O'er whom both sovereign power and father's voice

I have to use. Thy frank election make;

Thou hast power to choose, and they none to forsake.

HELENA.

To each of you one fair and virtuous mistress

Fall, when love please. Marry, to each but one!

LAFEU.

I'd give bay Curtal and his furniture

My mouth no more were broken than these boys',

And writ as little beard.

KING.

Peruse them well.

Not one of those but had a noble father.

HELENA.

Gentlemen,

Heaven hath through me restor'd the King to health.

ALL.

We understand it, and thank heaven for you.

HELENA.
I am a simple maid, and therein wealthiest
That I protest I simply am a maid.
Please it your Majesty, I have done already.

The blushes in my cheeks thus whisper me:
'We blush that thou shouldst choose; but, be refused,
Let the white death sit on thy cheek for ever,
We'll ne'er come there again.'

KING.

Make choice and see:
Who shuns thy love shuns all his love in me.

HELENA.

Now, Dian, from thy altar do I fly,

And to imperial Love, that god most high,

Do my sighs stream. Sir, will you hear my suit?

FIRST LORD.

And grant it.

HELENA.

Thanks, sir; all the rest is mute.

LAFEU.

I had rather be in this choice than throw ames-ace for my life.

HELENA.

The honour, sir, that flames in your fair eyes,

Before I speak, too threat'ningly replies.

Love make your fortunes twenty times above

Her that so wishes, and her humble love!

SECOND LORD.

No better, if you please.

HELENA.

My wish receive,

Which great Love grant; and so I take my leave.

LAFEU.

Do all they deny her? An they were sons of mine I'd have

them whipt; or I would send them to th' Turk to make eunuchs of.

HELENA.

Be not afraid that I your hand should take;

I'll never do you wrong for your own sake.

Blessing upon your vows; and in your bed

Find fairer fortune, if you ever wed!

LAFEU.

These boys are boys of ice; they'll none have her.

Sure, they are bastards to the English; the French ne'er got 'em.

HELENA.

You are too young, too happy, and too good,

To make yourself a son out of my blood.

FOURTH LORD.

Fair one, I think not so.

LAFEU.

There's one grape yet; I am sure thy father drunk

wine-but

if thou be'st not an ass, I am a youth of fourteen; I have known thee already.

HELENA.

[To BERTRAM] I dare not say I take you; but I give

Me and my service, ever whilst I live,

Into your guiding power. This is the man.

KING.

Why, then, young Bertram, take her; she's thy wife.

BERTRAM.

My wife, my liege! I shall beseech your Highness,

In such a business give me leave to use

The help of mine own eyes.

KING.

Know'st thou not, Bertram,

What she has done for me?

BERTRAM.

Yes, my good lord;

But never hope to know why I should marry her.

KING.

Thou know'st she has rais'd me from my sickly bed.

BERTRAM.

But follows it, my lord, to bring me down

Must answer for your raising? I know her well:

She had her breeding at my father's charge.

A poor physician's daughter my wife! Disdain

Rather corrupt me ever!

KING.

'Tis only title thou disdain'st in her, the which

I can build up. Strange is it that our bloods,

Of colour, weight, and heat, pour'd all together,

Would quite confound distinction, yet stand off

In differences so mighty. If she be

All that is virtuous-save what thou dislik'st,

A poor physician's daughter-thou dislik'st

Of virtue for the name; but do not so.

From lowest place when virtuous things proceed,

The place is dignified by the doer's deed;

Where great additions swell's, and virtue none,

It is a dropsied honour. Good alone

Is good without a name. Vileness is so:

The property by what it is should go,

Not by the title. She is young, wise, fair;

In these to nature she's immediate heir;

And these breed honour. That is honour's scorn

Which challenges itself as honour's born

And is not like the sire. Honours thrive

When rather from our acts we them derive

Than our fore-goers. The mere word's a slave,

Debauch'd on every tomb, on every grave

A lying trophy; and as oft is dumb

Where dust and damn'd oblivion is the tomb

Of honour'd bones indeed. What should be said?

If thou canst like this creature as a maid,

I can create the rest. Virtue and she

Is her own dower; honour and wealth from me.

BERTRAM.

I cannot love her, nor will strive to do 't.

KING.

Thou wrong'st thyself, if thou shouldst strive to choose.

HELENA.

That you are well restor'd, my lord, I'm glad.

Let the rest go.

KING.

My honour's at the stake; which to defeat,
I must produce my power. Here, take her hand,
Proud scornful boy, unworthy this good gift,
That dost in vile misprision shackle up
My love and her desert; that canst not dream
We, poising us in her defective scale,
Shall weigh thee to the beam; that wilt not know
It is in us to plant thine honour where
We please to have it grow. Check thy contempt;
Obey our will, which travails in thy good;
Believe not thy disdain, but presently
Do thine own fortunes that obedient right
Which both thy duty owes and our power claims;
Or I will throw thee from my care for ever
Into the staggers and the careless lapse
Of youth and ignorance; both my revenge and hate

Loosing upon thee in the name of justice,

Without all terms of pity. Speak; thine answer.

BERTRAM.

Pardon, my gracious lord; for I submit

My fancy to your eyes. When I consider

What great creation and what dole of honour

Flies where you bid it, I find that she which late

Was in my nobler thoughts most base is now

The praised of the King; who, so ennobled,

Is as 'twere born so.

KING.

Take her by the hand,

And tell her she is thine; to whom I promise

A counterpoise, if not to thy estate

A balance more replete.

BERTRAM.

I take her hand.

KING.

Good fortune and the favour of the King

Smile upon this contract; whose ceremony

Shall seem expedient on the now-born brief,

And be perform'd to-night. The solemn feast

Shall more attend upon the coming space,

Expecting absent friends. As thou lov'st her,

Thy love's to me religious; else, does err.

Exeunt all but LAFEU and PAROLLES who stay behind,

commenting of this wedding

LAFEU.

Do you hear, monsieur? A word with you.

PAROLLES.

Your pleasure, sir?

LAFEU.

Your lord and master did well to make his recantation.

PAROLLES.

Recantation! My Lord! my master!

LAFEU.

Ay; is it not a language I speak?

PAROLLES.

A most harsh one, and not to be understood without bloody succeeding. My master!

LAFEU.

Are you companion to the Count Rousillon?

PAROLLES.

To any count; to all counts; to what is man.

LAFEU.

To what is count's man: count's master is of another style.

PAROLLES.

You are too old, sir; let it satisfy you, you are too old.

LAFEU.

I must tell thee, sirrah, I write man; to which title age
cannot bring thee.

PAROLLES.

What I dare too well do, I dare not do.

LAFEU.

I did think thee, for two ordinaries, to be a pretty wise
fellow; thou didst make tolerable vent of thy travel; it might
pass. Yet the scarfs and the bannerets about thee did manifoldly
dissuade me from believing thee a vessel of too great a
burden. I
have now found thee; when I lose thee again I care not; yet art
thou good for nothing but taking up; and that thou'rt scarce worth.

PAROLLES.

Hadst thou not the privilege of antiquity upon thee-

LAFEU.

Do not plunge thyself too far in anger, lest thou hasten thy

trial; which if-Lord have mercy on thee for a hen! So, my good

window of lattice, fare thee well; thy casement I need not open,

for I look through thee. Give me thy hand.

PAROLLES.

My lord, you give me most egregious indignity.

LAFEU.

Ay, with all my heart; and thou art worthy of it.

PAROLLES.

I have not, my lord, deserv'd it.

LAFEU.

Yes, good faith, ev'ry dram of it; and I will not bate thee a scruple.

PAROLLES.

Well, I shall be wiser.

LAFEU.

Ev'n as soon as thou canst, for thou hast to pull at a smack
o' th' contrary. If ever thou be'st bound in thy scarf and
beaten, thou shalt find what it is to be proud of thy
bondage. I
have a desire to hold my acquaintance with thee, or rather my
knowledge, that I may say in the default 'He is a man I
know.'

PAROLLES.

My lord, you do me most insupportable vexation.

LAFEU.

I would it were hell pains for thy sake, and my poor doing
eternal; for doing I am past, as I will by thee, in what motion
age will give me leave. *Exit*

PAROLLES. Well, thou hast a son shall take this disgrace off me:

scurvy, old, filthy, scurvy lord! Well, I must be patient; there

is no fettering of authority. I'll beat him, by my life, if I can

meet him with any convenience, an he were double and double a

lord. I'll have no more pity of his age than I would have of-

I'll beat him, and if I could but meet him again.

Re-enter LAFEU

LAFEU.

Sirrah, your lord and master's married; there's news for

you; you have a new mistress.

PAROLLES.

I most unfeignedly beseech your lordship to make some

reservation of your wrongs. He is my good lord: whom I serve above is my master.

LAFEU.

Who? God?

PAROLLES.
Ay, sir.

LAFEU.
The devil it is that's thy master. Why dost thou garter up
thy arms o' this fashion? Dost make hose of thy sleeves? Do other
servants so? Thou wert best set thy lower part where thy nose
stands. By mine honour, if I were but two hours younger, I'd beat
thee. Methink'st thou art a general offence, and every man should
beat thee. I think thou wast created for men to breathe
themselves upon thee.

PAROLLES.
This is hard and undeserved measure, my lord.

LAFEU.
Go to, sir; you were beaten in Italy for picking a kernel
out of a pomegranate; you are a vagabond, and no true traveller;
you are more saucy with lords and honourable personages than the
commission of your birth and virtue gives you heraldry. You are
not worth another word, else I'd call you knave. I leave you.

Exit

Enter BERTRAM

PAROLLES.

Good, very, good, it is so then. Good, very good; let it be conceal'd awhile.

BERTRAM.

Undone, and forfeited to cares for ever!

PAROLLES.

What's the matter, sweetheart?

BERTRAM.

Although before the solemn priest I have sworn,

I will not bed her.

PAROLLES.

What, what, sweetheart?

BERTRAM.

O my Parolles, they have married me!
I'll to the Tuscan wars, and never bed her.

PAROLLES.
France is a dog-hole, and it no more merits
The tread of a man's foot. To th' wars!

BERTRAM.
There's letters from my mother; what th' import is I
know not yet.

PAROLLES.

Ay, that would be known. To th' wars, my boy, to th' wars!
He wears his honour in a box unseen
That hugs his kicky-wicky here at home,
Spending his manly marrow in her arms,
Which should sustain the bound and high curvet

Of Mars's fiery steed. To other regions!
France is a stable; we that dwell in't jades;
Therefore, to th' war!

BERTRAM.
It shall be so; I'll send her to my house,
Acquaint my mother with my hate to her,
And wherefore I am fled; write to the King
That which I durst not speak. His present gift
Shall furnish me to those Italian fields
Where noble fellows strike. War is no strife
To the dark house and the detested wife.

PAROLLES.
Will this capriccio hold in thee, art sure?

BERTRAM.

Go with me to my chamber and advise me.
I'll send her straight away. To-morrow
I'll to the wars, she to her single sorrow.

PAROLLES.

Why, these balls bound; there's noise in it. 'Tis hard:

A young man married is a man that's marr'd.
Therefore away, and leave her bravely; go.
The King has done you wrong; but, hush, 'tis so. *Exeunt*

ACT II. SCENE 4. Paris. The KING'S palace

Enter HELENA and CLOWN

HELENA.

My mother greets me kindly; is she well?

CLOWN.

She is not well, but yet she has her health; she's very
merry, but yet she is not well. But thanks be given, she's very
well, and wants nothing i' th' world; but yet she is not well.

HELENA.

If she be very well, what does she ail that she's not very well?

CLOWN.

Truly, she's very well indeed, but for two things.

HELENA.

What two things?

CLOWN.

One, that she's not in heaven, whither God send her quickly!
The other, that she's in earth, from whence God send her quickly!

Enter PAROLLES

PAROLLES.
Bless you, my fortunate lady!

HELENA.

I hope, sir, I have your good will to have mine own good fortunes.

PAROLLES.
You had my prayers to lead them on; and to keep them on,
have them still. O, my knave, how does my old lady?

CLOWN.
So that you had her wrinkles and I her money, I would she did as you say.

PAROLLES.

Why, I say nothing.

CLOWN.

Marry, you are the wiser man; for many a man's tongue shakes out his master's undoing. To say nothing, to do nothing, to know nothing, and to have nothing, is to be a great part of your title, which is within a very little of nothing.

PAROLLES.

Away! th'art a knave.

CLOWN.

You should have said, sir, 'Before a knave th'art a knave';
that's 'Before me th'art a knave.' This had been truth, sir.

PAROLLES.

Go to, thou art a witty fool; I have found thee.

CLOWN.

Did you find me in yourself, sir, or were you taught to find

me? The search, sir, was profitable; and much fool may you find

in you, even to the world's pleasure and the increase of laughter.

PAROLLES.

A good knave, i' faith, and well fed.

Madam, my lord will go away to-night:

A very serious business calls on him.

The great prerogative and rite of love,

Which, as your due, time claims, he does acknowledge;

But puts it off to a compell'd restraint;

Whose want, and whose delay, is strew'd with sweets,

Which they distil now in the curbed time,

To make the coming hour o'erflow with joy

And pleasure drown the brim.

HELENA.

What's his else?

PAROLLES.

That you will take your instant leave o' th' King,

And make this haste as your own good proceeding,

Strength'ned with what apology you think

May make it probable need.

HELENA.

What more commands he?

PAROLLES.

That, having this obtain'd, you presently

Attend his further pleasure.

HELENA.

In everything I wait upon his will.

PAROLLES.

I shall report it so.

HELENA.

I pray you. *Exit* PAROLLES

Come, sirrah. *Exeunt*

ACT II. SCENE 5. Paris. The KING'S palace

Enter LAFEU and BERTRAM

LAFEU.

But I hope your lordship thinks not him a soldier.

BERTRAM.

Yes, my lord, and of very valiant approof.

LAFEU.

You have it from his own deliverance.

BERTRAM.

And by other warranted testimony.

LAFEU.

Then my dial goes not true; I took this lark for a bunting.

BERTRAM.

I do assure you, my lord, he is very great in knowledge,

and accordingly valiant.

LAFEU.

I have then sinn'd against his experience and transgress'd

against his valour; and my state that way is dangerous, since

I

cannot yet find in my heart to repent. Here he comes; I pray you

make us friends; I will pursue the amity

Enter PAROLLES

PAROLLES.

[To BERTRAM] These things shall be done, sir.

LAFEU.

Pray you, sir, who's his tailor?

PAROLLES.

Sir!

LAFEU.

O, I know him well. Ay, sir; he, sir, 's a good workman,

a very good tailor.

BERTRAM.

[Aside to PAROLLES] Is she gone to the King?

PAROLLES.

She is.

BERTRAM.

Will she away to-night?

PAROLLES.

As you'll have her.

BERTRAM.

I have writ my letters, casketed my treasure,

Given order for our horses; and to-night,

When I should take possession of the bride,

End ere I do begin.

LAFEU.

A good traveller is something at the latter end of a dinner;

but one that lies three-thirds and uses a known truth to pass a

thousand nothings with, should be once heard and thrice beaten.

God save you, Captain.

BERTRAM.

Is there any unkindness between my lord and you,

monsieur?

PAROLLES.

I know not how I have deserved to run into my lord's displeasure.

LAFEU.

You have made shift to run into 't, boots and spurs and all,

like him that leapt into the custard; and out of it you'll run

again, rather than suffer question for your residence.

BERTRAM.

It may be you have mistaken him, my lord.

LAFEU.

And shall do so ever, though I took him at's prayers.

Fare you well, my lord; and believe this of me: there can be no

kernal in this light nut; the soul of this man is his clothes;

trust him not in matter of heavy consequence; I have kept of them

tame, and know their natures. Farewell, monsieur; I have spoken

better of you than you have or will to deserve at my hand;

but we

must do good against evil. *Exit*

PAROLLES. An idle lord, I swear.

BERTRAM.

I think so.

PAROLLES.

Why, do you not know him?

BERTRAM.

Yes, I do know him well; and common speech

Gives him a worthy pass. Here comes my clog.

Enter HELENA

HELENA.

I have, sir, as I was commanded from you,

Spoke with the King, and have procur'd his leave

For present parting; only he desires

Some private speech with you.

BERTRAM.

I shall obey his will.

You must not marvel, Helen, at my course,

Which holds not colour with the time, nor does

The ministration and required office

On my particular. Prepar'd I was not

For such a business; therefore am I found

So much unsettled. This drives me to entreat you

That presently you take your way for home,

And rather muse than ask why I entreat you;

For my respects are better than they seem,

And my appointments have in them a need

Greater than shows itself at the first view

To you that know them not. This to my mother.

[Giving a letter]

'Twill be two days ere I shall see you; so

I leave you to your wisdom.

HELENA.

Sir, I can nothing say

But that I am your most obedient servant.

BERTRAM.

Come, come, no more of that.

HELENA.
And ever shall
With true observance seek to eke out that
Wherein toward me my homely stars have fail'd
To equal my great fortune.

BERTRAM.
Let that go.

My haste is very great. Farewell; hie home.

HELENA.
Pray, sir, your pardon.

BERTRAM.

Well, what would you say?

HELENA.

I am not worthy of the wealth I owe,

Nor dare I say 'tis mine, and yet it is;

But, like a timorous thief, most fain would steal

What law does vouch mine own.

BERTRAM.

What would you have?

HELENA.

Something; and scarce so much; nothing, indeed.

I would not tell you what I would, my lord.

Faith, yes:

Strangers and foes do sunder and not kiss.

BERTRAM.

I pray you, stay not, but in haste to horse.

HELENA.

I shall not break your bidding, good my lord.

BERTRAM.

Where are my other men, monsieur?

Farewell! *Exit* HELENA

Go thou toward home, where I will never come

Whilst I can shake my sword or hear the drum.

Away, and for our flight.

PAROLLES.

Bravely, coragio! *Exeunt*

ACT III. SCENE 1. Florence. The DUKE's palace

Flourish. *Enter* the DUKE OF FLORENCE, attended; two

FRENCH LORDS, with a TROOP OF SOLDIERS

DUKE.

So that, from point to point, now have you hear

The fundamental reasons of this war;

Whose great decision hath much blood let forth

And more thirsts after.

FIRST LORD.

Holy seems the quarrel

Upon your Grace's part; black and fearful

On the opposer.

DUKE.

Therefore we marvel much our cousin France

Would in so just a business shut his bosom

Against our borrowing prayers.

SECOND LORD.

Good my lord,

The reasons of our state I cannot yield,

But like a common and an outward man

That the great figure of a council frames

By self-unable motion; therefore dare not
Say what I think of it, since I have found
Myself in my incertain grounds to fail
As often as I guess'd.

DUKE.
Be it his pleasure.

FIRST LORD.
But I am sure the younger of our nature,
That surfeit on their ease, will day by day
Come here for physic.

DUKE.
Welcome shall they be
And all the honours that can fly from us
Shall on them settle. You know your places well;
When better fall, for your avails they fell.
To-morrow to th' field. Flourish. *Exeunt*

ACT III. SCENE 2. Rousillon. The COUNT'S palace

Enter COUNTESS and CLOWN

COUNTESS.

It hath happen'd all as I would have had it, save that he
comes not along with her.

CLOWN.

By my troth, I take my young lord to be a very melancholy man.

COUNTESS.

By what observance, I pray you?

CLOWN.

Why, he will look upon his boot and sing; mend the ruff and
sing; ask questions and sing; pick his teeth and sing. I know a
man that had this trick of melancholy sold a goodly manor for a song.

COUNTESS.

Let me see what he writes, and when he means to come.

[Opening a letter]

CLOWN.

I have no mind to Isbel since I was at court. Our old ling and our Isbels o' th' country are nothing like your old ling and your Isbels o' th' court. The brains of my Cupid's knock'd out; and I begin to love, as an old man loves money, with no stomach.

COUNTESS.

What have we here?

CLOWN.

E'en that you have there. *Exit*

COUNTESS. *[Reads]* 'I have sent you a daughter-in-law; she hath recovered the King and undone me. I have wedded her, not bedded her; and sworn to make the "not" eternal. You shall hear I am run away; know it before the report come. If there be breadth enough in the world, I will hold a long distance. My duty to you.

Your unfortunate son,

BERTRAM.'

This is not well, rash and unbridled boy,

To fly the favours of so good a king,

To pluck his indignation on thy head

By the misprizing of a maid too virtuous

For the contempt of empire.

Re-enter CLOWN

CLOWN.

O madam, yonder is heavy news within between two soldiers and my young lady.

COUNTESS.

What is the -matter?

CLOWN.

Nay, there is some comfort in the news, some comfort; your son will not be kill'd so soon as I thought he would.

COUNTESS.

Why should he be kill'd?

CLOWN.

So say I, madam, if he run away, as I hear he does the
danger is in standing to 't; that's the loss of men, though it be
the getting of children. Here they come will tell you more.
For my
part, I only hear your son was run away. *Exit*

Enter HELENA and the two FRENCH GENTLEMEN

SECOND GENTLEMAN.

Save you, good madam.

HELENA.

Madam, my lord is gone, for ever gone.

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

Do not say so.

COUNTESS.

Think upon patience. Pray you, gentlemen-

I have felt so many quirks of joy and grief

That the first face of neither, on the start,

Can woman me unto 't. Where is my son, I pray you?

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

Madam, he's gone to serve the Duke of Florence.

We met him thitherward; for thence we came,

And, after some dispatch in hand at court,

Thither we bend again.

HELENA.

Look on this letter, madam; here's my passport.

[Reads] 'When thou canst get the ring upon my finger, which

never shall come off, and show me a child begotten of thy body

that I am father to, then call me husband; but in such a

"then" I

write a "never."

This is a dreadful sentence.

COUNTESS.

Brought you this letter, gentlemen?

FIRST GENTLEMAN.
Ay, madam;
And for the contents' sake are sorry for our pains.

COUNTESS.
I prithee, lady, have a better cheer;
If thou engrossest all the griefs are thine,
Thou robb'st me of a moiety. He was my son;
But I do wash his name out of my blood,
And thou art all my child. Towards Florence is he?

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

Ay, madam.

COUNTESS.

And to be a soldier?

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

Such is his noble purpose; and, believe 't,
The Duke will lay upon him all the honour
That good convenience claims.

COUNTESS.

Return you thither?

SECOND GENTLEMAN.

Ay, madam, with the swiftest wing of speed.

HELENA.

[Reads] 'Till I have no wife, I have nothing in
France. '
'Tis bitter.

COUNTESS.

Find you that there?

HELENA.

Ay, madam.

SECOND GENTLEMAN.

'Tis but the boldness of his hand haply, which

his heart was not consenting to.

COUNTESS.

Nothing in France until he have no wife!

There's nothing here that is too good for him

But only she; and she deserves a lord

That twenty such rude boys might tend upon,

And call her hourly mistress. Who was with him?

SECOND GENTLEMAN.

A servant only, and a gentleman

Which I have sometime known.

COUNTESS.

Parolles, was it not?

SECOND GENTLEMAN.

Ay, my good lady, he.

COUNTESS.

A very tainted fellow, and full of wickedness.

My son corrupts a well-derived nature

With his inducement.

SECOND GENTLEMAN.

Indeed, good lady,

The fellow has a deal of that too much

Which holds him much to have.

COUNTESS.

Y'are welcome, gentlemen.

I will entreat you, when you see my son, To tell him that his sword can never win

The honour that he loses. More I'll entreat you

Written to bear along.

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

We serve you, madam,

In that and all your worthiest affairs.

COUNTESS.

Not so, but as we change our courtesies.

Will you draw near? *Exeunt* COUNTESS and GENTLEMEN

HELENA.

'Till I have no wife, I have nothing in France.'

Nothing in France until he has no wife!

Thou shalt have none, Rousillon, none in France

Then hast thou all again. Poor lord! is't

That chase thee from thy country, and expose

Those tender limbs of thine to the event

Of the non-sparing war? And is it I

That drive thee from the sportive court, where thou
Wast shot at with fair eyes, to be the mark
Of smoky muskets? O you leaden messengers,
That ride upon the violent speed of fire,
Fly with false aim; move the still-piecing air,
That sings with piercing; do not touch my lord.
Whoever shoots at him, I set him there;
Whoever charges on his forward breast,
I am the caitiff that do hold him to't;
And though I kill him not, I am the cause
His death was so effected. Better 'twere
I met the ravin lion when he roar'd
With sharp constraint of hunger; better 'twere
That all the miseries which nature owes
Were mine at once. No; come thou home, Rousillon,
Whence honour but of danger wins a scar,
As oft it loses all. I will be gone.

My being here it is that holds thee hence.
Shall I stay here to do 't? No, no, although
The air of paradise did fan the house,

And angels offic'd all. I will be gone,

That pitiful rumour may report my flight

To consolate thine ear. Come, night; end, day.

For with the dark, poor thief, I'll steal away. *Exit*

ACT III. SCENE 3. Florence. Before the DUKE's palace

Flourish. *Enter* the DUKE OF FLORENCE, BERTRAM, PAROLLES, SOLDIERS, drum and trumpets

DUKE.

The General of our Horse thou art; and we,

Great in our hope, lay our best love and credence

Upon thy promising fortune.

BERTRAM.

Sir, it is

A charge too heavy for my strength; but yet

We'll strive to bear it for your worthy sake

To th' extreme edge of hazard.

DUKE.

Then go thou forth;

And Fortune play upon thy prosperous helm,
As thy auspicious mistress!

BERTRAM.

This very day,
Great Mars, I put myself into thy file;
Make me but like my thoughts, and I shall prove
A lover of thy drum, hater of love. *Exeunt*

ACT III. SCENE 4. Rousillon. The COUNT'S palace

Enter COUNTESS and STEWARD

COUNTESS.

Alas! and would you take the letter of her?
Might you not know she would do as she has done
By sending me a letter? Read it again.

STEWARD.

[Reads] 'I am Saint Jaques' pilgrim, thither gone.
Ambitious love hath so in me offended
That barefoot plod I the cold ground upon,

With sainted vow my faults to have amended.
Write, write, that from the bloody course of war
My dearest master, your dear son, may hie.
Bless him at home in peace, whilst I from far
His name with zealous fervour sanctify.
His taken labours bid him me forgive;
I, his despiteful Juno, sent him forth
From courtly friends, with camping foes to live,
Where death and danger dogs the heels of worth.
He is too good and fair for death and me;
Whom I myself embrace to set him free.'

COUNTESS.

Ah, what sharp stings are in her mildest words!
Rinaldo, you did never lack advice so much
As letting her pass so; had I spoke with her,
I could have well diverted her intents,
Which thus she hath prevented.

STEWARD.

Pardon me, madam;

If I had given you this at over-night,

She might have been o'er ta'en; and yet she writes

Pursuit would be but vain.

COUNTESS.

What angel shall

Bless this unworthy husband? He cannot thrive,

Unless her prayers, whom heaven delights to hear

And loves to grant, reprieve him from the wrath

Of greatest justice. Write, write, Rinaldo,

To this unworthy husband of his wife;

Let every word weigh heavy of her worth

That he does weigh too light. My greatest grief,

Though little he do feel it, set down sharply.

Dispatch the most convenient messenger.

When haply he shall hear that she is gone

He will return; and hope I may that she,

Hearing so much, will speed her foot again,

Led hither by pure love. Which of them both

Is dearest to me I have no skill in sense

To make distinction. Provide this messenger.

My heart is heavy, and mine age is weak;

Grief would have tears, and sorrow bids me speak. *Exeunt*

ACT III. SCENE 5.

Without the walls of Florence

A tucket afar off. *Enter* an old WIDOW OF FLORENCE, her daughter

DIANA,

VIOLENTA, and MARIANA, with other CITIZENS

WIDOW.

Nay, come; for if they do approach the city we shall lose all the sight.

DIANA.

They say the French count has done most honourable service.

WIDOW.

It is reported that he has taken their great'st commander;

and that with his own hand he slew the Duke's brother.

[Tucket]

We have lost our labour; they are gone a contrary way. Hark! you
may know by their trumpets.

MARIANA.

Come, let's return again, and suffice ourselves with the
report of it. Well, Diana, take heed of this French earl; the
honour of a maid is her name, and no legacy is so rich as honesty.

WIDOW.

I have told my neighbour how you have been solicited by a
gentleman his companion.

MARIANA.

I know that knave, hang him! one Parolles; a filthy
officer he is in those suggestions for the young earl. Beware of
them, Diana: their promises, enticements, oaths, tokens, and all
these engines of lust, are not the things they go under; many a
maid hath been seduced by them; and the misery is, example, that
so terrible shows in the wreck of maidenhood, cannot for all that
dissuade succession, but that they are limed with the twigs that

threatens them. I hope I need not to advise you further; but

I

hope your own grace will keep you where you are, though there
were no further danger known but the modesty which is so lost.

DIANA.
You shall not need to fear me.

Enter HELENA in the dress of a pilgrim

WIDOW.
I hope so. Look, here comes a pilgrim. I know she will lie
at my house: thither they send one another. I'll question her.
God save you, pilgrim! Whither are bound?

HELENA.

To Saint Jaques le Grand.
Where do the palmers lodge, I do beseech you?

WIDOW.

At the Saint Francis here, beside the port.

HELENA.

Is this the way?

[A march afar]

WIDOW.

Ay, marry, is't. Hark you! They come this way.

If you will tarry, holy pilgrim,

But till the troops come by,

I will conduct you where you shall be lodg'd;

The rather for I think I know your hostess

As ample as myself.

HELENA.

Is it yourself?

WIDOW.

If you shall please so, pilgrim.

HELENA.

I thank you, and will stay upon your leisure.

WIDOW.

You came, I think, from France?

HELENA.

I did so.

WIDOW.

Here you shall see a countryman of yours
That has done worthy service.

HELENA.

His name, I pray you.

DIANA.

The Count Rousillon. Know you such a one?

HELENA.

But by the ear, that hears most nobly of him;
His face I know not.

DIANA.

What some'er he is,
He's bravely taken here. He stole from France,
As 'tis reported, for the King had married him
Against his liking. Think you it is so?

HELENA.

Ay, surely, mere the truth; I know his lady.

DIANA.

There is a gentleman that serves the Count
Reports but coarsely of her.

HELENA.

What's his name?

DIANA.

Monsieur Parolles.

HELENA.

O, I believe with him,

In argument of praise, or to the worth

Of the great Count himself, she is too mean

To have her name repeated; all her deserving

Is a reserved honesty, and that

I have not heard examin'd.

DIANA.

Alas, poor lady!

'Tis a hard bondage to become the wife

Of a detesting lord.

WIDOW.

I sweet, good creature, wheresoe'er she is
Her heart weighs sadly. This young maid might do her
A shrewd turn, if she pleas'd.

HELENA.

How do you mean?
May be the amorous Count solicits her
In the unlawful purpose.

WIDOW.

He does, indeed;
And brokes with all that can in such a suit
Corrupt the tender honour of a maid;
But she is arm'd for him, and keeps her guard
In honestest defence.

Enter , with drum and colours, BERTRAM, PAROLLES, and the whole ARMY

MARIANA.

The gods forbid else!

WIDOW.

So, now they come.

That is Antonio, the Duke's eldest son;

That, Escalus.

HELENA.

Which is the Frenchman?

DIANA.

He-

That with the plume; 'tis a most gallant fellow.

I would he lov'd his wife; if he were honester

He were much goodlier. Is't not a handsome gentleman?

HELENA.

I like him well.

DIANA.

'Tis pity he is not honest. Yond's that same knave
That leads him to these places; were I his lady
I would poison that vile rascal.

HELENA.

Which is he?

DIANA.

That jack-an-apes with scarfs. Why is he melancholy?

HELENA.

Perchance he's hurt i' th' battle.

PAROLLES.

Lose our drum! well.

MARIANA.

He's shrewdly vex'd at something.

Look, he has spied us.

WIDOW.

Marry, hang you!

MARIANA.

And your courtesy, for a ring-carrier!

Exeunt BERTRAM, PAROLLES, and ARMY

WIDOW.

The troop is past. Come, pilgrim, I will bring you

Where you shall host. Of enjoin'd penitents

There's four or five, to great Saint Jaques bound,

Already at my house.

HELENA.

I humbly thank you.

Please it this matron and this gentle maid

To eat with us to-night; the charge and thanking

Shall be for me, and, to requite you further,

I will bestow some precepts of this virgin,

Worthy the note.

BOTH.

We'll take your offer kindly. *Exeunt*

ACT III. SCENE 6. Camp before Florence

Enter BERTRAM, and the two FRENCH LORDS

SECOND LORD.

Nay, good my lord, put him to't; let him have his way.

FIRST LORD.

If your lordship find him not a hiding, hold me no more in your respect.

SECOND LORD.

On my life, my lord, a bubble.

BERTRAM.

Do you think I am so far deceived in him?

SECOND LORD.
Believe it, my lord, in mine own direct knowledge,
without any malice, but to speak of him as my kinsman, he's a
most notable coward, an infinite and endless liar, an hourly
promise-breaker, the owner of no one good quality worthy your
lordship's entertainment.

FIRST LORD.
It were fit you knew him; lest, reposing too far in his
virtue, which he hath not, he might at some great and trusty
business in a main danger fail you.

BERTRAM.
I would I knew in what particular action to try him.

FIRST LORD.
None better than to let him fetch off his drum, which

you hear him so confidently undertake to do.

SECOND LORD.
I with a troop of Florentines will suddenly surprise
him; such I will have whom I am sure he knows not from the enemy.
We will bind and hoodwink him so that he shall suppose no other
but that he is carried into the leaguer of the adversaries when
we bring him to our own tents. Be but your lordship present at
his examination; if he do not, for the promise of his life and in
the highest compulsion of base fear, offer to betray you and
deliver all the intelligence in his power against you, and that
with the divine forfeit of his soul upon oath, never trust my
judgment in anything.

FIRST LORD.
O, for the love of laughter, let him fetch his drum; he
says he has a stratagem for't. When your lordship sees the bottom
of his success in't, and to what metal this counterfeit lump of
ore will be melted, if you give him not John Drum's
entertainment, your inclining cannot be removed. Here he comes.

Enter PAROLLES

SECOND LORD.

O, for the love of laughter, hinder not the honour of

his design; let him fetch off his drum in any hand.

BERTRAM.

How now, monsieur! This drum sticks sorely in your disposition.

FIRST LORD.

A pox on 't; let it go; 'tis but a drum.

PAROLLES.

But a drum! Is't but a drum? A drum so lost! There was

excellent command: to charge in with our horse upon our own

wings, and to rend our own soldiers!

FIRST LORD.

That was not to be blam'd in the command of the

service; it was a disaster of war that Caesar himself could not have prevented, if he had been there to command.

BERTRAM.

Well, we cannot greatly condemn our success.

Some dishonour we had in the loss of that drum; but it is not to be recovered.

PAROLLES.

It might have been recovered.

BERTRAM.

It might, but it is not now.

PAROLLES.

It is to be recovered. But that the merit of service is
seldom attributed to the true and exact performer, I would have
that drum or another, or 'hic jacet.'

BERTRAM.

Why, if you have a stomach, to't, monsieur. If you think

your mystery in stratagem can bring this instrument of honour
again into his native quarter, be magnanimous in the enterprise,
and go on; I will grace the attempt for a worthy exploit. If you
speed well in it, the Duke shall both speak of it and extend to
you what further becomes his greatness, even to the utmost
syllable of our worthiness.

PAROLLES.
By the hand of a soldier, I will undertake it.

BERTRAM.

But you must not now slumber in it.

PAROLLES.
I'll about it this evening; and I will presently pen
down my dilemmas, encourage myself in my certainty, put myself
into my mortal preparation; and by midnight look to hear further from me.

BERTRAM.

May I be bold to acquaint his Grace you are gone about it?

PAROLLES.
I know not what the success will be, my lord, but the
attempt I vow.

BERTRAM.
I know th' art valiant; and, to the of thy soldiership,
will subscribe for thee. Farewell.

PAROLLES.
I love not many words. *Exit*

SECOND LORD. No more than a fish loves water. Is not this a strange
fellow, my lord, that so confidently seems to undertake this
business, which he knows is not to be done; damns himself to do,
and dares better be damn'd than to do 't.

FIRST LORD.
You do not know him, my lord, as we do. Certain it is
that he will steal himself into a man's favour, and for a week

escape a great deal of discoveries; but when you find him out,
you have him ever after.

BERTRAM.
Why, do you think he will make no deed at all of this that
so seriously he does address himself unto?

SECOND LORD.
None in the world; but return with an invention, and
clap upon you two or three probable lies. But we have almost
emboss'd him. You shall see his fall to-night; for indeed he is
not for your lordship's respect.

FIRST LORD.
We'll make you some sport with the fox ere we case him.
He was first smok'd by the old Lord Lafeu. When his disguise and
he is parted, tell me what a sprat you shall find him; which you
shall see this very night.

SECOND LORD.
I must go look my twigs; he shall be caught.

BERTRAM.

Your brother, he shall go along with me.

SECOND LORD.
As't please your lordship. I'll leave you. *Exit*

BERTRAM. Now will I lead you to the house, and show you
The lass I spoke of.

FIRST LORD.
But you say she's honest.

BERTRAM.
That's all the fault. I spoke with her but once,
And found her wondrous cold; but I sent to her,
By this same coxcomb that we have i' th' wind,
Tokens and letters which she did re-send;
And this is all I have done. She's a fair creature;
Will you go see her?

FIRST LORD.

With all my heart, my lord. *Exeunt*

ACT III. SCENE 7. Florence. The WIDOW'S house

Enter HELENA and WIDOW

HELENA.

If you misdoubt me that I am not she,
I know not how I shall assure you further
But I shall lose the grounds I work upon.

WIDOW.

Though my estate be fall'n, I was well born,
Nothing acquainted with these businesses;
And would not put my reputation now
In any staining act.

HELENA.

Nor would I wish you.

FIRST give me trust the Count he is my husband,

And what to your sworn counsel I have spoken

Is so from word to word; and then you cannot,

By the good aid that I of you shall borrow,

Err in bestowing it.

WIDOW.

I should believe you;

For you have show'd me that which well approves

Y'are great in fortune.

HELENA.

Take this purse of gold,

And let me buy your friendly help thus far,

Which I will over-pay and pay again

When I have found it. The Count he woos your daughter

Lays down his wanton siege before her beauty,

Resolv'd to carry her. Let her in fine consent,

As we'll direct her how 'tis best to bear it.

Now his important blood will nought deny

That she'll demand. A ring the County wears
That downward hath succeeded in his house
From son to son some four or five descents
Since the first father wore it. This ring he holds
In most rich choice; yet, in his idle fire,
To buy his will, it would not seem too dear,
Howe'er repented after.

WIDOW.
Now I see
The bottom of your purpose.

HELENA.
You see it lawful then. It is no more
But that your daughter, ere she seems as won,
Desires this ring; appoints him an encounter;
In fine, delivers me to fill the time,
Herself most chastely absent. After this,
To marry her, I'll add three thousand crowns
To what is pass'd already.

WIDOW.

I have yielded.
Instruct my daughter how she shall persever,
That time and place with this deceit so lawful
May prove coherent. Every night he comes
With musics of all sorts, and songs compos'd
To her unworthiness. It nothing steads us
To chide him from our eaves, for he persists
As if his life lay on 't.

HELENA.
Why then to-night
Let us assay our plot; which, if it speed,
Is wicked meaning in a lawful deed,
And lawful meaning in a lawful act;
Where both not sin, and yet a sinful fact.
But let's about it. *Exeunt*

ACT IV. SCENE 1. Without the Florentine camp

Enter SECOND FRENCH LORD with five or six other SOLDIERS in ambush

SECOND LORD.

He can come no other way but by this hedge-corner.
When you sally upon him, speak what terrible language you will;
though you understand it not yourselves, no matter; for we must
not seem to understand him, unless some one among us, whom we
must produce for an interpreter.

FIRST SOLDIER.

Good captain, let me be th' interpreter.

SECOND LORD.

Art not acquainted with him? Knows he not thy voice?

FIRST SOLDIER.

No, sir, I warrant you.

SECOND LORD.

But what linsey-woolsey has thou to speak to us again?

FIRST SOLDIER.

E'en such as you speak to me.

SECOND LORD.

He must think us some band of strangers i' th'

adversary's entertainment. Now he hath a smack of all

neighbouring languages, therefore we must every one be a man of

his own fancy; not to know what we speak one to another, so we

seem to know, is to know straight our purpose: choughs'

language,

gabble enough, and good enough. As for you, interpreter, you must

seem very politic. But couch, ho! here he comes; to beguile two

hours in a sleep, and then to return and swear the lies he forges.

Enter PAROLLES

PAROLLES.

Ten o'clock. Within these three hours 'twill be time

enough to go home. What shall I say I have done? It must be a
very plausive invention that carries it. They begin to smoke me;
and disgraces have of late knock'd to often at my door. I
find my
tongue is too foolhardy; but my heart hath the fear of Mars
before it, and of his creatures, not daring the reports of my tongue.

SECOND LORD.

This is the first truth that e'er thine own tongue was guilty of.

PAROLLES.
What the devil should move me to undertake the recovery
of this drum, being not ignorant of the impossibility, and
knowing I had no such purpose? I must give myself some hurts, and
say I got them in exploit. Yet slight ones will not carry it.
They will say 'Came you off with so little?' And great ones I
dare not give. Wherefore, what's the instance? Tongue, I must put
you into a butterwoman's mouth, and buy myself another of
Bajazet's mule, if you prattle me into these perils.

SECOND LORD.

Is it possible he should know what he is, and be that he is?

PAROLLES.

I would the cutting of my garments would serve the turn,
or the breaking of my Spanish sword.

SECOND LORD.

We cannot afford you so.

PAROLLES.

Or the baring of my beard; and to say it was in stratagem.

SECOND LORD.

'Twould not do.

PAROLLES.

Or to drown my clothes, and say I was stripp'd.

SECOND LORD.

Hardly serve.

PAROLLES.

Though I swore I leap'd from the window of the
citadel-

SECOND LORD.

How deep?

PAROLLES.

Thirty fathom.

SECOND LORD.

Three great oaths would scarce make that be believed.

PAROLLES.

I would I had any drum of the enemy's; I would swear

I

recover'd it.

SECOND LORD.

You shall hear one anon. *[Alarum within]*

PAROLLES.

A drum now of the enemy's!

SECOND LORD.

Throca movousus, cargo, cargo, cargo.

ALL.

Cargo, cargo, cargo, villianda par corbo, cargo.

PAROLLES.

O, ransom, ransom! Do not hide mine eyes.

[They blindfold him]

FIRST SOLDIER.

Boskos thromuldo boskos.

PAROLLES.

I know you are the Muskos' regiment,

And I shall lose my life for want of language.

If there be here German, or Dane, Low Dutch,

Italian, or French, let him speak to me;

I'll discover that which shall undo the Florentine.

FIRST SOLDIER.

Boskos vauvado. I understand thee, and can speak thy tongue. Kerely-bonto, sir, betake thee to thy faith, for seventeen poniards are at thy bosom.

PAROLLES.

O!

FIRST SOLDIER.

O, pray, pray, pray! Manka revania dulche.

SECOND LORD.

Oscorbidulchos volivorco.

FIRST SOLDIER.

The General is content to spare thee yet;

And, hoodwink'd as thou art, will lead thee on

To gather from thee. Haply thou mayst inform

Something to save thy life.

PAROLLES.

O, let me live,

And all the secrets of our camp I'll show,

Their force, their purposes. Nay, I'll speak that

Which you will wonder at.

FIRST SOLDIER.

But wilt thou faithfully?

PAROLLES.

If I do not, damn me.

FIRST SOLDIER.

Acordo linta.

Come on; thou art granted space.

Exit , PAROLLES guarded. A short alarum within

SECOND LORD.

Go, tell the Count Rousillon and my brother

We have caught the woodcock, and will keep him muffled

Till we do hear from them.

SECOND SOLDIER.

Captain, I will.

SECOND LORD.

'A will betray us all unto ourselves-

Inform on that.

SECOND SOLDIER.

So I will, sir.

SECOND LORD.

Till then I'll keep him dark and safely lock'd.

Exeunt

ACT IV. SCENE 2. Florence. The WIDOW'S house

Enter BERTRAM and DIANA

BERTRAM.

They told me that your name was Fontibell.

DIANA.

No, my good lord, Diana.

BERTRAM.

Titled goddess;

And worth it, with addition! But, fair soul,

In your fine frame hath love no quality?
If the quick fire of youth light not your mind,
You are no maiden, but a monument;
When you are dead, you should be such a one
As you are now, for you are cold and stern;
And now you should be as your mother was
When your sweet self was got.

DIANA.

She then was honest.

BERTRAM.

So should you be.

DIANA.

No.

My mother did but duty; such, my lord,
As you owe to your wife.

BERTRAM.

No more o'that!

I prithee do not strive against my vows.
I was compell'd to her; but I love the
By love's own sweet constraint, and will for ever
Do thee all rights of service.

DIANA.

Ay, so you serve us
Till we serve you; but when you have our roses
You barely leave our thorns to prick ourselves,
And mock us with our bareness.

BERTRAM.

How have I sworn!

DIANA.

'Tis not the many oaths that makes the truth,
But the plain single vow that is vow'd true.

What is not holy, that we swear not by,

But take the High'st to witness. Then, pray you, tell me:

If I should swear by Jove's great attributes

I lov'd you dearly, would you believe my oaths

When I did love you ill? This has no holding,

To swear by him whom I protest to love

That I will work against him. Therefore your oaths

Are words and poor conditions, but unseal'd-

At least in my opinion.

BERTRAM.

Change it, change it;

Be not so holy-cruel. Love is holy;

And my integrity ne'er knew the crafts

That you do charge men with. Stand no more off,

But give thyself unto my sick desires,

Who then recovers. Say thou art mine, and ever

My love as it begins shall so persever.

DIANA.

I see that men make ropes in such a scarre

That we'll forsake ourselves. Give me that ring.

BERTRAM.

I'll lend it thee, my dear, but have no power

To give it from me.

DIANA.

Will you not, my lord?

BERTRAM.

It is an honour 'longing to our house,

Bequeathed down from many ancestors;

Which were the greatest obloquy i' th' world

In me to lose.

DIANA.

Mine honour's such a ring:

My chastity's the jewel of our house,

Bequeathed down from many ancestors;

Which were the greatest obloquy i' th' world

In me to lose. Thus your own proper wisdom
Brings in the champion Honour on my part
Against your vain assault.

BERTRAM.
Here, take my ring;
My house, mine honour, yea, my life, be thine,
And I'll be bid by thee.

DIANA.
When midnight comes, knock at my chamber window;
I'll order take my mother shall not hear.
Now will I charge you in the band of truth,
When you have conquer'd my yet maiden bed,
Remain there but an hour, nor speak to me:
My reasons are most strong; and you shall know them
When back again this ring shall be deliver'd.
And on your finger in the night I'll put
Another ring, that what in time proceeds
May token to the future our past deeds.
Adieu till then; then fail not. You have won

A wife of me, though there my hope be done.

BERTRAM.

A heaven on earth I have won by wooing thee.
Exit

DIANA. For which live long to thank both heaven and me!

You may so in the end.
My mother told me just how he would woo,
As if she sat in's heart; she says all men
Have the like oaths. He had sworn to marry me
When his wife's dead; therefore I'll lie with him
When I am buried. Since Frenchmen are so braid,
Marry that will, I live and die a maid.
Only, in this disguise, I think't no sin
To cozen him that would unjustly win. *Exit*

ACT IV. SCENE 3. The Florentine camp

Enter the two FRENCH LORDS, and two or three SOLDIERS

SECOND LORD.

You have not given him his mother's letter?

FIRST LORD.

I have deliv'red it an hour since. There is something

in't that stings his nature; for on the reading it he chang'd

almost into another man.

SECOND LORD.

He has much worthy blame laid upon him for shaking off

so good a wife and so sweet a lady.

FIRST LORD.

Especially he hath incurred the everlasting displeasure

of the King, who had even tun'd his bounty to sing happiness to

him. I will tell you a thing, but you shall let it dwell darkly with you.

SECOND LORD.

When you have spoken it, 'tis dead, and I am the grave of it.

FIRST LORD.

He hath perverted a young gentlewoman here in Florence,
of a most chaste renown; and this night he fleshes his will in
the spoil of her honour. He hath given her his monumental ring,
and thinks himself made in the unchaste composition.

SECOND LORD.

Now, God delay our rebellion! As we are ourselves,
what things are we!

FIRST LORD.

Merely our own traitors. And as in the common course of
all treasons we still see them reveal themselves till they attain
to their abhorr'd ends; so he that in this action contrives
against his own nobility, in his proper stream, o'erflows himself.

SECOND LORD.

Is it not meant damnable in us to be trumpeters of our
unlawful intents? We shall not then have his company
to-night?

FIRST LORD.

Not till after midnight; for he is dieted to his hour.

SECOND LORD.
That approaches apace. I would gladly have him see his
company anatomiz'd, that he might take a measure of his own
judgments, wherein so curiously he had set this counterfeit.

FIRST LORD.
We will not meddle with him till he come; for his
presence must be the whip of the other.

SECOND LORD.

In the meantime, what hear you of these wars?

FIRST LORD.
I hear there is an overture of peace.

SECOND LORD.

Nay, I assure you, a peace concluded.

FIRST LORD.

What will Count Rousillon do then? Will he travel

higher, or return again into France?

SECOND LORD.

I perceive, by this demand, you are not altogether of his counsel.

FIRST LORD.

Let it be forbid, sir! So should I be a great deal of his act.

SECOND LORD.

Sir, his wife, some two months since, fled from his

house. Her pretence is a pilgrimage to Saint Jaques le Grand;

which holy undertaking with most austere sanctimony she

accomplish'd; and, there residing, the tenderness of her nature

became as a prey to her grief; in fine, made a groan of her last breath, and now she sings in heaven.

FIRST LORD.

How is this justified?

SECOND LORD.

The stronger part of it by her own letters, which
makes her story true even to the point of her death. Her death
itself, which could not be her office to say is come, was
faithfully confirm'd by the rector of the place.

FIRST LORD.

Hath the Count all this intelligence?

SECOND LORD.

Ay, and the particular confirmations, point from
point, to the full arming of the verity.

FIRST LORD.

I am heartily sorry that he'll be glad of this.

SECOND LORD.

How mightily sometimes we make us comforts of our losses!

FIRST LORD.
And how mightily some other times we drown our gain in
tears! The great dignity that his valour hath here acquir'd for
him shall at home be encount'red with a shame as ample.

SECOND LORD.
The web of our life is of a mingled yarn, good and ill
together. Our virtues would be proud if our faults whipt them
not; and our crimes would despair if they were not cherish'd by our virtues.

Enter a MESSENGER

How now? Where's your master?

SERVANT.
He met the Duke in the street, sir; of whom he hath taken

a solemn leave. His lordship will next morning for France.

The

Duke hath offered him letters of commendations to the King.

SECOND LORD.

They shall be no more than needful there, if they were

more than they can commend.

FIRST LORD.

They cannot be too sweet for the King's tartness.

Here's his lordship now.

Enter BERTRAM

How now, my lord, is't not after midnight?

BERTRAM.

I have to-night dispatch'd sixteen businesses, a month's

length apiece; by an abstract of success: I have congied with the

Duke, done my adieu with his nearest; buried a wife, mourn'd for her; writ to my lady mother I am returning; entertain'd my convoy; and between these main parcels of dispatch effected many nicer needs. The last was the greatest, but that I have not ended yet.

SECOND LORD.

If the business be of any difficulty and this morning your departure hence, it requires haste of your lordship.

BERTRAM.

I mean the business is not ended, as fearing to hear of it hereafter. But shall we have this dialogue between the Fool and the Soldier? Come, bring forth this counterfeit module has deceiv'd me like a double-meaning prophesier.

SECOND LORD.

Bring him forth. *[Exeunt SOLDIERS]* Has sat i' th' stocks all night, poor gallant knave.

BERTRAM.

No matter; his heels have deserv'd it, in usurping his spurs so long. How does he carry himself?

SECOND LORD.
I have told your lordship already the stocks carry
him. But to answer you as you would be understood: he weeps like
a wench that had shed her milk; he hath confess'd himself to
Morgan, whom he supposes to be a friar, from the time of his
remembrance to this very instant disaster of his setting i' th'
stocks. And what think you he hath confess'd?

BERTRAM.

Nothing of me, has 'a?

SECOND LORD.
His confession is taken, and it shall be read to his
face; if your lordship be in't, as I believe you are, you must
have the patience to hear it.

Enter PAROLLES guarded, and

FIRST SOLDIER as interpreter

BERTRAM.

A plague upon him! muffled! He can say nothing of me. SECOND LORD. Hush, hush! Hoodman comes. Portotartarossa. FIRST SOLDIER. He calls for the tortures. What will you say without 'em? PAROLLES. I will confess what I know without constraint; if ye pinch me like a pasty, I can say no more. FIRST SOLDIER. Bosko chimurcho. SECOND LORD. Boblibindo chicurmurco. FIRST SOLDIER. YOU are a merciful general. Our General bids you answer to what I shall ask you out of a note. PAROLLES. And truly, as I hope to live. FIRST SOLDIER. 'First demand of him how many horse the Duke is strong.' What say you to that? PAROLLES. Five or six thousand; but very weak and unserviceable. The troops are all scattered, and the commanders very poor rogues, upon my reputation and credit, and as I hope to live. FIRST SOLDIER. Shall I set down your answer so? PAROLLES. Do; I'll take the sacrament on 't, how and which way you will. BERTRAM. All's one to him. What a past-saving slave is this! SECOND LORD. Y'are deceiv'd, my lord; this is Monsieur Parolles, the gallant militarist-that was his own phrase-that had the whole theoric of war in the knot of his scarf, and the practice in the chape of his dagger. FIRST LORD. I will never trust a man again for keeping his sword clean; nor believe he can have everything in him by wearing his apparel neatly. FIRST SOLDIER. Well, that's set down. PAROLLES. 'Five or six thousand horse' I said-I will say true- 'or thereabouts' set down, for I'll speak truth. SECOND LORD. He's very near the truth in this. BERTRAM. But I con him no thanks for't in the nature he delivers it. PAROLLES. 'Poor rogues' I pray you say. FIRST SOLDIER. Well, that's set down. PAROLLES. I humbly thank you, sir. A truth's a truth-the rogues are marvellous poor. FIRST SOLDIER. 'Demand of him of what strength they are a-foot.' What say you to that? PAROLLES. By my troth, sir, if I were to live this present hour, I will tell true. Let me see: Spurio, a hundred and fifty; Sebastian, so many; Corambus, so many; Jaques, so many; Guiltian, Cosmo, Lodowick, and Gratii, two hundred fifty each; mine own company, Chitopher, Vaumond, Bentii, two hundred fifty each; so that the muster-file, rotten and sound, upon my life, amounts not to fifteen thousand poll; half of the which dare not shake the snow from off their cassocks lest they shake themselves to pieces. BERTRAM. What shall be done to him? SECOND LORD. Nothing, but let him have thanks. Demand of him my condition, and what credit I have with the Duke. FIRST SOLDIER. Well, that's set down. 'You shall demand of him whether one Captain Dumain be i' th' camp, a Frenchman; what his reputation is with the Duke, what his valour, honesty, expertness in wars; or whether he thinks it were not possible, with well-weighing sums of gold, to corrupt him to a revolt.' What say you to this? What do you know of it? PAROLLES. I beseech you, let me answer to the particular of the inter'gatories. Demand them singly. FIRST SOLDIER. Do you know this Captain Dumain? PAROLLES. I know him: 'a was a botcher's prentice in Paris, from whence he was whipt for getting the shrieve's fool with child-a dumb innocent that could not say him nay. BERTRAM. Nay, by your leave, hold your hands; though I know his brains are forfeit to the next tile that falls. FIRST SOLDIER. Well, is this captain in the Duke of Florence's camp? PAROLLES. Upon my knowledge, he is, and lousy. SECOND LORD. Nay, look not so upon me; we shall hear of your lordship anon. FIRST SOLDIER. What is his reputation with the Duke? PAROLLES. The Duke knows him for no other but a poor officer of mine; and writ to me this other day to turn him out o' th' band. I think I have his letter in my pocket. FIRST SOLDIER. Marry, we'll search. PAROLLES. In good sadness, I do not know; either it is there or it is upon a file with the Duke's other letters in my tent. FIRST SOLDIER. Here 'tis; here's a paper. Shall I read it to you? PAROLLES. I do not know if it be it or no. BERTRAM. Our interpreter does it well. SECOND LORD. Excellently. FIRST SOLDIER. *[Reads]* 'Dian, the Count's a fool, and full of gold.' PAROLLES. That is not the Duke's letter, sir; that is an advertisement to a proper maid in Florence, one Diana, to take heed of the allurement of one Count Rousillon, a foolish idle boy, but for all that very ruttish. I pray you, sir, put it up again. FIRST SOLDIER. Nay, I'll read it first by your favour. PAROLLES. My meaning in't, I protest, was very honest in the behalf of the maid; for I knew the young Count to be a dangerous and lascivious boy, who is a whale to virginity, and devours up all the fry it finds. BERTRAM. Damnable both-sides rogue! FIRST SOLDIER. *[Reads]* 'When he swears oaths, bid him drop gold, and take it; After he scores, he never pays the score. Half won is match well made; match, and well make it; He ne'er pays after-debts, take it before. And say a soldier, Dian, told thee this: Men are to mell with, boys are not to kiss; For count of this, the Count's a fool, I know it, Who pays before, but not when he does owe it. Thine, as he vow'd to thee in thine ear, PAROLLES.' BERTRAM. He shall be whipt through the army with this rhyme in's forehead. FIRST LORD. This is your devoted friend, sir, the manifold linguist, and the amnipotent soldier. BERTRAM. I could endure anything before but a cat, and now he's a cat to me. FIRST SOLDIER. I perceive, sir, by our General's looks we shall be fain to hang you. PAROLLES. My life, sir, in any case! Not that I am afraid to die, but that, my offences being many, I would repent out the remainder of nature. Let me live, sir, in a dungeon, i' th' stocks, or anywhere, so I may live. FIRST SOLDIER. We'll see what may be done, so you confess freely; therefore, once more to this Captain Dumain: you have answer'd to his reputation with the Duke, and to his valour; what is his honesty? PAROLLES. He will steal, sir, an egg out of a cloister; for rapes and ravishments he parallels Nessus. He professes not keeping of oaths; in breaking 'em he is stronger than Hercules. He will lie, sir, with such volubility that you would think truth were a fool. Drunkenness is his best virtue, for he will be swine-drunk; and in his sleep he does little harm, save to his bedclothes about him; but they know his conditions and lay him in straw. I have but little more to say, sir, of his honesty. He has everything that an honest man should not have; what an honest man should have he has nothing. SECOND LORD. I begin to love him for this. BERTRAM. For this description of thine honesty? A pox upon him! For me, he's more and more a cat. FIRST SOLDIER. What say you to his expertness in war? PAROLLES. Faith, sir, has led the drum before the English tragedians-to belie him I will not-and more of his soldiership I know not, except in that country he had the honour to be the officer at a place there called Mile-end to instruct for the doubling of files-I would do the man what honour I can-but of this I am not certain. SECOND LORD. He hath out-villain'd villainy so far that the rarity redeems him. BERTRAM. A pox on him! he's a cat still. FIRST SOLDIER. His qualities being at this poor price, I need not to ask you if gold will corrupt him to revolt. PAROLLES. Sir, for a cardecue he will sell the fee-simple of his salvation, the inheritance of it; and cut th' entail from all

remainders and a perpetual succession for it perpetually.

FIRST SOLDIER.

What's his brother, the other Captain Dumain?

FIRST LORD.

Why does he ask him of me?

FIRST SOLDIER.

What's he?

PAROLLES.

E'en a crow o' th' same nest; not altogether so great as

the first in goodness, but greater a great deal in evil. He

excels his brother for a coward; yet his brother is reputed one

of the best that is. In a retreat he outruns any lackey:

marry,

in coming on he has the cramp.

FIRST SOLDIER.

If your life be saved, will you undertake to betray

the Florentine?

PAROLLES.

Ay, and the Captain of his Horse, Count Rousillon.

FIRST SOLDIER.

I'll whisper with the General, and know his pleasure.

PAROLLES.

[Aside] I'll no more drumming. A plague of all drums!
Only to seem to deserve well, and to beguile the supposition of
that lascivious young boy the Count, have I run into this danger.
Yet who would have suspected an ambush where I was taken?

FIRST SOLDIER.

There is no remedy, sir, but you must die.
The General says you that have so traitorously discover'd the
secrets of your army, and made such pestiferous reports of men
very nobly held, can serve the world for no honest use; therefore
you must die. Come, headsman, of with his head.

PAROLLES.

O Lord, sir, let me live, or let me see my death!

FIRST SOLDIER.

That shall you, and take your leave of all your
friends. *[Unmuffling him]* So look about you; know you any here?

BERTRAM.

Good morrow, noble Captain.

FIRST LORD.

God bless you, Captain Parolles.

SECOND LORD.

God save you, noble Captain.

FIRST LORD.

Captain, what greeting will you to my Lord Lafeu? I am
for France.

SECOND LORD.

Good Captain, will you give me a copy of the sonnet
you writ to Diana in behalf of the Count Rousillon? An I were not
a very coward I'd compel it of you; but fare you well.

Exeunt BERTRAM and LORDS

FIRST SOLDIER.

You are undone, Captain, all but your scarf; that
has a knot on 't yet.

PAROLLES.

Who cannot be crush'd with a plot?

FIRST SOLDIER.
If you could find out a country where but women were
that had received so much shame, you might begin an impudent
nation. Fare ye well, sir; I am for France too; we shall speak of
you there. *Exit* with SOLDIERS
PAROLLES.
Yet am I thankful. If my heart were great,
'Twould burst at this. Captain I'll be no more;
But I will eat, and drink, and sleep as soft
As captain shall. Simply the thing I am
Shall make me live. Who knows himself a braggart,
Let him fear this; for it will come to pass
That every braggart shall be found an ass.
Rust, sword; cool, blushes; and, Parolles, live

Safest in shame. Being fool'd, by fool'ry thrive.

There's place and means for every man alive.

I'll after them. *Exit*

ACT IV SCENE 4. The WIDOW'S house

Enter HELENA, WIDOW, and DIANA

HELENA.

That you may well perceive I have not wrong'd you!

One of the greatest in the Christian world

Shall be my surety; fore whose throne 'tis needful,

Ere I can perfect mine intents, to kneel.

Time was I did him a desired office,

Dear almost as his life; which gratitude

Through flinty Tartar's bosom would peep forth,

And answer 'Thanks.' I duly am inform'd

His Grace is at Marseilles, to which place

We have convenient convoy. You must know

I am supposed dead. The army breaking,

My husband hies him home; where, heaven aiding,

And by the leave of my good lord the King, We'll be before our welcome.

WIDOW.

Gentle madam,

You never had a servant to whose trust

Your business was more welcome.

HELENA.

Nor you, mistress,

Ever a friend whose thoughts more truly labour

To recompense your love. Doubt not but heaven

Hath brought me up to be your daughter's dower,

As it hath fated her to be my motive

And helper to a husband. But, O strange men!

That can such sweet use make of what they hate,

When saucy trusting of the cozen'd thoughts

Defiles the pitchy night. So lust doth play

With what it loathes, for that which is away.

But more of this hereafter. You, Diana,

Under my poor instructions yet must suffer

Something in my behalf.

DIANA.

Let death and honesty

Go with your impositions, I am yours

Upon your will to suffer.

HELENA.

Yet, I pray you:

But with the word the time will bring on summer,

When briers shall have leaves as well as thorns

And be as sweet as sharp. We must away;

Our waggon is prepar'd, and time revives us.

All's Well that Ends Well. Still the fine's the crown.

Whate'er the course, the end is the renown. *Exeunt*

ACT IV SCENE 5. Rousillon. The COUNT'S palace

Enter COUNTESS, LAFEU, and CLOWN

LAFEU.

No, no, no, son was misled with a snipt-taffeta fellow there, whose villainous saffron would have made all the unbak'd and doughy youth of a nation in his colour. Your daughter-in-law had been alive at this hour, and your son here at home, more advanc'd by the King than by that red-tail'd humble-bee I speak of. COUNTESS. I would I had not known him. It was the death of the most virtuous gentlewoman that ever nature had praise for creating. If she had partaken of my flesh, and cost me the dearest groans of a mother. I could not have owed her a more rooted love. LAFEU. 'Twas a good lady, 'twas a good lady. We may pick a thousand sallets ere we light on such another herb. CLOWN. Indeed, sir, she was the sweet-marjoram of the sallet, or, rather, the herb of grace. LAFEU. They are not sallet-herbs, you knave; they are nose-herbs. CLOWN. I am no great Nebuchadnezzar, sir; I have not much skill in grass. LAFEU. Whether dost thou profess thyself-a knave or a fool? CLOWN. A fool, sir, at a woman's service, and a knave at a man's. LAFEU. Your distinction? CLOWN. I would cozen the man of his wife, and do his service. LAFEU. So you were a knave at his service, indeed. CLOWN. And I would give his wife my bauble, sir, to do her service. LAFEU. I will subscribe for thee; thou art both knave and fool. CLOWN. At your service. LAFEU. No, no, no. CLOWN. Why, sir, if I cannot serve you, I can serve as great a prince as you are. LAFEU. Who's that? A Frenchman? CLOWN. Faith, sir, 'a has an English name; but his fisnomy is more hotter in France than there. LAFEU. What prince is that? CLOWN. The Black Prince, sir; alias, the Prince of Darkness; alias, the devil. LAFEU. Hold thee, there's my purse. I give thee not this to suggest thee from thy master thou talk'st of; serve him still. CLOWN. I am a woodland fellow, sir, that always loved a great fire; and the master I speak of ever keeps a good fire. But, sure, he is the prince of the world; let his nobility remain in's court. I am for the house with the narrow gate, which I take to be too little for pomp to enter. Some that humble themselves may; but the many will be too chill and tender: and they'll be for the flow'ry way that leads to the broad gate and the great fire. LAFEU. Go thy ways, I begin to be aweary of thee; and I tell thee so before, because I would not fall out with thee. Go thy ways; let my horses be well look'd to, without any tricks. CLOWN. If I put any tricks upon 'em, sir, they shall be jades' tricks, which are their own right by the law of nature. *Exit* LAFEU. A shrewd knave, and an unhappy. COUNTESS. So 'a is. My lord that's gone made himself much sport out of him. By his authority he remains here, which he thinks is a patent for his sauciness; and indeed he has no pace, but runs where he will. LAFEU. I like him well; 'tis not amiss. And I was about to tell you, since I heard of the good lady's death, and that my lord your son was upon his return home, I moved the King my master to speak in the behalf of my daughter; which, in the minority of them both, his Majesty out of a self-gracious remembrance did first propose. His Highness hath promis'd me to do it; and, to stop up the displeasure he hath conceived against your son, there is no fitter matter. How does your ladyship like it? COUNTESS. With very much content, my lord; and I wish it happily effected. LAFEU. His Highness comes post from Marseilles, of as able body as when he number'd thirty; 'a will be here to-morrow, or I am deceiv'd by him that in such intelligence hath seldom fail'd. COUNTESS. It rejoices me that I hope I shall see him ere I die. I have letters that my son will be here to-night. I shall beseech your lordship to remain with me tal they meet together. LAFEU. Madam, I was thinking with what manners I might safely be admitted. COUNTESS. You need but plead your honourable privilege. LAFEU. Lady, of that I have made a bold charter; but, I thank my God, it holds yet.

Re-enter CLOWN

CLOWN.

O madam, yonder's my lord your son with a patch of velvet

on's face; whether there be a scar under 't or no, the velvet

knows; but 'tis a goodly patch of velvet. His left cheek is a

cheek of two pile and a half, but his right cheek is worn bare.

LAFEU.

A scar nobly got, or a noble scar, is a good liv'ry of

honour; so belike is that.

CLOWN.

But it is your carbonado'd face.

LAFEU.

Let us go see your son, I pray you;

I long to talk with the young noble soldier.

CLOWN.

Faith, there's a dozen of 'em, with delicate fine hats, and

most courteous feathers, which bow the head and nod at every man.

Exeunt

ACT V. SCENE 1. Marseilles. A street

Enter HELENA, WIDOW, and DIANA, with two ATTENDANTS

HELENA.

But this exceeding posting day and night

Must wear your spirits low; we cannot help it.

But since you have made the days and nights as one,

To wear your gentle limbs in my affairs,

Be bold you do so grow in my requital

As nothing can unroot you.

Enter a GENTLEMAN

In happy time!

This man may help me to his Majesty's ear,

If he would spend his power. God save you, sir.

GENTLEMAN.

And you.

HELENA.

Sir, I have seen you in the court of France.

GENTLEMAN.
I have been sometimes there.

HELENA.
I do presume, sir, that you are not fall'n
From the report that goes upon your goodness;
And therefore, goaded with most sharp occasions,
Which lay nice manners by, I put you to
The use of your own virtues, for the which
I shall continue thankful.

GENTLEMAN.

What's your will?

HELENA.
That it will please you

To give this poor petition to the King;

And aid me with that store of power you have

To come into his presence.

GENTLEMAN.

The King's not here.

HELENA.

Not here, sir?

GENTLEMAN.

Not indeed.

He hence remov'd last night, and with more haste

Than is his use.

WIDOW.

Lord, how we lose our pains!

HELENA.

All's Well That Ends Well yet,
Though time seem so adverse and means unfit.
I do beseech you, whither is he gone?

GENTLEMAN.
Marry, as I take it, to Rousillon;
Whither I am going.

HELENA.
I do beseech you, sir,
Since you are like to see the King before me,
Commend the paper to his gracious hand;
Which I presume shall render you no blame,
But rather make you thank your pains for it.
I will come after you with what good speed
Our means will make us means.

GENTLEMAN.
This I'll do for you.

HELENA.

And you shall find yourself to be well thank'd,

Whate'er falls more. We must to horse again;

Go, go, provide. *Exeunt*

ACT V SCENE 2. Rousillon. The inner court of the COUNT'S palace

Enter CLOWN and PAROLLES

PAROLLES.

Good Monsieur Lavache, give my Lord Lafeu this

letter. I

have ere now, sir, been better known to you, when I have held

familiarity with fresher clothes; but I am now, sir, muddied in

Fortune's mood, and smell somewhat strong of her strong displeasure.

CLOWN.

Truly, Fortune's displeasure is but sluttish, if it smell

so strongly as thou speak'st of. I will henceforth eat no fish

of Fortune's butt'ring. Prithee, allow the wind.

PAROLLES.

Nay, you need not to stop your nose, sir; I spake but by a metaphor.

CLOWN.

Indeed, sir, if your metaphor stink, I will stop my nose; or

against any man's metaphor. Prithee, get thee further.

PAROLLES.

Pray you, sir, deliver me this paper.

CLOWN.

Foh! prithee stand away. A paper from Fortune's

close-stool

to give to a nobleman! Look here he comes himself.

Enter LAFEU

Here is a pur of Fortune's, sir, or of Fortune's cat, but not

a musk-cat, that has fall'n into the unclean fishpond of her

displeasure, and, as he says, is muddied withal. Pray you,

sir,

use the carp as you may; for he looks like a poor, decayed,
ingenious, foolish, rascally knave. I do pity his distress
in my similes of comfort, and leave him to your lordship.
Exit

PAROLLES. My lord, I am a man whom Fortune hath cruelly scratch'd.

LAFEU.
And what would you have me to do? 'Tis too late to pare her
nails now. Wherein have you played the knave with Fortune, that
she should scratch you, who of herself is a good lady and would
not have knaves thrive long under her? There's a cardecue for
you. Let the justices make you and Fortune friends; I am for other business.

PAROLLES.
I beseech your honour to hear me one single word.

LAFEU.

You beg a single penny more; come, you shall ha't; save your word.

PAROLLES.

My name, my good lord, is Parolles.

LAFEU.

You beg more than word then. Cox my passion! give me your
hand. How does your drum?

PAROLLES.

O my good lord, you were the first that found me.

LAFEU.

Was I, in sooth? And I was the first that lost thee.

PAROLLES.

It lies in you, my lord, to bring me in some grace, for
you did bring me out.

LAFEU.

Out upon thee, knave! Dost thou put upon me at once both the
office of God and the devil? One brings the in grace, and the

other brings thee out. *[Trumpets sound]* The King's

coming; I

know by his trumpets. Sirrah, inquire further after me; I had

talk of you last night. Though you are a fool and a knave, you

shall eat. Go to; follow.

PAROLLES.

I praise God for you. *Exeunt*

ACT V SCENE 3. Rousillon. The COUNT'S palace

Flourish. *Enter* KING, COUNTESS, LAFEU, the two FRENCH LORDS, with

ATTENDANTS

KING.

We lost a jewel of her, and our esteem

Was made much poorer by it; but your son,

As mad in folly, lack'd the sense to know

Her estimation home.

COUNTESS.

'Tis past, my liege;

And I beseech your Majesty to make it
Natural rebellion, done i' th' blaze of youth,
When oil and fire, too strong for reason's force,
O'erbears it and burns on.

KING.
My honour'd lady,
I have forgiven and forgotten all;
Though my revenges were high bent upon him
And watch'd the time to shoot.

LAFEU.
This I must say-
But first, I beg my pardon: the young lord
Did to his Majesty, his mother, and his lady,
Offence of mighty note; but to himself
The greatest wrong of all. He lost a wife
Whose beauty did astonish the survey
Of richest eyes; whose words all ears took captive;
Whose dear perfection hearts that scorn'd to serve
Humbly call'd mistress.

KING.

Praising what is lost

Makes the remembrance dear. Well, call him hither;

We are reconcil'd, and the first view shall kill

All repetition. Let him not ask our pardon;

The nature of his great offence is dead,

And deeper than oblivion do we bury

Th' incensing relics of it; let him approach,

A stranger, no offender; and inform him

So 'tis our will he should.

GENTLEMAN.

I shall, my liege. *Exit* GENTLEMAN

KING.

What says he to your daughter? Have you spoke?

LAFEU.

All that he is hath reference to your Highness.

KING.

Then shall we have a match. I have letters sent me

That sets him high in fame.

Enter BERTRAM

LAFEU.

He looks well on 't.

KING.

I am not a day of season,

For thou mayst see a sunshine and a hail

In me at once. But to the brightest beams

Distracted clouds give way; so stand thou forth;

The time is fair again.

BERTRAM.

My high-repented blames,

Dear sovereign, pardon to me.

KING.

All is whole;

Not one word more of the consumed time.

Let's take the instant by the forward top;

For we are old, and on our quick'st decrees

Th' inaudible and noiseless foot of Time

Steals ere we can effect them. You remember

The daughter of this lord?

BERTRAM.

Admiringly, my liege. At first

I stuck my choice upon her, ere my heart

Durst make too bold herald of my tongue;

Where the impression of mine eye infixing,

Contempt his scornful perspective did lend me,

Which warp'd the line of every other favour,

Scorn'd a fair colour or express'd it stol'n,

Extended or contracted all proportions

To a most hideous object. Thence it came

That she whom all men prais'd, and whom myself,

Since I have lost, have lov'd, was in mine eye

The dust that did offend it.

KING.

Well excus'd.
That thou didst love her, strikes some scores away
From the great compt; but love that comes too late,
Like a remorseful pardon slowly carried,
To the great sender turns a sour offence,
Crying 'That's good that's gone.' Our rash faults
Make trivial price of serious things we have,
Not knowing them until we know their grave.
Oft our displeasures, to ourselves unjust,
Destroy our friends, and after weep their dust;
Our own love waking cries to see what's done,
While shameful hate sleeps out the afternoon.

Be this sweet Helen's knell. And now forget her.
Send forth your amorous token for fair Maudlin.
The main consents are had; and here we'll stay
To see our widower's second marriage-day.

COUNTESS.

Which better than the first, O dear heaven, bless!
Or, ere they meet, in me, O nature, cesse!

LAFEU.
Come on, my son, in whom my house's name
Must be digested; give a favour from you,
To sparkle in the spirits of my daughter,
That she may quickly come.
[BERTRAM gives a ring]
By my old beard,
And ev'ry hair that's on 't, Helen, that's dead,
Was a sweet creature; such a ring as this,
The last that e'er I took her leave at court,
I saw upon her finger.

BERTRAM.

Hers it was not.

KING.

Now, pray you, let me see it; for mine eye,

While I was speaking, oft was fasten'd to't.

This ring was mine; and when I gave it Helen

I bade her, if her fortunes ever stood

Necessitied to help, that by this token

I would relieve her. Had you that craft to reave her

Of what should stead her most?

BERTRAM.

My gracious sovereign,

Howe'er it pleases you to take it so,

The ring was never hers.

COUNTESS.

Son, on my life,

I have seen her wear it; and she reckon'd it

At her life's rate.

LAFEU.

I am sure I saw her wear it.

BERTRAM.
You are deceiv'd, my lord; she never saw it.
In Florence was it from a casement thrown me,
Wrapp'd in a paper, which contain'd the name
Of her that threw it. Noble she was, and thought
I stood engag'd; but when I had subscrib'd
To mine own fortune, and inform'd her fully
I could not answer in that course of honour
As she had made the overture, she ceas'd,
In heavy satisfaction, and would never
Receive the ring again.

KING.
Plutus himself,
That knows the tinct and multiplying med'cine,
Hath not in nature's mystery more science
Than I have in this ring. 'Twas mine, 'twas Helen's,
Whoever gave it you. Then, if you know
That you are well acquainted with yourself,

Confess 'twas hers, and by what rough enforcement

You got it from her. She call'd the saints to surety

That she would never put it from her finger

Unless she gave it to yourself in bed-

Where you have never come-or sent it us

Upon her great disaster.

BERTRAM.

She never saw it.

KING.

Thou speak'st it falsely, as I love mine honour;

And mak'st conjectural fears to come into me

Which I would fain shut out. If it should prove

That thou art so inhuman- 'twill not prove so.

And yet I know not-thou didst hate her deadly,

And she is dead; which nothing, but to close

Her eyes myself, could win me to believe

More than to see this ring. Take him away.

[GUARDS seize BERTRAM]

My fore-past proofs, howe'er the matter fall,

Shall tax my fears of little vanity,
Having vainly fear'd too little. Away with him.

We'll sift this matter further.

BERTRAM.
If you shall prove
This ring was ever hers, you shall as easy
Prove that I husbanded her bed in Florence,
Where she yet never was. *Exit* , guarded
KING.

I am wrapp'd in dismal thinkings.

Enter a GENTLEMAN

GENTLEMAN.
Gracious sovereign,
Whether I have been to blame or no, I know not:
Here's a petition from a Florentine,
Who hath, for four or five removes, come short

To tender it herself. I undertook it,
Vanquish'd thereto by the fair grace and speech
Of the poor suppliant, who by this, I know,
Is here attending; her business looks in her
With an importing visage; and she told me
In a sweet verbal brief it did concern
Your Highness with herself.

KING.

[Reads the letter] 'Upon his many protestations to marry me
when his wife was dead, I blush to say it, he won me. Now is the
Count Rousillon a widower; his vows are forfeited to me, and my
honour's paid to him. He stole from Florence, taking no leave,
and I follow him to his country for justice. Grant it me, O
King!

in you it best lies; otherwise a seducer flourishes, and a poor maid is undone.
DIANA CAPILET.'

LAFEU.

I will buy me a son-in-law in a fair, and toll for this.

I'll none of him.

KING.

The heavens have thought well on thee, Lafeu,

To bring forth this discov'ry. Seek these suitors.

Go speedily, and bring again the Count.

Exeunt ATTENDANTS

I am afeard the life of Helen, lady,

Was foully snatch'd.

COUNTESS.

Now, justice on the doers!

Enter BERTRAM, guarded

KING.

I wonder, sir, sith wives are monsters to you.

And that you fly them as you swear them lordship,

Yet you desire to marry.

Enter WIDOW and DIANA

What woman's that?

DIANA.

I am, my lord, a wretched Florentine,

Derived from the ancient Capilet.

My suit, as I do understand, you know,

And therefore know how far I may be pitied.

WIDOW.

I am her mother, sir, whose age and honour

Both suffer under this complaint we bring,

And both shall cease, without your remedy.

KING.

Come hither, Count; do you know these women?

BERTRAM.

My lord, I neither can nor will deny

But that I know them. Do they charge me further?

DIANA.

Why do you look so strange upon your wife?

BERTRAM.

She's none of mine, my lord.

DIANA.

If you shall marry,

You give away this hand, and that is mine;

You give away heaven's vows, and those are mine;

You give away myself, which is known mine;

For I by vow am so embodied yours

That she which marries you must marry me,

Either both or none.

LAFEU.

[To BERTRAM] Your reputation comes too short for

my daughter; you are no husband for her.

BERTRAM.

My lord, this is a fond and desp'rate creature

Whom sometime I have laugh'd with. Let your Highness

Lay a more noble thought upon mine honour

Than for to think that I would sink it here.

KING.

Sir, for my thoughts, you have them ill to friend

Till your deeds gain them. Fairer prove your honour

Than in my thought it lies!

DIANA.

Good my lord,

Ask him upon his oath if he does think

He had not my virginity.

KING.

What say'st thou to her?

BERTRAM.

She's impudent, my lord,

And was a common gamester to the camp.

DIANA.

He does me wrong, my lord; if I were so

He might have bought me at a common price.

Do not believe him. o, behold this ring,

Whose high respect and rich validity

Did lack a parallel; yet, for all that,

He gave it to a commoner o' th' camp,

If I be one.

COUNTESS.

He blushes, and 'tis it.

Of six preceding ancestors, that gem

Conferr'd by testament to th' sequent issue,

Hath it been ow'd and worn. This is his wife:

That ring's a thousand proofs.

KING.

Methought you said

You saw one here in court could witness it.

DIANA.

I did, my lord, but loath am to produce

So bad an instrument; his name's Parolles.

LAFEU.

I saw the man to-day, if man he be.

KING.

Find him, and bring him hither. *Exit* an ATTENDANT

BERTRAM.

What of him?

He's quoted for a most perfidious slave,

With all the spots o' th' world tax'd and debauch'd,

Whose nature sickens but to speak a truth.

Am I or that or this for what he'll utter
That will speak anything?

KING.

She hath that ring of yours.

BERTRAM.
I think she has. Certain it is I lik'd her,
And boarded her i' th' wanton way of youth.
She knew her distance, and did angle for me,
Madding my eagerness with her restraint,
As all impediments in fancy's course
Are motives of more fancy; and, in fine,
Her infinite cunning with her modern grace
Subdu'd me to her rate. She got the ring;
And I had that which any inferior might
At market-price have bought.

DIANA.
I must be patient.

You that have turn'd off a first so noble wife
May justly diet me. I pray you yet-
Since you lack virtue, I will lose a husband-
Send for your ring, I will return it home,
And give me mine again.

BERTRAM.

I have it not.

KING.

What ring was yours, I pray you?

DIANA.

Sir, much like
The same upon your finger.

KING.

Know you this ring? This ring was his of late.

DIANA.

And this was it I gave him, being abed.

KING.

The story, then, goes false you threw it him

Out of a casement.

DIANA.

I have spoke the truth.

Enter PAROLLES

BERTRAM.

My lord, I do confess the ring was hers.

KING.

You boggle shrewdly; every feather starts you.

Is this the man you speak of?

DIANA.

Ay, my lord.

KING.

Tell me, sirrah-but tell me true I charge you,

Not fearing the displeasure of your master,

Which, on your just proceeding, I'll keep off-

By him and by this woman here what know you?

PAROLLES.

So please your Majesty, my master hath been an honourable gentleman; tricks he hath had in him, which gentlemen have.

KING.

Come, come, to th' purpose. Did he love this woman?

PAROLLES.

Faith, sir, he did love her; but how?

KING.

How, I pray you?

PAROLLES.

He did love her, sir, as a gentleman loves a woman.

KING.

How is that?

PAROLLES.

He lov'd her, sir, and lov'd her not.

KING.

As thou art a knave and no knave.

What an equivocal companion is this!

PAROLLES.

I am a poor man, and at your Majesty's command.

LAFEU.

He's a good drum, my lord, but a naughty orator.

DIANA.

Do you know he promis'd me marriage?

PAROLLES.

Faith, I know more than I'll speak.

KING.

But wilt thou not speak all thou know'st?

PAROLLES.

Yes, so please your Majesty. I did go between them,

as I

said; but more than that, he loved her-for indeed he was mad for

her, and talk'd of Satan, and of Limbo, and of Furies, and I know

not what. Yet I was in that credit with them at that time

that I

knew of their going to bed; and of other motions, as promising
her marriage, and things which would derive me ill will to speak
of; therefore I will not speak what I know.

KING.
Thou hast spoken all already, unless thou canst say they are
married; but thou art too fine in thy evidence; therefore stand aside.
This ring, you say, was yours?

DIANA.

Ay, my good lord.

KING.
Where did you buy it? Or who gave it you?

DIANA.

It was not given me, nor I did not buy it.

KING.

Who lent it you?

DIANA.

It was not lent me neither.

KING.

Where did you find it then?

DIANA.

I found it not.

KING.

If it were yours by none of all these ways,

How could you give it him?

DIANA.

I never gave it him.

LAFEU.

This woman's an easy glove, my lord; she goes of and on at pleasure.

KING.

This ring was mine, I gave it his first wife.

DIANA.

It might be yours or hers, for aught I know.

KING.

Take her away, I do not like her now;

To prison with her. And away with him.

Unless thou tell'st me where thou hadst this ring,

Thou diest within this hour.

DIANA.

I'll never tell you.

KING.

Take her away.

DIANA.

I'll put in bail, my liege.

KING.

I think thee now some common customer.

DIANA.

By Jove, if ever I knew man, 'twas you.

KING.

Wherefore hast thou accus'd him all this while?

DIANA.

Because he's guilty, and he is not guilty.

He knows I am no maid, and he'll swear to't:

I'll swear I am a maid, and he knows not.

Great King, I am no strumpet, by my life;
I am either maid, or else this old man's wife.

[Pointing to LAFEU]

KING.

She does abuse our ears; to prison with her.

DIANA.
Good mother, fetch my bail. Stay, royal sir;

Exit WIDOW

The jeweller that owes the ring is sent for,
And he shall surety me. But for this lord
Who hath abus'd me as he knows himself,
Though yet he never harm'd me, here I quit him.
He knows himself my bed he hath defil'd;
And at that time he got his wife with child.
Dead though she be, she feels her young one kick;

So there's my riddle: one that's dead is quick-

And now behold the meaning.

Re-enter WIDOW with HELENA

KING.

Is there no exorcist

Beguiles the truer office of mine eyes?

Is't real that I see?

HELENA.

No, my good lord;

'Tis but the shadow of a wife you see,

The name and not the thing.

BERTRAM.

Both, both; o, pardon!

HELENA.

O, my good lord, when I was like this maid,

I found you wondrous kind. There is your ring,

And, look you, here's your letter. This it says:

'When from my finger you can get this ring, And are by me with child,' *etc.* This is done.

Will you be mine now you are doubly won?

BERTRAM.

If she, my liege, can make me know this clearly,

I'll love her dearly, ever, ever dearly.

HELENA.

If it appear not plain, and prove untrue,

Deadly divorce step between me and you!

O my dear mother, do I see you living?

LAFEU.

Mine eyes smell onions; I shall weep anon. *[To PAROLLES]*

Good Tom Drum, lend me a handkercher. So, I

thank thee. Wait on me home, I'll make sport with thee;

let thy curtsies alone, they are scurvy ones.

KING.

Let us from point to point this story know, To make the even truth in pleasure flow.

[To DIANA] If thou beest yet a fresh uncropped flower,

Choose thou thy husband, and I'll pay thy dower;

For I can guess that by thy honest aid

Thou kept'st a wife herself, thyself a maid.-

Of that and all the progress, more and less,

Resolvedly more leisure shall express.

All yet seems well; and if it end so meet,

The bitter past, more welcome is the sweet. *[Flourish]*

EPILOGUE.

KING.

The King's a beggar, now the play is done.

All is well ended if this suit be won,

That you express content; which we will pay

With strife to please you, day exceeding day.

Ours be your patience then, and yours our parts;

Your gentle hands lend us, and take our hearts.

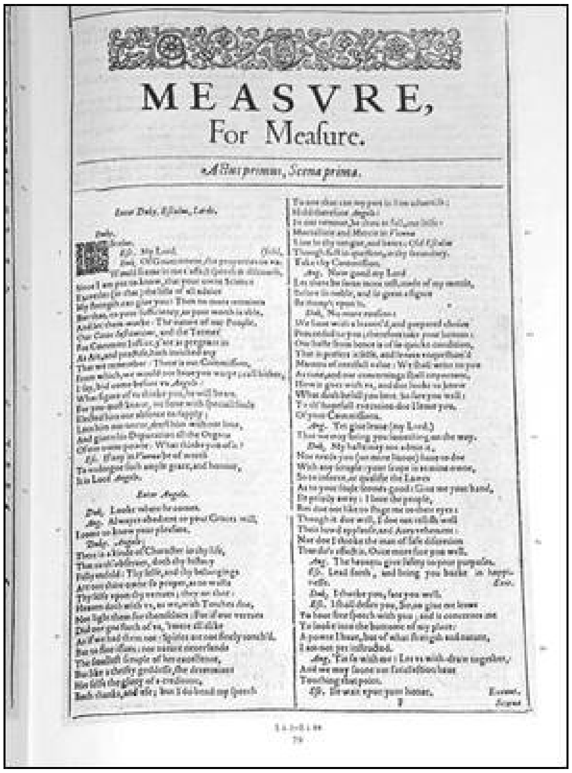
Exeunt omnes

MEASURE FOR MEASURE

This problem comedy is believed to have been written in 1603 or 1604. The play deals with issues of mercy, justice, and truth and their relationship to pride and humility. A virtuous maiden is given the ultimatum of surrendering her chastity in return for saving her brother’s life, thus revealing the play’s controversial and problematic dilemma. The plot deals with Vincentio, the Duke of Vienna, who makes it known that he intends to leave the city on a diplomatic mission. He leaves the government in the hands of a strict judge, Angelo.

The play draws on two distinct sources. The original is *The Story of Epitia* , a story from Cinthio's *Hecatommithi* , first published in 1565. Shakespeare was familiar with this book as it contains the original source for *Othello* . Cinthio also published the same story in a play version with some small differences, which Shakespeare may have been aware of.

Shakespeare's main source text for this play is available via this link .



MEASVRE,
For Meaſure.

Actus primus, Scena prima.

The First Folio, published in 1623

Claudio and Isabella by William Holman Hunt, 1850

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ACT V. SCENE I. The city gate

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

VINCENTIO, the Duke

ANGELO, the Deputy

ESCALUS, an ancient Lord

CLAUDIO, a young gentleman

LUCIO, a fantastic

Two other like Gentlemen

VARRIUS, a gentleman, servant to the Duke

PROVOST

THOMAS, friar

PETER, friar

A JUSTICE

ELBOW, a simple constable

FROTH, a foolish gentleman

POMPEY, a clown and servant to Mistress Overdone

ABHORSON, an executioner

BARNARDINE, a dissolute prisoner

ISABELLA, sister to Claudio

MARIANA, betrothed to Angelo

JULIET, beloved of Claudio

FRANCISCA, a nun

MISTRESS OVERDONE, a bawd

Lords, Officers, Citizens, Boy, and Attendants

SCENE: Vienna

ACT I. SCENE I. The DUKE'S palace

Enter DUKE, ESCALUS, LORDS, and ATTENDANTS

DUKE.

Escalus!

ESCALUS.

My lord.

DUKE.

Of government the properties to unfold

Would seem in me t' affect speech and discourse,

Since I am put to know that your own science

Exceeds, in that, the lists of all advice

My strength can give you; then no more remains

But that to your sufficiency-as your worth is able-

And let them work. The nature of our people,

Our city's institutions, and the terms

For common justice, y'are as pregnant in

As art and practice hath enriched any

That we remember. There is our commission,

From which we would not have you warp. Call hither,

I say, bid come before us, Angelo. *Exit* an ATTENDANT
What figure of us think you he will bear?
For you must know we have with special soul
Elected him our absence to supply;
Lent him our terror, dress'd him with our love,
And given his deputation all the organs
Of our own power. What think you of it?

ESCALUS.
If any in Vienna be of worth
To undergo such ample grace and honour,
It is Lord Angelo.

Enter ANGELO

DUKE.
Look where he comes.

ANGELO.
Always obedient to your Grace's will,
I come to know your pleasure.

DUKE.

Angelo,

There is a kind of character in thy life

That to th' observer doth thy history

Fully unfold. Thyself and thy belongings

Are not thine own so proper as to waste

Thyself upon thy virtues, they on thee.

Heaven doth with us as we with torches do,

Not light them for themselves; for if our virtues

Did not go forth of us, 'twere all alike

As if we had them not. Spirits are not finely touch'd

But to fine issues; nor Nature never lends

The smallest scruple of her excellence

But, like a thrifty goddess, she determines

Herself the glory of a creditor,

Both thanks and use. But I do bend my speech

To one that can my part in him advertise.

Hold, therefore, Angelo-

In our remove be thou at full ourself;

Mortality and mercy in Vienna

Live in thy tongue and heart. Old Escalus,
Though first in question, is thy secondary.
Take thy commission.

ANGELO.
Now, good my lord,
Let there be some more test made of my metal,
Before so noble and so great a figure
Be stamp'd upon it.

DUKE.

No more evasion!
We have with a leaven'd and prepared choice
Proceeded to you; therefore take your honours.
Our haste from hence is of so quick condition
That it prefers itself, and leaves unquestion'd
Matters of needful value. We shall write to you,
As time and our concernings shall importune,
How it goes with us, and do look to know
What doth befall you here. So, fare you well.

To th' hopeful execution do I leave you
Of your commissions.

ANGELO.
Yet give leave, my lord,
That we may bring you something on the way.

DUKE.
My haste may not admit it;
Nor need you, on mine honour, have to do
With any scruple: your scope is as mine own,
So to enforce or qualify the laws
As to your soul seems good. Give me your hand;
I'll privily away. I love the people,
But do not like to stage me to their eyes;
Though it do well, I do not relish well
Their loud applause and Aves vehement;
Nor do I think the man of safe discretion
That does affect it. Once more, fare you well.

ANGELO.

The heavens give safety to your purposes!

ESCALUS.

Lead forth and bring you back in happiness!

DUKE.

I thank you. Fare you well. *Exit*

ESCALUS. I shall desire you, sir, to give me leave

To have free speech with you; and it concerns me

To look into the bottom of my place:

A pow'r I have, but of what strength and nature

I am not yet instructed.

ANGELO.

'Tis so with me. Let us withdraw together,

And we may soon our satisfaction have

Touching that point.

ESCALUS.

I'll wait upon your honour. *Exeunt*

SCENE II. A street

Enter Lucio and two other GENTLEMEN

LUCIO.

If the Duke, with the other dukes, come not to composition

with the King of Hungary, why then all the dukes fall upon the King.

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

Heaven grant us its peace, but not the King of

Hungary's!

SECOND GENTLEMAN.

Amen.

LUCIO.

Thou conclud'st like the sanctimonious pirate that went to

sea with the Ten Commandments, but scrap'd one out of the table.

SECOND GENTLEMAN.

'Thou shalt not steal'?

LUCIO.

Ay, that he raz'd.

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

Why, 'twas a commandment to command the captain

and all the rest from their functions: they put forth to steal.

There's not a soldier of us all that, in the thanksgiving before

meat, do relish the petition well that prays for peace.

SECOND GENTLEMAN.

I never heard any soldier dislike it.

LUCIO.

I believe thee; for I think thou never wast where grace was said.

SECOND GENTLEMAN.

No? A dozen times at least.

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

What, in metre?

LUCIO.

In any proportion or in any language.

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

I think, or in any religion.

LUCIO.

Ay, why not? Grace is grace, despite of all controversy;

as,

for example, thou thyself art a wicked villain, despite of all grace.

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

Well, there went but a pair of shears between us.

LUCIO.

I grant; as there may between the lists and the velvet.

Thou art the list.

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

And thou the velvet; thou art good velvet;

thou'rt

a three-pil'd piece, I warrant thee. I had as lief be a list of

an English kersey as be pil'd, as thou art pil'd, for a French

velvet. Do I speak feelingly now?

LUCIO.

I think thou dost; and, indeed, with most painful feeling of

thy speech. I will, out of thine own confession, learn to begin

thy health; but, whilst I live, forget to drink after thee.

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

I think I have done myself wrong, have I not?

SECOND GENTLEMAN.

Yes, that thou hast, whether thou art tainted or free.

Enter MISTRESS OVERDONE

LUCIO.

Behold, behold, where Madam Mitigation comes! I have

purchas'd as many diseases under her roof as come to-

SECOND GENTLEMAN.

To what, I pray?

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

Judge.

SECOND GENTLEMAN.

To three thousand dolours a year.

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

Ay, and more.

LUCIO.

A French crown more.

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

Thou art always figuring diseases in me, but thou

art full of error; I am sound.

LUCIO.

Nay, not, as one would say, healthy; but so sound as things

that are hollow: thy bones are hollow; impiety has made a feast of thee.

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

How now! which of your hips has the most profound sciatica?

MRS.

OVERDONE. Well, well! there's one yonder arrested and carried

to prison was worth five thousand of you all.

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

Who's that, I pray thee?

MRS.

OVERDONE. Marry, sir, that's Claudio, Signior Claudio.

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

Claudio to prison? 'Tis not so.

MRS.

OVERDONE. Nay, but I know 'tis so: I saw him arrested; saw him

carried away; and, which is more, within these three days his

head to be chopp'd off.

LUCIO.

But, after all this fooling, I would not have it so. Art thou sure of this?

MRS.

OVERDONE. I am too sure of it; and it is for getting Madam

Julietta with child.

LUCIO.

Believe me, this may be; he promis'd to meet me two hours

since, and he was ever precise in promise-keeping.

SECOND GENTLEMAN.

Besides, you know, it draws something near to the

speech we had to such a purpose.

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

But most of all agreeing with the proclamation.

LUCIO.

Away; let's go learn the truth of it.

Exeunt Lucio and GENTLEMEN

MRS.

OVERDONE. Thus, what with the war, what with the sweat, what

with the gallows, and what with poverty, I am custom-shrunk.

Enter POMPEY

How now! what's the news with you?

POMPEY.

Yonder man is carried to prison.

MRS.

OVERDONE. Well, what has he done?

POMPEY.

A woman.

MRS.

OVERDONE. But what's his offence?

POMPEY.

Groping for trouts in a peculiar river.

MRS.

OVERDONE. What! is there a maid with child by him?

POMPEY.

No; but there's a woman with maid by him. You have not

heard of the proclamation, have you?

MRS.

OVERDONE. What proclamation, man?

POMPEY.

All houses in the suburbs of Vienna must be pluck'd down.

MRS.

OVERDONE. And what shall become of those in the city?

POMPEY.

They shall stand for seed; they had gone down too, but that

a wise burgher put in for them.

MRS.

OVERDONE. But shall all our houses of resort in the suburbs be

pull'd down?

POMPEY.

To the ground, mistress.

MRS.

OVERDONE. Why, here's a change indeed in the commonwealth!

What shall become of me?

POMPEY.

Come, fear not you: good counsellors lack no clients.

Though you change your place you need not change your trade;

I'll

be your tapster still. Courage, there will be pity taken on you;

you that have worn your eyes almost out in the service, you will be considered.

MRS.

OVERDONE. What's to do here, Thomas Tapster? Let's withdraw.

POMPEY.

Here comes Signior Claudio, led by the provost to prison;

and there's Madam Juliet. *Exeunt*

Enter PROVOST, CLAUDIO, JULIET, and OFFICERS;

LUCIO following

CLAUDIO.

Fellow, why dost thou show me thus to th' world?

Bear me to prison, where I am committed.

PROVOST.

I do it not in evil disposition,

But from Lord Angelo by special charge.

CLAUDIO.

Thus can the demigod Authority

Make us pay down for our offence by weight

The words of heaven: on whom it will, it will;
On whom it will not, so; yet still 'tis just.

LUCIO.

Why, how now, Claudio, whence comes this restraint?

CLAUDIO.
From too much liberty, my Lucio, liberty;
As surfeit is the father of much fast,
So every scope by the immoderate use
Turns to restraint. Our natures do pursue,
Like rats that ravin down their proper bane,
A thirsty evil; and when we drink we die.

LUCIO.
If I could speak so wisely under an arrest, I would send for certain of my creditors; and yet, to say the truth, I had as lief have the foppery of freedom as the morality of imprisonment.

What's thy offence, Claudio?

CLAUDIO.

What but to speak of would offend again.

LUCIO.

What, is't murder?

CLAUDIO.

No.

LUCIO.

Lechery?

CLAUDIO.

Call it so.

PROVOST.

Away, sir; you must go.

CLAUDIO.

One word, good friend. Lucio, a word with you.

LUCIO.

A hundred, if they'll do you any good. Is lechery so look'd after?

CLAUDIO.

Thus stands it with me: upon a true contract

I got possession of Julietta's bed.

You know the lady; she is fast my wife,

Save that we do the denunciation lack

Of outward order; this we came not to,

Only for propagation of a dow'r

Remaining in the coffer of her friends.

From whom we thought it meet to hide our love

Till time had made them for us. But it chances

The stealth of our most mutual entertainment,

With character too gross, is writ on Juliet.

LUCIO.

With child, perhaps?

CLAUDIO.

Unhappily, even so.

And the new deputy now for the Duke-

Whether it be the fault and glimpse of newness,

Or whether that the body public be

A horse whereon the governor doth ride,

Who, newly in the seat, that it may know

He can command, lets it straight feel the spur;

Whether the tyranny be in his place,

Or in his eminence that fills it up,

I stagger in. But this new governor

Awakes me all the enrolled penalties

Which have, like unscour'd armour, hung by th' wall

So long that nineteen zodiacs have gone round

And none of them been worn; and, for a name,

Now puts the drowsy and neglected act

Freshly on me. 'Tis surely for a name.

LUCIO.

I warrant it is; and thy head stands so tickle on thy
shoulders that a milkmaid, if she be in love, may sigh it off.
Send after the Duke, and appeal to him.

CLAUDIO.

I have done so, but he's not to be found.
I prithee, Lucio, do me this kind service:
This day my sister should the cloister enter,
And there receive her approbation;
Acquaint her with the danger of my state;
Implore her, in my voice, that she make friends
To the strict deputy; bid herself assay him.
I have great hope in that; for in her youth
There is a prone and speechless dialect
Such as move men; beside, she hath prosperous art
When she will play with reason and discourse,
And well she can persuade.

LUCIO.

I pray she may; as well for the encouragement of the like, which else would stand under grievous imposition, as for the enjoying of thy life, who I would be sorry should be thus foolishly lost at a game of tick-tack. I'll to her.

CLAUDIO.

I thank you, good friend Lucio.

LUCIO.

Within two hours.

CLAUDIO.

Come, officer, away. *Exeunt*

SCENE III. A monastery

Enter DUKE and FRIAR THOMAS

DUKE.

No, holy father; throw away that thought;

Believe not that the dribbling dart of love
Can pierce a complete bosom. Why I desire thee
To give me secret harbour hath a purpose
More grave and wrinkled than the aims and ends
Of burning youth.

FRIAR.
May your Grace speak of it?

DUKE.
My holy sir, none better knows than you
How I have ever lov'd the life removed,
And held in idle price to haunt assemblies
Where youth, and cost, a witless bravery keeps.
I have deliver'd to Lord Angelo,
A man of stricture and firm abstinence,
My absolute power and place here in Vienna,
And he supposes me travell'd to Poland;
For so I have strew'd it in the common ear,
And so it is received. Now, pious sir,
You will demand of me why I do this.

FRIAR.

Gladly, my lord.

DUKE.

We have strict statutes and most biting laws,
The needful bits and curbs to headstrong steeds,
Which for this fourteen years we have let slip;
Even like an o'ergrown lion in a cave,
That goes not out to prey. Now, as fond fathers,
Having bound up the threat'ning twigs of birch,
Only to stick it in their children's sight
For terror, not to use, in time the rod
Becomes more mock'd than fear'd; so our decrees,
Dead to infliction, to themselves are dead;
And liberty plucks justice by the nose;
The baby beats the nurse, and quite athwart
Goes all decorum.

FRIAR.

It rested in your Grace

To unloose this tied-up justice when you pleas'd;
And it in you more dreadful would have seem'd
Than in Lord Angelo.

DUKE.
I do fear, too dreadful.
Sith 'twas my fault to give the people scope,
'Twould be my tyranny to strike and gall them
For what I bid them do; for we bid this be done,
When evil deeds have their permissive pass
And not the punishment. Therefore, indeed, my father,
I have on Angelo impos'd the office;
Who may, in th' ambush of my name, strike home,
And yet my nature never in the fight
To do in slander. And to behold his sway,
I will, as 'twere a brother of your order,
Visit both prince and people. Therefore, I prithee,
Supply me with the habit, and instruct me
How I may formally in person bear me
Like a true friar. Moe reasons for this action
At our more leisure shall I render you.

Only, this one: Lord Angelo is precise;

Stands at a guard with envy; scarce confesses

That his blood flows, or that his appetite

Is more to bread than stone. Hence shall we see,

If power change purpose, what our seemers be. *Exeunt*

SCENE IV. A nunnery

Enter ISABELLA and FRANCISCA

ISABELLA.

And have you nuns no farther privileges?

FRANCISCA.

Are not these large enough?

ISABELLA.

Yes, truly; I speak not as desiring more,

But rather wishing a more strict restraint

Upon the sisterhood, the votarists of Saint Clare.

LUCIO.

[Within] Ho! Peace be in this place!

ISABELLA.

Who's that which calls?

FRANCISCA.

It is a man's voice. Gentle Isabella,

Turn you the key, and know his business of him:

You may, I may not; you are yet unsworn;

When you have vow'd, you must not speak with men

But in the presence of the prioress;

Then, if you speak, you must not show your face,

Or, if you show your face, you must not speak.

He calls again; I pray you answer him. *Exit* FRANCISCA

ISABELLA.

Peace and prosperity! Who is't that calls?

Enter LUCIO

LUCIO.

Hail, virgin, if you be, as those cheek-roses

Proclaim you are no less. Can you so stead me

As bring me to the sight of Isabella,

A novice of this place, and the fair sister

To her unhappy brother Claudio?

ISABELLA.

Why her 'unhappy brother'? Let me ask

The rather, for I now must make you know

I am that Isabella, and his sister.

LUCIO.

Gentle and fair, your brother kindly greets you.

Not to be weary with you, he's in prison.

ISABELLA.

Woe me! For what?

LUCIO.

For that which, if myself might be his judge,

He should receive his punishment in thanks:

He hath got his friend with child.

ISABELLA.

Sir, make me not your story.

LUCIO.

It is true.

I would not-though 'tis my familiar sin

With maids to seem the lapwing, and to jest,

Tongue far from heart-play with all virgins so:

I hold you as a thing enskied and sainted,

By your renouncement an immortal spirit,

And to be talk'd with in sincerity,

As with a saint.

ISABELLA.

You do blaspheme the good in mocking me.

LUCIO.
Do not believe it. Fewness and truth, 'tis thus:

Your brother and his lover have embrac'd.
As those that feed grow full, as blossoming time
That from the seedness the bare fallow brings
To teeming foison, even so her plenteous womb
Expresseth his full tilth and husbandry.

ISABELLA.
Some one with child by him? My cousin Juliet?

LUCIO.

Is she your cousin?

ISABELLA.
Adoptedly, as school-maids change their names
By vain though apt affection.

LUCIO.

She it is.

ISABELLA.

O, let him marry her!

LUCIO.

This is the point.

The Duke is very strangely gone from hence;

Bore many gentlemen, myself being one,

In hand, and hope of action; but we do learn,

By those that know the very nerves of state,

His givings-out were of an infinite distance

From his true-meant design. Upon his place,

And with full line of his authority,

Governs Lord Angelo, a man whose blood

Is very snow-broth, one who never feels

The wanton stings and motions of the sense,

But doth rebate and blunt his natural edge

With profits of the mind, study and fast.
He-to give fear to use and liberty,
Which have for long run by the hideous law,
As mice by lions-hath pick'd out an act
Under whose heavy sense your brother's life
Falls into forfeit; he arrests him on it,
And follows close the rigour of the statute
To make him an example. All hope is gone,
Unless you have the grace by your fair prayer
To soften Angelo. And that's my pith of business
'Twixt you and your poor brother.

ISABELLA.

Doth he so seek his life?

LUCIO.
Has censur'd him
Already, and, as I hear, the Provost hath
A warrant for his execution.

ISABELLA.

Alas! what poor ability's in me

To do him good?

LUCIO.

Assay the pow'r you have.

ISABELLA.

My power, alas, I doubt!

LUCIO.

Our doubts are traitors,

And make us lose the good we oft might win

By fearing to attempt. Go to Lord Angelo,

And let him learn to know, when maidens sue,

Men give like gods; but when they weep and kneel,

All their petitions are as freely theirs

As they themselves would owe them.

ISABELLA.

I'll see what I can do.

LUCIO.

But speedily.

ISABELLA.

I will about it straight;
No longer staying but to give the Mother
Notice of my affair. I humbly thank you.
Commend me to my brother; soon at night
I'll send him certain word of my success.

LUCIO.

I take my leave of you.

ISABELLA.

Good sir, adieu. *Exeunt*

ACT II. Scene I. A hall in ANGELO'S house

Enter ANGELO, ESCALUS, a JUSTICE, PROVOST, OFFICERS, and other

ATTENDANTS

ANGELO.

We must not make a scarecrow of the law,
Setting it up to fear the birds of prey,
And let it keep one shape till custom make it
Their perch, and not their terror.

ESCALUS.

Ay, but yet
Let us be keen, and rather cut a little
Than fall and bruise to death. Alas! this gentleman,
Whom I would save, had a most noble father.
Let but your honour know,
Whom I believe to be most strait in virtue,
That, in the working of your own affections,
Had time coher'd with place, or place with wishing,
Or that the resolute acting of our blood

Could have attain'd th' effect of your own purpose

Whether you had not sometime in your life

Err'd in this point which now you censure him,

And pull'd the law upon you.

ANGELO.

'Tis one thing to be tempted, Escalus,

Another thing to fall. I not deny

The jury, passing on the prisoner's life,

May in the sworn twelve have a thief or two

Guiltier than him they try. What's open made to justice,

That justice seizes. What knows the laws

That thieves do pass on thieves? 'Tis very pregnant,

The jewel that we find, we stoop and take't,

Because we see it; but what we do not see

We tread upon, and never think of it.

You may not so extenuate his offence

For I have had such faults; but rather tell me,

When I, that censure him, do so offend,

Let mine own judgment pattern out my death,

And nothing come in partial. Sir, he must die.

ESCALUS.

Be it as your wisdom will.

ANGELO.
Where is the Provost?

PROVOST.

Here, if it like your honour.

ANGELO.
See that Claudio
Be executed by nine to-morrow morning;
Bring him his confessor; let him be prepar'd;
For that's the utmost of his pilgrimage. *Exit* PROVOST
ESCALUS.
[Aside] Well, heaven forgive him! and forgive us all!
Some rise by sin, and some by virtue fall;
Some run from breaks of ice, and answer none,

And some condemned for a fault alone.

Enter ELBOW and OFFICERS with FROTH and POMPEY

ELBOW.

Come, bring them away; if these be good people in a commonweal that do nothing but use their abuses in common houses, I know no law; bring them away. ANGELO. How now, sir! What's your name, and what's the matter? ELBOW. If it please your honour, I am the poor Duke's constable, and my name is Elbow; I do lean upon justice, sir, and do bring in here before your good honour two notorious benefactors. ANGELO. Benefactors! Well-what benefactors are they? Are they not malefactors? ELBOW. If it please your honour, I know not well what they are; but precise villains they are, that I am sure of, and void of all profanation in the world that good Christians ought to have. ESCALUS. This comes off well; here's a wise officer. ANGELO. Go to; what quality are they of? Elbow is your name? Why dost thou not speak, Elbow? POMPEY. He cannot, sir; he's out at elbow. ANGELO. What are you, sir? ELBOW. He, sir? A tapster, sir; parcel-bawd; one that serves a bad woman; whose house, sir, was, as they say, pluck'd down in the suburbs; and now she professes a hot-house, which, I think, is a very ill house too. ESCALUS. How know you that? ELBOW. My Wife, sir, whom I detest before heaven and your honour-ESCALUS. How! thy wife! ELBOW. Ay, sir; whom I thank heaven, is an honest woman-ESCALUS. Dost thou detest her therefore? ELBOW. I say, sir, I will detest myself also, as well as she, that this house, if it be not a bawd's house, it is pity of her life, for it is a naughty house. ESCALUS. How dost thou know that, constable? ELBOW. Marry, sir, by my wife; who, if she had been a woman cardinally given, might have been accus'd in fornication, adultery, and all uncleanliness there. ESCALUS. By the woman's means? ELBOW. Ay, sir, by Mistress Overdone's means; but as she spit in his face, so she defied him. POMPEY. Sir, if it please your honour, this is not so. ELBOW. Prove it before these varlets here, thou honourable man, prove it. ESCALUS. Do you hear how he misplaces? POMPEY. Sir, she came in great with child; and longing, saving your honour's reverence, for stew'd prunes. Sir, we had but two in the house, which at that very distant time stood, as it were, in a fruit dish, a dish of some three pence; your honours have seen such dishes; they are not China dishes, but very good dishes. ESCALUS. Go to, go to; no matter for the dish, sir. POMPEY. No, indeed, sir, not of a pin; you are therein in the right; but to the point. As I say, this Mistress Elbow, being, as I say, with child, and being great-bellied, and longing, as I said, for prunes; and having but two in the dish, as I said, Master Froth here, this very man, having eaten the rest, as I said, and, as I say, paying for them very honestly; for, as you know, Master Froth, I could not give you three pence again-FROTH. No, indeed. POMPEY. Very well; you being then, if you be rememb'red, cracking the stones of the foresaid prunes-FROTH. Ay, so I did indeed. POMPEY. Why, very well; I telling you then, if you be rememb'red, that such a one and such a one were past cure of the thing you wot of, unless they kept very good diet, as I told you-FROTH. All this is true. POMPEY. Why, very well then-ESCALUS. Come, you are a tedious fool. To the purpose: what was done to Elbow's wife that he hath cause to complain of? Come me to what was done to her. POMPEY. Sir, your honour cannot come to that yet. ESCALUS. No, sir, nor I mean it not. POMPEY. Sir, but you shall come to it, by your honour's leave. And, I beseech you, look into Master Froth here, sir, a man of fourscore pound a year; whose father died at Hallowmas-was't not at Hallowmas, Master Froth? FROTH. All-hallond eve. POMPEY. Why, very well; I hope here be truths. He, sir, sitting, as I say, in a lower chair, sir; 'twas in the Bunch of Grapes, where, indeed, you have a delight to sit, have you not? FROTH. I have so; because it is an open room, and good for winter. POMPEY. Why, very well then; I hope here be truths. ANGELO. This will last out a night in Russia, When nights are longest there; I'll take my leave, And leave you to the hearing of the cause, Hoping you'll find good cause to whip them all. ESCALUS. I think no less. Good morrow to your lordship. *[Exit ANGELO]* Now, sir, come on; what was done to Elbow's wife, once more? POMPEY. Once?- sir. There was nothing done to her once. ELBOW. I beseech you, sir, ask him what this man did to my wife. POMPEY. I beseech your honour, ask me. ESCALUS. Well, sir, what did this gentleman to her? POMPEY. I beseech you, sir, look in this gentleman's face. Good Master Froth, look upon his honour; 'tis for a good purpose. Doth your honour mark his face? ESCALUS. Ay, sir, very well. POMPEY. Nay, I beseech you, mark it well. ESCALUS. Well, I do so. POMPEY. Doth your honour see any harm in his face? ESCALUS. Why, no. POMPEY. I'll be suppos'd upon a book his face is the worst thing about him. Good then; if his face be the worst thing about him, how could Master Froth do the constable's wife any harm? I would know that of your honour. ESCALUS. He's in the right, constable; what say you to it? ELBOW. First, an it like you, the house is a respected house; next, this is a respected fellow; and his mistress is a respected woman. POMPEY. By this hand, sir, his wife is a more respected person than any of us all. ELBOW. Varlet, thou liest; thou liest, wicket varlet; the time is yet to come that she was ever respected with man, woman, or child. POMPEY. Sir, she was respected with him before he married with her. ESCALUS. Which is the wiser here, Justice or Iniquity? Is this true? ELBOW. O thou caitiff! O thou varlet! O thou wicked Hannibal! I respected with her before I was married to her! If ever I was respected with her, or she with me, let not your worship think me the poor Duke's officer. Prove this, thou wicked Hannibal, or I'll have mine action of batt'ry on thee. ESCALUS. If he took you a box o' th' ear, you might have your action of slander too. ELBOW. Marry, I thank your good worship for it. What is't your worship's pleasure I shall do with this wicked caitiff? ESCALUS. Truly, officer, because he hath some offences in him that thou wouldst discover if thou couldst, let him continue in his courses till thou know'st what they are. ELBOW. Marry, I thank your worship for it. Thou seest, thou wicked varlet, now, what's come upon thee: thou art to continue now, thou varlet; thou art to continue. ESCALUS. Where were you born, friend? FROTH. Here in Vienna, sir. ESCALUS. Are you of fourscore pounds a year? FROTH. Yes, an't please you, sir. ESCALUS. So. What trade are you of, sir? POMPEY. A tapster, a poor widow's tapster. ESCALUS. Your mistress' name? POMPEY. Mistress Overdone. ESCALUS. Hath she had any more than one husband? POMPEY. Nine, sir; Overdone by the last. ESCALUS. Nine! Come hither to me, Master Froth. Master Froth, I would not have you acquainted with tapsters: they will draw you, Master Froth, and you will hang them. Get you gone, and let me hear no more of you. FROTH. I thank your worship. For mine own part, I never come into any room in a taphouse but I am drawn in. ESCALUS. Well, no more of it, Master Froth; farewell. *[Exit FROTH]* Come you hither to me, Master Tapster; what's your name, Master Tapster? POMPEY. Pompey. ESCALUS. What else? POMPEY. Bum, sir. ESCALUS. Troth, and your bum is the greatest thing about you; so that, in the beastliest sense, you are Pompey the Great. Pompey, you are partly a bawd, Pompey, howsoever you colour it in being a tapster. Are you not? Come, tell me true; it shall be the better for you. POMPEY. Truly, sir, I am a poor fellow that would live. ESCALUS. How would you live, Pompey-by being a bawd? What do you think of the trade, Pompey? Is it a lawful trade? POMPEY. If the law would allow it, sir. ESCALUS. But the law will not allow it, Pompey; nor it shall not be allowed in Vienna. POMPEY. Does your worship mean to geld and splay all the youth of the city? ESCALUS. No, Pompey. POMPEY. Truly, sir, in my poor opinion, they will to't then. If your worship will take order for the drabs and the knaves, you need not to fear the bawds. ESCALUS. There is pretty orders beginning, I can tell you: but it is but heading and hanging. POMPEY. If you head and hang all that offend that way but for ten year together, you'll be glad to give out a commission for more heads; if this law hold in Vienna ten year, I'll rent the fairest house in it, after threepence a bay. If you live to see this come to pass, say Pompey told you so. ESCALUS. Thank you, good Pompey; and, in requital of your prophecy, hark you: I advise you, let me not find you before me again upon any complaint whatsoever-no, not for dwelling where you do; if I do, Pompey, I shall beat you to your tent, and prove a shrewd Caesar to you; in plain dealing, Pompey, I shall have you whipt. So for this time, Pompey, fare you well. POMPEY. I thank your worship for your good counsel; *[Aside]* but I shall follow it as the flesh and fortune shall better determine. Whip me? No, no; let carman whip his jade; The valiant heart's not whipt out of his trade. *Exit* ESCALUS. Come hither to me, Master Elbow; come hither, Master Constable. How long have you been in this place of constable? ELBOW. Seven year and a half, sir. ESCALUS. I thought, by the readiness in the office, you had continued in it some time. You say seven years together? ELBOW. And a half, sir. ESCALUS. Alas, it hath been great pains to you! They do you wrong to put you so oft upon't. Are there not men in your ward sufficient to serve it? ELBOW. Faith, sir, few of any wit in such matters; as they are chosen, they are glad to choose me for them; I do it for some piece of money, and go through with all. ESCALUS. Look you, bring me in the names of some six or seven, the most sufficient of your parish. ELBOW. To your worship's house, sir? ESCALUS. To my house. Fare you well. *[Exit ELBOW]* What's o'clock, think you? JUSTICE. Eleven, sir. ESCALUS. I pray you home to dinner with me. JUSTICE. I humbly thank you. ESCALUS. It grieves me for the death of Claudio; But there's no remedy. JUSTICE. Lord Angelo is severe. ESCALUS. It is but needful: Mercy is not itself that oft looks so; Pardon is still the nurse of second woe. But yet, poor Claudio! There is no remedy. Come, sir. *Exeunt*

SCENE II. Another room in ANGELO'S house

Enter PROVOST and a SERVANT

SERVANT.

He's hearing of a cause; he will come straight.

I'll tell him of you.

PROVOST.

Pray you do. *[Exit SERVANT]* I'll know

His pleasure; may be he will relent. Alas,

He hath but as offended in a dream!

All sects, all ages, smack of this vice; and he

To die for 't!

Enter ANGELO

ANGELO.

Now, what's the matter, Provost?

PROVOST.

Is it your will Claudio shall die to-morrow?

ANGELO.
Did not I tell thee yea? Hadst thou not order?

Why dost thou ask again?

PROVOST.
Lest I might be too rash;
Under your good correction, I have seen
When, after execution, judgment hath
Repented o'er his doom.

ANGELO.
Go to; let that be mine.
Do you your office, or give up your place,
And you shall well be spar'd.

PROVOST.

I crave your honour's pardon.

What shall be done, sir, with the groaning Juliet?

She's very near her hour.

ANGELO.

Dispose of her

To some more fitter place, and that with speed.

Re-enter SERVANT

SERVANT.

Here is the sister of the man condemn'd

Desires access to you.

ANGELO.

Hath he a sister?

PROVOST.

Ay, my good lord; a very virtuous maid,

And to be shortly of a sisterhood,

If not already.

ANGELO.

Well, let her be admitted. *Exit* SERVANT

See you the fornicatress be remov'd;

Let her have needful but not lavish means;

There shall be order for't.

Enter Lucio and ISABELLA

PROVOST.

[Going] Save your honour!

ANGELO.

Stay a little while. *[To ISABELLA]* Y'are welcome;

what's your will?

ISABELLA.

I am a woeful suitor to your honour,

Please but your honour hear me.

ANGELO.

Well; what's your suit?

ISABELLA.

There is a vice that most I do abhor,

And most desire should meet the blow of justice;

For which I would not plead, but that I must;

For which I must not plead, but that I am

At war 'twixt will and will not.

ANGELO.

Well; the matter?

ISABELLA.

I have a brother is condemn'd to die;

I do beseech you, let it be his fault,

And not my brother.

PROVOST.

[Aside] Heaven give thee moving graces.

ANGELO.

Condemn the fault and not the actor of it!
Why, every fault's condemn'd ere it be done;
Mine were the very cipher of a function,
To fine the faults whose fine stands in record,
And let go by the actor.

ISABELLA.

O just but severe law!
I had a brother, then. Heaven keep your honour!

LUCIO.

[To ISABELLA] Give't not o'er so; to him again, entreat him,
Kneel down before him, hang upon his gown;
You are too cold: if you should need a pin,
You could not with more tame a tongue desire it.

To him, I say.

ISABELLA.

Must he needs die?

ANGELO.

Maiden, no remedy.

ISABELLA.

Yes; I do think that you might pardon him.

And neither heaven nor man grieve at the mercy.

ANGELO.

I will not do't.

ISABELLA.

But can you, if you would?

ANGELO.

Look, what I will not, that I cannot do.

ISABELLA.

But might you do't, and do the world no wrong,

If so your heart were touch'd with that remorse

As mine is to him?

ANGELO.

He's sentenc'd; 'tis too late.

LUCIO.

[To ISABELLA] You are too cold.

ISABELLA.

Too late? Why, no; I, that do speak a word,

May call it back again. Well, believe this:

No ceremony that to great ones longs,

Not the king's crown nor the deputed sword,

The marshal's truncheon nor the judge's robe,

Become them with one half so good a grace

As mercy does.

If he had been as you, and you as he,

You would have slipp'd like him; but he, like you,

Would not have been so stern.

ANGELO.

Pray you be gone.

ISABELLA.

I would to heaven I had your potency,

And you were Isabel! Should it then be thus?

No; I would tell what 'twere to be a judge

And what a prisoner.

LUCIO.

[To ISABELLA] Ay, touch him; there's the vein.

ANGELO.

Your brother is a forfeit of the law,

And you but waste your words.

ISABELLA.

Alas! Alas!

Why, all the souls that were were forfeit once;

And He that might the vantage best have took

Found out the remedy. How would you be

If He, which is the top of judgment, should

But judge you as you are? O, think on that;

And mercy then will breathe within your lips,

Like man new made.

ANGELO.

Be you content, fair maid.

It is the law, not I condemn your brother.

Were he my kinsman, brother, or my son,

It should be thus with him. He must die to-morrow.

ISABELLA.

To-morrow! O, that's sudden! Spare him, spare him.

He's not prepar'd for death. Even for our kitchens

We kill the fowl of season; shall we serve heaven

With less respect than we do minister

To our gross selves? Good, good my lord, bethink you.

Who is it that hath died for this offence?

There's many have committed it.

LUCIO.

[Aside] Ay, well said.

ANGELO.

The law hath not been dead, though it hath slept.

Those many had not dar'd to do that evil

If the first that did th' edict infringe

Had answer'd for his deed. Now 'tis awake,

Takes note of what is done, and, like a prophet,

Looks in a glass that shows what future evils-

Either now or by remissness new conceiv'd,

And so in progress to be hatch'd and born-

Are now to have no successive degrees,

But here they live to end.

ISABELLA.

Yet show some pity.

ANGELO.

I show it most of all when I show justice;

For then I pity those I do not know,

Which a dismiss'd offence would after gall,

And do him right that, answering one foul wrong,

Lives not to act another. Be satisfied;

Your brother dies to-morrow; be content.

ISABELLA.

So you must be the first that gives this sentence,

And he that suffers. O, it is excellent

To have a giant's strength! But it is tyrannous

To use it like a giant.

LUCIO.

[To ISABELLA] That's well said.

ISABELLA.

Could great men thunder

As Jove himself does, Jove would never be quiet, For every pelting petty officer

Would use his heaven for thunder,

Nothing but thunder. Merciful Heaven,

Thou rather, with thy sharp and sulphurous bolt,

Splits the unwedgeable and gnarled oak

Than the soft myrtle. But man, proud man,

Dress'd in a little brief authority,

Most ignorant of what he's most assur'd,

His glassy essence, like an angry ape,

Plays such fantastic tricks before high heaven

As makes the angels weep; who, with our speens,

Would all themselves laugh mortal.

LUCIO.

[To ISABELLA] O, to him, to him, wench! He will relent;

He's coming; I perceive 't.

PROVOST.

[Aside] Pray heaven she win him.

ISABELLA.

We cannot weigh our brother with ourself.

Great men may jest with saints: 'tis wit in them;

But in the less foul profanation.

LUCIO.

[To ISABELLA] Thou'rt i' th' right, girl; more o' that.

ISABELLA.

That in the captain's but a choleric word

Which in the soldier is flat blasphemy.

LUCIO.

[To ISABELLA] Art avis'd o' that? More on't.

ANGELO.

Why do you put these sayings upon me?

ISABELLA.

Because authority, though it err like others,

Hath yet a kind of medicine in itself

That skins the vice o' th' top. Go to your bosom, Knock there, and ask your heart what it doth know

That's like my brother's fault. If it confess

A natural guiltiness such as is his,

Let it not sound a thought upon your tongue

Against my brother's life.

ANGELO.

[Aside] She speaks, and 'tis

Such sense that my sense breeds with it.- Fare you well.

ISABELLA.

Gentle my lord, turn back.

ANGELO.

I will bethink me. Come again to-morrow.

ISABELLA.

Hark how I'll bribe you; good my lord, turn back.

ANGELO.

How, bribe me?

ISABELLA.

Ay, with such gifts that heaven shall share with you.

LUCIO.

[To ISABELLA) You had marr'd all else.

ISABELLA.

Not with fond sicles of the tested gold,

Or stones, whose rate are either rich or poor

As fancy values them; but with true prayers

That shall be up at heaven and enter there

Ere sun-rise, prayers from preserved souls,

From fasting maids, whose minds are dedicate

To nothing temporal.

ANGELO.

Well; come to me to-morrow.

LUCIO.

[To ISABELLA] Go to; 'tis well; away.

ISABELLA.

Heaven keep your honour safe!

ANGELO.

[Aside] Amen; for I

Am that way going to temptation

Where prayers cross.

ISABELLA.

At what hour to-morrow

Shall I attend your lordship?

ANGELO.

At any time 'fore noon.

ISABELLA.

Save your honour! *Exeunt* all but ANGELO

ANGELO.

From thee; even from thy virtue!
What's this, what's this? Is this her fault or mine?

The tempter or the tempted, who sins most?
Ha!
Not she; nor doth she tempt; but it is I
That, lying by the violet in the sun,
Do as the carrion does, not as the flow'r,
Corrupt with virtuous season. Can it be
That modesty may more betray our sense
Than woman's lightness? Having waste ground enough,
Shall we desire to raze the sanctuary,
And pitch our evils there? O, fie, fie, fie!

What dost thou, or what art thou, Angelo?
Dost thou desire her foully for those things
That make her good? O, let her brother live!
Thieves for their robbery have authority
When judges steal themselves. What, do I love her,

That I desire to hear her speak again,

And feast upon her eyes? What is't I dream on?

O cunning enemy, that, to catch a saint,

With saints dost bait thy hook! Most dangerous

Is that temptation that doth goad us on

To sin in loving virtue. Never could the strumpet,

With all her double vigour, art and nature,

Once stir my temper; but this virtuous maid

Subdues me quite. Ever till now,

When men were fond, I smil'd and wond'red how. *Exit*

SCENE III. A prison

Enter , severally, DUKE, disguised as a FRIAR, and PROVOST

DUKE.

Hail to you, Provost! so I think you are.

PROVOST.

I am the Provost. What's your will, good friar?

DUKE.

Bound by my charity and my blest order,
I come to visit the afflicted spirits
Here in the prison. Do me the common right
To let me see them, and to make me know
The nature of their crimes, that I may minister
To them accordingly.

PROVOST.

I would do more than that, if more were needful.

Enter JULIET

Look, here comes one; a gentlewoman of mine,
Who, falling in the flaws of her own youth,
Hath blister'd her report. She is with child;
And he that got it, sentenc'd-a young man
More fit to do another such offence
Than die for this.

DUKE.

When must he die?

PROVOST.

As I do think, to-morrow.

[To JULIET] I have provided for you; stay awhile

And you shall be conducted.

DUKE.

Repent you, fair one, of the sin you carry?

JULIET.

I do; and bear the shame most patiently.

DUKE.

I'll teach you how you shall arraign your conscience,

And try your penitence, if it be sound

Or hollowly put on.

JULIET.

I'll gladly learn.

DUKE.

Love you the man that wrong'd you?

JULIET.

Yes, as I love the woman that wrong'd him.

DUKE.

So then, it seems, your most offenceful act
Was mutually committed.

JULIET.

Mutually.

DUKE.

Then was your sin of heavier kind than his.

JULIET.

I do confess it, and repent it, father.

DUKE.

'Tis meet so, daughter; but lest you do repent
As that the sin hath brought you to this shame,
Which sorrow is always toward ourselves, not heaven,
Showing we would not spare heaven as we love it,
But as we stand in fear-

JULIET.

I do repent me as it is an evil,
And take the shame with joy.

DUKE.

There rest.
Your partner, as I hear, must die to-morrow,
And I am going with instruction to him.
Grace go with you! Benedicite! *Exit*

JULIET. Must die to-morrow! O, injurious law,

That respites me a life whose very comfort

Is still a dying horror!

PROVOST.

'Tis pity of him. *Exeunt*

SCENE IV. ANGELO'S house

Enter ANGELO

ANGELO.

When I would pray and think, I think and pray

To several subjects. Heaven hath my empty words,

Whilst my invention, hearing not my tongue,

Anchors on Isabel. Heaven in my mouth,

As if I did but only chew his name,

And in my heart the strong and swelling evil

Of my conception. The state whereon I studied

Is, like a good thing being often read,

Grown sere and tedious; yea, my gravity, Wherein-let no man hear me-I take pride,

Could I with boot change for an idle plume

Which the air beats for vain. O place, O form,

How often dost thou with thy case, thy habit,

Wrench awe from fools, and tie the wiser souls

To thy false seeming! Blood, thou art blood.

Let's write 'good angel' on the devil's horn;

'Tis not the devil's crest.

Enter SERVANT

How now, who's there?

SERVANT.

One Isabel, a sister, desires access to you.

ANGELO.

Teach her the way. *[Exit SERVANT]* O heavens!

Why does my blood thus muster to my heart,

Making both it unable for itself

And dispossessing all my other parts

Of necessary fitness?
So play the foolish throngs with one that swoons;
Come all to help him, and so stop the air
By which he should revive; and even so
The general subject to a well-wish'd king
Quit their own part, and in obsequious fondness
Crowd to his presence, where their untaught love
Must needs appear offence.

Enter ISABELLA

How now, fair maid?

ISABELLA.
I am come to know your pleasure.

ANGELO.
That you might know it would much better please me
Than to demand what 'tis. Your brother cannot live.

ISABELLA.

Even so! Heaven keep your honour!

ANGELO.

Yet may he live awhile, and, it may be,

As long as you or I; yet he must die.

ISABELLA.

Under your sentence?

ANGELO.

Yea.

ISABELLA.

When? I beseech you; that in his reprieve,

Longer or shorter, he may be so fitted

That his soul sicken not.

ANGELO.

Ha! Fie, these filthy vices! It were as good

To pardon him that hath from nature stol'n
A man already made, as to remit
Their saucy sweetness that do coin heaven's image
In stamps that are forbid; 'tis all as easy
Falsely to take away a life true made
As to put metal in restrained means
To make a false one.

ISABELLA.

'Tis set down so in heaven, but not in earth.

ANGELO.

Say you so? Then I shall pose you quickly.
Which had you rather-that the most just law
Now took your brother's life; or, to redeem him,
Give up your body to such sweet uncleanness
As she that he hath stain'd?

ISABELLA.

Sir, believe this:

I had rather give my body than my soul.

ANGELO.

I talk not of your soul; our compell'd sins

Stand more for number than for accompt.

ISABELLA.

How say you?

ANGELO.

Nay, I'll not warrant that; for I can speak

Against the thing I say. Answer to this:

I, now the voice of the recorded law,

Pronounce a sentence on your brother's life;

Might there not be a charity in sin

To save this brother's life?

ISABELLA.

Please you to do't,

I'll take it as a peril to my soul

It is no sin at all, but charity.

ANGELO.

Pleas'd you to do't at peril of your soul,

Were equal poise of sin and charity.

ISABELLA.

That I do beg his life, if it be sin,

Heaven let me bear it! You granting of my suit,

If that be sin, I'll make it my morn prayer

To have it added to the faults of mine,

And nothing of your answer.

ANGELO.

Nay, but hear me;

Your sense pursues not mine; either you are ignorant

Or seem so, craftily; and that's not good.

ISABELLA.

Let me be ignorant, and in nothing good

But graciously to know I am no better.

ANGELO.

Thus wisdom wishes to appear most bright

When it doth tax itself; as these black masks

Proclaim an enshielded beauty ten times louder

Than beauty could, display'd. But mark me:

To be received plain, I'll speak more gross-

Your brother is to die.

ISABELLA.

So.

ANGELO.

And his offence is so, as it appears,

Accountant to the law upon that pain.

ISABELLA.

True.

ANGELO.

Admit no other way to save his life,

As I subscribe not that, nor any other,

But, in the loss of question, that you, his sister,

Finding yourself desir'd of such a person

Whose credit with the judge, or own great place,

Could fetch your brother from the manacles

Of the all-binding law; and that there were

No earthly mean to save him but that either

You must lay down the treasures of your body

To this supposed, or else to let him suffer-

What would you do?

ISABELLA.

As much for my poor brother as myself;

That is, were I under the terms of death,

Th' impression of keen whips I'd wear as rubies,

And strip myself to death as to a bed

That longing have been sick for, ere I'd yield

My body up to shame.

ANGELO.

Then must your brother die.

ISABELLA.

And 'twere the cheaper way:

Better it were a brother died at once

Than that a sister, by redeeming him,

Should die for ever.

ANGELO.

Were not you, then, as cruel as the sentence

That you have slander'd so?

ISABELLA.

Ignominy in ransom and free pardon

Are of two houses: lawful mercy

Is nothing kin to foul redemption.

ANGELO.

You seem'd of late to make the law a tyrant;

And rather prov'd the sliding of your brother
A merriment than a vice.

ISABELLA.
O, pardon me, my lord! It oft falls out,
To have what we would have, we speak not what we mean:
I something do excuse the thing I hate
For his advantage that I dearly love.

ANGELO.

We are all frail.

ISABELLA.
Else let my brother die,
If not a fedary but only he
Owe and succeed thy weakness.

ANGELO.

Nay, women are frail too.

ISABELLA.

Ay, as the glasses where they view themselves,
Which are as easy broke as they make forms.
Women, help heaven! Men their creation mar
In profiting by them. Nay, call us ten times frail;
For we are soft as our complexions are,
And credulous to false prints.

ANGELO.

I think it well;
And from this testimony of your own sex,
Since I suppose we are made to be no stronger
Than faults may shake our frames, let me be bold.
I do arrest your words. Be that you are,
That is, a woman; if you be more, you're none;
If you be one, as you are well express'd
By all external warrants, show it now
By putting on the destin'd livery.

ISABELLA.

I have no tongue but one; gentle, my lord,

Let me intreat you speak the former language.

ANGELO.

Plainly conceive, I love you.

ISABELLA.

My brother did love Juliet,

And you tell me that he shall die for't.

ANGELO.

He shall not, Isabel, if you give me love.

ISABELLA.

I know your virtue hath a license in't,

Which seems a little fouler than it is,

To pluck on others.

ANGELO.

Believe me, on mine honour,

My words express my purpose.

ISABELLA.

Ha! little honour to be much believ'd,

And most pernicious purpose! Seeming, seeming!

I will proclaim thee, Angelo, look for't.

Sign me a present pardon for my brother

Or, with an outstretch'd throat, I'll tell the world aloud

What man thou art.

ANGELO.

Who will believe thee, Isabel?

My unsoil'd name, th' austereness of my life,

My vouch against you, and my place i' th' state,

Will so your accusation overweigh

That you shall stifle in your own report,

And smell of calumny. I have begun,

And now I give my sensual race the rein:

Fit thy consent to my sharp appetite;

Lay by all nicety and prolixious blushes

That banish what they sue for; redeem thy brother

By yielding up thy body to my will;
Or else he must not only die the death,
But thy unkindness shall his death draw out
To ling'ring sufferance. Answer me to-morrow,
Or, by the affection that now guides me most,
I'll prove a tyrant to him. As for you,
Say what you can: my false o'erweighs your true. *Exit*

ISABELLA. To whom should I complain? Did I tell this,
Who would believe me? O perilous mouths
That bear in them one and the self-same tongue
Either of condemnation or approof,
Bidding the law make curtsy to their will;
Hooking both right and wrong to th' appetite,
To follow as it draws! I'll to my brother.
Though he hath fall'n by prompture of the blood,
Yet hath he in him such a mind of honour
That, had he twenty heads to tender down
On twenty bloody blocks, he'd yield them up
Before his sister should her body stoop
To such abhorr'd pollution.

Then, Isabel, live chaste, and, brother, die:

More than our brother is our chastity.

I'll tell him yet of Angelo's request,

And fit his mind to death, for his soul's rest. *Exit*

ACT III. SCENE I. The prison

Enter DUKE, disguised as before, CLAUDIO, and PROVOST

DUKE.

So, then you hope of pardon from Lord Angelo?

CLAUDIO.

The miserable have no other medicine

But only hope:

I have hope to Eve, and am prepar'd to die.

DUKE.

Be absolute for death; either death or life

Shall thereby be the sweeter. Reason thus with life.

If I do lose thee, I do lose a thing

That none but fools would keep. A breath thou art,

Servile to all the skyey influences,

That dost this habitation where thou keep'st

Hourly afflict. Merely, thou art Death's fool;

For him thou labour'st by thy flight to shun

And yet run'st toward him still. Thou art not noble;

For all th' accommodations that thou bear'st

Are nurs'd by baseness. Thou 'rt by no means valiant;

For thou dost fear the soft and tender fork

Of a poor worm. Thy best of rest is sleep,

And that thou oft provok'st; yet grossly fear'st

Thy death, which is no more. Thou art not thyself;

For thou exists on many a thousand grains

That issue out of dust. Happy thou art not;

For what thou hast not, still thou striv'st to get,

And what thou hast, forget'st. Thou art not certain;

For thy complexion shifts to strange effects,

After the moon. If thou art rich, thou'rt poor;

For, like an ass whose back with ingots bows,

Thou bear'st thy heavy riches but a journey,
And Death unloads thee. Friend hast thou none;
For thine own bowels which do call thee sire,
The mere effusion of thy proper loins,
Do curse the gout, serpigo, and the rheum,
For ending thee no sooner. Thou hast nor youth nor age,
But, as it were, an after-dinner's sleep,
Dreaming on both; for all thy blessed youth
Becomes as aged, and doth beg the alms
Of palsied eld; and when thou art old and rich,
Thou hast neither heat, affection, limb, nor beauty,
To make thy riches pleasant. What's yet in this
That bears the name of life? Yet in this life
Lie hid moe thousand deaths; yet death we fear,
That makes these odds all even.

CLAUDIO.

I humbly thank you.
To sue to live, I find I seek to die;
And, seeking death, find life. Let it come on.

ISABELLA.

[Within] What, ho! Peace here; grace and good company!

PROVOST.

Who's there? Come in; the wish deserves a welcome.

DUKE.

Dear sir, ere long I'll visit you again.

CLAUDIO.

Most holy sir, I thank you.

Enter ISABELLA

ISABELLA.

My business is a word or two with Claudio.

PROVOST.

And very welcome. Look, signior, here's your sister.

DUKE.

Provost, a word with you.

PROVOST.

As many as you please.

DUKE.

Bring me to hear them speak, where I may be conceal'd.

Exeunt DUKE and PROVOST

CLAUDIO.

Now, sister, what's the comfort?

ISABELLA.

Why,

As all comforts are; most good, most good, indeed.

Lord Angelo, having affairs to heaven,

Intends you for his swift ambassador,

Where you shall be an everlasting leiger.

Therefore, your best appointment make with speed;

To-morrow you set on.

CLAUDIO.

Is there no remedy?

ISABELLA.

None, but such remedy as, to save a head,

To cleave a heart in twain.

CLAUDIO.

But is there any?

ISABELLA.

Yes, brother, you may live:

There is a devilish mercy in the judge,

If you'll implore it, that will free your life,

But fetter you till death.

CLAUDIO.

Perpetual durance?

ISABELLA.

Ay, just; perpetual durance, a restraint,
Though all the world's vastidity you had,
To a determin'd scope.

CLAUDIO.

But in what nature?

ISABELLA.

In such a one as, you consenting to't,
Would bark your honour from that trunk you bear,
And leave you naked.

CLAUDIO.

Let me know the point.

ISABELLA.

O, I do fear thee, Claudio; and I quake,
Lest thou a feverous life shouldst entertain,
And six or seven winters more respect
Than a perpetual honour. Dar'st thou die?
The sense of death is most in apprehension;
And the poor beetle that we tread upon
In corporal sufferance finds a pang as great
As when a giant dies.

CLAUDIO.

Why give you me this shame?
Think you I can a resolution fetch
From flow'ry tenderness? If I must die,
I will encounter darkness as a bride
And hug it in mine arms.

ISABELLA.

There spake my brother; there my father's grave

Did utter forth a voice. Yes, thou must die:
Thou art too noble to conserve a life
In base appliances. This outward-sainted deputy,
Whose settled visage and deliberate word
Nips youth i' th' head, and follies doth enew
As falcon doth the fowl, is yet a devil;
His filth within being cast, he would appear
A pond as deep as hell.

CLAUDIO.

The precise Angelo!

ISABELLA.

O, 'tis the cunning livery of hell
The damned'st body to invest and cover
In precise guards! Dost thou think, Claudio,
If I would yield him my virginity
Thou mightst be freed?

CLAUDIO.

O heavens! it cannot be.

ISABELLA.

Yes, he would give't thee, from this rank offence,

So to offend him still. This night's the time

That I should do what I abhor to name,

Or else thou diest to-morrow.

CLAUDIO.

Thou shalt not do't.

ISABELLA.

O, were it but my life!

I'd throw it down for your deliverance

As frankly as a pin.

CLAUDIO.

Thanks, dear Isabel.

ISABELLA.

Be ready, Claudio, for your death to-morrow.

CLAUDIO.

Yes. Has he affections in him

That thus can make him bite the law by th' nose

When he would force it? Sure it is no sin;

Or of the deadly seven it is the least.

ISABELLA.

Which is the least?

CLAUDIO.

If it were damnable, he being so wise,

Why would he for the momentary trick

Be perdurably fin'd?- O Isabel!

ISABELLA.

What says my brother?

CLAUDIO.

Death is a fearful thing.

ISABELLA.

And shamed life a hateful.

CLAUDIO.

Ay, but to die, and go we know not where;
To lie in cold obstruction, and to rot;
This sensible warm motion to become
A kneaded clod; and the delighted spirit
To bathe in fiery floods or to reside
In thrilling region of thick-ribbed ice;
To be imprison'd in the viewless winds,
And blown with restless violence round about
The pendent world; or to be worse than worst
Of those that lawless and incertain thought
Imagine howling- 'tis too horrible.
The weariest and most loathed worldly life
That age, ache, penury, and imprisonment,

Can lay on nature is a paradise
To what we fear of death.

ISABELLA.

Alas, alas!

CLAUDIO.
Sweet sister, let me live.
What sin you do to save a brother's life,
Nature dispenses with the deed so far
That it becomes a virtue.

ISABELLA.
O you beast!

O faithless coward! O dishonest wretch!
Wilt thou be made a man out of my vice?
Is't not a kind of incest to take life
From thine own sister's shame? What should I think?

Heaven shield my mother play'd my father fair!
For such a warped slip of wilderness
Ne'er issu'd from his blood. Take my defiance;
Die; perish. Might but my bending down
Reprieve thee from thy fate, it should proceed.
I'll pray a thousand prayers for thy death,
No word to save thee.

CLAUDIO.

Nay, hear me, Isabel.

ISABELLA.

O fie, fie, fie!
Thy sin's not accidental, but a trade.
Mercy to thee would prove itself a bawd;
'Tis best that thou diest quickly.

CLAUDIO.

O, hear me, Isabella.

Re-enter DUKE

DUKE.

Vouchsafe a word, young sister, but one word.

ISABELLA.

What is your will?

DUKE.

Might you dispense with your leisure, I would by and by have some speech with you; the satisfaction I would require is likewise your own benefit.

ISABELLA.

I have no superfluous leisure; my stay must be stolen out of other affairs; but I will attend you awhile.

[Walks apart]

DUKE.

Son, I have overheard what hath pass'd between you and your sister. Angelo had never the purpose to corrupt her; only he hath made an assay of her virtue to practise his judgment with the

disposition of natures. She, having the truth of honour in her,

hath made him that gracious denial which he is most glad to

receive. I am confessor to Angelo, and I know this to be true;

therefore prepare yourself to death. Do not satisfy your

resolution with hopes that are fallible; to-morrow you must die;

go to your knees and make ready.

CLAUDIO.

Let me ask my sister pardon. I am so out of love with life

that I will sue to be rid of it.

DUKE.

Hold you there. Farewell. *[Exit CLAUDIO]* Provost, a word with you.

Re-enter PROVOST

PROVOST.

What's your will, father? DUKE. That, now you are come, you will be gone. Leave me a while with the maid; my mind promises with my habit no loss shall touch her by my company. PROVOST. In good time. *Exit* PROVOST DUKE. The hand that hath made you fair hath made you good; the goodness that is cheap in beauty makes beauty brief in goodness; but grace, being the soul of your complexion, shall keep the body of it ever fair. The assault that Angelo hath made to you, fortune hath convey'd to my understanding; and, but that frailty hath examples for his falling, I should wonder at Angelo. How will you do to content this substitute, and to save your brother? ISABELLA. I am now going to resolve him; I had rather my brother die by the law than my son should be unlawfully born. But, O, how much is the good Duke deceiv'd in Angelo! If ever he return, and I can speak to him, I will open my lips in vain, or discover his government. DUKE. That shall not be much amiss; yet, as the matter now stands, he will avoid your accusation: he made trial of you only. Therefore fasten your ear on my advisings; to the love I have in doing good a remedy presents itself. I do make myself believe that you may most uprighteously do a poor wronged lady a merited benefit; redeem your brother from the angry law; do no stain to your own gracious person; and much please the absent Duke, if peradventure he shall ever return to have hearing of this business. ISABELLA. Let me hear you speak farther; I have spirit to do anything that appears not foul in the truth of my spirit. DUKE. Virtue is bold, and goodness never fearful. Have you not heard speak of Mariana, the sister of Frederick, the great soldier who miscarried at sea? ISABELLA. I have heard of the lady, and good words went with her name. DUKE. She should this Angelo have married; was affianced to her by oath, and the nuptial appointed; between which time of the contract and limit of the solemnity her brother Frederick was wreck'd at sea, having in that perished vessel the dowry of his sister. But mark how heavily this befell to the poor gentlewoman: there she lost a noble and renowned brother, in his love toward her ever most kind and natural; with him the portion and sinew of her fortune, her marriage-dowry; with both, her combinate husband, this well-seeming Angelo. ISABELLA. Can this be so? Did Angelo so leave her? DUKE. Left her in her tears, and dried not one of them with his comfort; swallowed his vows whole, pretending in her discoveries of dishonour; in few, bestow'd her on her own lamentation, which she yet wears for his sake; and he, a marble to her tears, is washed with them, but relents not. ISABELLA. What a merit were it in death to take this poor maid from the world! What corruption in this life that it will let this man live! But how out of this can she avail? DUKE. It is a rupture that you may easily heal; and the cure of it not only saves your brother, but keeps you from dishonour in doing it. ISABELLA. Show me how, good father. DUKE. This forenamed maid hath yet in her the continuance of her first affection; his unjust unkindness, that in all reason should have quenched her love, hath, like an impediment in the current, made it more violent and unruly. Go you to Angelo; answer his requiring with a plausible obedience; agree with his demands to the point; only refer yourself to this advantage: first, that your stay with him may not be long; that the time may have all shadow and silence in it; and the place answer to convenience. This being granted in course-and now follows all: we shall advise this wronged maid to stead up your appointment, go in your place. If the encounter acknowledge itself hereafter, it may compel him to her recompense; and here, by this, is your brother saved, your honour untainted, the poor Mariana advantaged, and the corrupt deputy scaled. The maid will I frame and make fit for his attempt. If you think well to carry this as you may, the doubleness of the benefit defends the deceit from reproof. What think you of it? ISABELLA. The image of it gives me content already; and I trust it will grow to a most prosperous perfection. DUKE. It lies much in your holding up. Haste you speedily to Angelo; if for this night he entreat you to his bed, give him promise of satisfaction. I will presently to Saint Luke's; there, at the moated grange, resides this dejected Mariana. At that place call upon me; and dispatch with Angelo, that it may be quickly. ISABELLA. I thank you for this comfort. Fare you well, good father. *Exeunt* severally

Scene II. The street before the prison

Enter , on one side, DUKE disguised as before; on the other, ELBOW, and OFFICERS with POMPEY

ELBOW.

Nay, if there be no remedy for it, but that you will needs

buy and sell men and women like beasts, we shall have all the

world drink brown and white bastard.

DUKE.

O heavens! what stuff is here?

POMPEY.

'Twas never merry world since, of two usuries, the merriest

was put down, and the worser allow'd by order of law a furr'd gown to keep him warm; and furr'd with fox on lamb-skins too, to

signify that craft, being richer than innocency, stands for the facing.

ELBOW.

Come your way, sir. Bless you, good father friar.

DUKE.

And you, good brother father. What offence hath this man made you, sir?

ELBOW.

Marry, sir, he hath offended the law; and, sir, we take him

to be a thief too, sir, for we have found upon him, sir, a

strange picklock, which we have sent to the deputy.

DUKE.

Fie, sirrah, a bawd, a wicked bawd!

The evil that thou causest to be done,

That is thy means to live. Do thou but think

What 'tis to cram a maw or clothe a back

From such a filthy vice; say to thyself

'From their abominable and beastly touches
I drink, I eat, array myself, and live.'
Canst thou believe thy living is a life,
So stinkingly depending? Go mend, go mend.

POMPEY.
Indeed, it does stink in some sort, sir; but yet, sir,
I would prove-

DUKE.
Nay, if the devil have given thee proofs for sin,
Thou wilt prove his. Take him to prison, officer;
Correction and instruction must both work
Ere this rude beast will profit.

ELBOW.

He must before the deputy, sir; he has given him warning.
The deputy cannot abide a whoremaster; if he be a whoremonger,
and comes before him, he were as good go a mile on his errand.

DUKE.

That we were all, as some would seem to be,

From our faults, as his faults from seeming, free.

ELBOW.

His neck will come to your waist-a cord, sir.

Enter LUCIO

POMPEY.

I spy comfort; I cry bail. Here's a gentleman, and a friend of mine.

LUCIO.

How now, noble Pompey! What, at the wheels of Caesar?

Art

thou led in triumph? What, is there none of Pygmalion's images,

newly made woman, to be had now for putting the hand in the

pocket and extracting it clutch'd? What reply, ha? What say'st

thou to this tune, matter, and method? Is't not drown'd i' th'

last rain, ha? What say'st thou, trot? Is the world as it was, man? Which is the way? Is it sad, and few words? or how? The trick of it?

DUKE.

Still thus, and thus; still worse!

LUCIO.
How doth my dear morsel, thy mistress? Procures she still,
ha?

POMPEY.
Troth, sir, she hath eaten up all her beef, and she is herself in the tub.

LUCIO.
Why, 'tis good; it is the right of it; it must be so; ever
your fresh whore and your powder'd bawd-an unshunn'd
consequence; it must be so. Art going to prison, Pompey?

POMPEY.
Yes, faith, sir.

LUCIO.

Why, 'tis not amiss, Pompey. Farewell; go, say I sent thee thither. For debt, Pompey-or how?

ELBOW.

For being a bawd, for being a bawd.

LUCIO.

Well, then, imprison him. If imprisonment be the due of a bawd, why, 'tis his right. Bawd is he doubtless, and of antiquity, too; bawd-born. Farewell, good Pompey. Commend me to the prison, Pompey. You will turn good husband now, Pompey; you will keep the house.

POMPEY.

I hope, sir, your good worship will be my bail.

LUCIO.

No, indeed, will I not, Pompey; it is not the wear. I will pray, Pompey, to increase your bondage. If you take it not

patiently, why, your mettle is the more. Adieu trusty Pompey.

Bless you, friar.

DUKE.

And you.

LUCIO.

Does Bridget paint still, Pompey, ha?

ELBOW.

Come your ways, sir; come.

POMPEY.

You will not bail me then, sir?

LUCIO.

Then, Pompey, nor now. What news abroad, friar? what news?

ELBOW.

Come your ways, sir; come.

LUCIO.

Go to kennel, Pompey, go.

Exeunt ELBOW, POMPEY and OFFICERS

What news, friar, of the Duke?

DUKE.

I know none. Can you tell me of any?

LUCIO.

Some say he is with the Emperor of Russia; other some,

he is

in Rome; but where is he, think you?

DUKE.

I know not where; but wheresoever, I wish him well.

LUCIO.

It was a mad fantastical trick of him to steal from the

state and usurp the beggary he was never born to. Lord Angelo

dukes it well in his absence; he puts transgression to't.

DUKE.

He does well in't.

LUCIO.

A little more lenity to lechery would do no harm in him;

something too crabbed that way, friar.

DUKE.

It is too general a vice, and severity must cure it.

LUCIO.

Yes, in good sooth, the vice is of a great kindred; it is

well allied; but it is impossible to extirp it quite, friar, till eating and drinking be put down. They say this Angelo was not

made by man and woman after this downright way of creation. Is it true, think you? DUKE. How should he be made, then? LUCIO. Some report a sea-maid spawn'd him; some, that he was begot between two stock-fishes. But it is certain that when he makes water his urine is congeal'd ice; that I know to be true. And he is a motion generative; that's infallible. DUKE. You are pleasant, sir, and speak apace. LUCIO. Why, what a ruthless thing is this in him, for the rebellion of a codpiece to take away the life of a man! Would the Duke that is absent have done this? Ere he would have hang'd a man for the getting a hundred bastards, he would have paid for the nursing a thousand. He had some feeling of the sport; he knew the service, and that instructed him to mercy. DUKE. I never heard the absent Duke much detected for women; he was not inclin'd that way. LUCIO. O, sir, you are deceiv'd. DUKE. 'Tis not possible. LUCIO. Who-not the Duke? Yes, your beggar of fifty; and his use was to put a ducat in her clack-dish. The Duke had crotchets in him. He would be drunk too; that let me inform you. DUKE. You do him wrong, surely. LUCIO. Sir, I was an inward of his. A shy fellow was the Duke; and I believe I know the cause of his withdrawing. DUKE. What, I prithee, might be the cause? LUCIO. No, pardon; 'tis a secret must be lock'd within the teeth and the lips; but this I can let you understand: the greater file of the subject held the Duke to be wise. DUKE. Wise? Why, no question but he was. LUCIO. A very superficial, ignorant, unweighing fellow. DUKE. Either this is envy in you, folly, or mistaking; the very stream of his life, and the business he hath helmed, must, upon a warranted need, give him a better proclamation. Let him be but testimonied in his own bringings-forth, and he shall appear to the envious a scholar, a statesman, and a soldier. Therefore you speak unskilfully; or, if your knowledge be more, it is much dark'ned in your malice. LUCIO. Sir, I know him, and I love him. DUKE. Love talks with better knowledge, and knowledge with dearer love. LUCIO. Come, sir, I know what I know. DUKE. I can hardly believe that, since you know not what you speak. But, if ever the Duke return, as our prayers are he may, let me desire you to make your answer before him. If it be honest you have spoke, you have courage to maintain it; I am bound to call upon you; and I pray you your name? LUCIO. Sir, my name is Lucio, well known to the Duke. DUKE. He shall know you better, sir, if I may live to report you. LUCIO. I fear you not. DUKE. O, you hope the Duke will return no more; or you imagine me too unhurtful an opposite. But, indeed, I can do you little harm: you'll forswear this again. LUCIO. I'll be hang'd first. Thou art deceiv'd in me, friar. But no more of this. Canst thou tell if Claudio die to-morrow or no? DUKE. Why should he die, sir? LUCIO. Why?

For filling a bottle with a tun-dish. I would the Duke we talk of were return'd again. This ungenitur'd agent will unpeople the province with continency; sparrows must not build in his house-eaves because they are lecherous. The Duke yet would have dark deeds darkly answered; he would never bring them to

light. Would he were return'd! Marry, this Claudio is condemned

for untrussing. Farewell, good friar; I prithee pray for me.

The

Duke, I say to thee again, would eat mutton on Fridays. He's not

past it yet; and, I say to thee, he would mouth with a beggar

though she smelt brown bread and garlic. Say that I said so.

Farewell. Exit

DUKE. No might nor greatness in mortality

Can censure scape; back-wounding calumny

The whitest virtue strikes. What king so strong

Can tie the gall up in the slanderous tongue?

But who comes here?

Enter ESCALUS, PROVOST, and OFFICERS with

MISTRESS OVERDONE

ESCALUS.

Go, away with her to prison.

MRS.

OVERDONE. Good my lord, be good to me; your honour is

accounted a merciful man; good my lord.

ESCALUS.

Double and treble admonition, and still forfeit in the

same kind! This would make mercy swear and play the tyrant.

PROVOST.

A bawd of eleven years' continuance, may it please your honour.

MRS.

OVERDONE. My lord, this is one Lucio's information against me.

Mistress Kate Keepdown was with child by him in the Duke's time;

he promis'd her marriage. His child is a year and a quarter old

come Philip and Jacob; I have kept it myself; and see how he goes about to abuse me.

ESCALUS.

That fellow is a fellow of much license. Let him be call'd

before us. Away with her to prison. Go to; no more words.

[Exeunt

OFFICERS with MISTRESS OVERDONE] Provost, my brother Angelo will

not be alter'd: Claudio must die to-morrow. Let him be furnish'd

with divines, and have all charitable preparation. If my brother

wrought by my pity, it should not be so with him.

PROVOST.

So please you, this friar hath been with him, and advis'd

him for th' entertainment of death.

ESCALUS.

Good even, good father.

DUKE.

Bliss and goodness on you!

ESCALUS.
Of whence are you?

DUKE.
Not of this country, though my chance is now
To use it for my time. I am a brother
Of gracious order, late come from the See
In special business from his Holiness.

ESCALUS.

What news abroad i' th' world?

DUKE.
None, but that there is so great a fever on goodness that the
dissolution of it must cure it. Novelty is only in request;
and,
as it is, as dangerous to be aged in any kind of course as it is
virtuous to be constant in any undertakeing. There is scarce

truth enough alive to make societies secure; but security enough
to make fellowships accurst. Much upon this riddle runs the
wisdom of the world. This news is old enough, yet it is every
day's news. I pray you, sir, of what disposition was the Duke?

ESCALUS.

One that, above all other strifes, contended especially to know himself.

DUKE.
What pleasure was he given to?

ESCALUS.
Rather rejoicing to see another merry than merry at
anything which profess'd to make him rejoice; a gentleman of all
temperance. But leave we him to his events, with a prayer they
may prove prosperous; and let me desire to know how you find
Claudio prepar'd. I am made to understand that you have lent him visitation.

DUKE.
He professes to have received no sinister measure from his

judge, but most willingly humbles himself to the determination of
justice. Yet had he framed to himself, by the instruction of his
frailty, many deceiving promises of life; which I, by my good
leisure, have discredited to him, and now he is resolv'd to die.

ESCALUS.
You have paid the heavens your function, and the prisoner
the very debt of your calling. I have labour'd for the poor
gentleman to the extremest shore of my modesty; but my brother
justice have I found so severe that he hath forc'd me to tell him
he is indeed Justice.

DUKE.
If his own life answer the straitness of his proceeding, it
shall become him well; wherein if he chance to fail, he hath sentenc'd himself.

ESCALUS.
I am going to visit the prisoner. Fare you well.

DUKE.
Peace be with you! *Exeunt* ESCALUS and PROVOST

He who the sword of heaven will bear

Should be as holy as severe;

Pattern in himself to know,

Grace to stand, and virtue go;

More nor less to others paying

Than by self-offences weighing.

Shame to him whose cruel striking

Kills for faults of his own liking!

Twice treble shame on Angelo,

To weed my vice and let his grow!

O, what may man within him hide,

Though angel on the outward side!

How may likeness, made in crimes,

Make a practice on the times,

To draw with idle spiders' strings

Most ponderous and substantial things!

Craft against vice I must apply.

With Angelo to-night shall lie

His old betrothed but despised;

So disguise shall, by th' disguised,

Pay with falsehood false exacting,

And perform an old contracting. *Exit*

Act IV. Scene I. The moated grange at Saint Duke's

Enter MARIANA; and BOY singing

SONG

Take, O, take those lips away,

That so sweetly were forsworn;

And those eyes, the break of day,

Lights that do mislead the morn;

But my kisses bring again, bring again;

Seals of love, but seal'd in vain, seal'd in vain.

Enter DUKE, disguised as before

MARIANA.

Break off thy song, and haste thee quick away;

Here comes a man of comfort, whose advice

Hath often still'd my brawling discontent. *Exit* BOY

I cry you mercy, sir, and well could wish

You had not found me here so musical.

Let me excuse me, and believe me so,

My mirth it much displeas'd, but pleas'd my woe.

DUKE.

'Tis good; though music oft hath such a charm

To make bad good and good provoke to harm.

I pray you tell me hath anybody inquir'd for me here to-day.

Much

upon this time have I promis'd here to meet.

MARIANA.

You have not been inquir'd after; I have sat here all day.

Enter ISABELLA

DUKE.

I do constantly believe you. The time is come even now. I

shall crave your forbearance a little. May be I will call upon

you anon, for some advantage to yourself.

MARIANA.

I am always bound to you. *Exit*

DUKE. Very well met, and well come.

What is the news from this good deputy?

ISABELLA.

He hath a garden circummur'd with brick,

Whose western side is with a vineyard back'd;

And to that vineyard is a planched gate

That makes his opening with this bigger key;

This other doth command a little door

Which from the vineyard to the garden leads.

There have I made my promise

Upon the heavy middle of the night

To call upon him.

DUKE.

But shall you on your knowledge find this way?

ISABELLA.

I have ta'en a due and wary note upon't;
With whispering and most guilty diligence,
In action all of precept, he did show me
The way twice o'er.

DUKE.

Are there no other tokens
Between you 'greed concerning her observance?

ISABELLA.

No, none, but only a repair i' th' dark;
And that I have possess'd him my most stay
Can be but brief; for I have made him know
I have a servant comes with me along,
That stays upon me; whose persuasion is
I come about my brother.

DUKE.

'Tis well borne up.

I have not yet made known to Mariana

A word of this. What ho, within! come forth.

Re-enter MARIANA

I pray you be acquainted with this maid;

She comes to do you good.

ISABELLA.

I do desire the like.

DUKE.

Do you persuade yourself that I respect you?

MARIANA.

Good friar, I know you do, and have found it.

DUKE.

Take, then, this your companion by the hand,

Who hath a story ready for your ear.

I shall attend your leisure; but make haste;

The vaporous night approaches.

MARIANA.

Will't please you walk aside?

Exeunt MARIANA and ISABELLA

DUKE.

O place and greatness! Millions of false eyes

Are stuck upon thee. Volumes of report

Run with these false, and most contrarious quest

Upon thy doings. Thousand escapes of wit

Make thee the father of their idle dream,

And rack thee in their fancies.

Re-enter MARIANA and ISABELLA

Welcome, how agreed?

ISABELLA.

She'll take the enterprise upon her, father,

If you advise it.

DUKE.

It is not my consent,

But my entreaty too.

ISABELLA.

Little have you to say,

When you depart from him, but, soft and low,

'Remember now my brother.'

MARIANA.

Fear me not.

DUKE.

Nor, gentle daughter, fear you not at all.

He is your husband on a pre-contract.

To bring you thus together 'tis no sin,

Sith that the justice of your title to him

Doth flourish the deceit. Come, let us go;

Our corn's to reap, for yet our tithe's to sow. *Exeunt*

SCENE II. The prison

Enter PROVOST and POMPEY

PROVOST.

Come hither, sirrah. Can you cut off a man's head?

POMPEY.

If the man be a bachelor, sir, I can; but if he be a

married man, he's his wife's head, and I can never cut of a woman's head.

PROVOST.

Come, sir, leave me your snatches and yield me a direct

answer. To-morrow morning are to die Claudio and Barnardine.

Here

is in our prison a common executioner, who in his office lacks a

helper; if you will take it on you to assist him, it shall redeem

you from your gyves; if not, you shall have your full time of

imprisonment, and your deliverance with an unpitied whipping, for

you have been a notorious bawd.

POMPEY.

Sir, I have been an unlawful bawd time out of mind; but yet

I will be content to be a lawful hangman. I would be glad to receive some instructions from my fellow partner.

PROVOST.

What ho, Abhorson! Where's Abhorson there?

Enter ABHORSON

ABHORSON.

Do you call, sir?

PROVOST.

Sirrah, here's a fellow will help you to-morrow in your

execution. If you think it meet, compound with him by the year,

and let him abide here with you; if not, use him for the present,

and dismiss him. He cannot plead his estimation with you; he hath been a bawd.

ABHORSON.

A bawd, sir? Fie upon him! He will discredit our mystery.

PROVOST.

Go to, sir; you weigh equally; a feather will turn the
scale. *Exit*

POMPEY. Pray, sir, by your good favour-for surely, sir, a good
favour you have but that you have a hanging look-do you call,
sir, your occupation a mystery?

ABHORSON.
Ay, sir; a mystery.

POMPEY.
Painting, sir, I have heard say, is a mystery; and your
whores, sir, being members of my occupation, using painting, do
prove my occupation a mystery; but what mystery there should be
in hanging, if I should be hang'd, I cannot imagine.

ABHORSON.

Sir, it is a mystery.

POMPEY.

Proof?

ABHORSON.

Every true man's apparel fits your thief: if it be too

little for your thief, your true man thinks it big enough; if it

be too big for your thief, your thief thinks it little enough; so

every true man's apparel fits your thief.

Re-enter PROVOST

PROVOST.

Are you agreed?

POMPEY.

Sir, I will serve him; for I do find your hangman is a more

penitent trade than your bawd; he doth oftener ask forgiveness.

PROVOST.

You, sirrah, provide your block and your axe to-morrow four o'clock.

ABHORSON.

Come on, bawd; I will instruct thee in my trade; follow.

POMPEY.

I do desire to learn, sir; and I hope, if you have occasion
to use me for your own turn, you shall find me yare; for truly,
sir, for your kindness I owe you a good turn.

PROVOST.

Call hither Barnardine and Claudio.

Exeunt ABHORSON and POMPEY

Th' one has my pity; not a jot the other,
Being a murderer, though he were my brother.

Enter CLAUDIO

Look, here's the warrant, Claudio, for thy death;
'Tis now dead midnight, and by eight to-morrow
Thou must be made immortal. Where's Barnardine?

CLAUDIO.

As fast lock'd up in sleep as guiltless labour
When it lies starkly in the traveller's bones.
He will not wake.

PROVOST.

Who can do good on him?
Well, go, prepare yourself. *[Knocking within]* But hark, what noise?
Heaven give your spirits comfort! *Exit* CLAUDIO

[Knocking continues] By and by.
I hope it is some pardon or reprieve
For the most gentle Claudio.

Enter DUKE, disguised as before

Welcome, father.

DUKE.
The best and wholesom'st spirits of the night
Envelop you, good Provost! Who call'd here of late?

PROVOST.

None, since the curfew rung.

DUKE.

Not Isabel?

PROVOST.

No.

DUKE.

They will then, ere't be long.

PROVOST.

What comfort is for Claudio?

DUKE.

There's some in hope.

PROVOST.

It is a bitter deputy.

DUKE.

Not so, not so; his life is parallel'd

Even with the stroke and line of his great justice;

He doth with holy abstinence subdue

That in himself which he spurs on his pow'r

To qualify in others. Were he meal'd with that

Which he corrects, then were he tyrannous;

But this being so, he's just. *[Knocking within]* Now are they

come. *Exit* PROVOST

This is a gentle provost; seldom when

The steeled gaoler is the friend of men. *[Knocking within]*

How now, what noise! That spirit's possess'd with haste

That wounds th' unsisting postern with these strokes.

Re-enter PROVOST

PROVOST.

There he must stay until the officer

Arise to let him in; he is call'd up.

DUKE.

Have you no countermand for Claudio yet

But he must die to-morrow?

PROVOST.

None, sir, none.

DUKE.

As near the dawning, Provost, as it is,

You shall hear more ere morning.

PROVOST.

Happily

You something know; yet I believe there comes

No countermand; no such example have we.

Besides, upon the very siege of justice,

Lord Angelo hath to the public ear

Profess'd the contrary.

Enter a MESSENGER This is his lordship's man. DUKE. And here comes

Claudio's pardon. MESSENGER. My lord hath sent you this note; and by me this further charge, that you swerve not from the smallest article of it, neither in time, matter, or other circumstance. Good morrow; for as I take it, it is almost day. PROVOST. I shall obey him. *Exit* MESSENGER DUKE. *[Aside]* This is his pardon, purchas'd by such sin For which the pardoner himself is in; Hence hath offence his quick celerity, When it is borne in high authority. When vice makes mercy, mercy's so extended That for the fault's love is th' offender friended. Now, sir, what news? PROVOST. I told you: Lord Angelo, belike thinking me remiss in mine office, awakens me with this unwonted putting-on; methinks strangely, for he hath not us'd it before. DUKE. Pray you, let's hear. PROVOST. *[Reads]* 'Whatsoever you may hear to the contrary, let Claudio be executed by four of the clock, and, in the afternoon, Barnardine. For my better satisfaction, let me have Claudio's head sent me by five. Let this be duly performed, with a thought that more depends on it than we must yet deliver. Thus fail not to do your office, as you will answer it at your peril.' What say you to this, sir? DUKE. What is that Barnardine who is to be executed in th' afternoon? PROVOST. A Bohemian born; but here nurs'd up and bred. One that is a prisoner nine years old. DUKE. How came it that the absent Duke had not either deliver'd him to his liberty or executed him? I have heard it was ever his manner to do so. PROVOST. His friends still wrought reprieves for him; and, indeed, his fact, till now in the government of Lord Angelo, came not to an undoubted proof. DUKE. It is now apparent? PROVOST. Most manifest, and not denied by himself. DUKE. Hath he borne himself penitently in prison? How seems he to be touch'd? PROVOST. A man that apprehends death no more dreadfully but as a drunken sleep; careless, reckless, and fearless, of what's past, present, or to come; insensible of mortality and desperately mortal. DUKE. He wants advice. PROVOST. He will hear none. He hath evermore had the liberty of the prison; give him leave to escape hence, he would not; drunk many times a day, if not many days entirely drunk. We have very oft awak'd him, as if to carry him to execution, and show'd him a seeming warrant for it; it hath not moved him at all. DUKE. More of him anon. There is written in your brow, Provost, honesty and constancy. If I read it not truly, my ancient skill beguiles me; but in the boldness of my cunning I will lay myself in hazard. Claudio, whom here you have warrant to execute, is no greater forfeit to the law than Angelo who hath sentenc'd him. To make you understand this in a manifested effect, I crave but four days' respite; for the which you are to do me both a present and a dangerous courtesy. PROVOST. Pray, sir, in what? DUKE. In the delaying death. PROVOST. Alack! How may I do it, having the hour limited, and an express command, under penalty, to deliver his head in the view of Angelo? I may make my case as Claudio's, to cross this in the smallest. DUKE. By the vow of mine order, I warrant you, if my instructions may be your guide. Let this Barnardine be this morning executed, and his head borne to Angelo. PROVOST. Angelo hath seen them both, and will discover the favour. DUKE. O, death's a great disguiser; and you may add to it. Shave the head and tie the beard; and say it was the desire of the penitent to be so bar'd before his death. You know the course is common. If anything fall to you upon this more than thanks and good fortune, by the saint whom I profess, I will plead against it with my life. PROVOST. Pardon me, good father; it is against my oath. DUKE. Were you sworn to the Duke, or to the deputy? PROVOST. To him and to his substitutes. DUKE. You will think you have made no offence if the Duke avouch the justice of your dealing? PROVOST. But what likelihood is in that? DUKE. Not a resemblance, but a certainty. Yet since I see you fearful, that neither my coat, integrity, nor persuasion, can with ease attempt you, I will go further than I meant, to pluck all fears out of you. Look you, sir, here is the hand and seal of the Duke. You know the character, I doubt not; and the signet is not strange to you. PROVOST. I know them both. DUKE. The contents of this is the return of the Duke; you shall anon over-read it at your pleasure, where you shall find within these two days he will be here. This is a thing that Angelo knows not; for he this very day receives letters of strange tenour, perchance of the Duke's death, perchance entering into some monastery; but, by chance, nothing of what is writ. Look, th' unfolding star calls up the shepherd. Put not yourself into amazement how these things should be: all difficulties are but easy when they are known. Call your executioner, and off with Barnardine's head. I will give him a present shrift, and advise him for a better place. Yet you are amaz'd, but this shall absolutely resolve you. Come away; it is almost clear dawn. *Exeunt*

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SCENE III. The prison

Enter POMPEY

POMPEY.

I am as well acquainted here as I was in our house of profession; one would think it were Mistress Overdone's own house, for here be many of her old customers. First, here's young Master Rash; he's in for a commodity of brown paper and old ginger, nine score and seventeen pounds, of which he made five marks ready money. Marry, then ginger was not much in request, for the old women were all dead. Then is there here one Master Caper, at the suit of Master Threepile the mercer, for some four suits of peach-colour'd satin, which now peaches him a beggar. Then have we here young Dizy, and young Master Deepvow, and Master Copperspur, and Master Starvelackey, the rapier and dagger man, and young Dropheir that kill'd lusty Pudding, and Master Forthlight the tilter, and brave Master Shootie the great traveller, and wild Halfcan that stabb'd Pots, and, I think, forty more-all great doers in our trade, and are now 'for the Lord's sake.'

Enter ABHORSON

ABHORSON.

Sirrah, bring Barnardine hither.

POMPEY.

Master Barnardine! You must rise and be hang'd, Master Barnardine!

ABHORSON.

What ho, Barnardine!

BARNARDINE.

[Within] A pox o' your throats! Who makes that noise

there? What are you?

POMPEY.

Your friends, sir; the hangman. You must be so good,

sir,

to rise and be put to death.

BARNARDINE.

[Within] Away, you rogue, away; I am sleepy.

ABHORSON.

Tell him he must awake, and that quickly too.

POMPEY.

Pray, Master Barnardine, awake till you are executed,

and sleep afterwards.

ABHORSON.

Go in to him, and fetch him out.

POMPEY.

He is coming, sir, he is coming; I hear his straw rustle.

Enter BARNARDINE

ABHORSON.

Is the axe upon the block, sirrah?

POMPEY.

Very ready, sir.

BARNARDINE.

How now, Abhorson, what's the news with you?

ABHORSON.

Truly, sir, I would desire you to clap into your prayers;

for, look you, the warrant's come.

BARNARDINE.

You rogue, I have been drinking all night; I am not fitted for't.

POMPEY.

O, the better, sir! For he that drinks all night and is

hanged betimes in the morning may sleep the sounder all the next day.

Enter DUKE, disguised as before

ABHORSON.

Look you, sir, here comes your ghostly father.

Do we jest now, think you?

DUKE.

Sir, induced by my charity, and hearing how hastily you are

to depart, I am come to advise you, comfort you, and pray with you.

BARNARDINE.

Friar, not I; I have been drinking hard all night, and

I will have more time to prepare me, or they shall beat out my

brains with billets. I will not consent to die this day,

that's certain.

DUKE.

O, Sir, you must; and therefore I beseech you

Look forward on the journey you shall go.

BARNARDINE.

I swear I will not die to-day for any man's persuasion.

DUKE.

But hear you-

BARNARDINE.

Not a word; if you have anything to say to me, come to
my ward; for thence will not I to-day. *Exit*

DUKE. Unfit to live or die. O gravel heart!
After him, fellows; bring him to the block.
Exeunt ABHORSON and POMPEY

Enter PROVOST

PROVOST.

Now, sir, how do you find the prisoner?

DUKE.

A creature unprepar'd, unmeet for death;

And to transport him in the mind he is
Were damnable.

PROVOST.
Here in the prison, father,
There died this morning of a cruel fever
One Ragozine, a most notorious pirate,
A man of Claudio's years; his beard and head
Just of his colour. What if we do omit
This reprobate till he were well inclin'd,
And satisfy the deputy with the visage
Of Ragozine, more like to Claudio?

DUKE.
O, 'tis an accident that heaven provides!
Dispatch it presently; the hour draws on
Prefix'd by Angelo. See this be done,
And sent according to command; whiles I
Persuade this rude wretch willingly to die.

PROVOST.

This shall be done, good father, presently.
But Barnardine must die this afternoon;
And how shall we continue Claudio,
To save me from the danger that might come
If he were known alive?

DUKE.
Let this be done:

Put them in secret holds, both Barnardine and Claudio.
Ere twice the sun hath made his journal greeting
To the under generation, you shall find
Your safety manifested.

PROVOST.

I am your free dependant.

DUKE.
Quick, dispatch, and send the head to Angelo.

Exit PROVOST

Now will I write letters to Angelo-

The Provost, he shall bear them-whose contents

Shall witness to him I am near at home,

And that, by great injunctions, I am bound

To enter publicly. Him I'll desire

To meet me at the consecrated fount,

A league below the city; and from thence,

By cold gradation and well-balanc'd form.

We shall proceed with Angelo.

Re-enter PROVOST

PROVOST.

Here is the head; I'll carry it myself.

DUKE.

Convenient is it. Make a swift return;

For I would commune with you of such things

That want no ear but yours.

PROVOST.

I'll make all speed. *Exit*

ISABELLA. *[Within]* Peace, ho, be here!

DUKE.

The tongue of Isabel. She's come to know
If yet her brother's pardon be come hither;
But I will keep her ignorant of her good,
To make her heavenly comforts of despair
When it is least expected.

Enter ISABELLA

ISABELLA.

Ho, by your leave!

DUKE.

Good morning to you, fair and gracious daughter.

ISABELLA.

The better, given me by so holy a man.

Hath yet the deputy sent my brother's pardon?

DUKE.

He hath releas'd him, Isabel, from the world.

His head is off and sent to Angelo.

ISABELLA.

Nay, but it is not so.

DUKE.

It is no other.

Show your wisdom, daughter, in your close patience,

ISABELLA.

O, I will to him and pluck out his eyes!

DUKE.

You shall not be admitted to his sight.

ISABELLA.

Unhappy Claudio! Wretched Isabel!

Injurious world! Most damned Angelo!

DUKE.

This nor hurts him nor profits you a jot;

Forbear it, therefore; give your cause to heaven.

Mark what I say, which you shall find

By every syllable a faithful verity.

The Duke comes home to-morrow. Nay, dry your eyes.

One of our covent, and his confessor,

Gives me this instance. Already he hath carried

Notice to Escalus and Angelo,

Who do prepare to meet him at the gates,

There to give up their pow'r. If you can, pace your wisdom

In that good path that I would wish it go,

And you shall have your bosom on this wretch,
Grace of the Duke, revenges to your heart,
And general honour.

ISABELLA.
I am directed by you.

DUKE.
This letter, then, to Friar Peter give;
'Tis that he sent me of the Duke's return.
Say, by this token, I desire his company
At Mariana's house tonight. Her cause and yours
I'll perfect him withal; and he shall bring you
Before the Duke; and to the head of Angelo
Accuse him home and home. For my poor self,
I am combined by a sacred vow,
And shall be absent. Wend you with this letter.
Command these fretting waters from your eyes
With a light heart; trust not my holy order,
If I pervert your course. Who's here?

Enter LUCIO

LUCIO.

Good even. Friar, where's the Provost?

DUKE.

Not within, sir.

LUCIO.

O pretty Isabella, I am pale at mine heart to see thine eyes so red. Thou must be patient. I am fain to dine and sup with water and bran; I dare not for my head fill my belly; one fruitful meal would set me to't. But they say the Duke will be here to-morrow. By my troth, Isabel, I lov'd thy brother. If the old fantastical Duke of dark corners had been at home, he had lived. *Exit* ISABELLA

DUKE.

Sir, the Duke is marvellous little beholding to your reports; but the best is, he lives not in them.

LUCIO.

Friar, thou knowest not the Duke so well as I do; he's a better woodman than thou tak'st him for.

DUKE.

Well, you'll answer this one day. Fare ye well.

LUCIO.

Nay, tarry; I'll go along with thee; I can tell thee pretty tales of the Duke.

DUKE.

You have told me too many of him already, sir, if they be true; if not true, none were enough.

LUCIO.

I was once before him for getting a wench with child.

DUKE.

Did you such a thing?

LUCIO.

Yes, marry, did I; but I was fain to forswear it: they would

else have married me to the rotten medlar.

DUKE.

Sir, your company is fairer than honest. Rest you well.

LUCIO.

By my troth, I'll go with thee to the lane's end. If bawdy

talk offend you, we'll have very little of it. Nay, friar, I

am a

kind of burr; I shall stick. *Exeunt*

SCENE IV. ANGELO'S house

Enter ANGELO and ESCALUS

ESCALUS.

Every letter he hath writ hath disvouch'd other.

ANGELO.

In most uneven and distracted manner. His actions show much like to madness; pray heaven his wisdom be not tainted! And why meet him at the gates, and redeliver our authorities there?

ESCALUS.

I guess not.

ANGELO.

And why should we proclaim it in an hour before his ent'ring that, if any crave redress of injustice, they should exhibit their petitions in the street?

ESCALUS.

He shows his reason for that: to have a dispatch of complaints; and to deliver us from devices hereafter, which shall then have no power to stand against us.

ANGELO.

Well, I beseech you, let it be proclaim'd;

Betimes i' th' morn I'll call you at your house;

Give notice to such men of sort and suit

As are to meet him.

ESCALUS.

I shall, sir; fare you well.

ANGELO.

Good night. *Exit* ESCALUS

This deed unshapes me quite, makes me unpregnant

And dull to all proceedings. A deflow'red maid!

And by an eminent body that enforc'd

The law against it! But that her tender shame

Will not proclaim against her maiden loss,

How might she tongue me! Yet reason dares her no;

For my authority bears a so credent bulk

That no particular scandal once can touch

But it confounds the breather. He should have liv'd,

Save that his riotous youth, with dangerous sense,

Might in the times to come have ta'en revenge,

By so receiving a dishonour'd life

With ransom of such shame. Would yet he had liv'd!

Alack, when once our grace we have forgot,

Nothing goes right; we would, and we would not. *Exit*

SCENE V. Fields without the town

Enter DUKE in his own habit, and Friar PETER

DUKE.

These letters at fit time deliver me. *[Giving letters]*

The Provost knows our purpose and our plot.

The matter being afoot, keep your instruction

And hold you ever to our special drift;

Though sometimes you do blench from this to that

As cause doth minister. Go, call at Flavius' house,

And tell him where I stay; give the like notice

To Valentinus, Rowland, and to Crassus,

And bid them bring the trumpets to the gate;

But send me Flavius first.

PETER.

It shall be speeded well. *Exit* FRIAR

Enter VARRIUS

DUKE.

I thank thee, Varrius; thou hast made good haste.

Come, we will walk. There's other of our friends

Will greet us here anon. My gentle Varrius! *Exeunt*

SCENE VI. A street near the city gate

Enter ISABELLA and MARIANA

ISABELLA.

To speak so indirectly I am loath;

I would say the truth; but to accuse him so,

That is your part. Yet I am advis'd to do it;

He says, to veil full purpose.

MARIANA.

Be rul'd by him.

ISABELLA.

Besides, he tells me that, if peradventure
He speak against me on the adverse side,
I should not think it strange; for 'tis a physic
That's bitter to sweet end.

MARIANA.
I would Friar Peter-

Enter FRIAR PETER

ISABELLA.
O, peace! the friar is come.

PETER.
Come, I have found you out a stand most fit,
Where you may have such vantage on the Duke
He shall not pass you. Twice have the trumpets sounded;
The generous and gravest citizens
Have hent the gates, and very near upon
The Duke is ent'ring; therefore, hence, away. *Exeunt*

ACT V. SCENE I. The city gate

Enter at several doors DUKE, VARRIUS, LORDS; ANGELO, ESCALUS,

Lucio,

PROVOST, OFFICERS, and CITIZENS

DUKE.

My very worthy cousin, fairly met!

Our old and faithful friend, we are glad to see you.

ANGELO, ESCALUS. Happy return be to your royal Grace!

DUKE.

Many and hearty thankings to you both.

We have made inquiry of you, and we hear

Such goodness of your justice that our soul

Cannot but yield you forth to public thanks,

Forerunning more requital.

ANGELO.

You make my bonds still greater.

DUKE.

O, your desert speaks loud; and I should wrong it

To lock it in the wards of covert bosom,

When it deserves, with characters of brass,

A forted residence 'gainst the tooth of time

And razure of oblivion. Give me your hand.

And let the subject see, to make them know

That outward courtesies would fain proclaim

Favours that keep within. Come, Escalus,

You must walk by us on our other hand,

And good supporters are you.

Enter FRIAR PETER and ISABELLA

PETER.

Now is your time; speak loud, and kneel before him.

ISABELLA.

Justice, O royal Duke! Vail your regard

Upon a wrong'd-I would fain have said a maid!

O worthy Prince, dishonour not your eye

By throwing it on any other object

Till you have heard me in my true complaint,

And given me justice, justice, justice, justice.

DUKE.

Relate your wrongs. In what? By whom? Be brief.

Here is Lord Angelo shall give you justice;

Reveal yourself to him.

ISABELLA.

O worthy Duke,

You bid me seek redemption of the devil!

Hear me yourself; for that which I must speak

Must either punish me, not being believ'd,

Or wring redress from you. Hear me, O, hear me, here!

ANGELO.

My lord, her wits, I fear me, are not firm;
She hath been a suitor to me for her brother,
Cut off by course of justice-

ISABELLA.
By course of justice!

ANGELO.

And she will speak most bitterly and strange.

ISABELLA.
Most strange, but yet most truly, will I speak.

That Angelo's forsworn, is it not strange?
That Angelo's a murderer, is't not strange?
That Angelo is an adulterous thief,
An hypocrite, a virgin-violator,
Is it not strange and strange?

DUKE.

Nay, it is ten times strange.

ISABELLA.

It is not truer he is Angelo

Than this is all as true as it is strange;

Nay, it is ten times true; for truth is truth

To th' end of reck'ning.

DUKE.

Away with her. Poor soul,

She speaks this in th' infirmity of sense.

ISABELLA.

O Prince! I conjure thee, as thou believ'st

There is another comfort than this world,

That thou neglect me not with that opinion

That I am touch'd with madness. Make not impossible

That which but seems unlike: 'tis not impossible

But one, the wicked'st caitiff on the ground,

May seem as shy, as grave, as just, as absolute,

As Angelo; even so may Angelo,

In all his dressings, characts, titles, forms,
Be an arch-villain. Believe it, royal Prince,
If he be less, he's nothing; but he's more,
Had I more name for badness.

DUKE.

By mine honesty,
If she be mad, as I believe no other,
Her madness hath the oddest frame of sense,
Such a dependency of thing on thing,
As e'er I heard in madness.

ISABELLA.

O gracious Duke,
Harp not on that; nor do not banish reason
For inequality; but let your reason serve
To make the truth appear where it seems hid,
And hide the false seems true.

DUKE.

Many that are not mad

Have, sure, more lack of reason. What would you say?

ISABELLA.

I am the sister of one Claudio,

Condemn'd upon the act of fornication

To lose his head; condemn'd by Angelo.

I, in probation of a sisterhood,

Was sent to by my brother; one Lucio

As then the messenger-

LUCIO.

That's I, an't like your Grace.

I came to her from Claudio, and desir'd her

To try her gracious fortune with Lord Angelo

For her poor brother's pardon.

ISABELLA.

That's he, indeed.

DUKE.

You were not bid to speak.

LUCIO.

No, my good lord;

Nor wish'd to hold my peace.

DUKE.

I wish you now, then;

Pray you take note of it; and when you have

A business for yourself, pray heaven you then Be perfect.

LUCIO.

I warrant your honour.

DUKE.

The warrant's for yourself; take heed to't.

ISABELLA.

This gentleman told somewhat of my tale.

LUCIO.

Right.

DUKE.

It may be right; but you are i' the wrong

To speak before your time. Proceed.

ISABELLA.

I went

To this pernicious caitiff deputy.

DUKE.

That's somewhat madly spoken.

ISABELLA.

Pardon it;

The phrase is to the matter.

DUKE.

Mended again. The matter-proceed.

ISABELLA.

In brief-to set the needless process by,

How I persuaded, how I pray'd, and kneel'd,

How he refell'd me, and how I replied,

For this was of much length-the vile conclusion

I now begin with grief and shame to utter:

He would not, but by gift of my chaste body

To his concupiscible intemperate lust,

Release my brother; and, after much debatement,

My sisterly remorse confutes mine honour,

And I did yield to him. But the next morn betimes,

His purpose surfeiting, he sends a warrant

For my poor brother's head.

DUKE.

This is most likely!

ISABELLA.

O that it were as like as it is true!

DUKE.

By heaven, fond wretch, thou know'st not what thou speak'st,

Or else thou art suborn'd against his honour

In hateful practice. First, his integrity

Stands without blemish; next, it imports no reason

That with such vehemency he should pursue

Faults proper to himself. If he had so offended,

He would have weigh'd thy brother by himself,

And not have cut him off. Some one hath set you on;

Confess the truth, and say by whose advice

Thou cam'st here to complain.

ISABELLA.

And is this all?

Then, O you blessed ministers above,

Keep me in patience; and, with ripened time,

Unfold the evil which is here wrapt up

In countenance! Heaven shield your Grace from woe, As I, thus wrong'd, hence unbelieved go!

DUKE.

I know you'd fain be gone. An officer!

To prison with her! Shall we thus permit

A blasting and a scandalous breath to fall

On him so near us? This needs must be a practice.

Who knew of your intent and coming hither?

ISABELLA.

One that I would were here, Friar Lodowick.

DUKE.

A ghostly father, belike. Who knows that Lodowick?

LUCIO.

My lord, I know him; 'tis a meddling friar.

I do not like the man; had he been lay, my lord,

For certain words he spake against your Grace

In your retirement, I had swing'd him soundly.

DUKE.

Words against me? This's a good friar, belike!
And to set on this wretched woman here
Against our substitute! Let this friar be found.

LUCIO.
But yesternight, my lord, she and that friar,
I saw them at the prison; a saucy friar,
A very scurvy fellow.

PETER.

Blessed be your royal Grace!
I have stood by, my lord, and I have heard
Your royal ear abus'd. First, hath this woman
Most wrongfully accus'd your substitute;
Who is as free from touch or soil with her
As she from one ungot.

DUKE.

We did believe no less.
Know you that Friar Lodowick that she speaks of?

PETER.
I know him for a man divine and holy;
Not scurvy, nor a temporary meddler,
As he's reported by this gentleman;
And, on my trust, a man that never yet
Did, as he vouches, misreport your Grace.

LUCIO.
My lord, most villainously; believe it.

PETER.
Well, he in time may come to clear himself;
But at this instant he is sick, my lord,
Of a strange fever. Upon his mere request-
Being come to knowledge that there was complaint

Intended 'gainst Lord Angelo-came I hither

To speak, as from his mouth, what he doth know

Is true and false; and what he, with his oath

And all probation, will make up full clear,

Whensoever he's convented. First, for this woman-

To justify this worthy nobleman,

So vulgarly and personally accus'd-

Her shall you hear disproved to her eyes,

Till she herself confess it.

DUKE.

Good friar, let's hear it. *Exit* ISABELLA guarded

Do you not smile at this, Lord Angelo?

O heaven, the vanity of wretched fools!

Give us some seats. Come, cousin Angelo;

In this I'll be impartial; be you judge

Of your own cause.

Enter MARIANA veiled

Is this the witness, friar?

FIRST let her show her face, and after speak.

MARIANA.

Pardon, my lord; I will not show my face

Until my husband bid me.

DUKE.

What, are you married?

MARIANA.

No, my lord.

DUKE.

Are you a maid?

MARIANA.

No, my lord.

DUKE.

A widow, then?

MARIANA.

Neither, my lord.

DUKE.

Why, you are nothing then; neither maid, widow, nor wife.

LUCIO.

My lord, she may be a punk; for many of them are neither
maid, widow, nor wife.

DUKE.

Silence that fellow. I would he had some cause
To prattle for himself.

LUCIO.

Well, my lord.

MARIANA.

My lord, I do confess I ne'er was married,

And I confess, besides, I am no maid.

I have known my husband; yet my husband

Knows not that ever he knew me.

LUCIO.

He was drunk, then, my lord; it can be no better.

DUKE.

For the benefit of silence, would thou wert so too!

LUCIO.

Well, my lord.

DUKE.

This is no witness for Lord Angelo.

MARIANA.

Now I come to't, my lord:

She that accuses him of fornication,

In self-same manner doth accuse my husband;

And charges him, my lord, with such a time

When I'll depose I had him in mine arms,

With all th' effect of love.

ANGELO.

Charges she moe than me?

MARIANA.

Not that I know.

DUKE.

No? You say your husband.

MARIANA.

Why, just, my lord, and that is Angelo,

Who thinks he knows that he ne'er knew my body,

But knows he thinks that he knows Isabel's.

ANGELO.

This is a strange abuse. Let's see thy face.

MARIANA.

My husband bids me; now I will unmask.

[Unveiling]

This is that face, thou cruel Angelo,

Which once thou swor'st was worth the looking on;

This is the hand which, with a vow'd contract,

Was fast belock'd in thine; this is the body

That took away the match from Isabel,

And did supply thee at thy garden-house

In her imagin'd person.

DUKE.

Know you this woman?

LUCIO.

Carnally, she says.

DUKE.

Sirrah, no more.

LUCIO.

Enough, my lord.

ANGELO.

My lord, I must confess I know this woman;
And five years since there was some speech of marriage
Betwixt myself and her; which was broke off,
Partly for that her promised proportions
Came short of composition; but in chief
For that her reputation was disvalued
In levity. Since which time of five years
I never spake with her, saw her, nor heard from her,
Upon my faith and honour.

MARIANA.

Noble Prince,

As there comes light from heaven and words from breath,

As there is sense in truth and truth in virtue,

I am affianc'd this man's wife as strongly

As words could make up vows. And, my good lord,

But Tuesday night last gone, in's garden-house,

He knew me as a wife. As this is true,

Let me in safety raise me from my knees,

Or else for ever be confixed here,

A marble monument!

ANGELO.

I did but smile till now.

Now, good my lord, give me the scope of justice;

My patience here is touch'd. I do perceive

These poor informal women are no more

But instruments of some more mightier member

That sets them on. Let me have way, my lord, To find this practice out.

DUKE.
Ay, with my heart;
And punish them to your height of pleasure.
Thou foolish friar, and thou pernicious woman,
Compact with her that's gone, think'st thou thy oaths,
Though they would swear down each particular saint,
Were testimonies against his worth and credit,
That's seal'd in approbation? You, Lord Escalus,
Sit with my cousin; lend him your kind pains
To find out this abuse, whence 'tis deriv'd.
There is another friar that set them on;
Let him be sent for.

PETER.
Would lie were here, my lord! For he indeed
Hath set the women on to this complaint.
Your provost knows the place where he abides,
And he may fetch him.

DUKE.

Go, do it instantly. *Exit* PROVOST

And you, my noble and well-warranted cousin,

Whom it concerns to hear this matter forth,

Do with your injuries as seems you best

In any chastisement. I for a while will leave you;

But stir not you till you have well determin'd

Upon these slanderers.

ESCALUS.

My lord, we'll do it throughly. *Exit* DUKE

Signior Lucio, did not you say you knew that Friar Lodowick to be a dishonest person?

LUCIO.

'Cucullus non facit monachum': honest in nothing but in his clothes; and one that hath spoke most villainous speeches of the Duke.

ESCALUS.

We shall entreat you to abide here till he come and enforce them against him. We shall find this friar a notable fellow.

LUCIO.

As any in Vienna, on my word.

ESCALUS.

Call that same Isabel here once again; I would speak with

her. *[Exit an ATTENDANT]* Pray you, my lord, give me leave to

question; you shall see how I'll handle her.

LUCIO.

Not better than he, by her own report.

ESCALUS.

Say you?

LUCIO.

Marry, sir, I think, if you handled her privately, she would

sooner confess; perchance, publicly, she'll be asham'd.

Re-enter OFFICERS with ISABELLA; and PROVOST with the

DUKE in his friar's habit

ESCALUS.

I will go darkly to work with her.

LUCIO.

That's the way; for women are light at midnight.

ESCALUS.

Come on, mistress; here's a gentlewoman denies all that you have said.

LUCIO.

My lord, here comes the rascal I spoke of, here with the Provost.

ESCALUS.

In very good time. Speak not you to him till we call upon you.

LUCIO.

Mum.

ESCALUS.

Come, sir; did you set these women on to slander Lord

Angelo? They have confess'd you did.

DUKE.

'Tis false.

ESCALUS.

How! Know you where you are?

DUKE.

Respect to your great place! and let the devil

Be sometime honour'd for his burning throne!

Where is the Duke? 'Tis he should hear me speak.

ESCALUS.

The Duke's in us; and we will hear you speak;

Look you speak justly.

DUKE.

Boldly, at least. But, O, poor souls,

Come you to seek the lamb here of the fox,

Good night to your redress! Is the Duke gone?

Then is your cause gone too. The Duke's unjust

Thus to retort your manifest appeal,

And put your trial in the villain's mouth

Which here you come to accuse.

LUCIO.

This is the rascal; this is he I spoke of.

ESCALUS.

Why, thou unreverend and unhallowed friar,

Is't not enough thou hast suborn'd these women

To accuse this worthy man, but, in foul mouth,

And in the witness of his proper ear,

To call him villain; and then to glance from him

To th' Duke himself, to tax him with injustice?

Take him hence; to th' rack with him! We'll touze you

Joint by joint, but we will know his purpose.

What, 'unjust'!

DUKE.

Be not so hot; the Duke

Dare no more stretch this finger of mine than he

Dare rack his own; his subject am I not,

Nor here provincial. My business in this state

Made me a looker-on here in Vienna,

Where I have seen corruption boil and bubble

Till it o'errun the stew: laws for all faults,

But faults so countenanc'd that the strong statutes

Stand like the forfeits in a barber's shop,

As much in mock as mark.

ESCALUS.

Slander to th' state! Away with him to prison!

ANGELO.

What can you vouch against him, Signior Lucio?

Is this the man that you did tell us of?

LUCIO.

'Tis he, my lord. Come hither, good-man bald-pate.
Do you know me?

DUKE.
I remember you, sir, by the sound of your voice. I met you at
the prison, in the absence of the Duke.

LUCIO.

O did you so? And do you remember what you said of the Duke?

DUKE.
Most notedly, sir.

LUCIO.
Do you so, sir? And was the Duke a fleshmonger, a fool, and
a coward, as you then reported him to be?

DUKE.

You must, sir, change persons with me ere you make that my

report; you, indeed, spoke so of him; and much more, much worse.

LUCIO.

O thou damnable fellow! Did not I pluck thee by the nose for thy speeches?

DUKE.

I protest I love the Duke as I love myself.

ANGELO.

Hark how the villain would close now, after his treasonable abuses!

ESCALUS.

Such a fellow is not to be talk'd withal. Away with him to

prison! Where is the Provost? Away with him to prison! Lay bolts

enough upon him; let him speak no more. Away with those giglets

too, and with the other confederate companion!

[The PROVOST lays bands on the DUKE]

DUKE.

Stay, sir; stay awhile.

ANGELO.

What, resists he? Help him, Lucio.

LUCIO.

Come, sir; come, sir; come, sir; foh, sir! Why, you
bald-pated lying rascal, you must be hooded, must you? Show your
knave's visage, with a pox to you! Show your sheep-biting face,
and be hang'd an hour! Will't not off?
[Pulls off the FRIAR'S bood and discovers the DUKE]

DUKE.

Thou art the first knave that e'er mad'st a duke.
First, Provost, let me bail these gentle three.

[To Lucio] Sneak not away, sir, for the friar and you

Must have a word anon. Lay hold on him.

LUCIO.

This may prove worse than hanging.

DUKE.

[To ESCALUS] What you have spoke I pardon; sit you down.
We'll borrow place of him. *[To ANGELO]* Sir, by your leave.
Hast thou or word, or wit, or impudence,
That yet can do thee office? If thou hast,
Rely upon it till my tale be heard,
And hold no longer out.

ANGELO.

O my dread lord,
I should be guiltier than my guiltiness,
To think I can be undiscernible,
When I perceive your Grace, like pow'r divine,
Hath look'd upon my passes. Then, good Prince,
No longer session hold upon my shame,

But let my trial be mine own confession;

Immediate sentence then, and sequent death,

Is all the grace I beg.

DUKE.

Come hither, Mariana.

Say, wast thou e'er contracted to this woman?

ANGELO.

I was, my lord.

DUKE.

Go, take her hence and marry her instantly.

Do you the office, friar; which consummate,

Return him here again. Go with him, Provost.

Exeunt ANGELO, MARIANA, FRIAR PETER, and PROVOST

ESCALUS.

My lord, I am more amaz'd at his dishonour

Than at the strangeness of it.

DUKE.

Come hither, Isabel.
Your friar is now your prince. As I was then
Advertising and holy to your business,
Not changing heart with habit, I am still
Attorney'd at your service.

ISABELLA.
O, give me pardon,
That I, your vassal have employ'd and pain'd
Your unknown sovereignty.

DUKE.

You are pardon'd, Isabel.
And now, dear maid, be you as free to us.
Your brother's death, I know, sits at your heart;
And you may marvel why I obscur'd myself,
Labouring to save his life, and would not rather

Make rash remonstrance of my hidden pow'r

Than let him so be lost. O most kind maid,

It was the swift celerity of his death,

Which I did think with slower foot came on,

That brain'd my purpose. But peace be with him!

That life is better life, past fearing death,

Than that which lives to fear. Make it your comfort,

So happy is your brother.

ISABELLA.

I do, my lord.

Re-enter ANGELO, MARIANA, FRIAR PETER, and PROVOST

DUKE.

For this new-married man approaching here,

Whose salt imagination yet hath wrong'd

Your well-defended honour, you must pardon

For Mariana's sake; but as he adjudg'd your brother-

Being criminal in double violation

Of sacred chastity and of promise-breach,

Thereon dependent, for your brother's life-

The very mercy of the law cries out

Most audible, even from his proper tongue,
'An Angelo for Claudio, death for death!'
Haste still pays haste, and leisure answers leisure;
Like doth quit like, and Measure still for Measure.
Then, Angelo, thy fault's thus manifested,
Which, though thou wouldst deny, denies thee vantage.
We do condemn thee to the very block
Where Claudio stoop'd to death, and with like haste.

Away with him!

MARIANA.
O my most gracious lord,
I hope you will not mock me with a husband.

DUKE.
It is your husband mock'd you with a husband.
Consenting to the safeguard of your honour,
I thought your marriage fit; else imputation,
For that he knew you, might reproach your life,
And choke your good to come. For his possessions,

Although by confiscation they are ours,

We do instate and widow you withal

To buy you a better husband.

MARIANA.

O my dear lord,

I crave no other, nor no better man.

DUKE.

Never crave him; we are definitive.

MARIANA.

Gentle my liege- *[Kneeling]*

DUKE.

You do but lose your labour.

Away with him to death! *[To LUCIO]* Now, sir, to you.

MARIANA.

O my good lord! Sweet Isabel, take my part;

Lend me your knees, and all my life to come

I'll lend you all my life to do you service.

DUKE.

Against all sense you do importune her.
Should she kneel down in mercy of this fact,
Her brother's ghost his paved bed would break,
And take her hence in horror.

MARIANA.
Isabel,
Sweet Isabel, do yet but kneel by me;
Hold up your hands, say nothing; I'll speak all.
They say best men moulded out of faults;
And, for the most, become much more the better
For being a little bad; so may my husband.

O Isabel, will you not lend a knee?

DUKE.
He dies for Claudio's death.

ISABELLA.

[Kneeling] Most bounteous sir,

Look, if it please you, on this man condemn'd,

As if my brother liv'd. I partly think

A due sincerity govern'd his deeds

Till he did look on me; since it is so,

Let him not die. My brother had but justice,

In that he did the thing for which he died;

For Angelo,

His act did not o'ertake his bad intent,

And must be buried but as an intent

That perish'd by the way. Thoughts are no subjects;

Intents but merely thoughts.

MARIANA.

Merely, my lord.

DUKE.

Your suit's unprofitable; stand up, I say.

I have bethought me of another fault.
Provost, how came it Claudio was beheaded
At an unusual hour?

PROVOST.
It was commanded so.

DUKE.

Had you a special warrant for the deed?

PROVOST.
No, my good lord; it was by private message.

DUKE.
For which I do discharge you of your office;
Give up your keys.

PROVOST.
Pardon me, noble lord;

I thought it was a fault, but knew it not;
Yet did repent me, after more advice;
For testimony whereof, one in the prison,
That should by private order else have died,
I have reserv'd alive.

DUKE.

What's he?

PROVOST.
His name is Barnardine.

DUKE.

I would thou hadst done so by Claudio.
Go fetch him hither; let me look upon him. *Exit* PROVOST

ESCALUS.
I am sorry one so learned and so wise
As you, Lord Angelo, have still appear'd,
Should slip so grossly, both in the heat of blood

And lack of temper'd judgment afterward.

ANGELO.
I am sorry that such sorrow I procure;
And so deep sticks it in my penitent heart
That I crave death more willingly than mercy;
'Tis my deserving, and I do entreat it.
Re-enter PROVOST, with BARNARDINE, CLAUDIO (muffled)
and JULIET
DUKE.
Which is that Barnardine?

PROVOST.

This, my lord.

DUKE.
There was a friar told me of this man.
Sirrah, thou art said to have a stubborn soul,
That apprehends no further than this world,
And squar'st thy life according. Thou'rt condemn'd;

But, for those earthly faults, I quit them all,
And pray thee take this mercy to provide
For better times to come. Friar, advise him;
I leave him to your hand. What muffl'd fellow's that?

PROVOST.
This is another prisoner that I sav'd,
Who should have died when Claudio lost his head;
As like almost to Claudio as himself. *[Unmuffles CLAUDIO]*

DUKE.
[To ISABELLA] If he be like your brother, for his sake
Is he pardon'd; and for your lovely sake,
Give me your hand and say you will be mine,
He is my brother too. But fitter time for that.
By this Lord Angelo perceives he's safe;
Methinks I see a quick'ning in his eye.

Well, Angelo, your evil quits you well.
Look that you love your wife; her worth worth yours.
I find an apt remission in myself;

And yet here's one in place I cannot pardon.
To Lucio] You, sirrah, that knew me for a fool, a coward,
One all of luxury, an ass, a madman!
Wherein have I so deserv'd of you
That you extol me thus?

LUCIO.

Faith, my lord, I spoke it but according to the trick.
If you will hang me for it, you may; but I had rather it would
please you I might be whipt.

DUKE.
Whipt first, sir, and hang'd after.
Proclaim it, Provost, round about the city,
If any woman wrong'd by this lewd fellow-
As I have heard him swear himself there's one
Whom he begot with child, let her appear,
And he shall marry her. The nuptial finish'd,
Let him be whipt and hang'd.

LUCIO.

I beseech your Highness, do not marry me to a whore.
Your
Highness said even now I made you a duke; good my lord, do not
recompense me in making me a cuckold.

DUKE.

Upon mine honour, thou shalt marry her.
Thy slanders I forgive; and therewithal
Remit thy other forfeits. Take him to prison;
And see our pleasure herein executed.

LUCIO.
Marrying a punk, my lord, is pressing to death,
whipping,
and hanging.

DUKE.
Slandering a prince deserves it.

Exeunt OFFICERS with LUCIO

She, Claudio, that you wrong'd, look you restore.

Joy to you, Mariana! Love her, Angelo;

I have confess'd her, and I know her virtue.

Thanks, good friend Escalus, for thy much goodness;

There's more behind that is more gratulate.

Thanks, Provost, for thy care and secrecy;

We shall employ thee in a worthier place.

Forgive him, Angelo, that brought you home

The head of Ragozine for Claudio's:

Th' offence pardons itself. Dear Isabel,

I have a motion much imports your good;

Whereto if you'll a willing ear incline,

What's mine is yours, and what is yours is mine.

So, bring us to our palace, where we'll show

What's yet behind that's meet you all should know.

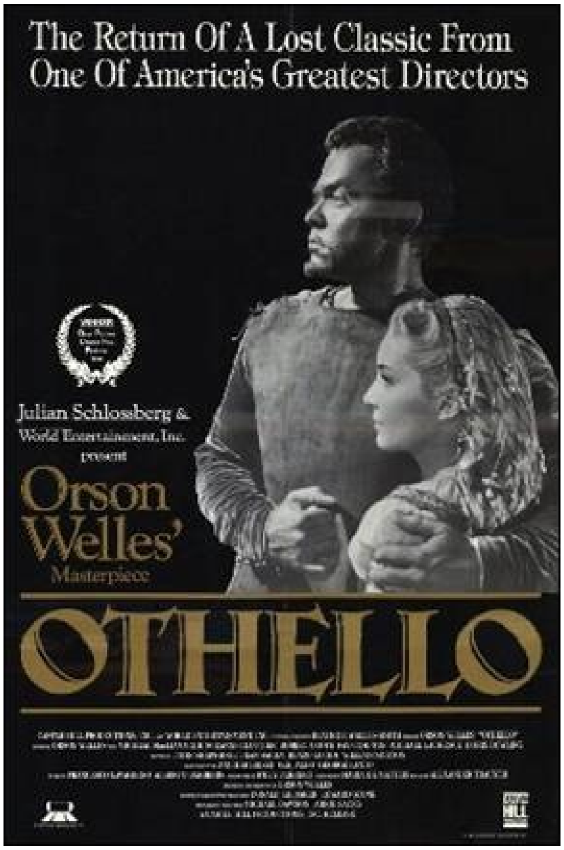
Exeunt

OTHELLO

This famous tragedy is believed to have been written in 1603, and is based on the Italian short story *Un Capitano Moro* by Cinthio, a follower of Boccaccio, first published in 1565. The work revolves around four central characters: Othello, a Moorish general in the Venetian army; his wife Desdemona; his lieutenant, Cassio; and his trusted ensign Iago, whose secret machinations to bring about the downfall of Othello serve as the play's central action.

The play opens with Roderigo, a rich and dissolute gentleman, complaining to Iago, a high-ranking soldier, that he has not told him about the secret marriage between Desdemona, the daughter of a Senator named Brabantio, and Othello, a Moorish general in the Venetian army. He is upset because he loves Desdemona and had previously asked her father for her hand in marriage. Iago is upset with Othello for promoting a younger man named Cassio above him, and tells Roderigo that he plans to use Othello for his own advantage.

Shakespeare's main source text for this play is available via this link .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laurence
FISHBURNE
Irene
JACOB
kenneth
BRANAGH
Othello

The 1995 movie version, with Kenneth Brannagh as the conspiring Iago

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DRAMATIS PERSONAE

OTHELLO, the Moor, general of the Venetian forces

DESDEMONA, his wife

IAGO, ensign to Othello

EMILIA, his wife, lady-in-waiting to Desdemona

CASSIO, lieutenant to Othello

THE DUKE OF VENICE

BRABANTIO, Venetian Senator, father of Desdemona

GRATIANO, nobleman of Venice, brother of Brabantio

LODOVICO, nobleman of Venice, kinsman of Brabantio

RODERIGO, rejected suitor of Desdemona

BIANCA, mistress of Cassio

MONTANO, a Cypriot official

A Clown in service to Othello

Senators, Sailors, Messengers, Officers, Gentlemen, Musicians,

And Attendants

SCENE: Venice and Cyprus

ACT I. SCENE I. Venice. A street.

Enter Roderigo and Iago.

RODERIGO. Tush, never tell me! I take it much unkindly

That thou, Iago, who hast had my purse

As if the strings were thine, shouldst know of this.

IAGO.

'Sblood, but you will not hear me.

If ever I did dream of such a matter,

Abhor me.

RODERIGO.

Thou told'st me thou didst hold him in thy hate.

IAGO.

Despise me, if I do not. Three great ones of the city,

In personal suit to make me his lieutenant,

Off-capp'd to him; and, by the faith of man,

I know my price, I am worth no worse a place.

But he, as loving his own pride and purposes,

Evades them, with a bumbast circumstance

Horribly stuff'd with epithets of war,

And, in conclusion,

Nonsuits my mediators; for, "Certes," says he,

"I have already chose my officer."

And what was he?
Forsooth, a great arithmetician,
One Michael Cassio, a Florentine
(A fellow almost damn'd in a fair wife)
That never set a squadron in the field,
Nor the division of a battle knows
More than a spinster; unless the bookish theoric,
Wherein the toged consuls can propose
As masterly as he. Mere prattle without practice
Is all his soldiership. But he, sir, had the election;
And I, of whom his eyes had seen the proof
At Rhodes, at Cyprus, and on other grounds
Christian and heathen, must be belee'd and calm'd
By debitor and creditor. This counter-caster,
He, in good time, must his lieutenant be,
And I-God bless the mark!- his Moorship's ancient.

RODERIGO.

By heaven, I rather would have been his hangman.

IAGO.

Why, there's no remedy. 'Tis the curse of service,
Preferment goes by letter and affection,
And not by old gradation, where each second
Stood heir to the first. Now, sir, be judge yourself
Whether I in any just term am affined
To love the Moor.

RODERIGO.

I would not follow him then.

IAGO.
O, sir, content you.

I follow him to serve my turn upon him:
We cannot all be masters, nor all masters
Cannot be truly follow'd. You shall mark
Many a duteous and knee-crooking knave,
That doting on his own obsequious bondage
Wears out his time, much like his master's ass,
For nought but provender, and when he's old, cashier'd.

Whip me such honest knaves. Others there are
Who, trimm'd in forms and visages of duty,
Keep yet their hearts attending on themselves,
And throwing but shows of service on their lords
Do well thrive by them; and when they have lined their coats
Do themselves homage. These fellows have some soul,
And such a one do I profess myself.
For, sir,
It is as sure as you are Roderigo,
Were I the Moor, I would not be Iago.
In following him, I follow but myself;
Heaven is my judge, not I for love and duty,
But seeming so, for my peculiar end.
For when my outward action doth demonstrate
The native act and figure of my heart
In complement extern, 'tis not long after
But I will wear my heart upon my sleeve
For daws to peck at: I am not what I am.

RODERIGO.

What a full fortune does the thick-lips owe, If he can carry't thus!

IAGO.

Call up her father,

Rouse him, make after him, poison his delight,

Proclaim him in the streets, incense her kinsmen,

And, though he in a fertile climate dwell,

Plague him with flies. Though that his joy be joy,

Yet throw such changes of vexation on't

As it may lose some color.

RODERIGO.

Here is her father's house; I'll call aloud.

IAGO.

Do, with like timorous accent and dire yell

As when, by night and negligence, the fire

Is spied in populous cities.

RODERIGO.

What, ho, Brabantio! Signior Brabantio, ho!

IAGO.

Awake! What, ho, Brabantio! Thieves! Thieves! Thieves!

Look to your house, your daughter, and your bags!

Thieves! Thieves!

Brabantio appears above, at a window.

BRABANTIO.

What is the reason of this terrible summons?

What is the matter there?

RODERIGO.

Signior, is all your family within?

IAGO.

Are your doors lock'd?

BRABANTIO.

Why? Wherefore ask you this?

IAGO.

'Zounds, sir, you're robb'd! For shame, put on your gown;

Your heart is burst, you have lost half your soul;

Even now, now, very now, an old black ram

Is tupping your white ewe. Arise, arise!

Awake the snorting citizens with the bell,

Or else the devil will make a grandsire of you.

Arise, I say!

BRABANTIO.

What, have you lost your wits?

RODERIGO.

Most reverend signior, do you know my voice?

BRABANTIO.

Not I. What are you?

RODERIGO.

My name is Roderigo.

BRABANTIO.

The worser welcome.

I have charged thee not to haunt about my doors.
In honest plainness thou hast heard me say
My daughter is not for thee; and now, in madness,
Being full of supper and distempering draughts,
Upon malicious bravery, dost thou come
To start my quiet.

RODERIGO.

Sir, sir, sir-

BRABANTIO.

But thou must needs be sure
My spirit and my place have in them power
To make this bitter to thee.

RODERIGO.

Patience, good sir.

BRABANTIO.

What tell'st thou me of robbing? This is Venice;
My house is not a grange.

RODERIGO.

Most grave Brabantio,
In simple and pure soul I come to you.

IAGO.

'Zounds, sir, you are one of those that will not serve God,
if the devil bid you. Because we come to do you service and you
think we are ruffians, you'll have your daughter covered with a

Barbary horse; you'll have your nephews neigh to you; you'll have coursers for cousins, and gennets for germans.

BRABANTIO.

What profane wretch art thou?

IAGO.

I am one, sir, that comes to tell you your daughter and the Moor are now making the beast with two backs.

BRABANTIO.

Thou are a villain.

IAGO.

You are-a senator.

BRABANTIO.

This thou shalt answer; I know thee, Roderigo.

RODERIGO.

Sir, I will answer anything. But, I beseech you,

If't be your pleasure and most wise consent,

As partly I find it is, that your fair daughter,

At this odd-even and dull watch o' the night,

Transported with no worse nor better guard

But with a knave of common hire, a gondolier,

To the gross clasps of a lascivious Moor-

If this be known to you, and your allowance,

We then have done you bold and saucy wrongs;

But if you know not this, my manners tell me

We have your wrong rebuke. Do not believe

That, from the sense of all civility,

I thus would play and trifle with your reverence.

Your daughter, if you have not given her leave,

I say again, hath made a gross revolt,

Tying her duty, beauty, wit, and fortunes

In an extravagant and wheeling stranger

Of here and everywhere. Straight satisfy yourself:

If she be in her chamber or your house,

Let loose on me the justice of the state

For thus deluding you.

BRABANTIO.
Strike on the tinder, ho!

Give me a taper! Call up all my people!
This accident is not unlike my dream;
Belief of it oppresses me already.
Light, I say, light! *Exit* above.

IAGO.
Farewell, for I must leave you.
It seems not meet, nor wholesome to my place,
To be produced-as, if I stay, I shall-
Against the Moor; for I do know, the state,
However this may gall him with some check,
Cannot with safety cast him, for he's embark'd
With such loud reason to the Cyprus wars,
Which even now stands in act, that, for their souls,
Another of his fathom they have none
To lead their business; in which regard,

Though I do hate him as I do hell pains,
Yet for necessity of present life,
I must show out a flag and sign of love,
Which is indeed but sign. That you shall surely find him,
Lead to the Sagittary the raised search,
And there will I be with him. So farewell.
Exit.

Enter , below, Brabantio, in his nightgown, and
Servants with torches.

BRABANTIO.

It is too true an evil: gone she is,
And what's to come of my despised time
Is nought but bitterness. Now, Roderigo,
Where didst thou see her? O unhappy girl!

With the Moor, say'st thou? Who would be a father!
How didst thou know 'twas she? O, she deceives me
Past thought! What said she to you? Get more tapers.
Raise all my kindred. Are they married, think you?

RODERIGO.

Truly, I think they are.

BRABANTIO.

O heaven! How got she out? O treason of the blood!
Fathers, from hence trust not your daughters' minds
By what you see them act. Is there not charms
By which the property of youth and maidhood
May be abused? Have you not read, Roderigo,
Of some such thing?

RODERIGO.

Yes, sir, I have indeed.

BRABANTIO.

Call up my brother. O, would you had had her!
Some one way, some another. Do you know
Where we may apprehend her and the Moor?

RODERIGO.

I think I can discover him, if you please

To get good guard and go along with me.

BRABANTIO.

Pray you, lead on. At every house I'll call;

I may command at most. Get weapons, ho!

And raise some special officers of night.

On, good Roderigo, I'll deserve your pains.

Exeunt.

SCENE II. Another street.

Enter Othello, Iago, and Attendants with torches.

IAGO. Though in the trade of war I have slain men,

Yet do I hold it very stuff o' the conscience

To do no contrived murther. I lack iniquity

Sometimes to do me service. Nine or ten times

I had thought to have yerk'd him here under the ribs.

OTHELLO.

'Tis better as it is.

IAGO.

Nay, but he prated
And spoke such scurvy and provoking terms
Against your honor
That, with the little godliness I have,
I did full hard forbear him. But I pray you, sir,
Are you fast married? Be assured of this,
That the magnifico is much beloved,
And hath in his effect a voice potential
As double as the Duke's. He will divorce you,
Or put upon you what restraint and grievance
The law, with all his might to enforce it on,
Will give him cable.

OTHELLO.

Let him do his spite.

My services, which I have done the signiory,

Shall out-tongue his complaints. 'Tis yet to know-

Which, when I know that boasting is an honor,

I shall promulgate-I fetch my life and being

From men of royal siege, and my demerits

May speak unbonneted to as proud a fortune

As this that I have reach'd. For know, Iago,

But that I love the gentle Desdemona,

I would not my unhoused free condition

Put into circumscription and confine

For the sea's worth. But, look! What lights come yond?

IAGO.

Those are the raised father and his friends.

You were best go in.

OTHELLO.

Not I; I must be found.

My parts, my title, and my perfect soul

Shall manifest me rightly. Is it they?

IAGO.

By Janus, I think no.

Enter Cassio and certain Officers with torches.

OTHELLO. The servants of the Duke? And my lieutenant?

The goodness of the night upon you, friends!

What is the news?

CASSIO.

The Duke does greet you, general,

And he requires your haste-post-haste appearance,

Even on the instant.

OTHELLO.

What is the matter, think you?

CASSIO.

Something from Cyprus, as I may divine;

It is a business of some heat. The galleys

Have sent a dozen sequent messengers

This very night at one another's heels;

And many of the consuls, raised and met,

Are at the Duke's already. You have been hotly call'd for,

When, being not at your lodging to be found,

The Senate hath sent about three several quests

To search you out.

OTHELLO.

'Tis well I am found by you.

I will but spend a word here in the house

And go with you.

Exit.

CASSIO.

Ancient, what makes he here?

IAGO.

Faith, he tonight hath boarded a land carack;

If it prove lawful prize, he's made forever.

CASSIO.

I do not understand.

IAGO.

He's married.

CASSIO.

To who?

Re-enter Othello.

IAGO.

Marry, to-Come, captain, will you go?

OTHELLO.

Have with you.

CASSIO.

Here comes another troop to seek for you.

IAGO.

It is Brabantio. General, be advised,

He comes to bad intent.

Enter Brabantio, Roderigo, and Officers with torches

and weapons.

OTHELLO.

Holla! Stand there!

RODERIGO.

Signior, it is the Moor.

BRABANTIO.

Down with him, thief!

They draw on both sides.

IAGO.

You, Roderigo! Come, sir, I am for you.

OTHELLO.

Keep up your bright swords, for the dew will rust them.
Good signior, you shall more command with years
Than with your weapons.

BRABANTIO.

O thou foul thief, where hast thou stow'd my daughter?
Damn'd as thou art, thou hast enchanted her,
For I'll refer me to all things of sense,
If she in chains of magic were not bound,
Whether a maid so tender, fair, and happy,
So opposite to marriage that she shunn'd

The wealthy, curled darlings of our nation,

Would ever have, to incur a general mock,

Run from her guardage to the sooty bosom

Of such a thing as thou-to fear, not to delight.

Judge me the world, if 'tis not gross in sense

That thou hast practiced on her with foul charms,

Abused her delicate youth with drugs or minerals

That weaken motion. I'll have't disputed on;

'Tis probable, and palpable to thinking.

I therefore apprehend and do attach thee

For an abuser of the world, a practicer

Of arts inhibited and out of warrant.

Lay hold upon him. If he do resist,

Subdue him at his peril.

OTHELLO.

Hold your hands,

Both you of my inclining and the rest.

Were it my cue to fight, I should have known it

Without a prompter. Where will you that I go

To answer this your charge?

BRABANTIO.

To prison, till fit time

Of law and course of direct session

Call thee to answer.

OTHELLO.

What if I do obey?

How may the Duke be therewith satisfied,

Whose messengers are here about my side,

Upon some present business of the state

To bring me to him?

FIRST OFFICER.

'Tis true, most worthy signior;

The Duke's in council, and your noble self,

I am sure, is sent for.

BRABANTIO.

How? The Duke in council?

In this time of the night? Bring him away;

Mine's not an idle cause. The Duke himself,

Or any of my brothers of the state,

Cannot but feel this wrong as 'twere their own;

For if such actions may have passage free,

Bond slaves and pagans shall our statesmen be.

Exeunt.

SCENE III. A council chamber. The Duke and Senators sitting at a table; Officers attending.

DUKE. There is no composition in these news

That gives them credit.

FIRST SENATOR.

Indeed they are disproportion'd;

My letters say a hundred and seven galleys.

DUKE.

And mine, a hundred and forty.

SECOND SENATOR.

And mine, two hundred.

But though they jump not on a just account-

As in these cases, where the aim reports,

'Tis oft with difference-yet do they all confirm

A Turkish fleet, and bearing up to Cyprus.

DUKE.

Nay, it is possible enough to judgement.
I do not so secure me in the error,
But the main article I do approve
In fearful sense.

SAILOR.

[Within.] What, ho! What, ho! What, ho!

FIRST OFFICER.

A messenger from the galleys.

Enter Sailor.

DUKE. Now, what's the business?

SAILOR.

The Turkish preparation makes for Rhodes,
So was I bid report here to the state
By Signior Angelo.

DUKE.

How say you by this change?

FIRST SENATOR.

This cannot be,

By no assay of reason; 'tis a pageant

To keep us in false gaze. When we consider

The importancy of Cyprus to the Turk,

And let ourselves again but understand

That as it more concerns the Turk than Rhodes,

So may he with more facile question bear it,

For that it stands not in such warlike brace,

But altogether lacks the abilities

That Rhodes is dress'd in. If we make thought of this,

We must not think the Turk is so unskillful

To leave that latest which concerns him first,

Neglecting an attempt of ease and gain,

To wake and wage a danger profitless.

DUKE.

Nay, in all confidence, he's not for Rhodes.

FIRST OFFICER.

Here is more news.

Enter a Messenger.

MESSENGER. The Ottomites, reverend and gracious,
Steering with due course toward the isle of Rhodes,
Have there injointed them with an after fleet.

FIRST SENATOR.
Ay, so I thought. How many, as you guess?

MESSENGER.
Of thirty sail; and now they do re-stem
Their backward course, bearing with frank appearance
Their purposes toward Cyprus. Signior Montano,
Your trusty and most valiant servitor,
With his free duty recommends you thus,

And prays you to believe him.

DUKE.

'Tis certain then for Cyprus.
Marcus Luccicos, is not he in town?

FIRST SENATOR.

He's now in Florence.

DUKE.
Write from us to him, post-post-haste dispatch.

FIRST SENATOR.

Here comes Brabantio and the valiant Moor.

Enter Brabantio, Othello, Iago, Roderigo, and Officers.

DUKE. Valiant Othello, we must straight employ you

Against the general enemy Ottoman.

[To Brabantio.] I did not see you; welcome, gentle signior;
We lack'd your counsel and your help tonight.

BRABANTIO.

So did I yours. Good your Grace, pardon me:
Neither my place nor aught I heard of business
Hath raised me from my bed, nor doth the general care
Take hold on me; for my particular grief
Is of so flood-gate and o'erbearing nature
That it engluts and swallows other sorrows,
And it is still itself.

DUKE.
Why, what's the matter?

BRABANTIO.

My daughter! O, my daughter!

ALL.

Dead?

BRABANTIO.

Ay, to me.
She is abused, stol'n from me and corrupted
By spells and medicines bought of mountebanks;
For nature so preposterously to err,
Being not deficient, blind, or lame of sense,
Sans witchcraft could not.

DUKE.
Whoe'er he be that in this foul proceeding
Hath thus beguiled your daughter of herself
And you of her, the bloody book of law
You shall yourself read in the bitter letter
After your own sense, yea, though our proper son
Stood in your action.

BRABANTIO.

Humbly I thank your Grace.
Here is the man, this Moor, whom now, it seems,
Your special mandate for the state affairs
Hath hither brought.

ALL.

We are very sorry for't.

DUKE.
[To Othello.] What in your own part can you say to this?

BRABANTIO.
Nothing, but this is so.

OTHELLO.
Most potent, grave, and reverend signiors,
My very noble and approved good masters,
That I have ta'en away this old man's daughter,

It is most true; true, I have married her;

The very head and front of my offending

Hath this extent, no more. Rude am I in my speech,

And little blest with the soft phrase of peace;

For since these arms of mine had seven years' pith,

Till now some nine moons wasted, they have used

Their dearest action in the tented field,

And little of this great world can I speak,

More than pertains to feats of broil and battle;

And therefore little shall I grace my cause

In speaking for myself. Yet, by your gracious patience,

I will a round unvarnish'd tale deliver

Of my whole course of love: what drugs, what charms,

What conjuration, and what mighty magic-

For such proceeding I am charged withal-

I won his daughter.

BRABANTIO.

A maiden never bold,

Of spirit so still and quiet that her motion

Blush'd at herself; and she-in spite of nature, Of years, of country, credit, everything-

To fall in love with what she fear'd to look on!

It is judgement maim'd and most imperfect,

That will confess perfection so could err

Against all rules of nature, and must be driven

To find out practices of cunning hell

Why this should be. I therefore vouch again

That with some mixtures powerful o'er the blood,

Or with some dram conjured to this effect,

He wrought upon her.

DUKE.

To vouch this is no proof,

Without more certain and more overt test

Than these thin habits and poor likelihoods

Of modern seeming do prefer against him.

FIRST SENATOR.

But, Othello, speak.

Did you by indirect and forced courses

Subdue and poison this young maid's affections?

Or came it by request, and such fair question

As soul to soul affordeth?

OTHELLO.

I do beseech you,

Send for the lady to the Sagittary,

And let her speak of me before her father.

If you do find me foul in her report,

The trust, the office I do hold of you,

Not only take away, but let your sentence

Even fall upon my life.

DUKE.

Fetch Desdemona hither.

OTHELLO.

Ancient, conduct them; you best know the place.

Exeunt Iago and Attendants.

And till she come, as truly as to heaven

I do confess the vices of my blood,

So justly to your grave ears I'll present

How I did thrive in this fair lady's love

And she in mine.

DUKE.

Say it, Othello.

OTHELLO.

Her father loved me, oft invited me,

Still question'd me the story of my life

From year to year, the battles, sieges, fortunes,

That I have pass'd.

I ran it through, even from my boyish days

To the very moment that he bade me tell it:

Wherein I spake of most disastrous chances,

Of moving accidents by flood and field,

Of hair-breadth 'scapes i' the imminent deadly breach,

Of being taken by the insolent foe

And sold to slavery, of my redemption thence

And portance in my travels' history;

Wherein of antres vast and deserts idle,

Rough quarries, rocks, and hills whose heads touch heaven,

It was my hint to speak-such was the process-

And of the Cannibals that each other eat,

The Anthropophagi, and men whose heads

Do grow beneath their shoulders. This to hear

Would Desdemona seriously incline;

But still the house affairs would draw her thence,

Which ever as she could with haste dispatch,

She'ld come again, and with a greedy ear

Devour up my discourse; which I observing,

Took once a pliant hour, and found good means

To draw from her a prayer of earnest heart

That I would all my pilgrimage dilate,

Whereof by parcels she had something heard,

But not intentively. I did consent,

And often did beguile her of her tears

When I did speak of some distressful stroke

That my youth suffer'd. My story being done,

She gave me for my pains a world of sighs;

She swore, in faith, 'twas strange, 'twas passing strange;
'Twas pitiful, 'twas wondrous pitiful.
She wish'd she had not heard it, yet she wish'd
That heaven had made her such a man; she thank'd me,
And bade me, if I had a friend that loved her,
I should but teach him how to tell my story,
And that would woo her. Upon this hint I spake:
She loved me for the dangers I had pass'd,
And I loved her that she did pity them.

This only is the witchcraft I have used.
Here comes the lady; let her witness it.

Enter Desdemona, Iago, and Attendants.

DUKE. I think this tale would win my daughter too.
Good Brabantio,
Take up this mangled matter at the best:
Men do their broken weapons rather use
Than their bare hands.

BRABANTIO.

I pray you, hear her speak.

If she confess that she was half the wooer,

Destruction on my head, if my bad blame

Light on the man! Come hither, gentle mistress.

Do you perceive in all this noble company

Where most you owe obedience?

DESDEMONA.

My noble father,

I do perceive here a divided duty.

To you I am bound for life and education;

My life and education both do learn me

How to respect you; you are the lord of duty,

I am hitherto your daughter. But here's my husband,

And so much duty as my mother show'd

To you, preferring you before her father,

So much I challenge that I may profess

Due to the Moor, my lord.

BRABANTIO.

God be with you! I have done.
Please it your Grace, on to the state affairs;
I had rather to adopt a child than get it.

Come hither, Moor.
I here do give thee that with all my heart
Which, but thou hast already, with all my heart
I would keep from thee. For your sake, jewel,
I am glad at soul I have no other child;
For thy escape would teach me tyranny,
To hang clogs on them. I have done, my lord.

DUKE.
Let me speak like yourself, and lay a sentence
Which, as a grise or step, may help these lovers
Into your favor.
When remedies are past, the griefs are ended
By seeing the worst, which late on hopes depended.
To mourn a mischief that is past and gone
Is the next way to draw new mischief on.
What cannot be preserved when Fortune takes,

Patience her injury a mockery makes.
The robb'd that smiles steals something from the thief;
He robs himself that spends a bootless grief.

BRABANTIO.
So let the Turk of Cyprus us beguile;
We lose it not so long as we can smile.
He bears the sentence well, that nothing bears
But the free comfort which from thence he hears;
But he bears both the sentence and the sorrow
That, to pay grief, must of poor patience borrow.
These sentences, to sugar or to gall,
Being strong on both sides, are equivocal.
But words are words; I never yet did hear
That the bruised heart was pierced through the ear.

I humbly beseech you, proceed to the affairs of state.

DUKE.
The Turk with a most mighty preparation makes for Cyprus.
Othello, the fortitude of the place is best known to you; and

though we have there a substitute of most allowed sufficiency, yet opinion, a sovereign mistress of effects, throws a more safer voice on you. You must therefore be content to slubber the gloss of your new fortunes with this more stubborn and boisterous expedition.

OTHELLO.
The tyrant custom, most grave senators,
Hath made the flinty and steel couch of war
My thrice-driven bed of down. I do agnize
A natural and prompt alacrity
I find in hardness and do undertake
These present wars against the Ottomites.
Most humbly therefore bending to your state,
I crave fit disposition for my wife,
Due reference of place and exhibition,
With such accommodation and besort
As levels with her breeding.

DUKE.
If you please,
Be't at her father's.

BRABANTIO.

I'll not have it so.

OTHELLO.

Nor I.

DESDEMONA.

Nor I. I would not there reside

To put my father in impatient thoughts

By being in his eye. Most gracious Duke,

To my unfolding lend your prosperous ear,

And let me find a charter in your voice

To assist my simpleness.

DUKE.

What would you, Desdemona?

DESDEMONA.

That I did love the Moor to live with him,

My downright violence and storm of fortunes

May trumpet to the world. My heart's subdued

Even to the very quality of my lord.

I saw Othello's visage in his mind,

And to his honors and his valiant parts

Did I my soul and fortunes consecrate.

So that, dear lords, if I be left behind,

A moth of peace, and he go to the war,

The rites for which I love him are bereft me,

And I a heavy interim shall support

By his dear absence. Let me go with him.

OTHELLO.

Let her have your voices.

Vouch with me, heaven, I therefore beg it not

To please the palate of my appetite,

Nor to comply with heat-the young affects

In me defunct-and proper satisfaction;

But to be free and bounteous to her mind.

And heaven defend your good souls, that you think

I will your serious and great business scant
For she is with me. No, when light-wing'd toys
Of feather'd Cupid seel with wanton dullness
My speculative and officed instruments,
That my disports corrupt and taint my business,
Let housewives make a skillet of my helm,
And all indign and base adversities
Make head against my estimation!

DUKE.
Be it as you shall privately determine,
Either for her stay or going. The affair cries haste,
And speed must answer't: you must hence tonight.

DESDEMONA.
Tonight, my lord?

DUKE.

This night.

OTHELLO.

With all my heart.

DUKE.

At nine i' the morning here we'll meet again.
Othello, leave some officer behind,
And he shall our commission bring to you,
With such things else of quality and respect
As doth import you.

OTHELLO.

So please your Grace, my ancient;
A man he is of honesty and trust.
To his conveyance I assign my wife,
With what else needful your good Grace shall think
To be sent after me.

DUKE.

Let it be so.

Good night to everyone. *[To Brabantio.]* And, noble signior,

If virtue no delighted beauty lack,

Your son-in-law is far more fair than black.

FIRST SENATOR.

Adieu, brave Moor, use Desdemona well.

BRABANTIO.

Look to her, Moor, if thou hast eyes to see;

She has deceived her father, and may thee.

Exeunt Duke, Senators, and Officers.

OTHELLO.

My life upon her faith! Honest Iago,

My Desdemona must I leave to thee.

I prithee, let thy wife attend on her,

And bring them after in the best advantage.

Come, Desdemona, I have but an hour

Of love, of worldly matters and direction,

To spend with thee. We must obey the time.

Exeunt Othello and Desdemona.

RODERIGO.

Iago!

IAGO.

What say'st thou, noble heart?

RODERIGO.

What will I do, thinkest thou?

IAGO.

Why, go to bed and sleep.

RODERIGO.

I will incontinently drown myself.

IAGO.

If thou dost, I shall never love thee after.

Why, thou silly gentleman!

RODERIGO.

It is silliness to live when to live is torment, and then
have we a prescription to die when death is our physician.

IAGO.

O villainous! I have looked upon the world for four times
seven years, and since I could distinguish betwixt a benefit and
an injury, I never found man that knew how to love himself.
Ere I
would say I would drown myself for the love of a guinea hen,

I

would change my humanity with a baboon.

RODERIGO.

What should I do? I confess it is my shame to be so fond,
but it is not in my virtue to amend it.

IAGO.

Virtue? a fig! 'Tis in ourselves that we are thus or thus.
Our bodies are gardens, to the which our wills are gardeners; so
that if we will plant nettles or sow lettuce, set hyssop and weed
up thyme, supply it with one gender of herbs or distract it with
many, either to have it sterile with idleness or manured with
industry, why, the power and corrigible authority of this lies in
our wills. If the balance of our lives had not one scale of
reason to poise another of sensuality, the blood and baseness of
our natures would conduct us to most preposterous conclusions.
But we have reason to cool our raging motions, our carnal stings,
our unbitted lusts; whereof I take this, that you call love,
to be a sect or scion.

RODERIGO.

It cannot be.

IAGO.
It is merely a lust of the blood and a permission of the
will. Come, be a man! Drown thyself? Drown cats and blind

puppies. I have professed me thy friend, and I confess me knit to thy deserving with cables of perdurable toughness; I could never better stead thee than now. Put money in thy purse; follow thou the wars; defeat thy favor with an usurped beard. I say, put money in thy purse. It cannot be that Desdemona should long continue her love to the Moor-put money in thy purse-nor he his to her. It was a violent commencement, and thou shalt see an answerable sequestration-put but money in thy purse. These Moors are changeable in their wills-fill thy purse with money. The food that to him now is as luscious as locusts, shall be to him shortly as acerb as the coloquintida. She must change for youth; when she is sated with his body, she will find the error of her choice. She must have change, she must; therefore put money in thy purse. If thou wilt needs damn thyself, do it a more delicate way than drowning. Make all the money thou canst. If sanctimony and a frail vow betwixt an erring barbarian and a supersubtle Venetian be not too hard for my wits and all the tribe of hell, thou shalt enjoy her-therefore make money. A pox of drowning thyself! It is clean out of the way. Seek thou rather to be hanged in compassing thy joy than to be drowned and go without her.

RODERIGO.

Wilt thou be fast to my hopes, if I depend on the issue?

IAGO.

Thou art sure of me-go, make money. I have told thee often, and I retell thee again and again, I hate the Moor. My cause is hearted; thine hath no less reason. Let us be conjunctive in our revenge against him. If thou canst cuckold him, thou dost thyself a pleasure, me a sport. There are many events in the womb of time which will be delivered. Traverse, go, provide thy money. We will have more of this tomorrow. Adieu.

RODERIGO.

Where shall we meet i' the morning?

IAGO.

At my lodging.

RODERIGO.

I'll be with thee betimes.

IAGO.

Go to, farewell. Do you hear, Roderigo?

RODERIGO.

What say you?

IAGO.

No more of drowning, do you hear?

RODERIGO.

I am changed; I'll go sell all my land.

Exit.

IAGO.

Thus do I ever make my fool my purse;
For I mine own gain'd knowledge should profane
If I would time expend with such a snipe

But for my sport and profit. I hate the Moor,

And it is thought abroad that 'twixt my sheets

He has done my office. I know not if't be true,

But I for mere suspicion in that kind

Will do as if for surety. He holds me well,

The better shall my purpose work on him.

Cassio's a proper man. Let me see now-

To get his place, and to plume up my will

In double knavery-How, how?- Let's see-

After some time, to abuse Othello's ear

That he is too familiar with his wife.

He hath a person and a smooth dispose

To be suspected-framed to make women false.

The Moor is of a free and open nature,

That thinks men honest that but seem to be so,

And will as tenderly be led by the nose

As asses are.

I have't. It is engender'd. Hell and night

Must bring this monstrous birth to the world's light.

Exit.

ACT II. SCENE I. A seaport in Cyprus. An open place near the quay.

Enter Montano and two Gentlemen.

MONTANO. What from the cape can you discern at sea?

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

Nothing at all. It is a high-wrought flood;
I cannot, 'twixt the heaven and the main,
Descry a sail.

MONTANO.

Methinks the wind hath spoke aloud at land;
A fuller blast ne'er shook our battlements.
If it hath ruffian'd so upon the sea,
What ribs of oak, when mountains melt on them,
Can hold the mortise? What shall we hear of this?

SECOND GENTLEMAN.

A segregation of the Turkish fleet.

For do but stand upon the foaming shore,

The chidden billow seems to pelt the clouds;

The wind-shaked surge, with high and monstrous mane,

Seems to cast water on the burning bear,

And quench the guards of the ever-fixed pole.

I never did like molestation view

On the enchafed flood.

MONTANO.

If that the Turkish fleet

Be not enshelter'd and embay'd, they are drown'd;

It is impossible to bear it out.

Enter a third Gentleman.

THIRD GENTLEMAN. News, lads! Our wars are done.

The desperate tempest hath so bang'd the Turks,

That their designment halts. A noble ship of Venice

Hath seen a grievous wreck and sufferance

On most part of their fleet.

MONTANO.

How? Is this true?

THIRD GENTLEMAN.

The ship is here put in,

A Veronesa. Michael Cassio,

Lieutenant to the warlike Moor, Othello,

Is come on shore; the Moor himself at sea,

And is in full commission here for Cyprus.

MONTANO.

I am glad on't; 'tis a worthy governor.

THIRD GENTLEMAN.

But this same Cassio, though he speak of comfort

Touching the Turkish loss, yet he looks sadly

And prays the Moor be safe; for they were parted

With foul and violent tempest.

MONTANO.

Pray heavens he be,

For I have served him, and the man commands
Like a full soldier. Let's to the seaside, ho!
As well to see the vessel that's come in
As to throw out our eyes for brave Othello,
Even till we make the main and the aerial blue
An indistinct regard.

THIRD GENTLEMAN.

Come, let's do so,
For every minute is expectancy
Of more arrivance.

Enter Cassio.

CASSIO. Thanks, you the valiant of this warlike isle,
That so approve the Moor! O, let the heavens
Give him defense against the elements,
For I have lost him on a dangerous sea.

MONTANO.

I she well shipp'd?

CASSIO.
His bark is stoutly timber'd, and his pilot
Of very expert and approved allowance;
Therefore my hopes, not surfeited to death,
Stand in bold cure.
A cry within, "A sail, a sail, a
sail!"

Enter a fourth Gentleman.

What noise?

FOURTH GENTLEMAN.
The town is empty; on the brow o' the sea
Stand ranks of people, and they cry, "A sail!"

CASSIO.
My hopes do shape him for the governor.

Guns heard.

SECOND GENTLEMAN.

They do discharge their shot of courtesy-

Our friends at least.

CASSIO.

I pray you, sir, go forth,

And give us truth who 'tis that is arrived.

SECOND GENTLEMAN.

I shall.

Exit.

MONTANO.

But, good lieutenant, is your general wived?

CASSIO.

Most fortunately: he hath achieved a maid

That paragons description and wild fame, One that excels the quirks of blazoning pens,

And in the essential vesture of creation

Does tire the ingener.

Re-enter second Gentleman.

How now! who has put in?

SECOND GENTLEMAN.

'Tis one Iago, ancient to the general.

CASSIO.

He has had most favorable and happy speed:

Tempests themselves, high seas, and howling winds,

The gutter'd rocks, and congregated sands,

Traitors ensteep'd to clog the guiltless keel,

As having sense of beauty, do omit

Their mortal natures, letting go safely by

The divine Desdemona.

MONTANO.

What is she?

CASSIO.

She that I spake of, our great captain's captain,

Left in the conduct of the bold Iago,

Whose footing here anticipates our thoughts

A se'nnight's speed. Great Jove, Othello guard,

And swell his sail with thine own powerful breath,

That he may bless this bay with his tall ship,

Make love's quick pants in Desdemona's arms,

Give renew'd fire to our extincted spirits,

And bring all Cyprus comfort.

Enter Desdemona, Emilia Iago, Roderigo, and Attendants.

O, behold,

The riches of the ship is come on shore!

Ye men of Cyprus, let her have your knees.

Hall to thee, lady! And the grace of heaven,

Before, behind thee, and on every hand,

Enwheel thee round!

DESDEMONA.

I thank you, valiant Cassio.
What tidings can you tell me of my lord?

CASSIO.
He is not yet arrived, nor know I aught
But that he's well and will be shortly here.

DESDEMONA.

O, but I fear-How lost you company?

CASSIO.
The great contention of the sea and skies
Parted our fellowship-But, hark! a sail.
A cry within, "A sail, a sail!" Guns heard.

SECOND GENTLEMAN.

They give their greeting to the citadel;

This likewise is a friend.

CASSIO.

See for the news.

Exit Gentleman.

Good ancient, you are welcome. *[To Emilia.]* Welcome, mistress.

Let it not gall your patience, good Iago,

That I extend my manners; 'tis my breeding

That gives me this bold show of courtesy. Kisses her.

IAGO.

Sir, would she give you so much of her lips

As of her tongue she oft bestows on me,

You'ld have enough.

DESDEMONA.

Alas, she has no speech.

IAGO.

In faith, too much;

I find it still when I have list to sleep.

Marry, before your ladyship I grant,

She puts her tongue a little in her heart

And chides with thinking.

EMILIA.

You have little cause to say so.

IAGO.

Come on, come on. You are pictures out of doors,

Bells in your parlors, wildcats in your kitchens,

Saints in your injuries, devils being offended,

Players in your housewifery, and housewives in your beds.

DESDEMONA.

O, fie upon thee, slanderer!

IAGO.

Nay, it is true, or else I am a Turk:

You rise to play, and go to bed to work.

EMILIA.

You shall not write my praise.

IAGO.

No, let me not.

DESDEMONA.

What wouldst thou write of me, if thou shouldst praise me?

IAGO.

O gentle lady, do not put me to't,

For I am nothing if not critical.

DESDEMONA.

Come on, assay-There's one gone to the harbor?

IAGO.

Ay, madam.

DESDEMONA.

I am not merry, but I do beguile

The thing I am by seeming otherwise.

Come, how wouldst thou praise me?

IAGO.

I am about it, but indeed my invention

Comes from my pate as birdlime does from frieze;

It plucks out brains and all. But my Muse labors,

And thus she is deliver'd.

If she be fair and wise, fairness and wit,

The one's for use, the other useth it.

DESDEMONA.

Well praised! How if she be black and witty?

IAGO.

If she be black, and thereto have a wit,
She'll find a white that shall her blackness fit.

DESDEMONA.

Worse and worse.

EMILIA.
How if fair and foolish?

IAGO.
She never yet was foolish that was fair,
For even her folly help'd her to an heir.

DESDEMONA.
These are old fond paradoxes to make fools laugh i' the
alehouse. What miserable praise hast thou for her that's foul and foolish?

IAGO.
There's none so foul and foolish thereunto,
But does foul pranks which fair and wise ones do.

DESDEMONA.

O heavy ignorance! Thou praisest the worst best. But what praise couldst thou bestow on a deserving woman indeed, one that in the authority of her merit did justly put on the vouch of very malice itself?

IAGO.

She that was ever fair and never proud,

Had tongue at will and yet was never loud,

Never lack'd gold and yet went never gay,

Fled from her wish and yet said, "Now I may";

She that, being anger'd, her revenge being nigh,

Bade her wrong stay and her displeasure fly;

She that in wisdom never was so frail

To change the cod's head for the salmon's tail;

She that could think and ne'er disclose her mind,

See suitors following and not look behind;

She was a wight, if ever such wight were-

DESDEMONA.

To do what?

IAGO.

To suckle fools and chronicle small beer.

DESDEMONA.

O most lame and impotent conclusion! Do not learn of him, Emilia, though he be thy husband. How say you, Cassio? Is he not a most profane and liberal counselor?

CASSIO.

He speaks home, madam. You may relish him more in the soldier than in the scholar.

IAGO.

[Aside.] He takes her by the palm; ay, well said, whisper. With as little a web as this will I ensnare as great a fly as *Cassio.* Ay, smile upon her, do; I will gyve thee in thine own courtship. You say true; 'tis so, indeed. If such tricks as these strip you out of your lieutenantry, it had been better you had not kissed your three fingers so oft, which now again you are

most apt to play the sir in. Very good. Well kissed! an excellent courtesy! 'tis so, indeed. Yet again your fingers to your lips? Would they were clyster-pipes for your sake! [Trumpet within.]

The Moor! I know his trumpet.

CASSIO.

'Tis truly so.

DESDEMONA.

Let's meet him and receive him.

CASSIO.

Lo, where he comes!

Enter Othello and Attendants.

OTHELLO. O my fair warrior!

DESDEMONA.

My dear Othello!

OTHELLO.

It gives me wonder great as my content

To see you here before me. O my soul's joy!

If after every tempest come such calms,

May the winds blow till they have waken'd death!

And let the laboring bark climb hills of seas

Olympus-high, and duck again as low

As hell's from heaven! If it were now to die,

'Twere now to be most happy; for I fear

My soul hath her content so absolute

That not another comfort like to this

Succeeds in unknown fate.

DESDEMONA.

The heavens forbid

But that our loves and comforts should increase,

Even as our days do grow!

OTHELLO.

Amen to that, sweet powers!

I cannot speak enough of this content;

It stops me here; it is too much of joy.

And this, and this, the greatest discords be Kisses her.

That e'er our hearts shall make!

IAGO.

[Aside.] O, you are well tuned now!

But I'll set down the pegs that make this music,

As honest as I am.

OTHELLO.

Come, let us to the castle.

News, friends: our wars are done, the Turks are drown'd.

How does my old acquaintance of this isle?

Honey, you shall be well desired in Cyprus;

I have found great love amongst them. O my sweet,

I prattle out of fashion, and I dote

In mine own comforts. I prithee, good Iago,

Go to the bay and disembark my coffers.

Bring thou the master to the citadel;

He is a good one, and his worthiness

Does challenge much respect. Come, Desdemona,

Once more well met at Cyprus.

Exeunt all but Iago and Roderigo.

IAGO.

Do thou meet me presently at the harbor. Come hither. If thou

be'st valiant-as they say base men being in love have then a

nobility in their natures more than is native to them-list me.

The lieutenant tonight watches on the court of guard. First,

I must tell thee this: Desdemona is directly in love with him.

RODERIGO.

With him? Why, 'tis not possible.

IAGO.

Lay thy finger thus, and let thy soul be instructed. Mark me

with what violence she first loved the Moor, but for bragging and

telling her fantastical lies. And will she love him still for

prating? Let not thy discreet heart think it. Her eye must be

fed; and what delight shall she have to look on the devil?

When

the blood is made dull with the act of sport, there should be,

again to inflame it and to give satiety a fresh appetite,

loveliness in favor, sympathy in years, manners, and

beauties-

all which the Moor is defective in. Now, for want of these

required conveniences, her delicate tenderness will find itself

abused, begin to heave the gorge, disrelish and abhor the

Moor;

very nature will instruct her in it and compel her to some second

choice. Now sir, this granted-as it is a most pregnant and

unforced position-who stands so eminently in the degree of this

fortune as Cassio does? A knave very voluble; no further

conscionable than in putting on the mere form of civil and humane

seeming, for the better compass of his salt and most hidden loose

affection? Why, none, why, none-a slipper and subtle knave, a
finder out of occasions, that has an eye can stamp and
counterfeit advantages, though true advantage never present
itself-a devilish knave! Besides, the knave is handsome,
young,
and hath all those requisites in him that folly and green minds
look after-a pestilent complete knave, and the woman hath found him already.

RODERIGO.

I cannot believe that in her; she's full of most blest condition.

IAGO.
Blest fig's-end! The wine she drinks is made of grapes.
If
she had been blest, she would never have loved the Moor.
Blest
pudding! Didst thou not see her paddle with the palm of his hand?

Didst not mark that?

RODERIGO.

Yes, that I did; but that was but courtesy.

IAGO.

Lechery, by this hand; an index and obscure prologue to the
history of lust and foul thoughts. They met so near with their
lips that their breaths embraced together. Villainous thoughts,
Roderigo! When these mutualities so marshal the way, hard at hand
comes the master and main exercise, the incorporate conclusion.
Pish! But, sir, be you ruled by me. I have brought you from
Venice. Watch you tonight; for the command, I'll lay't upon you.
Cassio knows you not. I'll not be far from you. Do you find some
occasion to anger Cassio, either by speaking too loud, or
tainting his discipline, or from what other course you please,
which the time shall more favorably minister.

RODERIGO.

Well.

IAGO.

Sir, he is rash and very sudden in choler, and haply may

strike at you. Provoke him, that he may; for even out of that
will I cause these of Cyprus to mutiny, whose qualification shall
come into no true taste again but by the displanting of Cassio.
So shall you have a shorter journey to your desires by the means
I shall then have to prefer them, and the impediment most
profitably removed, without the which there were no expectation
of our prosperity.

RODERIGO.

I will do this, if I can bring it to any opportunity.

IAGO.
I warrant thee. Meet me by and by at the citadel. I must
fetch his necessaries ashore. Farewell.

RODERIGO.
Adieu.

Exit.

IAGO.

That Cassio loves her, I do well believe it;

That she loves him, 'tis apt and of great credit.

The Moor, howbeit that I endure him not,

Is of a constant, loving, noble nature,

And I dare think he'll prove to Desdemona

A most dear husband. Now, I do love her too,

Not out of absolute lust, though peradventure

I stand accountant for as great a sin,

But partly led to diet my revenge,

For that I do suspect the lusty Moor

Hath leap'd into my seat; the thought whereof

Doth like a poisonous mineral gnaw my inwards,

And nothing can or shall content my soul

Till I am even'd with him, wife for wife.

Or failing so, yet that I put the Moor

At least into a jealousy so strong

That judgement cannot cure. Which thing to do,

If this poor trash of Venice, whom I trace

For his quick hunting, stand the putting on,

I'll have our Michael Cassio on the hip,

Abuse him to the Moor in the rank garb
(For I fear Cassio with my nightcap too),
Make the Moor thank me, love me, and reward me
For making him egregiously an ass
And practicing upon his peace and quiet
Even to madness. 'Tis here, but yet confused:
Knavery's plain face is never seen till used.

Exit.

SCENE II. A street.

Enter a Herald with a proclamation; people following.

HERALD. It is Othello's pleasure, our noble and valiant general, that upon certain tidings now arrived, importing the mere perdition of the Turkish fleet, every man put himself into triumph; some to dance, some to make bonfires, each man to what sport and revels his addiction leads him; for besides these beneficial news, it is the celebration of his nuptial. So much was his pleasure should be proclaimed. All offices are open, and there is full liberty of feasting from this present hour of five till the bell have told eleven. Heaven bless the isle of Cyprus

and our noble general Othello!

Exeunt.

SCENE III. A hall in the castle.

Enter Othello, Desdemona, Cassio, and Attendants.

OTHELLO. Good Michael, look you to the guard tonight.

Let's teach ourselves that honorable stop,

Not to outsport discretion.

CASSIO.

Iago hath direction what to do;

But notwithstanding with my personal eye

Will I look to't.

OTHELLO.

Iago is most honest.

Michael, good night. Tomorrow with your earliest

Let me have speech with you. Come, my dear love,

The purchase made, the fruits are to ensue;

That profit's yet to come 'tween me and you.

Good night.

Exeunt Othello, Desdemona, and Attendants.

Enter Iago.

CASSIO. Welcome, Iago; we must to the watch.

IAGO.

Not this hour, lieutenant; 'tis not yet ten o' the clock.

Our

general cast us thus early for the love of his Desdemona; who let

us not therefore blame. He hath not yet made wanton the night

with her, and she is sport for Jove.

CASSIO.

She's a most exquisite lady.

IAGO.

And, I'll warrant her, full of game.

CASSIO.

Indeed she's a most fresh and delicate creature.

IAGO.

What an eye she has! Methinks it sounds a parley to provocation.

CASSIO.

An inviting eye; and yet methinks right modest.

IAGO.

And when she speaks, is it not an alarum to love?

CASSIO.

She is indeed perfection.

IAGO.

Well, happiness to their sheets! Come, lieutenant, I have a
stope of wine, and here without are a brace of Cyprus gallants
that would fain have a measure to the health of black Othello.

CASSIO.

Not tonight, good Iago. I have very poor and unhappy brains
for drinking. I could well wish courtesy would invent some other
custom of entertainment.

IAGO.

O, they are our friends! But one cup; I'll drink for you.

CASSIO.

I have drunk but one cup tonight, and that was craftily
qualified too, and behold what innovation it makes here. I am
unfortunate in the infirmity, and dare not task my weakness with any more.

IAGO.

What, man! 'Tis a night of revels, the gallants desire it.

CASSIO.

Where are they?

IAGO.

Here at the door; I pray you, call them in.

CASSIO.

I'll do't, but it dislikes me.

Exit.

IAGO.

If I can fasten but one cup upon him,

With that which he hath drunk tonight already,

He'll be as full of quarrel and offense

As my young mistress' dog. Now my sick fool Roderigo,

Whom love hath turn'd almost the wrong side out,

To Desdemona hath tonight caroused

Potations pottle-deep; and he's to watch.

Three lads of Cyprus, noble swelling spirits, That hold their honors in a wary distance,

The very elements of this warlike isle,

Have I tonight fluster'd with flowing cups,

And they watch too. Now, 'mongst this flock of drunkards,

Am I to put our Cassio in some action

That may offend the isle. But here they come.

If consequence do but approve my dream,

My boat sails freely, both with wind and stream.

Re-enter Cassio; with him Montano and Gentlemen;

Servants following with wine.

CASSIO.

'Fore God, they have given me a rouse already.

MONTANO.

Good faith, a little one; not past a pint, as I am a soldier.

IAGO.

Some wine, ho!

[Sings.] "And let me the canakin clink, clink;
And let me the canakin clink.
A soldier's a man;
O, man's life's but a span;
Why then let a soldier drink."
Some wine, boys!

CASSIO.

'Fore God, an excellent song.

IAGO.

I learned it in England, where indeed they are most potent in
potting. Your Dane, your German, and your swag-bellied
Hollander-
Drink, ho!- are nothing to your English.

CASSIO.

Is your Englishman so expert in his drinking?

IAGO.

Why, he drinks you with facility your Dane dead drunk; he sweats not to overthrow your Almain; he gives your Hollander a vomit ere the next pottle can be filled.

CASSIO.

To the health of our general!

MONTANO.

I am for it, lieutenant, and I'll do you justice.

IAGO.

O sweet England!

[Sings.] "King Stephen was and-a worthy peer,
His breeches cost him but a crown;
He held them sixpence all too dear,
With that he call'd the tailor lown.
"He was a wight of high renown,
And thou art but of low degree.

'Tis pride that pulls the country down;
Then take thine auld cloak about thee."
Some wine, ho!

CASSIO.
Why, this is a more exquisite song than the other.

IAGO.

Will you hear't again?

CASSIO.
No, for I hold him to be unworthy of his place that does
those things. Well, God's above all, and there be souls must be
saved, and there be souls must not be saved.

IAGO.

It's true, good lieutenant.

CASSIO.

For mine own part-no offense to the general, nor any man

of quality-I hope to be saved.

IAGO.

And so do I too, lieutenant.

CASSIO.

Ay, but, by your leave, not before me; the lieutenant is to

be saved before the ancient. Let's have no more of this;

let's to

our affairs. God forgive us our sins! Gentlemen, let's look to

our business. Do not think, gentlemen, I am drunk: this is my

ancient, this is my right hand, and this is my left. I am not

drunk now; I can stand well enough, and I speak well enough.

ALL.

Excellent well.

CASSIO.

Why, very well then; you must not think then that I am drunk.

Exit.

MONTANO.

To the platform, masters; come, let's set the watch.

IAGO.

You see this fellow that is gone before;
He is a soldier fit to stand by Caesar
And give direction. And do but see his vice;
'Tis to his virtue a just equinox,
The one as long as the other. 'Tis pity of him.
I fear the trust Othello puts him in
On some odd time of his infirmity
Will shake this island.

MONTANO.

But is he often thus?

IAGO.

'Tis evermore the prologue to his sleep.
He'll watch the horologe a double set,
If drink rock not his cradle.

MONTANO.
It were well
The general were put in mind of it.
Perhaps he sees it not, or his good nature
Prizes the virtue that appears in Cassio
And looks not on his evils. Is not this true?

Enter Roderigo.

IAGO. *[Aside to him.]* How now, Roderigo!
I pray you, after the lieutenant; go. *Exit* Roderigo.

MONTANO.
And 'tis great pity that the noble Moor
Should hazard such a place as his own second
With one of an ingraft infirmity.
It were an honest action to say

So to the Moor.

IAGO.

Not I, for this fair island.
I do love Cassio well, and would do much
To cure him of this evil-But, hark! What noise?
A cry within, "Help,
help!"
Re-enter Cassio, driving in Roderigo.

CASSIO.

'Zounds! You rogue! You rascal!

MONTANO.
What's the matter, lieutenant?

CASSIO.

A knave teach me my duty! But I'll beat the knave into a twiggen bottle.

RODERIGO.

Beat me!

CASSIO.

Dost thou prate, rogue? Strikes Roderigo.

MONTANO.

Nay, good lieutenant; I pray you, sir, hold your hand.

CASSIO.

Let me go, sir, or I'll knock you o'er the mazzard.

MONTANO.

Come, come, you're drunk.

CASSIO.

Drunk? They fight.

IAGO.

[Aside to Roderigo.] Away, I say; go out and cry a mutiny.

Exit Roderigo.

Nay, good lieutenant! God's will, gentlemen!

Help, ho!- Lieutenant-sir- Montano-sir-

Help, masters!- Here's a goodly watch indeed!

A bell rings.

Who's that that rings the bell?- Diablo, ho!

The town will rise. God's will, lieutenant, hold!

You will be shamed forever.

Re-enter Othello and Attendants.

OTHELLO.

What is the matter here?

MONTANO.

'Zounds, I bleed still; I am hurt to the death.

Faints.

OTHELLO.

Hold, for your lives!

IAGO.

Hold, ho! Lieutenant-sir- Montano-gentlemen-
Have you forgot all place of sense and duty?
Hold! the general speaks to you! Hold, hold, for shame!

OTHELLO.

Why, how now, ho! from whence ariseth this?
Are we turn'd Turks, and to ourselves do that
Which heaven hath forbid the Ottomites?
For Christian shame, put by this barbarous brawl.
He that stirs next to carve for his own rage
Holds his soul light; he dies upon his motion.
Silence that dreadful bell; it frights the isle

From her propriety. What is the matter, masters?
Honest Iago, that look'st dead with grieving,
Speak: who began this? On thy love, I charge thee.

IAGO.
I do not know. Friends all but now, even now,
In quarter, and in terms like bride and groom
Devesting them for bed; and then, but now
(As if some planet had unwitted men),
Swords out, and tilting one at other's breast,
In opposition bloody. I cannot speak
Any beginning to this peevish odds;
And would in action glorious I had lost
Those legs that brought me to a part of it!

OTHELLO.
How comes it, Michael, you are thus forgot?

CASSIO.

I pray you, pardon me; I cannot speak.

OTHELLO.

Worthy Montano, you were wont be civil;

The gravity and stillness of your youth

The world hath noted, and your name is great

In mouths of wisest censure. What's the matter,

That you unlace your reputation thus,

And spend your rich opinion for the name

Of a night-brawler? Give me answer to it.

MONTANO.

Worthy Othello, I am hurt to danger.

Your officer, Iago, can inform you-

While I spare speech, which something now offends me-

Of all that I do know. Nor know I aught

By me that's said or done amiss this night,

Unless self-charity be sometimes a vice,

And to defend ourselves it be a sin

When violence assails us.

OTHELLO.

Now, by heaven,

My blood begins my safer guides to rule,

And passion, having my best judgement collied,

Assays to lead the way. If I once stir,

Or do but lift this arm, the best of you

Shall sink in my rebuke. Give me to know

How this foul rout began, who set it on,

And he that is approved in this offense,

Though he had twinn'd with me, both at a birth,

Shall lose me. What! in a town of war,

Yet wild, the people's hearts brimful of fear,

To manage private and domestic quarrel,

In night, and on the court and guard of safety!

'Tis monstrous. Iago, who began't?

MONTANO.

If partially affined, or leagued in office,

Thou dost deliver more or less than truth,

Thou art no soldier.

IAGO.

Touch me not so near:

I had rather have this tongue cut from my mouth

Than it should do offense to Michael Cassio;

Yet, I persuade myself, to speak the truth

Shall nothing wrong him. Thus it is, general.

Montano and myself being in speech,

There comes a fellow crying out for help,

And Cassio following him with determined sword,

To execute upon him. Sir, this gentleman

Steps in to Cassio and entreats his pause.

Myself the crying fellow did pursue,

Lest by his clamor-as it so fell out-

The town might fall in fright. He, swift of foot,

Outran my purpose; and I return'd the rather

For that I heard the clink and fall of swords,

And Cassio high in oath, which till tonight

I ne'er might say before. When I came back-

For this was brief-I found them close together,

At blow and thrust, even as again they were

When you yourself did part them.

More of this matter cannot I report.

But men are men; the best sometimes forget.

Though Cassio did some little wrong to him,

As men in rage strike those that wish them best,

Yet surely Cassio, I believe, received

From him that fled some strange indignity,

Which patience could not pass.

OTHELLO.

I know, Iago,

Thy honesty and love doth mince this matter,

Making it light to Cassio. Cassio, I love thee,

But never more be officer of mine.

Re-enter Desdemona, attended.

Look, if my gentle love be not raised up! I'll make thee an example. DESDEMONA. What's the matter? OTHELLO. All's well now, sweeting; come away to bed. Sir, for your hurts, myself will be your surgeon. Lead him off. *Exit* Montano, attended. Iago, look with care about the town, And silence those whom this vile brawl distracted. Come, Desdemona, 'tis the soldiers' life. To have their balmy slumbers waked with strife. *Exeunt* all but Iago and Cassio. IAGO. What, are you hurt, lieutenant? CASSIO. Ay, past all surgery. IAGO. Marry, heaven forbid! CASSIO. Reputation, reputation, reputation! O, I have lost my reputation! I have lost the immortal part of myself, and what remains is bestial. My reputation, Iago, my reputation! IAGO. As I am an honest man, I thought you had received some bodily wound; there is more sense in that than in reputation. Reputation is an idle and most false imposition; oft got without merit and lost without deserving. You have lost no reputation at all, unless you repute yourself such a loser. What, man! there are ways to recover the general again. You are but now cast in his mood, a punishment more in policy than in malice; even so as one would beat his offenseless dog to affright an imperious lion. Sue to him again, and he's yours. CASSIO. I will rather sue to be despised than to deceive so good a commander with so slight, so drunken, and so indiscreet an officer. Drunk? and speak parrot? and squabble? swagger? swear? and discourse fustian with one's own shadow? O thou invisible spirit of wine, if thou hast no name to be known by, let us call thee devil! IAGO. What was he that you followed with your sword? What had he done to you? CASSIO. I know not. IAGO. Is't possible? CASSIO. I remember a mass of things, but nothing distinctly; a quarrel, but nothing wherefore. O God, that men should put an enemy in their mouths to steal away their brains! that we should, with joy, pleasance, revel, and applause, transform ourselves into beasts! IAGO. Why, but you are now well enough. How came you thus recovered? CASSIO. It hath pleased the devil drunkenness to give place to the devil wrath: one unperfectness shows me another, to make me frankly despise myself. IAGO. Come, you are too severe a moraler. As the time, the place, and the condition of this country stands, I could heartily wish this had not befallen; but since it is as it is, mend it for your own good. CASSIO. I will ask him for my place again; he shall tell me I am a drunkard! Had I as many mouths as Hydra, such an answer would stop them all. To be now a sensible man, by and by a fool, and presently a beast! O strange! Every inordinate cup is unblest, and the ingredient is a devil. IAGO. Come, come, good wine is a good familiar creature, if it be well used. Exclaim no more against it. And, good lieutenant, I think you think I love you. CASSIO. I have well approved it, sir. I drunk! IAGO. You or any man living may be drunk at some time, man. I'll tell you what you shall do. Our general's wife is now the general. I may say so in this respect, for that he hath devoted and given up himself to the contemplation, mark, and denotement of her parts and graces. Confess yourself freely to her; importune her help to put you in your place again. She is of so free, so kind, so apt, so blessed a disposition, she holds it a vice in her goodness not to do more than she is requested. This broken joint between you and her husband entreat her to splinter; and, my fortunes against any lay worth naming, this crack of your love shall grow stronger than it was before. CASSIO. You advise me well. IAGO. I protest, in the sincerity of love and honest kindness. CASSIO. I think it freely; and betimes in the morning I will beseech the virtuous Desdemona to undertake for me. I am desperate of my fortunes if they check me here. IAGO. You are in the right. Good night, lieutenant, I must to the watch. CASSIO. Good night, honest Iago. *Exit* . IAGO. And what's he then that says I play the villain? When this advice is free I give and honest, Probal to thinking, and indeed the course To win the Moor again? For 'tis most easy The inclining Desdemona to subdue In any honest suit. She's framed as fruitful As the free elements. And then for her To win the Moor, were't to renounce his baptism, All seals and symbols of redeemed sin, His soul is so enfetter'd to her love, That she may make, unmake, do what she list, Even as her appetite shall play the god With his weak function. How am I then a villain To counsel Cassio to this parallel course, Directly to his good? Divinity of hell! When devils will the blackest sins put on, They do suggest at first with heavenly shows, As I do now. For whiles this honest fool Plies Desdemona to repair his fortune, And she for him pleads strongly to the Moor, I'll pour this pestilence into his ear, That she repeals him for her body's lust; And by how much she strives to do him good, She shall undo her credit with the Moor. So will I turn her virtue into pitch, And out of her own goodness make the net That shall enmesh them all.

Enter Roderigo.

How now, Roderigo!

RODERIGO.

I do follow here in the chase, not like a hound that

hunts, but one that fills up the cry. My money is almost

spent; I

have been tonight exceedingly well cudgeled; and I think the

issue will be, I shall have so much experience for my pains; and so, with no money at all and a little more wit, return again to Venice.

IAGO.

How poor are they that have not patience!

What wound did ever heal but by degrees?

Thou know'st we work by wit and not by witchcraft,

And wit depends on dilatory time.

Does't not go well? Cassio hath beaten thee,

And thou by that small hurt hast cashier'd Cassio.

Though other things grow fair against the sun,

Yet fruits that blossom first will first be ripe.

Content thyself awhile. By the mass, 'tis morning;

Pleasure and action make the hours seem short.

Retire thee; go where thou art billeted.

Away, I say. Thou shalt know more hereafter.

Nay, get thee gone. *[Exit Roderigo.]* Two things are to be done:

My wife must move for Cassio to her mistress-

I'll set her on;

Myself the while to draw the Moor apart, And bring him jump when he may Cassio find

Soliciting his wife. Ay, that's the way;

Dull not device by coldness and delay.

Exit.

ACT III. SCENE I. Before the castle.

Enter Cassio and some Musicians.

CASSIO. Masters, play here, I will content your pains;

Something

that's brief; and bid "Good morrow, general."

Music.

Enter Clown.

CLOWN. Why, masters, have your instruments been in Naples, that they speak i' the nose thus?

FIRST MUSICIAN.

How, sir, how?

CLOWN.

Are these, I pray you, wind instruments?

FIRST MUSICIAN.

Ay, marry, are they, sir.

CLOWN.

O, thereby hangs a tail.

FIRST MUSICIAN.

Whereby hangs a tale, sir?

CLOWN.

Marry, sir, by many a wind instrument that I know. But,
masters, here's money for you; and the general so likes your
music, that he desires you, for love's sake, to make no more noise with it.

FIRST MUSICIAN.

Well, sir, we will not.

CLOWN.

If you have any music that may not be heard, to't again;

but, as they say, to hear music the general does not greatly care.

FIRST MUSICIAN.

We have none such, sir.

CLOWN.

Then put up your pipes in your bag, for I'll away.

Go, vanish into air, away! *Exeunt* Musicians.

CASSIO.

Dost thou hear, my honest friend?

CLOWN.

No, I hear not your honest friend; I hear you.

CASSIO.

Prithee, keep up thy quillets. There's a poor piece of gold

for thee. If the gentlewoman that attends the general's wife be

stirring, tell her there's one Cassio entreats her a little favor

of speech. Wilt thou do this?

CLOWN.

She is stirring, sir. If she will stir hither, I shall seem

to notify unto her.

CASSIO.

Do, good my friend. *Exit* Clown.

Enter Iago.

In happy time, Iago.

IAGO.

You have not been abed, then?

CASSIO.

Why, no; the day had broke

Before we parted. I have made bold, Iago,

To send in to your wife. My suit to her

Is that she will to virtuous Desdemona

Procure me some access.

IAGO.

I'll send her to you presently;

And I'll devise a mean to draw the Moor

Out of the way, that your converse and business

May be more free.

CASSIO.

I humbly thank you for't. *[Exit Iago.]* I never knew

A Florentine more kind and honest.

Enter Emilia.

EMILIA. Good morrow, good lieutenant. I am sorry

For your displeasure, but all will sure be well.

The general and his wife are talking of it,

And she speaks for you stoutly. The Moor replies

That he you hurt is of great fame in Cyprus

And great affinity and that in wholesome wisdom

He might not but refuse you; but he protests he loves you

And needs no other suitor but his likings

To take the safest occasion by the front

To bring you in again.

CASSIO.

Yet, I beseech you,

If you think fit, or that it may be done,

Give me advantage of some brief discourse

With Desdemona alone.

EMILIA.

Pray you, come in.

I will bestow you where you shall have time

To speak your bosom freely.

CASSIO.

I am much bound to you.

Exeunt.

SCENE II. A room in the castle.

Enter Othello, Iago, and Gentlemen.

OTHELLO. These letters give, Iago, to the pilot,

And by him do my duties to the Senate.

That done, I will be walking on the works;

Repair there to me.

IAGO.

Well, my good lord, I'll do't.

OTHELLO.

This fortification, gentlemen, shall we see't?

GENTLEMEN.

We'll wait upon your lordship.

Exeunt.

SCENE III. The garden of the castle.

Enter Desdemona, Cassio, and Emilia.

DESDEMONA. Be thou assured, good Cassio, I will do
All my abilities in thy behalf.

EMILIA.
Good madam, do. I warrant it grieves my husband
As if the cause were his.

DESDEMONA.
O, that's an honest fellow. Do not doubt, Cassio,
But I will have my lord and you again
As friendly as you were.

CASSIO.
Bounteous madam,
Whatever shall become of Michael Cassio,
He's never anything but your true servant.

DESDEMONA.

I know't: I thank you. You do love my lord:

You have known him long; and be you well assured

He shall in strangeness stand no farther off

Than in a politic distance.

CASSIO.

Ay, but, lady,

That policy may either last so long,

Or feed upon such nice and waterish diet,

Or breed itself so out of circumstances,

That I being absent and my place supplied,

My general will forget my love and service.

DESDEMONA.

Do not doubt that. Before Emilia here

I give thee warrant of thy place, assure thee,

If I do vow a friendship, I'll perform it

To the last article. My lord shall never rest;

I'll watch him tame and talk him out of patience;

His bed shall seem a school, his board a shrift;
I'll intermingle everything he does
With Cassio's suit. Therefore be merry, Cassio,
For thy solicitor shall rather die
Than give thy cause away.

Enter Othello and Iago, at a distance.

EMILIA. Madam, here comes my lord.

CASSIO.
Madam, I'll take my leave.

DESDEMONA.

Nay, stay and hear me speak.

CASSIO.
Madam, not now. I am very ill at ease,
Unfit for mine own purposes.

DESDEMONA.

Well, do your discretion. *Exit* Cassio.

IAGO.

Ha! I like not that.

OTHELLO.

What dost thou say?

IAGO.

Nothing, my lord; or if-I know not what.

OTHELLO.

Was not that Cassio parted from my wife?

IAGO.

Cassio, my lord! No, sure, I cannot think it,
That he would steal away so guilty-like,
Seeing you coming.

OTHELLO.

I do believe 'twas he.

DESDEMONA.
How now, my lord!
I have been talking with a suitor here,
A man that languishes in your displeasure.

OTHELLO.

Who is't you mean?

DESDEMONA.
Why, your lieutenant, Cassio. Good my lord,
If I have any grace or power to move you,
His present reconciliation take;
For if he be not one that truly loves you,
That errs in ignorance and not in cunning,
I have no judgement in an honest face.

I prithee, call him back.

OTHELLO.

Went he hence now?

DESDEMONA.

Ay, sooth; so humbled
That he hath left part of his grief with me
To suffer with him. Good love, call him back.

OTHELLO.

Not now, sweet Desdemona; some other time.

DESDEMONA.

But shall't be shortly?

OTHELLO.

The sooner, sweet, for you.

DESDEMONA.

Shall't be tonight at supper?

OTHELLO.

No, not tonight.

DESDEMONA.

Tomorrow dinner then?

OTHELLO.

I shall not dine at home;
I meet the captains at the citadel.

DESDEMONA.

Why then tomorrow night, or Tuesday morn,
On Tuesday noon, or night, on Wednesday morn.
I prithee, name the time, but let it not
Exceed three days. In faith, he's penitent;
And yet his trespass, in our common reason-

Save that, they say, the wars must make example
Out of their best-is not almost a fault
To incur a private check. When shall he come?
Tell me, Othello. I wonder in my soul,
What you would ask me, that I should deny,
Or stand so mammering on. What? Michael Cassio,
That came awooing with you, and so many a time
When I have spoke of you dispraisingly
Hath ta'en your part-to have so much to do
To bring him in! Trust me, I could do much-

OTHELLO.
Prithee, no more. Let him come when he will;
I will deny thee nothing.

DESDEMONA.
Why, this is not a boon;
'Tis as I should entreat you wear your gloves,
Or feed on nourishing dishes, or keep you warm,
Or sue to you to do a peculiar profit
To your own person. Nay, when I have a suit

Wherein I mean to touch your love indeed,

It shall be full of poise and difficult weight,

And fearful to be granted.

OTHELLO.

I will deny thee nothing,

Whereon, I do beseech thee, grant me this,

To leave me but a little to myself.

DESDEMONA.

Shall I deny you? No. Farewell, my lord.

OTHELLO.

Farewell, my Desdemona; I'll come to thee straight.

DESDEMONA.

Emilia, come. Be as your fancies teach you;

Whate'er you be, I am obedient.

Exeunt Desdemona and Emilia.

OTHELLO.

Excellent wretch! Perdition catch my soul,

But I do love thee! and when I love thee not,

Chaos is come again.

IAGO.

My noble lord-

OTHELLO.

What dost thou say, Iago?

IAGO.

Did Michael Cassio, when you woo'd my lady,

Know of your love?

OTHELLO.

He did, from first to last. Why dost thou ask?

IAGO.

But for a satisfaction of my thought;

No further harm.

OTHELLO.

Why of thy thought, Iago?

IAGO.

I did not think he had been acquainted with her.

OTHELLO.

O, yes, and went between us very oft.

IAGO.

Indeed!

OTHELLO.

Indeed? ay, indeed. Discern'st thou aught in that?

Is he not honest?

IAGO.

Honest, my lord?

OTHELLO.

Honest? Ay, honest.

IAGO.

My lord, for aught I know.

OTHELLO.

What dost thou think?

IAGO.

Think, my lord?

OTHELLO.

Think, my lord? By heaven, he echoes me,
As if there were some monster in his thought
Too hideous to be shown. Thou dost mean something.

I heard thee say even now, thou like'st not that,
When Cassio left my wife. What didst not like?
And when I told thee he was of my counsel
In my whole course of wooing, thou criedst, "Indeed!"
And didst contract and purse thy brow together,
As if thou then hadst shut up in thy brain
Some horrible conceit. If thou dost love me,
Show me thy thought.

IAGO.

My lord, you know I love you.

OTHELLO.

I think thou dost;
And for I know thou'rt full of love and honesty
And weigh'st thy words before thou givest them breath,
Therefore these stops of thine fright me the more;
For such things in a false disloyal knave
Are tricks of custom; but in a man that's just
They're close dilations, working from the heart,
That passion cannot rule.

IAGO.

For Michael Cassio,

I dare be sworn I think that he is honest.

OTHELLO.

I think so too.

IAGO.

Men should be what they seem;

Or those that be not, would they might seem none!

OTHELLO.

Certain, men should be what they seem.

IAGO.

Why then I think Cassio's an honest man.

OTHELLO.

Nay, yet there's more in this.

I prithee, speak to me as to thy thinkings,

As thou dost ruminate, and give thy worst of thoughts

The worst of words.

IAGO.

Good my lord, pardon me;

Though I am bound to every act of duty,

I am not bound to that all slaves are free to.

Utter my thoughts? Why, say they are vile and false;

As where's that palace whereinto foul things

Sometimes intrude not? Who has a breast so pure,

But some uncleanly apprehensions

Keep leets and law-days, and in session sit

With meditations lawful?

OTHELLO.

Thou dost conspire against thy friend, Iago,

If thou but think'st him wrong'd and makest his ear

A stranger to thy thoughts.

IAGO.

I do beseech you-

Though I perchance am vicious in my guess,

As, I confess, it is my nature's plague

To spy into abuses, and oft my jealousy

Shapes faults that are not-that your wisdom yet,

From one that so imperfectly conceits,

Would take no notice, nor build yourself a trouble

Out of his scattering and unsure observance.

It were not for your quiet nor your good,

Nor for my manhood, honesty, or wisdom,

To let you know my thoughts.

OTHELLO.

What dost thou mean?

IAGO.

Good name in man and woman, dear my lord,

Is the immediate jewel of their souls.

Who steals my purse steals trash; 'tis something, nothing;

'Twas mine, 'tis his, and has been slave to thousands;
But he that filches from me my good name
Robs me of that which not enriches him
And makes me poor indeed.

OTHELLO.

By heaven, I'll know thy thoughts.

IAGO.
You cannot, if my heart were in your hand;
Nor shall not, whilst 'tis in my custody.

OTHELLO.
Ha!

IAGO.

O, beware, my lord, of jealousy!
It is the green-eyed monster, which doth mock
The meat it feeds on. That cuckold lives in bliss

Who, certain of his fate, loves not his wronger;
But O, what damned minutes tells he o'er
Who dotes, yet doubts, suspects, yet strongly loves!

OTHELLO.

O misery!

IAGO.
Poor and content is rich, and rich enough;
But riches fineless is as poor as winter
To him that ever fears he shall be poor.
Good heaven, the souls of all my tribe defend
From jealousy!

OTHELLO.

Why, why is this?
Think'st thou I'ld make a life of jealousy,
To follow still the changes of the moon
With fresh suspicions? No! To be once in doubt

Is once to be resolved. Exchange me for a goat

When I shall turn the business of my soul

To such exsufflicate and blown surmises,

Matching thy inference. 'Tis not to make me jealous

To say my wife is fair, feeds well, loves company,

Is free of speech, sings, plays, and dances well;

Where virtue is, these are more virtuous.

Nor from mine own weak merits will I draw

The smallest fear or doubt of her revolt;

For she had eyes and chose me. No, Iago,

I'll see before I doubt; when I doubt, prove;

And on the proof, there is no more but this-

Away at once with love or jealousy!

IAGO.

I am glad of it, for now I shall have reason

To show the love and duty that I bear you

With franker spirit. Therefore, as I am bound,

Receive it from me. I speak not yet of proof.

Look to your wife; observe her well with Cassio;

Wear your eye thus, not jealous nor secure.

I would not have your free and noble nature
Out of self-bounty be abused. Look to't.
I know our country disposition well;
In Venice they do let heaven see the pranks
They dare not show their husbands; their best conscience
Is not to leave't undone, but keep't unknown.

OTHELLO.

Dost thou say so?

IAGO.

She did deceive her father, marrying you;
And when she seem'd to shake and fear your looks,
She loved them most.

OTHELLO.

And so she did.

IAGO.

Why, go to then.

She that so young could give out such a seeming,

To seel her father's eyes up close as oak-

He thought 'twas witchcraft-but I am much to blame;

I humbly do beseech you of your pardon

For too much loving you.

OTHELLO.

I am bound to thee forever.

IAGO.

I see this hath a little dash'd your spirits.

OTHELLO.

Not a jot, not a jot.

IAGO.

I'faith, I fear it has.

I hope you will consider what is spoke

Comes from my love. But I do see you're moved;

I am to pray you not to strain my speech

To grosser issues nor to larger reach

Than to suspicion.

OTHELLO.

I will not.

IAGO.

Should you do so, my lord,

My speech should fall into such vile success

Which my thoughts aim not at. Cassio's my worthy friend-

My lord, I see you're moved.

OTHELLO.

No, not much moved.

I do not think but Desdemona's honest.

IAGO.

Long live she so! and long live you to think so!

OTHELLO.

And yet, how nature erring from itself-

IAGO.

Ay, there's the point, as-to be bold with you-
Not to affect many proposed matches
Of her own clime, complexion, and degree,
Whereto we see in all things nature tends-
Foh, one may smell in such a will most rank,
Foul disproportion, thoughts unnatural.
But pardon me. I do not in position
Distinctly speak of her; though I may fear,
Her will, recoiling to her better judgement,
May fall to match you with her country forms,
And happily repent.

OTHELLO.

Farewell, farewell.
If more thou dost perceive, let me know more;
Set on thy wife to observe. Leave me, Iago.

IAGO.

[Going.] My lord, I take my leave.

OTHELLO.

Why did I marry? This honest creature doubtless

Sees and knows more, much more, than he unfolds.

IAGO.

[Returning.] My lord, I would I might entreat your honor

To scan this thing no further; leave it to time.

Though it be fit that Cassio have his place,

For sure he fills it up with great ability,

Yet, if you please to hold him off awhile,

You shall by that perceive him and his means.

Note if your lady strain his entertainment

With any strong or vehement importunity;

Much will be seen in that. In the meantime,

Let me be thought too busy in my fears-

As worthy cause I have to fear I am-

And hold her free, I do beseech your honor.

OTHELLO.

Fear not my government.

IAGO.
I once more take my leave.

Exit.

OTHELLO.
This fellow's of exceeding honesty,
And knows all qualities, with a learned spirit,
Of human dealings. If I do prove her haggard,
Though that her jesses were my dear heartstrings,
I'ld whistle her off and let her down the wind
To prey at fortune. Haply, for I am black
And have not those soft parts of conversation
That chamberers have, or for I am declined
Into the vale of years-yet that's not much-
She's gone. I am abused, and my relief

Must be to loathe her. O curse of marriage,
That we can call these delicate creatures ours,
And not their appetites! I had rather be a toad,
And live upon the vapor of a dungeon,
Than keep a corner in the thing I love
For others' uses. Yet, 'tis the plague of great ones:
Prerogatived are they less than the base;
'Tis destiny unshunnable, like death.
Even then this forked plague is fated to us
When we do quicken. Desdemona comes:
Re-enter Desdemona and Emilia.

If she be false, O, then heaven mocks itself!
I'll not believe't.

DESDEMONA.

How now, my dear Othello!
Your dinner, and the generous islanders
By you invited, do attend your presence.

OTHELLO.

I am to blame.

DESDEMONA.

Why do you speak so faintly?

Are you not well?

OTHELLO.

I have a pain upon my forehead here.

DESDEMONA.

Faith, that's with watching; 'twill away again.

Let me but bind it hard, within this hour

It will be well.

OTHELLO.

Your napkin is too little;

He puts the handkerchief from him, and she drops it.

Let it alone. Come, I'll go in with you.

DESDEMONA.

I am very sorry that you are not well.

Exeunt Othello and Desdemona.

EMILIA.

I am glad I have found this napkin;
This was her first remembrance from the Moor.
My wayward husband hath a hundred times
Woo'd me to steal it; but she so loves the token,
For he conjured her she should ever keep it,
That she reserves it evermore about her
To kiss and talk to. I'll have the work ta'en out,
And give't Iago. What he will do with it
Heaven knows, not I;
I nothing but to please his fantasy.

Re-enter Iago.

IAGO.

How now, what do you here alone?

EMILIA.

Do not you chide; I have a thing for you.

IAGO.

A thing for me? It is a common thing-

EMILIA.

Ha!

IAGO.

To have a foolish wife.

EMILIA.

O, is that all? What will you give me now

For that same handkerchief?

IAGO.

What handkerchief?

EMILIA.

What handkerchief?
Why, that the Moor first gave to Desdemona,
That which so often you did bid me steal.

IAGO.
Hast stol'n it from her?

EMILIA.
No, faith; she let it drop by negligence,
And, to the advantage, I being here took't up.

Look, here it is.

IAGO.
A good wench; give it me.

EMILIA.
What will you do with't, that you have been so earnest

To have me filch it?

IAGO.

[Snatching it.] Why, what is that to you?

EMILIA.

If't be not for some purpose of import,

Give't me again. Poor lady, she'll run mad

When she shall lack it.

IAGO.

Be not acknown on't; I have use for it.

Go, leave me. *Exit* Emilia.

I will in Cassio's lodging lose this napkin,

And let him find it. Trifles light as air

Are to the jealous confirmations strong

As proofs of holy writ; this may do something.

The Moor already changes with my poison:

Dangerous conceits are in their natures poisons,

Which at the first are scarce found to distaste,

But with a little act upon the blood
Burn like the mines of sulphur. I did say so.

Look, where he comes!

Re-enter Othello.

Not poppy, nor mandragora,
Nor all the drowsy syrups of the world,
Shall ever medicine thee to that sweet sleep
Which thou owedst yesterday.

OTHELLO.

Ha, ha, false to me?

IAGO.

Why, how now, general! No more of that.

OTHELLO.

Avaunt! be gone! Thou hast set me on the rack.
I swear 'tis better to be much abused

Than but to know't a little.

IAGO.

How now, my lord?

OTHELLO.

What sense had I of her stol'n hours of lust?

I saw't not, thought it not, it harm'd not me;

I slept the next night well, was free and merry;

I found not Cassio's kisses on her lips.

He that is robb'd, not wanting what is stol'n,

Let him not know't and he's not robb'd at all.

IAGO.

I am sorry to hear this.

OTHELLO.

I had been happy if the general camp,

Pioners and all, had tasted her sweet body,

So I had nothing known. O, now forever
Farewell the tranquil mind! Farewell content!
Farewell the plumed troop and the big wars
That make ambition virtue! O, farewell,
Farewell the neighing steed and the shrill trump,
The spirit-stirring drum, the ear-piercing fife,
The royal banner, and all quality,
Pride, pomp, and circumstance of glorious war!
And O you mortal engines, whose rude throats
The immortal Jove's dread clamors counterfeit,
Farewell! Othello's occupation's gone!

IAGO.

Is't possible, my lord?

OTHELLO.

Villain, be sure thou prove my love a whore;
Be sure of it. Give me the ocular proof;
Or, by the worth of man's eternal soul,
Thou hadst been better have been born a dog

Than answer my waked wrath!

IAGO.

Is't come to this?

OTHELLO.

Make me to see't; or at the least so prove it,

That the probation bear no hinge nor loop

To hang a doubt on; or woe upon thy life!

IAGO.

My noble lord-

OTHELLO.

If thou dost slander her and torture me,

Never pray more; abandon all remorse;

On horror's head horrors accumulate;

Do deeds to make heaven weep, all earth amazed;

For nothing canst thou to damnation add

Greater than that.

IAGO.

O grace! O heaven defend me!

Are you a man? have you a soul or sense?

God be wi' you; take mine office. O wretched fool,

That livest to make thine honesty a vice!

O monstrous world! Take note, take note, O world,

To be direct and honest is not safe.

I thank you for this profit, and from hence

I'll love no friend sith love breeds such offense.

OTHELLO.

Nay, stay; thou shouldst be honest.

IAGO.

I should be wise; for honesty's a fool,

And loses that it works for.

OTHELLO.

By the world,

I think my wife be honest, and think she is not;
I think that thou art just, and think thou art not.
I'll have some proof. Her name, that was as fresh
As Dian's visage, is now begrimed and black
As mine own face. If there be cords or knives,
Poison or fire, or suffocating streams,
I'll not endure it. Would I were satisfied!

IAGO.
I see, sir, you are eaten up with passion;
I do repent me that I put it to you.

You would be satisfied?

OTHELLO.
Would? Nay, I will.

IAGO.

And may. But, how? how satisfied, my lord?
Would you, the supervisor, grossly gape on?

Behold her topp'd?

OTHELLO.

Death and damnation! O!

IAGO.

It were a tedious difficulty, I think,

To bring them to that prospect. Damn them then,

If ever mortal eyes do see them bolster

More than their own! What then? how then?

What shall I say? Where's satisfaction?

It is impossible you should see this

Were they as prime as goats, as hot as monkeys,

As salt as wolves in pride, and fools as gross

As ignorance made drunk. But yet, I say,

If imputation and strong circumstances,

Which lead directly to the door of truth,

Will give you satisfaction, you may have't.

OTHELLO.

Give me a living reason she's disloyal.

IAGO.

I do not like the office;

But sith I am enter'd in this cause so far,

Prick'd to't by foolish honesty and love,

I will go on. I lay with Cassio lately

And, being troubled with a raging tooth,

I could not sleep.

There are a kind of men so loose of soul,

That in their sleeps will mutter their affairs;

One of this kind is Cassio.

In sleep I heard him say, "Sweet Desdemona,

Let us be wary, let us hide our loves";

And then, sir, would he gripe and wring my hand,

Cry, "O sweet creature!" and then kiss me hard,

As if he pluck'd up kisses by the roots,

That grew upon my lips; then laid his leg

Over my thigh, and sigh'd and kiss'd; and then

Cried, "Cursed fate that gave thee to the Moor!"

OTHELLO.

O monstrous! monstrous!

IAGO.
Nay, this was but his dream.

OTHELLO.

But this denoted a foregone conclusion.
'Tis a shrewd doubt, though it be but a dream.

IAGO.
And this may help to thicken other proofs
That do demonstrate thinly.

OTHELLO.

I'll tear her all to pieces.

IAGO.

Nay, but be wise; yet we see nothing done;
She may be honest yet. Tell me but this;
Have you not sometimes seen a handkerchief
Spotted with strawberries in your wife's hand?

OTHELLO.

I gave her such a one; 'twas my first gift.

IAGO.

I know not that; but such a handkerchief-
I am sure it was your wife's-did I today
See Cassio wipe his beard with.

OTHELLO.

If it be that-

IAGO.

If it be that, or any that was hers,
It speaks against her with the other proofs.

OTHELLO.

O, that the slave had forty thousand lives!
One is too poor, too weak for my revenge.
Now do I see 'tis true. Look here, Iago,
All my fond love thus do I blow to heaven.

'Tis gone.
Arise, black vengeance, from thy hollow hell!
Yield up, O love, thy crown and hearted throne
To tyrannous hate! Swell, bosom, with thy fraught,
For 'tis of aspics' tongues!

IAGO.
Yet be content.

OTHELLO.

O, blood, blood, blood!

IAGO.

Patience, I say; your mind perhaps may change.

OTHELLO.

Never, Iago. Like to the Pontic Sea,
Whose icy current and compulsive course
Ne'er feels retiring ebb, but keeps due on
To the Propontic and the Hellespont,
Even so my bloody thoughts, with violent pace,
Shall ne'er look back, ne'er ebb to humble love,
Till that a capable and wide revenge
Swallow them up. Now, by yond marble heaven,
In the due reverence of a sacred vow Kneels.
I here engage my words.

IAGO.

Do not rise yet.
Kneels.
Witness, you ever-burning lights above,
You elements that clip us round about,

Witness that here Iago doth give up

The execution of his wit, hands, heart,

To wrong'd Othello's service! Let him command,

And to obey shall be in me remorse,

What bloody business ever. They rise.

OTHELLO.

I greet thy love,

Not with vain thanks, but with acceptance bounteous,

And will upon the instant put thee to't:

Within these three days let me hear thee say

That Cassio's not alive.

IAGO.

My friend is dead, 'tis done at your request;

But let her live.

OTHELLO.

Damn her, lewd minx! O, damn her!

Come, go with me apart; I will withdraw, To furnish me with some swift means of death

For the fair devil. Now art thou my lieutenant.

IAGO.

I am your own forever.

Exeunt.

SCENE IV. Before the castle.

Enter Desdemona, Emilia, and Clown.

DESDEMONA. Do you know, sirrah, where Lieutenant Cassio lies?

CLOWN.

I dare not say he lies anywhere.

DESDEMONA.

Why, man?

CLOWN.

He's a soldier; and for one to say a soldier lies, is stabbing.

DESDEMONA.

Go to! Where lodges he?

CLOWN.

To tell you where he lodges, is to tell you where I lie.

DESDEMONA.

Can anything be made of this?

CLOWN.

I know not where he lodges, and for me to devise a lodging,
and say he lies here or he lies there, were to lie in mine own throat.

DESDEMONA.

Can you inquire him out and be edified by report?

CLOWN.

I will catechize the world for him; that is, make questions

and by them answer.

DESDEMONA.

Seek him, bid him come hither. Tell him I have moved my

lord on his behalf and hope all will be well.

CLOWN.

To do this is within the compass of man's wit, and therefore

I will attempt the doing it.

Exit.

DESDEMONA.

Where should I lose that handkerchief, Emilia?

EMILIA.

I know not, madam.

DESDEMONA.

Believe me, I had rather have lost my purse

Full of crusadoes; and, but my noble Moor

Is true of mind and made of no such baseness

As jealous creatures are, it were enough

To put him to ill thinking.

EMILIA.

Is he not jealous?

DESDEMONA.

Who, he? I think the sun where he was born

Drew all such humors from him.

EMILIA.

Look, where he comes.

DESDEMONA.

I will not leave him now till Cassio

Be call'd to him.

Enter Othello.

How is't with you, my lord?

OTHELLO.

Well, my good lady. *[Aside.]* O, hardness to dissemble!

How do you, Desdemona?

DESDEMONA.

Well, my good lord.

OTHELLO.

Give me your hand. This hand is moist, my lady.

DESDEMONA.

It yet has felt no age nor known no sorrow.

OTHELLO.

This argues fruitfulness and liberal heart;

Hot, hot, and moist. This hand of yours requires

A sequester from liberty, fasting, and prayer,

Much castigation, exercise devout,

For here's a young and sweating devil here

That commonly rebels. 'Tis a good hand,

A frank one.

DESDEMONA.

You may, indeed, say so;

For 'twas that hand that gave away my heart.

OTHELLO.

A liberal hand. The hearts of old gave hands;

But our new heraldry is hands, not hearts.

DESDEMONA.

I cannot speak of this. Come now, your promise.

OTHELLO.

What promise, chuck?

DESDEMONA.

I have sent to bid Cassio come speak with you.

OTHELLO.

I have a salt and sorry rheum offends me;
Lend me thy handkerchief.

DESDEMONA.

Here, my lord.

OTHELLO.

That which I gave you.

DESDEMONA.

I have it not about me.

OTHELLO.

Not?

DESDEMONA.

No, faith, my lord.

OTHELLO.

That's a fault. That handkerchief

Did an Egyptian to my mother give;

She was a charmer, and could almost read

The thoughts of people. She told her, while she kept it,

'Twould make her amiable and subdue my father

Entirely to her love, but if she lost it

Or made a gift of it, my father's eye

Should hold her loathed and his spirits should hunt

After new fancies. She dying gave it me,

And bid me, when my fate would have me wive,

To give it her. I did so, and take heed on't;

Make it a darling like your precious eye;

To lose't or give't away were such perdition

As nothing else could match.

DESDEMONA.

Is't possible?

OTHELLO.
'Tis true; there's magic in the web of it.
A sibyl, that had number'd in the world
The sun to course two hundred compasses,
In her prophetic fury sew'd the work;
The worms were hallow'd that did breed the silk,
And it was dyed in mummy which the skillful
Conserved of maiden's hearts.

DESDEMONA.

Indeed! is't true?

OTHELLO.
Most veritable; therefore look to't well.

DESDEMONA.

Then would to God that I had never seen't!

OTHELLO.

Ha! wherefore?

DESDEMONA.

Why do you speak so startingly and rash?

OTHELLO.

Is't lost? is't gone? speak, is it out o' the way?

DESDEMONA.

Heaven bless us!

OTHELLO.

Say you?

DESDEMONA.

It is not lost; but what an if it were?

OTHELLO.

How?

DESDEMONA.

I say, it is not lost.

OTHELLO.

Fetch't, let me see it.

DESDEMONA.

Why, so I can, sir, but I will not now.

This is a trick to put me from my suit.

Pray you, let Cassio be received again.

OTHELLO.

Fetch me the handkerchief, my mind misgives.

DESDEMONA.

Come, come,

You'll never meet a more sufficient man.

OTHELLO.

The handkerchief!

DESDEMONA.

I pray, talk me of Cassio.

OTHELLO.

The handkerchief!

DESDEMONA.

A man that all his time

Hath founded his good fortunes on your love,

Shared dangers with you-

OTHELLO.

The handkerchief!

DESDEMONA.

In sooth, you are to blame.

OTHELLO.

Away!

Exit.

EMILIA.

Is not this man jealous?

DESDEMONA.

I ne'er saw this before.

Sure there's some wonder in this handkerchief;

I am most unhappy in the loss of it.

EMILIA.

'Tis not a year or two shows us a man.
They are all but stomachs and we all but food;
They eat us hungerly, and when they are full
They belch us. Look you! Cassio and my husband.

Enter Cassio and Iago.

IAGO. There is no other way; 'tis she must do't.
And, lo, the happiness! Go and importune her.

DESDEMONA.

How now, good Cassio! What's the news with you?

CASSIO.
Madam, my former suit: I do beseech you
That by your virtuous means I may again
Exist and be a member of his love

Whom I with all the office of my heart
Entirely honor. I would not be delay'd.
If my offense be of such mortal kind
That nor my service past nor present sorrows
Nor purposed merit in futurity
Can ransom me into his love again,
But to know so must be my benefit;
So shall I clothe me in a forced content
And shut myself up in some other course
To Fortune's alms.

DESDEMONA.

Alas, thrice-gentle Cassio!
My advocation is not now in tune;
My lord is not my lord, nor should I know him
Were he in favor as in humor alter'd.
So help me every spirit sanctified,
As I have spoken for you all my best
And stood within the blank of his displeasure
For my free speech! You must awhile be patient.

What I can do I will; and more I will
Than for myself I dare. Let that suffice you.

IAGO.

Is my lord angry?

EMILIA.
He went hence but now,
And certainly in strange unquietness.

IAGO.
Can he be angry? I have seen the cannon,
When it hath blown his ranks into the air
And, like the devil, from his very arm
Puff'd his own brother. And can he be angry?
Something of moment then. I will go meet him.

There's matter in't indeed if he be angry.

DESDEMONA.

I prithee, do so. *Exit* Iago.

Something sure of state,

Either from Venice or some unhatch'd practice

Made demonstrable here in Cyprus to him,

Hath puddled his clear spirit; and in such cases

Men's natures wrangle with inferior things,

Though great ones are their object. 'Tis even so;

For let our finger ache, and it indues

Our other healthful members even to that sense

Of pain. Nay, we must think men are not gods,

Nor of them look for such observancy

As fits the bridal. Beshrew me much, Emilia,

I was, unhandsome warrior as I am,

Arraigning his unkindness with my soul;

But now I find I had suborn'd the witness,

And he's indicted falsely.

EMILIA.

Pray heaven it be state matters, as you think,

And no conception nor no jealous toy

Concerning you.

DESDEMONA.

Alas the day, I never gave him cause!

EMILIA.

But jealous souls will not be answer'd so;

They are not ever jealous for the cause,

But jealous for they are jealous. 'Tis a monster

Begot upon itself, born on itself.

DESDEMONA.

Heaven keep that monster from Othello's mind!

EMILIA.

Lady, amen.

DESDEMONA.

I will go seek him. Cassio, walk hereabout.

If I do find him fit, I'll move your suit, And seek to effect it to my uttermost.

CASSIO.

I humbly thank your ladyship.

Exeunt Desdemona and Emilia.

Enter Bianca.

BIANCA. Save you, friend Cassio!

CASSIO.

What make you from home?

How is it with you, my most fair Bianca?

I'faith, sweet love, I was coming to your house.

BIANCA.

And I was going to your lodging, Cassio.

What, keep a week away? seven days and nights?

Eight score eight hours? and lovers' absent hours, More tedious than the dial eight score times?

O weary reckoning!

CASSIO.
Pardon me, Bianca.
I have this while with leaden thoughts been press'd;
But I shall in a more continuate time
Strike off this score of absence. Sweet Bianca,
Gives her Desdemona's handkerchief.

Take me this work out.

BIANCA.
O Cassio, whence came this?

This is some token from a newer friend.
To the felt absence now I feel a cause.

Is't come to this? Well, well.

CASSIO.

Go to, woman!

Throw your vile guesses in the devil's teeth,

From whence you have them. You are jealous now

That this is from some mistress, some remembrance.

No, by my faith, Bianca.

BIANCA.

Why, whose is it?

CASSIO.

I know not, sweet. I found it in my chamber.

I like the work well. Ere it be demanded-

As like enough it will-I'ld have it copied.

Take it, and do't; and leave me for this time.

BIANCA.

Leave you! wherefore?

CASSIO.

I do attend here on the general;

And think it no addition, nor my wish,

To have him see me woman'd.

BIANCA.

Why, I pray you?

CASSIO.

Not that I love you not.

BIANCA.

But that you do not love me.

I pray you, bring me on the way a little,

And say if I shall see you soon at night.

CASSIO.

'Tis but a little way that I can bring you,

For I attend here, but I'll see you soon.

BIANCA.

'Tis very good; I must be circumstanced.

Exeunt.

ACT IV. SCENE I. Cyprus. Before the castle.

Enter Othello and Iago.

IAGO. Will you think so?

OTHELLO.

Think so, Iago?

IAGO.

What,

To kiss in private?

OTHELLO.

An unauthorized kiss.

IAGO.

Or to be naked with her friend in bed

An hour or more, not meaning any harm?

OTHELLO.

Naked in bed, Iago, and not mean harm!

It is hypocrisy against the devil.

They that mean virtuously and yet do so,

The devil their virtue tempts and they tempt heaven.

IAGO.

So they do nothing, 'tis a venial slip.

But if I give my wife a handkerchief-

OTHELLO.

What then?

IAGO.

Why, then, 'tis hers, my lord, and being hers, She may, I think, bestow't on any man.

OTHELLO.

She is protectress of her honor too.
May she give that?

IAGO.
Her honor is an essence that's not seen;
They have it very oft that have it not.
But for the handkerchief-

OTHELLO.
By heaven, I would most gladly have forgot it.
Thou said'st-O, it comes o'er my memory,
As doth the raven o'er the infected house,
Boding to all-he had my handkerchief.

IAGO.
Ay, what of that?

OTHELLO.

That's not so good now.

IAGO.
What,
If I had said I had seen him do you wrong?
Or heard him say-as knaves be such abroad,
Who having, by their own importunate suit,
Or voluntary dotage of some mistress,
Convinced or supplied them, cannot choose
But they must blab-

OTHELLO.

Hath he said anything?

IAGO.
He hath, my lord; but be you well assured,
No more than he'll unswear.

OTHELLO.

What hath he said?

IAGO.

Faith, that he did-I know not what he did.

OTHELLO.

What? what?

IAGO.

Lie-

OTHELLO.

With her?

IAGO.

With her, on her, what you will.

OTHELLO.

Lie with her! lie on her! We say lie on her, when they

belie her. Lie with her! 'Zounds, that's fulsome!

Handkerchief-

confessions-handkerchief! To confess and be hanged for his

labor-

first, to be hanged, and then to confess. I tremble at it.

Nature would not invest herself in such shadowing passion without

some instruction. It is not words that shakes me thus. Pish!

Noses, ears, and lips. Is't possible? Confess? Handkerchief?

O devil!

Falls in a trance.

IAGO.

Work on,

My medicine, work! Thus credulous fools are caught,

And many worthy and chaste dames even thus,

All guiltless, meet reproach. What, ho! My lord!

My lord, I say! Othello!

Enter Cassio.

How now, Cassio!

CASSIO.

What's the matter?

IAGO.

My lord is fall'n into an epilepsy.

This is his second fit; he had one yesterday.

CASSIO.

Rub him about the temples.

IAGO.

No, forbear;

The lethargy must have his quiet course.

If not, he foams at mouth, and by and by

Breaks out to savage madness. Look, he stirs.

Do you withdraw yourself a little while,

He will recover straight. When he is gone,

I would on great occasion speak with you. *Exit* Cassio.

How is it, general? Have you not hurt your head?

OTHELLO.

Dost thou mock me?

IAGO.

I mock you? No, by heaven.

Would you would bear your fortune like a man!

OTHELLO.

A horned man's a monster and a beast.

IAGO.

There's many a beast then in a populous city,

And many a civil monster.

OTHELLO.

Did he confess it?

IAGO.

Good sir, be a man;
Think every bearded fellow that's but yoked
May draw with you. There's millions now alive
That nightly lie in those unproper beds
Which they dare swear peculiar. Your case is better.
O, 'tis the spite of hell, the fiend's arch-mock,
To lip a wanton in a secure couch,
And to suppose her chaste! No, let me know,
And knowing what I am, I know what she shall be.

OTHELLO.

O, thou art wise; 'tis certain.

IAGO.

Stand you awhile apart,

Confine yourself but in a patient list.

Whilst you were here o'erwhelmed with your grief-

A passion most unsuiting such a man-

Cassio came hither. I shifted him away,

And laid good 'scuse upon your ecstasy;

Bade him anon return and here speak with me

The which he promised. Do but encave yourself

And mark the fleers, the gibes, and notable scorns,

That dwell in every region of his face;

For I will make him tell the tale anew,

Where, how, how oft, how long ago, and when

He hath and is again to cope your wife.

I say, but mark his gesture. Marry, patience,

Or I shall say you are all in all in spleen,

And nothing of a man.

OTHELLO.

Dost thou hear, Iago?

I will be found most cunning in my patience;

But (dost thou hear?) most bloody.

IAGO.

That's not amiss;

But yet keep time in all. Will you withdraw?

Othello retires.

Now will I question Cassio of Bianca,

A housewife that by selling her desires

Buys herself bread and clothes. It is a creature

That dotes on Cassio, as 'tis the strumpet's plague

To beguile many and be beguiled by one.

He, when he hears of her, cannot refrain

From the excess of laughter. Here he comes.

Re-enter Cassio.

As he shall smile, Othello shall go mad;

And his unbookish jealousy must construe

Poor Cassio's smiles, gestures, and light behavior

Quite in the wrong. How do you now, lieutenant?

CASSIO.

The worser that you give me the addition

Whose want even kills me.

IAGO.

Ply Desdemona well, and you are sure on't.

Now, if this suit lay in Bianco's power,

How quickly should you speed!

CASSIO.

Alas, poor caitiff!

OTHELLO.

Look, how he laughs already!

IAGO.

I never knew a woman love man so.

CASSIO.

Alas, poor rogue! I think, i'faith, she loves me.

OTHELLO.

Now he denies it faintly and laughs it out.

IAGO.

Do you hear, Cassio?

OTHELLO.

Now he importunes him

To tell it o'er. Go to; well said, well said.

IAGO.

She gives it out that you shall marry her.

Do you intend it?

CASSIO.

Ha, ha, ha!

OTHELLO.

Do you triumph, Roman? Do you triumph?

CASSIO.

I marry her! What? A customer! I prithee, bear some charity
to my wit; do not think it so unwholesome. Ha, ha, ha!

OTHELLO.

So, so, so, so. They laugh that win.

IAGO.

Faith, the cry goes that you shall marry her.

CASSIO.

Prithee, say true.

IAGO.

I am a very villain else.

OTHELLO.

Have you scored me? Well.

CASSIO.

This is the monkey's own giving out. She is persuaded I

will marry her, out of her own love and flattery, not out of my promise.

OTHELLO.

Iago beckons me; now he begins the story.

CASSIO.

She was here even now; she haunts me in every place. I was

the other day talking on the sea bank with certain Venetians, and

thither comes the bauble, and, by this hand, she falls me thus

about my neck-

OTHELLO.

Crying, "O dear Cassio!" as it were; his gesture imports it.

CASSIO.

So hangs and lolls and weeps upon me; so hales and pulls me. Ha, ha, ha!

OTHELLO.

Now he tells how she plucked him to my chamber. O, I see

that nose of yours, but not that dog I shall throw it to.

CASSIO.

Well, I must leave her company.

IAGO.

Before me! look where she comes.

CASSIO.

'Tis such another fitchew! marry, a perfumed one.

Enter Bianca.

What do you mean by this haunting of me?

BIANCA.

Let the devil and his dam haunt you! What did you mean by
that same handkerchief you gave me even now? I was a fine fool to
take it. I must take out the work? A likely piece of work that
you should find it in your chamber and not know who left it
there! This is some minx's token, and I must take out the work?
There, give it your hobbyhorse. Wheresoever you had it, I'll take
out no work on't.

CASSIO.

How now, my sweet Bianca! how now! how now!

OTHELLO.

By heaven, that should be my handkerchief!

BIANCA.

An you'll come to supper tonight, you may; an you will not,
come when you are next prepared for.

Exit.

IAGO.

After her, after her.

CASSIO.

Faith, I must; she'll rail i' the street else.

IAGO.

Will you sup there?

CASSIO.

Faith, I intend so.

IAGO.

Well, I may chance to see you, for I would very fain speak with you.

CASSIO.

Prithee, come; will you?

IAGO.

Go to; say no more. *Exit* Cassio.

OTHELLO.

[Advancing.] How shall I murther him, Iago?

IAGO.

Did you perceive how he laughed at his vice?

OTHELLO.

O Iago!

IAGO.

And did you see the handkerchief?

OTHELLO.

Was that mine?

IAGO.

Yours, by this hand. And to see how he prizes the foolish

woman your wife! She gave it him, and he hath given it his whore.

OTHELLO.

I would have him nine years akilling. A fine woman! a fair

woman! a sweet woman!

IAGO.

Nay, you must forget that.

OTHELLO.

Ay, let her rot, and perish, and be damned tonight, for

she shall not live. No, my heart is turned to stone; I strike it,

and it hurts my hand. O, the world hath not a sweeter creature.

She might lie by an emperor's side, and command him tasks.

IAGO.

Nay, that's not your way.

OTHELLO.

Hang her! I do but say what she is. So delicate with her
needle, an admirable musician. O, she will sing the savageness
out of a bear. Of so high and plenteous wit and invention-

IAGO.

She's the worse for all this.

OTHELLO.

O, a thousand, a thousand times. And then, of so gentle a condition!

IAGO.

Ay, too gentle.

OTHELLO.

Nay, that's certain. But yet the pity of it, Iago!

O Iago, the pity of it, Iago!

IAGO.

If you are so fond over her iniquity, give her patent to
offend, for, if it touch not you, it comes near nobody.

OTHELLO.

I will chop her into messes. Cuckold me!

IAGO.

O, 'tis foul in her.

OTHELLO.

With mine officer!

IAGO.

That's fouler.

OTHELLO.

Get me some poison, Iago, this night. I'll not expostulate
with her, lest her body and beauty unprovide my mind again.

This

night, Iago.

IAGO.

Do it not with poison, strangle her in her bed, even the bed

she hath contaminated.

OTHELLO.

Good, good, the justice of it pleases, very good.

IAGO.

And for Cassio, let me be his undertaker. You shall hear more by midnight.

OTHELLO.

Excellent good. *[A trumpet within.]* What trumpet is that same?

IAGO.

Something from Venice, sure. 'Tis Lodovico

Come from the Duke. And, see your wife is with him.

Enter Lodovico, Desdemona, and Attendants.

LODOVICO. God save the worthy general!

OTHELLO.

With all my heart, sir.

LODOVICO.

The Duke and Senators of Venice greet you.

Gives him a letter.

OTHELLO.

I kiss the instrument of their pleasures.

Opens the letter, and reads.

DESDEMONA.

And what's the news, good cousin Lodovico?

IAGO.

I am very glad to see you, signior;
Welcome to Cyprus.

LODOVICO.

I thank you. How does Lieutenant Cassio?

IAGO.

Lives, sir.

DESDEMONA.

Cousin, there's fall'n between him and my lord
An unkind breech; but you shall make all well.

OTHELLO.

Are you sure of that?

DESDEMONA.

My lord?

OTHELLO.

[Reads.] "This fail you not to do, as you will-"

LODOVICO.

He did not call; he's busy in the paper.

Is there division 'twixt my lord and Cassio?

DESDEMONA.

A most unhappy one. I would do much

To atone them, for the love I bear to Cassio.

OTHELLO.

Fire and brimstone!

DESDEMONA.

My lord?

OTHELLO.

Are you wise?

DESDEMONA.

What, is he angry?

LODOVICO.

May be the letter moved him;
For, as I think, they do command him home,
Deputing Cassio in his government.

DESDEMONA.

By my troth, I am glad on't.

OTHELLO.

Indeed!

DESDEMONA.

My lord?

OTHELLO.

I am glad to see you mad.

DESDEMONA.

Why, sweet Othello?

OTHELLO.

Devil! Strikes her.

DESDEMONA.

I have not deserved this.

LODOVICO.

My lord, this would not be believed in Venice,

Though I should swear I saw't. 'Tis very much.

Make her amends; she weeps.

OTHELLO.

O devil, devil!

If that the earth could teem with woman's tears,

Each drop she falls would prove a crocodile.

Out of my sight!

DESDEMONA.

[Going.] I will not stay to offend you.

LODOVICO.

Truly, an obedient lady.

I do beseech your lordship, call her back.

OTHELLO.

Mistress!

DESDEMONA.

My lord?

OTHELLO.

What would you with her, sir?

LODOVICO.

Who, I, my lord?

OTHELLO.

Ay, you did wish that I would make her turn.

Sir, she can turn and turn, and yet go on,

And turn again; and she can weep, sir, weep;

And she's obedient, as you say, obedient,

Very obedient. Proceed you in your tears.

Concerning this, sir-O well-painted passion!-

I am commanded home. Get you away;

I'll send for you anon. Sir, I obey the mandate,

And will return to Venice. Hence, avaunt!

Exit Desdemona.

Cassio shall have my place. And, sir, tonight,

I do entreat that we may sup together.

You are welcome, sir, to Cyprus. Goats and monkeys!

Exit.

LODOVICO.

Is this the noble Moor whom our full Senate

Call all in all sufficient? This the nature

Whom passion could not shake? whose solid virtue

The shot of accident nor dart of chance

Could neither graze nor pierce?

IAGO.

He is much changed.

LODOVICO.

Are his wits safe? Is he not light of brain?

IAGO.

He's that he is. I may not breathe my censure

What he might be: if what he might he is not,

I would to heaven he were!

LODOVICO.

What, strike his wife!

IAGO.

Faith, that was not so well; yet would I knew
That stroke would prove the worst!

LODOVICO.

Is it his use?
Or did the letters work upon his blood,
And new create this fault?

IAGO.

Alas, alas!
It is not honesty in me to speak
What I have seen and known. You shall observe him,
And his own courses will denote him so
That I may save my speech. Do but go after,
And mark how he continues.

LODOVICO.

I am sorry that I am deceived in him.

Exeunt.

SCENE II. A room in the castle.

Enter Othello and Emilia.

OTHELLO. You have seen nothing, then?

EMILIA.

Nor ever heard, nor ever did suspect.

OTHELLO.

Yes, you have seen Cassio and she together.

EMILIA.

But then I saw no harm, and then I heard

Each syllable that breath made up between them.

OTHELLO.

What, did they never whisper?

EMILIA.

Never, my lord.

OTHELLO.

Nor send you out o' the way?

EMILIA.

Never.

OTHELLO.

To fetch her fan, her gloves, her mask, nor nothing?

EMILIA.

Never, my lord.

OTHELLO.

That's strange.

EMILIA.

I durst, my lord, to wager she is honest,

Lay down my soul at stake. If you think other,

Remove your thought; it doth abuse your bosom.

If any wretch have put this in your head,

Let heaven requite it with the serpent's curse!

For if she be not honest, chaste, and true,

There's no man happy; the purest of their wives

Is foul as slander.

OTHELLO.

Bid her come hither; go. *Exit* Emilia.

She says enough; yet she's a simple bawd

That cannot say as much. This is a subtle whore,

A closet lock and key of villainous secrets.

And yet she'll kneel and pray; I have seen her do't.

Enter Desdemona with Emilia.

DESDEMONA. My lord, what is your will?

OTHELLO.

Pray, chuck, come hither.

DESDEMONA.

What is your pleasure?

OTHELLO.

Let me see your eyes;

Look in my face.

DESDEMONA.

What horrible fancy's this?

OTHELLO.

[To Emilia.] Some of your function, mistress,

Leave procreants alone and shut the door;

Cough, or cry "hem," if anybody come.

Your mystery, your mystery; nay, dispatch. *Exit* Emilia.

DESDEMONA.

Upon my knees, what doth your speech import?

I understand a fury in your words,

But not the words.

OTHELLO.

Why, what art thou?

DESDEMONA.

Your wife, my lord, your true and loyal wife.

OTHELLO.

Come, swear it, damn thyself;

Lest, being like one of heaven, the devils themselves

Should fear to seize thee. Therefore be double-damn'd;

Swear thou art honest.

DESDEMONA.

Heaven doth truly know it.

OTHELLO.

Heaven truly knows that thou art false as hell.

DESDEMONA.

To whom, my lord? with whom? how am I false?

OTHELLO.

O Desdemona! Away! away! away!

DESDEMONA.

Alas the heavy day! Why do you weep?
Am I the motive of these tears, my lord?
If haply you my father do suspect
An instrument of this your calling back,
Lay not your blame on me. If you have lost him,
Why, I have lost him too.

OTHELLO.

Had it pleased heaven

To try me with affliction, had they rain'd

All kinds of sores and shames on my bare head,

Steep'd me in poverty to the very lips,

Given to captivity me and my utmost hopes,

I should have found in some place of my soul

A drop of patience; but, alas, to make me

A fixed figure for the time of scorn

To point his slow unmoving finger at!

Yet could I bear that too, well, very well;

But there, where I have garner'd up my heart,

Where either I must live or bear no life;

The fountain from the which my current runs,

Or else dries up; to be discarded thence!

Or keep it as a cistern for foul toads

To knot and gender in! Turn thy complexion there,

Patience, thou young and rose-lipp'd cherubin,

Ay, there, look grim as hell!

DESDEMONA.

I hope my noble lord esteems me honest.

OTHELLO.

O, ay, as summer flies are in the shambles,

That quicken even with blowing. O thou weed,

Who art so lovely fair and smell'st so sweet

That the sense aches at thee, would thou hadst ne'er been born!

DESDEMONA.

Alas, what ignorant sin have I committed?

OTHELLO.

Was this fair paper, this most goodly book,

Made to write "whore" upon? What committed?

Committed? O thou public commoner!

I should make very forges of my cheeks,

That would to cinders burn up modesty,

Did I but speak thy deeds. What committed!

Heaven stops the nose at it, and the moon winks;

The bawdy wind, that kisses all it meets,

Is hush'd within the hollow mine of earth, And will not hear it. What committed?

Impudent strumpet!

DESDEMONA.

By heaven, you do me wrong.

OTHELLO.

Are not you a strumpet?

DESDEMONA.

No, as I am a Christian.
If to preserve this vessel for my lord
From any other foul unlawful touch
Be not to be a strumpet, I am none.

OTHELLO.

What, not a whore?

DESDEMONA.

No, as I shall be saved.

OTHELLO.

Is't possible?

DESDEMONA.

O, heaven forgive us!

OTHELLO.

I cry you mercy then;

I took you for that cunning whore of Venice

That married with Othello. *[Raises his voice.]* You, mistress,

That have the office opposite to Saint Peter,

And keep the gate of hell!

Re-enter Emilia.

You, you, ay, you!

We have done our course; there's money for your pains.

I pray you, turn the key, and keep our counsel.

Exit.

EMILIA.

Alas, what does this gentleman conceive?

How do you, madam? How do you, my good lady?

DESDEMONA.

Faith, half asleep.

EMILIA.

Good madam, what's the matter with my lord?

DESDEMONA.

With who?

EMILIA.

Why, with my lord, madam.

DESDEMONA.

Who is thy lord?

EMILIA.

He that is yours, sweet lady.

DESDEMONA.

I have none. Do not talk to me, Emilia;
I cannot weep, nor answer have I none
But what should go by water. Prithee, tonight
Lay on my bed my wedding sheets. Remember,
And call thy husband hither.

EMILIA.

Here's a change indeed!

Exit.

DESDEMONA.

'Tis meet I should be used so, very meet.
How have I been behaved, that he might stick
The small'st opinion on my least misuse?

Re-enter Emilia with Iago.

IAGO.
What is your pleasure, madam? How is't with you?

DESDEMONA.
I cannot tell. Those that do teach young babes
Do it with gentle means and easy tasks.
He might have chid me so, for in good faith,
I am a child to chiding.

IAGO.

What's the matter, lady?

EMILIA.
Alas, Iago, my lord hath so bewhored her,

Thrown such despite and heavy terms upon her,
As true hearts cannot bear.

DESDEMONA.

Am I that name, Iago?

IAGO.

What name, fair lady?

DESDEMONA.

Such as she says my lord did say I was.

EMILIA.

He call'd her whore; a beggar in his drink
Could not have laid such terms upon his callet.

IAGO.

Why did he so?

DESDEMONA.

I do not know; I am sure I am none such.

IAGO.

Do not weep, do not weep. Alas the day!

EMILIA.

Hath she forsook so many noble matches,

Her father and her country and her friends,

To be call'd whore? Would it not make one weep?

DESDEMONA.

It is my wretched fortune.

IAGO.

Beshrew him for't!

How comes this trick upon him?

DESDEMONA.

Nay, heaven doth know.

EMILIA.

I will be hang'd, if some eternal villain,

Some busy and insinuating rogue,

Some cogging, cozening slave, to get some office,

Have not devised this slander; I'll be hang'd else.

IAGO.

Fie, there is no such man; it is impossible.

DESDEMONA.

If any such there be, heaven pardon him!

EMILIA.

A halter pardon him! And hell gnaw his bones!

Why should he call her whore? Who keeps her company?

What place? What time? What form? What likelihood?

The Moor's abused by some most villainous knave,

Some base notorious knave, some scurvy fellow.

O heaven, that such companions thou'ldst unfold,

And put in every honest hand a whip

To lash the rascals naked through the world

Even from the east to the west!

IAGO.

Speak within door.

EMILIA.

O, fie upon them! Some such squire he was

That turn'd your wit the seamy side without,

And made you to suspect me with the Moor.

IAGO.

You are a fool; go to.

DESDEMONA.

O good Iago,

What shall I do to win my lord again?

Good friend, go to him, for by this light of heaven,

I know not how I lost him. Here I kneel:

If e'er my will did trespass 'gainst his love

Either in discourse of thought or actual deed,

Or that mine eyes, mine ears, or any sense,

Delighted them in any other form,

Or that I do not yet, and ever did,

And ever will, though he do shake me off

To beggarly divorcement, love him dearly,

Comfort forswear me! Unkindness may do much,

And his unkindness may defeat my life,

But never taint my love. I cannot say "whore."

It doth abhor me now I speak the word;

To do the act that might the addition earn

Not the world's mass of vanity could make me.

IAGO.

I pray you, be content; 'tis but his humor:

The business of the state does him offense,

And he does chide with you.

DESDEMONA.

If 'twere no other-

IAGO.

'Tis but so, I warrant. Trumpets within.

Hark, how these instruments summon to supper!

The messengers of Venice stay the meat.

Go in, and weep not; all things shall be well.

Exeunt Desdemona and Emilia.

Enter Roderigo.

How now, Roderigo!

RODERIGO.

I do not find that thou dealest justly with me.

IAGO.

What in the contrary?

RODERIGO.
Every day thou daffest me with some device, Iago; and
rather, as it seems to me now, keepest from me all conveniency
than suppliest me with the least advantage of hope. I will indeed
no longer endure it; nor am I yet persuaded to put up in peace
what already I have foolishly suffered.

IAGO.

Will you hear me, Roderigo?

RODERIGO.
Faith, I have heard too much, for your words and
performances are no kin together.

IAGO.

You charge me most unjustly.

RODERIGO.

With nought but truth. I have wasted myself out of my
means. The jewels you have had from me to deliver to Desdemona
would half have corrupted a votarist. You have told me she hath
received them and returned me expectations and comforts of sudden
respect and acquaintance; but I find none.

IAGO.

Well, go to, very well.

RODERIGO.

Very well! go to! I cannot go to, man; nor 'tis not very
well. By this hand, I say 'tis very scurvy, and begin to find myself fopped in it.

IAGO.

Very well.

RODERIGO.

I tell you 'tis not very well. I will make myself known
to Desdemona. If she will return me my jewels, I will give over
my suit and repent my unlawful solicitation; if not, assure
yourself I will seek satisfaction of you.

IAGO.
You have said now.

RODERIGO.

Ay, and said nothing but what I protest intendment of doing.

IAGO.
Why, now I see there's mettle in thee; and even from this
instant do build on thee a better opinion than ever before.
Give
me thy hand, Roderigo. Thou hast taken against me a most just
exception; but yet, I protest, have dealt most directly in thy affair.

RODERIGO.

It hath not appeared.

IAGO.

I grant indeed it hath not appeared, and your suspicion is not without wit and judgement. But, Roderigo, if thou hast that in thee indeed, which I have greater reason to believe now than ever, I mean purpose, courage, and valor, this night show it; if thou the next night following enjoy not Desdemona, take me from this world with treachery and devise engines for my life.

RODERIGO.

Well, what is it? Is it within reason and compass?

IAGO.

Sir, there is especial commission come from Venice to depute Cassio in Othello's place.

RODERIGO.

Is that true? Why then Othello and Desdemona return again to Venice.

IAGO.

O, no; he goes into Mauritania, and takes away with him the
fair Desdemona, unless his abode be lingered here by some
accident; wherein none can be so determinate as the removing of Cassio.

RODERIGO.

How do you mean, removing of him?

IAGO.

Why, by making him uncapable of Othello's place; knocking out his brains.

RODERIGO.

And that you would have me to do?

IAGO.

Ay, if you dare do yourself a profit and a right. He sups
tonight with a harlotry, and thither will I go to him. He knows
not yet of his honorable fortune. If you will watch his going
thence, which his will fashion to fall out between twelve and
one, you may take him at your pleasure; I will be near to second

your attempt, and he shall fall between us. Come, stand not amazed at it, but go along with me; I will show you such a necessity in his death that you shall think yourself bound to put it on him. It is now high supper-time, and the night grows to waste. About it.

RODERIGO.

I will hear further reason for this.

IAGO.
And you shall be satisfied.

Exeunt.

SCENE III. Another room in the castle.

Enter Othello, Lodovico, Desdemona, Emilia, and Attendants.

LODOVICO. I do beseech you, sir, trouble yourself no further.

OTHELLO.

O, pardon me; 'twill do me good to walk.

LODOVICO.

Madam, good night; I humbly thank your ladyship.

DESDEMONA.

Your honor is most welcome.

OTHELLO.

Will you walk, sir?

O-Desdemona-

DESDEMONA.

My lord?

OTHELLO.

Get you to bed on the instant; I will be returned

forthwith. Dismiss your attendant there; look it be done.

DESDEMONA.

I will, my lord.

Exeunt Othello, Lodovico, and Attendants.

EMILIA.

How goes it now? He looks gentler than he did.

DESDEMONA.

He says he will return incontinent.
He hath commanded me to go to bed,
And bade me to dismiss you.

EMILIA.

Dismiss me?

DESDEMONA.

It was his bidding; therefore, good Emilia,
Give me my nightly wearing, and adieu.

We must not now displease him.

EMILIA.

I would you had never seen him!

DESDEMONA.

So would not I. My love doth so approve him,

That even his stubbornness, his checks, his frowns-

Prithee, unpin me-have grace and favor in them.

EMILIA.

I have laid those sheets you bade me on the bed.

DESDEMONA.

All's one. Good faith, how foolish are our minds!

If I do die before thee, prithee shroud me

In one of those same sheets.

EMILIA.

Come, come, you talk.

DESDEMONA.

My mother had a maid call'd Barbary;
She was in love, and he she loved proved mad
And did forsake her. She had a song of "willow";
An old thing 'twas, but it express'd her fortune,
And she died singing it. That song tonight
Will not go from my mind; I have much to do
But to go hang my head all at one side
And sing it like poor Barbary. Prithee, dispatch.

EMILIA.

Shall I go fetch your nightgown?

DESDEMONA.

No, unpin me here.

This Lodovico is a proper man.

EMILIA.

A very handsome man.

DESDEMONA.

He speaks well.

EMILIA.

I know a lady in Venice would have walked barefoot to
Palestine for a touch of his nether lip.

DESDEMONA.

[Sings.]

"The poor soul sat sighing by a sycamore tree,
Sing all a green willow;
Her hand on her bosom, her head on her knee,
Sing willow, willow, willow.
The fresh streams ran by her, and murmur'd her moans,
Sing willow, willow, willow;
Her salt tears fell from her, and soften'd the stones-"
Lay be these-

[Sings.] "Sing willow, willow, willow-"

Prithee, hie thee; he'll come anon-

[Sings.] "Sing all a green willow must be my garland.

Let nobody blame him; his scorn I approve-"

Nay, that's not next. Hark, who is't that knocks?

EMILIA.

It's the wind.

DESDEMONA.

[Sings.]

"I call'd my love false love; but what said he then?

Sing willow, willow, willow.

If I court moe women, you'll couch with moe men-"

So get thee gone; good night. Mine eyes do itch;

Doth that bode weeping?

EMILIA.

'Tis neither here nor there.

DESDEMONA.

I have heard it said so. O, these men, these men!

Dost thou in conscience think-tell me, Emilia-

That there be women do abuse their husbands

In such gross kind?

EMILIA.

There be some such, no question.

DESDEMONA.

Wouldst thou do such a deed for all the world?

EMILIA.

Why, would not you?

DESDEMONA.

No, by this heavenly light!

EMILIA.

Nor I neither by this heavenly light; I might do't as well i' the dark.

DESDEMONA.

Wouldst thou do such a deed for all the world?

EMILIA.

The world's a huge thing; it is a great price
For a small vice.

DESDEMONA.

In troth, I think thou wouldst not.

EMILIA.

In troth, I think I should, and undo't when I had done.
Marry, I would not do such a thing for a joint-ring, nor for
measures of lawn, nor for gowns, petticoats, nor caps, nor any
petty exhibition; but, for the whole world-why, who would not

make her husband a cuckold to make him a monarch? I should venture purgatory for't.

DESDEMONA.
Beshrew me, if I would do such a wrong
For the whole world.

EMILIA.
Why, the wrong is but a wrong i' the world; and having the world for your labor, 'tis a wrong in your own world, and you might quickly make it right.

DESDEMONA.
I do not think there is any such woman.

EMILIA.
Yes, a dozen, and as many to the vantage as would store the world they played for.
But I do think it is their husbands' faults
If wives do fall; say that they slack their duties
And pour our treasures into foreign laps,

Or else break out in peevish jealousies,
Throwing restraint upon us, or say they strike us,
Or scant our former having in despite,
Why, we have galls, and though we have some grace,
Yet have we some revenge. Let husbands know
Their wives have sense like them; they see and smell
And have their palates both for sweet and sour,
As husbands have. What is it that they do
When they change us for others? Is it sport?

I think it is. And doth affection breed it?
I think it doth. Is't frailty that thus errs?
It is so too. And have not we affections,
Desires for sport, and frailty, as men have?
Then let them use us well; else let them know,
The ills we do, their ills instruct us so.

DESDEMONA.

Good night, good night. Heaven me such uses send,
Not to pick bad from bad, but by bad mend!

Exeunt.

ACT V. SCENE I. Cyprus. A street.

Enter Iago and Roderigo:

IAGO.

Here, stand behind this bulk; straight will he come.

Wear thy good rapier bare, and put it home.

Quick, quick; fear nothing; I'll be at thy elbow.

It makes us, or it mars us; think on that,

And fix most firm thy resolution.

RODERIGO.

Be near at hand; I may miscarry in't.

IAGO.

Here, at thy hand, be bold, and take thy stand.

Retires.

RODERIGO.

I have no great devotion to the deed;

And yet he hath given me satisfying reasons.

'Tis but a man gone. Forth, my sword; he dies.

IAGO.

I have rubb'd this young quat almost to the sense,

And he grows angry. Now, whether he kill Cassio,

Or Cassio him, or each do kill the other,

Every way makes my gain. Live Roderigo,

He calls me to a restitution large

Of gold and jewels that I bobb'd from him,

As gifts to Desdemona;

It must not be. If Cassio do remain,

He hath a daily beauty in his life

That makes me ugly; and besides, the Moor

May unfold me to him; there stand I in much peril.

No, he must die. Be't so. I hear him coming.

Enter Cassio.

RODERIGO. I know his gait; 'tis he. Villain, thou diest!

Makes a pass at Cassio.

CASSIO.

That thrust had been mine enemy indeed,

But that my coat is better than thou know'st;

I will make proof of thine. Draws, and wounds Roderigo.

RODERIGO.

O, I am slain!

Iago from behind wounds Cassio in the leg, and exit.

CASSIO.

I am maim'd forever. Help, ho! Murther! Murther!

Falls.

Enter Othello.

OTHELLO. The voice of Cassio; Iago keeps his word.

RODERIGO.

O, villain that I am!

OTHELLO.

It is even so.

CASSIO.

O, help, ho! Light! A surgeon!

OTHELLO.

'Tis he. O brave Iago, honest and just,

That hast such noble sense of thy friend's wrong!

Thou teachest me. Minion, your dear lies dead,

And your unblest fate hies. Strumpet, I come!

Forth of my heart those charms, thine eyes, are blotted;

Thy bed lust-stain'd shall with lust's blood be spotted.

Exit.

Enter Lodovico and Gratiano.

CASSIO. What, ho! No watch? No passage? Murther! Murther!

GRATIANO.

'Tis some mischance; the cry is very direful.

CASSIO.

O, help!

LODOVICO.

Hark!

RODERIGO.

O wretched villain!

LODOVICO.

Two or three groan; it is a heavy night.
These may be counterfeits; let's think't unsafe
To come in to the cry without more help.

RODERIGO.

Nobody come? Then shall I bleed to death.

LODOVICO.
Hark!

Re-enter Iago, with a light.

GRATIANO.
Here's one comes in his shirt, with light and weapons.

IAGO.

Who's there? Whose noise is this that cries on murther?

LODOVICO.

We do not know.

IAGO.

Did not you hear a cry?

CASSIO.

Here, here! for heaven's sake, help me!

IAGO.

What's the matter?

GRATIANO.

This is Othello's ancient, as I take it.

LODOVICO.

The same indeed; a very valiant fellow.

IAGO.

What are you here that cry so grievously?

CASSIO.

Iago? O, I am spoil'd, undone by villains!
Give me some help.

IAGO.

O me, lieutenant! What villains have done this?

CASSIO.
I think that one of them is hereabout,
And cannot make away.

IAGO.
O treacherous villains!

[To Lodovico and Gratiano.] What are you there?
Come in and give some help.

RODERIGO.

O, help me here!

CASSIO.

That's one of them.

IAGO.

O murtherous slave! O villain!

Stabs Roderigo.

RODERIGO.

O damn'd Iago! O inhuman dog!

IAGO.

Kill men i' the dark! Where be these bloody thieves?

How silent is this town! Ho! Murther! Murther!

What may you be? Are you of good or evil?

LODOVICO.

As you shall prove us, praise us.

IAGO.

Signior Lodovico?

LODOVICO.

He, sir.

IAGO.

I cry you mercy. Here's Cassio hurt by villains.

GRATIANO.

Cassio?

IAGO.

How is't, brother?

CASSIO.

My leg is cut in two.

IAGO.

Marry, heaven forbid!

Light, gentlemen; I'll bind it with my shirt.

Enter Bianca.

BIANCA. What is the matter, ho? Who is't that cried?

IAGO.

Who is't that cried?

BIANCA.

O my dear Cassio, my sweet Cassio! O Cassio, Cassio,

Cassio!

IAGO.

O notable strumpet! Cassio, may you suspect

Who they should be that have thus mangled you?

CASSIO.

No.

GRATIANO.

I am sorry to find you thus; I have been to seek you.

IAGO.

Lend me a garter. So. O, for a chair,

To bear him easily hence!

BIANCA.

Alas, he faints! O Cassio, Cassio, Cassio!

IAGO.

Gentlemen all, I do suspect this trash

To be a party in this injury.

Patience awhile, good Cassio. Come, come;

Lend me a light. Know we this face or no?

Alas, my friend and my dear countryman

Roderigo? No-yes, sure. O heaven! Roderigo.

GRATIANO.

What, of Venice?

IAGO.

Even he, sir. Did you know him?

GRATIANO.

Know him! ay.

IAGO.

Signior Gratiano? I cry you gentle pardon;

These bloody accidents must excuse my manners,

That so neglected you.

GRATIANO.

I am glad to see you.

IAGO.

How do you, Cassio? O, a chair, a chair!

GRATIANO.
Roderigo!

IAGO.
He, he, 'tis he. *[A chair brought in.]* O, that's well said:
the chair.
Some good man bear him carefully from hence;
I'll fetch the general's surgeon. *[To Bianca.]* For you,
mistress,
Save you your labor. He that lies slain here, Cassio,
Was my dear friend; what malice was between you?

CASSIO.

None in the world; nor do I know the man.

IAGO.

[To Bianca.] What, look you pale? O, bear him out o' the air.

Cassio and Roderigo are borne off.

Stay you, good gentlemen. Look you pale, mistress?
Do you perceive the gastness of her eye?

Nay, if you stare, we shall hear more anon.
Behold her well; I pray you, look upon her.
Do you see, gentlemen? Nay, guiltiness will speak,
Though tongues were out of use.

Enter Emilia.

EMILIA. 'Las, what's the matter? What's the matter, husband?

IAGO.

Cassio hath here been set on in the dark
By Roderigo, and fellows that are 'scaped;
He's almost slain, and Roderigo dead.

EMILIA.

Alas, good gentleman! alas, good Cassio!

IAGO.

This is the fruit of whoring. Prithee, Emilia,
Go know of Cassio where he supp'd tonight.
What, do you shake at that?

BIANCA.

He supp'd at my house; but I therefore shake not.

IAGO.

O, did he so? I charge you, go with me.

EMILIA.

Fie, fie upon thee, strumpet!

BIANCA.

I am no strumpet, but of life as honest
As you that thus abuse me.

EMILIA.

As I! foh! fie upon thee!

IAGO.

Kind gentlemen, let's go see poor Cassio dress'd.
Come, mistress, you must tell's another tale.
Emilia, run you to the citadel,
And tell my lord and lady what hath happ'd!
Will you go on? *[Aside.]* This is the night
That either makes me or fordoes me quite.

Exeunt.

SCENE II. A bedchamber in the castle. Desdemona in bed asleep; a light burning.

Enter Othello.

OTHELLO. It is the cause, it is the cause, my soul.
Let me not name it to you, you chaste stars!
It is the cause. Yet I'll not shed her blood,
Nor scar that whiter skin of hers than snow
And smooth as monumental alabaster.
Yet she must die, else she'll betray more men.

Put out the light, and then put out the light.
If I quench thee, thou flaming minister,
I can again thy former light restore,
Should I repent me; but once put out thy light,
Thou cunning'st pattern of excelling nature,
I know not where is that Promethean heat
That can thy light relume. When I have pluck'd the rose,
I cannot give it vital growth again,
It must needs wither; I'll smell it on the tree. Kisses her.
O, balmy breath, that dost almost persuade
Justice to break her sword! One more, one more;
Be thus when thou art dead, and I will kill thee,
And love thee after. One more, and this the last;

So sweet was ne'er so fatal. I must weep,
But they are cruel tears; this sorrow's heavenly,
It strikes where it doth love. She wakes.

DESDEMONA.

Who's there? Othello?

OTHELLO.
Ay, Desdemona.

DESDEMONA.

Will you come to bed, my lord?

OTHELLO.
Have you pray'd tonight, Desdemona?

DESDEMONA.

Ay, my lord.

OTHELLO.

If you bethink yourself of any crime
Unreconciled as yet to heaven and grace,
Solicit for it straight.

DESDEMONA.

Alas, my lord, what may you mean by that?

OTHELLO.

Well, do it, and be brief; I will walk by.

I would not kill thy unprepared spirit.
No, heaven forfend! I would not kill thy soul.

DESDEMONA.

Talk you of killing?

OTHELLO.

Ay, I do.

DESDEMONA.

Then heaven have mercy on me!

OTHELLO.

Amen, with all my heart!

DESDEMONA.

If you say so, I hope you will not kill me.

OTHELLO.

Hum!

DESDEMONA.

And yet I fear you, for you are fatal then
When your eyes roll so. Why I should fear I know not,
Since guiltiness I know not; but yet I feel I fear.

OTHELLO.

Think on thy sins.

DESDEMONA.

They are loves I bear to you.

OTHELLO.

Ay, and for that thou diest.

DESDEMONA.

That death's unnatural that kills for loving.
Alas, why gnaw you so your nether lip?

Some bloody passion shakes your very frame.
These are portents; but yet I hope, I hope,
They do not point on me.

OTHELLO.

Peace, and be still!

DESDEMONA.

I will so. What's the matter?

OTHELLO.

That handkerchief which I so loved and gave thee

Thou gavest to Cassio.

DESDEMONA.

No, by my life and soul!

Send for the man, and ask him.

OTHELLO.

Sweet soul, take heed,

Take heed of perjury; thou are on thy deathbed.

DESDEMONA.

Ay, but not yet to die.

OTHELLO.

Yes, presently:

Therefore confess thee freely of thy sin,

For to deny each article with oath

Cannot remove nor choke the strong conception

That I do groan withal. Thou art to die.

DESDEMONA.

Then Lord have mercy on me!

OTHELLO.

I say, amen.

DESDEMONA.

And have you mercy too! I never did

Offend you in my life; never loved Cassio

But with such general warranty of heaven

As I might love. I never gave him token.

OTHELLO.

By heaven, I saw my handkerchief in 's hand.

O perjured woman! Thou dost stone my heart,

And makest me call what I intend to do

A murther, which I thought a sacrifice.

I saw the handkerchief.

DESDEMONA.

He found it then;

I never gave it him. Send for him hither;

Let him confess a truth.

OTHELLO.

He hath confess'd.

DESDEMONA.

What, my lord?

OTHELLO.

That he hath used thee.

DESDEMONA.

How? unlawfully?

OTHELLO.

Ay.

DESDEMONA.

He will not say so.

OTHELLO.

No, his mouth is stopp'd;
Honest Iago hath ta'en order for't.

DESDEMONA.

O, my fear interprets! What, is he dead?

OTHELLO.

Had all his hairs been lives, my great revenge

Had stomach for them all.

DESDEMONA.

Alas, he is betray'd, and I undone!

OTHELLO.

Out, strumpet! Weep'st thou for him to my face?

DESDEMONA.

O, banish me, my lord, but kill me not!

OTHELLO.

Down, strumpet!

DESDEMONA.

Kill me tomorrow; let me live tonight!

OTHELLO.

Nay, if you strive-

DESDEMONA.

But half an hour!

OTHELLO.

Being done, there is no pause.

DESDEMONA.

But while I say one prayer!

OTHELLO.

It is too late. He stifles her.

EMILIA.

[Within.] My lord, my lord! What, ho! my lord, my lord!

OTHELLO.

What noise is this? Not dead? not yet quite dead?

I that am cruel am yet merciful;

I would not have thee linger in thy pain.

So, so.

EMILIA.

[Within.] What, ho! my lord, my lord!

OTHELLO.

Who's there?

EMILIA.

[Within.] O, good my lord, I would speak a word with you!

OTHELLO.

Yes, 'tis Emilia. By and by. She's dead.

'Tis like she comes to speak of Cassio's death.

The noise was here. Ha! no more moving?

Still as the grave. Shall she come in? were't good?

I think she stirs again. No. What's best to do?

If she come in, she'll sure speak to my wife.
My wife! My wife! What wife? I have no wife.

O, insupportable! O heavy hour!
Methinks it should be now a huge eclipse
Of sun and moon, and that the affrighted globe
Should yawn at alteration.

EMILIA.
[Within.] I do beseech you
That I may speak with you, O, good my lord!

OTHELLO.

I had forgot thee. O, come in, Emilia.
Soft, by and by. Let me the curtains draw.

Where art thou? Unlocks the door.

Enter Emilia.

What's the matter with thee now?

EMILIA.

O, my good lord, yonder's foul murthers done!

OTHELLO.

What, now?

EMILIA.

But now, my lord.

OTHELLO.

It is the very error of the moon;
She comes more nearer earth than she was wont
And makes men mad.

EMILIA.

Cassio, my lord, hath kill'd a young Venetian

Call'd Roderigo.

OTHELLO.

Roderigo kill'd?

And Cassio kill'd?

EMILIA.

No, Cassio is not kill'd.

OTHELLO.

Not Cassio kill'd! Then murther's out of tune,
And sweet revenge grows harsh.

DESDEMONA.

O, falsely, falsely murther'd!

EMILIA.

Alas, what cry is that?

OTHELLO.

That? what?

EMILIA.

Out, and alas! That was my lady's voice.

Help! help, ho! help! O lady, speak again!

Sweet Desdemona! O sweet mistress, speak!

DESDEMONA.

A guiltless death I die.

EMILIA.

O, who hath done this deed?

DESDEMONA.

Nobody; I myself. Farewell;

Commend me to my kind lord. O, farewell!

Dies.

OTHELLO.

Why, how should she be murther'd?

EMILIA.

Alas, who knows?

OTHELLO.

You heard her say herself, it was not I.

EMILIA.

She said so; I must needs report the truth.

OTHELLO.

She's like a liar gone to burning hell;
'Twas I that kill'd her.

EMILIA.

O, the more angel she,

And you the blacker devil!

OTHELLO.

She turn'd to folly, and she was a whore.

EMILIA.

Thou dost belie her, and thou art a devil.

OTHELLO.

She was false as water.

EMILIA.

Thou art rash as fire, to say

That she was false. O, she was heavenly true!

OTHELLO.

Cassio did top her; ask thy husband else.

O, I were damn'd beneath all depth in hell,

But that I did proceed upon just grounds
To this extremity. Thy husband knew it all.

EMILIA.

My husband?

OTHELLO.
Thy husband.

EMILIA.

That she was false to wedlock?

OTHELLO.
Ay, with Cassio. Nay, had she been true,
If heaven would make me such another world
Of one entire and perfect chrysolite,
I'ld not have sold her for it.

EMILIA.

My husband?

OTHELLO.

Ay, 'twas he that told me first.
An honest man he is, and hates the slime
That sticks on filthy deeds.

EMILIA.
My husband?

OTHELLO.

What needs this iteration, woman? I say thy husband.

EMILIA.
O mistress, villainy hath made mocks with love!

My husband say that she was false!

OTHELLO.

He, woman;

I say thy husband. Dost understand the word?

My friend, thy husband, honest, honest Iago.

EMILIA.

If he say so, may his pernicious soul

Rot half a grain a day! He lies to the heart.

She was too fond of her most filthy bargain.

OTHELLO.

Ha!

EMILIA.

Do thy worst;

This deed of thine is no more worthy heaven

Than thou wast worthy her.

OTHELLO.

Peace, you were best.

EMILIA.

Thou hast not half that power to do me harm
As I have to be hurt. O gull! O dolt!
As ignorant as dirt! Thou hast done a deed-
I care not for thy sword; I'll make thee known,
Though I lost twenty lives. Help! help, ho! help!
The Moor hath kill'd my mistress! Murther, murther!

Enter Montano, Gratiano, Iago, and others.

MONTANO. What is the matter? How now, general?

EMILIA.

O, are you come, Iago? You have done well,
That men must lay their murthers on your neck.

GRATIANO.

What is the matter?

EMILIA.

Disprove this villain, if thou be'st a man.

He says thou told'st him that his wife was false;

I know thou didst not, thou'rt not such a villain.

Speak, for my heart is full.

IAGO.

I told him what I thought, and told no more

Than what he found himself was apt and true.

EMILIA.

But did you ever tell him she was false?

IAGO.

I did.

EMILIA.

You told a lie, an odious, damned lie;

Upon my soul, a lie, a wicked lie!

She false with Cassio? Did you say with Cassio?

IAGO.

With Cassio, mistress. Go to, charm your tongue.

EMILIA.

I will not charm my tongue; I am bound to speak.
My mistress here lies murther'd in her bed-

ALL.

O heavens forfend!

EMILIA.

And your reports have set the murther on.

OTHELLO.

Nay, stare not, masters; it is true indeed.

GRATIANO.

'Tis a strange truth.

MONTANO.

O monstrous act!

EMILIA.
Villainy, villainy, villainy!

I think upon't, I think, I smell't, O villainy!
I thought so then. I'll kill myself for grief.

O villainy, villainy!

IAGO.
What, are you mad? I charge you, get you home.

EMILIA.
Good gentlemen, let me have leave to speak;
'Tis proper I obey him, but not now.

Perchance, Iago, I will ne'er go home.

OTHELLO.

O! O! O! Falls on the bed.

EMILIA.

Nay, lay thee down and roar;

For thou hast kill'd the sweetest innocent

That e'er did lift up eye.

OTHELLO.

[Rises.] O, she was foul!

I scarce did know you, uncle; there lies your niece,

Whose breath indeed these hands have newly stopp'd.

I know this act shows horrible and grim.

GRATIANO.

Poor Desdemon! I am glad thy father's dead.

Thy match was mortal to him, and pure grief

Shore his old thread in twain; did he live now, This sight would make him do a desperate turn,

Yea, curse his better angel from his side,

And fall to reprobation.

OTHELLO.

'Tis pitiful, but yet Iago knows

That she with Cassio hath the act of shame

A thousand times committed. Cassio confess'd it,

And she did gratify his amorous works

With that recognizance and pledge of love

Which I first gave her. I saw it in his hand,

It was a handkerchief, an antique token

My father gave my mother.

EMILIA.

O heaven! O heavenly powers!

IAGO.

'Zounds! Hold your peace.

EMILIA.

'Twill out, 'twill. I peace?
No, I will speak as liberal as the north;
Let heaven and men and devils, let them all,
All, all, cry shame against me, yet I'll speak.

IAGO.

Be wise, and get you home.

EMILIA.
I will not.

Iago offers to stab Emilia.

GRATIANO.
Fie!

Your sword upon a woman?

EMILIA.

O thou dull Moor! That handkerchief thou speak'st of

I found by fortune and did give my husband,

For often with a solemn earnestness,

More than indeed belong'd to such a trifle,

He begg'd of me to steal it.

IAGO.

Villainous whore!

EMILIA.

She give it Cassio? No, alas, I found it,

And I did give't my husband.

IAGO.

Filth, thou liest!

EMILIA.

By heaven, I do not, I do not, gentlemen.

O murtherous coxcomb! What should such a fool

Do with so good a wife?

OTHELLO.

Are there not stones in heaven

But what serve for thunder? Precious villain!

He runs at Iago, but Montano

disarms him. Iago stabs Emilia.

GRATIANO.

The woman falls; sure, he hath kill'd his wife.

EMILIA.

Ay, ay! O, lay me by my mistress' side. *Exit* Iago.

GRATIANO.

He's gone, but his wife's kill'd.

MONTANO.

'Tis a notorious villain. Take you this weapon,

Which I have here recover'd from the Moor.

Come, guard the door without; let him not pass,

But kill him rather. I'll after that same villain,

For 'tis a damned slave. *Exeunt* all but Othello and Emilia.

OTHELLO.

I am not valiant neither,

But every puny whipster gets my sword.

But why should honor outlive honesty?

Let it go all.

EMILIA.

What did thy song bode, lady?

Hark, canst thou hear me? I will play the swan,

And die in music. *[Sings.]* "Willow, willow, willow."

Moor, she was chaste; she loved thee, cruel Moor;

So come my soul to bliss, as I speak true;

So speaking as I think, I die, I die.

Dies.

OTHELLO.

I have another weapon in this chamber;

It is a sword of Spain, the ice-brook's temper-

O, here it is. Uncle, I must come forth.

GRATIANO.

[Within.] If thou attempt it, it will cost thee dear.

Thou hast no weapon, and perforce must suffer.

OTHELLO.

Look in upon me then, and speak with me,

Or, naked as I am, I will assault thee.

Re-enter Gratiano.

GRATIANO.

What is the matter?

OTHELLO.

Behold, I have a weapon;

A better never did itself sustain

Upon a soldier's thigh. I have seen the day
That with this little arm and this good sword
I have made my way through more impediments
Than twenty times your stop. But, O vain boast!

Who can control his fate? 'Tis not so now.
Be not afraid, though you do see me weapon'd;
Here is my journey's end, here is my butt
And very sea-mark of my utmost sail.

Do you go back dismay'd? 'Tis a lost fear.
Man but a rush against Othello's breast,
And he retires. Where should Othello go?
Now, how dost thou look now? O ill-starr'd wench!
Pale as thy smock! When we shall meet at compt,
This look of thine will hurl my soul from heaven,
And fiends will snatch at it. Cold, cold, my girl?
Even like thy chastity. O cursed, cursed slave!
Whip me, ye devils,
From the possession of this heavenly sight!

Blow me about in winds! Roast me in sulphur!
Wash me in steep-down gulfs of liquid fire!

O Desdemon! dead, Desdemon! dead!
O! O! O!

Enter Lodovico, Montano, Cassio carried in a chair,

and Officers with Iago, prisoner.

LODOVICO.
Where is this rash and most unfortunate man?

OTHELLO.

That's he that was Othello. Here I am.

LODOVICO.
Where is that viper? Bring the villain forth.

OTHELLO.

I look down towards his feet; but that's a fable.

If that thou be'st a devil, I cannot kill thee. Wounds Iago.

LODOVICO.

Wrench his sword from him.

IAGO.

I bleed, sir, but not kill'd.

OTHELLO.

I am not sorry neither. I'ld have thee live,

For, in my sense, 'tis happiness to die.

LODOVICO.

O thou Othello, that wert once so good,

Fall'n in the practice of a damned slave,

What shall be said to thee?

OTHELLO.

Why, anything;
An honorable murtherer, if you will,
For nought did I in hate, but all in honor.

LODOVICO.

This wretch hath part confess'd his villainy.
Did you and he consent in Cassio's death?

OTHELLO.

Ay.

CASSIO.
Dear general, I never gave you cause.

OTHELLO.

I do believe it, and I ask your pardon.
Will you, I pray, demand that demi-devil
Why he hath thus ensnared my soul and body?

IAGO.

Demand me nothing; what you know, you know.

From this time forth I never will speak word.

LODOVICO.

What, not to pray?

GRATIANO.

Torments will ope your lips.

OTHELLO.

Well, thou dost best.

LODOVICO.

Sir, you shall understand what hath befall'n,
Which, as I think, you know not. Here is a letter
Found in the pocket of the slain Roderigo,
And here another. The one of them imports

The death of Cassio to be undertook
By Roderigo.

OTHELLO.

O villain!

CASSIO.
Most heathenish and most gross!

LODOVICO.
Now here's another discontented paper,
Found in his pocket too; and this, it seems,
Roderigo meant to have sent this damned villain;
But that, belike, Iago in the interim
Came in and satisfied him.

OTHELLO.
O the pernicious caitiff!
How came you, Cassio, by that handkerchief
That was my wife's?

CASSIO.

I found it in my chamber;

And he himself confess'd but even now

That there he dropp'd it for a special purpose

Which wrought to his desire.

OTHELLO.

O fool! fool! fool!

CASSIO.

There is besides in Roderigo's letter,

How he upbraids Iago, that he made him

Brave me upon the watch, whereon it came

That I was cast. And even but now he spake

After long seeming dead, Iago hurt him,

Iago set him on.

LODOVICO.

You must forsake this room, and go with us.

Your power and your command is taken off,

And Cassio rules in Cyprus. For this slave,

If there be any cunning cruelty

That can torment him much and hold him long,

It shall be his. You shall close prisoner rest,

Till that the nature of your fault be known

To the Venetian state. Come, bring away.

OTHELLO.

Soft you; a word or two before you go.

I have done the state some service, and they know't.

No more of that. I pray you, in your letters,

When you shall these unlucky deeds relate,

Speak of me as I am; nothing extenuate,

Nor set down aught in malice. Then must you speak

Of one that loved not wisely but too well;

Of one not easily jealous, but, being wrought,

Perplex'd in the extreme; of one whose hand,

Like the base Indian, threw a pearl away

Richer than all his tribe; of one whose subdued eyes, Albeit unused to the melting mood,

Drop tears as fast as the Arabian trees

Their medicinal gum. Set you down this;

And say besides, that in Aleppo once,

Where a malignant and a turban'd Turk

Beat a Venetian and traduced the state,

I took by the throat the circumcised dog

And smote him, thus. Stabs himself.

LODOVICO.

O bloody period!

GRATIANO.

All that's spoke is marr'd.

OTHELLO.

I kiss'd thee ere I kill'd thee. No way but this,

Killing myself, to die upon a kiss.

Falls on the bed, and dies.

CASSIO.

This did I fear, but thought he had no weapon;
For he was great of heart.

LODOVICO.

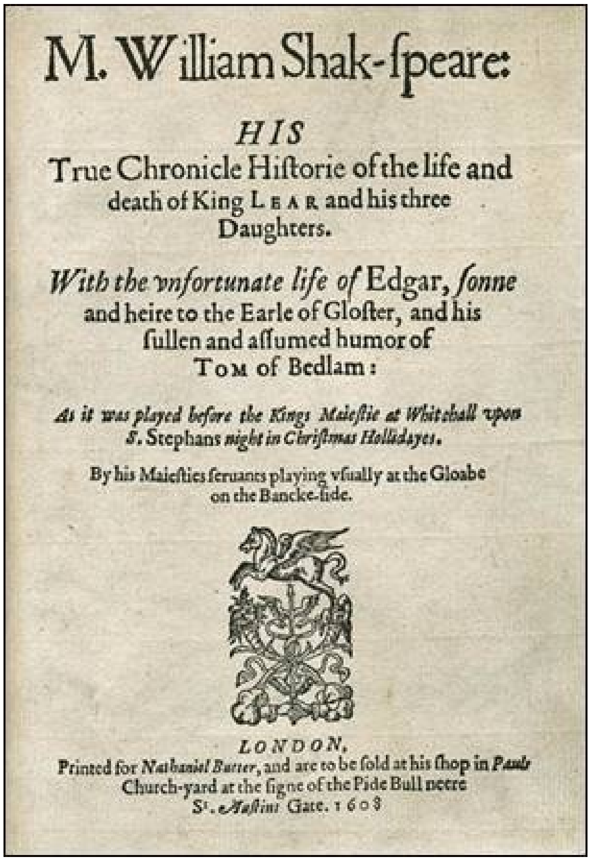
[To Iago.] O Spartan dog,
More fell than anguish, hunger, or the sea!
Look on the tragic loading of this bed;
This is thy work. The object poisons sight;
Let it be hid. Gratiano, keep the house,
And seize upon the fortunes of the Moor,
For they succeed on you. To you, Lord Governor,
Remains the censure of this hellish villain,
The time, the place, the torture. O, enforce it!
Myself will straight aboard, and to the state
This heavy act with heavy heart relate.
Exeunt.

KING LEAR

Though largely forgotten for many years, this tragedy is now regarded as one of the greatest plays ever written. It tells the story of Lear, who descends into madness after foolishly disposing of his kingdom between two of his three daughters. He holds a foolish ‘love test’, offering the largest share of his estate to the daughter that flatters him the most, bringing tragic consequences to all.

The play is based on the legend of Leir of Britain, a mythological pre-Roman Celtic king and was written between 1603 and 1606 and later revised. After the Restoration, the play was revised with a happy ending for audiences who disliked its dark and depressing tone, but since the 19th century Shakespeare's original version has been judged as one of his greatest achievements. The tragedy is particularly noted for its probing observations on the nature of human suffering, as depicted in the portrayal of many of the play’s characters.

Shakespeare's main source text for this play is available via this link .



M. William Shak-ſpeare:

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ſullen and aſſumed humor of
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As it was played before the Kings Maieſtie at Whitehall vpon
S. Stephans *night in Chriſtmas Hollidayes.*

By his Maieſties ſeruants playing vſually at the Gloabe
on the Bancke-ſide.

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S^{t}. *Auſtins* Gate. 1608

The 1608 Quarto

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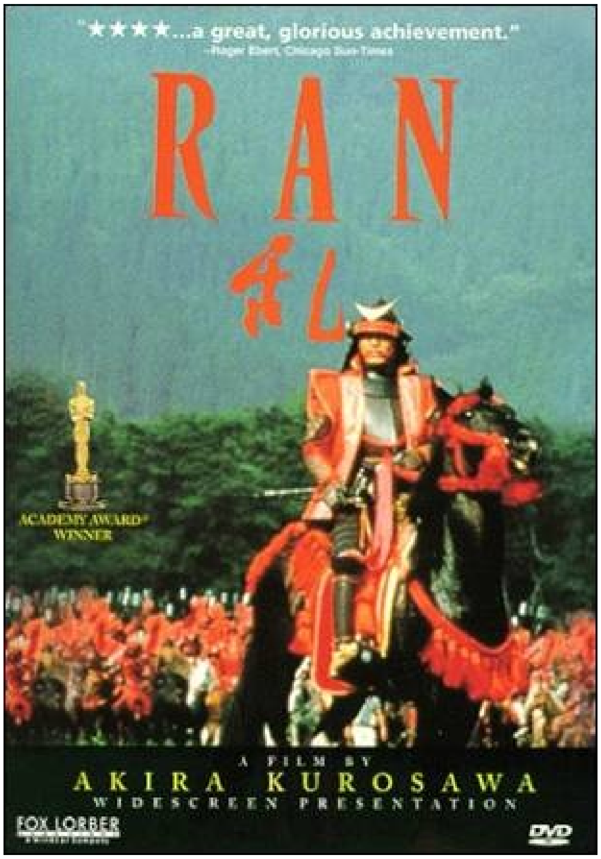
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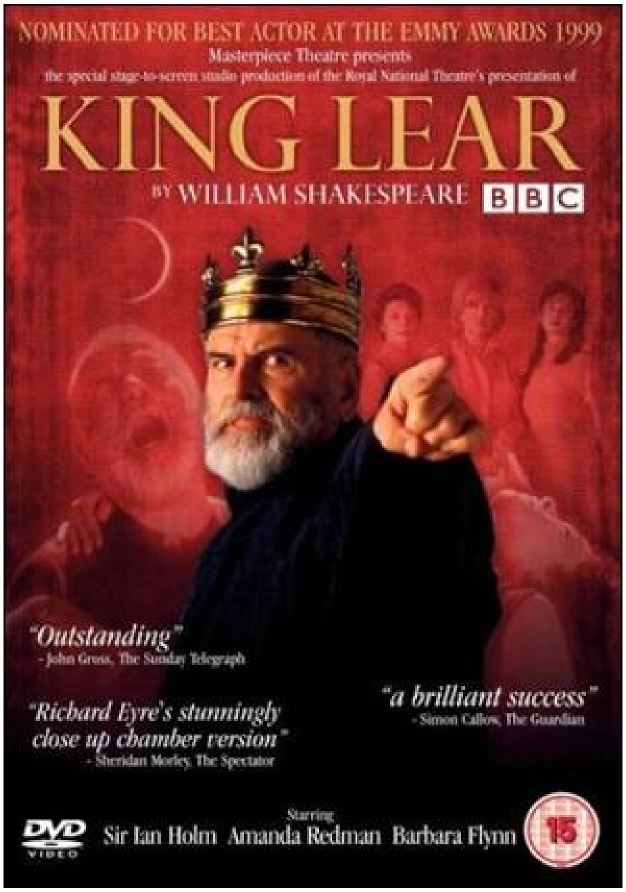
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The Royal Shakespeare Company's 2008 adaptation

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

Lear, King of Britain.

King of France.

Duke of Burgundy.

Duke of Cornwall.

Duke of Albany.

Earl of Kent.

Earl of Gloucester.

Edgar, son of Gloucester.

Edmund, bastard son to Gloucester.

Curan, a courtier.

Old Man, tenant to Gloucester.

Doctor.

Lear's Fool.

Oswald, steward to Goneril.

A Captain under Edmund's command.

Gentlemen.

A Herald.

Servants to Cornwall.

Goneril, daughter to Lear.

Regan, daughter to Lear.
Cordelia, daughter to Lear.

Knights attending on Lear, Officers, Messengers, Soldiers, Attendants.

Scene: Ancient Britain.

ACT I. Scene I. *[King Lear's Palace.]*

Enter Kent, Gloucester, and Edmund. [Kent and Glouceste converse.

Edmund stands back.]

Kent . I thought the King had more affected the Duke of Albany than Cornwall.

Glou. It did always seem so to us; but now, in the division of the
kingdom, it appears not which of the Dukes he values most, for
equalities are so weigh'd that curiosity in neither can make
choice of either's moiety.

Kent . Is not this your son, my lord?

Glou. His breeding, sir, hath been at my charge. I have so often
blush'd to acknowledge him that now I am braz'd to't.

Kent . I cannot conceive you.

Glou. Sir, this young fellow's mother could; whereupon she grew round-womb'd, and had indeed, sir, a son for her cradle ere she had a husband for her bed. Do you smell a fault?

Kent . I cannot wish the fault undone, the issue of it being so proper.

Glou. But I have, sir, a son by order of law, some year elder than this, who yet is no dearer in my account. Though this knave came something saucily into the world before he was sent for, yet was his mother fair, there was good sport at his making, and the whoreson must be acknowledged.- Do you know this noble gentleman, Edmund?

Edm. [comes forward] No, my lord.

Glou. My Lord of Kent. Remember him hereafter as my honourable friend.

Edm. My services to your lordship.

Kent . I must love you, and sue to know you better.

Edm. Sir, I shall study deserving.

Glou. He hath been out nine years, and away he shall again.

Sound a sennet.

The King is coming.

Enter one bearing a coronet; then Lear; then the Dukes of

Albany and Cornwall; next, Goneril, Regan, Cordelia, with Followers.

Lear. Attend the lords of France and Burgundy, Gloucester.

Glou. I shall, my liege.

Exeunt [Gloucester and Edmund] .

Lear. Meantime we shall express our darker purpose.
Give me the map there. Know we have divided
In three our kingdom; and 'tis our fast intent
To shake all cares and business from our age,
Conferring them on younger strengths while we
Unburthen'd crawl toward death. Our son of Cornwall,

And you, our no less loving son of Albany,
We have this hour a constant will to publish
Our daughters' several dowers, that future strife
May be prevented now. The princes, France and Burgundy,
Great rivals in our youngest daughter's love,
Long in our court have made their amorous sojourn,
And here are to be answer'd. Tell me, my daughters
(Since now we will divest us both of rule,
Interest of territory, cares of state),
Which of you shall we say doth love us most?
That we our largest bounty may extend
Where nature doth with merit challenge. Goneril,
Our eldest-born, speak first.

Gon. Sir, I love you more than words can wield the matter;
Dearer than eyesight, space, and liberty;
Beyond what can be valued, rich or rare;
No less than life, with grace, health, beauty, honour;
As much as child e'er lov'd, or father found;
A love that makes breath poor, and speech unable.

Beyond all manner of so much I love you.

Cor. [aside] What shall Cordelia speak? Love, and be silent.

Lear. Of all these bounds, even from this line to this,
With shadowy forests and with champains rich'd,
With plenteous rivers and wide-skirted meads,
We make thee lady. To thine and Albany's issue
Be this perpetual.- What says our second daughter,
Our dearest Regan, wife to Cornwall? Speak.

Reg. Sir, I am made
Of the selfsame metal that my sister is,
And prize me at her worth. In my true heart
I find she names my very deed of love;
Only she comes too short, that I profess
Myself an enemy to all other joys
Which the most precious square of sense possesses,
And find I am alone felicitate
In your dear Highness' love.

Cor. [aside] Then poor Cordelia!
And yet not so; since I am sure my love's
More richer than my tongue.

Lear. To thee and thine hereditary ever
Remain this ample third of our fair kingdom,
No less in space, validity, and pleasure
Than that conferr'd on Goneril.- Now, our joy,
Although the last, not least; to whose young love
The vines of France and milk of Burgundy
Strive to be interest; what can you say to draw
A third more opulent than your sisters? Speak.

Cor. Nothing, my lord.

Lear. Nothing?

Cor. Nothing.

Lear. Nothing can come of nothing. Speak again.

Cor. Unhappy that I am, I cannot heave
My heart into my mouth. I love your Majesty
According to my bond; no more nor less.

Lear. How, how, Cordelia? Mend your speech a little,
Lest it may mar your fortunes.

Cor. Good my lord,
You have begot me, bred me, lov'd me; I
Return those duties back as are right fit,
Obey you, love you, and most honour you.
Why have my sisters husbands, if they say
They love you all? Haply, when I shall wed,
That lord whose hand must take my plight shall carry
Half my love with him, half my care and duty.
Sure I shall never marry like my sisters,
To love my father all.

Lear. But goes thy heart with this?

Cor. Ay, good my lord.

Lear. So young, and so untender?

Cor. So young, my lord, and true.

Lear. Let it be so! thy truth then be thy dower!
For, by the sacred radiance of the sun,
The mysteries of Hecate and the night;
By all the operation of the orbs
From whom we do exist and cease to be;
Here I disclaim all my paternal care,
Propinquity and property of blood,
And as a stranger to my heart and me
Hold thee from this for ever. The barbarous Scythian,
Or he that makes his generation messes
To gorge his appetite, shall to my bosom
Be as well neighbour'd, pitied, and reliev'd,
As thou my sometime daughter.

Kent. Good my liege-

Lear. Peace, Kent!

Come not between the dragon and his wrath.

I lov'd her most, and thought to set my rest

On her kind nursery.- Hence and avoid my sight!-

So be my grave my peace as here I give

Her father's heart from her! Call France! Who stirs?

Call Burgundy! Cornwall and Albany,

With my two daughters' dowers digest this third;

Let pride, which she calls plainness, marry her.

I do invest you jointly in my power,

Preeminence, and all the large effects

That troop with majesty. Ourself, by monthly course,

With reservation of an hundred knights,

By you to be sustain'd, shall our abode

Make with you by due turns. Only we still retain

The name, and all th' additions to a king. The sway,

Revenue, execution of the rest,

Beloved sons, be yours; which to confirm,

This coronet part betwixt you.

Kent. Royal Lear,

Whom I have ever honour'd as my king,
Lov'd as my father, as my master follow'd,
As my great patron thought on in my prayers-

Lear. The bow is bent and drawn; make from the shaft.

Kent. Let it fall rather, though the fork invade
The region of my heart! Be Kent unmannerly
When Lear is mad. What wouldst thou do, old man?
Think'st thou that duty shall have dread to speak
When power to flattery bows? To plainness honour's bound
When majesty falls to folly. Reverse thy doom;
And in thy best consideration check
This hideous rashness. Answer my life my judgment,
Thy youngest daughter does not love thee least,
Nor are those empty-hearted whose low sound
Reverbs no hollowness.

Lear. Kent, on thy life, no more!

Kent. My life I never held but as a pawn

To wage against thine enemies; nor fear to lose it,

Thy safety being the motive.

Lear. Out of my sight!

Kent. See better, Lear, and let me still remain

The true blank of thine eye.

Lear. Now by Apollo-

Kent. Now by Apollo, King,

Thou swear'st thy gods in vain.

Lear. O vassal! miscreant!

[Lays his hand on his sword.]

Alb. , Corn. Dear sir, forbear!

Kent. Do!

Kill thy physician, and the fee bestow

Upon the foul disease. Revoke thy gift,
Or, whilst I can vent clamour from my throat,
I'll tell thee thou dost evil.

Lear. Hear me, recreant!
On thine allegiance, hear me!
Since thou hast sought to make us break our vow-
Which we durst never yet-and with strain'd pride
To come between our sentence and our power,-
Which nor our nature nor our place can bear,-
Our potency made good, take thy reward.
Five days we do allot thee for provision
To shield thee from diseases of the world,
And on the sixth to turn thy hated back
Upon our kingdom. If, on the tenth day following,
Thy banish'd trunk be found in our dominions,
The moment is thy death. Away! By Jupiter,
This shall not be revok'd.

Kent. Fare thee well, King. Since thus thou wilt appear,
Freedom lives hence, and banishment is here.

[To Cordelia] The gods to their dear shelter take thee,

maid,

That justly think'st and hast most rightly said!

[To Regan and Goneril] And your large speeches may your deeds approve,

That good effects may spring from words of love.

Thus Kent, O princes, bids you all adieu;

He'll shape his old course in a country new.

Exit.

Flourish. Enter Gloucester, with France and Burgundy;

Attendants.

Glou. Here's France and Burgundy, my noble lord.

Lear. My Lord of Burgundy,

We first address toward you, who with this king

Hath rivall'd for our daughter. What in the least

Will you require in present dower with her,

Or cease your quest of love?

Bur. Most royal Majesty,
I crave no more than hath your Highness offer'd,
Nor will you tender less.

Lear. Right noble Burgundy,
When she was dear to us, we did hold her so;
But now her price is fall'n. Sir, there she stands.
If aught within that little seeming substance,
Or all of it, with our displeasure piec'd,
And nothing more, may fitly like your Grace,
She's there, and she is yours.

Bur. I know no answer.

Lear. Will you, with those infirmities she owes,
Unfriended, new adopted to our hate,
Dow'r'd with our curse, and stranger'd with our oath,
Take her, or leave her?

Bur. Pardon me, royal sir.
Election makes not up on such conditions.

Lear. Then leave her, sir; for, by the pow'r that made me,
I tell you all her wealth. *[To France]* For you, great King,
I would not from your love make such a stray
To match you where I hate; therefore beseech you
T' avert your liking a more worthier way
Than on a wretch whom nature is asham'd
Almost t' acknowledge hers.

France. This is most strange,
That she that even but now was your best object,
The argument of your praise, balm of your age,
Most best, most dearest, should in this trice of time
Commit a thing so monstrous to dismantle
So many folds of favour. Sure her offence
Must be of such unnatural degree
That monsters it, or your fore-vouch'd affection
Fall'n into taint; which to believe of her
Must be a faith that reason without miracle
Should never plant in me.

Cor. I yet beseech your Majesty,

If for I want that glib and oily art

To speak and purpose not, since what I well intend,

I'll do't before I speak-that you make known

It is no vicious blot, murther, or foulness,

No unchaste action or dishonoured step,

That hath depriv'd me of your grace and favour;

But even for want of that for which I am richer-

A still-soliciting eye, and such a tongue

As I am glad I have not, though not to have it

Hath lost me in your liking.

Lear. Better thou

Hadst not been born than not t' have pleas'd me better.

France. Is it but this-a tardiness in nature

Which often leaves the history unspoke

That it intends to do? My Lord of Burgundy,

What say you to the lady? Love's not love

When it is mingled with regards that stands

Aloof from th' entire point. Will you have her?

She is herself a dowry.

Bur. Royal Lear,
Give but that portion which yourself propos'd,
And here I take Cordelia by the hand,
Duchess of Burgundy.

Lear. Nothing! I have sworn; I am firm.

Bur. I am sorry then you have so lost a father
That you must lose a husband.

Cor. Peace be with Burgundy!
Since that respects of fortune are his love,
I shall not be his wife.

France. Fairest Cordelia, that art most rich, being poor;
Most choice, forsaken; and most lov'd, despis'd!

Thee and thy virtues here I seize upon.

Be it lawful I take up what's cast away.
Gods, gods! 'tis strange that from their cold'st neglect
My love should kindle to inflam'd respect.
Thy dow'rless daughter, King, thrown to my chance,
Is queen of us, of ours, and our fair France.
Not all the dukes in wat'rish Burgundy
Can buy this unpriz'd precious maid of me.

Bid them farewell, Cordelia, though unkind.
Thou losest here, a better where to find.

Lear. Thou hast her, France; let her be thine; for we
Have no such daughter, nor shall ever see
That face of hers again. Therefore be gone
Without our grace, our love, our benison.

Come, noble Burgundy.
Flourish. Exeunt Lear, Burgundy, [Cornwall, Albany,
Gloucester, and Attendants].

France. Bid farewell to your sisters.

Cor. The jewels of our father, with wash'd eyes
Cordelia leaves you. I know you what you are;
And, like a sister, am most loath to call
Your faults as they are nam'd. Use well our father.
To your professed bosoms I commit him;
But yet, alas, stood I within his grace,
I would prefer him to a better place!
So farewell to you both.

Gon. Prescribe not us our duties.

Reg. Let your study
Be to content your lord, who hath receiv'd you
At fortune's alms. You have obedience scanted,
And well are worth the want that you have wanted.

Cor. Time shall unfold what plighted cunning hides.
Who cover faults, at last shame them derides.

Well may you prosper!

France. Come, my fair Cordelia.

Exeunt France and Cordelia.

Gon. Sister, it is not little I have to say of what most nearly appertains to us both. I think our father will hence to-night.

Reg. That's most certain, and with you; next month with us.

Gon. You see how full of changes his age is. The observation we have made of it hath not been little. He always lov'd our sister most, and with what poor judgment he hath now cast her off appears too grossly.

Reg. 'Tis the infirmity of his age; yet he hath ever but slenderly known himself.

Gon. The best and soundest of his time hath been but rash; then must we look to receive from his age, not alone the imperfections of long-ingraffed condition, but therewithal the unruly waywardness that infirm and choleric years bring with them.

Reg. Such unconstant starts are we like to have from him as this
of Kent's banishment.

Gon. There is further compliment of leave-taking between France and
him. Pray you let's hit together. If our father carry authority
with such dispositions as he bears, this last surrender of his
will but offend us.

Reg. We shall further think on't.

Gon. We must do something, and i' th' heat.
Exeunt.

Scene II. The Earl of Gloucester's Castle.

Enter [Edmund the] Bastard solus, *[with a letter]* .

Edm. Thou, Nature, art my goddess; to thy law
My services are bound. Wherefore should I
Stand in the plague of custom, and permit
The curiosity of nations to deprive me,

For that I am some twelve or fourteen moonshines

Lag of a brother? Why bastard? wherefore base?

When my dimensions are as well compact,

My mind as generous, and my shape as true,

As honest madam's issue? Why brand they us

With base? with baseness? bastardy? base, base?

Who, in the lusty stealth of nature, take

More composition and fierce quality

Than doth, within a dull, stale, tired bed,

Go to th' creating a whole tribe of fops

Got 'tween asleep and wake? Well then,

Legitimate Edgar, I must have your land.

Our father's love is to the bastard Edmund

As to th' legitimate. Fine word- 'legitimate'!

Well, my legitimate, if this letter speed,

And my invention thrive, Edmund the base

Shall top th' legitimate. I grow; I prosper.

Now, gods, stand up for bastards!

Enter Gloucester.

Glou. Kent banish'd thus? and France in choler parted?
And the King gone to-night? subscrib'd his pow'r?
Confin'd to exhibition? All this done
Upon the gad? Edmund, how now? What news?

Edm. So please your lordship, none.

[Puts up the letter.]

Glou. Why so earnestly seek you to put up that letter?

Edm. I know no news, my lord.

Glou. What paper were you reading?

Edm. Nothing, my lord.

Glou. No? What needed then that terrible dispatch of it into your pocket? The quality of nothing hath not such need to hide itself. Let's see. Come, if it be nothing, I shall not need spectacles.

Edm. I beseech you, sir, pardon me. It is a letter from my brother that I have not all o'er-read; and for so much as I have perus'd, I find it not fit for your o'erlooking.

Glou. Give me the letter, sir.

Edm. I shall offend, either to detain or give it. The contents, as in part I understand them, are to blame.

Glou. Let's see, let's see!

Edm. I hope, for my brother's justification, he wrote this but as an essay or taste of my virtue.

Glou. (reads) 'This policy and reverence of age makes the world bitter to the best of our times; keeps our fortunes from us till our oldness cannot relish them. I begin to find an idle and fond bondage in the oppression of aged tyranny, who sways, not as it hath power, but as it is suffer'd. Come to me, that of this I may speak more. If our father would sleep till I wak'd him, you should enjoy half his revenue for ever, and live the beloved of your brother, 'EDGAR.'

Hum! Conspiracy? 'Sleep till I wak'd him, you should enjoy half his revenue.' My son Edgar! Had he a hand to write this? a heart and brain to breed it in? When came this to you? Who brought it? Edm. It was not brought me, my lord: there's the cunning of it. I found it thrown in at the casement of my closet. Glou. You know the character to be your brother's? Edm. If the matter were good, my lord, I durst swear it were his; but in respect of that, I would fain think it were not. Glou. It is his. Edm. It is his hand, my lord; but I hope his heart is not in the contents. Glou. Hath he never before sounded you in this business? Edm. Never, my lord. But I have heard him oft maintain it to be fit that, sons at perfect age, and fathers declining, the father should be as ward to the son, and the son manage his revenue. Glou. O villain, villain! His very opinion in the letter! Abhorred villain! Unnatural, detested, brutish villain! worse than brutish! Go, sirrah, seek him. I'll apprehend him. Abominable villain! Where is he? Edm. I do not well know, my lord. If it shall please you to suspend your indignation against my brother till you can derive from him better testimony of his intent, you should run a certain course; where, if you violently proceed against him, mistaking his purpose, it would make a great gap in your own honour and shake in pieces the heart of his obedience. I dare pawn down my life for him that he hath writ this to feel my affection to your honour, and to no other pretence of danger. Glou. Think you so? Edm. If your honour judge it meet, I will place you where you shall hear us confer of this and by an auricular assurance have your satisfaction, and that without any further delay than this very evening. Glou. He cannot be such a monster. Edm. Nor is not, sure. Glou. To his father, that so tenderly and entirely loves him. Heaven and earth! Edmund, seek him out; wind me into him, I pray you; frame the business after your own wisdom. I would unstate myself to be in a due resolution. Edm. I will seek him, sir, presently; convey the business as I shall find means, and acquaint you withal. Glou. These late eclipses in the sun and moon portend no good to us. Though the wisdom of nature can reason it thus and thus, yet nature finds itself scourg'd by the sequent effects. Love cools, friendship falls off, brothers divide. In cities, mutinies; in countries, discord; in palaces, treason; and the bond crack'd 'twixt son and father. This villain of mine comes under the prediction; there's son against father: the King falls from bias of nature; there's father against child. We have seen the best of our time. Machinations, hollowness, treachery, and all ruinous disorders follow us disquietly to our graves. Find out this villain, Edmund; it shall lose thee nothing; do it carefully. And the noble and true-hearted Kent banish'd! his offence, honesty! 'Tis strange. *Exit* . Edm. This is the excellent foppery of the world, that, when we are sick in fortune, often the surfeit of our own behaviour, we make guilty of our disasters the sun, the moon, and the stars; as if we were villains on necessity; fools by heavenly compulsion; knaves, thieves, and treachers by spherical pre-dominance; drunkards, liars, and adulterers by an enforc'd obedience of planetary influence; and all that we are evil in, by a divine thrusting on. An admirable evasion of whore-master man, to lay his goatish disposition to the charge of a star! My father compounded with my mother under the Dragon's Tail, and my nativity was under Ursa Major, so that it follows I am rough and lecherous. Fut! I should have been that I am, had the maidenliest star in the firmament twinkled on my bastardizing. Edgar-

Enter Edgar.

and pat! he comes, like the catastrophe of the old comedy.

My

cue is villainous melancholy, with a sigh like Tom o'

Bedlam.

O, these eclipses do portend these divisions! Fa, sol, la, mi.

Edg. How now, brother Edmund? What serious contemplation are you in?

Edm. I am thinking, brother, of a prediction I read this other day,

what should follow these eclipses.

Edg. Do you busy yourself with that?

Edm. I promise you, the effects he writes of succeed unhappily: as of unnaturalness between the child and the parent; death, dearth, dissolutions of ancient amities; divisions in state, menaces and maledictions against king and nobles; needless diffidences, banishment of friends, dissipation of cohorts, nuptial breaches, and I know not what.

Edg. How long have you been a sectary astronomical?

Edm. Come, come! When saw you my father last?

Edg. The night gone by.

Edm. Spake you with him?

Edg. Ay, two hours together.

Edm. Parted you in good terms? Found you no displeasure in him by word or countenance

Edg. None at all.

Edm. Bethink yourself wherein you may have offended him; and at my
entreaty forbear his presence until some little time hath
qualified the heat of his displeasure, which at this instant so
rageth in him that with the mischief of your person it would scarcely allay.

Edg. Some villain hath done me wrong.

Edm. That's my fear. I pray you have a continent forbearance till
the speed of his rage goes slower; and, as I say, retire with me
to my lodging, from whence I will fitly bring you to hear my
lord speak. Pray ye, go! There's my key. If you do stir abroad,
go arm'd.

Edg. Arm'd, brother?

Edm. Brother, I advise you to the best. Go arm'd. I am no honest man
if there be any good meaning toward you. I have told you
what I

have seen and heard; but faintly, nothing like the image and

horror of it. Pray you, away!

Edg. Shall I hear from you anon?

Edm. I do serve you in this business.

Exit Edgar.

A credulous father! and a brother noble,
Whose nature is so far from doing harms
That he suspects none; on whose foolish honesty
My practices ride easy! I see the business.
Let me, if not by birth, have lands by wit;
All with me's meet that I can fashion fit.

Exit.

Scene III. The Duke of Albany's Palace.

Enter Goneril and *[her]* Steward *[Oswald]* .

Gon. Did my father strike my gentleman for chiding of his fool?

Osw. Ay, madam.

Gon. By day and night, he wrongs me! Every hour
He flashes into one gross crime or other
That sets us all at odds. I'll not endure it.
His knights grow riotous, and himself upbraids us
On every trifle. When he returns from hunting,
I will not speak with him. Say I am sick.
If you come slack of former services,
You shall do well; the fault of it I'll answer.

[Horns within.]

Osw. He's coming, madam; I hear him.

Gon. Put on what weary negligence you please,
You and your fellows. I'd have it come to question.
If he distaste it, let him to our sister,
Whose mind and mine I know in that are one,

Not to be overrul'd. Idle old man,
That still would manage those authorities
That he hath given away! Now, by my life,
Old fools are babes again, and must be us'd
With checks as flatteries, when they are seen abus'd.
Remember what I have said.

Osw. Very well, madam.

Gon. And let his knights have colder looks among you.
What grows of it, no matter. Advise your fellows so.
I would breed from hence occasions, and I shall,
That I may speak. I'll write straight to my sister
To hold my very course. Prepare for dinner.
Exeunt.

Scene IV. The Duke of Albany's Palace.

Enter Kent, *[disguised]* .

Kent. If but as well I other accents borrow,
That can my speech defuse, my good intent

May carry through itself to that full issue
For which I raz'd my likeness. Now, banish'd Kent,
If thou canst serve where thou dost stand condemn'd,
So may it come, thy master, whom thou lov'st,
Shall find thee full of labours.
Horns within. *Enter* Lear, *[Knights,]* and Attendants.

Lear. Let me not stay a jot for dinner; go get it ready. [*Exit* an Attendant.] How now? What art thou?

Kent. A man, sir.

Lear. What dost thou profess? What wouldst thou with us?

Kent. I do profess to be no less than I seem, to serve him truly that will put me in trust, to love him that is honest, to converse with him that is wise and says little, to fear judgment, to fight when I cannot choose, and to eat no fish.

Lear. What art thou?

Kent. A very honest-hearted fellow, and as poor as the King.

Lear. If thou be'st as poor for a subject as he's for a king, thou art poor enough. What wouldst thou?

Kent. Service.

Lear. Who wouldst thou serve?

Kent. You.

Lear. Dost thou know me, fellow?

Kent. No, sir; but you have that in your countenance which I would fain call master.

Lear. What's that?

Kent. Authority.

Lear. What services canst thou do?

Kent. I can keep honest counsel, ride, run, mar a curious tale in
telling it and deliver a plain message bluntly. That which
ordinary men are fit for, I am qualified in, and the best of me is diligence.

Lear. How old art thou?

Kent. Not so young, sir, to love a woman for singing, nor so old to
dote on her for anything. I have years on my back
forty-eight.

Lear. Follow me; thou shalt serve me. If I like thee no worse after
dinner, I will not part from thee yet. Dinner, ho, dinner!

Where's my knave? my fool? Go you and call my fool hither.

[Exit an attendant.]

Enter [Oswald the] Steward.

You, you, sirrah, where's my daughter?

Osw. So please you- *Exit* .

Lear. What says the fellow there? Call the clotpoll back.
[Exit a Knight.] Where's my fool, ho? I think the world's asleep.

[Enter Knight]
How now? Where's that mongrel?

Knight. He says, my lord, your daughter is not well.

Lear. Why came not the slave back to me when I call'd him?

Knight. Sir, he answered me in the roundest manner, he would not.

Lear. He would not?

Knight. My lord, I know not what the matter is; but to my judgment
your Highness is not entertain'd with that ceremonious affection
as you were wont. There's a great abatement of kindness appears
as well in the general dependants as in the Duke himself also

and your daughter.

Lear. Ha! say'st thou so?

Knight. I beseech you pardon me, my lord, if I be mistaken; for my duty cannot be silent when I think your Highness wrong'd.

Lear. Thou but rememb'rest me of mine own conception. I have perceived a most faint neglect of late, which I have rather blamed as mine own jealous curiosity than as a very pretence and purpose of unkindness. I will look further into't. But where's my fool? I have not seen him this two days.

Knight. Since my young lady's going into France, sir, the fool hath much pined away.

Lear. No more of that; I have noted it well. Go you and tell my daughter I would speak with her. *[Exit Knight.]* Go you, call hither my fool.

[Exit an Attendant.]

Enter [Oswald the] Steward.

O, you, sir, you! Come you hither, sir. Who am I, sir?

Osw. My lady's father.

Lear. 'My lady's father'? My lord's knave! You whoreson dog!
you slave! you cur!

Osw. I am none of these, my lord; I beseech your pardon.

Lear. Do you bandy looks with me, you rascal?

[Strikes him.]

Osw. I'll not be strucken, my lord.

Kent. Nor tripp'd neither, you base football player?

[Trips up his heels.

Lear. I thank thee, fellow. Thou serv'st me, and I'll love thee.

Kent. Come, sir, arise, away! I'll teach you differences. Away, away! If you will measure your lubber's length again, tarry; but away! Go to! Have you wisdom? So.

[Pushes him out.]

Lear. Now, my friendly knave, I thank thee. There's earnest of thy service. *[Gives money.]*

Enter Fool.

Fool. Let me hire him too. Here's my coxcomb.
[Offers Kent his cap.]

Lear. How now, my pretty knave? How dost thou?

Fool. Sirrah, you were best take my coxcomb.

Kent. Why, fool?

Fool. Why? For taking one's part that's out of favour. Nay, an thou
canst not smile as the wind sits, thou'lt catch cold shortly.
There, take my coxcomb! Why, this fellow hath banish'd two on's
daughters, and did the third a blessing against his will. If
thou follow him, thou must needs wear my coxcomb.- How now,
nuncle? Would I had two coxcombs and two daughters!

Lear. Why, my boy?

Fool. If I gave them all my living, I'ld keep my coxcombs myself.
There's mine! beg another of thy daughters.

Lear. Take heed, sirrah-the whip.

Fool. Truth's a dog must to kennel; he must be whipp'd out, when
Lady the brach may stand by th' fire and stink.

Lear. A pestilent gall to me!

Fool. Sirrah, I'll teach thee a speech.

Lear. Do.

Fool. Mark it, nuncle.
Have more than thou showest,
Speak less than thou knowest,
Lend less than thou owest,
Ride more than thou goest,
Learn more than thou trowest,
Set less than thou throwest;
Leave thy drink and thy whore,
And keep in-a-door,
And thou shalt have more
Than two tens to a score.

Kent. This is nothing, fool.

Fool. Then 'tis like the breath of an unfeed lawyer-you gave me nothing for't. Can you make no use of nothing, nuncle?

Lear. Why, no, boy. Nothing can be made out of nothing.

Fool. [to Kent] Prithee tell him, so much the rent of his land comes to. He will not believe a fool.

Lear. A bitter fool!

Fool. Dost thou know the difference, my boy, between a bitter fool and a sweet fool?

Lear. No, lad; teach me.

Fool. That lord that counsell'd thee
To give away thy land,
Come place him here by me-
Do thou for him stand.
The sweet and bitter fool
Will presently appear;
The one in motley here,
The other found out there.

Lear. Dost thou call me fool, boy?

Fool. All thy other titles thou hast given away; that thou wast born with.

Kent. This is not altogether fool, my lord.

Fool. No, faith; lords and great men will not let me. If I had a
monopoly out, they would have part on't. And ladies too, they
will not let me have all the fool to myself; they'll be
snatching. Give me an egg, nuncle, and I'll give thee two crowns.

Lear. What two crowns shall they be?

Fool. Why, after I have cut the egg i' th' middle and eat up the
meat, the two crowns of the egg. When thou clovest thy crown i'
th' middle and gav'st away both parts, thou bor'st thine ass on
thy back o'er the dirt. Thou hadst little wit in thy bald crown
when thou gav'st thy golden one away. If I speak like myself in
this, let him be whipp'd that first finds it so.
[Sings] Fools had ne'er less grace in a year,
For wise men are grown foppish;
They know not how their wits to wear,

Their manners are so apish.

Lear. When were you wont to be so full of songs, sirrah?

Fool. I have us'd it, nuncle, ever since thou mad'st thy daughters thy mother; for when thou gav'st them the rod, and put'st down thine own breeches,
[Sings] Then they for sudden joy did weep,
And I for sorrow sung,
That such a king should play bo-peep
And go the fools among.
Prithee, nuncle, keep a schoolmaster that can teach thy fool to lie. I would fain learn to lie.

Lear. An you lie, sirrah, we'll have you whipp'd.

Fool. I marvel what kin thou and thy daughters are. They'll have me whipp'd for speaking true; thou'lt have me whipp'd for lying; and sometimes I am whipp'd for holding my peace. I had rather be any kind o' thing than a fool! And yet I would not be thee, nuncle. Thou hast pared thy wit o' both sides and left nothing i' th' middle. Here comes one o' the parings.

Enter Goneril.

Lear. How now, daughter? What makes that frontlet on? Methinks you are too much o' late i' th' frown.

Fool. Thou wast a pretty fellow when thou hadst no need to care for her frowning. Now thou art an O without a figure. I am better than thou art now: I am a fool, thou art nothing.
[To Goneril] Yes, forsooth, I will hold my tongue. So your face bids me, though you say nothing. Mum, mum!
He that keeps nor crust nor crum,
Weary of all, shall want some.-
[Points at Lear] That's a sheal'd peascod.

Gon. Not only, sir, this your all-licens'd fool,
But other of your insolent retinue
Do hourly carp and quarrel, breaking forth
In rank and not-to-be-endured riots. Sir,
I had thought, by making this well known unto you,

To have found a safe redress, but now grow fearful,

By what yourself, too, late have spoke and done,

That you protect this course, and put it on

By your allowance; which if you should, the fault

Would not scape censure, nor the redresses sleep,

Which, in the tender of a wholesome weal,

Might in their working do you that offence

Which else were shame, that then necessity

Must call discreet proceeding.

Fool. For you know, nuncle,

The hedge-sparrow fed the cuckoo so long

That it had it head bit off by it young.

So out went the candle, and we were left darkling.

Lear. Are you our daughter?

Gon. Come, sir,

I would you would make use of that good wisdom

Whereof I know you are fraught, and put away

These dispositions that of late transform you

From what you rightly are.

Fool. May not an ass know when the cart draws the horse?
Whoop, Jug, I love thee!

Lear. Doth any here know me? This is not Lear.
Doth Lear walk thus? speak thus? Where are his eyes?
Either his notion weakens, his discernings
Are lethargied-Ha! waking? 'Tis not so!

Who is it that can tell me who I am?

Fool. Lear's shadow.

Lear. I would learn that; for, by the marks of sovereignty,
Knowledge, and reason, I should be false persuaded
I had daughters.

Fool. Which they will make an obedient father.

Lear. Your name, fair gentlewoman?

Gon. This admiration, sir, is much o' th' savour
Of other your new pranks. I do beseech you
To understand my purposes aright.
As you are old and reverend, you should be wise.
Here do you keep a hundred knights and squires;
Men so disorder'd, so debosh'd, and bold
That this our court, infected with their manners,
Shows like a riotous inn. Epicurism and lust
Make it more like a tavern or a brothel
Than a grac'd palace. The shame itself doth speak
For instant remedy. Be then desir'd
By her that else will take the thing she begs
A little to disquantity your train,
And the remainder that shall still depend
To be such men as may besort your age,
Which know themselves, and you.

Lear. Darkness and devils!
Saddle my horses! Call my train together!
Degenerate bastard, I'll not trouble thee;

Yet have I left a daughter.

Gon. You strike my people, and your disorder'd rabble
Make servants of their betters.

Enter Albany.

Lear. Woe that too late repents!- O, sir, are you come?
Is it your will? Speak, sir!- Prepare my horses.
Ingratitude, thou marble-hearted fiend,
More hideous when thou show'st thee in a child
Than the sea-monster!

Alb. Pray, sir, be patient.

Lear. [to Goneril] Detested kite, thou liest!
My train are men of choice and rarest parts,
That all particulars of duty know
And in the most exact regard support
The worships of their name.- O most small fault,
How ugly didst thou in Cordelia show!

Which, like an engine, wrench'd my frame of nature
From the fix'd place; drew from my heart all love
And added to the gall. O Lear, Lear, Lear!
Beat at this gate that let thy folly in *[Strikes his head.]*
And thy dear judgment out! Go, go, my people.

Alb. My lord, I am guiltless, as I am ignorant
Of what hath mov'd you.

Lear. It may be so, my lord.
Hear, Nature, hear! dear goddess, hear!
Suspend thy purpose, if thou didst intend
To make this creature fruitful.
Into her womb convey sterility;
Dry up in her the organs of increase;
And from her derogate body never spring
A babe to honour her! If she must teem,
Create her child of spleen, that it may live
And be a thwart disnatur'd torment to her.
Let it stamp wrinkles in her brow of youth,
With cadent tears fret channels in her cheeks,

Turn all her mother's pains and benefits
To laughter and contempt, that she may feel
How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is
To have a thankless child! Away, away! *Exit* .

Alb. Now, gods that we adore, whereof comes this?

Gon. Never afflict yourself to know the cause;
But let his disposition have that scope
That dotage gives it.

Enter Lear.

Lear. What, fifty of my followers at a clap?
Within a fortnight?

Alb. What's the matter, sir?

Lear. I'll tell thee. *[To Goneril]* Life and death! I am asham'd
That thou hast power to shake my manhood thus;
That these hot tears, which break from me perforce,

Should make thee worth them. Blasts and fogs upon thee!

Th' untented woundings of a father's curse

Pierce every sense about thee!- Old fond eyes,

Beweep this cause again, I'll pluck ye out,

And cast you, with the waters that you lose,

To temper clay. Yea, is it come to this?

Let it be so. Yet have I left a daughter,

Who I am sure is kind and comfortable.

When she shall hear this of thee, with her nails

She'll flay thy wolvish visage. Thou shalt find

That I'll resume the shape which thou dost think

I have cast off for ever; thou shalt, I warrant thee.

Exeunt [Lear, Kent, and Attendants] .

Gon. Do you mark that, my lord?

Alb. I cannot be so partial, Goneril,

To the great love I bear you -

Gon. Pray you, content.- What, Oswald, ho!

[To the Fool] You, sir, more knave than fool, after your master!

Fool. Nuncle Lear, nuncle Lear, tarry! Take the fool with thee.
A fox when one has caught her,
And such a daughter,
Should sure to the slaughter,
If my cap would buy a halter.
So the fool follows after. *Exit* .

Gon. This man hath had good counsel! A hundred knights?
'Tis politic and safe to let him keep
At point a hundred knights; yes, that on every dream,
Each buzz, each fancy, each complaint, dislike,
He may enguard his dotage with their pow'rs
And hold our lives in mercy.- Oswald, I say!

Alb. Well, you may fear too far.

Gon. Safer than trust too far.
Let me still take away the harms I fear,
Not fear still to be taken. I know his heart.
What he hath utter'd I have writ my sister.

If she sustain him and his hundred knights,
When I have show'd th' unfitness-

Enter [Oswald the] Steward.

How now, Oswald?
What, have you writ that letter to my sister?

Osw. Yes, madam.

Gon. Take you some company, and away to horse!
Inform her full of my particular fear,
And thereto add such reasons of your own
As may compact it more. Get you gone,
And hasten your return. *[Exit Oswald.]* No, no, my lord!
This milky gentleness and course of yours,
Though I condemn it not, yet, under pardon,
You are much more at task for want of wisdom
Than prais'd for harmful mildness.

Alb. How far your eyes may pierce I cannot tell.

Striving to better, oft we mar what's well.

Gon. Nay then-

Alb. Well, well; th' event. *Exeunt* .

Scene V. Court before the Duke of Albany's Palace.

Enter Lear, Kent, and Fool.

Lear. Go you before to Gloucester with these letters. Acquaint my
daughter no further with anything you know than comes from her
demand out of the letter. If your diligence be not speedy, I
shall be there afore you.

Kent. I will not sleep, my lord, till I have delivered your letter.
Exit.

Fool. If a man's brains were in's heels, were't not in danger of kibes?

Lear. Ay, boy.

Fool. Then I prithee be merry. Thy wit shall ne'er go
slip-shod.

Lear. Ha, ha, ha!

Fool. Shalt see thy other daughter will use thee kindly; for though
she's as like this as a crab's like an apple, yet I can tell
what I can tell.

Lear. What canst tell, boy?

Fool. She'll taste as like this as a crab does to a crab. Thou
canst tell why one's nose stands i' th' middle on's face?

Lear. No.

Fool. Why, to keep one's eyes of either side's nose, that what a
man cannot smell out, 'a may spy into.

Lear. I did her wrong.

Fool. Canst tell how an oyster makes his shell?

Lear. No.

Fool. Nor I neither; but I can tell why a snail has a house.

Lear. Why?

Fool. Why, to put's head in; not to give it away to his daughters,
and leave his horns without a case.

Lear. I will forget my nature. So kind a father!- Be my horses ready?

Fool. Thy asses are gone about 'em. The reason why the seven stars
are no moe than seven is a pretty reason.

Lear. Because they are not eight?

Fool. Yes indeed. Thou wouldst make a good fool.

Lear. To tak't again perforce! Monster ingratitude!

Fool. If thou wert my fool, nuncle, I'ld have thee beaten for being old before thy time.

Lear. How's that?

Fool. Thou shouldst not have been old till thou hadst been wise.

Lear. O, let me not be mad, not mad, sweet heaven!
Keep me in temper; I would not be mad!

[Enter a Gentleman.]

How now? Are the horses ready?

Gent. Ready, my lord.

Lear. Come, boy.

Fool. She that's a maid now, and laughs at my departure,
Shall not be a maid long, unless things be cut shorter *Exeunt* .

ACT II. Scene I. A court within the Castle of the Earl of Gloucester.

Enter [Edmund the] Bastard and Curan, meeting.

Edm. Save thee, Curan.

Cur. And you, sir. I have been with your father, and given him
notice that the Duke of Cornwall and Regan his Duchess will be
here with him this night.

Edm. How comes that?

Cur. Nay, I know not. You have heard of the news abroad-I mean the
whisper'd ones, for they are yet but ear-kissing arguments?

Edm. Not I. Pray you, what are they?

Cur. Have you heard of no likely wars toward 'twixt the two Dukes
of Cornwall and Albany?

Edm. Not a word.

Cur. You may do, then, in time. Fare you well, sir. *Exit* .

Edm. The Duke be here to-night? The better! best!
This weaves itself perforce into my business.
My father hath set guard to take my brother;
And I have one thing, of a queasy question,
Which I must act. Briefness and fortune, work!
Brother, a word! Descend! Brother, I say!

Enter Edgar.

My father watches. O sir, fly this place!
Intelligence is given where you are hid.

You have now the good advantage of the night.
Have you not spoken 'gainst the Duke of Cornwall?
He's coming hither; now, i' th' night, i' th' haste,
And Regan with him. Have you nothing said
Upon his party 'gainst the Duke of Albany?

Advise yourself.

Edg. I am sure on't, not a word.

Edm. I hear my father coming. Pardon me!
In cunning I must draw my sword upon you.
Draw, seem to defend yourself; now quit you well.-
Yield! Come before my father. Light, ho, here!

Fly, brother.- Torches, torches!- So farewell.

Exit Edgar.

Some blood drawn on me would beget opinion
Of my more fierce endeavour. *[Stabs his arm.]* I have seen drunkards
Do more than this in sport.- Father, father!-
Stop, stop! No help?

Enter Gloucester, and Servants with torches.

Glou. Now, Edmund, where's the villain?

Edm. Here stood he in the dark, his sharp sword out,
Mumbling of wicked charms, conjuring the moon
To stand 's auspicious mistress.

Glou. But where is he?

Edm. Look, sir, I bleed.

Glou. Where is the villain, Edmund?

Edm. Fled this way, sir. When by no means he could-

Glou. Pursue him, ho! Go after. *[Exeunt some Servants]* .
By no means what?

Edm. Persuade me to the murther of your lordship;
But that I told him the revenging gods
'Gainst parricides did all their thunders bend;
Spoke with how manifold and strong a bond
The child was bound to th' father-sir, in fine,

Seeing how loathly opposite I stood

To his unnatural purpose, in fell motion

With his prepared sword he charges home

My unprovided body, lanch'd mine arm;

But when he saw my best alarum'd spirits,

Bold in the quarrel's right, rous'd to th' encounter,

Or whether gasted by the noise I made,

Full suddenly he fled.

Glou. Let him fly far.

Not in this land shall he remain uncaught;

And found-dispatch. The noble Duke my master,

My worthy arch and patron, comes to-night.

By his authority I will proclaim it

That he which find, him shall deserve our thanks,

Bringing the murderous caitiff to the stake;

He that conceals him, death.

Edm. When I dissuaded him from his intent

And found him pight to do it, with curst speech

I threaten'd to discover him. He replied, 'Thou unpossessing bastard, dost thou think,

If I would stand against thee, would the reposal

Of any trust, virtue, or worth in thee

Make thy words faith'd? No. What I should deny

(As this I would; ay, though thou didst produce

My very character), I'ld turn it all

To thy suggestion, plot, and damned practice;

And thou must make a dullard of the world,

If they not thought the profits of my death

Were very pregnant and potential spurs

To make thee seek it.'

Glou. Strong and fast'ned villain!

Would he deny his letter? I never got him.

Tucket within.

Hark, the Duke's trumpets! I know not why he comes.

All ports I'll bar; the villain shall not scape;

The Duke must grant me that. Besides, his picture

I will send far and near, that all the kingdom

May have due note of him, and of my land,

Loyal and natural boy, I'll work the means
To make thee capable.

Enter Cornwall, Regan, and Attendants.

Corn. How now, my noble friend? Since I came hither
(Which I can call but now) I have heard strange news.

Reg. If it be true, all vengeance comes too short
Which can pursue th' offender. How dost, my lord?

Glou. O madam, my old heart is crack'd, it's crack'd!

Reg. What, did my father's godson seek your life?
He whom my father nam'd? Your Edgar?

Glou. O lady, lady, shame would have it hid!

Reg. Was he not companion with the riotous knights
That tend upon my father?

Glou. I know not, madam. 'Tis too bad, too bad!

Edm. Yes, madam, he was of that consort.

Reg. No marvel then though he were ill affected.
'Tis they have put him on the old man's death,
To have th' expense and waste of his revenues.
I have this present evening from my sister
Been well inform'd of them, and with such cautions
That, if they come to sojourn at my house,
I'll not be there.

Corn. Nor I, assure thee, Regan.
Edmund, I hear that you have shown your father
A childlike office.

Edm. 'Twas my duty, sir.

Glou. He did bewray his practice, and receiv'd
This hurt you see, striving to apprehend him.

Corn. Is he pursued?

Glou. Ay, my good lord.

Corn. If he be taken, he shall never more
Be fear'd of doing harm. Make your own purpose,
How in my strength you please. For you, Edmund,
Whose virtue and obedience doth this instant
So much commend itself, you shall be ours.
Natures of such deep trust we shall much need;
You we first seize on.

Edm. I shall serve you, sir,
Truly, however else.

Glou. For him I thank your Grace.

Corn. You know not why we came to visit you-

Reg. Thus out of season, threading dark-ey'd night.
Occasions, noble Gloucester, of some poise,

Wherein we must have use of your advice.

Our father he hath writ, so hath our sister,

Of differences, which I best thought it fit

To answer from our home. The several messengers

From hence attend dispatch. Our good old friend,

Lay comforts to your bosom, and bestow

Your needful counsel to our business,

Which craves the instant use.

Glou. I serve you, madam.

Your Graces are right welcome.

Exeunt. Flourish.

Scene II. Before Gloucester's Castle.

Enter Kent and *[Oswald the]* Steward, severally.

Osw. Good dawning to thee, friend. Art of this house?

Kent. Ay.

Osw. Where may we set our horses?

Kent. I' th' mire.

Osw. Prithee, if thou lov'st me, tell me.

Kent. I love thee not.

Osw. Why then, I care not for thee.

Kent. If I had thee in Lipsbury Pinfold, I would make thee care for me.

Osw. Why dost thou use me thus? I know thee not.

Kent. Fellow, I know thee.

Osw. What dost thou know me for?

Kent. A knave; a rascal; an eater of broken meats; a base,
proud,
shallow, beggarly, three-suited, hundred-pound, filthy,
worsted-stocking knave; a lily-liver'd, action-taking,

whoreson,

glass-gazing, superserviceable, finical rogue;

one-trunk-inheriting slave; one that wouldst be a bawd in way of

good service, and art nothing but the composition of a knave,

beggar, coward, pander, and the son and heir of a mongrel bitch;

one whom I will beat into clamorous whining, if thou deny the

least syllable of thy addition.

Osw. Why, what a monstrous fellow art thou, thus to rail on one

that's neither known of thee nor knows thee!

Kent. What a brazen-fac'd varlet art thou, to deny thou knowest me!

Is it two days ago since I beat thee and tripp'd up thy heels

before the King? *[Draws his sword.]* Draw, you rogue! for, though

it be night, yet the moon shines. I'll make a sop o' th'

moonshine o' you. Draw, you whoreson cullionly barbermonger! draw!

Osw. Away! I have nothing to do with thee.

Kent. Draw, you rascal! You come with letters against the King, and

take Vanity the puppet's part against the royalty of her father.
Draw, you rogue, or I'll so carbonado your shanks! Draw, you
rascal! Come your ways!

Osw. Help, ho! murther! help!

Kent. Strike, you slave! Stand, rogue! Stand, you neat slave!
Strike! *[Beats him.]*

Osw. Help, ho! murther! murther!

Enter Edmund, with his rapier drawn, Gloucester, Cornwall,

Regan, Servants.

Edm. How now? What's the matter? Parts *[them]* .

Kent. With you, goodman boy, an you please! Come, I'll flesh ye!
Come on, young master!

Glou. Weapons? arms? What's the matter here?

Corn. Keep peace, upon your lives!
He dies that strikes again. What is the matter?

Reg. The messengers from our sister and the King

Corn. What is your difference? Speak.

Osw. I am scarce in breath, my lord.

Kent. No marvel, you have so bestirr'd your valour. You cowardly rascal, nature disclaims in thee; a tailor made thee.

Corn. Thou art a strange fellow. A tailor make a man?

Kent. Ay, a tailor, sir. A stonecutter or a painter could not have made him so ill, though he had been but two hours at the trade.

Corn. Speak yet, how grew your quarrel?

Osw. This ancient ruffian, sir, whose life I have spar'd

At suit of his grey beard-

Kent. Thou whoreson zed! thou unnecessary letter! My lord, if you'll give me leave, I will tread this unbolted villain into mortar and daub the walls of a jakes with him. 'Spare my grey beard,' you wagtail?

Corn. Peace, sirrah!
You beastly knave, know you no reverence?

Kent. Yes, sir, but anger hath a privilege.

Corn. Why art thou angry?

Kent. That such a slave as this should wear a sword,
Who wears no honesty. Such smiling rogues as these,
Like rats, oft bite the holy cords atwain
Which are too intrinse t' unloose; smooth every passion
That in the natures of their lords rebel,
Bring oil to fire, snow to their colder moods;
Renege, affirm, and turn their halcyon beaks

With every gale and vary of their masters,

Knowing naught (like dogs) but following.

A plague upon your epileptic visage!

Smile you my speeches, as I were a fool?

Goose, an I had you upon Sarum Plain,

I'ld drive ye cackling home to Camelot.

Corn. What, art thou mad, old fellow?

Glou. How fell you out? Say that.

Kent. No contraries hold more antipathy

Than I and such a knave.

Corn. Why dost thou call him knave? What is his fault?

Kent. His countenance likes me not.

Corn. No more perchance does mine, or his, or hers.

Kent. Sir, 'tis my occupation to be plain.
I have seen better faces in my time
Than stands on any shoulder that I see
Before me at this instant.

Corn. This is some fellow
Who, having been prais'd for bluntness, doth affect
A saucy roughness, and constrains the garb
Quite from his nature. He cannot flatter, he!

An honest mind and plain-he must speak truth!
An they will take it, so; if not, he's plain.
These kind of knaves I know which in this plainness
Harbour more craft and more corrupter ends
Than twenty silly-ducking observants
That stretch their duties nicely.

Kent. Sir, in good faith, in sincere verity,
Under th' allowance of your great aspect,
Whose influence, like the wreath of radiant fire
On flickering Phoebus' front-

Corn. What mean'st by this?

Kent. To go out of my dialect, which you discommend so much. I know, sir, I am no flatterer. He that beguil'd you in a plain accent was a plain knave, which, for my part, I will not be, though I should win your displeasure to entreat me to't.

Corn. What was th' offence you gave him?

Osw. I never gave him any.
It pleas'd the King his master very late
To strike at me, upon his misconstruction;
When he, conjunct, and flattering his displeasure,
Tripp'd me behind; being down, insulted, rail'd
And put upon him such a deal of man
That worthied him, got praises of the King
For him attempting who was self-subdu'd;
And, in the fleshment of this dread exploit,
Drew on me here again.

Kent. None of these rogues and cowards

But Ajax is their fool.

Corn. Fetch forth the stocks!

You stubborn ancient knave, you reverent braggart,

We'll teach you-

Kent. Sir, I am too old to learn.

Call not your stocks for me. I serve the King;

On whose employment I was sent to you.

You shall do small respect, show too bold malice

Against the grace and person of my master,

Stocking his messenger.

Corn. Fetch forth the stocks! As I have life and honour,

There shall he sit till noon.

Reg. Till noon? Till night, my lord, and all night too!

Kent. Why, madam, if I were your father's dog,

You should not use me so.

Reg. Sir, being his knave, I will.

Corn. This is a fellow of the selfsame colour
Our sister speaks of. Come, bring away the stocks!

Stocks brought out.

Glou. Let me beseech your Grace not to do so.
His fault is much, and the good King his master
Will check him for't. Your purpos'd low correction
Is such as basest and contemn'dest wretches
For pilf'rings and most common trespasses
Are punish'd with. The King must take it ill
That he, so slightly valued in his messenger,
Should have him thus restrain'd.

Corn. I'll answer that.

Reg. My sister may receive it much more worse,
To have her gentleman abus'd, assaulted,

For following her affairs. Put in his legs.-

[Kent is put in the stocks.]

Come, my good lord, away.

Exeunt [all but Gloucester and Kent] .

Glou. I am sorry for thee, friend. 'Tis the Duke's pleasure,

Whose disposition, all the world well knows,

Will not be rubb'd nor stopp'd. I'll entreat for thee.

Kent. Pray do not, sir. I have watch'd and travell'd hard.

Some time I shall sleep out, the rest I'll whistle.

A good man's fortune may grow out at heels.

Give you good morrow!

Glou. The Duke 's to blame in this; 'twill be ill taken.

Exit.

Kent. Good King, that must approve the common saw,

Thou out of heaven's benediction com'st

To the warm sun!

Approach, thou beacon to this under globe,

That by thy comfortable beams I may

Peruse this letter. Nothing almost sees miracles

But misery. I know 'tis from Cordelia,

Who hath most fortunately been inform'd

Of my obscured course-and *[reads]* 'shall find time

From this enormous state, seeking to give

Losses their remedies'- All weary and o'erwatch'd,

Take vantage, heavy eyes, not to behold

This shameful lodging.

Fortune, good night; smile once more, turn thy wheel.

Sleeps.

Scene III. The open country.

Enter Edgar.

Edg. I heard myself proclaim'd,

And by the happy hollow of a tree

Escap'd the hunt. No port is free, no place

That guard and most unusual vigilance

Does not attend my taking. Whiles I may scape,
I will preserve myself; and am bethought
To take the basest and most poorest shape
That ever penury, in contempt of man,
Brought near to beast. My face I'll grime with filth,
Blanket my loins, elf all my hair in knots,
And with presented nakedness outface
The winds and persecutions of the sky.
The country gives me proof and precedent
Of Bedlam beggars, who, with roaring voices,
Strike in their numb'd and mortified bare arms
Pins, wooden pricks, nails, sprigs of rosemary;
And with this horrible object, from low farms,
Poor pelting villages, sheepcotes, and mills,
Sometime with lunatic bans, sometime with prayers,
Enforce their charity. 'Poor Turlygod! poor Tom!'
That's something yet! Edgar I nothing am. *Exit* .

Scene IV. Before Gloucester's Castle; Kent in the stocks.

Enter Lear, Fool, and Gentleman.

Lear. 'Tis strange that they should so depart from home,
And not send back my messenger.

Gent. As I learn'd,
The night before there was no purpose in them
Of this remove.

Kent. Hail to thee, noble master!

Lear. Ha!
Mak'st thou this shame thy pastime?

Kent. No, my lord.

Fool. Ha, ha! look! he wears cruel garters. Horses are tied by the
head, dogs and bears by th' neck, monkeys by th' loins, and men
by th' legs. When a man's over-lusty at legs, then he wears

wooden nether-stocks.

Lear. What's he that hath so much thy place mistook
To set thee here?

Kent. It is both he and she-
Your son and daughter.

Lear. No.

Kent. Yes.

Lear. No, I say.

Kent. I say yea.

Lear. No, no, they would not!

Kent. Yes, they have.

Lear. By Jupiter, I swear no!

Kent. By Juno, I swear ay!

Lear. They durst not do't;
They would not, could not do't. 'Tis worse than murther
To do upon respect such violent outrage.
Resolve me with all modest haste which way
Thou mightst deserve or they impose this usage,
Coming from us.

Kent. My lord, when at their home
I did commend your Highness' letters to them,
Ere I was risen from the place that show'd
My duty kneeling, came there a reeking post,
Stew'd in his haste, half breathless, panting forth
From Goneril his mistress salutations;
Deliver'd letters, spite of intermission,
Which presently they read; on whose contents,
They summon'd up their meiny, straight took horse,
Commanded me to follow and attend
The leisure of their answer, gave me cold looks,

And meeting here the other messenger,
Whose welcome I perceiv'd had poison'd mine-
Being the very fellow which of late
Display'd so saucily against your Highness-
Having more man than wit about me, drew.

He rais'd the house with loud and coward cries.
Your son and daughter found this trespass worth
The shame which here it suffers.

Fool. Winter's not gone yet, if the wild geese fly that way.
Fathers that wear rags
Do make their children blind;
But fathers that bear bags
Shall see their children kind.
Fortune, that arrant whore,
Ne'er turns the key to th' poor.
But for all this, thou shalt have as many dolours for thy
daughters as thou canst tell in a year.

Lear. O, how this mother swells up toward my heart!

Hysterica passio! Down, thou climbing sorrow!

Thy element's below! Where is this daughter?

Kent. With the Earl, sir, here within.

Lear. Follow me not;
Stay here. *Exit* .

Gent. Made you no more offence but what you speak of?

Kent. None.
How chance the King comes with so small a number?

Fool. An thou hadst been set i' th' stocks for that question, thou'dst well deserv'd it.

Kent. Why, fool?

Fool. We'll set thee to school to an ant, to teach thee there's no labouring i' th' winter. All that follow their noses are led by their eyes but blind men, and there's not a nose among twenty

but can smell him that's stinking. Let go thy hold when a great

wheel runs down a hill, lest it break thy neck with following

it; but the great one that goes upward, let him draw thee after.

When a wise man gives thee better counsel, give me mine

again. I

would have none but knaves follow it, since a fool gives it.

That sir which serves and seeks for gain,
And follows but for form,
Will pack when it begins to rain
And leave thee in the storm.
But I will tarry; the fool will stay,
And let the wise man fly.
The knave turns fool that runs away;
The fool no knave, perdy.

Kent. Where learn'd you this, fool?

Fool. Not i' th' stocks, fool.

Enter Lear and Gloucester

Lear. Deny to speak with me? They are sick? they are weary?
They have travell'd all the night? Mere fetches-
The images of revolt and flying off!
Fetch me a better answer.

Glou. My dear lord,
You know the fiery quality of the Duke,
How unremovable and fix'd he is
In his own course.

Lear. Vengeance! plague! death! confusion!
Fiery? What quality? Why, Gloucester, Gloucester,
I'ld speak with the Duke of Cornwall and his wife.

Glou. Well, my good lord, I have inform'd them so.

Lear. Inform'd them? Dost thou understand me, man?

Glou. Ay, my good lord.

Lear. The King would speak with Cornwall; the dear father
Would with his daughter speak, commands her service.

Are they inform'd of this? My breath and blood!
Fiery? the fiery Duke? Tell the hot Duke that-
No, but not yet! May be he is not well.
Infirmity doth still neglect all office
Whereto our health is bound. We are not ourselves
When nature, being oppress'd, commands the mind
To suffer with the body. I'll forbear;
And am fallen out with my more headier will,
To take the indispos'd and sickly fit
For the sound man.- Death on my state! Wherefore
Should be sit here? This act persuades me
That this remotion of the Duke and her
Is practice only. Give me my servant forth.
Go tell the Duke and 's wife I'ld speak with them-
Now, presently. Bid them come forth and hear me,
Or at their chamber door I'll beat the drum
Till it cry sleep to death.

Glou. I would have all well betwixt you. *Exit* .

Lear. O me, my heart, my rising heart! But down!

Fool. Cry to it, nuncle, as the cockney did to the eels when she
put 'em i' th' paste alive. She knapp'd 'em o' th' coxcombs with
a stick and cried 'Down, wantons, down!' 'Twas her brother that,
in pure kindness to his horse, buttered his hay.

Enter Cornwall, Regan, Gloucester, Servants.

Lear. Good morrow to you both.

Corn. Hail to your Grace!
Kent here set at liberty.

Reg. I am glad to see your Highness.

Lear. Regan, I think you are; I know what reason
I have to think so. If thou shouldst not be glad,
I would divorce me from thy mother's tomb,

Sepulchring an adultress. *[To Kent]* O, are you free?
Some other time for that.- Beloved Regan,
Thy sister's naught. O Regan, she hath tied
Sharp-tooth'd unkindness, like a vulture, here!

[Lays his hand on his heart.]
I can scarce speak to thee. Thou'lt not believe
With how deprav'd a quality-O Regan!

Reg. I pray you, sir, take patience. I have hope
You less know how to value her desert
Than she to scant her duty.

Lear. Say, how is that?

Reg. I cannot think my sister in the least
Would fail her obligation. If, sir, perchance
She have restrain'd the riots of your followers,
'Tis on such ground, and to such wholesome end,
As clears her from all blame.

Lear. My curses on her!

Reg. O, sir, you are old!
Nature in you stands on the very verge
Of her confine. You should be rul'd, and led
By some discretion that discerns your state
Better than you yourself. Therefore I pray you
That to our sister you do make return;
Say you have wrong'd her, sir.

Lear. Ask her forgiveness?
Do you but mark how this becomes the house:
'Dear daughter, I confess that I am old. *[Kneels.]*
Age is unnecessary. On my knees I beg
That you'll vouchsafe me raiment, bed, and food.'

Reg. Good sir, no more! These are unsightly tricks.
Return you to my sister.

Lear. *[rises]* Never, Regan!
She hath abated me of half my train;

Look'd black upon me; struck me with her tongue,
Most serpent-like, upon the very heart.
All the stor'd vengeances of heaven fall
On her ingrateful top! Strike her young bones,
You taking airs, with lameness!

Corn. Fie, sir, fie!

Lear. You nimble lightnings, dart your blinding flames
Into her scornful eyes! Infect her beauty,
You fen-suck'd fogs, drawn by the pow'rful sun,
To fall and blast her pride!

Reg. O the blest gods! so will you wish on me
When the rash mood is on.

Lear. No, Regan, thou shalt never have my curse.
Thy tender-hefted nature shall not give
Thee o'er to harshness. Her eyes are fierce; but thine
Do comfort, and not burn. 'Tis not in thee
To grudge my pleasures, to cut off my train,

To bandy hasty words, to scant my sizes,
And, in conclusion, to oppose the bolt
Against my coming in. Thou better know'st
The offices of nature, bond of childhood,
Effects of courtesy, dues of gratitude.
Thy half o' th' kingdom hast thou not forgot,
Wherein I thee endow'd.

Reg. Good sir, to th' purpose.
Tucket within.

Lear. Who put my man i' th' stocks?

Corn. What trumpet's that?

Reg. I know't-my sister's. This approves her letter,
That she would soon be here.

Enter [Oswald the] Steward.

Is your lady come?

Lear. This is a slave, whose easy-borrowed pride
Dwells in the fickle grace of her he follows.

Out, varlet, from my sight!

Corn. What means your Grace?

Enter Goneril.

Lear. Who stock'd my servant? Regan, I have good hope
Thou didst not know on't.- Who comes here? O heavens!
If you do love old men, if your sweet sway
Allow obedience-if yourselves are old,
Make it your cause! Send down, and take my part!
[To Goneril] Art not asham'd to look upon this beard?-
O Regan, wilt thou take her by the hand?

Gon. Why not by th' hand, sir? How have I offended?
All's not offence that indiscretion finds
And dotage terms so.

Lear. O sides, you are too tough!

Will you yet hold? How came my man i' th' stocks?

Corn. I set him there, sir; but his own disorders

Deserv'd much less advancement.

Lear. You? Did you?

Reg. I pray you, father, being weak, seem so.

If, till the expiration of your month,

You will return and sojourn with my sister,

Dismissing half your train, come then to me.

I am now from home, and out of that provision

Which shall be needful for your entertainment.

Lear. Return to her, and fifty men dismiss'd?

No, rather I abjure all roofs, and choose

To wage against the enmity o' th' air,

To be a comrade with the wolf and owl-

Necessity's sharp pinch! Return with her?

Why, the hot-blooded France, that dowerless took
Our youngest born, I could as well be brought
To knee his throne, and, squire-like, pension beg
To keep base life afoot. Return with her?
Persuade me rather to be slave and sumpter
To this detested groom. *[Points at Oswald.]*

Gon. At your choice, sir.

Lear. I prithee, daughter, do not make me mad.
I will not trouble thee, my child; farewell.

We'll no more meet, no more see one another.
But yet thou art my flesh, my blood, my daughter;
Or rather a disease that's in my flesh,
Which I must needs call mine. Thou art a boil,
A plague sore, an embossed carbuncle
In my corrupted blood. But I'll not chide thee.

Let shame come when it will, I do not call it.
I do not bid the Thunder-bearer shoot

Nor tell tales of thee to high-judging Jove.
Mend when thou canst; be better at thy leisure;
I can be patient, I can stay with Regan,
I and my hundred knights.

Reg. Not altogether so.
I look'd not for you yet, nor am provided
For your fit welcome. Give ear, sir, to my sister;
For those that mingle reason with your passion
Must be content to think you old, and so-
But she knows what she does.

Lear. Is this well spoken?

Reg. I dare avouch it, sir. What, fifty followers?
Is it not well? What should you need of more?
Yea, or so many, sith that both charge and danger
Speak 'gainst so great a number? How in one house
Should many people, under two commands,
Hold amity? 'Tis hard; almost impossible.

Gon. Why might not you, my lord, receive attendance
From those that she calls servants, or from mine?

Reg. Why not, my lord? If then they chanc'd to slack ye,
We could control them. If you will come to me
(For now I spy a danger), I entreat you
To bring but five-and-twenty. To no more
Will I give place or notice.

Lear. I gave you all-

Reg. And in good time you gave it!

Lear. Made you my guardians, my depositaries;
But kept a reservation to be followed
With such a number. What, must I come to you
With five-and-twenty, Regan? Said you so?

Reg. And speak't again my lord. No more with me.

Lear. Those wicked creatures yet do look well-favour'd

When others are more wicked; not being the worst
Stands in some rank of praise. *[To Goneril]* I'll go with thee.
Thy fifty yet doth double five-and-twenty,
And thou art twice her love.

Gon. Hear, me, my lord.
What need you five-and-twenty, ten, or five,
To follow in a house where twice so many
Have a command to tend you?

Reg. What need one?

Lear. O, reason not the need! Our basest beggars
Are in the poorest thing superfluous.
Allow not nature more than nature needs,
Man's life is cheap as beast's. Thou art a lady:
If only to go warm were gorgeous,
Why, nature needs not what thou gorgeous wear'st
Which scarcely keeps thee warm. But, for true need-
You heavens, give me that patience, patience I need!
You see me here, you gods, a poor old man,

As full of grief as age; wretched in both.
If it be you that stirs these daughters' hearts
Against their father, fool me not so much
To bear it tamely; touch me with noble anger,
And let not women's weapons, water drops,
Stain my man's cheeks! No, you unnatural hags!
I will have such revenges on you both
That all the world shall-I will do such things-
What they are yet, I know not; but they shall be
The terrors of the earth! You think I'll weep.
No, I'll not weep.
I have full cause of weeping, but this heart
Shall break into a hundred thousand flaws
Or ere I'll weep. O fool, I shall go mad!
Exeunt Lear, Gloucester, Kent, and Fool. Storm and tempest.

Corn. Let us withdraw; 'twill be a storm.

Reg. This house is little; the old man and 's people
Cannot be well bestow'd.

Gon. 'Tis his own blame; hath put himself from rest
And must needs taste his folly.

Reg. For his particular, I'll receive him gladly,
But not one follower.

Gon. So am I purpos'd.
Where is my Lord of Gloucester?

Corn. Followed the old man forth.

Enter Gloucester.

He is return'd.

Glou. The King is in high rage.

Corn. Whither is he going?

Glou. He calls to horse, but will I know not whither.

Corn. 'Tis best to give him way; he leads himself.

Gon. My lord, entreat him by no means to stay.

Glou. Alack, the night comes on, and the bleak winds
Do sorely ruffle. For many miles about
There's scarce a bush.

Reg. O, sir, to wilful men
The injuries that they themselves procure
Must be their schoolmasters. Shut up your doors.
He is attended with a desperate train,
And what they may incense him to, being apt
To have his ear abus'd, wisdom bids fear.

Corn. Shut up your doors, my lord: 'tis a wild night.
My Regan counsels well. Come out o' th' storm.

[Exeunt.]

ACT III. Scene I. A heath.

Storm still.   *Enter* Kent and a Gentleman at several doors.

Kent. Who's there, besides foul weather?

Gent. One minded like the weather, most unquietly.

Kent. I know you. Where's the King?

Gent. Contending with the fretful elements;
Bids the wind blow the earth into the sea,
Or swell the curled waters 'bove the main,
That things might change or cease; tears his white hair,
Which the impetuous blasts, with eyeless rage,
Catch in their fury and make nothing of;
Strives in his little world of man to outscorn
The to-and-fro-conflicting wind and rain.
This night, wherein the cub-drawn bear would couch,
The lion and the belly-pinched wolf
Keep their fur dry, unbonneted he runs,
And bids what will take all.

Kent. But who is with him?

Gent. None but the fool, who labours to outjest
His heart-struck injuries.

Kent. Sir, I do know you,
And dare upon the warrant of my note
Commend a dear thing to you. There is division
(Although as yet the face of it be cover'd
With mutual cunning) 'twixt Albany and Cornwall;
Who have (as who have not, that their great stars
Thron'd and set high?) servants, who seem no less,
Which are to France the spies and speculations
Intelligent of our state. What hath been seen,
Either in snuffs and packings of the Dukes,
Or the hard rein which both of them have borne
Against the old kind King, or something deeper,
Whereof, perchance, these are but furnishings-
But, true it is, from France there comes a power
Into this scattered kingdom, who already,

Wise in our negligence, have secret feet
In some of our best ports and are at point
To show their open banner. Now to you:
If on my credit you dare build so far
To make your speed to Dover, you shall find
Some that will thank you, making just report
Of how unnatural and bemadding sorrow
The King hath cause to plain.
I am a gentleman of blood and breeding,
And from some knowledge and assurance offer
This office to you.

Gent. I will talk further with you.

Kent. No, do not.
For confirmation that I am much more
Than my out-wall, open this purse and take
What it contains. If you shall see Cordelia
(As fear not but you shall), show her this ring,
And she will tell you who your fellow is
That yet you do not know. Fie on this storm!

I will go seek the King.

Gent. Give me your hand. Have you no more to say?

Kent. Few words, but, to effect, more than all yet:
That, when we have found the King (in which your pain
That way, I'll this), he that first lights on him
Holla the other.
Exeunt [severally] .

Scene II. Another part of the heath.

Storm still. *Enter* Lear and Fool.

Lear. Blow, winds, and crack your cheeks! rage! blow!
You cataracts and hurricanoes, spout
Till you have drench'd our steeples, drown'd the cocks!
You sulph'rous and thought-executing fires,
Vaunt-couriers to oak-cleaving thunderbolts,
Singe my white head! And thou, all-shaking thunder,
Strike flat the thick rotundity o' th' world,
Crack Nature's moulds, all germains spill at once,

That makes ingrateful man!

Fool. O nuncle, court holy water in a dry house is better than this rain water out o' door. Good nuncle, in, and ask thy daughters blessing! Here's a night pities nether wise men nor fools.

Lear. Rumble thy bellyful! Spit, fire! spout, rain!
Nor rain, wind, thunder, fire are my daughters.

I tax not you, you elements, with unkindness.
I never gave you kingdom, call'd you children,
You owe me no subscription. Then let fall
Your horrible pleasure. Here I stand your slave,
A poor, infirm, weak, and despis'd old man.
But yet I call you servile ministers,
That will with two pernicious daughters join
Your high-engender'd battles 'gainst a head
So old and white as this! O! O! 'tis foul!

Fool. He that has a house to put 's head in has a good head-piece.

The codpiece that will house
Before the head has any,
The head and he shall louse:
So beggars marry many.
The man that makes his toe
What he his heart should make
Shall of a corn cry woe,
And turn his sleep to wake.

For there was never yet fair woman but she made mouths in a glass.

Enter Kent.

Lear. No, I will be the pattern of all patience;
I will say nothing.

Kent. Who's there?

Fool. Marry, here's grace and a codpiece; that's a wise man and a fool.

Kent. Alas, sir, are you here? Things that love night

Love not such nights as these. The wrathful skies
Gallow the very wanderers of the dark
And make them keep their caves. Since I was man,
Such sheets of fire, such bursts of horrid thunder,
Such groans of roaring wind and rain, I never
Remember to have heard. Man's nature cannot carry
Th' affliction nor the fear.

Lear. Let the great gods,
That keep this dreadful pudder o'er our heads,
Find out their enemies now. Tremble, thou wretch,
That hast within thee undivulged crimes
Unwhipp'd of justice. Hide thee, thou bloody hand;
Thou perjur'd, and thou simular man of virtue
That art incestuous. Caitiff, in pieces shake
That under covert and convenient seeming
Hast practis'd on man's life. Close pent-up guilts,
Rive your concealing continents, and cry
These dreadful summoners grace. I am a man
More sinn'd against than sinning.

Kent. Alack, bareheaded?

Gracious my lord, hard by here is a hovel;

Some friendship will it lend you 'gainst the tempest.

Repose you there, whilst I to this hard house

(More harder than the stones whereof 'tis rais'd,

Which even but now, demanding after you,

Denied me to come in) return, and force

Their scanted courtesy.

Lear. My wits begin to turn.

Come on, my boy. How dost, my boy? Art cold?

I am cold myself. Where is this straw, my fellow?

The art of our necessities is strange,

That can make vile things precious. Come, your hovel.

Poor fool and knave, I have one part in my heart

That's sorry yet for thee.

Fool. [sings]

He that has and a little tiny wit-

With hey, ho, the wind and the rain-

Must make content with his fortunes fit,
For the rain it raineth every day.

Lear. True, my good boy. Come, bring us to this hovel.

Exeunt [Lear and Kent] .

Fool. This is a brave night to cool a courtesan. I'll speak a prophecy ere I go:

When priests are more in word than matter;
When brewers mar their malt with water;
When nobles are their tailors' tutors,
No heretics burn'd, but wenches' suitors;
When every case in law is right,
No squire in debt nor no poor knight;
When slanders do not live in tongues,
Nor cutpurses come not to throngs;
When usurers tell their gold i' th' field,
And bawds and whores do churches build:
Then shall the realm of Albion
Come to great confusion.
Then comes the time, who lives to see't,

That going shall be us'd with feet.

This prophecy Merlin shall make, for I live before his time.

Exit.

Scene III. Gloucester's Castle.

Enter Gloucester and Edmund.

Glou. Alack, alack, Edmund, I like not this unnatural dealing!

When

I desir'd their leave that I might pity him, they took from me

the use of mine own house, charg'd me on pain of perpetual

displeasure neither to speak of him, entreat for him, nor any way sustain him.

Edm. Most savage and unnatural!

Glou. Go to; say you nothing. There is division betwixt the Dukes,

and a worse matter than that. I have received a letter this

night- 'tis dangerous to be spoken-I have lock'd the letter in

my closet. These injuries the King now bears will be revenged

home; there's part of a power already footed; we must incline to the King. I will seek him and privily relieve him. Go you and

maintain talk with the Duke, that my charity be not of him

perceived. If he ask for me, I am ill and gone to bed.

Though I

die for't, as no less is threat'ned me, the King my old master

must be relieved. There is some strange thing toward,

Edmund.

Pray you be careful. *Exit* .

Edm. This courtesy, forbid thee, shall the Duke

Instantly know, and of that letter too.

This seems a fair deserving, and must draw me

That which my father loses-no less than all.

The younger rises when the old doth fall. *Exit* .

Scene IV. The heath. Before a hovel.

Storm still. *Enter* Lear, Kent, and Fool.

Kent. Here is the place, my lord. Good my lord, enter.

The tyranny of the open night 's too rough

For nature to endure.

Lear. Let me alone.

Kent. Good my lord, enter here.

Lear. Wilt break my heart?

Kent. I had rather break mine own. Good my lord, enter.

Lear. Thou think'st 'tis much that this contentious storm
Invades us to the skin. So 'tis to thee;
But where the greater malady is fix'd,
The lesser is scarce felt. Thou'dst shun a bear;
But if thy flight lay toward the raging sea,
Thou'dst meet the bear i' th' mouth. When the mind's free,
The body's delicate. The tempest in my mind
Doth from my senses take all feeling else
Save what beats there. Filial ingratitude!
Is it not as this mouth should tear this hand
For lifting food to't? But I will punish home!

No, I will weep no more. In such a night
'To shut me out! Pour on; I will endure.
In such a night as this! O Regan, Goneril!

Your old kind father, whose frank heart gave all!
O, that way madness lies; let me shun that!

No more of that.

Kent. Good my lord, enter here.

Lear. Prithee go in thyself; seek thine own ease.
This tempest will not give me leave to ponder
On things would hurt me more. But I'll go in.
[To the Fool] In, boy; go first.- You houseless poverty-
Nay, get thee in. I'll pray, and then I'll sleep.

Exit [Fool] .

Poor naked wretches, wheresoe'er you are,
That bide the pelting of this pitiless storm,

How shall your houseless heads and unfed sides,
Your loop'd and window'd raggedness, defend you
From seasons such as these? O, I have ta'en
Too little care of this! Take physic, pomp;
Expose thyself to feel what wretches feel,
That thou mayst shake the superflux to them
And show the heavens more just.

Edg. [within] Fathom and half, fathom and half! Poor Tom!

Enter Fool *[from the hovel]* .

Fool. Come not in here, nuncle, here's a spirit. Help me, help me!

Kent. Give me thy hand. Who's there?

Fool. A spirit, a spirit! He says his name's poor Tom.

Kent. What art thou that dost grumble there i' th' straw?
Come forth.

Enter Edgar *[disguised as a madman]* .

Edg. Away! the foul fiend follows me! Through the sharp hawthorn blows the cold wind. Humh! go to thy cold bed, and warm thee. Lear. Hast thou given all to thy two daughters, and art thou come to this? Edg. Who gives anything to poor Tom? whom the foul fiend hath led through fire and through flame, through ford and whirlpool, o'er bog and quagmire; that hath laid knives under his pillow and halters in his pew, set ratsbane by his porridge, made him proud of heart, to ride on a bay trotting horse over four-inch'd bridges, to course his own shadow for a traitor. Bless thy five wits! Tom 's acold. O, do de, do de, do de. Bless thee from whirlwinds, star-blasting, and taking! Do poor Tom some charity, whom the foul fiend vexes. There could I have him now-and there-and there again-and there! Storm still. Lear. What, have his daughters brought him to this pass? Couldst thou save nothing? Didst thou give 'em all? Fool. Nay, he reserv'd a blanket, else we had been all sham'd. Lear. Now all the plagues that in the pendulous air Hang fated o'er men's faults light on thy daughters! Kent. He hath no daughters, sir. Lear. Death, traitor! nothing could have subdu'd nature To such a lowness but his unkind daughters. Is it the fashion that discarded fathers Should have thus little mercy on their flesh? Judicious punishment! 'Twas this flesh begot Those pelican daughters. Edg. Pillicock sat on Pillicock's Hill. 'Allow, 'allow, loo, loo! Fool. This cold night will turn us all to fools and madmen. Edg. Take heed o' th' foul fiend; obey thy parents: keep thy word justly; swear not; commit not with man's sworn spouse; set not thy sweet heart on proud array. Tom 's acold. Lear. What hast thou been? Edg. A servingman, proud in heart and mind; that curl'd my hair, wore gloves in my cap; serv'd the lust of my mistress' heart and did the act of darkness with her; swore as many oaths as I spake words, and broke them in the sweet face of heaven; one that slept in the contriving of lust, and wak'd to do it. Wine lov'd I deeply, dice dearly; and in woman out-paramour'd the Turk. False of heart, light of ear, bloody of hand; hog in sloth, fox in stealth, wolf in greediness, dog in madness, lion in prey. Let not the creaking of shoes nor the rustling of silks betray thy poor heart to woman. Keep thy foot out of brothel, thy hand out of placket, thy pen from lender's book, and defy the foul fiend. Still through the hawthorn blows the cold wind; says suum, mun, hey, no, nonny. Dolphin my boy, my boy, sessa! let him trot by. Storm still. Lear. Why, thou wert better in thy grave than to answer with thy uncover'd body this extremity of the skies. Is man no more than this? Consider him well. Thou ow'st the worm no silk, the beast no hide, the sheep no wool, the cat no perfume. Ha! Here's three on's are sophisticated! Thou art the thing itself; unaccommodated man is no more but such a poor, bare, forked animal as thou art. Off, off, you lendings! Come, unbutton here. *[Tears at his clothes.]* Fool. Prithee, nuncle, be contented! 'Tis a naughty night to swim in. Now a little fire in a wild field were like an old lecher's heart-a small spark, all the rest on's body cold. Look, here comes a walking fire.

Enter Gloucester with a torch.

Edg. This is the foul fiend Flibbertigibbet. He begins at curfew,

and walks till the first cock. He gives the web and the pin,

squints the eye, and makes the harelip; mildews the white wheat,

and hurts the poor creature of earth.

Saint Withold footed thrice the 'old;

He met the nightmare, and her nine fold;

Bid her alight

And her troth plight,

And aroint thee, witch, aroint thee!

Kent. How fares your Grace?

Lear. What's he?

Kent. Who's there? What is't you seek?

Glou. What are you there? Your names?

Edg. Poor Tom, that eats the swimming frog, the toad, the todpole,
the wall-newt and the water; that in the fury of his heart, when
the foul fiend rages, eats cow-dung for sallets, swallows the
old rat and the ditch-dog, drinks the green mantle of the
standing pool; who is whipp'd from tithing to tithing, and
stock-punish'd and imprison'd; who hath had three suits to his
back, six shirts to his body, horse to ride, and weapons to wear;
But mice and rats, and such small deer,
Have been Tom's food for seven long year.
Beware my follower. Peace, Smulkin! peace, thou fiend!

Glou. What, hath your Grace no better company?

Edg. The prince of darkness is a gentleman!
Modo he's call'd, and Mahu.

Glou. Our flesh and blood is grown so vile, my lord, That it doth hate what gets it.

Edg. Poor Tom 's acold.

Glou. Go in with me. My duty cannot suffer
T' obey in all your daughters' hard commands.
Though their injunction be to bar my doors
And let this tyrannous night take hold upon you,
Yet have I ventur'd to come seek you out
And bring you where both fire and food is ready.

Lear. First let me talk with this philosopher.
What is the cause of thunder?

Kent. Good my lord, take his offer; go into th' house.

Lear. I'll talk a word with this same learned Theban.
What is your study?

Edg. How to prevent the fiend and to kill vermin.

Lear. Let me ask you one word in private.

Kent. Importune him once more to go, my lord.

His wits begin t' unsettle.

Glou. Canst thou blame him?

Storm still.

His daughters seek his death. Ah, that good Kent!

He said it would be thus-poor banish'd man!

Thou say'st the King grows mad: I'll tell thee, friend,

I am almost mad myself. I had a son,

Now outlaw'd from my blood. He sought my life

But lately, very late. I lov'd him, friend-

No father his son dearer. True to tell thee,

The grief hath craz'd my wits. What a night 's this!

I do beseech your Grace-

Lear. O, cry you mercy, sir.

Noble philosopher, your company.

Edg. Tom's acold.

Glou. In, fellow, there, into th' hovel; keep thee warm.

Lear. Come, let's in all.

Kent. This way, my lord.

Lear. With him!
I will keep still with my philosopher.

Kent. Good my lord, soothe him; let him take the fellow.

Glou. Take him you on.

Kent. Sirrah, come on; go along with us.

Lear. Come, good Athenian.

Glou. No words, no words! hush.

Edg. Child Rowland to the dark tower came;
His word was still
Fie, foh, and fum!
I smell the blood of a British man.

Exeunt.

Scene V. Gloucester's Castle.

Enter Cornwall and Edmund.

Corn. I will have my revenge ere I depart his house.

Edm. How, my lord, I may be censured, that nature thus gives way to loyalty, something fears me to think of.

Corn. I now perceive it was not altogether your brother's evil disposition made him seek his death; but a provoking merit, set awork by a reproveable badness in himself.

Edm. How malicious is my fortune that I must repent to be just! This is the letter he spoke of, which approves him an

intelligent party to the advantages of France. O heavens! that
this treason were not-or not I the detector!

Corn. Go with me to the Duchess.

Edm. If the matter of this paper be certain, you have mighty
business in hand.

Corn. True or false, it hath made thee Earl of Gloucester.
Seek out where thy father is, that he may be ready for our apprehension.

Edm. [aside] If I find him comforting the King, it will stuff his
suspicion more fully.- I will persever in my course of loyalty,
though the conflict be sore between that and my blood.

Corn. I will lay trust upon thee, and thou shalt find a dearer
father in my love.

Exeunt.

Scene VI. A farmhouse near Gloucester's Castle.

Enter Gloucester, Lear, Kent, Fool, and Edgar.

Glou. Here is better than the open air; take it thankfully. I will

piece out the comfort with what addition I can. I will not be long from you.

Kent. All the power of his wits have given way to his impatience.

The gods reward your kindness!

Exit [Gloucester] .

Edg. Frateretto calls me, and tells me Nero is an angler in the

lake of darkness. Pray, innocent, and beware the foul fiend.

Fool. Prithee, nuncle, tell me whether a madman be a gentleman or a yeoman.

Lear. A king, a king!

Fool. No, he's a yeoman that has a gentleman to his son; for he's a

mad yeoman that sees his son a gentleman before him.

Lear. To have a thousand with red burning spits

Come hizzing in upon 'em-

Edg. The foul fiend bites my back.

Fool. He's mad that trusts in the tameness of a wolf, a horse's health, a boy's love, or a whore's oath.

Lear. It shall be done; I will arraign them straight.
[To Edgar] Come, sit thou here, most learned justicer.
[To the Fool] Thou, sapient sir, sit here. Now, you
she-foxes!

Edg. Look, where he stands and glares! Want'st thou eyes at trial, madam?

Come o'er the bourn, Bessy, to me.

Fool. Her boat hath a leak,
And she must not speak
Why she dares not come over to thee.

Edg. The foul fiend haunts poor Tom in the voice of a nightingale.
Hoppedance cries in Tom's belly for two white herring. Croak
not, black angel; I have no food for thee.

Kent. How do you, sir? Stand you not so amaz'd.
Will you lie down and rest upon the cushions?

Lear. I'll see their trial first. Bring in their evidence.
[To Edgar] Thou, robed man of justice, take thy place.
[To the Fool] And thou, his yokefellow of equity,
Bench by his side. *[To Kent]* You are o' th' commission,
Sit you too.

Edg. Let us deal justly.
Sleepest or wakest thou, jolly shepherd?
Thy sheep be in the corn;
And for one blast of thy minikin mouth
Thy sheep shall take no harm.
Purr! the cat is gray.

Lear. Arraign her first. 'Tis Goneril. I here take my oath before this honourable assembly, she kicked the poor King her father.

Fool. Come hither, mistress. Is your name Goneril?

Lear. She cannot deny it.

Fool. Cry you mercy, I took you for a joint-stool.

Lear. And here's another, whose warp'd looks proclaim
What store her heart is made on. Stop her there!

Arms, arms! sword! fire! Corruption in the place!
False justicer, why hast thou let her scape?

Edg. Bless thy five wits!

Kent. O pity! Sir, where is the patience now
That you so oft have boasted to retain?

Edg. [aside] My tears begin to take his part so much
They'll mar my counterfeiting.

Lear. The little dogs and all,

Tray, Blanch, and Sweetheart, see, they bark at me.

Edg. Tom will throw his head at them. Avaunt, you curs!

Be thy mouth or black or white,

Tooth that poisons if it bite;

Mastiff, greyhound, mongrel grim,

Hound or spaniel, brach or lym,

Bobtail tyke or trundle-tall-

Tom will make them weep and wail;

For, with throwing thus my head,

Dogs leap the hatch, and all are fled.

Do de, de, de. Sessa! Come, march to wakes and fairs and market

towns. Poor Tom, thy horn is dry.

Lear. Then let them anatomize Regan. See what breeds about her

heart. Is there any cause in nature that makes these hard

hearts? *[To Edgar]* You, sir-I entertain you for one of my

hundred; only I do not like the fashion of your garments.

You'll

say they are Persian attire; but let them be chang'd.

Kent. Now, good my lord, lie here and rest awhile.

Lear. Make no noise, make no noise; draw the curtains.
So, so, so. We'll go to supper i' th' morning. So, so, so.

Fool. And I'll go to bed at noon.

Enter Gloucester.

Glou. Come hither, friend. Where is the King my master?

Kent. Here, sir; but trouble him not; his wits are gone.

Glou. Good friend, I prithee take him in thy arms.
I have o'erheard a plot of death upon him.
There is a litter ready; lay him in't
And drive towards Dover, friend, where thou shalt meet
Both welcome and protection. Take up thy master.
If thou shouldst dally half an hour, his life,

With thine, and all that offer to defend him,
Stand in assured loss. Take up, take up!
And follow me, that will to some provision
Give thee quick conduct.

Kent. Oppressed nature sleeps.
This rest might yet have balm'd thy broken senses,
Which, if convenience will not allow,
Stand in hard cure. *[To the Fool]* Come, help to bear thy master.
Thou must not stay behind.

Glou. Come, come, away!
Exeunt [all but Edgar] .

Edg. When we our betters see bearing our woes,
We scarcely think our miseries our foes.
Who alone suffers suffers most i' th' mind,
Leaving free things and happy shows behind;
But then the mind much sufferance doth o'erskip
When grief hath mates, and bearing fellowship.
How light and portable my pain seems now,

When that which makes me bend makes the King bow,

He childed as I fathered! Tom, away!

Mark the high noises, and thyself bewray

When false opinion, whose wrong thought defiles thee,

In thy just proof repeals and reconciles thee.

What will hap more to-night, safe scape the King!

Lurk, lurk. *[Exit.]*

Scene VII. Gloucester's Castle.

Enter Cornwall, Regan, Goneril, *[Edmund the]* Bastard, and

Servants.

Corn. [to Goneril] Post speedily to my lord your husband, show him

this letter. The army of France is landed.- Seek out the traitor Gloucester.

[Exeunt some of the Servants.]

Reg. Hang him instantly.

Gon. Pluck out his eyes.

Corn. Leave him to my displeasure. Edmund, keep you our sister
company. The revenges we are bound to take upon your traitorous
father are not fit for your beholding. Advise the Duke where you
are going, to a most festinate preparation. We are bound to the
like. Our posts shall be swift and intelligent betwixt us.
Farewell, dear sister; farewell, my Lord of Gloucester.

Enter [Oswald the] Steward.

How now? Where's the King?

Osw. My Lord of Gloucester hath convey'd him hence.
Some five or six and thirty of his knights,
Hot questrists after him, met him at gate;
Who, with some other of the lord's dependants,
Are gone with him towards Dover, where they boast
To have well-armed friends.

Corn. Get horses for your mistress.

Gon. Farewell, sweet lord, and sister.

Corn. Edmund, farewell.

Exeunt Goneril, *[Edmund, and Oswald]* .

Go seek the traitor Gloucester,

Pinion him like a thief, bring him before us.

[Exeunt other Servants.]

Though well we may not pass upon his life

Without the form of justice, yet our power

Shall do a court'sy to our wrath, which men

May blame, but not control.

Enter Gloucester, brought in by two or three.

Who's there? the traitor?

Reg. Ingrateful fox! 'tis he.

Corn. Bind fast his corky arms.

Glou. What mean, your Graces? Good my friends, consider

You are my guests. Do me no foul play, friends.

Corn. Bind him, I say.

[Servants bind him.]

Reg. Hard, hard. O filthy traitor!

Glou. Unmerciful lady as you are, I am none.

Corn. To this chair bind him. Villain, thou shalt find-

[Regan plucks his beard.]

Glou. By the kind gods, 'tis most ignobly done
To pluck me by the beard.

Reg. So white, and such a traitor!

Glou. Naughty lady,
These hairs which thou dost ravish from my chin

Will quicken, and accuse thee. I am your host.
With robber's hands my hospitable favours
You should not ruffle thus. What will you do?

Corn. Come, sir, what letters had you late from France?

Reg. Be simple-answer'd, for we know the truth.

Corn. And what confederacy have you with the traitors
Late footed in the kingdom?

Reg. To whose hands have you sent the lunatic King?
Speak.

Glou. I have a letter guessingly set down,
Which came from one that's of a neutral heart,
And not from one oppos'd.

Corn. Cunning.

Reg. And false.

Corn. Where hast thou sent the King?

Glou. To Dover.

Reg. Wherefore to Dover? Wast thou not charg'd at peril-

Corn. Wherefore to Dover? Let him first answer that.

Glou. I am tied to th' stake, and I must stand the course.

Reg. Wherefore to Dover, sir?

Glou. Because I would not see thy cruel nails
Pluck out his poor old eyes; nor thy fierce sister
In his anointed flesh stick boarish fangs.
The sea, with such a storm as his bare head
In hell-black night endur'd, would have buoy'd up
And quench'd the steeled fires.

Yet, poor old heart, he holp the heavens to rain.

If wolves had at thy gate howl'd that stern time,

Thou shouldst have said, 'Good porter, turn the key.'

All cruels else subscrib'd. But I shall see

The winged vengeance overtake such children.

Corn. See't shalt thou never. Fellows, hold the chair.

Upon these eyes of thine I'll set my foot.

Glou. He that will think to live till he be old,

Give me some help!- O cruel! O ye gods!

Reg. One side will mock another. Th' other too!

Corn. If you see vengeance-

1. Serv. Hold your hand, my lord!

I have serv'd you ever since I was a child;

But better service have I never done you

Than now to bid you hold.

Reg. How now, you dog?

1. Serv. If you did wear a beard upon your chin,

I'ld shake it on this quarrel.

Reg. What do you mean?

Corn. My villain! Draw and fight.

1. Serv. Nay, then, come on, and take the chance of anger.

Reg. Give me thy sword. A peasant stand up thus?

She takes a sword and runs at him behind.

1. Serv. O, I am slain! My lord, you have one eye left

To see some mischief on him. O! He dies.

Corn. Lest it see more, prevent it. Out, vile jelly!

Where is thy lustre now?

Glou. All dark and comfortless! Where's my son Edmund?

Edmund, enkindle all the sparks of nature

To quit this horrid act.

Reg. Out, treacherous villain!

Thou call'st on him that hates thee. It was he

That made the overture of thy treasons to us;
Who is too good to pity thee.

Glou. O my follies! Then Edgar was abus'd.
Kind gods, forgive me that, and prosper him!

Reg. Go thrust him out at gates, and let him smell
His way to Dover.

Exit [one] with Gloucester.

How is't, my lord? How look you?

Corn. I have receiv'd a hurt. Follow me, lady.
Turn out that eyeless villain. Throw this slave
Upon the dunghill. Regan, I bleed apace.
Untimely comes this hurt. Give me your arm.

Exit [Cornwall, led by Regan] .

2. Serv. I'll never care what wickedness I do,

If this man come to good.

3. Serv. If she live long,

And in the end meet the old course of death,

Women will all turn monsters.

2. Serv. Let's follow the old Earl, and get the bedlam

To lead him where he would. His roguish madness

Allows itself to anything.

3. Serv. Go thou. I'll fetch some flax and whites of eggs

To apply to his bleeding face. Now heaven help him!

Exeunt.

ACT IV. Scene I. The heath.

Enter Edgar.

Edg. Yet better thus, and known to be contemn'd,

Than still contemn'd and flatter'd. To be worst,

The lowest and most dejected thing of fortune,

Stands still in esperance, lives not in fear.

The lamentable change is from the best;

The worst returns to laughter. Welcome then,
Thou unsubstantial air that I embrace!
The wretch that thou hast blown unto the worst
Owes nothing to thy blasts.

Enter Gloucester, led by an Old Man.

But who comes here?
My father, poorly led? World, world, O world!
But that thy strange mutations make us hate thee,
Life would not yield to age.
Old Man. O my good lord,
I have been your tenant, and your father's tenant,
These fourscore years.

Glou. Away, get thee away! Good friend, be gone.
Thy comforts can do me no good at all;
Thee they may hurt.
Old Man. You cannot see your way.

Glou. I have no way, and therefore want no eyes;

I stumbled when I saw. Full oft 'tis seen
Our means secure us, and our mere defects
Prove our commodities. Ah dear son Edgar,
The food of thy abused father's wrath!
Might I but live to see thee in my touch,
I'ld say I had eyes again!
Old Man. How now? Who's there?

Edg. [aside] O gods! Who is't can say 'I am at the worst'?
I am worse than e'er I was.

Old Man. 'Tis poor mad Tom.

Edg. [aside] And worse I may be yet. The worst is not
So long as we can say 'This is the worst.'

Old Man. Fellow, where goest?

Glou. Is it a beggarman?
Old Man. Madman and beggar too.

Glou. He has some reason, else he could not beg.
I' th' last night's storm I such a fellow saw,
Which made me think a man a worm. My son
Came then into my mind, and yet my mind
Was then scarce friends with him. I have heard more since.
As flies to wanton boys are we to th' gods.

They kill us for their sport.

Edg. [aside] How should this be?
Bad is the trade that must play fool to sorrow,
Ang'ring itself and others.- Bless thee, master!

Glou. Is that the naked fellow?
Old Man. Ay, my lord.

Glou. Then prithee get thee gone. If for my sake
Thou wilt o'ertake us hence a mile or twain
I' th' way toward Dover, do it for ancient love;
And bring some covering for this naked soul,
Who I'll entreat to lead me.

Old Man. Alack, sir, he is mad!

Glou. 'Tis the time's plague when madmen lead the blind.
Do as I bid thee, or rather do thy pleasure.

Above the rest, be gone.
Old Man. I'll bring him the best 'parel that I have,
Come on't what will. *Exit* .

Glou. Sirrah naked fellow-

Edg. Poor Tom's acold. *[Aside]* I cannot daub it further.

Glou. Come hither, fellow.

Edg. *[aside]* And yet I must.- Bless thy sweet eyes, they bleed.

Glou. Know'st thou the way to Dover?

Edg. Both stile and gate, horseway and footpath. Poor Tom hath been
scar'd out of his good wits. Bless thee, good man's son, from

the foul fiend! Five fiends have been in poor Tom at once: of
lust, as Obidicut; Hobbididence, prince of dumbness; Mahu, of
stealing; Modo, of murder; Flibbertigibbet, of mopping and
mowing, who since possesses chambermaids and waiting women.
So,
bless thee, master!

Glou. Here, take this Purse, thou whom the heavens' plagues
Have humbled to all strokes. That I am wretched
Makes thee the happier. Heavens, deal so still!
Let the superfluous and lust-dieted man,
That slaves your ordinance, that will not see
Because he does not feel, feel your pow'r quickly;
So distribution should undo excess,
And each man have enough. Dost thou know Dover?

Edg. Ay, master.

Glou. There is a cliff, whose high and bending head
Looks fearfully in the confined deep.
Bring me but to the very brim of it,

And I'll repair the misery thou dost bear
With something rich about me. From that place
I shall no leading need.

Edg. Give me thy arm.
Poor Tom shall lead thee.

Exeunt.

Scene II. Before the Duke of Albany's Palace.

Enter Goneril and *[Edmund the]* Bastard.

Gon. Welcome, my lord. I marvel our mild husband
Not met us on the way.

Enter [Oswald the] Steward.

Now, where's your master?

Osw. Madam, within, but never man so chang'd.
I told him of the army that was landed:

He smil'd at it. I told him you were coming:
His answer was, 'The worse.' Of Gloucester's treachery
And of the loyal service of his son
When I inform'd him, then he call'd me sot
And told me I had turn'd the wrong side out.
What most he should dislike seems pleasant to him;
What like, offensive.

Gon. [to Edmund] Then shall you go no further.
It is the cowish terror of his spirit,
That dares not undertake. He'll not feel wrongs
Which tie him to an answer. Our wishes on the way
May prove effects. Back, Edmund, to my brother.
Hasten his musters and conduct his pow'rs.
I must change arms at home and give the distaff
Into my husband's hands. This trusty servant
Shall pass between us. Ere long you are like to hear
(If you dare venture in your own behalf)
A mistress's command. Wear this. *[Gives a favour.]*
Spare speech.

Decline your head. This kiss, if it durst speak,
Would stretch thy spirits up into the air.

Conceive, and fare thee well.

Edm. Yours in the ranks of death! *Exit* .

Gon. My most dear Gloucester!
O, the difference of man and man!
To thee a woman's services are due;
My fool usurps my body.

Osw. Madam, here comes my lord. *Exit* .

Enter Albany.

Gon. I have been worth the whistle.

Alb. O Goneril,
You are not worth the dust which the rude wind
Blows in your face! I fear your disposition.

That nature which contemns it origin
Cannot be bordered certain in itself.
She that herself will sliver and disbranch
From her material sap, perforce must wither
And come to deadly use.

Gon. No more! The text is foolish.

Alb. Wisdom and goodness to the vile seem vile;
Filths savour but themselves. What have you done?

Tigers, not daughters, what have you perform'd?
A father, and a gracious aged man,
Whose reverence even the head-lugg'd bear would lick,
Most barbarous, most degenerate, have you madded.

Could my good brother suffer you to do it?
A man, a prince, by him so benefited!
If that the heavens do not their visible spirits
Send quickly down to tame these vile offences,
It will come,

Humanity must perforce prey on itself,

Like monsters of the deep.

Gon. Milk-liver'd man!

That bear'st a cheek for blows, a head for wrongs;

Who hast not in thy brows an eye discerning

Thine honour from thy suffering; that not know'st

Fools do those villains pity who are punish'd

Ere they have done their mischief. Where's thy drum?

France spreads his banners in our noiseless land,

With plumed helm thy state begins to threat,

Whiles thou, a moral fool, sit'st still, and criest

'Alack, why does he so?'

Alb. See thyself, devil!

Proper deformity seems not in the fiend

So horrid as in woman.

Gon. O vain fool!

Alb. Thou changed and self-cover'd thing, for shame!

Bemonster not thy feature! Were't my fitness
To let these hands obey my blood,
They are apt enough to dislocate and tear
Thy flesh and bones. Howe'er thou art a fiend,
A woman's shape doth shield thee.

Gon. Marry, your manhood mew!

Enter a Gentleman.

Alb. What news?

Gent. O, my good lord, the Duke of Cornwall 's dead,
Slain by his servant, going to put out
The other eye of Gloucester.

Alb. Gloucester's eyes?

Gent. A servant that he bred, thrill'd with remorse,
Oppos'd against the act, bending his sword

To his great master; who, thereat enrag'd,
Flew on him, and amongst them fell'd him dead;
But not without that harmful stroke which since
Hath pluck'd him after.

Alb. This shows you are above,
You justicers, that these our nether crimes
So speedily can venge! But O poor Gloucester!
Lose he his other eye?

Gent. Both, both, my lord.
This letter, madam, craves a speedy answer.

'Tis from your sister.

Gon. [aside] One way I like this well;
But being widow, and my Gloucester with her,
May all the building in my fancy pluck
Upon my hateful life. Another way
The news is not so tart.- I'll read, and answer.
Exit.

Alb. Where was his son when they did take his eyes?

Gent. Come with my lady hither.

Alb. He is not here.

Gent. No, my good lord; I met him back again.

Alb. Knows he the wickedness?

Gent. Ay, my good lord. 'Twas he inform'd against him,
And quit the house on purpose, that their punishment
Might have the freer course.

Alb. Gloucester, I live
To thank thee for the love thou show'dst the King,
And to revenge thine eyes. Come hither, friend.
Tell me what more thou know'st.

Exeunt.

Scene III. The French camp near Dover.

Enter Kent and a Gentleman.

Kent. Why the King of France is so suddenly gone back know you the reason?

Gent. Something he left imperfect in the state, which since his coming forth is thought of, which imports to the kingdom so much fear and danger that his personal return was most required and necessary.

Kent. Who hath he left behind him general?

Gent. The Marshal of France, Monsieur La Far.

Kent. Did your letters pierce the Queen to any demonstration of grief?

Gent. Ay, sir. She took them, read them in my presence,
And now and then an ample tear trill'd down
Her delicate cheek. It seem'd she was a queen
Over her passion, who, most rebel-like,
Sought to be king o'er her.

Kent. O, then it mov'd her?

Gent. Not to a rage. Patience and sorrow strove

Who should express her goodliest. You have seen

Sunshine and rain at once: her smiles and tears

Were like, a better way. Those happy smilets

That play'd on her ripe lip seem'd not to know

What guests were in her eyes, which parted thence

As pearls from diamonds dropp'd. In brief,

Sorrow would be a rarity most belov'd,

If all could so become it.

Kent. Made she no verbal question?

Gent. Faith, once or twice she heav'd the name of father

Pantingly forth, as if it press'd her heart;

Cried 'Sisters, sisters! Shame of ladies! Sisters!

Kent! father! sisters! What, i' th' storm? i' th' night?

Let pity not be believ'd!' There she shook

The holy water from her heavenly eyes,

And clamour moisten'd. Then away she started
To deal with grief alone.

Kent. It is the stars,
The stars above us, govern our conditions;
Else one self mate and mate could not beget
Such different issues. You spoke not with her since?

Gent. No.

Kent. Was this before the King return'd?

Gent. No, since.

Kent. Well, sir, the poor distressed Lear's i' th' town;
Who sometime, in his better tune, remembers
What we are come about, and by no means
Will yield to see his daughter.

Gent. Why, good sir?

Kent. A sovereign shame so elbows him; his own unkindness,
That stripp'd her from his benediction, turn'd her
To foreign casualties, gave her dear rights
To his dog-hearted daughters-these things sting
His mind so venomously that burning shame
Detains him from Cordelia.

Gent. Alack, poor gentleman!

Kent. Of Albany's and Cornwall's powers you heard not?

Gent. 'Tis so; they are afoot.

Kent. Well, sir, I'll bring you to our master Lear
And leave you to attend him. Some dear cause
Will in concealment wrap me up awhile.
When I am known aright, you shall not grieve
Lending me this acquaintance. I pray you go
Along with me. *Exeunt* .

Scene IV. The French camp.

Enter , with Drum and Colours, Cordelia, Doctor, and Soldiers.

Cor. Alack, 'tis he! Why, he was met even now
As mad as the vex'd sea, singing aloud,
Crown'd with rank fumiter and furrow weeds,
With hardocks, hemlock, nettles, cuckoo flow'rs,
Darnel, and all the idle weeds that grow
In our sustaining corn. A century send forth.
Search every acre in the high-grown field
And bring him to our eye. *[Exit an Officer.]* What can man's wisdom
In the restoring his bereaved sense?

He that helps him take all my outward worth.

Doct. There is means, madam.
Our foster nurse of nature is repose,
The which he lacks. That to provoke in him
Are many simples operative, whose power
Will close the eye of anguish.

Cor. All blest secrets,

All you unpublish'd virtues of the earth,
Spring with my tears! be aidant and remediate
In the good man's distress! Seek, seek for him!
Lest his ungovern'd rage dissolve the life
That wants the means to lead it.

Enter Messenger.

Mess. News, madam.
The British pow'rs are marching hitherward.

Cor. 'Tis known before. Our preparation stands
In expectation of them. O dear father,
It is thy business that I go about.
Therefore great France
My mourning and important tears hath pitied.
No blown ambition doth our arms incite,
But love, dear love, and our ag'd father's right.
Soon may I hear and see him!

Exeunt.

Scene V. Gloucester's Castle.

Enter Regan and *[Oswald the]* Steward.

Reg. But are my brother's pow'rs set forth?

Osw. Ay, madam.

Reg. Himself in person there?

Osw. Madam, with much ado.

Your sister is the better soldier.

Reg. Lord Edmund spake not with your lord at home?

Osw. No, madam.

Reg. What might import my sister's letter to him?

Osw. I know not, lady.

Reg. Faith, he is posted hence on serious matter.
It was great ignorance, Gloucester's eyes being out,
To let him live. Where he arrives he moves
All hearts against us. Edmund, I think, is gone,
In pity of his misery, to dispatch
His nighted life; moreover, to descry
The strength o' th' enemy.

Osw. I must needs after him, madam, with my letter.

Reg. Our troops set forth to-morrow. Stay with us.
The ways are dangerous.

Osw. I may not, madam.
My lady charg'd my duty in this business.

Reg. Why should she write to Edmund? Might not you
Transport her purposes by word? Belike,
Something-I know not what-I'll love thee much-
Let me unseal the letter.

Osw. Madam, I had rather-

Reg. I know your lady does not love her husband;
I am sure of that; and at her late being here
She gave strange eliads and most speaking looks
To noble Edmund. I know you are of her bosom.

Osw. I, madam?

Reg. I speak in understanding. Y'are! I know't.
Therefore I do advise you take this note.
My lord is dead; Edmund and I have talk'd,
And more convenient is he for my hand
Than for your lady's. You may gather more.
If you do find him, pray you give him this;
And when your mistress hears thus much from you,
I pray desire her call her wisdom to her.

So farewell.
If you do chance to hear of that blind traitor,
Preferment falls on him that cuts him off.

Osw. Would I could meet him, madam! I should show

What party I do follow.

Reg. Fare thee well. *Exeunt* .

Scene VI. The country near Dover.

Enter Gloucester, and Edgar *[like a Peasant]* .

Glou. When shall I come to th' top of that same hill?

Edg. You do climb up it now. Look how we labour.

Glou. Methinks the ground is even.

Edg. Horrible steep.
Hark, do you hear the sea?

Glou. No, truly.

Edg. Why, then, your other senses grow imperfect
By your eyes' anguish.

Glou. So may it be indeed.
Methinks thy voice is alter'd, and thou speak'st
In better phrase and matter than thou didst.

Edg. Y'are much deceiv'd. In nothing am I chang'd
But in my garments.

Glou. Methinks y'are better spoken.

Edg. Come on, sir; here's the place. Stand still. How fearful
And dizzy 'tis to cast one's eyes so low!
The crows and choughs that wing the midway air
Show scarce so gross as beetles. Halfway down
Hangs one that gathers sampire-dreadful trade!
Methinks he seems no bigger than his head.
The fishermen that walk upon the beach
Appear like mice; and yond tall anchoring bark,
Diminish'd to her cock; her cock, a buoy
Almost too small for sight. The murmuring surge
That on th' unnumb'red idle pebble chafes
Cannot be heard so high. I'll look no more,
Lest my brain turn, and the deficient sight
Topple down headlong.

Glou. Set me where you stand.

Edg. Give me your hand. You are now within a foot
Of th' extreme verge. For all beneath the moon
Would I not leap upright.

Glou. Let go my hand.
Here, friend, is another purse; in it a jewel
Well worth a poor man's taking. Fairies and gods
Prosper it with thee! Go thou further off;
Bid me farewell, and let me hear thee going.

Edg. Now fare ye well, good sir.

Glou. With all my heart.

Edg. [aside] . Why I do trifle thus with his despair
Is done to cure it.

Glou. O you mighty gods! He kneels.
This world I do renounce, and, in your sights,

Shake patiently my great affliction off.

If I could bear it longer and not fall

To quarrel with your great opposeless wills,

My snuff and loathed part of nature should

Burn itself out. If Edgar live, O, bless him!

Now, fellow, fare thee well.

He falls *[forward and swoons]* .

Edg. Gone, sir, farewell.-

And yet I know not how conceit may rob

The treasury of life when life itself

Yields to the theft. Had he been where he thought,

By this had thought been past.- Alive or dead?

Ho you, sir! friend! Hear you, sir? Speak!-

Thus might he pass indeed. Yet he revives.

What are you, sir?

Glou. Away, and let me die.

Edg. Hadst thou been aught but gossamer, feathers, air,

So many fadom down precipitating,

Thou'dst shiver'd like an egg; but thou dost breathe;
Hast heavy substance; bleed'st not; speak'st; art sound.
Ten masts at each make not the altitude
Which thou hast perpendicularly fell.

Thy life is a miracle. Speak yet again.

Glou. But have I fall'n, or no?

Edg. From the dread summit of this chalky bourn.
Look up a-height. The shrill-gorg'd lark so far
Cannot be seen or heard. Do but look up.

Glou. Alack, I have no eyes!
Is wretchedness depriv'd that benefit
To end itself by death? 'Twas yet some comfort
When misery could beguile the tyrant's rage
And frustrate his proud will.

Edg. Give me your arm.
Up-so. How is't? Feel you your legs? You stand.

Glou. Too well, too well.

Edg. This is above all strangeness.
Upon the crown o' th' cliff what thing was that
Which parted from you?

Glou. A poor unfortunate beggar.

Edg. As I stood here below, methought his eyes
Were two full moons; he had a thousand noses,
Horns whelk'd and wav'd like the enridged sea.
It was some fiend. Therefore, thou happy father,
Think that the clearest gods, who make them honours
Of men's impossibility, have preserv'd thee.

Glou. I do remember now. Henceforth I'll bear
Affliction till it do cry out itself
'Enough, enough,' and die. That thing you speak of,
I took it for a man. Often 'twould say
'The fiend, the fiend'- he led me to that place.

Edg. Bear free and patient thoughts.

Enter Lear, mad, *[fantastically dressed with weeds]* .

But who comes here?
The safer sense will ne'er accommodate
His master thus.

Lear. No, they cannot touch me for coming;
I am the King himself.

Edg. O thou side-piercing sight!

Lear. Nature 's above art in that respect. There's your press money. That fellow handles his bow like a crow-keeper. Draw me a clothier's yard. Look, look, a mouse! Peace, peace; this piece of toasted cheese will do't. There's my gauntlet; I'll prove it on a giant. Bring up the brown bills. O, well flown, bird! i' th' clout, i' th' clout! Hewgh! Give the word.

Edg. Sweet marjoram.

Lear. Pass.

Glou. I know that voice.

Lear. Ha! Goneril with a white beard? They flatter'd me like a dog, and told me I had white hairs in my beard ere the black ones were there. To say 'ay' and 'no' to everything I said! 'Ay' and 'no' too was no good divinity. When the rain came to wet me once, and the wind to make me chatter; when the thunder would not peace at my bidding; there I found 'em, there I smelt 'em out. Go to, they are not men o' their words! They told me I was everything. 'Tis a lie-I am not ague-proof.

Glou. The trick of that voice I do well remember.
Is't not the King?

Lear. Ay, every inch a king!
When I do stare, see how the subject quakes.

I pardon that man's life. What was thy cause?
Adultery?

Thou shalt not die. Die for adultery? No.
The wren goes to't, and the small gilded fly
Does lecher in my sight.
Let copulation thrive; for Gloucester's bastard son
Was kinder to his father than my daughters
Got 'tween the lawful sheets.

To't, luxury, pell-mell! for I lack soldiers.
Behold yond simp'ring dame,
Whose face between her forks presageth snow,
That minces virtue, and does shake the head
To hear of pleasure's name.
The fitchew nor the soiled horse goes to't
With a more riotous appetite.
Down from the waist they are Centaurs,
Though women all above.
But to the girdle do the gods inherit,
Beneath is all the fiend's.

There's hell, there's darkness, there's the sulphurous pit;
burning, scalding, stench, consumption. Fie, fie, fie! pah, pah!
Give me an ounce of civet, good apothecary, to sweeten my
imagination. There's money for thee.

Glou. O, let me kiss that hand!

Lear. Let me wipe it first; it smells of mortality.

Glou. O ruin'd piece of nature! This great world
Shall so wear out to naught. Dost thou know me?

Lear. I remember thine eyes well enough. Dost thou squiny at me?
No, do thy worst, blind Cupid! I'll not love. Read thou this
challenge; mark but the penning of it.

Glou. Were all the letters suns, I could not see one.

Edg. *[aside]* I would not take this from report. It is,
And my heart breaks at it.

Lear. Read.

Glou. What, with the case of eyes?

Lear. O, ho, are you there with me? No eyes in your head, nor no
money in your purse? Your eyes are in a heavy case, your purse
in a light. Yet you see how this world goes.

Glou. I see it feelingly.

Lear. What, art mad? A man may see how the world goes with no eyes.
Look with thine ears. See how yond justice rails upon yond
simple thief. Hark in thine ear. Change places and,
handy-dandy,
which is the justice, which is the thief? Thou hast seen a
farmer's dog bark at a beggar?

Glou. Ay, sir.

Lear. And the creature run from the cur? There thou mightst behold
the great image of authority: a dog's obeyed in office.

Thou rascal beadle, hold thy bloody hand!
Why dost thou lash that whore? Strip thine own back.
Thou hotly lusts to use her in that kind
For which thou whip'st her. The usurer hangs the cozener.
Through tatter'd clothes small vices do appear;
Robes and furr'd gowns hide all. Plate sin with gold,
And the strong lance of justice hurtless breaks;
Arm it in rags, a pygmy's straw does pierce it.

None does offend, none-I say none! I'll able 'em.
Take that of me, my friend, who have the power
To seal th' accuser's lips. Get thee glass eyes
And, like a scurvy politician, seem
To see the things thou dost not. Now, now, now, now!
Pull off my boots. Harder, harder! So.

Edg. O, matter and impertinency mix'd!
Reason, in madness!

Lear. If thou wilt weep my fortunes, take my eyes.

I know thee well enough; thy name is Gloucester.

Thou must be patient. We came crying hither;

Thou know'st, the first time that we smell the air

We wawl and cry. I will preach to thee. Mark.

Glou. Alack, alack the day!

Lear. When we are born, we cry that we are come

To this great stage of fools. This' a good block.

It were a delicate stratagem to shoe

A troop of horse with felt. I'll put't in proof,

And when I have stol'n upon these sons-in-law,

Then kill, kill, kill, kill, kill, kill!

Enter a Gentleman *[with Attendants]* .

Gent. O, here he is! Lay hand upon him.- Sir,

Your most dear daughter-

Lear. No rescue? What, a prisoner? I am even

The natural fool of fortune. Use me well;

You shall have ransom. Let me have a surgeon;
I am cut to th' brains.

Gent. You shall have anything.

Lear. No seconds? All myself?
Why, this would make a man a man of salt,
To use his eyes for garden waterpots,
Ay, and laying autumn's dust.

Gent. Good sir-

Lear. I will die bravely, like a smug bridegroom. What!
I will be jovial. Come, come, I am a king;
My masters, know you that?

Gent. You are a royal one, and we obey you.

Lear. Then there's life in't. Nay, an you get it, you shall get it by running. Sa, sa, sa, sa!

Exit running. *[Attendants follow.]*

Gent. A sight most pitiful in the meanest wretch,
Past speaking of in a king! Thou hast one daughter
Who redeems nature from the general curse
Which twain have brought her to.

Edg. Hail, gentle sir.

Gent. Sir, speed you. What's your will?

Edg. Do you hear aught, sir, of a battle toward?

Gent. Most sure and vulgar. Every one hears that
Which can distinguish sound.

Edg. But, by your favour,
How near's the other army?

Gent. Near and on speedy foot. The main descry

Stands on the hourly thought.

Edg. I thank you sir. That's all.

Gent. Though that the Queen on special cause is here,
Her army is mov'd on.

Edg. I thank you, sir

Exit [Gentleman] .

Glou. You ever-gentle gods, take my breath from me;
Let not my worser spirit tempt me again
To die before you please!

Edg. Well pray you, father.

Glou. Now, good sir, what are you?

Edg. A most poor man, made tame to fortune's blows,

Who, by the art of known and feeling sorrows,
Am pregnant to good pity. Give me your hand;
I'll lead you to some biding.

Glou. Hearty thanks.
The bounty and the benison of heaven
To boot, and boot!

Enter [Oswald the] Steward.

Osw. A proclaim'd prize! Most happy!
That eyeless head of thine was first fram'd flesh
To raise my fortunes. Thou old unhappy traitor,
Briefly thyself remember. The sword is out
That must destroy thee.

Glou. Now let thy friendly hand
Put strength enough to't.

[Edgar interposes.]

Osw. Wherefore, bold peasant,
Dar'st thou support a publish'd traitor? Hence!
Lest that th' infection of his fortune take
Like hold on thee. Let go his arm.

Edg. Chill not let go, zir, without vurther 'cagion.

Osw. Let go, slave, or thou diest!

Edg. Good gentleman, go your gait, and let poor voke pass. An chud ha' bin zwagger'd out of my life, 'twould not ha' bin zo long as 'tis by a vortnight. Nay, come not near th' old man. Keep out, che vore ye, or Ise try whether your costard or my ballow be the harder. Chill be plain with you.

Osw. Out, dunghill!
They fight.

Edg. Chill pick your teeth, zir. Come! No matter vor your foins.

[Oswald falls.]

Osw. Slave, thou hast slain me. Villain, take my purse.
If ever thou wilt thrive, bury my body,
And give the letters which thou find'st about me
To Edmund Earl of Gloucester. Seek him out
Upon the British party. O, untimely death! Death!
He dies.

Edg. I know thee well. A serviceable villain,
As duteous to the vices of thy mistress
As badness would desire.

Glou. What, is he dead?

Edg. Sit you down, father; rest you.
Let's see his pockets; these letters that he speaks of
May be my friends. He's dead. I am only sorry
He had no other deathsman. Let us see.

Leave, gentle wax; and, manners, blame us not.
To know our enemies' minds, we'ld rip their hearts;

Their papers, is more lawful. Reads the letter.

'Let our reciprocal vows be rememb'red. You have many opportunities to cut him off. If your will want not, time and place will be fruitfully offer'd. There is nothing done, if he return the conqueror. Then am I the prisoner, and his bed my jail; from the loathed warmth whereof deliver me, and supply the place for your labour.

'Your (wife, so I would say) affectionate servant,

'Goneril.'

O indistinguish'd space of woman's will!
A plot upon her virtuous husband's life,
And the exchange my brother! Here in the sands
Thee I'll rake up, the post unsanctified
Of murtherous lechers; and in the mature time
With this ungracious paper strike the sight
Of the death-practis'd Duke, For him 'tis well
That of thy death and business I can tell.

Glou. The King is mad. How stiff is my vile sense,
That I stand up, and have ingenious feeling
Of my huge sorrows! Better I were distract.

So should my thoughts be sever'd from my griefs,
And woes by wrong imaginations lose
The knowledge of themselves.

A drum afar off.

Edg. Give me your hand.
Far off methinks I hear the beaten drum.
Come, father, I'll bestow you with a friend. *Exeunt* .

Scene VII. A tent in the French camp.

Enter Cordelia, Kent, Doctor, and Gentleman.

Cor. O thou good Kent, how shall I live and work
To match thy goodness? My life will be too short
And every measure fail me.

Kent. To be acknowledg'd, madam, is o'erpaid.
All my reports go with the modest truth;
Nor more nor clipp'd, but so.

Cor. Be better suited.
These weeds are memories of those worser hours.

I prithee put them off.

Kent. Pardon, dear madam.
Yet to be known shortens my made intent.
My boon I make it that you know me not
Till time and I think meet.

Cor. Then be't so, my good lord. *[To the Doctor]* How, does the King?

Doct. Madam, sleeps still.

Cor. O you kind gods,
Cure this great breach in his abused nature!
Th' untun'd and jarring senses, O, wind up
Of this child-changed father!

Doct. So please your Majesty
That we may wake the King? He hath slept long.

Cor. Be govern'd by your knowledge, and proceed

I' th' sway of your own will. Is he array'd?

Enter Lear in a chair carried by Servants.

Gent. Ay, madam. In the heaviness of sleep

We put fresh garments on him.

Doct. Be by, good madam, when we do awake him.

I doubt not of his temperance.

Cor. Very well.

Music.

Doct. Please you draw near. Louder the music there!

Cor. O my dear father, restoration hang

Thy medicine on my lips, and let this kiss

Repair those violent harms that my two sisters

Have in thy reverence made!

Kent . Kind and dear princess!

Cor. Had you not been their father, these white flakes

Had challeng'd pity of them. Was this a face

To be oppos'd against the warring winds?

To stand against the deep dread-bolted thunder?

In the most terrible and nimble stroke

Of quick cross lightning? to watch-poor perdu!-

With this thin helm? Mine enemy's dog,

Though he had bit me, should have stood that night

Against my fire; and wast thou fain, poor father,

To hovel thee with swine and rogues forlorn,

In short and musty straw? Alack, alack!

'Tis wonder that thy life and wits at once

Had not concluded all.- He wakes. Speak to him.

Doct. Madam, do you; 'tis fittest.

Cor. How does my royal lord? How fares your Majesty?

Lear. You do me wrong to take me out o' th' grave.

Thou art a soul in bliss; but I am bound

Upon a wheel of fire, that mine own tears

Do scald like molten lead.

Cor. Sir, do you know me?

Lear. You are a spirit, I know. When did you die?

Cor. Still, still, far wide!

Doct. He's scarce awake. Let him alone awhile.

Lear. Where have I been? Where am I? Fair daylight,

I am mightily abus'd. I should e'en die with pity,

To see another thus. I know not what to say.

I will not swear these are my hands. Let's see.

I feel this pin prick. Would I were assur'd

Of my condition!

Cor. O, look upon me, sir,

And hold your hands in benediction o'er me.

No, sir, you must not kneel.

Lear. Pray, do not mock me.
I am a very foolish fond old man,
Fourscore and upward, not an hour more nor less;
And, to deal plainly,
I fear I am not in my perfect mind.
Methinks I should know you, and know this man;
Yet I am doubtful; for I am mainly ignorant
What place this is; and all the skill I have
Remembers not these garments; nor I know not
Where I did lodge last night. Do not laugh at me;
For (as I am a man) I think this lady
To be my child Cordelia.

Cor. And so I am! I am!

Lear. Be your tears wet? Yes, faith. I pray weep not.
If you have poison for me, I will drink it.

I know you do not love me; for your sisters
Have, as I do remember, done me wrong.

You have some cause, they have not.

Cor. No cause, no cause.

Lear. Am I in France?

Kent. In your own kingdom, sir.

Lear. Do not abuse me.

Doct. Be comforted, good madam. The great rage
You see is kill'd in him; and yet it is danger
To make him even o'er the time he has lost.
Desire him to go in. Trouble him no more
Till further settling.

Cor. Will't please your Highness walk?

Lear. You must bear with me.

Pray you now, forget and forgive. I am old and foolish.

Exeunt. Manent Kent and Gentleman.

Gent. Holds it true, sir, that the Duke of Cornwall was so slain?

Kent. Most certain, sir.

Gent. Who is conductor of his people?

Kent. As 'tis said, the bastard son of Gloucester.

Gent. They say Edgar, his banish'd son, is with the Earl of Kent in Germany.

Kent. Report is changeable. 'Tis time to look about; the powers of the kingdom approach apace.

Gent. The arbitrement is like to be bloody.

Fare you well, sir. *[Exit.]*

Kent. My point and period will be throughly wrought,

Or well or ill, as this day's battle's fought. *Exit* .

ACT V. Scene I. The British camp near Dover.

Enter , with Drum and Colours, Edmund, Regan, Gentleman, and

Soldiers.

Edm. Know of the Duke if his last purpose hold,

Or whether since he is advis'd by aught

To change the course. He's full of alteration

And self-reproving. Bring his constant pleasure.

[Exit an Officer.]

Reg. Our sister's man is certainly miscarried.

Edm. Tis to be doubted, madam.

Reg. Now, sweet lord,

You know the goodness I intend upon you.

Tell me-but truly-but then speak the truth-
Do you not love my sister?

Edm. In honour'd love.

Reg. But have you never found my brother's way
To the forfended place?

Edm. That thought abuses you.

Reg. I am doubtful that you have been conjunct
And bosom'd with her, as far as we call hers.

Edm. No, by mine honour, madam.

Reg. I never shall endure her. Dear my lord,
Be not familiar with her.

Edm. Fear me not.
She and the Duke her husband!

Enter , with Drum and Colours, Albany, Goneril, Soldiers.

Gon. [aside] I had rather lose the battle than that sister
Should loosen him and me.

Alb. Our very loving sister, well bemet.
Sir, this I hear: the King is come to his daughter,
With others whom the rigour of our state
Forc'd to cry out. Where I could not be honest,
I never yet was valiant. For this business,
It toucheth us as France invades our land,
Not bolds the King, with others whom, I fear,
Most just and heavy causes make oppose.

Edm. Sir, you speak nobly.

Reg. Why is this reason'd?

Gon. Combine together 'gainst the enemy;
For these domestic and particular broils
Are not the question here.

Alb. Let's then determine

With th' ancient of war on our proceeding.

Edm. I shall attend you presently at your tent.

Reg. Sister, you'll go with us?

Gon. No.

Reg. 'Tis most convenient. Pray you go with us.

Gon. [aside] O, ho, I know the riddle.- I will go.

[As they are going out,] enter Edgar *[disguised]* .

Edg. If e'er your Grace had speech with man so poor,

Hear me one word.

Alb. I'll overtake you.- Speak.

Exeunt [all but Albany and Edgar] .

Edg. Before you fight the battle, ope this letter.
If you have victory, let the trumpet sound
For him that brought it. Wretched though I seem,
I can produce a champion that will prove
What is avouched there. If you miscarry,
Your business of the world hath so an end,
And machination ceases. Fortune love you!

Alb. Stay till I have read the letter.

Edg. I was forbid it.
When time shall serve, let but the herald cry,
And I'll appear again.

Alb. Why, fare thee well. I will o'erlook thy paper.

Exit [Edgar] .

Enter Edmund.

Edm. The enemy 's in view; draw up your powers.
Here is the guess of their true strength and forces
By diligent discovery; but your haste
Is now urg'd on you.

Alb. We will greet the time. *Exit* .

Edm. To both these sisters have I sworn my love;
Each jealous of the other, as the stung
Are of the adder. Which of them shall I take?
Both? one? or neither? Neither can be enjoy'd,
If both remain alive. To take the widow
Exasperates, makes mad her sister Goneril;
And hardly shall I carry out my side,
Her husband being alive. Now then, we'll use
His countenance for the battle, which being done,
Let her who would be rid of him devise
His speedy taking off. As for the mercy
Which he intends to Lear and to Cordelia-
The battle done, and they within our power,
Shall never see his pardon; for my state

Stands on me to defend, not to debate. *Exit* .

Scene II. A field between the two camps.

Alarum within. *Enter* , with Drum and Colours, the Powers of France over the stage, Cordelia with her Father in her hand, and exeunt.

Enter Edgar and Gloucester.

Edg. Here, father, take the shadow of this tree

For your good host. Pray that the right may thrive.

If ever I return to you again,

I'll bring you comfort.

Glou. Grace go with you, sir!

Exit [Edgar] .

Alarum and retreat within. *Enter* Edgar,

Edg. Away, old man! give me thy hand! away!

King Lear hath lost, he and his daughter ta'en.

Give me thy hand! come on!

Glou. No further, sir. A man may rot even here.

Edg. What, in ill thoughts again? Men must endure
Their going hence, even as their coming hither;
Ripeness is all. Come on.

Glou. And that's true too. *Exeunt* .

Scene III. The British camp, near Dover.

Enter , in conquest, with Drum and Colours, Edmund; Lear and Cordelia as prisoners; Soldiers, Captain.

Edm. Some officers take them away. Good guard
Until their greater pleasures first be known
That are to censure them.

Cor. We are not the first
Who with best meaning have incurr'd the worst.

For thee, oppressed king, am I cast down;
Myself could else outfrown false Fortune's frown.

Shall we not see these daughters and these sisters?

Lear. No, no, no, no! Come, let's away to prison.
We two alone will sing like birds i' th' cage.
When thou dost ask me blessing, I'll kneel down
And ask of thee forgiveness. So we'll live,
And pray, and sing, and tell old tales, and laugh
At gilded butterflies, and hear poor rogues
Talk of court news; and we'll talk with them too-
Who loses and who wins; who's in, who's out-
And take upon 's the mystery of things,
As if we were God's spies; and we'll wear out,
In a wall'd prison, packs and sects of great ones
That ebb and flow by th' moon.

Edm. Take them away.

Lear. Upon such sacrifices, my Cordelia, The gods themselves throw incense. Have I caught thee?

He that parts us shall bring a brand from heaven

And fire us hence like foxes. Wipe thine eyes.

The goodyears shall devour 'em, flesh and fell,

Ere they shall make us weep! We'll see 'em starv'd first.

Come. Exeunt [Lear and Cordelia, guarded] .

Edm. Come hither, Captain; hark.

Take thou this note *[gives a paper]* . Go follow them to prison.

One step I have advanc'd thee. If thou dost

As this instructs thee, thou dost make thy way

To noble fortunes. Know thou this, that men

Are as the time is. To be tender-minded

Does not become a sword. Thy great employment

Will not bear question. Either say thou'lt do't,

Or thrive by other means.

Capt. I'll do't, my lord.

Edm. About it! and write happy when th' hast done.

Mark-I say, instantly; and carry it so

As I have set it down.

Capt. I cannot draw a cart, nor eat dried oats;
If it be man's work, I'll do't. *Exit* .

Flourish. *Enter* Albany, Goneril, Regan, Soldiers.

Alb. Sir, you have show'd to-day your valiant strain,
And fortune led you well. You have the captives
Who were the opposites of this day's strife.
We do require them of you, so to use them
As we shall find their merits and our safety
May equally determine.

Edm. Sir, I thought it fit
To send the old and miserable King
To some retention and appointed guard;
Whose age has charms in it, whose title more,
To pluck the common bosom on his side
And turn our impress'd lances in our eyes
Which do command them. With him I sent the Queen,

My reason all the same; and they are ready
To-morrow, or at further space, t' appear
Where you shall hold your session. At this time
We sweat and bleed: the friend hath lost his friend;
And the best quarrels, in the heat, are curs'd
By those that feel their sharpness.
The question of Cordelia and her father
Requires a fitter place.

Alb. Sir, by your patience,
I hold you but a subject of this war,
Not as a brother.

Reg. That's as we list to grace him.
Methinks our pleasure might have been demanded
Ere you had spoke so far. He led our powers,
Bore the commission of my place and person,
The which immediacy may well stand up
And call itself your brother.

Gon. Not so hot!

In his own grace he doth exalt himself
More than in your addition.

Reg. In my rights
By me invested, he compeers the best.

Gon. That were the most if he should husband you.

Reg. Jesters do oft prove prophets.

Gon. Holla, holla!
That eye that told you so look'd but asquint.

Reg. Lady, I am not well; else I should answer
From a full-flowing stomach. General,
Take thou my soldiers, prisoners, patrimony;
Dispose of them, of me; the walls are thine.
Witness the world that I create thee here
My lord and master.

Gon. Mean you to enjoy him?

Alb. The let-alone lies not in your good will.

Edm. Nor in thine, lord.

Alb. Half-blooded fellow, yes.

Reg. *[to Edmund]* Let the drum strike, and prove my title thine.

Alb. Stay yet; hear reason. Edmund, I arrest thee
On capital treason; and, in thine attaint,
This gilded serpent *[points to Goneril]* . For your claim, fair sister,
I bar it in the interest of my wife.
'Tis she is subcontracted to this lord,
And I, her husband, contradict your banes.
If you will marry, make your loves to me;
My lady is bespoke.

Gon. An interlude!

Alb. Thou art arm'd, Gloucester. Let the trumpet sound.

If none appear to prove upon thy person
Thy heinous, manifest, and many treasons,
There is my pledge *[throws down a glove]* ! I'll prove it on thy heart,
Ere I taste bread, thou art in nothing less
Than I have here proclaim'd thee.

Reg. Sick, O, sick!

Gon. [aside] If not, I'll ne'er trust medicine.

Edm. There's my exchange *[throws down a glove]* . What in the world he is
That names me traitor, villain-like he lies.
Call by thy trumpet. He that dares approach,
On him, on you, who not? I will maintain
My truth and honour firmly.

Alb. A herald, ho!

Edm. A herald, ho, a herald!

Alb. Trust to thy single virtue; for thy soldiers,

All levied in my name, have in my name
Took their discharge.

Reg. My sickness grows upon me.

Alb. She is not well. Convey her to my tent.
[Exit Regan, led.]

Enter a Herald.

Come hither, herald. Let the trumpet sound,
And read out this.

Capt. Sound, trumpet! A trumpet sounds.

Her. (reads) 'If any man of quality or degree within the lists of
the army will maintain upon Edmund, supposed Earl of Gloucester,
that he is a manifold traitor, let him appear by the third sound
of the trumpet. He is bold in his defence.'

Edm. Sound! First trumpet.

Her. Again! Second trumpet.

Her. Again! Third trumpet.

Trumpet answers within.

Enter Edgar, armed, at the third sound, a Trumpet before him.

Alb. Ask him his purposes, why he appears
Upon this call o' th' trumpet.

Her. What are you?
Your name, your quality? and why you answer
This present summons?

Edg. Know my name is lost;
By treason's tooth bare-gnawn and canker-bit.
Yet am I noble as the adversary
I come to cope.

Alb. Which is that adversary?

Edg. What's he that speaks for Edmund Earl of Gloucester?

Edm. Himself. What say'st thou to him?

Edg. Draw thy sword,

That, if my speech offend a noble heart,

Thy arm may do thee justice. Here is mine.

Behold, it is the privilege of mine honours,

My oath, and my profession. I protest-

Maugre thy strength, youth, place, and eminence,

Despite thy victor sword and fire-new fortune,

Thy valour and thy heart-thou art a traitor;

False to thy gods, thy brother, and thy father;

Conspirant 'gainst this high illustrious prince;

And from th' extremest upward of thy head

To the descent and dust beneath thy foot,

A most toad-spotted traitor. Say thou 'no,'

This sword, this arm, and my best spirits are bent

To prove upon thy heart, whereto I speak,

Thou liest.

Edm. In wisdom I should ask thy name;
But since thy outside looks so fair and warlike,
And that thy tongue some say of breeding breathes,
What safe and nicely I might well delay
By rule of knighthood, I disdain and spurn.
Back do I toss those treasons to thy head;
With the hell-hated lie o'erwhelm thy heart;
Which-for they yet glance by and scarcely bruise-
This sword of mine shall give them instant way
Where they shall rest for ever. Trumpets, speak!

Alarums. Fight. *[Edmund falls.]*

Alb. Save him, save him!

Gon. This is mere practice, Gloucester.
By th' law of arms thou wast not bound to answer
An unknown opposite. Thou art not vanquish'd,
But cozen'd and beguil'd.

Alb. Shut your mouth, dame,
Or with this paper shall I stop it. [Shows her her letter to
Edmund.]- *[To Edmund]* . Hold, sir.
[To Goneril] Thou worse than any name, read thine own evil.
No tearing, lady! I perceive you know it.

Gon. Say if I do-the laws are mine, not thine.
Who can arraign me for't?

Alb. Most monstrous!
Know'st thou this paper?

Gon. Ask me not what I know. *Exit* .

Alb. Go after her. She's desperate; govern her.
[Exit an Officer.]

Edm. What, you have charg'd me with, that have I done,
And more, much more. The time will bring it out.
'Tis past, and so am I.- But what art thou
That hast this fortune on me? If thou'rt noble,

I do forgive thee.

Edg. Let's exchange charity.
I am no less in blood than thou art, Edmund;
If more, the more th' hast wrong'd me.
My name is Edgar and thy father's son.
The gods are just, and of our pleasant vices
Make instruments to scourge us.
The dark and vicious place where thee he got
Cost him his eyes.

Edm. Th' hast spoken right; 'tis true.
The wheel is come full circle; I am here.

Alb. Methought thy very gait did prophesy
A royal nobleness. I must embrace thee.
Let sorrow split my heart if ever I
Did hate thee, or thy father!

Edg. Worthy prince, I know't.

Alb. Where have you hid yourself?

How have you known the miseries of your father?

Edg. By nursing them, my lord. List a brief tale;

And when 'tis told, O that my heart would burst!

The bloody proclamation to escape

That follow'd me so near (O, our lives' sweetness!

That with the pain of death would hourly die

Rather than die at once!) taught me to shift

Into a madman's rags, t' assume a semblance

That very dogs disdain'd; and in this habit

Met I my father with his bleeding rings,

Their precious stones new lost; became his guide,

Led him, begg'd for him, sav'd him from despair;

Never (O fault!) reveal'd myself unto him

Until some half hour past, when I was arm'd,

Not sure, though hoping of this good success,

I ask'd his blessing, and from first to last

Told him my pilgrimage. But his flaw'd heart

(Alack, too weak the conflict to support!)

'Twixt two extremes of passion, joy and grief, Burst smilingly.

Edm. This speech of yours hath mov'd me,
And shall perchance do good; but speak you on;
You look as you had something more to say.

Alb. If there be more, more woful, hold it in;
For I am almost ready to dissolve,
Hearing of this.

Edg. This would have seem'd a period
To such as love not sorrow; but another,
To amplify too much, would make much more,
And top extremity.
Whilst I was big in clamour, came there a man,
Who, having seen me in my worst estate,
Shunn'd my abhorr'd society; but then, finding
Who 'twas that so endur'd, with his strong arms
He fastened on my neck, and bellowed out
As he'd burst heaven; threw him on my father;
Told the most piteous tale of Lear and him

That ever ear receiv'd; which in recounting
His grief grew puissant, and the strings of life
Began to crack. Twice then the trumpets sounded,
And there I left him tranc'd.

Alb. But who was this?

Edg. Kent, sir, the banish'd Kent; who in disguise
Followed his enemy king and did him service
Improper for a slave.

Enter a Gentleman with a bloody knife.

Gent. Help, help! O, help!

Edg. What kind of help?

Alb. Speak, man.

Edg. What means that bloody knife?

Gent. 'Tis hot, it smokes.

It came even from the heart of-O! she's dead!

Alb. Who dead? Speak, man.

Gent. Your lady, sir, your lady! and her sister

By her is poisoned; she hath confess'd it.

Edm. I was contracted to them both. All three

Now marry in an instant.

Enter Kent.

Edg. Here comes Kent.

Alb. Produce their bodies, be they alive or dead.

[Exit Gentleman.]

This judgement of the heavens, that makes us tremble

Touches us not with pity. O, is this he?

The time will not allow the compliment

That very manners urges.

Kent. I am come
To bid my king and master aye good night.

Is he not here?

Alb. Great thing of us forgot!
Speak, Edmund, where's the King? and where's Cordelia?

The bodies of Goneril and Regan are brought in.
Seest thou this object, Kent?

Kent. Alack, why thus?

Edm. Yet Edmund was belov'd.
The one the other poisoned for my sake,
And after slew herself.

Alb. Even so. Cover their faces.

Edm. I pant for life. Some good I mean to do,
Despite of mine own nature. Quickly send
(Be brief in't) to the castle; for my writ
Is on the life of Lear and on Cordelia.

Nay, send in time.

Alb. Run, run, O, run!

Edg. To who, my lord? Who has the office? Send
Thy token of reprieve.

Edm. Well thought on. Take my sword;
Give it the Captain.

Alb. Haste thee for thy life. *[Exit Edgar.]*

Edm. He hath commission from thy wife and me
To hang Cordelia in the prison and
To lay the blame upon her own despair
That she fordid herself.

Alb. The gods defend her! Bear him hence awhile.

[Edmund is borne off.]

Enter Lear, with Cordelia *[dead]* in his arms, [Edgar,

Captain,

and others following].

Lear. Howl, howl, howl, howl! O, you are men of stone.
Had I your tongues and eyes, I'ld use them so
That heaven's vault should crack. She's gone for ever!
I know when one is dead, and when one lives.

She's dead as earth. Lend me a looking glass.
If that her breath will mist or stain the stone,
Why, then she lives.

Kent. Is this the promis'd end?

Edg. Or image of that horror?

Alb. Fall and cease!

Lear. This feather stirs; she lives! If it be so,
It is a chance which does redeem all sorrows
That ever I have felt.

Kent. O my good master!

Lear. Prithee away!

Edg. 'Tis noble Kent, your friend.

Lear. A plague upon you, murderers, traitors all!
I might have sav'd her; now she's gone for ever!

Cordelia, Cordelia! stay a little. Ha!
What is't thou say'st, Her voice was ever soft,
Gentle, and low-an excellent thing in woman.
I kill'd the slave that was a-hanging thee.

Capt. 'Tis true, my lords, he did.

Lear. Did I not, fellow?
I have seen the day, with my good biting falchion
I would have made them skip. I am old now,
And these same crosses spoil me. Who are you?

Mine eyes are not o' th' best. I'll tell you straight.

Kent. If fortune brag of two she lov'd and hated,
One of them we behold.

Lear. This' a dull sight. Are you not Kent?

Kent. The same-
Your servant Kent. Where is your servant Caius?

Lear. He's a good fellow, I can tell you that.
He'll strike, and quickly too. He's dead and rotten.

Kent. No, my good lord; I am the very man-

Lear. I'll see that straight.

Kent . That from your first of difference and decay
Have followed your sad steps.

Lear. You're welcome hither.

Kent. Nor no man else! All's cheerless, dark, and deadly.
Your eldest daughters have fordone themselves,
And desperately are dead.

Lear. Ay, so I think.

Alb. He knows not what he says; and vain is it
That we present us to him.

Edg. Very bootless.

Enter a Captain.

Capt. Edmund is dead, my lord.

Alb. That's but a trifle here.
You lords and noble friends, know our intent.
What comfort to this great decay may come
Shall be applied. For us, we will resign,
During the life of this old Majesty,
To him our absolute power; *[to Edgar and Kent]* you to your rights;
With boot, and Such addition as your honours
Have more than merited.- All friends shall taste
The wages of their virtue, and all foes
The cup of their deservings.- O, see, see!

Lear. And my poor fool is hang'd! No, no, no life!
Why should a dog, a horse, a rat, have life,
And thou no breath at all? Thou'lt come no more,
Never, never, never, never, never!

Pray you undo this button. Thank you, sir.
Do you see this? Look on her! look! her lips!

Look there, look there! He dies.

Edg. He faints! My lord, my lord!

Kent. Break, heart; I prithee break!

Edg. Look up, my lord.

Kent. Vex not his ghost. O, let him pass! He hates him
That would upon the rack of this tough world
Stretch him out longer.

Edg. He is gone indeed.

Kent. The wonder is, he hath endur'd so long.
He but usurp'd his life.

Alb. Bear them from hence. Our present business
Is general woe. *[To Kent and Edgar]* Friends of my soul, you twain
Rule in this realm, and the gor'd state sustain.

Kent. I have a journey, sir, shortly to go.

My master calls me; I must not say no.

Alb. The weight of this sad time we must obey,

Speak what we feel, not what we ought to say.

The oldest have borne most; we that are young

Shall never see so much, nor live so long.

Exeunt with a dead march.

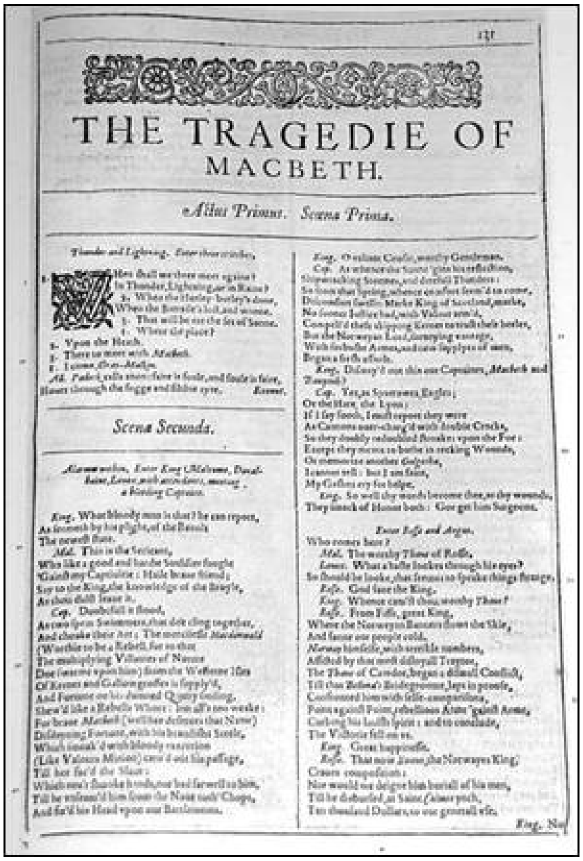
MACBETH

Being Shakespeare's shortest tragedy, *Macbeth* is believed to have been written between 1603 and 1607. The earliest account of a performance was in April 1611, when Simon Forman recorded seeing such a play at the Globe Theatre. Shakespeare's sources for the tragedy are the accounts of King Macbeth of Scotland, Macduff, and Duncan in Holinshed's *Chronicles* , which huge collection Shakespeare used in many of his history plays. However, Shakespeare’s version of events bears little relation to real events in Scottish history, as Macbeth was in fact an admired and virtuous monarch.

The play is famous for its treatment of the supernatural, especially with the characters of the three witches that haunt Macbeth with their prophecies. In the world of theatre, many actors believe that the play is cursed, and will not mention its title aloud, referring to it instead as ‘the Scottish play’. It is believed by some this is because Shakespeare stole actual spells from a coven of witches to include in the play, which was then cursed. There are many reports of tragic occurrences during the performance of this play in theatres across the world.

The first act of the play opens amidst thunder and lightning with the Three Sisters deciding that their next meeting shall be with Macbeth. In the following scene, a wounded sergeant reports to King Duncan of Scotland that his generals — Macbeth, who is the Thane of Glamis, and Banquo — have just defeated the allied forces of Norway and Ireland, who were led by the traitor Macdonwald. Macbeth, the King's kinsman, is praised for his bravery and fighting prowess. However, once he meets the witches and is tempted by ambition, Macbeth’s character soon makes a dramatic change…

Shakespeare's main source text for this play is available via this link .



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THE TRAGEDIE OF
MACBETH.

Actus Primus. Scena Prima.

Scena Secunda.

The First Folio printing of the play

Macbeth and the Three Witches by Theodore Chasseria, 1855

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ROMAN POLANSKI'S FILM OF
MACBETH
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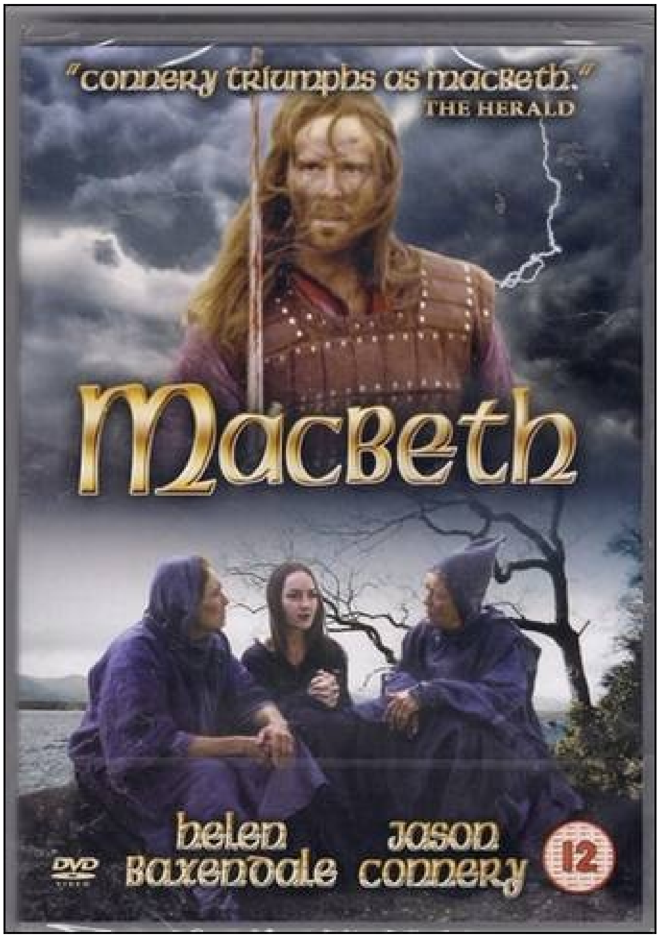
The Roman Polanski 1971 film adaptation


"Connery triumphs as Macbeth."
THE HERALD
Macbeth
Helen Baxendale
Jason Connery
12
DVD

The authentic 1997 Scottish version

SAM WORTHINGTON
MACBETH
FROM THE ACCLAIMED DIRECTOR OF "ROMPER STOMPER"
SOMETHING WICKED THIS WAY COMES
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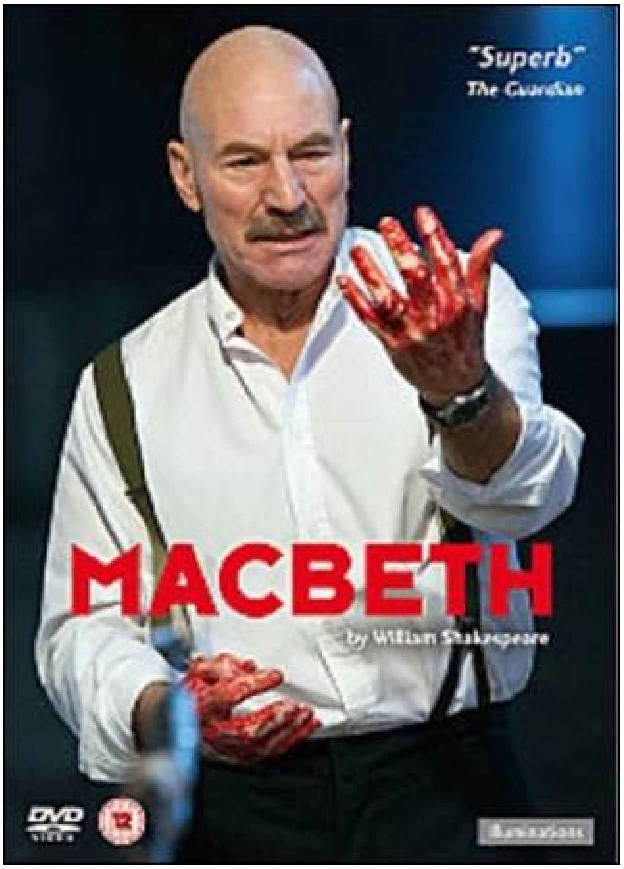
The 2007 Australian mob movie version


"Superb"
The Guardian
MACBETH
by William Shakespeare

Patrick Stewart in the 2010 TV adaptation, noted for its modern hanlding of the tragedy

Macbeth and Banquo with the Witches by Henry Fuseli

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

DUNCAN, King of Scotland

MACBETH, Thane of Glamis and Cawdor, a general in the King's army

LADY MACBETH, his wife

MACDUFF, Thane of Fife, a nobleman of Scotland

LADY MACDUFF, his wife

MALCOLM, elder son of Duncan

DONALBAIN, younger son of Duncan

BANQUO, Thane of Lochaber, a general in the King's army

FLEANCE, his son

LENNOX, nobleman of Scotland

ROSS, nobleman of Scotland

MENTEITH nobleman of Scotland

ANGUS, nobleman of Scotland

CAITHNESS, nobleman of Scotland

SIWARD, Earl of Northumberland, general of the English forces

YOUNG SIWARD, his son

SEYTON, attendant to Macbeth

HECATE, Queen of the Witches

The Three Witches

Boy, Son of Macduff

Gentlewoman attending on Lady Macbeth

An English Doctor

A Scottish Doctor

A Sergeant

A Porter

An Old Man

The Ghost of Banquo and other Apparitions

Lords, Gentlemen, Officers, Soldiers, Murtherers, Attendants, and Messengers

SCENE: Scotland and England

ACT I. SCENE I. A desert place. Thunder and lightning.

Enter three Witches.

FIRST WITCH. When shall we three meet again?

In thunder, lightning, or in rain?

SECOND WITCH.

When the hurlyburly's done,

When the battle's lost and won.

THIRD WITCH.

That will be ere the set of sun.

FIRST WITCH.

Where the place?

SECOND WITCH.

Upon the heath.

THIRD WITCH.

There to meet with Macbeth.

FIRST WITCH.

I come, Graymalkin.

ALL.

Paddock calls. Anon!

Fair is foul, and foul is fair.
Hover through the fog and filthy air. *Exeunt* .

SCENE II. A camp near Forres. Alarum within.

Enter Duncan, Malcolm, Donalbain, Lennox, with Attendants, meeting a bleeding Sergeant.

DUNCAN. What bloody man is that? He can report,

As seemeth by his plight, of the revolt

The newest state.

MALCOLM.

This is the sergeant

Who like a good and hardy soldier fought

'Gainst my captivity. Hail, brave friend!

Say to the King the knowledge of the broil

As thou didst leave it.

SERGEANT.

Doubtful it stood,

As two spent swimmers that do cling together

And choke their art. The merciless Macdonwald-

Worthy to be a rebel, for to that

The multiplying villainies of nature

Do swarm upon him -from the Western Isles

Of kerns and gallowglasses is supplied;

And Fortune, on his damned quarrel smiling, Show'd like a rebel's whore. But all's too weak;

For brave Macbeth -well he deserves that name-

Disdaining Fortune, with his brandish'd steel,

Which smoked with bloody execution,

Like Valor's minion carved out his passage

Till he faced the slave,

Which ne'er shook hands, nor bade farewell to him,

Till he unseam'd him from the nave to the chaps,

And fix'd his head upon our battlements.

DUNCAN.

O valiant cousin! Worthy gentleman!

SERGEANT.

As whence the sun 'gins his reflection

Shipwrecking storms and direful thunders break,

So from that spring whence comfort seem'd to come

Discomfort swells. Mark, King of Scotland, mark.

No sooner justice had, with valor arm'd,

Compell'd these skipping kerns to trust their heels,

But the Norweyan lord, surveying vantage,

With furbish'd arms and new supplies of men,
Began a fresh assault.

DUNCAN.
Dismay'd not this
Our captains, Macbeth and Banquo.?

SERGEANT.
Yes,
As sparrows eagles, or the hare the lion.
If I say sooth, I must report they were
As cannons overcharged with double cracks,
So they
Doubly redoubled strokes upon the foe.
Except they meant to bathe in reeking wounds,
Or memorize another Golgotha,
I cannot tell-
But I am faint; my gashes cry for help.

DUNCAN.
So well thy words become thee as thy wounds;

They smack of honor both. Go get him surgeons.

Exit Sergeant, attended.

Who comes here?

Enter Ross.

MALCOLM The worthy Thane of Ross.

LENNOX.

What a haste looks through his eyes! So should he look

That seems to speak things strange.

ROSS.

God save the King!

DUNCAN.

Whence camest thou, worthy Thane?

ROSS.

From Fife, great King,

Where the Norweyan banners flout the sky

And fan our people cold.

Norway himself, with terrible numbers,

Assisted by that most disloyal traitor

The Thane of Cawdor, began a dismal conflict,

Till that Bellona's bridegroom, lapp'd in proof,

Confronted him with self-comparisons,

Point against point rebellious, arm 'gainst arm,

Curbing his lavish spirit; and, to conclude,

The victory fell on us.

DUNCAN.

Great happiness!

ROSS.

That now

Sweno, the Norways' king, craves composition;

Nor would we deign him burial of his men

Till he disbursed, at Saint Colme's Inch,

Ten thousand dollars to our general use.

DUNCAN.

No more that Thane of Cawdor shall deceive

Our bosom interest. Go pronounce his present death,

And with his former title greet Macbeth.

ROSS.

I'll see it done.

DUNCAN.

What he hath lost, noble Macbeth hath won.

Exeunt.

SCENE III. A heath. Thunder.

Enter the three Witches.

FIRST WITCH. Where hast thou been, sister?

SECOND WITCH.

Killing swine.

THIRD WITCH.

Sister, where thou?

FIRST WITCH.

A sailor's wife had chestnuts in her lap,

And mounch'd, and mounch'd, and mounch'd. "Give me," quoth I.

"Aroint thee, witch!" the rump-fed ronyon cries.

Her husband's to Aleppo gone, master the Tiger;

But in a sieve I'll thither sail,

And, like a rat without a tail,

I'll do, I'll do, and I'll do.

SECOND WITCH.

I'll give thee a wind.

FIRST WITCH.

Thou'rt kind.

THIRD WITCH.

And I another.

FIRST WITCH.

I myself have all the other,
And the very ports they blow,
All the quarters that they know
I' the shipman's card.
I will drain him dry as hay:
Sleep shall neither night nor day
Hang upon his penthouse lid;
He shall live a man forbid.

Weary se'nnights nine times nine

Shall he dwindle, peak, and pine;

Though his bark cannot be lost,

Yet it shall be tempest-toss'd.

Look what I have.

SECOND WITCH.

Show me, show me.

FIRST WITCH.

Here I have a pilot's thumb,

Wreck'd as homeward he did come. Drum within.

THIRD WITCH.

A drum, a drum!

Macbeth doth come.

ALL.

The weird sisters, hand in hand,

Posters of the sea and land,
Thus do go about, about,
Thrice to thine, and thrice to mine,
And thrice again, to make up nine.

Peace! The charm's wound up.

Enter Macbeth and Banquo.

MACBETH. So foul and fair a day I have not seen.

BANQUO.
How far is't call'd to Forres? What are these
So wither'd and so wild in their attire,
That look not like the inhabitants o' the earth,
And yet are on't? Live you? or are you aught
That man may question? You seem to understand me,
By each at once her choppy finger laying
Upon her skinny lips. You should be women,
And yet your beards forbid me to interpret
That you are so.

MACBETH.

Speak, if you can. What are you?

FIRST WITCH.
All hail, Macbeth, hail to thee, Thane of Glamis!

SECOND WITCH.

All hail, Macbeth, hail to thee, Thane of Cawdor!

THIRD WITCH.
All hail, Macbeth, that shalt be King hereafter!

BANQUO.
Good sir, why do you start, and seem to fear
Things that do sound so fair? I' the name of truth,
Are ye fantastical or that indeed
Which outwardly ye show? My noble partner
You greet with present grace and great prediction

Of noble having and of royal hope,
That he seems rapt withal. To me you speak not.
If you can look into the seeds of time,
And say which grain will grow and which will not,
Speak then to me, who neither beg nor fear
Your favors nor your hate.

FIRST WITCH.

Hail!

SECOND WITCH.

Hail!

THIRD WITCH.

Hail!

FIRST WITCH.

Lesser than Macbeth, and greater.

SECOND WITCH.

Not so happy, yet much happier.

THIRD WITCH.

Thou shalt get kings, though thou be none.
So all hail, Macbeth and Banquo!

FIRST WITCH.

Banquo and Macbeth, all hail!

MACBETH.

Stay, you imperfect speakers, tell me more.
By Sinel's death I know I am Thane of Glamis;
But how of Cawdor? The Thane of Cawdor lives,
A prosperous gentleman; and to be King
Stands not within the prospect of belief,
No more than to be Cawdor. Say from whence
You owe this strange intelligence, or why
Upon this blasted heath you stop our way

With such prophetic greeting? Speak, I charge you.

Witches vanish.

BANQUO.

The earth hath bubbles as the water has,

And these are of them. Whither are they vanish'd?

MACBETH.

Into the air, and what seem'd corporal melted

As breath into the wind. Would they had stay'd!

BANQUO.

Were such things here as we do speak about?

Or have we eaten on the insane root

That takes the reason prisoner?

MACBETH.

Your children shall be kings.

BANQUO.

You shall be King.

MACBETH.

And Thane of Cawdor too. Went it not so?

BANQUO.

To the selfsame tune and words. Who's here?

Enter Ross and Angus.

ROSS. The King hath happily received, Macbeth,
The news of thy success; and when he reads
Thy personal venture in the rebels' fight,
His wonders and his praises do contend
Which should be thine or his. Silenced with that,
In viewing o'er the rest o' the selfsame day,
He finds thee in the stout Norweyan ranks,
Nothing afeard of what thyself didst make,
Strange images of death. As thick as hail

Came post with post, and every one did bear
Thy praises in his kingdom's great defense,
And pour'd them down before him.

ANGUS.
We are sent
To give thee, from our royal master, thanks;
Only to herald thee into his sight,
Not pay thee.

ROSS.
And for an earnest of a greater honor,
He bade me, from him, call thee Thane of Cawdor.
In which addition, hail, most worthy Thane,
For it is thine.

BANQUO.

What, can the devil speak true?

MACBETH.

The Thane of Cawdor lives. Why do you dress me
In borrow'd robes?

ANGUS.
Who was the Thane lives yet,
But under heavy judgement bears that life
Which he deserves to lose. Whether he was combined
With those of Norway, or did line the rebel
With hidden help and vantage, or that with both
He labor'd in his country's wreck, I know not;
But treasons capital, confess'd and proved,
Have overthrown him.

MACBETH.
[Aside.] Glamis, and Thane of Cawdor!
The greatest is behind. *[To Ross and Angus]* Thanks for your pains.

[Aside to Banquo] Do you not hope your children shall be kings,
When those that gave the Thane of Cawdor to me
Promised no less to them?

BANQUO.

[Aside to Macbeth.] That, trusted home,

Might yet enkindle you unto the crown,

Besides the Thane of Cawdor. But 'tis strange;

And oftentimes, to win us to our harm,

The instruments of darkness tell us truths,

Win us with honest trifles, to betray's

In deepest consequence-

Cousins, a word, I pray you.

MACBETH.

[Aside.] Two truths are told,

As happy prologues to the swelling act

Of the imperial theme-I thank you, gentlemen.

[Aside.] This supernatural soliciting

Cannot be ill, cannot be good. If ill,

Why hath it given me earnest of success,

Commencing in a truth? I am Thane of Cawdor.

If good, why do I yield to that suggestion

Whose horrid image doth unfix my hair

And make my seated heart knock at my ribs,
Against the use of nature? Present fears
Are less than horrible imaginings:
My thought, whose murther yet is but fantastical,
Shakes so my single state of man that function
Is smother'd in surmise, and nothing is
But what is not.

BANQUO.
Look, how our partner's rapt.

MACBETH.
[Aside.] If chance will have me King, why, chance may crown me
Without my stir.

BANQUO.
New honors come upon him,
Like our strange garments, cleave not to their mould
But with the aid of use.

MACBETH.

[Aside.] Come what come may,

Time and the hour runs through the roughest day.

BANQUO.

Worthy Macbeth, we stay upon your leisure.

MACBETH.

Give me your favor; my dull brain was wrought

With things forgotten. Kind gentlemen, your pains

Are register'd where every day I turn

The leaf to read them. Let us toward the King.

Think upon what hath chanced, and at more time,

The interim having weigh'd it, let us speak

Our free hearts each to other.

BANQUO.

Very gladly.

MACBETH.

Till then, enough. Come, friends. *Exeunt* .

SCENE IV. Forres. The palace.

Flourish. *Enter* Duncan, Malcolm, Donalbain, Lennox, and Attendants.

DUNCAN.

Is execution done on Cawdor? Are not
Those in commission yet return'd?

MALCOLM.

My liege,
They are not yet come back. But I have spoke
With one that saw him die, who did report
That very frankly he confess'd his treasons,
Implored your Highness' pardon, and set forth
A deep repentance. Nothing in his life
Became him like the leaving it; he died
As one that had been studied in his death,
To throw away the dearest thing he owed
As 'twere a careless trifle.

DUNCAN.

There's no art

To find the mind's construction in the face:

He was a gentleman on whom I built

An absolute trust.

Enter Macbeth, Banquo, Ross, and Angus.

O worthiest cousin!

The sin of my ingratitude even now

Was heavy on me. Thou art so far before,

That swiftest wing of recompense is slow

To overtake thee. Would thou hadst less deserved,

That the proportion both of thanks and payment

Might have been mine! Only I have left to say,

More is thy due than more than all can pay.

MACBETH.

The service and the loyalty lowe,

In doing it, pays itself. Your Highness' part

Is to receive our duties, and our duties

Are to your throne and state, children and servants,
Which do but what they should, by doing everything
Safe toward your love and honor.

DUNCAN.

Welcome hither.
I have begun to plant thee, and will labor
To make thee full of growing. Noble Banquo,
That hast no less deserved, nor must be known
No less to have done so; let me infold thee
And hold thee to my heart.

BANQUO.
There if I grow,
The harvest is your own.

DUNCAN.
My plenteous joys,
Wanton in fullness, seek to hide themselves
In drops of sorrow. Sons, kinsmen, thanes,

And you whose places are the nearest, know
We will establish our estate upon
Our eldest, Malcolm, whom we name hereafter
The Prince of Cumberland; which honor must
Not unaccompanied invest him only,
But signs of nobleness, like stars, shall shine
On all deservers. From hence to Inverness,
And bind us further to you.

MACBETH.

The rest is labor, which is not used for you.
I'll be myself the harbinger, and make joyful
The hearing of my wife with your approach;
So humbly take my leave.

DUNCAN.

My worthy Cawdor!

MACBETH.

[Aside.] The Prince of Cumberland! That is a step
On which I must fall down, or else o'erleap,

For in my way it lies. Stars, hide your fires;
Let not light see my black and deep desires.
The eye wink at the hand; yet let that be
Which the eye fears, when it is done, to see. *Exit* .

DUNCAN.

True, worthy Banquo! He is full so valiant,
And in his commendations I am fed;
It is a banquet to me. Let's after him,
Whose care is gone before to bid us welcome.
It is a peerless kinsman. Flourish. *Exeunt* .

SCENE V. Inverness. Macbeth's castle.

Enter Lady Macbeth, reading a letter.

LADY MACBETH. "They met me in the day of success, and I have
learned by the perfectest report they have more in them than
mortal knowledge. When I burned in desire to question them
further, they made themselves air, into which they vanished.
Whiles I stood rapt in the wonder of it, came missives from the
King, who all-hailed me 'Thane of Cawdor'; by which title,

before, these weird sisters saluted me and referred me to the coming on of time with 'Hail, King that shalt be!' This have I thought good to deliver thee, my dearest partner of greatness, that thou mightst not lose the dues of rejoicing, by being ignorant of what greatness is promised thee. Lay it to thy heart, and farewell."

Glamis thou art, and Cawdor, and shalt be
What thou art promised. Yet do I fear thy nature.
It is too full o' the milk of human kindness
To catch the nearest way. Thou wouldst be great;
Art not without ambition, but without
The illness should attend it. What thou wouldst highly,
That wouldst thou holily; wouldst not play false,
And yet wouldst wrongly win. Thou'ldst have, great Glamis,
That which cries, "Thus thou must do, if thou have it;
And that which rather thou dost fear to do
Than wishest should be undone." Hie thee hither,
That I may pour my spirits in thine ear,
And chastise with the valor of my tongue
All that impedes thee from the golden round,
Which fate and metaphysical aid doth seem

To have thee crown'd withal.

Enter a Messenger.

What is your tidings?

MESSENGER.

The King comes here tonight.

LADY MACBETH.

Thou'rt mad to say it!

Is not thy master with him? who, were't so,

Would have inform'd for preparation.

MESSENGER.

So please you, it is true; our Thane is coming.

One of my fellows had the speed of him,

Who, almost dead for breath, had scarcely more

Than would make up his message.

LADY MACBETH.

Give him tending;

He brings great news. *Exit* Messenger.

The raven himself is hoarse

That croaks the fatal entrance of Duncan

Under my battlements. Come, you spirits

That tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here

And fill me from the crown to the toe top-full

Of direst cruelty! Make thick my blood,

Stop up the access and passage to remorse,

That no compunctious visitings of nature

Shake my fell purpose nor keep peace between

The effect and it! Come to my woman's breasts,

And take my milk for gall, your murthering ministers,

Wherever in your sightless substances

You wait on nature's mischief! Come, thick night,

And pall thee in the dunnest smoke of hell

That my keen knife see not the wound it makes

Nor heaven peep through the blanket of the dark

To cry, "Hold, hold!"

Enter Macbeth.

Great Glamis! Worthy Cawdor!
Greater than both, by the all-hail hereafter!
Thy letters have transported me beyond
This ignorant present, and I feel now
The future in the instant.

MACBETH.
My dearest love,
Duncan comes here tonight.

LADY MACBETH.
And when goes hence?

MACBETH.

Tomorrow, as he purposes.

LADY MACBETH.
O, never

Shall sun that morrow see!

Your face, my Thane, is as a book where men

May read strange matters. To beguile the time,

Look like the time; bear welcome in your eye,

Your hand, your tongue; look like the innocent flower,

But be the serpent under it. He that's coming

Must be provided for; and you shall put

This night's great business into my dispatch,

Which shall to all our nights and days to come

Give solely sovereign sway and masterdom.

MACBETH.

We will speak further.

LADY MACBETH.

Only look up clear;

To alter favor ever is to fear.

Leave all the rest to me. *Exeunt* .

SCENE VI. Before Macbeth's castle. Hautboys and torches.

Enter Duncan, Malcolm, Donalbain, Banquo, Lennox, Macduff, Ross, Angus, and Attendants.

DUNCAN. This castle hath a pleasant seat; the air

Nimbly and sweetly recommends itself

Unto our gentle senses.

BANQUO.

This guest of summer,

The temple-haunting martlet, does approve

By his loved mansionry that the heaven's breath

Smells wooingly here. No jutty, frieze,

Buttress, nor coign of vantage, but this bird

Hath made his pendant bed and procreant cradle;

Where they most breed and haunt, I have observed

The air is delicate.

Enter Lady Macbeth.

DUNCAN. See, see, our honor'd hostess!

The love that follows us sometime is our trouble,

Which still we thank as love. Herein I teach you
How you shall bid God 'ield us for your pains,
And thank us for your trouble.

LADY MACBETH.
All our service
In every point twice done, and then done double,
Were poor and single business to contend
Against those honors deep and broad wherewith
Your Majesty loads our house. For those of old,
And the late dignities heap'd up to them,
We rest your hermits.

DUNCAN.

Where's the Thane of Cawdor?
We coursed him at the heels and had a purpose
To be his purveyor; but he rides well,
And his great love, sharp as his spur, hath holp him
To his home before us. Fair and noble hostess,
We are your guest tonight.

LADY MACBETH.

Your servants ever

Have theirs, themselves, and what is theirs, in compt,

To make their audit at your Highness' pleasure,

Still to return your own.

DUNCAN.

Give me your hand;

Conduct me to mine host. We love him highly,

And shall continue our graces towards him.

By your leave, hostess. *Exeunt* .

SCENE VII Macbeth's castle. Hautboys and torches.

Enter a Sewer and divers Servants with dishes and service, who pass over the stage. Then enter Macbeth.

MACBETH. If it were done when 'tis done, then 'twere well

It were done quickly. If the assassination

Could trammel up the consequence, and catch,

With his surcease, success; that but this blow

Might be the be-all and the end-all -here,

But here, upon this bank and shoal of time,

We'ld jump the life to come. But in these cases

We still have judgement here, that we but teach

Bloody instructions, which being taught return

To plague the inventor. This even-handed justice

Commends the ingredients of our poison'd chalice

To our own lips. He's here in double trust:

First, as I am his kinsman and his subject,

Strong both against the deed; then, as his host,

Who should against his murtherer shut the door,

Not bear the knife myself. Besides, this Duncan

Hath borne his faculties so meek, hath been

So clear in his great office, that his virtues

Will plead like angels trumpet-tongued against

The deep damnation of his taking-off,

And pity, like a naked new-born babe

Striding the blast, or heaven's cherubin horsed

Upon the sightless couriers of the air,

Shall blow the horrid deed in every eye,

That tears shall drown the wind. I have no spur

To prick the sides of my intent, but only
Vaulting ambition, which o'erleaps itself
And falls on the other.

Enter Lady Macbeth.

How now, what news?

LADY MACBETH.

He has almost supp'd. Why have you left the chamber?

MACBETH.

Hath he ask'd for me?

LADY MACBETH.

Know you not he has?

MACBETH.

We will proceed no further in this business:

He hath honor'd me of late, and I have bought

Golden opinions from all sorts of people,

Which would be worn now in their newest gloss,

Not cast aside so soon.

LADY MACBETH.

Was the hope drunk

Wherein you dress'd yourself? Hath it slept since?

And wakes it now, to look so green and pale

At what it did so freely? From this time

Such I account thy love. Art thou afeard

To be the same in thine own act and valor

As thou art in desire? Wouldst thou have that

Which thou esteem'st the ornament of life

And live a coward in thine own esteem,

Letting "I dare not" wait upon "I would"

Like the poor cat i' the adage?

MACBETH.

Prithee, peace!

I dare do all that may become a man;

Who dares do more is none.

LADY MACBETH.

What beast wast then

That made you break this enterprise to me?

When you durst do it, then you were a man,

And, to be more than what you were, you would

Be so much more the man. Nor time nor place

Did then adhere, and yet you would make both.

They have made themselves, and that their fitness now

Does unmake you. I have given suck and know

How tender 'tis to love the babe that milks me-

I would, while it was smiling in my face,

Have pluck'd my nipple from his boneless gums

And dash'd the brains out had I so sworn as you

Have done to this.

MACBETH.

If we should fail?

LADY MACBETH.

We fail?

But screw your courage to the sticking-place

And we'll not fail. When Duncan is asleep-

Whereto the rather shall his day's hard journey

Soundly invite him-his two chamberlains

Will I with wine and wassail so convince

That memory, the warder of the brain,

Shall be a fume and the receipt of reason

A limbeck only. When in swinish sleep

Their drenched natures lie as in a death,

What cannot you and I perform upon

The unguarded Duncan? What not put upon

His spongy officers, who shall bear the guilt

Of our great quell?

MACBETH.

Bring forth men-children only,

For thy undaunted mettle should compose

Nothing but males. Will it not be received,

When we have mark'd with blood those sleepy two
Of his own chamber and used their very daggers,
That they have done't?

LADY MACBETH.
Who dares receive it other,
As we shall make our griefs and clamor roar
Upon his death?

MACBETH.
I am settled and bend up
Each corporal agent to this terrible feat.

Away, and mock the time with fairest show:
False face must hide what the false heart doth know.

Exeunt.

ACT II. SCENE I. Inverness. Court of Macbeth's castle.

Enter Banquo and Fleance, bearing a torch before him.

BANQUO. How goes the night, boy?

FLEANCE.

The moon is down; I have not heard the clock.

BANQUO.

And she goes down at twelve.

FLEANCE.

I take't 'tis later, sir.

BANQUO.

Hold, take my sword. There's husbandry in heaven,
Their candles are all out. Take thee that too.
A heavy summons lies like lead upon me,
And yet I would not sleep. Merciful powers,
Restrain in me the cursed thoughts that nature
Gives way to in repose!

Enter Macbeth and a Servant with a torch.

Give me my sword.

Who's there?

MACBETH.

A friend.

BANQUO.

What, sir, not yet at rest? The King's abed.

He hath been in unusual pleasure and

Sent forth great largess to your offices.

This diamond he greets your wife withal,

By the name of most kind hostess, and shut up

In measureless content.

MACBETH.

Being unprepared,

Our will became the servant to defect,

Which else should free have wrought.

BANQUO.

All's well.

I dreamt last night of the three weird sisters:

To you they have show'd some truth.

MACBETH.

I think not of them;

Yet, when we can entreat an hour to serve,

We would spend it in some words upon that business,

If you would grant the time.

BANQUO.

At your kind'st leisure.

MACBETH.

If you shall cleave to my consent, when 'tis,

It shall make honor for you.

BANQUO.

So I lose none

In seeking to augment it, but still keep

My bosom franchised and allegiance clear,

I shall be counsel'd.

MACBETH.

Good repose the while.

BANQUO.

Thanks, sir, the like to you.

Exeunt Banquo. and Fleance.

MACBETH.

Go bid thy mistress, when my drink is ready,

She strike upon the bell. Get thee to bed. *Exit* Servant.

Is this a dagger which I see before me,

The handle toward my hand? Come, let me clutch thee.

I have thee not, and yet I see thee still.

Art thou not, fatal vision, sensible

To feeling as to sight? Or art thou but

A dagger of the mind, a false creation,

Proceeding from the heat-oppressed brain?

I see thee yet, in form as palpable

As this which now I draw.

Thou marshal'st me the way that I was going,

And such an instrument I was to use.

Mine eyes are made the fools o' the other senses,

Or else worth all the rest. I see thee still,

And on thy blade and dudgeon gouts of blood,

Which was not so before. There's no such thing:

It is the bloody business which informs

Thus to mine eyes. Now o'er the one half-world

Nature seems dead, and wicked dreams abuse

The curtain'd sleep; witchcraft celebrates

Pale Hecate's offerings; and wither'd Murther,

Alarum'd by his sentinel, the wolf,

Whose howl's his watch, thus with his stealthy pace,

With Tarquin's ravishing strides, towards his design

Moves like a ghost. Thou sure and firm-set earth,

Hear not my steps, which way they walk, for fear

Thy very stones prate of my whereabout,
And take the present horror from the time,
Which now suits with it. Whiles I threat, he lives;
Words to the heat of deeds too cold breath gives.

A bell rings.
I go, and it is done; the bell invites me.
Hear it not, Duncan, for it is a knell
That summons thee to heaven, or to hell. *Exit* .

SCENE II. The same.

Enter Lady Macbeth.

LADY MACBETH. That which hath made them drunk hath made me bold;
What hath quench'd them hath given me fire. Hark! Peace!
It was the owl that shriek'd, the fatal bellman,
Which gives the stern'st good night. He is about it:
The doors are open, and the surfeited grooms
Do mock their charge with snores. I have drugg'd their possets
That death and nature do contend about them,
Whether they live or die.

MACBETH.

[Within.] Who's there' what, ho!

LADY MACBETH.

Alack, I am afraid they have awaked
And 'tis not done. The attempt and not the deed
Confounds us. Hark! I laid their daggers ready;
He could not miss 'em. Had he not resembled
My father as he slept, I had done't.

Enter Macbeth,

My husband!

MACBETH.

I have done the deed. Didst thou not hear a noise?

LADY MACBETH.

I heard the owl scream and the crickets cry.

Did not you speak?

MACBETH.

When?

LADY MACBETH.

Now.

MACBETH.

As I descended?

LADY MACBETH.

Ay.

MACBETH.

Hark!

Who lies i' the second chamber?

LADY MACBETH.

Donalbain.

MACBETH.

This is a sorry sight. [Looks on his hands.

LADY MACBETH.

A foolish thought, to say a sorry sight.

MACBETH.

There's one did laugh in 's sleep, and one cried,

"Murther!"

That they did wake each other. I stood and heard them,

But they did say their prayers and address'd them

Again to sleep.

LADY MACBETH.

There are two lodged together.

MACBETH.

One cried, "God bless us!" and "Amen" the other,

As they had seen me with these hangman's hands.

Listening their fear, I could not say "Amen,"

When they did say, "God bless us!"

LADY MACBETH.

Consider it not so deeply.

MACBETH.

But wherefore could not I pronounce "Amen"?

I had most need of blessing, and "Amen"

Stuck in my throat.

LADY MACBETH.

These deeds must not be thought

After these ways; so, it will make us mad.

MACBETH.

I heard a voice cry, "Sleep no more!
Macbeth does murther sleep" -the innocent sleep,
Sleep that knits up the ravel'd sleave of care,
The death of each day's life, sore labor's bath,
Balm of hurt minds, great nature's second course,
Chief nourisher in life's feast-

LADY MACBETH.

What do you mean?

MACBETH.

Still it cried, "Sleep no more!" to all the house;
"Glamis hath murther'd sleep, and therefore Cawdor
Shall sleep no more. Macbeth shall sleep no more."

LADY MACBETH.

Who was it that thus cried? Why, worthy Thane,
You do unbend your noble strength, to think
So brainsickly of things. Go, get some water
And wash this filthy witness from your hand.
Why did you bring these daggers from the place?

They must lie there. Go carry them, and smear
The sleepy grooms with blood.

MACBETH.

I'll go no more.
I am afraid to think what I have done;
Look on't again I dare not.

LADY MACBETH.
Infirm of purpose!
Give me the daggers. The sleeping and the dead
Are but as pictures; 'tis the eye of childhood
That fears a painted devil. If he do bleed,
I'll gild the faces of the grooms withal,
For it must seem their guilt. *Exit* . Knocking within.

MACBETH.
Whence is that knocking?

How is't with me, when every noise appals me?

What hands are here? Ha, they pluck out mine eyes!
Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood
Clean from my hand? No, this my hand will rather
The multitudinous seas incarnadine,
Making the green one red.

Re-enter Lady Macbeth.

LADY MACBETH.
My hands are of your color, but I shame
To wear a heart so white. *[Knocking within.]* I hear knocking
At the south entry. Retire we to our chamber.

A little water clears us of this deed.
How easy is it then! Your constancy
Hath left you unattended. *[Knocking within.]* Hark, more knocking.
Get on your nightgown, lest occasion call us
And show us to be watchers. Be not lost
So poorly in your thoughts.

MACBETH.

To know my deed, 'twere best not know myself.

Knocking within.

Wake Duncan with thy knocking! I would thou couldst!

Exeunt.

SCENE III. The same.

Enter a Porter. Knocking within.

PORTER. Here's a knocking indeed! If a man were porter of Hell

Gate, he should have old turning the key. *[Knocking within.]*

Knock, knock, knock! Who's there, i' the name of Belzebub?

Here's

a farmer that hanged himself on th' expectation of plenty.

Come

in time! Have napkins enow about you; here you'll sweat fort.

[Knocking within.] Knock, knock! Who's there, in th' other

devil's name? Faith, here's an equivocator that could swear in

both the scales against either scale, who committed treason

enough for God's sake, yet could not equivocate to heaven. O,
come in, equivocator. *[Knocking within.]* Knock, knock, knock!
Who's there? Faith, here's an English tailor come hither, for
stealing out of a French hose. Come in, tailor; here you may
roast your goose. *[Knocking within.]* Knock, knock! Never at
quiet! What are you? But this place is too cold for hell.
I'll
devil-porter it no further. I had thought to have let in some of
all professions, that go the primrose way to the everlasting
bonfire. *[Knocking within.]* Anon, anon! I pray you, remember the porter.
Opens the gate.

Enter Macduff and Lennox.

MACDUFF. Was it so late, friend, ere you went to bed,
That you do lie so late?

PORTER.
Faith, sir, we were carousing till the second cock; and
drink, sir, is a great provoker of three things.

MACDUFF.

What three things does drink especially provoke?

PORTER.
Marry, sir, nose-painting, sleep, and urine. Lechery,
sir,
it provokes and unprovokes: it provokes the desire, but it takes
away the performance. Therefore much drink may be said to be an
equivocator with lechery: it makes him, and it mars him; it sets
him on, and it takes him off; it persuades him and disheartens
him; makes him stand to and not stand to; in conclusion,
equivocates him in a sleep, and giving him the lie, leaves him.

MACDUFF.
I believe drink gave thee the lie last night.

PORTER.
That it did, sir, i' the very throat on me; but requited
him for his lie, and, I think, being too strong for him, though
he took up my legs sometime, yet I made shift to cast him.

MACDUFF.

Is thy master stirring?

Enter Macbeth.

Our knocking has awaked him; here he comes.

LENNOX.

Good morrow, noble sir.

MACBETH.

morrow, both.

MACDUFF.

Is the King stirring, worthy Thane?

MACBETH.

Not yet.

MACDUFF.

He did command me to call timely on him;

I have almost slipp'd the hour.

MACBETH.

I'll bring you to him.

MACDUFF.

I know this is a joyful trouble to you,

But yet 'tis one.

MACBETH.

The labor we delight in physics pain.

This is the door.

MACDUFF I'll make so bold to call,

For 'tis my limited service. *Exit* .

LENNOX.

Goes the King hence today?

MACBETH.

He does; he did appoint so.

LENNOX.

The night has been unruly. Where we lay,

Our chimneys were blown down, and, as they say,

Lamentings heard i' the air, strange screams of death,

And prophesying with accents terrible

Of dire combustion and confused events

New hatch'd to the woeful time. The obscure bird

Clamor'd the livelong night. Some say the earth

Was feverous and did shake.

MACBETH.

'Twas a rough fight.

LENNOX.

My young remembrance cannot parallel

A fellow to it.

Re-enter Macduff.

MACDUFF.

O horror, horror, horror! Tongue nor heart

Cannot conceive nor name thee.

MACBETH.

LENNOX. What's the matter?

MACDUFF.

Confusion now hath made his masterpiece.

Most sacrilegious murther hath broke ope

The Lord's anointed temple and stole thence

The life o' the building.

MACBETH.

What is't you say? the life?

LENNOX.

Mean you his Majesty?

MACDUFF.

Approach the chamber, and destroy your sight
With a new Gorgon. Do not bid me speak;
See, and then speak yourselves.
Exeunt Macbeth and Lennox.
Awake, awake!

Ring the alarum bell. Murther and treason!
Banquo and Donalbain! Malcolm, awake!
Shake off this downy sleep, death's counterfeit,
And look on death itself! Up, up, and see
The great doom's image! Malcolm! Banquo!
As from your graves rise up, and walk like sprites
To countenance this horror! Ring the bell. Bell rings.

Enter Lady Macbeth.

LADY MACBETH. What's the business,

That such a hideous trumpet calls to parley

The sleepers of the house? Speak, speak!

MACDUFF.

O gentle lady,

'Tis not for you to hear what I can speak:

The repetition in a woman's ear

Would murther as it fell.

Enter Banquo.

O Banquo, Banquo!

Our royal master's murther'd.

LADY MACBETH.

Woe, alas!

What, in our house?

BANQUO.

Too cruel anywhere.

Dear Duff, I prithee, contradict thyself,

And say it is not so.

Re-enter Macbeth and Lennox, with Ross.

MACBETH.

Had I but died an hour before this chance,

I had lived a blessed time, for from this instant

There's nothing serious in mortality.

All is but toys; renown and grace is dead,

The wine of life is drawn, and the mere lees

Is left this vault to brag of.

Enter Malcolm and Donalbain.

DONALBAIN. What is amiss?

MACBETH.

You are, and do not know't.

The spring, the head, the fountain of your blood

Is stopped, the very source of it is stopp'd.

MACDUFF.

Your royal father's murther'd.

MALCOLM.

O, by whom?

LENNOX.

Those of his chamber, as it seem'd, had done't.

Their hands and faces were all badged with blood;

So were their daggers, which unwiped we found

Upon their pillows.

They stared, and were distracted; no man's life

Was to be trusted with them.

MACBETH.

O, yet I do repent me of my fury,

That I did kill them.

MACDUFF.

Wherefore did you so?

MACBETH.

Who can be wise, amazed, temperate and furious,
Loyal and neutral, in a moment? No man.
The expedition of my violent love
Outrun the pauser reason. Here lay Duncan,
His silver skin laced with his golden blood,
And his gash'd stabs look'd like a breach in nature
For ruin's wasteful entrance; there, the murtherers,
Steep'd in the colors of their trade, their daggers
Unmannerly breech'd with gore. Who could refrain,
That had a heart to love, and in that heart
Courage to make 's love known?

LADY MACBETH.

Help me hence, ho!

MACDUFF.

Look to the lady.

MALCOLM.

[Aside to Donalbain.] Why do we hold our tongues,

That most may claim this argument for ours?

DONALBAIN.

[Aside to Malcolm.] What should be spoken here,

where our fate,

Hid in an auger hole, may rush and seize us?

Let's away,

Our tears are not yet brew'd.

MALCOLM.

[Aside to Donalbain.] Nor our strong sorrow

Upon the foot of motion.

BANQUO.

Look to the lady.

Lady Macbeth is carried out.

And when we have our naked frailties hid,
That suffer in exposure, let us meet
And question this most bloody piece of work
To know it further. Fears and scruples shake us.
In the great hand of God I stand, and thence
Against the undivulged pretense I fight
Of treasonous malice.

MACDUFF.
And so do I.

ALL.

So all.

MACBETH.
Let's briefly put on manly readiness
And meet i' the hall together.

ALL.
Well contented.

Exeunt all but Malcolm and Donalbain.

MALCOLM.

What will you do? Let's not consort with them.
To show an unfelt sorrow is an office
Which the false man does easy. I'll to England.

DONALBAIN.

To Ireland, I; our separated fortune
Shall keep us both the safer. Where we are
There's daggers in men's smiles; the near in blood,
The nearer bloody.

MALCOLM.

This murtherous shaft that's shot
Hath not yet lighted, and our safest way
Is to avoid the aim. Therefore to horse;
And let us not be dainty of leave-taking,
But shift away. There's warrant in that theft
Which steals itself when there's no mercy left.

Exeunt.

SCENE IV. Outside Macbeth's castle.

Enter Ross with an Old Man.

OLD MAN. Threescore and ten I can remember well,

Within the volume of which time I have seen

Hours dreadful and things strange, but this sore night

Hath trifled former knowings.

ROSS.

Ah, good father,

Thou seest the heavens, as troubled with man's act,

Threaten his bloody stage. By the clock 'tis day,

And yet dark night strangles the traveling lamp.

Is't night's predominance, or the day's shame,

That darkness does the face of earth entomb,

When living light should kiss it?

OLD MAN.

'Tis unnatural,

Even like the deed that's done. On Tuesday last

A falcon towering in her pride of place

Was by a mousing owl hawk'd at and kill'd.

ROSS.

And Duncan's horses-a thing most strange and certain-

Beauteous and swift, the minions of their race,

Turn'd wild in nature, broke their stalls, flung out,

Contending 'gainst obedience, as they would make

War with mankind.

OLD MAN.

'Tis said they eat each other.

ROSS.

They did so, to the amazement of mine eyes

That look'd upon't.

Enter Macduff.

Here comes the good Macduff.

How goes the world, sir, now?

MACDUFF.

Why, see you not?

ROSS.

Is't known who did this more than bloody deed?

MACDUFF.

Those that Macbeth hath slain.

ROSS.

Alas, the day!

What good could they pretend?

MACDUFF.

They were suborn'd:

Malcolm and Donalbain, the King's two sons,
Are stol'n away and fled, which puts upon them
Suspicion of the deed.

ROSS.
'Gainst nature still!
Thriftless ambition, that wilt ravin up
Thine own life's means! Then 'tis most like
The sovereignty will fall upon Macbeth.

MACDUFF.
He is already named, and gone to Scone
To be invested.

ROSS.
Where is Duncan's body?

MACDUFF.
Carried to Colmekill,
The sacred storehouse of his predecessors
And guardian of their bones.

ROSS.

Will you to Scone?

MACDUFF.

No, cousin, I'll to Fife.

ROSS.

Well, I will thither.

MACDUFF.

Well, may you see things well done there.

Adieu,

Lest our old robes sit easier than our new!

ROSS.

Farewell, father.

OLD MAN.

God's benison go with you and with those

That would make good of bad and friends of foes!

Exeunt.

ACT III. SCENE I. Forres. The palace.

Enter Banquo.

BANQUO. Thou hast it now: King, Cawdor, Glamis, all,
As the weird women promised, and I fear
Thou play'dst most foully for't; yet it was said
It should not stand in thy posterity,
But that myself should be the root and father
Of many kings. If there come truth from them
(As upon thee, Macbeth, their speeches shine)
Why, by the verities on thee made good,
May they not be my oracles as well
And set me up in hope? But hush, no more.

Sennet sounds. *Enter* Macbeth as King, Lady Macbeth
as Queen, Lennox, Ross, Lords, Ladies, and Attendants.

MACBETH.

Here's our chief guest.

LADY MACBETH.
If he had been forgotten,
It had been as a gap in our great feast
And all thing unbecoming.

MACBETH.
Tonight we hold a solemn supper, sir,
And I'll request your presence.

BANQUO.
Let your Highness
Command upon me, to the which my duties
Are with a most indissoluble tie
Forever knit.

MACBETH.

Ride you this afternoon?

BANQUO.

Ay, my good lord.

MACBETH.

We should have else desired your good advice,

Which still hath been both grave and prosperous

In this day's council; but we'll take tomorrow.

Is't far you ride'!

BANQUO.

As far, my lord, as will fill up the time

'Twixt this and supper. Go not my horse the better,

I must become a borrower of the night

For a dark hour or twain.

MACBETH.

Fail not our feast.

BANQUO.

My lord, I will not.

MACBETH.

We hear our bloody cousins are bestow'd

In England and in Ireland, not confessing

Their cruel parricide, filling their hearers

With strange invention. But of that tomorrow,

When therewithal we shall have cause of state

Craving us jointly. Hie you to horse; adieu,

Till you return at night. Goes Fleance with you?

BANQUO.

Ay, my good lord. Our time does call upon 's.

MACBETH.

I wish your horses swift and sure of foot,

And so I do commend you to their backs.

Farewell. Exit Banquo.

Let every man be master of his time

Till seven at night; to make society

The sweeter welcome, we will keep ourself

Till supper time alone. While then, God be with you!

Exeunt all but Macbeth and an Attendant.

Sirrah, a word with you. Attend those men

Our pleasure?

ATTENDANT.

They are, my lord, without the palace gate.

MACBETH.

Bring them before us. *Exit* Attendant.

To be thus is nothing,

But to be safely thus. Our fears in Banquo.

Stick deep, and in his royalty of nature

Reigns that which would be fear'd. 'Tis much he dares,

And, to that dauntless temper of his mind,

He hath a wisdom that doth guide his valor

To act in safety. There is none but he

Whose being I do fear; and under him

My genius is rebuked, as it is said

Mark Antony's was by Caesar. He chid the sisters
When first they put the name of King upon me
And bade them speak to him; then prophet-like
They hail'd him father to a line of kings.
Upon my head they placed a fruitless crown
And put a barren sceptre in my gripe,
Thence to be wrench'd with an unlineal hand,
No son of mine succeeding. If't be so,
For Banquo's issue have I filed my mind,
For them the gracious Duncan have I murther'd,
Put rancors in the vessel of my peace
Only for them, and mine eternal jewel
Given to the common enemy of man,
To make them kings -the seed of Banquo kings!
Rather than so, come, Fate, into the list,
And champion me to the utterance! Who's there?

Re-enter Attendant, with two Murtherers.

Now go to the door, and stay there till we call.

Exit Attendant.

Was it not yesterday we spoke together?

FIRST MURTHERER.

It was, so please your Highness.

MACBETH.

Well then, now
Have you consider'd of my speeches? Know
That it was he in the times past which held you
So under fortune, which you thought had been
Our innocent self? This I made good to you
In our last conference, pass'd in probation with you:
How you were borne in hand, how cross'd, the instruments,
Who wrought with them, and all things else that might
To half a soul and to a notion crazed
Say, "Thus did Banquo."

FIRST MURTHERER.

You made it known to us.

MACBETH.

I did so, and went further, which is now

Our point of second meeting. Do you find

Your patience so predominant in your nature,

That you can let this go? Are you so gospel'd,

To pray for this good man and for his issue,

Whose heavy hand hath bow'd you to the grave

And beggar'd yours forever?

FIRST MURTHERER.

We are men, my liege.

MACBETH.

Ay, in the catalogue ye go for men,

As hounds and greyhounds, mongrels, spaniels, curs,

Shoughs, waterrugs, and demi-wolves are clept

All by the name of dogs. The valued file

Distinguishes the swift, the slow, the subtle,

The housekeeper, the hunter, every one

According to the gift which bounteous nature
Hath in him closed, whereby he does receive
Particular addition, from the bill
That writes them all alike; and so of men.
Now if you have a station in the file,
Not i' the worst rank of manhood, say it,
And I will put that business in your bosoms
Whose execution takes your enemy off,
Grapples you to the heart and love of us,
Who wear our health but sickly in his life,
Which in his death were perfect.

SECOND MURTHERER.
I am one, my liege,
Whom the vile blows and buffets of the world
Have so incensed that I am reckless what
I do to spite the world.

FIRST MURTHERER.
And I another
So weary with disasters, tugg'd with fortune,

That I would set my life on any chance,
To mend it or be rid on't.

MACBETH.
Both of you
Know Banquo was your enemy.

BOTH MURTHERERS.

True, my lord.

MACBETH.
So is he mine, and in such bloody distance
That every minute of his being thrusts
Against my near'st of life; and though I could
With barefaced power sweep him from my sight
And bid my will avouch it, yet I must not,
For certain friends that are both his and mine,
Whose loves I may not drop, but wail his fall
Who I myself struck down. And thence it is
That I to your assistance do make love,

Masking the business from the common eye

For sundry weighty reasons.

SECOND MURTHERER.

We shall, my lord,

Perform what you command us.

FIRST MURTHERER.

Though our lives-

MACBETH.

Your spirits shine through you. Within this hour at most

I will advise you where to plant yourselves,

Acquaint you with the perfect spy o' the time,

The moment on't; fort must be done tonight

And something from the palace (always thought

That I require a clearness); and with him-

To leave no rubs nor botches in the work-

Fleance his son, that keeps him company,

Whose absence is no less material to me

Than is his father's, must embrace the fate

Of that dark hour. Resolve yourselves apart;

I'll come to you anon.

BOTH MURTHERERS.

We are resolved, my lord.

MACBETH.

I'll call upon you straight. Abide within.

Exeunt Murtherers.

It is concluded: Banquo, thy soul's flight,

If it find heaven, must find it out tonight. *Exit* .

SCENE II. The palace.

Enter Lady Macbeth and a Servant.

LADY MACBETH. Is Banquo gone from court?

SERVANT.

Ay, madam, but returns again tonight.

LADY MACBETH.

Say to the King I would attend his leisure

For a few words.

SERVANT.

Madam, I will. *Exit* .

LADY MACBETH.

Nought's had, all's spent,

Where our desire is got without content.

'Tis safer to be that which we destroy

Than by destruction dwell in doubtful joy.

Enter Macbeth.

How now, my lord? Why do you keep alone,

Of sorriest fancies your companions making,

Using those thoughts which should indeed have died

With them they think on? Things without all remedy

Should be without regard. What's done is done.

MACBETH.

We have scotch'd the snake, not kill'd it.

She'll close and be herself, whilst our poor malice

Remains in danger of her former tooth.

But let the frame of things disjoint, both the worlds suffer,

Ere we will eat our meal in fear and sleep

In the affliction of these terrible dreams

That shake us nightly. Better be with the dead,

Whom we, to gain our peace, have sent to peace,

Than on the torture of the mind to lie

In restless ecstasy. Duncan is in his grave;

After life's fitful fever he sleeps well.

Treason has done his worst; nor steel, nor poison,

Malice domestic, foreign levy, nothing,

Can touch him further.

LADY MACBETH.

Come on,

Gentle my lord, sleek o'er your rugged looks;

Be bright and jovial among your guests tonight.

MACBETH.

So shall I, love, and so, I pray, be you.
Let your remembrance apply to Banquo;
Present him eminence, both with eye and tongue:
Unsafe the while, that we
Must lave our honors in these flattering streams,
And make our faces vizards to our hearts,
Disguising what they are.

LADY MACBETH.
You must leave this.

MACBETH.

O, full of scorpions is my mind, dear wife!
Thou know'st that Banquo and his Fleance lives.

LADY MACBETH.

But in them nature's copy's not eterne.

MACBETH.

There's comfort yet; they are assailable.

Then be thou jocund. Ere the bat hath flown

His cloister'd flight, ere to black Hecate's summons

The shard-borne beetle with his drowsy hums

Hath rung night's yawning peal, there shall be done

A deed of dreadful note.

LADY MACBETH.

What's to be done?

MACBETH.

Be innocent of the knowledge, dearest chuck,

Till thou applaud the deed. Come, seeling night,

Scarf up the tender eye of pitiful day,

And with thy bloody and invisible hand

Cancel and tear to pieces that great bond

Which keeps me pale! Light thickens, and the crow

Makes wing to the rooky wood;

Good things of day begin to droop and drowse, Whiles night's black agents to their preys do rouse.

Thou marvel'st at my words, but hold thee still:

Things bad begun make strong themselves by ill.

So, prithee, go with me. *Exeunt* .

SCENE III. A park near the palace.

Enter three Murtherers.

FIRST MURTHERER. But who did bid thee join with us?

THIRD MURTHERER.

Macbeth.

SECOND MURTHERER.

He needs not our mistrust, since he delivers

Our offices and what we have to do

To the direction just.

FIRST MURTHERER.

Then stand with us.

The west yet glimmers with some streaks of day;

Now spurs the lated traveler apace

To gain the timely inn, and near approaches

The subject of our watch.

THIRD MURTHERER.

Hark! I hear horses.

BANQUO.

[Within.] Give us a light there, ho!

SECOND MURTHERER.

Then 'tis he; the rest

That are within the note of expectation

Already are i' the court.

FIRST MURTHERER.

His horses go about.

THIRD MURTHERER.

Almost a mile, but he does usually-

So all men do -from hence to the palace gate

Make it their walk.

SECOND MURTHERER.

A light, a light!

Enter Banquo, and Fleance with a torch.

THIRD MURTHERER. 'Tis he.

FIRST MURTHERER.

Stand to't.

BANQUO.

It will be rain tonight.

FIRST MURTHERER.

Let it come down.

They set upon Banquo.

BANQUO.

O, treachery! Fly, good Fleance, fly, fly, fly!

Thou mayst revenge. O slave! Dies. Fleance escapes.

THIRD MURTHERER.

Who did strike out the light?

FIRST MURTHERER.

Wast not the way?

THIRD MURTHERER.

There's but one down; the son is fled.

SECOND MURTHERER.

We have lost

Best half of our affair.

FIRST MURTHERER.

Well, let's away and say how much is done.

Exeunt.

SCENE IV. A Hall in the palace. A banquet prepared.

Enter Macbeth, Lady Macbeth, Ross, Lennox, Lords, and Attendants.

MACBETH. You know your own degrees; sit down. At first

And last the hearty welcome.

LORDS.

Thanks to your Majesty.

MACBETH.

Ourself will mingle with society

And play the humble host.

Our hostess keeps her state, but in best time

We will require her welcome.

LADY MACBETH.

Pronounce it for me, sir, to all our friends,

For my heart speaks they are welcome.

Enter first Murtherer to the door.

MACBETH. See, they encounter thee with their hearts' thanks.

Both sides are even; here I'll sit i' the midst.

Be large in mirth; anon we'll drink a measure

The table round. *[Approaches the door.]* There's blood upon thy face.

MURTHERER.

'Tis Banquo's then.

MACBETH.

'Tis better thee without than he within.

Is he dispatch'd?

MURTHERER.

My lord, his throat is cut; that I did for him.

MACBETH.

Thou art the best o' the cut-throats! Yet he's good

That did the like for Fleance. If thou didst it,

Thou art the nonpareil.

MURTHERER.

Most royal sir,

Fleance is 'scaped.

MACBETH.

[Aside.] Then comes my fit again. I had else been perfect,

Whole as the marble, founded as the rock,

As broad and general as the casing air;

But now I am cabin'd, cribb'd, confin'd, bound in

To saucy doubts and fears -But Banquo's safe?

MURTHERER.

Ay, my good lord. Safe in a ditch he bides,

With twenty trenched gashes on his head,

The least a death to nature.

MACBETH.

Thanks for that.

There the grown serpent lies; the worm that's fled

Hath nature that in time will venom breed,

No teeth for the present. Get thee gone. Tomorrow

We'll hear ourselves again.

Exit Murtherer.

LADY MACBETH.

My royal lord,

You do not give the cheer. The feast is sold

That is not often vouch'd, while 'tis amaking,

'Tis given with welcome. To feed were best at home;

From thence the sauce to meat is ceremony;

Meeting were bare without it.

MACBETH.

Sweet remembrancer!

Now good digestion wait on appetite,

And health on both!

LENNOX.

May't please your Highness sit.

The Ghost of Banquo enters and sits in Macbeth's place.

MACBETH.

Here had we now our country's honor roof'd,

Were the graced person of our Banquo present,

Who may I rather challenge for unkindness

Than pity for mischance!

ROSS.

His absence, sir,

Lays blame upon his promise. Please't your Highness

To grace us with your royal company?

MACBETH.

The table's full.

LENNOX.

Here is a place reserved, sir.

MACBETH.

Where?

LENNOX.

Here, my good lord. What is't that moves your Highness?

MACBETH.

Which of you have done this?

LORDS.

What, my good lord?

MACBETH.

Thou canst not say I did it; never shake

Thy gory locks at me.

ROSS.

Gentlemen, rise; his Highness is well.

LADY MACBETH.

Sit, worthy friends; my lord is often thus,

And hath been from his youth. Pray you, keep seat.

The fit is momentary; upon a thought

He will again be well. If much you note him,

You shall offend him and extend his passion.

Feed, and regard him not-Are you a man?

MACBETH.

Ay, and a bold one, that dare look on that

Which might appal the devil.

LADY MACBETH.

O proper stuff!

This is the very painting of your fear;

This is the air-drawn dagger which you said
Led you to Duncan. O, these flaws and starts,
Impostors to true fear, would well become
A woman's story at a winter's fire,
Authorized by her grandam. Shame itself!
Why do you make such faces? When all's done,
You look but on a stool.

MACBETH.

Prithee, see there! Behold! Look! Lo! How say you?
Why, what care I? If thou canst nod, speak too.
If charnel houses and our graves must send
Those that we bury back, our monuments
Shall be the maws of kites. *Exit* Ghost.

LADY MACBETH.
What, quite unmann'd in folly?

MACBETH.

If I stand here, I saw him.

LADY MACBETH.

Fie, for shame!

MACBETH.

Blood hath been shed ere now, i' the olden time,

Ere humane statute purged the gentle weal;

Ay, and since too, murthers have been perform'd

Too terrible for the ear. The time has been,

That, when the brains were out, the man would die,

And there an end; but now they rise again,

With twenty mortal murthers on their crowns,

And push us from our stools. This is more strange

Than such a murther is.

LADY MACBETH.

My worthy lord,

Your noble friends do lack you.

MACBETH.

I do forget.

Do not muse at me, my most worthy friends.
I have a strange infirmity, which is nothing
To those that know me. Come, love and health to all;
Then I'll sit down. Give me some wine, fill full.
I drink to the general joy o' the whole table,
And to our dear friend Banquo, whom we miss.
Would he were here! To all and him we thirst,
And all to all.

LORDS.

Our duties and the pledge.

Re-enter Ghost.

MACBETH.

Avaunt, and quit my sight! Let the earth hide thee!
Thy bones are marrowless, thy blood is cold;
Thou hast no speculation in those eyes

Which thou dost glare with.

LADY MACBETH.

Think of this, good peers,

But as a thing of custom. 'Tis no other,

Only it spoils the pleasure of the time.

MACBETH.

What man dare, I dare.

Approach thou like the rugged Russian bear,

The arm'd rhinoceros, or the Hyrcan tiger;

Take any shape but that, and my firm nerves

Shall never tremble. Or be alive again,

And dare me to the desert with thy sword.

If trembling I inhabit then, protest me

The baby of a girl. Hence, horrible shadow!

Unreal mockery, hence! *Exit* Ghost.

Why, so, being gone,

I am a man again. Pray you sit still.

LADY MACBETH.

You have displaced the mirth, broke the good meeting,

With most admired disorder.

MACBETH.

Can such things be,

And overcome us like a summer's cloud,

Without our special wonder? You make me strange

Even to the disposition that I owe

When now I think you can behold such sights

And keep the natural ruby of your cheeks

When mine is blanch'd with fear.

ROSS.

What sights, my lord?

LADY MACBETH.

I pray you, speak not; he grows worse and worse;

Question enrages him. At once, good night.

Stand not upon the order of your going,

But go at once.

LENNOX.

Good night, and better health

Attend his Majesty!

LADY MACBETH.

A kind good night to all!

Exeunt all but Macbeth and Lady Macbeth.

MACBETH.

will have blood; they say blood will have blood.

Stones have been known to move and trees to speak;

Augures and understood relations have

By maggot pies and choughs and rooks brought forth

The secret'st man of blood. What is the night?

LADY MACBETH.

Almost at odds with morning, which is which.

MACBETH.

How say'st thou, that Macduff denies his person
At our great bidding?

LADY MACBETH.
Did you send to him, sir?

MACBETH.

I hear it by the way, but I will send.
There's not a one of them but in his house
I keep a servant feed. I will tomorrow,
And betimes I will, to the weird sisters.
More shall they speak; for now I am bent to know,
By the worst means, the worst. For mine own good
All causes shall give way. I am in blood
Stepp'd in so far that, should I wade no more,
Returning were as tedious as go o'er.
Strange things I have in head that will to hand,
Which must be acted ere they may be scann'd.

LADY MACBETH.

You lack the season of all natures, sleep.

MACBETH.

Come, we'll to sleep. My strange and self-abuse

Is the initiate fear that wants hard use.

We are yet but young in deed. *Exeunt* .

SCENE V. A heath. Thunder.

Enter the three Witches, meeting Hecate.

FIRST WITCH. Why, how now, Hecate? You look angerly.

HECATE.

Have I not reason, beldams as you are,

Saucy and overbold? How did you dare

To trade and traffic with Macbeth

In riddles and affairs of death,

And I, the mistress of your charms,

The close contriver of all harms,

Was never call'd to bear my part,

Or show the glory of our art?

And, which is worse, all you have done

Hath been but for a wayward son,

Spiteful and wrathful, who, as others do,

Loves for his own ends, not for you.

But make amends now. Get you gone,

And at the pit of Acheron

Meet me i' the morning. Thither he

Will come to know his destiny.

Your vessels and your spells provide,

Your charms and everything beside.

I am for the air; this night I'll spend

Unto a dismal and a fatal end.

Great business must be wrought ere noon:

Upon the corner of the moon

There hangs a vaporous drop profound;

I'll catch it ere it come to ground.

And that distill'd by magic sleights

Shall raise such artificial sprites

As by the strength of their illusion

Shall draw him on to his confusion.

He shall spurn fate, scorn death, and bear

His hopes 'bove wisdom, grace, and fear.

And you all know security

Is mortals' chiefest enemy.

Music and a song within,

"Come away, come away."

Hark! I am call'd; my little spirit, see,

Sits in a foggy cloud and stays for me. *Exit* .

FIRST WITCH.

Come, let's make haste; she'll soon be back again.

Exeunt.

SCENE VI. Forres. The palace.

Enter Lennox and another Lord.

LENNOX. My former speeches have but hit your thoughts,

Which can interpret farther; only I say

Thing's have been strangely borne. The gracious Duncan

Was pitied of Macbeth; marry, he was dead.

And the right valiant Banquo walk'd too late, Whom, you may say, if't please you, Fleance kill'd,

For Fleance fled. Men must not walk too late.

Who cannot want the thought, how monstrous

It was for Malcolm and for Donalbain

To kill their gracious father? Damned fact!

How it did grieve Macbeth! Did he not straight,

In pious rage, the two delinquents tear

That were the slaves of drink and thralls of sleep?

Was not that nobly done? Ay, and wisely too,

For 'twould have anger'd any heart alive

To hear the men deny't. So that, I say,

He has borne all things well; and I do think

That, had he Duncan's sons under his key-

As, an't please heaven, he shall not -they should find

What 'twere to kill a father; so should Fleance.

But, peace! For from broad words, and 'cause he fail'd

His presence at the tyrant's feast, I hear,

Macduff lives in disgrace. Sir, can you tell

Where he bestows himself?

LORD.

The son of Duncan,

From whom this tyrant holds the due of birth,

Lives in the English court and is received

Of the most pious Edward with such grace

That the malevolence of fortune nothing

Takes from his high respect. Thither Macduff

Is gone to pray the holy King, upon his aid

To wake Northumberland and warlike Siward;

That by the help of these, with Him above

To ratify the work, we may again

Give to our tables meat, sleep to our nights,

Free from our feasts and banquets bloody knives,

Do faithful homage, and receive free honors-

All which we pine for now. And this report

Hath so exasperate the King that he

Prepares for some attempt of war.

LENNOX.

Sent he to Macduff?

LORD.

He did, and with an absolute "Sir, not I,"

The cloudy messenger turns me his back,

And hums, as who should say, "You'll rue the time

That clogs me with this answer."

LENNOX.

And that well might

Advise him to a caution, to hold what distance

His wisdom can provide. Some holy angel

Fly to the court of England and unfold

His message ere he come, that a swift blessing

May soon return to this our suffering country

Under a hand accursed!

LORD.

I'll send my prayers with him.

Exeunt.

ACT IV. SCENE I. A cavern. In the middle, a boiling cauldron. Thunder.

Enter the three Witches.

FIRST WITCH. Thrice the brinded cat hath mew'd.

SECOND WITCH.

Thrice and once the hedge-pig whined.

THIRD WITCH.

Harpier cries, "'Tis time, 'tis time."

FIRST WITCH.

Round about the cauldron go;

In the poison'd entrails throw.

Toad, that under cold stone

Days and nights has thirty-one

Swelter'd venom sleeping got,

Boil thou first i' the charmed pot.

ALL.

Double, double, toil and trouble;

Fire burn and cauldron bubble.

SECOND WITCH.

Fillet of a fenny snake,

In the cauldron boil and bake;

Eye of newt and toe of frog,

Wool of bat and tongue of dog,

Adder's fork and blind-worm's sting,

Lizard's leg and howlet's wing,

For a charm of powerful trouble,

Like a hell-broth boil and bubble.

ALL.

Double, double, toil and trouble;

Fire burn and cauldron bubble.

THIRD WITCH.

Scale of dragon, tooth of wolf,

Witch's mummy, maw and gulf

Of the ravin'd salt-sea shark,

Root of hemlock digg'd i' the dark,

Liver of blaspheming Jew,

Gall of goat and slips of yew

Sliver'd in the moon's eclipse,

Nose of Turk and Tartar's lips,

Finger of birth-strangled babe

Ditch-deliver'd by a drab,

Make the gruel thick and slab.

Add thereto a tiger's chawdron,

For the ingredients of our cawdron.

ALL.

Double, double, toil and trouble;

Fire burn and cauldron bubble.

SECOND WITCH.

Cool it with a baboon's blood,

Then the charm is firm and good.

Enter Hecate to the other three Witches.

HECATE. O, well done! I commend your pains,

And everyone shall share i' the gains.

And now about the cauldron sing,

Like elves and fairies in a ring,

Enchanting all that you put in.

Music and a song, "Black spirits."

Hecate retires.

SECOND WITCH.

By the pricking of my thumbs,

Something wicked this way comes.

Open, locks,

Whoever knocks!

Enter Macbeth.

MACBETH. How now, you secret, black, and midnight hags?

What is't you do?

ALL.

A deed without a name.

MACBETH.

I conjure you, by that which you profess

(Howeer you come to know it) answer me:

Though you untie the winds and let them fight

Against the churches, though the yesty waves

Confound and swallow navigation up,

Though bladed corn be lodged and trees blown down,

Though castles topple on their warders' heads,

Though palaces and pyramids do slope

Their heads to their foundations, though the treasure

Of nature's germaines tumble all together

Even till destruction sicken, answer me

To what I ask you.

FIRST WITCH.

Speak.

SECOND WITCH.

Demand.

THIRD WITCH.

We'll answer.

FIRST WITCH.

Say, if thou'dst rather hear it from our mouths,
Or from our masters'?

MACBETH.

Call 'em, let me see 'em.

FIRST WITCH.

Pour in sow's blood that hath eaten
Her nine farrow; grease that's sweaten
From the murtherer's gibbet throw
Into the flame.

ALL.

Come, high or low;

Thyself and office deftly show!

Thunder. First Apparition: an armed Head.

MACBETH.

Tell me, thou unknown power-

FIRST WITCH.

He knows thy thought:

Hear his speech, but say thou nought.

FIRST APPARITION.

Macbeth! Macbeth! Macbeth! Beware Macduff,

Beware the Thane of Fife. Dismiss me. Enough.

Descends.

MACBETH.

Whate'er thou art, for thy good caution, thanks;

Thou hast harp'd my fear aright. But one word more-

FIRST WITCH.

He will not be commanded. Here's another,

More potent than the first.

Thunder. Second Apparition: a bloody Child.

SECOND APPARITION.

Macbeth! Macbeth! Macbeth!

MACBETH.

Had I three ears, I'd hear thee.

SECOND APPARITION.

Be bloody, bold, and resolute: laugh to scorn

The power of man, for none of woman born

Shall harm Macbeth. Descends.

MACBETH.

Then live, Macduff. What need I fear of thee?

But yet I'll make assurance double sure,

And take a bond of fate: thou shalt not live,
That I may tell pale-hearted fear it lies,
And sleep in spite of thunder.
Thunder. Third Apparition: a Child crowned,
with a tree in his hand.
What is this,
That rises like the issue of a king,
And wears upon his baby brow the round
And top of sovereignty?

ALL.

Listen, but speak not to't.

THIRD APPARITION.
Be lion-mettled, proud, and take no care
Who chafes, who frets, or where conspirers are.
Macbeth shall never vanquish'd be until
Great Birnam Wood to high Dunsinane Hill
Shall come against him. Descends.

MACBETH.

That will never be.
Who can impress the forest, bid the tree
Unfix his earth-bound root? Sweet bodements, good!
Rebellion's head, rise never till the Wood
Of Birnam rise, and our high-placed Macbeth
Shall live the lease of nature, pay his breath
To time and mortal custom. Yet my heart
Throbs to know one thing: tell me, if your art
Can tell so much, shall Banquo's issue ever
Reign in this kingdom?

ALL.

Seek to know no more.

MACBETH.
I will be satisfied! Deny me this,
And an eternal curse fall on you! Let me know.
Why sinks that cauldron, and what noise is this?

Hautboys.

FIRST WITCH.

Show!

SECOND WITCH.

Show!

THIRD.

WITCH. Show!

ALL.

Show his eyes, and grieve his heart;

Come like shadows, so depart!

A show of eight Kings, the last with a glass in his hand;

Banquo's Ghost following.

MACBETH.

Thou are too like the spirit of Banquo Down!
Thy crown does sear mine eyeballs. And thy hair,
Thou other gold-bound brow, is like the first.
A third is like the former. Filthy hags!

Why do you show me this? A fourth! Start, eyes!
What, will the line stretch out to the crack of doom?

Another yet! A seventh! I'll see no more!
And yet the eighth appears, who bears a glass
Which shows me many more; and some I see
That twofold balls and treble sceptres carry.
Horrible sight! Now I see 'tis true;
For the blood-bolter'd Banquo smiles upon me,
And points at them for his. What, is this so?

FIRST WITCH.
Ay, sir, all this is so. But why
Stands Macbeth thus amazedly?
Come,sisters, cheer we up his sprites,
And show the best of our delights.

I'll charm the air to give a sound,
While you perform your antic round,
That this great King may kindly say
Our duties did his welcome pay.

Music. The Witches dance and
then vanish with Hecate.

MACBETH.
are they? Gone? Let this pernicious hour
Stand ay accursed in the calendar!

Come in, without there!

Enter Lennox.

LENNOX. What's your Grace's will?

MACBETH.
Saw you the weird sisters?

LENNOX.

No, my lord.

MACBETH.

Came they not by you?

LENNOX.

No indeed, my lord.

MACBETH.

Infected be the 'air whereon they ride,

And damn'd all those that trust them! I did hear

The galloping of horse. Who wast came by?

LENNOX.

'Tis two or three, my lord, that bring you word

Macduff is fled to England.

MACBETH.

Fled to England?

LENNOX.

Ay, my good lord.

MACBETH.

[Aside.] Time, thou anticipatest my dread exploits.

The flighty purpose never is o'ertook

Unless the deed go with it. From this moment

The very firstlings of my heart shall be

The firstlings of my hand. And even now,

To crown my thoughts with acts, be it thought and done:

The castle of Macduff I will surprise,

Seize upon Fife, give to the edge o' the sword

His wife, his babes, and all unfortunate souls

That trace him in his line. No boasting like a fool;

This deed I'll do before this purpose cool.

But no more sights! -Where are these gentlemen?

Come, bring me where they are. *Exeunt* .

SCENE II. Fife. Macduff's castle.

Enter Lady Macduff, her Son, and Ross.

LADY MACDUFF. What had he done, to make him fly the land?

ROSS.

You must have patience, madam.

LADY MACDUFF.

He had none;

His flight was madness. When our actions do not,

Our fears do make us traitors.

ROSS.

You know not

Whether it was his wisdom or his fear.

LADY MACDUFF.

Wisdom? To leave his wife, to leave his babes,

His mansion, and his titles, in a place

From whence himself does fly? He loves us not;

He wants the natural touch; for the poor wren,

The most diminutive of birds, will fight,
Her young ones in her nest, against the owl.
All is the fear and nothing is the love;
As little is the wisdom, where the flight
So runs against all reason.

ROSS.
My dearest coz,
I pray you, school yourself. But for your husband,
He is noble, wise, Judicious, and best knows
The fits o' the season. I dare not speak much further;
But cruel are the times when we are traitors
And do not know ourselves; when we hold rumor
From what we fear, yet know not what we fear,
But float upon a wild and violent sea
Each way and move. I take my leave of you;
Shall not be long but I'll be here again.
Things at the worst will cease or else climb upward
To what they were before. My pretty cousin,
Blessing upon you!

LADY MACDUFF.

Father'd he is, and yet he's fatherless.

ROSS.

I am so much a fool, should I stay longer,

It would be my disgrace and your discomfort.

I take my leave at once. *Exit* .

LADY MACDUFF.

Sirrah, your father's dead.

And what will you do now? How will you live?

SON.

As birds do, Mother.

LADY MACDUFF.

What, with worms and flies?

SON.

With what I get, I mean; and so do they.

LADY MACDUFF.

Poor bird! Thou'ldst never fear the net nor lime,

The pitfall nor the gin.

SON.

Why should I, Mother? Poor birds they are not set for.

My father is not dead, for all your saying.

LADY MACDUFF.

Yes, he is dead. How wilt thou do for father?

SON.

Nay, how will you do for a husband?

LADY MACDUFF.

Why, I can buy me twenty at any market.

SON.

Then you'll buy 'em to sell again.

LADY MACDUFF.

Thou speak'st with all thy wit, and yet, i'
faith,
With wit enough for thee.

SON.

Was my father a traitor, Mother?

LADY MACDUFF.

Ay, that he was.

SON.

What is a traitor?

LADY MACDUFF.

Why one that swears and lies.

SON.

And be all traitors that do so?

LADY MACDUFF.

Everyone that does so is a traitor and must be hanged.

SON.

And must they all be hanged that swear and lie?

LADY MACDUFF.

Everyone.

SON.

Who must hang them?

LADY MACDUFF.

Why, the honest men.

SON.

Then the liars and swearers are fools, for there are liars and

swearers enow to beat the honest men and hang up them.

LADY MACDUFF.

Now, God help thee, poor monkey! But how wilt thou do for a father?

SON.

If he were dead, you'ld weep for him; if you would not, it

were a good sign that I should quickly have a new father.

LADY MACDUFF.

Poor prattler, how thou talk'st!

Enter a Messenger.

MESSENGER. Bless you, fair dame! I am not to you known, Though in your state of honor I am perfect.

I doubt some danger does approach you nearly.

If you will take a homely man's advice,

Be not found here; hence, with your little ones.

To fright you thus, methinks I am too savage;

To do worse to you were fell cruelty,

Which is too nigh your person. Heaven preserve you!

I dare abide no longer. *Exit* .

LADY MACDUFF.

Whither should I fly?

I have done no harm. But I remember now

I am in this earthly world, where to do harm

Is often laudable, to do good sometime

Accounted dangerous folly. Why then, alas,

Do I put up that womanly defense,

To say I have done no harm -What are these faces?

Enter Murtherers.

FIRST MURTHERER. Where is your husband?

LADY MACDUFF.

I hope, in no place so unsanctified

Where such as thou mayst find him.

FIRST MURTHERER.

He's a traitor.

SON.

Thou liest, thou shag-ear'd villain!

FIRST MURTHERER.

What, you egg!

Stabs him.

Young fry of treachery!

SON.

He has kill'd me, Mother.

Run away, I pray you! Dies.

Exit Lady Macduff, crying "Murther!"

Exeunt Murtherers, following her.

SCENE III. England. Before the King's palace.

Enter Malcolm and Macduff.

MALCOLM. Let us seek out some desolate shade and there

Weep our sad bosoms empty.

MACDUFF.

Let us rather

Hold fast the mortal sword, and like good men

Bestride our downfall'n birthdom. Each new morn

New widows howl, new orphans cry, new sorrows

Strike heaven on the face, that it resounds

As if it felt with Scotland and yell'd out

Like syllable of dolor.

MALCOLM.

What I believe, I'll wall;

What know, believe; and what I can redress,

As I shall find the time to friend, I will.

What you have spoke, it may be so perchance.

This tyrant, whose sole name blisters our tongues,

Was once thought honest. You have loved him well;

He hath not touch'd you yet. I am young, but something

You may deserve of him through me, and wisdom

To offer up a weak, poor, innocent lamb

To appease an angry god.

MACDUFF.

I am not treacherous.

MALCOLM.

But Macbeth is.

A good and virtuous nature may recoil

In an imperial charge. But I shall crave your pardon;
That which you are, my thoughts cannot transpose.

Angels are bright still, though the brightest fell.
Though all things foul would wear the brows of grace,
Yet grace must still look so.

MACDUFF.

I have lost my hopes.

MALCOLM.

Perchance even there where I did find my doubts.
Why in that rawness left you wife and child,
Those precious motives, those strong knots of love,
Without leave-taking? I pray you,
Let not my jealousies be your dishonors,
But mine own safeties. You may be rightly just,
Whatever I shall think.

MACDUFF.

Bleed, bleed, poor country!
Great tyranny, lay thou thy basis sure,
For goodness dare not check thee. Wear thou thy wrongs;
The title is affeer'd. Fare thee well, lord.
I would not be the villain that thou think'st
For the whole space that's in the tyrant's grasp
And the rich East to boot.

MALCOLM.
Be not offended;
I speak not as in absolute fear of you.
I think our country sinks beneath the yoke;
It weeps, it bleeds, and each new day a gash
Is added to her wounds. I think withal
There would be hands uplifted in my right;
And here from gracious England have I offer
Of goodly thousands. But for all this,
When I shall tread upon the tyrant's head,
Or wear it on my sword, yet my poor country
Shall have more vices than it had before,
More suffer and more sundry ways than ever,

By him that shall succeed.

MACDUFF.

What should he be?

MALCOLM.

It is myself I mean, in whom I know

All the particulars of vice so grafted

That, when they shall be open'd, black Macbeth

Will seem as pure as snow, and the poor state

Esteem him as a lamb, being compared

With my confineless harms.

MACDUFF.

Not in the legions

Of horrid hell can come a devil more damn'd

In evils to top Macbeth.

MALCOLM.

I grant him bloody,

Luxurious, avaricious, false, deceitful, Sudden, malicious, smacking of every sin

That has a name. But there's no bottom, none,

In my voluptuousness. Your wives, your daughters,

Your matrons, and your maids could not fill up

The cestern of my lust, and my desire

All continent impediments would o'erbear

That did oppose my will. Better Macbeth

Than such an one to reign.

MACDUFF.

Boundless intemperance

In nature is a tyranny; it hath been

The untimely emptying of the happy throne,

And fall of many kings. But fear not yet

To take upon you what is yours. You may

Convey your pleasures in a spacious plenty

And yet seem cold, the time you may so hoodwink.

We have willing dames enough; there cannot be

That vulture in you to devour so many

As will to greatness dedicate themselves,

Finding it so inclined.

MALCOLM.

With this there grows

In my most ill-composed affection such

A stanchless avarice that, were I King,

I should cut off the nobles for their lands,

Desire his jewels and this other's house,

And my more-having would be as a sauce

To make me hunger more, that I should forge

Quarrels unjust against the good and loyal,

Destroying them for wealth.

MACDUFF.

This avarice

Sticks deeper, grows with more pernicious root

Than summer-seeming lust, and it hath been

The sword of our slain kings. Yet do not fear;

Scotland hath foisons to fill up your will

Of your mere own. All these are portable,

With other graces weigh'd.

MALCOLM.

But I have none. The king-becoming graces,

As justice, verity, temperance, stableness,

Bounty, perseverance, mercy, lowliness,

Devotion, patience, courage, fortitude,

I have no relish of them, but abound

In the division of each several crime,

Acting it many ways. Nay, had I power, I should

Pour the sweet milk of concord into hell,

Uproar the universal peace, confound

All unity on earth.

MACDUFF.

O Scotland, Scotland!

MALCOLM.

If such a one be fit to govern, speak.

I am as I have spoken.

MACDUFF.

Fit to govern?

No, not to live. O nation miserable!
With an untitled tyrant bloody-scepter'd,
When shalt thou see thy wholesome days again,
Since that the truest issue of thy throne
By his own interdiction stands accursed
And does blaspheme his breed? Thy royal father
Was a most sainted king; the queen that bore thee,
Oftener upon her knees than on her feet,
Died every day she lived. Fare thee well!
These evils thou repeat'st upon thyself
Have banish'd me from Scotland. O my breast,
Thy hope ends here!

MALCOLM.

Macduff, this noble passion,
Child of integrity, hath from my soul
Wiped the black scruples, reconciled my thoughts
To thy good truth and honor. Devilish Macbeth

By many of these trains hath sought to win me

Into his power, and modest wisdom plucks me

From over-credulous haste. But God above

Deal between thee and me! For even now

I put myself to thy direction and

Unspeak mine own detraction; here abjure

The taints and blames I laid upon myself,

For strangers to my nature. I am yet

Unknown to woman, never was forsworn,

Scarcely have coveted what was mine own,

At no time broke my faith, would not betray

The devil to his fellow, and delight

No less in truth than life. My first false speaking

Was this upon myself. What I am truly

Is thine and my poor country's to command.

Whither indeed, before thy here-approach,

Old Siward, with ten thousand warlike men

Already at a point, was setting forth.

Now we'll together, and the chance of goodness

Be like our warranted quarrel! Why are you silent?

MACDUFF.

Such welcome and unwelcome things at once

'Tis hard to reconcile.

Enter a Doctor.

MALCOLM. Well, more anon. Comes the King forth, I pray you?

DOCTOR.

Ay, sir, there are a crew of wretched souls

That stay his cure. Their malady convinces

The great assay of art, but at his touch,

Such sanctity hath heaven given his hand,

They presently amend.

MALCOLM.

I thank you, Doctor. *Exit* Doctor.

MACDUFF.

What's the disease he means?

MALCOLM.

'Tis call'd the evil:
A most miraculous work in this good King,
Which often, since my here-remain in England,
I have seen him do. How he solicits heaven,
Himself best knows; but strangely-visited people,
All swol'n and ulcerous, pitiful to the eye,
The mere despair of surgery, he cures,
Hanging a golden stamp about their necks
Put on with holy prayers; and 'tis spoken,
To the succeeding royalty he leaves
The healing benediction. With this strange virtue
He hath a heavenly gift of prophecy,
And sundry blessings hang about his throne
That speak him full of grace.

Enter Ross.

MACDUFF. See, who comes here?

MALCOLM.

My countryman, but yet I know him not.

MACDUFF.

My ever gentle cousin, welcome hither.

MALCOLM.

I know him now. Good God, betimes remove

The means that makes us strangers!

ROSS.

Sir, amen.

MACDUFF.

Stands Scotland where it did?

ROSS.

Alas, poor country,

Almost afraid to know itself! It cannot

Be call'd our mother, but our grave. Where nothing,

But who knows nothing, is once seen to smile;

Where sighs and groans and shrieks that rend the air,

Are made, not mark'd; where violent sorrow seems

A modern ecstasy. The dead man's knell

Is there scarce ask'd for who, and good men's lives

Expire before the flowers in their caps,

Dying or ere they sicken.

MACDUFF.

O, relation

Too nice, and yet too true!

MALCOLM.

What's the newest grief?

ROSS.

That of an hour's age doth hiss the speaker;

Each minute teems a new one.

MACDUFF.

How does my wife?

ROSS.

Why, well.

MACDUFF.

And all my children?

ROSS.

Well too.

MACDUFF.

The tyrant has not batter'd at their peace?

ROSS.

No, they were well at peace when I did leave 'em.

MACDUFF.

Be not a niggard of your speech. How goest?

ROSS.

When I came hither to transport the tidings,

Which I have heavily borne, there ran a rumor

Of many worthy fellows that were out,

Which was to my belief witness'd the rather,

For that I saw the tyrant's power afoot.

Now is the time of help; your eye in Scotland

Would create soldiers, make our women fight,

To doff their dire distresses.

MALCOLM.

Be't their comfort

We are coming thither. Gracious England hath

Lent us good Siward and ten thousand men;

An older and a better soldier none

That Christendom gives out.

ROSS.

Would I could answer

This comfort with the like! But I have words

That would be howl'd out in the desert air,

Where hearing should not latch them.

MACDUFF.

What concern they?

The general cause? Or is it a fee-grief

Due to some single breast?

ROSS.

No mind that's honest

But in it shares some woe, though the main part

Pertains to you alone.

MACDUFF.

If it be mine,

Keep it not from me, quickly let me have it.

ROSS.

Let not your ears despise my tongue forever,

Which shall possess them with the heaviest sound

That ever yet they heard.

MACDUFF.

Humh! I guess at it.

ROSS.

Your castle is surprised; your wife and babes

Savagely slaughter'd. To relate the manner

Were, on the quarry of these murther'd deer,

To add the death of you.

MALCOLM.

Merciful heaven!

What, man! Neer pull your hat upon your brows;

Give sorrow words. The grief that does not speak

Whispers the o'erfraught heart, and bids it break.

MACDUFF.

My children too?

ROSS.

Wife, children, servants, all

That could be found.

MACDUFF.

And I must be from thence!

My wife kill'd too?

ROSS.

I have said.

MALCOLM.

Be comforted.

Let's make us medicines of our great revenge,

To cure this deadly grief.

MACDUFF.

He has no children. All my pretty ones?

Did you say all? O hell-kite! All?

What, all my pretty chickens and their dam

At one fell swoop?

MALCOLM.

Dispute it like a man.

MACDUFF.

I shall do so,

But I must also feel it as a man.

I cannot but remember such things were

That were most precious to me. Did heaven look on,

And would not take their part? Sinful Macduff,

They were all struck for thee! Naught that I am,

Not for their own demerits, but for mine,

Fell slaughter on their souls. Heaven rest them now!

MALCOLM.

Be this the whetstone of your sword. Let grief
Convert to anger; blunt not the heart, enrage it.

MACDUFF.
O, I could play the woman with mine eyes
And braggart with my tongue! But, gentle heavens,
Cut short all intermission; front to front
Bring thou this fiend of Scotland and myself;
Within my sword's length set him; if he 'scape,
Heaven forgive him too!

MALCOLM.

This tune goes manly.
Come, go we to the King; our power is ready,
Our lack is nothing but our leave. Macbeth
Is ripe for shaking, and the powers above
Put on their instruments. Receive what cheer you may,
The night is long that never finds the day. *Exeunt* .

ACT V. SCENE I. Dunsinane. Anteroom in the castle.

Enter a Doctor of Physic and a Waiting Gentlewoman.

DOCTOR. I have two nights watched with you, but can perceive no
truth in your report. When was it she last walked?

GENTLEWOMAN.
Since his Majesty went into the field, have seen her
rise from her bed, throw her nightgown upon her, unlock her
closet, take forth paper, fold it, write upon't, read it,
afterwards seal it, and again return to bed; yet all this while
in a most fast sleep.

DOCTOR.
A great perturbation in nature, to receive at once the
benefit of sleep and do the effects of watching! In this slumbery
agitation, besides her walking and other actual performances,
what, at any time, have you heard her say?

GENTLEWOMAN.
That, sir, which I will not report after her.

DOCTOR.

You may to me, and 'tis most meet you should.

GENTLEWOMAN.
Neither to you nor anyone, having no witness to confirm my speech.

Enter Lady Macbeth with a taper.

Lo you, here she comes! This is her very guise, and, upon my
life, fast asleep. Observe her; stand close.

DOCTOR.

How came she by that light?

GENTLEWOMAN.
Why, it stood by her. She has light by her
continually; 'tis her command.

DOCTOR.

You see, her eyes are open.

GENTLEWOMAN.

Ay, but their sense is shut.

DOCTOR.

What is it she does now? Look how she rubs her hands.

GENTLEWOMAN.

It is an accustomed action with her, to seem thus
washing her hands. I have known her continue in this a quarter of an hour.

LADY MACBETH.

Yet here's a spot.

DOCTOR.

Hark, she speaks! I will set down what comes from her, to
satisfy my remembrance the more strongly.

LADY MACBETH.

Out, damned spot! Out, I say! One-two -why then 'tis
time to do't. Hell is murky. Fie, my lord, fie! A soldier, and
afeard? What need we fear who knows it, when none can call our
power to account? Yet who would have thought the old man to have
had so much blood in him?

DOCTOR.

Do you mark that?

LADY MACBETH.

The Thane of Fife had a wife; where is she now?
What,
will these hands neer be clean? No more o' that, my lord, no more
o' that. You mar all with this starting.

DOCTOR.

Go to, go to; you have known what you should not.

GENTLEWOMAN.

She has spoke what she should not, I am sure of that.
Heaven knows what she has known.

LADY MACBETH.
Here's the smell of the blood still. All the perfumes
of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand. Oh, oh, oh!

DOCTOR.

What a sigh is there! The heart is sorely charged.

GENTLEWOMAN.
I would not have such a heart in my bosom for the
dignity of the whole body.

DOCTOR.
Well, well, well-

GENTLEWOMAN.

Pray God it be, sir.

DOCTOR.

This disease is beyond my practice. Yet I have known those

which have walked in their sleep who have died holily in their beds.

LADY MACBETH.

Wash your hands, put on your nightgown, look not so

pale. I tell you yet again, Banquo's buried; he cannot come out on's grave.

DOCTOR.

Even so?

LADY MACBETH.

To bed, to bed; there's knocking at the gate.

Come,

come, come, come, give me your hand.What's done cannot be undone.

To bed, to bed, to bed.

Exit.

DOCTOR.

Will she go now to bed?

GENTLEWOMAN.

Directly.

DOCTOR.

Foul whisperings are abroad. Unnatural deeds
Do breed unnatural troubles; infected minds
To their deaf pillows will discharge their secrets.

More needs she the divine than the physician.
God, God, forgive us all! Look after her;
Remove from her the means of all annoyance,
And still keep eyes upon her. So good night.

My mind she has mated and amazed my sight.
I think, but dare not speak.

GENTLEWOMAN.

Good night, good doctor.

Exeunt.

SCENE II. The country near Dunsinane. Drum and colors.

Enter Menteith, Caithness, Angus, Lennox, and Soldiers.

MENTEITH. The English power is near, led on by Malcolm,

His uncle Siward, and the good Macduff.

Revenges burn in them, for their dear causes

Would to the bleeding and the grim alarm

Excite the mortified man.

ANGUS.

Near Birnam Wood

Shall we well meet them; that way are they coming.

CAITHNESS.

Who knows if Donalbain be with his brother?

LENNOX.

For certain, sir, he is not; I have a file

Of all the gentry. There is Seward's son

And many unrough youths that even now

Protest their first of manhood.

MENTEITH.

What does the tyrant?

CAITHNESS.

Great Dunsinane he strongly fortifies.

Some say he's mad; others, that lesser hate him,

Do call it valiant fury; but, for certain,

He cannot buckle his distemper'd cause

Within the belt of rule.

ANGUS.

Now does he feel

His secret murthers sticking on his hands, Now minutely revolts upbraid his faith-breach;

Those he commands move only in command,

Nothing in love. Now does he feel his title

Hang loose about him, like a giant's robe

Upon a dwarfish thief.

MENTEITH.

Who then shall blame

His pester'd senses to recoil and start,

When all that is within him does condemn

Itself for being there?

CAITHNESS.

Well, march we on

To give obedience where 'tis truly owed.

Meet we the medicine of the sickly weal,

And with him pour we, in our country's purge,

Each drop of us.

LENNOX.

Or so much as it needs

To dew the sovereign flower and drown the weeds.

Make we our march towards Birnam. *Exeunt* marching.

SCENE III. Dunsinane. A room in the castle.

Enter Macbeth, Doctor, and Attendants.

MACBETH. Bring me no more reports; let them fly all!

Till Birnam Wood remove to Dunsinane

I cannot taint with fear. What's the boy Malcolm?

Was he not born of woman? The spirits that know

All mortal consequences have pronounced me thus:

"Fear not, Macbeth; no man that's born of woman

Shall e'er have power upon thee." Then fly, false Thanes,

And mingle with the English epicures!

The mind I sway by and the heart I bear

Shall never sag with doubt nor shake with fear.

Enter a Servant.

The devil damn thee black, thou cream-faced loon!

Where got'st thou that goose look?

SERVANT.

There is ten thousand-

MACBETH.

Geese, villain?

SERVANT.

Soldiers, sir.

MACBETH.

Go prick thy face and over-red thy fear,
Thou lily-liver'd boy. What soldiers, patch?
Death of thy soul! Those linen cheeks of thine
Are counselors to fear. What soldiers, whey-face?

SERVANT.

The English force, so please you.

MACBETH.

Take thy face hence. *Exit* Servant.

Seyton-I am sick at heart,

When I behold-Seyton, I say!- This push

Will cheer me ever or disseat me now.

I have lived long enough. My way of life

Is fall'n into the sear, the yellow leaf,

And that which should accompany old age,

As honor, love, obedience, troops of friends,

I must not look to have; but in their stead,

Curses, not loud but deep, mouth-honor, breath,

Which the poor heart would fain deny and dare not.

Seyton!

Enter Seyton.

SEYTON. What's your gracious pleasure?

MACBETH.

What news more?

SEYTON.

All is confirm'd, my lord, which was reported.

MACBETH.

I'll fight, 'til from my bones my flesh be hack'd.

Give me my armor.

SEYTON.

'Tis not needed yet.

MACBETH.

I'll put it on.

Send out more horses, skirr the country round,

Hang those that talk of fear. Give me mine armor.

How does your patient, doctor?

DOCTOR.

Not so sick, my lord,

As she is troubled with thick-coming fancies, That keep her from her rest.

MACBETH.

Cure her of that.

Canst thou not minister to a mind diseased,

Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow,

Raze out the written troubles of the brain,

And with some sweet oblivious antidote

Cleanse the stuff'd bosom of that perilous stuff

Which weighs upon the heart?

DOCTOR.

Therein the patient

Must minister to himself.

MACBETH.

Throw physic to the dogs, I'll none of it.

Come, put mine armor on; give me my staff.

Seyton, send out. Doctor, the Thanes fly from me.

Come, sir, dispatch. If thou couldst, doctor, cast
The water of my land, find her disease
And purge it to a sound and pristine health,
I would applaud thee to the very echo,
That should applaud again. Pull't off, I say.
What rhubarb, cyme, or what purgative drug
Would scour these English hence? Hearst thou of them?

DOCTOR.

Ay, my good lord, your royal preparation
Makes us hear something.

MACBETH.

Bring it after me.
I will not be afraid of death and bane
Till Birnam Forest come to Dunsinane.

DOCTOR.

[Aside.] Were I from Dunsinane away and clear,
Profit again should hardly draw me here. *Exeunt* .

SCENE IV. Country near Birnam Wood. Drum and colors.

Enter Malcolm, old Seward and his Son, Macduff, Menteith,

Caithness,

Angus, Lennox, Ross, and Soldiers, marching.

MALCOLM.

Cousins, I hope the days are near at hand

That chambers will be safe.

MENTEITH.

We doubt it nothing.

SIWARD.

What wood is this before us?

MENTEITH.

The Wood of Birnam.

MALCOLM.

Let every soldier hew him down a bough,

And bear't before him; thereby shall we shadow

The numbers of our host, and make discovery

Err in report of us.

SOLDIERS.

It shall be done.

SIWARD.

We learn no other but the confident tyrant

Keeps still in Dunsinane and will endure

Our setting down before't.

MALCOLM.

'Tis his main hope;

For where there is advantage to be given,

Both more and less have given him the revolt,

And none serve with him but constrained things

Whose hearts are absent too.

MACDUFF.

Let our just censures
Attend the true event, and put we on
Industrious soldiership.

SIWARD.

The time approaches
That will with due decision make us know
What we shall say we have and what we owe.
Thoughts speculative their unsure hopes relate,
But certain issue strokes must arbitrate.

Towards which advance the war.

Exeunt Marching.

SCENE V. Dunsinane. Within the castle.

Enter Macbeth, Seyton, and Soldiers, with drum and colors.

MACBETH. Hang out our banners on the outward walls;
The cry is still, "They come!" Our castle's strength

Will laugh a siege to scorn. Here let them lie
Till famine and the ague eat them up.
Were they not forced with those that should be ours,
We might have met them dareful, beard to beard,
And beat them backward home.
A cry of women within.

What is that noise?

SEYTON.
It is the cry of women, my good lord. *Exit* .

MACBETH.
I have almost forgot the taste of fears:
The time has been, my senses would have cool'd
To hear a night-shriek, and my fell of hair
Would at a dismal treatise rouse and stir
As life were in't. I have supp'd full with horrors;
Direness, familiar to my slaughterous thoughts,
Cannot once start me.

Re-enter Seyton.

Wherefore was that cry?

SEYTON.

The Queen, my lord, is dead.

MACBETH.

She should have died hereafter;
There would have been a time for such a word.
Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day
To the last syllable of recorded time;
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle!
Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage
And then is heard no more. It is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing.

Enter a Messenger.

Thou comest to use thy tongue; thy story quickly.

MESSENGER.

Gracious my lord,

I should report that which I say I saw,

But know not how to do it.

MACBETH.

Well, say, sir.

MESSENGER.

As I did stand my watch upon the hill,

I look'd toward Birnam, and anon, methought,

The Wood began to move.

MACBETH.

Liar and slave!

MESSENGER.

Let me endure your wrath, if't be not so.

Within this three mile may you see it coming;

I say, a moving grove.

MACBETH.

If thou speak'st false,

Upon the next tree shalt thou hang alive,

Till famine cling thee; if thy speech be sooth,

I care not if thou dost for me as much.

I pull in resolution and begin

To doubt the equivocation of the fiend

That lies like truth. "Fear not, till Birnam Wood

Do come to Dunsinane," and now a wood

Comes toward Dunsinane. Arm, arm, and out!

If this which he avouches does appear,

There is nor flying hence nor tarrying here.

I 'gin to be aweary of the sun

And wish the estate o' the world were now undone.

Ring the alarum bell! Blow, wind! Come, wrack!

At least we'll die with harness on our back. *Exeunt* .

SCENE VI. Dunsinane. Before the castle.

Enter Malcolm, old Siward, Macduff, and their Army, with boughs.

Drum and colors.

MALCOLM.

Now near enough; your leavy screens throw down,

And show like those you are. You, worthy uncle,

Shall with my cousin, your right noble son,

Lead our first battle. Worthy Macduff and we

Shall take upon 's what else remains to do,

According to our order.

SIWARD.

Fare you well.

Do we but find the tyrant's power tonight,

Let us be beaten if we cannot fight.

MACDUFF.

Make all our trumpets speak, give them all breath,

Those clamorous harbingers of blood and death.

Exeunt.

SCENE VII. Dunsinane. Before the castle. Alarums.

Enter Macbeth.

MACBETH. They have tied me to a stake; I cannot fly,

But bear-like I must fight the course. What's he

That was not born of woman? Such a one

Am I to fear, or none.

Enter young Siward.

YOUNG SIWARD. What is thy name?

MACBETH.

Thou'lt be afraid to hear it.

YOUNG SIWARD.

No, though thou call'st thyself a hotter name
Than any is in hell.

MACBETH.

My name's Macbeth.

YOUNG SIWARD.
The devil himself could not pronounce a title
More hateful to mine ear.

MACBETH.
No, nor more fearful.

YOUNG SIWARD O Thou liest, abhorred tyrant; with my sword
I'll prove the lie thou speak'st.
They fight, and young Seward is slain.

MACBETH.

Thou wast born of woman.

But swords I smile at, weapons laugh to scorn,

Brandish'd by man that's of a woman born. *Exit* .

Alarums. *Enter* Macduff.

MACDUFF.

That way the noise is. Tyrant, show thy face!

If thou best slain and with no stroke of mine,

My wife and children's ghosts will haunt me still.

I cannot strike at wretched kerns, whose arms

Are hired to bear their staves. Either thou, Macbeth,

Or else my sword, with an unbatter'd edge,

I sheathe again undeeded. There thou shouldst be;

By this great clatter, one of greatest note

Seems bruited. Let me find him, Fortune!

And more I beg not. *Exit* . Alarums.

Enter Malcolm and old Siward.

SIWARD. This way, my lord; the castle's gently render'd.

The tyrant's people on both sides do fight,

The noble Thanes do bravely in the war,

The day almost itself professes yours,

And little is to do.

MALCOLM.

We have met with foes

That strike beside us.

SIWARD.

Enter , sir, the castle.

Exeunt. Alarum.

SCENE VIII. Another part of the field.

Enter Macbeth.

MACBETH. Why should I play the Roman fool and die

On mine own sword? Whiles I see lives, the gashes

Do better upon them.

Enter Macduff.

MACDUFF. Turn, hell hound, turn!

MACBETH.

Of all men else I have avoided thee.

But get thee back, my soul is too much charged

With blood of thine already.

MACDUFF.

I have no words.

My voice is in my sword, thou bloodier villain

Than terms can give thee out! They fight.

MACBETH.

Thou losest labor.

As easy mayst thou the intrenchant air

With thy keen sword impress as make me bleed.

Let fall thy blade on vulnerable crests;

I bear a charmed life, which must not yield

To one of woman born.

MACDUFF.

Despair thy charm,

And let the angel whom thou still hast served

Tell thee, Macduff was from his mother's womb

Untimely ripp'd.

MACBETH.

Accursed be that tongue that tells me so,

For it hath cow'd my better part of man!

And be these juggling fiends no more believed

That patter with us in a double sense,

That keep the word of promise to our ear

And break it to our hope. I'll not fight with thee.

MACDUFF.

Then yield thee, coward,

And live to be the show and gaze o' the time.

We'll have thee, as our rarer monsters are,

Painted upon a pole, and underwrit,

"Here may you see the tyrant."

MACBETH.

I will not yield,

To kiss the ground before young Malcolm's feet,

And to be baited with the rabble's curse.

Though Birnam Wood be come to Dunsinane,

And thou opposed, being of no woman born,

Yet I will try the last. Before my body

I throw my warlike shield! Lay on, Macduff,

And damn'd be him that first cries, "Hold, enough!"

Exeunt fighting. Alarums.

SCENE IX.

Retreat. Flourish. *Enter* , with drum and colors, Malcolm, old Siward, Ross, the other Thanes, and Soldiers.

MALCOLM.

I would the friends we miss were safe arrived.

SIWARD.

Some must go off, and yet, by these I see,

So great a day as this is cheaply bought.

MALCOLM.

Macduff is missing, and your noble son.

ROSS.

Your son, my lord, has paid a soldier's debt.

He only lived but till he was a man,

The which no sooner had his prowess confirm'd

In the unshrinking station where he fought, But like a man he died.

SIWARD.

Then he is dead?

ROSS.

Ay, and brought off the field. Your cause of sorrow
Must not be measured by his worth, for then
It hath no end.

SIWARD.

Had he his hurts before?

ROSS.

Ay, on the front.

SIWARD.

Why then, God's soldier be he!

Had I as many sons as I have hairs,

I would not wish them to a fairer death.

And so his knell is knoll'd.

MALCOLM.

He's worth more sorrow,

And that I'll spend for him.

SIWARD.

He's worth no more:

They say he parted well and paid his score,

And so God be with him! Here comes newer comfort.

Re-enter Macduff, with Macbeth's head.

MACDUFF.

Hail, King, for so thou art. Behold where stands

The usurper's cursed head. The time is free.

I see thee compass'd with thy kingdom's pearl

That speak my salutation in their minds,

Whose voices I desire aloud with mine-

Hail, King of Scotland!

ALL.

Hail, King of Scotland! Flourish.

MALCOLM.

We shall not spend a large expense of time

Before we reckon with your several loves

And make us even with you. My Thanes and kinsmen,

Henceforth be Earls, the first that ever Scotland

In such an honor named. What's more to do,

Which would be planted newly with the time,

As calling home our exiled friends abroad

That fled the snares of watchful tyranny,

Producing forth the cruel ministers

Of this dead butcher and his fiend-like queen,

Who, as 'tis thought, by self and violent hands

Took off her life; this, and what needful else

That calls upon us, by the grace of Grace

We will perform in measure, time, and place.

So thanks to all at once and to each one,

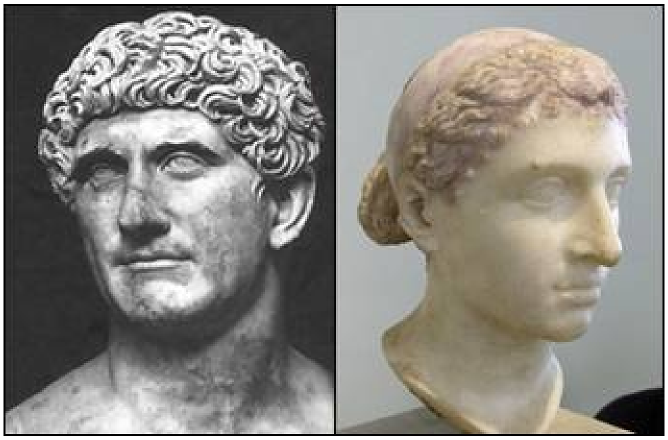
Whom we invite to see us crown'd at Scone.

Flourish. Exeunt .

ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

Believed to have been written between 1603 and 1607, this tragedy is based on Thomas North's translation of Plutarch's *Lives* and follows the relationship between Cleopatra and Mark Antony from the time of the Parthian War to Cleopatra's suicide. The major antagonist is Octavius Caesar, one of Antony's fellow triumviri and the future first emperor of Rome. The tragedy is a Roman play featuring swift, panoramic shifts in locations and moods, alternating between sensual, imaginative Alexandria and the more pragmatic, austere Rome.

Shakespeare's main source text for this play is available via this link .



The tragic real life couple

‘Cleopatra’ by John William Waterhouse, 1888

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SCENE II.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

MARK ANTONY, Triumvirs

OCTAVIUS CAESAR, "

M. AEMILIUS LEPIDUS, "

SEXTUS POMPEIUS, "

DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS, friend to Antony

VENTIDIUS, " " "

EROS, " " "

SCARUS, " " "

DERCETAS, " " "

DEMETRIUS, " " "

PHILO, " " "

MAECENAS, friend to Caesar

AGRIPPA, " " "

DOLABELLA, " " "

PROCULEIUS, " " "

THYREUS, " " "

GALLUS, " " "

MENAS, friend to Pompey

MENECRATES, " " "

VARRIUS, " " "

TAURUS, Lieutenant-General to Caesar

CANIDIUS, Lieutenant-General to Antony

SILIUS, an Officer in Ventidius's army

EUPHRONIUS, an Ambassador from Antony to Caesar

ALEXAS, attendant on Cleopatra

MARDIAN, " " "

SELEUCUS, " " "

DIOMEDES, " " "

A SOOTHSAYER

A CLOWN

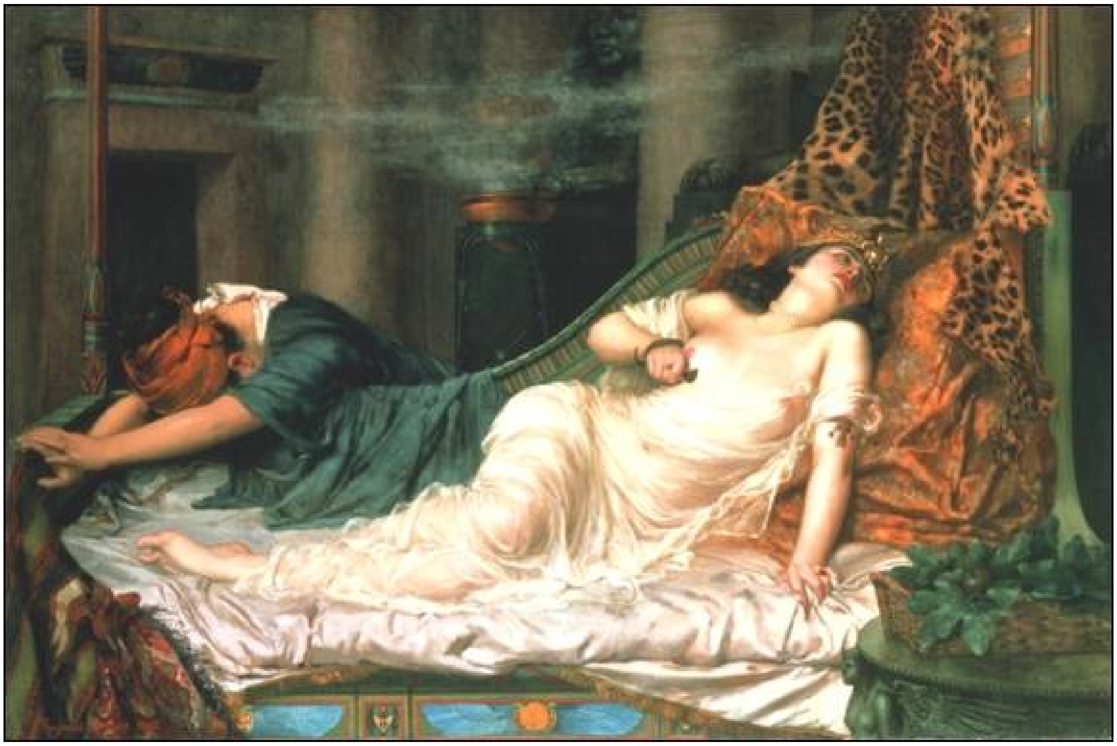
CLEOPATRA, Queen of Egypt

OCTAVIA, sister to Caesar and wife to Antony

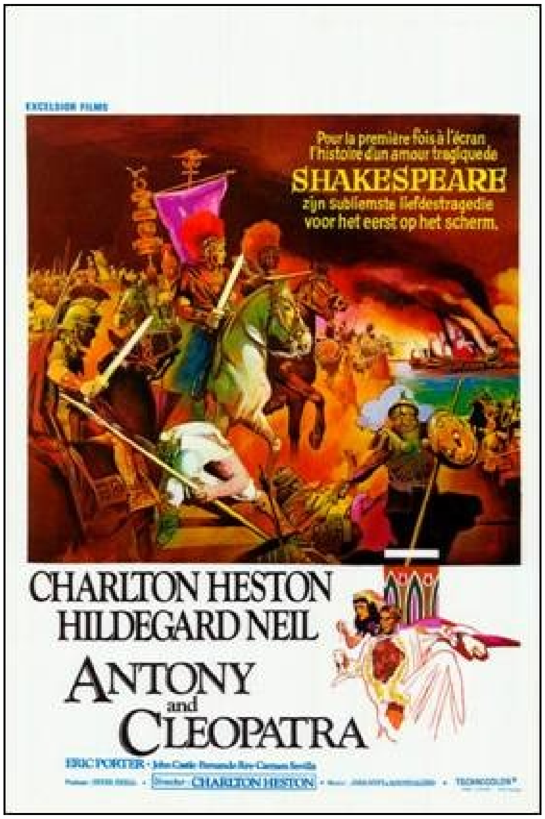
CHARMIAN, lady attending on Cleopatra

IRAS, " " " "

Officers, Soldiers, Messengers, and Attendants



The Death of Cleopatra by Reginald Arthur, 1892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HILDEGARD NEIL
ANTONY and CLEOPATRA
ERIC PORTER · John Castle · Fernando Rey · Carmen Sevilla
Director · CHARLTON HESTON
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The 1974 film adaptation, directed by Charlton Heston

ACT I. SCENE I. Alexandria. CLEOPATRA'S palace

Enter DEMETRIUS and PHILO

PHILO.

Nay, but this dotage of our general's

O'erflows the measure. Those his goodly eyes,

That o'er the files and musters of the war

Have glow'd like plated Mars, now bend, now turn,

The office and devotion of their view

Upon a tawny front. His captain's heart,

Which in the scuffles of great fights hath burst

The buckles on his breast, reneges all temper,

And is become the bellows and the fan

To cool a gipsy's lust.

Flourish. Enter ANTONY, CLEOPATRA, her LADIES, the train,

with eunuchs fanning her

Look where they come!

Take but good note, and you shall see in him

The triple pillar of the world transform'd

Into a strumpet's fool. Behold and see.

CLEOPATRA.

If it be love indeed, tell me how much.

ANTONY.

There's beggary in the love that can be reckon'd.

CLEOPATRA.

I'll set a bourn how far to be belov'd.

ANTONY.

Then must thou needs find out new heaven, new earth.

Enter a MESSENGER

MESSENGER.

News, my good lord, from Rome.

ANTONY.

Grates me the sum.

CLEOPATRA.

Nay, hear them, Antony.
Fulvia perchance is angry; or who knows
If the scarce-bearded Caesar have not sent
His pow'rful mandate to you: 'Do this or this;
Take in that kingdom and enfranchise that;
Perform't, or else we damn thee.'

ANTONY.

How, my love?

CLEOPATRA.

Perchance? Nay, and most like,

You must not stay here longer; your dismission

Is come from Caesar; therefore hear it, Antony.

Where's Fulvia's process? Caesar's I would say? Both?

Call in the messengers. As I am Egypt's Queen,

Thou blushest, Antony, and that blood of thine

Is Caesar's homager. Else so thy cheek pays shame

When shrill-tongu'd Fulvia scolds. The messengers!

ANTONY.

Let Rome in Tiber melt, and the wide arch

Of the rang'd empire fall! Here is my space.

Kingdoms are clay; our dungy earth alike

Feeds beast as man. The nobleness of life

Is to do thus *[emhracing]* , when such a mutual pair

And such a twain can do't, in which I bind,

On pain of punishment, the world to weet
We stand up peerless.

CLEOPATRA.

Excellent falsehood!
Why did he marry Fulvia, and not love her?
I'll seem the fool I am not. Antony
Will be himself.

ANTONY.

But stirr'd by Cleopatra.
Now for the love of Love and her soft hours,
Let's not confound the time with conference harsh;
There's not a minute of our lives should stretch
Without some pleasure now. What sport to-night?

CLEOPATRA.

Hear the ambassadors.

ANTONY.

Fie, wrangling queen!

Whom everything becomes-to chide, to laugh,

To weep; whose every passion fully strives

To make itself in thee fair and admir'd.

No messenger but thine, and all alone

To-night we'll wander through the streets and note

The qualities of people. Come, my queen;

Last night you did desire it. Speak not to us.

Exeunt ANTONY and CLEOPATRA, with the train

DEMETRIUS.

Is Caesar with Antonius priz'd so slight?

PHILO.

Sir, sometimes when he is not Antony,

He comes too short of that great property

Which still should go with Antony.

DEMETRIUS.

I am full sorry

That he approves the common liar, who

Thus speaks of him at Rome; but I will hope

Of better deeds to-morrow. Rest you happy! *Exeunt*

SCENE II. Alexandria. CLEOPATRA'S palace

Enter CHARMIAN, IRAS, ALEXAS, and a SOOTHSAYER

CHARMIAN.

Lord Alexas, sweet Alexas, most anything Alexas, almost most absolute Alexas, where's the soothsayer that you prais'd so to th' Queen? O that I knew this husband, which you say must charge his horns with garlands!

ALEXAS.

Soothsayer!

SOOTHSAYER.

Your will?

CHARMIAN.

Is this the man? Is't you, sir, that know things?

SOOTHSAYER.

In nature's infinite book of secrecy

A little I can read.

ALEXAS.

Show him your hand.

Enter ENOBARBUS

ENOBARBUS.

Bring in the banquet quickly; wine enough

Cleopatra's health to drink.

CHARMIAN.

Good, sir, give me good fortune.

SOOTHSAYER.

I make not, but foresee.

CHARMIAN.

Pray, then, foresee me one.

SOOTHSAYER.

You shall be yet far fairer than you are.

CHARMIAN.

He means in flesh.

IRAS.

No, you shall paint when you are old.

CHARMIAN.

Wrinkles forbid!

ALEXAS.

Vex not his prescience; be attentive.

CHARMIAN.

Hush!

SOOTHSAYER.

You shall be more beloving than beloved.

CHARMIAN.

I had rather heat my liver with drinking.

ALEXAS.

Nay, hear him.

CHARMIAN.

Good now, some excellent fortune! Let me be married to
three kings in a forenoon, and widow them all. Let me have a
child at fifty, to whom Herod of Jewry may do homage. Find me to

marry me with Octavius Caesar, and companion me with my mistress.

SOOTHSAYER.

You shall outlive the lady whom you serve.

CHARMIAN.

O, excellent! I love long life better than figs.

SOOTHSAYER.

You have seen and prov'd a fairer former fortune
Than that which is to approach.

CHARMIAN.

Then belike my children shall have no names.

Prithee, how many boys and wenches must I have?

SOOTHSAYER.

If every of your wishes had a womb,
And fertile every wish, a million.

CHARMIAN.

Out, fool! I forgive thee for a witch.

ALEXAS.

You think none but your sheets are privy to your wishes.

CHARMIAN.

Nay, come, tell Iras hers.

ALEXAS.

We'll know all our fortunes.

ENOBARBUS.

Mine, and most of our fortunes, to-night, shall be-
drunk to bed.

IRAS.

There's a palm presages chastity, if nothing else.

CHARMIAN.

E'en as the o'erflowing Nilus presageth famine.

IRAS.
Go, you wild bedfellow, you cannot soothsay.

CHARMIAN.
Nay, if an oily palm be not a fruitful
prognostication, I
cannot scratch mine ear. Prithee, tell her but worky-day fortune.

SOOTHSAYER.
Your fortunes are alike.

IRAS.

But how, but how? Give me particulars.

SOOTHSAYER.

I have said.

IRAS.

Am I not an inch of fortune better than she?

CHARMIAN.

Well, if you were but an inch of fortune better than I, where would you choose it?

IRAS.

Not in my husband's nose.

CHARMIAN.

Our worser thoughts heavens mend! Alexas-come, his fortune, his fortune! O, let him marry a woman that cannot go, sweet Isis, I beseech thee! And let her die too, and give him a worse! And let worse follow worse, till the worst of all follow him laughing to his grave, fiftyfold a cuckold! Good Isis, hear me this prayer, though thou deny me a matter of more weight; good Isis, I beseech thee!

IRAS.

Amen. Dear goddess, hear that prayer of the people! For, as

it is a heartbreaking to see a handsome man loose-wiv'd, so it is

a deadly sorrow to behold a foul knave uncuckolded.

Therefore,

dear Isis, keep decorum, and fortune him accordingly!

CHARMIAN.

Amen.

ALEXAS.

Lo now, if it lay in their hands to make me a cuckold, they

would make themselves whores but they'ld do't!

Enter CLEOPATRA

ENOBARBUS.

Hush! Here comes Antony.

CHARMIAN.

Not he; the Queen.

CLEOPATRA.

Saw you my lord?

ENOBARBUS.

No, lady.

CLEOPATRA.

Was he not here?

CHARMIAN.

No, madam.

CLEOPATRA.

He was dispos'd to mirth; but on the sudden

A Roman thought hath struck him. Enobarbus!

ENOBARBUS.

Madam?

CLEOPATRA.

Seek him, and bring him hither. Where's Alexas?

ALEXAS.

Here, at your service. My lord approaches.

Enter ANTONY, with a MESSENGER and attendants

CLEOPATRA.

We will not look upon him. Go with us.

Exeunt CLEOPATRA, ENOBARBUS, and the rest

MESSENGER.

Fulvia thy wife first came into the field.

ANTONY.

Against my brother Lucius?

MESSENGER.

Ay.

But soon that war had end, and the time's state

Made friends of them, jointing their force 'gainst Caesar,

Whose better issue in the war from Italy

Upon the first encounter drave them.

ANTONY.

Well, what worst?

MESSENGER.

The nature of bad news infects the teller.

ANTONY.

When it concerns the fool or coward. On!

Things that are past are done with me. 'Tis thus:

Who tells me true, though in his tale lie death, I hear him as he flatter'd.

MESSENGER.

Labienus-

This is stiff news-hath with his Parthian force

Extended Asia from Euphrates,

His conquering banner shook from Syria

To Lydia and to Ionia,

Whilst-

ANTONY.

Antony, thou wouldst say.

MESSENGER.

O, my lord!

ANTONY.

Speak to me home; mince not the general tongue;

Name Cleopatra as she is call'd in Rome.

Rail thou in Fulvia's phrase, and taunt my faults

With such full licence as both truth and malice

Have power to utter. O, then we bring forth weeds

When our quick minds lie still, and our ills told us

Is as our earing. Fare thee well awhile.

MESSENGER.

At your noble pleasure. *Exit*

ANTONY. From Sicyon, ho, the news! Speak there!

FIRST ATTENDANT.

The man from Sicyon-is there such an one?

SECOND ATTENDANT.

He stays upon your will.

ANTONY.

Let him appear.

These strong Egyptian fetters I must break,

Or lose myself in dotage.

Enter another MESSENGER with a letter

What are you?

SECOND MESSENGER.

Fulvia thy wife is dead.

ANTONY.

Where died she?

SECOND MESSENGER.

In Sicyon.

Her length of sickness, with what else more serious

Importeth thee to know, this bears. *[Gives the letter]*

ANTONY.

Forbear me. *Exit* MESSENGER

There's a great spirit gone! Thus did I desire it.

What our contempts doth often hurl from us

We wish it ours again; the present pleasure,

By revolution low'ring, does become

The opposite of itself. She's good, being gone;

The hand could pluck her back that shov'd her on.

I must from this enchanting queen break off.

Ten thousand harms, more than the ills I know,

My idleness doth hatch. How now, Enobarbus!

Re-enter ENOBARBUS

ENOBARBUS.

What's your pleasure, sir?

ANTONY.

I must with haste from hence.

ENOBARBUS.

Why, then we kill all our women. We see how mortal an

unkindness is to them; if they suffer our departure, death's the word.

ANTONY.

I must be gone.

ENOBARBUS.
Under a compelling occasion, let women die. It were pity
to cast them away for nothing, though between them and a great
cause they should be esteemed nothing. Cleopatra, catching but
the least noise of this, dies instantly; I have seen her die
twenty times upon far poorer moment. I do think there is mettle
in death, which commits some loving act upon her, she hath such a
celerity in dying.

ANTONY.

She is cunning past man's thought.

ENOBARBUS.
Alack, sir, no! Her passions are made of nothing but the
finest part of pure love. We cannot call her winds and waters
sighs and tears; they are greater storms and tempests than
almanacs can report. This cannot be cunning in her; if it be, she
makes a show'r of rain as well as Jove.

ANTONY.

Would I had never seen her!

ENOBARBUS.

O Sir, you had then left unseen a wonderful piece of

work, which not to have been blest withal would have discredited your travel.

ANTONY.

Fulvia is dead.

ENOBARBUS.

Sir?

ANTONY.

Fulvia is dead.

ENOBARBUS.

Fulvia?

ANTONY.

Dead.

ENOBARBUS.

Why, sir, give the gods a thankful sacrifice. When it
pleaseth their deities to take the wife of a man from him, it
shows to man the tailors of the earth; comforting therein that
when old robes are worn out there are members to make new. If
there were no more women but Fulvia, then had you indeed a cut,
and the case to be lamented. This grief is crown'd with
consolation: your old smock brings forth a new petticoat; and
indeed the tears live in an onion that should water this sorrow.

ANTONY.

The business she hath broached in the state
Cannot endure my absence.

ENOBARBUS.

And the business you have broach'd here cannot be without you; especially that of Cleopatra's, which wholly depends on your abode.

ANTONY.

No more light answers. Let our officers

Have notice what we purpose. I shall break

The cause of our expedience to the Queen,

And get her leave to part. For not alone

The death of Fulvia, with more urgent touches,

Do strongly speak to us; but the letters to

Of many our contriving friends in Rome

Petition us at home. Sextus Pompeius

Hath given the dare to Caesar, and commands

The empire of the sea; our slippery people,

Whose love is never link'd to the deserver

Till his deserts are past, begin to throw

Pompey the Great and all his dignities

Upon his son; who, high in name and power,

Higher than both in blood and life, stands up

For the main soldier; whose quality, going on,

The sides o' th' world may danger. Much is breeding

Which, like the courser's hair, hath yet but life

And not a serpent's poison. Say our pleasure,

To such whose place is under us, requires

Our quick remove from hence.

ENOBARBUS.

I shall do't. *Exeunt*

SCENE III. Alexandria. CLEOPATRA'S palace

Enter CLEOPATRA, CHARMIAN, IRAS, and ALEXAS

CLEOPATRA.

Where is he?

CHARMIAN.

I did not see him since.

CLEOPATRA.

See where he is, who's with him, what he does.

I did not send you. If you find him sad, Say I am dancing; if in mirth, report

That I am sudden sick. Quick, and return. *Exit* ALEXAS

CHARMIAN.

Madam, methinks, if you did love him dearly,

You do not hold the method to enforce

The like from him.

CLEOPATRA.

What should I do I do not?

CHARMIAN.

In each thing give him way; cross him in nothing.

CLEOPATRA.

Thou teachest like a fool-the way to lose him.

CHARMIAN.

Tempt him not so too far; I wish, forbear;

In time we hate that which we often fear.

Enter ANTONY

But here comes Antony.

CLEOPATRA.

I am sick and sullen.

ANTONY.

I am sorry to give breathing to my purpose-

CLEOPATRA.

Help me away, dear Charmian; I shall fall.

It cannot be thus long; the sides of nature

Will not sustain it.

ANTONY.

Now, my dearest queen-

CLEOPATRA.

Pray you, stand farther from me.

ANTONY.

What's the matter?

CLEOPATRA.
I know by that same eye there's some good news.

What says the married woman? You may go.
Would she had never given you leave to come!
Let her not say 'tis I that keep you here-
I have no power upon you; hers you are.

ANTONY.
The gods best know-

CLEOPATRA.
O, never was there queen
So mightily betray'd! Yet at the first
I saw the treasons planted.

ANTONY.

Cleopatra-

CLEOPATRA.

Why should I think you can be mine and true,
Though you in swearing shake the throned gods,
Who have been false to Fulvia? Riotous madness,
To be entangled with those mouth-made vows,
Which break themselves in swearing!

ANTONY.

Most sweet queen-

CLEOPATRA.

Nay, pray you seek no colour for your going,
But bid farewell, and go. When you sued staying,
Then was the time for words. No going then!
Eternity was in our lips and eyes,
Bliss in our brows' bent, none our parts so poor
But was a race of heaven. They are so still,
Or thou, the greatest soldier of the world,
Art turn'd the greatest liar.

ANTONY.

How now, lady!

CLEOPATRA.

I would I had thy inches. Thou shouldst know
There were a heart in Egypt.

ANTONY.

Hear me, queen:
The strong necessity of time commands
Our services awhile; but my full heart
Remains in use with you. Our Italy
Shines o'er with civil swords: Sextus Pompeius
Makes his approaches to the port of Rome;
Equality of two domestic powers
Breed scrupulous faction; the hated, grown to strength,
Are newly grown to love. The condemn'd Pompey,
Rich in his father's honour, creeps apace
Into the hearts of such as have not thrived

Upon the present state, whose numbers threaten;
And quietness, grown sick of rest, would purge
By any desperate change. My more particular,
And that which most with you should safe my going,
Is Fulvia's death.

CLEOPATRA.
Though age from folly could not give me freedom,
It does from childishness. Can Fulvia die?

ANTONY.

She's dead, my Queen.
Look here, and at thy sovereign leisure read
The garboils she awak'd. At the last, best.
See when and where she died.

CLEOPATRA.

O most false love!
Where be the sacred vials thou shouldst fill

With sorrowful water? Now I see, I see,
In Fulvia's death how mine receiv'd shall be.

ANTONY.
Quarrel no more, but be prepar'd to know
The purposes I bear; which are, or cease,
As you shall give th' advice. By the fire
That quickens Nilus' slime, I go from hence
Thy soldier, servant, making peace or war
As thou affects.

CLEOPATRA.

Cut my lace, Charmian, come!
But let it be; I am quickly ill and well-
So Antony loves.

ANTONY.
My precious queen, forbear,
And give true evidence to his love, which stands
An honourable trial.

CLEOPATRA.

So Fulvia told me.
I prithee turn aside and weep for her;
Then bid adieu to me, and say the tears
Belong to Egypt. Good now, play one scene
Of excellent dissembling, and let it look
Like perfect honour.

ANTONY.

You'll heat my blood; no more.

CLEOPATRA.

You can do better yet; but this is meetly.

ANTONY.

Now, by my sword-

CLEOPATRA.

And target. Still he mends;
But this is not the best. Look, prithee, Charmian,
How this Herculean Roman does become
The carriage of his chafe.

ANTONY.
I'll leave you, lady.

CLEOPATRA.

Courteous lord, one word.
Sir, you and I must part-but that's not it.

Sir, you and I have lov'd-but there's not it.
That you know well. Something it is I would-
O, my oblivion is a very Antony,
And I am all forgotten!

ANTONY.
But that your royalty
Holds idleness your subject, I should take you

For idleness itself.

CLEOPATRA.

'Tis sweating labour
To bear such idleness so near the heart
As Cleopatra this. But, sir, forgive me;
Since my becomings kill me when they do not
Eye well to you. Your honour calls you hence;
Therefore be deaf to my unpitied folly,
And all the gods go with you! Upon your sword
Sit laurel victory, and smooth success
Be strew'd before your feet!

ANTONY.

Let us go. Come.
Our separation so abides and flies
That thou, residing here, goes yet with me,
And I, hence fleeting, here remain with thee.
Away! *Exeunt*

SCENE IV. Rome. CAESAR'S house

Enter OCTAVIUS CAESAR, reading a letter; LEPIDUS, and their train

CAESAR.

You may see, Lepidus, and henceforth know,

It is not Caesar's natural vice to hate

Our great competitor. From Alexandria

This is the news: he fishes, drinks, and wastes

The lamps of night in revel; is not more manlike

Than Cleopatra, nor the queen of Ptolemy

More womanly than he; hardly gave audience, or

Vouchsaf'd to think he had partners. You shall find there

A man who is the abstract of all faults

That all men follow.

LEPIDUS.

I must not think there are

Evils enow to darken all his goodness.

His faults, in him, seem as the spots of heaven,

More fiery by night's blackness; hereditary

Rather than purchas'd; what he cannot change

Than what he chooses.

CAESAR.

You are too indulgent. Let's grant it is not

Amiss to tumble on the bed of Ptolemy,

To give a kingdom for a mirth, to sit

And keep the turn of tippling with a slave,

To reel the streets at noon, and stand the buffet

With knaves that smell of sweat. Say this becomes him-

As his composure must be rare indeed

Whom these things cannot blemish-yet must Antony

No way excuse his foils when we do bear

So great weight in his lightness. If he fill'd

His vacancy with his voluptuousness,

Full surfeits and the dryness of his bones

Call on him for't! But to confound such time

That drums him from his sport and speaks as loud

As his own state and ours- 'tis to be chid

As we rate boys who, being mature in knowledge,

Pawn their experience to their present pleasure,

And so rebel to judgment.

Enter a MESSENGER

LEPIDUS.

Here's more news.

MESSENGER.

Thy biddings have been done; and every hour,

Most noble Caesar, shalt thou have report

How 'tis abroad. Pompey is strong at sea,

And it appears he is belov'd of those

That only have fear'd Caesar. To the ports

The discontents repair, and men's reports

Give him much wrong'd.

CAESAR.

I should have known no less.

It hath been taught us from the primal state

That he which is was wish'd until he were;

And the ebb'd man, ne'er lov'd till ne'er worth love,

Comes dear'd by being lack'd. This common body, Like to a vagabond flag upon the stream,

Goes to and back, lackeying the varying tide,

To rot itself with motion.

MESSENGER.

Caesar, I bring thee word

Menecrates and Menas, famous pirates,

Make the sea serve them, which they ear and wound

With keels of every kind. Many hot inroads

They make in Italy; the borders maritime

Lack blood to think on't, and flush youth revolt.

No vessel can peep forth but 'tis as soon

Taken as seen; for Pompey's name strikes more

Than could his war resisted.

CAESAR.

Antony,

Leave thy lascivious wassails. When thou once

Was beaten from Modena, where thou slew'st

Hirtius and Pansa, consuls, at thy heel

Did famine follow; whom thou fought'st against,

Though daintily brought up, with patience more
Than savages could suffer. Thou didst drink
The stale of horses and the gilded puddle
Which beasts would cough at. Thy palate then did deign
The roughest berry on the rudest hedge;
Yea, like the stag when snow the pasture sheets,
The barks of trees thou brows'd. On the Alps
It is reported thou didst eat strange flesh,
Which some did die to look on. And all this-
It wounds thine honour that I speak it now-
Was borne so like a soldier that thy cheek
So much as lank'd not.

LEPIDUS.

'Tis pity of him.

CAESAR.

Let his shames quickly
Drive him to Rome. 'Tis time we twain
Did show ourselves i' th' field; and to that end
Assemble we immediate council. Pompey

Thrives in our idleness.

LEPIDUS.

To-morrow, Caesar,

I shall be furnish'd to inform you rightly

Both what by sea and land I can be able

To front this present time.

CAESAR.

Till which encounter

It is my business too. Farewell.

LEPIDUS.

Farewell, my lord. What you shall know meantime

Of stirs abroad, I shall beseech you, sir,

To let me be partaker.

CAESAR.

Doubt not, sir;

I knew it for my bond. *Exeunt*

SCENE V. Alexandria. CLEOPATRA'S palace

Enter CLEOPATRA, CHARMIAN, IRAS, and MARDIAN

CLEOPATRA.

Charmian!

CHARMIAN.

Madam?

CLEOPATRA.

Ha, ha!

Give me to drink mandragora.

CHARMIAN.

Why, madam?

CLEOPATRA.

That I might sleep out this great gap of time
My Antony is away.

CHARMIAN.

You think of him too much.

CLEOPATRA.

O, 'tis treason!

CHARMIAN.

Madam, I trust, not so.

CLEOPATRA.

Thou, eunuch Mardian!

MARDIAN.

What's your Highness' pleasure?

CLEOPATRA.

Not now to hear thee sing; I take no pleasure

In aught an eunuch has. 'Tis well for thee
That, being unseminar'd, thy freer thoughts
May not fly forth of Egypt. Hast thou affections?

MARDIAN.

Yes, gracious madam.

CLEOPATRA.

Indeed?

MARDIAN.

Not in deed, madam; for I can do nothing
But what indeed is honest to be done.
Yet have I fierce affections, and think
What Venus did with Mars.

CLEOPATRA.

O Charmian,
Where think'st thou he is now? Stands he or sits he?
Or does he walk? or is he on his horse?

O happy horse, to bear the weight of Antony!

Do bravely, horse; for wot'st thou whom thou mov'st?

The demi-Atlas of this earth, the arm

And burgonet of men. He's speaking now,

Or murmuring 'Where's my serpent of old Nile?'

For so he calls me. Now I feed myself

With most delicious poison. Think on me,

That am with Phoebus' amorous pinches black,

And wrinkled deep in time? Broad-fronted Caesar,

When thou wast here above the ground, I was

A morsel for a monarch; and great Pompey

Would stand and make his eyes grow in my brow;

There would he anchor his aspect and die

With looking on his life.

Enter ALEXAS

ALEXAS.

Sovereign of Egypt, hail!

CLEOPATRA.

How much unlike art thou Mark Antony!
Yet, coming from him, that great med'cine hath
With his tinct gilded thee.
How goes it with my brave Mark Antony?

ALEXAS.
Last thing he did, dear Queen,
He kiss'd-the last of many doubled kisses-
This orient pearl. His speech sticks in my heart.

CLEOPATRA.
Mine ear must pluck it thence.

ALEXAS.
'Good friend,' quoth he
'Say the firm Roman to great Egypt sends
This treasure of an oyster; at whose foot,
To mend the petty present, I will piece
Her opulent throne with kingdoms. All the East,

Say thou, shall call her mistress.' So he nodded,

And soberly did mount an arm-gaunt steed,

Who neigh'd so high that what I would have spoke

Was beastly dumb'd by him.

CLEOPATRA.

What, was he sad or merry?

ALEXAS.

Like to the time o' th' year between the extremes

Of hot and cold; he was nor sad nor merry.

CLEOPATRA.

O well-divided disposition! Note him,

Note him, good Charmian; 'tis the man; but note him!

He was not sad, for he would shine on those

That make their looks by his; he was not merry,

Which seem'd to tell them his remembrance lay

In Egypt with his joy; but between both.

O heavenly mingle! Be'st thou sad or merry,

The violence of either thee becomes,

So does it no man else. Met'st thou my posts?

ALEXAS.

Ay, madam, twenty several messengers.

Why do you send so thick?

CLEOPATRA.

Who's born that day

When I forget to send to Antony

Shall die a beggar. Ink and paper, Charmian.

Welcome, my good Alexas. Did I, Charmian,

Ever love Caesar so?

CHARMIAN.

O that brave Caesar!

CLEOPATRA.

Be chok'd with such another emphasis!

Say 'the brave Antony.'

CHARMIAN.

The valiant Caesar!

CLEOPATRA.

By Isis, I will give thee bloody teeth

If thou with Caesar paragon again

My man of men.

CHARMIAN.

By your most gracious pardon,

I sing but after you.

CLEOPATRA.

My salad days,

When I was green in judgment, cold in blood,

To say as I said then. But come, away!

Get me ink and paper.

He shall have every day a several greeting, Or I'll unpeople Egypt. *Exeunt*

ACT II. SCENE I. Messina. POMPEY'S house

Enter POMPEY, MENECRATES, and MENAS, in warlike manner

POMPEY.

If the great gods be just, they shall assist

The deeds of justest men.

MENECRATES.

Know, worthy Pompey,

That what they do delay they not deny.

POMPEY.

Whiles we are suitors to their throne, decays

The thing we sue for.

MENECRATES.

We, ignorant of ourselves,

Beg often our own harms, which the wise pow'rs

Deny us for our good; so find we profit

By losing of our prayers.

POMPEY.

I shall do well.

The people love me, and the sea is mine;

My powers are crescent, and my auguring hope

Says it will come to th' full. Mark Antony

In Egypt sits at dinner, and will make

No wars without doors. Caesar gets money where

He loses hearts. Lepidus flatters both,

Of both is flatter'd; but he neither loves,

Nor either cares for him.

MENAS.

Caesar and Lepidus

Are in the field. A mighty strength they carry.

POMPEY.

Where have you this? 'Tis false.

MENAS.

From Silvius, sir.

POMPEY.

He dreams. I know they are in Rome together,

Looking for Antony. But all the charms of love,

Salt Cleopatra, soften thy wan'd lip!

Let witchcraft join with beauty, lust with both;

Tie up the libertine in a field of feasts,

Keep his brain fuming. Epicurean cooks

Sharpen with cloyless sauce his appetite,

That sleep and feeding may prorogue his honour

Even till a Lethe'd dullness-

Enter VARRIUS

How now, Varrius!

VARRIUS.

This is most certain that I shall deliver:

Mark Antony is every hour in Rome
Expected. Since he went from Egypt 'tis
A space for farther travel.

POMPEY.
I could have given less matter
A better ear. Menas, I did not think
This amorous surfeiter would have donn'd his helm
For such a petty war; his soldiership
Is twice the other twain. But let us rear
The higher our opinion, that our stirring
Can from the lap of Egypt's widow pluck
The ne'er-lust-wearied Antony.

MENAS.
I cannot hope
Caesar and Antony shall well greet together.
His wife that's dead did trespasses to Caesar;
His brother warr'd upon him; although, I think,
Not mov'd by Antony.

POMPEY.

I know not, Menas,

How lesser enmities may give way to greater.

Were't not that we stand up against them all,

'Twere pregnant they should square between themselves;

For they have entertained cause enough

To draw their swords. But how the fear of us

May cement their divisions, and bind up

The petty difference we yet not know.

Be't as our gods will have't! It only stands

Our lives upon to use our strongest hands.

Come, Menas. *Exeunt*

SCENE II. Rome. The house of LEPIDUS

Enter ENOBARBUS and LEPIDUS

LEPIDUS.

Good Enobarbus, 'tis a worthy deed,

And shall become you well, to entreat your captain

To soft and gentle speech.

ENOBARBUS.

I shall entreat him

To answer like himself. If Caesar move him,

Let Antony look over Caesar's head

And speak as loud as Mars. By Jupiter,

Were I the wearer of Antonius' beard,

I would not shave't to-day.

LEPIDUS.

'Tis not a time

For private stomaching.

ENOBARBUS.

Every time

Serves for the matter that is then born in't.

LEPIDUS.

But small to greater matters must give way.

ENOBARBUS.

Not if the small come first.

LEPIDUS.

Your speech is passion;

But pray you stir no embers up. Here comes

The noble Antony.

Enter ANTONY and VENTIDIUS

ENOBARBUS.

And yonder, Caesar.

Enter CAESAR, MAECENAS, and AGRIPPA

ANTONY.

If we compose well here, to Parthia.

Hark, Ventidius.

CAESAR.

I do not know, Maecenas. Ask Agrippa.

LEPIDUS.

Noble friends,

That which combin'd us was most great, and let not

A leaner action rend us. What's amiss,

May it be gently heard. When we debate

Our trivial difference loud, we do commit

Murder in healing wounds. Then, noble partners,

The rather for I earnestly beseech,

Touch you the sourest points with sweetest terms,

Nor curstness grow to th' matter.

ANTONY.

'Tis spoken well.

Were we before our arinies, and to fight,

I should do thus. *[Flourish]*

CAESAR.

Welcome to Rome.

ANTONY.

Thank you.

CAESAR.

Sit.

ANTONY.

Sit, sir.

CAESAR.

Nay, then. *[They sit]*

ANTONY.

I learn you take things ill which are not so,

Or being, concern you not.

CAESAR.

I must be laugh'd at

If, or for nothing or a little,

Should say myself offended, and with you

Chiefly i' the world; more laugh'd at that I should
Once name you derogately when to sound your name
It not concern'd me.

ANTONY.
My being in Egypt, Caesar,
What was't to you?

CAESAR.
No more than my residing here at Rome
Might be to you in Egypt. Yet, if you there
Did practise on my state, your being in Egypt
Might be my question.

ANTONY.
How intend you-practis'd?

CAESAR.
You may be pleas'd to catch at mine intent
By what did here befall me. Your wife and brother
Made wars upon me, and their contestation

Was theme for you; you were the word of war.

ANTONY.

You do mistake your business; my brother never

Did urge me in his act. I did inquire it,

And have my learning from some true reports

That drew their swords with you. Did he not rather

Discredit my authority with yours,

And make the wars alike against my stomach,

Having alike your cause? Of this my letters

Before did satisfy you. If you'll patch a quarrel,

As matter whole you have not to make it with,

It must not be with this.

CAESAR.

You praise yourself

By laying defects of judgment to me; but

You patch'd up your excuses.

ANTONY.

Not so, not so;

I know you could not lack, I am certain on't,
Very necessity of this thought, that I,
Your partner in the cause 'gainst which he fought,
Could not with graceful eyes attend those wars
Which fronted mine own peace. As for my wife,
I would you had her spirit in such another!
The third o' th' world is yours, which with a snaffle
You may pace easy, but not such a wife.

ENOBARBUS.
Would we had all such wives, that the men might go to
wars with the women!

ANTONY.
So much uncurbable, her garboils, Caesar,
Made out of her impatience-which not wanted
Shrewdness of policy too-I grieving grant
Did you too much disquiet. For that you must
But say I could not help it.

CAESAR.

I wrote to you
When rioting in Alexandria; you
Did pocket up my letters, and with taunts
Did gibe my missive out of audience.

ANTONY.
Sir,
He fell upon me ere admitted. Then
Three kings I had newly feasted, and did want
Of what I was i' th' morning; but next day
I told him of myself, which was as much
As to have ask'd him pardon. Let this fellow
Be nothing of our strife; if we contend,
Out of our question wipe him.

CAESAR.
You have broken
The article of your oath, which you shall never
Have tongue to charge me with.

LEPIDUS.

Soft, Caesar!

ANTONY.

No;

Lepidus, let him speak.

The honour is sacred which he talks on now,

Supposing that I lack'd it. But on, Caesar:

The article of my oath-

CAESAR.

To lend me arms and aid when I requir'd them,

The which you both denied.

ANTONY.

Neglected, rather;

And then when poisoned hours had bound me up

From mine own knowledge. As nearly as I may,

I'll play the penitent to you; but mine honesty

Shall not make poor my greatness, nor my power

Work without it. Truth is, that Fulvia,

To have me out of Egypt, made wars here;
For which myself, the ignorant motive, do
So far ask pardon as befits mine honour
To stoop in such a case.

LEPIDUS.

'Tis noble spoken.

MAECENAS.
If it might please you to enforce no further
The griefs between ye-to forget them quite
Were to remember that the present need
Speaks to atone you.

LEPIDUS.
Worthily spoken, Maecenas.

ENOBARBUS.
Or, if you borrow one another's love for the instant,
you may, when you hear no more words of Pompey, return it again.

You shall have time to wrangle in when you have nothing else to do.

ANTONY.

Thou art a soldier only. Speak no more.

ENOBARBUS.

That truth should be silent I had almost forgot.

ANTONY.

You wrong this presence; therefore speak no more.

ENOBARBUS.

Go to, then-your considerate stone!

CAESAR.

I do not much dislike the matter, but
The manner of his speech; for't cannot be
We shall remain in friendship, our conditions

So diff'ring in their acts. Yet if I knew

What hoop should hold us stanch, from edge to edge

O' th' world, I would pursue it.

AGRIPPA.

Give me leave, Caesar.

CAESAR.

Speak, Agrippa.

AGRIPPA.

Thou hast a sister by the mother's side,

Admir'd Octavia. Great Mark Antony

Is now a widower.

CAESAR.

Say not so, Agrippa.

If Cleopatra heard you, your reproof

Were well deserv'd of rashness.

ANTONY.

I am not married, Caesar. Let me hear

Agrippa further speak.

AGRIPPA.

To hold you in perpetual amity,

To make you brothers, and to knit your hearts

With an unslipping knot, take Antony

Octavia to his wife; whose beauty claims

No worse a husband than the best of men;

Whose virtue and whose general graces speak

That which none else can utter. By this marriage

All little jealousies, which now seem great,

And all great fears, which now import their dangers,

Would then be nothing. Truths would be tales,

Where now half tales be truths. Her love to both

Would each to other, and all loves to both,

Draw after her. Pardon what I have spoke;

For 'tis a studied, not a present thought,

By duty ruminated.

ANTONY.

Will Caesar speak?

CAESAR.

Not till he hears how Antony is touch'd

With what is spoke already.

ANTONY.

What power is in Agrippa,

If I would say 'Agrippa, be it so,'

To make this good?

CAESAR.

The power of Caesar, and

His power unto Octavia.

ANTONY.

May I never

To this good purpose, that so fairly shows,

Dream of impediment! Let me have thy hand.
Further this act of grace; and from this hour
The heart of brothers govern in our loves
And sway our great designs!

CAESAR.

There is my hand.
A sister I bequeath you, whom no brother
Did ever love so dearly. Let her live
To join our kingdoms and our hearts; and never
Fly off our loves again!

LEPIDUS.

Happily, amen!

ANTONY.

I did not think to draw my sword 'gainst Pompey;
For he hath laid strange courtesies and great
Of late upon me. I must thank him only,
Lest my remembrance suffer ill report;

At heel of that, defy him.

LEPIDUS.

Time calls upon's.

Of us must Pompey presently be sought,

Or else he seeks out us.

ANTONY.

Where lies he?

CAESAR.

About the Mount Misenum.

ANTONY.

What is his strength by land?

CAESAR.

Great and increasing; but by sea

He is an absolute master.

ANTONY.

So is the fame.

Would we had spoke together! Haste we for it.

Yet, ere we put ourselves in arms, dispatch we

The business we have talk'd of.

CAESAR.

With most gladness;

And do invite you to my sister's view,

Whither straight I'll lead you.

ANTONY.

Let us, Lepidus,

Not lack your company.

LEPIDUS.

Noble Antony,

Not sickness should detain me. *[Flourish]*

Exeunt all but ENOBARBUS, AGRIPPA, MAECENAS

MAECENAS.

Welcome from Egypt, sir.

ENOBARBUS.

Half the heart of Caesar, worthy Maecenas! My honourable friend, Agrippa!

AGRIPPA.

Good Enobarbus!

MAECENAS.

We have cause to be glad that matters are so well digested. You stay'd well by't in Egypt.

ENOBARBUS.

Ay, sir; we did sleep day out of countenance and made the night light with drinking.

MAECENAS.

Eight wild boars roasted whole at a breakfast, and but twelve persons there. Is this true?

ENOBARBUS.

This was but as a fly by an eagle. We had much more

monstrous matter of feast, which worthily deserved noting.

MAECENAS.

She's a most triumphant lady, if report be square to her.

ENOBARBUS.

When she first met Mark Antony she purs'd up his heart,

upon the river of Cydnus.

AGRIPPA.

There she appear'd indeed! Or my reporter devis'd well for her.

ENOBARBUS.

I will tell you.

The barge she sat in, like a burnish'd throne, Burn'd on the water. The poop was beaten gold;

Purple the sails, and so perfumed that

The winds were love-sick with them; the oars were silver,

Which to the tune of flutes kept stroke, and made

The water which they beat to follow faster,

As amorous of their strokes. For her own person,

It beggar'd all description. She did lie

In her pavilion, cloth-of-gold, of tissue,

O'erpicturing that Venus where we see

The fancy out-work nature. On each side her

Stood pretty dimpled boys, like smiling Cupids,

With divers-colour'd fans, whose wind did seem

To glow the delicate cheeks which they did cool,

And what they undid did.

AGRIPPA.

O, rare for Antony!

ENOBARBUS.

Her gentlewomen, like the Nereides,

So many mermaids, tended her i' th' eyes,

And made their bends adornings. At the helm

A seeming mermaid steers. The silken tackle

Swell with the touches of those flower-soft hands

That yarely frame the office. From the barge

A strange invisible perfume hits the sense

Of the adjacent wharfs. The city cast

Her people out upon her; and Antony,

Enthron'd i' th' market-place, did sit alone,

Whistling to th' air; which, but for vacancy,

Had gone to gaze on Cleopatra too,

And made a gap in nature.

AGRIPPA.

Rare Egyptian!

ENOBARBUS.

Upon her landing, Antony sent to her,

Invited her to supper. She replied

It should be better he became her guest;

Which she entreated. Our courteous Antony,

Whom ne'er the word of 'No' woman heard speak,

Being barber'd ten times o'er, goes to the feast,

And for his ordinary pays his heart

For what his eyes eat only.

AGRIPPA.

Royal wench!

She made great Caesar lay his sword to bed.

He ploughed her, and she cropp'd.

ENOBARBUS.

I saw her once

Hop forty paces through the public street;

And, having lost her breath, she spoke, and panted,

That she did make defect perfection,

And, breathless, pow'r breathe forth.

MAECENAS.

Now Antony must leave her utterly.

ENOBARBUS.

Never! He will not.
Age cannot wither her, nor custom stale
Her infinite variety. Other women cloy
The appetites they feed, but she makes hungry
Where most she satisfies; for vilest things
Become themselves in her, that the holy priests
Bless her when she is riggish.

MAECENAS.
If beauty, wisdom, modesty, can settle
The heart of Antony, Octavia is
A blessed lottery to him.

AGRIPPA.

Let us go.
Good Enobarbus, make yourself my guest
Whilst you abide here.

ENOBARBUS.

Humbly, sir, I thank you. *Exeunt*

SCENE III. Rome. CAESAR'S house

Enter ANTONY, CAESAR, OCTAVIA between them

ANTONY.

The world and my great office will sometimes

Divide me from your bosom.

OCTAVIA.

All which time

Before the gods my knee shall bow my prayers

To them for you.

ANTONY.

Good night, sir. My Octavia,

Read not my blemishes in the world's report.

I have not kept my square; but that to come

Shall all be done by th' rule. Good night, dear lady.

OCTAVIA.

Good night, sir.

CAESAR.

Good night. *Exeunt* CAESAR and OCTAVIA

Enter SOOTHSAYER

ANTONY.

Now, sirrah, you do wish yourself in Egypt?

SOOTHSAYER.

Would I had never come from thence, nor you thither!

ANTONY.

If you can-your reason.

SOOTHSAYER.

I see it in my motion, have it not in my tongue; but
yet hie you to Egypt again.

ANTONY.
Say to me,
Whose fortunes shall rise higher, Caesar's or mine?

SOOTHSAYER.

Caesar's.
Therefore, O Antony, stay not by his side.
Thy daemon, that thy spirit which keeps thee, is
Noble, courageous, high, unmatchable,
Where Caesar's is not; but near him thy angel
Becomes a fear, as being o'erpow'r'd. Therefore
Make space enough between you.

ANTONY.
Speak this no more.

SOOTHSAYER.

To none but thee; no more but when to thee.

If thou dost play with him at any game,

Thou art sure to lose; and of that natural luck

He beats thee 'gainst the odds. Thy lustre thickens

When he shines by. I say again, thy spirit

Is all afraid to govern thee near him;

But, he away, 'tis noble.

ANTONY.

Get thee gone.

Say to Ventidius I would speak with him.

Exit SOOTHSAYER

He shall to Parthia.- Be it art or hap,

He hath spoken true. The very dice obey him;

And in our sports my better cunning faints

Under his chance. If we draw lots, he speeds;

His cocks do win the battle still of mine,

When it is all to nought, and his quails ever
Beat mine, inhoop'd, at odds. I will to Egypt;
And though I make this marriage for my peace,
I' th' East my pleasure lies.

Enter VENTIDIUS

O, come, Ventidius,
You must to Parthia. Your commission's ready;
Follow me and receive't. *Exeunt*

SCENE IV. Rome. A street

Enter LEPIDUS, MAECENAS, and AGRIPPA

LEPIDUS.

Trouble yourselves no further. Pray you hasten
Your generals after.

AGRIPPA.

Sir, Mark Antony
Will e'en but kiss Octavia, and we'll follow.

LEPIDUS.

Till I shall see you in your soldier's dress,

Which will become you both, farewell.

MAECENAS.

We shall,

As I conceive the journey, be at th' Mount

Before you, Lepidus.

LEPIDUS.

Your way is shorter;

My purposes do draw me much about.

You'll win two days upon me.

BOTH.

Sir, good success!

LEPIDUS.

Farewell. Exeunt

SCENE V. Alexandria. CLEOPATRA'S palace

Enter CLEOPATRA, CHARMIAN, IRAS, and ALEXAS

CLEOPATRA.

Give me some music-music, moody food

Of us that trade in love.

ALL.

The music, ho!

Enter MARDIAN the eunuch

CLEOPATRA.

Let it alone! Let's to billiards. Come, Charmian.

CHARMIAN.

My arm is sore; best play with Mardian.

CLEOPATRA.

As well a woman with an eunuch play'd

As with a woman. Come, you'll play with me, sir?

MARDIAN.

As well as I can, madam.

CLEOPATRA.

And when good will is show'd, though't come too short,

The actor may plead pardon. I'll none now.

Give me mine angle-we'll to th' river. There,

My music playing far off, I will betray

Tawny-finn'd fishes; my bended hook shall pierce

Their slimy jaws; and as I draw them up

I'll think them every one an Antony,

And say 'Ah ha! Y'are caught.'

CHARMIAN.

'Twas merry when

You wager'd on your angling; when your diver

Did hang a salt fish on his hook, which he

With fervency drew up.

CLEOPATRA.

That time? O times
I laughed him out of patience; and that night
I laugh'd him into patience; and next morn,
Ere the ninth hour, I drunk him to his bed,
Then put my tires and mantles on him, whilst
I wore his sword Philippan.

Enter a MESSENGER

O! from Italy?
Ram thou thy fruitful tidings in mine ears,
That long time have been barren.

MESSENGER.

Madam, madam-

CLEOPATRA.

Antony's dead! If thou say so, villain,
Thou kill'st thy mistress; but well and free,

If thou so yield him, there is gold, and here
My bluest veins to kiss-a hand that kings
Have lipp'd, and trembled kissing.

MESSENGER.
First, madam, he is well.

CLEOPATRA.

Why, there's more gold.
But, sirrah, mark, we use
To say the dead are well. Bring it to that,
The gold I give thee will I melt and pour
Down thy ill-uttering throat.

MESSENGER.
Good madam, hear me.

CLEOPATRA.

Well, go to, I will.

But there's no goodness in thy face. If Antony
Be free and healthful-why so tart a favour
To trumpet such good tidings? If not well,
Thou shouldst come like a Fury crown'd with snakes,
Not like a formal man.

MESSENGER.

Will't please you hear me?

CLEOPATRA.

I have a mind to strike thee ere thou speak'st.
Yet, if thou say Antony lives, is well,
Or friends with Caesar, or not captive to him,
I'll set thee in a shower of gold, and hail
Rich pearls upon thee.

MESSENGER.

Madam, he's well.

CLEOPATRA.

Well said.

MESSENGER.

And friends with Caesar.

CLEOPATRA.

Th'art an honest man.

MESSENGER.

Caesar and he are greater friends than ever.

CLEOPATRA.

Make thee a fortune from me.

MESSENGER.

But yet, madam-

CLEOPATRA.

I do not like 'but yet.' It does allay
The good precedence; fie upon 'but yet'!
'But yet' is as a gaoler to bring forth
Some monstrous malefactor. Prithee, friend,
Pour out the pack of matter to mine ear,
The good and bad together. He's friends with Caesar;
In state of health, thou say'st; and, thou say'st, free.

MESSENGER.

Free, madam! No; I made no such report.
He's bound unto Octavia.

CLEOPATRA.

For what good turn?

MESSENGER.

For the best turn i' th' bed.

CLEOPATRA.

I am pale, Charmian.

MESSENGER.

Madam, he's married to Octavia.

CLEOPATRA.

The most infectious pestilence upon thee!

[Strikes him down]

MESSENGER.

Good madam, patience.

CLEOPATRA.

What say you? Hence, *[Strikes him]*

Horrible villain! or I'll spurn thine eyes

Like balls before me; I'll unhair thy head;

[She hales him up and down]

Thou shalt be whipp'd with wire and stew'd in brine, Smarting in ling'ring pickle.

MESSENGER.

Gracious madam,

I that do bring the news made not the match.

CLEOPATRA.

Say 'tis not so, a province I will give thee,

And make thy fortunes proud. The blow thou hadst

Shall make thy peace for moving me to rage;

And I will boot thee with what gift beside

Thy modesty can beg.

MESSENGER.

He's married, madam.

CLEOPATRA.

Rogue, thou hast liv'd too long. *[Draws a knife]*

MESSENGER.

Nay, then I'll run.

What mean you, madam? I have made no fault. *Exit*

CHARMIAN. Good madam, keep yourself within yourself:

The man is innocent.

CLEOPATRA.

Some innocents scape not the thunderbolt.

Melt Egypt into Nile! and kindly creatures

Turn all to serpents! Call the slave again.

Though I am mad, I will not bite him. Call!

CHARMIAN.

He is afear'd to come.

CLEOPATRA.

I will not hurt him.

These hands do lack nobility, that they strike
A meaner than myself; since I myself
Have given myself the cause.

Enter the MESSENGER again

Come hither, sir.
Though it be honest, it is never good
To bring bad news. Give to a gracious message
An host of tongues; but let ill tidings tell
Themselves when they be felt.

MESSENGER.
I have done my duty.

CLEOPATRA.

Is he married?
I cannot hate thee worser than I do
If thou again say 'Yes.'

MESSENGER.

He's married, madam.

CLEOPATRA.

The gods confound thee! Dost thou hold there still?

MESSENGER.

Should I lie, madam?

CLEOPATRA.

O, I would thou didst,
So half my Egypt were submerg'd and made
A cistern for scal'd snakes! Go, get thee hence.
Hadst thou Narcissus in thy face, to me
Thou wouldst appear most ugly. He is married?

MESSENGER.

I crave your Highness' pardon.

CLEOPATRA.

He is married?

MESSENGER.

Take no offence that I would not offend you;

To punish me for what you make me do

Seems much unequal. He's married to Octavia.

CLEOPATRA.

O, that his fault should make a knave of thee

That art not what th'art sure of! Get thee hence.

The merchandise which thou hast brought from Rome

Are all too dear for me. Lie they upon thy hand,

And be undone by 'em! *Exit* MESSENGER

CHARMIAN.

Good your Highness, patience.

CLEOPATRA.

In praising Antony I have disprais'd Caesar.

CHARMIAN.

Many times, madam.

CLEOPATRA.

I am paid for't now. Lead me from hence,

I faint. O Iras, Charmian! 'Tis no matter.

Go to the fellow, good Alexas; bid him

Report the feature of Octavia, her years,

Her inclination; let him not leave out

The colour of her hair. Bring me word quickly.

Exit ALEXAS

Let him for ever go-let him not, Charmian-

Though he be painted one way like a Gorgon,

The other way's a Mars. *[To MARDIAN]*

Bid you Alexas

Bring me word how tall she is.- Pity me, Charmian,

But do not speak to me. Lead me to my chamber. *Exeunt*

SCENE VI. Near Misenum

Flourish. *Enter* POMPEY and MENAS at one door, with drum and trumpet; at another, CAESAR, ANTONY, LEPIDUS, ENOBARBUS, MAECENAS, AGRIPPA, with soldiers marching

POMPEY.

Your hostages I have, so have you mine;

And we shall talk before we fight.

CAESAR.

Most meet

That first we come to words; and therefore have we

Our written purposes before us sent;

Which if thou hast considered, let us know

If 'twill tie up thy discontented sword

And carry back to Sicily much tall youth

That else must perish here.

POMPEY.

To you all three,

The senators alone of this great world,

Chief factors for the gods: I do not know

Wherefore my father should revengers want,

Having a son and friends, since Julius Caesar,
Who at Philippi the good Brutus ghosted,
There saw you labouring for him. What was't
That mov'd pale Cassius to conspire? and what
Made the all-honour'd honest Roman, Brutus,
With the arm'd rest, courtiers of beauteous freedom,
To drench the Capitol, but that they would
Have one man but a man? And that is it
Hath made me rig my navy, at whose burden
The anger'd ocean foams; with which I meant
To scourge th' ingratitude that despiteful Rome
Cast on my noble father.

CAESAR.
Take your time.

ANTONY.
Thou canst not fear us, Pompey, with thy sails;
We'll speak with thee at sea; at land thou know'st
How much we do o'er-count thee.

POMPEY.

At land, indeed,

Thou dost o'er-count me of my father's house.

But since the cuckoo builds not for himself,

Remain in't as thou mayst.

LEPIDUS.

Be pleas'd to tell us-

For this is from the present-how you take

The offers we have sent you.

CAESAR.

There's the point.

ANTONY.

Which do not be entreated to, but weigh

What it is worth embrac'd.

CAESAR.

And what may follow,

To try a larger fortune.

POMPEY.

You have made me offer

Of Sicily, Sardinia; and I must

Rid all the sea of pirates; then to send

Measures of wheat to Rome; this 'greed upon,

To part with unhack'd edges and bear back

Our targes undinted.

ALL.

That's our offer.

POMPEY.

Know, then,

I came before you here a man prepar'd

To take this offer; but Mark Antony

Put me to some impatience. Though I lose

The praise of it by telling, you must know,

When Caesar and your brother were at blows,

Your mother came to Sicily and did find

Her welcome friendly.

ANTONY.

I have heard it, Pompey,

And am well studied for a liberal thanks

Which I do owe you.

POMPEY.

Let me have your hand.

I did not think, sir, to have met you here.

ANTONY.

The beds i' th' East are soft; and thanks to you,

That call'd me timelier than my purpose hither;

For I have gained by't.

CAESAR.

Since I saw you last

There is a change upon you.

POMPEY.

Well, I know not

What counts harsh fortune casts upon my face;

But in my bosom shall she never come

To make my heart her vassal.

LEPIDUS.

Well met here.

POMPEY.

I hope so, Lepidus. Thus we are agreed.

I crave our composition may be written,

And seal'd between us.

CAESAR.

That's the next to do.

POMPEY.

We'll feast each other ere we part, and let's

Draw lots who shall begin.

ANTONY.

That will I, Pompey.

POMPEY.

No, Antony, take the lot;

But, first or last, your fine Egyptian cookery

Shall have the fame. I have heard that Julius Caesar

Grew fat with feasting there.

ANTONY.

You have heard much.

POMPEY.

I have fair meanings, sir.

ANTONY.

And fair words to them.

POMPEY.

Then so much have I heard;

And I have heard Apollodorus carried-

ENOBARBUS.

No more of that! He did so.

POMPEY.

What, I pray you?

ENOBARBUS.

A certain queen to Caesar in a mattress.

POMPEY.

I know thee now. How far'st thou, soldier?

ENOBARBUS.

Well;

And well am like to do, for I perceive
Four feasts are toward.

POMPEY.

Let me shake thy hand.
I never hated thee; I have seen thee fight,
When I have envied thy behaviour.

ENOBARBUS.
Sir,
I never lov'd you much; but I ha' prais'd ye
When you have well deserv'd ten times as much
As I have said you did.

POMPEY.
Enjoy thy plainness;
It nothing ill becomes thee.
Aboard my galley I invite you all.

Will you lead, lords?

ALL.

Show's the way, sir.

POMPEY.

Come. *Exeunt* all but ENOBARBUS and MENAS

MENAS.

[Aside] Thy father, Pompey, would ne'er have made this treaty.- You and I have known, sir.

ENOBARBUS.

At sea, I think.

MENAS.

We have, sir.

ENOBARBUS.

You have done well by water.

MENAS.

And you by land.

ENOBARBUS.

I Will praise any man that will praise me; though it
cannot be denied what I have done by land.

MENAS.

Nor what I have done by water.

ENOBARBUS.

Yes, something you can deny for your own safety: you
have been a great thief by sea.

MENAS.

And you by land.

ENOBARBUS.

There I deny my land service. But give me your hand,
Menas; if our eyes had authority, here they might take two thieves kissing.

MENAS.

All men's faces are true, whatsome'er their hands are.

ENOBARBUS.

But there is never a fair woman has a true face.

MENAS.

No slander: they steal hearts.

ENOBARBUS.

We came hither to fight with you.

MENAS.

For my part, I am sorry it is turn'd to a drinking.

Pompey doth this day laugh away his fortune.

ENOBARBUS.

If he do, sure he cannot weep't back again.

MENAS.

Y'have said, sir. We look'd not for Mark Antony here.

Pray

you, is he married to Cleopatra?

ENOBARBUS.

Caesar' sister is call'd Octavia.

MENAS.

True, sir; she was the wife of Caius Marcellus.

ENOBARBUS.

But she is now the wife of Marcus Antonius.

MENAS.

Pray ye, sir?

ENOBARBUS.

'Tis true.

MENAS.
Then is Caesar and he for ever knit together.

ENOBARBUS.

If I were bound to divine of this unity, I would not prophesy so.

MENAS.
I think the policy of that purpose made more in the marriage
than the love of the parties.

ENOBARBUS.
I think so too. But you shall find the band that seems
to tie their friendship together will be the very strangler of
their amity: Octavia is of a holy, cold, and still conversation.

MENAS.

Who would not have his wife so?

ENOBARBUS.

Not he that himself is not so; which is Mark Antony.

He

will to his Egyptian dish again; then shall the sighs of Octavia

blow the fire up in Caesar, and, as I said before, that which is

the strength of their amity shall prove the immediate author of

their variance. Antony will use his affection where it is; he

married but his occasion here.

MENAS.

And thus it may be. Come, sir, will you aboard? I have a health for you.

ENOBARBUS.

I shall take it, sir. We have us'd our throats in Egypt.

MENAS.

Come, let's away. *Exeunt*

ACT_2|SC_7

SCENE VII.

On board POMPEY'S galley, off Misenum

Music plays. *Enter* two or three SERVANTS with a banquet

FIRST SERVANT.

Here they'll be, man. Some o' their plants are

ill-rooted already; the least wind i' th' world will blow them down.

SECOND SERVANT.

Lepidus is high-colour'd.

FIRST SERVANT.

They have made him drink alms-drink.

SECOND SERVANT.

As they pinch one another by the disposition, he

cries out 'No more!'; reconciles them to his entreaty and himself to th' drink.

FIRST SERVANT.

But it raises the greater war between him and his discretion.

SECOND SERVANT.
Why, this it is to have a name in great men's
fellowship. I had as lief have a reed that will do me no service
as a partizan I could not heave.

FIRST SERVANT.
To be call'd into a huge sphere, and not to be seen
to move in't, are the holes where eyes should be, which pitifully
disaster the cheeks.
A sennet sounded. *Enter* CAESAR, ANTONY, LEPIDUS,
POMPEY, AGRIPPA, MAECENAS, ENOBARBUS, MENAS,
with other CAPTAINS
ANTONY.
[To CAESAR] Thus do they, sir: they take the flow o' th'
Nile
By certain scales i' th' pyramid; they know
By th' height, the lowness, or the mean, if dearth

Or foison follow. The higher Nilus swells
The more it promises; as it ebbs, the seedsman
Upon the slime and ooze scatters his grain,
And shortly comes to harvest.

LEPIDUS.

Y'have strange serpents there.

ANTONY.
Ay, Lepidus.

LEPIDUS.
Your serpent of Egypt is bred now of your mud by the
operation of your sun; so is your crocodile.

ANTONY.

They are so.

POMPEY.

Sit-and some wine! A health to Lepidus!

LEPIDUS.

I am not so well as I should be, but I'll ne'er out.

ENOBARBUS.

Not till you have slept. I fear me you'll be in till then.

LEPIDUS.

Nay, certainly, I have heard the Ptolemies' pyramises are

very goodly things. Without contradiction I have heard that.

MENAS.

[Aside to POMPEY] Pompey, a word.

POMPEY.

[Aside to MENAS] Say in mine ear; what is't?

MENAS.

[Aside to POMPEY] Forsake thy seat, I do beseech thee,

Captain,

And hear me speak a word.

POMPEY.

[Whispers in's ear] Forbear me till anon-

This wine for Lepidus!

LEPIDUS.

What manner o' thing is your crocodile?

ANTONY.

It is shap'd, sir, like itself, and it is as broad as it

hath breadth; it is just so high as it is, and moves with it own

organs. It lives by that which nourisheth it, and the elements

once out of it, it transmigrates.

LEPIDUS.

What colour is it of?

ANTONY.

Of it own colour too.

LEPIDUS.

'Tis a strange serpent.

ANTONY.

'Tis so. And the tears of it are wet.

CAESAR.

Will this description satisfy him?

ANTONY.

With the health that Pompey gives him, else he is a very epicure.

POMPEY.

[Aside to MENAS] Go, hang, sir, hang! Tell me of that!

Away!

Do as I bid you.- Where's this cup I call'd for?

MENAS.

[Aside to POMPEY] If for the sake of merit thou wilt hear me,

Rise from thy stool.

POMPEY.

[Aside to MENAS] I think th'art mad. [Rises and walks

aside] The matter?

MENAS.

I have ever held my cap off to thy fortunes.

POMPEY.

Thou hast serv'd me with much faith. What's else to

say?-

Be jolly, lords.

ANTONY.

These quicksands, Lepidus,

Keep off them, for you sink.

MENAS.

Wilt thou be lord of all the world?

POMPEY.

What say'st thou?

MENAS.

Wilt thou be lord of the whole world? That's twice.

POMPEY.

How should that be?

MENAS.

But entertain it,

And though you think me poor, I am the man

Will give thee all the world.

POMPEY.

Hast thou drunk well?

MENAS.

No, Pompey, I have kept me from the cup.

Thou art, if thou dar'st be, the earthly Jove;

Whate'er the ocean pales or sky inclips

Is thine, if thou wilt ha't.

POMPEY.

Show me which way.

MENAS.

These three world-sharers, these competitors,

Are in thy vessel. Let me cut the cable;

And when we are put off, fall to their throats.

All there is thine.

POMPEY.

Ah, this thou shouldst have done,

And not have spoke on't. In me 'tis villainy:

In thee't had been good service. Thou must know

'Tis not my profit that does lead mine honour:

Mine honour, it. Repent that e'er thy tongue

Hath so betray'd thine act. Being done unknown,

I should have found it afterwards well done,

But must condemn it now. Desist, and drink.

MENAS.

[Aside] For this,

I'll never follow thy pall'd fortunes more.

Who seeks, and will not take when once 'tis offer'd,

Shall never find it more.

POMPEY.

This health to Lepidus!

ANTONY.

Bear him ashore. I'll pledge it for him, Pompey.

ENOBARBUS.

Here's to thee, Menas!

MENAS.

Enobarbus, welcome!

POMPEY.

Fill till the cup be hid.

ENOBARBUS.

There's a strong fellow, Menas.

[Pointing to the servant who carries off LEPIDUS]

MENAS.

Why?

ENOBARBUS.

'A bears the third part of the world, man; see'st not?

MENAS.

The third part, then, is drunk. Would it were all,
That it might go on wheels!

ENOBARBUS.

Drink thou; increase the reels.

MENAS.

Come.

POMPEY.

This is not yet an Alexandrian feast.

ANTONY.

It ripens towards it. Strike the vessels, ho!

Here's to Caesar!

CAESAR.

I could well forbear't.

It's monstrous labour when I wash my brain

And it grows fouler.

ANTONY.

Be a child o' th' time.

CAESAR.

Possess it, I'll make answer.

But I had rather fast from all four days

Than drink so much in one.

ENOBARBUS.

[To ANTONY] Ha, my brave emperor!

Shall we dance now the Egyptian Bacchanals

And celebrate our drink?

POMPEY.

Let's ha't, good soldier.

ANTONY.

Come, let's all take hands,

Till that the conquering wine hath steep'd our sense

In soft and delicate Lethe.

ENOBARBUS.

All take hands.

Make battery to our ears with the loud music,

The while I'll place you; then the boy shall sing;

The holding every man shall bear as loud

As his strong sides can volley.

[Music plays. ENOBARBUS places them hand in hand]

THE SONG

Come, thou monarch of the vine,

Plumpy Bacchus with pink eyne!

In thy fats our cares be drown'd,

With thy grapes our hairs be crown'd.

Cup us till the world go round,

Cup us till the world go round!

CAESAR.

What would you more? Pompey, good night. Good brother,

Let me request you off; our graver business

Frowns at this levity. Gentle lords, let's part;

You see we have burnt our cheeks. Strong Enobarb

Is weaker than the wine, and mine own tongue

Splits what it speaks. The wild disguise hath almost

Antick'd us all. What needs more words? Good night.

Good Antony, your hand.

POMPEY.

I'll try you on the shore.

ANTONY.

And shall, sir. Give's your hand.

POMPEY.

O Antony,

You have my father's house-but what? We are friends.

Come, down into the boat.

ENOBARBUS.

Take heed you fall not.

Exeunt all but ENOBARBUS and MENAS

Menas, I'll not on shore.

MENAS.

No, to my cabin.

These drums! these trumpets, flutes! what!

Let Neptune hear we bid a loud farewell

To these great fellows. Sound and be hang'd, sound out!

[Sound a flourish, with drums]

ENOBARBUS.

Hoo! says 'a. There's my cap.

MENAS.

Hoo! Noble Captain, come. *Exeunt*

ACT_3|SC_1

ACT III.
SCENE I.

A plain in Syria

***Enter* VENTIDIUS, as it were in triumph, with SILIUS**

and other Romans, OFFICERS and soldiers; the dead body

of PACORUS borne before him

VENTIDIUS.

Now, darting Parthia, art thou struck, and now

Pleas'd fortune does of Marcus Crassus' death

Make me revenger. Bear the King's son's body

Before our army. Thy Pacorus, Orodes,

Pays this for Marcus Crassus.

SILIUS.

Noble Ventidius,

Whilst yet with Parthian blood thy sword is warm

The fugitive Parthians follow; spur through Media,

Mesopotamia, and the shelters whither

The routed fly. So thy grand captain, Antony,

Shall set thee on triumphant chariots and

Put garlands on thy head.

VENTIDIUS.

O Silius, Silius,

I have done enough. A lower place, note well,

May make too great an act; for learn this, Silius:

Better to leave undone than by our deed

Acquire too high a fame when him we serve's away.

Caesar and Antony have ever won

More in their officer, than person. Sossius,

One of my place in Syria, his lieutenant,

For quick accumulation of renown,

Which he achiev'd by th' minute, lost his favour.

Who does i' th' wars more than his captain can

Becomes his captain's captain; and ambition,
The soldier's virtue, rather makes choice of loss
Than gain which darkens him.
I could do more to do Antonius good,
But 'twould offend him; and in his offence
Should my performance perish.

SILIUS.

Thou hast, Ventidius, that
Without the which a soldier and his sword
Grants scarce distinction. Thou wilt write to Antony?

VENTIDIUS.

I'll humbly signify what in his name,
That magical word of war, we have effected;
How, with his banners, and his well-paid ranks,
The ne'er-yet-beaten horse of Parthia
We have jaded out o' th' field.

SILIUS.

Where is he now?

VENTIDIUS.

He purposeth to Athens; whither, with what haste

The weight we must convey with's will permit,

We shall appear before him.- On, there; pass along.

Exeunt

ACT_3|SC_2

SCENE II. Rome. CAESAR'S house

Enter AGRIPPA at one door, ENOBARBUS at another

AGRIPPA.

What, are the brothers parted?

ENOBARBUS.

They have dispatch'd with Pompey; he is gone;

The other three are sealing. Octavia weeps

To part from Rome; Caesar is sad; and Lepidus,

Since Pompey's feast, as Menas says, is troubled

With the green sickness.

AGRIPPA.

'Tis a noble Lepidus.

ENOBARBUS.

A very fine one. O, how he loves Caesar!

AGRIPPA.

Nay, but how dearly he adores Mark Antony!

ENOBARBUS.

Caesar? Why he's the Jupiter of men.

AGRIPPA.

What's Antony? The god of Jupiter.

ENOBARBUS.

Spake you of Caesar? How! the nonpareil!

AGRIPPA.

O, Antony! O thou Arabian bird!

ENOBARBUS.

Would you praise Caesar, say 'Caesar'- go no further.

AGRIPPA.

Indeed, he plied them both with excellent praises.

ENOBARBUS.

But he loves Caesar best. Yet he loves Antony.
Hoo! hearts, tongues, figures, scribes, bards, poets, cannot
Think, speak, cast, write, sing, number-hoo!-
His love to Antony. But as for Caesar,
Kneel down, kneel down, and wonder.

AGRIPPA.

Both he loves.

ENOBARBUS.

They are his shards, and he their beetle. [Trumpets

within] So-

This is to horse. Adieu, noble Agrippa.

AGRIPPA.

Good fortune, worthy soldier, and farewell.

Enter CAESAR, ANTONY, LEPIDUS, and OCTAVIA

ANTONY.

No further, sir.

CAESAR.

You take from me a great part of myself;

Use me well in't. Sister, prove such a wife

As my thoughts make thee, and as my farthest band

Shall pass on thy approof. Most noble Antony,

Let not the piece of virtue which is set

Betwixt us as the cement of our love

To keep it builded be the ram to batter
The fortress of it; for better might we
Have lov'd without this mean, if on both parts
This be not cherish'd.

ANTONY.
Make me not offended
In your distrust.

CAESAR.

I have said.

ANTONY.
You shall not find,
Though you be therein curious, the least cause
For what you seem to fear. So the gods keep you,
And make the hearts of Romans serve your ends!
We will here part.

CAESAR.

Farewell, my dearest sister, fare thee well.

The elements be kind to thee and make

Thy spirits all of comfort! Fare thee well.

OCTAVIA.

My noble brother!

ANTONY.

The April's in her eyes. It is love's spring,

And these the showers to bring it on. Be cheerful.

OCTAVIA.

Sir, look well to my husband's house; and-

CAESAR.

What, Octavia?

OCTAVIA.

I'll tell you in your ear.

ANTONY.

Her tongue will not obey her heart, nor can
Her heart inform her tongue-the swan's down feather,
That stands upon the swell at the full of tide,
And neither way inclines.

ENOBARBUS.

[Aside to AGRIPPA] Will Caesar weep?

AGRIPPA.

[Aside to ENOBARBUS] He has a cloud in's face.

ENOBARBUS.

[Aside to AGRIPPA] He were the worse for that, were he a horse;
So is he, being a man.

AGRIPPA.

[Aside to ENOBARBUS] Why, Enobarbus,
When Antony found Julius Caesar dead,
He cried almost to roaring; and he wept

When at Philippi he found Brutus slain.

ENOBARBUS.

[Aside to AGRIPPA] That year, indeed, he was troubled with a rheum;

What willingly he did confound he wail'd,

Believe't-till I weep too.

CAESAR.

No, sweet Octavia,

You shall hear from me still; the time shall not

Out-go my thinking on you.

ANTONY.

Come, sir, come;

I'll wrestle with you in my strength of love.

Look, here I have you; thus I let you go,

And give you to the gods.

CAESAR.

Adieu; be happy!

LEPIDUS.

Let all the number of the stars give light

To thy fair way!

CAESAR.

Farewell, farewell! *[Kisses OCTAVIA]*

ANTONY.

Farewell! Trumpets sound. *Exeunt*

ACT_3|SC_3

SCENE III.

Alexandria. CLEOPATRA'S palace

Enter CLEOPATRA, CHARMIAN, IRAS, and ALEXAS

CLEOPATRA.

Where is the fellow?

ALEXAS.

Half afeard to come.

CLEOPATRA.

Go to, go to.

Enter the MESSENGER as before

Come hither, sir.

ALEXAS.

Good Majesty,

Herod of Jewry dare not look upon you

But when you are well pleas'd.

CLEOPATRA.

That Herod's head

I'll have. But how, when Antony is gone,

Through whom I might command it? Come thou near.

MESSENGER.

Most gracious Majesty!

CLEOPATRA.

Didst thou behold Octavia?

MESSENGER.

Ay, dread Queen.

CLEOPATRA.

Where?

MESSENGER.

Madam, in Rome

I look'd her in the face, and saw her led

Between her brother and Mark Antony.

CLEOPATRA.

Is she as tall as me?

MESSENGER.

She is not, madam.

CLEOPATRA.

Didst hear her speak? Is she shrill-tongu'd or low?

MESSENGER.

Madam, I heard her speak: she is low-voic'd.

CLEOPATRA.

That's not so good. He cannot like her long.

CHARMIAN.

Like her? O Isis! 'tis impossible.

CLEOPATRA.

I think so, Charmian. Dull of tongue and dwarfish!

What majesty is in her gait? Remember,

If e'er thou look'dst on majesty.

MESSENGER.

She creeps.

Her motion and her station are as one;

She shows a body rather than a life,

A statue than a breather.

CLEOPATRA.

Is this certain?

MESSENGER.

Or I have no observance.

CHARMIAN.

Three in Egypt

Cannot make better note.

CLEOPATRA.

He's very knowing;

I do perceive't. There's nothing in her yet.

The fellow has good judgment.

CHARMIAN.

Excellent.

CLEOPATRA.

Guess at her years, I prithee.

MESSENGER.

Madam,

She was a widow.

CLEOPATRA.

Widow? Charmian, hark!

MESSENGER.

And I do think she's thirty.

CLEOPATRA.

Bear'st thou her face in mind? Is't long or round?

MESSENGER.

Round even to faultiness.

CLEOPATRA.

For the most part, too, they are foolish that are so.
Her hair, what colour?

MESSENGER.

Brown, madam; and her forehead
As low as she would wish it.

CLEOPATRA.

There's gold for thee.
Thou must not take my former sharpness ill.

I will employ thee back again; I find thee

Most fit for business. Go make thee ready;

Our letters are prepar'd. *Exeunt* MESSENGER

CHARMIAN.

A proper man.

CLEOPATRA.

Indeed, he is so. I repent me much

That so I harried him. Why, methinks, by him,

This creature's no such thing.

CHARMIAN.

Nothing, madam.

CLEOPATRA.

The man hath seen some majesty, and should know.

CHARMIAN.

Hath he seen majesty? Isis else defend,

And serving you so long!

CLEOPATRA.

I have one thing more to ask him yet, good Charmian.

But 'tis no matter; thou shalt bring him to me

Where I will write. All may be well enough.

CHARMIAN.

I warrant you, madam. *Exeunt*

ACT_3|SC_4

SCENE IV.

Athens. ANTONY'S house

Enter ANTONY and OCTAVIA

ANTONY.

Nay, nay, Octavia, not only that-

That were excusable, that and thousands more

Of semblable import-but he hath wag'd

New wars 'gainst Pompey; made his will, and read it
To public ear;
Spoke scandy of me; when perforce he could not
But pay me terms of honour, cold and sickly
He vented them, most narrow measure lent me;
When the best hint was given him, he not took't,
Or did it from his teeth.

OCTAVIA.
O my good lord,
Believe not all; or if you must believe,
Stomach not all. A more unhappy lady,
If this division chance, ne'er stood between,
Praying for both parts.
The good gods will mock me presently
When I shall pray 'O, bless my lord and husband!'
Undo that prayer by crying out as loud
'O, bless my brother!' Husband win, win brother,
Prays, and destroys the prayer; no mid-way
'Twixt these extremes at all.

ANTONY.

Gentle Octavia,

Let your best love draw to that point which seeks

Best to preserve it. If I lose mine honour,

I lose myself; better I were not yours

Than yours so branchless. But, as you requested,

Yourself shall go between's. The meantime, lady,

I'll raise the preparation of a war

Shall stain your brother. Make your soonest haste;

So your desires are yours.

OCTAVIA.

Thanks to my lord.

The Jove of power make me, most weak, most weak,

Your reconciler! Wars 'twixt you twain would be

As if the world should cleave, and that slain men

Should solder up the rift.

ANTONY.

When it appears to you where this begins,

Turn your displeasure that way, for our faults

Can never be so equal that your love

Can equally move with them. Provide your going;

Choose your own company, and command what cost

Your heart has mind to. *Exeunt*

ACT_3|SC_5

SCENE V.

Athens. ANTONY'S house

Enter ENOBARBUS and EROS, meeting

ENOBARBUS.

How now, friend Eros!

EROS.

There's strange news come, sir.

ENOBARBUS.

What, man?

EROS.

Caesar and Lepidus have made wars upon Pompey.

ENOBARBUS.

This is old. What is the success?

EROS.

Caesar, having made use of him in the wars 'gainst Pompey,

presently denied him rivality, would not let him partake in the

glory of the action; and not resting here, accuses him of letters

he had formerly wrote to Pompey; upon his own appeal, seizes him.

So the poor third is up, till death enlarge his confine.

ENOBARBUS.

Then, world, thou hast a pair of chaps-no more;

And throw between them all the food thou hast,

They'll grind the one the other. Where's Antony?

EROS.

He's walking in the garden-thus, and spurns

The rush that lies before him; cries 'Fool Lepidus!'

And threats the throat of that his officer

That murd'red Pompey.

ENOBARBUS.

Our great navy's rigg'd.

EROS.

For Italy and Caesar. More, Domitius:

My lord desires you presently; my news

I might have told hereafter.

ENOBARBUS.

'Twill be naught;

But let it be. Bring me to Antony.

EROS.

Come, sir. *Exeunt*

ACT_3|SC_6

SCENE VI.

Rome. CAESAR'S house

Enter CAESAR, AGRIPPA, and MAECENAS

CAESAR.

Contemning Rome, he has done all this and more
In Alexandria. Here's the manner of't:
I' th' market-place, on a tribunal silver'd,
Cleopatra and himself in chairs of gold
Were publicly enthron'd; at the feet sat
Caesarion, whom they call my father's son,
And all the unlawful issue that their lust
Since then hath made between them. Unto her
He gave the stablishment of Egypt; made her
Of lower Syria, Cyprus, Lydia,
Absolute queen.

MAECENAS.

This in the public eye?

CAESAR.

I' th' common show-place, where they exercise.

His sons he there proclaim'd the kings of kings:

Great Media, Parthia, and Armenia,

He gave to Alexander; to Ptolemy he assign'd

Syria, Cilicia, and Phoenicia. She

In th' habiliments of the goddess Isis

That day appear'd; and oft before gave audience,

As 'tis reported, so.

MAECENAS.

Let Rome be thus

Inform'd.

AGRIPPA.

Who, queasy with his insolence

Already, will their good thoughts call from him.

CAESAR.

The people knows it, and have now receiv'd
His accusations.

AGRIPPA.

Who does he accuse?

CAESAR.

Caesar; and that, having in Sicily
Sextus Pompeius spoil'd, we had not rated him
His part o' th' isle. Then does he say he lent me
Some shipping, unrestor'd. Lastly, he frets
That Lepidus of the triumvirate
Should be depos'd; and, being, that we detain
All his revenue.

AGRIPPA.

Sir, this should be answer'd.

CAESAR.

'Tis done already, and messenger gone.
I have told him Lepidus was grown too cruel,
That he his high authority abus'd,
And did deserve his change. For what I have conquer'd
I grant him part; but then, in his Armenia
And other of his conquer'd kingdoms,
Demand the like.

MAECENAS.
He'll never yield to that.

CAESAR.

Nor must not then be yielded to in this.

Enter OCTAVIA, with her train

OCTAVIA.
Hail, Caesar, and my lord! hail, most dear Caesar!

CAESAR.

That ever I should call thee cast-away!

OCTAVIA.

You have not call'd me so, nor have you cause.

CAESAR.

Why have you stol'n upon us thus? You come not

Like Caesar's sister. The wife of Antony

Should have an army for an usher, and

The neighs of horse to tell of her approach

Long ere she did appear. The trees by th' way

Should have borne men, and expectation fainted,

Longing for what it had not. Nay, the dust

Should have ascended to the roof of heaven,

Rais'd by your populous troops. But you are come

A market-maid to Rome, and have prevented

The ostentation of our love, which left unshown

Is often left unlov'd. We should have met you

By sea and land, supplying every stage

With an augmented greeting.

OCTAVIA.

Good my lord,

To come thus was I not constrain'd, but did it

On my free will. My lord, Mark Antony,

Hearing that you prepar'd for war, acquainted

My grieved ear withal; whereon I begg'd

His pardon for return.

CAESAR.

Which soon he granted,

Being an obstruct 'tween his lust and him.

OCTAVIA.

Do not say so, my lord.

CAESAR.

I have eyes upon him,

And his affairs come to me on the wind.

Where is he now?

OCTAVIA.

My lord, in Athens.

CAESAR.

No, my most wronged sister: Cleopatra
Hath nodded him to her. He hath given his empire
Up to a whore, who now are levying
The kings o' th' earth for war. He hath assembled
Bocchus, the king of Libya; Archelaus
Of Cappadocia; Philadelphos, king
Of Paphlagonia; the Thracian king, Adallas;
King Manchus of Arabia; King of Pont;
Herod of Jewry; Mithridates, king
Of Comagene; Polemon and Amyntas,
The kings of Mede and Lycaonia, with
More larger list of sceptres.

OCTAVIA.

Ay me most wretched,

That have my heart parted betwixt two friends,
That does afflict each other!

CAESAR.

Welcome hither.
Your letters did withhold our breaking forth,
Till we perceiv'd both how you were wrong led
And we in negligent danger. Cheer your heart;
Be you not troubled with the time, which drives
O'er your content these strong necessities,
But let determin'd things to destiny
Hold unbewail'd their way. Welcome to Rome;
Nothing more dear to me. You are abus'd
Beyond the mark of thought, and the high gods,
To do you justice, make their ministers
Of us and those that love you. Best of comfort,
And ever welcome to us.

AGRIPPA.
Welcome, lady.

MAECENAS.

Welcome, dear madam.

Each heart in Rome does love and pity you;

Only th' adulterous Antony, most large

In his abominations, turns you off,

And gives his potent regiment to a trull

That noises it against us.

OCTAVIA.

Is it so, sir?

CAESAR.

Most certain. Sister, welcome. Pray you

Be ever known to patience. My dear'st sister! *Exeunt*

ACT_3|SC_7

SCENE VII.

ANTONY'S camp near Actium

Enter CLEOPATRA and ENOBARBUS

CLEOPATRA.

I will be even with thee, doubt it not.

ENOBARBUS.

But why, why,

CLEOPATRA.

Thou hast forspoke my being in these wars,

And say'st it is not fit.

ENOBARBUS.

Well, is it, is it?

CLEOPATRA.

Is't not denounc'd against us? Why should not we

Be there in person?

ENOBARBUS.

[Aside] Well, I could reply:
If we should serve with horse and mares together
The horse were merely lost; the mares would bear
A soldier and his horse.

CLEOPATRA.

What is't you say?

ENOBARBUS.
Your presence needs must puzzle Antony;
Take from his heart, take from his brain, from's time,
What should not then be spar'd. He is already
Traduc'd for levity; and 'tis said in Rome
That Photinus an eunuch and your maids
Manage this war.

CLEOPATRA.
Sink Rome, and their tongues rot
That speak against us! A charge we bear i' th' war,
And, as the president of my kingdom, will

Appear there for a man. Speak not against it;

I will not stay behind.

Enter ANTONY and CANIDIUS

ENOBARBUS.

Nay, I have done.

Here comes the Emperor.

ANTONY.

Is it not strange, Canidius,

That from Tarentum and Brundusium

He could so quickly cut the Ionian sea,

And take in Toryne?- You have heard on't, sweet?

CLEOPATRA.

Celerity is never more admir'd

Than by the negligent.

ANTONY.

A good rebuke,
Which might have well becom'd the best of men
To taunt at slackness. Canidius, we
Will fight with him by sea.

CLEOPATRA.

By sea! What else?

CANIDIUS.

Why will my lord do so?

ANTONY.

For that he dares us to't.

ENOBARBUS.

So hath my lord dar'd him to single fight.

CANIDIUS.

Ay, and to wage this battle at Pharsalia,

Where Caesar fought with Pompey. But these offers,
Which serve not for his vantage, he shakes off;
And so should you.

ENOBARBUS.
Your ships are not well mann'd;
Your mariners are muleteers, reapers, people
Ingross'd by swift impress. In Caesar's fleet
Are those that often have 'gainst Pompey fought;
Their ships are yare; yours heavy. No disgrace
Shall fall you for refusing him at sea,
Being prepar'd for land.

ANTONY.

By sea, by sea.

ENOBARBUS.
Most worthy sir, you therein throw away
The absolute soldiership you have by land;
Distract your army, which doth most consist

Of war-mark'd footmen; leave unexecuted
Your own renowned knowledge; quite forgo
The way which promises assurance; and
Give up yourself merely to chance and hazard
From firm security.

ANTONY.
I'll fight at sea.

CLEOPATRA.

I have sixty sails, Caesar none better.

ANTONY.
Our overplus of shipping will we burn,
And, with the rest full-mann'd, from th' head of Actium
Beat th' approaching Caesar. But if we fail,
We then can do't at land.

Enter a MESSENGER

Thy business?

MESSENGER.

The news is true, my lord: he is descried;

Caesar has taken Toryne.

ANTONY.

Can he be there in person? 'Tis impossible-

Strange that his power should be. Canidius,

Our nineteen legions thou shalt hold by land,

And our twelve thousand horse. We'll to our ship.

Away, my Thetis!

Enter a SOLDIER

How now, worthy soldier?

SOLDIER.

O noble Emperor, do not fight by sea;

Trust not to rotten planks. Do you misdoubt

This sword and these my wounds? Let th' Egyptians

And the Phoenicians go a-ducking; we
Have us'd to conquer standing on the earth
And fighting foot to foot.

ANTONY.
Well, well-away.
Exeunt ANTONY, CLEOPATRA, and ENOBARBUS
SOLDIER.

By Hercules, I think I am i' th' right.

CANIDIUS.
Soldier, thou art; but his whole action grows
Not in the power on't. So our leader's led,
And we are women's men.

SOLDIER.
You keep by land
The legions and the horse whole, do you not?

CANIDIUS.

Marcus Octavius, Marcus Justeius,

Publicola, and Caelius are for sea;

But we keep whole by land. This speed of Caesar's

Carries beyond belief.

SOLDIER.

While he was yet in Rome,

His power went out in such distractions as

Beguil'd all spies.

CANIDIUS.

Who's his lieutenant, hear you?

SOLDIER.

They say one Taurus.

CANIDIUS.

Well I know the man.

Enter a MESSENGER

MESSENGER.

The Emperor calls Canidius.

CANIDIUS.

With news the time's with labour and throes forth

Each minute some. *Exeunt*

SCENE VIII.

A plain near Actium

Enter CAESAR, with his army, marching

CAESAR.

Taurus!

TAURUS.

My lord?

CAESAR.

Strike not by land; keep whole; provoke not battle

Till we have done at sea. Do not exceed

The prescript of this scroll. Our fortune lies

Upon this jump. *Exeunt*

SCENE IX.

Another part of the plain

Enter ANTONY and ENOBARBUS

ANTONY.

Set we our squadrons on yon side o' th' hill,

In eye of Caesar's battle; from which place

We may the number of the ships behold,

And so proceed accordingly. *Exeunt*

ACT_3|SC_10

SCENE X.

Another part of the plain

CANIDIUS marcheth with his land army one way

over the stage, and TAURUS, the Lieutenant of

CAESAR, the other way. After their going in is heard

the noise of a sea-fight

Alarum. *Enter* ENOBARBUS

ENOBARBUS.

Naught, naught, all naught! I can behold no longer.
Th' Antoniad, the Egyptian admiral,
With all their sixty, fly and turn the rudder.
To see't mine eyes are blasted.

Enter SCARUS

SCARUS.

Gods and goddesses,
All the whole synod of them!

ENOBARBUS.

What's thy passion?

SCARUS.

The greater cantle of the world is lost

With very ignorance; we have kiss'd away
Kingdoms and provinces.

ENOBARBUS.
How appears the fight?

SCARUS.
On our side like the token'd pestilence,
Where death is sure. Yon ribaudred nag of Egypt-
Whom leprosy o'ertake!- i' th' midst o' th' fight,
When vantage like a pair of twins appear'd,
Both as the same, or rather ours the elder-
The breese upon her, like a cow in June-
Hoists sails and flies.

ENOBARBUS.
That I beheld;
Mine eyes did sicken at the sight and could not
Endure a further view.

SCARUS.

She once being loof'd,

The noble ruin of her magic, Antony,

Claps on his sea-wing, and, like a doting mallard,

Leaving the fight in height, flies after her.

I never saw an action of such shame;

Experience, manhood, honour, ne'er before

Did violate so itself.

ENOBARBUS.

Alack, alack!

Enter CANIDIUS

CANIDIUS.

Our fortune on the sea is out of breath,

And sinks most lamentably. Had our general

Been what he knew himself, it had gone well.

O, he has given example for our flight

Most grossly by his own!

ENOBARBUS.

Ay, are you thereabouts?

Why then, good night indeed.

CANIDIUS.

Toward Peloponnesus are they fled.

SCARUS.

'Tis easy to't; and there I will attend

What further comes.

CANIDIUS.

To Caesar will I render

My legions and my horse; six kings already

Show me the way of yielding.

ENOBARBUS.

I'll yet follow

The wounded chance of Antony, though my reason

Sits in the wind against me. *Exeunt*

ACT_3|SC_11

SCENE XI.

Alexandria. CLEOPATRA'S palace

***Enter* ANTONY With attendants**

ANTONY.

Hark! the land bids me tread no more upon't;

It is asham'd to bear me. Friends, come hither.

I am so lated in the world that I

Have lost my way for ever. I have a ship

Laden with gold; take that; divide it. Fly,

And make your peace with Caesar.

ALL.

Fly? Not we!

ANTONY.

I have fled myself, and have instructed cowards

To run and show their shoulders. Friends, be gone;

I have myself resolv'd upon a course

Which has no need of you; be gone.

My treasure's in the harbour, take it. O,

I follow'd that I blush to look upon.

My very hairs do mutiny; for the white

Reprove the brown for rashness, and they them

For fear and doting. Friends, be gone; you shall

Have letters from me to some friends that will

Sweep your way for you. Pray you look not sad,

Nor make replies of loathness; take the hint

Which my despair proclaims. Let that be left

Which leaves itself. To the sea-side straight way.

I will possess you of that ship and treasure.

Leave me, I pray, a little; pray you now;

Nay, do so, for indeed I have lost command;

Therefore I pray you. I'll see you by and by. ***[Sits down]***

Enter **CLEOPATRA, led by CHARMIAN and IRAS,**

EROS following

EROS.

Nay, gentle madam, to him! Comfort him.

IRAS.

Do, most dear Queen.

CHARMIAN.

Do? Why, what else?

CLEOPATRA.

Let me sit down. O Juno!

ANTONY.

No, no, no, no, no.

EROS.

See you here, sir?

ANTONY.

O, fie, fie, fie!

CHARMIAN.

Madam!

IRAS.

Madam, O good Empress!

EROS.

Sir, sir!

ANTONY.

Yes, my lord, yes. He at Philippi kept

His sword e'en like a dancer, while I struck

The lean and wrinkled Cassius; and 'twas I

That the mad Brutus ended; he alone

Dealt on lieutenantry, and no practice had

In the brave squares of war. Yet now-no matter.

CLEOPATRA.

Ah, stand by!

EROS.
The Queen, my lord, the Queen!

IRAS.

Go to him, madam, speak to him.
He is unqualitied with very shame.

CLEOPATRA.

Well then, sustain me. O!
EROS.

Most noble sir, arise; the Queen approaches.
Her head's declin'd, and death will seize her but
Your comfort makes the rescue.

ANTONY.

I have offended reputation-
A most unnoble swerving.

EROS.

Sir, the Queen.

ANTONY.

O, whither hast thou led me, Egypt? See
How I convey my shame out of thine eyes
By looking back what I have left behind
'Stroy'd in dishonour.

CLEOPATRA.

O my lord, my lord,
Forgive my fearful sails! I little thought
You would have followed.

ANTONY.

Egypt, thou knew'st too well

My heart was to thy rudder tied by th' strings,
And thou shouldst tow me after. O'er my spirit
Thy full supremacy thou knew'st, and that
Thy beck might from the bidding of the gods Command me.

CLEOPATRA.

O, my pardon!

ANTONY.
Now I must
To the young man send humble treaties, dodge
And palter in the shifts of lowness, who
With half the bulk o' th' world play'd as I pleas'd,
Making and marring fortunes. You did know
How much you were my conqueror, and that
My sword, made weak by my affection, would
Obey it on all cause.

CLEOPATRA.
Pardon, pardon!

ANTONY.

Fall not a tear, I say; one of them rates

All that is won and lost. Give me a kiss;

Even this repays me.

We sent our schoolmaster; is 'a come back?

Love, I am full of lead. Some wine,

Within there, and our viands! Fortune knows

We scorn her most when most she offers blows. *Exeunt*

ACT_3|SC_12

SCENE XII.

CAESAR'S camp in Egypt

Enter CAESAR, AGRIPPA, DOLABELLA, THYREUS, with others

CAESAR.

Let him appear that's come from Antony.

Know you him?

DOLABELLA.

Caesar, 'tis his schoolmaster:
An argument that he is pluck'd, when hither
He sends so poor a pinion of his wing,
Which had superfluous kings for messengers
Not many moons gone by.

Enter EUPHRONIUS, Ambassador from ANTONY

CAESAR.

Approach, and speak.

EUPHRONIUS.

Such as I am, I come from Antony.

I was of late as petty to his ends

As is the morn-dew on the myrtle leaf

To his grand sea.

CAESAR.

Be't so. Declare thine office.

EUPHRONIUS.

Lord of his fortunes he salutes thee, and

Requires to live in Egypt; which not granted,

He lessens his requests and to thee sues

To let him breathe between the heavens and earth,

A private man in Athens. This for him.

Next, Cleopatra does confess thy greatness,

Submits her to thy might, and of thee craves

The circle of the Ptolemies for her heirs,

Now hazarded to thy grace.

CAESAR.

For Antony,

I have no ears to his request. The Queen

Of audience nor desire shall fail, so she

From Egypt drive her all-disgraced friend,

Or take his life there. This if she perform,

She shall not sue unheard. So to them both.

EUPHRONIUS.

Fortune pursue thee!

CAESAR.

Bring him through the bands. *Exit* EUPHRONIUS

[To THYREUS] To try thy eloquence, now 'tis time. Dispatch;

From Antony win Cleopatra. Promise,

And in our name, what she requires; add more,

From thine invention, offers. Women are not
In their best fortunes strong; but want will perjure
The ne'er-touch'd vestal. Try thy cunning, Thyreus;
Make thine own edict for thy pains, which we
Will answer as a law.

THYREUS.

Caesar, I go.

CAESAR.

Observe how Antony becomes his flaw,
And what thou think'st his very action speaks
In every power that moves.

THYREUS.

Caesar, I shall. *Exeunt*

ACT_3|SC_13

SCENE XIII.

Alexandria. CLEOPATRA'S palace

Enter CLEOPATRA, ENOBARBUS, CHARMIAN, and IRAS

CLEOPATRA.

What shall we do, Enobarbus?

ENOBARBUS.

Think, and die.

CLEOPATRA.

Is Antony or we in fault for this?

ENOBARBUS.

Antony only, that would make his will
Lord of his reason. What though you fled
From that great face of war, whose several ranges
Frighted each other? Why should he follow?
The itch of his affection should not then
Have nick'd his captainship, at such a point,
When half to half the world oppos'd, he being

The mered question. 'Twas a shame no less
Than was his loss, to course your flying flags
And leave his navy gazing.

CLEOPATRA.

Prithee, peace.

Enter EUPHRONIUS, the Ambassador; with ANTONY

ANTONY.
Is that his answer?

EUPHRONIUS.

Ay, my lord.

ANTONY.
The Queen shall then have courtesy, so she
Will yield us up.

EUPHRONIUS.

He says so.

ANTONY.

Let her know't.

To the boy Caesar send this grizzled head,

And he will fill thy wishes to the brim

With principalities.

CLEOPATRA.

That head, my lord?

ANTONY.

To him again. Tell him he wears the rose

Of youth upon him; from which the world should note

Something particular. His coin, ships, legions,

May be a coward's whose ministers would prevail

Under the service of a child as soon

As i' th' command of Caesar. I dare him therefore

To lay his gay comparisons apart,

And answer me declin'd, sword against sword,

Ourselves alone. I'll write it. Follow me.

Exeunt ANTONY and EUPHRONIUS

EUPHRONIUS.

[Aside] Yes, like enough high-battled Caesar will

Unstate his happiness, and be stag'd to th' show

Against a sworder! I see men's judgments are

A parcel of their fortunes, and things outward

Do draw the inward quality after them,

To suffer all alike. That he should dream,

Knowing all measures, the full Caesar will

Answer his emptiness! Caesar, thou hast subdu'd

His judgment too.

Enter a SERVANT

SERVANT.

A messenger from Caesar.

CLEOPATRA.

What, no more ceremony? See, my women!

Against the blown rose may they stop their nose

That kneel'd unto the buds. Admit him, sir. *Exit* SERVANT

ENOBARBUS.

[Aside] Mine honesty and I begin to square.

The loyalty well held to fools does make

Our faith mere folly. Yet he that can endure

To follow with allegiance a fall'n lord

Does conquer him that did his master conquer,

And earns a place i' th' story.

Enter THYREUS

CLEOPATRA.

Caesar's will?

THYREUS.

Hear it apart.

CLEOPATRA.

None but friends: say boldly.

THYREUS.

So, haply, are they friends to Antony.

ENOBARBUS.

He needs as many, sir, as Caesar has,

Or needs not us. If Caesar please, our master

Will leap to be his friend. For us, you know

Whose he is we are, and that is Caesar's.

THYREUS.

So.

Thus then, thou most renown'd: Caesar entreats

Not to consider in what case thou stand'st

Further than he is Caesar.

CLEOPATRA.

Go on. Right royal!

THYREUS.

He knows that you embrace not Antony
As you did love, but as you fear'd him.

CLEOPATRA.

O!

THYREUS.

The scars upon your honour, therefore, he
Does pity, as constrained blemishes,
Not as deserv'd.

CLEOPATRA.

He is a god, and knows
What is most right. Mine honour was not yielded,
But conquer'd merely.

ENOBARBUS.

[Aside] To be sure of that,

I will ask Antony. Sir, sir, thou art so leaky
That we must leave thee to thy sinking, for
Thy dearest quit thee. *Exit*

THYREUS. Shall I say to Caesar
What you require of him? For he partly begs
To be desir'd to give. It much would please him
That of his fortunes you should make a staff
To lean upon. But it would warm his spirits
To hear from me you had left Antony,
And put yourself under his shroud,
The universal landlord.

CLEOPATRA.
What's your name?

THYREUS.

My name is Thyreus.

CLEOPATRA.

Most kind messenger,

Say to great Caesar this: in deputation

I kiss his conquring hand. Tell him I am prompt

To lay my crown at 's feet, and there to kneel.

Tell him from his all-obeying breath I hear

The doom of Egypt.

THYREUS.

'Tis your noblest course.

Wisdom and fortune combating together,

If that the former dare but what it can,

No chance may shake it. Give me grace to lay

My duty on your hand.

CLEOPATRA.

Your Caesar's father oft,

When he hath mus'd of taking kingdoms in,

Bestow'd his lips on that unworthy place,

As it rain'd kisses.

Re-enter ANTONY and ENOBARBUS

ANTONY.

Favours, by Jove that thunders!

What art thou, fellow?

THYREUS.

One that but performs

The bidding of the fullest man, and worthiest

To have command obey'd.

ENOBARBUS.

[Aside] You will be whipt.

ANTONY.

Approach there.- Ah, you kite!- Now, gods and devils!

Authority melts from me. Of late, when I cried 'Ho!'

Like boys unto a muss, kings would start forth

And cry 'Your will?' Have you no ears? I am Antony yet.

Enter servants

Take hence this Jack and whip him.

ENOBARBUS.

'Tis better playing with a lion's whelp

Than with an old one dying.

ANTONY.

Moon and stars!

Whip him. Were't twenty of the greatest tributaries

That do acknowledge Caesar, should I find them

So saucy with the hand of she here-what's her name

Since she was Cleopatra? Whip him, fellows,

Till like a boy you see him cringe his face,

And whine aloud for mercy. Take him hence.

THYMUS.

Mark Antony-

ANTONY.

Tug him away. Being whipt,

Bring him again: the Jack of Caesar's shall

Bear us an errand to him. *Exeunt* servants with THYREUS

You were half blasted ere I knew you. Ha!

Have I my pillow left unpress'd in Rome,

Forborne the getting of a lawful race,

And by a gem of women, to be abus'd

By one that looks on feeders?

CLEOPATRA.

Good my lord-

ANTONY.

You have been a boggler ever.

But when we in our viciousness grow hard-

O misery on't!- the wise gods seel our eyes,

In our own filth drop our clear judgments, make us

Adore our errors, laugh at's while we strut

To our confusion.

CLEOPATRA.

O, is't come to this?

ANTONY.

I found you as a morsel cold upon

Dead Caesar's trencher. Nay, you were a fragment

Of Cneius Pompey's, besides what hotter hours,

Unregist'red in vulgar fame, you have

Luxuriously pick'd out; for I am sure,

Though you can guess what temperance should be,

You know not what it is.

CLEOPATRA.

Wherefore is this?

ANTONY.

To let a fellow that will take rewards,

And say 'God quit you!' be familiar with

My playfellow, your hand, this kingly seal

And plighter of high hearts! O that I were

Upon the hill of Basan to outroar

The horned herd! For I have savage cause,

And to proclaim it civilly were like

A halter'd neck which does the hangman thank

For being yare about him.

Re-enter a SERVANT with THYREUS

Is he whipt?

SERVANT.

Soundly, my lord.

ANTONY.

Cried he? and begg'd 'a pardon?

SERVANT.

He did ask favour.

ANTONY.

If that thy father live, let him repent
Thou wast not made his daughter; and be thou sorry
To follow Caesar in his triumph, since
Thou hast been whipt for following him. Henceforth
The white hand of a lady fever thee!
Shake thou to look on't. Get thee back to Caesar;

Tell him thy entertainment; look thou say
He makes me angry with him; for he seems
Proud and disdainful, harping on what I am,
Not what he knew I was. He makes me angry;
And at this time most easy 'tis to do't,
When my good stars, that were my former guides,
Have empty left their orbs and shot their fires
Into th' abysm of hell. If he mislike
My speech and what is done, tell him he has
Hipparchus, my enfranched bondman, whom
He may at pleasure whip or hang or torture,
As he shall like, to quit me. Urge it thou.
Hence with thy stripes, be gone. *Exit* THYREUS

CLEOPATRA.

Have you done yet?

ANTONY.

Alack, our terrene moon
Is now eclips'd, and it portends alone
The fall of Antony.

CLEOPATRA.

I must stay his time.

ANTONY.
To flatter Caesar, would you mingle eyes
With one that ties his points?

CLEOPATRA.
Not know me yet?

ANTONY.

Cold-hearted toward me?

CLEOPATRA.
Ah, dear, if I be so,
From my cold heart let heaven engender hail,
And poison it in the source, and the first stone
Drop in my neck; as it determines, so

Dissolve my life! The next Caesarion smite!
Till by degrees the memory of my womb,
Together with my brave Egyptians all,
By the discandying of this pelleted storm,
Lie graveless, till the flies and gnats of Nile
Have buried them for prey.

ANTONY.
I am satisfied.
Caesar sits down in Alexandria, where
I will oppose his fate. Our force by land
Hath nobly held; our sever'd navy to
Have knit again, and fleet, threat'ning most sea-like.

Where hast thou been, my heart? Dost thou hear, lady?
If from the field I shall return once more
To kiss these lips, I will appear in blood.
I and my sword will earn our chronicle.

There's hope in't yet.

CLEOPATRA.

That's my brave lord!

ANTONY.

I will be treble-sinew'd, hearted, breath'd,

And fight maliciously. For when mine hours

Were nice and lucky, men did ransom lives

Of me for jests; but now I'll set my teeth,

And send to darkness all that stop me. Come,

Let's have one other gaudy night. Call to me

All my sad captains; fill our bowls once more;

Let's mock the midnight bell.

CLEOPATRA.

It is my birthday.

I had thought t'have held it poor; but since my lord

Is Antony again, I will be Cleopatra.

ANTONY.

We will yet do well.

CLEOPATRA.

Call all his noble captains to my lord.

ANTONY.

Do so, we'll speak to them; and to-night I'll force
The wine peep through their scars. Come on, my queen,
There's sap in't yet. The next time I do fight
I'll make death love me; for I will contend
Even with his pestilent scythe. *Exeunt* all but ENOBARBUS

ENOBARBUS.

Now he'll outstare the lightning. To be furious
Is to be frighted out of fear, and in that mood
The dove will peck the estridge; and I see still
A diminution in our captain's brain
Restores his heart. When valour preys on reason,
It eats the sword it fights with. I will seek
Some way to leave him. *Exit*

ACT_4|SC_1

ACT IV.
SCENE I.

CAESAR'S camp before Alexandria

***Enter* CAESAR, AGRIPPA, and MAECENAS, with his army;**

CAESAR reading a letter

CAESAR.

He calls me boy, and chides as he had power

To beat me out of Egypt. My messenger

He hath whipt with rods; dares me to personal combat,

Caesar to Antony. Let the old ruffian know

I have many other ways to die, meantime

Laugh at his challenge.

MAECENAS.

Caesar must think

When one so great begins to rage, he's hunted

Even to falling. Give him no breath, but now

Make boot of his distraction. Never anger

Made good guard for itself.

CAESAR.

Let our best heads

Know that to-morrow the last of many battles

We mean to fight. Within our files there are

Of those that serv'd Mark Antony but late

Enough to fetch him in. See it done;

And feast the army; we have store to do't,

And they have earn'd the waste. Poor Antony! *Exeunt*

ACT_4|SC_2

SCENE II.

Alexandria. CLEOPATRA's palace

Enter ANTONY, CLEOPATRA, ENOBARBUS, CHARMIAN, IRAS,

ALEXAS, with others

ANTONY.

He will not fight with me, Domitius?

ENOBARBUS.

No.

ANTONY.

Why should he not?

ENOBARBUS.

He thinks, being twenty times of better fortune,

He is twenty men to one.

ANTONY.

To-morrow, soldier,

By sea and land I'll fight. Or I will live,

Or bathe my dying honour in the blood

Shall make it live again. Woo't thou fight well?

ENOBARBUS.

I'll strike, and cry 'Take all.'

ANTONY.

Well said; come on.

Call forth my household servants; let's to-night

Be bounteous at our meal.

Enter three or four servitors

Give me thy hand,

Thou has been rightly honest. So hast thou;

Thou, and thou, and thou. You have serv'd me well,

And kings have been your fellows.

CLEOPATRA.

[Aside to ENOBARBUS] What means this?

ENOBARBUS.

[Aside to CLEOPATRA] 'Tis one of those odd tricks which sorrow shoots

Out of the mind.

ANTONY.

And thou art honest too.

I wish I could be made so many men,

And all of you clapp'd up together in

An Antony, that I might do you service

So good as you have done.

SERVANT.

The gods forbid!

ANTONY.

Well, my good fellows, wait on me to-night.

Scant not my cups, and make as much of me

As when mine empire was your fellow too,

And suffer'd my command.

CLEOPATRA.

[Aside to ENOBARBUS] What does he mean?

ENOBARBUS.

[Aside to CLEOPATRA] To make his followers weep.

ANTONY.

Tend me to-night;

May be it is the period of your duty.

Haply you shall not see me more; or if,

A mangled shadow. Perchance to-morrow

You'll serve another master. I look on you

As one that takes his leave. Mine honest friends,

I turn you not away; but, like a master

Married to your good service, stay till death.

Tend me to-night two hours, I ask no more,

And the gods yield you for't!

ENOBARBUS.

What mean you, sir,

To give them this discomfort? Look, they weep;

And I, an ass, am onion-ey'd. For shame!

Transform us not to women.

ANTONY.

Ho, ho, ho!

Now the witch take me if I meant it thus!
Grace grow where those drops fall! My hearty friends,
You take me in too dolorous a sense;
For I spake to you for your comfort, did desire you
To burn this night with torches. Know, my hearts,
I hope well of to-morrow, and will lead you
Where rather I'll expect victorious life
Than death and honour. Let's to supper, come,
And drown consideration. *Exeunt*
ACT_4|SC_3

SCENE III.

Alexandria. Before CLEOPATRA's palace

Enter a company of soldiers

FIRST SOLDIER.

Brother, good night. To-morrow is the day.

SECOND SOLDIER.

It will determine one way. Fare you well.

Heard you of nothing strange about the streets?

FIRST SOLDIER.

Nothing. What news?

SECOND SOLDIER.

Belike 'tis but a rumour. Good night to you.

FIRST SOLDIER.

Well, sir, good night.

[They meet other soldiers]

SECOND SOLDIER.

Soldiers, have careful watch.

FIRST SOLDIER.

And you. Good night, good night.

[The two companies separate and place themselves
in every corner of the stage]

SECOND SOLDIER.
Here we. And if to-morrow
Our navy thrive, I have an absolute hope
Our landmen will stand up.

THIRD SOLDIER.
'Tis a brave army,
And full of purpose.
[Music of the hautboys is under the stage]

SECOND SOLDIER.

Peace, what noise?

THIRD SOLDIER.

List, list!

SECOND SOLDIER.

Hark!

THIRD SOLDIER.

Music i' th' air.

FOURTH SOLDIER.

Under the earth.

THIRD SOLDIER.

It signs well, does it not?

FOURTH SOLDIER.

No.

THIRD SOLDIER.

Peace, I say!

What should this mean?

SECOND SOLDIER.

'Tis the god Hercules, whom Antony lov'd,

Now leaves him.

THIRD SOLDIER.

Walk; let's see if other watchmen

Do hear what we do.

SECOND SOLDIER.

How now, masters!

SOLDIERS.

[Speaking together] How now!

How now! Do you hear this?

FIRST SOLDIER.

Ay; is't not strange?

THIRD SOLDIER.

Do you hear, masters? Do you hear?

FIRST SOLDIER.

Follow the noise so far as we have quarter;

Let's see how it will give off.

SOLDIERS.

Content. 'Tis strange. *Exeunt*

ACT_4|SC_4

SCENE IV.

Alexandria. CLEOPATRA's palace

Enter ANTONY and CLEOPATRA, CHARMIAN, IRAS,

with others

ANTONY.

Eros! mine armour, Eros!

CLEOPATRA.

Sleep a little.

ANTONY.

No, my chuck. Eros! Come, mine armour, Eros!

Enter EROS with armour

Come, good fellow, put mine iron on.

If fortune be not ours to-day, it is

Because we brave her. Come.

CLEOPATRA.

Nay, I'll help too.

What's this for?

ANTONY.

Ah, let be, let be! Thou art

The armourer of my heart. False, false; this, this.

CLEOPATRA.

Sooth, la, I'll help. Thus it must be.

ANTONY.

Well, well;

We shall thrive now. Seest thou, my good fellow?

Go put on thy defences.

EROS.

Briefly, sir.

CLEOPATRA.

Is not this buckled well?

ANTONY.

Rarely, rarely!

He that unbuckles this, till we do please

To daff't for our repose, shall hear a storm.

Thou fumblest, Eros, and my queen's a squire

More tight at this than thou. Dispatch. O love,

That thou couldst see my wars to-day, and knew'st

The royal occupation! Thou shouldst see

A workman in't.

Enter an armed SOLDIER

Good-morrow to thee. Welcome.

Thou look'st like him that knows a warlike charge.

To business that we love we rise betime,

And go to't with delight.

SOLDIER.

A thousand, sir,

Early though't be, have on their riveted trim,

And at the port expect you.

[Shout. Flourish of trumpets within]

Enter CAPTAINS and soldiers

CAPTAIN.

The morn is fair. Good morrow, General.

ALL.

Good morrow, General.

ANTONY.

'Tis well blown, lads.

This morning, like the spirit of a youth

That means to be of note, begins betimes.

So, so. Come, give me that. This way. Well said.

Fare thee well, dame, whate'er becomes of me.

This is a soldier's kiss. Rebukeable,

And worthy shameful check it were, to stand

On more mechanic compliment; I'll leave thee

Now like a man of steel. You that will fight, Follow me close; I'll bring you to't. Adieu.

Exeunt ANTONY, EROS, CAPTAINS and soldiers

CHARMIAN.

Please you retire to your chamber?

CLEOPATRA.

Lead me.

He goes forth gallantly. That he and Caesar might

Determine this great war in single fight!

Then, Antony-but now. Well, on. *Exeunt*

ACT_4|SC_5

SCENE V.

Alexandria. ANTONY'S camp

Trumpets sound. *Enter* ANTONY and EROS, a SOLDIER

meeting them

SOLDIER.

The gods make this a happy day to Antony!

ANTONY.

Would thou and those thy scars had once prevail'd
To make me fight at land!

SOLDIER.
Hadst thou done so,
The kings that have revolted, and the soldier
That has this morning left thee, would have still
Followed thy heels.

ANTONY.

Who's gone this morning?

SOLDIER.
Who?
One ever near thee. Call for Enobarbus,
He shall not hear thee; or from Caesar's camp
Say 'I am none of thine.'

ANTONY.
What say'st thou?

SOLDIER.

Sir,

He is with Caesar.

EROS.

Sir, his chests and treasure

He has not with him.

ANTONY.

Is he gone?

SOLDIER.

Most certain.

ANTONY.

Go, Eros, send his treasure after; do it;

Detain no jot, I charge thee. Write to him-

I will subscribe-gentle adieus and greetings;

Say that I wish he never find more cause

To change a master. O, my fortunes have

Corrupted honest men! Dispatch. Enobarbus! *Exeunt*

ACT_4|SC_6

SCENE VI.

Alexandria. CAESAR'S camp

Flourish. ***Enter*** **AGRIPPA, CAESAR, With DOLABELLA**

and ENOBARBUS

CAESAR.

Go forth, Agrippa, and begin the fight.

Our will is Antony be took alive;

Make it so known.

AGRIPPA.

Caesar, I shall. ***Exit***

CAESAR. The time of universal peace is near.

Prove this a prosp'rous day, the three-nook'd world

Shall bear the olive freely.

Enter **A MESSENGER**

MESSENGER.

Antony

Is come into the field.

CAESAR.

Go charge Agrippa

Plant those that have revolted in the vant,

That Antony may seem to spend his fury

Upon himself. *Exeunt* all but ENOBARBUS

ENOBARBUS.

Alexas did revolt and went to Jewry on

Affairs of Antony; there did dissuade

Great Herod to incline himself to Caesar

And leave his master Antony. For this pains

Casaer hath hang'd him. Canidius and the rest

That fell away have entertainment, but

No honourable trust. I have done ill,

Of which I do accuse myself so sorely

That I will joy no more.

Enter a SOLDIER of CAESAR'S

SOLDIER.

Enobarbus, Antony

Hath after thee sent all thy treasure, with

His bounty overplus. The messenger

Came on my guard, and at thy tent is now

Unloading of his mules.

ENOBARBUS.

I give it you.

SOLDIER.

Mock not, Enobarbus.

I tell you true. Best you saf'd the bringer

Out of the host. I must attend mine office,

Or would have done't myself. Your emperor

Continues still a Jove. _Exit_

ENOBARBUS. I am alone the villain of the earth,

And feel I am so most. O Antony,

Thou mine of bounty, how wouldst thou have paid

My better service, when my turpitude

Thou dost so crown with gold! This blows my heart.

If swift thought break it not, a swifter mean

Shall outstrike thought; but thought will do't, I feel.

I fight against thee? No! I will go seek

Some ditch wherein to die; the foul'st best fits

My latter part of life. *Exit*

ACT_4|SC_7

SCENE VII.

Field of battle between the camps

Alarum. Drums and trumpets. *Enter* AGRIPPA

and others

AGRIPPA.

Retire. We have engag'd ourselves too far.

Caesar himself has work, and our oppression

Exceeds what we expected. *Exeunt*

Alarums. *Enter* ANTONY, and SCARUS wounded

SCARUS.

O my brave Emperor, this is fought indeed!

Had we done so at first, we had droven them home

With clouts about their heads.

ANTONY.

Thou bleed'st apace.

SCARUS.

I had a wound here that was like a T,

But now 'tis made an H.

ANTONY.

They do retire.

SCARUS.

We'll beat'em into bench-holes. I have yet

Room for six scotches more.

Enter EROS

EROS.

They are beaten, sir, and our advantage serves

For a fair victory.

SCARUS.

Let us score their backs

And snatch 'em up, as we take hares, behind.

'Tis sport to maul a runner.

ANTONY.

I will reward thee

Once for thy sprightly comfort, and tenfold

For thy good valour. Come thee on.

SCARUS.

I'll halt after. *Exeunt*

ACT_4|SC_8

SCENE VIII.

Under the walls of Alexandria

Alarum. ***Enter*** **ANTONY, again in a march; SCARUS**

with others

ANTONY.

We have beat him to his camp. Run one before

And let the Queen know of our gests. To-morrow,

Before the sun shall see's, we'll spill the blood

That has to-day escap'd. I thank you all;

For doughty-handed are you, and have fought

Not as you serv'd the cause, but as't had been

Each man's like mine; you have shown all Hectors.

Enter **the city, clip your wives, your friends,**

Tell them your feats; whilst they with joyful tears

Wash the congealment from your wounds and kiss

The honour'd gashes whole.

Enter **CLEOPATRA, attended**

[To SCARUS] **Give me thy hand-**

To this great fairy I'll commend thy acts,

Make her thanks bless thee. O thou day o' th' world,

Chain mine arm'd neck. Leap thou, attire and all,

Through proof of harness to my heart, and there

Ride on the pants triumphing.

CLEOPATRA.

Lord of lords!

O infinite virtue, com'st thou smiling from

The world's great snare uncaught?

ANTONY.

Mine nightingale,

We have beat them to their beds. What, girl! though grey

Do something mingle with our younger brown, yet ha' we

A brain that nourishes our nerves, and can

Get goal for goal of youth. Behold this man;

Commend unto his lips thy favouring hand-

Kiss it, my warrior-he hath fought to-day

As if a god in hate of mankind had

Destroyed in such a shape.

CLEOPATRA.

I'll give thee, friend,
An armour all of gold; it was a king's.

ANTONY.

He has deserv'd it, were it carbuncled
Like holy Phoebus' car. Give me thy hand.
Through Alexandria make a jolly march;
Bear our hack'd targets like the men that owe them.
Had our great palace the capacity
To camp this host, we all would sup together,
And drink carouses to the next day's fate,
Which promises royal peril. Trumpeters,
With brazen din blast you the city's ear;
Make mingle with our rattling tabourines,
That heaven and earth may strike their sounds together
Applauding our approach. ***Exeunt***

ACT_4|SC_9

SCENE IX.

CAESAR'S camp

***Enter* a CENTURION and his company; ENOBARBUS follows**

CENTURION.

If we be not reliev'd within this hour,

We must return to th' court of guard. The night

Is shiny, and they say we shall embattle

By th' second hour i' th' morn.

FIRST WATCH.

This last day was

A shrewd one to's.

ENOBARBUS.

O, bear me witness, night-

SECOND WATCH.

What man is this?

FIRST WATCH.

Stand close and list him.

ENOBARBUS.

Be witness to me, O thou blessed moon,
When men revolted shall upon record
Bear hateful memory, poor Enobarbus did
Before thy face repent!

CENTURION.

Enobarbus?

SECOND WATCH.

Peace!

Hark further.

ENOBARBUS.

O sovereign mistress of true melancholy,

The poisonous damp of night disponge upon me,

That life, a very rebel to my will,

May hang no longer on me. Throw my heart

Against the flint and hardness of my fault,

Which, being dried with grief, will break to powder,

And finish all foul thoughts. O Antony,

Nobler than my revolt is infamous,

Forgive me in thine own particular,

But let the world rank me in register

A master-leaver and a fugitive!

O Antony! O Antony! ***[Dies]***

FIRST WATCH.

Let's speak to him.

CENTURION.

Let's hear him, for the things he speaks

May concern Caesar.

SECOND WATCH.

Let's do so. But he sleeps.

CENTURION.

Swoons rather; for so bad a prayer as his

Was never yet for sleep.

FIRST WATCH.

Go we to him.

SECOND WATCH.

Awake, sir, awake; speak to us.

FIRST WATCH.

Hear you, sir?

CENTURION.

The hand of death hath raught him.

***[Drums afar off]* Hark! the drums**

Demurely wake the sleepers. Let us bear him

To th' court of guard; he is of note. Our hour

Is fully out.

SECOND WATCH.

Come on, then;

He may recover yet. *Exeunt* with the body

ACT_4|SC_10

SCENE X.

Between the two camps

Enter ANTONY and SCARUS, with their army

ANTONY.

Their preparation is to-day by sea;

We please them not by land.

SCARUS.

For both, my lord.

ANTONY.

I would they'd fight i' th' fire or i' th' air;

We'd fight there too. But this it is, our foot

Upon the hills adjoining to the city

Shall stay with us-Order for sea is given;

They have put forth the haven-

Where their appointment we may best discover

And look on their endeavour. *Exeunt*

ACT_4|SC_11

SCENE XI.

Between the camps

***Enter* CAESAR and his army**

CAESAR.

But being charg'd, we will be still by land,

Which, as I take't, we shall; for his best force

Is forth to man his galleys. To the vales,

And hold our best advantage. *Exeunt*

ACT_4|SC_12

SCENE XII.

A hill near Alexandria

***Enter* ANTONY and SCARUS**

ANTONY.

Yet they are not join'd. Where yond pine does stand

I shall discover all. I'll bring thee word

Straight how 'tis like to go. *Exit*

SCARUS. Swallows have built

In Cleopatra's sails their nests. The augurers

Say they know not, they cannot tell; look grimly,

And dare not speak their knowledge. Antony

Is valiant and dejected; and by starts

His fretted fortunes give him hope and fear

Of what he has and has not.

***[* Alarum afar off, as at a sea-fight]**

Re-enter ANTONY

ANTONY.

All is lost!

This foul Egyptian hath betrayed me.

My fleet hath yielded to the foe, and yonder

They cast their caps up and carouse together

Like friends long lost. Triple-turn'd whore! 'tis thou

Hast sold me to this novice; and my heart

Makes only wars on thee. Bid them all fly;

For when I am reveng'd upon my charm,

I have done all. Bid them all fly; begone. *Exit* SCARUS

O sun, thy uprise shall I see no more!

Fortune and Antony part here; even here

Do we shake hands. All come to this? The hearts

That spaniel'd me at heels, to whom I gave

Their wishes, do discandy, melt their sweets

On blossoming Caesar; and this pine is bark'd

That overtopp'd them all. Betray'd I am.

O this false soul of Egypt! this grave charm-

Whose eye beck'd forth my wars and call'd them home,

Whose bosom was my crownet, my chief end-

Like a right gypsy hath at fast and loose

Beguil'd me to the very heart of loss.

What, Eros, Eros!

***Enter* CLEOPATRA**

Ah, thou spell! Avaunt!

CLEOPATRA.

Why is my lord enrag'd against his love?

ANTONY.

Vanish, or I shall give thee thy deserving

And blemish Caesar's triumph. Let him take thee

And hoist thee up to the shouting plebeians;

Follow his chariot, like the greatest spot

Of all thy sex; most monster-like, be shown

For poor'st diminutives, for doits, and let

Patient Octavia plough thy visage up

With her prepared nails. *Exit* CLEOPATRA

'Tis well th'art gone,

If it be well to live; but better 'twere

Thou fell'st into my fury, for one death

Might have prevented many. Eros, ho!

The shirt of Nessus is upon me; teach me,

Alcides, thou mine ancestor, thy rage;

Let me lodge Lichas on the horns o' th' moon,

And with those hands that grasp'd the heaviest club

Subdue my worthiest self. The witch shall die.

To the young Roman boy she hath sold me, and I fall

Under this plot. She dies for't. Eros, ho! ***Exit***

ACT_4|SC_13

SCENE XIII.

Alexandria. CLEOPATRA's palace

Enter CLEOPATRA, CHARMIAN, IRAS, and MARDIAN

CLEOPATRA.

Help me, my women. O, he is more mad

Than Telamon for his shield; the boar of Thessaly

Was never so emboss'd.

CHARMIAN.

To th'monument!
There lock yourself, and send him word you are dead.
The soul and body rive not more in parting
Than greatness going off.

CLEOPATRA.

To th' monument!
Mardian, go tell him I have slain myself;
Say that the last I spoke was 'Antony'
And word it, prithee, piteously. Hence, Mardian,
And bring me how he takes my death. To th' monument!

Exeunt

ACT_4|SC_14

SCENE XIV.

CLEOPATRA'S palace

Enter ANTONY and EROS

ANTONY.

Eros, thou yet behold'st me?

EROS.

Ay, noble lord.

ANTONY.

Sometime we see a cloud that's dragonish;
A vapour sometime like a bear or lion,
A tower'd citadel, a pendent rock,
A forked mountain, or blue promontory
With trees upon't that nod unto the world
And mock our eyes with air. Thou hast seen these signs;
They are black vesper's pageants.

EROS.

Ay, my lord.

ANTONY.

That which is now a horse, even with a thought
The rack dislimns, and makes it indistinct,
As water is in water.

EROS.

It does, my lord.

ANTONY.

My good knave Eros, now thy captain is
Even such a body. Here I am Antony;
Yet cannot hold this visible shape, my knave.
I made these wars for Egypt; and the Queen-
Whose heart I thought I had, for she had mine,
Which, whilst it was mine, had annex'd unto't
A million moe, now lost-she, Eros, has
Pack'd cards with Caesar, and false-play'd my glory
Unto an enemy's triumph.

Nay, weep not, gentle Eros; there is left us

Ourselves to end ourselves.

Enter MARDIAN

O, thy vile lady!

She has robb'd me of my sword.

MARDIAN.

No, Antony;

My mistress lov'd thee, and her fortunes mingled

With thine entirely.

ANTONY.

Hence, saucy eunuch; peace!

She hath betray'd me, and shall die the death.

MARDIAN.

Death of one person can be paid but once,

And that she has discharg'd. What thou wouldst do

Is done unto thy hand. The last she spake
Was 'Antony! most noble Antony!'
Then in the midst a tearing groan did break
The name of Antony; it was divided
Between her heart and lips. She rend'red life,
Thy name so buried in her.

ANTONY.
Dead then?

MARDIAN.

Dead.

ANTONY.
Unarm, Eros; the long day's task is done,
And we must sleep. That thou depart'st hence safe
Does pay thy labour richly. Go. *Exit* MARDIAN
Off, pluck off!
The sevenfold shield of Ajax cannot keep
The battery from my heart. O, cleave, my sides!

Heart, once be stronger than thy continent,

Crack thy frail case. Apace, Eros, apace.-

No more a soldier. Bruised pieces, go;

You have been nobly borne.- From me awhile. *Exit* EROS

I will o'ertake thee, Cleopatra, and

Weep for my pardon. So it must be, for now

All length is torture. Since the torch is out,

Lie down, and stray no farther. Now all labour

Mars what it does; yea, very force entangles

Itself with strength. Seal then, and all is done.

Eros!- I come, my queen.- Eros!- Stay for me;

Where souls do couch on flowers, we'll hand in hand,

And with our sprightly port make the ghosts gaze.

Dido and her Aeneas shall want troops,

And all the haunt be ours.- Come, Eros, Eros!

Re-enter EROS

EROS.

What would my lord?

ANTONY.

Since Cleopatra died,
I have liv'd in such dishonour that the gods
Detest my baseness. I, that with my sword
Quarter'd the world, and o'er green Neptune's back
With ships made cities, condemn myself to lack
The courage of a woman; less noble mind
Than she which by her death our Caesar tells
'I am conqueror of myself.' Thou art sworn, Eros,
That, when the exigent should come-which now
Is come indeed-when I should see behind me
Th' inevitable prosecution of
Disgrace and horror, that, on my command,
Thou then wouldst kill me. Do't; the time is come.

Thou strik'st not me; 'tis Caesar thou defeat'st.
Put colour in thy cheek.

EROS.

The gods withhold me!
Shall I do that which all the Parthian darts,

Though enemy, lost aim and could not?

ANTONY.

Eros,

Wouldst thou be window'd in great Rome and see

Thy master thus with pleach'd arms, bending down

His corrigible neck, his face subdu'd

To penetrative shame, whilst the wheel'd seat

Of fortunate Caesar, drawn before him, branded

His baseness that ensued?

EROS.

I would not see't.

ANTONY.

Come, then; for with a wound I must be cur'd.

Draw that thy honest sword, which thou hast worn

Most useful for thy country.

EROS.

O, sir, pardon me!

ANTONY.

When I did make thee free, swor'st thou not then

To do this when I bade thee? Do it at once,

Or thy precedent services are all

But accidents unpurpos'd. Draw, and come.

EROS.

Turn from me then that noble countenance,

Wherein the worship of the whole world lies.

ANTONY.

Lo thee! *[Turning from him]*

EROS.

My sword is drawn.

ANTONY.

Then let it do at once

The thing why thou hast drawn it.

EROS.

My dear master,

My captain and my emperor, let me say,

Before I strike this bloody stroke, farewell.

ANTONY.

'Tis said, man; and farewell.

EROS.

Farewell, great chief. Shall I strike now?

ANTONY.

Now, Eros.

EROS.

Why, there then! Thus do I escape the sorrow

Of Antony's death. [Kills himself

ANTONY.

Thrice nobler than myself!
Thou teachest me, O valiant Eros, what
I should, and thou couldst not. My queen and Eros
Have, by their brave instruction, got upon me
A nobleness in record. But I will be
A bridegroom in my death, and run into't
As to a lover's bed. Come, then; and, Eros,
Thy master dies thy scholar. To do thus
[Falling on his sword]
I learn'd of thee. How? not dead? not dead?-
The guard, ho! O, dispatch me!

Enter DERCETAS and a guard

FIRST GUARD.
What's the noise?

ANTONY.

I have done my work ill, friends. O, make an end
Of what I have begun.

SECOND GUARD.

The star is fall'n.

FIRST GUARD.
And time is at his period.

ALL.

Alas, and woe!

ANTONY.
Let him that loves me, strike me dead.

FIRST GUARD.

Not I.

SECOND GUARD.

Nor I.

THIRD GUARD.

Nor any one. *Exeunt* guard

DERCETAS.

Thy death and fortunes bid thy followers fly.
This sword but shown to Caesar, with this tidings,
Shall enter me with him.

Enter DIOMEDES

DIOMEDES.

Where's Antony?

DERCETAS.

There, Diomed, there.

DIOMEDES.

Lives he?

Wilt thou not answer, man? *Exit* DERCETAS

ANTONY.

Art thou there, Diomed? Draw thy sword and give me

Sufficing strokes for death.

DIOMEDES.

Most absolute lord,

My mistress Cleopatra sent me to thee.

ANTONY.

When did she send thee?

DIOMEDES.

Now, my lord.

ANTONY.

Where is she?

DIOMEDES.

Lock'd in her monument. She had a prophesying fear
Of what hath come to pass; for when she saw-
Which never shall be found-you did suspect
She had dispos'd with Caesar, and that your rage
Would not be purg'd, she sent you word she was dead;
But fearing since how it might work, hath sent
Me to proclaim the truth; and I am come,
I dread, too late.

ANTONY.

Too late, good Diomed. Call my guard, I prithee.

DIOMEDES.

What, ho! the Emperor's guard! The guard, what ho!
Come, your lord calls!

Enter four or five of the guard of ANTONY

ANTONY.

Bear me, good friends, where Cleopatra bides;

'Tis the last service that I shall command you.

FIRST GUARD.

Woe, woe are we, sir, you may not live to wear

All your true followers out.

ALL.

Most heavy day!

ANTONY.

Nay, good my fellows, do not please sharp fate

To grace it with your sorrows. Bid that welcome

Which comes to punish us, and we punish it,

Seeming to bear it lightly. Take me up.

I have led you oft; carry me now, good friends,

And have my thanks for all. *Exeunt* , hearing ANTONY

ACT_4|SC_15

SCENE XV.

Alexandria. A monument

***Enter* CLEOPATRA and her maids aloft, with CHARMIAN**

and IRAS

CLEOPATRA.

O Charmian, I will never go from hence!

CHARMIAN.

Be comforted, dear madam.

CLEOPATRA.

No, I will not.
All strange and terrible events are welcome,
But comforts we despise; our size of sorrow,
Proportion'd to our cause, must be as great
As that which makes it.

***Enter* DIOMEDES, below**

How now! Is he dead?

DIOMEDES.

His death's upon him, but not dead.

Look out o' th' other side your monument;

His guard have brought him thither.

***Enter* , below, ANTONY, borne by the guard**

CLEOPATRA.

O sun,

Burn the great sphere thou mov'st in! Darkling stand

The varying shore o' th' world. O Antony,

Antony, Antony! Help, Charmian; help, Iras, help;

Help, friends below! Let's draw him hither.

ANTONY.

Peace!

Not Caesar's valour hath o'erthrown Antony,

But Antony's hath triumph'd on itself.

CLEOPATRA.

So it should be, that none but Antony

Should conquer Antony; but woe 'tis so!

ANTONY.

I am dying, Egypt, dying; only

I here importune death awhile, until

Of many thousand kisses the poor last

I lay upon thy lips.

CLEOPATRA.

I dare not, dear.

Dear my lord, pardon! I dare not,

Lest I be taken. Not th' imperious show

Of the full-fortun'd Caesar ever shall

Be brooch'd with me. If knife, drugs, serpents, have

Edge, sting, or operation, I am safe.

Your wife Octavia, with her modest eyes

And still conclusion, shall acquire no honour

Demuring upon me. But come, come, Antony-

Help me, my women-we must draw thee up;

Assist, good friends.

ANTONY.

O, quick, or I am gone.

CLEOPATRA.

Here's sport indeed! How heavy weighs my lord!
Our strength is all gone into heaviness;
That makes the weight. Had I great Juno's power,
The strong-wing'd Mercury should fetch thee up,
And set thee by Jove's side. Yet come a little.
Wishers were ever fools. O come, come,

[They heave ANTONY aloft to CLEOPATRA]

And welcome, welcome! Die where thou hast liv'd.
Quicken with kissing. Had my lips that power,
Thus would I wear them out.

ALL.

A heavy sight!

ANTONY.

I am dying, Egypt, dying.

Give me some wine, and let me speak a little.

CLEOPATRA.

No, let me speak; and let me rail so high

That the false huswife Fortune break her wheel,

Provok'd by my offence.

ANTONY.

One word, sweet queen:

Of Caesar seek your honour, with your safety. O!

CLEOPATRA.

They do not go together.

ANTONY.

Gentle, hear me:

None about Caesar trust but Proculeius.

CLEOPATRA.

My resolution and my hands I'll trust;

None about Caesar

ANTONY.

The miserable change now at my end

Lament nor sorrow at; but please your thoughts

In feeding them with those my former fortunes

Wherein I liv'd the greatest prince o' th' world,

The noblest; and do now not basely die,

Not cowardly put off my helmet to

My countryman-a Roman by a Roman

Valiantly vanquish'd. Now my spirit is going

I can no more.

CLEOPATRA.

Noblest of men, woo't die?

Hast thou no care of me? Shall I abide

In this dull world, which in thy absence is

No better than a sty? O, see, my women, *[Antony dies]*

The crown o' th' earth doth melt. My lord!

O, wither'd is the garland of the war,

The soldier's pole is fall'n! Young boys and girls

Are level now with men. The odds is gone,

And there is nothing left remarkable

Beneath the visiting moon. *[Swoons]*

CHARMIAN.

O, quietness, lady!

IRAS.

She's dead too, our sovereign.

CHARMIAN.

Lady!

IRAS.

Madam!

CHARMIAN.

O madam, madam, madam!

IRAS.

Royal Egypt, Empress!

CHARMIAN.

Peace, peace, Iras!

CLEOPATRA.

No more but e'en a woman, and commanded

By such poor passion as the maid that milks

And does the meanest chares. It were for me

To throw my sceptre at the injurious gods;

To tell them that this world did equal theirs

Till they had stol'n our jewel. All's but nought;

Patience is sottish, and impatience does

Become a dog that's mad. Then is it sin

To rush into the secret house of death

Ere death dare come to us? How do you, women?

What, what! good cheer! Why, how now, Charmian!

My noble girls! Ah, women, women, look,

Our lamp is spent, it's out! Good sirs, take heart.

We'll bury him; and then, what's brave, what's noble,

Let's do it after the high Roman fashion,

And make death proud to take us. Come, away;

This case of that huge spirit now is cold.

Ah, women, women! Come; we have no friend

But resolution and the briefest end.

***Exeunt* ; those above hearing off ANTONY'S body**

ACT_5|SC_1

ACT V.
SCENE I.

Alexandria. CAESAR'S camp

***Enter* CAESAR, AGRIPPA, DOLABELLA, MAECENAS, GALLUS,**

PROCULEIUS, and others, his Council of War

CAESAR.

Go to him, Dolabella, bid him yield;

Being so frustrate, tell him he mocks

The pauses that he makes.

DOLABELLA.

Caesar, I shall. *Exit*

***Enter* DERCETAS With the sword of ANTONY**

CAESAR.

Wherefore is that? And what art thou that dar'st

Appear thus to us?

DERCETAS.

I am call'd Dercetas;

Mark Antony I serv'd, who best was worthy

Best to be serv'd. Whilst he stood up and spoke,

He was my master, and I wore my life

To spend upon his haters. If thou please

To take me to thee, as I was to him

I'll be to Caesar; if thou pleasest not,
I yield thee up my life.

CAESAR.
What is't thou say'st?

DERCETAS.

I say, O Caesar, Antony is dead.

CAESAR.
The breaking of so great a thing should make
A greater crack. The round world
Should have shook lions into civil streets,
And citizens to their dens. The death of Antony
Is not a single doom; in the name lay
A moiety of the world.

DERCETAS.
He is dead, Caesar,
Not by a public minister of justice,

Nor by a hired knife; but that self hand

Which writ his honour in the acts it did

Hath, with the courage which the heart did lend it,

Splitted the heart. This is his sword;

I robb'd his wound of it; behold it stain'd

With his most noble blood.

CAESAR.

Look you sad, friends?

The gods rebuke me, but it is tidings

To wash the eyes of kings.

AGRIPPA.

And strange it is

That nature must compel us to lament

Our most persisted deeds.

MAECENAS.

His taints and honours

Wag'd equal with him.

AGRIPPA.

A rarer spirit never
Did steer humanity. But you gods will give us
Some faults to make us men. Caesar is touch'd.

MAECENAS.

When such a spacious mirror's set before him,
He needs must see himself.

CAESAR.

O Antony,
I have follow'd thee to this! But we do lance
Diseases in our bodies. I must perforce
Have shown to thee such a declining day
Or look on thine; we could not stall together
In the whole world. But yet let me lament,
With tears as sovereign as the blood of hearts,
That thou, my brother, my competitor
In top of all design, my mate in empire,
Friend and companion in the front of war,
The arm of mine own body, and the heart

Where mine his thoughts did kindle-that our stars,

Unreconciliable, should divide

Our equalness to this. Hear me, good friends-

***Enter* an EGYPTIAN**

But I will tell you at some meeter season.

The business of this man looks out of him;

We'll hear him what he says. Whence are you?

EGYPTIAN.

A poor Egyptian, yet the Queen, my mistress,

Confin'd in all she has, her monument,

Of thy intents desires instruction,

That she preparedly may frame herself

To th' way she's forc'd to.

CAESAR.

Bid her have good heart.

She soon shall know of us, by some of ours,

How honourable and how kindly we

Determine for her; for Caesar cannot learn

To be ungentle.

EGYPTIAN.

So the gods preserve thee! ***Exit***

CAESAR. Come hither, Proculeius. Go and say

We purpose her no shame. Give her what comforts

The quality of her passion shall require,

Lest, in her greatness, by some mortal stroke

She do defeat us; for her life in Rome

Would be eternal in our triumph. Go,

And with your speediest bring us what she says,

And how you find her.

PROCULEIUS.

Caesar, I shall. ***Exit***

CAESAR. Gallus, go you along. ***Exit*** **GALLUS**

Where's Dolabella, to second Proculeius?

ALL.

Dolabella!

CAESAR.

Let him alone, for I remember now

How he's employ'd; he shall in time be ready.

Go with me to my tent, where you shall see

How hardly I was drawn into this war,

How calm and gentle I proceeded still

In all my writings. Go with me, and see

What I can show in this. *Exeunt*

SCENE II.

Alexandria. The monument

Enter CLEOPATRA, CHARMIAN, IRAS, and MARDIAN

CLEOPATRA.

My desolation does begin to make
A better life. 'Tis paltry to be Caesar:
Not being Fortune, he's but Fortune's knave,
A minister of her will; and it is great
To do that thing that ends all other deeds,
Which shackles accidents and bolts up change,
Which sleeps, and never palates more the dug,
The beggar's nurse and Caesar's.

Enter , to the gates of the monument, PROCULEIUS, GALLUS, and soldiers

PROCULEIUS.

Caesar sends greetings to the Queen of Egypt,
And bids thee study on what fair demands

Thou mean'st to have him grant thee.

CLEOPATRA.

What's thy name?

PROCULEIUS.

My name is Proculeius.

CLEOPATRA.

Antony

Did tell me of you, bade me trust you; but

I do not greatly care to be deceiv'd,

That have no use for trusting. If your master

Would have a queen his beggar, you must tell him

That majesty, to keep decorum, must

No less beg than a kingdom. If he please

To give me conquer'd Egypt for my son,

He gives me so much of mine own as I

Will kneel to him with thanks.

PROCULEIUS.

Be of good cheer;

Y'are fall'n into a princely hand; fear nothing.

Make your full reference freely to my lord,

Who is so full of grace that it flows over

On all that need. Let me report to him

Your sweet dependency, and you shall find

A conqueror that will pray in aid for kindness

Where he for grace is kneel'd to.

CLEOPATRA.

Pray you tell him

I am his fortune's vassal and I send him

The greatness he has got. I hourly learn

A doctrine of obedience, and would gladly

Look him i' th' face.

PROCULEIUS.

This I'll report, dear lady.

Have comfort, for I know your plight is pitied

Of him that caus'd it.

GALLUS.

You see how easily she may be surpris'd.

Here PROCULEIUS and two of the guard ascend the

monument by a ladder placed against a window,

and come behind CLEOPATRA. Some of the guard

unbar and open the gates

Guard her till Caesar come. *Exit*

IRAS. Royal Queen!

CHARMIAN.

O Cleopatra! thou art taken, Queen!

CLEOPATRA.

Quick, quick, good hands. *[Drawing a dagger]*

PROCULEIUS.

Hold, worthy lady, hold, *[Disarms her]*

Do not yourself such wrong, who are in this

Reliev'd, but not betray'd.

CLEOPATRA.

What, of death too,

That rids our dogs of languish?

PROCULEIUS.

Cleopatra,

Do not abuse my master's bounty by

Th' undoing of yourself. Let the world see

His nobleness well acted, which your death

Will never let come forth.

CLEOPATRA.

Where art thou, death?

Come hither, come! Come, come, and take a queen

Worth many babes and beggars!

PROCULEIUS.

O, temperance, lady!

CLEOPATRA.

Sir, I will eat no meat; I'll not drink, sir;
If idle talk will once be necessary,
I'll not sleep neither. This mortal house I'll ruin,
Do Caesar what he can. Know, sir, that I
Will not wait pinion'd at your master's court,
Nor once be chastis'd with the sober eye
Of dull Octavia. Shall they hoist me up,
And show me to the shouting varletry
Of censuring Rome? Rather a ditch in Egypt
Be gentle grave unto me! Rather on Nilus' mud
Lay me stark-nak'd, and let the water-flies
Blow me into abhorring! Rather make
My country's high pyramides my gibbet,
And hang me up in chains!

PROCULEIUS.

You do extend
These thoughts of horror further than you shall
Find cause in Caesar.

Enter DOLABELLA

DOLABELLA.

Proculeius,

What thou hast done thy master Caesar knows,

And he hath sent for thee. For the Queen,

I'll take her to my guard.

PROCULEIUS.

So, Dolabella,

It shall content me best. Be gentle to her.

[To CLEOPATRA] To Caesar I will speak what you shall please,

If you'll employ me to him.

CLEOPATRA.

Say I would die.

Exeunt PROCULEIUS and soldiers

DOLABELLA.

Most noble Empress, you have heard of me?

CLEOPATRA.

I cannot tell.

DOLABELLA.

Assuredly you know me.

CLEOPATRA.

No matter, sir, what I have heard or known.
You laugh when boys or women tell their dreams;
Is't not your trick?

DOLABELLA.

I understand not, madam.

CLEOPATRA.

I dreamt there was an Emperor Antony-

O, such another sleep, that I might see
But such another man!

DOLABELLA.
If it might please ye-

CLEOPATRA.
His face was as the heav'ns, and therein stuck
A sun and moon, which kept their course and lighted
The little O, the earth.

DOLABELLA.
Most sovereign creature-

CLEOPATRA.
His legs bestrid the ocean; his rear'd arm
Crested the world. His voice was propertied
As all the tuned spheres, and that to friends;
But when he meant to quail and shake the orb,
He was as rattling thunder. For his bounty,
There was no winter in't; an autumn 'twas

That grew the more by reaping. His delights
Were dolphin-like: they show'd his back above
The element they liv'd in. In his livery
Walk'd crowns and crownets; realms and islands were
As plates dropp'd from his pocket.

DOLABELLA.
Cleopatra-

CLEOPATRA.
Think you there was or might be such a man
As this I dreamt of?

DOLABELLA.
Gentle madam, no.

CLEOPATRA.

You lie, up to the hearing of the gods.
But if there be nor ever were one such,
It's past the size of drearning. Nature wants stuff

To vie strange forms with fancy; yet t' imagine
An Antony were nature's piece 'gainst fancy,
Condemning shadows quite.

DOLABELLA.

Hear me, good madam.
Your loss is, as yourself, great; and you bear it
As answering to the weight. Would I might never
O'ertake pursu'd success, but I do feel,
By the rebound of yours, a grief that smites
My very heart at root.

CLEOPATRA.

I thank you, sir.
Know you what Caesar means to do with me?

DOLABELLA.

I am loath to tell you what I would you knew.

CLEOPATRA.

Nay, pray you, sir.

DOLABELLA.

Though he be honourable-

CLEOPATRA.

He'll lead me, then, in triumph?

DOLABELLA.

Madam, he will. I know't. *[Flourish]*

[Within: 'Make way there-Caesar!']

Enter CAESAR; GALLUS, PROCULEIUS, MAECENAS, SELEUCUS,

and others of his train

CAESAR.

Which is the Queen of Egypt?

DOLABELLA.

It is the Emperor, madam. *[CLEOPATPA kneels]*

CAESAR.

Arise, you shall not kneel.

I pray you, rise; rise, Egypt.

CLEOPATRA.

Sir, the gods

Will have it thus; my master and my lord I must obey.

CAESAR.

Take to you no hard thoughts.

The record of what injuries you did us,

Though written in our flesh, we shall remember

As things but done by chance.

CLEOPATRA.

Sole sir o' th' world,

I cannot project mine own cause so well

To make it clear, but do confess I have

Been laden with like frailties which before

Have often sham'd our sex.

CAESAR.

Cleopatra, know

We will extenuate rather than enforce.

If you apply yourself to our intents-

Which towards you are most gentle-you shall find

A benefit in this change; but if you seek

To lay on me a cruelty by taking

Antony's course, you shall bereave yourself

Of my good purposes, and put your children

To that destruction which I'll guard them from,

If thereon you rely. I'll take my leave.

CLEOPATRA.

And may, through all the world. 'Tis yours, and we,

Your scutcheons and your signs of conquest, shall

Hang in what place you please. Here, my good lord.

CAESAR.

You shall advise me in all for Cleopatra.

CLEOPATRA.

This is the brief of money, plate, and jewels,

I am possess'd of. 'Tis exactly valued,

Not petty things admitted. Where's Seleucus?

SELEUCUS.

Here, madam.

CLEOPATRA.

This is my treasurer; let him speak, my lord,

Upon his peril, that I have reserv'd

To myself nothing. Speak the truth, Seleucus.

SELEUCUS.

Madam,

I had rather seal my lips than to my peril

Speak that which is not.

CLEOPATRA.

What have I kept back?

SELEUCUS.

Enough to purchase what you have made known.

CAESAR.

Nay, blush not, Cleopatra; I approve

Your wisdom in the deed.

CLEOPATRA.

See, Caesar! O, behold,

How pomp is followed! Mine will now be yours;

And, should we shift estates, yours would be mine.

The ingratitude of this Seleucus does

Even make me wild. O slave, of no more trust

Than love that's hir'd! What, goest thou back? Thou shalt
Go back, I warrant thee; but I'll catch thine eyes
Though they had wings. Slave, soulless villain, dog!
O rarely base!

CAESAR.

Good Queen, let us entreat you.

CLEOPATRA.
O Caesar, what a wounding shame is this,
That thou vouchsafing here to visit me,
Doing the honour of thy lordliness
To one so meek, that mine own servant should
Parcel the sum of my disgraces by
Addition of his envy! Say, good Caesar,
That I some lady trifles have reserv'd,
Immoment toys, things of such dignity
As we greet modern friends withal; and say
Some nobler token I have kept apart
For Livia and Octavia, to induce

Their mediation-must I be unfolded

With one that I have bred? The gods! It smites me

Beneath the fall I have. *[To SELEUCUS]* Prithee go hence;

Or I shall show the cinders of my spirits

Through th' ashes of my chance. Wert thou a man,

Thou wouldst have mercy on me.

CAESAR.

Forbear, Seleucus. *Exit* SELEUCUS

CLEOPATRA.

Be it known that we, the greatest, are misthought

For things that others do; and when we fall

We answer others' merits in our name,

Are therefore to be pitied.

CAESAR.

Cleopatra,

Not what you have reserv'd, nor what acknowledg'd,

Put we i' th' roll of conquest. Still be't yours,

Bestow it at your pleasure; and believe

Caesar's no merchant, to make prize with you

Of things that merchants sold. Therefore be cheer'd;

Make not your thoughts your prisons. No, dear Queen;

For we intend so to dispose you as

Yourself shall give us counsel. Feed and sleep.

Our care and pity is so much upon you

That we remain your friend; and so, adieu.

CLEOPATRA.

My master and my lord!

CAESAR.

Not so. Adieu.

Flourish. Exeunt CAESAR and his train

CLEOPATRA.

He words me, girls, he words me, that I should not

Be noble to myself. But hark thee, Charmian!

[Whispers CHARMIAN]

IRAS.

Finish, good lady; the bright day is done,

And we are for the dark.

CLEOPATRA.

Hie thee again.

I have spoke already, and it is provided;

Go put it to the haste.

CHARMIAN.

Madam, I will.

Re-enter DOLABELLA

DOLABELLA.

Where's the Queen?

CHARMIAN.

Behold, sir. *Exit*

CLEOPATRA. Dolabella!

DOLABELLA.

Madam, as thereto sworn by your command,
Which my love makes religion to obey,
I tell you this: Caesar through Syria
Intends his journey, and within three days
You with your children will he send before.
Make your best use of this; I have perform'd
Your pleasure and my promise.

CLEOPATRA.

Dolabella,
I shall remain your debtor.

DOLABELLA.

I your servant.

Adieu, good Queen; I must attend on Caesar.

CLEOPATRA.

Farewell, and thanks. *Exit* DOLABELLA
Now, Iras, what think'st thou?

Thou an Egyptian puppet shall be shown
In Rome as well as I. Mechanic slaves,
With greasy aprons, rules, and hammers, shall
Uplift us to the view; in their thick breaths,
Rank of gross diet, shall we be enclouded,
And forc'd to drink their vapour.

IRAS.

The gods forbid!

CLEOPATRA.

Nay, 'tis most certain, Iras. Saucy lictors
Will catch at us like strumpets, and scald rhymers
Ballad us out o' tune; the quick comedians
Extemporally will stage us, and present
Our Alexandrian revels; Antony
Shall be brought drunken forth, and I shall see
Some squeaking Cleopatra boy my greatness
I' th' posture of a whore.

IRAS.

O the good gods!

CLEOPATRA.

Nay, that's certain.

IRAS.

I'll never see't, for I am sure mine nails
Are stronger than mine eyes.

CLEOPATRA.

Why, that's the way
To fool their preparation and to conquer
Their most absurd intents.

Enter CHARMIAN

Now, Charmian!
Show me, my women, like a queen. Go fetch
My best attires. I am again for Cydnus,

To meet Mark Antony. Sirrah, Iras, go.
Now, noble Charmian, we'll dispatch indeed;
And when thou hast done this chare, I'll give thee leave
To play till doomsday. Bring our crown and all.

Exit IRAS. A noise within

Wherefore's this noise?

Enter a GUARDSMAN

GUARDSMAN.
Here is a rural fellow
That will not be denied your Highness' presence.
He brings you figs.

CLEOPATRA.
Let him come in. *Exit* GUARDSMAN
What poor an instrument
May do a noble deed! He brings me liberty.
My resolution's plac'd, and I have nothing

Of woman in me. Now from head to foot
I am marble-constant; now the fleeting moon
No planet is of mine.
Re-enter GUARDSMAN and CLOWN, with a basket
GUARDSMAN.
This is the man.

CLEOPATRA.
Avoid, and leave him. *Exit* GUARDSMAN
Hast thou the pretty worm of Nilus there
That kills and pains not?

CLOWN.
Truly, I have him. But I would not be the party that should desire you to touch him, for his biting is immortal; those that do die of it do seldom or never recover.

CLEOPATRA.

Remember'st thou any that have died on't?

CLOWN.

Very many, men and women too. I heard of one of them no longer than yesterday: a very honest woman, but something given to lie, as a woman should not do but in the way of honesty; how she died of the biting of it, what pain she felt-truly she makes a very good report o' th' worm. But he that will believe all that they say shall never be saved by half that they do. But this is most falliable, the worm's an odd worm.

CLEOPATRA.

Get thee hence; farewell.

CLOWN.

I wish you all joy of the worm.

[Sets down the basket]

CLEOPATRA.

Farewell.

CLOWN.

You must think this, look you, that the worm will do his kind.

CLEOPATRA.

Ay, ay; farewell.

CLOWN.

Look you, the worm is not to be trusted but in the keeping
of wise people; for indeed there is no goodness in the worm.

CLEOPATRA.

Take thou no care; it shall be heeded.

CLOWN.

Very good. Give it nothing, I pray you, for it is not worth the feeding.

CLEOPATRA.

Will it eat me?

CLOWN.

You must not think I am so simple but I know the devil himself will not eat a woman. I know that a woman is a dish for the gods, if the devil dress her not. But truly, these same whoreson devils do the gods great harm in their women, for in every ten that they make the devils mar five.

CLEOPATRA.

Well, get thee gone; farewell.

CLOWN.

Yes, forsooth. I wish you joy o' th' worm. *Exit*

Re-enter IRAS, with a robe, crown, &c.

CLEOPATRA.

Give me my robe, put on my crown; I have
Immortal longings in me. Now no more
The juice of Egypt's grape shall moist this lip.
Yare, yare, good Iras; quick. Methinks I hear
Antony call. I see him rouse himself

To praise my noble act. I hear him mock
The luck of Caesar, which the gods give men
To excuse their after wrath. Husband, I come.
Now to that name my courage prove my title!
I am fire and air; my other elements
I give to baser life. So, have you done?

Come then, and take the last warmth of my lips.
Farewell, kind Charmian. Iras, long farewell.

[Kisses them. IRAS falls and dies]
Have I the aspic in my lips? Dost fall?
If thus thou and nature can so gently part,
The stroke of death is as a lover's pinch,
Which hurts and is desir'd. Dost thou lie still?
If thou vanishest, thou tell'st the world
It is not worth leave-taking.

CHARMIAN.
Dissolve, thick cloud, and rain, that I may say
The gods themselves do weep.

CLEOPATRA.

This proves me base.
If she first meet the curled Antony,
He'll make demand of her, and spend that kiss
Which is my heaven to have. Come, thou mortal wretch,

[To an asp, which she applies to her breast]
With thy sharp teeth this knot intrinsicate
Of life at once untie. Poor venomous fool,
Be angry and dispatch. O couldst thou speak,
That I might hear thee call great Caesar ass Unpolicied!

CHARMIAN.

O Eastern star!

CLEOPATRA.
Peace, peace!
Dost thou not see my baby at my breast

That sucks the nurse asleep?

CHARMIAN.

O, break! O, break!

CLEOPATRA.

As sweet as balm, as soft as air, as gentle-

O Antony! Nay, I will take thee too:

[Applying another asp to her arm]

What should I stay- *[Dies]*

CHARMIAN.

In this vile world? So, fare thee well.

Now boast thee, death, in thy possession lies

A lass unparallel'd. Downy windows, close;

And golden Phoebus never be beheld

Of eyes again so royal! Your crown's awry;

I'll mend it and then play-

Enter the guard, rushing in

FIRST GUARD.

Where's the Queen?

CHARMIAN.

Speak softly, wake her not.

FIRST GUARD.

Caesar hath sent-

CHARMIAN.

Too slow a messenger. *[Applies an asp]*

O, come apace, dispatch. I partly feel thee.

FIRST GUARD.

Approach, ho! All's not well: Caesar's beguil'd.

SECOND GUARD.

There's Dolabella sent from Caesar; call him.

FIRST GUARD.

What work is here! Charmian, is this well done?

CHARMIAN.

It is well done, and fitting for a princes

Descended of so many royal kings.

Ah, soldier! *[CHARMIAN dies]*

Re-enter DOLABELLA

DOLABELLA.

How goes it here?

SECOND GUARD.

All dead.

DOLABELLA.

Caesar, thy thoughts

Touch their effects in this. Thyself art coming

To see perform'd the dreaded act which thou

So sought'st to hinder.

[Within: 'A way there, a way for Caesar!']

Re-enter CAESAR and all his train

DOLABELLA.

O sir, you are too sure an augurer:

That you did fear is done.

CAESAR.

Bravest at the last,

She levell'd at our purposes, and being royal,

Took her own way. The manner of their deaths?

I do not see them bleed.

DOLABELLA.

Who was last with them?

FIRST GUARD.

A simple countryman that brought her figs.

This was his basket.

CAESAR.

Poison'd then.

FIRST GUARD.
O Caesar,
This Charmian liv'd but now; she stood and spake.
I found her trimming up the diadem
On her dead mistress. Tremblingly she stood,
And on the sudden dropp'd.

CAESAR.

O noble weakness!
If they had swallow'd poison 'twould appear
By external swelling; but she looks like sleep,
As she would catch another Antony
In her strong toil of grace.

DOLABELLA.

Here on her breast

There is a vent of blood, and something blown;

The like is on her arm.

FIRST GUARD.

This is an aspic's trail; and these fig-leaves

Have slime upon them, such as th' aspic leaves

Upon the caves of Nile.

CAESAR.

Most probable

That so she died; for her physician tells me

She hath pursu'd conclusions infinite

Of easy ways to die. Take up her bed,

And bear her women from the monument.

She shall be buried by her Antony;

No grave upon the earth shall clip in it

A pair so famous. High events as these

Strike those that make them; and their story is

No less in pity than his glory which

Brought them to be lamented. Our army shall

In solemn show attend this funeral,

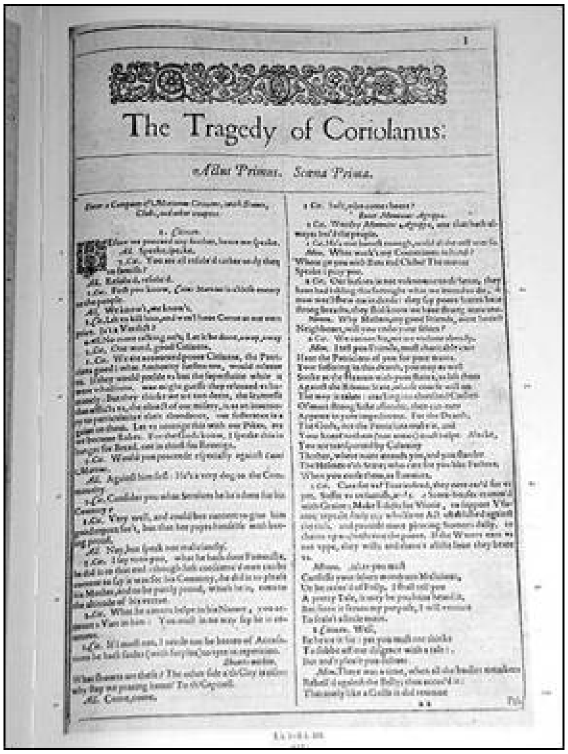
And then to Rome. Come, Dolabella, see

High order in this great solemnity. *Exeunt*

CORIOLANUS

This tragedy was written from 1605 to 1608 and is based on the life of the legendary Roman leader, Gaius Marcius Coriolanus. The play opens in Rome shortly after the expulsion of the Tarquin kings. There are riots in progress, after stores of grain were withheld from ordinary citizens. The rioters are particularly angry at Caius Martius, a brilliant Roman general whom they blame for the grains being taken away. The rioters encounter a patrician named Menenius Agrippa, as well as Caius Martius himself. Menenius tries to calm the rioters, while Martius is openly contemptuous, and says that the plebeians were not worthy of the grain because of their lack of military service. Two of the tribunes of Rome, Brutus and Sicinius, privately denounce Martius. He leaves Rome after news arrives that a Volscian army is in the field.

Coriolanus is mostly based on the *Life of Coriolanus* in Thomas North's translation of Plutarch's *Lives* and is available via this link .



1

The Tragedy of Coriolanus.

Actus Primus. Scœna Prima.

The first page of the First Folio , 1623

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DRAMATIS PERSONAE

CAIUS MARCIUS, afterwards CAIUS MARCIUS CORIOLANUS

Generals against the Volscians

TITUS LARTIUS

COMINIUS

MENENIUS AGRIPPA, friend to Coriolanus

Tribunes of the People

SICINIUS VELUTUS

JUNIUS BRUTUS

YOUNG MARCIUS, son to Coriolanus

A ROMAN HERALD

NICANOR, a Roman

TULLUS AUFIDIUS, General of the Volscians

LIEUTENANT, to Aufidius

CONSPIRATORS, With Aufidius

ADRIAN, a Volscian

A CITIZEN of Antium

TWO VOLSCIAN GUARDS

VOLUMNIA, mother to Coriolanus

VIRGILIA, wife to Coriolanus

VALERIA, friend to Virgilia

GENTLEWOMAN attending on Virgilia

Roman and Volscian Senators, Patricians, Aediles, Lictors,

Soldiers, Citizens, Messengers, Servants to Aufidius, and other Attendants

SCENE: Rome and the neighbourhood; Corioli and the neighbourhood; Antium

ACT I. SCENE I. Rome. A street

Enter a company of mutinous citizens, with staves, clubs, and other weapons

FIRST CITIZEN.

Before we proceed any further, hear me speak.

ALL.

Speak, speak.

FIRST CITIZEN.

YOU are all resolv'd rather to die than to famish?

ALL.

Resolv'd, resolv'd.

FIRST CITIZEN.

First, you know Caius Marcius is chief enemy to the people.

ALL.

We know't, we know't.

FIRST CITIZEN.

Let us kill him, and we'll have corn at our own
price. Is't a verdict?

ALL.
No more talking on't; let it be done. Away, away!

SECOND CITIZEN.

One word, good citizens.

FIRST CITIZEN.
We are accounted poor citizens, the patricians good.
What authority surfeits on would relieve us; if they would yield
us but the superfluity while it were wholesome, we might guess
they relieved us humanely; but they think we are too dear.
The
leanness that afflicts us, the object of our misery, is as an
inventory to particularize their abundance; our sufferance is a
gain to them. Let us revenge this with our pikes ere we become
rakes; for the gods know I speak this in hunger for bread,
not in thirst for revenge.

SECOND CITIZEN.

Would you proceed especially against Caius Marcius?

FIRST CITIZEN.

Against him first; he's a very dog to the commonalty.

SECOND CITIZEN.

Consider you what services he has done for his country?

FIRST CITIZEN.

Very well, and could be content to give him good
report for't but that he pays himself with being proud.

SECOND CITIZEN.

Nay, but speak not maliciously.

FIRST CITIZEN.

I say unto you, what he hath done famously he did it

to that end; though soft-conscienc'd men can be content to say it
was for his country, he did it to please his mother and to be
partly proud, which he is, even to the altitude of his virtue.

SECOND CITIZEN.

What he cannot help in his nature you account a
vice in him. You must in no way say he is covetous.

FIRST CITIZEN.

If I must not, I need not be barren of accusations;
he hath faults, with surplus, to tire in repetition. [Shouts
within] What shouts are these? The other side o' th' city is
risen. Why stay we prating here? To th' Capitol!

ALL.

Come, come.

FIRST CITIZEN.

Soft! who comes here?

Enter MENENIUS AGRIPPA

SECOND CITIZEN.

Worthy Menenius Agrippa; one that hath always lov'd the people.

FIRST CITIZEN.

He's one honest enough; would all the rest were so!

MENENIUS.

What work's, my countrymen, in hand? Where go you
With bats and clubs? The matter? Speak, I pray you.

FIRST CITIZEN.

Our business is not unknown to th' Senate; they have
had inkling this fortnight what we intend to do, which now we'll
show 'em in deeds. They say poor suitors have strong breaths;
they shall know we have strong arms too.

MENENIUS.

Why, masters, my good friends, mine honest neighbours,

Will you undo yourselves?

FIRST CITIZEN.

We cannot, sir; we are undone already.

MENENIUS.

I tell you, friends, most charitable care

Have the patricians of you. For your wants,

Your suffering in this dearth, you may as well

Strike at the heaven with your staves as lift them

Against the Roman state; whose course will on

The way it takes, cracking ten thousand curbs

Of more strong link asunder than can ever

Appear in your impediment. For the dearth,

The gods, not the patricians, make it, and

Your knees to them, not arms, must help. Alack,

You are transported by calamity

Thither where more attends you; and you slander

The helms o' th' state, who care for you like fathers,

When you curse them as enemies.

FIRST CITIZEN.

Care for us! True, indeed! They ne'er car'd for us
yet. Suffer us to famish, and their storehouses cramm'd with
grain; make edicts for usury, to support usurers; repeal daily
any wholesome act established against the rich, and provide more
piercing statutes daily to chain up and restrain the poor. If the
wars eat us not up, they will; and there's all the love they bear us.

MENENIUS.

Either you must
Confess yourselves wondrous malicious,
Or be accus'd of folly. I shall tell you
A pretty tale. It may be you have heard it;
But, since it serves my purpose, I will venture
To stale't a little more.

FIRST CITIZEN.

Well, I'll hear it, sir; yet you must not think to
fob off our disgrace with a tale. But, an't please you, deliver.

MENENIUS.

There was a time when all the body's members

Rebell'd against the belly; thus accus'd it:

That only like a gulf it did remain

I' th' midst o' th' body, idle and unactive,

Still cupboarding the viand, never bearing

Like labour with the rest; where th' other instruments

Did see and hear, devise, instruct, walk, feel,

And, mutually participate, did minister

Unto the appetite and affection common

Of the whole body. The belly answer'd-

FIRST CITIZEN.

Well, sir, what answer made the belly?

MENENIUS.

Sir, I shall tell you. With a kind of smile,

Which ne'er came from the lungs, but even thus-

For look you, I may make the belly smile

As well as speak-it tauntingly replied

To th' discontented members, the mutinous parts

That envied his receipt; even so most fitly
As you malign our senators for that
They are not such as you.

FIRST CITIZEN.
Your belly's answer-What?
The kingly crowned head, the vigilant eye,
The counsellor heart, the arm our soldier,
Our steed the leg, the tongue our trumpeter,
With other muniments and petty helps
Is this our fabric, if that they-

MENENIUS.
What then?

Fore me, this fellow speaks! What then? What then?

FIRST CITIZEN.
Should by the cormorant belly be restrain'd,
Who is the sink o' th' body-

MENENIUS.

Well, what then?

FIRST CITIZEN.

The former agents, if they did complain,

What could the belly answer?

MENENIUS.

I will tell you;

If you'll bestow a small-of what you have little-

Patience awhile, you'st hear the belly's answer.

FIRST CITIZEN.

Y'are long about it.

MENENIUS.

Note me this, good friend:

Your most grave belly was deliberate,

Not rash like his accusers, and thus answered.

'True is it, my incorporate friends,' quoth he

'That I receive the general food at first

Which you do live upon; and fit it is,

Because I am the storehouse and the shop

Of the whole body. But, if you do remember,

I send it through the rivers of your blood,

Even to the court, the heart, to th' seat o' th' brain;

And, through the cranks and offices of man,

The strongest nerves and small inferior veins

From me receive that natural competency

Whereby they live. And though that all at once

You, my good friends'- this says the belly; mark me.

FIRST CITIZEN.

Ay, sir; well, well.

MENENIUS.

'Though all at once cannot

See what I do deliver out to each,

Yet I can make my audit up, that all

From me do back receive the flour of all,

And leave me but the bran.' What say you to' t?

FIRST CITIZEN.

It was an answer. How apply you this?

MENENIUS.

The senators of Rome are this good belly,

And you the mutinous members; for, examine

Their counsels and their cares, digest things rightly

Touching the weal o' th' common, you shall find

No public benefit which you receive

But it proceeds or comes from them to you,

And no way from yourselves. What do you think,

You, the great toe of this assembly?

FIRST CITIZEN.

I the great toe? Why the great toe?

MENENIUS.

For that, being one o' th' lowest, basest, poorest,

Of this most wise rebellion, thou goest foremost.

Thou rascal, that art worst in blood to run,

Lead'st first to win some vantage.

But make you ready your stiff bats and clubs.

Rome and her rats are at the point of battle;

The one side must have bale.

Enter CAIUS MARCIUS

Hail, noble Marcius!

MARCIUS.

Thanks. What's the matter, you dissentious rogues

That, rubbing the poor itch of your opinion,

Make yourselves scabs?

FIRST CITIZEN.

We have ever your good word.

MARCIUS.

He that will give good words to thee will flatter

Beneath abhorring. What would you have, you curs, That like nor peace nor war? The one affrights you,

The other makes you proud. He that trusts to you,

Where he should find you lions, finds you hares;

Where foxes, geese; you are no surer, no,

Than is the coal of fire upon the ice

Or hailstone in the sun. Your virtue is

To make him worthy whose offence subdues him,

And curse that justice did it. Who deserves greatness

Deserves your hate; and your affections are

A sick man's appetite, who desires most that

Which would increase his evil. He that depends

Upon your favours swims with fins of lead,

And hews down oaks with rushes. Hang ye! Trust ye?

With every minute you do change a mind

And call him noble that was now your hate,

Him vile that was your garland. What's the matter

That in these several places of the city

You cry against the noble Senate, who,

Under the gods, keep you in awe, which else

Would feed on one another? What's their seeking?

MENENIUS.

For corn at their own rates, whereof they say

The city is well stor'd.

MARCIUS.

Hang 'em! They say!

They'll sit by th' fire and presume to know

What's done i' th' Capitol, who's like to rise,

Who thrives and who declines; side factions, and give out

Conjectural marriages, making parties strong,

And feebling such as stand not in their liking

Below their cobbled shoes. They say there's grain enough!

Would the nobility lay aside their ruth

And let me use my sword, I'd make a quarry

With thousands of these quarter'd slaves, as high

As I could pick my lance.

MENENIUS.

Nay, these are almost thoroughly persuaded;

For though abundantly they lack discretion,

Yet are they passing cowardly. But, I beseech you,
What says the other troop?

MARCIUS.
They are dissolv'd. Hang 'em!
They said they were an-hungry; sigh'd forth proverbs-
That hunger broke stone walls, that dogs must eat,
That meat was made for mouths, that the gods sent not
Corn for the rich men only. With these shreds
They vented their complainings; which being answer'd,
And a petition granted them-a strange one,
To break the heart of generosity
And make bold power look pale-they threw their caps
As they would hang them on the horns o' th' moon,
Shouting their emulation.

MENENIUS.

What is granted them?

MARCIUS.

Five tribunes, to defend their vulgar wisdoms,
Of their own choice. One's Junius Brutus-
Sicinius Velutus, and I know not. 'Sdeath!
The rabble should have first unroof'd the city
Ere so prevail'd with me; it will in time
Win upon power and throw forth greater themes
For insurrection's arguing.

MENENIUS.

This is strange.

MARCIUS.

Go get you home, you fragments.

Enter a MESSENGER, hastily

MESSENGER.

Where's Caius Marcius?

MARCIUS.

Here. What's the matter?

MESSENGER.

The news is, sir, the Volsces are in arms.

MARCIUS.

I am glad on't; then we shall ha' means to vent

Our musty superfluity. See, our best elders.

Enter COMINIUS, TITUS LARTIUS, with other SENATORS;

JUNIUS BRUTUS and SICINIUS VELUTUS

FIRST SENATOR.

Marcius, 'tis true that you have lately told us:

The Volsces are in arms.

MARCIUS.

They have a leader,

Tullus Aufidius, that will put you to't.

I sin in envying his nobility;

And were I anything but what I am,

I would wish me only he.

COMINIUS.

You have fought together?

MARCIUS.

Were half to half the world by th' ears, and he

Upon my party, I'd revolt, to make

Only my wars with him. He is a lion

That I am proud to hunt.

FIRST SENATOR.

Then, worthy Marcius,

Attend upon Cominius to these wars.

COMINIUS.

It is your former promise.

MARCIUS.

Sir, it is;

And I am constant. Titus Lartius, thou

Shalt see me once more strike at Tullus' face.

What, art thou stiff? Stand'st out?

LARTIUS.

No, Caius Marcius;

I'll lean upon one crutch and fight with t'other

Ere stay behind this business.

MENENIUS.

O, true bred!

FIRST SENATOR.

Your company to th' Capitol; where, I know,

Our greatest friends attend us.

LARTIUS.

[To COMINIUS] Lead you on.

[To MARCIUS] Follow Cominius; we must follow you;

Right worthy you priority.

COMINIUS.

Noble Marcius!

FIRST SENATOR.

[To the Citizens] Hence to your homes; be gone.

MARCIUS.

Nay, let them follow.

The Volsces have much corn: take these rats thither

To gnaw their garners. Worshipful mutineers,

Your valour puts well forth; pray follow.

Ciitzens steal away. *Exeunt* all but SICINIUS and BRUTUS

SICINIUS.

Was ever man so proud as is this Marcius?

BRUTUS.

He has no equal.

SICINIUS.

When we were chosen tribunes for the people-

BRUTUS.

Mark'd you his lip and eyes?

SICINIUS.

Nay, but his taunts!

BRUTUS.

Being mov'd, he will not spare to gird the gods.

SICINIUS.

Bemock the modest moon.

BRUTUS.

The present wars devour him! He is grown
Too proud to be so valiant.

SICINIUS.
Such a nature,
Tickled with good success, disdains the shadow
Which he treads on at noon. But I do wonder
His insolence can brook to be commanded
Under Cominius.

BRUTUS.
Fame, at the which he aims-
In whom already he is well grac'd-cannot
Better be held nor more attain'd than by
A place below the first; for what miscarries
Shall be the general's fault, though he perform
To th' utmost of a man, and giddy censure
Will then cry out of Marcius 'O, if he
Had borne the business!'

SICINIUS.

Besides, if things go well,

Opinion, that so sticks on Marcius, shall

Of his demerits rob Cominius.

BRUTUS.

Come.

Half all Cominius' honours are to Marcius,

Though Marcius earn'd them not; and all his faults

To Marcius shall be honours, though indeed

In aught he merit not.

SICINIUS.

Let's hence and hear

How the dispatch is made, and in what fashion,

More than his singularity, he goes

Upon this present action.

BRUTUS.

Let's along. *Exeunt*

SCENE II. Corioli. The Senate House.

Enter TULLUS AUFIDIUS with SENATORS of Corioli

FIRST SENATOR.

So, your opinion is, Aufidius,

That they of Rome are ent'red in our counsels

And know how we proceed.

AUFIDIUS.

Is it not yours?

What ever have been thought on in this state

That could be brought to bodily act ere Rome

Had circumvention? 'Tis not four days gone

Since I heard thence; these are the words-I think

I have the letter here;.yes, here it is:

[Reads] 'They have press'd a power, but it is not known

Whether for east or west. The dearth is great;

The people mutinous; and it is rumour'd,

Cominius, Marcius your old enemy,

Who is of Rome worse hated than of you,

And Titus Lartius, a most valiant Roman,

These three lead on this preparation

Whither 'tis bent. Most likely 'tis for you;

Consider of it.'

FIRST SENATOR.

Our army's in the field;

We never yet made doubt but Rome was ready

To answer us.

AUFIDIUS.

Nor did you think it folly

To keep your great pretences veil'd till when

They needs must show themselves; which in the hatching,

It seem'd, appear'd to Rome. By the discovery

We shall be short'ned in our aim, which was

To take in many towns ere almost Rome

Should know we were afoot.

SECOND SENATOR.

Noble Aufidius,

Take your commission; hie you to your bands;

Let us alone to guard Corioli.

If they set down before's, for the remove

Bring up your army; but I think you'll find

Th' have not prepar'd for us.

AUFIDIUS.

O, doubt not that!

I speak from certainties. Nay more,

Some parcels of their power are forth already,

And only hitherward. I leave your honours.

If we and Caius Marcius chance to meet,

'Tis sworn between us we shall ever strike

Till one can do no more.

ALL.

The gods assist you!

AUFIDIUS.

And keep your honours safe!

FIRST SENATOR.

Farewell.

SECOND SENATOR.

Farewell.

ALL.

Farewell. Exeunt

SCENE III. Rome. MARCIUS' house

Enter VOLUMNIA and VIRGILIA, mother and wife to MARCIUS; they set them down on two low stools and sew

VOLUMNIA.

I pray you, daughter, sing, or express yourself in a more

comfortable sort. If my son were my husband, I should freelier

rejoice in that absence wherein he won honour than in the

embracements of his bed where he would show most love. When yet

he was but tender-bodied, and the only son of my womb; when youth
with comeliness pluck'd all gaze his way; when, for a day of
kings' entreaties, a mother should not sell him an hour from her
beholding; I, considering how honour would become such a
person-
that it was no better than picture-like to hang by th' wall, if
renown made it not stir-was pleas'd to let him seek danger where
he was to find fame. To a cruel war I sent him, from whence he
return'd his brows bound with oak. I tell thee, daughter, I
sprang not more in joy at first hearing he was a man-child than
now in first seeing he had proved himself a man.

VIRGILIA.

But had he died in the business, madam, how then?

VOLUMNIA.

Then his good report should have been my son; I therein
would have found issue. Hear me profess sincerely: had I a dozen
sons, each in my love alike, and none less dear than thine and my
good Marcius, I had rather had eleven die nobly for their country

than one voluptuously surfeit out of action.

Enter a GENTLEWOMAN

GENTLEWOMAN.

Madam, the Lady Valeria is come to visit you.

VIRGILIA.

Beseech you give me leave to retire myself.

VOLUMNIA.

Indeed you shall not.
Methinks I hear hither your husband's drum;
See him pluck Aufidius down by th' hair;
As children from a bear, the Volsces shunning him.
Methinks I see him stamp thus, and call thus:
'Come on, you cowards! You were got in fear,
Though you were born in Rome.' His bloody brow
With his mail'd hand then wiping, forth he goes,
Like to a harvest-man that's task'd to mow

Or all or lose his hire.

VIRGILIA.

His bloody brow? O Jupiter, no blood!

VOLUMNIA.

Away, you fool! It more becomes a man

Than gilt his trophy. The breasts of Hecuba,

When she did suckle Hector, look'd not lovelier

Than Hector's forehead when it spit forth blood

At Grecian sword, contemning. Tell Valeria

We are fit to bid her welcome. *Exit* GENTLEWOMAN

VIRGILIA.

Heavens bless my lord from fell Aufidius!

VOLUMNIA.

He'll beat Aufidius' head below his knee

And tread upon his neck.

Re-enter GENTLEWOMAN, With VALERIA and an usher

VALERIA.

My ladies both, good day to you.

VOLUMNIA.

Sweet madam!

VIRGILIA.

I am glad to see your ladyship.

VALERIA.

How do you both? You are manifest housekeepers. What are you sewing here? A fine spot, in good faith. How does your little son?

VIRGILIA.

I thank your ladyship; well, good madam.

VOLUMNIA.

He had rather see the swords and hear a drum than look upon his schoolmaster.

VALERIA.

O' my word, the father's son! I'll swear 'tis a very
pretty boy. O' my troth, I look'd upon him a Wednesday half an
hour together; has such a confirm'd countenance! I saw him run
after a gilded butterfly; and when he caught it he let it go
again, and after it again, and over and over he comes, and up
again, catch'd it again; or whether his fall enrag'd him, or how
'twas, he did so set his teeth and tear it. O, I warrant, how he mammock'd it!

VOLUMNIA.

One on's father's moods.

VALERIA.

Indeed, la, 'tis a noble child.

VIRGILIA.

A crack, madam.

VALERIA.

Come, lay aside your stitchery; I must have you play the idle huswife with me this afternoon.

VIRGILIA.

No, good madam; I will not out of doors.

VALERIA.

Not out of doors!

VOLUMNIA.

She shall, she shall.

VIRGILIA.

Indeed, no, by your patience; I'll not over the threshold till my lord return from the wars.

VALERIA.

Fie, you confine yourself most unreasonably; come, you must go visit the good lady that lies in.

VIRGILIA.

I will wish her speedy strength, and visit her with my
prayers; but I cannot go thither.

VOLUMNIA.

Why, I pray you?

VIRGILIA.

'Tis not to save labour, nor that I want love.

VALERIA.

You would be another Penelope; yet they say all the yarn
she spun in Ulysses' absence did but fill Ithaca full of moths.
Come, I would your cambric were sensible as your finger, that you
might leave pricking it for pity. Come, you shall go with us.

VIRGILIA.

No, good madam, pardon me; indeed I will not forth.

VALERIA.

In truth, la, go with me; and I'll tell you excellent news of your husband.

VIRGILIA.

O, good madam, there can be none yet.

VALERIA.

Verily, I do not jest with you; there came news from him last night.

VIRGILIA.

Indeed, madam?

VALERIA.

In earnest, it's true; I heard a senator speak it.

Thus it

is: the Volsces have an army forth; against whom Cominius the

general is gone, with one part of our Roman power. Your lord and

Titus Lartius are set down before their city Corioli; they

nothing doubt prevailing and to make it brief wars. This is true, on mine honour; and so, I pray, go with us.

VIRGILIA.

Give me excuse, good madam; I will obey you in everything hereafter.

VOLUMNIA.

Let her alone, lady; as she is now, she will but disease

our better mirth.

VALERIA.

In troth, I think she would. Fare you well, then.

Come,

good sweet lady. Prithee, Virgilia, turn thy solemness out o'

door and go along with us.

VIRGILIA.

No, at a word, madam; indeed I must not. I wish you much mirth.

VALERIA.

Well then, farewell. *Exeunt*

SCENE IV. Before Corioli

Enter MARCIUS, TITUS LARTIUS, with drum and colours, with CAPTAINS and soldiers. To them a MESSENGER

MARCIUS.

Yonder comes news; a wager-they have met.

LARTIUS.

My horse to yours-no.

MARCIUS.

'Tis done.

LARTIUS.

Agreed.

MARCIUS.

Say, has our general met the enemy?

MESSENGER.

They lie in view, but have not spoke as yet.

LARTIUS.

So, the good horse is mine.

MARCIUS.

I'll buy him of you.

LARTIUS.

No, I'll nor sell nor give him; lend you him I will
For half a hundred years. Summon the town.

MARCIUS.

How far off lie these armies?

MESSENGER.

Within this mile and half.

MARCIUS.

Then shall we hear their 'larum, and they ours.

Now, Mars, I prithee, make us quick in work,

That we with smoking swords may march from hence

To help our fielded friends! Come, blow thy blast.

They sound a parley. *Enter* two SENATORS with others,

on the walls of Corioli

Tullus Aufidius, is he within your walls?

FIRST SENATOR.

No, nor a man that fears you less than he:

That's lesser than a little. *[Drum afar off]* Hark, our drums

Are bringing forth our youth. We'll break our walls

Rather than they shall pound us up; our gates,

Which yet seem shut, we have but pinn'd with rushes;

They'll open of themselves. *[Alarum far off]* Hark you far off!

There is Aufidius. List what work he makes

Amongst your cloven army.

MARCIUS.

O, they are at it!

LARTIUS.

Their noise be our instruction. Ladders, ho!

Enter the army of the Volsces

MARCIUS.

They fear us not, but issue forth their city.

Now put your shields before your hearts, and fight

With hearts more proof than shields. Advance, brave Titus.

They do disdain us much beyond our thoughts,

Which makes me sweat with wrath. Come on, my fellows.

He that retires, I'll take him for a Volsce,

And he shall feel mine edge.

Alarum. The Romans are beat back to their trenches.

Re-enter MARCIUS, cursing

MARCIUS.

All the contagion of the south light on you,

You shames of Rome! you herd of-Boils and plagues

Plaster you o'er, that you may be abhorr'd

Farther than seen, and one infect another

Against the wind a mile! You souls of geese

That bear the shapes of men, how have you run

From slaves that apes would beat! Pluto and hell!

All hurt behind! Backs red, and faces pale

With flight and agued fear! Mend and charge home,

Or, by the fires of heaven, I'll leave the foe

And make my wars on you. Look to't. Come on;

If you'll stand fast we'll beat them to their wives,

As they us to our trenches. Follow me.

Another alarum. The Volsces fly, and MARCIUS follows them to the gates

So, now the gates are ope; now prove good seconds;

'Tis for the followers fortune widens them,

Not for the fliers. Mark me, and do the like.

[MARCIUS enters the gates]

FIRST SOLDIER.

Fool-hardiness; not I.

SECOND SOLDIER.

Not I. *[MARCIUS is shut in]*

FIRST SOLDIER.

See, they have shut him in.

ALL.

To th' pot, I warrant him. *[Alarum continues]*

Re-enter TITUS LARTIUS

LARTIUS.

What is become of Marcius?

ALL.

Slain, sir, doubtless.

FIRST SOLDIER.

Following the fliers at the very heels,

With them he enters; who, upon the sudden,

Clapp'd to their gates. He is himself alone,

To answer all the city.

LARTIUS.

O noble fellow!

Who sensibly outdares his senseless sword,

And when it bows stand'st up. Thou art left, Marcius;

A carbuncle entire, as big as thou art,

Were not so rich a jewel. Thou wast a soldier

Even to Cato's wish, not fierce and terrible

Only in strokes; but with thy grim looks and

The thunder-like percussion of thy sounds

Thou mad'st thine enemies shake, as if the world

Were feverous and did tremble.

Re-enter MARCIUS, bleeding, assaulted by the enemy

FIRST SOLDIER.

Look, sir.

LARTIUS.

O, 'tis Marcius!

Let's fetch him off, or make remain alike.

[They fight, and all enter the city]

SCENE V. Within Corioli. A street

Enter certain Romans, with spoils

FIRST ROMAN.

This will I carry to Rome.

SECOND ROMAN.

And I this.

THIRD ROMAN.

A murrain on 't! I took this for silver.

[Alarum continues still afar off]

Enter MARCIUS and TITUS LARTIUS With a trumpeter

MARCIUS.

See here these movers that do prize their hours
At a crack'd drachma! Cushions, leaden spoons,
Irons of a doit, doublets that hangmen would
Bury with those that wore them, these base slaves,
Ere yet the fight be done, pack up. Down with them!
Exeunt pillagers
And hark, what noise the general makes! To him!
There is the man of my soul's hate, Aufidius,
Piercing our Romans; then, valiant Titus, take
Convenient numbers to make good the city;
Whilst I, with those that have the spirit, will haste
To help Cominius.

LARTIUS.

Worthy sir, thou bleed'st;
Thy exercise hath been too violent
For a second course of fight.

MARCIUS.

Sir, praise me not;

My work hath yet not warm'd me. Fare you well;

The blood I drop is rather physical

Than dangerous to me. To Aufidius thus

I will appear, and fight.

LARTIUS.

Now the fair goddess, Fortune,

Fall deep in love with thee, and her great charms

Misguide thy opposers' swords! Bold gentleman,

Prosperity be thy page!

MARCIUS.

Thy friend no less

Than those she placeth highest! So farewell.

LARTIUS.

Thou worthiest Marcius! *Exit* MARCIUS

Go sound thy trumpet in the market-place;

Call thither all the officers o' th' town, Where they shall know our mind. Away! *Exeunt*

SCENE VI. Near the camp of COMINIUS

Enter COMINIUS, as it were in retire, with soldiers

COMINIUS.

Breathe you, my friends. Well fought; we are come off

Like Romans, neither foolish in our stands

Nor cowardly in retire. Believe me, sirs,

We shall be charg'd again. Whiles we have struck,

By interims and conveying gusts we have heard

The charges of our friends. The Roman gods,

Lead their successes as we wish our own,

That both our powers, with smiling fronts encount'ring,

May give you thankful sacrifice!

Enter A MESSENGER

Thy news?

MESSENGER.

The citizens of Corioli have issued

And given to Lartius and to Marcius battle;

I saw our party to their trenches driven,

And then I came away.

COMINIUS.

Though thou speak'st truth,

Methinks thou speak'st not well. How long is't since?

MESSENGER.

Above an hour, my lord.

COMINIUS.

'Tis not a mile; briefly we heard their drums.

How couldst thou in a mile confound an hour,

And bring thy news so late?

MESSENGER.

Spies of the Volsces

Held me in chase, that I was forc'd to wheel

Three or four miles about; else had I, sir,

Half an hour since brought my report.

Enter MARCIUS

COMINIUS.

Who's yonder

That does appear as he were flay'd? O gods!

He has the stamp of Marcius, and I have

Before-time seen him thus.

MARCIUS.

Come I too late?

COMINIUS.

The shepherd knows not thunder from a tabor

More than I know the sound of Marcius' tongue

From every meaner man.

MARCIUS.

Come I too late?

COMINIUS.

Ay, if you come not in the blood of others,

But mantled in your own.

MARCIUS.

O! let me clip ye

In arms as sound as when I woo'd, in heart

As merry as when our nuptial day was done,

And tapers burn'd to bedward.

COMINIUS.

Flower of warriors,

How is't with Titus Lartius?

MARCIUS.

As with a man busied about decrees:

Condemning some to death and some to exile;

Ransoming him or pitying, threat'ning th' other;

Holding Corioli in the name of Rome
Even like a fawning greyhound in the leash,
To let him slip at will.

COMINIUS.
Where is that slave
Which told me they had beat you to your trenches?

Where is he? Call him hither.

MARCIUS.
Let him alone;
He did inform the truth. But for our gentlemen,
The common file-a plague! tribunes for them!
The mouse ne'er shunn'd the cat as they did budge
From rascals worse than they.

COMINIUS.

But how prevail'd you?

MARCIUS.

Will the time serve to tell? I do not think.

Where is the enemy? Are you lords o' th' field?

If not, why cease you till you are so?

COMINIUS.

Marcius,

We have at disadvantage fought, and did

Retire to win our purpose.

MARCIUS.

How lies their battle? Know you on which side

They have plac'd their men of trust?

COMINIUS.

As I guess, Marcius,

Their bands i' th' vaward are the Antiates,

Of their best trust; o'er them Aufidius,

Their very heart of hope.

MARCIUS.

I do beseech you,

By all the battles wherein we have fought,

By th' blood we have shed together, by th' vows

We have made to endure friends, that you directly

Set me against Aufidius and his Antiates;

And that you not delay the present, but,

Filling the air with swords advanc'd and darts,

We prove this very hour.

COMINIUS.

Though I could wish

You were conducted to a gentle bath

And balms applied to you, yet dare I never

Deny your asking: take your choice of those

That best can aid your action.

MARCIUS.

Those are they

That most are willing. If any such be here-

As it were sin to doubt-that love this painting

Wherein you see me smear'd; if any fear

Lesser his person than an ill report;

If any think brave death outweighs bad life

And that his country's dearer than himself;

Let him alone, or so many so minded,

Wave thus to express his disposition,

And follow Marcius. [They all shout and wave their

swords, take him up in their arms and cast up their caps]

O, me alone! Make you a sword of me?

If these shows be not outward, which of you

But is four Volsces? None of you but is

Able to bear against the great Aufidius

A shield as hard as his. A certain number,

Though thanks to all, must I select from all; the rest

Shall bear the business in some other fight,

As cause will be obey'd. Please you to march;

And four shall quickly draw out my command,

Which men are best inclin'd.

COMINIUS.

March on, my fellows;

Make good this ostentation, and you shall

Divide in all with us. *Exeunt*

SCENE VII. The gates of Corioli

TITUS LARTIUS, having set a guard upon Corioli, going with drum and trumpet toward COMINIUS and CAIUS MARCIUS, enters with a LIEUTENANT, other soldiers, and a scout

LARTIUS.

So, let the ports be guarded; keep your duties

As I have set them down. If I do send, dispatch

Those centuries to our aid; the rest will serve

For a short holding. If we lose the field

We cannot keep the town.

LIEUTENANT.

Fear not our care, sir.

LARTIUS.

Hence, and shut your gates upon's.

Our guider, come; to th' Roman camp conduct us. *Exeunt*

SCENE VIII. A field of battle between the Roman and

the Volscian camps

Alarum, as in battle. *Enter* MARCIUS and AUFIDIUS at several doors

MARCIUS.

I'll fight with none but thee, for I do hate thee

Worse than a promise-breaker.

AUFIDIUS.

We hate alike:

Not Afric owns a serpent I abhor

More than thy fame and envy. Fix thy foot.

MARCIUS.

Let the first budger die the other's slave,

And the gods doom him after!

AUFIDIUS.

If I fly, Marcius,

Halloa me like a hare.

MARCIUS.

Within these three hours, Tullus,

Alone I fought in your Corioli walls,

And made what work I pleas'd. 'Tis not my blood

Wherein thou seest me mask'd. For thy revenge

Wrench up thy power to th' highest.

AUFIDIUS.

Wert thou the Hector

That was the whip of your bragg'd progeny,

Thou shouldst not scape me here.

Here they fight, and certain Volsces come in the aid

of AUFIDIUS. MARCIUS fights till they be driven in breathless

Officious, and not valiant, you have sham'd me

In your condemned seconds. *Exeunt*

SCENE IX. The Roman camp

Flourish. Alarum. A retreat is sounded. *Enter* , at one door, COMINIUS with the Romans; at another door, MARCIUS, with his arm in a scarf

COMINIUS.

If I should tell thee o'er this thy day's work,

Thou't not believe thy deeds; but I'll report it

Where senators shall mingle tears with smiles;

Where great patricians shall attend, and shrug,

I' th' end admire; where ladies shall be frighted

And, gladly quak'd, hear more; where the dull tribunes,

That with the fusty plebeians hate thine honours,

Shall say against their hearts 'We thank the gods

Our Rome hath such a soldier.'

Yet cam'st thou to a morsel of this feast,

Having fully din'd before.

Enter TITUS LARTIUS, with his power, from the pursuit

LARTIUS.

O General,

Here is the steed, we the caparison.

Hadst thou beheld-

MARCIUS.

Pray now, no more; my mother,

Who has a charter to extol her blood,

When she does praise me grieves me. I have done

As you have done-that's what I can; induc'd
As you have been-that's for my country.
He that has but effected his good will
Hath overta'en mine act.

COMINIUS.

You shall not be
The grave of your deserving; Rome must know
The value of her own. 'Twere a concealment
Worse than a theft, no less than a traducement,
To hide your doings and to silence that
Which, to the spire and top of praises vouch'd,
Would seem but modest. Therefore, I beseech you,
In sign of what you are, not to reward
What you have done, before our army hear me.

MARCIUS.

I have some wounds upon me, and they smart
To hear themselves remembr'red.

COMINIUS.

Should they not,

Well might they fester 'gainst ingratitude

And tent themselves with death. Of all the horses-

Whereof we have ta'en good, and good store-of all

The treasure in this field achiev'd and city,

We render you the tenth; to be ta'en forth

Before the common distribution at

Your only choice.

MARCIUS.

I thank you, General,

But cannot make my heart consent to take

A bribe to pay my sword. I do refuse it,

And stand upon my common part with those

That have beheld the doing.

A long flourish. They all cry 'Marcius, Marcius!'

cast up their caps and lances. COMINIUS and LARTIUS stand bare

May these same instruments which you profane

Never sound more! When drums and trumpets shall

I' th' field prove flatterers, let courts and cities be

Made all of false-fac'd soothing. When steel grows

Soft as the parasite's silk, let him be made
An overture for th' wars. No more, I say.
For that I have not wash'd my nose that bled,
Or foil'd some debile wretch, which without note
Here's many else have done, you shout me forth
In acclamations hyperbolical,
As if I lov'd my little should be dieted
In praises sauc'd with lies.

COMINIUS.

Too modest are you;
More cruel to your good report than grateful
To us that give you truly. By your patience,
If 'gainst yourself you be incens'd, we'll put you-
Like one that means his proper harm-in manacles,
Then reason safely with you. Therefore be it known,
As to us, to all the world, that Caius Marcius
Wears this war's garland; in token of the which,
My noble steed, known to the camp, I give him,
With all his trim belonging; and from this time,
For what he did before Corioli, can him

With all th' applause-and clamour of the host,

Caius Marcius Coriolanus.

Bear th' addition nobly ever!

[Flourish. Trumpets sound, and drums]

ALL.

Caius Marcius Coriolanus!

CORIOLANUS.

I will go wash;

And when my face is fair you shall perceive

Whether I blush or no. Howbeit, I thank you;

I mean to stride your steed, and at all times

To undercrest your good addition

To th' fairness of my power.

COMINIUS.

So, to our tent;

Where, ere we do repose us, we will write

To Rome of our success. You, Titus Lartius,
Must to Corioli back. Send us to Rome
The best, with whom we may articulate
For their own good and ours.

LARTIUS.

I shall, my lord.

CORIOLANUS.
The gods begin to mock me. I, that now
Refus'd most princely gifts, am bound to beg
Of my Lord General.

COMINIUS.

Take't- 'tis yours; what is't?

CORIOLANUS.
I sometime lay here in Corioli
At a poor man's house; he us'd me kindly.

He cried to me; I saw him prisoner;
But then Aufidius was within my view,
And wrath o'erwhelm'd my pity. I request you
To give my poor host freedom.

COMINIUS.
O, well begg'd!
Were he the butcher of my son, he should
Be free as is the wind. Deliver him, Titus.

LARTIUS.

Marcius, his name?

CORIOLANUS.
By Jupiter, forgot!

I am weary; yea, my memory is tir'd.
Have we no wine here?

COMINIUS.

Go we to our tent.

The blood upon your visage dries; 'tis time

It should be look'd to. Come. *Exeunt*

SCENE X. The camp of the Volsces

A flourish. Cornets. *Enter* TULLUS AUFIDIUS bloody, with two or three soldiers

AUFIDIUS.

The town is ta'en.

FIRST SOLDIER.

'Twill be deliver'd back on good condition.

AUFIDIUS.

Condition!

I would I were a Roman; for I cannot,

Being a Volsce, be that I am. Condition?

What good condition can a treaty find

I' th' part that is at mercy? Five times, Marcius,
I have fought with thee; so often hast thou beat me;
And wouldst do so, I think, should we encounter
As often as we eat. By th' elements,
If e'er again I meet him beard to beard,
He's mine or I am his. Mine emulation
Hath not that honour in't it had; for where
I thought to crush him in an equal force,
True sword to sword, I'll potch at him some way,
Or wrath or craft may get him.

FIRST SOLDIER.

He's the devil.

AUFIDIUS.
Bolder, though not so subtle. My valour's poison'd
With only suff'ring stain by him; for him
Shall fly out of itself. Nor sleep nor sanctuary,
Being naked, sick, nor fane nor Capitol,
The prayers of priests nor times of sacrifice,

Embarquements all of fury, shall lift up

Their rotten privilege and custom 'gainst

My hate to Marcius. Where I find him, were it

At home, upon my brother's guard, even there,

Against the hospitable canon, would I

Wash my fierce hand in's heart. Go you to th' city;

Learn how 'tis held, and what they are that must

Be hostages for Rome.

FIRST SOLDIER.

Will not you go?

AUFIDIUS.

I am attended at the cypress grove; I pray you-

'Tis south the city mills-bring me word thither

How the world goes, that to the pace of it

I may spur on my journey.

FIRST SOLDIER.

I shall, sir. *Exeunt*

ACT II. SCENE I. Rome. A public place

Enter MENENIUS, with the two Tribunes of the people, SICINIUS and

BRUTUS

MENENIUS.

The augurer tells me we shall have news tonight. BRUTUS. Good or bad? MENENIUS. Not according to the prayer of the people, for they love not Marcius. SICINIUS. Nature teaches beasts to know their friends. MENENIUS. Pray you, who does the wolf love? SICINIUS. The lamb. MENENIUS. Ay, to devour him, as the hungry plebeians would the noble Marcius. BRUTUS. He's a lamb indeed, that baes like a bear. MENENIUS. He's a bear indeed, that lives fike a lamb. You two are old men; tell me one thing that I shall ask you. BOTH TRIBUNES. Well, sir. MENENIUS. In what enormity is Marcius poor in that you two have not in abundance? BRUTUS. He's poor in no one fault, but stor'd with all. SICINIUS. Especially in pride. BRUTUS. And topping all others in boasting. MENENIUS. This is strange now. Do you two know how you are censured here in the city-I mean of us o' th' right-hand file? Do you? BOTH TRIBUNES. Why, how are we censur'd? MENENIUS. Because you talk of pride now-will you not be angry? BOTH TRIBUNES. Well, well, sir, well. MENENIUS. Why, 'tis no great matter; for a very little thief of occasion will rob you of a great deal of patience. Give your dispositions the reins, and be angry at your pleasures-at the least, if you take it as a pleasure to you in being so. You blame Marcius for being proud? BRUTUS. We do it not alone, sir. MENENIUS. I know you can do very little alone; for your helps are many, or else your actions would grow wondrous single: your abilities are too infant-like for doing much alone. You talk of pride. O that you could turn your eyes toward the napes of your necks, and make but an interior survey of your good selves! O that you could! BOTH TRIBUNES. What then, sir? MENENIUS. Why, then you should discover a brace of unmeriting, proud, violent, testy magistrates-alias fools-as any in Rome. SICINIUS. Menenius, you are known well enough too. MENENIUS. I am known to be a humorous patrician, and one that loves a cup of hot wine with not a drop of allaying Tiber in't; said to be something imperfect in favouring the first complaint, hasty and tinder-like upon too trivial motion; one that converses more with the buttock of the night than with the forehead of the morning. What I think I utter, and spend my malice in my breath. Meeting two such wealsmen as you are-I cannot call you Lycurguses-if the drink you give me touch my palate adversely, I make a crooked face at it. I cannot say your worships have deliver'd the matter well, when I find the ass in compound with the major part of your syllables; and though I must be content to bear with those that say you are reverend grave men, yet they lie deadly that tell you you have good faces. If you see this in the map of my microcosm, follows it that I am known well enough too? What harm can your bisson conspectuities glean out of this character, if I be known well enough too? BRUTUS. Come, sir, come, we know you well enough. MENENIUS. You know neither me, yourselves, nor any thing. You are ambitious for poor knaves' caps and legs; you wear out a good wholesome forenoon in hearing a cause between an orange-wife and a fosset-seller, and then rejourn the controversy of threepence to a second day of audience. When you are hearing a matter between party and party, if you chance to be pinch'd with the colic, you make faces like mummers, set up the bloody flag against all patience, and, in roaring for a chamber-pot, dismiss the controversy bleeding, the more entangled by your hearing. All the peace you make in their cause is calling both the parties knaves. You are a pair of strange ones. BRUTUS. Come, come, you are well understood to be a perfecter giber for the table than a necessary bencher in the Capitol. MENENIUS. Our very priests must become mockers, if they shall encounter such ridiculous subjects as you are. When you speak best unto the purpose, it is not worth the wagging of your beards; and your beards deserve not so honourable a grave as to stuff a botcher's cushion or to be entomb'd in an ass's pack-saddle. Yet you must be saying Marcius is proud; who, in a cheap estimation, is worth all your predecessors since Deucalion; though peradventure some of the best of 'em were hereditary hangmen. God-den to your worships. More of your conversation would infect my brain, being the herdsmen of the beastly plebeians. I will be bold to take my leave of you. *[BRUTUS and SICINIUS go aside]*

Enter VOLUMNIA, VIRGILIA, and VALERIA

How now, my as fair as noble ladies-and the moon, were she earthly, no nobler-whither do you follow your eyes so fast?

VOLUMNIA.

Honourable Menenius, my boy Marcius approaches; for the love of Juno, let's go.

MENENIUS.

Ha! Marcius coming home?

VOLUMNIA.

Ay, worthy Menenius, and with most prosperous approbation.

MENENIUS.

Take my cap, Jupiter, and I thank thee. Hoo!

Marcius coming home!

VOLUMNIA, VIRGILIA. Nay, 'tis true.

VOLUMNIA.

Look, here's a letter from him; the state hath another,

his wife another; and I think there's one at home for you.

MENENIUS.

I will make my very house reel tonight. A letter for me?

VIRGILIA.

Yes, certain, there's a letter for you; I saw't.

MENENIUS.

A letter for me! It gives me an estate of seven years'

health; in which time I will make a lip at the physician. The

most sovereign prescription in Galen is but empiricutic and, to

this preservative, of no better report than a horse-drench.

Is he

not wounded? He was wont to come home wounded.

VIRGILIA.

O, no, no, no.

VOLUMNIA.

O, he is wounded, I thank the gods for't.

MENENIUS.

So do I too, if it be not too much. Brings a victory in his pocket? The wounds become him.

VOLUMNIA.

On's brows, Menenius, he comes the third time home with the oaken garland.

MENENIUS.

Has he disciplin'd Aufidius soundly?

VOLUMNIA.

Titus Lartius writes they fought together, but

Aufidius got off.

MENENIUS.

And 'twas time for him too, I'll warrant him that; an he
had stay'd by him, I would not have been so fidius'd for all the
chests in Corioli and the gold that's in them. Is the Senate possess'd of this?

VOLUMNIA.

Good ladies, let's go. Yes, yes, yes: the Senate has
letters from the general, wherein he gives my son the whole name
of the war; he hath in this action outdone his former deeds doubly.

VALERIA.

In troth, there's wondrous things spoke of him.

MENENIUS.

Wondrous! Ay, I warrant you, and not without his true purchasing.

VIRGILIA.

The gods grant them true!

VOLUMNIA.

True! pow, waw.

MENENIUS.

True! I'll be sworn they are true. Where is he wounded?

[To the TRIBUNES] God save your good worships! Marcius is coming

home; he has more cause to be proud. Where is he wounded?

VOLUMNIA.

I' th' shoulder and i' th' left arm; there will be large

cicatrices to show the people when he shall stand for his place.

He received in the repulse of Tarquin seven hurts i' th' body.

MENENIUS.

One i' th' neck and two i' th' thigh-there's nine

that I know.

VOLUMNIA.

He had before this last expedition twenty-five wounds upon him.

MENENIUS.

Now it's twenty-seven; every gash was an enemy's grave.

[A shout and flourish] Hark! the trumpets.

VOLUMNIA.

These are the ushers of Marcius. Before him he carries
noise, and behind him he leaves tears;
Death, that dark spirit, in's nervy arm doth lie,
Which, being advanc'd, declines, and then men die.
A sennet. Trumpets sound. *Enter* COMINIUS the
GENERAL, and TITUS LARTIUS; between them,
CORIOLANUS, crown'd with an oaken garland; with
CAPTAINS and soldiers and a HERALD
HERALD.
Know, Rome, that all alone Marcius did fight
Within Corioli gates, where he hath won,

With fame, a name to Caius Marcius; these

In honour follows Coriolanus.

Welcome to Rome, renowned Coriolanus! *[Flourish]*

ALL.

Welcome to Rome, renowned Coriolanus!

CORIOLANUS.

No more of this, it does offend my heart.

Pray now, no more.

COMINIUS.

Look, sir, your mother!

CORIOLANUS.

O,

You have, I know, petition'd all the gods

For my prosperity! *[Kneels]*

VOLUMNIA.

Nay, my good soldier, up;

My gentle Marcius, worthy Caius, and

By deed-achieving honour newly nam'd-

What is it? Coriolanus must I can thee?

But, O, thy wife!

CORIOLANUS.

My gracious silence, hail!

Wouldst thou have laugh'd had I come coffin'd home,

That weep'st to see me triumph? Ah, my dear,

Such eyes the widows in Corioli wear,

And mothers that lack sons.

MENENIUS.

Now the gods crown thee!

CORIOLANUS.

And live you yet? *[To VALERIA]* O my sweet lady, pardon.

VOLUMNIA.

I know not where to turn.

O, welcome home! And welcome, General.

And y'are welcome all.

MENENIUS.

A hundred thousand welcomes. I could weep

And I could laugh; I am light and heavy. Welcome!

A curse begin at very root on's heart

That is not glad to see thee! You are three

That Rome should dote on; yet, by the faith of men,

We have some old crab trees here at home that will not

Be grafted to your relish. Yet welcome, warriors.

We call a nettle but a nettle, and

The faults of fools but folly.

COMINIUS.

Ever right.

CORIOLANUS.

Menenius ever, ever.

HERALD.

Give way there, and go on.

CORIOLANUS.

[To his wife and mother] Your hand, and yours.

Ere in our own house I do shade my head,

The good patricians must be visited;

From whom I have receiv'd not only greetings,

But with them change of honours.

VOLUMNIA.

I have lived

To see inherited my very wishes,

And the buildings of my fancy; only

There's one thing wanting, which I doubt not but

Our Rome will cast upon thee.

CORIOLANUS.

Know, good mother,

I had rather be their servant in my way

Than sway with them in theirs.

COMINIUS.

On, to the Capitol.

[Flourish. Cornets. Exeunt in state, as before]

BRUTUS and SICINIUS come forward

BRUTUS.

All tongues speak of him and the bleared sights

Are spectacled to see him. Your prattling nurse

Into a rapture lets her baby cry

While she chats him; the kitchen malkin pins

Her richest lockram 'bout her reechy neck,

Clamb'ring the walls to eye him; stalls, bulks, windows,

Are smother'd up, leads fill'd and ridges hors'd

With variable complexions, all agreeing

In earnestness to see him. Seld-shown flamens

Do press among the popular throngs and puff

To win a vulgar station; our veil'd dames

Commit the war of white and damask in

Their nicely gawded cheeks to th' wanton spoil

Of Phoebus' burning kisses. Such a pother,

As if that whatsoever god who leads him

Were slily crept into his human powers,

And gave him graceful posture.

SICINIUS.

On the sudden

I warrant him consul.

BRUTUS.

Then our office may

During his power go sleep.

SICINIUS.

He cannot temp'rately transport his honours

From where he should begin and end, but will

Lose those he hath won.

BRUTUS.

In that there's comfort.

SICINIUS.

Doubt not

The commoners, for whom we stand, but they

Upon their ancient malice will forget

With the least cause these his new honours; which

That he will give them make I as little question

As he is proud to do't.

BRUTUS.

I heard him swear,

Were he to stand for consul, never would he

Appear i' th' market-place, nor on him put

The napless vesture of humility;

Nor, showing, as the manner is, his wounds

To th' people, beg their stinking breaths.

SICINIUS.

'Tis right.

BRUTUS.

It was his word. O, he would miss it rather

Than carry it but by the suit of the gentry to him

And the desire of the nobles.

SICINIUS.

I wish no better

Than have him hold that purpose, and to put it

In execution.

BRUTUS.

'Tis most like he will.

SICINIUS.

It shall be to him then as our good wills:

A sure destruction.

BRUTUS.

So it must fall out

To him or our authorities. For an end,

We must suggest the people in what hatred

He still hath held them; that to's power he would

Have made them mules, silenc'd their pleaders, and

Dispropertied their freedoms; holding them

In human action and capacity

Of no more soul nor fitness for the world

Than camels in their war, who have their provand

Only for bearing burdens, and sore blows

For sinking under them.

SICINIUS.

This, as you say, suggested

At some time when his soaring insolence

Shall touch the people-which time shall not want,

If he be put upon't, and that's as easy

As to set dogs on sheep-will be his fire

To kindle their dry stubble; and their blaze

Shall darken him for ever.

Enter A MESSENGER

BRUTUS.

What's the matter?

MESSENGER.

You are sent for to the Capitol. 'Tis thought
That Marcius shall be consul.
I have seen the dumb men throng to see him and
The blind to hear him speak; matrons flung gloves,
Ladies and maids their scarfs and handkerchers,
Upon him as he pass'd; the nobles bended
As to Jove's statue, and the commons made
A shower and thunder with their caps and shouts.

I never saw the like.

BRUTUS.

Let's to the Capitol,
And carry with us ears and eyes for th' time,
But hearts for the event.

SICINIUS.

Have with you. *Exeunt*

SCENE II. Rome. The Capitol

Enter two OFFICERS, to lay cushions, as it were in the Capitol

FIRST OFFICER.

Come, come, they are almost here. How many stand for consulships?

SECOND OFFICER.

Three, they say; but 'tis thought of every one
Coriolanus will carry it.

FIRST OFFICER.

That's a brave fellow; but he's vengeance proud and
loves not the common people.

SECOND OFFICER.

Faith, there have been many great men that have

flatter'd the people, who ne'er loved them; and there be many
that they have loved, they know not wherefore; so that, if they
love they know not why, they hate upon no better a ground.
Therefore, for Coriolanus neither to care whether they love or
hate him manifests the true knowledge he has in their
disposition, and out of his noble carelessness lets them plainly see't.

FIRST OFFICER.
If he did not care whether he had their love or no,
he waved indifferently 'twixt doing them neither good nor harm;
but he seeks their hate with greater devotion than they can
render it him, and leaves nothing undone that may fully discover
him their opposite. Now to seem to affect the malice and
displeasure of the people is as bad as that which he
dislikes-to
flatter them for their love.

SECOND OFFICER.
He hath deserved worthily of his country; and his
ascent is not by such easy degrees as those who, having been
supple and courteous to the people, bonneted, without any further

deed to have them at all, into their estimation and report; but he hath so planted his honours in their eyes and his actions in their hearts that for their tongues to be silent and not confess so much were a kind of ingrateful injury; to report otherwise were a malice that, giving itself the lie, would pluck reproof and rebuke from every car that heard it.

FIRST OFFICER.

No more of him; he's a worthy man. Make way,

they are coming.

A sennet.   *Enter* the PATRICIANS and the TRIBUNES OF THE PEOPLE, LICTORS before them; CORIOLANUS, MENENIUS, COMINIUS the Consul. SICINIUS and BRUTUS take their places by themselves.

CORIOLANUS stands

MENENIUS.

Having determin'd of the Volsces, and
To send for Titus Lartius, it remains,
As the main point of this our after-meeting,
To gratify his noble service that
Hath thus stood for his country. Therefore please you,

Most reverend and grave elders, to desire
The present consul and last general
In our well-found successes to report
A little of that worthy work perform'd
By Caius Marcius Coriolanus; whom
We met here both to thank and to remember
With honours like himself. *[CORIOLANUS sits]*

FIRST SENATOR.

Speak, good Cominius.
Leave nothing out for length, and make us think
Rather our state's defective for requital
Than we to stretch it out. Masters o' th' people,
We do request your kindest ears; and, after,
Your loving motion toward the common body,
To yield what passes here.

SICINIUS.
We are convented
Upon a pleasing treaty, and have hearts

Inclinable to honour and advance

The theme of our assembly.

BRUTUS.

Which the rather

We shall be bless'd to do, if he remember

A kinder value of the people than

He hath hereto priz'd them at.

MENENIUS.

That's off, that's off;

I would you rather had been silent. Please you

To hear Cominius speak?

BRUTUS.

Most willingly.

But yet my caution was more pertinent

Than the rebuke you give it.

MENENIUS.

He loves your people;

But tie him not to be their bedfellow.

Worthy Cominius, speak.

[CORIOLANUS rises, and offers to go away]

Nay, keep your place.

FIRST SENATOR.

Sit, Coriolanus, never shame to hear

What you have nobly done.

CORIOLANUS.

Your Honours' pardon.

I had rather have my wounds to heal again

Than hear say how I got them.

BRUTUS.

Sir, I hope

My words disbench'd you not.

CORIOLANUS.

No, sir; yet oft,

When blows have made me stay, I fled from words.

You sooth'd not, therefore hurt not. But your people,

I love them as they weigh-

MENENIUS.

Pray now, sit down.

CORIOLANUS.

I had rather have one scratch my head i' th' sun

When the alarum were struck than idly sit

To hear my nothings monster'd. *Exit*

MENENIUS. Masters of the people,

Your multiplying spawn how can he flatter-

That's thousand to one good one-when you now see

He had rather venture all his limbs for honour

Than one on's ears to hear it? Proceed, Cominius.

COMINIUS.

I shall lack voice; the deeds of Coriolanus

Should not be utter'd feebly. It is held

That valour is the chiefest virtue and

Most dignifies the haver. If it be,

The man I speak of cannot in the world

Be singly counterpois'd. At sixteen years,

When Tarquin made a head for Rome, he fought

Beyond the mark of others; our then Dictator,

Whom with all praise I point at, saw him fight

When with his Amazonian chin he drove

The bristled lips before him; he bestrid

An o'erpress'd Roman and i' th' consul's view

Slew three opposers; Tarquin's self he met,

And struck him on his knee. In that day's feats,

When he might act the woman in the scene,

He prov'd best man i' th' field, and for his meed

Was brow-bound with the oak. His pupil age

Man-ent'red thus, he waxed like a sea,

And in the brunt of seventeen battles since

He lurch'd all swords of the garland. For this last,

Before and in Corioli, let me say

I cannot speak him home. He stopp'd the fliers,
And by his rare example made the coward
Turn terror into sport; as weeds before
A vessel under sail, so men obey'd
And fell below his stem. His sword, death's stamp,
Where it did mark, it took; from face to foot
He was a thing of blood, whose every motion
Was tim'd with dying cries. Alone he ent'red
The mortal gate of th' city, which he painted
With shunless destiny; aidless came off,
And with a sudden re-enforcement struck
Corioli like a planet. Now all's his.
When by and by the din of war 'gan pierce
His ready sense, then straight his doubled spirit
Re-quick'ned what in flesh was fatigate,
And to the battle came he; where he did
Run reeking o'er the lives of men, as if
'Twere a perpetual spoil; and till we call'd
Both field and city ours he never stood
To ease his breast with panting.

MENENIUS.

Worthy man!

FIRST SENATOR.

He cannot but with measure fit the honours

Which we devise him.

COMINIUS.

Our spoils he kick'd at,

And look'd upon things precious as they were

The common muck of the world. He covets less

Than misery itself would give, rewards

His deeds with doing them, and is content

To spend the time to end it.

MENENIUS.

He's right noble;

Let him be call'd for.

FIRST SENATOR.

Call Coriolanus.

OFFICER.

He doth appear.

Re-enter CORIOLANUS

MENENIUS.

The Senate, Coriolanus, are well pleas'd

To make thee consul.

CORIOLANUS.

I do owe them still

My life and services.

MENENIUS.

It then remains

That you do speak to the people.

CORIOLANUS.

I do beseech you

Let me o'erleap that custom; for I cannot

Put on the gown, stand naked, and entreat them

For my wounds' sake to give their suffrage. Please you

That I may pass this doing.

SICINIUS.

Sir, the people

Must have their voices; neither will they bate

One jot of ceremony.

MENENIUS.

Put them not to't.

Pray you go fit you to the custom, and

Take to you, as your predecessors have,

Your honour with your form.

CORIOLANUS.

It is a part

That I shall blush in acting, and might well

Be taken from the people.

BRUTUS.

Mark you that?

CORIOLANUS.

To brag unto them 'Thus I did, and thus!'
Show them th' unaching scars which I should hide,
As if I had receiv'd them for the hire
Of their breath only!

MENENIUS.

Do not stand upon't.
We recommend to you, Tribunes of the People,
Our purpose to them; and to our noble consul
Wish we all joy and honour.

SENATORS.

To Coriolanus come all joy and honour!
[Flourish. Cornets. Then exeunt all
but SICINIUS and BRUTUS]

BRUTUS.

You see how he intends to use the people.

SICINIUS.

May they perceive's intent! He will require them

As if he did contemn what he requested

Should be in them to give.

BRUTUS.

Come, we'll inform them

Of our proceedings here. On th' market-place

I know they do attend us. *Exeunt*

SCENE III. Rome. The Forum

Enter seven or eight citizens

FIRST CITIZEN.

Once, if he do require our voices, we ought not to deny him.

SECOND CITIZEN.

We may, sir, if we will.

THIRD CITIZEN.

We have power in ourselves to do it, but it is a
power that we have no power to do; for if he show us his wounds
and tell us his deeds, we are to put our tongues into those
wounds and speak for them; so, if he tell us his noble deeds, we
must also tell him our noble acceptance of them. Ingratitude is
monstrous, and for the multitude to be ingrateful were to make a
monster of the multitude; of the which we being members should
bring ourselves to be monstrous members.

FIRST CITIZEN.

And to make us no better thought of, a little help
will serve; for once we stood up about the corn, he himself stuck
not to call us the many-headed multitude.

THIRD CITIZEN.

We have been call'd so of many; not that our heads

are some brown, some black, some abram, some bald, but that our
wits are so diversely colour'd; and truly I think if all our wits
were to issue out of one skull, they would fly east, west,
north,
south, and their consent of one direct way should be at once to
all the points o' th' compass.

SECOND CITIZEN.
Think you so? Which way do you judge my wit would fly?

THIRD CITIZEN.
Nay, your wit will not so soon out as another man's
will- 'tis strongly wedg'd up in a block-head; but if it were at
liberty 'twould sure southward.

SECOND CITIZEN.
Why that way?

THIRD CITIZEN.
To lose itself in a fog; where being three parts
melted away with rotten dews, the fourth would return for

conscience' sake, to help to get thee a wife.

SECOND CITIZEN.

YOU are never without your tricks; you may, you may.

THIRD CITIZEN.

Are you all resolv'd to give your voices? But that's
no matter, the greater part carries it. I say, if he would
incline to the people, there was never a worthier man.

Enter CORIOLANUS, in a gown of humility,

with MENENIUS

Here he comes, and in the gown of humility. Mark his behaviour.
We are not to stay all together, but to come by him where he
stands, by ones, by twos, and by threes. He's to make his
requests by particulars, wherein every one of us has a single
honour, in giving him our own voices with our own tongues;
therefore follow me, and I'll direct you how you shall go by him.

ALL.

Content, content. *Exeunt* citizens

MENENIUS.

O sir, you are not right; have you not known

The worthiest men have done't?

CORIOLANUS.

What must I say?

'I pray, sir'- Plague upon't! I cannot bring

My tongue to such a pace. 'Look, sir, my wounds

I got them in my country's service, when

Some certain of your brethren roar'd and ran

From th' noise of our own drums.'

MENENIUS.

O me, the gods!

You must not speak of that. You must desire them

To think upon you.

CORIOLANUS.

Think upon me? Hang 'em!

I would they would forget me, like the virtues

Which our divines lose by 'em.

MENENIUS.

You'll mar all.

I'll leave you. Pray you speak to 'em, I pray you,

In wholesome manner. *Exit*

Re-enter three of the citizens

CORIOLANUS.

Bid them wash their faces

And keep their teeth clean. So, here comes a brace.

You know the cause, sir, of my standing here.

THIRD CITIZEN.

We do, sir; tell us what hath brought you to't.

CORIOLANUS.

Mine own desert.

SECOND CITIZEN.

Your own desert?

CORIOLANUS.

Ay, not mine own desire.

THIRD CITIZEN.

How, not your own desire?

CORIOLANUS.

No, sir, 'twas never my desire yet to trouble the poor with begging.

THIRD CITIZEN.

YOU MUST think, if we give you anything, we hope to gain by you.

CORIOLANUS.

Well then, I pray, your price o' th' consulship?

FIRST CITIZEN.

The price is to ask it kindly.

CORIOLANUS.
Kindly, sir, I pray let me ha't. I have wounds to show
you, which shall be yours in private. Your good voice, sir;
what say you?

SECOND CITIZEN.

You shall ha' it, worthy sir.

CORIOLANUS.
A match, sir. There's in all two worthy voices begg'd.

I have your alms. Adieu.

THIRD CITIZEN.
But this is something odd.

SECOND CITIZEN.

An 'twere to give again-but 'tis no matter.

Exeunt the three citizens

Re-enter two other citizens

CORIOLANUS.

Pray you now, if it may stand with the tune of your

voices that I may be consul, I have here the customary gown.

FOURTH CITIZEN.

You have deserved nobly of your country, and you

have not deserved nobly.

CORIOLANUS.

Your enigma?

FOURTH CITIZEN.

You have been a scourge to her enemies; you have

been a rod to her friends. You have not indeed loved the common people.

CORIOLANUS.

You should account me the more virtuous, that I have

not been common in my love. I will, sir, flatter my sworn

brother, the people, to earn a dearer estimation of them;

'tis a

condition they account gentle; and since the wisdom of their

choice is rather to have my hat than my heart, I will practise

the insinuating nod and be off to them most counterfeitly.

That

is, sir, I will counterfeit the bewitchment of some popular man

and give it bountiful to the desirers. Therefore, beseech you

I

may be consul.

FIFTH CITIZEN.

We hope to find you our friend; and therefore give

you our voices heartily.

FOURTH CITIZEN.

You have received many wounds for your country.

CORIOLANUS.

I will not seal your knowledge with showing them. I

will make much of your voices, and so trouble you no farther.

BOTH CITIZENS.

The gods give you joy, sir, heartily!

Exeunt citizens

CORIOLANUS.

Most sweet voices!

Better it is to die, better to starve,

Than crave the hire which first we do deserve.

Why in this wolvish toge should I stand here

To beg of Hob and Dick that do appear

Their needless vouches? Custom calls me to't.

What custom wills, in all things should we do't,

The dust on antique time would lie unswept,

And mountainous error be too highly heap'd

For truth to o'erpeer. Rather than fool it so,

Let the high office and the honour go
To one that would do thus. I am half through:

The one part suffered, the other will I do.
Re-enter three citizens more
Here come moe voices.
Your voices. For your voices I have fought;
Watch'd for your voices; for your voices bear
Of wounds two dozen odd; battles thrice six
I have seen and heard of; for your voices have
Done many things, some less, some more. Your voices?

Indeed, I would be consul.

SIXTH CITIZEN.

He has done nobly, and cannot go without any honest man's voice.

SEVENTH CITIZEN.

Therefore let him be consul. The gods give him
joy, and make him good friend to the people!

ALL.

Amen, amen. God save thee, noble consul!

Exeunt citizens

CORIOLANUS.

Worthy voices!

Re-enter MENENIUS with BRUTUS and SICINIUS

MENENIUS.

You have stood your limitation, and the tribunes

Endue you with the people's voice. Remains

That, in th' official marks invested, you

Anon do meet the Senate.

CORIOLANUS.

Is this done?

SICINIUS.

The custom of request you have discharg'd.

The people do admit you, and are summon'd

To meet anon, upon your approbation.

CORIOLANUS.

Where? At the Senate House?

SICINIUS.

There, Coriolanus.

CORIOLANUS.

May I change these garments?

SICINIUS.

You may, sir.

CORIOLANUS.

That I'll straight do, and, knowing myself again,
Repair to th' Senate House.

MENENIUS.

I'll keep you company. Will you along?

BRUTUS.

We stay here for the people.

SICINIUS.

Fare you well.

Exeunt CORIOLANUS and MENENIUS

He has it now; and by his looks methinks

'Tis warm at's heart.

BRUTUS.

With a proud heart he wore

His humble weeds. Will you dismiss the people?

Re-enter citizens

SICINIUS.

How now, my masters! Have you chose this man?

FIRST CITIZEN.

He has our voices, sir.

BRUTUS.

We pray the gods he may deserve your loves.

SECOND CITIZEN.

Amen, sir. To my poor unworthy notice,

He mock'd us when he begg'd our voices.

THIRD CITIZEN.

Certainly;

He flouted us downright.

FIRST CITIZEN.

No, 'tis his kind of speech-he did not mock us.

SECOND CITIZEN.

Not one amongst us, save yourself, but says

He us'd us scornfully. He should have show'd us

His marks of merit, wounds receiv'd for's country.

SICINIUS.

Why, so he did, I am sure.

ALL.

No, no; no man saw 'em.

THIRD CITIZEN.

He said he had wounds which he could show in private,
And with his hat, thus waving it in scorn,
'I would be consul,' says he; 'aged custom
But by your voices will not so permit me;
Your voices therefore.' When we granted that,
Here was 'I thank you for your voices. Thank you,
Your most sweet voices. Now you have left your voices,
I have no further with you.' Was not this mockery?

SICINIUS.

Why either were you ignorant to see't,
Or, seeing it, of such childish friendliness

To yield your voices?

BRUTUS.

Could you not have told him-

As you were lesson'd-when he had no power

But was a petty servant to the state,

He was your enemy; ever spake against

Your liberties and the charters that you bear

I' th' body of the weal; and now, arriving

A place of potency and sway o' th' state,

If he should still malignantly remain

Fast foe to th' plebeii, your voices might

Be curses to yourselves? You should have said

That as his worthy deeds did claim no less

Than what he stood for, so his gracious nature

Would think upon you for your voices, and

Translate his malice towards you into love,

Standing your friendly lord.

SICINIUS.

Thus to have said,

As you were fore-advis'd, had touch'd his spirit
And tried his inclination; from him pluck'd
Either his gracious promise, which you might,
As cause had call'd you up, have held him to;
Or else it would have gall'd his surly nature,
Which easily endures not article
Tying him to aught. So, putting him to rage,
You should have ta'en th' advantage of his choler
And pass'd him unelected.

BRUTUS.
Did you perceive
He did solicit you in free contempt
When he did need your loves; and do you think
That his contempt shall not be bruising to you
When he hath power to crush? Why, had your bodies
No heart among you? Or had you tongues to cry
Against the rectorship of judgment?

SICINIUS.
Have you

Ere now denied the asker, and now again,
Of him that did not ask but mock, bestow
Your su'd-for tongues?

THIRD CITIZEN.
He's not confirm'd: we may deny him yet.

SECOND CITIZENS.
And will deny him;
I'll have five hundred voices of that sound.

FIRST CITIZEN.

I twice five hundred, and their friends to piece 'em.

BRUTUS.
Get you hence instantly, and tell those friends
They have chose a consul that will from them take
Their liberties, make them of no more voice
Than dogs, that are as often beat for barking
As therefore kept to do so.

SICINIUS.

Let them assemble;

And, on a safer judgment, all revoke

Your ignorant election. Enforce his pride

And his old hate unto you; besides, forget not

With what contempt he wore the humble weed;

How in his suit he scorn'd you; but your loves,

Thinking upon his services, took from you

Th' apprehension of his present portance,

Which, most gibingly, ungravely, he did fashion

After the inveterate hate he bears you.

BRUTUS.

Lay

A fault on us, your tribunes, that we labour'd,

No impediment between, but that you must

Cast your election on him.

SICINIUS.

Say you chose him

More after our commandment than as guided
By your own true affections; and that your minds,
Pre-occupied with what you rather must do
Than what you should, made you against the grain
To voice him consul. Lay the fault on us.

BRUTUS.
Ay, spare us not. Say we read lectures to you,
How youngly he began to serve his country,
How long continued; and what stock he springs of-
The noble house o' th' Marcians; from whence came
That Ancus Marcius, Numa's daughter's son,
Who, after great Hostilius, here was king;
Of the same house Publius and Quintus were,
That our best water brought by conduits hither;
And Censorinus, nobly named so,
Twice being by the people chosen censor,
Was his great ancestor.

SICINIUS.
One thus descended,

That hath beside well in his person wrought

To be set high in place, we did commend

To your remembrances; but you have found,

Scaling his present bearing with his past,

That he's your fixed enemy, and revoke

Your sudden approbation.

BRUTUS.

Say you ne'er had done't-

Harp on that still-but by our putting on;

And presently, when you have drawn your number,

Repair to th' Capitol.

CITIZENS.

will will so; almost all

Repent in their election. *Exeunt* plebeians

BRUTUS.

Let them go on;

This mutiny were better put in hazard

Than stay, past doubt, for greater.

If, as his nature is, he fall in rage

With their refusal, both observe and answer
The vantage of his anger.

SICINIUS.

To th' Capitol, come.
We will be there before the stream o' th' people;
And this shall seem, as partly 'tis, their own,
Which we have goaded onward. *Exeunt*

ACT III. SCENE I. Rome. A street

Cornets. *Enter* CORIOLANUS, MENENIUS, all the GENTRY, COMINIUS,

TITUS LARTIUS, and other SENATORS

CORIOLANUS.

Tullus Aufidius, then, had made new head?

LARTIUS.

He had, my lord; and that it was which caus'd
Our swifter composition.

CORIOLANUS.

So then the Volsces stand but as at first,
Ready, when time shall prompt them, to make road
Upon's again.

COMINIUS.

They are worn, Lord Consul, so
That we shall hardly in our ages see
Their banners wave again.

CORIOLANUS.

Saw you Aufidius?

LARTIUS.
On safeguard he came to me, and did curse
Against the Volsces, for they had so vilely
Yielded the town. He is retir'd to Antium.

CORIOLANUS.

Spoke he of me?

LARTIUS.
He did, my lord.

CORIOLANUS.

How? What?

LARTIUS.

How often he had met you, sword to sword;

That of all things upon the earth he hated

Your person most; that he would pawn his fortunes

To hopeless restitution, so he might

Be call'd your vanquisher.

CORIOLANUS.

At Antium lives he?

LARTIUS.

At Antium.

CORIOLANUS.

I wish I had a cause to seek him there,

To oppose his hatred fully. Welcome home.

Enter SICINIUS and BRUTUS

Behold, these are the tribunes of the people,

The tongues o' th' common mouth. I do despise them,

For they do prank them in authority,
Against all noble sufferance.

SICINIUS.

Pass no further.

CORIOLANUS.
Ha! What is that?

BRUTUS.

It will be dangerous to go on-no further.

CORIOLANUS.
What makes this change?

MENENIUS.

The matter?

COMINIUS.

Hath he not pass'd the noble and the common?

BRUTUS.

Cominius, no.

CORIOLANUS.

Have I had children's voices?

FIRST SENATOR.

Tribunes, give way: he shall to th'

market-place.

BRUTUS.

The people are incens'd against him.

SICINIUS.

Stop,

Or all will fall in broil.

CORIOLANUS.

Are these your herd?

Must these have voices, that can yield them now

And straight disclaim their tongues? What are your offices?

You being their mouths, why rule you not their teeth?

Have you not set them on?

MENENIUS.

Be calm, be calm.

CORIOLANUS.

It is a purpos'd thing, and grows by plot,

To curb the will of the nobility;

Suffer't, and live with such as cannot rule

Nor ever will be rul'd.

BRUTUS.

Call't not a plot.

The people cry you mock'd them; and of late,

When corn was given them gratis, you repin'd;

Scandal'd the suppliants for the people, call'd them

Time-pleasers, flatterers, foes to nobleness.

CORIOLANUS.

Why, this was known before.

BRUTUS.

Not to them all.

CORIOLANUS.

Have you inform'd them sithence?

BRUTUS.

How? I inform them!

COMINIUS.

You are like to do such business.

BRUTUS.

Not unlike
Each way to better yours.

CORIOLANUS.

Why then should I be consul? By yond clouds,
Let me deserve so ill as you, and make me
Your fellow tribune.

SICINIUS.

You show too much of that
For which the people stir; if you will pass
To where you are bound, you must enquire your way,
Which you are out of, with a gentler spirit,
Or never be so noble as a consul,
Nor yoke with him for tribune.

MENENIUS.

Let's be calm.

COMINIUS.

The people are abus'd; set on. This palt'ring

Becomes not Rome; nor has Coriolanus

Deserved this so dishonour'd rub, laid falsely

I' th' plain way of his merit.

CORIOLANUS.

Tell me of corn!

This was my speech, and I will speak't again-

MENENIUS.

Not now, not now.

FIRST SENATOR.

Not in this heat, sir, now.

CORIOLANUS.

Now, as I live, I will.

My nobler friends, I crave their pardons.
For the mutable, rank-scented meiny, let them
Regard me as I do not flatter, and
Therein behold themselves. I say again,
In soothing them we nourish 'gainst our Senate
The cockle of rebellion, insolence, sedition,
Which we ourselves have plough'd for, sow'd, and scatter'd,
By mingling them with us, the honour'd number,
Who lack not virtue, no, nor power, but that
Which they have given to beggars.

MENENIUS.

Well, no more.

FIRST SENATOR.
No more words, we beseech you.

CORIOLANUS.

How? no more!

As for my country I have shed my blood,

Not fearing outward force, so shall my lungs

Coin words till their decay against those measles

Which we disdain should tetter us, yet sought

The very way to catch them.

BRUTUS.

You speak o' th' people

As if you were a god, to punish; not

A man of their infirmity.

SICINIUS.

'Twere well

We let the people know't.

MENENIUS.

What, what? his choler?

CORIOLANUS.

Choler!

Were I as patient as the midnight sleep,

By Jove, 'twould be my mind!

SICINIUS.

It is a mind

That shall remain a poison where it is,

Not poison any further.

CORIOLANUS.

Shall remain!

Hear you this Triton of the minnows? Mark you

His absolute 'shall'?

COMINIUS.

'Twas from the canon.

CORIOLANUS.

'Shall'!

O good but most unwise patricians! Why,

You grave but reckless senators, have you thus

Given Hydra here to choose an officer

That with his peremptory 'shall,' being but

The horn and noise o' th' monster's, wants not spirit

To say he'll turn your current in a ditch,

And make your channel his? If he have power,

Then vail your ignorance; if none, awake

Your dangerous lenity. If you are learn'd,

Be not as common fools; if you are not,

Let them have cushions by you. You are plebeians,

If they be senators; and they are no less,

When, both your voices blended, the great'st taste

Most palates theirs. They choose their magistrate;

And such a one as he, who puts his 'shall,'

His popular 'shall,' against a graver bench

Than ever frown'd in Greece. By Jove himself,

It makes the consuls base; and my soul aches

To know, when two authorities are up,

Neither supreme, how soon confusion

May enter 'twixt the gap of both and take
The one by th' other.

COMINIUS.

Well, on to th' market-place.

CORIOLANUS.

Whoever gave that counsel to give forth
The corn o' th' storehouse gratis, as 'twas us'd
Sometime in Greece-

MENENIUS.

Well, well, no more of that.

CORIOLANUS.

Though there the people had more absolute pow'r-
I say they nourish'd disobedience, fed
The ruin of the state.

BRUTUS.

Why shall the people give

One that speaks thus their voice?

CORIOLANUS.

I'll give my reasons,

More worthier than their voices. They know the corn

Was not our recompense, resting well assur'd

They ne'er did service for't; being press'd to th' war

Even when the navel of the state was touch'd,

They would not thread the gates. This kind of service

Did not deserve corn gratis. Being i' th' war,

Their mutinies and revolts, wherein they show'd

Most valour, spoke not for them. Th' accusation

Which they have often made against the Senate,

All cause unborn, could never be the native

Of our so frank donation. Well, what then?

How shall this bosom multiplied digest

The Senate's courtesy? Let deeds express

What's like to be their words: 'We did request it;

We are the greater poll, and in true fear

They gave us our demands.' Thus we debase

The nature of our seats, and make the rabble

Call our cares fears; which will in time
Break ope the locks o' th' Senate and bring in
The crows to peck the eagles.

MENENIUS.

Come, enough.

BRUTUS.
Enough, with over measure.

CORIOLANUS.

No, take more.
What may be sworn by, both divine and human,
Seal what I end withal! This double worship,
Where one part does disdain with cause, the other
Insult without all reason; where gentry, title, wisdom,
Cannot conclude but by the yea and no
Of general ignorance-it must omit
Real necessities, and give way the while

To unstable slightness. Purpose so barr'd, it follows

Nothing is done to purpose. Therefore, beseech you-

You that will be less fearful than discreet;

That love the fundamental part of state

More than you doubt the change on't; that prefer

A noble life before a long, and wish

To jump a body with a dangerous physic

That's sure of death without it-at once pluck out

The multitudinous tongue; let them not lick

The sweet which is their poison. Your dishonour

Mangles true judgment, and bereaves the state

Of that integrity which should become't,

Not having the power to do the good it would,

For th' ill which doth control't.

BRUTUS.

Has said enough.

SICINIUS.

Has spoken like a traitor and shall answer

As traitors do.

CORIOLANUS.

Thou wretch, despite o'erwhelm thee!

What should the people do with these bald tribunes,

On whom depending, their obedience fails

To the greater bench? In a rebellion,

When what's not meet, but what must be, was law,

Then were they chosen; in a better hour

Let what is meet be said it must be meet,

And throw their power i' th' dust.

BRUTUS.

Manifest treason!

SICINIUS.

This a consul? No.

BRUTUS.

The aediles, ho!

Enter an AEDILE

Let him be apprehended.

SICINIUS.

Go call the people, *[Exit AEDILE]* in whose name myself

Attach thee as a traitorous innovator,

A foe to th' public weal. Obey, I charge thee,

And follow to thine answer.

CORIOLANUS.

Hence, old goat!

PATRICIANS.

We'll surety him.

COMINIUS.

Ag'd sir, hands off.

CORIOLANUS.

Hence, rotten thing! or I shall shake thy bones

Out of thy garments.

SICINIUS.

Help, ye citizens!

Enter a rabble of plebeians, with the AEDILES

MENENIUS.

On both sides more respect.

SICINIUS.

Here's he that would take from you all your power.

BRUTUS.

Seize him, aediles.

PLEBEIANS.

Down with him! down with him!

SECOND SENATOR.

Weapons, weapons, weapons!

[They all bustle about CORIOLANUS]

ALL.

Tribunes! patricians! citizens! What, ho! Sicinius!

Brutus! Coriolanus! Citizens!

PATRICIANS.

Peace, peace, peace; stay, hold, peace!

MENENIUS.

What is about to be? I am out of breath;

Confusion's near; I cannot speak. You tribunes

To th' people-Coriolanus, patience!

Speak, good Sicinius.

SICINIUS.

Hear me, people; peace!

PLEBEIANS.

Let's hear our tribune. Peace! Speak, speak, speak.

SICINIUS.

You are at point to lose your liberties.
Marcius would have all from you; Marcius,
Whom late you have nam'd for consul.

MENENIUS.

Fie, fie, fie!
This is the way to kindle, not to quench.

FIRST SENATOR.

To unbuild the city, and to lay all flat.

SICINIUS.

What is the city but the people?

PLEBEIANS.

True,

The people are the city.

BRUTUS.

By the consent of all we were establish'd

The people's magistrates.

PLEBEIANS.

You so remain.

MENENIUS.

And so are like to do.

COMINIUS.

That is the way to lay the city flat,
To bring the roof to the foundation,
And bury all which yet distinctly ranges
In heaps and piles of ruin.

SICINIUS.

This deserves death.

BRUTUS.

Or let us stand to our authority
Or let us lose it. We do here pronounce,
Upon the part o' th' people, in whose power
We were elected theirs: Marcius is worthy
Of present death.

SICINIUS.

Therefore lay hold of him;
Bear him to th' rock Tarpeian, and from thence
Into destruction cast him.

BRUTUS.

AEdiles, seize him.

PLEBEIANS.

Yield, Marcius, yield.

MENENIUS.

Hear me one word; beseech you, Tribunes,
Hear me but a word.

AEDILES.

Peace, peace!

MENENIUS.

Be that you seem, truly your country's friend,
And temp'rately proceed to what you would
Thus violently redress.

BRUTUS.

Sir, those cold ways,

That seem like prudent helps, are very poisonous

Where the disease is violent. Lay hands upon him

And bear him to the rock.

[CORIOLANUS draws his sword]

CORIOLANUS.

No: I'll die here.

There's some among you have beheld me fighting;

Come, try upon yourselves what you have seen me.

MENENIUS.

Down with that sword! Tribunes, withdraw awhile.

BRUTUS.

Lay hands upon him.

MENENIUS.

Help Marcius, help,

You that be noble; help him, young and old.

PLEBEIANS.
Down with him, down with him!
[In this mutiny the TRIBUNES, the AEDILES,
and the people are beat in]

MENENIUS.

Go, get you to your house; be gone, away.
All will be nought else.

SECOND SENATOR.

Get you gone.

CORIOLANUS.
Stand fast;
We have as many friends as enemies.

MENENIUS.

Shall it be put to that?

FIRST SENATOR.

The gods forbid!

I prithee, noble friend, home to thy house;

Leave us to cure this cause.

MENENIUS.

For 'tis a sore upon us

You cannot tent yourself; be gone, beseech you.

COMINIUS.

Come, sir, along with us.

CORIOLANUS.

I would they were barbarians, as they are,

Though in Rome litter'd; not Romans, as they are not,

Though calved i' th' porch o' th' Capitol.

MENENIUS.

Be gone.

Put not your worthy rage into your tongue;

One time will owe another.

CORIOLANUS.

On fair ground

I could beat forty of them.

MENENIUS.

I could myself

Take up a brace o' th' best of them; yea, the two tribunes.

COMINIUS.

But now 'tis odds beyond arithmetic,

And manhood is call'd foolery when it stands

Against a falling fabric. Will you hence,

Before the tag return? whose rage doth rend

Like interrupted waters, and o'erbear

What they are us'd to bear.

MENENIUS.

Pray you be gone.

I'll try whether my old wit be in request

With those that have but little; this must be patch'd

With cloth of any colour.

COMINIUS.

Nay, come away.

Exeunt CORIOLANUS and COMINIUS, with others

PATRICIANS.

This man has marr'd his fortune.

MENENIUS.

His nature is too noble for the world:

He would not flatter Neptune for his trident,

Or Jove for's power to thunder. His heart's his mouth;

What his breast forges, that his tongue must vent;

And, being angry, does forget that ever

He heard the name of death. *[A noise within]*

Here's goodly work!

PATRICIANS.

I would they were a-bed.

MENENIUS.

I would they were in Tiber.

What the vengeance, could he not speak 'em fair?

Re-enter BRUTUS and SICINIUS, the rabble again

SICINIUS.

Where is this viper
That would depopulate the city and
Be every man himself?

MENENIUS.

You worthy Tribunes-

SICINIUS.

He shall be thrown down the Tarpeian rock

With rigorous hands; he hath resisted law,

And therefore law shall scorn him further trial

Than the severity of the public power,

Which he so sets at nought.

FIRST CITIZEN.

He shall well know

The noble tribunes are the people's mouths,

And we their hands.

PLEBEIANS.

He shall, sure on't.

MENENIUS.

Sir, sir-

SICINIUS.

Peace!

MENENIUS.

Do not cry havoc, where you should but hunt

With modest warrant.

SICINIUS.

Sir, how comes't that you

Have holp to make this rescue?

MENENIUS.

Hear me speak.

As I do know the consul's worthiness,

So can I name his faults.

SICINIUS.

Consul! What consul?

MENENIUS.

The consul Coriolanus.

BRUTUS.

He consul!

PLEBEIANS.

No, no, no, no, no.

MENENIUS.

If, by the tribunes' leave, and yours, good people,
I may be heard, I would crave a word or two;
The which shall turn you to no further harm
Than so much loss of time.

SICINIUS.

Speak briefly, then,
For we are peremptory to dispatch
This viperous traitor; to eject him hence
Were but one danger, and to keep him here
Our certain death; therefore it is decreed
He dies to-night.

MENENIUS.

Now the good gods forbid

That our renowned Rome, whose gratitude
Towards her deserved children is enroll'd
In Jove's own book, like an unnatural dam
Should now eat up her own!

SICINIUS.

He's a disease that must be cut away.

MENENIUS.
O, he's a limb that has but a disease-
Mortal, to cut it off: to cure it, easy.
What has he done to Rome that's worthy death?
Killing our enemies, the blood he hath lost-
Which I dare vouch is more than that he hath
By many an ounce-he dropt it for his country;
And what is left, to lose it by his country
Were to us all that do't and suffer it
A brand to th' end o' th' world.

SICINIUS.

This is clean kam.

BRUTUS.

Merely awry. When he did love his country,

It honour'd him.

SICINIUS.

The service of the foot,

Being once gangren'd, is not then respected

For what before it was.

BRUTUS.

We'll hear no more.

Pursue him to his house and pluck him thence,

Lest his infection, being of catching nature,

Spread further.

MENENIUS.

One word more, one word

This tiger-footed rage, when it shall find

The harm of unscann'd swiftness, will, too late,

Tie leaden pounds to's heels. Proceed by process,

Lest parties-as he is belov'd-break out,

And sack great Rome with Romans.

BRUTUS.

If it were so-

SICINIUS.

What do ye talk?

Have we not had a taste of his obedience-

Our aediles smote, ourselves resisted? Come!

MENENIUS.

Consider this: he has been bred i' th' wars

Since 'a could draw a sword, and is ill school'd

In bolted language; meal and bran together

He throws without distinction. Give me leave,

I'll go to him and undertake to bring him

Where he shall answer by a lawful form,

In peace, to his utmost peril.

FIRST SENATOR.

Noble Tribunes,

It is the humane way; the other course

Will prove too bloody, and the end of it

Unknown to the beginning.

SICINIUS.

Noble Menenius,

Be you then as the people's officer.

Masters, lay down your weapons.

BRUTUS.

Go not home.

SICINIUS.

Meet on the market-place. We'll attend you there;

Where, if you bring not Marcius, we'll proceed

In our first way.

MENENIUS.

I'll bring him to you.

[To the SENATORS] Let me desire your company; he must come,
Or what is worst will follow.

FIRST SENATOR.
Pray you let's to him. *Exeunt*

SCENE II. Rome. The house of CORIOLANUS

Enter CORIOLANUS with NOBLES

CORIOLANUS.
Let them pull all about mine ears, present me
Death on the wheel or at wild horses' heels;
Or pile ten hills on the Tarpeian rock,
That the precipitation might down stretch
Below the beam of sight; yet will I still

Be thus to them.

FIRST PATRICIAN.

You do the nobler.

CORIOLANUS.

I muse my mother

Does not approve me further, who was wont

To call them woollen vassals, things created

To buy and sell with groats; to show bare heads

In congregations, to yawn, be still, and wonder,

When one but of my ordinance stood up

To speak of peace or war.

Enter VOLUMNIA

I talk of you:

Why did you wish me milder? Would you have me

False to my nature? Rather say I play

The man I am.

VOLUMNIA.

O, sir, sir, sir,

I would have had you put your power well on

Before you had worn it out.

CORIOLANUS.

Let go.

VOLUMNIA.

You might have been enough the man you are

With striving less to be so; lesser had been

The thwartings of your dispositions, if

You had not show'd them how ye were dispos'd,

Ere they lack'd power to cross you.

CORIOLANUS.

Let them hang.

VOLUMNIA.

Ay, and burn too.

Enter MENENIUS with the SENATORS

MENENIUS.

Come, come, you have been too rough, something too rough;

You must return and mend it.

FIRST SENATOR.

There's no remedy,

Unless, by not so doing, our good city

Cleave in the midst and perish.

VOLUMNIA.

Pray be counsell'd;

I have a heart as little apt as yours,

But yet a brain that leads my use of anger

To better vantage.

MENENIUS.

Well said, noble woman!

Before he should thus stoop to th' herd, but that

The violent fit o' th' time craves it as physic

For the whole state, I would put mine armour on,

Which I can scarcely bear.

CORIOLANUS.

What must I do?

MENENIUS.

Return to th' tribunes.

CORIOLANUS.

Well, what then, what then?

MENENIUS.

Repent what you have spoke.

CORIOLANUS.

For them! I cannot do it to the gods;

Must I then do't to them?

VOLUMNIA.

You are too absolute;

Though therein you can never be too noble

But when extremities speak. I have heard you say

Honour and policy, like unsever'd friends,

I' th' war do grow together; grant that, and tell me

In peace what each of them by th' other lose

That they combine not there.

CORIOLANUS.

Tush, tush!

MENENIUS.

A good demand.

VOLUMNIA.

If it be honour in your wars to seem

The same you are not, which for your best ends

You adopt your policy, how is it less or worse
That it shall hold companionship in peace
With honour as in war; since that to both
It stands in like request?

CORIOLANUS.

Why force you this?

VOLUMNIA.
Because that now it lies you on to speak
To th' people, not by your own instruction,
Nor by th' matter which your heart prompts you,
But with such words that are but roted in
Your tongue, though but bastards and syllables
Of no allowance to your bosom's truth.
Now, this no more dishonours you at all
Than to take in a town with gentle words,
Which else would put you to your fortune and
The hazard of much blood.
I would dissemble with my nature where

My fortunes and my friends at stake requir'd

I should do so in honour. I am in this

Your wife, your son, these senators, the nobles;

And you will rather show our general louts

How you can frown, than spend a fawn upon 'em

For the inheritance of their loves and safeguard

Of what that want might ruin.

MENENIUS.

Noble lady!

Come, go with us, speak fair; you may salve so,

Not what is dangerous present, but the los

Of what is past.

VOLUMNIA.

I prithee now, My son,

Go to them with this bonnet in thy hand;

And thus far having stretch'd it-here be with them-

Thy knee bussing the stones-for in such busines

Action is eloquence, and the eyes of th' ignorant

More learned than the ears-waving thy head, Which often thus correcting thy-stout heart,

Now humble as the ripest mulberry

That will not hold the handling. Or say to them

Thou art their soldier and, being bred in broils,

Hast not the soft way which, thou dost confess,

Were fit for thee to use, as they to claim,

In asking their good loves; but thou wilt frame

Thyself, forsooth, hereafter theirs, so far

As thou hast power and person.

MENENIUS.

This but done

Even as she speaks, why, their hearts were yours;

For they have pardons, being ask'd, as free

As words to little purpose.

VOLUMNIA.

Prithee now,

Go, and be rul'd; although I know thou hadst rather

Follow thine enemy in a fiery gulf

Than flatter him in a bower.

Enter COMINIUS

Here is Cominius.

COMINIUS.

I have been i' th' market-place; and, sir, 'tis fit

You make strong party, or defend yourself

By calmness or by absence; all's in anger.

MENENIUS.

Only fair speech.

COMINIUS.

I think 'twill serve, if he

Can thereto frame his spirit.

VOLUMNIA.

He must and will.

Prithee now, say you will, and go about it.

CORIOLANUS.

Must I go show them my unbarb'd sconce? Must I

With my base tongue give to my noble heart

A lie that it must bear? Well, I will do't;

Yet, were there but this single plot to lose,

This mould of Marcius, they to dust should grind it,

And throw't against the wind. To th' market-place!

You have put me now to such a part which never

I shall discharge to th' life.

COMINIUS.

Come, come, we'll prompt you.

VOLUMNIA.

I prithee now, sweet son, as thou hast said

My praises made thee first a soldier, so,

To have my praise for this, perform a part

Thou hast not done before.

CORIOLANUS.

Well, I must do't.
Away, my disposition, and possess me
Some harlot's spirit! My throat of war be turn'd,
Which quier'd with my drum, into a pipe
Small as an eunuch or the virgin voice
That babies lulls asleep! The smiles of knaves
Tent in my cheeks, and schoolboys' tears take up
The glasses of my sight! A beggar's tongue
Make motion through my lips, and my arm'd knees,
Who bow'd but in my stirrup, bend like his
That hath receiv'd an alms! I will not do't,
Lest I surcease to honour mine own truth,
And by my body's action teach my mind
A most inherent baseness.

VOLUMNIA.

At thy choice, then.
To beg of thee, it is my more dishonour

Than thou of them. Come all to ruin. Let
Thy mother rather feel thy pride than fear
Thy dangerous stoutness; for I mock at death
With as big heart as thou. Do as thou list.
Thy valiantness was mine, thou suck'dst it from me;
But owe thy pride thyself.

CORIOLANUS.

Pray be content.
Mother, I am going to the market-place;
Chide me no more. I'll mountebank their loves,
Cog their hearts from them, and come home belov'd
Of all the trades in Rome. Look, I am going.
Commend me to my wife. I'll return consul,
Or never trust to what my tongue can do
I' th' way of flattery further.

VOLUMNIA.

Do your will. *Exit*

COMINIUS. Away! The tribunes do attend you. Arm yourself
To answer mildly; for they are prepar'd
With accusations, as I hear, more strong
Than are upon you yet.

CORIOLANUS.

The word is 'mildly.' Pray you let us go.
Let them accuse me by invention; I
Will answer in mine honour.

MENENIUS.
Ay, but mildly.

CORIOLANUS.
Well, mildly be it then-mildly. *Exeunt*

SCENE III. Rome. The Forum

Enter SICINIUS and BRUTUS

BRUTUS.

In this point charge him home, that he affects

Tyrannical power. If he evade us there,

Enforce him with his envy to the people,

And that the spoil got on the Antiates

Was ne'er distributed.

Enter an AEDILE

What, will he come?

AEDILE.

He's coming.

BRUTUS.

How accompanied?

AEDILE.

With old Menenius, and those senators

That always favour'd him.

SICINIUS.

Have you a catalogue

Of all the voices that we have procur'd,

Set down by th' poll?

AEDILE.

I have; 'tis ready.

SICINIUS.

Have you corrected them by tribes?

AEDILE.

I have.

SICINIUS.

Assemble presently the people hither;

And when they hear me say 'It shall be so

I' th' right and strength o' th' commons' be it either

For death, for fine, or banishment, then let them,

If I say fine, cry 'Fine!'- if death, cry 'Death!'

Insisting on the old prerogative

And power i' th' truth o' th' cause.

AEDILE.

I shall inform them.

BRUTUS.

And when such time they have begun to cry,

Let them not cease, but with a din confus'd

Enforce the present execution

Of what we chance to sentence.

AEDILE.

Very well.

SICINIUS.

Make them be strong, and ready for this hint,

When we shall hap to give't them.

BRUTUS.

Go about it. *Exit* AEDILE

Put him to choler straight. He hath been us'd

Ever to conquer, and to have his worth

Of contradiction; being once chaf'd, he cannot

Be rein'd again to temperance; then he speaks

What's in his heart, and that is there which looks

With us to break his neck.

Enter CORIOLANUS, MENENIUS and COMINIUS, with others

SICINIUS.

Well, here he comes.

MENENIUS.

Calmly, I do beseech you.

CORIOLANUS.

Ay, as an ostler, that for th' poorest piece

Will bear the knave by th' volume. Th' honour'd gods
Keep Rome in safety, and the chairs of justice
Supplied with worthy men! plant love among's!
Throng our large temples with the shows of peace,
And not our streets with war!

FIRST SENATOR.

Amen, amen!

MENENIUS.

A noble wish.

Re-enter the.AEDILE,with the plebeians

SICINIUS.

Draw near, ye people.

AEDILE.

List to your tribunes. Audience! peace, I say!

CORIOLANUS.

First, hear me speak.

BOTH TRIBUNES.

Well, say. Peace, ho!

CORIOLANUS.
Shall I be charg'd no further than this present?

Must all determine here?

SICINIUS.
I do demand,
If you submit you to the people's voices,
Allow their officers, and are content
To suffer lawful censure for such faults
As shall be prov'd upon you.

CORIOLANUS.

I am content.

MENENIUS.

Lo, citizens, he says he is content.

The warlike service he has done, consider; think

Upon the wounds his body bears, which show

Like graves i' th' holy churchyard.

CORIOLANUS.

Scratches with briers,

Scars to move laughter only.

MENENIUS.

Consider further,

That when he speaks not like a citizen,

You find him like a soldier; do not take

His rougher accents for malicious sounds,

But, as I say, such as become a soldier

Rather than envy you.

COMINIUS.

Well, well! No more.

CORIOLANUS.

What is the matter,

That being pass'd for consul with full voice,

I am so dishonour'd that the very hour

You take it off again?

SICINIUS.

Answer to us.

CORIOLANUS.

Say then; 'tis true, I ought so.

SICINIUS.

We charge you that you have contriv'd to take

From Rome all season'd office, and to wind

Yourself into a power tyrannical;

For which you are a traitor to the people.

CORIOLANUS.

How-traitor?

MENENIUS.

Nay, temperately! Your promise.

CORIOLANUS.

The fires i' th' lowest hell fold in the people!

Call me their traitor! Thou injurious tribune!

Within thine eyes sat twenty thousand deaths,

In thy hands clutch'd as many millions, in

Thy lying tongue both numbers, I would say

'Thou liest' unto thee with a voice as free

As I do pray the gods.

SICINIUS.

Mark you this, people?

PLEBEIANS.

To th' rock, to th' rock, with him!

SICINIUS.

Peace!

We need not put new matter to his charge.

What you have seen him do and heard him speak,

Beating your officers, cursing yourselves,

Opposing laws with strokes, and here defying

Those whose great power must try him-even this,

So criminal and in such capital kind,

Deserves th' extremest death.

BRUTUS.

But since he hath

Serv'd well for Rome-

CORIOLANUS.

What do you prate of service?

BRUTUS.

I talk of that that know it.

CORIOLANUS.

You!

MENENIUS.

Is this the promise that you made your mother?

COMINIUS.

Know, I pray you-

CORIOLANUS.

I'll know no further.

Let them pronounce the steep Tarpeian death,

Vagabond exile, flaying, pent to linger

But with a grain a day, I would not buy

Their mercy at the price of one fair word,

Nor check my courage for what they can give, To have't with saying 'Good morrow.'

SICINIUS.

For that he has-

As much as in him lies-from time to time

Envied against the people, seeking means

To pluck away their power; as now at last

Given hostile strokes, and that not in the presence

Of dreaded justice, but on the ministers

That do distribute it-in the name o' th' people,

And in the power of us the tribunes, we,

Ev'n from this instant, banish him our city,

In peril of precipitation

From off the rock Tarpeian, never more

To enter our Rome gates. I' th' people's name,

I say it shall be so.

PLEBEIANS.

It shall be so, it shall be so! Let him away!

He's banish'd, and it shall be so.

COMINIUS.

Hear me, my masters and my common friends-

SICINIUS.

He's sentenc'd; no more hearing.

COMINIUS.

Let me speak.

I have been consul, and can show for Rome

Her enemies' marks upon me. I do love

My country's good with a respect more tender,

More holy and profound, than mine own life,

My dear wife's estimate, her womb's increase

And treasure of my loins. Then if I would

Speak that-

SICINIUS.

We know your drift. Speak what?

BRUTUS.

There's no more to be said, but he is banish'd,
As enemy to the people and his country.
It shall be so.

PLEBEIANS.

It shall be so, it shall be so.

CORIOLANUS.

YOU common cry of curs, whose breath I hate
As reek o' th' rotten fens, whose loves I prize
As the dead carcasses of unburied men
That do corrupt my air-I banish you.
And here remain with your uncertainty!
Let every feeble rumour shake your hearts;
Your enemies, with nodding of their plumes,
Fan you into despair! Have the power still
To banish your defenders, till at length
Your ignorance-which finds not till it feels,

Making but reservation of yourselves

Still your own foes-deliver you

As most abated captives to some nation

That won you without blows! Despising

For you the city, thus I turn my back;

There is a world elsewhere.

Exeunt CORIOLANUS,

COMINIUS, MENENIUS, with the other PATRICIANS

AEDILE.

The people's enemy is gone, is gone!

[They all shout and throw up their caps]

PLEBEIANS.

Our enemy is banish'd, he is gone! Hoo-oo!

SICINIUS.

Go see him out at gates, and follow him,

As he hath follow'd you, with all despite;

Give him deserv'd vexation. Let a guard

Attend us through the city.

PLEBEIANS.

Come, come, let's see him out at gates; come!

The gods preserve our noble tribunes! Come. *Exeunt*

ACT IV. SCENE I. Rome. Before a gate of the city

Enter CORIOLANUS, VOLUMNIA, VIRGILIA, MENENIUS, COMINIUS, with the young NOBILITY of Rome

CORIOLANUS.

Come, leave your tears; a brief farewell. The beast

With many heads butts me away. Nay, mother,

Where is your ancient courage? You were us'd

To say extremities was the trier of spirits;

That common chances common men could bear;

That when the sea was calm all boats alike

Show'd mastership in floating; fortune's blows,

When most struck home, being gentle wounded craves

A noble cunning. You were us'd to load me

With precepts that would make invincible

The heart that conn'd them.

VIRGILIA.

O heavens! O heavens!

CORIOLANUS.
Nay, I prithee, woman-

VOLUMNIA.
Now the red pestilence strike all trades in Rome,
And occupations perish!

CORIOLANUS.

What, what, what!
I shall be lov'd when I am lack'd. Nay, mother,
Resume that spirit when you were wont to say,
If you had been the wife of Hercules,
Six of his labours you'd have done, and sav'd
Your husband so much sweat. Cominius,

Droop not; adieu. Farewell, my wife, my mother.

I'll do well yet. Thou old and true Menenius,

Thy tears are salter than a younger man's

And venomous to thine eyes. My sometime General,

I have seen thee stern, and thou hast oft beheld

Heart-hard'ning spectacles; tell these sad women

'Tis fond to wail inevitable strokes,

As 'tis to laugh at 'em. My mother, you wot well

My hazards still have been your solace; and

Believe't not lightly-though I go alone,

Like to a lonely dragon, that his fen

Makes fear'd and talk'd of more than seen-your son

Will or exceed the common or be caught

With cautelous baits and practice.

VOLUMNIA.

My first son,

Whither wilt thou go? Take good Cominius

With thee awhile; determine on some course

More than a wild exposture to each chance

That starts i' th' way before thee.

VIRGILIA.

O the gods!

COMINIUS.

I'll follow thee a month, devise with the
Where thou shalt rest, that thou mayst hear of us,
And we of thee; so, if the time thrust forth
A cause for thy repeal, we shall not send
O'er the vast world to seek a single man,
And lose advantage, which doth ever cool
I' th' absence of the needer.

CORIOLANUS.

Fare ye well;
Thou hast years upon thee, and thou art too full
Of the wars' surfeits to go rove with one
That's yet unbruis'd; bring me but out at gate.
Come, my sweet wife, my dearest mother, and
My friends of noble touch; when I am forth,
Bid me farewell, and smile. I pray you come.

While I remain above the ground you shall

Hear from me still, and never of me aught

But what is like me formerly.

MENENIUS.

That's worthily

As any ear can hear. Come, let's not weep.

If I could shake off but one seven years

From these old arms and legs, by the good gods,

I'd with thee every foot.

CORIOLANUS.

Give me thy hand.

Come. Exeunt

SCENE II. Rome. A street near the gate

Enter the two Tribunes, SICINIUS and BRUTUS with the AEDILE

SICINIUS.

Bid them all home; he's gone, and we'll no further.

The nobility are vex'd, whom we see have sided

In his behalf.

BRUTUS.

Now we have shown our power,

Let us seem humbler after it is done

Than when it was a-doing.

SICINIUS.

Bid them home.

Say their great enemy is gone, and they

Stand in their ancient strength.

BRUTUS.

Dismiss them home. *Exit* AEDILE

Here comes his mother.

Enter VOLUMNIA, VIRGILIA, and MENENIUS

SICINIUS.

Let's not meet her.

BRUTUS.

Why?

SICINIUS.

They say she's mad.

BRUTUS.

They have ta'en note of us; keep on your way.

VOLUMNIA.

O, Y'are well met; th' hoarded plague o' th' gods

Requite your love!

MENENIUS.

Peace, peace, be not so loud.

VOLUMNIA.

If that I could for weeping, you should hear-

Nay, and you shall hear some. *[To BRUTUS]* Will you be gone?

VIRGILIA.

[To SICINIUS] You shall stay too. I would I had the power

To say so to my husband.

SICINIUS.

Are you mankind?

VOLUMNIA.

Ay, fool; is that a shame? Note but this, fool:

Was not a man my father? Hadst thou foxship

To banish him that struck more blows for Rome

Than thou hast spoken words?

SICINIUS.

O blessed heavens!

VOLUMNIA.

Moe noble blows than ever thou wise words;

And for Rome's good. I'll tell thee what-yet go!

Nay, but thou shalt stay too. I would my son

Were in Arabia, and thy tribe before him,

His good sword in his hand.

SICINIUS.

What then?

VIRGILIA.

What then!

He'd make an end of thy posterity.

VOLUMNIA.

Bastards and all.

Good man, the wounds that he does bear for Rome!

MENENIUS.

Come, come, peace.

SICINIUS.

I would he had continued to his country

As he began, and not unknit himself

The noble knot he made.

BRUTUS.

I would he had.

VOLUMNIA.

'I would he had!' 'Twas you incens'd the rabble-

Cats that can judge as fitly of his worth

As I can of those mysteries which heaven

Will not have earth to know.

BRUTUS.

Pray, let's go.

VOLUMNIA.

Now, pray, sir, get you gone;

You have done a brave deed. Ere you go, hear this:

As far as doth the Capitol exceed

The meanest house in Rome, so far my son-

This lady's husband here, this, do you see?-

Whom you have banish'd does exceed you an.

BRUTUS.

Well, well, we'll leave you.

SICINIUS.

Why stay we to be baited

With one that wants her wits? *Exeunt* TRIBUNES

VOLUMNIA.

Take my prayers with you.

I would the gods had nothing else to do

But to confirm my curses. Could I meet 'em

But once a day, it would unclog my heart

Of what lies heavy to't.

MENENIUS.

You have told them home,

And, by my troth, you have cause. You'll sup with me?

VOLUMNIA.

Anger's my meat; I sup upon myself,

And so shall starve with feeding. Come, let's go.

Leave this faint puling and lament as I do,

In anger, Juno-like. Come, come, come.

Exeunt VOLUMNIA and VIRGILIA

MENENIUS.

Fie, fie, fie! *Exit*

SCENE III. A highway between Rome and Antium

Enter a ROMAN and a VOLSCE, meeting

ROMAN.

I know you well, sir, and you know me; your name, I

think,

is Adrian.

VOLSCE.

It is so, sir. Truly, I have forgot you.

ROMAN.

I am a Roman; and my services are, as you are, against 'em.

Know you me yet?

VOLSCE.

Nicanor? No!

ROMAN.

The same, sir.

VOLSCE.

YOU had more beard when I last saw you, but your favour is

well appear'd by your tongue. What's the news in Rome? I have a

note from the Volscian state, to find you out there. You have
well saved me a day's journey.

ROMAN.
There hath been in Rome strange insurrections: the people
against the senators, patricians, and nobles.

VOLSCE.
Hath been! Is it ended, then? Our state thinks not so; they
are in a most warlike preparation, and hope to come upon them in
the heat of their division.

ROMAN.
The main blaze of it is past, but a small thing would make
it flame again; for the nobles receive so to heart the banishment
of that worthy Coriolanus that they are in a ripe aptness to take
all power from the people, and to pluck from them their tribunes
for ever. This lies glowing, I can tell you, and is almost mature
for the violent breaking out.

VOLSCE.

Coriolanus banish'd!

ROMAN.

Banish'd, sir.

VOLSCE.

You will be welcome with this intelligence, Nicanor.

ROMAN.

The day serves well for them now. I have heard it said the

fittest time to corrupt a man's wife is when she's fall'n out

with her husband. Your noble Tullus Aufidius will appear well in

these wars, his great opposer, Coriolanus, being now in no

request of his country.

VOLSCE.

He cannot choose. I am most fortunate thus accidentally to

encounter you; you have ended my business, and I will merrily accompany you home.

ROMAN.

I shall between this and supper tell you most strange things

from Rome, all tending to the good of their adversaries. Have you

an army ready, say you?

VOLSCE.

A most royal one: the centurions and their charges,

distinctly billeted, already in th' entertainment, and to be on

foot at an hour's warning.

ROMAN.

I am joyful to hear of their readiness, and am the man,

I

think, that shall set them in present action. So, sir, heartily

well met, and most glad of your company.

VOLSCE.

You take my part from me, sir. I have the most cause to be glad of yours.

ROMAN.

Well, let us go together.

SCENE IV. Antium. Before AUFIDIUS' house

Enter CORIOLANUS, in mean apparel, disguis'd and muffled

CORIOLANUS.

A goodly city is this Antium. City,
'Tis I that made thy widows: many an heir
Of these fair edifices fore my wars
Have I heard groan and drop. Then know me not.
Lest that thy wives with spits and boys with stones,
In puny battle slay me.

Enter A CITIZEN

Save you, sir.

CITIZEN.

And you.

CORIOLANUS.

Direct me, if it be your will,

Where great Aufidius lies. Is he in Antium?

CITIZEN.

He is, and feasts the nobles of the state

At his house this night.

CORIOLANUS.

Which is his house, beseech you?

CITIZEN.

This here before you.

CORIOLANUS.

Thank you, sir; farewell. *Exit* CITIZEN

O world, thy slippery turns! Friends now fast sworn,

Whose double bosoms seems to wear one heart, Whose hours, whose bed, whose meal and exercise

Are still together, who twin, as 'twere, in love,

Unseparable, shall within this hour,

On a dissension of a doit, break out

To bitterest enmity; so fellest foes,

Whose passions and whose plots have broke their sleep

To take the one the other, by some chance,

Some trick not worth an egg, shall grow dear friends

And interjoin their issues. So with me:

My birthplace hate I, and my love's upon

This enemy town. I'll enter. If he slay me,

He does fair justice: if he give me way,

I'll do his country service.

SCENE V. Antium. AUFIDIUS' house

Music plays. *Enter* A SERVINGMAN

FIRST SERVANT.

Wine, wine, wine! What service is here! I think our

fellows are asleep. *Exit*

Enter another SERVINGMAN

SECOND SERVANT.Where's Cotus? My master calls for him.

Cotus! *Exit*

Enter CORIOLANUS

CORIOLANUS.

A goodly house. The feast smells well, but I

Appear not like a guest.

Re-enter the first SERVINGMAN

FIRST SERVANT.

What would you have, friend?

Whence are you? Here's no place for you: pray go to the door.

Exit

CORIOLANUS. I have deserv'd no better entertainment

In being Coriolanus.

Re-enter second SERVINGMAN

SECOND SERVANT.

Whence are you, sir? Has the porter his eyes in his

head that he gives entrance to such companions? Pray get you out.

CORIOLANUS.

Away!

SECOND SERVANT.

Away? Get you away.

CORIOLANUS.

Now th' art troublesome.

SECOND SERVANT.

Are you so brave? I'll have you talk'd with anon.

Enter a third SERVINGMAN. The first meets him

THIRD SERVANT.

What fellow's this?

FIRST SERVANT.

A strange one as ever I look'd on. I cannot get him

out o' th' house. Prithee call my master to him.

THIRD SERVANT.

What have you to do here, fellow? Pray you avoid the house.

CORIOLANUS.

Let me but stand-I will not hurt your hearth.

THIRD SERVANT.

What are you?

CORIOLANUS.

A gentleman.

THIRD SERVANT.

A marv'llous poor one.

CORIOLANUS.

True, so I am.

THIRD SERVANT.

Pray you, poor gentleman, take up some other
station; here's no place for you. Pray you avoid. Come.

CORIOLANUS.

Follow your function, go and batten on cold bits.

[Pushes him away from him]

THIRD SERVANT.

What, you will not? Prithee tell my master what a

strange guest he has here.

SECOND SERVANT.

And I shall. *Exit*

THIRD SERVANT. Where dwell'st thou?

CORIOLANUS.

Under the canopy.

THIRD SERVANT.

Under the canopy?

CORIOLANUS.

Ay.

THIRD SERVANT.

Where's that?

CORIOLANUS.

I' th' city of kites and crows.

THIRD SERVANT.

I' th' city of kites and crows!

What an ass it is! Then thou dwell'st with daws too?

CORIOLANUS.

No, I serve not thy master.

THIRD SERVANT.

How, sir! Do you meddle with my master?

CORIOLANUS.

Ay; 'tis an honester service than to meddle with thy

mistress. Thou prat'st and prat'st; serve with thy trencher;
hence! *[Beats him away]*

Enter AUFIDIUS with the second SERVINGMAN

AUFIDIUS.
Where is this fellow?

SECOND SERVANT.
Here, sir; I'd have beaten him like a dog, but for
disturbing the lords within.

AUFIDIUS.

Whence com'st thou? What wouldst thou? Thy name?
Why speak'st not? Speak, man. What's thy name?

CORIOLANUS.
[Unmuffling] If, Tullus,
Not yet thou know'st me, and, seeing me, dost not
Think me for the man I am, necessity

Commands me name myself.

AUFIDIUS.

What is thy name?

CORIOLANUS.

A name unmusical to the Volscians' ears,

And harsh in sound to thine.

AUFIDIUS.

Say, what's thy name?

Thou has a grim appearance, and thy face

Bears a command in't; though thy tackle's torn,

Thou show'st a noble vessel. What's thy name?

CORIOLANUS.

Prepare thy brow to frown-know'st thou me yet?

AUFIDIUS.

I know thee not. Thy name?

CORIOLANUS.

My name is Caius Marcius, who hath done

To thee particularly, and to all the Volsces,

Great hurt and mischief; thereto witness may

My surname, Coriolanus. The painful service,

The extreme dangers, and the drops of blood

Shed for my thankless country, are requited

But with that surname-a good memory

And witness of the malice and displeasure

Which thou shouldst bear me. Only that name remains;

The cruelty and envy of the people,

Permitted by our dastard nobles, who

Have all forsook me, hath devour'd the rest,

An suffer'd me by th' voice of slaves to be

Whoop'd out of Rome. Now this extremity

Hath brought me to thy hearth; not out of hope,

Mistake me not, to save my life; for if

I had fear'd death, of all the men i' th' world

I would have 'voided thee; but in mere spite, To be full quit of those my banishers,

Stand I before thee here. Then if thou hast

A heart of wreak in thee, that wilt revenge

Thine own particular wrongs and stop those maims

Of shame seen through thy country, speed thee straight

And make my misery serve thy turn. So use it

That my revengeful services may prove

As benefits to thee; for I will fight

Against my cank'red country with the spleen

Of all the under fiends. But if so be

Thou dar'st not this, and that to prove more fortunes

Th'art tir'd, then, in a word, I also am

Longer to live most weary, and present

My throat to thee and to thy ancient malice;

Which not to cut would show thee but a fool,

Since I have ever followed thee with hate,

Drawn tuns of blood out of thy country's breast,

And cannot live but to thy shame, unless

It be to do thee service.

AUFIDIUS.

O Marcius, Marcius!

Each word thou hast spoke hath weeded from my heart

A root of ancient envy. If Jupiter

Should from yond cloud speak divine things,

And say "Tis true,' I'd not believe them more

Than thee, all noble Marcius. Let me twine

Mine arms about that body, where against

My grained ash an hundred times hath broke

And scarr'd the moon with splinters; here I clip

The anvil of my sword, and do contest

As hotly and as nobly with thy love

As ever in ambitious strength I did

Contend against thy valour. Know thou first,

I lov'd the maid I married; never man

Sigh'd truer breath; but that I see thee here,

Thou noble thing, more dances my rapt heart

Than when I first my wedded mistress saw

Bestride my threshold. Why, thou Mars, I tell the

We have a power on foot, and I had purpose

Once more to hew thy target from thy brawn, Or lose mine arm for't. Thou hast beat me out

Twelve several times, and I have nightly since

Dreamt of encounters 'twixt thyself and me-

We have been down together in my sleep,

Unbuckling helms, fisting each other's throat-

And wak'd half dead with nothing. Worthy Marcius,

Had we no other quarrel else to Rome but that

Thou art thence banish'd, we would muster all

From twelve to seventy, and, pouring war

Into the bowels of ungrateful Rome,

Like a bold flood o'erbeat. O, come, go in,

And take our friendly senators by th' hands,

Who now are here, taking their leaves of me

Who am prepar'd against your territories,

Though not for Rome itself.

CORIOLANUS.

You bless me, gods!

AUFIDIUS.

Therefore, most. absolute sir, if thou wilt have

The leading of thine own revenges, take

Th' one half of my commission, and set down-

As best thou art experienc'd, since thou know'st

Thy country's strength and weakness-thine own ways,

Whether to knock against the gates of Rome,

Or rudely visit them in parts remote

To fright them ere destroy. But come in;

Let me commend thee first to those that shall

Say yea to thy desires. A thousand welcomes!

And more a friend than e'er an enemy;

Yet, Marcius, that was much. Your hand; most welcome!

Exeunt CORIOLANUS and AUFIDIUS

The two SERVINGMEN come forward

FIRST SERVANT.

Here's a strange alteration!

SECOND SERVANT.

By my hand, I had thought to have strucken him with

a cudgel; and yet my mind gave me his clothes made a false report of him.

FIRST SERVANT.

What an arm he has! He turn'd me about with his
finger and his thumb, as one would set up a top.

SECOND SERVANT.
Nay, I knew by his face that there was something in
him; he had, sir, a kind of face, methought-I cannot tell how to term it.

FIRST SERVANT.
He had so, looking as it were-Would I were hang'd,
but I thought there was more in him than I could think.

SECOND SERVANT.
So did I, I'll be sworn. He is simply the rarest
man i' th' world.

FIRST SERVANT.

I think he is; but a greater soldier than he you wot on.

SECOND SERVANT.
Who, my master?

FIRST SERVANT.

Nay, it's no matter for that.

SECOND SERVANT.

Worth six on him.

FIRST SERVANT.

Nay, not so neither; but I take him to be the greater soldier.

SECOND SERVANT.

Faith, look you, one cannot tell how to say that;

for the defence of a town our general is excellent.

FIRST SERVANT.

Ay, and for an assault too.

Re-enter the third SERVINGMAN

THIRD SERVANT.

O slaves, I can tell you news-news, you rascals!

BOTH.

What, what, what? Let's partake.

THIRD SERVANT.

I would not be a Roman, of all nations;

I had as lief be a condemn'd man.

BOTH.

Wherefore? wherefore?

THIRD SERVANT.

Why, here's he that was wont to thwack our

general-

Caius Marcius.

FIRST SERVANT.

Why do you say 'thwack our general'?

THIRD SERVANT.

I do not say 'thwack our general,' but he was always
good enough for him.

SECOND SERVANT.

Come, we are fellows and friends. He was ever too
hard for him, I have heard him say so himself.

FIRST SERVANT.

He was too hard for him directly, to say the troth
on't; before Corioli he scotch'd him and notch'd him like a carbonado.

SECOND SERVANT.

An he had been cannibally given, he might have
broil'd and eaten him too.

FIRST SERVANT.

But more of thy news!

THIRD SERVANT.

Why, he is so made on here within as if he were son
and heir to Mars; set at upper end o' th' table; no question
asked him by any of the senators but they stand bald before him.
Our general himself makes a mistress of him, sanctifies himself
with's hand, and turns up the white o' th' eye to his discourse.
But the bottom of the news is, our general is cut i' th' middle
and but one half of what he was yesterday, for the other has half
by the entreaty and grant of the whole table. He'll go, he says,
and sowl the porter of Rome gates by th' ears; he will mow all
down before him, and leave his passage poll'd.

SECOND SERVANT.

And he's as like to do't as any man I can imagine.

THIRD SERVANT.
Do't! He will do't; for look you, sir, he has as
many friends as enemies; which friends, sir, as it were, durst
not-look you, sir-show themselves, as we term it, his friends,
whilst he's in directitude.

FIRST SERVANT.

Directitude? What's that?

THIRD SERVANT.

But when they shall see, sir, his crest up again and the man in blood, they will out of their burrows, like conies after rain, and revel an with him.

FIRST SERVANT.

But when goes this forward?

THIRD SERVANT.

To-morrow, to-day, presently. You shall have the drum struck up this afternoon; 'tis as it were parcel of their feast, and to be executed ere they wipe their lips.

SECOND SERVANT.

Why, then we shall have a stirring world again. This peace is nothing but to rust iron, increase tailors, and breed ballad-makers.

FIRST SERVANT.

Let me have war, say I; it exceeds peace as far as

day does night; it's spritely, waking, audible, and full of vent.

Peace is a very apoplexy, lethargy; mull'd, deaf, sleepy,

insensible; a getter of more bastard children than war's a destroyer of men.

SECOND SERVANT.

'Tis so; and as war in some sort may be said to be

a ravisher, so it cannot be denied but peace is a great maker of cuckolds.

FIRST SERVANT.

Ay, and it makes men hate one another.

THIRD SERVANT.

Reason: because they then less need one another.

The

wars for my money. I hope to see Romans as cheap as Volscians.

They are rising, they are rising.

BOTH.

In, in, in, in! *Exeunt*

SCENE VI. Rome. A public place

Enter the two Tribunes, SICINIUS and BRUTUS

SICINIUS.

We hear not of him, neither need we fear him.
His remedies are tame. The present peace
And quietness of the people, which before
Were in wild hurry, here do make his friends
Blush that the world goes well; who rather had,
Though they themselves did suffer by't, behold
Dissentious numbers pest'ring streets than see
Our tradesmen singing in their shops, and going
About their functions friendly.

Enter MENENIUS

BRUTUS.

We stood to't in good time. Is this Menenius?

SICINIUS.

'Tis he, 'tis he. O, he is grown most kind
Of late. Hail, sir!

MENENIUS.

Hail to you both!

SICINIUS.

Your Coriolanus is not much miss'd
But with his friends. The commonwealth doth stand,
And so would do, were he more angry at it.

MENENIUS.

All's well, and might have been much better
He could have temporiz'd.

SICINIUS.

Where is he, hear you?

MENENIUS.

Nay, I hear nothing; his mother and his wife

Hear nothing from him.

Enter three or four citizens

CITIZENS.

The gods preserve you both!

SICINIUS.

God-den, our neighbours.

BRUTUS.

God-den to you all, god-den to you an.

FIRST CITIZEN.

Ourselves, our wives, and children, on our knees

Are bound to pray for you both.

SICINIUS.

Live and thrive!

BRUTUS.

Farewell, kind neighbours; we wish'd Coriolanus

Had lov'd you as we did.

CITIZENS.

Now the gods keep you!

BOTH TRIBUNES.

Farewell, farewell. *Exeunt* citizens

SICINIUS.

This is a happier and more comely time

Than when these fellows ran about the streets

Crying confusion.

BRUTUS.

Caius Marcius was

A worthy officer i' the war, but insolent,
O'ercome with pride, ambitious past all thinking,
Self-loving-

SICINIUS.

And affecting one sole throne,
Without assistance.

MENENIUS.

I think not so.

SICINIUS.

We should by this, to all our lamentation,
If he had gone forth consul, found it so.

BRUTUS.

The gods have well prevented it, and Rome
Sits safe and still without him.

Enter an AEDILE

AEDILE.

Worthy tribunes,

There is a slave, whom we have put in prison,

Reports the Volsces with several powers

Are ent'red in the Roman territories,

And with the deepest malice of the war

Destroy what lies before 'em.

MENENIUS.

'Tis Aufidius,

Who, hearing of our Marcius' banishment,

Thrusts forth his horns again into the world,

Which were inshell'd when Marcius stood for Rome,

And durst not once peep out.

SICINIUS.

Come, what talk you of Marcius?

BRUTUS.

Go see this rumourer whipp'd. It cannot be

The Volsces dare break with us.

MENENIUS.

Cannot be!

We have record that very well it can;

And three examples of the like hath been

Within my age. But reason with the fellow

Before you punish him, where he heard this,

Lest you shall chance to whip your information

And beat the messenger who bids beware

Of what is to be dreaded.

SICINIUS.

Tell not me.

I know this cannot be.

BRUTUS.

Not Possible.

Enter A MESSENGER

MESSENGER.

The nobles in great earnestness are going

All to the Senate House; some news is come

That turns their countenances.

SICINIUS.

'Tis this slave-

Go whip him fore the people's eyes-his raising,

Nothing but his report.

MESSENGER.

Yes, worthy sir,

The slave's report is seconded, and more,

More fearful, is deliver'd.

SICINIUS.

What more fearful?

MESSENGER.

It is spoke freely out of many mouths-
How probable I do not know-that Marcius,
Join'd with Aufidius, leads a power 'gainst Rome,
And vows revenge as spacious as between
The young'st and oldest thing.

SICINIUS.

This is most likely!

BRUTUS.
Rais'd only that the weaker sort may wish
Good Marcius home again.

SICINIUS.
The very trick on 't.

MENENIUS.

This is unlikely.
He and Aufidius can no more atone

Than violent'st contrariety.

Enter a second MESSENGER

SECOND MESSENGER.

You are sent for to the Senate.

A fearful army, led by Caius Marcius

Associated with Aufidius, rages

Upon our territories, and have already

O'erborne their way, consum'd with fire and took

What lay before them.

Enter COMINIUS

COMINIUS.

O, you have made good work!

MENENIUS.

What news? what news?

COMINIUS.

You have holp to ravish your own daughters and
To melt the city leads upon your pates,
To see your wives dishonour'd to your noses-

MENENIUS.

What's the news? What's the news?

COMINIUS.

Your temples burned in their cement, and
Your franchises, whereon you stood, confin'd
Into an auger's bore.

MENENIUS.

Pray now, your news?
You have made fair work, I fear me. Pray, your news.
If Marcius should be join'd wi' th' Volscians-

COMINIUS.

If!

He is their god; he leads them like a thing

Made by some other deity than Nature,

That shapes man better; and they follow him

Against us brats with no less confidence

Than boys pursuing summer butterflies,

Or butchers killing flies.

MENENIUS.

You have made good work,

You and your apron men; you that stood so much

Upon the voice of occupation and

The breath of garlic-eaters!

COMINIUS.

He'll shake

Your Rome about your ears.

MENENIUS.

As Hercules

Did shake down mellow fruit. You have made fair work!

BRUTUS.

But is this true, sir?

COMINIUS.

Ay; and you'll look pale

Before you find it other. All the regions

Do smilingly revolt, and who resists

Are mock'd for valiant ignorance,

And perish constant fools. Who is't can blame him?

Your enemies and his find something in him.

MENENIUS.

We are all undone unless

The noble man have mercy.

COMINIUS.

Who shall ask it?

The tribunes cannot do't for shame; the people

Deserve such pity of him as the wolf

Does of the shepherds; for his best friends, if they

Should say 'Be good to Rome'- they charg'd him even

As those should do that had deserv'd his hate,

And therein show'd fike enemies.

MENENIUS.

'Tis true;

If he were putting to my house the brand

That should consume it, I have not the face

To say 'Beseech you, cease.' You have made fair hands,

You and your crafts! You have crafted fair!

COMINIUS.

You have brought

A trembling upon Rome, such as was never

S' incapable of help.

BOTH TRIBUNES.

Say not we brought it.

MENENIUS.

How! Was't we? We lov'd him, but, like beasts

And cowardly nobles, gave way unto your clusters,

Who did hoot him out o' th' city.

COMINIUS.

But I fear

They'll roar him in again. Tullus Aufidius,

The second name of men, obeys his points

As if he were his officer. Desperation

Is all the policy, strength, and defence,

That Rome can make against them.

Enter a troop of citizens

MENENIUS.

Here comes the clusters.

And is Aufidius with him? You are they

That made the air unwholesome when you cast

Your stinking greasy caps in hooting at

Coriolanus' exile. Now he's coming,

And not a hair upon a soldier's head

Which will not prove a whip; as many coxcombs

As you threw caps up will he tumble down,

And pay you for your voices. 'Tis no matter;

If he could burn us all into one coal

We have deserv'd it.

PLEBEIANS.

Faith, we hear fearful news.

FIRST CITIZEN.

For mine own part,

When I said banish him, I said 'twas pity.

SECOND CITIZEN.

And so did I.

THIRD CITIZEN.

And so did I; and, to say the truth, so did very many of us. That we did, we did for the best; and though we

willingly consented to his banishment, yet it was against our will.

COMINIUS.

Y'are goodly things, you voices!

MENENIUS.

You have made

Good work, you and your cry! Shall's to the Capitol?

COMINIUS.

O, ay, what else?

Exeunt COMINIUS and MENENIUS

SICINIUS.

Go, masters, get you be not dismay'd;

These are a side that would be glad to have

This true which they so seem to fear. Go home,

And show no sign of fear.

FIRST CITIZEN.

The gods be good to us! Come, masters, let's

home. I

ever said we were i' th' wrong when we banish'd him.

SECOND CITIZEN.

So did we all. But come, let's home.

Exeunt citizens

BRUTUS.

I do not like this news.

SICINIUS.

Nor I.

BRUTUS.

Let's to the Capitol. Would half my wealth

Would buy this for a lie!

SICINIUS.

Pray let's go. *Exeunt*

SCENE VII. A camp at a short distance from Rome

Enter AUFIDIUS with his LIEUTENANT

AUFIDIUS.

Do they still fly to th' Roman?

LIEUTENANT.

I do not know what witchcraft's in him, but
Your soldiers use him as the grace fore meat,
Their talk at table, and their thanks at end;
And you are dark'ned in this action, sir,
Even by your own.

AUFIDIUS.

I cannot help it now,
Unless by using means I lame the foot
Of our design. He bears himself more proudlier,
Even to my person, than I thought he would
When first I did embrace him; yet his nature
In that's no changeling, and I must excuse
What cannot be amended.

LIEUTENANT.

Yet I wish, sir-

I mean, for your particular-you had not

Join'd in commission with him, but either

Had borne the action of yourself, or else

To him had left it solely.

AUFIDIUS.

I understand thee well; and be thou sure,

When he shall come to his account, he knows not

What I can urge against him. Although it seems,

And so he thinks, and is no less apparent

To th' vulgar eye, that he bears all things fairly

And shows good husbandry for the Volscian state,

Fights dragon-like, and does achieve as soon

As draw his sword; yet he hath left undone

That which shall break his neck or hazard mine

Whene'er we come to our account.

LIEUTENANT.

Sir, I beseech you, think you he'll carry Rome?

AUFIDIUS.

All places yield to him ere he sits down,

And the nobility of Rome are his;

The senators and patricians love him too.

The tribunes are no soldiers, and their people

Will be as rash in the repeal as hasty

To expel him thence. I think he'll be to Rome

As is the osprey to the fish, who takes it

By sovereignty of nature. First he was

A noble servant to them, but he could not

Carry his honours even. Whether 'twas pride,

Which out of daily fortune ever taints

The happy man; whether defect of judgment,

To fail in the disposing of those chances

Which he was lord of; or whether nature,

Not to be other than one thing, not moving

From th' casque to th' cushion, but commanding peace

Even with the same austerity and garb

As he controll'd the war; but one of these-

As he hath spices of them all-not all,

For I dare so far free him-made him fear'd,

So hated, and so banish'd. But he has a merit

To choke it in the utt'rance. So our virtues

Lie in th' interpretation of the time;

And power, unto itself most commendable,

Hath not a tomb so evident as a chair

T' extol what it hath done.

One fire drives out one fire; one nail, one nail;

Rights by rights falter, strengths by strengths do fail.

Come, let's away. When, Caius, Rome is thine,

Thou art poor'st of all; then shortly art thou mine.

Exeunt

ACT V. SCENE I. Rome. A public place

Enter MENENIUS, COMINIUS, SICINIUS and BRUTUS, the two Tribunes, with others

MENENIUS.

No, I'll not go. You hear what he hath said

Which was sometime his general, who lov'd him
In a most dear particular. He call'd me father;
But what o' that? Go, you that banish'd him:
A mile before his tent fall down, and knee
The way into his mercy. Nay, if he coy'd
To hear Cominius speak, I'll keep at home.

COMINIUS.

He would not seem to know me.

MENENIUS.
Do you hear?

COMINIUS.

Yet one time he did call me by my name.
I urg'd our old acquaintance, and the drops
That we have bled together. 'Coriolanus'
He would not answer to; forbid all names;
He was a kind of nothing, titleless,

Till he had forg'd himself a name i' th' fire

Of burning Rome.

MENENIUS.

Why, so! You have made good work.

A pair of tribunes that have wrack'd for Rome

To make coals cheap-a noble memory!

COMINIUS.

I minded him how royal 'twas to pardon

When it was less expected; he replied,

It was a bare petition of a state

To one whom they had punish'd.

MENENIUS.

Very well.

Could he say less?

COMINIUS.

I offer'd to awaken his regard

For's private friends; his answer to me was,

He could not stay to pick them in a pile

Of noisome musty chaff. He said 'twas folly,

For one poor grain or two, to leave unburnt

And still to nose th' offence.

MENENIUS.

For one poor grain or two!

I am one of those. His mother, wife, his child,

And this brave fellow too-we are the grains:

You are the musty chaff, and you are smelt

Above the moon. We must be burnt for you.

SICINIUS.

Nay, pray be patient; if you refuse your aid

In this so never-needed help, yet do not

Upbraid's with our distress. But sure, if you

Would be your country's pleader, your good tongue,

More than the instant army we can make,

Might stop our countryman.

MENENIUS.

No; I'll not meddle.

SICINIUS.

Pray you go to him.

MENENIUS.

What should I do?

BRUTUS.

Only make trial what your love can do
For Rome, towards Marcius.

MENENIUS.

Well, and say that Marcius
Return me, as Cominius is return'd,
Unheard-what then?
But as a discontented friend, grief-shot
With his unkindness? Say't be so?

SICINIUS.

Yet your good will

Must have that thanks from Rome after the measure

As you intended well.

MENENIUS.

I'll undertake't;

I think he'll hear me. Yet to bite his lip

And hum at good Cominius much unhearts me.

He was not taken well: he had not din'd;

The veins unfill'd, our blood is cold, and then

We pout upon the morning, are unapt

To give or to forgive; but when we have stuff'd

These pipes and these conveyances of our blood

With wine and feeding, we have suppler souls

Than in our priest-like fasts. Therefore I'll watch him

Till he be dieted to my request,

And then I'll set upon him.

BRUTUS.

You know the very road into his kindness
And cannot lose your way.

MENENIUS.
Good faith, I'll prove him,
Speed how it will. I shall ere long have knowledge
Of my success. *Exit*

COMINIUS. He'll never hear him.

SICINIUS.
Not?

COMINIUS.
I tell you he does sit in gold, his eye
Red as 'twould burn Rome, and his injury
The gaoler to his pity. I kneel'd before him;
'Twas very faintly he said 'Rise'; dismiss'd me
Thus with his speechless hand. What he would do,
He sent in writing after me; what he would not,
Bound with an oath to yield to his conditions;

So that all hope is vain,

Unless his noble mother and his wife,

Who, as I hear, mean to solicit him

For mercy to his country. Therefore let's hence,

And with our fair entreaties haste them on. *Exeunt*

SCENE II. The Volscian camp before Rome

Enter MENENIUS to the WATCH on guard

FIRST WATCH.

Stay. Whence are you?

SECOND WATCH.

Stand, and go back.

MENENIUS.

You guard like men, 'tis well; but, by your leave,

I am an officer of state and come

To speak with Coriolanus.

FIRST WATCH.

From whence?

MENENIUS.

From Rome.

FIRST WATCH.

YOU may not pass; you must return. Our general

Will no more hear from thence.

SECOND WATCH.

You'll see your Rome embrac'd with fire before

You'll speak with Coriolanus.

MENENIUS.

Good my friends,

If you have heard your general talk of Rome

And of his friends there, it is lots to blanks

My name hath touch'd your ears: it is Menenius.

FIRST WATCH.

Be it so; go back. The virtue of your name
Is not here passable.

MENENIUS.

I tell thee, fellow,
Thy general is my lover. I have been
The book of his good acts whence men have read
His fame unparallel'd haply amplified;
For I have ever verified my friends-
Of whom he's chief-with all the size that verity
Would without lapsing suffer. Nay, sometimes,
Like to a bowl upon a subtle ground,
I have tumbled past the throw, and in his praise
Have almost stamp'd the leasing; therefore, fellow,
I must have leave to pass.

FIRST WATCH.

Faith, sir, if you had told as many lies in his behalf
as you have uttered words in your own, you should not pass here;
no, though it were as virtuous to lie as to live chastely.

Therefore go back.

MENENIUS.
Prithee, fellow, remember my name is Menenius, always
factionary on the party of your general.

SECOND WATCH.
Howsoever you have been his liar, as you say you
have, I am one that, telling true under him, must say you cannot
pass. Therefore go back.

MENENIUS.
Has he din'd, canst thou tell? For I would not speak with
him till after dinner.

FIRST WATCH.
You are a Roman, are you?

MENENIUS.

I am as thy general is.

FIRST WATCH.

Then you should hate Rome, as he does. Can you, when
you have push'd out your gates the very defender of them, and in
a violent popular ignorance given your enemy your shield, think
to front his revenges with the easy groans of old women, the
virginal palms of your daughters, or with the palsied
intercession of such a decay'd dotant as you seem to be? Can you
think to blow out the intended fire your city is ready to flame
in with such weak breath as this? No, you are deceiv'd; therefore
back to Rome and prepare for your execution. You are
condemn'd;
our general has sworn you out of reprieve and pardon.

MENENIUS.

Sirrah, if thy captain knew I were here, he would use me with estimation.

FIRST WATCH.

Come, my captain knows you not.

MENENIUS.

I mean thy general.

FIRST WATCH.

My general cares not for you. Back, I say; go,

lest I

let forth your half pint of blood. Back-that's the utmost of

your having. Back.

MENENIUS.

Nay, but fellow, fellow-

Enter CORIOLANUS with AUFIDIUS

CORIOLANUS.

What's the matter?

MENENIUS.

Now, you companion, I'll say an errand for you; you shall

know now that I am in estimation; you shall perceive that a Jack

guardant cannot office me from my son Coriolanus. Guess but by my
entertainment with him if thou stand'st not i' th' state of
hanging, or of some death more long in spectatorship and crueller
in suffering; behold now presently, and swoon for what's to come
upon thee. The glorious gods sit in hourly synod about thy
particular prosperity, and love thee no worse than thy old father
Menenius does! O my son! my son! thou art preparing fire for us;
look thee, here's water to quench it. I was hardly moved to come
to thee; but being assured none but myself could move thee, I
have been blown out of your gates with sighs, and conjure thee to
pardon Rome and thy petitionary countrymen. The good gods assuage
thy wrath, and turn the dregs of it upon this varlet here;
this,
who, like a block, hath denied my access to thee.

CORIOLANUS.

Away!

MENENIUS.
How! away!

CORIOLANUS.

Wife, mother, child, I know not. My affairs

Are servanted to others. Though I owe

My revenge properly, my remission lies

In Volscian breasts. That we have been familiar,

Ingrate forgetfulness shall poison rather

Than pity note how much. Therefore be gone.

Mine ears against your suits are stronger than

Your gates against my force. Yet, for I lov'd thee,

Take this along; I writ it for thy sake *[Gives a letter]*

And would have sent it. Another word, Menenius,

I will not hear thee speak. This man, Aufidius,

Was my belov'd in Rome; yet thou behold'st.

AUFIDIUS.

You keep a constant temper.

Exeunt CORIOLANUS and Aufidius

FIRST WATCH.

Now, sir, is your name Menenius?

SECOND WATCH.

'Tis a spell, you see, of much power! You know the way home again.

FIRST WATCH.

Do you hear how we are shent for keeping your greatness back?

SECOND WATCH.

What cause, do you think, I have to swoon?

MENENIUS.

I neither care for th' world nor your general; for such
things as you, I can scarce think there's any, y'are so slight.

He that hath a will to die by himself fears it not from another.
Let your general do his worst. For you, be that you are,
long;
and your misery increase with your age! I say to you, as I was
said to: Away! *Exit*

FIRST WATCH. A noble fellow, I warrant him.

SECOND WATCH.

The worthy fellow is our general; he's the rock, the

oak not to be wind-shaken. *Exeunt*

SCENE III. The tent of CORIOLANUS

Enter CORIOLANUS, AUFIDIUS, and others

CORIOLANUS.

We will before the walls of Rome to-morrow
Set down our host. My partner in this action,
You must report to th' Volscian lords how plainly
I have borne this business.

AUFIDIUS.

Only their ends
You have respected; stopp'd your ears against
The general suit of Rome; never admitted

A private whisper-no, not with such friends

That thought them sure of you.

CORIOLANUS.

This last old man,

Whom with crack'd heart I have sent to Rome,

Lov'd me above the measure of a father;

Nay, godded me indeed. Their latest refuge

Was to send him; for whose old love I have-

Though I show'd sourly to him-once more offer'd

The first conditions, which they did refuse

And cannot now accept. To grace him only,

That thought he could do more, a very little

I have yielded to; fresh embassies and suits,

Nor from the state nor private friends, hereafter

Will I lend ear to. *[Shout within]* Ha! what shout is this?

Shall I be tempted to infringe my vow

In the same time 'tis made? I will not.

Enter , in mourning habits, VIRGILIA, VOLUMNIA, VALERIA,

YOUNG MARCIUS, with attendants

My wife comes foremost, then the honour'd mould
Wherein this trunk was fram'd, and in her hand
The grandchild to her blood. But out, affection!
All bond and privilege of nature, break!

Let it be virtuous to be obstinate.
What is that curtsy worth? or those doves' eyes,
Which can make gods forsworn? I melt, and am not
Of stronger earth than others. My mother bows,
As if Olympus to a molehill should
In supplication nod; and my young boy
Hath an aspect of intercession which
Great nature cries 'Deny not.' Let the Volsces
Plough Rome and harrow Italy; I'll never
Be such a gosling to obey instinct, but stand
As if a man were author of himself
And knew no other kin.

VIRGILIA.

My lord and husband!

CORIOLANUS.

These eyes are not the same I wore in Rome.

VIRGILIA.

The sorrow that delivers us thus chang'd

Makes you think so.

CORIOLANUS.

Like a dull actor now

I have forgot my part and I am out,

Even to a full disgrace. Best of my flesh,

Forgive my tyranny; but do not say,

For that, 'Forgive our Romans.' O, a kiss

Long as my exile, sweet as my revenge!

Now, by the jealous queen of heaven, that kiss

I carried from thee, dear, and my true lip

Hath virgin'd it e'er since. You gods! I prate,

And the most noble mother of the world

Leave unsaluted. Sink, my knee, i' th' earth; *[Kneels]*

Of thy deep duty more impression show

Than that of common sons.

VOLUMNIA.

O, stand up blest!

Whilst with no softer cushion than the flint

I kneel before thee, and unproperly

Show duty, as mistaken all this while

Between the child and parent. *[Kneels]*

CORIOLANUS.

What's this?

Your knees to me, to your corrected son?

Then let the pebbles on the hungry beach

Fillip the stars; then let the mutinous winds

Strike the proud cedars 'gainst the fiery sun,

Murd'ring impossibility, to make

What cannot be slight work.

VOLUMNIA.

Thou art my warrior;

I holp to frame thee. Do you know this lady?

CORIOLANUS.

The noble sister of Publicola,

The moon of Rome, chaste as the icicle

That's curdied by the frost from purest snow,

And hangs on Dian's temple-dear Valeria!

VOLUMNIA.

This is a poor epitome of yours,

Which by th' interpretation of full time

May show like all yourself.

CORIOLANUS.

The god of soldiers,

With the consent of supreme Jove, inform

Thy thoughts with nobleness, that thou mayst prove

To shame unvulnerable, and stick i' th' wars

Like a great sea-mark, standing every flaw,

And saving those that eye thee!

VOLUMNIA.

Your knee, sirrah.

CORIOLANUS.
That's my brave boy.

VOLUMNIA.
Even he, your wife, this lady, and myself,
Are suitors to you.

CORIOLANUS.

I beseech you, peace!
Or, if you'd ask, remember this before:
The thing I have forsworn to grant may never
Be held by you denials. Do not bid me
Dismiss my soldiers, or capitulate
Again with Rome's mechanics. Tell me not
Wherein I seem unnatural; desire not
T'allay my rages and revenges with

Your colder reasons.

VOLUMNIA.

O, no more, no more!

You have said you will not grant us any thing-

For we have nothing else to ask but that

Which you deny already; yet we will ask,

That, if you fail in our request, the blame

May hang upon your hardness; therefore hear us.

CORIOLANUS.

Aufidius, and you Volsces, mark; for we'll

Hear nought from Rome in private. Your request?

VOLUMNIA.

Should we be silent and not speak, our raiment

And state of bodies would bewray what life

We have led since thy exile. Think with thyself

How more unfortunate than all living women

Are we come hither; since that thy sight, which should

Make our eyes flow with joy, hearts dance with comforts, Constrains them weep and shake with fear and sorrow,

Making the mother, wife, and child, to see

The son, the husband, and the father, tearing

His country's bowels out. And to poor we

Thine enmity's most capital: thou bar'st us

Our prayers to the gods, which is a comfort

That all but we enjoy. For how can we,

Alas, how can we for our country pray,

Whereto we are bound, together with thy victory,

Whereto we are bound? Alack, or we must lose

The country, our dear nurse, or else thy person,

Our comfort in the country. We must find

An evident calamity, though we had

Our wish, which side should win; for either thou

Must as a foreign recreant be led

With manacles through our streets, or else

Triumphantly tread on thy country's ruin,

And bear the palm for having bravely shed

Thy wife and children's blood. For myself, son,

I purpose not to wait on fortune till

These wars determine; if I can not persuade thee

Rather to show a noble grace to both parts
Than seek the end of one, thou shalt no sooner
March to assault thy country than to tread-
Trust to't, thou shalt not-on thy mother's womb
That brought thee to this world.

VIRGILIA.

Ay, and mine,
That brought you forth this boy to keep your name
Living to time.

BOY.

'A shall not tread on me!
I'll run away till I am bigger, but then I'll fight.

CORIOLANUS.

Not of a woman's tenderness to be
Requires nor child nor woman's face to see.
I have sat too long. *[Rising]*

VOLUMNIA.

Nay, go not from us thus.

If it were so that our request did tend

To save the Romans, thereby to destroy

The Volsces whom you serve, you might condemn us

As poisonous of your honour. No, our suit

Is that you reconcile them: while the Volsces

May say 'This mercy we have show'd,' the Romans

'This we receiv'd,' and each in either side

Give the all-hail to thee, and cry 'Be blest

For making up this peace!' Thou know'st, great son,

The end of war's uncertain; but this certain,

That, if thou conquer Rome, the benefit

Which thou shalt thereby reap is such a name

Whose repetition will be dogg'd with curses;

Whose chronicle thus writ: 'The man was noble,

But with his last attempt he wip'd it out,

Destroy'd his country, and his name remains

To th' ensuing age abhorr'd.' Speak to me, son.

Thou hast affected the fine strains of honour,

To imitate the graces of the gods,

To tear with thunder the wide cheeks o' th' air,

And yet to charge thy sulphur with a bolt

That should but rive an oak. Why dost not speak?

Think'st thou it honourable for a noble man

Still to remember wrongs? Daughter, speak you:

He cares not for your weeping. Speak thou, boy;

Perhaps thy childishness will move him more

Than can our reasons. There's no man in the world

More bound to's mother, yet here he lets me prate

Like one i' th' stocks. Thou hast never in thy life

Show'd thy dear mother any courtesy,

When she, poor hen, fond of no second brood,

Has cluck'd thee to the wars, and safely home

Loaden with honour. Say my request's unjust,

And spurn me back; but if it he not so,

Thou art not honest, and the gods will plague thee,

That thou restrain'st from me the duty which

To a mother's part belongs. He turns away.

Down, ladies; let us shame him with our knees.

To his surname Coriolanus 'longs more pride

Than pity to our prayers. Down. An end;

This is the last. So we will home to Rome,
And die among our neighbours. Nay, behold's!
This boy, that cannot tell what he would have
But kneels and holds up hands for fellowship,
Does reason our petition with more strength
Than thou hast to deny't. Come, let us go.
This fellow had a Volscian to his mother;
His wife is in Corioli, and his child
Like him by chance. Yet give us our dispatch.
I am hush'd until our city be afire,
And then I'll speak a little.

[He holds her by the hand, silent]

CORIOLANUS.
O mother, mother!
What have you done? Behold, the heavens do ope,
The gods look down, and this unnatural scene
They laugh at. O my mother, mother! O!
You have won a happy victory to Rome;
But for your son-believe it, O, believe it!-

Most dangerously you have with him prevail'd,
If not most mortal to him. But let it come.
Aufidius, though I cannot make true wars,
I'll frame convenient peace. Now, good Aufidius,
Were you in my stead, would you have heard
A mother less, or granted less, Aufidius?

AUFIDIUS.
I was mov'd withal.

CORIOLANUS.

I dare be sworn you were!
And, sir, it is no little thing to make
Mine eyes to sweat compassion. But, good sir,
What peace you'fl make, advise me. For my part,
I'll not to Rome, I'll back with you; and pray you
Stand to me in this cause. O mother! wife!

AUFIDIUS.
[Aside] I am glad thou hast set thy mercy and thy honour

At difference in thee. Out of that I'll work
Myself a former fortune.

CORIOLANUS.

[To the ladies] Ay, by and by;
But we will drink together; and you shall bear
A better witness back than words, which we,
On like conditions, will have counter-seal'd.
Come, enter with us. Ladies, you deserve
To have a temple built you. All the swords
In Italy, and her confederate arms,
Could not have made this peace. *Exeunt*

SCENE IV. Rome. A public place

Enter MENENIUS and SICINIUS

MENENIUS.

See you yond coign o' th' Capitol, yond cornerstone?

SICINIUS.

Why, what of that?

MENENIUS.

If it be possible for you to displace it with your little
finger, there is some hope the ladies of Rome, especially his
mother, may prevail with him. But I say there is no hope
in't;
our throats are sentenc'd, and stay upon execution.

SICINIUS.

Is't possible that so short a time can alter the condition of a man?

MENENIUS.

There is differency between a grub and a butterfly; yet
your butterfly was a grub. This Marcius is grown from man to
dragon; he has wings, he's more than a creeping thing.

SICINIUS.

He lov'd his mother dearly.

MENENIUS.
So did he me; and he no more remembers his mother now
than an eight-year-old horse. The tartness of his face sours ripe
grapes; when he walks, he moves like an engine and the ground
shrinks before his treading. He is able to pierce a corslet with
his eye, talks like a knell, and his hum is a battery. He sits in
his state as a thing made for Alexander. What he bids be done is
finish'd with his bidding. He wants nothing of a god but
eternity, and a heaven to throne in.

SICINIUS.
Yes-mercy, if you report him truly.

MENENIUS.
I paint him in the character. Mark what mercy his mother
shall bring from him. There is no more mercy in him than there is
milk in a male tiger; that shall our poor city find. And all this is 'long of you.

SICINIUS.

The gods be good unto us!

MENENIUS.

No, in such a case the gods will not be good unto us.
When we banish'd him we respected not them; and, he returning to break our necks, they respect not us.

Enter a MESSENGER

MESSENGER.
Sir, if you'd save your life, fly to your house.
The plebeians have got your fellow tribune
And hale him up and down; all swearing if
The Roman ladies bring not comfort home
They'll give him death by inches.

Enter another MESSENGER

SICINIUS.
What's the news?

SECOND MESSENGER.

Good news, good news! The ladies have prevail'd,

The Volscians are dislodg'd, and Marcius gone.

A merrier day did never yet greet Rome,

No, not th' expulsion of the Tarquins.

SICINIUS.

Friend,

Art thou certain this is true? Is't most certain?

SECOND MESSENGER.

As certain as I know the sun is fire.

Where have you lurk'd, that you make doubt of it?

Ne'er through an arch so hurried the blown tide

As the recomforted through th' gates. Why, hark you!

[Trumpets, hautboys, drums beat, all together]

The trumpets, sackbuts, psalteries, and fifes,

Tabors and cymbals, and the shouting Romans, Make the sun dance. Hark you! *[A shout within]*

MENENIUS.

This is good news.

I will go meet the ladies. This Volumnia

Is worth of consuls, senators, patricians,

A city full; of tribunes such as you,

A sea and land full. You have pray'd well to-day:

This morning for ten thousand of your throats

I'd not have given a doit. Hark, how they joy!

[Sound still with the shouts]

SICINIUS.

First, the gods bless you for your tidings; next,

Accept my thankfulness.

SECOND MESSENGER.

Sir, we have all

Great cause to give great thanks.

SICINIUS.

They are near the city?

MESSENGER.

Almost at point to enter.

SICINIUS.

We'll meet them,

And help the joy. *Exeunt*

SCENE V. Rome. A street near the gate

Enter two SENATORS With VOLUMNIA, VIRGILIA, VALERIA, passing over the stage,

'With other LORDS

FIRST SENATOR.

Behold our patroness, the life of Rome!

Call all your tribes together, praise the gods,

And make triumphant fires; strew flowers before them.

Unshout the noise that banish'd Marcius,

Repeal him with the welcome of his mother;

ALL.

Welcome, ladies, welcome!

[A flourish with drums and trumpets. Exeunt]

SCENE VI. Corioli. A public place

Enter TULLUS AUFIDIUS with attendents

AUFIDIUS.

Go tell the lords o' th' city I am here;

Deliver them this paper' having read it,

Bid them repair to th' market-place, where I,

Even in theirs and in the commons' ears,

Will vouch the truth of it. Him I accuse

The city ports by this hath enter'd and

Intends t' appear before the people, hoping

To purge himself with words. Dispatch.

Exeunt attendants

Enter three or four CONSPIRATORS of AUFIDIUS' faction

Most welcome!

FIRST CONSPIRATOR.

How is it with our general?

AUFIDIUS.

Even so

As with a man by his own alms empoison'd,

And with his charity slain.

SECOND CONSPIRATOR.

Most noble sir,

If you do hold the same intent wherein

You wish'd us parties, we'll deliver you

Of your great danger.

AUFIDIUS.

Sir, I cannot tell;

We must proceed as we do find the people.

THIRD CONSPIRATOR.

The people will remain uncertain whilst

'Twixt you there's difference; but the fall of either

Makes the survivor heir of all.

AUFIDIUS.

I know it;

And my pretext to strike at him admits

A good construction. I rais'd him, and I pawn'd

Mine honour for his truth; who being so heighten'd,

He watered his new plants with dews of flattery,

Seducing so my friends; and to this end

He bow'd his nature, never known before

But to be rough, unswayable, and free.

THIRD CONSPIRATOR.

Sir, his stoutness

When he did stand for consul, which he lost

By lack of stooping-

AUFIDIUS.

That I would have spoken of.

Being banish'd for't, he came unto my hearth,

Presented to my knife his throat. I took him;

Made him joint-servant with me; gave him way

In all his own desires; nay, let him choose

Out of my files, his projects to accomplish,

My best and freshest men; serv'd his designments

In mine own person; holp to reap the fame

Which he did end all his, and took some pride

To do myself this wrong. Till, at the last,

I seem'd his follower, not partner; and

He wag'd me with his countenance as if

I had been mercenary.

FIRST CONSPIRATOR.

So he did, my lord.

The army marvell'd at it; and, in the last, When he had carried Rome and that we look'd

For no less spoil than glory-

AUFIDIUS.

There was it;

For which my sinews shall be stretch'd upon him.

At a few drops of women's rheum, which are

As cheap as lies, he sold the blood and labour

Of our great action; therefore shall he die,

And I'll renew me in his fall. But, hark!

[Drums and

trumpets sound, with great shouts of the people]

FIRST CONSPIRATOR.

Your native town you enter'd like a post,

And had no welcomes home; but he returns

Splitting the air with noise.

SECOND CONSPIRATOR.

And patient fools,

Whose children he hath slain, their base throats tear

With giving him glory.

THIRD CONSPIRATOR.
Therefore, at your vantage,
Ere he express himself or move the people
With what he would say, let him feel your sword,
Which we will second. When he lies along,
After your way his tale pronounc'd shall bury
His reasons with his body.

AUFIDIUS.

Say no more:
Here come the lords.

Enter the LORDS of the city

LORDS.
You are most welcome home.

AUFIDIUS.

I have not deserv'd it.

But, worthy lords, have you with heed perused

What I have written to you?

LORDS.

We have.

FIRST LORD.

And grieve to hear't.

What faults he made before the last, I think

Might have found easy fines; but there to end

Where he was to begin, and give away

The benefit of our levies, answering us

With our own charge, making a treaty where

There was a yielding-this admits no excuse.

AUFIDIUS.

He approaches; you shall hear him.

Enter CORIOLANUS, marching with drum and colours;

the commoners being with him

CORIOLANUS.

Hail, lords! I am return'd your soldier;

No more infected with my country's love

Than when I parted hence, but still subsisting

Under your great command. You are to know

That prosperously I have attempted, and

With bloody passage led your wars even to

The gates of Rome. Our spoils we have brought home

Doth more than counterpoise a full third part

The charges of the action. We have made peace

With no less honour to the Antiates

Than shame to th' Romans; and we here deliver,

Subscrib'd by th' consuls and patricians,

Together with the seal o' th' Senate, what

We have compounded on.

AUFIDIUS.

Read it not, noble lords;

But tell the traitor in the highest degree

He hath abus'd your powers.

CORIOLANUS.

Traitor! How now?

AUFIDIUS.

Ay, traitor, Marcius.

CORIOLANUS.

Marcius!

AUFIDIUS.

Ay, Marcius, Caius Marcius! Dost thou think

I'll grace thee with that robbery, thy stol'n name

Coriolanus, in Corioli?

You lords and heads o' th' state, perfidiously

He has betray'd your business and given up,

For certain drops of salt, your city Rome-

I say your city-to his wife and mother;

Breaking his oath and resolution like
A twist of rotten silk; never admitting
Counsel o' th' war; but at his nurse's tears
He whin'd and roar'd away your victory,
That pages blush'd at him, and men of heart
Look'd wond'ring each at others.

CORIOLANUS.
Hear'st thou, Mars?

AUFIDIUS.
Name not the god, thou boy of tears-

CORIOLANUS.
Ha!

AUFIDIUS.

-no more.

CORIOLANUS.

Measureless liar, thou hast made my heart

Too great for what contains it. 'Boy'! O slave!

Pardon me, lords, 'tis the first time that ever

I was forc'd to scold. Your judgments, my grave lords,

Must give this cur the lie; and his own notion-

Who wears my stripes impress'd upon him, that

Must bear my beating to his grave-shall join

To thrust the lie unto him.

FIRST LORD.

Peace, both, and hear me speak.

CORIOLANUS.

Cut me to pieces, Volsces; men and lads,

Stain all your edges on me. 'Boy'! False hound!

If you have writ your annals true, 'tis there

That, like an eagle in a dove-cote, I

Flutter'd your Volscians in Corioli.

Alone I did it. 'Boy'!

AUFIDIUS.

Why, noble lords,

Will you be put in mind of his blind fortune,

Which was your shame, by this unholy braggart,

Fore your own eyes and ears?

CONSPIRATORS.

Let him die for't.

ALL THE PEOPLE.

Tear him to pieces. Do it presently. He kill'd my

son. My daughter. He kill'd my cousin Marcus. He kill'd my father.

SECOND LORD.

Peace, ho! No outrage-peace!

The man is noble, and his fame folds in

This orb o' th' earth. His last offences to us

Shall have judicious hearing. Stand, Aufidius,

And trouble not the peace.

CORIOLANUS.

O that I had him,

With six Aufidiuses, or more-his tribe,

To use my lawful sword!

AUFIDIUS.

Insolent villain!

CONSPIRATORS.

Kill, kill, kill, kill, kill him!

[The CONSPIRATORS draw and kill CORIOLANUS,who falls.

AUFIDIUS stands on him]

LORDS.

Hold, hold, hold, hold!

AUFIDIUS.

My noble masters, hear me speak.

FIRST LORD.

O Tullus!

SECOND LORD.

Thou hast done a deed whereat valour will weep.

THIRD LORD.

Tread not upon him. Masters all, be quiet;

Put up your swords.

AUFIDIUS.

My lords, when you shall know-as in this rage,

Provok'd by him, you cannot-the great danger

Which this man's life did owe you, you'll rejoice

That he is thus cut off. Please it your honours

To call me to your Senate, I'll deliver

Myself your loyal servant, or endure

Your heaviest censure.

FIRST LORD.

Bear from hence his body,
And mourn you for him. Let him be regarded
As the most noble corse that ever herald
Did follow to his um.

SECOND LORD.
His own impatience
Takes from Aufidius a great part of blame.
Let's make the best of it.

AUFIDIUS.
My rage is gone,
And I am struck with sorrow. Take him up.

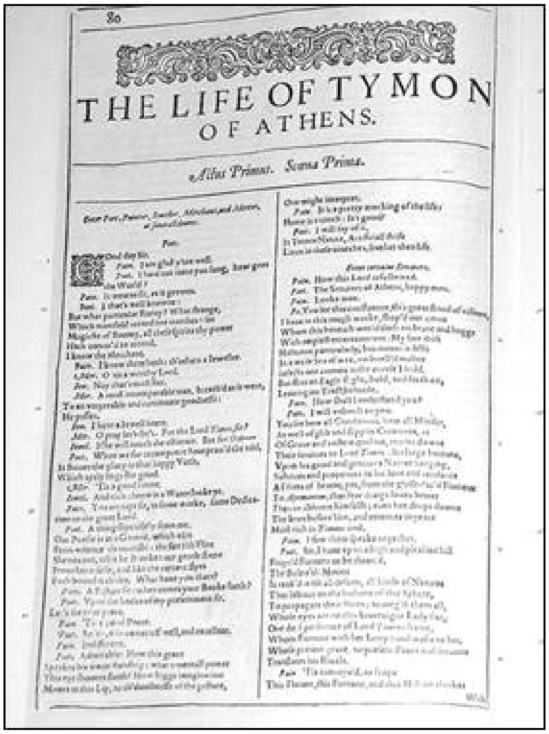
Help, three o' th' chiefest soldiers; I'll be one.
Beat thou the drum, that it speak mournfully;
Trail your steel pikes. Though in this city he
Hath widowed and unchilded many a one,
Which to this hour bewail the injury,
Yet he shall have a noble memory.
Assist. Exeunt , bearing the body of CORIOLANUS

[A dead march sounded]

TIMON OF ATHENS

This lesser known play concerns the fortunes of an Athenian misanthropist. The unusual nature of the play has caused some critics to label it a tragedy and others a problem play. In the story, Timon is initially a wealthy and generous Athenian gentleman. However, later on he finds himself betrayed by his friends when he runs into financial difficulties. Eventually, he abandons city life and vows to live apart from his corrupt fellow men.

The play has caused considerable debate among scholars, due to its odd construction, with several missing parts in the text adding to the confusion. No precise date of composition can be given and critics vary from claiming *Timon of Athens* to be one of Shakespeare's first works to one of his last.



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THE LIFE OF TYMON OF ATHENS.

Actus Primus. Scæna Prima.

The 1623 First Folio

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DRAMATIS PERSONAE

TIMON of Athens

LUCIUS

LUCULLUS

SEMPRONIUS

flattering lords

VENTIDIUS, one of Timon's false friends

ALCIBIADES, an Athenian captain

APEMANTUS, a churlish philosopher

FLAVIUS, steward to Timon

FLAMINIUS

LUCILIUS

SERVILIUS

Timon's servants

CAPHIS

PHILOTUS

TITUS

HORTENSIUS

servants to Timon's creditors

POET PAINTER JEWELLER MERCHANT MERCER AN OLD ATHENIAN THREE STRANGERS A PAGE A FOOL

PHRYNIA

TIMANDRA

mistresses to Alcibiades

CUPID

AMAZONS

in the Masque

Lords, Senators, Officers, Soldiers, Servants, Thieves, and Attendants

SCENE: Athens and the neighbouring woods

Illustration from ‘Tales from Shakespeare’ , McLoughlin Bros., 1890

ACT I. SCENE I. Athens. TIMON'S house

Enter POET, PAINTER, JEWELLER, MERCHANT, and MERCER, at several doors

POET.

Good day, sir.

PAINTER.

I am glad y'are well.

POET.

I have not seen you long; how goes the world?

PAINTER.

It wears, sir, as it grows.

POET.

Ay, that's well known.
But what particular rarity? What strange,
Which manifold record not matches? See,
Magic of bounty, all these spirits thy power
Hath conjur'd to attend! I know the merchant.

PAINTER.

I know them both; th' other's a jeweller.

MERCHANT.

O, 'tis a worthy lord!

JEWELLER.

Nay, that's most fix'd.

MERCHANT.

A most incomparable man; breath'd, as it were,
To an untirable and continuate goodness.
He passes.

JEWELLER.

I have a jewel here-

MERCHANT.

O, pray let's see't. For the Lord Timon, sir?

JEWELLER.

If he will touch the estimate. But for that-

POET.

When we for recompense have prais'd the vile,
It stains the glory in that happy verse
Which aptly sings the good.

MERCHANT.

[Looking at the jewel] 'Tis a good form.

JEWELLER.

And rich. Here is a water, look ye.

PAINTER.

You are rapt, sir, in some work, some dedication
To the great lord.

POET.

A thing slipp'd idly from me.
Our poesy is as a gum, which oozes
From whence 'tis nourish'd. The fire i' th' flint

Shows not till it be struck: our gentle flame

Provokes itself, and like the current flies

Each bound it chafes. What have you there?

PAINTER.

A picture, sir. When comes your book forth?

POET.

Upon the heels of my presentment, sir.

Let's see your piece.

PAINTER.

'Tis a good piece.

POET.

So 'tis; this comes off well and excellent.

PAINTER.

Indifferent.

POET.

Admirable. How this grace

Speaks his own standing! What a mental power

This eye shoots forth! How big imagination

Moves in this lip! To th' dumbness of the gesture

One might interpret.

PAINTER.

It is a pretty mocking of the life.

Here is a touch; is't good?

POET.

I will say of it

It tutors nature. Artificial strife

Lives in these touches, livelier than life.

Enter certain SENATORS, and pass over

PAINTER.

How this lord is followed!

POET.

The senators of Athens-happy man!

PAINTER.

Look, moe!

POET.

You see this confluence, this great flood of visitors.
I have in this rough work shap'd out a man
Whom this beneath world doth embrace and hug
With amplest entertainment. My free drift
Halts not particularly, but moves itself
In a wide sea of tax. No levell'd malice
Infects one comma in the course I hold,
But flies an eagle flight, bold and forth on,
Leaving no tract behind.

PAINTER.

How shall I understand you?

POET.

I will unbolt to you.

You see how all conditions, how all minds-

As well of glib and slipp'ry creatures as

Of grave and austere quality, tender down

Their services to Lord Timon. His large fortune,

Upon his good and gracious nature hanging,

Subdues and properties to his love and tendance

All sorts of hearts; yea, from the glass-fac'd flatterer

To Apemantus, that few things loves better

Than to abhor himself; even he drops down

The knee before him, and returns in peace

Most rich in Timon's nod.

PAINTER.

I saw them speak together.

POET.

Sir, I have upon a high and pleasant hill

Feign'd Fortune to be thron'd. The base o' th' mount

Is rank'd with all deserts, all kind of natures

That labour on the bosom of this sphere

To propagate their states. Amongst them all

Whose eyes are on this sovereign lady fix'd

One do I personate of Lord Timon's frame,

Whom Fortune with her ivory hand wafts to her;

Whose present grace to present slaves and servants

Translates his rivals.

PAINTER.

'Tis conceiv'd to scope.

This throne, this Fortune, and this hill, methinks,

With one man beckon'd from the rest below,

Bowing his head against the steepy mount

To climb his happiness, would be well express'd

In our condition.

POET.

Nay, sir, but hear me on.

All those which were his fellows but of late-

Some better than his value-on the moment

Follow his strides, his lobbies fill with tendance,

Rain sacrificial whisperings in his ear,

Make sacred even his stirrup, and through him

Drink the free air.

PAINTER.

Ay, marry, what of these?

POET.

When Fortune in her shift and change of mood

Spurns down her late beloved, all his dependants,

Which labour'd after him to the mountain's top

Even on their knees and hands, let him slip down,

Not one accompanying his declining foot.

PAINTER.

'Tis common.
A thousand moral paintings I can show
That shall demonstrate these quick blows of Fortune's
More pregnantly than words. Yet you do well
To show Lord Timon that mean eyes have seen
The foot above the head.

Trumpets sound. *Enter* TIMON, addressing himself
courteously to every suitor, a MESSENGER from
VENTIDIUS talking with him; LUCILIUS and other servants following

TIMON.

Imprison'd is he, say you?

MESSENGER.

Ay, my good lord. Five talents is his debt;
His means most short, his creditors most strait.
Your honourable letter he desires
To those have shut him up; which failing,
Periods his comfort.

TIMON.

Noble Ventidius! Well.
I am not of that feather to shake of
My friend when he must need me. I do know him
A gentleman that well deserves a help,
Which he shall have. I'll pay the debt, and free him.

MESSENGER.
Your lordship ever binds him.

TIMON.
Commend me to him; I will send his ransom;
And being enfranchis'd, bid him come to me.
'Tis not enough to help the feeble up,
But to support him after. Fare you well.

MESSENGER.
All happiness to your honour! *Exit*

Enter an OLD ATHENIAN

OLD ATHENIAN.

Lord Timon, hear me speak.

TIMON.

Freely, good father.

OLD ATHENIAN.

Thou hast a servant nam'd Lucilius.

TIMON.

I have so; what of him?

OLD ATHENIAN.

Most noble Timon, call the man before thee.

TIMON.

Attends he here, or no? Lucilius!

LUCILIUS.

Here, at your lordship's service.

OLD ATHENIAN.

This fellow here, Lord Timon, this thy creature,

By night frequents my house. I am a man

That from my first have been inclin'd to thrift,

And my estate deserves an heir more rais'd

Than one which holds a trencher.

TIMON.

Well; what further?

OLD ATHENIAN.

One only daughter have I, no kin else,

On whom I may confer what I have got.

The maid is fair, o' th' youngest for a bride,

And I have bred her at my dearest cost

In qualities of the best. This man of thine

Attempts her love; I prithee, noble lord,
Join with me to forbid him her resort;
Myself have spoke in vain.

TIMON.

The man is honest.

OLD ATHENIAN.

Therefore he will be, Timon.
His honesty rewards him in itself;
It must not bear my daughter.

TIMON.

Does she love him?

OLD ATHENIAN.

She is young and apt:
Our own precedent passions do instruct us
What levity's in youth.

TIMON.

Love you the maid?

LUCILIUS.
Ay, my good lord, and she accepts of it.

OLD ATHENIAN.
If in her marriage my consent be missing,
I call the gods to witness I will choose
Mine heir from forth the beggars of the world,
And dispossess her all.

TIMON.
How shall she be endow'd,
If she be mated with an equal husband?

OLD ATHENIAN.

Three talents on the present; in future, all.

TIMON.

This gentleman of mine hath serv'd me long;.

To build his fortune I will strain a little,

For 'tis a bond in men. Give him thy daughter:

What you bestow, in him I'll counterpoise,

And make him weigh with her.

OLD ATHENIAN.

Most noble lord,

Pawn me to this your honour, she is his.

TIMON.

My hand to thee; mine honour on my promise.

LUCILIUS.

Humbly I thank your lordship. Never may

That state or fortune fall into my keeping

Which is not owed to you!

Exeunt LUCILIUS and OLD ATHENIAN

POET.

[Presenting his poem] Vouchsafe my labour, and long live your lordship!

TIMON.

I thank you; you shall hear from me anon;

Go not away. What have you there, my friend?

PAINTER.

A piece of painting, which I do beseech

Your lordship to accept.

TIMON.

Painting is welcome.

The painting is almost the natural man;

For since dishonour traffics with man's nature,

He is but outside; these pencill'd figures are

Even such as they give out. I like your work,

And you shall find I like it; wait attendance

Till you hear further from me.

PAINTER.

The gods preserve ye!

TIMON.

Well fare you, gentleman. Give me your hand;

We must needs dine together. Sir, your jewel

Hath suffered under praise.

JEWELLER.

What, my lord! Dispraise?

TIMON.

A mere satiety of commendations;

If I should pay you for't as 'tis extoll'd,

It would unclew me quite.

JEWELLER.

My lord, 'tis rated

As those which sell would give; but you well know

Things of like value, differing in the owners, Are prized by their masters. Believe't, dear lord,

You mend the jewel by the wearing it.

TIMON.

Well mock'd.

Enter APEMANTUS

MERCHANT.

No, my good lord; he speaks the common tongue,

Which all men speak with him.

TIMON.

Look who comes here; will you be chid?

JEWELLER.

We'll bear, with your lordship.

MERCHANT.

He'll spare none.

TIMON.

Good morrow to thee, gentle Apemantus!

APEMANTUS.

Till I be gentle, stay thou for thy good morrow;
When thou art Timon's dog, and these knaves honest.

TIMON.

Why dost thou call them knaves? Thou know'st them not.

APEMANTUS.

Are they not Athenians?

TIMON.

Yes.

APEMANTUS.

Then I repent not.

JEWELLER.

You know me, Apemantus?

APEMANTUS.

Thou know'st I do; I call'd thee by thy name.

TIMON.

Thou art proud, Apemantus.

APEMANTUS.

Of nothing so much as that I am not like Timon.

TIMON.

Whither art going?

APEMANTUS.

To knock out an honest Athenian's brains.

TIMON.

That's a deed thou't die for.

APEMANTUS.

Right, if doing nothing be death by th' law.

TIMON.

How lik'st thou this picture, Apemantus?

APEMANTUS.

The best, for the innocence.

TIMON.

Wrought he not well that painted it?

APEMANTUS.

He wrought better that made the painter; and yet he's but a filthy piece of work.

PAINTER.

Y'are a dog.

APEMANTUS.

Thy mother's of my generation; what's she, if I be a dog?

TIMON.

Wilt dine with me, Apemantus?

APEMANTUS.

No; I eat not lords.

TIMON.

An thou shouldst, thou'dst anger ladies.

APEMANTUS.

O, they eat lords; so they come by great bellies.

TIMON.

That's a lascivious apprehension.

APEMANTUS.

So thou apprehend'st it take it for thy labour.

TIMON.

How dost thou like this jewel, Apemantus?

APEMANTUS.

Not so well as plain dealing, which will not cost a man a doit.

TIMON.

What dost thou think 'tis worth?

APEMANTUS.

Not worth my thinking. How now, poet!

POET.

How now, philosopher!

APEMANTUS.

Thou liest.

POET.

Art not one?

APEMANTUS.

Yes.

POET.

Then I lie not.

APEMANTUS.

Art not a poet?

POET.

Yes.

APEMANTUS.

Then thou liest. Look in thy last work, where thou hast

feign'd him a worthy fellow.

POET.

That's not feign'd-he is so.

APEMANTUS.

Yes, he is worthy of thee, and to pay thee for thy

labour. He that loves to be flattered is worthy o' th' flatterer.

Heavens, that I were a lord!

TIMON.

What wouldst do then, Apemantus?

APEMANTUS.

E'en as Apemantus does now: hate a lord with my heart.

TIMON.

What, thyself?

APEMANTUS.

Ay.

TIMON.

Wherefore?

APEMANTUS.

That I had no angry wit to be a lord.- Art not thou a merchant?

MERCHANT.

Ay, Apemantus.

APEMANTUS.

Traffic confound thee, if the gods will not!

MERCHANT.
If traffic do it, the gods do it.

APEMANTUS.

Traffic's thy god, and thy god confound thee!
Trumpet sounds. *Enter* a MESSENGER
TIMON.

What trumpet's that?

MESSENGER.
'Tis Alcibiades, and some twenty horse,
All of companionship.

TIMON.

Pray entertain them; give them guide to us.

Exeunt some attendants

You must needs dine with me. Go not you hence

Till I have thank'd you. When dinner's done

Show me this piece. I am joyful of your sights.

Enter ALCIBIADES, with the rest

Most welcome, sir! *[They salute]*

APEMANTUS.

So, so, there!

Aches contract and starve your supple joints!

That there should be small love amongst these sweet knaves,

And all this courtesy! The strain of man's bred out

Into baboon and monkey.

ALCIBIADES.

Sir, you have sav'd my longing, and I feed

Most hungerly on your sight.

TIMON.

Right welcome, sir!

Ere we depart we'll share a bounteous time

In different pleasures. Pray you, let us in.

Exeunt all but APEMANTUS

Enter two LORDS

FIRST LORD.

What time o' day is't, Apemantus?

APEMANTUS.

Time to be honest.

FIRST LORD.

That time serves still.

APEMANTUS.

The more accursed thou that still omit'st it.

SECOND LORD.

Thou art going to Lord Timon's feast.

APEMANTUS.

Ay; to see meat fill knaves and wine heat fools.

SECOND LORD.

Fare thee well, fare thee well.

APEMANTUS.

Thou art a fool to bid me farewell twice.

SECOND LORD.

Why, Apemantus?

APEMANTUS.

Shouldst have kept one to thyself, for I mean to give thee none.

FIRST LORD.

Hang thyself.

APEMANTUS.

No, I will do nothing at thy bidding; make thy requests to thy friend.

SECOND LORD.

Away, unpeaceable dog, or I'll spurn thee hence.

APEMANTUS.

I will fly, like a dog, the heels o' th' ass. *Exit*

FIRST LORD. He's opposite to humanity. Come, shall we in

And taste Lord Timon's bounty? He outgoes

The very heart of kindness.

SECOND LORD.

He pours it out: Plutus, the god of gold,

Is but his steward; no meed but he repays

Sevenfold above itself; no gift to him

But breeds the giver a return exceeding

All use of quittance.

FIRST LORD.

The noblest mind he carries

That ever govern'd man.

SECOND LORD.

Long may he live in fortunes! shall we in?

FIRST LORD.

I'll keep you company. *Exeunt*

SCENE II. A room of state in TIMON'S house

Hautboys playing loud music. A great banquet serv'd in; FLAVIUS and others attending; and then enter LORD TIMON, the states, the ATHENIAN LORDS, VENTIDIUS, which TIMON redeem'd from prison. Then comes, dropping after all, APEMANTUS, discontentedly, like himself

VENTIDIUS.

Most honoured Timon,

It hath pleas'd the gods to remember my father's age,

And call him to long peace.

He is gone happy, and has left me rich.

Then, as in grateful virtue I am bound

To your free heart, I do return those talents,

Doubled with thanks and service, from whose help

I deriv'd liberty.

TIMON.

O, by no means,

Honest Ventidius! You mistake my love;

I gave it freely ever; and there's none

Can truly say he gives, if he receives.

If our betters play at that game, we must not dare

To imitate them: faults that are rich are fair.

VENTIDIUS.

A noble spirit!

TIMON.

Nay, my lords, ceremony was but devis'd at first
To set a gloss on faint deeds, hollow welcomes,
Recanting goodness, sorry ere 'tis shown;
But where there is true friendship there needs none.
Pray, sit; more welcome are ye to my fortunes
Than my fortunes to me. *[They sit]*

FIRST LORD.

My lord, we always have confess'd it.

APEMANTUS.

Ho, ho, confess'd it! Hang'd it, have you not?

TIMON.

O, Apemantus, you are welcome.

APEMANTUS.

No;

You shall not make me welcome.

I come to have thee thrust me out of doors.

TIMON.

Fie, th'art a churl; ye have got a humour there

Does not become a man; 'tis much to blame.

They say, my lords, Ira furor brevis est; but yond man is ever angry. Go, let him have a table by himself; for he does neither affect company nor is he fit for't indeed.

APEMANTUS.

Let me stay at thine apperil, Timon.

I come to observe; I give thee warning on't.

TIMON.

I take no heed of thee. Th'art an Athenian, therefore welcome. I myself would have no power; prithee let my meat make thee silent.

APEMANTUS.

I scorn thy meat; 't'would choke me, for I should ne'er
flatter thee. O you gods, what a number of men eats Timon,
and he
sees 'em not! It grieves me to see so many dip their meat in one
man's blood; and all the madness is, he cheers them up too.

I wonder men dare trust themselves with men.
Methinks they should invite them without knives:

Good for their meat and safer for their lives.
There's much example for't; the fellow that sits next him now,
parts bread with him, pledges the breath of him in a divided
draught, is the readiest man to kill him. 'T has been proved.
If
I were a huge man I should fear to drink at meals.

Lest they should spy my windpipe's dangerous notes:
Great men should drink with harness on their throats.

TIMON.

My lord, in heart! and let the health go round.

SECOND LORD.

Let it flow this way, my good lord.

APEMANTUS.

Flow this way! A brave fellow! He keeps his tides well.

Those healths will make thee and thy state look ill, Timon.

Here's that which is too weak to be a sinner, honest water, which

ne'er left man i' th' mire.

This and my food are equals; there's no odds.'

Feasts are too proud to give thanks to the gods.

APEMANTUS' Grace

Immortal gods, I crave no pelf;

I pray for no man but myself.

Grant I may never prove so fond

To trust man on his oath or bond,

Or a harlot for her weeping,

Or a dog that seems a-sleeping,

Or a keeper with my freedom,

Or my friends, if I should need 'em.

Amen. So fall to't.

Rich men sin, and I eat root. *[Eats and drinks]*

Much good dich thy good heart, Apemantus!

TIMON.

Captain Alcibiades, your heart's in the field now.

ALCIBIADES.

My heart is ever at your service, my lord.

TIMON.

You had rather be at a breakfast of enemies than dinner of friends.

ALCIBIADES.

So they were bleeding new, my lord, there's no meat

like 'em; I could wish my best friend at such a feast.

APEMANTUS.

Would all those flatterers were thine enemies then, that
then thou mightst kill 'em, and bid me to 'em.

FIRST LORD.

Might we but have that happiness, my lord, that you
would once use our hearts, whereby we might express some part of
our zeals, we should think ourselves for ever perfect.

TIMON.

O, no doubt, my good friends, but the gods themselves have
provided that I shall have much help from you. How had you been
my friends else? Why have you that charitable title from
thousands, did not you chiefly belong to my heart? I have told
more of you to myself than you can with modesty speak in your own
behalf; and thus far I confirm you. O you gods, think I, what
need we have any friends if we should ne'er have need of 'em?
They were the most needless creatures living, should we ne'er
have use for 'em; and would most resemble sweet instruments hung
up in cases, that keep their sounds to themselves. Why, I have
often wish'd myself poorer, that I might come nearer to you.

We

are born to do benefits; and what better or properer can we call

our own than the riches of our friends? O, what a precious

comfort 'tis to have so many like brothers commanding one

another's fortunes! O, joy's e'en made away ere't can be born!

Mine eyes cannot hold out water, methinks. To forget their

faults, I drink to you.

APEMANTUS.

Thou weep'st to make them drink, Timon.

SECOND LORD.

Joy had the like conception in our eyes,

And at that instant like a babe sprung up.

APEMANTUS.

Ho, ho! I laugh to think that babe a bastard.

THIRD LORD.

I promise you, my lord, you mov'd me much.

APEMANTUS.

Much! *[Sound tucket]*

TIMON.

What means that trump?

Enter a SERVANT

How now?

SERVANT.

Please you, my lord, there are certain ladies most
desirous of admittance.

TIMON.

Ladies! What are their wills?

SERVANT.

There comes with them a forerunner, my lord, which bears
that office to signify their pleasures.

TIMON.

I pray let them be admitted.

Enter CUPID

CUPID.

Hail to thee, worthy Timon, and to all

That of his bounties taste! The five best Senses

Acknowledge thee their patron, and come freely

To gratulate thy plenteous bosom. Th' Ear,

Taste, Touch, Smell, pleas'd from thy table rise;

They only now come but to feast thine eyes.

TIMON.

They're welcome all; let 'em have kind admittance.

Music, make their welcome. *Exit* CUPID

FIRST LORD.

You see, my lord, how ample y'are belov'd.

Music. Re-enter CUPID, witb a Masque of LADIES as Amazons,

with lutes in their hands, dancing and playing

APEMANTUS.

Hoy-day, what a sweep of vanity comes this way!

They dance? They are mad women.
Like madness is the glory of this life,
As this pomp shows to a little oil and root.
We make ourselves fools to disport ourselves,
And spend our flatteries to drink those men
Upon whose age we void it up again
With poisonous spite and envy.
Who lives that's not depraved or depraves?
Who dies that bears not one spurn to their graves
Of their friends' gift?
I should fear those that dance before me now
Would one day stamp upon me. 'T has been done:

Men shut their doors against a setting sun.

The LORDS rise from table, with much adoring of

TIMON; and to show their loves, each single out an

Amazon, and all dance, men witb women, a lofty

strain or two to the hautboys, and cease

TIMON.

You have done our pleasures much grace, fair ladies,

Set a fair fashion on our entertainment,

Which was not half so beautiful and kind;

You have added worth unto't and lustre,

And entertain'd me with mine own device;

I am to thank you for't.

FIRST LADY.

My lord, you take us even at the best.

APEMANTUS.

Faith, for the worst is filthy, and would not hold

taking, I doubt me.

TIMON.

Ladies, there is an idle banquet attends you;

Please you to dispose yourselves.

ALL LADIES.

Most thankfully, my lord.

Exeunt CUPID and LADIES

TIMON.

Flavius!

FLAVIUS.

My lord?

TIMON.

The little casket bring me hither.

FLAVIUS.

Yes, my lord. *[Aside]* More jewels yet!
There is no crossing him in's humour,
Else I should tell him-well i' faith, I should-
When all's spent, he'd be cross'd then, an he could.
'Tis pity bounty had not eyes behind,

That man might ne'er be wretched for his mind. *Exit*

FIRST LORD. Where be our men?

SERVANT.

Here, my lord, in readiness.

SECOND LORD.
Our horses!
Re-enter FLAVIUS, with the casket
TIMON.
O my friends,
I have one word to say to you. Look you, my good lord,
I must entreat you honour me so much
As to advance this jewel; accept it and wear it,
Kind my lord.

FIRST LORD.
I am so far already in your gifts-

ALL.

So are we all.

Enter a SERVANT

SERVANT.

My lord, there are certain nobles of the Senate newly

alighted and come to visit you.

TIMON.

They are fairly welcome. *Exit* SERVANT

FLAVIUS.

I beseech your honour, vouchsafe me a word; it does concern you near.

TIMON.

Near! Why then, another time I'll hear thee. I prithee let's

be provided to show them entertainment.

FLAVIUS.

[Aside] I scarce know how.

Enter another SERVANT

SECOND SERVANT.

May it please vour honour, Lord Lucius, out of his

free love, hath presented to you four milk-white horses,

trapp'd in silver.

TIMON.

I shall accept them fairly. Let the presents

Be worthily entertain'd. *Exit* SERVANT

Enter a third SERVANT

How now! What news?

THIRD SERVANT.

Please you, my lord, that honourable gentleman,

Lord

Lucullus, entreats your company to-morrow to hunt with him and has sent your honour two brace of greyhounds.

TIMON.

I'll hunt with him; and let them be receiv'd,

Not without fair reward. *Exit* SERVANT

FLAVIUS.

[Aside] What will this come to?

He commands us to provide and give great gifts,

And all out of an empty coffer;

Nor will he know his purse, or yield me this,

To show him what a beggar his heart is,

Being of no power to make his wishes good.

His promises fly so beyond his state

That what he speaks is all in debt; he owes

For ev'ry word. He is so kind that he now

Pays interest for't; his land's put to their books.

Well, would I were gently put out of office

Before I were forc'd out!

Happier is he that has no friend to feed

Than such that do e'en enemies exceed.

I bleed inwardly for my lord. *Exit*

TIMON. You do yourselves much wrong;

You bate too much of your own merits.

Here, my lord, a trifle of our love.

SECOND LORD.

With more than common thanks I will receive it.

THIRD LORD.

O, he's the very soul of bounty!

TIMON.

And now I remember, my lord, you gave good words the other

day of a bay courser I rode on. 'Tis yours because you lik'd it.

THIRD LORD.

O, I beseech you pardon me, my lord, in that.

TIMON.

You may take my word, my lord: I know no man
Can justly praise but what he does affect.

I weigh my friend's affection with mine own.
I'll tell you true; I'll call to you.

ALL LORDS.

O, none so welcome!

TIMON.
I take all and your several visitations
So kind to heart 'tis not enough to give;
Methinks I could deal kingdoms to my friends
And ne'er be weary. Alcibiades,
Thou art a soldier, therefore seldom rich.
It comes in charity to thee; for all thy living
Is 'mongst the dead, and all the lands thou hast
Lie in a pitch'd field.

ALCIBIADES.

Ay, defil'd land, my lord.

FIRST LORD.

We are so virtuously bound-

TIMON.

And so am I to you.

SECOND LORD.

So infinitely endear'd-

TIMON.

All to you. Lights, more lights!

FIRST LORD.

The best of happiness, honour, and fortunes, keep with
you, Lord Timon!

TIMON.

Ready for his friends.

Exeunt all but APEMANTUS and TIMON

APEMANTUS.

What a coil's here!
Serving of becks and jutting-out of bums!
I doubt whether their legs be worth the sums
That are given for 'em. Friendship's full of dregs:

Methinks false hearts should never have sound legs.
Thus honest fools lay out their wealth on curtsies.

TIMON.

Now, Apemantus, if thou wert not sullen
I would be good to thee.

APEMANTUS.

No, I'll nothing; for if I should be brib'd too, there
would be none left to rail upon thee, and then thou wouldst sin
the faster. Thou giv'st so long, Timon, I fear me thou wilt give
away thyself in paper shortly. What needs these feasts,
pomps,

and vain-glories?

TIMON.

Nay, an you begin to rail on society once, I am sworn not to

give regard to you. Farewell; and come with better music.

Exit

APEMANTUS. So. Thou wilt not hear me now: thou shalt not then.

I'll

lock thy heaven from thee.

O that men's ears should be

To counsel deaf, but not to flattery! *Exit*

ACT II. SCENE I. A SENATOR'S house

Enter A SENATOR, with papers in his hand

SENATOR.

And late, five thousand. To Varro and to Isidore

He owes nine thousand; besides my former sum,

Which makes it five and twenty. Still in motion
Of raging waste? It cannot hold; it will not.
If I want gold, steal but a beggar's dog
And give it Timon, why, the dog coins gold.
If I would sell my horse and buy twenty moe
Better than he, why, give my horse to Timon,
Ask nothing, give it him, it foals me straight,
And able horses. No porter at his gate,
But rather one that smiles and still invites
All that pass by. It cannot hold; no reason
Can sound his state in safety. Caphis, ho!

Caphis, I say!

Enter CAPHIS

CAPHIS.
Here, sir; what is your pleasure?

SENATOR.
Get on your cloak and haste you to Lord Timon;

Importune him for my moneys; be not ceas'd
With slight denial, nor then silenc'd when
'Commend me to your master' and the cap
Plays in the right hand, thus; but tell him
My uses cry to me, I must serve my turn
Out of mine own; his days and times are past,
And my reliances on his fracted dates
Have smit my credit. I love and honour him,
But must not break my back to heal his finger.
Immediate are my needs, and my relief
Must not be toss'd and turn'd to me in words,
But find supply immediate. Get you gone;
Put on a most importunate aspect,
A visage of demand; for I do fear,
When every feather sticks in his own wing,
Lord Timon will be left a naked gull,
Which flashes now a phoenix. Get you gone.

CAPHIS.

I go, sir.

SENATOR.

Take the bonds along with you,

And have the dates in compt.

CAPHIS.

I will, sir.

SENATOR.

Go. Exeunt

SCENE II. Before TIMON'S house

Enter FLAVIUS, TIMON'S Steward, with many bills in his hand

FLAVIUS.

No care, no stop! So senseless of expense

That he will neither know how to maintain it

Nor cease his flow of riot; takes no account

How things go from him, nor resumes no care

Of what is to continue. Never mind

Was to be so unwise to be so kind.

What shall be done? He will not hear till feel.

I must be round with him. Now he comes from hunting.

Fie, fie, fie, fie!

Enter CAPHIS, and the SERVANTS Of ISIDORE and VARRO

CAPHIS.

Good even, Varro. What, you come for money?

VARRO'S SERVANT. Is't not your business too?

CAPHIS.

It is. And yours too, Isidore?

ISIDORE'S SERVANT. It is so.

CAPHIS.

Would we were all discharg'd!

VARRO'S SERVANT. I fear it.

CAPHIS.

Here comes the lord.

Enter TIMON and his train, with ALCIBIADES

TIMON.

So soon as dinner's done we'll forth again,
My Alcibiades.- With me? What is your will?

CAPHIS.

My lord, here is a note of certain dues.

TIMON.

Dues! Whence are you?

CAPHIS.

Of Athens here, my lord.

TIMON.

Go to my steward.

CAPHIS.

Please it your lordship, he hath put me off

To the succession of new days this month.

My master is awak'd by great occasion

To call upon his own, and humbly prays you

That with your other noble parts you'll suit

In giving him his right.

TIMON.

Mine honest friend,

I prithee but repair to me next morning.

CAPHIS.

Nay, good my lord-

TIMON.

Contain thyself, good friend.

VARRO'S SERVANT. One Varro's servant, my good lord-

ISIDORE'S SERVANT. From Isidore: he humbly prays your speedy
payment-

CAPHIS.
If you did know, my lord, my master's wants-

VARRO'S SERVANT. 'Twas due on forfeiture, my lord, six weeks and past.

ISIDORE'S SERVANT. Your steward puts me off, my lord; and
I am sent expressly to your lordship.

TIMON.

Give me breath.
I do beseech you, good my lords, keep on;

I'll wait upon you instantly.

Exeunt ALCIBIADES and LORDS

[To FLAVIUS] Come hither. Pray you,

How goes the world that I am thus encount'red

With clamorous demands of date-broke bonds

And the detention of long-since-due debts,

Against my honour?

FLAVIUS.

Please you, gentlemen,

The time is unagreeable to this business.

Your importunacy cease till after dinner,

That I may make his lordship understand

Wherefore you are not paid.

TIMON.

Do so, my friends.

See them well entertain'd. *Exit*

FLAVIUS. Pray draw near. *Exit*

Enter APEMANTUS and FOOL

CAPHIS.

Stay, stay, here comes the fool with Apemantus.

Let's ha' some sport with 'em.

VARRO'S SERVANT. Hang him, he'll abuse us!

ISIDORE'S SERVANT. A plague upon him, dog!

VARRO'S SERVANT. How dost, fool?

APEMANTUS.

Dost dialogue with thy shadow?

VARRO'S SERVANT. I speak not to thee.

APEMANTUS.

No, 'tis to thyself. *[To the FOOL]* Come away.

ISIDORE'S SERVANT. *[To VARRO'S SERVANT]* There's the fool hangs on your back already.

APEMANTUS.

No, thou stand'st single; th'art not on him yet.

CAPHIS.
Where's the fool now?

APEMANTUS.

He last ask'd the question. Poor rogues and usurers'
men! Bawds between gold and want!

ALL SERVANTS.

What are we, Apemantus?

APEMANTUS.

Asses.

ALL SERVANTS.

Why?

APEMANTUS.

That you ask me what you are, and do not know
yourselves. Speak to 'em, fool.

FOOL.

How do you, gentlemen?

ALL SERVANTS.

Gramercies, good fool. How does your mistress?

FOOL.

She's e'en setting on water to scald such chickens as you
are. Would we could see you at Corinth!

APEMANTUS.

Good! gramercy.

Enter PAGE

FOOL.

Look you, here comes my mistress' page.

PAGE.

[To the FOOL] Why, how now, Captain? What do you in this wise company? How dost thou, Apemantus?

APEMANTUS.

Would I had a rod in my mouth, that I might answer thee profitably!

PAGE.

Prithee, Apemantus, read me the superscription of these letters; I know not which is which.

APEMANTUS.

Canst not read?

PAGE.

No.

APEMANTUS.

There will little learning die, then, that day thou art

hang'd. This is to Lord Timon; this to Alcibiades. Go; thou wast

born a bastard, and thou't die a bawd.

PAGE.

Thou wast whelp'd a dog, and thou shalt famish dog's death.

Answer not: I am gone. *Exit* PAGE

APEMANTUS.

E'en so thou outrun'st grace.

Fool, I will go with you to Lord Timon's.

FOOL.

Will you leave me there?

APEMANTUS.

If Timon stay at home. You three serve three usurers?

ALL SERVANTS.

Ay; would they serv'd us!

APEMANTUS.

So would I-as good a trick as ever hangman serv'd thief.

FOOL.

Are you three usurers' men?

ALL SERVANTS.

Ay, fool.

FOOL.

I think no usurer but has a fool to his servant. My mistress
is one, and I am her fool. When men come to borrow of your
masters, they approach sadly and go away merry; but they enter my
mistress' house merrily and go away sadly. The reason of this?

VARRO'S SERVANT. I could render one.

APEMANTUS.

Do it then, that we may account thee a whoremaster and a
knave; which notwithstanding, thou shalt be no less esteemed.

VARRO'S SERVANT. What is a whoremaster, fool?

FOOL.

A fool in good clothes, and something like thee. 'Tis a
spirit. Sometime 't appears like a lord; sometime like a lawyer;
sometime like a philosopher, with two stones moe than's
artificial one. He is very often like a knight; and,
generally,
in all shapes that man goes up and down in from fourscore to

thirteen, this spirit walks in.

VARRO'S SERVANT. Thou art not altogether a fool.

FOOL.

Nor thou altogether a wise man.

As much foolery as I have, so much wit thou lack'st.

APEMANTUS.

That answer might have become Apemantus.

VARRO'S SERVANT. Aside, aside; here comes Lord Timon.

Re-enter TIMON and FLAVIUS

APEMANTUS.

Come with me, fool, come.

FOOL.

I do not always follow lover, elder brother, and woman;

sometime the philosopher.

Exeunt APEMANTUS and FOOL

FLAVIUS.

Pray you walk near; I'll speak with you anon.

Exeunt SERVANTS

TIMON.

You make me marvel wherefore ere this time
Had you not fully laid my state before me,
That I might so have rated my expense
As I had leave of means.

FLAVIUS.

You would not hear me
At many leisures I propos'd.

TIMON.

Go to;
Perchance some single vantages you took
When my indisposition put you back,
And that unaptness made your minister
Thus to excuse yourself.

FLAVIUS.

O my good lord,

At many times I brought in my accounts,

Laid them before you; you would throw them off

And say you found them in mine honesty.

When, for some trifling present, you have bid me

Return so much, I have shook my head and wept;

Yea, 'gainst th' authority of manners, pray'd you

To hold your hand more close. I did endure

Not seldom, nor no slight checks, when I have

Prompted you in the ebb of your estate

And your great flow of debts. My lov'd lord,

Though you hear now-too late!- yet now's a time:

The greatest of your having lacks a half

To pay your present debts.

TIMON.

Let all my land be sold.

FLAVIUS.

'Tis all engag'd, some forfeited and gone;
And what remains will hardly stop the mouth
Of present dues. The future comes apace;
What shall defend the interim? And at length
How goes our reck'ning?

TIMON.
To Lacedaemon did my land extend.

FLAVIUS.
O my good lord, the world is but a word;
Were it all yours to give it in a breath,
How quickly were it gone!

TIMON.
You tell me true.

FLAVIUS.
If you suspect my husbandry or falsehood,
Call me before th' exactest auditors
And set me on the proof. So the gods bless me,

When all our offices have been oppress'd
With riotous feeders, when our vaults have wept
With drunken spilth of wine, when every room
Hath blaz'd with lights and bray'd with minstrelsy,
I have retir'd me to a wasteful cock
And set mine eyes at flow.

TIMON.

Prithee no more.

FLAVIUS.

'Heavens,' have I said 'the bounty of this lord!
How many prodigal bits have slaves and peasants
This night englutted! Who is not Lord Timon's?
What heart, head, sword, force, means, but is Lord Timon's?

Great Timon, noble, worthy, royal Timon!'
Ah! when the means are gone that buy this praise,
The breath is gone whereof this praise is made.
Feast-won, fast-lost; one cloud of winter show'rs,

These flies are couch'd.

TIMON.

Come, sermon me no further.

No villainous bounty yet hath pass'd my heart;

Unwisely, not ignobly, have I given.

Why dost thou weep? Canst thou the conscience lack

To think I shall lack friends? Secure thy heart:

If I would broach the vessels of my love,

And try the argument of hearts by borrowing,

Men and men's fortunes could I frankly use

As I can bid thee speak.

FLAVIUS.

Assurance bless your thoughts!

TIMON.

And, in some sort, these wants of mine are crown'd

That I account them blessings; for by these

Shall I try friends. You shall perceive how you

Mistake my fortunes; I am wealthy in my friends.

Within there! Flaminius! Servilius!

Enter FLAMINIUS, SERVILIUS, and another SERVANT

SERVANTS.

My lord! my lord!

TIMON.

I will dispatch you severally-you to Lord Lucius; to Lord

Lucullus you; I hunted with his honour to-day. You to Sempronius.

Commend me to their loves; and I am proud, say, that my occasions

have found time to use 'em toward a supply of money. Let the

request be fifty talents.

FLAMINIUS.

As you have said, my lord. *Exeunt* SERVANTS

FLAVIUS.

[Aside] Lord Lucius and Lucullus? Humh!

TIMON.

Go you, sir, to the senators,
Of whom, even to the state's best health, I have
Deserv'd this hearing. Bid 'em send o' th' instant
A thousand talents to me.

FLAVIUS.
I have been bold,
For that I knew it the most general way,
To them to use your signet and your name;
But they do shake their heads, and I am here
No richer in return.

TIMON.

Is't true? Can't be?

FLAVIUS.
They answer, in a joint and corporate voice,
That now they are at fall, want treasure, cannot
Do what they would, are sorry-you are honourable-
But yet they could have wish'd-they know not-

Something hath been amiss-a noble nature

May catch a wrench-would all were well!- 'tis pity-

And so, intending other serious matters,

After distasteful looks, and these hard fractions,

With certain half-caps and cold-moving nods,

They froze me into silence.

TIMON.

You gods, reward them!

Prithee, man, look cheerly. These old fellows

Have their ingratitude in them hereditary.

Their blood is cak'd, 'tis cold, it seldom flows;

'Tis lack of kindly warmth they are not kind;

And nature, as it grows again toward earth,

Is fashion'd for the journey dull and heavy.

Go to Ventidius. Prithee be not sad,

Thou art true and honest; ingeniously I speak,

No blame belongs to thee. Ventidius lately

Buried his father, by whose death he's stepp'd

Into a great estate. When he was poor,

Imprison'd, and in scarcity of friends,

I clear'd him with five talents. Greet him from me,
Bid him suppose some good necessity
Touches his friend, which craves to be rememb'red
With those five talents. That had, give't these fellows
To whom 'tis instant due. Nev'r speak or think
That Timon's fortunes 'mong his friends can sink.

FLAVIUS.

I would I could not think it.
That thought is bounty's foe;
Being free itself, it thinks all others so. *Exeunt*

ACT III. SCENE I. LUCULLUS' house

FLAMINIUS waiting to speak with LUCULLUS. *Enter* SERVANT to him

SERVANT.

I have told my lord of you; he is coming down to you.

FLAMINIUS.

I thank you, sir.

Enter LUCULLUS

SERVANT.

Here's my lord.

LUCULLUS.

[Aside] One of Lord Timon's men? A gift, I warrant.

Why,

this hits right; I dreamt of a silver basin and ewer

to-night-

Flaminius, honest Flaminius, you are very respectively welcome,

sir. Fill me some wine. *[Exit SERVANT]* And how does that

honourable, complete, freehearted gentleman of Athens, thy very

bountiful good lord and master?

FLAMINIUS.

His health is well, sir.

LUCULLUS.

I am right glad that his health is well, sir. And what
hast thou there under thy cloak, pretty Flaminius?

FLAMINIUS.

Faith, nothing but an empty box, sir, which in my lord's
behalf I come to entreat your honour to supply; who, having
great and instant occasion to use fifty talents, hath sent to
your lordship to furnish him, nothing doubting your present assistance therein.

LUCULLIUS.

La, la, la, la! 'Nothing doubting' says he? Alas, good
lord! a noble gentleman 'tis, if he would not keep so good a
house. Many a time and often I ha' din'd with him and told him
on't; and come again to supper to him of purpose to have him
spend less; and yet he would embrace no counsel, take no warning
by my coming. Every man has his fault, and honesty is his. I ha'

told him on't, but I could ne'er get him from't.

Re-enter SERVANT, with wine

SERVANT.

Please your lordship, here is the wine.

LUCULLUS.

Flaminius, I have noted thee always wise. Here's to thee.

FLAMINIUS.

Your lordship speaks your pleasure.

LUCULLUS.

I have observed thee always for a towardly prompt spirit,
give thee thy due, and one that knows what belongs to reason, and
canst use the time well, if the time use thee well. Good parts in
thee. *[To SERVANT]* Get you gone, sirrah. *[Exit SERVANT]* Draw
nearer, honest Flaminius. Thy lord's a bountiful gentleman; but
thou art wise, and thou know'st well enough, although thou com'st
to me, that this is no time to lend money, especially upon bare
friendship without security. Here's three solidares for thee.
Good boy, wink at me, and say thou saw'st me not. Fare thee well.

FLAMINIUS.

Is't possible the world should so much differ,

And we alive that liv'd? Fly, damned baseness,

To him that worships thee. *[Throwing the money back]*

LUCULLUS.

Ha! Now I see thou art a fool, and fit for thy master.

Exit

FLAMINIUS. May these add to the number that may scald thee!

Let molten coin be thy damnation,

Thou disease of a friend and not himself!

Has friendship such a faint and milky heart

It turns in less than two nights? O you gods,

I feel my master's passion! This slave

Unto his honour has my lord's meat in him;

Why should it thrive and turn to nutriment

When he is turn'd to poison?

O, may diseases only work upon't!

And when he's sick to death, let not that part of nature

Which my lord paid for be of any power

To expel sickness, but prolong his hour! *Exit*

SCENE II. A public place

Enter Lucius, with three STRANGERS

LUCIUS.

Who, the Lord Timon? He is my very good friend, and an honourable gentleman.

FIRST STRANGER.

We know him for no less, though we are but strangers to him. But I can tell you one thing, my lord, and which I hear from common rumours: now Lord Timon's happy hours are done and past, and his estate shrinks from him.

LUCIUS.

Fie, no: do not believe it; he cannot want for money.

SECOND STRANGER.

But believe you this, my lord, that not long ago one of his men was with the Lord Lucullus to borrow so many talents; nay, urg'd extremely for't, and showed what necessity

belong'd to't, and yet was denied.

LUCIUS.

How?

SECOND STRANGER.

I tell you, denied, my lord.

LUCIUS.

What a strange case was that! Now, before the gods, I am

asham'd on't. Denied that honourable man! There was very little

honour show'd in't. For my own part, I must needs confess I have

received some small kindnesses from him, as money, plate,

jewels,

and such-like trifles, nothing comparing to his; yet, had he

mistook him and sent to me, I should ne'er have denied his

occasion so many talents.

Enter SERVILIUS

SERVILIUS.

See, by good hap, yonder's my lord; I have sweat to see
his honour.- My honour'd lord!

LUCIUS.

Servilius? You are kindly met, sir. Fare thee well; commend
me to thy honourable virtuous lord, my very exquisite friend.

SERVILIUS.

May it please your honour, my lord hath sent-

LUCIUS.

Ha! What has he sent? I am so much endeared to that lord:
he's ever sending. How shall I thank him, think'st thou? And what
has he sent now?

SERVILIUS.

Has only sent his present occasion now, my lord,
requesting your lordship to supply his instant use with so many talents.

LUCIUS.

I know his lordship is but merry with me;
He cannot want fifty-five hundred talents.

SERVILIUS.

But in the mean time he wants less, my lord.
If his occasion were not virtuous
I should not urge it half so faithfully.

LUCIUS.

Dost thou speak seriously, Servilius?

SERVILIUS.

Upon my soul, 'tis true, sir.

LUCIUS.

What a wicked beast was I to disfurnish myself against such a good time, when I might ha' shown myself honourable! How unluckily it happ'ned that I should purchase the day before for a little part and undo a great deal of honour! Servilius, now before the gods, I am not able to do-the more beast, I say!

I was sending to use Lord Timon myself, these gentlemen can witness; but I would not for the wealth of Athens I had done't now. Commend me bountifully to his good lordship, and I hope his honour will conceive the fairest of me, because I have no power to be kind. And tell him this from me: I count it one of my greatest afflictions, say, that I cannot pleasure such an honourable gentleman. Good Servilius, will you befriend me so far as to use mine own words to him?

SERVILIUS.

Yes, sir, I shall.

LUCIUS.

I'll look you out a good turn, Servilius.

Exit SERVILIUS

True, as you said, Timon is shrunk indeed;

And he that's once denied will hardly speed. *Exit*

FIRST STRANGER. Do you observe this, Hostilius?

SECOND STRANGER.

Ay, too well.

FIRST STRANGER.

Why, this is the world's soul; and just of the same piece

Is every flatterer's spirit. Who can call him his friend

That dips in the same dish? For, in my knowing,

Timon has been this lord's father,

And kept his credit with his purse;

Supported his estate; nay, Timon's money

Has paid his men their wages. He ne'er drinks

But Timon's silver treads upon his lip;

And yet-O, see the monstrousness of man

When he looks out in an ungrateful shape!-

He does deny him, in respect of his,

What charitable men afford to beggars.

THIRD STRANGER.

Religion groans at it.

FIRST STRANGER.

For mine own part,

I never tasted Timon in my life,

Nor came any of his bounties over me

To mark me for his friend; yet I protest,

For his right noble mind, illustrious virtue,

And honourable carriage,

Had his necessity made use of me,

I would have put my wealth into donation,

And the best half should have return'd to him,

So much I love his heart. But I perceive

Men must learn now with pity to dispense;

For policy sits above conscience. *Exeunt*

SCENE III. SEMPRONIUS' house

Enter SEMPRONIUS and a SERVANT of TIMON'S

SEMPRONIUS.

Must he needs trouble me in't? Hum! 'Bove all others?
He might have tried Lord Lucius or Lucullus;
And now Ventidius is wealthy too,
Whom he redeem'd from prison. All these
Owe their estates unto him.

SERVANT.

My lord,
They have all been touch'd and found base metal, for
They have all denied him.

SEMPRONIUS.

How! Have they denied him?

Has Ventidius and Lucullus denied him?
And does he send to me? Three? Humh!

It shows but little love or judgment in him.

Must I be his last refuge? His friends, like physicians,

Thrice give him over. Must I take th' cure upon me?

Has much disgrac'd me in't; I'm angry at him,

That might have known my place. I see no sense for't,

But his occasions might have woo'd me first;

For, in my conscience, I was the first man

That e'er received gift from him.

And does he think so backwardly of me now

That I'll requite it last? No;

So it may prove an argument of laughter

To th' rest, and I 'mongst lords be thought a fool.

I'd rather than the worth of thrice the sum

Had sent to me first, but for my mind's sake;

I'd such a courage to do him good. But now return,

And with their faint reply this answer join:

Who bates mine honour shall not know my coin. *Exit*

SERVANT. Excellent! Your lordship's a goodly villain. The devil knew not what he did when he made man politic-he cross'd himself by't; and I cannot think but, in the end, the villainies of man

will set him clear. How fairly this lord strives to appear foul!
Takes virtuous copies to be wicked, like those that under hot
ardent zeal would set whole realms on fire.

Of such a nature is his politic love.
This was my lord's best hope; now all are fled,
Save only the gods. Now his friends are dead,
Doors that were ne'er acquainted with their wards
Many a bounteous year must be employ'd
Now to guard sure their master.

And this is all a liberal course allows:
Who cannot keep his wealth must keep his house. *Exit*

SCENE IV. A hall in TIMON'S house

Enter two Of VARRO'S MEN, meeting LUCIUS' SERVANT, and others,

all being servants of TIMON's creditors, to wait for his coming out.

Then enter TITUS and HORTENSIUS

FIRST VARRO'S SERVANT. Well met; good morrow, Titus and Hortensius.

TITUS.

The like to you, kind Varro.

HORTENSIUS.

Lucius! What, do we meet together?

LUCIUS' SERVANT. Ay, and I think one business does command us all;

for mine is money.

TITUS.

So is theirs and ours.

Enter PHILOTUS

LUCIUS' SERVANT. And Sir Philotus too!

PHILOTUS.

Good day at once.

LUCIUS' SERVANT. welcome, good brother, what do you think the hour?

PHILOTUS.

Labouring for nine.

LUCIUS' SERVANT. So much?

PHILOTUS.

Is not my lord seen yet?

LUCIUS' SERVANT. Not yet.

PHILOTUS.

I wonder on't; he was wont to shine at seven.

LUCIUS' SERVANT. Ay, but the days are wax'd shorter with him;

You must consider that a prodigal course

Is like the sun's, but not like his recoverable.

I fear

'Tis deepest winter in Lord Timon's purse;

That is, one may reach deep enough and yet Find little.

PHILOTUS.

I am of your fear for that.

TITUS.

I'll show you how t' observe a strange event.

Your lord sends now for money.

HORTENSIUS.

Most true, he does.

TITUS.

And he wears jewels now of Timon's gift,

For which I wait for money.

HORTENSIUS.

It is against my heart.

LUCIUS' SERVANT. Mark how strange it shows

Timon in this should pay more than he owes;

And e'en as if your lord should wear rich jewels

And send for money for 'em.

HORTENSIUS.

I'm weary of this charge, the gods can witness;

I know my lord hath spent of Timon's wealth,

And now ingratitude makes it worse than stealth.

FIRST VARRO'S SERVANT. Yes, mine's three thousand crowns;

what's yours?

LUCIUS' SERVANT. Five thousand mine.

FIRST VARRO'S SERVANT. 'Tis much deep; and it should seem by th' sum

Your master's confidence was above mine,

Else surely his had equall'd.

Enter FLAMINIUS

TITUS.

One of Lord Timon's men.

LUCIUS' SERVANT. Flaminius! Sir, a word. Pray, is my lord ready to come forth?

FLAMINIUS.

No, indeed, he is not.

TITUS.

We attend his lordship; pray signify so much.

FLAMINIUS.

I need not tell him that; he knows you are to diligent.

Exit

Enter FLAVIUS, in a cloak, muffled

LUCIUS' SERVANT. Ha! Is not that his steward muffled so?

He goes away in a cloud. Call him, call him.

TITUS.

Do you hear, sir?

SECOND VARRO'S SERVANT. By your leave, sir.

FLAVIUS.

What do ye ask of me, my friend?

TITUS.

We wait for certain money here, sir.

FLAVIUS.
Ay,
If money were as certain as your waiting,
'Twere sure enough.
Why then preferr'd you not your sums and bills
When your false masters eat of my lord's meat?
Then they could smile, and fawn upon his debts,
And take down th' int'rest into their glutt'nous maws.
You do yourselves but wrong to stir me up;
Let me pass quietly.

Believe't, my lord and I have made an end:
I have no more to reckon, he to spend.

LUCIUS' SERVANT. Ay, but this answer will not serve.

FLAVIUS.

If 'twill not serve, 'tis not so base as you,

For you serve knaves. *Exit*

FIRST VARRO'S SERVANT. How! What does his cashier'd worship mutter?

SECOND VARRO'S SERVANT. No matter what; he's poor, and that's

revenge enough. Who can speak broader than he that has no house

to put his head in? Such may rail against great buildings.

Enter SERVILIUS

TITUS.
O, here's Servilius; now we shall know some answer.

SERVILIUS.
If I might beseech you, gentlemen, to repair some other

hour, I should derive much from't; for take't of my soul, my lord

leans wondrously to discontent. His comfortable temper has

forsook him; he's much out of health and keeps his chamber.

LUCIUS' SERVANT. Many do keep their chambers are not sick;

And if it be so far beyond his health,

Methinks he should the sooner pay his debts,

And make a clear way to the gods.

SERVILIUS.

Good gods!

TITUS.

We cannot take this for answer, sir.

FLAMINIUS.

[Within] Servilius, help! My lord! my lord!

Enter TIMON, in a rage, FLAMINIUS following

TIMON.

What, are my doors oppos'd against my passage?

Have I been ever free, and must my house

Be my retentive enemy, my gaol?

The place which I have feasted, does it now, Like all mankind, show me an iron heart?

LUCIUS' SERVANT. Put in now, Titus.

TITUS.

My lord, here is my bill.

LUCIUS' SERVANT. Here's mine.

HORTENSIUS.

And mine, my lord.

BOTH VARRO'S SERVANTS. And ours, my lord.

PHILOTUS.

All our bills.

TIMON.

Knock me down with 'em; cleave me to the girdle.

LUCIUS' SERVANT. Alas, my lord-

TIMON.

Cut my heart in sums.

TITUS.

Mine, fifty talents.

TIMON.

Tell out my blood.

LUCIUS' SERVANT. Five thousand crowns, my lord.

TIMON.

Five thousand drops pays that. What yours? and yours?

FIRST VARRO'S SERVANT. My lord-

SECOND VARRO'S SERVANT. My lord-

TIMON.

Tear me, take me, and the gods fall upon you! *Exit*

HORTENSIUS. Faith, I perceive our masters may throw their caps at

their money. These debts may well be call'd desperate ones,

for a

madman owes 'em. *Exeunt*

Re-enter TIMON and FLAVIUS

TIMON.

They have e'en put my breath from me, the slaves.

Creditors? Devils!

FLAVIUS.

My dear lord-

TIMON.

What if it should be so?

FLAMINIUS.

My lord-

TIMON.

I'll have it so. My steward!

FLAVIUS.

Here, my lord.

TIMON.

So fitly? Go, bid all my friends again:

Lucius, Lucullus, and Sempronius-all.

I'll once more feast the rascals.

FLAVIUS.

O my lord,

You only speak from your distracted soul;

There is not so much left to furnish out

A moderate table.

TIMON.

Be it not in thy care.

Go, I charge thee, invite them all; let in the tide

Of knaves once more; my cook and I'll provide. *Exeunt*

SCENE V. The Senate House

Enter three SENATORS at one door, ALCIBIADES meeting them, with attendants

FIRST SENATOR.

My lord, you have my voice to't: the fault's bloody.

'Tis necessary he should die:

Nothing emboldens sin so much as mercy.

SECOND SENATOR.

Most true; the law shall bruise him.

ALCIBIADES.

Honour, health, and compassion, to the Senate!

FIRST SENATOR.

Now, Captain?

ALCIBIADES.

I am an humble suitor to your virtues;

For pity is the virtue of the law,

And none but tyrants use it cruelly.

It pleases time and fortune to lie heavy

Upon a friend of mine, who in hot blood

Hath stepp'd into the law, which is past depth

To those that without heed do plunge into't.

He is a man, setting his fate aside,

Of comely virtues;

Nor did he soil the fact with cowardice-

An honour in him which buys out his fault-

But with a noble fury and fair spirit,

Seeing his reputation touch'd to death,

He did oppose his foe;
And with such sober and unnoted passion
He did behove his anger ere 'twas spent,
As if he had but prov'd an argument.

FIRST SENATOR.
You undergo too strict a paradox,
Striving to make an ugly deed look fair;
Your words have took such pains as if they labour'd
To bring manslaughter into form and set
Quarrelling upon the head of valour; which, indeed,
Is valour misbegot, and came into the world
When sects and factions were newly born.
He's truly valiant that can wisely suffer
The worst that man can breathe,
And make his wrongs his outsides,
To wear them like his raiment, carelessly,
And ne'er prefer his injuries to his heart,
To bring it into danger.
If wrongs be evils, and enforce us kill,
What folly 'tis to hazard life for ill!

ALCIBIADES.

My lord-

FIRST SENATOR.

You cannot make gross sins look clear:

To revenge is no valour, but to bear.

ALCIBIADES.

My lords, then, under favour, pardon me

If I speak like a captain:

Why do fond men expose themselves to battle,

And not endure all threats? Sleep upon't,

And let the foes quietly cut their throats,

Without repugnancy? If there be

Such valour in the bearing, what make we

Abroad? Why, then, women are more valiant,

That stay at home, if bearing carry it;

And the ass more captain than the lion; the fellow

Loaden with irons wiser than the judge,

If wisdom be in suffering. O my lords,
As you are great, be pitifully good.
Who cannot condemn rashness in cold blood?
To kill, I grant, is sin's extremest gust;
But, in defence, by mercy, 'tis most just.
To be in anger is impiety;
But who is man that is not angry?

Weigh but the crime with this.

SECOND SENATOR.
You breathe in vain.

ALCIBIADES.
In vain! His service done
At Lacedaemon and Byzantium
Were a sufficient briber for his life.

FIRST SENATOR.
What's that?

ALCIBIADES.

Why, I say, my lords, has done fair service,
And slain in fight many of your enemies;
How full of valour did he bear himself
In the last conflict, and made plenteous wounds!

SECOND SENATOR.

He has made too much plenty with 'em.
He's a sworn rioter; he has a sin that often
Drowns him and takes his valour prisoner.
If there were no foes, that were enough
To overcome him. In that beastly fury
He has been known to commit outrages
And cherish factions. 'Tis inferr'd to us
His days are foul and his drink dangerous.

FIRST SENATOR.

He dies.

ALCIBIADES.

Hard fate! He might have died in war.

My lords, if not for any parts in him-

Though his right arm might purchase his own time,

And be in debt to none-yet, more to move you,

Take my deserts to his, and join 'em both;

And, for I know your reverend ages love

Security, I'll pawn my victories, all

My honours to you, upon his good returns.

If by this crime he owes the law his life,

Why, let the war receive't in valiant gore;

For law is strict, and war is nothing more.

FIRST SENATOR.

We are for law: he dies. Urge it no more

On height of our displeasure. Friend or brother,

He forfeits his own blood that spills another.

ALCIBIADES.

Must it be so? It must not be. My lords,

I do beseech you, know me.

SECOND SENATOR.

How!

ALCIBIADES.

Call me to your remembrances.

THIRD SENATOR.

What!

ALCIBIADES.

I cannot think but your age has forgot me;
It could not else be I should prove so base
To sue, and be denied such common grace.
My wounds ache at you.

FIRST SENATOR.

Do you dare our anger?
'Tis in few words, but spacious in effect:

We banish thee for ever.

ALCIBIADES.

Banish me!

Banish your dotage! Banish usury

That makes the Senate ugly.

FIRST SENATOR.

If after two days' shine Athens contain thee,

Attend our weightier judgment. And, not to swell our spirit,

He shall be executed presently. *Exeunt* SENATORS

ALCIBIADES.

Now the gods keep you old enough that you may live

Only in bone, that none may look on you!

I'm worse than mad; I have kept back their foes,

While they have told their money and let out

Their coin upon large interest, I myself

Rich only in large hurts. All those for this?

Is this the balsam that the usuring Senate

Pours into captains' wounds? Banishment!

It comes not ill; I hate not to be banish'd;

It is a cause worthy my spleen and fury,

That I may strike at Athens. I'll cheer up

My discontented troops, and lay for hearts.

'Tis honour with most lands to be at odds;

Soldiers should brook as little wrongs as gods. *Exit*

SCENE VI. A banqueting hall in TIMON'S house

Music. Tables set out; servants attending. *Enter* divers LORDS, friends of TIMON, at several doors

FIRST LORD.

The good time of day to you, sir.

SECOND LORD.

I also wish it to you. I think this honourable lord

did but try us this other day.

FIRST LORD.

Upon that were my thoughts tiring when we encount'red.

I hope it is not so low with him as he made it seem in the trial of his several friends.

SECOND LORD.

It should not be, by the persuasion of his new feasting.

FIRST LORD.
I should think so. He hath sent me an earnest inviting,
which many my near occasions did urge me to put off; but he hath
conjur'd me beyond them, and I must needs appear.

SECOND LORD.
In like manner was I in debt to my importunate
business, but he would not hear my excuse. I am sorry, when he
sent to borrow of me, that my provision was out.

FIRST LORD.
I am sick of that grief too, as I understand how all things go.

SECOND LORD.

Every man here's so. What would he have borrowed of you?

FIRST LORD.

A thousand pieces.

SECOND LORD.

A thousand pieces!

FIRST LORD.

What of you?

SECOND LORD.

He sent to me, sir-here he comes.

Enter TIMON and attendants

TIMON.

With all my heart, gentlemen both! And how fare you?

FIRST LORD.

Ever at the best, hearing well of your lordship.

SECOND LORD.

The swallow follows not summer more willing than we your lordship.

TIMON.

[Aside] Nor more willingly leaves winter; such

summer-birds

are men-Gentlemen, our dinner will not recompense this long

stay; feast your ears with the music awhile, if they will fare so

harshly o' th' trumpet's sound; we shall to't presently.

FIRST LORD.

I hope it remains not unkindly with your lordship that

I return'd you an empty messenger.

TIMON.

O sir, let it not trouble you.

SECOND LORD.

My noble lord-

TIMON.

Ah, my good friend, what cheer?

SECOND LORD.

My most honourable lord, I am e'en sick of shame that, when your lordship this other day sent to me, I was so unfortunate a beggar.

TIMON.

Think not on't, sir.

SECOND LORD.

If you had sent but two hours before-

TIMON.

Let it not cumber your better remembrance. [The banquet brought in] Come, bring in all together.

SECOND LORD.

All cover'd dishes!

FIRST LORD.

Royal cheer, I warrant you.

THIRD LORD.

Doubt not that, if money and the season can yield it.

FIRST LORD.

How do you? What's the news?

THIRD LORD.

Alcibiades is banish'd. Hear you of it?

FIRST AND SECOND LORDS.

Alcibiades banish'd!

THIRD LORD.

'Tis so, be sure of it.

FIRST LORD.

How? how?

SECOND LORD.

I pray you, upon what?

TIMON.

My worthy friends, will you draw near?

THIRD LORD.

I'll tell you more anon. Here's a noble feast toward.

SECOND LORD.

This is the old man still.

THIRD LORD.

Will't hold? Will't hold?

SECOND LORD.

It does; but time will-and so-

THIRD LORD.

I do conceive.

TIMON.

Each man to his stool with that spur as he would to the lip of his mistress; your diet shall be in all places alike. Make not a city feast of it, to let the meat cool ere we can agree upon the first place. Sit, sit. The gods require our thanks:

You great benefactors, sprinkle our society with thankfulness. For your own gifts make yourselves prais'd; but reserve still to give, lest your deities be despised. Lend to each man enough, that one need not lend to another; for were your god-heads to borrow of men, men would forsake the gods. Make the meat be beloved more than the man that gives it. Let no assembly of

twenty be without a score of villains. If there sit twelve women
at the table, let a dozen of them be-as they are. The rest of
your foes, O gods, the senators of Athens, together with the
common lag of people, what is amiss in them, you gods, make
suitable for destruction. For these my present friends, as they
are to me nothing, so in nothing bless them, and to nothing are they welcome.
Uncover, dogs, and lap. [The dishes are uncovered and
seen to he full of warm water]

SOME SPEAK.

What does his lordship mean?

SOME OTHER.
I know not.

TIMON.
May you a better feast never behold,
You knot of mouth-friends! Smoke and lukewarm water
Is your perfection. This is Timon's last;
Who, stuck and spangled with your flatteries,

Washes it off, and sprinkles in your faces

[Throwing the water in their faces]

Your reeking villainy. Live loath'd and long,

Most smiling, smooth, detested parasites,

Courteous destroyers, affable wolves, meek bears,

You fools of fortune, trencher friends, time's flies,

Cap and knee slaves, vapours, and minute-lacks!

Of man and beast the infinite malady

Crust you quite o'er! What, dost thou go?

Soft, take thy physic first; thou too, and thou.

Stay, I will lend thee money, borrow none. [Throws the

dishes at them, and drives them out]

What, all in motion? Henceforth be no feast

Whereat a villain's not a welcome guest.

Burn house! Sink Athens! Henceforth hated be

Of Timon man and all humanity! *Exit*

Re-enter the LORDS

FIRST LORD.

How now, my lords!

SECOND LORD.

Know you the quality of Lord Timon's fury?

THIRD LORD.

Push! Did you see my cap?

FOURTH LORD.

I have lost my gown.

FIRST LORD.

He's but a mad lord, and nought but humours sways him.
He gave me a jewel th' other day, and now he has beat it out of
my hat. Did you see my jewel?

THIRD LORD.

Did you see my cap?

SECOND LORD.

Here 'tis.

FOURTH LORD.

Here lies my gown.

FIRST LORD.

Let's make no stay.

SECOND LORD.

Lord Timon's mad.

THIRD LORD.

I feel't upon my bones.

FOURTH LORD.

One day he gives us diamonds, next day stones.

Exeunt

ACT IV. SCENE I. Without the walls of Athens

Enter TIMON

TIMON.

Let me look back upon thee. O thou wall

That girdles in those wolves, dive in the earth

And fence not Athens! Matrons, turn incontinent.

Obedience, fail in children! Slaves and fools,

Pluck the grave wrinkled Senate from the bench

And minister in their steads. To general filths

Convert, o' th' instant, green virginity.

Do't in your parents' eyes. Bankrupts, hold fast;

Rather than render back, out with your knives

And cut your trusters' throats. Bound servants, steal:

Large-handed robbers your grave masters are,

And pill by law. Maid, to thy master's bed:

Thy mistress is o' th' brothel. Son of sixteen,

Pluck the lin'd crutch from thy old limping sire,

With it beat out his brains. Piety and fear,

Religion to the gods, peace, justice, truth,

Domestic awe, night-rest, and neighbourhood,

Instruction, manners, mysteries, and trades,
Degrees, observances, customs and laws,
Decline to your confounding contraries
And let confusion live. Plagues incident to men,
Your potent and infectious fevers heap
On Athens, ripe for stroke. Thou cold sciatica,
Cripple our senators, that their limbs may halt
As lamely as their manners. Lust and liberty,
Creep in the minds and marrows of our youth,
That 'gainst the stream of virtue they may strive
And drown themselves in riot. Itches, blains,
Sow all th' Athenian bosoms, and their crop
Be general leprosy! Breath infect breath,
That their society, as their friendship, may
Be merely poison! Nothing I'll bear from thee
But nakedness, thou detestable town!

Take thou that too, with multiplying bans.
Timon will to the woods, where he shall find
Th' unkindest beast more kinder than mankind.
The gods confound-hear me, you good gods all-

The Athenians both within and out that wall!

And grant, as Timon grows, his hate may grow

To the whole race of mankind, high and low!

Amen. Exit

SCENE II. Athens. TIMON's house

Enter FLAVIUS, with two or three SERVANTS

FIRST SERVANT.

Hear you, Master Steward, where's our master?

Are we undone, cast off, nothing remaining?

FLAVIUS.

Alack, my fellows, what should I say to you?

Let me be recorded by the righteous gods,

I am as poor as you.

FIRST SERVANT.

Such a house broke!

So noble a master fall'n! All gone, and not

One friend to take his fortune by the arm

And go along with him?

SECOND SERVANT.

As we do turn our backs

From our companion, thrown into his grave,

So his familiars to his buried fortunes

Slink all away; leave their false vows with him,

Like empty purses pick'd; and his poor self,

A dedicated beggar to the air,

With his disease of all-shunn'd poverty,

Walks, like contempt, alone. More of our fellows.

Enter other SERVANTS

FLAVIUS.

All broken implements of a ruin'd house.

THIRD SERVANT.

Yet do our hearts wear Timon's livery;
That see I by our faces. We are fellows still,
Serving alike in sorrow. Leak'd is our bark;
And we, poor mates, stand on the dying deck,
Hearing the surges threat. We must all part
Into this sea of air.

FLAVIUS.
Good fellows all,
The latest of my wealth I'll share amongst you.
Wherever we shall meet, for Timon's sake,
Let's yet be fellows; let's shake our heads and say,
As 'twere a knell unto our master's fortune,
'We have seen better days.' Let each take some.

[Giving them money]
Nay, put out all your hands. Not one word more!
Thus part we rich in sorrow, parting poor.
[Embrace, and part several ways]
O the fierce wretchedness that glory brings us!
Who would not wish to be from wealth exempt,

Since riches point to misery and contempt?

Who would be so mock'd with glory, or to live

But in a dream of friendship,

To have his pomp, and all what state compounds,

But only painted, like his varnish'd friends?

Poor honest lord, brought low by his own heart,

Undone by goodness! Strange, unusual blood,

When man's worst sin is he does too much good!

Who then dares to be half so kind again?

For bounty, that makes gods, does still mar men.

My dearest lord-blest to be most accurst,

Rich only to be wretched-thy great fortunes

Are made thy chief afflictions. Alas, kind lord!

He's flung in rage from this ingrateful seat

Of monstrous friends; nor has he with him to

Supply his life, or that which can command it.

I'll follow and enquire him out.

I'll ever serve his mind with my best will;

Whilst I have gold, I'll be his steward still. *Exit*

SCENE III. The woods near the sea-shore. Before TIMON'S cave

Enter TIMON in the woods

TIMON.

O blessed breeding sun, draw from the earth

Rotten humidity; below thy sister's orb

Infect the air! Twinn'd brothers of one womb-

Whose procreation, residence, and birth,

Scarce is dividant-touch them with several fortunes:

The greater scorns the lesser. Not nature,

To whom all sores lay siege, can bear great fortune

But by contempt of nature.

Raise me this beggar and deny't that lord:

The senator shall bear contempt hereditary,

The beggar native honour.

It is the pasture lards the rother's sides,

The want that makes him lean. Who dares, who dares,

In purity of manhood stand upright,

And say 'This man's a flatterer'? If one be,

So are they all; for every grise of fortune

Is smooth'd by that below. The learned pate
Ducks to the golden fool. All's oblique;
There's nothing level in our cursed natures
But direct villainy. Therefore be abhorr'd
All feasts, societies, and throngs of men!

His semblable, yea, himself, Timon disdains.
Destruction fang mankind! Earth, yield me roots.

[Digging]
Who seeks for better of thee, sauce his palate
With thy most operant poison. What is here?
Gold? Yellow, glittering, precious gold? No, gods,
I am no idle votarist. Roots, you clear heavens!
Thus much of this will make black white, foul fair,
Wrong right, base noble, old young, coward valiant.
Ha, you gods! why this? What, this, you gods? Why, this
Will lug your priests and servants from your sides,
Pluck stout men's pillows from below their heads-
This yellow slave
Will knit and break religions, bless th' accurs'd,

Make the hoar leprosy ador'd, place thieves
And give them title, knee, and approbation,
With senators on the bench. This is it
That makes the wappen'd widow wed again-
She whom the spital-house and ulcerous sores
Would cast the gorge at this embalms and spices
To th 'April day again. Come, damn'd earth,
Thou common whore of mankind, that puts odds
Among the rout of nations, I will make thee
Do thy right nature. *[March afar off]*
Ha! a drum? Th'art quick,
But yet I'll bury thee. Thou't go, strong thief,
When gouty keepers of thee cannot stand.
Nay, stay thou out for earnest. *[Keeping some gold]*

Enter ALCIBIADES, with drum and fife, in warlike

manner; and PHRYNIA and TIMANDRA

ALCIBIADES.

What art thou there? Speak.

TIMON.

A beast, as thou art. The canker gnaw thy heart

For showing me again the eyes of man!

ALCIBIADES.

What is thy name? Is man so hateful to thee

That art thyself a man?

TIMON.

I am Misanthropos, and hate mankind.

For thy part, I do wish thou wert a dog,

That I might love thee something.

ALCIBIADES.

I know thee well;

But in thy fortunes am unlearn'd and strange.

TIMON.

I know thee too; and more than that I know thee

I not desire to know. Follow thy drum;

With man's blood paint the ground, gules, gules.

Religious canons, civil laws, are cruel;

Then what should war be? This fell whore of thine

Hath in her more destruction than thy sword

For all her cherubin look.

PHRYNIA.

Thy lips rot off!

TIMON.

I will not kiss thee; then the rot returns

To thine own lips again.

ALCIBIADES.

How came the noble Timon to this change?

TIMON.

As the moon does, by wanting light to give.

But then renew I could not, like the moon;

There were no suns to borrow of.

ALCIBIADES.

Noble Timon,
What friendship may I do thee?

TIMON.

None, but to
Maintain my opinion.

ALCIBIADES.

What is it, Timon?

TIMON.

Promise me friendship, but perform none. If thou wilt not promise, the gods plague thee, for thou art man! If thou dost perform, confound thee, for thou art a man!

ALCIBIADES.

I have heard in some sort of thy miseries.

TIMON.

Thou saw'st them when I had prosperity.

ALCIBIADES.

I see them now; then was a blessed time.

TIMON.

As thine is now, held with a brace of harlots.

TIMANDRA.

Is this th' Athenian minion whom the world
Voic'd so regardfully?

TIMON.

Art thou Timandra?

TIMANDRA.

Yes.

TIMON.

Be a whore still; they love thee not that use thee.
Give them diseases, leaving with thee their lust.
Make use of thy salt hours. Season the slaves
For tubs and baths; bring down rose-cheek'd youth
To the tub-fast and the diet.

TIMANDRA.
Hang thee, monster!

ALCIBIADES.
Pardon him, sweet Timandra, for his wits
Are drown'd and lost in his calamities.
I have but little gold of late, brave Timon,
The want whereof doth daily make revolt
In my penurious band. I have heard, and griev'd,
How cursed Athens, mindless of thy worth,
Forgetting thy great deeds, when neighbour states,
But for thy sword and fortune, trod upon them-

TIMON.

I prithee beat thy drum and get thee gone.

ALCIBIADES.

I am thy friend, and pity thee, dear Timon.

TIMON.

How dost thou pity him whom thou dost trouble?

I had rather be alone.

ALCIBIADES.

Why, fare thee well;

Here is some gold for thee.

TIMON.

Keep it: I cannot eat it.

ALCIBIADES.

When I have laid proud Athens on a heap-

TIMON.

War'st thou 'gainst Athens?

ALCIBIADES.

Ay, Timon, and have cause.

TIMON.

The gods confound them all in thy conquest;

And thee after, when thou hast conquer'd!

ALCIBIADES.

Why me, Timon?

TIMON.

That by killing of villains

Thou wast born to conquer my country.

Put up thy gold. Go on. Here's gold. Go on.
Be as a planetary plague, when Jove
Will o'er some high-vic'd city hang his poison
In the sick air; let not thy sword skip one.
Pity not honour'd age for his white beard:

He is an usurer. Strike me the counterfeit matron:
It is her habit only that is honest,
Herself's a bawd. Let not the virgin's cheek
Make soft thy trenchant sword; for those milk paps
That through the window bars bore at men's eyes
Are not within the leaf of pity writ,
But set them down horrible traitors. Spare not the babe
Whose dimpled smiles from fools exhaust their mercy;
Think it a bastard whom the oracle
Hath doubtfully pronounc'd thy throat shall cut,
And mince it sans remorse. Swear against abjects;
Put armour on thine ears and on thine eyes,
Whose proof nor yells of mothers, maids, nor babes,
Nor sight of priests in holy vestments bleeding,
Shall pierce a jot. There's gold to pay thy soldiers.

Make large confusion; and, thy fury spent,

Confounded be thyself! Speak not, be gone.

ALCIBIADES.

Hast thou gold yet? I'll take the gold thou givest me,

Not all thy counsel.

TIMON.

Dost thou, or dost thou not, heaven's curse upon thee!

PHRYNIA AND TIMANDRA.

Give us some gold, good Timon.

Hast thou more?

TIMON.

Enough to make a whore forswear her trade,

And to make whores a bawd. Hold up, you sluts,

Your aprons mountant; you are not oathable,

Although I know you'll swear, terribly swear,

Into strong shudders and to heavenly agues, Th' immortal gods that hear you. Spare your oaths;

I'll trust to your conditions. Be whores still;

And he whose pious breath seeks to convert you-

Be strong in whore, allure him, burn him up;

Let your close fire predominate his smoke,

And be no turncoats. Yet may your pains six months

Be quite contrary! And thatch your poor thin roofs

With burdens of the dead-some that were hang'd,

No matter. Wear them, betray with them. Whore still;

Paint till a horse may mire upon your face.

A pox of wrinkles!

PHRYNIA AND TIMANDRA.

Well, more gold. What then?

Believe't that we'll do anything for gold.

TIMON.

Consumptions sow

In hollow bones of man; strike their sharp shins,

And mar men's spurring. Crack the lawyer's voice,

That he may never more false title plead,
Nor sound his quillets shrilly. Hoar the flamen,
That scolds against the quality of flesh
And not believes himself. Down with the nose,
Down with it flat, take the bridge quite away
Of him that, his particular to foresee,
Smells from the general weal. Make curl'd-pate ruffians bald,
And let the unscarr'd braggarts of the war
Derive some pain from you. Plague all,
That your activity may defeat and quell
The source of all erection. There's more gold.
Do you damn others, and let this damn you,
And ditches grave you all!

PHRYNIA AND TIMANDRA.

More counsel with more money, bounteous Timon.

TIMON.

More whore, more mischief first; I have given you earnest.

ALCIBIADES.

Strike up the drum towards Athens. Farewell, Timon;

If I thrive well, I'll visit thee again.

TIMON.

If I hope well, I'll never see thee more.

ALCIBIADES.

I never did thee harm.

TIMON.

Yes, thou spok'st well of me.

ALCIBIADES.

Call'st thou that harm?

TIMON.

Men daily find it. Get thee away, and take

Thy beagles with thee.

ALCIBIADES.

We but offend him. Strike.

Drum beats. *Exeunt* all but TIMON

TIMON.

That nature, being sick of man's unkindness,

Should yet be hungry! Common mother, thou, *[Digging]*

Whose womb unmeasurable and infinite breast

Teems and feeds all; whose self-same mettle,

Whereof thy proud child, arrogant man, is puff'd,

Engenders the black toad and adder blue,

The gilded newt and eyeless venom'd worm,

With all th' abhorred births below crisp heaven

Whereon Hyperion's quick'ning fire doth shine-

Yield him, who all thy human sons doth hate,

From forth thy plenteous bosom, one poor root!

Ensear thy fertile and conceptious womb,

Let it no more bring out ingrateful man!

Go great with tigers, dragons, wolves, and bears;

Teem with new monsters whom thy upward face

Hath to the marbled mansion all above
Never presented!- O, a root! Dear thanks!-
Dry up thy marrows, vines, and plough-torn leas,
Whereof ingrateful man, with liquorish draughts
And morsels unctuous, greases his pure mind,
That from it all consideration slips-

Enter APEMANTUS

More man? Plague, plague!

APEMANTUS.

I was directed hither. Men report
Thou dost affect my manners and dost use them.

TIMON.

'Tis, then, because thou dost not keep a dog,
Whom I would imitate. Consumption catch thee!

APEMANTUS.

This is in thee a nature but infected,

A poor unmanly melancholy sprung

From change of fortune. Why this spade, this place?

This slave-like habit and these looks of care?

Thy flatterers yet wear silk, drink wine, lie soft,

Hug their diseas'd perfumes, and have forgot

That ever Timon was. Shame not these woods

By putting on the cunning of a carper.

Be thou a flatterer now, and seek to thrive

By that which has undone thee: hinge thy knee,

And let his very breath whom thou'lt observe

Blow off thy cap; praise his most vicious strain,

And call it excellent. Thou wast told thus;

Thou gav'st thine ears, like tapsters that bade welcome,

To knaves and all approachers. 'Tis most just

That thou turn rascal; hadst thou wealth again

Rascals should have't. Do not assume my likeness.

TIMON.

Were I like thee, I'd throw away myself.

APEMANTUS.

Thou hast cast away thyself, being like thyself;

A madman so long, now a fool. What, think'st

That the bleak air, thy boisterous chamberlain,

Will put thy shirt on warm? Will these moist trees,

That have outliv'd the eagle, page thy heels

And skip when thou point'st out? Will the cold brook,

Candied with ice, caudle thy morning taste

To cure thy o'ernight's surfeit? Call the creatures

Whose naked natures live in all the spite

Of wreakful heaven, whose bare unhoused trunks,

To the conflicting elements expos'd,

Answer mere nature-bid them flatter thee.

O, thou shalt find-

TIMON.

A fool of thee. Depart.

APEMANTUS.

I love thee better now than e'er I did.

TIMON.

I hate thee worse.

APEMANTUS.

Why?

TIMON.

Thou flatter'st misery.

APEMANTUS.

I flatter not, but say thou art a caitiff.

TIMON.

Why dost thou seek me out?

APEMANTUS.

To vex thee.

TIMON.

Always a villain's office or a fool's.

Dost please thyself in't?

APEMANTUS.

Ay.

TIMON.

What, a knave too?

APEMANTUS.

If thou didst put this sour-cold habit on

To castigate thy pride, 'twere well; but thou

Dost it enforcedly. Thou'dst courtier be again

Wert thou not beggar. Willing misery

Outlives incertain pomp, is crown'd before.

The one is filling still, never complete;

The other, at high wish. Best state, contentless,
Hath a distracted and most wretched being,
Worse than the worst, content.
Thou should'st desire to die, being miserable.

TIMON.

Not by his breath that is more miserable.
Thou art a slave whom Fortune's tender arm
With favour never clasp'd, but bred a dog.
Hadst thou, like us from our first swath, proceeded
The sweet degrees that this brief world affords
To such as may the passive drugs of it
Freely command, thou wouldst have plung'd thyself
In general riot, melted down thy youth
In different beds of lust, and never learn'd
The icy precepts of respect, but followed
The sug'red game before thee. But myself,
Who had the world as my confectionary;
The mouths, the tongues, the eyes, and hearts of men
At duty, more than I could frame employment;

That numberless upon me stuck, as leaves

Do on the oak, have with one winter's brush

Fell from their boughs, and left me open, bare

For every storm that blows-I to bear this,

That never knew but better, is some burden.

Thy nature did commence in sufferance; time

Hath made thee hard in't. Why shouldst thou hate men?

They never flatter'd thee. What hast thou given?

If thou wilt curse, thy father, that poor rag,

Must be thy subject; who, in spite, put stuff

To some she-beggar and compounded thee

Poor rogue hereditary. Hence, be gone.

If thou hadst not been born the worst of men,

Thou hadst been a knave and flatterer.

APEMANTUS.

Art thou proud yet?

TIMON.

Ay, that I am not thee.

APEMANTUS.

I, that I was No prodigal.

TIMON.

I, that I am one now.

Were all the wealth I have shut up in thee,

I'd give thee leave to hang it. Get thee gone.

That the whole life of Athens were in this!

Thus would I eat it. *[Eating a root]*

APEMANTUS.

Here! I will mend thy feast.

[Offering him food]

TIMON.

First mend my company: take away thyself.

APEMANTUS.

So I shall mend mine own by th' lack of thine.

TIMON.
'Tis not well mended so; it is but botch'd.

If not, I would it were.

APEMANTUS.
What wouldst thou have to Athens?

TIMON.
Thee thither in a whirlwind. If thou wilt,
Tell them there I have gold; look, so I have.

APEMANTUS.

Here is no use for gold.

TIMON.

The best and truest;

For here it sleeps and does no hired harm.

APEMANTUS.

Where liest a nights, Timon?

TIMON.

Under that's above me.

Where feed'st thou a days, Apemantus?

APEMANTUS.

Where my stomach. finds meat; or rather, where I eat it.

TIMON.

Would poison were obedient, and knew my mind!

APEMANTUS.

Where wouldst thou send it?

TIMON.
To sauce thy dishes.

APEMANTUS.
The middle of humanity thou never knewest, but the extremity of both ends. When thou wast in thy gilt and thy perfume, they mock'd thee for too much curiosity; in thy rags thou know'st none, but art despis'd for the contrary. There's a medlar for thee; eat it.

TIMON.
On what I hate I feed not.

APEMANTUS.

Dost hate a medlar?

TIMON.
Ay, though it look like thee.

APEMANTUS.

An th' hadst hated medlars sooner, thou shouldst have
loved thyself better now. What man didst thou ever know unthrift
that was beloved after his means?

TIMON.

Who, without those means thou talk'st of, didst thou ever
know belov'd?

APEMANTUS.

Myself.

TIMON.

I understand thee: thou hadst some means to keep a dog.

APEMANTUS.

What things in the world canst thou nearest compare to
thy flatterers?

TIMON.

Women nearest; but men, men are the things themselves.

What

wouldst thou do with the world, Apemantus, if it lay in thy power?

APEMANTUS.

Give it the beasts, to be rid of the men.

TIMON.

Wouldst thou have thyself fall in the confusion of men, and

remain a beast with the beasts?

APEMANTUS.

Ay, Timon.

TIMON.

A beastly ambition, which the gods grant thee t' attain to!

If thou wert the lion, the fox would beguile thee; if thou wert

the lamb, the fox would eat thee; if thou wert the fox, the lion would suspect thee, when, peradventure, thou wert accus'd by the ass. If thou wert the ass, thy dulness would torment thee; and still thou liv'dst but as a breakfast to the wolf. If thou wert the wolf, thy greediness would afflict thee, and oft thou shouldst hazard thy life for thy dinner. Wert thou the unicorn, pride and wrath would confound thee, and make thine own self the conquest of thy fury. Wert thou bear, thou wouldst be kill'd by the horse; wert thou a horse, thou wouldst be seiz'd by the leopard; wert thou a leopard, thou wert german to the lion, and the spots of thy kindred were jurors on thy life. All thy safety were remotion, and thy defence absence. What beast couldst thou be that were not subject to a beast? And what beast art thou already, that seest not thy loss in transformation!

APEMANTUS.
If thou couldst please me with speaking to me, thou mightst have hit upon it here. The commonwealth of Athens is become a forest of beasts.

TIMON.
How has the ass broke the wall, that thou art out of the city?

APEMANTUS.

Yonder comes a poet and a painter. The plague of company

light upon thee! I will fear to catch it, and give way. When

I

know not what else to do, I'll see thee again.

TIMON.

When there is nothing living but thee, thou shalt be

welcome. I had rather be a beggar's dog than Apemantus.

APEMANTUS.

Thou art the cap of all the fools alive.

TIMON.

Would thou wert clean enough to spit upon!

APEMANTUS.

A plague on thee! thou art too bad to curse.

TIMON.

All villains that do stand by thee are pure.

APEMANTUS.

There is no leprosy but what thou speak'st.

TIMON.

If I name thee.

I'll beat thee-but I should infect my hands.

APEMANTUS.

I would my tongue could rot them off!

TIMON.

Away, thou issue of a mangy dog!

Choler does kill me that thou art alive;

I swoon to see thee.

APEMANTUS.

Would thou wouldst burst!

TIMON.

Away,

Thou tedious rogue! I am sorry I shall lose

A stone by thee. *[Throws a stone at him]*

APEMANTUS.

Beast!

TIMON.

Slave!

APEMANTUS.

Toad!

TIMON.

Rogue, rogue, rogue!

I am sick of this false world, and will love nought

But even the mere necessities upon't.

Then, Timon, presently prepare thy grave;

Lie where the light foam of the sea may beat

Thy gravestone daily; make thine epitaph,

That death in me at others' lives may laugh.

[Looks at the gold] O thou sweet king-killer, and dear divorce

'Twixt natural son and sire! thou bright defiler

Of Hymen's purest bed! thou valiant Mars!

Thou ever young, fresh, lov'd, and delicate wooer,

Whose blush doth thaw the consecrated snow

That lies on Dian's lap! thou visible god,

That sold'rest close impossibilities,

And mak'st them kiss! that speak'st with every tongue

To every purpose! O thou touch of hearts!

Think thy slave man rebels, and by thy virtue

Set them into confounding odds, that beasts

May have the world in empire!

APEMANTUS.

Would 'twere so!
But not till I am dead. I'll say th' hast gold.

Thou wilt be throng'd to shortly.

TIMON.
Throng'd to?

APEMANTUS.

Ay.

TIMON.
Thy back, I prithee.

APEMANTUS.

Live, and love thy misery!

TIMON.

Long live so, and so die! *[Exit APEMANTUS]* I am quit.

More

things like men? Eat, Timon, and abhor them.

Enter the BANDITTI

FIRST BANDIT.

Where should he have this gold? It is some poor

fragment, some slender ort of his remainder. The mere want of

gold and the falling-from of his friends drove him into this melancholy.

SECOND BANDIT.

It is nois'd he hath a mass of treasure.

THIRD BANDIT.

Let us make the assay upon him; if he care not for't,

he will supply us easily; if he covetously reserve it, how shall's get it?

SECOND BANDIT.

True; for he bears it not about him. 'Tis hid.

FIRST BANDIT.

Is not this he?

BANDITTI.

Where?

SECOND BANDIT.

'Tis his description.

THIRD BANDIT.

He; I know him.

BANDITTI.

Save thee, Timon!

TIMON.

Now, thieves?

BANDITTI.

Soldiers, not thieves.

TIMON.

Both too, and women's sons.

BANDITTI.

We are not thieves, but men that much do want.

TIMON.

Your greatest want is, you want much of meat.
Why should you want? Behold, the earth hath roots;
Within this mile break forth a hundred springs;
The oaks bear mast, the briars scarlet hips;
The bounteous housewife Nature on each bush
Lays her full mess before you. Want! Why want?

FIRST BANDIT.

We cannot live on grass, on berries, water,

As beasts and birds and fishes.

TIMON.

Nor on the beasts themselves, the birds, and fishes;

You must eat men. Yet thanks I must you con

That you are thieves profess'd, that you work not

In holier shapes; for there is boundless theft

In limited professions. Rascal thieves,

Here's gold. Go, suck the subtle blood o' th' grape

Till the high fever seethe your blood to froth,

And so scape hanging. Trust not the physician;

His antidotes are poison, and he slays

Moe than you rob. Take wealth and lives together;

Do villainy, do, since you protest to do't,

Like workmen. I'll example you with thievery:

The sun's a thief, and with his great attraction

Robs the vast sea; the moon's an arrant thief,

And her pale fire she snatches from the sun;

The sea's a thief, whose liquid surge resolves
The moon into salt tears; the earth's a thief,
That feeds and breeds by a composture stol'n
From gen'ral excrement-each thing's a thief.
The laws, your curb and whip, in their rough power
Has uncheck'd theft. Love not yourselves; away,
Rob one another. There's more gold. Cut throats;
All that you meet are thieves. To Athens go,
Break open shops; nothing can you steal
But thieves do lose it. Steal not less for this
I give you; and gold confound you howsoe'er!
Amen.

THIRD BANDIT.

Has almost charm'd me from my profession by persuading me to it.

FIRST BANDIT.

'Tis in the malice of mankind that he thus advises
us; not to have us thrive in our mystery.

SECOND BANDIT.

I'll believe him as an enemy, and give over my trade.

FIRST BANDIT.

Let us first see peace in Athens. There is no time so miserable but a man may be true. *Exeunt* THIEVES

Enter FLAVIUS, to TIMON

FLAVIUS.

O you gods!

Is yond despis'd and ruinous man my lord?
Full of decay and failing? O monument
And wonder of good deeds evilly bestow'd!
What an alteration of honour
Has desp'rate want made!
What viler thing upon the earth than friends,
Who can bring noblest minds to basest ends!
How rarely does it meet with this time's guise,
When man was wish'd to love his enemies!

Grant I may ever love, and rather woo
Those that would mischief me than those that do!
Has caught me in his eye; I will present
My honest grief unto him, and as my lord
Still serve him with my life. My dearest master!

TIMON.

Away! What art thou?

FLAVIUS.
Have you forgot me, sir?

TIMON.
Why dost ask that? I have forgot all men;
Then, if thou grant'st th'art a man, I have forgot thee.

FLAVIUS.

An honest poor servant of yours.

TIMON.

Then I know thee not.

I never had honest man about me, I.

All I kept were knaves, to serve in meat to villains.

FLAVIUS.

The gods are witness,

Nev'r did poor steward wear a truer grief

For his undone lord than mine eyes for you.

TIMON.

What, dost thou weep? Come nearer. Then I love thee

Because thou art a woman and disclaim'st

Flinty mankind, whose eyes do never give

But thorough lust and laughter. Pity's sleeping.

Strange times, that weep with laughing, not with weeping!

FLAVIUS.

I beg of you to know me, good my lord,

T' accept my grief, and whilst this poor wealth lasts

To entertain me as your steward still.

TIMON.

Had I a steward
So true, so just, and now so comfortable?
It almost turns my dangerous nature mild.
Let me behold thy face. Surely, this man
Was born of woman.
Forgive my general and exceptless rashness,
You perpetual-sober gods! I do proclaim
One honest man-mistake me not, but one;
No more, I pray-and he's a steward.

How fain would I have hated all mankind!
And thou redeem'st thyself. But all, save thee,
I fell with curses.
Methinks thou art more honest now than wise;
For by oppressing and betraying me
Thou mightst have sooner got another service;
For many so arrive at second masters
Upon their first lord's neck. But tell me true,

For I must ever doubt though ne'er so sure,
Is not thy kindness subtle, covetous,
If not a usuring kindness, and as rich men deal gifts,
Expecting in return twenty for one?

FLAVIUS.
No, my most worthy master, in whose breast
Doubt and suspect, alas, are plac'd too late!

You should have fear'd false times when you did feast:
Suspect still comes where an estate is least.
That which I show, heaven knows, is merely love,
Duty, and zeal, to your unmatched mind,
Care of your food and living; and believe it,
My most honour'd lord,
For any benefit that points to me,
Either in hope or present, I'd exchange
For this one wish, that you had power and wealth
To requite me by making rich yourself.

TIMON.

Look thee, 'tis so! Thou singly honest man,

Here, take. The gods, out of my misery,

Have sent thee treasure. Go, live rich and happy,

But thus condition'd; thou shalt build from men;

Hate all, curse all, show charity to none,

But let the famish'd flesh slide from the bone

Ere thou relieve the beggar. Give to dogs

What thou deniest to men; let prisons swallow 'em,

Debts wither 'em to nothing. Be men like blasted woods,

And may diseases lick up their false bloods!

And so, farewell and thrive.

FLAVIUS.

O, let me stay

And comfort you, my master.

TIMON.

If thou hat'st curses,

Stay not; fly whilst thou art blest and free.

Ne'er see thou man, and let me ne'er see thee.

Exeunt severally

ACT V. SCENE I. The woods. Before TIMON's cave

Enter POET and PAINTER

PAINTER.

As I took note of the place, it cannot be far where he abides.

POET.

to be thought of him? Does the rumour hold for true that he's
so full of gold?

PAINTER.

Certain. Alcibiades reports it; Phrynia and Timandra had
gold of him. He likewise enrich'd poor straggling soldiers with
great quantity. 'Tis said he gave unto his steward a mighty sum.

POET.

Then this breaking of his has been but a try for his friends?

PAINTER.

Nothing else. You shall see him a palm in Athens again,

and flourish with the highest. Therefore 'tis not amiss we tender
our loves to him in this suppos'd distress of his; it will show
honestly in us, and is very likely to load our purposes with what
they travail for, if it be just and true report that goes of his having.

POET.
What have you now to present unto him?

PAINTER.
Nothing at this time but my visitation; only I will
promise him an excellent piece.

POET.

I must serve him so too, tell him of an intent that's coming toward him.

PAINTER.
Good as the best. Promising is the very air o' th'
time;
it opens the eyes of expectation. Performance is ever the duller
for his act, and but in the plainer and simpler kind of people

the deed of saying is quite out of use. To promise is most

courtly and fashionable; performance is a kind of will or

testament which argues a great sickness in his judgment that makes it.

Enter TIMON from his cave

TIMON.

[Aside] Excellent workman! Thou canst not paint a man so bad as is thyself.

POET.

I am thinking what I shall say I have provided for him.

It

must be a personating of himself; a satire against the softness

of prosperity, with a discovery of the infinite flatteries that

follow youth and opulency.

TIMON.

[Aside] Must thou needs stand for a villain in thine own

work? Wilt thou whip thine own faults in other men? Do so, I

have gold for thee.

POET.

Nay, let's seek him;
Then do we sin against our own estate
When we may profit meet and come too late.

PAINTER.

True;
When the day serves, before black-corner'd night,
Find what thou want'st by free and offer'd light.
Come.

TIMON.

[Aside] I'll meet you at the turn. What a god's gold,
That he is worshipp'd in a baser temple
Than where swine feed!
'Tis thou that rig'st the bark and plough'st the foam,
Settlest admired reverence in a slave.
To thee be worship! and thy saints for aye
Be crown'd with plagues, that thee alone obey!
Fit I meet them. *[Advancing from his cave]*

POET.

Hail, worthy Timon!

PAINTER.

Our late noble master!

TIMON.

Have I once liv'd to see two honest men?

POET.

Sir,

Having often of your open bounty tasted,

Hearing you were retir'd, your friends fall'n off,

Whose thankless natures-O abhorred spirits!-

Not all the whips of heaven are large enough-

What! to you,

Whose star-like nobleness gave life and influence

To their whole being! I am rapt, and cannot cover

The monstrous bulk of this ingratitude

With any size of words.

TIMON.

Let it go naked: men may see't the better.

You that are honest, by being what you are,

Make them best seen and known.

PAINTER.

He and myself

Have travail'd in the great show'r of your gifts,

And sweetly felt it.

TIMON.

Ay, you are honest men.

PAINTER.

We are hither come to offer you our service.

TIMON.

Most honest men! Why, how shall I requite you?

Can you eat roots, and drink cold water-No?

BOTH.

What we can do, we'll do, to do you service.

TIMON.

Y'are honest men. Y'have heard that I have gold;

I am sure you have. Speak truth; y'are honest men.

PAINTER.

So it is said, my noble lord; but therefore

Came not my friend nor I.

TIMON.

Good honest men! Thou draw'st a counterfeit

Best in all Athens. Th'art indeed the best;

Thou counterfeit'st most lively.

PAINTER.

So, so, my lord.

TIMON.

E'en so, sir, as I say. *[To To POET]* And for thy fiction,

Why, thy verse swells with stuff so fine and smooth

That thou art even natural in thine art.

But for all this, my honest-natur'd friends,

I must needs say you have a little fault.

Marry, 'tis not monstrous in you; neither wish I

You take much pains to mend.

BOTH.

Beseech your honour

To make it known to us.

TIMON.

You'll take it ill.

BOTH.

Most thankfully, my lord.

TIMON.

Will you indeed?

BOTH.

Doubt it not, worthy lord.

TIMON.

There's never a one of you but trusts a knave
That mightily deceives you.

BOTH.

Do we, my lord?

TIMON.

Ay, and you hear him cog, see him dissemble,
Know his gross patchery, love him, feed him,
Keep in your bosom; yet remain assur'd
That he's a made-up villain.

PAINTER.

I know not such, my lord.

POET.

Nor I.

TIMON.

Look you, I love you well; I'll give you gold,

Rid me these villains from your companies.

Hang them or stab them, drown them in a draught,

Confound them by some course, and come to me,

I'll give you gold enough.

BOTH.

Name them, my lord; let's know them.

TIMON.

You that way, and you this-but two in company;

Each man apart, all single and alone,

Yet an arch-villain keeps him company.

[To the PAINTER] If, where thou art, two villians shall not be,

Come not near him. *[To the POET]* If thou wouldst not reside

But where one villain is, then him abandon.-

Hence, pack! there's gold; you came for gold, ye slaves.

[To the PAINTER] You have work for me; there's payment; hence!

[To the POET] You are an alchemist; make gold of that.-

Out, rascal dogs! *[Beats and drives them out]*

Enter FLAVIUS and two SENATORS

FLAVIUS.

It is vain that you would speak with Timon;

For he is set so only to himself

That nothing but himself which looks like man

Is friendly with him.

FIRST SENATOR.

Bring us to his cave.

It is our part and promise to th' Athenians

To speak with Timon.

SECOND SENATOR.

At all times alike

Men are not still the same; 'twas time and griefs

That fram'd him thus. Time, with his fairer hand,

Offering the fortunes of his former days,

The former man may make him. Bring us to him,

And chance it as it may.

FLAVIUS.

Here is his cave.

Peace and content be here! Lord Timon! Timon!

Look out, and speak to friends. Th' Athenians

By two of their most reverend Senate greet thee.

Speak to them, noble Timon.

Enter TIMON out of his cave

TIMON.

Thou sun that comforts, burn. Speak and be hang'd!

For each true word a blister, and each false

Be as a cauterizing to the root o' th' tongue,

Consuming it with speaking!

FIRST SENATOR.

Worthy Timon-

TIMON.

Of none but such as you, and you of Timon.

FIRST SENATOR.

The senators of Athens greet thee, Timon.

TIMON.

I thank them; and would send them back the plague,

Could I but catch it for them.

FIRST SENATOR.

O, forget
What we are sorry for ourselves in thee.
The senators with one consent of love
Entreat thee back to Athens, who have thought
On special dignities, which vacant lie
For thy best use and wearing.

SECOND SENATOR.
They confess
Toward thee forgetfulness too general, gross;
Which now the public body, which doth seldom
Play the recanter, feeling in itself
A lack of Timon's aid, hath sense withal
Of it own fail, restraining aid to Timon,
And send forth us to make their sorrowed render,
Together with a recompense more fruitful
Than their offence can weigh down by the dram;
Ay, even such heaps and sums of love and wealth
As shall to thee blot out what wrongs were theirs
And write in thee the figures of their love,
Ever to read them thine.

TIMON.

You witch me in it;

Surprise me to the very brink of tears.

Lend me a fool's heart and a woman's eyes,

And I'll beweep these comforts, worthy senators.

FIRST SENATOR.

Therefore so please thee to return with us,

And of our Athens, thine and ours, to take

The captainship, thou shalt be met with thanks,

Allow'd with absolute power, and thy good name

Live with authority. So soon we shall drive back

Of Alcibiades th' approaches wild,

Who, like a boar too savage, doth root up

His country's peace.

SECOND SENATOR.

And shakes his threat'ning sword

Against the walls of Athens.

FIRST SENATOR.

Therefore, Timon-

TIMON.

Well, sir, I will. Therefore I will, sir, thus:
If Alcibiades kill my countrymen,
Let Alcibiades know this of Timon,
That Timon cares not. But if he sack fair Athens,
And take our goodly aged men by th' beards,
Giving our holy virgins to the stain
Of contumelious, beastly, mad-brain'd war,
Then let him know-and tell him Timon speaks it
In pity of our aged and our youth-
I cannot choose but tell him that I care not,
And let him take't at worst; for their knives care not,
While you have throats to answer. For myself,
There's not a whittle in th' unruly camp
But I do prize it at my love before
The reverend'st throat in Athens. So I leave you
To the protection of the prosperous gods,

As thieves to keepers.

FLAVIUS.

Stay not, all's in vain.

TIMON.

Why, I was writing of my epitaph;

It will be seen to-morrow. My long sickness

Of health and living now begins to mend,

And nothing brings me all things. Go, live still;

Be Alcibiades your plague, you his,

And last so long enough!

FIRST SENATOR.

We speak in vain.

TIMON.

But yet I love my country, and am not

One that rejoices in the common wreck,

As common bruit doth put it.

FIRST SENATOR.

That's well spoke.

TIMON.

Commend me to my loving countrymen-

FIRST SENATOR.

These words become your lips as they pass through them.

SECOND SENATOR.

And enter in our ears like great triumphers

In their applauding gates.

TIMON.

Commend me to them,

And tell them that, to ease them of their griefs,

Their fears of hostile strokes, their aches, losses,

Their pangs of love, with other incident throes

That nature's fragile vessel doth sustain
In life's uncertain voyage, I will some kindness do them-
I'll teach them to prevent wild Alcibiades' wrath.

FIRST SENATOR.

I like this well; he will return again.

TIMON.
I have a tree, which grows here in my close,
That mine own use invites me to cut down,
And shortly must I fell it. Tell my friends,
Tell Athens, in the sequence of degree
From high to low throughout, that whoso please
To stop affliction, let him take his haste,
Come hither, ere my tree hath felt the axe,
And hang himself. I pray you do my greeting.

FLAVIUS.
Trouble him no further; thus you still shall find him.

TIMON.

Come not to me again; but say to Athens

Timon hath made his everlasting mansion

Upon the beached verge of the salt flood,

Who once a day with his embossed froth

The turbulent surge shall cover. Thither come,

And let my gravestone be your oracle.

Lips, let sour words go by and language end:

What is amiss, plague and infection mend!

Graves only be men's works and death their gain!

Sun, hide thy beams. Timon hath done his reign.

Exit TIMON into his cave

FIRST SENATOR.

His discontents are unremovably

Coupled to nature.

SECOND SENATOR.

Our hope in him is dead. Let us return

And strain what other means is left unto us

In our dear peril.

FIRST SENATOR.

It requires swift foot. *Exeunt*

SCENE II. Before the walls of Athens

Enter two other SENATORS with a MESSENGER

FIRST SENATOR.

Thou hast painfully discover'd; are his files

As full as thy report?

MESSENGER.

I have spoke the least.

Besides, his expedition promises

Present approach.

SECOND SENATOR.

We stand much hazard if they bring not Timon.

MESSENGER.

I met a courier, one mine ancient friend,

Whom, though in general part we were oppos'd,

Yet our old love had a particular force,

And made us speak like friends. This man was riding

From Alcibiades to Timon's cave

With letters of entreaty, which imported

His fellowship i' th' cause against your city,

In part for his sake mov'd.

Enter the other SENATORS, from TIMON

FIRST SENATOR.

Here come our brothers.

THIRD SENATOR.

No talk of Timon, nothing of him expect.

The enemies' drum is heard, and fearful scouring

Doth choke the air with dust. In, and prepare.

Ours is the fall, I fear; our foes the snare. *Exeunt*

SCENE III. The TIMON's cave, and a rude tomb seen

Enter a SOLDIER in the woods, seeking TIMON

SOLDIER.

By all description this should be the place.

Who's here? Speak, ho! No answer? What is this?

Timon is dead, who hath outstretch'd his span.

Some beast rear'd this; here does not live a man.

Dead, sure; and this his grave. What's on this tomb

I cannot read; the character I'll take with wax.

Our captain hath in every figure skill,

An ag'd interpreter, though young in days;

Before proud Athens he's set down by this,

Whose fall the mark of his ambition is. *Exit*

SCENE IV. Before the walls of Athens

Trumpets sound. *Enter* ALCIBIADES with his powers before Athens

ALCIBIADES.

Sound to this coward and lascivious town

Our terrible approach.

Sound a parley. The SENATORS appear upon the walls

Till now you have gone on and fill'd the time

With all licentious measure, making your wills

The scope of justice; till now, myself, and such

As slept within the shadow of your power,

Have wander'd with our travers'd arms, and breath'd

Our sufferance vainly. Now the time is flush,

When crouching marrow, in the bearer strong,

Cries of itself 'No more!' Now breathless wrong

Shall sit and pant in your great chairs of ease,

And pursy insolence shall break his wind

With fear and horrid flight.

FIRST SENATOR.

Noble and young,
When thy first griefs were but a mere conceit,
Ere thou hadst power or we had cause of fear,
We sent to thee, to give thy rages balm,
To wipe out our ingratitude with loves
Above their quantity.

SECOND SENATOR.
So did we woo
Transformed Timon to our city's love
By humble message and by promis'd means.
We were not all unkind, nor all deserve
The common stroke of war.

FIRST SENATOR.
These walls of ours
Were not erected by their hands from whom
You have receiv'd your griefs; nor are they such
That these great tow'rs, trophies, and schools, should fall
For private faults in them.

SECOND SENATOR.

Nor are they living

Who were the motives that you first went out;

Shame, that they wanted cunning, in excess

Hath broke their hearts. March, noble lord,

Into our city with thy banners spread.

By decimation and a tithed death-

If thy revenges hunger for that food

Which nature loathes-take thou the destin'd tenth,

And by the hazard of the spotted die

Let die the spotted.

FIRST SENATOR.

All have not offended;

For those that were, it is not square to take,

On those that are, revenge: crimes, like lands,

Are not inherited. Then, dear countryman,

Bring in thy ranks, but leave without thy rage;

Spare thy Athenian cradle, and those kin

Which, in the bluster of thy wrath, must fall

With those that have offended. Like a shepherd

Approach the fold and cull th' infected forth,
But kill not all together.

SECOND SENATOR.
What thou wilt,
Thou rather shalt enforce it with thy smile
Than hew to't with thy sword.

FIRST SENATOR.
Set but thy foot
Against our rampir'd gates and they shall ope,
So thou wilt send thy gentle heart before
To say thou't enter friendly.

SECOND SENATOR.
Throw thy glove,
Or any token of thine honour else,
That thou wilt use the wars as thy redress
And not as our confusion, all thy powers
Shall make their harbour in our town till we
Have seal'd thy full desire.

ALCIBIADES.

Then there's my glove;

Descend, and open your uncharged ports.

Those enemies of Timon's and mine own,

Whom you yourselves shall set out for reproof,

Fall, and no more. And, to atone your fears

With my more noble meaning, not a man

Shall pass his quarter or offend the stream

Of regular justice in your city's bounds,

But shall be render'd to your public laws

At heaviest answer.

BOTH.

'Tis most nobly spoken.

ALCIBIADES.

Descend, and keep your words.

[The SENATORS descend and open the gates]

Enter a SOLDIER as a Messenger

SOLDIER.

My noble General, Timon is dead;
Entomb'd upon the very hem o' th' sea;
And on his gravestone this insculpture, which
With wax I brought away, whose soft impression
Interprets for my poor ignorance.

ALCIBIADES reads the Epitaph

'Here lies a wretched corse, of wretched soul bereft;
Seek not my name. A plague consume you wicked caitiffs left!

Here lie I, Timon, who alive all living men did hate.
Pass by, and curse thy fill; but pass, and stay not here thy gait.'

These well express in thee thy latter spirits.
Though thou abhorr'dst in us our human griefs,
Scorn'dst our brain's flow, and those our droplets which
From niggard nature fall, yet rich conceit

Taught thee to make vast Neptune weep for aye

On thy low grave, on faults forgiven. Dead

Is noble Timon, of whose memory

Hereafter more. Bring me into your city,

And I will use the olive, with my sword;

Make war breed peace, make peace stint war, make each

Prescribe to other, as each other's leech.

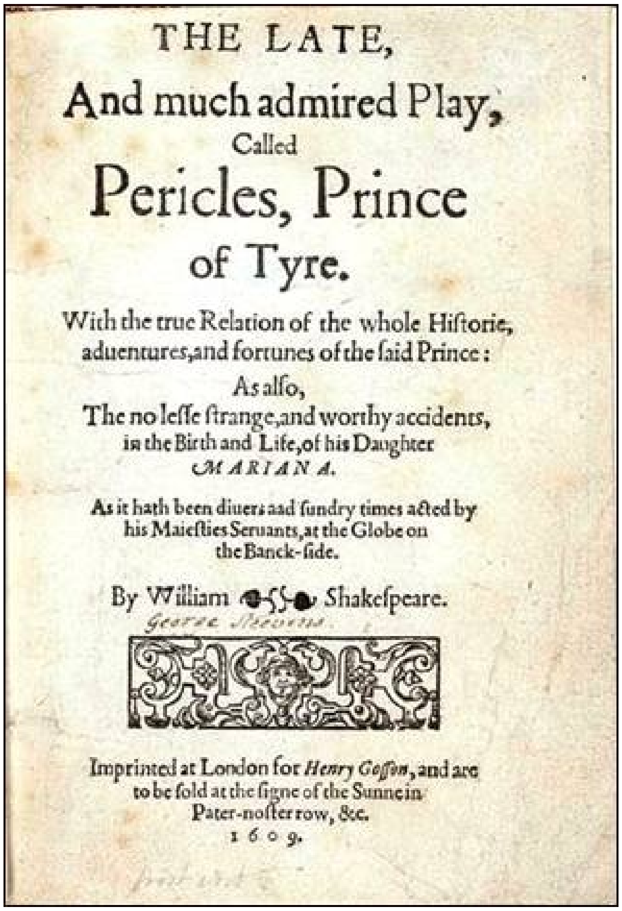
Let our drums strike. *Exeunt*

PERICLES

This play was only partly written by Shakespeare and it was not included in the First Folio, leading some to doubt its authenticity. Modern editors generally agree that Shakespeare is responsible for almost half the play, 827 lines, from Act III, following the story of Pericles and Marina. Studies indicate that the first two acts, detailing the early voyages of Pericles, were written by a mediocre collaborator, with strong evidence suggesting the victualler, dramatist and pamphleteer George Wilkins.

The play draws upon the source of *Confessio Amantis* (1393) by John Gower, an English poet and contemporary of Geoffrey Chaucer, providing the story of Apollonius of Tyre. Believed to have been written between 1607 and 1608, *Pericles* is remarkable for a scene in a brothel, suggesting its somewhat bawdy nature compared to many other Shakespearean works.

Shakespeare's main source text for this play is available via this link .



THE LATE,
And much admired Play,
Called
Pericles, Prince
of Tyre.
With the true Relation of the whole Hiſtorie,
aduentures,and fortunes of the ſaid Prince:
As alſo,
The no leſſe ſtrange,and worthy accidents,
in the Birth and Life,of his Daughter
MARIANA.
As it hath been diuers and ſundry times acted by
his Maieſties Seruants,at the Globe on
the Banck-ſide.
By William Shakeſpeare.
George Steevens.

Imprinted at London for *Henry Goſſon*, and are
to be ſold at the ſigne of the Sunne in
Pater-noſter row, &c.
1609.

The 1609 Quarto title page

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ACT V.

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SCENE III. The temple of Diana at Ephesus

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

ANTIOCHUS, king of Antioch.

PERICLES, prince of Tyre.

HELICANUS, ESCANES, two lords of Tyre.

SIMONIDES, kIng of Pentapolis.

CLEON, governor of Tarsus.

LYSIMACHUS, governor of Mytilene.

CERIMON, a lord of Ephesus.

THALIARD, a lord of Antioch.

PFIILEMON, servant to Cerimon.

LEONINE, servant to Dionyza.

Marshal.
A Pandar.

BOULT, his servant.

The Daughter of Antiochus.

DIONYZA, wife to Cleon.

THAISA, daughter to Simonides.

MARINA, daughter to Pericles and Thaisa.

LYCHORIDA, nurse to Marina.

A Bawd.

Lords, Knights, Gentlemen, Sailors, Pirates, Fishermen, and Messengers.

DIANA.

GOWER, as Chorus.

SCENE: Dispersedly in various countries.

ACT I.

[Enter GOWER.]

[Before the palace of Antioch.]

To sing a song that old was sung,

From ashes ancient Gower is come;

Assuming man's infirmities,

To glad your ear, and please your eyes.

It hath been sung at festivals,

On ember-eves and holy-ales;

And lords and ladies in their lives

Have read it for restoratives:

The purchase is to make men glorious;

Et bonum quo antiquius, eo melius.

If you, born in these latter times,

When wit's more ripe, accept my rhymes,

And that to hear an old man sing

May to your wishes pleasure bring,

I life would wish, and that I might

Waste it for you, like taper-light.

This Antioch, then, Antiochus the Great

Built up, this city, for his chiefest seat;

The fairest in all Syria,

I tell you what mine authors say:

This king unto him took a fere,

Who died and left a female heir,

So buxom, so blithe, and full of face,

As heaven had lent her all his grace;

With whom the father liking took,

And her to incest did provoke:

Bad child; worse father! to entice his own

To evil should be done by none:

But custom what they did begin

Was with long use account no sin.

The beauty of this sinful dame

Made many princes thither frame,

To seek her as a bed-fellow,

In marriage-pleasures play-fellow:

Which to prevent he made a law,

To keep her still, and men in awe,

That whoso ask'd her for his wife,

His riddle told not, lost his life:

So for her many a wight did die,

As yon grim looks do testify.

What now ensues, to the judgement your eye

I give, my cause who lest can justify.

[Exit.]

SCENE I. Antioch. A room in the palace.

[Enter ANTIOCHUS, PRINCE PERICLES, and followers.]

ANTIOCHUS.

Young prince of Tyre, you have at large received

The danger of the task you undertake.

PERICLES.

I have, Antiochus, and, with a soul

Embolden'd with the glory of her praise,

Think death no hazard in this enterprise.

ANTIOCHUS.

Bring in our daughter, clothed like a bride,

For the embracements even of Jove himself;

At whose conception, till Lucina reign'd,

Nature this dowry gave, to glad her presence,

The senate-house of planets all did sit,

To knit in her their best perfections.

[Music.   Enter the Daughter of Antiochus.]

PERICLES

See where she comes, apparell'd like the spring,

Graces her subjects, and her thoughts the king

Of every virtue gives renown to men!

Her face the book of praises, where is read

Nothing but curious pleasures, as from thence

Sorrow were ever razed, and testy wrath

Could never be her mild companion.

You gods that made me man, and sway in love,

That have inflamed desire in my breast

To taste the fruit of yon celestial tree,

Or die in the adventure, be my helps,

As I am son and servant to your will,

To compass such a boundless happiness!

ANTIOCHUS.

Prince Pericles, —

PERICLES.

That would be son to great Antiochus.

ANTIOCHUS.

Before thee stands this fair Hesperides,

With golden fruit, but dangerous to be touch'd;

For death-like dragons here affright thee hard:

Her face, like heaven, enticeth thee to view

Her countless glory, which desert must gain;

And which, without desert, because thine eye

Presumes to reach, all thy whole heap must die.

Yon sometimes famous princes, like thyself,

Drawn by report, adventurous by desire,

Tell thee, with speechless tongues and semblance pale,

That without covering, save yon field of stars,

Here they stand Martyrs, slain in Cupid's wars;

And with dead cheeks advise thee to desist

For going on death's net, whom none resist.

PERICLES.

Antiochus, I thank thee, who hath taught

My frail mortality to know itself,
And by those fearful objects to prepare
This body, like to them, to what I must;
For death remember'd should be like a mirror,
Who tells us life 's but breath, to trust it error.
I'll make my will then, and, as sick men do
Who know the world, see heaven, but, feeling woe,
Gripe not at earthly joys as erst they did;
So I bequeath a happy peace to you
And all good men, as every prince should do;
My riches to the earth from whence they came;
But my unspotted fire of love to you.

[To the daughter of Antiochus.]
Thus ready for the way of life or death,
I wait the sharpest blow, Antiochus.

ANTIOCHUS.
Scorning advice, read the conclusion, then:
Which read and not expounded, 'tis decreed,
As these before thee thou thyself shalt bleed.

DAUGHTER.

Of all say'd yet, mayst thou prove prosperous!
Of all say'd yet, I wish thee happiness!

PERICLES
Like a bold champion, I assume THe lists,
Nor ask advice of any other thought
But faithfulness and courage.

[He reads the riddle.]
I am no viper, yet I feed
On mother's flesh which did me breed.
I sought a husband, in which labour
I found that kindness in a father:
He's father, son, and husband mild;
I mother, wife, and yet his child.
How they may be, and yet in two,
As you will live, resolve it you.
Sharp physic is the last: but, O you powers

That give heaven countless eyes to view men's acts,

Why cloud they not their sights perpetually,

If this be true, which makes me pale to read it?

Fair glass of light, I loved you, and could still,

[Takes hold of the hand of the Princess.]

Were not this glorious casket stored with ill:

But I must tell you, now my thoughts revolt;

For he's no man on whom perfections wait

That, knowing sin within, will touch the gate,

You are a fair viol, and your sense the strings;

Who, finger'd to make man his lawful music,

Would draw heaven down, and all the gods to hearken;

But being play'd upon before your time,

Hell only danceth at so harsh a chime.

Good sooth, I care not for you.

ANTIOCHUS.

Prince Pericles, touch not, upon thy life,

For that's an article within our law,

As dangerous as the rest. Tour time's expired:

Either expound now, or receive your sentence.

PERICLES.

Great king,

Few love to hear the sins they love to act;

'Twould braid yourself too near for me to tell it.

Who has a book of all that monarchs do,

He's more secure to keep it shut than shown:

For vice repeated is like the wandering wind,

Blows dust in others' eyes, to spread itself;

And yet the end of all is bought thus dear,

The breath is gone, and the sore eyes see clear

To stop the air would hurt them. The blind mole casts

Copp'd hills towards heaven, to tell the earth is throng'd

By man's oppression; and the poor worm doth die for't.

Kind are earth's gods; in vice their law's their will;

And if Jove stray, who dares say Jove doth ill?

It is enough you know; and it is fit,

What being more known grows worse, to smother it.

All love the womb that their first bred,

Then give my tongue like leave to love my head.

ANTIOCHUS.*[Aside]*

Heaven, that I had thy head! he has found the meaning:

But I will gloze with him. — Young prince of Tyre.

Though by the tenour of our strict edict,

Your exposition misinterpreting,

We might proceed to cancel of your days;

Yet hope, succeeding from so fair a tree

As your fair self, doth tune us otherwise:

Forty days longer we do respite you;

If by which time our secret be undone,

This mercy shows we'll joy in such a son:

And until then your entertain shall be

As doth befit our honour and your worth.

[Exeunt all but Pericles.]

PERACLES.

How courtesy would seem to cover sin,

When what is done is like an hypocrite,

The which is good in nothing but in sight!

If it be true that I interpret false,

Then were it certain you were not so bad

As with foul incest to abuse your soul;

Where now you're both a father and a son,

By your untimely claspings with your child,

Which pleasure fits an husband, not a father;

And she an eater of her mother's flesh,

By the defiling of her parent's bed;

And both like serpents are, who though they feed

On sweetest flowers, yet they poison breed.

Antioch, farewell! for wisdom sees, those men

Blush not in actions blacker than the night,

Will shun no course to keep them from the light.

One sin, I know, another doth provoke;

Murder's as near to lust as flame to smoke:

Poison and treason are the hands of sin,

Ay, and the targets, to put off the shame:

Then, lest my life be cropp'd to keep you clear,

By flight I 'II shun the danger which I fear.

[Exit.]

[Re-enter Antiochus.]

ANTIOCHUS.

He gath found the meaning, for which we mean

To have his head.

He must not live to trumpet forth my infamy,

Nor tell the world Antiochus doth sin

In such a loathed manner;

And therefore instantly this prince must die;

For by his fall my honour must keep high.

Who attends us there?

[Enter Thaliard.]

THALIARD.

Doth your highness call?

ANTIOCHUS.

Thaliard,

You are of our chamber, and our mind partakes

Her private actions to your secrecy;

And for your faithfulness we will advance you.

Thaliard, behold, here's poison, and here's gold;

We hate the prince of Tyre, and thou must kill him:

It fits thee not to ask the reason why,

Because we Bid it. Say, is it done?

THALIARD.

My lord,

Tis done.

ANTIOCHUS.

Enough.

[Enter a Messenger.]

Let your breath cool yourself, telling your haste.

MESSENGER.

My lord, prlnce Pericles is fled.

[Exit.]

ANTIOCHUS.
As thou
Wilt live, fly after: and like an arrow shot
From a well-experienced archer hits the mark
His eye doth level at, so thou ne'er return
Unless thou say 'Prince Pericles is dead.'

THALIARD.
My lord,
If I can get him within my pistol's length,
I'll make him sure enough: so, farewell to your highness.

ANTIOCHUS.
Thaliard! adieu!

[Exit Thaliard.]
Till

Pericles be dead,

My heart can lend no succour to my head.

[Exit.]

SCENE II. Tyre. A room in the palace.

[Enter Pericles.]

PERICLES.

[To Lords without.]

Let none disturb us. — Why should this change of thoughts,

The sad companion, dull-eyed melancholy,

Be my so used a guest as not an hour,

In the day's glorious walk, or peaceful night,

The tomb where grief should sleep, can breed me quiet?

Here pleasures court mine eyes, and mine eyes shun them,

And danger, which I fear'd, is at Antioch,

Whose arm seems far too short to hit me here:

Yet neither pleasure's art can joy my spirits,

Nor yet the other's distance comfort me.

Then it is thus: the passions of the mind,
That have their first conception by mis-dread
Have after-nourishment and life by care;
And what was first but fear what might he done,
Grows elder now and cares it be not done.
And so with me: the great Antiochus,
'Gainst whom I am too little to contend,
Since he 's so great can make his will his act,
Will think me speaking, though I swear to silence;
Nor boots it me to say I honour him.
If he suspect I may dishonour him:
And what may make him blush in being known,
He'll stop the course by which it might be known;
With hostile forces he'11 o'erspread the land,
And with the ostent of war will look so huge,
Amazement shall drive courage from the state;
Our men be vanquish'd ere they do resist,
And subjects punish'd that ne'er thought offence:
Which care of them, not pity of myself,
Who am no more but as the tops of trees,
Which fence the roots they grow by and defend them,

Makes both my body pine and soul to languish,

And punish that before that he would punish.

[Enter Helicanus, with other Lords.]

FIRST LORD.

Joy and all comfort in your sacred breast!

SECOND LORD.

And keep your mind, till you return to us,

Peaceful and comfortable!

HELICANUS.

Peace, peace, and give experience tongue.

They do abuse the king that flatter him:

For flattery is the bellows blows up sin;

The thing the which is flatter'd, but a spark,

To which that blast gives heat and stronger glowing:

Whereas reproof, obedient and in order,

Fits kings, as they are men, for they may err.

When Signior Sooth here does proclaim a peace,

He flatters you, makes war upon your life.

Prince, pardon me, or strike me, if you please;

I cannot be much lower than my knees.

PERICLES.

All leave us else; but let your cares o'erlook

What shipping and what lading is in our haven,

And then return to us.

[Exeunt Lords.]

Helicanus, thou

Hast moved us: what seest thou in our looks?

HELICANUS.

An angry brow, dread lord.

PERICLES.

If there be such a dart in princes' frowns,

How durst thy tongue move anger to our face?

HELICANUS.

How dare the plants look up to heaven, from whence

They have their nourishment?

PERICLES.

Thou know'st I have power

To take thy life from thee.

HELICANUS.

[Kneeling.]

I have ground the axe myself;

Do you but strike the blow.

PERICLES.

Rise, prithee, rise.

Sit down: thou art no flatterer:

I thank thee for it; and heaven forbid

That kings should let their ears hear their faults hid!

Fit counsellor and servant for a prince, Who by thy wisdom makest a prince thy servant,

What wouldst thou have me do?

HELICANUS.

To bear with patience

Such griefs as you yourself do lay upon yourself.

PERICLES.

Thou speak'st like a physician, Helicanus,

That minister'st a potion unto me

That thou wouldst tremble to receive thyself.

Attend me, then: I went to Antioch,

And there as thou know'st, against the face of death,

I sought the purchase of a glorious beauty,

From whence an issue I might propagate,

Are arms to princes, and bring joys to subjects.

Her face was to mine eye beyond all wonder;

The rest — hark in thine ear — as black as incest:

Which by my knowledge found, the sinful father

Seem'd not to strike, but smooth: but thou know'st this,

'Tis time to fear when tyrants seem to kiss.

Which fear so grew in me, I hither fled,
Under the covering of a careful night,
Who seem'd my good protector; and, being here,
Bethought me what was past, what might succeed.
I knew him tyrannous; and tyrants' fears
Decrease not, but grow faster than the years:
And should he doubt it, as no doubt he doth,
That I should open to the listening air
How many worthy princes' bloods were shed,
To keep his bed of blackness unlaid ope,
To lop that doubt, he'll fill this land with arms,
And make pretence of wrong that I have done him;
When all, for mine, if I may call offence,
Must feel war's blow, who spares not innocence:
Which love to all, of which thyself art one,
Who now reprovest me for it, —

HELICANUS.

Alas, sir!

PERICLES.

Drew sleep out of mine eyes, blood from my cheeks,
Musings into my mind, with thousand doubts
How I might stop this tempest ere it came;
And finding little comfort to relieve them,
I thought it princely charity to grieve them.

HELICANUS.
Well, my lord, since you have given me leave to speak,
Freely will I speak. Antiochus you fear,
And justly too, I think, you fear the tyrant,
Who either by public war or private treason
Will take away your life.
Therefore, my lord, go travel for a while,
Till that his rage and anger be forgot,
Or till the Destinies do cut his thread of life.
Your rule direct to any; if to me,
Day serves not light more faithful than I'll be.

PERICLES.
I do not doubt thy faith;
But should he wrong my liberties in my absence?

HELCANUS.

We'll mingle our bloods together in the earth,
From whence we had our being and our birth.

PERICLES.

Tyre, I now look from thee then, and to Tarsus
Intend my travel, where I'll hear from thee;
And by whose letters I'll dispose myself.
The care I had and have of subjects' good
On thee I lay, whose wisdom's strength can bear it.

I'll take thy word for faith, not ask thine oath:
Who shuns not to break one will sure crack both:
But in our orbs we'll live so round and safe,
That time of both this truth shall ne'er convince,
Thou show'dst a subject's shine, I a true prince.

[Exeunt.]

SCENE III. Tyre. An ante-chamber in the Palace.

[Enter Thaliard.]

THALIARD.

So, this is Tyre, and this the court. Here must I Kill King Pericles; and if I do it not, I am sure to be hanged at home: 'tis dangerous. Well, I perceive he was a wise fellow, and had good discretion, that, being bid to ask what he would of the king, desired he might know none of his secrets: now do I see he had some reason for 't; for if a king bid a man be a villain, he's bound by the indenture of his oath to be one. Hush! here come the lords of Tyre.

[Enter Helicanus and Escanes, with other Lords of Tyre.]

HELICANUS.

You shall not need, my fellow peers of Tyre,

Further to question me of your king's departure:

His seal'd commission, left in trust with me,

Doth speak sufficiently he 's gone to travel.

THALIARD.

[Aside.]

How! the king gone!

HELICANUS.

If further yet you will be satisfied,

Why, as it were unlicensed of your loves,

He would depart, I 'II give some light unto you.

Being at Antioch —

THALIARD.

[Aside.]

What from Antioch?

HELICANUS.

Royal Antiochus — on what cause I know not

Took some displeasure at him; at least he judged so:

And doubting lest that he had err'd or sinn'd,

To show his sorrow, he 'ld correct himself;

So puts himself unto the shipman's toil,

With whom each minute threatens life or death.

THALIARD.

[Aside.]

Well, I perceive
I shall not be hang'd now, although I would;
But since he 's gone, the king's seas must please
He 'scaped the land, to perish at the sea.

I 'll present myself. Peace to the lords of Tyre!

HELICANUS.
Lord Thaliard from Antiochus is welcome.

THALIARD.
From him I come
With message unto princely Pericles;
But since my landing I have understood
Your lord has betook himself to unknown travels,
My message must return from whence it came.

HELICANUS.
We have no reason to desire it,
Commended to our master, not to us:
Yet, ere you shall depart, this we desire,

As friends to Antioch, we may feast in Tyre.

[Exeunt.]

SCENE IV. Tarsus. A room in the Governor's house.

[*Enter* Cleon, the governor of Tarsus, with Dionyza, and others.]

CLEON.

My Dionyza, shall we rest us here,
And by relating tales of others' griefs,
See if 'twill teach us to forqet our own?

DIONYZA.

That were to blow at fire in hope to quench it;
For who digs hills because they do aspire
Throws down one mountain to cast up a higher.
O my distressed lord, even such our griefs are;
Here they're but felt, and seen with mischief's eyes,
But like to groves, being topp'd, they higher rise.

CLEON.

O Dionyza,

Who wanteth food, and will not say he wants it,

Or can conceal his hunger till he famish?

Our tongues and sorrows do sound deep

Our woes into the air; our eyes do weep,

Till tongues fetch breath that may proclaim them louder;

That, if heaven slumber while their creatures want,

They may awake their helps to comfort them.

I'll then discourse our woes, felt several years,

And wanting breath to speak help me with tears.

DIONYZA.

I'll do my best, sir.

CLEON.

This Tarsus, o'er which I have the government,

A city on whom plenty held full hand,

For riches strew'd herself even in the streets;

Whose towers bore heads so high they kiss'd the clouds,

And strangers ne'er beheld but wonder'd at;
Whose men and dames so jetted and adorn'd,
Like one another's glass to trim them by:
Their tables were stored full, to glad the sight,
And not so much to feed on as delight;
All poverty was scorn'd, and pride so great,
The name of help grew odious to repeat.

DIONYZA.

O, 'tis too true.

CLEON.
But see what heaven can do! By this our change,
These mouths, who but of late, earth, sea, and air,
Were all too little to content and please,
Although they gave their creatures in abundance,
As houses are defiled for want of use,
They are now starved for want of exercise:
Those palates who, not yet two sumMers younger,
Must have inventions to delight the taste,

Would now be glad of bread, and beg for it:
Those mothers who, to nousle up their babes,
Thought nought too curious, are ready now
To eat those little darlings whom they loved.
So sharp are hunger's teeth, that man and wife
Draw lots who first shall die to lengthen life:
Here stands a lord, and there a lady weeping;
Here many sink, yet those which see them fall
Have scarce strength left to give them burial.

Is not this true?

DIONYZA.
Our cheeks and hollow eyes do witness it.

CLEON.
O, let those cities that of plenty's cup
And her prosperities so largely taste,
With their superflous riots, hear these tears!
The misery of Tarsus may be theirs.

[Enter a Lord.]

LORD.

Where's the lord governor?

CLEON.
Here.
Speak out thy sorrows which thou bring'st in haste,
For comfort is too far for us to expect.

LORD.
We have descried, upon our neighbouring shore,
A portly sail of ships make hitherward.

CLEON.

I thought as much.
One sorrow never comes but brings an heir,
That may succeed as his inheritor;
And so in ours: some neighbouring nation,

Taking advantage of our misery,
Math stuff'd these hollow vessels with their power,
To beat us down, the which are down already;
And make a conquest of unhappy me,
Whereas no glory's got to overcome.

LORD.
That's the least fear; for, by the semblance
Of their white flags display'd, they bring us peace,
And come to us as favourers, not as foes.

CLEON.

Thou speak'st like him's untutor'd to repeat:
Who makes the fairest show means most deceit.
But bring they what they will and what they can,
What need we fear?

The ground's the lowest, and we are half way there.
Go tell their general we attend him here,
To know for what he comes, and whence he comes,

And what he craves.

LORD.

I go, my lord.

[Exit.]

CLEON.

Welcome is peace, if he on peace consist;

If wars, we are unable to resist.

[Enter Pericles with Attendants.]

PERICLES.

Lord governor, for so we hear you are,

Let not our ships and number of our men

Be like a beacon fired to amaze your eyes.

We have heard your miseries as far as Tyre,

And seen the desolation of your streets:

Nor come we to add sorrow to your tears, But to relieve them of their heavy load;

And these our ships, you happily may think

Are like the Trojan horse was stuff'd within

With bloody veins, expecting overthrow,

Are stored with corn to make your needy bread,

And give them life whom hunger starved half dead.

ALL.

The gods of Greece protect you!

And we'll pray for you.

PERICLES.

Arise, I pray you, rise:

We do not look for reverence, but for love,

And harbourage for ourself, our ships, and men.

CLEON.

The which when any shall not gratify,

Or pay you with unthankfulness in thought,

Be it our wives, our children, or ourselves, The curse of heaven and men succeed their evils!

Till when, — the which I hope shall ne'er be seen, —

Your grace is welcome to our town and us.

PERICLES.

Which welcome we'll accept; feast here awhile,

Until our stars that frown lend us a smile.

[Exeunt.]

ACT II.

[Enter Gower.]

GOWER.

Mere have you seen a mighty king

His child, I wis, to incest bring;

A better prince and benign lord,

That will prove awful both in deed word.

Be quiet then as men should be,

Till he hath pass'd necessity.

I'll show you those in troubles reign,

Losing a mite, a mountain gain.

The good in conversation,

To whom I give my benison,

Is still at Tarsus, where each man

Thinks all is writ he speken can;

And, to remember what he does,

Build his statue to make him glorious:

But tidings to the contrary

Are brought your eyes; what need speak I?

DUMB SHOW.

[*Enter* at one door Pericles talking with Cleon talking with CLEON; all the train with them. *Enter* at another door a Gentleman, with a letter to Pericles; Pericles shows the letter to Cleon; gives the Messenger a reward, and knights him. *Exit* Pericles at one door, and Cleon at another.]

Good Helicane, that stay'd at home.

Not to eat honey like a drone

From others' labours; for though he strive

To killen bad, keep good alive;

And to fulfil his prince' desire,

Sends word of all that haps in Tyre:

How Thaliard came full bent with sin

And had intent to murder him;

And that in Tarsus was not best

Longer for him to make his rest.

He, doing so, put forth to seas,

Where when men been, there's seldom ease;

For now the wind begins to blow;

Thunder above and deeps below

Make such unquiet, that the ship

Should house him safe is wreck'd and split;

And he, good prince, having all lost,

By waves from coast to coast is tost:

All perishen of man, of pelf,

Ne aught escapen but himself;

Till fortune, tired with doing bad,

Threw him ashore, to give him glad:

And here he comes. What shall be next,

Pardon old Gower, — this longs the text.

[Exit.]

SCENE I. Pentapolis. An open place by the sea-side.

[Enter Pericles, wet.]

PERICLES.

Yet cease your ire, you angry stars of heaven!
Wind, rain, and thunder, remember, earthly man
Is but a substance that must yield to you;
And I, as fits my nature, do obey you:
Alas, the sea hath cast me on the rocks,
Wash'd me from shore to shore, and left me breath
Nothing to think on but ensuing death:
Let it suffice the greatness of your powers
To have bereft a prince of all his fortunes;
And having thrown him from your watery grave,
Here to have death in peace is all he'll crave.

[Enter three Fishermen.]

FIRST FISHERMAN.

What, ho, Pilch!

SECOND FISHERMAN.

Ha, come and bring away the nets!

FIRST FISHERMAN.

What, Patch-breech, I say!

THIRD FISHERMAN.

What say you, master?

FIRST FISHERMAN.

Look how thou stirrest now! come away, or I'll fetch thee with a wanion.

THIRD FISHERMAN.

'Faith, master, I am thinking of the poor men that were cast away before us even now.

FIRST FISHERMAN.

Alas, poor souls, it grieved my heart to hear what pitiful cries they made to us to help them, when, well-a-day, we could scarce help ourselves.

THIRD FISHERMAN.

Nay, master, said not I as much when I saw the porpus how he bounced and tumbled? they say they're half fish, half flesh: a plague on them, they ne'er come but I look to be washed. Master, I marvel how the fishes live in the sea.

FIRST FISHERMAN.

Why, as men do a-land; the great ones eat up the little ones: I can compare our rich misers to nothing so fitly as to a whale; a' plays and tumbles, driving the poor fry before him, and at last devours them all at a mouthful. such whales have I heard on o' the land, who never leave gaping till they they've swallowed the whole parish, church, steeple, bells, and all.

PERICLES.

[Aside.]

A pretty moral.

THIRD FISHERMAN.

But, master, if I had been the sexton, I would have been that day in the belfry.

SECOND FISHERMAN.

Why, man?

THIRD FISHERMAN.

Because he should have swallowed me too; and when I had been in his belly, I would have kept such a jangling of the bells, that he should never have left, till he cast bells, steeple, church, and parish, up again. But if the good King Simonides were of my mind, —

PERICLES.

[Aside.]

Simonides!

THIRD FISHERMAN.

We would purge the land of these drones, that rob the bee of her honey.

PERICLES.

[Aside.]

How from the finny subjec of the sea

These fishers tell the infirmities of men;

And from their watery empire recollect

All that may men approve or men detect!

Peace be at your labour, honest fishermen.

SECOND FISHERMAN.

Honest! good fellow, what's that; If it be a day fits you, search out of the calendar, and nobody look after it.

PERICLES.

May see the sea hath cast upon your coast.

SECOND FISHERMAN.

What a drunken knave was the sea to cast thee in our way!

PERICLES.

A man whom both the waters and the wind,

In that vast tennis-court, have made the ball

For them to play upon, entreats you pity him;

He asks of you, that never used to beg.

FIRST FISHERMAN.

No, friend, cannot you beg? Here's them in our country of Greece gets more with begging than we can do with working.

SECOND FISHERMAN.

Canst thou catch any fishes, then?

PERICLES.

I never practised it.

SECOND FISHERMAN.

Nay, then thou wilt starve, sure; for here's nothing to be got now-a-days, unless thou canst fish for 't.

PERICLES.

What I have been I have forgot to know;

But what I am, want teaches me to think on:

A man throng'd up with cold: my veins are chill,

And have no more of life than may suffice

To give my tongue that heat to ask your help;

Which if you shall refuse, when I am dead, For that I am a man, pray see me buried.

FIRST FISHERMAN.

Die quoth-a? Now gods forbid! I have a gown here; come, put it on; keep thee warm. Now, afore me, a handsome fellow! Come, thou shalt go home, and we'll have flesh for holidays, fish for fasting-days, and moreo'er puddings and flap-jacks, and thou shalt be welcome.

PERICLES.

I thank you, sir.

SECOND FISHERMAN.

Hark you, my friend; you said you could not beg.

PERICLES.

I did but crave.

SECOND FISHERMAN.

But crave! Then I'll turn craver too, and so I shall 'scape whipping.

PERICLES.

Why, are your beggars whipped, then?

SECOND FISHERMAN.

O, not all, my friend, not all; for if all your beggars were whipped, I would wish no better office than to be beadle.

But, master, I'll go draw up the net.

[Exit with Third Fisherman.]

PERICLES.

[Aside.]

How well this honest mirth becomes their 1abour!

FIRST FISHERMAN.

Hark you, sir, do you know where ye are?

PERICLES.

Not well.

FIRST FISHERMAN.

Why, I'll tell you: this is called Pentapolis, and our king the good Simonides.

PERICLES.

The good King Simonides, do you call him?

FIRST FISHERMAN.

Ay, sir; and he deserves so to be called for his peaceable reign and good government.

PERICLES.

He is a happy king, since he gains from his subjects the name of good government. How far is his court distant from this shore?

FIRST FISHERMAN.

Marry sir, half a day's journey: and I'll tell you, he hath a fair daughter, and to-morrow is her birth-day; and there are princes and knights come from all parts of the world to just and tourney for her love.

PERICLES.

Were my fortunes equal to my desires, I could wish to make one there.

FIRST FISHERMAN.

O, sir, things must be as they may; and what a man cannot get, he may lawfully deal for — his wife' soul.

[Re-enter Second and Third Fishermen, drawing up a net.]

SECOND FISHERMAN.

Help, master, help! here's a fish hangs in the net, like a poor man's right in the law; 'twill hardly come out. Ha! bots on't, 'tis come at last, and 'tis turned to a rusty armour.

PERICLES.

An armour, friends! I pray you, let me see it.

Thanks, fortune, yet, that, after all my crosses,

Thou givest me somewhat to repair myself,

And though it was mine own, part of my heritage,

Which my dead father did bequeath to me, With this strict charge, even as he left his life.

'Keep it, my Pericles; it hath been a shield

'Twixt me and death;' — and pointed to this brace; —

For that it saved me, keep it; in like necessity —

The which the gods protect thee from! — may defend thee.'

It kept where I kept, I so dearly loved it;

Till the rough seas, that spare not any man,

Took it in rage, though calm'd have given't again:

I thank thee for 't: my shipwreck now's no ill,

Since I have here my father's gift in's will.

FIRST FISHERMAN.

What mean you' sir?

PERICLES.

To beg of you, kind friends, this coat of worth,

For it was sometime target to a king;

I know it by this mark. He loved me dearly,

And for his sake I wish the having of it;

And that you'ld guide me to your sovereign court,

Where with it I may appear a gentleman;

And if that ever my fortune's better,

I'll pay your bounties; till then rest your debtor.

FIRST FISHERMAN.

Why, wilt thou tourney for the lady?

PERICLES.

I'll show the virtue I have borne in arms.

FIRST FISHERMAN.

Why, do'e take it, and the gods give thee good on 't!

SECOND FISHERMAN.

Ay, but hark you, my friend; 'twas we that made up this garment through the rough seams of the waters: there are certain condolements, certain vails. I hope, sir, if you thrive, you'll remember from whence you had it.

PERICLES.

Believe't I will.

By your furtherance I am clothed in steel;

And, spite of all the rapture of the sea,

This jewel holds his building on my arm:

Unto thy value I will mount myself

Upon a courser, whose delightful steps

Shall make the gazer joy to see him tread.

Only, my friend, I yet am unprovided

Of a pair of bases.

SECOND FISHERMAN.

We'll sure provide: thou shalt have my best gown to make thee a pair; and I'll bring thee to the court myself.

PERICLES.

Then honour be but a goal to my will,

This day I'll rise, or else add ill to ill.

[Exeunt.]

SCENE II. The same. A public way, or platform leading to the lists. A pavilion by the side of it for the

reception of the King, Princess, Lords, *etc.*

[Enter Simonides, Lords and Attendants.]

SIMONIDES.

Are the knights ready to begin the triumph?

FIRST LORD.

They are, my liege;

And stay your coming to present themselves.

SIMONIDES.

Return them, we are ready; and our daughter,

In honour of whose birth these triumphs are,

Sits here, like beauty's child, whom nature gat

For men to see, and seeing wonder at.

[Exit a Lord.]

THALIARD.

It pleaseth you1 my royal father, to express

My commendations great, whose merit's less.

SIMONIDES.

It's fit it should be so; for princes are

A model, which heaven makes like to itself:

As jewels lose their glory if neglected,

So princes their renowns if not respected.

'Tis now your honour, daughter, to explain

The labour of each knight in his device.

THALIARD.

Which, to preserve mine honour, I'll perform.

[Enter a Knight; he passes over, and his Squire presents his shield to the Princess.]

SIMONIDES.

Who is the first that doth prefer himself?

THALIARD.

A knight of Sparta, my renowned father;

And the device he bears upon his shield
Is a black Ethiope reaching at the sun:
The word, 'Lux tua vita mihi.'

SIMONIDES.

He loves you well that holds his life of you.

[The Second Knight passes over.]
Who is the second that presents himself?

THALIARD.
A prince of Macedon, my royal father;
And the device he bears upon his shield
Is an arm'd knight that's conquer'd by a lady;
The motto thus, in Spanish, 'Piu por dulzura que por fuerza.'

[The Third Knight passes over.]

SIMONIDES.

And what's the third?

THALIARD.

The third of Antioch;

And his device, a wreath of chivalry;

The word, 'Me pompae provexit apex.'

[The Fourth Knight passes over.]

SIMONIDES.

What is the fourth?

THALIARD.

A burning torch that's turned upside down;

The word, 'Quod me alit, me extinguit.'

SIMONIDES.

Which shows that beauty hath his power and will,

Which can as well inflame as it can kill.

[The Fifth Knight passes over.]

THALIARD.

The fifth, an hand environed with clouds,

Holding out gold that's by the touchstone tried;

The motto thus, 'Sic spectanda fides.'

[The Sixith Knight, Pericles, passes over.]

SIMONIDES.

And what's

The sixth and last, the which the knight himself

With such a graceful courtesy deliver'd?

THALIARD.

He seems to be a stranger; but his present is

A wither'd branch, that's only green at top;

The motto, 'In hac spe vivo.'

SIMONIDES.

A pretty moral;

From the dejected state wherein he is,

He hopes by you his fortunes yet may flourish.

FIRST LORD.

He had need mean better than his outward show

Can any way speak in his just commend;

For by his rusty outside he appears

To have practised more the whipstock than the lance.

SECOND LORD.

He well may be a stranger, for he comes

To an honour'd triumph strangely furnished.

THIRD LORD.

And on set purpose let his armour rust

Until this day, to scour it in the dust.

SIMONIDES.

Opinion's but a fool, that makes us scan

The outward habit by the inward man.

But stay, the knights are coming: we will withdraw

Into the gallery.

[Exeunt.]

[Great shouts within, and all cry 'The mean knight!']

SCENE III. The same. A hall of state: a banquet prepared.

[*Enter* Simonides, Thaisa, Lords, Attendants, and Knights, from tilting.]

SIMONIDES.

Knights,

To say you're welcome were superfluous.

To place upon the volume of your deeds,

As in a title-page, your worth in arms,

Were more than you expect, or more than's fit,

Since every worth in show commends itself.

Prepare for mirth, for mirth becomes a feast:

You are princes and my guests.

THAISA.

But you, my knight and guest;

To whom this wreath of victory I give,

And crown you king of this day's happiness.

PERICLES.

'Tis more by fortune, lady, than by merit.

SIMONIDES.

Call it by what you will, the day is yours;
And here, I hope, is none that envies it.
In framing an artist, art hath thus decreed,
To make some good, but others to exceed;
And you are her labour'd scholar. Come queen of the feast, —
For, daughter, so you are, — here take your place:
Marshal the rest, as they deserve their grace.

KNIGHTS.

We are honour'd much by good Simonides.

SIMONIDES.

Your presence glads our days; honour we love;
For who hates honour hates the gods above.

MARSHALL.

Sir, yonder is your place.

PERICLES.

Some other is more fit.

FIRST KNIGHT.

Contend not, sir; for we are gentlemen
That neither in our hearts nor outward eyes
Envy the great nor do the low despise.

PERICLES.

You are right courteous knights.

SIMONIDES.

Sit, sir, sit.

PERICLES.

By Jove, I wonder, that is king of thoughts, These cates resist me, she but thought upon.

THAISA.

By Juno, that is queen of marriage,

All viands that I eat do seem unsavoury,

Wishing him my meat. Sure, he's a gallant gentleman.

SIMONIDES.

He's but a country gentleman;

Has done no more than other knights have done;

Has broken a staff or so; so let it pass.

THAISA.

To me he seems like diamond to glass.

PERICLES.

Yon king's to me like to my father's picture,

Which tells me in that glory once he was;

Had princes sit, like stars, about his throne,

And he the sun, for them to reverence;

None that beheld him, but, like lesser lights,

Did vail their crowns to his supremacy:

Where now his son's like a glow-worm in the night,

The which hath fire in darkness, none in light:

Whereby I see that Time's the king of men,

He's both their parent, and he is their grave,

And gives them what he will, not what they crave.

SIMONIDES.

What, are you merry, knights?

KNIGHTS.

Who can be other in this royal presence?

SIMONIDES.

Here, with a cup that's stored unto the brim, —

As you do love, fill to your mistress' lips, —

We drink this health to you.

KNIGHTS.

We thank your grace.

SIMONIDES.

Yet pause awhile:
Yon knight doth sit too melancholy,
As if the entertainment in our court
Had not a show might countervail his worth.

Note it not you, Thaisa?

THAISA.
What is it
To me, my father?

SIMONIDES.
O attend, my daughter:
Princes in this should live like god's above,
Who freely give to every one that comes
To honour them:
And princes not doing so are like to gnats,

Which make a sound, but kill'd are wonder'd at.

Therefore to make his entrance more sweet,

Here, say we drink this standing-bowl of wine to him.

THAISA.

Alas, my father, it befits not me

Unto a stranger knight to be so bold:

He may my proffer take for an offence,

Since men take women's gifts for impudence.

SIMONIDES.

How!

Do as I bid you, or you'll move me else.

THAISA.

[Aside]

Now, by the gods, he could not please me better.

SIMONIDES.

And furthermore tell him, we desire to know of him, Of whence he is, his name and parentage.

THAISA.

The king my father, sir, has drunk to you.

PERICLES.

I thank him.

THAISA.

Wishing it so much blood unto your life.

PERICLES.

I thank both him and you, and pledge him freely.

THAISA.

And further he desires to know of you,

Of whence you are, your name and parentage.

PERICLES.

A gentleman of Tyre; my name, Pericles;
My education been in arts and arms;
Who, looking for adventures in the world,
Was by the rough seas reft of ships and men,
And after shipwreck driven upon this shore.

THAISA.
He thanks your grace; names himself Pericles,
A gentleman of Tyre,
Who only by misfortune of the seas
Bereft of ships and men, cast on this shore.

SIMONIDES.
Now, by the gods, I pity his misfortune,
And will awake him from his melancholy.
Come, gentlemen, we sit too long on trifles,
And waste the time, which looks for other revels.
Even in your armours, as you are address'd,
Will very well become a soldier's dance.
I will not have excuse, with saying this,
Loud music is too harsh for ladies' heads

Since they love men in arms as well as beds.

[The Knights dance.]

So, this was well ask'd, 'twas so well perform'd.

Come, sir;

Here is a lady which wants breathing too:

And I have heard you nights of Tyre

Are excellent in making ladies trip;

And that their measures are as exceltent.

PERICLES.

In those that practise them they are, my lord.

SIMONIDES.

O, that's as much as you would be denied

Of your fair courtesy.

[The Knights and Ladies dance.]

Unclasp, unclasp:

Thanks gentlemen, to all; all have done well.

[To Pericles.]

But you the you the best. Pages and lights to conduct

These knights unto their several lodging.

[To Pericles.]

Yours, sir,

We have given order to be next our own.

PERICLES.

I am at your grace's pleasure.

SIMONIDES.

Princes, it is too late to talk of love;

And that's the mark I know you level at:

Therefore each one betake him to his rest;

To-morrow all for speeding do their best.

[Exeunt.]

SCENE IV. Tyre. A room in the Govenor's house.

[Enter Helicanus and Escanes.]

HELICANUS.

No, Escanes, know this of me,

Antiochus from incest lived not free:

For which, the most high gods not minding longer

To withhold the vengeance that they had in store

Due to this heinous capital offence,

Even in the height and pride of all his glory,

When he was seated in a chariot

Of an inestimable value, and his daughter with him,

A fire from heavn came and shrivell'd up

Their bodies, even to loathing; for they so stunk,

That all those eyes adored them ere their fall

Scorn now their hand should give them burial.

ESCANES.

'Twas very strange

HELICANUS.

And yet but justice; for though

This king were great; his greatness was no guard.

To bar heaven's shaft, but sin had his reward.

ESCANES.

'Tis very true.

[Enter two or three Lords.]

FIRST LORD.

See, not a man in private conference

Or council has respect with him but he.

SECOND LORD.

It shall no longer grieve with out reproof.

THIRD LORD.

And cursed be he that will not second it.

FIRST LORD.

Follow me, then. Lord Helicane, a word.

HELICANE.

With me? and welcome: happy day, my lords.

FIRST LORD.

Know that our griefs are risen to the top,

And now at length they overflow their banks.

HELICANE.

Your griefs! for what? wrong not your prince your love.

FIRST LORD.

Wrong not yourself, then, noble Helicane;

But if the prince do live, let us salute him.

Or know what ground's made happy by his breath.

If in the world he live, we'll seek him there;

And be resolved he lives to govern us,

Or dead, give's cause to mourn his funeral, And leave us to our free election.

SECOND LORD.

Whose death indeed 's the strongest in our censure:
And knowing this kingdom is without a head, —
Like goodly buildings left without a roof
Soon fall to ruin, — your noble self,
That best know how to rulle and how to reign,
We thus submit unto, — our sovereign.

ALL.

Live, noble Helicane!

HELICANUS.
For honour's cause, forbear your suffrages:

If that you love Prince Pericles, forbear.
Take I your wish, I leap into the seas,
Where's hourly trouble for a minute's ease.

A twelve month longer, let me entreat you to

Forbear the absence of your king;

If in which time expired, he not return,

I shall with aged patience bear your yoke.

But if I cannot win you to this love,

Go search like nobles, like noble subjects,

And in your search spend your adventurous worth;

Whom if you find, and win unto return,

You shall like diamonds sit about his crown.

FIRST LORD.

To wisdom he's a fool that will not yield;

And since Lord Helicane enjoineth us,

We with our travels will endeavour us.

HELICANUS.

Then you love us, we you, and we'll clasp hands:

When peers thus knit, a kingdom ever stands.

[Exeunt.]

SCENE V. Pentapolis. A room in the palace.

Enter Simonides, reading a letter at one door: the Knights meet him.]

FIRST KNIGHT.]

Good morrow to the good Simonides.

SIMONIDES.

Knights, from my daughter this I let you know,

That for this twelvemonth she'll not undertake

A married life.

Her reason to herself is only known,

Which yet from her by no means can I get.

SECOND KNIGHT.

May we not get access to her, my lord?

SIMONIDES.

'Faith, by no means; she hath so strictly tied

Her to her chamber, that 'tis impossible.

One twelve moons more she'll wear Diana's livery;
This by the eye of Cynthia hath she vow'd,
And on her virgin honour will not break it.

THIRD KNIGHT.
Loath to bid farewell, we take our leaves.

[Exeunt Knights.]

SIMONIDES.
So,
They are well dispatch'd; now to my daughter's letter:

She tells me here, she'll wed the stranger knight.
Or never more to view nor day nor light.
'Tis well, mistress; your choice agrees with mine;
I like that well: nay, how absolute she's in it,
Not minding whether I dislike or no!
Well, I do commend her choice;
And will no longer have it delay'd.
Soft! here he comes: I must dissemble it.

[Enter Pericles.]

PERICLES.

All fortune to the good Simonides!

SIMONIDES.

To you as much, sir! I am beholding to you
For your sweet music this last night: I do
Protest my ears were never better fed
With such delightful pleasing harmony.

PERICLES.

It is your grace's pleasure to commend;
Not my desert.

SIMONIDES.

Sir, you are music's master.

PERICLES.

The worst of all her scholars, my good lord.

SIMONIDES.

Let me ask you one thing:

What do you think of my daughter, sir?

PERICLES.

A most virtuous princess.

SIMONIDES.

And she is fair too, is she not?

PERICLES.

As a fair day in summer, wondrous fair.

SIMONIDES.

Sir, my daughter thinks very well of you;

Ay, so well, that you must be her master, And she will be your scholar: therefore look to it.

PERICLES.

I am unworthy for her schoolmaster.

SIMONIDES.

She thinks not so; peruse this writing else.

PERICLES.

[Aside.]

A letter, that she loves the knight of Tyre!

'Tis the king's subtilty to have my life.

O, seek not to entrap me, gracious lord,

A stranger and distressed gentleman,

That never aim'd so high to love your daughter,

But bent all offices to honour her.

SIMONIDES.

Thou hast bewitch'd my daughter, and thou art A villain.

PERICLES.

By the gods, I have not:

Never did thought of mine levy offence;

Nor never did my actions yet commence

A deed might gain her love or your displeasure.

SIMONIDES.

Traitor, thou liest.

PERICLES.

Traitor!

SIMONIDES.

Ay, traitor;

PERICLES.

Even in his throat — unless it be the king —

That calls me traitor, I return the lie.

SIMONIDES.

[Aside.]

Now, by the gods, I do applaud his courage.

PERICLES.

My actions are as noble as my thoughts,

That never relish'd of a base descent.

I came unto your court for honour's cause,

And not to be a rebel to her state;

And he that otherwise accounts of me,

This sword shall prove he's honour's enemy.

SIMONIDES.

No?

Here comes my daughter, she can witness it.

[Enter Thaisa.]

PERICLES.

Then, as you are as virtuous as fair,

Resolve your angry father, if my tongue

Did e'er solicit, or my hand subscribe

To any syllable that made love to you.

THAISA.

Why, sir, say if you had,

Who takes offence at that would make me glad?

SIMONIDES.

Yea, mistress, are you so peremptory?

[Aside.]

I am glad on't with all my heart. —

I'll tame you; I'll bring you in subjection.

Will you, not having my consent,

Bestow your love and your affections

Upon a stranger?

[Aside.]

who, for aught I know,

May be, nor can I think the contrary,

As great in blood as I myself. —

Therefore hear you, mistress; either frame
Your will to mine, — and you, sir, hear you,
Either be ruled by me, or I will make you —
Man and wife:

Nay, come, your hands and lips must seal it too:
And being join'd, I'll thus your hopes destroy;
And for a further grief, — God give you joy! —
What, are you both pleased?

THAISA.

Yes, if you love me, sir.

PERICLES.
Even as my life my blood that fosters it.

SIMONIDES.

What, are you both agreed?

BOTH.

Yes, if it please your majesty.

SIMONIDES.

It pleaseth me so well, that I will see you wed;

And then with what haste you can get you to bed.

[Exeunt.]

ACT III.

[Enter Gower.]

GOWER.

Now sleep yslaked hath the rout;

No din but snores the house about,

Made louder by the o'er-fed breast

Of this most pompous marriage-feast.

The cat, with eyne of burning coal,

Now couches fore the mouse's hole;

And crickets sing at the oven's mouth,

E'er the blither for their drouth.

Hymen hath brought the bride to bed,

Where, by the loss of maidenhead,

A babe is moulded. Be attent,

And time that is so briefly spent

With your fine fancies quaintly eche:

What's dumb in show I'll plain with speech.

[Dumb Show.]

[Enter , Pericles and Simonides, at one door, with Attendants; a Messenger meets them, kneels, and gives Pericles a letter: Pericles shows it Simonides; the Lords kneel to him. Then enter Thaisa with child, with Lychorida a nurse. The King shows her the letter; she rejoices: she and Pericles take leave of her father, and depart, with Lychorida and their Attendants. Then exeunt Simonides and the rest.]

By many a dern and painful perch

Of Pericles the careful search,

By the four opposing coigns

Which the world together joins,

Is made with all due diligence

That horse and sail and high expense

Can stead the quest. At last from Tyre,

Fame answering the most strange inquire,
To the court of King Simonides
Are letters brought, the tenour these:
Antiochus and his daughter dead;
The men of Tyrus on the head
Of Helicanus would set on
The crown of Tyre, but he will none:
The mutiny he there hastes t' oppress;
Says to 'em, if King Pericles
Come not home in twice six moons,
He, obedient to their dooms,
Will take the crown. The sum of this,
Brought hither to Pentapolis
Y-ravished the regions round,
And every one with claps can sound,
'Our heir-apparent is a king!

Who dream'd, who thought of such a thing?'
Brief, he must hence depart to Tyre:
His queen with child makes her desire —
Which who shall cross? — along to go:

Omit we all their dole and woe:

Lychorida, her nurse, she takes,

And so to sea. Their vessel shakes

On Neptune's billow; half the flood

Hath their keel cut: but fortune's mood

Varies again; the grisled north

Disgorges such a tempest forth,

That, as a duck for life that dives,

So up and down the poor ship drives:

The lady shrieks, and well-a-near

Does fall in travail with her fear:

And what ensues in this fell storm

Shall for itself itself perform.

I nill relate, action may

Conveniently the rest convey;

Which might not what by me is told.

In your imagination hold

This stage the ship, upon whose deck

The sea-tost Pericles appears to speak.

[Exit.]

SCENE I.

[Enter Pericles, on shipboard.]

PERICLES.

Thou god of this great vast, rebuke these surges,

Which wash forth both heaven and hell; and thou that hast

Upon the winds command, bind them in brass,

Having call'd them from the deep! O, still

Thy deafening, dreadful thunders; gently quench

Thy nimble, sulphurous flashes! O, how, Lychorida,

How does my queen? Thou stormest venomously;

Wilt thou spit all thyself? The seaman's whistle

Is as a whisper in the ears of death,

Unheard. Lychorida! - Lucina, O

Divinest patroness, and midwife gentle

To those that cry by night, convey thy deity

Aboard our dancing boat; make swift the pangs

Of my queen's travails!

[Enter Lychorida, with an Infant.]

Now, Lychorida!

LYCHORIDA.

Here is a thing too young for such a place,

Who, if it had conceit, would die, as I

Am like to do: take in your aims this piece

Of your dead queen.

PERICLES.

How, how, Lychorida!

LYCHORIDA.

Patience, good sir; do not assist the storm.

Here's all that is left living of your queen,

A little daughter: for the sake of it,

Be manly, and take comfort.

PERICLES.

O you gods!

Why do you make us love your goodly gifts,

And snatch them straight away? We here below

Recall not what we give, and therein may

Use honour with you.

LYCHORIDA.

Patience, good sir.

Even for this charge.

PERICLES.

Now, mild may be thy life!

For a more blustrous birth had never babe:

Quiet and gentle thy conditions! for

Thou art the rudliest welcome to this world

That ever was prince's child. Happy what follows!

Thiou hast as chiding a nativity

As fire, air, water, earth, and heaven can make,

To herald thee from the womb: even at the first

Thy loss is more than can thy portage quit,

With all thou canst find here, Now, the good gods

Throw their best eyes upon't!

{ *Enter* two Sailors.]

FIRST SAILOR.

What courage, sir? God save you!

PERICLES.

Courage enough: I do not fear the flaw;

It hath done to me the worst. Yet, for the love

Of ths poor infant, this fresh-new sea-farer,

I would it would be quiet.

FIRST SAILOR.

Slack the bolins there! Thou wilt not, wilt thou? Blow, and split thyself.

SECOND SAILOR.

But sea-room, an the brine and cloudy billow kiss the moon, I care not.

FIRST SAILOR.

Sir, your queen must overboard: the sea works high, the wind is loud and will not lie till the ship be cleared of the dead.

PERICLES.

That's your superstition.

FIRST SAILOR.

Pardon us, sir; with us at sea it has been still observed; and we are strong in custom. Therefore briefly yield her; for she must overboard straight.

PERICLES.

As you think meet. Most wretched queen!

LYCHORIDA.

Here she lies, sir.

PERICLES.

A terrible childben hast thou had, my dear;

No light, no fire: the unfriendly elements

Forgot thee utterly; nor have I time

To give thee hallow'd to thy grave, but straight

Must cast thee, scarcely coffin'd, in the ooze;

Where, for a monument upon thy bones,

And e'er-remaining lamps, the belching whale

And humming water must o'erwhelm thy corpse,

Lying with simple shells. O Lychorida.

Bid Nestor bring me spices, ink and paper,

My casket and my jewels; and bid Nicander

Bring me the satin coffer: lay the babe

Upon the pillow: hie thee, whiles I say

A priestly farewell to her: suddenly, woman.

[Exit Lychorida.]

SECOND SAILOR.

Sir, we have a chest beneath the hatches, caulked and bitumed ready.

PERICLES.

I thank thee. Mariner, say what coast is this?

SECOND SAILOR.

We are near Tarsus.

PERICLES.

Thither, gentle mariner,

Alter thy course for Tyre. When, canst thou reach it?

SECOND SAILOR.

By break of day, if the wind cease.

PERICLES.

O, make for Tarsus!

There will I visit Cleon, for the babe

Cannot hold out to Tyrus there I'll leave it

At careful nursing. Go thy ways, good mariner:

I'll bring the body presently.

[Exeunt.]

SCENE II. Ephesus. A room in Cerimon's house.

[*Enter* Cerimon, with a Servant, and some Persons who have been shipwrecked.]

CERIMON.

Philemon, ho!

[Enter Philemon.]

PHILEMON.

Doth my lord call?

CERIMON.

Get fire and meat for these poor men:

'T has been a turbulent and stormy night.

SERVANT.

I have been in many; but such a night as this, Till now, I ne'er endured.

CERIMON.

Your master will be dead ere you return;
There's nothing can be minister'd to nature
That can recover him.

[To Philemon.]

Give this to the 'pothecary,
And tell me how it works.

[Exeunt all but Cerimon.]

[Enter two Gentlemen.]

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

Good morrow.

SECOND GENTLEMAN.

Good morrow to your lordship.

CERIMON.

Gentlemen,

Why do you stir so early?

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

Sir,

Our lodgings, standing bleak upon the sea,

Shook as the earth did quake;

The very principals did seem to rend,

And all-to topple: pure surprise and fear

Made me to quit the house.

SECOND GENTLEMAN.

That is the cause we trouble you so early;

'Tis not our husbandry.

CERIMON.

O, you say well.

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

But I much marvel that your lordship, having

Rich tire about you, should at these early hours

Shake off the golden slumber of repose.

'Tis most strange,

Nature should be so conversant with pain.

Being thereto not compell'd.

CERIMON.

I hold it ever,

Virtue and cunning were endowments greater

Than nobleness and riches: careless heirs

May the two latter darken and expend;

But immortality attends the former,

Making a man a god. 'Tis known, I ever

Have studied physic, through which secret art,

By turning o'er authorities, I have,

Together with my practice, made familiar

To me and to my aid the blest infusions

That dwell in vegetives, in metals, stones;

And I can speak of the disturbances
That nature works, and of her cures; which doth give me
A more content in course of true delight
Than to be thirsty after tottering honour,
Or tie my treasure up in silken bags,
To please the fool and death.

SECOND GENTLEMAN.
Your honour has through Ephesus pour'd forth
Your charity, and hundreds call themselves
Your creatures, who by you have been restored:
And not your knowledge, your personal pain, but even
Your purse, still open, hath built Lord Cerimon
Such strong renown as time shall ne'er decay.

[Enter two or three Servants with a chest.]

FIRST SERVANT.

So; lift there.

CERIMON.

What is that?

FIRST SERVANT.

Sir, even now

Did the sea toss upon our shore this chest:

'Tis of some wreck.

CERIMON.

Set 't down, let's look upon 't.

SECOND GENTLEMAN.

'Tis like a coffin, sir.

CERIMON.

Whate'er it be,

'Tis wondrous heavy. Wrench it open straight:

If the sea's stomach be o'ercharged with gold,

'Tis a good constraint of fortune it belches upon us.

SECOND GENTLEMAN.

'Tis so, my lord.

CERIMON.

How close 'tis caulk'd and bitumed!
Did the sea cast it up?

FIRST SERVANT.

I never saw so huge a billow, sir,
As toss'd it upon shore.

CERIMON.

Wrench it open;
Soft! it smells most sweetly in my sense.

SECOND GENTLEMAN.

A delicate odour.

CERIMON.

As ever hit my nostril. So up with it.

O you most potent gods! what's here? a corse!

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

Most strange!

CERIMON.

Shrouded in cloth of state; balm'd and entreasured

With full bags of spices! A passport too!

Apollo, perfect me in the characters!

[Reads from a scroll.]

'Here I give to understand,

If e'er this coffin drive a-land,

I, King Pericles, have lost

This queen, worth all our mundane cost.

Who her, give her burying;

She was the daughter of a king:

Besides this treasure for a fee,

The gods requite his charity!'

If thou livest, Pericles, thou hast a heart

That even cracks for woe! This chanced tonight.

SECOND GENTLEMAN.

Most likely, sir.

CERIMON.

Nay, certainly tonight;

For look how fresh she looks! They were too rough

That threw her in the sea. Make a fire within

Fetch hither all my boxes in my closet.

[Exit a Servant.]

Death may usurp on nature many hours,

And yet the fire of life kindle again

The o'erpress'd spirits. I heard of an Egyptian

That had nine hours lien dead,

Who was by good appliance recovered.

[Re-enter a Servant, with boxes, napkins, and fire.

Well said, well said; the fire and cloths.

The rough and woeful music that we have,

Cause it to sound, beseech you

The viol once more: how thou stirr'st, thou block!

The music there! — I pray you, give her air.

Gentlemen,

This queen will live: nature awakes; a warmth

Breathes out of her: she hath not been entranced

Above five hours: see how she gins to blow

Into life's flower again!

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

The heavens,

Through you, increase our wonder and set up

Your fame for ever.

CERIMON.

She is alive; behold,

Her eyelids, cases to those heavenly jewels

Which Pericles hath lost,

Begin to part their fringes of bright gold;

The diamonds of a most praised water

Do appear, to make the world twice rich.

Live,

And make us weep to hear your fate, fair creature,

Rare as you seem to be.

[She moves.]

THAISA.

O dear Diana,

Where am I? Where's my lord? What world is this?

SECOND GENTLEMAN.

Is not this strange?

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

Most rare.

CERIMON.

Hush, my gentle neighbours!

Lend me your hands; to the next chamber bear her.
Get linen: now this matter must be look'd to,
For her, relapse is mortal. Come, come;
And AEsculapius guide us!

[Exeunt, carrying her away.]

SCENE III. Tarsus. A room in Cleon's house.

[*Enter* Pericles, Cleon, Dionyza, and Lychorida with Marina in her arms.]

PERICLES.
Most honour'd Cleon, I must needs be gone;
My twelve months are expired, and Tyrus stands
In a litigious peace. You, and your lady,
Take from my heart all thankfulness! The gods
Make up the rest upon you!

CLEON.

Your shafts of fortune, though they hurt you mortally,
Yet glance full wanderingly on us.

DIONYZA.

O, your sweet queen!
That the strict fates had pleased you had brought her hither,
To have bless'd mine eyes with her!

PERICLES.
We cannot but obey
The powers above us. Could I rage and roar
As doth the sea she lies in, yet the end
Must be as 'tis. My gentle babe Marina, whom,
For she was born at sea, I have named so, here
I charge your charity withal, leaving her
The infant of your care; beseeching you
To give her princely training, that she may be
Manner'd as she is born.

CLEON.

Fear not, my lord, but think
Your grace, that fed my country with your corn,
For which the people's prayers still fall upon you,
Must in your child be thought on. If neglection
Should therein make me vile, the common body,
By you relieved, would force me to my duty:
But if to that my nature need a spur,
The gods revenge it upon me and mine,
To the end of generation!

PERICLES.

I believe you;
Your honour and your goodness teach me to 't,
Without your vows. Till she be married, madam,
By bright Diana, whom we honour, all
Unscissar'd shall this hair of mine remain,
Though I show ill in 't. So I take my leave
Good madam, make me blessed in your care
In bringing up my child.

DIONYZA.

I have one myself,
Who shall not be mere dear to my respect
Than yours, my lord.

PERICLES.

Madam, my thanks and prayers.

CLEON.
We'll bring your grace e'en to the edge o' the shore,
Then give you up to the mask'd Neptune and
The gentlest winds of heaven.

PERICLES.
I will embrace
Your offer. Come, dearest madam. O, no tears,
Lychorida, no tears:
Look to your little mistress, on whose grace
You may depend hereafter. Come, my lord.

[Exeunt.]

SCENE IV. Ephesus. A room in Cerimon's house.

[Enter Cerimon and Thaisa.]

CERIMON.

Madam, this letter, and some certain jewels,

Lay with you in your coffer: which are now

At your command. Know you the character?

THAISA.

It is my lord's.

That I was shipp'd at sea, I well remember,

Even on my eaning time; but whether there

Deliver'd, by the holy gods,

I cannot rightly say. But since King Pericles,

My wedded lord, I ne'er shall see again,

A vestal livery will I take me to,

And never more have joy.

CERIMON.

Madam, if this you purpose as ye speak,

Diana's temple is not distant far,

Where you may abide till your date expire.

Moreover, if you please, a niece of mine

Shall there attend you.

THAISA.

My recompense is thanks, that's all;

Yet my good will is great, though the gift small.

[Exeunt.]

ACT IV.

[Enter Gower.]

GOWER.

Imagine Pericles arrived at Tyre,

Welcomed and settled to his own desire.

His woeful queen we leave at Ephesus,

Unto Diana there a votaress.

Now to Marina bend your mind,

Whom our fast-growing scene must find

At Tarsus, and by Cleon train'd

In music, letters; who hath gain'd

Of education all the grace,

Which makes her both the heart and place

Of general wonder. But, alack,

That monster envy, oft the wrack

Of earned praise, Marina's life

Seeks to take off by treason's knife.

And in this kind hath our Cleon

One daughter, and a wench full grown,

Even ripe for marriage-rite; this maid

Hight Philoten: and it is said

For certain in our story, she

Would ever with Marina be:

Be't when she weaved the sleided silk

With fingers long, small, white as milk;

Or when she would with sharp needle wound,

The cambric, which she made more sound

By hurting it; or when to the lute

She sung, and made the night-bird mute

That still records with moan; or when

She would with rich and constant pen

Vail to her mistress Dian; still

This Philoten contends in skill

With absolute Marina: so

With the dove of Paphos might the crow

Vie feathers white. Marina gets

All praises, which are paid as debts,

And not as given. This so darks

In Philoten all graceful marks,

That Cleon's wife, with envy rare,

A present murderer does prepare

For good Marina, that her daughter

Might stand peerless by this slaughter.

The sooner her vile thoughts to stead,

Lychorida, our nurse, is dead:

And cursed Dionyza hath

The pregnant instrument of wrath

Prest for this blow. The unborn event

I do commend to your content:

Only I carry winged time

Post on the lame feet of my rhyme;

Which never could I so convey,

Unless your thoughts went on my way.

Dionyza does appear,

With Leonine, a murderer.

[Exit.]

Scene I. Tarsus. An open place near the sea-shore.

[Enter Dionyza and Leonine.]

DIONYZA.

Thy oath remember; thou hast sworn to do 't:

'Tis but a blow, which never shall be known.

Thou canst not do a thing in the world so soon,

To yield thee so much profit. Let not conscience,

Which is but cold, inflaming love i' thy bosom,

Inflame too nicely; nor let pity, which

Even women have cast off, melt thee, but be

A soldier to thy purpose.

LEONINE.

I will do't; but yet she is a goodly creature.

DIONYZA.

The fitter, then, the gods should have her. Here she comes weeping for her only mistress' death. Thou art resolved?

LEONINE.

I am resolved.

[Enter Marina, with a basket of flowers.]

MARINA.

No, I will rob Tellus of her weed

To strew thy green with flowers: the yellows, blues,

The purple violets, and marigolds,

Shall as a carpet hang upon thy grave,

While summer-days do last. Ay me! poor maid,

Born in a tempest, when my mother died,

This world to me is like a lasting storm,

Whirring me from my friends.

DIONYZA.

How now, Marina! why do you keep alone?

How chance my daughter is not with you? Do not

Consume your blood with sorrowing: you have

A nurse of me. Lord, how your favour's changed

With this unprofitable woe!

Come, give me your flowers, ere the sea mar it.

Walk with Leonine; the air is quick there,

And it pierces and sharpens the stomach.

Come,

Leonine, take her by the arm, walk with her.

MARINA.

No, I pray you;

I'll not bereave you of your servant.

DIONYZA.

Come, come;

I love the king your father, and yourself,

With more than foreign heart. We every day

Expect him here: when he shall come and find

Our paragon to all reports thus blasted,

He will repent the breadth of his great voyage;

Blame both my lord and me, that we have taken

No care to your best courses. Go, I pray you,

Walk, and be cheerful once again; reserve

That excellent complexion, which did steal

The eyes of young and old. Care not for me;

I can go home alone.

MARINA.

Well, I will go;

But yet I have no desire to it.

DIONYZA.

Come, come, I know 'tis good for you.

Walk half an hour, Leonine, at the least:

Remember what I have said.

LEONINE.

I warrant you, madam.

DIONYZA.

I'll leave you, my sweet lady, for a while:

Pray, walk softly, do not heat your blood:

What! I must have a care of you.

MARINA.

My thanks, sweet madam.

[Exit Dionyza.]

Is this wind westerly that blows?

LEONINE.

South-west.

MARINA.

When I was born, the wind was north.

LEONINE.

Was 't so?

MARINA.

My father, as nurse said, did never fear,

But cried 'Good seamen!' to the sailors, galling

His kingly hands, haling ropes;

And, clasping to the mast, endured a sea

That almost burst the deck.

LEONINE.

When was this?

MARINA.

When I was born:

Never was waves nor wind more violent;

And from the ladder-tackle washes off

A canvas-climber. 'Ha!' says one, wilt out?'

And with a dropping industry they skip

From stem to stern: the boatswain whistles, and

The master calls, and trebles their confusion.

LEONINE.

Come, say your prayers.

MARINA.

What mean you?

LEONINE.

If you require a little space for prayer,

I grant it: pray; but be not tedious,

For the gods are quick of ear, and I am sworn
To do my work with haste.

MARINA.

Why will you kill rne?

LEONINE.
To satisfy my lady.

MARINA.

Why would she have me kill'd?
Now, as I can remember, by my troth,
I never did her hurt in all my life:
I never spoke bad word, nor did ill turn
To any living creature: believe me, la,
I never kill'd a mouse, nor hurt a fly:
I trod upon a worm against my will,
But I wept for it. How have I offended,
Wherein my death might yield her any profit,

Or my life imply her any danger?

LEONINE.

My commission

Is not to reason of the deed, but do it.

MARINA.

You will not do 't for all the world, I hope.

You are well favour'd, and your looks foreshow

You have a gentle heart. I saw you lately,

When you caught hurt in parting two that fought:

Good sooth, it show'd well in you: do so now:

Your lady seeks my life; come you between,

And save poor me, the weaker.

LEONINE.

I am sworn,

And will dispatch.

[He seizes her.]

[Enter Pirates.]

FIRST PIRATE.

Hold, villain!

[Leonine runs away.]

SECOND PIRATE.

A prize! a prize!

THIRD PIRATE.

Half-part, mates, half-part,

Comes, let's have her aboard suddenly.

[Exeunt Pirates with Marina.]

[Re-enter Leonine.]

LEONINE.

These roguing thieves serve the great pirate Valdes;

And they hav seized Marina. Let her go:

Thre's no hope she will return. I'll swear she's dead

And thrown into the sea. But I'll see further:

Perhaps they will but please themselves upon her,

Not carry her aboard. If she remain,

Whom they have ravish'd must by me be slain.

[Exit.]

Scene II. Mytilene. A room in a brothel.

[Enter Pandar, Bawd, and Boult.]

PANDAR.

Boult!

BOULT.

Sir?

PANDAR.

Search the market narrowly; Mytilene is full of gallants. We lost too much money this mart by being too wenchless.

BAWD.

We were never so much out of creatures. We have but poor three, and they can do no more than they can do; and they with continual action are even as good as rotten.

PANDAR.

Therefore let's have fresh ones, whate'r we pay for them. If there be not a conscience to be used in every trade, we shall never prosper.

BAWD.

Thou sayest true: 'tis not our bringing up of poor bastards, — as, I think, I have bought up some eleven —

BOULT.

Ay, to eleven; and brought them down again. But shall I search the market?

BAWD.

What else, man? The stuff we have, a strong wind will blo it to pieces, they are so pitifully sodden.

PANDAR.

Thou sayest true; they're too unwholesome, o' conscience. The poor Transylvanian is dead, that lay with the little baggage.

BOULT.

Ay, she quickly pooped him; she made him roast-meat for worms.

But I'll go search the market.

[Exit.]

PANDAR.

Three or four thousand chequins were as pretty a proportion to live quietly, and so give over.

BAWD.

Wgy to give over, I pray you? is it a shame to get when we are old?

PANDAR.

O, our credit comes not in like the commodity , nor the commodity wages not with the danger: therfore, if in our youths we could pick up some pretty estate, 'twere not amiss to keep our door hatched. Besides, the sore terms we stand upon with the gods will be strong with us for giving over.

BAWD.

Come, others sorts offend as well as we.

PANDAR.

As well as we! ay, and better too; we offend worse. Neither is our profession any trade; it's no calling. But here comes Boult.

[Re-enter Boult, with the Pirates and Marina.]

BOULT

[To Marina.]

Come your ways. My masters, you say she's a virgin?

FIRST PIRATE.

O, sir, we doubt it not.

BOULT.

Master, I have gone through for this piece, you see: if you like her, so; if not, I have lost my earnest.

BAWD.

Boult, has she any qualities?

BOULT.

She has a good face, speaks well, and has excellent clothes: ther's no further necessity of qualities can make her be refused.

BAWD.

What is her price, Boult?

BOULT.

I cannot be baited one doit of a thousand pieces.

PANDAR.

Well, follow me, my masters, you shall have your money presently.

Wife, take her in; instruct her what she has to do, that she may

not be raw in her entertainment.

[Exeunt Pandar and Pirates.]

BAWD.

Boult, take you the marks of her, the colour of her hair, complexion, height, age, with warrant of her virginity; and cry 'He that will give most shall have her first.' Such a maidenhead were no cheap thing, if men were as they have been. Get this done as I command you.

BOULT.

Performance shall follow.

[Exit .

MARINA.

Alack that Leonine was so slack, so slow!

He should have struck, not spoke; or that these pirates,

Not enough barbarous, had not o'erboard thrown me

For to seek my mother!

BARD.

Why lament you, pretty one?

MARINA.

That I am pretty.

BAWD.

Come, the gods have done their part in you.

MARINA.

I accuse them not.

BAWD.

You are light into my hands, where you are like to live.

MARINA.

The more my fault
To scape his hands where I was like to die.

BAWD.

Ay, and you shall live in pleasure.

MARINA.

No.

BAWD.

Yes, indeed shall you, and taste gentlemen of all fashions: you shall fare well; you shall have the difference of all complexions.

What! do you stop your ears?

MARINA.

Are you a woman?

BAWD.

What would you have me be, an I be not a woman?

MARINA.

An honest woman, or not a woman.

BAWD.

Marry, whip the, gosling: I think I shall have something to do with you. Come, you're a young foolish sapling, and must be bowed as I would have you.

MARINA.

The gods defend me!

BAWD.

If it please the gods to defend you by men, then men must comfort you, men must feed you, men must stir you up. Boult's returned.

[Re-enter Boult.]

Now, sir, hast thou cried her through the market?

BOULT.

I have cried her almost to the number of her hairs; I have drawn her picture with my voice.

BAWD.

And I prithee tell me, how dost thou find the inclination of the people, especially of the younger sort?

BOULT.

'Faith, they listened to me as they would have hearkened to their father's testament. There was a Spaniard's mouth so watered, that he went to bed to her very description.

BAWD.

We shall have him here to-morrow: with his best ruff on.

BOULT.

Tonight, tonight. But, mistress, do you know the French knight that cowers i' the hams?

BAWD.

Who, Monsieur Veroles?

BOULT.

Ay, he: he offered to cut a caper at the proclamation; but he made a groan at it, and swore he would see her to-morrow.

BAWD.

Well. well; as for him, he brought his disease hither: here he does but repair it. I know he will come in our shadow, to scatter his crowns in the sun.

BOULT.

Well, if we had of every nation a traveller, we should lodge them with this sign.

[To Marina.] Pray you, come hither awhile. You have fortunes coming upon you. Mark me: you must seem to do that fearfully which you commit willingly, despise profit where you have most gain. To weep that you live as ye do makes pity in your lovers: seldom but that pity begets you a good opinion, and that opinion a mere profit.

MARINA.

I understand you not.

BOULT.

O, take her home, mistress, take her home: these blushes of hers must be quenched with some present practice.

BAWD.

Thou sayest true, i' faith so they must; for your bride goes to that with shame which is her way to go with warrant.

BOULT.

'Faith, some do and some do not. But, mistress, if I have bargained for the joint,—

BAWD.

Thou mayst cut a morsel off the spit.

BOULT.

I may so.

BAWD.

Who should deny it? Come young one, I like the manner of your garments well.

BOULT.

Ay, by my faith, they shall not be changed yet.

BAWD.

Boult, spend thou that in the town: report what a sojourner we have; you'll lose nothing by custom. When nature framed this piece, she meant thee a good turn; therefore say what a paragon she is, and thou hast the harvest out of thine own report.

BOULT.

I warrant you, mistress, thunder shall not so awake the beds of

eels as my giving out her Beauty stir up the lewdly-inclined.

I'll bring home some tonight.

BAWD.

Come your ways; follow me.

MARINA.

If fires be hot, knives sharp, or waters deep,
Untied I still my virgin knot will keep.

Diana, aid my purpose!

BAWD.

What have we to do with Diana? Pray you, will you go with us?

[Exeunt.]

SCENE III. Tarsus. A room in Cleon's house.

[Enter Cleon and Dionyza.]

DIONYZA.

Why, are you foolish? Can it be undone?

CLEON.

O, Dionyza, such a piece of slaughter

The sun and moon ne'er look'd upon!

DIONYZA.

I think

You'll turn a child agan.

CLEON.

Were I chief lord of all this spacious world,

I'ld give it to undo the deed. 0 lady,

Much less in blood than virtue, yet a princess

To equal any single crown o' the earth

I' the justice of compare! O villain Leonine!

Whom thou hast poison'd too:

If thou hadst drunk to him, 't had been a kindness

Becoming well thy fact: what canst thou say

When noble Pericles shall demand his child?

DIONYZA.

That she is dead. Nurses are not the fates, To foster it, nor ever to preserve.

She died at night; I'11 say so. Who can cross it?
Unless you play the pious innocent,
And for an honest attribute cry out
'She died by foul play.'

CLEON.
O, go to. Well, well,
Of all the faults beneath the heavens, the gods
Do like this worst.

DIONYZA.
Be one of those that think.
The petty wrens of Tarsus will fly hence,
And open this to Pericles. I do shame
To think of what a noble strain you are,
And of how coward a spirit.

CLEON.
To such proceeding

Whoever but his approbation added,

Though not his prime consent, he did not flow

From honourable sources,

DIONYZA.

Be it so, then:

Yet none does know, but you, how she came dead,

Nor none can know, Leonine being gone.

She did distain my child, and stood between

Her and her fortunes: none would look on her,

But cast their gazes on Marina's face;

Whilst ours was blurted at and held a malkin

Not worth the time of day. It pierced me through;

And though you call my course unnatural,

You not your child well loving, yet I find

It greets me as an enterprise of kindness

Perform'd to your sole daughter.

CLEON.

Heavens forgive it!

DIONYZA.

And as for Pericles,

What should he say? We wept after her hearse,

And yet we mourn: her monument

Is almost finish'd, and her epitaphs

In glittering golden characters express

A general praise to her, and care in us

At whose expense 'tis done.

CLEON.

Thou art like the harpy,

Which, to betray, dost, with thine angel's face,

Seize with thine eagle's talons.

DIONYZA.

You are like one that superstitiously

Doth swear to the gods that winter kills the flies:

But yet I know you'll do as I advise.

[Exeunt.]

SCENE IV.

[*Enter* Gower, before the monument of Marina at Tarsus.]

GOWER.

Thus time we waste, and longest leagues make short;

Sail seas in cockles, have an wish but for 't;

Making, to take your imagination,

From bourn to bourn, region to region.

By you being pardon'd, we commit no crime

To use one language in each several clime

Where our scenes seem to live. I do beseech you

To learn of me, who stand i' the gaps to teach you,

The stages of our story. Pericles

Is now again thwarting the wayward seas

Attended on by many a lord and knight,

To see his daughter, all his life's deight.

Old Escanes, whom Helicanus late

Advanced in time to great and high estate.

Is left to govern. Bear you it in mind,

Old Helicanus goes along behind

Well-sailing ships and bounteous winds have brought

This king to Tarsus, — think his pilot thought;
So with his steerage shall your thoughts grow on, —
To fetch his daughter home, who first is gone.
Like motes and shadows see them move awhile;
Your ears unto your eyes I'll reconcile.

[Dumb Show.]

[Enter Pericles, at one door, with all his train; Cleon and Dionyza, at the other. Cleon shows Pericles the tomb; whereat Pericles makes lamentation, puts on sackcloth, and in a mighty passion departs. Then exeunt Cleon and Dionyza.]

See how belief may suffer by foul show;
This borrow'd passion stands for true old woe;
And Pericles, in sorrow all devour'd,
With sighs shot through; and biggest tears o'ershower'd,
Leaves Tarsus and again embarks. He swears
Never to wash his face, nor cut his hairs:
He puts on sackcloth, and to sea. He bears
A tempest, which his mortal vessel tears,
And yet he rides it out. Now please you wit

The epitaph is for Marina writ
By wicked Dionyza.

[Reads the inscription on Marina's monument.]
'The fairest, sweet'st, and best lies here,
Who wither'd in her spring of year.
She was of Tyrus the king's daughter,
On whom foul death hath made this slaughter;
Marina was she call'd; and at her birth,
Thetis, being proud, swallow'd some part o' the earth:
Therefore the earth, fearing to be o'erflow'd,
Hath Thetis' birth-child on the heavens bestow'd:
Wherefore she does, and swears she'll never stint,
Make raging battery upon shores of flint.'
No visor does become black villany
So well as soft and tender flattery.
Let Pericles believe his daughter's dead,
And bear his courses to be ordered
By Lady Fortune; while our scene must play
His daughter's woe and heavy well-a-day
In her unholy service. Patience, then,

And think you now are all in Mytilene.

[Exit.]

SCENE V. Mytilene. A street before the brothel.

[Enter, from the brothel, two Gentlemen.]

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

Did you ever hear the like?

SECOND GENTLEMAN.

No, nor never shall do in such a place as this, she being once gone.

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

But to have divinity preached there! did you ever dream of such a thing?

SECOND GENTLEMAN.

No, no. Come, I am for no more bawdy-houses: shall's go hear the vestals sing?

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

I'll do any thing now that is virtuous; but I am out of the road of rutting for ever.

[Exeunt.]

SCENE VI. The same. A room in the brothel.

[Enter Pandar, Bawd, and Boult.]

PANDAR.

Well, I had rather than twice the worth of her she had ne'er come here.

BAWD.

Fie, fie upon her! she's able to freeze the god Priapus, and undo a whole generation. We must either get her ravished, or be rid of her. When she should do for clients her fitment, and do me the kindness of our profession, she has me her quirks, her reasons, her master reasons, her prayers, her knees; that she would make a puritan of the devil, if he should cheapen a kiss of her.

BOULT.

'Faith, I must ravish her, or she'll disfurnish us of all our cavaliers, and make our swearers priests.

PANDAR.

Now, the pox upon her green-sickness for me!

BAWD.

'Faith, there's no way to be rid on't but by the way to the pox.

Here comes the Lord Lysimachus disguised.

BOULT.

We should have both lord and lown, if the peevish baggage would but give way to customers.

[Enter Lysimachus.]

LYSIMACHUS.

How now! How a dozen of virginities?

BAWD.

Now, the gods to bless your honour!

BOULT.

I am glad to see your honour in good health.

LYSIMACHUS.

You may so; 'tis the better for you that your resorters stand upon sound legs. How now! wholesome iniquity have you that a man may deal withal, and defy the surgeon?

BAWD.

We have here one, sir, if she would — but there never came her like in Mytilene.

LYSIMACHUS.

If she'ld do the deed of darkness, thou wouldst say.

BAWD.

Your honour knows what 'tis to say well enough.

LYSIMACHUS.

Well, call forth, call forth.

BOULT.

For flesh and blood, sir, white and red, you shall see a rose; and she were a rose indeed, if she had but —

LYSIMACHUS.

What, prithee?

BOULT.

O, sir, I can be modest.

LYSIMACHUS.

That dignifies the renown of a bawd, no less than it gives a good report to a number to be chaste.

[Exit Boult.]

BAWD.

Here comes that which grows to the stalk; never plucked yet, I can assure you.

[Re-enter Boult with Marina.]

Is she not a fair creature?

LYSIMACHUS.

'Faith, she would serve after a long voyage at sea. Well, there's for you: leave us.

BAWD.

I beseech your honour, give me leave: a word, and I'll have done presently.

LYSIMACHUS.

I beseech you, do.

BAWD.

[To Marina.]

First, I would have you note, this is an honourable man.

MARINA.

I desire to find him so, that I may worthily note him.

BAWD.

Next, he's the governor of this country, and a man whom I am bound to.

MARINA.

If he govern the country, you are bound to him indeed; but how honourable he is in that, I know not.

BAWD.

Pray you, without any more virginal fencing, will you use him kindly? He will line your apron with gold.

MARINA.

What he will do graciously, I will thankfully receive.

LYSIMACHUS.

Ha' you done?

BAWD.

My lord, she's not paced yet: you must take some pains to work her to your manage. Come, we will leave his honour and her together. Go thy ways.

[Exeunt Bawd, Pandar, and Boult.]

LYSIMACHUS.

Now, pretty one, how long have you been at this trade?

MARINA.

What trade, sir?

LYSIMACHUS.

Why, I cannot name't but I shall offend.

MARINA.

I cannot be offended with my trade. Please you to name it.

LYSIMACHUS.

How long have you been of this profession?

MARINA.

E'er since I can remember?

LYSIMACHUS.

Did you go to't so young? Were you a gamester at five or at seven?

MARINA.

Earlier, too, sir, if now I be one.

LYSIMACHUS.

Why, the house you dwell in proclaims you to be a creature of sale.

MARINA.

Do you know this house to be a place of such resort, and will come into 't? I hear say you are of honourable parts, and are the governor of this place.

LYSIMACHUS.

Why, hath your principal made known unto you who I am?

MARINA.

Who is my principal?

LYSIMACHUS.

Why, your herb-woman; she that sets seeds and roots of shame and iniquity. O, you have heard something of my power, and so stand aloof for more serious wooing. But I protest to thee, pretty one, my authority shall not see thee, or else look friendly upon thee. Come, bring me to some private place: come, come.

MARINA.

If you were born to honour, show it now;

If put upon you, make the judgement good

That thought you worthy of it.

LYSIMACHUS.

How 's this? how 's this? Some more; be sage.

MARINA.

For me,

That am a maid, though most ungentle fortune

Have placed me in this sty, where, since I came,

Diseases have been sold dearer than physic,

O, that the gods

Would set me free from this unhallow'd place,

Though they did change me to the meanest bird

That flies i' the purer air!

LYSIMACHUS.

I did not think

Thou couldst have spoke so well; ne'er dream'd thou couldst.

Had I brought hither a corrupted mind,

Thy speech had alter'd it. Hold, here 's gold for thee:

Persever in that clear way thou goest,

And the gods strengthen thee!

MARINA.

The good gods preserve you!

LYSIMACHUS.

For me, be you thoughten

That I came with no ill intent; for to me
The very doors and windows savour vilely.
Fare thee well. Thou art a piece of virtue, and
I doubt not but thy training hath been noble.

Hold, here's more gold for thee.
A curse upon him, die he like a thief,
That robs thee of thy goodness! If thou dost
Hear from me, it shall be for thy good.

[Re-enter Boult.]

BOULT.

I beseech your honour, one piece for me.

LYSIMACHUS.

Avaunt, thou damned doorkeeper!
Your house but for this virgin that doth prop it,
Would sink and overwhelm you. Away!

[Exit.]

BOULT.

How's this? We must take another course with you. If your peevish chastity, which is not worth a breakfast in the cheapest country under the cope, shall undo a whole household, let me be gelded like a spaniel. Come your ways.

MARINA.

Whither would you have me?

BOULT.

I must have your maidenhead taken off, or the common hangman shall execute it. Come your ways. We'll have no more gentlemen driven away. Come your ways, I say.

[Re-enter Bawd.]

BAWD.

How now! what's the matter?

BOULT.

Worse and worse, mistress; she has here spoken holy words to the

Lord Lysimachus.

BAWD.

O Abominable!

BOULT.

She makes our profession as it were to stink afore the face of the gods.

BAWD.

Marry, hang her up for ever!

BOULT.

The nobleman would have dealt with her like a nobleman, and she sent him away as cold as a snowball; saying his prayers too.

BAWD.

Boult, take her away; use her at thy pleasure: crack the glass of her virginity, and make the rest malleable.

BOULT.

An if she were a thornier piece of ground than she is, she shall be ploughed.

MARINA.

Hark, hark, you gods!

BAWD.

She conjures: away with her! Would she had never come within my doors! Marry, hang you! She's born to undo us. Will you not go the way of women-kind? Marry, come up, my dish of chastity with rosemary and bays!

[Exit.]

BOULT.

Come, mistress; come your ways with me.

MARINA.

Whither wilt thou have me?

BOULT.

To take from you the jewel you hold so dear.

MARINA.

Prithee, tell me one thing first.

BOULT.

Come now, your one thing.

MARINA.

What canst thou wish thine enemy to be?

BOULT.

Why, I could wish him to he my master, or rather, my mistress.

MARINA.

Neither of these are so had as thou art,

Since they do better thee in their command.

Thou hold'st a place, for which the pained'st fiend

Of hell would not in reputation change:

Thou art the damned doorkeeper to every

Coistrel that comes inquiring for his Tib;

To the choleric fisting of every rogue

Thy ear is liable, thy food is such

As hath been belch'd on by infected lungs.

BOULT.

What would you have me do? go to the wars, would you? where a man may serve seven years for the loss of a leg, and have not money enough in the end to buy him a wooden one?

MARINA.

Do any thing but this thou doest. Empty

Old receptacles, or common shores, of filth;

Serve by indenture to the common hangman:

Any of these ways are yet better than this;

For what thou professest, a baboon, could he speak,

Would own a name too dear. O, that the gods

Would safely deliver me from this place!

Here, here's gold for thee.

If that thy master would gain by me,

Proclaim that I can sing, weave, sew, and dance,

With other virtues, which I'll keep from boast;

And I will undertake all these to teach.

I doubt not but this populous city will

Yield many scholars.

BOULT.

But can you teach all this you speak of?

MARINA.

Prove that I cannot, take me home again,

And prostitute me to the basest groom

That doth frequent your house.

BOULT.

Well, I will see what I can do for thee: if I can place thee, I will.

MARINA.

But amongst honest women.

BOULT.

'Faith, my acquaintance lies little amongst them. But since my master and mistress have bought you, there's no going but by their consent: therefore I will make them acquainted with your purpose, and I doubt not but I shall find them tractable enough. ome, I'll do for thee what I can; come your ways.

[Exeunt.]

ACT V.

[Enter Gower.]

GOWER.

Marina thus the brothel 'scapes, and chances

Into an honest house, our story says.

She sings like one immortal, and she dances

As goddess-like to her admired lays;

Deep clerks she dumbs; and with her neeld composes

Nature's own shape, of bud, bird, branch, or berry,

That even her art sistrs the natural roses;

Her inkle, silk, twin with the rubied cherry:

That pupils lacks she none of noble race,

Who pour their bounty on her; and her gain

She gives the cursed bawd. Here we her place;

And to her father turn our thoughts again,

Where we left him, on the sea. We there him lost;

Whence, driven before the winds, he is arrived

Here where his daughter dwells; and on this coast

Suppose him now at anchor. The city strived

God Neptune's annual feast to keep: from whence

Lysimachus our Tyrian ship espies,

His banners sable, trimm'd with rich expense;

And to him in his barge with fervour hies.

In your supposing once more put your sight

Of heavy Pericles; think this his bark:

Where what is done in action, more, if might,

Shall be discover'd; please you, sit and hark.

[Exit.]

SCENE I. On board Pericles' ship, off Mytilene.

A close pavilion on deck, with a curtain before it; Pericles within it, reclined on a couch. A barge lying beside the Tyrian vessel.

[Enter two Sailors, one belonging to the Tyrian vessel, the other to the barge; to them Helicanus.]

TYRIAN SAILOR.

[To the Sailor of Mytilene.]

Where is lord Helicanus? he can resolve you.

O, here he is.

Sir, there's a barge put off from Mytilene,

And in it is Lysimachus the governor,

Who craves to come aboard. What is your will?

HELICANUS.

That he have his. Call up some gentlemen.

TYRIAN SAILOR.

Ho, gentlemen! my lord calls.

[Enter two or three Gentlemen.]

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

Doth your lordship call?

HELICANUS.

Gentlemen, there s some of worth would come aboard;

I pray ye, greet them fairly.

[The Gentlemen and the two Sailors descend, and go on board the barge.

Enter , from thence, Lysimachus and Lords; with the Gentlemen and the two sailors.

TYRIAN SAILOR.

Sir,

This is the man that can, in aught you would,

Resolve you.

LYSIMACHUS.

Hail, reverend sir! the gods preserve you!

HELICANUS.

And you, sir, to outlive the age I am,

And die as I would do.

LYSIMACHUS.

You wish me well.

Being on shore, honouring of Neptune's triumphs,

Seeing this goodly vessel ride before us,

I made to it, to know of whence you are.

HELICANUS.

First, what is your place?

LYSIMACHUS.

I am the governor of this place you lie before.

HELICANUS.

Sir,

Our vessel is of Tyre, in it the king;

A man who for this three months hath not spoken

To any one, nor taken sustenance

But to prorogue his grief.

LYSIMACHUS.

Upon what ground is his distemperature?

HELICANUS.

'Twould be too tedious to repeat;

But the main grief springs from the loss

Of a beloved daughter and a wife.

LYSIMACHUS.

May we not see him?

HELICANUS.

You may;

But bootless is your sight: he will not speak To any.

LYSIMACHUS.

Yet let me obtain my wish.

HELICANUS.

Behold him.

[Pericles discovered.]

This was a goodly person.

Till the disaster that, one mortal night,

Drove him to this.

LYSIMACHUS.

Sir king, all hail! the gods preserve you!

Hail, royal sir!

HELICANUS.

It is in vain; he will not speak to you.

FIRST LORD.

Sir,

We have a maid in Mytilene, I durst wager,

Would win some words of him.

LYSIMACHUS.

'Tis well bethought.

She questionless with her sweet harmony

And other chosen attractions, would allure,

And make a battery through his deafen'd parts,

Which now are midway stopp'd:

She is all happy as the fairest of all,

And, with her fellow maids, is now upon

The leafy shelter that abuts against

The island's side.

[Whispers a Lord, who goes off in the barge of Lysimachus.]

HELICANUS.

Sure, all's effectless; yet nothing we'll omit

That bears recovery's name. But, since your kindness

We have stretch'd thus far, let us beseech you

That for our gold we may provision have,

Wherein we are not destitute for want,

But weary for the staleness.

LYSIMACHUS.

O, sir, a courtesy

Which if we should deny, the most just gods

For every graff would send a catepillar,

And so afflict our province. Yet once more

Let me entreat to know at large the cause

Of your king's sorrow.

HELICANUS.

Sit, sir, I will recount it to you:

But, see, I am prevented.

[Re-enter, from the barge, Lord, with Marina, and a young Lady.]

LYSIMACHUS.

O, here is

The lady that I sent for. Welcome, fair one!

Is't not a goodly presence?

HELICANUS.

She's a gallant lady.

LYSIMACHUS.

She's such a one, that, were I well assured

Came of a gentle kind and noble stock,

I'ld wish no better choice, and think me rarely wed.

Fair one, all goodness that consists in bounty

Expect even here, where is a kingly patient:

If that thy prosperous and artificial feat

Can draw him but to answer thee in aught,

Thy sacred physic shall receive such pay
As thy desires can wish.

MARINA.
Sir, I will use
My utmost skill in his recovery,
Provided
That none but I and my companion maid
Be suffer'd to come near him.

LYSIMACHUS.
Come, let us leave her,
And the gods make her prosperous!

[Marina sings.]

LYSIMACHUS.
Mark'd he your music?

MARINA.
No, nor look'd on us,

LYSIMACHUS.

See, she will speak to him.

MARINA.

Hail, sir! my lord, lend ear.

PERICLES.

Hum, ha!

MARINA.

I am a maid,
My lord, that ne'er before invited eyes,
But have been gazed on like a cornet: she speaks,
My lord, that, may be, hath endured a grief
Might equal yours, if both were justly weigh'd.
Though wayward fortune did malign my state,
My derivation was from ancestors
Who stood equivalent with mighty kings:
But time hath rooted out my parentage,

And to the world and awkward casualties

Bound me in servitude.

[Aside.]

I will desist;

But there is something glows upon my cheek,

And whispers in mine ear 'Go not till he speak.'

PERICLES.

My fortunes — parentage — good parentage —

To equal mine! — was it not thus? what say you?

MARINA.

I said, my lord, if you did know my parentage.

You would not do me violence.

PERICLES.

I do think so. Pray you, turn your eyes upon me.

You are like something that — What country-woman?

Here of these shores?

MARINA.

No, nor of any shores:
Yet I was mortally brought forth, and am
No other than I appear.

PERICLES.
I am great with woe, and shall deliver weeping.
My dearest wife was like this maid, and such a one
My daughter might have been: my queen's square brows;
Her stature to an inch; as wand-like straight;
As silver-voiced; her eyes as jewel-like
And cased as richly; in pace another Juno;
Who starves the ears she feeds, and makes them hungry,
The more she gives them speech. Where do you live?

MARINA.
Where I am but a stranger: from the deck
You may discern the place.

PERICLES.

Where were you bred?

And how achieved you these endowments, which

You make more rich to owe?

MARINA.

If I should tell my history, it would seem

Like lies disdain'd in the reporting.

PERICLES.

Prithee, speak:

Falseness cannot come from thee; for thou look'st

Modest as Justice, and thou seem'st a palace

For the crown'd Truth to dwell in: I will believe thee,

And make my senses credit thy relation

To points that seem impossible; for thou look'st

Like one I loved indeed. What were thy friends?

Didst thou not say, when I did push thee back —

Which was when I perceived thee — that thou earnest

From good descending?

MARINA.

So indeed I did.

PERICLES.
Report thy parentage. I think thou said'st
Thou hadst been toss'd from wrong to injury,
And that thou thought'st thy griefs might equal mine,
If both were open'd.

MARINA.
Some such thing,
I said, and said no more but what my thoughts
Did warrant me was likely.

PERICLES.
Tell thy story;
If thine consider'd prove the thousandth part
Of my endurance, thou art a man, and I

Have suffer'd like a girl: yet thou dost look
Like Patience gazing on kings' graves, and smiling
Extremity out of act. What were thy friends?

How lost thou them? Thy name, my most kind virgin?
Recount, I do beseech thee: come, sit by me.

MARINA.

My name is Marina.

PERICLES.

O, I am mock'd,
And thou by some incensed god sent hither
To make the world to laugh at me.

MARINA.

Patience, good sir,
Or here I'll cease.

PERICLES.

Nay, I'll be patient.

Thou little know'st how thou dost startle me,

To call thyself Marina.

MARINA.

The name

Was given me by one that had some power,

My father, and a king.

PERICLES.

How! a king's daughter?

And call'd Marina?

MARINA.

You said you would believe me;

But, not to be a troubler of your peace,

I will end here.

PERICLES.

But are you flesh and blood?

Have you a working pulse? and are no fairy?
Motion! Well; speak on. Where were you born?

And wherefore call'd Marina?

MARINA.
Call'd Marina
For I was born at sea.

PERICLES.
At sea! what mother?

MARINA.
My mother was the daughter of a king;
Who died the minute I was born,
As my good nurse Lychorida hath oft
Deliver'd weeping.

PERICLES.

O, stop there a little!

[Aside.]

This is the rarest dream that e'er dull sleep
Did mock sad fools withal: this cannot be:
My daughter's buried. Well: where were: you bred?
I'll hear you more, to the bottom of your story,
And never interrupt you.

MARINA.

You scorn: believe me, 'twere best I did give o'er. -

PERICLES.

I will believe you by the syllable
Of what you shall deliver. Yet, give me leave:
How came you in these parts? where were you bred?

MARINA.

The king my father did in Tarsus leave me;
Till cruel Cleon, with his wicked wife,

Did seek to murder me: and having woo'd

A villain to attempt it, who having drawn to do 't,

A crew of pirates came and rescued me;

Brought me to Mytilene. But, good sir.

Whither will you have me? Why do you weep? It may be,

You think me an impostor: no, good faith;

I am the daughter to King Pericles,

If good King Pericles be.

PERICLES.

Ho, Helicanus!

HELICANUS.

Calls my lord?

PERICLES.

Thou art a grave and noble counsellor,

Most wise in general: tell me, if thou canst,

What this maid is, or what is like to be,

That thus hath made me weep?

HELICANUS.

I know not; but

Here is the regent, sir, of Mytilene

Speaks nobly of her.

LYSIMACHUS.

She would never tell

Her parentage; being demanded that,

She would sit still and weep.

PERICLES.

O Helicanus, strike me, honour'd sir;

Give me a gash, put me to present pain;

Lest this great sea of joys rushing upon me

O'erbear the shores of my mortality,

And drown me with their sweetness. O, come hither,

Thou that beget'st him that did thee beget;

Thou that wast born at sea, buried at Tarsus,

And found at sea again! O Helicanus,

Down on thy knees, thank the holy gods as loud

As thunder threatens us: this is Marina.
What was thy mother's name? tell me but that,
For truth can never be confirm'd enough,
Though doubts did ever sleep

MARINA.
First, sir, I pray,
What is your title?

PERICLES.
I am Pericles of Tyre: but tell me now
My drown'd queen's name, as in the rest you said
Thou hast been godlike perfect,
The heir of kingdoms and another like
To Pericles thy father.

MARINA.
Is it no more to be your daughter than
To say my mother's name was Thaisa?
Thaisa was my mother, who did end
The minute I began.

PERICLES.

Now, blessing on thee! rise; thou art my child.

Give me fresh garments. Mine own, Helicanus;

She is not dead at Tarsus, as she should have been,

By savage Cleon: she shall tell thee all;

When thou shalt kneel, and justify in knowledge

She is thy very princess. Who is this?

HELICANUS.

Sir, 'tis the governor of Mytilene,

Who, hearing of your melancholy state,

Did come to see you.

PERICLES.

I embrace you.

Give me my robes. I am wild in my beholding.

O heavens bless my girl! But, hark, what music?

Tell Helicanus, my Marina, tell him

O'er, point by point, for yet he seems to doubt, How sure you are my daughter. But, what music?

HELICANUS.

My lord, I hear none.

PERICLES.

None!

The music of the spheres! List, my Marina.

LYSIMACHUS.

It is not good to cross him; give him way

PERICLES.

Rarest sounds! Do ye not hear?

LYSIMACHUS.

My lord, I hear.

[Music.]

PERICLES.

Most heavenly music!
It nips me unto listening, and thick slumber
Hangs upon mine eyes: let me rest.

[Sleeps.]

LYSIMACHUS.

A pillow for his head:
So, leave him all. Well, my companion friends,
If this but answer to my just belief,
I'll well remember you.

[Exeunt all but Pericles.]

[Diana appears to Pericles as in a vision.]

DIANA.

My temple stands in Ephesus: hie thee thither,

And do upon mine altar sacrifice.
There, when my maiden priests are met together,
Before the people all,
Reveal how thou at sea didst lose thy wife:
To mourn thy crosses, with thy daughter's, call
And give them repetition to the life.
Or perform my bidding, or thou livest in woe:

Do it, and happy; by my silver bow!
Awake, and tell thy dream.

[Disappears.]

PERICLES.
Celestial Dian, goddess argentine,
I will obey thee. Helicanus!

[Re-enter Helicanus, Lysimachus, and Marina.]

HELICANUS.
Sir?

PERICLES.

My purpose was for Tarsus, there to strike

The inhospitable Cleon; but I am

For other service first: toward Ephesus

Turn our blown sails; eftsoons I'll tell thee why

[To Lysimachus.]

Shall we refresh us, sir, upon your shore,

And give you gold for such provision

As our intents will need?

LYSIMACHUS.

Sir,

With all my heart; and when you come ashore,

I have another suit.

PERICLES.

You shall prevail,

Were you to woo my daughter; for it seems

You have been noble towards her.

LYSIMACHUS.

Sir, lend me your arm.

PERICLES.

Come, my Marina.

[Exeunt.]

SCENE II. *Enter* Gower, before the temple of Diana at Ephesus.

GOWER.

Now our sands are almost run;
More a little, and then dumb.
This, my last boon, give me,
For such kindness must relieve me,
That you aptly will suppose
What pageantry, what feats, what shows,
What minstrelsy, and pretty din,
The regent made in Mytilene

To greet the king. So he thrived,
That he is promised to be wived
To fair Marina; but in no wise
Till he had done his sacrifice,
As Dian bade: whereto being bound,
The interim, pray you, all confound.
In feather'd briefness sails are fill'd,
And wishes fall out as they're will'd.
At Ephesus, the temple see,
Cur king and all his company.
That he can hither come so soon,
Is by your fancy's thankful doom.

[Exit.]

SCENE III. The temple of Diana at Ephesus

Thaisa standing near the altar, as high priestess; a number of Virgins on each side; Cerimon and other inhabitants of Ephesus attending.

[Enter Pericles, with his train; Lysimachus, Helicanus, Marina, and a Lady.]

PERICLES.

Hail, Dian! to perform thy just command,
I here confess myself the king of Tyre;
Who, frighted from my country, did wed
At Pentapolis the fair Thaisa.
At sea in childbed died she, but brought forth
A maid-child call'd Marina; who, O goddess,
Wears yet thy silver livery. She at Tarsus
Was nursed with Cleon; who at fourteen years
He sought to murder: but her better stars
Brought her to Mytilene; 'gainst whose shore
Riding, her fortunes brought the maid aboard us,
Where by her own most clear remembrance, she
Made known herself my daughter.

THAISA.

Voice and favour!
You are, you are — O royal Pericles!

[Faints.]

PERICLES.

What means the nun? she dies! help, gentlemen!

CERIMON.

Noble sir,

If you have told Diana's altar true,

This is your wife.

PERICLES.

Reverend appearer, no;

I threw her overboard with these very arms.

CERIMON.

Upon this coast, I warrant you.

PERICLES.

'Tis most certain.

CERIMON.

Look to the lady; O, she's but o'er-joy'd.
Early in blustering morn this lady was
Thrown upon this shore. I oped the coffin,
Found there rich jewels; recover'd her, and placed her
Here in Diana's temple.

PERICLES.
May we see them?

CERIMON.
Great sir, they shall be brought you to my house,
Whither I invite you. Look, Thaisa is Recovered.

THAISA.

O, let me look!
If he be none of mine, my sanctity
Will to my sense bend no licentious ear,

But curb it, spite of seeing. O, my lord,
Are you not Pericles? Like him you spake,
Like him you are: did you not name a tempest,
A birth, and death?

PERICLES.

The voice of dead Thaisa!

THAISA.

That Thaisa am I, supposed dead
And drown'd.

PERICLES.

Immortal Dian!

THAISA.

Now I know you better,
When we with tears parted Pentapolis,
The king my father gave you such a ring.

[Shows a ring.]

PERICLES.

This, this: no more, you gods! your present kindness

Makes my past miseries sports: you shall do well,

That on the touching of her lips I may

Melt and no more be seen. O, come, be buried

A second time within these arms.

MARINA.

My heart

Leaps to be gone into my mother's bosom.

[Kneels to Thaisa.]

PERICLES.

Look, who kneels here! Flesh of thy flesh, Thaisa;

Thy burden at the sea, and call'd Marina

For she was yielded there.

THAISA.

Blest, and mine own!

HELICANUS.

Hail, madam, and my queen!

THAISA.

I know you not.

PERICLES.

You have heard me say, when did fly from Tyre,

I left behind an ancient substitute:

Can you remember what I call'd the man

I have named him oft.

THAISA.

'Twas Helicanus then.

PERICLES.

Still confirmation:
Embrace him, dear Thaisa; this is he.

Now do I long to hear how you were found:
How possibly preserved; and who to thank,
Besides the gods, for this great miracle.

THAISA.
Lord Cerimon, my lord; this man,
Through whom the gods have shown their power; that can
From first to last resolve you.

PERICLES.
Reverend sir,
The gods can have no mortal officer
More like a god than you. Will you deliver
How this dead queen re-lives?

CERIMON.
I will, my lord
Beseech you, first go with me to my house,

Where shall be shown you all was found with her;
How she came placed here in the temple;
No needful thing omitted.

PERICLES.
Pure Dian, bless thee for thy vision! I
Will offer night-oblations to thee. Thaisa,
This prince, the fair-betrothed of your daughter,
Shall marry her at Pentapolis. And now,
This ornament
Makes me look dismal will I clip to form;
And what this fourteen years no razor touch'd
To grace thy marriage-day, I'll beautify.

THAISA.
Lord Cerimon hath letters of good credit, sir,
My father's dead.

PERICLES.
Heavens make a star of him! Yet there, my queen,
We'll celebrate their nuptials, and ourselves

Will in that kingdom spend our following days:

Our son and daughter shall in Tyrus reign.

Lord Cerimon, we do our longing stay

To hear the rest untold: sir, lead's the way.

[Exeunt.]

[Enter Gower.]

GOWER.

In Antiochus and his daughter you have heard

Of monstrous lust the due and just reward:

In Pericles, his queen and daughter, seen,

Although assail'd with fortune fierce and keen,

Virtue preserved from fell destruction's blast,

Led on by heaven, and crown'd with joy at last:

In Helicanus may you well descry

A figure of truth, of faith, of loyalty:

In reverend Cerimon there well appears

The worth that learned charity aye wears:

For wicked Cleon and his wife, when fame

Had spread their cursed deed, and honour'd name

Of Pericles, to rage the city turn,

That him and his they in his palace burn;

The gods for murder seemed so content

To punish them although not done but meant.

So, on your patence evermore attending,

New joy wait on you! Here our play has ending.

[Exit.]

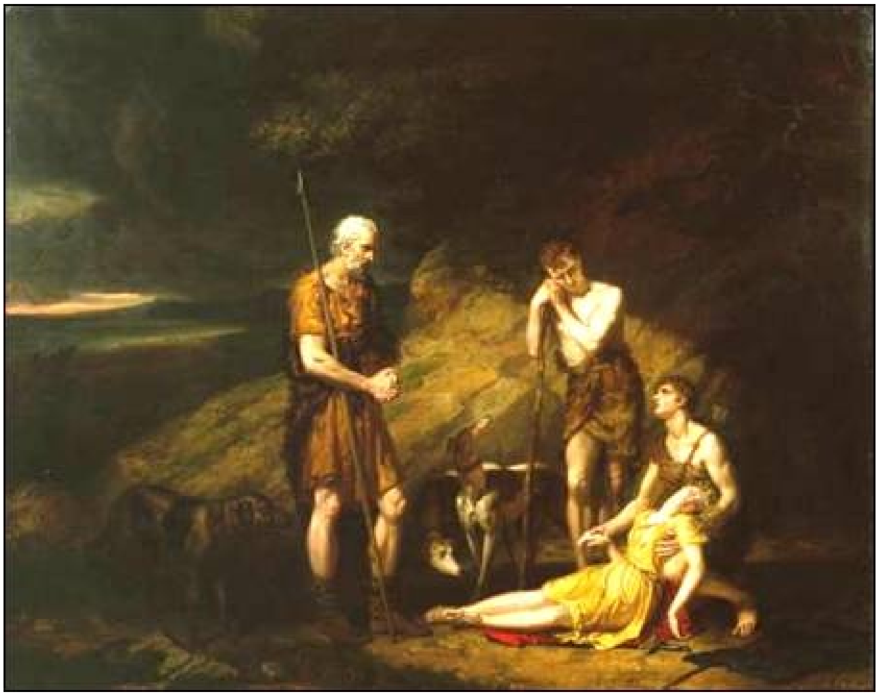
CYMBELINE

This late play is based on legends concerning the early Celtic British King Cunobelinus. Although listed as a tragedy in the First Folio, modern critics classify *Cymbeline* as a romance and the precise date of composition remains unknown.

The plot of Cymbeline is loosely based on a tale by Geoffrey of Monmouth about the real-life British monarch Cunobelinus. Shakespeare, however, freely adapts the legend to a large extent, adding his own sub-plots. Imogen, daughter of the British king Cymbeline, is in love with Posthumus Leonatus, a man raised in her father's court who, though an orphan of low birth, is described as possessing exceeding personal merit and martial skill. The two have secretly married, exchanging jewellery as tokens: a ring from Imogen, a bracelet from

Posthumus. Cymbeline has discovered the affair and banishes Posthumus for his presumption, for Imogen is currently Cymbeline's only child and so her husband is heir to the British throne.

Shakespeare's main source text for this play is available via this link .



'Imogen Discovered in the Cave of Belarius' by George Dawe

‘Imogen’ by Herbert Gustave Schmalz

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DRAMATIS PERSONAE

CYMBELINE, King of Britain

CLOTEN, son to the Queen by a former husband

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS, a gentleman, husband to Imogen

BELARIUS, a banished lord, disguised under the name of Morgan

GUIDERIUS and ARVIRAGUS, sons to Cymbeline, disguised under the names of POLYDORE and CADWAL, supposed sons to Belarius

PHILARIO, Italian, friend to Posthumus

IACHIMO, Italian, friend to Philario

A FRENCH GENTLEMAN, friend to Philario

CAIUS LUCIUS, General of the Roman Forces

A ROMAN CAPTAIN

TWO BRITISH CAPTAINS

PISANIO, servant to Posthumus

CORNELIUS, a physician

TWO LORDS of Cymbeline's court

TWO GENTLEMEN of the same

TWO GAOLERS

QUEEN, wife to Cymbeline

IMOGEN, daughter to Cymbeline by a former queen

HELEN, a lady attending on Imogen

APPARITIONS

Lords, Ladies, Roman Senators, Tribunes, a Soothsayer, a

Dutch Gentleman, a Spanish Gentleman, Musicians, Officers,

Captains, Soldiers, Messengers, and Attendants

SCENE: Britain; Italy

ACT I. SCENE I. Britain. The garden of CYMBELINE'S palace

FIRST GENTLEMAN. You do not meet a man but frowns; our bloods

No more obey the heavens than our courtiers

Still seem as does the King's.

SECOND GENTLEMAN.

But what's the matter?

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

His daughter, and the heir of's kingdom, whom

He purpos'd to his wife's sole son-a widow

That late he married-hath referr'd herself

Unto a poor but worthy gentleman. She's wedded;

Her husband banish'd; she imprison'd. All

Is outward sorrow, though I think the King

Be touch'd at very heart.

SECOND GENTLEMAN.

None but the King?

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

He that hath lost her too. So is the Queen,

That most desir'd the match. But not a courtier,

Although they wear their faces to the bent

Of the King's looks, hath a heart that is not

Glad at the thing they scowl at.

SECOND GENTLEMAN.

And why so?

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

He that hath miss'd the Princess is a thing
Too bad for bad report; and he that hath her-
I mean that married her, alack, good man!
And therefore banish'd-is a creature such
As, to seek through the regions of the earth
For one his like, there would be something failing
In him that should compare. I do not think
So fair an outward and such stuff within
Endows a man but he.

SECOND GENTLEMAN.

You speak him far.

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

I do extend him, sir, within himself;
Crush him together rather than unfold
His measure duly.

SECOND GENTLEMAN.

What's his name and birth?

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

I cannot delve him to the root; his father
Was call'd Sicilius, who did join his honour
Against the Romans with Cassibelan,
But had his titles by Tenantius, whom
He serv'd with glory and admir'd success,
So gain'd the sur-addition Leonatus;
And had, besides this gentleman in question,
Two other sons, who, in the wars o' th' time,
Died with their swords in hand; for which their father,
Then old and fond of issue, took such sorrow
That he quit being; and his gentle lady,

Big of this gentleman, our theme, deceas'd

As he was born. The King he takes the babe

To his protection, calls him Posthumus Leonatus,

Breeds him and makes him of his bedchamber,

Puts to him all the learnings that his time

Could make him the receiver of; which he took,

As we do air, fast as 'twas minist'red,

And in's spring became a harvest, liv'd in court-

Which rare it is to do-most prais'd, most lov'd,

A sample to the youngest; to th' more mature

A glass that feated them; and to the graver

A child that guided dotards. To his mistress,

For whom he now is banish'd-her own price

Proclaims how she esteem'd him and his virtue;

By her election may be truly read

What kind of man he is.

SECOND GENTLEMAN.

I honour him

Even out of your report. But pray you tell me,

Is she sole child to th' King?

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

His only child.

He had two sons-if this be worth your hearing,

Mark it-the eldest of them at three years old,

I' th' swathing clothes the other, from their nursery

Were stol'n; and to this hour no guess in knowledge

Which way they went.

SECOND GENTLEMAN.

How long is this ago?

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

Some twenty years.

SECOND GENTLEMAN.

That a king's children should be so convey'd,

So slackly guarded, and the search so slow

That could not trace them!

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

Howsoe'er 'tis strange,

Or that the negligence may well be laugh'd at,

Yet is it true, sir.

SECOND GENTLEMAN.

I do well believe you.

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

We must forbear; here comes the gentleman,

The Queen, and Princess. *Exeunt*

Enter the QUEEN, POSTHUMUS, and IMOGEN

QUEEN.

No, be assur'd you shall not find me, daughter,

After the slander of most stepmothers,

Evil-ey'd unto you. You're my prisoner, but

Your gaoler shall deliver you the keys

That lock up your restraint. For you, Posthumus,

So soon as I can win th' offended King,

I will be known your advocate. Marry, yet
The fire of rage is in him, and 'twere good
You lean'd unto his sentence with what patience
Your wisdom may inform you.

POSTHUMUS.
Please your Highness,
I will from hence to-day.

QUEEN.
You know the peril.
I'll fetch a turn about the garden, pitying
The pangs of barr'd affections, though the King
Hath charg'd you should not speak together. *Exit*

IMOGEN. O dissembling courtesy! How fine this tyrant
Can tickle where she wounds! My dearest husband,
I something fear my father's wrath, but nothing-
Always reserv'd my holy duty-what
His rage can do on me. You must be gone;
And I shall here abide the hourly shot

Of angry eyes, not comforted to live

But that there is this jewel in the world

That I may see again.

POSTHUMUS.

My queen! my mistress!

O lady, weep no more, lest I give cause

To be suspected of more tenderness

Than doth become a man. I will remain

The loyal'st husband that did e'er plight troth;

My residence in Rome at one Philario's,

Who to my father was a friend, to me

Known but by letter; thither write, my queen,

And with mine eyes I'll drink the words you send,

Though ink be made of gall.

Re-enter QUEEN

QUEEN.

Be brief, I pray you.

If the King come, I shall incur I know not

How much of his displeasure. *[Aside]* Yet I'll move him

To walk this way. I never do him wrong

But he does buy my injuries, to be friends;
Pays dear for my offences. *Exit*

POSTHUMUS. Should we be taking leave
As long a term as yet we have to live,
The loathness to depart would grow. Adieu!

IMOGEN.

Nay, stay a little.
Were you but riding forth to air yourself,
Such parting were too petty. Look here, love:
This diamond was my mother's; take it, heart;
But keep it till you woo another wife,
When Imogen is dead.

POSTHUMUS.

How, how? Another?
You gentle gods, give me but this I have,
And sear up my embracements from a next

With bonds of death! Remain, remain thou here

[Puts on the ring]

While sense can keep it on. And, sweetest, fairest,

As I my poor self did exchange for you,

To your so infinite loss, so in our trifles

I still win of you. For my sake wear this;

It is a manacle of love; I'll place it

Upon this fairest prisoner. *[Puts a bracelet on her arm]*

IMOGEN.

O the gods!

When shall we see again?

Enter CYMBELINE and LORDS

POSTHUMUS.

Alack, the King!

CYMBELINE.

Thou basest thing, avoid; hence from my sight

If after this command thou fraught the court

With thy unworthiness, thou diest. Away!

Thou'rt poison to my blood.

POSTHUMUS.

The gods protect you,

And bless the good remainders of the court!

I am gone. *Exit*

IMOGEN. There cannot be a pinch in death

More sharp than this is.

CYMBELINE.

O disloyal thing,

That shouldst repair my youth, thou heap'st

A year's age on me!

IMOGEN.

I beseech you, sir,

Harm not yourself with your vexation.

I am senseless of your wrath; a touch more rare

Subdues all pangs, all fears.

CYMBELINE.

Past grace? obedience?

IMOGEN.

Past hope, and in despair; that way past grace.

CYMBELINE.

That mightst have had the sole son of my queen!

IMOGEN.

O blessed that I might not! I chose an eagle,
And did avoid a puttock.

CYMBELINE.

Thou took'st a beggar, wouldst have made my throne
A seat for baseness.

IMOGEN.

No; I rather added
A lustre to it.

CYMBELINE.

O thou vile one!

IMOGEN.
Sir,
It is your fault that I have lov'd Posthumus.
You bred him as my playfellow, and he is
A man worth any woman; overbuys me
Almost the sum he pays.

CYMBELINE.

What, art thou mad?

IMOGEN.
Almost, sir. Heaven restore me! Would I were
A neat-herd's daughter, and my Leonatus

Our neighbour shepherd's son!

Re-enter QUEEN

CYMBELINE.

Thou foolish thing!

[To the QUEEN] They were again together. You have done

Not after our command. Away with her,

And pen her up.

QUEEN.

Beseech your patience.- Peace,

Dear lady daughter, peace!- Sweet sovereign,

Leave us to ourselves, and make yourself some comfort

Out of your best advice.

CYMBELINE.

Nay, let her languish

A drop of blood a day and, being aged,

Die of this folly. *Exit* , with LORDS

Enter PISANIO

QUEEN.

Fie! you must give way.

Here is your servant. How now, sir! What news?

PISANIO.

My lord your son drew on my master.

QUEEN.

Ha!

No harm, I trust, is done?

PISANIO.

There might have been,

But that my master rather play'd than fought,

And had no help of anger; they were parted

By gentlemen at hand.

QUEEN.

I am very glad on't.

IMOGEN.
Your son's my father's friend; he takes his part
To draw upon an exile! O brave sir!
I would they were in Afric both together;
Myself by with a needle, that I might prick
The goer-back. Why came you from your master?

PISANIO.
On his command. He would not suffer me
To bring him to the haven; left these notes
Of what commands I should be subject to,
When't pleas'd you to employ me.

QUEEN.
This hath been
Your faithful servant. I dare lay mine honour
He will remain so.

PISANIO.

I humbly thank your Highness.

QUEEN.

Pray walk awhile.

IMOGEN.

About some half-hour hence,
Pray you speak with me. You shall at least
Go see my lord aboard. For this time leave me. *Exeunt*

SCENE II. Britain. A public place

Enter CLOTEN and two LORDS

FIRST LORD.

Sir, I would advise you to shift a shirt; the violence
of action hath made you reek as a sacrifice. Where air comes out,
air comes in; there's none abroad so wholesome as that you vent.

CLOTEN.

If my shirt were bloody, then to shift it. Have I hurt him?

SECOND LORD.

[Aside] No, faith; not so much as his patience.

FIRST LORD.

Hurt him! His body's a passable carcass if he be not

hurt. It is a throughfare for steel if it be not hurt.

SECOND LORD.

[Aside] His steel was in debt; it went o' th' back side the town.

CLOTEN.

The villain would not stand me.

SECOND LORD.

[Aside] No; but he fled forward still, toward your face.

FIRST LORD.

Stand you? You have land enough of your own; but he
added to your having, gave you some ground.

SECOND LORD.

[Aside] As many inches as you have oceans.
Puppies!

CLOTEN.

I would they had not come between us.

SECOND LORD.

[Aside] So would I, till you had measur'd how long a
fool you were upon the ground.

CLOTEN.

And that she should love this fellow, and refuse me!

SECOND LORD.

[Aside] If it be a sin to make a true election,

she is damn'd.

FIRST LORD.

Sir, as I told you always, her beauty and her brain go

not together; she's a good sign, but I have seen small reflection of her wit.

SECOND LORD.

[Aside] She shines not upon fools, lest the reflection should hurt her.

CLOTEN.

Come, I'll to my chamber. Would there had been some hurt done!

SECOND LORD.

[Aside] I wish not so; unless it had been the fall of

an ass, which is no great hurt.

CLOTEN.

You'll go with us?

FIRST LORD.

I'll attend your lordship.

CLOTEN.

Nay, come, let's go together.

SECOND LORD.

Well, my lord. *Exeunt*

SCENE III. Britain. CYMBELINE'S palace

Enter IMOGEN and PISANIO

IMOGEN.

I would thou grew'st unto the shores o' th' haven,

And questioned'st every sail; if he should write,

And I not have it, 'twere a paper lost,

As offer'd mercy is. What was the last

That he spake to thee?

PISANIO.

It was: his queen, his queen!

IMOGEN.

Then wav'd his handkerchief?

PISANIO.

And kiss'd it, madam.

IMOGEN.

Senseless linen, happier therein than I!

And that was all?

PISANIO.

No, madam; for so long
As he could make me with his eye, or care
Distinguish him from others, he did keep
The deck, with glove, or hat, or handkerchief,

Still waving, as the fits and stirs of's mind
Could best express how slow his soul sail'd on,
How swift his ship.

IMOGEN.
Thou shouldst have made him
As little as a crow, or less, ere left
To after-eye him.

PISANIO.
Madam, so I did.

IMOGEN.
I would have broke mine eyestrings, crack'd them but
To look upon him, till the diminution
Of space had pointed him sharp as my needle;
Nay, followed him till he had melted from
The smallness of a gnat to air, and then
Have turn'd mine eye and wept. But, good Pisanio,
When shall we hear from him?

PISANIO.

Be assur'd, madam,

With his next vantage.

IMOGEN.

I did not take my leave of him, but had

Most pretty things to say. Ere I could tell him

How I would think on him at certain hours

Such thoughts and such; or I could make him swear

The shes of Italy should not betray

Mine interest and his honour; or have charg'd him,

At the sixth hour of morn, at noon, at midnight,

T' encounter me with orisons, for then

I am in heaven for him; or ere I could

Give him that parting kiss which I had set

Betwixt two charming words, comes in my father,

And like the tyrannous breathing of the north

Shakes all our buds from growing.

Enter a LADY

LADY.

The Queen, madam,

Desires your Highness' company.

IMOGEN.

Those things I bid you do, get them dispatch'd.

I will attend the Queen.

PISANIO.

Madam, I shall. *Exeunt*

SCENE IV. Rome. PHILARIO'S house

Enter PHILARIO, IACHIMO, a FRENCHMAN, a DUTCHMAN, and a SPANIARD

IACHIMO.

Believe it, sir, I have seen him in Britain. He was then

of a crescent note, expected to prove so worthy as since he hath

been allowed the name of. But I could then have look'd on him

without the help of admiration, though the catalogue of his endowments had been tabled by his side, and I to peruse him by items.

PHILARIO.
You speak of him when he was less furnish'd than now he
is with that which makes him both without and within.

FRENCHMAN.
I have seen him in France; we had very many there could
behold the sun with as firm eyes as he.

IACHIMO.
This matter of marrying his king's daughter, wherein he
must be weighed rather by her value than his own, words him,

I

doubt not, a great deal from the matter.

FRENCHMAN.

And then his banishment.

IACHIMO.

Ay, and the approbation of those that weep this lamentable

divorce under her colours are wonderfully to extend him, be it

but to fortify her judgment, which else an easy battery might lay

flat, for taking a beggar, without less quality. But how comes it

he is to sojourn with you? How creeps acquaintance?

PHILARIO.

His father and I were soldiers together, to whom I have

been often bound for no less than my life.

Enter POSTHUMUS

Here comes the Briton. Let him be so entertained amongst you as suits with gentlemen of your knowing to a stranger of his quality. I beseech you all be better known to this gentleman, whom I commend to you as a noble friend of mine. How worthy he is I will leave to appear hereafter, rather than story him in his own hearing. FRENCHMAN. Sir, we have known together in Orleans. POSTHUMUS. Since when I have been debtor to you for courtesies, which I will be ever to pay and yet pay still. FRENCHMAN. Sir, you o'errate my poor kindness. I was glad I did atone my countryman and you; it had been pity you should have been put together with so mortal a purpose as then each bore, upon importance of so slight and trivial a nature. POSTHUMUS. By your pardon, sir. I was then a young traveller; rather shunn'd to go even with what I heard than in my every action to be guided by others' experiences; but upon my mended judgment-if I offend not to say it is mended-my quarrel was not altogether slight. FRENCHMAN. Faith, yes, to be put to the arbitrement of swords, and by such two that would by all likelihood have confounded one the other or have fall'n both. IACHIMO. Can we, with manners, ask what was the difference? FRENCHMAN. Safely, I think. 'Twas a contention in public, which may, without contradiction, suffer the report. It was much like an argument that fell out last night, where each of us fell in praise of our country mistresses; this gentleman at that time vouching-and upon warrant of bloody affirmation-his to be more fair, virtuous, wise, chaste, constant, qualified, and less attemptable, than any the rarest of our ladies in France. IACHIMO. That lady is not now living, or this gentleman's opinion, by this, worn out. POSTHUMUS. She holds her virtue still, and I my mind. IACHIMO. You must not so far prefer her fore ours of Italy. POSTHUMUS. Being so far provok'd as I was in France, I would abate her nothing, though I profess myself her adorer, not her friend. IACHIMO. As fair and as good-a kind of hand-in-hand comparison-had been something too fair and too good for any lady in Britain. If she went before others I have seen as that diamond of yours outlustres many I have beheld, I could not but believe she excelled many; but I have not seen the most precious diamond that is, nor you the lady. POSTHUMUS. I prais'd her as I rated her. So do I my stone. IACHIMO. What do you esteem it at? POSTHUMUS. More than the world enjoys. IACHIMO. Either your unparagon'd mistress is dead, or she's outpriz'd by a trifle. POSTHUMUS. You are mistaken: the one may be sold or given, if there were wealth enough for the purchase or merit for the gift; the other is not a thing for sale, and only the gift of the gods. IACHIMO. Which the gods have given you? POSTHUMUS. Which by their graces I will keep. IACHIMO. You may wear her in title yours; but you know strange fowl light upon neighbouring ponds. Your ring may be stol'n too. So your brace of unprizable estimations, the one is but frail and the other casual; a cunning thief, or a that-way-accomplish'd courtier, would hazard the winning both of first and last. POSTHUMUS. Your Italy contains none so accomplish'd a courtier to convince the honour of my mistress, if in the holding or loss of that you term her frail. I do nothing doubt you have store of thieves; notwithstanding, I fear not my ring. PHILARIO. Let us leave here, gentlemen. POSTHUMUS. Sir, with all my heart. This worthy signior, I thank him, makes no stranger of me; we are familiar at first. IACHIMO. With five times so much conversation I should get ground of your fair mistress; make her go back even to the yielding, had I admittance and opportunity to friend. POSTHUMUS. No, no. IACHIMO. I dare thereupon pawn the moiety of my estate to your ring, which, in my opinion, o'ervalues it something. But I make my wager rather against your confidence than her reputation; and, to bar your offence herein too, I durst attempt it against any lady in the world. POSTHUMUS. You are a great deal abus'd in too bold a persuasion, and I doubt not you sustain what y'are worthy of by your attempt. IACHIMO. What's that? POSTHUMUS. A repulse; though your attempt, as you call it, deserve more-a punishment too. PHILARIO. Gentlemen, enough of this. It came in too suddenly; let it die as it was born, and I pray you be better acquainted. IACHIMO. Would I had put my estate and my neighbour's on th' approbation of what I have spoke! POSTHUMUS. What lady would you choose to assail? IACHIMO. Yours, whom in constancy you think stands so safe. I will lay you ten thousand ducats to your ring that, commend me to the court where your lady is, with no more advantage than the opportunity of a second conference, and I will bring from thence that honour of hers which you imagine so reserv'd. POSTHUMUS. I will wage against your gold, gold to it. My ring I hold dear as my finger; 'tis part of it. IACHIMO. You are a friend, and therein the wiser. If you buy ladies' flesh at a million a dram, you cannot preserve it from tainting. But I see you have some religion in you, that you fear. POSTHUMUS. This is but a custom in your tongue; you bear a graver purpose, I hope. IACHIMO. I am the master of my speeches, and would undergo what's spoken, I swear. POSTHUMUS. Will you? I Shall but lend my diamond till your return. Let there be covenants drawn between's. My mistress exceeds in goodness the hugeness of your unworthy thinking. I dare you to this match: here's my ring. PHILARIO. I will have it no lay. IACHIMO. By the gods, it is one. If I bring you no sufficient testimony that I have enjoy'd the dearest bodily part of your mistress, my ten thousand ducats are yours; so is your diamond too. If I come off, and leave her in such honour as you have trust in, she your jewel, this your jewel, and my gold are yours-provided I have your commendation for my more free entertainment. POSTHUMUS. I embrace these conditions; let us have articles betwixt us. Only, thus far you shall answer: if you make your voyage upon her, and give me directly to understand you have prevail'd, I am no further your enemy-she is not worth our debate; if she remain unseduc'd, you not making it appear otherwise, for your ill opinion and th' assault you have made to her chastity you shall answer me with your sword. IACHIMO. Your hand-a covenant! We will have these things set down by lawful counsel, and straight away for Britain, lest the bargain should catch cold and starve. I will fetch my gold and have our two wagers recorded. POSTHUMUS. Agreed. *Exeunt* POSTHUMUS and IACHIMO FRENCHMAN. Will this hold, think you? PHILARIO. Signior Iachimo will not from it. Pray let us follow 'em. *Exeunt*

SCENE V. Britain. CYMBELINE'S palace

Enter QUEEN, LADIES, and CORNELIUS

QUEEN.

Whiles yet the dew's on ground, gather those flowers;

Make haste; who has the note of them?

LADY.

I, madam.

QUEEN.

Dispatch. Exeunt LADIES

Now, Master Doctor, have you brought those drugs?

CORNELIUS.

Pleaseth your Highness, ay. Here they are, madam.

[Presenting a box]

But I beseech your Grace, without offence-

My conscience bids me ask-wherefore you have

Commanded of me these most poisonous compounds

Which are the movers of a languishing death,

But, though slow, deadly?

QUEEN.

I wonder, Doctor,

Thou ask'st me such a question. Have I not been

Thy pupil long? Hast thou not learn'd me how

To make perfumes? distil? preserve? yea, so

That our great king himself doth woo me oft

For my confections? Having thus far proceeded-

Unless thou think'st me devilish-is't not meet

That I did amplify my judgment in

Other conclusions? I will try the forces

Of these thy compounds on such creatures as

We count not worth the hanging-but none human-

To try the vigour of them, and apply

Allayments to their act, and by them gather

Their several virtues and effects.

CORNELIUS.

Your Highness

Shall from this practice but make hard your heart;

Besides, the seeing these effects will be

Both noisome and infectious.

QUEEN.

O, content thee.

Enter PISANIO

[Aside] Here comes a flattering rascal; upon him

Will I first work. He's for his master,

An enemy to my son.- How now, Pisanio!

Doctor, your service for this time is ended;

Take your own way.

CORNELIUS.

[Aside] I do suspect you, madam;

But you shall do no harm.

QUEEN.

[To PISANIO] Hark thee, a word.

CORNELIUS.

[Aside] I do not like her. She doth think she has
Strange ling'ring poisons. I do know her spirit,
And will not trust one of her malice with
A drug of such damn'd nature. Those she has
Will stupefy and dull the sense awhile,
Which first perchance she'll prove on cats and dogs,
Then afterward up higher; but there is
No danger in what show of death it makes,
More than the locking up the spirits a time,
To be more fresh, reviving. She is fool'd
With a most false effect; and I the truer
So to be false with her.

QUEEN.

No further service, Doctor,
Until I send for thee.

CORNELIUS.

I humbly take my leave. *Exit*

QUEEN. Weeps she still, say'st thou? Dost thou think in time
She will not quench, and let instructions enter
Where folly now possesses? Do thou work.
When thou shalt bring me word she loves my son,
I'll tell thee on the instant thou art then
As great as is thy master; greater, for
His fortunes all lie speechless, and his name
Is at last gasp. Return he cannot, nor
Continue where he is. To shift his being
Is to exchange one misery with another,
And every day that comes comes comes to
A day's work in him. What shalt thou expect
To be depender on a thing that leans,
Who cannot be new built, nor has no friends
So much as but to prop him?

[The QUEEN drops the box. PISANIO takes it up]
Thou tak'st up
Thou know'st not what; but take it for thy labour.
It is a thing I made, which hath the King

Five times redeem'd from death. I do not know

What is more cordial. Nay, I prithee take it;

It is an earnest of a further good

That I mean to thee. Tell thy mistress how

The case stands with her; do't as from thyself.

Think what a chance thou changest on; but think

Thou hast thy mistress still; to boot, my son,

Who shall take notice of thee. I'll move the King

To any shape of thy preferment, such

As thou'lt desire; and then myself, I chiefly,

That set thee on to this desert, am bound

To load thy merit richly. Call my women.

Think on my words. *Exit* PISANIO

A sly and constant knave,

Not to be shak'd; the agent for his master,

And the remembrancer of her to hold

The hand-fast to her lord. I have given him that

Which, if he take, shall quite unpeople her

Of leigers for her sweet; and which she after,

Except she bend her humour, shall be assur'd

To taste of too.

Re-enter PISANIO and LADIES

So, so. Well done, well done.

The violets, cowslips, and the primroses,

Bear to my closet. Fare thee well, Pisanio;

Think on my words. *Exeunt* QUEEN and LADIES

PISANIO.

And shall do.

But when to my good lord I prove untrue

I'll choke myself-there's all I'll do for you. *Exit*

SCENE VI. Britain. The palace

Enter IMOGEN alone

IMOGEN.

A father cruel and a step-dame false;

A foolish suitor to a wedded lady

That hath her husband banish'd. O, that husband!

My supreme crown of grief! and those repeated

Vexations of it! Had I been thief-stol'n,

As my two brothers, happy! but most miserable

Is the desire that's glorious. Blessed be those,

How mean soe'er, that have their honest wills,

Which seasons comfort. Who may this be? Fie!

Enter PISANIO and IACHIMO

PISANIO.

Madam, a noble gentleman of Rome

Comes from my lord with letters.

IACHIMO.

Change you, madam?
The worthy Leonatus is in safety,
And greets your Highness dearly. *[Presents a letter]*

IMOGEN.

Thanks, good sir.
You're kindly welcome.

IACHIMO.

[Aside] All of her that is out of door most rich!
If she be furnish'd with a mind so rare,
She is alone th' Arabian bird, and I
Have lost the wager. Boldness be my friend!

Arm me, audacity, from head to foot!
Or, like the Parthian, I shall flying fight;
Rather, directly fly.

IMOGEN.

[Reads] 'He is one of the noblest note, to whose

kindnesses I am most infinitely tied. Reflect upon him

accordingly, as you value your trust. LEONATUS.'

So far I read aloud;

But even the very middle of my heart

Is warm'd by th' rest and takes it thankfully.

You are as welcome, worthy sir, as I

Have words to bid you; and shall find it so

In all that I can do.

IACHIMO.

Thanks, fairest lady.

What, are men mad? Hath nature given them eyes

To see this vaulted arch and the rich crop

Of sea and land, which can distinguish 'twixt

The fiery orbs above and the twinn'd stones

Upon the number'd beach, and can we not

Partition make with spectacles so precious

'Twixt fair and foul?

IMOGEN.

What makes your admiration?

IACHIMO.

It cannot be i' th' eye, for apes and monkeys,

'Twixt two such shes, would chatter this way and

Contemn with mows the other; nor i' th' judgment,

For idiots in this case of favour would

Be wisely definite; nor i' th' appetite;

Sluttery, to such neat excellence oppos'd,

Should make desire vomit emptiness,

Not so allur'd to feed.

IMOGEN.

What is the matter, trow?

IACHIMO.

The cloyed will-

That satiate yet unsatisfied desire, that tub

Both fill'd and running-ravening first the lamb,

Longs after for the garbage.

IMOGEN.

What, dear sir,

Thus raps you? Are you well?

IACHIMO.

Thanks, madam; well.- Beseech you, sir,

Desire my man's abode where I did leave him.

He's strange and peevish.

PISANIO.

I was going, sir,

To give him welcome. *Exit*

IMOGEN. Continues well my lord? His health beseech you?

IACHIMO.

Well, madam.

IMOGEN.

Is he dispos'd to mirth? I hope he is.

IACHIMO.

Exceeding pleasant; none a stranger there

So merry and so gamesome. He is call'd

The Britain reveller.

IMOGEN.

When he was here

He did incline to sadness, and oft-times

Not knowing why.

IACHIMO.

I never saw him sad.

There is a Frenchman his companion, one

An eminent monsieur that, it seems, much loves

A Gallian girl at home. He furnaces

The thick sighs from him; whiles the jolly Briton-

Your lord, I mean-laughs from's free lungs, cries 'O,

Can my sides hold, to think that man-who knows

By history, report, or his own proof,

What woman is, yea, what she cannot choose

But must be-will's free hours languish for

Assured bondage?'

IMOGEN.

Will my lord say so?

IACHIMO.

Ay, madam, with his eyes in flood with laughter.

It is a recreation to be by

And hear him mock the Frenchman. But heavens know

Some men are much to blame.

IMOGEN.

Not he, I hope.

IACHIMO.

Not he; but yet heaven's bounty towards him might

Be us'd more thankfully. In himself, 'tis much;

In you, which I account his, beyond all talents.

Whilst I am bound to wonder, I am bound To pity too.

IMOGEN.

What do you pity, sir?

IACHIMO.

Two creatures heartily.

IMOGEN.

Am I one, sir?

You look on me: what wreck discern you in me

Deserves your pity?

IACHIMO.

Lamentable! What,

To hide me from the radiant sun and solace

I' th' dungeon by a snuff?

IMOGEN.

I pray you, sir,

Deliver with more openness your answers

To my demands. Why do you pity me?

IACHIMO.

That others do,

I was about to say, enjoy your-But

It is an office of the gods to venge it,

Not mine to speak on't.

IMOGEN.

You do seem to know

Something of me, or what concerns me; pray you-

Since doubting things go ill often hurts more

Than to be sure they do; for certainties

Either are past remedies, or, timely knowing,

The remedy then born-discover to me

What both you spur and stop.

IACHIMO.

Had I this cheek
To bathe my lips upon; this hand, whose touch,
Whose every touch, would force the feeler's soul
To th' oath of loyalty; this object, which
Takes prisoner the wild motion of mine eye,
Fixing it only here; should I, damn'd then,
Slaver with lips as common as the stairs
That mount the Capitol; join gripes with hands
Made hard with hourly falsehood-falsehood as
With labour; then by-peeping in an eye
Base and illustrious as the smoky light
That's fed with stinking tallow-it were fit
That all the plagues of hell should at one time
Encounter such revolt.

IMOGEN.

My lord, I fear,
Has forgot Britain.

IACHIMO.

And himself. Not I
Inclin'd to this intelligence pronounce
The beggary of his change; but 'tis your graces
That from my mutest conscience to my tongue
Charms this report out.

IMOGEN.

Let me hear no more.

IACHIMO.
O dearest soul, your cause doth strike my heart
With pity that doth make me sick! A lady
So fair, and fasten'd to an empery,
Would make the great'st king double, to be partner'd
With tomboys hir'd with that self exhibition
Which your own coffers yield! with diseas'd ventures
That play with all infirmities for gold
Which rottenness can lend nature! such boil'd stuff
As well might poison poison! Be reveng'd;
Or she that bore you was no queen, and you

Recoil from your great stock.

IMOGEN.

Reveng'd?

How should I be reveng'd? If this be true-

As I have such a heart that both mine ears

Must not in haste abuse-if it be true,

How should I be reveng'd?

IACHIMO.

Should he make me

Live like Diana's priest betwixt cold sheets,

Whiles he is vaulting variable ramps,

In your despite, upon your purse? Revenge it.

I dedicate myself to your sweet pleasure,

More noble than that runagate to your bed,

And will continue fast to your affection,

Still close as sure.

IMOGEN.

What ho, Pisanio!

IACHIMO.

Let me my service tender on your lips.

IMOGEN.

Away! I do condemn mine ears that have
So long attended thee. If thou wert honourable,
Thou wouldst have told this tale for virtue, not
For such an end thou seek'st, as base as strange.
Thou wrong'st a gentleman who is as far
From thy report as thou from honour; and
Solicits here a lady that disdains
Thee and the devil alike.- What ho, Pisanio!-
The King my father shall be made acquainted
Of thy assault. If he shall think it fit
A saucy stranger in his court to mart
As in a Romish stew, and to expound
His beastly mind to us, he hath a court
He little cares for, and a daughter who

He not respects at all.- What ho, Pisanio!

IACHIMO.

O happy Leonatus! I may say

The credit that thy lady hath of thee

Deserves thy trust, and thy most perfect goodness

Her assur'd credit. Blessed live you long,

A lady to the worthiest sir that ever

Country call'd his! and you his mistress, only

For the most worthiest fit! Give me your pardon.

I have spoke this to know if your affiance

Were deeply rooted, and shall make your lord

That which he is new o'er; and he is one

The truest manner'd, such a holy witch

That he enchants societies into him,

Half all men's hearts are his.

IMOGEN.

You make amends.

IACHIMO.

He sits 'mongst men like a descended god:

He hath a kind of honour sets him of

More than a mortal seeming. Be not angry,

Most mighty Princess, that I have adventur'd

To try your taking of a false report, which hath

Honour'd with confirmation your great judgment

In the election of a sir so rare,

Which you know cannot err. The love I bear him

Made me to fan you thus; but the gods made you,

Unlike all others, chaffless. Pray your pardon.

IMOGEN.

All's well, sir; take my pow'r i' th' court for yours.

IACHIMO.

My humble thanks. I had almost forgot

T' entreat your Grace but in a small request,

And yet of moment too, for it concerns

Your lord; myself and other noble friends

Are partners in the business.

IMOGEN.

Pray what is't?

IACHIMO.

Some dozen Romans of us, and your lord-

The best feather of our wing-have mingled sums

To buy a present for the Emperor;

Which I, the factor for the rest, have done

In France. 'Tis plate of rare device, and jewels

Of rich and exquisite form, their values great;

And I am something curious, being strange,

To have them in safe stowage. May it please you

To take them in protection?

IMOGEN.

Willingly;

And pawn mine honour for their safety. Since

My lord hath interest in them, I will keep them

In my bedchamber.

IACHIMO.

They are in a trunk,

Attended by my men. I will make bold

To send them to you only for this night;

I must aboard to-morrow.

IMOGEN.

O, no, no.

IACHIMO.

Yes, I beseech; or I shall short my word

By length'ning my return. From Gallia

I cross'd the seas on purpose and on promise

To see your Grace.

IMOGEN.

I thank you for your pains.

But not away to-morrow!

IACHIMO.

O, I must, madam.

Therefore I shall beseech you, if you please

To greet your lord with writing, do't to-night.

I have outstood my time, which is material

'To th' tender of our present.

IMOGEN.

I will write.

Send your trunk to me; it shall safe be kept

And truly yielded you. You're very welcome. *Exeunt*

ACT II. SCENE I. Britain. Before CYMBELINE'S palace

Enter CLOTEN and the two LORDS

CLOTEN.

Was there ever man had such luck! When I kiss'd the jack,
upon an up-cast to be hit away! I had a hundred pound on't; and
then a whoreson jackanapes must take me up for swearing, as
if I
borrowed mine oaths of him, and might not spend them at my pleasure.

FIRST LORD.

What got he by that? You have broke his pate with your bowl.

SECOND LORD.
[Aside] If his wit had been like him that broke it, it
would have run all out.

CLOTEN.
When a gentleman is dispos'd to swear, it is not for any
standers-by to curtail his oaths. Ha?

SECOND LORD.
No, my lord; *[Aside]* nor crop the ears of them.

CLOTEN.

Whoreson dog! I give him satisfaction? Would he had been one of my rank!

SECOND LORD.

[Aside] To have smell'd like a fool.

CLOTEN.

I am not vex'd more at anything in th' earth. A pox

on't! I

had rather not be so noble as I am; they dare not fight with me,

because of the Queen my mother. Every jackslave hath his bellyful

of fighting, and I must go up and down like a cock that nobody can match.

SECOND LORD.

[Aside] You are cock and capon too; and you crow,

cock, with your comb on.

CLOTEN.

Sayest thou?

SECOND LORD.

It is not fit your lordship should undertake every
companion that you give offence to.

CLOTEN.

No, I know that; but it is fit I should commit offence to my inferiors.

SECOND LORD.

Ay, it is fit for your lordship only.

CLOTEN.

Why, so I say.

FIRST LORD.

Did you hear of a stranger that's come to court
to-night?

CLOTEN.

A stranger, and I not known on't?

SECOND LORD.

[Aside] He's a strange fellow himself, and knows it not.

FIRST LORD.

There's an Italian come, and, 'tis thought, one of
Leonatus' friends.

CLOTEN.

Leonatus? A banish'd rascal; and he's another, whatsoever
he be. Who told you of this stranger?

FIRST LORD.

One of your lordship's pages.

CLOTEN.

Is it fit I went to look upon him? Is there no derogation
in't?

SECOND LORD.

You cannot derogate, my lord.

CLOTEN.

Not easily, I think.

SECOND LORD.

[Aside] You are a fool granted; therefore your issues, being foolish, do not derogate.

CLOTEN.

Come, I'll go see this Italian. What I have lost to-day at bowls I'll win to-night of him. Come, go.

SECOND LORD.

I'll attend your lordship.

Exeunt CLOTEN and FIRST LORD

That such a crafty devil as is his mother
Should yield the world this ass! A woman that
Bears all down with her brain; and this her son
Cannot take two from twenty, for his heart,

And leave eighteen. Alas, poor princess,

Thou divine Imogen, what thou endur'st,

Betwixt a father by thy step-dame govern'd,

A mother hourly coining plots, a wooer

More hateful than the foul expulsion is

Of thy dear husband, than that horrid act

Of the divorce he'd make! The heavens hold firm

The walls of thy dear honour, keep unshak'd

That temple, thy fair mind, that thou mayst stand

T' enjoy thy banish'd lord and this great land! *Exit*

SCENE II. Britain. IMOGEN'S bedchamber in CYMBELINE'S palace; a trunk in one corner

Enter IMOGEN in her bed, and a LADY attending

IMOGEN.

Who's there? My woman? Helen?

LADY.

Please you, madam.

IMOGEN.

What hour is it?

LADY.

Almost midnight, madam.

IMOGEN.

I have read three hours then. Mine eyes are weak;
Fold down the leaf where I have left. To bed.
Take not away the taper, leave it burning;
And if thou canst awake by four o' th' clock,
I prithee call me. Sleep hath seiz'd me wholly. *Exit* LADY
To your protection I commend me, gods.
From fairies and the tempters of the night
Guard me, beseech ye!

[Sleeps. IACHIMO comes from the trunk]

IACHIMO.

The crickets sing, and man's o'er-labour'd sense

Repairs itself by rest. Our Tarquin thus

Did softly press the rushes ere he waken'd

The chastity he wounded. Cytherea,

How bravely thou becom'st thy bed! fresh lily,

And whiter than the sheets! That I might touch!

But kiss; one kiss! Rubies unparagon'd,

How dearly they do't! 'Tis her breathing that

Perfumes the chamber thus. The flame o' th' taper

Bows toward her and would under-peep her lids

To see th' enclosed lights, now canopied

Under these windows white and azure, lac'd

With blue of heaven's own tinct. But my design

To note the chamber. I will write all down:

Such and such pictures; there the window; such

Th' adornment of her bed; the arras, figures-

Why, such and such; and the contents o' th' story.

Ah, but some natural notes about her body

Above ten thousand meaner movables

Would testify, t' enrich mine inventory.

O sleep, thou ape of death, lie dull upon her!
And be her sense but as a monument,
Thus in a chapel lying! Come off, come off;

[Taking off her bracelet]
As slippery as the Gordian knot was hard!
'Tis mine; and this will witness outwardly,
As strongly as the conscience does within,
To th' madding of her lord. On her left breast
A mole cinque-spotted, like the crimson drops
I' th' bottom of a cowslip. Here's a voucher
Stronger than ever law could make; this secret
Will force him think I have pick'd the lock and ta'en
The treasure of her honour. No more. To what end?
Why should I write this down that's riveted,
Screw'd to my memory? She hath been reading late
The tale of Tereus; here the leaf's turn'd down
Where Philomel gave up. I have enough.

To th' trunk again, and shut the spring of it.
Swift, swift, you dragons of the night, that dawning

May bare the raven's eye! I lodge in fear;

Though this a heavenly angel, hell is here. *[Clock strikes]*

One, two, three. Time, time! *Exit* into the trunk

SCENE III. CYMBELINE'S palace. An ante-chamber adjoining IMOGEN'S apartments

Enter CLOTEN and LORDS

FIRST LORD.

Your lordship is the most patient man in loss, the most

coldest that ever turn'd up ace.

CLOTEN.

It would make any man cold to lose.

FIRST LORD.

But not every man patient after the noble temper of

your lordship. You are most hot and furious when you win.

CLOTEN.

Winning will put any man into courage. If I could get this foolish Imogen, I should have gold enough. It's almost morning, is't not?

FIRST LORD.

Day, my lord.

CLOTEN.

I would this music would come. I am advised to give her music a mornings; they say it will penetrate.

Enter musicians

Come on, tune. If you can penetrate her with your fingering, so. We'll try with tongue too. If none will do, let her remain; but I'll never give o'er. First, a very excellent good-conceited thing; after, a wonderful sweet air, with admirable rich words to it-and then let her consider.

SONG

Hark, hark! the lark at heaven's gate sings,

And Phoebus 'gins arise,
His steeds to water at those springs
On chalic'd flow'rs that lies;
And winking Mary-buds begin
To ope their golden eyes.
With everything that pretty bin,
My lady sweet, arise;
Arise, arise!

So, get you gone. If this penetrate, I will consider your music the better; if it do not, it is a vice in her ears which horsehairs and calves' guts, nor the voice of unpaved eunuch to boot, can never amend. *Exeunt* musicians

Enter CYMBELINE and QUEEN

SECOND LORD.

Here comes the King.

CLOTEN.

I am glad I was up so late, for that's the reason I was up so early. He cannot choose but take this service I have done fatherly.- Good morrow to your Majesty and to my gracious mother.

CYMBELINE.

Attend you here the door of our stern daughter?

Will she not forth?

CLOTEN.

I have assail'd her with musics, but she vouchsafes no notice.

CYMBELINE.

The exile of her minion is too new;

She hath not yet forgot him; some more time

Must wear the print of his remembrance out,

And then she's yours.

QUEEN.

You are most bound to th' King,

Who lets go by no vantages that may

Prefer you to his daughter. Frame yourself

To orderly soliciting, and be friended

With aptness of the season; make denials
Increase your services; so seem as if
You were inspir'd to do those duties which
You tender to her; that you in all obey her,
Save when command to your dismission tends,
And therein you are senseless.

CLOTEN.

Senseless? Not so.

Enter a MESSENGER

MESSENGER.
So like you, sir, ambassadors from Rome;
The one is Caius Lucius.

CYMBELINE.
A worthy fellow,
Albeit he comes on angry purpose now;
But that's no fault of his. We must receive him

According to the honour of his sender;

And towards himself, his goodness forespent on us,

We must extend our notice. Our dear son,

When you have given good morning to your mistress,

Attend the Queen and us; we shall have need

T' employ you towards this Roman. Come, our queen.

Exeunt all but CLOTEN

CLOTEN.

If she be up, I'll speak with her; if not,

Let her lie still and dream. By your leave, ho! *[Knocks]*

I know her women are about her; what

If I do line one of their hands? 'Tis gold

Which buys admittance; oft it doth-yea, and makes

Diana's rangers false themselves, yield up

Their deer to th' stand o' th' stealer; and 'tis gold

Which makes the true man kill'd and saves the thief;

Nay, sometime hangs both thief and true man. What

Can it not do and undo? I will make

One of her women lawyer to me, for

I yet not understand the case myself.

By your leave. *[Knocks]*

Enter a LADY

LADY.

Who's there that knocks?

CLOTEN.

A gentleman.

LADY.

No more?

CLOTEN.

Yes, and a gentlewoman's son.

LADY.

That's more
Than some whose tailors are as dear as yours
Can justly boast of. What's your lordship's pleasure?

CLOTEN.

Your lady's person; is she ready?

LADY.

Ay,

To keep her chamber.

CLOTEN.

There is gold for you; sell me your good report.

LADY.

How? My good name? or to report of you

What I shall think is good? The Princess!

Enter IMOGEN

CLOTEN.

Good morrow, fairest sister. Your sweet hand.

Exit LADY

IMOGEN.

Good morrow, sir. You lay out too much pains
For purchasing but trouble. The thanks I give
Is telling you that I am poor of thanks,
And scarce can spare them.

CLOTEN.

Still I swear I love you.

IMOGEN.

If you but said so, 'twere as deep with me.
If you swear still, your recompense is still
That I regard it not.

CLOTEN.

This is no answer.

IMOGEN.

But that you shall not say I yield, being silent,

I would not speak. I pray you spare me. Faith,

I shall unfold equal discourtesy

To your best kindness; one of your great knowing

Should learn, being taught, forbearance.

CLOTEN.

To leave you in your madness 'twere my sin;

I will not.

IMOGEN.

Fools are not mad folks.

CLOTEN.

Do you call me fool?

IMOGEN.

As I am mad, I do;

If you'll be patient, I'll no more be mad;

That cures us both. I am much sorry, sir, You put me to forget a lady's manners

By being so verbal; and learn now, for all,

That I, which know my heart, do here pronounce,

By th' very truth of it, I care not for you,

And am so near the lack of charity

To accuse myself I hate you; which I had rather

You felt than make't my boast.

CLOTEN.

You sin against

Obedience, which you owe your father. For

The contract you pretend with that base wretch,

One bred of alms and foster'd with cold dishes,

With scraps o' th' court-it is no contract, none.

And though it be allowed in meaner parties-

Yet who than he more mean?- to knit their souls-

On whom there is no more dependency

But brats and beggary-in self-figur'd knot,

Yet you are curb'd from that enlargement by

The consequence o' th' crown, and must not foil

The precious note of it with a base slave, A hilding for a livery, a squire's cloth,

A pantler-not so eminent!

IMOGEN.

Profane fellow!

Wert thou the son of Jupiter, and no more

But what thou art besides, thou wert too base

To be his groom. Thou wert dignified enough,

Even to the point of envy, if 'twere made

Comparative for your virtues to be styl'd

The under-hangman of his kingdom, and hated

For being preferr'd so well.

CLOTEN.

The south fog rot him!

IMOGEN.

He never can meet more mischance than come

To be but nam'd of thee. His mean'st garment

That ever hath but clipp'd his body is dearer

In my respect than all the hairs above thee, Were they all made such men. How now, Pisanio!

Enter PISANIO

CLOTEN.

'His garments'! Now the devil-

IMOGEN.

To Dorothy my woman hie thee presently.

CLOTEN.

'His garment'!

IMOGEN.

I am sprited with a fool;

Frighted, and ang'red worse. Go bid my woman

Search for a jewel that too casually

Hath left mine arm. It was thy master's; shrew me,

If I would lose it for a revenue

Of any king's in Europe! I do think

I saw't this morning; confident I am

Last night 'twas on mine arm; I kiss'd it.

I hope it be not gone to tell my lord

That I kiss aught but he.

PISANIO.

'Twill not be lost.

IMOGEN.

I hope so. Go and search. *Exit* PISANIO

CLOTEN.

You have abus'd me.

'His meanest garment'!

IMOGEN.

Ay, I said so, sir.

If you will make 't an action, call witness to 't.

CLOTEN.

I will inform your father.

IMOGEN.

Your mother too.

She's my good lady and will conceive, I hope,

But the worst of me. So I leave you, sir,

To th' worst of discontent. *Exit*

CLOTEN. I'll be reveng'd.

'His mean'st garment'! Well. *Exit*

SCENE IV. Rome. PHILARIO'S house

Enter POSTHUMUS and PHILARIO

POSTHUMUS.

Fear it not, sir; I would I were so sure

To win the King as I am bold her honour

Will remain hers.

PHILARIO.

What means do you make to him?

POSTHUMUS.

Not any; but abide the change of time,

Quake in the present winter's state, and wish

That warmer days would come. In these fear'd hopes

I barely gratify your love; they failing,

I must die much your debtor.

PHILARIO.

Your very goodness and your company

O'erpays all I can do. By this your king

Hath heard of great Augustus. Caius Lucius

Will do's commission throughly; and I think

He'll grant the tribute, send th' arrearages,

Or look upon our Romans, whose remembrance

Is yet fresh in their grief.

POSTHUMUS.

I do believe
Statist though I am none, nor like to be,
That this will prove a war; and you shall hear
The legions now in Gallia sooner landed
In our not-fearing Britain than have tidings
Of any penny tribute paid. Our countrymen
Are men more order'd than when Julius Caesar
Smil'd at their lack of skill, but found their courage
Worthy his frowning at. Their discipline,
Now mingled with their courages, will make known
To their approvers they are people such
That mend upon the world.

Enter IACHIMO

PHILARIO.

See! Iachimo!

POSTHUMUS.

The swiftest harts have posted you by land,

And winds of all the comers kiss'd your sails,

To make your vessel nimble.

PHILARIO.

Welcome, sir.

POSTHUMUS.

I hope the briefness of your answer made

The speediness of your return.

IACHIMO.

Your lady

Is one of the fairest that I have look'd upon.

POSTHUMUS.

And therewithal the best; or let her beauty

Look through a casement to allure false hearts,

And be false with them.

IACHIMO.

Here are letters for you.

POSTHUMUS.

Their tenour good, I trust.

IACHIMO.
'Tis very like.

PHILARIO.
Was Caius Lucius in the Britain court
When you were there?

IACHIMO.
He was expected then,
But not approach'd.

POSTHUMUS.

All is well yet.
Sparkles this stone as it was wont, or is't not
Too dull for your good wearing?

IACHIMO.

If I have lost it,

I should have lost the worth of it in gold.

I'll make a journey twice as far t' enjoy

A second night of such sweet shortness which

Was mine in Britain; for the ring is won.

POSTHUMUS.

The stone's too hard to come by.

IACHIMO.

Not a whit,

Your lady being so easy.

POSTHUMUS.

Make not, sir,

Your loss your sport. I hope you know that we

Must not continue friends.

IACHIMO.

Good sir, we must,

If you keep covenant. Had I not brought

The knowledge of your mistress home, I grant

We were to question farther; but I now

Profess myself the winner of her honour,

Together with your ring; and not the wronger

Of her or you, having proceeded but

By both your wills.

POSTHUMUS.

If you can make't apparent

That you have tasted her in bed, my hand

And ring is yours. If not, the foul opinion

You had of her pure honour gains or loses

Your sword or mine, or masterless leaves both

To who shall find them.

IACHIMO.

Sir, my circumstances,

Being so near the truth as I will make them, Must first induce you to believe-whose strength

I will confirm with oath; which I doubt not

You'll give me leave to spare when you shall find

You need it not.

POSTHUMUS.

Proceed.

IACHIMO.

First, her bedchamber,

Where I confess I slept not, but profess

Had that was well worth watching-it was hang'd

With tapestry of silk and silver; the story,

Proud Cleopatra when she met her Roman

And Cydnus swell'd above the banks, or for

The press of boats or pride. A piece of work

So bravely done, so rich, that it did strive

In workmanship and value; which I wonder'd

Could be so rarely and exactly wrought,

Since the true life on't was-

POSTHUMUS.

This is true;

And this you might have heard of here, by me

Or by some other.

IACHIMO.

More particulars

Must justify my knowledge.

POSTHUMUS.

So they must,

Or do your honour injury.

IACHIMO.

The chimney

Is south the chamber, and the chimneypiece

Chaste Dian bathing. Never saw I figures

So likely to report themselves. The cutter

Was as another nature, dumb; outwent her,

Motion and breath left out.

POSTHUMUS.

This is a thing
Which you might from relation likewise reap,
Being, as it is, much spoke of.

IACHIMO.

The roof o' th' chamber
With golden cherubins is fretted; her andirons-
I had forgot them-were two winking Cupids
Of silver, each on one foot standing, nicely
Depending on their brands.

POSTHUMUS.

This is her honour!
Let it be granted you have seen all this, and praise
Be given to your remembrance; the description
Of what is in her chamber nothing saves
The wager you have laid.

IACHIMO.

Then, if you can, *[Shows the bracelet]*

Be pale. I beg but leave to air this jewel. See!

And now 'tis up again. It must be married

To that your diamond; I'll keep them.

POSTHUMUS.

Jove!

Once more let me behold it. Is it that

Which I left with her?

IACHIMO.

Sir-I thank her-that.

She stripp'd it from her arm; I see her yet;

Her pretty action did outsell her gift,

And yet enrich'd it too. She gave it me, and said

She priz'd it once.

POSTHUMUS.

May be she pluck'd it of

To send it me.

IACHIMO.

She writes so to you, doth she?

POSTHUMUS.
O, no, no, no! 'tis true. Here, take this too;
[Gives the ring]
It is a basilisk unto mine eye,
Kills me to look on't. Let there be no honour
Where there is beauty; truth where semblance; love
Where there's another man. The vows of women
Of no more bondage be to where they are made
Than they are to their virtues, which is nothing.

O, above measure false!

PHILARIO.
Have patience, sir,
And take your ring again; 'tis not yet won.
It may be probable she lost it, or

Who knows if one her women, being corrupted

Hath stol'n it from her?

POSTHUMUS.

Very true;

And so I hope he came by't. Back my ring.

Render to me some corporal sign about her,

More evident than this; for this was stol'n.

IACHIMO.

By Jupiter, I had it from her arm!

POSTHUMUS.

Hark you, he swears; by Jupiter he swears.

'Tis true-nay, keep the ring, 'tis true. I am sure

She would not lose it. Her attendants are

All sworn and honourable-they induc'd to steal it!

And by a stranger! No, he hath enjoy'd her.

The cognizance of her incontinency

Is this: she hath bought the name of whore thus dearly.

There, take thy hire; and all the fiends of hell
Divide themselves between you!

PHILARIO.
Sir, be patient;
This is not strong enough to be believ'd
Of one persuaded well of.

POSTHUMUS.
Never talk on't;
She hath been colted by him.

IACHIMO.
If you seek
For further satisfying, under her breast-
Worthy the pressing-lies a mole, right proud
Of that most delicate lodging. By my life,
I kiss'd it; and it gave me present hunger
To feed again, though full. You do remember
This stain upon her?

POSTHUMUS.

Ay, and it doth confirm
Another stain, as big as hell can hold,
Were there no more but it.

IACHIMO.

Will you hear more?

POSTHUMUS.

Spare your arithmetic; never count the turns.
Once, and a million!

IACHIMO.

I'll be sworn-

POSTHUMUS.

No swearing.
If you will swear you have not done't, you lie;
And I will kill thee if thou dost deny
Thou'st made me cuckold.

IACHIMO.

I'll deny nothing.

POSTHUMUS.

O that I had her here to tear her limb-meal!

I will go there and do't, i' th' court, before

Her father. I'll do something- *Exit*

PHILARIO. Quite besides

The government of patience! You have won.

Let's follow him and pervert the present wrath

He hath against himself.

IACHIMO.

With all my heart. *Exeunt*

SCENE V. Rome. Another room in PHILARIO'S house

Enter POSTHUMUS

POSTHUMUS.

Is there no way for men to be, but women

Must be half-workers? We are all bastards,

And that most venerable man which I

Did call my father was I know not where

When I was stamp'd. Some coiner with his tools

Made me a counterfeit; yet my mother seem'd

The Dian of that time. So doth my wife

The nonpareil of this. O, vengeance, vengeance!

Me of my lawful pleasure she restrain'd,

And pray'd me oft forbearance; did it with

A pudency so rosy, the sweet view on't

Might well have warm'd old Saturn; that I thought her

As chaste as unsunn'd snow. O, all the devils!

This yellow Iachimo in an hour-was't not?

Or less!- at first? Perchance he spoke not, but,

Like a full-acorn'd boar, a German one,

Cried 'O!' and mounted; found no opposition

But what he look'd for should oppose and she

Should from encounter guard. Could I find out

The woman's part in me! For there's no motion

That tends to vice in man but I affirm

It is the woman's part. Be it lying, note it,

The woman's; flattering, hers; deceiving, hers;

Lust and rank thoughts, hers, hers; revenges, hers;

Ambitions, covetings, change of prides, disdain,

Nice longing, slanders, mutability,

All faults that man may name, nay, that hell knows,

Why, hers, in part or all; but rather all;

For even to vice

They are not constant, but are changing still

One vice but of a minute old for one

Not half so old as that. I'll write against them,

Detest them, curse them. Yet 'tis greater skill

In a true hate to pray they have their will:

The very devils cannot plague them better. *Exit*

ACT III. SCENE I. Britain. A hall in CYMBELINE'S palace

Enter in state, CYMBELINE, QUEEN, CLOTEN, and LORDS at one door, and at another CAIUS LUCIUS and attendants

CYMBELINE.

Now say, what would Augustus Caesar with us?

LUCIUS.

When Julius Caesar-whose remembrance yet

Lives in men's eyes, and will to ears and tongues

Be theme and hearing ever-was in this Britain,

And conquer'd it, Cassibelan, thine uncle,

Famous in Caesar's praises no whit less

Than in his feats deserving it, for him

And his succession granted Rome a tribute,

Yearly three thousand pounds, which by thee lately

Is left untender'd.

QUEEN.

And, to kill the marvel,

Shall be so ever.

CLOTEN.

There be many Caesars

Ere such another Julius. Britain is

A world by itself, and we will nothing pay

For wearing our own noses.

QUEEN.

That opportunity,

Which then they had to take from 's, to resume

We have again. Remember, sir, my liege,

The kings your ancestors, together with

The natural bravery of your isle, which stands

As Neptune's park, ribb'd and pal'd in

With rocks unscalable and roaring waters,

With sands that will not bear your enemies' boats

But suck them up to th' top-mast. A kind of conquest

Caesar made here; but made not here his brag

Of 'came, and saw, and overcame.' With shame-

The first that ever touch'd him-he was carried

From off our coast, twice beaten; and his shipping-

Poor ignorant baubles!- on our terrible seas,

Like egg-shells mov'd upon their surges, crack'd
As easily 'gainst our rocks; for joy whereof
The fam'd Cassibelan, who was once at point-
O, giglot fortune!- to master Caesar's sword,
Made Lud's Town with rejoicing fires bright
And Britons strut with courage.

CLOTEN.

Come, there's no more tribute to be paid. Our kingdom is stronger than it was at that time; and, as I said, there is no moe such Caesars. Other of them may have crook'd noses; but to owe such straight arms, none.

CYMBELINE.

Son, let your mother end.

CLOTEN.

We have yet many among us can gripe as hard as Cassibelan. I do not say I am one; but I have a hand. Why tribute? Why should we pay tribute? If Caesar can hide the sun from us with a blanket, or put the moon in his pocket, we will pay him tribute for light;

else, sir, no more tribute, pray you now.

CYMBELINE.

You must know,

Till the injurious Romans did extort

This tribute from us, we were free. Caesar's ambition-

Which swell'd so much that it did almost stretch

The sides o' th' world-against all colour here

Did put the yoke upon's; which to shake of

Becomes a warlike people, whom we reckon

Ourselves to be.

CLOTEN.

We do.

CYMBELINE.

Say then to Caesar,

Our ancestor was that Mulmutius which

Ordain'd our laws-whose use the sword of Caesar

Hath too much mangled; whose repair and franchise

Shall, by the power we hold, be our good deed,

Though Rome be therefore angry. Mulmutius made our laws,

Who was the first of Britain which did put

His brows within a golden crown, and call'd

Himself a king.

LUCIUS.

I am sorry, Cymbeline,

That I am to pronounce Augustus Caesar-

Caesar, that hath moe kings his servants than

Thyself domestic officers-thine enemy.

Receive it from me, then: war and confusion

In Caesar's name pronounce I 'gainst thee; look

For fury not to be resisted. Thus defied,

I thank thee for myself.

CYMBELINE.

Thou art welcome, Caius.

Thy Caesar knighted me; my youth I spent

Much under him; of him I gather'd honour,

Which he to seek of me again, perforce,

Behoves me keep at utterance. I am perfect

That the Pannonians and Dalmatians for

Their liberties are now in arms, a precedent

Which not to read would show the Britons cold;

So Caesar shall not find them.

LUCIUS.

Let proof speak.

CLOTEN.

His majesty bids you welcome. Make pastime with us a day or two, or longer. If you seek us afterwards in other terms, you shall find us in our salt-water girdle. If you beat us out of it, it is yours; if you fall in the adventure, our crows shall fare the better for you; and there's an end.

LUCIUS.

So, sir.

CYMBELINE.

I know your master's pleasure, and he mine;

All the remain is, welcome. *Exeunt*

SCENE II. Britain. Another room in CYMBELINE'S palace

Enter PISANIO reading of a letter

PISANIO.

How? of adultery? Wherefore write you not

What monsters her accuse? Leonatus!

O master, what a strange infection

Is fall'n into thy ear! What false Italian-

As poisonous-tongu'd as handed-hath prevail'd

On thy too ready hearing? Disloyal? No.

She's punish'd for her truth, and undergoes,

More goddess-like than wife-like, such assaults

As would take in some virtue. O my master!

Thy mind to her is now as low as were

Thy fortunes. How? that I should murder her?

Upon the love, and truth, and vows, which I

Have made to thy command? I, her? Her blood?

If it be so to do good service, never

Let me be counted serviceable. How look I

That I should seem to lack humanity

So much as this fact comes to? *[Reads]* 'Do't. The letter

That I have sent her, by her own command

Shall give thee opportunity.' O damn'd paper,

Black as the ink that's on thee! Senseless bauble,

Art thou a fedary for this act, and look'st

So virgin-like without? Lo, here she comes.

Enter IMOGEN

I am ignorant in what I am commanded.

IMOGEN.

How now, Pisanio!

PISANIO.

Madam, here is a letter from my lord.

IMOGEN.

Who? thy lord? That is my lord-Leonatus?
O, learn'd indeed were that astronomer
That knew the stars as I his characters-
He'd lay the future open. You good gods,
Let what is here contain'd relish of love,
Of my lord's health, of his content; yet not
That we two are asunder-let that grieve him!
Some griefs are med'cinable; that is one of them,
For it doth physic love-of his content,
All but in that. Good wax, thy leave. Blest be
You bees that make these locks of counsel! Lovers
And men in dangerous bonds pray not alike;
Though forfeiters you cast in prison, yet
You clasp young Cupid's tables. Good news, gods!

[Reads]

'Justice and your father's wrath, should he take me in his dominion, could not be so cruel to me as you, O the dearest of creatures, would even renew me with your eyes. Take notice that I

am in Cambria, at Milford Haven. What your own love will out of

this advise you, follow. So he wishes you all happiness that

remains loyal to his vow, and your increasing in love

LEONATUS POSTHUMUS.'

O for a horse with wings! Hear'st thou, Pisanio?

He is at Milford Haven. Read, and tell me

How far 'tis thither. If one of mean affairs

May plod it in a week, why may not I

Glide thither in a day? Then, true Pisanio-

Who long'st like me to see thy lord, who long'st-

O, let me 'bate!- but not like me, yet long'st,

But in a fainter kind-O, not like me,

For mine's beyond beyond!-say, and speak thick-

Love's counsellor should fill the bores of hearing

To th' smothering of the sense-how far it is

To this same blessed Milford. And by th' way

Tell me how Wales was made so happy as

T' inherit such a haven. But first of all,

How we may steal from hence; and for the gap

That we shall make in time from our hence-going

And our return, to excuse. But first, how get hence.

Why should excuse be born or ere begot?
We'll talk of that hereafter. Prithee speak,
How many score of miles may we well ride
'Twixt hour and hour?

PISANIO.
One score 'twixt sun and sun,
Madam, 's enough for you, and too much too.

IMOGEN.
Why, one that rode to's execution, man,
Could never go so slow. I have heard of riding wagers
Where horses have been nimbler than the sands
That run i' th' clock's behalf. But this is fool'ry.
Go bid my woman feign a sickness; say
She'll home to her father; and provide me presently
A riding suit, no costlier than would fit
A franklin's huswife.

PISANIO.

Madam, you're best consider.

IMOGEN.

I see before me, man. Nor here, nor here,

Nor what ensues, but have a fog in them

That I cannot look through. Away, I prithee;

Do as I bid thee. There's no more to say;

Accessible is none but Milford way. *Exeunt*

SCENE III. Wales. A mountainous country with a cave

Enter from the cave BELARIUS, GUIDERIUS, and ARVIRAGUS

BELARIUS.

A goodly day not to keep house with such

Whose roof's as low as ours! Stoop, boys; this gate

Instructs you how t' adore the heavens, and bows you

To a morning's holy office. The gates of monarchs

Are arch'd so high that giants may jet through

And keep their impious turbans on without

Good morrow to the sun. Hail, thou fair heaven!

We house i' th' rock, yet use thee not so hardly

As prouder livers do.

GUIDERIUS.

Hail, heaven!

ARVIRAGUS.

Hail, heaven!

BELARIUS.

Now for our mountain sport. Up to yond hill,

Your legs are young; I'll tread these flats. Consider,

When you above perceive me like a crow,

That it is place which lessens and sets off;

And you may then revolve what tales I have told you

Of courts, of princes, of the tricks in war.

This service is not service so being done,

But being so allow'd. To apprehend thus

Draws us a profit from all things we see,
And often to our comfort shall we find
The sharded beetle in a safer hold
Than is the full-wing'd eagle. O, this life
Is nobler than attending for a check,
Richer than doing nothing for a bribe,
Prouder than rustling in unpaid-for silk:
Such gain the cap of him that makes him fine,
Yet keeps his book uncross'd. No life to ours!

GUIDERIUS.

Out of your proof you speak. We, poor unfledg'd,
Have never wing'd from view o' th' nest, nor know not
What air's from home. Haply this life is best,
If quiet life be best; sweeter to you
That have a sharper known; well corresponding
With your stiff age. But unto us it is
A cell of ignorance, travelling abed,
A prison for a debtor that not dares
To stride a limit.

ARVIRAGUS.

What should we speak of

When we are old as you? When we shall hear

The rain and wind beat dark December, how,

In this our pinching cave, shall we discourse.

The freezing hours away? We have seen nothing;

We are beastly: subtle as the fox for prey,

Like warlike as the wolf for what we eat.

Our valour is to chase what flies; our cage

We make a choir, as doth the prison'd bird,

And sing our bondage freely.

BELARIUS.

How you speak!

Did you but know the city's usuries,

And felt them knowingly-the art o' th' court,

As hard to leave as keep, whose top to climb

Is certain falling, or so slipp'ry that

The fear's as bad as falling; the toil o' th' war,

A pain that only seems to seek out danger

I' th'name of fame and honour, which dies i' th'search,

And hath as oft a sland'rous epitaph

As record of fair act; nay, many times,

Doth ill deserve by doing well; what's worse-

Must curtsy at the censure. O, boys, this story

The world may read in me; my body's mark'd

With Roman swords, and my report was once

first with the best of note. Cymbeline lov'd me;

And when a soldier was the theme, my name

Was not far off. Then was I as a tree

Whose boughs did bend with fruit; but in one night

A storm, or robbery, call it what you will,

Shook down my mellow hangings, nay, my leaves,

And left me bare to weather.

GUIDERIUS.

Uncertain favour!

BELARIUS.

My fault being nothing-as I have told you oft-

But that two villains, whose false oaths prevail'd

Before my perfect honour, swore to Cymbeline

I was confederate with the Romans. So

Follow'd my banishment, and this twenty years

This rock and these demesnes have been my world,

Where I have liv'd at honest freedom, paid

More pious debts to heaven than in all

The fore-end of my time. But up to th' mountains!

This is not hunters' language. He that strikes

The venison first shall be the lord o' th' feast;

To him the other two shall minister;

And we will fear no poison, which attends

In place of greater state. I'll meet you in the valleys.

Exeunt GUIDERIUS and ARVIRAGUS

How hard it is to hide the sparks of nature!

These boys know little they are sons to th' King,

Nor Cymbeline dreams that they are alive.

They think they are mine; and though train'd up thus meanly

I' th' cave wherein they bow, their thoughts do hit

The roofs of palaces, and nature prompts them

In simple and low things to prince it much

Beyond the trick of others. This Polydore, The heir of Cymbeline and Britain, who

The King his father call'd Guiderius-Jove!

When on my three-foot stool I sit and tell

The warlike feats I have done, his spirits fly out

Into my story; say 'Thus mine enemy fell,

And thus I set my foot on's neck'; even then

The princely blood flows in his cheek, he sweats,

Strains his young nerves, and puts himself in posture

That acts my words. The younger brother, Cadwal,

Once Arviragus, in as like a figure

Strikes life into my speech, and shows much more

His own conceiving. Hark, the game is rous'd!

O Cymbeline, heaven and my conscience knows

Thou didst unjustly banish me! Whereon,

At three and two years old, I stole these babes,

Thinking to bar thee of succession as

Thou refts me of my lands. Euriphile,

Thou wast their nurse; they took thee for their mother,

And every day do honour to her grave.

Myself, Belarius, that am Morgan call'd,

They take for natural father. The game is up. *Exit*

SCENE IV. Wales, near Milford Haven

Enter PISANIO and IMOGEN

IMOGEN.

Thou told'st me, when we came from horse, the place

Was near at hand. Ne'er long'd my mother so

To see me first as I have now. Pisanio! Man!

Where is Posthumus? What is in thy mind

That makes thee stare thus? Wherefore breaks that sigh

From th' inward of thee? One but painted thus

Would be interpreted a thing perplex'd

Beyond self-explication. Put thyself

Into a haviour of less fear, ere wildness

Vanquish my staider senses. What's the matter?

Why tender'st thou that paper to me with

A look untender! If't be summer news,

Smile to't before; if winterly, thou need'st

But keep that count'nance still. My husband's hand?

That drug-damn'd Italy hath out-craftied him,

And he's at some hard point. Speak, man; thy tongue
May take off some extremity, which to read
Would be even mortal to me.

PISANIO.

Please you read,
And you shall find me, wretched man, a thing
The most disdain'd of fortune.

IMOGEN.

[Reads] 'Thy mistress, Pisanio, hath play'd the strumpet in
my bed, the testimonies whereof lie bleeding in me. I speak not
out of weak surmises, but from proof as strong as my grief and as
certain as I expect my revenge. That part thou, Pisanio, must act
for me, if thy faith be not tainted with the breach of hers.
Let
thine own hands take away her life; I shall give thee opportunity
at Milford Haven; she hath my letter for the purpose; where, if
thou fear to strike, and to make me certain it is done, thou art
the pander to her dishonour, and equally to me disloyal.'

PISANIO.

What shall I need to draw my sword? The paper

Hath cut her throat already. No, 'tis slander,

Whose edge is sharper than the sword, whose tongue

Outvenoms all the worms of Nile, whose breath

Rides on the posting winds and doth belie

All corners of the world. Kings, queens, and states,

Maids, matrons, nay, the secrets of the grave,

This viperous slander enters. What cheer, madam?

IMOGEN.

False to his bed? What is it to be false?

To lie in watch there, and to think on him?

To weep twixt clock and clock? If sleep charge nature,

To break it with a fearful dream of him,

And cry myself awake? That's false to's bed,

Is it?

PISANIO.

Alas, good lady!

IMOGEN.

I false! Thy conscience witness! Iachimo,

Thou didst accuse him of incontinency;

Thou then look'dst like a villain; now, methinks,

Thy favour's good enough. Some jay of Italy,

Whose mother was her painting, hath betray'd him.

Poor I am stale, a garment out of fashion,

And for I am richer than to hang by th' walls

I must be ripp'd. To pieces with me! O,

Men's vows are women's traitors! All good seeming,

By thy revolt, O husband, shall be thought

Put on for villainy; not born where't grows,

But worn a bait for ladies.

PISANIO.

Good madam, hear me.

IMOGEN.

True honest men being heard, like false Aeneas,

Were, in his time, thought false; and Sinon's weeping
Did scandal many a holy tear, took pity
From most true wretchedness. So thou, Posthumus,
Wilt lay the leaven on all proper men:
Goodly and gallant shall be false and perjur'd
From thy great fail. Come, fellow, be thou honest;
Do thou thy master's bidding; when thou seest him,
A little witness my obedience. Look!
I draw the sword myself; take it, and hit
The innocent mansion of my love, my heart.
Fear not; 'tis empty of all things but grief;
Thy master is not there, who was indeed
The riches of it. Do his bidding; strike.
Thou mayst be valiant in a better cause,
But now thou seem'st a coward.

PISANIO.

Hence, vile instrument!
Thou shalt not damn my hand.

IMOGEN.

Why, I must die;

And if I do not by thy hand, thou art

No servant of thy master's. Against self-slaughter

There is a prohibition so divine

That cravens my weak hand. Come, here's my heart-

Something's afore't. Soft, soft! we'll no defence!-

Obedient as the scabbard. What is here?

The scriptures of the loyal Leonatus

All turn'd to heresy? Away, away,

Corrupters of my faith! you shall no more

Be stomachers to my heart. Thus may poor fools

Believe false teachers; though those that are betray'd

Do feel the treason sharply, yet the traitor

Stands in worse case of woe. And thou, Posthumus,

That didst set up my disobedience 'gainst the King

My father, and make me put into contempt the suits

Of princely fellows, shalt hereafter find

It is no act of common passage but

A strain of rareness; and I grieve myself

To think, when thou shalt be disedg'd by her

That now thou tirest on, how thy memory

Will then be pang'd by me. Prithee dispatch.

The lamp entreats the butcher. Where's thy knife?

Thou art too slow to do thy master's bidding,

When I desire it too.

PISANIO.

O gracious lady,

Since I receiv'd command to do this busines

I have not slept one wink.

IMOGEN.

Do't, and to bed then.

PISANIO.

I'll wake mine eyeballs first.

IMOGEN.

Wherefore then

Didst undertake it? Why hast thou abus'd
So many miles with a pretence? This place?
Mine action and thine own? our horses' labour?
The time inviting thee? the perturb'd court,
For my being absent?- whereunto I never
Purpose return. Why hast thou gone so far
To be unbent when thou hast ta'en thy stand,
Th' elected deer before thee?

PISANIO.
But to win time
To lose so bad employment, in the which
I have consider'd of a course. Good lady,
Hear me with patience.

IMOGEN.
Talk thy tongue weary-speak.
I have heard I am a strumpet, and mine ear,
Therein false struck, can take no greater wound,
Nor tent to bottom that. But speak.

PISANIO.

Then, madam,

I thought you would not back again.

IMOGEN.

Most like-

Bringing me here to kill me.

PISANIO.

Not so, neither;

But if I were as wise as honest, then

My purpose would prove well. It cannot be

But that my master is abus'd. Some villain,

Ay, and singular in his art, hath done you both

This cursed injury.

IMOGEN.

Some Roman courtezan!

PISANIO.

No, on my life!
I'll give but notice you are dead, and send him
Some bloody sign of it, for 'tis commanded
I should do so. You shall be miss'd at court,
And that will well confirm it.

IMOGEN.
Why, good fellow,
What shall I do the while? where bide? how live?
Or in my life what comfort, when I am
Dead to my husband?

PISANIO.
If you'll back to th' court-

IMOGEN.
No court, no father, nor no more ado
With that harsh, noble, simple nothing-
That Cloten, whose love-suit hath been to me
As fearful as a siege.

PISANIO.

If not at court,

Then not in Britain must you bide.

IMOGEN.

Where then?

Hath Britain all the sun that shines? Day, night,

Are they not but in Britain? I' th' world's volume

Our Britain seems as of it, but not in't;

In a great pool a swan's nest. Prithee think

There's livers out of Britain.

PISANIO.

I am most glad

You think of other place. Th' ambassador,

LUCIUS the Roman, comes to Milford Haven

To-morrow. Now, if you could wear a mind

Dark as your fortune is, and but disguise

That which t' appear itself must not yet be

But by self-danger, you should tread a course

Pretty and full of view; yea, happily, near
The residence of Posthumus; so nigh, at least,
That though his actions were not visible, yet
Report should render him hourly to your ear
As truly as he moves.

IMOGEN.
O! for such means,
Though peril to my modesty, not death on't,
I would adventure.

PISANIO.
Well then, here's the point:
You must forget to be a woman; change
Command into obedience; fear and niceness-
The handmaids of all women, or, more truly,
Woman it pretty self-into a waggish courage;
Ready in gibes, quick-answer'd, saucy, and
As quarrelous as the weasel. Nay, you must
Forget that rarest treasure of your cheek,
Exposing it-but, O, the harder heart!

Alack, no remedy!- to the greedy touch
Of common-kissing Titan, and forget
Your laboursome and dainty trims wherein
You made great Juno angry.

IMOGEN.
Nay, be brief;
I see into thy end, and am almost
A man already.

PISANIO.
First, make yourself but like one.
Fore-thinking this, I have already fit-
'Tis in my cloak-bag- doublet, hat, hose, all
That answer to them. Would you, in their serving,
And with what imitation you can borrow
From youth of such a season, fore noble Lucius
Present yourself, desire his service, tell him
Wherein you're happy-which will make him know
If that his head have ear in music; doubtless
With joy he will embrace you; for he's honourable,

And, doubling that, most holy. Your means abroad-
You have me, rich; and I will never fail
Beginning nor supplyment.

IMOGEN.
Thou art all the comfort
The gods will diet me with. Prithee away!
There's more to be consider'd; but we'll even
All that good time will give us. This attempt
I am soldier to, and will abide it with
A prince's courage. Away, I prithee.

PISANIO.
Well, madam, we must take a short farewell,
Lest, being miss'd, I be suspected of
Your carriage from the court. My noble mistress,
Here is a box; I had it from the Queen.
What's in't is precious. If you are sick at sea
Or stomach-qualm'd at land, a dram of this
Will drive away distemper. To some shade,
And fit you to your manhood. May the gods

Direct you to the best!

IMOGEN.

Amen. I thank thee. *Exeunt* severally

SCENE V. Britain . CYMBELINE'S palace

Enter CYMBELINE, QUEEN, CLOTEN, LUCIUS, and LORDS

CYMBELINE.

Thus far; and so farewell.

LUCIUS.

Thanks, royal sir.

My emperor hath wrote; I must from hence,

And am right sorry that I must report ye

My master's enemy.

CYMBELINE.

Our subjects, sir,

Will not endure his yoke; and for ourself

To show less sovereignty than they, must needs

Appear unkinglike.

LUCIUS.

So, sir. I desire of you

A conduct overland to Milford Haven.

Madam, all joy befall your Grace, and you!

CYMBELINE.

My lords, you are appointed for that office;

The due of honour in no point omit.

So farewell, noble Lucius.

LUCIUS.

Your hand, my lord.

CLOTEN.

Receive it friendly; but from this time forth

I wear it as your enemy.

LUCIUS.

Sir, the event

Is yet to name the winner. Fare you well.

CYMBELINE.

Leave not the worthy Lucius, good my lords,

Till he have cross'd the Severn. Happiness!

Exeunt LUCIUS and LORDS

QUEEN.

He goes hence frowning; but it honours us

That we have given him cause.

CLOTEN.

'Tis all the better;

Your valiant Britons have their wishes in it.

CYMBELINE.

Lucius hath wrote already to the Emperor

How it goes here. It fits us therefore ripely

Our chariots and our horsemen be in readiness.

The pow'rs that he already hath in Gallia

Will soon be drawn to head, from whence he moves

His war for Britain.

QUEEN.

'Tis not sleepy business,

But must be look'd to speedily and strongly.

CYMBELINE.

Our expectation that it would be thus

Hath made us forward. But, my gentle queen,

Where is our daughter? She hath not appear'd

Before the Roman, nor to us hath tender'd

The duty of the day. She looks us like

A thing more made of malice than of duty;

We have noted it. Call her before us, for

We have been too slight in sufferance. *Exit* a MESSENGER

QUEEN.

Royal sir,

Since the exile of Posthumus, most retir'd

Hath her life been; the cure whereof, my lord,

'Tis time must do. Beseech your Majesty,

Forbear sharp speeches to her; she's a lady

So tender of rebukes that words are strokes,

And strokes death to her.

Re-enter MESSENGER

CYMBELINE.

Where is she, sir? How

Can her contempt be answer'd?

MESSENGER.

Please you, sir,

Her chambers are all lock'd, and there's no answer

That will be given to th' loud of noise we make.

QUEEN.

My lord, when last I went to visit her,

She pray'd me to excuse her keeping close;

Whereto constrain'd by her infirmity

She should that duty leave unpaid to you

Which daily she was bound to proffer. This

She wish'd me to make known; but our great court

Made me to blame in memory.

CYMBELINE.

Her doors lock'd?

Not seen of late? Grant, heavens, that which I fear

Prove false! *Exit*

QUEEN. Son, I say, follow the King.

CLOTEN.

That man of hers, Pisanio, her old servant,

I have not seen these two days.

QUEEN.

Go, look after. *Exit* CLOTEN

Pisanio, thou that stand'st so for Posthumus!

He hath a drug of mine. I pray his absence

Proceed by swallowing that; for he believes

It is a thing most precious. But for her,

Where is she gone? Haply despair hath seiz'd her;

Or, wing'd with fervour of her love, she's flown

To her desir'd Posthumus. Gone she is

To death or to dishonour, and my end

Can make good use of either. She being down,

I have the placing of the British crown.

Re-enter CLOTEN

How now, my son?

CLOTEN.

'Tis certain she is fled.

Go in and cheer the King. He rages; none

Dare come about him.

QUEEN.

All the better. May

This night forestall him of the coming day! *Exit*

CLOTEN. I love and hate her; for she's fair and royal,

And that she hath all courtly parts more exquisite

Than lady, ladies, woman. From every one

The best she hath, and she, of all compounded,

Outsells them all. I love her therefore; but

Disdaining me and throwing favours on

The low Posthumus slanders so her judgment

That what's else rare is chok'd; and in that point

I will conclude to hate her, nay, indeed,

To be reveng'd upon her. For when fools
Shall-

Enter PISANIO

Who is here? What, are you packing, sirrah?
Come hither. Ah, you precious pander! Villain,
Where is thy lady? In a word, or else
Thou art straightway with the fiends.

PISANIO.

O good my lord!

CLOTEN.
Where is thy lady? or, by Jupiter-
I will not ask again. Close villain,
I'll have this secret from thy heart, or rip
Thy heart to find it. Is she with Posthumus?
From whose so many weights of baseness cannot
A dram of worth be drawn.

PISANIO.

Alas, my lord,

How can she be with him? When was she miss'd?

He is in Rome.

CLOTEN.

Where is she, sir? Come nearer.

No farther halting! Satisfy me home

What is become of her.

PISANIO.

O my all-worthy lord!

CLOTEN.

All-worthy villain!

Discover where thy mistress is at once,

At the next word. No more of 'worthy lord'!

Speak, or thy silence on the instant is

Thy condemnation and thy death.

PISANIO.

Then, sir,

This paper is the history of my knowledge

Touching her flight. *[Presenting a letter]*

CLOTEN.

Let's see't. I will pursue her

Even to Augustus' throne.

PISANIO.

[Aside] Or this or perish.

She's far enough; and what he learns by this

May prove his travel, not her danger.

CLOTEN.

Humh!

PISANIO.

[Aside] I'll write to my lord she's dead. O Imogen,

Safe mayst thou wander, safe return again!

CLOTEN.

Sirrah, is this letter true?

PISANIO.

Sir, as I think.

CLOTEN.

It is Posthumus' hand; I know't. Sirrah, if thou wouldst

not be a villain, but do me true service, undergo those

employments wherein I should have cause to use thee with a

serious industry-that is, what villainy soe'er I bid thee do, to

perform it directly and truly-I would think thee an honest man;

thou shouldst neither want my means for thy relief nor my voice

for thy preferment.

PISANIO.

Well, my good lord.

CLOTEN.

Wilt thou serve me? For since patiently and constantly thou hast stuck to the bare fortune of that beggar Posthumus, thou canst not, in the course of gratitude, but be a diligent follower of mine. Wilt thou serve me?

PISANIO.

Sir, I will.

CLOTEN.

Give me thy hand; here's my purse. Hast any of thy late master's garments in thy possession?

PISANIO.

I have, my lord, at my lodging, the same suit he wore when he took leave of my lady and mistress.

CLOTEN.

The first service thou dost me, fetch that suit hither.

Let

it be thy first service; go.

PISANIO.

I shall, my lord. *Exit*

CLOTEN. Meet thee at Milford Haven! I forgot to ask him one thing;

I'll remember't anon. Even there, thou villain Posthumus,

will I

kill thee. I would these garments were come. She said upon a

time-the bitterness of it I now belch from my heart-that she

held the very garment of Posthumus in more respect than my noble

and natural person, together with the adornment of my qualities.

With that suit upon my back will I ravish her; first kill him,

and in her eyes. There shall she see my valour, which will then

be a torment to her contempt. He on the ground, my speech of

insultment ended on his dead body, and when my lust hath

dined-

which, as I say, to vex her I will execute in the clothes that

she so prais'd-to the court I'll knock her back, foot her home

again. She hath despis'd me rejoicingly, and I'll be merry in my revenge.

Re-enter PISANIO, with the clothes

Be those the garments?

PISANIO.

Ay, my noble lord.

CLOTEN.

How long is't since she went to Milford Haven?

PISANIO.

She can scarce be there yet.

CLOTEN.

Bring this apparel to my chamber; that is the second thing that I have commanded thee. The third is that thou wilt be a voluntary mute to my design. Be but duteous and true, preferment shall tender itself to thee. My revenge is now at Milford, would I had wings to follow it! Come, and be true. *Exit*

PISANIO. Thou bid'st me to my loss; for true to thee

Were to prove false, which I will never be, To him that is most true. To Milford go,

And find not her whom thou pursuest. Flow, flow,

You heavenly blessings, on her! This fool's speed

Be cross'd with slowness! Labour be his meed! *Exit*

SCENE VI. Wales. Before the cave of BELARIUS

Enter IMOGEN alone, in boy's clothes

IMOGEN.

I see a man's life is a tedious one.

I have tir'd myself, and for two nights together

Have made the ground my bed. I should be sick

But that my resolution helps me. Milford,

When from the mountain-top Pisanio show'd thee,

Thou wast within a ken. O Jove! I think

Foundations fly the wretched; such, I mean,

Where they should be reliev'd. Two beggars told me

I could not miss my way. Will poor folks lie,

That have afflictions on them, knowing 'tis

A punishment or trial? Yes; no wonder,

When rich ones scarce tell true. To lapse in fulness
Is sorer than to lie for need; and falsehood
Is worse in kings than beggars. My dear lord!
Thou art one o' th' false ones. Now I think on thee
My hunger's gone; but even before, I was
At point to sink for food. But what is this?

Here is a path to't; 'tis some savage hold.
I were best not call; I dare not call. Yet famine,
Ere clean it o'erthrow nature, makes it valiant.
Plenty and peace breeds cowards; hardness ever
Of hardiness is mother. Ho! who's here?
If anything that's civil, speak; if savage,
Take or lend. Ho! No answer? Then I'll enter.
Best draw my sword; and if mine enemy
But fear the sword, like me, he'll scarcely look on't.
Such a foe, good heavens! *Exit* into the cave

Enter BELARIUS, GUIDERIUS, and ARVIRAGUS

BELARIUS.

You, Polydore, have prov'd best woodman and
Are master of the feast. Cadwal and I
Will play the cook and servant; 'tis our match.
The sweat of industry would dry and die
But for the end it works to. Come, our stomachs
Will make what's homely savoury; weariness
Can snore upon the flint, when resty sloth
Finds the down pillow hard. Now, peace be here,
Poor house, that keep'st thyself!

GUIDERIUS.

I am thoroughly weary.

ARVIRAGUS.

I am weak with toil, yet strong in appetite.

GUIDERIUS.

There is cold meat i' th' cave; we'll browse on that
Whilst what we have kill'd be cook'd.

BELARIUS.

[Looking into the cave] Stay, come not in.

But that it eats our victuals, I should think

Here were a fairy.

GUIDERIUS.

What's the matter, sir?

BELARIUS.. By Jupiter, an angel! or, if not,

An earthly paragon! Behold divineness

No elder than a boy!

Re-enter IMOGEN

IMOGEN.

Good masters, harm me not.

Before I enter'd here I call'd, and thought

To have begg'd or bought what I have took. Good troth,

I have stol'n nought; nor would not though I had found

Gold strew'd i' th' floor. Here's money for my meat.

I would have left it on the board, so soon

As I had made my meal, and parted

With pray'rs for the provider.

GUIDERIUS.

Money, youth?

ARVIRAGUS.

All gold and silver rather turn to dirt,

As 'tis no better reckon'd but of those

Who worship dirty gods.

IMOGEN.

I see you're angry.

Know, if you kill me for my fault, I should

Have died had I not made it.

BELARIUS.

Whither bound?

IMOGEN.

To Milford Haven.

BELARIUS.

What's your name?

IMOGEN.

Fidele, sir. I have a kinsman who

Is bound for Italy; he embark'd at Milford;

To whom being going, almost spent with hunger,

I am fall'n in this offence.

BELARIUS.

Prithee, fair youth,

Think us no churls, nor measure our good minds

By this rude place we live in. Well encounter'd!

'Tis almost night; you shall have better cheer

Ere you depart, and thanks to stay and eat it.

Boys, bid him welcome.

GUIDERIUS.

Were you a woman, youth,

I should woo hard but be your groom. In honesty

I bid for you as I'd buy.

ARVIRAGUS.

I'll make't my comfort

He is a man. I'll love him as my brother;

And such a welcome as I'd give to him

After long absence, such is yours. Most welcome!

Be sprightly, for you fall 'mongst friends.

IMOGEN.

'Mongst friends,

If brothers. *[Aside]* Would it had been so that they

Had been my father's sons! Then had my prize

Been less, and so more equal ballasting

To thee, Posthumus.

BELARIUS.

He wrings at some distress.

GUIDERIUS.

Would I could free't!

ARVIRAGUS.

Or I, whate'er it be,
What pain it cost, what danger! Gods!

BELARIUS.

[Whispering] Hark, boys.

IMOGEN.

[Aside] Great men,
That had a court no bigger than this cave,
That did attend themselves, and had the virtue
Which their own conscience seal'd them, laying by
That nothing-gift of differing multitudes,
Could not out-peer these twain. Pardon me, gods!
I'd change my sex to be companion with them,
Since Leonatus' false.

BELARIUS.

It shall be so.

Boys, we'll go dress our hunt. Fair youth, come in.

Discourse is heavy, fasting; when we have supp'd,

We'll mannerly demand thee of thy story,

So far as thou wilt speak it.

GUIDERIUS.

Pray draw near.

ARVIRAGUS.

The night to th' owl and morn to th' lark less welcome.

IMOGEN.

Thanks, sir.

ARVIRAGUS.

I pray draw near. *Exeunt*

SCENE VII. Rome. A public place

Enter two ROMAN SENATORS and TRIBUNES

FIRST SENATOR.

This is the tenour of the Emperor's writ:
That since the common men are now in action
'Gainst the Pannonians and Dalmatians,
And that the legions now in Gallia are
Full weak to undertake our wars against
The fall'n-off Britons, that we do incite
The gentry to this business. He creates
Lucius proconsul; and to you, the tribunes,
For this immediate levy, he commands
His absolute commission. Long live Caesar!

TRIBUNE.

Is Lucius general of the forces?

SECOND SENATOR.

Ay.

TRIBUNE.

Remaining now in Gallia?

FIRST SENATOR.

With those legions

Which I have spoke of, whereunto your levy

Must be supplyant. The words of your commission

Will tie you to the numbers and the time

Of their dispatch.

TRIBUNE.

We will discharge our duty. *Exeunt*

ACT IV. SCENE I. Wales. Near the cave of BELARIUS

Enter CLOTEN alone

CLOTEN.

I am near to th' place where they should meet, if Pisanio

have mapp'd it truly. How fit his garments serve me! Why should his mistress, who was made by him that made the tailor, not be fit too? The rather-saving reverence of the word-for 'tis said a woman's fitness comes by fits. Therein I must play the workman. I dare speak it to myself, for it is not vain-glory for a man and his glass to confer in his own chamber-I mean, the lines of my body are as well drawn as his; no less young, more strong, not beneath him in fortunes, beyond him in the advantage of the time, above him in birth, alike conversant in general services, and more remarkable in single oppositions. Yet this imperceiverant thing loves him in my despite. What mortality is! Posthumus, thy head, which now is growing upon thy shoulders, shall within this hour be off; thy mistress enforced; thy garments cut to pieces before her face; and all this done, spurn her home to her father, who may, haply, be a little angry for my so rough usage; but my mother, having power of his testiness, shall turn all into my commendations. My horse is tied up safe. Out, sword, and to a sore purpose! Fortune, put them into my hand. This is the very description of their meeting-place; and the fellow dares not deceive me. *Exit*

SCENE II. Wales. Before the cave of BELARIUS

Enter , from the cave, BELARIUS, GUIDERIUS, ARVIRAGUS, and IMOGEN

BELARIUS.

[To IMOGEN] You are not well. Remain here in the cave;

We'll come to you after hunting.

ARVIRAGUS.

[To IMOGEN] Brother, stay here.

Are we not brothers?

IMOGEN.

So man and man should be;

But clay and clay differs in dignity,

Whose dust is both alike. I am very sick.

GUIDERIUS.

Go you to hunting; I'll abide with him.

IMOGEN.

So sick I am not, yet I am not well;

But not so citizen a wanton as

To seem to die ere sick. So please you, leave me;
Stick to your journal course. The breach of custom
Is breach of all. I am ill, but your being by me
Cannot amend me; society is no comfort
To one not sociable. I am not very sick,
Since I can reason of it. Pray you trust me here.
I'll rob none but myself; and let me die,
Stealing so poorly.

GUIDERIUS.

I love thee; I have spoke it.
How much the quantity, the weight as much
As I do love my father.

BELARIUS.

What? how? how?

ARVIRAGUS.

If it be sin to say so, sir, I yoke me
In my good brother's fault. I know not why

I love this youth, and I have heard you say
Love's reason's without reason. The bier at door,
And a demand who is't shall die, I'd say
'My father, not this youth.'

BELARIUS.
[Aside] O noble strain!
O worthiness of nature! breed of greatness!

Cowards father cowards and base things sire base.
Nature hath meal and bran, contempt and grace.
I'm not their father; yet who this should be
Doth miracle itself, lov'd before me.-
'Tis the ninth hour o' th' morn.

ARVIRAGUS.
Brother, farewell.

IMOGEN.

I wish ye sport.

ARVIRAGUS.

Your health. *[To BELARIUS]* So please you, sir.

IMOGEN.

[Aside] These are kind creatures. Gods, what lies I
have heard!

Our courtiers say all's savage but at court.
Experience, O, thou disprov'st report!
Th' imperious seas breed monsters; for the dish,
Poor tributary rivers as sweet fish.
I am sick still; heart-sick. Pisanio,
I'll now taste of thy drug. *[Swallows some]*

GUIDERIUS.

I could not stir him.
He said he was gentle, but unfortunate;
Dishonestly afflicted, but yet honest.

ARVIRAGUS.

Thus did he answer me; yet said hereafter
I might know more.

BELARIUS.

To th' field, to th' field!

We'll leave you for this time. Go in and rest.

ARVIRAGUS.

We'll not be long away.

BELARIUS.

Pray be not sick,
For you must be our huswife.

IMOGEN.

Well, or ill,
I am bound to you.

BELARIUS.

And shalt be ever. *Exit* IMOGEN into the cave

This youth, howe'er distress'd, appears he hath had

Good ancestors.

ARVIRAGUS.

How angel-like he sings!

GUIDERIUS.

But his neat cookery! He cut our roots in characters,

And sauc'd our broths as Juno had been sick,

And he her dieter.

ARVIRAGUS.

Nobly he yokes

A smiling with a sigh, as if the sigh

Was that it was for not being such a smile;

The smile mocking the sigh that it would fly

From so divine a temple to commix

With winds that sailors rail at.

GUIDERIUS.

I do note
That grief and patience, rooted in him both,
Mingle their spurs together.

ARVIRAGUS.

Grow patience!
And let the stinking elder, grief, untwine
His perishing root with the increasing vine!

BELARIUS.

It is great morning. Come, away! Who's there?

Enter CLOTEN

CLOTEN.

I cannot find those runagates; that villain
Hath mock'd me. I am faint.

BELARIUS.

Those runagates?

Means he not us? I partly know him; 'tis
Cloten, the son o' th' Queen. I fear some ambush.
I saw him not these many years, and yet
I know 'tis he. We are held as outlaws. Hence!

GUIDERIUS.
He is but one; you and my brother search
What companies are near. Pray you away;
Let me alone with him. *Exeunt* BELARIUS and ARVIRAGUS
CLOTEN.
Soft! What are you
That fly me thus? Some villain mountaineers?

I have heard of such. What slave art thou?

GUIDERIUS.
A thing
More slavish did I ne'er than answering
'A slave' without a knock.

CLOTEN.

Thou art a robber,

A law-breaker, a villain. Yield thee, thief.

GUIDERIUS.

To who? To thee? What art thou? Have not I

An arm as big as thine, a heart as big?

Thy words, I grant, are bigger, for I wear not

My dagger in my mouth. Say what thou art;

Why I should yield to thee.

CLOTEN.

Thou villain base,

Know'st me not by my clothes?

GUIDERIUS.

No, nor thy tailor, rascal,

Who is thy grandfather; he made those clothes,

Which, as it seems, make thee.

CLOTEN.

Thou precious varlet,

My tailor made them not.

GUIDERIUS.

Hence, then, and thank

The man that gave them thee. Thou art some fool;

I am loath to beat thee.

CLOTEN.

Thou injurious thief,

Hear but my name, and tremble.

GUIDERIUS.

What's thy name?

CLOTEN.

Cloten, thou villain.

GUIDERIUS.

Cloten, thou double villain, be thy name,

I cannot tremble at it. Were it toad, or adder, spider, 'Twould move me sooner.

CLOTEN.

To thy further fear,

Nay, to thy mere confusion, thou shalt know

I am son to th' Queen.

GUIDERIUS.

I'm sorry for't; not seeming

So worthy as thy birth.

CLOTEN.

Art not afeard?

GUIDERIUS.

Those that I reverence, those I fear-the wise:

At fools I laugh, not fear them.

CLOTEN.

Die the death.

When I have slain thee with my proper hand,

I'll follow those that even now fled hence,

And on the gates of Lud's Town set your heads.

Yield, rustic mountaineer. *Exeunt* , fighting

Re-enter BELARIUS and ARVIRAGUS

BELARIUS.

No company's abroad.

ARVIRAGUS.

None in the world; you did mistake him, sure.

BELARIUS.

I cannot tell; long is it since I saw him,

But time hath nothing blurr'd those lines of favour

Which then he wore; the snatches in his voice,

And burst of speaking, were as his. I am absolute

'Twas very Cloten.

ARVIRAGUS.

In this place we left them.

I wish my brother make good time with him,

You say he is so fell.

BELARIUS.

Being scarce made up,

I mean to man, he had not apprehension

Or roaring terrors; for defect of judgment

Is oft the cease of fear.

Re-enter GUIDERIUS with CLOTEN'S head

But, see, thy brother.

GUIDERIUS.

This Cloten was a fool, an empty purse;

There was no money in't. Not Hercules

Could have knock'd out his brains, for he had none;

Yet I not doing this, the fool had borne

My head as I do his.

BELARIUS.

What hast thou done?

GUIDERIUS.

I am perfect what: cut off one Cloten's head,

Son to the Queen, after his own report;

Who call'd me traitor, mountaineer, and swore

With his own single hand he'd take us in,

Displace our heads where-thank the gods!- they grow,

And set them on Lud's Town.

BELARIUS.

We are all undone.

GUIDERIUS.

Why, worthy father, what have we to lose

But that he swore to take, our lives? The law

Protects not us; then why should we be tender

To let an arrogant piece of flesh threat us,

Play judge and executioner all himself,

For we do fear the law? What company

Discover you abroad?

BELARIUS.

No single soul
Can we set eye on, but in an safe reason
He must have some attendants. Though his humour
Was nothing but mutation-ay, and that
From one bad thing to worse-not frenzy, not
Absolute madness could so far have rav'd,
To bring him here alone. Although perhaps
It may be heard at court that such as we
Cave here, hunt here, are outlaws, and in time
May make some stronger head-the which he hearing,
As it is like him, might break out and swear
He'd fetch us in; yet is't not probable
To come alone, either he so undertaking
Or they so suffering. Then on good ground we fear,
If we do fear this body hath a tail
More perilous than the head.

ARVIRAGUS.

Let ordinance
Come as the gods foresay it. Howsoe'er,
My brother hath done well.

BELARIUS.
I had no mind
To hunt this day; the boy Fidele's sickness
Did make my way long forth.

GUIDERIUS.
With his own sword,
Which he did wave against my throat, I have ta'en
His head from him. I'll throw't into the creek
Behind our rock, and let it to the sea
And tell the fishes he's the Queen's son, Cloten.
That's all I reck. *Exit*

BELARIUS. I fear'twill be reveng'd.
Would, Polydore, thou hadst not done't! though valour
Becomes thee well enough.

ARVIRAGUS.

Would I had done't,

So the revenge alone pursu'd me! Polydore,

I love thee brotherly, but envy much

Thou hast robb'd me of this deed. I would revenges,

That possible strength might meet, would seek us through,

And put us to our answer.

BELARIUS.

Well, 'tis done.

We'll hunt no more to-day, nor seek for danger

Where there's no profit. I prithee to our rock.

You and Fidele play the cooks; I'll stay

Till hasty Polydore return, and bring him

To dinner presently.

ARVIRAGUS.

Poor sick Fidele!

I'll willingly to him; to gain his colour

I'd let a parish of such Cloten's blood,

And praise myself for charity. *Exit*

BELARIUS. O thou goddess,

Thou divine Nature, thou thyself thou blazon'st

In these two princely boys! They are as gentle

As zephyrs blowing below the violet,

Not wagging his sweet head; and yet as rough,

Their royal blood enchaf'd, as the rud'st wind

That by the top doth take the mountain pine

And make him stoop to th' vale. 'Tis wonder

That an invisible instinct should frame them

To royalty unlearn'd, honour untaught,

Civility not seen from other, valour

That wildly grows in them, but yields a crop

As if it had been sow'd. Yet still it's strange

What Cloten's being here to us portends,

Or what his death will bring us.

Re-enter GUIDERIUS

GUIDERIUS.

Where's my brother?

I have sent Cloten's clotpoll down the stream,

In embassy to his mother; his body's hostage

For his return. *[Solemn music]*

BELARIUS.

My ingenious instrument!

Hark, Polydore, it sounds. But what occasion

Hath Cadwal now to give it motion? Hark!

GUIDERIUS.

Is he at home?

BELARIUS.

He went hence even now.

GUIDERIUS.

What does he mean? Since death of my dear'st mother

It did not speak before. All solemn things

Should answer solemn accidents. The matter?

Triumphs for nothing and lamenting toys

Is jollity for apes and grief for boys.

Is Cadwal mad?

Re-enter ARVIRAGUS, with IMOGEN as dead, bearing her in his arms

BELARIUS.

Look, here he comes,
And brings the dire occasion in his arms
Of what we blame him for!

ARVIRAGUS.

The bird is dead
That we have made so much on. I had rather
Have skipp'd from sixteen years of age to sixty,
To have turn'd my leaping time into a crutch,
Than have seen this.

GUIDERIUS.

O sweetest, fairest lily!
My brother wears thee not the one half so well
As when thou grew'st thyself.

BELARIUS.

O melancholy!

Who ever yet could sound thy bottom? find

The ooze to show what coast thy sluggish crare

Might'st easiliest harbour in? Thou blessed thing!

Jove knows what man thou mightst have made; but I,

Thou diedst, a most rare boy, of melancholy.

How found you him?

ARVIRAGUS.

Stark, as you see;

Thus smiling, as some fly had tickled slumber,

Not as death's dart, being laugh'd at; his right cheek

Reposing on a cushion.

GUIDERIUS.

Where?

ARVIRAGUS.

O' th' floor;

His arms thus leagu'd. I thought he slept, and put

My clouted brogues from off my feet, whose rudeness

Answer'd my steps too loud.

GUIDERIUS.

Why, he but sleeps.

If he be gone he'll make his grave a bed;

With female fairies will his tomb be haunted,

And worms will not come to thee.

ARVIRAGUS.

With fairest flowers,

Whilst summer lasts and I live here, Fidele,

I'll sweeten thy sad grave. Thou shalt not lack

The flower that's like thy face, pale primrose; nor

The azur'd hare-bell, like thy veins; no, nor

The leaf of eglantine, whom not to slander,

Out-sweet'ned not thy breath. The ruddock would,

With charitable bill-O bill, sore shaming

Those rich-left heirs that let their fathers lie

Without a monument!- bring thee all this;

Yea, and furr'd moss besides, when flow'rs are none,

To winter-ground thy corse-

GUIDERIUS.

Prithee have done,

And do not play in wench-like words with that

Which is so serious. Let us bury him,

And not protract with admiration what

Is now due debt. To th' grave.

ARVIRAGUS.

Say, where shall's lay him?

GUIDERIUS.

By good Euriphile, our mother.

ARVIRAGUS.

Be't so;

And let us, Polydore, though now our voices

Have got the mannish crack, sing him to th' ground,

As once to our mother; use like note and words,

Save that Euriphile must be Fidele.

GUIDERIUS.

Cadwal,

I cannot sing. I'll weep, and word it with thee;

For notes of sorrow out of tune are worse

Than priests and fanes that lie.

ARVIRAGUS.

We'll speak it, then.

BELARIUS.

Great griefs, I see, med'cine the less, for Cloten

Is quite forgot. He was a queen's son, boys;

And though he came our enemy, remember

He was paid for that. Though mean and mighty rotting

Together have one dust, yet reverence-

That angel of the world-doth make distinction

Of place 'tween high and low. Our foe was princely;

And though you took his life, as being our foe,

Yet bury him as a prince.

GUIDERIUS.

Pray you fetch him hither.

Thersites' body is as good as Ajax',

When neither are alive.

ARVIRAGUS.

If you'll go fetch him,

We'll say our song the whilst. Brother, begin.

Exit BELARIUS

GUIDERIUS.

Nay, Cadwal, we must lay his head to th' East;

My father hath a reason for't.

ARVIRAGUS.

'Tis true.

GUIDERIUS.

Come on, then, and remove him.

ARVIRAGUS.

So. Begin.

SONG

GUIDERIUS.

Fear no more the heat o' th' sun

Nor the furious winter's rages;

Thou thy worldly task hast done,

Home art gone, and ta'en thy wages.

Golden lads and girls all must,

As chimney-sweepers, come to dust.

ARVIRAGUS.

Fear no more the frown o' th' great;

Thou art past the tyrant's stroke.

Care no more to clothe and eat;

To thee the reed is as the oak.

The sceptre, learning, physic, must

All follow this and come to dust.

GUIDERIUS.

Fear no more the lightning flash,

ARVIRAGUS.

Nor th' all-dreaded thunder-stone;

GUIDERIUS.

Fear not slander, censure rash;

ARVIRAGUS.

Thou hast finish'd joy and moan.

BOTH.

All lovers young, all lovers must

Consign to thee and come to dust.

GUIDERIUS.

No exorciser harm thee!

ARVIRAGUS.

Nor no witchcraft charm thee!

GUIDERIUS.

Ghost unlaid forbear thee!

ARVIRAGUS.

Nothing ill come near thee!

BOTH.

Quiet consummation have,

And renowned be thy grave!

Re-enter BELARIUS with the body of CLOTEN

GUIDERIUS.

We have done our obsequies. Come, lay him down.

BELARIUS.

Here's a few flowers; but 'bout midnight, more.

The herbs that have on them cold dew o' th' night

Are strewings fit'st for graves. Upon their faces.

You were as flow'rs, now wither'd. Even so

These herblets shall which we upon you strew.

Come on, away. Apart upon our knees.

The ground that gave them first has them again.

Their pleasures here are past, so is their pain.

Exeunt all but IMOGEN

IMOGEN.

[Awaking] Yes, sir, to Milford Haven. Which is the way?

I thank you. By yond bush? Pray, how far thither?

'Ods pittikins! can it be six mile yet?

I have gone all night. Faith, I'll lie down and sleep.

But, soft! no bedfellow. O gods and goddesses!

[Seeing the body]

These flow'rs are like the pleasures of the world;

This bloody man, the care on't. I hope I dream;

For so I thought I was a cave-keeper,

And cook to honest creatures. But 'tis not so;

'Twas but a bolt of nothing, shot at nothing, Which the brain makes of fumes. Our very eyes

Are sometimes, like our judgments, blind. Good faith,

I tremble still with fear; but if there be

Yet left in heaven as small a drop of pity

As a wren's eye, fear'd gods, a part of it!

The dream's here still. Even when I wake it is

Without me, as within me; not imagin'd, felt.

A headless man? The garments of Posthumus?

I know the shape of's leg; this is his hand,

His foot Mercurial, his Martial thigh,

The brawns of Hercules; but his Jovial face-

Murder in heaven! How! 'Tis gone. Pisanio,

All curses madded Hecuba gave the Greeks,

And mine to boot, be darted on thee! Thou,

Conspir'd with that irregulous devil, Cloten,

Hath here cut off my lord. To write and read

Be henceforth treacherous! Damn'd Pisanio

Hath with his forged letters-damn'd Pisanio-

From this most bravest vessel of the world

Struck the main-top. O Posthumus! alas,

Where is thy head? Where's that? Ay me! where's that?

Pisanio might have kill'd thee at the heart,

And left this head on. How should this be? Pisanio?

'Tis he and Cloten; malice and lucre in them

Have laid this woe here. O, 'tis pregnant, pregnant!

The drug he gave me, which he said was precious

And cordial to me, have I not found it

Murd'rous to th' senses? That confirms it home.

This is Pisanio's deed, and Cloten. O!

Give colour to my pale cheek with thy blood,

That we the horrider may seem to those

Which chance to find us. O, my lord, my lord!

[Falls fainting on the body]

Enter LUCIUS, CAPTAINS, and a SOOTHSAYER

CAPTAIN.

To them the legions garrison'd in Gallia,

After your will, have cross'd the sea, attending

You here at Milford Haven; with your ships,

They are in readiness.

LUCIUS.

But what from Rome?

CAPTAIN.

The Senate hath stirr'd up the confiners

And gentlemen of Italy, most willing spirits,

That promise noble service; and they come

Under the conduct of bold Iachimo,

Sienna's brother.

LUCIUS.

When expect you them?

CAPTAIN.

With the next benefit o' th' wind.

LUCIUS.

This forwardness

Makes our hopes fair. Command our present numbers

Be muster'd; bid the captains look to't. Now, sir,
What have you dream'd of late of this war's purpose?

SOOTHSAYER.

Last night the very gods show'd me a vision-
I fast and pray'd for their intelligence-thus:
I saw Jove's bird, the Roman eagle, wing'd
From the spongy south to this part of the west,
There vanish'd in the sunbeams; which portends,
Unless my sins abuse my divination,
Success to th' Roman host.

LUCIUS.

Dream often so,
And never false. Soft, ho! what trunk is here
Without his top? The ruin speaks that sometime
It was a worthy building. How? a page?
Or dead or sleeping on him? But dead, rather;
For nature doth abhor to make his bed
With the defunct, or sleep upon the dead.
Let's see the boy's face.

CAPTAIN.

He's alive, my lord.

LUCIUS.

He'll then instruct us of this body. Young one,

Inform us of thy fortunes; for it seems

They crave to be demanded. Who is this

Thou mak'st thy bloody pillow? Or who was he

That, otherwise than noble nature did,

Hath alter'd that good picture? What's thy interest

In this sad wreck? How came't? Who is't? What art thou?

IMOGEN.

I am nothing; or if not,

Nothing to be were better. This was my master,

A very valiant Briton and a good,

That here by mountaineers lies slain. Alas!

There is no more such masters. I may wander

From east to occident; cry out for service;

Try many, all good; serve truly; never

Find such another master.

LUCIUS.

'Lack, good youth!

Thou mov'st no less with thy complaining than

Thy master in bleeding. Say his name, good friend.

IMOGEN.

Richard du Champ. *[Aside]* If I do lie, and do

No harm by it, though the gods hear, I hope

They'll pardon it.- Say you, sir?

LUCIUS.

Thy name?

IMOGEN.

Fidele, sir.

LUCIUS.

Thou dost approve thyself the very same;
Thy name well fits thy faith, thy faith thy name.
Wilt take thy chance with me? I will not say
Thou shalt be so well master'd; but, be sure,
No less belov'd. The Roman Emperor's letters,
Sent by a consul to me, should not sooner
Than thine own worth prefer thee. Go with me.

IMOGEN.

I'll follow, sir. But first, an't please the gods,
I'll hide my master from the flies, as deep
As these poor pickaxes can dig; and when
With wild wood-leaves and weeds I ha' strew'd his grave,
And on it said a century of prayers,
Such as I can, twice o'er, I'll weep and sigh;
And leaving so his service, follow you,
So please you entertain me.

LUCIUS.

Ay, good youth;

And rather father thee than master thee.

My friends,

The boy hath taught us manly duties; let us

Find out the prettiest daisied plot we can,

And make him with our pikes and partisans

A grave. Come, arm him. Boy, he is preferr'd

By thee to us; and he shall be interr'd

As soldiers can. Be cheerful; wipe thine eyes.

Some falls are means the happier to arise. *Exeunt*

SCENE III. Britain. CYMBELINE'S palace

Enter CYMBELINE, LORDS, PISANIO, and attendants

CYMBELINE.

Again! and bring me word how 'tis with her.

Exit an attendant

A fever with the absence of her son;

A madness, of which her life's in danger. Heavens,

How deeply you at once do touch me! Imogen,
The great part of my comfort, gone; my queen
Upon a desperate bed, and in a time
When fearful wars point at me; her son gone,
So needful for this present. It strikes me past
The hope of comfort. But for thee, fellow,
Who needs must know of her departure and
Dost seem so ignorant, we'll enforce it from thee
By a sharp torture.

PISANIO.
Sir, my life is yours;
I humbly set it at your will; but for my mistress,
I nothing know where she remains, why gone,
Nor when she purposes return. Beseech your Highness,
Hold me your loyal servant.

LORD.
Good my liege,
The day that she was missing he was here.
I dare be bound he's true and shall perform

All parts of his subjection loyally. For Cloten,
There wants no diligence in seeking him,
And will no doubt be found.

CYMBELINE.

The time is troublesome.

[To PISANIO] We'll slip you for a season; but our jealousy
Does yet depend.

LORD.
So please your Majesty,
The Roman legions, all from Gallia drawn,
Are landed on your coast, with a supply
Of Roman gentlemen by the Senate sent.

CYMBELINE.

Now for the counsel of my son and queen!
I am amaz'd with matter.

LORD.

Good my liege,

Your preparation can affront no less

Than what you hear of. Come more, for more you're ready.

The want is but to put those pow'rs in motion

That long to move.

CYMBELINE.

I thank you. Let's withdraw,

And meet the time as it seeks us. We fear not

What can from Italy annoy us; but

We grieve at chances here. Away! *Exeunt* all but PISANIO

PISANIO.

I heard no letter from my master since

I wrote him Imogen was slain. 'Tis strange.

Nor hear I from my mistress, who did promise

To yield me often tidings. Neither know

What is betid to Cloten, but remain

Perplex'd in all. The heavens still must work.

Wherein I am false I am honest; not true, to be true.

These present wars shall find I love my country,

Even to the note o' th' King, or I'll fall in them.

All other doubts, by time let them be clear'd:

Fortune brings in some boats that are not steer'd. *Exit*

SCENE IV. Wales. Before the cave of BELARIUS

Enter BELARIUS, GUIDERIUS, and ARVIRAGUS

GUIDERIUS.

The noise is round about us.

BELARIUS.

Let us from it.

ARVIRAGUS.

What pleasure, sir, find we in life, to lock it

From action and adventure?

GUIDERIUS.

Nay, what hope

Have we in hiding us? This way the Romans

Must or for Britons slay us, or receive us

For barbarous and unnatural revolts

During their use, and slay us after.

BELARIUS.

Sons,

We'll higher to the mountains; there secure us.

To the King's party there's no going. Newness

Of Cloten's death-we being not known, not muster'd

Among the bands-may drive us to a render

Where we have liv'd, and so extort from's that

Which we have done, whose answer would be death,

Drawn on with torture.

GUIDERIUS.

This is, sir, a doubt

In such a time nothing becoming you

Nor satisfying us.

ARVIRAGUS.

It is not likely

That when they hear the Roman horses neigh,

Behold their quarter'd fires, have both their eyes

And ears so cloy'd importantly as now,

That they will waste their time upon our note,

To know from whence we are.

BELARIUS.

O, I am known

Of many in the army. Many years,

Though Cloten then but young, you see, not wore him

From my remembrance. And, besides, the King

Hath not deserv'd my service nor your loves,

Who find in my exile the want of breeding,

The certainty of this hard life; aye hopeless

To have the courtesy your cradle promis'd,

But to be still hot summer's tanlings and

The shrinking slaves of winter.

GUIDERIUS.

Than be so,

Better to cease to be. Pray, sir, to th' army.

I and my brother are not known; yourself

So out of thought, and thereto so o'ergrown,

Cannot be questioned.

ARVIRAGUS.

By this sun that shines,

I'll thither. What thing is't that I never

Did see man die! scarce ever look'd on blood

But that of coward hares, hot goats, and venison!

Never bestrid a horse, save one that had

A rider like myself, who ne'er wore rowel

Nor iron on his heel! I am asham'd

To look upon the holy sun, to have

The benefit of his blest beams, remaining

So long a poor unknown.

GUIDERIUS.

By heavens, I'll go!

If you will bless me, sir, and give me leave,

I'll take the better care; but if you will not,

The hazard therefore due fall on me by

The hands of Romans!

ARVIRAGUS.

So say I. Amen.

BELARIUS.

No reason I, since of your lives you set

So slight a valuation, should reserve

My crack'd one to more care. Have with you, boys!

If in your country wars you chance to die,

That is my bed too, lads, and there I'll lie.

Lead, lead. *[Aside]* The time seems long; their blood thinks scorn

Till it fly out and show them princes born. *Exeunt*

ACT V. SCENE I. Britain. The Roman camp

Enter POSTHUMUS alone, with a bloody handkerchief

POSTHUMUS.

Yea, bloody cloth, I'll keep thee; for I wish'd
Thou shouldst be colour'd thus. You married ones,
If each of you should take this course, how many
Must murder wives much better than themselves
For wrying but a little! O Pisanio!
Every good servant does not all commands;
No bond but to do just ones. Gods! if you
Should have ta'en vengeance on my faults, I never
Had liv'd to put on this; so had you saved
The noble Imogen to repent, and struck
Me, wretch more worth your vengeance. But alack,
You snatch some hence for little faults; that's love,
To have them fall no more. You some permit
To second ills with ills, each elder worse,
And make them dread it, to the doer's thrift.
But Imogen is your own. Do your best wills,
And make me blest to obey. I am brought hither
Among th' Italian gentry, and to fight

Against my lady's kingdom. 'Tis enough

That, Britain, I have kill'd thy mistress; peace!

I'll give no wound to thee. Therefore, good heavens,

Hear patiently my purpose. I'll disrobe me

Of these Italian weeds, and suit myself

As does a Britain peasant. So I'll fight

Against the part I come with; so I'll die

For thee, O Imogen, even for whom my life

Is every breath a death. And thus unknown,

Pitied nor hated, to the face of peril

Myself I'll dedicate. Let me make men know

More valour in me than my habits show.

Gods, put the strength o' th' Leonati in me!

To shame the guise o' th' world, I will begin

The fashion-less without and more within. *Exit*

SCENE II. Britain. A field of battle between the British and Roman camps

Enter LUCIUS, IACHIMO, and the Roman army at one door, and the British army at another, LEONATUS POSTHUMUS following like a poor soldier. They march over and go out. Alarums. Then enter again, in skirmish, IACHIMO and POSTHUMUS. He vanquisheth and disarmeth IACHIMO, and then leaves him

IACHIMO.

The heaviness and guilt within my bosom

Takes off my manhood. I have belied a lady,

The Princess of this country, and the air on't

Revengingly enfeebles me; or could this carl,

A very drudge of nature's, have subdu'd me

In my profession? Knighthoods and honours borne

As I wear mine are titles but of scorn.

If that thy gentry, Britain, go before

This lout as he exceeds our lords, the odds

Is that we scarce are men, and you are gods. *Exit*

The battle continues; the BRITONS fly; CYMBELINE is taken.

Then enter to his rescue BELARIUS, GUIDERIUS, and ARVIRAGUS

BELARIUS.

Stand, stand! We have th' advantage of the ground;

The lane is guarded; nothing routs us but

The villainy of our fears.

GUIDERIUS and ARVIRAGUS. Stand, stand, and fight!

Re-enter POSTHUMUS, and seconds the Britons; they rescue

CYMBELINE, and exeunt. Then re-enter LUCIUS and IACHIMO,

with IMOGEN

LUCIUS.

Away, boy, from the troops, and save thyself;

For friends kill friends, and the disorder's such

As war were hoodwink'd.

IACHIMO.

'Tis their fresh supplies.

LUCIUS.

It is a day turn'd strangely. Or betimes

Let's reinforce or fly. *Exeunt*

SCENE III. Another part of the field

Enter POSTHUMUS and a Britain LORD

LORD.

Cam'st thou from where they made the stand?

POSTHUMUS.

I did:

Though you, it seems, come from the fliers.

LORD.

I did.

POSTHUMUS.

No blame be to you, sir, for all was lost,

But that the heavens fought. The King himself

Of his wings destitute, the army broken,

And but the backs of Britons seen, an flying,

Through a strait lane-the enemy, full-hearted,

Lolling the tongue with slaught'ring, having work

More plentiful than tools to do't, struck down

Some mortally, some slightly touch'd, some falling

Merely through fear, that the strait pass was damm'd

With dead men hurt behind, and cowards living

To die with length'ned shame.

LORD.

Where was this lane?

POSTHUMUS.

Close by the battle, ditch'd, and wall'd with turf,
Which gave advantage to an ancient soldier-
An honest one, I warrant, who deserv'd
So long a breeding as his white beard came to,
In doing this for's country. Athwart the lane
He, with two striplings-lads more like to run
The country base than to commit such slaughter;
With faces fit for masks, or rather fairer
Than those for preservation cas'd or shame-
Made good the passage, cried to those that fled
'Our Britain's harts die flying, not our men.
To darkness fleet souls that fly backwards! Stand;
Or we are Romans and will give you that,
Like beasts, which you shun beastly, and may save

But to look back in frown. Stand, stand!' These three,

Three thousand confident, in act as many-

For three performers are the file when all

The rest do nothing-with this word 'Stand, stand!'

Accommodated by the place, more charming

With their own nobleness, which could have turn'd

A distaff to a lance, gilded pale looks,

Part shame, part spirit renew'd; that some turn'd coward

But by example-O, a sin in war

Damn'd in the first beginners!- gan to look

The way that they did and to grin like lions

Upon the pikes o' th' hunters. Then began

A stop i' th' chaser, a retire; anon

A rout, confusion thick. Forthwith they fly,

Chickens, the way which they stoop'd eagles; slaves,

The strides they victors made; and now our cowards,

Like fragments in hard voyages, became

The life o' th' need. Having found the back-door open

Of the unguarded hearts, heavens, how they wound!

Some slain before, some dying, some their friends

O'erborne i' th' former wave. Ten chas'd by one

Are now each one the slaughterman of twenty.
Those that would die or ere resist are grown
The mortal bugs o' th' field.

LORD.
This was strange chance:

A narrow lane, an old man, and two boys.

POSTHUMUS.
Nay, do not wonder at it; you are made
Rather to wonder at the things you hear
Than to work any. Will you rhyme upon't,
And vent it for a mock'ry? Here is one:
'Two boys, an old man (twice a boy), a lane,
Preserv'd the Britons, was the Romans' bane.'

LORD.
Nay, be not angry, sir.

POSTHUMUS.

'Lack, to what end?

Who dares not stand his foe I'll be his friend;

For if he'll do as he is made to do,

I know he'll quickly fly my friendship too.

You have put me into rhyme.

LORD.

Farewell; you're angry. *Exit*

POSTHUMUS. Still going? This is a lord! O noble misery,

To be i' th' field and ask 'What news?' of me!

To-day how many would have given their honours

To have sav'd their carcasses! took heel to do't,

And yet died too! I, in mine own woe charm'd,

Could not find death where I did hear him groan,

Nor feel him where he struck. Being an ugly monster,

'Tis strange he hides him in fresh cups, soft beds,

Sweet words; or hath moe ministers than we

That draw his knives i' th' war. Well, I will find him;

For being now a favourer to the Briton,

No more a Briton, I have resum'd again

The part I came in. Fight I will no more,

But yield me to the veriest hind that shall

Once touch my shoulder. Great the slaughter is

Here made by th' Roman; great the answer be

Britons must take. For me, my ransom's death;

On either side I come to spend my breath,

Which neither here I'll keep nor bear again,

But end it by some means for Imogen.

Enter two BRITISH CAPTAINS and soldiers

FIRST CAPTAIN.

Great Jupiter be prais'd! Lucius is taken.

'Tis thought the old man and his sons were angels.

SECOND CAPTAIN.

There was a fourth man, in a silly habit,

That gave th' affront with them.

FIRST CAPTAIN.

So 'tis reported;

But none of 'em can be found. Stand! who's there?

POSTHUMUS.

A Roman,

Who had not now been drooping here if seconds

Had answer'd him.

SECOND CAPTAIN.

Lay hands on him; a dog!

A leg of Rome shall not return to tell

What crows have peck'd them here. He brags his service,

As if he were of note. Bring him to th' King.

Enter CYMBELINE, BELARIUS, GUIDERIUS, ARVIRAGUS, PISANIO, and

Roman

captives. The CAPTAINS present POSTHUMUS to CYMBELINE, who delivers

him over to a gaoler. *Exeunt* omnes

SCENE IV. Britain. A prison

Enter POSTHUMUS and two GAOLERS

FIRST GAOLER.

You shall not now be stol'n, you have locks upon you;

So graze as you find pasture.

SECOND GAOLER.

Ay, or a stomach. *Exeunt* GAOLERS

POSTHUMUS.

Most welcome, bondage! for thou art a way,

I think, to liberty. Yet am I better

Than one that's sick o' th' gout, since he had rather

Groan so in perpetuity than be cur'd

By th' sure physician death, who is the key

T' unbar these locks. My conscience, thou art fetter'd

More than my shanks and wrists; you good gods, give me

The penitent instrument to pick that bolt,

Then, free for ever! Is't enough I am sorry?

So children temporal fathers do appease;

Gods are more full of mercy. Must I repent,

I cannot do it better than in gyves,

Desir'd more than constrain'd. To satisfy,

If of my freedom 'tis the main part, take

No stricter render of me than my all.

I know you are more clement than vile men,

Who of their broken debtors take a third,

A sixth, a tenth, letting them thrive again

On their abatement; that's not my desire.

For Imogen's dear life take mine; and though

'Tis not so dear, yet 'tis a life; you coin'd it.

'Tween man and man they weigh not every stamp;

Though light, take pieces for the figure's sake;

You rather mine, being yours. And so, great pow'rs,

If you will take this audit, take this life,

And cancel these cold bonds. O Imogen!

I'll speak to thee in silence. *[Sleeps]*

Solemn music. *Enter* , as in an apparition, SICILIUS

LEONATUS, father to POSTHUMUS, an old man attired

like a warrior; leading in his hand an ancient

matron, his WIFE, and mother to POSTHUMUS, with

music before them. Then, after other music, follows
the two young LEONATI, brothers to POSTHUMUS,
with wounds, as they died in the wars.
They circle POSTHUMUS round as he lies sleeping
SICILIUS.
No more, thou thunder-master, show
Thy spite on mortal flies.
With Mars fall out, with Juno chide,
That thy adulteries
Rates and revenges.
Hath my poor boy done aught but well,
Whose face I never saw?
I died whilst in the womb he stay'd
Attending nature's law;
Whose father then, as men report
Thou orphans' father art,
Thou shouldst have been, and shielded him
From this earth-vexing smart.

MOTHER.
Lucina lent not me her aid,

But took me in my throes,

That from me was Posthumus ripp'd,

Came crying 'mongst his foes,

A thing of pity.

SICILIUS.

Great Nature like his ancestry

Moulded the stuff so fair

That he deserv'd the praise o' th' world

As great Sicilius' heir.

FIRST BROTHER.

When once he was mature for man,

In Britain where was he

That could stand up his parallel,

Or fruitful object be

In eye of Imogen, that best

Could deem his dignity?

MOTHER.

With marriage wherefore was he mock'd,

To be exil'd and thrown
From Leonati seat and cast
From her his dearest one,
Sweet Imogen?

SICILIUS.
Why did you suffer Iachimo,
Slight thing of Italy,
To taint his nobler heart and brain
With needless jealousy,
And to become the geck and scorn
O' th' other's villainy?

SECOND BROTHER.
For this from stiller seats we came,
Our parents and us twain,
That, striking in our country's cause,
Fell bravely and were slain,
Our fealty and Tenantius' right
With honour to maintain.

FIRST BROTHER.

Like hardiment Posthumus hath

To Cymbeline perform'd.

Then, Jupiter, thou king of gods,

Why hast thou thus adjourn'd

The graces for his merits due,

Being all to dolours turn'd?

SICILIUS.

Thy crystal window ope; look out;

No longer exercise

Upon a valiant race thy harsh

And potent injuries.

MOTHER.

Since, Jupiter, our son is good,

Take off his miseries.

SICILIUS.

Peep through thy marble mansion. Help!

Or we poor ghosts will cry
To th' shining synod of the rest
Against thy deity.

BROTHERS.
Help, Jupiter! or we appeal,
And from thy justice fly.
JUPITER descends-in thunder and lightning, sitting
upon an eagle. He throws a thunderbolt. The GHOSTS
fall on their knees
JUPITER.
No more, you petty spirits of region low,
Offend our hearing; hush! How dare you ghosts
Accuse the Thunderer whose bolt, you know,
Sky-planted, batters all rebelling coasts?
Poor shadows of Elysium, hence and rest
Upon your never-withering banks of flow'rs.

Be not with mortal accidents opprest:
No care of yours it is; you know 'tis ours.
Whom best I love I cross; to make my gift,

The more delay'd, delighted. Be content;
Your low-laid son our godhead will uplift;
His comforts thrive, his trials well are spent.
Our Jovial star reign'd at his birth, and in
Our temple was he married. Rise and fade!
He shall be lord of Lady Imogen,
And happier much by his affliction made.
This tablet lay upon his breast, wherein
Our pleasure his full fortune doth confine;
And so, away; no farther with your din
Express impatience, lest you stir up mine.
Mount, eagle, to my palace crystalline. *[Ascends]*

SICILIUS.

He came in thunder; his celestial breath
Was sulpherous to smell; the holy eagle
Stoop'd as to foot us. His ascension is
More sweet than our blest fields. His royal bird
Prunes the immortal wing, and cloys his beak,
As when his god is pleas'd.

ALL.

Thanks, Jupiter!

SICILIUS.

The marble pavement closes, he is enter'd

His radiant roof. Away! and, to be blest,

Let us with care perform his great behest. *[GHOSTS vanish]*

POSTHUMUS.

[Waking] Sleep, thou has been a grandsire and begot

A father to me; and thou hast created

A mother and two brothers. But, O scorn,

Gone! They went hence so soon as they were born.

And so I am awake. Poor wretches, that depend

On greatness' favour, dream as I have done;

Wake and find nothing. But, alas, I swerve;

Many dream not to find, neither deserve,

And yet are steep'd in favours; so am I,

That have this golden chance, and know not why.

What fairies haunt this ground? A book? O rare one!

Be not, as is our fangled world, a garment
Nobler than that it covers. Let thy effects
So follow to be most unlike our courtiers,
As good as promise.

[Reads] 'When as a lion's whelp shall, to himself unknown, without seeking find, and be embrac'd by a piece of tender air; and when from a stately cedar shall be lopp'd branches which, being dead many years, shall after revive, be jointed to the old stock, and freshly grow; then shall Posthumus end his miseries, Britain be fortunate and flourish in peace and plenty.'
'Tis still a dream, or else such stuff as madmen
Tongue, and brain not; either both or nothing,
Or senseless speaking, or a speaking such
As sense cannot untie. Be what it is,
The action of my life is like it, which
I'll keep, if but for sympathy.
Re-enter GAOLER
GAOLER.

Come, sir, are you ready for death?

POSTHUMUS.

Over-roasted rather; ready long ago.

GAOLER.

Hanging is the word, sir; if you be ready for that, you are well cook'd.

POSTHUMUS.

So, if I prove a good repast to the spectators, the dish pays the shot.

GAOLER.

A heavy reckoning for you, sir. But the comfort is, you
shall be called to no more payments, fear no more tavern bills,
which are often the sadness of parting, as the procuring of mirth.
You come in faint for want of meat, depart reeling with too much
drink; sorry that you have paid too much, and sorry that you are
paid too much; purse and brain both empty; the brain the heavier
for being too light, the purse too light, being drawn of
heaviness. O, of this contradiction you shall now be quit. O, the
charity of a penny cord! It sums up thousands in a trice. You

have no true debitor and creditor but it; of what's past, is, and
to come, the discharge. Your neck, sir, is pen, book, and
counters; so the acquittance follows.

POSTHUMUS.

I am merrier to die than thou art to live.

GAOLER.
Indeed, sir, he that sleeps feels not the toothache.
But a
man that were to sleep your sleep, and a hangman to help him to
bed, I think he would change places with his officer; for look
you, sir, you know not which way you shall go.

POSTHUMUS.

Yes indeed do I, fellow.

GAOLER.
Your death has eyes in's head, then; I have not seen him so

pictur'd. You must either be directed by some that take upon them
to know, or to take upon yourself that which I am sure you do not
know, or jump the after-inquiry on your own peril. And how you
shall speed in your journey's end, I think you'll never return to tell one.

POSTHUMUS.
I tell thee, fellow, there are none want eyes to direct
them the way I am going, but such as wink and will not use them.

GAOLER.
What an infinite mock is this, that a man should have the
best use of eyes to see the way of blindness! I am sure hanging's
the way of winking.

Enter a MESSENGER

MESSENGER.
Knock off his manacles; bring your prisoner to the King.

POSTHUMUS.

Thou bring'st good news: I am call'd to be made free.

GAOLER.

I'll be hang'd then.

POSTHUMUS.

Thou shalt be then freer than a gaoler; no bolts for the

dead. *Exeunt* POSTHUMUS and MESSENGER

GAOLER.

Unless a man would marry a gallows and beget young gibbets,

I never saw one so prone. Yet, on my conscience, there are verier

knaves desire to live, for all he be a Roman; and there be some

of them too that die against their wills; so should I, if I were

one. I would we were all of one mind, and one mind good. O, there

were desolation of gaolers and gallowses! I speak against my

present profit, but my wish hath a preferment in't. *Exit*

SCENE V. Britain. CYMBELINE'S tent

Enter CYMBELINE, BELARIUS, GUIDERIUS, ARVIRAGUS, PISANIO, LORDS, OFFICERS, and attendants

CYMBELINE.

Stand by my side, you whom the gods have made
Preservers of my throne. Woe is my heart
That the poor soldier that so richly fought,
Whose rags sham'd gilded arms, whose naked breast
Stepp'd before targes of proof, cannot be found.
He shall be happy that can find him, if
Our grace can make him so.

BELARIUS.

I never saw
Such noble fury in so poor a thing;
Such precious deeds in one that promis'd nought
But beggary and poor looks.

CYMBELINE.

No tidings of him?

PISANIO.

He hath been search'd among the dead and living,

But no trace of him.

CYMBELINE.

To my grief, I am

The heir of his reward; [To BELARIUS, GUIDERIUS, and

ARVIRAGUS]

which I will add

To you, the liver, heart, and brain, of Britain,

By whom I grant she lives. 'Tis now the time

To ask of whence you are. Report it.

BELARIUS.

Sir,

In Cambria are we born, and gentlemen;

Further to boast were neither true nor modest,

Unless I add we are honest.

CYMBELINE.

Bow your knees.

Arise my knights o' th' battle; I create you

Companions to our person, and will fit you

With dignities becoming your estates.

Enter CORNELIUS and LADIES

There's business in these faces. Why so sadly

Greet you our victory? You look like Romans,

And not o' th' court of Britain.

CORNELIUS.

Hail, great King!

To sour your happiness I must report

The Queen is dead.

CYMBELINE.

Who worse than a physician

Would this report become? But I consider

By med'cine'life may be prolong'd, yet death

Will seize the doctor too. How ended she?

CORNELIUS.

With horror, madly dying, like her life;
Which, being cruel to the world, concluded
Most cruel to herself. What she confess'd
I will report, so please you; these her women
Can trip me if I err, who with wet cheeks
Were present when she finish'd.

CYMBELINE.

Prithee say.

CORNELIUS.

First, she confess'd she never lov'd you; only
Affected greatness got by you, not you;
Married your royalty, was wife to your place;
Abhorr'd your person.

CYMBELINE.

She alone knew this;

And but she spoke it dying, I would not
Believe her lips in opening it. Proceed.

CORNELIUS.
Your daughter, whom she bore in hand to love
With such integrity, she did confess
Was as a scorpion to her sight; whose life,
But that her flight prevented it, she had
Ta'en off by poison.

CYMBELINE.
O most delicate fiend!

Who is't can read a woman? Is there more?

CORNELIUS.
More, sir, and worse. She did confess she had
For you a mortal mineral, which, being took,
Should by the minute feed on life, and ling'ring,
By inches waste you. In which time she purpos'd,
By watching, weeping, tendance, kissing, to

O'ercome you with her show; and in time,

When she had fitted you with her craft, to work

Her son into th' adoption of the crown;

But failing of her end by his strange absence,

Grew shameless-desperate, open'd, in despite

Of heaven and men, her purposes, repented

The evils she hatch'd were not effected; so,

Despairing, died.

CYMBELINE.

Heard you all this, her women?

LADY.

We did, so please your Highness.

CYMBELINE.

Mine eyes

Were not in fault, for she was beautiful;

Mine ears, that heard her flattery; nor my heart

That thought her like her seeming. It had been vicious

To have mistrusted her; yet, O my daughter!

That it was folly in me thou mayst say,

And prove it in thy feeling. Heaven mend all!

Enter LUCIUS, IACHIMO, the SOOTHSAYER, and other

Roman prisoners, guarded; POSTHUMUS behind, and IMOGEN

Thou com'st not, Caius, now for tribute; that

The Britons have raz'd out, though with the loss

Of many a bold one, whose kinsmen have made suit

That their good souls may be appeas'd with slaughter

Of you their captives, which ourself have granted;

So think of your estate.

LUCIUS.

Consider, sir, the chance of war. The day

Was yours by accident; had it gone with us,

We should not, when the blood was cool, have threaten'd

Our prisoners with the sword. But since the gods

Will have it thus, that nothing but our lives

May be call'd ransom, let it come. Sufficeth

A Roman with a Roman's heart can suffer.

Augustus lives to think on't; and so much

For my peculiar care. This one thing only

I will entreat: my boy, a Briton born,

Let him be ransom'd. Never master had

A page so kind, so duteous, diligent,

So tender over his occasions, true,

So feat, so nurse-like; let his virtue join

With my request, which I'll make bold your Highness

Cannot deny; he hath done no Briton harm

Though he have serv'd a Roman. Save him, sir,

And spare no blood beside.

CYMBELINE.

I have surely seen him;

His favour is familiar to me. Boy,

Thou hast look'd thyself into my grace,

And art mine own. I know not why, wherefore

To say 'Live, boy.' Ne'er thank thy master. Live;

And ask of Cymbeline what boon thou wilt,

Fitting my bounty and thy state, I'll give it;

Yea, though thou do demand a prisoner,
The noblest ta'en.

IMOGEN.

I humbly thank your Highness.

LUCIUS.
I do not bid thee beg my life, good lad,
And yet I know thou wilt.

IMOGEN.
No, no! Alack,
There's other work in hand. I see a thing
Bitter to me as death; your life, good master,
Must shuffle for itself.

LUCIUS.
The boy disdains me,
He leaves me, scorns me. Briefly die their joys
That place them on the truth of girls and boys.

Why stands he so perplex'd?

CYMBELINE.

What wouldst thou, boy?

I love thee more and more; think more and more

What's best to ask. Know'st him thou look'st on? Speak,

Wilt have him live? Is he thy kin? thy friend?

IMOGEN.

He is a Roman, no more kin to me

Than I to your Highness; who, being born your vassal,

Am something nearer.

CYMBELINE.

Wherefore ey'st him so?

IMOGEN.

I'll tell you, sir, in private, if you please

To give me hearing.

CYMBELINE.

Ay, with all my heart,

And lend my best attention. What's thy name?

IMOGEN.

Fidele, sir.

CYMBELINE.

Thou'rt my good youth, my page;

I'll be thy master. Walk with me; speak freely.

[CYMBELINE and IMOGEN converse apart]

BELARIUS.

Is not this boy reviv'd from death?

ARVIRAGUS.

One sand another

Not more resembles-that sweet rosy lad

Who died and was Fidele. What think you?

GUIDERIUS.

The same dead thing alive.

BELARIUS.

Peace, peace! see further. He eyes us not; forbear.
Creatures may be alike; were't he, I am sure
He would have spoke to us.

GUIDERIUS.

But we saw him dead.

BELARIUS.

Be silent; let's see further.

PISANIO.

[Aside] It is my mistress.
Since she is living, let the time run on

To good or bad. *[CYMBELINE and IMOGEN advance]*

CYMBELINE.

Come, stand thou by our side;

Make thy demand aloud. *[To IACHIMO]* Sir, step you forth;

Give answer to this boy, and do it freely,

Or, by our greatness and the grace of it,

Which is our honour, bitter torture shall

Winnow the truth from falsehood. On, speak to him.

IMOGEN.

My boon is that this gentleman may render

Of whom he had this ring.

POSTHUMUS.

[Aside] What's that to him?

CYMBELINE.

That diamond upon your finger, say

How came it yours?

IACHIMO.

Thou'lt torture me to leave unspoken that
Which to be spoke would torture thee.

CYMBELINE.

How? me?

IACHIMO.

I am glad to be constrain'd to utter that
Which torments me to conceal. By villainy
I got this ring; 'twas Leonatus' jewel,
Whom thou didst banish; and-which more may grieve thee,
As it doth me-a nobler sir ne'er liv'd
'Twixt sky and ground. Wilt thou hear more, my lord?

CYMBELINE.

All that belongs to this.

IACHIMO.

That paragon, thy daughter,

For whom my heart drops blood and my false spirits
Quail to remember-Give me leave, I faint.

CYMBELINE.
My daughter? What of her? Renew thy strength;
I had rather thou shouldst live while nature will
Than die ere I hear more. Strive, man, and speak.

IACHIMO.
Upon a time-unhappy was the clock
That struck the hour!- was in Rome-accurs'd
The mansion where!- 'twas at a feast-O, would
Our viands had been poison'd, or at least
Those which I heav'd to head!- the good Posthumus-
What should I say? he was too good to be
Where ill men were, and was the best of all
Amongst the rar'st of good ones-sitting sadly
Hearing us praise our loves of Italy
For beauty that made barren the swell'd boast
Of him that best could speak; for feature, laming
The shrine of Venus or straight-pight Minerva,

Postures beyond brief nature; for condition,

A shop of all the qualities that man

Loves woman for; besides that hook of wiving,

Fairness which strikes the eye-

CYMBELINE.

I stand on fire.

Come to the matter.

IACHIMO.

All too soon I shall,

Unless thou wouldst grieve quickly. This Posthumus,

Most like a noble lord in love and one

That had a royal lover, took his hint;

And not dispraising whom we prais'd-therein

He was as calm as virtue-he began

His mistress' picture; which by his tongue being made,

And then a mind put in't, either our brags

Were crack'd of kitchen trulls, or his description

Prov'd us unspeaking sots.

CYMBELINE.

Nay, nay, to th' purpose.

IACHIMO.

Your daughter's chastity-there it begins.
He spake of her as Dian had hot dreams
And she alone were cold; whereat I, wretch,
Made scruple of his praise, and wager'd with him
Pieces of gold 'gainst this which then he wore
Upon his honour'd finger, to attain
In suit the place of's bed, and win this ring
By hers and mine adultery. He, true knight,
No lesser of her honour confident
Than I did truly find her, stakes this ring;
And would so, had it been a carbuncle
Of Phoebus' wheel; and might so safely, had it
Been all the worth of's car. Away to Britain
Post I in this design. Well may you, sir,
Remember me at court, where I was taught

Of your chaste daughter the wide difference

'Twixt amorous and villainous. Being thus quench'd

Of hope, not longing, mine Italian brain

Gan in your duller Britain operate

Most vilely; for my vantage, excellent;

And, to be brief, my practice so prevail'd

That I return'd with simular proof enough

To make the noble Leonatus mad,

By wounding his belief in her renown

With tokens thus and thus; averring notes

Of chamber-hanging, pictures, this her bracelet-

O cunning, how I got it!- nay, some marks

Of secret on her person, that he could not

But think her bond of chastity quite crack'd,

I having ta'en the forfeit. Whereupon-

Methinks I see him now-

POSTHUMUS.

[Coming forward] Ay, so thou dost,

Italian fiend! Ay me, most credulous fool,

Egregious murderer, thief, anything

That's due to all the villains past, in being,

To come! O, give me cord, or knife, or poison,

Some upright justicer! Thou, King, send out

For torturers ingenious. It is I

That all th' abhorred things o' th' earth amend

By being worse than they. I am Posthumus,

That kill'd thy daughter; villain-like, I lie-

That caus'd a lesser villain than myself,

A sacrilegious thief, to do't. The temple

Of virtue was she; yea, and she herself.

Spit, and throw stones, cast mire upon me, set

The dogs o' th' street to bay me. Every villain

Be call'd Posthumus Leonatus, and

Be villainy less than 'twas! O Imogen!

My queen, my life, my wife! O Imogen,

Imogen, Imogen!

IMOGEN.

Peace, my lord. Hear, hear!

POSTHUMUS.

Shall's have a play of this? Thou scornful page,

There lies thy part. *[Strikes her. She falls]*

PISANIO.

O gentlemen, help!

Mine and your mistress! O, my lord Posthumus!

You ne'er kill'd Imogen till now. Help, help!

Mine honour'd lady!

CYMBELINE.

Does the world go round?

POSTHUMUS.

How comes these staggers on me?

PISANIO.

Wake, my mistress!

CYMBELINE.

If this be so, the gods do mean to strike me

To death with mortal joy.

PISANIO.

How fares my mistress?

IMOGEN.

O, get thee from my sight;

Thou gav'st me poison. Dangerous fellow, hence!

Breathe not where princes are.

CYMBELINE.

The tune of Imogen!

PISANIO.

Lady,

The gods throw stones of sulphur on me, if

That box I gave you was not thought by me

A precious thing! I had it from the Queen.

CYMBELINE.

New matter still?

IMOGEN.
It poison'd me.

CORNELIUS.

O gods!
I left out one thing which the Queen confess'd,
Which must approve thee honest. 'If Pisanio
Have' said she 'given his mistress that confection
Which I gave him for cordial, she is serv'd
As I would serve a rat.'

CYMBELINE.

What's this, Cornelius?

CORNELIUS.

The Queen, sir, very oft importun'd me

To temper poisons for her; still pretending

The satisfaction of her knowledge only

In killing creatures vile, as cats and dogs,

Of no esteem. I, dreading that her purpose

Was of more danger, did compound for her

A certain stuff, which, being ta'en would cease

The present pow'r of life, but in short time

All offices of nature should again

Do their due functions. Have you ta'en of it?

IMOGEN.

Most like I did, for I was dead.

BELARIUS.

My boys,

There was our error.

GUIDERIUS.

This is sure Fidele.

IMOGEN.

Why did you throw your wedded lady from you?

Think that you are upon a rock, and now

Throw me again. *[Embracing him]*

POSTHUMUS.

Hang there like fruit, my soul,

Till the tree die!

CYMBELINE.

How now, my flesh? my child?

What, mak'st thou me a dullard in this act?

Wilt thou not speak to me?

IMOGEN.

[Kneeling] Your blessing, sir.

BELARIUS.

[To GUIDERIUS and ARVIRAGUS] Though you did love this

youth, I blame ye not;

You had a motive for't.

CYMBELINE.

My tears that fall

Prove holy water on thee! Imogen,

Thy mother's dead.

IMOGEN.

I am sorry for't, my lord.

CYMBELINE.

O, she was naught, and long of her it was

That we meet here so strangely; but her son

Is gone, we know not how nor where.

PISANIO.

My lord,

Now fear is from me, I'll speak troth. Lord Cloten,

Upon my lady's missing, came to me

With his sword drawn, foam'd at the mouth, and swore,

If I discover'd not which way she was gone,

It was my instant death. By accident

I had a feigned letter of my master's

Then in my pocket, which directed him

To seek her on the mountains near to Milford;

Where, in a frenzy, in my master's garments,

Which he enforc'd from me, away he posts

With unchaste purpose, and with oath to violate

My lady's honour. What became of him

I further know not.

GUIDERIUS.

Let me end the story:

I slew him there.

CYMBELINE.

Marry, the gods forfend!
I would not thy good deeds should from my lips
Pluck a hard sentence. Prithee, valiant youth,
Deny't again.

GUIDERIUS.

I have spoke it, and I did it.

CYMBELINE.
He was a prince.

GUIDERIUS.
A most incivil one. The wrongs he did me
Were nothing prince-like; for he did provoke me
With language that would make me spurn the sea,
If it could so roar to me. I cut off's head,
And am right glad he is not standing here
To tell this tale of mine.

CYMBELINE.

I am sorry for thee.
By thine own tongue thou art condemn'd, and must
Endure our law. Thou'rt dead.

IMOGEN.
That headless man
I thought had been my lord.

CYMBELINE.
Bind the offender,
And take him from our presence.

BELARIUS.
Stay, sir King.
This man is better than the man he slew,
As well descended as thyself, and hath
More of thee merited than a band of Clotens
Had ever scar for. *[To the guard]* Let his arms alone;
They were not born for bondage.

CYMBELINE.

Why, old soldier,
Wilt thou undo the worth thou art unpaid for
By tasting of our wrath? How of descent
As good as we?

ARVIRAGUS.

In that he spake too far.

CYMBELINE.

And thou shalt die for't.

BELARIUS.

We will die all three;
But I will prove that two on's are as good
As I have given out him. My sons, I must
For mine own part unfold a dangerous speech,
Though haply well for you.

ARVIRAGUS.

Your danger's ours.

GUIDERIUS.

And our good his.

BELARIUS.

Have at it then by leave!
Thou hadst, great King, a subject who
Was call'd Belarius.

CYMBELINE.

What of him? He is
A banish'd traitor.

BELARIUS.

He it is that hath
Assum'd this age; indeed a banish'd man;
I know not how a traitor.

CYMBELINE.

Take him hence,

The whole world shall not save him.

BELARIUS.

Not too hot.

First pay me for the nursing of thy sons,

And let it be confiscate all, so soon

As I have receiv'd it.

CYMBELINE.

Nursing of my sons?

BELARIUS.

I am too blunt and saucy: here's my knee.

Ere I arise I will prefer my sons;

Then spare not the old father. Mighty sir,

These two young gentlemen that call me father,

And think they are my sons, are none of mine;

They are the issue of your loins, my liege, And blood of your begetting.

CYMBELINE.

How? my issue?

BELARIUS.

So sure as you your father's. I, old Morgan,
Am that Belarius whom you sometime banish'd.
Your pleasure was my mere offence, my punishment
Itself, and all my treason; that I suffer'd
Was all the harm I did. These gentle princes-
For such and so they are-these twenty years
Have I train'd up; those arts they have as
Could put into them. My breeding was, sir, as
Your Highness knows. Their nurse, Euriphile,
Whom for the theft I wedded, stole these children
Upon my banishment; I mov'd her to't,
Having receiv'd the punishment before
For that which I did then. Beaten for loyalty
Excited me to treason. Their dear loss,
The more of you 'twas felt, the more it shap'd

Unto my end of stealing them. But, gracious sir,
Here are your sons again, and I must lose
Two of the sweet'st companions in the world.
The benediction of these covering heavens
Fall on their heads like dew! for they are worthy
To inlay heaven with stars.

CYMBELINE.

Thou weep'st and speak'st.
The service that you three have done is more
Unlike than this thou tell'st. I lost my children.
If these be they, I know not how to wish
A pair of worthier sons.

BELARIUS.

Be pleas'd awhile.
This gentleman, whom I call Polydore,
Most worthy prince, as yours, is true Guiderius;
This gentleman, my Cadwal, Arviragus,
Your younger princely son; he, sir, was lapp'd

In a most curious mantle, wrought by th' hand
Of his queen mother, which for more probation
I can with ease produce.

CYMBELINE.
Guiderius had
Upon his neck a mole, a sanguine star;
It was a mark of wonder.

BELARIUS.
This is he,
Who hath upon him still that natural stamp.
It was wise nature's end in the donation,
To be his evidence now.

CYMBELINE.
O, what am I?
A mother to the birth of three? Ne'er mother
Rejoic'd deliverance more. Blest pray you be,
That, after this strange starting from your orbs,
You may reign in them now! O Imogen,

Thou hast lost by this a kingdom.

IMOGEN.

No, my lord;

I have got two worlds by't. O my gentle brothers,

Have we thus met? O, never say hereafter

But I am truest speaker! You call'd me brother,

When I was but your sister: I you brothers,

When we were so indeed.

CYMBELINE.

Did you e'er meet?

ARVIRAGUS.

Ay, my good lord.

GUIDERIUS.

And at first meeting lov'd,

Continu'd so until we thought he died.

CORNELIUS.

By the Queen's dram she swallow'd.

CYMBELINE.

O rare instinct!
When shall I hear all through? This fierce abridgment
Hath to it circumstantial branches, which
Distinction should be rich in. Where? how liv'd you?

And when came you to serve our Roman captive?
How parted with your brothers? how first met them?
Why fled you from the court? and whither? These,
And your three motives to the battle, with
I know not how much more, should be demanded,
And all the other by-dependences,
From chance to chance; but nor the time nor place
Will serve our long interrogatories. See,
Posthumus anchors upon Imogen;
And she, like harmless lightning, throws her eye
On him, her brothers, me, her master, hitting

Each object with a joy; the counterchange

Is severally in all. Let's quit this ground,

And smoke the temple with our sacrifices.

[To BELARIUS] Thou art my brother; so we'll hold thee ever.

IMOGEN.

You are my father too, and did relieve me

To see this gracious season.

CYMBELINE.

All o'erjoy'd

Save these in bonds. Let them be joyful too,

For they shall taste our comfort.

IMOGEN.

My good master,

I will yet do you service.

LUCIUS.

Happy be you!

CYMBELINE.

The forlorn soldier, that so nobly fought,

He would have well becom'd this place and grac'd

The thankings of a king.

POSTHUMUS.

I am, sir,

The soldier that did company these three

In poor beseeming; 'twas a fitment for

The purpose I then follow'd. That I was he,

Speak, Iachimo. I had you down, and might

Have made you finish.

IACHIMO.

[Kneeling] I am down again;

But now my heavy conscience sinks my knee,

As then your force did. Take that life, beseech you,

Which I so often owe; but your ring first,

And here the bracelet of the truest princess

That ever swore her faith.

POSTHUMUS.

Kneel not to me.

The pow'r that I have on you is to spare you;

The malice towards you to forgive you. Live,

And deal with others better.

CYMBELINE.

Nobly doom'd!

We'll learn our freeness of a son-in-law;

Pardon's the word to all.

ARVIRAGUS.

You holp us, sir,

As you did mean indeed to be our brother;

Joy'd are we that you are.

POSTHUMUS.

Your servant, Princes. Good my lord of Rome,
Call forth your soothsayer. As I slept, methought
Great Jupiter, upon his eagle back'd,
Appear'd to me, with other spritely shows
Of mine own kindred. When I wak'd, I found
This label on my bosom; whose containing
Is so from sense in hardness that I can
Make no collection of it. Let him show
His skill in the construction.

LUCIUS.

Philarmonus!

SOOTHSAYER.

Here, my good lord.

LUCIUS.

Read, and declare the meaning.

SOOTHSAYER.

[Reads] 'When as a lion's whelp shall, to himself
unknown, without seeking find, and be embrac'd by
a piece of tender air; and when from a stately cedar shall
be lopp'd branches which, being dead many years, shall
after revive, be jointed to the old stock, and freshly grow;
then shall Posthumus end his miseries, Britain be fortunate
and flourish in peace and plenty.'
Thou, Leonatus, art the lion's whelp;
The fit and apt construction of thy name,
Being Leonatus, doth import so much.

[To CYMBELINE] The piece of tender air, thy virtuous daughter,
Which we call 'mollis aer,' and 'mollis aer'
We term it 'mulier'; which 'mulier' I divine
Is this most constant wife, who even now
Answering the letter of the oracle,
Unknown to you, unsought, were clipp'd about
With this most tender air.

CYMBELINE.
This hath some seeming.

SOOTHSAYER.

The lofty cedar, royal Cymbeline,

Personates thee; and thy lopp'd branches point

Thy two sons forth, who, by Belarius stol'n,

For many years thought dead, are now reviv'd,

To the majestic cedar join'd, whose issue

Promises Britain peace and plenty.

CYMBELINE.

Well,

My peace we will begin. And, Caius Lucius,

Although the victor, we submit to Caesar

And to the Roman empire, promising

To pay our wonted tribute, from the which

We were dissuaded by our wicked queen,

Whom heavens in justice, both on her and hers,

Have laid most heavy hand.

SOOTHSAYER.

The fingers of the pow'rs above do tune

The harmony of this peace. The vision

Which I made known to Lucius ere the stroke

Of yet this scarce-cold battle, at this instant

Is full accomplish'd; for the Roman eagle,

From south to west on wing soaring aloft,

Lessen'd herself and in the beams o' th' sun

So vanish'd; which foreshow'd our princely eagle,

Th'imperial Caesar, Caesar, should again unite

His favour with the radiant Cymbeline,

Which shines here in the west.

CYMBELINE.

Laud we the gods;

And let our crooked smokes climb to their nostrils

From our bless'd altars. Publish we this peace

To all our subjects. Set we forward; let

A Roman and a British ensign wave

Friendly together. So through Lud's Town march;

And in the temple of great Jupiter

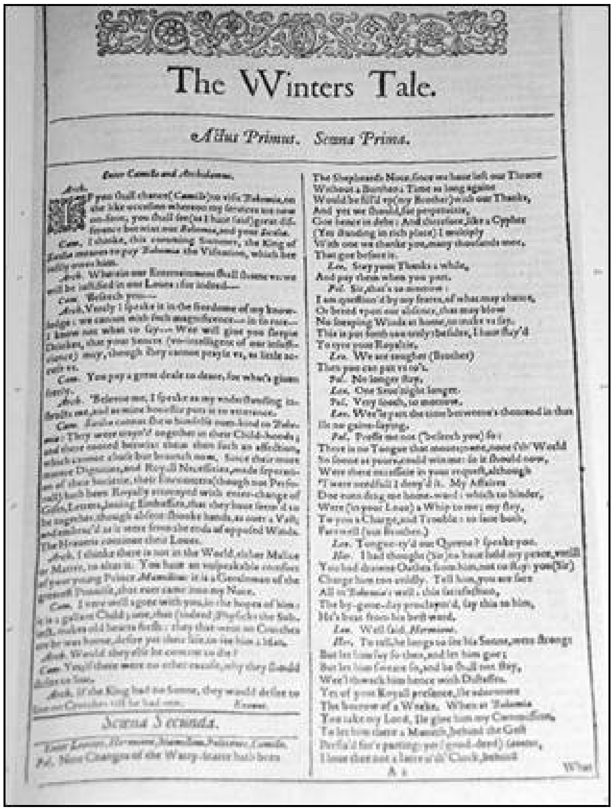
Our peace we'll ratify; seal it with feasts.

Set on there! Never was a war did cease, Ere bloody hands were wash'd, with such a peace. *Exeunt*

THE WINTER'S TALE

Regarded as being one of Shakespeare's "problem plays", the first three acts of this late play are filled with intense psychological drama, while the last two acts are comedic and culminate with a happy ending. The play begins with the appearance of two childhood friends: Leontes, King of Sicilia, and Polixenes, the King of Bohemia. Polixenes is visiting the kingdom of Sicilia, and is enjoying catching up with his old friend. However, after nine months, Polixenes yearns to return to his own kingdom to tend to affairs and see his son. Leontes desperately attempts to get Polixenes to stay longer, but is unsuccessful. Leontes then sends his wife, Queen Hermione, to try to persuade Polixenes. Hermione agrees and with three short speeches is successful. Leontes is puzzled as to how Hermione convinced Polixenes so easily, and is suddenly consumed with an insane paranoia that his pregnant wife has been having an affair with Polixenes and that the child is a bastard. Leontes orders Camillo, a Sicilian Lord, to poison Polixenes.

The main plot of *The Winter's Tale* is taken from Robert Greene's pastoral romance *Pandosto* , published in 1588 and, interestingly, Shakespeare's changes to the plot are uncharacteristically minor. Shakespeare's main source text for this play is available via this link .



The Winters Tale.

Actus Primus. Scœna Prima.

The First Folio, 1623

‘Autolycus’ by Charles Robert Leslie, 1836

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DRAMATIS PERSONAE

LEONTES, King of Sicilia

MAMILLIUS, his son, the young Prince of Sicilia

CAMILLO, lord of Sicilia

ANTIGONUS, " " "

CLEOMENES, " " "

DION, " " "

POLIXENES, King of Bohemia

FLORIZEL, his son, Prince of Bohemia

ARCHIDAMUS, a lord of Bohemia

OLD SHEPHERD, reputed father of Perdita

CLOWN, his son

AUTOLYCUS, a rogue

A MARINER

A GAOLER

TIME, as Chorus

HERMIONE, Queen to Leontes

PERDITA, daughter to Leontes and Hermione

PAULINA, wife to Antigonus

EMILIA, a lady attending on the Queen

MOPSA, shepherdess

DORCAS, "

Other Lords, Gentlemen, Ladies, Officers, Servants, Shepherds, Shepherdesses

SCENE: Sicilia and Bohemia

ACT I. SCENE I. Sicilia. The palace of LEONTES

Enter CAMILLO and ARCHIDAMUS

ARCHIDAMUS.

If you shall chance, Camillo, to visit Bohemia, on the
like occasion whereon my services are now on foot, you shall see,
as I have said, great difference betwixt our Bohemia and your Sicilia.

CAMILLO.

I think this coming summer the King of Sicilia means to
pay Bohemia the visitation which he justly owes him.

ARCHIDAMUS.

Wherein our entertainment shall shame us we will be
justified in our loves; for indeed-

CAMILLO.

Beseech you-

ARCHIDAMUS.

Verily, I speak it in the freedom of my knowledge: we
cannot with such magnificence, in so rare-I know not what to
say. We will give you sleepy drinks, that your senses,

unintelligent of our insufficience, may, though they cannot
praise us, as little accuse us.

CAMILLO.

You pay a great deal too dear for what's given freely.

ARCHIDAMUS.
Believe me, I speak as my understanding instructs me
and as mine honesty puts it to utterance.

CAMILLO.
Sicilia cannot show himself overkind to Bohemia. They were
train'd together in their childhoods; and there rooted betwixt
them then such an affection which cannot choose but branch now.
Since their more mature dignities and royal necessities made
separation of their society, their encounters, though not
personal, have been royally attorneyed with interchange of gifts,
letters, loving embassies; that they have seem'd to be together,
though absent; shook hands, as over a vast; and embrac'd as it
were from the ends of opposed winds. The heavens continue their loves!

ARCHIDAMUS.

I think there is not in the world either malice or
matter to alter it. You have an unspeakable comfort of your young
Prince Mamillius; it is a gentleman of the greatest promise that
ever came into my note.

CAMILLO.

I very well agree with you in the hopes of him. It is a
gallant child; one that indeed physics the subject, makes old
hearts fresh; they that went on crutches ere he was born desire
yet their life to see him a man.

ARCHIDAMUS.

Would they else be content to die?

CAMILLO.

Yes; if there were no other excuse why they should desire to live.

ARCHIDAMUS.

If the King had no son, they would desire to live on crutches till he had one.

Exeunt

SCENE II. Sicilia. The palace of LEONTES

Enter LEONTES, POLIXENES, HERMIONE, MAMILLIUS, CAMILLO, and

ATTENDANTS

POLIXENES.

Nine changes of the wat'ry star hath been
The shepherd's note since we have left our throne
Without a burden. Time as long again
Would be fill'd up, my brother, with our thanks;
And yet we should for perpetuity
Go hence in debt. And therefore, like a cipher,
Yet standing in rich place, I multiply
With one 'We thank you' many thousands moe
That go before it.

LEONTES.

Stay your thanks a while,
And pay them when you part.

POLIXENES.

Sir, that's to-morrow.

I am question'd by my fears of what may chance

Or breed upon our absence, that may blow

No sneaping winds at home, to make us say

'This is put forth too truly.' Besides, I have stay'd

To tire your royalty.

LEONTES.

We are tougher, brother,

Than you can put us to't.

POLIXENES.

No longer stay.

LEONTES.

One sev'night longer.

POLIXENES.

Very sooth, to-morrow.

LEONTES.

We'll part the time between's then; and in that
I'll no gainsaying.

POLIXENES.

Press me not, beseech you, so.
There is no tongue that moves, none, none i' th' world,
So soon as yours could win me. So it should now,
Were there necessity in your request, although
'Twere needful I denied it. My affairs
Do even drag me homeward; which to hinder
Were in your love a whip to me; my stay
To you a charge and trouble. To save both,
Farewell, our brother.

LEONTES.

Tongue-tied, our Queen? Speak you.

HERMIONE.

I had thought, sir, to have held my peace until
You had drawn oaths from him not to stay. You, sir,
Charge him too coldly. Tell him you are sure
All in Bohemia's well-this satisfaction
The by-gone day proclaim'd. Say this to him,
He's beat from his best ward.

LEONTES.

Well said, Hermione.

HERMIONE.
To tell he longs to see his son were strong;
But let him say so then, and let him go;
But let him swear so, and he shall not stay;
We'll thwack him hence with distaffs.

[To POLIXENES] Yet of your royal presence I'll
adventure the borrow of a week. When at Bohemia
You take my lord, I'll give him my commission
To let him there a month behind the gest

Prefix'd for's parting.- Yet, good deed, Leontes,

I love thee not a jar o' th' clock behind

What lady she her lord.- You'll stay?

POLIXENES.

No, madam.

HERMIONE.

Nay, but you will?

POLIXENES.

I may not, verily.

HERMIONE.

Verily!

You put me off with limber vows; but I,

Though you would seek t' unsphere the stars with oaths,

Should yet say 'Sir, no going.' Verily,

You shall not go; a lady's 'verily' is

As potent as a lord's. Will go yet?

Force me to keep you as a prisoner,

Not like a guest; so you shall pay your fees

When you depart, and save your thanks. How say you?

My prisoner or my guest? By your dread 'verily,'

One of them you shall be.

POLIXENES.

Your guest, then, madam:

To be your prisoner should import offending;

Which is for me less easy to commit

Than you to punish.

HERMIONE.

Not your gaoler then,

But your kind. hostess. Come, I'll question you

Of my lord's tricks and yours when you were boys.

You were pretty lordings then!

POLIXENES.

We were, fair Queen,

Two lads that thought there was no more behind

But such a day to-morrow as to-day,

And to be boy eternal.

HERMIONE.

Was not my lord

The verier wag o' th' two?

POLIXENES.

We were as twinn'd lambs that did frisk i' th' sun

And bleat the one at th' other. What we chang'd

Was innocence for innocence; we knew not

The doctrine of ill-doing, nor dream'd

That any did. Had we pursu'd that life,

And our weak spirits ne'er been higher rear'd

With stronger blood, we should have answer'd heaven

Boldly 'Not guilty,' the imposition clear'd

Hereditary ours.

HERMIONE.

By this we gather
You have tripp'd since.

POLIXENES.

O my most sacred lady,
Temptations have since then been born to 's, for
In those unfledg'd days was my wife a girl;
Your precious self had then not cross'd the eyes
Of my young playfellow.

HERMIONE.

Grace to boot!
Of this make no conclusion, lest you say
Your queen and I are devils. Yet, go on;
Th' offences we have made you do we'll answer,
If you first sinn'd with us, and that with us
You did continue fault, and that you slipp'd not
With any but with us.

LEONTES.

Is he won yet?

HERMIONE.

He'll stay, my lord.

LEONTES.

At my request he would not.

Hermione, my dearest, thou never spok'st

To better purpose.

HERMIONE.

Never?

LEONTES.

Never but once.

HERMIONE.

What! Have I twice said well? When was't before?

I prithee tell me; cram's with praise, and make's

As fat as tame things. One good deed dying tongueless

Slaughters a thousand waiting upon that.

Our praises are our wages; you may ride's

With one soft kiss a thousand furlongs ere

With spur we heat an acre. But to th' goal:

My last good deed was to entreat his stay;

What was my first? It has an elder sister,

Or I mistake you. O, would her name were Grace!

But once before I spoke to th' purpose-When?

Nay, let me have't; I long.

LEONTES.

Why, that was when

Three crabbed months had sour'd themselves to death,

Ere I could make thee open thy white hand

And clap thyself my love; then didst thou utter

'I am yours for ever.'

HERMIONE.

'Tis Grace indeed.

Why, lo you now, I have spoke to th' purpose twice:

The one for ever earn'd a royal husband;

Th' other for some while a friend.

[Giving her hand to POLIXENES]

LEONTES.

[Aside] Too hot, too hot!

To mingle friendship far is mingling bloods.

I have tremor cordis on me; my heart dances,

But not for joy, not joy. This entertainment

May a free face put on; derive a liberty

From heartiness, from bounty, fertile bosom,

And well become the agent. 'T may, I grant;

But to be paddling palms and pinching fingers,

As now they are, and making practis'd smiles

As in a looking-glass; and then to sigh, as 'twere

The mort o' th' deer. O, that is entertainment

My bosom likes not, nor my brows! Mamillius,

Art thou my boy?

MAMILLIUS.

Ay, my good lord.

LEONTES.

I' fecks!

Why, that's my bawcock. What! hast smutch'd thy nose?

They say it is a copy out of mine. Come, Captain,

We must be neat-not neat, but cleanly, Captain.

And yet the steer, the heifer, and the calf,

Are all call'd neat.- Still virginalling

Upon his palm?- How now, you wanton calf,

Art thou my calf?

MAMILLIUS.

Yes, if you will, my lord.

LEONTES.

Thou want'st a rough pash and the shoots that I have,

To be full like me; yet they say we are
Almost as like as eggs. Women say so,
That will say anything. But were they false
As o'er-dy'd blacks, as wind, as waters-false
As dice are to be wish'd by one that fixes
No bourn 'twixt his and mine; yet were it true
To say this boy were like me. Come, sir page,
Look on me with your welkin eye. Sweet villain!

Most dear'st! my collop! Can thy dam?- may't be?
Affection! thy intention stabs the centre.
Thou dost make possible things not so held,
Communicat'st with dreams-how can this be?-
With what's unreal thou coactive art,
And fellow'st nothing. Then 'tis very credent
Thou mayst co-join with something; and thou dost-
And that beyond commission; and I find it,
And that to the infection of my brains
And hard'ning of my brows.

POLIXENES.

What means Sicilia?

HERMIONE.

He something seems unsettled.

POLIXENES.

How, my lord!

What cheer? How is't with you, best brother?

HERMIONE.

You look

As if you held a brow of much distraction.

Are you mov'd, my lord?

LEONTES.

No, in good earnest.

How sometimes nature will betray its folly,

Its tenderness, and make itself a pastime

To harder bosoms! Looking on the lines

Of my boy's face, methoughts I did recoil

Twenty-three years; and saw myself unbreech'd,

In my green velvet coat; my dagger muzzl'd,

Lest it should bite its master and so prove,

As ornaments oft do, too dangerous.

How like, methought, I then was to this kernel,

This squash, this gentleman. Mine honest friend,

Will you take eggs for money?

MAMILLIUS.

No, my lord, I'll fight.

LEONTES.

You will? Why, happy man be's dole! My brother,

Are you so fond of your young prince as we

Do seem to be of ours?

POLIXENES.

If at home, sir,

He's all my exercise, my mirth, my matter;

Now my sworn friend, and then mine enemy;

My parasite, my soldier, statesman, all.

He makes a July's day short as December,

And with his varying childness cures in me

Thoughts that would thick my blood.

LEONTES.

So stands this squire

Offic'd with me. We two will walk, my lord,

And leave you to your graver steps. Hermione,

How thou lov'st us show in our brother's welcome;

Let what is dear in Sicily be cheap;

Next to thyself and my young rover, he's

Apparent to my heart.

HERMIONE.

If you would seek us,

We are yours i' th' garden. Shall's attend you there?

LEONTES.

To your own bents dispose you; you'll be found,

Be you beneath the sky. *[Aside]* I am angling now,
Though you perceive me not how I give line.

Go to, go to!
How she holds up the neb, the bill to him!
And arms her with the boldness of a wife
To her allowing husband!
Exeunt POLIXENES, HERMIONE, and ATTENDANTS
Gone already!

Inch-thick, knee-deep, o'er head and ears a fork'd one!
Go, play, boy, play; thy mother plays, and I
Play too; but so disgrac'd a part, whose issue
Will hiss me to my grave. Contempt and clamour
Will be my knell. Go, play, boy, play. There have been,
Or I am much deceiv'd, cuckolds ere now;
And many a man there is, even at this present,
Now while I speak this, holds his wife by th' arm
That little thinks she has been sluic'd in's absence,
And his pond fish'd by his next neighbour, by
Sir Smile, his neighbour. Nay, there's comfort in't,

Whiles other men have gates and those gates open'd,

As mine, against their will. Should all despair

That hath revolted wives, the tenth of mankind

Would hang themselves. Physic for't there's none;

It is a bawdy planet, that will strike

Where 'tis predominant; and 'tis pow'rfull, think it,

From east, west, north, and south. Be it concluded,

No barricado for a belly. Know't,

It will let in and out the enemy

With bag and baggage. Many thousand on's

Have the disease, and feel't not. How now, boy!

MAMILLIUS.

I am like you, they say.

LEONTES.

Why, that's some comfort.

What! Camillo there?

CAMILLO.

Ay, my good lord.

LEONTES.

Go play, Mamillius; thou'rt an honest man.

Exit MAMILLIUS

Camillo, this great sir will yet stay longer.

CAMILLO.

You had much ado to make his anchor hold;
When you cast out, it still came home.

LEONTES.

Didst note it?

CAMILLO.

He would not stay at your petitions; made
His business more material.

LEONTES.

Didst perceive it?

[Aside] They're here with me already; whisp'ring, rounding,
'Sicilia is a so-forth.' 'Tis far gone
When I shall gust it last.- How came't, Camillo,
That he did stay?

CAMILLO.

At the good Queen's entreaty.

LEONTES.
'At the Queen's' be't. 'Good' should be pertinent;
But so it is, it is not. Was this taken
By any understanding pate but thine?
For thy conceit is soaking, will draw in
More than the common blocks. Not noted, is't,
But of the finer natures, by some severals

Of head-piece extraordinary? Lower messes

Perchance are to this business purblind? Say.

CAMILLO.

Business, my lord? I think most understand

Bohemia stays here longer.

LEONTES.

Ha?

CAMILLO.

Stays here longer.

LEONTES.

Ay, but why?

CAMILLO.

To satisfy your Highness, and the entreaties

Of our most gracious mistress.

LEONTES.

Satisfy

Th' entreaties of your mistress! Satisfy!

Let that suffice. I have trusted thee, Camillo,

With all the nearest things to my heart, as well

My chamber-councils, wherein, priest-like, thou

Hast cleans'd my bosom-I from thee departed

Thy penitent reform'd; but we have been

Deceiv'd in thy integrity, deceiv'd

In that which seems so.

CAMILLO.

Be it forbid, my lord!

LEONTES.

To bide upon't: thou art not honest; or,

If thou inclin'st that way, thou art a coward,

Which hoxes honesty behind, restraining

From course requir'd; or else thou must be counted

A servant grafted in my serious trust,

And therein negligent; or else a fool

That seest a game play'd home, the rich stake drawn,

And tak'st it all for jest.

CAMILLO.

My gracious lord,

I may be negligent, foolish, and fearful:

In every one of these no man is free

But that his negligence, his folly, fear,

Among the infinite doings of the world,

Sometime puts forth. In your affairs, my lord,

If ever I were wilfull-negligent,

It was my folly; if industriously

I play'd the fool, it was my negligence,

Not weighing well the end; if ever fearful

To do a thing where I the issue doubted,

Whereof the execution did cry out

Against the non-performance, 'twas a fear

Which oft infects the wisest. These, my lord,

Are such allow'd infirmities that honesty

Is never free of. But, beseech your Grace,

Be plainer with me; let me know my trespass

By its own visage; if I then deny it,

'Tis none of mine.

LEONTES.

Ha' not you seen, Camillo-

But that's past doubt; you have, or your eye-glass

Is thicker than a cuckold's horn-or heard-

For to a vision so apparent rumour

Cannot be mute-or thought-for cogitation

Resides not in that man that does not think-

My wife is slippery? If thou wilt confess-

Or else be impudently negative,

To have nor eyes nor ears nor thought-then say

My wife's a hobby-horse, deserves a name

As rank as any flax-wench that puts to

Before her troth-plight. Say't and justify't.

CAMILLO.

I would not be a stander-by to hear

My sovereign mistress clouded so, without

My present vengeance taken. Shrew my heart!

You never spoke what did become you less

Than this; which to reiterate were sin

As deep as that, though true.

LEONTES.

Is whispering nothing?

Is leaning cheek to cheek? Is meeting noses?

Kissing with inside lip? Stopping the career

Of laughter with a sigh?- a note infallible

Of breaking honesty. Horsing foot on foot?

Skulking in corners? Wishing clocks more swift;

Hours, minutes; noon, midnight? And all eyes

Blind with the pin and web but theirs, theirs only,

That would unseen be wicked-is this nothing?

Why, then the world and all that's in't is nothing;

The covering sky is nothing; Bohemia nothing;

My is nothing; nor nothing have these nothings,

If this be nothing.

CAMILLO.

Good my lord, be cur'd

Of this diseas'd opinion, and betimes;

For 'tis most dangerous.

LEONTES.

Say it be, 'tis true.

CAMILLO.

No, no, my lord.

LEONTES.

It is; you lie, you lie.

I say thou liest, Camillo, and I hate thee;

Pronounce thee a gross lout, a mindless slave,

Or else a hovering temporizer that

Canst with thine eyes at once see good and evil,

Inclining to them both. Were my wife's liver

Infected as her life, she would not live

The running of one glass.

CAMILLO.

Who does her?

LEONTES.

Why, he that wears her like her medal, hanging
About his neck, Bohemia; who-if I
Had servants true about me that bare eyes
To see alike mine honour as their profits,
Their own particular thrifts, they would do that
Which should undo more doing. Ay, and thou,
His cupbearer-whom I from meaner form
Have bench'd and rear'd to worship; who mayst see,
Plainly as heaven sees earth and earth sees heaven,
How I am gall'd-mightst bespice a cup
To give mine enemy a lasting wink;
Which draught to me were cordial.

CAMILLO.

Sir, my lord,
I could do this; and that with no rash potion,
But with a ling'ring dram that should not work

Maliciously like poison. But I cannot
Believe this crack to be in my dread mistress,
So sovereignly being honourable.
I have lov'd thee-

LEONTES.
Make that thy question, and go rot!
Dost think I am so muddy, so unsettled,
To appoint myself in this vexation; sully
The purity and whiteness of my sheets-
Which to preserve is sleep, which being spotted
Is goads, thorns, nettles, tails of wasps;
Give scandal to the blood o' th' Prince, my son-
Who I do think is mine, and love as mine-
Without ripe moving to 't? Would I do this?

Could man so blench?

CAMILLO.
I must believe you, sir.
I do; and will fetch off Bohemia for't;

Provided that, when he's remov'd, your Highness
Will take again your queen as yours at first,
Even for your son's sake; and thereby for sealing
The injury of tongues in courts and kingdoms
Known and allied to yours.

LEONTES.
Thou dost advise me
Even so as I mine own course have set down.

I'll give no blemish to her honour, none.

CAMILLO.
My lord,
Go then; and with a countenance as clear
As friendship wears at feasts, keep with Bohemia
And with your queen. I am his cupbearer;
If from me he have wholesome beverage,
Account me not your servant.

LEONTES.

This is all:

Do't, and thou hast the one half of my heart;

Do't not, thou split'st thine own.

CAMILLO.

I'll do't, my lord.

LEONTES.

I will seem friendly, as thou hast advis'd me. *Exit*

CAMILLO. O miserable lady! But, for me,

What case stand I in? I must be the poisoner

Of good Polixenes; and my ground to do't

Is the obedience to a master; one

Who, in rebellion with himself, will have

All that are his so too. To do this deed,

Promotion follows. If I could find example

Of thousands that had struck anointed kings

And flourish'd after, I'd not do't; but since

Nor brass, nor stone, nor parchment, bears not one, Let villainy itself forswear't. I must

Forsake the court. To do't, or no, is certain

To me a break-neck. Happy star reign now!

Here comes Bohemia.

Enter POLIXENES

POLIXENES.

This is strange. Methinks

My favour here begins to warp. Not speak?

Good day, Camillo.

CAMILLO.

Hail, most royal sir!

POLIXENES.

What is the news i' th' court?

CAMILLO.

None rare, my lord.

POLIXENES.

The King hath on him such a countenance
As he had lost some province, and a region
Lov'd as he loves himself; even now I met him
With customary compliment, when he,
Wafting his eyes to th' contrary and falling
A lip of much contempt, speeds from me;
So leaves me to consider what is breeding
That changes thus his manners.

CAMILLO.

I dare not know, my lord.

POLIXENES.

How, dare not! Do not. Do you know, and dare not
Be intelligent to me? 'Tis thereabouts;
For, to yourself, what you do know, you must,
And cannot say you dare not. Good Camillo,
Your chang'd complexions are to me a mirror

Which shows me mine chang'd too; for I must be

A party in this alteration, finding

Myself thus alter'd with't.

CAMILLO.

There is a sickness

Which puts some of us in distemper; but

I cannot name the disease; and it is caught

Of you that yet are well.

POLIXENES.

How! caught of me?

Make me not sighted like the basilisk;

I have look'd on thousands who have sped the better

By my regard, but kill'd none so. Camillo-

As you are certainly a gentleman; thereto

Clerk-like experienc'd, which no less adorns

Our gentry than our parents' noble names,

In whose success we are gentle-I beseech you,

If you know aught which does behove my knowledge

Thereof to be inform'd, imprison't not
In ignorant concealment.

CAMILLO.
I may not answer.

POLIXENES.

A sickness caught of me, and yet I well?
I must be answer'd. Dost thou hear, Camillo?
I conjure thee, by all the parts of man
Which honour does acknowledge, whereof the least
Is not this suit of mine, that thou declare
What incidency thou dost guess of harm
Is creeping toward me; how far off, how near;
Which way to be prevented, if to be;
If not, how best to bear it.

CAMILLO.
Sir, I will tell you;
Since I am charg'd in honour, and by him

That I think honourable. Therefore mark my counsel,

Which must be ev'n as swiftly followed as

I mean to utter it, or both yourself and me

Cry lost, and so goodnight.

POLIXENES.

On, good Camillo.

CAMILLO.

I am appointed him to murder you.

POLIXENES.

By whom, Camillo?

CAMILLO.

By the King.

POLIXENES.

For what?

CAMILLO.

He thinks, nay, with all confidence he swears,

As he had seen 't or been an instrument

To vice you to't, that you have touch'd his queen Forbiddenly.

POLIXENES.

O, then my best blood turn

To an infected jelly, and my name

Be yok'd with his that did betray the Best!

Turn then my freshest reputation to

A savour that may strike the dullest nostril

Where I arrive, and my approach be shunn'd,

Nay, hated too, worse than the great'st infection

That e'er was heard or read!

CAMILLO.

Swear his thought over

By each particular star in heaven and

By all their influences, you may as well

Forbid the sea for to obey the moon

As or by oath remove or counsel shake
The fabric of his folly, whose foundation
Is pil'd upon his faith and will continue
The standing of his body.

POLIXENES.
How should this grow?

CAMILLO.
I know not; but I am sure 'tis safer to
Avoid what's grown than question how 'tis born.
If therefore you dare trust my honesty,
That lies enclosed in this trunk which you
Shall bear along impawn'd, away to-night.
Your followers I will whisper to the business;
And will, by twos and threes, at several posterns,
Clear them o' th' city. For myself, I'll put
My fortunes to your service, which are here
By this discovery lost. Be not uncertain,
For, by the honour of my parents, I
Have utt'red truth; which if you seek to prove,

I dare not stand by; nor shall you be safer
Than one condemn'd by the King's own mouth, thereon
His execution sworn.

POLIXENES.
I do believe thee:
I saw his heart in's face. Give me thy hand;
Be pilot to me, and thy places shall
Still neighbour mine. My ships are ready, and
My people did expect my hence departure
Two days ago. This jealousy
Is for a precious creature; as she's rare,
Must it be great; and, as his person's mighty,
Must it be violent; and as he does conceive
He is dishonour'd by a man which ever
Profess'd to him, why, his revenges must
In that be made more bitter. Fear o'ershades me.
Good expedition be my friend, and comfort
The gracious Queen, part of this theme, but nothing
Of his ill-ta'en suspicion! Come, Camillo;
I will respect thee as a father, if

Thou bear'st my life off hence. Let us avoid.

CAMILLO.

It is in mine authority to command

The keys of all the posterns. Please your Highness

To take the urgent hour. Come, sir, away. *Exeunt*

ACT II. SCENE I. Sicilia. The palace of LEONTES

Enter HERMIONE, MAMILLIUS, and LADIES

HERMIONE.

Take the boy to you; he so troubles me,

'Tis past enduring.

FIRST LADY.

Come, my gracious lord,

Shall I be your playfellow?

MAMILLIUS.

No, I'll none of you.

FIRST LADY.

Why, my sweet lord?

MAMILLIUS.

You'll kiss me hard, and speak to me as if

I were a baby still. I love you better.

SECOND LADY.

And why so, my lord?

MAMILLIUS.

Not for because

Your brows are blacker; yet black brows, they say,

Become some women best; so that there be not

Too much hair there, but in a semicircle

Or a half-moon made with a pen.

SECOND LADY.

Who taught't this?

MAMILLIUS.

I learn'd it out of women's faces. Pray now,

What colour are your eyebrows?

FIRST LADY.

Blue, my lord.

MAMILLIUS.

Nay, that's a mock. I have seen a lady's nose

That has been blue, but not her eyebrows.

FIRST LADY.

Hark ye:

The Queen your mother rounds apace. We shall

Present our services to a fine new prince

One of these days; and then you'd wanton with us,

If we would have you.

SECOND LADY.

She is spread of late
Into a goodly bulk. Good time encounter her!

HERMIONE.

What wisdom stirs amongst you? Come, sir, now
I am for you again. Pray you sit by us,
And tell's a tale.

MAMILLIUS.

Merry or sad shall't be?

HERMIONE.

As merry as you will.

MAMILLIUS.

A sad tale's best for winter. I have one
Of sprites and goblins.

HERMIONE.

Let's have that, good sir.

Come on, sit down; come on, and do your best

To fright me with your sprites; you're pow'rfull at it.

MAMILLIUS.

There was a man-

HERMIONE.

Nay, come, sit down; then on.

MAMILLIUS.

Dwelt by a churchyard-I will tell it softly;

Yond crickets shall not hear it.

HERMIONE.

Come on then,

And give't me in mine ear.

Enter LEONTES, ANTIGONUS, LORDS, and OTHERS

LEONTES.

he met there? his train? Camillo with him?

FIRST LORD.

Behind the tuft of pines I met them; never
Saw I men scour so on their way. I ey'd them
Even to their ships.

LEONTES.

How blest am I
In my just censure, in my true opinion!
Alack, for lesser knowledge! How accurs'd
In being so blest! There may be in the cup
A spider steep'd, and one may drink, depart,
And yet partake no venom, for his knowledge
Is not infected; but if one present
Th' abhorr'd ingredient to his eye, make known
How he hath drunk, he cracks his gorge, his sides,
With violent hefts. I have drunk, and seen the spider.
Camillo was his help in this, his pander.
There is a plot against my life, my crown;
All's true that is mistrusted. That false villain

Whom I employ'd was pre-employ'd by him;
He has discover'd my design, and I
Remain a pinch'd thing; yea, a very trick
For them to play at will. How came the posterns
So easily open?

FIRST LORD.
By his great authority;
Which often hath no less prevail'd than so
On your command.

LEONTES.

I know't too well.
Give me the boy. I am glad you did not nurse him;
Though he does bear some signs of me, yet you
Have too much blood in him.

HERMIONE.

What is this? Sport?

LEONTES.

Bear the boy hence; he shall not come about her;

Away with him; and let her sport herself

[MAMILLIUS is led out]

With that she's big with-for 'tis Polixenes

Has made thee swell thus.

HERMIONE.

But I'd say he had not,

And I'll be sworn you would believe my saying,

Howe'er you lean to th' nayward.

LEONTES.

You, my lords,

Look on her, mark her well; be but about

To say 'She is a goodly lady' and

The justice of your hearts will thereto ad

'Tis pity she's not honest-honourable.'

Praise her but for this her without-door form,

Which on my faith deserves high speech, and straight

The shrug, the hum or ha, these petty brands

That calumny doth use-O, I am out!-

That mercy does, for calumny will sear

Virtue itself-these shrugs, these hum's and ha's,

When you have said she's goodly, come between,

Ere you can say she's honest. But be't known,

From him that has most cause to grieve it should be,

She's an adultress.

HERMIONE.

Should a villain say so,

The most replenish'd villain in the world,

He were as much more villain: you, my lord,

Do but mistake.

LEONTES.

You have mistook, my lady,

Polixenes for Leontes. O thou thing!

Which I'll not call a creature of thy place,

Lest barbarism, making me the precedent,

Should a like language use to all degrees

And mannerly distinguishment leave out
Betwixt the prince and beggar. I have said
She's an adultress; I have said with whom.
More, she's a traitor; and Camillo is
A federary with her, and one that knows
What she should shame to know herself
But with her most vile principal-that she's
A bed-swerver, even as bad as those
That vulgars give bold'st titles; ay, and privy
To this their late escape.

HERMIONE.
No, by my life,
Privy to none of this. How will this grieve you,
When you shall come to clearer knowledge, that
You thus have publish'd me! Gentle my lord,
You scarce can right me throughly then to say
You did mistake.

LEONTES.
No; if I mistake

In those foundations which I build upon,
The centre is not big enough to bear
A school-boy's top. Away with her to prison.
He who shall speak for her is afar off guilty
But that he speaks.

HERMIONE.
There's some ill planet reigns.
I must be patient till the heavens look
With an aspect more favourable. Good my lords,
I am not prone to weeping, as our sex
Commonly are-the want of which vain dew
Perchance shall dry your pities-but I have
That honourable grief lodg'd here which burns
Worse than tears drown. Beseech you all, my lords,
With thoughts so qualified as your charities
Shall best instruct you, measure me; and so
The King's will be perform'd!

LEONTES.
[To the GUARD] Shall I be heard?

HERMIONE.

Who is't that goes with me? Beseech your highness
My women may be with me, for you see
My plight requires it. Do not weep, good fools;
There is no cause; when you shall know your mistress
Has deserv'd prison, then abound in tears
As I come out: this action I now go on
Is for my better grace. Adieu, my lord.
I never wish'd to see you sorry; now
I trust I shall. My women, come; you have leave.

LEONTES.

Go, do our bidding; hence!

Exeunt HERMIONE, guarded, and LADIES

FIRST LORD.

Beseech your Highness, call the Queen again.

ANTIGONUS.

Be certain what you do, sir, lest your justice

Prove violence, in the which three great ones suffer,

Yourself, your queen, your son.

FIRST LORD.

For her, my lord,

I dare my life lay down-and will do't, sir,

Please you t' accept it-that the Queen is spotless

I' th' eyes of heaven and to you-I mean

In this which you accuse her.

ANTIGONUS.

If it prove

She's otherwise, I'll keep my stables where

I lodge my wife; I'll go in couples with her;

Than when I feel and see her no farther trust her;

For every inch of woman in the world,

Ay, every dram of woman's flesh is false,

If she be.

LEONTES.

Hold your peaces.

FIRST LORD.

Good my lord-

ANTIGONUS.

It is for you we speak, not for ourselves.

You are abus'd, and by some putter-on

That will be damn'd for't. Would I knew the villain!

I would land-damn him. Be she honour-flaw'd-

I have three daughters: the eldest is eleven;

The second and the third, nine and some five;

If this prove true, they'll pay for 't. By mine honour,

I'll geld 'em all; fourteen they shall not see

To bring false generations. They are co-heirs;

And I had rather glib myself than they

Should not produce fair issue.

LEONTES.

Cease; no more.

You smell this business with a sense as cold

As is a dead man's nose; but I do see't and feel't

As you feel doing thus; and see withal

The instruments that feel.

ANTIGONUS.

If it be so,

We need no grave to bury honesty;

There's not a grain of it the face to sweeten

Of the whole dungy earth.

LEONTES.

What! Lack I credit?

FIRST LORD.

I had rather you did lack than I, my lord,

Upon this ground; and more it would content me

To have her honour true than your suspicion,

Be blam'd for't how you might.

LEONTES.

Why, what need we

Commune with you of this, but rather follow

Our forceful instigation? Our prerogative

Calls not your counsels; but our natural goodness

Imparts this; which, if you-or stupified

Or seeming so in skill-cannot or will not

Relish a truth like us, inform yourselves

We need no more of your advice. The matter,

The loss, the gain, the ord'ring on't, is all

Properly ours.

ANTIGONUS.

And I wish, my liege,

You had only in your silent judgment tried it,

Without more overture.

LEONTES.

How could that be?

Either thou art most ignorant by age,

Or thou wert born a fool. Camillo's flight,

Added to their familiarity-

Which was as gross as ever touch'd conjecture,

That lack'd sight only, nought for approbation

But only seeing, all other circumstances

Made up to th' deed-doth push on this proceeding.

Yet, for a greater confirmation-

For, in an act of this importance, 'twere

Most piteous to be wild-I have dispatch'd in post

To sacred Delphos, to Apollo's temple,

Cleomenes and Dion, whom you know

Of stuff'd sufficiency. Now, from the oracle

They will bring all, whose spiritual counsel had,

Shall stop or spur me. Have I done well?

FIRST LORD.

Well done, my lord.

LEONTES.

Though I am satisfied, and need no more

Than what I know, yet shall the oracle

Give rest to th' minds of others such as he

Whose ignorant credulity will not

Come up to th' truth. So have we thought it good

From our free person she should be confin'd,

Lest that the treachery of the two fled hence

Be left her to perform. Come, follow us;

We are to speak in public; for this business

Will raise us all.

ANTIGONUS.

[Aside] To laughter, as I take it,

If the good truth were known.

Exeunt

SCENE II. Sicilia. A prison

Enter PAULINA, a GENTLEMAN, and ATTENDANTS

PAULINA.

The keeper of the prison-call to him;

Let him have knowledge who I am. *Exit* GENTLEMAN

Good lady!

No court in Europe is too good for thee;

What dost thou then in prison?

Re-enter GENTLEMAN with the GAOLER

Now, good sir,

You know me, do you not?

GAOLER.

For a worthy lady,

And one who much I honour.

PAULINA.

Pray you, then,

Conduct me to the Queen.

GAOLER.

I may not, madam;

To the contrary I have express commandment.

PAULINA.

Here's ado, to lock up honesty and honour from

Th' access of gentle visitors! Is't lawful, pray you,

To see her women-any of them? Emilia?

GAOLER.

So please you, madam,

To put apart these your attendants,

Shall bring Emilia forth.

PAULINA.

I pray now, call her.

Withdraw yourselves. *Exeunt* ATTENDANTS

GAOLER.

And, madam,

I must be present at your conference.

PAULINA.

Well, be't so, prithee. *Exit* GAOLER

Here's such ado to make no stain a stain

As passes colouring.

Re-enter GAOLER, with EMILIA

Dear gentlewoman,

How fares our gracious lady?

EMILIA.

As well as one so great and so forlorn

May hold together. On her frights and griefs,

Which never tender lady hath borne greater,

She is, something before her time, deliver'd.

PAULINA.

A boy?

EMILIA.

A daughter, and a goodly babe,

Lusty, and like to live. The Queen receives

Much comfort in't; says 'My poor prisoner,

I am as innocent as you.'

PAULINA.

I dare be sworn.

These dangerous unsafe lunes i' th' King, beshrew them!
He must be told on't, and he shall. The office
Becomes a woman best; I'll take't upon me;
If I prove honey-mouth'd, let my tongue blister,
And never to my red-look'd anger be
The trumpet any more. Pray you, Emilia,
Commend my best obedience to the Queen;
If she dares trust me with her little babe,
I'll show't the King, and undertake to be
Her advocate to th' loud'st. We do not know
How he may soften at the sight o' th' child:
The silence often of pure innocence
Persuades when speaking fails.

EMILIA.
Most worthy madam,
Your honour and your goodness is so evident
That your free undertaking cannot miss
A thriving issue; there is no lady living

So meet for this great errand. Please your ladyship

To visit the next room, I'll presently

Acquaint the Queen of your most noble offer

Who but to-day hammer'd of this design,

But durst not tempt a minister of honour,

Lest she should be denied.

PAULINA.

Tell her, Emilia,

I'll use that tongue I have; if wit flow from't

As boldness from my bosom, let't not be doubted

I shall do good.

EMILIA.

Now be you blest for it!

I'll to the Queen. Please you come something nearer.

GAOLER.

Madam, if't please the Queen to send the babe,

I know not what I shall incur to pass it, Having no warrant.

PAULINA.

You need not fear it, sir.

This child was prisoner to the womb, and is

By law and process of great Nature thence

Freed and enfranchis'd-not a party to

The anger of the King, nor guilty of,

If any be, the trespass of the Queen.

GAOLER.

I do believe it.

PAULINA.

Do not you fear. Upon mine honour, I

Will stand betwixt you and danger. *Exeunt*

SCENE III. Sicilia. The palace of LEONTES

Enter LEONTES, ANTIGONUS, LORDS, and SERVANTS

LEONTES.

Nor night nor day no rest! It is but weakness

To bear the matter thus-mere weakness. If

The cause were not in being-part o' th' cause,

She, th' adultress; for the harlot king

Is quite beyond mine arm, out of the blank

And level of my brain, plot-proof; but she

I can hook to me-say that she were gone,

Given to the fire, a moiety of my rest

Might come to me again. Who's there?

FIRST SERVANT.

My lord?

LEONTES.

How does the boy?

FIRST SERVANT.

He took good rest to-night;

'Tis hop'd his sickness is discharg'd.

LEONTES.

To see his nobleness!

Conceiving the dishonour of his mother,

He straight declin'd, droop'd, took it deeply,

Fasten'd and fix'd the shame on't in himself,

Threw off his spirit, his appetite, his sleep,

And downright languish'd. Leave me solely. Go,

See how he fares. *[Exit SERVANT]* Fie, fie! no thought of him!

The very thought of my revenges that way

Recoil upon me-in himself too mighty,

And in his parties, his alliance. Let him be,

Until a time may serve; for present vengeance,

Take it on her. Camillo and Polixenes

Laugh at me, make their pastime at my sorrow.

They should not laugh if I could reach them; nor

Shall she, within my pow'r.

Enter PAULINA, with a CHILD

FIRST LORD.

You must not enter.

PAULINA.

Nay, rather, good my lords, be second to me.

Fear you his tyrannous passion more, alas,

Than the Queen's life? A gracious innocent soul,

More free than he is jealous.

ANTIGONUS.

That's enough.

SECOND SERVANT.

Madam, he hath not slept to-night; commanded

None should come at him.

PAULINA.

Not so hot, good sir;

I come to bring him sleep. 'Tis such as you,

That creep like shadows by him, and do sigh

At each his needless heavings-such as you

Nourish the cause of his awaking: I

Do come with words as medicinal as true,

Honest as either, to purge him of that humour

That presses him from sleep.

LEONTES.

What noise there, ho?

PAULINA.

No noise, my lord; but needful conference

About some gossips for your Highness.

LEONTES.

How!

Away with that audacious lady! Antigonus,

I charg'd thee that she should not come about me;

I knew she would.

ANTIGONUS.

I told her so, my lord,

On your displeasure's peril, and on mine,

She should not visit you.

LEONTES.

What, canst not rule her?

PAULINA.

From all dishonesty he can: in this,

Unless he take the course that you have done-

Commit me for committing honour-trust it,

He shall not rule me.

ANTIGONUS.

La you now, you hear!

When she will take the rein, I let her run;

But she'll not stumble.

PAULINA.

Good my liege, I come-
And I beseech you hear me, who professes
Myself your loyal servant, your physician,
Your most obedient counsellor; yet that dares
Less appear so, in comforting your evils,
Than such as most seem yours-I say I come
From your good Queen.

LEONTES.

Good Queen!

PAULINA.

Good Queen, my lord, good Queen-I say good Queen;
And would by combat make her good, so were I
A man, the worst about you.

LEONTES.

Force her hence.

PAULINA.

Let him that makes but trifles of his eyes

First hand me. On mine own accord I'll off;

But first I'll do my errand. The good Queen,

For she is good, hath brought you forth a daughter;

Here 'tis; commends it to your blessing.

[Laying down the child]

LEONTES.

Out!

A mankind witch! Hence with her, out o' door!

A most intelligencing bawd!

PAULINA.

Not so.

I am as ignorant in that as you

In so entitling me; and no less honest

Than you are mad; which is enough, I'll warrant,

As this world goes, to pass for honest.

LEONTES.

Traitors!

Will you not push her out? Give her the bastard.

[To ANTIGONUS] Thou dotard, thou art woman-tir'd, unroosted

By thy Dame Partlet here. Take up the bastard;

Take't up, I say; give't to thy crone.

PAULINA.

For ever

Unvenerable be thy hands, if thou

Tak'st up the Princess by that forced baseness

Which he has put upon't!

LEONTES.

He dreads his wife.

PAULINA.

So I would you did; then 'twere past all doubt
You'd call your children yours.

LEONTES.

A nest of traitors!

ANTIGONUS.

I am none, by this good light.

PAULINA.

Nor I; nor any
But one that's here; and that's himself; for he
The sacred honour of himself, his Queen's,
His hopeful son's, his babe's, betrays to slander,
Whose sting is sharper than the sword's; and will not-
For, as the case now stands, it is a curse
He cannot be compell'd to 't-once remove
The root of his opinion, which is rotten

As ever oak or stone was sound.

LEONTES.

A callat

Of boundless tongue, who late hath beat her husband,

And now baits me! This brat is none of mine;

It is the issue of Polixenes.

Hence with it, and together with the dam

Commit them to the fire.

PAULINA.

It is yours.

And, might we lay th' old proverb to your charge,

So like you 'tis the worse. Behold, my lords,

Although the print be little, the whole matter

And copy of the father-eye, nose, lip,

The trick of's frown, his forehead; nay, the valley,

The pretty dimples of his chin and cheek; his smiles;

The very mould and frame of hand, nail, finger.

And thou, good goddess Nature, which hast made it

So like to him that got it, if thou hast

The ordering of the mind too, 'mongst all colours

No yellow in't, lest she suspect, as he does,

Her children not her husband's!

LEONTES.

A gross hag!

And, lozel, thou art worthy to be hang'd

That wilt not stay her tongue.

ANTIGONUS.

Hang all the husbands

That cannot do that feat, you'll leave yourself

Hardly one subject.

LEONTES.

Once more, take her hence.

PAULINA.

A most unworthy and unnatural lord

Can do no more.

LEONTES.

I'll ha' thee burnt.

PAULINA.

I care not.

It is an heretic that makes the fire,

Not she which burns in't. I'll not call you tyrant

But this most cruel usage of your Queen-

Not able to produce more accusation

Than your own weak-hing'd fancy-something savours

Of tyranny, and will ignoble make you,

Yea, scandalous to the world.

LEONTES.

On your allegiance,

Out of the chamber with her! Were I a tyrant,

Where were her life? She durst not call me so,

If she did know me one. Away with her!

PAULINA.

I pray you, do not push me; I'll be gone.
Look to your babe, my lord; 'tis yours. Jove send her
A better guiding spirit! What needs these hands?
You that are thus so tender o'er his follies
Will never do him good, not one of you.
So, so. Farewell; we are gone. *Exit*

LEONTES. Thou, traitor, hast set on thy wife to this.
My child! Away with't. Even thou, that hast
A heart so tender o'er it, take it hence,
And see it instantly consum'd with fire;
Even thou, and none but thou. Take it up straight.
Within this hour bring me word 'tis done,
And by good testimony, or I'll seize thy life,
With that thou else call'st thine. If thou refuse,
And wilt encounter with my wrath, say so;
The bastard brains with these my proper hands
Shall I dash out. Go, take it to the fire;

For thou set'st on thy wife.

ANTIGONUS.

I did not, sir.

These lords, my noble fellows, if they please,

Can clear me in't.

LORDS.

We can. My royal liege,

He is not guilty of her coming hither.

LEONTES.

You're liars all.

FIRST LORD.

Beseech your Highness, give us better credit.

We have always truly serv'd you; and beseech

So to esteem of us; and on our knees we beg,

As recompense of our dear services

Past and to come, that you do change this purpose,

Which being so horrible, so bloody, must
Lead on to some foul issue. We all kneel.

LEONTES.

I am a feather for each wind that blows.
Shall I live on to see this bastard kneel
And call me father? Better burn it now
Than curse it then. But be it; let it live.
It shall not neither. *[To ANTIGONUS]* You, Sir, come you hither.
You that have been so tenderly officious
With Lady Margery, your midwife there,
To save this bastard's life-for 'tis a bastard,
So sure as this beard's grey-what will you adventure
To save this brat's life?

ANTIGONUS.
Anything, my lord,
That my ability may undergo,
And nobleness impose. At least, thus much:
I'll pawn the little blood which I have left

To save the innocent-anything possible.

LEONTES.

It shall be possible. Swear by this sword

Thou wilt perform my bidding.

ANTIGONUS.

I will, my lord.

LEONTES.

Mark, and perform it-seest thou? For the fail

Of any point in't shall not only be

Death to thyself, but to thy lewd-tongu'd wife,

Whom for this time we pardon. We enjoin thee,

As thou art liegeman to us, that thou carry

This female bastard hence; and that thou bear it

To some remote and desert place, quite out

Of our dominions; and that there thou leave it,

Without more mercy, to it own protection

And favour of the climate. As by strange fortune

It came to us, I do in justice charge thee, On thy soul's peril and thy body's torture,

That thou commend it strangely to some place

Where chance may nurse or end it. Take it up.

ANTIGONUS.

I swear to do this, though a present death

Had been more merciful. Come on, poor babe.

Some powerful spirit instruct the kites and ravens

To be thy nurses! Wolves and bears, they say,

Casting their savageness aside, have done

Like offices of pity. Sir, be prosperous

In more than this deed does require! And blessing

Against this cruelty fight on thy side,

Poor thing, condemn'd to loss! *Exit* with the child

LEONTES.

No, I'll not rear

Another's issue.

Enter a SERVANT

SERVANT.

Please your Highness, posts

From those you sent to th' oracle are come

An hour since. Cleomenes and Dion,

Being well arriv'd from Delphos, are both landed,

Hasting to th' court.

FIRST LORD.

So please you, sir, their speed

Hath been beyond account.

LEONTES.

Twenty-three days

They have been absent; 'tis good speed; foretells

The great Apollo suddenly will have

The truth of this appear. Prepare you, lords;

Summon a session, that we may arraign

Our most disloyal lady; for, as she hath

Been publicly accus'd, so shall she have

A just and open trial. While she lives,

My heart will be a burden to me. Leave me;

And think upon my bidding. *Exeunt*

ACT III. SCENE I. Sicilia. On the road to the Capital

Enter CLEOMENES and DION

CLEOMENES.

The climate's delicate, the air most sweet,
Fertile the isle, the temple much surpassing
The common praise it bears.

DION.

I shall report,
For most it caught me, the celestial habits-
Methinks I so should term them-and the reverence
Of the grave wearers. O, the sacrifice!
How ceremonious, solemn, and unearthly,
It was i' th' off'ring!

CLEOMENES.

But of all, the burst

And the ear-deaf'ning voice o' th' oracle,

Kin to Jove's thunder, so surpris'd my sense

That I was nothing.

DION.

If th' event o' th' journey

Prove as successful to the Queen-O, be't so!-

As it hath been to us rare, pleasant, speedy,

The time is worth the use on't.

CLEOMENES.

Great Apollo

Turn all to th' best! These proclamations,

So forcing faults upon Hermione,

I little like.

DION.

The violent carriage of it

Will clear or end the business. When the oracle-

Thus by Apollo's great divine seal'd up-

Shall the contents discover, something rare

Even then will rush to knowledge. Go; fresh horses.

And gracious be the issue! *Exeunt*

SCENE II. Sicilia. A court of justice

Enter LEONTES, LORDS, and OFFICERS

LEONTES.

This sessions, to our great grief we pronounce,

Even pushes 'gainst our heart-the party tried,

The daughter of a king, our wife, and one

Of us too much belov'd. Let us be clear'd

Of being tyrannous, since we so openly

Proceed in justice, which shall have due course,

Even to the guilt or the purgation.

Produce the prisoner.

OFFICER.

It is his Highness' pleasure that the Queen

Appear in person here in court.

Enter HERMIONE, as to her trial, PAULINA, and LADIES

Silence!

LEONTES.
Read the indictment.

OFFICER.
[Reads] 'Hermione, Queen to the worthy Leontes, King of Sicilia, thou art here accused and arraigned of high treason, in committing adultery with Polixenes, King of Bohemia; and conspiring with Camillo to take away the life of our sovereign lord the King, thy royal husband: the pretence whereof being by circumstances partly laid open, thou, Hermione, contrary to the faith and allegiance of true subject, didst counsel and aid them, for their better safety, to fly away by night.'

HERMIONE.
Since what I am to say must be but that
Which contradicts my accusation, and
The testimony on my part no other
But what comes from myself, it shall scarce boot me
To say 'Not guilty.' Mine integrity

Being counted falsehood shall, as I express it,

Be so receiv'd. But thus-if pow'rs divine

Behold our human actions, as they do,

I doubt not then but innocence shall make

False accusation blush, and tyranny

Tremble at patience. You, my lord, best know-

Who least will seem to do so-my past life

Hath been as continent, as chaste, as true,

As I am now unhappy; which is more

Than history can pattern, though devis'd

And play'd to take spectators; for behold me-

A fellow of the royal bed, which owe

A moiety of the throne, a great king's daughter,

The mother to a hopeful prince-here standing

To prate and talk for life and honour fore

Who please to come and hear. For life, I prize it

As I weigh grief, which I would spare; for honour,

'Tis a derivative from me to mine,

And only that I stand for. I appeal

To your own conscience, sir, before Polixenes

Came to your court, how I was in your grace,

How merited to be so; since he came,
With what encounter so uncurrent I
Have strain'd t' appear thus; if one jot beyond
The bound of honour, or in act or will
That way inclining, hard'ned be the hearts
Of all that hear me, and my near'st of kin
Cry fie upon my grave!

LEONTES.

I ne'er heard yet
That any of these bolder vices wanted
Less impudence to gainsay what they did
Than to perform it first.

HERMIONE.

That's true enough;
Though 'tis a saying, sir, not due to me.

LEONTES.

You will not own it.

HERMIONE.

More than mistress of

Which comes to me in name of fault, I must not

At all acknowledge. For Polixenes,

With whom I am accus'd, I do confess

I lov'd him as in honour he requir'd;

With such a kind of love as might become

A lady like me; with a love even such,

So and no other, as yourself commanded;

Which not to have done, I think had been in me

Both disobedience and ingratitude

To you and toward your friend; whose love had spoke,

Ever since it could speak, from an infant, freely,

That it was yours. Now for conspiracy:

I know not how it tastes, though it be dish'd

For me to try how; all I know of it

Is that Camillo was an honest man;

And why he left your court, the gods themselves,

Wotting no more than I, are ignorant.

LEONTES.

You knew of his departure, as you know
What you have underta'en to do in's absence.

HERMIONE.
Sir,
You speak a language that I understand not.
My life stands in the level of your dreams,
Which I'll lay down.

LEONTES.

Your actions are my dreams.
You had a bastard by Polixenes,
And I but dream'd it. As you were past all shame-
Those of your fact are so-so past all truth;
Which to deny concerns more than avails; for as
Thy brat hath been cast out, like to itself,
No father owning it-which is indeed
More criminal in thee than it-so thou
Shalt feel our justice; in whose easiest passage
Look for no less than death.

HERMIONE.

Sir, spare your threats.
The bug which you would fright me with I seek.

To me can life be no commodity.
The crown and comfort of my life, your favour,
I do give lost, for I do feel it gone,
But know not how it went; my second joy
And first fruits of my body, from his presence
I am barr'd, like one infectious; my third comfort,
Starr'd most unluckily, is from my breast-
The innocent milk in it most innocent mouth-
Hal'd out to murder; myself on every post
Proclaim'd a strumpet; with immodest hatred
The child-bed privilege denied, which 'longs
To women of all fashion; lastly, hurried
Here to this place, i' th' open air, before
I have got strength of limit. Now, my liege,
Tell me what blessings I have here alive

That I should fear to die. Therefore proceed.
But yet hear this-mistake me not: no life,
I prize it not a straw, but for mine honour
Which I would free-if I shall be condemn'd
Upon surmises, all proofs sleeping else
But what your jealousies awake, I tell you
'Tis rigour, and not law. Your honours all,
I do refer me to the oracle:
Apollo be my judge!

FIRST LORD.

This your request
Is altogether just. Therefore, bring forth,
And in Apollo's name, his oracle.

Exeunt certain OFFICERS

HERMIONE.

The Emperor of Russia was my father;
O that he were alive, and here beholding
His daughter's trial! that he did but see
The flatness of my misery; yet with eyes
Of pity, not revenge!

Re-enter OFFICERS, with CLEOMENES and DION

OFFICER.

You here shall swear upon this sword of justice
That you, Cleomenes and Dion, have
Been both at Delphos, and from thence have brought
This seal'd-up oracle, by the hand deliver'd
Of great Apollo's priest; and that since then
You have not dar'd to break the holy seal
Nor read the secrets in't.

CLEOMENES, DION. All this we swear.

LEONTES.

Break up the seals and read.

OFFICER.

[Reads] 'Hermione is chaste; Polixenes blameless;
Camillo a true subject; Leontes a jealous tyrant; his innocent
babe truly begotten; and the King shall live without an heir, if
that which is lost be not found.'

LORDS.

Now blessed be the great Apollo!

HERMIONE.
Praised!

LEONTES.

Hast thou read truth?

OFFICER.
Ay, my lord; even so
As it is here set down.

LEONTES.
There is no truth at all i' th' oracle.

The sessions shall proceed. This is mere falsehood.

Enter a SERVANT

SERVANT.

My lord the King, the King!

LEONTES.

What is the business?

SERVANT.

O sir, I shall be hated to report it:

The Prince your son, with mere conceit and fear

Of the Queen's speed, is gone.

LEONTES.

How! Gone?

SERVANT.

Is dead.

LEONTES.

Apollo's angry; and the heavens themselves
Do strike at my injustice. *[HERMIONE swoons]*
How now, there!

PAULINA.

This news is mortal to the Queen. Look down
And see what death is doing.

LEONTES.

Take her hence.

Her heart is but o'ercharg'd; she will recover.
I have too much believ'd mine own suspicion.
Beseech you tenderly apply to her
Some remedies for life.

Exeunt PAULINA and LADIES with HERMIONE

Apollo, pardon
My great profaneness 'gainst thine oracle.
I'll reconcile me to Polixenes,
New woo my queen, recall the good Camillo-

Whom I proclaim a man of truth, of mercy.

For, being transported by my jealousies

To bloody thoughts and to revenge, I chose

Camillo for the minister to poison

My friend Polixenes; which had been done

But that the good mind of Camillo tardied

My swift command, though I with death and with

Reward did threaten and encourage him,

Not doing it and being done. He, most humane

And fill'd with honour, to my kingly guest

Unclasp'd my practice, quit his fortunes here,

Which you knew great, and to the certain hazard

Of all incertainties himself commended,

No richer than his honour. How he glisters

Thorough my rust! And how his piety

Does my deeds make the blacker!

Re-enter PAULINA

PAULINA.

Woe the while!

O, cut my lace, lest my heart, cracking it,

Break too!

FIRST LORD.

What fit is this, good lady?

PAULINA.

What studied torments, tyrant, hast for me?

What wheels, racks, fires? what flaying, boiling

In leads or oils? What old or newer torture

Must I receive, whose every word deserves

To taste of thy most worst? Thy tyranny

Together working with thy jealousies,

Fancies too weak for boys, too green and idle

For girls of nine-O, think what they have done,

And then run mad indeed, stark mad; for all

Thy by-gone fooleries were but spices of it.

That thou betray'dst Polixenes, 'twas nothing;

That did but show thee, of a fool, inconstant,

And damnable ingrateful. Nor was't much

Thou wouldst have poison'd good Camillo's honour,

To have him kill a king-poor trespasses,

More monstrous standing by; whereof I reckon
The casting forth to crows thy baby daughter
To be or none or little, though a devil
Would have shed water out of fire ere done't;
Nor is't directly laid to thee, the death
Of the young Prince, whose honourable thoughts-
Thoughts high for one so tender-cleft the heart
That could conceive a gross and foolish sire
Blemish'd his gracious dam. This is not, no,
Laid to thy answer; but the last-O lords,
When I have said, cry 'Woe!'- the Queen, the Queen,
The sweet'st, dear'st creature's dead; and vengeance
For't not dropp'd down yet.

FIRST LORD.
The higher pow'rs forbid!

PAULINA.
I say she's dead; I'll swear't. If word nor oath
Prevail not, go and see. If you can bring
Tincture or lustre in her lip, her eye,

Heat outwardly or breath within, I'll serve you

As I would do the gods. But, O thou tyrant!

Do not repent these things, for they are heavier

Than all thy woes can stir; therefore betake thee

To nothing but despair. A thousand knees

Ten thousand years together, naked, fasting,

Upon a barren mountain, and still winter

In storm perpetual, could not move the gods

To look that way thou wert.

LEONTES.

Go on, go on.

Thou canst not speak too much; I have deserv'd

All tongues to talk their bitt'rest.

FIRST LORD.

Say no more;

Howe'er the business goes, you have made fault

I' th' boldness of your speech.

PAULINA.

I am sorry for't.
All faults I make, when I shall come to know them.
I do repent. Alas, I have show'd too much
The rashness of a woman! He is touch'd
To th' noble heart. What's gone and what's past help
Should be past grief. Do not receive affliction
At my petition; I beseech you, rather
Let me be punish'd that have minded you
Of what you should forget. Now, good my liege,
Sir, royal sir, forgive a foolish woman.

The love I bore your queen-lo, fool again!
I'll speak of her no more, nor of your children;
I'll not remember you of my own lord,
Who is lost too. Take your patience to you,
And I'll say nothing.

LEONTES.

Thou didst speak but well

When most the truth; which I receive much better

Than to be pitied of thee. Prithee, bring me

To the dead bodies of my queen and son.

One grave shall be for both. Upon them shall

The causes of their death appear, unto

Our shame perpetual. Once a day I'll visit

The chapel where they lie; and tears shed there

Shall be my recreation. So long as nature

Will bear up with this exercise, so long

I daily vow to use it. Come, and lead me

To these sorrows. *Exeunt*

SCENE III. Bohemia. The sea-coast

Enter ANTIGONUS with the CHILD, and a MARINER

ANTIGONUS.

Thou art perfect then our ship hath touch'd upon

The deserts of Bohemia?

MARINER.

Ay, my lord, and fear

We have landed in ill time; the skies look grimly

And threaten present blusters. In my conscience,

The heavens with that we have in hand are angry

And frown upon 's.

ANTIGONUS.

Their sacred wills be done! Go, get aboard;

Look to thy bark. I'll not be long before

I call upon thee.

MARINER.

Make your best haste; and go not

Too far i' th' land; 'tis like to be loud weather;

Besides, this place is famous for the creatures

Of prey that keep upon't.

ANTIGONUS.

Go thou away;

I'll follow instantly.

MARINER.

I am glad at heart

To be so rid o' th' business. *Exit*

ANTIGONUS. Come, poor babe.

I have heard, but not believ'd, the spirits o' th' dead

May walk again. If such thing be, thy mother

Appear'd to me last night; for ne'er was dream

So like a waking. To me comes a creature,

Sometimes her head on one side some another-

I never saw a vessel of like sorrow,

So fill'd and so becoming; in pure white robes,

Like very sanctity, she did approach

My cabin where I lay; thrice bow'd before me;

And, gasping to begin some speech, her eyes

Became two spouts; the fury spent, anon

Did this break from her: 'Good Antigonus,

Since fate, against thy better disposition,

Hath made thy person for the thrower-out

Of my poor babe, according to thine oath,

Places remote enough are in Bohemia,

There weep, and leave it crying; and, for the babe

Is counted lost for ever, Perdita

I prithee call't. For this ungentle business,

Put on thee by my lord, thou ne'er shalt see

Thy wife Paulina more.' so, with shrieks,

She melted into air. Affrighted much,

I did in time collect myself, and thought

This was so and no slumber. Dreams are toys;

Yet, for this once, yea, superstitiously,

I will be squar'd by this. I do believe

Hermione hath suffer'd death, and that

Apollo would, this being indeed the issue

Of King Polixenes, it should here be laid,

Either for life or death, upon the earth

Of its right father. Blossom, speed thee well!

[Laying down the child]

There lie, and there thy character; there these

[Laying down a bundle]

Which may, if fortune please, both breed thee, pretty,

And still rest thine. The storm begins. Poor wretch, That for thy mother's fault art thus expos'd

To loss and what may follow! Weep I cannot,

But my heart bleeds; and most accurs'd am I

To be by oath enjoin'd to this. Farewell!

The day frowns more and more. Thou'rt like to have

A lullaby too rough; I never saw

The heavens so dim by day. *[Noise of hunt within]* A savage clamour!

Well may I get aboard! This is the chase;

I am gone for ever. *Exit* , pursued by a bear

Enter an old SHEPHERD

SHEPHERD.

I would there were no age between ten and three and

twenty, or that youth would sleep out the rest; for there is

nothing in the between but getting wenches with child, wronging

the ancientry, stealing, fighting- *[Horns]* Hark you now!

Would

any but these boil'd brains of nineteen and two and twenty hunt

this weather? They have scar'd away two of my best sheep,

which I

fear the wolf will sooner find than the master. If any where

I

have them, 'tis by the sea-side, browsing of ivy. Good luck,

an't

be thy will! What have we here? *[Taking up the child]* Mercy

on's, a barne! A very pretty barne. A boy or a child, I

wonder? A

pretty one; a very pretty one-sure, some scape. Though I am not

bookish, yet I can read waiting-gentlewoman in the scape.

This

has been some stair-work, some trunk-work, some

behind-door-work;

they were warmer that got this than the poor thing is here.

I'll

take it up for pity; yet I'll tarry till my son come; he halloo'd

but even now. Whoa-ho-hoa!

Enter CLOWN

CLOWN.

Hilloa, loa!

SHEPHERD.

What, art so near? If thou'lt see a thing to talk on when
thou art dead and rotten, come hither. What ail'st thou, man?

CLOWN.

I have seen two such sights, by sea and by land! But I am
not to say it is a sea, for it is now the sky; betwixt the
firmament and it you cannot thrust a bodkin's point.

SHEPHERD.

Why, boy, how is it?

CLOWN.

I would you did but see how it chafes, how it rages, how it
takes up the shore! But that's not to the point. O, the most
piteous cry of the poor souls! Sometimes to see 'em, and not to
see 'em; now the ship boring the moon with her mainmast, and anon
swallowed with yeast and froth, as you'd thrust a cork into a
hogshead. And then for the land service-to see how the bear tore

out his shoulder-bone; how he cried to me for help, and said his name was Antigonus, a nobleman! But to make an end of the ship-

to see how the sea flap-dragon'd it; but first, how the poor souls roared, and the sea mock'd them; and how the poor gentleman roared, and the bear mock'd him, both roaring louder than the sea or weather.

SHEPHERD.

Name of mercy, when was this, boy?

CLOWN.

Now, now; I have not wink'd since I saw these sights; the men are not yet cold under water, nor the bear half din'd on the gentleman; he's at it now.

SHEPHERD.

Would I had been by to have help'd the old man!

CLOWN.

I would you had been by the ship-side, to have help'd her;
there your charity would have lack'd footing.

SHEPHERD.
Heavy matters, heavy matters! But look thee here, boy.
Now bless thyself; thou met'st with things dying, I with things
new-born. Here's a sight for thee; look thee, a bearing-cloth for
a squire's child! Look thee here; take up, take up, boy;
open't.

So, let's see-it was told me I should be rich by the fairies.
This is some changeling. Open't. What's within, boy?

CLOWN.
You're a made old man; if the sins of your youth are
forgiven you, you're well to live. Gold! all gold!

SHEPHERD.
This is fairy gold, boy, and 'twill prove so. Up with't,
keep it close. Home, home, the next way! We are lucky, boy; and
to be so still requires nothing but secrecy. Let my sheep go.

Come, good boy, the next way home.

CLOWN.

Go you the next way with your findings. I'll go see if the

bear be gone from the gentleman, and how much he hath eaten.

They

are never curst but when they are hungry. If there be any of him

left, I'll bury it.

SHEPHERD.

That's a good deed. If thou mayest discern by that which

is left of him what he is, fetch me to th' sight of him.

CLOWN.

Marry, will I; and you shall help to put him i' th' ground.

SHEPHERD.

'Tis a lucky day, boy; and we'll do good deeds on't.

Exeunt

ACT IV. SCENE I.

Enter TIME, the CHORUS

TIME.

I, that please some, try all, both joy and terror
Of good and bad, that makes and unfolds error,
Now take upon me, in the name of Time,
To use my wings. Impute it not a crime
To me or my swift passage that I slide
O'er sixteen years, and leave the growth untried
Of that wide gap, since it is in my pow'r
To o'erthrow law, and in one self-born hour
To plant and o'erwhelm custom. Let me pass
The same I am, ere ancient'st order was
Or what is now receiv'd. I witness to
The times that brought them in; so shall I do
To th' freshest things now reigning, and make stale
The glistering of this present, as my tale
Now seems to it. Your patience this allowing,

I turn my glass, and give my scene such growing

As you had slept between. Leontes leaving-

Th' effects of his fond jealousies so grieving

That he shuts up himself-imagine me,

Gentle spectators, that I now may be

In fair Bohemia; and remember well

I mention'd a son o' th' King's, which Florizel

I now name to you; and with speed so pace

To speak of Perdita, now grown in grace

Equal with wond'ring. What of her ensues

I list not prophesy; but let Time's news

Be known when 'tis brought forth. A shepherd's daughter,

And what to her adheres, which follows after,

Is th' argument of Time. Of this allow,

If ever you have spent time worse ere now;

If never, yet that Time himself doth say

He wishes earnestly you never may. *Exit*

SCENE II. Bohemia. The palace of POLIXENES

Enter POLIXENES and CAMILLO

POLIXENES.

I pray thee, good Camillo, be no more importunate: 'tis a sickness denying thee anything; a death to grant this. CAMILLO. It is fifteen years since I saw my country; though I have for the most part been aired abroad, I desire to lay my bones there. Besides, the penitent King, my master, hath sent for me; to whose feeling sorrows I might be some allay, or I o'erween to think so, which is another spur to my departure. POLIXENES. As thou lov'st me, Camillo, wipe not out the rest of thy services by leaving me now. The need I have of thee thine own goodness hath made. Better not to have had thee than thus to want thee; thou, having made me businesses which none without thee can sufficiently manage, must either stay to execute them thyself, or take away with thee the very services thou hast done; which if I have not enough considered-as too much I cannot-to be more thankful to thee shall be my study; and my profit therein the heaping friendships. Of that fatal country Sicilia, prithee, speak no more; whose very naming punishes me with the remembrance of that penitent, as thou call'st him, and reconciled king, my brother; whose loss of his most precious queen and children are even now to be afresh lamented. Say to me, when saw'st thou the Prince Florizel, my son? Kings are no less unhappy, their issue not being gracious, than they are in losing them when they have approved their virtues. CAMILLO. Sir, it is three days since I saw the Prince. What his happier affairs may be are to me unknown; but I have missingly noted he is of late much retired from court, and is less frequent to his princely exercises than formerly he hath appeared. POLIXENES. I have considered so much, Camillo, and with some care, so far that I have eyes under my service which look upon his removedness; from whom I have this intelligence, that he is seldom from the house of a most homely shepherd-a man, they say, that from very nothing, and beyond the imagination of his neighbours, is grown into an unspeakable estate. CAMILLO. I have heard, sir, of such a man, who hath a daughter of most rare note. The report of her is extended more than can be thought to begin from such a cottage. POLIXENES. That's likewise part of my intelligence; but, I fear, the angle that plucks our son thither. Thou shalt accompany us to the place; where we will, not appearing what we are, have some question with the shepherd; from whose simplicity I think it not uneasy to get the cause of my son's resort thither. Prithee be my present partner in this business, and lay aside the thoughts of Sicilia. CAMILLO. I willingly obey your command. POLIXENES. My best Camillo! We must disguise ourselves. *Exeunt*

SCENE III. Bohemia. A road near the SHEPHERD'S cottage

Enter AUTOLYCUS, singing

When daffodils begin to peer,

With heigh! the doxy over the dale,

Why, then comes in the sweet o' the year,

For the red blood reigns in the winter's pale.

The white sheet bleaching on the hedge,

With heigh! the sweet birds, O, how they sing!

Doth set my pugging tooth on edge,

For a quart of ale is a dish for a king.

The lark, that tirra-lirra chants,

With heigh! with heigh! the thrush and the jay,

Are summer songs for me and my aunts,

While we lie tumbling in the hay.

I have serv'd Prince Florizel, and in my time wore

three-pile;

but now I am out of service.

But shall I go mourn for that, my dear?

The pale moon shines by night;
And when I wander here and there,
I then do most go right.
If tinkers may have leave to live,
And bear the sow-skin budget,
Then my account I well may give
And in the stocks avouch it.
My traffic is sheets; when the kite builds, look to lesser linen.
My father nam'd me Autolycus; who, being, I as am, litter'd under
Mercury, was likewise a snapper-up of unconsidered trifles.
With
die and drab I purchas'd this caparison; and my revenue is the
silly-cheat. Gallows and knock are too powerful on the highway;
beating and hanging are terrors to me; for the life to come,

I

sleep out the thought of it. A prize! a prize!

Enter CLOWN

CLOWN.

Let me see: every 'leven wether tods; every tod yields pound and odd shilling; fifteen hundred shorn, what comes the wool to? AUTOLYCUS. *[Aside]* If the springe hold, the cock's mine. CLOWN. I cannot do 't without counters. Let me see: what am I to buy for our sheep-shearing feast? Three pound of sugar, five pound of currants, rice-what will this sister of mine do with rice? But my father hath made her mistress of the feast, and she lays it on. She hath made me four and twenty nosegays for the shearers-three-man song-men all, and very good ones; but they are most of them means and bases; but one Puritan amongst them, and he sings psalms to hornpipes. I must have saffron to colour the warden pies; mace; dates-none, that's out of my note; nutmegs, seven; race or two of ginger, but that I may beg; four pound of prunes, and as many of raisins o' th' sun. AUTOLYCUS. *[Grovelling on the ground]* O that ever I was born! CLOWN. I' th' name of me! AUTOLYCUS. O, help me, help me! Pluck but off these rags; and then, death, death! CLOWN. Alack, poor soul! thou hast need of more rags to lay on thee, rather than have these off. AUTOLYCUS. O sir, the loathsomeness of them offend me more than the stripes I have received, which are mighty ones and millions. CLOWN. Alas, poor man! a million of beating may come to a great matter. AUTOLYCUS. I am robb'd, sir, and beaten; my money and apparel ta'en from me, and these detestable things put upon me. CLOWN. What, by a horseman or a footman? AUTOLYCUS. A footman, sweet sir, a footman. CLOWN. Indeed, he should be a footman, by the garments he has left with thee; if this be a horseman's coat, it hath seen very hot service. Lend me thy hand, I'll help thee. Come, lend me thy hand. *[Helping him up]* AUTOLYCUS. O, good sir, tenderly, O! CLOWN. Alas, poor soul! AUTOLYCUS. O, good sir, softly, good sir; I fear, sir, my shoulder blade is out. CLOWN. How now! Canst stand? AUTOLYCUS. Softly, dear sir *[Picks his pocket]* ; good sir, softly. You ha' done me a charitable office. CLOWN. Dost lack any money? I have a little money for thee. AUTOLYCUS. No, good sweet sir; no, I beseech you, sir. I have a kinsman not past three quarters of a mile hence, unto whom I was going; I shall there have money or anything I want. Offer me no money, I pray you; that kills my heart. CLOWN. What manner of fellow was he that robb'd you? AUTOLYCUS. A fellow, sir, that I have known to go about with troll-my-dames; I knew him once a servant of the Prince. I cannot tell, good sir, for which of his virtues it was, but he was certainly whipt out of the court. CLOWN. His vices, you would say; there's no virtue whipt out of the court. They cherish it to make it stay there; and yet it will no more but abide. AUTOLYCUS. Vices, I would say, sir. I know this man well; he hath been since an ape-bearer; then a process-server, a bailiff; then he compass'd a motion of the Prodigal Son, and married a tinker's wife within a mile where my land and living lies; and, having flown over many knavish professions, he settled only in rogue. Some call him Autolycus. CLOWN. Out upon him! prig, for my life, prig! He haunts wakes, fairs, and bear-baitings. AUTOLYCUS. Very true, sir; he, sir, he; that's the rogue that put me into this apparel. CLOWN. Not a more cowardly rogue in all Bohemia; if you had but look'd big and spit at him, he'd have run. AUTOLYCUS. I must confess to you, sir, I am no fighter; I am false of heart that way, and that he knew, I warrant him. CLOWN. How do you now? AUTOLYCUS. Sweet sir, much better than I was; I can stand and walk. I will even take my leave of you and pace softly towards my kinsman's. CLOWN. Shall I bring thee on the way? AUTOLYCUS. No, good-fac'd sir; no, sweet sir. CLOWN. Then fare thee well. I must go buy spices for our sheep-shearing. AUTOLYCUS. Prosper you, sweet sir! *Exit* CLOWN Your purse is not hot enough to purchase your spice. I'll be with you at your sheep-shearing too. If I make not this cheat bring out another, and the shearers prove sheep, let me be unroll'd, and my name put in the book of virtue! *[Sings]* Jog on, jog on, the footpath way, And merrily hent the stile-a; A merry heart goes all the day, Your sad tires in a mile-a. *Exit*

SCENE IV. Bohemia. The SHEPHERD'S cottage

Enter FLORIZEL and PERDITA

FLORIZEL.

These your unusual weeds to each part of you

Do give a life-no shepherdess, but Flora

Peering in April's front. This your sheep-shearing

Is as a meeting of the petty gods,

And you the Queen on't.

PERDITA.

Sir, my gracious lord,

To chide at your extremes it not becomes me-

O, pardon that I name them! Your high self,

The gracious mark o' th' land, you have obscur'd

With a swain's wearing; and me, poor lowly maid,

Most goddess-like prank'd up. But that our feasts

In every mess have folly, and the feeders

Digest it with a custom, I should blush

To see you so attir'd; swoon, I think,

To show myself a glass.

FLORIZEL.

I bless the time

When my good falcon made her flight across

Thy father's ground.

PERDITA.

Now Jove afford you cause!

To me the difference forges dread; your greatness

Hath not been us'd to fear. Even now I tremble

To think your father, by some accident,
Should pass this way, as you did. O, the Fates!
How would he look to see his work, so noble,
Vilely bound up? What would he say? Or how
Should I, in these my borrowed flaunts, behold
The sternness of his presence?

FLORIZEL.

Apprehend
Nothing but jollity. The gods themselves,
Humbling their deities to love, have taken
The shapes of beasts upon them: Jupiter
Became a bull and bellow'd; the green Neptune
A ram and bleated; and the fire-rob'd god,
Golden Apollo, a poor humble swain,
As I seem now. Their transformations
Were never for a piece of beauty rarer,
Nor in a way so chaste, since my desires
Run not before mine honour, nor my lusts
Burn hotter than my faith.

PERDITA.

O, but, sir,

Your resolution cannot hold when 'tis

Oppos'd, as it must be, by th' pow'r of the King.

One of these two must be necessities,

Which then will speak, that you must change this purpose,

Or I my life.

FLORIZEL.

Thou dearest Perdita,

With these forc'd thoughts, I prithee, darken not

The mirth o' th' feast. Or I'll be thine, my fair,

Or not my father's; for I cannot be

Mine own, nor anything to any, if

I be not thine. To this I am most constant,

Though destiny say no. Be merry, gentle;

Strangle such thoughts as these with any thing

That you behold the while. Your guests are coming.

Lift up your countenance, as it were the day

Of celebration of that nuptial which

We two have sworn shall come.

PERDITA.

O Lady Fortune,
Stand you auspicious!

FLORIZEL.

See, your guests approach.
Address yourself to entertain them sprightly,
And let's be red with mirth.

Enter SHEPHERD, with POLIXENES and CAMILLO, disguised;

CLOWN, MOPSA, DORCAS, with OTHERS

SHEPHERD.

Fie, daughter! When my old wife liv'd, upon
This day she was both pantler, butler, cook;
Both dame and servant; welcom'd all; serv'd all;
Would sing her song and dance her turn; now here
At upper end o' th' table, now i' th' middle;
On his shoulder, and his; her face o' fire

With labour, and the thing she took to quench it
She would to each one sip. You are retired,
As if you were a feasted one, and not
The hostess of the meeting. Pray you bid
These unknown friends to's welcome, for it is
A way to make us better friends, more known.
Come, quench your blushes, and present yourself
That which you are, Mistress o' th' Feast. Come on,
And bid us welcome to your sheep-shearing,
As your good flock shall prosper.

PERDITA.
[To POLIXENES] Sir, welcome.
It is my father's will I should take on me
The hostess-ship o' th' day. *[To CAMILLO]*
You're welcome, sir.
Give me those flow'rs there, Dorcas. Reverend sirs,
For you there's rosemary and rue; these keep
Seeming and savour all the winter long.
Grace and remembrance be to you both!

And welcome to our shearing.

POLIXENES.

Shepherdess-

A fair one are you-well you fit our ages

With flow'rs of winter.

PERDITA.

Sir, the year growing ancient,

Not yet on summer's death nor on the birth

Of trembling winter, the fairest flow'rs o' th' season

Are our carnations and streak'd gillyvors,

Which some call nature's bastards. Of that kind

Our rustic garden's barren; and I care not

To get slips of them.

POLIXENES.

Wherefore, gentle maiden,

Do you neglect them?

PERDITA.

For I have heard it said

There is an art which in their piedness shares

With great creating nature.

POLIXENES.

Say there be;

Yet nature is made better by no mean

But nature makes that mean; so over that art

Which you say adds to nature, is an art

That nature makes. You see, sweet maid, we marry

A gentler scion to the wildest stock,

And make conceive a bark of baser kind

By bud of nobler race. This is an art

Which does mend nature-change it rather; but

The art itself is nature.

PERDITA.

So it is.

POLIXENES.

Then make your garden rich in gillyvors,

And do not call them bastards.

PERDITA.

I'll not put

The dibble in earth to set one slip of them;

No more than were I painted I would wish

This youth should say 'twere well, and only therefore

Desire to breed by me. Here's flow'rs for you:

Hot lavender, mints, savory, marjoram;

The marigold, that goes to bed wi' th' sun,

And with him rises weeping; these are flow'rs

Of middle summer, and I think they are given

To men of middle age. Y'are very welcome.

CAMILLO.

I should leave grazing, were I of your flock,

And only live by gazing.

PERDITA.

Out, alas!

You'd be so lean that blasts of January

Would blow you through and through. Now, my fair'st friend,

I would I had some flow'rs o' th' spring that might

Become your time of day-and yours, and yours,

That wear upon your virgin branches yet

Your maidenheads growing. O Proserpina,

From the flowers now that, frighted, thou let'st fall

From Dis's waggon!- daffodils,

That come before the swallow dares, and take

The winds of March with beauty; violets, dim

But sweeter than the lids of Juno's eyes

Or Cytherea's breath; pale primroses,

That die unmarried ere they can behold

Bright Phoebus in his strength-a malady

Most incident to maids; bold oxlips, and

The crown-imperial; lilies of all kinds,

The flow'r-de-luce being one. O, these I lack

To make you garlands of, and my sweet friend

To strew him o'er and o'er!

FLORIZEL.

What, like a corse?

PERDITA.

No; like a bank for love to lie and play on;

Not like a corse; or if-not to be buried,

But quick, and in mine arms. Come, take your flow'rs.

Methinks I play as I have seen them do

In Whitsun pastorals. Sure, this robe of mine

Does change my disposition.

FLORIZEL.

What you do

Still betters what is done. When you speak, sweet,

I'd have you do it ever. When you sing,

I'd have you buy and sell so; so give alms;

Pray so; and, for the ord'ring your affairs,

To sing them too. When you do dance, I wish you

A wave o' th' sea, that you might ever do

Nothing but that; move still, still so,

And own no other function. Each your doing,

So singular in each particular,

Crowns what you are doing in the present deeds,
That all your acts are queens.

PERDITA.
O Doricles,
Your praises are too large. But that your youth,
And the true blood which peeps fairly through't,
Do plainly give you out an unstain'd shepherd,
With wisdom I might fear, my Doricles,
You woo'd me the false way.

FLORIZEL.
I think you have
As little skill to fear as I have purpose
To put you to't. But, come; our dance, I pray.
Your hand, my Perdita; so turtles pair
That never mean to part.

PERDITA.
I'll swear for 'em.

POLIXENES.

This is the prettiest low-born lass that ever

Ran on the green-sward; nothing she does or seems

But smacks of something greater than herself,

Too noble for this place.

CAMILLO.

He tells her something

That makes her blood look out. Good sooth, she is

The queen of curds and cream.

CLOWN.

Come on, strike up.

DORCAS.

Mopsa must be your mistress; marry, garlic,

To mend her kissing with!

MOPSA.

Now, in good time!

CLOWN.

Not a word, a word; we stand upon our manners.

Come, strike up. *[Music]*

Here a dance Of SHEPHERDS and SHEPHERDESSES

POLIXENES.

Pray, good shepherd, what fair swain is this

Which dances with your daughter?

SHEPHERD.

They call him Doricles, and boasts himself

To have a worthy feeding; but I have it

Upon his own report, and I believe it:

He looks like sooth. He says he loves my daughter;

I think so too; for never gaz'd the moon

Upon the water as he'll stand and read,

As 'twere my daughter's eyes; and, to be plain,

I think there is not half a kiss to choose

Who loves another best.

POLIXENES.

She dances featly.

SHEPHERD.

So she does any thing; though I report it
That should be silent. If young Doricles
Do light upon her, she shall bring him that
Which he not dreams of.

Enter a SERVANT

SERVANT.

O master, if you did but hear the pedlar at the door, you would never dance again after a tabor and pipe; no, the bagpipe could not move you. He sings several tunes faster than you'll tell money; he utters them as he had eaten ballads, and all men's ears grew to his tunes.

CLOWN.

He could never come better; he shall come in. I love a ballad but even too well, if it be doleful matter merrily set down, or a very pleasant thing indeed and sung lamentably.

SERVANT.

He hath songs for man or woman of all sizes; no milliner
can so fit his customers with gloves. He has the prettiest
love-songs for maids; so without bawdry, which is strange; with
such delicate burdens of dildos and fadings, 'jump her and thump
her'; and where some stretch-mouth'd rascal would, as it were,
mean mischief, and break a foul gap into the matter, he makes the
maid to answer 'Whoop, do me no harm, good man'- puts him off,
slights him, with 'Whoop, do me no harm, good man.'

POLIXENES.

This is a brave fellow.

CLOWN.

Believe me, thou talkest of an admirable conceited fellow.
Has he any unbraided wares?

SERVANT.

He hath ribbons of all the colours i' th' rainbow;

points,

more than all the lawyers in Bohemia can learnedly handle, though

they come to him by th' gross; inkles, caddisses, cambrics,

lawns. Why he sings 'em over as they were gods or goddesses; you

would think a smock were she-angel, he so chants to the

sleeve-hand and the work about the square on't.

CLOWN.

Prithee bring him in; and let him approach singing.

PERDITA.

Forewarn him that he use no scurrilous words in's tunes.

Exit SERVANT

CLOWN.

You have of these pedlars that have more in them than you'd think, sister.

PERDITA.

Ay, good brother, or go about to think.

Enter AUTOLYCUS, Singing

Lawn as white as driven snow;
Cypress black as e'er was crow;
Gloves as sweet as damask roses;
Masks for faces and for noses;
Bugle bracelet, necklace amber,
Perfume for a lady's chamber;
Golden quoifs and stomachers,
For my lads to give their dears;
Pins and poking-sticks of steel-
What maids lack from head to heel.
Come, buy of me, come; come buy, come buy;
Buy, lads, or else your lasses cry.

Come, buy.

CLOWN.

If I were not in love with Mopsa, thou shouldst take no
money of me; but being enthrall'd as I am, it will also be the
bondage of certain ribbons and gloves.

MOPSA.

I was promis'd them against the feast; but they come not too late now.

DORCAS.
He hath promis'd you more than that, or there be liars.

MOPSA.
He hath paid you all he promis'd you. May be he has paid you
more, which will shame you to give him again.

CLOWN.
Is there no manners left among maids? Will they wear their
plackets where they should bear their faces? Is there not
milking-time, when you are going to bed, or kiln-hole, to whistle
off these secrets, but you must be tittle-tattling before all our
guests? 'Tis well they are whisp'ring. Clammer your tongues,

and not a word more.

MOPSA.

I have done. Come, you promis'd me a tawdry-lace, and a pair of sweet gloves.

CLOWN.

Have I not told thee how I was cozen'd by the way, and lost all my money?

AUTOLYCUS.

And indeed, sir, there are cozeners abroad;

therefore it

behoves men to be wary.

CLOWN.

Fear not thou, man; thou shalt lose nothing here.

AUTOLYCUS.

I hope so, sir; for I have about me many parcels of charge.

CLOWN.

What hast here? Ballads?

MOPSA.

Pray now, buy some. I love a ballad in print a-life, for
then we are sure they are true.

AUTOLYCUS.

Here's one to a very doleful tune: how a usurer's wife
was brought to bed of twenty money-bags at a burden, and how she
long'd to eat adders' heads and toads carbonado'd.

MOPSA.

Is it true, think you?

AUTOLYCUS.

Very true, and but a month old.

DORCAS.

Bless me from marrying a usurer!

AUTOLYCUS.

Here's the midwife's name to't, one Mistress Taleporter,
and five or six honest wives that were present. Why should I
carry lies abroad?

MOPSA.

Pray you now, buy it.

CLOWN.

Come on, lay it by; and let's first see moe ballads;
we'll
buy the other things anon.

AUTOLYCUS.

Here's another ballad, of a fish that appeared upon the
coast on Wednesday the fourscore of April, forty thousand fathom
above water, and sung this ballad against the hard hearts of
maids. It was thought she was a woman, and was turn'd into a cold
fish for she would not exchange flesh with one that lov'd her.

The ballad is very pitiful, and as true.

DORCAS.

Is it true too, think you?

AUTOLYCUS.

Five justices' hands at it; and witnesses more than my pack will hold.

CLOWN.

Lay it by too. Another.

AUTOLYCUS.

This is a merry ballad, but a very pretty one.

MOPSA.

Let's have some merry ones.

AUTOLYCUS.

Why, this is a passing merry one, and goes to the tune of 'Two maids wooing a man.' There's scarce a maid westward but

she sings it; 'tis in request, I can tell you.

MOPSA.

can both sing it. If thou'lt bear a part, thou shalt hear;

'tis in three parts.

DORCAS.

We had the tune on't a month ago.

AUTOLYCUS.

I can bear my part; you must know 'tis my occupation.

Have at it with you.

SONG

AUTOLYCUS.

Get you hence, for I must go

Where it fits not you to know.

DORCAS.

Whither?

MOPSA.

O, whither?

DORCAS.

Whither?

MOPSA.

It becomes thy oath full well
Thou to me thy secrets tell.

DORCAS.

Me too! Let me go thither

MOPSA.

Or thou goest to th' grange or mill.

DORCAS.

If to either, thou dost ill.

AUTOLYCUS.

Neither.

DORCAS.

What, neither?

AUTOLYCUS.

Neither.

DORCAS.

Thou hast sworn my love to be.

MOPSA.

Thou hast sworn it more to me.

Then whither goest? Say, whither?

CLOWN.

We'll have this song out anon by ourselves; my father and

the gentlemen are in sad talk, and we'll not trouble them.

Come,

bring away thy pack after me. Wenches, I'll buy for you both.

Pedlar, let's have the first choice. Follow me, girls.

Exit with DORCAS and MOPSA

AUTOLYCUS.

And you shall pay well for 'em.

Exit AUTOLYCUS, Singing

Will you buy any tape,
Or lace for your cape,
My dainty duck, my dear-a?
Any silk, any thread,
Any toys for your head,
Of the new'st and fin'st, fin'st wear-a?

Come to the pedlar;
Money's a meddler
That doth utter all men's ware-a.

Re-enter SERVANT

SERVANT.

Master, there is three carters, three shepherds, three neat-herds, three swineherds, that have made themselves all men of hair; they call themselves Saltiers, and they have dance which the wenches say is a gallimaufry of gambols, because they are not in't; but they themselves are o' th' mind, if it be not too rough for some that know little but bowling, it will please plentifully.

SHEPHERD.

Away! We'll none on't; here has been too much homely foolery already. I know, sir, we weary you.

POLIXENES.

You weary those that refresh us. Pray, let's see these four threes of herdsmen.

SERVANT.

One three of them, by their own report, sir, hath danc'd
before the King; and not the worst of the three but jumps twelve
foot and a half by th' squier.

SHEPHERD.
Leave your prating; since these good men are pleas'd, let
them come in; but quickly now.

SERVANT.
Why, they stay at door, sir. *Exit*
Here a dance of twelve SATYRS
POLIXENES.
[To SHEPHERD] O, father, you'll know more of that hereafter.

[To CAMILLO] Is it not too far gone? 'Tis time to part them.
He's simple and tells much. *[To FLORIZEL]* How now, fair shepherd!
Your heart is full of something that does take
Your mind from feasting. Sooth, when I was young
And handed love as you do, I was wont
To load my she with knacks; I would have ransack'd
The pedlar's silken treasury and have pour'd it

To her acceptance: you have let him go

And nothing marted with him. If your lass

Interpretation should abuse and call this

Your lack of love or bounty, you were straited

For a reply, at least if you make a care

Of happy holding her.

FLORIZEL.

Old sir, I know

She prizes not such trifles as these are.

The gifts she looks from me are pack'd and lock'd

Up in my heart, which I have given already,

But not deliver'd. O, hear me breathe my life

Before this ancient sir, whom, it should seem,

Hath sometime lov'd. I take thy hand-this hand,

As soft as dove's down and as white as it,

Or Ethiopian's tooth, or the fann'd snow that's bolted

By th' northern blasts twice o'er.

POLIXENES.

What follows this?

How prettily the young swain seems to wash

The hand was fair before! I have put you out.

But to your protestation; let me hear

What you profess.

FLORIZEL.

Do, and be witness to't.

POLIXENES.

And this my neighbour too?

FLORIZEL.

And he, and more

Than he, and men-the earth, the heavens, and all:

That, were I crown'd the most imperial monarch,

Thereof most worthy, were I the fairest youth

That ever made eye swerve, had force and knowledge

More than was ever man's, I would not prize them

Without her love; for her employ them all;

Commend them and condemn them to her service

Or to their own perdition.

POLIXENES.

Fairly offer'd.

CAMILLO.

This shows a sound affection.

SHEPHERD.

But, my daughter,

Say you the like to him?

PERDITA.

I cannot speak

So well, nothing so well; no, nor mean better.

By th' pattern of mine own thoughts I cut out

The purity of his.

SHEPHERD.

Take hands, a bargain!
And, friends unknown, you shall bear witness to't:
I give my daughter to him, and will make
Her portion equal his.

FLORIZEL.
O, that must be
I' th' virtue of your daughter. One being dead,
I shall have more than you can dream of yet;
Enough then for your wonder. But come on,
Contract us fore these witnesses.

SHEPHERD.
Come, your hand;
And, daughter, yours.

POLIXENES.
Soft, swain, awhile, beseech you;
Have you a father?

FLORIZEL.

I have, but what of him?

POLIXENES.

Knows he of this?

FLORIZEL.

He neither does nor shall.

POLIXENES.

Methinks a father
Is at the nuptial of his son a guest
That best becomes the table. Pray you, once more,
Is not your father grown incapable
Of reasonable affairs? Is he not stupid
With age and alt'ring rheums? Can he speak, hear,
Know man from man, dispute his own estate?
Lies he not bed-rid, and again does nothing
But what he did being childish?

FLORIZEL.

No, good sir;

He has his health, and ampler strength indeed

Than most have of his age.

POLIXENES.

By my white beard,

You offer him, if this be so, a wrong

Something unfilial. Reason my son

Should choose himself a wife; but as good reason

The father-all whose joy is nothing else

But fair posterity-should hold some counsel

In such a business.

FLORIZEL.

I yield all this;

But, for some other reasons, my grave sir,

Which 'tis not fit you know, I not acquaint

My father of this business.

POLIXENES.

Let him know't.

FLORIZEL.

He shall not.

POLIXENES.

Prithee let him.

FLORIZEL.

No, he must not.

SHEPHERD.

Let him, my son; he shall not need to grieve

At knowing of thy choice.

FLORIZEL.

Come, come, he must not.

Mark our contract.

POLIXENES.

[Discovering himself] Mark your divorce, young sir,

Whom son I dare not call; thou art too base

To be acknowledg'd-thou a sceptre's heir,

That thus affects a sheep-hook! Thou, old traitor,

I am sorry that by hanging thee I can but

Shorten thy life one week. And thou, fresh piece

Of excellent witchcraft, who of force must know

The royal fool thou cop'st with-

SHEPHERD.

O, my heart!

POLIXENES.

I'll have thy beauty scratch'd with briers and made

More homely than thy state. For thee, fond boy,

If I may ever know thou dost but sigh

That thou no more shalt see this knack-as never

I mean thou shalt-we'll bar thee from succession;

Not hold thee of our blood, no, not our kin,
Farre than Deucalion off. Mark thou my words.
Follow us to the court. Thou churl, for this time,
Though full of our displeasure, yet we free thee
From the dead blow of it. And you, enchantment,
Worthy enough a herdsman-yea, him too
That makes himself, but for our honour therein,
Unworthy thee-if ever henceforth thou
These rural latches to his entrance open,
Or hoop his body more with thy embraces,
I will devise a death as cruel for thee
As thou art tender to't. *Exit*

PERDITA. Even here undone!
I was not much afeard; for once or twice
I was about to speak and tell him plainly
The self-same sun that shines upon his court
Hides not his visage from our cottage, but
Looks on alike. *[To FLORIZEL]* Will't please you, sir, be gone?
I told you what would come of this. Beseech you,
Of your own state take care. This dream of mine-

Being now awake, I'll queen it no inch farther,
But milk my ewes and weep.

CAMILLO.
Why, how now, father!

Speak ere thou diest.

SHEPHERD.
I cannot speak nor think,
Nor dare to know that which I know. *[To FLORIZEL]* O sir,
You have undone a man of fourscore-three
That thought to fill his grave in quiet, yea,
To die upon the bed my father died,
To lie close by his honest bones; but now
Some hangman must put on my shroud and lay me
Where no priest shovels in dust. *[To PERDITA]* O cursed wretch,
That knew'st this was the Prince, and wouldst adventure
To mingle faith with him!- Undone, undone!
If I might die within this hour, I have liv'd
To die when I desire. *Exit*

FLORIZEL. Why look you so upon me?
I am but sorry, not afeard; delay'd,
But nothing alt'red. What I was, I am:
More straining on for plucking back; not following
My leash unwillingly.

CAMILLO.
Gracious, my lord,
You know your father's temper. At this time
He will allow no speech-which I do guess
You do not purpose to him-and as hardly
Will he endure your sight as yet, I fear;
Then, till the fury of his Highness settle,
Come not before him.

FLORIZEL.

I not purpose it.
I think Camillo?

CAMILLO.

Even he, my lord.

PERDITA.

How often have I told you 'twould be thus!
How often said my dignity would last
But till 'twere known!

FLORIZEL.

It cannot fail but by
The violation of my faith; and then
Let nature crush the sides o' th' earth together
And mar the seeds within! Lift up thy looks.
From my succession wipe me, father; I
Am heir to my affection.

CAMILLO.

Be advis'd.

FLORIZEL.

I am-and by my fancy; if my reason

Will thereto be obedient, I have reason;

If not, my senses, better pleas'd with madness,

Do bid it welcome.

CAMILLO.

This is desperate, sir.

FLORIZEL.

So call it; but it does fulfil my vow:

I needs must think it honesty. Camillo,

Not for Bohemia, nor the pomp that may

Be thereat glean'd, for all the sun sees or

The close earth wombs, or the profound seas hides

In unknown fathoms, will I break my oath

To this my fair belov'd. Therefore, I pray you,

As you have ever been my father's honour'd friend,

When he shall miss me-as, in faith, I mean not

To see him any more-cast your good counsels

Upon his passion. Let myself and Fortune
Tug for the time to come. This you may know,
And so deliver: I am put to sea
With her who here I cannot hold on shore.
And most opportune to her need I have
A vessel rides fast by, but not prepar'd
For this design. What course I mean to hold
Shall nothing benefit your knowledge, nor
Concern me the reporting.

CAMILLO.

O my lord,
I would your spirit were easier for advice.
Or stronger for your need.

FLORIZEL.

Hark, Perdita. *[Takes her aside]*

[To CAMILLO] I'll hear you by and by.

CAMILLO.

He's irremovable,

Resolv'd for flight. Now were I happy if

His going I could frame to serve my turn,

Save him from danger, do him love and honour,

Purchase the sight again of dear Sicilia

And that unhappy king, my master, whom

I so much thirst to see.

FLORIZEL.

Now, good Camillo,

I am so fraught with curious business that

I leave out ceremony.

CAMILLO.

Sir, I think

You have heard of my poor services i' th' love

That I have borne your father?

FLORIZEL.

Very nobly

Have you deserv'd. It is my father's music

To speak your deeds; not little of his care
To have them recompens'd as thought on.

CAMILLO.
Well, my lord,
If you may please to think I love the King,
And through him what's nearest to him, which is
Your gracious self, embrace but my direction.
If your more ponderous and settled project
May suffer alteration, on mine honour,
I'll point you where you shall have such receiving
As shall become your Highness; where you may
Enjoy your mistress, from the whom, I see,
There's no disjunction to be made but by,
As heavens forfend! your ruin-marry her;
And with my best endeavours in your absence
Your discontenting father strive to qualify,
And bring him up to liking.

FLORIZEL.
How, Camillo,

May this, almost a miracle, be done?
That I may call thee something more than man,
And after that trust to thee.

CAMILLO.
Have you thought on
A place whereto you'll go?

FLORIZEL.
Not any yet;
But as th' unthought-on accident is guilty
To what we wildly do, so we profess
Ourselves to be the slaves of chance and flies
Of every wind that blows.

CAMILLO.
Then list to me.
This follows, if you will not change your purpose
But undergo this flight: make for Sicilia,
And there present yourself and your fair princess-
For so, I see, she must be-fore Leontes.

She shall be habited as it becomes

The partner of your bed. Methinks I see

Leontes opening his free arms and weeping

His welcomes forth; asks thee there 'Son, forgiveness!'

As 'twere i' th' father's person; kisses the hands

Of your fresh princess; o'er and o'er divides him

'Twixt his unkindness and his kindness-th' one

He chides to hell, and bids the other grow

Faster than thought or time.

FLORIZEL.

Worthy Camillo,

What colour for my visitation shall I

Hold up before him?

CAMILLO.

Sent by the King your father

To greet him and to give him comforts. Sir,

The manner of your bearing towards him, with

What you as from your father shall deliver,

Things known betwixt us three, I'll write you down;

The which shall point you forth at every sitting

What you must say, that he shall not perceive

But that you have your father's bosom there

And speak his very heart.

FLORIZEL.

I am bound to you.

There is some sap in this.

CAMILLO.

A course more promising

Than a wild dedication of yourselves

To unpath'd waters, undream'd shores, most certain

To miseries enough; no hope to help you,

But as you shake off one to take another;

Nothing so certain as your anchors, who

Do their best office if they can but stay you

Where you'll be loath to be. Besides, you know

Prosperity's the very bond of love,

Whose fresh complexion and whose heart together

Affliction alters.

PERDITA.

One of these is true:
I think affliction may subdue the cheek,
But not take in the mind.

CAMILLO.
Yea, say you so?
There shall not at your father's house these seven years
Be born another such.

FLORIZEL.
My good Camillo,
She is as forward of her breeding as
She is i' th' rear o' our birth.

CAMILLO.
I cannot say 'tis pity
She lacks instructions, for she seems a mistress

To most that teach.

PERDITA.

Your pardon, sir; for this

I'll blush you thanks.

FLORIZEL.

My prettiest Perdita!

But, O, the thorns we stand upon! Camillo-

Preserver of my father, now of me;

The medicine of our house-how shall we do?

We are not furnish'd like Bohemia's son;

Nor shall appear in Sicilia.

CAMILLO.

My lord,

Fear none of this. I think you know my fortunes

Do all lie there. It shall be so my care

To have you royally appointed as if

The scene you play were mine. For instance, sir, That you may know you shall not want-one word.

[They talk aside]

Re-enter AUTOLYCUS

AUTOLYCUS.

Ha, ha! what a fool Honesty is! and Trust, his sworn
brother, a very simple gentleman! I have sold all my trumpery;
not a counterfeit stone, not a ribbon, glass, pomander,
brooch,
table-book, ballad, knife, tape, glove, shoe-tie, bracelet,
horn-ring, to keep my pack from fasting. They throng who should
buy first, as if my trinkets had been hallowed and brought a
benediction to the buyer; by which means I saw whose purse was
best in picture; and what I saw, to my good use I rememb'red.
My
clown, who wants but something to be a reasonable man, grew so in
love with the wenches' song that he would not stir his pettitoes
till he had both tune and words, which so drew the rest of the
herd to me that all their other senses stuck in ears. You might
have pinch'd a placket, it was senseless; 'twas nothing to geld a
codpiece of a purse; I would have fil'd keys off that hung in

chains. No hearing, no feeling, but my sir's song, and admiring
the nothing of it. So that in this time of lethargy I pick'd and
cut most of their festival purses; and had not the old man come
in with whoobub against his daughter and the King's son and
scar'd my choughs from the chaff, I had not left a purse alive in the whole army.

CAMILLO, FLORIZEL, and PERDITA come forward

CAMILLO.

Nay, but my letters, by this means being there
So soon as you arrive, shall clear that doubt.

FLORIZEL.

And those that you'll procure from King Leontes?

CAMILLO.

Shall satisfy your father.

PERDITA.

Happy be you!

All that you speak shows fair.

CAMILLO.

[seeing AUTOLYCUS] Who have we here?

We'll make an instrument of this; omit

Nothing may give us aid.

AUTOLYCUS.

[Aside] If they have overheard me now-why, hanging.

CAMILLO.

How now, good fellow! Why shak'st thou so?

Fear not, man; here's no harm intended to thee.

AUTOLYCUS.

I am a poor fellow, sir.

CAMILLO.

Why, be so still; here's nobody will steal that from thee.

Yet for the outside of thy poverty we must make an exchange;
therefore discase thee instantly-thou must think there's a
necessity in't-and change garments with this gentleman.
Though
the pennyworth on his side be the worst, yet hold thee,
there's
some boot. *[Giving money]*

AUTOLYCUS.
I am a poor fellow, sir. *[Aside]* I know ye well enough.

CAMILLO.
Nay, prithee dispatch. The gentleman is half flay'd already.

AUTOLYCUS.
Are you in camest, sir? *[Aside]* I smell the trick on't.

FLORIZEL.
Dispatch, I prithee.

AUTOLYCUS.

Indeed, I have had earnest; but I cannot with conscience take it.

CAMILLO.

Unbuckle, unbuckle.

FLORIZEL and AUTOLYCUS exchange garments

Fortunate mistress-let my prophecy

Come home to ye!- you must retire yourself

Into some covert; take your sweetheart's hat

And pluck it o'er your brows, muffle your face,

Dismantle you, and, as you can, disliken

The truth of your own seeming, that you may-

For I do fear eyes over-to shipboard

Get undescried.

PERDITA.

I see the play so lies

That I must bear a part.

CAMILLO.

No remedy.

Have you done there?

FLORIZEL.

Should I now meet my father,

He would not call me son.

CAMILLO.

Nay, you shall have no hat.

[Giving it to PERDITA]

Come, lady, come. Farewell, my friend.

AUTOLYCUS.

Adieu, sir.

FLORIZEL.

O Perdita, what have we twain forgot!

Pray you a word. *[They converse apart]*

CAMILLO.

[Aside] What I do next shall be to tell the King

Of this escape, and whither they are bound;

Wherein my hope is I shall so prevail

To force him after; in whose company

I shall re-view Sicilia, for whose sight

I have a woman's longing.

FLORIZEL.

Fortune speed us!

Thus we set on, Camillo, to th' sea-side.

CAMILLO.

The swifter speed the better.

Exeunt FLORIZEL, PERDITA, and CAMILLO

AUTOLYCUS.

I understand the business, I hear it. To have an open

ear, a quick eye, and a nimble hand, is necessary for a cut-purse; a good nose is requisite also, to smell out work for

th' other senses. I see this is the time that the unjust man doth

thrive. What an exchange had this been without boot! What a boot

is here with this exchange! Sure, the gods do this year connive

at us, and we may do anything extempore. The Prince himself is

about a piece of iniquity-stealing away from his father with his

clog at his heels. If I thought it were a piece of honesty to

acquaint the King withal, I would not do't. I hold it the more

knavery to conceal it; and therein am I constant to my profession.

Re-enter CLOWN and SHEPHERD

Aside, aside-here is more matter for a hot brain. Every lane's end, every shop, church, session, hanging, yields a careful man work. CLOWN. See, see; what a man you are now! There is no other way but to tell the King she's a changeling and none of your flesh and blood. SHEPHERD. Nay, but hear me. CLOWN. Nay-but hear me. SHEPHERD. Go to, then. CLOWN. She being none of your flesh and blood, your flesh and blood has not offended the King; and so your flesh and blood is not to be punish'd by him. Show those things you found about her, those secret things-all but what she has with her. This being done, let the law go whistle; I warrant you. SHEPHERD. I will tell the King all, every word-yea, and his son's pranks too; who, I may say, is no honest man, neither to his father nor to me, to go about to make me the King's brother-in-law. CLOWN. Indeed, brother-in-law was the farthest off you could have been to him; and then your blood had been the dearer by I know how much an ounce. AUTOLYCUS. *[Aside]* Very wisely, puppies! SHEPHERD. Well, let us to the King. There is that in this fardel will make him scratch his beard. AUTOLYCUS. *[Aside]* I know not what impediment this complaint may be to the flight of my master. CLOWN. Pray heartily he be at palace. AUTOLYCUS. *[Aside]* Though I am not naturally honest, I am so sometimes by chance. Let me pocket up my pedlar's excrement. *[Takes off his false beard]* How now, rustics! Whither are you bound? SHEPHERD. To th' palace, an it like your worship. AUTOLYCUS.

Your affairs there, what, with whom, the condition of that fardel, the place of your dwelling, your names, your ages, of what having, breeding, and anything that is fitting to be known-discover. CLOWN. We are but plain fellows, sir. AUTOLYCUS. A lie: you are rough and hairy. Let me have no lying; it becomes none but tradesmen, and they often give us soldiers the lie; but we pay them for it with stamped coin, not stabbing steel; therefore they do not give us the lie. CLOWN. Your worship had like to have given us one, if you had not taken yourself with the manner. SHEPHERD. Are you a courtier, an't like you, sir? AUTOLYCUS. Whether it like me or no, I am a courtier. Seest thou not the air of the court in these enfoldings? Hath not my gait in it the measure of the court? Receives not thy nose court-odour from me? Reflect I not on thy baseness court-contempt? Think'st thou, for that I insinuate, that toaze from thee thy business, I am therefore no courtier? I am courtier cap-a-pe, and one that will either push on or pluck back thy business there; whereupon I command the to open thy affair. SHEPHERD. My business, sir, is to the King. AUTOLYCUS. What advocate hast thou to him? SHEPHERD. I know not, an't like you. CLOWN. Advocate's the court-word for a pheasant; say you have none. SHEPHERD. None, sir; I have no pheasant, cock nor hen. AUTOLYCUS. How blessed are we that are not simple men! Yet nature might have made me as these are, Therefore I will not disdain. CLOWN. This cannot be but a great courtier. SHEPHERD. His garments are rich, but he wears them not handsomely. CLOWN. He seems to be the more noble in being fantastical. A great man, I'll warrant; I know by the picking on's teeth. AUTOLYCUS. The fardel there? What's i' th' fardel? Wherefore that box? SHEPHERD. Sir, there lies such secrets in this fardel and box which none must know but the King; and which he shall know within this hour, if I may come to th' speech of him. AUTOLYCUS. Age, thou hast lost thy labour. SHEPHERD. Why, Sir? AUTOLYCUS. The King is not at the palace; he is gone aboard a new ship to purge melancholy and air himself; for, if thou be'st capable of things serious, thou must know the King is full of grief. SHEPHERD. So 'tis said, sir-about his son, that should have married a shepherd's daughter. AUTOLYCUS. If that shepherd be not in hand-fast, let him fly; the curses he shall have, the tortures he shall feel, will break the back of man, the heart of monster. CLOWN. Think you so, sir? AUTOLYCUS. Not he alone shall suffer what wit can make heavy and vengeance bitter; but those that are germane to him, though remov'd fifty times, shall all come under the hangman-which, though it be great pity, yet it is necessary. An old sheep-whistling rogue, a ram-tender, to offer to have his daughter come into grace! Some say he shall be ston'd; but that death is too soft for him, say I. Draw our throne into a sheep-cote!- all deaths are too few, the sharpest too easy. CLOWN.

Has the old man e'er a son, sir, do you hear, an't like you, sir? AUTOLYCUS. He has a son-who shall be flay'd alive; then 'nointed over with honey, set on the head of a wasp's nest; then stand till he be three quarters and a dram dead; then recover'd again with aqua-vitae or some other hot infusion; then, raw as he is, and in the hottest day prognostication proclaims, shall he be set against a brick wall, the sun looking with a southward eye upon him, where he is to behold him with flies blown to death. But what talk we of these traitorly rascals, whose miseries are to be smil'd at, their offences being so capital? Tell me, for you seem to be honest plain men, what you have to the King. Being something gently consider'd, I'll bring you where he is aboard, tender your persons to his presence, whisper him in your behalfs; and if it be in man besides the King to effect your suits, here is man shall do it. CLOWN. He seems to be of great authority. Close with him, give him gold; and though authority be a stubborn bear, yet he is oft led by the nose with gold. Show the inside of your purse to the outside of his hand, and no more ado. Remember-ston'd and flay'd alive. SHEPHERD. An't please you, sir, to undertake the business for us, here is that gold I have. I'll make it as much more, and leave this young man in pawn till I bring it you. AUTOLYCUS. After I have done what I promised? SHEPHERD. Ay, sir. AUTOLYCUS. Well, give me the moiety. Are you a party in this business? CLOWN. In some sort, sir; but though my case be a pitiful one, I hope I shall not be flay'd out of it. AUTOLYCUS. O, that's the case of the shepherd's son! Hang him, he'll be made an example. CLOWN. Comfort, good comfort! We must to the King and show our strange sights. He must know 'tis none of your daughter nor my sister; we are gone else. Sir, I will give you as much as this old man does, when the business is performed; and remain, as he says, your pawn till it be brought you. AUTOLYCUS. I will trust you. Walk before toward the sea-side; go on the right-hand; I will but look upon the hedge, and follow you. CLOWN. We are blest in this man, as I may say, even blest. SHEPHERD. Let's before, as he bids us. He was provided to do us good. *Exeunt* SHEPHERD and CLOWN AUTOLYCUS. If I had a mind to be honest, I see Fortune would not suffer me: she drops booties in my mouth. I am courted now with a double occasion-gold, and a means to do the Prince my master good; which who knows how that may turn back to my advancement? I will bring these two moles, these blind ones, aboard him. If he think it fit to shore them again, and that the complaint they have to the King concerns him nothing, let him call me rogue for being so far officious; for I am proof against that title, and what shame else belongs to't. To him will I present them. There may be matter in it. *Exit*

ACT V. SCENE I. Sicilia. The palace of LEONTES

Enter LEONTES, CLEOMENES, DION, PAULINA, and OTHERS

CLEOMENES.

Sir, you have done enough, and have perform'd
A saint-like sorrow. No fault could you make
Which you have not redeem'd; indeed, paid down
More penitence than done trespass. At the last,
Do as the heavens have done: forget your evil;
With them forgive yourself.

LEONTES.

Whilst I remember
Her and her virtues, I cannot forget
My blemishes in them, and so still think of
The wrong I did myself; which was so much
That heirless it hath made my kingdom, and
Destroy'd the sweet'st companion that e'er man
Bred his hopes out of.

PAULINA.

True, too true, my lord.
If, one by one, you wedded all the world,
Or from the all that are took something good
To make a perfect woman, she you kill'd
Would be unparallel'd.

LEONTES.
I think so. Kill'd!
She I kill'd! I did so; but thou strik'st me
Sorely, to say I did. It is as bitter
Upon thy tongue as in my thought. Now, good now,
Say so but seldom.

CLEOMENES.

Not at all, good lady.
You might have spoken a thousand things that would
Have done the time more benefit, and grac'd
Your kindness better.

PAULINA.

You are one of those

Would have him wed again.

DION.

If you would not so,

You pity not the state, nor the remembrance

Of his most sovereign name; consider little

What dangers, by his Highness' fail of issue,

May drop upon his kingdom and devour

Incertain lookers-on. What were more holy

Than to rejoice the former queen is well?

What holier than, for royalty's repair,

For present comfort, and for future good,

To bless the bed of majesty again

With a sweet fellow to't?

PAULINA.

There is none worthy,

Respecting her that's gone. Besides, the gods

Will have fulfill'd their secret purposes;
For has not the divine Apollo said,
Is't not the tenour of his oracle,
That King Leontes shall not have an heir
Till his lost child be found? Which that it shall,
Is all as monstrous to our human reason
As my Antigonus to break his grave
And come again to me; who, on my life,
Did perish with the infant. 'Tis your counsel
My lord should to the heavens be contrary,
Oppose against their wills. *[To LEONTES]* Care not for issue;
The crown will find an heir. Great Alexander
Left his to th' worthiest; so his successor
Was like to be the best.

LEONTES.

Good Paulina,
Who hast the memory of Hermione,
I know, in honour, O that ever I
Had squar'd me to thy counsel! Then, even now,
I might have look'd upon my queen's full eyes,

Have taken treasure from her lips-

PAULINA.

And left them

More rich for what they yielded.

LEONTES.

Thou speak'st truth.

No more such wives; therefore, no wife. One worse,

And better us'd, would make her sainted spirit

Again possess her corpse, and on this stage,

Where we offend her now, appear soul-vex'd,

And begin 'Why to me'-

PAULINA.

Had she such power,

She had just cause.

LEONTES.

She had; and would incense me

To murder her I married.

PAULINA.

I should so.
Were I the ghost that walk'd, I'd bid you mark
Her eye, and tell me for what dull part in't
You chose her; then I'd shriek, that even your ears
Should rift to hear me; and the words that follow'd
Should be 'Remember mine.'

LEONTES.
Stars, stars,
And all eyes else dead coals! Fear thou no wife;
I'll have no wife, Paulina.

PAULINA.
Will you swear
Never to marry but by my free leave?

LEONTES.

Never, Paulina; so be blest my spirit!

PAULINA.

Then, good my lords, bear witness to his oath.

CLEOMENES.

You tempt him over-much.

PAULINA.

Unless another,

As like Hermione as is her picture,

Affront his eye.

CLEOMENES.

Good madam-

PAULINA.

I have done.

Yet, if my lord will marry-if you will, sir,

No remedy but you will-give me the office
To choose you a queen. She shall not be so young
As was your former; but she shall be such
As, walk'd your first queen's ghost, it should take joy
To see her in your arms.

LEONTES.

My true Paulina,
We shall not marry till thou bid'st us.

PAULINA.

That
Shall be when your first queen's again in breath;
Never till then.

Enter a GENTLEMAN

GENTLEMAN.

One that gives out himself Prince Florizel,
Son of Polixenes, with his princess-she
The fairest I have yet beheld-desires access

To your high presence.

LEONTES.

What with him? He comes not

Like to his father's greatness. His approach,

So out of circumstance and sudden, tells us

'Tis not a visitation fram'd, but forc'd

By need and accident. What train?

GENTLEMAN.

But few,

And those but mean.

LEONTES.

His princess, say you, with him?

GENTLEMAN.

Ay; the most peerless piece of earth, I think,

That e'er the sun shone bright on.

PAULINA.

O Hermione,

As every present time doth boast itself

Above a better gone, so must thy grave

Give way to what's seen now! Sir, you yourself

Have said and writ so, but your writing now

Is colder than that theme: 'She had not been,

Nor was not to be equall'd.' Thus your verse

Flow'd with her beauty once; 'tis shrewdly ebb'd,

To say you have seen a better.

GENTLEMAN.

Pardon, madam.

The one I have almost forgot-your pardon;

The other, when she has obtain'd your eye,

Will have your tongue too. This is a creature,

Would she begin a sect, might quench the zeal

Of all professors else, make proselytes

Of who she but bid follow.

PAULINA.

How! not women?

GENTLEMAN.

Women will love her that she is a woman

More worth than any man; men, that she is

The rarest of all women.

LEONTES.

Go, Cleomenes;

Yourself, assisted with your honour'd friends,

Bring them to our embracement. *Exeunt*

Still, 'tis strange

He thus should steal upon us.

PAULINA.

Had our prince,

Jewel of children, seen this hour, he had pair'd

Well with this lord; there was not full a month

Between their births.

LEONTES.

Prithee no more; cease. Thou know'st

He dies to me again when talk'd of. Sure,

When I shall see this gentleman, thy speeches

Will bring me to consider that which may

Unfurnish me of reason.

Re-enter CLEOMENES, with FLORIZEL, PERDITA, and

ATTENDANTS

They are come.

Your mother was most true to wedlock, Prince;

For she did print your royal father off,

Conceiving you. Were I but twenty-one,

Your father's image is so hit in you

His very air, that I should call you brother,

As I did him, and speak of something wildly

By us perform'd before. Most dearly welcome!

And your fair princess-goddess! O, alas!

I lost a couple that 'twixt heaven and earth

Might thus have stood begetting wonder as

You, gracious couple, do. And then I lost-

All mine own folly-the society,
Amity too, of your brave father, whom,
Though bearing misery, I desire my life
Once more to look on him.

FLORIZEL.
By his command
Have I here touch'd Sicilia, and from him
Give you all greetings that a king, at friend,
Can send his brother; and, but infirmity,
Which waits upon worn times, hath something seiz'd
His wish'd ability, he had himself
The lands and waters 'twixt your throne and his
Measur'd, to look upon you; whom he loves,
He bade me say so, more than all the sceptres
And those that bear them living.

LEONTES.
O my brother-
Good gentleman!- the wrongs I have done thee stir
Afresh within me; and these thy offices,

So rarely kind, are as interpreters
Of my behind-hand slackness! Welcome hither,
As is the spring to th' earth. And hath he too
Expos'd this paragon to th' fearful usage,
At least ungentle, of the dreadful Neptune,
To greet a man not worth her pains, much less
Th' adventure of her person?

FLORIZEL.

Good, my lord,
She came from Libya.

LEONTES.

Where the warlike Smalus,
That noble honour'd lord, is fear'd and lov'd?

FLORIZEL.

Most royal sir, from thence; from him whose daughter
His tears proclaim'd his, parting with her; thence,
A prosperous south-wind friendly, we have cross'd,
To execute the charge my father gave me

For visiting your Highness. My best train

I have from your Sicilian shores dismiss'd;

Who for Bohemia bend, to signify

Not only my success in Libya, sir,

But my arrival and my wife's in safety

Here where we are.

LEONTES.

The blessed gods

Purge all infection from our air whilst you

Do climate here! You have a holy father,

A graceful gentleman, against whose person,

So sacred as it is, I have done sin,

For which the heavens, taking angry note,

Have left me issueless; and your father's blest,

As he from heaven merits it, with you,

Worthy his goodness. What might I have been,

Might I a son and daughter now have look'd on,

Such goodly things as you!

Enter a LORD

LORD.

Most noble sir,

That which I shall report will bear no credit,

Were not the proof so nigh. Please you, great sir,

Bohemia greets you from himself by me;

Desires you to attach his son, who has-

His dignity and duty both cast off-

Fled from his father, from his hopes, and with

A shepherd's daughter.

LEONTES.

Where's Bohemia? Speak.

LORD.

Here in your city; I now came from him.

I speak amazedly; and it becomes

My marvel and my message. To your court

Whiles he was hast'ning-in the chase, it seems,

Of this fair couple-meets he on the way

The father of this seeming lady and
Her brother, having both their country quitted
With this young prince.

FLORIZEL.
Camillo has betray'd me;
Whose honour and whose honesty till now
Endur'd all weathers.

LORD.
Lay't so to his charge;
He's with the King your father.

LEONTES.
Who? Camillo?

LORD.
Camillo, sir; I spake with him; who now
Has these poor men in question. Never saw I
Wretches so quake. They kneel, they kiss the earth;
Forswear themselves as often as they speak.

Bohemia stops his ears, and threatens them

With divers deaths in death.

PERDITA.

O my poor father!

The heaven sets spies upon us, will not have

Our contract celebrated.

LEONTES.

You are married?

FLORIZEL.

We are not, sir, nor are we like to be;

The stars, I see, will kiss the valleys first.

The odds for high and low's alike.

LEONTES.

My lord,

Is this the daughter of a king?

FLORIZEL.

She is,

When once she is my wife.

LEONTES.

That 'once,' I see by your good father's speed,

Will come on very slowly. I am sorry,

Most sorry, you have broken from his liking

Where you were tied in duty; and as sorry

Your choice is not so rich in worth as beauty,

That you might well enjoy her.

FLORIZEL.

Dear, look up.

Though Fortune, visible an enemy,

Should chase us with my father, pow'r no jot

Hath she to change our loves. Beseech you, sir,

Remember since you ow'd no more to time

Than I do now. With thought of such affections,

Step forth mine advocate; at your request

My father will grant precious things as trifles.

LEONTES.

Would he do so, I'd beg your precious mistress,

Which he counts but a trifle.

PAULINA.

Sir, my liege,

Your eye hath too much youth in't. Not a month

Fore your queen died, she was more worth such gazes

Than what you look on now.

LEONTES.

I thought of her

Even in these looks I made. *[To FLORIZEL]* But your petition

Is yet unanswer'd. I will to your father.

Your honour not o'erthrown by your desires,

I am friend to them and you. Upon which errand

I now go toward him; therefore, follow me,

And mark what way I make. Come, good my lord. *Exeunt*

SCENE II. Sicilia. Before the palace of LEONTES

Enter AUTOLYCUS and a GENTLEMAN

AUTOLYCUS.

Beseech you, sir, were you present at this relation?

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

I was by at the opening of the fardel, heard the
old shepherd deliver the manner how he found it; whereupon, after
a little amazedness, we were all commanded out of the chamber;
only this, methought I heard the shepherd say he found the child.

AUTOLYCUS.

I would most gladly know the issue of it.

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

I make a broken delivery of the business; but the
changes I perceived in the King and Camillo were very notes of
admiration. They seem'd almost, with staring on one another, to
tear the cases of their eyes; there was speech in their dumbness,

language in their very gesture; they look'd as they had heard of a world ransom'd, or one destroyed. A notable passion of wonder appeared in them; but the wisest beholder that knew no more but seeing could not say if th' importance were joy or sorrow-
but in
the extremity of the one it must needs be.

Enter another GENTLEMAN

Here comes a gentleman that happily knows more. The news, Rogero?

SECOND GENTLEMAN.
Nothing but bonfires. The oracle is
fulfill'd:
the King's daughter is found. Such a deal of wonder is broken out within this hour that ballad-makers cannot be able to express it.

Enter another GENTLEMAN

Here comes the Lady Paulina's steward; he can deliver you more.

How goes it now, sir? This news, which is call'd true, is so like an old tale that the verity of it is in strong suspicion. Has the King found his heir?

THIRD GENTLEMAN.

Most true, if ever truth were pregnant by circumstance. That which you hear you'll swear you see, there is such unity in the proofs. The mantle of Queen Hermione's; her jewel about the neck of it; the letters of Antigonus found with it, which they know to be his character; the majesty of the creature in resemblance of the mother; the affection of nobleness which nature shows above her breeding; and many other evidences-

proclaim her with all certainty to be the King's daughter.

Did

you see the meeting of the two kings?

SECOND GENTLEMAN.

No.

THIRD GENTLEMAN.

Then you have lost a sight which was to be seen,
cannot be spoken of. There might you have beheld one joy crown
another, so and in such manner that it seem'd sorrow wept to take
leave of them; for their joy waded in tears. There was casting up
of eyes, holding up of hands, with countenance of such
distraction that they were to be known by garment, not by favour.
Our king, being ready to leap out of himself for joy of his found
daughter, as if that joy were now become a loss, cries 'O, thy
mother, thy mother!' then asks Bohemia forgiveness; then embraces
his son-in-law; then again worries he his daughter with clipping
her. Now he thanks the old shepherd, which stands by like a
weather-bitten conduit of many kings' reigns. I never heard of
such another encounter, which lames report to follow it and
undoes description to do it.

SECOND GENTLEMAN.
What, pray you, became of Antigonus, that carried
hence the child?

THIRD GENTLEMAN.
Like an old tale still, which will have matter to

rehearse, though credit be asleep and not an ear open: he was

torn to pieces with a bear. This avouches the shepherd's son, who has not only his innocence, which seems much, to justify him, but a handkerchief and rings of his that Paulina knows. FIRST GENTLEMAN. What became of his bark and his followers? THIRD GENTLEMAN. Wreck'd the same instant of their master's death, and in the view of the shepherd; so that all the instruments which aided to expose the child were even then lost when it was found. But, O, the noble combat that 'twixt joy and sorrow was fought in Paulina! She had one eye declin'd for the loss of her husband, another elevated that the oracle was fulfill'd. She lifted the Princess from the earth, and so locks her in embracing as if she would pin her to her heart, that she might no more be in danger of losing. FIRST GENTLEMAN. The dignity of this act was worth the audience of kings and princes; for by such was it acted. THIRD GENTLEMAN. One of the prettiest touches of all, and that which angl'd for mine eyes-caught the water, though not the fish-was, when at the relation of the Queen's death, with the manner how she came to't bravely confess'd and lamented by the King, how attentivenes wounded his daughter; till, from one sign of dolour to another, she did with an 'Alas!'- I would fain say-bleed tears; for I am sure my heart wept blood. Who was most marble there changed colour; some swooned, all sorrowed. If all the world could have seen't, the woe had been universal. FIRST GENTLEMAN. Are they returned to the court? THIRD GENTLEMAN. No. The Princess hearing of her mother's statue, which is in the keeping of Paulina-a piece many years in doing and now newly perform'd by that rare Italian master, Julio Romano, who, had he himself eternity and could put breath into his work, would beguile nature of her custom, so perfectly he is her ape. He so near to Hermione hath done Hermione that they say one would speak to her and stand in hope of answer-thither with all greediness of affection are they gone, and there they intend to sup. SECOND GENTLEMAN. I thought she had some great matter there in hand; for she hath privately twice or thrice a day, ever since the death of Hermione, visited that removed house. Shall we thither, and with our company piece the rejoicing? FIRST GENTLEMAN. Who would be thence that has the benefit of access? Every wink of an eye some new grace will be born. Our

absence makes us unthrifty to our knowledge. Let's along.

Exeunt GENTLEMEN

AUTOLYCUS.

Now, had I not the dash of my former life in me, would preferment drop on my head. I brought the old man and his son aboard the Prince; told him I heard them talk of a fardel and

I

know not what; but he at that time over-fond of the shepherd's daughter-so he then took her to be-who began to be much sea-sick, and himself little better, extremity of weather continuing, this mystery remained undiscover'd. But 'tis all one to me; for had I been the finder-out of this secret, it would not have relish'd among my other discredits.

Enter SHEPHERD and CLOWN

Here come those I have done good to against my will, and already appearing in the blossoms of their fortune.

SHEPHERD.
Come, boy; I am past moe children, but thy sons and daughters will be all gentlemen born.

CLOWN.

You are well met, sir. You denied to fight with me this
other day, because I was no gentleman born. See you these
clothes? Say you see them not and think me still no gentleman
born. You were best say these robes are not gentlemen born.
Give
me the lie, do; and try whether I am not now a gentleman born.

AUTOLYCUS.

I know you are now, sir, a gentleman born.

CLOWN.

Ay, and have been so any time these four hours.

SHEPHERD.

And so have I, boy.

CLOWN.

So you have; but I was a gentleman born before my father;

for the King's son took me by the hand and call'd me brother; and
then the two kings call'd my father brother; and then the Prince,
my brother, and the Princess, my sister, call'd my father father.
And so we wept; and there was the first gentleman-like tears that ever we shed.

SHEPHERD.

We may live, son, to shed many more.

CLOWN.

Ay; or else 'twere hard luck, being in so preposterous estate as we are.

AUTOLYCUS.

I humbly beseech you, sir, to pardon me all the
faults I
have committed to your worship, and to give me your good report
to the Prince my master.

SHEPHERD.

Prithee, son, do; for we must be gentle, now we are gentlemen.

CLOWN.

Thou wilt amend thy life?

AUTOLYCUS.

Ay, an it like your good worship.

CLOWN.

Give me thy hand. I will swear to the Prince thou art as
honest a true fellow as any is in Bohemia.

SHEPHERD.

You may say it, but not swear it.

CLOWN.

Not swear it, now I am a gentleman? Let boors and franklins
say it: I'll swear it.

SHEPHERD.

How if it be false, son?

CLOWN.

If it be ne'er so false, a true gentleman may swear it in the behalf of his friend. And I'll swear to the Prince thou art a tall fellow of thy hands and that thou wilt not be drunk; but

I

know thou art no tall fellow of thy hands and that thou wilt be drunk. But I'll swear it; and I would thou wouldst be a tall fellow of thy hands.

AUTOLYCUS.

I will prove so, sir, to my power.

CLOWN.

Ay, by any means, prove a tall fellow. If I do not wonder how thou dar'st venture to be drunk not being a tall fellow, trust me not. Hark! the kings and the princes, our kindred, are going to see the Queen's picture. Come, follow us; we'll be thy good masters. *Exeunt*

SCENE III. Sicilia. A chapel in PAULINA's house

Enter LEONTES, POLIXENES, FLORIZEL, PERDITA, CAMILLO, PAULINA,

LORDS and ATTENDANTS

LEONTES.

O grave and good Paulina, the great comfort

That I have had of thee!

PAULINA.

What, sovereign sir,

I did not well, I meant well. All my services

You have paid home; but that you have vouchsaf'd,

With your crown'd brother and these your contracted

Heirs of your kingdoms, my poor house to visit,

It is a surplus of your grace, which never

My life may last to answer.

LEONTES.

O Paulina,

We honour you with trouble; but we came

To see the statue of our queen. Your gallery
Have we pass'd through, not without much content
In many singularities; but we saw not
That which my daughter came to look upon,
The statue of her mother.

PAULINA.
As she liv'd peerless,
So her dead likeness, I do well believe,
Excels whatever yet you look'd upon
Or hand of man hath done; therefore I keep it
Lonely, apart. But here it is. Prepare
To see the life as lively mock'd as ever
Still sleep mock'd death. Behold; and say 'tis well.

[PAULINA draws a curtain, and discovers HERMIONE
standing like a statue]
I like your silence; it the more shows off
Your wonder; but yet speak. First, you, my liege.

Comes it not something near?

LEONTES.

Her natural posture!
Chide me, dear stone, that I may say indeed
Thou art Hermione; or rather, thou art she
In thy not chiding; for she was as tender
As infancy and grace. But yet, Paulina,
Hermione was not so much wrinkled, nothing
So aged as this seems.

POLIXENES.

O, not by much!

PAULINA.

So much the more our carver's excellence,
Which lets go by some sixteen years and makes her
As she liv'd now.

LEONTES.

As now she might have done,

So much to my good comfort as it is
Now piercing to my soul. O, thus she stood,
Even with such life of majesty-warm life,
As now it coldly stands-when first I woo'd her!
I am asham'd. Does not the stone rebuke me
For being more stone than it? O royal piece,
There's magic in thy majesty, which has
My evils conjur'd to remembrance, and
From thy admiring daughter took the spirits,
Standing like stone with thee!

PERDITA.

And give me leave,
And do not say 'tis superstition that
I kneel, and then implore her blessing. Lady,
Dear queen, that ended when I but began,
Give me that hand of yours to kiss.

PAULINA.

O, patience!

The statue is but newly fix'd, the colour's Not dry.

CAMILLO.

My lord, your sorrow was too sore laid on,

Which sixteen winters cannot blow away,

So many summers dry. Scarce any joy

Did ever so long live; no sorrow

But kill'd itself much sooner.

POLIXENES.

Dear my brother,

Let him that was the cause of this have pow'r

To take off so much grief from you as he

Will piece up in himself.

PAULINA.

Indeed, my lord,

If I had thought the sight of my poor image

Would thus have wrought you-for the stone is mine-

I'd not have show'd it.

LEONTES.

Do not draw the curtain.

PAULINA.

No longer shall you gaze on't, lest your fancy

May think anon it moves.

LEONTES.

Let be, let be.

Would I were dead, but that methinks already-

What was he that did make it? See, my lord,

Would you not deem it breath'd, and that those veins

Did verily bear blood?

POLIXENES.

Masterly done!

The very life seems warm upon her lip.

LEONTES.

The fixture of her eye has motion in't,

As we are mock'd with art.

PAULINA.

I'll draw the curtain.

My lord's almost so far transported that

He'll think anon it lives.

LEONTES.

O sweet Paulina,

Make me to think so twenty years together!

No settled senses of the world can match

The pleasure of that madness. Let 't alone.

PAULINA.

I am sorry, sir, I have thus far stirr'd you; but

I could afflict you farther.

LEONTES.

Do, Paulina;

For this affliction has a taste as sweet

As any cordial comfort. Still, methinks,

There is an air comes from her. What fine chisel

Could ever yet cut breath? Let no man mock me,

For I will kiss her.

PAULINA.

Good my lord, forbear.

The ruddiness upon her lip is wet;

You'll mar it if you kiss it; stain your own

With oily painting. Shall I draw the curtain?

LEONTES.

No, not these twenty years.

PERDITA.

So long could I

Stand by, a looker-on.

PAULINA.

Either forbear,

Quit presently the chapel, or resolve you

For more amazement. If you can behold it,

I'll make the statue move indeed, descend,

And take you by the hand, but then you'll think-

Which I protest against-I am assisted

By wicked powers.

LEONTES.

What you can make her do

I am content to look on; what to speak

I am content to hear; for 'tis as easy

To make her speak as move.

PAULINA.

It is requir'd

You do awake your faith. Then all stand still;

Or those that think it is unlawful business

I am about, let them depart.

LEONTES.

Proceed.

No foot shall stir.

PAULINA.

Music, awake her: strike. *[Music]*

'Tis time; descend; be stone no more; approach;

Strike all that look upon with marvel. Come;

I'll fill your grave up. Stir; nay, come away.

Bequeath to death your numbness, for from him

Dear life redeems you. You perceive she stirs.

[HERMIONE comes down from the pedestal]

Start not; her actions shall be holy as

You hear my spell is lawful. Do not shun her

Until you see her die again; for then

You kill her double. Nay, present your hand.

When she was young you woo'd her; now in age

Is she become the suitor?

LEONTES.

O, she's warm!

If this be magic, let it be an art
Lawful as eating.

POLIXENES.

She embraces him.

CAMILLO.
She hangs about his neck.

If she pertain to life, let her speak too.

POLIXENES.
Ay, and make it manifest where she has liv'd,
Or how stol'n from the dead.

PAULINA.
That she is living,
Were it but told you, should be hooted at
Like an old tale; but it appears she lives
Though yet she speak not. Mark a little while.

Please you to interpose, fair madam. Kneel,
And pray your mother's blessing. Turn, good lady;
Our Perdita is found.

HERMIONE.
You gods, look down,
And from your sacred vials pour your graces
Upon my daughter's head! Tell me, mine own,
Where hast thou been preserv'd? Where liv'd? How found
Thy father's court? For thou shalt hear that I,
Knowing by Paulina that the oracle
Gave hope thou wast in being, have preserv'd
Myself to see the issue.

PAULINA.
There's time enough for that,
Lest they desire upon this push to trouble
Your joys with like relation. Go together,
You precious winners all; your exultation
Partake to every one. I, an old turtle,
Will wing me to some wither'd bough, and there

My mate, that's never to be found again,

Lament till I am lost.

LEONTES.

O peace, Paulina!

Thou shouldst a husband take by my consent,

As I by thine a wife. This is a match,

And made between's by vows. Thou hast found mine;

But how, is to be question'd; for I saw her,

As I thought, dead; and have, in vain, said many

A prayer upon her grave. I'll not seek far-

For him, I partly know his mind-to find thee

An honourable husband. Come, Camillo,

And take her by the hand whose worth and honesty

Is richly noted, and here justified

By us, a pair of kings. Let's from this place.

What! look upon my brother. Both your pardons,

That e'er I put between your holy looks

My ill suspicion. This your son-in-law,

And son unto the King, whom heavens directing, Is troth-plight to your daughter. Good Paulina,

Lead us from hence where we may leisurely

Each one demand and answer to his part

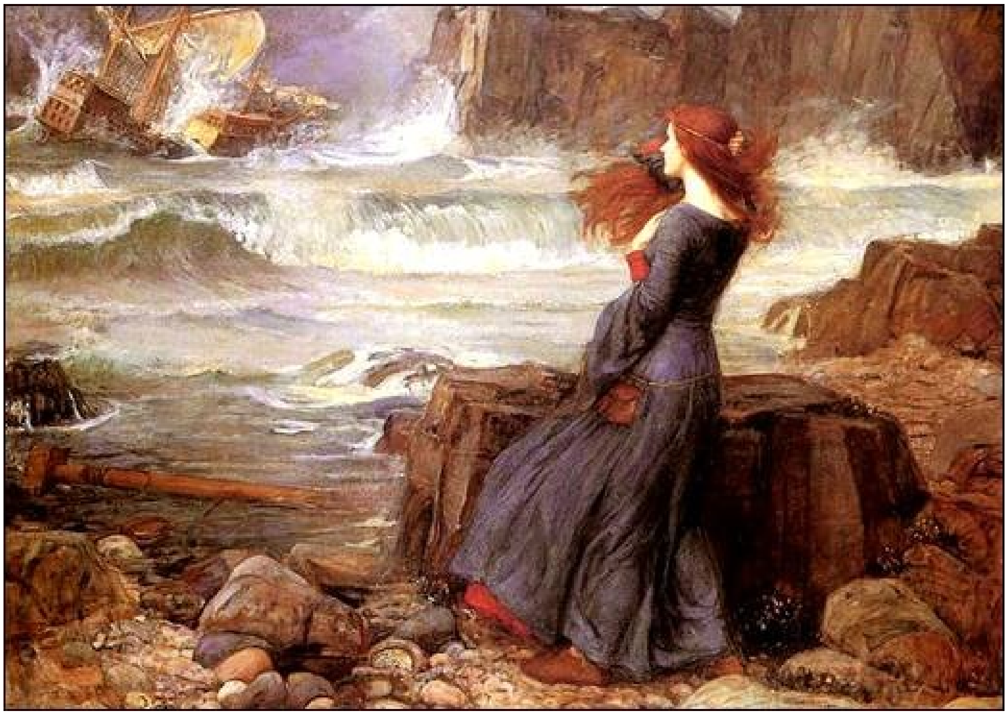
Perform'd in this wide gap of time since first

We were dissever'd. Hastily lead away. *Exeunt*

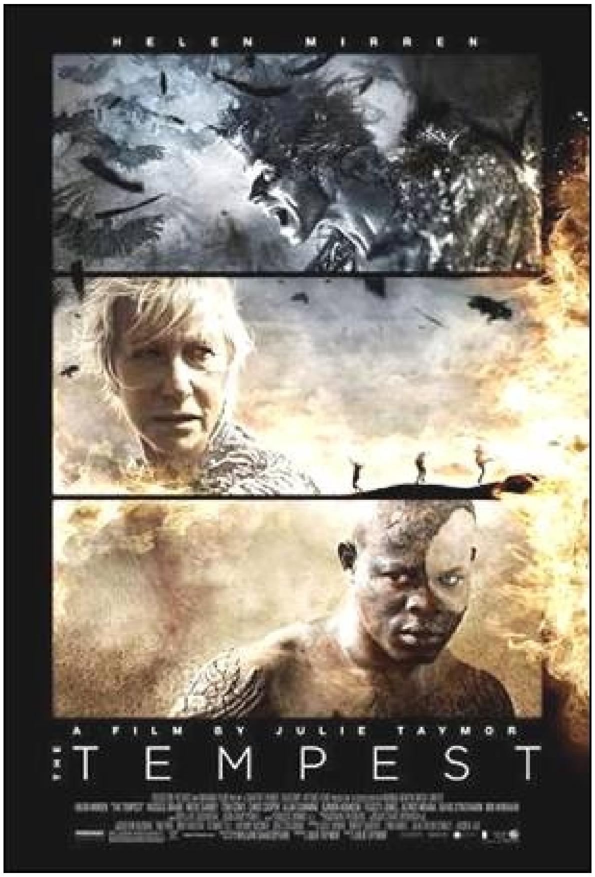
THE TEMPEST

Believed to have been written between 1610 and 1611, this well-known play is set on a remote island, where the sorcerer Prospero, the exiled Duke of Milan, plots to restore his daughter Miranda to her rightful place. He conjures a storm to lure to the island his usurping brother Antonio and Alonso, King of Naples. During their time on this magical island, Prospero’s machinations bring about the revelation of Antonio's low nature, the redemption of Alonso and the marriage of Miranda to Alonso's son, Ferdinand.

There is no obvious single source for *The Tempest* , but critics have seen parallels in Erasmus's *Naufragium* , Peter Martyr's *De orbo novo* , and an eyewitness report by William Strachey of the real-life shipwreck of the Sea Venture on the islands of Bermuda.



'Miranda' by John William Waterhouse, 1910


HELEN MIRREN
A FILM BY JULIE TAYMOR
THE TEMPEST

The 2010 film adaptation, with a female Prospero, played by Helen Mirren

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EPILOGUE

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

ALONSO, King of Naples

SEBASTIAN, his brother

PROSPERO, the right Duke of Milan

ANTONIO, his brother, the usurping Duke of Milan

FERDINAND, son to the King of Naples

GONZALO, an honest old counsellor Lords

ADRIAN

FRANCISCO

CALIBAN, a savage and deformed slave

TRINCULO, a jester

STEPHANO, a drunken butler

MASTER OF A SHIP

BOATSWAIN

MARINERS

MIRANDA, daughter to Prospero

ARIEL, an airy spirit Spirits

IRIS

CERES

JUNO

NYMPHS

REAPERS

Other Spirits attending on Prospero

SCENE: A ship at sea; afterwards an uninhabited island

ACT I. SCENE 1

On a ship at sea; a tempestuous noise of thunder and lightning heard

Enter a SHIPMASTER and a BOATSWAIN

MASTER. Boatswain!

BOATSWAIN.

Here, master; what cheer?

MASTER.

Good! Speak to th' mariners; fall to't yarely, or

we run ourselves aground; bestir, bestir. *Exit*

Enter MARINERS

BOATSWAIN. Heigh, my hearts! cheerly, cheerly, my hearts! yare, yare! Take in the topsail. Tend to th' master's whistle. Blow till thou burst thy wind, if room enough.

Enter ALONSO, SEBASTIAN, ANTONIO, FERDINAND, GONZALO, and OTHERS

ALONSO. Good boatswain, have care. Where's the master?

Play the men.

BOATSWAIN.

I pray now, keep below.

ANTONIO.

Where is the master, boson?

BOATSWAIN.

Do you not hear him? You mar our labour;

keep your cabins; you do assist the storm.

GONZALO.

Nay, good, be patient.

BOATSWAIN.

When the sea is. Hence! What cares these

roarers for the name of king? To cabin! silence! Trouble us not.

GONZALO.

Good, yet remember whom thou hast aboard.

BOATSWAIN.

None that I more love than myself. You are

counsellor; if you can command these elements to

silence, and work the peace of the present, we will not

hand a rope more. Use your authority; if you cannot, give

thanks you have liv'd so long, and make yourself ready

in your cabin for the mischance of the hour, if it so

hap.-Cheerly, good hearts!-Out of our way, I say.

Exit

GONZALO. I have great comfort from this fellow. Methinks

he hath no drowning mark upon him; his complexion is

perfect gallows. Stand fast, good Fate, to his hanging;

make the rope of his destiny our cable, for our own doth

little advantage. If he be not born to be hang'd, our

case is miserable. *Exeunt*

Re-enter BOATSWAIN

BOATSWAIN.

Down with the topmast. Yare, lower, lower! Bring her to try wi' th' maincourse. *[A cry within]* A plague upon this howling! They are louder than the weather or our office.

Re-enter SEBASTIAN, ANTONIO, and GONZALO

Yet again! What do you here? Shall we give o'er, and
drown? Have you a mind to sink?

SEBASTIAN.
A pox o' your throat, you bawling, blasphemous,
incharitable dog!

BOATSWAIN.

Work you, then.

ANTONIO.
Hang, cur; hang, you whoreson, insolent noisemaker;
we are less afraid to be drown'd than thou art.

GONZALO.
I'll warrant him for drowning, though the ship were
no stronger than a nutshell, and as leaky as an unstanched wench.

BOATSWAIN.

Lay her a-hold, a-hold; set her two courses; off

to sea again; lay her off.

Enter MARINERS, Wet

MARINERS.

All lost! to prayers, to prayers! all lost!

Exeunt

BOATSWAIN.

What, must our mouths be cold?

GONZALO.

The King and Prince at prayers!

Let's assist them,

For our case is as theirs.

SEBASTIAN.

I am out of patience.

ANTONIO.

We are merely cheated of our lives by drunkards.

This wide-chopp'd rascal-would thou mightst lie drowning

The washing of ten tides!

GONZALO.

He'll be hang'd yet,

Though every drop of water swear against it,

And gape at wid'st to glut him.

[A confused noise within: Mercy on us!

We split, we split! Farewell, my wife and children!

Farewell, brother! We split, we split, we split!]

ANTONIO.

Let's all sink wi' th' King.

SEBASTIAN.

Let's take leave of him.

Exeunt ANTONIO and SEBASTIAN

GONZALO.

Now would I give a thousand furlongs of sea for

an acre of barren ground-long heath, brown furze, any

thing. The wills above be done, but I would fain die

dry death. *Exeunt*

SCENE 2

The Island. Before PROSPERO'S cell

Enter PROSPERO and MIRANDA

MIRANDA. If by your art, my dearest father, you have
Put the wild waters in this roar, allay them.
The sky, it seems, would pour down stinking pitch,
But that the sea, mounting to th' welkin's cheek,
Dashes the fire out. O, I have suffered
With those that I saw suffer! A brave vessel,
Who had no doubt some noble creature in her,
Dash'd all to pieces! O, the cry did knock
Against my very heart! Poor souls, they perish'd.
Had I been any god of power, I would
Have sunk the sea within the earth or ere
It should the good ship so have swallow'd and
The fraughting souls within her.

PROSPERO.

Be conected;
No more amazement; tell your piteous heart
There's no harm done.

MIRANDA.

O, woe the day!

PROSPERO.
No harm.
I have done nothing but in care of thee,
Of thee, my dear one, thee, my daughter, who
Art ignorant of what thou art, nought knowing
Of whence I am, nor that I am more better
Than Prospero, master of a full poor cell,
And thy no greater father.

MIRANDA.
More to know
Did never meddle with my thoughts.

PROSPERO.

'Tis time

I should inform thee farther. Lend thy hand,

And pluck my magic garment from me. So,

[Lays down his mantle]

Lie there my art. Wipe thou thine eyes; have comfort.

The direful spectacle of the wreck, which touch'd

The very virtue of compassion in thee,

I have with such provision in mine art

So safely ordered that there is no soul-

No, not so much perdition as an hair

Betid to any creature in the vessel

Which thou heard'st cry, which thou saw'st sink.

Sit down, for thou must now know farther.

MIRANDA.

You have often

Begun to tell me what I am; but stopp'd,

And left me to a bootless inquisition,

Concluding 'Stay; not yet.'

PROSPERO.

The hour's now come;

The very minute bids thee ope thine ear.

Obey, and be attentive. Canst thou remember

A time before we came unto this cell?

I do not think thou canst; for then thou wast not

Out three years old.

MIRANDA.

Certainly, sir, I can.

PROSPERO.

By what? By any other house, or person?

Of any thing the image, tell me, that

Hath kept with thy remembrance?

MIRANDA.

'Tis far off,

And rather like a dream than an assurance

That my remembrance warrants. Had I not
Four, or five, women once, that tended me?

PROSPERO.
Thou hadst, and more, Miranda. But how is it
That this lives in thy mind? What seest thou else
In the dark backward and abysm of time?
If thou rememb'rest aught, ere thou cam'st here,
How thou cam'st here thou mayst.

MIRANDA.

But that I do not.

PROSPERO.
Twelve year since, Miranda, twelve year since,
Thy father was the Duke of Milan, and
A prince of power.

MIRANDA.

Sir, are not you my father?

PROSPERO.

Thy mother was a piece of virtue, and

She said thou wast my daughter; and thy father

Was Duke of Milan, and his only heir

And princess no worse issued.

MIRANDA.

O, the heavens!

What foul play had we that we came from thence?

Or blessed was't we did?

PROSPERO.

Both, both, my girl.

By foul play, as thou say'st, were we heav'd thence;

But blessedly holp hither.

MIRANDA.

O, my heart bleeds
To think o' th' teen that I have turn'd you to,
Which is from my remembrance. Please you, farther.

PROSPERO.
My brother and thy uncle, call'd Antonio-
I pray thee, mark me that a brother should
Be so perfidious. He, whom next thyself
Of all the world I lov'd, and to him put
The manage of my state; as at that time
Through all the signories it was the first,
And Prospero the prime duke, being so reputed
In dignity, and for the liberal arts
Without a parallel, those being all my study-
The government I cast upon my brother
And to my state grew stranger, being transported
And rapt in secret studies. Thy false uncle-
Dost thou attend me?

MIRANDA.
Sir, most heedfully.

PROSPERO.

Being once perfected how to grant suits,
How to deny them, who t' advance, and who
To trash for over-topping, new created
The creatures that were mine, I say, or chang'd 'em,
Or else new form'd 'em; having both the key
Of officer and office, set all hearts i' th' state
To what tune pleas'd his ear; that now he was
The ivy which had hid my princely trunk
And suck'd my verdure out on't. Thou attend'st not.

MIRANDA.

O, good sir, I do!

PROSPERO.

I pray thee, mark me.
I thus neglecting worldly ends, all dedicated
To closeness and the bettering of my mind
With that which, but by being so retir'd,

O'er-priz'd all popular rate, in my false brother

Awak'd an evil nature; and my trust,

Like a good parent, did beget of him

A falsehood, in its contrary as great

As my trust was; which had indeed no limit,

A confidence sans bound. He being thus lorded,

Not only with what my revenue yielded,

But what my power might else exact, like one

Who having into truth, by telling of it,

Made such a sinner of his memory,

To credit his own lie-he did believe

He was indeed the Duke; out o' th' substitution,

And executing th' outward face of royalty

With all prerogative. Hence his ambition growing-

Dost thou hear?

MIRANDA.

Your tale, sir, would cure deafness.

PROSPERO.

To have no screen between this part he play'd

And him he play'd it for, he needs will be
Absolute Milan. Me, poor man-my library
Was dukedom large enough-of temporal royalties
He thinks me now incapable; confederates,
So dry he was for sway, wi' th' King of Naples,
To give him annual tribute, do him homage,
Subject his coronet to his crown, and bend
The dukedom, yet unbow'd-alas, poor Milan!-
To most ignoble stooping.

MIRANDA.

O the heavens!

PROSPERO.
Mark his condition, and th' event, then tell me
If this might be a brother.

MIRANDA.
I should sin
To think but nobly of my grandmother:

Good wombs have borne bad sons.

PROSPERO.

Now the condition:
This King of Naples, being an enemy
To me inveterate, hearkens my brother's suit;
Which was, that he, in lieu o' th' premises,
Of homage, and I know not how much tribute,
Should presently extirpate me and mine
Out of the dukedom, and confer fair Milan
With all the honours on my brother. Whereon,
A treacherous army levied, one midnight
Fated to th' purpose, did Antonio open
The gates of Milan; and, i' th' dead of darkness,
The ministers for th' purpose hurried thence
Me and thy crying self.

MIRANDA.
Alack, for pity!
I, not rememb'ring how I cried out then,

Will cry it o'er again; it is a hint
That wrings mine eyes to't.

PROSPERO.
Hear a little further,
And then I'll bring thee to the present busines
Which now's upon 's; without the which this story
Were most impertinent.

MIRANDA.
Wherefore did they not
That hour destroy us?

PROSPERO.
Well demanded, wench!
My tale provokes that question. Dear, they durst not,
So dear the love my people bore me; nor set
A mark so bloody on the business; but
With colours fairer painted their foul ends.
In few, they hurried us aboard a bark;
Bore us some leagues to sea, where they prepared

A rotten carcass of a butt, not rigg'd,
Nor tackle, sail, nor mast; the very rats
Instinctively have quit it. There they hoist us,
To cry to th' sea, that roar'd to us; to sigh
To th' winds, whose pity, sighing back again,
Did us but loving wrong.

MIRANDA.
Alack, what trouble
Was I then to you!

PROSPERO.
O, a cherubin
Thou wast that did preserve me! Thou didst smile,
Infused with a fortitude from heaven,
When I have deck'd the sea with drops full salt,
Under my burden groan'd; which rais'd in me
An undergoing stomach, to bear up
Against what should ensue.

MIRANDA.

How came we ashore?

PROSPERO.

By Providence divine.
Some food we had and some fresh water that
A noble Neapolitan, Gonzalo,
Out of his charity, who being then appointed
Master of this design, did give us, with
Rich garments, linens, stuffs, and necessaries,
Which since have steaded much; so, of his gentleness,
Knowing I lov'd my books, he furnish'd me
From mine own library with volumes that
I prize above my dukedom.

MIRANDA.
Would I might
But ever see that man!

PROSPERO.
Now I arise. *[Puts on his mantle]*

Sit still, and hear the last of our sea-sorrow.
Here in this island we arriv'd; and here
Have I, thy schoolmaster, made thee more profit
Than other princess' can, that have more time
For vainer hours, and tutors not so careful.

MIRANDA.
Heavens thank you for't! And now, I pray you,
sir,
For still 'tis beating in my mind, your reason
For raising this sea-storm?

PROSPERO.

Know thus far forth:
By accident most strange, bountiful Fortune,
Now my dear lady, hath mine enemies
Brought to this shore; and by my prescience
I find my zenith doth depend upon
A most auspicious star, whose influence
If now I court not, but omit, my fortunes

Will ever after droop. Here cease more questions;

Thou art inclin'd to sleep; 'tis a good dullness,

And give it way. I know thou canst not choose.

[MIRANDA sleeps]

Come away, servant; come; I am ready now.

Approach, my Ariel. Come.

Enter ARIEL

ARIEL.

All hail, great master! grave sir, hail! I come

To answer thy best pleasure; be't to fly,

To swim, to dive into the fire, to ride

On the curl'd clouds. To thy strong bidding task

Ariel and all his quality.

PROSPERO.

Hast thou, spirit,

Perform'd to point the tempest that I bade thee?

ARIEL.

To every article.
I boarded the King's ship; now on the beak,
Now in the waist, the deck, in every cabin,
I flam'd amazement. Sometime I'd divide,
And burn in many places; on the topmast,
The yards, and bowsprit, would I flame distinctly,
Then meet and join Jove's lightning, the precursors
O' th' dreadful thunder-claps, more momentary
And sight-outrunning were not; the fire and cracks
Of sulphurous roaring the most mighty Neptune
Seem to besiege, and make his bold waves tremble,
Yea, his dread trident shake.

PROSPERO.

My brave spirit!
Who was so firm, so constant, that this coil
Would not infect his reason?

ARIEL.

Not a soul
But felt a fever of the mad, and play'd
Some tricks of desperation. All but mariners
Plung'd in the foaming brine, and quit the vessel,
Then all afire with me; the King's son, Ferdinand,
With hair up-staring-then like reeds, not hair-
Was the first man that leapt; cried 'Hell is empty,
And all the devils are here.'

PROSPERO.

Why, that's my spirit!

But was not this nigh shore?

ARIEL.

Close by, my master.

PROSPERO.

But are they, Ariel, safe?

ARIEL.

Not a hair perish'd;
On their sustaining garments not a blemish,
But fresher than before; and, as thou bad'st me,
In troops I have dispers'd them 'bout the isle.
The King's son have I landed by himself,
Whom I left cooling of the air with sighs
In an odd angle of the isle, and sitting,
His arms in this sad knot.

PROSPERO.

Of the King's ship,
The mariners, say how thou hast dispos'd,
And all the rest o' th' fleet?

ARIEL.

Safely in harbour
Is the King's ship; in the deep nook, where once
Thou call'dst me up at midnight to fetch dew
From the still-vex'd Bermoothes, there she's hid;

The mariners all under hatches stowed,
Who, with a charm join'd to their suff'red labour,
I have left asleep; and for the rest o' th' fleet,
Which I dispers'd, they all have met again,
And are upon the Mediterranean flote
Bound sadly home for Naples,
Supposing that they saw the King's ship wreck'd,
And his great person perish.

PROSPERO.

Ariel, thy charge
Exactly is perform'd; but there's more work.

What is the time o' th' day?

ARIEL.

Past the mid season.

PROSPERO.

At least two glasses. The time 'twixt six and now
Must by us both be spent most preciously.

ARIEL.

Is there more toil? Since thou dost give me pains,

Let me remember thee what thou hast promis'd,

Which is not yet perform'd me.

PROSPERO.

How now, moody?

What is't thou canst demand?

ARIEL.

My liberty.

PROSPERO.

Before the time be out? No more!

ARIEL.

I prithee,

Remember I have done thee worthy service, Told thee no lies, made thee no mistakings, serv'd

Without or grudge or grumblings. Thou didst promise

To bate me a full year.

PROSPERO.

Dost thou forget

From what a torment I did free thee?

ARIEL.

No.

PROSPERO.

Thou dost; and think'st it much to tread the ooze

Of the salt deep,

To run upon the sharp wind of the north,

To do me business in the veins o' th' earth

When it is bak'd with frost.

ARIEL.

I do not, sir.

PROSPERO.

Thou liest, malignant thing. Hast thou forgot

The foul witch Sycorax, who with age and envy

Was grown into a hoop? Hast thou forgot her?

ARIEL.

No, sir.

PROSPERO.

Thou hast. Where was she born?

Speak; tell me.

ARIEL.

Sir, in Argier.

PROSPERO.

O, was she so? I must

Once in a month recount what thou hast been,

Which thou forget'st. This damn'd witch Sycorax,

For mischiefs manifold, and sorceries terrible

To enter human hearing, from Argier

Thou know'st was banish'd; for one thing she did

They would not take her life. Is not this true?

ARIEL.

Ay, sir.

PROSPERO.

This blue-ey'd hag was hither brought with child,

And here was left by th'sailors. Thou, my slave,

As thou report'st thyself, wast then her servant;

And, for thou wast a spirit too delicate

To act her earthy and abhorr'd commands,

Refusing her grand hests, she did confine thee,

By help of her more potent ministers,

And in her most unmitigable rage,

Into a cloven pine; within which rift

Imprison'd thou didst painfully remain

A dozen years; within which space she died,
And left thee there, where thou didst vent thy groans
As fast as mill-wheels strike. Then was this island-
Save for the son that she did litter here,
A freckl'd whelp, hag-born-not honour'd with
A human shape.

ARIEL.

Yes, Caliban her son.

PROSPERO.

Dull thing, I say so; he, that Caliban
Whom now I keep in service. Thou best know'st
What torment I did find thee in; thy groans
Did make wolves howl, and penetrate the breasts
Of ever-angry bears; it was a torment
To lay upon the damn'd, which Sycorax
Could not again undo. It was mine art,
When I arriv'd and heard thee, that made gape
The pine, and let thee out.

ARIEL.

I thank thee, master.

PROSPERO.
If thou more murmur'st, I will rend an oak
And peg thee in his knotty entrails, till
Thou hast howl'd away twelve winters.

ARIEL.
Pardon, master;
I will be correspondent to command,
And do my spriting gently.

PROSPERO.
Do so; and after two days
I will discharge thee.

ARIEL.
That's my noble master!

What shall I do? Say what. What shall I do?

PROSPERO.

Go make thyself like a nymph o' th' sea; be subject
To no sight but thine and mine, invisible
To every eyeball else. Go take this shape,
And hither come in 't. Go, hence with diligence!

Exit ARIEL

Awake, dear heart, awake; thou hast slept well;
Awake.

MIRANDA.

The strangeness of your story put
Heaviness in me.

PROSPERO.

Shake it off. Come on,
We'll visit Caliban, my slave, who never

Yields us kind answer.

MIRANDA.

'Tis a villain, sir,

I do not love to look on.

PROSPERO.

But as 'tis,

We cannot miss him: he does make our fire,

Fetch in our wood, and serves in offices

That profit us. What ho! slave! Caliban!

Thou earth, thou! Speak.

CALIBAN.

[Within] There's wood enough within.

PROSPERO.

Come forth, I say; there's other business for thee.

Come, thou tortoise! when?

Re-enter ARIEL like a water-nymph

Fine apparition! My quaint Ariel,
Hark in thine ear.

ARIEL.
My lord, it shall be done. *Exit*

PROSPERO. Thou poisonous slave, got by the devil himself
Upon thy wicked dam, come forth!

Enter CALIBAN

CALIBAN.
As wicked dew as e'er my mother brush'd
With raven's feather from unwholesome fen
Drop on you both! A south-west blow on ye
And blister you all o'er!

PROSPERO.
For this, be sure, to-night thou shalt have cramps,
Side-stitches that shall pen thy breath up; urchins
Shall, for that vast of night that they may work,

All exercise on thee; thou shalt be pinch'd

As thick as honeycomb, each pinch more stinging

Than bees that made 'em.

CALIBAN.

I must eat my dinner.

This island's mine, by Sycorax my mother,

Which thou tak'st from me. When thou cam'st first,

Thou strok'st me and made much of me, wouldst give me

Water with berries in't, and teach me how

To name the bigger light, and how the less,

That burn by day and night; and then I lov'd thee,

And show'd thee all the qualities o' th' isle,

The fresh springs, brine-pits, barren place and fertile.

Curs'd be I that did so! All the charms

Of Sycorax, toads, beetles, bats, light on you!

For I am all the subjects that you have,

Which first was mine own king; and here you sty me

In this hard rock, whiles you do keep from me

The rest o' th' island.

PROSPERO.

Thou most lying slave,
Whom stripes may move, not kindness! I have us'd thee,
Filth as thou art, with human care, and lodg'd thee
In mine own cell, till thou didst seek to violate
The honour of my child.

CALIBAN.

O ho, O ho! Would't had been done.
Thou didst prevent me; I had peopl'd else
This isle with Calibans.

MIRANDA.

Abhorred slave,
Which any print of goodness wilt not take,
Being capable of all ill! I pitied thee,
Took pains to make thee speak, taught thee each hour
One thing or other. When thou didst not, savage,
Know thine own meaning, but wouldst gabble like
A thing most brutish, I endow'd thy purposes
With words that made them known. But thy vile race,

Though thou didst learn, had that in't which good natures
Could not abide to be with; therefore wast thou
Deservedly confin'd into this rock, who hadst
Deserv'd more than a prison.

CALIBAN.
You taught me language, and my profit on't
Is, I know how to curse. The red plague rid you
For learning me your language!

PROSPERO.

Hag-seed, hence!
Fetch us in fuel. And be quick, thou 'rt best,
To answer other business. Shrug'st thou, malice?
If thou neglect'st, or dost unwillingly
What I command, I'll rack thee with old cramps,
Fill all thy bones with aches, make thee roar,
That beasts shall tremble at thy din.

CALIBAN.

No, pray thee.

[Aside] I must obey. His art is of such pow'r,
It would control my dam's god, Setebos,
And make a vassal of him.

PROSPERO.

So, slave; hence! *Exit* CALIBAN

Re-enter ARIEL invisible, playing ad singing;

FERDINAND following

ARIEL'S SONG.

Come unto these yellow sands,
And then take hands;
Curtsied when you have and kiss'd,
The wild waves whist,
Foot it featly here and there,
And, sweet sprites, the burden bear.

Hark, hark!

[Burden dispersedly: Bow-wow.]

The watch dogs bark.

[Burden dispersedly: Bow-wow.]
Hark, hark! I hear
The strain of strutting chanticleer
Cry, Cock-a-diddle-dow.

FERDINAND.

Where should this music be? I' th' air or th' earth?
It sounds no more; and sure it waits upon
Some god o' th' island. Sitting on a bank,
Weeping again the King my father's wreck,
This music crept by me upon the waters,
Allaying both their fury and my passion
With its sweet air; thence I have follow'd it,
Or it hath drawn me rather. But 'tis gone.
No, it begins again.
ARIEL'S SONG
Full fathom five thy father lies;

Of his bones are coral made;

Those are pearls that were his eyes;

Nothing of him that doth fade

But doth suffer a sea-change

Into something rich and strange.

Sea-nymphs hourly ring his knell:

[Burden: Ding-dong.]

Hark! now I hear them-Ding-dong bell.

FERDINAND.

The ditty does remember my drown'd father.

This is no mortal business, nor no sound

That the earth owes. I hear it now above me.

PROSPERO.

The fringed curtains of thine eye advance,

And say what thou seest yond.

MIRANDA.

What is't? a spirit?

Lord, how it looks about! Believe me, sir,
It carries a brave form. But 'tis a spirit.

PROSPERO.
No, wench; it eats and sleeps and hath such senses
As we have, such. This gallant which thou seest
Was in the wreck; and but he's something stain'd
With grief, that's beauty's canker, thou mightst call him
A goodly person. He hath lost his fellows,
And strays about to find 'em.

MIRANDA.
I might call him
A thing divine; for nothing natural
I ever saw so noble.

PROSPERO.
[Aside] It goes on, I see,
As my soul prompts it. Spirit, fine spirit! I'll free thee
Within two days for this.

FERDINAND.

Most sure, the goddess
On whom these airs attend! Vouchsafe my pray'r
May know if you remain upon this island;
And that you will some good instruction give
How I may bear me here. My prime request,
Which I do last pronounce, is, O you wonder!
If you be maid or no?

MIRANDA.

No wonder, sir;
But certainly a maid.

FERDINAND.

My language? Heavens!
I am the best of them that speak this speech,
Were I but where 'tis spoken.

PROSPERO.

How? the best?

What wert thou, if the King of Naples heard thee?

FERDINAND.

A single thing, as I am now, that wonders

To hear thee speak of Naples. He does hear me;

And that he does I weep. Myself am Naples,

Who with mine eyes, never since at ebb, beheld

The King my father wreck'd.

MIRANDA.

Alack, for mercy!

FERDINAND.

Yes, faith, and all his lords, the Duke of Milan

And his brave son being twain.

PROSPERO.

[Aside] The Duke of Milan

And his more braver daughter could control thee, If now 'twere fit to do't. At the first sight

They have chang'd eyes. Delicate Ariel,

I'll set thee free for this. *[To FERDINAND]* A word, good sir;

I fear you have done yourself some wrong; a word.

MIRANDA.

Why speaks my father so ungently? This

Is the third man that e'er I saw; the first

That e'er I sigh'd for. Pity move my father

To be inclin'd my way!

FERDINAND.

O, if a virgin,

And your affection not gone forth, I'll make you

The Queen of Naples.

PROSPERO.

Soft, Sir! one word more.

[Aside] They are both in either's pow'rs; but this swift busines

I must uneasy make, lest too light winning

Make the prize light. *[To FERDINAND]* One word more; I

charge thee

That thou attend me; thou dost here usurp

The name thou ow'st not; and hast put thyself

Upon this island as a spy, to win it

From me, the lord on't.

FERDINAND.

No, as I am a man.

MIRANDA.

There's nothing ill can dwell in such a temple.

If the ill spirit have so fair a house,

Good things will strive to dwell with't.

PROSPERO.

Follow me.

Speak not you for him; he's a traitor. Come;

I'll manacle thy neck and feet together.

Sea-water shalt thou drink; thy food shall be
The fresh-brook mussels, wither'd roots, and husks
Wherein the acorn cradled. Follow.

FERDINAND.
No;
I will resist such entertainment till
Mine enemy has more power.

[He draws, and is charmed from moving]

MIRANDA.
O dear father,
Make not too rash a trial of him, for
He's gentle, and not fearful.

PROSPERO.
What, I say,
My foot my tutor? Put thy sword up, traitor;
Who mak'st a show but dar'st not strike, thy conscience
Is so possess'd with guilt. Come from thy ward;

For I can here disarm thee with this stick
And make thy weapon drop.

MIRANDA.

Beseech you, father!

PROSPERO.
Hence! Hang not on my garments.

MIRANDA.
Sir, have pity;
I'll be his surety.

PROSPERO.
Silence! One word more
Shall make me chide thee, if not hate thee. What!

An advocate for an impostor! hush!
Thou think'st there is no more such shapes as he,
Having seen but him and Caliban. Foolish wench!

To th' most of men this is a Caliban,
And they to him are angels.

MIRANDA.
My affections
Are then most humble; I have no ambition
To see a goodlier man.

PROSPERO.

Come on; obey.
Thy nerves are in their infancy again,
And have no vigour in them.

FERDINAND.
So they are;
My spirits, as in a dream, are all bound up.
My father's loss, the weakness which I feel,
The wreck of all my friends, nor this man's threats
To whom I am subdu'd, are but light to me,
Might I but through my prison once a day

Behold this maid. All corners else o' th' earth

Let liberty make use of; space enough

Have I in such a prison.

PROSPERO.

[Aside] It works. *[To FERDINAND]* Come on.-

Thou hast done well, fine Ariel! *[To FERDINAND]* Follow me.

[To ARIEL] Hark what thou else shalt do me.

MIRANDA.

Be of comfort;

My father's of a better nature, sir,

Than he appears by speech; this is unwonted

Which now came from him.

PROSPERO.

[To ARIEL] Thou shalt be as free

As mountain winds; but then exactly do

All points of my command.

ARIEL.

To th' syllable.

PROSPERO.

[To FERDINAND] Come, follow. *[To MIRANDA]*

Speak not for him. *Exeunt*

ACT II. SCENE 1

Another part of the island

Enter ALONSO, SEBASTIAN, ANTONIO, GONZALO, ADRIAN, FRANCISCO, and

OTHERS

GONZALO.

Beseech you, sir, be merry; you have cause,

So have we all, of joy; for our escape

Is much beyond our loss. Our hint of woe

Is common; every day, some sailor's wife, The masters of some merchant, and the merchant,

Have just our theme of woe; but for the miracle,

I mean our preservation, few in millions

Can speak like us. Then wisely, good sir, weigh

Our sorrow with our comfort.

ALONSO.

Prithee, peace.

SEBASTIAN.

He receives comfort like cold porridge.

ANTONIO.

The visitor will not give him o'er so.

SEBASTIAN.

Look, he's winding up the watch of his wit; by

and by it will strike.

GONZALO.

Sir-

SEBASTIAN.

One-Tell.

GONZALO.

When every grief is entertain'd that's offer'd,

Comes to th' entertainer-

SEBASTIAN.

A dollar.

GONZALO.

Dolour comes to him, indeed; you have spoken

truer than you purpos'd.

SEBASTIAN.

You have taken it wiselier than I meant you should.

GONZALO.

Therefore, my lord-

ANTONIO.

Fie, what a spendthrift is he of his tongue!

ALONSO.

I prithee, spare.

GONZALO.

Well, I have done; but yet-

SEBASTIAN.

He will be talking.

ANTONIO.

Which, of he or Adrian, for a good wager, first begins to crow?

SEBASTIAN.

The old cock.

ANTONIO.

The cock'rel.

SEBASTIAN.

Done. The wager?

ANTONIO.

A laughter.

SEBASTIAN.

A match!

ADRIAN.

Though this island seem to be desert-

ANTONIO.

Ha, ha, ha!

SEBASTIAN.

So, you're paid.

ADRIAN.

Uninhabitable, and almost inaccessible-

SEBASTIAN.

Yet-

ADRIAN.

Yet-

ANTONIO.

He could not miss't.

ADRIAN.

It must needs be of subtle, tender, and delicate temperance.

ANTONIO.

Temperance was a delicate wench.

SEBASTIAN.

Ay, and a subtle; as he most learnedly deliver'd.

ADRIAN.

The air breathes upon us here most sweetly.

SEBASTIAN.

As if it had lungs, and rotten ones.

ANTONIO.

Or, as 'twere perfum'd by a fen.

GONZALO.

Here is everything advantageous to life.

ANTONIO.

True; save means to live.

SEBASTIAN.

Of that there's none, or little.

GONZALO.

How lush and lusty the grass looks! how green!

ANTONIO.

The ground indeed is tawny.

SEBASTIAN.

With an eye of green in't.

ANTONIO.

He misses not much.

SEBASTIAN.

No; he doth but mistake the truth totally.

GONZALO.

But the rarity of it is, which is indeed almost

beyond credit-

SEBASTIAN.

As many vouch'd rarities are.

GONZALO.

That our garments, being, as they were, drench'd

in the sea, hold, notwithstanding, their freshness and

glosses, being rather new-dy'd, than stain'd with salt water.

ANTONIO.

If but one of his pockets could speak, would it not say he lies?

SEBASTIAN.

Ay, or very falsely pocket up his report.

GONZALO.

Methinks our garments are now as fresh as when
we put them on first in Afric, at the marriage of the
King's fair daughter Claribel to the King of Tunis.

SEBASTIAN.

'Twas a sweet marriage, and we prosper well in our return.

ADRIAN.

Tunis was never grac'd before with such a paragon to their queen.

GONZALO.

Not since widow Dido's time.

ANTONIO.

Widow! a pox o' that! How came that 'widow'
in? Widow Dido!

SEBASTIAN.

What if he had said 'widower Aeneas' too?
Good Lord, how you take it!

ADRIAN.
'Widow Dido' said you? You make me study of
that. She was of Carthage, not of Tunis.

GONZALO.

This Tunis, sir, was Carthage.

ADRIAN.
Carthage?

GONZALO.

I assure you, Carthage.

ANTONIO.

His word is more than the miraculous harp.

SEBASTIAN.

He hath rais'd the wall, and houses too.

ANTONIO.

What impossible matter will he make easy next?

SEBASTIAN.

I think he will carry this island home in his

pocket, and give it his son for an apple.

ANTONIO.

And, sowing the kernels of it in the sea, bring forth more islands.

GONZALO.

Ay.

ANTONIO.

Why, in good time.

GONZALO.

Sir, we were talking that our garments seem now

as fresh as when we were at Tunis at the marriage of

your daughter, who is now Queen.

ANTONIO.

And the rarest that e'er came there.

SEBASTIAN.

Bate, I beseech you, widow Dido.

ANTONIO.

O, widow Dido! Ay, widow Dido.

GONZALO.

Is not, sir, my doublet as fresh as the first day I wore it? I mean, in a sort.

ANTONIO.

That 'sort' was well fish'd for.

GONZALO.

When I wore it at your daughter's marriage?

ALONSO.

You cram these words into mine ears against
The stomach of my sense. Would I had never
Married my daughter there; for, coming thence,
My son is lost; and, in my rate, she too,
Who is so far from Italy removed
I ne'er again shall see her. O thou mine heir
Of Naples and of Milan, what strange fish
Hath made his meal on thee?

FRANCISCO.

Sir, he may live;

I saw him beat the surges under him,
And ride upon their backs; he trod the water,
Whose enmity he flung aside, and breasted
The surge most swoln that met him; his bold head
'Bove the contentious waves he kept, and oared
Himself with his good arms in lusty stroke
To th' shore, that o'er his wave-worn basis bowed,
As stooping to relieve him. I not doubt
He came alive to land.

ALONSO.

No, no, he's gone.

SEBASTIAN.

Sir, you may thank yourself for this great loss,
That would not bless our Europe with your daughter,
But rather lose her to an African;
Where she, at least, is banish'd from your eye,
Who hath cause to wet the grief on't.

ALONSO.

Prithee, peace.

SEBASTIAN.

You were kneel'd to, and importun'd otherwise

By all of us; and the fair soul herself

Weigh'd between loathness and obedience at

Which end o' th' beam should bow. We have lost your son,

I fear, for ever. Milan and Naples have

Moe widows in them of this business' making,

Than we bring men to comfort them;

The fault's your own.

ALONSO.

So is the dear'st o' th' loss.

GONZALO.

My lord Sebastian,

The truth you speak doth lack some gentleness,

And time to speak it in; you rub the sore,

When you should bring the plaster.

SEBASTIAN.

Very well.

ANTONIO.

And most chirurgeonly.

GONZALO.

It is foul weather in us all, good sir,
When you are cloudy.

SEBASTIAN.

Foul weather?

ANTONIO.

Very foul.

GONZALO.

Had I plantation of this isle, my lord-

ANTONIO.

He'd sow 't with nettle-seed.

SEBASTIAN.

Or docks, or mallows.

GONZALO.

And were the king on't, what would I do?

SEBASTIAN.

Scape being drunk for want of wine.

GONZALO.

I' th' commonwealth I would by contraries
Execute all things; for no kind of traffic
Would I admit; no name of magistrate;
Letters should not be known; riches, poverty,
And use of service, none; contract, succession,

Bourn, bound of land, tilth, vineyard, none;
No use of metal, corn, or wine, or oil;
No occupation; all men idle, all;
And women too, but innocent and pure;
No sovereignty-

SEBASTIAN.

Yet he would be king on't.

ANTONIO.

The latter end of his commonwealth forgets the beginning.

GONZALO.

All things in common nature should produce
Without sweat or endeavour. Treason, felony,
Sword, pike, knife, gun, or need of any engine,
Would I not have; but nature should bring forth,
Of it own kind, all foison, all abundance,
To feed my innocent people.

SEBASTIAN.

No marrying 'mong his subjects?

ANTONIO.

None, man; all idle; whores and knaves.

GONZALO.

I would with such perfection govern, sir,

T' excel the golden age.

SEBASTIAN.

Save his Majesty!

ANTONIO.

Long live Gonzalo!

GONZALO.

And-do you mark me, sir?

ALONSO.

Prithee, no more; thou dost talk nothing to me.

GONZALO.

I do well believe your Highness; and did it to

minister occasion to these gentlemen, who are of such

sensible and nimble lungs that they always use to laugh at nothing.

ANTONIO.

'Twas you we laugh'd at.

GONZALO.

Who in this kind of merry fooling am nothing to

you; so you may continue, and laugh at nothing still.

ANTONIO.

What a blow was there given!

SEBASTIAN.

An it had not fall'n flat-long.

GONZALO.

You are gentlemen of brave mettle; you would

lift the moon out of her sphere, if she would continue

in it five weeks without changing.

Enter ARIEL, invisible, playing solemn music

SEBASTIAN.

We would so, and then go a-bat-fowling.

ANTONIO.

Nay, good my lord, be not angry.

GONZALO.

No, I warrant you; I will not adventure my

discretion so weakly. Will you laugh me asleep, for I am very heavy?

ANTONIO.

Go sleep, and hear us.

[All sleep but ALONSO, SEBASTIAN and ANTONIO]

ALONSO.

What, all so soon asleep! I wish mine eyes

Would, with themselves, shut up my thoughts; I find

They are inclin'd to do so.

SEBASTIAN.

Please you, sir,

Do not omit the heavy offer of it:

It seldom visits sorrow; when it doth,

It is a comforter.

ANTONIO.

We two, my lord,

Will guard your person while you take your rest,

And watch your safety.

ALONSO.

Thank you-wondrous heavy!

[ALONSO sleeps. Exit ARIEL]

SEBASTIAN.

What a strange drowsiness possesses them!

ANTONIO.

It is the quality o' th' climate.

SEBASTIAN.

Why

Doth it not then our eyelids sink? I find not

Myself dispos'd to sleep.

ANTONIO.

Nor I; my spirits are nimble.

They fell together all, as by consent;

They dropp'd, as by a thunderstroke. What might,

Worthy Sebastian? O, what might! No more!

And yet methinks I see it in thy face,

What thou shouldst be; th' occasion speaks thee; and
My strong imagination sees a crown
Dropping upon thy head.

SEBASTIAN.

What, art thou waking?

ANTONIO.

Do you not hear me speak?

SEBASTIAN.

I do; and surely
It is a sleepy language, and thou speak'st
Out of thy sleep. What is it thou didst say?
This is a strange repose, to be asleep
With eyes wide open; standing, speaking, moving,
And yet so fast asleep.

ANTONIO.

Noble Sebastian,

Thou let'st thy fortune sleep-die rather; wink'st

Whiles thou art waking.

SEBASTIAN.

Thou dost snore distinctly;

There's meaning in thy snores.

ANTONIO.

I am more serious than my custom; you

Must be so too, if heed me; which to do

Trebles thee o'er.

SEBASTIAN.

Well, I am standing water.

ANTONIO.

I'll teach you how to flow.

SEBASTIAN.

Do so: to ebb,

Hereditary sloth instructs me.

ANTONIO.

O,

If you but knew how you the purpose cherish,

Whiles thus you mock it! how, in stripping it,

You more invest it! Ebbing men indeed,

Most often, do so near the bottom run

By their own fear or sloth.

SEBASTIAN.

Prithee say on.

The setting of thine eye and cheek proclaim

A matter from thee; and a birth, indeed,

Which throes thee much to yield.

ANTONIO.

Thus, sir:

Although this lord of weak remembrance, this

Who shall be of as little memory

When he is earth'd, hath here almost persuaded-

For he's a spirit of persuasion, only

Professes to persuade-the King his son's alive,

'Tis as impossible that he's undrown'd

As he that sleeps here swims.

SEBASTIAN.

I have no hope

That he's undrown'd.

ANTONIO.

O, out of that 'no hope'

What great hope have you! No hope that way is

Another way so high a hope, that even

Ambition cannot pierce a wink beyond,

But doubt discovery there. Will you grant with me

That Ferdinand is drown'd?

SEBASTIAN.

He's gone.

ANTONIO.

Then tell me,

Who's the next heir of Naples?

SEBASTIAN.

Claribel.

ANTONIO.

She that is Queen of Tunis; she that dwells

Ten leagues beyond man's life; she that from Naples

Can have no note, unless the sun were post,

The Man i' th' Moon's too slow, till newborn chins

Be rough and razorable; she that from whom

We all were sea-swallow'd, though some cast again,

And by that destiny, to perform an act

Whereof what's past is prologue, what to come

In yours and my discharge.

SEBASTIAN.

What stuff is this! How say you?
'Tis true, my brother's daughter's Queen of Tunis;
So is she heir of Naples; 'twixt which regions
There is some space.

ANTONIO.

A space whose ev'ry cubit
Seems to cry out 'How shall that Claribel
Measure us back to Naples? Keep in Tunis,
And let Sebastian wake.' Say this were death
That now hath seiz'd them; why, they were no worse
Than now they are. There be that can rule Naples
As well as he that sleeps; lords that can prate
As amply and unnecessarily
As this Gonzalo; I myself could make
A chough of as deep chat. O, that you bore
The mind that I do! What a sleep were this
For your advancement! Do you understand me?

SEBASTIAN.

Methinks I do.

ANTONIO.

And how does your content

Tender your own good fortune?

SEBASTIAN.

I remember

You did supplant your brother Prospero.

ANTONIO.

True.

And look how well my garments sit upon me,

Much feater than before. My brother's servants

Were then my fellows; now they are my men.

SEBASTIAN.

But, for your conscience-

ANTONIO.

Ay, sir; where lies that? If 'twere a kibe,

'Twould put me to my slipper; but I feel not

This deity in my bosom; twenty consciences

That stand 'twixt me and Milan, candied be they

And melt, ere they molest! Here lies your brother,

No better than the earth he lies upon,

If he were that which now he's like-that's dead;

Whom I with this obedient steel, three inches of it,

Can lay to bed for ever; whiles you, doing thus,

To the perpetual wink for aye might put

This ancient morsel, this Sir Prudence, who

Should not upbraid our course. For all the rest,

They'll take suggestion as a cat laps milk;

They'll tell the clock to any business that

We say befits the hour.

SEBASTIAN.

Thy case, dear friend,

Shall be my precedent; as thou got'st Milan,

I'll come by Naples. Draw thy sword. One stroke

Shall free thee from the tribute which thou payest;

And I the King shall love thee.

ANTONIO.

Draw together;

And when I rear my hand, do you the like,

To fall it on Gonzalo.

SEBASTIAN.

O, but one word. *[They talk apart]*

Re-enter ARIEL, invisible, with music and song

ARIEL.

My master through his art foresees the danger

That you, his friend, are in; and sends me forth-

For else his project dies-to keep them living.

[Sings in GONZALO'S ear]

While you here do snoring lie,

Open-ey'd conspiracy

His time doth take.

If of life you keep a care,

Shake off slumber, and beware.

Awake, awake!

ANTONIO.

Then let us both be sudden.

GONZALO.

Now, good angels

Preserve the King! *[They wake]*

ALONSO.

Why, how now?-Ho, awake!-Why are you drawn?

Wherefore this ghastly looking?

GONZALO.

What's the matter?

SEBASTIAN.

Whiles we stood here securing your repose,

Even now, we heard a hollow burst of bellowing

Like bulls, or rather lions; did't not wake you?

It struck mine ear most terribly.

ALONSO.

I heard nothing.

ANTONIO.

O, 'twas a din to fright a monster's ear,
To make an earthquake! Sure it was the roar
Of a whole herd of lions.

ALONSO.

Heard you this, Gonzalo?

GONZALO.

Upon mine honour, sir, I heard a humming,
And that a strange one too, which did awake me;
I shak'd you, sir, and cried; as mine eyes open'd,
I saw their weapons drawn-there was a noise,
That's verily. 'Tis best we stand upon our guard,

Or that we quit this place. Let's draw our weapons.

ALONSO.

Lead off this ground; and let's make further search

For my poor son.

GONZALO.

Heavens keep him from these beasts!

For he is, sure, i' th' island.

ALONSO.

Lead away.

ARIEL.

Prospero my lord shall know what I have done;

So, King, go safely on to seek thy son. *Exeunt*

SCENE 2

Another part of the island

Enter CALIBAN, with a burden of wood. A noise of thunder heard

CALIBAN.

All the infections that the sun sucks up
From bogs, fens, flats, on Prosper fall, and make him
By inch-meal a disease! His spirits hear me,
And yet I needs must curse. But they'll nor pinch,
Fright me with urchin-shows, pitch me i' th' mire,
Nor lead me, like a firebrand, in the dark
Out of my way, unless he bid 'em; but
For every trifle are they set upon me;
Sometime like apes that mow and chatter at me,
And after bite me; then like hedgehogs which
Lie tumbling in my barefoot way, and mount
Their pricks at my footfall; sometime am I
All wound with adders, who with cloven tongues
Do hiss me into madness.

Enter TRINCULO

Lo, now, lo!
Here comes a spirit of his, and to torment me
For bringing wood in slowly. I'll fall flat;
Perchance he will not mind me.

TRINCULO.

Here's neither bush nor shrub to bear off any
weather at all, and another storm brewing; I hear it
sing i' th' wind. Yond same black cloud, yond huge one,
looks like a foul bombard that would shed his liquor. If
it should thunder as it did before, I know not where to
hide my head. Yond same cloud cannot choose but fall by
pailfuls. What have we here? a man or a fish? dead or
alive? A fish: he smells like a fish; a very ancient and
fish-like smell; kind of not-of-the-newest Poor-John. A
strange fish! Were I in England now, as once I was, and
had but this fish painted, not a holiday fool there but
would give a piece of silver. There would this monster
make a man; any strange beast there makes a man; when
they will not give a doit to relieve a lame beggar, they

will lay out ten to see a dead Indian. Legg'd like a man, and his fins like arms! Warm, o' my troth! I do now let loose my opinion; hold it no longer: this is no fish, but an islander, that hath lately suffered by thunderbolt. *[Thunder]* Alas, the storm is come again! My best way is to creep under his gaberdine; there is no other shelter hereabout. Misery acquaints a man with strange bed-fellows. I will here shroud till the dregs of the storm be past.

Enter STEPHANO singing; a bottle in his hand

STEPHANO.
I shall no more to sea, to sea,
Here shall I die ashore-
This is a very scurvy tune to sing at a man's funeral;
well, here's my comfort. *[Drinks]*
The master, the swabber, the boatswain, and I,
The gunner, and his mate,
Lov'd Mall, Meg, and Marian, and Margery,
But none of us car'd for Kate;

For she had a tongue with a tang,
Would cry to a sailor 'Go hang!'
She lov'd not the savour of tar nor of pitch,
Yet a tailor might scratch her where'er she did itch.
Then to sea, boys, and let her go hang!

This is a scurvy tune too; but here's my comfort.

[Drinks]

CALIBAN.

Do not torment me. O!

STEPHANO.

What's the matter? Have we devils here? Do you put tricks upon 's with savages and men of Ind? Ha! I have not scap'd drowning to be afeard now of your four legs; for it hath been said: As proper a man as ever went on four legs cannot make him give ground; and it shall be said so again, while Stephano breathes at nostrils.

CALIBAN.

The spirit torments me. O!

STEPHANO.
This is some monster of the isle with four legs,
who hath got, as I take it, an ague. Where the devil
should he learn our language? I will give him some
relief, if it be but for that. If I can recover him, and
keep him tame, and get to Naples with him, he's a
present for any emperor that ever trod on neat's leather.

CALIBAN.
Do not torment me, prithee; I'll bring my wood home faster.

STEPHANO.
He's in his fit now, and does not talk after the
wisest. He shall taste of my bottle; if he have never
drunk wine afore, it will go near to remove his fit. If
I can recover him, and keep him tame, I will not take
too much for him; he shall pay for him that hath him,

and that soundly.

CALIBAN.

Thou dost me yet but little hurt; thou wilt anon,

I know it by thy trembling; now Prosper works upon thee.

STEPHANO.

Come on your ways; open your mouth; here is

that which will give language to you, cat. Open your

mouth; this will shake your shaking, I can tell you, and

that soundly; you cannot tell who's your friend. Open your chaps again.

TRINCULO.

I should know that voice; it should be-but he is

drown'd; and these are devils. O, defend me!

STEPHANO.

Four legs and two voices; a most delicate monster!

His forward voice, now, is to speak well of his

friend; his backward voice is to utter foul speeches and

to detract. If all the wine in my bottle will recover
him, I will help his ague. Come-Amen! I will pour some in thy other mouth.

TRINCULO.
Stephano!

STEPHANO.

Doth thy other mouth call me? Mercy, mercy!
This is a devil, and no monster; I will leave him; I
have no long spoon.

TRINCULO.
Stephano! If thou beest Stephano, touch me, and
speak to me; for I am Trinculo-be not afeard-thy good
friend Trinculo.

STEPHANO.
If thou beest Trinculo, come forth; I'll pull
the by the lesser legs; if any be Trinculo's legs, these
are they. Thou art very Trinculo indeed! How cam'st thou

to be the siege of this moon-calf? Can he vent Trinculos?

TRINCULO.

I took him to be kill'd with a thunderstroke.
But art thou not drown'd, Stephano? I hope now thou are
not drown'd. Is the storm overblown? I hid me under the
dead moon-calf's gaberdine for fear of the storm. And
art thou living, Stephano? O Stephano, two Neapolitans scap'd!

STEPHANO.
Prithee, do not turn me about; my stomach is not constant.

CALIBAN.
[Aside] These be fine things, an if they be not sprites.
That's a brave god, and bears celestial liquor.

I will kneel to him.

STEPHANO.
How didst thou scape? How cam'st thou hither?

Swear by this bottle how thou cam'st hither-I escap'd
upon a butt of sack, which the sailors heaved o'erboard-
by this bottle, which I made of the bark of a tree, with
mine own hands, since I was cast ashore.

CALIBAN.
I'll swear upon that bottle to be thy true
subject, for the liquor is not earthly.

STEPHANO.

Here; swear then how thou escap'dst.

TRINCULO.
Swum ashore, man, like a duck; I can swim like
a duck, I'll be sworn.

STEPHANO.
[Passing the bottle] Here, kiss the book. Though
thou canst swim like a duck, thou art made like a goose.

TRINCULO.

O Stephano, hast any more of this?

STEPHANO.

The whole butt, man; my cellar is in a rock by
th' seaside, where my wine is hid. How now, moon-calf!
How does thine ague?

CALIBAN.

Hast thou not dropp'd from heaven?

STEPHANO.

Out o' th' moon, I do assure thee; I was the Man
i' th' Moon, when time was.

CALIBAN.

I have seen thee in her, and I do adore thee. My
mistress show'd me thee, and thy dog and thy bush.

STEPHANO.

Come, swear to that; kiss the book. I will
furnish it anon with new contents. Swear.
[CALIBAN drinks]

TRINCULO.

By this good light, this is a very shallow monster!
I afeard of him! A very weak monster! The Man i' th'
Moon! A most poor credulous monster! Well drawn,
monster, in good sooth!

CALIBAN.

I'll show thee every fertile inch o' th' island;
and will kiss thy foot. I prithee be my god.

TRINCULO.

By this light, a most perfidious and drunken
monster! When's god's asleep he'll rob his bottle.

CALIBAN.

I'll kiss thy foot; I'll swear myself thy subject.

STEPHANO.

Come on, then; down, and swear.

TRINCULO.

I shall laugh myself to death at this puppy-

headed monster. A most scurvy monster! I could find in

my heart to beat him-

STEPHANO.

Come, kiss.

TRINCULO.

But that the poor monster's in drink. An abominable monster!

CALIBAN.

I'll show thee the best springs; I'll pluck thee berries;

I'll fish for thee, and get thee wood enough.

A plague upon the tyrant that I serve!
I'll bear him no more sticks, but follow thee,
Thou wondrous man.

TRINCULO.

A most ridiculous monster, to make a wonder of a poor drunkard!

CALIBAN.
I prithee let me bring thee where crabs grow;
And I with my long nails will dig thee pig-nuts;
Show thee a jay's nest, and instruct thee how
To snare the nimble marmoset; I'll bring thee
To clust'ring filberts, and sometimes I'll get thee
Young scamels from the rock. Wilt thou go with me?

STEPHANO.
I prithee now, lead the way without any more
talking. Trinculo, the King and all our company else
being drown'd, we will inherit here. Here, bear my bottle.

Fellow Trinculo, we'll fill him by and by again.

CALIBAN.

[Sings drunkenly] Farewell, master; farewell, farewell!

TRINCULO.

A howling monster; a drunken monster!

CALIBAN.

No more dams I'll make for fish;
Nor fetch in firing
At requiring,
Nor scrape trenchering, nor wash dish.
'Ban 'Ban, Ca-Caliban,
Has a new master-Get a new man.
Freedom, high-day! high-day, freedom! freedom, high-day, freedom!

STEPHANO.

O brave monster! Lead the way. *Exeunt*

ACT III. SCENE 1

Before PROSPERO'S cell

Enter FERDINAND, hearing a log

FERDINAND.

There be some sports are painful, and their labour

Delight in them sets off; some kinds of baseness

Are nobly undergone, and most poor matters

Point to rich ends. This my mean task

Would be as heavy to me as odious, but

The mistress which I serve quickens what's dead,

And makes my labours pleasures. O, she is

Ten times more gentle than her father's crabbed;

And he's compos'd of harshness. I must remove

Some thousands of these logs, and pile them up,

Upon a sore injunction; my sweet mistress

Weeps when she sees me work, and says such baseness

Had never like executor. I forget;

But these sweet thoughts do even refresh my labours, Most busy, least when I do it.

Enter MIRANDA; and PROSPERO at a distance, unseen

MIRANDA.
Alas, now; pray you,
Work not so hard; I would the lightning had
Burnt up those logs that you are enjoin'd to pile.
Pray, set it down and rest you; when this burns,
'Twill weep for having wearied you. My father
Is hard at study; pray, now, rest yourself;
He's safe for these three hours.

FERDINAND.
O most dear mistress,
The sun will set before I shall discharge
What I must strive to do.

MIRANDA.
If you'll sit down,
I'll bear your logs the while; pray give me that;

I'll carry it to the pile.

FERDINAND.

No, precious creature;

I had rather crack my sinews, break my back,

Than you should such dishonour undergo,

While I sit lazy by.

MIRANDA.

It would become me

As well as it does you; and I should do it

With much more ease; for my good will is to it,

And yours it is against.

PROSPERO.

[Aside] Poor worm, thou art infected!

This visitation shows it.

MIRANDA.

You look wearily.

FERDINAND.

No, noble mistress; 'tis fresh morning with me

When you are by at night. I do beseech you,

Chiefly that I might set it in my prayers,

What is your name?

MIRANDA.

Miranda-O my father,

I have broke your hest to say so!

FERDINAND.

Admir'd Miranda!

What's dearest to the world! Full many a lady

I have ey'd with best regard; and many a time

Th' harmony of their tongues hath into bondage

Brought my too diligent ear; for several virtues

Have I lik'd several women, never any

With so full soul, but some defect in her

Did quarrel with the noblest grace she ow'd,

And put it to the foil; but you, O you,

So perfect and so peerless, are created
Of every creature's best!

MIRANDA.
I do not know
One of my sex; no woman's face remember,
Save, from my glass, mine own; nor have I seen
More that I may call men than you, good friend,
And my dear father. How features are abroad,
I am skilless of; but, by my modesty,
The jewel in my dower, I would not wish
Any companion in the world but you;
Nor can imagination form a shape,
Besides yourself, to like of. But I prattle
Something too wildly, and my father's precepts
I therein do forget.

FERDINAND.
I am, in my condition,
A prince, Miranda; I do think, a king-
I would not so!-and would no more endure

This wooden slavery than to suffer

The flesh-fly blow my mouth. Hear my soul speak:

The very instant that I saw you, did

My heart fly to your service; there resides

To make me slave to it; and for your sake

Am I this patient log-man.

MIRANDA.

Do you love me?

FERDINAND.

O heaven, O earth, bear witness to this sound,

And crown what I profess with kind event,

If I speak true! If hollowly, invert

What best is boded me to mischief! I,

Beyond all limit of what else i' th' world,

Do love, prize, honour you.

MIRANDA.

I am a fool

To weep at what I am glad of.

PROSPERO.

[Aside] Fair encounter

Of two most rare affections! Heavens rain grace

On that which breeds between 'em!

FERDINAND.

Wherefore weep you?

MIRANDA.

At mine unworthiness, that dare not offer

What I desire to give, and much less take

What I shall die to want. But this is trifling;

And all the more it seeks to hide itself,

The bigger bulk it shows. Hence, bashful cunning!

And prompt me, plain and holy innocence!

I am your wife, if you will marry me;

If not, I'll die your maid. To be your fellow

You may deny me; but I'll be your servant,

Whether you will or no.

FERDINAND.

My mistress, dearest;
And I thus humble ever.

MIRANDA.

My husband, then?

FERDINAND.

Ay, with a heart as willing
As bondage e'er of freedom. Here's my hand.

MIRANDA.

And mine, with my heart in't. And now farewell
Till half an hour hence.

FERDINAND.

A thousand thousand!

Exeunt FERDINAND and MIRANDA severally

PROSPERO.

So glad of this as they I cannot be,

Who are surpris'd withal; but my rejoicing

At nothing can be more. I'll to my book;

For yet ere supper time must I perform

Much business appertaining. *Exit*

SCENE 2

Another part of the island

Enter CALIBAN, STEPHANO, and TRINCULO

STEPHANO.

Tell not me-when the butt is out we will drink

water, not a drop before; therefore bear up, and board

'em. Servant-monster, drink to me.

TRINCULO.

Servant-monster! The folly of this island! They

say there's but five upon this isle: we are three of

them; if th' other two be brain'd like us, the state totters.

STEPHANO.

Drink, servant-monster, when I bid thee; thy
eyes are almost set in thy head.

TRINCULO.

Where should they be set else? He were a brave
monster indeed, if they were set in his tail.

STEPHANO.

My man-monster hath drown'd his tongue in
sack. For my part, the sea cannot drown me; I swam, ere
I could recover the shore, five and thirty leagues, off
and on. By this light, thou shalt be my lieutenant,
monster, or my standard.

TRINCULO.

Your lieutenant, if you list; he's no standard.

STEPHANO.

We'll not run, Monsieur Monster.

TRINCULO.

Nor go neither; but you'll lie like dogs, and
yet say nothing neither.

STEPHANO.

Moon-calf, speak once in thy life, if thou beest
a good moon-calf.

CALIBAN.

How does thy honour? Let me lick thy shoe.
I'll not serve him; he is not valiant.

TRINCULO.

Thou liest, most ignorant monster: I am in case
to justle a constable. Why, thou debosh'd fish, thou,
was there ever man a coward that hath drunk so much sack
as I to-day? Wilt thou tell a monstrous lie, being but
half fish and half a monster?

CALIBAN.

Lo, how he mocks me! Wilt thou let him, my lord?

TRINCULO.

'Lord' quoth he! That a monster should be such a natural!

CALIBAN.

Lo, lo again! Bite him to death, I prithee.

STEPHANO.

Trinculo, keep a good tongue in your head; if
you prove a mutineer-the next tree! The poor monster's
my subject, and he shall not suffer indignity.

CALIBAN.

I thank my noble lord. Wilt thou be pleas'd to
hearken once again to the suit I made to thee?

STEPHANO.

Marry will I; kneel and repeat it; I will stand,

and so shall Trinculo.

Enter ARIEL, invisible

CALIBAN.

As I told thee before, I am subject to a tyrant,

sorcerer, that by his cunning hath cheated me of the island.

ARIEL.

Thou liest.

CALIBAN.

Thou liest, thou jesting monkey, thou;

I would my valiant master would destroy thee.

I do not lie.

STEPHANO.

Trinculo, if you trouble him any more in's tale,

by this hand, I will supplant some of your teeth.

TRINCULO.

Why, I said nothing.

STEPHANO.

Mum, then, and no more. Proceed.

CALIBAN.

I say, by sorcery he got this isle;
From me he got it. If thy greatness will
Revenge it on him-for I know thou dar'st,
But this thing dare not-

STEPHANO.

That's most certain.

CALIBAN.

Thou shalt be lord of it, and I'll serve thee.

STEPHANO.

How now shall this be compass'd? Canst thou
bring me to the party?

CALIBAN.

Yea, yea, my lord; I'll yield him thee asleep,
Where thou mayst knock a nail into his head.

ARIEL.

Thou liest; thou canst not.

CALIBAN.

What a pied ninny's this! Thou scurvy patch!
I do beseech thy greatness, give him blows,
And take his bottle from him. When that's gone
He shall drink nought but brine; for I'll not show him
Where the quick freshes are.

STEPHANO.

Trinculo, run into no further danger; interrupt
the monster one word further and, by this hand, I'll turn

my mercy out o' doors, and make a stock-fish of thee.

TRINCULO.

Why, what did I? I did nothing. I'll go farther off.

STEPHANO.

Didst thou not say he lied?

ARIEL.

Thou liest.

STEPHANO.

Do I so? Take thou that. *[Beats him]* As you like

this, give me the lie another time.

TRINCULO.

I did not give the lie. Out o' your wits and

hearing too? A pox o' your bottle! This can sack and

drinking do. A murrain on your monster, and the devil take your fingers!

CALIBAN.

Ha, ha, ha!

STEPHANO.

Now, forward with your tale.-Prithee stand further off.

CALIBAN.

Beat him enough; after a little time, I'll beat him too.

STEPHANO.

Stand farther. Come, proceed.

CALIBAN.

Why, as I told thee, 'tis a custom with him
I' th' afternoon to sleep; there thou mayst brain him,
Having first seiz'd his books; or with a log
Batter his skull, or paunch him with a stake,
Or cut his wezand with thy knife. Remember

First to possess his books; for without them
He's but a sot, as I am, nor hath not
One spirit to command; they all do hate him
As rootedly as I. Burn but his books.
He has brave utensils-for so he calls them-
Which, when he has a house, he'll deck withal.
And that most deeply to consider is
The beauty of his daughter; he himself
Calls her a nonpareil. I never saw a woman
But only Sycorax my dam and she;
But she as far surpasseth Sycorax
As great'st does least.

STEPHANO.

Is it so brave a lass?

CALIBAN.
Ay, lord; she will become thy bed, I warrant,
And bring thee forth brave brood.

STEPHANO.

Monster, I will kill this man; his daughter and I
will be King and Queen-save our Graces!-and Trinculo
and thyself shall be viceroys. Dost thou like the plot,
Trinculo?

TRINCULO.

Excellent.

STEPHANO.

Give me thy hand; I am sorry I beat thee; but
while thou liv'st, keep a good tongue in thy head.

CALIBAN.

Within this half hour will he be asleep.
Wilt thou destroy him then?

STEPHANO.

Ay, on mine honour.

ARIEL.

This will I tell my master.

CALIBAN.

Thou mak'st me merry; I am full of pleasure.
Let us be jocund; will you troll the catch
You taught me but while-ere?

STEPHANO.

At thy request, monster, I will do reason, any
reason. Come on, Trinculo, let us sing. *[Sings]*
Flout 'em and scout 'em,
And scout 'em and flout 'em;
Thought is free.

CALIBAN.

That's not the tune.
[ARIEL plays the tune on a tabor and pipe]

STEPHANO.

What is this same?

TRINCULO.
This is the tune of our catch, play'd by the
picture of Nobody.

STEPHANO.
If thou beest a man, show thyself in thy
likeness; if thou beest a devil, take't as thou list.

TRINCULO.
O, forgive me my sins!

STEPHANO.

He that dies pays all debts. I defy thee. Mercy upon us!

CALIBAN.

Art thou afeard?

STEPHANO.

No, monster, not I.

CALIBAN.
Be not afeard. The isle is full of noises,
Sounds, and sweet airs, that give delight, and hurt not.
Sometimes a thousand twangling instruments
Will hum about mine ears; and sometimes voices,
That, if I then had wak'd after long sleep,
Will make me sleep again; and then, in dreaming,
The clouds methought would open and show riches
Ready to drop upon me, that, when I wak'd,
I cried to dream again.

STEPHANO.
This will prove a brave kingdom to me, where I
shall have my music for nothing.

CALIBAN.

When Prospero is destroy'd.

STEPHANO.

That shall be by and by; I remember the story.

TRINCULO.

The sound is going away; let's follow it, and after do our work.

STEPHANO.

Lead, monster; we'll follow. I would I could see

this taborer; he lays it on.

TRINCULO.

Wilt come? I'll follow, Stephano. *Exeunt*

SCENE 3

Another part of the island

Enter ALONSO, SEBASTIAN, ANTONIO, GONZALO, ADRIAN, FRANCISCO, and

OTHERS

GONZALO.

By'r lakin, I can go no further, sir;

My old bones ache. Here's a maze trod, indeed,

Through forth-rights and meanders! By your patience,

I needs must rest me.

ALONSO.

Old lord, I cannot blame thee,

Who am myself attach'd with weariness

To th' dulling of my spirits; sit down and rest.

Even here I will put off my hope, and keep it

No longer for my flatterer; he is drown'd

Whom thus we stray to find, and the sea mocks

Our frustrate search on land. Well, let him go.

ANTONIO.

[Aside to SEBASTIAN] I am right glad that he's so out of hope.
Do not, for one repulse, forgo the purpose
That you resolv'd t' effect.

SEBASTIAN.
[Aside to ANTONIO] The next advantage
Will we take throughly.

ANTONIO.
[Aside to SEBASTIAN] Let it be to-night;
For, now they are oppress'd with travel, they
Will not, nor cannot, use such vigilance
As when they are fresh.

SEBASTIAN.
[Aside to ANTONIO] I say, to-night; no more.
Solemn and strange music; and PROSPERO on the
top, invisible. *Enter* several strange SHAPES,
bringing in a banquet; and dance about it with
gentle actions of salutations; and inviting the
KING, etc., to eat, they depart

ALONSO.

What harmony is this? My good friends, hark!

GONZALO.

Marvellous sweet music!

ALONSO.

Give us kind keepers, heavens! What were these?

SEBASTIAN.

A living drollery. Now I will believe
That there are unicorns; that in Arabia
There is one tree, the phoenix' throne, one phoenix
At this hour reigning-there.

ANTONIO.

I'll believe both;
And what does else want credit, come to me,
And I'll be sworn 'tis true; travellers ne'er did lie,
Though fools at home condemn 'em.

GONZALO.

If in Naples

I should report this now, would they believe me?

If I should say, I saw such islanders,

For certes these are people of the island,

Who though they are of monstrous shape yet, note,

Their manners are more gentle-kind than of

Our human generation you shall find

Many, nay, almost any.

PROSPERO.

[Aside] Honest lord,

Thou hast said well; for some of you there present

Are worse than devils.

ALONSO.

I cannot too much muse

Such shapes, such gesture, and such sound, expressing,

Although they want the use of tongue, a kind

Of excellent dumb discourse.

PROSPERO.

[Aside] Praise in departing.

FRANCISCO.

They vanish'd strangely.

SEBASTIAN.

No matter, since
They have left their viands behind; for we have stomachs.

Will't please you taste of what is here?

ALONSO.

Not I.

GONZALO.

Faith, sir, you need not fear. When we were boys,
Who would believe that there were mountaineers,
Dewlapp'd like bulls, whose throats had hanging at 'em
Wallets of flesh? or that there were such men

Whose heads stood in their breasts? which now we find
Each putter-out of five for one will bring us
Good warrant of.

ALONSO.
I will stand to, and feed,
Although my last; no matter, since I feel
The best is past. Brother, my lord the Duke,
Stand to, and do as we.
Thunder and lightning. *Enter* ARIEL, like a harpy;
claps his wings upon the table; and, with a quaint
device, the banquet vanishes
ARIEL.
You are three men of sin, whom Destiny,
That hath to instrument this lower world
And what is in't, the never-surfeited sea
Hath caus'd to belch up you; and on this island
Where man doth not inhabit-you 'mongst men
Being most unfit to live. I have made you mad;
And even with such-like valour men hang and drown
Their proper selves.

[ALONSO, SEBASTIAN etc., draw their swords]

You fools! I and my fellows

Are ministers of Fate; the elements

Of whom your swords are temper'd may as well

Wound the loud winds, or with bemock'd-at stabs

Kill the still-closing waters, as diminish

One dowle that's in my plume; my fellow-ministers

Are like invulnerable. If you could hurt,

Your swords are now too massy for your strengths

And will not be uplifted. But remember-

For that's my business to you-that you three

From Milan did supplant good Prospero;

Expos'd unto the sea, which hath requit it,

Him, and his innocent child; for which foul deed

The pow'rs, delaying, not forgetting, have

Incens'd the seas and shores, yea, all the creatures,

Against your peace. Thee of thy son, Alonso,

They have bereft; and do pronounce by me

Ling'ring perdition, worse than any death

Can be at once, shall step by step attend

You and your ways; whose wraths to guard you from-

Which here, in this most desolate isle, else falls

Upon your heads-is nothing but heart's sorrow,

And a clear life ensuing.

He vanishes in thunder; then, to soft music, enter

the SHAPES again, and dance, with mocks and mows,

and carrying out the table

PROSPERO.

Bravely the figure of this harpy hast thou

Perform'd, my Ariel; a grace it had, devouring.

Of my instruction hast thou nothing bated

In what thou hadst to say; so, with good life

And observation strange, my meaner ministers

Their several kinds have done. My high charms work,

And these mine enemies are all knit up

In their distractions. They now are in my pow'r;

And in these fits I leave them, while I visit

Young Ferdinand, whom they suppose is drown'd,

And his and mine lov'd darling. *Exit* above

GONZALO.

I' th' name of something holy, sir, why stand you

In this strange stare?

ALONSO.

O, it is monstrous, monstrous!
Methought the billows spoke, and told me of it;
The winds did sing it to me; and the thunder,
That deep and dreadful organ-pipe, pronounc'd
The name of Prosper; it did bass my trespass.
Therefore my son i' th' ooze is bedded; and
I'll seek him deeper than e'er plummet sounded,
And with him there lie mudded. *Exit*

SEBASTIAN. But one fiend at a time,
I'll fight their legions o'er.

ANTONIO.
I'll be thy second. *Exeunt* SEBASTIAN and ANTONIO
GONZALO.
All three of them are desperate; their great guilt,
Like poison given to work a great time after,

Now gins to bite the spirits. I do beseech you,

That are of suppler joints, follow them swiftly,

And hinder them from what this ecstasy

May now provoke them to.

ADRIAN.

Follow, I pray you. *Exeunt*

ACT IV. SCENE 1

Before PROSPERO'S cell

Enter PROSPERO, FERDINAND, and MIRANDA

PROSPERO.

If I have too austerely punish'd you,

Your compensation makes amends; for

Have given you here a third of mine own life,

Or that for which I live; who once again

I tender to thy hand. All thy vexations

Were but my trials of thy love, and thou
Hast strangely stood the test; here, afore heaven,
I ratify this my rich gift. O Ferdinand!
Do not smile at me that I boast her off,
For thou shalt find she will outstrip all praise,
And make it halt behind her.

FERDINAND.
I do believe it
Against an oracle.

PROSPERO.
Then, as my gift, and thine own acquisition
Wort'hily purchas'd, take my daughter. But
If thou dost break her virgin-knot before
All sanctimonious ceremonies may
With full and holy rite be minist'red,
No sweet aspersion shall the heavens let fall
To make this contract grow; but barren hate,
Sour-ey'd disdain, and discord, shall bestrew
The union of your bed with weeds so loathly

That you shall hate it both. Therefore take heed,
As Hymen's lamps shall light you.

FERDINAND.

As I hope
For quiet days, fair issue, and long life,
With such love as 'tis now, the murkiest den,
The most opportune place, the strong'st suggestion
Our worser genius can, shall never melt
Mine honour into lust, to take away
The edge of that day's celebration,
When I shall think or Phoebus' steeds are founder'd
Or Night kept chain'd below.

PROSPERO.

Fairly spoke.
Sit, then, and talk with her; she is thine own.

What, Ariel! my industrious servant, Ariel!

Enter ARIEL

ARIEL.

What would my potent master? Here I am.

PROSPERO.

Thou and thy meaner fellows your last service

Did worthily perform; and I must use you

In such another trick. Go bring the rabble,

O'er whom I give thee pow'r, here to this place.

Incite them to quick motion; for I must

Bestow upon the eyes of this young couple

Some vanity of mine art; it is my promise,

And they expect it from me.

ARIEL.

Presently?

PROSPERO.

Ay, with a twink.

ARIEL.

Before you can say 'come' and 'go,'
And breathe twice, and cry 'so, so,'
Each one, tripping on his toe,
Will be here with mop and mow.

Do you love me, master? No?

PROSPERO.
Dearly, my delicate Ariel. Do not approach
Till thou dost hear me call.

ARIEL.
Well! I conceive. *Exit*

PROSPERO. Look thou be true; do not give dalliance
Too much the rein; the strongest oaths are straw
To th' fire i' th' blood. Be more abstemious,
Or else good night your vow!

FERDINAND.

I warrant you, sir,
The white cold virgin snow upon my heart
Abates the ardour of my liver.

PROSPERO.

Well!
Now come, my Ariel, bring a corollary,
Rather than want a spirit; appear, and pertly.
No tongue! All eyes! Be silent. *[Soft music]*

Enter IRIS

IRIS.
Ceres, most bounteous lady, thy rich leas
Of wheat, rye, barley, vetches, oats, and pease;
Thy turfy mountains, where live nibbling sheep,
And flat meads thatch'd with stover, them to keep;
Thy banks with pioned and twilled brims,

Which spongy April at thy hest betrims,
To make cold nymphs chaste crowns; and thy broom groves,
Whose shadow the dismissed bachelor loves,
Being lass-lorn; thy pole-clipt vineyard;
And thy sea-marge, sterile and rocky hard,
Where thou thyself dost air-the Queen o' th' sky,
Whose wat'ry arch and messenger am I,
Bids thee leave these; and with her sovereign grace,
Here on this grass-plot, in this very place,
To come and sport. Her peacocks fly amain.

[JUNO descends in her car]

Approach, rich Ceres, her to entertain.

Enter CERES

CERES.

Hail, many-coloured messenger, that ne'er
Dost disobey the wife of Jupiter;
Who, with thy saffron wings, upon my flow'rs
Diffusest honey drops, refreshing show'rs;

And with each end of thy blue bow dost crown
My bosky acres and my unshrubb'd down,
Rich scarf to my proud earth-why hath thy Queen
Summon'd me hither to this short-grass'd green?

IRIS.
A contract of true love to celebrate,
And some donation freely to estate
On the blest lovers.

CERES.
Tell me, heavenly bow,
If Venus or her son, as thou dost know,
Do now attend the Queen? Since they did plot
The means that dusky Dis my daughter got,
Her and her blind boy's scandal'd company
I have forsworn.

IRIS.
Of her society
Be not afraid. I met her Deity

Cutting the clouds towards Paphos, and her son
Dove-drawn with her. Here thought they to have done
Some wanton charm upon this man and maid,
Whose vows are that no bed-rite shall be paid
Till Hymen's torch be lighted; but in vain.
Mars's hot minion is return'd again;
Her waspish-headed son has broke his arrows,
Swears he will shoot no more, but play with sparrows,
And be a boy right out. *[JUNO alights]*

CERES.
Highest Queen of State,
Great Juno, comes; I know her by her gait.

JUNO.
How does my bounteous sister? Go with me
To bless this twain, that they may prosperous be,
And honour'd in their issue. *[They sing]*

JUNO.
Honour, riches, marriage-blessing,

Long continuance, and increasing,

Hourly joys be still upon you!

Juno sings her blessings on you.

CERES.

Earth's increase, foison plenty,

Barns and gamers never empty;

Vines with clust'ring bunches growing,

Plants with goodly burden bowing;

Spring come to you at the farthest,

In the very end of harvest!

Scarcity and want shall shun you,

Ceres' blessing so is on you.

FERDINAND.

This is a most majestic vision, and

Harmonious charmingly. May I be bold

To think these spirits?

PROSPERO.

Spirits, which by mine art

I have from their confines call'd to enact
My present fancies.

FERDINAND.
Let me live here ever;
So rare a wond'red father and a wise
Makes this place Paradise.
[JUNO and CERES whisper, and send IRIS on employment]

PROSPERO.
Sweet now, silence;
Juno and Ceres whisper seriously.
There's something else to do; hush, and be mute,
Or else our spell is marr'd.

IRIS.
You nymphs, call'd Naiads, of the wind'ring brooks,
With your sedg'd crowns and ever harmless looks,
Leave your crisp channels, and on this green land
Answer your summons; Juno does command.
Come, temperate nymphs, and help to celebrate

A contract of true love; be not too late.

Enter certain NYMPHS

You sun-burnt sicklemen, of August weary,
Come hither from the furrow, and be merry;
Make holiday; your rye-straw hats put on,
And these fresh nymphs encounter every one
In country footing.

Enter certain REAPERS, properly habited; they join

with the NYMPHS in a graceful dance; towards the
end whereof PROSPERO starts suddenly, and speaks,
after which, to a strange, hollow, and confused
noise, they heavily vanish
PROSPERO.
[Aside] I had forgot that foul conspiracy
Of the beast Caliban and his confederates
Against my life; the minute of their plot
Is almost come. *[To the SPIRITS]* Well done; avoid; no more!

FERDINAND.

This is strange; your father's in some passion

That works him strongly.

MIRANDA.

Never till this day

Saw I him touch'd with anger so distemper'd.

PROSPERO.

You do look, my son, in a mov'd sort,

As if you were dismay'd; be cheerful, sir.

Our revels now are ended. These our actors,

As I foretold you, were all spirits, and

Are melted into air, into thin air;

And, like the baseless fabric of this vision,

The cloud-capp'd towers, the gorgeous palaces,

The solemn temples, the great globe itself,

Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve,

And, like this insubstantial pageant faded,

Leave not a rack behind. We are such stuff

As dreams are made on; and our little life
Is rounded with a sleep. Sir, I am vex'd;
Bear with my weakness; my old brain is troubled;
Be not disturb'd with my infirmity.
If you be pleas'd, retire into my cell
And there repose; a turn or two I'll walk
To still my beating mind.

FERDINAND, MIRANDA. We wish your peace. *Exeunt*

PROSPERO.

Come, with a thought. I thank thee, Ariel; come.

Enter ARIEL

ARIEL.
Thy thoughts I cleave to. What's thy pleasure?

PROSPERO.
Spirit,
We must prepare to meet with Caliban.

ARIEL.

Ay, my commander. When I presented 'Ceres.'
I thought to have told thee of it; but I fear'd
Lest I might anger thee.

PROSPERO.
Say again, where didst thou leave these varlets?

ARIEL.
I told you, sir, they were red-hot with drinking;
So full of valour that they smote the air
For breathing in their faces; beat the ground
For kissing of their feet; yet always bending
Towards their project. Then I beat my tabor,
At which like unback'd colts they prick'd their ears,
Advanc'd their eyelids, lifted up their noses
As they smelt music; so I charm'd their cars,
That calf-like they my lowing follow'd through
Tooth'd briers, sharp furzes, pricking goss, and thorns,

Which ent'red their frail shins. At last I left them
I' th' filthy mantled pool beyond your cell,
There dancing up to th' chins, that the foul lake
O'erstunk their feet.

PROSPERO.

This was well done, my bird.
Thy shape invisible retain thou still.
The trumpery in my house, go bring it hither
For stale to catch these thieves.

ARIEL.
I go, I go. *Exit*

PROSPERO. A devil, a born devil, on whose nature
Nurture can never stick; on whom my pains,
Humanely taken, all, all lost, quite lost;
And as with age his body uglier grows,
So his mind cankers. I will plague them all,
Even to roaring.

Re-enter ARIEL, loaden with glistering apparel, &c.

Come, hang them on this line.

[PROSPERO and ARIEL remain, invisible]

Enter CALIBAN, STEPHANO, and TRINCULO, all wet

CALIBAN.

Pray you, tread softly, that the blind mole may not

Hear a foot fall; we now are near his cell.

STEPHANO.

Monster, your fairy, which you say is a harmless

fairy, has done little better than play'd the Jack with us.

TRINCULO.

Monster, I do smell all horse-piss at which my

nose is in great indignation.

STEPHANO.

So is mine. Do you hear, monster? If I should
take a displeasure against you, look you-

TRINCULO.
Thou wert but a lost monster.

CALIBAN.

Good my lord, give me thy favour still.
Be patient, for the prize I'll bring thee to
Shall hoodwink this mischance; therefore speak softly.
All's hush'd as midnight yet.

TRINCULO.

Ay, but to lose our bottles in the pool!

STEPHANO.
There is not only disgrace and dishonour in
that, monster, but an infinite loss.

TRINCULO.

That's more to me than my wetting; yet this is
your harmless fairy, monster.

STEPHANO.

I will fetch off my bottle, though I be o'er ears for my labour.

CALIBAN.

Prithee, my king, be quiet. Seest thou here,
This is the mouth o' th' cell; no noise, and enter.
Do that good mischief which may make this island
Thine own for ever, and I, thy Caliban,
For aye thy foot-licker.

STEPHANO.

Give me thy hand. I do begin to have bloody thoughts.

TRINCULO.

O King Stephano! O peer! O worthy Stephano!
Look what a wardrobe here is for thee!

CALIBAN.

Let it alone, thou fool; it is but trash.

TRINCULO.

O, ho, monster; we know what belongs to a frippery. O King Stephano!

STEPHANO.

Put off that gown, Trinculo; by this hand, I'll have that gown.

TRINCULO.

Thy Grace shall have it.

CALIBAN.

The dropsy drown this fool! What do you mean
To dote thus on such luggage? Let 't alone,
And do the murder first. If he awake,
From toe to crown he'll fill our skins with pinches;
Make us strange stuff.

STEPHANO.

Be you quiet, monster. Mistress line, is not
this my jerkin? Now is the jerkin under the line; now,
jerkin, you are like to lose your hair, and prove a bald jerkin.

TRINCULO.

Do, do. We steal by line and level, an't like
your Grace.

STEPHANO.

I thank thee for that jest; here's a garment
for't. Wit shall not go unrewarded while I am king of
this country. 'Steal by line and level' is an excellent
pass of pate; there's another garmet for't.

TRINCULO.

Monster, come, put some lime upon your fingers,
and away with the rest.

CALIBAN.

I will have none on't. We shall lose our time,
And all be turn'd to barnacles, or to apes
With foreheads villainous low.

STEPHANO.

Monster, lay-to your fingers; help to bear this away where my hogshead of wine is, or I'll turn you out of my kingdom. Go to, carry this.

TRINCULO.

And this.

STEPHANO.

Ay, and this.

A noise of hunters beard. *Enter* divers SPIRITS, in shape of dogs and hounds, bunting them about; PROSPERO and ARIEL setting them on

PROSPERO.

Hey, Mountain, hey!

ARIEL.

Silver! there it goes, Silver!

PROSPERO.

Fury, Fury! There, Tyrant, there! Hark, hark!

[CALIBAN, STEPHANO, and TRINCULO are driven out]

Go charge my goblins that they grind their joints

With dry convulsions, shorten up their sinews

With aged cramps, and more pinch-spotted make them

Than pard or cat o' mountain.

ARIEL.

Hark, they roar.

PROSPERO.

Let them be hunted soundly. At this hour

Lies at my mercy all mine enemies.

Shortly shall all my labours end, and thou

Shalt have the air at freedom; for a little

Follow, and do me service. *Exeunt*

ACT V. SCENE 1

Before PROSPERO'S cell

Enter PROSPERO in his magic robes, and ARIEL

PROSPERO.

Now does my project gather to a head;
My charms crack not, my spirits obey; and time
Goes upright with his carriage. How's the day?

ARIEL.

On the sixth hour; at which time, my lord,
You said our work should cease.

PROSPERO.

I did say so,

When first I rais'd the tempest. Say, my spirit,
How fares the King and 's followers?

ARIEL.
Confin'd together
In the same fashion as you gave in charge;
Just as you left them; all prisoners, sir,
In the line-grove which weather-fends your cell;
They cannot budge till your release. The King,
His brother, and yours, abide all three distracted,
And the remainder mourning over them,
Brim full of sorrow and dismay; but chiefly
Him you term'd, sir, 'the good old lord, Gonzalo';
His tears run down his beard, like winter's drops
From eaves of reeds. Your charm so strongly works 'em
That if you now beheld them your affections
Would become tender.

PROSPERO.

Dost thou think so, spirit?

ARIEL.

Mine would, sir, were I human.

PROSPERO.

And mine shall.
Hast thou, which art but air, a touch, a feeling
Of their afflictions, and shall not myself,
One of their kind, that relish all as sharply,
Passion as they, be kindlier mov'd than thou art?
Though with their high wrongs I am struck to th' quick,
Yet with my nobler reason 'gainst my fury
Do I take part; the rarer action is
In virtue than in vengeance; they being penitent,
The sole drift of my purpose doth extend
Not a frown further. Go release them, Ariel;
My charms I'll break, their senses I'll restore,
And they shall be themselves.

ARIEL.

I'll fetch them, sir. *Exit*

PROSPERO. Ye elves of hills, brooks, standing lakes, and groves;

And ye that on the sands with printless foot

Do chase the ebbing Neptune, and do fly him

When he comes back; you demi-puppets that

By moonshine do the green sour ringlets make,

Whereof the ewe not bites; and you whose pastime

Is to make midnight mushrooms, that rejoice

To hear the solemn curfew; by whose aid-

Weak masters though ye be-I have be-dimm'd

The noontide sun, call'd forth the mutinous winds,

And 'twixt the green sea and the azur'd vault

Set roaring war. To the dread rattling thunder

Have I given fire, and rifted Jove's stout oak

With his own bolt; the strong-bas'd promontory

Have I made shake, and by the spurs pluck'd up

The pine and cedar. Graves at my command

Have wak'd their sleepers, op'd, and let 'em forth,

By my so potent art. But this rough magic

I here abjure; and, when I have requir'd

Some heavenly music-which even now I do-

To work mine end upon their senses that

This airy charm is for, I'll break my staff,

Bury it certain fathoms in the earth,

And deeper than did ever plummet sound

I'll drown my book. *[Solem music]*

Here enters ARIEL before; then ALONSO, with

frantic gesture, attended by GONZALO; SEBASTIAN

and ANTONIO in like manner, attended by ADRIAN

and FRANCISCO. They all enter the circle which

PROSPERO had made, and there stand charm'd; which

PROSPERO observing, speaks

A solemn air, and the best comforter

To an unsettled fancy, cure thy brains,

Now useless, boil'd within thy skull! There stand,

For you are spell-stopp'd.

Holy Gonzalo, honourable man,

Mine eyes, ev'n sociable to the show of thine,

Fall fellowly drops. The charm dissolves apace,

And as the morning steals upon the night,

Melting the darkness, so their rising senses

Begin to chase the ignorant fumes that mantle

Their clearer reason. O good Gonzalo,

My true preserver, and a loyal sir

To him thou follow'st! I will pay thy graces

Home both in word and deed. Most cruelly

Didst thou, Alonso, use me and my daughter;

Thy brother was a furtherer in the act.

Thou art pinch'd for't now, Sebastian. Flesh and blood,

You, brother mine, that entertain'd ambition,

Expell'd remorse and nature, who, with Sebastian-

Whose inward pinches therefore are most strong-

Would here have kill'd your king, I do forgive thee,

Unnatural though thou art. Their understanding

Begins to swell, and the approaching tide

Will shortly fill the reasonable shore

That now lies foul and muddy. Not one of them

That yet looks on me, or would know me. Ariel,

Fetch me the hat and rapier in my cell; *Exit* ARIEL

I will discase me, and myself present

As I was sometime Milan. Quickly, spirit

Thou shalt ere long be free.

ARIEL, on returning, sings and helps to attire him

Where the bee sucks, there suck I;

In a cowslip's bell I lie;

There I couch when owls do cry.

On the bat's back I do fly

After summer merrily.

Merrily, merrily shall I live now

Under the blossom that hangs on the bough.

PROSPERO.

Why, that's my dainty Ariel! I shall miss thee;

But yet thou shalt have freedom. So, so, so.

To the King's ship, invisible as thou art;

There shalt thou find the mariners asleep

Under the hatches; the master and the boatswain

Being awake, enforce them to this place;

And presently, I prithee.

ARIEL.

I drink the air before me, and return

Or ere your pulse twice beat. *Exit*

GONZALO. All torment, trouble, wonder and amazement,
Inhabits here. Some heavenly power guide us
Out of this fearful country!

PROSPERO.
Behold, Sir King,
The wronged Duke of Milan, Prospero.
For more assurance that a living prince
Does now speak to thee, I embrace thy body;
And to thee and thy company I bid
A hearty welcome.

ALONSO.
Whe'er thou be'st he or no,
Or some enchanted trifle to abuse me,
As late I have been, I not know. Thy pulse
Beats, as of flesh and blood; and, since I saw thee,
Th' affliction of my mind amends, with which,
I fear, a madness held me. This must crave-

An if this be at all-a most strange story.

Thy dukedom I resign, and do entreat

Thou pardon me my wrongs. But how should Prospero

Be living and be here?

PROSPERO.

First, noble friend,

Let me embrace thine age, whose honour cannot

Be measur'd or confin'd.

GONZALO.

Whether this be

Or be not, I'll not swear.

PROSPERO.

You do yet taste

Some subtleties o' th' isle, that will not let you

Believe things certain. Welcome, my friends all!

[Aside to SEBASTIAN and ANTONIO] But you, my brace of

lords, were I so minded,

I here could pluck his Highness' frown upon you,

And justify you traitors; at this time

I will tell no tales.

SEBASTIAN.

[Aside] The devil speaks in him.

PROSPERO.

No.

For you, most wicked sir, whom to call brother

Would even infect my mouth, I do forgive

Thy rankest fault-all of them; and require

My dukedom of thee, which perforce I know

Thou must restore.

ALONSO.

If thou beest Prospero,

Give us particulars of thy preservation;

How thou hast met us here, whom three hours since

Were wreck'd upon this shore; where I have lost-

How sharp the point of this remembrance is!-

My dear son Ferdinand.

PROSPERO.

I am woe for't, sir.

ALONSO.

Irreparable is the loss; and patience

Says it is past her cure.

PROSPERO.

I rather think

You have not sought her help, of whose soft grace

For the like loss I have her sovereign aid,

And rest myself content.

ALONSO.

You the like loss!

PROSPERO.

As great to me as late; and, supportable

To make the dear loss, have I means much weaker
Than you may call to comfort you, for I
Have lost my daughter.

ALONSO.
A daughter!
O heavens, that they were living both in Naples,
The King and Queen there! That they were, I wish
Myself were mudded in that oozy bed
Where my son lies. When did you lose your daughter?

PROSPERO.
In this last tempest. I perceive these lords
At this encounter do so much admire
That they devour their reason, and scarce think
Their eyes do offices of truth, their words
Are natural breath; but, howsoe'er you have
Been justled from your senses, know for certain
That I am Prospero, and that very duke
Which was thrust forth of Milan; who most strangely
Upon this shore, where you were wrecked, was landed

To be the lord on't. No more yet of this;
For 'tis a chronicle of day by day,
Not a relation for a breakfast, nor
Befitting this first meeting. Welcome, sir;
This cell's my court; here have I few attendants,
And subjects none abroad; pray you, look in.
My dukedom since you have given me again,
I will requite you with as good a thing;
At least bring forth a wonder, to content ye
As much as me my dukedom.

Here PROSPERO discovers FERDINAND and MIRANDA,
playing at chess

MIRANDA.

Sweet lord, you play me false.

FERDINAND.

No, my dearest love,
I would not for the world.

MIRANDA.

Yes, for a score of kingdoms you should wrangle

And I would call it fair play.

ALONSO.

If this prove

A vision of the island, one dear son

Shall I twice lose.

SEBASTIAN.

A most high miracle!

FERDINAND.

Though the seas threaten, they are merciful;

I have curs'd them without cause. *[Kneels]*

ALONSO.

Now all the blessings

Of a glad father compass thee about!

Arise, and say how thou cam'st here.

MIRANDA.

O, wonder!
How many goodly creatures are there here!
How beauteous mankind is! O brave new world
That has such people in't!

PROSPERO.

'Tis new to thee.

ALONSO.
What is this maid with whom thou wast at play?
Your eld'st acquaintance cannot be three hours;
Is she the goddess that hath sever'd us,
And brought us thus together?

FERDINAND.
Sir, she is mortal;
But by immortal Providence she's mine.
I chose her when I could not ask my father

For his advice, nor thought I had one. She
Is daughter to this famous Duke of Milan,
Of whom so often I have heard renown
But never saw before; of whom I have
Receiv'd a second life; and second father
This lady makes him to me.

ALONSO.

I am hers.
But, O, how oddly will it sound that I
Must ask my child forgiveness!

PROSPERO.
There, sir, stop;
Let us not burden our remembrances with
A heaviness that's gone.

GONZALO.
I have inly wept,
Or should have spoke ere this. Look down, you gods,

And on this couple drop a blessed crown;

For it is you that have chalk'd forth the way

Which brought us hither.

ALONSO.

I say, Amen, Gonzalo!

GONZALO.

Was Milan thrust from Milan, that his issue

Should become Kings of Naples? O, rejoice

Beyond a common joy, and set it down

With gold on lasting pillars: in one voyage

Did Claribel her husband find at Tunis;

And Ferdinand, her brother, found a wife

Where he himself was lost; Prospero his dukedom

In a poor isle; and all of us ourselves

When no man was his own.

ALONSO.

[To FERDINAND and MIRANDA] Give me your hands.

Let grief and sorrow still embrace his heart

That doth not wish you joy.

GONZALO.
Be it so. Amen!
Re-enter ARIEL, with the MASTER and BOATSWAIN
amazedly following
O look, sir; look, sir! Here is more of us!
I prophesied, if a gallows were on land,
This fellow could not drown. Now, blasphemy,
That swear'st grace o'erboard, not an oath on shore?

Hast thou no mouth by land? What is the news?

BOATSWAIN.
The best news is that we have safely found
Our King and company; the next, our ship-
Which but three glasses since we gave out split-
Is tight and yare, and bravely rigg'd, as when
We first put out to sea.

ARIEL.

[Aside to PROSPERO] Sir, all this service

Have I done since I went.

PROSPERO.

[Aside to ARIEL] My tricksy spirit!

ALONSO.

These are not natural events; they strengthen

From strange to stranger. Say, how came you hither?

BOATSWAIN.

If I did think, sir, I were well awake,

I'd strive to tell you. We were dead of sleep,

And-how, we know not-all clapp'd under hatches;

Where, but even now, with strange and several noises

Of roaring, shrieking, howling, jingling chains,

And moe diversity of sounds, all horrible,

We were awak'd; straightway at liberty;

Where we, in all her trim, freshly beheld

Our royal, good, and gallant ship; our master

Cap'ring to eye her. On a trice, so please you, Even in a dream, were we divided from them,

And were brought moping hither.

ARIEL.

[Aside to PROSPERO] Was't well done?

PROSPERO.

[Aside to ARIEL] Bravely, my diligence. Thou shalt be free.

ALONSO.

This is as strange a maze as e'er men trod;

And there is in this business more than nature

Was ever conduct of. Some oracle

Must rectify our knowledge.

PROSPERO.

Sir, my liege,

Do not infest your mind with beating on

The strangeness of this business; at pick'd leisure,

Which shall be shortly, single I'll resolve you,

Which to you shall seem probable, of every

These happen'd accidents; till when, be cheerful

And think of each thing well. *[Aside to ARIEL]* Come

hither, spirit;

Set Caliban and his companions free;

Untie the spell. *[Exit ARIEL]* How fares my gracious sir?

There are yet missing of your company

Some few odd lads that you remember not.

Re-enter ARIEL, driving in CALIBAN, STEPHANO, and

TRINCULO, in their stolen apparel

STEPHANO.

Every man shift for all the rest, and let no man

take care for himself; for all is but fortune. Coragio,

bully-monster, coragio!

TRINCULO.

If these be true spies which I wear in my head,

here's a goodly sight.

CALIBAN.

O Setebos, these be brave spirits indeed!

How fine my master is! I am afraid

He will chastise me.

SEBASTIAN.

Ha, ha!
What things are these, my lord Antonio?

Will money buy'em?

ANTONIO.
Very like; one of them
Is a plain fish, and no doubt marketable.

PROSPERO.
Mark but the badges of these men, my lords,
Then say if they be true. This mis-shapen knave-
His mother was a witch, and one so strong
That could control the moon, make flows and ebbs,
And deal in her command without her power.
These three have robb'd me; and this demi-devil-
For he's a bastard one-had plotted with them

To take my life. Two of these fellows you
Must know and own; this thing of darkness I
Acknowledge mine.

CALIBAN.

I shall be pinch'd to death.

ALONSO.

Is not this Stephano, my drunken butler?

SEBASTIAN.

He is drunk now; where had he wine?

ALONSO.

And Trinculo is reeling ripe; where should they
Find this grand liquor that hath gilded 'em?

How cam'st thou in this pickle?

TRINCULO.

I have been in such a pickle since I saw you
last that, I fear me, will never out of my bones. I
shall not fear fly-blowing.

SEBASTIAN.

Why, how now, Stephano!

STEPHANO.
O, touch me not; I am not Stephano, but a cramp.

PROSPERO.

You'd be king o' the isle, sirrah?

STEPHANO.
I should have been a sore one, then.

ALONSO.
[Pointing to CALIBAN] This is as strange a thing
as e'er I look'd on.

PROSPERO.

He is as disproportioned in his manners

As in his shape. Go, sirrah, to my cell;

Take with you your companions; as you look

To have my pardon, trim it handsomely.

CALIBAN.

Ay, that I will; and I'll be wise hereafter,

And seek for grace. What a thrice-double ass

Was I to take this drunkard for a god,

And worship this dull fool!

PROSPERO.

Go to; away!

ALONSO.

Hence, and bestow your luggage where you found it.

SEBASTIAN.

Or stole it, rather.

Exeunt CALIBAN, STEPHANO, and TRINCULO

PROSPERO.

Sir, I invite your Highness and your train

To my poor cell, where you shall take your rest

For this one night; which, part of it, I'll waste

With such discourse as, I not doubt, shall make it

Go quick away-the story of my life,

And the particular accidents gone by

Since I came to this isle. And in the morn

I'll bring you to your ship, and so to Naples,

Where I have hope to see the nuptial

Of these our dear-belov'd solemnized,

And thence retire me to my Milan, where

Every third thought shall be my grave.

ALONSO.

I long

To hear the story of your life, which must

Take the ear strangely.

PROSPERO.

I'll deliver all;

And promise you calm seas, auspicious gales,

And sail so expeditious that shall catch

Your royal fleet far off. *[Aside to ARIEL]* My Ariel,

chick,

That is thy charge. Then to the elements

Be free, and fare thou well!-Please you, draw near.

Exeunt

EPILOGUE

PROSPERO

Now my charms are all o'erthrown,

And what strength I have's mine own,

Which is most faint. Now 'tis true,

I must be here confin'd by you,

Or sent to Naples. Let me not,

Since I have my dukedom got,

And pardon'd the deceiver, dwell

In this bare island by your spell;

But release me from my bands

With the help of your good hands.

Gentle breath of yours my sails

Must fill, or else my project fails,

Which was to please. Now I want

Spirits to enforce, art to enchant;

And my ending is despair

Unless I be reliev'd by prayer,

Which pierces so that it assaults

Mercy itself, and frees all faults.

As you from crimes would pardon'd be,

Let your indulgence set me free.

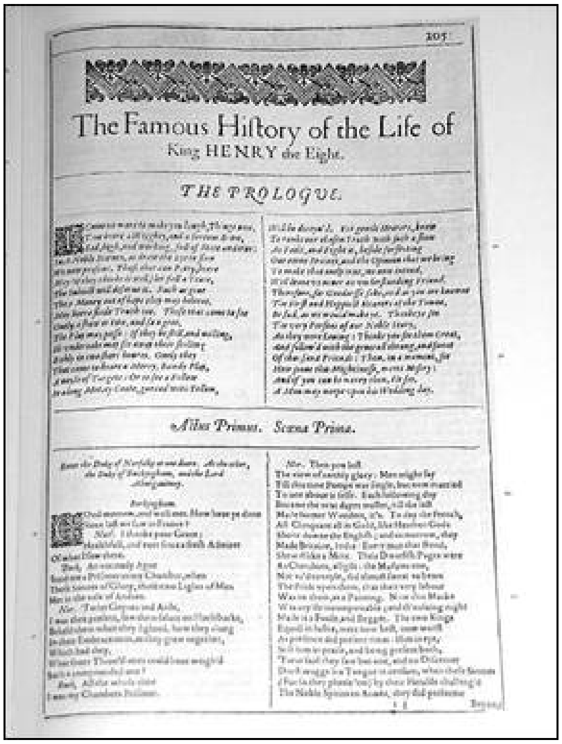
HENRY VIII

OR

ALL IS TRUE

This late history play is believed to be a collaboration between Shakespeare and John Fletcher, based on the life of the prominent King of England. An alternative title, *All is True* , is recorded in contemporary documents, and the title Henry VIII did not appear until the play's publication in the First Folio of 1623. During a performance of *Henry VIII* at the Globe Theatre in 1613, a cannon shot ignited the theatre's thatched roof, burning the original building to the ground. It was rebuilt soon after.

As with most of his history plays, Shakespeare relied primarily on Holinshed's *Chronicles* . Most scholars date the play to 1613, the year in which the Globe Theatre burned down during one of the play's earliest known performances. One contemporary report states that the play was relatively new at the time of the fire, having "been acted not passing 2 or 3 times before".



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The Famous Hiſtory of the Life of
King HENRY the Eight.

THE PROLOGUE.

Actus Primus. Scœna Prima.

The 1623 First Folio title page

Henry VIII

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EPILOGUE.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

KING HENRY THE EIGHTH

CARDINAL WOLSEY CARDINAL CAMPEIUS

CAPUCIUS, Ambassador from the Emperor Charles V

CRANMER, ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY

DUKE OF NORFOLK DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM

DUKE OF SUFFOLK EARL OF SURREY

LORD CHAMBERLAIN LORD CHANCELLOR

GARDINER, BISHOP OF WINCHESTER

BISHOP OF LINCOLN LORD ABERGAVENNY

LORD SANDYS SIR HENRY GUILDFORD

SIR THOMAS LOVELL SIR ANTHONY DENNY

SIR NICHOLAS VAUX SECRETARIES to Wolsey

CROMWELL, servant to Wolsey

GRIFFITH, gentleman-usher to Queen Katharine

THREE GENTLEMEN

DOCTOR BUTTS, physician to the King

GARTER KING-AT-ARMS

SURVEYOR to the Duke of Buckingham

BRANDON, and a SERGEANT-AT-ARMS

DOORKEEPER Of the Council chamber

PORTER, and his MAN PAGE to Gardiner

A CRIER

QUEEN KATHARINE, wife to King Henry, afterwards divorced

ANNE BULLEN, her Maid of Honour, afterwards Queen

AN OLD LADY, friend to Anne Bullen

PATIENCE, woman to Queen Katharine

Lord Mayor, Aldermen, Lords and Ladies in the Dumb

Shows; Women attending upon the Queen; Scribes,

Officers, Guards, and other Attendants; Spirits

SCENE: London; Westminster; Kimbolton

THE PROLOGUE.

I come no more to make you laugh; things now

That bear a weighty and a serious brow,

Sad, high, and working, full of state and woe,

Such noble scenes as draw the eye to flow,

We now present. Those that can pity here

May, if they think it well, let fall a tear:

The subject will deserve it. Such as give

Their money out of hope they may believe

May here find truth too. Those that come to see

Only a show or two, and so agree

The play may pass, if they be still and willing,

I'll undertake may see away their shilling

Richly in two short hours. Only they

That come to hear a merry bawdy play,

A noise of targets, or to see a fellow

In a long motley coat guarded with yellow,

Will be deceiv'd; for, gentle hearers, know,

To rank our chosen truth with such a show

As fool and fight is, beside forfeiting

Our own brains, and the opinion that we bring

To make that only true we now intend,

Will leave us never an understanding friend.

Therefore, for goodness sake, and as you are known

The first and happiest hearers of the town,

Be sad, as we would make ye. Think ye see

The very persons of our noble story

As they were living; think you see them great,

And follow'd with the general throng and sweat

Of thousand friends; then, in a moment, see

How soon this mightiness meets misery.

And if you can be merry then, I'll say

A man may weep upon his wedding-day.

ACT I. SCENE 1.

London. The palace

Enter the DUKE OF NORFOLK at one door; at the other, the DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM and the LORD ABERGAVENNY

BUCKINGHAM.

Good morrow, and well met. How have ye done

Since last we saw in France?

NORFOLK.

I thank your Grace,

Healthful; and ever since a fresh admirer

Of what I saw there.

BUCKINGHAM.

An untimely ague

Stay'd me a prisoner in my chamber when

Those suns of glory, those two lights of men,

Met in the vale of Andren.

NORFOLK.

'Twixt Guynes and Arde-

I was then present, saw them salute on horseback;

Beheld them, when they lighted, how they clung

In their embracement, as they grew together;

Which had they, what four thron'd ones could have weigh'd

Such a compounded one?

BUCKINGHAM.

All the whole time

I was my chamber's prisoner.

NORFOLK.

Then you lost

The view of earthly glory; men might say,

Till this time pomp was single, but now married

To one above itself. Each following day

Became the next day's master, till the last

Made former wonders its. To-day the French,

All clinquant, all in gold, like heathen gods, Shone down the English; and to-morrow they

Made Britain India: every man that stood

Show'd like a mine. Their dwarfish pages were

As cherubins, an gilt; the madams too,

Not us'd to toil, did almost sweat to bear

The pride upon them, that their very labour

Was to them as a painting. Now this masque

Was cried incomparable; and th' ensuing night

Made it a fool and beggar. The two kings,

Equal in lustre, were now best, now worst,

As presence did present them: him in eye

still him in praise; and being present both,

'Twas said they saw but one, and no discerner

Durst wag his tongue in censure. When these suns-

For so they phrase 'em-by their heralds challeng'd

The noble spirits to arms, they did perform

Beyond thought's compass, that former fabulous story,

Being now seen possible enough, got credit,

That Bevis was believ'd.

BUCKINGHAM.

O, you go far!

NORFOLK.

As I belong to worship, and affect
In honour honesty, the tract of ev'rything
Would by a good discourser lose some life
Which action's self was tongue to. All was royal:
To the disposing of it nought rebell'd;
Order gave each thing view. The office did
Distinctly his full function.

BUCKINGHAM.

Who did guide-
I mean, who set the body and the limbs
Of this great sport together, as you guess?

NORFOLK.

One, certes, that promises no element
In such a business.

BUCKINGHAM.

I pray you, who, my lord?

NORFOLK.

All this was ord'red by the good discretion
Of the right reverend Cardinal of York.

BUCKINGHAM.

The devil speed him! No man's pie is freed
From his ambitious finger. What had he
To do in these fierce vanities? I wonder
That such a keech can with his very bulk
Take up the rays o' th' beneficial sun,
And keep it from the earth.

NORFOLK.

Surely, sir,
There's in him stuff that puts him to these ends;
For, being not propp'd by ancestry, whose grace
Chalks successors their way, nor call'd upon
For high feats done to th' crown, neither allied

To eminent assistants, but spider-like,
Out of his self-drawing web, 'a gives us note
The force of his own merit makes his way-
A gift that heaven gives for him, which buys
A place next to the King.

ABERGAVENNY.
I cannot tell
What heaven hath given him-let some graver eye
Pierce into that; but I can see his pride
Peep through each part of him. Whence has he that?
If not from hell, the devil is a niggard
Or has given all before, and he begins
A new hell in himself.

BUCKINGHAM.
Why the devil,
Upon this French going out, took he upon him-
Without the privity o' th' King-t' appoint
Who should attend on him? He makes up the file
Of all the gentry; for the most part such

To whom as great a charge as little honour

He meant to lay upon; and his own letter,

The honourable board of council out,

Must fetch him in he papers.

ABERGAVENNY.

I do know

Kinsmen of mine, three at the least, that have

By this so sicken'd their estates that never

They shall abound as formerly.

BUCKINGHAM.

O, many

Have broke their backs with laying manors on 'em

For this great journey. What did this vanity

But minister communication of

A most poor issue?

NORFOLK.

Grievingly I think

The peace between the French and us not values

The cost that did conclude it.

BUCKINGHAM.

Every man,

After the hideous storm that follow'd, was

A thing inspir'd, and, not consulting, broke

Into a general prophecy-that this tempest,

Dashing the garment of this peace, aboded

The sudden breach on't.

NORFOLK.

Which is budded out;

For France hath flaw'd the league, and hath attach'd

Our merchants' goods at Bordeaux.

ABERGAVENNY.

Is it therefore

Th' ambassador is silenc'd?

NORFOLK.

Marry, is't.

ABERGAVENNY.

A proper tide of a peace, and purchas'd

At a superfluous rate!

BUCKINGHAM.

Why, all this business

Our reverend Cardinal carried.

NORFOLK.

Like it your Grace,

The state takes notice of the private difference

Betwixt you and the Cardinal. I advise you-

And take it from a heart that wishes towards you

Honour and plenteous safety-that you read

The Cardinal's malice and his potency

Together; to consider further, that

What his high hatred would effect wants not

A minister in his power. You know his nature,

That he's revengeful; and I know his sword

Hath a sharp edge-it's long and't may be said

It reaches far, and where 'twill not extend,

Thither he darts it. Bosom up my counsel

You'll find it wholesome. Lo, where comes that rock

That I advise your shunning.

Enter CARDINAL WOLSEY, the purse borne before him, certain of the guard, and two SECRETARIES with papers. The CARDINAL in his passage fixeth his eye on BUCKINGHAM, and BUCKINGHAM on him, both full of disdain

WOLSEY.

The Duke of Buckingham's surveyor? Ha!

Where's his examination?

SECRETARY.

Here, so please you.

WOLSEY.

Is he in person ready?

SECRETARY.

Ay, please your Grace.

WOLSEY.
Well, we shall then know more, and Buckingham
shall lessen this big look.
Exeunt WOLSEY and his train
BUCKINGHAM.
This butcher's cur is venom-mouth'd, and I
Have not the power to muzzle him; therefore best
Not wake him in his slumber. A beggar's book
Outworths a noble's blood.

NORFOLK.

What, are you chaf'd?
Ask God for temp'rance; that's th' appliance only
Which your disease requires.

BUCKINGHAM.
I read in's looks
Matter against me, and his eye revil'd

Me as his abject object. At this instant
He bores me with some trick. He's gone to th' King;
I'll follow, and outstare him.

NORFOLK.
Stay, my lord,
And let your reason with your choler question
What 'tis you go about. To climb steep hills
Requires slow pace at first. Anger is like
A full hot horse, who being allow'd his way,
Self-mettle tires him. Not a man in England
Can advise me like you; be to yourself
As you would to your friend.

BUCKINGHAM.
I'll to the King,
And from a mouth of honour quite cry down
This Ipswich fellow's insolence; or proclaim
There's difference in no persons.

NORFOLK.

Be advis'd:

Heat not a furnace for your foe so hot

That it do singe yourself. We may outrun

By violent swiftness that which we run at,

And lose by over-running. Know you not

The fire that mounts the liquor till't run o'er

In seeming to augment it wastes it? Be advis'd.

I say again there is no English soul

More stronger to direct you than yourself,

If with the sap of reason you would quench

Or but allay the fire of passion.

BUCKINGHAM.

Sir,

I am thankful to you, and I'll go along

By your prescription; but this top-proud fellow-

Whom from the flow of gan I name not, but

From sincere motions, by intelligence,

And proofs as clear as founts in July when

We see each grain of gravel-I do know

To be corrupt and treasonous.

NORFOLK.

Say not treasonous.

BUCKINGHAM.

To th' King I'll say't, and make my vouch as strong

As shore of rock. Attend: this holy fox,

Or wolf, or both-for he is equal rav'nous

As he is subtle, and as prone to mischief

As able to perform't, his mind and place

Infecting one another, yea, reciprocally-

Only to show his pomp as well in France

As here at home, suggests the King our master

To this last costly treaty, th' interview

That swallowed so much treasure and like a glass

Did break i' th' wrenching.

NORFOLK.

Faith, and so it did.

BUCKINGHAM.

Pray, give me favour, sir; this cunning cardinal

The articles o' th' combination drew

As himself pleas'd; and they were ratified

As he cried 'Thus let be' to as much end

As give a crutch to th' dead. But our Count-Cardinal

Has done this, and 'tis well; for worthy Wolsey,

Who cannot err, he did it. Now this follows,

Which, as I take it, is a kind of puppy

To th' old dam treason: Charles the Emperor,

Under pretence to see the Queen his aunt-

For 'twas indeed his colour, but he came

To whisper Wolsey-here makes visitation-

His fears were that the interview betwixt

England and France might through their amity

Breed him some prejudice; for from this league

Peep'd harms that menac'd him-privily

Deals with our Cardinal; and, as I trow-

Which I do well, for I am sure the Emperor

Paid ere he promis'd; whereby his suit was granted

Ere it was ask'd-but when the way was made, And pav'd with gold, the Emperor thus desir'd,

That he would please to alter the King's course,

And break the foresaid peace. Let the King know,

As soon he shall by me, that thus the Cardinal

Does buy and sell his honour as he pleases,

And for his own advantage.

NORFOLK.

I am sorry

To hear this of him, and could wish he were

Something mistaken in't.

BUCKINGHAM.

No, not a syllable:

I do pronounce him in that very shape

He shall appear in proof.

Enter BRANDON, a SERGEANT-AT-ARMS before him,

and two or three of the guard

BRANDON.

Your office, sergeant: execute it.

SERGEANT.

Sir,

My lord the Duke of Buckingham, and Earl

Of Hereford, Stafford, and Northampton, I

Arrest thee of high treason, in the name

Of our most sovereign King.

BUCKINGHAM.

Lo you, my lord,

The net has fall'n upon me! I shall perish

Under device and practice.

BRANDON.

I am sorry

To see you ta'en from liberty, to look on

The business present; 'tis his Highness' pleasure

You shall to th' Tower.

BUCKINGHAM.

It will help nothing
To plead mine innocence; for that dye is on me
Which makes my whit'st part black. The will of heav'n
Be done in this and all things! I obey.
O my Lord Aberga'ny, fare you well!

BRANDON.

Nay, he must bear you company.

[To ABERGAVENNY] The King
Is pleas'd you shall to th' Tower, till you know
How he determines further.

ABERGAVENNY.

As the Duke said,
The will of heaven be done, and the King's pleasure
By me obey'd.

BRANDON.

Here is warrant from

The King t' attach Lord Montacute and the bodies

Of the Duke's confessor, John de la Car,

One Gilbert Peck, his chancellor-

BUCKINGHAM.

So, so!

These are the limbs o' th' plot; no more, I hope.

BRANDON.

A monk o' th' Chartreux.

BUCKINGHAM.

O, Nicholas Hopkins?

BRANDON.

He.

BUCKINGHAM.

My surveyor is false. The o'er-great Cardinal

Hath show'd him gold; my life is spann'd already.

I am the shadow of poor Buckingham,

Whose figure even this instant cloud puts on

By dark'ning my clear sun. My lord, farewell.

Exeunt

ACT I. SCENE 2.

London. The Council Chamber

Cornets. Enter KING HENRY, leaning on the CARDINAL'S shoulder, the NOBLES, and SIR THOMAS LOVELL, with others. The CARDINAL places himself under the KING'S feet on his right side

KING.

My life itself, and the best heart of it,

Thanks you for this great care; I stood i' th' level

Of a full-charg'd confederacy, and give thanks

To you that chok'd it. Let be call'd before us

That gentleman of Buckingham's. In person

I'll hear his confessions justify;

And point by point the treasons of his master

He shall again relate.

A noise within, crying 'Room for the Queen!' *Enter* the QUEEN, usher'd by the DUKES OF NORFOLK and SUFFOLK; she kneels. The KING riseth from his state, takes her up, kisses and placeth her by him

QUEEN KATHARINE.

Nay, we must longer kneel: I am suitor.

KING.

Arise, and take place by us. Half your suit

Never name to us: you have half our power.

The other moiety ere you ask is given;

Repeat your will, and take it.

QUEEN KATHARINE.

Thank your Majesty.

That you would love yourself, and in that love

Not unconsidered leave your honour nor

The dignity of your office, is the point

Of my petition.

KING.

Lady mine, proceed.

QUEEN KATHARINE.

I am solicited, not by a few,

And those of true condition, that your subjects

Are in great grievance: there have been commissions

Sent down among 'em which hath flaw'd the heart

Of all their loyalties; wherein, although,

My good Lord Cardinal, they vent reproaches

Most bitterly on you as putter-on

Of these exactions, yet the King our master-

Whose honour Heaven shield from soil!-even he escapes not

Language unmannerly; yea, such which breaks

The sides of loyalty, and almost appears

In loud rebellion.

NORFOLK.

Not almost appears-

It doth appear; for, upon these taxations,

The clothiers all, not able to maintain

The many to them 'longing, have put of
The spinsters, carders, fullers, weavers, who
Unfit for other life, compell'd by hunger
And lack of other means, in desperate manner
Daring th' event to th' teeth, are all in uproar,
And danger serves among them.

KING.

Taxation!
Wherein? and what taxation? My Lord Cardinal,
You that are blam'd for it alike with us,
Know you of this taxation?

WOLSEY.
Please you, sir,
I know but of a single part in aught
Pertains to th' state, and front but in that file
Where others tell steps with me.

QUEEN KATHARINE.

No, my lord!

You know no more than others! But you frame

Things that are known alike, which are not wholesome

To those which would not know them, and yet must

Perforce be their acquaintance. These exactions,

Whereof my sovereign would have note, they are

Most pestilent to th' hearing; and to bear 'em

The back is sacrifice to th' load. They say

They are devis'd by you, or else you suffer

Too hard an exclamation.

KING.

Still exaction!

The nature of it? In what kind, let's know,

Is this exaction?

QUEEN KATHARINE.

I am much too venturous

In tempting of your patience, but am bold'ned

Under your promis'd pardon. The subjects' grief

Comes through commissions, which compels from each

The sixth part of his substance, to be levied

Without delay; and the pretence for this

Is nam'd your wars in France. This makes bold mouths;

Tongues spit their duties out, and cold hearts freeze

Allegiance in them; their curses now

Live where their prayers did; and it's come to pass

This tractable obedience is a slave

To each incensed will. I would your Highness

Would give it quick consideration, for

There is no primer business.

KING.

By my life,

This is against our pleasure.

WOLSEY.

And for me,

I have no further gone in this than by

A single voice; and that not pass'd me but

By learned approbation of the judges. If I am

Traduc'd by ignorant tongues, which neither know

My faculties nor person, yet will be

The chronicles of my doing, let me say

'Tis but the fate of place, and the rough brake

That virtue must go through. We must not stint

Our necessary actions in the fear

To cope malicious censurers, which ever

As rav'nous fishes do a vessel follow

That is new-trimm'd, but benefit no further

Than vainly longing. What we oft do best,

By sick interpreters, once weak ones, is

Not ours, or not allow'd; what worst, as oft

Hitting a grosser quality, is cried up

For our best act. If we shall stand still,

In fear our motion will be mock'd or carp'd at,

We should take root here where we sit, or sit

State-statues only.

KING.

Things done well

And with a care exempt themselves from fear:

Things done without example, in their issue

Are to be fear'd. Have you a precedent

Of this commission? I believe, not any.

We must not rend our subjects from our laws,

And stick them in our will. Sixth part of each?

A trembling contribution! Why, we take

From every tree lop, bark, and part o' th' timber;

And though we leave it with a root, thus hack'd,

The air will drink the sap. To every county

Where this is question'd send our letters with

Free pardon to each man that has denied

The force of this commission. Pray, look tot;

I put it to your care.

WOLSEY.

[Aside to the SECRETARY] A word with you.

Let there be letters writ to every shire

Of the King's grace and pardon. The grieved commons

Hardly conceive of me-let it be nois'd

That through our intercession this revokement

And pardon comes. I shall anon advise you
Further in the proceeding. *Exit*

SECRETARY

Enter SURVEYOR

QUEEN KATHARINE.

I am sorry that the Duke of Buckingham
Is run in your displeasure.

KING.

It grieves many.
The gentleman is learn'd and a most rare speaker;
To nature none more bound; his training such
That he may furnish and instruct great teachers
And never seek for aid out of himself. Yet see,
When these so noble benefits shall prove
Not well dispos'd, the mind growing once corrupt,
They turn to vicious forms, ten times more ugly

Than ever they were fair. This man so complete,

Who was enroll'd 'mongst wonders, and when we,

Almost with ravish'd list'ning, could not find

His hour of speech a minute-he, my lady,

Hath into monstrous habits put the graces

That once were his, and is become as black

As if besmear'd in hell. Sit by us; you shall hear-

This was his gentleman in trust-of him

Things to strike honour sad. Bid him recount

The fore-recited practices, whereof

We cannot feel too little, hear too much.

WOLSEY.

Stand forth, and with bold spirit relate what you,

Most like a careful subject, have collected

Out of the Duke of Buckingham.

KING.

Speak freely.

SURVEYOR.

First, it was usual with him-every day

It would infect his speech-that if the King

Should without issue die, he'll carry it so

To make the sceptre his. These very words

I've heard him utter to his son-in-law,

Lord Aberga'ny, to whom by oath he menac'd

Revenge upon the Cardinal.

WOLSEY.

Please your Highness, note

This dangerous conception in this point:

Not friended by his wish, to your high person

His will is most malignant, and it stretches

Beyond you to your friends.

QUEEN KATHARINE.

My learn'd Lord Cardinal,

Deliver all with charity.

KING.

Speak on.

How grounded he his title to the crown

Upon our fail? To this point hast thou heard him

At any time speak aught?

SURVEYOR.

He was brought to this

By a vain prophecy of Nicholas Henton.

KING.

What was that Henton?

SURVEYOR.

Sir, a Chartreux friar,

His confessor, who fed him every minute

With words of sovereignty.

KING.

How know'st thou this?

SURVEYOR.

Not long before your Highness sped to France,

The Duke being at the Rose, within the parish

Saint Lawrence Poultney, did of me demand

What was the speech among the Londoners

Concerning the French journey. I replied

Men fear'd the French would prove perfidious,

To the King's danger. Presently the Duke

Said 'twas the fear indeed and that he doubted

'Twould prove the verity of certain words

Spoke by a holy monk 'that oft' says he

'Hath sent to me, wishing me to permit

John de la Car, my chaplain, a choice hour

To hear from him a matter of some moment;

Whom after under the confession's seal

He solemnly had sworn that what he spoke

My chaplain to no creature living but

To me should utter, with demure confidence

This pausingly ensu'd: "Neither the King nor's heirs,

Tell you the Duke, shall prosper; bid him strive

To gain the love o' th' commonalty; the Duke

Shall govern England."'

QUEEN KATHARINE.

If I know you well,

You were the Duke's surveyor, and lost your office

On the complaint o' th' tenants. Take good heed

You charge not in your spleen a noble person

And spoil your nobler soul. I say, take heed;

Yes, heartily beseech you.

KING.

Let him on.

Go forward.

SURVEYOR.

On my soul, I'll speak but truth.

I told my lord the Duke, by th' devil's illusions

The monk might be deceiv'd, and that 'twas dangerous for him

To ruminate on this so far, until
It forg'd him some design, which, being believ'd,
It was much like to do. He answer'd 'Tush,
It can do me no damage'; adding further
That, had the King in his last sickness fail'd,
The Cardinal's and Sir Thomas Lovell's heads
Should have gone off.

KING.

Ha! what, so rank? Ah ha!
There's mischief in this man. Canst thou say further?

SURVEYOR.

I can, my liege.

KING.
Proceed.

SURVEYOR.

Being at Greenwich,
After your Highness had reprov'd the Duke
About Sir William Bulmer-

KING.
I remember
Of such a time: being my sworn servant,
The Duke retain'd him his. But on: what hence?

SURVEYOR.
'If' quoth he 'I for this had been committed-
As to the Tower I thought-I would have play'd
The part my father meant to act upon
Th' usurper Richard; who, being at Salisbury,
Made suit to come in's presence, which if granted,
As he made semblance of his duty, would
Have put his knife into him.'

KING.
A giant traitor!

WOLSEY.

Now, madam, may his Highness live in freedom,
And this man out of prison?

QUEEN KATHARINE.

God mend all!

KING.

There's something more would out of thee: what say'st?

SURVEYOR.

After 'the Duke his father' with the 'knife,'
He stretch'd him, and, with one hand on his dagger,
Another spread on's breast, mounting his eyes,
He did discharge a horrible oath, whose tenour
Was, were he evil us'd, he would outgo
His father by as much as a performance
Does an irresolute purpose.

KING.

There's his period,

To sheath his knife in us. He is attach'd;

Call him to present trial. If he may

Find mercy in the law, 'tis his; if none,

Let him not seek't of us. By day and night!

He's traitor to th' height.

Exeunt

ACT I. SCENE 3.

London. The palace

Enter the LORD CHAMBERLAIN and LORD SANDYS

CHAMBERLAIN.

Is't possible the spells of France should juggle

Men into such strange mysteries?

SANDYS.

New customs,

Though they be never so ridiculous,

Nay, let 'em be unmanly, yet are follow'd.

CHAMBERLAIN.

As far as I see, all the good our English

Have got by the late voyage is but merely

A fit or two o' th' face; but they are shrewd ones;

For when they hold 'em, you would swear directly

Their very noses had been counsellors

To Pepin or Clotharius, they keep state so.

SANDYS.

They have all new legs, and lame ones. One would take it,

That never saw 'em pace before, the spavin

Or springhalt reign'd among 'em.

CHAMBERLAIN.

Death! my lord,

Their clothes are after such a pagan cut to't,

That sure th' have worn out Christendom.

Enter SIR THOMAS LOVELL

How now?

What news, Sir Thomas Lovell?

LOVELL.

Faith, my lord,

I hear of none but the new proclamation

That's clapp'd upon the court gate.

CHAMBERLAIN.

What is't for?

LOVELL.

The reformation of our travell'd gallants,

That fill the court with quarrels, talk, and tailors.

CHAMBERLAIN.

I am glad 'tis there. Now I would pray our monsieurs

To think an English courtier may be wise, And never see the Louvre.

LOVELL.

They must either,

For so run the conditions, leave those remnants

Of fool and feather that they got in France,

With all their honourable points of ignorance

Pertaining thereunto-as fights and fireworks;

Abusing better men than they can be,

Out of a foreign wisdom-renouncing clean

The faith they have in tennis, and tall stockings,

Short blist'red breeches, and those types of travel

And understand again like honest men,

Or pack to their old playfellows. There, I take it,

They may, cum privilegio, wear away

The lag end of their lewdness and be laugh'd at.

SANDYS.

'Tis time to give 'em physic, their diseases

Are grown so catching.

CHAMBERLAIN.

What a loss our ladies
Will have of these trim vanities!

LOVELL.

Ay, marry,
There will be woe indeed, lords: the sly whoresons
Have got a speeding trick to lay down ladies.
A French song and a fiddle has no fellow.

SANDYS.

The devil fiddle 'em! I am glad they are going,
For sure there's no converting 'em. Now
An honest country lord, as I am, beaten
A long time out of play, may bring his plainsong
And have an hour of hearing; and, by'r Lady,
Held current music too.

CHAMBERLAIN.

Well said, Lord Sandys;
Your colt's tooth is not cast yet.

SANDYS.

No, my lord,

Nor shall not while I have a stamp.

CHAMBERLAIN.

Sir Thomas,

Whither were you a-going?

LOVELL.

To the Cardinal's;

Your lordship is a guest too.

CHAMBERLAIN.

O, 'tis true;

This night he makes a supper, and a great one,

To many lords and ladies; there will be

The beauty of this kingdom, I'll assure you.

LOVELL.

That churchman bears a bounteous mind indeed,

A hand as fruitful as the land that feeds us;
His dews fall everywhere.

CHAMBERLAIN.
No doubt he's noble;
He had a black mouth that said other of him.

SANDYS.
He may, my lord; has wherewithal. In him
Sparing would show a worse sin than ill doctrine:
Men of his way should be most liberal,
They are set here for examples.

CHAMBERLAIN.
True, they are so;
But few now give so great ones. My barge stays;
Your lordship shall along. Come, good Sir Thomas,
We shall be late else; which I would not be,
For I was spoke to, with Sir Henry Guildford,
This night to be comptrollers.

SANDYS.

I am your lordship's.

Exeunt

ACT I. SCENE 4.

London. The Presence Chamber in York Place

Hautboys. A small table under a state for the Cardinal, a longer table for the guests. Then enter ANNE BULLEN, and divers other LADIES and GENTLEMEN, as guests, at one door; at another door enter SIR HENRY GUILDFORD

GUILDFORD.

Ladies, a general welcome from his Grace

Salutes ye all; this night he dedicates

To fair content and you. None here, he hopes,

In all this noble bevy, has brought with her

One care abroad; he would have all as merry

As, first, good company, good wine, good welcome,

Can make good people.

Enter LORD CHAMBERLAIN, LORD SANDYS, and SIR

THOMAS LOVELL

O, my lord, y'are tardy,
The very thought of this fair company
Clapp'd wings to me.

CHAMBERLAIN.

You are young, Sir Harry Guildford.

SANDYS.
Sir Thomas Lovell, had the Cardinal
But half my lay thoughts in him, some of these
Should find a running banquet ere they rested
I think would better please 'em. By my life,
They are a sweet society of fair ones.

LOVELL.
O that your lordship were but now confessor
To one or two of these!

SANDYS.

I would I were;
They should find easy penance.

LOVELL.

Faith, how easy?

SANDYS.
As easy as a down bed would afford it.

CHAMBERLAIN.
Sweet ladies, will it please you sit? Sir Harry,
Place you that side; I'll take the charge of this.

His Grace is ent'ring. Nay, you must not freeze:
Two women plac'd together makes cold weather.

My Lord Sandys, you are one will keep 'em waking:
Pray sit between these ladies.

SANDYS.

By my faith,

And thank your lordship. By your leave, sweet ladies.

[Seats himself between ANNE BULLEN and another

lady]

If I chance to talk a little wild, forgive me;

I had it from my father.

ANNE.

Was he mad, sir?

SANDYS.

O, very mad, exceeding mad, in love too.

But he would bite none; just as I do now,

He would kiss you twenty with a breath. [Kisses

her]

CHAMBERLAIN.

Well said, my lord.

So, now y'are fairly seated. Gentlemen,

The penance lies on you if these fair ladies

Pass away frowning.

SANDYS.

For my little cure,

Let me alone.

Hautboys. *Enter* CARDINAL WOLSEY, attended; and takes his state

WOLSEY.

Y'are welcome, my fair guests. That noble lady

Or gentleman that is not freely merry

Is not my friend. This, to confirm my welcome-

And to you all, good health!

[Drinks]

SANDYS.

Your Grace is noble.

Let me have such a bowl may hold my thanks

And save me so much talking.

WOLSEY.

My Lord Sandys,

I am beholding to you. Cheer your neighbours.

Ladies, you are not merry. Gentlemen,

Whose fault is this?

SANDYS.

The red wine first must rise

In their fair cheeks, my lord; then we shall have 'em

Talk us to silence.

ANNE.

You are a merry gamester,

My Lord Sandys.

SANDYS.

Yes, if I make my play.

Here's to your ladyship; and pledge it, madam,

For 'tis to such a thing-

ANNE.

You cannot show me.

SANDYS.

I told your Grace they would talk anon.

[Drum and trumpet. Chambers

discharg'd]

WOLSEY.

What's that?

CHAMBERLAIN.

Look out there, some of ye. *Exit* a

SERVANT

WOLSEY.

What warlike voice,

And to what end, is this? Nay, ladies, fear not:

By all the laws of war y'are privileg'd.

Re-enter SERVANT

CHAMBERLAIN.

How now! what is't?

SERVANT.

A noble troop of strangers-
For so they seem. Th' have left their barge and landed,
And hither make, as great ambassadors
From foreign princes.

WOLSEY.

Good Lord Chamberlain,
Go, give 'em welcome; you can speak the French tongue;
And pray receive 'em nobly and conduct 'em
Into our presence, where this heaven of beauty
Shall shine at full upon them. Some attend him.

Exit CHAMBERLAIN attended. All rise, and tables remov'd

You have now a broken banquet, but we'll mend it.
A good digestion to you all; and once more
I show'r a welcome on ye; welcome all.

Hautboys. *Enter* the KING, and others, as maskers,
habited like shepherds, usher'd by the LORD CHAMBERLAIN.
They pass directly before the CARDINAL,
and gracefully salute him
A noble company! What are their pleasures?

CHAMBERLAIN.
Because they speak no English, thus they pray'd
To tell your Grace, that, having heard by fame
Of this so noble and so fair assembly
This night to meet here, they could do no less,
Out of the great respect they bear to beauty,
But leave their flocks and, under your fair conduct,
Crave leave to view these ladies and entreat
An hour of revels with 'em.

WOLSEY.
Say, Lord Chamberlain,
They have done my poor house grace; for which I pay 'em
A thousand thanks, and pray 'em take their pleasures.
[They choose ladies. The KING chooses ANNE

BULLEN]

KING.

The fairest hand I ever touch'd! O beauty,

Till now I never knew thee! [Music.

Dance]

WOLSEY.

My lord!

CHAMBERLAIN.

Your Grace?

WOLSEY.

Pray tell 'em thus much from me:

There should be one amongst 'em, by his person,

More worthy this place than myself; to whom,

If I but knew him, with my love and duty

I would surrender it.

CHAMBERLAIN.

I will, my lord.

[He whispers to the
maskers]

WOLSEY.

What say they?

CHAMBERLAIN.
Such a one, they all confess,
There is indeed; which they would have your Grace
Find out, and he will take it.

WOLSEY.
Let me see, then. [Comes from his
state]
By all your good leaves, gentlemen, here I'll make
My royal choice.

KING.

[Unmasking] Ye have found him, Cardinal.

You hold a fair assembly; you do well, lord.

You are a churchman, or, I'll tell you, Cardinal,

I should judge now unhappily.

WOLSEY.

I am glad

Your Grace is grown so pleasant.

KING.

My Lord Chamberlain,

Prithee come hither: what fair lady's that?

CHAMBERLAIN.

An't please your Grace, Sir Thomas Bullen's

daughter-

The Viscount Rochford-one of her Highness' women.

KING.

By heaven, she is a dainty one. Sweet heart,

I were unmannerly to take you out

And not to kiss you. A health, gentlemen!

Let it go round.

WOLSEY.

Sir Thomas Lovell, is the banquet ready

I' th' privy chamber?

LOVELL.

Yes, my lord.

WOLSEY.

Your Grace,

I fear, with dancing is a little heated.

KING.

I fear, too much.

WOLSEY.

There's fresher air, my lord,

In the next chamber.

KING.

Lead in your ladies, ev'ry one. Sweet partner,

I must not yet forsake you. Let's be merry:

Good my Lord Cardinal, I have half a dozen healths

To drink to these fair ladies, and a measure

To lead 'em once again; and then let's dream

Who's best in favour. Let the music knock it.

Exeunt , with trumpets

ACT II. SCENE 1.

Westminster. A street

Enter two GENTLEMEN, at several doors

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

Whither away so fast?

SECOND GENTLEMAN.

O, God save ye!

Ev'n to the Hall, to hear what shall become

Of the great Duke of Buckingham.

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

I'll save you

That labour, sir. All's now done but the ceremony

Of bringing back the prisoner.

SECOND GENTLEMAN.

Were you there?

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

Yes, indeed, was I.

SECOND GENTLEMAN.

Pray, speak what has happen'd.

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

You may guess quickly what.

SECOND GENTLEMAN.

Is he found guilty?

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

Yes, truly is he, and condemn'd upon't.

SECOND GENTLEMAN.

I am sorry for't.

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

So are a number more.

SECOND GENTLEMAN.

But, pray, how pass'd it?

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

I'll tell you in a little. The great Duke.

Came to the bar; where to his accusations

He pleaded still not guilty, and alleged

Many sharp reasons to defeat the law.

The King's attorney, on the contrary,

Urg'd on the examinations, proofs, confessions,

Of divers witnesses; which the Duke desir'd

To have brought, viva voce, to his face;

At which appear'd against him his surveyor,

Sir Gilbert Peck his chancellor, and John Car,

Confessor to him, with that devil-monk,

Hopkins, that made this mischief.

SECOND GENTLEMAN.

That was he

That fed him with his prophecies?

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

The same.

All these accus'd him strongly, which he fain

Would have flung from him; but indeed he could not;

And so his peers, upon this evidence,

Have found him guilty of high treason. Much

He spoke, and learnedly, for life; but all

Was either pitied in him or forgotten.

SECOND GENTLEMAN.

After all this, how did he bear himself

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

When he was brought again to th' bar to hear

His knell rung out, his judgment, he was stirr'd

With such an agony he sweat extremely,

And something spoke in choler, ill and hasty;

But he fell to himself again, and sweetly

In all the rest show'd a most noble patience.

SECOND GENTLEMAN.

I do not think he fears death.

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

Sure, he does not;

He never was so womanish; the cause

He may a little grieve at.

SECOND GENTLEMAN.

Certainly

The Cardinal is the end of this.

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

'Tis likely,

By all conjectures: first, Kildare's attainder,

Then deputy of Ireland, who remov'd,

Earl Surrey was sent thither, and in haste too,

Lest he should help his father.

SECOND GENTLEMAN.

That trick of state

Was a deep envious one.

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

At his return

No doubt he will requite it. This is noted,

And generally: whoever the King favours

The Cardinal instantly will find employment,

And far enough from court too.

SECOND GENTLEMAN.

All the commons

Hate him perniciously, and, o' my conscience,

Wish him ten fathom deep: this Duke as much

They love and dote on; call him bounteous Buckingham,

The mirror of all courtesy-

Enter BUCKINGHAM from his arraignment, tip-staves

before him; the axe with the edge towards him; halberds

on each side; accompanied with SIR THOMAS

LOVELL, SIR NICHOLAS VAUX, SIR WILLIAM SANDYS,

and common people, *etc.*

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

Stay there, sir,
And see the noble ruin'd man you speak of.

SECOND GENTLEMAN.

Let's stand close, and behold him.

BUCKINGHAM.

All good people,
You that thus far have come to pity me,
Hear what I say, and then go home and lose me.
I have this day receiv'd a traitor's judgment,
And by that name must die; yet, heaven bear witness,
And if I have a conscience, let it sink me
Even as the axe falls, if I be not faithful!

The law I bear no malice for my death:
'T has done, upon the premises, but justice.

But those that sought it I could wish more Christians.

Be what they will, I heartily forgive 'em;

Yet let 'em look they glory not in mischief

Nor build their evils on the graves of great men,

For then my guiltless blood must cry against 'em.

For further life in this world I ne'er hope

Nor will I sue, although the King have mercies

More than I dare make faults. You few that lov'd me

And dare be bold to weep for Buckingham,

His noble friends and fellows, whom to leave

Is only bitter to him, only dying,

Go with me like good angels to my end;

And as the long divorce of steel falls on me

Make of your prayers one sweet sacrifice,

And lift my soul to heaven. Lead on, a God's name.

LOVELL.

I do beseech your Grace, for charity,

If ever any malice in your heart

Were hid against me, now to forgive me frankly.

BUCKINGHAM.

Sir Thomas Lovell, I as free forgive you

As I would be forgiven. I forgive all.

There cannot be those numberless offences

'Gainst me that I cannot take peace with. No black envy

Shall mark my grave. Commend me to his Grace;

And if he speak of Buckingham, pray tell him

You met him half in heaven. My vows and prayers

Yet are the King's, and, till my soul forsake,

Shall cry for blessings on him. May he live

Longer than I have time to tell his years;

Ever belov'd and loving may his rule be;

And when old time Shall lead him to his end,

Goodness and he fill up one monument!

LOVELL.

To th' water side I must conduct your Grace;

Then give my charge up to Sir Nicholas Vaux,

Who undertakes you to your end.

VAUX.

Prepare there;

The Duke is coming; see the barge be ready;

And fit it with such furniture as suits

The greatness of his person.

BUCKINGHAM.

Nay, Sir Nicholas,

Let it alone; my state now will but mock me.

When I came hither I was Lord High Constable

And Duke of Buckingham; now, poor Edward Bohun.

Yet I am richer than my base accusers

That never knew what truth meant; I now seal it;

And with that blood will make 'em one day groan fort.

My noble father, Henry of Buckingham,

Who first rais'd head against usurping Richard,

Flying for succour to his servant Banister,

Being distress'd, was by that wretch betray'd

And without trial fell; God's peace be with him!

Henry the Seventh succeeding, truly pitying

My father's loss, like a most royal prince,

Restor'd me to my honours, and out of ruins

Made my name once more noble. Now his son,

Henry the Eighth, life, honour, name, and all

That made me happy, at one stroke has taken

For ever from the world. I had my trial,

And must needs say a noble one; which makes me

A little happier than my wretched father;

Yet thus far we are one in fortunes: both

Fell by our servants, by those men we lov'd most-

A most unnatural and faithless service.

Heaven has an end in all. Yet, you that hear me,

This from a dying man receive as certain:

Where you are liberal of your loves and counsels,

Be sure you be not loose; for those you make friends

And give your hearts to, when they once perceive

The least rub in your fortunes, fall away

Like water from ye, never found again

But where they mean to sink ye. All good people,

Pray for me! I must now forsake ye; the last hour

Of my long weary life is come upon me.

Farewell;

And when you would say something that is sad, Speak how I fell. I have done; and God forgive me!

Exeunt BUCKINGHAM and train

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

O, this is full of pity! Sir, it calls,

I fear, too many curses on their heads

That were the authors.

SECOND GENTLEMAN.

If the Duke be guiltless,

'Tis full of woe; yet I can give you inkling

Of an ensuing evil, if it fall,

Greater than this.

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

Good angels keep it from us!

What may it be? You do not doubt my faith, sir?

SECOND GENTLEMAN.

This secret is so weighty, 'twill require

A strong faith to conceal it.

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

Let me have it;

I do not talk much.

SECOND GENTLEMAN.

I am confident.

You shall, sir. Did you not of late days hear

A buzzing of a separation

Between the King and Katharine?

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

Yes, but it held not;

For when the King once heard it, out of anger

He sent command to the Lord Mayor straight

To stop the rumour and allay those tongues

That durst disperse it.

SECOND GENTLEMAN.

But that slander, sir,

Is found a truth now; for it grows again

Fresher than e'er it was, and held for certain
The King will venture at it. Either the Cardinal
Or some about him near have, out of malice
To the good Queen, possess'd him with a scruple
That will undo her. To confirm this too,
Cardinal Campeius is arriv'd and lately;
As all think, for this business.

FIRST GENTLEMAN.
'Tis the Cardinal;
And merely to revenge him on the Emperor
For not bestowing on him at his asking
The archbishopric of Toledo, this is purpos'd.

SECOND GENTLEMAN.
I think you have hit the mark; but is't not cruel
That she should feel the smart of this? The Cardinal
Will have his will, and she must fall.

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

'Tis woeful.

We are too open here to argue this;

Let's think in private more.

Exeunt

ACT II. SCENE 2.

London. The palace

Enter the LORD CHAMBERLAIN reading this letter

CHAMBERLAIN.

'My lord,

'The horses your lordship sent for, with all the care

had, I saw well chosen, ridden, and furnish'd. They were

young and handsome, and of the best breed in the north.

When they were ready to set out for London, a man of

my Lord Cardinal's, by commission, and main power, took

'em from me, with this reason: his master would be serv'd

before a subject, if not before the King; which stopp'd our mouths, sir.'

I fear he will indeed. Well, let him have them.

He will have all, I think.

Enter to the LORD CHAMBERLAIN the DUKES OF NORFOLK and

SUFFOLK

NORFOLK.

Well met, my Lord Chamberlain.

CHAMBERLAIN.

Good day to both your Graces.

SUFFOLK.

How is the King employ'd?

CHAMBERLAIN.

I left him private,

Full of sad thoughts and troubles.

NORFOLK.

What's the cause?

CHAMBERLAIN.

It seems the marriage with his brother's wife

Has crept too near his conscience.

SUFFOLK.

No, his conscience

Has crept too near another lady.

NORFOLK.

'Tis so;

This is the Cardinal's doing; the King-Cardinal,

That blind priest, like the eldest son of fortune,

Turns what he list. The King will know him one day.

SUFFOLK.

Pray God he do! He'll never know himself else.

NORFOLK.

How holily he works in all his business!

And with what zeal! For, now he has crack'd the league

Between us and the Emperor, the Queen's great nephew,

He dives into the King's soul and there scatters

Dangers, doubts, wringing of the conscience,

Fears, and despairs-and all these for his marriage;

And out of all these to restore the King,

He counsels a divorce, a loss of her

That like a jewel has hung twenty years

About his neck, yet never lost her lustre;

Of her that loves him with that excellence

That angels love good men with; even of her

That, when the greatest stroke of fortune falls,

Will bless the King-and is not this course pious?

CHAMBERLAIN.

Heaven keep me from such counsel! 'Tis most true

These news are everywhere; every tongue speaks 'em,

And every true heart weeps for 't. All that dare

Look into these affairs see this main end-

The French King's sister. Heaven will one day open

The King's eyes, that so long have slept upon

This bold bad man.

SUFFOLK.

And free us from his slavery.

NORFOLK.

We had need pray, and heartily, for our deliverance;

Or this imperious man will work us an

From princes into pages. All men's honours

Lie like one lump before him, to be fashion'd

Into what pitch he please.

SUFFOLK.

For me, my lords,

I love him not, nor fear him-there's my creed;

As I am made without him, so I'll stand,

If the King please; his curses and his blessings

Touch me alike; th' are breath I not believe in.
I knew him, and I know him; so I leave him
To him that made him proud-the Pope.

NORFOLK.
Let's in;
And with some other business put the King
From these sad thoughts that work too much upon him.

My lord, you'll bear us company?

CHAMBERLAIN.
Excuse me,
The King has sent me otherwhere; besides,
You'll find a most unfit time to disturb him.

Health to your lordships!

NORFOLK.
Thanks, my good Lord Chamberlain.

Exit LORD CHAMBERLAIN; and the KING

draws

the curtain and sits reading pensively

SUFFOLK.

How sad he looks; sure, he is much afflicted.

KING.

Who's there, ha?

NORFOLK.

Pray God he be not angry.

KING HENRY.

Who's there, I say? How dare you thrust yourselves

Into my private meditations?

Who am I, ha?

NORFOLK.

A gracious king that pardons all offences

Malice ne'er meant. Our breach of duty this way
Is business of estate, in which we come
To know your royal pleasure.

KING.
Ye are too bold.

Go to; I'll make ye know your times of business.
Is this an hour for temporal affairs, ha?

Enter WOLSEY and CAMPEIUS with a commission

Who's there? My good Lord Cardinal? O my Wolsey,
The quiet of my wounded conscience,
Thou art a cure fit for a King. *[To CAMPEIUS]* You're welcome,
Most learned reverend sir, into our kingdom.
Use us and it. *[To WOLSEY]* My good lord, have great care
I be not found a talker.

WOLSEY.

Sir, you cannot.

I would your Grace would give us but an hour

Of private conference.

KING.

[To NORFOLK and SUFFOLK] We are busy; go.

NORFOLK.

[Aside to SUFFOLK] This priest has no pride in him!

SUFFOLK.

[Aside to NORFOLK] Not to speak of!

I would not be so sick though for his place.

But this cannot continue.

NORFOLK.

[Aside to SUFFOLK] If it do,

I'll venture one have-at-him.

SUFFOLK.

[Aside to NORFOLK] I another.

Exeunt NORFOLK and

SUFFOLK

WOLSEY.

Your Grace has given a precedent of wisdom

Above all princes, in committing freely

Your scruple to the voice of Christendom.

Who can be angry now? What envy reach you?

The Spaniard, tied by blood and favour to her,

Must now confess, if they have any goodness,

The trial just and noble. All the clerks,

I mean the learned ones, in Christian kingdoms

Have their free voices. Rome the nurse of judgment,

Invited by your noble self, hath sent

One general tongue unto us, this good man,

This just and learned priest, Cardinal Campeius,

Whom once more I present unto your Highness.

KING.

And once more in mine arms I bid him welcome, And thank the holy conclave for their loves.

They have sent me such a man I would have wish'd for.

CAMPEIUS.

Your Grace must needs deserve an strangers' loves,

You are so noble. To your Highness' hand

I tender my commission; by whose virtue-

The court of Rome commanding-you, my Lord

Cardinal of York, are join'd with me their servant

In the unpartial judging of this business.

KING.

Two equal men. The Queen shall be acquainted

Forthwith for what you come. Where's Gardiner?

WOLSEY.

I know your Majesty has always lov'd her

So dear in heart not to deny her that

A woman of less place might ask by law-

Scholars allow'd freely to argue for her.

KING.

Ay, and the best she shall have; and my favour

To him that does best. God forbid else. Cardinal,

Prithee call Gardiner to me, my new secretary;

I find him a fit fellow. *Exit*

WOLSEY

Re-enter WOLSEY with GARDINER

WOLSEY.

[Aside to GARDINER] Give me your hand: much

joy and favour to you;

You are the King's now.

GARDINER.

[Aside to WOLSEY] But to be commanded

For ever by your Grace, whose hand has rais'd me.

KING.

Come hither, Gardiner. [Walks and

whispers]

CAMPEIUS.

My Lord of York, was not one Doctor Pace

In this man's place before him?

WOLSEY.

Yes, he was.

CAMPEIUS.

Was he not held a learned man?

WOLSEY.

Yes, surely.

CAMPEIUS.

Believe me, there's an ill opinion spread then,

Even of yourself, Lord Cardinal.

WOLSEY.

How! Of me?

CAMPEIUS.

They will not stick to say you envied him

And, fearing he would rise, he was so virtuous,

Kept him a foreign man still; which so griev'd him

That he ran mad and died.

WOLSEY.

Heav'n's peace be with him!

That's Christian care enough. For living murmurers

There's places of rebuke. He was a fool,

For he would needs be virtuous: that good fellow,

If I command him, follows my appointment.

I will have none so near else. Learn this, brother,

We live not to be grip'd by meaner persons.

KING.

Deliver this with modesty to th' Queen.

Exit

GARDINER

The most convenient place that I can think of

For such receipt of learning is Blackfriars;

There ye shall meet about this weighty business-

My Wolsey, see it furnish'd. O, my lord,

Would it not grieve an able man to leave

So sweet a bedfellow? But, conscience, conscience!

O, 'tis a tender place! and I must leave her.

Exeunt

ACT II. SCENE 3.

London. The palace

Enter ANNE BULLEN and an OLD LADY

ANNE.

Not for that neither. Here's the pang that pinches:

His Highness having liv'd so long with her, and she

So good a lady that no tongue could ever

Pronounce dishonour of her-by my life,

She never knew harm-doing-O, now, after

So many courses of the sun enthroned,

Still growing in a majesty and pomp, the which

To leave a thousand-fold more bitter than

'Tis sweet at first t' acquire-after this process,

To give her the avaunt, it is a pity

Would move a monster.

OLD LADY.

Hearts of most hard temper

Melt and lament for her.

ANNE.

O, God's will! much better

She ne'er had known pomp; though't be temporal,

Yet, if that quarrel, fortune, do divorce

It from the bearer, 'tis a sufferance panging

As soul and body's severing.

OLD LADY.

Alas, poor lady!

She's a stranger now again.

ANNE.

So much the more
Must pity drop upon her. Verily,
I swear 'tis better to be lowly born
And range with humble livers in content
Than to be perk'd up in a glist'ring grief
And wear a golden sorrow.

OLD LADY.

Our content
Is our best having.

ANNE.

By my troth and maidenhead,
I would not be a queen.

OLD LADY.

Beshrew me, I would,

And venture maidenhead for 't; and so would you,

For all this spice of your hypocrisy.

You that have so fair parts of woman on you

Have too a woman's heart, which ever yet

Affected eminence, wealth, sovereignty;

Which, to say sooth, are blessings; and which gifts,

Saving your mincing, the capacity

Of your soft cheveril conscience would receive

If you might please to stretch it.

ANNE.

Nay, good troth.

OLD LADY.

Yes, troth and troth. You would not be a queen!

ANNE.

No, not for all the riches under heaven.

OLD LADY.

'Tis strange: a threepence bow'd would hire me,

Old as I am, to queen it. But, I pray you,

What think you of a duchess? Have you limbs

To bear that load of title?

ANNE.

No, in truth.

OLD LADY.

Then you are weakly made. Pluck off a little;

I would not be a young count in your way

For more than blushing comes to. If your back

Cannot vouchsafe this burden, 'tis too weak

Ever to get a boy.

ANNE.

How you do talk!

I swear again I would not be a queen

For all the world.

OLD LADY.

In faith, for little England

You'd venture an emballing. I myself

Would for Carnarvonshire, although there long'd

No more to th' crown but that. Lo, who comes here?

Enter the LORD CHAMBERLAIN

CHAMBERLAIN.

Good morrow, ladies. What were't worth to know

The secret of your conference?

ANNE.

My good lord,

Not your demand; it values not your asking.

Our mistress' sorrows we were pitying.

CHAMBERLAIN.

It was a gentle business and becoming

The action of good women; there is hope
All will be well.

ANNE.
Now, I pray God, amen!

CHAMBERLAIN.
You bear a gentle mind, and heav'nly blessings
Follow such creatures. That you may, fair lady,
Perceive I speak sincerely and high notes
Ta'en of your many virtues, the King's Majesty
Commends his good opinion of you to you, and
Does purpose honour to you no less flowing
Than Marchioness of Pembroke; to which tide
A thousand pound a year, annual support,
Out of his grace he adds.

ANNE.
I do not know
What kind of my obedience I should tender;
More than my all is nothing, nor my prayers

Are not words duly hallowed, nor my wishes

More worth than empty vanities; yet prayers and wishes

Are all I can return. Beseech your lordship,

Vouchsafe to speak my thanks and my obedience,

As from a blushing handmaid, to his Highness;

Whose health and royalty I pray for.

CHAMBERLAIN.

Lady,

I shall not fail t' approve the fair conceit

The King hath of you. *[Aside]* I have perus'd her well:

Beauty and honour in her are so mingled

That they have caught the King; and who knows yet

But from this lady may proceed a gem

To lighten all this isle?-I'll to the King

And say I spoke with you.

ANNE.

My honour'd lord! *Exit* LORD

CHAMBERLAIN

OLD LADY.

Why, this it is: see, see!

I have been begging sixteen years in court-

Am yet a courtier beggarly-nor could

Come pat betwixt too early and too late

For any suit of pounds; and you, O fate!

A very fresh-fish here-fie, fie, fie upon

This compell'd fortune!-have your mouth fill'd up

Before you open it.

ANNE.

This is strange to me.

OLD LADY.

How tastes it? Is it bitter? Forty pence, no.

There was a lady once-'tis an old story-

That would not be a queen, that would she not,

For all the mud in Egypt. Have you heard it?

ANNE.

Come, you are pleasant.

OLD LADY.

With your theme I could

O'ermount the lark. The Marchioness of Pembroke!

A thousand pounds a year for pure respect!

No other obligation! By my life,

That promises moe thousands: honour's train

Is longer than his foreskirt. By this time

I know your back will bear a duchess. Say,

Are you not stronger than you were?

ANNE.

Good lady,

Make yourself mirth with your particular fancy,

And leave me out on't. Would I had no being,

If this salute my blood a jot; it faints me

To think what follows.

The Queen is comfortless, and we forgetful

In our long absence. Pray, do not deliver

What here y' have heard to her.

OLD LADY.

What do you think me?

Exeunt

ACT II. SCENE 4.

London. A hall in Blackfriars

Trumpets, sennet, and cornets. *Enter* two VERGERS, with short silver wands; next them, two SCRIBES, in the habit of doctors; after them, the ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY alone; after him, the BISHOPS OF LINCOLN, ELY, ROCHESTER, and SAINT ASAPH; next them, with some small distance, follows a GENTLEMAN bearing the purse, with the great seal, and a Cardinal's hat; then two PRIESTS, bearing each silver cross; then a GENTLEMAN USHER bareheaded, accompanied with a SERGEANT-AT-ARMS bearing a silver mace; then two GENTLEMEN bearing two great silver pillars; after them, side by side, the two CARDINALS, WOLSEY and CAMPEIUS; two NOBLEMEN with the sword and mace. Then enter the KING and QUEEN and their trains. The KING takes place under the cloth of state; the two CARDINALS sit under him as judges. The QUEEN takes place some distance from the KING. The BISHOPS place themselves on each side of the court, in manner of consistory; below them the SCRIBES. The LORDS sit next the BISHOPS. The rest of the attendants stand in convenient order about the stage

WOLSEY.

Whilst our commission from Rome is read,

Let silence be commanded.

KING.

What's the need?

It hath already publicly been read,

And on all sides th' authority allow'd;

You may then spare that time.

WOLSEY.

Be't so; proceed.

SCRIBE.

Say 'Henry King of England, come into the court.'

CRIER.

Henry King of England, &c.

KING.

Here.

SCRIBE.

Say 'Katharine Queen of England, come into the court.'

CRIER.

Katharine Queen of England, &c.

The QUEEN makes no answer, rises out of her chair,

goes about the court, comes to the KING, and kneels

at his feet; then speaks

QUEEN KATHARINE.

Sir, I desire you do me right and justice,

And to bestow your pity on me; for

I am a most poor woman and a stranger,

Born out of your dominions, having here

No judge indifferent, nor no more assurance

Of equal friendship and proceeding. Alas, sir,

In what have I offended you? What cause

Hath my behaviour given to your displeasure

That thus you should proceed to put me of

And take your good grace from me? Heaven witness,

I have been to you a true and humble wife,

At all times to your will conformable,

Ever in fear to kindle your dislike,

Yea, subject to your countenance-glad or sorry

As I saw it inclin'd. When was the hour

I ever contradicted your desire

Or made it not mine too? Or which of your friends

Have I not strove to love, although I knew

He were mine enemy? What friend of mine

That had to him deriv'd your anger did

Continue in my liking? Nay, gave notice

He was from thence discharg'd? Sir, call to mind

That I have been your wife in this obedience

Upward of twenty years, and have been blest

With many children by you. If, in the course

And process of this time, you can report,

And prove it too against mine honour, aught,

My bond to wedlock or my love and duty,

Against your sacred person, in God's name,

Turn me away and let the foul'st contempt

Shut door upon me, and so give me up

To the sharp'st kind of justice. Please you, sir,

The King, your father, was reputed for

A prince most prudent, of an excellent

And unmatch'd wit and judgment; Ferdinand,

My father, King of Spain, was reckon'd one

The wisest prince that there had reign'd by many

A year before. It is not to be question'd
That they had gather'd a wise council to them
Of every realm, that did debate this business,
Who deem'd our marriage lawful. Wherefore I humbly
Beseech you, sir, to spare me till I may
Be by my friends in Spain advis'd, whose counsel
I will implore. If not, i' th' name of God,
Your pleasure be fulfill'd!

WOLSEY.
You have here, lady,
And of your choice, these reverend fathers-men
Of singular integrity and learning,
Yea, the elect o' th' land, who are assembled
To plead your cause. It shall be therefore bootless
That longer you desire the court, as well
For your own quiet as to rectify
What is unsettled in the King.

CAMPEIUS.
His Grace

Hath spoken well and justly; therefore, madam,

It's fit this royal session do proceed

And that, without delay, their arguments

Be now produc'd and heard.

QUEEN KATHARINE.

Lord Cardinal,

To you I speak.

WOLSEY.

Your pleasure, madam?

QUEEN KATHARINE.

Sir,

I am about to weep; but, thinking that

We are a queen, or long have dream'd so, certain

The daughter of a king, my drops of tears

I'll turn to sparks of fire.

WOLSEY.

Be patient yet.

QUEEN KATHARINE.

I Will, when you are humble; nay, before

Or God will punish me. I do believe,

Induc'd by potent circumstances, that

You are mine enemy, and make my challenge

You shall not be my judge; for it is you

Have blown this coal betwixt my lord and me-

Which God's dew quench! Therefore I say again,

I utterly abhor, yea, from my soul

Refuse you for my judge, whom yet once more

I hold my most malicious foe and think not

At all a friend to truth.

WOLSEY.

I do profess

You speak not like yourself, who ever yet

Have stood to charity and display'd th' effects

Of disposition gentle and of wisdom

O'ertopping woman's pow'r. Madam, you do me wrong:
I have no spleen against you, nor injustice
For you or any; how far I have proceeded,
Or how far further shall, is warranted
By a commission from the Consistory,
Yea, the whole Consistory of Rome. You charge me
That I have blown this coal: I do deny it.
The King is present; if it be known to him
That I gainsay my deed, how may he wound,
And worthily, my falsehood! Yea, as much
As you have done my truth. If he know
That I am free of your report, he knows
I am not of your wrong. Therefore in him
It lies to cure me, and the cure is to
Remove these thoughts from you; the which before
His Highness shall speak in, I do beseech
You, gracious madam, to unthink your speaking
And to say so no more.

QUEEN KATHARINE.

My lord, my lord,

I am a simple woman, much too weak

T' oppose your cunning. Y'are meek and humble-mouth'd;

You sign your place and calling, in full seeming,

With meekness and humility; but your heart

Is cramm'd with arrogancy, spleen, and pride.

You have, by fortune and his Highness' favours,

Gone slightly o'er low steps, and now are mounted

Where pow'rs are your retainers, and your words,

Domestics to you, serve your will as't please

Yourself pronounce their office. I must tell you

You tender more your person's honour than

Your high profession spiritual; that again

I do refuse you for my judge and here,

Before you all, appeal unto the Pope,

To bring my whole cause 'fore his Holiness

And to be judg'd by him.

[She curtsies to the KING, and offers to

depart]

CAMPEIUS.

The Queen is obstinate,

Stubborn to justice, apt to accuse it, and

Disdainful to be tried by't; 'tis not well.

She's going away.

KING.

Call her again.

CRIER.

Katharine Queen of England, come into the court.

GENTLEMAN USHER.

Madam, you are call'd back.

QUEEN KATHARINE.

What need you note it? Pray you keep your way;

When you are call'd, return. Now the Lord help!

They vex me past my patience. Pray you pass on.

I will not tarry; no, nor ever more

Upon this business my appearance make

In any of their courts. *Exeunt* QUEEN and her attendants

KING.

Go thy ways, Kate.

That man i' th' world who shall report he has

A better wife, let him in nought be trusted

For speaking false in that. Thou art, alone-

If thy rare qualities, sweet gentleness,

Thy meekness saintlike, wife-like government,

Obeying in commanding, and thy parts

Sovereign and pious else, could speak thee out-

The queen of earthly queens. She's noble born;

And like her true nobility she has

Carried herself towards me.

WOLSEY.

Most gracious sir,

In humblest manner I require your Highness

That it shall please you to declare in hearing

Of all these ears-for where I am robb'd and bound,

There must I be unloos'd, although not there
At once and fully satisfied-whether ever I
Did broach this business to your Highness, or
Laid any scruple in your way which might
Induce you to the question on't, or ever
Have to you, but with thanks to God for such
A royal lady, spake one the least word that might
Be to the prejudice of her present state,
Or touch of her good person?

KING.

My Lord Cardinal,
I do excuse you; yea, upon mine honour,
I free you from't. You are not to be taught
That you have many enemies that know not
Why they are so, but, like to village curs,
Bark when their fellows do. By some of these
The Queen is put in anger. Y'are excus'd.
But will you be more justified? You ever
Have wish'd the sleeping of this business; never desir'd
It to be stirr'd; but oft have hind'red, oft,

The passages made toward it. On my honour,

I speak my good Lord Cardinal to this point,

And thus far clear him. Now, what mov'd me to't,

I will be bold with time and your attention.

Then mark th' inducement. Thus it came-give heed to't:

My conscience first receiv'd a tenderness,

Scruple, and prick, on certain speeches utter'd

By th' Bishop of Bayonne, then French ambassador,

Who had been hither sent on the debating

A marriage 'twixt the Duke of Orleans and

Our daughter Mary. I' th' progress of this business,

Ere a determinate resolution, he-

I mean the Bishop-did require a respite

Wherein he might the King his lord advertise

Whether our daughter were legitimate,

Respecting this our marriage with the dowager,

Sometimes our brother's wife. This respite shook

The bosom of my conscience, enter'd me,

Yea, with a splitting power, and made to tremble

The region of my breast, which forc'd such way

That many maz'd considerings did throng

And press'd in with this caution. First, methought

I stood not in the smile of heaven, who had

Commanded nature that my lady's womb,

If it conceiv'd a male child by me, should

Do no more offices of life to't than

The grave does to the dead; for her male issue

Or died where they were made, or shortly after

This world had air'd them. Hence I took a thought

This was a judgment on me, that my kingdom,

Well worthy the best heir o' th' world, should not

Be gladded in't by me. Then follows that

I weigh'd the danger which my realms stood in

By this my issue's fail, and that gave to me

Many a groaning throe. Thus hulling in

The wild sea of my conscience, I did steer

Toward this remedy, whereupon we are

Now present here together; that's to say

I meant to rectify my conscience, which

I then did feel full sick, and yet not well,

By all the reverend fathers of the land

And doctors learn'd. First, I began in private
With you, my Lord of Lincoln; you remember
How under my oppression I did reek,
When I first mov'd you.

LINCOLN.
Very well, my liege.

KING.
I have spoke long; be pleas'd yourself to say
How far you satisfied me.

LINCOLN.
So please your Highness,
The question did at first so stagger me-
Bearing a state of mighty moment in't
And consequence of dread-that I committed
The daring'st counsel which I had to doubt,
And did entreat your Highness to this course
Which you are running here.

KING.

I then mov'd you,

My Lord of Canterbury, and got your leave

To make this present summons. Unsolicited

I left no reverend person in this court,

But by particular consent proceeded

Under your hands and seals; therefore, go on,

For no dislike i' th' world against the person

Of the good Queen, but the sharp thorny points

Of my alleged reasons, drives this forward.

Prove but our marriage lawful, by my life

And kingly dignity, we are contented

To wear our moral state to come with her,

Katharine our queen, before the primest creature

That's paragon'd o' th' world.

CAMPEIUS.

So please your Highness,

The Queen being absent, 'tis a needful fitness

That we adjourn this court till further day;

Meanwhile must be an earnest motion

Made to the Queen to call back her appeal
She intends unto his Holiness.

KING.
[Aside] I may perceive
These cardinals trifle with me. I abhor
This dilatory sloth and tricks of Rome.
My learn'd and well-beloved servant, Cranmer,
Prithee return. With thy approach I know
My comfort comes along. -Break up the court;
I say, set on. Exuent in manner as they entered

ACT III. SCENE 1.

London. The QUEEN'S apartments

Enter the QUEEN and her women, as at work

QUEEN KATHARINE.
Take thy lute, wench. My soul grows

sad with troubles;

Sing and disperse 'em, if thou canst. Leave working.

SONG

Orpheus with his lute made trees,

And the mountain tops that freeze,

Bow themselves when he did sing;

To his music plants and flowers

Ever sprung, as sun and showers

There had made a lasting spring.

Every thing that heard him play,

Even the billows of the sea,

Hung their heads and then lay by.

In sweet music is such art,

Killing care and grief of heart

Fall asleep or hearing die.

Enter a GENTLEMAN

QUEEN KATHARINE.

How now?

GENTLEMAN.

An't please your Grace, the two great Cardinals

Wait in the presence.

QUEEN KATHARINE.

Would they speak with me?

GENTLEMAN.

They will'd me say so, madam.

QUEEN KATHARINE.

Pray their Graces

To come near. *[Exit GENTLEMAN]* What can be their business

With me, a poor weak woman, fall'n from favour?

I do not like their coming. Now I think on't,

They should be good men, their affairs as righteous;

But all hoods make not monks.

Enter the two CARDINALS, WOLSEY and CAMPEIUS

WOLSEY.

Peace to your Highness!

QUEEN KATHARINE.

Your Graces find me here part of housewife;

I would be all, against the worst may happen.

What are your pleasures with me, reverend lords?

WOLSEY.

May it please you, noble madam, to withdraw

Into your private chamber, we shall give you

The full cause of our coming.

QUEEN KATHARINE.

Speak it here;

There's nothing I have done yet, o' my conscience,

Deserves a corner. Would all other women

Could speak this with as free a soul as I do!

My lords, I care not-so much I am happy
Above a number-if my actions
Were tried by ev'ry tongue, ev'ry eye saw 'em,
Envy and base opinion set against 'em,
I know my life so even. If your business
Seek me out, and that way I am wife in,
Out with it boldly; truth loves open dealing.

WOLSEY.
Tanta est erga te mentis integritas, regina
serenis-sima-

QUEEN KATHARINE.
O, good my lord, no Latin!
I am not such a truant since my coming,
As not to know the language I have liv'd in;
A strange tongue makes my cause more strange, suspicious;
Pray speak in English. Here are some will thank you,
If you speak truth, for their poor mistress' sake:
Believe me, she has had much wrong. Lord Cardinal,
The willing'st sin I ever yet committed

May be absolv'd in English.

WOLSEY.

Noble lady,

I am sorry my integrity should breed,

And service to his Majesty and you,

So deep suspicion, where all faith was meant

We come not by the way of accusation

To taint that honour every good tongue blesses,

Nor to betray you any way to sorrow-

You have too much, good lady; but to know

How you stand minded in the weighty difference

Between the King and you, and to deliver,

Like free and honest men, our just opinions

And comforts to your cause.

CAMPEIUS.

Most honour'd madam,

My Lord of York, out of his noble nature,

Zeal and obedience he still bore your Grace,

Forgetting, like a good man, your late censure

Both of his truth and him-which was too far-
Offers, as I do, in a sign of peace,
His service and his counsel.

QUEEN KATHARINE.
[Aside] To betray me.-
My lords, I thank you both for your good wins;
Ye speak like honest men-pray God ye prove so!
But how to make ye suddenly an answer,
In such a point of weight, so near mine honour,
More near my life, I fear, with my weak wit,
And to such men of gravity and learning,
In truth I know not. I was set at work
Among my maids, full little, God knows, looking
Either for such men or such business.
For her sake that I have been-for I feel
The last fit of my greatness-good your Graces,
Let me have time and counsel for my cause.
Alas, I am a woman, friendless, hopeless!

WOLSEY.

Madam, you wrong the King's love with these fears;

Your hopes and friends are infinite.

QUEEN KATHARINE.

In England

But little for my profit; can you think, lords,

That any Englishman dare give me counsel?

Or be a known friend, 'gainst his Highness' pleasure-

Though he be grown so desperate to be honest-

And live a subject? Nay, forsooth, my friends,

They that must weigh out my afflictions,

They that my trust must grow to, live not here;

They are, as all my other comforts, far hence,

In mine own country, lords.

CAMPEIUS.

I would your Grace

Would leave your griefs, and take my counsel.

QUEEN KATHARINE.

How, sir?

CAMPEIUS.

Put your main cause into the King's protection;

He's loving and most gracious. 'Twill be much

Both for your honour better and your cause;

For if the trial of the law o'ertake ye

You'll part away disgrac'd.

WOLSEY.

He tells you rightly.

QUEEN KATHARINE.

Ye tell me what ye wish for both-my ruin.

Is this your Christian counsel? Out upon ye!

Heaven is above all yet: there sits a Judge

That no king can corrupt.

CAMPEIUS.

Your rage mistakes us.

QUEEN KATHARINE.

The more shame for ye; holy men I thought ye,

Upon my soul, two reverend cardinal virtues;

But cardinal sins and hollow hearts I fear ye.

Mend 'em, for shame, my lords. Is this your comfort?

The cordial that ye bring a wretched lady-

A woman lost among ye, laugh'd at, scorn'd?

I will not wish ye half my miseries:

I have more charity; but say I warned ye.

Take heed, for heaven's sake take heed, lest at once

The burden of my sorrows fall upon ye.

WOLSEY.

Madam, this is a mere distraction;

You turn the good we offer into envy.

QUEEN KATHARINE.

Ye turn me into nothing. Woe upon ye,

And all such false professors! Would you have me-

If you have any justice, any pity,

If ye be any thing but churchmen's habits-

Put my sick cause into his hands that hates me?

Alas! has banish'd me his bed already,

His love too long ago! I am old, my lords,

And all the fellowship I hold now with him

Is only my obedience. What can happen

To me above this wretchedness? All your studies

Make me a curse like this.

CAMPEIUS.

Your fears are worse.

QUEEN KATHARINE.

Have I liv'd thus long-let me speak myself,

Since virtue finds no friends-a wife, a true one?

A woman, I dare say without vain-glory,

Never yet branded with suspicion?

Have I with all my full affections

Still met the King, lov'd him next heav'n, obey'd him,

Been, out of fondness, superstitious to him,
Almost forgot my prayers to content him,
And am I thus rewarded? 'Tis not well, lords.
Bring me a constant woman to her husband,
One that ne'er dream'd a joy beyond his pleasure,
And to that woman, when she has done most,
Yet will I add an honoura great patience.

WOLSEY.
Madam, you wander from the good we aim at.

QUEEN KATHARINE.
My lord, I dare not make myself so guilty,
To give up willingly that noble title
Your master wed me to: nothing but death
Shall e'er divorce my dignities.

WOLSEY.

Pray hear me.

QUEEN KATHARINE.

Would I had never trod this English earth,

Or felt the flatteries that grow upon it!

Ye have angels' faces, but heaven knows your hearts.

What will become of me now, wretched lady?

I am the most unhappy woman living.

[To her WOMEN] Alas, poor wenches, where are now your fortunes?

Shipwreck'd upon a kingdom, where no pity,

No friends, no hope; no kindred weep for me;

Almost no grave allow'd me. Like the My,

That once was mistress of the field, and flourish'd,

I'll hang my head and perish.

WOLSEY.

If your Grace

Could but be brought to know our ends are honest,

You'd feel more comfort. Why should we, good lady,

Upon what cause, wrong you? Alas, our places,

The way of our profession is against it;

We are to cure such sorrows, not to sow 'em.

For goodness' sake, consider what you do;

How you may hurt yourself, ay, utterly

Grow from the King's acquaintance, by this carriage.

The hearts of princes kiss obedience,

So much they love it; but to stubborn spirits

They swell and grow as terrible as storms.

I know you have a gentle, noble temper,

A soul as even as a calm. Pray think us

Those we profess, peace-makers, friends, and servants.

CAMPEIUS.

Madam, you'll find it so. You wrong your virtues

With these weak women's fears. A noble spirit,

As yours was put into you, ever casts

Such doubts as false coin from it. The King loves you;

Beware you lose it not. For us, if you please

To trust us in your business, we are ready

To use our utmost studies in your service.

QUEEN KATHARINE.

Do what ye will my lords; and pray forgive me

If I have us'd myself unmannerly;

You know I am a woman, lacking wit

To make a seemly answer to such persons.

Pray do my service to his Majesty;

He has my heart yet, and shall have my prayers

While I shall have my life. Come, reverend fathers,

Bestow your counsels on me; she now begs

That little thought, when she set footing here,

She should have bought her dignities so dear.

Exeunt

ACT III.SCENE 2.

London. The palace

Enter the DUKE OF NORFOLK, the DUKE OF SUFFOLK, the EARL OF SURREY, and the LORD CHAMBERLAIN

NORFOLK.

If you will now unite in your complaints

And force them with a constancy, the Cardinal

Cannot stand under them: if you omit

The offer of this time, I cannot promise

But that you shall sustain moe new disgraces

With these you bear already.

SURREY.

I am joyful

To meet the least occasion that may give me

Remembrance of my father-in-law, the Duke,

To be reveng'd on him.

SUFFOLK.

Which of the peers

Have uncontemn'd gone by him, or at least

Strangely neglected? When did he regard

The stamp of nobleness in any person

Out of himself?

CHAMBERLAIN.

My lords, you speak your pleasures.

What he deserves of you and me I know;
What we can do to him-though now the time
Gives way to us-I much fear. If you cannot
Bar his access to th' King, never attempt
Anything on him; for he hath a witchcraft
Over the King in's tongue.

NORFOLK.
O, fear him not!
His spell in that is out; the King hath found
Matter against him that for ever mars
The honey of his language. No, he's settled,
Not to come off, in his displeasure.

SURREY.
Sir,
I should be glad to hear such news as this
Once every hour.

NORFOLK.
Believe it, this is true:

In the divorce his contrary proceedings
Are all unfolded; wherein he appears
As I would wish mine enemy.

SURREY.

How came
His practices to light?

SUFFOLK.

Most Strangely.

SURREY.

O, how, how?

SUFFOLK.

The Cardinal's letters to the Pope miscarried,
And came to th' eye o' th' King; wherein was read
How that the Cardinal did entreat his Holiness
To stay the judgment o' th' divorce; for if
It did take place, 'I do' quoth he 'perceive

My king is tangled in affection to
A creature of the Queen's, Lady Anne Bullen.'

SURREY.

Has the King this?

SUFFOLK.
Believe it.

SURREY.

Will this work?

CHAMBERLAIN.
The King in this perceives him how he coasts
And hedges his own way. But in this point
All his tricks founder, and he brings his physic
After his patient's death: the King already
Hath married the fair lady.

SURREY.

Would he had!

SUFFOLK.

May you be happy in your wish, my lord!

For, I profess, you have it.

SURREY.

Now, all my joy

Trace the conjunction!

SUFFOLK.

My amen to't!

NORFOLK.

An men's!

SUFFOLK.

There's order given for her coronation;

Marry, this is yet but young, and may be left

To some ears unrecounted. But, my lords,

She is a gallant creature, and complete

In mind and feature. I persuade me from her

Will fall some blessing to this land, which shall

In it be memoriz'd.

SURREY.

But will the King

Digest this letter of the Cardinal's?

The Lord forbid!

NORFOLK.

Marry, amen!

SUFFOLK.

No, no;

There be moe wasps that buzz about his nose

Will make this sting the sooner. Cardinal Campeius

Is stol'n away to Rome; hath ta'en no leave;
Has left the cause o' th' King unhandled, and
Is posted, as the agent of our Cardinal,
To second all his plot. I do assure you
The King cried 'Ha!' at this.

CHAMBERLAIN.
Now, God incense him,
And let him cry 'Ha!' louder!

NORFOLK.
But, my lord,
When returns Cranmer?

SUFFOLK.
He is return'd in his opinions; which
Have satisfied the King for his divorce,
Together with all famous colleges
Almost in Christendom. Shortly, I believe,
His second marriage shall be publish'd, and
Her coronation. Katharine no more

Shall be call'd queen, but princess dowager

And widow to Prince Arthur.

NORFOLK.

This same Cranmer's

A worthy fellow, and hath ta'en much pain

In the King's business.

SUFFOLK.

He has; and we shall see him

For it an archbishop.

NORFOLK.

So I hear.

SUFFOLK.

'Tis so.

Enter WOLSEY and CROMWELL

The Cardinal!

NORFOLK.

Observe, observe, he's moody.

WOLSEY.

The packet, Cromwell,

Gave't you the King?

CROMWELL.

To his own hand, in's bedchamber.

WOLSEY.

Look'd he o' th' inside of the paper?

CROMWELL.

Presently

He did unseal them; and the first he view'd,

He did it with a serious mind; a heed

Was in his countenance. You he bade

Attend him here this morning.

WOLSEY.

Is he ready

To come abroad?

CROMWELL.

I think by this he is.

WOLSEY.

Leave me awhile. *Exit*

CROMWELL

[Aside] It shall be to the Duchess of Alencon,

The French King's sister; he shall marry her.

Anne Bullen! No, I'll no Anne Bullens for him;

There's more in't than fair visage. Bullen!

No, we'll no Bullens. Speedily I wish

To hear from Rome. The Marchioness of Pembroke!

NORFOLK.

He's discontented.

SUFFOLK.

May be he hears the King

Does whet his anger to him.

SURREY.

Sharp enough,

Lord, for thy justice!

WOLSEY.

[Aside] The late Queen's gentlewoman, a knight's daughter,

To be her mistress' mistress! The Queen's queen!

This candle burns not clear. 'Tis I must snuff it;

Then out it goes. What though I know her virtuous

And well deserving? Yet I know her for

A spleeny Lutheran; and not wholesome to

Our cause that she should lie i' th' bosom of

Our hard-rul'd King. Again, there is sprung up
An heretic, an arch one, Cranmer; one
Hath crawl'd into the favour of the King,
And is his oracle.

NORFOLK.
He is vex'd at something.

Enter the KING, reading of a schedule, and LOVELL

SURREY.
I would 'twere something that would fret the string,
The master-cord on's heart!

SUFFOLK.
The King, the King!

KING.
What piles of wealth hath he accumulated
To his own portion! And what expense by th' hour
Seems to flow from him! How, i' th' name of thrift,

Does he rake this together?-Now, my lords,

Saw you the Cardinal?

NORFOLK.

My lord, we have

Stood here observing him. Some strange commotion

Is in his brain: he bites his lip and starts,

Stops on a sudden, looks upon the ground,

Then lays his finger on his temple; straight

Springs out into fast gait; then stops again,

Strikes his breast hard; and anon he casts

His eye against the moon. In most strange postures

We have seen him set himself.

KING.

It may well be

There is a mutiny in's mind. This morning

Papers of state he sent me to peruse,

As I requir'd; and wot you what I found

There-on my conscience, put unwittingly?

Forsooth, an inventory, thus importing

The several parcels of his plate, his treasure,

Rich stuffs, and ornaments of household; which

I find at such proud rate that it outspeaks

Possession of a subject.

NORFOLK.

It's heaven's will;

Some spirit put this paper in the packet

To bless your eye withal.

KING.

If we did think

His contemplation were above the earth

And fix'd on spiritual object, he should still

dwell in his musings; but I am afraid

His thinkings are below the moon, not worth

His serious considering.

[The KING takes his seat and whispers

LOVELL,

who goes to the

CARDINAL]

WOLSEY.

Heaven forgive me!

Ever God bless your Highness!

KING.

Good, my lord,

You are full of heavenly stuff, and bear the inventory

Of your best graces in your mind; the which

You were now running o'er. You have scarce time

To steal from spiritual leisure a brief span

To keep your earthly audit; sure, in that

I deem you an ill husband, and am glad

To have you therein my companion.

WOLSEY.

Sir,

For holy offices I have a time; a time

To think upon the part of business which

I bear i' th' state; and nature does require

Her times of preservation, which perforce
I, her frail son, amongst my brethren mortal,
Must give my tendance to.

KING.

You have said well.

WOLSEY.
And ever may your Highness yoke together,
As I will lend you cause, my doing well
With my well saying!

KING.
'Tis well said again;
And 'tis a kind of good deed to say well;
And yet words are no deeds. My father lov'd you:
He said he did; and with his deed did crown
His word upon you. Since I had my office
I have kept you next my heart; have not alone
Employ'd you where high profits might come home,

But par'd my present havings to bestow

My bounties upon you.

WOLSEY.

[Aside] What should this mean?

SURREY.

[Aside] The Lord increase this business!

KING.

Have I not made you

The prime man of the state? I pray you tell me

If what I now pronounce you have found true;

And, if you may confess it, say withal

If you are bound to us or no. What say you?

WOLSEY.

My sovereign, I confess your royal graces,

Show'r'd on me daily, have been more than could

My studied purposes requite; which went

Beyond all man's endeavours. My endeavours,

Have ever come too short of my desires,
Yet fil'd with my abilities; mine own ends
Have been mine so that evermore they pointed
To th' good of your most sacred person and
The profit of the state. For your great graces
Heap'd upon me, poor undeserver, I
Can nothing render but allegiant thanks;
My pray'rs to heaven for you; my loyalty,
Which ever has and ever shall be growing,
Till death, that winter, kill it.

KING.

Fairly answer'd!
A loyal and obedient subject is
Therein illustrated; the honour of it
Does pay the act of it, as, i' th' contrary,
The foulness is the punishment. I presume
That, as my hand has open'd bounty to you,
My heart dropp'd love, my pow'r rain'd honour, more
On you than any, so your hand and heart,

Your brain, and every function of your power,
Should, notwithstanding that your bond of duty,
As 'twere in love's particular, be more
To me, your friend, than any.

WOLSEY.
I do profess
That for your Highness' good I ever labour'd
More than mine own; that am, have, and will be-
Though all the world should crack their duty to you,
And throw it from their soul; though perils did
Abound as thick as thought could make 'em, and
Appear in forms more horrid-yet my duty,
As doth a rock against the chiding flood,
Should the approach of this wild river break,
And stand unshaken yours.

KING.

'Tis nobly spoken.
Take notice, lords, he has a loyal breast,

For you have seen him open 't. Read o'er this;

[Giving him
papers]
And after, this; and then to breakfast with
What appetite you have.

Exit the KING, frowning upon the CARDINAL; the

NOBLES

throng after him, smiling and whispering
WOLSEY.
What should this mean?

What sudden anger's this? How have I reap'd it?
He parted frowning from me, as if ruin
Leap'd from his eyes; so looks the chafed lion
Upon the daring huntsman that has gall'd him-
Then makes him nothing. I must read this paper;
I fear, the story of his anger. 'Tis so;

This paper has undone me. 'Tis th' account

Of all that world of wealth I have drawn together

For mine own ends; indeed to gain the popedom,

And fee my friends in Rome. O negligence,

Fit for a fool to fall by! What cross devil

Made me put this main secret in the packet

I sent the King? Is there no way to cure this?

No new device to beat this from his brains?

I know 'twill stir him strongly; yet I know

A way, if it take right, in spite of fortune,

Will bring me off again. What's this? 'To th' Pope.'

The letter, as I live, with all the business

I writ to's Holiness. Nay then, farewell!

I have touch'd the highest point of all my greatness,

And from that full meridian of my glory

I haste now to my setting. I shall fall

Like a bright exhalation in the evening,

And no man see me more.

Re-enter to WOLSEY the DUKES OF NORFOLK and

SUFFOLK, the EARL OF SURREY, and the LORD

CHAMBERLAIN

NORFOLK.

Hear the King's pleasure, Cardinal, who commands you

To render up the great seal presently

Into our hands, and to confine yourself

To Asher House, my Lord of Winchester's,

Till you hear further from his Highness.

WOLSEY.

Stay:

Where's your commission, lords? Words cannot carry

Authority so weighty.

SUFFOLK.

Who dares cross 'em,

Bearing the King's will from his mouth expressly?

WOLSEY.

Till I find more than will or words to do it-

I mean your malice-know, officious lords,

I dare and must deny it. Now I feel

Of what coarse metal ye are moulded-envy;

How eagerly ye follow my disgraces,

As if it fed ye; and how sleek and wanton

Ye appear in every thing may bring my ruin!

Follow your envious courses, men of malice;

You have Christian warrant for 'em, and no doubt

In time will find their fit rewards. That seal

You ask with such a violence, the King-

Mine and your master-with his own hand gave me;

Bade me enjoy it, with the place and honours,

During my life; and, to confirm his goodness,

Tied it by letters-patents. Now, who'll take it?

SURREY.

The King, that gave it.

WOLSEY.

It must be himself then.

SURREY.

Thou art a proud traitor, priest.

WOLSEY.

Proud lord, thou liest.
Within these forty hours Surrey durst better
Have burnt that tongue than said so.

SURREY.
Thy ambition,
Thou scarlet sin, robb'd this bewailing land
Of noble Buckingham, my father-in-law.
The heads of all thy brother cardinals,
With thee and all thy best parts bound together,
Weigh'd not a hair of his. Plague of your policy!
You sent me deputy for Ireland;
Far from his succour, from the King, from all
That might have mercy on the fault thou gav'st him;
Whilst your great goodness, out of holy pity,
Absolv'd him with an axe.

WOLSEY.

This, and all else

This talking lord can lay upon my credit,

I answer is most false. The Duke by law

Found his deserts; how innocent I was

From any private malice in his end,

His noble jury and foul cause can witness.

If I lov'd many words, lord, I should tell you

You have as little honesty as honour,

That in the way of loyalty and truth

Toward the King, my ever royal master,

Dare mate a sounder man than Surrey can be

And an that love his follies.

SURREY.

By my soul,

Your long coat, priest, protects you; thou shouldst feel

My sword i' the life-blood of thee else. My lords

Can ye endure to hear this arrogance?

And from this fellow? If we live thus tamely,

To be thus jaded by a piece of scarlet,

Farewell nobility! Let his Grace go forward

And dare us with his cap like larks.

WOLSEY.

All goodness

Is poison to thy stomach.

SURREY.

Yes, that goodness

Of gleaning all the land's wealth into one,

Into your own hands, Cardinal, by extortion;

The goodness of your intercepted packets

You writ to th' Pope against the King; your goodness,

Since you provoke me, shall be most notorious.

My Lord of Norfolk, as you are truly noble,

As you respect the common good, the state

Of our despis'd nobility, our issues,

Whom, if he live, will scarce be gentlemen-

Produce the grand sum of his sins, the articles

Collected from his life. I'll startle you

Worse than the sacring bell, when the brown wench

Lay kissing in your arms, Lord Cardinal.

WOLSEY.

How much, methinks, I could despise this man,

But that I am bound in charity against it!

NORFOLK.

Those articles, my lord, are in the King's hand;

But, thus much, they are foul ones.

WOLSEY.

So much fairer

And spotless shall mine innocence arise,

When the King knows my truth.

SURREY.

This cannot save you.

I thank my memory I yet remember

Some of these articles; and out they shall.

Now, if you can blush and cry guilty, Cardinal,

You'll show a little honesty.

WOLSEY.

Speak on, sir;

I dare your worst objections. If I blush,

It is to see a nobleman want manners.

SURREY.

I had rather want those than my head. Have at you!

First, that without the King's assent or knowledge

You wrought to be a legate; by which power

You maim'd the jurisdiction of all bishops.

NORFOLK.

Then, that in all you writ to Rome, or else

To foreign princes, 'Ego et Rex meus'

Was still inscrib'd; in which you brought the King

To be your servant.

SUFFOLK.

Then, that without the knowledge

Either of King or Council, when you went

Ambassador to the Emperor, you made bold
To carry into Flanders the great seal.

SURREY.
Item, you sent a large commission
To Gregory de Cassado, to conclude,
Without the King's will or the state's allowance,
A league between his Highness and Ferrara.

SUFFOLK.
That out of mere ambition you have caus'd
Your holy hat to be stamp'd on the King's coin.

SURREY.
Then, that you have sent innumerable substance,
By what means got I leave to your own conscience,
To furnish Rome and to prepare the ways
You have for dignities, to the mere undoing
Of all the kingdom. Many more there are,
Which, since they are of you, and odious,
I will not taint my mouth with.

CHAMBERLAIN.

O my lord,

Press not a falling man too far! 'Tis virtue.

His faults lie open to the laws; let them,

Not you, correct him. My heart weeps to see him

So little of his great self.

SURREY.

I forgive him.

SUFFOLK.

Lord Cardinal, the King's further pleasure is-

Because all those things you have done of late,

By your power legatine within this kingdom,

Fall into th' compass of a praemunire-

That therefore such a writ be sued against you:

To forfeit all your goods, lands, tenements,

Chattels, and whatsoever, and to be

Out of the King's protection. This is my charge.

NORFOLK.

And so we'll leave you to your meditations
How to live better. For your stubborn answer
About the giving back the great seal to us,
The King shall know it, and, no doubt, shall thank you.

So fare you well, my little good Lord Cardinal.

Exeunt all but

WOLSEY

WOLSEY.

So farewell to the little good you bear me.
Farewell, a long farewell, to all my greatness!
This is the state of man: to-day he puts forth
The tender leaves of hopes; to-morrow blossoms
And bears his blushing honours thick upon him;
The third day comes a frost, a killing frost,
And when he thinks, good easy man, full surely
His greatness is a-ripening, nips his root,
And then he falls, as I do. I have ventur'd,

Like little wanton boys that swim on bladders,

This many summers in a sea of glory;

But far beyond my depth. My high-blown pride

At length broke under me, and now has left me,

Weary and old with service, to the mercy

Of a rude stream, that must for ever hide me.

Vain pomp and glory of this world, I hate ye;

I feel my heart new open'd. O, how wretched

Is that poor man that hangs on princes' favours!

There is betwixt that smile we would aspire to,

That sweet aspect of princes, and their ruin

More pangs and fears than wars or women have;

And when he falls, he falls like Lucifer,

Never to hope again.

Enter CROMWELL, standing amazed

Why, how now, Cromwell!

CROMWELL.

I have no power to speak, sir.

WOLSEY.

What, amaz'd

At my misfortunes? Can thy spirit wonder

A great man should decline? Nay, an you weep,

I am fall'n indeed.

CROMWELL.

How does your Grace?

WOLSEY.

Why, well;

Never so truly happy, my good Cromwell.

I know myself now, and I feel within me

A peace above all earthly dignities,

A still and quiet conscience. The King has cur'd me,

I humbly thank his Grace; and from these shoulders,

These ruin'd pillars, out of pity, taken

A load would sink a navy-too much honour.

O, 'tis a burden, Cromwell, 'tis a burden

Too heavy for a man that hopes for heaven!

CROMWELL.

I am glad your Grace has made that right use of it.

WOLSEY.

I hope I have. I am able now, methinks,

Out of a fortitude of soul I feel,

To endure more miseries and greater far

Than my weak-hearted enemies dare offer.

What news abroad?

CROMWELL.

The heaviest and the worst

Is your displeasure with the King.

WOLSEY.

God bless him!

CROMWELL.

The next is that Sir Thomas More is chosen

Lord Chancellor in your place.

WOLSEY.

That's somewhat sudden.

But he's a learned man. May he continue

Long in his Highness' favour, and do justice

For truth's sake and his conscience; that his bones

When he has run his course and sleeps in blessings,

May have a tomb of orphans' tears wept on him!

What more?

CROMWELL.

That Cranmer is return'd with welcome,

Install'd Lord Archbishop of Canterbury.

WOLSEY.

That's news indeed.

CROMWELL.

Last, that the Lady Anne,

Whom the King hath in secrecy long married,

This day was view'd in open as his queen,

Going to chapel; and the voice is now

Only about her coronation.

WOLSEY.

There was the weight that pull'd me down.

O Cromwell,

The King has gone beyond me. All my glories

In that one woman I have lost for ever.

No sun shall ever usher forth mine honours,

Or gild again the noble troops that waited

Upon my smiles. Go get thee from me, Cromwell;

I am a poor fall'n man, unworthy now

To be thy lord and master. Seek the King;

That sun, I pray, may never set! I have told him

What and how true thou art. He will advance thee;

Some little memory of me will stir him-

I know his noble nature-not to let

Thy hopeful service perish too. Good Cromwell,
Neglect him not; make use now, and provide
For thine own future safety.

CROMWELL.
O my lord,
Must I then leave you? Must I needs forgo
So good, so noble, and so true a master?
Bear witness, all that have not hearts of iron,
With what a sorrow Cromwell leaves his lord.
The King shall have my service; but my prayers
For ever and for ever shall be yours.

WOLSEY.
Cromwell, I did not think to shed a tear
In all my miseries; but thou hast forc'd me,
Out of thy honest truth, to play the woman.
Let's dry our eyes; and thus far hear me, Cromwell,
And when I am forgotten, as I shall be,
And sleep in dull cold marble, where no mention
Of me more must be heard of, say I taught thee-

Say Wolsey, that once trod the ways of glory,
And sounded all the depths and shoals of honour,
Found thee a way, out of his wreck, to rise in-
A sure and safe one, though thy master miss'd it.
Mark but my fall and that that ruin'd me.

Cromwell, I charge thee, fling away ambition:
By that sin fell the angels. How can man then,
The image of his Maker, hope to win by it?
Love thyself last; cherish those hearts that hate thee;
Corruption wins not more than honesty.
Still in thy right hand carry gentle peace
To silence envious tongues. Be just, and fear not;
Let all the ends thou aim'st at be thy country's,
Thy God's, and truth's; then, if thou fall'st, O Cromwell,
Thou fall'st a blessed martyr!

Serve the King, and-prithee lead me in.
There take an inventory of all I have
To the last penny; 'tis the King's. My robe,
And my integrity to heaven, is all

I dare now call mine own. O Cromwell, Cromwell!
Had I but serv'd my God with half the zeal
I serv'd my King, he would not in mine age
Have left me naked to mine enemies.

CROMWELL.

Good sir, have patience.

WOLSEY.

So I have. Farewell
The hopes of court! My hopes in heaven do dwell.
Exeunt

ACT IV. SCENE 1.

A street in Westminster

Enter two GENTLEMEN, meeting one another

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

Y'are well met once again.

SECOND GENTLEMAN.

So are you.

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

You come to take your stand here, and behold
The Lady Anne pass from her coronation?

SECOND GENTLEMAN.

'Tis all my business. At our last encounter
The Duke of Buckingham came from his trial.

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

'Tis very true. But that time offer'd sorrow;
This, general joy.

SECOND GENTLEMAN.

'Tis well. The citizens,

I am sure, have shown at full their royal minds-

As, let 'em have their rights, they are ever forward-

In celebration of this day with shows,

Pageants, and sights of honour.

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

Never greater,

Nor, I'll assure you, better taken, sir.

SECOND GENTLEMAN.

May I be bold to ask what that contains,

That paper in your hand?

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

Yes; 'tis the list

Of those that claim their offices this day,

By custom of the coronation.

The Duke of Suffolk is the first, and claims

To be High Steward; next, the Duke of Norfolk,

He to be Earl Marshal. You may read the rest.

SECOND GENTLEMAN.

I thank you, sir; had I not known those customs,
I should have been beholding to your paper.
But, I beseech you, what's become of Katharine,
The Princess Dowager? How goes her business?

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

That I can tell you too. The Archbishop
Of Canterbury, accompanied with other
Learned and reverend fathers of his order,
Held a late court at Dunstable, six miles of
From Ampthill, where the Princess lay; to which
She was often cited by them, but appear'd not.
And, to be short, for not appearance and
The King's late scruple, by the main assent
Of all these learned men, she was divorc'd,
And the late marriage made of none effect;
Since which she was removed to Kimbolton,
Where she remains now sick.

SECOND GENTLEMAN.

Alas, good lady!

[Trumpets]

The trumpets sound. Stand close, the Queen is coming.

[Hautboys]

THE ORDER OF THE CORONATION.

1. A lively flourish of trumpets.

2. Then two JUDGES.
3. LORD CHANCELLOR, with purse and mace before him.

4. CHORISTERS singing.

[Music]

5. MAYOR OF LONDON, bearing the mace. Then GARTER, in his coat of arms, and on his head he wore a gilt copper crown.
6. MARQUIS DORSET, bearing a sceptre of gold, on his head a

demi-coronal of gold. With him, the EARL OF SURREY,

bearing the rod of silver with the dove, crowned with an

earl's coronet. Collars of Esses.

7. DUKE OF SUFFOLK, in his robe of estate, his coronet on

his head, bearing a long white wand, as High Steward.

With him, the DUKE OF NORFOLK, with the rod of

marshalship, a coronet on his head. Collars of Esses.

8. A canopy borne by four of the CINQUE-PORTS; under it

the QUEEN in her robe; in her hair richly adorned with

pearl, crowned. On each side her, the BISHOPS OF LONDON

and WINCHESTER.

9. The old DUCHESS OF NORFOLK, in a coronal of gold

wrought with flowers, bearing the QUEEN'S train.

10. Certain LADIES or COUNTESSES, with plain circlets of gold without flowers.

Exeunt , first passing over the stage in order and state,

and then a great flourish of trumpets

SECOND GENTLEMAN.

A royal train, believe me. These know.

Who's that that bears the sceptre?

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

Marquis Dorset;

And that the Earl of Surrey, with the rod.

SECOND GENTLEMAN.

A bold brave gentleman. That should be

The Duke of Suffolk?

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

'Tis the same-High Steward.

SECOND GENTLEMAN.

And that my Lord of Norfolk?

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

Yes.

SECOND GENTLEMAN.

[Looking on the QUEEN] Heaven bless thee!

Thou hast the sweetest face I ever look'd on.

Sir, as I have a soul, she is an angel;

Our king has all the Indies in his arms,

And more and richer, when he strains that lady;

I cannot blame his conscience.

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

They that bear

The cloth of honour over her are four barons

Of the Cinque-ports.

SECOND GENTLEMAN.

Those men are happy; and so are all are near her.

I take it she that carries up the train

Is that old noble lady, Duchess of Norfolk.

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

It is; and all the rest are countesses.

SECOND GENTLEMAN.

Their coronets say so. These are stars indeed,
And sometimes falling ones.

FIRST GENTLEMAN.
No more of that.

Exit Procession, with a great flourish of trumpets

Enter a third GENTLEMAN
God save you, sir! Where have you been broiling?

THIRD GENTLEMAN.
Among the crowds i' th' Abbey, where a finger
Could not be wedg'd in more; I am stifled
With the mere rankness of their joy.

SECOND GENTLEMAN.
You saw
The ceremony?

THIRD GENTLEMAN.

That I did.

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

How was it?

THIRD GENTLEMAN.

Well worth the seeing.

SECOND GENTLEMAN.

Good sir, speak it to us.

THIRD GENTLEMAN.

As well as I am able. The rich stream
Of lords and ladies, having brought the Queen
To a prepar'd place in the choir, fell of
A distance from her, while her Grace sat down
To rest awhile, some half an hour or so,
In a rich chair of state, opposing freely
The beauty of her person to the people.

Believe me, sir, she is the goodliest woman
That ever lay by man; which when the people
Had the full view of, such a noise arose
As the shrouds make at sea in a stiff tempest,
As loud, and to as many tunes; hats, cloaks-
Doublets, I think-flew up, and had their faces
Been loose, this day they had been lost. Such joy
I never saw before. Great-bellied women,
That had not half a week to go, like rams
In the old time of war, would shake the press,
And make 'em reel before 'em. No man living
Could say 'This is my wife' there, all were woven
So strangely in one piece.

SECOND GENTLEMAN.

But what follow'd?

THIRD GENTLEMAN.

At length her Grace rose, and with modest paces
Came to the altar, where she kneel'd, and saintlike
Cast her fair eyes to heaven, and pray'd devoutly.

Then rose again, and bow'd her to the people;
When by the Archbishop of Canterbury
She had all the royal makings of a queen:
As holy oil, Edward Confessor's crown,
The rod, and bird of peace, and all such emblems
Laid nobly on her; which perform'd, the choir,
With all the choicest music of the kingdom,
Together sung 'Te Deum.' So she parted,
And with the same full state pac'd back again
To York Place, where the feast is held.

FIRST GENTLEMAN.
Sir,
You must no more call it York Place: that's past:
For since the Cardinal fell that title's lost.

'Tis now the King's, and called Whitehall.

THIRD GENTLEMAN.
I know it;
But 'tis so lately alter'd that the old name

Is fresh about me.

SECOND GENTLEMAN.

What two reverend bishops
Were those that went on each side of the Queen?

THIRD GENTLEMAN.

Stokesly and Gardiner: the one of Winchester,
Newly preferr'd from the King's secretary;
The other, London.

SECOND GENTLEMAN.

He of Winchester
Is held no great good lover of the Archbishop's,
The virtuous Cranmer.

THIRD GENTLEMAN.

All the land knows that;
However, yet there is no great breach. When it comes,
Cranmer will find a friend will not shrink from him.

SECOND GENTLEMAN.

Who may that be, I pray you?

THIRD GENTLEMAN.

Thomas Cromwell,

A man in much esteem with th' King, and truly

A worthy friend. The King has made him Master

O' th' jewel House,

And one, already, of the Privy Council.

SECOND GENTLEMAN.

He will deserve more.

THIRD GENTLEMAN.

Yes, without all doubt.

Come, gentlemen, ye shall go my way, which

Is to th' court, and there ye shall be my guests:

Something I can command. As I walk thither,

I'll tell ye more.

BOTH.

You may command us, sir.

Exeunt

ACT IV. SCENE 2.

Kimbolton

Enter KATHARINE, Dowager, sick; led between GRIFFITH, her Gentleman Usher, and PATIENCE, her woman

GRIFFITH.

How does your Grace?

KATHARINE.

O Griffith, sick to death!

My legs like loaden branches bow to th' earth,

Willing to leave their burden. Reach a chair.

So-now, methinks, I feel a little ease.

Didst thou not tell me, Griffith, as thou led'st me,

That the great child of honour, Cardinal Wolsey,

Was dead?

GRIFFITH.

Yes, madam; but I think your Grace,

Out of the pain you suffer'd, gave no ear to't.

KATHARINE.

Prithee, good Griffith, tell me how he died.

If well, he stepp'd before me, happily,

For my example.

GRIFFITH.

Well, the voice goes, madam;

For after the stout Earl Northumberland

Arrested him at York and brought him forward,

As a man sorely tainted, to his answer,

He fell sick suddenly, and grew so ill

He could not sit his mule.

KATHARINE.

Alas, poor man!

GRIFFITH.

At last, with easy roads, he came to Leicester,

Lodg'd in the abbey; where the reverend abbot,

With all his covent, honourably receiv'd him;

To whom he gave these words: 'O father Abbot,

An old man, broken with the storms of state,

Is come to lay his weary bones among ye;

Give him a little earth for charity!'

So went to bed; where eagerly his sickness

Pursu'd him still And three nights after this,

About the hour of eight-which he himself

Foretold should be his last-full of repentance,

Continual meditations, tears, and sorrows,

He gave his honours to the world again,

His blessed part to heaven, and slept in peace.

KATHARINE.

So may he rest; his faults lie gently on him!

Yet thus far, Griffith, give me leave to speak him,

And yet with charity. He was a man
Of an unbounded stomach, ever ranking
Himself with princes; one that, by suggestion,
Tied all the kingdom. Simony was fair play;
His own opinion was his law. I' th' presence
He would say untruths, and be ever double
Both in his words and meaning. He was never,
But where he meant to ruin, pitiful.
His promises were, as he then was, mighty;
But his performance, as he is now, nothing.
Of his own body he was ill, and gave
The clergy ill example.

GRIFFITH.
Noble madam,
Men's evil manners live in brass: their virtues
We write in water. May it please your Highness
To hear me speak his good now?

KATHARINE.
Yes, good Griffith;

I were malicious else.

GRIFFITH.

This Cardinal,

Though from an humble stock, undoubtedly

Was fashion'd to much honour from his cradle.

He was a scholar, and a ripe and good one;

Exceeding wise, fair-spoken, and persuading;

Lofty and sour to them that lov'd him not,

But to those men that sought him sweet as summer.

And though he were unsatisfied in getting-

Which was a sin-yet in bestowing, madam,

He was most princely: ever witness for him

Those twins of learning that he rais'd in you,

Ipswich and Oxford! One of which fell with him,

Unwilling to outlive the good that did it;

The other, though unfinish'd, yet so famous,

So excellent in art, and still so rising,

That Christendom shall ever speak his virtue.

His overthrow heap'd happiness upon him;

For then, and not till then, he felt himself, And found the blessedness of being little.

And, to add greater honours to his age

Than man could give him, he died fearing God.

KATHARINE.

After my death I wish no other herald,

No other speaker of my living actions,

To keep mine honour from corruption,

But such an honest chronicler as Griffith.

Whom I most hated living, thou hast made me,

With thy religious truth and modesty,

Now in his ashes honour. Peace be with him!

patience, be near me still, and set me lower:

I have not long to trouble thee. Good Griffith,

Cause the musicians play me that sad note

I nam'd my knell, whilst I sit meditating

On that celestial harmony I go to.

[Sad and solemn

music]

GRIFFITH.

She is asleep. Good wench, let's sit down quiet,

For fear we wake her. Softly, gentle Patience.

THE VISION.

Enter , solemnly tripping one after another, six PERSONAGES clad in white robes, wearing on their heads garlands of bays, and golden vizards on their faces; branches of bays or palm in their hands. They first congee unto her, then dance; and, at certain changes, the first two hold a spare garland over her head, at which the other four make reverent curtsies. Then the two that held the garland deliver the same to the other next two, who observe the same order in their changes, and holding the garland over her head; which done, they deliver the same garland to the last two, who likewise observe the same order; at which, as it were by inspiration, she makes in her sleep signs of rejoicing, and holdeth up her hands to heaven. And so in their dancing vanish, carrying the garland with them. The music continues

KATHARINE.

Spirits of peace, where are ye? Are ye all gone?

And leave me here in wretchedness behind ye?

GRIFFITH.

Madam, we are here.

KATHARINE.

It is not you I call for.

Saw ye none enter since I slept?

GRIFFITH.

None, madam.

KATHARINE.

No? Saw you not, even now, a blessed troop

Invite me to a banquet; whose bright faces

Cast thousand beams upon me, like the sun?

They promis'd me eternal happiness,

And brought me garlands, Griffith, which I feel

I am not worthy yet to wear. I shall, assuredly.

GRIFFITH.

I am most joyful, madam, such good dreams

Possess your fancy.

KATHARINE.

Bid the music leave,

They are harsh and heavy to me. [Music

ceases]

PATIENCE.

Do you note

How much her Grace is alter'd on the sudden?

How long her face is drawn! How pale she looks,

And of an earthly cold! Mark her eyes.

GRIFFITH.

She is going, wench. Pray, pray.

PATIENCE.

Heaven comfort her!

Enter a MESSENGER

MESSENGER.

An't like your Grace-

KATHARINE.

You are a saucy fellow.

Deserve we no more reverence?

GRIFFITH.

You are to blame,

Knowing she will not lose her wonted greatness,

To use so rude behaviour. Go to, kneel.

MESSENGER.

I humbly do entreat your Highness' pardon;

My haste made me unmannerly. There is staying

A gentleman, sent from the King, to see you.

KATHARINE.

Admit him entrance, Griffith; but this fellow

Let me ne'er see again. *Exit*

MESSENGER

Enter LORD CAPUCIUS

If my sight fail not,

You should be Lord Ambassador from the Emperor,

My royal nephew, and your name Capucius.

CAPUCIUS.

Madam, the same-your servant.

KATHARINE.

O, my Lord,

The times and titles now are alter'd strangely

With me since first you knew me. But, I pray you,

What is your pleasure with me?

CAPUCIUS.

Noble lady,

First, mine own service to your Grace; the next,

The King's request that I would visit you,

Who grieves much for your weakness, and by me

Sends you his princely commendations

And heartily entreats you take good comfort.

KATHARINE.

O my good lord, that comfort comes too late,

'Tis like a pardon after execution:

That gentle physic, given in time, had cur'd me;

But now I am past all comforts here, but prayers.

How does his Highness?

CAPUCIUS.

Madam, in good health.

KATHARINE.

So may he ever do! and ever flourish

When I shall dwell with worms, and my poor name

Banish'd the kingdom! Patience, is that letter

I caus'd you write yet sent away?

PATIENCE.

No, madam. [Giving it to

KATHARINE]

KATHARINE.

Sir, I most humbly pray you to deliver
This to my lord the King.

CAPUCIUS.

Most willing, madam.

KATHARINE.

In which I have commended to his goodness
The model of our chaste loves, his young daughter-
The dews of heaven fall thick in blessings on her!-
Beseeching him to give her virtuous breeding-
She is young, and of a noble modest nature;
I hope she will deserve well-and a little
To love her for her mother's sake, that lov'd him,
Heaven knows how dearly. My next poor petition
Is that his noble Grace would have some pity
Upon my wretched women that so long
Have follow'd both my fortunes faithfully;

Of which there is not one, I dare avow-
And now I should not lie-but will deserve,
For virtue and true beauty of the soul,
For honesty and decent carriage,
A right good husband, let him be a noble;
And sure those men are happy that shall have 'em.
The last is for my men-they are the poorest,
But poverty could never draw 'em from me-
That they may have their wages duly paid 'em,
And something over to remember me by.
If heaven had pleas'd to have given me longer life
And able means, we had not parted thus.
These are the whole contents; and, good my lord,
By that you love the dearest in this world,
As you wish Christian peace to souls departed,
Stand these poor people's friend, and urge the King
To do me this last right.

CAPUCIUS.

By heaven, I will,
Or let me lose the fashion of a man!

KATHARINE.

I thank you, honest lord. Remember me

In all humility unto his Highness;

Say his long trouble now is passing

Out of this world. Tell him in death I bless'd him,

For so I will. Mine eyes grow dim. Farewell,

My lord. Griffith, farewell. Nay, Patience,

You must not leave me yet. I must to bed;

Call in more women. When I am dead, good wench,

Let me be us'd with honour; strew me over

With maiden flowers, that all the world may know

I was a chaste wife to my grave. Embalm me,

Then lay me forth; although unqueen'd, yet like

A queen, and daughter to a king, inter me.

I can no more. *Exeunt* , leading

KATHARINE

ACT V. SCENE 1.

London. A gallery in the palace

Enter GARDINER, BISHOP OF WINCHESTER, a PAGE with a torch before him, met by SIR THOMAS LOVELL

GARDINER.

It's one o'clock, boy, is't not?

BOY.

It hath struck.

GARDINER.

These should be hours for necessities,
Not for delights; times to repair our nature
With comforting repose, and not for us
To waste these times. Good hour of night, Sir Thomas!
Whither so late?

LOVELL.

Came you from the King, my lord?

GARDINER.
I did, Sir Thomas, and left him at primero
With the Duke of Suffolk.

LOVELL.
I must to him too,
Before he go to bed. I'll take my leave.

GARDINER.
Not yet, Sir Thomas Lovell. What's the matter?
It seems you are in haste. An if there be
No great offence belongs to't, give your friend
Some touch of your late business. Affairs that walk-
As they say spirits do-at midnight, have
In them a wilder nature than the business
That seeks despatch by day.

LOVELL.
My lord, I love you;

And durst commend a secret to your ear
Much weightier than this work. The Queen's in labour,
They say in great extremity, and fear'd
She'll with the labour end.

GARDINER.
The fruit she goes with
I pray for heartily, that it may find
Good time, and live; but for the stock, Sir Thomas,
I wish it grubb'd up now.

LOVELL.
Methinks I could
Cry thee amen; and yet my conscience says
She's a good creature, and, sweet lady, does
Deserve our better wishes.

GARDINER.
But, sir, sir-
Hear me, Sir Thomas. Y'are a gentleman
Of mine own way; I know you wise, religious;

And, let me tell you, it will ne'er be well-
'Twill not, Sir Thomas Lovell, take't of me-
Till Cranmer, Cromwell, her two hands, and she,
Sleep in their graves.

LOVELL.
Now, sir, you speak of two
The most remark'd i' th' kingdom. As for Cromwell,
Beside that of the Jewel House, is made Master
O' th' Rolls, and the King's secretary; further, sir,
Stands in the gap and trade of moe preferments,
With which the time will load him. Th' Archbishop
Is the King's hand and tongue, and who dare speak
One syllable against him?

GARDINER.
Yes, yes, Sir Thomas,
There are that dare; and I myself have ventur'd
To speak my mind of him; and indeed this day,
Sir-I may tell it you-I think I have
Incens'd the lords o' th' Council, that he is-

For so I know he is, they know he is-

A most arch heretic, a pestilence

That does infect the land; with which they moved

Have broken with the King, who hath so far

Given ear to our complaint-of his great grace

And princely care, foreseeing those fell mischiefs

Our reasons laid before him-hath commanded

Tomorrow morning to the Council board

He be convented. He's a rank weed, Sir Thomas,

And we must root him out. From your affairs

I hinder you too long-good night, Sir Thomas.

LOVELL.

Many good nights, my lord; I rest your servant.

Exeunt GARDINER and

PAGE

Enter the KING and the DUKE OF SUFFOLK

KING.

Charles, I will play no more to-night;

My mind's not on't; you are too hard for me.

SUFFOLK.

Sir, I did never win of you before.

KING.

But little, Charles;

Nor shall not, when my fancy's on my play.

Now, Lovell, from the Queen what is the news?

LOVELL.

I could not personally deliver to her

What you commanded me, but by her woman

I sent your message; who return'd her thanks

In the great'st humbleness, and desir'd your Highness

Most heartily to pray for her.

KING.

What say'st thou, ha?

To pray for her? What, is she crying out?

LOVELL.

So said her woman; and that her suff'rance made

Almost each pang a death.

KING.

Alas, good lady!

SUFFOLK.

God safely quit her of her burden, and

With gentle travail, to the gladding of

Your Highness with an heir!

KING.

'Tis midnight, Charles;

Prithee to bed; and in thy pray'rs remember

Th' estate of my poor queen. Leave me alone, For I must think of that which company

Will not be friendly to.

SUFFOLK.

I wish your Highness

A quiet night, and my good mistress will

Remember in my prayers.

KING.

Charles, good night. *Exit*

SUFFOLK

Enter SIR ANTHONY DENNY

Well, sir, what follows?

DENNY.

Sir, I have brought my lord the Archbishop,

As you commanded me.

KING.

Ha! Canterbury?

DENNY.

Ay, my good lord.

KING.

'Tis true. Where is he, Denny?

DENNY.

He attends your Highness' pleasure.

KING.

Bring him to us. *Exit*

DENNY

LOVELL.

[Aside] This is about that which the bishop spake.

I am happily come hither.

Re-enter DENNY, With CRANMER

KING.

Avoid the gallery. [LOVELL seems to

stay]

Ha! I have said. Be gone.

What! *Exeunt* LOVELL and

DENNY

CRANMER.

[Aside] I am fearful-wherefore frowns he thus?

'Tis his aspect of terror. All's not well.

KING.

How now, my lord? You do desire to know

Wherefore I sent for you.

CRANMER.

[Kneeling] It is my duty

T'attend your Highness' pleasure.

KING.

Pray you, arise,

My good and gracious Lord of Canterbury.

Come, you and I must walk a turn together;

I have news to tell you; come, come, me your hand.

Ah, my good lord, I grieve at what I speak,

And am right sorry to repeat what follows.

I have, and most unwillingly, of late

Heard many grievous-I do say, my lord,

Grievous-complaints of you; which, being consider'd,

Have mov'd us and our Council that you shall

This morning come before us; where I know

You cannot with such freedom purge yourself

But that, till further trial in those charges

Which will require your answer, you must take

Your patience to you and be well contented

To make your house our Tow'r. You a brother of us,

It fits we thus proceed, or else no witness

Would come against you.

CRANMER.

I humbly thank your Highness
And am right glad to catch this good occasion
Most throughly to be winnowed where my chaff
And corn shall fly asunder; for I know
There's none stands under more calumnious tongues
Than I myself, poor man.

KING.

Stand up, good Canterbury;
Thy truth and thy integrity is rooted
In us, thy friend. Give me thy hand, stand up;
Prithee let's walk. Now, by my holidame,
What manner of man are you? My lord, I look'd
You would have given me your petition that
I should have ta'en some pains to bring together
Yourself and your accusers, and to have heard you
Without indurance further.

CRANMER.

Most dread liege,

The good I stand on is my truth and honesty;
If they shall fail, I with mine enemies
Will triumph o'er my person; which I weigh not,
Being of those virtues vacant. I fear nothing
What can be said against me.

KING.

Know you not
How your state stands i' th' world, with the whole world?
Your enemies are many, and not small; their practices
Must bear the same proportion; and not ever
The justice and the truth o' th' question carries
The due o' th' verdict with it; at what ease
Might corrupt minds procure knaves as corrupt
To swear against you? Such things have been done.
You are potently oppos'd, and with a malice
Of as great size. Ween you of better luck,
I mean in perjur'd witness, than your Master,
Whose minister you are, whiles here He liv'd
Upon this naughty earth? Go to, go to;
You take a precipice for no leap of danger,

And woo your own destruction.

CRANMER.

God and your Majesty
Protect mine innocence, or I fall into
The trap is laid for me!

KING.

Be of good cheer;
They shall no more prevail than we give way to.
Keep comfort to you, and this morning see
You do appear before them; if they shall chance,
In charging you with matters, to commit you,
The best persuasions to the contrary
Fail not to use, and with what vehemency
Th' occasion shall instruct you. If entreaties
Will render you no remedy, this ring
Deliver them, and your appeal to us
There make before them. Look, the good man weeps!

He's honest, on mine honour. God's blest Mother!

I swear he is true-hearted, and a soul

None better in my kingdom. Get you gone,

And do as I have bid you.

Exit

CRANMER

He has strangled his language in his tears.

Enter OLD LADY

GENTLEMAN.

[Within] Come back; what mean you?

OLD LADY.

I'll not come back; the tidings that I bring

Will make my boldness manners. Now, good angels

Fly o'er thy royal head, and shade thy person

Under their blessed wings!

KING.

Now, by thy looks

I guess thy message. Is the Queen deliver'd?

Say ay, and of a boy.

OLD LADY.

Ay, ay, my liege;

And of a lovely boy. The God of Heaven

Both now and ever bless her! 'Tis a girl,

Promises boys hereafter. Sir, your queen

Desires your visitation, and to be

Acquainted with this stranger; 'tis as like you

As cherry is to cherry.

KING.

Lovell!

Enter LOVELL

LOVELL.

Sir?

KING.

Give her an hundred marks. I'll to the Queen.

Exit

OLD LADY. An hundred marks? By this light, I'll ha' more!

An ordinary groom is for such payment.

I will have more, or scold it out of him.

Said I for this the girl was like to him! I'll

Have more, or else unsay't; and now, while 'tis hot,

I'll put it to the issue.

Exeunt

ACT V. SCENE 2.

Lobby before the Council Chamber

Enter CRANMER, ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY

CRANMER.

I hope I am not too late; and yet the gentleman
That was sent to me from the Council pray'd me
To make great haste. All fast? What means this? Ho!

Who waits there? Sure you know me?

Enter KEEPER

KEEPER.
Yes, my lord;
But yet I cannot help you.

CRANMER.
Why?

KEEPER.

Your Grace must wait till you be call'd for.

Enter DOCTOR BUTTS

CRANMER.

So.

BUTTS.

[Aside] This is a piece of malice. I am glad

I came this way so happily; the King

Shall understand it presently.

Exit

CRANMER. *[Aside]* 'Tis Butts,

The King's physician; as he pass'd along,

How earnestly he cast his eyes upon me!

Pray heaven he sound not my disgrace! For certain,

This is of purpose laid by some that hate me-

God turn their hearts! I never sought their malice-

To quench mine honour; they would shame to make me

Wait else at door, a fellow councillor,

'Mong boys, grooms, and lackeys. But their pleasures

Must be fulfill'd, and I attend with patience.

Enter the KING and BUTTS at window above

BUTTS.

I'll show your Grace the strangest sight-

KING.

What's that, Butts?

BUTTS.

I think your Highness saw this many a day.

KING.

Body a me, where is it?

BUTTS.

There my lord:

The high promotion of his Grace of Canterbury;

Who holds his state at door, 'mongst pursuivants,

Pages, and footboys.

KING.

Ha, 'tis he indeed.

Is this the honour they do one another?

'Tis well there's one above 'em yet. I had thought

They had parted so much honesty among 'em-

At least good manners-as not thus to suffer

A man of his place, and so near our favour,

To dance attendance on their lordships' pleasures,

And at the door too, like a post with packets.

By holy Mary, Butts, there's knavery!

Let 'em alone, and draw the curtain close;

We shall hear more anon.

Exeunt

ACT V. SCENE 3.

The Council Chamber

A Council table brought in, with chairs and stools, and placed under the state. *Enter* LORD CHANCELLOR, places himself at the upper end of the table on the left band, a seat being left void above him, as for Canterbury's seat. DUKE OF SUFFOLK, DUKE OF NORFOLK, SURREY, LORD CHAMBERLAIN, GARDINER, seat themselves in order on each side; CROMWELL at lower end, as secretary. KEEPER at the door

CHANCELLOR.

Speak to the business, master secretary;

Why are we met in council?

CROMWELL.

Please your honours,

The chief cause concerns his Grace of Canterbury.

GARDINER.

Has he had knowledge of it?

CROMWELL.

Yes.

NORFOLK.

Who waits there?

KEEPER.

Without, my noble lords?

GARDINER.

Yes.

KEEPER.

My Lord Archbishop;

And has done half an hour, to know your pleasures.

CHANCELLOR.

Let him come in.

KEEPER.

Your Grace may enter now.

CRANMER approaches the Council table

CHANCELLOR.

My good Lord Archbishop, I am very sorry

To sit here at this present, and behold

That chair stand empty; but we all are men,

In our own natures frail and capable
Of our flesh; few are angels; out of which frailty
And want of wisdom, you, that best should teach us,
Have misdemean'd yourself, and not a little,
Toward the King first, then his laws, in filling
The whole realm by your teaching and your chaplains-
For so we are inform'd-with new opinions,
Divers and dangerous; which are heresies,
And, not reform'd, may prove pernicious.

GARDINER.

Which reformation must be sudden too,
My noble lords; for those that tame wild horses
Pace 'em not in their hands to make 'em gentle,
But stop their mouth with stubborn bits and spur 'em
Till they obey the manage. If we suffer,
Out of our easiness and childish pity
To one man's honour, this contagious sickness,
Farewell all physic; and what follows then?
Commotions, uproars, with a general taint
Of the whole state; as of late days our neighbours,

The upper Germany, can dearly witness,
Yet freshly pitied in our memories.

CRANMER.
My good lords, hitherto in all the progress
Both of my life and office, I have labour'd,
And with no little study, that my teaching
And the strong course of my authority
Might go one way, and safely; and the end
Was ever to do well. Nor is there living-
I speak it with a single heart, my lords-
A man that more detests, more stirs against,
Both in his private conscience and his place,
Defacers of a public peace than I do.
Pray heaven the King may never find a heart
With less allegiance in it! Men that make
Envy and crooked malice nourishment
Dare bite the best. I do beseech your lordships
That, in this case of justice, my accusers,
Be what they will, may stand forth face to face
And freely urge against me.

SUFFOLK.

Nay, my lord,

That cannot be; you are a councillor,

And by that virtue no man dare accuse you.

GARDINER.

My lord, because we have business of more moment,

We will be short with you. 'Tis his Highness' pleasure

And our consent, for better trial of you,

From hence you be committed to the Tower;

Where, being but a private man again,

You shall know many dare accuse you boldly,

More than, I fear, you are provided for.

CRANMER.

Ah, my good Lord of Winchester, I thank you;

You are always my good friend; if your will pass,

I shall both find your lordship judge and juror,

You are so merciful. I see your end-

'Tis my undoing. Love and meekness, lord,

Become a churchman better than ambition;
Win straying souls with modesty again,
Cast none away. That I shall clear myself,
Lay all the weight ye can upon my patience,
I make as little doubt as you do conscience
In doing daily wrongs. I could say more,
But reverence to your calling makes me modest.

GARDINER.
My lord, my lord, you are a sectary;
That's the plain truth. Your painted gloss discovers,
To men that understand you, words and weakness.

CROMWELL.
My Lord of Winchester, y'are a little,
By your good favour, too sharp; men so noble,
However faulty, yet should find respect
For what they have been; 'tis a cruelty
To load a falling man.

GARDINER.

Good Master Secretary,

I cry your honour mercy; you may, worst

Of all this table, say so.

CROMWELL.

Why, my lord?

GARDINER.

Do not I know you for a favourer

Of this new sect? Ye are not sound.

CROMWELL.

Not sound?

GARDINER.

Not sound, I say.

CROMWELL.

Would you were half so honest!

Men's prayers then would seek you, not their fears.

GARDINER.

I shall remember this bold language.

CROMWELL.

Do.

Remember your bold life too.

CHANCELLOR.

This is too much;

Forbear, for shame, my lords.

GARDINER.

I have done.

CROMWELL.

And I.

CHANCELLOR.

Then thus for you, my lord: it stands agreed,

I take it, by all voices, that forthwith

You be convey'd to th' Tower a prisoner;

There to remain till the King's further pleasure

Be known unto us. Are you all agreed, lords?

ALL.

We are.

CRANMER.

Is there no other way of mercy,

But I must needs to th' Tower, my lords?

GARDINER.

What other

Would you expect? You are strangely troublesome.

Let some o' th' guard be ready there.

Enter the guard

CRANMER.

For me?

Must I go like a traitor thither?

GARDINER.

Receive him,

And see him safe i' th' Tower.

CRANMER.

Stay, good my lords,

I have a little yet to say. Look there, my lords;

By virtue of that ring I take my cause

Out of the gripes of cruel men and give it

To a most noble judge, the King my master.

CHAMBERLAIN.

This is the King's ring.

SURREY.

'Tis no counterfeit.

SUFFOLK.

'Tis the right ring, by heav'n. I told ye all,
When we first put this dangerous stone a-rolling,
'Twould fall upon ourselves.

NORFOLK.

Do you think, my lords,
The King will suffer but the little finger
Of this man to be vex'd?

CHAMBERLAIN.

'Tis now too certain;
How much more is his life in value with him!

Would I were fairly out on't!

CROMWELL.

My mind gave me,
In seeking tales and informations
Against this man-whose honesty the devil
And his disciples only envy at-
Ye blew the fire that burns ye. Now have at ye!

Enter the KING frowning on them; he takes his seat

GARDINER.
Dread sovereign, how much are we bound to heaven
In daily thanks, that gave us such a prince;
Not only good and wise but most religious;
One that in all obedience makes the church
The chief aim of his honour and, to strengthen
That holy duty, out of dear respect,
His royal self in judgment comes to hear
The cause betwixt her and this great offender.

KING.
You were ever good at sudden commendations,
Bishop of Winchester. But know I come not

To hear such flattery now, and in my presence

They are too thin and bare to hide offences.

To me you cannot reach you play the spaniel,

And think with wagging of your tongue to win me;

But whatsoe'er thou tak'st me for, I'm sure

Thou hast a cruel nature and a bloody.

[To CRANMER] Good man, sit down. Now let me see the proudest

He that dares most but wag his finger at thee.

By all that's holy, he had better starve

Than but once think this place becomes thee not.

SURREY.

May it please your Grace-

KING.

No, sir, it does not please me.

I had thought I had had men of some understanding

And wisdom of my Council; but I find none.

Was it discretion, lords, to let this man,

This good man-few of you deserve that title-

This honest man, wait like a lousy footboy
At chamber door? and one as great as you are?
Why, what a shame was this! Did my commission
Bid ye so far forget yourselves? I gave ye
Power as he was a councillor to try him,
Not as a groom. There's some of ye, I see,
More out of malice than integrity,
Would try him to the utmost, had ye mean;
Which ye shall never have while I live.

CHANCELLOR.
Thus far,
My most dread sovereign, may it like your Grace
To let my tongue excuse all. What was purpos'd
concerning his imprisonment was rather-
If there be faith in men-meant for his trial
And fair purgation to the world, than malice,
I'm sure, in me.

KING.
Well, well, my lords, respect him;

Take him, and use him well, he's worthy of it.

I will say thus much for him: if a prince

May be beholding to a subject,

Am for his love and service so to him.

Make me no more ado, but all embrace him;

Be friends, for shame, my lords! My Lord of Canterbury,

I have a suit which you must not deny me:

That is, a fair young maid that yet wants baptism;

You must be godfather, and answer for her.

CRANMER.

The greatest monarch now alive may glory

In such an honour; how may I deserve it,

That am a poor and humble subject to you?

KING.

Come, come, my lord, you'd spare your spoons. You shall have

Two noble partners with you: the old Duchess of Norfolk

And Lady Marquis Dorset. Will these please you?

Once more, my Lord of Winchester, I charge you,

Embrace and love this man.

GARDINER.

With a true heart
And brother-love I do it.

CRANMER.

And let heaven
Witness how dear I hold this confirmation.

KING.

Good man, those joyful tears show thy true heart.
The common voice, I see, is verified
Of thee, which says thus: 'Do my Lord of Canterbury
A shrewd turn and he's your friend for ever.'
Come, lords, we trifle time away; I long
To have this young one made a Christian.
As I have made ye one, lords, one remain;
So I grow stronger, you more honour gain.
Exeunt

ACT V. SCENE 4.

The palace yard

Noise and tumult within.   *Enter* PORTER and his MAN

PORTER.

You'll leave your noise anon, ye rascals. Do you

take the court for Paris garden? Ye rude slaves, leave your gaping.

[Within: Good master porter, I belong to th' larder.]

PORTER.

Belong to th' gallows, and be hang'd, ye rogue! Is

this a place to roar in? Fetch me a dozen crab-tree staves,

and strong ones; these are but switches to 'em. I'll scratch

your heads. You must be seeing christenings? Do you look

for ale and cakes here, you rude rascals?

MAN.

Pray, sir, be patient; 'tis as much impossible,

Unless we sweep 'em from the door with cannons,

To scatter 'em as 'tis to make 'em sleep

On May-day morning; which will never be.

We may as well push against Paul's as stir 'em.

PORTER.

How got they in, and be hang'd?

MAN.

Alas, I know not: how gets the tide in?

As much as one sound cudgel of four foot-

You see the poor remainder-could distribute,

I made no spare, sir.

PORTER.

You did nothing, sir.

MAN.

I am not Samson, nor Sir Guy, nor Colbrand,

To mow 'em down before me; but if I spar'd any

That had a head to hit, either young or old, He or she, cuckold or cuckold-maker,

Let me ne'er hope to see a chine again;

And that I would not for a cow, God save her!

[Within: Do you hear, master porter?]

PORTER.

I shall be with you presently, good master puppy.

Keep the door close, sirrah.

MAN.

What would you have me do?

PORTER.

What should you do, but knock 'em down by th'
dozens? Is this Moorfields to muster in? Or have we some
strange Indian with the great tool come to court, the
women so besiege us? Bless me, what a fry of fornication
is at door! On my Christian conscience, this one christening

will beget a thousand: here will be father, godfather, and all together.

MAN.

The spoons will be the bigger, sir. There is a fellow somewhat near the door, he should be a brazier by his face, for, o' my conscience, twenty of the dog-days now reign in's nose; all that stand about him are under the line, they need no other penance. That fire-drake did I hit three times on the head, and three times was his nose discharged against me; he stands there like a mortar-piece, to blow us. There was a haberdasher's wife of small wit near him, that rail'd upon me till her pink'd porringer fell off her head, for kindling such a combustion in the state. I miss'd the meteor once, and hit that woman, who cried out 'Clubs!' when I might see from far some forty truncheoners draw to her succour, which were the hope o' th' Strand, where she was quartered. They fell on; I made good my place. At length they came to th' broomstaff to me; I defied 'em still; when suddenly a file of boys behind 'em, loose shot, deliver'd such a show'r of pebbles that I was fain to draw

mine honour in and let 'em win the work: the devil was
amongst 'em, I think surely.

PORTER.
These are the youths that thunder at a playhouse
and fight for bitten apples; that no audience but the tribulation
of Tower-hill or the limbs of Limehouse, their dear
brothers, are able to endure. I have some of 'em in Limbo
Patrum, and there they are like to dance these three days;
besides the running banquet of two beadles that is to come.

Enter the LORD CHAMBERLAIN

CHAMBERLAIN.
Mercy o' me, what a multitude are here!
They grow still too; from all parts they are coming,
As if we kept a fair here! Where are these porters,
These lazy knaves? Y'have made a fine hand, fellows.
There's a trim rabble let in: are all these
Your faithful friends o' th' suburbs? We shall have
Great store of room, no doubt, left for the ladies,

When they pass back from the christening.

PORTER.

An't please your honour,

We are but men; and what so many may do,

Not being torn a pieces, we have done.

An army cannot rule 'em.

CHAMBERLAIN.

As I live,

If the King blame me for't, I'll lay ye an

By th' heels, and suddenly; and on your heads

Clap round fines for neglect. Y'are lazy knaves;

And here ye lie baiting of bombards, when

Ye should do service. Hark! the trumpets sound;

Th' are come already from the christening.

Go break among the press and find a way out

To let the troops pass fairly, or I'll find

A Marshalsea shall hold ye play these two months.

PORTER.

Make way there for the Princess.

MAN.

You great fellow,

Stand close up, or I'll make your head ache.

PORTER.

You i' th' camlet, get up o' th' rail;

I'll peck you o'er the pales else.

Exeunt

ACT V. SCENE 5.

The palace

Enter TRUMPETS, sounding; then two ALDERMEN, LORD MAYOR, GARTER, CRANMER, DUKE OF NORFOLK, with his marshal's staff, DUKE OF SUFFOLK, two Noblemen bearing great standing-bowls for the christening gifts; then four Noblemen bearing a canopy, under which the DUCHESS OF NORFOLK, godmother, bearing the CHILD richly habited in a mantle, etc., train borne by a LADY; then follows the MARCHIONESS DORSET, the other godmother, and LADIES. The troop pass once about the stage, and GARTER speaks

GARTER.

Heaven, from thy endless goodness, send prosperous life, long and ever-happy, to the high and mighty Princess of England, Elizabeth!

Flourish. Enter KING and guard

CRANMER.

[Kneeling] And to your royal Grace and the

good Queen!

My noble partners and myself thus pray:

All comfort, joy, in this most gracious lady,

Heaven ever laid up to make parents happy,

May hourly fall upon ye!

KING.

Thank you, good Lord Archbishop.

What is her name?

CRANMER.

Elizabeth.

KING.

Stand up, lord. [The KING kisses the
child]
With this kiss take my blessing: God protect thee!

Into whose hand I give thy life.

CRANMER.

Amen.

KING.

My noble gossips, y'have been too prodigal;
I thank ye heartily. So shall this lady,
When she has so much English.

CRANMER.

Let me speak, sir,
For heaven now bids me; and the words I utter
Let none think flattery, for they'll find 'em truth.
This royal infant-heaven still move about her!-

Though in her cradle, yet now promises

Upon this land a thousand blessings,

Which time shall bring to ripeness. She shall be-

But few now living can behold that goodness-

A pattern to all princes living with her,

And all that shall succeed. Saba was never

More covetous of wisdom and fair virtue

Than this pure soul shall be. All princely graces

That mould up such a mighty piece as this is,

With all the virtues that attend the good,

Shall still be doubled on her. Truth shall nurse her,

Holy and heavenly thoughts still counsel her;

She shall be lov'd and fear'd. Her own shall bless her:

Her foes shake like a field of beaten corn,

And hang their heads with sorrow. Good grows with her;

In her days every man shall eat in safety

Under his own vine what he plants, and sing

The merry songs of peace to all his neighbours.

God shall be truly known; and those about her

From her shall read the perfect ways of honour,

And by those claim their greatness, not by blood.

Nor shall this peace sleep with her; but as when

The bird of wonder dies, the maiden phoenix

Her ashes new create another heir

As great in admiration as herself,

So shall she leave her blessedness to one-

When heaven shall call her from this cloud of darkness-

Who from the sacred ashes of her honour

Shall star-like rise, as great in fame as she was,

And so stand fix'd. Peace, plenty, love, truth, terror,

That were the servants to this chosen infant,

Shall then be his, and like a vine grow to him;

Wherever the bright sun of heaven shall shine,

His honour and the greatness of his name

Shall be, and make new nations; he shall flourish,

And like a mountain cedar reach his branches

To all the plains about him; our children's children

Shall see this and bless heaven.

KING.

Thou speakest wonders.

CRANMER.

She shall be, to the happiness of England,

An aged princess; many days shall see her,

And yet no day without a deed to crown it.

Would I had known no more! But she must die-

She must, the saints must have her-yet a virgin;

A most unspotted lily shall she pass

To th' ground, and all the world shall mourn her.

KING.

O Lord Archbishop,

Thou hast made me now a man; never before

This happy child did I get anything.

This oracle of comfort has so pleas'd me

That when I am in heaven I shall desire

To see what this child does, and praise my Maker.

I thank ye all. To you, my good Lord Mayor,

And you, good brethren, I am much beholding;

I have receiv'd much honour by your presence,

And ye shall find me thankful. Lead the way, lords;

Ye must all see the Queen, and she must thank ye,

She will be sick else. This day, no man think
Has business at his house; for all shall stay.

This little one shall make it holiday.
Exeunt

EPILOGUE.

'Tis ten to one this play can never please
All that are here. Some come to take their ease
And sleep an act or two; but those, we fear,
W'have frighted with our trumpets; so, 'tis clear,
They'll say 'tis nought; others to hear the city
Abus'd extremely, and to cry 'That's witty!'
Which we have not done neither; that, I fear,
All the expected good w'are like to hear
For this play at this time is only in
The merciful construction of good women;
For such a one we show'd 'em. If they smile
And say 'twill do, I know within a while
All the best men are ours; for 'tis ill hap

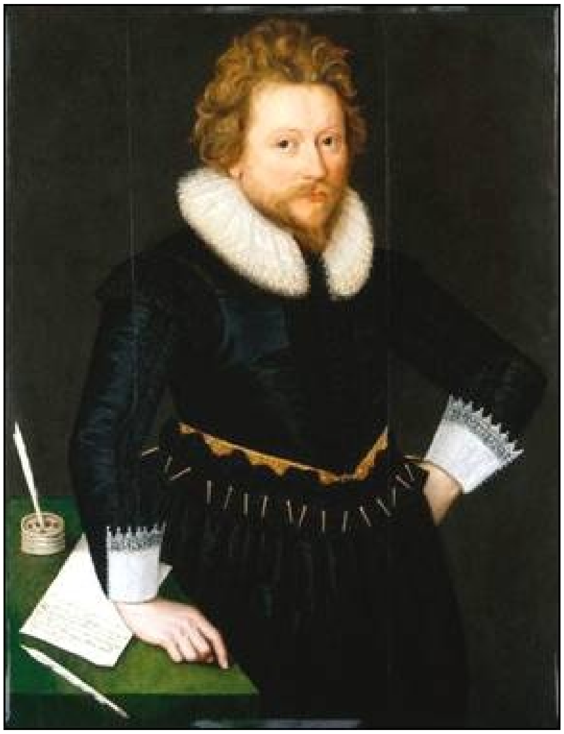
If they hold when their ladies bid 'em clap.

THE TWO NOBLE KINSMEN

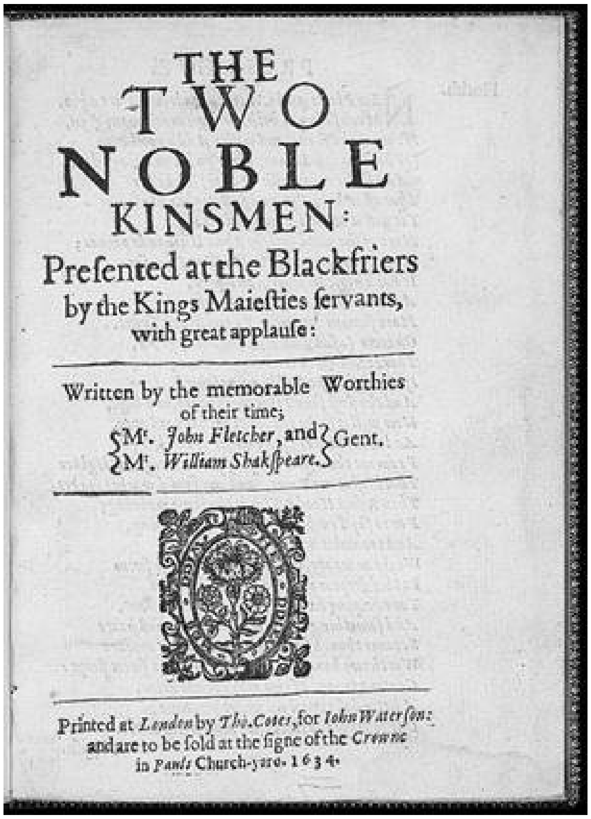
Attributed to John Fletcher and Shakespeare, this play derives its plot from *The Knight's Tale* in Geoffrey Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales* . Written in 1613-14, the authorship of the play remained in doubt many years and only in recent times have most critics agreed that Shakespeare and Fletcher collaborated on the play.

The Two Noble Kinsmen begins with three queens pleading with Theseus and Hippolyta, rulers of Athens, to avenge the deaths of their husbands at the hands of the tyrant Creon of Thebes. Creon has killed the three kings and refuses to allow them proper burial. Theseus agrees to wage war on Creon. In Thebes, Palamon and Arcite, cousins and close friends, are bound by duty to fight for Creon, though they are appalled by his tyranny. In a hard-fought battle Palamon and Arcite enact prodigies of courage, but the Thebans are defeated by Theseus. Palamon and Arcite are imprisoned, but philosophically resign themselves to their fate. Their stoicism is instantly destroyed when from their prison window they see the Athenian princess Emilia. Both fall in love with her, and their friendship turns to bitter rivalry. Arcite is released after a relative intercedes on his behalf. He is banished from Athens, but he disguises himself, wins a local wrestling match, and is appointed as Emilia's attendant.

Shakespeare's main source text for this play is available via this link .



John Fletcher, who, after Shakespeare's retirement, became one of the most successful London playwrights of his time



THE
TWO
NOBLE
KINSMEN:
Preſented at the Blackfriers
by the Kings Maieſties ſervants,
with great applauſe:

Written by the memorable Worthies
of their time;
Mr. John Fletcher, and Gent.
Mr. William Shakſpeare.

Printed at London by Tho. Cotes, for Iohn Waterſon:
and are to be ſold at the ſigne of the Crowne
in Pauls Church-yard. 1634.

The 1634 Quarto title page

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EPILOGUE

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

ANTIOCHUS, king of Antioch.
PERICLES, prince of Tyre.
HELICANUS, ESCANES, two lords of Tyre.
SIMONIDES, kIng of Pentapolis.
CLEON, governor of Tarsus.
LYSIMACHUS, governor of Mytilene.
CERIMON, a lord of Ephesus.
THALIARD, a lord of Antioch.
PFIILEMON, servant to Cerimon.
LEONINE, servant to Dionyza.
Marshal.
A Pandar.
BOULT, his servant.
The Daughter of Antiochus.
DIONYZA, wife to Cleon.
THAISA, daughter to Simonides.
MARINA, daughter to Pericles and Thaisa.
LYCHORIDA, nurse to Marina.
A Bawd.
Lords, Knights, Gentlemen, Sailors, Pirates, Fishermen, and Messengers.
DIANA.
GOWER, as Chorus.

Prologue

Flourish. Enter Prologue

Chorus New plays and maidenheads are near akin:
Much followed both, for both much money giv'n
If they stand sound and well. And a good play,
Whose modest scenes blush on his marriage day
That after holy tie and first night's stir
Yet still is modesty, and still retains
More of the maid to sight than husband's pains.
We pray our play may be so, for I am sure
It has a noble breeder and a pure, ... [Pro.10]
A learned. and a poet never went
More famous yet 'twixt Po and silver Trent.
Chaucer, of all admired, the story gives:

There constant to eternity it lives.
Of we let fall the nobleness of this
And the first sound this child hear be a hiss,
Now will it shake the bones of that good man,
And make him cry from under ground, 'O fan
From me the witless chaff of such a writer,

That blasts my bays and my famed works makes lighter ... [Pro.20]

Than Robin Hood? This is the fear we bring,

For to say truth, it were an endless thing

And too ambitious to aspire to him,

Weak as we are, and almost breathless swim

In this deep water. Do but you hold out

Your helping hands and we shall tack about

And something do to save us. You shall hear

Scenes, though below his art, may yet appear

Worth two hours' travail. To his bones, sweet sleep;

Content to you. If this play do not keep ... [Pro. 30]

A little dull time from us, we perceive

Our losses fall so thick we must needs leave. *[Flourish. Exit]*

Act I, Scene 1

Music. *Enter* Hymen with a torch burning, a Boy in a white robe before, singing and strewing flowers. After Hymen, a nymph encompassed in her tresses, bearing a wheaten garland. Then Theseus between two other nymphs with wheaten chaplets on their heads. Then Hippolyta, the bride, led by Pirithous and another holding a garland over her head, her tresses likewise hanging. After her, Emilia holding up her train. Then Artesius (and other attendants).

BOY *[sings during procession.]*

Roses, their sharp spines being gone,
Not royal in their smells alone,
But in their hue;
Maiden pinks, of odor faint,
And sweet thyme true;
Primrose, first-born child of Ver,
Merry springtime's harbinger,
With harebells dim;
Oxlips, in their cradles growing, ...
Marigolds, on deathbeds blowing,
Lark's-heels trim;
All dear nature's children sweet,
Lie fore bride and bridegroom's feet.

Blessing their sense.
Not an angel of the air,
Bird melodious, or bird fair,
Is absent hence.

The crow, the sland'rous cuckoo, nor ...

Nor chatt'ring pie,

May on our bride-house perch or sing,

Or with them any discord bring,

But from it fly.

[Enter three Queens in black, with veils stained, with imperial crowns. The First Queen falls down at the foot of Theseus; the Second falls down at the foot of Hippolyta; the Third, before Emilia.]

1 QUEEN *[to Theseus.]* For pity's sake and true gentility's,

Hear and respect me.

2 QUEEN *[to Hippolyta,]* For your mother's sake,

And as you wish your womb may thrive with fair ones,

Hear and respect me.

3 QUEEN *[to Emilia.]* Now for the love of him whom Jove hath marked

The honor of your bed, and for the sake ...

Of clear virginity, be advocate

For us and our distresses. This good deed
Shall raze you out o'th' Book of Trespasses
All you are set down there.

THESEUS *[to First Queen.]* Sad lady, rise.

HIPPOLYTA *[to Second Queen.]* ~~~ Stand up.

EMILIA *[to Third Queen.]* ~~~ ~~~ No knees to me.
What woman I may stead that is distressed
Does bind me to her.

THESEUS *[to First Queen.]* What's your request? Deliver you for all.

1 QUEEN *[kneeling still.]* We are three queens whose sovereigns fell before
The wrath of cruel Creon; who endured ...
The beaks of ravens, talons of the kites,
And pecks of crows in the foul fields of Thebes.
He will not suffer us to burn their bones,
To urn their ashes, nor to take th' offense
Of mortal loathsomeness from the blest eye

Of holy Phoebus, but infects the winds
With stench of our slain lords. O pity, Duke!
Thou purger of the earth, draw thy feared sword
That does good turns to th' world; give us the bones
And of thy boundless goodness take some note ...
That for our crowned heads we have no roof,
Save this, which is the lion's and the bear's,
And vault to everything.

THESEUS Pray you, kneel not:
I was transported with your speech, and suffered
Your knees to wrong themselves, I have heard the fortunes
Of your dead lords, which gives me such lamenting
As wakes my vengeance and revenge for 'em.
King Capeneus was your lord: the day
That he should marry you -- at such a season ...
As now it is with me -- I met your groom
By Mars's altar. You were that time fair,
Not Juno's mantle fairer than your tresses,
Nor in more bounty spread her. Your wheaten wreath
Was then nor threshed nor blasted; fortune at you

Dimpled her cheek with smiles; Hercules our kinsman --
Then weaker than your eyes -- laid by his club.
He tumbled down upon his Nemean hide
And swore his sinews thawed. O grief and time,
Fearful consumers, you will all devour. ...

1 QUEEN *[Kneeling still.]* O, I hope some god,
Some god hath put his mercy in your manhood,
Whereto he'll infuse power and press you forth
Our undertaker.

THESEUS O no knees, none, widow: *[The First Queen rises.]*
Unto the helmeted Bellona use them
And pray for me, your soldier. Troubled I am
2 QUEEN *[kneeling still.]* Honored Hippolyta,
Most dreaded Amazonian, that hast slain
The scythe-tusked boar, that with thy arm, as strong
As it is white, wast near to make the male ...
To thy sex captive, but that this, thy lord --
Born to uphold creation in that honor
First nature styled it in -- shrunk thee into

The bound thou wast o'erflowing, at once subduing
Thy force and thy affection; soldieress,
That equally canst poise sternness with pity,
Whom now I know has much more power on him
Than ever he had on thee, who ow'st his strength,
And his love too, who is a servant for
The tenor of thy speech; dear glass of ladies, ...
Bid him that we, whom flaming war doth scorch,
Under the shadow of his sword may cool us.

Require him he advance it o'er our heads.
Speak't in a woman's key, like such a woman
As any of us three. Weep ere you fail.
Lend us a knee:
But touch the ground for us no longer time
Than a dove's motion when the head's plucked off.
Tell him, if he i' th' blood-sized field lay swoll'n,
Showing the sun his teeth, grinning at the moon, ...

What you would do.

HIPPOLYTA Poor lady, say no more.
I had as lief trace this good action with you
As that whereto I am going, and never yet
Went I so willing way. My lord is taken
Heart-deep with your distress. Let him consider.
I'll speak anon. *[The Second Queen rises.]*

3 QUEEN *[kneeling still, to Emilia.]* O, my petition was
Set down in ice, which by hot grief uncandied
Melts into drops; so sorrow, wanting form,
Is pressed with deeper matter.

EMILIA Pray stand up:
Your grief is written in your cheek.

3 QUEEN O woe, ...
You cannot read it there; there, through my tears,
Like wrinkled pebbles in a glassy stream,
You may behold 'em. *[The Third Queen arises.]* Lady, lady, alack --
He that will all the treasure know o'th' earth
Must know the center too; he that will fish

For my least minnow, let him lead his line
To catch one at my heart. O, pardon me:
Extremity, that sharpens sundry wits,
Makes me a fool.

EMILIA Pray you, say nothing, pray you.
Who cannot feel nor see the rain, being in't, ...
Knows neither wet nor dry. If that you were
The ground-piece of some painter, I would buy you
T'instruct me 'gainst a capital grief, indeed
Such heart-pierced demonstration; but alas,
Being a natural sister of our sex,
Your sorrow beats so ardently upon me
That it shall make a counter-reflect 'gainst
My brother's heart, and warm it to some pity,
Though it were made of stone. Pray have good comfort.

THESEUS Forward to th' temple. Leave not out a jot ...
O'th' sacred ceremony.

1 QUEEN O, this celebration

Will longer last and be more costly than
Your suppliants' war. Remember that your fame
Knolls in the ear o'th' world: what you do quickly
Is not done rashly; your first thought is more
Than others' labored meditance; your premeditating
More than their actions. But, O Jove, your actions,
Soon as they move, as ospreys do the fish,
Subdue before they touch. Think, dear Duke, think
What beds our slain kings have.

2 QUEEN What griefs our beds, ...
That our dear lords have none.

3 QUEEN None fit for th' dead.
Those that with cords, knives, drams, precipitance,
Weary of this world's light, have to themselves
Been death's most horrid agents, human grace
Affords them dust and shadow.

1 QUEEN But our lords
Lie blist'ring fore the visitating sun,

And were good kings, when living

THESEUS It is true,

And I will give you comfort to give your dead lords graves,

The which to do must make some work with Creon.

1 QUEEN And that work presents itself to th' doing ...

Now 'twill take form, the heats are gone tomorrow.

Then, bootless toil must recompense itself

With its own sweat; now he's secure,

Not dreams we stand before your puissance

Rinsing our holy begging in our eyes

To make petition clear.

2 QUEEN Now you may take him,

Drunk with his victory.

3 QUEEN And his army full

Of bread and sloth.

THESEUS Artesius, that best knowest

How to draw out, fit to this enterprise

The prim'st for this proceeding and the number ...

To carry such a business: forth and levy

Our worthiest instruments, whilst we dispatch

This grand act of our life, this daring deed

Of fate in wedlock.

1 QUEEN *[to the other two Queens.]* ~~~ Dowagers, take hands;

Let us be widows to our woes; delay

Commends us to a famishing hope.

ALL THREE QUEENS Farewell

2 QUEEN We come unseasonably, but when could grief

Cull forth, as unpanged judgment can, fitt'st time

For best solicitation?

THESEUS Why, good ladies, ...

This is a service whereto I am going

Greater than any war -- it more imports me

Than all the actions that I have foregone,

Or futurely can cope.

1 QUEEN The more proclaiming

Our suit shall be neglected when her arms,

Able to lock Jove from a synod, shall

By warranting moonlight corslet thee! O when

Her twinning cherries shall their sweetness fall

Upon thy tasteful lips, what wilt thou think

Of rotten kings or blubbered queens? What care

For what thou feel'st not, what thou feel'st being able ...

To make Mars spur his drum? O, if thou couch

But one night with her, every hour in't will

Take hostage of thee for a hundred, and

Thou shalt remember nothing more than what

That banquet bids thee to.

HIPPOLYTA *[to Theseus.]* ~~~ Though much unlike

You should be so transported, as much sorry

I should be such a suitor -- yet I think

Did I not by th'abstaining of my joy,

Which breeds a deeper longing, cure their surfeit

That craves a present medicine, I should pluck ...

All ladies' scandal on me. *[Kneels.]* Therefore, sir, As I shall here make trial of my prayers,

Either presuming them to have some force,

Or sentencing for aye their vigor dumb,

Prorogue this business we are going about, and hang

Your shield afore your heart -- about that neck

Which is my fee, and which I freely lend

To do these poor queens service.

ALL THREE QUEENS *[to Emilia.]* ~~~ O, help now,

Our cause cries for your knee.

EMILIA *[Kneels to Theseus.]* ~~~ If you grant not

My sister her petition in that force ...

With that celerity and nature which

She makes it in, from henceforth I'll not dare

To ask you anything, nor be so hardy

Ever to take a husband.

THESEUS Pray stand up. *[They rise.]*

I am entreating of myself to do

That which you kneel to have me. -- Pirithous, Lead on the bride: get you and pray the gods

For success and return; omit not anything

In the pretended celebration. -- Queens,

Follow your soldier. *[to Artesius.]* As before, hence you, ...

And at the banks of Aulis meet us with

The forces you can raise, where we shall find

The moiety of a number for a business

More bigger looked. *[Exit Artesius.]*

[to Hippolyta.] ~~~ Since that our theme is haste,

I stamp this kiss upon thy current lip --

Sweet, keep it as my token. *[to the wedding party.]* Set you forward,

For I will see you gone.

[to Emilia.] Farewell, my beauteous sister. -- Pirithous,

Keep the feast full: bate not an hour on't.

PIRITHOUS   Sir,

I'll follow you at heels. The feast's solemnity ...

Shall want till your return

THESEUS   Cousin, I charge you

Budge not from Athens. We shall be returning
Ere you can end this feast, of which, I pray you,
Make no abatement. -- Once more, farewell all.

[Exeunt Hippolyta, Emilia, Pirithous, and train towards the temple.]

1 QUEEN Thus dost thou still make good the tongue o' th' world.

2 QUEEN And earn'st a deity equal with Mars --

3 QUEEN If not above him, for
Thou being but mortal mak'st affections bend
To godlike honors; they themselves, some say,
Groan under such a mast'ry.

THESEUS As we are men,] ...
Thus should we do; being sensually subdued
We lose our human title. Good cheer, ladies.
Now turn we towards your comforts. *[Flourish. Exeunt.]*

Act I, Scene 2

Enter Palamon and Arcite

ARCITE Dear Palamon, dearer in love than blood,

And our prime cousin, yet unhardened in

The crimes of nature, let us leave the city,

Thebes, and the temptings in't, before we further

Sully our gloss of youth.

And here to keep in abstinence we shame

As in incontinence; for not to swim

I'th' aid o'th' current were almost to sink --

At least to frustrate striving; and to follow

The common stream 'twould bring us to an eddy ...

Where we should turn or drown; if labor through,

Our gain but life and weakness.

PALAMON Your advice

Is cried up with example. What strange ruins

Since first we went to school may we perceive

Walking in Thebes? Scars and bare weeds

The gain o'th' martialist who did propound

To his bold ends honor and golden ingots,

Which though he won, he had not; and now flirted

By peace for whom he fought. Who then shall offer

To Mars's so-scorned altar? I do bleed ...

When such I meet, and wish great Juno would

Resume her ancient fit of jealousy

To get the soldier work, that peace might purge

For her repletion and retain anew

Her charitable heart, now hard and harsher

Than strife or war could be.

ARCITE Are you not out?

Meet you no ruin but the soldier in

The cranks and turns of Thebes? You did begin

As if you met decays of many kinds. ...

Perceive you none that do arouse your pity

But th'unconsidered soldier?

PALAMON Yet, I pity

Decays where'er I find them, but such most

That, sweating in an honorable toil,

Are paid with ice to cool 'em.

ARCITE 'Tis not this

I did begin to speak of. This is virtue,

Of no respect in Thebes. I spake of Thebes,

How dangerous, if we will keep our honors,

It is for our residing where every evil

Hath a good color, where every seeming good's

A certain evil, where not to be ev'n jump ...

As they are here were to be strangers, and

Such things to be, mere monsters.

PALAMON 'Tis in our power,

Unless we fear that apes can tutor's, to

Be masters of our manners. What need I

Affect another's gait, which is not catching

Where there is faith? Or to be fond upon

Another's way of speech, when by mine own

I may be reasonably conceived -- saved, too --

Speaking it truly? Why am I bound

By any generous bond to follow him ...

Follows his tailor, haply so long until

The followed make pursuit? Or let me know

Why mine own barber is unblest -- with him

My poor chin, too -- for 'tis not scissored just

To such a favorite's glass? What canon is there

That does command my rapier from my hip

To dangle't in my hand? Or to go tiptoe

Before the street be foul? Either I am

The fore-horse in the team or I am none

That draw i' th' sequent trace. These poor slight sores ...

Need not a plaintain. That which rips my bosom

Almost to th' heart's --

ARCITE Our uncle Creon

PALAMON He,

A most unbounded tyrant, whose successes

Makes heaven unfeared and villainy assured

Beyond its power there's nothing; almost puts
Faith in a fever, and deifies alone
Voluble chance; who only attributes
The faculties of other instruments
To his nerves and act; commands men's service,
And what they win in't, boot and glory; one ...
That fears not to do harm, good dares not. Let
The blood of mine that's sib to him be sucked
From me with leeches. Let them break and fall
Off me with that corruption.

ARCITE Clear-spirited cousin,
Let's leave his court that we may nothing share
Of his loud infamy: for our milk
Will relish of the pasture, and we must
Be vile or disobedient; not his kinsmen
In blood unless in quality.

PALAMON Nothing truer.
I think the echoes of his shames have defeated ...
The ears of heav'nly justice. Widow's cries

Descend again into their throats and have not *[Enter Valerius.]*
Due audience of the gods -- Valerius.

VALERIUS   The king calls for you; yet be leaden-footed
Till his great rage be off him. Phoebus, when
He broke his whipstock and exclaimed against
The horses of the sun, but whispered to
The loudness of his fury.

PALAMON   Small winds shake him.
But what's the matter?

VALERIUS   Theseus, who where he threats, appalls, hath sent ...
Deadly defiance to him and pronounces
Ruin to Thebes, who is at hand to seal
The promise of his wrath.

ARCITE   Let him approach.
But that we fear the gods in him, he brings not
A jot of terror to us. Yet what man
Thirds his own worth -- the case is each of ours --

When that his action's dregged with mind assured
'Tis bad he goes about.

PALAMON   Leave that unreasoned.
Our services stand now for Thebes, not Creon,
Yet to be neutral to him were dishonor, ...
Rebellious to oppose. Therefore we must
With him stand to the mercy of our fate,
Who hath bounded our last minute.

ARCITE   So we must.
Is't said this war's afoot? Or shall it be
On fall of some condition?

VALERIUS   ÔTis in motion,
The intelligence of state came in the instant
With the defier.

PALAMON   Let's to the King, who, were he
A quarter carrier of that honor which
His enemy come in, the blood we venture

Should be as for our health, which were not spent, ...

Rather laid out for purchase. But, alas,

Our hands advanced before our hearts, what will

The fall o'th' stroke do damage?

ARCITE Let th'event --

That never-erring arbitrator -- tell us

When we know all ourselves, and let us follow

The becking of our chance. *[Exeunt.]*

Act I, Scene 3

Enter Pirithous, Hippolyta, and Emilia

PIRITHOUS   No further.

HIPPOLYTA   Sir, farewell. Repeat my wishes
To our great lord, of whose success I dare not
Make any timorous question; yet I wish him
Excess and overflow of power, an't might be,
To dure ill-dealing fortune. Speed to him;
Store never hurts good governors.

PIRITHOUS   Though I know
His ocean needs not my poor drops, yet they
Must yield their tribute there. *[to Emilia]* My precious maid,
Those best affections that the heavens infuse
In their best-tempered pieces keep enthroned ...
In your dear heart.

EMILIA Thanks, sir. Remember me

To our all-royal brother, for whose speed

The great Bellona I'll solicit; and

Since in our terrene state petitions are not

Without gifts understood, I'll offer to her

What I shall be advised she likes. Our hearts

Are in his army, in his tent.

HIPPOLYTA In's bosom.

We have been soldiers, and we cannot weep

When our friends don their helms, or put to sea,

Or tell of babes broached on the lance, or women ...

That have sod their infants in-and after eat them --

The brine they wept at killing 'em: then if

You stay to see of us such spinsters, we

Should hold you here forever.

PIRITHOUS Peace be to you

As I pursue this war, which shall be then

Beyond further requiring. *[Exit Pirithous.]*

EMILIA How his longing
Follows his friend! Since his depart, his sports,
Though craving seriousness and skill, passed slightly
His careless execution, where nor gain
Made him regard or loss consider, but ...
Yet fate hath brought them off. Their knot of love,
Tied, weaved, entangled with so true, so long,
And with a finger of so deep a cunning,
May be outworn, never undone. I think
Theseus cannot be umpire to himself,
Cleaving his conscience into twain and doing
Each side like justice, which he loves best.

EMILIA Doubtless
There is a best, and reason has no manners
So say it is not you. I was acquainted
Once with a time when I enjoyed a playfellow; ...
You were at wars when she the grave enriched,
Who made too proud the bed; took leave o'th' moon --
Which then looked pale at parting -- when our count
Was each eleven.

HIPPOLYTA 'Twas Flavina

EMILIA Yes.

You talk of Pirithous' and Theseus' love:

Theirs has more ground, is more maturely seasoned,

More buckled with strong judgment, and their needs

The one of th'other may be said to water

Their intertangled roots of love; but I

And she I sigh and spoke of were things innocent, ...

Loved for what we did, and like the elements,

That know not what, nor why, yet do effect

Rare issues by their operance, our souls

Did so to one another. What she liked

Was then of me approved; what not, condemned --

No more arraignment. The flower that I would pluck

And put between my breasts -- O then but beginning

To swell about the blossom -- she would long

Till she had such another, and commit it

To the like innocent cradle, where phoenix-like, ...

They died in perfume. On my head no toy

But was her pattern. Her affections -- pretty,

Though happily her careless wear -- I followed
For my most serious decking. Had mine ear
Stol'n some new air, or at adventure hummed one,
From musical coinage, why, it was a note
Whereon her spirits would sojourn -- rather dwell on --
And sing it in her slumbers. This rehearsal --
Which, seely innocence wots well, comes in
Like old 8emportment's bastard -- has this end: ...
That the true love 'tween maid and maid may be
More than in sex dividual.

HIPPOLYTA You're out of breath,
And this high-speeded pace is but to say
That you shall never, like the maid Flavina,
Love any that's called man.

EMILIA I am sure I shall not.

HIPPOLYTA Now alack, weak sister,
I must no more believe thee in this point --
Though in't I know thou dost believe thyself --

Than I will trust a sickly appetite ...

That loathes even as it longs. But sure, my sister,

If I were ripe for your persuasion, you

Have said enough to shake me from the arm

Of the all-noble Theseus, for whose fortunes

I will now in and kneel, with great assurance

That we more than his Pirithous possess

The high throne in his heart.

EMILIA I am not

Against your faith, yet I continue mine. *[Exeunt.]*

Act I, Scene 4

Cornets. A battle struck within. Then a retreat. Flourish. Then enter Theseus, victor. The three Queens meet him and fall on their faces before him. Also enter a Herald, and attendants bearing Palamon and Arcite on two hearses.

1 QUEEN *[to Theseus.]* To thee no star be dark.

2 QUEEN *[to Theseus.]* Both heaven and earth

Friend thee for ever.

3 QUEEN *[to Theseus.]* All the good that may
Be wished upon thy head, I cry 'Amen' to't.

THESEUS Th'impartial gods, who from the mounted heavens
View us their mortal herd, behold who err
And in their time chastise. Go and find out
The bones of your dead lords and honor them
With treble ceremony: rather than a gap
Should be in their dear rites we would supply't.

But those we will depute which shall invest ...
You in your dignities, and even each thing
Our haste does leave imperfect. So adieu,
And heaven's good eyes look on you. *[Exeunt the Queen.]*
~~~ What are those?

HERALD Men of great quality, as may be judged
By their appointment. Some of Thebes have told's
They are sisters' children, nephews to the King.
~~~

THESEUS	By th' helm of Mars I saw them in the war,
Like to a pair of lions smeared with prey,
Make lanes in troops aghast. I fixed my note
Constantly on them, for they were a mark ...
Worth a god's view. What prisoner was't that told me
When I enquired their names?

HERALD	Wi' leave, they're called
Arcite and Palamon.

THESEUS	'Tis right: those, those.
They are not dead?

HERALD	Nor in a state of life. Had they been taken
When their last hurts were given, 'twas possible
They might have been recovered. Yet they breathe,
And have the name of men.

THESEUS	Then like men use 'em.
The very lees of such, millions of rates

Exceed the wine of others. All our surgeons ...

Convent in their behoof; our richest balms,

Rather than niggard, waste. Their lives concern us

Much more than Thebes is worth. Rather than have 'em

Freed of this plight and in their morning state --

Sound and at liberty -- I would 'em dead;

But forty-thousandfold we had rather have 'em

Prisoners to us, than death. Bear 'em speedily

From our kind air, to them unkind, and minister

What man to man may do -- for our sake, more,

Since I have known frights, fury, friends' behests, ...

Love's provocations, zeal, a mistress' task,

Desire of liberty, a fever, madness,

Hath set a mark which nature could not reach to

Without some imposition, sickness in will

O'er-wrestling strength in reason. For our love

And great Apollo's mercy, all our best

Their best skill tender. -- Lead into the city

Where, having bound things scattered, we will post

To Athens fore our army. *[Flourish. Exeunt.]*

Act II, Scene 1

Enter the Jailer and the Wooer.

JAILER I may depart with little, while I live; something I
may cast to you, not much. Alas, the prison I keep,
though it be for great ones, yet they seldom come;
before one salmon you shall take a number of minnows.
I am given out to be better lined than it can appear to
me report is a true speaker. I would I were really that
I am delivered to be. Marry, what I have -- be it what
it will -- I will assure upon my daughter at the day of my death.

WOOER Sir, I demand no more than your own offer, and ...
When that shall be seen, I tender my consent.

WOOER I have, sir. Here she comes.

JAILER *[to Daughter.]* Your friend and I have chanced to name you here, upon the old business -- but no more of that now. So soon as the court hurry is over we will have an end of it. I'th' mean time, look tenderly to the two prisoners. I can tell you they are princes. ...

DAUGHTER These strewings are for their chamber. 'Tis pity they are in prison, and 'twere pity they should be out. I do think they have patience to make any adversity ashamed; the prison itself is proud of 'em, and they have all the world in their chamber.

JAILER They are famed to be a pair of absolute men.

DAUGHTER By my troth, I think fame but stammers 'em -- they stand a grece above the reach of report.

JAILER I heard them reported in the battle to be the only doers. ...

DAUGHTER Nay, most likely, for they are noble sufferers. I marvel how they would have looked had they been victors, that with such a constant nobility

enforce a freedom out of bondage, making misery their
mirth, and affliction a toy to jest at.

JAILER Do they so?

DAUGHTER It seems to me they have no more
sense of their captivity than I of ruling Athens. They
eat well, look merrily, discourse of many things, but
nothing of their own restraint and disasters. Yet ...

sometime a divided sigh -- martyred as 'twere i' th'
deliverance -- will break from one of them, when the
other presently gives it so sweet a rebuke that I could
wish myself a sigh to be so chid, or at least a sigher to be comforted.

WOOER I never saw 'em.

JAILER The Duke himself came privately in the night,

[Palamon and Arcite appear at a window above.]

and so did they. What the reason of it is I know not.

Look, yonder they are. That's Arcite looks out.

DAUGHTER No, sir, no -- that's Palamon. Arcite is ...
the lower of the twain -- *[pointing at Arcite.]* you may
perceive a part of him.

JAILER Go to, leave your pointing. They would not make
us their object. Out of their sight.

DAUGHTER It is a holiday to look on them. Lord,
the difference of men!

Act II, Scene 2

Enter Palamon and Arcite in prison, (in shackles), above].

PALAMON How do you, noble cousin?

ARCITE How do you, sir?

PALAMON Why, strong enough to laugh at misery
And bear the chance of war. Yet we are prisoners,
I fear, for ever, cousin.

ARCITE I believe it,
And to that destiny have patiently
Laid up my hour to come.

PALAMON O, cousin Arcite,
Where is Thebes now? Where is our noble country?
Where are our friends and kindreds? Never more
Must we behold those comforts, never see
The hardy youths strive for the games of honor, ...
Hung with the painted favors of their ladies,
Like tall ships under sail; then start amongst 'em
And, as an east wind, leave 'em all behind us,
Like lazy clouds, whilst Palamon and Arcite,
Even in the wagging of a wanton leg,
Outstripped the people's praises, won the garlands

Ere they have time to wish 'em ours. O never
Shall we two exercise, like twins of honor,
Our arms again and feel our fiery horses
Like proud seas under us. Our good swords, now -- ...
Better the red-eyed god of war ne'er wore --
Ravished our sides, like age must run to rust
And deck the temples of those gods that hate us.
These hands shall never draw 'em out like lightning
To blast whole armies more.

ARCITE No, Palamon,
Those hopes are prisoners with us. Here we are,
And here the graces of our youths must wither,
Like a too-timely spring. Here age must find us
And, which is heaviest, Palamon, unmarried --
The sweet embraces of a loving wife ...
Loaden with kisses, armed with thousand Cupids,
Shall never clasp our necks; no issue know us;
No figures of ourselves shall we e'er see
To glad our age, and, like young eagles, teach 'em
Boldly to gaze against bright arms and say,

'Remember what your fathers were, and conquer.'
The fair-eyed maids shall weep our banishments,
And in their songs curse ever-blinded fortune,
Till she for shame see what a wrong she has done
To youth and nature. This is all our world. ...
We shall know nothing here but one another,
Hear nothing but the clock that tells our woes.
The vine shall grow, but we shall never see it;
Summer shall come, and with her all delights,
But dead-cold winter must inhabit here still.

PALAMON 'Tis too true, Arcite. To our Theban hounds
That shook the aged forest with their echoes,
No more now must we holler; no more shake
Our pointed javelins whilst the angry swine
Flies like a Parthian quiver from our rages, ...
Struck with our well-steeled darts. All valiant uses --
The food and nourishment of noble minds --
In us two here shall perish; we shall die --
Which is the curse of honor -- lastly,
Children of grief and ignorance.

ARCITE Yet, cousin,
Even from the bottom of these miseries,
From all that fortune can inflict upon us,
I see two comforts rising -- two mere blessings,
If the gods please, to hold here a brave patience
And the enjoying of our griefs together. ...
Whilst Palamon is with me, let me perish
If I think this our prison.

PALAMON Certainly
'Tis a main goodness, cousin, that our fortunes
Were twined together. 'Tis most true, two souls
Put in noble bodies, let 'em suffer
The gall of hazard, so they grow together,
Will never sink; they must not, say they could.

A willing man dies sleeping and all's done.

ARCITE Shall we make worthy uses of this place
That all men hate so much?

PALAMON How, gentle cousin?

ARCITE Let's think this prison holy sanctuary,
To keep us from corruption of worse men.
We are young, and yet desire the ways of honor
That liberty and common conversation,
The poison of pure spirits, might, like women,
Woo us to wander from. What worthy blessing
Can be, but our imaginations
May make it ours? And here being thus together,
We are an endless mine to one another:
We are one another's wife, ever begetting ...
Crave our acquaintance. I might sicken, cousin,
Where you should never know it, and so perish
Without your noble hand to close mine eyes,
Or prayers to the gods. A thousand chances,
Were we from hence, would sever us.

PALAMON You have made me --
I thank you, cousin Arcite -- almost wanton

With my captivity. What a misery
It is to live abroad, and everywhere!
'Tis like a beast, methinks. I find the court here;
I am sure, a more content; and all those pleasures ...
That woo the wills of men to vanity
I see through now, and am sufficient
To tell the world 'tis but a gaudy shadow,
That old Time, as he passes by, takes with him.
What had we been, old in the court of Creon,
Where sin is justice, lust and ignorance
The virtues of the great ones? Cousin Arcite,
Had not the loving gods found this place for us,
We had died as they do, ill old men, unwept,
And had their epitaphs, the people's curses. ...

Shall I say more?

ARCITE I would hear you still.

PALAMON Ye shall.
Is there record of any two that loved

Better than we do, Arcite?

ARCITE Sure there cannot.

PALAMON I do not think it possible our friendship
Should ever leave us.

ARCITE Till our deaths it cannot,

[Enter Emilia and her Woman (below). Palamon sees Emilia and is silent.]
And after death our spirits shall be led
To those that love eternally. Speak on, sir.

EMILIA *[to her Woman.]* This garden has a worldÊof pleasure in't.
What flower is this?

WOMAN 'Tis called narcissus, madam.

EMILIA That was a fair boy, certain, but a fool ...
To love himself. Were there not maids enough?

ARCITE *[to Palamon.]* Pray forward.

PALAMON Yes.

EMILIA *[to her Woman.]* ~~~ ~~~ Or were they all hard-hearted?

WOMAN They could not be to one so fair.

EMILIA Thou wouldst not.

WOMAN I think I should not, madam.

EMILIA That's a good wench --
But take heed to your kindness, though.

WOMAN Why, madam?

EMILIA Men are mad things.

ARCITE Will ye go forward, cousin?

EMILIA *[to her Woman.]* Canst not thou work such flowers in silk, wench?

WOMAN Yes.

EMILIA I'll have a gown full of 'em, and of these.

This is a pretty color -- will't not do

Rarely upon a skirt, wench?

WOMAN Dainty, madam.

ARCITE *[to Palamon.]* Cousin, cousin, how do you, sir? Why, Palamon!

PALAMON Never till now was I in prison, Arcite.

ARCITE Why, what's the matter, man?

PALAMON Behold and wonder! *[Arcite sees Emilia.]*

By heaven, she is a goddess!

ARCITE Ha!

PALAMON Do reverence.

She is a goddess, Arcite.

EMILIA *[to her Woman.]* ~~~ Of all flowers

Methinks a rose is best.

WOMAN Why, gentle madam?

EMILIA It is the very emblem of a maid --

For when the west wind courts her gently,

How modestly she blows, and paints the sun

With her chaste blushes! When the north comes near her, ...

Rude and impatient, then, like chastity,

She locks her beauties in her bud again,

And leaves him to base briars.

WOMAN Yet, good madam,

Sometimes her modesty will blow so far

She falls for't -- a maid,

If she have any honor, would be loath

To take example by her.

EMILIA Thou art wanton.

ARCITE *[to Palamon.]* She is wondrous fair.

PALAMON She is all the beauty extant.

EMILIA *[to her Woman.]*

The sun grows high -- let's walk in. Keep these flowers.

We'll see how close art can come near their colors. ...

I am wondrous merry-hearted -- I could laugh now.

WOMAN I could lie down, I am sure.

EMILIA And take one with you?

WOMAN That's as we bargain, madam.

EMILIA Well, agree then. *[Exeunt Emilia and her Woman.]*

PALAMON What think you of this beauty?

ARCITE 'Tis a rare one.

PALAMON Is't but a rare one?

ARCITE Yes, a matchless beauty.

PALAMON Might not a man well lose himself and love her?

ARCITE I cannot tell what you have done; I have,
Beshrew mine eyes for't. Now I feel my shackles.

PALAMON You love her then?

ARCITE Who would not?

PALAMON And desire her?

ARCITE Before my liberty.

PALAMON I saw her first.

ARCITE That's nothing.

PALAMON But it shall be.

ARCITE I saw her too.

PALAMON Yes, but you must not love her

ARCITE I will not, as you do, to worship her

As she is heavenly and a blessed goddess!

I love her as a woman, to enjoy her --

So both may love.

PALAMON You shall not love at all.

ARCITE Not love at all -- who shall deny me?

PALAMON I that first saw her, I that took possession ...

First with mine eye of all those beauties

In her revealed to mankind. If thou lov'st her,

Or entertain'st a hope to blast my wishes,

Thou art a traitor, Arcite, and a fellow

False as thy title to her. Friendship, blood,

And all the ties between us I disclaim,

If thou once think upon her.

ARCITE Yes, I love her --

And if the lives of all my name lay on it,

I must do so. I love her with my soul --

If that will lose ye, farewell, Palamon! ...

I say again,

I love her, and in loving her maintain

I am as worthy and as free a lover,

And have as just a title to her beauty,

As any Palamon, or any living

That is a man's son.

PALAMON Have I called thee friend?

ARCITE Yes, and have found me so. Why are you moved thus?

Let me deal coldly with you. Am not I

Part of your blood, part of your soul? You have told me

That I was Palamon and you were Arcite.

PALAMON Yes.

ARCITE Am I not liable to those affections,

Those joys, griefs, angers, fears, my friend shall suffer?

PALAMON Ye may be.

ARCITE Why then would you deal so cunningly,

So strangely, so unlike a noble kinsman,

To love alone? Speak truly. Do you think me

Unworthy of her sight?

PALAMON No, but unjust

If thou pursue that sight.

ARCITE Because another

First sees the enemy, shall I stand still, And let mine honor down, and never charge?

PALAMON Yes, if he be but one.

ARCITE But say that one ...
Had rather combat me?

PALAMON Let that one say so,
And use thy freedom; else, if thou pursuest her,
Be as that cursed man that hates his country,
A branded villain.

ARCITE You are mad.

PALAMON I must be.
Till thou art worthy, Arcite, it concerns me,
And in this madness if I hazard thee
And take thy life, I deal but truly.

ARCITE Fie, sir.
You play the child extremely. I will love her,

I must, I ought to do so, and I dare --
And all this justly.

PALAMON O, that now, that now ...
Thy false self and thy friend had but this fortune --
To be one hour at liberty and grasp
Our good swords in our hands! I would quickly teach thee
What t'were to filch affection from another.
Thou art baser in it than a cut-purse.
Put but thy head out of this window more
And, as I have a soul, I'll nail thy life to't.

ARCITE Thou dar'st not, fool; thou canst not; thou art feeble.
Put my head out? I'll throw my body out
And leap the garden when I see her next, *[Enter the Jailer, above.]* ...
And pitch between her arms to anger thee.

PALAMON No more -- the keeper's coming. I shall live
To knock thy brains out with my shackles.

ARCITE Do.

JAILER By your leave, gentlemen.

PALAMON Now, honest keeper?

JAILER Lord Arcite, you must presently to th' Duke.
The cause I know not yet.

ARCITE I am ready, keeper.

JAILER Prince Palamon, I must a while bereave you
Of your fair cousin's company. *[Exeunt Arcite and the Jailer.]*

PALAMON And me, too,
Even when you please, of life. Why is he sent for?

It may be he shall marry her -- he's goodly, ...
And like enough the Duke hath taken notice
Both of his blood and body. But his falsehood!
Why should a friend be treacherous? If that
Get him a wife so noble and so fair,

Let honest men ne'er love again. Once more

I would but see this fair one. Blessed garden,

And fruit and flowers more blessed, that still blossom

As her bright eyes shine on ye! Would I were,

For all the fortune of my life hereafter,

Yon little tree, yon blooming apricot -- ...

How I would spread and fling my wanton arms

In at her window! I would bring her fruit

Fit for the gods to feed on; youth and pleasure

Still as she tasted should be doubled on her;

And if she be not heavenly, I would make her

So near the gods in nature they should fear her --

[Enter the Jailer, above.]

And then I am sure she would love me. How now, keeper,

Where's Arcite?

JAILER: ~~~ Banished -- Prince Pirithous

Obtained his liberty; but never more,

Upon his oath and life, must he set foot

Upon this kingdom. ...

PALAMON *[aside]* He's a blessed man.

He shall see Thebes again, and call to arms

The bold young men that, when he bids 'em charge,

Fall on like fire. Arcite shall have a fortune,

If he dare make himself a worthy lover,

Yet in the field to strike a battle for her;

And if he lose her then, he's a cold coward.

How bravely may he bear himself to win her

If he be noble Arcite; thousand ways!

Were I at liberty I would do things ...

Of such virtuous greatness that this lady,

This blushing virgin, should take manhood to her

And seek to ravish me.

JAILER My lord, for you

I have this charge to --

PALAMON to discharge my life.

JAILER No, but from this place to remove your lordship --

The windows are too open.

PALAMON Devils take 'em

That are so envious to me -- prithee kill me.

JAILER And hang for't afterward?

PALAMON By this good light,

Had I a sword I would kill thee.

JAILER Why, my lord?

PALAMON Thou bring'st such pelting scurvy news continually, ...

Thou art not worthy life. I will not go.

JAILER Indeed you must, my lord.

PALAMON May I see the garden?

JAILER No.

PALAMON Then I am resolved -- I will not go

JAILER I must constrain you, then; and for you are dangerous,
I'll clap more irons on you.

PALAMON Do, good keeper.
I'll shake 'em so ye shall not sleep:

I'll make ye a new morris. Must I go?

JAILER There is no remedy.

PALAMON Farewell, kind window.
May rude wind never hurt thee, O, my lady,
If ever thou hast felt what sorrow was, ...
Dream how I suffer. Come, now bury me.

Act II, Scene 3

Enter Arcite.

ARCITE Banished the kingdom? 'Tis a benefit,
A mercy I must thank 'em for; but banished
The free enjoying of that face I die for --
O, 'twas a studied punishment, a death
Beyond imagination; such a vengeance
That, were I old and wicked, all my sins
Could never pluck upon me. Palamon,
Thou has the start now -- thou shalt stay and see
Her bright eyes break each morning 'gainst thy window,
And let in life into thee. Thou shalt feed ...
Upon the sweetness of a noble beauty
That nature ne'er exceeded, nor ne'er shall.

Good gods! What happiness has Palamon!
Twenty to one he'll come to speak to her,
And if she be as gentle as she's fair,
I know she's his -- he has a tongue will tame
Tempests and make the wild rocks wanton.
Come what can come,
The worst is death. I will not leave the kingdom.

I know mine own is but a heap of ruins, ...

And no redress there. If I go he has her.

I am resolved another shape shall make me,

Or end my fortunes. Either way I am happy --

I'll see her and be near her, or no more.

[Enter four Country People, one of whom carries a garland before them. Arcite stands apart.]

1st COUNTRYMAN My masters, I'll be there -- that's certain.

2d COUNTRYMAN And I'll be there.

3d COUNTRYMAN And I.

4th COUNTRYMAN Why then, have with ye, boys!

~~~'Tis but a chiding --

Let the plow play today, I'll tickle't out

Of the jades' tails tomorrow.

1st COUNTRYMAN I am sure ...

To have my wife as jealous as a turkey --

But that's all one. I'll go through, let her mumble.

2d COUNTRYMAN Clap her aboard tomorrow night and stow her,
~~~

And all's made up again.

3d COUNTRYMAN Ay, do but put

A fescue in her fist and you shall see her

Take a new lesson out and be a good wench.

Do we all hold against the maying?

4th COUNTRYMAN Hold? What should ail us?

3d COUNTRYMAN Arcas will be there

2d COUNTRYMAN And Sennois, and Rycas, and three

better lads ne'er danced under green tree; and ye know ...

what wenches, ha? But will the dainty dominie, the

schoolmaster, keep touch, do you think? For he does all, ye know.

3d COUNTRYMAN He'll eat a hornbook ere he fail. Go

to, the matter's too far driven between him and the

tanner's daughter to let slip now, and she must see the

Duke, and she must dance too.

4th COUNTRYMAN Shall we be lusty?

2d COUNTRYMAN All the boys in Athens blow wind

i' th' breech on's! And here I'll be and there I'll be, for ...

our town, and here again and there again -- ha, boys,

hey for the weavers!

1st COUNTRYMAN This must be done i' th' woods.

4th COUNTRYMAN O, pardon me.

2d COUNTRYMAN By any means, our thing of learning
said so; where he himself will edify the Duke most
parlously in our behalfs -- he's excellent i' th' woods,
bring him to th' plains, his learning makes no cry.

3d COUNTRYMAN We'll see the sports, then every man
to's tackle -- and, sweet companions, let's rehearse, by ...
any means, before the ladies see us, and do sweetly,
and God know what may come on't.

4th COUNTRYMAN Content -- the sports once ended,
we'll perform. Away boys, and hold.

ARCITE *[coming forward.]*
By your leaves, honest friends, pray you whither go you?

4th COUNTRYMAN Whither? Why, what a question's that?

ARCITE Yet 'tis a question
To me that know not.

3d COUNTRYMAN To the games, my friend.

2d COUNTRYMAN Where were you bred, you know it not?

ARCITE Not far, sir --

Are there such games today?

1st COUNTRYMAN Yes, marry, are there, ...

And such as you never saw. The Duke himself

Will be in person there.

ARCITE What pastimes are they?

2d COUNTRYMAN Wrestling and running.

~~~*[to the others.]* 'Tis a pretty fellow.

3d COUNTRYMAN *[to Arcite.]* Thou wilt not go along?

ARCITE Not yet, sir.

4th COUNTRYMAN Well, sir,

Take your own time. *[to the others.]* Come, boys.

1st COUNTRYMAN My mind misgives me --

This fellow has a vengeance trick o'th' hip:

Mark how his body's made for't.

2d COUNTRYMAN I'll be hanged though
~~~

If he dare venture; hang him, plum porridge!

He wrestle? He roast eggs! Come, let's be gone, lads.

[Exeunt the four Countrymen.]

ARCITE This is an offered opportunity ...

I durst not wish for. Well I could have wrestled --

The best men called it excellent -- and run

Swifter than wind upon a field of corn,

Curling the wealthy ears, never flew. I'll venture,

And in some poor disguise be there. Who knows

Whether my brows may not be girt with garlands,

And happiness prefer me to a place

Where I may ever dwell in sight of her? *[Exit.]*

Act II, Scene 4

Enter the Jailer's Daughter.

DAUGHTER Why should I love this gentleman? 'Tis odds
He will never affect me. I am base,
My father the mean keeper of his prison,
And he a prince. To marry him is hopeless,
To be his whore is witless. Out upon't,
What pushes are we wenches driven to
When fifteen has once found us? First, I saw him;
I, seeing, thought he was a goodly man;
He has as much to please a woman in him --
If he please to bestow it so -- as ever ...
These eyes yet looked on. Next, I pitied him,
And so would any young wench, o'my conscience,
That ever dreamed or vowed her maidenhead
To a young handsome man. Then, I loved him,
Extremely loved him, infinitely loved him --
And yet he had a cousin fair as he, too.
But in my heart was Palamon, and there,
Lord, what a coil he keeps! To hear him
Sing in an evening, what a heaven it is!

And yet his songs are sad ones. Fairer spoken ...
Was never gentleman. When I come in
To bring him water in a morning, first
He bows his noble body, then salutes me, thus:
'Fair, gentle maid, good morrow. May thy goodness
Get thee a happy husband.' Once he kissed me --
I loved my lips the better ten days after.
Would he would do so every day! He grieves much,
And me as much to see his misery.

What should I do to make him know I love him?
For I would fain enjoy him. Say I ventured ...
To set him free? What says the law then? Thus much
For law or kindred! I will do it,
And this night; ere tomorrow he shall love me. *[Exit.]*

Act II, Scene 5

Short flourish of cornets and shouts within. *Enter* Theseus, Hippolyta, Pirithous, Emilia, Arcite disguised, with a garland, and attendants.

THESEUS You have done worthily. I have not seen
Since Hercules a man of tougher sinews.
Whate'er you are, you run the best and wrestle
That these times can allow.

ARCITE I am proud to please you.

THESEUS What country bred you?

ARCITE This -- but far off, prince.

THESEUS Are you a gentleman?

ARCITE My father said so,
And to those gentle uses gave me life.

THESEUS Are you his heir?

ARCITE His youngest, sir.

THESEUS Your father

Sure is a happy sire, then. What proves you?

ARCITE A little of all noble qualities. ...

I could have kept a hawk and well have hollered

To a deep cry of dogs; I dare not praise

My feat in horsemanship, yet they that knew me

Would say it was my best piece; last and greatest,

I would be thought a soldier.

THESEUS You are perfect.

PIRITHOUS Upon my soul, a proper man.

EMILIA He is so.

PIRITHOUS *[to Hippolyta.]* How do you like him, lady?

HIPPOLYTA I admire him.

I have not seen so young a man so noble --

If he say true -- of his sort.

EMILIA Believe

His mother was a wondrous handsome woman -- ...

His face methinks goes that way.

HIPPOLYTA But his body

And fiery mind illustrate a brave father.

PIRITHOUS Mark how his virtue, like a hidden sun,

Breaks through his baser garments.

HIPPOLYTA He's well got, sure.

THESEUS *[to Arcite.]* What made you seek this place, sir?

ARCITE Noble Theseus,

To purchase name and do my ablest service

To such a well-found wonder as thy worth,

For only in thy court of all the world

Dwells fair-eyed honor.

PIRITHOUS All his words are worthy.

THESEUS *[to Arcite.]* Sir, we are much indebted to your travel, ...
Nor shall you lose your wish. -- Pirithous,
Dispose of this fair gentleman.

PIRITHOUS Thanks, Theseus.

[to Arcite.] Whate'er you are, you're mine, and I shall give you
To a most noble service, to this lady,
This bright young virgin; pray observe her goodness.
You have honored her fair birthday with your virtues,
And as your due you're hers. Kiss her fair hand, sir.

ARCITE Sir, you're a noble giver. *[to Emilia.]* Dearest beauty,
Thus let me seal my vowed faith. *[He kisses her hand.]*
~~~ When your servant,
Your most unworthy creature, but offends you, ...

Command him die, he shall.
~~~

EMILIA That were too cruel.
If you deserve well, sir, I shall soon see't.

You're mine, and somewhat better than your rank I'll use you.

PIRITHOUS *[to Arcite.]* I'll see you furnished, and, because you say
You are a horseman, I must needs entreat you
This afternoon to ride -- but 'tis a rough one.

ARCITE I like him better, prince -- I shall not then
Freeze in my saddle.

THESEUS *[to Hippolyta.]* ~~~ Sweet, you must be ready --
And you, Emilia, *[to Pirithous.]* and you, friend -- and all,
Tomorrow by the sun, to do observance ...
To flow'ry May in Dian's wood. *[to Arcite.]* Wait well, sir,
Upon your mistress. -- Emily, I hope
He shall not go afoot.

EMILIA That were a shame, sir,

While I have horses. *[to Arcite.]* Take your choice, and what
You want, at any time, let me but know it.
If you serve faithfully, I dare assure you,
You'll find a loving mistress.

ARCITE If I do not,
Let me find that my father ever hated --
Disgrace and blows.

THESEUS Go, lead the way -- you have won it.
It shall be so: you shall receive all dues ...

Fit for the honor you have won. 'Twere wrong else.

[to Emilia.] Sister, beshrew my heart, you have a servant
That, if I were a woman, would be master.

But you are wise.

EMILIA I hope too wise for that, sir. *[Flourish. Exeunt.]*

Act II, Scene 6

Enter the Jailer's Daughter.

DAUGHTER Let all the dukes and all the devils roar --

He is at liberty! I have ventured for him,

And out I have brought him. To a little wood

A mile hence I have sent him, where a cedar

Higher than all the rest spreads like a plane,

Fast by a brook -- and there he shall keep close

'Till I provide him files and food, for yet

His iron bracelets are not off. O Love,

What a stout-hearted child thou art! My father

Durst better have endured cold iron than done it. ...

I love him beyond love and beyond reason

Or wit or safety. I have made him know it --

I care not, I am desperate. If the law

Find me and then condemn me for't, some wenches,

Some honest-hearted maids, will sing my dirge

And tell to memory my death was noble,

Dying almost a martyr. That way he takes,

I purpose, is my way too. Sure, he cannot

Be so unmanly as to leave me here.

If he do, maids will not so easily ...

Trust men again. And yet, he has not thanked me

For what I have done -- no, not so much as kissed me --

And that, methinks, is not so well. Nor scarcely

Could I persuade him to become a free man,

He made such scruples of the wrong he did

To me and to my father. Yet, I hope

When he considers more, this love of mine

Will take more root within him. Let him do

What he will with me -- so he use me kindly.

For use me, so he shall, or I'll proclaim him, ...

And to his face, no man. I'll presently

Provide him with necessaries and pack my clothes up,

And where there is a patch of ground I'll venture,

So he be with me. By him, like a shadow,

I'll ever dwell. Within this hour the hubbub

Will be all o'er the prison -- I am then

Kissing the man they look for. Farewell, father;

Get many more such prisoners and such daughters,

And shortly you may keep yourself. Now to him. *[Exit.]*

ACT III, Scene 1

A bush in place. Cornets in sundry places. Noise and hollering as of people a-Maying. *Enter* Arcite.

ARCITE The Duke has lost Hippolyta -- each took

A several laund. This is a solemn rite

They owe bloomed May, and the Athenians pay it

To th' heart of ceremony. O, Queen Emilia,

Fresher than May, sweeter

Than her gold buttons on the boughs, or all

Th'enameled knacks o'th' mead or garden -- yea,

We challenge too the bank of any nymph

That makes the stream seem flowers; thou, O jewel

O'th' wood, o'th' world, has likewise blessed a pace ...

With thy sole presence in thy

[~~~] rumination

That I, poor man, might eftsoons come between

And chop on some cold thought. Thrice blessed chance

To drop on such a mistress, expectation

Most guiltless on't! Tell me, O Lady Fortune,

Next after Emily my sovereign, how far

I may be proud. She takes strong note of me,

Hath made me near her, and this beauteous morn,

The prim'st of all the year, presents me with ...

A brace of horses -- two such steeds might well

Be by a pair of kings backed, in a field

That their crowns' titles tried. Alas, alas,

Poor cousin Palamon, poor prisoner -- thou

So little dream'st upon my fortune that

Thou think'st thyself the happier thing to be

So near Emilia. Me thou deem'st at Thebes,

And therein wretched, although free. But if

Thou knew'st my mistress breathed on me, and that

I eared her language, lived in her eye -- O, coz, ...

hat passion would enclose thee!

[*Enter* Palamon as out of a bush with his shackles. He bends his fist at Arcite.]

PALAMON   Traitor kinsman,
Thou shouldst perceive my passion if these signs
Of prisonment were off me, and this hand
But owner of a sword. By all oaths in one,
I and the justice of my love would make thee
A confessed traitor. O thou most perfidious
That ever gently looked, the void'st of honor
That e'er bore gentle token, falsest cousin
That ever blood made kin -- call'st thou her thine?
I'll prove it in my shackles, with these hands, ...
Void of appointment, that thou liest and art
A very thief in love, a chaffy lord
Not worth the name of villain. Had I a sword
And these house-clogs away --

ARCITE   Dear cousin Palamon --

PALAMON   Cozener Arcite, give me language such
As thou has showed me feat.

ARCITE Not finding in
The circuit of my breast any gross stuff
To form me like your blazon holds me to
This gentleness of answer -- 'tis your passion
That thus mistakes, the which, to you being enemy,
Cannot to me be kind. Honor and honesty
I cherish and depend on, howsoe'er
You skip them in me, and with them, fair coz,
I'll maintain my proceedings. Pray be pleased
To show in generous terms your griefs, since that
Your question's with your equal, who professes
To clear his own way with the mind and sword
Of a true gentleman.

PALAMON That thou durst, Arcite!

ARCITE My coz, my coz, you have been well advertised
How much I dare; you've seen me use my sword ...
Against th'advice of fear. Sure, of another
You would not hear me doubted, but your silence

Should break out, though i' th' sanctuary.

PALAMON Sir,
I have seen you move in such a place which well
Might justify your manhood; you were called
A good knight and a bold. But the whole week's not fair
If any day it rain: their valiant temper
Men lose when they incline to treachery,
And then they fight like compelled bears -- would fly
Were they not tied.

ARCITE Kinsman, you might as well ...
Speak this and act it in your glass as to
His ear which now disdains you.

PALAMON Come up to me,
Quit me of these cold gyves, give me a sword,
Though it be rusty, and the charity
Of one meal lend me. Come before me then,
A good sword in thy hand, and do but say
That Emily is thine -- I will forgive

The trespass thou hast done me, yea, my life,
If then thou carry't; and brave souls in shades
That have died manly, which will seek of me ...
Some news from earth, they shall get none but this --
That thou art brave and noble.

ARCITE Be content,
Again betake you to your hawthorn house.
With counsel of the night I will be here
With wholesome viands. These impediments
Will I file off. You shall have garments and
Perfumes to kill the smell o'th' prison. After,
When you shall stretch yourself and say but 'Arcite,
I am in plight', there shall be at your choice
Both sword and armor.

PALAMON O, you heavens, dares any ...
So noble bear a guilty business! None
But only Arcite, therefore none but Arcite
In this kind is so bold.

ARCITE Sweet Palamon.

PALAMON I do embrace you and your offer -- for
Your offer do't I only, sir; your person,
Without hypocrisy, I may not wish *[Wind horns within]*
More than my sword's edge on't.

ARCITE You hear the horns --

Enter your musit lest this match between's

Be crossed ere met. Give me your hand, farewell.
I'll bring you every needful thing -- I pray you, ...

Take comfort and be strong.

PALAMON Pray hold your promise,
And do the deed with a bent brow. Most certain
You love me not -- be rough with me and pour
This oil out of your language. By this air,
I could for each word give a cuff, my stomach

Not reconciled by reason.

ARCITE Plainly spoken,

Yet -- pardon me -- hard language: when I spur *[Wind horns within.]*

My horse I chide him not. Content and anger

In me have but one face. Hark, sir, they call

The scattered to the banquet. You must guess ...

I have an office there.

PALAMON Sir, your attendance

Cannot please heaven, and I know your office

Unjustly is achieved.

ARCITE 'Tis a good title.

I am persuaded this question, sick between's,

By bleeding must be cured. I am a suitor

That to your sword you will bequeath this plea

And talk of it no more.

PALAMON But this one word:

You are going now to gaze upon my mistress --

For note you, mine she is --

ARCITE Nay then --

PALAMON Nay, pray you --
You talk of feeding me to breed me strength --
You are going now to look upon a sun
That strengthens what it looks on. There you have
A vantage o'er me, but enjoy it till
I may enforce my remedy. Farewell.

[Exeunt severally, Palamon as into the bush.]

Act III, Scene 2

Enter the Jailer's Daughter, with a file.

DAUGHTER He has mistook the brake I meant, is gone

After his fancy. 'Tis now well nigh morning.
No matter -- would it were perpetual night,
And darkness lord o'th' world. Hark, 'tis a wolf!
In me hath grief slain fear, and, but for one thing,
I care for nothing -- and that's Palamon.
I reck not if the wolves would jaw me, so
He had this file. What if I hollered for him?

I cannot holler. If I whooped, what then?
If he not answered, I should call a wolf
And do him but that service. I have heard
Strange howls this live-long night -- why may't not be
They have made prey of him? He has no weapons;
He cannot run; the jangling of his gyves
Might call fell things to listen, who have in them
A sense to know a man unarmed, and can
Smell where resistance is. I'll set it down
He's torn to pieces: they howled many together
And then they fed on him. So much for that.
Be bold to ring the bell. How stand I then? ...

All's chared when he is gone. No, no, I lie:

My father's to be hanged for his escape,

Myself to beg, if I prized life so much

As to deny my act -- but that I would not,

Should I try death by dozens. I am moped --

Food took I none these two days,

Sipped some water. I have not closed mine eyes

Save when my lids scoured off their brine. Alas,

Dissolve, my life; let not my sense unsettle,

Lest I should drown or stab or hang myself.

O state of nature, fail together in me,

Since thy best props are warped. So which way now?

The best way is the next way to a grave,

Each errant step beside is torment. Lo,

The moon is down, the crickets chirp, the screech-owl

Calls in the dawn. All offices are done

Save what I fail in; but the point is this,

An end, and that is all. *[Exit.]*

Act III, Scene 3

Enter Arcite with a bundle containing meat, wine, and files.

ARCITE I should be near the place. Ho, cousin Palamon!

PALAMON Arcite.

ARCITE The same, I have brought you food and files.
Come forth and fear not, here's no Theseus.

PALAMON Nor none so honest, Arcite.

ARCITE That's no matter --
We'll argue that hereafter. Come, take courage --
You shall not die thus beastly. Here, sir, drink;
I know you are faint. Then I'll talk further with you.

PALAMON Arcite, you mightst now poison me.

ARCITE I might --

But I must fear you first. Sit down and, good now,
No more of these vain parleys. Let us not, ...
Having our ancient reputation with us,
Make talk for fools and cowards. To your health, sir.

PALAMON Do. *[Arcite drinks.]*

ARCITE Pray sit down, then, and let me entreat you,
By all the honesty and honor in you,
No mention of this woman -- 'twill disturb us.
We shall have time enough.

PALAMON Well, sir, I'll pledge you. *[Palamon drinks.]*

ARCITE Drink a good hearty draught; it breeds good blood, man.
Do not you feel it thaw you?

PALAMON Stay, I'll tell you
After a draught or two more. *[Palamon drinks.]*

ARCITE Spare it not --

The Duke has more, coz. Eat now.

PALAMON Yes. *[Palamon eats.]*

ARCITE I am glad ...

You have so good a stomach.

PALAMON I am gladder

I have so good meat to't.

ARCITE Is't not mad, lodging

Here in the wild woods, cousin?

PALAMON Yes, for them

That have wild consciences.

ARCITE How tastes your victuals?

Your hunger needs no sauce, I see.

PALAMON Not much.

But if it did, yours is too tart, sweet cousin.

What is this?

ARCITE Venison.

PALAMON 'Tis a lusty meat --

Give me more wine. Here, Arcite, to the wenches

We have known in our days. *[Drinking.]* The lord steward's daughter.

Do you remember her?

ARCITE After you, coz. ...

PALAMON She loved a black-haired man.

ARCITE She did so; well, sir.

PALAMON And I have heard some call him Arcite, and --

ARCITE Out with't, faith.

PALAMON She met him in an arbor --

What did she there, coz? Play o'th' virginals?

ARCITE Something she did, sir --

PALAMON Made her groan a month for't --
Or two, or three, or ten.

ARCITE The marshal's sister
Had her share too, as I remember, cousin,
Else there be tales abroad. You'll pledge her?

PALAMON Yes. *[They drink.]*

ARCITE A pretty brown wench 'tis. There was a time
When young men went a-hunting, and a wood, ...
And a broad beech, and thereby hangs a tale --
Heigh-ho!

PALAMON For Emily, upon my life! Fool,
Away with this strained mirth. I say again,
That sigh was breathed for Emily. Base cousin,

Dar'st thou break first?

ARCITE You are wide.

PALAMON By heaven and earth,

There's nothing in thee honest.

ARCITE Then I'll leave you --

You are a beast now.

PALAMON As thou mak'st me, traitor.

ARCITE *[Pointing to the bundle.]*

There's all things needful: files and shirts and perfumes --

I'll come again some two hours hence and bring

That that shall quiet all.

PALAMON A sword and armor

ARCITE Fear me not. You are now too foul. Farewell.

Get off your trinkets: you shall want naught.

PALAMON Sirrah --

ARCITE I'll hear no more. *[Exit.]*

PALAMON If he keep touch, he dies for't. *[Exit, as into the bush.]*

Act III, Scene 4

Enter the Jailer's Daughter.

DAUGHTER I am very cold, and all the stars are out too,
The little stars and all that, that look like aglets --
The sun has seen my folly. Palamon!
Alas, no, he's in heaven. Where am I now?

Yonder's the sea and there's a ship -- how't tumbles!
And there's a rock lies watching under water --
Now, now, it beats upon it -- now, now, now,
There's a leak sprung, a sound one -- how they cry!

Open her before the wind -- you'll lose all else.
Up with a course or two and tack about, boys. ...

Good night, good night, you're gone. I am very hungry.
Would I could find a fine frog -- he would tell me
News from all parts o'th' world, then would I make
A carrack of a cockle-shell, and sail
By east and north-east to the King of Pygmies,
For he tells fortunes rarely. Now my father,
Twenty to one, is trussed up in a trice
Tomorrow morning. I'll say never a word.

[She sings.]
For I'll cut my green coat, a foot above my knee,
And I'll clip my yellow locks, an inch below mine eye, ...
Hey nonny, nonny, nonny,
He s'buy me a white cut, forth for to ride,
And I'll go seek him, through the world that is so wide,
Hey nonny, nonny, nonny
O for a prick now, like a nightingale,

To put my breast against. I shall sleep like a top else. *[Exit]*

Act III, Scene 5

Enter Gerald (a schoolmaster), five Countrymen, one of whom is dressed as a Babion *[baboon]* , five Wenches, and Timothy, a taborer. All are attired as morris dancers.

SCHOOLMASTER   Fie, fie,

What tediosity and disinsanity

Is here among ye! Have my rudiments

Been labored so long with ye, milked unto ye,

And, by a figure, even the very plum-broth

And marrow of my understanding laid upon ye?

And do you still cry 'how?' and 'wherefore?'

You most coarse frieze capacities, ye jean judgments,

Have I said, 'thus let be', and 'there let be',

And 'then let be', and no man understand me? ...

Proh deum, medius fidius -- ye are all dunces.
For why, here stand I. Here the Duke comes. There are you,
Close in the thicket. The Duke appears. I meet him,
And unto him I offer learned things
And many figures. He hears, and nods, and hums,
And then cries, 'Rare!', and I go forward. At length
I fling my cap up -- mark there -- then do you,
As once did Meleager and the boar,
Break comely out before him, like true lovers,
Cast yourselves in a body decently, ...

And sweetly, by a figure, trace and turn, boys.
1st COUNTRYMAN And sweetly we will do it, master Gerald.
2d COUNTRYMAN Draw up the company. Where's the taborer?

3d COUNTRYMAN Why, Timothy!

TABORER Here, my mad boys, have at ye!

SCHOOLMASTER But I say, where's these women?
4th COUNTRYMAN Here's Friz and Madeline.

2d COUNTRYMAN And little Luce with the white legs, and bounding Barbara.
1st COUNTRYMAN And freckled Nell, that never failed her master.

SCHOOLMASTER Where be your ribbons, maids? Swim with your bodies
And carry it sweetly and deliverly,
And now and then a favor and a frisk
NELL Let us alone, sir.

SCHOOLMASTER Where's the rest o'th' music?
3d COUNTRYMAN Dispersed as you commanded.

SCHOOLMASTER Couple, then,
And see what's wanting. Where's the babion?

[to the Babion.] My friend, carry your tail without offense
Or scandal to the ladies; and be sure
You tumble with audacity and manhood,
And when you bark, do it with judgment
BABION Yes, sir.

SCHOOLMASTER Quousque tandem? Here is a woman wanting!

4th COUNTRYMAN We may go whistle -- all the fat's i' th' fire.

SCHOOLMASTER We have, ...
As learned authors utter, washed a tile;
We have been fatuous, and labored vainly.
2d COUNTRYMAN This is that scornful piece, that scurvy hilding
That gave her promise faithfully she would be here --
Cicely, the seamstress' daughter.

The next gloves that I give her shall be dog-skin.
Nay, an she fail me once -- you can tell, Arcas,
She swore by wine and bread she would not break.

SCHOOLMASTER An eel and woman,
A learned poet says, unless by th' tail ...
And with thy teeth thou hold, will either fail --
In manners this was false position.
1st COUNTRYMAN A fire-ill take her! Does she flinch now?

3d COUNTRYMAN What

Shall we determine, sir?

SCHOOLMASTER   Nothing;

Our business is become a nullity,

Yea, and a woeful and a piteous nullity.

4th COUNTRYMAN   Now, when the credit of our town lay on it,

Now to be frampold, now to piss o'th' nettle!

Go thy ways -- I'll remember thee, I'll fit thee!

[Enter the Jailer's Daughter.]

DAUGHTER *[sings]*

The George Alow came from the south, ...

From the coast of Barbary-a;

And there he met with brave gallants of war,

By one, by two, by three-a.

'Well hailed, well hailed, you jolly gallants,

And whither now are you bound-a?

O let me have your company

Till I come to the sound-a.'

There was three fools fell out about an owlet --

The one he said it was an owl,

The other he said nay, ...

The third he said it was a hawk,

And her bells were cut away.

3d COUNTRYMAN There's a dainty madwoman, master,

Comes i' th' nick, as mad as a March hare.

If we can get her dance, we are made again.

I warrant her, she'll do the rarest gambols.

1st COUNTRYMAN A madwoman? We are made, boys.

SCHOOLMASTER *[to the Jailer's Daughter.]* And are you mad, good woman?

DAUGHTER I would be sorry else.

Give me your hand.

SCHOOLMASTER Why?

DAUGHTER I can tell your fortune. *[She examines his hand.]*

You are a fool. Tell ten -- I have posed him. Buzz! ...
Friend, you must eat no white bread -- if you do,
Your teeth will bleed extremely. Shall we dance, ho?
I know you -- you're a tinker, Sirrah tinker,
Stop no more holes but what you should.

SCHOOLMASTER   Dii boni --
A tinker, damsel?

DAUGHTER Or a conjurer --
Raise me a devil now and let him play
Qui passa o'th' bells and bones.

SCHOOLMASTER   Go, take her,
And fluently persuade her to a peace.
Et opus exegi, quod nec lovis ira, hec ignis --
Strike up, and lead her in.

2 COUNTRYMAN   Come, lass, let's trip it.

DAUGHTER I'll lead.

3 COUNTRYMAN Do, do.

SCHOOLMASTER Persuasively and cunningly --

[Wind horns within.] ~~~ away, boys,

I hear the horns. Give me some meditation,

And mark your cue.

[Exeunt all but Gerald the Schoolmaster.] ~~~ Pallas inspire me.

[Enter Theseus, Pirithous, Hippolyta, Emilia, Arcite, and train.]

THESEUS This way the stag took.

SCHOOLMASTER Stay and edify.

THESEUS What have we here?

PIRITHOUS Some country sport, upon my life, sir.

THESEUS *[to the Schoolmaster.]* Well sir, go forward -- we will edify.
Ladies, sit down -- we'll stay it.

[They sit, Theseus in a chair, the others on stools.]

SCHOOLMASTER Thou doughty Duke, all hail! All hail, sweet ladies.

THESEUS This is a cold beginning.

SCHOOLMASTER If you but favor, our country pastime made is.
We are a few of those collected here,
That ruder tongues distinguish 'villager';
And to say verity, and not to fable,
We are a merry rout, or else a rabble,
Or company, or by a figure, chorus,
That fore thy dignity will dance a morris. ...
And I, that am the rectifier of all,
By title, pedagogus, that let fall
The birch upon the breeches of the small ones,
And humble with a ferula the tall ones,
Do here present this machine, or this frame;

And dainty Duke, whose doughty dismal fame

From Dis to Daedalus, from post to pillar,

Is blown abroad, help me, thy poor well-willer,

And with thy twinkling eyes, look right and straight

Upon this mighty 'Moor' -- of mickle weight -- ...

'Ice' now comes in, which, being glued together,

Makes 'morris', and the cause that we come hither.

The body of our sport, of no small study,

I first appear, though rude, and raw, and muddy,

To speak, before thy noble grace, this tenor

At whose great feet I offer up my penner.

The next, the Lord of May and Lady bright;

The Chambermaid and Serving man, by night

That seek out silent hanging; then mine Host

And his fat Spouse, that welcomes, to their cost, ...

The galled traveler, and with a beck'ning

Informs the tapster to inflame the reck'ning;

Then the beest-eating Clown; and next, the Fool;

The babion with long tail and eke long tool,

Cum multis alits that make a dance --

Say 'aye', and all shall presently advance.

THESEUS Ay, aye, by any means, dear dominie.

PIRITHOUS Produce.

SCHOOLMASTER *[Knocks for the dance.]*

Intrate filii, come forth and foot it.

[He flings up his cap.] Music.

[The Schoolmaster ushers in May Lord, May Lady, Serving man, Chambermaid, A Country Clown, or Shepherd, Country Wench, An Host, Hostess, A He-Babion, She-Babion, A He-fool, The Jailer's Daughter, as She-fool.]

[All these people appareled to the life, the men issuing out of one door and the wenches from the other. They dance a morris.]

Ladies, if we have been merry,

And have pleased ye with a derry, ...

And a derry, and a down,

Say the schoolmaster's no clown.

Duke, if we have pleased thee too,

And have done as good boys should do,

Give us but a tree or twain

For a maypole, and again,

Ere another year run out,

We'll make thee laugh, and all this rout.

THESEUS Take twenty, dominie. *[to Hippolyta.]* How does my sweetheart?

HIPPOLYTA Never so pleased, sir.

EMILIA 'Twas an excellent dance, ...

And for a preface, I never heard a better.

THESEUS Schoolmaster, I thank you. One see 'em all rewarded.

PIRITHOUS And here's something to paint your pole withal.

[He gives them money.]

THESEUS Now to our sports again.

SCHOOLMASTER May the stag thou hunt'st stand long,

And thy dogs be swift and strong;

May they kill him without lets,

And the ladies eat his dowsets.

[Exit Theseus and train. Wind horns within.]

Come, we are all made. Dii deaeque omnes,

Ye have danced rarely, wenches. *[Exeunt.]*

Act III, Scene 6

Enter Palamon from the bush.

PALAMON About this hour my cousin gave his faith

To visit me again, and with him bring

Two swords and two good armors; if he fail,

He's neither man nor soldier. When he left me,

I did not think a week could have restored

My lost strength to me, I was grown so low

And crest-fall'n with my wants. I thank thee, Arcite,

Thou art yet a fair foe, and I feel myself,

With this refreshing, able once again

To out-dure danger. To delay it longer ...

Would make the world think, when it comes to hearing,

That I lay fatting, like a swine, to fight,

And not a soldier. Therefore this blest morning

Shall be the last; and that sword he refuses,

If it but hold, I kill him with; 'tis justice.

So, love and fortune for me!

[Enter Arcite with two armors and two swords.]

~~~ O, good morrow.

ARCITE Good morrow, noble kinsman.

PALAMON I have put you
To too much pains, sir.

ARCITE That too much, fair cousin,
Is but a debt to honor, and my duty.

PALAMON Would you were so in all, sir -- I could wish ye ...
As kind a kinsman, as you force me find
A beneficial foe, that my embraces
Might thank ye, not my blows.

ARCITE I shall think either,
Well done, a noble recompense.

PALAMON Then I shall quit you.
~~~

ARCITE Defy me in these fair terms, and you show
More than a mistress to me -- no more anger,
As you love anything that's honorable.
We were not bred to talk, man. When we are armed
And both upon our guards, then let our fury,
Like meeting of two tides, fly strongly from us; ...
And then to whom the birthright of this beauty
Truly pertains -- without upbraidings, scorns,
Despisings of our persons, and such poutings
Fitter for girls and schoolboys -- will be seen,
And quickly, yours or mine. Will't please you arm, sir?
Or, if you feel yourself not fitting yet,
And furnished with your old strength, I'll stay, cousin,
And every day discourse you into health,
As I am spared. Your person I am friends with,
And I could wish I had not said I loved her, ...
Though I had died; but loving such a lady,
And justifying my love, I must not fly from't.

PALAMON Arcite, thou art so brave an enemy

That no man but thy cousin's fit to kill thee.

I am well and lusty -- choose your arms.

ARCITE Choose you, sir.

PALAMON Wilt thou exceed in all, or dost thou do it
To make me spare thee?

ARCITE If you think so, cousin,
You are deceived, for as I am a soldier,
I will not spare you.

PALAMON That's well said.

ARCITE You'll find it.

PALAMON Then as I am an honest man, and love ...
With all the justice of affection,
I'll pay thee soundly. *[He chooses one armor.]* This I'll take.

ARCITE *[indicating the remaining armor.]* ~~~ That's mine, then.

I'll arm you first.

PALAMON Do. *[Arcite arms Palamon.]* Pray thee tell me, cousin,

Where gott'st thou this good Armour?

ARCITE 'Tis the Duke's,

And to say true, I stole it. Do I pinch you?

PALAMON No.

ARCITE Is't not too heavy?

PALAMON I have worn a lighter --

But I shall make it serve.

ARCITE I'll buckle't close.

PALAMON By any means.

ARCITE You care not for a grand guard?

PALAMON No, no, we'll use no horses. I perceive

You would fain be at that fight.

ARCITE I am indifferent.

PALAMON Faith, so am I. Good cousin, thrust the buckle

Through far enough.

ARCITE I warrant you.

PALAMON My casque now.

ARCITE Will you fight bare-armed?

PALAMON We shall be the nimbler.

ARCITE But use your gauntlets, though -- those are o'th' least.

Prithee take mine, good cousin.

PALAMON Thank you, Arcite.

How do I look, Am I fall'n much away?

ARCITE Faith, very little -- love has used you kindly.

PALAMON I'll warrant thee, I'll strike home.

ARCITE Do, and spare not --
I'll give you cause, sweet cousin.

PALAMON Now to you, sir. *[Palamon arms Arcite.]*
Methinks this armor's very like that, Arcite, ...

Thou wor'st that day the three kings fell, but lighter.

ARCITE That was a very good one, and that day,
I well remember, you outdid me, cousin.
I never saw such valor. When you charged
Upon the left wing of the enemy,
I spurred hard to come up, and under me
I had a right good horse.

PALAMON You had indeed --
A bright bay, I remember.

ARCITE Yes, but all
Was vainly labored in me -- you outwent me, ...
Nor could my wishes reach you. Yet a little
I did by imitation.

PALAMON More by virtue --
You are modest, cousin.

ARCITE When I saw you charge first,
Methought I heard a dreadful clap of thunder
Break from the troop.

PALAMON But still before that flew
The lightning of your valor. Stay a little,
Is not this piece too strait?

ARCITE No, no, 'tis well.

PALAMON I would have nothing hurt thee but my sword --
A bruise would be dishonor.

ARCITE Now I am perfect.

PALAMON Stand off, then.

ARCITE Take my sword; I hold it better.

PALAMON I thank ye. No, keep it -- your life lies on it. ...
Here's one -- if it but hold, I ask no more
For all my hopes. My cause and honor guard me.

ARCITE And me, my love.
They bow several ways, then advance and stand.)
~~~ Is there aught else to say?

PALAMON This only, and no more. Thou art mine aunt's son,
And that blood we desire to shed is mutual:
In me, thine, and in thee, mine. My sword
Is in my hand, and if thou kill'st me,
~~~

The gods and I forgive thee. If there be

A place prepared for those that sleep in honor,

I wish his weary soul that falls may win it.

Fight bravely, cousin. Give me thy noble hand.

ARCITE Here, Palamon. This hand shall never more

Come near thee with such friendship.

PALAMON I commend thee.

ARCITE If I fall, curse me, and say I was a coward --

For none but such dare die in these just trials.

Once more farewell, my cousin.

PALAMON Farewell, Arcite. [Fight. Horns within; they stand.]

ARCITE Lo, cousin, lo, our folly has undone us.

PALAMON Why?

ARCITE This is the Duke a-hunting, as I told you.
If we be found, we are wretched. O, retire,
For honor's sake, and safely, presently, ...
Into your bush again. Sir, we shall find
Too many hours to die. In, gentle cousin --
If you be seen, you perish instantly
For breaking prison, and I, if you reveal me,
for my contempt. Then all the world will scorn us,
And say we had a noble difference,
But base disposers of it.

PALAMON No, no, cousin,
I will no more be hidden, nor put off
This great adventure to a second trial.
I know your cunning and I know your cause -- ...
He that faints now, shame take him! Put thyself
Upon thy present guard --

ARCITE You are not mad?

PALAMON Or I will make th'advantage of this hour

Mine own, and what to come shall threaten me
I fear less than my fortune. Know, weak cousin,
I love Emilia, and in that I'll bury
Thee and all crosses else.

ARCITE Then come what can come,
Thou shalt know, Palamon, I dare as well
Die as discourse or sleep. Only this fears me,
The law will have the honor of our ends.

Have at thy life!

PALAMON Look to thine own well, Arcite!

[They fight again. Horns, *Enter* Theseus, Hippolyta, Emilia, Pirithous, and train. Theseus separates Palamon and Arcite.]

THESEUS What ignorant and mad malicious traitors
Are you, that 'gainst the tenor of my laws
Are making battle, thus like knights appointed,
Without my leave and officers of arms?

By Castor, both shall die.

PALAMON Hold thy word, Theseus.
We are certainly both traitors both despisers
Of thee and of thy goodness. I am Palamon,
That cannot love thee, he that broke thy prison --
Think well what that deserves. And this is Arcite; ...
A bolder traitor never trod thy ground,
A falser ne'er seemed friend. This is the man
Was begged and banished; this is he contemns thee,
And what thou dar'st do; and in this disguise,
Against thine own edict, follows thy sister,
That fortunate bright star, the fair Emilia,
Whose servant -- if there be a right in seeing
And first bequeathing of the soul to -- justly
I am; and, which is more, dares think her his.

This treachery, like a most trusty lover, ...
I called him now to answer. If thou be'st
As thou art spoken, great and virtuous,

The true decider of all injuries,
Say, 'Fight again', and thou shalt see me, Theseus,
Do such a justice thou thyself wilt envy.

Then take my life -- I'll woo thee to't.

PIRITHOUS   O heaven,
What more than man is this!

THESEUS   I have sworn.

ARCITE   We seek not
Thy breath of mercy, Theseus. 'Tis to me
A thing as soon to die as thee to say it,
And no more moved. Where this man calls me traitor ...
Let me say this much -- if in love be treason,
In service of so excellent a beauty,
As I love most, and in that faith will perish,
As I have brought my life here to confirm it,
As I have served her truest, worthiest,
As I dare kill this cousin that denies it,

So let me be most traitor and ye please me.
For scorning thy edict, Duke, ask that lady
Why she is fair, and why her eyes command me
Stay here to love her, and if she say, 'Traitor', ...

I am a villain fit to lie unburied.

PALAMON Thou shalt have pity of us both, O Theseus,
If unto neither thou show mercy. Stop,
As thou art just, thy noble ear against us;
As thou art valiant, for thy cousin's soul,
Whose twelve strong labors crown his memory,
Let's die together, at one instant, Duke.

Only a little let him fall before me.
That I may tell my soul he shall not have her.

THESEUS I grant your wish; for to say true, your cousin ...
Has ten times more offended, for I gave him
More mercy than you found, sir, your offenses
Being no more than his. None here speak for 'em,

For ere the sun set both shall sleep for ever.

HIPPOLYTA *[to Emilia.]* Alas, the pity! Now or never, sister,
Speak, not to be denied. That face of yours
Will bear the curses else of after ages
For these lost cousins.

EMILIA In my face, dear sister,
I find no anger to 'em, nor no ruin.

The misadventure of their own eyes kill 'em. ...
Yet that I will be woman and have pity, *[She kneels.]*
My kneels shall grow to th' ground, but I'll get mercy.
Help me, dear sister -- in a deed so virtuous
The powers of all women will be with us.

[Hippolyta kneels.] Most royal brother --

HIPPOLYTA Sir, by our tie of marriage --

EMILIA By your own spotless honor --

HIPPOLYTA By that faith,

That fair hand, and that honest heart you gave me --

EMILIA By that you would have pity in another,

By your own virtues infinite --

HIPPOLYTA By valor,

By all the chaste nights I have ever pleased you -

THESEUS These are strange conjurings.

PIRITHOUS Nay, then, I'll in too.

[He kneels.] By all our friendship, sir, by all our dangers,

By all you love most: wars, and this sweet lady --

EMILIA By that you would have trembled to deny

A blushing maid --

HIPPOLYTA By your own eyes, by strength --

In which you swore I went beyond all women,
Almost all men -- and yet I yielded, Theseus --

PIRITHOUS To crown all this, by your most noble soul,
Which cannot want due mercy, I beg first --

HIPPOLYTA Next hear my prayers --

EMILIA Last let me entreat, sir --

PIRITHOUS For mercy.

HIPPOLYTA Mercy.

EMILIA Mercy on these princes.

THESEUS Ye make my faith reel. Say I felt
Compassion to 'em both, how would you place it? *[They rise.]*

EMILIA Upon their lives -- but with their banishments.

THESEUS You are a right woman, sister: you have pity,
But want the understanding where to use it.
If you desire their lives, invent a way
Safer than banishment. Can these two live,
And have the agony of love about 'em,
And not kill one another? Every day ...
They'd fight about you, hourly bring your honor
In public question with their swords. Be wise, then,
And her forget 'em. It concerns your credit
And my oath equally. I have said -- they die.

Better they fall by th' law than one another.
Bow not my honor.

EMILIA O my noble brother,
That oath was rashly made, and in your anger.
Your reason will not hold it. If such vows
Stand for express will, all the world must perish.

Beside, I have another oath 'gainst yours, ...
Of more authority, I am sure more love --

Not made in passion, neither, but good heed.

THESEUS What is it, sister?

PIRITHOUS *[to Emilia]* ~~~ Urge it home, brave lady.

EMILIA That you would ne'er deny me anything
Fit for my modest suit and your free granting.
I tie you to your word now; if ye fail in't,
Think how you maim your honor --
For now I am set a-begging, sir. I am deaf
To all but your compassion -- how their lives
Might breed the ruin of my name, opinion. ...
Shall anything that loves me perish for me?
That were a cruel wisdom: do men prune
The straight young boughs that blush with thousand blossoms
Because they may be rotten? O, Duke Theseus,
The goodly mothers that have groaned for these,
And all the longing maids that ever loved,
If your vow stand, shall curse me and my beauty,
And in their funeral songs for these two cousins

Despise my cruelty and cry woe worth me,

Till I am nothing but the scorn of women. ...

For heaven's sake, save their lives and banish 'em.

THESEUS On what conditions?

EMILIA Swear 'em never more

To make me their contention, or to know me,

To tread upon thy dukedom; and to be,

Wherever they shall travel, ever strangers

To one another.

PALAMON I'll be cut a-pieces

Before I take this oath -- forget I love her?

O all ye gods, despise me, then. Thy banishment

I not mislike, so we may fairly carry

Our swords and cause along -- else, never trifle, ...

But take our lives, Duke. I must love, and will;

And for that love must and dare kill this cousin

On any piece the earth has.

THESEUS Will you, Arcite,
Take these conditions?

PALAMON He's a villain then.

PIRITHOUS These are men!

ARCITE No, never, Duke. 'Tis worse to me than begging,
To take my life so basely. Though I think
I never shall enjoy her, yet I'll preserve
The honor of affection and die for her,
Make death a devil.

THESEUS What may be done? For now I feel compassion.

PIRITHOUS Let it not fall again, sir.

THESEUS Say, Emilia,
If one of them were dead -- as one must -- are you
Content to take the other to your husband?
They cannot both enjoy you. They are princes

As goodly as your own eyes, and as noble
As ever fame yet spoke of. Look upon 'em,
And if you can love, end this difference.
I give consent. *[to Palamon and Arcite.]* Are you content too, princes?

PALAMON and ARCITE With all our souls.

THESEUS He that she refuses
Must die, then.

PALAMON and ARCITE Any death thou canst invent, Duke.

PALAMON If I fall from that mouth, I fall with favor,
And lovers yet unborn shall bless my ashes.

ARCITE If she refuse me, yet my grave will wed me,
And soldiers sing my epitaph.

THESEUS *[to Emilia.]* ~~~ Make choice, then.

EMILIA I cannot, sir. They are both too excellent

For me, a hair shall never fall of these men.

HIPPOLYTA *[to Theseus.]* What will become of 'em?

THESEUS Thus I ordain it,
And by mine honor once again it stands,
Or both shall die. *[to Palamon and Arcite.]* You shall both to your country,
And each within this month, accompanied ...
With three fair knights, appear again in this place,
In which I'll plant a pyramid; and whether,
Before us that are here, can force his cousin,
By fair and knightly strength, to touch the pillar,
He shall enjoy her; the other lose his head,
And all his friends; nor shall he grudge to fall,
Nor think he dies with interest in this lady.
Will this content ye?

PALAMON Yes. Here, cousin Arcite,
I am friends again till that hour.

ARCITE I embrace ye.

THESEUS *[to Emilia.]* Are you content, sister?

EMILIA Yes, I must, sir. ...
Else both miscarry.

THESEUS *[to Palamon and Arcite.]* Come, shake hands again, then,
And take heed, as you are gentlemen, this quarrel
Sleep till the hour prefixed, and hold your course.

PALAMON We dare not fail thee, Theseus.

THESEUS Come, I'll give ye
Now usage like to princes and to friends.
When ye return, who wins I'll settle here,
Who loses, yet I'll weep upon his bier.

[Exeunt. The bush is removed.]

ACT IV, Scene 1

Enter the Jailer and his Friend.

JAILER Hear you no more? Was nothing said of me
Concerning the escape of Palamon?

Good sir, remember.

FRIEND Nothing that I heard,
For I came home before the business
Was fully ended. Yet I might perceive,
Ere I departed, a great likelihood
Of both their pardons: for Hippolyta
And fair-eyed Emily upon their knees
Begged with such handsome pity that the Duke,
Methought, stood staggering whether he should follow ...
His rash oath or the sweet compassion
Of those two ladies; and to second them
That truly noble prince, Pirithous --
Half his own heart -- set in too, that I hope
All shall be well. Neither heard I one question

Of your name or his scape. *[Enter the Second Friend.]*

JAILER Pray heaven it hold so.

2 FRIEND Be of good comfort, man. I bring you news,
Good news.

JAILER They are welcome.

2 FRIEND Palamon has cleared you,
And got your pardon, and discovered how
And by whose means he scaped -- which was your daughter's, ...
Whose pardon is procured too; and the prisoner,
Not to be held ungrateful to her goodness,
Has given a sum of money to her marriage --
A large one, I'll assure you.

JAILER Ye are a good man,
And ever bring good news.

1 FRIEND How was it ended?

2 FRIEND Why, as it should be: they that ne'er begged,
But they prevailed, had their suits fairly granted --
The prisoners have their lives.

1 FRIEND I knew't would be so.

2 FRIEND But there be new conditions which you'll hear of
At better time.

JAILER I hope they are good.

2 FRIEND They are honorable -- ...
How good they'll prove I know not. *[Enter the Wooer.]*

1 FRIEND 'Twill be known.

WOOER Alas, sir, where's your daughter?

JAILER Why do you ask?

WOOER O, sir, when did you see her?

2 FRIEND How he looks!

JAILER This morning.

WOOER Was she well? Was she in health?
Sir, when did she sleep?

1 FRIEND These are strange questions.

JAILER I do not think she was very well: for now
You make me mind her, but this very day
I asked her questions and she answered me
So far from what she was, so childishly,
So sillily, as if she were a fool, ...
An innocent -- and I was very angry.

But what of her, sir?

WOOER Nothing but my pity --

But you must know it, and as good by me
As by another that less loves her --

JAILER Well, sir?

1 FRIEND Not right?

WOOER No, sir, not well.

2 FRIEND Not well?

WOOER 'Tis too true -- she is mad.

1 FRIEND It cannot be.

WOOER Believe, you'll find it so.

JAILER I half suspected
What you told me -- the gods comfort her!
Either this was her love to Palamon,
Or fear of my miscarrying on his scape, ...

Or both.

WOOER 'Tis likely.

JAILER But why all this haste, sir?

WOOER I'll tell you quickly. As I late was angling
In the great lake that lies behind the palace,
As patiently I was attending sport,
I heard a voice -- a shrill one -- and attentive
I gave my ear, when I might well perceive
'Twas one that sung, and by the smallness of it
A boy or woman. I then left my angle
To his own skill, came hear, but yet perceived not ...
Who made the sound, the rushes and the reeds
Had so encompassed it. I laid me down
And listened to the words she sung, for then,
Through a small glade cut by the fishermen,
I saw it was your daughter.

JAILER Pray go on, sir.

WOOER She sung much, but no sense; only I heard her
Repeat this often -- 'Palamon is gone,
Is gone to th' wood to gather mulberries;
I'll find him out tomorrow.'

1 FRIEND Pretty soul!

WOOER 'His shackles will betray him -- he'll be taken, ...
And what shall I do then? I'll bring a bevy,
A hundred black-eyed maids that love as I do,
With chaplets on their heads of daffodillies,
With cherry lips and cheeks of damask roses,
And all we'll dance an antic fore the Duke
And beg his pardon.' Then she talked of you, sir --
That you must lose your head tomorrow morning,
And she must gather flowers to bury you,
And see the house made handsome. Then she sung
Nothing but 'willow, willow, willow', and between...
Ever was 'Palamon, fair Palamon',

And 'Palamon was a tall young man'. The place
Was knee-deep where she sat; her careless tresses
A wreath of bull-rush rounded; about her stuck
Thousand freshwater flowers of several colors --
That she appeared, methought, like the fair nymph
That feeds the lake with waters, or as Iris
Newly dropped down from heaven. Rings she made
Of rushes that grew by, and to 'em spoke
The prettiest posies -- 'Thus our true love's tied', ...
'This you may lose, not me', and many a one.
And then she wept, and sung again, and sighed --
And with the same breath smiled and kissed her hand.

2 FRIEND Alas, what pity it is!

WOOER I made in to her;
She saw me and straight sought the flood -- I saved her,
And set her safe to land, when presently
She slipped away and to the city made,
With such a cry and swiftness that, believe me,
She left me far behind her. Three or four

I saw from far off cross her -- one of 'em ...

I knew to be your brother, where she stayed

And fell, scarce to be got away. I left them with her,

[Enter the Jailer's Brother, the Jailer's Daughter, and others.]

And hither came to tell you -- here they are.

DAUGHTER *[sings.]* 'May you never more enjoy the light ...' --

Is not this a fine song?

BROTHER O, a very fine one.

DAUGHTER I can sing twenty more.

BROTHER I think you can

DAUGHTER Yes, truly can I -- I can sing 'The Broom'

And 'Bonny Robin' -- are not you a tailor?

BROTHER Yes.

DAUGHTER Where's my wedding gown?

BROTHER I'll bring it tomorrow.

DAUGHTER Do, very rarely -- I must be abroad else, ...
To call the maids and pay the minstrels,
For I must lose my maidenhead by cock light,
'Twill never thrive else. *[Sings.]* 'O fair, O sweet . . .'

BROTHER *[to the Jailer.]* You must e'en take it patiently.

JAILER ÔTis true.

DAUGHTER Good ev'n, good men. Pray, did you ever hear
Of one young Palamon?

JAILER Yes, wench, we know him.

DAUGHTER Is't not a fine young gentleman?

JAILER 'Tis, love.

BROTHER By no mean cross her, she is then distempered
Far worse than now she shows.

1 FRIEND *[to the Jailer's Daughter.]* ~~~ Yes, he's a fine man.

DAUGHTER O, is he so? You have a sister.

1 FRIEND Yes.

DAUGHTER But she shall never have him, tell her so,
For a trick that I know. You'd best look to her,
For if she see him once, she's gone -- she's done
And undone in an hour. All the young maids
Of our town are in love with him, but I laugh at 'em
And let 'em all alone. Is't not a wise course?

1 FRIEND Yes.

DAUGHTER There is at least two hundred now with child by him,
There must be four; yet I keep close for all this,

Close as a cockle; and all these must be boys --

He has the trick on't -- and at ten years old ...

They must be all gelt for musicians

And sing the wars of Theseus.

2 FRIEND This is strange.

JAILER'S BROTHER As ever you heard, but say nothing.

1 FRIEND No.

DAUGHTER They come from all parts of the dukedom to him.

I'll warrant ye, he had not so few last night

As twenty to dispatch. He'll tickle't up

In two hours, if his hand be in.

JAILER She's lost.

Past all cure.

BROTHER Heaven forbid, man!

DAUGHTER *[to the Jailer.]* Come hither -- you are a wise man.

1 FRIEND Does she know him?

2 FRIEND: No -- would she did.

DAUGHTER You are master of a ship?

JAILER Yes.

DAUGHTER Where's your compass?

JAILER Here.

DAUGHTER Set it to th' north.
And now direct your course to th' wood where Palamon
Lies longing for me. For the tackling,
Let me alone. Come, weigh, my hearts, cheerly all.

Uff, uff, uff! 'Tis up. The wind's fair. Top the bowline.
Out with the mainsail. Where's your whistle, master?

BROTHER Let's get her in.

JAILER Up to the top, boy!

BROTHER Where's the pilot?

1 FRIEND Here.

DAUGHTER What kenn'st thou?

2 FRIEND A fair wood.

DAUGHTER Bear for it, master.

Tack about!

[Sings] 'When Cynthia with her borrowed light' . . . *[Exeunt.]*

Act IV, Scene 2

Enter Emilia, with two pictures.

EMILIA Yet I may bind these wounds up that must open

And bleed to death for my sake else -- I'll choose,

And end their strife. Two such young handsome men

Shall never fall for me; their weeping mothers

Following the dead cold ashes of their sons,

Shall; never curse my cruelty. Good heaven,

What a sweet face has Arcite! If wise nature,

With all her best endowments, all those beauties

She sows into the births of noble bodies,

Were here a mortal woman and had in her ...

The coy denials of young maids, yet doubtless

She would run mad for this man. What an eye,

Of what fiery sparkle and quick sweetness

Has this young prince! Here love itself sits smiling!

Just such another wanton Ganymede

Set Jove afire once, and enforced the god
Snatch up the goodly boy and set him by him,
A shining constellation. What a brow,
Of what spacious majesty, he carries!
Arched like the great-eyed Juno's, but far sweeter, ...
Smoother than Pelops' shoulder! Fame and honor,
Methinks, from hence, as from a promontory
Pointed in heaven, should clap their wings and sing
To all the under world the loves and fights
Of gods, and such men near 'em. Palamon
Is but his foil; to him a mere dull shadow;
He's swart and meager, of an eye as heavy
As if he had lost his mother; a still temper,
No stirring in him, no alacrity,
Of all this sprightly sharpness, not a smile. ...

Yet these that we count errors may become him:
Narcissus was a sad boy, but a heavenly.

O, who can find the bent of woman's fancy?
I am a fool, my reason is lost in me,

I have no choice, and I have lied so lewdly

That women ought to beat me. On my knees

I ask thy pardon, Palamon, thou art alone

And only beautiful, and these the eyes,

These the bright lamps of beauty, that command

And threaten love -- and what young maid dare cross 'em? ...

What a bold gravity, and yet inviting,

Has this brown manly face? O, love this only

From this hour is complexion. Lie there, Arcite,

Thou art a changeling to him, a mere gypsy,

And this the noble body. I am sotted,

Utterly lost -- my virgin's faith has fled me.

For if my brother, but even now, had asked me

Whether I loved, I had run made for Arcite;

Now if my sister, more for Palamon.

Stand both together. Now come ask me, brother -- ...

Alas, I know not; ask me now, sweet sister --

I may go look. What a mere child is fancy,

That having two fair gauds of equal sweetness,

Cannot distinguish, but must cry for both!

[Enter a Gentleman.] How now, sir?

GENTLEMAN From the noble Duke your brother,

Madam I bring you news. The knights are come.

EMILIA To end the quarrel?

GENTLEMAN Yes.

EMILIA Would I might end first!

What sins have I committed, chaste Diana,

That my unspotted youth must now be soiled

With blood of princes, and my chastity ...

Be made the altar where the lives of lovers --

Two greater and two better never yet

Made mothers joy -- must be the sacrifice

To my unhappy beauty?

[Enter Theseus, Hippolyta, Pirithous, and attendants.]

THESEUS Bring 'em in

Quickly, by any means, I long to see 'em. *[Exit one or more.]*

[to Emilia.] Your two contending lovers are returned,

And with them their fair knights. Now, my fair sister,

You must love one of them.

EMILIA I had rather both,

So neither for my sake should fall untimely. *[Enter a Messenger.]*

THESEUS Who saw 'em?

PIRITHOUS I a while.

GENTLEMAN And I.

THESEUS *[to the Messenger]* From whence come you, sir?

MESSENGER From the knights.

THESEUS Pray speak.

You that have seen them, what they are.

MESSENGER I will, sir.

And truly what I think. Six braver spirits

Than these they have brought, if we judge by the outside,

I never saw nor read of. He that stands

In the first place with Arcite, by his seeming,

Should be a stout man; by his face, a prince,

His very looks so say him: his complexion,

Nearer a brown than black, stern and yet noble,

Which shows him hardy, fearless, proud of dangers. ...

The circles of his eyes show fire within him,

And, as a heated lion, so he looks.

His hair hangs long behind him, black and shining,

Like raven's wings. His shoulders, broad and strong;

Armed long and round; and on his thigh a sword

Hung by a curious baldric, when he frowns

To seal his well with. Better, o' my conscience,

Was never soldier's friend.

THESEUS Thou hast well described him.

PIRITHOUS Yet a great deal short, ...
Methinks, of him that's first with Palamon.

THESEUS Pray speak him, friend.

PIRITHOUS I guess he is a prince too,
And, if it may be, greater -- for his show
Has all the ornament of honor in't.
He's somewhat bigger than the knight he spoke of,
But of a face far sweeter. His complexion
Is as a ripe grape, ruddy. He has felt,
Without doubt, what he fights for, and so apter
To make this cause his own. In's face appears
All the fair hopes of what he undertakes, ...
And when he's angry, then a settled valor,
Not tainted with extremes, runs through his body
And guides his arm to brave things. Fear he cannot --
He shows no such soft temper. His head's yellow,
Hard-haired and curled, thick twined: like ivy tods,
Not to undo with thunder. In his face
The livery of the warlike maid appears,

Pure red and white -- for yet no beard has blessed him --
And in his rolling eyes sits victory, ...

As if she ever meant to court his valor.
His nose stands high, a character of honor;
His red lips, after fights, are fit for ladies.

EMILIA Must these men die too?

PIRITHOUS When he speaks, his tongue
Sounds like a trumpet. All his lineaments
Are as a man would wish 'em -- strong and clean.
He wears a well-steeled axe, the staff of gold.

His age, some five-and-twenty.

MESSENGER There's another -- ...
A little man, but of a tough soul, seeming
As great as any. Fairer promises
In such a body yet I never looked on.

PIRITHOUS O, he that's freckle-faced?

MESSENGER The same, my lord.
Are they not sweet ones?

PIRITHOUS Yes, they are well.

MESSENGER Methinks,
Being so few and well disposed, they show
Great and fine art in nature. He's white-haired --
Not wanton white, but such a manly color
Next to an auburn, tough and nimble set,
Which shows an active soul. His arms are brawny,
Lined with strong sinews -- to the shoulder piece
Gently they swell, like women new-conceived,
Which speaks him prone to labor, never fainting ...
Under the weight of arms; stout-hearted, still,
But when he stirs, a tiger. He's grey-eyed,
Which yields compassion where he conquers; sharp
To spy advantages, and where he finds 'em,
He's swift to make 'em his. He does no wrongs,

Nor takes none. He's round-faced, and when he smiles
He shows a lover; when he frowns, a soldier.
About his head he wears the winner's oak,
And in it stuck the favor of his lady.

His age, some six-and-thirty. In his hand ...
He bears a charging staff embossed with silver.

THESEUS Are they all thus?

PIRITHOUS They are all the sons of honor.

THESEUS Now as I have a soul, I long to see Ôem.

[to Hippolyta.] ~~~ Lady, you shall see men fight now.

HIPPOLYTA I wish it,
But not the cause, my lord. They would show
Bravely about the titles of two kingdoms --
'Tis pity love should be so tyrannous.

[to Emilia.] O my soft-hearted sister, what think you?

Weep not till they weep blood. Wench, it must be.

THESEUS *[to Emilia.]* You have steeled 'em with your beauty.

[to Pirithous.] ~~~ Honored friend, ...

To you I give the field: pray order it

Fitting the persons that must use it.

PIRITHOUS Yes, sir

THESEUS Come, I'll go visit 'em -- I cannot stay,

Their fame has fired me. Till they appear,

Good friend, be royal.

PIRITHOUS There shall want no bravery.

EMILIA *[Aside.]* Poor wench, go weep -- for whosoever wins

Loses a noble cousin for thy sins. *[Exeunt.]*

Act IV, Scene 3

Enter the Jailer, the Wooer, and the Doctor.

DOCTOR Her distraction is more at some time of the moon

than at other some, is it not?

JAILER She is continually in a harmless distemper: sleeps

little; altogether without appetite, save often drinking;

dreaming of another world, and a better; and what

broken piece of matter soe'er she's about, the name

'Palamon' lards it, that she farces every business.

[Enter the Jailer's Daughter.] withal, fits it to every question. Look where she comes --

you shall perceive her behavior. *[They stand apart.]*

DAUGHTER I have forgot it quite -- the burden on't ...

was 'Down-a, down-a' and penned by no worse man

than Giraldo, Emilia's schoolmaster. He's as fantastical,

too, as ever he may go upon's legs -- for in the next world will Dido see Palamon, and then will she be out

of love with Aeneas

DOCTOR What stuff's here? Poor soul.

JAILER E'en thus all day long.

DAUGHTER Now for this charm that I told you

of -- you must bring a piece of silver on the tip of your

tongue, or no ferry: then, if it be your chance to come ...

where the blessed spirits are -- there's a sight now! We

maids that have our livers perished, cracked to pieces

with love, we shall come there and do nothing all day

long but pick flowers with Proserpine. Then will I make

Palamon a nosegay, then let him mark me, then --

DOCTOR How prettily she's amiss! Note her a little further.

DAUGHTER Faith, I'll tell you: sometime we go to

barley-break, we of the blessed. Alas, 'tis a sore life

they have i' th' other place -- such burning, frying,

boiling, hissing, howling, chattering, cursing -- O they ...

have shrewd measure -- take heed! If one be mad or
hang or drown themselves, thither they go, Jupiter
bless us, and there shall we be put in a cauldron of
lead and usurers' grease, amongst a whole million of
cut-purses, and there boil like a gammon of bacon that
will never be enough.

DOCTOR How her brain coins!

DAUGHTER Lords and courtiers that have got
maids with child -- they are in this place. They shall
stand in fire up to the navel and in ice up to th' heart, ...
and there th'offending part burns, and the deceiving
part freezes -- in truth a very grievous punishment as
one would think for such a trifle. Believe me, one would
marry a leprous witch to be rid on't, I'll assure you.

DOCTOR How she continues this fancy! 'Tis not an
engrafted madness, but a most thick and profound melancholy.

DAUGHTER To hear there a proud lady and a

proud city wife howl together! I were a beast and I'd
call it good sport. One cries, 'O this smoke!', th'other, ...
'This fire!'; one cries, 'O that ever I did it behind the
arras!', and then howls -- th'other curses a suing fellow
and her garden-house.

[Sings] 'I will be true, my stars, my fate . . .' *[Exit Daughter.]*

JAILER *[to the Doctor.]* What think you of her, sir?

DOCTOR I think she has a perturbed mind, which I cannot minister to.

JAILER Alas, what then?

DOCTOR Understand you she ever affected any man ere she beheld Palamon?

JAILER I was once, sir, in great hope that she had fixed her
liking on this gentleman, my friend.

WOOER I did think so too, and would account I had a

great penn'orth on't to give half my state that both
she and I, at this present, stood unfeignedly on the same terms.

DOCTOR That intemperate surfeit of her eye hath distempered
the other senses. They may return and settle
again to execute their preordained faculties, but they
are now in a most extravagant vagary. This you must ...
do: confine her to a place where the light may rather
seem to steal in than be permitted; take upon you,
young sir her friend, the name of Palamon; say you
come to eat with her and to commune of love. This
will catch her attention, for this her mind beats upon --
other objects that are inserted 'tween her mind and
eye become the pranks and friskins of her madness.
Sing to her such green songs of love as she says
Palamon hath sung in prison; come to her stuck in as
sweet flowers as the season is mistress of, and thereto ...
make an addition of some other compounded odors
which are grateful to the sense. All this shall become
Palamon, for Palamon can sing, and Palamon is sweet
and every good thing. Desire to eat with her, carve

her, drink to her, and still among intermingle your petition of grace and acceptance into her favor. Learn what maids have been her companions and play-feres, and let them repair to her, with Palamon in their mouths, and appear with tokens as if they suggested for him. It is a falsehood she is in, which is with ... falsehoods to be combated. This may bring her to eat, to sleep, and reduce what's now out of square in her into their former law and regiment. I have seen it approved, how many times I know not, but to make the number more I have great hope in this. I will between the passages of this project come in with my appliance,. Let us put it in execution, and hasten the success, which doubt not will bring forth comfort. *[Exeunt.]*

Act V, Scene 1

An altar prepared. Flourish.   *Enter* Theseus, Pirithous, Hippolyta, attendants.

THESEUS Now let 'em enter and before the gods

Tender their holy prayers. Let the temples

Burn bright with sacred fires, and the altars

In hallowed clouds commend their swelling incense

To those above us. Let no due be wanting.

[Flourish of cornets.] They have a noble work in hand, will honor

The very powers that love 'em.

[Enter Palamon with his three Knights, at one door, and Arcite with his three Knights, at the other door.]

PIRITHOUS Sir, they enter.

THESEUS You valiant and strong-hearted enemies,

You royal german foes that this day come

To blow that nearness out that flames between ye, ...

Lay by your anger for an hour and dove-like,

Before the holy altars of your helpers,

The all-feared gods, bow down your stubborn bodies.

Your ire is more than mortal -- so your help be;

And as the gods regard ye, fight with justice.

I'll leave you to your prayers, and betwixt ye

I part my wishes.

PIRITHOUS Honor crown the worthiest.

[Exit Theseus and his train.]

PALAMON *[to Arcite.]* The glass is running now that cannot finish

Till one of us expire. Think you but thus,

That were there aught in me which strove to show ...

Mine enemy in this business, were't one eye

Against another, arm oppressed by arm,

I would destroy th'offender -- coz, I would,

Though parcel of myself. Then from this gather

How I should tender you.

ARCITE I am in labor

To push your name, your ancient love, our kindred,

Out of my memory, and i' th' self-same place

To seat something I would confound. So hoist we

The sails that must these vessels port even where

The heavenly limiter pleases.

PALAMON You speak well, ...

Before I turn, let me embrace thee, cousin --

This I shall never do again.

ARCITE One farewell.

PALAMON Why, let it be so -- farewell, coz.

ARCITE Farewell, sir. *[Exeunt Palamon and his three Knights.]*

Knights, kinsmen, lovers -- yea, my sacrifices,

True worshipers of Mars, whose spirit in you

Expels the seeds of fear and th'apprehension

Which still is father of it, go with me

Before the god of our profession. There

Require of him the hearts of lions and

The breath of tigers, yea, the fierceness too, ...

Yea, the speed also -- to go on, I mean,

Else wish we to be snails. You know my prize
Must be dragged out of blood -- force and great feat
Must put my garland on me, where she sticks,
The queen of flowers. Our intercession, then,
Must be to him that makes the camp a cistern
Brimmed with the blood of men -- give me your aid,
And bend your spirits towards him.

[They kneel before the altar, fall on their faces, then on their knees again.]

[Praying to Mars] ~~~ Thou mighty one,
That with thy power hast turned green Neptune into purple;
Whose havoc in vast field comets prewarn, ...
Unearthed skulls proclaim; whose breath blows down
The teeming Ceres' foison; who dost pluck
With hand armipotent from forth blue clouds
The masoned turrets, that both mak'st and break'st
The stony girths of cities; me thy pupil,
Youngest follower of thy drum, instruct this day
With military skill, that to thy laud
I may advance my streamer, and by thee

Be styled the lord o'th' day. Give me, great Mars,

Some token of thy pleasure. ...

[Here they fall on their faces, as formerly, and there is heard clanging of Armour, with a short thunder, as the burst of a battle, whereupon they all rise and bow to the altar.]

O great corrector of enormous times,

Shaker of e'er-rank states, thou grand decider

Of dusty and old titles, that heal'st with blood

The earth when it is sick, and cur'st the world

O'th' pleurisy of people, I do take

Thy signs auspiciously, and in thy name,

To my design, march boldly. *[to his Knights.]* Let us go.

Act V, Scene 2

Enter Palamon and his Knights with the former observance.

PALAMON *[to his Knights.]* Our stars must glister with new fire, or be

Today extinct. Our argument is love,

Which if the goddess of it grant, she gives
Victory too. Then blend your spirits with mine,
You whose free nobleness do make my cause
Your personal hazard. To the goddess Venus
Commend we our proceeding, and implore
Her power unto our party.

[Here they kneel before the altar, fall on their faces, then on their knees again.]

[Praying to Venus.] Hail, sovereign queen of secrets, who hast power
To call the fiercest tyrant from his rage ...
And weep unto a girl; that hast the might
Even with an eye-glance, to choke Mars's drum
And turn th'alarum to whispers; that canst make
A cripple flourish with his crutch, and cure him
Before Apollo; that mayst force the king
To be his subject's vassal, and induce
Stale gravity to dance; the polled bachelor
Whose youth, like wanton boys through bonfires,
Have skipped thy flame, at seventy thou canst catch
And make him to the scorn of his hoarse throat ...

Abuse young lays of love. What godlike power
Hast thou not power upon? To Phoebus thou
Add'st flames hotter than his -- the heavenly fires
Did scorch his mortal son, thine him. The huntress,
All moist and cold, some say, began to throw
Her bow away and sigh. Take to thy grave
Me, thy vowed soldier, who do bear thy yoke
As 'twere a wreath of roses, yet is heavier
Than lead itself, stings more than nettles.
I have never been foul-mouthed against thy law; ...
Ne'er revealed secret, for I knew none; would not,
Had I kenned all that were. I never practiced
Upon man's wife, nor would the libels read
Of liberal wits. I never at great feasts
Sought to betray a beauty, but have blushed
At simp'ring sirs that did. I have been harsh
To large confessors, and have hotly asked them
If they had mothers -- I had one, a woman,
And women 'twere they wronged. I knew a man
Of eighty winters, this I told them, who ...
A lass of fourteen brided -- 'twas thy power

To put life into dust. The aged cramp
Had screwed his square foot round,
The gout had knit his fingers into knots,
Torturing convulsions from his globy eyes
Had almost drawn their spheres, that what was life
In him seemed torture. This anatomy
Had by his young fair fere a boy, and I
Believed it was his, for she swore it was,
And who would not believe her? Brief -- I am ...
To those that prate and have done, no companion;
To those that boast, and have not, a defier;
To those that would and cannot, a rejoicer.
Yea, him I do not love that tells close offices
The foulest way, nor names concealments in
The boldest language. Such a one I am,
And vow that lover never yet made sigh
Truer than I. O, then, most soft sweet goddess,
Give me the victory of this question, which
Is true love's merit, and bless me with a sign ...

Of thy great pleasure.

[Here music is heard, doves are seen to flutter.

They fall again upon their faces, then on their knees.]

O thou that from eleven to ninety reign'st

In mortal bosoms, whose chase is this world

And we in herds thy game, I give thee thanks

For this fair token, which, being laid unto

Mine innocent true heart, arms in assurance

My body to this business. *[to his Knights.]* Let us rise

And bow before the goddess. *[They rise and bow.]*

~ Time comes on. *[Exeunt.]*

Act V, Scene 3

Still music of recorders. *Enter* Emilia in white, her hair about her shoulders, with a wheaten wreath; one in white holding up her train, her hair stuck with flowers; one before her carrying a silver hind in which is conveyed incense and sweet odors, which being set upon the altar, her maids standing apart, she sets fire to it. Then they curtsy and kneel.

EMILIA *[Praying to Diana.]* O sacred, shadowy, cold, and constant queen,

Abandoner of revels, mute contemplative,
Sweet, solitary, white as chaste, and pure
As wind-fanned snow, who to thy female knights
Allow'st no more blood than will make a blush,
Which is their order's robe: I here, thy priest,
Am humbled fore thine altar. O, vouchsafe
With that thy rare green eye, which never yet
Beheld thing maculate, look on thy virgin;
And, sacred silver mistress, lend thine ear -- ...
Which ne'er heard scurril term, into whose port
Ne'er entered wanton sound -- to my petition,
Seasoned with holy fear. This is my last
Of vestal office. I am bride-habited,
But maiden-hearted. A husband I have 'pointed,
But do not know him. Out of two, I should
Choose one and pray for his success, but I
Am guiltless of election. Of mine eyes
Were I to lose one, they are equal precious --
I could doom neither: that which perished should ...
Go to't unsentenced. Therefore, most modest queen,
He of the two pretenders that best loves me

And has the truest title in't, let him
Take off my wheaten garland, or else grant
The file and quality I hold I may
Continue in thy band.

[Here the hind vanishes under the altar and in the place ascends
a rose tree having one rose upon it.]*[to her women.]*
See what our general of ebbs and flows
Out from the bowels of her holy altar,
With sacred act, advances -- but one rose!
If well inspired, this battle shall confound ...
Both these brave knights, and I a virgin flower
Must grow alone, unplucked.

[Here is heard a sudden twang of instruments and the
rose falls from the tree.]
The flower is fall'n, the tree descends. *[to Diana]* O mistress,
Thou here dischargest me -- I shall be gathered.

I think so, but I know not thine own will.
Unclasp thy mystery. *[to her women.]* I hope she's pleased;

Her signs were gracious. *[They curtsy and exeunt.]*

Act V, Scene 4

Enter the Doctor, the Jailer, and the Wooer in the habit of Palamon.

DOCTOR Has this advice I told you done any good upon her?

WOOER O, very much. The maids that kept her company
have persuaded her that I am Palamon. Within
this half-hour she came smiling to me, and asked me
what I would eat, and when I would kiss her.

I told her presently, and kissed her twice.

DOCTOR 'Twas well done -- twenty times had been far better,
For there the cure lies mainly.

WOOER Then she told me

She would watch with me tonight, for well she knew
What hour my fit would take me.

DOCTOR Let her do so, ...
And when your fit comes, fit her home,
And presently.

WOOER She would have me sing.

DOCTOR You did so?

WOOER No.

DOCTOR 'Twas very ill done, then.
You should observe her every way.

WOOER Alas,
I have no voice, sir, to confirm her that way.

DOCTOR That's all one, if ye make a noise.
If she entreat again, do anything --

Lie with her if she ask you.

JAILER Ho there, Doctor.

DOCTOR Yes, in the way of cure.

JAILER But first, by your leave, ...
I'th' way of honesty,
DOCTOR That's but a niceness --
Ne'er cast your child away for honesty.
Cure her first this way, then if she will be honest,
She has the path before her.

JAILER Thank ye, Doctor.

DOCTOR Pray bring her in and let's see how she is
WOOER I will, and tell her her Palamon stays for her.
But, Doctor, methinks you are i' th' wrong still. *[Exit Jailer.]*

DOCTOR Go, go. You fathers are fine fools -- her honesty?
An we should give her physic till we find that --

WOOER Why, do you think she is not honest, sir?

DOCTOR How old is she?

WOOER She's eighteen.

DOCTOR She may be --
But that's all one. 'Tis nothing to our purpose.
Whate'er her father says, if you perceive
Her mood inclining that way that I spoke of,
Videlicet, the way of flesh -- you have me?

WOOER Yes, very well, sir.

DOCTOR Please her appetite,
And do it home -- it cures her, ipso facto,
The melancholy humor that infects her.

WOOER I am of your mind, Doctor.

[Enter the Jailer and his Daughter, mad.]

DOCTOR You'll find it so -- she comes; pray humor her. ...

[The Doctor and the Wooer stand apart.]

JAILER *[to Daughter.]* Come, your love Palamon stays for you, child,
And has done this long hour, to visit you.

DAUGHTER I thank him for his gentle patience.
He's a kind gentleman, and I am much bound to him.

Did you ne'er see the horse he gave me?

JAILER Yes.

DAUGHTER How do you like him?

JAILER He's a very fair one.

DAUGHTER You never saw him dance?

JAILER No.

DAUGHTER I have, often.
He dances very finely, very comely,
And, for a jig, come cut and long-tail to him,
He turns ye like a top.

JAILER That's fine, indeed.

DAUGHTER He'll dance the morris twenty mile an hour,
And that will founder the best hobbyhorse,
If I have any skill, in all the parish --
And gallops to the tune of 'Light o' love'.

What think you of this horse?

JAILER Having these virtues
I think he might be brought to play at tennis.

DAUGHTER Alas, that's nothing.

JAILER Can he write and read too?

DAUGHTER A very fair hand, and casts himself th'accounts
Of all his hay and provender. That ostler
Must rise betime that cozens him. You know ...
The chestnut mare the Duke has?

JAILER Very well
DAUGHTER She is horribly in love with him, poor beast,
But he is like his master -- coy and scornful.

JAILER What dowry has she?

DAUGHTER Some two hundred bottles
And twenty strike of oats, but he'll ne'er have her.
He lisps in's neighing, able to entice
A miller's mare. He'll be the death of her.

DOCTOR What stuff she utters!

JAILER Make curtsy -- here your love comes.

WOOER *[coming forward.]* Pretty soul, ...
How do ye? *[She curtsies.]* That's a fine maid, there's a curtsy.

DAUGHTER Yours to command, i' th' way of honesty --
How far is't now to th' end o'th' world, my masters?

DOCTOR Why, a day's journey, wench.

DAUGHTER *[to Wooer.]* ~~~ Will you go with me?

WOOER What shall we do there, wench?

DAUGHTER Why, play at stool-ball --
What is there else to do?

WOOER I am content
If we shall keep our wedding there.

DAUGHTER 'Tis true --

For there, I will assure you, we shall find
Some blind priest for the purpose that will venture
To marry us, for here they are nice, and foolish. ...
Besides, my father must be hanged tomorrow,
And that would be a blot i' th' business.
Are you not Palamon?

WOOER Do not you know me?

DAUGHTER Yes, but you care not for me. I have nothing
But this poor petticoat and two coarse smocks.

WOOER That's all one -- I will have you
DAUGHTER Will you surely?

WOOER Yes, by this fair hand, will I.

DAUGHTER We'll to bed then.

WOOER E'en when you will. *[He kisses her.]*

DAUGHTER *[Rubbing off the kiss]*

~~~ O, sir, you would fain be nibbling.

WOOER Why do you rub my kiss off?

DAUGHTER 'Tis a sweet one,

And will perfume me finely against the wedding. ...

[Indicating the Doctor] Is this not your cousin Arcite?

DOCTOR Yes, sweetheart,

And I am glad my cousin Palamon

Has made so fair a choice.

DAUGHTER Do you think he'll have me?

DOCTOR Yes, without doubt.

DAUGHTER *[to the Jailer.]* ~~~ Do you think so too?

JAILER Yes.
~~~

DAUGHTER We shall have many children. *[to the Doctor.]*

~~~Lord, how you're grown!

My Palamon, I hope, will grow too, finely,

Now he's at liberty. Alas, poor chicken,

He was kept down with hard meat and ill lodging,

But I'll kiss him up again. *[Enter a Messenger.]*

MESSENGER What do you here? You'll lose the noblest sight ...

That e'er was seen.

JAILER Are they i' th' field?

MESSENGER They are --

You bear a charge there too.

JAILER I'll away straight.

[to the others.] I must e'en leave you here.

DOCTOR Nay, we'll go with you --
~~~

I will not lose the sight.

JAILER How did you like her?

DOCTOR I'll warrant you, within these three or four days

I'll make her right again.

[Exit the Jailer with the Messenger.]

[to the Wooer.] ~~~ You must not from her,

But still preserve her in this way.

WOOER I will.

DOCTOR Let's get her in.

WOOER *[to the Jailer's Daughter.]* ~~~ Come, sweet, we'll go to dinner,

And then we'll play at cards.

DAUGHTER And shall we kiss too?

WOOER A hundred times.

DAUGHTER And twenty.

WOOER Ay, and twenty.

DAUGHTER And then we'll sleep together

DOCTOR *[to the Wooer.]* ~~~ Take her offer.

WOOER *[to the Jailer's Daughter]* Yes, marry, will we.

DAUGHTER But you shall not hurt me.

WOOER I will not, sweet.

DAUGHTER If you do, love, I'll cry. *[Exeunt.]*

Act V, Scene 5

Flourish. Enter Theseus, Hippolyta, Emilia, Pirithous, and some attendants.

EMILIA I'll no step further.

PIRITHOUS Will you lose this sight?

EMILIA I had rather see a wren hawk at fly
Than this decision. Every blow that falls
Threats a brave life; each stroke laments
The place whereon it falls, and sounds more like
A bell than blade. I will stay here.
It is enough my hearing shall be punished
With what shall happen, 'gainst the which there is
No dealing, but to hear; not taint mine eye
With dread sights it may shun.

PIRITHOUS *[to Theseus.]* ~~~ Sir, my good lord, ...
Your sister will no further.

THESEUS O, she must.

She shall see deeds of honor in their kind,

Which sometime show well penciled. Nature now

Shall make and act the story, the belief

Both sealed with eye and ear *[to Emilia.]* You must be present --

You are the victor's meed, the price and garland

To crown the question's title.

EMILIA Pardon me,

If I were there, I'd wink.

THESEUS You must be there --

This trial is, as 'twere, i' th' night, and you

The only star to shine.

EMILIA I am extinct.

There is but envy in that light which shows

The one the other. Darkness, which ever was

The dam of horror, who does stand accursed

Of many mortal missions, may even now,

By casting her black mantle over both,
That neither could find other, get herself
Some part of a good name, and many a murder
Set off whereto she's guilty.

HIPPOLYTA You must go.

EMILIA In faith, I will not.

THESEUS Why, the knights must kindle
Their valor at your eye. Know, of this war ...
You are the treasure, and must needs be by
To give the service pay.

EMILIA Sir, pardon me --
The title of a kingdom may be tried
Out of itself.

THESEUS Well, well -- then at your pleasure.
Those that remain with you could wish their office
To any of their enemies.

HIPPOLYTA Farewell, sister.
I am like to know your husband fore yourself,
By some small start of time. He whom the gods
Do of the two know best, I pray them he
Be made your lot. ...

[Exeunt all but Emilia. Emilia takes out two pictures, one from her right side, and one from her left.]

EMILIA Arcite is gently visaged, yet his eye
Is like an engine bent or a sharp weapon
In a soft sheath. Mercy and manly courage
Are bedfellows in his visage. Palamon
Has a most menacing aspect. His brow
Is graved and seems to bury what it frowns on,
Yet sometime 'tis not so, but alters to
The quality of his thoughts. Long time his eye
Will dwell upon his object. Melancholy
Becomes him nobly -- so does Arcite's mirth. ...
But Palamon's sadness is a kind of mirth,

So mingled as if mirth did make him sad

And sadness merry. Those darker humors that

Stock misbecomingly on others, on them

Live in fair dwelling.

[Cornets. Trumpets sound as to a charge.]

Hark, how yon spurs to spirit do incite

The princes to their proof. Arcite may win me,

And yet may Palamon wound Arcite to

The spoiling of his figure. O, what pity

Enough for such a chance! If I were by ...

I might do hurt, for they would glance their eyes

Toward my seat, and in that motion might

Omit a ward or forfeit an offense

Which craved that very time. It is much better

[Cornets. A great cry and noise within, crying, 'A Palamon'.]

I am not there. O better never born,

Than minister to such harm. *[Enter Servant.]*

What is the chance?

SERVANT The cry's 'A Palamon'.

EMILIA Then he has won. 'Twas ever likely --

He looked all grace and success, and he is

Doubtless the prim'st of men. I prithee run ...

And tell me how it goes.

SERVANT Still 'Palamon'.

EMILIA Run and enquire. *[Exit Servant.]*

[She speaks to the picture in her right hand.]

~~~ Poor servant, thou hast lost.

Upon my right side still I wore thy picture,

Palamon's on the left. Why so, I know not.

I had no end in't, else chance would have it so.

[Another cry and shout within and cornets.]

On the sinister side the heart lies -- Palamon

Had the best-boding chance. This burst of clamor
~~~

Is sure the end o'th' combat. *[Enter Servant.]*

SERVANT They said that Palamon had Arcite's body
Within an inch o'th' pyramid -- that the cry ...
Was general 'A Palamon'. But anon
Th'assistants made a brave redemption, and
The two bold tilters at this instant are
Hand to hand at it.

EMILIA Were they metamorphosed
Both into one! O why? There were no woman
Worth so composed a man: their single share,
Their nobleness peculiar to them, gives
The prejudice of disparity, value's shortness,
To any lady breathing -- *[Cornets. Cry within, 'Arcite, Arcite'.]*
~~~ More exulting?
'Palamon' still?

SERVANT Nay, now the sound is 'Arcite'.

EMILIA I prithee, lay attention to the cry.
~~~

[Cornets. A great shout and cry, 'Arcite, victory!']

Set both thine ears to th' business.

SERVANT The cry is

'Arcite' and 'Victory' -- hark, 'Arcite, victory!'

The combat's consummation is proclaimed

By the wind instruments.

EMILIA Half sights saw

That Arcite was no babe. God's lid, his richness

And costliness of spirit looked through him -- it could

No more be hid in him than fire in flax,

Than humble banks can go to law with waters

That drift winds force to raging. I did think ...

Good Palamon would miscarry, yet I knew not

Why I did think so. Our reasons are not prophets

When oft our fancies are. They are coming off --

Alas, poor Palamon.

[She puts away the pictures. Cornets. *Enter* Theseus, Hippolyta,

Pirithous, Arcite as victor, and attendants.]

THESEUS Lo, where our sister is in expectation,

Yet quaking and unsettled. Fairest Emily,

The gods by their divine arbitrament

Have given you this knight. He is a good one

As ever struck at head. *[to Arcite and Emilia.]* Give me your hands.

[to Arcite.] Receive you her, *[to Emilia.]*

~~~ you him: *[to both.]* be plighted with ...

A love that grows as you decay.

ARCITE Emilia,

To buy you I have lost what's dearest to me

Save what is bought, and yet I purchase cheaply

As I do rate your value.

THESEUS *[to Emilia.]* ~~~ O loved sister,

He speaks now of as brave a knight as e'er

Did spur a noble steed. Surely the gods

Would have him die a bachelor lest his race
~~~

Should show i' th' world too godlike. His behavior

So charmed me that, methought, Alcides was

To him a sow of lead. If I could praise ...

Each part of him to th'all I have spoke, your Arcite

Did not lose by't; for he that was thus good,

Encountered yet his better. I have heard

Two emulous Philomels beat the ear o'th' night

With their contentious throats, now one the higher,

Anon the other, then again the first,

And by and by out-breasted, that the sense

Could not be judge between 'em -- so it fared

Good space between these kinsmen, till heavens did

Make hardly one the winner. *[to Arcite.]* Wear the garland ...

With joy that you have won. -- For the subdued,

Give them our present justice, since I know

Their lives but pinch 'em. Let it be here done.

The scene's not for our seeing; go we hence

Right joyful, with some sorrow. *[to Arcite.]* Arm your prize;

I know you will not lose her. Hippolyta,

I see one eye of yours conceives a tear,

The which it will deliver. *[Flourish.]*

EMILIA Is this winning?

O all you heavenly powers, where is your mercy?

But that your wills have said it must be so, ...

And charge me live to comfort this unfriended,

This miserable prince, that cuts away

A life more worthy from him than all women,

I should and would die too.

HIPPOLYTA Infinite pity

That four such eyes should be so fixed on one

That two must needs be blind for't.

THESEUS

So it is. *[Exeunt.]*

Act V, Scene 6

Enter , guarded, Palamon and his three Knights pinioned;

Enter with them the Jailer and an executioner with block and axe.

PALAMON There's many a man alive that hath outlived
The love o'th' people; yea, i' th' self-same state
Stands many a father with his child: some comfort
We have by so considering. We expire,
And not without men's pity; to live still,
Have their good wishes. We prevent
The loathsome misery of age, beguile
The gout and rheum that in lag hours attend
The grey approachers; we come towards the gods
Young and unwappered, not halting under crimes ...
Many and stale -- that sure shall please the gods
Sooner than such, to give us nectar with 'em,
For we are more clear spirits. May dear kinsmen,
Whose lives for this poor comfort are laid down,
You have sold 'em too too cheap.

1 KNIGHT What ending could be
Of more content? O'er us the victors have

Fortune, whose title is as momentary

As to us death is certain -- a grain of honor

They not o'erweigh us.

2 KNIGHT Let us bid farewell,

And with our patience anger tott'ring fortune, ...

Who at her certain'st reels.

2 KNIGHT Come, who begins?

PALAMON E'en he that led you to this banquet shall

Taste to you all. *[to the Jailer]* Aha, my friend, my friend,

Your gentle daughter gave me freedom once;

You'll see't done now for ever. Pray, how does she?

I heard she was not well; her kind of ill

Gave me some sorrow.

JAILER Sir, she's well restored

And is to be married shortly.

PALAMON By my short life,

I am most glad on't. 'Tis the latest thing

I shall be glad of. Prithee, tell her so; ...

Commend me to her, and to piece her portion

Tender her this. *[He gives his purse.]*

1 KNIGHT Nay, let's be offerers all.

2 KNIGHT Is it a maid?

PALAMON Verily, I think so --

A right good creature more to me deserving

Than I can quit or speak of.

ALL 3 KNIGHTS Commend us to her.

[They give their purses.]

JAILER The gods requite you all, and make her thankful.

PALAMON Adieu, and let my life be now as short

As my leave-taking. *[He lies on the block.]*

1 KNIGHT Lead, courageous cousin.

2 and 3 KNIGHTS We'll follow cheerfully.

[A great noise within: crying, 'Run! Save! Hold!'

Enter in haste a Messenger.]

MESSENGER Hold! Hold! O, hold! Hold! Hold! ...

[Enter Pirithous in haste.]

PIRITHOUS Hold, ho! It is a cursed haste you made
If you had done so quickly! Noble Palamon,
The gods will show their glory in a life
That thou art yet to lead.

PALAMON Can that be,
When Venus, I have said, is false? How do things fare?

PIRITHOUS   Arise, great sir, and give the tidings ear
That are most rarely sweet and bitter.

PALAMON   What
Hath waked us from our dream?

PIRITHOUS   List, then: your cousin,
Mounted upon a steed that Emily
Did first bestow on him, a black one owing
Not a hair-worth of white -- which some will say
Weakens his price and many will not buy
His goodness with this note; which superstition
Here finds allowance -- on this horse is Arcite
Trotting the stones of Athens, which the calkins
Did rather tell than trample; for the horse
Would make his length a mile, if't pleased his rider
To put pride in him. As he thus went counting
The flinty pavement, dancing, as 'twere, to th' music
His own hooves made -- for, as they say, from iron ...
Came music's origin -- what envious flint,
Cold as old Saturn and like him possessed

With fire malevolent, darted a spark,

Or what fierce sulfur else, to this end made,

I comment not -- the hot horse, hot as fire,

Took toy at this and fell to what disorder

His power could give his will, bounds; comes on end;

Forgets school-doing, being therein trained

And of kind manage; pig-like he whines

At the sharp rowel, which he frets at rather ...

Than any jot obeys; seeks all foul means

Of boist'rous and rough jad'ry to disseat

His lord, that kept it bravely. When naught served,

When neither curb would crack, girth break, nor diff'ring plunges

Disroot his rider whence he grew, but that

He kept him 'tween his legs, on his hind hooves --

On end he stands --

That Arcite's legs, being higher than his head,

Seemed with strange art to hang. His victor's wreath

Even then fell off his head; and presently ...

Backward the jade comes o'er and his full poise

Becomes the rider's load. Yet is he living;

But such a vessel 'tis that floats but for

The surge that next approaches. He much desires
To have some speech with you -- lo, he appears.

[Enter Theseus, Hippolyta, Emilia, and Arcite in a chair borne by attendants.]

PALAMON O miserable end of our alliance!
The gods are mighty. Arcite, if thy heart,
Thy worthy manly heart, be yet unbroken,
Give me thy last words. I am Palamon,
One that yet loves thee dying.

ARCITE Take Emilia, ...
And with her all the world's joy. Reach thy hand --
Farewell -- I have told my last hour. I was false,
Yet never treacherous. Forgive me, cousin --
One kiss from fair Emilia -- *[They kiss.]* 'tis done.
Take her; I die. *[He dies.]*

PALAMON Thy brave soul seek Elysium.

EMILIA *[to Arcite's body.]*

I'll close thine eyes, Prince. Blessed souls be with thee.
Thou art a right good man, and, while I live,
This day I give to tears.

PALAMON And I to honor.

THESEUS In this place first you fought, e'en very here
I sundered you. Acknowledge to the gods ...

Our thanks that you are living.
His part is played, and, though it were too short,
He did it well. Your day is lengthened and
The blissful dew of heaven does arouse you.
The powerful Venus well hath graced her altar,
And given you your love; our master, Mars,
Hath vouched his oracle, and to Arcite gave
The grace of the contention. So the deities
Have showed due justice. -- Bear this hence.

[Exeunt attendants with Arcite's body.]

PALAMON O cousin,

That we should things desire which do cost us ...

The loss of our desire! That naught could buy

Dear love, but loss of dear love!

THESEUS Never fortune

Did play a subtler game -- the conquered triumphs,

The victor has the loss. Yet in the passage

The gods have been most equal. Palamon,

Your kinsman hath confessed the right o'th' lady

Do lie in you, for you first saw her and

Even then proclaimed your fancy. He restored her

As your stol'n jewel, and desired your spirit

To send him hence, forgiven. The gods my justice ...

Take from my hand, and they themselves become

The executioners. Lead your lady off,

And call your lovers from the stage of death,

Whom I adopt my friends. A day or two

Let us look sadly and give grace unto

The funeral of Arcite, in whose end

The visages of bridegrooms we'll put on

And smile with Palamon, for whom an hour,

But one hour since, I was as dearly sorry

As glad of Arcite, and am now as glad ...

As for him sorry. O you heavenly charmers, --

What things you make of us! For what we lack

We laugh, for what we have, are sorry; still

Are children in some kind. Let us be thankful

For that which is, and with you leave dispute

That are above our question. Let's go off

And bear us like the time. *[Flourish. Exeunt.]*

EPILOGUE

CHORUS

I would now ask ye how ye like the play,

But, as it is with schoolboys, cannot say.

I am cruel fearful. Pray yet stay awhile,

And let me look upon ye. No man smile?

Then it goes hard, I see. He that has

Loved a young handsome wench, then, show his face --

'Tis strange if none be here -- and, if he will,

Against his conscience let him hiss and kill

Our market. 'Tis in vain, I see, to stay ye.

Have at the worst can come, then! Now, what say ye? ... [Ep.10]

And yet mistake me not -- I am not bold --

We have no such cause. If the tale we have told --

For 'tis no other -- any way content ye,

For to that honest purpose it was meant ye,

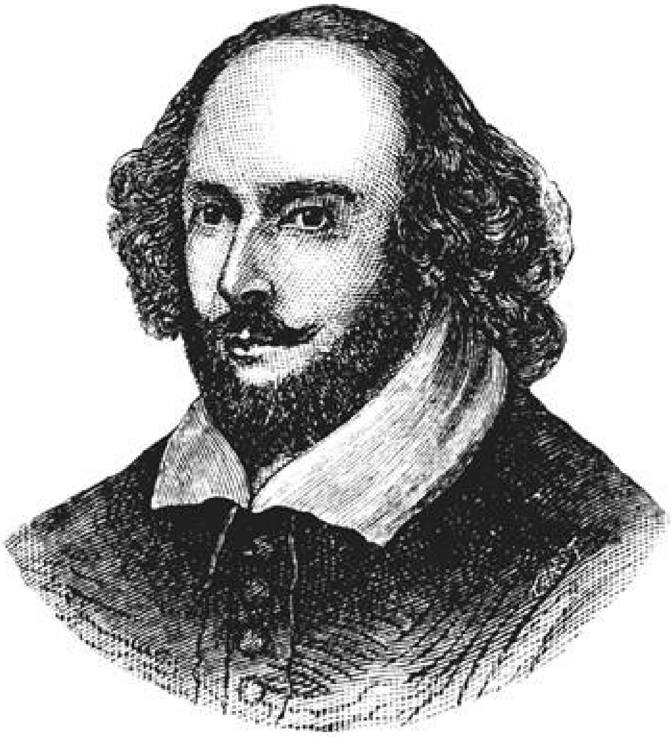
We have our end; and ye shall have ere long

I dare say, many a better to prolong

Your old loves to us. We and all our might

Rest at your service. Gentlemen, good night. *[Flourish. Exit.]*

The Lost Plays



LOVE'S LABOUR'S WON

Shakespeare wrote this play before 1598 and it appears to have been published by 1603, but no copies are known to have survived. Many believe the lost work was a sequel to *Love's Labour's Lost* , depicting the further adventures of the King of Navarre, Berowne, Longaville, and Dumain, whose marriages were delayed at the end of the first play. Others argue it was simply an alternative name for one of Shakespeare’s other plays. The first mention of the play occurs in the *Wits Treasury* (1598), where *Love’s Labour’s Won* is listed with eleven other Shakespeare plays. The list of comedies reads as:

"for Comedy, witnes his Ge[n]tleme[n] of Verona, his Errors, his Loue labors lot, his Loue labours wonne, his Midummers night dreame, & his Merchant of

Venice".

Another theory claims that *Love's Labour's Won* was an alternative name for *The Taming of the Shrew* , which had been written several years earlier and is noticeably missing from the list. However, in 1953, one Solomon Pottesman, a London based antiquarian book dealer and collector, discovered the August 1603 book list of the stationer Christopher Hunt, which lists as printed in quarto:

"marchant of vennis, taming of a shrew, ... loves labor lost, loves labor won."

Therefore, this list proves that the play was a unique work and not an early title of *The Taming of the Shrew.* However, *Much Ado About Nothing* , commonly believed to be written around 1598, is often suggested as being the play, as well as *All's Well That Ends Well* , and both these plays would suit the title of *Love's Labour's Won.* Unfortunately, we will most likely never discover the true content of the play and so *Love's Labour's Won* will remain a literary mystery to tantalise scholars for years to come.

CARDENIO

This lost play is known to have been performed by The King's Men, Shakespeare’s theatre company, in 1613 and was attributed to Shakespeare and John Fletcher in a Stationers' Register entry of 1653. The content of the play was likely based on an episode in Miguel de Cervantes' *Don Quixote* involving the character Cardenio, a young man who has been driven mad and lives in the Sierra Morena. Thomas Shelton's translation of the First Part of Don Quixote was published in 1612, and would have been available to Shakespeare.

Although there are records of the play having been performed, there is no information about its authorship earlier than the 1653 entry in the Stationers' Register. The entry was made by Humphrey Moseley, a bookseller and publisher, who was asserting his right to publish the work. Moseley is not necessarily to be trusted on the question of authorship, as he is known to have falsely used Shakespeare's name in other entries, in order to create interest in plays he was publishing. However, some modern scholars accept Moseley's attribution, placing the lost work in the same category of collaboration between Fletcher and Shakespeare as *The Two Noble Kinsmen* . Also, Fletcher based several of his later plays on works by Cervantes, making his involvement plausible.

In 1727, the dramatist-turned-scholar Lewis Theobald claimed to have obtained three Restoration-era manuscripts of an unnamed play by Shakespeare, which he edited and released under the name *Double Falsehood* , or the Distrest Lovers, featuring a plot of the Cardenio episode in *Don Quixote* . The fate of Theobald's three alleged manuscripts is unknown. The very existence of three genuine manuscripts of that age is doubtful, and Theobald was said to have invited interested persons to view the alleged manuscript, but he then avoided actually displaying them. These facts have led many scholars to conclude that Theobald's play was a hoax written by himself. However, more recent stylometric analysis leads to the conclusion that *Double Falsehood* was based on one or more manuscripts written in part by Fletcher and in part by another playwright. The open question is whether that second playwright was Shakespeare. The text contains no more than two or three passages which appear good enough to be attributed to Shakespeare, but it is possible that Theobald so heavily edited the text that Shakespeare's style was lost. The text of *Double Falsehood* can be accessed from this link .

In 1990, handwriting expert Charles Hamilton, after seeing a 1611 manuscript known as *The Second Maiden's Tragedy* (usually attributed to Thomas Middleton), identified it as the missing *Cardenio* in which the characters' names had been changed. However, this is not generally accepted by Shakespearean scholars and the plot bears no resemblance to the Cardenio tale in *Don Quixote* . The text of *The Second Maiden's Tragedy* is available in the Apocryphal section of this works and can be accessed from this link .

DOUBLE FALSEHOOD

OR

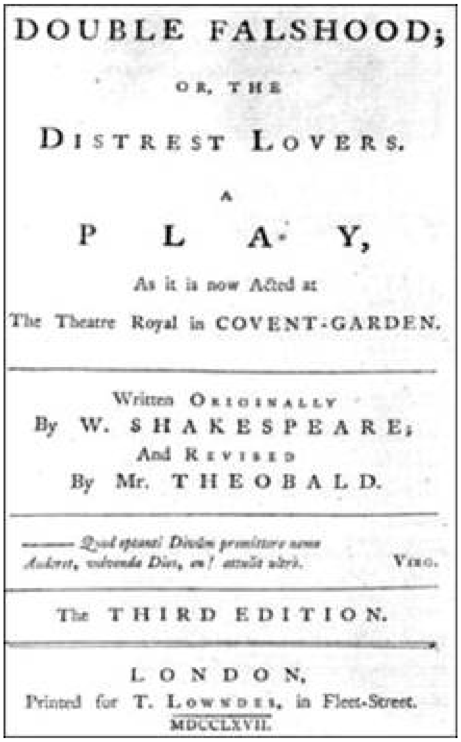
THE DISTREST LOVERS

This 1727 play was produced by the playwright Lewis Theobald. Many scholars now believe it is an adaptation of Shakespeare’s lost play *Cardenio* . Theobald himself claimed his version was based on three manuscripts of an unnamed lost play by Shakespeare. The play concerns the "Cardenio" episode in *Don Quixote* . Theobald's play changes the names of the main characters from the Spanish original; for example. Cervantes' Cardenio becomes Julio and his Lucinda becomes Leonora.

Publisher Humphrey Moseley was the first to link *Cardenio* with Shakespeare, as the title page of his edition of 1647, entered at the Stationers' Register on 9 September 1653, credits the work to "Mr Fletcher & Shakespeare". However, Moseley’s attribution of plays to Shakespeare has often been received with scepticism, due to how he was most likely trying to increase interest in his printings.

Theobald's claim of a Shakespearean text in *Double Falsehood* was met with suspicion, and even accusations of forgery, from contemporaries such as Alexander Pope and subsequent generations of critics. Nevertheless, Theobald is regarded by critics as a far more serious scholar than Pope, and even as being a forerunner of modern textual criticism. The evidence of Shakespeare's connection with a dramatisation of the Cardenio story comes from the entry in the Stationers' Register, but Theobald could not have known of this evidence, since it was not found until long after his death. Now, the scholarly consensus judges the play to be an 18th-century rewriting of the lost *Cardenio* and for the first time editors are including the text in their complete works editions of Shakespeare.

Double Falsehood was first performed on 13 December 1727 at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane and published in 1728. The drama was revived at Covent Garden on 24 April 1749, and performed again on 6 May of the same year. Later performances occurred in 1781 and 1793. The play is set in Andalusia, Spain and the opening scene introduces Duke Angelo and his elder son and heir, Roderick, who is his loyal and virtuous son. The Duke also has a younger son, Henriquez, a scapegrace and prodigal who is absent from the ducal court, pursuing his own interests.



DOUBLE FALSHOOD;
OR, THE
DISTREST LOVERS.
A
PLAY,
As it is now Acted at
The Theatre Royal in COVENT-GARDEN.

Written ORIGINALLY
By W. SHAKESPEARE;
And REVISED
By Mr. THEOBALD.

—— Quod optanti Divûm promittere nemo
Auderet, volvenda Dies, en! attulit ultrò. VIRG.

The THIRD EDITION.

LONDON,
Printed for T. LOWNDES, in Fleet-Street.
MDCCLXVII.

The original title page

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PREFACE OF THE EDITOR

The Success, which this Play has met with from the Town in the Representation, (to say nothing of the Reception it found from those Great Judges, to whom I have had the Honour of communicating it in Manuscript;) has almost made the Purpose of a Preface unnecessary: And therefore what I have to say, is design'd rather to wipe out a flying Objection or two, than to labour at proving it the Production of Shakespeare.

It has been alledg'd as incredible, that such a Curiosity should be stifled and lost to the World for above a Century. To This my Answer is short; that tho' it never till now made its Appearance on the Stage, yet one of the Manuscript Copies, which I have, is of above Sixty Years Standing, in the Handwriting of Mr. Downes, the famous Old Prompter; and, as I am credibly inform'd, was early in the Possession of the celebrated Mr. Betterton, and by Him design'd to have been usher'd into the World. What Accident prevented This Purpose of his, I do not pretend to know: Or thro' what hands it had successively pass'd before that Period of Time. There is a Tradition (which I have from the Noble Person, who supply'd me with One of my Copies) that this Play was given by our Author, as a Present of Value, to a Natural Daughter of his, for whose Sake he wrote it, in the Time of his Retirement from the Stage. Two other Copies I have, (one of which I was glad to purchase at a very good Rate,) which may not, perhaps, be quite so Old as the Former; but One of Them is much more perfect, and has fewer Flaws and Interruptions in the Sense.

Another Objection has been started, (which would carry much more Weight with it, were it Fact;) that the Tale of this Play, being built upon a Novel in Don Quixot, Chronology is against Us, and Shakespeare could not be the Author. But it happens, that the First Part of Don Quixot, which contains the Novel upon which the Tale of this Play seems to be built, was publish'd in the year 1605, and our Shakespeare did not dye till April 1616; an interval of no less than Eleven Years, and more than sufficient for All that we want granted.

Others again, to depreciate the Affair, as they thought, have been pleased to urge, that tho' the Play may have some Resemblances of Shakespeare, yet the Colouring, Diction,and Characters, come nearer to the Style and Manner of Fletcher. This,I think, is far from deserving any Answer; I submit it to the Determination of better Judgments; tho' my Partiality for Shakespeare makes me wish, that Every Thing which is good, or pleasing, in that other great poet, had been owing to his Pen. I had once design'd a Dissertation to prove this Play to be of Shakespeare's Writing, from some of its remarkable Peculiarities in the Language, and Nature of the Thoughts: but as I could not be sure that the Play might be attack'd, I found it adviseable, upon second Consideration, to reserve that part to my Defence. That Danger, I think, is now over; so I must look out for a better Occasion. I am honour'd with so many powerful Sollicitations, pressing Me to the Prosecution of an Attempt, which I have begun with some little Success, of restoring Shakespeare from the numerous Corruptions of his Text: that I can neither in Gratitude, nor good Manners, longer resist them. I therefore think it not amiss here to promise, that, tho' private Property should so far stand in my Way, as to prevent me from putting out an Edition of Shakespeare, yet, some Way or other, if I live, the Publick shall receive from my Hand his whole Works corrected, with my best Care and Ability. This may furnish an Occasion for speaking more at large concerning the present Play: For which Reason I shall now drop it for another Subject.

As to the Performance of the respective Actors concern'd in this Play, my applauding It here would be altogether superfluous. The Publick has distinguish'd and given them a Praise, much beyond Any that can flow from my Pen. But I have some particular Acknowledgments to make to the Managers of this Company, for which I am glad to embrace so fair an Opportunity.

I came to Them at this Juncture as an Editor, not an Author, and have met with so much Candour, and handsome Treatment from Them, that I am willing to believe, the Complaint, which has so commonly obtain'd, of their Disregard and ill Behaviour to Writers, has been more severely urg'd, than it is justly grounded. They must certainly be too good Judges of their own Interest, not to know that a Theatre cannot always subsist on old Stock, but that the Town requires Novelty at their Hands. On the other Hand, they must be so far Judges of their own Art and Profession, as to know that all the Compositions, which are offer'd them, would never go down with Audiences of so nice and delicate a Taste, as in this Age frequent the Theatres. It would be very hard upon such a Community, where so many Interests are concern'd, and so much Merit in their Business allow'd, if they had not a Priviledge of refusing some crude Pieces, too imperfect for the Entertainment of the Publick. I would not be thought to inferr, that they have never discourag'd what They might, perhaps, afterwards wish they had receiv'd. They do not, I believe, set up for such a Constant Infallibility. But if We do but fairly consider out of above Four Thousand Plays extant, how small a Number will now stand the Test; if We do but consider too, how often a raw Performance has been extoll’d by the Partiality of private Friendship; and what a Clamour of Injury has been rais’d from that Quarter, upon such Performance meeting a Repulse; we may pretty easily account for the Grounds upon which they proceeded in discountenancing some Plays, and the harsh Things that are thrown out upon their giving a Repulse to others.

But I should beg Pardon for interfering in this Question, in which I am properly neither Party, nor Judge. I am only throwing out a private Opinion, without Interest or Prejudice, and if I am right in the Notion, Valeat quantum valere potest.

PROLOGUE

Written by Philip Frowde, Esq;
And spoken by Mr. Wilks .

As in some Region, where indulgent Skies
Enrich the Soil, a thousand Plants arise
Frequent and bold; a thousand Landskips meet
Our ravisht View, irregularly sweet:
We gaze, divided, now on These, now Those;
While All one beauteous Wilderness compose.

Such Shakespeare’ s Genius was: — Let Britons boast
The glorious Birth, and, eager, strive who most
Shall celebrate his Verse; for while we raise
Trophies of Fame to him, ourselves we praise:
Display the Talents of a British mind,
Where All is great, free, open, unconfin’d.
Be it our Pride, to reach his daring Flight;
And relish Beauties, he alone could write.

Most modern Authors, fearful to aspire,
With Imitation cramp their genial Fire;
The well-schemed Plan keep strict before their Eyes,

Dwell on Proportions, trifling Decencies;
While noble Nature all neglected lies.
Nature, that claims Precedency of Place,
Perfection’s Basis, and essential Grace!
Nature so intimately Shakespeare knew,
From her first Springs his Sentiments he drew;
Most greatly wild they flow; and, when most wild, yet true.

While These, secure in what the Criticks teach,
Of servile Laws still dread the dangerous Breach;
His vast, unbounded, Soul disdain’d their Rule,
Above the Precepts of the Pedant School!

Oh! could the Bard, revisiting our Light,
Receive these Honours done his Shade To-night,
How would he bless the Scene this Age displays,
Transcending his Eliza’s golden Days!
When great Augustus fills the British Throne,
And his lov’d Consort makes the Muse her own.
How would he joy, to see fair Merit’s Claim
Thus answer’d in his own reviving Fame!
How cry with Pride — Oblivion I forgive;
This my last Child to latest Times shall live:
Lost to the World, well for the Birth it stay’d
To this auspicious Æra well delay’d.

Floral ornament with lyre and trumpets

EPILOGUE

Written by a Friend.
Spoken by Mrs. Oldfield.

Well, Heaven defend us from these ancient Plays,
These Moral Bards of good Queen Bess’s Days!
They write from Virtue’s Laws, and think no further;
But draw a Rape as dreadful as a Murther.

You modern Wits, more deeply vers'd in Nature,
Can tip the wink, to tell us, you know better;
As who shou'd say— 'Tis no such killing Matter.—
We've heard old Stories told, and yet ne'er wonder'd,
Of many a Prude, that has endur'd a Hundred:
And Violante grieves, or we're mistaken,
Not, because ravisht; but because — forsaken.—

Had this been written to the modern Stage,
Her Manners had been copy'd from the Age.
Then, tho' she had been once a little wrong,
She still had had the Grace to've held her Tongue;
And after all, with downcast Looks, been led
Like any Virgin to the Bridal Bed.
There, if the good Man question'd her Mis-doing,
She'd stop him short— Pray, who made you so knowing?
What, doubt my Virtue!— What's your base Intention?
Sir, that's a Point above your Comprehension.—

Well, Heav'n be prais'd, the Virtue of our Times
Secures us from our Gothick Grandsires' Crimes.
Rapes, Magick, new Opinions, which before
Have fill'd our Chronicles, are now no more:
And this reforming Age may justly boast,
That dreadful Sin Polygamy is lost.
So far from multiplying Wives, 'tis known
Our Husbands find, they've Work enough with one.—
Then, as for Rapes, those dangerous days are past;
Our Dapper Sparks are seldom in such haste.

In Shakespeare' s Age the English Youth inspir'd,
Lov'd, as they fought, by him and Beauty fir'd.
'Tis yours to crown the Bard, whose Magick Strain
Cou'd charm the Heroes of that glorious Reign,
Which humbled to the Dust the Pride of Spain.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE.

Men.

Duke *Angelo* .	Mr. *Corey* .
Roderick , his Elder Son.	Mr. *Mills* .
Henriquez , his Younger Son.	Mr. *Wilks* .
Don Bernard , Father to *Leonora* .	Mr. *Harper* .
Camillo , Father to *Julio* .	Mr. *Griffin* .
Julio , in Love with *Leonora* .	Mr. *Booth* .
Citizen.	Mr. *Oates* .
Master of the Flocks.	Mr. Bridgewater.
First Shepherd.	Mr. *Norris* .
Second Shepherd.	Mr. *Ray* .
[A Churchman.]	

[*Fabian* , a Clown.]

[*Lopez* , another.]

[*Gerald* , servant to *Henriquez* .]

[Servant to *Henriquez* .]

[Servant to *Violante* .]

A Gentleman. ,

Women.

Leonora .	Mrs. *Porter* .
Violante .	Mrs. *Booth* .

[Maid to *Violante* .]

Gentlemen, Servants, Musicians, Attendants to *Leonora* , *etc.*

Scene , the Province of Andalusia in Spain.

Act I. Scene I.

Scene, *A Royal Palace.*

Duke Angelo, Roderick, and Courtiers.

Roderick .

My gracious Father, this unwonted Strain
Visits my heart with Sadness.

Duke. Why, my Son?
Making my Death familiar to my Tongue
Digs not my Grave one Jot before the Date.
I’ve worn the Garland of my Honours long,
And would not leave it wither’d to thy Brow,
But flourishing and green; worthy the Man,
Who, with my Dukedoms, heirs my better Glories.

Roder. This Praise, which is my Pride, spreads me with Blushes.

Duke. Think not, that I can flatter thee, my *Roderick* ;
Or let the Scale of Love o’er-poize my Judgment.
Like a fair Glass of Retrospection, Thou
Reflect’st the Virtues of my early Youth;
Making my old Blood mend its Pace with Transport:
While fond *Henriquez* , thy irregular Brother,
Sets the large Credit of his Name at Stake,
A Truant to my Wishes, and his Birth.
His Taints of Wildness hurt our nicer Honour,
And call for swift Reclaim.

Roder. I trust, my Brother
Will, by the Vantage of his cooler Wisdom,
E’er-while redeem the hot Escapes of Youth,
And court Opinion with a golden Conduct.

Duke. Be Thou a Prophet in that kind Suggestion!
But I, by Fears weighing his unweigh'd Course,
Interpret for the Future from the Past.
And strange Misgivings, why he hath of late
By Importunity, and strain'd Petition,
Wrested our Leave of Absence from the Court,
Awake Suspicion. Thou art inward with him;
And, haply, from the bosom'd Trust can'st shape
Some formal Cause to qualify my Doubts.

Roder. Why he hath press'd this Absence, Sir, I know not;
But have his Letters of a modern Date,
Wherein by *Julio* , good *Camillo'* s Son,
(Who, as he says, shall follow hard upon;
And whom I with the growing Hour expect:)
He doth sollicit the Return of Gold
To purchase certain Horse, that like him well.
This *Julio* he encounter'd first in *France* ,
And lovingly commends him to my Favour;
Wishing, I would detain him some few Days,
To know the Value of his well-placed Trust.

Duke. O, do it, *Roderick* ; and assay to mould him
An honest Spy upon thy Brother's Riots.
Make us acquainted when the Youth arrives;
We'll see this *Julio* , and he shall from Us
Receive the secret Loan his Friend requires.
Bring him to Court.

[Exeunt.

Scene II. Prospect of a Village at a Distance.

Enters Camillo with a Letter.

Cam . How comes the Duke to take such Notice of my Son, that he must needs have him in Court, and I must send him upon the View of his Letter? — Horsemanship! What Horsemanship has *Julio?* I think, he can no more but gallop a Hackney, unless he practised Riding in *France* . It may be, he did so;

for he was there a good Continuance. But I have not heard him speak much of his Horsemanship. That’s no Matter: if he be not a good Horseman, all’s one in such a Case, he must bear. Princes are absolute; they may do what they will in any Thing, save what they cannot do.

Enter s Julio.

O, come on, Sir; read this Paper: no more Ado, but read it: It must not be answer’d by my Hand, nor yours, but, in Gross, by your Person; your sole Person. Read aloud.

Jul. ’Please you, to let me first o’erlook it, Sir.

Cam . I was this other day in a Spleen against your new Suits: I do now think, some Fate was the Taylour that hath fitted them: for, this Hour, they are for the Palace of the Duke. — Your Father’s House is too dusty.

Jul. Hem!— to Court? Which is the better, to serve a Mistress, or a Duke? I am sued to be his Slave, and I sue to be *Leonora’* s. [*Aside.*

Cam . You shall find your Horsemanship much praised there; Are you so good a Horseman?

Jul. I have been,
E’er now, commended for my Seat, or mock’d.

Cam . Take one Commendation with another, every Third’s a Mock.— Affect not therefore to be praised. Here’s a deal of Command and Entreaty mixt; there’s no denying; you must go, peremptorily he inforces That.

Jul. What Fortune soever my Going shall encounter, cannot be good Fortune; What I part withal unseasons any other Goodness. [*Aside.*

Cam . You must needs go; he rather conjures, than importunes.

Jul. No moving of my Love-Suit to him now?—

[Aside.

Cam . Great Fortunes have grown out of less Grounds.

Jul. What may her Father think of me, who expects to be sollicited this very Night? [*Aside.*

Cam . Those scatter’d Pieces of Virtue, which are in him, the Court will solder together, varnish, and rectify.

Jul. He will surely think I deal too slightly, or unmannerly, or foolishly, indeed; nay, dishonestly; to bear him in hand with my Father’s Consent, who yet hath not been touch’d with so much as a Request to it. [*Aside.*

Cam . Well, Sir, have you read it over?

Jul. Yes, Sir.

Cam . And consider’d it?

Jul. As I can.

Cam . If you are courted by good Fortune, you must go.

Jul. So it please You, Sir.

Cam . By any Means, and to morrow: Is it not there the Limit of his Request?

Jul. It is, Sir.

Cam . I must bethink me of some Necessaries, without which you might be unfurnish’d: And my Supplies shall at all Convenience follow You. Come to my Closet by and by; I would there speak with You.

[Exit Camillo.

Manet Julio solus.

Jul. I do not see that Fervour in the Maid,
Which Youth and Love should kindle. She consents,
As ’twere to feed without an Appetite;

Tells me, She is content; and plays the Coy one,
Like Those that subtly make their Words their Ward,
Keeping Address at Distance. This Affection
Is such a feign'd One, as will break untouch'd;
Dye frosty, e'er it can be thaw'd; while mine,
Like to a Clime beneath *Hyperion'* s Eye,
Burns with one constant Heat. I'll strait go to her;
Pray her to regard my Honour: but She greets me.—

Enter Leonora, and Maid.

See, how her Beauty doth inrich the Place!
O, add the Musick of thy charming Tongue,
Sweet as the Lark that wakens up the Morn,
And make me think it Paradise indeed.
I was about to seek thee, *Leonora* ,
And chide thy Coldness, Love.

Leon . What says your Father?

Jul. I have not mov'd him yet.

Leon. Then do not, *Julio* .

Jul. Not move him? Was it not your own Command,
That his Consent should ratify our Loves?

Leon. Perhaps, it was: but now I've chang'd my Mind.
You purchase at too dear a Rate, that puts You
To wooe me and your Father too: Besides,
As He, perchance, may say, you shall not have me;
You, who are so obedient, must discharge me
Out of your Fancy*:* Then, you know, 'twill prove
My Shame and Sorrow, meeting such Repulse,
To wear the Willow in my Prime of Youth.

Jul. Oh! do not rack me with these ill-placed Doubts;
Nor think, tho' Age has in my Father's Breast

Put out Love’s Flame, he therefore has not Eyes,
Or is in Judgment blind. You wrong your Beauties,
Venus will frown if you disprize her Gifts,
That have a Face would make a frozen Hermit
Leap from his Cell, and burn his Beads to kiss it;
Eyes, that are nothing but continual Births
Of new Desires in Those that view their Beams.
You cannot have a Cause to doubt.

Leon.   Why, *Julio* ?
When you that dare not chuse without your Father,
And, where you love, you dare not vouch it; must not,
Though you have Eyes, see with ’em; — can I, think you,
Somewhat, perhaps, infected with your Suit,
Sit down content to say, You would, but dare not?

Jul. Urge not Suspicions of what cannot be;
You deal unkindly; misbecomingly,
I’m loth to say: For All that waits on you,
Is graced, and graces. — No Impediment
Shall bar my Wishes, but such grave Delays
As Reason presses Patience with; which blunt not,
But rather whet our Loves. Be patient, Sweet.

Leon. Patient! What else? My Flames are in the Flint.
Haply, to lose a Husband I may weep;
Never, to get One: When I cry for Bondage,
Let Freedom quit me.

Jul. From what a Spirit comes This?
I now perceive too plain, you care not for me.
Duke, I obey thy Summons, be its Tenour
Whate’er it will: If War, I come thy Souldier:
Or if to waste my silken Hours at Court,
The Slave of Fashion, I with willing Soul
Embrace the lazy Banishment for Life;
Since *Leonora* has pronounc’d my Doom.

Leon. What do you mean? Why talk you of the Duke?

Wherefore of War, or Court, or Banishment?

Jul. How this new Note is grown of me, I know not;
But the Duke writes for Me. Coming to move
My Father in our Bus'ness, I did find him
Reading this Letter; whose Contents require
My instant Service, and Repair to Court.

Leon. Now I perceive the Birth of these Delays;
Why *Leonora* was not worth your Suit.
Repair to Court? Ay, there you shall, perhaps,
(Rather, past Doubt;) behold some choicer Beauty,
Rich in her Charms, train'd to the Arts of Soothing,
Shall prompt you to a Spirit of Hardiness,
To say, So please you, Father, I have chosen
This Mistress for my own. —

Jul. Still you mistake me:
Ever your Servant I profess my self;
And will not blot me with a Change, for all
That Sea and Land inherit.

Leon. But when go you?

Jul. To morrow, Love; so runs the Duke's Command;
Stinting our Farewell-kisses, cutting off
The Forms of Parting, and the Interchange
Of thousand precious Vows, with Haste too rude.
Lovers have Things of Moment to debate,
More than a Prince, or dreaming Statesman, know:
Such Ceremonies wait on *Cupid* 's Throne.
Why heav'd that Sigh?

Leon. O *Julio* , let me whisper
What, but for Parting, I should blush to tell thee:
My Heart beats thick with Fears, lest the gay Scene,
The Splendors of a Court, should from thy Breast
Banish my Image, kill my Int'rest in thee,
And I be left, the Scoff of Maids, to drop

A Widow’s Tear for thy departed Faith.

Jul. O let Assurance, strong as Words can bind,
Tell thy pleas’d Soul, I will be wond’rous faithful;
True, as the Sun is to his Race of Light,
As Shade to Darkness, as Desire to Beauty:
And when I swerve, let Wretchedness o’ertake me,
Great as e’er Falsehood met, or Change can merit.

Leon. Enough; I’m satisfied: and will remain
Yours, with a firm and untir’d Constancy.
Make not your Absence long: Old Men are wav’ring;
And sway’d by Int’rest more than Promise giv’n.
Should some fresh Offer start, when you’re away,
I may be prest to Something, which must put
My Faith, or my Obedience, to the Rack.

Jul. Fear not, but I with swiftest Wing of Time
Will labour my Return. And in my Absence,
My noble Friend, and now our honour’d Guest,
The Lord *Henriquez* , will in my behalf
Hang at your Father’s Ear, and with kind Hints,
Pour’d from a friendly Tongue, secure my Claim;
And play the Lover for thy absent *Julio* .

Leon. Is there no Instance of a Friend turn’d false?
Take Heed of That: No Love by Proxy, *Julio.*
My Father—;

Enter s Don Bernard.

D. Bern. What, *Julio* , in publick? This Wooeing is too urgent. Is your Father yet moved in the Suit, who must be the prime Unfolder of this Business?

Jul. I have not yet, indeed, at full possess’d
My Father, whom it is my Service follows;
But only that I have a Wife in Chase.

D. Bern. Chase! — Let Chase alone: No Matter for That.— You may halt after her, whom you profess to pursue, and catch her too; Marry, not unless your Father let you slip. — Briefly, I desire you, (for she tells me, my Instructions shall be both Eyes and Feet to her;) no farther to insist in your Requiring, ’till, as I have formerly said, *Camillo* make known to Me, that his good Liking goes along with Us; which but once breath’d, all is done; ’till when, the Business has no Life, and cannot find a Beginning.

Jul. Sir, I will know his Mind, e’er I taste Sleep:
At Morn, you shall be learn’d in his Desire.
I take my Leave. — O virtuous *Leonora* ,
Repose, sweet as thy Beauties, seal thy Eyes;
Once more, adieu. I have thy Promise, Love;
Remember, and be faithful. [*Ex.* Julio.

D. Bern. His Father is as unsettled, as he is wayward, in his Disposition. If I thought young *Julio* ’s Temper were not mended by the Mettal of his Mother, I should be something crazy in giving my Consent to this Match: And, to tell you true, if my Eyes might be the Directors to your Mind, I could in this Town look upon Twenty Men of more delicate Choice. I speak not This altogether to unbend your Affections to him: But the Meaning of what I say is, that you set such Price upon yourself to him, as Many, and much his Betters, would buy you at; (and reckon those Virtues in you at the rate of their Scarcity;) to which if he come not up, you remain for a better Mart.

Leon. My Obedience, Sir, is chain’d to your Advice.

D. Bern. ’Tis well said, and wisely. I fear, your Lover is a little Folly-tainted; which, shortly after it proves so, you will repent.

Leon. Sir, I confess, I approve him of all the Men I know; but that Approbation is nothing, ’till season’d by your Consent.

D. Bern. We shall hear soon what his Father will do, and so proceed accordingly. I have no great Heart to the Business, neither will I with any Violence oppose it: But leave it to that Power which rules in these Conjunctions, and there’s an End. Come; haste We homeward, Girl. [*Exeunt.*

Scene III.

Enter Henriquez, and Servants with Lights.

Henr. Bear the Lights close: — Where is the Musick, Sirs?

Serv. Coming, my Lord.

Henr. Let ’em not come too near. This Maid,
For whom my Sighs ride on the Night’s chill Vapour,
Is born most humbly, tho’ she be as fair
As Nature’s richest Mould and Skill can make her,
Mended with strong Imagination.
But what of That? Th’ Obscureness of her Birth
Cannot eclipse the Lustre of her Eyes,
Which make her all One Light.— Strike up, my Masters;
But touch the Strings with a religious Softness;
Teach Sound to languish thro’ the Night’s dull Ear,
’Till Melancholy start from her lazy Couch,
And Carelessness grow Convert to Attention.

[Musick plays.

She drives me into Wonder, when I sometimes
Hear her discourse; The Court, whereof Report,
And Guess alone inform her, she will rave at,
As if she there sev’n Reigns had slander’d Time.
Then, when she reasons on her Country State,
Health, Virtue, Plainness, and Simplicity,
On Beauties true in Title, scorning Art,
Freedom as well to do, as think, what’s good;
My Heart grows sick of Birth and empty Rank,
And I become a Villager in Wish.
Play on; — She sleeps too sound: — Be still, and vanish:
A Gleam of Day breaks sudden from her Window:
O Taper, graced by that midnight Hand!

Violante appears above at her Window.

Viol. Who is’t, that wooes at this late Hour? What are you?

Henr. One, who for your dear Sake —

Viol. Watches the starless Night!
My Lord *Henriquez* , or my Ear deceives me.
You’ve had my Answer, and ’tis more than strange
You’ll combat these Repulses. Good my Lord,
Be Friend to your own Health; and give me Leave,
Securing my poor Fame, nothing to pity
What Pangs you swear you suffer. ’Tis impossible
To plant your choice Affections in my Shade,
At least, for them to grow there.

Henr. Why, *Violante* ?

Viol. Alas! Sir, there are Reasons numberless
To bar your Aims. Be warn’d to Hours more wholesom;
For, These you watch in vain. I have read Stories,
(I fear, too true ones;) how young Lords, like you,
Have thus besung mean Windows, rhymed their Sufferings
Ev’n to th’Abuse of Things Divine, set up
Plain Girls, like me, the Idols of their Worship,
Then left them to bewail their easie Faith,
And stand the World’s Contempt.

Henr. Your Memory,
Too faithful to the Wrongs of few lost Maids,
Makes Fear too general.

Viol. Let us be homely,
And let us too be chast, doing you Lords no Wrong;
But crediting your Oaths with such a Spirit,
As you profess them: so no Party trusted
Shall make a losing Bargain. Home, my Lord,
What you can say, is most unseasonable; what sing,
Most absonant and harsh: Nay, your Perfume,
Which I smell hither, cheers not my Sense
Like our Field-violet’s Breath.

Henr. Why this Dismission
Does more invite my Staying.

Viol. Men of your Temper
Make ev’ry Thing their Bramble. But I wrong
That which I am preserving, my Maid’s Name,
To hold so long Discourse. Your Virtues guide you
T’effect some nobler Purpose![*Ex.* Violante.

Henr. Stay, bright Maid!
Come back, and leave me with a fairer Hope.
She’s gone:— Who am I, that am thus contemn’d?
The second Son to a Prince? — Yes; well; What then?
Why, your great Birth forbids you to descend
To a low Alliance: — Her’s is the self-same Stuff,
Whereof we Dukes are made; but Clay more pure!
And take away my Title, which is acquir’d
Not by my self, but thrown by Fortune on Me,
Or by the Merit of some Ancestour
Of singular Quality, She doth inherit
Deserts t’outweigh me. — I must stoop to gain her;
Throw all my gay Comparisons aside,
And turn my proud Additions out of Service,
Rather than keep them to become my Masters.
The Dignities we wear, are Gifts of Pride;
And laugh’d at by the Wise, as meer Outside.

[Exit.

End of the First Act.

Act II. Scene I.

Scene, *The Prospect of a Village.*

Enter Fabian and Lopez; Henriquez on the Opposite Side.

Lop. Soft,

Henr. Ha! Is it come to this? Oh the Devil, the Devil, the Devil!

Fab. Lo you now! for Want of the discreet Ladle of a cool Understanding, will this Fellow’s Brains boil over.

Henr. To have enjoy’d her, I would have given — What?
All that at present I could boast my own,
And the Reversion of the World to boot,
Had the Inheritance been mine: — And now,
(Just Doom of guilty Joys!) I grieve as much
That I have rifled all the Stores of Beauty,
Those Charms of Innocence and artless Love,
As just before I was devour’d with Sorrow,
That she refus’d my Vows, and shut the Door
Upon my ardent Longings.

Lop. Love! Love! — Downright Love! I see by the Foolishness of it.

Henr. Now then to Recollection — Was’t not so? A Promise first of Marriage — Not a Promise only, for ’twas bound with Surety of a thousand Oaths; — and those not light ones neither. — Yet I remember too, those Oaths could not prevail; th’ unpractis’d Maid trembled to meet my Love: By Force alone I snatch’d th’ imperfect Joy, which now torments my Memory. Not Love, but brutal Violence prevail’d; to which the Time, and Place, and Opportunity, were Accessaries most dishonourable. Shame, Shame upon it!

Fab. What a Heap of Stuff’s this — I fancy, this Fellow’s Head would make a good Pedlar’s Pack, Neighbour.

Henr. Hold, let me be severe to my Self, but not unjust. — Was it a Rape then? No. Her Shrieks, her Exclamations then had drove me from her. True, she did not consent; as true, she did resist; but still in Silence all. — ’Twas but the Coyness of a modest Bride, not the Resentment of a ravisht Maid. And is the Man yet born, who would not risque the Guilt, to meet the Joy? — The Guilt! that’s true — but then the Danger; the Tears, the Clamours of the ruin’d Maid, pursuing me to Court. That, that, I fear will (as it already does my Conscience) something shatter my Honour. What’s to be done? But now I have no Choice. Fair *Leonora* reigns confest the Tyrant Queen of my revolted Heart, and *Violante* seems a short Usurper there. — *Julio* ’s already by my Arts remov’d.—

O Friendship, how wilt thou answer That? Oh, that a Man could reason down this Feaver of the Blood, or sooth with Words the Tumult in his Heart! Then, *Julio* , I might be, indeed, thy Friend. They, they only should condemn me, who born devoid of Passion ne’er have prov’d the fierce Disputes ’twixt Virtue and Desire. While they, who have, like me,
The loose Escapes of youthful Nature known,
Must wink at mine, indulgent to their own.

[Exit Henriquez.

Lop. This Man is certainly mad, and may be mischievous. Pr’ythee, Neighbour, let’s follow him; but at some Distance, for fear of the worst.

[Exeunt, after Henr.

Scene II. An Apartment.

Enters Violante alone.

Viol. Whom shall I look upon without a Blush?
There’s not a Maid, whose Eye with Virgin Gaze
Pierces not to my Guilt. What will’t avail me,
To say I was not willing;
Nothing; but that I publish my Dishonour,
And wound my Fame anew. — O Misery,
To seem to all one’s Neighbours rich, yet know
One’s Self necessitous and wretched.

Enter Maid, and afterwards Gerald with a Letter.

Maid. Madam, here’s *Gerald* , Lord *Henriquez* ’ Servant;
He brings a Letter to you.

Viol. A Letter to me! How I tremble now!
Your Lord’s for Court, good *Gerald* , is he not?

Ger. Not so, Lady.

Viol. O my presaging Heart! When goes he then?

Ger. His Business now steers him some other Course.

Viol. Whither, I pray you? — How my Fears torment me!

Ger. Some two Months Progress.

Viol. Whither, whither, Sir,
I do beseech you? Good Heav'ns, I lose all Patience.
Did he deliberate this? or was the Business
But then conceiv'd, when it was born?

Ger. Lady, I know not That; nor is it in the Command I have to wait your Answer. For the perusing the Letter I commend you to your Leisure.

[Exit Gerald.

Viol. To Hearts like mine Suspence is Misery.
Wax, render up thy Trust: Be the Contents
Prosp'rous, or fatal, they are all my Due.

Reads.] *Our Prudence should now teach us to forget,*
what our Indiscretion has committed. I
have already made one Step towards this
Wisdom, by prevailing on Myself to bid you
Farewell.

O, Wretched and betray'd! Lost *Violante!*
Heart-wounded with a thousand perjur'd Vows,
Poison'd with studied Language, and bequeath'd
To Desperation. I am now become
The Tomb of my own Honour: a dark Mansion,
For Death alone to dwell in. I invite thee,
Consuming Desolation, to this Temple,
Now fit to be thy Spoil: the ruin'd Fabrick,
Which cannot be repair'd, at once o'er-throw.
What must I do? — But That's not worth my Thought:
I will commend to Hazard all the Time
That I shall spend hereafter: Farewel, my Father,

Whom I’ll no more offend: and Men, adieu,
Whom I’ll no more believe: and Maids, adieu,
Whom I’ll no longer shame. The Way I go,
As yet I know not. — Sorrow be my Guide.

[Exit Violante.

Scene III. Prospect of a Village, before Don Bernard’s House.

Enters Henriquez.

Henr. Where were the Eyes, the Voice, the various Charms,
Each beauteous Particle, each nameless Grace,
Parents of glowing Love? All These in Her,
It seems, were not: but a Disease in Me,
That fancied Graces in her. — Who ne’er beheld
More than a Hawthorne, shall have Cause to say
The Cedar’s a tall Tree; and scorn the Shade,
The lov’d Bush once had lent him. Soft! mine Honour
Begins to sicken in this black Reflection.
How can it be, that with my Honour safe
I should pursue *Leonora* for my Wife?
That were accumulating Injuries,
To *Violante* first, and now to *Julio* ;
To her a perjur’d Wretch, to him perfidious;
And to myself in strongest Terms accus’d
Of murth’ring Honour wilfully, without which
My Dog’s the Creature of the nobler Kind. —
But Pleasure is too strong for Reason’s Curb;
And Conscience sinks o’er-power’d with Beauty’s Sweets.
Come, *Leonora* , Authress of my Crime,
Appear, and vindicate thy Empire here;
Aid me to drive this ling’ring Honour hence,
And I am wholly thine.

Enter to him, Don Bernard and Leonora.

D. Bern. Fye, my good Lord; why would you wait without?
If you suspect your Welcome, I have brought
My *Leonora* to assure you of it. [Henr. *Salutes* Leon.

Henr. O Kiss, sweet as the Odours of the Spring,
But cold as Dews that dwell on Morning Flow’rs!
Say, *Leonora* , has your Father conquer’d?
Shall Duty then at last obtain the Prize,
Which you refus’d to Love? And shall *Henriquez*
Owe all his Happiness to good *Bernardo* ?
Ah! no; I read my Ruin in your Eyes:
That Sorrow, louder than a thousand Tongues,
Pronounces my Despair.

D. Bern. Come, *Leonora* ,
You are not now to learn, this noble Lord,
(Whom but to name, restores my failing Age,)
Has with a Lover’s Eye beheld your Beauty;
Thro’ which his Heart speaks more than Language can;
It offers Joy and Happiness to You,
And Honour to our House. Imagine then
The Birth and Qualities of him that loves you;
Which when you know, you cannot rate too dear.

Leon. My Father, on my Knees I do beseech you
To pause one Moment on your Daughter’s Ruin.
I vow, my Heart ev’n bleeds, that I must thank you
For your past Tenderness; and yet distrust
That which is yet behind. Consider, Sir,
Whoe’er’s th’ Occasion of another’s Fault,
Cannot himself be innocent. O, give not
The censuring World Occasion to reproach
Your harsh Commands; or to my Charge lay That
Which most I fear, the Fault of Disobedience.

D. Bern. Pr’ythee, fear neither the One, nor the Other: I tell thee, Girl, there’s more Fear than Danger. For my own part, as soon as Thou art married to this noble Lord, my Fears will be over.

Leon. Sir, I should be the vainest of my Sex,
Not to esteem myself unworthy far
Of this high Honour. Once there was a Time,
When to have heard my Lord *Henriquez* ' Vows,
Might have subdued my unexperienc'd Heart,
And made me wholly his. — But That's now past:
And my firm-plighted Faith by your Consent
Was long since given to the injur'd *Julio* .

D. Bern. Why then, by my Consent e'en take it back again. Thou, like a simple Wench, hast given thy Affections to a Fellow, that does not care a Farthing for them. One, that has left thee for a Jaunt to Court; as who should say, I'll get a Place now; 'tis Time enough to marry, when I'm turn'd out of it.

Henr. So, surely, it should seem, most lovely Maid;
Julio , alas, feels nothing of my Passion:
His Love is but th' Amusement of an Hour,
A short Relief from Business, or Ambition,
The Sport of Youth, and Fashion of the Age.
O! had he known the Hopes, the Doubts, the Ardours,
Or half the fond Varieties of Passion,
That play the Tyrant with my tortur'd Soul;
He had not left Thee to pursue his Fortune:
To practise Cringes in a slavish Circle,
And barter real Bliss for unsure Honour.

Leon. Oh, the opposing Wind,
Should'ring the Tide, makes here a fearful Billow:
I needs must perish in it.— Oh, my Lord,
Is it then possible, you can forget
What's due to your great Name, and princely Birth,
To Friendship's holy Law, to Faith repos'd,
To Truth, to Honour, and poor injur'd *Julio* ?
O think, my Lord, how much this *Julio* loves you;
Recall his Services, his well-try'd Faith;
Think too, this very Hour, where-e'er he be,
Your Favour is the Envy of the Court,

And secret Triumph of his grateful Heart.
Poor *Julio* , how securely thou depend’st
Upon the Faith and Honour of thy Master;
Mistaken Youth! this very Hour he robs thee
Of all thy Heart holds dear.— ’Tis so *Henriquez*
Repays the Merits of unhappy *Julio* .   [*Weeps.*

Henr. My slumb’ring Honour catches the Alarm.
I was to blame to parley with her thus:
Sh’as shown me to myself. It troubles me.   [*Aside.*

D. Bern. Mad; Mad. Stark mad, by this Light.

Leon. I but begin to be so. — I conjure you,
By all the tender Interests of Nature,
By the chaste Love ’twixt you, and my dear Mother,
(O holy Heav’n, that she were living now!)
Forgive and pity me.— Oh, Sir, remember,
I’ve heard my Mother say a thousand Times,
Her Father would have forced her Virgin Choice;
But when the Conflict was ’twixt Love and Duty,
Which should be first obey’d, my Mother quickly
Paid up her Vows to Love, and married You.
You thought this well, and she was praised for This;
For this her Name was honour’d, Disobedience
Was ne’er imputed to her, her firm Love
Conquer’d whate’er oppos’d it, and she prosper’d
Long Time your Wife. My Case is now the same;
You are the Father, which You then condemn’d;
I, what my Mother was; but not so happy.—

D. Bern. Go to, you’re a Fool. No doubt, You have old Stories enough to undo you.— What, you can’t throw yourself away but by Precedent, ha?— You will needs be married to One, that will None of You? You will be happy no Body’s way but your own, forsooth.— But, d’ye mark me, spare your Tongue for the future; (and That’s using you hardly too, to bid you spare what you have a great deal too much of:) Go, go your ways, and d’ye hear, get ready within these Two days to be married to a Husband you don’t deserve; — Do it, or, by my dead Father’s Soul, you are no Acquaintance of mine.

Henr. She weeps: Be gentler to her, good *Bernardo* .

Leon. Then Woe the Day. — I’m circled round with Fire;
No Way for my Escape, but thro’ the Flames.
Oh, can I e’er resolve to live without
A Father’s Blessing, or abandon *Julio?*
With other Maids, the Choice were not so hard;
Int’rest, that rules the World, has made at last
A Merchandize of Hearts: and Virgins now
Chuse as they’re bid, and wed without Esteem.
By nobler Springs shall my Affections move;
Nor own a Master, but the Man I love.

[Exit Leonora.

D. Bern. Go thy ways, Contradiction. — Follow her, my Lord; follow her, in the very Heat. This Obstinacy must be combated by Importunity as obstinate. [*Exit* Henriquez *after her.*

The Girl says right; her Mother was just such Another. I remember, Two of Us courted her at the same Time. She lov’d neither of Us, but She chose me purely to spight that surly Old Blockhead my Father-in-Law. Who comes here, *Camillo?* Now the refusing Part will lie on my Side.—

Enter s Camillo.

Cam. My worthy Neighbour, I am much in Fortune’s Favour to find You thus alone. I have a Suit to You.

D. Bern. Please to name it, Sir.

Cam. Sir, I have long held You in singular Esteem: and what I shall now say, will be a Proof of it. You know, Sir, I have but one Son.

D. Bern. Ay, Sir.

Cam. And the Fortune I am blest withal, You pretty well know what it is.

D. Bern. ’Tis a fair One, Sir.

Cam. Such as it is, the whole Reversion is my Son’s. He is now engaged in his Attendance on our Master, the Duke. But e’er he went, he left with me the Secret of his Heart, his Love for your fair Daughter. For your Consent, he said, ’twas ready: I took a Night, indeed, to think upon it, and now have brought you mine; and am come to bind the Contract with half my Fortune in present, the Whole some time hence, and, in the mean while, my hearty Blessing. Ha? What say You to’t, *Don Bernard?*

D. Bern. Why, really, Neighbour, — I must own, I have heard Something of this Matter.—

Cam. Heard Something of it? No doubt, you have.

D. Bern. Yes, now I recollect it well.

Cam. Was it so long ago then?

D. Bern. Very long ago, Neighbour.— On *Tuesday* last.

Cam. What, am I mock’d in this Business, *Don Bernard?*

D. Bern. Not mock’d, good *Camillo* , not mock’d: But in Love-matters, you know, there are Abundance of Changes in half an Hour. Time, Time, Neighbour, plays Tricks with all of us.

Cam. Time, Sir! What tell you me of Time? Come, I see how this goes. Can a little Time take a Man by the Shoulder, and shake off his Honour? Let me tell you, Neighbour, it must either be a strong Wind, or a very mellow Honesty that drops so easily. Time, quoth’a?

D. Bern. Look’ee, *Camillo* ; will you please to put your Indignation in your Pocket for half a Moment, while I tell you the whole Truth of the Matter. My Daughter, you must know, is such a tender Soul, she cannot possibly see a Duke’s younger Son without falling desperately in Love with him. Now, you know, Neighbour, when Greatness rides Post after a Man of my Years, ’tis both Prudence, and good Breeding, to let one’s self be overtaken by it. And who can help all This? I profess, it was not my seeking, Neighbour.

Cam. I profess, a Fox might earth in the Hollowness of your Heart, Neighbour, and there’s an End. If I were to give a bad Conscience its true Likeness, it should be drawn after a very near Neighbour to a certain poor Neighbour of yours. — Neighbour! with a Pox.

D. Bern. Nay, you are so nimble with me, you will hear Nothing.

Cam. Sir, if I must speak Nothing, I will hear Nothing. As for what you have to say, if it comes from your Heart, ’tis a Lye before you speak it. — I’ll to Leonora; and if I find her in the same Story, why, I shall believe your Wife was true to You, and your Daughter is your own. Fare you well. [*Exit, as into* D. Bernard*’s House.*

D. Bern. Ay, but two Words must go to that Bargain. It happens, that I am at present of Opinion my Daughter shall receive no more Company to day; ’ at least, no such Visits as yours.

[Exit D. Bernard, following him.

Scene IV. ***Changes to another Prospect of*** **Don Bernard*’s House.***

Leonora, above.

Leon. How tediously I’ve waited at the Window,
Yet know not One that passes.— Should I trust
My Letter to a Stranger, whom I think
To bear an honest Face, (in which sometimes
We fancy we are wond’rous skillful;) then
I might be much deceiv’d. This late Example
Of base *Henriquez* , bleeding in me now,
From each good Aspect takes away my Trust:
For his Face seem’d to promise Truth and Honour.
Since Nature’s Gifts in noblest Forms deceive,
Be happy You, that want ’em! — Here comes One;
I’ve seen him, tho’ I know him not; He has
An honest Face too— that’s no Matter.— Sir, —

Enter s Citizen.

Citiz. To me?

Leon. As You were of a virtuous Matron born,
(There is no Doubt, you are:) I do conjure you
Grant me one Boon. Say, do you know me, Sir?

Citiz. Ay, *Leonora* , and your worthy Father.

Leon. I have not Time to press the Suit I’ve to you
With many Words; nay, I should want the Words,
Tho’ I had Leisure: but for Love of Justice,
And as you pity Misery— But I wander
Wide from my Subject. Know you *Julio* , Sir?

Citiz. Yes, very well; and love him too, as well.

Leon. Oh, there an Angel spake! Then I conjure you,
Convey this Paper to him: and believe me,
You do Heav’n Service in’t, and shall have Cause
Not to repent your Pains. — I know not what
Your Fortune is; — Pardon me, gentle Sir,
That I am bold to offer This.

[Throws down a Purse with Money.

D. Bern. within.] *Leonora* . —

Leon. I trust to you; Heav’n put it in your Heart
To work me some Relief.

Citiz. Doubt it not, Lady. You have mov’d me so,
That tho’ a thousand Dangers barr’d my way,
I’d dare ’em all to serve you. [*Exit* Citizen.

Leon. Thanks from a richer Hand than mine requite you!

D. Bern. within.] Why, Daughter —

Leon. I come: — Oh, Julio, feel but half my Grief,
And Thou wilt outfly Time to bring Relief.

[Exit Leonora from the Window.

End of the Second Act.

Act III. Scene I.

Scene, *The Prospect of a Village.*

Enter Julio with a Letter, and Citizen.

Citiz. When from the Window she did bow and call,
Her Passions shook her Voice; and from her Eyes
Mistemper and Distraction, with strange Wildness
Bespoke Concern above a common Sorrow.

Jul. Poor *Leonora* ! Treacherous, damn'd *Henriquez!*
She bids me fill my Memory with her Danger;
I do, my *Leonora* ; yes, I fill
The Region of my Thought with nothing else;
Lower, she tells me here, that this Affair
Shall yield a Testimony of her Love:
And prays, her Letter may come safe and sudden.
This Pray'r the Heav'ns have heard, and I beseech 'em,
To hear all Pray'rs she makes.

Citiz. Have Patience, Sir.

Jul. O my good Friend, methinks, I am too patient.
Is there a Treachery, like This in Baseness,
Recorded any where? It is the deepest:
None but Itself can be its Parallel:
And from a Friend, profess'd! — Friendship? Why, 'tis

A Word for ever maim’d; in human Nature
It was a Thing the noblest; and ’mong Beasts,
It stood not in mean Place: Things of fierce Nature
Hold Amity and Concordance. — Such a Villany
A Writer could not put down in his Scene,
Without Taxation of his Auditory
For Fiction most enormous.

Citiz. These Upbraidings
Cool Time, while they are vented.

Jul. I am counsel’d.
For you, evermore, Thanks. You’ve done much for Us;
So gently press’d to ’t, that I may perswade me
You’ll do a little more.

Citiz. Put me t’Employment
That’s honest, tho’ not safe, with my best Spirits
I’ll give’t Accomplishment.

Jul. No more but This;
For I must see *Leonora* : And to appear
Like *Julio* , as I am, might haply spoil
Some good Event ensuing. Let me crave
Th’ Exchange of Habit with you: some Disguise,
May bear Me to my Love, unmark’d, and secret.

Citiz. You shall not want. Yonder’s the House before us:
Make Haste to reach it.

Jul. Still I thank you, Sir.
O *Leonora!* stand but this rude Shock;
Hold out thy Faith against the dread Assault
Of this base Lord, the Service of my Life
Shall be devoted to repay thy Constancy. [*Exeunt.*

Scene II. Don Bernard’*s House.*

Enters Leonora.

Leon. I've hoped to th' latest Minute Hope can give:
He will not come: H'as not receiv'd my Letter:
'May be, some other View has from our Home
Repeal'd his chang'd Eye: for what Business can
Excuse a Tardiness thus willfull? None.
Well then, it is not Business. — Oh! that Letter, —
I say, is not deliver'd; or He's sick;
Or, O Suggestion, wherefore wilt Thou fright me?
Julio does to *Henriquez* on meer Purpose,
On plotted Purpose, yield me up; and He
Hath chose another Mistress. All Presumptions
Make pow'rful to this Point: His own Protraction,
Henriquez left behind; — That Strain lack'd Jealousie,
Therefore lack'd Love. — So sure as Life shall empty
It self in Death, this new Surmise of mine
Is a bold Certainty. 'Tis plain, and obvious,
Henriquez would not, durst not, thus infringe
The Law of Friendship; thus provoke a Man,
That bears a Sword, and wears his Flag of Youth
As fresh as He: He durst not: 'Tis Contrivance,
Gross-dawbing 'twixt them Both. — But I'm o'erheard.   [*Going.*

Enter s Julio, disguised.

Jul. Stay, *Leonora* ; Has this outward Veil
Quite lost me to thy Knowledge?

Leon.   O my *Julio!*
Thy Presence ends the stern Debate of Doubt,
And cures me of a thousand heartsick Fears,
Sprung from thy Absence: yet awakes a Train
Of other sleeping Terrors. Do you weep?

Jul. No, *Leonora* ; when I weep, it must be
The Substance of mine Eye. 'Would I could weep;
For then mine Eye would drop upon my Heart,
And swage the Fire there.

Leon. You are full possess'd
How things go here. First, welcome heartily;
Welcome to th'Ending of my last good Hour:
Now Summer Bliss and gawdy Days are gone,
My Lease in 'em 's expir'd.

Jul. Not so, *Leonora* .

Leon. Yes, *Julio* , yes; an everlasting Storm
Is come upon me, which I can't bear out.
I cannot stay much Talk; we have lost Leisure;
And thus it is: Your Absence hath giv'n Breeding
To what my Letter hath declar'd, and is
This Instant on th'effecting, Hark! the Musick

[Flourish within.

Is now on tuning, which must celebrate
This Bus'ness so discordant. — Tell me then,
What you will do.

Jul. I know not what: Advise me:
I'll kill the Traytor.

Leon. O! take Heed: his Death
Betters our Cause no whit. No killing, *Julio* .

Jul. My Blood stands still; and all my Faculties
Are by Enchantment dull'd. You gracious Pow'rs,
The Guardians of sworn Faith, and suff'ring Virtue,
Inspire Prevention of this dreaded Mischief!
This Moment is our own; Let's use it, Love,
And fly o'th' Instant from this House of Woe.

Leon. Alas! Impossible: My steps are watch'd;
There's no Escape for Me. You must stay too.

Jul. What! stay, and see thee ravish'd from my Arms?
I'll force thy Passage. Wear I not a Sword?
Ne'er on Man's Thigh rode better. — If I suffer

The Traytor play his Part; if I not do
Manhood and Justice, Honour; let me be deem'd
A tame, pale, Coward, whom the Night-Owl's Hoot
May turn to Aspen-leaf: Some Man take This,
Give Me a Distaff for it.

Leon. Patience, *Julio* ;
And trust to Me: I have fore-thought the Means
To disappoint these Nuptials. — Hark! again;

[Musick within.

These are the Bells knoll for Us.— See, the Lights
Move this Way, *Julio* . Quick, behind yon Arras,
And take thy secret Stand. — Dispute it not;
I have my Reasons, you anon shall know them: —
There you may mark the Passages of the Night.
Yet, more: — I charge you by the dearest Tyes,
What-e'er you see, or hear, what-e'er shall hap,
In your Concealment rest a silent Statue.
Nay, hide thee strait, — or, — see, I'm arm'd and vow[*Shews a Dagger*.
To fall a bleeding Sacrifice before Thee.

[Thrusts him out, to the Arras.

I dare not tell thee of my Purpose, *Julio* ,
Lest it should wrap thee in such Agonies,
Which my Love could not look on. —

Scene opens to a large Hall: An Altar prepared with Tapers. Enter at one Door Servants with Lights, Henriquez, Don Bernard, and Churchman. At another, Attendants to Leonora. Henriquez runs to her.

Henr. Why, *Leonora* , wilt Thou with this Gloom
Darken my Triumph; suff'ring Discontent,
And wan Displeasure, to subdue that Cheek
Where Love should sit inthron'd? Behold your Slave;
Nay, frown not; for each Hour of growing Time
Shall task me to thy Service, 'till by Merit
Of dearest Love I blot the low-born *Julio*

From thy fair Mind.

Leon. So I shall make it foul;
This Counsel is corrupt.

Henr. Come, you will change.—

Leon. Why would you make a Wife of such a One,
That is so apt to change? This foul Proceeding
Still speaks against itself, and vilifies
The purest of your Judgment. — For your Birth's Sake
I will not dart my hoarded Curses at you,
Nor give my Meanings Language: For the Love
Of all good Things together, yet take heed,
And spurn the Tempter back.

D. Bern. I think, you're mad. — Perverse, and foolish, Wretch!

Leon. How may I be obedient, and wise too?
Of my Obedience, Sir, I cannot strip me;
Nor can I then be wise: Grace against Grace!
Ungracious, if I not obey a Father;
Most perjur'd, if I do. — Yet, Lord, consider,
Or e'er too late, or e'er that Knot be ty'd,
Which may with Violence damnable be broken,
No other way dissever'd: Yet consider,
You wed my Body, not my Heart, my Lord;
No Part of my Affection. Sounds it well,
That *Julio* 's Love is Lord *Henriquez* ' Wife;
Have you an Ear for this harsh Sound?

Henr. No Shot of Reason can come near the Place,
Where my Love's fortified. The Day shall come,
Wherein you'll chide this Backwardness, and bless
Our Fervour in this Course.

Leon. No, no, *Henriquez* ,
When you shall find what Prophet you are prov'd,
You'll prophesie no more.

D. Bern. Have done this Talking,
If you will cleave to your Obedience, do’t;
If not, unbolt the Portal, and be gone;
My Blessing stay behind you.

Leon. Sir, your Pardon:
I will not swerve a Hair’s Breadth from my Duty;
It shall first cost me dear.

D. Bern. Well then, to th’ Point:
Give me your Hand. — My honour’d Lord, receive
My Daughter of Me, — (nay, no dragging back,
But with my Curses;) — whom I frankly give you,
And wish you Joy and Honour.

[As Don Bernard goes to give Leonora to Henriquez, Julio advances from the Arras, and steps between.

Jul. Hold, *Don Bernard* ,
Mine is the elder Claim.

D. Bern. What are you, Sir?

Jul. A Wretch, that’s almost lost to his own Knowledge,
Struck thro’ with Injuries. —

Henr. Ha! *Julio?* — Hear you,
Were you not sent on our Commands to Court?
Order’d to wait your fair Dismission thence?
And have you dared, knowing you are our Vassal,
To steal away unpriviledg’d, and leave
My Business and your Duty unaccomplish’d?

Jul. Ungen’rous Lord! The Circumstance of Things
Should stop the Tongue of Question. — You have wrong’d me;
Wrong’d me so basely, in so dear a Point,
As stains the Cheek of Honour with a Blush;
Cancells the Bonds of Service; bids Allegiance
Throw to the Wind all high Respects of Birth,
Title, and Eminence; and, in their Stead,

Fills up the panting Heart with just Defiance.
If you have Sense of Shame, or Justice, Lord,
Forego this bad Intent; or with your Sword
Answer me like a Man, and I shall thank you.
Julio once dead, *Leonora* may be thine;
But, living, She's a Prize too rich to part with.

Henr. Vain Man! the present Hour is fraught with Business
Of richer Moment. Love shall first be serv'd:
Then, if your Courage hold to claim it of me,
I may have Leisure to chastise this Boldness.

Jul. Nay, then I'll seize my Right.

Henr. What, here, a Brawl?
My Servants, — Turn this boist'rous Sworder forth;
And see he come not to disturb our Joys.

Jul. Hold, Dogs! — *Leonora* , — Coward, base, *Henriquez!*

[Julio is seiz'd, and drag'd out by the Servants.

Henr. She dies upon Me; help!

[Leonora swoons; as they endeavour to recover her, a Paper drops from her.

D. Bern. Throng not about her;
But give her Air.

Henr. What Paper's That? let's see it.
It is her own HandWriting.

D. Bern. Bow her Head:
'Tis but her Fright; she will recover soon.
What learn you by that Paper, good my Lord?

Henr. That she would do the Violence to herself,
Which Nature hath anticipated on her.
What Dagger means she? Search her well, I pray you.

D. Bern. Here is the Dagger. — Oh, the stubborn Sex,
Rash ev’n to Madness! —

Henr. Bear her to her Chamber:
Life flows in her again. — Pray, bear her hence:
And tend her, as you would the World’s best Treasure.

[Women carry Leonora off.

Don Bernard , this wild Tumult soon will cease,
The Cause remov’d; and all return to Calmness.
Passions in Women are as short in Working,
As strong in their Effect. Let the Priest wait:
Come, go we in: My Soul is all on Fire;
And burns impatient of this forc’d Delay.

[Exeunt; and the Scene closes.

Scene III. Prospect of a Village at a Distance.

Enters Roderick.

Rod. Julio ’s Departure thus in secret from Me,
With the long doubtful Absence of my Brother,
(Who cannot suffer, but my Father feels it;)
Have trusted me with strong Suspicions,
And Dreams, that will not let me sleep, nor eat,
Nor taste those Recreations Health demands:
But, like a Whirlwind, hither have they snatch’d me,
Perforce, to be resolv’d. I know my Brother
Had *Julio* ’s Father for his Host: from him
Enquiry may befriend me.

Enter s Camillo.

Old Sir, I’m glad
To ’ve met you thus: What ails the Man? *Camillo* , —

Cam. Ha?

Rod. Is’t possible, you should forget your Friends?

Cam. Friends! What are Those?

Rod. Why, Those that love you, Sir.

Cam. You’re None of Those, sure, if you be Lord *Roderick* .

Rod. Yes, I am that Lord *Roderick* , and I lie not,
If I protest, I love you passing well.

Cam. You lov’d my Son too passing well, I take it:
One, that believ’d too suddenly his Court-Creed.

Rod. All is not well. [*aside.*] — Good old Man, do not rail.

Cam. My Lord, my Lord, you’ve dealt dishonourably.

Rod. Good Sir, I am so far from doing Wrongs
Of that base Strain, I understand you not.

Cam. Indeed! — You know not neither, o’ my Conscience,
How your most virtuous Brother, noble *Henriquez* ,
(You look so like him, Lord, you are the worse for’t;
Rots upon such Dissemblers!) under colour
Of buying Coursers, and I know not what,
Bought my poor Boy out of Possession
Ev’n of his plighted Faith. — Was not this Honour?
And This a constant Friend?

Rod. I dare not say so.

Cam. Now you have robb’d him of his Love, take all;
Make up your Malice, and dispatch his Life too.

Rod. If you would hear me, Sir, —

Cam. Your brave old Father

Would have been torn in Pieces with wild Horses,
E’er he had done this Treachery. On my Conscience,
Had he but dreamt you Two durst have committed
This base, unmanly Crime, —

Rod. Why, this is Madness. —

Cam. I’ve done; I’ve eas’d my Heart; now you may talk.

Rod. Then as I am a Gentleman, believe me,
(For I will lie for no Man;) I’m so far
From being guilty of the least Suspicion
Of Sin that way, that fearing the long Absence
Of *Julio* and my Brother might beget
Something to start at, hither have I travell’d
To know the Truth of you.

Enter s Violante behind.

Viol. My Servant loiters; sure, he means me well.
Camillo , and a Stranger? These may give me
Some Comfort from their Talk. I’ll step aside:
And hear what Fame is stirring. [Violante *retires.*

Rod. Why this Wond’ring?

Cam. Can there be one so near in Blood as you are
To that *Henriquez* , and an honest Man?

Rod. While he was good, I do confess my Nearness;
But, since his Fall from Honour, he’s to me
As a strange Face I saw but Yesterday,
And as soon lost.

Cam. I ask your Pardon, Lord;
I was too rash and bold.

Rod. No Harm done, Sir.

Cam. But is it possible, you should not hear
The Passage ’twixt *Leonora* and your Brother?

Rod. None of All This.

Enter s Citizen.

How now?

Citiz. I bear you Tidings, Sir, which I could wish
Some other Tongue deliver’d.

Cam.   Whence, I pray you?

Citiz. From your Son, Sir.

Cam. Pr’ythee, where is he?

Citiz. That’s more than I know now, Sir.
But This I can assure you, he has left
The City raging mad; Heav’n comfort him!
He came to that curst Marriage — The Fiends take it! —

Cam. Pr’ythee, be gone, and bid the Bell knoll for me:
I have had one Foot in the Grave some Time.
Nay, go, good Friend; thy News deserve no Thanks.
How does your Lordship?[*Exit Citizen.*

Rod. That’s well said, Old Man.
I hope, all shall be well yet.

Cam. It had need;
For ’tis a crooked World. Farewell, poor Boy! —

Enter s Don Bernard.

D. Bern. This comes of forcing Women where they hate:

It was my own Sin; and I am rewarded.
Now I am like an aged Oak, alone,
Left for all Tempests. — I would cry, but cannot:
I'm dry'd to Death almost with these Vexations.
Lord! what a heavy Load I have within me!
My Heart, — my Heart, — my Heart —

Cam. Has this ill Weather
Met with Thee too?

D. Bern. O Wench, that I were with thee!

Cam. You do not come to mock at me now?

D. Bern. Ha? —

Cam. Do not dissemble; Thou may'st find a Knave
As bad as thou art, to undo thee too:
I hope to see that Day before I dye yet.

D. Bern. It needeth not, *Camillo* ; I am Knave
Sufficient to my self. If thou wilt rail,
Do it as bitterly as thou canst think of;
For I deserve it. Draw thy Sword, and strike me;
And I will thank thee for't. — I've lost my Daughter;
She's stol'n away; and whither gone, I know not.

Cam. She has a fair Blessing in being from you, Sir.
I was too poor a Brother for your Greatness;
You must be grafted into noble Stocks,
And have your Titles rais'd. My State was laugh'd at:
And my Alliance scorn'd. I've lost a Son too;
Which must not be put up so. [*Offers to draw.*

Rod. Hold; be counsel'd.
You've equal Losses; urge no farther Anger.
Heav'n, pleas'd now at your Love, may bring again,
And, no Doubt, will, your Children to your Comforts:
In which Adventure my Foot shall be foremost.
And One more will I add, my Honour'd Father;

Who has a Son to grieve for too, tho' tainted.
Let your joint Sorrow be as Balm to heal
These Wounds of adverse Fortune.

D. Bern. Come, *Camillo* ,
Do not deny your Love, for Charity;
I ask it of you. Let this noble Lord
Make Brothers of Us, whom our own cross Fates
Could never join. What I have been, forget;
What I intend to be, believe and nourish:
I do confess my Wrongs; give me your Hand.

Cam. Heav'n make thee honest; — there.

Rod. 'Tis done like good Men.
Now there rests Nought, but that we part, and each
Take sev'ral Ways in Quest of our lost Friends:
Some of my Train o'er the wild Rocks shall wait you.
Our best Search ended, here we'll meet again,
And tell the Fortunes of our separate Travels. [*Exeunt.*

Violante comes forward.

Viol. I would, your Brother had but half your Virtue!
Yet there remains a little Spark of Hope
That lights me to some Comfort. The Match is cross'd;
The Parties separate; and I again
May come to see this Man that has betray'd me;
And wound his Conscience for it: Home again
I will not go, whatever Fortune guides me;
Tho' ev'ry Step I went, I trod upon
Dangers as fearful and as pale as Death.
No, no, *Henriquez* ; I will follow thee
Where there is Day. Time may beget a Wonder.

Enter s Servant.

O, are you come? What News?

Serv. None, but the worst. Your Father makes mighty Offers yonder by a Cryer, to any One can bring you home again.

Viol. Art Thou corrupted?

Serv. No.

Viol. Wilt thou be honest?

Serv. I hope, you do not fear me.

Viol. Indeed, I do not. Thou hast an honest Face;
And such a Face, when it deceives, take heed,
Is curst of all Heav’n’s Creatures.

Serv. I’ll hang first.

Viol. Heav’n bless thee from that End! — I’ve heard a Man
Say more than This; and yet that Man was false.
Thou’lt not be so, I hope.

Serv. By my Life, Mistress, —

Viol. Swear not; I credit Thee. But pr’ythee tho’,
Take Heed, thou dost not fail: I do not doubt Thee:
Yet I have trusted such a serious Face,
And been abused too.

Serv. If I fail your Trust, —

Viol. I do thee Wrong to hold thy Honesty
At Distance thus: Thou shalt know all my Fortunes.
Get me a Shepherd’s Habit.

Serv. Well; what else?

Viol. And wait me in the Evening, where I told thee;
There Thou shalt know my farther Ends. Take Heed—

Serv. D’ye fear me still?

Viol. No; This is only Counsel:
My Life and Death I have put equally
Into thy Hand: Let not Rewards, nor Hopes,
Be cast into the Scale to turn thy Faith.
Be honest but for Virtue’s sake, that’s all;
He, that has such a Treasure, cannot fall. [*Exeunt.*

The End of the Third Act.

Act IV. Scene I.

Scene, *A Wide Plain, with a Prospect of Mountains at a Distance.*

Enter Master of the Flocks, three or four Shepherds, and Violante in Boy’s Cloaths.

1 Shep. Well, he’s as sweet a Man, Heav’n comfort him! as ever these Eyes look’d on.

2 Shep. If he have a Mother, I believe, Neighbours, she’s a Woe-woman for him at this Hour.

Mast. Why should he haunt these wild unpeopled Mountains,
Where nothing dwells but Hunger, and sharp Winds?

1 Shep. His Melancholy, Sir, that’s the main Devil does it. Go to, I fear he has had too much foul Play offer’d him.

Mast. How gets he Meat?

2 Shep. Why, now and then he takes our Victuals from us, tho’ we desire him to eat; and instead of a short Grace, beats us well and soundly, and then falls to.

Mast. Where lies He?

1 Shep. Ev’n where the Night o’ertakes him.

2 Shep. Now will I be hang’d, an’ some fair-snouted skittish Woman, or other, be not at the End of this Madness.

1 Shep. Well, if he lodg’d within the Sound of us, I knew our Musick would allure him. How attentively he stood, and how he fix’d his Eyes, when your Boy sung his Love-Ditty. Oh, here he comes again.

Mast. Let him alone; he wonders strangely at us.

1 Shep. Not a Word, Sirs, to cross him, as you love your Shoulders.

2 Shep. He seems much disturb’d: I believe the mad Fit is upon him.

Enter s Julio.

Jul. Horsemanship!— Hell— Riding shall be abolish’d:
Turn the barb’d Steed loose to his native Wildness;
It is a Beast too noble to be made
The Property of Man’s Baseness.— What a Letter
Wrote he to’s Brother? What a Man was I?
Why, *Perseus* did not know his Seat like me;
The *Parthian* , that rides swift without the Rein,
Match’d not my Grace and Firmness. – – – Shall this Lord
Dye, when Men pray for him? Think you ’tis meet?

1 Shep. I don’t know what to say: Neither I, nor all the Confessors in *Spain* , can unriddle this wild Stuff.

Jul. I must to Court! be usher’d into Grace,
By a large List of Praises ready penn’d!
O Devil! What a venomous World is this,
When Commendations are the Baits to Ruin!
All these good Words were Gyves and Fetters, Sir,
To keep me bolted there: while the false Sender
Play’d out the Game of Treach’ry.— Hold; come hither;
You have an Aspect, Sir, of wond’rous Wisdom,
And, as it seems, are travell’d deep in Knowledge;
Have you e’er seen the *Phoenix* of the Earth,

The Bird of Paradise?

2 Shep. In Troth, not I, Sir.

Jul. I have; and known her Haunts, and where she built
Her spicy Nest: ’till, like a credulous Fool,
I shew’d the Treasure to a Friend in Trust,
And he hath robb’d me of her. — Trust no Friend:
Keep thy Heart’s Counsels close. — Hast thou a Mistress?
Give her not out in Words; nor let thy Pride
Be wanton to display her Charms to View;
Love is contagious: and a Breath of Praise,
Or a slight Glance, has kindled up its Flame,
And turn’d a Friend a Traytor. — ’Tis in Proof;
And it has hurt my Brain.

1 Shep. Marry, now there is some Moral in his Madness, and we may profit by it.

Mast. See, he grows cool, and pensive.
Go towards him, Boy, but do not look that way.

Viol. Alas! I tremble —

Jul. Oh, my pretty Youth!
Come hither, Child; Did not your Song imply
Something of Love?

1 Shep. Ha—ha— goes it there? Now if the Boy be witty, we shall trace something.

Viol. Yes, Sir, it was the Subject.

Jul. Sit here then: Come, shake not, good pretty Soul,
Nor do not fear me; I’ll not do thee Wrong.

Viol. Why do you look so on me?

Jul. I have Reasons.
It puzzles my Philosophy, to think
That the rude Blast, hot Sun, and dashing Rains

Have made no fiercer War upon thy Youth;
Nor hurt the Bloom of that Vermilion Cheek.
You weep too, do you not?

Viol. Sometimes, I do.

Jul. I weep sometimes too. You’re extremely young.

Viol. Indeed, I’ve seen more Sorrows far than Years.

Jul. Yet all these have not broken your Complexion.
You have a strong Heart, and you are the happier.
I warrant, you’re a very loving Woman.

Viol. A Woman, Sir?— I fear, h’as found me out.

[Aside.

2 Shep. He takes the Boy for a Woman.— Mad, again!

Jul. You’ve met some Disappointment; some foul Play
Has cross’d your Love.— I read it in your Face.

Viol. You read a Truth then.

Jul. Where can lie the Fault?
Is’t in the Man, or some dissembling Knave,
He put in Trust? Ho! have I hit the Cause?

Viol. You’re not far off.

Jul. This World is full of Coz’ners, very full;
Young Virgins must be wary in their Ways.
I’ve known a Duke’s Son do as great a Knavery.
Will you be rul’d by me?

Viol. Yes.

Jul. Kill Yourself.
’Twill be a Terror to the Villain’s Conscience,

The longest Day he lives.

Viol. By no Means. What?
Commit Self-murther!

Jul. Yes; I'll have it so.

1 Shep. I fear, his Fit is returning. Take heed of all hands. — Sir,— do you want any thing?

Jul. Thou ly'st; thou can'st not hurt me: I am proof
'Gainst farther Wrongs. — Steal close behind me, Lady.
I will avenge Thee.

Viol. Thank the Heav'ns, I'm free.

Jul. O treach'rous, base *Henriquez!* have I caught thee?

2 Shep. Help! help! good Neighbours; he will kill me else. [Julio *seizes on the* Shepherd;
Violante *runs out.*

Jul. Here Thou shalt pay thy Heart-blood for the Wrongs
Thou'st heap'd upon this Head. Faith-breaker! Villain!
I'll suck thy Life-blood.

1 Shep. Good Sir, have Patience; this is no *Henriquez* . [*They rescue the* Shepherd.

Jul. Well; let him slink to Court, and hide a Coward;
Not all his Father's Guards shall shield him there.
Or if he prove too strong for Mortal Arm,
I will sollicit ev'ry Saint in Heav'n
To lend me Vengeance. — I'll about it strait. —
The wrathful Elements shall wage this War;
Furies shall haunt him; Vultures gnaw his Heart;
And Nature pour forth all her Stores of Plagues,
To join in Punishment of Trust betray'd. [*Exit* Julio.

2 Shep. Go thy Ways, and a Vengeance go with Thee! — Pray, feel my Nose; is it fast, Neighbours?

1 Shep. ’Tis as well as may be.

2 Shep. He pull’d at it, as he would have drag’d a Bullock backward by the Tail. — An’t had been some Men’s Nose that I know, Neighbours, who knows where it had been now? He has given me such a devilish Dash o’er the Mouth, that I feel, I shall never whistle to my Sheep again: Then they’ll make Holy-day.

1 Shep. Come, shall we go? for, I fear, if the Youth return, our second Course will be much more against our Stomachs.

Mast. Walk you afore; I will but give my Boy
Some short Instructions, and I’ll follow strait.
We’ll crash a Cup together.

1 Shep. Pray, do not linger.

Mast. I will not, Sirs; — This must not be a Boy;
His Voice, Mein, Gesture, ev’ry Thing he does,
Savour of soft and female Delicacy.
He but puts on this Seeming, and his Garb
Speaks him of such a Rank, as well perswades me,
He plays the Swain, rather to cloak some Purpose,
Than forced to’t by a Need: I’ve waited long
To mark the End he has in his Disguise;
But am not perfect in’t. The Madman’s Coil
Has driv’n him shaking hence. These Fears betray him.
If he prove right, I’m happy. O, he’s here.

Enter s Violante.

Come hither, Boy; where did you leave the Flock, Child?

Viol. Grazing below, Sir. — What does he mean, to stroke One o’the Cheek so? I hope, I’m not betray’d.

Mast. Have you learnt the Whistle yet, and when to Fold?

And how to make the Dog bring in the Strayers?

Viol. Time, Sir, will furnish me with all these Rules;
My Will is able, but my Knowledge weak, Sir.

Mast. That’s a good Child: Why dost thou blush, my Boy?
’Tis certainly a Woman. [*Aside.*] Speak, my Boy.

Viol. Heav’n! how I tremble. — ’Tis unusual to me
To find such Kindness at a Master’s Hand,
That am a poor Boy, ev’ry way unable,
Unless it be in Pray’rs to merit it.
Besides, I’ve often heard old People say,
Too much Indulgence makes Boys rude and sawcy.

Mast. Are you so cunning!—

Viol. How his Eyes shake Fire,
And measure ev’ry Piece of Youth about me![*Aside.*
The Ewes want Water, Sir: Shall I go drive ’em
Down to the Cisterns? Shall I make haste, Sir?
’Would I were five Miles from him— How he gripes me![*Aside.*

Mast. Come, come, all this is not sufficient, Child,
To make a Fool of me.— This is a fine Hand,
A delicate fine Hand,— Never change Colour;
You understand me, — and a Woman’s Hand.

Viol. You’re strangely out: Yet if I were a Woman,
I know, you are so honest and so good,
That tho’ I wore Disguises for some Ends,
You would not wrong me.—

Mast. Come, you’re made for Love;
Will you comply? I’m madder with this Talk.
There’s Nothing you can say, can take my Edge off.

Viol. Oh, do but quench these foul Affections in you,
That, like base Thieves, have rob’d you of your Reason,
And I will be a Woman; and begin

So sad a Story, that if there be aught
Of humane in you, or a Soul that’s gentle,
You cannot chuse but pity my lost Youth.

Mast. No Stories now.—

Viol. Kill me directly, Sir;
As you have any Goodness, take my Life.

Rod. within. Hoa! Shepherd, will you hear, Sir?

Mast. What bawling Rogue is that, i’th’ Devil’s Name?

Viol. Blessings upon him, whatsoe’er he be![*Runs out.*

Enter s Roderick.

Rod. Good Even, my Friend; I thought, you all had been asleep in this Country.

Mast. You had lied then; for you were waking, when you thought so.

Rod. I thank you, Sir.

Mast. I pray, be cover’d; ’tis not so much worth, Sir.

Rod. Was that thy Boy ran crying?

Mast. Yes; what then?

Rod. Why dost thou beat him so?

Mast. To make him grow.

Rod. A pretty Med’cine! Thou can’st not tell me the Way to the next Nunnery?—

Mast. How do you know That? — Yes, I can tell you; but the Question is, whether I will or no; and, indeed, I will not. Fare you well. [*Exit* Master.

Rod. What a brute Fellow’s this! Are they all thus?
My Brother *Henriquez* tells me by his Letters,
The Mistress of his Soul not far from hence
Hath taken Sanctuary: from which he prays
My Aid to bring her back.— From what *Camillo*
Hinted, I wear some Doubts.— Here ’tis appointed
That we should meet; it must be here; ’tis so.
He comes.

Enter s Henriquez.

Now, Brother, what’s this post-haste Business
You hurry me about? — Some wenching Matter —

Henr. My Letter told you, Sir.

Rod. ’Tis true, it tells me, that you’ve lost a Mistress
Whom your Heart bleeds for; but the Means to win her
From her close Life, I take it, is not mention’d.
You’re ever in these Troubles.—

Henr. Noble Brother,
I own, I have too freely giv’n a Scope
To Youth’s intemp’rate Heat, and rash Desires:
But think not, that I would engage your Virtues
To any Cause, wherein my constant Heart
Attended not my Eye. ’Till now my Passions
Reign’d in my Blood; ne’er pierc’d into my Mind;
But I’m a Convert grown to purest Thoughts:
And must in Anguish spend my Days to come,
If I possess not her: So much I love.

Rod. The Means? — She’s in a Cloyster, is she not?
Within whose Walls to enter as We are,
Will never be: Few Men, but Fryars, come there;
Which We shall never make.

Henr. If That would do it,

I would make Any thing.

Rod. Are you so hot?
I'll serve him, be it but to save his Honour. [*Aside.*
To feign a Corpse — By th' Mass, it shall be so.
We must pretend, we do transport a Body
As 'twere to's Funeral: and coming late by,
Crave a Night's Leave to rest the Herse i'th' Convent.
That be our Course; for to such Charity
Strict Zeal and Custom of the House give Way.

Henr. And, opportune, a vacant Herse pass'd by
From Rites but new perform'd: This for a Price
We'll hire, to put our Scheme in Act. Ho! *Gerald* —

[Enter Gerald, whom Henriquez whispers; then Gerald goes out.

Rod. When we're once lodg'd, the Means of her Conveyance,
By safe and secret Force, with Ease we'll compass
But, Brother, know my Terms. — If that your Mistress
Will to the World come back, and she appear
An Object worthy in our Father's Eye,
Wooe her, and win her; but if his Consent
Keep not Pace with your Purpose —

Henr. Doubt it not.
I've look'd not with a common Eye; but chose
A noble Virgin, who to make her so,
Has all the Gifts of Heav'n and Earth upon her.
If ever Woman yet could be an Angel,
She is the nearest.

Rod. Well; a Lover's Praise
Feasts not a Common Ear. — Now to our Plot;
We shall bring Night in with Us. [*Exeunt.*

Scene II.

Enter Julio, and Two Gentlemen.

Gent. Good Sir, compose yourself.

Jul. O *Leonora* ,
That Heav'n had made Thee stronger than a Woman,
How happy had I been!

Gent. He's calm again:
I'll take this Interval to work upon Him.
These wild and solitary Places, Sir,
But feed your Pain; let better Reason guide you;
And quit this forlorne State, that yields no Comfort.

[Lute sounds within.

Jul. Ha! hark, a Sound from Heav'n! Do you hear Nothing?

Gent. Yes, Sir; the Touch of some sweet Instrument:
Here's no Inhabitant.

Jul. No, no, the better.

Gent. This is a strange Place to hear Musick in.

Jul. I'm often visited with these sweet Airs.
The Spirit of some hapless Man that dy'd,
And left his Love hid in a faithless Woman,
Sure haunts these Mountains. [Violante *sings within.*

Fond Echo! forego thy light Strain,
And heedfully hear a lost Maid;
Go, tell the false Ear of the Swain
How deeply his Vows have betray'd.
Go, tell him, what Sorrows I bear;
See, yet if his Heart feel my Woe:
'Tis now he must heal my Despair,
Or Death will make Pity too slow.

Gent. See, how his Soul strives in him! This sad Strain
Has search'd him to the Heart.

Jul. Excellent Sorrow!
You never lov’d?

Gent. No.

Jul. Peace; and learn to grieve then.

[Violante sings within.

Go, tell him, what Sorrows I bear;
See, yet if his Heart feel my Woe:
’Tis now he must heal my Despair,
Or Death will make Pity too slow.

Is not this heav’nly?

Gent. I never heard the Like, Sir.

Jul. I’ll tell you, my good Friends; but pray, say Nothing;
I’m strangely touch’d with This. The heav’nly Sound
Diffuses a sweet Peace thro’ all my Soul.
But yet I wonder, what new, sad, Companion
Grief has brought hither to out-bid my Sorrows.
Stand off, stand off, stand off — Friends, it appears.

Enter s Violante.

Viol. How much more grateful are these craggy Mountains,
And these wild Trees, than things of nobler Natures;
For These receive my Plaints, and mourn again
In many Echoes to Me. All good People
Are faln asleep for ever. None are left,
That have the Sense, and Touch of Tenderness
For Virtue’s sake: No, scarce their Memory:
From whom I may expect Counsel in Fears,
Ease to Complainings, or Redress of Wrongs.

Jul. This is a moving Sorrow, but say nothing.

Viol. What Dangers have I run, and to what Insults
Expos’d this Ruin of my self? Oh! Mischief
On that Soul-spotted Hind, my vicious Master!
Who would have thought, that such poor Worms as They,
(Whose best Feed is coarse Bread; whose Bev’rage, Water;)
Should have so much rank Blood? I shake all over,
And blush to think what had become of me,
If that good Man had not reliev’d me from him.

Jul. Since she is not *Leonora* , she is heav’nly.
When she speaks next, listen as seriously,
As Women do that have their Loves at Sea,
What Wind blows ev’ry Morning. —

Viol. I cannot get this false Man’s Memory
Out of my Mind. You Maidens, that shall live
To hear my mournful Tale, when I am Ashes,
Be wise; and to an Oath no more give Credit,
To Tears, to Vows, (false Both!) or any Thing
A Man shall promise, than to Clouds, that now
Bear such a pleasing Shape, and now are nothing.
For they will cozen, (if They may be cozen’d,)
The very Gods they worship. — Valour, Justice,
Discretion, Honesty, and all they covet,
To make them seeming Saints, are but the Wiles
By which these *Syrens* lure us to Destruction.

Jul. Do not you weep now? I could drop myself
Into a Fountain for her.

Gent. She weeps extremely.

Jul. Let her weep; ’tis well:
Her Heart will break else. Great Sorrows live in Tears.

Viol. O false *Henriquez* ! —

Jul. Ha!

Viol. And Oh, thou Fool,

Forsaken *Violante!* whose Belief
And childish Love have made Thee so — go, dye;
For there is nothing left Thee now to look for,
That can bring Comfort, but a quiet Grave.
There all the Miseries I long have felt,
And Those to come, shall sweetly sleep together.
Fortune may guide that false *Henriquez* hither,
To weep Repentance o'er my pale, dead Coarse,
And cheer my wand'ring Spirit with those lov'd Obsequies. [*Going.*

Jul. Stay, Lady, stay: Can it be possible,
That you are *Violante?*

Viol. That lost Name,
Spoken by One, that needs must know my Fortunes,
Has taken much Fear from me. Who are you, Sir?
For, sure, I am that hopeless *Violante* .

Jul. And I, as far from any earthly Comfort
That I know yet, the much-wrong'd *Julio!*

Viol. *Julio!*

Jul. I once was thought so. — If the curst *Henriquez*
Had Pow'r to change you to a Boy, why, Lady,
Should not that Mischief make me any thing,
That have an equal Share in all the Miseries
His Crimes have flung upon Us?

Viol. Well I know it:
And pardon Me, I could not know your Virtues,
Before your Griefs. Methought, when last we met,
The Accent of your Voice struck on my Ear
Like something I had known, but Floods of Sorrow
Drown'd the Remembrance. If you'll please to sit,
(Since I have found a suff'ring true Companion,)
And give me Hearing, I will tell you something
Of *Leonora* , that may comfort you.

Jul. Blessing upon Thee! Henceforth, I protest

Never to leave Thee, if Heav’n say *Amen* .
But, soft! let’s shift our Ground, guide our sad Steps
To some remoter Gloom, where, undisturb’d,
We may compare our Woes; dwell on the Tale
Of mutual Injuries, ’till our Eyes run o’er,
And we infect each other, with fresh Sorrows. —
Talk’d you of Comfort? ’Tis the Food of Fools,
And We will None on’t; but indulge Despair:
So, worn with Griefs, steal to the Cave of Death,
And in a Sigh give up our latest Breath. [*Exeunt.*

The End of the Fourth Act.

Act V. Scene I.

Scene, *The Prospect of the Mountains continued.*

Enter Roderick, Leonora veil’d, Henriquez, Attendants as Mourners.

Rod. Rest certain, Lady, Nothing shall betide you,
But fair, and noble Usage. Pardon me,
That hitherto a Course of Violence
Has snatch’d you from that Seat of Contemplation
To which you gave your After-Life.

Leon. Where am I?

Rod. Not in the Nunnery; never blush, nor tremble;
Your Honour has as fair a Guard, as when
Within a Cloyster. Know then, what is done,
(Which, I presume, you understand not truly,)
Has this Use, to preserve the Life of One
Dying for Love of You: my Brother, and your Friend:
Under which Colour we desir’d to rest
Our Herse one Night within your hallow’d Walls,
Where we surpriz’d you.

Leon. Are you that Lord *Roderick* ,
So spoken of for Virtue, and fair Life,
And dare you lose these to be Advocate
For such a Brother, such a sinful Brother,
Such an unfaithful, treacherous, brutal Brother?

Rod. This is a fearful Charge. —

[Looks at Henriquez.

Leon. If you would have me

Think, you still bear Respect for Virtue’s Name;
As you would wish, your Daughters, thus distress’d,
Might find a Guard, protect me from *Henriquez* ;
And I am happy.

Rod. Come, Sir, make your Answer;
For as I have a Soul, I am asham’d on’t.

Henr. O *Leonora* , see! thus self-condemn’d,
I throw me at your Feet, and sue for Mercy.
If I have err’d, impute it to my Love;
The Tyrant God that bows us to his Sway,
Rebellious to the Laws of reas’ning Men;
That will not have his Votaries Actions scann’d,
But calls it Justice, when we most obey him.
He but commanded, what your Eyes inspir’d;
Whose sacred Beams, darted into my Soul,
Have purg’d the Mansion from impure Desires,
And kindled in my Heart a Vestal’s Flame.

Leon. Rise, rise, my Lord; this well-dissembled Passion
Has gain’d you nothing but a deeper Hate.
Should I imagine, he can truly love me,
That, like a Villain, murthers my Desires?
Or should I drink that Wine, and think it Cordial,
When I see Poyson in’t?

Rod. Draw this way, Lady;
I am not perfect in your Story yet;
But see you’ve had some Wrongs, that want Redress.
Only you must have Patience to go with us
To yon small Lodge, which meets the Sight from hence,
Where your Distress shall find the due Respect:
’Till when, your Griefs shall govern me as much,
As Nearness and Affection to my Brother.
Call my Attendants yours; and use them freely;
For as I am a Gentleman, no Pow’r,
Above your own Will, shall come near your Person.

[As they are going out, Violante enters, and plucks Roderick by the Sleeve; the rest go out.]

Viol. Your Ear a Moment: Scorn not my tender Youth.

Roder. Look to the Lady there. — I follow strait.
What ails this Boy? Why dost thou single me?

Viol. The due Observance of your noble Virtue,
Vow’d to this mourning Virgin, makes me bold
To give it more Employment.

Rod. Art not Thou
The surly Shepherd’s Boy, that, when I call’d
To know the Way, ran crying by me?

Viol . Yes, Sir.
And I thank Heav’n and you for helping me.

Rod. How did I help thee, Boy?

Viol. I do but seem so, Sir; and am indeed
A Woman; one your Brother once has lov’d;
Or, Heav’n forgive him else, he ly’d extremely.

Rod. Weep not, good Maid; O this licentious Brother!
But how came you a Wand’rer on these Mountains?

Viol. That, as we pass, an’t please you, I’ll discover.
I will assure you, Sir, these barren Mountains
Hold many Wonders of your Brother’s making.
Here wanders hapless *Julio* , worthy Man!
Besides himself with Wrongs —

Rod. That once again —

Viol. Sir, I said, *Julio* . — Sleep weigh’d down his Eyelids,
Oppress’d with Watching, just as you approach’d us.

Rod. O Brother! We shall sound the Depths of Falsehood.

If this be true, no more but guide me to him:
I hope, a fair End will succeed all yet.
If it be He, by your Leave, gentle Brother,
I’ll see him serv’d first. — Maid, you have o’erjoy’d me.
Thou shalt have Right too: Make thy fair Appeal
To the good Duke, and doubt not but thy Tears
Shall be repaid with Interest from his Justice.
Lead me to *Julio* .   [*Exeunt.*

Scene II. ***An Apartment in the Lodge.***

Enter Duke, Don Bernard, and Camillo.

Cam. Ay, then your Grace had had a Son more; He, a Daughter; and I, an Heir: But let it be as ’tis, I cannot mend it; one way or other, I shall rub it over, with rubbing to my Grave, and there’s an End on’t.

Duke. Our Sorrows cannot help us, Gentlemen.

Cam. Hang me, Sir, if I shed one Tear more. By *Jove* , I’ve wept so long, I’m as blind as Justice. When I come to see my Hawks (which I held a Toy next to my Son;) if they be but House-high, I must stand aiming at them like a Gunner.

Duke. Why, he mourns like a Man. *Don Bernard* , you
Are still like *April* , full of Show’rs and Dews:
And yet I blame you not: for I myself
Feel the self-same Affections. — Let them go;
They’re disobedient Children.

D. Bern. Ay, my Lord;
Yet they may turn again.

Cam. Let them e’en have their Swing: they’re young and wanton; the next Storm we shall have them gallop homeward, whining as Pigs do in the Wind.

D. Bern. Would I had my Daughter any way.

Cam. Would’st thou have her with Bearn, Man, tell me that?

D. Bern. I care not, if an honest Father got it.

Cam. You might have had her so in this good Time, Had my Son had her: Now you may go seek Your Fool to stop a Gap with.

Duke. You say, that *Rod'rick* charg'd you here should wait him:
He has o'erslip'ed the Time, at which his Letters
Of Speed request that I should also meet him.
I fear, some bad Event is usher'd in
By this Delay: — How now?

Enter s Gentleman.

Gent. So please your Grace,
Lord *Rod'rick* makes Approach.

Duke. I thank thee, Fellow,
For thy so timely News: Comes he alone?

Gent. No, Sir, attended well; and in his Train
Follows a Herse with all due Rites of Mourning.

[Exit Gent.

Duke. Heav'n send, *Henriquez* live!

Cam. 'Tis my poor *Julio* .—

Enter s Roderick, hastily.

Duke. O welcome, welcome,
Welcome, good *Rod'rick!* Say, what News?

Cam. Do you bring Joy or Grief, my Lord? For me,
Come what can come, I'll live a Month or two
If the Gout please; curse my Physician once more,
And then, — —
Under this Stone

Lies Sev’nty One.

Rod. Signior, you do express a manly Patience.
My noble Father, something I have brought
To ease your Sorrows: My Endeavours have not
Been altogether barren in my Journey.

Duke. It comes at need, Boy; but I hop’d it from thee.

Enter Leonora veil’d, Henriquez behind, and Attendants.

Rod. The Company I bring, will bear me Witness
The busiest of my Time has been employ’d
On this good Task. *Don Bernard* finds beneath
This Veil his Daughter: You, my Royal Father,
Behind that Lady find a wand’ring Son.
How I met with them, and how brought them hither,
More Leisure must unfold.

Henr. My Father here!
And *Julio* ’s! O Confusion! — Low as Earth
I bow me for your Pardon. [*To the Duke.*

D. Bern. O my Girl!
Thou bring’st new Life. —[*Embraces* Leonora.

Duke. And you, my Son, restore me [*To* Roderick.
One Comfort here that has been missing long.
I hope, thy Follies thou hast left abroad. [*To* Henriq.

Cam. Ay, ay; you’ve all Comforts but I; you have ruin’d me, kill’d my poor Boy; cheated and ruin’d him; and I have no Comfort.

Rod. Be patient, Signior; Time may guide my Hand
To work you Comfort too.

Cam. I thank your Lordship;
’Would Grandsire Time had been so kind to’ve done it;

We might have joy’d together like good Fellows.
But he’s so full of Business, good Old Man,
’Tis Wonder, he could do the Good he has done.

D. Bern. Nay, Child, be comforted. These Tears distract me.

Duke. Hear your good Father, Lady.

Leon. Willingly.

Duke. The Voice of Parents is the Voice of Gods:
For to their Children they are Heav’n’s Lieutenants:
Made Fathers, not for common Uses meerly
Of Procreation; (Beasts and Birds would be
As noble then as we are) but to steer
The wanton Freight of Youth thro’ Storms and Dangers,
Which with full Sails they bear upon: and streighten
The moral Line of Life, they bend so often.
For these are We made Fathers; and for These,
May challenge Duty on our Children’s Part.
Obedience is the Sacrifice of Angels,
Whose Form you carry.

D. Bern. Hear the Duke, good Wench.

Leon. I do most heedfully. My gracious Lord,

[To the Duke.

Let me be so unmanner’d to request,
He would not farther press me with Persuasions
O’th’ instant Hour: but have the gentle Patience
To bury this keen Suit, ’till I shake Hands
With my old Sorrows, —

Cam. Why dost look at me?
Alas! I cannot help thee.

Leon. And but weep
A Farewell to my murther’d *Julio* , —

Cam. Blessing be with thy Soul, whene’er it leaves Thee!

Leon. For such sad Rites must be perform’d, my Lord,
E’er I can love again. Maids, that have lov’d,
If they be worth that noble Testimony,
Wear their Loves here, my Lord; here, in their Hearts;
Deep, deep within; not in their Eyes, or Accents;
Such may be slip’d away; or with two Tears
Wash’d out of all Remembrance: Mine, no Physick,
But Time, or Death, can cure.

Henr. You make your own Conditions, and I seal them
Thus on your virtuous Hand. [*Aside.*

Cam. Well, Wench, thy Equal
Shall not be found in haste; I give thee That:
Thou art a right one, ev’ry Inch. — Thy Father
(For, without Doubt, that Snuff never begot Thee,)
Was some choice Fellow, some true Gentleman;
I give thy Mother Thanks for’t — there’s no Harm done. —
Would I were young again, and had but thee,
A good Horse under me, and a good Sword,
And thus much for Inheritance. —

[Violante offers, once or twice, to shew herself, but goes back.

Duke. What Boy’s That,
Has offer’d twice or thrice to break upon us?
I’ve noted him, and still he falls back fearful.

Rod. A little Boy, Sir, like a Shepherd?

Duke. Yes.

Rod. ’Tis your Page, Brother; — One that was so, late.

Henr. My Page! What Page?

Rod. Ev’n so he says, your Page;
And more, and worse, you stole him from his Friends,

And promis’d him Preferment.

Henr. I, Preferment! —

Rod. And on some slight Occasion let him slip
Here on these Mountains, where he had been starv’d,
Had not my People found him, as we travell’d.
This was not handsome, Brother.

Henr. You are merry.

Rod. You’ll find it sober Truth.

Duke. If so, ’tis ill.

Henr. ’Tis Fiction all, Sir; — Brother, you must please
To look some other Fool to put these Tricks on;
They are too obvious: — Please your Grace, give Leave
T’ admit the Boy; If he know me, and say,
I stole him from his Friends, and cast him off,
Know me no more. — Brother, pray do not wrong me.

Enter s Violante

Rod. Here is the Boy. If he deny this to you,
Then I have wrong’d you.

Duke. Hear me; What’s thy Name, Boy?

Viol. Florio , an’t like your Grace.

Duke. A pretty Child.
Where wast thou born?

Viol. On t’other Side the Mountains.

Duke. What are thy Friends?

Viol. A Father, Sir; but poor.

Duke. How camest thou hither? how, to leave thy Father?

Viol. That noble Gentleman pleas’d once to like me,[*Pointing to* Henriquez.
And, not to lye, so much to doat upon me,
That with his Promises he won my Youth,
And Duty, from my Father: Him I follow’d.

Rod. How say you now, Brother?

Cam. Ay, my Lord, how say You?

Hen. As I have Life and Soul, ’tis all a Trick, Sir.
I never saw the Boy before.

Viol. O Sir,
Call not your Soul to witness in a Wrong:
And ’tis not noble in you, to despise
What you have made thus. If I lye, let Justice
Turn all her Rods upon me.

Duke. Fye, *Henriquez* ;
There is no Trace of Cunning in this Boy.

Cam. A good Boy! — Be not fearful: Speak thy Mind, Child.
Nature, sure, meant thou should’st have been a Wench;
And then’t had been no Marvel he had bobb’d thee.

Duke. Why did he put thee from him?

Viol. That to me
Is yet unknown, Sir; for my Faith, he could not;
I never did deceive him: for my Service,
He had no just Cause; what my Youth was able,
My Will still put in Act, to please my Master:
I cannot steal; therefore that can be nothing
To my Undoing: no, nor lye; my Breeding,
Tho’ it be plain, is honest.

Duke. Weep not, Child.

Cam. This Lord has abused Men, Women, and Children already: What farther Plot he has, the Devil knows.

Duke. If thou can’st bring a Witness of thy Wrong,
(Else it would be Injustice to believe thee,
He having sworn against it;) thou shalt have,
I bind it with my Honour, Satisfaction
To thine own Wishes.

Viol. I desire no more, Sir.
I have a Witness, and a noble one,
For Truth and Honesty.

Rod. Go, bring him hither. [*Exit* Violante.

Henr. This lying Boy will take him to his Heels,
And leave me slander’d.

Rod. No; I’ll be his Voucher.

Henr. Nay then ’tis plain, this is Confederacy.

Rod. That he has been an Agent in your Service,
Appears from this. Here is a Letter, Brother,
(Produc’d, perforce, to give him Credit with me;)
The Writing, yours; the Matter, Love; for so,
He says, he can explain it.

Cam. Then, belike,
A young He-bawd.

Henr. This Forgery confounds me!

Duke. Read it, *Roderick* .

Rod. Reads.] *Our Prudence should now teach us to*
forget, what our Indiscretion has com
mitted. I have already made one Step
towards this Wisdom — —

Henr. Hold, Sir.— My very Words to *Violante* !

[Aside.

Duke. Go on.

Henr. My gracious Father, give me Pardon;
I do confess, I some such Letter wrote
(The Purport all too trivial for your Ear,)
But how it reach'd this young Dissembler's Hands,
Is what I cannot solve. For on my Soul,
And by the Honours of my Birth and House,
The Minion's Face 'till now I never saw.

Rod. Run not too far in Debt on Protestation.—
Why should you do a Child this Wrong?

Henr. Go to;
Your Friendships past warrant not this Abuse:
If you provoke me thus, I shall forget
What you are to me. This is a meer Practice,
And Villany to draw me into Scandal.

Rod. No more; you are a Boy. — Here comes a Witness,
Shall prove you so: No more.—

Enter Julio, disguis'd; Violante, as a Woman.

Henr. Another Rascal!

Duke . Hold: —

Henr. Ha![*Seeing* Violante.

Duke. What's here?

Henr. By all my Sins, the injur'd *Violante* . [*Aside.*

Rod. Now, Sir, whose Practice breaks?

Cam. Is this a Page?[*To* Henr.

Rod. One that has done him Service,
And he has paid her for’t; but broke his Covenant.

Viol. My Lord, I come not now to wound your Spirit.
Your pure Affection dead, which first betray’d me,
My Claim dye with it! Only let me not
Shrink to the Grave with Infamy upon me:
Protect my Virtue, tho’ it hurt your Faith;
And my last Breath shall speak *Henriquez* noble.

Henr. What a fierce Conflict Shame, and wounded Honour,
Raise in my Breast! — but Honour shall o’ercome.—
She looks as beauteous, and as innocent,
As when I wrong’d her. — Virtuous *Violante* !
Too good for me! dare you still love a Man,
So faithless as I am?— I know you love me.
Thus, thus, and thus, I print my vow’d Repentance:
Let all Men read it here.— My gracious Father,
Forgive, and make me rich with your Consent,
This is my Wife; no other would I chuse,
Were she a Queen.

Cam . Here’s a new Change. *Bernard* looks dull upon’t.

Henr. And fair *Leonora* , from whose Virgin Arms
I forc’d my wrong’d Friend *Julio* , O forgive me.
Take home your holy Vows, and let him have ’em
That has deserv’d them. O that he were here!
That I might own the Baseness of my Wrong,
And purpos’d Recompence. My *Violante* ,
You must again be widow’d: for I vow
A ceaseless Pilgrimage, ne’er to know Joy,
’Till I can give it to the injur’d *Julio* .

Cam . This almost melts me: — But my poor lost Boy —

Rod. I’ll stop that Voyage, Brother. — Gentle Lady,
What think you of this honest Man?

Leon . Alas!
My Thoughts, my Lord, were all employ’d within!
He has a Face makes me remember something
I have thought well of; how he looks upon me!
Poor Man, he weeps. — Ha! stay; it cannot be —
He has his Eye, his Features, Shape, and Gesture.—
’Would, he would speak.

Jul.Leonora , —[*Throws off his Disguise.*

Leon . Yes, ’tis He.
O Ecstacy of Joy! —[*They embrace.*

Cam . Now, what’s the Matter?

Rod. Let ’em alone; they’re almost starv’d for Kisses.

Cam . Stand forty Foot off; no Man trouble ’em.
Much Good may’t do your Hearts! — What is he, Lord,
What is he?

Rod. A certain Son of yours.

Cam . The Devil he is.

Rod. If he be the Devil, that Devil must call you Father.

Cam . By your Leave a little, ho, — Are you my *Julio?*

Jul. My Duty tells me so, Sir,
Still on my Knees. — But Love engross’d me all;
O *Leonora* , do I once more hold thee?

Cam . Nay, to’t again: I will not hinder a Kiss,
’Tis he— ’ [*Leaps.*

Leon . The righteous Pow’rs at length have crown’d our Loves.

Think, *Julio* , from the Storm that's now o'erblown,
Tho' sour Affliction combat Hope awhile,
When Lovers swear true Faith, the list'ning Angels
Stand on the golden Battlements of Heav'n,
And waft their Vows to the Eternal Throne.
Such were our Vows, and so are they repaid.

Duke. E'en as you are, we'll join your Hands together.
A Providence above our Pow'r rules all.
Ask him Forgiveness, Boy. [*To* Henriquez.

Jul. He has it, Sir:
The Fault was Love's, not his.

Henr. Brave, gen'rous *Julio!*
I knew thy Nobleness of old, and priz'd it,
'Till Passion made me blind — Once more, my Friend,
Share in a Heart, that ne'er shall wrong thee more.
And, Brother, —

Rod. This Embrace cuts off Excuses.

Duke. I must, in part, repair my Son's Offence:
At your best Leisure, *Julio* , know our Court.
And, *Violante* , (for I know you now;)
I have a Debt to pay*:* Your good old Father,
Once, when I chas'd the Boar, preserv'd my Life:
For that good Deed, and for your Virtue's Sake,
Tho' your Descent be low, call me your Father.
A Match drawn out of Honesty, and Goodness,
Is Pedigree enough. — Are you all pleas'd?

[Gives her to Henriquez.

Camil. All.

Henr. All, Sir,

D. Bern. All, Sir,

Jul. All.

Duke. And I not least. We’ll now return to Court:
(And that short Travel, and your Loves compleated,
Shall, as I trust, for Life restrain these Wand’rings.)
There, the Solemnity, and Grace, I’ll do
Your sev’ral Nuptials, shall approve my Joy;
And make griev’d Lovers, that your Story read,
Wish, true Love’s Wand’rings may like yours succeed.

[Curtain falls.

FINIS.

The Sources

The reconstruction of The Globe, which opened in 1997

LIST OF THE PLAYS' SOURCES

HENRY VI – Holinshed's *Chronicles*

THE TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA – Young's Translation of *Diana*

ROMEO AND JULIET – Brooke's Poem

THE MERCHANT OF VENICE – Three Sources

TWELFTH NIGHT – Barnabe Rich's Short Story

HAMLET – Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy*

TROILUS AND CRESSIDA – Chaucer's Poem

ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL - William Painter's *Palace of Pleasure*

MEASURE FOR MEASURE – George Whetstone's *Promos and Cassandra*

OTHELLO - Cinthio's Tale

KING LEAR – Holinshed, Sydney and Spenser

MACBETH – Holinshed’s Chronicles

ANTHONY AND CLEOPATRA – Thomas North’s translation of Plutarch’s *Lives*

CORIOLANUS – Thomas North’s translation of Plutarch’s *Lives*

PERICLES – John Gower’s *Confessio Amantis*

THE WINTER’S TALE – Greene’s Poem

CYMBELINE - Geoffrey of Monmouth’s *History*

THE TWO NOBLE KINSMEN – Chaucer’s *The Knight’s Tale*

HENRY VI – Holinshed’s *Chronicles*

Many of Shakespeare’s history plays drew their source material from Holinshed’s famous *Chronicles* . This extract from the 1587 second edition reveals much of the content of Shakespeare’s earliest plays – the *Henry VI* ‘trilogy’.

In time of this siege at Orleance (French stories saie) the first wéeke of March 1408, W. P. Ieha de Tillet. vnto Charles the Dolphin, at Chinon as he was in verie great care and studie how to Les chronic. de Bretaigne: Le Rosier calleth him Robert. wrestle against the English nation, by one Peter Badricourt capteine of Vacouleur, (made after marshall of France by the Dolphins creation) was caried a yoong wench of an eightéene yeeres old, called Ione Are, by name of hir father (a sorie sheepheard) Ione de Are Pusell de dieu. Iames of Are, and Isabell hir mother, brought vp poorelie in their trade of kéeping cattell, borne at Domprin (therefore reported by Bale, Ione Domprin) vpon Meuse in In vita Bundvicœ. Loraine within the diocesse of Thoule. Of fauour was she counted likesome, of person stronglie made and manlie, of courage great, hardie, and stout withall, an vnderstander of counsels though she were not at them, great semblance of chastitie both of bodie and behauiour, the name of Iesus in hir mouth about all hir businesses, humble, obedient, and fasting diuerse daies in the weeke. A person (as their bookes make hir) raised vp by power diuine, onelie for succour to the French estate then déepelie in distresse, in whome, for planting a credit the rather, first the companie that toward the Dolphin did conduct hir, through places all dangerous, as holden by the English, where she neuer was afore, all the waie and by nightertale safelie did she lead; then at the Dolphins sending by hir assignement, from saint Katharins church of Fierbois in Touraine (where she neuer had béene and knew not) in a secret place there among old iron, appointed she hir sword to be sought out and brought Grand chro. 4. hir, that with fiue floure dellces was grauen on both sides, wherewith she fought & did manie slaughters by hir owne hands. On warfar rode she in armourFrom head to foot. cap a pie & mustered as a man, before hir an ensigne all white, wherin was Iesus Christ painted with a floure delice in his hand.

Vnto the Dolphin into his gallerie when first she was brought, and he shadowing himselfe behind, setting other gaie lords before him to trie hir cunning from all the companie, with a salutation (that indeed marz all the matter) she pickt him out This salutation appeareth after héere. alone, who therevpon had hir to the end of the gallerie, where she held him an houre in secret and priuate talke, that of his priuie chamber was thought verie long, and therefore would haue broken it off; but he made them a sign to let hir saie on. In which (among other) as likelie it was, she set out vnto him the singular feats (forsooth) giuen her to vnderstand by reuelation diuine, that in vertue of that sword shée Les grand chronic. should atchiue, which were, how with honor and victorie shee wóuld raise the siege at Orleance, set him in state of the crowne of France, and driue the English out of the countrie, thereby he to inioie the kingdome alone. Héerevpon he hartened at full, appointed hir a sufficient armie with absolute power to lead them, and they obedientlie to doo as she bad them. Then fell she to worke, and first defeated indéed the siege at Orleance, by and by incouraged him to crowne himselfe king of France at Reims, that a little before from the English she had woone. Thus after pursued she manie bold enterprises to our great displeasure a two yeare togither, for the time she kept in state vntill she were taken and for heresie and witcherie burned: as in particularities hereafter followeth.. But in hir prime time she armed at all points (like a iolie capteine) roade from Poictiers to Blois, and there found men of warre, vittels, and munition, ready to be conueied to Orleance.

Héere was it knowne that the Englishmen kept not so diligent watch as they had beene accustomed to doo, and therefore this maid (with other French capteins) comming forward in the dead time of the night, and in a great raine and thunder entred into the citie with all their vittels, artillerie, and other necessarie prouisions. The next daie the Englishmen boldlie assaulted the towne, but the Frenchmen defended the walles so, as no great feat worthie of memorie chanced that daie betwixt them, though the Frenchmen were amazed at the valiant attempt of the Englishmen, whervpon the bastard of Orleance gaue knowledge to the duke of Alanson, in what danger the towne stood without his present helpe, who comming within two leagues of the citie, gaue knowledge to them within, that they should be readie the next daie to receiue him.

This accordinglie was accomplished: for the Englishmen willinglie suffered him and his armie also to enter, supposing that it should be for their aduantage to haue so great a multitude to enter the citie, whereby their vittels (whereof they within had great scarsitie) might the sooner be consumed. On the next daie in the morning, the Frenchmen altogither issued out of the towne, woone by assault the bastile of saint Lou, and set it on fire. And after they likewise assaulted the tower at the bridge foot, which was manfullie defended. But the Frenchmen (more in number) at length tooke it, yer the lord Talbot could come to the succours, in the which William Gladesdale the capteine was slaine, with the lord Moolins, and lord Poinings also.

The Frenchmen puffed vp with this good lucke, fetched a compasse about, and in good order of battell marched toward the bastile, which was in the keeping of the lord Talbot: the which vpon the enimies approch, like a capteine without all feare or dread of that great multitude, issued foorth againt them, and gaue them so sharpe an incounter, that they not able to withstand his puissance, fled (like shéepe before the woolfe) againe into the citie, with great losse of men and small artillerie. Of Englishmen were lost in the two Bastiles, to the number of six hundred persons, or thereabout, though the French writers multiplie this number of hundreds to thousands, as their maner is.

The earle of Suffolke, the lord Talbot, the lord Scales, and other capteins assembled togither in councell, and after causes shewed to and fro, it was amongst them determined to leaue their fortresses and bastiles, and to asssmble in the plaine field, and there to abide all the daie, to sée if the Frenchmen would issue foorth to fight with them. This conclusion taken was accordinglie executed: but when the Frenchmen durst not once come foorth to shew their heads, the Englishmen set fire of their lodgings, and departed in good order of Battell fiom Orleance. The next daie, which The siege of Orleance broken vp. was the eight daie of Maie, the earle of Suffolke rode to Iargeaux with foure hundred Englishmen, and the lord Talbot with an other companie returned to Mehun. And after he had fortified that towne, he went to the towne of Lauall, and woone it, togither with the castell, sore punishing the townsmen for their cankered obstinacie against them.

Thus when the Englishmen had seuered themselues into garrisons, the duke of Alanson, the bastard of Orleance, lone le Pusell, the lord Gawcourt, and diuerse other capteins of the Frenchmen, came the twelfe daie of Iune, before the towne of Iargeaux, where the earle of Suffolke and his two brethren soiourned, & gaue to the towne so fierce an assault on thrée parts, that Poiton de Sentrailes, perceiuing an other part void of defendants, scaled the wals on that side, and without difficultie tooke the towne, and slue sir Alexander Poole, brother to the erle, and manic other, to the number of two hundred. But the Frenchmen gained not much thereby, for they lost thére hundred good men and more. Of the Englishmen fortie were taken, with the earle and his other brother named Iohn.

The Frenchmen, as they returned to Orleance, fell at variance for their prisoners, Prisoners slaine by the French as they were taken. and slue them all, sauing the earle and his brother. Shortlie after, the same French armie came to Mehun, where they tooke the tower at the bridge foot, and put therein a garrison. From thence they remooued to Baugencie, and constreined them that were within the towne to yéeld, vpon condition they might depart with bag and baggage. At the same place there came to the duke of Alanson, the new constable Arthur of

Britaine, and with him the lord Dalbret, and other. Also after this the earle of Vandosme came to them, so that by the dailie repaire of such as assembled togiter to strengthen the French part, they were in all to the number betweene twentie and thrée and twentie thousand men.

All which being once ioined in one armie, shortlie after fought with the lord Talbot Nichol. Giles. (who had with him not past six thousand men) néere vnto a village in Beausse Fiue thousd saith Hall. called Pataie: at which battell the charge was giuen by the French so vpon a sudden, that the Englishmen had not leisure to put themselues in arraie, after they had put vp their stakes before their archers, so that there was no remedie but to fight at aduenture. This battell continued by the space of three long houres; for the Englishmen, though they were ouerpressed with multitude of their enimies, yet they neuer fled backe one foot, till their capteine the lord Talbot was sore wounded at the backe, and so taken.

Then their hearts began to faint, and they fled, in which flight were slaine aboue Great losse on the English side. twelue hundred, and fortie taken, of whome the lord Talbot, the lord Scales, the The lordsTalbos, Scales, and Hungerford taken. lord Hungerford, & sir Thomas Rampston were cheefe. Diuerse archers, after they ans. had shot all their arrowes, hauing onelie their swords, defended themselues, and with helpe of some of thei horsmen came safe to Mehun. This ouerthrow, and speciallie the taking of the lord Talbot, did not so much reioise the Frenchmen; but it did as much abash the Englishmen: so that immediatlie therevpon, the townes of Ienuile, Mehun, Fort, and diuerse other, returned from the English part, and became French. From this battell departed without anie stroke striken sir Iohn Fastolfe, the same yeare for his valiantnesse elected into the order of the garter. But for doubt of misdealing at this brunt, the duke of Bedford tooke from him the image of saint George, and his garter; though afterward by meanes of freends, and apparant causes of good excuse, the same were to him againe deliuered against the mind of the lord Talbot.

Charles the Dolphin that called himselfe French K. perceiuing fortune to smile thus vpon him, assembled a great power, and determined to conquer the citie of Reimes, that he might be there sacred, crowned, and annointed, according to the custome of his progenitours, that all men might iudge that he was by all lawes and decrees a iust and lawfull king. In his waie thitherwards he besieged the citie of Auxerre, the citizens whereof compounded with him to yéeld, if they were not rescued within certeine daies. From thence he came before Trois, and after twelue daies siege had that citie deliuered vnto him, by composition, that the capteine sir Philip Hall (with his people and mooueables) might depart in safetie. After that Trois was yéelded, the communaltie of Chaalons rebelled against sir Iohn Aubemond their capteine, and constreined him to deliuer the towne vpon like composition. In semblable manner did they of Reimes, desiring him to giue safe conduct to all the Englishmen safclie to depart. When Reimes was thus become French, the foresaid Charles the Dolphin in the presence of the dukes of Lorraine and Barre, and of all tlle noble men of his faction, was sacred there king of France by the name of Charles the seauenth, with all The French king crowned. rites and ceremonies thereto belonging. They of Auxerre, when the terme of their appointment was expired, submitted themselues to him; and so likewise did all the cities and townes adioining.

The duke of Bedford aduertised of all these dooings, assembled his power about him, and hauing togither ten thousand good Englishmen (beside Normans) departed out of Paris in warlike fashion, and passing thorough Brie to Monstreau fault Yonne, sent by his herald Bedford, letters to the French king, signifieng to him; that where he had (contrarie to the finall conclusion accorded betwéene his noble brother K. Henrie the fift, & king Charles the sixt, father to him that was the vsurper) by allurement of Ione taken to be a witch. a deuelish witch, taken vpon him the name, title, & dignitie of the king of France; and further had by murther, stealing, craft, and deceitfull meanes, violentlie gotten, and wrongfullie kept diuerse cities and townes belonging to the king of England his neplue; for proofe thereof he was come downe from Paris with his armie, into the countrie of Brie, by dint of sword and stroke of battell to prooue his writing and cause true, willing his enimie to choose the place, and in the same he would giue him battell.

The new French king being come from Reimes to Dampmartine, studieng how to compasse them of Paris, was halfe abashed at this message. But yet to set a good countenance on the matter, he answered the herald, that he would sooner seke his maister, than his maister should néed to pursue him. The duke of Bedford hearing this answer, marched toward the king, and pitched his field in a strong place. The French king, thought at the first he meant to haue abidden battell; yet when he vnderstood that the duke was equall to him in number of people, he changed his purpose, and turned with his armie a little out of the waie. The duke of Bedford, perceiuing his faint courage, followed him by the hils and dales, till he came to a town not far from Senlis, where he found the French king and his armie lodged; wherefore he ordered his battels like an expert cheefteine in martiall science, setting the archers before, and himselfe with the noblemen in the maine battell, and put the Normans on both sides for wings. The French king also ordered his battels with the aduise of his capteins.

Thus these two armies laie two daies and two nights either in sight of other, without anie great dooing, except a few skirmishes, wherein the dukes light horssemen did verie valiantlie. At length in the dead of the night (as priuilie as might be) the The French armie fled in the night. French king brake vp his campe, and fled to Braie. The duke of Bedford had much adoo to staie his people in the morning from pursuit of the French armie: but for that Boheme. he mistrusted the Parisiens, he would not depart farre from that citie, and so returned thither againe. ¶In this season pope Martin the fift of that name, meaning to subdue the Bohemers that dissented from the church of Rome in matters of religion, appointed Henrie Beaufort Bishop of Winchester & cardinall of saint Eusebie, to be his legat in an armie that should inuade the kingdome of Boheme, and to bring a power of men with him, out of England. And because the warre touched religion, he licenced the cardinall to take the tenth part of euerie spirituall dignitie, benefice, and promotion.

This matter was opened in the parlement house, and assented to: wherevpon the bishop gathered the monie, and assembled foure thousand men & aboue, not without great grudge of the people, which dailie were with tallages and aids wearied and sore burdened. As this bishop was come to Douer readie to passe the seas ouer into Flanders, the duke of Glocester hauing receiued letters from the duke of Bedford, conteining an earnest request to reléeue him with some spéedie aid of men of warre, was constreined to write vnto the bishop of Winchester, willing him in time of such néed, when all stood vpon lossc or gaine, to passe with all his armie toward the duke of Bedford, to assist him against his aduersaries; which thing doone, and to his honour atchiued, he might performe his iournie against the vngratious Bohemers. The cardinall (though not well contented with this countermand) yet least he should run into the note of infamie, if he refused to aid the regent of France in so great a cause, passed ouer with his power, and brought the same vnto his coosine to the citie of Paris.

About the same season, the French king, in hope to be receiucd into the townes of Campaigne and Beauuois (by reason of the fauour and good will which the inhabitants bare towards him) was come with an armie towards Campaigne. Whereof the duke of Bedford being aduertised, and hauing now his host augmented with the new supplie, which the cardinall had of late brought vnto him, marched forward with great speed toward the place where he vnderstood the French king was lodged: and comming to Senlis, he perceiued how his enimies were incamped vpon the mount Pilioll, betweene Senlis and Campaigne.

Here might either armie behold the other: wherevpon for the auoiding of dangers that might insue, the campes were trenched, and the battels pitched, and the fields ordered as though they should haue tried the matter by battell: but nothing was doone except with skirmishes, in the which the Normans sore vexed the Frenchmen; and therefore receiued great commendations and praises of the lord regent: who vndoubtedlie determined to haue giuen battell to his enimies if they would haue abidden it. But after the armies had thus lien ether in sight of other, for the space of two daies together, the French king not determining to aduenture in an open battell the whole chance of the game, least he might thereby receiue a perpetuall checkemate, in the night season remooued his campe, and fled to Crespie, though his number was double to the English armie. The duke of Bedford, seeing that

An. Reg. 8. the French king was thus cowardlie recoiled with all his power and armie, returned againe to Paris, euer suspecting the deceitfull faith of the Parisiens.

The bishop of Winchester, after that the French king was retreated backe, went into Boheme, and there did somewhat, though shortlie after without anie great Boheme. praise or gaine he returned into England, more glad of his comming backe than of his aduancing forward. Anon after the pope vnlegated him, and set an other in his The pope did vnlegat the cardinall of Winchester. place, wherewith he was nothing contented. On the sixt daie of Nouember, being the daie of saint Leonard, king Henrie in the eight yeare of his reigne was at K. Henries coronation at Westminster. Westminster with all pompe and honour crowned king of this realme of England. In the same yere the French king was receiued into the towne of Campaigne, and shortlie after were the townes of

Senlis and Beauuois rendered to him. And the lord Longueall tooke by stelth the castell of Aumarle, and slue all the Englishmen within it.

Also about the same time, the Frenchmen recouered castell Gaillard foorth of the Thom. Wals. Englishmens hands, where 'the lord Barbason was found in a dungeon, inclosed within a great grate of iron like to a little chamber, and foorthwith they brake open the grate: but Barbason would not come foorth; because he had giuen his faith and promise to one Kingston that was capteine of that fortresse for the king of England, to be true prisoner, vntill the Frenchmen had sent to the same Kingston (that was departed vpon such couenants as they were agréed vpon at the deliuerie of that fortresse) willing him to come backe againe vpon safe conduct. Which at their earnest request he did, and withall discharged the lord Barbason of his oth; and so then he came foorth, and remained at his libertie, to the great reioising of the Frenchmen, which iudged that he had béene rather dead than aliue all that time of his imprisonment.

About the same time also the French king sought by all meanes possible to breake the amitie betwixt the realme of England, and the house of Burgognie. Whereof the duke of Bedford hauing intelligence, thought it stood him vpon the more earnestlie to looke to his charge; and namelie as it were an anchorhold, he determined to prouide that he might defend and safelie kéepe the duchie of Normandie, and therefore appointing the bishop of Terrowen and Elie, named Lewes of Lutzenburgh, chancellor for king Henrie of the realme of France, to remaine at Paris vpon the defense of that citie, with a conuenient number of Englishmen, he departed into Normandie, and comming to Rone, called a parlement there of the thrée estates of the A parlement at Rone called by the duke of Bedford. duchie, in the which he declared manie things vnto them, touching the happie life, and great freedome which they might be assured to inioy, so long as they continued vnder the English obeisance: and therefore he exhorted them to abide constant in their allegiance, faith, and promise made and sworne to his noble brother king Henrie the fift.

Whilest the duke of Bedford was busie to reteine the Normans in their due obedience, the French king departed from Senlis; and comming to the towne of saint The French got saint Denis. Denis, found it in maner desolate, so that he entered there without resistance, and lodged his armie at Mount Martyr and Amberuilliers, néere vnto the citie of Paris; and from thence sent Iohn duke of Alanson, and his sorceresse lone la Pusell, with thrée thousand light horssemen to asssault the citie, and followed himselfe, in hope to get it, either by force or treatie. But the English capteins euerie one kéeping his ward and place assigned, so manfullie defended themselues, their walles and towers with the assistance of the Parisiens, that they repelled the Frenchmen, and threw downe Ione their great goddesse into the bottome of the towne ditch, where she lay Ione had a hurt in the leg and a fall, drawen all durtie out of the mire. behind the backe of an asse sore hurt in the leg, till the time that she (all filthie with mire and durt) was drawne out by Guischard of Thienbrone, seruant to the duke of Alanson.

The French king, perceiuing that he could not preuaile in this enterprise, left the dead bodies behind him, and taking with him the wounded capteins, returned into Berrie. But in the meane waie, the inhabitants of Laignie submitted themselues vnto him. The duke of Bedford being in Normandie, hearing of this sudden attempt, with all hast possible came to Paris, where he gaue manie great thanks, with high commendations vnto the capteins, souldiers and citizens for their assured fidelitie, great hardinesse & manlie dooing. Which his gentle words so incouraged the harts of the Parisiens, that they sware, promised and concluded, to be freends for euer to the king of England, and his fréends, and enimies alwaies to his foes and aduersaries, making proclamation by this stile: "Fréends to K. Henrie, freends to the Parisiens; Enimies to England, enimies to Paris." Marie whether this was vttered from their harts, it is hard so to saie, for the sequeale of their acts seemed to proue the contrarie.

Soone after these dooings, came to Paris with a great companie Philip duke of Burgognie, and then vpon long consultation had for the recouerie of their losses, it was agreed that the duke of Bedford should raise an armie, & that the duke of Burgognie should be his deputie, and tarie at Paris for the defense of the citie. The duke of Bedford then without any great resistance recouered againe the towne of saint Denis, Saint Denisby by vs recouered againe. with diuerse other fortresses. And after this he sent the bastard of Clarence to laie siege to the castell of Torsie, the which (notwithstanding the great strength therof) after six moneths siege, was rendred vp into his hands. During the siege of this castell, sir Thomas Kiriell knight, with foure hundred Englishmen departed from Gourneie in Normandie, and rode by Beauuois, spoiling and wasting the countrie to the suburbes of Cleremont. Whereof the earle of that towne hauing aduertisement, assembled all the men of warre of the garrisons adioining, and with the same set forward to fight with the Englishmen, whom he found in a streict place néere to Beauuois.

The earle of Cleremont, perceiuing that he could not hurt them with his men of armes, by reason of the strength, came downe on foot with all his companie, and fiercelie set on the Englishmen: but by the terrible shot of the English archers, the Frenchmen in the end were constreined to flée; and the Englishmen perceiuing the matter, streight leapt on horssebacke and followed the chase. In the which were taken two hundred prisoners, and thrise as manie slaine. The earle escaped by the swiftnesse of his horsse. At the same season the earle of Suffolke besieging the towne of Aumarle (whereof was capteine the lord of Rambures) after foure and twentie great assaults, had the towne and castell simplie to him rendred. Thus by little and little the Englishmen recouered manie townes which before they had lost. Howbeit about the verie same time, the Frenchmen stale the towne of Lauall, by treason wrought by a miller, which kéeping a mill that ioined to the wall, suffered the French to passe through his mill into the towne. Shortlie after also sir Steuen de Vignoilles, surnamed la Hire, tooke by scaling the towne of Louiers in Normandie. La Hire. The Englishmen in the cold moneth of December besieged the towne of Laignie in Laignie besieged by the Englishmen. the which was the Pusell, and diuerse other good capteins.

[In the moneth of Maie 1430, with a valiant man in feats of armes on the duke W. P. of Burgognions side, one Franquet and his band of three hundred souldiers, making 1430 all towards the maintenance of the siege, the Pusell Ione and a foure hundred with Le Rosier. hir did méet. In great courage and force did she and hir people sundrie times assaile him, but he with his (though much vnder in number) by meanes of his archers in good order set, did so hardilie withstand them, that for the first and second push she rather lost than wan? Wherat this captinesse striken into a fretting chafe, called out in all hast the garrison of Laignie, and from other the forts thereabout, who thicke and threefold came downe with might and maine, in armour and number so far excéeding Franquets, that though they had doone hir much hurt in hir horsemen; yet by the verie multitude were they oppressed, most in hir furie put to the sword; & as for to Franquet that worthie capteine himselfe, hir rage not appeased, till out of hand she had his head stroken off: contrarie to all manhood (but she was a woman, if she were that) & contrarie to common right & law of armes. The man for his merits was verie much lamented, and she by hir malice then found of what spirit she was.]

After this the duke of Bourgognie accompanied with the earles of Arundell, and Suffolke, and the lord Iohn of Lutzenburgh besieged the towne of Campiegne with Campiegne besieged. a great puissance. This towne was well walled, manned and vittelled, so that the besiegers were constreined to cast trenches, and make mines, for otherwise they saw not how to compasse their purpose. In the meane time it happened in the night of the Ascension of our lord, that Poiton de Saintreiles, lone la Pusell, and fiue or six hundred men of armes issued out by the bridge toward Mondedier, intending to set fire in the tents and lodgings of the lord Bawdo de Noielle.

¶In this yeare of our Lord, among diuerse notable men of learning and knowledge, Abr. Fl. ex Gesnero. one Richard Fleming, English borne, a doctor of diuinitie professed in Oxford, did flourish: who by the prouidence of God grew in such fauour with this king Henrie the sixt, & the nobles néere & about him, that he was preferred to the bishops see of Lincolne. This man founded Lincolne college in Oxford, in which vniuersitie he had Richard Fleming bishop of Lincolne. beene a profitable student. Diuerse bookes he wrote (as the vniuersitie librarie dooth beare witnesse) whereof these following haue béene séene vnder their names and titles; The books that he wrote. to wit: A protestation against the Spaniards, the Frenchmen, and the Scots, made in th egenerall councell holden at Sens: one booke of the Etymologie of England; besides diuerse other treatises, as Gesner reporteth Ex bibliotheca Oxonii, aforesaid.]

At the verie same time that Campeigne was besieged (as before is said) sir Iohn of Lutzenburgh, with eight other gentlemen, chanced to be néere vnto the lodging of the said lord Bawdo, where they espied the Frenchmen, which began to cut downe tents, ouerthrow pauilions, & kill men in their beds: wherevpon they with all speed assembled a great number of men, as well English as Burgognions, and couragiouslie set on the Frenchmen, and in the end beat them backe into the towne, so that they fled so fast that one letted another, as they would haue entered. In the chase and pursute Ione the Pusell taken. was the Pusell taken, with diuerse other, besides those that were slaine, which were no small number. Diuerse were hurt also on both parts. Among the Englishmen, sir Iohn Montgomerie had his arme broken, and sir Iohn Steward was shot into the thigh with a quarell.

[As before ye haue heard somewhat of this damsels strange beginning and proceedings, W. P. so sith the ending of all such miraclemongers dooth (for the most part) plainelie decipher the vertue and power that they worke, by hir shall ye be aduertised what at last became of hir; cast your opinions as ye haue cause. Of hir louers (the Frenchmen) reporteth one, how in Campeigne thus besieged, Guillamne de Flauie the capteine Chroniques de Britaigne. hauing sold hir aforehand to the lord of Lutzenburgh, vnder colour of hasting hir with a band out of the towne towards their king, for him with spéed to come and leauie the siege there, so gotten hir foorth he shut the gates after hir, when anon by the Burgognians set vpon and ouermatcht in the conflict she was taken: marie yet (all things accounted) to no small maruell how it could come so to passe, had she béene of any deuotion or of true beléefe, and no false miscreant, but all holie as she made it. For earlie that morning she gat hir to saint Iameses church, confessed hir, and receiued hir maker (as the booke termes it) and after setting hir selfe to a piller, manie of the townesmen that with a fiue or six score of their children stood about there to see hir, vnto them "(quod she) Good children and my déere freends, I tell you plaine one hath sold me. I am betraied and shortlie shall be deliuered to death; I beséech you praie to God for me, for I shall neuer haue more power to doo seruice either to the king or to the realme of France againe."

Saith another booke, she was intrapt by a Picard capteine of Soissons, who sold Le Rosier. that citie to the duke of Burgognie, and he then put it ouer into the hands of the lord of Lutzenburgh, so by that meanes the Burgognians approched and besieged Campeigne, for succour whereof as damsell lone with hir capteins from Laignie was thither come, and dailie to the English gaue manie a hot skirmish, so happened it one a daie in an outsallie that she made by a Picard of the lord of Lutzenburghs band, in the fiercest of hir fight she was taken, and by him by and by to his lord persented, who sold hir ouer againe to the English, who for witchcraft and sorcerie burnt hir at Rone. Tillet telleth it thus, that she was caught at Campeigne by one In la vie du Charles septiesme. of the earle of Ligneis soldiers, from him had to Beaureuoir castell, where kept a thrée months, she was after for ten thousand pounds in monie and three hundred Fiue thousand pounds freh crowns in monie. An hundred and fiftie crownes rent. pounds rent (all Turnois) sold into the English hands.

In which for hir pranks so vncouth and suspicious, the lord regent by Peter

Chauchon bishop of Beauuois (in whose diocesse she was taken) caused hir life and beléefe, after order of law to be inquired vpon and examined. Wherein found though a virgin, yet first shamefullie reiecting hir sex abominablie in acts and apparell to haue counterfeit mankind, and then all damnablie faithlesse, to be a pernicious instrument to hostilitie and bloudshed in diuelish witchcraft and sorcerie, sentence accordinglie was pronounced against hir. Howbeit vpon humble confession of hir iniquities with a counterfeit contrition pretending a carefull sorow for the same, execution spared and all mollified into this, that from thencefoorth she should cast off hir vnnaturall wearing of mans abilliments, and kéepe hir to garments of hir owne kind, abiure hir pernicious practises of sorcerie and witcherie, and haue life and leasure in perpetuall prison to bewaile hir misdeeds. Which to performe (according to the maner of abiuration) a solemne oth verie gladlie she tooke.

But herein (God helpe vs) she fullie afore possest of the feend, not able to hold hir in anie towardnesse of grace, falling streight waie into hir former abominations (and Polydo. 22, in H. 6. yet seking to eetch out life as long as she might) stake not (though the shift were shamefull) to confesse hir selfe a strumpet, and (vnmaried as she was) to be with child. For triall, the lord regents lenitie gaue hir nine moneths staie, at the end wherof she found herein as false as wicked in the rest, an eight daies after, vpon a further definitiue sentence declared against hir to be relapse and a renouncer of hir oth and repentance, was she therevpon deliuered ouer to secular power, and so executed by consumption of fire in the old market place at Rone, in the selfe same stéed where now saint Michaels church stands, hir ashes afterward without the towne wals shaken into the wind. Now recounting altogither, hir pastorall bringing vp, rude Les grand chron. without any vertuous instruction, hir campestrall conuersation with wicked spirits, whome in hir first salutation to Charles the Dolphin, she vttered to be our Ladie, Les grandes chronic. le & liure. saint Katharine, and saint Annes, that in this behalfe came and gaue hir commandements from God hir maker, as she kept hir fathers lambs in the fields (where saints in warres among christen men were (be we sure) neuer so parciall patrons or partners to maintenance of horrible slaughters, rapines, and bloudshed) hereto hir murtherous mind in killing of Franquet hir owne prisoner, hir two yeares continuance in hir abominations and deadlie mischiefe without anie hir trauell or motion betwéene the princes for peace, hir relapse at last & falling againe into hir abiured iniquities, by hir virginitie (if it were anie) by hir holie words, hir fasting and praiers what they might be, sith satan (after S. Paule) can change himselfe into an angell of light, the d6eplier to deceiue.

THE TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA – Young's Translation of *Diana*

This extract from Book II. of the "Diana" of George de Montemayor was translated by Bartholomew Young in 1598 and was the likely source of Shakespeare's early play *The Two Gentlemen of Verona.*

THE SHEPERDESS FELISMENA.

You shall therefore knowe (faire nymphes) that great Vandalia is my native countrie, a province not far hence, where I was borne, in a citie called Soldina, my mother called Delia, my father Andronius, for linage and possessions the chiefest of all that province. It fell out that as my mother was married many yeeres and had no children, (by reason whereof she lived so sad and malecontent that she enjoyed not one merry day) with teares and sighes she daily importuned the heavens, and with a thousand vowes and devout offerings, besought God to grant her the summe of her desire : whose omnipotence it pleased, beholding from his im-periall throne her continuall orisons, to make her barren bodie (the greater part of her age being now spent and gone) to become fruitfull. What infinite joy she conceived thereof, let her judge, that after a long desire of any thing, fortune at last doth put it into her handes. Of which content my father Andronius being no lesse partaker, shewed such tokens of inward joy as are impossible to be expressed. My mother Delia was so much given to reading of ancient histories, that if, by reason of sicknes or any important businesse, she had not bene hindred, she would never (by her will) have passed the time away in any other delight; who (as I said) being now with childe, and finding herselfe on a night ill at ease, intreated my father to reade something unto her, that, her minde being occupied in contemplation thereof, she might the better passe her greefe away. My father, who studied for nothing els but to please her in all he might, began to reade unto her the historie of Paris, when the three Ladies referred their proude contention for the golden apple to his conclusion and judgement. But as my mother held it for an infallible opinion that Paris had partially given that sentence, (pers waded thereunto by a blinde passion of beautie) so she said, that without all doubt he did not with due reason and wisedome consider the goddesse of battels; for, as martiall and heroicall feates (saide she) excelled all other qualities, so with equitie and justice the apple should have bene given to her. My father answered, that since the apple was to be given to the fairest, and that Venus was fairer than any of the rest, Paris had rightly given his judgement, if that harme had not ensued thereof, which afterwardes did. To this my mother replied, that, though it was written in the apple, That it should be given to the fairest it was not to be understood of corporall beautie, but of the intellec-tuall beautie of the mind. And therefore since fortitude was a thing that made one most beautiful, and the exercise of arms an exterior act of this vertue, she affirmed, that to the goddesse of battels this apple should be given, if Paris had judged like a prudent and unappassionate judge. So that (faire nymphes) they spent a great part of the night in controversie, both of them alledging the most reasons they could to confirme their owne purpose. They persisting in this point, sleepe began to overcome her, whom the reasons and arguments of her husband coulde not once moove; so - that being very deepe in her disputations, she fell into as deepe a sleepe, to whom, (my father being now gone to his chamber) appeered the goddesse Venus, with as frowning a countenance as faire, and saide, I marvell, Delia, who hath mooved thee to be so contrarie to her, that was never opposite to theel If thou hadst but called to minde the time when thou wert so overcome in love for Androniuv, thou wouldest not have paide me the debt (thou owest me) with so ill coine. But thou shalt not escape free from my due anger; for thou shalt bring forth a sonne and a daughter, whose birth shall cost thee no lesse than thy life, and them their contentment, for uttering so much in disgrace of my honour and beautie: both which shall be as infortunate in their love as any were ever in all their lives, or to the age wherein, with remedylesse sighes, they shall breath forth the summe of their ceaselesse sorrowes. And having saide thus, she vanished away: when, likewise, it seemed to my mother that the Goddesse Pallas came to her in a vision, and with a merry countenance saide thus unto her: With what sufficient rewardes may I be able to requite the due regarde (most happie and discreete Delia) which thou hast alleaged in my favour against thy husbands obstinate opinion, except it be by making thee understand that thou shalt bring foorth a sonne and a daughter, the most fortunate in armes that have bene to their times. Having thus said, she vanished out of her sight, and my mother, thorow exceeding feare, awaked immediately. Who, within a moneth after, at one birth was delivered of me, and of a brother of mine, and died in childe-bed, leaving my father the most sorrowfull man in the world for her sudden death; for greefe whereof, within a little while after, he also died. And bicause you may knowe (faire nymphes) in what great extremities love hath put me, you must understand, that (being a woman of that qualitie and disposition as you have heard) I have bene forced by my cruell destinie to leave my naturall habit and libertie, and the due respect of mine honour, to follow him, who thinkes (perhaps) that I do but leese it by loving him so extremely.

Behold, how bootelesse and unseemely it is for a woman to be so dextrous in armes, as if it were her proper nature and kinde, wherewith (faire nymphes) I had never bene indued, but that, by meanes thereof, I should come to doe you this little service against these villaines; whiche I account no lesse then if fortune had begun to satisfie in part some of those infinite wrongs that she hath continually done me. The nymphes were so amazed at her words, that they coulde neither aske nor answere any thing to that the faire Shepherdesse tolde them, who, prosecuting her historie, saide: My brother and I were brought up in a nunnerie, where an aunt of ours was abbesse, until we had accomplished twelve yeeres of age, at what time we were taken from thence againe, and my brother was caried to the mightie and invincible king of Portugall his court (whose noble fame and princely liberalise was bruted over all the world) where, being growen to yeeres able to manage armes, he atchieved as valiant and almost incredible enterprises by them, as he suffered unfortunate disgraces and foiles by love. And with all this he was so highly favoured of that magnificent king, that he would never suffer him to depart from his court. Unfortunate I, reserved by my sinister destinies to greater mishaps, was caried to a grandmother of mine, which place I would I had never seene, since it was an occasion of such a sorrowfull life as never any woman suffered the like. And bicause there is not any thing (faire nymphes) which I am not forced to tell you, as well for the great vertue and desertes which your excellent beauties doe testifie, as also for that for my minde doth give me, that you shall be no small part and meanes of my comfort, knowe, that as I was in my grandmothers house, and almost seventeene yeeres olde, a certaine yoong gentleman fell in love with me, who dwelt no further from our house then the length of a garden terrasse, so that he might see me every sommers night when I walked in the garden. When as therefore ingratefull Felix had beheld in that place the unfortunate Felismena (for this is the name of the wofull woman that tels you her mishaps) he was extremely enamoured of me, or else did cunningly dissemble it, I not knowing then whether of these two I might beleeve, but am now assured, that whosoever beleeves lest, or nothing at all in these affaires, shall be most at ease. Many daies Don Felix spent in endeavouring to make me know the paines which he suffered for me, and many more did I spende in making the matter strange, and that he did not suffer them for my sake: and I know not why love delaied the time so long by forcing me to love him, but onely that (when he came indeed) he might enter into my hart at once, and with greater force and violence. When he had, therefore, by sundrie signes, as by tylt and tourneyes, and by prauncing up and downe upon his proude jennet before my windowes, made it manifest that he was in love with me (for at the first I did not so well perceive it) he determined in the end to write a letter unto me; and having practised divers times before with a maide of mine, and at length, with many gifts and faire promises, gotten her good will and furtherance, he gave her the letter to deliver to me. But to see the ineanes that Rosina made unto me, (for so was she called) the dutifull services and unwoonted circumstances, before she did deliver it, the othes that she sware unto me, and the subtle words and serious protestations she used, it was a pleasant thing, and woorthie the noting. To whom (neverthelesse) with an angrie countenance I turned againe, saying, If I had not regard of mine owne estate, and what hereafter might be said, I would make this shamelesse face of thine be knowne ever after for a marke of an impudent and bolde minion: but bicause it is the first time, let this suffice that I have saide, and give thee warning to take heed of the second.

Me thinkes I see now the craftie wench, how she helde her peace, dissembling very cunningly the sorrow that she conceived by my angrie answer; for she fained a counterfaite smiling, saying, Jesus, Mistresse! I gave it yon, bicause you might laugh at it, and not to moove your patience with it in this sort; for if I had any thought that it would have provoked you to anger, I praie God he may shew his wrath as great towards me as ever he did to the daughter of any mother. And with this she added many wordes more (as she could do well enough) to pacifie the fained anger and ill opinion that I had conceived of her, and taking her letter with her, she departed from me. This having passed thus, I began to imagine what might ensue thereof, and love (me thought) did put a certaine desire into my minde to see the letter, though modestie and shame forbad me to ask it of my maide, especially for the wordes that had passed betweene us, as you have heard. And so I continued all that day untill night, in varietie of many thoughts; but when Rosina came to helpe me to bedde, God knowes how desirous I was to have her entreat me againe to take the letter, but she woulde never speake unto me about it, nor (as it seemed) did so much as once thinke thereof. Yet to trie, if by giving her some occasion I might prevaile, I saide unto her : And is it so, Rosina, that Don Felix, without any regard to mine honour, dares write unto me] These are things, mistresse, (saide she demurely to me againe) that are commonly incident to love, wherefore I beseech you pardon me, for if I had thought to have angred you with it, I would have first pulled out the bals of mine eies. How cold my hart was at that blow, God knowes, yet did I dissemble the matter, and suffer my selfe to remaine that night onely with my desire, and with occasion of little sleepe. And so it was, indeede, for that (me thought) was the longest and most painfull night that ever I passed. But when, with a slower pace (then I desired) the wished day was come, the discreet and subtle Rosina came into my chamber to helpe me to make me readie, in dooing whereof, of purpose she let the letter closely fall, which, when J perceived, What is that that fell downe] (said I), let me see it. It is nothing, mistresse, saide she. Come, come, let me see it (saide I): what! moove me not, or else tell me what it is. Good Lord, mistresse (saide she), why will you see it: it is the letter I would have given you yesterday. Nay, that it is not (saide I) wherefore shewe it me, that I may see if you lie or no. I had no sooner said so but she put it into my handes, saying, God never give me good if it be anie other thing; and although I knewe it well indeede, yet I saide, what, this is not the same, for I know that well enough, but it is one of thy lovers letters: I will read it, to see in what neede he standeth of thy favour. And opening it, I founde it conteined this that followeth.

"I ever imagined (deere mistresse) that your discretion and wisedome woulde have taken away the feare I had to write unto you, the same knowing well enough (without any letter at all) how much I love you, but the very same hath so cunningly dissembled, that wherein I hoped the only remedie of my griefes had been, therein consisted my greatest harme. If according to your wisedome you censure my boldnes, I shall not then (I know) enjoy one hower of life; but if you do consider of it according to loves accustomed effects, then will I not exchange my hope for it. Be not offended, I beseech you, (good ladie) with my letter, and blame me not for writing unto you, untill you see by experience whether I can leave of to write: and take me besides into the possession of that which is yours, since all is mine doth wholly consist in your hands, the which, with all reverence and dutifull affection, a thousand times I kisse."

When I had now seene my Don Felix his letter, whether it was for reading it at such a time, when by the same he shewed that he loved me more than himselfe, or whether he had disposition and regiment over part of this wearied soule, to imprint that love in it whereof he wrote unto me, I began to love him too well, (and, alas, for my harme!) since he was the cause of so much sorrow as I have passed for his sake. Whereupon, asking Rosina forgivenes of what was past (as a thing needfull for that which was to come) and committing the secrecie of my love to her fidelitie, I read the letter once againe, pausing a little at every worde (and a very little indeede it was) bicause I concluded so soone with my selfe, to do that I did, although in verie truth it lay not otherwise in my power to do. Wherefore, calling for paper and inke, I answered his letter thus.

" Esteeme not so slightly of mine honour, Don Felix, as with fained wordes to thinke to enveagle it, or with thy vaine pretenses to offend it any waies. I know wel enough what manner of man thou art, and how great thy desert and presumption is; from whence thy boldnes doth arise (I gesse), and not from the force (which thing thou wouldst faine perswade me) of thy fervent love. And if it be so (as my suspicion suggesteth) thy labor is as vaine as thy imagination presumptuous, by thinking to make me do any thing contrarie to that which I owe unto mine honour. Consider (I beseech thee) how seldome things commenced under suttletie and dissimulation have good successe; and that it is not the part of a gentleman to meane them one way and speak them another. Thou praiest me (amongst other things) to admit thee into possession of that that is mine: but I am of so ill an humour in matters of this qualitie, that I trust not things experienced, how much lesse then thy bare wordes; yet, neverthelesse, I make no small account of that which thou hast manifested to me in thy letter; for it is ynough that I am incredulous, though not unthankfull."

This letter did I send, contrarie to that I should have done, because it was the occasion of all my harmes and greefes; for after this, he began to waxe more bolde by unfolding his thoughts, and seeking out the meanes to have a parly with me. In the end, (faire nymphes) a few daies being spent in his demaunds and my answers, false love did worke in me after his wonted fashions, every hower seasing more strongly upon my unfortunate soule. The tourneies were now renewed, the musicke by night did never cease; amorous letters and verses were re-continued on both sides; and thus passed I away almost a whole yeere, at the end whereof, I felt my selfe so far in his love, that I had no power to retire, nor stay my selfe from disclosing my thoughts unto him, the thing which he desired more then his owne life. But my adverse fortune afterwardes would, that of these our mutuall loves (when as now they were most assured) his father had some intelligence, and whosoever revealed them first, perswaded him so cunningly, that his father (fearing lest he would have married me out of hand) sent him to the great Princesse Augusta Ccesarinas court, telling him, it was not meete that a yoong gentleman, and of so noble a house as he was, should spende his youth idly at home, where nothing could be learned but examples of vice, whereof the verie same idlenes (he said) was the onely mistresse. He went away so pensive, that his great greefe would not suffer him to acquaint me with his departure; which when I knew, how sorrowfull I remained, she may imagine that hath bene at any time tormented with like passion. To tell you now the life that I led in his absence, my sadnes, sighes, and teares, which every day I powred out of these wearied eies, my toong is far unable: if then my paines were such that I cannot now expresse them, how could I then suffer them 1 But being in the mids of my mishaps, and in the depth of those woes which the absence of Don Felix caused me to feele, and it seeming to me that my grieefe was without remedie, if he were once seene or knowen of the ladies in that court (more beautifull and gracious then my selfe), by occasion whereof, as also by absence (a capitall enemie to love) I might easily be forgotten, I determined to adventure that, which I think never any woman imagined; which was to apparell my selfe in the habit of a man, and to hye me to the court to see him, in whose sight al my hope and content remained. Which determination I no sooner thought of then I put in practise, love blinding my eies and minde with an inconsiderate regarde of mine owne estate and condition. To the execution of which attempt I wanted no ijadustrie; for, being furnished with the helpe of one of my approoved friends, and treasouresse of my secrets, who bought me such apparell as I willed her, and a good horse for my journey, I went not onely out of my countrie, but out of my deere reputation, which (I thinke) I shall never recover againe; and so trotted directly to the court, passing by the way many accidents, which (if time would give me leave to tell them) would not make you laugh a little to heare them. Twenty daies I was in going thither, at the ende of which, being come to the desired place, I took up mine inne in a streete less frequented with concurse of people: and the great desire I had to see the destroier of my joy did not suffer me to thinke of any other thing, but how or where I might see him. To inquire of him of mine host I durst not, lest my comming might (perhaps) have bene discovered; and to seeke him foorth I thought it not best, lest some inopinate mishap might have fallen out, whereby I might have bene knowen. Wherefore I passed all that day in these perplexities, while night came on, each hower whereof (me thought) was a whole yeere unto me. But midnight being a little past, mine host called at my chamber doore, and told me if I was desirous to heare some brave musicke, I should arise quickly, and open a window towards the street. The which I did by and by, and making no noise at all, I heard how Don Felix his page, called Fabius (whom 1 knew by his voice) saide to others that came with him, Now it is time, my masters, bicause the lady is in her gallerie over her garden, taking the fresh aire of the coole night. He had no sooner saide so, but they began to winde three cornets and a sackbot, with such skill and sweetenesse, that it seemed celestiall musicke; and then began a voice to sing, the sweetest (in my opinion) that ever I heard. And though I was in suspence, by hearing Fabius speake, whereby a thousand doubtes and imaginations (repugnant to my rest) occurred in my minde, yet I neglected not to heare what was sung, bicause their operations were not of such force that they were able to hinder the desire, nor distemper the delight that I conceived by hearing it. That therefore which was sung were these verses:—

Sweete mistresse, harken unto me, (If it greeves thee to see me die)

And hearing, though it greeveth thee, To heare me yet do not denie.

O grant me then this short content, For forc'd I am to thee to flie.

My sighes do not make thee relent, Nor teares thy hart do mollifie.

Nothing of mine doth give thee payne, Nor thou think'st of no remedie:

Mistresse, how long shall I sustaine Such ill as still thou dost applie ?

In death there is no helpe, be sure, But in thy will, where it doth lie;

For all those illes which death doth cure, Alas ! they are but light to trie:

My troubles do not trouble thee, Nor hope to touch thy soule so nie :

O! from a will that is so free,

What should I hope when I do crie I

How can I mollifie that brave And stony hart of pittie drie ?

Yet mistresse, turne those eies (that have No peeres) shining like stars in skie;

But turne them not in angrie sort,

If thou wilt not kill me thereby:

Tho' yet, in anger or in sport,

Thou killest onHv with thine eie.

After they had first, with a concert of musicke, sung this song, two plaied, the one upon a lute, the other upon a silver sounding harpe, being accompanied with the sweete voice of my Don Felix The great joy that I felt in hearing him cannot be imagined, for (me thought) I heard him nowe, as in that happie and passed time of our loves. But after the deceit of this imagination was discovered, seeing with mine eies, and hearing with mine eares, that this musicke was bestowed upon another, and not on me, God knowes what a bitter death it was unto my soule: and with a greevous sigh, that caried almost my life away with it, I asked mine host if he knew what the ladie was for whose sake the musicke was made! He answered me, that he could not imagine on whom it was bestowed, bicause in that streete dwelled manie noble and faire ladies. And when I saw he could not satisfie my request, I bent mine eares againe to heare my Don Felix, who now, to the tune of a delicate harpe, whereon he sweetely plaied, began to sing this sonnet following:—

A Sonnet.

My painefull yeeres impartiall Love was spending

In vaine and booteles hopes my life appaying,

And cruell Fortune to the world bewraying

Strange samples of my teares that have no ending.

Time, everie thing to truth at last commending,

Leaves of my steps such markes, that now betraying,

And all deceitfull trusts shall be decaying,

And none have cause to plaine of his offending.

Shee, whom I lov'd to my obliged power,

That in her sweetest love to me discovers

Which never yet I knew (those heavenly pleasures),

And I do saie, exclaiming every hower,

Do not you see what makes you wise,

O lovers ? Love, Fortune, Time, and my faire mystresse treasures.

The sonnet being ended, they paused awhile, playing on fower lutes togither, and on a paire of virginals, with such

heavenly melodie, that the whole worlde (I thinke) could not affoord sweeter musick to the eare nor delight to any minde, not subject to the panges of such predominant greefe and sorrow as mine was. But then fower voices, passing well tuned and set togither, began to sing this song following:—

A Song.

That sweetest harme I doe not blame,

First caused by thy fairest eies,

But greeve, bicause too late I came,

To know my fault, and to be wise.

I never knew a worser kinde of life,
To live in feare, from boldnesse still to cease:
Nor, woorse then this, to live in such a strife,
Whether of bothe to speake, or holde my peace ?

And so the harme I do not blame,
Caused by thee or thy faire eics;
But that to see how late I came,
To know my fault, and to be wise.

I ever more did feare that I should knowe
Some secret things, and doubtful] in their kinde,
Bicause the surest things doe ever goe
Most contrarie unto my wish and minde.

And yet by knowing of the same
There is no hurt; but it denies
My remedie, since late I came,
To knowe my fault, and to be wise.

When this song was ended, they began to sound divers sorts of instruments, and voices most excellently agreeing togither, and with such sweetnes that they could not chuse but delight any very much who were so farre from it as I. About dawning of the day the musicke ended, and I did what I could to espie out iny Dm Felix, but the darknes of the night was mine enimie therein. And seeing now that they were gone, I went to bed againe, where I bewailed my great mishap, knowing that he whom most of al I loved, had so unwoorthily forgotten me, whereof his music was too manifest a witnes. And when it was time, I arose, and without any other consideration, went straight to the Princesse her pallace, where (I thought) I might see that which I so greatly desired, determining to call my selfe Valerius, if any (perhaps) did aske my name. Coinming therefore to a faire broad court before the pallace gate, I viewed the windowes and galleries, where I sawe such store of blazing beauties, and gallant ladies, that I am not able now to recount, nor then to do any more but woonder at their graces, their gorgeous attyre, their jewels, their brave fashions of apparell, and ornaments wherewith they were so richly set out. Up and downe this place, before the windowes, roade many lords and brave gentlemen in rich and sumptuous habits, and mounted upon proud jennets, every one casting his eie to that part where his thoughts were secretly placed. God knowes how greatly I desired to see Don Felix there, and that his injurious love had beene in that famous pallace; bicause I might then have beene assured that he should never have got any other guerdon of his sutes and services, but onely to see and to be seene, and sometimes to speake to his mistresse, whom he must serve before a thousand eies, bicause the privilege of that place doth not give him any further leave. But it was my ill fortune that he had settled his love in that place where I might not be assured of this poore helpe. Thus, as I was standing neere to the pallace gate, I espied Fabius, Don Felix his page, comming in great haste to the pallace, where, speaking a word or two with a porter that kept the second entrie, he returned the same waie he came. I gessed his errant was, to knowe whether it were fit time for Don Felix to come to dispatch certaine busines that his father had in the court, and that he could not choose but come thither out of hand. And being in this supposed joy which his sight did promise me, I saw him comming along with a great traine of followers attending on his person, all of thera being bravely apparelled in a liverie of watchet silke, garded with yellow velvet, and stitched on either side with threedes of twisted silver, wearing likewise blew, yellow, and white feathers in their hats. But my lorde Don Felix had on a paire of ash colour hose, embrodered and drawen foorth with watchet tissue; his dublet was of white satten, embrodered with knots of golde, and likewise an embrodered jerkin of the same coloured velvet; and his short cape cloke was of blacke velvet, edged with gold lace, and hung full of buttons of pearle and gold, and lined with a razed watchet satten: by his side he ware, at a paire of embrodered hangers, a rapier and dagger, with engraven hilts and pommell of beaten golde. On his head, a hat beset full of golden stars, in the mids of everie which a rich orient pearle was enchased, and his feather was likewise blew, yellow, and white. Mounted he came upon a faire dapple graie jennet, with a rich furniture of blew, embrodered with golde and seede pearle. When I saw him in this rich equipage, I was so amazed at his sight, that how extremely my sences were ravished with sudden joye I am not able (faire nymphes) to tell you. Truth it is, that I could not but shed some teares for joy and greefe, which his sight did make me feele, but, fearing to be noted by the standers by, for that time I dried them up. But as Dm Felix (being now come to the pallace gate) was dismounted, and gone up a paire of staires into the chamber of presence, I went to his men, where they were attending his returne; and seeing Fabius, whom I had seene before amongst them, I tooke him aside, and saide unto him, My friend, I pray you tell me what Lord this is, which did but even now alight from his jennet, for (me thinkes) he is very like one whom I have seene before in an other farre countrey. Fabius then answered me thus: Art thou such a novice in the court that thou knowest not Don Felix?

I tell thee there is not any lord, knight, or gentleman better knowne in it than he. No doubt of that (saide I), but I will tell thee what a novice I am, and how small a time I have beene in the court, for yesterday was the first that ever I came to it. Naie then, I cannot blame thee (saide Fabius) if thou knowest him not. Knowe, then, that this gentleman is called Don Felix, borne in Vandalia, and hath his chiefest house in the antient cittie of Soldina, and is remaining in this court about certaine affaires of his fathers and his owne. But I pray you tell me (said I) why he gives his liveries of these colours 1 If the cause were not so manifest, I woulde conceale it (saide Fabius), but since there is not any that knowes it not, and canst not come to any in this court who cannot tell thee the reason why, I thinke by telling thee it I do no more then in courtesie I am bound to do. Thou must therefore understand, that he loves and serves a ladie heere in this citie named Celia, and therefore weares and gives for his liverie an azure blew, which is the colour of the skie, and white and yellow, which are the colours of his lady and mistresse. When I heard these words, imagine (faire nymphes) in what a plight I was; but dissembling my mishap and griefe, I answered him : This ladie certes is greatly beholding to him, bicause he thinkes not enough, by wearing her colours, to shew how willing he is to serve her, unlesse also he beare her name in his liverie; whereupon I gesse she cannot but be very faire and amiable. She is no lesse, indeede, (saide Fabius) although the other whom he loved and served in our owne countrey in beautie farre excelled this, and loved and favoured him more then ever this did. But this mischievous absence doth violate and dissolve those thinges which men thinke to be most strong and firme. At these wordes (faire nymphes) was I faine to come to some composition with my teares, which, if I had not stopped from issuing foorth, Fabius could not have chosen but suspected, by the alteration of my countenance, that all was not well with me. And then the page did aske me, what countreyman I was, my name, and of what calling and condition I was: whom I answered, that my countrey where I was borne was Vandalia, my name Valerius, and till that time served no master. Then by this reckoning (saide he) we are both countrey-men, and may be both fellowes in one house if thou wilt; for Don Felix my master commanded me long since to seeke him out a page. Therefore if thou wilt serve him, say so. As for meate, drinke, and apparell, and a couple of shillings to play away, thou shalt never want; besides pretie wenches, which are not daintie in our streete, as faire and amorous as queenes, of which there is not anie that will not die for the love of so proper a youth as thou art. And to tell thee in secret (because, perhaps, we may be fellowes), I know where an old cannons maide is, a gallant fine girle, whom if thou canst but finde in thy hart to love and serve as I do, thou shalt never want at her hands fine hand-kerchers, peeces of bacon, and now and then wine of S. Martyn. When I heard this, I could not choose but laugh, to see how naturally the unhappie page played his part by depainting foorth their properties in their lively colours. And because I thought nothing more commodious for my rest, and for the enjoying of my desire, then to follow Fabius his counsel, I answered him, thus: In truth, I determined to serve none; but now, since fortune hath offered me so good a service, and at such a time, when I am constrained to take this course of life, I shall not do amisse if I frame myselfe to the service of some lord or gentleman in this court, but especially of your master, because he seemes to be a woorthy gentleman, and such an one that makes more reckoning of his servants then an other. Ha, thou knowest him not so well as I (said Fabius); for I promise thee, by the faith of a gentleman (for I am one indeede, for my father comes of the Cachopines of Laredo), that my master Don Felix is the best natured gentleman that ever thou knewest in thy life, and one who useth his pages better then any other. And were it not for those troublesome loves, which makes us runne up and downe more, and sleepe lesse, then we woulde, there were not such a master in the whole worlde againe. In the end (faire nymphes) Fabius spake to his master, Don Felix, as soone as he was come foorth, in my behalfe, who commanded me the same night to come to him at his lodging. Thither I went, and he entertained me for his page, making the most of me in the worlde; where, being but a few daies with him, I sawe the messages, letters, and gifts that were brought and caried on both sides, greevous wounds (alas! and corsives to my dying hart), which made my soule to flie sometimes out of my body, and every hower in hazard to leese my forced patience before every one. But after one moneth was past, Don Felix began to like so well of me, that he disclosed his whole love unto me, from the beginning unto the present estate and forwardnes that it was then in, committing the charge thereof to my secrecie and helpe; telling me that he was favoured of her at the beginning, and that afterwards she waxed wearie of her loving and accustomed entertainment, the cause whereof was a secret report (whosoever it was that buzzed it into her eares) of the love that he did beare to a lady in his owne countrey, and that his present love unto her was but to entertaine the time, while his business in the court were dispatched. And there is no doubt (saide Don Felix unto me) but that, indeede, I did once commence that love that she laies to my charge; but God knowes if now there be any thing in the world that I love and esteeme more deere and precious then her. When I heard him say so, you may imagine (faire nymphes) what a mortall dagger pierced my wounded heart. But with dissembling the matter the best I coulde, I answered him thus: It were better, sir (me thinkes), that the gentlewoman should complaine with cause, and that it were so indeed; for if the other ladie, whom you served before, did not deserve to be forgotten of you, you do her (under correction, my lord) the greatest wrong in the world. The love (said Don Felix againe) which I beare to my Celia will not let me understand it so; but I have done her (me thinkes) the greater injurie, having placed my love first in an other, anfl not in her. Of these wrongs (saide I to my selfe) I know who beares the woorst away. And (disloyall) he, pulling a letter out of his bosome, which he had received the same hower from his mistresse, reade it unto me, thinking he did me a great favour thereby, the contents whereof were these:—

Celias letter to Don Felix.

Never any thing that I suspected, touching thy love, hath beene so farre from the truth, that hath not given me occasion to beleeve more often mine owne imagination then thy inno-cencie; wherein, if I do thee any wrong, referre it but to the censure of thine owne follie. For well thou mightest have denied, or not declared thy passed love, without giving me occasion to condemne thee by thine owne confession. Thou saiest I was the cause that made thee forget thy former love. Comfort thy selfe, for there shall not want another to make thee forget thy second. And assure thy selfe of this (Lord Don Felix) that there is not any thing more unbeseeming a gentleman, then to finde an occasion in a gentlewoman to leese himselfe for her love. I will saie no more, but that in an ill, where there is no remedie, the best is not to seeke out any.

After he had made an end of reading the letter, he said unto me, What thinkest thou, Valerius, of these words? With pardon be it spoken, my Lord, that your deedes are shewed by them. Go to, said Don Felix, and speake no more of that. Sir, saide I, they must like me wel, if they like you, because none can judge better of their words that love well then they themselves. But that which I thinke of the letter is, that this gentlewoman would have beene the first, and that fortune had entreated her in such sort, that all others might have envied her estate. But what wouldest thou counsell me 1 said Don Felix. If thy griefe doth suffer any counsell, sai4e I, that thy thoughts be divided into this second passion, since there is so much due to the first. Don Felix answered me againe, sighing, and knocking me gently on the shoulder, saying, How wise art thou, Valerius, and what good counsell dost thou give me if I could follow it. Let us now go in to dinner, for when I have dined, I will have thee carie me a letter to my lady Celia, and then thou shalt see if any other love is not woorthy to be forgotten in lieu of thinking onely of her. These were wordes that greeved Felismena to the hart, but bicause she had him before her eies, whom she loved more than herselfe, the content, that she had by onely seeing him, was a sufficient remedie of the paine, that the greatest of these stings did make her feele. After Don Felix had dined, he called me unto him, and giving me a speciall charge what I should do (because he had imparted his griefe unto me, and put his hope and remedie in my hands), he willed me to carie a letter to Celia, which he had alreadie written, and, reading it first unto me, it said thus:—

Don Felix his letter to Celia.

The thought, that seekes an occasion to forget the thing which it doth love and desire, suffers it selfe so easily to be knowne, that (without troubling the minde much) it may be quickly discerned. And thinke not (faire ladie) that I seeke a remedie to excuse you of that, wherewith it pleased you to use me, since I never came to be so much in credit with you, that in lesser things I woulde do it. I have confessed unto you that indeede I once loved well, because that true love, without dissimulation, doth not suffer any thing to be hid, and you (deare ladie) make that an occasion to forget me, which should be rather a motive to love me better. I cannot perswade me, that you make so small an account of your selfe, to thinke that I can forget you for any thing that is, or hath ever been, but rather imagine that you write

cleane contrarie to that, which you have tried by my zealous love and faith towards you. Touching all those things, that, in prejudice of my good will towards you, it pleaseth you to imagine, my innocent thoughts assure me to the contrarie, which shall suffice to be ill recompenced besides being so ill thought of as they are.

After Don Felix had read this letter unto me, he asked me if the answer was correspondent to those words that his ladie Celia had sent him in hers, and if there was any thing therein that might be amended; whereunto I answered thus: I thinke, Sir, it is needlesse to amende this letter, or to make the gentlewoman amendes, to whom it is sent, but her, whom you do injurie so much with it. Which under your lordships pardon I speake, bicause I am so much affected to the first love in all my life, that there is not any thing that can make me alter my minde. Thou hast the greatest reason in the world (said Don Felix) if I coulde perswade my selfe to leave of that, which I have begun. But what wilt thou have me do, since absence hath frozen the former love, and the continuall presence of a peerelesse beautie rekindled another more hot and fervent in me 1 Thus may she thinke her selfe (saide I againe) unjustly deceived, whom first you loved, because that love which is subject to the power of absence cannot be termed love, and none can perswade me that it hath beene love. These words did I dissemble the best I could, because 1 felt so sensible griefe, to see myselfe forgotten of him, who had so great reason to love me, and whom I did love so much, that I did more, then any would have thought, to make my selfe still unknowen. But taking the letter and mine errant with me, I went to Celias house, imagining by the way the wofull estate whereunto my hap-lesse love had brought me; since I was forced to make warre against mine owne selfe, and to be the intercessour of a thing so contrarie to mine owne content. But comming to

Celias house, and finding a page standing at the dore, I asked him if I might speake with his ladie: who being informed of me from whence I came, tolde Celia how I would speake with her, commending therewithall my beautie and person unto her, and telling her besides, that Don Felix had but lately entertained me into his service; which made Celia saie unto him, What, Don Felix so soone disclose his secret loves to a page, but newly entertained 1 he hath (belike) some great occasion that mooves him to do it. Bid him com in, and let us know what he would have. In I came, and to the place where the enimie of my life was, and, with great reverence kissing her hands, I delivered Don Felix his letter unto her. Celia tooke it, and casting her eies upon me, I might perceive how my sight had made a sudden alteration in her countenance, for she was so farre besides herselfe, that for a good while she was not able to speake a worde, but, remembring her selfe at last, she saide unto me, What good fortune hath beene so favourable to Don Felix to bring thee to this court, to make thee his page? Even that, faire ladie, saide I, which is better then ever I imagined, bicause it hath beene an occasion to make me behold such singular beautie and perfections as now I see cleerely before mine eies. And if the paines, the teares, the sighes, and the continuall disquiets that my lord Don Felix hath suffred have greeved me heeretofore, now that I have seene the source from whence they flow, and the cause of all his ill, the pittie that I had on him is now wholly converted into a certaine kinde of envie. But if it be true (faire lady) that my com-miiig is welcome unto you, I beseech you by that, which you owe to the great love which he beares you, that your answer may import no lesse unto him. There is not anie thing (saide Celia) that I would not do for thee, though I were determined not to love him at all, who for my sake hath forsaken another. For it is no small point of wisedome for me to learne by other womens harmes to be more wise, and warie in mine owne. Beleeve not, good lady (saide I), that there is any thing in the worlde that can make Don Felix forget you. And if he hath cast off another for your sake, woonder not thereat, when your beautie and wisedome is so great, and the others so small that there is no reason to thinke that he will (though he hath woorthelie forsaken her for your sake) or ever can forget you for any woman else in the worlde. Doest thou then know Fetismena (said Celia), the lady whom thy master did once love and serve in his owne countrey 1 I know her (saide I), although not so well as it was needful! for me to have prevented so many mishaps, (and this I spake softly to my selfe). For my fathers house was neere to hers; but seeing your great beautie adorned with such perfections and wisedome, Don Felix can not be blamed, if he hath forgotten his first love only to embrace and honour yours. To this did Celia answer, merily and smiling, Thou hast learned quickly of thy master to sooth. Not so, faire ladie, saide I, but to serve you woulde I faine learne: for flatterie cannot be, where (in the judgement of all) there are so manifest signes and proofes of this due commendation. Celia began in good earnest to ask me what manner of woman Felismena was, whom I answered, that, touching her beautie, Some thought her to be very faire; but I was never of that opinion, bicause she hath many daies since wanted the chiefest thing that is requisite for it. What is that 1 said Celia. Content of minde, saide I, bicause perfect beautie can never be, where the same is not adjoyned to it. Thou hast the greatest reason in the world, said she, but I have seene some ladies whose lively hewe sadnes hath not one whit abated, and others whose beautie anger hath encreased, which is a strange thing me thinkes. Haplesse is that beauty, saide I, that hath sorrow and anger the preservers and mistresses of it, but I cannot skill of these impertinent things: And yet that woman, that must needes be molested with continuall paine and trouble, with greefe and care of minde and with other passions to make her looke well, cannot be reckoned among the number of faire women, and for mine owne part I do not account her so. Wherein thou hast great reason, said she, as in all things else that thou hast saide, thou hast showed thy selfe wise and discreete. Which I have deerely bought, said I againe: But I beseech you (gracious lady) to answer this letter, because my lord Don Felix may also have some contentment, by receiving this first well emploied service at my hands. I am content, saide Celia, but first thou must tell me if Felismena in matters of discretion be wise, and well advised] There was never any woman (saide I againe) more wise then she, bicause she hath beene long since beaten to it by her great mishaps: but she did never advise her selfe well, for if she had (as she was accounte d wise) she had never come to have bene so contrarie to her selfe. Thou speakest so wisely in all thy answeres, saide Celia, that there is not any that woulde not take great delight to heare them: which are not viands (said I) for such a daintie taste, nor reasons for so ingenious and fine a conceit (faire lady), as you have, but boldly affirming, that by the same I meane no harme at all. There is not any thing, saide Celia, whereunto thy wit cannot attaine, but because thou shalt not spende thy time so ill in praising me, as thy master doth in praying me, I will reade thy letter, and tell thee what thou shalt say unto him from me. Whereupon unfolding it, she began to read it to her selfe, to whose countenance and gestures in reading of the same, which are oftentimes outwarde signes of the inwarde disposition and meaning of the hart, I gave a watchfull eie. And when she had read it, she said unto me, Tell thy master, that he that can so well by wordes expresse what he meanes, cannot choose but meane as well as he saith: and comming neerer unto me, she saide softly in mine eare, And this for the love of thee, Valerius, and not so much for Don Felix thy master his sake, for I see how much thou lovest and tenderest his estate. And from thence, alas (saide I to my selfe), did all my woes arise. Whereupon kissing her hands for the great curtesie and favour she shewed me, I hied me to Don Felix with this answer, which was no small joy to him to heare it, &nd another death to me to report it, saying manie times to my selfe (when I did either bring him home some joyfull tydings or carrie letters or tokens to her), O thrise unfortunate Felismena, that with thine owne weapons art constrained to wounde thy ever-dying hart, and to heape up favours for him, who made so small account of thine. And so did I passe away my life with so many torments of minde, that if by the sight of my Don Felix they had not beene tempered, it coulde not have otherwise beene but that I must needes have lost it. More then two monethes togither did Celia hide from me the fervent love she bare me, although not in such sort, but that by certaine apparant signes I came to the knowledge thereof, which was no small lighting and ease of that griefe, which incessantly haunted my wearied spirites; for as I thought it a strong occasion, and the onely meane to make her utterly forget Don Felix, so likewise I imagined, that, perhaps, it might befall to him as it hath done to many, that the force of ingratitude, and contempt of his love, might have utterly abolished such thoughtes out of his hart. But, alas, it happened not so to my Don Felix ; for the more he perceived that his ladie forgot him, the more was his minde troubled with greater cares and greefe, which made him leade the most sorrowfull life that might be, whereof the least part did not fall to my lot. For remedie of whose sighes and pitious lamentations; poore Felismena (even by maine force) did get favours from Celia, scoring them up (whensoever she sent them by me) in the catalogue of my infinite mishaps. For if by chaunce he sent her anie thing by any of his other servants, it was so slenderly accepted, that he thought it best to send none unto her but my selfe, perceiving what inconvenience did ensue thereof. But God knowes how many teares my messages cost me, and so many they were, that in Celias presence I ceased not to powre them foorth, earnestly beseeching her with praiers and petitions not to entreat him so ill, who loved her so much, bicause I would binde Don Felix to me by the greatest bonde, as never man in like was bounde to any woman. My teares greeved Celia to the hart, as well for that I shed them in her presence, as also for that she sawe if I meant to love her, I woulde not (for requitall of hers to me) have sollicited her with such diligence, nor pleaded with such pittie, to get favours for another. And thus I lived in the greatest confusion that might be, amids a thousand anxieties of minde, for I imagined with my selfe, that if I made not a shew that I loved her, as she did me, I did put it in hazard lest Celia, for despite of my simplicitie or contempt, woulde have loved Don Felix more then before, and by loving him that mine coulde not have any good successe; and if I fained my selfe, on the other side, to be in love with her, it might have beene an occasion to have made her reject my lord Don Felix ; so that with the thought of his love neglected, and with the force of her contempt, he might have lost his content, and after that, his life, the least of which two mischiefes to prevent I would have given a thousand lives, if I had them. Manie daies passed away in this sort, wherein I served him as a thirde betweene both, to the great cost of my contentment, at the end whereof the successe of his love went on woorse and woorse, bicause the love that Celia did beare me was so great, that the extreme force of her passion made her loose some part of that compassion she should have had of her selfe. And on a day after that I had caried and recaried many messages and tokens betweene them, sometimes faining some my selfe from her unto him, bicause I could not see him (whom I loved so deerly) so sad and pensive, with many supplications and earnest praiers I besought lady Celia with pittie to regard the painfull life that Don Felix passed for her sake, and to consider that by not favouring him, she was repugnant to that which she owed to her selfe: which thing I entreated, bicause I saw him in such a case, that there was no other thing to be expected of him but death, by reason of the continuall and great paine which his greevous thoughts made him feele. But she with swelling teares in her eies, and with many sighes, answered me thus: Unfortunate and accursed Celia, that nowe in the end dost know how thou livest deceived with a false opinion of thy great simplicitie (ungratefull Valerius) and of thy small discretion. I did not beleeve till now that thou didst crave favours of me for thy master, but onely for thy selfe, and to enjoy my sight all that time, that thou diddest spende in suing to me for them. But now I see thou dost aske them in earnest, and that thou art so content to see me use him well, that thou canst not (without doubt) love me at all. O how ill dost thou acquite the love I beare thee, and that which, for thy sake, I do nowe forsake 1 O that time might revenge me of thy proude and foolish minde, since love hath not beene the meanes to do it. For I cannot thinke that Fortune will be so contrarie unto me, but that she will punish thee for contemning that great good which she meant to bestow on thee. And tell thy lord Don Felix, that if he will see me alive, that he see me not at all: and thou, vile traitour, cruell enemie to my rest, com no more (I charge thee) before these wearied eies, since their teares were never of force to make thee knowe how much thou art bound unto them. And with this she suddenly flang out of my sight with so many teares, that mine were not of force to staie her. For in the greatest haste in the worlde she got her into her chamber, where, locking the dore after her, it availed me not to call and crie unto her, requesting her with amorous and sweete words to open me the dore, and to take such satisfaction on me as it pleased her: nor to tell her many other things, whereby I declared unto her the small reason she had to be so angrie with me, and to shut me out. But with a strange kinde of furie she saide unto me, Come no more, ungratefull and proud Valerius, in my sight, and speake no more unto me, for thou art not able to make satisfaction for such great disdaine, and I will have no other remedie for the harine which thou hast done me, but death it selfe, the which with mine owne hands I will take in satisfaction of that, which thou deservest: which words when I heard, I staied no longer, but with a heavie cheere came to my Don Felix his lodging, and, with more sadnes then I was able to dissemble, tolde him that I could not speake with Celia, because she was visited of certaine gentlewomen her kinsewomen. But the next day in the morning it was bruted over all the citie, that a certaine trance had taken her that night, wherein she gave up the ghost, which stroke all the court with no small woonder. But that, which Don Felix felt by her sudden death, and how neere it greeved his very soule, as I am not able to tell, so cannot humane intendement conceive it, for the complaints he made, the teares, the burning sighes, and hart-breake sobbes, were without all measure and number. But I saie nothing of my selfe, when on the one side the unlucky death of Celia touched my soule very neere, the teares of Don Felix on the other did cut my hart in two with greefe: and yet this was nothing to that intolerable paine which afterwards I felt. For Don Felix heard no sooner of her death, but the same night he was missing in his house, that none of his servants nor any bodie else could tell any newes of him.

Whereupon you may perceive (faire nymphes) what cruell torments I did then feele: then did I wish a thousand times for death to prevent all these woes and myseries, which afterwards befell unto me: for Fortune (it seemed) was but wearie of those which she had but till then given me. But as all the care and diligence which I emploied in seeking out my Don Felix was but in vaine, so I resolved with my selfe to take this habite upon me as you see, wherein it is more then two yeeres since I have wandered up and downe, seeking him in manie countryes: but my Fortune hath denied me to finde him out, although I am not a little now bounde unto her by conducting me hither at this time, wherein I did you this small piece of service. Which (faire nymphes) beleeve me, I account (next after his life in whom I have put all my hope) the greatest content that might have fallen unto me.

ROMEO AND JULIET – Brooke’s Poem

Shakespeare's primary source for *Romeo and Juliet* was Arthur Brooke's *Romeus and Juliet,* first published in 1562.

ROMEUS AND JULIET: To the Reader

The God of all Glory created, universally, all creatures to set forth His praise; both those which we esteem profitable in use and pleasure, and also those which we accompt noisome and loathsome. But principally He hath appointed man the chiefest instrument of His honour, not only for ministering matter thereof in man himself, but as well in gathering out of other the occasions of publishing God's goodness, wisdom, and power. And in like sort, every doing of man hath, by God's dispensation, something whereby God may and ought to be honoured. So the good doings of the good and the evil acts of the wicked, the happy success of the blessed and the woeful proceedings of the miserable, do in divers sort sound one praise of God. And as each flower yieldeth honey to the bee, so every example ministereth good lessons to the well-disposed mind. The glorious triumph of the continent man upon the lusts of wanton flesh, encourageth men to honest restraint of wild affections; the shameful and wretched ends of such as have yielded their liberty thrall to foul desires teach men to withhold themselves from the headlong fall of loose dishonesty. So, to like effect, by sundry means the good man's example biddeth men to be good, and the evil man's mischief warneth men not to be evil. To this good end serve all ill ends of ill beginnings. And to this end, good Reader, is this tragical matter written, to describe unto thee a couple of unfortunate lovers, thralling themselves to unhonest desire; neglecting the authority and advice of parents and friends; conferring their principal counsels with drunken gossips and superstitious friars (the naturally fit instruments of unchastity); attempting all adventures of peril for th' attaining of their wished lust; using auricular confession the key of whoredom and treason, for furtherance of their purpose; abusing the honourable name of lawful marriage to cloak the shame of stolen contracts; finally by all means of unhonest life hasting to most unhappy death. This precedent, good Reader, shall be to thee, as the slaves of Lacedemon, oppressed with excess of drink, deformed and altered from likeness of men both in mind and use of body, were to the free-born children, so shewed to them by their parents, to th' intent to raise in them an hateful loathing of so filthy beastliness. Hereunto, if you apply it, ye shall deliver my doing from offence and profit yourselves. Though I saw the same argument lately set forth on stage with more commendation than I can look for -- being there much better set forth than I have or can do -- yet the same matter penned as it is may serve to like good effect, if the readers do bring with them like good minds to consider it, which hath the more encouraged me to publish it, such as it is.

--Ar. Br.

THE ARGUMENT

Love hath inflaméd twain by sudden sight,
 And both do grant the thing that both desire
 They wed in shrift by counsel of a friar.
 Young Romeus climbs fair Juliet's bower by night.
Three months he doth enjoy his chief delight.
 By Tybalt's rage provokéd unto ire,
 He payeth death to Tybalt for his hire.
 A banished man he 'scapes by secret flight.
New marriage is offered to his wife.
 She drinks a drink that seems to reave her breath:
 They bury her that sleeping yet hath life.
Her husband hears the tidings of her death.
 He drinks his bane. And she with Romeus' knife,
When she awakes, herself, alas! she slay'th.

There is beyond the Alps, a town of ancient fame,
Whose bright renown yet shineth clear: Verona men it name;
Built in a happy time, built on a fertile soil
Maintained by the heavenly fates, and by the townish toil
The fruitful hills above, the pleasant vales below,
The silver stream with channel deep, that thro' the town doth flow,
The store of springs that serve for use, and eke for ease,
And other more commodities, which profit may and please,--
Eke many certain signs of things betid of old,

To fill the hungry eyes of those that curiously behold,
Do make this town to be preferred above the rest
Of Lombard towns, or at the least, compared with the best.
In which while Escalus as prince alone did reign,
To reach reward unto the good, to pay the lewd with pain,
Alas, I rue to think, an heavy hap befell:

Which Boccace scant, not my rude tongue, were able forth to tell.
Within my trembling hand, my pen doth shake for fear,

And, on my cold amazéd head, upright doth stand my hair.

But sith she doth command, whose hest I must obey,

In mourning verse, a woeful chance to tell I will assay.

Help, learnéd Pallas, help, ye Muses with your art,

Help, all ye damnéd fiends to tell of joys returned to smart.

Help eke, ye sisters three, my skilless pen t'indite:

For you it caused which I, alas, unable am to write. There were two ancient stocks, which Fortune high did place

Above the rest, indued with wealth, and nobler of their race,

Loved of the common sort, loved of the prince alike,

And like unhappy were they both, when Fortune list to strike;

Whose praise, with equal blast, Fame in her trumpet blew;

The one was clepéd Capulet, and th'other Montague.

A wonted use it is, that men of likely sort,

(I wot not by what fury forced) envy each other's port.

So these, whose egall state bred envy pale of hue,

And then, of grudging envy's root, black hate and rancour grew

As, of a little spark, oft riseth mighty fire, So of a kindled spark of grudge, in flames flash out their ire:

And then their deadly food, first hatched of trifling strife,

Did bathe in blood of smarting wounds; it reavéd breath and life,

No legend lie I tell, scarce yet their eyes be dry,

That did behold the grisly sight, with wet and weeping eye

But when the prudent prince, who there the sceptre held,

So great a new disorder in his commonweal beheld;

By gentle mean he sought, their choler to assuage;

And by persuasion to appease, their blameful furious rage.

But both his words and time, the prince hath spent in vain:

So rooted was the inward hate, he lost his busy pain.

When friendly sage advice, ne gentle words avail,

By thund'ring threats, and princely power their courage 'gan he quail

In hope that when he had the wasting flame supprest,

In time he should quite quench the sparks that burned within their breast. Now whilst these kindreds do remain in this estate,

And each with outward friendly show doth hide his inward hate:

One Romeus, who was of race a Montague,
Upon whose tender chin, as yet, no manlike beard there grew,
Whose beauty and whose shape so far the rest did stain,
That from the chief of Verone youth he greatest fame did gain,
Hath found a maid so fair (he found so foul his hap),
Whose beauty, shape, and comely grace, did so his heart entrap
That from his own affairs, his thought she did remove;

Only he sought to honour her, to serve her and to love.
To her he writeth oft, oft messengers are sent,
At length, in hope of better speed, himself the lover went,
Present to plead for grace, which absent was not found:

And to discover to her eye his new receivéd wound.
But she that from her youth was fostered evermore
With virtue's food, and taught in school of wisdom's skilful lore
By answer did cut off th'affections of his love,
That he no more occasion had so vain a suit to move.
So stern she was of cheer, for all the pain he took,

That, in reward of toil, she would not give a friendly look.

And yet how much she did with constant mind retire;
So much the more his fervent mind was pricked forth by desire.
But when he many months, hopeless of his recure,
Had servéd her, who forced not what pains he did endure
At length he thought to leave Verona, and to prove
If change of place might change away his ill-bestowéd love;
And speaking to himself, thus 'gan he make his moan:
"What booteth me to love and serve a fell, unthankful one,
Sith that my humble suit and labour sowed in vain,

Can reap none other fruit at all but scorn and proud disdain?
What way she seeks to go, the same I seek to run,
But she the path wherein I tread, with speedy flight doth shun.
I cannot live, except that near to her I be;
She is aye best content when she is farthest off from me.
Wherefore henceforth I will far from her take my flight;
Perhaps mine eye once banished by absence from her sight,
This fire of mine, that by her pleasant eyne is fed,
Shall little and little wear away, and quite at last be dead."
But whilst he did decree this purpose still to keep,

A contrary, repugnant thought sank in his breast so deep,
That doubtful is he now which of the twain is best:
In sighs, in tears, in plaint, in care, in sorrow and unrest,
He moans the day, he wakes the long and weary night;
So deep hath love with piercing hand, y-graved her beauty bright
Within his breast, and hath so mastered quite his heart,
That he of force must yield as thrall; -- no way is left to start.
He cannot stay his step, but forth still must he run;
He languisheth and melts away, as snow against the sun.
His kindred and allies do wonder what he ails,

And each of them in friendly wise his heavy hap bewails.
But one among the rest, the trustiest of his feres,
Far more than he with counsel filled, and riper of his years,
'Gan sharply him rebuke, such love to him he bare,
That he was fellow of his smart, and partner of his care.
"What mean'st thou, Romeus, quoth he, what doting rage
Doth make thee thus consume away the best part of thine age,
In seeking her that scorns, and hides her from thy sight,
Not forcing all thy great expense, ne yet thy honour bright,
Thy tears, thy wretched life, ne thine unspotted truth,

Which are of force, I ween, to move the hardest heart to ruth?
Now for our friendship's sake, and for thy health, I pray,
That thou henceforth become thine own. -- Oh, give no more away
Unto a thankless wight thy precious free estate;
In that thou lovest such a one, thou seem'st thyself to hate.
For she doth love elsewhere, -- and then thy time is lorn,
Or else (what booteth thee to sue?) Love's court she hath forsworn.

Both young thou art of years, and high in Fortune's grace:
What man is better shaped than thou ? Who hath a sweeter face?
By painful studies' mean, great learning hast thou won;

Thy parents have none other heir, thou art their only son.
What greater grief, trowst thou, what woeful deadly smart
Should so be able to distrain thy seely father's heart,
As in his age to see thee plungéd deep in vice,
When greatest hope he hath to hear thy virtue's fame arise?
What shall thy kinsmen think, thou cause of all their ruth?

Thy deadly foes do laugh to scorn thy ill-employéd youth.

Wherefore my counsel is, that thou henceforth begin
To know and fly the error which too long thou livedst in.
Remove the veil of love, that keeps thine eyes so blind,

That thou ne canst the ready path of thy forefathers find.
But if unto thy will so much in thrall thou art,
Yet in some other place bestow thy witless wand'ring heart.
Choose out some worthy dame, her honour thou and serve,
Who will give ear to thy complaint, and pity ere thou sterve.
But sow no more thy pains in such a barren soil,
As yields in harvest time no crop, in recompense of toil.
Ere long the townish dames together will resort;
Some one of beauty, favour, shape, and of so lovely port,
With so fast fixéd eye, perhaps thou mayst behold,

That thou shalt quite forget thy love, and passions past of old."
The young man's listening ear received the wholesome sound,
And reason's truth y-planted so, within his head had ground;
That now with healthy cool y-tempered is the heat,
And piecemeal wears away the grief that erst his heart did fret.
To his approved friend a solemn oath he plight,

At every feast y-kept by day, and banquet made by night,

At pardons in the church, at games in open street,

And everywhere he would resort where ladies wont to meet;

Eke should his savage heart like all indifferently,

For he would view and judge them all with unalluréd eye.

How happy had he been, had he not been forsworn;

But twice as happy had he been, had he been never born.

For ere the moon could thrice her wasted horns renew,

False Fortune cast for him, poor wretch, a mischief new to brew. The weary winter nights restore the Christmas games,

And now the season doth invite to banquet townish dames.

And first in Capel's house, the chief of all the kin

Spar'th for no cost, the wonted use of banquets to begin.

No lady fair or foul was in Verona town,

No knight or gentleman of high or low renown,

But Capulet himself hath bid unto his feast,

Or by his name in paper sent, appointed as a geast.

Young damsels thither flock, of bachelors a rout,

Not so much for the banquet's sake, as beauties to search out.

But not a Montague would enter at his gate,
(For as you heard, the Capulets and they were at debate)
Save Romeus, and he, in mask with hidden face,
The supper done, with other five did press into the place.
When they had masked awhile, with dames in courtly wise,

All did unmask, the rest did show them to their ladies' eyes;
But bashful Romeus with shamefast face forsook,
The open press, and him withdrew into the chamber's nook.
But brighter than the sun, the waxen torches shone,
That maugre what he could, he was espied of everyone.
But of the women chief, their gazing eyes that threw,
To wonder at his sightly shape and beauty's spotless hue,
With which the heavens him had and nature so bedecked,
That ladies thought the fairest dames were foul in his respect.
And in their head beside, another wonder rose,

How he durst put himself in throng among so many foes.
Of courage stout they thought his coming to proceed:

And women love an hardy heart, as I in stories read.

The Capulets disdain the presence of their foe,
Yet they suppress their stirréd ire, the cause I do not know:
Perhaps t'offend their guests the courteous knights are loth,
Perhaps they stay from sharp revenge, dreading the Prince's wroth.
Perhaps for that they shamed to exercise their rage
Within their house, 'gainst one alone, and him of tender age.
They use no taunting talk, ne harm him by their deed;

They neither say, "What mak'st thou here?" ne yet they say, "God speed."
So that he freely might the ladies view at ease;
And they also beholding him, their change of fancies please;
Which Nature had him taught to do with such a grace,
That there was none but joyéd at his being there in place.
With upright beam he weighed the beauty of each dame,
And judged who best, and who next her, was wrought in Nature's frame.
At length he saw a maid, right fair, of perfect shape,
Which Theseus or Paris would have chosen to their rape.
Whom erst he never saw; of all she pleased him most;

Within himself he said to her, "Thou justly may'st thee boast
Of perfect shape's renown, and beauty's sounding praise,

Whose like ne hath, ne shall be seen, ne liveth in our days."
And whilst he fixed on her his partial piercéd eye,
His former love, for which of late he ready was to die,
Is now as quite forgot, as it had never been:
The proverb saith, "Unminded oft are they that are unseen."
And as out of a plank a nail a nail doth drive,
So novel love out of the mind the ancient love doth rive.
This sudden kindled fire in time is wox so great,

That only death and both their bloods might quench the fiery heat.
When Romeus saw himself in this new tempest tossed,
Where both was hope of pleasant port, and danger to be lost,
He doubtful, scarcely knew what countenance to keep;
In Lethe's flood his wonted flames were quenched and drenchéd deep.
Yea, he forgets himself, ne is the wretch so bold
To ask her name, that without force hath him in bondage fold.
Ne how t'unloose his bonds doth the poor fool devise,
But only seeketh by her sight to feed his hungry eyes:

Through them he swalloweth down love's sweet impoisoned bait:

How surely are the wareless wrapt by those that lie in wait!
So is the poison spread throughout his bones and veins,
That in a while, alas, the while, it hasteth deadly pains.
Whilst Juliet, for so this gentle damsel hight,
From side to side on every one did cast about her sight:
At last her floating eyes were anchored fast on him,
Who for her sake did banish health and freedom from each limb.
He in her sight did seem to pass the rest as far
As Phoebus' shining beams do pass the brightness of a star.
In wait lay warlike Love with golden bow and shaft,

And to his ear with steady hand the bowstring up he raft.
Till now she had escaped his sharp inflaming dart,
Till now he listed not assault her young and tender heart.
His whetted arrow loosed, so touched her to the quick,
That through the eye it strake the heart, and there the head did stick.
It booted not to strive, for why, she wanted strength;
The weaker aye unto the strong of force must yield, at length.
The pomps now of the feast her heart 'gins to despise;
And only joyeth when her eyne meet with her lover's eyes.
When their new smitten hearts had fed on loving gleams,

Whilst, passing to and fro their eyes, y-mingled were their beams.
Each of these lovers 'gan by other's looks to know,
That friendship in their breast had root, and both would have it grow.
When thus in both their hearts had Cupid made his breach
And each of them had sought the mean to end the war by speech,
Dame Fortune did assent their purpose to advance,
With torch in hand a comely knight did fetch her forth to dance;
She quit herself so well, and with so trim a grace,
That she the chief praise won that night from all Verona race,
The whilst our Romeus a place had warely won,

Nigh to the seat where she must sit, the dance once being done.
Fair Juliet turned to her chair with pleasant cheer,
And glad she was her Romeus approachéd was so near.
At th' one side of her chair her lover Romeo,
And on the other side there sat one called Mercutio;
A courtier that each where was highly had in price,
For he was courteous of his speech, and pleasant of device.
Even as a lion would among the lambs be bold,
Such was among the bashful maids Mercutio to behold.

With friendly gripe he seized fair Juliet's snowish hand:

A gift he had that Nature gave him in his swathing band,
That frozen mountain ice was never half so cold,
As were his hands, though ne'er so near the fire he did them hold.
As soon as had the knight the virgin's right hand raught,
Within his trembling hand her left hath loving Romeus caught.
For he wist well himself for her abode most pain,
And well he wist she loved him best, unless she list to feign.
Then she with tender hand his tender palm hath pressed;
What joy, trow you, was grafféd so in Romeus' cloven breast
The sudden sweet delight hath stoppéd quite his tongue,

Ne can he claim of her his right, ne crave redress of wrong.
But she espied straightway, by changing of his hue
From pale to red, from red to pale, and so from pale anew,
That veh'ment love was cause, why so his tongue did stay,
And so much more she longed to hear what Love could teach him say.
When she had longéd long, and he long held his peace,
And her desire of hearing him, by silence did increase,

At last, with trembling voice and shamefast cheer, the maid
Unto her Romeus turned herself, and thus to him she said:

"O blessed be the time of thy arrival here":

But ere she could speak forth the rest, to her Love drew so near
And so within her mouth, her tongue he gluéd fast,
That no one word could 'scape her more than what already passed.
In great contented ease the young man straight is rapt:
"What chance," quoth he, "un'ware to me, O lady mine, is hapt,
That gives you worthy cause my coming here to bliss?"
Fair Juliet was come again unto herself by this:
First ruthfully she looked, then said with smiling cheer:
"Marvel no whit, my heart's delight, my only knight and fere,
Mercutio's icy hand had all-to frozen mine,

And of thy goodness thou again hast warmed it with thine."
Whereto with stayéd brow, 'gan Romeus to reply:
"If so the gods have granted me such favour from the sky,
That by my being here some service I have done
That pleaseth you, I am as glad, as I a realm had won.

O well-bestowed time, that hath the happy hire,
Which I would wish, if I might have, my wished heart's desire.
For I of God would crave, as price of pains forepast,
To serve, obey, and honour you, so long as life shall last;
As proof shall teach you plain, if that you like to try

His faultless truth, that nill for aught unto his lady lie.
But if my touched hand have warmed yours some deal,
Assure yourself the heat is cold, which in your hand you feel,
Compared to such quick sparks and glowing furious glead,
As from your beauty's pleasant eyne, Love causéd to proceed;
Which have so set on fire each feeling part of mine,
That lo, my mind doth melt away, my outward parts do pine.
And but you help, all whole, to ashes shall I turn;
Wherefore, alas, have ruth on him, whom you do force to burn."
Even with his ended tale, the torches' dance had end,

And Juliet of force must part from her new chosen friend.
His hand she clasped hard, and all her parts did shake,
When leisureless with whisp'ring voice thus did she answer make:
"You are no more your own, dear friend, than I am yours,

My honour savéd, prest t'obey your will, while life endures."
Lo, here the lucky lot that seld true lovers find,
Each takes away the other's heart, and leaves the own behind.
A happy life is love, if God grant from above,
That heart with heart by even weight do make exchange of love.
But Romeus gone from her, his heart for care is cold;

He hath forgot to ask her name that hath his heart in hold.
With forgéd careless cheer, of one he seeks to know,
Both how she hight, and whence she came, that him enchanted so.
So hath he learned her name, and know'th she is no geast,
Her father was a Capulet, and master of the feast.
Thus hath his foe in choice to give him life or death,
That scarcely can his woeful breast keep in the lively breath.
Wherefore with piteous plaint fierce Fortune doth he blame,
That in his ruth and wretched plight doth seek her laughing game.
And he reproveth Love, chief cause of his unrest,

Who ease and freedom hath exiled out of his youthful breast.
Twice hath he made him serve, hopeless of his reward;
Of both the ills to choose the less, I ween the choice were hard.

First to a ruthless one he made him sue for grace,
And now with spur he forceth him to run an endless race.
Amid these stormy seas one anchor doth him hold,
He serveth not a cruel one, as he had done of old.
And therefore is content, and chooseth still to serve,
Though hap should swear that guerdonless the wretched wight should sterve.
The lot of Tantalus is, Romeus, like to thine;

For want of food amid his food, the miser still doth pine.
As careful was the maid what way were best devise
To learn his name, that entertained her in so gentle wise,
Of whom her heart received so deep, so wide a wound.

An ancient dame she called to her, and in her ear 'gan round.
This old dame in her youth had nursed her with her milk,
With slender needle taught her sew, and how to spin with silk.
"What twain are those," quoth she, "which press unto the door,
Whose pages in their hand do bear two torches light before?"
And then as each of them had of his household name,

So she him named yet once again, the young and wily dame.

"And tell me, who is he with visor in his hand,
That yonder doth in masking weed beside the window stand?"
"His name is Romeus," said she, "a Montague,
Whose father's pride first stirred the strife which both your households rue."
The word of Montague her joys did overthrow,
And straight instead of happy hope, despair began to grow.

"What hap have I," quoth she, "to love my father's foe?
What, am I weary of my weal? What, do I wish my woe?"
But though her grievous pains distrained her tender heart,

Yet with an outward show of joy she cloakéd inward smart;
And of the courtlike dames her leave so courtly took,
That none did guess the sudden change by changing of her look.
Then at her mother's hest to chamber she her hied,
So well she feigned, mother ne nurse the hidden harm descried.
But when she should have slept, as wont she was, in bed,
Not half a wink of quiet sleep could harbour in her head.
For lo, an hugy heap of divers thoughts arise,
That rest have banished from her heart, and slumber from her eyes.
And now from side to side she tosseth and she turns,

And now for fear she shivereth, and now for love she burns.
And now she likes her choice, and now her choice she blames,
And now each hour within her head a thousand fancies frames.
Sometime in mind to stop amid her course begun,
Sometime she vows, what so betide, th'attempted race to run.

Thus danger's dread and love within the maiden fought:
The fight was fierce, continuing long by their contrary thought.
In turning maze of love she wand'reth to and fro,
Then standeth doubtful what to do, lost, overpressed with woe.
How so her fancies cease, her tears did never blin,

With heavy cheer and wringéd hands thus doth her plaint begin:
"Ah, silly fool," quoth she, "y-caught in subtle snare!

Ah, wretchéd wench, bewrapt in woe! Ah, caitiff clad with care!
Whence come these wand'ring thoughts to thy unconstant breast?

By straying thus from reason's law, that reave thy wonted rest.
What if his subtle brain to feign have taught his tongue,

And so the snake that lurks in grass thy tender heart hath stung?
What if with friendly speech the traitor lie in wait,
As oft the poisoned hook is hid, wrapt in the pleasant bait?
Oft under cloak of truth hath Falsehood served her lust;

And turned their honour into shame, that did so slightly trust.

What, was not Dido so, a crowned queen, defamed?
And eke, for such a heinous crime, have men not Theseus blamed?
A thousand stories more, to teach me to beware,
In Boccace and in Ovid's books too plainly written are.
Perhaps, the great revenge he cannot work by strength,
By subtle sleight, my honour stained, he hopes to work at length.
So shall I seek to find my father's foe his game;
So, I befiled, Report shall take her trump of black defame,
Whence she with pufféd cheek shall blow a blast so shrill

Of my dispraise, that with the noise Verona shall she fill.
Then I, a laughing-stock through all the town become,
Shall hide myself, but not my shame, within an hollow tomb."
Straight underneath her foot she treadeth in the dust.

Her troublesome thought, as wholly vain, y-bred of fond distrust.
"No, no, by God above, I wot it well," quoth she,
"Although I rashly spake before, in no wise can it be
That where such perfect shape with pleasant beauty rests,
There crooked craft and treason black should be appointed guests.
Sage writers say, the thoughts are dwelling in the eyne;

Then sure I am, as Cupid reigns, that Romeus is mine.
The tongue the messenger eke call they of the mind;
So that I see he loveth me; shall I then be unkind?
His face's rosy hue I saw full oft to seek;
And straight again it flashéd forth, and spread in either cheek.
His fixéd heavenly eyne, that through me quite did pierce
His thoughts unto my heart, my thought they seeméd to rehearse.

What meant his falt'ring tongue in telling of his tale?
The trembling of his joints, and eke his colour waxen pale?
And whilst I talked with him, himself he hath exiled

Out of himself, a seeméd me, ne was I sure beguiled.

Those arguments of love Craft wrate not in his face,

But Nature's hand, when all deceit was banished out of place.

What other certain signs seek I of his good will?

These do suffice; and steadfast I will love and serve him still.

Till Atropos shall cut my fatal thread of life,

So that he mind to make of me his lawful wedded wife.

For so perchance this new alliance may procure

Unto our houses such a peace as ever shall endure." Oh, how we can persuade ourself to what we like,

And how we can dissuade our mind, if aught our mind mislike!

Weak arguments are strong, our fancies straight to frame

To pleasing things, and eke to shun if we mislike the same.

The maid had scarcely yet ended the weary war,

Kept in her heart by striving thoughts, when every shining star

Had paid his borrowed light, and Phoebus spread in skies

His golden rays, which seemed to say, now time it is to rise.

And Romeus had by this forsaken his weary bed,

Where restless he a thousand thoughts had forgéd in his head.

And while with ling'ring step by Juliet's house he passed,

And upwards to her windows high his greedy eyes did cast,
His love that looked for him there 'gan he straight espy.
With pleasant cheer each greeted is; she followeth with her eye
His parting steps, and he oft looketh back again
But not so oft as he desires; warely he doth refrain.
What life were like to love, if dread of jeopardy
Y-soured not the sweet, if love were free from jealousy!
But she more sure within, unseen of any wight,
When so he comes, looks after him till he be out of sight.
In often passing so, his busy eyes he threw,

That every pane and tooting hole the wily lover knew.
In happy hour he doth a garden plot espy,
From which, except he warely walk, men may his love descry;
For lo, it fronted full upon her leaning place,
Where she is wont to show her heart by cheerful friendly face.
And lest the arbours might their secret love bewray,
He doth keep back his forward foot from passing there by day;

But when on earth the Night her mantle black hath spread;
Well armed he walketh forth alone, ne dreadful foes doth dread.
Whom maketh Love not bold, nay,whom makes he not blind?

He reaveth danger's dread oft-times out of the lover's mind.
By night he passeth here, a week or two in vain;
And for the missing of his mark his grief hath him nigh slain.
And Juliet that now doth lack her heart's relief,
Her Romeus' pleasant eyne, I mean, is almost dead for grief.
Each day she changeth hours (for lovers keep an hour
When they are sure to see their love in passing by their bower).
Impatient of her woe, she happed to lean one night
Within her window, and anon the moon did shine so bright
That she espied her love: her heart revivéd sprang;

And now for joy she claps her hands, which erst for woe she wrang.
Eke Romeus, when he saw his long desiréd sight,
His mourning cloak of moan cast off, hath clad him with delight.
Yet dare I say, of both that she rejoicéd more:
His care was great, hers twice as great was all the time before;
For whilst she knew not why he did himself absent,

Aye doubting both his health and life, his death she did lament
For love is fearful oft where is no cause of fear,
And what love fears, that love laments, as though it chancéd were.
Of greater cause alway is greater work y-bred;

While he nought doubteth of her health, she dreads lest he be dead.
When only absence is the cause of Romeus' smart,
By happy hope of sight again he feeds his fainting heart.

What wonder then if he were wrapped in less annoy?
What marvel if by sudden sight she fed of greater joy
His smaller grief or joy no smaller love do prove;
Ne, for she passed him in both, did she him pass in love:
But each of them alike did burn in equal flame,
The well-beloving knight and eke the well-beloved dame.
Now whilst with bitter tears her eyes as fountains run,

With whispering voice, y-broke with sobs, thus is her tale begun:
"O Romeus, of your life too lavas sure you are,
That in this place, and at this time, to hazard it you dare.
What if your deadly foes, my kinsmen, saw you here?

Like lions wild, your tender parts asunder would they tear.
In ruth and in disdain, I, weary of my life,
With cruel hand my mourning heart would pierce with bloody knife.
For you, mine own, once dead, what joy should I have here?
And eke my honour stained, which I than life do hold more dear."
"Fair lady mine, dame Juliet, my life," quod he,

"Even from my birth committed was to fatal sisters three.
They may in spite of foes draw forth my lively thread;
And they also, whoso saith nay, asunder may it shred.
But who to reave my life, his rage and force would bend,
Perhaps should try unto his pain how I it could defend.
Ne yet I love it so, but always for your sake,
A sacrifice to death I would my wounded corpse betake.
If my mishap were such, that here before your sight,
I should restore again to death, of life, my borrowed light,
This one thing and no more my parting sprite would rue,

That part he should before that you by certain trial knew
The love I owe to you, the thrall I languish in,

And how I dread to lose the gain which I do hope to win;

And how I wish for life, not for my proper ease,

But that in it you might I love, you honour, serve and please,

Till deadly pangs the sprite out of the corpse shall send."

And thereupon he sware an oath, and so his tale had end. Now love and pity boil in Juliet's ruthful breast;

In window on her leaning arm her weary head doth rest;

Her bosom bathed in tears, to witness inward pain,

With dreary cheer to Romeus thus answered she again:

"Ah, my dear Romeus, keep in these words," quod she,

"For lo, the thought of such mischance already maketh me

For pity and for dread well-nigh to yield up breath;

In even balance peiséd are my life and eke my death.

For so my heart is knit, yea, made one self with yours,

That sure there is no grief so small, by which your mind endures,

But as you suffer pain, so I do bear in part,

Although it lessens not your grief, the half of all your smart.

But these things overpast, if of your health and mine

You have respect, or pity aught my teary, weeping eyne,
In few unfained words your hidden mind unfold,
That as I see your pleasant face, your heart I may behold.
For if you do intend my honour to defile,
In error shall you wander still, as you have done this while;
But if your thought be chaste, and have on virtue ground,
If wedlock be the end and mark which your desire hath found,
Obedience set aside, unto my parents due,
The quarrel eke that long ago between our households grew,
Both me and mine I will all whole to you betake,

And following you whereso you go, my father's house forsake.
But if by wanton love and by unlawful suit
You think in ripest years to pluck my maidenhood's dainty fruit,
You are beguiled; and now your Juliet you beseeks
To cease your suit, and suffer her to live among her likes."
Then Romeus, whose thought was free from foul desire,
And to the top of virtue's height did worthily aspire,
Was filled with greater joy than can my pen express,

Or, till they have enjoyed the like, the hearer's heart can guess.
And then with joined hands, heaved up into the skies,
He thanks the Gods, and from the heavens for vengeance down he cries

If he have other thought but as his lady spake;
And then his look he turned to her, and thus did answer make:
"Since, lady, that you like to honour me so much
As to accept me for your spouse, I yield myself for such.
In true witness whereof, because I must depart,
Till that my deed do prove my word, I leave in pawn my heart.
To-morrow eke betimes before the sun arise,
To Friar Laurence will I wend, to learn his sage advice.
He is my ghostly sire, and oft he hath me taught

What I should do in things of weight, when I his aid have sought.
And at this selfsame hour, I plight you here my faith,
I will be here, if you think good, to tell you what he saith."
She was contented well; else favour found he none
That night at lady Juliet's hand, save pleasant words alone.
This barefoot friar girt with cord his grayish weed,

For he of Francis' order was, a friar, as I rede.
Not as the most was he, a gross unlearned fool,
But doctor of divinity proceeded he in school.
The secrets eke he knew in Nature's works that lurk;
By magic's art most men supposed that he could wonders work.

Ne doth it ill beseem divines those skills to know,
If on no harmful deed they do such skilfulness bestow;
For justly of no art can men condemn the use,
But right and reason's lore cry out against the lewd abuse.
The bounty of the friar and wisdom hath so won
The townsfolks' hearts, that well nigh all to Friar Laurence run
To shrive themself; the old, the young, the great and small;
Of all he is beloved well, and honoured much of all.
And, for he did the rest in wisdom far exceed,
The prince by him, his counsel craved, was holp at time of need.

Betwixt the Capulets and him great friendship grew,
A secret and assuréd friend unto the Montague.
Loved of this young man more than any other guest,
The friar eke of Verone youth aye likéd Romeus best;

For whom he ever hath in time of his distress,
As erst you heard, by skilful lore found out his harm's redress:
To him is Romeus gone, ne stay'th he till the morrow;
To him he painteth all his case, his passéd joy and sorrow.
How he hath her espied with other dames in dance,

And how that first to talk with her himself he did advance;
Their talk and change of looks he 'gan to him declare,
And how so fast by faith and troth they both y-coupléd are,
That neither hope of life, nor dread of cruel death,
Shall make him false his faith to her, while life shall lend him breath.
And then with weeping eyes he prays his ghostly sire
To further and accomplish all their honest hearts' desire.
A thousand doubts and mo in th'old man's head arose,
A thousand dangers like to come the old man doth disclose,
And from the spousal rites he redeth him refrain,

Perhaps he shall be bet advised within a week or twain.
Advice is banished quite from those that follow love,
Except advice to what they like their bending mind do move.
As well the father might have counselled him to stay

That from a mountain's top thrown down is falling half the way
As warn his friend to stop amid his race begun,
Whom Cupid with his smarting whip enforceth forth to run.
Part won by earnest suit, the friar doth grant at last;
And part, because he thinks the storms, so lately overpast,
Of both the households' wrath, this marriage might appease;

So that they should not rage again, but quite for ever cease
The respite of a day he asketh to devise
What way were best, unknown, to end so great an enterprise.
The wounded man that now doth deadly pains endure,
Scarce patient tarrieth whilst his leech doth make the salve to cure:
So Romeus hardly grants a short day and a night,
Yet needs he must, else must he want his only heart's delight.
You see that Romeus no time or pain doth spare;
Think that the whilst fair Juliet is not devoid of care.

Young Romeus poureth forth his hap and his mishap
Into the friar's breast; but where shall Juliet unwrap
The secrets of her heart? To whom shall she unfold
Her hidden burning love, and eke her thought and cares so cold?

The nurse of whom I spake, within her chamber lay,
Upon the maid she waiteth still; to her she doth bewray
Her new receivéd wound, and then her aid doth crave,
In her, she saith, it lies to spill, in her, her life to save.
Not easily she made the froward nurse to bow,
But won at length with promised hire, she made a solemn vow.
To do what she commands, as handmaid of her hest;

Her mistress' secrets hide she will within her covert breast.
To Romeus she goes; of him she doth desire
To know the mean of marriage, by counsel of the friar.
"On Saturday," quod he, "if Juliet come to shrift,
She shall be shrived and marriéd; how like you, nurse, this drift?"
"Now by my truth," quod she, "God's blessing have your heart,
For yet in all my life I have not heard of such a part.
Lord, how you young men can such crafty wiles devise,
If that you love the daughter well, to blear the mother's eyes.
An easy thing it is with cloak of holiness

To mock the seely mother, that suspecteth nothing less.
But that it pleaséd you to tell me of the case,

For all my many years, perhaps, I should have found it scarce.
Now for the rest let me and Juliet alone;
To get her leave, some feat excuse I will devise anon;
For that her golden locks by sloth have been unkempt,
Or for unwares some wanton dream the youthful damsel drempt,
Or for in thoughts of love her idle time she spent,
Or otherwise within her heart deservéd to be shent.
I know her mother will in no case say her nay;

I warrant you, she shall not fail to come on Saturday."
And then she swears to him, the mother loves her well;
And how she gave her suck in youth, she leaveth not to tell.
"A pretty babe," quod she, "it was when it was young;
Lord, how it could full prettily have prated with it tongue!
A thousand times and more I laid her on my lap,
And clapped her on the buttock soft, and kissed where I did clap.
And gladder then was I of such a kiss, forsooth,
Than I had been to have a kiss of some old lecher's mouth."
And thus of Juliet's youth began this prating nurse,

And of her present state to make a tedious, long discourse.

For though he pleasure took in hearing of his love,
The message' answer seeméd him to be of more behove.
But when these beldames sit at ease upon their tail,
The day and eke the candle-light before their talk shall fail.
And part they say is true, and part they do devise,
Yet boldly do they chat of both, when no man checks their lies.
Then he six crowns of gold out of his pocket drew,
And gave them her; "A slight reward," quod he, "and so, adieu."
In seven years twice told she had not bowed so low

Her crooked knees, as now they bow; she swears she will bestow
Her crafty wit, her time, and all her busy pain,
To help him to his hopéd bliss; and, cow'ring down again,
She takes her leave, and home she hies with speedy pace;
The chamber door she shuts, and then she saith with smiling face:

"Good news for thee, my girl, good tidings I thee bring.
Leave off thy wonted song of care, and now of pleasure sing.
For thou may'st hold thyself the happiest under sun,
That in so little while, so well, so worthy a knight hast won.
The best y-shaped is he, and hath the fairest face

Of all this town, and there is none hath half so good a grace:
So gentle of his speech, and of his counsel wise":

And still with many praises more she heaved him to the skies.
"Tell me else what," quod she, "this evermore I thought;
But of our marriage, say at once, what answer have you brought"
"Nay, soft," quoth she, "I fear your hurt by sudden joy."
"I list not play," quod Juliet, "although thou list to toy."
How glad, trow you, was she, when she had heard her say,
No farther off than Saturday deferréd was the day!
Again the ancient nurse doth speak of Romeus,

"And then," said she, "he spake to me, and then I spake him thus."
Nothing was done or said that she hath left untold,
Save only one, that she forgot, the taking of the gold.
"There is no loss," quod she, "sweet wench, to loss of time,
Ne in thine age shalt thou repent so much of any crime.
For when I call to mind my former passéd youth,
One thing there is which most of all doth cause my endless ruth.
At sixteen years I first did choose my loving fere,

And I was fully ripe before, I dare well say, a year.
The pleasure that I lost, that year so overpast,

A thousand times I have bewept, and shall while life doth last.
In faith it were a shame, -- yea, sin it were, y-wis,
When thou may'st live in happy joy, to set light by thy bliss."
She that this morning could her mistress' mind dissuade,
Is now become an oratress, her lady to persuade.
If any man be here whom love hath clad with care,
To him I speak; if thou wilt speed, thy purse thou must not spare,
Two sorts of men there are, seld welcome in at door,
The wealthy sparing niggard, and the suitor that is poor.
For glitt'ring gold is wont by kind to move the heart;

And oftentimes a slight reward doth cause a more desart.
Y-written have I read, I wot not in what book,
There is no better way to fish than with a golden hook.
Of Romeus these two do sit and chat awhile,
And to themself they laugh how they the mother shall beguile.
A feat excuse they find, but sure I know it not,
And leave for her to go to shrift on Saturday she got.

So well this Juliet, this wily wench did know
Her mother's angry hours, and eke the true bent of her bow.
The Saturday betimes, in sober weed y-clad,

She took her leave, and forth she went with visage grave and sad.
With her the nurse is sent, as bridle of her lust,
With her the mother sends a maid almost of equal trust.
Betwixt her teeth the bit the jennet now hath caught,
So warely eke the virgin walks, her maid perceiveth nought.
She gazeth not in church on young men of the town,
Ne wand'reth she from place to place, but straight she kneeleth down
Upon an altar's step, where she devoutly prays,
And there upon her tender knees the weary lady stays;
Whilst she doth send her maid the certain truth to know,

If Friar Laurence leisure had to hear her shrift, or no.
Out of his shriving place he comes with pleasant cheer;
The shamefast maid with bashful brow to himward draweth near.
"Some great offence," quoth he, "you have committed late,
Perhaps you have displeased your friend by giving him a mate."
Then turning to the nurse and to the other maid,

"Go, hear a mass or two," quod he, "which straightway shall be said.
For, her confession heard, I will unto you twain
The charge that I received of you restore to you again."
What, was not Juliet, trow you, right well apaid?

That for this trusty friar hath changed her young mistrusting maid?
I dare well say, there is in all Verona none,
But Romeus, with whom she would so gladly be alone.
Thus to the friar's cell they both forth walkéd bin;
He shuts the door as soon as he and Juliet were in.
But Romeus, her friend, was entered in before,
And there had waited for his love, two hours large and more.
Each minute seemed an hour, and every hour a day,
'Twixt hope he livéd and despair of coming or of stay.
Now wavering hope and fear are quite fled out of sight,

For what he hoped he hath at hand, his pleasant, chief delight.
And joyful Juliet is healed of all her smart,
For now the rest of all her parts have found her straying heart.

Both their confessions first the friar hath heard them make.

And then to her with louder voice thus Friar Laurence spake:
"Fair lady Juliet, my ghostly daughter dear,
As far as I of Romeus learn, who by you standeth here,
'Twixt you it is agreed, that you shall be his wife,
And he your spouse in steady truth, till death shall end your life.
Are you both fully bent to keep this great behest?"

And both the lovers said, it was their only heart's request.
When he did see their minds in links of love so fast,
When in the praise of wedlock's state some skilful talk was past,
When he had told at length the wife what was her due,
His duty eke by ghostly talk the youthful husband knew;
How that the wife in love must honour and obey,
What love and honour he doth owe, and debt that he must pay.
The words pronouncéd were which holy church of old
Appointed hath for marriage, and she a ring of gold
Received of Romeus; and then they both arose.

To whom the friar then said: "Perchance apart you will disclose,
Betwixt yourself alone, the bottom of your heart;
Say on at once, for time it is that hence you should depart."

Then Romeus said to her, both loth to part so soon,
"Fair lady, send to me again your nurse this afternoon.
Of cord I will bespeak a ladder by that time;
By which, this night, while others sleep, I will your window climb.
Then will we talk of love and of our old despairs,
And then, with longer leisure had, dispose our great affairs."
These said, they kiss, and then part to their fathers' house,

The joyful bride unto her home, to his eke go'th the spouse:
Contented both, and yet both uncontented still,
Till Night and Venus' child give leave the wedding to fulfil.
The painful soldier, sore y-beat with weary war,
The merchant eke that needful things doth dread to fetch from far,
The ploughman that for doubt of fierce invading foes,
Rather to sit in idle ease than sow his tilt hath chose,
Rejoice to hear proclaimed the tidings of the peace;
Not pleasured with the sound so much; but, when the wars do cease,
Then ceased are the harms which cruel war brings forth:

The merchant then may boldly fetch his wares of precious worth;
Dreadless the husbandman doth till his fertile field.

For wealth, her mate, not for herself, is peace so precious held:
So lovers live in care, in dread, and in unrest,
And deadly war by striving thoughts they keep within their breast:
But wedlock is the peace whereby is freedom won
To do a thousand pleasant things that should not else be done.
The news of ended war these two have heard with joy,
But now they long the fruit of peace with pleasure to enjoy.
In stormy wind and wave, in danger to be lost,

Thy steerless ship, O Romeus, hath been long while betossed;
The seas are now appeased, and thou, by happy star,
Art come in sight of quiet haven; and, now the wrackful bar
Is hid with swelling tide, boldly thou may'st resort
Unto thy wedded lady's bed, thy long desiréd port.
God grant, no folly's mist so dim thy inward sight,
That thou do miss the channel that doth lead to thy delight.
God grant, no danger's rock, y-lurking in the dark,
Before thou win the happy port, wrack thy sea-beaten bark.
A servant Romeus had, of word and deed so just,

That with his life, if need required, his master would him trust.

His faithfulness had oft our Romeus proved of old;
And therefore all that yet was done unto his man he told,
Who straight, as he was charged, a corden ladder looks,
To which he hath made fast two strong and crooked iron hooks.
The bride to send the nurse at twilight faileth not,
To whom the bridegroom given hath the ladder that he got.
And then to watch for him appointeth her an hour;
For whether Fortune smile on him, or if she list to lower,
He will not miss to come to his appointed place,

Where wont he was to take by stealth the view of Juliet's face.
How long these lovers thought the lasting of the day,
Let other judge that wonted are like passions to assay:
For my part, I do guess each hour seems twenty year:
So that I deem, if they might have, as of Alcume we hear,
The sun bound to their will, if they the heavens might guide,
Black shade of night and doubled dark should straight all over hide.
Th'appointed hour is come; he, clad in rich array,
Walks toward his desiréd home: good fortune guide his way.
Approaching near the place from whence his heart had life,

So light he wox, he leapt the wall, and there he spied his wife,
Who in the window watched the coming of her lord;
Where she so surely had made fast the ladder made of cord,
That dangerless her spouse the chamber window climbs,
Where he ere then had wished himself above ten thousand times.
The windows close are shut; else look they for no guest;
To light the waxen quariers, the ancient nurse is pressed,
Which Juliet had before prepared to be light,
That she at pleasure might behold her husband's beauty bright.
A kerchief white as snow ware Juliet on her head,

Such as she wonted was to wear, attire meet for the bed.
As soon as she him spied, about his neck she clung,
And by her long and slender arms a great while there she hung.
A thousand times she kissed, and him unkissed again,
Ne could she speak a word to him, though would she ne'er so fain.
And like betwixt his arms to faint his lady is;
She fets a sigh and clappeth close her closéd mouth to his;
And ready then to sownd she lookéd ruthfully,
That lo, it made him both at once to live and eke to die.
These piteous painful pangs were haply overpast,

And she unto herself again returnéd home at last.
Then, through her troubled breast, even from the farthest part,
An hollow sigh, a messenger, she sendeth from her heart.
O Romeus, quoth she, in whom all virtues shine,
Welcome thou art into this place, where from these eyes of mine
Such teary streams did flow, that I suppose well-nigh
The source of all my bitter tears is altogether dry.
Absence so pined my heart, which on thy presence fed,
And of thy safety and thy health so much I stood in dread.
But now what is decreed by fatal destiny,

I force it not; let Fortune do, and death, their worst to me.
Full recompensed am I for all my passéd harms,
In that the Gods have granted me to clasp thee in mine arms.
The crystal tears began to stand in Romeus' eyes,
When he unto his lady's words 'gan answer in this wise:
"Though cruel Fortune be so much my deadly foe,
That I ne can by lively proof cause thee, fair dame, to know
How much I am by love enthralléd unto thee,
Ne yet what mighty power thou hast, by thy desert, on me,

Ne torments that for thee I did ere this endure,

Yet of thus much, ne will I feign, I may thee well assure,
The least of many pains which of thy absence sprung,
More painfully than death itself my tender heart hath wrung.
Ere this, one death had reft a thousand deaths away,
But life prolongéd was by hope of this desiréd day,
Which so just tribute pays of all my passéd moan,
That I as well contented am as if myself alone
Did from the Ocean reign unto the sea of Ind.
Wherefore now let us wipe away old cares out of our mind.
For as the wretched state is now redressed at last,

So is it skill behind our back the curséd care to cast.
Since Fortune of her grace hath place and time assigned,
Where we with pleasure may content our uncontented mind,
In Lethes hide we deep all grief and all annoy,
Whilst we do bathe in bliss, and fill our hungry hearts with joy.
And, for the time to come, let be our busy care
So wisely to direct our love, as no wight else be ware;
Lest envious foes by force despoil our new delight,

And us throw back from happy state to more unhappy plight."
Fair Juliet began to answer what he said,

But forth in haste the old nurse stepped, and so her answer stayed.
"Who takes not time," quoth she, "when time well offered is,
Another time shall seek for time, and yet of time shall miss.
And when occasion serves, whoso doth let it slip,
Is worthy sure, if I might judge, of lashes with a whip.
Wherefore if each of you hath harmed the other so,
And each of you hath been the cause of other's wailéd woe,
Lo here a field" -- she showed a field-bed ready dight --
"Where you may, if you list, in arms revenge yourself by fight."
Whereto these lovers both 'gan easily assent,

And to the place of mild revenge with pleasant cheer they went,
Where they were left alone -- the nurse is gone to rest --
How can this be? They restless lie, ne yet they feel unrest.
I grant that I envy the bliss they livéd in;
Oh that I might have found the like, I wish it for no sin,
But that I might as well with pen their joys depaint,
As heretofore I have displayed their secret hidden plaint.

Of shivering care and dread I have felt many a fit,
But Fortune such delight as theirs did never grant me yet.
By proof no certain truth can I unhappy write,

But what I guess by likelihood, that dare I to indite.
The blindfold goddess that with frowning face doth fray,
And from their seat the mighty kings throws down with headlong sway.
Beginneth now to turn to these her smiling face;
Needs must they taste of great delight, so much in Fortune's grace.
If Cupid, god of love, be god of pleasant sport,
I think, O Romeus, Mars himself envies thy happy sort.
Ne Venus justly might, as I suppose, repent,
If in thy stead, O Juliet, this pleasant time she spent.
Thus pass they forth the night, in sport, in jolly game;

The hastiness of Phoebus' steeds in great despite they blame.
And now the virgin's fort hath warlike Romeus got,
In which as yet no breach was made by force of cannon shot,
And now in ease he doth possess the hopéd place:
How glad was he, speak you that may your lover's parts embrace.

The marriage thus made up, and both the parties pleased,
The nigh approach of day's return these seely fools diseased.
And for they might no while in pleasure pass their time,
Ne leisure had they much to blame the hasty morning's crime,
With friendly kiss in arms of her his leave he takes,

And every other night, to come, a solemn oath he makes,
By one self mean, and eke to come at one self hour:

And so he doth, till Fortune list to sauce his sweet with sour.
But who is he that can his present state assure?

And say unto himself, thy joys shall yet a day endure?
So wavering Fortune's wheel, her changes be so strange;
And every wight y-thralléd is by Fate unto her change,
Who reigns so over all, that each man hath his part
(Although not aye, perchance, alike) of pleasure and of smart.
For after many joys some feel but little pain,

And from that little grief they turn to happy joy again.
But other some there are, that, living long in woe,

At length they be in quiet ease, but long abide not so;
Whose grief is much increased by mirth that went before,
Because the sudden change of things doth make it seem the more.
Of this unlucky sort our Romeus is one,
For all his hap turns to mishap, and all his mirth to moan.
And joyful Juliet another leaf must turn;
As wont she was, her joys bereft, she must begin to mourn.
The summer of their bliss doth last a month or twain,

But winter's blast with speedy foot doth bring the fall again.
Whom glorious Fortune erst had heaved to the skies,
By envious Fortune overthrown, on earth now grovelling lies.
She paid their former grief with pleasure's doubled gain,
But now for pleasure's usury, tenfold redoubleth pain.
The prince could never cause those households so agree,
But that some sparkles of their wrath as yet remaining be;
Which lie this while raked up in ashes pale and dead
Till time do serve that they again in wasting flame may spread.
At holiest times, men say, most heinous crimes are done;

The morrow after Easter day the mischief new begun.

A band of Capulets did meet -- my heart it rues! --
Within the walls, by Purser's gate, a band of Montagues.
The Capulets, as chief, a young man have chose out,
Best exercised in feats of arms, and noblest of the rout,
Our Juliet's uncle's son, that clepéd was Tybalt;
He was of body tall and strong, and of his courage halt.
They need no trumpet sound to bid them give the charge,
So loud he cried with strainéd voice and mouth outstretchéd large:
"Now, now," quod he, "my friends, ourself so let us wreak,

That of this day's revenge and us our children's heirs may speak.
Now once for all let us their swelling pride assuage;
Let none of them escape alive." Then he, with furious rage,
And they with him, gave charge upon their present foes,
And then forthwith a skirmish great upon this fray arose.
For, lo, the Montagues thought shame away to fly,
And rather than to live with shame, with praise did choose to die.
The words that Tybalt used to stir his folk to ire,
Have in the breasts of Montagues kindled a furious fire.
With lions' hearts they fight, warely themself defend;

To wound his foe, his present wit and force each one doth bend.
This furious fray is long on each side stoutly fought,
That whether part had got the worst, full doubtful were the thought.
The noise hereof anon throughout the town doth fly,
And parts are taken on every side; both kindreds thither hie.
Here one doth gasp for breath, his friend bestrideth him;
And he hath lost a hand, and he another maiméd limb,
His leg is cut whilst he strikes at another full,
And whom he would have thrust quite through, hath cleft his crackéd skull.
Their valiant hearts forbode their foot to give the ground;

With unappalléd cheer they took full deep and doubtful wound.
Thus foot by foot long while, and shield to shield set fast,
One he doth make another faint, but makes him not aghast.
And whilst this noise is rife in every townsman's ear,
Eke, walking with his friends, the noise doth woeful Romeus hear.
With speedy foot he runs unto the fray apace;
With him, those few that were with him he leadeth to the place.
They pity much to see the slaughter made so great,
That wetshod they might stand in blood on either side the street.
"Part, friends," said he; "Part, friends -- help, friends, to part the fray,"

And to the rest, "Enough," he cries, "Now time it is to stay.
God's farther wrath you stir, beside the hurt you feel,
And with this new uproar confound all this our common weal."
But they so busy are in fight, so eager and fierce,
That through their ears his sage advice no leisure had to pierce.
Then leapt he in the throng, to part and bar the blows
As well of those that were his friends, as of his deadly foes.
As soon as Tybalt had our Romeus espied,
He threw a thrust at him that would have passed from side to side;
But Romeus ever went, doubting his foes, well armed,

So that the sword, kept out by mail, hath nothing Romeus harmed.
"Thou dost me wrong," quoth he, "for I but part the fray;
Not dread, but other weighty cause my hasty hand doth stay.
Thou art the chief of thine, the noblest eke thou art,
Wherefore leave off thy malice now, and help these folk to part.
Many are hurt, some slain, and some are like to die."
"No, coward, traitor boy," quoth he, "straightway I mind to try,
Whether thy sugared talk, and tongue so smoothly filed,
Against the force of this my sword shall serve thee for a shield.

And then at Romeus' head a blow he strake so hard,

That might have clove him to the brain but for his cunning ward.
It was but lent to him that could repay again,
And give him death for interest, a well forborne gain.
Right as a forest boar, that lodgéd in the thick,
Pinchéd with dog, or else with spear y-prickéd to the quick,
His bristles stiff upright upon his back doth set,
And in his foamy mouth his sharp and crooked tusks doth whet;
Or as a lion wild that rampeth in his rage,
His whelps bereft, whose fury can no weaker beast assuage;
Such seeméd Romeus in every other's sight,
When he him shope, of wrong received t'avenge himself by fight.
Even as two thunderbolts thrown down out of the sky,

That through the air, the massy earth, and seas, have power to fly;
So met these two, and while they change a blow or twain,
Our Romeus thrust him through the throat, and so is Tybalt slain.
Lo, here the end of those that stir a deadly strife:

Who thirsteth after other's death, himself hath lost his life.

The Capulets are quailed by Tybalt's overthrow,
The courage of the Montagues by Romeus' sight doth grow.
The townsmen waxen strong, the Prince doth send his force;

The fray hath end. The Capulets do bring the breathless corse
Before the Prince, and crave that cruel deadly pain
May be the guerdon of his fault, that hath their kinsman slain.
The Montagues do plead their Romeus void of fault;
The lookers-on do say, the fight begun was by Tybalt.
The Prince doth pause, and then gives sentence in a while,
That Romeus for slaying him should go into exile.
His foes would have him hanged, or sterve in prison strong;
His friends do think, but dare not say, that Romeus hath wrong.
Both households straight are charged on pain of losing life,

Their bloody weapons laid aside, to cease the stirréd strife.
This common plague is spread through all the town anon,
From side to side the town is filled with murmur and with moan,
For Tybalt's hasty death bewailéd was of some,
Both for his skill in feats of arms, and for, in time to come
He should, had this not chanced, been rich and of great power,

To help his friends, and serve the state; which hope within an hour
Was wasted quite, and he, thus yielding up his breath,
More than he holp the town in life, hath harmed it by his death.
And other some bewail, but ladies most of all,

The luckless lot by Fortune's guilt that is so late befall,
Without his fault, unto the seely Romeus;
For whilst that he from native land shall live exiléd thus,
From heavenly beauty's light and his well-shapéd parts,
The sight of which was wont, fair dames, to glad your youthful hearts,
Shall you be banished quite, and till he do return,
What hope have you to joy, what hope to cease to mourn?
This Romeus was born so much in heaven's grace,
Of Fortune and of Nature so beloved, that in his face,
Beside the heavenly beauty glist'ring aye so bright,

And seemly grace that wonted so to glad the seer's sight,
A certain charm was graved by Nature's secret art,
That virtue had to draw to it the love of many a heart.
So every one doth wish to bear a part of pain,
That he releaséd of exile might straight return again.

But how doth mourn among the mourners Juliet!

How doth she bathe her breast in tears ! What deep sighs doth she fet!
How doth she tear her hair! Her weed how doth she rent!

How fares the lover hearing of her lover's banishment!
How wails she Tybalt's death, whom she had loved so well!

Her hearty grief and piteous plaint, cunning I want to tell.
For delving deeply now in depth of deep despair,
With wretched sorrow's cruel sound she fills the empty air;
And to the lowest hell down falls her heavy cry,
And up unto the heaven's height her piteous plaint doth fly.
The waters and the woods of sighs and sobs resound,
And from the hard resounding rocks her sorrows do rebound.
Eke from her teary eyne down rainéd many a shower,
That in the garden where she walked might water herb and flower.
But when at length she saw herself outragéd so,

Unto her chamber straight she hied; there, overcharged with woe,
Upon her stately bed her painful parts she threw,

And in so wondrous wise began her sorrows to renew,
That sure no heart so hard, but it of flint had bin,
But would have rued the piteous plaint that she did languish in.
Then rapt out of herself, whilst she on every side
Did cast her restless eye, at length the window she espied,
Through which she had with joy seen Romeus many a time,
Which oft the vent'rous knight was wont for Juliet's sake to climb.
She cried, "O cursed window, accursed be every pane,

Through which, alas, too soon I raught the cause of life and bane;
If by thy mean I have some slight delight received,
Or else such fading pleasure as by Fortune straight was reaved,
Hast thou not made me pay a tribute rigorous
Of heapéd grief and lasting care, and sorrows dolorous,
That these my tender parts, which needful strength do lack
To bear so great unwieldy load upon so weak a back,
Oppressed with weight of cares and with these sorrows rife,
At length must open wide to death the gates of loathéd life;
That so my weary sprite may somewhere else unload

His deadly load, and free from thrall may seek elsewhere abode

For pleasant, quiet ease and for assuréd rest,
Which I as yet could never find but for my more unrest?
O Romeus, when first we both acquainted were,
When to thy painted promises I lent my list'ning ear,
Which to the brinks you filled with many a solemn oath,
And I them judged empty of guile, and fraughted full of troth,
I thought you rather would continue our good will,
And seek t'appease our fathers' strife, which daily groweth still.
I little weened you would have sought occasion how

By such an heinous act to break the peace and eke your vow;
Whereby your bright renown all whole y-clipséd is,
And I unhappy, husbandless, of comfort robbed and bliss.
But if you did so much the blood of Capels thirst,
Why have you often sparéd mine -- mine might have quenched it first.
Since that so many times and in so secret place,
Where you were wont with veil of love to hide your hatred's face.
My doubtful life hath happed by fatal doom to stand
In mercy of your cruel heart, and of your bloody hand.

What? -- seemed the conquest which you got of me so small?

What? -- seemed it not enough that I, poor wretch, was made your thrall?
But that you must increase it with that kinsman's blood,
Which for his worth and love to me, most in my favour stood
Well, go henceforth elsewhere, and seek another while
Some other as unhappy as I, by fiattery to beguile.
And, where I come, see that you shun to show your face,
For your excuse within my heart shall find no resting place.
And I that now, too late, my former fault repent,
Will so the rest of weary life with many tears lament,
That soon my joiceless corpse shall yield up banished breath,

And where on earth it restless lived, in earth seek rest by death."
These said, her tender heart, by pain oppresséd sore,
Restrained her tears, and forced her tongue to keep her talk in store;
And then as still she was, as if in sownd she lay,
And then again, wroth with herself, with feeble voice 'gan say:
"Ah, cruel murthering tongue, murth'rer of others' fame,
How durst thou once attempt to touch the honour of his name?
Whose deadly foes do yield him due and earnéd praise;
For though his freedom be bereft, his honour not decays.

Why blam'st thou Romeus for slaying of Tybalt,

Since he is guiltless quite of all, and Tybalt bears the fault?
Whither shall he, alas, poor banished man, now fly?

What place of succour shall he seek beneath the starry sky?
Since she pursueth him, and him defames by wrong,
That in distress should be his fort, and only rampire strong.
Receive the recompense, O Romeus, of thy wife,
Who, for she was unkind herself, doth offer up her life,
In flames of ire, in sighs, in sorrow and in ruth,
So to revenge the crime she did commit against thy truth."
These said, she could no more; her senses all 'gan fail,

And deadly pangs began straightway her tender heart assail;
Her limbs she stretchéd forth, she drew no more her breath:
Who had been there might well have seen the signs of present death.
The nurse that knew no cause why she absented her,
Did doubt lest that some sudden grief too much tormented her.
Each where but where she was the careful beldam sought;
Last, of the chamber where she lay she haply her bethought;

Where she with piteous eye her nurse-child did behold,
Her limbs stretched out, her outward parts as any marble cold.
The nurse supposed that she had paid to death her debt,

And then, as she had lost her wits, she cried to Juliet:
"Ah, my dear heart," quoth she, "how grieveth me thy death!
Alas, what cause hast thou thus soon to yield up living breath?"
But while she handled her, and chaféd every part,
She knew there was some spark of life by beating of her heart,
So that a thousand times she called upon her name;
There is no way to help a trance but she hath tried the same:
She openeth wide her mouth, she stoppeth close her nose,
She bendeth down her breast, she wrings her fingers and her toes,
And on her bosom cold she layeth clothés hot;

A warméd and a wholesome juice she poureth down her throat.
At length doth Juliet heave faintly up her eyes,
And then she stretcheth forth her arm, and then her nurse she spies.
But when she was awaked from her unkindly trance,
"Why dost thou trouble me," quoth she, "what drave thee, with mischance,
To come to see my sprite forsake my breathless corse?

Go hence, and let me die, if thou have on my smart remorse.

For who would see her friend to live in deadly pain?
Alas, I see my grief begun for ever will remain.

Or who would seek to live, all pleasure being past?

My mirth is done, my mourning moan for aye is like to last.
Wherefore since that there is none other remedy,
Come, gentle death, and rive my heart at once, and let me die."
The nurse with trickling tears, to witness inward smart,
With hollow sigh fetched from the depth of her appalléd heart,
Thus spake to Juliet, y-clad with ugly care:
"Good lady mine, I do not know what makes you thus to fare;
Ne yet the cause of your unmeasured heaviness.
But of this one I you assure, for care and sorrow's stress,
This hour large and more I thought, so God me save,

That my dead corpse should wait on yours to your untimely grave."
"Alas, my tender nurse and trusty friend," quoth she,
"Art thou so blind that with thine eye thou canst not easely see

The lawful cause I have to sorrow and to mourn,
Since those the which I held most dear, I have at once forlorn."
Her nurse then answered thus: "Methinks it sits you ill
To fall in these extremities that may you guiltless spill.
For when the storms of care and troubles do arise,
Then is the time for men to know the foolish from the wise.
You are accounted wise, a fool am I your nurse;

But I see not how in like case I could behave me worse.
Tybalt your friend is dead; what, ween you by your tears
To call him back again? think you that he your crying hears?
You shall perceive the fault, if it be justly tried,
Of his so sudden death, was in his rashness and his pride.
Would you that Romeus himself had wrongéd so,
To suffer himself causeless to be outraged of his foe,
To whom in no respect he ought a place to give?
Let it suffice to thee, fair dame, that Romeus doth live,
And that there is good hope that he, within a while,

With greater glory shall be called home from his hard exile.
How well y-born he is, thyself, I know, canst tell,

By kindred strong,and well allied, of all belovéd well.
With patience arm thyself, for though that Fortune's crime,
Without your fault, to both your griefs, depart you for a time'
I dare say, for amends of all your present pain,
She will restore your own to you, within a month or twain,
With such contented ease as never erst you had;
Wherefore rejoice a while in hope, and be ne more so sad.
And that I may discharge your heart of heavy care,

A certain way I have found out, my pains ne will I spare,
To learn his present state, and what in time to come
He minds to do; which known by me, you shall know all and some.
But that I dread the whilst your sorrows will you quell,
Straight would I hie where he doth lurk, to Friar Laurence' cell.
But if you 'gin eftsoons, as erst you did, to mourn,
Whereto go I? you will be dead, before I thence return.
So I shall spend in waste my time and busy pain.
So unto you, your life once lost, good answer comes in vain;
So shall I rid myself with this sharp-pointed knife;

So shall you cause your parents dear wax weary of their life;

So shall your Romeus, despising lively breath,
With hasty foot, before his time, run to untimely death.
Where, if you can awhile, by reason, rage suppress,
I hope at my return to bring the salve of your distress.
Now choose to have me here a partner of your pain,
Or promise me to feed on hope till I return again."
  Her mistress sends her forth, and makes a grave behest
With reason's reign to rule the thoughts that rage within her breast.
When hugy heaps of harms are heaped before her eyes,

Then vanish they by hope of 'scape; and thus the lady lies
'Twixt well assuréd trust, and doubtful lewd despair:

Now black and ugly be her thoughts; now seem they white and fair.
As oft in summer tide black clouds do dim the sun,
And straight again in clearest sky his restless steeds do run,
So Juliet's wand'ring mind y-clouded is with woe,
And by and by her hasty thought the woes doth overgo.
But now is time to tell, whilst she was tosséd thus,
What winds did drive or haven did hold her lover, Romeus.
When he had slain his foe that 'gan this deadly strife,

And saw the furious fray had end by ending Tybalt's life,
He fled the sharp revenge of those that yet did live,
And doubting much what penal doom the troubled prince might give,
He sought somewhere unseen to lurk a little space,
And trusty Laurence' secret cell he thought the surest place.
In doubtful hap aye best a trusty friend is tried;
The friendly friar in this distress doth grant his friend to hide.
A secret place he hath, well sealed round about,
The mouth of which so close is shut, that none may find it out;
But room there is to walk, and place to sit and rest,

Beside a bed to sleep upon, full soft and trimly drest.
The floor is planked so, with mats it is so warm,
That neither wind nor smoky damps have power him aught to harm.
Where he was wont in youth his fair friends to bestow,
There now he hideth Romeus, whilst forth he goeth to know
Both what is said and done, and what appointed pain,
Is publishéd by trumpet's sound; then home he hies again.
  By this, unto his cell the nurse with speedy pace
Was come the nearest way; she sought no idle resting place.

The friar sent home the news of Romeus' certain health,

And promise made, what so befell, he should that night by stealth
Come to his wonted place, that they in needful wise
Of their affairs in time to come might thoroughly devise.
Those joyful news the nurse brought home with merry joy;
And now our Juliet joys to think she shall her love enjoy.
The friar shuts fast his door, and then to him beneath,
That waits to hear the doubtful news of life or else of death,
Thy hap," quoth he, "is good, danger of death is none,
But thou shalt live, and do full well, in spite of spiteful fone.
This only pain for thee was erst proclaimed aloud,

A banished man, thou may'st thee not within Verona shroud."
These heavy tidings heard, his golden locks he tare,
And like a frantic man hath torn the garments that he ware.
And as the smitten deer in brakes is walt'ring found,
So wal'treth he, and with his breast doth beat the trodden ground.
He rises eft, and strikes his head against the walls,
He falleth down again, and loud for hasty death he calls
"Come speedy death," quoth he, "the readiest leech in love;

Since nought can else beneath the sun the ground of grief remove,
Of loathsome life break down the hated, staggering stays,

Destroy, destroy at once the life that faintly yet decays.
But you, fair dame, in whom dame Nature did devise
With cunning hand to work that might seem wondrous in our eyes,
For you, I pray the Gods, your pleasures to increase,
And all mishap, with this my death, for evermore to cease.
And mighty Jove with speed of justice bring them low,
Whose lofty pride, without our guilt, our bliss doth overblow.
And Cupid grant to those their speedy wrongs' redress,
That shall bewail my cruel death and pity her distress."
Therewith a cloud of sighs he breathed into the skies,

And two great streams of bitter tears ran from his swollen eyes.
These things the ancient friar with sorrow saw and heard,
Of such beginning, eke the end, the wise man greatly feared.
But lo, he was so weak, by reason of his age,
That he ne could by force repress the rigour of his rage.
His wise and friendly words he speaketh to the air,
For Romeus so vexéd is with care and with despair,

That no advice can pierce his close forestoppéd ears;
So now the friar doth take his part in shedding ruthful tears.
With colour pale and wan, with arms full hard y-fold,

With woeful cheer his wailing friend he standeth to behold.
And then our Romeus with tender hands y-wrung,
With voice with plaint made hoarse, with sobs, and with a falt'ring tongue,
Renewed with novel moan the dolours of his heart;
His outward dreary cheer bewrayed his store of inward smart.
First Nature did he blame, the author of his life,
In which his joys had been so scant, and sorrows aye so rife;
The time and place of birth he fiercely did reprove,
He cried out, with open mouth, against the stars above;
The fatal sisters three, he said, had done him wrong,

The thread that should not have been spun, they had drawn forth too long.
He wished that he had before this time been born,
Or that as soon as he wan light, his life he had forlorn.
His nurse he curséd, and the hand that gave him pap,
The midwife eke with tender grip that held him in her lap;
And then did he complain on Venus' cruel son,

Who led him first unto the rocks which he should warely shun:
By means whereof he lost both life and liberty,
And died a hundred times a day, and yet could never die.
Love's troubles lasten long, the joys he gives are short;

He forceth not a lover's pain, their earnest is his sport.
A thousand things and more I here let pass to write,
Which unto Love this woeful man did speak in great despite.
On Fortune eke he railed, he called her deaf and blind,
Unconstant, fond, deceitful, rash, unruthful, and unkind.
And to himself he laid a great part of the fault,
For that he slew and was not slain, in fighting with Tybalt.
He blamed all the world, and all he did defy,
But Juliet for whom he lived, for whom eke would he die.
When after raging fits appeaséd was his rage,

And when his passions, poured forth, 'gan partly to assuage,
So wisely did the friar unto his tale reply,
That he straight cared for his life, that erst had care to die.
"Art thou," quoth he, "a man? Thy shape saith, so thou art;
Thy crying, and thy weeping eyes denote a woman's heart.

For manly reason is quite from off thy mind outchased,
And in her stead affections lewd and fancies highly placed:
So that I stood in doubt, this hour, at the least,
If thou a man or woman wert, or else a brutish beast.
A wise man in the midst of troubles and distress

Still stands not wailing present harm, but seeks his harm's redress.
As when the winter flaws with dreadful noise arise,
And heave the foamy swelling waves up to the starry skies,
So that the bruiséd bark in cruel seas betost,
Despaireth of the happy haven, in danger to be lost,
The pilot bold at helm, cries, 'Mates, strike now your sail,'
And turns her stem into the waves that strongly her assail;
Then driven hard upon the bare and wrackful shore,
In greater danger to be wracked than he had been before,
He seeth his ship full right against the rock to run,

But yet he doth what lieth in him the perilous rock to shun:
Sometimes the beaten boat, by cunning government,
The anchors lost, the cables broke, and all the tackle spent,
The rudder smitten off, and overboard the mast,

Doth win the long desiréd port, the stormy danger past:
But if the master dread, and overpressed with woe
Begin to wring his hands, and lets the guiding rudder go,
The ship rents on the rock, or sinketh in the deep,
And eke the coward drenchéd is: So, if thou still beweep
And seek not how to help the changes that do chance,

Thy cause of sorrow shall increase, thou cause of thy mischance.
Other account thee wise, prove not thyself a fool;
Now put in practice lessons learned of old in wisdom's school.
The wise man saith, 'Beware thou double not thy pain,
For one perhaps thou may'st abide, but hardly suffer twain.'
As well we ought to seek things hurtful to decrease,
As to endeavour helping things by study to increase.
The praise of true freedom in wisdom's bondage lies,
He winneth blame whose deeds be fond, although his words be wise.
Sickness the body's gaol, grief gaol is of the mind,

If thou canst 'scape from heavy grief, true freedom shalt thou find.
Fortune can fill nothing so full of hearty grief,
But in the same a constant mind finds solace and relief.

Virtue is always thrall to troubles and annoy,
But wisdom in adversity finds cause of quiet joy.
And they most wretched are that know no wretchedness,
And after great extremity mishaps aye waxen less.
Like as there is no weal but wastes away sometime,
So every kind of wailéd woe will wear away in time.
If thou wilt master quite the troubles that thee spill,

Endeavour first by reason's help to master witless will.
A sundry med'cine hath each sundry faint disease,
But patience, a common salve, to every wound gives ease.
The world is alway full of chances and of change,
Wherefore the change of chance must not seem to a wise man strange.
For tickel Fortune doth, in changing, but her kind,
But all her changes cannot change a steady constant mind.
Though wavering Fortune turn from thee her smiling face,
And Sorrow seek to set himself in banished Pleasure's place,
Yet may thy marred state be mended in a while,

And she eftsoons that frownoth now, with p1easant cheer shall smile,
For as her happy state no long while standeth sure,

Even so the heavy plight she brings, not always doth endure.

What need so many words to thee that art so wise?
Thou better canst advise thyself, than I can thee advise.
Wisdom, I see, is vain, if thus in time of need
A wise man's wit unpractiséd doth stand him in no stede.
I know thou hast some cause of sorrow and of care,
But well I wot thou hast no cause thus franticly to fare.
Affection's foggy mist thy feebled sight doth blind;

But if that reason's beams again might shine into thy mind,
If thou would'st view thy state with an indifferent eye,
I think thou would'st condemn thy plaint, thy sighing, and thy cry.
With valiant hand thou mad'st thy foe yield up his breath,
Thou hast escaped his sword and eke the laws that threaten death.
By thy escape thy friends are fraughted full of joy,
And by his death thy deadly foes are laden with annoy.
Wilt thou with trusty friends of pleasure take some part ?

Or else to please thy hateful foes be partner of their smart ?
Why cry'st thou out on love? Why dost thou blame thy fate?

Why dost thou so cry after death? Thy life why dost thou hate?

Dost thou repent the choice that thou so late didst choose?
Love is thy Lord; thou ought'st obey and not thy prince accuse.

For thou hast found, thou know'st, great favour in his sight.
He granted thee, at thy request, thy only heart's delight.
So that the gods envied the bliss thou lived'st in;
To give to such unthankful men is folly and a sin.
Methinks I hear thee say, the cruel banishment
Is only cause of thy unrest; only thou dost lament
That from thy native land and friends thou must depart,

Enforced to fly from her that hath the keeping of thy heart:
And so oppressed with weight of smart that thou dost feel,
Thou dost complain of Cupid's brand, and Fortune's turning wheel.
Unto a valiant heart there is no banishment,
All countries are his native soil beneath the firmament.
As to the fish the sea, as to the fowl the air,
So is like pleasant to the wise each place of his repair.

Though froward Fortune chase thee hence into exile,
With doubled honour shall she call thee home within a while.
Admit thou should'st abide abroad a year or twain,

Should so short absence cause so long and eke so grievous pain?
Though thou ne may'st thy friends here in Verona see,
They are not banished Mantua, where safely thou may'st be.
Thither they may resort, though thou resort not hither,
And there in surety may you talk of your affairs together.
Yea, but this while, alas, thy Juliet must thou miss,
The only pillar of thy health, and anchor of thy bliss.
Thy heart thou leav'st with her, when thou dost hence depart,
And in thy breast incloséd bear'st her tender friendly heart.
But if thou rue so much to leave the rest behind,

With thought of passéd joys content thy uncontented mind.
So shall the moan decrease wherewith thy mind doth melt,
Compared to the heavenly joys which thou hast often felt.
He is too nice a weakling that shrinketh at a shower,
And he unworthy of the sweet, that tasteth not the sour.
Call now again to mind thy first consuming flame,

How didst thou vainly burn in love of an unloving dame?
Hadst thou not well nigh wept quite out thy swelling eyne
Did not thy parts, fordone with pain, languish away and pine?
Those griefs and others like were haply overpast,

And thou in height of Fortune's wheel well placéd at the last!
From whence thou art now fall'n, that, raiséd up again,
With greater joy a greater while in pleasure may'st thou reign.
Compare the present while with times y-past before,
And think that Fortune hath for thee great pleasure yet in store.
The whilst, this little wrong receive thou patiently,
And what of force must needs be done, that do thou willingly.
Folly it is to fear that thou canst not avoid,
And madness to desire it much that cannot be enjoyed.
To give to Fortune place, not aye deserveth blame,

But skill it is, according to the times thyself to frame."
  Whilst to this skilful lore he lent his list'ning ears,
His sighs are stopped and stoppéd are the conduits of his tears.
As blackest clouds are chased by winter's nimble wind,
So have his reasons chaséd care out of his careful mind.

As of a morning foul ensues an evening fair,
So banished hope returneth home to banish his despair.
Now is affection's veil removed from his eyes,
He seeth the path that he must walk, and reason makes him wise.
For very shame the blood doth flash in both his cheeks,

He thanks the father for his lore, and farther aid he seeks.
He saith, that skill-less youth for counsel is unfit,
And anger oft with hastiness are joined to want of wit;
But sound advice abounds in heads with hoarish hairs,
For wisdom is by practice won, and perfect made by years.
But aye from this time forth his ready bending will
Shall be in awe and governéd by Friar Laurence' skill.
The governor is now right careful of his charge,
To whom he doth wisely discourse of his affairs at large.
He tells him how he shall depart the town unknown,

Both mindful of his friend's safety, and careful of his own;
How he shall guide himself, how he shall seek to win
The friendship of the better sort, how warely to creep in
The favour of the Mantuan prince, and how he may

Appease the wrath of Escalus, and wipe the fault away;
The choler of his foes by gentle means t' assuage,
Or else by force and practices to bridle quite their rage:
And last he chargeth him at his appointed hour
To go with manly, merry cheer unto his lady's bower,
And there with wholesome words to salve her sorrow's smart,

And to revive, if need require, her faint and dying heart.
  The old man's words have filled with joy our Romeus' breast,
And eke the old wife's talk hath set our Juliet's heart at rest.

Whereto may I compare, O lovers, this your day?
Like days the painful mariners are wonted to assay;
For, beat with tempest great, when they at length espy
Some little beam of Phoebus' light, that pierceth through the sky,
To clear the shadowed earth by clearness of his face,
They hope that dreadless they shall run the remnant of their race;
Yea, they assure themself, and quite behind their back

They cast all doubt, and thank the gods for scaping of the wrack;
But straight the boisterous winds with greater fury blow,

And overboard the broken mast the stormy blasts do throw;
The heavens large are clad with clouds as dark as hell,
And twice as high the striving waves begin to roar and swell;
With greater dangers dread the men are vexéd more,
In greater peril of their life than they had been before.
The golden sun was gone to lodge him in the west,
The full moon eke in yonder south had sent most men to rest,
When restless Romeus and restless Juliet

In wonted sort, by wonted mean, in Juliet's chamber met.
And from the window's top down had he leapéd scarce,
When she with arms outstretchéd wide so hard did him embrace,
That well nigh had the sprite, not forced by deadly force,
Flown unto death, before the time abandoning the corse,
Thus muet stood they both the eighth part of an hour,
And both would speak, but neither had of speaking any power;
But on his breast her head doth joyless Juliet lay,
And on her slender neck his chin doth ruthful Romeus stay.
Their scalding sighs ascend, and by their cheeks down fall

Their trickling tears, as crystal clear, but bitterer far than gall.

Then he, to end the grief which both they lived in,
Did kiss his love, and wisely thus his tale he did begin:
"My Juliet, my love, my only hope and care,
To you I purpose not as now with length of word declare
The diverseness and eke the accidents so strange
Of frail unconstant Fortune, that delighteth still in change;
Who in a moment heaves her friends up to the height
Of her swift-turning slippery wheel, then fleets her friendship straight.
O wondrous change, even with the twinkling of an eye

Whom erst herself had rashly set in pleasant place so high,
The same in great despite down headlong doth she throw,
And while she treads and spurneth at the lofty state laid low,
More sorrow doth she shape within an hour's space,
Than pleasure in an hundred years; so geason is her grace.
The proof whereof in me, alas, too plain appears,
Whom tenderly my careful friends have fostered with my feres,
In prosperous high degree, maintainéd so by fate,
That, as yourself did see, my foes envied my noble state.
One thing there was I did above the rest desire,

To which as to the sovereign good by hope I would aspire.
That by our marriage mean we might within a while,
To work our perfect happiness, our parents reconcile:
That safely so we might, not stopped by sturdy strife,
Unto the bounds that God hath set, guide forth our pleasant life.
But now, alack, too soon my bliss is overblown,
And upside down my purpose and my enterprise are thrown.
And driven from my friends, of strangers must I crave;
Oh, grant it God, from dangers dread that I may surety have.
For lo, henceforth I must wander in lands unknown

(So hard I find the Prince's doom), exiléd from mine own.
Which thing I have thought good to set before your eyes
And to exhort you now to prove yourself a woman wise,
That patiently you bear my absent long abode,
For what above by fatal dooms decreéd is, that God"--
And more than this to say, it seeméd, he was bent,
But Juliet in deadly grief, with brackish tears besprent,
Brake off his tale begun, and whilst his speech he stayed,
These selfsame words, or like to these, with dreary cheer she said:
"Why, Romeus, can it be thou hast so hard a heart;

So far removed from ruth; so far from thinking on my smart;
To leave me thus alone, thou cause of my distress,
Besiegéd with so great a camp of mortal wretchedness,
That every hour now, and moment in a day,
A thousand times Death brags, as he would reave my life away?
Yet such is my mishap, O cruel destiny,
That still I live, and wish for death, but yet can never die;
So that just cause I have to think, as seemeth me,
That froward Fortune did of late with cruel Death agree
To lengthen loathéd life, to pleasure in my pain,

And triumph in my harm, as in the greatest hopéd gain.
And thou, the instrument of Fortune's cruel will,
Without whose aid she can no way her tyrannous lust fulfil,
Art not a whit ashamed, as far as I can see,
To cast me off, when thou hast culled the better part of me.
Whereby, alas, too soon, I, seely wretch, do prove,
That all the ancient sacred laws of friendship and of love
Are quelled and quenchéd quite, since he, on whom alway
My chief hope and my steady trust was wonted still to stay,

For whom I am become unto myself a foe,

Disdaineth me, his steadfast friend, and scorns my friendship so.
Nay, Romeus, nay, thou may'st of two things choose the one,
Either to see thy castaway, as soon as thou art gone,
Headlong to throw herself down from the window's height,
And so to break her slender neck with all the body's weight,
Or suffer her to be companion of thy pain,
Whereso thou go, Fortune thee guide, till thou return again.
So wholly into thine transforméd is my heart,
That even as oft as I do think that thou and I shall part,
So oft, methinks, my life withdraws itself away,

Which I retain to no end else but to the end I may,
In spite of all thy foes, thy present parts enjoy,
And in distress to bear with thee the half of thine annoy.
Wherefore, in humble sort, Romeus, I make request,
If ever tender pity yet were lodged in gentle breast,
Oh, let it now have place to rest within thy heart;
Receive me as thy servant, and the fellow of thy smart.
Thy absence is my death, thy sight shall give me life;

But if perhaps thou stand in dread to lead me as a wife,
Art thou all counsel-less? Canst thou no shift devise?

What letteth but in other weed I may myself disguise?
What, shall I be the first? Hath none done so ere this,
To 'scape the bondage of their friends ? Thyself can answer, yes.
Or dost thou stand in doubt that I thy wife ne can
By service pleasure thee as much as may thy hiréd man?
Or is my loyalty of both accompted less?

Perhaps thou fear'st lest I for gain forsake thee in distress.
What, hath my beauty now no power at all on you,
Whose brightness, force, and praise, sometime up to the skies you blew?
My tears, my friendship and my pleasures done of old,

Shall they be quite forgot indeed?" When Romeus did behold
The wildness of her look, her colour pale and dead,
The worst of all that might betide to her, he 'gan to dread;
And once again he did in arms his Juliet take,
And kissed her with a loving kiss, and thus to her he spake:
"Ah, Juliet," quoth he, "the mistress of my heart,

For whom, even now, thy servant doth abide in deadly smart,
Even for the happy days which thou desir'st to see,
And for the fervent friendship's sake that thou dost owe to me,
At once these fancies vain out of thy mind root out,

Except, perhaps, unto thy blame, thou fondly go about
To hasten forth my death, and to thine own to run,
Which Nature's law and wisdom's lore teach every wight to shun.
For, but thou change thy mind, I do foretell the end,
Thou shalt undo thyself for aye, and me thy trusty friend.
For why, thy absence known, thy father will be wroth,
And in his rage so narrowly he will pursue us both,
That we shall try in vain to 'scape away by flight,
And vainly seek a lurking place to hide us from his sight.
Then we, found out and caught, quite void of strong defence,

Shall cruelly be punishéd for thy departure hence;
I as a ravisher, thou as a careless child,
I as a man who doth defile, thou as a maid defiled;
Thinking to lead in ease a long contented life,
Shall short our days by shameful death: but if, my loving wife,

Thou banish from thy mind two foes that counsel hath,
That wont to hinder sound advice, rash hastiness and wrath;
If thou be bent t'obey the lore of reason's skill
And wisely by her princely power suppress rebelling will,
If thou our safety seek, more than thine own delight,

Since surety stands in parting, and thy pleasures grow of sight,
Forbear the cause of joy, and suffer for a while,
So shall I safely live abroad, and safe turn from exile,
So shall no slander's blot thy spotless life distain,
So shall thy kinsmen be unstirred, and I exempt from pain.
And think thou not, that aye the cause of care shall last;
These stormy broils shall overblow, much like a winter's blast.
For Fortune changeth more than fickle fantasy;
In nothing Fortune constant is save in unconstancy.
Her hasty running wheel is of a restless course,

That turns the climbers headlong down, from better to the worse,
And those that are beneath she heaveth up again:
So we shall rise to pleasure's mount, out of the pit of pain.
Ere four months overpass, such order will I take,

And by my letters and my friends such means I mind to make,
That of my wand'ring race ended shall be the toil,
And I called home with honour great unto my native soil.
But if I be condemned to wander still in thrall,
I will return to you, mine own, befall what may befall.
And then by strength of friends, and with a mighty hand,

From Verone will I carry thee into a foreign land,
Not in man's weed disguised, or as one scarcely known,
But as my wife and only fere, in garment of thine own.
Wherefore repress at once the passions of thy heart,
And where there is no cause of grief, cause hope to heal thy smart.
For of this one thing thou may'st well assuréd be,
That nothing else but only death shall sunder me from thee."
  The reasons that he made did seem of so great weight,
And had with her such force, that she to him 'gan answer straight:
"Dear sir, nought else wish I but to obey your will;

But sure whereso you go, your heart with me shall tarry still,
As sign and certain pledge, till here I shall you see,
Of all the power that over you yourself did grant to me;

And in his stead take mine, the gage of my good will. --
One promise crave I at your hand, that grant me to fulfil;
Fail not to let me have, at Friar Laurence' hand,
The tidings of your health, and how your doubtful case shall stand.
And all the weary while that you shall spend abroad,
Cause me from time to time to know the place of your abode."
His eyes did gush out tears, a sigh brake from his breast,

When he did grant and with an oath did vow to keep the hest.
Thus these two lovers pass away the weary night,
In pain and plaint, not, as they wont, in pleasure and delight.
But now, somewhat too soon, in farthest east arose
Fair Lucifer, the golden star that lady Venus chose;
Whose course appointed is with speedy race to run,
A messenger of dawning day and of the rising sun.
Then fresh Aurora with her pale and silver glade
Did clear the skies, and from the earth had chaséd ugly shade.
When thou ne lookest wide, ne closely dost thou wink

When Phoebus from our hemisphere in western wave doth sink,
What colour then the heavens do show unto thine eyes,

The same, or like, saw Romeus in farthest eastern skies.
As yet he saw no day, ne could he call it night
With equal force decreasing dark fought with increasing light.
Then Romeus in arms his lady 'gan to fold,
With friendly kiss, and ruthfully she 'gan her knight behold.
With solemn oath they both their sorrowful leave do take;
They swear no stormy troubles shall their steady friendship shake.
Then careful Romeus again to cell returns,

And in her chamber secretly our joyless Juliet mourns.
Now hugy clouds of care, of sorrow, and of dread,
The clearness of their gladsome hearts hath wholly overspread.
When golden-crested Phoebus boasteth him in sky,
And under earth, to 'scape revenge, his deadly foe doth fly
Then hath these lovers' day an end, their night begun,
For each of them to other is as to the world the sun,
The dawning they shall see, ne summer any more,
But blackfaced night with winter rough, ah, beaten over sore.
  The weary watch discharged did hie them home to sleep,

The warders and the scouts were charged their place and course to keep,

And Verone gates awide the porters had set open,
When Romeus had of his affairs with Friar Laurence spoken.
Warely he walked forth, unknown of friend or foe,
Clad like a merchant venturer, from top even to the toe.
He spurred apace, and came, withouten stop or stay,
To Mantua gates, where lighted down, he sent his man away
With words of comfort to his old afflicted sire;
And straight, in mind to sojourn there, a lodging doth he hire,
And with the nobler sort he doth himself acquaint,

And of his open wrong received the duke doth hear his plaint.
He practiseth by friends for pardon of exile;
The whilst he seeketh every way his sorrows to beguile.

But who forgets the coal that burneth in his breast?
Alas, his cares deny his heart the sweet desiréd rest;
No time finds he of mirth, he finds no place of joy,
But everything occasion gives of sorrow and annoy.
For when in turning skies the heaven's lamps are light,
And from the other hemisphere fair Phoebus chaseth night,
When every man and beast hath rest from painful toil,

Then in the breast of Romeus his passions 'gin to boil.
Then doth he wet with tears the couch whereon he lies,
And then his sighs the chamber fill, and out aloud he cries
Against the restless stars in rolling skies that range,
Against the fatal sisters three, and Fortune full of change.
Each night a thousand times he calleth for the day,
He thinketh Titan's restless steeds of restiness do stay;
Or that at length they have some baiting place found out,
Or, guided ill, have lost their way and wandered far about.
While thus in idle thoughts the weary time he spendeth,

The night hath end, but not with night the plaint of night he endeth.

Is he accompanied? Is he in place alone?
In company he wails his harm, apart he maketh moan:
For if his feres rejoice, what cause hath he to joy,
That wanteth still his chief delight, while they their loves enjoy?
But if with heavy cheer they show their inward grief,
He waileth most his wretchedness that is of wretches chief.
When he doth hear abroad the praise of ladies blown,

Within his thought he scorneth them, and doth prefer his own.
When pleasant songs he hears, while others do rejoice,

The melody of music doth stir up his mourning voice.
But if in secret place he walk somewhere alone,
The place itself and secretness redoubleth all his moan.
Then speaks he to the beasts, to feathered fowls and trees,
Unto the earth, the clouds, and to whatso beside he sees.
To them he shew'th his smart, as though they reason had.

Each thing may cause his heaviness, but nought may make him glad.
And, weary of the day, again he calleth night,
The sun he curseth, and the hour when first his eyes saw light.
And as the night and day their course do interchange,

So doth our Romeus' nightly cares for cares of day exchange.
In absence of her knight the lady no way could
Keep truce between her griefs and her, though ne'er so fain she would;
And though with greater pain she cloakéd sorrow's smart,
Yet did her paléd face disclose the passions of her heart.
Her sighing every hour, her weeping everywhere,

Her reckless heed of meat, of sleep, and wearing of her gear,
The careful mother marks; then of her health afraid,
Because the griefs increaséd still, thus to her child she said:
"Dear daughter, if you should long languish in this sort,

I stand in doubt that oversoon your sorrows will make short
Your loving father's life and mine, that love you more
Than our own proper breath and life. Bridle henceforth therefore
Your grief and pain, yourself on joy your thought to set,
For time it is that now you should our Tybalt's death forget.
Of whom since God hath claimed the life that was but lent,
He is in bliss, ne is there cause why you should thus lament.
You can not call him back with tears and shriekings shrill:
It is a fault thus still to grudge at God's appointed will."
The seely soul had now no longer power to feign,

No longer could she hide her harm, but answered thus again,
With heavy broken sighs, with visage pale and dead:
"Madam, the last of Tybalt's tears a great while since I shed.
Whose spring hath been ere this so laded out by me,
That empty quite and moistureless I guess it now to be.

So that my painéd heart by conduits of the eyne
No more henceforth, as wont it was, shall gush forth dropping brine."
The woeful mother knew not what her daughter meant,
And loth to vex her child by words, her peace she warely hent.
But when from hour to hour, from morrow to the morrow,

Still more and more she saw increased her daughter's wonted sorrow,
All means she sought of her and household folk to know
The certain root whereon her grief and bootless moan doth grow.
But lo, she hath in vain her time and labour lore,
Wherefore without all measure is her heart tormented sore.
And sith herself could not find out the cause of care,
She thought it good to tell the sire how ill his child did fare.
And when she saw her time, thus to her fere she said:
"Sir, if you mark our daughter well, the countenance of the maid,
And how she fareth since that Tybalt unto death,

Before his time, forced by his foe, did yield his living breath,
Her face shall seem so changed, her doings eke so strange,
That you will greatly wonder at so great and sudden change.
Not only she forbears her meat, her drink, and sleep,

But now she tendeth nothing else but to lament and weep.
No greater joy hath she, nothing contents her heart
So much as in the chamber close to shut herself apart;
Where she doth so torment her poor afflicted mind,
That much in danger stands her life, except some help we find.
But, out, alas, I see not how it may be found,

Unless that first we might find whence her sorrows thus abound.
For though with busy care I have employed my wit,
And used all the ways I knew to learn the truth of it,
Neither extremity ne gentle means could boot;
She hideth close within her breast her secret sorrow's root.
This was my first conceit, that all her ruth arose
Out of her cousin Tybalt's death, late slain of deadly foes;
But now my heart doth hold a new repugnant thought;
Some greater thing, not Tybalt's death, this change in her hath wrought.
Herself assuréd me that many days ago

She shed the last of Tybalt's tears; which word amazed me so
That I then could not guess what thing else might her grieve;
But now at length I have bethought me; and I do believe

The only crop and root of all my daughter's pain
Is grudging envy's faint disease: perhaps she doth disdain
To see in wedlock yoke the most part of her feres,
Whilst only she unmarriéd doth lose so many years.
And more perchance she thinks you mind to keep her so;
Wherefore despairing doth she wear herself away with woe.
Therefore, dear sir, in time take on your daughter ruth;

For why, a brickle thing is glass, and frail is frailless youth.
Join her at once to some in link of marriage,
That may be meet for our degree, and much about her age:
So shall you banish care out of your daughter's breast,
So we her parents, in our age, shall live in quiet rest."
Whereto 'gan easily her husband to agree,
And to the mother's skilful talk thus straightway answered he:
"Oft have I thought, dear wife, of all these things ere this,
But evermore my mind me gave, it should not be amiss
By farther leisure had a husband to provide;

Scarce saw she yet full sixteen years: too young to be a bride!
But since her state doth stand on terms so perilous,

And that a maiden daughter is a treasure dangerous,
With so great speed I will endeavour to procure
A husband for our daughter young, her sickness faint to cure,
That you shall rest content, so warely will I choose,
And she recover soon enough the time she seems to lose.
The whilst seek you to learn, if she in any part
Already hath, unware to us, fixéd her friendly heart;
Lest we have more respect to honour and to wealth,

Than to our daughter's quiet life, and to her happy health;
Whom I do hold as dear as th'apple of mine eye,
And rather wish in poor estate and daughterless to die,
Than leave my goods and her y-thralled to such a one,
Whose churlish dealing, I once dead, should be her cause of moan."
This pleasant answer heard, the lady parts again,
And Capulet, the maiden's sire, within a day or twain,
Conferreth with his friends for marriage of his daughter,
And many gentlemen there were with busy care that sought her;
Both for the maiden was well shapéd, young, and fair,

As also well brought up, and wise; her father's only heir.

Among the rest was one inflamed with her desire,
Who County Paris clepéd was; an earl he had to sire.
Of all the suitors him the father liketh best,
And easily unto the earl he maketh his behest,
Both of his own good will, and of his friendly aid,
To win his wife unto his will, and to persuade the maid.
The wife did joy to hear the joyful husband say
How happy hap, how meet a match, he had found out that day;
Ne did she seek to hide her joys within her heart,

But straight she hieth to Juliet; to her she tells, apart,
What happy talk, by mean of her, was past no rather
Between the wooing Paris and her careful, loving father.
The person of the man, the features of his face,
His youthful years, his fairness, and his port, and seemly grace,
With curious words she paints before her daughter's eyes,
And then with store of virtue's praise she heaves him to the skies.
She vaunts his race, and gifts that Fortune did him give,
Whereby, she saith, both she and hers in great delight shall live.
When Juliet conceived her parents' whole intent,

Whereto both love and reason's right forbode her to assent,
Within herself she thought, rather than be forsworn,
With horses wild her tender parts asunder should be torn.
Not now, with bashful brow, in wonted wise, she spake,
But with unwonted boldness straight into these words she brake:
"Madam, I marvel much that you so lavas are
Of me your child, your jewel once, your only joy and care,
As thus to yield me up at pleasure of another,
Before you know if I do like or else mislike my lover.
Do what you list, but yet of this assure you still,

If you do as you say you will, I yield not there until.
For had I choice of twain, far rather would I choose
My part of all your goods and eke my breath and life to lose,
Than grant that he possess of me the smallest part;
First, weary of my painful life, my cares shall kill my heart,
Else will I pierce my breast with sharp and bloody knife;
And you, my mother, shall become the murd'ress of my life,
In giving me to him whom I ne can, ne may,
Ne ought, to love: wherefore on knees, dear mother, I you pray,
To let me live henceforth, as I have lived tofore;

Cease all your troubles for my sake, and care for me no more;
But suffer Fortune fierce to work on me her will,
In her it lieth to do me boot, in her it lieth to spill.
For whilst you for the best desire to place me so,
You haste away my ling'ring death, and double all my woe.
  So deep this answer made the sorrows down to sink
Into the mother's breast, that she ne knoweth what to think
Of these her daughter's words, but all appalled she stands,
And up unto the heavens she throws her wond'ring head and hands.
And, nigh beside herself, her husband hath she sought;

She tells him all; she doth forget ne yet she hideth aught.
The testy old man, wroth, disdainful without measure,
Sends forth his folk in haste for her, and bids them take no leisure:
Ne on her tears or plaint at all to have remorse,
But, if they cannot with her will, to bring the maid perforce.
The message heard, they part, to fetch that they must fet,
And willingly with them walks forth obedient Juliet.
Arrivéd in the place, when she her father saw,
Of whom, as much as duty would, the daughter stood in awe,

The servants sent away, (the mother thought it meet,)

The woeful daughter all bewept fell grovelling at his feet,
Which she doth wash with tears as she thus grovelling lies --
So fast, and eke so plenteously distil they from her eyes:
When she to call for grace her mouth doth think to open,
Muet she is -- for sighs and sobs her fearful talk have broken.
The sire, whose swelling wrath her tears could not assuage,
With fiery eyne, and scarlet cheeks, thus spake her in his rage,
Whilst ruthfully stood by the maiden's mother mild:
"Listen," quoth he, "unthankful and thou disobedient child,
Hast thou so soon let slip out of thy mind the word

That thou so oftentimes hast heard rehearséd at my board?
How much the Roman youth of parents stood in awe,
And eke what power upon their seed the fathers had by law?
Whom they not only might pledge, alienate, and sell,
Whenso they stood in need, but more, if children did rebel,
The parents had the power of life and sudden death.
What if those goodmen should again receive the living breath,
In how strait bonds would they thy stubborn body bind?

What weapons would they seek for thee? what torments would they find?
To chasten, if they saw, the lewdness of thy life,

Thy great unthankfulness to me, and shameful sturdy strife?
Such care thy mother had, so dear thou wert to me,
That I with long and earnest suit provided have for thee
One of the greatest lords that wones about this town,
And for his many virtues' sake a man of great renown.
Of whom both thou and I unworthy are too much,
So rich ere long he shall be left, his father's wealth is such,
Such is the nobleness and honour of the race,
From whence his father came: and yet, thou playest in this case
The dainty fool, and stubborn girl; for want of skill

Thou dost refuse thy offered weal, and disobey my will.
Even by His strength I swear, that first did give me life,
And gave me in my youth the strength to get thee on my wife,
Unless by Wednesday next thou bend as I am bent,
And at our castle called Freetown thou freely do assent
To County Paris' suit, and promise to agree

To whatsoever then shall pass 'twixt him, my wife, and me,
Not only will I give all that I have away
From thee, to those that shall me love, me honour, and obey,
But also to so close and to so hard a gaol

I shall thee wed, for all thy life, that sure thou shalt not fail
A thousand times a day to wish for sudden death,
And curse the day and hour when first thy lungs did give thee breath.
Advise thee well, and say that thou art warnéd now,
And think not that I speak in sport, or mind to break my vow.
For were it not that I to County Paris gave
My faith, which I must keep unfalsed, my honour so to save,
Ere thou go hence, myself would see thee chastened so,
That thou should'st once for all be taught thy duty how to know;
And what revenge of old the angry sires did find

Against their children that rebelled and showed themself unkind."
These said, the old man straight is gone in haste away,
Ne for his daughter's answer would the testy father stay.
And after him his wife doth follow out of door,
And there they leave their chidden child kneeling upon the floor:

Then she that oft had seen the fury of her sire,
Dreading what might come of his rage, nould farther stir his ire.
Unto her chamber she withdrew herself apart,
Where she was wonted to unload the sorrows of her heart.
There did she not so much busy her eyes in sleeping,

As overpressed with restless thoughts in piteous bootless weeping.
The fast falling of tears make not her tears decrease,
Ne, by the pouring forth of plaint, the cause of plaint doth cease.
So that to th'end the moan and sorrow may decay,
The best is that she seek some mean to take the cause away.
Her weary bed betime the woeful wight forsakes,
And to Saint Francis' church to mass her way devoutly takes.
The friar forth is called; she prays him hear her shrift;
Devotion is in so young years a rare and precious gift.
When on her tender knees the dainty lady kneels,

In mind to pour forth all the grief that inwardly she feels,
With sighs and salted tears her shriving doth begin,
For she of heapéd sorrows hath to speak, and not of sin.
Her voice with piteous plaint was made already hoarse,

And hasty sobs, when she would speak, brake off her words perforce.
But as she may, piecemeal, she poureth in his lap
The marriage news, a mischief new, preparéd by mishap,
Her parents' promise erst to County Paris past,
Her father's threats she telleth him, and thus concludes at last:
"Once was I wedded well, ne will I wed again;

For since I know I may not be the wedded wife of twain,
For I am bound to have one God, one faith, one make,
My purpose is as soon as I shall hence my journey take,
With these two hands, which joined unto the heavens I stretch,
The hasty death which I desire, unto myself to reach.
This day, O Romeus, this day thy woeful wife
Will bring the end of all her cares by ending careful life.
So my departed sprite shall witness to the sky,
And eke my blood unto the earth bear record, how that I
Have kept my faith unbroke, steadfast unto my friend."

When this her heavy tale was told, her vow eke at an end,
Her gazing here and there, her fierce and staring look,
Did witness that some lewd attempt her heart had undertook.

Whereat the friar astound, and ghastfully afraid
Lest she by deed perform her word, thus much to her he said:
"Ah, Lady Juliet, what need the words you spake?

I pray you, grant me one request, for blesséd Mary's sake.
Measure somewhat your grief, hold here awhile your peace;
Whilst I bethink me of your case, your plaint and sorrows cease.
Such comfort will I give you, ere you part from hence,

And for th'assaults of Fortune's ire prepare so sure defence,
So wholesome salve will I for your afflictions find,
That you shall hence depart again with well contented mind."
  His words have chaséd straight out of her heart despair,
Her black and ugly dreadful thoughts by hope are waxen fair.
So Friar Laurence now hath left her there alone,
And he out of the church in haste is to his chamber gone;
Where sundry thoughts within his careful head arise;
The old man's foresight divers doubts hath set before his eyes,
His conscience one while condemns it for a sin
To let her take Paris to spouse, since he himself had bin

The chiefest cause, that she unknown to father or mother,
Not five months past, in that self place was wedded to another.
Another while an hugy heap of dangers dread
His restless thought hath heapéd up within his troubled head.
Even of itself th'attempt he judgeth perilous;
The execution eke he deems so much more dangerous,
That to a woman's grace he must himself commit,
That young is, simple and unware, for weighty affairs unfit;
For if she fail in aught, the matter publishéd,

Both she and Romeus were undone, himself eke punishéd.
When to and fro in mind he divers thoughts had cast,
With tender pity and with ruth his heart was won at last;
He thought he rather would in hazard set his fame,
Than suffer such adultery. Resolving on the same,
Out of his closet straight he took a little glass,
And then with double haste returned where woeful Juliet was;
Whom he hath found well-nigh in trance, scarce drawing breath,
Attending still to hear the news of life or else of death.

Of whom he did enquire of the appointed day:

"On Wednesday next," quod Juliet, "so doth my father say,
I must give my consent; but, as I do remember,
The solemn day of marriage is the tenth day of September."
"Dear daughter," quoth the friar, "of good cheer see thou be,
For lo, Saint Francis of his grace hath showed a way to me,
By which I may both thee and Romeus together
Out of the bondage which you fear assurédly deliver.
Even from the holy font thy husband have I known,
And, since he grew in years, have kept his counsels as mine own.
For from his youth he would unfold to me his heart,

And often have I curéd him of anguish and of smart;
I know that by desert his friendship I have won,
And I him hold as dear as if he were my proper son.
Wherefore my friendly heart cannot abide that he
Should wrongfully in aught be harmed, if that it lay in me
To right or to revenge the wrong by my advice,
Or timely to prevent the same in any other wise.
And sith thou art his wife, thee am I bound to love,
For Romeus' friendship's sake, and seek thy anguish to remove,

And dreadful torments, which thy heart besiegen round;

Wherefore, my daughter, give good ear unto my counsels sound.
Forget not what I say, ne tell it any wight,
Not to the nurse thou trustest so, as Romeus is thy knight;
For on this thread doth hang thy death and eke thy life,
My fame or shame, his weal or woe that chose thee to his wife.
Thou art not ignorant -- because of such renown
As everywhere is spread of me, but chiefly in this town --
That in my youthful days abroad I travelléd,
Through every land found out by men, by men inhabited;
So twenty years from home, in lands unknown a guest,

I never gave my weary limbs long time of quiet rest,
But in the desert woods, to beasts of cruel kind,
Or on the seas to drenching waves, at pleasure of the wind,
I have committed them, to ruth of rover's hand,
And to a thousand dangers more, by water and by land.
But not in vain, my child, hath all my wand'ring bin;
Beside the great contentedness my sprite abideth in,
That by the pleasant thought of passéd things doth grow,

One private fruit more have I plucked, which thou shalt shortly know:
What force the stones, the plants, and metals have to work,

And divers other things that in the bowels of earth do lurk,
With care I have sought out, with pain I did them prove;
With them eke can I help myself at times of my behove, --
Although the science be against the laws of men, --
When sudden danger forceth me; but yet most chiefly when
The work to do is least displeasing unto God,
Not helping to do any sin that wreakful Jove forbode.
For since in life no hope of long abode I have,
But now am come unto the brink of my appointed grave,
And that my death draws near, whose stripe I may not shun,

But shall be called make account of all that I have done,
Now ought I from henceforth more deeply print in mind
The judgment of the Lord, than when youth's folly made me blind,
When love and fond desire were boiling in my breast,
Whence hope and dread by striving thoughts had banished friendly rest.
Know therefore, daughter, that with other gifts which I
Have well attainéd to, by grace and favour of the sky,

Long since I did find out, and yet the way I know
Of certain roots and savoury herbs to make a kind of dough,
Which bakéd hard, and beat into a powder fine,

And drunk with conduit water, or with any kind of wine,
It doth in half an hour astonne the taker so,
And mast'reth all his senses, that he feeleth weal nor woe:
And so it burieth up the sprite and living breath,
That even the skilful leech would say, that he is slain by death.
One virtue more it hath, as marvellous as this;
The taker, by receiving it, at all not grievéd is;
But painless as a man that thinketh nought at all,
Into a sweet and quiet sleep immediately doth fall;
From which, according to the quantity he taketh,

Longer or shorter is the time before the sleeper waketh;
And thence, th'effect once wrought, again it doth restore
Him that received unto the state wherein he was before.
Wherefore, mark well the end of this my tale begun,
And thereby learn what is by thee hereafter to be done.
Cast off from thee at once the weed of womanish dread,

With manly courage arm thyself from heel unto the head;
For only on the fear or boldness of thy breast
The happy hap or ill mishap of thy affair doth rest.
Receive this vial small and keep it as thine eye;

And on thy marriage day, before the sun do clear the sky,
Fill it with water full up to the very brim,
Then drink it off, and thou shalt feel throughout each vein and limb
A pleasant slumber slide, and quite dispread at length
On all thy parts, from every part reave all thy kindly strength;
Withouten moving thus thy idle parts shall rest,
No pulse shall go, ne heart once beat within thy hollow breast,
But thou shalt lie as she that dieth in a trance:
Thy kinsmen and thy trusty friends shall wail the sudden chance;
Thy corpse then will they bring to grave in this churchyard,

Where thy forefathers long ago a costly tomb prepared,
Both for themself and eke for those that should come after,
Both deep it is, and long and large, where thou shalt rest, my daughter,
Till I to Mantua send for Romeus, thy knight;
Out of the tomb both he and I will take thee forth that night.

And when out of thy sleep thou shalt awake again,
Then may'st thou go with him from hence; and, healéd of thy pain,
In Mantua lead with him unknown a pleasant life;
And yet perhaps in time to come, when cease shall all the strife,
And that the peace is made 'twixt Romeus and his foes,

Myself may find so fit a time these secrets to disclose,
Both to my praise, and to thy tender parents' joy,
That dangerless, without reproach, thou shalt thy love enjoy."
When of his skilful tale the friar had made an end,
To which our Juliet well her ear and wits did bend,
That she hath heard it all and hath forgotten nought,
Her fainting heart was comforted with hope and pleasant thought,
And then to him she said: "Doubt not but that I will
With stout and unappalléd heart your happy hest fulfil.
Yea, if I wist it were a venomous deadly drink,

Rather would I that through my throat the certain bane should sink,
Than I, not drinking it, into his hands should fall,
That hath no part of me as yet, ne ought to have at all.
Much more I ought with bold and with a willing heart

To greatest danger yield myself, and to the deadly smart,
To come to him on whom my life doth wholly stay,
That is my only heart's delight, and so he shall be aye."
"Then go," quoth he, "my child, I pray that God on high
Direct thy foot, and by thy hand upon the way thee guie.
God grant he so confirm in thee thy present will,

That no inconstant toy thee let thy promise to fulfil."
  A thousand thanks and more our Juliet gave the friar,
And homeward to her father's house joyful she doth retire;
And as with stately gait she passéd through the street,
She saw her mother in the door, that with her there would meet,
In mind to ask if she her purpose yet did hold,
In mind also, apart 'twixt them, her duty to have told;
Wherefore with pleasant face, and with unwonted cheer,
As soon as she was unto her approachéd somewhat near,
Before the mother spake, thus did she first begin:

"Madam, at Saint Francis' church have I this morning bin,
Where I did make abode a longer while, percase,
Than duty would; yet have I not been absent from this place

So long a while, without a great and just cause why;
This fruit have I receivéd there -- my heart, erst like to die,
Is now revived again, and my afflicted breast,
Releaséd from affliction, restoréd is to rest!
For lo, my troubled ghost, alas, too sore diseased,
By ghostly counsel and advice hath Friar Laurence eased;
To whom I did at large discourse my former life,

And in confession did I tell of all our passéd strife;
Of County Paris' suit, and how my lord, my sire,
By my ungrate and stubborn strife I stirréd unto ire;
But lo, the holy friar hath by his ghostly lore
Made me another woman now than I had been before.
By strength of arguments he chargéd so my mind,
That, though I sought, no sure defence my searching thought could find.
So forced I was at length to yield up witless will,
And promised to be ordered by the friar's praiséd skill.
Wherefore, albeit I had rashly, long before,

The bed and rites of marriage for many years forswore,
Yet mother, now behold your daughter at your will,

Ready, if you command her aught, your pleasure to fulfil.
Wherefore in humble wise, dear madam, I you pray,
To go unto my lord and sire, withouten long delay;
Of him first pardon crave of faults already past,
And show him, if it pleaseth you, his child is now at last
Obedient to his just and to his skilful hest,
And that I will, God lending life, on Wednesday next be prest
To wait on him and you, unto th'appointed place,

Where I will, in your hearing, and before my father's face,
Unto the County give my faith and whole assent,
And take him for my lord and spouse; thus fully am I bent;
And that out of your mind I may remove all doubt,
Unto my closet fare I now, to search and to choose out
The bravest garments and the richest jewels there,
Which, better him to please, I mind on Wednesday next to wear;
For if I did excel the famous Grecian rape,
Yet might attire help to amend my beauty and my shape."
  The simple mother was rapt into great delight;

Not half a word could she bring forth, but in this joyful plight

With nimble foot she ran, and with unwonted pace,
Unto her pensive husband, and to him with pleasant face
She told what she had heard, and praiseth much the friar,
And joyful tears ran down the cheeks of this gray-bearded sire.
With hands and eyes heaved up he thanks God in his heart,
And then he saith: "This is not, wife, the friar's first desert;
Oft hath he showed to us great friendship heretofore,
By helping us at needful times with wisdom's precious lore.
In all our commonweal scarce one is to be found

But is, for some good turn, unto this holy father bound.
Oh that the third part of my goods -- I do not feign --
But twenty of his passéd years might purchase him again!
So much in recompense of friendship would I give,
So much, in faith, his extreme age my friendly heart doth grieve."
  These said, the glad old man from home go'th straight abroad
And to the stately palace hieth where Paris made abode;
Whom he desires to be on Wednesday next his geast,
At Freetown, where he minds to make for him a costly feast.
But lo, the earl saith, such feasting were but lost,

And counsels him till marriage-time to spare so great a cost,
For then he knoweth well the charges will be great;
The whilst, his heart desireth still her sight, and not his meat.
He craves of Capulet that he may straight go see
Fair Juliet; whereto he doth right willingly agree.
The mother, warned before, her daughter doth prepare;
She warneth and she chargeth her that in no wise she spare
Her courteous speech, her pleasant looks, and comely grace,
But liberally to give them forth when Paris comes in place:
Which she as cunningly could set forth to the show,

As cunning craftsmen to the sale do set their wares on row;
That ere the County did out of her sight depart,
So secretly unwares to him she stale away his heart,
That of his life and death the wily wench had power.
And now his longing heart thinks long for their appointed hour,
And with importune suit the parents doth he pray
The wedlock knot to knit soon up, and haste the marriage day.
  The wooer hath passed forth the first day in this sort,
And many other more than this, in pleasure and disport.
At length the wishéd time of long hopéd delight,

As Paris thought, drew near; but near approachéd heavy plight.
Against the bridal day the parents did prepare
Such rich attire, such furniture, such store of dainty fare,
That they which did behold the same the night before
Did think and say, a man could scarcely wish for any more.
Nothing did seem too dear; the dearest things were bought;
And, as the written story saith, indeed there wanted nought
That 'longed to his degree, and honour of his stock;
But Juliet, the whilst, her thoughts within her breast did lock;
Even from the trusty nurse, whose secretness was tried,

The secret counsel of her heart the nurse-child seeks to hide.
For sith, to mock her Dame, she did not stick to lie,
She thought no sin with show of truth to blear her nurse's eye.
In chamber secretly the tale she 'gan renew,
That at the door she told her dame, as though it had been true.
The flatt'ring nurse did praise the friar for his skill,
And said that she had done right well by wit to order will.
She setteth forth at large the father's furious rage,
And eke she praiseth much to her the second marriage;

And County Paris now she praiseth ten times more,

By wrong, than she herself, by right, had Romeus praised before.
Paris shall dwell there still, Romeus shall not return;
What shall it boot her life to languish still and mourn?
The pleasures past before she must account as gain;
But if he do return, what then? -- for one she shall have twain.
The one shall use her as his lawful wedded wife,
In wanton love with equal joy the other lead his life;
And best shall she be sped of any townish dame,
Of husband and of paramour to find her change of game.
These words and like the nurse did speak, in hope to please,

But greatly did these wicked words the lady's mind disease;
But aye she hid her wrath, and seeméd well content,
When daily did the naughty nurse new arguments invent.
But when the bride perceived her hour approachéd near,
She sought, the best she could, to feign, and tempered so her cheer,
That by her outward look no living wight could guess
Her inward woe; and yet anew renewed is her distress.
Unto her chamber doth the pensive wight repair,

And in her hand a percher light the nurse bears up the stair.
In Juliet's chamber was her wonted use to lie;

Wherefore her mistress, dreading that she should her work descry,
As soon as she began her pallet to unfold,
Thinking to lie that night where she was wont to lie of old,
Doth gently pray her seek her lodging somewhere else;
And, lest she, crafty, should suspect, a ready reason tells.
"Dear friend," quoth she, "you know to-morrow is the day
Of new contract; wherefore, this night, my purpose is to pray
Unto the heavenly minds that dwell above the skies,
And order all the course of things as they can best devise,
That they so smile upon the doings of to-morrow,

That all the remnant of my life may be exempt from sorrow:
Wherefore, I pray you, leave me here alone this night,
But see that you to-morrow come before the dawning light,
For you must curl my hair, and set on my attire."
And easily the loving nurse did yield to her desire,
For she within her head did cast before no doubt;
She little knew the close attempt her nurse-child went about.

The nurse departed once, the chamber door shut close,
Assuréd that no living wight her doing might disclose,
She pouréd forth into the vial of the friar

Water, out of a silver ewer that on the board stood by her.
The sleepy mixture made, fair Juliet doth it hide
Under her bolster soft, and so unto her bed she hied:
Where divers novel thoughts arise within her head,
And she is so environed about with deadly dread,
That what before she had resolved undoubtedly
That same she calleth into doubt; and Iying doubtfully,
Whilst honest love did strive with dread of deadly pain,
With hands y-wrung, and weeping eyes, thus gan she to complain:
"What, is there any one, beneath the heavens high,

So much unfortunate as I? so much past hope as I?
What, am I not myself, of all that yet were born,
The deepest drenchéd in despair, and most in Fortune's scorn?
For lo, the world for me hath nothing else to find,
Beside mishap and wretchedness and anguish of the mind;
Since that the cruel cause of my unhappiness

Hath put me to this sudden plunge, and brought to such distress,
As, to the end I may my name and conscience save,
I must devour the mixéd drink that by me here I have,
Whose working and whose force as yet I do not know."

And of this piteous plaint began another doubt to grow:
"What do I know," quoth she, "if that this powder shall
Sooner or later than it should, or else, not work at all?
And then my craft descried as open as the day,
The people's tale and laughing-stock shall I remain for aye."
"And what know I," quoth she, "if serpents odious,
And other beasts and worms that are of nature venomous,
That wonted are to lurk in dark caves underground,
And commonly, as I have heard, in dead men's tombs are found,
Shall harm me, yea or nay, where I shall lie as dead? --

Or how shall I that alway have in so fresh air been bred,
Endure the lothsome stink of such an heapéd store
Of carcases not yet consumed, and bones that long before
Intombéd were, where I my sleeping-place shall have,
Where all my ancestors do rest, my kindred's common grave?

Shall not the friar and my Romeus, when they come,
Find me, if I awake before, y-stifled in the tomb?"
  And whilst she in these thoughts doth dwell somewhat too long,
The force of her imagining anon did wax so strong,
That she surmised she saw, out of the hollow vault,

A grisly thing to look upon, the carcase of Tybalt;
Right in the selfsame sort that she few days before
Had seen him in his blood embrued, to death eke wounded sore.
And then when she again within herself had weighed
That quick she should be buried there, and by his side be laid,
All comfortless, for she shall living fere have none,
But many a rotten carcase, and full many a naked bone;
Her dainty tender parts 'gan shiver all for dread,
Her golden hairs did stand upright upon her chillish head.
Then presséd with the fear that she there livéd in,

A sweat as cold as mountain ice pierced through her slender skin,
That with the moisture hath wet every part of hers:
And more besides, she vainly thinks, whilst vainly thus she fears,
A thousand bodies dead have compassed her about,

And lest they will dismember her she greatly stands in doubt.
But when she felt her strength began to wear away,
By little and little, and in her heart her fear increaséd aye,
Dreading that weakness might, or foolish cowardice,
Hinder the execution of the purposed enterprise,
As she had frantic been, in haste the glass she caught,

And up she drank the mixture quite, withouten farther thought.
Then on her breast she crossed her arms long and small,
And so, her senses failing her, into a trance did fall.
And when that Phoebus bright heaved up his seemly head,
And from the East in open skies his glist'ring rays dispread,
The nurse unshut the door, for she the key did keep,
And doubting she had slept too long, she thought to break her sleep;
First softly did she call, then louder thus did cry:
"Lady, you sleep too long; the earl will raise you by and by."
But, well away, in vain unto the deaf she calls,

She thinks to speak to Juliet, but speaketh to the walls.
If all the dreadful noise that might on earth be found,
Or on the roaring seas, or if the dreadful thunder's sound

Had blown into her ears, I think they could not make
The sleeping wight before the time by any means awake;
So were the sprites of life shut up, and senses thralled;
Wherewith the seely careful nurse was wondrously appalled.
She thought to daw her now as she had done of old,
But lo, she found her parts were stiff and more than marble cold;
Neither at mouth nor nose found she recourse of breath;

Two certain arguments were these of her untimely death.
Wherefore, as one distraught, she to her mother ran,
With scratchéd face, and hair betorn, but no word speak she can,
At last, with much ado, "Dead," quoth she, "is my child!"
"Now, out, alas!" the mother cried, and as a tiger wild,
Whose whelps, whilst she is gone out of her den to prey,
The hunter greedy of his game doth kill or carry away;
So raging forth she ran unto her Juliet's bed,
And there she found her darling and her only comfort dead.
  Then shrieked she out as loud as serve her would her breath,

And then, that pity was to hear, thus cried she out on Death:
"Ah cruel Death," quoth she, "that thus against all right,

Hast ended my felicity, and robbed my heart's delight,
Do now thy worst to me, once wreak thy wrath for all,
Even in despite I cry to thee, thy vengeance let thou fall.
Whereto stay I, alas, since Juliet is gone?

Whereto live I, since she is dead, except to wail and moan?
Alack, dear child, my tears for thee shall never cease;
Even as my days of life increase, so shall my plaint increase:
Such store of sorrow shall afflict my tender heart,

That deadly pangs, when they assail shall not augment my smart."
Then 'gan she so to sob, it seemed her heart would brast;
And while she crieth thus, behold, the father at the last,
The County Paris, and of gentlemen a rout,
And ladies of Verona town and country round about,
Both kindreds and allies thither apace have preast,
For by their presence there they sought to honour so the feast;
But when the heavy news the bidden guests did hear,
So much they mourned, that who had seen their count'nance and their cheer,
Might easily have judged by that that they had seen,

That day the day of wrath and eke of pity to have been.
But more than all the rest the father's heart was so
Smit with the heavy news, and so shut up with sudden woe,
That he ne had the power his daughter to be-weep,
Ne yet to speak, but long is forced his tears and plaint to keep.
In all the haste he hath for skilful leeches sent;
And, hearing of her passéd life, they judge with one assent
The cause of this her death was inward care and thought;
And then with double force again the doubled sorrows wrought.
If ever there hath been a lamentable day,

A day ruthful, unfortunate and fatal, then I say,
The same was it in which through Verone town was spread
The woeful news how Juliet was stervéd in her bed.
For so she was bemoaned both of the young and old,
That it might seem to him that would the common plaint behold,
That all the commonwealth did stand in jeopardy;
So universal was the plaint, so piteous was the cry.
For lo, beside her shape and native beauty's hue,
With which, like as she grew in age, her virtues' praises grew,
She was also so wise, so lowly, and so mild,

That even from the hoary head unto the witless child,
She wan the hearts of all, so that there was not one,
Ne great, ne small, but did that day her wretched state bemoan.
Whilst Juliet slept, and whilst the other weepen thus,
Our Friar Laurence hath by this sent one to Romeus,
A friar of his house, -- there never was a better,
He trusted him even as himself, -- to whom he gave a letter,
In which he written had of everything at length,
That passed 'twixt Juliet and him, and of the powder's strength;
The next night after that, he willeth him to come

To help to take his Juliet out of the hollow tomb,
For by that time the drink, he saith, will cease to work,
And for one night his wife and he within his cell shall lurk;
Then shall he carry her to Mantua away, --
Till fickle Fortune favour him, -- disguised in man's array.
  This letter closed he sends to Romeus by his brother;
He chargeth him that in no case he give it any other.
Apace our Friar John to Mantua him hies;
And, for because in Italy it is a wonted guise

That friars in the town should seldom walk alone,

But of their convent aye should be accompanied with one
Of his profession, straight a house he findeth out,
In mind to take some friar with him, to walk the town about.
But entered once he might not issue out again,
For that a brother of the house, a day before or twain,
Died of the plague -- a sickness which they greatly fear and hate --
So were the brethren charged to keep within their convent gate,
Barred of their fellowship that in the town do wone;
The townfolk eke commanded are the friar's house to shun
Till they that had the care of health their freedom should renew;

Whereof, as you shall shortly hear, a mischief great there grew.
The friar by this restraint, beset with dread and sorrow,
Not knowing what the letters held, deferred until the morrow;
And then he thought in time to send to Romeus.
But whilst at Mantua where he was, these doings framéd thus,
The town of Juliet's birth was wholly busiéd
About her obsequies, to see their darling buriéd.
Now is the parents' mirth quite changéd into moan,

And now to sorrow is returned the joy of every one;
And now the wedding weeds for mourning weeds they change,

And Hymene into a dirge; -- alas! it seemeth strange:
Instead of marriage gloves, now funeral gloves they have,
And whom they should see marriéd, they follow to the grave.
The feast that should have been of pleasure and of joy,
Hath every dish and cup filled full of sorrow and annoy.
Now throughout Italy this common use they have,
That all the best of every stock are earthéd in one grave:
For every household, if it be of any fame,
Doth build a tomb, or dig a vault, that bears the household's name;
Wherein, if any of that kindred hap to die,

They are bestowed; else in the same no other corpse may lie.
The Capulets her corpse in such a one did lay,
Where Tybalt, slain of Romeus, was laid the other day.
Another use there is, that whosoever dies,
Borne to their church with open face upon the bier he lies,
In wonted weed attired, not wrapped in winding sheet.
So, as by chance he walked abroad, our Romeus' man did meet

His master's wife; the sight with sorrow straight did wound
His honest heart; with tears he saw her lodgéd underground.
And, for he had been sent to Verone for a spy,

The doings of the Capulets by wisdom to descry,
And for he knew her death did touch his master most,
Alas, too soon, with heavy news he hied away in post;
And in his house he found his master Romeus,
Where he, besprent with many tears, began to speak him thus:
"Sire, unto you of late is chanced so great a harm,
That sure, except with constancy you seek yourself to arm,
I fear that straight you will breathe out your latter breath,
And I, most wretched wight, shall be th'occasion of your death.
Know, sir, that yesterday, my lady and your wife,

I wot not by what sudden grief, hath made exchange of life
And for because on earth she found nought but unrest,
In heaven hath she sought to find a place of quiet rest
And with these weeping eyes myself have seen her laid
Within the tomb of Capulets": and herewithal he stayed.
  This sudden message' sound, sent forth with sighs and tears,

Our Romeus received too soon with open list'ning ears
And thereby hath sunk in such sorrow in his heart,
That lo, his sprite annoyéd sore with torment and with smart,
Was like to break out of his prison house perforce,

And that he might fly after hers, would leave the massy corse.
But earnest love that will not fail him till his end,
This fond and sudden fantasy into his head did send:
That if near unto her he offered up his breath,
That then a hundred thousand parts more glorious were his death.
Eke should his painful heart a great deal more be eased,
And more also, he vainly thought, his lady better pleased.
Wherefore when he his face hath washed with water clean,
Lest that the stains of driéd tears might on his cheeks be seen,
And so his sorrow should of everyone be spied,

Which he with all his care did seek from everyone to hide,
Straight, weary of the house, he walketh forth abroad:
His servant, at the master's hest, in chamber still abode;
And then fro street to street he wand'reth up and down,
To see if he in any place may find, in all the town,

A salve meet for his sore, an oil fit for his wound;
And seeking long -- alack, too soon! -- the thing he sought, he found.
  An apothecary sat unbusied at his door,
Whom by his heavy countenance he guessed to be poor.
And in his shop he saw his boxes were but few,

And in his window, of his wares, there was so small a shew;
Wherefore our Romeus assuredly hath thought,
What by no friendship could be got, with money should be bought;
For needy lack is like the poor man to compel
To sell that which the city's law forbiddeth him to sell.
Then by the hand he drew the needy man apart,
And with the sight of glitttring gold inflaméd hath his heart:
"Take fifty crowns of gold," quoth he, "I give them thee,
So that, before I part from hence, thou straight deliver me
Some poison strong, that may in less than half an hour

Kill him whose wretched hap shall be the potion to devour."
The wretch by covetise is won, and doth assent
To sell the thing, whose sale ere long, too late, he doth repent.
In haste he poison sought, and closely he it bound,

And then began with whispering voice thus in his ear to round:
"Fair sir," quoth he, "be sure this is the speeding gear,
And more there is than you shall need; for half of that is there
Will serve, I undertake, in less than half an hour
To kill the strongest man alive; such is the poison's power."
  Then Romeus, somewhat eased of one part of his care,

Within his bosom putteth up his dear unthrifty ware.
Returning home again, he sent his man away
To Verone town, and chargeth him that he, without delay,
Provide both instruments to open wide the tomb,
And lights to show him Juliet; and stay till he shall come
Near to the place whereas his loving wife doth rest,
And chargeth him not to bewray the dolours of his breast.
Peter, these heard, his leave doth of his master take;
Betime he comes to town, such haste the painful man did make:
And then with busy care he seeketh to fulfil,

But doth disclose unto no wight his woeful master's will.

Would God, he had herein broken his master's hest!

Would God, that to the friar he had disclosèd all his breast!
But Romeus the while with many a deadly thought
Provokèd much, hath caused ink and paper to be brought,
And in few lines he did of all his love discourse,
How by the friar's help, and by the knowledge of the nurse,
The wedlock knot was knit, and by what mean that night
And many mo he did enjoy his happy heart's delight;
Where he the poison bought, and how his life should end;

And so his wailful tragedy the wretched man hath penned.
The letters closed and sealed, directed to his sire,
He locketh in his purse, and then a post-horse doth he hire.
When he approachèd near, he warely lighted down,
And even with the shade of night he entered Verone town
Where he hath found his man, waiting when he should come,
With lantern, and with instruments to open Juliet's tomb.
"Help, Peter, help," quod he, "help to remove the stone,
And straight when I am gone fro thee, my Juliet to bemoan,
See that thou get thee hence, and on the pain of death

I charge thee that thou come not near while I abide beneath,

Ne seek thou not to let thy master's enterprise,
Which he hath fully purposéd to do, in any wise.
Take there a letter, which, as soon as he shall rise,
Present it in the morning to my loving father's eyes;
Which unto him, perhaps, far pleasanter shall seem,
Than either I do mind to say, or thy gross head can deem."
  Now Peter, that knew not the purpose of his heart,
Obediently a little way withdrew himself apart;
And then our Romeus (the vault-stone set upright),

Descended down, and in his hand he bare the candle light.
And then with piteous eye the body of his wife
He 'gan behold, who surely was the organ of his life;
For whom unhappy now he is, but erst was blissed,
He watered her with tears, and then a hundred times her kissed;
And in his folded arms full straitly he her plight,
But no way could his greedy eyes be filléd with her sight:
His fearful hands he laid upon her stomach cold,
And them on divers parts beside the woeful wight did hold.
But when he could not find the signs of life he sought,

Out of his curséd box he drew the poison that he bought;
Whereof he greedily devoured the greater part,
And then he cried, with deadly sigh fetched from his mourning heart:
"O Juliet, of whom the world unworthy was,
From which, for world's unworthiness thy worthy ghost did pass,
What death more pleasant could my heart wish to abide
Than that which here it suff'reth now, so near thy friendly side?
Or else so glorious tomb how could my youth have craved,
As in one selfsame vault with thee haply to be ingraved?
What epitaph more worth, or half so excellent,

To consecrate my memory, could any man invent,
As this our mutual and our piteous sacrifice
Of life, set light for love?" But while he talketh in this wise,
And thought as yet awhile his dolours to enforce,
His tender heart began to faint, pressed with the venom's force;
Which little and little 'gan to overcome his heart,
And whilst his busy eyne he threw about to every part,
He saw, hard by the corse of sleeping Juliet,
Bold Tybalt's carcase dead, which was not all consuméd yet
To whom, as having life, in this sort speaketh he:

"Ah, cousin dear, Tybalt, whereso thy restless sprite now be
With stretchéd hands to thee for mercy now I cry,
For that before thy kindly hour I forcéd thee to die.
But if with quenchéd life not quenchéd be thine ire,
But with revenging lust as yet thy heart be set on fire,
What more amends, or cruel wreak desirest thou
To see on me, than this which here is showed forth to thee now?
Who reft by force of arms from thee thy living breath,
The same with his own hand, thou seest, doth poison himself to death.
And for he caused thee in tomb too soon to lie,

Too soon also, younger than thou, himself he layeth by."
These said, when he 'gan feel the poison's force prevail,
And little and little mastered life for aye began to fail,
Kneeling upon his knees, he said with voice full low, --
"Lord Christ, that so to ransom me descendedst long ago
Out of thy Father's bosom, and in the Virgin's womb
Didst put on flesh, oh, let my plaint out of this hollow tomb,
Pierce through the air, and grant my suit may favour find;
Take pity on my sinful and my poor afflicted mind!

For well enough I know, this body is but clay,

Nought but a mass of sin, too frail, and subject to decay."
Then pressed with extreme grief he threw with so great force
His overpresséd parts upon his lady's wailéd corse,
That now his weakened heart, weakened with torments past,
Unable to abide this pang, the sharpest and the last,
Remainéd quite deprived of sense and kindly strength,
And so the long imprisoned soul hath freedom won at length
Ah cruel death, too soon, too soon was this divorce,
'Twixt youthful Romeus' heavenly sprite, and his fair earthy corse!
The friar that knew what time the powder had been taken,

Knew eke the very instant when the sleeper should awaken;
But wondering that he could no kind of answer hear
Of letters which to Romeus his fellow friar did bear,
Out of Saint Francis' church himself alone did fare,
And for the opening of the tomb meet instruments he bare.
Approaching nigh the place and seeing there the light,
Great horror felt he in his heart, by strange and sudden sight;
Till Peter, Romeus' man, his coward heart made bold,

When of his master's being there the certain news he told:
"There hath he been," quoth he, "this half hour at the least

And in this time, I dare well say, his plaint hath still increast."
Then both they entered in, where they, alas, did find
The breathless corpse of Romeus, forsaken of the mind:
Where they have made such moan, as they may best conceive,
That have with perfect friendship loved, whose friend fierce death did reave.
But whilst with piteous plaint they Romeus' fate beweep,
An hour too late fair Juliet awakéd out of sleep;
And much amazed to see in tomb so great a light,
She wist not if she saw a dream, or sprite that walked by night.
But coming to herself she knew them, and said thus:

"What, friar Laurence, is it you? Where is my Romeus?"
And then the ancient friar, that greatly stood in fear,
Lest, if they lingered over long they should be taken there,
In few plain words the whole that was betid, he told,
And with his finger showed his corpse outstretchéd, stiff, and cold;
And then persuaded her with patience to abide
This sudden great mischance, and saith, that he will soon provide

In some religious house for her a quiet place,
Where she may spend the rest of life, and where in time, percase,
She may with wisdom's mean measure her mourning breast,

And unto her tormented soul call back exiléd rest.
But lo, as soon as she had cast her ruthful eye
On Romeus' face, that pale and wan fast by her side did lie,
Straightway she did unstop the conduits of her tears,
And out they gush; -- with cruel hand she tare her golden hairs.
But when she neither could her swelling sorrow 'suage
Ne yet her tender heart abide her sickness' furious rage,
Fall'n on his corpse she lay, long panting on his face,
And then with all her force and strength the dead corpse did embrace.
As though with sighs, with sobs, with force, and busy pain

She would him raise, and him restore from death to life again:
A thousand times she kissed his mouth, as cold as stone,
And it unkissed again as oft; then 'gan she thus to moan:
"Ah, pleasant prop of all my thoughts, ah, only ground
Of all the sweet delights that yet in all my life I found,
Did such assuréd trust within thy heart repose,

That in this place and at this time, thy churchyard thou hast chose
Betwixt the arms of me, thy perfect-loving make
And thus by means of me to end thy life, and for my sake ?
Even in the flow'ring of thy youth, when unto thee

Thy life most dear, as to the most, and pleasant ought to be,
How could this tender corpse withstand the cruel fight
Of furious Death, that wonts to fray the stoutest with his sight?
How could thy dainty youth agree with willing heart,
In this so foul-infected place to dwell, where now thou art?
Where spiteful Fortune hath appointed thee to be
The dainty food of greedy worms, unworthy, sure, of thee.
Alas, alas, alas, what needed now anew
My wonted sorrows, doubled twice, again thus to renew?
Which both the time and eke my patient long abode

Should now at length have quenchéd quite, and under foot have trode?
Ah, wretch and caitive that I am, even when I thought
To find my painful passion's salve, I missed the thing I sought;
And to my mortal harm the fatal knife I ground,
That gave to me so deep, so wide, so cruel deadly wound!

Ah thou, most fortunate and most unhappy tomb!
For thou shalt bear, from age to age, witness in time to come
Of the most perfect league betwixt a pair of lovers,
That were the most unfortunate and fortunate of others,
Receive the latter sigh, receive the latter pang,

Of the most cruel of cruel slaves that wrath and death aye wrang."
  And when our Juliet would continue still her moan,
The friar and the servant fled, and left her there alone;
For they a sudden noise fast by the place did hear,
And lest they might be taken there, greatly they stood in fear.
When Juliet saw herself left in the vault alone,
That freely she might work her will, for let or stay was none,
Then once for all she took the cause of all her harms,
The body dead of Romeus, and clasped it in her arms;
Then she with earnest kiss sufficiently did prove,

That more than by the fear of death, she was attaint by love;
And then past deadly fear, for life ne had she care,
With hasty hand she did draw out the dagger that he ware.

"O welcome Death," quoth she, "end of unhappiness,
That also art beginning of assuréd happiness,
Fear not to dart me now, thy stripe no longer stay,
Prolong no longer now my life, I hate this long delay;
For straight my parting sprite, out of this carcase fled,
At ease shall find my Romeus' sprite among so many dead.
And thou my loving lord, Romeus, my trusty fere,

If knowledge yet do rest in thee, if thou these words dost hear,
Receive thou her whom thou didst love so lawfully,
That caused, alas, thy violent death, although unwillingly;
And therefore willingly offers to thee her ghost,
To th'end that no wight else but thou might have just cause to boast
Th'enjoying of my love, which aye I have reserved
Free from the rest, bound unto thee, that hast it well deserved;
That so our parted sprites from light that we see here,
In place of endless light and bliss may ever live y-fere."
These said, her ruthless hand through-girt her valiant heart:

Ah, ladies, help with tears to wail the lady's deadly smart!
She groans, she stretcheth out her limbs, she shuts her eyes,

And from her corpse the sprite doth fly; -- what should I say -- she dies.
The watchmen of the town the whilst are passéd by,
And through the gates the candle-light within the tomb they spy;
Whereby they did suppose enchanters to be come,
That with prepared instruments had opened wide the tomb,
In purpose to abuse the bodies of the dead,
Which by their science' aid abused, do stand them oft in stead.
Their curious hearts desire the truth hereof to know;

Then they by certain steps descend, where they do find below,
In claspéd arms y-wrapt, the husband and the wife,
In whom as yet they seemed to see some certain marks of life.
But when more curiously with leisure they did view,
The certainty of both their deaths assuredly they knew:
Then here and there so long with careful eye they sought,
That at the length hidden they found the murth'rers; -- so they thought.
In dungeon deep that night they lodged them underground;
The next day do they tell the prince the mischief that they found.
The news was by and by throughout the town dispread,

Both of the taking of the friar, and of the two found dead.

Thither might you have seen whole households forth to run,
For to the tomb where they did hear this wonder strange was done,
The great, the small, the rich, the poor, the young, the old,
With hasty pace do run to see, but rue when they behold.
And that the murtherers to all men might be known,
Like as the murder's bruit abroad through all the town was blown,
The prince did straight ordain, the corses that were found
Should be set forth upon a stage high raiséd from the ground,
Right in the selfsame form, showed forth to all men's sight,

That in the hollow vault they had been found that other night;
And eke that Romeus' man and Friar Laurence should
Be openly examinéd; for else the people would
Have murmuréd, or feigned there were some weighty cause
Why openly they were not called, and so convict by laws.
  The holy friar now, and reverent by his age,
In great reproach set to the show upon the open stage, --
A thing that ill beseemed a man of silver hairs, --
His beard as white as milk he bathes with great fast-falling tears:
Whom straight the dreadful judge commandeth to declare

Both, how this murther had been done, and who the murth'rers are;
For that he near the tomb was found at hours unfit,
And had with him those iron tools for such a purpose fit.
The friar was of lively sprite and free of speech,
The judge's words appalled him not, ne were his wits to seech,
But with advised heed a while first did he stay,
And then with bold assuréd voice aloud thus 'gan he say:
"My lords, there is not one among you, set together,
So that, affection set aside, by wisdom he consider

My former passéd life, and this my extreme age,
And eke this heavy sight, the wreak of frantic Fortune's rage,
But that, amazéd much, doth wonder at this change,
So great, so suddenly befall'n, unlooked for, and strange.
For I, that in the space of sixty years and ten,
Since first I did begin, too soon, to lead my life with men,
And with the world's vain things, myself I did acquaint,
Was never yet, in open place, at any time attaint
With any crime, in weight as heavy as a rush,
Ne is there any stander-by can make me guilty blush,
Although before the face of God, I do confess

Myself to be the sinfull'st wretch of all this mighty press.
When readiest I am and likeliest to make
My great accompt, which no man else for me shall undertake;
When worms, the earth, and death, do cite me every hour,
T'appear before the judgment seat of everlasting power,
And falling ripe, I step upon my grave's brink,
Even then, am I, most wretched wight, as each of you doth think,
Through my most heinous deed, with headlong sway thrown down,
In greatest danger of my life, and domage of renown.
The spring, whence in your head this new conceit doth rise,

And in your heart increaseth still your vain and wrong surmise,
May be the hugeness of these tears of mine, percase,
That so abundantly down fall by either side my face;
As though the memory in Scriptures were not kept
That Christ our Saviour himself for ruth and pity wept;
And more, whoso will read, y-written shall he find,
That tears are as true messengers of man's unguilty mind.
Or else, a liker proof, that I am in the crime,
You say these present irons are, and the suspected time;

As though all hours alike had not been made above!

Did Christ not say, the day had twelve -- whereby he sought to prove,
That no respect of hours ought justly to be had,
But at all times men have the choice of doing good or bad;
Even as the sprite of God the hearts of men doth guide,
Or as it leaveth them to stray from virtue's path aside.
As for the irons that were taken in my hand,
As now I deem, I need not seek to make ye understand
To what use iron first was made, when it began;
How of itself it helpeth not, ne yet can help a man.
The thing that hurteth is the malice of his will,

That such indifferent things is wont to use and order ill.
Thus much I thought to say, to cause you so to know
That neither these my piteous tears, though ne'er so fast they flow,
Ne yet these iron tools, nor the suspected time,
Can justly prove the murther done, or damn me of the crime:
No one of these hath power, ne power have all the three,
To make me other than I am, how so I seem to be.
But sure my conscience, if so my guilt deserve,

For an appeacher, witness, and a hangman, eke should serve;
For through mine age, whose hairs of long time since were hoar,

And credit great that I was in, with you, in time tofore,
And eke the sojourn short that I on earth must make,
That every day and hour do look my journey hence to take,
My conscience inwardly should more torment me thrice,
Than all the outward deadly pain that all you could devise.
But, God I praise, I feel no worm that gnaweth me,
And from remorse's pricking sting I joy that I am free:
I mean, as touching this, wherewith you troubled are,
Wherewith you should be troubled still, if I my speech should spare.
But to the end I may set all your hearts at rest,

And pluck out all the scruples that are rooted in your breast,
Which might perhaps henceforth, increasing more and more,
Within your conscience also increase your cureless sore,
I swear by yonder heavens, whither I hope to climb,
And for a witness of my words my heart attesteth Him,
Whose mighty hand doth wield them in their violent sway,
And on the rolling stormy seas the heavy earth doth stay,

That I will make a short and eke a true discourse
Of this most woeful tragedy, and show both th'end and source
Of their unhappy death, which you perchance no less

Will wonder at than they, alas, poor lovers in distress,
Tormented much in mind, not forcing lively breath,
With strong and patient heart did yield themself to cruel death:
Such was the mutual love wherein they burnéd both,
And of their promised friendship's faith so steady was the troth."
And then the ancient friar began to make discourse,
Even from the first, of Romeus' and Juliet's amours;
How first by sudden sight the one the other chose,
And 'twixt themself did knit the knot which only death might loose;
And how, within a while, with hotter love oppressed,

Under confession's cloak, to him themself they have addressed,
And how with solemn oaths they have protested both,
That they in heart are marriéd by promise and by oath;
And that except he grant the rites of church to give,
They shall be forced by earnest love in sinful state to live:
Which thing when he had weighed, and when he understood

That the agreement 'twixt them twain was lawful, honest, good,
And all things peiséd well, it seeméd meet to be,
For like they were of nobleness, age, riches, and degree:
Hoping that so, at length, ended might be the strife,

Of Montagues and Capulets, that led in hate their life,
Thinking to work a work well pleasing in God's sight,
In secret shrift he wedded them; and they the selfsame night
Made up the marriage in house of Capulet,
As well doth know, if she be asked, the nurse of Juliet.
He told how Romeus fled for reaving Tybalt's life,
And how, the whilst, Paris the earl was offered to his wife;
And how the lady did so great a wrong disdain,
And how to shrift unto his church she came to him again;
And how she fell flat down before his feet aground,

And how she sware, her hand and bloody knife should wound
Her harmless heart, except that he some mean did find
To disappoint the earl's attempt; and spotless save her mind.
Wherefore, he doth conclude, although that long before
By thought of death and age he had refused for evermore

The hidden arts which he delighted in, in youth, --
Yet won by her importuneness, and by his inward ruth,
And fearing lest she would her cruel vow discharge
His closed conscience he had opened and set at large;
And rather did he choose to suffer for one time

His soul to be spotted somedeal with small and easy crime,
Than that the lady should, weary of living breath,
Murther herself, and danger much her seely soul by death:
Wherefore his ancient arts again he puts in ure,
A certain powder gave he her, that made her sleep so sure,
That they her held for dead; and how that Friar John
With letters sent to Romeus to Mantua is gone;
Of whom he knoweth not as yet, what is become;
And how that dead he found his friend within her kindred's tomb.
He thinks with poison strong, for care the young man sterved,

Supposing Juliet dead; and how that Juliet hath carved,
With Romeus' dagger drawn, her heart, and yielded breath,
Desirous to accompany her lover after death;
And how they could not save her, so they were afeard,

And hid themself, dreading the noise of watchmen, that they heard.
And for the proof of this his tale, he doth desire
The judge to send forthwith to Mantua for the friar,
To learn his cause of stay, and eke to read his letter;
And, more beside, to th'end that they might judge his cause the better,
He prayeth them depose the nurse of Juliet,

And Romeus'man whom at unwares beside the tomb he met.
  Then Peter, not so much erst as he was, dismayed;
"My lords," quoth he, "too true is all that Friar Laurence said.
And when my master went into my mistress'grave,
This letter that I offer you, unto me then he gave,
Which he himself did write, as I do understand,
And charged me to offer them unto his father's hand."
The opened packet doth contain in it the same
That erst the skilful friar said; and eke the wretch's name
That had at his request the deadly poison sold,

The price of it, and why he bought, his letters plain have told.
The case unfolded so and open now it lies,
That they could wish no better proof, save seeing it with their eyes;

So orderly all things were told and triéd out,
That in the press there was not one that stood at all in doubt.
  The wiser sort, to council called by Escalus,
Have given advice, and Escalus sagely decreeth thus:
The nurse of Juliet is banished in her age,
Because that from the parents she did hide the marriage,
Which might have wrought much good had it in time been known,

Where now by her concealing it a mischief great is grown;
And Peter, for he did obey his master's hest,
ln wonted freedom had good leave to lead his life in rest,
Th'apothecary high is hangéd by the throat,
And for the pains he took with him the hangman had his coat.
But now what shall betide of this grey-bearded sire?
Of Friar Laurence thus arraigned, that good barefooted friar
Because that many times he worthily did serve
The commonwealth, and in his life was never found to swerve,
He was dischargéd quite, and no mark of defame

Did seem to blot or touch at all the honour of his name.
But of himself he went into an hermitage,

Two miles from Verone town, where he in prayers passed forth his age;
Till that from earth to heaven his heavenly sprite did fly,
Five years he lived an hermit and an hermit did he die.
The strangeness of the chance, when triéd was the truth,
The Montagues and Capulets hath moved so to ruth,
That with their emptied tears their choler and their rage
Was emptied quite; and they, whose wrath no wisdom could assuage,
Nor threat'ning of the prince, ne mind of murthers done,

At length, so mighty Jove it would, by pity they are won.
And lest that length of time might from our minds remove
The memory of so perfect, sound, and so approvéd love,
The bodies dead, removed from vault where they did die,
ln stately tomb, on pillars great of marble, raise they high.
On every side above were set, and eke beneath,
Great store of cunning epitaphs, in honour of their death.
And even at this day the tomb is to be seen;
So that among the monuments that in Verona been,
There is no monument more worthy of the sight,

Than is the tomb of Juliet and Romeus her knight.

THE MERCHANT OF VENICE – Three Sources

THE ADVENTURES OF GIANNETTO.

From the Pecorone of Ser Giovanni Fiorentino

Both the original Italian of this tale and the English translation known to Shakespeare are included in alternate pages.

EGLI ebbe in Firenze in casa gli Scali un mercatante, il quale ebbe nome Bindo; il quale era stato piu volte e alia Tana e in Alessandria, e in tutti que* gran viaggi che si fanno con le mercatanzie. Era questo Bindo assai ri'cco, e aveva tre figliuoli maschi grandi; e venendo a morte, chiamo il maggior e '1 mezzano, e fece in lor presenza testamento, e lascid lor due eredi di cid ch' egli aveva al mondo, e al mi-nore non lascio niente. Fatto ch' egli ebbe testamento, il figliuol minore, che aveva nome Giannetto, sentendo questo, ando a trovarlo al letto e gli disse: Padre mio, io mi mara-viglio forte di quello che voi avete fatto, a non esservi ricor-dato di me in su '1 testamento. Rispose il padre: Giannetto mio, e' non e creatura, a cui voglia meglio che a te, e pero io non voglio che dopo la morte mia tu stia qui, anzi voglio, com* io son morto, che tu te ne vada a Vinegia a un tuo san-tolo, che ha nome messere Ansaldo, il quale non ha figliuolo

There lived at Florence, in the house of the Scali, a merchant whose name was

Bindo, who had been several times at Tana, and at Alexan dria, and had made the other long voyages usually made by the merchants. This Bindo was rich, and had three sons grown to man's estate. He being near his end, called for the two eldest, and in their presence made his will, and left these two heirs of every thing he had in the world: to the youngest he left nothing. The will being made, this youngest, whose name was Giannetto, hearing what bad been done, went to his father's bedside, and said to him, What has my father done? not to have mentioned me in his will is somewhat extraordinary.

nessuno, e hammi scritto piu volte ch' io te gli mandi. E sotti dire ch' egli d il piu ricco mercatante che sia oggi tra' Cristiani. E pero voglio che come io son morto, tu te ne vada a lui, e gli porti questa lettera; e se tu saprai fare, tu rimarrai ricco uomo. Disse il figliuolo : Padre mio, io sono apparecchiato a fare cid che voi mi comandate; di che il pa dre gli die la benedizione, e ivi a pochi di si mori, e tutti i figliuoli ne fecero grandissimo lamento, e fecero al corpo quello onore che si gli conveniva. E poi ivi a pochi di, questi due fratelli chiamarono Giannetto, e si gli dissero: Fratello nostro, egli d vero che nostro padre fece testamento, e lascid eredi noi, e di te non fe veruna menzione; nondimeno tu se' pure nostro fratello, e per tanto a quell' ora manchi a te, che a noi, quello che c' e. Rispose Giannetto: Fratelli miei, io vi ringrazio della vostra proferta; ma quanto a me, l'animo mio e d'andare a procacciare mia ventura in qualche parte; e cosi son fermo di fare, e voi v' abbiate 1' eredita segnata e bene-detta. Onde i fratelli veggendo la volonta sua, diedergli un cavallo e danari per le spese. Giannetto prese commiato da loro, e andossene a Yinegia, e giunse al fondaco di messere Ansaldo, e diegli la lettera che '1 padre gli aveva dato innan-

The father replied, My dear Giannetto, there is no creature liying to whom I wish better than to you; and therefore *tis my desire that you leave this city after my death, and that you go to Venice to your god father, whose name is Ansaldo; he has no child, and has wrote to me often to send you there to him; and I can tell you, he is the richest merchant amongst the Christians: and therefore it is my request, that as soon as I am dead, you go and carry this letter to him, and if you behave well, you will be certainly a rich man. The son answered, I am ready to do whatever my dear father shall command: upon which he gave him his benediction, and in a few days died.

The sons all made great lamentation at his death, and paid all neces sary honours to his corpse. Some days after, the two brothers sent for Giannetto, and told him, Brother, it is true that our father made a will, and we two are left his heirs, without any mention of you: nevertheless, you are our brother, and shall have the command of every thing as much as we ourselves; you shall not want till we are in want. Gian-

zi che morisse. Per che messere Ansaldo leggendo questa lettera, conobbe cbe costui era il figliuolo del suo carissimo Bindo; e come 1' ebbe letta, di subito 1' abbraccio, dicendo: Ben venga il figliuoccio mio, il quale io ho tanto desiderato; e subito lo domando di Bindo, dove Giannetto gli rispose ch' egli era morto; per ch' egli con molte lagrime I'abbraccio e bascid, e disse: Ben mi duole la morte di Bindo, perch' egli m' aiuto guadagnare gran parte di quel ch' io ho; ma tanta e 1' allegrezza ch' io ho ora di te, che mitiga quel dolore. E fecelo menare a casa, e comando a' fattori suoi, e a' compagni, e a' scudieri e a' fanti, e quanti n' erano in casa, che Gian netto fosse ubidito e servito piu che la sua persona. E prima a lui consegno le chiavi di tutti i suoi contanti, e disse : Fig liuolo mio, cio che c' e, spendi e vesti e calza|oggi mai come ti piace, e metti tavola a' cittadini, e fatti conoscere; perd ch' io lascio a te questo pensiero, e tanto meglio ti vorrd, quanto piu ben ti farai volere. Per che Giannetto comincid a usare co' gentiluomini di Vinegia, a fare corti, desinari, a donare, e vestir famigli e a comperare di buoni corsieri, e a giostrare e bagordare, come quel ch* era esperto e pratico, e magnanimo e cortese in ogni cosa; e ben sapeVa fare onore netto replied to this, My dear brothers, I thank you most heartily for your offer, but I am resolved to seek my fortune in some other place, and do you enjoy here the riches left to you. His brothers, finding him determined, make him a present of a horse, and money to bear hw expences. Giannetto took leave of them, and went to Venice, to the counting-house of Ansaldo, and presented the letter given by the father before his death. Ansaldo reading the letter, knew this young man to be the son of his dearest friend Bmdo; and having finished the letter, ran immediately to embrace him, crying out, My dearest god' son, whom I have so long wished to see, is welcome to my arms. Then asking news of his father, Giannetto replied, He is dead. Embracing him again with tears, and kissing him, I am much grieved, replied Ansaldo, to hear of the death of Bindo: by his assistance it was that I got the greatest part of what I am worth: but the joy I feel in seeing you mitigates my sorrow for the loss of him. He conducted him to his house, and gave orders to his clerks, his grooms, his servants, and F 2

e cortesia dove si conveniva, e sempre rendeva onore a messere Ansaldo, piu che se fosse stato cento volte suo padre. £ seppesi si saviamente mantenere con ogni maniera di gente, che quasi il comune di Vinegia gli voleva bene, veggendolo tanto savio e con tanta piacevolezza, e cortese oltre a misura; di che le donne e gli uomini ne parevano innamorati, e mes sere Ansaldo non vedeva piu oltre che lui, tanto gli piacevano i modi e le maniere sue. Ne si faceva quasi niuna festa in Vinegia, che '1 detto Giannetto non vi fosse invitato, tanto gli era voluto bene da ogni persona. Ora avvenne che due suoi cari compagni volsero andare in Alessandria con loro mercatanzie con due navi, com' erano usati di fare ogni anno; onde eglino il dissero a Giannetto, dicendo: Tu devresti dilettarti del mare con noi, per vedere del mondo, e massimamente quel Damasco e quel paese di la. Rispose Giannetto: In buona fe ch' io verrei molto volentieri, se '1 padre mio mes sere Ansaldo mi desse la parola. Disser costoro : Noi fare-mo si ch' e' te la dara, e sara contento. E subito se n'andarono a messer Ansaldo, e dissero : Noi vi vogliaino pregare, che vi piaccia di dare parola a Giannetto che ne venga in questa primavera con noi in Alessandria, e che gli forniate every one in the house, that Giannetto should be obeyed, and served with more attention than had been paid to himself. He then delivered him the keys of his ready money; and told him, Son, spend this money in dressing and equipping yourself in the manner you like best; keep a table to entertain company, and make yourself known: I shall leave it to you to do as you think best; and remember, that the more you gain the good will of every body, the more you will be dear to me.

Giannetto now began to visit and frequent the gentlemen of Venice, to give entertainments, had a number of servants, and bought good horses to assist at all tiltings and tournaments, and such like exercises, at which he excelled; being adroit, expert, and well-bred, and knowing how to do the honours on all the occasions that offered; particularly to Ansaldo, he was more obedient and courteous than if he had been an hundred times his father. He conducted himself so discreetly with all sorts of people, that almost every body in Venice was fond of him, and loved him greatly. Ansaldo could think of nothing but him; so much qualche legno o nave, accid ch' egli vegga un poco del mondo. Disse messere Ansaldo: Io son contento, se piace a lui. Ris-posero costoro: Messere, egli e contento. Per che messer Ansaldo subito gli fe fornire una bellissima nave, e fella caricare di molta mercatanzia, e guernire di bandiere e d' armi quanto fe mestiero. E dipoi ch' ella fu acconcia, messere Ansaldo comando al padrone et a gli altri che erano al servi-zio della nave, che facessero cio che Giannetto comandasse loro, e che fosse loro raccomandato; perd ch' io non lo mando, diceva egli, per guadagno che io voglia ch' e' faccia, ma perch' egli vada a suo diletto veggendo il mondo. E quando Gian netto fu per montar, tutta Vinegia

trasse a vedere, perche di gran tempo non era uscita di Vinegia una nave tanto bella e tanto ben fornita, quanto quella. Et a ogni persona incresceva della sua partita; e cosi prese commiato da messere Ansaldo e tutti i suoi compagni, e entrarono in mare, e alza-rono le vele, e presero il camino d' Alessandria nel nome di Dio e di buona ventura. Ora essendo questi tre compagni in tre navi, e navicando piu e piu di, avvenne che una mattina innanzi giorno il detto Giannetto vide un golfo di mare con un bellissimo porto, e domando il padrone come si chiamava was he pleased with his good manners and behaviour. There was scarce any party of pleasure in Venice to which Giannetto was not in vited, so much was he esteemed by all.

Now it happened, that two of his most intimate acquaintance had designed to go with two ships, laden with merchandize, to Alexandria, as was usual every year; they told Giannetto he would do well to take pleasure in a voyage at sea with them, to see the world, and more espe-pecially Damascus, and the countries near it. Giannetto said, In good faith I would go willingly if my father Ansaldo will give leave. We will manage so well with him, his companions answered, as to make him content. They go to Ansaldo, and beg his permission for Gian netto to go in the spring with them to Alexandria; and desire him to provide him a ship, that he may see a little of the world. Ansaldo said he would give leave if the other desired it. They answered, it was his desire. Ansaldo immediately provided a very fine ship, and loaded it with merchandize, and adorned it with streamers, and fur-

quel porto; il quale gli rispose: Messere, quel luogo e d' una gentildonna vedova, la quale ha fatto pericolare molti signori. Disse Giannetto : Come 1 Rispose costui: Messere, questa d una bella donna e vaga, e tiene questa legge; che chiunque v' arriva, convien che dorma con lei, e s' egli ha a far seco, convien ch' e' la tolga per moglie, et e signora del porto e di tutto '1 paese. E s' egli non ha a fare con lei, perde tutto cio ch' egli ha. Penso Giannetto fra se un poco, e poi disse : Trova ogni modo che tu vuoi, e pommi a quel porto. Disse il padrone: Messere, guardate cid che voi dite, pero che molti signori vi sono iti, che ne sono rimasi diserti. Disse Giannetto: Non t' impacciare in altro; fa quel ch' io ti dico; e cosi fu fatto, che subito volsero la nave, e calaronsi in quel porto, che i compagni dell' altre navi non se ne furono accorti niente. Per che la mattina si sparse la novella, come questa bella nave era giunta in porto; tal che tutta la gente trasse a vedere, e fu subito detto alia donna, si ch' ella mando per Giannetto, il quale incontanente fu a lei, e con molta riverenza la saluto, et ella lo prese per mano, e doman-dollo chi egli era e donde, e se e' sapeva 1' usanza del paese. Rispcse

Giannetto chp si, e che non v' ora ito per nessuna nished it with arms as many as were necessary; and as soon as it was ready, he gave orders to the captain and sailors to do every thing Giannetto commanded. He told them, he did not send him in hopes of great gain, but to see the world at his pleasure. And when Gian netto was going on board, all Venice was gathered to see him; for there had not, for a long time, so fine a ship been seen to sail from thence. Every body was concerned at his departure. He took his leave of Ansaldo and his acquaintance; and putting out to sea, they hoisted the sails, and stood for Alexandria. The three friends with their ships sailing in company for some days, it happened one morning early, that Giannetto saw a gulph, with a fine port, and asked the captain how the port was called? He replied, That place belongs to a widow lady, who has ruined many gentlemen. In what manner? says Giannetto. He answers, This lady is a fine and beautiful woman, and has made a law, that whosoever arrives here is obliged to go to bed with her, and if he can have the enjoyment of her, he must take altra cosa. Et ella disse: E voi siate il ben venuto per cen to volte; e cosi gli fece tutto quel giorno grandissimo onore, e fece invitare baroni e conti e cavalieri assai, ch' ella ave-va sotto se, perch' e' tenessero compagnia a costui. Piacque molto a tutti i baroni la maniera di Giannetto, e '1 suo essere costumato e piacevole e parlante; si che quasi ogniuno se ne innamord, e tutto quel giorno si danzo e si canto, e fecesi festa nella Corte per amore di Giannetto; e ogniuno sarebbe stato contento d'averlo avuto per signore. Ora venendo la sera, la donna lo prese per mano, e menollo in camera e disse: E' mi pare ora d' andarsi a letto. Rispose Giannetto': Ma donna, io sono a voi; e subito vennero due damigelle, l'una con vino, e 1' altra con confetti. Disse la donna: Io so che voi avete colto sete, perd bevete. Giannetto prese de' con fetti, e bevve di questo vino, il quale era lavorato da far dormire, et egli nol sapeva, et ebbene una mezza tazza, perche gli parve buono, e subitamente si spoglid e andossi a ripo-sare. E come egli giunse nel letto, cosi fu addormentato. La donna si corico a lato a costui, che mai non si risenti in-fino alia mattina, ch' era passata terza. Per che la donna quando fu giorno si levo, e fe cominciare a scaricare la nave,

her for his wife, and be lord of the port, and all the country; but if he cannot enjoy her, he loses every thing he has brought with him. Giannetto, after a little reflection, tells the captain to do every thing in his power to get into the port. The captain bids him consider what he had commanded; that many persons had gone in who had been stripped of every thing. Giannetto tells him not to trouble himself on that score; do what I order. He was obeyed; and in an instant they turn the ship, and slide into the port so easily that the other ships per ceived nothing.

In the morning the news was spread of a fine ship being arrived in the port, so that every body ran to see it. The lady was informed soon of it, and sent fox Giannetto, who waited on her immediately, and salutes her with a low bow. She, taking him by the hand, asks him who he is? from whence be came? and if he knew the custom of the country? He answers in the affirmative; and that the knowledge of that custom was his only reason for coming. The lady replies, You la quale trovo piena di molta ricca e buona mercatanzia. Ora essendo passata la terza, le cameriere della donna andarono al letto a Giannetto, e fecerlo levare e dissergli cbe s'andasse con Dio; pero ch' egli aveva perduto la nave, e cid che v' era; di che' e' si vergogno, e parvegli avere raal fatto. La donna gli fece dare un cavallo e danari per le spese, et egli se n' andd tristo e doloroso, e vennesene verso Vinegia; dove, come fu giunto, non voile andare a casa per vergogna, ma di notte se n' ando a casa d' un suo compagno, il qual si maraviglid molto e gli disse: Oime! Giannetto, ch' e questo! Et egli rispose: La nave mia percosse una notte in uno scog-lio, e ruppesi e fracassossi ogni cosa, e chi ando qua, e chi la; io m' attenni a un pezzo di legno, che mi gittd a proda, e cosi me ne sono venuto per terra, e son qui. Giannetto stette piu giomi in casa di questo suo compagno, il quale andd un di a visitare messere Ansaldo, e trovollo molto maninconoso. Disse messere Ansaldo: Io ho si grande la paura, che questo mio figliuolo non sia morto, o che '1 mare non gli faccia male, ch' io non trovo luogo, e non bo bene; tanto e l'amore ch' io gli porto. Disse questo giovane : Io ve ne so dire novelle, ch' egli ha rotto in mare e perduto ogni cosa, salvo ch' egli are a hundred times welcome; and that day paid him great honours, and sent for her barons, counts, and knights in great number, who were her subjects, to keep Giannetto company. These nobles were highly delighted with the good breeding and manners of Giannetto; every one was in raptures with him, and the whole day was spent in musick and dancing, and feasting at the court, in honour of him; and all would have been rejoiced to have him for their lord.

The night being come, the lady taking him by the hand, and leading him to her chamber, said, It seems to be time to go to bed. Giannetto tells the lady he is entirely devoted to her service; and immediately two damsels enter with wine and sweet meats. The lady says, she is sure he must be thirsty; and entreats him to taste the wine: he takes the sweet meats and drinks some of the wine, which was prepared with ingredients to cause sleep; this he was ignorant of, and drank half the cup, as he found it to his taste. He then undresses himself, and goes into the bed, where he instantly falls asleep; the lady lays in the bed e campatOi Disse messere Ansaldo: Lodato sia Dio! pur ch' egli sia campato, io son contento; dell' avere ch' e perduto, non mi euro. Ov' e 1 Questo giovane rispose:

Egli e in casa mia; e di subito messere Ansaldo si mosse, e voile andare a vederlo. E com' egli lo vide, subito corse ad abbracciarlo e disse : Figliuol mio, non ti bisogna vergognar di me, ch' egli e usanza che delle navi rompano in mare; e pero, figliuol mio, non ti sgomentare; poiche non t' hai fatto male, io son contento, e menosselo a casa sempre confortandolo. La novella si sparse per tutta Vinegia, e a ogniuno incresceva del danno che aveva avuto Giannetto. Ora avvenne ch' indi a poco tempo quei suoi compagni tornarono d' Ales sandria, e tutti ricchi; e coin' eglino giunsero, domandarono di Giannetto, e fu loro detta ogni cosa; per che subito corsero ad abbracciarlo, dicendo: Come ti partisti tu, o dove an-dasti] che noi non potemmo mai sapere nulla di te, e tor-nammo indietro tutto quel giorno, ne mai ti potemmo vedere, ne sapere dove tu fossi ito; e n' abbiamo avuto tanto dolore, che per tutto questo camino non ci siamo potuti rallegrare, credendo che tu fossi morto. Rispose Giannetto : E' si levo un vento in contrario in un gomito di mare, che mend la nave by his side: he never wakes till late in the morning; but the lady rose with the sun, and gave orders to unload the vessel, which she found full of rich and costly merchandise. After nine o'clock, the women servants of the lady go to the bedside, order Giannetto to rise and be gone, for he had lost the ship and every thing belonging to it. He was much ashamed; and then perceived that he had been guilty of great folly. The lady gave him a horse, and money for his pocket, and he leaves the place very sorrowful and melancholy, and goes forwards on the way towards Venice. When he arrives, he dares not return home for shame; but at night goes to the house of a friend, who is surprised to see him, and inquires of him the cause of his return? He answers, his ship had struck on a rock in the night, and was broke in pieces, and every thing destroyed; he held fast a great piece of wood, which threw him on shore, and so he came there by land.

He staid many days in the house of this friend, who going one day to make a visit to Ansaldo, and finding him very disconsolate: I fear,

mia a piombo a ferire in uno soogiio ch' era presso a terra, che appena campai, e ogni cosa ando sottosopra. E questa e la scusa che Giannetto die, per non iscoprire il difetto suo. E si fecero insieme la festa grande, ringraziando Iddio pur ch' egli era campato, dicendo: A quest' altra primavera, con la grazia di Dio, guadagneremo cid che tu hai perduto a questa volta, e perd attendiamo a darci buon tempo senza maninconia. E cosi attesero a darci piacere e buon tempo, com' erano usati prima. Ma pure Giannetto non faceva se non pensare, com' egli potesse tornare a quella donna, ima-ginando e dicendo: Per certo e' conviene ch' io 1* abbia per moglie, o io vi morro; e quasi non si poteva rallegrare. Per che messere Ansaldo gli di9se piu volte: Non ti dare manin conia, che noi abbiamo tanta roba, che noi ci possiamo stare molto bene. Rispose Giannetto: Signor mio, io non sard mai contento, se io non rifo un' altra volta questa andata. Onde veggendo pure messere Ansaldo la volonta sua, quando fu il tempo gli form un' altra nave di piu mercatanzia che la prima, e di piu valuta; tal che in quella mise la maggior parte di cid ch' egli aveva al mondo. I compagni, quando ebbero fornite le navi loro di cid che faceva mestiero, entra-

says Ansaldo, so much, that this son of mine is either dead, or that the sea does not agree with him, that I have no rest day or night; so great is my love to him. The friend told him, he could tell him news of him; that he had been shipwreckt, and had lost his all; but that he himself was safe. God be praised, says Ansaldo; if be be alive, I am satisfy'd: | do not value the loss of the ship: where is he? The young man reply'd, He is at my house. Ansaldo instantly gets up, and runs to find him, and when he saw him, embracing him, My dear son, says he, you need not fear my displeasure for what has happened; it is a common accident; trouble yourself no farther; as you have received no hurt, all is well. He takes him h me, all the way telling him to be chearful easy.

The news of this accident was soon known all over Venice, and every one was concerned for the loss Giannetto had sustained. Some time after this, his companions arrived from Alexandria very rich, and de manded what was become of their friend, and having heard the story,

rono in mare con Giannetto insieme, e fecer vela e presero lor viaggio. E navicando piu e piu giorni, Giannetto stava sempre attento di rivedere il porto di quella donna, il quale si chiamava il porto della donna del Belmonte. E giugnendo una notte alia foce di questo porto, il quale era in un gomito di mare, Giannetto 1' ebbe subito conoseiuto, e fe volgere le vele e '1 timone e calovvisi dentro, tal che i compagni, ch' erano nell' altre navi, ancora non se n' accorsero. La donna levandosi la mattina, e guardando giu nel porto, vide svento-lare le bandiere di questa nave, e subito V ebbe conosciute, e chiamo una sua cameriera e disse: Conosci tu quelle ban diere] Disse la cameriera: Madonna, ella pare la nave di quel giovane che ci arrivo, ora fa uno anno, che ci mise co-tanta dovizia con quella sua mercatanzia. Disse la donna: Per certo tu di il vero; e veramente che costui non meno che gran fatto debbe essere innamorato di me; pero ch' io non ce ne vidi mai nessuno, che ci tornasse piu che una volta. Disse la cameriera: Io non vidi mai il piu cortese ne il piu grazioso uomo di lui. La donna mando per lui donzelli e scudieri assai, i quali con molta festa lo visitarono, et

egli con tutti fece allegrezza e festa; e cosi venne su nel castello they ran to see and embrace him, asking him in what manner he parted from them? where he went? that they could hear nothing of him; that they sailed backwards and forwards all that day, and could not see nor hear any tidings of his ship. They told him their uneasiness had been so great during the voyage, that the pleasure was spoiled by the fear of hearing news of his death. Giannetto tells them, a contrary wind blowing from an arm of the sea, drove his ship plum against a rock near shore, and with difficulty he saved himself; but every thing was wreckt. This was the excuse Giannetto forged, not to be obliged to make known his folly. They tejoiced with him, and returned thanks to God for his safety; telling him that next spring, by God's assistance, he might gain as much as he had lost the last; and therefore, say they, let us enjoy ourselves, and not be dejected: and they amused and di verted themselves as usual. But Giannetto had no thoughts other than of his return to the lady; and was resolved to marry her, or die in the attempt: and with these thoughts could hardly be chearful.

e nel cospetto della donna. E quando ella lo vide, con grandissima festa e allegrezza 1* abbraccio, et egli con molta riverenza abbraccid lei. E cosi stettero tutto quel giorno in festa e in allegrezza, pero che la donna fece invitare baroni e donne assai, i quali vennero alia Corte a far festa per amore di Giannetto; e quasi a tutti i baroni n' increscieva, e volentieri T averebbono voluto per signore per la sua tanta piacevolezza e cortesia; e quasi tutte le donne n' erano innamorate, veggendo con quanta misura e' guidava una danza, e sempre quel suo viso stava allegro, che ogniuno s'avvisava ch' e' fosse figliuolo di qualche gran signore. E veggendo il tempo d' andare a dormire, questa donna prese per mano Giannetto e disse: Andianci a posare, e andaronsi in camera, e posti a sedere, ecco venire due damigelle con vino e confetti, e quivi beverono e confettaronsi, e poi s' andarono a letto, e com' egli fu nel letto, cosi fu addormentato. La donna si spoglid e coricossi a lato a costui, e brevemente, e' non si risenti in tutta notte. E quando venne la mattina, la donna si levo, e subito mando a fare scaricare quella nave. Passato poi terza, e Giannetto si risenti, e cerco per la donna e non la trovo; alzo il capo e vide ch' egli era alta mattina; levossi e cominciossi Ansaldo told him frequently, not to be cast down; says he, We have enough left to live very comfortably. Giannetto said, he should never be happy till he was at liberty to make another voyage. Ansaldo perceiving his intention, when the time was come, provided another ship of more value, and with more merchandizes than the first; and, indeed, freighted it with almost all he was worth in the world. His companions, when their ships had every thing in order, set sail, with Giannetto; and sailing along for several days together, he was all at tention to discover once more the port of the lady, which was called The port of the lady of Belmonte. Coming one night to the mouth of it, which was in a gulph of the sea, he immediately knew it to be the same, and shifting sails and rudder, be entered so secretly, that his companions in the other ships had no apprehension that his ship was missing.

The lady the next morning looking on the port from the bedchamber, and seeing the streamers of the ship playing in the wind, knew it; and a vergognare; e cosi gli fu donato un cavallo e danari per ispendere e dettogli: Tira via, etegli con vergogna subito si parti tristo e maninconoso; e infra molte giornate non ris-tette mai che giunse a Vinegia, e di notte se ne ando a casa di questo suo compagno, il quale quando lo vide, si die maggior maraviglia del mondo, dicendo: Oime! ch' e questo] Rispose Giannnetto : E male per me; che maladetta sia la fortuna mia, che mai ci arrivai in questo paese! Disse questo suo compagno: Per certo tu la puoi ben maladire, pero che tu hai diserto questo messere Ansaldo, il quale era il maggiore e 1' piu ricco mercatante che fosse tra' Cristiani; e peggio e la vergogna che '1 danno. Giannetto stette nas-coso piu di in casa questo suo compagno, e non sapeva che si fare ne che si dire, e quasi si voleva tornare a Firenze sen-za far motto a messere Ansaldo; e poi si delibero pure d' an-dare a lui, e cosi fece. Quando messere Ansaldo lo vide, si levo ritto, e corse ad abbracciarlo e disse: Ben venga il fig liuol mio, e Giannetto lagrimando abbraccid lui. Disse mes sere Ansaldo, quando ebbe inteso tutto: Sai com'e,Giannetto 1 non ti dare punto di maninconia; poi ch' io t' ho riavuto, io son contento. Ancora c'e rimaso tanto che noi ci potremo asked her maid, if she knew the streamers? the maid said, she imagined it was the ship of the young man who arrived the last year, and had left so fine a cargo behind him. You are in the right, answered the lady; he must surely have a great regard for me, for never any one re turned here a second time: the maid said, she had never seen a more agreeable man. The lady sent her servants in great number to attend him, who served him with much attention, and he treated them very graciously; and went to the castle, and presented himself to the lady; who, as soon as she saw hi'm, embraced him, which embrace he as de voutly returned, and the day was passed in joy and revels; for the lady had sent for her nobles of both sexes, who came to do honour to Gian netto, and were so well pleased with his behaviour, that they were sorry not to have him for their master. The ladies were enamoured of his dancing; the comeliness of his person, and the sweetness of his countenance, made all of them suppose him to be the son of some great man. Bed-time being come, the lady taking him by the hand,

stare pianamente. Egli e usanza del mare ad altri dare, ad altri togliere. La novella ando per tutta Vinegia di questo fatto, e ogniuno diceva di messere Ansaldo, e gravemente gl' incresceva del danno ch'egli aveva avuto, e convenne che messere Ansaldo vendesse di molte possessioni per pagare i creditori che gli avevano dato la roba. Avvenna che quei compagni di Giannetto tornarono d'Alessandria molto ricchi; e giunti in Vinegia fu lor detto come Giannetto era tomato, e come egli aveva rotto e perduto ogni cosa; di che essi si maravigliarone dicendo: Questo e il maggior fatto che si ve-desse mai, e andarono a messere Ansaldo e a Giannetto, e facendogli gran festa, dissero: Messere, non vi sgomentate, che noi intendiamo d' andare questo altro anno a guadagnare per voi; perd che noi siamo stati cagione quasi di questa vostra perdita, da che noi fummo quegli, che inducemmo Giannetto a venire con noi da prima, e perd non temete, e mentre che noi abbiamo della roba, fatene come della vostra. Messere Ansaldo gli ringrazio, e disse che bene aveva ancora tanto che ci potevano stare. Ora avvenne che stando sera e mattina Giannetto sopra questi pensieri, e' non si poteva rallegrare, e messere Ansaldo lo domandd quello ch' egli aveva entreated him to go to rest: when they were seated in the chamber, the two damsels enter with wine and sweet meats; and having eat and drank of them, they go to bed, and immediately Giannetto falls asleep, the lady undressed lying by his side; but, in short, he waked not the whole night. In the morning, the lady rises, and gives orders to strip the ship. After nine o'clock, he awakes, seeks for the lady, finds nothing; raises his head from the pillow, and finding it is late, gets up, and is ashamed of what has happened.

He has a horse and money given to him, and is told to be gone, and away he goes sorrowful and sad, and never stops till he gets to Venice; and at night goes to the house of the same friend, who when he saw him, with great wonder and astonishment asked him what was the matter? I am undone, says Giannetto, my cursed ill fortune first brought me to Venice. His friend answered, You may well curse your fortune, for you are the cause of the ruin of Ansaldo, who was the great est and richest merchant of any of the Christians; and your shame ought et egli rispose: Io non sard mai contento, s' io non racquisto quello ch' io ho perduto. Disse messere Ansaldo: Figliuol mio, io non voglio che tu vi vada piu; pero ch' egli e il meg-lio che noi ci stiamo pianamente con questo poco che noi abbiamo, che tu lo metta piu a partito. Rispose Giannetto : Io son fermo di fare tutto quel ch' io posso, perch' io mi ripu-terei in grandissima vergogna s' io stessi a questo modo. Per che veggendo messere Ansaldo la volonta sua, si dispose a vendere cid ch' egli aveva al mondo, e fornire a costui un' altra nave; e cosi fe che vende, tal che non gli rimase niente, e forni una bellissima nave di mercatanzia. E perche gli mancavano dieci mila ducati, ando a un Giudeo a Mestri, e accattogli con questi patti e condizioni, che s' egli non glie l'avesse renduti dal detto di a San Giovanni di giugno prossimo a venire, che '1 Giudeo gli potesse levare una libra di carne d'addosso di qualunque luogo e' volesse; e cosi fu con tento messere Ansaldo, e '1 Giudeo di questo fece trarre carta autentica con testimoni, e con quelle cautele e solen-nita, che intorno a cid bisognavano, e poi gli annovero dieci-mila ducati d' oro, de' quali danari messere Ansaldo forni cid che mancava alia nave; e se 1' altre due furone belle, la ter-

to be greater than the loss you have suffered. Giannetto lived privately many days in the house of his friend, not knowing what to do or say, in the design of returning to Florence without seeing Ansaldo. At last he took a resolution of seeing him, and accordingly waited on him. When Ansaldo saw him, he rose from his chair, and rnnning to em brace him, told him he was welcome: Giannetto with tears returned his embraces. Ansaldo, when he had heard his tale, Do not grieve, my dear son, says he, be assured that I cannot be angry, since I find you safe; we have still enough remaining to live decently; the sea enriches some men, others it ruins.

All Venice heard the story, and was concerned for Ansaldo: this misfortune obliged him to sell some estates to satisfy his creditors, who furnished the goods. The companions of Giannetto returned again, from Alexandria very rich, and when at Venice they were informed of this accident, they said it was the most extraordinary accident that could happen: they made a visit to Ansaldo and Giannetto, and with za fu inolto piu ricca e me' fornita; e cosi i compagni fornirono le loro due, con animo che cid ch' eglino guadagnassero fosse di Giannetto. E quando fu il tempo d'andare, essendo per movere, messere Ansaldo disse a Giannetto: Figliuol mio, tu vai e vedi nell' obligo ch' io rimango; d'una grazia ti pre-go, che se pure tu arrivassi male, che ti piaccia venire a ve-dermi, si ch' io possa vedere te innanzi ch' io moia, e andron-ne contento. Giannetto gli rispose: Messere Ansaldo, io faro tutte quelle cose ch' io creda piacervi. Messere Ansaldo gli die la sua benedizione, e cosi presero commiato e andarono a loro viaggio. Avevano questi due compagni sempre cura alia nave di Giannetto, e Giannetto andava sempre av-visato e attento di calarsi in questo porto di Belmonte. Per ch' e' fe tanto con uno de' suoi nocchieri, che una notte e condusse la nave nel porto di questa gentildonna. La mat tina rischiarato il giorno, i compagni ch' erano nell' altre due navi ponendosi mente intorno, e non veggendo in nessun lu-ogo la nave di Giannetto, dissero fra loro: Per certo questa e la mala ventura per costui, e presero per partito di seguire il camin loro, facendosi gran maraviglia di cid. Ora

essendo questa nave giunta in porto, tutto quel castello trasse a ve-

great kindness told them not to take too much to heart what was passed. We propose to make, say they, the next year, a voyage on your account: we have been the cause of this your loss, as we advised Giannetto at first to venture to sea; therefore fear nothing; as long as we have any thing, it will be at your disposal as much as if it was your own. Ansaldo returned them his thanks, and said he had still enough not to be troublesome to his friends. Poor Giannetto's head was day and night full of the thoughts of his bad success, and he could not put on a face of chearfulness: when Ansaldo enquired what was the matter, he confessed, he could never be contented till he should be in a condition to regain all that he lost. My dear child, you shall go no more, says Ansaldo; it will be better to stay here, content with the little we have left, than to risque another voyage.

Giannetto told him, he had made a firm resolution, to do all in his power to go again; that he could not bear the shame of living in the manner he must do. WhenAnsaldo found him resolved, he began to dere, sentendo che Giannetto era tomato, e maravigliandosi di cid molto, e dicendo: Cosi ui dee essere figliuolo di qualche grand* uomo, considerando ch' egli ci viene ogni anno con tanta mercanzia e con si be' navigli; che volesse Iddio, ch' egli fosse nostro signore; e cosi fu visitato da tutti i maggiori, e da baroni e cavalieri di quella terra, e fu detto alia donna come Giannetto era tomato in porto. Per che ella si fece alle finestre del palazzo, e vide questa bellissima nave, e conobbe le bandiere, e di cid si fece ella il segno della santa croce, dicendo: Per certo che questi e qualche gran fatto, et e quell' uomo che ha messo dovizia in questo paese; e man-do per lui. Giannetto ando a lei con molte abbracciate, e si salutarono e fecersi riverenza, e quivi s' attese tutto qyel gi-orno a fare allegrezza e festa, e fessi per amor di Giannetto una bella giostra, e molti baroni e cavalieri giostrarono quel giorno, e Giannetto voile giostrare anch' egli, e fece il di mi-racoli di sua persona, tanto stava bene nell' armi e a cavallo; e tanto piacque la maniera sua a tutti i baroni, che ogniuno lo desiderava per signore. Ora avvenne che la sera, essendo tempo d'andare a posarsi, la donna prese per mano Giannetto e disse: Andiamo a posarci; et essendo sull' uscio della ca-

sell every thing he had, and equip another ship; and so he did, and disposed of all he was worth, and left himself destitute, to furnish this other fine ship with merchandize: but, as he wanted still ten thousand ducats, he apply'd himself to a Jew at Mestri, and borrowed them on condition, that if they were not paid on the feast of St. John in the next month of June, that the Jew might take a pound of flesh from any part of his body he pleased. Ansaldo agreed, and the Jew had an obligation drawn, and witnessed, with all the form and ceremony necessary; and then counted him the ten thousand ducats of gold; with which Ansaldo bought what was still wanting for the vessel. This last ship was finer and better freighted than the other two, and his companions made ready for the voyage, with a design that whatever they gained should be for their friend. When it was time to depart, Ansaldo told Giannetto, that since he well knew of the obligation to the Jew, he entreated him in case any misfortune happened, that he would return to Venice, that he might see him before he died; and then be could

mera, una cameriera della donna, cui incresceva di Giannetto, si gi' inchind cosi all' orecchio, e disse pianamente: Fa vista di bere, e non bere stasera. Giannetto, intese le parole, e entro in camera, e la donna disse: Io so che voi avete colto sete, e pero io voglio che voi beate prima che v'andiate a dormire; e subito vennero due donzelle, che parevano due agnioli, con vino e confetti al modo usato, e si attesero a dar bere. Disse Giannetto: Chi si terrebbe di non bere, veggendo queste due damigelle tanto belle? di che la donna rise. E Giannetto prese la tazza, e fe vista di bere e cacciosselo giu pel seno, e la donna si credette ch' egli avesse bevuto, e disse fra '1 suo cuore: Tu conducerai un' altra nave, che quests hai tu perduta. Giannetto se n' andd nel letto, e sentissi tutto chiaro e di buona volonta, e parevagli mille anni che la donna ne venisse a letto; e diceva fra se medesimo: Per certo io ho giunta costei; si ch' e' ne pensa una il ghiotto, e un' altra il tavernaio. E perche la donna venisse piu tosto nel letto, comincid a far vista di russare e dormire. Per che la donna disse: Sta bene; e subito si spoglid leave the world with satisfaction: Giannetto promised to do every thing that he conceived might give him pleasure. Ansaldo gave him his blessing, they take their leave, and the ships set out.

The two companions observed carefully the ship of Giannetto, while he had nothing in his head but to contrive in what manner to steal into the port of Belmonte; and he prevailed with one of the sailors in the night to sail the vessel into the port of the lady. The morning being clear, his companions looking round, and not seeing any where the vessel, said to themselves, Giannetto has certainly bad luck; but continued their course, wondering greatly where the ship could be gone. The ship being arrived in port, all ran from the castle, hearing Giannetto was come again, and wondering much at his return. He must undoubtedly, say they, be the son of some great personage, as he comes every year with such rich merchandize, and fine ships: would to God he was our master 1 He was visited by all the principal men of the country, and it was told to the lady, that Giannetto was arrived in port. She saw from the window the vessel, and knew the streamers; and making the sign of the cross, cries! This is certainly a bold un*

e ando a lato a Giannetto, il quale non aspetto punto, ma comunque la donna fu entrata sotto, cosi si volse a lei, e ab-bracciolla e disse : Ora ho quel ch' io ho tanto desiderato, e con questo le dond la pace del santissimo matrimonio, e in tutta notte non gli uscl di braccio; di che la donna fu piu che contenta, e si levd la mattina innanzi giorno, e fece mandare per tutti i baroni e cavalieri, e altri cittadini assai, e disse loro: Giannetto e vostro signore, e perd attendete a far festa; di che subito per la terra si levd il romore, gridando: Viva il signore, viva il signore, e da nelle campane e ne gli stro-menti sonando a festa; e mandossi per molti baroni e conti ch' erano fuor del castello, dicendo loro: Yenite a vedere il signor vostro; e quivi si comincio una grande e bellissima festa. E quando Giannetto uscl della camera, fu fatto cava-liere e posto sulla sedia, e dato gli fu la bacchetta in mano, e chiamato signore con molto trionfo e gloria. E poi che tutti i baroni e le donne furono venute a Corte, egli sposo questa gentildonna con tanta festa, e con tanta allegrezza, che non si potrebbe ne dire ne imaginare. Per che tutti i baroni e dertaking! This is the man who has already left so great riches in this country; and immediately sent for him.

Giannetto goes to the castle, salutes, embraces her, and makes his bows, and the day is spent in joy and feasting; and to honour him, a tournament is ordered, and many barons and knights tilted that day. Giannetto did wonders, so well did he understand the lance, and was so graceful a figure on horseback: he pleased so much, that all were again desirous to have him for their lord.

The lady, when it was the usual time, taking him by the hand, begged him to take his rest. When he passed the door of the chamber, one of the damsels of the lady, laying her mouth to his ear, in a whisper said to him, Make a pretence to drink the liquor, but touch not one drop this evening. He understood what she meant, and when the lady said, I know you must be thirsty, I must have you drink before you go to bed, immediately two damsels, handsome as angels, with wine and sweet meats, in the usual manner, entered the room, and presented the wine. Who can refuse wine from such beautiful hands? cries Giannetto: at which the lady smiled. Giannetto takes the cup,

signori del paese vennero alia festa a fare allegrezza, giostrare, armeggiare,

danzare, cantare e sonare, con tutte quelle cose che s'appartengono a far festa. Messer Giannetto, come magnanimo, comincio a donare drappi di seta e altre ricche cose ch' egli aveva recate, e divento virile, e fecesi temere a mantenere ragione e giustizia a ogni maniera di gente, e cosi si stava in questa festa e allegrezza, e non si curava ne ricor-dava di messere Ansaldo cattivello, ch' era rimaso pegno per dieci mila ducati a quel Giudeo. Ora essendo un giorno messer Giannetto alia finestra del palazzo con la donna sua, vide passare per piazza una brigata d' uomini con torchietti in mano accesi, i quali andavano a offerire. Disse messer Giannetto: Che vuol dir quello? Rispose la donna: Quella e una brigata d' artefici che vanno a offerire alia Chiesa di San Giovanni, perch' egli e oggi la festa sua. Messer Gian netto si ricordo allora di messere Ansaldo, e levossi dalla finestra, e trasse un gran sospiro, e tutto si cambid nel viso, e andava di giu in su per la sala piu volte, pensando sopra questo fatto. La donna il domando quel ch' egli aveva.

and making as if he had drank, pours the wine into his bosom. The lady thinking he had drank, says aside to herself with great joy, You must go, young man, and bring another ship, for this is condemned. Giannetto went to bed, and finding himself brisk and in great spirits, he thought it a thousand years till the lady came to bed, comforting himself with the hopes that he had caught her now certainly, and that she would find, she was mistaken in her man; and in order to entice her soon to bed, he began to snore as if he slept soundly. The lady perceiving this, said, this will do, and laid heiself down by his side. Giannetto loses no time, but turning to the lady, embraces her, saying, Now am 1 in possession of my utmost wishes. He gave her immedi ately the strongest proofs of his affection, and lay all night in her arms. The lady was highly pleased with her lover, and early in the morning sent for her principal subjects, telling them, that Giannetto was their lord; and gave them orders to pay all possible honours to him. Imme diately the news is spread through the whole territory; the people crying, Long live our new master! long live our new master! the bells and musical instruments inviting all to joy and mirth. The nobles who Rispose messer Giannetto: Io non ho altro. Per che la donna il comincid a esaminare, dicendo: Per certo voi avete qualche cosa, e non lo volete dire; e tanto gli disse che mes ser Giannetto le conto come messere Ansaldo era rimaso pegno per dieci mila ducati, e questo di corre il termine, dice-va egli, e perd ho gran dolore che mio padre moia per me; perche se oggi e' non glie li da, ha a perdere una libra di car-ne d' addosso. La donna disse: Messere, montate subitamente a cavallo et attraversate per terra, che andrete piu tosto che per mare, e menate quella compagnia che vi piace, e portate cento mila ducati, e non restate mai che

voi siate a Vine gia; e se non e morto, fate di menarlo qui. Per che egli subito fe dare nella trombetta, e monto a cavallo con venti compagni, e tolse danari assai e prese il camino verso Vinegia. Ora avvenne che compiuto il termine, il Giudeo fe pigliare messere Ansaldo, e volevagli levare una libra di carne d' ad dosso; onde messere Ansaldo lo pregava, che gli piacesse d' indugiargli quella morte qualche di, acciocche se il suo Gian netto venisse, almeno e' lo potesse vedere. Disse il Giudeo:

were not at the castle, were sent for to appear there, and behold their master, and assist at all the rejoicings. When Giannetto came out of his chamber, he was knighted, and placed in the chair of state; had the scepter put into his hand, and was proclaimed sovereign of the country, with great pomp and splendour; and when the lords and ladies were come" to the castle, he married the lady in great ceremony. Nothing can be imagined equal to the joy on that occasion, as every one endeavoured to excell in tilting, dancing, musick, and every amuse • ment, and diversion, practiced at such solemnities.

Giannetto, who was of a disposition that did honour to his exalta tion, gave presents of every thing of value he had brought with him: he governed excellently well, and caused justice to be administered impartially to all sorts of people. He continued some time in this happy state, and never had entertained a thought of poor Ansaldo, who had given his bond to the Jew for ten thousand ducats. But one day, as he stood at the window of the palace with his bride, he saw a number of people pass along the piazza, with lighted torches in their hands, who were going to make their offerings. What is the meaning Io son contento di dare cid che voi volete quanto all' ondugio, ma s' egli venisse cento volte, io intendo di levarvi una libra di carne d' addosso, come dicono le carte. Rispose messere Ansaldo ch' era contento. Di che tutta Vinegia parlava di questo fatto; ma a ogniuno ne incresceva, e molti mercatanti si raunarono per volere pagar questi danari, e '1 Giudeo non voile mai, anzi voleva fare quello omicidio, per poter dire che avesse morto il maggiore mercatante che fosse tra' Cristiani. Ora avvenne che venendo forte messer Giannetto, la donna sua subito si gli mosse dietro vestita come uu giudice con due famigli. Giugnendo in Vinegia messer Giannetto ando a cassa il Giudeo, e con molta allegrezza abbraccio messere An saldo, e poi disse al Giudeo che gli voleva dare i danari suoi, e quel piu ch' egli stesso voleva. Rispose il Giudeo che non voleva danari, poi che non gli aveva avuti al tempo, ma che gli voleva levare una libra di carne d' addosso, e qui fu la quistion grande, e ogni persona dava il torto al Giudeo; ma pure considerato Vinegia essere terra di ragione, e il Giudeo aveva le sue ragioni piene e in pubblica forma, non si gli osava of this? says he. The lady answered, tbey are a company of artificers, who are going to make their offerings at the church of St. John, this day is his festival. Giannetto instantly recollected Ansaldo, and leaving the window, he gave a great sigh, and turned pale; running about the room in great distraction. His lady inquired the cause of his sudden change. He said, he felt nothing. She continued to press with great earnestness, till he was obliged to confess the cause of his uneasiness, that Ansaldo was engaged for the money, and that the term was expired; and the grief he was in, lest his father should lose his life for him: that if the ten thousand ducats were not paid that day he must lose a pound of bis flesh. The lady told him to mount on horseback, and go by land the nearest way, which was better than to go by sea; to take some attendants, and an hundred thousand ducats; and not to stop, till he arrived at Venice : and if he was not dead, to endeavour to bring Ansaldo to her. Giannetto takes horse with twenty attendants, and makes the best of his way to Venice.

The time being expired, the Jew had seized Ansaldo, and insisted on having a pound of flesh. He entreated him only to wait some days,

di dire il contrario per nessuno, se non pregarlo. Talche tutti i mercatanti di Vinegia vi furono su a pregare questo Giudeo, et egli sempre piu duro che mai. Per che messer Giannetto glie ne voile dare venti mila, e non volse, poi venne a trenta mila, e poi a quaranta mila, e poi a cinquanta mila; e cosi ascese infino a cento mila ducati. Ove il Giudeo disse: Sai com* e 1 se tu mi desse piu ducati che non vale questa citta, non gli torrei per esser contento; anzi i' vuo' fare quel che dicon le carte mie. E cosi stando in questa quistione, ecco giugnere in Vinegia questa donna vestita a modo di giudice, e smonto a uno albergo, e 1' albergatore domando un famiglio: Chi e questo gentil uomo? II famiglio, gia avvi-sato dalla donna di cid che '1 doveva dire essendo di lei inter rogate, rispose: Questo si e un gentil uomo giudice che vien da Bologna da studio, e tornasi a casa sua. L' albergatore cid intendendo, gli fece assai onore, et essendo a tavola il giu dice disse all' albergatore: Come si regge questa vostra citta 1 Rispose I' oste: Messere, faccisi troppa ragione. Disse il giudice : Come 1 Soggiunse 1' oste : Come, messere, io ve that if his dear Giannetto arrived, he might have the pleasure of em bracing him before his death: the Jew replied he was willing to wait, but, says he, if he comes an hundred times over, I will cut off the pound of flesh, according to the words of the obligation: Ansaldo an swered, that h£ was content.

Every one at Venice who had heard of this affair was much con cerned : several merchants would have jointly paid the money; the Jew would not hearken to the proposal, but insisted that he might commit this homicide, to have the satisfaction of saying, that he had put to death the greatest of the Christian merchants. Giannetto making all possible haste to Venice, his lady soon followed him in a lawyer's habit, with two servants following her. Giannetto when he came to Venice, goes to the Jew, and (after embracing Ansaldo) tells him, he is ready to pay the money, and as much more as he should demand. The Jew said, he would take no money, since it was not paid at the time due; but that he would have the pound of flesh. And now this was much talked of, and every one blamed the Jew: but as Venice was a place where justice was strictly administered, and the lo diro. E' ci venne da Firenze un giovane, ii quale aveva nome Giannetto, e venne qui a un suo nonno che ha nome messere Ansaldo, et e stato tanto aggraziato e tanto costumato, che gli uomini e le donne di questa terra erano innamorati di lui. E non ci venne mai in questa citta nessuno tanto aggraziato quanto era costui. Ora questo suo nonno in tre volte gli forni tre navi, le quali furono di gtandissima valuta, e ogni otta glie ne incontro sciagura, si che alia nave da sezzo gli manco danari; tal che questo messere Ansaldo accatto dieci mila ducati da un Giudeo con questi patti, che s' egli non glie li avesse renduti da ivi a San Giovanni di giugno prossimo che venia, il detto Giudeo gli potesse levare una libra di carne d' addosso dovunque e' volesse. Ora e tomato questo benedetto giovane, e per que' dieci mila ducati glie ne ha voluto dare cento mila, e 'I falso Giudeo non vuole; e sonvi stati a pregarlo tutti i buoni uomini di questa terra, e non giova niente. Rispose il giudice: Questa quistione e agevole a diterminare. Disse 1' oste: Se voi ci volete durar fatica a terminarla, si che quel buon uomo non muoia, voi n Jew had his pretensions grounded on publick and received forms, nobody dared to oppose him, and their only resource was entreaty; and when the merchants of Venice applied to him, he was inflexible. Giannetto offered him twenty thousand which he refused; then thirty thousand, afterwards forty, fifty, and at last an hundred thousand ducats. The Jew told him, if he would give him as much gold as the city of Venice was worth, he would not accept it; and says he, you know little of me, if you think I will desist from my demand.

The lady now arrives at Venice, in her lawyer's dress; and alighting at an inn, the landlord asks of one of the servants who his master was? The servant having learned his lesson, answered, that he was a young lawyer who had finished his studies at Bologna, and was returning to his own country. The .landlord upon this shews his guest great civility: and when he attended at dinner, the lawyer inquiring how justice was administred in that city; he answered, justice in this place is too severe. How comes that? says the lawyer. I will tell how, says the landlord: you must know, that some years ago there came here a young man from Florence, whose name was Giannetto, he was recom-

acquisterete la grazia e F amore del piu virtuoso giovane che nascesse mai, e poi di tutti gli uomini di questa terra. Onde questo giudice fece andare un bando per la terra, che qualunque avesse a diterminare quistion nessuna, venisse da lui; ove fu detto a messer Giannetto come e' v' era venuto un giu dice da Bologna, che determinarebbe ogni quistione. Per che messer Giannetto disse al Giudeo: Andiamo a questo giudice. Disse il Giudeo: Andiamo; ma venga chi vuole, che a ragione io n' ho a fare quanto dice la carta. E giunti nel cospetto del giudice, e fattogli debita riverenza, il giudice conobbe messer Giannetto, ma messer Giannetto non conobbe gia lui, perche con certe erbe s' era trasfigurata la faccia. Messer Giannetto e '1 Giudeo dissero ciascuno la ragion sua, e la quistione ordinatamente innanzi al giudice; il quale prese le carte e lessele, e poi disse al Giudeo: Io voglio che tu ti tolga questi cento mila ducati, e liberi questo buon uomo, il qual anco te ne sara sempre tenuto. Rispose il Giudeo : Io non ne faro niente. Disse il giudice: Egli e il tuo meglio. E '1 Giudeo, che al tutto non ne voleva far nulla. E d' ac-

mended to the care of a relation who is called Ansaldo: he behaved here so well as to possess the esteem and affections of every living creature, and never was a youth so well beloved. Now this Ansaldo sent him out three times, each time with a ship of great value; he, every time, was unfortunate : and to furnish the last, Ansaldo was forced to borrow ten thousand ducats of a Jew, on condition, that if he did not repay them in June, at the feast of St. John, the Jew might take a pound of his flesh. This excellent young man is now returned, and offers to pay an hundred'thousand ducats: the wicked Jew won't take them, although the best merchants in the city have applied to him, but to no purpose. Says the lawyer, this question may be easily answered. If you can answer it, says the landlord, and will take the trouble to do it, and save this worthy man from death, you will get the love and esteem of a most deserving young man, and of all the best men of this city. The lawyer caused a proclamation to be made, that whoever had any law matters to determine, they should have recourse to him: so it was told to Giannetto, that a famous lawyer was come from Bologna, who could decide all cases in law. Giannetto proposed to the Jew to cordo se n' andarono all' ufficio

diterminato sopra tali casi, e 1' giudice parlo per messere Ansaldo e disse: 01 tre fa venir costui; e fattolo venire, disse il giudice: Orsu lievagli una libra di came dovunque tu vuoi, e fa i fatti tuoi. Dove il Giudeo lo fece spogliare ignudo, e recossi in inano un rasoio, che per cid egli aveva fatto fare. E messer Giannetto si volse al giudice, e disse: Messere, di questo non vi pregava io. Rispose il giudice: Sta franco, che egli non ha ancora spic-cata una libra di came. Pure il Giudeo gli andava addosso* Disse il giudice: Guarda come tu fai; pero che se tu ne leve-rai piu o meno che una libra, io ti faro levare la testa. E anco io ti dico piu, che se n' uscira pure una gocciola di sangue, io ti faro morire; pero che le carte tue non fanno menzione di spargimento di sangue, anzi dicono che tu gli debba levare una libra di came, e non dice ne piu ne meno. E per tanto, se tu se' savio, tieni que' modi che tu credi fare il tuo ineglio. E cod subito fe mandare per lo giustiziere, e fegli recare il ceppo e la mannaia, e disse : Com' io ne vedro uscire gocciola di sangue, cosi ti faro levare la testa. II Giu-

apply to this lawyer. With all my heart, says the Jew; but let who will come, I will stick to my bond. When they came to this judge, and had saluted him, he immediately knew Giannetto; but he did not remember him: for he had disguised his face with the juice of certain herbs. Giannetto, and the Jew, each told the merits of the cause to the judge; who, when he had taken the bond and read it, said to the Jew, I must have you take the hundred thousand ducats, and release this honest man, who will always have a grateful sense of the favour done to him. The Jew replied, I will do no such thing. The judge answered, it will be better for you. The Jew was positive to yield nothing. Upon this they go to the tribunal appointed for such judgments: and our judge speaks in favour of Ansaldo; and desiring that the Jew may stand forth, Now, says he, do you (to the Jew) cut a pound of this man's flesh where you chuse. The Jew ordered him to be stripped naked; and takes in his hand a razor, which had been made on purpose. Gian netto seeing this, turning to the judge, this, says he, is not the favour I asked of you. Be quiet, says he, the pound of flesh is not yet cut off. As soon as the Jew was going to begin, take care what you do, says the deo comincid aver paura, e messer Giannetto a rallegrarsi. E dopo molte novelle, disse il Giudeo: Messer lo giudice, voi ne avete saputo piu di me; ma fatemi dare quei cento mila ducati e son contento. Disse il giudice: Io voglio che tu vi levi una libra di carne, come dicono le carte tue, perd ch' io non ti darei un danaio; avessigli tolti quando io te gli volli far dare. II Giudeo venne a nonanta, e poi a ottanta mila, e '1 giudice sempre piu fermo. Disse messer Giannetto al giu dice : Diangli cid che e' vuole, pure che ce lo renda. Disse il giudice : Io ti dico che tu lasci fare a me. Allora il Giu deo disse: Datemene cinquantamila. Rispose il giudice: Io non te ne darei il piu tristo danaio che tu avessi mai. Soggiunse il Giudeo: Datemi almeno i miei dieci mila ducati, che maladetta sia 1' aria e la terra. Disse il giudice: Non m' intendi tu 1 io non te ne vuo' dar nessuno; se tu glie la vuoi levare, si glie la lieva; quanto che no, io te faro protestare e annullare le carte tue. Talche chiunque v' era presente, di questo faceva grandissima allegrezza, e ciascuno si faceva beffe di questo Giudeo, dicendo: Tale si crede uccellare, ch'

judge, if you take more or less than a pound, I will order your head to be struck off: and I tell you beside, that if you shed one drop of blood you shall be put to death. Your paper makes no mention of the shed ding of blood; but says expresly, that you may take a pound of flesh? neither more nor less; and if you are wise, you will take great care what you do. He immediately sent for the executioner to bring the block and ax; and now, says he, if I see one drop of blood, off goes your head. The Jew began to be in great fear, and Giannetto in as great joy. At length the Jew, after much wrangling, told him, you are more cunning than I can pretend to be; however, give me the hun dred thousand ducats, and I am content. No, says the judge, cut off your pound of flesh according to your bond; I will not give you a farthing: why did not you take the money when it was offered? The Jew came down to ninety, and then to eighty thousand; but the judge was still resolute. Giannetto told the judge to give what he required, that Ansaldo might have his liberty: but he replied, let me manage him. Then the Jew would have taken fifty thousand: he said, I will not give you a penny. Give me at least, says the Jew, my own ten e uccellato. Onde veggendo il Giudeo ch' egli non poteva fare quello ch' egli avrebbe voluto, prese le carte sue, e per istizza tutte le taglid, e cosi fu liberato messere Ansaldo, e con grandissima festa messer Giannetto lo rimend a casa; e poi prestamente prese questi cento mila ducati, e ando a questo giudice, e trovollo nella camera che s' acconciava per volere andar via. Allora messer Giannetto gli disse: Mes sere, voi avete fatto a me il maggior servigio che mai mi fosse fatto; e perd io voglio che voi portiate questi danari a casa vostra; perd che voi gli avete ben guadagnati. Rispose il giudice : Messer Giannetto mio, a voi sia gran merce, ch' io non n' ho di bisogno; portategli con voi, si che la donna vos tra non dica che voi abbiate fatto male masserizia. Disse messer Giannetto: Per mia fe ch' ella e tanto magnanima, e tanto cortese e tanto da bene, che se io ne spendessi quattro cotanti che questi, ella sarebbe contenta; perd ch' ella voleva che io ne arrecassi molto piu che non sono questi. Soggiunse il giudice: Come vi contentate voi di lei 1 Rispose messer Giannetto: E' non e creatura al mondo, a cui io vo-glia meglio che a lei; perch' ella e tanto savia e tanto bella,

thousand ducats, and a curse confound you all. The judge replies, I will give you nothing: if you will have the pound of flesh, take it; if not, I will order your bond to be protested and annulled. Every one present was greatly pleased; and deriding the Jew, said, he who laid traps for others, is caught himself. The Jew seeing he could gain nothing, tore in pieces the bond in a great rage. Ansaldo was re leased, and conducted home with great joy by Giannetto. The hundred thousand ducats he carried to the inn to the lawyer, whom he found making ready to depart. You have done me, says he, a most important service, and I entreat you to accept of this money to carry home, for I am sure you have earned it. I thank you, replied the lawyer, I do not want money; keep and carry it back to your lady, that she may not have occasion to say, that you have squandered it away idly. Says Giannetto, my lady is so good and kind, that I might venture to spend four times as much, without incurring her displeasure; and she ordered me, when I came away, to bring with me a larger sum. How are you pleased with the lady? says the lawyer. I love her better than any earthly thing, answers Giannetto : Nature never produced any woman quanto la natura 1' avesse potuta far piu. E se voi mi volete fare tanta grazia di venire a vederla, voi vi maraviglierete dell* onore ch' elia vi fara, e vedrete s' egli e quel ch' io dico o piu. Rispose il giudice: Del venire con voi, non voglio, pero che io ho altre faccende; ma poi che voi dite ch' ella £ tanto da bene, quando la vedrete, salutatela per mia parte. Disse messer Giannetto: Sara fatto; ma io voglio che voi togliate di questi danari. E mentre che e' diceva queste parole, il giudice gli vide in dito uno anello, onde gli disse:

10 vuo' questo anello, e non voglio altro danaio nessuno. Rispose messer Giannetto: Io son contento, ma io ve lo do mai volentieri; pero che la donna mia me lo dond, e dis-semi ch' io lo portassi sempre per suo amore, e s' ella non me lo vedera, credera ch' io 1' abbia dato a qualche femina, e cosi si crucciera con meco, e credera ch' io sia innamorato, e io voglio meglio a lei che a me medesimo. Disse 11 giudice: E' mi par esser certo, ch' ella vi vuole tanto bene, ch' ella vi credera questo; e voi le direte che 1' avete donato a me. Ma forse lo volevate voi donare a qualche vostra manza antica qui? Rispose messer Gian-

so beautiful, discreet, and sensible, and seems to have done her utmost in forming her. If you will do me the favour to come and see her, you will be surprised at the honours she will shew you; and you will be able to judge whether I speak truth or not. I cannot go with you, says the lawyer, I have other engagements; but since you speak so much good of her, I must desire you to present my respects to her. I will not fail, Giannetto answered; and now, let me entreat you to accept of some of the money. While he was speaking, the lawyer observed a ring on his finger, and said, if you will give me this ring, I shall seek no other reward. Willingly, says Giannetto; but as it is a ring given me by my lady, to wear for her sake, I have some reluctance to part with it, and she may think, not seeing it on my finger, and will believe, that I have given it to a woman that I love, and quarrel with me, tho' I protest I love her much better than I love myself. Certain ly, says the lawyer, she esteems you sufficiently to credit what you tell her, and you may say you made a present of it to me; but I rather think you want to give it to some former mistress here in Venice. So great, says Giannetto, is the love and reverence I bear to her, that I would not change her for any woman in the world, she is so accom-

netto: Egli e tanto 1' amore e la fe ch? io le porto, che non e donna al mondo, a cui io cambiassi, tanto compiutamente e bella in ogni cosa; e cosi si cavd 1' anello di dito e diello al giudice, e poi s' abbracciarono, facendo riverenza V un all* altro. Disse il giudice: Fatemi una grazia. Rispose messer Giannetto: Domandate. Disse il giudice: Che voi non re-stiate qui; andatene tosto a vedere quella vostra donna. Dis9e messer Giannetto: E' mi pare cento mila anni ch' io la riveggia, e cosi presero commiato. II giudice entro in barca e andossi con Dio, e messer Giannetto fece cene e desinari, e dond cavalli e danari a que* suoi compagnoni, e cosi fe piu di festa, e mantenne corte, e poi prese comiato da tutti i Vini-ziani, e menossene messere Ansaldo con seco, e molti de' suoi compagni antichi se n' andarono con lui; e quasi tutti gli uo-mini e le donne per tenerezza lagrimarono per la partita sua; tanto s' era portato piacevolmente nel tempo ch' egli era stato a Vinegia con ogni persona;- e cosi si parti e tornossi in Belmonte. Ora avvenne che la donna sua giunse piu di innanzi, e fe vista d' essere stata al bagno, e rivestissi al modo femi-nile, e fece fare 1* apparecchio grande, e coprire tutte le strade di zendado, e fe vestire molte brigate d' armeggiatori. E

plished in every article. After this he takes the ring from his finger, and presents it to him; and embracing each the other, I have still a favour to ask, says the lawyer. It shall be granted, says Giannetto. It is, replied he, that you do not stay any time here, but go as soon as possible to your lady. It appears to me a thousand years till I see her, Giannetto answered: and immediately they take leave of each other. The lawyer embarked, and left Venice. Giannetto made entertain ments, and presents of horses and money to his former companions; and having made a great expence for several days, he took leave of his Venetian friends, and carried Ansaldo with him, and some of his old acquaintance accompanied them. Everybody shed tears at his de parture, both men and women; his amiable deportment had so gained the good-will of all. In this manner he left Venice, and returned to Belmonte.

The lady arrived some days before; and having resumed her female habit, pretended to have spent the time at the baths; and now gave orders to have every thing prepared, and the streets lined with tapestry,

quando messer Giannetto e messere Ansaldo giunsero, tutti i baroni e la corte gli andarono incontra, gridando: Viva il sig nore, viva il signore. E come e' giunsero nella terra, la donna corse ad abbracciare messere Ansaldo, e finse esser un poco crucciata con messer Giannetto, a cui voleva meglio cbe a se. Fecesi la festa grande di giostrare, di armeggiare, di danzare e di cantare per tutti i baroni e le donne e donzelle che v» erano. Veggendo messer Giannetto che la moglie non gli faceva cosi buon viso com' ella soleva, andossene in camera, e chiamolla e disse : Che hai tu 1 e volsela abbracciare. Disse la donna: Non ti bisogna fare queste carezze, ch' io so bene che a Vinegia tu hai ritrovate le tue manze antiche. Messer Giannetto si comincid a scusare. Disse la donna: Ov' e 1' anello ch' io ti diedi 7 Rispose messer Giannetto: Cid ch' io mi pensai, me n' e incontrato, e dissi bene che tu te ne pen-seresti male. Ma io ti giuro per la fe ch' io porto a Dio e a te, che quello anello io lo donai a quel giudice che mi die vinta la quistione. Disse la donna: Io ti giuro per la fe ch' io porto a Dio e a te, che tu lo donasti a una femina, e io lo so, e non ti vergogni di giurarlo. Soggiunse messer Gian netto : Io prego Iddio che mi disfaccia del mondo, s' io non ti and filled with men armed for the tiltings and exercises. And when Giannetto and Ansaldo were landed, all the court when out to meet them, crying, Long live our sovereign lord! long live our sovereign lord! When they arrived at the palace, the lady ran to embrace An saldo; but feigned anger against Giannetto, tho' she loved him exces sively : yet the feastings, tilts and diversions went on as usual, at which all the lords and ladies assisted. Giannetto seeing that his wife did not receive him with her accustomed good countenance, called her, and inquiring the reason, would have saluted her. She told him, she wanted not his caresses: I am sure, says she, you have been lavish of them to some of your former mistresses at Venice. Giannetto began to make excuses. She asked him where was the ring she had given him? It is no more that what I expected, cries Giannetto, and I was in the right to say you would be angry with me; but, I swear by all that is sacred, and by your dear self, that I gave the ring to the lawyer who gained our cause. And I can swear, says the lady, with as much solemnity, that you gave the ring to a woman; and I know it certainly:

dico il vero, e piu ch' io lo dissi col giudice insieme, quando egli me lo chiese. Disse la donna: Tu vi ti potevi anco rima-nere, e qua mandare messere Ansaldo, e tu goderti con le tue manze, che odo che tutte piangevano quando tu ti partisti. Messer Giannetto comincid a lagrimare, e a darsi assai tribu-lazione, dicendo: Tu fai Sacramento di quel che non e vero, e non potrebbe essere. Dove la donna veggendolo lagrimare, parve che le fosse dato d' un coltello nel cuore, e subito corse ad abbracciarlo, facendo le maggiori risa del mondo; e mos-trogli 1' anello, e dissegli ogni cosa, com' egli aveva detto al giudice, e come ella era stata quel giudice, e in che modo glielo diede. Onde messer Giannetto di questo si fece la maggior maraviglia del mondo; e veggendo ch' egli era pur vero, ne comincid a fare gran festa. E uscito fuor di camera lo disse con alcuno de' suoi baroni e compagni, e per questo erebbe e moltiplico 1' amore fra loro due. Dapoi messer Giannetto chiamo quella cameriera che gli aveva insegnato la sera che non beesse, e diella per moglie a messere Ansal do; e cosi stettero lungo tempo in allegrezza e festa, mentre che duro la lor vita.

therefore swear no more. Giannetto said, if what he had told her was not true, he wished every misfortune to fall on him, that might destroy him; and that he said all this to the lawyer, when he asked for the ring. The lady replied, you would have done better to stay at Venice with your mistresses, and have sent Ansaldo here; for I hear they all wept when you came away. Giannetto's tears began to fall, and in great sorrow he assured her that what she supposed could not possibly be true. The lady seeing his tears, which were daggers in her bosom, ran to embrace him, and in a tit of laughter shewed the ring, told every thing which he had said to the lawyer; that she was herself the lawyer; and how she obtained the ring. Giannetto was greatly asto nished, finding it all true, and was highly delighted with what he had heard; and went out of the chamber, and told the story to the nobles and to his companions; and this heightened greatly the love between him and his lady. He then called the damsel who had given him the good advice the evening not to drink the liquor, and gave her to An saldo for a wife: and they spent the rest of their lives in great felicity and contentment.

DECLAMATION NINETY-FIVE

OF A JEW, WHO WOULD FOR HIS DEBT HAVE A POUND OF THE FLESH OF A CHRISTIAN.

From the Orator of Alex. Silvayn, Englished by L. P.,1598

A Jew unto whom a Christian Merchant ought nine hundred crownes, would have summoned him for the same in Turckie : the Merchant because he would not be discredited, promised to pay the said summe within the tearme of three months, and if he paied it not, he was bound lo give him a pound of the flesh of his bodie. The tearme being past some fifteene daies, the Jew refused to take his money, and demaunded the pound of flesh : the ordinarie Judge of that place appointed him to cut a just pound of the Christ ians flesh, and if he cut either more or lesse, then his owne head should be smitten off. The Jew appealed from this sentence unto the chiefe Judge, saying :

Impossible is it to breake the credite of trafficke amongst men without great detriment unto the Commonwealth: wherfore no man ought to bind himselfe unto such covenants which hee cannot or wil not accomplish, for by that means should no man feare to be deceaved, and credit being main tained, every man might be assured of his owne; but since deceit hath taken place, never wonder if obligations are made more rigorous and strict then they were wont, seeing that although the bonds are made never so strong, yet can no man be very certaine that he shal not be a loser. It seemeth at the first sight, that it is a thing no lesse strange then cruel, to bind a man to pay a pound of the flesh of his bodie, for want of money: Surely, in that it is a thing not usuall, it appeareth to be somewhat the more admirable, but there are divers others that are more cruell, which because they are in use seeme nothing terrible at all: as to bind al the bodie unto a most lothsome prison, or unto an intoler able slaverie, where not only the whole bodie but also al the sences and spirits are tormented, the which is commonly practised, not only betwixt those which are either in sect or nation contrary, but also even amongst those that are all of one sect and nation, yea amongst neighbours and kindred, and even amongst Christians it hath ben seene, that the son hath imprisoned the father for monie. Likewise, in the Roman Commonwealth, so famous for laws and armes, it was lawfull for debt, to imprison, beat, and afflict with torments the free Citizens: How manie of them (do you thinke) would have thought themselves happie, if for a small debt they might have ben excused with the paiment of a pound of their flesh 1 Who ought then to marvile if a Jew requireth so small a thing of a Christian, to discharge him of a good round summe 1 A man may aske why I would not rather take silver of this man, then his flesh: I might alleage many reasons, for I might say that none but my selfe can tell what the breach of his promise hath cost me, and what I have thereby paied for want of money unto my creditors, of that which I have lost in my credit: for the miserie of those men which esteeme their reputation is so great, that oftentimes they had rather indure any thing secretlie then to have their discredit blazed abroad, because they would not be both shamed and harmed. Neverthelesse, I doe freely confesset that I had rather lose a pound of my flesh, then my credi, should be in any sort cracked: I might also say that I have need of this flesh to cure a friend of mine of a certaine maladie, which is otherwise incurable, or that I would have it to terrifle thereby the Christians for ever abusing the Jewes anie more hereafter: but I will onelie say, that by his obligation he oweth it me. It is lawfull to kill a souldior if he come unto the warres but an houre too late, and also to hang a theefe though he steale never so little : is it then such a great matter to cause such a one to pay a pound of his flesh, that hath broken his promise manie times, or that putteth another in danger to lose both credit and reputation, yea and it may be life and al for greife 1 Were it not better for him to lose that which I demand, then his soule, alreadie bound by his faith 1 Neither am I to take that which he oweth me, but he is to deliver it me : And especiallie because no man knoweth better then he where the same may be spared to the least hurt of his person, for I might take it in such a place as hee might thereby happen to lose his life: what a matter were it then, if I should cut of his privie members, supposing that the same would altogether weigh a just pound 1 Or els his head, should I be suffered to cut it off, although it were with the danger of mine owne life 1 I beleeve I should not; because there were as little reason therein, as there could be in the amends whereunto I should be bound: or els if I would cut off his nose, his lips, his eares, aud pull out his eies, to make of them altogether a pound, should I be suffered 1 Surely I thinke not, because the obligation dooth not specifie that I ought either to chuse, cut, or take the same, but that he ought to give me a pound of his flesh. Of every thing that is sold, he which delivereth the same is to make waight, and he which receiveth, taketh heed that it be just: seeing then that neither the obligation, custome, nor law doth bind me to cut, or weigh, much lesse unto the above mentioned satisfaction, I refuse it all, and require that the same which is due should bee delivered unto me.

The Christians Answere.

It is no strange matter to here those dispute of equitie which are themselves most unjust; and such as have no faith at all, desirous that others should observe the same inviolable the which were yet the more tollerable, if such men would bee contented with reasonable things, or at the least not altoge ther unreasonable : but what reason is there that one man should unto his own prejudice desire the hurt of another 1 as this of a jew who would have a pound of a Jew is content to lose nine hundred crownes to have a pound of my flesh, whereby is manifestly seene the antient and cruell hate which he beareth not only unto Christians, but unto all others which are not of his sect; yea, even unto the Turkes, who overkindly doe suffer such vermine to dwell amongst them, seeing that this presumptuous wretch dare not onely doubt, but appeale from the judgement of a good and just Judge, and afterwards he would by sophisticall reasons proove that his abhomination is equitie: trulie I confesse that I have suffered fifteene daies of the tearme to passe, yet who can tell whether he or lis the cause thereof. As for me I thinke that by secret meanes he hath caused the money to bee delaied, which from sundry places ought to have come unto me before the tearm which I promised unto him; Otherwise, I would never have been so rash as to bind my selfe so strictly: but although he were not the cause of the fault, is it therefore said, that he ought to bee so impudent, as to goe about to proove it no strange matter that he should be willing to be paied with mans flesh, which is a thing more natural for Tigres, then men, the which also was never heard of: but this divell in shape of a man, seeing me oppressed with necessitie propounded this accursed obligation unto me. Whereas hee alleageth the Romanes for an example, why doth he not as well tell on how for that crueltie in afflicting debtors over greevously, the Commonwealth was almost overthrowne, and that shortly after it was forbidden to im prison men any more for debt. To breake promise is, when a man sweareth or promiseth a thing, the which he hath no desire to performe, which yet upon an extreame necessitie is somewhat excusable; as for me, I have promised, and accom plished my promise, yet not so soone as I would; and al though I knew the danger wherein I was to satisfie the crueltie of this mischeevous man with the price of my flesh and blood, yet did I not flie away, but submitted my selfe unto the discretion of the Judge who hath justly repressed his beastlinesse. Wherein then have I falsefled my promise, is it in that I would not, (like him) disobey the judgement of the Judge! Behold I will present a part of my bodie unto him, that he may pay himselfe, according to the contents of the judgement, where is then my promise broken] But it is no marvaile if this race be so obstinat and cruell against us, for they doe it of set purpose to offend our God whom they have crucified: and wherefore 1 Because he was holie, as he is yet so reputed of this worthy Turkish nation: but what shal I say 1 Their own bible is full of their rebellion against God, against their Priests, Judges, and leaders. What did not the verie Patriarks themselves, from whom they have their beginning 1 They sold their brother, and had it not been for one amongst them, they had slaine him even for verie envie. How manie adulteries and abhominations were com mitted amongst them] How manie murthers 1 Absalon did not he cause his brother to be murthered 1 Did he not per secute his father? Is it not for their iniquitie that God hath dispersed them, without leaving them one onlie foot of ground 1 If then, when they had newlie received their law from God, when they saw his wonderous works with their eies, and had yet their Judges amongst them, they were so wicked, what may one hope of them now, when they have neither faith nor law, but their rapines and usuries 1 And that they beleeve they do a charitable work, when they do some great wrong unto anie that is not a Jew 1 It may please you then, most righteous Judge, to consider all these circumstances, having pittie of him who doth wholy submit himselfe unto your just clemencie: hoping thereby to be delivered from this monsters crueltie.

THE STORY OF THE CHOICE OF THREE CASKETS. FROM THE GESTA ROMANORUM.

Translated by Robert Robinson

THE THIRTY-SECOND HISTORIE.

Sometime in Rome dwelt a mightie Emperour, named Anselme, which had wedded the kings daughter of Jerusalem> a faire lady and a gracious, in the sight of every man, but she was long time with the emperour or shee bare him any child, wherefore the nobles of the empire were right sorrowfull, be cause their lord had none heire of his owne body begotten. Till at last it befell, that this Anselme walked after supper in an evening in his garden, and bethought himselfe how hee had none heire, and how the king of Ampluy warred on him con tinually, for so much as he had no sonne to make defiance in his absence, wherefore he was right sorrowfull and went to his chamber and slept. Then he thought he saw a vision in his sleepe, that the morning was much more cleerer than it was wont to be, and that the moone was more paler on the one side then on the other. And after he saw a bird of two colours, and by that bird stood two beasts, which fed that little bird with their heate: and after that came many moe beasts, and bowed their breasts toward the bird, and went their way. Then came there divers birds, that sung so sweetly and pleasantly that the emperour awaked. In the morning earely this Anselme remembered his vision and won dered much what it might signifie, wherefore he called to him his philosophers, and also the states of his empire, and told them his dreame, charging them to tell him the signification thereof, upon paine of death: and if they told him the inter pretation thereof he promised them great reward.

Then said they, Deere Lord, tell us your dreame, and we shall declare unto you what it betokeneth. Then the emperour told them from the beginning to the ending, as it is aforesaid. When the philosophers heard this, with glad cheere, they answered and said. My lord, the dreame that you saw betokeneth good, for the empire shal be more clearer then it is. The moone that is more pale on the one side then on the other, betokeneth the empres, that hath lost part of her coulour through the conception of a son, that she hath conceived. The little bird betokeneth the sonne that she shall beare. The two beasts that feede this bird betokeneth all the wise men and rich men of this empire, which shall obey thy sonne. These other beasts that bowed their breasts to the bird, betokeneth that many other nations shall doe him homage. The bird that sung so sweetly to this little bird, betokeneth the Romanes, which shall rejoyce and sing, be cause of his birth. Lo, this is the very interpretation of your dreame.

When the emperour heard this, he was right joyfull. Now, soone after that the empresse travailed in child-birth, and was delivered of a faire sonne, of whose birth was great and wonderfull joy made.

When the king of Ampluy heard this, hee thought in him selfe thus: Lo, I have warred against the emperour all the dayes of my life, and now hee hath a sonne the which will revenge all the wrongs that I have done and wrought against his father, when hee commeth to a full age, therefore it is better that I send to the emperour and beseech him of trewse and peace, that his sonne may have nothing against me when hee commeth to man-hood. When hee had thus thought in himselfe, he wrote to the emperour, beseeching him to have peace. When the emperour saw that the king of Ampluy wrote to him more for feare then for love, hee wrote againe to him, that if hee would find sufficient suertie to keep the peace, and binde himselfe all the dayes of his life to doe him service and homage, and to give him yearely a certaine tribute, he would receive him to peace.

When the king had read the tenour of the emperours letter, he called his counsel, praying them to give him coun-sayle how he might best do as touching this matter. Then said they: It is good that yee obey the emperours will and commandement in all things. For in the first, hee desireth of you surety for the peace, and as to this we answere thus.

Ye have but a daughter, and the emperour one only son, wherefore let a marriage be made between them, and that may be a perpetuall covenant of peace: also he asketh homage and rent, which it is good to fulfill. And when the king sent his messengers to the emperour, saying, that hee would fulfill his intent in all things, if it might please his highnesse that his sonne and the kings daughter might be married together. All this pleased well the emperour, nevertheles he sent againe, that if his daughter were a cleane virgin from her birth unto that day, he would consent to that marriage. Then was the king right glad, for his daughter was a cleane virgin.

Therefore when the letters of covenant and compact were sealed, the king furnished a faire ship, wherein he might send his daughter with many noble knights, ladyes, and great riches, unto the emperour, for to have his sonne in marriage.

Now when they were sayling in the sea toward Rome, a storme arose so extremeelye and so horribly, that the ship all to brast against a rock of stone, and they were all drowned, save onely that yong lady, which fixt her hope and heart so firmely on God, that she was saved. And about three of clocke, the tempest ceased, and the lady drave foorth over the waves, in the broken ship, which was cast up againe, but an huge whale followed after, readie to devoure both the ship and her: wherefore this faire yong lady when night came, smote fire with a stone, wherewith the ship was greatly lightened, and then the whale durst not adventure toward the ship, for feare of the light. At the cock-crowing, this yong lady was so weary of the great tempest and trouble of the sea, that she slept, and within a little after the fire sur ceased, and with that came the whale and devoured this virgin. But when she wakened and found her selfe swal lowed up in the whales belly, shee smote fire, and within a little while shee wounded the whale with a knife in many places, and when the whale felt himselfe wounded, according to his nature, he began to swim to land.

There was at that time dwelling in that country an earle that was a noble man, named Parris, the which for his recre ation walked by the sea shore, and as he was walking thus, he saw where the whale was comming towards the land, wherefore he turned home againe, and gathered many strong men and came thether againe, and caught the whale, and wounded him very sore, and as they smote, the mayden that was in his belly cried with an high voice and said, O gentle friends have mercie and compassion on me, for I am a kings daughter and a true virgin from the houre of my birth unto this day. When the earle heard this he wondred greatly and opened the side of the whale and tooke her out. And when she was thus delivered, shee told him forthwith whose daughter she was, and how shee had lost all her goods in the sea, and how shee should have beene married unto the emperours sonne. And when the earle heard this hee was right glad, wherefore hee comforted her the more, and kept her still with him till she was well refreshed. And in the meane time he sent messengers to the emperour, giving him to know how the kings daughter was saved.

Then was the emperour right glad of her safety and comming, and had great compassion on her, saying: Ah faire lady, for the love of my sonne thou hast suffered much woe, neverthelesse if thou be worthie to be his wife, soone shall I prove.

And when he had thus said, he commanded to bring forth three vessels, the first was made of pure gold, beset with precious stones without, and within full of dead mens bones, and thereupon was ingraven this posey: Whoso chooseth me shall finde that he deserveth.

The second vessel was made of fine silver, filled with earth and wormes, and the superscription was thus: Whoso cbooseth me shall find that his nature desireth.

The third vessel was made of lead, full within of precious stones, and the superscription, Who so chooseth mee shall finde that God hath disposed to him.

These three vessels the emperour shewed to the maiden and said, Lo, here daughter, these be faire vessels, if thou choose one of these, wherein is profit to thee and to other, then shalt thou have my sonne: but if thou choose that wherein is no profit to thee nor to none other, soothly thou shalt not marrie him.

When the mayden saw this, she lift up her hands to God and said: Thou Lord that knowest all things, grant me grace this houre so to choose, that I may receive the emperours sonne. And with that shee beheld the first vessell of gold, which was engraven, and read the superscription, Who so chooseth me, &c. saying thus: Though this vessel be full precious and made of pure gold, neverthelesse I know not what is within, therefore my deare lord, this vessel will

1 not choose.

And then shee beheld the second vessel that was of pure silver, and read the superscription, Who so chooseth mee shall finde that his nature desireth. Thinking thus within her selfe, If I choose this vessel, what is within it 1 know not, but well I wot there shall I finde that nature desireth, and my nature desireth the lust of the flesh, therefore this vessel will I not choose. When she had seene these two vessels, and given an answere as touching them, shee beheld the third vessell of lead, and read the superscription, Who so chooseth mee, shall finde that God hath disposed. Thincking within her selfe this vessel is not passing rich, nor throughly precious: neverthelesse, the superscription saith: Who so chooseth mee, shall finde that God hath disposed: and with out doubt God never disposeth any harme, therefore now I will choose this vessell, by the leave of God.

When the emperour saw this, hee said, O faire mayden open thy vessell, and see if thou hast well chosen or no. And when this yong lady had opened it, shee found it full of fine gold and precious stones, like as the emperour had told her before.

And then said the emperour, O my deere daughter, be cause thou hast wisely chosen, therefore shalt thou marry my sonne. And when he had so said, he ordained a marriage, and married them together with great solempnitie and much honour, and they lived peaceably a long time together.

THE MORALL.

This emperour betokeneth the Father of heaven, the which was long time without a natural sonne, therefore many men were in danger of perishing in hell. The empresse conceived when the angell Gabriel sayd, Loe, thou shalt con ceive and beare a childe. And then the firmament began to cleere when this little childe lightened the world with his birth. The moone began to waxe pale, when the face of the Virgin Mary was overshadowed by vertue of the grace of the Holy Ghost; and not onely her face was thus shadowed, but also her body, for shee conceived with childe as an other woman, wherefore Joseph would have forsaken her privily, and gone away. The little bird that came from the one side of the moone, betokeneth our Lord Jesu Christ, which at midnight was borne of the Virgin Mary, wrapped in clothes, and laid in an oxes crib. The two beasts betokeneth the oxe and the asse that Joseph brought with him, which honoured him in his birth. These other beasts that came from farre, betokeneth the shepheards in the fielde, to whom the angel said thus, Ecce nuncio vobis gaudium magnum, Loe I shew to you great joy. The birds that sung so sweetly, betokeneth the angels of heaven, which sung at his birth this joyful song: Gloria in excelsus, Joy to God above, and peace to men on earth.

The king of Ampluy, which helde war against the emperour, betokeneth all mankind, that was contrary to God, as long as they were in the Divels power. But immediately when our Lord Jesu Christ was born, he bowed himself to God and besought him of peace, when hee received his baptisme: for at our baptising we promised to drawe onely to God, and forsake the Divell and all his pompes. The king gave his daughter in marriage to the emperours sonne. Right so each of us ought to give his soul in marriage to Gods sonne, for he is always readie to receive our soule as his spouse, according to his Scripture, saying thus: Desponsabo teipsummihi, I will marry thee unto me. But or they may come to the palace of heaven, it behoveth her to saile by the sea of this world in the ship of good life; but oftentimes there ariseth a tem pest in the sea, that is, trouble of this world, temptation of the flesh, and the suggestion of the Divell, ariseth sodainely and drowneth the vertues that the soule receiveth in baptisme; neverthelesse yet falleth she not out of the ship of charitie, but keepeth her selfe surely therein by faith and hope; for, as the apostle saith, Spe salui facti sumus, By hope we be saved; for it is impossible to be saved without hope or faith.

The great whale that followeth the maiden betokeneth the Divell, which by night and by day lyeth in wait to overcome the soule by sinne; and therefore doe we as the mayden did, smite the fire of charity and love out of the stone, that is Christ, according to this saying: Ego sum lapis, I am a stone. And certainely the Divell shall have no power to grieve us. Many men begin well, as did the mayden, but at the last they be weary of their good works, and so sleepe they in sin. And anon, when the Divell perceiveth this, he devoureth the sinner in his evill thoughts, delights, consent, and worke; therefore if any of us feele our selves in this life under the power of the Divell, let him doe as the maiden did, smite the Divell with the knife of bitter repentance, then kindle the fire of charitie, and without doubt hee shall have the land of good life.

The earle that came with his servants to slay the whale, betokeneth a discreete preacher, which dwelleth beside the sea, that is, beside the world, and not in the world; that is, not drawing to worldly delectation, but is ready with good words of holy Scripture, to kill the Divell, and to destroy his power. Wee must all cry with an high voice as did this mayden, knowledging our sinnes, and then shall wee be de livered from the Divell, and nourished with vertuous exercise.

The emperour sheweth this maiden three vessels; that is, God putteth before man life and death, good and evill, and which of these hee chooseth hee shall obtaine; therefore saith Salomon, Ante hominem mors et vita, Death and life is set before man, choose which him list. And yet man is uncertaine whether he were best to choose life before death.

By the first vessell of gold full of dead mens bones, we shall understand some worldly men, both mightie men and rich, which outwardly shine as gold, in riches and pompes of the world; neverthelesse, within they bee full of dead mens bones; that is, the workes that they have wrought in this world be dead in the sight of God, through deadly sinne; therefore if any man choose such a life, he shall have that hee deserveth, that is, hell. And such men be like tombes that be white and richly painted and arayed without, and covered with cloth of golde and silke, but within there is nothing but dry bones. By the second vessel of silver we ought to un derstand some justices and wise men of this world, which shine in faire speech, but within they be ful of wormes of the earth; that is, their faire speach shall availe them no more at the day of judgement then the wormes of the earth, and, peradventure lesse; for then shall they suffer everlasting paine, if they die in deadly sinne.

By the third vessel of lead, full of golde and precious stones, we ought to understand a simple life and a poore, which the chosen soules choose, that they may be married to our blessed Lord Jesu Christ by humilitie and obeysance, and such men beare with them precious stones; that is, faith and her fruit-full works, pleasing to God; by the which, at the judgement day, they be espoused to our Lord Jesu Christ, and obtaine the heritage of heaven, unto the which bring us our Saviour Jesu Christ, Amen.

TWELFTH NIGHT – Barnabe Rich’s Short Story

The short story *The Historie of Apollonius and Silla* was the main source of *Twelfth Night* .

THE HISTORIE OF APOLONIUS AND SILLA;

DURING the time that the famous citty of Constantinople, remained in the handes of the Christians, amongst many other noble men, that kept their abiding in that florishing citty, there was one whose name was Apolonius, a worthy duke, who being but a very yong man, and even then newe come to his possessions which were very great, levied a mighty bande of men, at his owne proper charges, with whom hee served against the Turke, during the space of one whole yeere, in which time although it were very short, this young duke so behaved himselfe, as well by prowesse and valiance shewed with his owne hands, as otherwise, by his wisdome and liberality, used towards his souldiors, that all the world was filled with the fame of this noble duke. When he had thus spent one yeeres service, he caused his trompet to sound a retrait, and gathering his company together, and imbarking themselves he set saile, holding his course towards Constan tinople : but beeing upon the sea, by the extremity of a tempest which sodainely fell, his fleete was severed some one way, and some an other, but hee him selfe recovered the lie of Cypres, where he was worthily received by Pontus duke and governour of the same ile, with whom hee lodged, while his shippes were new repairing.

This Pontus that was lord and governour of this famous ile, was an auncient duke, and had two children, a sonne and a daughter, his son was named Silvio, of whom hereafter we shal have further occasion to speake, but at this instant he was in the parts of Africa, serving in the warres.

The daughter her name was Silla, whose beauty was so pereles, that she had the soveraignty amongst all other dames, as well for her beauty as for the noblenesse of her birth. This Silla having heard of the worthinesse of Apolonius, this yong duke, who besides his beauty and good graces, had a certaine natural allurement, that being now in his company in her fathers court, she was so strangly attached with the love of Apolonius, that there was nothing might content her but his presence and sweet sight, and although she saw no maner of hope, to attaine to that she most desired: knowing Apolonius to be but a guest, and ready to take the benefit of the next wind, and to depart into a straunge countrye, whereby shee was bereaved of all possi bility ever to see him againe, and therefore strived with, her selfe to leave her fondnesse, but al in vaine, it would not bee, but like the fowle which is once limed, the more shee striveth, the faster she tyeth her selfe. So Silla was now constrained perforce her will to yeeld to love, wherefore from time to time, shee used so great familiarity with him, as her honour might well permitte, and fedde him with such amorous baites, as the modestye of a maide, could reasonably afforde, which when shee perceived, did take but small effect, feeling her selfe out raged with the extremity of her passion, by the onely countenance that she bestowed upon Apolonius, it might have bene well perceived, that the very eyes pleaded unto him for pitie and remorse. But Apolonius comming but lately from out the field, from the chasing of his enemies, and his fury not yet throughly desolved, nor purged from his stomacke, gave no regard to those amorous entisements, which by reason of his youth, he had not bin acquainted withall. But his minde ran more to heare his pilots, bring newes of a merry wind, to serve his turne to Constantinople which in the ende came very prosperously: and giving Duke Pontus hearty thankes for his great entertainement, taking his leave of himselfe, and the ladie Silla his daughter, departed with his company, and with a happy gale arived at his desired porte; Gentlewoman according to my promise, I will here for brevities sake, omit to make repetition of the long and dolorous discourse recorded by Silla, for this sodaine departure of her Apolonius, knowing you to be as tenderly hearted as Silla her selfe, whereby you may the better conjecture the furie of her fever.

But Silla the further that she saw her selfe bereaved of al hope, ever any more to see her beloved Apolonius, so much the more contagious were her passions, and made the greater speed to execute that she had premeditated in her minde, which was this: Amongest many servants that did attend upon her, there was one whose name was Pedro, who had a long time waited upon her in her chamber, whereby shee was well assured of his fidelity and trust: to that Pedro therefore shee bewraied first the fervencie of her love borne to Apolonius, conjuring him in the name of the Gods *[Goddess]* of Love her selfe, and binding him by the duety that a servant ought to have, that tendereth his mistresse safety and good liking, and desiring him with teares trickling downe her cheekes, that hee would give his consent to aide and assiste her, in that she had determined, which was for that she was fully resolved to goe to Constantinople, where she might againe take the view of her beloved Apolonius, that hee according to the trust she had reposed in him, would not refuse to give his consent, secretly to convey her from out her fathers court according as she would give him direc tion, and also to make himselfe partaker of her journey, and to waite upon her, till she had seen the ende of her determination.

Pedro perceiving with what vehemencie his lady and mistresse had made request unto him, albeit hee sawe many perilles and doubts, depending in her pretence, notwithstand ing, gave his consent to bee at her disposition, promising her to further her with his best advice, and to bee ready to obey whatsoever shee would please to commaund him. The match beeyng thus agreed upon, and all things prepared in a readinesse for their departure: it happened there was a galley of Constantinople, ready to depart, which Pedro understanding came to the captaine, desiring him to have passage for him selfe, and for a poore maide that was his sister, which were bounde to Constantinople upon certaine urgent affaires, to which request, the captaine graunted, willing him to prepare aboarde with all speed, because the winde served him presently to depart.

Pedro now commyng to his misters *[mistress]* , and tellyng her how he had handeled the matter with the captaine, she likyng verie well of the devise, disguisyng her selfe into verie simple atyre, stoole away from out her fathers court, and came with Pedro, whom now she called brother aboarde the gallye, where al things being in readinesse and the wind serving verie wel, they launched forth with their oores, and set saile, when they were at the sea, the captaine of the galley taking the vew of Silla, perceiving her singular beautie, he was better pleased in beholdyng of her face, then in takyng the height either of the sunne or starre, and thinking her by the homlinesse of her apparell, to be but some simple maiden, calling her into his cabin, he beganne to breake with her after the sea fashion, desiring her to use his owne cabin for her better ease : and during the time that she remained at the sea, she should not want a bed, and then whispering softly in her eare, he saied, that for want of a bedfellow, he himselfe would supply that rome. Silla not being acquainted with any such talke, blushed for shame, but made him no answer at all, my captaine feeling such bickering within himselfe, the like whereof he had never indured upon the sea: was like to be taken prisoner aboard his owne ship, and forced to yeeld himselfe captive without any cannon shot, wherefore to salve all sores, and thinking it the readiest way to speed, he began to breake with Silla in the way of marriage, telling her how happy a voyage she had made, to fal into the lyking of such a one as himselfe was, who was able to keepe and maintaine her like a gentlewoman, and for her sake would likewise take her brother into his fellowship, whom hee would by some meanes prefer in such sort, that both of them should have good cause to thinke themselves thrise happy, shee to light of such a husband, and he to light of such a brother. But Silla nothing pleased with these preferments, desired him to cease his talke, for that she did thinke her selfe indeede to be too unworthy such a one as hee was, neither was she minded yet to marry, and therefore desired him to fixe his fancie upon some that were better worthy then her selfe was, and that could better like of his courtesie then she could do, the captaine seeing himselfe thus refused, being in a great chafe, he said as followeth " Then seeing you make so little accompt of my courtesie, proffered to one that is so far unworthy of it, from hence forth I will use the office of my authority, you shall know that I am the captaine of this shippe, and have power to commaund and dispose of things at my pleasure; and seeing you have so scornfully rejected me to be your loyall husband, I will now take you by force, and use you at my will, and so long as it shall please me, will keepe you for mine owne store, there shall be no man able to defend you, nor yet to perswade me from that I have determined." Silla with these words being stroke into a great feare, did thinke it now too late, to rew her rashe attempt, determined rather to dye with her owne hands, then to suffer her selfe to be abused in such sort, therefore she most humbly desired the captaine so much as he could to save her credit, and seeing that she must needes be at his will and disposition, that for that present he would depart, and suffer her till night, when in the darke he might take his pleasure, without any maner of suspition to the residue of his companie. The captaine thinking now the goale to be more than halfe wonne, was contented so farre to satisfie her request, and departed out leaving her alone in his cabin.

Silla, being alone by her selfe, drue out her knife readie to strike her selfe to the heart, and falling upon her knees desired God to receive her soule, as an acceptable sacrifice for her follies, which she had so wilfully committed, craving pardon for her sinnes, and so forth continuing a long and pittifull reconciliation to God, in the middest whereof there sodainly fell a wonderfull storme, the terrour whereof was such, that there was no man but did thinke the seas would presently have swallowed them, the bilowes so sodainly arose with the rage of the winde, that they were all glad to fall to heaving out of water, for otherwise their feeble gallie had never beene able to have brooked the seas, this storme continued all that day and the next night, and they being driven to put romer before the winde to keepe the gallie a head the billow, were driven upon the maine shore, where the gallie brake all to peeces, there was every man providing to save his owne life, some gat upon hatches, boordes, and casks, and were driven with the waves too and fro, but the greatest number were drowned, amongst the which Pedro was one, but Silla her selfe being in the cabyn as you have heard, tooke holde of a chest that was the captaines, the which by the onely providence of God brought her safe to the shore, the which when she had recovered, not knowing what was become of Pedro her man, shee deemed that both he and all the rest had beene drowned, for that she saw no body upon the shore but her selfe, wherefore, when she had a while made great lamentations, complaining her mishappes, shee beganne in the end to comfort her selfe with the hope, that she had to see her Apolonius, and found such meanes that she brake open the chest that brought her to land, wherein shee found good store of coine, and sondrie sutes of apparell that were the captaines, and now to pre vent a number of injuries, that might bee proffered to a woman that was left in her case, shee determined to leave her owne apparell, and to sorte her selfe into some of those sutes, that being taken for a man, shee might passe through the countrie in the better safety, and as shee changed her apparell shee thought it likewise convenient to change her name, wherefore not readily happening of any other, shee called her selfe Silvio, by the name of her owne brother, whom you have heard spoken of before.

In this maner she travailed to Constantinople, where she inquired out the pallace of the Duke Apolonius, and thinking her selfe now to bee both fit and able to play the serving-man, she presented her selfe to the duke craving his service, the duke very willing to give succour unto strangers, per ceiving him to be a proper smogue yong man, gave him entertainment: Silla thought her selfe no we more than satisfied for all the casualties that had happened unto her in her journey, that shee might at her pleasure take but the view of the Duke Apolonius, and above the rest of his servantes was verie diligent and attendaunt upon him, the which the duke perceiving, beganne likewise to growe into good liking with the diligence of his man, and therefore made him one of his chamber, who but Siluio then was most neare about him, in helping of him to make him readie in a morning in the setting of his ruffes, in the keeping of his chamber, Silvio pleased his maister so wel, that above all the rest of his servantes about him, he had the greatest credit, and the duke put him most in trust.

At this verie instaunt, there was remainyng in the Cittie a noble Dame a widdowe, whose husband was but lately deceased, one of the noblest men that were in the partes of Grecia, who left his lady and wife large possessions and great livings. This ladyes name was called Julina, who besides the aboundance of her wealth, and the greatnesse of her revenues, had likewise the soveraigntie of all the dames of Constantinople for her beautie. To this lady Julina, Apolo nius became an earnest suter, and according to the manner of wooers, besides faire wordes, sorrowfull sighes, and piteous countenaces, there must be sending of loving letters, chaines, braceletes, brouches, ringes, tablets, gemmes, juels, and pre sents I know not what: so my duke, who in the time that he remained in the Ile of Cypres, had no skill at all in the arte of love, although it were more then half profferred unto him, was now become a scholler in loves schoole, and had alreadie learned his first lesson, that is, to speake pittifully, to looke ruthfully, to promise largely, to serve diligently, and to d please carefully: now he was learning his second lesson, that is to reward liberally, to give bountifully, to present willingly, and to write lovingly. Thus Apolonius was so busied in his new study, that I warrant you there was no man that could chalenge him for plaiyng the truant, he followed his profession with so good a will: and who must bee the messenger to carrie the tokens and love letters, to the lady Julina, but Siluio his man, in him the duke reposed his only c5fidence, to goe betwene him and his lady.

Now gentlewomen, doe you thinke there could have beene a greater torment devised wherewith to afflict the heart of Silla, then herself to be made the instrument to worke her owne mishap, and to plaie the atturney in a cause, that made so much against herself. But Silla altogether desirous to please her maister, cared nothing at all to offend her selfe, followed his businesse with so good a will as if it had been in her own preferment.

Julina nowe having many times, taken the gaze of this yong youth Siluio, perceivyng him to bee of such excellent perfect grace, was so intangeled with the often sight of this sweete temptation, that she fell into as great a liking with the man, as the maister was with her selfe: and 011 a time Silvio beyng sent from his maister, with a message to the lady Julina, as he beganne very earnestly to solicite in his maisters behalfe, Julina interrupting him in his tale, saied: Silvio it is enough that you have saied for your maister, from henceforth either speake for your self, or say nothing at all. Silla abashed to heare these words, begS, in her mind to accuse the blindnes of love, that Julina neglecting the good of so noble a duke, wold preferre her love unto such a one, as nature it selfe had denied to recopence her liking.

And now for a time, leaving matters depending as you have heard, it fell out that the right Silvio indeede (whom you have heard spoken of before, the brother of Silla,) was come to his fathers courte into ye He of Cypres, where under-stading, that his sister was departed, in maner as you have heard conjectured, that the very occasion did proceede of some liking had betweene Pedro her man (that was missing with her) and her selfe, but Silvio who loved his sister, as dearly as his owne life, and the rather for that she was his naturall sister, both by father and mother, so the one of them was so like the other, in countenance and favour, that there was no man able to descerne the one from the other by their faces, saving by their apparell, the one being a man, the other a woman.

Silvio therefore vowed to his father, not onely to seeke out his sister Silla, but also to revenge the villanie, which he conceived in Pedro, for the carrying away of his sister, and thus departing, having travailed through many citties and townes, without hearing any maner of newes, of those he went to seeke for, at the last he arrived at Constantinople, where as he was walking in an evening for his owne recrea-ation, on a pleasant greene yarde, without the walles of the citie, he fortuned to meete with the lady Julina, who likewise had been abroad to take the aire, and as she sodainly cast her eyes upon Silvio, thinking him to be her olde acquaint ance, by reason they were so like one another, as you have heard before, said unto him, Sir Silvio, if your hast be not the greater, I pray you let me have a little talke with you, seeing I have so luckely met you in this place.

Silvio wondering to heare himselfe so rightly named, being but a stranger, not of above two dayes continuance in the citie, very courteously came towards her, desirous to heare what she would say.

Julina commanding her traine something to stand back, sayd as followeth. Seeing my good will and friendly love, hath beene the onely cause to make me so prodigall to offer, that I see is so lightly rejected, it maketh me to thinke, that men be of this condition, rather to desire those things, which they cannot come by, then to esteeme or value of that, which both largely and liberallie is offered unto them, but if the liberalise of my proffer, hath made to seeme lesse the value
d 2

of the thing that I meant to present, it is but in your owne conceipt, considering how many noble men there hath beene here before, and be yet at this present, which hath both served, sued, and most humbly intreated, to attaine to that, which to you of myselfe, I have freely offered, and I perceive is despised, or at the least very lightly regarded.

Silvio wondering at these wordes, but more amazed that shee could so rightly call him by his name, could not tell what to make of her speeches, assuring himselfe that shee was deceived, and did mistake him, did thinke notwithstand ing, it had bene a point of great simplicity, if he should forsake that, which fortune had so favourably proffered unto him, perceiving by her traine, that she was some lady of great honour, and viewing the perfection of her beauty, and the excellency of her grace and countenance, did thinke it unpossible that she should be despised, and therefore aunswered thus.

Madame, if before this time, I have seemed to forget my selfe, in neglecting your courtesie, which so liberally you have meant unto me: please it you to pardon what is past, and from this day forewardes, Silvio remaineth ready prest to make such reasonable amendes as his ability may any waies permit, or as it shall please you to commaund.

Julina the gladdest woman that might bee, to heare these joyfull newes, said: Then my Silvio see you faile not to morrow at night to sup with me at my owne house, where I will discourse farther with you, what amends you shall make me, to which request Silvio gave his glad consent, and thus they departed very well pleased. And as Julina did thinke the time very long, till she had reapt the fruite of her desire: so Silvio he wisht for harvest before come could growe, thinking the time as long, till hee saw how matters would fall out, but not knowing what lady she might bee, he presently (before Julina was out of sight) demaunded of one that was walking up, what shee was, and how she was called, who satisfied Silvio in every point, and also in what part of the towne her house did stand, whereby he might inquire it out.

Silvio thus departing to his lodging, passed the night with verie unquiet sleepes, and the next morning his mind ran so much of his supper, that he never cared, neither for his breakfast, nor dinner, and the day to his seeming passed away so slowely, that hee had thought the stately steedes had bin tired, that drawe the chariot of the sunne, or else some other Josua had commaunded them againe to stande, and wished that Phaeton had beene there with a whippe.

Julina on the other side, she had thought the clocke-setter had plaied the knave, the day came no faster forewards, but sixe a clocke being once strucken, recovered com fort to both parties; and Silvio hastening himselfe to the pallace of Julina, where by her he was friendly welcomed, and a sumptuous supper being made readie, furnished with sundrie sorts of delicate dishes, they sate them downe, passing the supper time with amorous lookes, loving countenances, and secret glaunces conveighed from the one to the other, which did better satisfie them, then the feeding of their daintie dishes.

Supper time being thus spent, Julina did thinke it very unfitly, if she should turne Silvio to go seeke his lodging in an evening, desired him therefore, that he would take a bed in her house for the night, and bringing him up into a faire chamber, that was very richly furnished, she found such meanes, that when all the rest of her household servants were a bed and quiet, she came her selfe to beare Silvio companie, where concluding upon conditions, that were in question be tweene them, they passed the night with such joy and contentation, as might in that convenient time be wished for, but onely that Julina, feeding too much of some one dish above the rest, received a surfeit, whereof she could not be cured in fortie weekes after, a naturall inclination in all women which are subject to longing, and want the reason to use a moderation in their diet: but the morning approaching,

Julina tooke her leave, and conveighed her selfe into her owne chamber, and when it wasfaire day light, Silvio making himself readie, departed likewise about his affaires in the towne, debating with himselfe how things had happened, being well assured that Julina had mistaken him, and there fore for feare of further evils, determined to come no more there, but tooke his journey towards other places in the parts of Grecia, to see if he could learne any tidings of his sister Silla.

The Duke Apolonius having made a long sute and never a whit the neerer of his purpose, came to Julina to crave her direct answer, either to accept of him, and of such con ditions as he proffered unto her, or els to give him his last farewell.

Julina, as you have heard, had taken an earnest pennie of an other, whom he *[she]* had thought had beene Silvio the dukes man, was at a controversie in her selfe, what she might doe: one while she thought, seeing her occasion served so fit, to crave the duke's good will, for the marrying of his man, then againe, she could not tell what displeasure the duke would conceive, in that she should seeme to preferre his man before him selfe, did thinke it best therefore to conceale the matter, till she might speake with Silvio, to use his opinion how these matters should be handled, and hereupon resolving her selfe, desiring the duke to pardon her speeches, said as followeth.

Sir Duke, for that from this time forwardes I am no longer of my selfe, having given my full power and authority over to an other, whose wife I now remaine by faithfull vowe and promise: and albeit, I knowe the world will wounder, when they shall understand the fondnesse of my choise, yet I trust you your selfe will nothing dislike with me, sith I have meant no other thing, then the satisfying of mine owne contentation and liking.

The duke hearing these wordes, aunswered: Madam, I must then content my selfe, although against my wil, having the lawe in your owne hands, to like of whom you list, and to make choise where it pleaseth you.

Julina giving the duke great thankes, that would content himselfe with such pacience, desired him likewise, to give his free consent and good wil, to the partie whom she had chosen to be her husband.

Nay surely madam (quoth the duke) I will never give my consent, that any other man shall enjoy you then my selfe, I have made too great accompt of you, then so lightly to passe you away with my good will: but seeing it lieth not in me to let you, having (as you say) made your owne choise, so from hence forwards I leave you to your owne liking, alwaies willing you well, and thus will take my leave.

The duke departed towards his owne house very sorrowfull, that Julina had thus served him, but in the meane space that the duke had remained in the house of Julina, some of his servantes fell into talke and conference, with the servantes of Julina, where debating betweene them, of the likelihood of the marriage, betweene the duke and the ladie, one of the servants of Julina said: that he never sawe his lady and mistresse, use so good countenance to the duke himselfe, as shee had done to Silvio his man, and beganne to report with what familiarity and courtesie, she had received him, feasted him, and lodged him, and that in his opinion, Silvio was like to speede before the duke or any other that were suters.

This tale was quickly brought to the duke himself, who making better inquiry into the matter, found it to bee true that was reported, and better considering of the words, which Julina had used towards himselfe, was very well assured that it could be no other then his owne man, that had thrust his nose so far out of joynt, wherefore without any further re spect, caused him to bee thrust into a dungeon, where he was kept prisoner, in a verie pitifull plight.

Poore Silvio, having got intelligence by some of his fellowes, what was the cause that the duke his maister did beare such displeasure unto him, devised all the meanes he could, as well by meditation *[mediation]* by his fellowes, as otherwise by petitions, and supplications to the duke, that he would suspend his judgement, till perfect proofe were had in the matter, and then if any manner of thing did fall out against him, wherby the duke had cause to take any greefe, he would confesse himselfe worthy not onely of imprisonment, but also of most vile and shamefull death: with these petitions he daiely plied the duke, but all in vaine, for the duke thought hee had made so good proofe, that he was throughlie confirmed in his opinion against his man.

But the ladie Julina wondering what made Silvio, that he was so slacke in his visitation, and why hee absented himselfe so long from her presence, began to thinke that all was not well, but in the end, perceiving no decoction of her former surfet, received a3 you have heard, and finding in her selfe, an unwounted swelling in her bellie, assuring her selfe to bee with child, fearing to become quite banckrout of her honour, did thinke it more then time to seeke out a father, and made such secret search, and diligent enquirie, that shee learned the truth how Silvio, was kepte in prison, by the duke his maister, and minding to find a present remedie, as well for the love she bare to Silvio, as for the maintainaunce of her credit and estimation, shee speedily hasted to the pallace of the duke, to whom she saied as folioweth.

Sir Duke, it may be that you will thinke my comming to your house in this sorte, doeth something passe the limites of modestie, the which I protest before God, proceedeth of this desire, that the worlde should know, how justly I seeke meanes to maintaine my honour, but to the end I seeme not tedious with prolixitie of woords, not to use other then direct circumstaunces, knowe sir, that the love I beare to my onely beloved Silvio, whom I doe esteeme more then all the jewelles in the world, whose personage I regard more then my owne life, is the onely cause of my attempted journey, beseeching you, that all the whole displeasure, which 1 understand you have conceived against him, may be imputed unto my charge, and that it would please you lovingly to deale with him, whom of my selfe I have chosen rather for the satisfaction of mine honest liking, then for the vaine preheminences or honourable dignities looked after by ambitious mindes.

The duke having heard this discourse, caused Silvio presently to be sent for, and to be brought before him, to whom he saied: Had it not been sufficient for thee, when I had reposed my selfe in thy fidelitie, and the trustinesse of thy service, that thou shouldest so traiterously deale with me, but since that time hast not spared, still to abuse me with so many forgeries, and perjured protestations, not onely hateful unto me, whose simplicitie thou thinkest to be such that by the plotte of thy pleasant tongue, thou wouldest make mee beleeve a manifest untroth, but most abominable be thy doings in the presence and sight of God, that hast not spared to blaspheme his holy name, by calling him to be a witnesse to maintaine thy leasinges, and so detestably wouldest thou forsweare thy selfe, in a matter that is so openly knowne.

Poore Silvio whose innocencie was such, that he might lawfully sweare, seeing Julina to be there in place, aunswered thus.

Most noble duke, well understanding your conceived greefe, most humbly I beseech you paciently to heare my ex cuse, not minding thereby to aggravate or heape up your wrath and displeasure, protesting before God, that there is nothing in the world, which 1 regarde so much, or doe esteeme so deare, as your good grace and favour, but desirous that your grace should know my innocencie, and to cleare my selfe of such impositions, wherewith I knowe I am wrong fully accused, which as I understand should be in the practi sing of the lady Julina, who standeth here in place, whose acquitaunce for my better discharge, now T most humbly crave, protesting before the almightie God, that neither in thought, word, nor deede, I have not otherwise used my selfe, then according to the bonde and duetie of a servant, that is both willing and desirous, to further his maisters sutes, which if I have otherwise sayed then that is true, you madame Julina, who can verie wel decide the depthes of all this doubt, I most humbly beseech you to certifie a troth, if I have in any thing missaied, or have otherwise spoken then is right and just.

Julina having heard this discourse which Silvio had made, perceivyng that he stood in great awe of the dukes dis pleasure, aunswered thus: Thinke not my Silvio that my comming hither is to accuse you of any misdemeanour towardes your maister, so I doe not denay, but in all such imbassages wherein towardes me you have been imployed, you have used the office of a faithfull and trustie messenger, neither am I ashamed to confesse, that the first daie that mine eyes did behold, the singular behaviour, the notable curtesie, and other innumerable giftes wherwith my Silvio is endued, but that beyond al measure my heart was so inflamed, that impossible it was for me, to quench the fervent love, or extinguish the least part of my conceived torment, before I had bewraied the same unto him, and of my owne motion, craved his promised faith and loialty of marriage, and now is the time to manifest the same unto the world, which hath been done before God, and betweene our selves: knowing that it is not needefull, to keepe secret that, which is neither evill done, nor hurtfull to any persone, therefore (as I saied before) Silvio is my husband by plighted faith, who I hope to obtaine without offence, or displeasure of any one, trusting that there is no man, that will so farre forget himselfe, as to restraine that, which God hath left at libertie for every wight, or that will seeke by crueltie, to force ladyes to marrie otherwise, then according to their owne likyng. Feare not then my Silvio to keepe your faith and promise, which you have made unto me, and as for the rest: I doubt not thinges will so fall out, as you shall have no maner of cause to complaine.

Silvio amased to heare these wordes, for that Julina by her speech, seemed to confirme that, which he most of all desired to bee quite of, saied : Who would have thought that a ladie of so great honour and reputation, would her selfe bee the embassadour, of a thing so prejuditiall, and uncomely for her estate, what plighted promises be these which bee spoken of: altogether ignoraunt unto me, which if it be other wise than I have saied, you sacred gods consume me straight with flashing flames of fire. But what wordes might I use to give credit to the truth, and innocencie of my cause? Ah madame Julina I desire no other testimonie, then your owne honestye and vertue thinking that you wil not so much blemish the brightnesse of your honour, knowing that a woman is or should be, the image of curtesie, continencie, and shamfastnesse, from the which so soone as she stoopeth, and leaveth the office of her duetie and modesty, besides the degraduation of her honour, she thrusteth her selfe into the pit of perpetual infamy, and as I can not think you would so farre forget your selfe, by the refusall of a noble duke, to dimme the light of your renowne and glorie, which hitherto you have maintained, amongest the best and noblest ladies, by such a one as I knowe my selfe to be, too farre unworthie your degree and callyng, so most humbly I beseech you to confesse a troth, whereto tendeth those vowes and promises you speake of, which speeches bee so obscure unto me, as I know not for my life howe I might understand them.

Julina something nipped with these speeches, saied, and what is the matter that now you make so little accoumpt of your Julina, that beeing my husband indeed, have the face to denie me, to whom thou art contracted by so many solemne othes: what art thou ashamed to have me to thy wife 1 how much oughtest thou rather to be ashamed to breake thy promised faith, and to have despised the holie and dreadfull name of God, but that time constraineth me to lay open that, which shame rather willeth I should dissemble and keepe secret, behold me then here Silvio whom thou hast gotten with childe, who if thou bee of such honestie, as I trust for all this I shall finde, then the thing is done without prejudice, or any hurt to my conscience, consideryng that by the professed faith, thou didest accoumpt mee for thy wife, and I received thee for my spouse and loyall husband, swearyng by the almightie God, that no other then you have made the conquest and triumph of my chastitie, whereof I crave no other witnesse then your selfe, and mine owne conscience.

I praie you gentlewomen, was not this a foule oversight of Julina, that would so precisely sweare so great an oth, that she was gotten with child by one, that was altogether un-furnisht with implementes for such a tourne. For Gods love take heede, and let this be an example to you, when you be with child, how you sweare who is the father, before you have had good proofe and knowledge of the partie, for men be so subtill, and full of sleight, that God knoweth a woman may quickly be deceived.

But now to returne to our Silvio, who hearing an othe sworne so divinely that he had gotten a woman with child, was like to beleeve that it had bin true in very deede, but remembring his owne impediment, thought it impossible that he should committe such an acte, and therfore halfe in a chafe, hee saied. What lawe is able to restraine the foolish indescretion of a woman, that yeeldeth herselfe to her owne desires, what shame is able to bridle or withdrawe her from her mind and madnesse, or with what snaffell is it possible to holde her back, from the execution of her filthinesse, but what abhomination is this, that a lady of such a house should so forget the greatnesse of her estate, the alliaunce whereof she is descended, the nobility of her deceased husband, and maketh no conscience to shame and slaunder her selfe, with such a one as I am, beeing so far unfit and un-seemely for her degree, but how horrible it is to heare the name of God so defaced, that we make no more account, but for the maintainance of our mischiefs, we feare no whit at all to forsweare his holy name, as though he were not in all his dealings most righteous true and just, and will not onely lay open our leasings to the worlde, but will likewise punish the same with sharpe and bitter scourges.

Julina not able to indure him to proceede any further in his sermon, was alreadie surprised with a vehement griefe, began bitterly to cry out, uttering these speeches following.

Alas, is it possible that the soveraigne justice of God, can abide a mischiefe so great and cursed, why may I not now suffer death, rather then the infamy which I see to wander before mine eies. Oh happy and more then right-happy had I bin, if inconstant fortune had not devised this treason, wherein I am surprised and caught, am I thus become to be intangled with snares, and in the handes of him, who in-joying the spoiles of my honour, will openly deprive mee of my fame, by making mee a common fable to all posterity in time to come, ah traitour and discourteous wretch, is this the recompence of the honest and firme amity which I have borne thee, wherein I have deserved this discourtesie, by loving thee more then thou art able to deserve, is it I, arrant theefe is it I, upon whom thou thinkest to worke thy mischiefes, doest thou thinke me no better worth, but that thou maiest pro digally wast my honour at thy pleasure, did est thou dare to adventure upon me, having thy conscience wounded with so deadly a treason: ah unhappy and above all other most unhappy, that have so charely preserved mine honour, and now am made a prey to satisfie a yong mans lust, that hath coveted nothing but the spoile of my chastity and good name.

Herewithall the teares so gushed downe her cheekes, that she was not able to open her mouth to use any further speech.

The duke who stoode by all this while, and heard this whole discourse, was wonderfully moved with compassio to wards Julina, knowing that from her infancie she had ever so honourably used her selfe, that there was no man able to detect her of any misdemeanour, otherwise then beseemed a lady of her estate, wherefore being fully resolved that Silvio his man liad committed this villanie against her, in a great furie drawing his rapier, he said unto Silvio.

How canst thou (arrant theefe) shew thy selfe so cruell and carelesse to such as doe thee honour, hast thou so little regard of such a noble lady, as humbleth her selfe to such a villaine as thou art, who without any respect either of her renowne or noble estate, canst be content to seeke the wracke and utter ruine of her honour, but frame thy selfe to make such satisfaction as she requireth, although I know unworthy wretch, that thou art not able to make her the least part of amends, or I sweare by God, that thou shalt not escape the death which I will minister to thee with mine owne hands, and therefore advise thee well what thou dooest.

Silvio having heard this sharpe sentence, fell downe on his knees before the duke craving for mercie, desiring that he might be suffered to speake with the lady Julina apart, promising to satisfie her according to her owne contentation.

Well (quoth the duke) I take thy worde, and there withall I advise thee that thou performe thy promise, or otherwise I protest before God, I will make thee such an example to the world, that all traitours shall tremble for feare, how they doe seeke the dishonouring of ladies.

But now Julina had conceived so great griefe against Silvio, that there was much adoe, to perswade her to talke with him, but remembring her owne case, desirous to heare what ex cuse he could make, in the end she agreed, and being brought into a place severallie by themselves, Silvio began with a pitious voyce to say as followeth.

I know not madam, of whom I might make complaint, whether of you or of my selfe, or rather of fortune, which hath conducted and brought us both into so great adversitie, I see that you receive great wrong, and I am condemned against all right, vou in perill to abide the bruite of spightfull tongues, and I in danger to loose the thing that I most desire; and although I could alledge many reasons to proove my sayings true, yet I referre my selfe to the experience and bountie of your minde. And here with all loosing his garments downe to his stomacke, and shewed Julina his breasts and prety teates, surmounting farre the whitenesse of snow it selfe, saying: Loe madam, beholde here the party whom who have chalenged to be the father of your childe, see I am a woman the daughter of a noble duke, who onely for the love of him, whom you so lightly have spoken of, have forsaken my father, abandoned my countrey, and in manner as you see am become a serving man, satisfying my selfe, but with the onely sight of my

Apolonius, and now madam, if my passion were not vehement, and my tormentes without comparison, I would wish that my fained griefes might be laughed to scorne, and my dissembled paines to bee rewarded with floutes. But my love beeing pure, my travaile continuall, and my griefes endlesse, I trust madam you wil not only excuse me of crime, but also pitty my distresse, the which I protest I would stil have kept secret, if my fortune would so have permitted.

Julina did now thinke her selfe to be in a worse case then ever she was before, for now she knew not whom to challenge to be the father of her child, wherefore, when she had told the duke the verye certaintye of the discourse, which Silvio had made unto her, shee departed to her owne house, with such griefe and sorrowe, that she purposed never to come out of her owne dores againe alive, to be a wonder and mocking stocke to the world.

But the duke more amazed, to heare this straunge discourse of Silvio came unto him, whom when he had viewed with better consideration, perceived in deede that it was Silla, the daughter of Duke Pontus, and imbracing her in his armes, he said Oh the branche of al vertue and the flowre of curtesie it selfe, pardon me I beseech you of all such discourtesies, as I have ignorantly committed towards you : desiring you that without farther memorie of auncient griefes, you will accept of me, who is more joyfull and better contented with your presence, then if the whole world were at my commaunde-ment. Where hath there ever bin founde such liberality in a lover, which having beene trained up and nourished amongest the delicacies and banquets of the court, accompa nied with traines of many faire and noble ladies living in pleasure, and in the middest of delights, would so prodigally adventure your selfe, neither fearing mishaps, nor misliking to take such pains, as I knowe you have not bin accustomed unto. O liberality never heard of before! O fact that can never be sufficiently rewarded! O true love most pure and unfained: heere with all sending for the most artificiall workemen, he provided for her sondry suites of sumpteous apparell, and the marriage day appointed, which was celebrat ed with great triumph through the whole citty of Constanti nople, every one praising the noblenesse of the duke, but so many as did behold the excellent beauty of Silla, gave her the praise above all the rest of the ladies in the troupe.

The matter seemed so wonderfull and straunge that the bruite was spread throughout al the parts of Grecia, in so much that it came to the hearing of Silvio, who as you have heard, remained in those parts to enquire of his sister, he being the gladdest man in the world, hasted to Constantinople, where comming to his sister he was joyfully received, and most lovingly welcomed, and intertained of the duke, his brother in law. After he had remained there two or three daies, the duke revealed unto Silvio, the whole discourse how it hap pened, betweene his sister and the lady Julina, and how his sister was chalenged, for getting a woman with child: Silvio blushing with these wordes, was striken with great remorse to make Julina amends; understanding her to bee a noble lady, and was left defamed to the world through his default, hee therefore bewraied the whole circumstance to the duke, whereof the duke beeing very joyfull, immediately repaired with Silvio to the house of Julina, whom they found in her chamber, in great lamentation and mourning. To whom the duke saide, take courage madam for behold here a gentleman, that wil not sticke, both to father your child and to take you for his wife, no inferiour person, but the sonne and heyre of a noble duke, worthy of your estate and dignity.

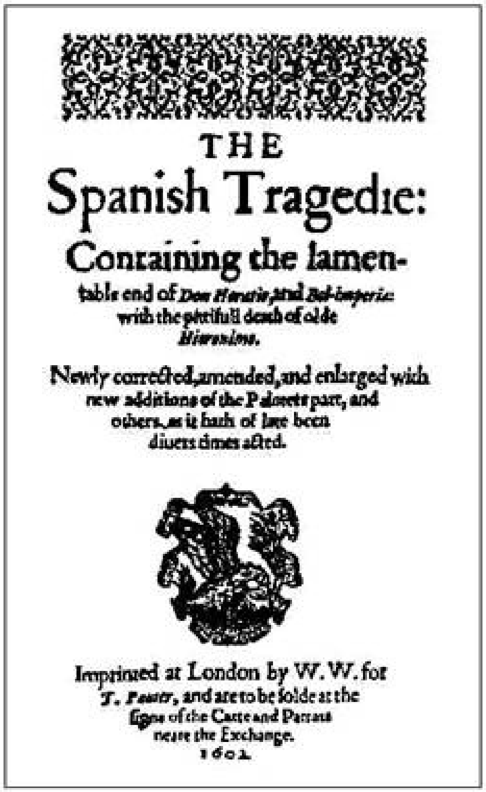
Julina seeing Silvio in place, did know very well that he was the father of her childe, and was so ravished with joy, that she knew not whether she were awake, or in some dreame. Silvio imbracing her in his armes, craving forgive-nesse of all that was past: concluded with her the marriage day, which was presently accomplished with great joy and contentation to all parties: and thus Silvio having attained a noble wife, and Silla his sister her desired husband, they passed the residue of their daies with such delight, as those that have accomplished the perfections of their felicities.

FINIS.

HAMLET – Kyd’s *The Spanish Tragedy*

Much doubt remains as to the precise source of Hamlet. However, *The Spanish Tragedy* , a famous revenge play in Shakespeare’s day written by Thomas Kyd, is believed to have influenced the plot of *Hamlet* . Kyd is also believed to have written an earlier lost play known as the *Ur-Hamlet* , also a likely source of Shakespeare’s famous tragedy.

Kyd’s entire play is provided here to aid the Shakespearean scholar.



THE
Spanish Tragedie:
Containing the lamen-
table end of *Don Horatio*, and *Bel-imperia*:
with the pittifull death of olde
Hieronimo.

Newly corrected, amended, and enlarged with
new additions of the Painters part, and
others, as it hath of late been
diuers times acted.

Imprinted at London by W. W. for
T. Pauier, and are to be ſolde at the
ſigne of the Catte and Parrats
neare the Exchange.
1602.

A 1602 title page for Kyd’s famous play

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DRAMATIS PERSONAE.

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KING OF SPAIN.

VICEROY OF PORTUGAL.

DON CIPRIAN, duke of Castile.

HIERONIMO, knight-marshall of Spain.

BALTHAZAR, the Viceroy's son.

LORENZO, Don Ciprian's son [and Bel-imperia's brother].

HORATIO, Hieronimo's son.

ALEXANDRO

VILLUPPO lords of Portual.

PEDRINGANO, servant of Bel-imperia.

SERBERINE, servant of Balthazar.

Spanish General, Portuguese Embassador, Old Man, Painter Page,

Hangman, Citizens, Soldiers, Attendants, &c.

BEL-IMPERIA, Lorenzo's sister.

ISABELLA, Hieronimo's wife.

PAGE.

MESSENGER.

CHRISTOPHEL.

SERVANT.

SENEX (DON BAZULTO).

CITIZENS.

SCENE: Spain; and Portugal.

ACTVS PRIMVS.

Prologue]

Enter the GHOAST OF ANDREA, and with him REUENGE.

GHOAST.

When this eternall substance of my soule

Did liue imprisond in my wanton flesh,

Ech in their function seruing others need,

I was a courtier in the Spanish court:

My name was Don Andrea; my discent,

Though not ignoble, yet inferiour far

To gratious fortunes of my tender youth,

For there, in prime and pride of all my yeeres,

By duteous seruice and deseruing loue,

In secret I possest a worthy dame,

Which hight sweet Bel-imperia by name.

But in the haruest of my sommer ioyes

Deaths winter nipt the blossomes of my blisse,

Forcing diuorce betwixt my loue and me;

For in the late conflict with Portingale

My valour drew me into dangers mouth

Till life to death made passage through my wounds.

When I was slaine, my soule descended straight

To passe the flowing streame of Archeron;

But churlish Charon, only boatman there,

Said that, my rites of buriall not performde,

I might not sit amongst his passengers.

Ere Sol had slept three nights in Thetis lap,

And slakte his smoaking charriot in her floud,

By Don Horatio, our knight-marshals sonne,

My funerals and obsequies were done.

Then was the fariman of hell content
To passe me ouer to the slimie strond
That leades to fell Auernus ougly waues.
There, pleasing Cerberus with honied speech,
I past the perils of the formost porch.
Not farre from hence, amidst ten thousand soules,
Sate Minos, Eacus and Rhadamant;
To whome no sooner gan I make approach,
To craue a pasport for my wandring ghost,
But Minos in grauen leaues of lotterie
Drew forth the manner of my life and death.
"This knight," quoth he, "both liu'd and died in loue;
And for his loue tried fortune of the warres;
And by warres fortune lost both loue and life."
"Why then," said Eacus, "convey him hence
To walke with lovers in our field of loue
And the course of euerlasting time
Vnder greene mirtle-trees and cipresse shades."
"No, no!" said Rhadamant, "it were not well
With louing soules to place a martialist.
He died in warre, and must to martiall fields,

Where wounded Hector liues in lasting paine,

And Achilles Mermedons do scoure the plaine."

Then Minos, mildest censor of the three,

Made this deuice, to end the difference:

"Send him," quoth he, "to our infernall king,

To dome him as best seemes his Maiestie."

To this effect my pasport straight was drawne.

In keeping on my way to Plutos court

Through dreadfull shades of euer-glooming night,

I saw more sights than thousand tongues can tell

Or pennes can write or mortall harts can think.

Three waies there were: that on the right hand side

Was ready way vnto the foresaid fields

Where louers liue and bloudie martialists,

But either sort containd within his bounds;

The left hand path, declining fearfuly,

Was ready downfall to the deepest hell,

Where bloudie Furies shakes their whips of steele,

And poore Ixion turnes an endles wheele,

Where vsurers are choakt with melting golde,

And wantons are imbraste with ougly snakes, And murderers groane with neuer-killing wounds,

And periured wights scalded in boiling lead,

And all foule sinnes with torments ouerwhelmd;

Twixt these two waies I trod the middle path,

Which brought me to the faire Elizian greene,

In midst whereof there standes a stately towre,

The walles of brasse, the gates of adamant.

Heere finding Pluto with his Proserpine,

I shewed my pasport, humbled on my knee.

Whereat faire Proserpine began to smile,

And begd that onely she might giue me doome.

Pluto was pleasd, and sealde it with a kisse.

Forthwith, Reuenge, she rounded thee in th' eare,

And bad thee lead me though the gates of horn,

Where dreames haue passage in the silent night.

No sooner had she spoke but we weere heere,

I wot not how, in the twinkling of an eye.

REUENGE.

Then know, Andrea, that thou ariu'd

Where thou shalt see the author of thy death, Don Balthazar, the prince of Portingale,

Depriu'd of life by Bel-imperia:

Heere sit we downe to see the misterie,

And serue for Chorus in this tragedie.

ACT I. SCENE 1.

[The Spanish Court]

Enter SPANISH KING, GENERALL, CASTILLE, HIERONIMO.

KING.

Now say, l*[ord]* generall: how fares our campe?

GEN.

All wel, my soueraigne liege, except some few

That are deceast by fortune of the warre.

KING.

But what portends thy cheerefull countenance

And posting to our presence this in hast?

Speak, man: hath fortune giuen vs victorie?

GEN.

Victorie, my liege, and that with little losse.

KING.

Out Portugals will pay vs tribute then?

GEN.

Tribute, and wonted homage therewithall.

KING.

Then blest be Heauen, and Guider of the heauens,
From whose faire influence such iustice flowes!

CAST.

O multum dilecte Deo, tibi militat aether,
Et coniuratae curato poplite gentes
Succumbent: recto soror est victoria iuris!

KING.

Thanks to my loving brother of Castille.
But, generall, vnfolde in breefe discourse

Your forme of battell and your warres successe,
That, adding all the pleasure of thy newes
Vnto the height of former happines,
With deeper wage and gentile dignitie
We may reward thy blisfull chiualrie.

GEN.
Where Spaine and Portingale do ioyntly knit
Their frontiers, leaning on each others bound,
There met our armies in the proud aray:
Both furnisht well, both full of hope and feare,
Both menacing alike with daring showes,
Both vaunting sundry colours of deuice,
Both cheerly sounding trumpets, drums and fifes,
Both raising dreadfull clamors to the skie,
That valleis, hils, and riuers made rebound
And heauen it-selfe was frighted with the sound.
Our battels both were pitcht in squadron forme,
Each corner strongly fenst with wings of shot;
But, ere we ioyned and came to push of pike,
I brought a squadron of our readiest shot

From out our rearward to begin the fight;
They brought another wing to incounter vs;
Meane-while our ordinance plaid on either side,
And captaines stroue to haue their valours tride.
Don Pedro, their chiefe horsemens corlonell,
Did with his cornet brauely make attempt
To break our order of our battell rankes;
But Don Rogero, worthy man of warre,
Marcht forth against him with our musketiers
And stopt the mallice of his fell approach.
While they maintaine hot skirmish too and fro,
Both battailes ioyne and fall to handie blowes,
Their violent shot resembling th' oceans rage
When, roaring lowd and with a swelling tide,
It beats vpon the rampiers of huge rocks,
And gapes to swallow neighbor-bounding lands.
Now, while Bellona rageth heere and there,
Thick stormes of bullets ran like winters haile,
And shiuered launces darke the troubled aire;
Pede pes & cuspide cuspis,
Arma sonant armis vir petiturque viro;

On euery side drop captaines to the ground,

And souldiers, some ill-maimde, some slaine outright:

Heere falls a body sundred from his head;

There legs and armes lye bleeding on the grasse,

Mingled with weapons and vnboweled steeds,

That scattering ouer-spread the purple plaine.

In all this turmoyle, three long hovres and more

The victory to neither part inclinde,

Till Don Andrea with his braue lanciers

In their maine battell made so great a breach

That, halfe dismaid, the multitude retirde.

But Balthazar, the Portingales young prince,

Brought rescue and encouragde them to stay.

Heere-hence the fight was eagerly renewd,

And in that conflict was Andrea slaine,—

Braue man-at-arms, but weake to Balthazar.

Yet, while the prince, insulting ouer him,

Breathd out proud vaunts, sounding to our reproch,

Friendship and hardie valour ioyned in one

Prickt forth Horatio, our knight-marshals sonne,

To challenge forth that prince in single fight.

Not long betweene these twain the fight indurde,
But straight the prince was beaten from his horse
And forcst to yeeld him prisoner to his foe.
When he was taken, all the rest fled,
And our carbines pursued them to death,
Till, Phoebus waning to the western deepe,
Our trumpeters were chargd to sound retreat.

KING.
Thanks, good l*[ord]* general, for these good newes!
And, for some argument of more to come,
Take this and weare it for thy soueraignes sake.

Giue him his chaine.

But tell me now: hast thou confirmed a peace?

GEN.
No peace, my liege, but peace conditionall,
That, if with homage tribute be well paid,
The fury of your forces wilbe staide.

And to this peace their viceroy hath subscribde,

Giue the K*[ING]* a paper.

And made a solemne vow that during life
His tribute shalbe truely paid to Spaine.

KING.
These words, these deeds become thy person wel.
But now, knight-marhsall, frolike with thy king,
For tis thy sonne that winnes this battels prize.

HIERO.
Long may he liue to serue my soueraigne liege!
And soone decay unless he serue my liege!

A *[trumpet]* a-farre off.

KING.
Nor thou nor he shall dye without reward.
What meanes this warning of this trumpets sound?

GEN.

This tels me that your Graces men of warre,

Such as warres fortune hath reseru'd from death,

Come marching on towards your royall seate,

To show themselues before your Maiestie;

For so gaue I in charge at my depart.

Whereby by demonstration shall appeare

That all, except three hundred or few more,

Are safe returnd and by their foes inricht.

The armie enters, BALTHAZAR betweene LORENZO

and HORATIO, captiue.

KING.

A gladsome sight! I long to see them heere.

They enter and passe by.

Was that the warlike prince of Portingale

That by our nephew was in triumph led?

GEN.

It was, my liege, the prince of Portingale.

KING.

But what was he that on the other side
Held him by th' arme as partner of the prize?

HIERO.

That was my sonne, my gracious soueraigne;
Of whome though from his tender infancie
My louing thoughts did neuer hope but well,
He neuer pleasd his fathers eyes till now,
Nor fild my hart with ouercloying ioyes.

KING.

Goe, let them march once more about these walles,
That staying them we may conferre and talke
With our braue prisoner and his double guard.

[Exit a MESSENGER.]

Hieoronimo, it greatly pleaseth vs

That in our victorie thou haue a share

By vertue of thy worthy sonnes exploit.

Enter againe.

Bring hether the young prince of Portingale!

The rest martch on, but, ere they be dismist,

We will bestow on euery soldier

Two duckets, and on euery leader ten,

That they may know our largesse welcomes them.

Exeunt all *[the army]* but BAL*[THAZAR]* ,

LOR*[ENZO]* , and HOR*[ATIO]* .

[KING.] Welcome, Don Balthazar! Welcome nephew!

And thou, Horatio, thou art welcome too!

Young prince, although thy fathers hard misdeedes

In keeping backe the tribute that he owes

Deserue but euill measure at our hands,

Yet shalt thou know that Spaine is honorable.

BALT.

The trespasse that my father made in peace
Is now controlde by fortune of the warres;
And cards once dealt, it bootes not aske why so.
His men are slaine,—a weakening to his realme;
His colours ceaz'd,—a blot vnto his name;
His sonne distrest,—a corsiue to his hart;
These punishments may cleare his late offence.

KING.

I, Balthazar, if he obserue this truce,
Our peace will grow the stronger for these warres.
Meane-while liue thou, though not in libertie,
Yet free from bearing any seruile yoake;
For in our hearing thy deserts were great.
And in our sight thy-selfe art gratious.

BALT.

And I shall studie to deserue this grace.

KING.

But tell me,—for their holding makes me doubt:
To Which of these twaine art thou prisoner?

LOR.

To me, my liege.

HOR.

To me, my soueraigne.

LOR.

This hand first tooke his courser by the raines.

HOR.

But first my launce did put him from his horse.

LOR.

I ceaz'd the weapon and enioyde it first.

HOR.

But first I forc'd him lay his weapons downe.

KING.

Let goe his arm, vpon my priviledge!

Let him goe.

Say, worthy prince: to whether didst thou yeeld?

BALT.

To him in curtesie; to this perforce;
He spake me faire, this other gaue me strokes;
He promisde life, this other threatned death;
He wan my loue, this other conquerd me;
And, truth to say, I yeeld myselfe to both.

HIERO.

But that I *[know]* your Grace is iust and wise,
And might seeme partiall in this difference,
Inforct by nature and by law of armes,
My tongue should plead for young Horatios right.

He hunted well that was a lyons death,
Not he that in a garment wore his skin;
So hares may pull dead lyons by the beard.

KING.
  Content thee, marshall; thou shalt haue no wrong,
And for thy sake thy sonne shall want to right.

Will both abide the censure of my doome?

LOR.
  I craue no better than your Grace awards.

HOR.
  Nor I, although I sit beside my right.

KING.
  Then by iudgement thus your strife shall end:
You both deserue and both shall haue reward.
Nephew, thou tookst his weapon*[s]* and his horse:
His weapons and his horse are thy reward.

Horatio, thou didst force him first to yeeld:
His ransome therefore is thy valours fee;
Appoint the sum as you shall both agree.
But, nephew, thou shalt haue the prince in guard,
For thine estate best fitteth such a guest;
Horatios house were small for all his traine.
Yet, in regard they substance passeth his,
And that iust guerdon may befall desert,
To him we yeeld the armour of the prince.
How likes don Balthazar of this deuice?

BALT.
 Right well, my liege, if this prouizo were:
That Don Horatio beare vs company,
Whome I admire and loue for chiualrie.

KING.
 Horatio, leaue him not that loues thee so.
Now let vs hence, to see our souldiers paide,
And feast our prisoner as our friendly guest.

Exeunt.

ACT I. SCENE 2.

[Portugal: the VICEROY'S palace.]

Enter VICEROY, ALEXANDRO, VILLUPPO.

VICE.

Is our embassadour dispatcht for Spaine?

ALEX.

Two daies, my liege, are past since his depart.

VICE.

And tribute paiment gone along with him?

ALEX.

I, my good lord.

VICE.

Then rest we heere a-while in our vnrest;
And feede our sorrowes with inward sighes,
For deepest cares break neuer into teares.
But wherefore sit I in a regall throne?

This better fits a wretches endles moane.
Yet this is higher then my fortunes reach,
And therefore better then my state deserues.

Falles to the grounde.

I, I, this earth, image of melancholly,
Seeks him whome fates *[adiudge]* to miserie!
Heere let me lye! Now am I at the lowest!
Qui iacet in terra non habet vnde cadat.
In me concumpsit vires fortuna nocendo,
Nil superest vt iam possit obesse magis.
Yes, Fortune may bereaue me of my crowne—
Heere, take it now; let Fortune doe her worst,
She shall now rob me of this sable weed.

O, no, she enuies none but pleasent things.
Such is the folly of despightfull chance,
Fortune is blinde and sees not my deserts,
So is she deafe and heares not my laments;
And, coulde she heare, yet is she willfull mad,
And therefore will not pittie my distresse.
Suppose that she coulde pittie me, what then?
What helpe can be expected at her hands
Whose foote is standing on a rowling stone
And minde more mutable then fickle windes?
Why waile I, then, wheres hope of no redresse?

O, yes, complaining makes my greefe seeme lesse.
My late ambition hath distaind my faith,
My breach of faith occaisioned bloudie warres,
Those bloudie warres haue spent my treasur*[i]* e,
And with my treasur*[i]* e my peoples blood,
And with the blood my ioy and best beloued,—
My best beloued, my sweet and onely sonne!
O, wherefore went I not to warre myselfe?

The cause was mine; I might haue died for both.
My yeeres were mellow, but his young and greene:

My death were naturall, but his was forced.

ALEX.

No doubt, my liege, but still the prince suruiues.

VICE.

Suruiues! I, where?

ALEX.

In Spaine, a prisoner by michance of warre.

VICE.

Then they haue slaine him for his fathers fault.

ALEX.

That were a breach to common lawe of armes.

VICE.

They recke no lawes that meditate reuenge.

ALEX.

His ransomes worth will stay from foule reuenge.

VICE.

No; if he liued, the newes would soone be heere.

VILLUP.

My soueraign, pardon the author of ill newes,
And Ile bewray the fortune of thy sonne.

VICE.

Speake on; Ile guerdon thee, what-ere it be.
Mine eare is ready to receiue ill newes,
My hart growne hard gainst mischiefes battery;
Stand vp, I say, and tell thy tale at large.

VILLUP.

Then heare that truth which these mine eies have seene:
When both the armies were in battell ioyned.

Don Balthazar amidst the thickest troupes,

To winne renowme, did wondrous feats of armes;

Amongst the rest I saw him hand-to-hand

In single fight with their lord generall.

Till Alexandro, that heere counterfeits

Vnder the colour of a duteous freend,

Discharged a pistol at the princes back,

As though he would haue slaine their generall,

But therwithall Don Balthazar fell downe;

And when he fell, then we began to flie;

But, had he liued, the day had sure bene ours.

ALEX.

O wiched forgerie! O traiterous miscreant!

VICE.

Hold thou thy peace! But now, Villuppo, say:

Where then became the carkasse of my sonne?

VILLUP.

I saw them drag it to the Spanish tents.

VICE.

I, I, my nightly dreames haue tolde me this!
Thou false, vnkinde, vnthankfull, traiterous beast!
Wherein had Balthazar offended thee,
That thou should betray him to our foes?
Wast Spanish golde that bleared so thine eyes
That thou couldst see no part of our deserts?
Perchance, because thou art Terseraes lord,
Thou hadst some hope to weare this diademe
If first my sonne and then myselfe were slaine;
But thy ambitious thought shall breake thy neck.

I, this was it that made thee spill his bloud!

Take the crowne and put it on againe.

But Ile now weare it till they bloud be spilt.

ALEX.

Vouchsafe, dread soueraigne, to heare me speak!

VICE.
  Away with him! his sight is second hell!
Keepe him till we determine his death.

If Balthazar be dead, he shall not liue.

  [They take him out.]

Villuppo, follow vs for thy reward.

  Exit VICE*[ROY]* .

VILLUP.
  Thus haue I with an enuious forged tale
Deceiued the king, betraid mine enemy,
And hope for guerdon of my villany.

ACT I. SCENE 3.

[Spain: the palace]

Enter HORATIO and BEL-IMPERIA.

BEL.

Signior Horatio, this is the place and houre
Wherein I must intreat thee to relate
The circumstance of Don Andreas death,
Who liuing was my garlands sweetest flower,
And in his death hath buried my delights.

HOR.

For loue of him and seruice to yourself,
[Ile not] refuse this heauy dolefull charge;
Yet teares and sighes, I feare, will hinder me.
When both our armies were enioynd in fight,
Your worthie chiualier admist the thikst,
For glorious cause still aiming at the fairest,
Was at the last by yong Don Balthazar
Encountered hand-to-hand. Their fight was long,
Their harts were great, their clamours menacing,
Their strength alike, their strokes both dangerous;

But wrathfull Nemesis, that wicked power,

Enuying at Andreas praise and worth,

Cut short his life to end his praise and woorth.

She, she herselfe, disguisde in armours maske,

As Pallas was before proud Pergamus,

Brought in a fresh supply of halberdiers,

Which pauncht his horse and dingd him to the ground.

Then yong Don Balthazar, with ruthles rage,

Taking aduantage of his foes distresse,

Did finish what his halberdiers begun;

And left not till Andreas life was done.

Then, though too late, incenst with iust remorce,

I with my band set foorth against the prince,

And brought him prisoner from his halba*[r]* diers.

BEL.

Would thou hadst slaine him that so slew my loue!

But then was Don Andreas carkasse lost?

HOR.

No; that was it for which I cheefely stroue,

Nor stept I back till I recouerd him.
I tooke him vp, and wound him in mine armes,
And, welding him vnto my priuate tent,
There laid him downe and dewd him with my teares,
And sighed and sorrowed as became a freend.
But neither freendly sorrow, sighes and teares
Could win pale Death from his vsurped right.

Yet this I did, and lesse I could not doe:
I saw him honoured with due funerall.
This scarfe I pluckt from off his liueles arme,
And wear it in remembrance of my freend.

BEL.
I know the scarfe: would he had kept it still!
For, had he liued, he would haue kept it still,
And worne it for his Bel-imperias sake;
For twas my fauour at his last depart.
But now weare thou it both for him and me;
For, after him, thou hast deserued it best.
But, for thy kindnes in his life and death,

Be sure, while Bel-imperias life endures,
She will be Don Horatios thankfull freend.

HOR.

And, madame, Don Horatio will not slacke
Humbly to serue faire Bel-imperia.
But now, if your good liking stand thereto,
Ile craue your pardon to goe seeke the prince;
For so the duke, your father, gaue me charge.

Exit.

BEL.

I, goe, Horatio; leaue me heere alone,
For solitude best fits my cheereles mood.—
Yet what auailes to waile Andreas death,
From whence Horatio proues my second loue?
Had he not loued Andrea as he did,
He could not sit in Bel-imperias thoughts.
But how can loue finde harbour in my brest,
Till I reuenge the death of my beloued?

Yes, second loue shall further my reuenge:

Ile loue Horatio, my Andreas freend,

The more to spight the prince that wrought his end;

And, where Don Balthazar, that slew my loue,

He shall, in rigour of my iust disdaine,

Reape long repentance for his murderous deed,—

For what wast els but murderous cowardise,

So many to oppresse one valiant knight,

Without respect of honour in the fight?

And heere he comes that murdred my delight.

Enter LORENZO and BALTHAZAR.

LOR.

Sister, what meanes this melanchollie walke?

BEL.

That for a-while I wish no company.

LOR.

But heere the prince is come to visite you.

BEL.

That argues that he liues in libertie.

BAL.

No madam, but in pleasing seruitude.

BEL.

Your prison then, belike, is your conceit.

BAL.

I, by conceite my freedome is enthralde.

BEL.

Then with conceite enlarge your-selfe againe.

BAL.

What if conceite haue laid my hart to gage?

BEL.

Pay that you borrowed, and recouer it.

BAL.

I die if it returne from whence it lyes.

BEL.

A hartles man, and liue? A miracle!

BAL.

I, lady, loue can work such miracles.

LOR.

Tush, tush, my lord! let goe these ambages,
And in plaine tearmes acquaint her with your loue.

BEL.

What bootes complaint, when thers no remedy?

BAL.

Yes, to your gracios selfe must I complaine,
In whose faire answere lyes my remedy,

On whose perfection all my thoughts attend,

On whose aspect mine eyes finde beauties bowre,

In whose translucent brest my hart is lodgde.

BEL.

Alas, my lord! there but words of course,

And but deuise to driue me from this place.

She, going in, lets fall her gloue, which

HORATIO, comming out, takes vp.

HOR.

Madame, your gloue.

BEL.

Thanks, good Horatio; take it for thy paines.

[BEL-IMPERIA exits.]

BAL.

Signior Horatio stoopt in happie time!

HOR.

I reapt more grace that I deseru'd or hop'd.

LOR.

My lord, be not dismaid for what is past;
You know that women oft are humerous:
These clouds will ouerblow with little winde;
Let me alone, Ill scatter them myselfe.
Meane-while let vs deuise to spend the time
In some delightfull sports and reuelling.

HOR.

The king, my lords, is comming hither straight
To feast the Portingall embassadour;
Things were in readiness before I came.

BAL.

Then heere it fits vs to attend the king,
To welcome hither our embassadour,
And learne my father and my countries health.

Enter the banquet, TRUMPETS, the KING,

and EMBASSADOUR.

KING.

See, lord embassador, how Spaine intreats

Their prisoner Balthazar, thy viceroyes sonne:

We pleasure more in kindenes than in warres.

EMBASS.

Sad is our king, and Portingale laments,

Supposing that Don Balthazar is slaine.

BAL.

[aside] So am I, slaine by beauties tirannie!—

You see, my lord, how Balthazar is slaine:

I frolike with the Duke of Castilles sonne,

Wrapt euery houre in pleasures of the court,

And graste with fauours of his Maiestie.

KING.

Put off your greetings till our feast be done;
Now come and sit with vs, and taste our cheere.

Sit to the banquet.

Sit downe, young prince, you are our second guest;
Brother, sit downe; and nephew, take your placel
Signior Horatio, waite thou vpon our cup,
For well thou hast deserued to be honored.
Now, lordings, fall too: Spaine is Portugall,
And Portugall is Spaine; we both are freends;
Tribute is paid, and we enioy our right.

But where is olde Hieronimo, our marhsall?
He promised vs, in honor of our guest,
To grace our banquet with some pompous iest.

Enter HIERONIMO with a DRUM, three KNIGHTS,
each with scutchin; then he fethces three
KINGS; they take their crownes and them captiue.

Hieronimo, this makes contents mine eie,
Although I sound well not the misterie.

HIERO.
  The first arm'd knight that hung his scutchin vp

He takes the scutchin ahd giues it to
the KING.

Was English Robert, Earle of Glocester,
Who, when King Stephen bore sway in Albion,
Arriued with fiue and twenty thousand men
In Portingale, and, by successe of warre,
Enforced the king, then but a Sarasin,
To beare the yoake of the English monarchie.

KING.
  My lord of Portingale, by this you see
That which may comfort both your king and you,
And make your late discomfort seeme the lesse.

But say, Hieronimo: what was the next?

HIERO.

  The second knight that hung his scutchin vp

He doth as he did before.

Was Edmond, Earle of Kent in Albion.

When English Richard wore the diadem,

He came likewise and razed Lisbon walles,

And tooke the king of Portingale in fight,—

For which, and other suche seruice done,

He after was created Duke of Yorke.

KING.

  This is another speciall argument

That Portingale may daine to beare our yoake,

When it by little England hath beene yoakt.

But now, Hieronimo, what were the last?

HIERO.

The third and last, not least in our account,

Dooing as before.

Was, as the rest, a valiant Englishman,
Braue Iohn of Gaunt, the Duke of Lancaster,
As by his scuthcin plainely may appeare:
He with a puissant armie came to Spaine
And tooke our Kinge of Castille prisoner.

EMBASS.
This is an argument for our viceroy
That Spaine may not insult for her successe,
Since English warriours likewise conquered Spaine
And made them bow their knees to Albion.

KING.
Hieronimo, I drinke to thee for this deuice,
Which hath pleasde both the embassador and me:

Pledge me, Hieronimo, if thou loue the king!

Takes the cup of HORATIO.

My lord, I feare we sit but ouer-long,
Vnlesse our dainties were more delicate,—
But welcome are to you the best we haue.
Now let vs in, that you may be dispatcht;
I think our councell is already set.

Exeunt omnes.

[CHORUS.]

ANDREA.
  Come we for this from depth of vnder ground,—
To see him feast that gaue me my deaths wound?

These pleasant sights are sorrow to my soule:
nothing but league and loue and banqueting!

REUENGE.

Be still, Andrea; ere we go from hence,
Ile turne their freendship into fell despight,
Their loue to mortall hate, their day to night,
Their hope into dispaire, their peace in warre,
Their ioyes to paine, their blisse to miserie.

ACTUS SECUNDUS.

ACT II. SCENE 1.

[The DUKE's castle.]

Enter LORENZO and BALTHAZAR.

LORENZO.

My lord, though Belimperia seeme thus coy,
Let reason holde you in your wonted ioy:
In time the sauage bull sustaines the yoake,
In time all haggard hawkes will stoope to lure,
In time small wedges cleaue the hardest oake,
In time the *[hardest]* flint is pearst with softest shower;
And she in time will fall from her disdaine,
And rue the sufferance of your freendly paine.

BAL.

No; she is wilder, and more hard withall, Then beast or bird, or tree or stony wall!

But wherefore blot I Belimperias name?
It is my fault, not she that merits blame.
My feature is not to content her sight;
My wordes are rude and worke her no delight;
The lines I send her are but harsh and ill,
Such as doe drop from Pan and Marsias quill;
My presents are not of sufficient cost;
And, being worthles, all my labours lost.

Yet might she loue me for my valiancie.
I; but thats slandred by captiuitie.

Yet might she loue me to content her sire.
I; but her reason masters *[her]* desire.
Yet might she loue me as her brothers freend.

I; but her hopes aime at some other end.
Yet might she loue me to vpreare her state.
I; but perhaps she *[loues]* some nobler mate.

Yet might she loue me as her beauties thrall.

I; but I feare she cannot loue at all.

LOR.

My lord, for my sake leaue these extasies,
And doubt not but weele finde some remedie.

Some cause there is that lets you not be loued:
First that must needs be knowne, and then remoued.

What if my sister loue some other knight?

BAL.

My sommers day will turne to winters night.

LOR.

I haue already founde a strategeme
To sound the bottome of this doubtfull theame.
My lord, for once you shall be rulde by me;
Hinder me not what ere you heare or see:

By force or faire meanes will I cast about

To finde the truth of all this question out.

Ho, Pedringano!

PED.

Signior.

LOR.

Vien qui presto!

Enter PEDRINGANO.

PED.

Hath your lordship any seruice to command me?

LOR.

I, Pedringano, seruice of import.

And, not to spend the time in trifling words,

Thus stands the case: it is not long, thou knowst,

Since I did shield thee from my fathers wrath

For thy conueniance in Andreas love,
For which thou wert adiudg'd to punishment;
I stood betwixt thee and thy punishment,
And since thou knowest how I haue favored thee.
Now to these fauours will I adde reward,
Not with faire woords, but store of golden coyne
And lands and liuing ioynd with dignities,
If thou but satisfie my iust demaund;
Tell truth and haue me for thy lasting freend.

PED.
What-ere it be your lordship shall demaund,
My bounden duety bids me tell the truth,
If case it lye in me to tell the truth.

LOR.
Then, Pedringano, this is my demaund;
Whome loues my sister Belimperia?

For she reposeth all her trust in thee.
Speak, man, and gaine both freendship and reward:

I meane, whome loues she in Andreas place?

PED.

Alas, my lord, since Don Andreas death
I haue no credit with her as before,
And therefore know not if she loue or no.

LOR.

Nay, if thou dally, then I am thy foe,
And feare shall force what frendship cannot winne.

Thy death shall bury what thy life conceales.
Thou dyest for more esteeming her than me!

[Draws his sword.]

PED.

Oh stay, my lord!

LOR.

Yet speak the truth, and I will guerdon thee
And shield thee from what-euer can ensue,
And will conceale what-euer proceeds from thee;
But, if thou dally once againe, thou diest!

PED.

If madame Belimperia be in loue—

LOR.

What, villaine! ifs and ands?

PED.

Oh stay, my lord! she loues Horatio!

BALTHAZAR starts back.

LOR.

What! Don Horatio, our knight-marshals sonne?

PED.

Euen him, my lord.

LOR.

  Now say but how knoest thou he is her loue,
And thou shalt finde me kinde and liberall.

Stand vp, I say, and feareles tell the truth.

PED.

  She sent him letters,—which my-selfe perusde,—
Full-fraught with lines and arguments of loue,
Perferring him before Prince Balthazar.

LOR.

  Sweare on this crosse that what thou saiest is true,
And that thou wilt conseale what thou hast tolde.

PED.

  I sweare to both, by him that made vs all.

LOR.

  In hope thine oath is true, heeres thy reward.

But, if I proue thee periurde and vniust,

This very sword whereon thou tookst thine oath

Shall be the worker of thy tragedie.

PED.

What I haue saide is true, and shall, for me,

Be still conceald from Belimperia.

Besides, your Honors liberalitie

Deserues my duteous seruice euen till death.

LOR.

Let this be all that thou shall doe for me:

Be watchfull when and where these louers meete,

And giue me notice in some secret sort.

PED.

I will, my lord.

LOR.

Then thou shalt finde that I am liberall.

Thou knowest that I can more aduance thy state

Then she: be therefore wise and faile me not.
Goe and attend her as thy custome is,
Least absence make her think thou doost amisse.

Exit PEDRINGANO.

Why, so, Tam armis quam ingenio:
Where wordes preuaile not, violence preuailes.

But golde doth more than either of them both.
How likes Prince Balthazar this strategeme?

BAL.

Both well and ill; it makes me glad and sad:
Glad, that I know the hinderer of my loue;
Sad, that I fear she hates me whome I loue;
Glad, that I know on whome to be reueng'd;
Sad, that sheele flie me if I take reuenge.
Yet must I take reuenge or dye my-selfe;
For loue resisted growes impatient.
I think Horatio be my destind plague:

First, in his hand he brandished a sword,

And with that sword he fiercely waged warre,

And in that warre he gaue me dangerous wounds,

And by those wounds he forced me to yeeld,

And by my yeelding I became his slaue;

Now, in his mouth he carries pleasing words,

Which pleasing wordes doe harbour sweet conceits,

Which sweet conceits are lim'd with slie deceits,

Which slie deceits smooth Belimperias eares,

And through her eares diue downe into her hart,

And in her hart set him, where I should stand.

Thus hath he tane my body by force,

And now by sleight would captiuate my soule;

But in his fall Ile tempt the Destinies,

And either loose my life or winne my loue.

LOR.

Lets goe, my lord; *[our]* staying staies reuenge.

Doe but follow me, and gaine your loue;

Her fauour must be wonne by his remooue.

Exeunt.

ACT II. SCENE 2.

The Duke's Castle

Enter HORATIO and BELIMPERIA.

HOR.

Now, madame, since by fauour of your love

Our hidden smoke is turnd to open flame,

And that with lookes and words we feed our thought,—

Two chiefe contents where more cannot be had,—

Thus in the midst of loues faire blandeshments

Why shew you signe of inward languishments?

PEDRINGANO sheweth all to the PRINCE and

LORENZO, placing them in secret.

BEL.

My hart, sweet freend, is like a ship at sea:

She wisheth port, where, riding all at ease,

She may repaire what stormie times haue worne,
And, leaning on the shore, may sing with ioy
That pleasure followes paine, and blisse annoy.
Possession of thy loue is th' onely port
Wherein my hart, with feares and hopes long tost,
Each howre doth wish and long to make resort,
There to repaire the ioyes that it hath lost,
And, sitting safe, to sing in Cupids quire
That sweetest blisse is crowne of loues desire.

BALTHAZAR, aboue.

BAL.
O sleepe, mine eyes; see not my loue prophande!
Be deafe, my ears; heare not my discontent!

Dye, hart; another ioyes what thou deseruest!

LOR.
Watch still, mine eyes, to see this loue disioyned!
Heare still, mine eares, to heare them both lament!

Liue, hart, to ioy at fond Horatios fall!

BEL.

Why stands Horatio speecheles all this while?

HOR.

The lesse I speak, the more I meditate.

BEL.

But whereon doost thou cheifely meditate?

HOR.

On dangers past and pleasures to ensue.

BAL.

On pleasures past and dangers to ensue!

BEL.

What dangers and what pleasures doost thou mean?

HOR.

Dangers of warre and pleasures of our loue.

LOR.

Dangers of death, but pleasures none at all!

BEL.

Let dangers goe; thy warre shall be with me,
But such a *[warre]* as breakes no bond of peace.
Speake thou faire words, Ile crosse them with faire words;
Send thou sweet looks, Ile meet them with sweet looks;
Write louing lines, Ile answere louing lines;
Giue me a kisse, Ile counterchecke thy kisse:
Be this our warring peace, or peacefull warre.

HOR.

But, gratious madame, then appoint the field
Where triall of this warre shall first be made.

BAL.

Ambitious villaine, how his boldenes growes!

BEL.

Then be thy fathers pleasant bower in the field,—
Where first we vowd a mutuall amitie.

The court were dangerous; that place is safe.
Our howre shalbe when Vesper ginnes to rise,
That summons home distresfull trauellers.
There none shall heare vs but the harmeles birds:
Happelie the gentle nightingale
Shall carroll vs a-sleepe ere we be ware,
And, singing wit the prickle at her breast,
Tell our delight and mirthfull dalliance.

Till then, each houre will seeme a yeere and more.

HOR.

But, honie-sweet and honorable loue,
Returne we now into your fathers sight;
Dangerous suspition waits on our delight.

LOR.

I, danger mixt with iealous despite
Shall send thy soule into eternalle night!

Exeunt.

ACT II. SCENE 3.

[The Spanish court.]

Enter the KING OF SPAINE, PORTINGALE
EMBASSADOUR, DON CIPRIAN, &c.

KING.

Brother of Castille, to the princes loue
What saies your daughter Belimperia?

CIP.

Although she coy it, as becomes her kinde,
And yet dissemble that she loues the prince,
I doubt not, I, but she will stoope in time;

And, were she froward,—which she will not be,—
Yet heerin shall she follow my aduice,
Which is to loue him or forgoe my loue.

KING.
  Then, lord embassadour of Portingale,
Aduise thy king to make this marriage vp
For strengthening of our late-confirmed league;
I know no better meanes to make vs freends.
Her dowry shall be large and liberall;
Besides that she is daughter and halfe heire
Vnto our brother heere, Don Ciprian,
And shall enioy the moitie of his land,
Ile grace her marriage with an vnckles gift,
And this is it: in case the match goe forward,
The tribute which you pay shalbe releast;
And, if by Balthazar she haue a sonne,
He shall enioy the kingdome after vs.

EMBAS.
  Ile make the motion to my soueraigne liege,

And worke it if my counsaile may preuaile.

KING.

Doe so, my lord; and, if he giue consent,
I hope his presence heere will honour vs
In celebration of the nuptiall day,—
And let himselfe determine of the time.

EM.

Wilt please your Grace command me ought besid?

KING.

Commend me to the king; and so, farewell!
But wheres Prince Balthazar, to take his leaue?

EM.

That is perfourmd alreadie, my good lord.

KING.

Amongst the rest of what you haue in charge,
The princes raunsome must not be forgot:

Thats none of mine, but his that tooke him prisoner,—
And well his forwardnes deserues reward:

It was Horatio, our knight-marshalls sonne.

EM.
  Betweene vs theres a price already pitcht,
And shall be send with all conuenient speed.

KING.
  Then once againe farewell, my lord!

EM.
  Farwell, my lord of Castile, and the rest!

Exit.

KING.
  Now, brother, you must make some little paines
To winne faire Belimperia from her will;
Young virgins must be ruled by their freends.

The prince is amiable, and loues her well;

If she neglect him and forgoe his loue,

She both will wrong her owne estate and ours.

Therefore, whiles I doe entertaine the prince

With greatest pleasure that our court affoords,

Endeauor you to winne your daughters thought.

If she giue back, all this will come to naught.

Exeunt.

ACT II. SCENE 4.

[HORATIO's garden.]

Enter HORATIO, BELIMPERIA, and PEDRINGANO.

HOR.

Now that the night begins with sable wings

To ouer-cloud the brightnes of the sunne,

And that in darkenes pleasures may be done,

Come, Belimperia, let vs to the bower,

And there is safetie passe a pleasant hower.

BEL.

I follow thee, my loue, and will not backe,
Although my fainting hart controles my soule.

HOR.

Why, make you doubt of Pedringanos faith?

BEL.

No; he is as trustie as my second selfe.
Goe, Pedringano, watch without the gate,
And let vs known if any make approach.

PED.

[aside] In-steed of watching, Ile deserue more golde
By fetching Don Lorenzo to this match.

Exit PED*[RINGANO]* .

HOR.

What means my loue?

BEL.
I know not what, my-selfe;
And yet my hart foretels me some some mischaunce.

HOR.
Sweet, say not so; faire Fortune is our freend,
And heauens haue shut vp day to pleasure vs.
The starres, thou seest, holde back their twinckling shine
And Luna hides her-selfe to pleasure vs.

BEL.
Thou hast preuailed! Ile conquer my misdoubt,
And in thy loue and councell drowne my feare.

I feare no more; loue now is all my thoughts!
Why sit we not? for pleasure asketh ease.

HOR.
The more thou sitst within these leauy bowers,

The more will Flora decke it with her flowers.

BEL.

I; but, if Flora spye Horatio heere,

Her iealous eye will think I sit too neere.

HOR.

Harke, madame, how the birds record by night,

For ioy that Belimperia sits in sight!

BEL.

No; Cupid counterfeits the nightingale,

To frame sweet musick to Horatios tale.

HOR.

If Cupid sing, then Venus is not farre,—

I, thou art Venus, or some fairer starre!

BEL.

If I be Venus, thou must needs be Mars;

And where Mars raigneth, there must needs be warres.

HOR.

Then thus begin our wars: put forth thy hand,
That it may combat with my ruder hand.

BEL.

Set forth thy foot to try the push of mine.

HOR.

But, first, my lookes shall combat against thee.

BEL.

Then ward thy-selfe! I dart this kiss as thee.

HOR.

Thus I *[return]* the dart thou threwest at me!

BEL.

Nay then, to gaine the glory of the field,
My twining armes shall yoake and make thee yeeld.

HOR.

Nay then, my armes are large and strong withall:

Thus elmes by vines are compast till they fall.

BEL.

O, let me goe, for in my troubled eyes

Now maist thou read that life in passion dies!

HOR.

O, stay a-while, and I will dye with thee;

So shalt thou yeeld, and yet haue conquerd me.

BEL.

Whose there? Pedringano? We are betraide!

Enter LORENZO, BALTHAZAR, CERBERIN,

PEDRINGANO, disguised.

LOR.

My lord, away with her! take her aside!

O sir, forbeare, your valour is already tride.

Quickly dispatch, my maisters.

Th*[e]* y hang him in the arbor.

HOR.

What, will you murder me?

LOR.

I; thus! and thus! these are the fruits of loue!

They stab him.

BEL.

O, saue his life, and let me dye for him!
O, saue him, brother! saue him, Balthazar!
I loued Horatio, but he loued not me.

BAL.

But Balthazar loues Belimperia.

LOR.

  Although his life were still ambitious, proud,

Yet is he at the highest now he is dead.

BEL.

  Murder! murder! helpe! Hieronimo, helpe!

LOR.

  Come, stop her mouth! away with her!

Exeunt.

Enter HIERONIMO in his shirt, &c.

HIERO.

  What outcried pluck me from my naked bed,

And chill my throbbing hart with trembling feare,

Which neuer danger yet could daunt before?

Who cals Hieronimo? speak; heare I am!

I did not slumber; therefore twas no dreame.

No, no; it was some woman cride for helpe.
And heere within this garden did she crie,
And in this garden must I rescue her.
But stay! what murderous spectacle is this?
A man hanged vp, and all the murderers gone!

And in the bower, to lay the guilt on me!
This place was made for pleasure not for death.

He cuts him downe.

Those garments that he weares I oft haue seene,—
Alas! it is Horatio, my sweet sonne!
O, no; but he that whilome was my sonne!

O, was it thou that call'dst me from my bed?
O, speak, if any sparke of life remaine!
I am thy father. Who hath slaine my sonne?
What sauadge monster, not of humane kinde,
Hath heere beene glutted with thy harmeles blood,
And left they bloudie corpes dishonoured heere,

For me amidst these darke and dreadfull shades
To drowne thee with an ocean of my teares?

O heauens, why made you night, to couer sinne?
By day this deed of darknes had not beene.
O earth, why didst thou not in time deuoure
The *[vile]* prophaner of this sacred bower?
O poore Horatio, what hadst thou misdoone
To leese thy life ere life was new begun?
O wicked butcher, what-so-ere thou wert,
How could thou strangle vertue and desert?
Ay me, most wretched! that haue lost my ioy
In leesing my Horatio, my sweet boy!

Enter ISABELL.

ISA.

My husbands absence makes my hart to throb.
Hieronimo!

HIERO.

  Heere, Isabella. Helpe me to lament;
For sighes are stopt, and all my teares are spent.

ISA.
  What worlde of griefe—my sonne Horatio!
O wheres the author of this endles woe?

HIERO.
  To know the author were some ease of greefe,
For in reuenge my hart would finde releefe.

ISA.
  Then is he gone? and is my sonne gone too?
O, gush out, teares! fountains and flouds of teares!
Blow, sighes, and raise and euerlasting storme;
For outrage fits our cursed wretchedness.

HIERO.
  Sweet louely rose, ill pluckt before thy time!
Faire, worthy sonne, not conquerd, but betraid!
Ile kisse thee now, for words with teares are *[stainde]* .

ISA.

  And Ile close vp the glasses of his sight;

For once these eyes were onely my delight.

HIERO.

  Seest thou this handkercher besmerd with blood?

It shall not from me till I take reuenge;

Seest thou those wounds that yet are bleeding fresh?

Ile not intombe them till I haue reueng'd:

Then will I ioy amidst my discontent,

Till then, my sorrow neuer shalbe spent.

ISA.

  The heauens are iust, murder cannot be hid;

Time is the author of both truth and right,

And time will bring this trecherie to light.

HIERO.

  Meane-while, good Isabella, cease thy plaints,

Or, at the least, dissemble them awhile;

So shall we sooner finde the practise out,

And learne by whome all this was brought about.

Come, Isabell, now let vs take him vp.

They take him vp.

And beare him in from out this cursed place.

Ile say his dirge,—singing fits not this case.

O aliquis mihi quas pulchrum ver educet herbas

HIERO*[NIMO]* sets his brest vnto his sword.

Misceat, et nostro detur medicina dolori;

Aut siqui faciunt annorum obliuia succos

Prebeat; ipse metam megnum quaecunque per orbem

Gramina sol pulchras eiecit lucis in oras.

Ipse bibam quicquid meditatur saga veneni,

Quicquid et irarum ui caeca nenia nectit.

Omnia perpetiar, lethum quoque, dum semel omnis

Nost in extincto moriatur pectore sensus.

Ergo tua perpetuus speeliuit limunia somnus?
Emoriar tecum: sic, sic iuuat ire sub vmbras!
Attamen absistam properato cedere letho,
Ne mortem vindicta tuam tum nulla sequatur.

Heere he throwes it from him and beares the body away.

[CHORUS.]

ANDREA.
  Broughtst thou me hether to increase my paine?
I lookt that Balthazar should haue been slaine;
But tis my freend Horatio that is slaine,
And they abuse faire Belimperia,
On whom I doted more then all the world,
Because she lou'd me more then all the world.

REUENGE.
  Thou talkest of haruest, when the corne is greene;
The end is *[growne]* of euery worke well done;

The sickle comes not till the corne be ripe.

Be still, and, ere I lead thee from this place,

Ile shew thee Balthazar in heauy case.

ACTUS TERTIUS.

ACT III. SCENE 1.

[The Portuguese court.]

Enter VICEROY OF PORTINGALE, NOBLES, ALEXANDRO, VILLUPPO.

VICEROY.

Infortunate condition of kings,

Seated amidst so many helples doubts!

First,we are plast vpon extreamest height,

And oft supplanted with exceeding hate,

But euer subiect to the wheele of chance;

And at our highest neuer ioy we so
As we doubt and dread our ouerthrow.
So striueth not the waues with sundry winds
As fortune toyleth in the affaires of kings,
That would be feard, yet feare to be beloued,
Sith feare and loue to kings is flatterie.
For instance, lordings, look vpon your king,
By hate depriued of his dearest sonne,
The only hope of our successiue line.

NOB.
I had not thought that Alexandros hart
Had beene enuenomde with such extreame hate;
But now I see that words haue seuerall workes,
And theres no credit in the countenance.

VIL.
No, for, my lord, had you beholde the traine
That fained loue had coloured in his lookes
When he in campe consorted Balthazar,
Farre more inconstant had you thought the sunne,

That howerly coasts the center of the earth,

Then Alexandros purpose to the prince.

VICE.

No more, Villuppo! thou hast said enough,

And with thy words thou saiest our wounded thoughts.

Nor shall I longer dally with the world,

Procrastinating Alexandros death.

Goe, some of you, and fetch the traitor forth,

That, as he is condemned, he may dye.

Enter ALEXANDRO, with a NOBLE-MAN and

HALBERTS.

NOB.

In such extreames will nought but patience serue.

ALEX.

But in extreames what patience shall I vse?

Nor discontents it me to leaue the world, With whome there nothing can preuaile but wrong.

NOB.

Yet hope the best.

ALEX.

Tis heauen my hope:
As for the earth, it is too much infect
To yeeld me hope of any of her mould.

VICE.

Why linger ye? bring froth that daring feend,
And let him die for his accursed deed.

ALEX.

Not that I feare the extremitie of death—
For nobles cannot stoop to seruile feare—
Doo I, O king, thus discontented liue;
But this, O this, torments my labouring soule,
That thus I die suspected of a sinne
Whereof, as Heauens haue knowne my secret thoughts,

So am I free from this suggestion!

VICE.
No more, I say; to the tortures! when?
Binde him, and burne his body in those flames,

They binde him to the stake.

That shall prefigure those vnquenched fiers
Of Phlegiton prepared for his soule.

ALEX.
My guiltles death will be aueng'd on thee!
On thee, Villuppo, that hath malisde thus,
Or for thy meed hast falsely me accusde!

VIL.
Nay, Alexandro, if thou menace me,
Ile lend a hand to send thee to the lake
Where those thy words shall perish with thy workes,
Iniurious traitour, monstrous homicide!

Enter EMBASSADOUR.

[EM.]   Stay! hold a-while! and heer, with pardon of
His Maiestie, lay hands vpon Villuppo!

VICE.
  Embassadour, what newes nath vrg'd this sodain entrance?

EM.
  Know, soueraigne l*[ord]* , that Balthazar doth liue.

VICE.
  What saiest thou? liueth Balthazar, our sonne?

EM.
  Your Highnes sonne, L*[ord]* Balthazar doth liue,
And, well intreated in the court of Spaine,
Humbly commends him to your Maiestie.
These eies beheld; and these my followers,
With these, the letters of the kings commend,

Giues him letters

Are happie witnesses of his Highnes health.

The KING lookes on the letters, and proceeds.

VICE.

[reads] "Thy sonne doth liue; your tribute is receiu'd;
Thy peace is made, and we are satisfied.
The rest resolue vpon as things proposde
For both our honors and they benefite."

EM.

These are his Highnes farther articles.

He giues him more letters.

VICE.

Accursed wrech to intimate these ills
Against the life and reputation

Of noble Alexandro! come, my lord, vnbinde him!
[To ALEXANDRO]   Let him vnbinde thee that is bounde to death,
To make a quitall for thy discontent.

They vnbinde him.

ALEX.

  Dread lord, in kindnes you could do no lesse,
Vpon report of such a damned fact;
But thus we see our innocence hath sau'd
The hopeles like which thou, Villuppo, sought
By thy suggestions to haue massacred.

VICE.

  Say, false Villuppo, wherefore didst thou thus
Falsely betray Lord Alexandros life?
Him whom thou knowest that no vnkindenes els
But euen the slaughter of our deerest sonne
Could once haue moued vs to haue misconceaued.

ALEX.

  Say, trecherous Villuppo; tell the King!
Or wherein hath Alexandro vsed thee ill?

VIL.
  Rent with remembrance of so foule a deed,
My guiltie soule submits me to thy doome,
For, not for Alexandros iniuries,
But for reward and hope to be preferd,
Thus haue I shamelesly hazarded his life.

VICE.
  Which, villaine, shalbe ransomed with thy death,
And not so meane a torment as we heere
Deuised for him who thou saidst slew our sonne,
But with the bitterest torments and extreames
That may be yet inuented for thine end.

ALEX*[ANDRO]* seemes to intreat.

Intreat me not! Goe, take the traitor hence!

Exit VILLUPPO.

And, Alexandro, let vs honor thee
With publique notice of thy loyaltie.
To end those things articulated heere
By our great l*[ord]* , the mightie king of Spaine,
We with our councell will deliberate.

Come, Alexandro, keepe vs company.

Exeunt.

ACT III. SCENE 2.

[Spain: near the DUKE's castle.]

Enter HIERONIMO.

HIERO.

Oh eies! no eies but fountains fraught with teares;
Oh life! no life, but liuely fourme of death;

Oh world! no world, but masse of publique wrongs,
Confusde and filde with murder and misdeeds;
Oh sacred heauens, if this vnhallowed deed,
If this inhumane and barberous attempt,
If this incomparable murder thus
Of mine, but now no more my sonne
Shall pass vnreueald and vnreuenged passe,
How should we tearme your dealings to be iust,
If you vniustly deale with those that in your iustice trust?
The night, sad secretary to my mones,
With direfull visions wake my vexed soule,
And with the wounds of my distresfull sonne
Solicite me for notice of his death;
The ougly feends do sally forth of hell,
And frame my hart with fierce inflamed thoughts;
The cloudie day my discontents records,
Early begins to regester my dreames
And driue me forth to seeke the murtherer.
Eies, life, world, heauens, hel, night and day,
See, search, show, send, some man, some meane, that may!

A letter falleth.

Whats heere? a letter? Tush, it is not so!
A letter for Hieronimo.
[Reads]   "For want of incke receiue this bloudie writ.
Me hath my haples brother hid from thee.
Reuenge thy-selfe on Balthazar and him,
For these were they that murdered thy sonne.
Hieronimo, reuenge Horatios death,
And better fare then Belimperia doth!"—
What meanes this vnexpected miracle?
My sonne slaine by Lorenzo and the prince?

What cause had they Horatio to maligne?
Or what might mooue thee, Belimperia,
To accuse they brother, had he beene the meane?
Hieronimo, beware! thou art betraide,
And to intrap they life this traine is laide.

Aduise thee therefore, be not credulous:
This is deuised to endanger thee,

That thou, by this, Lorenzo shoulst accuse.
And he, for thy dishonour done, show draw
Thy life in question and thy name in hate.
Deare was the life of my beloved sonne,
And of his death behoues me to be aueng'd:
Then hazard not thine own, Hieronimo,
But liue t'effect thy resolution!
I therefore will by circumstances trie
What I can gather to confirme this writ,
And, *[harken]* neere the Duke of Castiles house,
Close if I can with Belimperia,
To listen more, but nothing to bewray.

Enter PEDRINGANO.

Now, Predringano!

PED.

Now, Hieronimo!

HIERO.

Wheres thy lady?

PED.

I know not; heers my lord.

Enter LORENZO.

LOR.

How now, whose this? Hieronimo?

HIERO.My lord.

PED.

He asketh me for my lady Belimperia.

LOR.

What to doo, Hieronimo? Vse me.

[Dialogue from the undated and the 'A' manuscript.]

HIERO.

Oh, no, my lord, I dare not, it must not be;

I humbly thank your lordship.

[End of insertion.]

[Dialogue from the 1618, 1623, and 1633 editions.]

HIERO.Who? You, my lord?

I reserue your favour for a greater honour;

This is a very toy, my lord, a toy.

LOR.

All's one, Hieronimo; acquaint me with it.

HIERO.

Y faith, my lord, tis an idle thing.

I must confesse I ha bin too slacke, too tardy,

To remisse vnto your Honour.

LOR.

How now, Hieronimo?

HIERO.

In troth, my lord, it is a thing of nothing:

The murder of a sonne or so, my lord,—

A thing of nothing.

[End of insertion.]

LOR.

Why then, farewell!

HIERO.

My griefe in hart, my thoughts no tung can tell.

Exit.

LOR.

Come hither, Pedringano; seest thou this?

PED.

My lord, I see it, and suspect it too.

LOR.

This is that damned villain Serberine,
That hath, I feare, reuealde Horatios death.

PED.

My lord, he could not; twas so lately done, And since he hath not left my company.

LOR.

Admit he haue not; his conditions such
As feare or flattering words may make him false.
I know his humour, and there-with repent
That ere I vsde him in this enterprise.
But, Pedringano, to preuent the worst,
And cause I know thee secret as my soule,
Heere, for thy further satisfaction, take thou this!

Giues him more golde.

And harken to me; thus it is deuisde:
This night thou must—and prithee so resoule—
Meet Serberine at St. Luigis Parke,—
Thou knowest tis heere hard by behinde the house;
There take thy stand, and see thou strike him sure,
For dye he must, if we do meane to liue.

PED.

But how shall Serberine be there, my lord?

LOR.

Let me alone, Ile send him to meet
The prince and me where thou must doe this deed.

PED.

It shalbe done, my l*[ord]* ; it shall be done;
And Ile goe arme my-selfe to meet him there.

LOR.

When things shall alter, as I hope they wil,
Then shalt thou mount for this, thou knowest my minde.

Exit PED*[RINGANO]* .

Che le Ieron!

Enter PAGE.

PAGE.

My lord.

LOR.

Goe, sirra,
To Serberine, and bid him forthwith meet
The prince and me at S. Luigis Parke,
Behinde the house, this euening, boy.

PAGE.

I goe, my lord.

LOR.

But, sirra, let the houre be eight a-clocke.
Bid him not faile.

PAGE.

I flye, my lord.

Exit.

LOR.

Now to confirme the complot thou hast cast

Of all these practices, Ile spread the watch,

Vpon precise commandement from the king

Strongly to guard the place where Pedringano

This night shall murder haples Serberine.

Thus must we worke that will auoide distrust,

Thus must we practice to preuent mishap,

And thus one ill another must expulse.

This slie enquiry of Hieronimo

For Belimperia, breeds suspition;

And *[thus]* suspition boads a further ill.

As for my-selfe, I know my secret fault,

And so doe they, but I haue dealt for them.

They that for coine their soules endangered

To saue my life, for coyne shall venture theirs;

And better tis that base companions dye

Then by their life to hazard our good haps.

Nor shall they liue for me to feare their faith;

Ile trust my-selfe, my-selfe shall be my freend;

For dye they shall,—
Slaues are ordein*[e]* d to no other end.

Exit.

ACT III. SCENE 3.

[San Luigi's Park.]

Enter PEDRINGANO with a pistoll.

PED.

  Now, Pedringano, bid thy pistoll holde;
And holde on, Fortune! Once more fauour me!
Giue but successe to mine attempting spirit,
And let me shift for taking of mine aime.
Heere is the golde! This is the golde proposde!
It is no dreame that I aduenture for,
But Pedringano is possest thereof.
And he that would not straine his conscience
For him that thus his liberall purse hath sretcht,

Vnworthy such a fauour may he faile,
And, wishing, want when such as I preuaile!
As for the feare of apprehension,
I know, if need should be, my noble lord
Will stand betweene me and ensuing harmes.

Besides, this place is free from all suspect.
Heere therefore will I stay and take my stand.

Enter the WATCH.

I WATCH. I wonder much to what intent it is
That we are thus expresly chargd to watch.

II WATCH.
  This by commandement in the kings own name.

III WATCH.
  But we were neuer wont to watch and ward
So neere the duke his brothers house before.

II WATCH.

Content your-selfe, stand close, theres somewhat int.

Enter SERBERINE.

SER.

[aside] Heere, Serberine, attend and stay thy pace;
For heere did Don Lorenzos page appoint
That thou by his command shouldst meet with him.
How fit a place, if one were so disposde,
Me thinks this corner is to close with one.

PED.

[aside] Heere comes the bird that I must ceaze vpon;
Now, Pedringano, or neuer play the man!

SER.

[aside] I wonder that his lordship staies so long,
Or wherefore should he send for me so late.

PED.

For this, Serberine; and thou shalt ha'te!

Shootes the dagge.

So, there he lyes; my promise is performde.

The WATCH.

I WATCH. Harke, gentlemen, this is a pistol shot!

II WATCH.

And heeres one slaine; stay the murderer!

PED.

Now, by the sorrowes of the soules in hell,

He striues with the WATCH.

Who first laies hands on me, Ile be his priest!

III WATCH.

  Sirra, confesse, and therein play the priest.

Why hast thou thus vnkindely kild the man?

PED.

  Why, because he walkt abroad so late.

III WATCH.

  Come sir, you had bene better kept your bed

Then haue committed this misdeed so late.

II WATCH.

  Come to the marshalls with the murderer!

I WATCH. On to Hieronimos! helpe me heere

To bring the murdred body with vs too.

PED.

  Hieronimo? Carry me before whom you will;

What ere he be, Ile answere him and you.

And doe your worst, for I defie you all!

Exeunt.

ACT III. SCENE 4.

[The DUKE's castle]

Enter LORENZO and BALTHAZAR.

BAL.

How now, my lord? what makes you rise so soone?

LOR.

Feare of preuenting our mishaps too late.

BAL.

What mischiefe is it that we not mistrust?

LOR.

Our greatest ils we least mistrust, my lord,
And *[unexpected]* harmes do hurt vs most.

BAL.

Why, tell me, Don Lorenz,—tell me, man,
If ought concernes our honor and your owne!

LOR.

Nor you nor me, my lord, but both in one;
But I suspect—and the presumptions great—
That by those base confederates in our fault
Touching the death of Don Horatio
We are all betraide to olde Hieronimo.

BAL.

Betraide, Lorenzo? tush! it cannot be.

LOR.

A guiltie conscience vrged with the thought
Of former euils, easily cannot erre:
I am perswaded—and diswade me not—
That als reuealed to Hieronimo.
And therefore know that I haue cast it thus—

[Enter PAGE.]

But heeres the page. How now? what newes with thee?

PAGE.

My lord, Serberine is slaine.

BAL.

Who? Serberine, my man?

PAGE.

Your Highnes man, my lord.

LOR.

Speak, page: who murdered him?

PAGE.

He that is apprehended for the fact.

LOR.

Who?

PAGE.

Pedringano.

BAL.

Is Serberine slaine, that lou'd his lord so well?
Iniurious villaine! murderer of his freend!

LOR.

Hath Pedringano murdered Serberine?
My lord, let me entreat you to take the paines
To exasperate and hasten his reuenge
With your complaints vnto my l*[ord]* the king.
This their dissention breeds a greater doubt.

BAL.

Assure thee, Don Lorenzo, he shall dye,
Or els his Highnes hardly shall deny.
Meane-while, Ile haste the marshall sessions,
For die he shall for this damned deed.

Exit BALT*[HAZAR]* .

LOR.

[aside]   Why, so! this fits our former pollicie;

And thus experience bids the wise and deale.

I lay the plot, he prosecutes the point;

I set the trap, he breakes the worthles twigs,

And sees not that wherewith the bird was limde.

Thus hopefull men, that means to holde their owne,

Must look, like fowlers, to their dearest freends.

He runnes to kill whome I haue hope to catch,

And no man knowes it was my reaching *[fetch]* .

Tis hard to trust vnto a multitude,—

Or any one, in mine opinion,

When men themselues their secrets will reueale.

Enter a MESSENGER with a letter.

LOR.

Boy.

PAGE.

My lord.

LOR.

Whats he?

MES.

I haue a letter to your lordship.

LOR.

From whence?

MES.

From Pedringanos that's imprisoned.

LOR.

So he is in prison then?

MES.

I, my good lord.

LOR.

What would he with vs?

[Reads the letter.]

He writes vs heere
To stand good l*[ord]* and help him in distres.
Tell him I haue his letters, know his minde;
And what we may, let him assure him of.
Fellow, be gone; my boy shall follow thee.

Exit MES*[SENGER]* .

[Aside] This works like waxe! Yet once more try thy wits.—
Boy, goe conuay this purse to Pedringano,—
Thou knowest the prison,—closely giue it him,
And be aduisde that none here there-about.
Bid him be merry still, but secret;
And, though the marshall sessions be to-day,
Bid him not doubt of his deliuerie.

Tell him his pardon is already signde,

And thereon bid him boldely be resolued;

For, were he ready to be turned off,—

As tis my will the vttermost be tride,—

Thou with his pardon shalt attend him still.

Shew him this boxe, tell him his pardons int;

But opent not, and if thou louest thy life,

But let him wisely keepe his hopes vnknowne.

He shall not want while Don Lorenzo liues.

Away!

PAGE.

I goe, my lord, I runne!

LOR.

But, sirra, see that this be cleanely done.

Exit PAGE.

Now stands our fortune on a tickle point,

And now or neuer ends Lorenzos doubts.
One only thing is vneffected yet,
And thats to see the executioner,—
But to what end? I list not trust the aire
With vtterance of our pretence therein,
For feare the priuie whispring of the winde
Conuay our words amongst vnfreendly eares,
That lye too open to aduantages.
Et quel che voglio io, nessun lo sa,
Intendo io quel *[che]* mi bastera.

Exit.

ACT III. SCENE 5.

[A street.]

Enter BOY with the boxe.

[BOY.] My maister hath forbidden me to look in this box, and, by my troth, tis likely, if he had not warned me, I should not haue had so

much idle time; for wee [men-kinde] in our minoritie are like women in their vncertaintie; that they are most forbidden, they wil soonest attempt; so I now. By my bare honesty, heeres nothing but the bare emptie box! Were it not sin against secrecie, I would say it were a peece of gentlemanlike knauery. I must goe to Pedringano and tell him his pardon is in this boxe! Nay, I would haue sworne it, had I not seene the contrary. I cannot choose but smile to thinke how the villain wil flout the gallowes, scorne the audience, and descant on the hangman, and all presuming of his pardon from hence. Wilt not be an odde iest, for me to stand and grace euery iest he makes, pointing my figner at this boxe, as who *[should]* say: "Mock on, heers thy warrant!" Ist not a scuruie iest that a man should iest himselfe to death? Alas, poor Pedringano! I am in a sorte sorie for thee, but, if I should be hanged with thee, I *[could not]* weep.

Exit.

ACT III. SCENE 6.

[The court of justice.]

Enter HIERONIMO and the DEPUTIE.

HIERO.

Thus must we toyle in others mens extreames
That know not how to rememdie our owne,
And doe them iusties, when vniustly we
For all our wrongs can compasse no redrese.
But shall I neuer liue to see the day
That I may come by iustice to the Heauens
To know the cause that may my cares allay?
This toyles my body, this consumeth age,
That onley I to all men iust must be,
And neither gods nor men be iust to me!

DEP.

Worthy Hieronimo, your office askes
A care to punish such as doe transgresse.

HIERO.

So ist my duety to regarde his death
Who when he liued deserued my dearest blood.

But come; for that we came for, lets begin;

For heere lyes that which bids me to be gone.

Enter OFFICERS, BOY, & PEDRINGANO with a letter

in his hand, bound.

DEPU.

  Bring forth the prisoner for the court is set.

PED.

  Gramercy, boy! but it was time to come,

For I had written to my lord anew

A neerer matter that concerneth him,

For feare his lordship had forgotten me;

But, sith he hath rememberd me so well,

Come, come, come on! when shall we to this geere?

HIERO.

  Stand forth, thou monster, murderer of men,

And heere, for satisfaction of the world,

Confesse thy folly and repent thy fault, For ther's thy place of execution.

PED.

This is short worke! Well, to your martiallship
First I confesse, nor feare I death therefore,
I am the man,—twas I slew Serberine.
But, sir, then you think this shalbe the place
Where we shall satisfie you for this geare?

DEPU.

I, Pedrigano.

PED.

No I think not so.

HEIRO.

Peace, impudent! for thou shalt finde it so;
For blood with blood shall, while I sit as iudge,
Be satisfied, and the law dischargde.
And, though my-selfe cannot receiue the like,
Yet will I see that others haue their right.

Dispatch! the fault approued and confest,

And by our law he is condemned to die.

HANG.

Come on, sir! are you ready?

PED.

To do what, my fine officious knaue?

HANG.

To goe to this geere.

PED.

O, sir, you are to forward; thou woulst faine
furnish me with a halter, to disfurnish me of my habit.
So should I goe out of this geere, my raiment, into that
geere, the rope. But, hangman, now I spy your knauery, Ile
not change without boot; thats flat.

HANG.

Come, sir.

PED.

So then I must vp?

HANG.

No remedie.

PED.

Yes, but there shalbe for my comming downe.

HANG.

Indeed heers a remedie for that.

PED.

How? be turnd off?

HANG.

I, truly. Come, are you ready?

I pray *[you]* , sir, dispatch, the day goes away.

PED.

What, doe you hang by the howre? If you doo, I may chance to break your olde custome.

HANG.

Faith, you haue *[no]* reason, for I am like to break your yong neck.

PED.

Dost thou mock me, hangman? Pray God I be not preserued to break your knaues-pate for this!

HANG.

Alas, sir, you are a foot too low to reach it, and I hope you will neuer grow so high while I am in office.

PED.

Sirra, dost see yonder boy with the box in his hand?

HANG.

What, he that points to it with his finger?

PED.

I, that companion.

HANG.

I know him not; but what of him?

PED.

Doost thou think to liue till his olde doublet will make thee a new truss?

HANG.

I, and many a faire yeere after, to trusse vp many an honester man then either thou or he.

PED.

What hath he in his boxe, as thou thinkst?

HANG.

Faith, I cannot tell, nor I care not greatly.
Me thinks you should rather hearken to your soules health.

PED.

Why, sirra hangman, I take it that that is good for the body is likewise good for the soule: and it may be in that box is balme for both.

HANG.

Wel, thou art euen the meriest peece of mans flesh that ere gronde at my office-doore.

PED.

Is your roaguery become an office, with a knaues name?

HANG.

I, and that shall all they witnes that see you seale it with a theeues name.

PED.

I prithee, request this good company to pray *[for]* me.

HANG.

I, mary, sir, this is a good motion! My maisters,
you see heers a good fellow.

PED.

Nay, nay, now I remember me, let them alone till
some other time; for now I haue no great need.

HIERO.

I haue not seen a wretch so impudent.
O monstrous times where murders are so light,
And where the soule that should be shrinde in heauen
Solelie delights in interdicted things,
Still wandring in the thornie passages
That intercepts it-selfe of hapines!
Murder? O bloudy monster! God forbid
A fault so foule should scape vnpunished!
Dispatch and see this execution done;
This makes me to remember thee, my sonne.

Exit HIERO*[NIMO]* .

PED.

Nay, soft! no hast!

DEPU.

Why, wherefore stay you? haue you hope of life?

PED.

Why, I?

HANG.

As how?

PED.

Why, rascall, by my pardon from the king.

HANG.

Stand you on that? then you shall off with this.

He turnes him off.

DEPU.

So, executioner, conuey him hence;
But let his body be vnburied.
Let not the earth be chokt or infect
What that which Heauens contemnes and men neglect.

Exeunt.

ACT III. SCENE 7.

[HIERONIMO's house.]

Enter HIERONIMO.

HIER.

Where shall I run to breath abroad my woes,—
My woes whose weight hath wearied the earth,
Or mine exclaimes that haue surcharged the aire
With ceasles plaints for my deceased sonne?
The blustring winds, conspiring with my words,
At my lament haue moued to leaueless trees,
Disroabde the medowes of their flowred greene,
Made mountains marsh with spring-tides of my teares,

And broken through the brazen gates of hell;
Yet still tormented is my tortured soule
With broken sighes and restles passions,
That, winged, mount, and houering in the aire,
Beat at the windowes of the brightest heauens,
Soliciting for iustice and reuenge.
But they are plac't in those imperiall heights,
Where, countermurde with walles of diamond,
I finde the place impregnable, and they
Resist my woes and giue my words no way.

Enter HANGMAN with a letter.

HANG.

O Lord, sir! God blesse you, sir! The man, sir,—
Petergade, sir: he that was so full of merie conceits—

HIER.

Wel, what of him?

HANG.

O Lord, sir! he went the wrong way; the fellow had a faire commission to the contrary. Sir, heere is his pasport, I pray you, sir; we haue done him wrong.

HIERO.

I warrant thee; giue it me.

HANG.

You will stand between the gallowes and me?

HIERO.

I, I!

HANG.

I thank your l*[ord]* worship.

Exit HANGMAN.

HIERO.

And yet, though somewhat neerer me concernes
I will, to ease the greefe that I sustaine,

Take truce with sorrow while I read on this.

[Reads] "My lord, I writ, as mine extreames require,

That you would labour my deliuerie:

If you neglect, my life is desperate,

And in my death I shall reueale the troth.

You know, my lord, I slew him for your sake,

And was confederate with the prince and you;

Wonne by rewards and hopefull promises,

I holpe to murder Don Horatio too."—

Holpe he to murder mine Horatio?

And actors in th' accursed tragedie

Wast thou, Lorenzo? Bathazar and thou,

Of whome my sone, my sonne deseru'd so well?

What haue I heard? what haue mine eies behelde?

O sacred heauens, may it come to passe

That such a monstrous and detested deed,

So closely smootherd and so long conceald,

Shall thus by this be *[revenged]* or reuealed?

Now see I, what I durst not then suspect,

That Belimperias letter was not fainde,

Nor fained she, though falsly they haue wrongd

Both her, my-selfe, Horatio and themselues.
Now may I make compare twixt hers and this
Of euerie accident. I neere could finde
Till now, and now I feelingly perceiue,
They did what Heauen vnpunisht *[should]* not leaue.
O false Lorenzo! are these thy flattering lookes?
Is this honour that thou didst my sonne?
And, Balthazar,—bane to thy soule and me!—
What this the ransome he reseru'd *[for thee]* ?
Woe to the cause of these constrained warres!

Woe to thy basenes and captiuitie!
Woe to thy birth, thy body and thy soule,
Thy cursed father, and thy conquerd selfe!
And band with bitter execrations be
The day and place where he did pittie thee!
But wherefore waste I mine vnfruitfull words,
When naught but blood will satisfie my woes?
I will goe plaine me to my lord the king,
And cry aloud for iustice through the court,
Wearing the flints with these my withered feet,

And either purchase iustice by intreats

Or tire them all with my reuenging threats.

Exit.

ACT III. SCENE 8.

[HIERONIMO's house.]

Enter ISABELL and her MAID.

ISA.

So that you say this hearb will purge the *[eyes]* ,

And this the head? ah! but none of them will purge the hart!

No, thers no medicine left for my disease,

Nor any physick to recure the dead.

She runnes lunatick.

Horatio! O, wheres Horatio?

MAIDE.

Good madam, affright not thus your-selfe

With outrage for your sonne Horatio;

He sleepes in quiet in the Elizian fields.

ISA.

Why did I not giue you gownes and goodly things,

Bought you a wistle and a whipstalke too,

To be reuenged on their villanies?

MAIDE.

Madame, these humors doe torment my soule.

ISA.

My soule? poore soule, thou talkes of things

Thou knowest not what! My soule hath siluer wings,

That mounts me vp vnto the highest heauens—

To heauen? I, there sits up Horatio,

Backt with troup of fierry cherubins

Dauncing about his newly healed wounds,

Singing sweet hymns and chaunting heauenly notes, Rare harmony to greet his innocence,

That dyde, I, dyde a mirrour in our daies!

But say, where shall I finde, the men, the murderers,

That slew Horatio? whether shall I runne

To finde them out, that murdered my sonne?

Exeunt.

ACT III. SCENE 9.

[The DUKE's castle.]

BELIMPERIA at a window.

BEL.

What meanes this outrage that is offred me?

What am I thus sequestred from the court?

No notice? shall I not know the cause

Of these my secret and suspitious ils?

Accursed brother! vnkinde murderer!

Why bends thou thus thy minde to martir me?

Hieronimo, why writ I of they wrongs,

Or why art thou so slack in thy reuenge?

Andrea! O Andrea, that thou sawest

Me for thy freend Horatio handled thus,

And him for me thus causeles murdered!

Well, force perforce, I must constraine my-selfe

To patience, and apply me to the time,

Till Heauen, as I haue hoped, shall set me free.

Enter [CHRISTOPHEL.]

CHRIS.

Come, Madame Belimperia, this *[must]* not be!

Exeunt.

ACT III. Scene 10.

[A room in the DUKE's castle.]

Enter LORENZO, BALTHAZAR and the PAGE.

LOR.

Boy, talke no further; thus farre things goe well.
Thou art assurde that thou sawest him dead?

PAGE.

Or els, my lord, I liue not.

LOR.

Thats enough.
As for this resolution at his end,
Leaue that to him with whom he soiourns now.
Heere, take my ring, and giue it *[Christophel]* ,
And bid him let my sister be enlarg'd,
And bring her hither straight.

Exit PAGE.

This that I did was for a policie,
To smooth and keepe the murder secret,
Which as a nine daies wonder being ore-blowne,

My gentle sister will I now enlarge.

BAL.

And time, Lorenzo; for my lord the duke,

You heard, enquired for her yester-night.

LOR.

Why! and, my lord, I hope you have heard me say

Sufficient reason why she kept away;

But thats all one. My lord, you loue her?

BAL.

I.

LOR.

Then in your loue beware; deale cunningly;

Salue all suspititons; only sooth me vp,

And, if she hap to stand on tearmes with vs,

As for her sweet-hart, and concealement so,

Iest with her gently; vnder fained iest

Are things concealde that els would breed vnrest.

But heere she comes.

Enter BELIMPERIA.

LOR.

Now, sister.

BEL.

Sister? No!
Thou art no brother, but an enemy,
Els wouldst thou not haue vsde thy sister so:
First, to affright me with thy weapons drawne,
And with extreames abuse my company;
And then to hurry me like whirlwinds rage
Amidst a crew of thy confederates,
And clap my vp where none might come at me,
Nor I at any to reueale my wrongs.
What madding fury did possesse thy wits?

Or wherein ist that I offended thee?

LOR.

  Aduise you better, Belimperia;

For I haue done you no disparagement,—

Vnlesse, by more discretion then deseru'd,

I sought to saue your honour and mine owne.

BEL.

  Mine honour? Why, Lorenzo, wherein ist

That I neglect my reputation so

As you, or any, need to rescue it?

LOR.

  His Highnes and my father were resolu'd

To come conferre with olde Hieronimo

Concerning certaine matters of estate

That by the viceroy was determined.

BEL.

  And wherein was mine honour toucht in that?

BAL.

Haue patience, Belimperia; heare the rest.

LOR.

Me, next in sight, as messenger they sent
To giue him notice that they were so nigh:
Now, when I came, consorted with the prince,
And vnexpected in an arbor there
Found Belimperia with Horatio—

BEL.

How then?

LOR.

Why, then, remembring that olde disgrace
Which you for Don Andrea had indurde,
And now were likely longer to sustaine
By being found so meanely accompanied,
Thought rather, for I knew no readier meane,
To thrust Horatio forth my fathers way.

BAL.

  And carry you obscurely some-where els,

Least that his Highnes should haue found you there.

BEL.

  Euen so, my lord? And you are witnesse

That this is true which he entreateth of?

You, gentle brother, forged this for my sake?

And you, my lord, were made his instrument?

A worke of worth! worthy the noting too!

But whats the cause that you concealde me since?

LOR.

  Your melancholly, sister, since the newes

Of your first fauorite Don Andreas death

My fathers olde wrath hath exasperate.

BAL.

  And better wast for you, being in disgrace,

To absent your-selfe and giue his fury place.

BEL.

But why I had no notice of his ire?

LOR.

That were to adde more fewell to your fire,
Who burnt like Aetne for Andreas losse.

BEL.

Hath not my father then enquird for me?

LOR.

Sister, he hath; and this excusde I thee.

He whispereth in her eare.

But, Belimperia, see the gentle prince;
Looke on thy loue; beholde yong Balthazar,
Whose passions by the presence are increast,
And in whose melachollie thou maiest see
Thy hate, his loue, thy flight, his following thee.

BEL.

  Brother, you are become an oratour—

I know not, I, by what experience—

Too politick for me, past all compare,

Since I last saw you. But content your-selfe;

The prince is meditating higher things.

BAL.

  Tis of thy beauty, then, that conquers kings,

Of those thy tresses, Ariadnes twines,

Wherewith my libertie thou hast surprisde,

Of that thine iuorie front, my sorrowes map,

Wherein I see no hauen to rest my hope.

BEL.

  To loue and feare, and both at once, my lord,

In my conceipt, are things of more import

Then womens wit are to be busied with.

BAL.

Tis that I loue thee.

BEL.

Whome?

BAL.

Belimperia.

BEL.

But that I feare?

BAL.

Whome?

BEL.

Belimperia.

LOR.

Feare your-selfe?

BEL.

I, brother.

LOR.

How?

BEL.

As those

That, *[when]* they loue, are loath and feare to loose.

BAL.

Then, faire, let Balthazar your keeper be.

BEL.

No, Balthazar doth feare as well as we;

Et tremulo metui pauidum iunxere timorem,

Et vanum stolidae proditionis opus.

Exit.

LOR.

Nay, and you argue things so cunningly,

Weele goe continue this discourse at court.

BAL.

Led by the loadstar of heauenly lookes,

Wends poore oppressed Balthazar,

As ore the mountains walkes the wanderer

Incertain to effect his pilgrimage.

Exeunt.

ACT III. SCENE 11.

[A street.]

Enter two PORTINGALES, and HIERONIMO

meets them.

I PORT. By your leaue, sir.

[The following is inserted in the 1618, 1623, and 1633 editions.]

HIER.

Tis neither as you thinke, nor as you thinke, Nor as you thinke, you'r wide all:

These slippers are not mine, they were my sonne Horatios.
My sonne? And what's a sonne? A thing begot
Within a paire of minutes, there-about;
A lump bred up in darknesse, and doth serue
To ballance those light creatures we call women,
And at nine monethes end creepes foorth to light.
What is there yet in a sonne to make a father
Dote, rave or runne mad? Being born, it pouts,
Cries, and breeds teeth. What is there yet in a sonne?
He must be fed, be taught to goe and speake.
I, and yet? Why might not a man love
A calfe as well, or melt in passion over
A frisking kid, as for a sonne? Me thinkes
A young bacon or a fine smooth little horse-colt
Should moove a man as much as doth a son;
For one of these in very little time
Will grow to some good use, whereas a sonne,
The more he growes in stature and in yeeres,
The more unsquar'd, unlevelled he appeares,

Reckons his parents among the ranke of fooles,

Strikes cares upon their heads with his mad ryots,

Makes them looke old before they meet with age.—

This is a son! And what a losse were this,

Considered truely! Oh, but my Horatio

Grew out of reach of those insatiate humours:

He lovd his loving parents, he was my comfort

And his mothers joy, the very arme that did

Hold up our house, our hopes were stored up in him.

None but a damned murderer could hate him!

He had not seene the backe

Of nineteene yeere, when his strong arme unhorst

The proud prince Balthazar; and his great minde,

Too full of honour tooke him unto mercy,

That valient but ignoble Portingale.

Well! Heaven is Heaven still! And there's Nemesis, and Furies,

And things called whippes, and they sometimes doe meet

With murderers! They doe not alwayes scape,—

That is some comfort! I, I, I; and then

Time steales on, and steales and steales, till violence

Leapes foorth like thunder wrapt in a ball of fire, And so doth bring confusion to them all.

[End of insertion.]

Good leaue haue you; nay, I pray you goe,

For Ile leaue you, if you can leaue me so.

II PORT.

Pray you, which is the next way to my l*[ord]*

the dukes?

HIERO.

The next way from me.

I PORT. To the house, we meane.

HIERO.

O hard by; tis yon house that you see.

II PORT.

You could not tell vs if his sonne were there?

HIERO.

Who? my lord Lorenzo?

I PORT.   I, sir.

He goeth in at one doore and comes out at another.

HIERO.Oh, forbeare,
For other talke for vs far fitter were!
But, if you be importunate to know
The way to him and where to finde him out,
Then list to me, and Ile resolue your doubt:
There is a path vpon your left hand side
That leadeth from a guiltie conscience
Vnto a forrest of distrust and feare,—
A darksome place and dangerous to passe,—
There shall you meet with melancholy thoughts
Whose balefull humours if you but *[behold]* ,
It will conduct you to dispaire and death:
Whose rockie cliffes when you haue once behelde,
Within a hugie dale of lasting night,
That, kindled with worlds of iniquities,

Doth cast vp filthy and detested fumes,—
Not far from thence where murderers haue built
A habitation for their cursed soules,
There, in a brazen caldron fixed by Iove
In his fell wrath vpon a sulpher flame,
Your-selues shall finde Lorenzo bathing him
In boyling lead and blood of innocents.

I PORT. Ha, ha, ha!

HIERO.
  Ha, ha, ha! why, ha, ha, ha! Farewell, good ha,
ha, ha!

Exit.

II PORT.
  Doubtles this man is passing lunaticke,
Or imperfection of his age doth make him dote.

Come, lets away to seek my lord the duke.

[Exeunt.]

ACT III. SCENE 12.

[The Spanish court.]

Enter HIERONIMO with a ponyard in one hand,

and a rope in the other.

HIERO.

Now, sir, perhaps I come to see the king,
The king sees me, and faine would heare my sute:
Why, is this not a strange and seld-seene thing
That standers by with toyes should strike me mute?
Go too, I see their shifts, and say no more;
Hieronimo, tis time for thee to trudge!
Downe by the dale that flowes with purple gore
Standeth a firie tower; there sits a iudge
Vpon a seat of steele and molten brasse,
And twixt his teeth he holdes afire-brand,

That leades vnto the lake where he doth stand.
Away, Hieronimo; to him be gone:

Heele doe thee iustice for Horatios death.
Turne down this path, thou shalt be with him straite;
Or this, and then thou needst not take thy breth.
This way, or that way? Soft and faire, not so!
For, if I hang or kill my-selfe, lets know
Who will reuenge Horatios murther then!
No, no; fie, no! pardon me, ile none of that:

He flings away the dagger & halter.

This way Ile take; and this way comes the king,

He takes them up againe.

And heere Ile haue a fling at him, thats flat!
And, Balthazar, Ile be with thee to bring;
And thee, Lorenzo! Heeres the king; nay, stay!
And heere,—I, heere,—there goes the hare away!

Enter KING, EMBASSADOR, CASTILLE, and LORENZO.

KING.

Now shew, embassadour, what our viceroy saith:
Hath hee receiu'd the articles we sent?

HIERO.

Iustice! O, iustice to Hieronimo!

LOR.

Back! seest thou not the king is busie?

HIERO.

O! is he so?

KING.

Who is he that interrupts our busines?

HIERO.

Not I! *[aside]* Hieronimo, beware! goe by, goe by!

EMBAS.

Renowned king, he hath receiued and read
thy kingly proffers and thy promist league,
And, as a man exreamely ouer-ioyd
To heare his sonne so princely entertainde,
Whose death he had so solemnely bewailde,
This, for thy further satisfaction
And kingly loue, he kindely lets thee know:
First, for the marriage of his princely sonne
With Belimperia, thy beloued neece,
The newes are more delightfull to his soule
Then myrrh or incense to the offended Heauens.
In person, therefore, will be come himselfe
To see the marriage rites solemnized
And in the presence of the court of Spaine
To knit a sure *[inextricable]* band
Of kingly loue and euerlasting league
Betwixt the crownes of Spaine and Portingale.
There will he giue his crowne to Balthazar,

And make a queene of Belimperia.

KING.

Brother, how like you this our viceroies loue?

CAST.

No doubt, my lord, it is an argument
Of honorable care to keepe his freend
And wondrous zeale to Balthazar, his sonne.
Nor am I least indebted to his Grace,
That bends his liking to my daughter thus.

EM.

Now last, dread lord, heere hath his Highnes sent—
Although he send not that his sonne returne—
His ransome doe to Don Horatio.

HIERO.

Horatio? who cals Horatio?

KING.

And well remembred, thank his Maiestie!
Heere, see it giuen to Horatio.

HIERO.

Iustice! O iustice! iustice, gentle king!

KING.

Who is that? Hieronimo?

HIERO.

Iustice! O iustice! O my sonne! my sonne!
My sonne, whom naught can ransome or redeeme!

LOR.

Hieronimo, you are not well aduisde.

HIERO.

Away, Lorenzo! hinder me no more,
For thou hast made me bankrupt of my blisse!
Giue me my sonne! You shall not ransome him!
Away! Ile rip the bowels of the earth,

He diggeth with his dagger.

And ferrie ouer th' Elizian plaines
And bring my sonne to shew his deadly wounds.
Stand from about me! Ile make a pickaxe of my poniard,
And heere surrender vp my marshalship;
For Ile goe marshall vp the feends in hell,
To be auenged on you all for this.

KING.

What means this outrage?
Will none of you restraine his fury?

HIERO.

Nay, soft and faire; you shall not need to striue!
Needs must he goe that the diuels driue.

Exit.

KING.

What accident hath hapt *[to]* Hieronimo?
I haue not seene him to demeane him so.

LOR.
My gratious lord, he is with extreame pride
Conceiued of yong Horatio, his sonne,
And couetous of hauing himselfe
The ransome of the yong prince, Balthazar,
Distract, and in a manner lunatick.

KING.
Beleeue me, nephew, we are sorie for 't;
This is the loue that fathers beare their sonnes.
But, gentle brother, goe giue to him this golde,
The princes raunsome; let him haue his due;
For what he hath, Horatio shall not want.
Happily Hieronimo hath need thereof.

LOR.
But if he be thus helpelesly distract,
Tis requisite his office be resignde

And giuen to one of more discretion.

KING.

 We shall encrease his melanchollie so.
Tis best that we see further in it first;
Till when, our-selfe will exempt the place.
And, brother, now bring in the embassadour,
That he may be a witnes of the match
Twixt Balthazar and Belimperia,
And that we may prefixe a certaine time
Wherein the marriage shalbe solemnized,
That we may haue thy lord the viceroy heere.

EM.

 Therein your Highnes highly shall content
His maiestie, that longs to heare from hence.

KING.

 On then, and heare you, lord embassadour.

Exeunt.

ACT III. SCENE 13.

[HIERONIMO's house.]

Enter HIERONIMO with a book in his hand.

[HIERO.] Vindicta mihi.

I, heauen will be reuenged of euery ill,

Nor will they suffer murder vnrepaide!

Then stay, Hieronimo, attend their will;

For mortall men may not appoint their time.

Per scelus semper tutum est sceleribus iter:

Strike, and strike home, where wrong is offred thee;

For euils vnto ils conductors be,

And death's the worst of resultion.

For he that thinks with patience to contend

To quiet life, his life shall easily end.

Fata si miseros iuuant, habes selutem;

Fata si vitam negant, habes sepulchrum:

If destinie thy miseries doe ease,

Then hast thou health, and happie shalt thou be;
If destinie denie thee life, Hieronimo,
Yet shalt thou be assured of a tombe;
If neither, yet let this thy comfort be:

Heauen couereth him that hath no buriall.
And, to conclude, I will reuenge his death!
But how? Not as the vulgare wits of men,
With open, but ineuitable ils;
As by a secret, yet a certaine meane,
Which vnder kindeship wilbe cloked best.
Wise men will take their opportunitie,
Closely and safely fitting things to time;
But in extreames aduantage hath no time;
And therefore all times fit not for reuenge.
Thus, therefore, will I rest me in unrest,
Dissembling quiet in vnquietnes,
Not seeming that I know their villanies,
That my simplicitie may make them think
That ignorantly I will let all slip;
For ignorance, I wot, and well they know,

Remedium malorum iners est.
Nor ought auailes it me to menace them.
Who, as a wintrie storme vpon a plaine,
Will beare me downe with their nobilitie.
No, no, Hieronimo, thou must enioyne
Thine eies to obseruation, and thy tung
To milder speeches then thy spirit affoords,
Thy hart to patience, and thy hands to rest,
Thy cappe to curtesie, and they knee to bow,
Till to reuenge thou know when, where and how.
How now? what noise, what coile is that you keepe?

A noise within.

Enter a SERVANT.

SER.

Heere are a sort of poore petitioners
That are importunate, and it shall please you, sir,
That you should plead their cases to the king.

HIERO.

  That I should plead their seuerall actions?

Why, let them enter, and let me see them.

Enter three CITIZENS and an OLDE MAN

[DON BAZULTO] .

I CIT. So I tell you this: for learning and for law

There is not any aduocate in Spaine

That can preuaile or will take halfe the paine

That he will in pursuite of equitie.

HIERO.

  Come neere, you men, that thus importune me!

[Aside]   Now must I beare a face of grauitie,

For thus I vsde, before my marshalship,

To pleide the causes as corrigedor.—

Come on, sirs, whats the matter?

II CIT.

  Sir, an action.

HIERO.

Of batterie?

I CIT.Mine of debt.

HIERO.Giue place.

II CIT.

No, sir, mine is an action of the case.

III CIT.

Mine an eiectionae firmae by a lease.

HIERO.

Content you, sirs; are you determined
That I should plead your seuerall actions?

I CIT. I, sir; and heeres my declaration.

II CIT.

And heere is my band.

III CIT.

And heere is my lease.

They giue him papers.

HIERO.

But wherefore stands you silly man so mute,

With mournfall eyes and hands to heauen vprearde?

Come hether, father; let me know thy cause.

SENEX, *[DON BAZULTO]* . O worthy sir, my cause but slightly knowne

May mooue the harts of warlike Myrmydons,

And melt the Corsicke rockes with ruthfull teares!

HIERO.

Say, father; tell me whats thy sute!

[BAZULTO] . No, sir, could my woes

Giue way vnto my most distresfull words,

Then should I not in paper, as you see,
With incke bewray what blood began in me.

HIERO.
Whats heere? "The Humble Supplication
Of Don Bazulto for his Murdered Sonne."

[BAZULTO] . I, sir.

HIERO.No, sir, it was my murdred sonne!
Oh, my sonne, my sonne! oh, my sonne Horatio!
But mine or thine, Bazulto, be content;
Heere, take my handkercher and wipe thine eies,
Whiles wretched I in thy mishaps may see
The liuely portraict of my dying selfe.

He draweth out a bloudie napkin.

O, no; not this! Horatio, this was thine!
And when I dyde it in thy deerest blood,
This was a token twixt thy soule and me

That of thy death reuenged I should be.
But heere: take this, and this! what? my purse?
I, this and that and all of them are thine;
For all as one are our extremeties.

I CIT. Oh, see the kindenes of Hieronimo!

II CIT.
  This gentlenes shewes him a gentleman.

HIERO.
  See, see, oh, see thy shame, Hieronimo!
See heere a louing father to his sonne:
Beholde the sorrowes and the sad laments
That he deliuereth for his sonnes dicease.
If loues effects so striues in lesser things,
If loue enforce such moodes in meaner wits,
If loue expresse such power in poor estates,
Hieronimo, as when a raging sea,
Tost with the winde and tide, ore-turneth then
The vpper-billowes, course of waues to keep,

Whilest lesser waters labour in the deepe,

Then shamest thou not, Hieronimo, to neglect

The *[swift]* reuenge of thy Horatio?

Though on this earth iustice will not be found,

Ile downe to hell and in this passion

Knock at the dismall gates of Plutos court,

Getting by force, as once Alcides did,

A troupe of furies and tormenting hagges,

To torture Don Lorenzo and the rest.

Yet, least the triple-headed porter should

Denye my passage to the slimy strond,

The Thracian poet thou shalt counterfeite;

Come on, old father, be my Orpheus;

And, if thou canst no notes vpon the harpe,

Then sound the burden of thy sore harts greefe

Till we do gaine that Proserpine may graunt

Reuenge on them that murd*[er]* red my sonne.

Then will I rent and teare them thus and thus,

Shiuering their limmes in peeces with my teeth!

Teare the papers.

I CIT. Oh, sir, my declaration!

Exit HIERONIMO and they after.

II CIT.

  Saue my bond!

Enter HIERONIMO.

II CIT.

  Saue my bond!

III CIT.

  Alas my lease, it cost me
Ten pound, and you, my lord, haue torne the same!

HIERO.

  That can not be, I gaue it neuer a wound;
Shew me one drop of bloud fall from the same!

How is it possible I should slay it then?
Tush, no! Run after, catch me if you can!

Exeunt all but the OLDE MAN [DON
BAZULTO].

BAZULTO remaines till HIERONIMO enters
againe, who, staring him the face, speakes:

And art thou come, Horatio, from the depth,
To aske for iustice in this vpper earth?
T*[o]* tell thy father thou art vnreuenged?
To wring more teares from Isabellas eies,
Whose lights are dimd with ouer-long laments?
Goe back, my sonne, complaine to Eacus;
For heeres no iustice. Gentle boy, begone;
For iustice is exiled from the earth.
H*[i]* eronimo will beare thee company.
Thy mother cries on righteous Radamant
For iust reuenge against the murderers.

[BAZULTO] . Alas, my l*[ord]* , whence springs this troubled speech?

HIERO.

But let me looke on my Horatio:
Sweet boy, how art thou chang'd in deaths black shade!
Had Proserpine no pittie on thy youth,
But suffered thy fair crimson-colourd spring
With withered winter to be blasted thus?
Horatio, thou are older then thy father:

Ah, ruthless father, that fauour thus transformess.

BA.

Ah, my good lord, I am not your yong sonne.

HIE.

What! not my sonne? thou then a Furie art
Sent from the emptie kingdome of blacke night
To summon me to make appearance
Before grim Mynos and iust Radamant,
To plague Hieronimo, that is remisse

And seekes not vengeance for Horatios death.

BA.

I am a greeued man, and not a ghost,
That came for iustice for my murdered sonne.

HIE.

I, now I know thee, now thou namest thy sonne;
Thou art the liuely image of my griefe:
Within thy face sorrowes I may see;
The eyes are [dim'd] with teares, they cheekes are wan,
They forehead troubled, and thy muttring lips
Murmure sad words abruptly broken off
By force of windie sighes thy spirit breathes;
And all this sorrow riseth for thy sonne,
And selfe-same sorrow feele I for my sonne.
Come in, old man; thou shalt to Izabell.
Leane on my arme; I thee, thou me shalt stay;
And thou and I and she will sing a song,
Three parts in one, but all of discords fram'd,—
Talke not of cords!—but let vs now be gone,—

For with a cord Horatio was slaine.

Exeunt.

ACT III. SCENE 14.

[The Spanish court.]

Enter KING OF SPAINE, the DUKE, VICEROY, and
LORENZO, BALTHAZAR, DON PEDRO, and BELIMPERIA.

KING.
Go, brother, it is the Duke of Castiles cause;
Salute the viceroy in our name.

CASTILE.
I go.

VICE.
Go forth, Don Pedro, for they nephews sake,
And greet the Duke of Castile.

PEDRO.It shall be so.

KING.
  And now to meet these Portaguise;
For, as we now are, so sometimes were these,
Kings and commanders of the westerne Indies.
Welcome, braue viceroy, to the court of Spaine!

And welcome, all his honorable traine!
Tis not vnknowne to vs for why you come,
Or haue so kingly crost the seas.
Suffiseth it, in this we note the troth
And more then common loue you lend to vs.
So is it that mine honorable neece,
For it beseemes vs now that it be knowne,
Already is betroth'd to Balthazar;
And, by appointment and our condiscent,
To-morrow are they to be married.
To this intent we entertaine thy-selfe,
Thy followers, their pleasure, and our peace.

Speak, men of Portingale, shall it be so?
If I, say so; if not, say so flatly.

VICE.
Renowned king, I come not, as thou thinkst,
With doubtfull followers, vnresolued men,
But such as haue vpon thine articles
Confirmed thy motion and contented me.
Know, soueraigne, I come to solemnize
The marriage of they beloued neece,
Faire Belimperia, with my Balthazar,—
With thee, my sonne, whom sith I liue to see,
Heere, take my crowne, I giue it to her and thee,
And let me liue a solitarie life,
In ceaseless praiers,
To think how strangely heauen hath thee preserued.

KING.
See, brother, see, how nature striues in him!
Come, worthy viceroy, and accompany

They freend, *[to strive]* with thine extremities:
A place more priuate fits this princely mood.

VICE.

Or heere or where your Highnes thinks it good.

Exeunt all but CAST*[TILE]* and LOR*[ENZO]* .

CAS.

Nay, stay, Lorenzo; let me talke with you.
Seest thou this entertainement of these kings?

LOR.

I doe, my lord, and ioy to see the same.

CAS.

And knowest thou why this meeting is?

LOR.

For her, my lord, whom Balthazar doth loue,
And to confirme their promised marriage.

CAS.

She is thy sister.

LOR.

Who? Belimperia?
I, my gratious lord, and this is the day
That I haue longd so happily to see.

CAS.

Thou wouldst be loath that any fault of thine
Should intercept her in her happines?

LOR.

Heauens will not let Lorenzo erre so much.

CAS.

Why then, Lorenzo, listen to my words:
It is suspected, and reported too,
That thou, Lorenzo, wrongst Hieronimo,
And in his sutes toward his Maiestie

Still keepst him back and seekes to crosse his sute.

LOR.

That I, my lord?

CAS.

I tell thee, sonne, my-selfe haue heard it said,
When to my sorrow I haue been ashamed
To answere for thee, though thou art my sonne.
Lorenzo, knowest thou not the common loue
And kindenes that Hieronimo hath wone
By his deserts within the court of Spaine?
Or seest thou not the k*[ing]* my brothers care
In his behalfe and to procure his health?
Lorenzo, shouldst thou thwart his passions,
And he exclaime against thee to the king,
What honour wert in this assembly,
Or what a scandale were among the kings,
To heare Hieronimo exclaime on thee!
Tell me,—and loke thou tell me truely too,—
Whence growes the ground of this report in court?

LOR.

My l*[ord]* , it lyes not in Lorenzos power
To stop the vulgar liberall of their tongues:
A small aduantage makes a water-breach;
And no man liues that long contenteth all.

CAS.

My-selfe haue seene thee busie to keep back
Him and his supplications from the king.

LOR.

Your-selfe, my l*[ord]* , hath seene his assions,
That ill beseemde the presence of a king;
And, for I pittied him in his distresse,
I helde him thence with kinde and curteous words,
As free from malice to Hieronimo
As to my soule, my lord.

CAS.

Hieronimo, my sonne, mistakes thee then.

LOR.

My gratious father, beleeue me, so he doth;
But whats a silly man, distract in minde
To think vpon the murder of his sonne?
Alas, how easie is it for him to erre!
But, for his satisfaction and the worlds,
Twere good, my l*[ord]* , that Hieronimo and I
Were reconcilde, if he misconster me.

CAS.

Lorenzo, that hast said; it shalbe so!
Goe, one of you, and call Hieronimo.

Etner BALTHAZAR and BELIMPERIA.

BAL.

Come, Belimperia, Balthazars content,
My sorrowes ease, and soueraigne of my blisse,—
Sith heauen hath *[thee ordainded]* to be mine,
Disperce those cloudes and melanchollie lookes,

And cleere them vp with those thy sunne-bright eies,

Wherein my hope and heauens faire beautie lies!

BEL.

My lookes, my lord, are fitting for my loue,

Which, new begun, can shew no brighter yet.

BAL.

New kindled flames should burne as morning sun.

BEL.

But not too fast, least heate and all be done.

I see my lord my father.

BAL.

True, my loue;

I will goe salute him.

CAS.

Welcome, Balthazar,

Welcome, braue prince, the pledge of Castiles peace!

And welcome Belimperia! How now, girle?
Why commest thou sadly to salute vs thus?

Content thy-selfe, for I am satisfied.
It is not now as when Andrea liu'd;
We haue forgotten and forgiuen that,
And thou art graced with a happeir loue.
But, Balthazar, heere comes Hieronimo;
Ile haue a word with him.

Enter HIERONIMO and a SERUANT.

HIERO.And wheres the duke?

SER.
Yonder.

HIERO.Euen so.
[aside] What new deuice haue they deuised, tro?
Pocas palabras! Milde as the lambe!
Ist I will be reueng'd? No, I am not the man.

CAS.

Welcome, Hieronimo!

LOR.

Welcome, Hieronimo!

BAL.

Welcome, Hieronimo!

HIERO.

My lords, I thank you for Horatio.

CAS.

Hieronimo, the reason that I sent
To speak with you is this—

HIERO.What? so short?
Then Ile be gone; I thank you fort!

CAS.

Nay, stay, Hieronimo; goe call him, sonne.

LOR.

Hieronimo, my father craues a word with you.

HIERO.

With me, sir? Why, my l*[ord]* , I thought you had done.

LOR.

[aside]   No; would he had!

CAS.

Hieronimo, I hear

You finde your-selfe agreeued at my sonne,

Because you haue not accesse vnto the king,

And say tis he that intercepts your sutes.

HIERO.

Why, is not this a miserable thing, my lord?

CAS.

Hieronimo, I hope you haue no cause,
And would be loth that one of your deserts,
Should once haue reason to suspect my sonne,
Considering how I think of you my-selfe.

HIERO.
Your sonne Lorenzo? whome, my noble lord?
The hope of Spaine? mine honorable freend?

Graunt me the combat of them, if they dare!

Drawes out his sword.

Ile meet them face-to-face to tell me so!
These be the scandalous reports of such
As loues not me, and hate my lord too much.
Should I suspect Lorenzo would preuent
Or crosse my sute, that loued my sonne so well?
My lord, I am ashamed it should be said.

LOR.

  Hieronimo, I neuer gaue you cause.

H*[I]* ERO. My good lord, I know you did not.

CAS.
  There then pause,
And, for the satisfaction of the world,
Hieronimo, frequent my homely house,
The Duke of Castile Ciprians ancient seat;
And when thou wilt, vse me, my sonne, and it.
But heere before Prince Balthazar and me
Embrace each other, and be perfect freends.

HIERO.
  I, marry, my lord, and shall!
Freends, quoth he? See, Ile be freends with you all!
Especially with you, my louely lord;
For diuers causes it is fit for vs
That we be freends. The world is suspitious,
And men may think what we imagine not.

BAL.

Why this is freely doone, Hieronimo.

LOR.

And I hope olde grudges are forgot.

HIERO.

What els? it were a shame it should not be so!

CAS.

Come on, Hieronimo, at my request;

Let vs entreat your company to-day!

Exeunt.

[CHORUS.]

Enter GHOAST and REUENGE.

GHOST.

Awake Erictho! Cerberus, awake!

Sollicite Pluto, gentle Proserpine!

To combat, Achinon and Ericus in hell!
For neere by Stix and Phlegeton *[there came.]*
Nor ferried Caron to the fierie lakes,
Such fearfull sights, as poore Andrea see*[s]* ?
Reuenge awake!

REUENGE.
Awake? for-why?

GHOST.
Awake, Reuenge! for thou art ill aduisde
To sleepe away what thou art warnd to watch!

REUENGE.
Content thy-selfe, and doe not trouble me.

GHOST.
Awake, Reuenge, if loue, as loue hath had,
Haue yet the power of preuailance in hell!
Hieronimo with Lorenzo is ioynde in league,

And intecepts our passage to reuenge.

Awake, Reuenge, or we are woe-begone!

REUENGE.

Thus worldings ground what they haue dreamd vpon!
Content thy-selfe, Andrea; though I sleepe,
Yet is my mood soliciting their soules.
Sufficeth thee that poore Hieronimo
Cannot forget his sonne Horatio.
Nor dies Reuegne although he sleepe a-while;
For in vnquiet, quietnes is faind,
And slumbring is a common worldly wile.
Beholde, Andrea, for an instance how
Reuenge hath slept; and then imagine thou
What tis to be subiect to destinie.

Enter a Dumme-show.

GHOST.

Awake, Reuenge! reueale this misterie!

REUENGE.

  The two first *[do]* the nuptiall torches beare,
As brightly burning as the mid-daies sunne;
But after them doth Himen hie as fast,
Clothed in sable and saffron robe,
And blowes them out and quencheth them with blood,
As discontent that things continue so.

GHOST.

  Sufficeth me; thy meanings vnderstood,
And thanks to thee and those infernall powers
That will not tollerate a louers woe.
Rest thee; for I will sit to see the rest.

REUENGE.

  Then argue not; for thou hast thy request.

Exeunt.

ACTVS QUARTOS.

ACT IV. SCENE 1.

[The DUKE's castle.]

Enter BEL-IMPERIA and HIERONIMO.

BEL-IMPERIA. Is this the loue that bearst Horatio?
Is this the kindnes that thou counterfeits,
Are these the fruits of thine incessant teares?
Hieronimo, are these thy passions,
Thy protestations and thy deepe laments,
That thou wert wont to wearie men withall?
O vnkinde father! O deceitfull world!
With what excuses canst thou shew thy-selfe,—
With what dishonour, and the hate of men,—
Thus to neglect the losse and life of him
Whom both my letters and thine owne beliefe
Assures thee to be causeles slaughtered?
Hieronimo! for shame, Hieronimo,

Be not a history to after times
Of such ingratitude vnto thy sonne!
Vnhappy mothers of such chldren then!
But monstrous fathers, to forget so soone
The death of those whom they with care and cost
Haue tendred so, thus careles should be lost!
My-selfe, a stranger in respect to thee,
So loued his life as still I wish their deathes.
Nor shall his death be vnreuengd by me.
Although I beare it out for fashions sake;
For heere I sweare in sight of heauen and earth,
Shouldst thou neglect the loue thou shoudlst retain
And giue ouer and deuise no more,
My-selfe should send their hatefull soules to hel
That wrought his downfall with extreamest death!

HIE.

But may it be that Bel-imperia
Vowes such reuenge as she hath dain'd to say?
Why then, I see that heauen applies our drift,
And all the saints doe sit soliciting

For vengeance on those cursed murtherers.

Madame, tis true, and now I find it so.

I found a letter, written in your name,

And in that letter, how Horatio died.

Pardon, O pardon, Bel-imperia,

My feare and care in not beleeuing it!

Nor thinke I thoughtles thinke vpon a meane

To let his death be vnreuenge'd at full.

And heere I vow, so you but giue consent

And will conceale my resolution,

I will ere long determine of their deathes

That causeles thus haue murderd my sonne.

BEL.

Hieronimo, I will consent, conceale,

And ought that may effect for thine auaile,

Ioyne with thee to reuenge Horatios death.

HIER.

On then, *[and]* whatsoeuer I deuise,

Let me entreat you grace my practice,

For-why the plots already in mine head.—

Heere they are!

Enter BALTHAZAR and LORENZO.

BAL.

How now, Hieronimo?

What, courting Bel-imperia?

HIERO.I, my lord,

Such courting as, I promise you,

She hath my hart, but you, my lord, haue hers.

LOR.

But now, Hieronmimo, or neuer we are to intreate your helpe.

HIE.

My help? why, my good lords, assure your-selues of me;

For you haue giuen me cause,—I, by my faith, haue you!

BAL.

It pleasde you at the entertainment of the embassadour,
To grace the King so much as with a shew;
Now were your stuide so well furnished
As, for the passing of the first nights sport,
To entertaine my father with the like,
Or any such like pleasing motion,
Assure yourselfe it would content them well.

HIERO.
Is this all?

BAL.
I, this is all.

HIERO.
While then ile fit you; say no more.
When I was yong I gaue my minde
And plide my-selfe to fruitles poetrie,
Which, though it profite the professor naught,
Yet is it passing pleasing to the world.

LOR.

And how for that?

HIERO.Marrie, my good lord, thus.—

And yet, me thinks, you are too quick with vs!—

When in Tolledo there I studied,

It was my chaunce to write a tragedie,—

See heere, my lords,—

He showes them a book.

Which, long forgot, I found this other day.

Nor would your lordships fauour me so much

As but to grace me with your acting it,

I meane each one of you to play a part.

Assure you it will proue most passing strange

And wondrous plausible to that assembly.

BAL.

What, would you haue vs play a tragedie?

HIERO.

Why, Nero thought it no disparagement,

And kings and emperours haue tane delight

To make experience of their wit in plaies!

LOR.

Nay, be not angry, good Hieronimo;

The prince but asked a question.

BAL.

In faith, Hieronimo, and you be in earnest,

Ile make one.

LOR.

And I another.

HIERO.

Now, my good lord, could you intreat,

Your sister, Bel-imperia, to make one,—

For whats a play without a woman in it?

BEL.

Little intreaty shall serue me, Hieronimo,

For I must needs be imployed in your play.

HIERO.

Why, this is well! I tell you, lordings,

It was determined to haue beene acted,

By gentlemen and schollers too,

Such as could tell what to speak.

BAL.

And now it shall be plaide by princes and courtiers,

Such as can tell how to speak,

If, as it is our country manner,

You will but let vs know the argument.

HIERO.

That shall I roundly. The cronicles of Spaine

Recorde this written of a knight of Rodes;

He was betrothed, and wedded at the length,

To one Perseda, an Italian dame,

Whose beatuie rauished all that her behelde,

Especially the soule of Soliman,

Who at the marriage was the cheefest guest.

By sundry meanes sought Soliman to winne

Persedas loue, and could not gaine the same.

Then gan he break his passions to a freend,

One of his bashawes whome he held full deere.

Her has this bashaw long solicited,

And saw she was not otherwise to be wonne

But by her husbands death, this knight of Rodes,

Whome presently by trecherie his slew.

She, stirde with an exceeding hate therefore,

As cause of this, slew *[Sultan]* Soliman,

And, to escape the bashawes tirannie,

Did stab herselfe. And this *[is]* the tragedie.

LOR.

O, excellent!

BEL.

But say, Hieronimo:

What then became of him that was the bashaw?

HIERO.

Marrie thus: moued with remorse of his misdeeds,

Ran to a mountain top and hung himselfe.

BAL.

But which of vs is to performe that part?

HIERO.

O, that will I, my lords; make no doubt of it;

Ile play the murderer, I warrent you;

For I already haue conceited that.

BAL.

And what shall I?

HIERO.

Great Soliman, the Turkish emperour.

LOR.

  And I?

HIERO.Erastus, the knight of Rhodes.

BEL.

And I?

HIERO.

  Perseda, chaste and resolute.

And heere, my lords, are seueral abstracts drawne,

For eache of you to note your *[seuerall]* partes.

And act it as occasion's offred you.

You must prouide *[you with]* a Turkish cappe,

A black moustache and a fauchion.

Giues paper to BAL*[THAZAR]* .

You with a crosse, like a knight of Rhodes.

Giues another to LOR*[ENZO]* .

And, madame, you must *[then]* attire yourselfe

He giueth BEL[-IMPERIA] another.

Like Phoebe, Flora, or the huntresse *[Dian]* ,
Which to your discretion shall seeme best.
And as for me, my lords, Ile looke to one,
And with the raunsome that the viceroy sent
So furnish and performe this tragedie
As all the world shall say Hieronimo
Was liberall in gracing of it so.

BAL.
Hieronimo, me thinks a comedie were better.

HIERO.
A comedie? fie! comedies are fit for common wits;
But to present a kingly troupe withall,
Giue me a stately-written tragedie,—
Tragedia cothurnata, fitting kings,
Containing matter, and not common things!

My lords, all this *[our sport]* must be perfourmed,

As fitting, for the first nights reuelling.

The Italian tragedians were so sharpe

Of wit that in one houres meditation

They would performe any-thing in action.

LOR.

And well it may, for I haue seene the like

In Paris, mongst the French tragedians.

HIERO.

In Paris? mas, and well remembered!—

Theres one thing more that rests for vs to doo.

BAL.

Whats that, Hieronimo?

Forget not any-thing.

HIERO.Each one of vs

Must act his parte in vnknowne languages,

That it may breede the more varietie:
As you, my lord, in Latin, I in Greeke,
You in Italian, and, for-because I know
That Bel-imperia hath practised the French,
In courtly French shall all her phrases be.

BEL.
You meane to try my cunning then, Hieronimo!

BAL.
But this will be a meere confusion,
And hardly shall we all be vnderstoode.

HEIRO.
It must be so; for the conclusion
Shall proue the inuention and all was good;
And I my-selfe in an oration,
That I will haue there behinde a curtaine,
And with a strange and wondrous shew besides,
Assure yourselfe, shall make the matter knowne.
And all shalbe concluded in once scene,

For theres no pleasure tane in tediousnes.

BAL.

[to LOR.] How like you this?

LOR.

Why thus, my lord, we must resolue,

To soothe his humors vp.

BAL.

On then, Hieronimo; farewell till soone!

HIERO.

You plie this geere?

LOR.

I warrant you.

Exeuent all but HIERONIMO.

HIERO.

Why, so! now shall I see the fall of Babilon
Wrought by the heauens in this confusion.
And, if the world like not this tragedie,
Hard is the hap of olde Hieronimo.

Exit.

ACT IV. SCENE 2.

[HIERONIMO's garden.]

Enter ISABELLA with a weapon.

[ISA.]   Tell me no more! O monstrous homicides!
Since neither pietie nor pittie moues
The king to iustice or compassion,
I will reuenge my-selfe vpon this place,
Where thus they murdered my beloued sonne.

She cuts downe the arbour.

Downe with these branches and these loathsome bowes

On this vnfortunate and fatall pine!

Downe with them, Isabella; rent them vp,

And burnes the roots from whence the rest is sprung!

I will leaue not a root, a stalke, a tree,

A bowe, a branch, a blossome, nor a leafe,—

Not, not a hearb within this garden plot,

Accursed complot of my miserie!

Fruitlesse for-euer may this garden be,

Barren the earth, and blislesse whosoeuer

Immagines not to keep it vnmanurde!

An easterne winde comixt with noisome aires

Shall blast the plants and yong saplings *[here]* ,

The earth with serpents shalbe pestered,

And passengers, for feare to be infect,

Shall stand aloofe, and, looking at it, tell

There murdred dide the sonne of Isabell.

I, heere he dide, and heere I him imbrace!

See where his ghoast solicites with his wounds

Reuenge on her that should reuenge his death!

Hieronimo, make haste to see thy sonne,

For Sorrow and Dispaire hath scited me
To heare Horatio plead with Radamant.
Make haste, Hieronimo, to holde excusde
Thy negligence in pursute of their deaths
Whose hatefull wrath breau'd him of his breath.
Ah, nay; thou dost delay their deaths,
Forgiues the murderers of thy noble sonne;
And none but I bestirre me,—to no end!
And, as I cursse this tree from further fruit,
So shall my wombe be cursed for his sake;
And with this weapon will I wound this brest,—
That haples brest that gaue Horatio suck!

She stabs herselfe.

ACT IV. SCENE 3.

[The DUKE's castle.]

Enter HIERONIMO; he knocks up the curtaine.

Enter the DUKE OF CASTILE.

CAS.

How now, Hieronimo? wheres your fellows,
That you take all this paine?

HIERO.

O sir, it is for the authors credit
To look that all things may goe well.
But, good my lord, let me intreat your Grace
To giue the king the coppie of the plaie:

This is the argument of what we shew.

CAS.

I will, Hieronimo.

HIERO.

One more thing, my good lord.

CAS.

Whats that?

HIERO.

Let me intreat your Grace

That, when the traine are past into the gallerie,

You would vouchsafe to throwe me downe the key.

CAS.

I will Hieronimo.

Exit CAS*[TILE]* .

HIERO.

What, are you ready, Balthazar?

Bring a chaire and a cushion for the king.

Enter BALTHAZAR with a chaire.

Well doon, Balthazar; hang vp the title:

Our scene is Rhodes. What, is your beard on?

BAL.

Halfe on, the other is in my hand.

HIERO.

Dispatch, for shame! are you so long?

Exit BALTHAZAR.

Bethink thy-selfe, Hieronimo,
Recall thy wits, recompt thy former wrongs
Thou hast receiued by murder of thy sonne,
And lastly, *[but]* not least, how Isabell,
Once his mother and *[my]* deerest wife,
All woe-begone for him, hath slaine herselfe.
Behoues thee then, Hieronimo, to be
Reueng'd! The plot is laide of dire reuenge:
On then, Hieronimo; persue reuenge,
For nothing wants but acting of reuenge!

Exit HIERONIMO.

Enter SPANISH KING, VICEROY, the DUKE
OF CASTILE, and their traine, [to the
gallery].

KING.
  Now, viceroy, shall we see the tragedie
Of Soliman, the Turkish emperour,
Performde by pleasure by yor sonne the prince,
My nephew Don Lorenzo, and my neece.

VICE.
  Who? Bel-imperia?

KING.
  I; and Hieronimo our marshall,
At whose request they deine to doo't themselues.

These be our pastimes in the court of Spaine.
Heere, brother, you shall be the booke-keeper:

This is the argument of that they shew.

He giueth him a booke.

[Gentlemen, this play of Hieronimo in sundrie languages was thought good to be set downe in English more largely, for the easier vnderstanding to euery publique reader.]

Enter BALTHAZAR, BEL-IMPERIA, and

HIERONIMO.

BALTHAZAR.

[acting] Bashaw, that Rhodes is ours yeeld Heauens the honor

And holy Mahhomet, our sacred prophet!

And be thou grac't with euery excelence

That Soliman can giue or thou desire!

But thy desert in conquering Rhodes is lesse

Then in reseruing this faire Christian nimph,

Perseda, blisfull lamp of excellence,

Whose eies compell, like powerfull adamant,

The warlike heart of Soliman to wait.

KING.

See, viceroy, that is Balthazar your sonne, That represents the Emperour Solyman:

How well he acts his amorous passion!

VICE.

I; Bel-imperia hath taught him that.

CASTILE: That's because his mind runnes al on Bel-imperia.

HIERO.

[acting] What-euer ioy earth yeelds betide your Maiestie!

BALT.

[acting] Earth yeelds no ioy without Persedaes loue.

HIERO.

[acting] Let then Peerseda on your Grace attend.

BALT.

[acting] She shall not wait on me, but I on her!

Drawne by the influence of her lights, I yeeld.

But let my friend, the Rhodian knight, come foorth,—

Erasto, dearer then my life to me,—

That he may see Perseda, my beloued.

Enter ERASTO *[LORENZO]* .

KING.

Heere comes Lorenzo: looke vpon the plot

And tell me, brother, what part plaies he.

BEL.

[acting] Ah, my Erasto! Welcome to Perseda!

LO.

[acting] Thrice happie is Erasto that thou liuest!

Rhodes losse is nothing to Erastoes ioy;

Sith his Perseda liues, his life suruiues.

BALT.

[acting] Ah, bashaw, heere is loue betweene Erasto

And faire Perseda, soueraigne of my soule!

HIERO.

[acting] Remooue Erasto, mighty Solyman,
And then Perseda will be quickly wonne.

BALT.

[acting] Erasto is my friend; and, while he liues,
Perseda neuer will remooue her loue.

HIERO.

[acting] Let not Erasto liue to greeue great Soliman!

BALT.

[acting] Deare is Erasto in our princely eye.

HIERO.

[acting] But, if he be your riuall, let him die!

BALT.

[acting] Why, let him die! so loue commaundeth me.
Yet I greeve I that Erasto should so die.

HIERO.

[acting]   Erasto, Soliman saluteth thee,

And lets thee wit by me his Highnes will,

Which is, thou shouldst be thus imploid.

Stab him.

BEL.

[acting]   Ay, me, Erasto! See, Solyman, Erastoes slaine!

BALT.

[acting]   Yet liueth Solyman to comfort thee.

Faire queene of beautie, let not fauour die,

Both with gratious eye behlde his griefe,

That with Persedaes beautie is encreast,

If by Perseda griefe be not releast.

BEL.

[acting]   Tyrant, desist soliciting vaine sutes;

Relentles are mine eares to thy laments

As thy butcher is pittilesse and base
Which seazd on my Erasto, harmelesse knight.
Yet by thy power thou thinkest to commaund,
And to thy power Perseda doth obey;
But, were she able, thus she would reuenge
Thy treacheries on thee, ignoble prince;

Stab him.

And on herselfe she would be thus reuengd.

Stab herselfe.

KING.

Well said, old marshall! this was brauely done!

HIERO.

But Bel-imperia plauies Perseda well.

VICE.

Were this in earnest, Bel-imperia,

You would be better to my sonne then so.

KING.

But now what followes for Hieronimo?

HIERO.

Marrie, this followes for Hieronimo!
Heere breake we off our sundrie languages,
And thus conclude I in our vulgare tung:
Happely you think—but bootles are your thoughts—
That this is fabulously counterfeit,
And that we doo as all trageians doo,—
To die to-day, for fashioning our scene,
The death of Aiax, or some Romaine peer,
And, in a minute starting vp againe,
Reuiue to please tomorrows audience.
No, princes; know I am Hieronimo,
The hopeles father of a haples sonne,
Whose tung is tun'd to tell his latest tale,
Not to excuse grosse errors in the play.

I see your lookes vrge instance of these words:
Beholde the reason vrging me to this!

Showes his dead sonne.

See heere my shew; look on this spectacle!
Heere lay my hope, and heere my hope hath end;
Heere lay my hart, and heere my hart was slaine;
Heere lay my treasure, heere my treasure lost;
Heere lay my blisse, and heere my blisse bereft.
But hope, hart, treasure, ioy and blisse,—
All fled, faild, died, yea, all decaide with this.
From froth these wounds came breath that gaue me life;
They murdred me that made these fatall markes.

The cause was loue whence grew this mortall hate:
The hate, Lorenzo and yong Balthazar;
The loue, my sonne to Bel-imperia.
But night, the couerer of accursed crimes,
With pitchie silence husht these traitors harmes,
And lent them leaue—for they had sorted leasure—

To take aduantage in my garden plot
Vpon my sonne, my deere Horatio.
There mercilesse they butcherd vp my boy,
In black, darke night, to pale, dim, cruell death!
He shrikes; I heard—and yet, me thinks, I heare—
His dismall out-cry eccho in the aire;
With soonest speed I hasted to the noise,
Where, hanging on a tree, I found my sonne
Through-girt with wounds and slaughtred, as you see.
And greeued I, think you, at this spectacle?

Speak, Portuguise, whose losse resembles mine!
If thou canst weep vpon thy Balthazar,
Tis like I wailde for my Horatio.
And you, my l*[ord]* , whose reconciled sonne
Marcht in a net and thought himself vnseene,
And rated me for a brainsicke lunacie,
With "God amend that mad Hieronimo!"—
How can you brook our plaies catastrophe?
And heere beholde this bloudie hand-kercher,
Which at Horatios death weeping dipt

Within the riuer of his bleeding wounds!
It as propitious, see, I haue reserued,
And neuer hath it left my bloody hart,
Soliciting remembrance of my vow
With these, O these accursed murderers!

Which now perform'd, my hart is satisfied.
And to this end the bashaw I became,
That might reuenge me on Lorenzos life,
Who therefore was appointed to the part
And was to represent the knight of Rhodes,
That I might kill him more conueniently.
So, viceroy, was this Balthazar thy sonne—
That Soliman which Bel-imperia
In person of Perseda murdered,—
So*[le]* lie appointed to that tragicke part,
That she might slay him that offended her.

Poore Bel-imperia mist her part in this:
For, though the story saith she should haue died,
Yet I, of kindenes and care for her,

Did otherwise determine of her end.
But loue of him whome they did hate too much
Did vrge her resolution to be such.
And princes, now beholde Hieronimo,
Author and actor in this tragedie,
Bearing his latest fortune in his fist;
And will as resolute conclude his parte
As any of the actors gone before.
And, gentles, thus I end my play!

Vrge no more words, I haue no more to say.

He runs to hang himselfe.

KING.
  O hearken, viceroy; holde Hieronimo!
Brother, my newphew and they sonne are slaine!

VICE.
  We are betraide! my Balthazar is slaine!
Breake ope the doores; runne saue Hieronimo!

Hieronimo, doe but enforme the king of these euents;

Vpon mine honour, thou shalt haue no harme!

HIERO.

Viceroy, I will not trust thee with my life,

Which I this day haue offered to my sonne:

Accursed wretch, why staiest thou him that was resolued to die?

KING.

Speak, traitor! damned, bloudy murderer, speak!—

For, now I haue thee, I wil make thee speak!

Why hast thou done this vndeseruing deed?

VICE.

Why hast thou murdered my Balthazar?

CAS.

Why hast thou butchered both my children thus?

HIERO.

O good words! As deare to me was Horatio
As yours, or yours, my l*[ord]* , to you.
My guitles sonne was by Lorenzo slaine;
And by Lorenzo and that Balthazar
Am I at last reuenged thorowly,—
Vpon whole soules may Heauens be yet auenged
With far greater far then these afflictions!

CAS.

But who were thy confederates in this?

VICE.

That was thy daughter Bel-imperia;
For by her hand my Balthazar was slaine,—
I saw her stab him.

KING.

Why speakest thou not?

HIERO.

What lesser libertie can kings affoord
Then harmles silence? That afford it me!
Sufficeth I may not nor I will not tell thee.

KING.

Fetch forth the tortures! Traitor as thou art, Ile make thee tell!

HIERO.Indeed?
Thou maiest torment me as his wretched sonne
Hath done in murdring my Horatio;
But neuer shalt thou force me to reueale
The thing which I haue vowed inviolate.
And therefore, in despight of all thy threats,
Pleasde with their deaths, and easde with their reuenge,
First take my tung, and afterwards my hart!

He bites out his tongue.

KING.

O monstrous resolution of a wretch!

See, ViceRoy, he hath bitten foorth his tung
Rather than reueale what we requirde.

CAS.

Yet can he write.

KING.

And if in this he satisfie vs not,
We will deuise the 'xtreamest kinde of death
That euer was inuented for a wretch.

Then he makes signes for a knife to mend his pen.

CAS.

O, he would haue a knife to mend his pen.

VICE.

Here; and aduise thee that thou write the troth,—
Look to my brother! saue Hieronimo!

He with a knife stabs the DUKE and himself.

KING.

What age hath euer heard such monstrous deeds?
My brother and the whole succeeding hope
That Spaine expected after my dicease.
Go beare his body hence, that we may mourne
The losse of our beloued brothers death,
That he may be entom'd, what-ere befall.

I am the next, the neerest, last of all.

VICE.

And thou, Don Pedro, do the like for vs:
Take vp our haples sonne vntimely slaine;
Set me vp with him, and he with wofull me,
Vpon the maine-mast of a ship vnmand,
And let the winde and tide *[hale]* me along
To Sillas barking and vntamed gulfe
Or to the lothsome poole of Archeron,
To weepe my want for my sweet Balthazar.

Spaine hath no refuge for a Portingale!

The trumpets sound a dead march, the KING OF SPAINE
mourning after his brothers body, and the KING OF
PORTINGALE bearing the body of his sonne.
[CHORUS.]

Enter GHOAST and REUENGE.

GHOAST.
I; now my hopes haue end in their effects,
When blood and sorrow finnish my desires:
Horatio murdered in his Fathers bower,
Vilde Serberine by Pedrigano slaine,
False Pedrigano hang'd by quaint deuice,
Faire Isabella by herselfe misdone,
Prince Balthazar by Bel-imepria stabd,
The Duke of Castile an his wicked sonne
Both done to death by olde Hieronimo,
My Bel-imperia falne as Dido fell,
And good Hieronimo slaine by himselfe!

I, these were spectacles to please my soule.
Now will I beg at louely Proserpine
That, by the vertue of her princely doome,
I may consort my freends in pleasing sort,
And on my foes work iust and sharpe reuenge.
Ile lead my freend Horatio through those feeldes
Where neuer-dying warres are still inurde;
Ile lead faire Isabella to that traine
Where pittie weepes but neuer feeleth paine;
Ile lead my Bel-imperia to those ioyes
That vestal virgins and faire queenes possess;
Ile lead Hieronimo where Orpheus plaies,
Adding sweet pleasure to eternall daies.
But say, Reuenge,—for thou must helpe or none,—
Against the rest how shall my hate be showne?

REUENGE.

  This hand shall hale them down to deepest hell,
Where none but furies, bugs and tortures dwell.

GHOAST.

Then, sweet Reuenge, doo this at my request:
Let me iudge and doome them to vnrest;
Let loose poore Titius from the vultures gripe,
And let Don Ciprian supply his roome;
Place Don Lorenzo on Ixions wheele,
And let the louers endles paines surcease,
Iuno forget olde wrath and graunt him ease;
Hang Balthazar about Chimeras neck,
And let him there bewaile his bloudy loue,
Repining at our ioyes that are aboue;
Let Serberine goe roule the fatall stone
And take from Siciphus his endles mone;
False Pedringano, for his trecherie,
Let him be dragde through boyling Acheron,
And there liue dying still in endles flames,
Blaspheming gods and all their holy names.

REUENGE.

Then haste we downe to meet thy freends and foes;
To place thy freends in ease, the rest in woes.
For heere though death *[doth]* end their miserie,

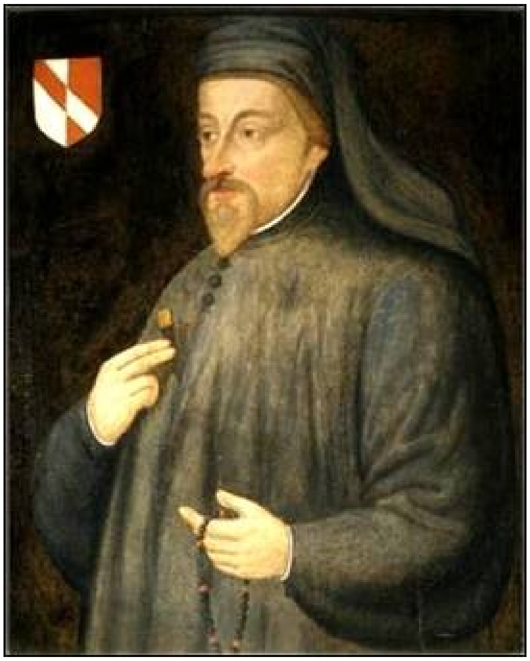
Ile there begin their endles tragedie.

Exeunt.

FINIS.

TROILUS AND CRESSIDA – Chaucer's Poem

Geoffrey Chaucer's long poem *Troilus and Criseyde* was the main inspiration of Shakespeare's play. Chaucer's 'epic' poem tells the tragic story of the two lovers set against the backdrop of the Siege of Troy. It was composed using rime royale and probably completed during the mid 1380's. Many scholars regard this poem as Chaucer's finest work.



Geoffrey Chaucer (1343-1400)

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BOOK I. Incipit Liber Primus

The double sorwe of Troilus to tellen,
That was the king Priamus sone of Troye,
In lovinge, how his aventures fellen
Fro wo to wele, and after out of Ioye,
My purpos is, er that I parte fro ye.
Thesiphone, thou help me for tendyte
Thise woful vers, that wepen as I wryte!

To thee clepe I, thou goddesse of torment,
Thou cruel Furie, sorwing ever in peyne;
Help me, that am the sorwful instrument
That helpeth lovers, as I can, to pleyne!
For wel sit it, the sothe for to seyne,
A woful wight to han a drery fere,
And, to a sorwful tale, a sory chere.

For I, that god of Loves servaunts serve,

Ne dar to Love, for myn unlyklinesse,
Preyen for speed, al sholde I therfor sterve,
So fer am I fro his help in derknesse;
But nathelees, if this may doon gladnesse
To any lover, and his cause avayle,
Have he my thank, and myn be this travayle!

But ye loveres, that bathen in gladnesse,
If any drope of pitee in yow be,
Remembreth yow on passed hevinesse
That ye han felt, and on the adversitee
Of othere folk, and thenketh how that ye
Han felt that Love dorste yow displese;
Or ye han wonne hym with to greet an ese.

And preyeth for hem that ben in the cas
Of Troilus, as ye may after here,
That love hem bringe in hevene to solas,
And eek for me preyeth to god so dere,
That I have might to shewe, in som manere,
Swich peyne and wo as Loves folk endure,

In Troilus unsely aventure.

And biddeth eek for hem that been despeyred
In love, that never nil recovered be,
And eek for hem that falsly been apeyred
Thorugh wikked tonges, be it he or she;
Thus biddeth god, for his benignitee,
So graunte hem sone out of this world to pace,
That been despeyred out of Loves grace.

And biddeth eek for hem that been at ese,
That god hem graunte ay good perseveraunce,
And sende hem might hir ladies so to plese,
That it to Love be worship and plesaunce.
For so hope I my soule best avaunce,
To preye for hem that Loves servaunts be,
And wryte hir wo, and live in charitee.

And for to have of hem compassioun
As though I were hir owene brother dere.
Now herkeneth with a gode entencioun,

For now wol I gon streight to my matere,
In whiche ye may the double sorwes here
Of Troilus, in loving of Criseyde,
And how that she forsook him er she deyde.

It is wel wist, how that the Grekes stronge
In armes with a thousand shippes wente
To Troyewardes, and the citee longe
Assegeden neigh ten yeer er they stente,
And, in diverse wyse and oon entente,
The ravisshing to wreken of Eleyne,
By Paris doon, they wroughten al hir peyne.

Now fil it so, that in the toun ther was
Dwellinge a lord of greet auctoritee,
A gret devyn that cleped was Calkas,
That in science so expert was, that he
Knew wel that Troye sholde destroyed be,
By answere of his god, that highte thus,
Daun Phebus or Apollo Delphicus.

So whan this Calkas knew by calculinge,
And eek by answere of this Appollo,
That Grekes sholden swich a peple bringe,
Thorugh which that Troye moste been for-do,
He caste anoon out of the toun to go; 75
For wel wiste he, by sort, that Troye sholde
Destroyed ben, ye, wolde who-so nolde.

For which, for to departen softely
Took purpos ful this forknowinge wyse,
And to the Grekes ost ful prively 80
He stal anoon; and they, in curteys wyse,
Hym deden bothe worship and servyse,
In trust that he hath conning hem to rede
In every peril which that is to drede.

The noyse up roos, whan it was first aspyed, 85
Thorugh al the toun, and generally was spoken,
That Calkas traytor fled was, and allyed
With hem of Grece; and casten to ben wroken
On him that falsly hadde his feith so broken;

And seyden, he and al his kin at ones
Ben worthy for to brennen, fel and bones.

Now hadde Calkas left, in this meschaunce,
Al unwist of this false and wikked dede,
His doughter, which that was in gret penaunce,
For of hir lyf she was ful sore in drede,
As she that niste what was best to rede;
For bothe a widowe was she, and allone
Of any freend to whom she dorste hir mone.

Criseyde was this lady name a-right;
As to my dome, in al Troyes citee
Nas noon so fair, for passing every wight
So aungellyk was hir natyf beautee,
That lyk a thing immortal semed she,
As doth an hevenish parfit creature,
That doun were sent in scorning of nature.

This lady, which that al-day herde at ere
Hir fadres shame, his falsnesse and tresoun,

Wel nigh out of hir wit for sorwe and fere,
In widewes habit large of samit broun,
On knees she fil biforn Ector a-doun; 110
With pitous voys, and tendrely wepinge,
His mercy bad, hir-selven excusinge.

Now was this Ector pitous of nature,
And saw that she was sorwfully bigoon,
And that she was so fair a creature; 115
Of his goodnesse he gladed hir anoon,
And seyde, `Lat your fadres treson goon
Forth with mischaunce, and ye your-self, in Ioye,
Dwelleth with us, whyl you good list, in Troye.

`And al thonour that men may doon yow have, 120
As ferforth as your fader dwelled here,
Ye shul han, and your body shal men save,
As fer as I may ought enquere or here.'
And she him thonked with ful humble chere,
And ofter wolde, and it hadde ben his wille, 125
And took hir leve, and hoom, and held hir stille.

And in hir hous she abood with swich meynee
As to hir honour nede was to holde;
And whyl she was dwellinge in that citee,
Kepte hir estat, and bothe of yonge and olde
Ful wel beloved, and wel men of hir tolde.
But whether that she children hadde or noon,
I rede it naught; therfore I late it goon.

The thinges fellen, as they doon of werre,
Bitwixen hem of Troye and Grekes ofte;
For som day boughten they of Troye it derre,
And eft the Grekes founden no thing softe
The folk of Troye; and thus fortune on-lofte,
And under eft, gan hem to wheelen bothe
After hir cours, ay whyl they were wrothe.

But how this toun com to destruccioun
Ne falleth nought to purpos me to telle;
For it were a long digressioun
Fro my matere, and yow to longe dwelle.

But the Troyane gestes, as they felle,
In Omer, or in Dares, or in Dyte,
Who-so that can, may rede hem as they wryte.

But though that Grekes hem of Troye shetten,
And hir citee bisegede al a-boute,
Hir olde usage wolde they not letten,
As for to honoure hir goddes ful devoute;
But aldermost in honour, out of doute,
They hadde a relik hight Palladion,
That was hir trist a-boven everichon.

And so bifel, whan comen was the tyme
Of Aperil, whan clothed is the mede
With newe grene, of lusty Ver the pryme,
And swote smellen floures whyte and rede,
In sondry wyses shewed, as I rede,
The folk of Troye hir observaunces olde,
Palladiones feste for to holde.

And to the temple, in al hir beste wyse,

In general, ther wente many a wight,
To herknen of Palladion servyse;
And namely, so many a lusty knight, 165
So many a lady fresh and mayden bright,
Ful wel arayed, bothe moste and leste,
Ye, bothe for the seson and the feste.

Among thise othere folk was Criseyda,
In widewes habite blak; but nathelees, 170
Right as our firste lettre is now an A,
In beautee first so stood she, makelees;
Hir godly looking gladede al the prees.
Nas never seyn thing to ben preysed derre,
Nor under cloude blak so bright a sterre 175

As was Criseyde, as folk seyde everichoon
That hir behelden in hir blake wede;
And yet she stood ful lowe and stille alloon,
Bihinden othere folk, in litel brede,
And neigh the dore, ay under shames drede, 180
Simple of a-tyr, and debonaire of chere,

With ful assured loking and manere.

This Troilus, as he was wont to gyde
His yonge knightes, ladde hem up and doun
In thilke large temple on every syde, 185
Biholding ay the ladyes of the toun,
Now here, now there, for no devocioun
Hadde he to noon, to reven him his reste,
But gan to preyse and lakken whom him leste.

And in his walk ful fast he gan to wayten 190
If knight or squyer of his companye
Gan for to syke, or lete his eyen bayten
On any woman that he coude aspye;
He wolde smyle, and holden it folye,
And seye him thus, `god wot, she slepeth softe 195
For love of thee, whan thou tornest ful ofte!

`I have herd told, pardieux, of your livinge,
Ye lovers, and your lewede observaunces,
And which a labour folk han in winninge

Of love, and, in the keping, which doutaunces;
And whan your preye is lost, wo and penaunces;
O verrey foles! nyce and blinde be ye;
Ther nis not oon can war by other be.'

And with that word he gan cast up the browe,
Ascaunces, `Lo! is this nought wysly spoken?'
At which the god of love gan loken rowe
Right for despyt, and shoop for to ben wroken;
He kidde anoon his bowe nas not broken;
For sodeynly he hit him at the fulle;
And yet as proud a pekok can he pulle.

O blinde world, O blinde entencioun!
How ofte falleth al theffect contraire
Of surquidrye and foul presumpcioun;
For caught is proud, and caught is debonaire.
This Troilus is clomben on the staire,
And litel weneth that he moot descenden.

But al-day falleth thing that foles ne wenden.

As proude Bayard ginneth for to skippe
Out of the wey, so priketh him his corn,
Til he a lash have of the longe whippe,
Than thenketh he, `Though I praunce al biforn
First in the trays, ful fat and newe shorn,
Yet am I but an hors, and horses lawe
I moot endure, and with my feres drawe.'

So ferde it by this fers and proude knight;
Though he a worthy kinges sone were,
And wende nothing hadde had swiche might
Ayens his wil that sholde his herte stere,
Yet with a look his herte wex a-fere,
That he, that now was most in pryde above,
Wex sodeynly most subget un-to love.

For-thy ensample taketh of this man,
Ye wyse, proude, and worthy folkes alle,
To scornen Love, which that so sone can
The freedom of your hertes to him thralle;

For ever it was, and ever it shal bifalle,
That Love is he that alle thing may binde;
For may no man for-do the lawe of kinde.

That this be sooth, hath preved and doth yet;
For this trowe I ye knowen, alle or some,
Men reden not that folk han gretter wit
Than they that han be most with love y-nome;
And strengest folk ben therwith overcome,
The worthiest and grettest of degree:
This was, and is, and yet men shal it see.

And trewelich it sit wel to be so;
For alderwysest han therwith ben plesed;
And they that han ben aldermost in wo,
With love han ben conforted most and esed;
And ofte it hath the cruel herte apesed,
And worthy folk maad worthier of name,
And causeth most to dreden vyce and shame.

Now sith it may not goodly be withstonde,

And is a thing so vertuous in kinde,
Refuseth not to Love for to be bonde,
Sin, as him-selven list, he may yow binde.
The yerde is bet that bowen wole and winde
Than that that brest; and therfor I yow rede
To folwen him that so wel can yow lede.

But for to tellen forth in special
As of this kinges sone of which I tolde,
And leten other thing collateral,
Of him thenke I my tale for to holde,
Both of his Ioye, and of his cares colde;
And al his werk, as touching this matere,
For I it gan, I wol ther-to refere.

With-inne the temple he wente him forth pleyinge,
This Troilus, of every wight aboute,
On this lady and now on that lokinge,
Wher-so she were of toune, or of with-oute:
And up-on cas bifel, that thorugh a route
His eye perced, and so depe it wente,

Til on Criseyde it smoot, and ther it stente.

And sodeynly he wax therwith astoned,
And gan hire bet biholde in thrifty wyse: 275
`O mercy, god!' thoughte he, `wher hastow woned,
That art so fair and goodly to devyse?'
Therwith his herte gan to sprede and ryse,
And softe sighed, lest men mighte him here,
And caughte a-yein his firste pleyinge chere. 280

She nas nat with the leste of hir stature,
But alle hir limes so wel answeringe
Weren to womanhode, that creature
Was neuer lasse mannish in seminge.
And eek the pure wyse of here meninge 285
Shewede wel, that men might in hir gesse
Honour, estat, and wommanly noblesse.

To Troilus right wonder wel with-alle
Gan for to lyke hir meninge and hir chere,
Which somdel deynous was, for she leet falle 290

Hir look a lite a-side, in swich manere,
Ascaunces, `What! May I not stonden here?'
And after that hir loking gan she lighte,
That never thoughte him seen so good a sighte.

And of hir look in him ther gan to quiken 295
So greet desir, and swich affeccioun,
That in his herte botme gan to stiken
Of hir his fixe and depe impressioun:
And though he erst hadde poured up and doun,
He was tho glad his hornes in to shrinke; 300
Unnethes wiste he how to loke or winke.

Lo, he that leet him-selven so konninge,
And scorned hem that loves peynes dryen,
Was ful unwar that love hadde his dwellinge
With-inne the subtile stremes of hir yen; 305
That sodeynly him thoughte he felte dyen,
Right with hir look, the spirit in his herte;
Blissed be love, that thus can folk converte!

She, this in blak, likinge to Troylus,
Over alle thyng, he stood for to biholde; 310
Ne his desir, ne wherfor he stood thus,
He neither chere made, ne worde tolde;
But from a-fer, his maner for to holde,
On other thing his look som-tyme he caste,
And eft on hir, whyl that servyse laste. 315

And after this, not fulliche al awhaped,
Out of the temple al esiliche he wente,
Repentinge him that he hadde ever y-iaped
Of loves folk, lest fully the descente
Of scorn fille on him-self; but, what he mente, 320
Lest it were wist on any maner syde,
His wo he gan dissimulen and hyde.

Whan he was fro the temple thus departed,
He streyght anoon un-to his paleys torneth,
Right with hir look thurgh-shoten and thurgh-darted, 325
Al feyneth he in lust that he soiorneth;
And al his chere and speche also he borneth;

And ay, of loves servants every whyle,
Him-self to wrye, at hem he gan to smyle.

And seyde, `Lord, so ye live al in lest,
Ye loveres! For the conningest of yow,
That serveth most ententiflich and best,
Him tit as often harm ther-of as prow;
Your hyre is quit ayein, ye, god wot how!
Nought wel for wel, but scorn for good servyse;
In feith, your ordre is ruled in good wyse!

`In noun-certeyn ben alle your observaunces,
But it a sely fewe poyntes be;
Ne nothing asketh so grete attendaunces
As doth youre lay, and that knowe alle ye;
But that is not the worste, as mote I thee;
But, tolde I yow the worste poynt, I leve,
Al seyde I sooth, ye wolden at me greve!

`But tak this, that ye loveres ofte eschuwe,
Or elles doon of good entencioun,

Ful ofte thy lady wole it misconstrue,
And deme it harm in hir opinioun;
And yet if she, for other enchesoun,
Be wrooth, than shalt thou han a groyn anoon:
Lord! wel is him that may be of yow oon!'

But for al this, whan that he say his tyme,
He held his pees, non other bote him gayned;
For love bigan his fetheres so to lyme,
That wel unnethe un-to his folk he fayned
That othere besye nedes him destrayned;
For wo was him, that what to doon he niste,
But bad his folk to goon wher that hem liste.

And whan that he in chaumbre was allone,
He doun up-on his beddes feet him sette,
And first be gan to syke, and eft to grone,
And thoughte ay on hir so, with-outen lette,
That, as he sat and wook, his spirit mette
That he hir saw a temple, and al the wyse
Right of hir loke, and gan it newe avyse.

Thus gan he make a mirour of his minde,
In which he saugh al hoolly hir figure;
And that he wel coude in his herte finde,
It was to him a right good aventure
To love swich oon, and if he dide his cure
To serven hir, yet mighte he falle in grace,
Or elles, for oon of hir servaunts pace.

Imagininge that travaille nor grame
Ne mighte, for so goodly oon, be lorn
As she, ne him for his desir ne shame,
Al were it wist, but in prys and up-born
Of alle lovers wel more than biforn;
Thus argumented he in his ginninge,
Ful unavysed of his wo cominge.

Thus took he purpos loves craft to suwe,
And thoughte he wolde werken prively,
First, to hyden his desir in muwe
From every wight y-born, al-outrely,

But he mighte ought recovered be therby;
Remembring him, that love to wyde y-blowe
Yelt bittre fruyt, though swete seed be sowe.

And over al this, yet muchel more he thoughte
What for to speke, and what to holden inne,
And what to arten hir to love he soughte,
And on a song anoon-right to biginne,
And gan loude on his sorwe for to winne;
For with good hope he gan fully assente
Criseyde for to love, and nought repente.

And of his song nought only the sentence,
As writ myn autour called Lollius,
But pleynly, save our tonges difference,
I dar wel sayn, in al that Troilus
Seyde in his song, lo! every word right thus
As I shal seyn; and who-so list it here,
Lo! next this vers, he may it finden here.

Cantus Troili.

`If no love is, O god, what fele I so?
And if love is, what thing and whiche is he!

If love be good, from whennes comth my wo?
If it be wikke, a wonder thinketh me,
Whenne every torment and adversitee
That cometh of him, may to me savory thinke;
For ay thurst I, the more that I it drinke.

`And if that at myn owene lust I brenne,
Fro whennes cometh my wailing and my pleynte?
If harme agree me, wher-to pleyne I thenne?
I noot, ne why unwery that I feynte.
O quike deeth, O swete harm so queynte,
How may of thee in me swich quantitee,
But-if that I consente that it be?

`And if that I consente, I wrongfully
Compleyne, y-wis; thus possed to and fro,
Al sterelees with inne a boot am I

A-mid the see, by-twixen windes two,
That in contrarie stonden ever-mo.

Allas! what is this wonder maladye?
For hete of cold, for cold of hete, I deye.' 420

And to the god of love thus seyde he
With pitous voys, `O lord, now youres is
My spirit, which that oughte youres be.
Yow thanke I, lord, that han me brought to this;
But whether goddesse or womman, y-wis, 425
She be, I noot, which that ye do me serve;
But as hir man I wole ay live and sterve.

`Ye stonden in hire eyen mightily,
As in a place un-to youre vertu digne;
Wherfore, lord, if my servyse or I 430
May lyke yow, so beth to me benigne;
For myn estat royal here I resigne
In-to hir hond, and with ful humble chere
Bicome hir man, as to my lady dere.'

In him ne deyned sparen blood royal 435
The fyr of love, wher-fro god me blesse,
Ne him forbar in no degree, for al
His vertu or his excellent prowesse;
But held him as his thral lowe in distresse,
And brende him so in sondry wyse ay newe, 440
That sixty tyme a day he loste his hewe.

So muche, day by day, his owene thought,
For lust to hir, gan quiken and encrese,
That every other charge he sette at nought;
For-thy ful ofte, his hote fyr to cese, 445
To seen hir goodly look he gan to prese;
For ther-by to ben esed wel he wende,
And ay the ner he was, the more he brende.

For ay the ner the fyr, the hotter is,
This, trowe I, knoweth al this companye. 450
But were he fer or neer, I dar seye this,
By night or day, for wisdom or folye,

His herte, which that is his brestes ye,
Was ay on hir, that fairer was to sene
Than ever were Eleyne or Polixene. 455

Eek of the day ther passed nought an houre
That to him-self a thousand tyme he seyde,
`Good goodly, to whom serve I and laboure,
As I best can, now wolde god, Criseyde,
Ye wolden on me rewe er that I deyde! 460
My dere herte, allas! myn hele and hewe
And lyf is lost, but ye wole on me rewe.'

Alle othere dredes weren from him fledde,
Both of the assege and his savacioun;
Ne in him desyr noon othere fownes bredde 465
But argumentes to his conclusioun,
That she on him wolde han compassioun,
And he to be hir man, whyl he may dure;
Lo, here his lyf, and from the deeth his cure!

The sharpe shoures felle of armes preve, 470

That Ector or his othere bretheren diden,
Ne made him only therfore ones meve;
And yet was he, wher-so men wente or riden,
Founde oon the beste, and lengest tyme abiden
Ther peril was, and dide eek such travayle 475
In armes, that to thenke it was mervayle.

But for non hate he to the Grekes hadde,
Ne also for the rescous of the toun,
Ne made him thus in armes for to madde,
But only, lo, for this conclusioun, 480
To lyken hir the bet for his renoun;
Fro day to day in armes so he spedde,
That alle the Grekes as the deeth him dredde.

And fro this forth tho refte him love his sleep,
And made his mete his foo; and eek his sorwe 485
Gan multiplye, that, who-so toke keep,
It shewed in his hewe, bothe eve and morwe;
Therfor a title he gan him for to borwe
Of other syknesse, lest of him men wende

That the hote fyr of love him brende,

And seyde, he hadde a fever and ferde amis;
But how it was, certayn, can I not seye,
If that his lady understood not this,
Or feyned hir she niste, oon of the tweye;
But wel I rede that, by no maner weye,
Ne semed it as that she of him roughte,
Nor of his peyne, or what-so-ever he thoughte.

But than fel to this Troylus such wo,
That he was wel neigh wood; for ay his drede
Was this, that she som wight had loved so,
That never of him she wolde have taken hede;
For whiche him thoughte he felte his herte blede.
Ne of his wo ne dorste he not biginne
To tellen it, for al this world to winne.

But whanne he hadde a space fro his care,
Thus to him-self ful ofte he gan to pleyne;
He sayde, `O fool, now art thou in the snare,

That whilom Iapedest at loves peyne;
Now artow hent, now gnaw thyn owene cheyne;
Thou were ay wont eche lovere reprehende 510
Of thing fro which thou canst thee nat defende.

`What wol now every lover seyn of thee,
If this be wist, but ever in thyn absence
Laughen in scorn, and seyn, `Lo, ther gooth he,
That is the man of so gret sapience, 515
That held us lovers leest in reverence!
Now, thonked be god, he may goon in the daunce
Of hem that Love list febly for to avaunce!'

`But, O thou woful Troilus, god wolde,
Sin thou most loven thurgh thi destinee, 520
That thow beset were on swich oon that sholde
Knowe al thy wo, al lakkede hir pitee:
But al so cold in love, towardes thee,
Thy lady is, as frost in winter mone,
And thou fordoon, as snow in fyr is sone.' 525

`God wolde I were aryved in the port
Of deth, to which my sorwe wil me lede!
A, lord, to me it were a gret comfort;
Than were I quit of languisshing in drede.
For by myn hidde sorwe y-blowe on brede
I shal bi-Iaped been a thousand tyme
More than that fool of whos folye men ryme.

`But now help god, and ye, swete, for whom
I pleyne, y-caught, ye, never wight so faste!
O mercy, dere herte, and help me from
The deeth, for I, whyl that my lyf may laste,
More than my-self wol love yow to my laste.
And with som freendly look gladeth me, swete,
Though never more thing ye me bi-hete!'

This wordes and ful manye an-other to
He spak, and called ever in his compleynte
Hir name, for to tellen hir his wo,
Til neigh that he in salte teres dreynte.
Al was for nought, she herde nought his pleynte;

And whan that he bithoughte on that folye, 545
A thousand fold his wo gan multiplye.

Biwayling in his chambre thus allone,
A freend of his, that called was Pandare,
Com ones in unwar, and herde him grone,
And say his freend in swich distresse and care:
`Allas!' quod he, `who causeth al this fare? 551
O mercy, god! What unhap may this mene?

Han now thus sone Grekes maad yow lene?

`Or hastow som remors of conscience,
And art now falle in som devocioun, 555
And waylest for thy sinne and thyn offence,
And hast for ferde caught attricioun?
God save hem that biseged han our toun,
And so can leye our Iolyte on presse,
And bring our lusty folk to holinesse!' 560

These wordes seyde he for the nones alle,

That with swich thing he mighte him angry maken,
And with an angre don his sorwe falle,
As for the tyme, and his corage awaken;
But wel he wist, as fer as tonges spaken, 565
Ther nas a man of gretter hardinesse
Than he, ne more desired worthinesse.

`What cas,' quod Troilus, `or what aventure
Hath gyded thee to see my languisshinge,
That am refus of euery creature? 570
But for the love of god, at my preyinge,
Go henne a-way, for certes, my deyinge
Wol thee disese, and I mot nedes deye;
Therfor go wey, ther is no more to seye.

`But if thou wene I be thus sik for drede, 575
It is not so, and therfor scorne nought;
Ther is a-nother thing I take of hede
Wel more than ought the Grekes han y-wrought,
Which cause is of my deeth, for sorwe and thought.
But though that I now telle thee it ne leste, 580

Be thou nought wrooth; I hyde it for the beste.'

This Pandare, that neigh malt for wo and routhe,
Ful often seyde, `Allas! what may this be?
Now freend,' quod he, `if ever love or trouthe
Hath been, or is, bi-twixen thee and me, 585
Ne do thou never swiche a crueltee
To hyde fro thy freend so greet a care;
Wostow nought wel that it am I, Pandare?

`I wole parten with thee al thy peyne,
If it be so I do thee no comfort, 590
As it is freendes right, sooth for to seyne,
To entreparten wo, as glad desport.
I have, and shal, for trewe or fals report,
In wrong and right y-loved thee al my lyve;
Hyd not thy wo fro me, but telle it blyve.' 595

Than gan this sorwful Troilus to syke,
And seyde him thus, "God leve it be my beste
To telle it thee; for sith it may thee lyke,

Yet wole I telle it, though myn herte breste;
And wel wot I thou mayst do me no reste.
But lest thow deme I truste not to thee,
Now herkne, freend, for thus it stant with me.

`Love, a-yeins the which who-so defendeth
Him-selven most, him alder-lest avayleth,
With disespeir so sorwfully me offendeth,
That streyght un-to the deeth myn herte sayleth.
Ther-to desyr so brenningly me assaylleth,
That to ben slayn it were a gretter Ioye
To me than king of Grece been and Troye!

`Suffiseth this, my fulle freend Pandare,
That I have seyd, for now wostow my wo;
And for the love of god, my colde care
So hyd it wel, I telle it never to mo;
For harmes mighte folwen, mo than two,
If it were wist; but be thou in gladnesse,
And lat me sterve, unknowe, of my distresse.'

`How hastow thus unkindely and longe
Hid this fro me, thou fool?' quod Pandarus;
`Paraunter thou might after swich oon longe,
That myn avys anoon may helpen us.' 620
`This were a wonder thing,' quod Troylus,
`Thou coudest never in love thy-selven wisse;
How devel maystow bringen me to blisse?'

`Ye, Troilus, now herke,' quod Pandare,
`Though I be nyce; it happeth ofte so, 625
That oon that exces doth ful yvele fare,
By good counseyl can kepe his freend ther-fro.
I have my-self eek seyn a blind man go
Ther-as he fel that coude loke wyde;
A fool may eek a wys man ofte gyde. 630

`A whetston is no kerving instrument,
And yet it maketh sharpe kerving-tolis.
And ther thou woost that I have ought miswent,
Eschewe thou that, for swich thing to thee scole is;
Thus ofte wyse men ben war by folis. 635

If thou do so, thy wit is wel biwared;
By his contrarie is every thing declared.

`For how might ever sweetnesse have be knowe
To him that never tasted bitternesse?
Ne no man may be inly glad, I trowe,
That never was in sorwe or som distresse;
Eek whyt by blak, by shame eek worthinesse,
Ech set by other, more for other semeth;
As men may see; and so the wyse it demeth.

`Sith thus of two contraries is a lore,
I, that have in love so ofte assayed
Grevaunces, oughte conne, and wel the more
Counsayllen thee of that thou art amayed.
Eek thee ne oughte nat ben yvel apayed,
Though I desyre with thee for to bere
Thyn hevy charge; it shal the lasse dere.

`I woot wel that it fareth thus by me
As to thy brother Parys an herdesse,

Which that y-cleped was Oenone,
Wrot in a compleynte of hir hevinesse: 655
Ye say the lettre that she wroot, y gesse?'

`Nay, never yet, y-wis,' quod Troilus.
`Now,' quod Pandare, `herkneth, it was thus. —

"Phebus, that first fond art of medicyne,'
Quod she, `and coude in every wightes care 660
Remede and reed, by herbes he knew fyne,
Yet to him-self his conning was ful bare;
For love hadde him so bounden in a snare,
Al for the doughter of the kinge Admete,
That al his craft ne coude his sorwe bete." — 665

`Right so fare I, unhappily for me;
I love oon best, and that me smerteth sore;
And yet, paraunter, can I rede thee,
And not my-self; repreve me no more.
I have no cause, I woot wel, for to sore 670
As doth an hauk that listeth for to pleye,

But to thyn help yet somwhat can I seye.

`And of o thing right siker maystow be,
That certayn, for to deyen in the peyne,
That I shal never-mo discoveren thee; 675
Ne, by my trouthe, I kepe nat restreyne
Thee fro thy love, thogh that it were Eleyne,
That is thy brotheres wif, if ich it wiste;
Be what she be, and love hir as thee liste.

`Therfore, as freend fullich in me assure, 680
And tel me plat what is thyn enchesoun,
And final cause of wo that ye endure;
For douteth nothing, myn entencioun
Nis nought to yow of reprehencioun,
To speke as now, for no wight may bireve 685
A man to love, til that him list to leve.

`And witeth wel, that bothe two ben vyces,
Mistrusten alle, or elles alle leve;
But wel I woot, the mene of it no vyce is,

For to trusten sum wight is a preve
Of trouthe, and for-thy wolde I fayn remeve
Thy wrong conseyte, and do thee som wight triste,
Thy wo to telle; and tel me, if thee liste.

`The wyse seyth, "Wo him that is allone,
For, and he falle, he hath noon help to ryse;"
And sith thou hast a felawe, tel thy mone;
For this nis not, certeyn, the nexte wyse
To winnen love, as techen us the wyse,
To walwe and wepe as Niobe the quene,
Whos teres yet in marbel been y-sene.

`Lat be thy weping and thi drerinesse,
And lat us lissen wo with other speche;
So may thy woful tyme seme lesse.
Delyte not in wo thy wo to seche,
As doon thise foles that hir sorwes eche
With sorwe, whan they han misaventure,
And listen nought to seche hem other cure.

`Men seyn, "To wrecche is consolacioun
To have an-other felawe in his peyne;"
That oughte wel ben our opinioun,
For, bothe thou and I, of love we pleyne;
So ful of sorwe am I, soth for to seyne,
That certeynly no more harde grace
May sitte on me, for-why ther is no space.

`If god wole thou art not agast of me,
Lest I wolde of thy lady thee bigyle,
Thow wost thy-self whom that I love, pardee,
As I best can, gon sithen longe whyle.
And sith thou wost I do it for no wyle,
And sith I am he that thou tristest most,
Tel me sumwhat, sin al my wo thou wost.'

Yet Troilus, for al this, no word seyde,
But longe he ley as stille as he ded were;
And after this with sykinge he abreyde,
And to Pandarus voys he lente his ere,
And up his eyen caste he, that in fere

Was Pandarus, lest that in frenesye
He sholde falle, or elles sone dye;

And cryde `A-wake' ful wonderly and sharpe;
`What? Slombrestow as in a lytargye?
Or artow lyk an asse to the harpe,
That hereth soun, whan men the strenges plye,
But in his minde of that no melodye
May sinken, him to glade, for that he
So dul is of his bestialitee?'

And with that, Pandare of his wordes stente;
And Troilus yet him no word answerde,
For-why to telle nas not his entente
To never no man, for whom that he so ferde.
For it is seyd, `Man maketh ofte a yerde
With which the maker is him-self y-beten
In sondry maner,' as thise wyse treten,

And namely, in his counseyl tellinge
That toucheth love that oughte be secree;

For of him-self it wolde y-nough out-springe, 745
But-if that it the bet governed be.
Eek som-tyme it is craft to seme flee
Fro thing which in effect men hunte faste;
Al this gan Troilus in his herte caste.

But nathelees, whan he had herd him crye 750
`Awake!' he gan to syke wonder sore,
And seyde, `Freend, though that I stille lye,
I am not deef; now pees, and cry no more;
For I have herd thy wordes and thy lore;
But suffre me my mischef to biwayle, 755
For thy proverbes may me nought avayle.

`Nor other cure canstow noon for me.
Eek I nil not be cured, I wol deye;
What knowe I of the quene Niobe?
Lat be thyne olde ensaumples, I thee preye.' 760
`No,' quod tho Pandarus, `therfore I seye,
Swich is delyt of foles to biwepe
Hir wo, but seken bote they ne kepe.

`Now knowe I that ther reson in the fayleth.
But tel me, if I wiste what she were 765
For whom that thee al this misaunter ayleth?
Dorstestow that I tolde hir in hir ere
Thy wo, sith thou darst not thy-self for fere,
And hir bisoughte on thee to han som routhe?'
`Why, nay,' quod he, `by god and by my trouthe!' 770

`What, Not as bisily,' quod Pandarus,
`As though myn owene lyf lay on this nede?'
`No, certes, brother,' quod this Troilus,
`And why?' — `For that thou sholdest never spede.'
`Wostow that wel?' — `Ye, that is out of drede,' 775
Quod Troilus, `for al that ever ye conne,
She nil to noon swich wrecche as I be wonne.'

Quod Pandarus, `Allas! What may this be,
That thou dispeyred art thus causelees?
What? Liveth not thy lady? Benedicite! 780
How wostow so that thou art gracelees?

Swich yvel is nat alwey botelees.
Why, put not impossible thus thy cure,
Sin thing to come is ofte in aventure.

`I graunte wel that thou endurest wo
As sharp as doth he, Ticius, in helle,
Whos stomak foules tyren ever-mo
That highte volturis, as bokes telle.
But I may not endure that thou dwelle
In so unskilful an opinioun
That of thy wo is no curacioun.

`But ones niltow, for thy coward herte,
And for thyn ire and folish wilfulnesse,
For wantrust, tellen of thy sorwes smerte,
Ne to thyn owene help do bisinesse
As muche as speke a resoun more or lesse,
But lyest as he that list of nothing recche.
What womman coude love swich a wrecche?

`What may she demen other of thy deeth,
If thou thus deye, and she not why it is, 800
But that for fere is yolden up thy breeth,
For Grekes han biseged us, y-wis?
Lord, which a thank than shaltow han of this!
Thus wol she seyn, and al the toun at ones,
"The wrecche is deed, the devel have his bones!" 805

`Thou mayst allone here wepe and crye and knele;
But, love a woman that she woot it nought,
And she wol quyte that thou shalt not fele;
Unknowe, unkist, and lost that is un-sought.
What! Many a man hath love ful dere y-bought 810
Twenty winter that his lady wiste,
That never yet his lady mouth he kiste.

`What? Shulde be therfor fallen in despeyr,
Or be recreaunt for his owene tene,
Or sleen him-self, al be his lady fayr? 815
Nay, nay, but ever in oon be fresh and grene
To serve and love his dere hertes quene,

And thenke it is a guerdoun hir to serve
A thousand-fold more than he can deserve.'

Of that word took hede Troilus, 820
And thoughte anoon what folye he was inne,
And how that sooth him seyde Pandarus,
That for to sleen him-self mighte he not winne,
But bothe doon unmanhod and a sinne,
And of his deeth his lady nought to wyte; 825
For of his wo, god woot, she knew ful lyte.

And with that thought he gan ful sore syke,
And seyde, `Allas! What is me best to do?'
To whom Pandare answered, `If thee lyke,
The best is that thou telle me thy wo; 830
And have my trouthe, but thou it finde so,
I be thy bote, or that it be ful longe,
To peces do me drawe, and sithen honge!'

`Ye, so thou seyst,' quod Troilus tho, `allas!
But, god wot, it is not the rather so; 835

Ful hard were it to helpen in this cas,
For wel finde I that Fortune is my fo,
Ne alle the men that ryden conne or go
May of hir cruel wheel the harm withstonde;
For, as hir list, she pleyeth with free and bonde.' 840

Quod Pandarus, `Than blamestow Fortune
For thou art wrooth, ye, now at erst I see;
Wostow nat wel that Fortune is commune
To every maner wight in som degree?
And yet thou hast this comfort, lo, pardee! 845
That, as hir Ioyes moten over-goon,
So mote hir sorwes passen everichoon.

`For if hir wheel stinte any-thing to torne,
Than cessed she Fortune anoon to be:
Now, sith hir wheel by no wey may soiorne, 850
What wostow if hir mutabilitee
Right as thy-selven list, wol doon by thee,
Or that she be not fer fro thyn helpinge?

Paraunter, thou hast cause for to singe!

`And therfor wostow what I thee beseche? 855
Lat be thy wo and turning to the grounde;
For who-so list have helping of his leche,
To him bihoveth first unwrye his wounde.
To Cerberus in helle ay be I bounde,
Were it for my suster, al thy sorwe, 860
By my wil, she sholde al be thyn to-morwe.

`Loke up, I seye, and tel me what she is
Anoon, that I may goon aboute thy nede;
Knowe ich hir ought? For my love, tel me this;
Than wolde I hopen rather for to spede.' 865
Tho gan the veyne of Troilus to blede,
For he was hit, and wex al reed for shame;
`A ha!' quod Pandare, `Here biginneth game!'

And with that word he gan him for to shake,
And seyde, `Theef, thou shalt hir name telle.' 870
But tho gan sely Troilus for to quake

As though men sholde han led him in-to helle,

And seyde, `Allas! Of al my wo the welle,

Than is my swete fo called Criseyde!'

And wel nigh with the word for fere he deyde. 875

And whan that Pandare herde hir name nevene,

Lord, he was glad, and seyde, `Freend so dere,

Now fare a-right, for Ioves name in hevene,

Love hath biset the wel, be of good chere;

For of good name and wysdom and manere 880

She hath y-nough, and eek of gentilesse;

If she be fayr, thou wost thy-self, I gesse,

`Ne I never saw a more bountevous

Of hir estat, ne a gladder, ne of speche

A freendlier, ne a more gracious 885

For to do wel, ne lasse hadde nede to seche

What for to doon; and al this bet to eche,

In honour, to as fer as she may strecche,

A kinges herte semeth by hirs a wrecche.

`And for-thy loke of good comfort thou be; 890
For certeinly, the firste poynt is this
Of noble corage and wel ordeyne,
A man to have pees with him-self, y-wis;
So oughtest thou, for nought but good it is
To loven wel, and in a worthy place; 895
Thee oghte not to clepe it hap, but grace.

`And also thenk, and therwith glade thee,
That sith thy lady vertuous is al,
So folweth it that ther is som pitee
Amonges alle thise othere in general; 900
And for-thy see that thou, in special,
Requere nought that is ayein hir name;
For vertue streccheth not him-self to shame.

`But wel is me that ever that I was born,
That thou biset art in so good a place; 905
For by my trouthe, in love I dorste have sworn,
Thee sholde never han tid thus fayr a grace;
And wostow why? For thou were wont to chace

At Love in scorn, and for despyt him calle
"Seynt Idiot, lord of thise foles alle."

`How often hastow maad thy nyce Iapes,
And seyd, that loves servants everichone
Of nycetee been verray goddes apes;
And some wolde monche hir mete alone,
Ligging a-bedde, and make hem for to grone;
And som, thou seydest, hadde a blaunche fevere,
And preydest god he sholde never kevere.

`And som of hem tok on hem, for the colde,
More than y-nough, so seydestow ful ofte;
And som han feyned ofte tyme, and tolde
How that they wake, whan they slepen softe;
And thus they wolde han brought hem-self a-lofte,
And nathelees were under at the laste;
Thus seydestow, and Iapedest ful faste.

`Yet seydestow, that, for the more part,
These loveres wolden speke in general,

And thoughten that it was a siker art,
For fayling, for to assayen over-al.

Now may I iape of thee, if that I shal!
But nathelees, though that I sholde deye, 930
That thou art noon of tho, that dorste I seye.

`Now beet thy brest, and sey to god of love,
"Thy grace, lord! For now I me repente
If I mis spak, for now my-self I love:"
Thus sey with al thyn herte in good entente.' 935
Quod Troilus, `A! Lord! I me consente,
And prey to thee my Iapes thou foryive,
And I shal never-more whyl I live.'

`Thou seyst wel,' quod Pandare, `and now I hope
That thou the goddes wraththe hast al apesed; 940
And sithen thou hast wepen many a drope,
And seyd swich thing wher-with thy god is plesed,
Now wolde never god but thou were esed;
And think wel, she of whom rist al thy wo

Here-after may thy comfort been al-so. 945

`For thilke ground, that bereth the wedes wikke,
Bereth eek thise holsom herbes, as ful ofte
Next the foule netle, rough and thikke,
The rose waxeth swote and smothe and softe;
And next the valey is the hil a-lofte; 950
And next the derke night the glade morwe;
And also Ioye is next the fyn of sorwe.

`Now loke that atempre be thy brydel,
And, for the beste, ay suffre to the tyde,
Or elles al our labour is on ydel; 955
He hasteth wel that wysly can abyde;
Be diligent, and trewe, and ay wel hyde.
Be lusty, free, persevere in thy servyse,
And al is wel, if thou werke in this wyse.

`But he that parted is in every place 960
Is no-wher hool, as writen clerkes wyse;
What wonder is, though swich oon have no grace?

Eek wostow how it fareth of som servyse?
As plaunte a tre or herbe, in sondry wyse,
And on the morwe pulle it up as blyve, 965
No wonder is, though it may never thryve.

`And sith that god of love hath thee bistowed
In place digne un-to thy worthinesse,
Stond faste, for to good port hastow rowed;
And of thy-self, for any hevinesse, 970
Hope alwey wel; for, but-if drerinesse
Or over-haste our bothe labour shende,
I hope of this to maken a good ende.

`And wostow why I am the lasse a-fered
Of this matere with my nece trete? 975
For this have I herd seyd of wyse y-lered,
"Was never man ne woman yet bigete
That was unapt to suffren loves hete,
Celestial, or elles love of kinde;"
For-thy som grace I hope in hir to finde. 980

`And for to speke of hir in special,
Hir beautee to bithinken and hir youthe,
It sit hir nought to be celestial
As yet, though that hir liste bothe and couthe;
But trewely, it sete hir wel right nouthe 985
A worthy knight to loven and cheryce,
And but she do, I holde it for a vyce.

`Wherfore I am, and wol be, ay redy
To peyne me to do yow this servyse;
For bothe yow to plese thus hope I 990
Her-afterward; for ye beth bothe wyse,
And conne it counseyl kepe in swich a wyse
That no man shal the wyser of it be;
And so we may be gladed alle three.

`And, by my trouthe, I have right now of thee 995
A good conceyt in my wit, as I gesse,
And what it is, I wol now that thou see.
I thenke, sith that love, of his goodnesse,
Hath thee converted out of wikkednesse,

That thou shalt be the beste post, I leve,
Of al his lay, and most his foos to-greve.

`Ensample why, see now these wyse clerkes,
That erren aldermost a-yein a lawe,
And ben converted from hir wikked werkes
Thorugh grace of god, that list hem to him drawe,
Than arn they folk that han most god in awe,
And strengest-feythed been, I understonde,
And conne an errour alder-best withstonde.'

Whan Troilus had herd Pandare assented
To been his help in loving of Criseyde,
Wex of his wo, as who seyth, untormented,
But hotter wex his love, and thus he seyde,
With sobre chere, al-though his herte pleyde,
`Now blisful Venus helpe, er that I sterve,
Of thee, Pandare, I may som thank deserve.

`But, dere frend, how shal myn wo ben lesse
Til this be doon? And goode, eek tel me this,

How wiltow seyn of me and my destresse?
Lest she be wrooth, this drede I most, y-wys,
Or nil not here or trowen how it is. 1020
Al this drede I, and eek for the manere
Of thee, hir eem, she nil no swich thing here.'

Quod Pandarus, `Thou hast a ful gret care
Lest that the cherl may falle out of the mone!
Why, lord! I hate of the thy nyce fare! 1025
Why, entremete of that thou hast to done!
For goddes love, I bidde thee a bone,
So lat me alone, and it shal be thy beste.' —
`Why, freend,' quod he, `now do right as the leste.

`But herke, Pandare, o word, for I nolde 1030
That thou in me wendest so greet folye,
That to my lady I desiren sholde
That toucheth harm or any vilenye;
For dredelees, me were lever dye
Than she of me ought elles understode 1035
But that, that mighte sounen in-to gode.'

Tho lough this Pandare, and anoon answerde,
`And I thy borw? Fy! No wight dooth but so;
I roughte nought though that she stode and herde
How that thou seyst; but fare-wel, I wol go. 1040
A-dieu! Be glad! God spede us bothe two!
Yif me this labour and this besinesse,
And of my speed be thyn al that swetnesse.'

Tho Troilus gan doun on knees to falle,
And Pandare in his armes hente faste, 1045
And seyde, `Now, fy on the Grekes alle!
Yet, pardee, god shal helpe us at the laste;
And dredelees, if that my lyf may laste,
And god to-forn, lo, som of hem shal smerte;
And yet me athinketh that this avaunt me asterte! 1050

`Now, Pandare, I can no more seye,
But thou wys, thou wost, thou mayst, thou art al!
My lyf, my deeth, hool in thyn bonde I leye;
Help now,' Quod he, `Yis, by my trouthe, I shal.'

`God yelde thee, freend, and this in special,' 1055
Quod Troilus, `that thou me recomaunde
To hir that to the deeth me may comaunde.'

This Pandarus tho, desirous to serve
His fulle freend, than seyde in this manere, 1059
`Far-wel, and thenk I wol thy thank deserve;
Have here my trouthe, and that thou shalt wel here.' —
And wente his wey, thenking on this matere,
And how he best mighte hir beseche of grace,
And finde a tyme ther-to, and a place.

For every wight that hath an hous to founde 1065
Ne renneth nought the werk for to biginne
With rakel hond, but he wol byde a stounde,
And sende his hertes lyne out fro with-inne
Alderfirst his purpos for to winne.
Al this Pandare in his herte thoughte, 1070
And caste his werk ful wysly, or he wroughte.

But Troilus lay tho no lenger doun,

But up anoon up-on his stede bay,

And in the feld he pleyde tho leoun;

Wo was that Greek that with him mette that day. 1075

And in the toun his maner tho forth ay

So goodly was, and gat him so in grace,

That ech him lovede that loked on his face.

For he bicom the frendlyeste wight,

The gentileste, and eek the moste free, 1080

The thriftieste and oon the beste knight,

That in his tyme was, or mighte be.

Dede were his Iapes and his crueltee,

His heighe port and his manere estraunge,

And ech of tho gan for a vertu chaunge. 1085

Now lat us stinte of Troilus a stounde,

That fareth lyk a man that hurt is sore,

And is somdel of akinge of his wounde

Y-lissed wel, but heled no del more:

And, as an esy pacient, the lore 1090

Abit of him that gooth aboute his cure;

And thus he dryveth forth his aventure.

Explicit Liber Primus

BOOK II. Incipit Prohemium Secundi Libri.

Out of these blake wawes for to sayle,
O wind, O wind, the weder ginneth clere;
For in this see the boot hath swich travayle,
Of my conning, that unnethe I it stere:
This see clepe I the tempestous matere
Of desespeyr that Troilus was inne:

But now of hope the calendes biginne.

O lady myn, that called art Cleo,
Thou be my speed fro this forth, and my muse,
To ryme wel this book, til I have do;
Me nedeth here noon other art to use.
For-why to every lovere I me excuse,

That of no sentement I this endyte,
But out of Latin in my tonge it wryte.

Wherfore I nil have neither thank ne blame
Of al this werk, but prey yow mekely,
Disblameth me if any word be lame,
For as myn auctor seyde, so seye I.
Eek though I speke of love unfelingly,
No wondre is, for it nothing of newe is;
A blind man can nat Iuggen wel in hewis.

Ye knowe eek, that in forme of speche is chaunge
With-inne a thousand yeer, and wordes tho
That hadden prys, now wonder nyce and straunge
Us thinketh hem; and yet they spake hem so,
And spedde as wel in love as men now do;
Eek for to winne love in sondry ages,
In sondry londes, sondry ben usages.

And for-thy if it happe in any wyse,
That here be any lovere in this place

That herkneth, as the storie wol devyse,
How Troilus com to his lady grace,
And thenketh, so nolde I nat love purchace,
Or wondreth on his speche or his doinge,
I noot; but it is me no wonderinge;

For every wight which that to Rome went,
Halt nat o path, or alwey o manere;
Eek in som lond were al the gamen shent,
If that they ferde in love as men don here,
As thus, in open doing or in chere,
In visitinge, in forme, or seyde hire sawes;
For-thy men seyn, ech contree hath his lawes.

Eek scarsly been ther in this place three
That han in love seid lyk and doon in al;
For to thy purpos this may lyken thee,
And thee right nought, yet al is seyd or shal;
Eek som men grave in tree, som in stoon wal,
As it bitit; but sin I have begonne,
Myn auctor shal I folwen, if I conne.

Exclipit prohemium Secundi Libri.

Incipit Liber Secundus.

In May, that moder is of monthes glade,
That fresshe floures, blewe, and whyte, and rede,
Ben quike agayn, that winter dede made,
And ful of bawme is fleting every mede;
Whan Phebus doth his brighte bemes sprede
Right in the whyte Bole, it so bitidde
As I shal singe, on Mayes day the thridde,

That Pandarus, for al his wyse speche,
Felt eek his part of loves shottes kene,
That, coude he never so wel of loving preche,
It made his hewe a-day ful ofte grene;
So shoop it, that hym fil that day a tene
In love, for which in wo to bedde he wente,
And made, er it was day, ful many a wente.

The swalwe Proigne, with a sorwful lay,
Whan morwe com, gan make hir waymentinge, 65
Why she forshapen was; and ever lay
Pandare a-bedde, half in a slomeringe,
Til she so neigh him made hir chiteringe
How Tereus gan forth hir suster take,
That with the noyse of hir he gan a-wake; 70

And gan to calle, and dresse him up to ryse,
Remembringe him his erand was to done
From Troilus, and eek his greet empryse;
And caste and knew in good plyt was the mone
To doon viage, and took his wey ful sone 75
Un-to his neces paleys ther bi-syde;
Now Ianus, god of entree, thou him gyde!

Whan he was come un-to his neces place,
`Wher is my lady?' to hir folk seyde he;
And they him tolde; and he forth in gan pace, 80
And fond, two othere ladyes sete and she,
With-inne a paved parlour; and they three

Herden a mayden reden hem the geste
Of the Sege of Thebes, whyl hem leste.

Quod Pandarus, `Ma dame, god yow see, 85
With al your book and al the companye!'
`Ey, uncle myn, welcome y-wis,' quod she,
And up she roos, and by the hond in hye
She took him faste, and seyde, `This night thrye,
To goode mote it turne, of yow I mette!' 90
And with that word she doun on bench him sette.

`Ye, nece, ye shal fare wel the bet,
If god wole, al this yeer,' quod Pandarus;
`But I am sory that I have yow let
To herknen of your book ye preysen thus; 95
For goddes love, what seith it? tel it us.

Is it of love? O, som good ye me lere!'
`Uncle,' quod she, `your maistresse is not here!'

With that they gonnen laughe, and tho she seyde,

`This romaunce is of Thebes, that we rede; 100
And we han herd how that king Laius deyde
Thurgh Edippus his sone, and al that dede;
And here we stenten at these lettres rede,
How the bisshop, as the book can telle,
Amphiorax, fil thurgh the ground to helle.' 105

Quod Pandarus, `Al this knowe I my-selve,
And al the assege of Thebes and the care;
For her-of been ther maked bokes twelve: —
But lat be this, and tel me how ye fare;
Do wey your barbe, and shew your face bare;   110
Do wey your book, rys up, and lat us daunce,
And lat us don to May som observaunce.'

`A! God forbede!' quod she. `Be ye mad?
Is that a widewes lyf, so god you save?
By god, ye maken me right sore a-drad, 115
Ye ben so wilde, it semeth as ye rave!
It sete me wel bet ay in a cave
To bidde, and rede on holy seyntes lyves;

Lat maydens gon to daunce, and yonge wyves.'

`As ever thryve I,' quod this Pandarus,
`Yet coude I telle a thing to doon you pleye.'
`Now, uncle dere,' quod she, `tel it us
For goddes love; is than the assege aweye?

I am of Grekes so ferd that I deye.'
`Nay, nay,' quod he, `as ever mote I thryve!
It is a thing wel bet than swiche fyve.'

`Ye, holy god,' quod she, `what thing is that?

What! Bet than swiche fyve? Ey, nay, y-wis!
For al this world ne can I reden what
It sholde been; som Iape, I trowe, is this;
And but your-selven telle us what it is,
My wit is for to arede it al to lene;
As help me god, I noot nat what ye meene.'

`And I your borow, ne never shal, for me,

This thing be told to yow, as mote I thryve!' 135
`And why so, uncle myn? Why so?' quod she.
`By god,' quod he, `that wole I telle as blyve;
For prouder womman were ther noon on-lyve,
And ye it wiste, in al the toun of Troye;
I iape nought, as ever have I Ioye!' 140

Tho gan she wondren more than biforn
A thousand fold, and doun hir eyen caste;
For never, sith the tyme that she was born,
To knowe thing desired she so faste;
And with a syk she seyde him at the laste, 145
`Now, uncle myn, I nil yow nought displese,
Nor axen more, that may do yow disese.'

So after this, with many wordes glade,
And freendly tales, and with mery chere,
Of this and that they pleyde, and gunnen wade 150
In many an unkouth glad and deep matere,
As freendes doon, whan they ben met y-fere;
Til she gan axen him how Ector ferde,

That was the tounes wal and Grekes yerde.

`Ful wel, I thanke it god,' quod Pandarus,
`Save in his arm he hath a litel wounde;
And eek his fresshe brother Troilus,
The wyse worthy Ector the secounde,
In whom that ever vertu list abounde,
As alle trouthe and alle gentillesse,
Wysdom, honour, fredom, and worthinesse.'

`In good feith, eem,' quod she, `that lyketh me;
They faren wel, god save hem bothe two!
For trewely I holde it greet deyntee
A kinges sone in armes wel to do,
And been of good condiciouns ther-to;
For greet power and moral vertu here
Is selde y-seye in o persone y-fere.'

`In good feith, that is sooth,' quod Pandarus;
`But, by my trouthe, the king hath sones tweye,
That is to mene, Ector and Troilus,

That certainly, though that I sholde deye,
They been as voyde of vyces, dar I seye,
As any men that liveth under the sonne,
Hir might is wyde y-knowe, and what they conne. 175

`Of Ector nedeth it nought for to telle:
In al this world ther nis a bettre knight
Than he, that is of worthinesse welle;
And he wel more vertu hath than might.
This knoweth many a wys and worthy wight. 180
The same prys of Troilus I seye,
God help me so, I knowe not swiche tweye.'

`By god,' quod she, `of Ector that is sooth;
Of Troilus the same thing trowe I;
For, dredelees, men tellen that he dooth 185
In armes day by day so worthily,
And bereth him here at hoom so gentilly
To every wight, that al the prys hath he
Of hem that me were levest preysed be.'

`Ye sey right sooth, y-wis,' quod Pandarus; 190
`For yesterday, who-so hadde with him been,
He might have wondred up-on Troilus;
For never yet so thikke a swarm of been
Ne fleigh, as Grekes fro him gonne fleen;
And thorugh the feld, in everi wightes ere, 195
Ther nas no cry but "Troilus is there!"

`Now here, now there, he hunted hem so faste,
Ther nas but Grekes blood; and Troilus,
Now hem he hurte, and hem alle doun he caste;
Ay where he wente, it was arayed thus: 200
He was hir deeth, and sheld and lyf for us;
That as that day ther dorste noon withstonde,
Whyl that he held his blody swerd in honde.

`Therto he is the freendlieste man
Of grete estat, that ever I saw my lyve; 205
And wher him list, best felawshipe can
To suche as him thinketh able for to thryve.'
And with that word tho Pandarus, as blyve,

He took his leve, and seyde, `I wol go henne.'
`Nay, blame have I, myn uncle,' quod she thenne. 210

`What eyleth yow to be thus wery sone,
And namelich of wommen? Wol ye so?
Nay, sitteth down; by god, I have to done
With yow, to speke of wisdom er ye go.'
And every wight that was a-boute hem tho, 215
That herde that, gan fer a-wey to stonde,
Whyl they two hadde al that hem liste in honde.

Whan that hir tale al brought was to an ende,
Of hire estat and of hir governaunce,
Quod Pandarus, `Now is it tyme I wende; 220
But yet, I seye, aryseth, lat us daunce,
And cast your widwes habit to mischaunce:
What list yow thus your-self to disfigure,
Sith yow is tid thus fair an aventure?'

`A! Wel bithought! For love of god,' quod she, 225
`Shal I not witen what ye mene of this?'

`No, this thing axeth layser,' tho quod he,
`And eek me wolde muche greve, y-wis,
If I it tolde, and ye it toke amis.
Yet were it bet my tonge for to stille 230
Than seye a sooth that were ayeins your wille.

`For, nece, by the goddesse Minerve,
And Iuppiter, that maketh the thonder ringe,
And by the blisful Venus that I serve,
Ye been the womman in this world livinge, 235
With-oute paramours, to my wittinge,
That I best love, and lothest am to greve,
And that ye witen wel your-self, I leve.'

`Y-wis, myn uncle,' quod she, `grant mercy;
Your freendship have I founden ever yit; 240
I am to no man holden trewely,
So muche as yow, and have so litel quit;
And, with the grace of god, emforth my wit,
As in my gilt I shal you never offende;
And if I have er this, I wol amende. 245

`But, for the love of god, I yow beseche,
As ye ben he that I love most and triste,
Lat be to me your fremde manere speche,
And sey to me, your nece, what yow liste:'
And with that word hir uncle anoon hir kiste, 250
And seyde, `Gladly, leve nece dere,
Tak it for good that I shal seye yow here.'

With that she gan hir eiyen doun to caste,
And Pandarus to coghe gan a lyte,
And seyde, `Nece, alwey, lo! To the laste, 255
How-so it be that som men hem delyte
With subtil art hir tales for to endyte,
Yet for al that, in hir entencioun
Hir tale is al for som conclusioun.

`And sithen thende is every tales strengthe, 260
And this matere is so bihovely,
What sholde I peynte or drawen it on lengthe
To yow, that been my freend so feithfully?'

And with that word he gan right inwardly
Biholden hir, and loken on hir face, 265
And seyde, `On suche a mirour goode grace!'

Than thoughte he thus: `If I my tale endyte
Ought hard, or make a proces any whyle,
She shal no savour han ther-in but lyte,
And trowe I wolde hir in my wil bigyle. 270
For tendre wittes wenen al be wyle
Ther-as they can nat pleynly understonde;
For-thy hir wit to serven wol I fonde —'

And loked on hir in a besy wyse,
And she was war that he byheld hir so, 275
And seyde, `Lord! So faste ye me avyse!

Sey ye me never er now? What sey ye, no?'
`Yes, yes,' quod he, `and bet wole er I go;
But, by my trouthe, I thoughte now if ye
Be fortunat, for now men shal it see.   280

`For to every wight som goodly aventure
Som tyme is shape, if he it can receyven;
And if that he wol take of it no cure,
Whan that it commeth, but wilfully it weyven,
Lo, neither cas nor fortune him deceyven, 285
But right his verray slouthe and wrecchednesse;
And swich a wight is for to blame, I gesse.

`Good aventure, O bele nece, have ye
Ful lightly founden, and ye conne it take;
And, for the love of god, and eek of me, 290
Cacche it anoon, lest aventure slake.

What sholde I lenger proces of it make?
Yif me your hond, for in this world is noon,
If that yow list, a wight so wel begoon.

`And sith I speke of good entencioun, 295
As I to yow have told wel here-biforn,
And love as wel your honour and renoun
As creature in al this world y-born;

By alle the othes that I have yow sworn,
And ye be wrooth therfore, or wene I lye, 300
Ne shal I never seen yow eft with ye.

`Beth nought agast, ne quaketh nat; wher-to?
Ne chaungeth nat for fere so your hewe;
For hardely the werste of this is do;
And though my tale as now be to yow newe, 305
Yet trist alwey, ye shal me finde trewe;
And were it thing that me thoughte unsittinge,
To yow nolde I no swiche tales bringe.'

`Now, my good eem, for goddes love, I preye,'
Quod she, `com of, and tel me what it is; 310
For bothe I am agast what ye wol seye,
And eek me longeth it to wite, y-wis.
For whether it be wel or be amis,
Say on, lat me not in this fere dwelle:'
`So wol I doon; now herkneth, I shal telle: 315

`Now, nece myn, the kinges dere sone,

The goode, wyse, worthy, fresshe, and free,
Which alwey for to do wel is his wone,
The noble Troilus, so loveth thee,
That, bot ye helpe, it wol his bane be.
Lo, here is al, what sholde I more seye?

Doth what yow list, to make him live or deye.

`But if ye lete him deye, I wol sterve;
Have her my trouthe, nece, I nil not lyen;
Al sholde I with this knyf my throte kerve —'
With that the teres braste out of his yen,
And seyde, `If that ye doon us bothe dyen,
Thus giltelees, than have ye fisshed faire;
What mende ye, though that we bothe apeyre?

`Allas! He which that is my lord so dere,
That trewe man, that noble gentil knight,
That nought desireth but your freendly chere,
I see him deye, ther he goth up-right,
And hasteth him, with al his fulle might,

For to be slayn, if fortune wol assente;
Allas! That god yow swich a beautee sente!

`If it be so that ye so cruel be,
That of his deeth yow liste nought to recche,
That is so trewe and worthy, as ye see,
No more than of a Iapere or a wrecche,
If ye be swich, your beautee may not strecche
To make amendes of so cruel a dede;
Avysement is good bifore the nede.

`Wo worth the faire gemme vertulees!
Wo worth that herbe also that dooth no bote!
Wo worth that beautee that is routhelees!

Wo worth that wight that tret ech under fote!
And ye, that been of beautee crop and rote,
If therwith-al in you ther be no routhe,
Than is it harm ye liven, by my trouthe!

`And also thenk wel that this is no gaude;

For me were lever, thou and I and he
Were hanged, than I sholde been his baude,
As heyghe, as men mighte on us alle y-see:
I am thyn eem, the shame were to me, 355
As wel as thee, if that I sholde assente,
Thorugh myn abet, that he thyn honour shente.

`Now understond, for I yow nought requere,
To binde yow to him thorugh no beheste,
But only that ye make him bettre chere 360
Than ye han doon er this, and more feste,
So that his lyf be saved, at the leste;
This al and som, and playnly our entente;
God help me so, I never other mente.

`Lo, this request is not but skile, y-wis, 365
Ne doute of reson, pardee, is ther noon.
I sette the worste that ye dredden this,
Men wolden wondren seen him come or goon:
Ther-ayeins answere I thus a-noon,
That every wight, but he be fool of kinde, 370

Wol deme it love of freendship in his minde.

`What? Who wol deme, though he see a man
To temple go, that he the images eteth?
Thenk eek how wel and wysly that he can
Governe him-self, that he nothing foryeteth, 375
That, wher he cometh, he prys and thank him geteth;
And eek ther-to, he shal come here so selde,
What fors were it though al the toun behelde?

`Swich love of freendes regneth al this toun;
And wrye yow in that mantel ever-mo; 380
And god so wis be my savacioun,
As I have seyd, your beste is to do so.
But alwey, goode nece, to stinte his wo,
So lat your daunger sucred ben a lyte,
That of his deeth ye be nought for to wyte.' 385

Criseyde, which that herde him in this wyse,
Thoughte, `I shal fele what he meneth, y-wis.'

`Now, eem,' quod she, `what wolde ye devyse?
What is your reed I sholde doon of this?'
`That is wel seyd,' quod be. `certayn, best is
That ye him love ayein for his lovinge,
As love for love is skilful guerdoninge.

`Thenk eek, how elde wasteth every houre
In eche of yow a party of beautee;
And therfore, er that age thee devoure,
Go love, for, olde, ther wol no wight of thee.
Lat this proverbe a lore un-to yow be;
"To late y-war, quod Beautee, whan it paste;"
And elde daunteth daunger at the laste.

`The kinges fool is woned to cryen loude,
Whan that him thinketh a womman bereth hir hye,
"So longe mote ye live, and alle proude,
Til crowes feet be growe under your ye,
And sende yow thanne a mirour in to prye
In whiche that ye may see your face a-morwe!"
Nece, I bidde wisshe yow no more sorwe.'

With this he stente, and caste adoun the heed,
And she bigan to breste a-wepe anoon,
And seyde, `Allas, for wo! Why nere I deed?
For of this world the feith is al agoon! 410
Allas! What sholden straunge to me doon,
Whan he, that for my beste freend I wende,
Ret me to love, and sholde it me defende?

`Allas! I wolde han trusted, doutelees,
That if that I, thurgh my disaventure, 415
Had loved other him or Achilles,
Ector, or any mannes creature,
Ye nolde han had no mercy ne mesure
On me, but alwey had me in repreve;
This false world, allas! Who may it leve? 420

`What? Is this al the Ioye and al the feste?
Is this your reed, is this my blisful cas?

Is this the verray mede of your beheste?

Is al this peynted proces seyd, allas!
Right for this fyn? O lady myn, Pallas! 425
Thou in this dredful cas for me purveye;
For so astonied am I that I deye!'

With that she gan ful sorwfully to syke;
`A! May it be no bet?' quod Pandarus;
`By god, I shal no-more come here this wyke, 430
And god to-forn, that am mistrusted thus;
I see ful wel that ye sette lyte of us,
Or of our deeth! Allas! I woful wrecche!

Mighte he yet live, of me is nought to recche.

`O cruel god, O dispitouse Marte, 435
O Furies three of helle, on yow I crye!
So lat me never out of this hous departe,
If that I mente harm or vilanye!
But sith I see my lord mot nedes dye,
And I with him, here I me shryve, and seye 440
That wikkedly ye doon us bothe deye.

`But sith it lyketh yow that I be deed,
By Neptunus, that god is of the see,
Fro this forth shal I never eten breed
Til I myn owene herte blood may see; 445
For certayn, I wole deye as sone as he —'
And up he sterte, and on his wey he raughte,
Til she agayn him by the lappe caughte.

Criseyde, which that wel neigh starf for fere,
So as she was the ferfulleste wight 450
That mighte be, and herde eek with hir ere,
And saw the sorwful ernest of the knight,
And in his preyere eek saw noon unright,
And for the harm that mighte eek fallen more,
She gan to rewe and dredde hir wonder sore; 455

And thoughte thus, `Unhappes fallen thikke
Alday for love, and in swich maner cas,
As men ben cruel in hem-self and wikke;
And if this man slee here him-self, allas!

In my presence, it wol be no solas. 460
What men wolde of hit deme I can nat seye;
It nedeth me ful sleyly for to pleye.'

And with a sorwful syk she seyde thrye,
`A! Lord! What me is tid a sory chaunce!
For myn estat lyth in Iupartye, 465
And eek myn emes lyf lyth in balaunce;
But nathelees, with goddes governaunce,
I shal so doon, myn honour shal I kepe,
And eek his lyf;' and stinte for to wepe.

`Of harmes two, the lesse is for to chese; 470
Yet have I lever maken him good chere
In honour, than myn emes lyf to lese;
Ye seyn, ye nothing elles me requere?'

`No, wis,' quod he, `myn owene nece dere.'
`Now wel,' quod she, `and I wol doon my peyne; 475
I shal myn herte ayeins my lust constreyne.

`But that I nil not holden him in honde,
Ne love a man, ne can I not, ne may
Ayeins my wil; but elles wol I fonde,
Myn honour sauf, plese him fro day to day;
Ther-to nolde I nought ones have seyd nay,
But that I dredde, as in my fantasye;
But cesse cause, ay cesseth maladye.

`And here I make a protestacioun,
That in this proces if ye depper go,
That certaynly, for no savacioun
Of yow, though that ye sterve bothe two,
Though al the world on o day be my fo,
Ne shal I never on him han other routhe. —'
`I graunte wel,' quod Pandare, `by my trouthe.

`But may I truste wel ther-to,' quod he,
`That of this thing that ye han hight me here,
Ye wol it holden trewly un-to me?'
`Ye, doutelees,' quod she, `myn uncle dere.'
`Ne that I shal han cause in this matere,'

Quod he, `to pleyne, or after yow to preche?'

`Why, no, parde; what nedeth more speche?'

Tho fillen they in othere tales glade,
Til at the laste, `O good eem,' quod she tho,
`For love of god, which that us bothe made, 500
Tel me how first ye wisten of his wo:

Wot noon of hit but ye?' He seyde, `No.'
`Can he wel speke of love?' quod she, `I preye,
Tel me, for I the bet me shal purveye.'

Tho Pandarus a litel gan to smyle, 505
And seyde, `By my trouthe, I shal yow telle.
This other day, nought gon ful longe whyle,
In-with the paleys-gardyn, by a welle,
Gan he and I wel half a day to dwelle,
Right for to speken of an ordenaunce, 510
How we the Grekes myghte disavaunce.

`Sone after that bigonne we to lepe,
And casten with our dartes to and fro,
Til at the laste he seyde he wolde slepe,
And on the gres a-doun he leyde him tho; 515
And I after gan rome to and fro
Til that I herde, as that I welk allone,
How he bigan ful wofully to grone.

`Tho gan I stalke him softely bihinde,
And sikerly, the sothe for to seyne, 520
As I can clepe ayein now to my minde,
Right thus to Love he gan him for to pleyne;
He seyde, "Lord! Have routhe up-on my peyne,
Al have I been rebel in myn entente;
Now, MEA CULPA, lord! I me repente. 525

`"O god, that at thy disposicioun
Ledest the fyn by Iuste purveyaunce,
Of every wight, my lowe confessioun
Accepte in gree, and send me swich penaunce
As lyketh thee, but from desesperaunce, 530

That may my goost departe awey fro thee,
Thou be my sheld, for thy benignitee.

`"For certes, lord, so soore hath she me wounded,
That stod in blak, with loking of hir yen,
That to myn hertes botme it is y-sounded,
Thorugh which I woot that I mot nedes dyen;
This is the worste, I dar me not bi-wryen;
And wel the hotter been the gledes rede,
That men hem wryen with asshen pale and dede."

`With that he smoot his heed adoun anoon,
And gan to motre, I noot what, trewely.
And I with that gan stille awey to goon,
And leet ther-of as nothing wist hadde I,
And come ayein anoon and stood him by,
And seyde, "A-wake, ye slepen al to longe;
It semeth nat that love dooth yow longe,

`"That slepen so that no man may yow wake.
Who sey ever or this so dul a man?"

"Ye, freend," quod he, "do ye your hedes ake
For love, and lat me liven as I can." 550
But though that he for wo was pale and wan,
Yet made he tho as freshe a countenaunce
As though he shulde have led the newe daunce.

`This passed forth, til now, this other day,
It fel that I com roming al allone 555
Into his chaumbre, and fond how that he lay
Up-on his bed; but man so sore grone
Ne herde I never, and what that was his mone,
Ne wist I nought; for, as I was cominge,
Al sodeynly he lefte his compleyninge. 560

`Of which I took somwat suspecioun,
And neer I com, and fond he wepte sore;
And god so wis be my savacioun,
As never of thing hadde I no routhe more.
For neither with engyn, ne with no lore, 565
Unethes mighte I fro the deeth him kepe;
That yet fele I myn herte for him wepe.

`And god wot, never, sith that I was born,
Was I so bisy no man for to preche,
Ne never was to wight so depe y-sworn, 570
Or he me tolde who mighte been his leche.
But now to yow rehersen al his speche,
Or alle his woful wordes for to soune,
Ne bid me not, but ye wol see me swowne.

`But for to save his lyf, and elles nought, 575
And to non harm of yow, thus am I driven;
And for the love of god that us hath wrought,
Swich chere him dooth, that he and I may liven.
Now have I plat to yow myn herte shriven;
And sin ye woot that myn entente is clene, 580
Tak hede ther-of, for I non yvel mene.

`And right good thrift, I prey to god, have ye,
That han swich oon y-caught with-oute net;
And be ye wys, as ye ben fair to see,
Wel in the ring than is the ruby set. 585

Ther were never two so wel y-met,
Whan ye ben his al hool, as he is youre:
Ther mighty god yet graunte us see that houre!'

`Nay, therof spak I not, a, ha!' quod she,
`As helpe me god, ye shenden every deel!' 590
`O mercy, dere nece,' anoon quod he,
`What-so I spak, I mente nought but weel,
By Mars the god, that helmed is of steel;
Now beth nought wrooth, my blood, my nece dere.'
`Now wel,' quod she, `foryeven be it here!' 595

With this he took his leve, and hoom he wente;
And lord, he was glad and wel bigoon!
Criseyde aroos, no lenger she ne stente,
But straught in-to hir closet wente anoon,
And sette here doun as stille as any stoon, 600
And every word gan up and doun to winde,
That he hadde seyd, as it com hir to minde;

And wex somdel astonied in hir thought,

Right for the newe cas; but whan that she
Was ful avysed, tho fond she right nought 605
Of peril, why she oughte afered be.
For man may love, of possibilitee,
A womman so, his herte may to-breste,
And she nought love ayein, but-if hir leste.

But as she sat allone and thoughte thus, 610
Thascry aroos at skarmish al with-oute,
And men cryde in the strete, `See, Troilus
Hath right now put to flight the Grekes route!'
With that gan al hir meynee for to shoute,
`A! Go we see, caste up the latis wyde; 615
For thurgh this strete he moot to palays ryde;

`For other wey is fro the yate noon
Of Dardanus, ther open is the cheyne.'
With that com he and al his folk anoon
An esy pas rydinge, in routes tweyne, 620
Right as his happy day was, sooth to seyne,
For which, men say, may nought disturbed be

That shal bityden of necessitee.

This Troilus sat on his baye stede,
Al armed, save his heed, ful richely,
And wounded was his hors, and gan to blede,
On whiche he rood a pas, ful softely;
But swych a knightly sighte, trewely,
As was on him, was nought, with-outen faile,
To loke on Mars, that god is of batayle.

So lyk a man of armes and a knight
He was to seen, fulfild of heigh prowesse;
For bothe he hadde a body and a might
To doon that thing, as wel as hardinesse;
And eek to seen him in his gere him dresse,
So fresh, so yong, so weldy semed he,
It was an heven up-on him for to see.

His helm to-hewen was in twenty places,
That by a tissew heng, his bak bihinde,
His sheld to-dasshed was with swerdes and maces,

In which men mighte many an arwe finde
That thirled hadde horn and nerf and rinde;
And ay the peple cryde, `Here cometh our Ioye,
And, next his brother, holdere up of Troye!'

For which he wex a litel reed for shame, 645
Whan he the peple up-on him herde cryen,
That to biholde it was a noble game,
How sobreliche he caste doun his yen.
Cryseyda gan al his chere aspyen,
And leet so softe it in hir herte sinke, 650
That to hir-self she seyde, `Who yaf me drinke?'

For of hir owene thought she wex al reed,
Remembringe hir right thus, `Lo, this is he
Which that myn uncle swereth he moot be deed,
But I on him have mercy and pitee;' 655
And with that thought, for pure ashamed, she
Gan in hir heed to pulle, and that as faste,
Whyl he and al the peple for-by paste,

And gan to caste and rollen up and doun
With-inne hir thought his excellent prowesse, 660
And his estat, and also his renoun,
His wit, his shap, and eek his gentillesse;
But most hir favour was, for his distresse
Was al for hir, and thoughte it was a routhe
To sleen swich oon, if that he mente trouthe. 665

Now mighte som envyous Iangle thus,
`This was a sodeyn love; how mighte it be
That she so lightly lovede Troilus
Right for the firste sighte; ye, pardee?'
Now who-so seyth so, mote he never thee! 670
For every thing, a ginning hath it nede
Er al be wrought, with-outen any drede.

For I sey nought that she so sodeynly
Yaf him hir love, but that she gan enclyne
To lyke him first, and I have told yow why; 675
And after that, his manhod and his pyne
Made love with-inne hir for to myne,

For which, by proces and by good servyse,
He gat hir love, and in no sodeyn wyse.

And also blisful Venus, wel arayed,
Sat in hir seventhe hous of hevene tho,
Disposed wel, and with aspectes payed,
To helpen sely Troilus of his wo.
And, sooth to seyn, she nas not al a fo
To Troilus in his nativitee;
God woot that wel the soner spedde he.

Now lat us stinte of Troilus a throwe,
That rydeth forth, and lat us tourne faste
Un-to Criseyde, that heng hir heed ful lowe,
Ther-as she sat allone, and gan to caste
Wher-on she wolde apoynte hir at the laste,
If it so were hir eem ne wolde cesse,
For Troilus, up-on hir for to presse.

And, lord! So she gan in hir thought argue
In this matere of which I have yow told,

And what to doon best were, and what eschue,
That plyted she ful ofte in many fold.
Now was hir herte warm, now was it cold,
And what she thoughte somwhat shal I wryte,
As to myn auctor listeth for to endyte. 700

She thoughte wel that Troilus persone
She knew by sighte and eek his gentillesse,
And thus she seyde, `Al were it nought to done,
To graunte him love, yet, for his worthinesse,
It were honour, with pley and with gladnesse, 705
In honestee, with swich a lord to dele,
For myn estat, and also for his hele.

`Eek, wel wot I my kinges sone is he;
And sith he hath to see me swich delyt,
If I wolde utterly his sighte flee, 710
Peraunter he mighte have me in dispyt,
Thurgh which I mighte stonde in worse plyt;
Now were I wys, me hate to purchace,
With-outen nede, ther I may stonde in grace?

`In every thing, I woot, ther lyth mesure.
For though a man forbede dronkenesse,
He nought for-bet that every creature
Be drinkelees for alwey, as I gesse;
Eek sith I woot for me is his distresse,
I ne oughte not for that thing him despyse,
Sith it is so, he meneth in good wyse.

`And eek I knowe, of longe tyme agoon,
His thewes goode, and that he is not nyce.
Ne avauntour, seyth men, certein, he is noon;
To wys is he to do so gret a vyce;
Ne als I nel him never so cheryce,
That he may make avaunt, by Iuste cause;
He shal me never binde in swiche a clause.

`Now set a cas, the hardest is, y-wis,
Men mighten deme that he loveth me;
What dishonour were it un-to me, this?

May I him lette of that? Why nay, pardee!
I knowe also, and alday here and see,
Men loven wommen al this toun aboute;
Be they the wers? Why, nay, with-outen doute. 735

`I thenk eek how he able is for to have
Of al this noble toun the thriftieste,
To been his love, so she hir honour save;
For out and out he is the worthieste,
Save only Ector, which that is the beste. 740
And yet his lyf al lyth now in my cure,
But swich is love, and eek myn aventure.

`Ne me to love, a wonder is it nought;
For wel wot I my-self, so god me spede,
Al wolde I that noon wiste of this thought, 745
I am oon the fayreste, out of drede,
And goodlieste, who-so taketh hede;
And so men seyn in al the toun of Troye.

What wonder is it though he of me have Ioye?

`I am myn owene woman, wel at ese, 750
I thank it god, as after myn estat;
Right yong, and stonde unteyd in lusty lese,
With-outen Ialousye or swich debat;
Shal noon housbonde seyn to me "Chekmat!"
For either they ben ful of Ialousye, 755
Or maisterful, or loven novelrye.

`What shal I doon? To what fyn live I thus?

Shal I nat loven, in cas if that me leste?
What, par dieux! I am nought religious!
And though that I myn herte sette at reste 760
Upon this knight, that is the worthieste,
And kepe alwey myn honour and my name,
By alle right, it may do me no shame.'

But right as whan the sonne shyneth brighte,
In March, that chaungeth ofte tyme his face, 765
And that a cloud is put with wind to flighte

Which over-sprat the sonne as for a space,
A cloudy thought gan thorugh hir soule pace,
That over-spradde hir brighte thoughtes alle,
So that for fere almost she gan to falle.

That thought was this: `Allas! Sin I am free,
Sholde I now love, and putte in Iupartye
My sikernesse, and thrallen libertee?
Allas! How dorste I thenken that folye?
May I nought wel in other folk aspye
Hir dredful Ioye, hir constreynt, and hir peyne?

Ther loveth noon, that she nath why to pleyne.

`For love is yet the moste stormy lyf,
Right of him-self, that ever was bigonne;
For ever som mistrust, or nyce stryf,
Ther is in love, som cloud is over that sonne:
Ther-to we wrecched wommen nothing conne,
Whan us is wo, but wepe and sitte and thinke;
Our wreche is this, our owene wo to drinke.

`Also these wikked tonges been so prest 785
To speke us harm, eek men be so untrewe,
That, right anoon as cessed is hir lest,
So cesseth love, and forth to love a newe:

But harm y-doon, is doon, who-so it rewe.
For though these men for love hem first to-rende, 790
Ful sharp biginning breketh ofte at ende.

`How ofte tyme hath it y-knowen be,
The treson, that to womman hath be do?
To what fyn is swich love, I can nat see,
Or wher bicometh it, whan it is ago; 795
Ther is no wight that woot, I trowe so,
Wher it bycomth; lo, no wight on it sporneth;
That erst was nothing, in-to nought it torneth.

`How bisy, if I love, eek moste I be
To plesen hem that Iangle of love, and demen, 800
And coye hem, that they sey non harm of me?

For though ther be no cause, yet hem semen
Al be for harm that folk hir freendes quemen;
And who may stoppen every wikked tonge,
Or soun of belles whyl that they be ronge?' 805

And after that, hir thought bigan to clere,
And seyde, `He which that nothing under-taketh,
No thing ne acheveth, be him looth or dere.'
And with an other thought hir herte quaketh;
Than slepeth hope, and after dreed awaketh; 810
Now hoot, now cold; but thus, bi-twixen tweye,
She rist hir up, and went hir for to pleye.

Adoun the steyre anoon-right tho she wente
In-to the gardin, with hir neces three,
And up and doun ther made many a wente, 815
Flexippe, she, Tharbe, and Antigone,
To pleyen, that it Ioye was to see;
And othere of hir wommen, a gret route,
hir folwede in the gardin al aboute.

This yerd was large, and rayled alle the aleyes, 820
And shadwed wel with blosmy bowes grene,
And benched newe, and sonded alle the weyes,
In which she walketh arm in arm bi-twene;
Til at the laste Antigone the shene
Gan on a Troian song to singe clere, 825
That it an heven was hir voys to here. —

She seyde, `O love, to whom I have and shal
Ben humble subgit, trewe in myn entente,
As I best can, to yow, lord, yeve ich al
For ever-more, myn hertes lust to rente. 830
For never yet thy grace no wight sente
So blisful cause as me, my lyf to lede
In alle Ioye and seurtee, out of drede.

`Ye, blisful god, han me so wel beset
In love, y-wis, that al that bereth lyf 835
Imaginen ne cowde how to ben bet;
For, lord, with-outen Ialousye or stryf,
I love oon which that is most ententyf

To serven wel, unwery or unfeyned,
That ever was, and leest with harm distreyned. 840

`As he that is the welle of worthinesse,
Of trouthe ground, mirour of goodliheed,
Of wit Appollo, stoon of sikernesse,
Of vertu rote, of lust findere and heed,
Thurgh which is alle sorwe fro me deed, 845
Y-wis, I love him best, so doth he me;
Now good thrift have he, wher-so that he be!

`Whom sholde I thanke but yow, god of love,
Of al this blisse, in which to bathe I ginne?
And thanked be ye, lord, for that I love! 850
This is the righte lyf that I am inne,
To flemen alle manere vyce and sinne:
This doth me so to vertu for to entende,
That day by day I in my wil amende.

`And who-so seyth that for to love is vyce, 855
Or thraldom, though he fele in it distresse,

He outher is envyous, or right nyce,
Or is unmighty, for his shrewednesse,
To loven; for swich maner folk, I gesse,
Defamen love, as nothing of him knowe;
Thei speken, but they bente never his bowe.

`What is the sonne wers, of kinde righte,
Though that a man, for feblesse of his yen,
May nought endure on it to see for brighte?
Or love the wers, though wrecches on it cryen?
No wele is worth, that may no sorwe dryen.
And for-thy, who that hath an heed of verre,
Fro cast of stones war him in the werre!

`But I with al myn herte and al my might,
As I have seyd, wol love, un-to my laste,
My dere herte, and al myn owene knight,
In which myn herte growen is so faste,
And his in me, that it shal ever laste.
Al dredde I first to love him to biginne,
Now woot I wel, ther is no peril inne.'

And of hir song right with that word she stente,
And therwith-al, `Now, nece,' quod Criseyde,
`Who made this song with so good entente?'
Antigone answerde anoon, and seyde,
`Ma dame, y-wis, the goodlieste mayde 880
Of greet estat in al the toun of Troye;
And let hir lyf in most honour and Ioye.'

`Forsothe, so it semeth by hir song,'
Quod tho Criseyde, and gan therwith to syke,
And seyde, `Lord, is there swich blisse among 885
These lovers, as they conne faire endyte?'
`Ye, wis,' quod freshe Antigone the whyte,
`For alle the folk that han or been on lyve
Ne conne wel the blisse of love discryve.

`But wene ye that every wrecche woot 890
The parfit blisse of love? Why, nay, y-wis;
They wenen al be love, if oon be hoot;
Do wey, do wey, they woot nothing of this!

Men mosten axe at seyntes if it is
Aught fair in hevene; Why? For they conne telle; 895
And axen fendes, is it foul in helle.'

Criseyde un-to that purpos nought answerde,
But seyde, `Y-wis, it wol be night as faste.'
But every word which that she of hir herde,
She gan to prenten in hir herte faste; 900
And ay gan love hir lasse for to agaste
Than it dide erst, and sinken in hir herte,
That she wex somwhat able to converte.

The dayes honour, and the hevenes ye,
The nightes fo, al this clepe I the sonne, 905
Gan westren faste, and dounward for to wrye,
As he that hadde his dayes cours y-ronne;
And whyte thinges wexen dimme and donne
For lak of light, and sterres for to appere,
That she and al hir folk in wente y-fere. 910

So whan it lyked hir to goon to reste,

And voyded weren they that voyden oughte,
She seyde, that to slepe wel hir leste.
Hir wommen sone til hir bed hir broughte.
Whan al was hust, than lay she stille, and thoughte
Of al this thing the manere and the wyse.

Reherce it nedeth nought, for ye ben wyse.

A nightingale, upon a cedre grene,
Under the chambre-wal ther as she lay,
Ful loude sang ayein the mone shene,
Paraunter, in his briddes wyse, a lay
Of love, that made hir herte fresh and gay.
That herkned she so longe in good entente,
Til at the laste the dede sleep hir hente.

And as she sleep, anoon-right tho hir mette,
How that an egle, fethered whyt as boon,
Under hir brest his longe clawes sette,
And out hir herte he rente, and that a-noon,
And dide his herte in-to hir brest to goon,

Of which she nought agroos, ne nothing smerte, 930
And forth he fleigh, with herte left for herte.

Now lat hir slepe, and we our tales holde
Of Troilus, that is to paleys riden,
Fro the scarmuch, of the whiche I tolde,
And in his chaumbre sit, and hath abiden 935
Til two or three of his messages yeden
For Pandarus, and soughten him ful faste,
Til they him founde and broughte him at the laste.

This Pandarus com leping in at ones,
And seiyde thus: `Who hath ben wel y-bete 940
To-day with swerdes, and with slinge-stones,
But Troilus, that hath caught him an hete?'
And gan to Iape, and seyde, `Lord, so ye swete!
But rys, and lat us soupe and go to reste;' 944
And he answerde him, `Do we as thee leste.'

With al the haste goodly that they mighte,
They spedde hem fro the souper un-to bedde;

And every wight out at the dore him dighte,
And wher him liste upon his wey him spedde;
But Troilus, that thoughte his herte bledde 950
For wo, til that he herde som tydinge,
He seyde, `Freend, shal I now wepe or singe?'

Quod Pandarus, `Ly stille and lat me slepe,
And don thyn hood, thy nedes spedde be;
And chese, if thou wolt singe or daunce or lepe; 955
At shorte wordes, thow shal trowe me. —
Sire, my nece wol do wel by thee,
And love thee best, by god and by my trouthe,
But lak of pursuit make it in thy slouthe.

`For thus ferforth I have thy work bigonne, 960
Fro day to day, til this day, by the morwe,
Hir love of freendship have I to thee wonne,
And also hath she leyd hir feyth to borwe.

Algate a foot is hameled of thy sorwe.'
What sholde I lenger sermon of it holde? 965

As ye han herd bifore, al he him tolde.

But right as floures, thorugh the colde of night
Y-closed, stoupen on hir stalke lowe,
Redressen hem a-yein the sonne bright,
And spreden on hir kinde cours by rowe, 970
Right so gan tho his eyen up to throwe
This Troilus, and seyde, `O Venus dere,
Thy might, thy grace, y-heried be it here!'

And to Pandare he held up bothe his hondes,
And seyde, `Lord, al thyn be that I have; 975
For I am hool, al brosten been my bondes;
A thousand Troians who so that me yave,
Eche after other, god so wis me save,
Ne mighte me so gladen; lo, myn herte,
It spredeth so for Ioye, it wol to-sterte! 980

`But Lord, how shal I doon, how shal I liven?
Whan shal I next my dere herte see?
How shal this longe tyme a-wey be driven,

Til that thou be ayein at hir fro me?

Thou mayst answere, "A-byd, a-byd," but he 985

That hangeth by the nekke, sooth to seyne,

In grete disese abydeth for the peyne.'

`Al esily, now, for the love of Marte,'

Quod Pandarus, `for every thing hath tyme;

So longe abyd til that the night departe; 990

For al so siker as thow lyst here by me,

And god toforn, I wol be there at pryme,

And for thy werk somwhat as I shal seye,

Or on som other wight this charge leye.

`For pardee, god wot, I have ever yit 995

Ben redy thee to serve, and to this night

Have I nought fayned, but emforth my wit

Don al thy lust, and shal with al my might.

Do now as I shal seye, and fare a-right;

And if thou nilt, wyte al thy-self thy care, 1000

On me is nought along thyn yvel fare.

`I woot wel that thow wyser art than I
A thousand fold, but if I were as thou,
God help me so, as I wolde outrely,
Right of myn owene hond, wryte hir right now 1005
A lettre, in which I wolde hir tellen how
I ferde amis, and hir beseche of routhe;
Now help thy-self, and leve it not for slouthe.

`And I my-self shal therwith to hir goon;
And whan thou wost that I am with hir there, 1010
Worth thou up-on a courser right anoon,
Ye, hardily, right in thy beste gere,
And ryd forth by the place, as nought ne were,
And thou shalt finde us, if I may, sittinge
At som windowe, in-to the strete lokinge. 1015

`And if thee list, than maystow us saluwe,
And up-on me make thy contenaunce;
But, by thy lyf, be war and faste eschuwe
To tarien ought, god shilde us fro mischaunce!
Ryd forth thy wey, and hold thy governaunce; 1020

And we shal speke of thee somwhat, I trowe,
Whan Thou art goon, to do thyne eres glowe!

`Touching thy lettre, thou art wys y-nough,
I woot thow nilt it digneliche endyte;
As make it with thise argumentes tough;
Ne scrivenish or craftily thou it wryte;
Beblotte it with thy teres eek a lyte;
And if thou wryte a goodly word al softe,
Though it be good, reherce it not to ofte.

`For though the beste harpour upon lyve
Wolde on the beste souned Ioly harpe
That ever was, with alle his fingres fyve,
Touche ay o streng, or ay o werbul harpe,
Were his nayles poynted never so sharpe,
It shulde maken every wight to dulle,
To here his glee, and of his strokes fulle.

`Ne Iompre eek no discordaunt thing y-fere,
As thus, to usen termes of phisyk;

In loves termes, hold of thy matere
The forme alwey, and do that it be lyk; 1040
For if a peyntour wolde peynte a pyk
With asses feet, and hede it as an ape,
It cordeth nought; so nere it but a Iape.'

This counseyl lyked wel to Troilus;
But, as a dreedful lover, he seyde this: — 1045
`Allas, my dere brother Pandarus,
I am ashamed for to wryte, y-wis,
Lest of myn innocence I seyde a-mis,
Or that she nolde it for despyt receyve;
Thanne were I deed, ther mighte it nothing weyve.' 1050

To that Pandare answerde, `If thee lest,
Do that I seye, and lat me therwith goon;
For by that lord that formed est and west,
I hope of it to bringe answere anoon
Right of hir hond, and if that thou nilt noon, 1055
Lat be; and sory mote he been his lyve,
Ayeins thy lust that helpeth thee to thryve.'

Quod Troilus, `Depardieux, I assente;
Sin that thee list, I will aryse and wryte;
And blisful god preye ich, with good entente,
The vyage, and the lettre I shal endyte,
So spede it; and thou, Minerva, the whyte,
Yif thou me wit my lettre to devyse:'
And sette him doun, and wroot right in this wyse. —

First he gan hir his righte lady calle,
His hertes lyf, his lust, his sorwes leche,
His blisse, and eek these othere termes alle,
That in swich cas these loveres alle seche;
And in ful humble wyse, as in his speche,
He gan him recomaunde un-to hir grace;
To telle al how, it axeth muchel space.

And after this, ful lowly he hir prayde
To be nought wrooth, though he, of his folye,
So hardy was to hir to wryte, and seyde,
That love it made, or elles moste he dye,

And pitously gan mercy for to crye;
And after that he seyde, and ley ful loude,
Him-self was litel worth, and lesse he coude;

And that she sholde han his conning excused,
That litel was, and eek he dredde hir so, 1080
And his unworthinesse he ay acused;
And after that, than gan he telle his woo;
But that was endeles, with-outen ho;
And seyde, he wolde in trouthe alwey him holde; —
And radde it over, and gan the lettre folde. 1085

And with his salte teres gan he bathe
The ruby in his signet, and it sette
Upon the wex deliverliche and rathe;
Therwith a thousand tymes, er he lette,
He kiste tho the lettre that he shette, 1090
And seyde, `Lettre, a blisful destenee
Thee shapen is, my lady shal thee see.'

This Pandare took the lettre, and that by tyme

A-morwe, and to his neces paleys sterte,
And faste he swoor, that it was passed pryme, 1095
And gan to Iape, and seyde, `Y-wis, myn herte,
So fresh it is, al-though it sore smerte,
I may not slepe never a Mayes morwe;
I have a Ioly wo, a lusty sorwe.'

Criseyde, whan that she hir uncle herde, 1100
With dreedful herte, and desirous to here
The cause of his cominge, thus answerde:
`Now by your feyth, myn uncle,' quod she, `dere,
What maner windes gydeth yow now here?
Tel us your Ioly wo and your penaunce, 1105
How ferforth be ye put in loves daunce.'

`By god,' quod he, `I hoppe alwey bihinde!'

And she to-laugh, it thoughte hir herte breste.
Quod Pandarus, `Loke alwey that ye finde
Game in myn hood, but herkneth, if yow leste; 1110
Ther is right now come in-to toune a geste,

A Greek espye, and telleth newe thinges,
For which I come to telle yow tydinges.

`Into the gardin go we, and we shal here,
Al prevely, of this a long sermoun.' 1115
With that they wenten arm in arm y-fere
In-to the gardin from the chaumbre doun.
And whan that he so fer was that the soun
Of that he speke, no man here mighte,
He seyde hir thus, and out the lettre plighte, 1120

`Lo, he that is al hoolly youres free
Him recomaundeth lowly to your grace,
And sent to you this lettre here by me;
Avyseth you on it, whan ye han space,
And of som goodly answere yow purchace; 1125
Or, helpe me god, so pleynly for to seyne,
He may not longe liven for his peyne.'

Ful dredfully tho gan she stonde stille,
And took it nought, but al hir humble chere

Gan for to chaunge, and seyde, `Scrit ne bille, 1130
For love of god, that toucheth swich matere,
Ne bring me noon; and also, uncle dere,
To myn estat have more reward, I preye,
Than to his lust; what sholde I more seye?

`And loketh now if this be resonable, 1135
And letteth nought, for favour ne for slouthe,
To seyn a sooth; now were it covenable
To myn estat, by god, and by your trouthe,
To taken it, or to han of him routhe,
In harming of my-self or in repreve? 1140
Ber it a-yein, for him that ye on leve!'

This Pandarus gan on hir for to stare,
And seyde, `Now is this the grettest wonder
That ever I sey! Lat be this nyce fare!
To deethe mote I smiten be with thonder, 1145
If, for the citee which that stondeth yonder,
Wolde I a lettre un-to yow bringe or take
To harm of yow; what list yow thus it make?

`But thus ye faren, wel neigh alle and some,
That he that most desireth yow to serve, 1150
Of him ye recche leest wher he bicome,
And whether that he live or elles sterve.
But for al that that ever I may deserve,
Refuse it nought,' quod he, and hente hir faste,
And in hir bosom the lettre doun he thraste, 1155

And seyde hire, `Now cast it awey anoon,
That folk may seen and gauren on us tweye.'

Quod she, `I can abyde til they be goon,'
And gan to smyle, and seyde hym, `Eem, I preye,
Swich answere as yow list, your-self purveye, 1160
For trewely I nil no lettre wryte.'

`No? than wol I,' quod he, `so ye endyte.'

Therwith she lough, and seyde, `Go we dyne.'
And he gan at him-self to iape faste,

And seyde, `Nece, I have so greet a pyne 1165
For love, that every other day I faste' —
And gan his beste Iapes forth to caste;
And made hir so to laughe at his folye,
That she for laughter wende for to dye.

And whan that she was comen in-to halle, 1170
`Now, eem,' quod she, `we wol go dine anoon;'
And gan some of hir women to hir calle,
And streyght in-to hir chaumbre gan she goon;
But of hir besinesses, this was oon
Amonges othere thinges, out of drede, 1175
Ful prively this lettre for to rede;

Avysed word by word in every lyne,
And fond no lak, she thoughte he coude good;
And up it putte, and went hir in to dyne.
But Pandarus, that in a study stood, 1180
Er he was war, she took him by the hood,
And seyde, `Ye were caught er that ye wiste;'
`I vouche sauf,' quod he. `do what yow liste.'

Tho wesshen they, and sette hem doun and ete;
And after noon ful sleyly Pandarus 1185
Gan drawe him to the window next the strete,
And seyde, `Nece, who hath arayed thus
The yonder hous, that stant afor-yeyn us?'
`Which hous?' quod she, and gan for to biholde,
And knew it wel, and whos it was him tolde, 1190

And fillen forth in speche of thinges smale,
And seten in the window bothe tweye.
Whan Pandarus saw tyme un-to his tale,
And saw wel that hir folk were alle aweye,
`Now, nece myn, tel on,' quod he; `I seye, 1195
How liketh yow the lettre that ye woot?

Can he ther-on? For, by my trouthe, I noot.'

Therwith al rosy hewed tho wex she,
And gan to humme, and seyde, `So I trowe.'
`Aquyte him wel, for goddes love,' quod he; 1200

`My-self to medes wol the lettre sowe.'
And held his hondes up, and sat on knowe,
`Now, goode nece, be it never so lyte,
Yif me the labour, it to sowe and plyte.'

`Ye, for I can so wryte,' quod she tho; 1205
`And eek I noot what I sholde to him seye.'
`Nay, nece,' quod Pandare, `sey nat so;
Yet at the leste thanketh him, I preye,
Of his good wil, and doth him not to deye.
Now for the love of me, my nece dere, 1210
Refuseth not at this tyme my preyere.'

`Depardieux,' quod she, `God leve al be wel!
God help me so, this is the firste lettre
That ever I wroot, ye, al or any del.'
And in-to a closet, for to avyse hir bettre, 1215
She wente allone, and gan hir herte unfettre
Out of disdaynes prison but a lyte;
And sette hir doun, and gan a lettre wryte,

Of which to telle in short is myn entente
Theffect, as fer as I can understonde: — 1220
She thonked him of al that he wel mente
Towardes hir, but holden him in honde
She nolde nought, ne make hir-selven bonde
In love, but as his suster, him to plese,
She wolde fayn to doon his herte an ese. 1225

She shette it, and to Pandarus in gan goon,
There as he sat and loked in-to the strete,
And doun she sette hir by him on a stoon
Of Iaspre, up-on a quisshin gold y-bete,
And seyde, `As wisly helpe me god the grete, 1230
I never dide a thing with more peyne
Than wryte this, to which ye me constreyne;'

And took it him: He thonked hir and seyde,
`God woot, of thing ful ofte looth bigonne
Cometh ende good; and nece myn, Criseyde, 1235
That ye to him of hard now ben y-wonne
Oughte he be glad, by god and yonder sonne!

For-why men seyth, "Impressiounes lighte
Ful lightly been ay redy to the flighte.'

`But ye han pleyed tyraunt neigh to longe, 1240
And hard was it your herte for to grave;
Now stint, that ye no longer on it honge,
Al wolde ye the forme of daunger save.
But hasteth yow to doon him Ioye have;
For trusteth wel, to longe y-doon hardnesse 1245
Causeth despyt ful often, for destresse.'

And right as they declamed this matere,
Lo, Troilus, right at the stretes ende,
Com ryding with his tenthe some y-fere,
Al softely, and thiderward gan bende 1250
Ther-as they sete, as was his way to wende
To paleys-ward; and Pandare him aspyde,
And seyde, `Nece, y-see who cometh here ryde!

`O flee not in, he seeth us, I suppose;
Lest he may thinke that ye him eschuwe.' 1255

`Nay, nay,' quod she, and wex as reed as rose.
With that he gan hir humbly to saluwe
With dreedful chere, and oft his hewes muwe;
And up his look debonairly he caste,
And bekked on Pandare, and forth he paste.

God woot if he sat on his hors a-right,
Or goodly was beseyn, that ilke day!

God woot wher he was lyk a manly knight!
What sholde I drecche, or telle of his aray?
Criseyde, which that alle these thinges say,
To telle in short, hir lyked al y-fere,
His persone, his aray, his look, his chere,

His goodly manere, and his gentillesse,
So wel, that never, sith that she was born,
Ne hadde she swich routhe of his distresse;
And how-so she hath hard ben her-biforn,
To god hope I, she hath now caught a thorn,
She shal not pulle it out this nexte wyke;

God sende mo swich thornes on to pyke!

Pandare, which that stood hir faste by, 1275
Felte iren hoot, and he bigan to smyte,
And seyde, `Nece, I pray yow hertely,
Tel me that I shal axen yow a lyte:
A womman, that were of his deeth to wyte,
With-outen his gilt, but for hir lakked routhe, 1280
Were it wel doon?' Quod she, `Nay, by my trouthe!'

`God help me so,' quod he, `ye sey me sooth.
Ye felen wel your-self that I not lye;
Lo, yond he rit!' Quod she, `Ye, so he dooth!'
`Wel,' quod Pandare, `as I have told yow thrye, 1285
Lat be youre nyce shame and youre folye,
And spek with him in esing of his herte;
Lat nycetee not do yow bothe smerte.'

But ther-on was to heven and to done;
Considered al thing, it may not be; 1290
And why, for shame; and it were eek to sone

To graunten him so greet a libertee.
`For playnly hir entente,' as seyde she,
`Was for to love him unwist, if she mighte,
And guerdon him with nothing but with sighte.' 1295

But Pandarus thoughte, `It shal not be so,
If that I may; this nyce opinioun
Shal not be holden fully yeres two.'
What sholde I make of this a long sermoun?
He moste assente on that conclusioun, 1300
As for the tyme; and whan that it was eve,
And al was wel, he roos and took his leve.

And on his wey ful faste homward he spedde,
And right for Ioye he felte his herte daunce;
And Troilus he fond alone a-bedde, 1305
That lay as dooth these loveres, in a traunce,
Bitwixen hope and derk desesperaunce.
But Pandarus, right at his in-cominge,
He song, as who seyth, `Lo! Sumwhat I bringe,'

And seyde, `Who is in his bed so sone 1310
Y-buried thus?' `It am I, freend,' quod he.

`Who, Troilus? Nay, helpe me so the mone,'
Quod Pandarus, `Thou shalt aryse and see
A charme that was sent right now to thee,
The which can helen thee of thyn accesse, 1315
If thou do forth-with al thy besinesse.'

`Ye, through the might of god!' quod Troilus.
And Pandarus gan him the lettre take,
And seyde, `Pardee, god hath holpen us;
Have here a light, and loke on al this blake.' 1320
But ofte gan the herte glade and quake
Of Troilus, whyl that he gan it rede,
So as the wordes yave him hope or drede.

But fynally, he took al for the beste
That she him wroot, for somwhat he biheld 1325
On which, him thoughte, he mighte his herte reste,
Al covered she the wordes under sheld.

Thus to the more worthy part he held,

That, what for hope and Pandarus biheste,

His grete wo for-yede he at the leste. 1330

But as we may alday our-selven see,

Through more wode or col, the more fyr;

Right so encrees hope, of what it be,

Therwith ful ofte encreseth eek desyr;

Or, as an ook cometh of a litel spyr, 1335

So through this lettre, which that she him sente,

Encresen gan desyr, of which he brente.

Wherfore I seye alwey, that day and night

This Troilus gan to desiren more

Than he dide erst, thurgh hope, and dide his might 1340

To pressen on, as by Pandarus lore,

And wryten to hir of his sorwes sore

Fro day to day; he leet it not refreyde,

That by Pandare he wroot somwhat or seyde;

And dide also his othere observaunces 1345

That to a lovere longeth in this cas;
And, after that these dees turnede on chaunces,
So was he outher glad or seyde `Allas!'
And held after his gestes ay his pas;
And aftir swiche answeres as he hadde,
So were his dayes sory outher gladde.

But to Pandare alwey was his recours,
And pitously gan ay til him to pleyne,
And him bisoughte of rede and som socours;
And Pandarus, that sey his wode peyne,
Wex wel neigh deed for routhe, sooth to seyne,
And bisily with al his herte caste
Som of his wo to sleen, and that as faste;

And seyde, `Lord, and freend, and brother dere,
God woot that thy disese dooth me wo.
But woltow stinten al this woful chere,
And, by my trouthe, or it be dayes two,
And god to-forn, yet shal I shape it so,
That thou shalt come in-to a certayn place,

Ther-as thou mayst thy-self hir preye of grace. 1365

`And certainly, I noot if thou it wost,
But tho that been expert in love it seye,
It is oon of the thinges that furthereth most,
A man to have a leyser for to preye,
And siker place his wo for to biwreye; 1370
For in good herte it moot som routhe impresse,
To here and see the giltles in distresse.

`Paraunter thenkestow: though it be so
That kinde wolde doon hir to biginne
To han a maner routhe up-on my wo, 1375
Seyth Daunger, "Nay, thou shalt me never winne;
So reuleth hir hir hertes goost with-inne,
That, though she bende, yet she stant on rote;
What in effect is this un-to my bote?"

`Thenk here-ayeins, whan that the sturdy ook, 1380
On which men hakketh ofte, for the nones,
Receyved hath the happy falling strook,

The grete sweigh doth it come al at ones,
As doon these rokkes or these milne-stones.
For swifter cours cometh thing that is of wighte,
Whan it descendeth, than don thinges lighte.

`And reed that boweth doun for every blast,
Ful lightly, cesse wind, it wol aryse;
But so nil not an ook whan it is cast;
It nedeth me nought thee longe to forbyse.
Men shal reioysen of a greet empryse
Acheved wel, and stant with-outen doute,
Al han men been the lenger ther-aboute.

`But, Troilus, yet tel me, if thee lest,
A thing now which that I shal axen thee;
Which is thy brother that thou lovest best
As in thy verray hertes privetee?'
`Y-wis, my brother Deiphebus,' quod he.
`Now,' quod Pandare, `er houres twyes twelve,
He shal thee ese, unwist of it him-selve.

`Now lat me allone, and werken as I may,'
Quod he; and to Deiphebus wente he tho
Which hadde his lord and grete freend ben ay;
Save Troilus, no man he lovede so.
To telle in short, with-outen wordes mo, 1405
Quod Pandarus, `I pray yow that ye be
Freend to a cause which that toucheth me.'

`Yis, pardee,' quod Deiphebus, `wel thow wost,
In al that ever I may, and god to-fore,
Al nere it but for man I love most, 1410
My brother Troilus; but sey wherfore
It is; for sith that day that I was bore,
I nas, ne never-mo to been I thinke,
Ayeins a thing that mighte thee for-thinke.'

Pandare gan him thonke, and to him seyde, 1415
`Lo, sire, I have a lady in this toun,
That is my nece, and called is Criseyde,
Which some men wolden doon oppressioun,
And wrongfully have hir possessioun:

Wherfor I of your lordship yow biseche 1420
To been our freend, with-oute more speche.'

Deiphebus him answerde, `O, is not this,
That thow spekest of to me thus straungely,
Criseyda, my freend?' He seyde, `Yis.'
`Than nedeth,' quod Deiphebus, `hardely, 1425
Na-more to speke, for trusteth wel, that I
Wol be hir champioun with spore and yerde;
I roughte nought though alle hir foos it herde.

`But tel me how, thou that woost al this matere,
How I might best avaylen? Now lat see.' 1430
Quod Pandarus; `If ye, my lord so dere,
Wolden as now don this honour to me,
To preyen hir to-morwe, lo, that she
Come un-to yow hir pleyntes to devyse,
Hir adversaries wolde of it agryse. 1435

`And if I more dorste preye as now,
And chargen yow to have so greet travayle,

To han som of your bretheren here with yow,
That mighten to hir cause bet avayle,
Than, woot I wel, she mighte never fayle 1440
For to be holpen, what at your instaunce,
What with hir othere freendes governaunce.'

Deiphebus, which that comen was, of kinde,
To al honour and bountee to consente,
Answerde, `It shal be doon; and I can finde 1445
Yet gretter help to this in myn entente.
What wolt thow seyn, if I for Eleyne sente
To speke of this? I trowe it be the beste;
For she may leden Paris as hir leste.

`Of Ector, which that is my lord, my brother, 1450
It nedeth nought to preye him freend to be;
For I have herd him, o tyme and eek other,
Speke of Criseyde swich honour, that he
May seyn no bet, swich hap to him hath she.
It nedeth nought his helpes for to crave; 1455
He shal be swich, right as we wole him have.

`Spek thou thy-self also to Troilus
On my bihalve, and pray him with us dyne.'
`Sire, al this shal be doon,' quod Pandarus;
And took his leve, and never gan to fyne, 1460
But to his neces hous, as streyt as lyne,
He com; and fond hir fro the mete aryse;
And sette him doun, and spak right in this wyse.

He seyde, `O veray god, so have I ronne!
Lo, nece myn, see ye nought how I swete? 1465
I noot whether ye the more thank me conne.
Be ye nought war how that fals Poliphete
Is now aboute eft-sones for to plete,
And bringe on yow advocacyes newe?'
`I? No,' quod she, and chaunged al hir hewe. 1470

`What is he more aboute, me to drecche
And doon me wrong? What shal I do, allas?
Yet of him-self nothing ne wolde I recche,
Nere it for Antenor and Eneas,

That been his freendes in swich maner cas; 1475
But, for the love of god, myn uncle dere,
No fors of that; lat him have al y-fere;

`With-outen that I have ynough for us.'
`Nay,' quod Pandare, `it shal nothing be so.
For I have been right now at Deiphebus, 1480
And Ector, and myne othere lordes mo,
And shortly maked eche of hem his fo;
That, by my thrift, he shal it never winne
For ought he can, whan that so he biginne.'

And as they casten what was best to done, 1485
Deiphebus, of his owene curtasye,
Com hir to preye, in his propre persone,
To holde him on the morwe companye
At diner, which she nolde not denye,
But goodly gan to his preyere obeye. 1490
He thonked hir, and wente up-on his weye.

Whanne this was doon, this Pandare up a-noon,

To telle in short, and forth gan for to wende
To Troilus, as stille as any stoon;
And al this thing he tolde him, word and ende; 1495
And how that he Deiphebus gan to blende;
And seyde him, `Now is tyme, if that thou conne,
To bere thee wel to-morwe, and al is wonne.

`Now spek, now prey, now pitously compleyne;
Lat not for nyce shame, or drede, or slouthe; 1500
Som-tyme a man mot telle his owene peyne;
Bileve it, and she shal han on thee routhe;
Thou shalt be saved by thy feyth, in trouthe.
But wel wot I, thou art now in a drede;
And what it is, I leye, I can arede. 1505

`Thow thinkest now, "How sholde I doon al this?
For by my cheres mosten folk aspye,
That for hir love is that I fare a-mis;
Yet hadde I lever unwist for sorwe dye."
Now thenk not so, for thou dost greet folye. 1510
For I right now have founden o manere

Of sleighte, for to coveren al thy chere.

`Thow shalt gon over night, and that as blyve,
Un-to Deiphebus hous, as thee to pleye,
Thy maladye a-wey the bet to dryve, 1515
For-why thou semest syk, soth for to seye.
Sone after that, doun in thy bed thee leye,
And sey, thow mayst no lenger up endure,
And ly right there, and byde thyn aventure.

`Sey that thy fever is wont thee for to take 1520
The same tyme, and lasten til a-morwe;
And lat see now how wel thou canst it make,
For, par-dee, syk is he that is in sorwe.
Go now, farwel! And, Venus here to borwe,
I hope, and thou this purpos holde ferme, 1525
Thy grace she shal fully ther conferme.'

Quod Troilus, `Y-wis, thou nedelees
Conseylest me, that sykliche I me feyne,
For I am syk in ernest, doutelees,

So that wel neigh I sterve for the peyne.' 1530
Quod Pandarus, `Thou shalt the bettre pleyne,
And hast the lasse need to countrefete;
For him men demen hoot that men seen swete.

`Lo, holde thee at thy triste cloos, and I
Shal wel the deer un-to thy bowe dryve.' 1535
Therwith he took his leve al softely,
And Troilus to paleys wente blyve.
So glad ne was he never in al his lyve;
And to Pandarus reed gan al assente,
And to Deiphebus hous at night he wente. 1540

What nedeth yow to tellen al the chere
That Deiphebus un-to his brother made,
Or his accesse, or his siklych manere,
How men gan him with clothes for to lade,
Whan he was leyd, and how men wolde him glade? 1545
But al for nought; he held forth ay the wyse
That ye han herd Pandare er this devyse.

But certeyn is, er Troilus him leyde,
Deiphebus had him prayed, over night,
To been a freend and helping to Criseyde. 1550
God woot, that he it grauntede anon-right,
To been hir fulle freend with al his might.
But swich a nede was to preye him thenne,
As for to bidde a wood man for to renne.

The morwen com, and neighen gan the tyme 1555
Of meel-tyd, that the faire quene Eleyne
Shoop hir to been, an houre after the pryme,
With Deiphebus, to whom she nolde feyne;
But as his suster, hoomly, sooth to seyne,
She com to diner in hir playn entente. 1560
But god and Pandare wiste al what this mente.

Com eek Criseyde, al innocent of this,
Antigone, hir sister Tarbe also;
But flee we now prolixitee best is,
For love of god, and lat us faste go 1565
Right to the effect, with-oute tales mo,

Why al this folk assembled in this place;
And lat us of hir saluinges pace.

Gret honour dide hem Deiphebus, certeyn,
And fedde hem wel with al that mighte lyke. 1570
But ever-more, `Allas!' was his refreyn,
`My goode brother Troilus, the syke,
Lyth yet"—and therwith-al he gan to syke;
And after that, he peyned him to glade
Hem as he mighte, and chere good he made. 1575

Compleyned eek Eleyne of his syknesse
So feithfully, that pitee was to here,
And every wight gan waxen for accesse
A leche anoon, and seyde, `In this manere
Men curen folk; this charme I wol yow lere.' 1580
But ther sat oon, al list hir nought to teche,
That thoughte, best coude I yet been his leche.

After compleynt, him gonnen they to preyse,
As folk don yet, whan som wight hath bigonne

To preyse a man, and up with prys him reyse
A thousand fold yet hyer than the sonne: —
`He is, he can, that fewe lordes conne.'
And Pandarus, of that they wolde afferme,
He not for-gat hir preysing to conferme.

Herde al this thing Criseyde wel y-nough,
And every word gan for to notifye;
For which with sobre chere hir herte lough;
For who is that ne wolde hir glorifye,
To mowen swich a knight don live or dye?
But al passe I, lest ye to longe dwelle;
For for o fyn is al that ever I telle.

The tyme com, fro diner for to ryse,
And, as hem oughte, arisen everychoon,
And gonne a while of this and that devyse.
But Pandarus brak al this speche anoon,
And seyde to Deiphebus, `Wole ye goon,
If youre wille be, as I yow preyde,
To speke here of the nedes of Criseyde?'

Eleyne, which that by the hond hir held,
Took first the tale, and seyde, `Go we blyve;' 1605
And goodly on Criseyde she biheld,
And seyde, `Ioves lat him never thryve,
That dooth yow harm, and bringe him sone of lyve!
And yeve me sorwe, but he shal it rewe,
If that I may, and alle folk be trewe.' 1610

`Tel thou thy neces cas,' quod Deiphebus
To Pandarus, `for thou canst best it telle.' —
`My lordes and my ladyes, it stant thus;
What sholde I lenger,' quod he, `do yow dwelle?'
He rong hem out a proces lyk a belle, 1615
Up-on hir fo, that highte Poliphete,
So heynous, that men mighte on it spete.

Answerde of this ech worse of hem than other,
And Poliphete they gonnen thus to warien,
`An-honged be swich oon, were he my brother; 1620
And so he shal, for it ne may not varien.'

What sholde I lenger in this tale tarien?
Pleynly, alle at ones, they hir highten
To been hir helpe in al that ever they mighten.

Spak than Eleyne, and seyde, `Pandarus,
Woot ought my lord, my brother, this matere,
I mene, Ector? Or woot it Troilus?'
He seyde, `Ye, but wole ye now me here?
Me thinketh this, sith Troilus is here,
It were good, if that ye wolde assente,
She tolde hir-self him al this, er she wente.

`For he wole have the more hir grief at herte,
By cause, lo, that she a lady is;
And, by your leve, I wol but right in sterte,
And do yow wite, and that anoon, y-wis,
If that he slepe, or wole ought here of this.'
And in he lepte, and seyde him in his ere,
`God have thy soule, y-brought have I thy bere!'

To smylen of this gan tho Troilus,
And Pandarus, with-oute rekeninge, 1640
Out wente anoon to Eleyne and Deiphebus,
And seyde hem, `So there be no taryinge,
Ne more pres, he wol wel that ye bringe
Criseyda, my lady, that is here;
And as he may enduren, he wole here. 1645

`But wel ye woot, the chaumbre is but lyte,
And fewe folk may lightly make it warm;
Now loketh ye, (for I wol have no wyte,
To bringe in prees that mighte doon him harm
Or him disesen, for my bettre arm), 1650
Wher it be bet she byde til eft-sones;
Now loketh ye, that knowen what to doon is.

`I sey for me, best is, as I can knowe,
That no wight in ne wente but ye tweye,
But it were I, for I can, in a throwe, 1655
Reherce hir cas unlyk that she can seye;
And after this, she may him ones preye

To ben good lord, in short, and take hir leve;
This may not muchel of his ese him reve.

`And eek, for she is straunge, he wol forbere 1660
His ese, which that him thar nought for yow;
Eek other thing that toucheth not to here,
He wol me telle, I woot it wel right now,
That secret is, and for the tounes prow.'
And they, that nothing knewe of his entente, 1665
With-oute more, to Troilus in they wente.

Eleyne, in al hir goodly softe wyse,
Gan him saluwe, and womanly to pleye,
And seyde, `Ywis, ye moste alweyes aryse!
Now fayre brother, beth al hool, I preye!' 1670
And gan hir arm right over his sholder leye,
And him with al hir wit to recomforte;
As she best coude, she gan him to disporte.

So after this quod she, `We yow biseke,
My dere brother, Deiphebus and I, 1675

For love of god, and so doth Pandare eke,
To been good lord and freend, right hertely,
Un-to Criseyde, which that certeinly
Receyveth wrong, as woot wel here Pandare,
That can hir cas wel bet than I declare.' 1680

This Pandarus gan newe his tunge affyle,
And al hir cas reherce, and that anoon;
Whan it was seyd, sone after, in a whyle,
Quod Troilus, `As sone as I may goon,
I wol right fayn with al my might ben oon, 1685
Have god my trouthe, hir cause to sustene.'

`Good thrift have ye,' quod Eleyne the quene.

Quod Pandarus, `And it your wille be
That she may take hir leve, er that she go?'
`O, elles god forbede,' tho quod he, 1690
`If that she vouche sauf for to do so.'
And with that word quod Troilus, `Ye two,
Deiphebus, and my suster leef and dere,

To yow have I to speke of o matere,

`To been avysed by your reed the bettre': — 1695
And fond, as hap was, at his beddes heed,
The copie of a tretis and a lettre,
That Ector hadde him sent to axen reed,
If swich a man was worthy to ben deed,
Woot I nought who; but in a grisly wyse 1700
He preyede hem anoon on it avyse.

Deiphebus gan this lettre to unfolde
In ernest greet; so did Eleyne the quene;
And rominge outward, fast it gan biholde,
Downward a steyre, in-to an herber grene. 1705
This ilke thing they redden hem bi-twene;
And largely, the mountaunce of an houre,
Thei gonne on it to reden and to poure.

Now lat hem rede, and turne we anoon
To Pandarus, that gan ful faste prye 1710
That al was wel, and out he gan to goon

In-to the grete chambre, and that in hye,
And seyde, `God save al this companye!
Com, nece myn; my lady quene Eleyne
Abydeth yow, and eek my lordes tweyne.

`Rys, take with yow your nece Antigone,
Or whom yow list, or no fors, hardily;
The lesse prees, the bet; com forth with me,
And loke that ye thonke humblely
Hem alle three, and, whan ye may goodly
Your tyme y-see, taketh of hem your leve,
Lest we to longe his restes him bireve.'

Al innocent of Pandarus entente,
Quod tho Criseyde, `Go we, uncle dere';
And arm in arm inward with him she wente,
Avysed wel hir wordes and hir chere;
And Pandarus, in ernestful manere,
Seyde, `Alle folk, for goddes love, I preye,
Stinteth right here, and softely yow pleye.

`Aviseth yow what folk ben here with-inne,
And in what plyt oon is, god him amende!
And inward thus ful softely biginne;
Nece, I conjure and heighly yow defende,
On his half, which that sowle us alle sende,
And in the vertue of corounes tweyne,
Slee nought this man, that hath for yow this peyne!

`Fy on the devel! Thenk which oon he is,
And in what plyt he lyth; com of anoon;
Thenk al swich taried tyd, but lost it nis!
That wol ye bothe seyn, whan ye ben oon.
Secoundelich, ther yet devyneth noon
Up-on yow two; come of now, if ye conne;
Whyl folk is blent, lo, al the tyme is wonne!

`In titering, and pursuite, and delayes,
The folk devyne at wagginge of a stree;
And though ye wolde han after merye dayes,
Than dar ye nought, and why? For she, and she
Spak swich a word; thus loked he, and he;

Lest tyme I loste, I dar not with yow dele;
Com of therfore, and bringeth him to hele.'

But now to yow, ye lovers that ben here,
Was Troilus nought in a cankedort,
That lay, and mighte whispringe of hem here,
And thoughte, `O lord, right now renneth my sort
Fully to dye, or han anoon comfort';
And was the firste tyme he shulde hir preye
Of love; O mighty god, what shal he seye?

Explicit Secundus Liber.

BOOK III. Incipit prohemium tercii libri.

O blisful light of whiche the bemes clere
Adorneth al the thridde hevene faire!
O sonnes lief, O Ioves doughter dere,
Plesaunce of love, O goodly debonaire,
In gentil hertes ay redy to repaire!
O verray cause of hele and of gladnesse,
Y-heried be thy might and thy goodnesse!

In hevene and helle, in erthe and salte see
Is felt thy might, if that I wel descerne;
As man, brid, best, fish, herbe and grene tree
Thee fele in tymes with vapour eterne.
God loveth, and to love wol nought werne;
And in this world no lyves creature,
With-outen love, is worth, or may endure.

Ye Ioves first to thilke effectes glade,

Thorugh which that thinges liven alle and be,
Comeveden, and amorous him made
On mortal thing, and as yow list, ay ye
Yeve him in love ese or adversitee;
And in a thousand formes doun him sente
For love in erthe, and whom yow liste, he hente.

Ye fierse Mars apeysen of his ire,
And, as yow list, ye maken hertes digne;
Algates, hem that ye wol sette a-fyre,
They dreden shame, and vices they resigne;
Ye do hem corteys be, fresshe and benigne,
And hye or lowe, after a wight entendeth;
The Ioyes that he hath, your might him sendeth.

Ye holden regne and hous in unitee;
Ye soothfast cause of frendship been also;
Ye knowe al thilke covered qualitee
Of thinges which that folk on wondren so,
Whan they can not construe how it may io,
She loveth him, or why he loveth here;

As why this fish, and nought that, comth to were.

Ye folk a lawe han set in universe,
And this knowe I by hem that loveres be,
That who-so stryveth with yow hath the werse:
Now, lady bright, for thy benignitee,
At reverence of hem that serven thee,
Whos clerk I am, so techeth me devyse
Som Ioye of that is felt in thy servyse.

Ye in my naked herte sentement
Inhelde, and do me shewe of thy swetnesse. —
Caliope, thy vois be now present,
For now is nede; sestow not my destresse,
How I mot telle anon-right the gladnesse
Of Troilus, to Venus heryinge?

To which gladnes, who nede hath, god him bringe!

Explicit prohemium Tercii Libri.

Incipit Liber Tercius.

Lay al this mene whyle Troilus,
Recordinge his lessoun in this manere,
`Ma fey!' thought he, `Thus wole I seye and thus;
Thus wole I pleyne unto my lady dere;
That word is good, and this shal be my chere;
This nil I not foryeten in no wyse.'
God leve him werken as he can devyse!

And, lord, so that his herte gan to quappe,
Heringe hir come, and shorte for to syke!
And Pandarus, that ledde hir by the lappe,
Com ner, and gan in at the curtin pyke,
And seyde, `God do bote on alle syke!
See, who is here yow comen to visyte;
Lo, here is she that is your deeth to wyte.'

Therwith it semed as he wepte almost;
`A ha,' quod Troilus so rewfully,
`Wher me be wo, O mighty god, thow wost!

Who is al there? I se nought trewely.'
`Sire,' quod Criseyde, `it is Pandare and I.'
`Ye, swete herte? Allas, I may nought ryse
To knele, and do yow honour in som wyse.'

And dressede him upward, and she right tho
Gan bothe here hondes softe upon him leye,
`O, for the love of god, do ye not so
To me,' quod she, `Ey! What is this to seye?
Sire, come am I to yow for causes tweye;
First, yow to thonke, and of your lordshipe eke
Continuance I wolde yow biseke.'

This Troilus, that herde his lady preye
Of lordship him, wex neither quik ne deed,
Ne mighte a word for shame to it seye,
Al-though men sholde smyten of his heed.
But lord, so he wex sodeinliche reed,
And sire, his lesson, that he wende conne,
To preyen hir, is thurgh his wit y-ronne.

Cryseyde al this aspyede wel y-nough, 85
For she was wys, and lovede him never-the-lasse,
Al nere he malapert, or made it tough,
Or was to bold, to singe a fool a masse.
But whan his shame gan somwhat to passe,
His resons, as I may my rymes holde, 90
I yow wole telle, as techen bokes olde.

In chaunged vois, right for his verray drede,
Which vois eek quook, and ther-to his manere
Goodly abayst, and now his hewes rede,
Now pale, un-to Criseyde, his lady dere, 95
With look doun cast and humble yolden chere,
Lo, the alderfirste word that him asterte
Was, twyes, `Mercy, mercy, swete herte!'

And stinte a whyl, and whan he mighte out-bringe,
The nexte word was, `God wot, for I have, 100
As feyfully as I have had konninge,
Ben youres, also god so my sowle save;

And shal til that I, woful wight, be grave.
And though I dar ne can un-to yow pleyne,
Y-wis, I suffre nought the lasse peyne. 105

`Thus muche as now, O wommanliche wyf,
I may out-bringe, and if this yow displese,
That shal I wreke upon myn owne lyf
Right sone, I trowe, and doon your herte an ese,
If with my deeth your herte I may apese. 110
But sin that ye han herd me somwhat seye,
Now recche I never how sone that I deye.'

Therwith his manly sorwe to biholde,
It mighte han maad an herte of stoon to rewe;
And Pandare weep as he to watre wolde, 115
And poked ever his nece newe and newe,
And seyde, `Wo bigon ben hertes trewe!
For love of god, make of this thing an ende,
Or slee us bothe at ones, er that ye wende.'

`I? What?' quod she, `By god and by my trouthe, 120

I noot nought what ye wilne that I seye.'
`I? What?' quod he, `That ye han on him routhe,
For goddes love, and doth him nought to deye.'
`Now thanne thus,' quod she, `I wolde him preye
To telle me the fyn of his entente; 125
Yet wist I never wel what that he mente.'

`What that I mene, O swete herte dere?'

Quod Troilus, `O goodly, fresshe free!
That, with the stremes of your eyen clere,
Ye wolde som-tyme freendly on me see, 130
And thanne agreen that I may ben he,
With-oute braunche of vyce on any wyse,
In trouthe alwey to doon yow my servyse,

`As to my lady right and chief resort,
With al my wit and al my diligence, 135
And I to han, right as yow list, comfort,
Under your yerde, egal to myn offence,
As deeth, if that I breke your defence;

And that ye deigne me so muche honoure,
Me to comaunden ought in any houre.

`And I to ben your verray humble trewe,
Secret, and in my paynes pacient,
And ever-mo desire freshly newe,
To serven, and been y-lyke ay diligent,
And, with good herte, al holly your talent
Receyven wel, how sore that me smerte,
Lo, this mene I, myn owene swete herte.'

Quod Pandarus, `Lo, here an hard request,
And resonable, a lady for to werne!
Now, nece myn, by natal Ioves fest,
Were I a god, ye sholde sterve as yerne,
That heren wel, this man wol nothing yerne
But your honour, and seen him almost sterve,
And been so looth to suffren him yow serve.'

With that she gan hir eyen on him caste
Ful esily, and ful debonairly,

Avysing hir, and hyed not to faste
With never a word, but seyde him softely,
`Myn honour sauf, I wol wel trewely,
And in swich forme as he can now devyse, 160
Receyven him fully to my servyse,

`Biseching him, for goddes love, that he
Wolde, in honour of trouthe and gentilesse,
As I wel mene, eek mene wel to me,
And myn honour, with wit and besinesse 165
Ay kepe; and if I may don him gladnesse,
From hennes-forth, y-wis, I nil not feyne:
Now beeth al hool; no lenger ye ne pleyne.

`But nathelees, this warne I yow,' quod she,
`A kinges sone al-though ye be, y-wis, 170
Ye shal na-more have soverainetee
Of me in love, than right in that cas is;
Ne I nil forbere, if that ye doon a-mis,
To wrathen yow; and whyl that ye me serve,
Cherycen yow right after ye deserve. 175

`And shortly, dere herte and al my knight,
Beth glad, and draweth yow to lustinesse,
And I shal trewely, with al my might,
Your bittre tornen al in-to swetenesse.
If I be she that may yow do gladnesse,
For every wo ye shal recovere a blisse';
And him in armes took, and gan him kisse.

Fil Pandarus on knees, and up his eyen
To hevene threw, and held his hondes hye,
`Immortal god!' quod he, `That mayst nought dyen,
Cupide I mene, of this mayst glorifye;
And Venus, thou mayst maken melodye;
With-outen hond, me semeth that in the towne,
For this merveyle, I here ech belle sowne.

`But ho! No more as now of this matere,
For-why this folk wol comen up anoon,
That han the lettre red; lo, I hem here.
But I coniure thee, Criseyde, and oon,

And two, thou Troilus, whan thow mayst goon,
That at myn hous ye been at my warninge, 195
For I ful wel shal shape youre cominge;

`And eseth ther your hertes right y-nough;
And lat see which of yow shal bere the belle
To speke of love a-right!' therwith he lough,
`For ther have ye a layser for to telle.' 200
Quod Troilus, `How longe shal I dwelle
Er this be doon?' Quod he, `Whan thou mayst ryse,
This thing shal be right as I yow devyse.'

With that Eleyne and also Deiphebus
Tho comen upward, right at the steyres ende; 205
And Lord, so than gan grone Troilus,
His brother and his suster for to blende.
Quod Pandarus, `It tyme is that we wende;
Tak, nece myn, your leve at alle three,
And lat hem speke, and cometh forth with me.' 210

She took hir leve at hem ful thriftily,

As she wel coude, and they hir reverence
Un-to the fulle diden hardely,
And speken wonder wel, in hir absence,
Of hir, in preysing of hir excellence,
Hir governaunce, hir wit; and hir manere
Commendeden, it Ioye was to here.

Now lat hir wende un-to hir owne place,
And torne we to Troilus a-yein,
That gan ful lightly of the lettre passe
That Deiphebus hadde in the gardin seyn.
And of Eleyne and him he wolde fayn
Delivered been, and seyde that him leste
To slepe, and after tales have reste.

Eleyne him kiste, and took hir leve blyve,
Deiphebus eek, and hoom wente every wight;
And Pandarus, as faste as he may dryve,
To Troilus tho com, as lyne right;
And on a paillet, al that glade night,
By Troilus he lay, with mery chere,

To tale; and wel was hem they were y-fere.

Whan every wight was voided but they two,
And alle the dores were faste y-shette,
To telle in short, with-oute wordes mo,
This Pandarus, with-outen any lette, 235
Up roos, and on his beddes syde him sette,
And gan to speken in a sobre wyse
To Troilus, as I shal yow devyse:

`Myn alderlevest lord, and brother dere,
God woot, and thou, that it sat me so sore, 240
When I thee saw so languisshing to-yere,
For love, of which thy wo wex alwey more;
That I, with al my might and al my lore,
Have ever sithen doon my bisinesse
To bringe thee to Ioye out of distresse, 245

`And have it brought to swich plyt as thou wost,
So that, thorugh me, thow stondest now in weye
To fare wel, I seye it for no bost,

And wostow which? For shame it is to seye,
For thee have I bigonne a gamen pleye
Which that I never doon shal eft for other,
Al-though he were a thousand fold my brother.

`That is to seye, for thee am I bicomen,
Bitwixen game and ernest, swich a mene
As maken wommen un-to men to comen;
Al sey I nought, thou wost wel what I mene.
For thee have I my nece, of vyces clene,
So fully maad thy gentilesse triste,
That al shal been right as thy-selve liste.

`But god, that al wot, take I to witnesse,
That never I this for coveityse wroughte,
But only for to abregge that distresse,
For which wel nygh thou deydest, as me thoughte.
But, gode brother, do now as thee oughte,
For goddes love, and kep hir out of blame,
Sin thou art wys, and save alwey hir name.

`For wel thou wost, the name as yet of here
Among the peple, as who seyth, halwed is;
For that man is unbore, I dar wel swere,
That ever wiste that she dide amis. 270
But wo is me, that I, that cause al this,
May thenken that she is my nece dere,
And I hir eem, and trattor eek y-fere!

`And were it wist that I, through myn engyn,
Hadde in my nece y-put this fantasye, 275
To do thy lust, and hoolly to be thyn,
Why, al the world up-on it wolde crye,
And seye, that I the worste trecherye
Dide in this cas, that ever was bigonne,
And she for-lost, and thou right nought y-wonne. 280

`Wherfore, er I wol ferther goon a pas,
Yet eft I thee biseche and fully seye,
That privetee go with us in this cas;
That is to seye, that thou us never wreye;
And be nought wrooth, though I thee ofte preye 285

To holden secree swich an heigh matere;
For skilful is, thow wost wel, my preyere.

`And thenk what wo ther hath bitid er this,
For makinge of avantes, as men rede;
And what mischaunce in this world yet ther is,
Fro day to day, right for that wikked dede;
For which these wyse clerkes that ben dede
Han ever yet proverbed to us yonge,
That "Firste vertu is to kepe tonge."

`And, nere it that I wilne as now tabregge
Diffusioun of speche, I coude almost
A thousand olde stories thee alegge
Of wommen lost, thorugh fals and foles bost;
Proverbes canst thy-self y-nowe, and wost,
Ayeins that vyce, for to been a labbe,
Al seyde men sooth as often as they gabbe.

`O tonge, allas! So often here-biforn
Hastow made many a lady bright of hewe

Seyd, "Welawey! The day that I was born!"
And many a maydes sorwes for to newe; 305
And, for the more part, al is untrewe
That men of yelpe, and it were brought to preve;
Of kinde non avauntour is to leve.

`Avauntour and a lyere, al is on;
As thus: I pose, a womman graunte me 310
Hir love, and seyth that other wol she non,
And I am sworn to holden it secree,
And after I go telle it two or three;
Y-wis, I am avauntour at the leste,
And lyere, for I breke my biheste. 315

`Now loke thanne, if they be nought to blame,
Swich maner folk; what shal I clepe hem, what,
That hem avaunte of wommen, and by name,
That never yet bihighte hem this ne that,
Ne knewe hem more than myn olde hat? 320
No wonder is, so god me sende hele,
Though wommen drede with us men to dele.

`I sey not this for no mistrust of yow,
Ne for no wys man, but for foles nyce,
And for the harm that in the world is now,
As wel for foly ofte as for malyce;
For wel wot I, in wyse folk, that vyce
No womman drat, if she be wel avysed;
For wyse ben by foles harm chastysed.

`But now to purpos; leve brother dere,
Have al this thing that I have seyd in minde,
And keep thee clos, and be now of good chere,
For at thy day thou shalt me trewe finde.
I shal thy proces sette in swich a kinde,
And god to-forn, that it shall thee suffyse,
For it shal been right as thou wolt devyse.

`For wel I woot, thou menest wel, parde;
Therfore I dar this fully undertake.
Thou wost eek what thy lady graunted thee,
And day is set, the chartres up to make.

Have now good night, I may no lenger wake;
And bid for me, sin thou art now in blisse,
That god me sende deeth or sone lisse.'

Who mighte telle half the Ioye or feste
Which that the sowle of Troilus tho felte, 345
Heringe theffect of Pandarus biheste?
His olde wo, that made his herte swelte,
Gan tho for Ioye wasten and to-melte,
And al the richesse of his sykes sore
At ones fledde, he felte of hem no more. 350

But right so as these holtes and these hayes,
That han in winter dede been and dreye,
Revesten hem in grene, whan that May is,
Whan every lusty lyketh best to pleye;
Right in that selve wyse, sooth to seye, 355
Wax sodeynliche his herte ful of Ioye,
That gladder was ther never man in Troye.

And gan his look on Pandarus up caste

Ful sobrely, and frendly for to see,
And seyde, `Freend, in Aprille the laste, 360
As wel thou wost, if it remembre thee,
How neigh the deeth for wo thou founde me;
And how thou didest al thy bisinesse
To knowe of me the cause of my distresse.

`Thou wost how longe I it for-bar to seye 365
To thee, that art the man that I best triste;
And peril was it noon to thee by-wreye,
That wiste I wel; but tel me, if thee liste,
Sith I so looth was that thy-self it wiste,
How dorst I mo tellen of this matere, 370
That quake now, and no wight may us here?

`But natheles, by that god I thee swere,
That, as him list, may al this world governe,
And, if I lye, Achilles with his spere
Myn herte cleve, al were my lyf eterne, 375
As I am mortal, if I late or yerne
Wolde it biwreye, or dorste, or sholde conne,

For al the good that god made under sonne;

`That rather deye I wolde, and determyne,
As thinketh me, now stokked in presoun,
In wrecchednesse, in filthe, and in vermyne,
Caytif to cruel king Agamenoun;
And this, in alle the temples of this toun
Upon the goddes alle, I wol thee swere,
To-morwe day, if that thee lyketh here.

`And that thou hast so muche y-doon for me,
That I ne may it never-more deserve,
This knowe I wel, al mighte I now for thee
A thousand tymes on a morwen sterve.
I can no more, but that I wol thee serve
Right as thy sclave, whider-so thou wende,
For ever-more, un-to my lyves ende!

`But here, with al myn herte, I thee biseche,
That never in me thou deme swich folye
As I shal seyn; me thoughte, by thy speche,

That this, which thou me dost for companye,
I sholde wene it were a bauderye;
I am nought wood, al-if I lewed be;
It is not so, that woot I wel, pardee.

`But he that goth, for gold or for richesse,
On swich message, calle him what thee list;
And this that thou dost, calle it gentilesse,
Compassioun, and felawship, and trist;
Departe it so, for wyde-where is wist
How that there is dyversitee requered
Bitwixen thinges lyke, as I have lered.

`And, that thou knowe I thenke nought ne wene
That this servyse a shame be or Iape,
I have my faire suster Polixene,
Cassandre, Eleyne, or any of the frape;
Be she never so faire or wel y-shape,
Tel me, which thou wilt of everichone,
To han for thyn, and lat me thanne allone.

`But, sith that thou hast don me this servyse
My lyf to save, and for noon hope of mede,
So, for the love of god, this grete empryse
Performe it out; for now is moste nede.
For high and low, with-outen any drede,
I wol alwey thyne hestes alle kepe;
Have now good night, and lat us bothe slepe.'

Thus held him ech of other wel apayed,
That al the world ne mighte it bet amende;
And, on the morwe, whan they were arayed,
Ech to his owene nedes gan entende.
But Troilus, though as the fyr he brende
For sharp desyr of hope and of plesaunce,
He not for-gat his gode governaunce.

But in him-self with manhod gan restreyne
Ech rakel dede and ech unbrydled chere,
That alle tho that liven, sooth to seyne,
Ne sholde han wist, by word or by manere,
What that he mente, as touching this matere.

From every wight as fer as is the cloude
He was, so wel dissimulen he coude.

And al the whyl which that I yow devyse, 435
This was his lyf; with al his fulle might,
By day he was in Martes high servyse,
This is to seyn, in armes as a knight;
And for the more part, the longe night
He lay, and thoughte how that he mighte serve 440
His lady best, hir thank for to deserve.

Nil I nought swere, al-though he lay softe,
That in his thought he nas sumwhat disesed,
Ne that he tornede on his pilwes ofte,
And wolde of that him missed han ben sesed; 445
But in swich cas men is nought alwey plesed,
For ought I wot, no more than was he;
That can I deme of possibilitee.

But certeyn is, to purpos for to go,
That in this whyle, as writen is in geste, 450

He say his lady som-tyme; and also
She with him spak, whan that she dorste or leste,
And by hir bothe avys, as was the beste,
Apoynteden ful warly in this nede,
So as they dorste, how they wolde procede. 455

But it was spoken in so short a wyse,
In swich awayt alwey, and in swich fere,
Lest any wyght devynen or devyse
Wolde of hem two, or to it leye an ere,
That al this world so leef to hem ne were 460
As that Cupido wolde hem grace sende
To maken of hir speche aright an ende.

But thilke litel that they spake or wroughte,
His wyse goost took ay of al swich hede,
It semed hir, he wiste what she thoughte 465
With-outen word, so that it was no nede
To bidde him ought to done, or ought forbede;
For which she thought that love, al come it late,
Of alle Ioye hadde opned hir the yate.

And shortly of this proces for to pace,
So wel his werk and wordes he bisette,
That he so ful stood in his lady grace,
That twenty thousand tymes, or she lette,
She thonked god she ever with him mette;
So coude he him governe in swich servyse,
That al the world ne might it bet devyse.

For-why she fond him so discreet in al,
So secret, and of swich obeisaunce,
That wel she felte he was to hir a wal
Of steel, and sheld from every displesaunce;
That, to ben in his gode governaunce,
So wys he was, she was no more afered,
I mene, as fer as oughte ben requered.

And Pandarus, to quike alwey the fyr,
Was evere y-lyke prest and diligent;
To ese his frend was set al his desyr.
He shof ay on, he to and fro was sent;

He lettres bar whan Troilus was absent.
That never man, as in his freendes nede,
Ne bar him bet than he, with-outen drede. 490

But now, paraunter, som man wayten wolde
That every word, or sonde, or look, or chere
Of Troilus that I rehersen sholde,
In al this whyle un-to his lady dere;
I trowe it were a long thing for to here; 495
Or of what wight that stant in swich disioynte,
His wordes alle, or every look, to poynte.

For sothe, I have not herd it doon er this,
In storye noon, ne no man here, I wene;
And though I wolde I coude not, y-wis; 500
For ther was som epistel hem bitwene,
That wolde, as seyth myn auctor, wel contene
Neigh half this book, of which him list not wryte;
How sholde I thanne a lyne of it endyte?

But to the grete effect: than sey I thus, 505

That stonding in concord and in quiete,
Thise ilke two, Criseyde and Troilus,
As I have told, and in this tyme swete,
Save only often mighte they not mete,
Ne layser have hir speches to fulfelle,
That it befel right as I shal yow telle.

That Pandarus, that ever dide his might
Right for the fyn that I shal speke of here,
As for to bringe to his hous som night
His faire nece, and Troilus y-fere,
Wher-as at leyser al this heigh matere,
Touching hir love, were at the fulle up-bounde,
Hadde out of doute a tyme to it founde.

For he with greet deliberacioun
Hadde every thing that her-to mighte avayle
Forn-cast, and put in execucioun.
And neither laft, for cost ne for travayle;
Come if hem list, hem sholde nothing fayle;
And for to been in ought espyed there,

That, wiste he wel, an inpossible were. 525

Dredelees, it cleer was in the wind
Of every pye and every lette-game;
Now al is wel, for al the world is blind
In this matere, bothe fremed and tame.
This timbur is al redy up to frame; 530
Us lakketh nought but that we witen wolde
A certein houre, in which she comen sholde.

And Troilus, that al this purveyaunce
Knew at the fulle, and waytede on it ay,
Hadde here-up-on eek made gret ordenaunce, 535
And founde his cause, and ther-to his aray,
If that he were missed, night or day,
Ther-whyle he was aboute this servyse,
That he was goon to doon his sacrifyse,

And moste at swich a temple alone wake, 540
Answered of Appollo for to be;
And first to seen the holy laurer quake,

Er that Apollo spak out of the tree,
To telle him next whan Grekes sholden flee,
And forthy lette him no man, god forbede,
But preye Apollo helpen in this nede.

Now is ther litel more for to doone,
But Pandare up, and shortly for to seyne,
Right sone upon the chaunging of the mone,
Whan lightles is the world a night or tweyne,
And that the welken shoop him for to reyne,
He streight a-morwe un-to his nece wente;
Ye han wel herd the fyn of his entente.

Whan he was come, he gan anoon to pleye
As he was wont, and of him-self to Iape;
And fynally, he swor and gan hir seye,
By this and that, she sholde him not escape,
Ne lengere doon him after hir to gape;
But certeynly she moste, by hir leve,
Come soupen in his hous with him at eve.

At whiche she lough, and gan hir faste excuse,
And seyde, `It rayneth; lo, how sholde I goon?'
`Lat be,' quod he, `ne stond not thus to muse;
This moot be doon, ye shal be ther anoon.'
So at the laste her-of they felle at oon, 565
Or elles, softe he swor hir in hir ere,
He nolde never come ther she were.

Sone after this, to him she gan to rowne,
And asked him if Troilus were there?
He swor hir, `Nay, for he was out of towne,' 570
And seyde, `Nece, I pose that he were,
Yow thurfte never have the more fere.
For rather than men mighte him ther aspye,
Me were lever a thousand-fold to dye.'

Nought list myn auctor fully to declare 575
What that she thoughte whan he seyde so,
That Troilus was out of town y-fare,
As if he seyde ther-of sooth or no;
But that, with-outen awayt, with him to go,

She graunted him, sith he hir that bisoughte
And, as his nece, obeyed as hir oughte.

But nathelees, yet gan she him biseche,
Al-though with him to goon it was no fere,
For to be war of goosish peples speche,
That dremen thinges whiche that never were,
And wel avyse him whom he broughte there;
And seyde him, `Eem, sin I mot on yow triste,
Loke al be wel, and do now as yow liste.'

He swor hire, `Yis, by stokkes and by stones,
And by the goddes that in hevene dwelle,
Or elles were him levere, soule and bones,
With Pluto king as depe been in helle
As Tantalus!' What sholde I more telle?
Whan al was wel, he roos and took his leve,
And she to souper com, whan it was eve,

With a certayn of hir owene men,
And with hir faire nece Antigone,

And othere of hir wommen nyne or ten;
But who was glad now, who, as trowe ye,
But Troilus, that stood and mighte it see
Thurgh-out a litel windowe in a stewe,
Ther he bishet, sin midnight, was in mewe,

Unwist of every wight but of Pandare?
But to the poynt; now whan that she was y-come
With alle Ioye, and alle frendes fare,
Hir em anoon in armes hath hir nome,
And after to the souper, alle and some,
Whan tyme was, ful softe they hem sette;
God wot, ther was no deyntee for to fette.

And after souper gonnen they to ryse,
At ese wel, with hertes fresshe and glade,
And wel was him that coude best devyse
To lyken hir, or that hir laughen made.

He song; she pleyde; he tolde tale of Wade.
But at the laste, as every thing hath ende,

She took hir leve, and nedes wolde wende.

But O, Fortune, executrice of wierdes,
O influences of thise hevenes hye!
Soth is, that, under god, ye ben our hierdes,
Though to us bestes been the causes wrye. 620
This mene I now, for she gan hoomward hye,
But execut was al bisyde hir leve,
At the goddes wil, for which she moste bleve.

The bente mone with hir hornes pale,
Saturne, and Iove, in Cancro ioyned were, 625
That swich a rayn from hevene gan avale
That every maner womman that was there
Hadde of that smoky reyn a verray fere;
At which Pandare tho lough, and seyde thenne,
`Now were it tyme a lady to go henne! 630

`But goode nece, if I mighte ever plese
Yow any-thing, than prey I yow,' quod he,
`To doon myn herte as now so greet an ese

As for to dwelle here al this night with me,
For-why this is your owene hous, pardee. 635
For, by my trouthe, I sey it nought a-game,
To wende as now, it were to me a shame.'

Criseyde, which that coude as muche good
As half a world, tok hede of his preyere;
And sin it ron, and al was on a flood, 640
She thoughte, as good chep may I dwellen here,
And graunte it gladly with a freendes chere,
And have a thank, as grucche and thanne abyde;
For hoom to goon, it may nought wel bityde.'

`I wol,' quod she, `myn uncle leef and dere, 645
Sin that yow list, it skile is to be so;
I am right glad with yow to dwellen here;
I seyde but a-game, I wolde go.'
`Y-wis, graunt mercy, nece!' quod he tho;
`Were it a game or no, soth for to telle, 650
Now am I glad, sin that yow list to dwelle.'

Thus al is wel; but tho bigan aright
The newe Ioye, and al the feste agayn;
But Pandarus, if goodly hadde he might,
He wolde han hyed hir to bedde fayn,
And seyde, `Lord, this is an huge rayn!
This were a weder for to slepen inne;
And that I rede us sonE to biginne.

`And nece, woot ye wher I wol yow leye,
For that we shul not liggen fer asonder,
And for ye neither shullen, dar I seye,
Heren noise of reynes nor of thondre?
By god, right in my lyte closet yonder.
And I wol in that outer hous allone
Be wardeyn of your wommen everichone.

`And in this middel chaumbre that ye see
Shal youre wommen slepen wel and softe;
And ther I seyde shal your-selve be;
And if ye liggen wel to-night, com ofte,
And careth not what weder is on-lofte.

The wyn anon, and whan so that yow leste,
So go we slepe, I trowe it be the beste.'

Ther nis no more, but here-after sone,
The voyde dronke, and travers drawe anon,
Gan every wight, that hadde nought to done 675
More in the place, out of the chaumber gon.
And ever-mo so sternelich it ron,
And blew therwith so wonderliche loude,
That wel neigh no man heren other coude.

Tho Pandarus, hir eem, right as him oughte, 680
With women swiche as were hir most aboute,
Ful glad un-to hir beddes syde hir broughte,
And toke his leve, and gan ful lowe loute,
And seyde, `Here at this closet-dore with-oute,
Right over-thwart, your wommen liggen alle, 685
That, whom yow list of hem, ye may here calle.'

So whan that she was in the closet leyd,
And alle hir wommen forth by ordenaunce

A-bedde weren, ther as I have seyd,
There was no more to skippen nor to traunce, 690
But boden go to bedde, with mischaunce,
If any wight was steringe any-where,
And late hem slepe that a-bedde were.

But Pandarus, that wel coude eche a del
The olde daunce, and every poynt ther-inne, 695
Whan that he sey that alle thing was wel,
He thoughte he wolde up-on his werk biginne,
And gan the stewe-dore al softe un-pinne;
And stille as stoon, with-outen lenger lette,
By Troilus a-doun right he him sette. 700

And, shortly to the poynt right for to gon,
Of al this werk he tolde him word and ende,
And seyde, `Make thee redy right anon,
For thou shalt in-to hevene blisse wende.'
`Now blisful Venus, thou me grace sende,' 705
Quod Troilus, `for never yet no nede
Hadde I er now, ne halvendel the drede.'

Quod Pandarus, `Ne drede thee never a del,
For it shal been right as thou wilt desyre;
So thryve I, this night shal I make it wel, 710
Or casten al the gruwel in the fyre.'

`Yit blisful Venus, this night thou me enspyre,'
Quod Troilus, `as wis as I thee serve,
And ever bet and bet shal, til I sterve.

`And if I hadde, O Venus ful of murthe, 715
Aspectes badde of Mars or of Saturne,
Or thou combust or let were in my birthe,
Thy fader prey al thilke harm disturne
Of grace, and that I glad ayein may turne,
For love of him thou lovedest in the shawe, 720
I mene Adoon, that with the boor was slawe.

`O Iove eek, for the love of faire Europe,
The whiche in forme of bole awey thou fette;
Now help, O Mars, thou with thy blody cope,

For love of Cipris, thou me nought ne lette;
O Phebus, thenk whan Dane hir-selven shette
Under the bark, and laurer wex for drede,
Yet for hir love, O help now at this nede!

`Mercurie, for the love of Hierse eke,
For which Pallas was with Aglauros wrooth,
Now help, and eek Diane, I thee biseke
That this viage be not to thee looth.
O fatal sustren, which, er any clooth
Me shapen was, my destene me sponne,
So helpeth to this werk that is bigonne!'

Quod Pandarus, `Thou wrecched mouses herte,
Art thou agast so that she wol thee byte?
Why, don this furred cloke up-on thy sherte,
And folowe me, for I wol have the wyte;
But byd, and lat me go bifore a lyte.'
And with that word he gan un-do a trappe,
And Troilus he broughte in by the lappe.

The sterne wind so loude gan to route
That no wight other noyse mighte here;
And they that layen at the dore with-oute, 745
Ful sykerly they slepten alle y-fere;
And Pandarus, with a ful sobre chere,
Goth to the dore anon with-outen lette,
Ther-as they laye, and softely it shette.

And as he com ayeinward prively, 750
His nece awook, and asked, `Who goth there?'
`My dere nece,' quod he, `it am I;
Ne wondreth not, ne have of it no fere;'
And ner he com, and seyde hir in hir ere,
`No word, for love of god I yow biseche; 755
Lat no wight ryse and heren of oure speche.'

`What! Which wey be ye comen, benedicite?'

Quod she; `And how thus unwist of hem alle?'
`Here at this secre trappe-dore,' quod he.
Quod tho Criseyde, `Lat me som wight calle.' 760

`Ey! God forbede that it sholde falle,'

Quod Pandarus, `that ye swich foly wroughte!
They mighte deme thing they never er thoughte!

`It is nought good a sleping hound to wake,
Ne yeve a wight a cause to devyne; 765
Your wommen slepen alle, I undertake,
So that, for hem, the hous men mighte myne;
And slepen wolen til the sonne shyne.
And whan my tale al brought is to an ende,
Unwist, right as I com, so wol I wende. 770

`Now, nece myn, ye shul wel understonde,'
Quod he, `so as ye wommen demen alle,
That for to holde in love a man in honde,
And him hir "leef" and "dere herte" calle,
And maken him an howve above a calle, 775
I mene, as love an other in this whyle,
She doth hir-self a shame, and him a gyle.

`Now wherby that I telle yow al this?
Ye woot your-self, as wel as any wight,
How that your love al fully graunted is
To Troilus, the worthieste knight,
Oon of this world, and ther-to trouthe plyght,
That, but it were on him along, ye nolde
Him never falsen, whyle ye liven sholde.

`Now stant it thus, that sith I fro yow wente,
This Troilus, right platly for to seyn,
Is thurgh a goter, by a prive wente,
In-to my chaumbre come in al this reyn,
Unwist of every maner wight, certeyn,
Save of my-self, as wisly have I Ioye,
And by that feith I shal Pryam of Troye!

`And he is come in swich peyne and distresse
That, but he be al fully wood by this,
He sodeynly mot falle in-to wodnesse,
But-if god helpe; and cause why this is,
He seyth him told is, of a freend of his,

How that ye sholde love oon that hatte Horaste,
For sorwe of which this night shalt been his laste.'

Criseyde, which that al this wonder herde,
Gan sodeynly aboute hir herte colde,
And with a syk she sorwfully answerde,
`Allas! I wende, who-so tales tolde,
My dere herte wolde me not holde
So lightly fals! Allas! Conceytes wronge,
What harm they doon, for now live I to longe!

`Horaste! Allas! And falsen Troilus?
I knowe him not, god helpe me so,' quod she;
`Allas! What wikked spirit tolde him thus?
Now certes, eem, to-morwe, and I him see,
I shal ther-of as ful excusen me
As ever dide womman, if him lyke';
And with that word she gan ful sore syke.

`O god!' quod she, `So worldly selinesse,
Which clerkes callen fals felicitee,

Y-medled is with many a bitternesse! 815
Ful anguisshous than is, god woot,' quod she,
`Condicioun of veyn prosperitee;
For either Ioyes comen nought y-fere,
Or elles no wight hath hem alwey here.

`O brotel wele of mannes Ioye unstable! 820
With what wight so thou be, or how thou pleye,
Either he woot that thou, Ioye, art muable,
Or woot it not, it moot ben oon of tweye;
Now if he woot it not, how may he seye
That he hath verray Ioye and selinesse, 825
That is of ignoraunce ay in derknesse?

`Now if he woot that Ioye is transitorie,
As every Ioye of worldly thing mot flee,
Than every tyme he that hath in memorie,
The drede of lesing maketh him that he 830
May in no perfit selinesse be.
And if to lese his Ioye he set a myte,
Than semeth it that Ioye is worth ful lyte.

`Wherfore I wol deffyne in this matere,
That trewely, for ought I can espye,
Ther is no verray wele in this world here.
But O, thou wikked serpent, Ialousye,
Thou misbeleved and envious folye,
Why hastow Troilus me mad untriste,
That never yet agilte him, that I wiste?'

Quod Pandarus, `Thus fallen is this cas.'
`Why, uncle myn,' quod she, `who tolde him this?

Why doth my dere herte thus, allas?'
`Ye woot, ye nece myn,' quod he, `what is;
I hope al shal be wel that is amis,
For ye may quenche al this, if that yow leste,
And doth right so, for I holde it the beste.'

`So shal I do to-morwe, y-wis,' quod she,
`And god to-forn, so that it shal suffyse.'
`To-morwe? Allas, that were a fair!' quod he,

`Nay, nay, it may not stonden in this wyse;
For, nece myn, thus wryten clerkes wyse,
That peril is with drecching in y-drawe;
Nay, swich abodes been nought worth an hawe.

`Nece, al thing hath tyme, I dar avowe; 855
For whan a chaumber a-fyr is, or an halle,
Wel more nede is, it sodeynly rescowe
Than to dispute, and axe amonges alle
How is this candele in the straw y-falle?
A! Benedicite! For al among that fare 860
The harm is doon, and fare-wel feldefare!

`And, nece myn, ne take it not a-greef,
If that ye suffre him al night in this wo,
God help me so, ye hadde him never leef,
That dar I seyn, now there is but we two; 865
But wel I woot, that ye wol not do so;
Ye been to wys to do so gret folye,
To putte his lyf al night in Iupertye.

`Hadde I him never leef? By god, I wene
Ye hadde never thing so leef,' quod she. 870
`Now by my thrift,' quod he, `that shal be sene;
For, sin ye make this ensample of me,
If I al night wolde him in sorwe see
For al the tresour in the toun of Troye,
I bidde god, I never mote have Ioye! 875

`Now loke thanne, if ye, that been his love,
Shul putte al night his lyf in Iupartye
For thing of nought! Now, by that god above,
Nought only this delay comth of folye,
But of malyce, if that I shal nought lye. 880
What, platly, and ye suffre him in distresse,
Ye neither bountee doon ne gentilesse!'

Quod tho Criseyde, `Wole ye doon o thing,
And ye therwith shal stinte al his disese?
Have here, and bereth him this blewe ringe, 885
For ther is nothing mighte him bettre plese,
Save I my-self, ne more his herte apese;

And sey my dere herte, that his sorwe
Is causeles, that shal be seen to-morwe.'

`A ring?' quod he, `Ye, hasel-wodes shaken!
Ye nece myn, that ring moste han a stoon
That mighte dede men alyve maken;
And swich a ring trowe I that ye have noon.
Discrecioun out of your heed is goon;
That fele I now,' quod he, `and that is routhe;
O tyme y-lost, wel maystow cursen slouthe!

`Wot ye not wel that noble and heigh corage
Ne sorweth not, ne stinteth eek for lyte?
But if a fool were in a Ialous rage,
I nolde setten at his sorwe a myte,
But feffe him with a fewe wordes whyte
Another day, whan that I mighte him finde;
But this thing stant al in another kinde.

`This is so gentil and so tendre of herte,
That with his deeth he wol his sorwes wreke;

For trusteth wel, how sore that him smerte,
He wol to yow no Ialouse wordes speke.
And for-thy, nece, er that his herte breke,
So spek your-self to him of this matere;
For with o word ye may his herte stere. 910

`Now have I told what peril he is inne,
And his coming unwist is to every wight;
Ne, pardee, harm may ther be noon, ne sinne;
I wol my-self be with yow al this night.
Ye knowe eek how it is your owne knight, 915
And that, by right, ye moste upon him triste,
And I al prest to fecche him whan yow liste.'

This accident so pitous was to here,
And eek so lyk a sooth, at pryme face,
And Troilus hir knight to hir so dere, 920
His prive coming, and the siker place,
That, though that she dide him as thanne a grace,
Considered alle thinges as they stode,
No wonder is, sin she dide al for gode.

Cryseyde answerde, `As wisly god at reste 925
My sowle bringe, as me is for him wo!
And eem, y-wis, fayn wolde I doon the beste,
If that I hadde grace to do so.
But whether that ye dwelle or for him go,
I am, til god me bettre minde sende, 930
At dulcarnon, right at my wittes ende.'

Quod Pandarus, `Ye, nece, wol ye here?
Dulcarnon called is "fleminge of wrecches";
It semeth hard, for wrecches wol not lere
For verray slouthe or othere wilful tecches; 935
This seyd by hem that be not worth two fecches.
But ye ben wys, and that we han on honde
Nis neither hard, ne skilful to withstonde.'

`Thanne, eem,' quod she, `doth her-of as yow list;
But er he come, I wil up first aryse; 940
And, for the love of god, sin al my trist
Is on yow two, and ye ben bothe wyse,

So wircheth now in so discreet a wyse,
That I honour may have, and he plesaunce;
For I am here al in your governaunce.' 945

`That is wel seyd,' quod he, `my nece dere'
Ther good thrift on that wyse gentil herte!
But liggeth stille, and taketh him right here,
It nedeth not no ferther for him sterte;
And ech of yow ese otheres sorwes smerte, 950
For love of god; and, Venus, I the herie;
For sone hope I we shulle ben alle merie.'

This Troilus ful sone on knees him sette
Ful sobrely, right be hir beddes heed,
And in his beste wyse his lady grette; 955
But lord, so she wex sodeynliche reed!
Ne, though men sholden smyten of hir heed,
She coude nought a word a-right out-bringe
So sodeynly, for his sodeyn cominge.

But Pandarus, that so wel coude fele 960

In every thing, to pleye anoon bigan,
And seyde, `Nece, see how this lord can knele!
Now, for your trouthe, seeth this gentil man!'
And with that word he for a quisshen ran,
And seyde, `Kneleth now, whyl that yow leste, 965
Ther god your hertes bringe sone at reste!'

Can I not seyn, for she bad him not ryse,
If sorwe it putte out of hir remembraunce,
Or elles that she toke it in the wyse
Of duetee, as for his observaunce; 970
But wel finde I she dide him this plesaunce,
That she him kiste, al-though she syked sore;
And bad him sitte a-doun with-outen more.

Quod Pandarus, `Now wol ye wel biginne;
Now doth him sitte, gode nece dere, 975
Upon your beddes syde al there with-inne,
That ech of yow the bet may other here.'
And with that word he drow him to the fere,
And took a light, and fond his contenaunce,

As for to loke up-on an old romaunce. 980

Criseyde, that was Troilus lady right,
And cleer stood on a ground of sikernesse,
Al thoughte she, hir servaunt and hir knight
Ne sholde of right non untrouthe in hir gesse,
Yet nathelees, considered his distresse, 985
And that love is in cause of swich folye,
Thus to him spak she of his Ialousye:

`Lo, herte myn, as wolde the excellence
Of love, ayeins the which that no man may,
Ne oughte eek goodly maken resistence 990
And eek bycause I felte wel and say
Youre grete trouthe, and servyse every day;
And that your herte al myn was, sooth to seyne,
This droof me for to rewe up-on your peyne.

`And your goodnesse have I founde alwey yit, 995
Of whiche, my dere herte and al my knight,
I thonke it yow, as fer as I have wit,

Al can I nought as muche as it were right;
And I, emforth my conninge and my might,
Have and ay shal, how sore that me smerte,
Ben to yow trewe and hool, with a myn herte;

`And dredelees, that shal be founde at preve. —
But, herte myn, what al this is to seyne
Shal wel be told, so that ye noght yow greve,
Though I to yow right on your-self compleyne.
For therwith mene I fynally the peyne,
That halt your herte and myn in hevinesse,
Fully to sleen, and every wrong redresse.

`My goode, myn, not I for-why ne how
That Ialousye, allas! That wikked wivere,
Thus causelees is cropen in-to yow;
The harm of which I wolde fayn delivere!
Allas! That he, al hool, or of him slivere,
Shuld have his refut in so digne a place,
Ther Iove him sone out of your herte arace!

`But O, thou Iove, O auctor of nature,
Is this an honour to thy deitee,
That folk ungiltif suffren here iniure,
And who that giltif is, al quit goth he?
O were it leful for to pleyne on thee, 1020
That undeserved suffrest Ialousye,
Of that I wolde up-on thee pleyne and crye!

`Eek al my wo is this, that folk now usen
To seyn right thus, "Ye, Ialousye is love!"
And wolde a busshel venim al excusen, 1025
For that o greyn of love is on it shove!
But that wot heighe god that sit above,
If it be lyker love, or hate, or grame;
And after that, it oughte bere his name.

`But certeyn is, som maner Ialousye 1030
Is excusable more than som, y-wis.
As whan cause is, and som swich fantasye
With pietee so wel repressed is,
That it unnethe dooth or seyth amis,

But goodly drinketh up al his distresse; 1035
And that excuse I, for the gentilesse.

`And som so ful of furie is and despyt
That it sourmounteth his repressioun;
But herte myn, ye be not in that plyt,
That thanke I god, for whiche your passioun 1040
I wol not calle it but illusioun,
Of habundaunce of love and bisy cure,
That dooth your herte this disese endure.

`Of which I am right sory but not wrooth;
But, for my devoir and your hertes reste, 1045
Wher-so yow list, by ordal or by ooth,
By sort, or in what wyse so yow leste,
For love of god, lat preve it for the beste!
And if that I be giltif, do me deye,
Allas! What mighte I more doon or seye?' 1050

With that a fewe brighte teres newe
Owt of hir eyen fille, and thus she seyde,

`Now god, thou wost, in thought ne dede untrewe
To Troilus was never yet Criseyde.'
With that hir heed doun in the bed she leyde,
And with the shete it wreigh, and syghed sore,
And held hir pees; not o word spak she more.

But now help god to quenchen al this sorwe,
So hope I that he shal, for he best may;
For I have seyn, of a ful misty morwe
Folwen ful ofte a mery someres day;
And after winter folweth grene May.
Men seen alday, and reden eek in stories,
That after sharpe shoures been victories.

This Troilus, whan he hir wordes herde,
Have ye no care, him liste not to slepe;
For it thoughte him no strokes of a yerde
To here or seen Criseyde, his lady wepe;
But wel he felte aboute his herte crepe,
For every teer which that Criseyde asterte,
The crampe of deeth, to streyne him by the herte.

And in his minde he gan the tyme acurse
That he cam there, and that that he was born;
For now is wikke y-turned in-to worse,
And al that labour he hath doon biforn, 1075
He wende it lost, he thoughte he nas but lorn.
`O Pandarus,' thoughte he, `allas! Thy wyle
Serveth of nought, so weylaway the whyle!'

And therwithal he heng a-doun the heed,
And fil on knees, and sorwfully he sighte; 1080
What mighte he seyn? He felte he nas but deed,
For wrooth was she that shulde his sorwes lighte.
But nathelees, whan that he speken mighte,
Than seyde he thus, `God woot, that of this game,
Whan al is wist, than am I not to blame!' 1085

Therwith the sorwe so his herte shette,
That from his eyen fil there not a tere,
And every spirit his vigour in-knette,
So they astoned or oppressed were.

The feling of his sorwe, or of his fere, 1090
Or of ought elles, fled was out of towne;
And doun he fel al sodeynly a-swowne.

This was no litel sorwe for to see;
But al was hust, and Pandare up as faste,
`O nece, pees, or we be lost,' quod he, 1095
`Beth nought agast;' But certeyn, at the laste,
For this or that, he in-to bedde him caste,
And seyde, `O theef, is this a mannes herte?'
And of he rente al to his bare sherte;

And seyde, `Nece, but ye helpe us now, 1100
Allas, your owne Troilus is lorn!'
`Y-wis, so wolde I, and I wiste how,
Ful fayn,' quod she; `Allas! That I was born!'
`Ye, nece, wole ye pullen out the thorn
That stiketh in his herte?' quod Pandare; 1105
`Sey "Al foryeve," and stint is al this fare!'

`Ye, that to me,' quod she, `ful lever were

Than al the good the sonne aboute gooth';
And therwithal she swoor him in his ere,
`Y-wis, my dere herte, I am nought wrooth, 1110
Have here my trouthe and many another ooth;
Now speek to me, for it am I, Cryseyde!'
But al for nought; yet mighte he not a-breyde.

Therwith his pous and pawmes of his hondes
They gan to frote, and wete his temples tweyne, 1115
And, to deliveren him from bittre bondes,
She ofte him kiste; and, shortly for to seyne,
Him to revoken she dide al hir peyne.
And at the laste, he gan his breeth to drawe,
And of his swough sone after that adawe, 1120

And gan bet minde and reson to him take,
But wonder sore he was abayst, y-wis.
And with a syk, whan he gan bet a-wake,
He seyde, `O mercy, god, what thing is this?'
`Why do ye with your-selven thus amis?' 1125
Quod tho Criseyde, `Is this a mannes game?

What, Troilus! Wol ye do thus, for shame?'

And therwithal hir arm over him she leyde,
And al foryaf, and ofte tyme him keste.
He thonked hir, and to hir spak, and seyde
As fil to purpos for his herte reste.
And she to that answerde him as hir leste;
And with hir goodly wordes him disporte
She gan, and ofte his sorwes to comforte.

Quod Pandarus, `For ought I can espyen,
This light, nor I ne serven here of nought;
Light is not good for syke folkes yen.
But for the love of god, sin ye be brought
In thus good plyt, lat now non hevy thought
Ben hanginge in the hertes of yow tweye:'
And bar the candele to the chimeneye.

Sone after this, though it no nede were,
Whan she swich othes as hir list devyse

Hadde of him take, hir thoughte tho no fere,
Ne cause eek non, to bidde him thennes ryse. 1145
Yet lesse thing than othes may suffyse
In many a cas; for every wight, I gesse,
That loveth wel meneth but gentilesse.

But in effect she wolde wite anoon
Of what man, and eek where, and also why 1150
He Ielous was, sin ther was cause noon;
And eek the signe, that he took it by,
She bad him that to telle hir bisily,
Or elles, certeyn, she bar him on honde,
That this was doon of malis, hir to fonde. 1155

With-outen more, shortly for to seyne,
He moste obeye un-to his lady heste;
And for the lasse harm, he moste feyne.
He seyde hir, whan she was at swiche a feste,
She mighte on him han loked at the leste; 1160
Not I not what, al dere y-nough a risshe,
As he that nedes moste a cause fisshe.

And she answerde, `Swete, al were it so,
What harm was that, sin I non yvel mene?
For, by that god that boughte us bothe two, 1165
In alle thinge is myn entente clene.
Swich arguments ne been not worth a bene;
Wol ye the childish Ialous contrefete?

Now were it worthy that ye were y-bete.'

Tho Troilus gan sorwfully to syke, 1170
Lest she be wrooth, him thoughte his herte deyde;
And seyde, `Allas! Up-on my sorwes syke
Have mercy, swete herte myn, Cryseyde!
And if that, in tho wordes that I seyde,
Be any wrong, I wol no more trespace; 1175
Do what yow list, I am al in your grace.'

And she answerde, `Of gilt misericorde!
That is to seyn, that I foryeve al this;
And ever-more on this night yow recorde,

And beth wel war ye do no more amis.'
`Nay, dere herte myn,' quod he, `y-wis.'
`And now,' quod she, `that I have do yow smerte,
Foryeve it me, myn owene swete herte.'

This Troilus, with blisse of that supprysed,
Put al in goddes hond, as he that mente
Nothing but wel; and, sodeynly avysed,
He hir in armes faste to him hente.
And Pandarus, with a ful good entente,
Leyde him to slepe, and seyde, `If ye ben wyse,
Swowneth not now, lest more folk aryse.'

What mighte or may the sely larke seye,
Whan that the sperhauk hath it in his foot?
I can no more, but of thise ilke tweye,
To whom this tale sucre be or soot,
Though that I tarie a yeer, som-tyme I moot,
After myn auctor, tellen hir gladnesse,
As wel as I have told hir hevinesse.

Criseyde, which that felte hir thus y-take,
As writen clerkes in hir bokes olde,
Right as an aspes leef she gan to quake, 1200
Whan she him felte hir in his armes folde.
But Troilus, al hool of cares colde,
Gan thanken tho the blisful goddes sevene;
Thus sondry peynes bringen folk in hevene.

This Troilus in armes gan hir streyne, 1205
And seyde, `O swete, as ever mote I goon,
Now be ye caught, now is ther but we tweyne;
Now yeldeth yow, for other boot is noon.'
To that Criseyde answerde thus anoon,
`Ne hadde I er now, my swete herte dere, 1210
Ben yolde, y-wis, I were now not here!'

O! Sooth is seyd, that heled for to be
As of a fevre or othere greet syknesse,
Men moste drinke, as men may often see,
Ful bittre drink; and for to han gladnesse, 1215
Men drinken often peyne and greet distresse;

I mene it here, as for this aventure,
That thourgh a peyne hath founden al his cure.

And now swetnesse semeth more sweet,
That bitternesse assayed was biforn;
For out of wo in blisse now they flete;
Non swich they felten, sith they were born;
Now is this bet, than bothe two be lorn!
For love of god, take every womman hede
To werken thus, if it comth to the nede.

Criseyde, al quit from every drede and tene,
As she that iuste cause hadde him to triste,
Made him swich feste, it Ioye was to sene,
Whan she his trouthe and clene entente wiste.
And as aboute a tree, with many a twiste,
Bitrent and wryth the sote wode-binde,
Gan eche of hem in armes other winde.

And as the newe abaysshed nightingale,
That stinteth first whan she biginneth to singe,

Whan that she hereth any herde tale,
Or in the hegges any wight steringe,
And after siker dooth hir voys out-ringe;
Right so Criseyde, whan hir drede stente,
Opned hir herte and tolde him hir entente.

And right as he that seeth his deeth y-shapen,
And deye moot, in ought that he may gesse,
And sodeynly rescous doth him escapen,
And from his deeth is brought in sikernesse,
For al this world, in swich present gladnesse
Was Troilus, and hath his lady swete;
With worse hap god lat us never mete!

Hir armes smale, hir streyghte bak and softe,
Hir sydes longe, fleshly, smothe, and whyte
He gan to stroke, and good thrift bad ful ofte
Hir snowish throte, hir brestes rounde and lyte;
Thus in this hevene he gan him to delyte,
And therwith-al a thousand tyme hir kiste;
That, what to done, for Ioye unnethe he wiste.

Than seyde he thus, `O, Love, O, Charitee,
Thy moder eek, Citherea the swete, 1255
After thy-self next heried be she,
Venus mene I, the wel-willy planete;
And next that, Imeneus, I thee grete;
For never man was to yow goddes holde
As I, which ye han brought fro cares colde. 1260

`Benigne Love, thou holy bond of thinges,
Who-so wol grace, and list thee nought honouren,
Lo, his desyr wol flee with-outen winges.
For, noldestow of bountee hem socouren
That serven best and most alwey labouren, 1265
Yet were al lost, that dar I wel seyn, certes,
But-if thy grace passed our desertes.

`And for thou me, that coude leest deserve
Of hem that nombred been un-to thy grace,
Hast holpen, ther I lykly was to sterve, 1270
And me bistowed in so heygh a place

That thilke boundes may no blisse pace,
I can no more, but laude and reverence
Be to thy bounte and thyn excellence!'

And therwithal Criseyde anoon he kiste, 1275
Of which, certeyn, she felte no disese,
And thus seyde he, `Now wolde god I wiste,
Myn herte swete, how I yow mighte plese!
What man,' quod he, `was ever thus at ese
As I, on whiche the faireste and the beste 1280
That ever I say, deyneth hir herte reste.

`Here may men seen that mercy passeth right;
The experience of that is felt in me,
That am unworthy to so swete a wight.
But herte myn, of your benignitee, 1285
So thenketh, though that I unworthy be,
Yet mot I nede amenden in som wyse,
Right thourgh the vertu of your heyghe servyse.

`And for the love of god, my lady dere,

Sin god hath wrought me for I shal yow serve, 1290
As thus I mene, that ye wol be my stere,
To do me live, if that yow liste, or sterve,
So techeth me how that I may deserve
Your thank, so that I, thurgh myn ignoraunce,
Ne do nothing that yow be displesaunce. 1295

`For certes, fresshe wommanliche wyf,
This dar I seye, that trouthe and diligence,
That shal ye finden in me al my lyf,
Ne wol not, certeyn, breken your defence;
And if I do, present or in absence, 1300
For love of god, lat slee me with the dede,
If that it lyke un-to your womanhede.'

`Y-wis,' quod she, `myn owne hertes list,
My ground of ese, and al myn herte dere,
Graunt mercy, for on that is al my trist; 1305
But late us falle awey fro this matere;
For it suffyseth, this that seyd is here.
And at o word, with-outen repentaunce,

Wel-come, my knight, my pees, my suffisaunce!'

Of hir delyt, or Ioyes oon the leste
Were impossible to my wit to seye;
But iuggeth, ye that han ben at the feste,
Of swich gladnesse, if that hem liste pleye!
I can no more, but thus thise ilke tweye
That night, be-twixen dreed and sikernesse,
Felten in love the grete worthinesse.

O blisful night, of hem so longe y-sought,
How blithe un-to hem bothe two thou were!
Why ne hadde I swich on with my soule y-bought,
Ye, or the leeste Ioye that was there?
A-wey, thou foule daunger and thou fere,
And lat hem in this hevene blisse dwelle,
That is so heygh, that al ne can I telle!

But sooth is, though I can not tellen al,
As can myn auctor, of his excellence,
Yet have I seyd, and, god to-forn, I shal

In every thing al hoolly his sentence.
And if that I, at loves reverence,
Have any word in eched for the beste,
Doth therwithal right as your-selven leste. 1330

For myne wordes, here and every part,
I speke hem alle under correccioun
Of yow, that feling han in loves art,
And putte it al in your discrecioun
To encrese or maken diminucioun 1335
Of my langage, and that I yow biseche;
But now to purpos of my rather speche.

Thise ilke two, that ben in armes laft,
So looth to hem asonder goon it were,
That ech from other wende been biraft, 1340
Or elles, lo, this was hir moste fere,
That al this thing but nyce dremes were;
For which ful ofte ech of hem seyde, `O swete,
Clippe ich yow thus, or elles I it mete?'

And, lord! So he gan goodly on hir see, 1345
That never his look ne bleynte from hir face,
And seyde, `O dere herte, may it be
That it be sooth, that ye ben in this place?'

`Ye, herte myn, god thank I of his grace!'
Quod tho Criseyde, and therwithal him kiste, 1350
That where his spirit was, for Ioye he niste.

This Troilus ful ofte hir eyen two
Gan for to kisse, and seyde, `O eyen clere,
It were ye that wroughte me swich wo,
Ye humble nettes of my lady dere! 1355
Though ther be mercy writen in your chere,
God wot, the text ful hard is, sooth, to finde,
How coude ye with-outen bond me binde?'

Therwith he gan hir faste in armes take,
And wel an hundred tymes gan he syke, 1360
Nought swiche sorwfull sykes as men make
For wo, or elles whan that folk ben syke,

But esy sykes, swiche as been to lyke,
That shewed his affeccioun with-inne;
Of swiche sykes coude he nought bilinne.

Sone after this they speke of sondry thinges,
As fil to purpos of this aventure,
And pleyinge entrechaungeden hir ringes,
Of which I can nought tellen no scripture;
But wel I woot, a broche, gold and asure,
In whiche a ruby set was lyk an herte,
Criseyde him yaf, and stak it on his sherte.

Lord! trowe ye, a coveitous, a wreccbe,
That blameth love and holt of it despyt,
That, of tho pens that he can mokre and kecche,
Was ever yet y-yeve him swich delyt,
As is in love, in oo poynt, in som plyt?
Nay, doutelees, for also god me save,
So parfit Ioye may no nigard have!

They wol sey `Yis,' but lord! So that they lye,

Tho bisy wrecches, ful of wo and drede!
They callen love a woodnesse or folye,
But it shal falle hem as I shal yow rede;
They shul forgo the whyte and eke the rede,
And live in wo, ther god yeve hem mischaunce, 1385
And every lover in his trouthe avaunce!

As wolde god, tho wrecches, that dispyse
Servyse of love, hadde eres al-so longe
As hadde Myda, ful of coveityse,
And ther-to dronken hadde as hoot and stronge 1390
As Crassus dide for his affectis wronge,
To techen hem that they ben in the vyce,
And loveres nought, al-though they holde hem nyce!

Thise ilke two, of whom that I yow seye,
Whan that hir hertes wel assured were, 1395
Tho gonne they to speken and to pleye,
And eek rehercen how, and whanne, and where,
They knewe hem first, and every wo and fere
That passed was; but al swich hevinesse,

I thanke it god, was tourned to gladnesse.

And ever-mo, whan that hem fel to speke
Of any thing of swich a tyme agoon,
With kissing al that tale sholde breke,
And fallen in a newe Ioye anoon,
And diden al hir might, sin they were oon,
For to recoveren blisse and been at ese,
And passed wo with Ioye countrepeyse.

Reson wil not that I speke of sleep,
For it accordeth nought to my matere;
God woot, they toke of that ful litel keep,
But lest this night, that was to hem so dere,
Ne sholde in veyn escape in no manere,
It was biset in Ioye and bisinesse
Of al that souneth in-to gentilnesse.

But whan the cok, comune astrologer,
Gan on his brest to bete, and after crowe,
And Lucifer, the dayes messager,

Gan for to ryse, and out hir bemes throwe;
And estward roos, to him that coude it knowe,
Fortuna maior, than anoon Criseyde, 1420
With herte sore, to Troilus thus seyde: —

`Myn hertes lyf, my trist and my plesaunce,
That I was born, allas! What me is wo,
That day of us mot make desseveraunce!
For tyme it is to ryse, and hennes go, 1425
Or elles I am lost for evermo!
O night, allas! Why niltow over us hove,
As longe as whanne Almena lay by Iove?

`O blake night, as folk in bokes rede,
That shapen art by god this world to hyde 1430
At certeyn tymes with thy derke wede,
That under that men mighte in reste abyde,
Wel oughte bestes pleyne, and folk thee chyde,
That thereas day with labour wolde us breste,
That thou thus fleest, and deynest us nought reste! 1435

`Thou dost, allas! To shortly thyn offyce,
Thou rakel night, ther god, makere of kinde,
Thee, for thyn hast and thyn unkinde vyce,
So faste ay to our hemi-spere binde.
That never-more under the ground thou winde! 1440
For now, for thou so hyest out of Troye,
Have I forgon thus hastily my Ioye!'

This Troilus, that with tho wordes felte,
As thoughte him tho, for pietous distresse,
The blody teres from his herte melte, 1445
As he that never yet swich hevinesse
Assayed hadde, out of so greet gladnesse,
Gan therwithal Criseyde his lady dere
In armes streyne, and seyde in this manere: —

`O cruel day, accusour of the Ioye 1450
That night and love han stole and faste y-wryen,
Acursed be thy coming in-to Troye,
For every bore hath oon of thy bright yen!

Envyous day, what list thee so to spyen?
What hastow lost, why sekestow this place, 1455
Ther god thy lyght so quenche, for his grace?

`Allas! What han thise loveres thee agilt,
Dispitous day? Thyn be the pyne of helle!
For many a lovere hastow shent, and wilt;
Thy pouring in wol no-wher lete hem dwelle. 1460
What proferestow thy light here for to selle?
Go selle it hem that smale seles graven,
We wol thee nought, us nedeth no day haven.'

And eek the sonne Tytan gan he chyde,
And seyde, `O fool, wel may men thee dispyse, 1465
That hast the Dawing al night by thy syde,
And suffrest hir so sone up fro thee ryse,
For to disesen loveres in this wyse.

What! Holde your bed ther, thou, and eek thy Morwe!
I bidde god, so yeve yow bothe sorwe!' 1470

Therwith ful sore he sighte, and thus he seyde,
`My lady right, and of my wele or wo
The welle and rote, O goodly myn, Criseyde,
And shal I ryse, allas! And shal I go?
Now fele I that myn herte moot a-two! 1475
For how sholde I my lyf an houre save,
Sin that with yow is al the lyf I have?

`What shal I doon, for certes, I not how,
Ne whanne, allas! I shal the tyme see,
That in this plyt I may be eft with yow; 1480
And of my lyf, god woot, how that shal be,
Sin that desyr right now so byteth me,
That I am deed anoon, but I retourne.

How sholde I longe, allas! Fro yow soiourne?

`But nathelees, myn owene lady bright, 1485
Yit were it so that I wiste outrely,
That I, your humble servaunt and your knight,
Were in your herte set so fermely

As ye in myn, the which thing, trewely,
Me lever were than thise worldes tweyne, 1490
Yet sholde I bet enduren al my peyne.'

To that Cryseyde answerde right anoon,
And with a syk she seyde, `O herte dere,
The game, y-wis, so ferforth now is goon,
That first shal Phebus falle fro his spere, 1495
And every egle been the dowves fere,
And every roche out of his place sterte,
Er Troilus out of Criseydes herte!

`Ye he so depe in-with myn herte grave,
That, though I wolde it turne out of my thought, 1500
As wisly verray god my soule save,
To dyen in the peyne, I coude nought!
And, for the love of god that us bath wrought,
Lat in your brayn non other fantasye
So crepe, that it cause me to dye! 1505

`And that ye me wolde han as faste in minde

As I have yow, that wolde I yow biseche;
And, if I wiste soothly that to finde,
God mighte not a poynt my Ioyes eche!
But, herte myn, with-oute more speche, 1510
Beth to me trewe, or elles were it routhe;
For I am thyn, by god and by my trouthe!

`Beth glad for-thy, and live in sikernesse;
Thus seyde I never er this, ne shal to mo;
And if to yow it were a gret gladnesse 1515
To turne ayein, soone after that ye go,
As fayn wolde I as ye, it were so,
As wisly god myn herte bringe at reste!'

And him in armes took, and ofte keste.

Agayns his wil, sin it mot nedes be, 1520
This Troilus up roos, and faste him cledde,
And in his armes took his lady free
An hundred tyme, and on his wey him spedde,
And with swich wordes as his herte bledde,

He seyde, `Farewel, mr dere herte swete, 1525
Ther god us graunte sounde and sone to mete!'

To which no word for sorwe she answerde,
So sore gan his parting hir destreyne;
And Troilus un-to his palays ferde,
As woo bigon as she was, sooth to seyne; 1530
So hard him wrong of sharp desyr the peyne
For to ben eft there he was in plesaunce,
That it may never out of his remembraunce.

Retorned to his real palais, sone
He softe in-to his bed gan for to slinke, 1535
To slepe longe, as he was wont to done,
But al for nought; he may wel ligge and winke,
But sleep ne may ther in his herte sinke;
Thenkinge how she, for whom desyr him brende,
A thousand-fold was worth more than he wende. 1540

And in his thought gan up and doun to winde
Hir wordes alle, and every countenaunce,

And fermely impressen in his minde
The leste poynt that to him was plesaunce;
And verrayliche, of thilke remembraunce, 1545
Desyr al newe him brende, and lust to brede
Gan more than erst, and yet took he non hede.

Criseyde also, right in the same wyse,
Of Troilus gan in hir herte shette
His worthinesse, his lust, his dedes wyse, 1550
His gentilesse, and how she with him mette,
Thonkinge love he so wel hir bisette;
Desyring eft to have hir herte dere
In swich a plyt, she dorste make him chere.

Pandare, a-morwe which that comen was 1555
Un-to his nece, and gan hir fayre grete,
Seyde, `Al this night so reyned it, allas!
That al my drede is that ye, nece swete,
Han litel layser had to slepe and mete;
Al night,' quod he, `hath reyn so do me wake, 1560
That som of us, I trowe, hir hedes ake.'

And ner he com, and seyde, `How stont it now
This mery morwe, nece, how can ye fare?'
Criseyde answerde, `Never the bet for yow,
Fox that ye been, god yeve youre herte care! 1565
God help me so, ye caused al this fare,
Trow I,' quod she, `for alle your wordes whyte;
O! Who-so seeth yow knoweth yow ful lyte!'

With that she gan hir face for to wrye
With the shete, and wex for shame al reed; 1570
And Pandarus gan under for to prye,
And seyde, `Nece, if that I shal be deed,
Have here a swerd, and smyteth of myn heed.'
With that his arm al sodeynly he thriste
Under hir nekke, and at the laste hir kiste. 1575

I passe al that which chargeth nought to seye,
What! God foryaf his deeth, and she al-so
Foryaf, and with hir uncle gan to pleye,
For other cause was ther noon than so.

But of this thing right to the effect to go,
Whan tyme was, hom til hir hous she wente,
And Pandarus hath fully his entente.

Now torne we ayein to Troilus,
That resteles ful longe a-bedde lay,
And prevely sente after Pandarus,
To him to come in al the haste he may.

He com anoon, nought ones seyde he `nay,'
And Troilus ful sobrely he grette,
And doun upon his beddes syde him sette.

This Troilus, with al the affeccioun
Of frendes love that herte may devyse,
To Pandarus on knees fil adoun,
And er that he wolde of the place aryse,
He gan him thonken in his beste wyse;
An hondred sythe he gan the tyme blesse,
That he was born, to bringe him fro distresse.

He seyde, `O frend of frendes the alderbeste
That ever was, the sothe for to telle,
Thou hast in hevene y-brought my soule at reste
Fro Flegitoun, the fery flood of helle;
That, though I mighte a thousand tymes selle,
Upon a day, my lyf in thy servyse,
It mighte nought a mote in that suffyse.

`The sonne, which that al the world may see,
Saw never yet, my lyf, that dar I leye,
So inly fayr and goodly as is she,
Whos I am al, and shal, til that I deye;
And, that I thus am hires, dar I seye,
That thanked be the heighe worthinesse
Of love, and eek thy kinde bisinesse.

`Thus hastow me no litel thing y-yive,
Fo which to thee obliged be for ay
My lyf, and why? For thorugh thyn help I live;
For elles deed hadde I be many a day.'
And with that word doun in his bed he lay,

And Pandarus ful sobrely him herde
Til al was seyd, and than he thus answerde:

`My dere frend, if I have doon for thee
In any cas, god wot, it is me leef;
And am as glad as man may of it be, 1620
God help me so; but tak now a-greef
That I shal seyn, be war of this myscheef,
That, thereas thou now brought art in-to blisse,
That thou thy-self ne cause it nought to misse.

`For of fortunes sharpe adversitee 1625
The worst kinde of infortune is this,
A man to have ben in prosperitee,
And it remembren, whan it passed is.
Thou art wys y-nough, for-thy do nought amis;
Be not to rakel, though thou sitte warme,
For if thou be, certeyn, it wol thee harme. 1631

`Thou art at ese, and holde the wel ther-inne.
For also seur as reed is every fyr,

As greet a craft is kepe wel as winne;
Brydle alwey wel thy speche and thy desyr, 1635
For worldly Ioye halt not but by a wyr;
That preveth wel, it brest alday so ofte;
For-thy nede is to werke with it softe.'

Quod Troilus, `I hope, and god to-forn,
My dere frend, that I shal so me bere, 1640
That in my gilt ther shal no thing be lorn,
Ne I nil not rakle as for to greven here;
It nedeth not this matere ofte tere;
For wistestow myn herte wel, Pandare,
God woot, of this thou woldest litel care.' 1645

Tho gan he telle him of his glade night,
And wher-of first his herte dredde, and how,
And seyde, `Freend, as I am trewe knight,
And by that feyth I shal to god and yow,
I hadde it never half so hote as now; 1650
And ay the more that desyr me byteth
To love hir best, the more it me delyteth.

`I noot my-self not wisly what it is;
But now I fele a newe qualitee,
Ye, al another than I dide er this.'
Pandare answerde, and seyde thus, that he
That ones may in hevene blisse be,
He feleth other weyes, dar I leye,
Than thilke tyme he first herde of it seye.

This is o word for al: this Troilus
Was never ful to speke of this matere,
And for to preysen un-to Pandarus
The bountee of his righte lady dere,
And Pandarus to thanke and maken chere.
This tale ay was span-newe to biginne,
Til that the night departed hem a-twinne.

Sone after this, for that fortune it wolde,
I-comen was the blisful tyme swete,
That Troilus was warned that he sholde,
Ther he was erst, Criseyde his lady mete;

For which he felte his herte in Ioye flete;
And feythfully gan alle the goddes herie;
And lat see now if that he can be merie.

And holden was the forme and al the wyse,
Of hir cominge, and eek of his also, 1675
As it was erst, which nedeth nought devyse.
But playnly to the effect right for to go,
In Ioye and suerte Pandarus hem two
A-bedde broughte, whan that hem bothe leste,
And thus they ben in quiete and in reste. 1680

Nought nedeth it to yow, sin they ben met,
To aske at me if that they blythe were;
For if it erst was wel, tho was it bet
A thousand-fold, this nedeth not enquere.
A-gon was every sorwe and every fere; 1685
And bothe, y-wis, they hadde, and so they wende,
As muche Ioye as herte may comprende.

This is no litel thing of for to seye,

This passeth every wit for to devyse;
For eche of hem gan otheres lust obeye;
Felicitee, which that thise clerkes wyse
Commenden so, ne may not here suffyse.
This Ioye may not writen been with inke,
This passeth al that herte may bithinke.

But cruel day, so wel-awey the stounde!
Gan for to aproche, as they by signes knewe,
For whiche hem thoughte felen dethes wounde;
So wo was hem, that changen gan hir hewe,
And day they goonnen to dispyse al newe,
Calling it traytour, envyous, and worse,
And bitterly the dayes light they curse.

Quod Troilus, `Allas! Now am I war
That Pirous and tho swifte stedes three,
Whiche that drawen forth the sonnes char,
Han goon som by-path in despyt of me;
That maketh it so sone day to be;
And, for the sonne him hasteth thus to ryse,

Ne shal I never doon him sacrifyse!'

But nedes day departe moste hem sone,
And whanne hir speche doon was and hir chere, 1710
They twinne anoon as they were wont to done,
And setten tyme of meting eft y-fere;
And many a night they wroughte in this manere.
And thus Fortune a tyme ladde in Ioye
Criseyde, and eek this kinges sone of Troye. 1715

In suffisaunce, in blisse, and in singinges,
This Troilus gan al his lyf to lede;
He spendeth, Iusteth, maketh festeynges;
He yeveth frely ofte, and chaungeth wede,
And held aboute him alwey, out of drede, 1720
A world of folk, as cam him wel of kinde,
The fressheste and the beste he coude fynde;

That swich a voys was of hym and a stevene
Thorugh-out the world, of honour and largesse,
That it up rong un-to the yate of hevene. 1725

And, as in love, he was in swich gladnesse,
That in his herte he demede, as I gesse,
That there nis lovere in this world at ese
So wel as he, and thus gan love him plese.

The godlihede or beautee which that kinde
In any other lady hadde y-set
Can not the mountaunce of a knot unbinde,
A-boute his herte, of al Criseydes net.
He was so narwe y-masked and y-knet,
That it undon on any manere syde,
That nil not been, for ought that may betyde.

And by the hond ful ofte he wolde take
This Pandarus, and in-to gardin lede,
And swich a feste and swich a proces make
Him of Criseyde, and of hir womanhede,
And of hir beautee, that, with-outen drede,
It was an hevene his wordes for to here;
And thanne he wolde singe in this manere.

`Love, that of erthe and see hath governaunce,
Love, that his hestes hath in hevene hye, 1745
Love, that with an holsom alliaunce
Halt peples ioyned, as him list hem gye,
Love, that knetteth lawe of companye,
And couples doth in vertu for to dwelle,
Bind this acord, that I have told and telle; 1750

`That that the world with feyth, which that is stable,
Dyverseth so his stoundes concordinge,
That elements that been so discordable
Holden a bond perpetuely duringe,
That Phebus mote his rosy day forth bringe, 1755
And that the mone hath lordship over the nightes,
Al this doth Love; ay heried be his mightes!

`That, that the see, that gredy is to flowen,
Constreyneth to a certeyn ende so
His flodes, that so fersly they ne growen 1760
To drenchen erthe and al for ever-mo;
And if that Love ought lete his brydel go,

Al that now loveth asonder sholde lepe,
And lost were al, that Love halt now to-hepe.

`So wolde god, that auctor is of kinde, 1765
That, with his bond, Love of his vertu liste
To cerclen hertes alle, and faste binde,
That from his bond no wight the wey out wiste.
And hertes colde, hem wolde I that he twiste
To make hem love, and that hem leste ay rewe 1770
On hertes sore, and kepe hem that ben trewe.'

In alle nedes, for the tounes werre,
He was, and ay the firste in armes dight;
And certeynly, but-if that bokes erre,
Save Ector, most y-drad of any wight; 1775
And this encrees of hardinesse and might
Cam him of love, his ladies thank to winne,
That altered his spirit so with-inne.

In tyme of trewe, on haukinge wolde he ryde,
Or elles hunten boor, bere, or lyoun; 1780

The smale bestes leet he gon bi-syde.
And whan that he com rydinge in-to toun,
Ful ofte his lady, from hir window doun,
As fresh as faucon comen out of muwe,
Ful redy was, him goodly to saluwe. 1785

And most of love and vertu was his speche,
And in despyt hadde alle wrecchednesse;
And doutelees, no nede was him biseche
To honouren hem that hadde worthinesse,
And esen hem that weren in distresse. 1790
And glad was he if any wight wel ferde,
That lover was, whan he it wiste or herde.

For sooth to seyn, he lost held every wight
But-if he were in loves heigh servyse,
I mene folk that oughte it been of right. 1795
And over al this, so wel coude he devyse
Of sentement, and in so unkouth wyse
Al his array, that every lover thoughte,
That al was wel, what-so he seyde or wroughte.

And though that he be come of blood royal,
Him liste of pryde at no wight for to chase;
Benigne he was to ech in general,
For which he gat him thank in every place.
Thus wolde love, y-heried be his grace,
That Pryde, Envye, Ire, and Avaryce
He gan to flee, and every other vyce.

Thou lady bright, the doughter to Dione,
Thy blinde and winged sone eek, daun Cupyde;
Ye sustren nyne eek, that by Elicone
In hil Parnaso listen for to abyde,
That ye thus fer han deyned me to gyde,
I can no more, but sin that ye wol wende,
Ye heried been for ay, with-outen ende!

Thourgh yow have I seyd fully in my song
Theffect and Ioye of Troilus servyse,
Al be that ther was som disese among,
As to myn auctor listeth to devyse.

My thridde book now ende ich in this wyse;

And Troilus in luste and in quiete

Is with Criseyde, his owne herte swete. 1820

Explicit Liber Tercius.

BOOK IV. Incipit Prohemium Liber Quartus.

But al to litel, weylaway the whyle,
Lasteth swich Ioye, y-thonked be Fortune!
That semeth trewest, whan she wol bygyle,
And can to foles so hir song entune,
That she hem hent and blent, traytour comune;
And whan a wight is from hir wheel y-throwe,
Than laugheth she, and maketh him the mowe.

From Troilus she gan hir brighte face
Awey to wrythe, and took of him non hede,
But caste him clene out of his lady grace,
And on hir wheel she sette up Diomede;
For which right now myn herte ginneth blede,
And now my penne, allas! With which I wryte,
Quaketh for drede of that I moot endyte.

For how Criseyde Troilus forsook,
Or at the leste, how that she was unkinde,

Mot hennes-forth ben matere of my book,
As wryten folk through which it is in minde.
Allas! That they sholde ever cause finde
To speke hir harm; and if they on hir lye,
Y-wis, hem-self sholde han the vilanye.

O ye Herines, Nightes doughtren three,
That endelees compleynen ever in pyne,
Megera, Alete, and eek Thesiphone;
Thou cruel Mars eek, fader to Quiryne,
This ilke ferthe book me helpeth fyne,
So that the los of lyf and love y-fere
Of Troilus be fully shewed here.

Explicit prohemium.

Incipit Quartus Liber.

Ligginge in ost, as I have seyd er this,
The Grekes stronge, aboute Troye toun,
Bifel that, whan that Phebus shyning is

Up-on the brest of Hercules Lyoun,
That Ector, with ful many a bold baroun,
Caste on a day with Grekes for to fighte,
As he was wont to greve hem what he mighte.

Not I how longe or short it was bitwene
This purpos and that day they fighte mente;
But on a day wel armed, bright and shene,
Ector, and many a worthy wight out wente,
With spere in hond and bigge bowes bente;
And in the herd, with-oute lenger lette,
Hir fomen in the feld anoon hem mette.

The longe day, with speres sharpe y-grounde,
With arwes, dartes, swerdes, maces felle,
They fighte and bringen hors and man to grounde,
And with hir axes out the braynes quelle.
But in the laste shour, sooth for to telle,
The folk of Troye hem-selven so misledden,
That with the worse at night homward they fledden.

At whiche day was taken Antenor,
Maugre Polydamas or Monesteo,
Santippe, Sarpedon, Polynestor,
Polyte, or eek the Troian daun Ripheo,
And othere lasse folk, as Phebuseo.
So that, for harm, that day the folk of Troye
Dredden to lese a greet part of hir Ioye.

Of Pryamus was yeve, at Greek requeste,
A tyme of trewe, and tho they gonnen trete,
Hir prisoneres to chaungen, moste and leste,
And for the surplus yeven sommes grete.
This thing anoon was couth in every strete,
Bothe in thassege, in toune, and every-where,
And with the firste it cam to Calkas ere.

Whan Calkas knew this tretis sholde holde,
In consistorie, among the Grekes, sone
He gan in thringe forth, with lordes olde,
And sette him there-as he was wont to done;
And with a chaunged face hem bad a bone,

For love of god, to don that reverence,
To stinte noyse, and yeve him audience. 70

Thanne seyde he thus, `Lo! Lordes myne, I was
Troian, as it is knowen out of drede;
And, if that yow remembre, I am Calkas,
That alderfirst yaf comfort to your nede,
And tolde wel how that ye sholden spede. 75
For dredelees, thorugh yow, shal, in a stounde,
Ben Troye y-brend, and beten doun to grounde.

`And in what forme, or in what maner wyse
This town to shende, and al your lust to acheve,
Ye han er this wel herd it me devyse; 80
This knowe ye, my lordes, as I leve.
And for the Grekes weren me so leve,
I com my-self in my propre persone,
To teche in this how yow was best to done;

`Havinge un-to my tresour ne my rente 85
Right no resport, to respect of your ese.

Thus al my good I loste and to yow wente,
Wening in this you, lordes, for to plese.

But al that los ne doth me no disese.
I vouche-sauf, as wisly have I Ioye, 90
For you to lese al that I have in Troye,

`Save of a doughter, that I lafte, allas!

Slepinge at hoom, whanne out of Troye I sterte.
O sterne, O cruel fader that I was!
How mighte I have in that so hard an herte? 95
Allas! I ne hadde y-brought hir in hir sherte!
For sorwe of which I wol not live to morwe,
But-if ye lordes rewe up-on my sorwe.

`For, by that cause I say no tyme er now
Hir to delivere, I holden have my pees; 100
But now or never, if that it lyke yow,
I may hir have right sone, doutelees.
O help and grace! Amonges al this prees,

Rewe on this olde caitif in destresse,
Sin I through yow have al this hevinesse! 105

`Ye have now caught and fetered in prisoun
Troians y-nowe; and if your willes be,
My child with oon may have redempcioun.
Now for the love of god and of bountee,
Oon of so fele, allas! So yeve him me. 110
What nede were it this preyere for to werne,
Sin ye shul bothe han folk and toun as yerne?

`On peril of my lyf, I shal nat lye,
Appollo hath me told it feithfully;
I have eek founde it be astronomye, 115
By sort, and by augurie eek trewely,
And dar wel seye, the tyme is faste by,
That fyr and flaumbe on al the toun shal sprede;
And thus shal Troye turne to asshen dede.

`For certeyn, Phebus and Neptunus bothe, 120
That makeden the walles of the toun,

Ben with the folk of Troye alwey so wrothe,
That thei wol bringe it to confusioun,
Right in despyt of king Lameadoun.
By-cause he nolde payen hem hir hyre, 125
The toun of Troye shal ben set on-fyre.'

Telling his tale alwey, this olde greye,
Humble in speche, and in his lokinge eke,
The salte teres from his eyen tweye
Ful faste ronnen doun by eyther cheke. 130
So longe he gan of socour hem by-seke
That, for to hele him of his sorwes sore,
They yave him Antenor, with-oute more.

But who was glad y-nough but Calkas tho?
And of this thing ful sone his nedes leyde 135
On hem that sholden for the tretis go,
And hem for Antenor ful ofte preyde
To bringen hoom king Toas and Criseyde;
And whan Pryam his save-garde sente,
Thembassadours to Troye streyght they wente. 140

The cause y-told of hir cominge, the olde
Pryam the king ful sone in general
Let here-upon his parlement to holde,
Of which the effect rehersen yow I shal.
Thembassadours ben answered for fynal,
Theschaunge of prisoners and al this nede
Hem lyketh wel, and forth in they procede.

This Troilus was present in the place,
Whan axed was for Antenor Criseyde,
For which ful sone chaungen gan his face,
As he that with tho wordes wel neigh deyde.
But nathelees, he no word to it seyde,
Lest men sholde his affeccioun espye;
With mannes herte he gan his sorwes drye.

And ful of anguissh and of grisly drede
Abood what lordes wolde un-to it seye;
And if they wolde graunte, as god forbede,
Theschaunge of hir, than thoughte he thinges tweye,

First, how to save hir honour, and what weye
He mighte best theschaunge of hir withstonde; 160
Ful faste he caste how al this mighte stonde.

Love him made al prest to doon hir byde,
And rather dye than she sholde go;
But resoun seyde him, on that other syde,
`With-oute assent of hir ne do not so, 165
Lest for thy werk she wolde be thy fo,
And seyn, that thorugh thy medling is y-blowe
Your bother love, there it was erst unknowe.'

For which he gan deliberen, for the beste,
That though the lordes wolde that she wente, 170
He wolde lat hem graunte what hem leste,
And telle his lady first what that they mente.
And whan that she had seyd him hir entente,
Ther-after wolde he werken also blyve,
Though al the world ayein it wolde stryve. 175

Ector, which that wel the Grekes herde,

For Antenor how they wolde han Criseyde,
Gan it withstonde, and sobrely answerde: —
`Sires, she nis no prisoner,' he seyde;
`I noot on yow who that this charge leyde, 180
But, on my part, ye may eft-sone hem telle,
We usen here no wommen for to selle.'

The noyse of peple up-stirte thanne at ones,
As breme as blase of straw y-set on fyre;
For infortune it wolde, for the nones, 185
They sholden hir confusioun desyre.
`Ector,' quod they, `what goost may yow enspyre
This womman thus to shilde and doon us lese
Daun Antenor? — a wrong wey now ye chese —

`That is so wys, and eek so bold baroun, 190
And we han nede to folk, as men may see;
He is eek oon, the grettest of this toun;
O Ector, lat tho fantasyes be!
O king Priam,' quod they, `thus seggen we,
That al our voys is to for-gon Criseyde;' 195

And to deliveren Antenor they preyde.

O Iuvenal, lord! Trewe is thy sentence,
That litel witen folk what is to yerne
That they ne finde in hir desyr offence;
For cloud of errour let hem not descerne
What best is; and lo, here ensample as yerne.
This folk desiren now deliveraunce
Of Antenor, that broughte hem to mischaunce!

For he was after traytour to the toun
Of Troye; allas! They quitte him out to rathe;
O nyce world, lo, thy discrecioun!
Criseyde, which that never dide hem skathe,
Shal now no lenger in hir blisse bathe;
But Antenor, he shal com hoom to toune,
And she shal out; thus seyden here and howne.

For which delibered was by parlement
For Antenor to yelden out Criseyde,
And it pronounced by the president,

Al-theigh that Ector `nay' ful ofte preyde.
And fynaly, what wight that it with-seyde, 215
It was for nought, it moste been, and sholde;
For substaunce of the parlement it wolde.

Departed out of parlement echone,
This Troilus, with-oute wordes mo,
Un-to his chaumbre spedde him faste allone, 220
But-if it were a man of his or two,
The whiche he bad out faste for to go,
By-cause he wolde slepen, as he seyde,
And hastely up-on his bed him leyde.

And as in winter leves been biraft, 225
Eche after other, til the tree be bare,
So that ther nis but bark and braunche y-laft,
Lyth Troilus, biraft of ech wel-fare,
Y-bounden in the blake bark of care,
Disposed wood out of his wit to breyde, 230
So sore him sat the chaunginge of Criseyde.

He rist him up, and every dore he shette
And windowe eek, and tho this sorweful man
Up-on his beddes syde a-doun him sette,
Ful lyk a deed image pale and wan;
And in his brest the heped wo bigan
Out-breste, and he to werken in this wyse
In his woodnesse, as I shal yow devyse.

Right as the wilde bole biginneth springe
Now here, now there, y-darted to the herte,
And of his deeth roreth in compleyninge,
Right so gan he aboute the chaumbre sterte,
Smyting his brest ay with his festes smerte;
His heed to the wal, his body to the grounde
Ful ofte he swapte, him-selven to confounde.

His eyen two, for pitee of his herte,
Out stremeden as swifte welles tweye;
The heighe sobbes of his sorwes smerte
His speche him refte, unnethes mighte he seye,
`O deeth, allas! Why niltow do me deye?

A-cursed be the day which that nature
Shoop me to ben a lyves creature!'

But after, whan the furie and the rage
Which that his herte twiste and faste threste,
By lengthe of tyme somwhat gan asswage,
Up-on his bed he leyde him doun to reste;
But tho bigonne his teres more out-breste,
That wonder is, the body may suffyse
To half this wo, which that I yow devyse.

Than seyde he thus, `Fortune! Allas the whyle!
What have I doon, what have I thus a-gilt?

How mightestow for reuthe me bigyle?
Is ther no grace, and shal I thus be spilt?

Shal thus Criseyde awey, for that thou wilt?
Allas! How maystow in thyn herte finde
To been to me thus cruel and unkinde?

`Have I thee nought honoured al my lyve,
As thou wel wost, above the goddes alle?
Why wiltow me fro Ioye thus depryve?
O Troilus, what may men now thee calle
But wrecche of wrecches, out of honour falle
In-to miserie, in which I wol biwayle
Criseyde, allas! Til that the breeth me fayle?

`Allas, Fortune! If that my lyf in Ioye
Displesed hadde un-to thy foule envye,
Why ne haddestow my fader, king of Troye,
By-raft the lyf, or doon my bretheren dye,
Or slayn my-self, that thus compleyne and crye,
I, combre-world, that may of nothing serve,
But ever dye, and never fully sterve?

`If that Criseyde allone were me laft,
Nought roughte I whider thou woldest me stere;
And hir, allas! Than hastow me biraft.
But ever-more, lo! This is thy manere,
To reve a wight that most is to him dere,

To preve in that thy gerful violence.

Thus am I lost, ther helpeth no defence!

`O verray lord of love, O god, allas!
That knowest best myn herte and al my thought,
What shal my sorwful lyf don in this cas 290
If I for-go that I so dere have bought?
Sin ye Cryseyde and me han fully brought
In-to your grace, and bothe our hertes seled,
How may ye suffre, allas! It be repeled?

`What I may doon, I shal, whyl I may dure 295
On lyve in torment and in cruel peyne,
This infortune or this disaventure,
Allone as I was born, y-wis, compleyne;
Ne never wil I seen it shyne or reyne;
But ende I wil, as Edippe, in derknesse 300
My sorwful lyf, and dyen in distresse.

`O wery goost, that errest to and fro,

Why niltow fleen out of the wofulleste
Body, that ever mighte on grounde go?
O soule, lurkinge in this wo, unneste, 305
Flee forth out of myn herte, and lat it breste,
And folwe alwey Criseyde, thy lady dere;
Thy righte place is now no lenger here!

`O wofulle eyen two, sin your disport
Was al to seen Criseydes eyen brighte, 310
What shal ye doon but, for my discomfort,
Stonden for nought, and wepen out your sighte?
Sin she is queynt, that wont was yow to lighte,
In veyn fro-this-forth have I eyen tweye
Y-formed, sin your vertue is a-weye. 315

`O my Criseyde, O lady sovereyne
Of thilke woful soule that thus cryeth,
Who shal now yeven comfort to the peyne?
Allas, no wight; but when myn herte dyeth,
My spirit, which that so un-to yow hyeth, 320
Receyve in gree, for that shal ay yow serve;

For-thy no fors is, though the body sterve.

`O ye loveres, that heighe upon the wheel
Ben set of Fortune, in good aventure,
God leve that ye finde ay love of steel,
And longe mot your lyf in Ioye endure!
But whan ye comen by my sepulture,
Remembreth that your felawe resteth there;
For I lovede eek, though I unworthy were.

`O olde, unholsom, and mislyved man,
Calkas I mene, allas! What eyleth thee
To been a Greek, sin thou art born Troian?
O Calkas, which that wilt my bane be,
In cursed tyme was thou born for me!
As wolde blisful Iove, for his Ioye,
That I thee hadde, where I wolde, in Troye!'

A thousand sykes, hottere than the glede,
Out of his brest ech after other wente,
Medled with pleyntes newe, his wo to fede,

For which his woful teres never stente;
And shortly, so his peynes him to-rente,
And wex so mat, that Ioye nor penaunce
He feleth noon, but lyth forth in a traunce.

Pandare, which that in the parlement
Hadde herd what every lord and burgeys seyde,
And how ful graunted was, by oon assent,
For Antenor to yelden so Criseyde,
Gan wel neigh wood out of his wit to breyde,
So that, for wo, he niste what he mente;
But in a rees to Troilus he wente.

A certeyn knight, that for the tyme kepte
The chaumbre-dore, un-dide it him anoon;
And Pandare, that ful tendreliche wepte,
In-to the derke chaumbre, as stille as stoon,
Toward the bed gan softely to goon,
So confus, that he niste what to seye;
For verray wo his wit was neigh aweye.

And with his chere and loking al to-torn,
For sorwe of this, and with his armes folden,
He stood this woful Troilus biforn,
And on his pitous face he gan biholden;
But lord, so often gan his herte colden,
Seing his freend in wo, whos hevinesse
His herte slow, as thoughte him, for distresse.

This woful wight, this Troilus, that felte
His freend Pandare y-comen him to see,
Gan as the snow ayein the sonne melte,
For which this sorwful Pandare, of pitee,
Gan for to wepe as tendreliche as he;
And specheles thus been thise ilke tweye,
That neyther mighte o word for sorwe seye.

But at the laste this woful Troilus,
Ney deed for smert, gan bresten out to rore,
And with a sorwful noyse he seyde thus,
Among his sobbes and his sykes sore,
`Lo! Pandare, I am deed, with-outen more.

Hastow nought herd at parlement,' he seyde,
`For Antenor how lost is my Criseyde?'

This Pandarus, ful deed and pale of hewe,
Ful pitously answerde and seyde, `Yis! 380
As wisly were it fals as it is trewe,
That I have herd, and wot al how it is.
O mercy, god, who wolde have trowed this?
Who wolde have wend that, in so litel a throwe,
Fortune our Ioye wolde han over-throwe? 385

`For in this world ther is no creature,
As to my doom, that ever saw ruyne
Straungere than this, thorugh cas or aventure.
But who may al eschewe, or al devyne?
Swich is this world; for-thy I thus defyne, 390
Ne trust no wight to finden in Fortune
Ay propretee; hir yeftes been comune.

`But tel me this, why thou art now so mad
To sorwen thus? Why lystow in this wyse,

Sin thy desyr al holly hastow had, 395
So that, by right, it oughte y-now suffyse?
But I, that never felte in my servyse
A frendly chere or loking of an ye,
Lat me thus wepe and wayle, til I dye.

`And over al this, as thou wel wost thy-selve, 400
This town is ful of ladies al aboute;
And, to my doom, fairer than swiche twelve
As ever she was, shal I finde, in som route,
Ye, oon or two, with-outen any doute.
For-thy be glad, myn owene dere brother, 405
If she be lost, we shal recovere another.

`What, god forbede alwey that ech plesaunce
In o thing were, and in non other wight!
If oon can singe, another can wel daunce;
If this be goodly, she is glad and light; 410
And this is fayr, and that can good a-right.
Ech for his vertu holden is for dere,
Bothe heroner and faucon for rivere.

`And eek, as writ Zanzis, that was ful wys,
"The newe love out chaceth ofte the olde;" 415
And up-on newe cas lyth newe avys.
Thenk eek, thy-self to saven artow holde;
Swich fyr, by proces, shal of kinde colde.
For sin it is but casuel plesaunce,
Som cas shal putte it out of remembraunce. 420

`For al-so seur as day cometh after night,
The newe love, labour or other wo,
Or elles selde seinge of a wight,
Don olde affecciouns alle over-go.
And, for thy part, thou shalt have oon of tho 425
To abrigge with thy bittre peynes smerte;
Absence of hir shal dryve hir out of herte.'

Thise wordes seyde he for the nones alle,
To helpe his freend, lest he for sorwe deyde.
For douteles, to doon his wo to falle, 430
He roughte not what unthrift that he seyde.

But Troilus, that neigh for sorwe deyde,
Tok litel hede of al that ever he mente;
Oon ere it herde, at the other out it wente:

But at the laste answerde and seyde, `Freend,
This lechecraft, or heled thus to be,
Were wel sitting, if that I were a feend,
To traysen hir that trewe is unto me!
I pray god, lat this consayl never y-thee;
But do me rather sterve anon-right here
Er I thus do as thou me woldest lere.

`She that I serve, y-wis, what so thou seye,
To whom myn herte enhabit is by right,
Shal han me holly hires til that I deye.
For, Pandarus, sin I have trouthe hir hight,
I wol not been untrewe for no wight;
But as hir man I wol ay live and sterve,
And never other creature serve.

`And ther thou seyst, thou shalt as faire finde

As she, lat be, make no comparisoun 450
To creature y-formed here by kinde.
O leve Pandare, in conclusioun,
I wol not be of thyn opinioun,
Touching al this; for whiche I thee biseche,
So hold thy pees; thou sleest me with thy speche. 455

`Thow biddest me I sholde love another
Al freshly newe, and lat Criseyde go!

It lyth not in my power, leve brother.
And though I mighte, I wolde not do so.
But canstow pleyen raket, to and fro, 460
Netle in, dokke out, now this, now that, Pandare?

Now foule falle hir, for thy wo that care!

`Thow farest eek by me, thou Pandarus,
As he, that whan a wight is wo bi-goon,
He cometh to him a pas, and seyth right thus, 465
"Thenk not on smert, and thou shalt fele noon."

Thou most me first transmuwen in a stoon,
And reve me my passiounes alle,
Er thou so lightly do my wo to falle.

`The deeth may wel out of my brest departe 470
The lyf, so longe may this sorwe myne;
But fro my soule shal Criseydes darte
Out never-mo; but doun with Proserpyne,
Whan I am deed, I wol go wone in pyne;
And ther I wol eternaly compleyne 475
My wo, and how that twinned be we tweyne.

`Thow hast here maad an argument, for fyn,
How that it sholde a lasse peyne be
Criseyde to for-goon, for she was myn,
And live in ese and in felicitee. 480
Why gabbestow, that seydest thus to me
That "him is wors that is fro wele y-throwe,
Than he hadde erst non of that wele y-knowe?"

`But tel me now, sin that thee thinketh so light

To chaungen so in love, ay to and fro, 485
Why hastow not don bisily thy might
To chaungen hir that doth thee al thy wo?
Why niltow lete hir fro thyn herte go?
Why niltow love another lady swete,
That may thyn herte setten in quiete? 490

`If thou hast had in love ay yet mischaunce,
And canst it not out of thyn herte dryve,
I, that livede in lust and in plesaunce
With hir as muche as creature on-lyve,
How sholde I that foryete, and that so blyve? 495
O where hastow ben hid so longe in muwe,
That canst so wel and formely arguwe?

`Nay, nay, god wot, nought worth is al thy reed,
For which, for what that ever may bifalle,
With-outen wordes mo, I wol be deed. 500
O deeth, that endere art of sorwes alle,
Com now, sin I so ofte after thee calle,
For sely is that deeth, soth for to seyne,

That, ofte y-cleped, cometh and endeth peyne.

`Wel wot I, whyl my lyf was in quiete,
Er thou me slowe, I wolde have yeven hyre;
But now thy cominge is to me so swete,
That in this world I nothing so desyre.
O deeth, sin with this sorwe I am a-fyre,
Thou outher do me anoon yn teres drenche,
Or with thy colde strook myn hete quenche!

`Sin that thou sleest so fele in sondry wyse
Ayens hir wil, unpreyed, day and night,
Do me, at my requeste, this servyse,
Delivere now the world, so dostow right,
Of me, that am the wofulleste wight
That ever was; for tyme is that I sterve,
Sin in this world of right nought may I serve.'

This Troilus in teres gan distille,
As licour out of alambyk ful faste;
And Pandarus gan holde his tunge stille,

And to the ground his eyen doun he caste.
But nathelees, thus thoughte he at the laste,
`What, parde, rather than my felawe deye,
Yet shal I somwhat more un-to him seye:' 525

And seyde, `Freend, sin thou hast swich distresse,
And sin thee list myn arguments to blame,
Why nilt thy-selven helpen doon redresse,
And with thy manhod letten al this grame?
Go ravisshe hir ne canstow not for shame! 530
And outher lat hir out of toune fare,
Or hold hir stille, and leve thy nyce fare.

`Artow in Troye, and hast non hardiment
To take a womman which that loveth thee,
And wolde hir-selven been of thyn assent? 535
Now is not this a nyce vanitee?
Rys up anoon, and lat this weping be,
And kyth thou art a man, for in this houre
I wil be deed, or she shal bleven oure.'

To this answerde him Troilus ful softe, 540
And seyde, `Parde, leve brother dere,
Al this have I my-self yet thought ful ofte,
And more thing than thou devysest here.
But why this thing is laft, thou shalt wel here;
And whan thou me hast yeve an audience, 545
Ther-after mayst thou telle al thy sentence.

`First, sin thou wost this toun hath al this werre
For ravisshing of wommen so by might,
It sholde not be suffred me to erre,
As it stant now, ne doon so gret unright. 550
I sholde han also blame of every wight,
My fadres graunt if that I so withstode,
Sin she is chaunged for the tounes goode.

`I have eek thought, so it were hir assent,
To aske hir at my fader, of his grace; 555
Than thenke I, this were hir accusement,
Sin wel I woot I may hir not purchace.
For sin my fader, in so heigh a place

As parlement, hath hir eschaunge enseled,
He nil for me his lettre be repeled.

`Yet drede I most hir herte to pertourbe
With violence, if I do swich a game;
For if I wolde it openly distourbe,
It moste been disclaundre to hir name.
And me were lever deed than hir defame,
As nolde god but-if I sholde have
Hir honour lever than my lyf to save!

`Thus am I lost, for ought that I can see;
For certeyn is, sin that I am hir knight,
I moste hir honour levere han than me
In every cas, as lovere oughte of right.
Thus am I with desyr and reson twight;
Desyr for to destourben hir me redeth,
And reson nil not, so myn herte dredeth.'

Thus wepinge that he coude never cesse,
He seyde, `Allas! How shal I, wrecche, fare?

For wel fele I alwey my love encresse,
And hope is lasse and lasse alwey, Pandare!
Encressen eek the causes of my care;
So wel-a-wey, why nil myn herte breste?
For, as in love, ther is but litel reste.'

Pandare answerde, `Freend, thou mayst, for me,
Don as thee list; but hadde ich it so hote,
And thyn estat, she sholde go with me;
Though al this toun cryede on this thing by note,
I nolde sette at al that noyse a grote.
For when men han wel cryed, than wol they roune;
A wonder last but nyne night never in toune.

`Devyne not in reson ay so depe
Ne curteysly, but help thy-self anoon;
Bet is that othere than thy-selven wepe,
And namely, sin ye two been al oon.
Rys up, for by myn heed, she shal not goon;
And rather be in blame a lyte y-founde
Than sterve here as a gnat, with-oute wounde.

`It is no shame un-to yow, ne no vyce
Hir to with-holden, that ye loveth most.
Paraunter, she mighte holden thee for nyce
To lete hir go thus to the Grekes ost.
Thenk eek Fortune, as wel thy-selven wost, 600
Helpeth hardy man to his enpryse,
And weyveth wrecches, for hir cowardyse.

`And though thy lady wolde a litel hir greve,
Thou shalt thy pees ful wel here-after make,
But as for me, certayn, I can not leve 605
That she wolde it as now for yvel take.

Why sholde than for ferd thyn herte quake?
Thenk eek how Paris hath, that is thy brother,
A love; and why shaltow not have another?

`And Troilus, o thing I dar thee swere, 610
That if Criseyde, whiche that is thy leef,
Now loveth thee as wel as thou dost here,

God helpe me so, she nil nat take a-greef,
Though thou do bote a-noon in this mischeef.
And if she wilneth fro thee for to passe, 615
Thanne is she fals; so love hir wel the lasse.

`For-thy tak herte, and thenk, right as a knight,
Thourgh love is broken alday every lawe.
Kyth now sumwhat thy corage and thy might,
Have mercy on thy-self, for any awe. 620
Lat not this wrecched wo thin herte gnawe,
But manly set the world on sixe and sevene;
And, if thou deye a martir, go to hevene.

`I wol my-self be with thee at this dede,
Though ich and al my kin, up-on a stounde, 625
Shulle in a strete as dogges liggen dede,
Thourgh-girt with many a wyd and blody wounde.
In every cas I wol a freend be founde.
And if thee list here sterven as a wrecche,
A-dieu, the devel spede him that it recche!' 630

This Troilus gan with tho wordes quiken,
And seyde, `Freend, graunt mercy, ich assente;
But certaynly thou mayst not me so priken,
Ne peyne noon ne may me so tormente,
That, for no cas, it is not myn entente, 635
At shorte wordes, though I dyen sholde,
To ravisshe hir, but-if hir-self it wolde.'

`Why, so mene I,' quod Pandarus, `al this day.
But tel me than, hastow hir wil assayed,
That sorwest thus?' And he answerde, `Nay.'
`Wher-of artow,' quod Pandare, `than a-mayed, 640
That nost not that she wol ben y-vel apayed
To ravisshe hir, sin thou hast not ben there,
But-if that Iove tolde it in thyn ere?

`For-thy rys up, as nought ne were, anoon, 645
And wash thy face, and to the king thou wende,
Or he may wondren whider thou art goon.
Thou most with wisdom him and othere blende;
Or, up-on cas, he may after thee sende

Er thou be war; and shortly, brother dere,
Be glad, and lat me werke in this matere.

`For I shal shape it so, that sikerly
Thou shalt this night som tyme, in som manere,
Com speke with thy lady prevely,
And by hir wordes eek, and by hir chere,
Thou shalt ful sone aperceyve and wel here
Al hir entente, and in this cas the beste;
And fare now wel, for in this point I reste.'

The swifte Fame, whiche that false thinges
Egal reporteth lyk the thinges trewe,
Was thorugh-out Troye y-fled with preste winges
Fro man to man, and made this tale al newe,
How Calkas doughter, with hir brighte hewe,
At parlement, with-oute wordes more,
I-graunted was in chaunge of Antenore.

The whiche tale anoon-right as Criseyde
Had herd, she, which that of hir fader roughte,

As in this cas, right nought, ne whanne he deyde,
Ful bisily to Iuppiter bisoughte
Yeve hem mischaunce that this tretis broughte. 670
But shortly, lest thise tales sothe were,
She dorste at no wight asken it, for fere.

As she that hadde hir herte and al hir minde
On Troilus y-set so wonder faste,
That al this world ne mighte hir love unbinde, 675
Ne Troilus out of hir herte caste;
She wol ben his, whyl that hir lyf may laste.
And thus she brenneth bothe in love and drede,
So that she niste what was best to rede.

But as men seen in toune, and al aboute, 680
That wommen usen frendes to visyte,
So to Criseyde of wommen com a route
For pitous Ioye, and wenden hir delyte;
And with hir tales, dere y-nough a myte,
These wommen, whiche that in the cite dwelle, 685
They sette hem doun, and seyde as I shal telle.

Quod first that oon, `I am glad, trewely,
By-cause of yow, that shal your fader see.'
Another seyde, `Y-wis, so nam not I,
For al to litel hath she with us be.' 690
Quod tho the thridde, `I hope, y-wis, that she
Shal bringen us the pees on every syde,
That, whan she gooth, almighty god hir gyde!'

Tho wordes and tho wommanisshe thinges,
She herde hem right as though she thennes were; 695
For, god it wot, hir herte on other thing is,
Although the body sat among hem there.
Hir advertence is alwey elles-where;
For Troilus ful faste hir soule soughte;
With-outen word, alwey on him she thoughte. 700

Thise wommen, that thus wenden hir to plese,
Aboute nought gonne alle hir tales spende;
Swich vanitee ne can don hir non ese,
As she that, al this mene whyle. brende

Of other passioun than that they wende, 705
So that she felte almost hir herte deye
For wo, and wery of that companye.

For which no lenger mighte she restreyne
Hir teres, so they gonnen up to welle,
That yaven signes of the bitter peyne 710
In whiche hir spirit was, and moste dwelle;
Remembring hir, fro heven unto which helle
She fallen was, sith she forgoth the sighte
Of Troilus, and sorowfully she sighte.

And thilke foles sittinge hir aboute 715
Wenden, that she wepte and syked sore
By-cause that she sholde out of that route
Departe, and never pleye with hem more.
And they that hadde y-knowen hir of yore
Seye hir so wepe, and thoughte it kindenesse, 720
And eche of hem wepte eek for hir destresse;

And bisily they gonnen hir conforten

Of thing, god wot, on which she litel thoughte;
And with hir tales wenden hir disporten,
And to be glad they often hir bisoughte. 725
But swich an ese ther-with they hir wroughte
Right as a man is esed for to fele,
For ache of heed, to clawen him on his hele!

But after al this nyce vanitee
They took hir leve, and hoom they wenten alle. 730
Criseyde, ful of sorweful pitee,
In-to hir chaumbre up wente out of the halle,
And on hir bed she gan for deed to falle,
In purpos never thennes for to ryse;
And thus she wroughte, as I shal yow devyse. 735

Hir ounded heer, that sonnish was of hewe,
She rente, and eek hir fingres longe and smale
She wrong ful ofte, and bad god on hir rewe,
And with the deeth to doon bote on hir bale.
Hir hewe, whylom bright, that tho was pale, 740
Bar witnes of hir wo and hir constreynte;

And thus she spak, sobbinge, in hir compleynte:

`Alas!' quod she, `out of this regioun
I, woful wrecche and infortuned wight,
And born in corsed constellacioun,
Mot goon, and thus departen fro my knight;
Wo worth, allas! That ilke dayes light
On which I saw him first with eyen tweyne,
That causeth me, and I him, al this peyne!'

Therwith the teres from hir eyen two
Doun fille, as shour in Aperill ful swythe;
Hir whyte brest she bet, and for the wo
After the deeth she cryed a thousand sythe,
Sin he that wont hir wo was for to lythe,
She mot for-goon; for which disaventure
She held hir-self a forlost creature.

She seyde, `How shal he doon, and I also?

How sholde I live, if that I from him twinne?

O dere herte eek, that I love so,
Who shal that sorwe sleen that ye ben inne?
O Calkas, fader, thyn be al this sinne!
O moder myn, that cleped were Argyve,
Wo worth that day that thou me bere on lyve!

`To what fyn sholde I live and sorwen thus?
How sholde a fish with-oute water dure?
What is Criseyde worth, from Troilus?
How sholde a plaunte or lyves creature
Live, with-oute his kinde noriture?
For which ful oft a by-word here I seye,
That "rotelees, mot grene sone deye."

`I shal don thus, sin neither swerd ne darte
Dar I non handle, for the crueltee,
That ilke day that I from yow departe,
If sorwe of that nil not my bane be,
Than shal no mete or drinke come in me
Til I my soule out of my breste unshethe;
And thus my-selven wol I do to dethe.

`And, Troilus, my clothes everichoon
Shul blake been, in tokeninge, herte swete,
That I am as out of this world agoon,
That wont was yow to setten in quiete;
And of myn ordre, ay til deeth me mete,
The observaunce ever, in your absence,
Shal sorwe been, compleynte, and abstinence.

`Myn herte and eek the woful goost ther-inne
Biquethe I, with your spirit to compleyne
Eternally, for they shal never twinne.
For though in erthe y-twinned be we tweyne,
Yet in the feld of pitee, out of peyne,
That hight Elysos, shul we been y-fere,
As Orpheus and Erudice, his fere.

`Thus, herte myn, for Antenor, allas!

I sone shal be chaunged, as I wene.
But how shul ye don in this sorwful cas,

How shal youre tendre herte this sustene? 795
But herte myn, for-yet this sorwe and tene,
And me also; for, soothly for to seye,
So ye wel fare, I recche not to deye.'

How mighte it ever y-red ben or y-songe,
The pleynte that she made in hir distresse? 800
I noot; but, as for me, my litel tonge,
If I discreven wolde hir hevinesse,
It sholde make hir sorwe seme lesse
Than that it was, and childishly deface
Hir heigh compleynte, and therfore I it pace. 805

Pandare, which that sent from Troilus
Was to Criseyde, as ye han herd devyse,
That for the beste it was accorded thus,
And he ful glad to doon him that servyse,
Un-to Criseyde, in a ful secree wyse, 810
Ther-as she lay in torment and in rage,
Com hir to telle al hoolly his message,

And fond that she hir-selven gan to trete

Ful pitously; for with hir salte teres

Hir brest, hir face, y-bathed was ful wete; 815

The mighty tresses of hir sonnish heres,

Unbroyden, hangen al aboute hir eres;

Which yaf him verray signal of martyre

Of deeth, which that hir herte gan desyre.

Whan she him saw, she gan for sorwe anoon 820

Hir tery face a-twixe hir armes hide,

For which this Pandare is so wo bi-goon,

That in the hous he mighte unnethe abyde,

As he that pitee felte on every syde.

For if Criseyde hadde erst compleyned sore, 825

Tho gan she pleyne a thousand tymes more.

And in hir aspre pleynte than she seyde,

`Pandare first of Ioyes mo than two

Was cause causinge un-to me, Criseyde,

That now transmuwed been in cruel wo. 830

Wher shal I seye to yow "wel come" or no,

That alderfirst me broughte in-to servyse
Of love, allas! That endeth in swich wyse?

`Endeth than love in wo? Ye, or men lyeth!
And alle worldly blisse, as thinketh me. 835
The ende of blisse ay sorwe it occupyeth;
And who-so troweth not that it so be,
Lat him upon me, woful wrecche, y-see,
That my-self hate, and ay my birthe acorse,
Felinge alwey, fro wikke I go to worse. 840

`Who-so me seeth, he seeth sorwe al at ones,
Peyne, torment, pleynte, wo, distresse.
Out of my woful body harm ther noon is,
As anguish, langour, cruel bitternesse,
A-noy, smert, drede, fury, and eek siknesse. 845
I trowe, y-wis, from hevene teres reyne,
For pitee of myn aspre and cruel peyne!   '

`And thou, my suster, ful of discomfort,'
Quod Pandarus, `what thenkestow to do?

Why ne hastow to thy-selven som resport, 850
Why woltow thus thy-selve, allas, for-do?
Leef al this werk and tak now hede to
That I shal seyn, and herkne, of good entente,
This, which by me thy Troilus thee sente.'

Torned hir tho Criseyde, a wo makinge 855
So greet that it a deeth was for to see: —
`Allas!' quod she, `what wordes may ye bringe?
What wol my dere herte seyn to me,
Which that I drede never-mo to see?
Wol he have pleynte or teres, er I wende? 860
I have y-nowe, if he ther-after sende!'

She was right swich to seen in hir visage
As is that wight that men on bere binde;
Hir face, lyk of Paradys the image,
Was al y-chaunged in another kinde. 865
The pleye, the laughtre men was wont to finde
On hir, and eek hir Ioyes everychone,
Ben fled, and thus lyth now Criseyde allone.

Aboute hir eyen two a purpre ring
Bitrent, in sothfast tokninge of hir peyne, 870
That to biholde it was a dedly thing,
For which Pandare mighte not restreyne
The teres from his eyen for to reyne.
But nathelees, as he best mighte, he seyde
From Troilus thise wordes to Criseyde. 875

`Lo, nece, I trowe ye han herd al how
The king, with othere lordes, for the beste,
Hath mad eschaunge of Antenor and yow,
That cause is of this sorwe and this unreste.
But how this cas doth Troilus moleste, 880
That may non erthely mannes tonge seye;
For verray wo his wit is al aweye.

`For which we han so sorwed, he and I,
That in-to litel bothe it hadde us slawe;
But thurgh my conseil this day, fynally, 885
He somwhat is fro weping now with-drawe.

And semeth me that he desyreth fawe
With yow to been al night, for to devyse
Remede in this, if ther were any wyse.

`This, short and pleyne, theffect of my message, 890
As ferforth as my wit can comprehende.
For ye, that been of torment in swich rage,
May to no long prologe as now entende;
And her-upon ye may answere him sende.
And, for the love of god, my nece dere, 895
So leef this wo er Troilus be here.'

`Gret is my wo,' quod she, and sighte sore,
As she that feleth dedly sharp distresse;
`But yet to me his sorwe is muchel more,
That love him bet than he himself, I gesse. 900
Allas! For me hath he swich hevinesse?

Can he for me so pitously compleyne?
Y-wis, his sorwe doubleth al my peyne.

`Grevous to me, god wot, is for to twinne,'
Quod she, `but yet it hardere is to me
To seen that sorwe which that he is inne;
For wel wot I, it wol my bane be;
And deye I wol in certayn,' tho quod she;
`But bidde him come, er deeth, that thus me threteth,
Dryve out that goost which in myn herte beteth.'

Thise wordes seyd, she on hir armes two
Fil gruf, and gan to wepe pitously.
Quod Pandarus, `Allas! Why do ye so,
Syn wel ye woot the tyme is faste by,
That he shal come? Arys up hastely,
That he yow nat biwopen thus ne finde,
But ye wol have him wood out of his minde!

`For wiste he that ye ferde in this manere,
He wolde him-selve slee; and if I wende
To han this fare, he sholde not come here
For al the good that Pryam may despende.
For to what fyn he wolde anoon pretende,

That knowe I wel; and for-thy yet I seye,
So leef this sorwe, or platly he wol deye.

`And shapeth yow his sorwe for to abregge, 925
And nought encresse, leve nece swete;
Beth rather to him cause of flat than egge,
And with som wysdom ye his sorwes bete.
What helpeth it to wepen ful a strete,
Or though ye bothe in salte teres dreynte? 930
Bet is a tyme of cure ay than of pleynte.

`I mene thus; whan I him hider bringe,
Sin ye ben wyse, and bothe of oon assent,
So shapeth how distourbe your goinge,
Or come ayen, sone after ye be went. 935
Wommen ben wyse in short avysement;
And lat sen how your wit shal now avayle;
And what that I may helpe, it shal not fayle.'

`Go,' quod Criseyde, `and uncle, trewely,
I shal don al my might, me to restreyne 940

From weping in his sighte, and bisily,

Him for to glade, I shal don al my peyne,

And in myn herte seken every veyne;

If to this soor ther may be founden salve,

It shal not lakken, certain, on myn halve.' 945

Goth Pandarus, and Troilus he soughte,

Til in a temple he fond him allone,

As he that of his lyf no lenger roughte;

But to the pitouse goddes everichone

Ful tendrely he preyde, and made his mone, 950

To doon him sone out of this world to pace;

For wel he thoughte ther was non other grace.

And shortly, al the sothe for to seye,

He was so fallen in despeyr that day,

That outrely he shoop him for to deye. 955

For right thus was his argument alwey:

He seyde, he nas but loren, waylawey!

`For al that comth, comth by necessitee;

Thus to be lorn, it is my destinee.

`For certaynly, this wot I wel,' he seyde,
`That for-sight of divyne purveyaunce
Hath seyn alwey me to for-gon Criseyde,
Sin god seeth every thing, out of doutaunce,
And hem disponeth, thourgh his ordenaunce,
In hir merytes sothly for to be,
As they shul comen by predestinee.

`But nathelees, allas! Whom shal I leve?
For ther ben grete clerkes many oon,
That destinee thorugh argumentes preve;
And som men seyn that nedely ther is noon;
But that free chois is yeven us everichoon.
O, welaway! So sleye arn clerkes olde,
That I not whos opinion I may holde.

`For som men seyn, if god seth al biforn,
Ne god may not deceyved ben, pardee,
Than moot it fallen, though men hadde it sworn,

That purveyaunce hath seyn bifore to be.
Wherfor I seye, that from eterne if he
Hath wist biforn our thought eek as our dede,
We have no free chois, as these clerkes rede. 980

`For other thought nor other dede also
Might never be, but swich as purveyaunce,
Which may not ben deceyved never-mo,
Hath feled biforn, with-outen ignoraunce.
For if ther mighte been a variaunce 985
To wrythen out fro goddes purveyinge,
Ther nere no prescience of thing cominge;

`But it were rather an opinioun
Uncerteyn, and no stedfast forseinge;
And certes, that were an abusioun, 990
That god shuld han no parfit cleer witinge
More than we men that han doutous weninge.
But swich an errour up-on god to gesse
Were fals and foul, and wikked corsednesse.

`Eek this is an opinioun of somme
That han hir top ful heighe and smothe y-shore;
They seyn right thus, that thing is not to come
For that the prescience hath seyn bifore
That it shal come; but they seyn that therfore
That it shal come, therfore the purveyaunce
Wot it biforn with-outen ignoraunce;

`And in this manere this necessitee
Retorneth in his part contrarie agayn.
For needfully bihoveth it not to be
That thilke thinges fallen in certayn
That ben purveyed; but nedely, as they seyn,
Bihoveth it that thinges, whiche that falle,
That they in certayn ben purveyed alle.

`I mene as though I laboured me in this,
To enqueren which thing cause of which thing be;
As whether that the prescience of god is
The certayn cause of the necessitee
Of thinges that to comen been, pardee;

Or if necessitee of thing cominge
Be cause certeyn of the purveyinge. 1015

`But now ne enforce I me nat in shewinge
How the ordre of causes stant; but wel wot I,
That it bihoveth that the bifallinge
Of thinges wist biforen certeynly
Be necessarie, al seme it not ther-by 1020
That prescience put falling necessaire
To thing to come, al falle it foule or faire.

`For if ther sit a man yond on a see,
Than by necessitee bihoveth it
That, certes, thyn opinioun soth be, 1025
That wenest or coniectest that he sit;
And ferther-over now ayenward yit,
Lo, right so it is of the part contrarie,
As thus; (now herkne, for I wol not tarie):

`I seye, that if the opinioun of thee 1030
Be sooth, for that he sit, than seye I this,

That he mot sitten by necessitee;
And thus necessitee in either is.
For in him nede of sittinge is, y-wis,
And in thee nede of sooth; and thus, forsothe, 1035
Ther moot necessitee ben in yow bothe.

`But thou mayst seyn, the man sit not therfore,
That thyn opinioun of sitting soth is;
But rather, for the man sit ther bifore,
Therfore is thyn opinioun sooth, y-wis. 1040
And I seye, though the cause of sooth of this
Comth of his sitting, yet necessitee
Is entrechaunged, bothe in him and thee.

`Thus on this same wyse, out of doutaunce,
I may wel maken, as it semeth me, 1045
My resoninge of goddes purveyaunce,
And of the thinges that to comen be;
By whiche reson men may wel y-see,
That thilke thinges that in erthe falle,
That by necessitee they comen alle. 1050

`For al-though that, for thing shal come, y-wis,
Therfore is it purveyed, certaynly,
Nat that it comth for it purveyed is:
Yet nathelees, bihoveth it nedfully,
That thing to come be purveyed, trewely; 1055
Or elles, thinges that purveyed be,
That they bityden by necessitee.

`And this suffyseth right y-now, certeyn,
For to destroye our free chois every del. —
But now is this abusion, to seyn, 1060
That fallinge of the thinges temporel
Is cause of goddes prescience eternel.
Now trewely, that is a fals sentence,
That thing to come sholde cause his prescience.

`What mighte I wene, and I hadde swich a thought, 1065
But that god purveyth thing that is to come
For that it is to come, and elles nought?
So mighte I wene that thinges alle and some,

That whylom been bifalle and overcome,
Ben cause of thilke sovereyn purveyaunce, 1070
That for-wot al with-outen ignoraunce.

`And over al this, yet seye I more herto,
That right as whan I woot ther is a thing,
Y-wis, that thing mot nedefully be so;
Eek right so, whan I woot a thing coming, 1075
So mot it come; and thus the bifalling
Of thinges that ben wist bifore the tyde,
They mowe not been eschewed on no syde.'

Than seyde he thus, `Almighty Iove in trone,
That wost of al this thing the soothfastnesse, 1080
Rewe on my sorwe, or do me deye sone,
Or bring Criseyde and me fro this distresse.'
And whyl he was in al this hevinesse,
Disputinge with himself in this matere,
Com Pandare in, and seyde as ye may here. 1085

`O mighty god,' quod Pandarus, `in trone, Ey! Who seigh ever a wys man faren so?

Why, Troilus, what thenkestow to done?
Hastow swich lust to been thyn owene fo?
What, parde, yet is not Criseyde a-go! 1090
Why list thee so thy-self for-doon for drede,
That in thyn heed thyn eyen semen dede?

`Hastow not lived many a yeer biforn
With-outen hir, and ferd ful wel at ese?
Artow for hir and for non other born? 1095
Hath kinde thee wroughte al-only hir to plese?

Lat be, and thenk right thus in thy disese.
That, in the dees right as ther fallen chaunces,
Right so in love, ther come and goon plesaunces.

`And yet this is a wonder most of alle, 1100
Why thou thus sorwest, sin thou nost not yit,
Touching hir goinge, how that it shal falle,
Ne if she can hir-self distorben it.

Thou hast not yet assayed al hir wit.
A man may al by tyme his nekke bede 1105
Whan it shal of, and sorwen at the nede.

`For-thy take hede of that that I shal seye;
I have with hir y-spoke and longe y-be,
So as accorded was bitwixe us tweye.
And ever-mor me thinketh thus, that she 1110
Hath somwhat in hir hertes prevetee,
Wher-with she can, if I shal right arede,
Distorbe al this, of which thou art in drede.

`For which my counseil is, whan it is night,
Thou to hir go, and make of this an ende; 1115
And blisful Iuno, thourgh hir grete mighte,
Shal, as I hope, hir grace un-to us sende.
Myn herte seyth, "Certeyn, she shal not wende;"
And for-thy put thyn herte a whyle in reste;
And hold this purpos, for it is the beste.' 1120

This Troilus answerde, and sighte sore,
`Thou seyst right wel, and I wil do right so;'

And what him liste, he seyde un-to it more.
And whan that it was tyme for to go,
Ful prevely himself, with-outen mo,
Un-to hir com, as he was wont to done;
And how they wroughte, I shal yow telle sone.

Soth is, that whan they gonne first to mete,
So gan the peyne hir hertes for to twiste,
That neither of hem other mighte grete,
But hem in armes toke and after kiste.
The lasse wofulle of hem bothe niste
Wher that he was, ne mighte o word out-bringe,
As I seyde erst, for wo and for sobbinge.

Tho woful teres that they leten falle
As bittre weren, out of teres kinde,
For peyne, as is ligne aloes or galle.
So bittre teres weep nought, as I finde,

The woful Myrra through the bark and rinde.
That in this world ther nis so hard an herte, 1140
That nolde han rewed on hir peynes smerte.

But whan hir woful wery gostes tweyne
Retorned been ther-as hem oughte dwelle,
And that somwhat to wayken gan the peyne
By lengthe of pleynte, and ebben gan the welle 1145
Of hire teres, and the herte unswelle,
With broken voys, al hoors for-shright, Criseyde
To Troilus thise ilke wordes seyde:

`O Iove, I deye, and mercy I beseche!
Help, Troilus!' And ther-with-al hir face 1150
Upon his brest she leyde, and loste speche;
Hir woful spirit from his propre place,
Right with the word, alwey up poynt to pace.
And thus she lyth with hewes pale and grene,
That whylom fresh and fairest was to sene. 1155

This Troilus, that on hir gan biholde,

Clepinge hir name, (and she lay as for deed,
With-oute answere, and felte hir limes colde,
Hir eyen throwen upward to hir heed),
This sorwful man can now noon other reed,
But ofte tyme hir colde mouth he kiste;
Wher him was wo, god and himself it wiste!

He rist him up, and long streight he hir leyde;
For signe of lyf, for ought he can or may,
Can he noon finde in nothing on Criseyde,
For which his song ful ofte is `weylaway!'
But whan he saugh that specheles she lay,
With sorwful voys and herte of blisse al bare,
He seyde how she was fro this world y-fare!

So after that he longe hadde hir compleyned,
His hondes wrong, and seyde that was to seye,
And with his teres salte hir brest bireyned,
He gan tho teris wypen of ful dreye,
And pitously gan for the soule preye,
And seyde, `O lord, that set art in thy trone,

Rewe eek on me, for I shal folwe hir sone!'

She cold was and with-outen sentement,
For aught he woot, for breeth ne felte he noon;
And this was him a preignant argument
That she was forth out of this world agoon; 1180
And whan he seigh ther was non other woon,
He gan hir limes dresse in swich manere
As men don hem that shul be leyd on bere.

And after this, with sterne and cruel herte,
His swerd a-noon out of his shethe he twighte, 1185
Himself to sleen, how sore that him smerte,
So that his sowle hir sowle folwen mighte,
Ther-as the doom of Mynos wolde it dighte;
Sin love and cruel Fortune it ne wolde,
That in this world he lenger liven sholde. 1190

Thanne seyde he thus, fulfild of heigh desdayn,
`O cruel Iove, and thou, Fortune adverse,
This al and som, that falsly have ye slayn

Criseyde, and sin ye may do me no werse,
Fy on your might and werkes so diverse! 1195
Thus cowardly ye shul me never winne;
Ther shal no deeth me fro my lady twinne.

`For I this world, sin ye han slayn hir thus,
Wol lete, and folowe hir spirit lowe or hye;
Shal never lover seyn that Troilus 1200
Dar not, for fere, with his lady dye;
For certeyn, I wol bere hir companye.
But sin ye wol not suffre us liven here,
Yet suffreth that our soules ben y-fere.

`And thou, citee, whiche that I leve in wo, 1205
And thou, Pryam, and bretheren al y-fere,
And thou, my moder, farwel! For I go;
And Attropos, make redy thou my bere!
And thou, Criseyde, o swete herte dere,
Receyve now my spirit!' wolde he seye, 1210
With swerd at herte, al redy for to deye

But as god wolde, of swough ther-with she abreyde,
And gan to syke, and `Troilus' she cryde;
And he answerde, `Lady myn Criseyde,
Live ye yet?' and leet his swerd doun glyde. 1215
`Ye, herte myn, that thanked be Cupyde!'
Quod she, and ther-with-al she sore sighte;
And he bigan to glade hir as he mighte;

Took hir in armes two, and kiste hir ofte,
And hir to glade he dide al his entente; 1220
For which hir goost, that flikered ay on-lofte,
In-to hir woful herte ayein it wente.
But at the laste, as that hir eyen glente
A-syde, anoon she gan his swerd aspye,
As it lay bare, and gan for fere crye, 1225

And asked him, why he it hadde out-drawe?
And Troilus anoon the cause hir tolde,
And how himself ther-with he wolde have slawe.
For which Criseyde up-on him gan biholde,
And gan him in hir armes faste folde, 1230

And seyde, `O mercy, god, lo, which a dede!

Allas! How neigh we were bothe dede!

`Thanne if I ne hadde spoken, as grace was,
Ye wolde han slayn your-self anoon?' quod she.
`Ye, douteless;' and she answerde, `Allas! 1235
For, by that ilke lord that made me,
I nolde a forlong wey on-lyve han be,
After your deeth, to han been crouned quene
Of al the lond the sonne on shyneth shene.

`But with this selve swerd, which that here is, 1240
My-selve I wolde han slayn!' — quod she tho;
`But ho, for we han right y-now of this,
And late us ryse and streight to bedde go
And there lat ys speken of oure wo.
For, by the morter which that I see brenne, 1245
Knowe I ful wel that day is not fer henne.'

Whan they were in hir bedde, in armes folde,

Nought was it lyk tho nightes here-biforn;
For pitously ech other gan biholde,
As they that hadden al hir blisse y-lorn,
Biwaylinge ay the day that they were born.
Til at the last this sorwful wight Criseyde
To Troilus these ilke wordes seyde: —

`Lo, herte myn, wel wot ye this,' quod she,
`That if a wight alwey his wo compleyne,
And seketh nought how holpen for to be,
It nis but folye and encrees of peyne;
And sin that here assembled be we tweyne
To finde bote of wo that we ben inne,
It were al tyme sone to biginne.

`I am a womman, as ful wel ye woot,
And as I am avysed sodeynly,
So wol I telle yow, whyl it is hoot.
Me thinketh thus, that nouther ye nor I
Oughte half this wo to make skilfully.
For there is art y-now for to redresse

That yet is mis, and sleen this hevinesse.

`Sooth is, the wo, the whiche that we ben inne,
For ought I woot, for nothing elles is
But for the cause that we sholden twinne. 1270
Considered al, ther nis no-more amis.
But what is thanne a remede un-to this,
But that we shape us sone for to mete?

This al and som, my dere herte swete.

`Now that I shal wel bringen it aboute 1275
To come ayein, sone after that I go,
Ther-of am I no maner thing in doute.
For dredeles, with-inne a wouke or two,
I shal ben here; and, that it may be so
By alle right, and in a wordes fewe, 1280
I shal yow wel an heep of weyes shewe.

`For which I wol not make long sermoun,
For tyme y-lost may not recovered be;

But I wol gon to my conclusioun,
And to the beste, in ought that I can see.
And, for the love of god, for-yeve it me
If I speke ought ayein your hertes reste;
For trewely, I speke it for the beste;

`Makinge alwey a protestacioun,
That now these wordes, whiche that I shal seye,
Nis but to shewe yow my mocioun,
To finde un-to our helpe the beste weye;
And taketh it non other wyse, I preye.
For in effect what-so ye me comaunde,
That wol I doon, for that is no demaunde.

`Now herkneth this, ye han wel understonde,
My goinge graunted is by parlement
So ferforth, that it may not be withstonde
For al this world, as by my Iugement.
And sin ther helpeth noon avysement
To letten it, lat it passe out of minde;
And lat us shape a bettre wey to finde.

`The sothe is, that the twinninge of us tweyne
Wol us disese and cruelliche anoye.
But him bihoveth som-tyme han a peyne,
That serveth love, if that he wol have Ioye.
And sin I shal no ferthere out of Troye
Than I may ryde ayein on half a morwe,
It oughte lesse causen us to sorwe.

`So as I shal not so ben hid in muwe,
That day by day, myn owene herte dere,
Sin wel ye woot that it is now a trewe,
Ye shal ful wel al myn estat y-here.
And er that truwe is doon, I shal ben here,
And thanne have ye bothe Antenor y-wonne
And me also; beth glad now, if ye conne;

`And thenk right thus, "Criseyde is now agoon,
But what! She shal come hastely ayeyn;"
And whanne, allas? By god, lo, right anoon,
Er dayes ten, this dar I saufly seyn.

And thanne at erste shul we been so fayn,
So as we shulle to-gederes ever dwelle,
That al this world ne mighte our blisse telle.

`I see that ofte, ther-as we ben now,
That for the beste, our counseil for to hyde, 1325
Ye speke not with me, nor I with yow
In fourtenight; ne see yow go ne ryde.
May ye not ten dayes thanne abyde,
For myn honour, in swich an aventure?
Y-wis, ye mowen elles lite endure! 1330

`Ye knowe eek how that al my kin is here,
But-if that onliche it my fader be;
And eek myn othere thinges alle y-fere,
And nameliche, my dere herte, ye,
Whom that I nolde leven for to see 1335
For al this world, as wyd as it hath space;
Or elles, see ich never Ioves face!

`Why trowe ye my fader in this wyse

Coveiteth so to see me, but for drede
Lest in this toun that folkes me dispyse
By-cause of him, for his unhappy dede?

What woot my fader what lyf that I lede?
For if he wiste in Troye how wel I fare,
Us neded for my wending nought to care.

`Ye seen that every day eek, more and more,
Men trete of pees; and it supposed is,
That men the quene Eleyne shal restore,
And Grekes us restore that is mis.
So though ther nere comfort noon but this,
That men purposen pees on every syde,
Ye may the bettre at ese of herte abyde.

`For if that it be pees, myn herte dere,
The nature of the pees mot nedes dryve
That men moste entrecomunen y-fere,
And to and fro eek ryde and gon as blyve
Alday as thikke as been flen from an hyve;

And every wight han libertee to bleve
Where-as him list the bet, with-outen leve.

`And though so be that pees ther may be noon,
Yet hider, though ther never pees ne were,
I moste come; for whider sholde I goon,
Or how mischaunce sholde I dwelle there
Among tho men of armes ever in fere?
For which, as wisly god my soule rede,
I can not seen wher-of ye sholden drede.

`Have here another wey, if it so be
That al this thing ne may yow not suffyse.
My fader, as ye knowen wel, pardee,
Is old, and elde is ful of coveityse,
And I right now have founden al the gyse,
With-oute net, wher-with I shal him hente;
And herkeneth how, if that ye wole assente.

`Lo, Troilus, men seyn that hard it is
The wolf ful, and the wether hool to have;

This is to seyn, that men ful ofte, y-wis,
Mot spenden part, the remenant for to save.
For ay with gold men may the herte grave
Of him that set is up-on coveityse;
And how I mene, I shal it yow devyse.

`The moeble which that I have in this toun
Un-to my fader shal I take, and seye,
That right for trust and for savacioun
It sent is from a freend of his or tweye,
The whiche freendes ferventliche him preye
To senden after more, and that in hye,
Whyl that this toun stant thus in Iupartye.

`And that shal been an huge quantitee,
Thus shal I seyn, but, lest it folk aspyde,
This may be sent by no wight but by me;
I shal eek shewen him, if pees bityde,
What frendes that ich have on every syde
Toward the court, to doon the wrathe pace
Of Priamus, and doon him stonde in grace.

`So what for o thing and for other, swete,
I shal him so enchaunten with my sawes,
That right in hevene his sowle is, shal he mete!
For al Appollo, or his clerkes lawes,
Or calculinge avayleth nought three hawes;
Desyr of gold shal so his sowle blende,
That, as me lyst, I shal wel make an ende.

`And if he wolde ought by his sort it preve
If that I lye, in certayn I shal fonde
Distorben him, and plukke him by the sleve,
Makinge his sort, and beren him on honde,
He hath not wel the goddes understonde.
For goddes speken in amphibologyes,
And, for o sooth they tellen twenty lyes.

`Eek drede fond first goddes, I suppose,
Thus shal I seyn, and that his cowarde herte
Made him amis the goddes text to glose,
Whan he for ferde out of his Delphos sterte.

And but I make him sone to converte,
And doon my reed with-inne a day or tweye,
I wol to yow oblige me to deye.'

And treweliche, as writen wel I finde,
That al this thing was seyd of good entente;
And that hir herte trewe was and kinde
Towardes him, and spak right as she mente,
And that she starf for wo neigh, whan she wente,
And was in purpos ever to be trewe;
Thus writen they that of hir werkes knewe.

This Troilus, with herte and eres spradde,
Herde al this thing devysen to and fro;
And verraylich him semed that he hadde
The selve wit; but yet to lete hir go
His herte misforyaf him ever-mo.
But fynally, he gan his herte wreste
To trusten hir, and took it for the beste.

For which the grete furie of his penaunce

Was queynt with hope, and ther-with hem bitwene
Bigan for Ioye the amorouse daunce.
And as the briddes, whan the sonne is shene,
Delyten in hir song in leves grene,
Right so the wordes that they spake y-fere
Delyted hem, and made hir hertes clere.

But natheles, the wending of Criseyde,
For al this world, may nought out of his minde;
For which ful ofte he pitously hir preyde,
That of hir heste he might hir trewe finde,
And seyde hire, `Certes, if ye be unkinde,
And but ye come at day set in-to Troye,
Ne shal I never have hele, honour, ne Ioye.

`For al-so sooth as sonne up-rist on morwe,
And, god! So wisly thou me, woful wrecche,
To reste bringe out of this cruel sorwe,
I wol my-selven slee if that ye drecche.
But of my deeth though litel be to recche,
Yet, er that ye me cause so to smerte,

Dwel rather here, myn owene swete herte!

`For trewely, myn owene lady dere, 1450
Tho sleightes yet that I have herd yow stere
Ful shaply been to failen alle y-fere.
For thus men seyn, "That oon thenketh the bere,
But al another thenketh his ledere."
Your sire is wys, and seyd is, out of drede, 1455
"Men may the wyse at-renne, and not at-rede."

`It is ful hard to halten unespyed
Bifore a crepul, for he can the craft;
Your fader is in sleighte as Argus yed;
For al be that his moeble is him biraft, 1460
His olde sleighte is yet so with him laft,
Ye shal not blende him for your womanhede,
Ne feyne a-right, and that is al my drede.

`I noot if pees shal ever-mo bityde;
But, pees or no, for ernest ne for game, 1465
I woot, sin Calkas on the Grekis syde

Hath ones been, and lost so foule his name,
He dar no more come here ayein for shame;
For which that weye, for ought I can espye,
To trusten on, nis but a fantasye. 1470

`Ye shal eek seen, your fader shal yow glose
To been a wyf, and as he can wel preche,
He shal som Grek so preyse and wel alose,
That ravisshen he shal yow with his speche,
Or do yow doon by force as he shal teche. 1475
And Troilus, of whom ye nil han routhe,
Shal causeles so sterven in his trouthe!

`And over al this, your fader shal despyse
Us alle, and seyn this citee nis but lorn;
And that thassege never shal aryse, 1480
For-why the Grekes han it alle sworn
Til we be slayn, and doun our walles torn.
And thus he shal yow with his wordes fere,
That ay drede I, that ye wol bleve there.

`Ye shul eek seen so many a lusty knight
A-mong the Grekes, ful of worthinesse,
And eche of hem with herte, wit, and might
To plesen yow don al his besinesse,
That ye shul dullen of the rudenesse
Of us sely Troianes, but-if routhe
Remorde yow, or vertue of your trouthe.

`And this to me so grevous is to thinke,
That fro my brest it wol my soule rende;
Ne dredeles, in me ther may not sinke
A good opinioun, if that ye wende;
For-why your faderes sleighte wol us shende.
And if ye goon, as I have told yow yore,
So thenk I nam but deed, with-oute more.

`For which, with humble, trewe, and pitous herte,
A thousand tymes mercy I yow preye;
So reweth on myn aspre peynes smerte,
And doth somwhat, as that I shal yow seye,
And lat us stele away bitwixe us tweye;

And thenk that folye is, whan man may chese,
For accident his substaunce ay to lese.

`I mene this, that sin we mowe er day
Wel stele away, and been to-gider so,
What wit were it to putten in assay,
In cas ye sholden to your fader go,
If that ye mighte come ayein or no?
Thus mene I, that it were a gret folye
To putte that sikernesse in Iupertye.

`And vulgarly to speken of substaunce
Of tresour, may we bothe with us lede
Y-nough to live in honour and plesaunce,
Til in-to tyme that we shal ben dede;
And thus we may eschewen al this drede.
For everich other wey ye can recorde,
Myn herte, y-wis, may not ther-with acorde.

`And hardily, ne dredeth no poverte,
For I have kin and freendes elles-where

That, though we comen in oure bare sherte,
Us sholde neither lakke gold ne gere,
But been honured whyl we dwelten there.
And go we anoon, for, as in myn entente,
This is the beste, if that ye wole assente.'

Criseyde, with a syk, right in this wyse
Answerde, `Y-wis, my dere herte trewe,
We may wel stele away, as ye devyse,
And finde swich unthrifty weyes newe;
But afterward, ful sore it wol us rewe.
And help me god so at my moste nede
As causeles ye suffren al this drede!

`For thilke day that I for cherisshinge
Or drede of fader, or of other wight,
Or for estat, delyt, or for weddinge,
Be fals to yow, my Troilus, my knight,
Saturnes doughter, Iuno, thorugh hir might,
As wood as Athamante do me dwelle
Eternaly in Stix, the put of helle!

`And this on every god celestial
I swere it yow; and eek on eche goddesse,
On every Nymphe and deite infernal,
On Satiry and Fauny more and lesse,
That halve goddes been of wildernesse; 1545
And Attropos my threed of lyf to-breste
If I be fals; now trowe me if thow leste!

`And thou, Simoys, that as an arwe clere
Thorugh Troye rennest ay downward to the see,
Ber witnesse of this word that seyd is here, 1550
That thilke day that ich untrewe be
To Troilus, myn owene herte free,
That thou retorne bakwarde to thy welle,
And I with body and soule sinke in helle!

`But that ye speke, awey thus for to go 1555
And leten alle your freendes, god forbede,
For any womman, that ye sholden so,
And namely, sin Troye hath now swich nede

Of help; and eek of o thing taketh hede,
If this were wist, my lif laye in balaunce, 1560
And your honour; god shilde us fro mischaunce!

`And if so be that pees her-after take,
As alday happeth, after anger, game,
Why, lord! The sorwe and wo ye wolden make,
That ye ne dorste come ayein for shame! 1565
And er that ye Iuparten so your name,
Beth nought to hasty in this hote fare;
For hasty man ne wanteth never care.

`What trowe ye the peple eek al aboute
Wolde of it seye? It is ful light to arede. 1570
They wolden seye, and swere it, out of doute,
That love ne droof yow nought to doon this dede,
But lust voluptuous and coward drede.
Thus were al lost, y-wis, myn herte dere,
Your honour, which that now shyneth so clere. 1575

`And also thenketh on myn honestee,

That floureth yet, how foule I sholde it shende,
And with what filthe it spotted sholde be,
If in this forme I sholde with yow wende.
Ne though I livede un-to the worldes ende, 1580
My name sholde I never ayeinward winne;
Thus were I lost, and that were routhe and sinne.

`And for-thy slee with reson al this hete;
Men seyn, "The suffraunt overcometh," pardee;
Eek "Who-so wol han leef, he lief mot lete;" 1585
Thus maketh vertue of necessitee
By pacience, and thenk that lord is he
Of fortune ay, that nought wol of hir recche;
And she ne daunteth no wight but a wrecche.

`And trusteth this, that certes, herte swete, 1590
Er Phebus suster, Lucina the shene,
The Leoun passe out of this Ariete,
I wol ben here, with-outen any wene.
I mene, as helpe me Iuno, hevenes quene,
The tenthe day, but-if that deeth me assayle, 1595

I wol yow seen with-outen any fayle.'

`And now, so this be sooth,' quod Troilus,
`I shal wel suffre un-to the tenthe day,
Sin that I see that nede it moot be thus.
But, for the love of god, if it be may, 1600
So lat us stele prively away;
For ever in oon, as for to live in reste,
Myn herte seyth that it wol been the beste.'

`O mercy, god, what lyf is this?' quod she;
`Allas, ye slee me thus for verray tene! 1605
I see wel now that ye mistrusten me;
For by your wordes it is wel y-sene.
Now, for the love of Cynthia the shene,
Mistrust me not thus causeles, for routhe;
Sin to be trewe I have yow plight my trouthe. 1610

`And thenketh wel, that som tyme it is wit
To spende a tyme, a tyme for to winne;
Ne, pardee, lorn am I nought fro yow yit,

Though that we been a day or two a-twinne.
Dryf out the fantasyes yow with-inne; 1615
And trusteth me, and leveth eek your sorwe,
Or here my trouthe, I wol not live til morwe.

`For if ye wiste how sore it doth me smerte,
Ye wolde cesse of this; for god, thou wost,
The pure spirit wepeth in myn herte, 1620
To see yow wepen that I love most,
And that I moot gon to the Grekes ost.
Ye, nere it that I wiste remedye
To come ayein, right here I wolde dye!

`But certes, I am not so nyce a wight 1625
That I ne can imaginen a wey
To come ayein that day that I have hight.
For who may holde thing that wol a-way?

My fader nought, for al his queynte pley.
And by my thrift, my wending out of Troye 1630
Another day shal torne us alle to Ioye.

`For-thy, with al myn herte I yow beseke,
If that yow list don ought for my preyere,
And for the love which that I love yow eke,
That er that I departe fro yow here,
That of so good a comfort and a chere
I may you seen, that ye may bringe at reste
Myn herte, which that is at point to breste.

`And over al this I pray yow,' quod she tho,
`Myn owene hertes soothfast suffisaunce,
Sin I am thyn al hool, with-outen mo,
That whyl that I am absent, no plesaunce
Of othere do me fro your remembraunce.
For I am ever a-gast, for-why men rede,
That "love is thing ay ful of bisy drede."

`For in this world ther liveth lady noon,
If that ye were untrewe, as god defende!
That so bitraysed were or wo bigoon
As I, that alle trouthe in yow entende.

And douteles, if that ich other wende,
I nere but deed; and er ye cause finde,
For goddes love, so beth me not unkinde.'

To this answerde Troilus and seyde,
`Now god, to whom ther nis no cause y-wrye,
Me glade, as wis I never un-to Criseyde,
Sin thilke day I saw hir first with ye,
Was fals, ne never shal til that I dye.
At shorte wordes, wel ye may me leve;
I can no more, it shal be founde at preve.'

`Graunt mercy, goode myn, y-wis,' quod she,
`And blisful Venus lat me never sterve
Er I may stonde of plesaunce in degree
To quyte him wel, that so wel can deserve;
And whyl that god my wit wol me conserve,
I shal so doon, so trewe I have yow founde,
That ay honour to me-ward shal rebounde.

`For trusteth wel, that your estat royal

Ne veyn delyt, nor only worthinesse
Of yow in werre, or torney marcial,
Ne pompe, array, nobley, or eek richesse, 1670
Ne made me to rewe on your distresse;
But moral vertue, grounded upon trouthe,
That was the cause I first hadde on yow routhe!

`Eek gentil herte and manhod that ye hadde,
And that ye hadde, as me thoughte, in despyt 1675
Every thing that souned in-to badde,
As rudenesse and poeplish appetyt;
And that your reson brydled your delyt,
This made, aboven every creature,
That I was your, and shal, whyl I may dure. 1680

`And this may lengthe of yeres not for-do,
Ne remuable fortune deface;
But Iuppiter, that of his might may do
The sorwful to be glad, so yeve us grace,
Er nightes ten, to meten in this place, 1685
So that it may your herte and myn suffyse;

And fareth now wel, for tyme is that ye ryse.'

And after that they longe y-pleyned hadde,
And ofte y-kist, and streite in armes folde,
The day gan ryse, and Troilus him cladde, 1690
And rewfulliche his lady gan biholde,
As he that felte dethes cares colde,
And to hir grace he gan him recomaunde;
Wher him was wo, this holde I no demaunde.

For mannes heed imaginen ne can, 1695
Ne entendement considere, ne tonge telle
The cruel peynes of this sorwful man,
That passen every torment doun in helle.
For whan he saugh that she ne mighte dwelle,
Which that his soule out of his herte rente, 1700
With-outen more, out of the chaumbre he wente.

Explicit Liber Quartus.

BOOK V. Incipit Liber Quintus.

Aprochen gan the fatal destinee
That Ioves hath in disposicioun,
And to yow, angry Parcas, sustren three,
Committeth, to don execucioun;
For which Criseyde moste out of the toun,
And Troilus shal dwelle forth in pyne
Til Lachesis his threed no lenger twyne. —

The golden-tressed Phebus heighe on-lofte
Thryes hadde alle with his bemes shene
The snowes molte, and Zephirus as ofte
Y-brought ayein the tendre leves grene,
Sin that the sone of Ecuba the quene
Bigan to love hir first, for whom his sorwe
Was al, that she departe sholde a-morwe.

Ful redy was at pryme Dyomede,
Criseyde un-to the Grekes ost to lede,

For sorwe of which she felt hir herte blede,
As she that niste what was best to rede.
And trewely, as men in bokes rede,
Men wiste never womman han the care,
Ne was so looth out of a toun to fare.

This Troilus, with-outen reed or lore,
As man that hath his Ioyes eek forlore,
Was waytinge on his lady evermore
As she that was the soothfast crop and more
Of al his lust, or Ioyes here-tofore.
But Troilus, now farewel al thy Ioye,
For shaltow never seen hir eft in Troye!

Soth is, that whyl he bood in this manere,
He gan his wo ful manly for to hyde.
That wel unnethe it seen was in his chere;
But at the yate ther she sholde oute ryde
With certeyn folk, he hoved hir tabyde,
So wo bigoon, al wolde he nought him pleyne,
That on his hors unnethe he sat for peyne.

For ire he quook, so gan his herte gnawe,
Whan Diomede on horse gan him dresse,
And seyde un-to him-self this ilke sawe,
`Allas,' quod he, `thus foul a wrecchednesse
Why suffre ich it, why nil ich it redresse? 40
Were it not bet at ones for to dye
Than evermore in langour thus to drye?

`Why nil I make at ones riche and pore
To have y-nough to done, er that she go?
Why nil I bringe al Troye upon a rore? 45
Why nil I sleen this Diomede also?
Why nil I rather with a man or two
Stele hir a-way? Why wol I this endure?

Why nil I helpen to myn owene cure?'

But why he nolde doon so fel a dede, 50
That shal I seyn, and why him liste it spare;
He hadde in herte alweyes a maner drede,

Lest that Criseyde, in rumour of this fare,
Sholde han ben slayn; lo, this was al his care.
And ellis, certeyn, as I seyde yore, 55
He hadde it doon, with-outen wordes more.

Criseyde, whan she redy was to ryde,
Ful sorwfully she sighte, and seyde `Allas!'
But forth she moot, for ought that may bityde,
And forth she rit ful sorwfully a pas. 60
Ther nis non other remedie in this cas.
What wonder is though that hir sore smerte,
Whan she forgoth hir owene swete herte?

This Troilus, in wyse of curteisye,
With hauke on hond, and with an huge route 65
Of knightes, rood and dide hir companye,
Passinge al the valey fer with-oute,
And ferther wolde han riden, out of doute,
Ful fayn, and wo was him to goon so sone;
But torne he moste, and it was eek to done. 70

And right with that was Antenor y-come
Out of the Grekes ost, and every wight
Was of it glad, and seyde he was wel-come.
And Troilus, al nere his herte light,
He peyned him with al his fulle might
Him to with-holde of wepinge at the leste,
And Antenor he kiste, and made feste.

And ther-with-al he moste his leve take,
And caste his eye upon hir pitously,
And neer he rood, his cause for to make,
To take hir by the honde al sobrely.

And lord! So she gan wepen tendrely!
And he ful softe and sleighly gan hir seye,
`Now hold your day, and dooth me not to deye.'

With that his courser torned he a-boute
With face pale, and un-to Diomede
No word he spak, ne noon of al his route;
Of which the sone of Tydeus took hede,

As he that coude more than the crede
In swich a craft, and by the reyne hir hente; 90
And Troilus to Troye homwarde he wente.

This Diomede, that ladde hir by the brydel,
Whan that he saw the folk of Troye aweye,
Thoughte, `Al my labour shal not been on ydel,
If that I may, for somwhat shal I seye, 95
For at the worste it may yet shorte our weye.
I have herd seyd, eek tymes twyes twelve,
"He is a fool that wol foryete himselve."'

But natheles this thoughte he wel ynough,
`That certaynly I am aboute nought, 100
If that I speke of love, or make it tough;
For douteles, if she have in hir thought
Him that I gesse, he may not been y-brought
So sone awey; but I shal finde a mene,
That she not wite as yet shal what I mene.' 105

This Diomede, as he that coude his good,

Whan this was doon, gan fallen forth in speche
Of this and that, and asked why she stood
In swich disese, and gan hir eek biseche,
That if that he encrese mighte or eche 110
With any thing hir ese, that she sholde
Comaunde it him, and seyde he doon it wolde.

For trewely he swoor hir, as a knight,
That ther nas thing with whiche he mighte hir plese,
That he nolde doon his peyne and al his might 115
To doon it, for to doon hir herte an ese.
And preyede hir, she wolde hir sorwe apese,
And seyde, `Y-wis, we Grekes con have Ioye
To honouren yow, as wel as folk of Troye.'

He seyde eek thus, `I woot, yow thinketh straunge, 120
No wonder is, for it is to yow newe,
Thaqueintaunce of these Troianis to chaunge,
For folk of Grece, that ye never knewe.
But wolde never god but-if as trewe
A Greek ye shulde among us alle finde 125

As any Troian is, and eek as kinde.

`And by the cause I swoor yow right, lo, now,
To been your freend, and helply, to my might,
And for that more aqueintaunce eek of yow
Have ich had than another straunger wight, 130
So fro this forth, I pray yow, day and night,
Comaundeth me, how sore that me smerte,
To doon al that may lyke un-to your herte;

`And that ye me wolde as your brother trete,
And taketh not my frendship in despyt; 135
And though your sorwes be for thinges grete,
Noot I not why, but out of more respyt,
Myn herte hath for to amende it greet delyt.
And if I may your harmes not redresse,
I am right sory for your hevinesse, 140

`And though ye Troians with us Grekes wrothe
Han many a day be, alwey yet, pardee,
O god of love in sooth we serven bothe.

And, for the love of god, my lady free,
Whom so ye hate, as beth not wroth with me. 145
For trewely, ther can no wight yow serve,
That half so looth your wraththe wolde deserve.

`And nere it that we been so neigh the tente
Of Calkas, which that seen us bothe may,
I wolde of this yow telle al myn entente; 150
But this enseled til another day.
Yeve me your hond, I am, and shal ben ay,
God help me so, whyl that my lyf may dure,
Your owene aboven every creature.

`Thus seyde I never er now to womman born; 155
For god myn herte as wisly glade so,
I lovede never womman here-biforn
As paramours, ne never shal no mo.
And, for the love of god, beth not my fo;
Al can I not to yow, my lady dere, 160
Compleyne aright, for I am yet to lere.

`And wondreth not, myn owene lady bright,
Though that I speke of love to you thus blyve;
For I have herd or this of many a wight,
Hath loved thing he never saugh his lyve. 165
Eek I am not of power for to stryve
Ayens the god of love, but him obeye
I wol alwey, and mercy I yow preye.

`Ther been so worthy knightes in this place,
And ye so fair, that everich of hem alle 170
Wol peynen him to stonden in your grace.
But mighte me so fair a grace falle,
That ye me for your servaunt wolde calle,
So lowly ne so trewely you serve
Nil noon of hem, as I shal, til I sterve.' 175

Criseide un-to that purpos lyte answerde,
As she that was with sorwe oppressed so
That, in effect, she nought his tales herde,
But here and there, now here a word or two.
Hir thoughte hir sorwful herte brast a-two. 180

For whan she gan hir fader fer aspye,
Wel neigh doun of hir hors she gan to sye.

But natheles she thonked Diomede
Of al his travaile, and his goode chere,
And that him liste his friendship hir to bede; 185
And she accepteth it in good manere,
And wolde do fayn that is him leef and dere;
And trusten him she wolde, and wel she mighte,
As seyde she, and from hir hors she alighte.

Hir fader hath hir in his armes nome, 190
And tweynty tyme he kiste his doughter swete,
And seyde, `O dere doughter myn, wel-come!'
She seyde eek, she was fayn with him to mete,
And stood forth mewet, milde, and mansuete.
But here I leve hir with hir fader dwelle, 195
And forth I wol of Troilus yow telle.

To Troye is come this woful Troilus,
In sorwe aboven alle sorwes smerte,

With felon look, and face dispitous.
Tho sodeinly doun from his hors he sterte, 200
And thorugh his paleys, with a swollen herte,
To chambre he wente; of nothing took he hede,
Ne noon to him dar speke a word for drede.

And there his sorwes that he spared hadde
He yaf an issue large, and `Deeth!' he cryde; 205
And in his throwes frenetyk and madde
He cursed Iove, Appollo, and eek Cupyde,
He cursed Ceres, Bacus, and Cipryde,
His burthe, him-self, his fate, and eek nature,
And, save his lady, every creature. 210

To bedde he goth, and weyleth there and torneth
In furie, as dooth he, Ixion in helle;
And in this wyse he neigh til day soiorneth.
But tho bigan his herte a lyte unswelle
Thorugh teres which that gonnen up to welle; 215
And pitously he cryde up-on Criseyde,
And to him-self right thus he spak, and seyde: —

`Wher is myn owene lady lief and dere,
Wher is hir whyte brest, wher is it, where?
Wher ben hir armes and hir eyen clere, 220
That yesternight this tyme with me were?
Now may I wepe allone many a tere,
And graspe aboute I may, but in this place,
Save a pilowe, I finde nought tenbrace.

`How shal I do? Whan shal she com ayeyn? 225
I noot, allas! Why leet ich hir to go?

As wolde god, ich hadde as tho be sleyn!
O herte myn, Criseyde, O swete fo!

O lady myn, that I love and no mo!
To whom for ever-mo myn herte I dowe; 230
See how I deye, ye nil me not rescowe!

`Who seeth yow now, my righte lode-sterre?

Who sit right now or stant in your presence?
Who can conforten now your hertes werre?
Now I am gon, whom yeve ye audience? 235
Who speketh for me right now in myn absence?
Allas, no wight; and that is al my care;
For wel wot I, as yvel as I ye fare.

`How sholde I thus ten dayes ful endure,
Whan I the firste night have al this tene? 240
How shal she doon eek, sorwful creature?
For tendernesse, how shal she this sustene,
Swich wo for me? O pitous, pale, and grene
Shal been your fresshe wommanliche face
For langour, er ye torne un-to this place.' 245

And whan he fil in any slomeringes,
Anoon biginne he sholde for to grone,
And dremen of the dredfulleste thinges
That mighte been; as, mete he were allone
In place horrible, makinge ay his mone, 250
Or meten that he was amonges alle

His enemys, and in hir hondes falle.

And ther-with-al his body sholde sterte,
And with the stert al sodeinliche awake,
And swich a tremour fele aboute his herte, 255
That of the feer his body sholde quake;
And there-with-al he sholde a noyse make,
And seme as though he sholde falle depe
From heighe a-lofte; and than he wolde wepe,

And rewen on him-self so pitously, 260
That wonder was to here his fantasye.
Another tyme he sholde mightily
Conforte him-self, and seyn it was folye,
So causeles swich drede for to drye,
And eft biginne his aspre sorwes newe, 265
That every man mighte on his sorwes rewe.

Who coude telle aright or ful discryve
His wo, his pleynt, his langour, and his pyne?
Nought al the men that han or been on-lyve.

Thou, redere, mayst thy-self ful wel devyne 270
That swich a wo my wit can not defyne.
On ydel for to wryte it sholde I swinke,
Whan that my wit is wery it to thinke.

On hevene yet the sterres were sene,
Al-though ful pale y-waxen was the mone; 275
And whyten gan the orisonte shene
Al estward, as it woned is for to done.
And Phebus with his rosy carte sone
Gan after that to dresse him up to fare,
Whan Troilus hath sent after Pandare. 280

This Pandare, that of al the day biforn
Ne mighte han comen Troilus to see,
Al-though he on his heed it hadde y-sworn,
For with the king Pryam alday was he,
So that it lay not in his libertee 285
No-wher to gon, but on the morwe he wente
To Troilus, whan that he for him sente.

For in his herte he coude wel devyne,
That Troilus al night for sorwe wook;
And that he wolde telle him of his pyne, 290
This knew he wel y-nough, with-oute book.
For which to chaumbre streight the wey he took,
And Troilus tho sobreliche he grette,
And on the bed ful sone he gan him sette.

`My Pandarus,' quod Troilus, `the sorwe 295
Which that I drye, I may not longe endure.
I trowe I shal not liven til to-morwe;
For whiche I wolde alwey, on aventure,
To thee devysen of my sepulture
The forme, and of my moeble thou dispone 300
Right as thee semeth best is for to done.

`But of the fyr and flaumbe funeral
In whiche my body brenne shal to glede,
And of the feste and pleyes palestral
At my vigile, I prey thee tak good hede 305
That be wel; and offre Mars my stede,

My swerd, myn helm, and, leve brother dere,
My sheld to Pallas yef, that shyneth clere.

`The poudre in which myn herte y-brend shal torne,
That preye I thee thou take and it conserve 310
In a vessel, that men clepeth an urne,
Of gold, and to my lady that I serve,
For love of whom thus pitously I sterve,
So yeve it hir, and do me this plesaunce,
To preye hir kepe it for a remembraunce. 315

`For wel I fele, by my maladye,
And by my dremes now and yore ago,
Al certeinly, that I mot nedes dye.
The owle eek, which that hight Ascaphilo,
Hath after me shright alle thise nightes two. 320
And, god Mercurie! Of me now, woful wrecche,
The soule gyde, and, whan thee list, it fecche!'

Pandare answerde, and seyde, `Troilus,
My dere freend, as I have told thee yore,

That it is folye for to sorwen thus, 325
And causeles, for whiche I can no-more.
But who-so wol not trowen reed ne lore,
I can not seen in him no remedye,
But lete him worthen with his fantasye.

`But Troilus, I pray thee tel me now, 330
If that thou trowe, er this, that any wight
Hath loved paramours as wel as thou?
Ye, god wot, and fro many a worthy knight
Hath his lady goon a fourtenight,
And he not yet made halvendel the fare. 335
What nede is thee to maken al this care?

`Sin day by day thou mayst thy-selven see
That from his love, or elles from his wyf,
A man mot twinnen of necessitee,
Ye, though he love hir as his owene lyf; 340
Yet nil he with him-self thus maken stryf.
For wel thow wost, my leve brother dere,
That alwey freendes may nought been y-fere.

`How doon this folk that seen hir loves wedded

By freendes might, as it bi-tit ful ofte, 345

And seen hem in hir spouses bed y-bedded?

God woot, they take it wysly, faire and softe.

For-why good hope halt up hir herte on-lofte,

And for they can a tyme of sorwe endure;

As tyme hem hurt, a tyme doth hem cure. 350

`So sholdestow endure, and late slyde

The tyme, and fonde to ben glad and light.

Ten dayes nis so longe not tabyde.

And sin she thee to comen hath bihight,

She nil hir hestes breken for no wight. 355

For dred thee not that she nil finden weye

To come ayein, my lyf that dorste I leye.

`Thy swevenes eek and al swich fantasye

Dryf out, and lat hem faren to mischaunce;

For they procede of thy malencolye, 360
That doth thee fele in sleep al this penaunce.

A straw for alle swevenes signifiaunce!
God helpe me so, I counte hem not a bene,
Ther woot no man aright what dremes mene.

`For prestes of the temple tellen this, 365
That dremes been the revelaciouns
Of goddes, and as wel they telle, y-wis,
That they ben infernals illusiouns;
And leches seyn, that of complexiouns
Proceden they, or fast, or glotonye. 370
Who woot in sooth thus what they signifye?

`Eek othere seyn that thorugh impressiouns,
As if a wight hath faste a thing in minde,
That ther-of cometh swiche avisiouns;
And othere seyn, as they in bokes finde, 375
That, after tymes of the yeer by kinde,
Men dreme, and that theffect goth by the mone;

But leve no dreem, for it is nought to done.

`Wel worth of dremes ay thise olde wyves,
And treweliche eek augurie of thise foules;
For fere of which men wenen lese her lyves,
As ravenes qualm, or shryking of thise oules.
To trowen on it bothe fals and foul is.
Allas, allas, so noble a creature
As is a man, shal drede swich ordure!

`For which with al myn herte I thee beseche,
Un-to thy-self that al this thou foryive;
And rys up now with-oute more speche,
And lat us caste how forth may best be drive
This tyme, and eek how freshly we may live
Whan that she cometh, the which shal be right sone;
God help me so, the beste is thus to done.

`Rys, lat us speke of lusty lyf in Troye
That we han lad, and forth the tyme dryve;
And eek of tyme cominge us reioye,

That bringen shal our blisse now so blyve;
And langour of these twyes dayes fyve
We shal ther-with so foryete or oppresse,
That wel unnethe it doon shal us duresse.

`This toun is ful of lordes al aboute, 400
And trewes lasten al this mene whyle.
Go we pleye us in som lusty route
To Sarpedon, not hennes but a myle.
And thus thou shalt the tyme wel bigyle,
And dryve it forth un-to that blisful morwe, 405
That thou hir see, that cause is of thy sorwe.

`Now rys, my dere brother Troilus;
For certes, it noon honour is to thee
To wepe, and in thy bedde to iouken thus.
For trewely, of o thing trust to me, 410
If thou thus ligge a day, or two, or three,
The folk wol wene that thou, for cowardyse,
Thee feynest syk, and that thou darst not ryse.'

This Troilus answerde, `O brother dere,
This knowen folk that han y-suffred peyne,
That though he wepe and make sorwful chere,
That feleth harm and smert in every veyne,
No wonder is; and though I ever pleyne,
Or alwey wepe, I am nothing to blame,
Sin I have lost the cause of al my game.

`But sin of fyne force I moot aryse,
I shal aryse as sone as ever I may;
And god, to whom myn herte I sacrifyse,
So sende us hastely the tenthe day!
For was ther never fowl so fayn of May,
As I shal been, whan that she cometh in Troye,
That cause is of my torment and my Ioye.

`But whider is thy reed,' quod Troilus,
`That we may pleye us best in al this toun?'
`Bi god, my conseil is,' quod Pandarus,
`To ryde and pleye us with king Sarpedoun.'
So longe of this they speken up and doun,

Til Troilus gan at the laste assente
To ryse, and forth to Sarpedoun they wente.

This Sarpedoun, as he that honourable
Was ever his lyve, and ful of heigh prowesse,
With al that mighte y-served been on table,
That deyntee was, al coste it greet richesse,
He fedde hem day by day, that swich noblesse,
As seyden bothe the moste and eek the leste,
Was never er that day wist at any feste.

Nor in this world ther is non instrument
Delicious, through wind, or touche, of corde,
As fer as any wight hath ever y-went,
That tonge telle or herte may recorde,
That at that feste it nas wel herd acorde;
Ne of ladies eek so fayr a companye
On daunce, er tho, was never y-seyn with ye.

But what avayleth this to Troilus,
That for his sorwe nothing of it roughte?

For ever in oon his herte pietous

Ful bisily Criseyde his lady soughte.

On hir was ever al that his herte thoughte,

Now this, now that, so faste imagininge,

That glade, y-wis, can him no festeyinge. 455

These ladies eek that at this feste been,

Sin that he saw his lady was a-weye,

It was his sorwe upon hem for to seen,

Or for to here on instrumentz so pleye.

For she, that of his herte berth the keye, 460

Was absent, lo, this was his fantasye,

That no wight sholde make melodye.

Nor ther nas houre in al the day or night,

Whan he was ther-as no wight mighte him here,

That he ne seyde, `O lufsom lady bright, 465

How have ye faren, sin that ye were here?

Welcome, y-wis, myn owene lady dere.'

But welaway, al this nas but a mase;

Fortune his howve entended bet to glase.

The lettres eek, that she of olde tyme 470
Hadde him y-sent, he wolde allone rede,
An hundred sythe, a-twixen noon and pryme;
Refiguringe hir shap, hir womanhede,
With-inne his herte, and every word and dede
That passed was, and thus he droof to an ende 475
The ferthe day, and seyde, he wolde wende.

And seyde, `Leve brother Pandarus,
Intendestow that we shal here bleve
Til Sarpedoun wol forth congeyen us?
Yet were it fairer that we toke our leve. 480
For goddes love, lat us now sone at eve
Our leve take, and homward lat us torne;
For trewely, I nil not thus soiourne.'

Pandare answerde, `Be we comen hider
To fecchen fyr, and rennen hoom ayeyn? 485
God helpe me so, I can not tellen whider

We mighten goon, if I shal soothly seyn,
Ther any wight is of us more fayn
Than Sarpedoun; and if we hennes hye
Thus sodeinly, I holde it vilanye. 490

`Sin that we seyden that we wolde bleve
With him a wouke; and now, thus sodeinly,
The ferthe day to take of him oure leve,
He wolde wondren on it, trewely!
Lat us holde forth our purpos fermely; 495
And sin that ye bihighten him to byde,
Hold forward now, and after lat us ryde.'

Thus Pandarus, with alle peyne and wo,
Made him to dwelle; and at the woukes ende,
Of Sarpedoun they toke hir leve tho, 500
And on hir wey they spedden hem to wende.
Quod Troilus, `Now god me grace sende,
That I may finden, at myn hom-cominge,
Criseyde comen!' And ther-with gan he singe.

`Ye, hasel-wode!' thoughte this Pandare, 505
And to him-self ful softely he seyde,
`God woot, refreyden may this hote fare,
Er Calkas sende Troilus Criseyde!'
But natheles, he Iaped thus, and seyde,
And swor, y-wis, his herte him wel bihighte, 510
She wolde come as sone as ever she mighte.

Whan they un-to the paleys were y-comen
Of Troilus, they doun of hors alighte,
And to the chambre hir wey than han they nomen.
And in-to tyme that it gan to nighte, 515
They spaken of Crysede the brighte.
And after this, whan that hem bothe leste,
They spedde hem fro the soper un-to reste.

On morwe, as sone as day bigan to clere,
This Troilus gan of his sleep tabrayde, 520
And to Pandare, his owene brother dere,
`For love of god,' ful pitously he seyde,
`As go we seen the paleys of Criseyde;

For sin we yet may have namore feste,
So lat us seen hir paleys at the leste.' 525

And ther-with-al, his meyne for to blende,
A cause he fond in toune for to go,
And to Criseydes hous they gonnen wende.
But lord! This sely Troilus was wo!
Him thoughte his sorweful herte braste a-two. 530
For whan he saugh hir dores sperred alle,
Wel neigh for sorwe a-doun he gan to falle.

Therwith, whan he was war and gan biholde
How shet was every windowe of the place,
As frost, him thoughte, his herte gan to colde; 535
For which with chaunged deedlich pale face,
With-outen word, he forth bigan to pace;
And, as god wolde, he gan so faste ryde,
That no wight of his contenance aspyde.

Than seyde he thus; `O paleys desolat, 540
O hous, of houses whylom best y-hight,

O paleys empty and disconsolat,
O thou lanterne, of which queynt is the light,
O paleys, whylom day, that now art night,
Wel oughtestow to falle, and I to dye, 545
Sin she is went that wont was us to gye!

`O paleys, whylom croune of houses alle,
Enlumined with sonne of alle blisse!
O ring, fro which the ruby is out-falle,
O cause of wo, that cause hast been of lisse! 550
Yet, sin I may no bet, fayn wolde I kisse
Thy colde dores, dorste I for this route;
And farewel shryne, of which the seynt is oute!'

Therwith he caste on Pandarus his ye
With chaunged face, and pitous to biholde; 555
And whan he mighte his tyme aright aspye,
Ay as he rood, to Pandarus he tolde
His newe sorwe, and eek his Ioyes olde,
So pitously and with so dede an hewe,
That every wight mighte on his sorwe rewe. 560

Fro thennesforth he rydeth up and doun,
And every thing com him to remembraunce
As he rood forbi places of the toun
In whiche he whylom hadde al his plesaunce.
`Lo, yond saugh I myn owene lady daunce; 565
And in that temple, with hir eyen clere,
Me coughte first my righte lady dere.

`And yonder have I herd ful lustily
My dere herte laugh, and yonder pleye
Saugh I hir ones eek ful blisfully. 570
And yonder ones to me gan she seye,
"Now goode swete, love me wel, I preye."
And yond so goodly gan she me biholde,
That to the deeth myn herte is to hir holde.

`And at that corner, in the yonder hous, 575
Herde I myn alderlevest lady dere
So wommanly, with voys melodious,
Singen so wel, so goodly, and so clere,

That in my soule yet me thinketh I here
The blisful soun; and, in that yonder place, 580
My lady first me took un-to hir grace.'

Thanne thoughte he thus, `O blisful lord Cupyde,
Whanne I the proces have in my memorie,
How thou me hast wereyed on every syde,
Men might a book make of it, lyk a storie. 585
What nede is thee to seke on me victorie,
Sin I am thyn, and hoolly at thy wille?
What Ioye hastow thyn owene folk to spille?

`Wel hastow, lord, y-wroke on me thyn ire,
Thou mighty god, and dredful for to greve! 590
Now mercy, lord, thou wost wel I desire
Thy grace most, of alle lustes leve,
And live and deye I wol in thy bileve,
For which I naxe in guerdon but a bone,
That thou Criseyde ayein me sende sone. 595

`Distreyne hir herte as faste to retorne

As thou dost myn to longen hir to see;
Than woot I wel, that she nil nought soiorne.
Now, blisful lord, so cruel thou ne be
Un-to the blood of Troye, I preye thee, 600
As Iuno was un-to the blood Thebane,
For which the folk of Thebes caughte hir bane.'

And after this he to the yates wente
Ther-as Criseyde out-rood a ful good paas,
And up and doun ther made he many a wente, 605
And to him-self ful ofte he seyde `Allas!

From hennes rood my blisse and my solas!
As wolde blisful god now, for his Ioye,
I mighte hir seen ayein come in-to Troye!

`And to the yonder hille I gan hir gyde, 610
Allas! And there I took of hir my leve!
And yond I saugh hir to hir fader ryde,
For sorwe of which myn herte shal to-cleve.
And hider hoom I com whan it was eve;

And here I dwelle out-cast from alle Ioye, 615
And shal, til I may seen hir eft in Troye.'

And of him-self imagened he ofte
To ben defet, and pale, and waxen lesse
Than he was wont, and that men seyden softe,
`What may it be? Who can the sothe gesse 620
Why Troilus hath al this hevinesse?'
And al this nas but his malencolye,
That he hadde of him-self swich fantasye.

Another tyme imaginen he wolde
That every wight that wente by the weye 625
Had of him routhe, and that they seyen sholde,
`I am right sory Troilus wole deye.'
And thus he droof a day yet forth or tweye.
As ye have herd, swich lyf right gan he lede,
As he that stood bitwixen hope and drede. 630

For which him lyked in his songes shewe
Thencheson of his wo, as he best mighte,

And made a song of wordes but a fewe,
Somwhat his woful herte for to lighte.
And whan he was from every mannes sighte,
With softe voys he, of his lady dere,
That was absent, gan singe as ye may here.

`O sterre, of which I lost have al the light,
With herte soor wel oughte I to bewayle,
That ever derk in torment, night by night,
Toward my deeth with wind in stere I sayle;
For which the tenthe night if that I fayle
The gyding of thy bemes brighte an houre,
My ship and me Caribdis wole devoure.'

This song whan he thus songen hadde, sone
He fil ayein in-to his sykes olde;
And every night, as was his wone to done,
He stood the brighte mone to beholde,
And al his sorwe he to the mone tolde;
And seyde, `Y-wis, whan thou art horned newe,
I shal be glad, if al the world be trewe!

`I saugh thyn hornes olde eek by the morwe,
Whan hennes rood my righte lady dere,
That cause is of my torment and my sorwe;
For whiche, O brighte Lucina the clere, 655
For love of god, ren faste aboute thy spere!
For whan thyn hornes newe ginne springe,
Than shal she come, that may my blisse bringe!'

The day is more, and lenger every night,
Than they be wont to be, him thoughte tho; 660
And that the sonne wente his course unright
By lenger wey than it was wont to go;
And seyde, `Y-wis, me dredeth ever-mo,
The sonnes sone, Pheton, be on-lyve,
And that his fadres cart amis he dryve.' 665

Upon the walles faste eek wolde he walke,
And on the Grekes ost he wolde see,
And to him-self right thus he wolde talke,
`Lo, yonder is myn owene lady free,

Or elles yonder, ther tho tentes be! 670
And thennes comth this eyr, that is so sote,
That in my soule I fele it doth me bote.

`And hardely this wind, that more and more
Thus stoundemele encreseth in my face,
Is of my ladyes depe sykes sore. 675
I preve it thus, for in non othere place
Of al this toun, save onliche in this space,
Fele I no wind that souneth so lyk peyne;
It seyth, "Allas! Why twinned be we tweyne?"'

This longe tyme he dryveth forth right thus, 680
Til fully passed was the nynthe night;
And ay bi-syde him was this Pandarus,
That bisily dide alle his fulle might
Him to comforte, and make his herte light;
Yevinge him hope alwey, the tenthe morwe 685
That she shal come, and stinten al his sorwe.

Up-on that other syde eek was Criseyde,

With wommen fewe, among the Grekes stronge;
For which ful ofte a day `Allas,' she seyde,
`That I was born! Wel may myn herte longe
After my deeth; for now live I to longe!
Allas! And I ne may it not amende;
For now is wors than ever yet I wende.

`My fader nil for nothing do me grace
To goon ayein, for nought I can him queme;
And if so be that I my terme passe,
My Troilus shal in his herte deme
That I am fals, and so it may wel seme.
Thus shal I have unthank on every syde;
That I was born, so weylaway the tyde!

`And if that I me putte in Iupartye,
To stele awey by nighte, and it bifalle
That I be caught, I shal be holde a spye;
Or elles, lo, this drede I most of alle,
If in the hondes of som wrecche I falle,
I am but lost, al be myn herte trewe;

Now mighty god, thou on my sorwe rewe!'

Ful pale y-waxen was hir brighte face,
Hir limes lene, as she that al the day
Stood whan she dorste, and loked on the place
Ther she was born, and ther she dwelt hadde ay.

And al the night wepinge, allas! she lay.
And thus despeired, out of alle cure,
She ladde hir lyf, this woful creature.

Ful ofte a day she sighte eek for destresse,
And in hir-self she wente ay portrayinge
Of Troilus the grete worthinesse,
And alle his goodly wordes recordinge
Sin first that day hir love bigan to springe.
And thus she sette hir woful herte a-fyre
Through remembraunce of that she gan desyre.

In al this world ther nis so cruel herte
That hir hadde herd compleynen in hir sorwe,

That nolde han wopen for hir peynes smerte,

So tendrely she weep, bothe eve and morwe. 725

Hir nedede no teres for to borwe.

And this was yet the worste of al hir peyne,

Ther was no wight to whom she dorste hir pleyne.

Ful rewfully she loked up-on Troye,

Biheld the toures heighe and eek the halles; 730

`Allas!' quod she, `The plesaunce and the Ioye

The whiche that now al torned in-to galle is,

Have I had ofte with-inne yonder walles!

O Troilus, what dostow now,' she seyde;

`Lord! Whether yet thou thenke up-on Criseyde? 735

`Allas! I ne hadde trowed on your lore,

And went with yow, as ye me radde er this!

Thanne hadde I now not syked half so sore.

Who mighte han seyd, that I had doon a-mis

To stele awey with swich on as he is? 740

But al to late cometh the letuarie,

Whan men the cors un-to the grave carie.

`To late is now to speke of this matere;
Prudence, allas! Oon of thyn eyen three
Me lakked alwey, er that I come here; 745
On tyme y-passed, wel remembred me;
And present tyme eek coude I wel y-see.
But futur tyme, er I was in the snare,
Coude I not seen; that causeth now my care.

`But natheles, bityde what bityde, 750
I shal to-morwe at night, by est or weste,
Out of this ost stele on som maner syde,
And go with Troilus wher-as him leste.

This purpos wol I holde, and this is beste.
No fors of wikked tonges Ianglerye, 755
For ever on love han wrecches had envye.

`For who-so wole of every word take hede,
Or rewlen him by every wightes wit,

Ne shal he never thryven, out of drede.
For that that som men blamen ever yit, 760
Lo, other maner folk commenden it.
And as for me, for al swich variaunce,
Felicitee clepe I my suffisaunce.

`For which, with-outen any wordes mo,
To Troye I wol, as for conclusioun.' 765
But god it wot, er fully monthes two,
She was ful fer fro that entencioun.
For bothe Troilus and Troye toun
Shal knotteles through-out hir herte slyde;
For she wol take a purpos for tabyde. 770

This Diomede, of whom yow telle I gan,
Goth now, with-inne him-self ay arguinge
With al the sleighte and al that ever he can,
How he may best, with shortest taryinge,
In-to his net Criseydes herte bringe. 775
To this entente he coude never fyne;
To fisshen hir, he leyde out hook and lyne.

But natheles, wel in his herte he thoughte,
That she nas nat with-oute a love in Troye,
For never, sithen he hir thennes broughte, 780
Ne coude he seen her laughe or make Ioye.

He nist how best hir herte for tacoye.
`But for to assaye,' he seyde, `it nought ne greveth;
For he that nought nassayeth, nought nacheveth.'

Yet seide he to him-self upon a night, 785
`Now am I not a fool, that woot wel how
Hir wo for love is of another wight,
And here-up-on to goon assaye hir now?

I may wel wite, it nil not been my prow.
For wyse folk in bokes it expresse, 790
"Men shal not wowe a wight in hevinesse."

`But who-so mighte winnen swich a flour
From him, for whom she morneth night and day,

He mighte seyn, he were a conquerour.'
And right anoon, as he that bold was ay, 795
Thoughte in his herte, `Happe how happe may,
Al sholde I deye, I wole hir herte seche;
I shal no more lesen but my speche.'

This Diomede, as bokes us declare,
Was in his nedes prest and corageous; 800
With sterne voys and mighty limes square,
Hardy, testif, strong, and chevalrous
Of dedes, lyk his fader Tideus.
And som men seyn, he was of tunge large;
And heir he was of Calidoine and Arge. 805

Criseyde mene was of hir stature,
Ther-to of shap, of face, and eek of chere,
Ther mighte been no fairer creature.
And ofte tyme this was hir manere,
To gon y-tressed with hir heres clere 810
Doun by hir coler at hir bak bihinde,
Which with a threde of gold she wolde binde.

And, save hir browes ioyneden y-fere,
Ther nas no lak, in ought I can espyen;
But for to speken of hir eyen clere,
Lo, trewely, they writen that hir syen,
That Paradys stood formed in hir yen.
And with hir riche beautee evermore
Strof love in hir, ay which of hem was more.

She sobre was, eek simple, and wys with-al,
The beste y-norisshed eek that mighte be,
And goodly of hir speche in general,
Charitable, estatliche, lusty, and free;
Ne never-mo ne lakkede hir pitee;
Tendre-herted, slydinge of corage;
But trewely, I can not telle hir age.

And Troilus wel waxen was in highte,
And complet formed by proporcioun
So wel, that kinde it not amenden mighte;
Yong, fresshe, strong, and hardy as lyoun;

Trewe as steel in ech condicioun;
On of the beste enteched creature,
That is, or shal, whyl that the world may dure.

And certainly in storie it is y-founde,
That Troilus was never un-to no wight, 835
As in his tyme, in no degree secounde
In durring don that longeth to a knight.
Al mighte a geaunt passen him of might,
His herte ay with the firste and with the beste
Stood paregal, to durre don that him leste. 840

But for to tellen forth of Diomede: —
It fil that after, on the tenthe day,
Sin that Criseyde out of the citee yede,
This Diomede, as fresshe as braunche in May,
Com to the tente ther-as Calkas lay, 845
And feyned him with Calkas han to done;
But what he mente, I shal yow telle sone.

Criseyde, at shorte wordes for to telle,

Welcomed him, and doun by hir him sette;
And he was ethe y-nough to maken dwelle. 850
And after this, with-outen longe lette,
The spyces and the wyn men forth hem fette;
And forth they speke of this and that y-fere,
As freendes doon, of which som shal ye here.

He gan first fallen of the werre in speche 855
Bitwixe hem and the folk of Troye toun;
And of thassege he gan hir eek byseche,
To telle him what was hir opinioun.
Fro that demaunde he so descendeth doun
To asken hir, if that hir straunge thoughte 860
The Grekes gyse, and werkes that they wroughte?

And why hir fader tarieth so longe
To wedden hir un-to som worthy wight?
Criseyde, that was in hir peynes stronge
For love of Troilus, hir owene knight, 865
As ferforth as she conning hadde or might,
Answerde him tho; but, as of his entente,

It semed not she wiste what he mente.

But natheles, this ilke Diomede
Gan in him-self assure, and thus he seyde, 870
`If ich aright have taken of yow hede,
Me thinketh thus, O lady myn, Criseyde,
That sin I first hond on your brydel leyde,
Whan ye out come of Troye by the morwe,
Ne coude I never seen yow but in sorwe. 875

`Can I not seyn what may the cause be
But-if for love of som Troyan it were,
The which right sore wolde athinken me
That ye, for any wight that dwelleth there,
Sholden spille a quarter of a tere, 880
Or pitously your-selven so bigyle;
For dredelees, it is nought worth the whyle.

`The folk of Troye, as who seyth, alle and some
In preson been, as ye your-selven see;
Nor thennes shal not oon on-lyve come 885

For al the gold bitwixen sonne and see.

Trusteth wel, and understondeth me.
Ther shal not oon to mercy goon on-lyve,
Al were he lord of worldes twyes fyve!

`Swich wreche on hem, for fecching of Eleyne, 890
Ther shal be take, er that we hennes wende,
That Manes, which that goddes ben of peyne,
Shal been agast that Grekes wol hem shende.
And men shul drede, un-to the worldes ende,
From hennesforth to ravisshe any quene, 895
So cruel shal our wreche on hem be sene.

`And but-if Calkas lede us with ambages,
That is to seyn, with double wordes slye,
Swich as men clepe a "word with two visages,"
Ye shal wel knowen that I nought ne lye, 900
And al this thing right seen it with your ye,
And that anoon; ye nil not trowe how sone;
Now taketh heed, for it is for to done.

`What wene ye your wyse fader wolde
Han yeven Antenor for yow anoon, 905
If he ne wiste that the citee sholde
Destroyed been? Why, nay, so mote I goon!
He knew ful wel ther shal not scapen oon
That Troyan is; and for the grete fere,
He dorste not, ye dwelte lenger there. 910

`What wole ye more, lufsom lady dere?
Lat Troye and Troyan fro your herte pace!
Dryf out that bittre hope, and make good chere,
And clepe ayein the beautee of your face,
That ye with salte teres so deface. 915
For Troye is brought in swich a Iupartye,
That, it to save, is now no remedye.

`And thenketh wel, ye shal in Grekes finde,
A more parfit love, er it be night,
Than any Troian is, and more kinde, 920
And bet to serven yow wol doon his might.

And if ye vouche sauf, my lady bright,
I wol ben he to serven yow my-selve,
Yee, lever than he lord of Greces twelve!'

And with that word he gan to waxen reed, 925
And in his speche a litel wight he quook,
And caste a-syde a litel wight his heed,
And stinte a whyle; and afterward awook,
And sobreliche on hir he threw his look,
And seyde, `I am, al be it yow no Ioye, 930
As gentil man as any wight in Troye.

`For if my fader Tydeus,' he seyde,
`Y-lived hadde, I hadde been, er this,
Of Calidoine and Arge a king, Criseyde!
And so hope I that I shal yet, y-wis. 935
But he was slayn, allas! The more harm is,
Unhappily at Thebes al to rathe,
Polymites and many a man to scathe.

`But herte myn, sin that I am your man,

And been the ferste of whom I seche grace, 940
To serven you as hertely as I can,
And ever shal, whyl I to live have space,
So, er that I departe out of this place,
Ye wol me graunte, that I may to-morwe,
At bettre leyser, telle yow my sorwe.' 945

What shold I telle his wordes that he seyde?
He spak y-now, for o day at the meste;
It preveth wel, he spak so that Criseyde
Graunted, on the morwe, at his requeste,
For to speken with him at the leste, 950
So that he nolde speke of swich matere;
And thus to him she seyde, as ye may here:

As she that hadde hir herte on Troilus
So faste, that ther may it noon arace;
And straungely she spak, and seyde thus; 955
`O Diomede, I love that ilke place
Ther I was born; and Ioves, for his grace,
Delivere it sone of al that doth it care!

God, for thy might, so leve it wel to fare!

`That Grekes wolde hir wraththe on Troye wreke,
If that they mighte, I knowe it wel, y-wis.
But it shal not bifallen as ye speke;
And god to-forn, and ferther over this,
I wot my fader wys and redy is;
And that he me hath bought, as ye me tolde,
So dere, I am the more un-to him holde.

`That Grekes been of heigh condicioun,
I woot eek wel; but certein, men shal finde
As worthy folk with-inne Troye toun,
As conning, and as parfit and as kinde,
As been bitwixen Orcades and Inde.
And that ye coude wel your lady serve,
I trowe eek wel, hir thank for to deserve.

`But as to speke of love, y-wis,' she seyde,
`I hadde a lord, to whom I wedded was,

The whos myn herte al was, til that he deyde;
And other love, as helpe me now Pallas,
Ther in myn herte nis, ne nevere was.
And that ye been of noble and heigh kinrede,
I have wel herd it tellen, out of drede. 980

`And that doth me to han so gret a wonder,
That ye wol scornen any womman so.

Eek, god wot, love and I be fer a-sonder!
I am disposed bet, so mote I go,
Un-to my deeth, to pleyne and maken wo. 985
What I shal after doon, I can not seye;
But trewely, as yet me list not pleye.

`Myn herte is now in tribulacioun,
And ye in armes bisy, day by day.
Here-after, whan ye wonnen han the toun, 990
Paraunter, thanne so it happen may,
That whan I see that I never er say,
Than wole I werke that I never wroughte!

This word to yow y-nough suffysen oughte.

`To-morwe eek wol I speken with yow fayn,
So that ye touchen nought of this matere.
And whan yow list, ye may come here ayeyn;
And, er ye gon, thus muche I seye yow here;
As help me Pallas with hir heres clere,
If that I sholde of any Greek han routhe,
It sholde be your-selven, by my trouthe!

`I sey not therfore that I wol yow love,
Ne I sey not nay, but in conclusioun,
I mene wel, by god that sit above:' —
And ther-with-al she caste hir eyen doun,
And gan to syke, and seyde, `O Troye toun,
Yet bidde I god, in quiete and in reste
I may yow seen, or do myn herte breste.'

But in effect, and shortly for to seye,
This Diomede al freshly newe ayeyn

Gan pressen on, and faste hir mercy preye;
And after this, the sothe for to seyn,
Hir glove he took, of which he was ful fayn.
And fynally, whan it was waxen eve,
And al was wel, he roos and took his leve.

The brighte Venus folwede and ay taughte
The wey, ther brode Phebus doun alighte;
And Cynthea hir char-hors over-raughte
To whirle out of the Lyon, if she mighte;
And Signifer his candelse shewed brighte,
Whan that Criseyde un-to hir bedde wente
In-with hir fadres faire brighte tente.

Retorning in hir soule ay up and doun
The wordes of this sodein Diomede,
His greet estat, and peril of the toun,
And that she was allone and hadde nede
Of freendes help; and thus bigan to brede
The cause why, the sothe for to telle,
That she tok fully purpos for to dwelle.

The morwe com, and goostly for to speke,
This Diomede is come un-to Criseyde,
And shortly, lest that ye my tale breke,
So wel he for himselve spak and seyde,
That alle hir sykes sore adoun he leyde.
And fynally, the sothe for to seyne,
He refte hir of the grete of al hir peyne.

And after this the story telleth us,
That she him yaf the faire baye stede,
The which he ones wan of Troilus;
And eek a broche (and that was litel nede)
That Troilus was, she yaf this Diomede.
And eek, the bet from sorwe him to releve,
She made him were a pencel of hir sleve.

I finde eek in stories elles-where,
Whan through the body hurt was Diomede
Of Troilus, tho weep she many a tere,
Whan that she saugh his wyde woundes blede;

And that she took to kepen him good hede,
And for to hele him of his sorwes smerte.
Men seyn, I not, that she yaf him hir herte. 1050

But trewely, the story telleth us,
Ther made never womman more wo
Than she, whan that she falsed Troilus.
She seyde, `Allas! For now is clene a-go
My name of trouthe in love, for ever-mo! 1055
For I have falsed oon, the gentileste
That ever was, and oon the worthieste!

`Allas, of me, un-to the worldes ende,
Shal neither been y-writen nor y-songe
No good word, for thise bokes wol me shende. 1060
O, rolled shal I been on many a tonge;
Through-out the world my belle shal be ronge;
And wommen most wol hate me of alle.

Allas, that swich a cas me sholde falle!

`They wol seyn, in as muche as in me is,
I have hem don dishonour, weylawey!
Al be I not the first that dide amis,
What helpeth that to do my blame awey?
But sin I see there is no bettre way,
And that to late is now for me to rewe,
To Diomede algate I wol be trewe.

`But Troilus, sin I no better may,
And sin that thus departen ye and I,
Yet preye I god, so yeve yow right good day
As for the gentileste, trewely,
That ever I say, to serven feithfully,
And best can ay his lady honour kepe:' —
And with that word she brast anon to wepe.

`And certes yow ne haten shal I never,
And freendes love, that shal ye han of me,
And my good word, al mighte I liven ever.
And, trewely, I wolde sory be
For to seen yow in adversitee.

And giltelees, I woot wel, I yow leve;
But al shal passe; and thus take I my leve.' 1085

But trewely, how longe it was bitwene,
That she for-sook him for this Diomede,
Ther is non auctor telleth it, I wene.
Take every man now to his bokes hede;
He shal no terme finden, out of drede. 1090
For though that he bigan to wowe hir sone,
Er he hir wan, yet was ther more to done.

Ne me ne list this sely womman chyde
Ferther than the story wol devyse.
Hir name, allas! Is publisshed so wyde, 1095
That for hir gilt it oughte y-noe suffyse.
And if I mighte excuse hir any wyse,
For she so sory was for hir untrouthe,
Y-wis, I wolde excuse hir yet for routhe.

This Troilus, as I biforn have told, 1100
Thus dryveth forth, as wel as he hath might.

But often was his herte hoot and cold,
And namely, that ilke nynthe night,
Which on the morwe she hadde him byhight
To come ayein: god wot, ful litel reste
Hadde he that night; nothing to slepe him leste.

The laurer-crouned Phebus, with his hete,
Gan, in his course ay upward as he wente,
To warmen of the est see the wawes wete,
And Nisus doughter song with fresh entente,
Whan Troilus his Pandare after sente;
And on the walles of the toun they pleyde,
To loke if they can seen ought of Criseyde.

Til it was noon, they stoden for to see
Who that ther come; and every maner wight,
That cam fro fer, they seyden it was she,
Til that they coude knowen him a-right.
Now was his herte dul, now was it light;
And thus by-iaped stonden for to stare
Aboute nought, this Troilus and Pandare.

To Pandarus this Troilus tho seyde,
`For ought I wot, bi-for noon, sikerly,
In-to this toun ne comth nought here Criseyde.
She hath y-now to done, hardily,
To winnen from hir fader, so trowe I; 1125
Hir olde fader wol yet make hir dyne
Er that she go; god yeve his herte pyne!'

Pandare answerde, `It may wel be, certeyn;
And for-thy lat us dyne, I thee biseche;
And after noon than maystw thou come ayeyn.' 1130
And hoom they go, with-oute more speche;
And comen ayein, but longe may they seche
Er that they finde that they after cape;
Fortune hem bothe thenketh for to Iape.

Quod Troilus, `I see wel now, that she 1135
Is taried with hir olde fader so,
That er she come, it wole neigh even be.
Com forth, I wol un-to the yate go.

Thise portours been unkonninge ever-mo;
And I wol doon hem holden up the yate 1140
As nought ne were, al-though she come late.'

The day goth faste, and after that comth eve,
And yet com nought to Troilus Criseyde.
He loketh forth by hegge, by tree, by greve,
And fer his heed over the wal he leyde. 1145
And at the laste he torned him, and seyde.

`By god, I woot hir mening now, Pandare!
Al-most, y-wis, al newe was my care.

`Now douteles, this lady can hir good;
I woot, she meneth ryden prively. 1150
I comende hir wysdom, by myn hood!
She wol not maken peple nycely
Gaure on hir, whan she comth; but softely
By nighte in-to the toun she thenketh ryde.
And, dere brother, thenk not longe to abyde. 1155

`We han nought elles for to don, y-wis.
And Pandarus, now woltow trowen me?

Have here my trouthe, I see hir! Yond she is.
Heve up thyn eyen, man! Maystow not see?'
Pandare answerde, `Nay, so mote I thee! 1160
Al wrong, by god; what seystow, man, wher art?

That I see yond nis but a fare-cart.'

`Allas, thou seist right sooth,' quod Troilus;
`But, hardely, it is not al for nought
That in myn herte I now reioyse thus. 1165
It is ayein som good I have a thought.
Noot I not how, but sin that I was wrought,
Ne felte I swich a confort, dar I seye;
She comth to-night, my lyf, that dorste I leye!'

Pandare answerde, `It may be wel, y-nough'; 1170
And held with him of al that ever he seyde;
But in his herte he thoughte, and softe lough,

And to him-self ful sobrely he seyde:
`From hasel-wode, ther Ioly Robin pleyde,
Shal come al that thou abydest here; 1175
Ye, farewel al the snow of ferne yere!'

The wardein of the yates gan to calle
The folk which that with-oute the yates were,
And bad hem dryven in hir bestes alle,
Or al the night they moste bleven there. 1180
And fer with-in the night, with many a tere,
This Troilus gan hoomward for to ryde;
For wel he seeth it helpeth nought tabyde.

But natheles, he gladded him in this;
He thoughte he misacounted hadde his day, 1185
And seyde, `I understonde have al a-mis.
For thilke night I last Criseyde say,
She seyde, "I shal ben here, if that I may,
Er that the mone, O dere herte swete!
The Lyon passe, out of this Ariete." 1190

`For which she may yet holde al hir biheste.'
And on the morwe un-to the yate he wente,
And up and down, by west and eek by este,
Up-on the walles made he many a wente.
But al for nought; his hope alwey him blente; 1195
For which at night, in sorwe and sykes sore,
He wente him hoom, with-outen any more.

This hope al clene out of his herte fledde,
He nath wher-on now lenger for to honge;
But for the peyne him thoughte his herte bledde, 1200
So were his throwes sharpe and wonder stronge.
For when he saugh that she abood so longe,
He niste what he iuggen of it mighte,
Sin she hath broken that she him bihighte.

The thridde, ferthe, fifte, sixte day 1205
After tho dayes ten, of which I tolde,
Bitwixen hope and drede his herte lay,
Yet somwhat trustinge on hir hestes olde.
But whan he saugh she nolde hir terme holde,

He can now seen non other remedye,
But for to shape him sone for to dye.

Therwith the wikked spirit, god us blesse,
Which that men clepeth wode Ialousye,
Gan in him crepe, in al this hevinesse;
For which, by-cause he wolde sone dye,
He ne eet ne dronk, for his malencolye,
And eek from every companye he fledde;
This was the lyf that al the tyme he ledde.

He so defet was, that no maner man
Unneth mighte him knowe ther he wente;
So was he lene, and ther-to pale and wan,
And feble, that he walketh by potente;
And with his ire he thus himselven shente.
But who-so axed him wher-of him smerte,
He seyde, his harm was al aboute his herte.

Pryam ful ofte, and eek his moder dere,
His bretheren and his sustren gonne him freyne

Why he so sorwful was in al his chere,
And what thing was the cause of al his peyne?
But al for nought; he nolde his cause pleyne,
But seyde, he felte a grevous maladye
A-boute his herte, and fayn he wolde dye.

So on a day he leyde him doun to slepe,
And so bifel that in his sleep him thoughte,
That in a forest faste he welk to wepe
For love of hir that him these peynes wroughte;
And up and doun as he the forest soughte,
He mette he saugh a boor with tuskes grete,
That sleep ayein the brighte sonnes hete.

And by this boor, faste in his armes folde,
Lay kissing ay his lady bright Criseyde:
For sorwe of which, whan he it gan biholde,
And for despyt, out of his slepe he breyde,
And loude he cryde on Pandarus, and seyde,
`O Pandarus, now knowe I crop and rote!
I nam but deed; ther nis non other bote!

`My lady bright Criseyde hath me bitrayed,

In whom I trusted most of any wight,

She elles-where hath now hir herte apayed;

The blisful goddes, through hir grete might, 1250

Han in my dreem y-shewed it ful right.

Thus in my dreem Criseyde I have biholde' —

And al this thing to Pandarus he tolde.

`O my Criseyde, allas! What subtiltee.

What newe lust, what beautee, what science, 1255

What wratthe of iuste cause have ye to me?

What gilt of me, what fel experience

Hath fro me raft, allas! Thyn advertence?

O trust, O feyth, O depe aseuraunce,

Who hath me reft Criseyde, al my plesaunce? 1260

`Allas! Why leet I you from hennes go,

For which wel neigh out of my wit I breyde?

Who shal now trowe on any othes mo?

God wot I wende, O lady bright, Criseyde,
That every word was gospel that ye seyde!
But who may bet bigylen, yf him liste,
Than he on whom men weneth best to triste?

`What shal I doon, my Pandarus, allas!
I fele now so sharpe a newe peyne,
Sin that ther is no remedie in this cas,
That bet were it I with myn hondes tweyne
My-selven slow, than alwey thus to pleyne.
For through my deeth my wo sholde han an ende,
Ther every day with lyf my-self I shende.'

Pandare answerde and seyde, `Allas the whyle
That I was born; have I not seyd er this,
That dremes many a maner man bigyle?
And why? For folk expounden hem a-mis.
How darstow seyn that fals thy lady is,
For any dreem, right for thyn owene drede?
Lat be this thought, thou canst no dremes rede.

`Paraunter, ther thou dremest of this boor,
It may so be that it may signifye
Hir fader, which that old is and eek hoor,
Ayein the sonne lyth, on poynt to dye, 1285
And she for sorwe ginneth wepe and crye,
And kisseth him, ther he lyth on the grounde;
Thus shuldestow thy dreem a-right expounde.'

`How mighte I thanne do?' quod Troilus,
`To knowe of this, ye, were it never so lyte?' 1290
`Now seystow wysly,' quod this Pandarus,
`My reed is this, sin thou canst wel endyte,
That hastely a lettre thou hir wryte,
Thorugh which thou shalt wel bringen it aboute,
To knowe a sooth of that thou art in doute. 1295

`And see now why; for this I dar wel seyn,
That if so is that she untrewe be,
I can not trowe that she wol wryte ayeyn.
And if she wryte, thou shalt ful sone see,
As whether she hath any libertee 1300

To come ayein, or ellis in som clause,
If she be let, she wol assigne a cause.

`Thou hast not writen hir sin that she wente,
Nor she to thee, and this I dorste leye,
Ther may swich cause been in hir entente, 1305
That hardely thou wolt thy-selven seye,
That hir a-bood the beste is for yow tweye.
Now wryte hir thanne, and thou shalt fele sone
A sothe of al; ther is no more to done.'

Acorded been to this conclusioun, 1310
And that anoon, these ilke lordes two;
And hastely sit Troilus adoun,
And rolleth in his herte to and fro,
How he may best discryven hir his wo.
And to Criseyde, his owene lady dere, 1315
He wroot right thus, and seyde as ye may here.

`Right fresshe flour, whos I have been and shal,
With-outen part of elles-where servyse,

With herte, body, lyf, lust, thought, and al;
I, woful wight, in every humble wyse 1320
That tonge telle or herte may devyse,
As ofte as matere occupyeth place,
Me recomaunde un-to your noble grace.

`Lyketh it yow to witen, swete herte,
As ye wel knowe how longe tyme agoon 1325
That ye me lefte in aspre peynes smerte,
Whan that ye wente, of which yet bote noon
Have I non had, but ever wers bigoon
Fro day to day am I, and so mot dwelle,
While it yow list, of wele and wo my welle. 1330

`For which to yow, with dredful herte trewe,
I wryte, as he that sorwe dryfth to wryte,
My wo, that every houre encreseth newe,
Compleyninge as I dar or can endyte.
And that defaced is, that may ye wyte 1335
The teres, which that fro myn eyen reyne,
That wolde speke, if that they coude, and pleyne.

`Yow first biseche I, that your eyen clere
To look on this defouled ye not holde;
And over al this, that ye, my lady dere,
Wol vouche-sauf this lettre to biholde.
And by the cause eek of my cares colde,
That sleeth my wit, if ought amis me asterte,
For-yeve it me, myn owene swete herte.

`If any servant dorste or oughte of right
Up-on his lady pitously compleyne,
Than wene I, that ich oughte be that wight,
Considered this, that ye these monthes tweyne
Han taried, ther ye seyden, sooth to seyne,
But dayes ten ye nolde in ost soiourne,
But in two monthes yet ye not retourne.

`But for-as-muche as me mot nedes lyke
Al that yow list, I dar not pleyne more,
But humbely with sorwful sykes syke;
Yow wryte ich myn unresty sorwes sore,

Fro day to day desyring evermore
To knowen fully, if your wil it were,
How ye han ferd and doon, whyl ye be there.

`The whos wel-fare and hele eek god encresse
In honour swich, that upward in degree
It growe alwey, so that it never cesse;
Right as your herte ay can, my lady free,
Devyse, I prey to god so mote it be.
And graunte it that ye sone up-on me rewe
As wisly as in al I am yow trewe.

`And if yow lyketh knowen of the fare
Of me, whos wo ther may no wight discryve,
I can no more but, cheste of every care,
At wrytinge of this lettre I was on-lyve,
Al redy out my woful gost to dryve;
Which I delaye, and holde him yet in honde,
Upon the sight of matere of your sonde.

`Myn eyen two, in veyn with which I see,

Of sorweful teres salte arn waxen welles;
My song, in pleynte of myn adversitee;
My good, in harm; myn ese eek waxen helle is.
My Ioye, in wo; I can sey yow nought elles,
But turned is, for which my lyf I warie,
Everich Ioye or ese in his contrarie.

`Which with your cominge hoom ayein to Troye
Ye may redresse, and, more a thousand sythe
Than ever ich hadde, encressen in me Ioye.
For was ther never herte yet so blythe
To han his lyf, as I shal been as swythe
As I yow see; and, though no maner routhe
Commeve yow, yet thinketh on your trouthe.

`And if so be my gilt hath deeth deserved,
Or if yow list no more up-on me see,
In guerdon yet of that I have you served,
Biseche I yow, myn hertes lady free,
That here-upon ye wolden wryte me,
For love of god, my righte lode-sterre,

Ther deeth may make an ende of al my werre.

`If other cause aught doth yow for to dwelle,
That with your lettre ye me recomforte; 1395
For though to me your absence is an helle,
With pacience I wol my wo comporte,
And with your lettre of hope I wol desporte.
Now wryteth, swete, and lat me thus not pleyne;
With hope, or deeth, delivereth me fro peyne. 1400

`Y-wis, myn owene dere herte trewe,
I woot that, whan ye next up-on me see,
So lost have I myn hele and eek myn hewe,
Criseyde shal nought conne knowe me!
Y-wis, myn hertes day, my lady free, 1405
So thursteth ay myn herte to biholde
Your beautee, that my lyf unnethe I holde.

`I sey no more, al have I for to seye
To you wel more than I telle may;
But whether that ye do me live or deye, 1410

Yet pray I god, so yeve yow right good day.
And fareth wel, goodly fayre fresshe may,
As ye that lyf or deeth me may comaunde;
And to your trouthe ay I me recomaunde

`With hele swich that, but ye yeven me 1415
The same hele, I shal noon hele have.
In you lyth, whan yow liste that it so be,
The day in which me clothen shal my grave.
In yow my lyf, in yow might for to save
Me from disese of alle peynes smerte; 1420
And fare now wel, myn owene swete herte!
Le vostre T.'

This lettre forth was sent un-to Criseyde,
Of which hir answere in effect was this;
Ful pitously she wroot ayein, and seyde,
That also sone as that she might, y-wis, 1425
She wolde come, and mende al that was mis.
And fynally she wroot and seyde him thanne,
She wolde come, ye, but she niste whenne.

But in hir lettre made she swich festes,
That wonder was, and swereth she loveth him best,
Of which he fond but botmelees bihestes.
But Troilus, thou mayst now, est or west,
Pype in an ivy leef, if that thee lest;
Thus gooth the world; god shilde us fro mischaunce,
And every wight that meneth trouthe avaunce!

Encresen gan the wo fro day to night
Of Troilus, for taryinge of Criseyde;
And lessen gan his hope and eek his might,
For which al doun he in his bed him leyde;
He ne eet, ne dronk, ne sleep, ne word he seyde,
Imagininge ay that she was unkinde;
For which wel neigh he wex out of his minde.

This dreem, of which I told have eek biforn,
May never come out of his remembraunce;
He thoughte ay wel he hadde his lady lorn,
And that Ioves, of his purveyaunce,

Him shewed hadde in sleep the signifiaunce
Of hir untrouthe and his disaventure,
And that the boor was shewed him in figure.

For which he for Sibille his suster sente, 1450
That called was Cassandre eek al aboute;
And al his dreem he tolde hir er he stente,
And hir bisoughte assoilen him the doute
Of the stronge boor, with tuskes stoute;
And fynally, with-inne a litel stounde, 1455
Cassandre him gan right thus his dreem expounde.

She gan first smyle, and seyde, `O brother dere,
If thou a sooth of this desyrest knowe,
Thou most a fewe of olde stories here,
To purpos, how that fortune over-throwe 1460
Hath lordes olde; through which, with-inne a throwe,
Thou wel this boor shalt knowe, and of what kinde
He comen is, as men in bokes finde.

`Diane, which that wrooth was and in ire

For Grekes nolde doon hir sacrifyse, 1465
Ne encens up-on hir auter sette a-fyre,
She, for that Grekes gonne hir so dispyse,
Wrak hir in a wonder cruel wyse.
For with a boor as greet as oxe in stalle
She made up frete hir corn and vynes alle. 1470

`To slee this boor was al the contree reysed,
Amonges which ther com, this boor to see,
A mayde, oon of this world the best y-preysed;
And Meleagre, lord of that contree,
He lovede so this fresshe mayden free 1475
That with his manhod, er he wolde stente,
This boor he slow, and hir the heed he sente;

`Of which, as olde bokes tellen us,
Ther roos a contek and a greet envye;
And of this lord descended Tydeus 1480
By ligne, or elles olde bokes lye;
But how this Meleagre gan to dye
Thorugh his moder, wol I yow not telle,

For al to long it were for to dwelle.'

[Argument of the 12 Books of Statius' "Thebais"]

Associat profugum Tideo primus Polimitem;
Tidea legatum docet insidiasque secundus;
Tercius Hemoniden canit et vates latitantes;
Quartus habet reges ineuntes prelia septem;
Mox furie Lenne quinto narratur et anguis;
Archimori bustum sexto ludique leguntur;
Dat Graios Thebes et vatem septimus vmbria;
Octauo cecidit Tideus, spes, vita Pelasgia;
Ypomedon nono moritur cum Parthonopeo;
Fulmine percussus, decimo Capaneus superatur;
Vndecimo sese perimunt per vulnera fratres;
Argiuam flentem narrat duodenus et igneum.

She tolde eek how Tydeus, er she stente, 1485
Un-to the stronge citee of Thebes,
To cleyme kingdom of the citee, wente,
For his felawe, daun Polymites,

Of which the brother, daun Ethyocles,
Ful wrongfully of Thebes held the strengthe;
This tolde she by proces, al by lengthe.

She tolde eek how Hemonides asterte,
Whan Tydeus slough fifty knightes stoute.
She tolde eek al the prophesyes by herte,
And how that sevene kinges, with hir route,
Bisegeden the citee al aboute;
And of the holy serpent, and the welle,
And of the furies, al she gan him telle.

Of Archimoris buryinge and the pleyes,
And how Amphiorax fil through the grounde,
How Tydeus was slayn, lord of Argeyes,
And how Ypomedoun in litel stounde
Was dreynt, and deed Parthonope of wounde;
And also how Cappaneus the proude
With thonder-dint was slayn, that cryde loude.

She gan eek telle him how that either brother,

Ethyocles and Polimyte also,
At a scarmyche, eche of hem slough other,
And of Argyves wepinge and hir wo;
And how the town was brent she tolde eek tho. 1510
And so descendeth doun from gestes olde
To Diomede, and thus she spak and tolde.

`This ilke boor bitokneth Diomede,
Tydeus sone, that doun descended is
Fro Meleagre, that made the boor to blede. 1515
And thy lady, wher-so she be, y-wis,
This Diomede hir herte hath, and she his.
Weep if thou wolt, or leef; for, out of doute,
This Diomede is inne, and thou art oute.'

`Thou seyst nat sooth,' quod he, `thou sorceresse, 1520
With al thy false goost of prophesye!
Thou wenest been a greet devyneresse;
Now seestow not this fool of fantasye
Peyneth hir on ladyes for to lye?
Awey!' quod he. `Ther Ioves yeve thee sorwe! 1525

Thou shalt be fals, paraunter, yet to-morwe!

`As wel thou mightest lyen on Alceste,
That was of creatures, but men lye,
That ever weren, kindest and the beste.
For whanne hir housbonde was in Iupartye 1530
To dye him-self, but-if she wolde dye,
She chees for him to dye and go to helle,
And starf anoon, as us the bokes telle.'

Cassandre goth, and he with cruel herte
For-yat his wo, for angre of hir speche; 1535
And from his bed al sodeinly he sterte,
As though al hool him hadde y-mad a leche.
And day by day he gan enquere and seche
A sooth of this, with al his fulle cure;
And thus he dryeth forth his aventure. 1540

Fortune, whiche that permutacioun
Of thinges hath, as it is hir committed
Through purveyaunce and disposicioun

Of heighe Iove, as regnes shal ben flitted
Fro folk in folk, or whan they shal ben smitted, 1545
Gan pulle awey the fetheres brighte of Troye
Fro day to day, til they ben bare of Ioye.

Among al this, the fyn of the parodie
Of Ector gan approchen wonder blyve;
The fate wolde his soule sholde unbodie, 1550
And shapen hadde a mene it out to dryve;
Ayeins which fate him helpeth not to stryve;
But on a day to fighten gan he wende,
At which, allas! He coughte his lyves ende.

For which me thinketh every maner wight 1555
That haunteth armes oughte to biwayle
The deeth of him that was so noble a knight;
For as he drough a king by thaventayle,
Unwar of this, Achilles through the mayle
And through the body gan him for to ryve; 1560
And thus this worthy knight was brought of lyve.

For whom, as olde bokes tellen us,
Was mad swich wo, that tonge it may not telle;
And namely, the sorwe of Troilus,
That next him was of worthinesse welle. 1565
And in this wo gan Troilus to dwelle,
That, what for sorwe, and love, and for unreste,
Ful ofte a day he bad his herte breste.

But natheles, though he gan him dispeyre,
And dradde ay that his lady was untrewe, 1570
Yet ay on hir his herte gan repeyre.
And as these loveres doon, he soughte ay newe
To gete ayein Criseyde, bright of hewe.
And in his herte he wente hir excusinge,
That Calkas causede al hir taryinge. 1575

And ofte tyme he was in purpos grete
Himselven lyk a pilgrim to disgyse,
To seen hir; but he may not contrefete
To been unknowen of folk that weren wyse,
Ne finde excuse aright that may suffyse, 1580

If he among the Grekes knowen were;
For which he weep ful ofte many a tere.

To hir he wroot yet ofte tyme al newe
Ful pitously, he lefte it nought for slouthe,
Biseching hir that, sin that he was trewe, 1585
She wolde come ayein and holde hir trouthe.
For which Criseyde up-on a day, for routhe,
I take it so, touchinge al this matere,
Wrot him ayein, and seyde as ye may here.

`Cupydes sone, ensample of goodlihede, 1590
O swerd of knighthod, sours of gentilesse!
How might a wight in torment and in drede
And helelees, yow sende as yet gladnesse?
I hertelees, I syke, I in distresse;
Sin ye with me, nor I with yow may dele, 1595
Yow neither sende ich herte may nor hele.

`Your lettres ful, the papir al y-pleynted,
Conceyved hath myn hertes pietee;

I have eek seyn with teres al depeynted
Your lettre, and how that ye requeren me 1600
To come ayein, which yet ne may not be.
But why, lest that this lettre founden were,
No mencioun ne make I now, for fere.

`Grevous to me, god woot, is your unreste,
Your haste, and that, the goddes ordenaunce, 1605
It semeth not ye take it for the beste.
Nor other thing nis in your remembraunce,
As thinketh me, but only your plesaunce.
But beth not wrooth, and that I yow biseche;
For that I tarie, is al for wikked speche. 1610

`For I have herd wel more than I wende,
Touchinge us two, how thinges han y-stonde;
Which I shal with dissimulinge amende.
And beth nought wrooth, I have eek understonde,
How ye ne doon but holden me in honde. 1615
But now no fors, I can not in yow gesse
But alle trouthe and alle gentilesse.

`Comen I wol, but yet in swich disioynte
I stonde as now, that what yeer or what day
That this shal be, that can I not apoynte.
But in effect, I prey yow, as I may,
Of your good word and of your frendship ay.
For trewely, whyl that my lyf may dure,
As for a freend, ye may in me assure.

`Yet preye I yow on yvel ye ne take,
That it is short which that I to yow wryte;
I dar not, ther I am, wel lettres make,
Ne never yet ne coude I wel endyte.

Eek greet effect men wryte in place lite.
Thentente is al, and nought the lettres space;
And fareth now wel, god have you in his grace!
  La vostre C.'

This Troilus this lettre thoughte al straunge,
Whan he it saugh, and sorwefully he sighte;

Him thoughte it lyk a kalendes of chaunge;
But fynally, he ful ne trowen mighte 1635
That she ne wolde him holden that she highte;
For with ful yvel wil list him to leve
That loveth wel, in swich cas, though him greve.

But natheles, men seyn that, at the laste,
For any thing, men shal the sothe see; 1640
And swich a cas bitidde, and that as faste,
That Troilus wel understood that she
Nas not so kinde as that hir oughte be.
And fynally, he woot now, out of doute,
That al is lost that he hath been aboute. 1645

Stood on a day in his malencolye
This Troilus, and in suspecioun
Of hir for whom he wende for to dye.
And so bifel, that through-out Troye toun,
As was the gyse, y-bore was up and doun 1650
A maner cote-armure, as seyth the storie,
Biforn Deiphebe, in signe of his victorie,

The whiche cote, as telleth Lollius,
Deiphebe it hadde y-rent from Diomede
The same day; and whan this Troilus 1655
It saugh, he gan to taken of it hede,
Avysing of the lengthe and of the brede,
And al the werk; but as he gan biholde,
Ful sodeinly his herte gan to colde,

As he that on the coler fond with-inne 1660
A broche, that he Criseyde yaf that morwe
That she from Troye moste nedes twinne,
In remembraunce of him and of his sorwe;
And she him leyde ayein hir feyth to borwe
To kepe it ay; but now, ful wel he wiste, 1665
His lady nas no lenger on to triste.

He gooth him hoom, and gan ful sone sende
For Pandarus; and al this newe chaunce,
And of this broche, he tolde him word and ende,
Compleyninge of hir hertes variaunce, 1670

His longe love, his trouthe, and his penaunce;
And after deeth, with-outen wordes more,
Ful faste he cryde, his reste him to restore.

Than spak he thus, `O lady myn Criseyde,
Wher is your feyth, and wher is your biheste? 1675
Wher is your love, wher is your trouthe,' he seyde;
`Of Diomede have ye now al this feste!
Allas, I wolde have trowed at the leste.
That, sin ye nolde in trouthe to me stonde,
That ye thus nolde han holden me in honde! 1680

`Who shal now trowe on any othes mo?
Allas, I never wolde han wend, er this,
That ye, Criseyde, coude han chaunged so;
Ne, but I hadde a-gilt and doon amis,
So cruel wende I not your herte, y-wis, 1685
To slee me thus; allas, your name of trouthe
Is now for-doon, and that is al my routhe.

`Was ther non other broche yow liste lete

To feffe with your newe love,' quod he,
`But thilke broche that I, with teres wete,
Yow yaf, as for a remembraunce of me?
Non other cause, allas, ne hadde ye
But for despyt, and eek for that ye mente
Al-outrely to shewen your entente!

`Through which I see that clene out of your minde
Ye han me cast, and I ne can nor may,
For al this world, with-in myn herte finde
To unloven yow a quarter of a day!

In cursed tyme I born was, weylaway!
That ye, that doon me al this wo endure,
Yet love I best of any creature.

`Now god,' quod he, `me sende yet the grace
That I may meten with this Diomede!
And trewely, if I have might and space,
Yet shal I make, I hope, his sydes blede.
O god,' quod he, `that oughtest taken hede

To fortheren trouthe, and wronges to punyce,
Why niltow doon a vengeaunce of this vyce?

`O Pandare, that in dremes for to triste
Me blamed hast, and wont art oft up-breyde, 1710
Now maystow see thy-selve, if that thee liste,
How trewe is now thy nece, bright Criseyde!
In sondry formes, god it woot,' he seyde,
`The goddes shewen bothe Ioye and tene
In slepe, and by my dreme it is now sene. 1715

`And certaynly, with-oute more speche,
From hennesforth, as ferforth as I may,
Myn owene deeth in armes wol I seche;
I recche not how sone be the day!
But trewely, Criseyde, swete may, 1720
Whom I have ay with al my might y-served,
That ye thus doon, I have it nought deserved.'

This Pandarus, that alle these thinges herde,
And wiste wel he seyde a sooth of this,

He nought a word ayein to him answerde;
For sory of his frendes sorwe he is,
And shamed, for his nece hath doon a-mis;
And stant, astoned of these causes tweye,
As stille as stoon; a word ne coude he seye.

But at the laste thus he spak, and seyde,
`My brother dere, I may thee do no-more.

What shulde I seyn? I hate, y-wis, Criseyde!
And, god wot, I wol hate hir evermore!
And that thou me bisoughtest doon of yore,
Havinge un-to myn honour ne my reste
Right no reward, I dide al that thee leste.

`If I dide ought that mighte lyken thee,
It is me leef; and of this treson now,
God woot, that it a sorwe is un-to me!
And dredelees, for hertes ese of yow,
Right fayn wolde I amende it, wiste I how.
And fro this world, almighty god I preye,

Delivere hir sone; I can no-more seye.'

Gret was the sorwe and pleynt of Troilus;
But forth hir cours fortune ay gan to holde.
Criseyde loveth the sone of Tydeus,
And Troilus mot wepe in cares colde.
Swich is this world; who-so it can biholde,
In eche estat is litel hertes reste;
God leve us for to take it for the beste!

In many cruel batayle, out of drede,
Of Troilus, this ilke noble knight,
As men may in these olde bokes rede,
Was sene his knighthod and his grete might.
And dredelees, his ire, day and night,
Ful cruelly the Grekes ay aboughte;
And alwey most this Diomede he soughte.

And ofte tyme, I finde that they mette
With blody strokes and with wordes grete,
Assayinge how hir speres weren whette;

And god it woot, with many a cruel hete
Gan Troilus upon his helm to bete.
But natheles, fortune it nought ne wolde,
Of others hond that either deyen sholde. —

And if I hadde y-taken for to wryte
The armes of this ilke worthy man,
Than wolde I of his batailles endyte.
But for that I to wryte first bigan
Of his love, I have seyd as that I can.
His worthy dedes, who-so list hem here,
Reed Dares, he can telle hem alle y-fere.

Bisechinge every lady bright of hewe,
And every gentil womman, what she be,
That al be that Criseyde was untrewe,
That for that gilt she be not wrooth with me.
Ye may hir gilt in othere bokes see;
And gladlier I wole wryten, if yow leste,
Penolopees trouthe and good Alceste.

Ne I sey not this al-only for these men,
But most for wommen that bitraysed be
Through false folk; god yeve hem sorwe, amen!
That with hir grete wit and subtiltee
Bitrayse yow! And this commeveth me
To speke, and in effect yow alle I preye,
Beth war of men, and herkeneth what I seye! —

Go, litel book, go litel myn tragedie,
Ther god thy maker yet, er that he dye,
So sende might to make in som comedie!
But litel book, no making thou nenvye,
But subgit be to alle poesye;
And kis the steppes, wher-as thou seest pace
Virgile, Ovyde, Omer, Lucan, and Stace.

And for ther is so greet diversitee
In English and in wryting of our tonge,
So preye I god that noon miswryte thee,
Ne thee mismetre for defaute of tonge.
And red wher-so thou be, or elles songe,

That thou be understonde I god beseche!
But yet to purpos of my rather speche. —

The wraththe, as I began yow for to seye,
Of Troilus, the Grekes boughten dere;
For thousandes his hondes maden deye,
As he that was with-outen any pere,
Save Ector, in his tyme, as I can here.
But weylawey, save only goddes wille,
Dispitously him slough the fiers Achille.

And whan that he was slayn in this manere,
His lighte goost ful blisfully is went
Up to the holownesse of the seventh spere,
In convers letinge every element;
And ther he saugh, with ful avysement,
The erratik sterres, herkeninge armonye
With sownes fulle of hevenish melodye.

And doun from thennes faste he gan avyse
This litel spot of erthe, that with the see

Embraced is, and fully gan despyse
This wrecched world, and held al vanitee
To respect of the pleyn felicitee
That is in hevene above; and at the laste,
Ther he was slayn, his loking doun he caste; 1820

And in him-self he lough right at the wo
Of hem that wepten for his deeth so faste;
And dampned al our werk that folweth so
The blinde lust, the which that may not laste,
And sholden al our herte on hevene caste. 1825
And forth he wente, shortly for to telle,
Ther as Mercurie sorted him to dwelle. —

Swich fyn hath, lo, this Troilus for love,
Swich fyn hath al his grete worthinesse;
Swich fyn hath his estat real above, 1830
Swich fyn his lust, swich fyn hath his noblesse;
Swich fyn hath false worldes brotelnesse.
And thus bigan his lovinge of Criseyde,
As I have told, and in this wyse he deyde.

O yonge fresshe folkes, he or she,
In which that love up groweth with your age,
Repeyreth hoom from worldly vanitee,
And of your herte up-casteth the visage
To thilke god that after his image
Yow made, and thinketh al nis but a fayre
This world, that passeth sone as floures fayre.

And loveth him, the which that right for love
Upon a cros, our soules for to beye,
First starf, and roos, and sit in hevene a-bove;
For he nil falsen no wight, dar I seye,
That wol his herte al hoolly on him leye.
And sin he best to love is, and most meke,
What nedeth feyned loves for to seke?

Lo here, of Payens corsed olde rytes,
Lo here, what alle hir goddes may availle;
Lo here, these wrecched worldes appetytes;
Lo here, the fyn and guerdon for travaille

Of Iove, Appollo, of Mars, of swich rascaille!
Lo here, the forme of olde clerkes speche
In poetrye, if ye hir bokes seche. — 1855

O moral Gower, this book I directe
To thee, and to the philosophical Strode,
To vouchen sauf, ther nede is, to corecte,
Of your benignitees and zeles gode.
And to that sothfast Crist, that starf on rode, 1860
With al myn herte of mercy ever I preye;
And to the lord right thus I speke and seye:

Thou oon, and two, and three, eterne on-lyve,
That regnest ay in three and two and oon,
Uncircumscript, and al mayst circumscryve, 1865
Us from visible and invisible foon
Defende; and to thy mercy, everichoon,
So make us, Iesus, for thy grace digne,
For love of mayde and moder thyn benigne! Amen.

Explicit Liber Troili et Criseydis.

ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL - William Painter's *Palace of Pleasure*

THE STORY OF GILETTA OF NARBONA (1566)

Giletta a phisician's daughter of Narbon, healed the Frenche Kyng of a fistula, for reward wherof she demaunded Beltramo counte of Rossiglione to husbande. The ccmnte beyng maried againste his will, for despite fled to Florence and loved an other. Giletta his wife, by pollicie founde meanes to lye with her husbande, in place of his lover, and was begotten with child of two soonnes : whiche knowen to her husbande, he received her againet and afterwardes he lived in greate honor and felicitie.

In Fraunce there was a gentleman called Isnardo, the counte of Rossiglione, who bicause he was sickly and diseased, kepte alwaies in his house a phisicion, named maister Gerardo of Narbona. This counte had one onely sonne called Beltramo, a verie yonge childe, pleasaunt and faire. With whom there was nourished and broughte up, many other children of his age: emonges whom one of the doughters of the said phisicion, named Giletta, who ferventlie fill in love with Beltramo, more then was meete for a maiden of her age. This Beltramo, when his father Was dedde, and left under the roial custodie of the kyng, was sente to Paris, for whose departure the maiden was verie pensife. A little while after, her father beyng likewise dedde, she was desirous to goe to Paris, onely to see the younge counte, if for that purpose she could gette any good occasion; But beyng diligently looked unto by her kinsfolke (bicause she was riche and fatherlesse) she could see no convenient® waie for her intended journey: and being now mariageable, the love she bare to the counte was never out of her remembraunce, and refused many husbandes with whom her kinsfolke would have placed her, without making them privie to the occasion of her refusall. Now it chaunced that she burned more in love with Beltramo than ever she did before, bicause she heard tell that hee was growen to the state of a goodly yonge gentlemanne. She heard by reporte, that the Frenche kyng had a swellyng upon his breast, whiche by reason of ill cure was growen to a fistula, and did putte him to merveilous paine and grief, and that there was no phisicion to be founde (although many were proved) that could heale it, but rather did impaire the grief and made it worsse and worsse. Wherfore the kyng, like one that was in dispaire, would take no more counsaill or helpe. Wherof the yonge maiden was wonderfull glad, and thought to have by this meanes, not onelie a lawfull occasion to goe to Paris, but if the disease were suche (as she supposed,) easely to bryng to passe that she might have the counte Beltramo to her husbande. Whereupon with suche knowledge as she had learned at her fathers handes before time, shee made a pouder of certain herbes, whiche she thought meete for that disease, and rode to Paris. And the first thing she went about when she came thither was to see the counte Beltramo. And then she repaired to the kyng, praying his grace to vouchsaufe to shewe her his disease. The kyng perceivyng her to be a faire yonge maiden and a comelie, would not hide it, but opened the same unto her. So soone as she sawe it, shee putte hym in comforte, that she was able to heale hym, saiyng: " Sire, if it shall please your grace, I trust in God without any paine or grief unto your highnesse, within eighte daies I will make you whole of this disease." The kyng hearyng her saie so, began to mocke her, saiyng: " How is it possible for thee, beyng a yong woman, to doe that whiche the best renoumed phisicions in the worlde can not!" He thanked her for her good will, and made her a directe answere, that he was determined no more to followe the counsaile of any phisicion. Whereunto the maiden answered: " Sire, you dispise my knowledge bicause I am yonge and a woman, but I assure you that I doe not minister phisicke by profession, but by the aide and helpe of God: and with the cunnyng of maister Gerardo of Narbona, who was my father, and a phisicion of greate fame so longe as he lived." The kyng hearyng those wordes, saied to hymself: " This woman, peradventure, is sent unto me of God, and therefore why should I disdain to prove her cunnyng 1 sithens she promiseth to heale me within a litle space, without any offence or grief unto me." And beyng determined to prove her, he said: "Damosell, if thou doest not heale me, but make me to breake my determinacion, what wilt thou shall folowe thereof." " Sire," saied the maiden: " Let me be kept in what guarde and kepyng you list: and if I dooe not heale you within these eight daies, let me bee burnte : but if I doe heale your grace what recompence shall I have then] To whom the kyng answered: " Bicause thou art a maiden and unmaried, if thou heale me accordyng to thy promisse, I wil bestowe thee upon some gentleman, that shalbe of right good worship and estimacion." To whom she answeared: " Sire, I am verie well content that you bestowe me in mariage: but I will have suche a husbande as I my self shall demaunde, without presumpcion to any of your children or other of your bloudde." Whiche requeste the kyng incontinently graunted. The yong maiden began to minister her phisicke, and in shorte space before her appoincted tyme, she had throughly cured the kyng. And when the king perceived himself whole, said unto her: " Thou hast well deserved a husbande (Giletta) even suche a one as thy selfe shalt chose." " I have then my lorde (quod she) deserved the countie Beltramo of Rossiglione, whom I have loved from my youthe." The kyng was very lothe to graunte hym unto her: but bicause he had made a promis which he was lothe to breake, he caused hym to be called forthe, and saied unto hym: " Sir counte, bi - cause you are a gentleman of greate honor, our pleasure is, that you retourne home to your owne house, to order your estate according to your degree: and that you take with you a damosell whiche I have appoincted to be your wife." To whom the counte gave his humble thankes, and demaunded what she was] " It is she (quoth the kyng) that with her medecines hath healed me." The counte knewe her well, and had alredie seen her, although she was faire, yet knowing her not to be of a stocke convenable to his nobilitie, disdain-fullie said unto the king, " Will you then (sir) give me a phisicion to wife 1 It is not the pleasure of God that ever I should in that wise bestowe my self." To whom the kyng said: " Wilt thou then, that we should breake our faithe, whiche we to recover healthe have given to the damosell, who for a rewarde thereof asked thee to husband V' Sire (quoth Beltramo) you maie take from me al that I have, and give my persone to whom you please, bicause I am your subject : but I assure you I shall never be contented with that mariage." "Well, you shall have her, (saied the kyng) for the maiden is faire and wise, and loveth you moste intirely: thinkyng verelie you shall leade a more joyfull life with her, then with a ladie of a greater house." The counte therewithal helde his peace, and the king made great preparacion for the mariage. And when the appoincted daie was come, the counte in the presence of the kyng (although it were againste his will) maried the maiden, who loved hym better then her owne self. Whiche dooen, the counte determinyng before what he would doe, praied licence to retourne to his countrie to consummat the mariage. And when he was on horsebacke he went not thither, but tooke his journey into Thuscane, where understandyng that the Florentines and Senois were at warres, he determined to take the Florentines parte, and was willinglie received and honourablie interteigned, and made capitaine of a certaine nomber of men, con-tinuyng in their service a longe tyme. The newe maried gentlewoman, scarce contented with that, and hopyng by her well doyng to cause hym to retourne into his countrie, went to Rossiglione, where she was received of all his subjectes for their ladie. And perceivyng that through the countes absence all thinges were spoiled and out of order, she like a sage lady, with greate diligence and care, disposed all thynges in order againe; whereof the subjectes rejoysed verie muche,bearyng to her their hartie love and affection, greatlie blamyng the counte bicause he could not contente himself with her. This notable gentlewoman having restored all the countrie againe, sent worde thereof to the counte her husbande, by two knightes of the countrie, whiche she sent to signifie unto hym, that if it were for her sake that he had abandoned his countrie, he should sende her worde thereof, and she to doe hym pleasure, would depart from thence. To whom he chorlishlie saied: " Lette her doe what she list: for I doe purpose to dwell with her, when she shall have this ryng (meanyng a ryng which he wore) upon her finger, and a soonne in her armes begotten by me." He greatly loved that ryng, and kepte it verie carefullie, and never tooke it of from his finger, for a certaine vertue that he knewe it had. The knightes hearyng the harde condicion of twoo thinges impossible: and seyng that by them he could not be removed from his determinacion, thei retourned againe to the ladie, tellinge her his answere: who, verie sorowfull* after she hadde a good while bethought herself, purposed to finde meanes to attaine to those twoo thynges, to the intente that thereby she might recover her husbande. And havyng advised with her self what to doe, she assembled the noblest and chiefest of her countrie, declaring unto them in lamentable wise what shee had alredie dooen, to winne the love of of the counte, shewyng them also what folowed thereof. And in the ende saied unto them, that she was lothe the counte for her sake should dwell in perpetuall exile: therefore she determined to spende the rest of her tyme in pilgrimages and devocion, for preservacion of her soule, praiyng them to take the charge and governemente of the countrie, and that they would lette the counte understande, that she had forsaken his house, and was removed farre from thence: with purpose never to retourne to Rossiglione againe. Many teares were shedde by the people, as she was speakyng these wordes, and divers supplicacions were made unto him to alter his opinion, but al in vaine. Wherefore commending them all unto God, she tooke her waie with her maide, and one of her kinsemen, in the habite of a pilgrime, well furnished with silver and precious jewelles: tellyng no man whither shee wente, and never rested till she came to Florence: where arrivyng by fortune at a poore widowes house, she contented her self with the state of a poore pilgrime, desirous to here newes of her lorde, whom by fortune she sawe the next daie passing by the house (where she lay) on horsebacke with his companie. And although she knewe him well enough, yet she demaunded of the good wife of the house what he was: who answered that he was a straunge gentleman, called the counte Beltramo of Rossiglione, a curteous knighte, and wel beloved in the citie, and that he was merveilously in love with a neighbor of hers, that was a gentlewoman, verie poore and of small substaunce, neverthelesse of right honest life and report, and by reason of her povertie was yet unmaried, and dwelte with her mother, that was a wise and honest ladie. The countesse well notyng these wordes, and by litle and litle debatyng every particular point thereof, comprehendyng the effecte of those newes, concluded what to doe, and when she had well understanded whiche was the house, and the name of the ladie, and of her doughter that was beloved of the counte: upon a daie repaired to the house secretelie in the habite of a pilgrime, where finding the mother and doughter in poore estate emonges their familie, after she hadde saluted them, tolde the mother that she had to saie unto her. The gentlewoman risyng up, curteouslie interteigned her, and beyng entred alone into a chamber, thei satte doune, and the countesse began to saie unto her in this wise. "Madame, me thinke that ye be one upon whom fortune doeth frowne, so well as upon me: but if you please, you maie bothe comfort me and your self." The ladie answered, "That there was nothyng in the worlde whereof she was more desirous then of honest comforte." The countesse procedyng in her talke, saied unto her. " I have nede now of your fidelitie and trust, whereupon if I doe staie, and you deceive mee, you shall bothe undoe me and your self." "Tel me then what it is hardelie (saied the gentlewoman :) if it bee your pleasure: for you shall never bee deceived of me." Then the countesse beganne to recite her whole estate of love: tellyng her what she was, and what had chaunced to that present daie, in such perfite order that the gentlewoman belevyng her woordes, bicause she had partlie heard report thereof before, beganne to have compassion upon her, and after that the countesse had rehearsed all the whole circumstaunce, she continued her purpose, saiyng: " Now you have heard emonges other my troubles, what twoo thynges thei bee, whiche behoveth me to have, if I do recover my husbande, whiche I knowe none can helpe me to obtain, but onely you, if it bee true that I heare, whiche is, that the counte my husbande, is farre in love with your doughter." To whom the gentlewoman saied: " Madame, if the counte love my doughter, I knowe not, albeit the likelihoode is greate: but what am I able to doe, in that whiche you desire 1" " Madame, answered the countesse, I will tell you: but first I will declare what I mean to doe for you, if my determinacion be brought to effect: I see your faier doughter of good age, redie to marie, but as I understand the cause why she is unmaried, is the lacke of substance to bestowe upon her. Wherfore I purpose, for recompence of the pleasure, whiche you shall dooe for me, to give so much redie money to marie her honorably, as you shall thinke sufficient" The countesse' offer was very well liked of the ladie, bicause she was but poore: yet having a noble hart, she said unto her, "Madame, tell me wherein I maie do you service: and if it be a thing honest, I will gladlie performe it, and the same being brought to passe, do as it shal please you." Then saied the countesse: " I thinke it requisite, that by some one whom you truste, that you give knowledge to the counte my husbande, that your doughter is, and shalbe at his commaundement: and to the intent she maie bee well assured that he loveth her in deede above any other, that she praieth him to sende her

a ring that he weareth upon his finger, whiche ring she heard tell he loved verie derely: and when he sendeth the ryng, you shall give it unto me, and afterwardes sende hym woorde, that your doughter is redie to accomplishe his pleasure, and then you shall cause him secretly to come hither, and place me by hym (in steede of your doughter) peradventure God will give me the grace, that I maie bee with childe, and so havyng this ryng on my finger, and the childe in myne armes begotten by him, I shall recover him, and by your meanes continue with hym, as a wife ought to doe with her husbande." This thing semed difficulte unto the gentlewoman : fearyng that there would folowe reproche unto her doughter. Notwithstandyng, consideryng what an honest parte it were, to be a meane that the good ladie should recover her husband, and that she should doe it for a good purpose, havyng affiaunce in her honest affection, not onely promised the countesse to bryng this to passe, but in fewe daies with greate subtiltie, folowyng the order wherein she was instructed, she had gotten the ryng, although it was with the countes ill will, and toke order that the countesse in stede of her doughter did lye with hym. And at the first meetyng, so afFectuously desired by the counte: God so disposed the matter that the countesse was begotten with child, of twoo goodly sonnes, and her delivery chaunced at the due time. Whereupon the gentlewoman, not onely contented the countesse at that tyme with the companie of her husbande, but at many other times so secretly that it was never knowen: the counte not thinkyng that be had lien with his wife, but with her whom he loved. To whom at his uprisyng in the mornyng, he used many curteous and amiable woordes, and gave divers faire and precious jewelles, whiche the countesse kepte moste carefullie: and when shee perceived herself with childe, she determined no more to trouble the gentlewoman, but saied unto her. " Madame, thankes be to God and you, I have the thyng that I desire, and even so it is tyme to recompence your desert, that afterwardes I maie departe."

The gentlewoman saied unto her, that if she had doen any pleasure agreable to her mind, she was right glad thereof whiche she did, not for hope of rewarde, but because it apperteined to her by well doyng so to doe. Whereunto the countesse saied : "Your saiyng pleaseth me well, and likewise for my parte, I dooe not purpose to give unto you the thing you shall demaunde of me in rewarde, but for con-sideracion of your well doyng, which duetie forceth me to so dooe." The gentlewoman then constrained with necessitie, demaunded of her with greate bashefulnesse, an hundred poundes to marie her doughter. The countesse perceivyng the shamefastnesse of the gentlewoman, and hearyng her curteous demaunde, gave her five hundred poundes, and so many faire and costly jewels whiche almoste amounted to like valer. For whiche the gentlewoman more then contented, gave moste hartie thankes to the countesse, who departed from the gentlewoman and retourned to her lodging. The gentlewoman to take occasion from the counte of any farther repaire, or sendyng to her house, tooke her doughter with her, and went into the countrie to her frendes. The counte Beltramo, within fewe daies after, beyng revoked home to his owne house by his subjectes, (hearyng that the countesse was departed from thence) retourned. The countesse knowynge that her housband was gone from Florence and retourned into his countrie, was verie glad and contented, and she continewed in Florence till the tyme of her childbedde was come, and was brough a bedde of twoo soones, whiche were verie like unto their fatner, and caused them carefullie to be noursed and brought up, and when she sawe tyme, she toke her journey (unknowen to any manne) and arrived at Mon-pellier, and restyng her self there for certaine daies, hearyng newes of the counte, and where he was, and that upon the daie of All Sainctes, he purposed to make a great feast and assemblie of ladies and knightes, in her pilgrimes weede she wente thither. And knowyng that thei were all assembled, at the palace of the counte, redie to sitte doune at the table,she passed through the people without chaunge of apparell, with her twoo sonnes in her armes: and when she was come up into the hall, even to the place where the counte was, fallying doune prostrate at his feete, wepyng, saied unto him: " My lorde, I am thy poore infortunate wife, who to th'intent thou mightest returne and dwel in thine owne house, have been a great while beggyng about the worlde. Therefore I now beseche thee, for the honour of God, that thou wilt observe the condicions, whiche the twoo knightes (that I sent unto thee) did commaunde me to doe: for beholde, here in myne armes, not onelie one soonne begotten by thee, but twaine, and likewise thy rynge. It is now tyme then (if thou kepe promis) that I should be received as thy wife." The counte hearyng this, was greatly astonned, and knewe the rynge, and the children also, thei were so like hym. " But tell me (quod he) how is this come to passe ?" The countesse to the great admiracion of the counte, and of all those that were in presence, rehearsed unto them in order all that, whiche had been doen, and the whole discourse thereof. For whiche cause the counte knowyng the thynges she had spoken to be true (and perceivyng her constaunt minde and good witte, and the twoo faier yonge boies to kepe his promisse made, and to please his subjectes, and the ladies that made sute unto him, to accept her from that time forthe as his lawfull wife, and to honour her) abjected his obstinate rigour: causyng her to rise up, and imbraced and kissed her, acknowledging her againe for his lawfull wife. And after he had apparelled her according to her estate, to the greate pleasure and contentacion of those that were there, and of all his other frendes not onely that daie, but many others, he kepte great chere, and from that tyme forthe, he loved and honoured her, as his dere spouse and wife.

MEASURE FOR MEASURE – George Whetstone's *Promos and Cassandra*

THE RARE HISTORIE OF PROMOS AND CASSANDRA,

Reported by Madam Isabella.

At what time Corvinus, the scourge of the Turkes, rayned as kinge of Bohemia, for to well governe the free cities of his realme, hee sent divers worthy majestrates. Among the rest, he gave the Lorde Promos the lieutennauntship of Julio ; who in the beginning of his government, purged the cittie of many ancient vices, and severely punished new offenders.

In this cittie, there was an olde custome (by the suffering of some majestrates, growne out of use) that what man so ever comitted adulterie, should lose his head; and the woman offender should ever after be infamously noted, by the wearing of some disguised apparrell: for the man was helde to bee the greatest offender, and therefore had the severest punishment.

Lorde Promos, with a rough execution, revived this statute, and in the hyest degree of injurie brake it hymselfe, as shall appeare by the sequell of Andrugioes adventures.

This Andrugio, by the yeelding favour of fayre Polina, trespassed against this ordinaunce, who through envie was accused, and by Lorde Promos condemned to suffer execution.

The wofull Cassandra, Andrugioes sister, prostrates her selfe at Lorde Promos feete, and with more teares then wordes thus pleaded for her brothers lyfe.

Most noble Lorde, and worthy judge, voutchsafe, mee the favour to speake, whose case is so desperate, as unlesse you beholde mee with the eyes of mercie, the frayle trespasse of condemned Andrugio, my brother, will bee the death of sor-rowfull Cassandra, his innocent sister. I wil not presume to excuse his offence, or reproche the lawe of rigor; for in the generall construction, hee hath done most evill, and the law hath judged but what is right: but (reverent judge,) pardon the necessitie maketh mee here tel, that your wisdome already knoweth. The most soveraigne justice is crowned with laurell, although shee bee gyrt with a sword, and this priveledge shee giveth unto her administrators; that they shall mitigate the severetie of the law, according to the qually ty of the offence. Then, that Justice bee not robbed of her gratious pitty, listen good Lorde Promos, to the nature of my brothers offence, and his able meanes to repayre the injurie. Hee hath defyled, no nuptiall bed, the stayne wherof dishonoureth the guyltlesse husband: hee hath committed no violent rape, in which act the injuried mayde can have no amends. But with yeelding consent of his mistresse Andrugio hath onlye sinned through love, and never ment but with marriage to make amendes.

I humbly beseeche you to accept his satisfaction, and by this example you shall be as much beloved for your clemen-cye, as feared for your severitie. Andrugio shalbe well warned, and hee with his sister, wofull Cassandra, shall ever remayne, your Lordships true servantes.

Promos eares were not so attentive to heare Cassandras ruethful tale, as his eyes were settled to regarde her excellent beautie. And Love, that was the appointed headsman of • Andrugio, became now the soveraigne of his judges thought. But because he would seeme to bridle his passions, he aunswered: fayre damsell, have patience, you importune me with an impossybylytie : he is condempned by lawe, then .without injurie to lawe, he can not be saved. 6 Princes and their deputies prerogatives (quoth she) are above the lawe. Besides, lawe, truelie construed, is but

The true intent lawetent of the ^ amends 0f injurie ; and where, the faulte may bee valued,

and amendes had, the breache of lawe is sufficiently repayred.

Quoth Lorde Promos: your passions mooveth more then your proofes, and for your sake I wyll reprive Andrugio, and j studie how to do you ease without apparant breache of lawe. i

Cassandra, recomforted, with humble thankes receyved his favoure, and in great haste goeth too participate this hope with her dying brother: but oh, that aucthorytie, should-have power, to make the vertuous to doo amisse, as well! as throughe correction to enforce the vicious to fall unto goodnesse.

Promos is a witnes of this priviledge, who not able to subdue his incontinent love, and (withal) resolved that Cassandra would never be overcome with fayre wordes, large promises, or riche rewardes, demaunded the spoyle of her virginitie for raunsome of her brothers lybertie.

Cassandra ymagyned at the first, that Lorde Promos used this speache but to trie her behaviour, aunswered hym so wisely, as, if he had not ben the ryvail of vertue, he could not but have suppressed his lewde affection, and have subscribed to her just petition : but to leave circumstaunces, Promos was fiered with a vicious desyre, which must be quenched with Cassandraes yeldyng love, or Andrugio must dye.

Cassandra, mooved with a chaste disdayne, departed with the resolution, rather to dye her selfe, then to stayne her honour; and with this heavie newes, greeted her condemned brother. Poore man, alas, what should he do! Life was sweete; but to be redeemed with his sisters infamie could not but be alwayes unsaverie.

To perswade her to consente was unnaturall: too yealde to death was more greevous.

To choose the leaste of these evylles was difficult : to studie long was daungerous.

Fayne would he lyve, but shame cloased his mouth when he attempted to perswade his sister.

But necessytie, that maistereth both shame and feare, brake a passadge for his imprysoned intent.

Sweete Cassandra, (quoth he) that men love is usuall, but to subdue affection is impossyble; and so thornie are the motions of incontinent desire, as to finde ease the tongue is only occupied to perswade. The purse is ever open to entice, and wheare neither words nor giftes can corrupt (with the mightie) force shall constrayne, or dispight, avenge. That Promos do love is but just: thy beautie commaundes hym; that Promos be refused is more just, because consent is thy shame.

Thou maiste refuse and lyve; but he beynge rejected, I die : for wantyng his wyll in thee he wyll wreake his teene on mee.

This is my hard estate : my lyfe lieth in thy infamie, and thy honour in my death. Which of these evylles be leaste I leave for thee to judge.

The wofull Cassandra answered, that death was the leaste; whose darte we can not shunne, when honour, in deathes dispight, outlyveth tyine.

. It is true (quoth Andrugio), but thy trespasse, wyll be in the leaste degree of blame; for in forced faultes justice sayth there is no intent of evyll.

Oh Andrugio, (quoth she), intent is now adayes lytle con-sidred: thou art not condemned by the intent, but by the -strickt worde of the law: so shall my crime bee reproched, and the forced cause passe unexcused; and such is the venome of envye. one evill deede shall disgrace ten good turnes, and in this yeelding, so shall I be valued: envye, disdaine, spight, mallice, sclaunder, and many moe furies will endevour to shame mee, and the meanest vertue wyll blush to help to support my honour; so that I see no lybertie >ffor thee but death, nor no ease for mee but to hasten my ende.

O yes (quoth Andrugio), for if this offence be known thy fame will bee enlarged, because it will lykewise bee

knowne, that thou receavedst dishonor to give thy brother^ lyfe : if it be secreat, thy conscience wyl be without scruple of guiltinesse. Thus, knowne, or unknowne, thou shalt be h deflowred, but not dishonested, and for amends wee both shall lyve.

This further hope remaineth; that as the gilliflower both pleaseth the eye and feedeth the sence, even so the vertue of thy chast behaviour may so grace thy bewty, as Promos filthie lust may bee turned into faithfull love, and so moveA him to salve thy honour in making thee hys wife, or for conscience forbeare to doe so hey nous an injurie.

Soveraigne maddame, and you faire gentlewomen, (quoth Isabella) I intreate you in Cassandras belialfe, these reasons well wayed, to judge her yeelding a constrainte, and no consent ; who, werie of her owne life, and tender over her brothers, with the teares of her lovely eyes bathed his cheekes, with this comfortable sentence.

Lyve Andrugio, and make much of this kisse, which i breatheth my honour into thy bowels, and draweth the infamie of thy first trespasse into my bosome.

The sharpe incounters betweene life and death so occupied Andrugios sences, that his tongue had not the vertue to bid her fare well. To greeve you with the hearing of Cassandras secreate plaints were an injurie, vertuous ladies, for they concluded with their good fortune, and everlasting fame; but for that her offence grew neyther of frayltie, free wyl, or any motion of a woman, but by the meere inforcement of a man,1 because she would not staine the modest weedes of her kynde, shee attired her selfe in the habit of a page, and with the bashfull grace *[of]* a pure virgin, shee presented wicked Promos Andrugioes precious ransome.

This devill, in humaine shape, more vicious then Hylio-gabalus of Rome, and withall, as cruell as Denis of Sicyll, receaved this juell with a thousande protestations of favour. But what should I say? in the beginnyng of his love Promos was metamorphosed into Priapus: and of a feende what may

we expect, but vengeaunce heaped upon villany] And therefore, let it not seeme straunge, that after this helhound had dishonoured Cassandra, hee sent his warrant to the gayler pryvely to execute Andrugio, and, with his bead crowned with these two breefes, in Promos name to present Cassandra:

Fayre Cassandra, as Prouios promist thee,

From pryson loe, he sendes thy brother free.

This was his charge, whose cursed wyll had ben executed had not God, by an especiall providence, at the howre of his death possessed Andrugio with the vertues of the two brave Romanes, Marcus Crassus, and Marius, the one of whiche by the force of his tongue, and the other by the motions of his eyes caused the axe to fall out of the headsmans hand, and mollyfyed his cruell mynde.

With lyke compassion the gayler (in hearinge Andrugios hard adventure) left his resolution; and uppon a solempne othe, to live unknowne, yea, to his deare sister, he gave him life, and in the dead of the night, betooke him to God, and to good fortune: which done, this good gayler tooke the head of a yonge man newe executed, who somewhat resembled Andrugio, and according to lewde Promos commaundement made a present thereof to Cassandra. How unwelcome this present was, the testimonie of her former sorowes somewhat discover; but to give her present passion a true grace were the taske of Prometheus, or such a one as hath had experience of the anguishes of hell.

O! quoth shee, sweete Andrugio, whether shall I firste lament thy death, exclaime of Promos injurie, or bemone my owne estate, deprived of honour ? and which is worse, cannot die but by the violence of my owne hands. Alas the least of these greefes, are to heavie a burden for a man, then all, joyned in one poore womans hearte, can not be eased but by death; and to be avenged of injurious fortune, I wil forthwith cut my fillet of life. But so shall Promos lewdnesse

escape unpunished: what remedie 1 I am not of power to revenge: to complayne, I expresse my owne infamie, but withal proclaime his vilanie: and to heare his lewdnes reproved woulde take away the bitternesse of my death. I will goe unto the king, who is just and mercifull: hee shall heare the ruthfull events of Promos tyrrannie; and to give him example of vengeaunce, I will seale my complaintes with my dearest bloode.

Continuing this determination, Cassandra buried her imagined brothers heade, and with speed jornyed unto king Corvinus court; before whose presence when shee arrived, her mourninge attyre, but especially her modest countenaunce, moved him to beholde her with an especiall regarde.

Cassandra (uppon the graunt of audience) with her eyes overcharged with teares, reported the alreadie discoursed accidentes, with suche an apparaunce of greefe, as the king and his attendants were astonied to heare her; and sure had shee not been happily prevented, shee had concluded her determination with chast Lucretias destiny. The king comforted her with many gratious words, and promised to take such order, that (although he could not be revived) her brothers death should fully be revenged, and her erased honour repayred without blemish of her former reputation.

Cassandra, upon these comfortable wordes, a lytell succoured her afflicted hart, and with patience attended the justice of the king; who with a chosen companie made a pro-gresse to Julio, and entred the town with a semblaunce of great favour towardes Promos, by that colour to learne what other corrupte majestrates ruled in the cittie: for well he knewe, that byrdes of a feather would flie together, and wicked men would joyne in affection to boulster each others evil.

After this gratious king had by heedfull intelligence un-derstoode the factions of the people, unlooked for of the magistrates, he caused a proclamation to be published, in which was a clause, that if anie person coulde charge anie magistrate or officer with anie notable or haynous offence, treason, murder, rape, sedition, or with any such notorious crime, where they were the judges of the multitude, hee woulde himselfe bee the judge of them, and doe justice unto the meanest. Uppon this proclamation it was a hell to heare the exclaim mations of the poore, and the festered consciences of the rich appeared as lothsome as the river of Stix.

Among manie that complayned, and received judgement of comfort, Cassandras processe was presented, who, lead betweene sorrow and shame, accused Promos to his face, i The evidence was so playne, as the horrour of a guiltie conscience reaved Promos of all motions of excuse; so that holding up his hande among the worst degree of theeves, the litle hope that was leaft moved him to confesse the crime, and with repentance to sue for mercy.

O! (quoth the king) such espetial mercy were tyrannie to a ! common wealth. No, Promos no: Hoc facias alteri, quod tibi vis fieri: you shall be measured with the grace you be-to wed on Andrugio.

I O God! (quoth hee) if men durst bark as dogges, manie a judge in the world would be bewrayed for a theefe. It behoveth a Prince to know to whom he committeth authoritie, jleast the sword of justice, appointed to chasten the lewde, 8 wound the good; and where good subjects are wronged, evill officers receave the benefit, and their soveraignes beareth the blame.

Well, wicked Promos, to scourge thy impious offences, I heere give sentence, that thou foorthwith marry Cassandra, * to repayre her honour by thee violated, and thaf the next day thou lose thy head, to make satisfaction for her brothers death.

This just judgement of the good kinge in the first point was foorthwith executed; but sacred is the authoritie, that d the vertues of the good are a sheelde unto the lewde: so esweete Cassandra, who (simply) by vertuc overcame the

spight of fortune, in this marriadge was charged with a new assault of sorrow, and preferring the dutie of a wife before the naturall zeale of a sister, where she before prosecuted the revenge of her brothers death, shee now was an humble suter to the kinge for her husbands lyfe.

The gracious kinge sought to appease her with good words, but hee could not do her this private favour without injurie unto the publyke weale; for though (quoth he) your sute be just, and the bounden dutie of a wife, yet I in fulfill-yng the same should do injustly, and (generally) injure my subjects: and therfore, good gentlewoman, have patience, and no doubt vertue in the ende will give you power over all your afflictions.

There was no remedie: Cassandra must departe out of hope to obtayne her sute; but as the experience, is in dayly use, the dooinges of princes post through the world on Pegasus backe, and as theyr actions are good or badde, so is their fame. With the lyke speede the kynges justice, and Promos execution was spred abroad, and by the tonge of a clowne was blowen into Andrugioes eares, who tyll then ly ved lyke an outlawe in the desart wooddes.

But upon these newes, covertly in the habyt of an hermyt, by the divine motion of the sowle who directes us in thinges that be good, and the flesshe in actions of evyll, Andrugio goes to see the death of his capitall enemie; but on the other parte regardyng the sorrow of his sister, he wisshed him lyfe as a friende.

To conclude, as well to geve terrour to the lewde, as comfort to his good subjectes, the kyng (personallie) came to see the execution of Promos; who, garded with officers, and strengthened with the comfortable perswasions of his ghostly fathers, among whom Andrugio was, meekely offered his lyfe as a satisfaction for his offences, which were many more then the lawe tooke knowledge of: and yet, to say the trueth, suche was his repentance, as the multitude did both forgeve and pittie him; yea, the king wondred that his lyfe was governed with no more vertue, consideryng the grace he showed at his death.

Andrugio behouldyng this ruethfull spectackle was so overcome with love towardes his sister, as to give her comfort he franckly consented anew to emperill his own life ; and followinge this resolution, in his hermyts weede, upon his knees he humblye desired the kinge too give hym leave to speake. The kyng (gratiously) graunted hym audience. Wherupon (quoth he), regarded soveraigne, if lawe may (possibly) be satisfied, Promos true repentance meritteth pardon.

Good father (quoth the king) he can not live, and the lawe satisfied, unlesse (by miracle) Andrugio be revived.

Then (quoth the hermyt) if Andrugio lyve, the law is satisfied, and Promos discharged.

I (quoth the king,) if your praier can revive the one, my mercie shall acquite the other.

I humbly thanke your Majestie (quoth Andrugio); and discoveryng himselfe, shewed the providence of God and the meane of his escape: and tendrynge his sisters comfort above his owne safetie, hee prostrated him selfe at his Majesties feete, humblye to obay the sentence of his pleasure. The kinge uppon the reporte of this straunge adventure, after good deliberation, pardoned Promos, to keepe his worde, and withall, houldyng an opinyon that it was more benefitiall for the citizens, to be ruled by their olde evell governour, new re-fourmed, then to adventure uppon a newe, whose behaviours were unknowne, and to perfect Cassandras joye, he pardoned her brother Andrugio, with condition, that he should marrie Polina. Thus, from betweene the teethe of daunger every partie was preserved, and in the ende establyshed in their hartes desire.

OTHELLO - Cinthio's Tale

Shakespeare's primary source was a story in Giraldi Cinthio's Hecatommithi, published in 1565. The following is an 1855 translation by J. E. Taylor.

There once lived in Venice a Moor, who was very valiant and of a handsome person; and having given proofs in war of great skill and prudence, he was highly esteemed by the Signoria *[Duke]* of the Republic, who in rewarding deeds of valor advanced the interests of the state.

It happened that a virtuous lady of marvelous beauty, named Disdemona, fell in love with the Moor, moved thereto by his valor; and he, vanquished by the beauty and the noble character of Disdemona, returned her love; and their affection was so mutual that, although the parents of the lady strove all they could to induce her to take another husband, she consented to marry the Moor; and they lived in such harmony and peace in Venice that no word ever passed between them that was not affectionate and kind.

Now it happened at this time that the Signoria of Venice made a change in the troops whom they used to maintain in Cyprus, and they appointed the Moor commander of the soldiers whom they dispatched thither. Joyful as was the Moor at the honor proffered him, such dignity being only conferred on men of noble rank and well-tried faith, and who had displayed bravery in arms -- yet his pleasure was lessened when he reflected on the length and dangers of the voyage, fearing that Disdemona would be pained at his absence. But Disdemona, who had no other happiness in the world than the Moor, and who rejoiced to witness the testimony of his valor her husband received from so powerful and noble a republic, was all impatient that he should embark with his troops, and longed to accompany him to so honorable a post. And all the more it vexed her to see the Moor so troubled; and not knowing what could be the reason, one day, when they were at dinner, she said to him, "How is it, O Moor that when so honorable a post has been conferred on you by the Signoria, you are thus melancholy?"

The Moor answered Disdemona, "My pleasure at the honor I have received is disturbed by the love I bear you; for I see that of necessity one of two things must happen -- either that I take you to encounter the perils of the sea, or, to save you from this danger, I must leave you here in Venice. The first could not be otherwise than serious to me, for all the toil you would have to bear and every danger that might befall you would cause me extreme anxiety and pain, yet were I to leave you behind me, I should be hateful to myself, since in parting from you I should part from my own life."

Disdemona, on hearing this, replied: "My husband, what thoughts are these that wander through your mind? Why let such things disturb you? I will accompany you withersoe'er you go, were it to pass through fire, as not to cross the water in a safe and well-provided ship; if needed there are toils and perils to encounter, I will share them with you. And in truth I should think you loved me littler were you to leave me here in Venice, denying me to bear you company, or could believe that I would liefer *[rather]* bide *[stay]* in safety here than share the dangers that await you. Prepare then for the voyage with all the readiness which the dignity of the post you hold deserves."

The Moor, in the fullness of his joy, threw his arms around his wife's neck, and with an affectionate and tender kiss exclaimed, "God keep you long in such love, dear wife!" Then speedily donning his armor, and having prepared everything for his expedition, he embarked on board the galley with his wife and all his troops, and, setting sail, they pursued their voyage, and with a perfectly tranquil sea arrived safely at Cyprus.

Now amongst the soldiery there was an Ensign, a man of handsome figure, but of the most depraved nature in the world. This man was in great favor with the Moor, who had not the slightest idea of his wickedness; for, despite the malice lurking in his heart, he cloaked with proud and valorous speech and with a specious presence the villainy of his soul with such art that he was to all outward show another Hector or Achilles. This man had likewise taken with him his wife to Cyprus, a young, and fair, and virtuous lady; and being of Italian birth she was much loved by Disdemona, who spent the greater part of every day with her.

In the same Company there was a certain Captain of a troop, to whom the Moor was much affectioned. And Disdemona, for this cause, knowing how much her husband valued him, showed him proofs of the greatest kindness, which was all very grateful to the Moor. Now the wicked Ensign, regardless of the faith that he had pledged his wife, no less than of friendship, fidelity and obligation which he owed the Moor, fell passionately in love with Disdemona, and bent all his thoughts to achieve his conquest; yet he dared not to declare his passion openly, fearing that, should the Moor perceive it, he would at once kill him. He therefore sought in various ways, and with secret guile, to betray his passion to the lady; but she, whose every wish was centered in the Moor, had no thought for this Ensign more than any other man, and all the means he tried to gain her love had no more effect that if he had not tried them. But the Ensign imagined that the cause of his ill success was that Disdemona loved the Captain of the troop; and the love which he had borne the lady now changed into the bitterest hate, and, having failed in his purposes, he devoted all his thoughts to plot the death of the Captain of the troop and to divert the affection of the Moor from Disdemona. After revolving in his mind various schemes, all alike wicked, he at length resolved to accuse her of unfaithfulness to her husband, and to represent the Captain as her paramour. But knowing the singular love the Moor bore to Disdemona, and the friendship he had for the Captain, he was well aware that, unless he practiced an artful fraud upon the Moor, it were impossible to make him give ear to either accusation; and wherefore he resolved to wait until time and circumstance should open a path for him to engage in his foul project.

Not long afterwards it happened that the Captain, having drawn his sword upon a soldier of the guard, and struck him, the Moor deprived him of his rank; whereat Disdemona was deeply grieved, and endeavored again and again to reconcile her husband to the man. This the Moor told to the wicked Ensign, and how his wife importuned him so much about the Captain that he feared he should be forced at last to receive him back to service. Upon this hint the Ensign resolved to act, and began to work his web of intrigue. "Perchance," said he, "the lady Disdemona may have good reason to look kindly upon him."

"And wherefore?" said the Moor.

"Nay, I would not step 'twixt man and wife," replied the Ensign, `but let your eyes be witness to themselves."

In vain the Moor went on to question the officer -- he would proceed no further; nevertheless, his words left a sharp, stinging thorn in the Moor's heart, who could think of nothing else, trying to guess their meaning and lost in melancholy. And one day, when his wife had been endeavoring to pacify his anger toward the Captain, and praying him not to be unmindful of ancient services and friendship for one small fault, especially since peace had been made between the Captain and the soldier he had struck, the Moor was angered, and exclaimed, "Great cause have you, Disdemona, to care so anxiously about this man! Is he a brother, or your kinsman, that he should be so near your heart?"

The lady, with all gentleness and humility, replied, "Be not angered, my dear lord; I have no other cause to bid me speak than sorrow that I see you lose so dear a friend as, by your own words, this Captain has been to you; nor has he done so grave a fault that you should bear him so much enmity. Nay, but you Moors are of so hot a nature that every little trifle moves you to anger and revenge."

Still more enraged at these words, the Moor replied, "I could bring proofs -- by heaven it mocks belief! but for the wrongs I have endured revenge must satisfy my wrath."

Disdemona, in astonishment and fright, seeing her husband's anger kindled against her, so contrary to his wont, said humbly and with timidness, "None save a good intent has led me thus to speak with you, my lord; but to give cause no longer for offense, I'll never speak a word more on the subject."

The Moor, observing the earnestness with which his wife again pleaded for the Captain, began to guess the meaning of the Ensign's words; and in deep melancholy he went to seek the villain and induce him to speak more openly of what he knew. Then the Ensign, who was bent upon injuring the unhappy lady, after feigning at first great reluctance to say aught that might displease the Moor, at length pretended to yield to his entreaties, and said, "I can't deny it pains me to the soul to be thus forced to say what needs must be more hard to hear than any other grief; but since you will it so, and that the regard I owe your honor compels me to confess the truth, I will no longer refuse to satisfy your questions and my duty. Know, then, that for no other reason is your lady vexed to see the

Captain in disfavor than the pleasure that she has in his company whenever he comes to your house, and all the more since she has taken an aversion to your blackness."

These words went straight to the Moor's heart; but in order to hear more (now that he believed true all that the Ensign had told him) he replied, with a fierce glance, "By heavens, I scarce can hold this hand from plucking out that tongue of thine, so bold, which dares to speak such slander of my wife!"

"Captain," replied the Ensign, "I looked for such reward for these my faithful offices -- none else; but since my duty, and the jealous care I bear your honor, have carried me thus far, I do repeat, so stands the truth, as you have heard it from these lips; and if the lady Disdemona hath, with a false show of love for you, blinded your eyes to what you should have seen, this is no argument but that I speak the truth. Nay, this same Captain told it me himself, like one whose happiness is incomplete until he can declare it to another; and, but that I feared your anger, I should have given him, when he told it me, his merited reward, and slain him. But since informing you of what concerns you more than any other man brings me so undeserved a recompense, would I had held my peace, since silence might have spared me your displeasure."

Then the Moor, burning with indignation and anguish, said, "Make thou these eyes self-witness of what thou tell'st or on thy life I'll make thee wish thou hadst been born without a tongue."

"An easy task it would have been," replied the villain, "when he was used to visit at your house; but now that you have banished him, not for just cause, but for mere frivolous pretext, it will be hard to prove the truth. Still, I do not forgo the hope to make you witness of that which you will not credit my lips."

Thus they parted. The wretched Moor, struck to the heart as by a barbed dart, returned to his home, and awaited the day when the Ensign should disclose to him the truth which was to make him miserable to the end of his days. But the evil--minded Ensign was, on his part, not less troubled by the chastity which he knew the lady Disdemona observed inviolate; and it seemed to him impossible to discover a means of making the Moor believe what he had falsely told him; and, turning the matter over in his thoughts in various ways, the villain resolved on a new deed of guilt.

Disdemona often used to go, as I have already said, to visit the Ensign's wife, and remained with her a good part of the day. Now, the Ensign observed that she carried about with her a handkerchief, which he knew the Moor had given her, finely embroidered in the Moorish fashion, and which was precious to Disdemona, nor less so to the Moor. Then he conceived the plan of taking this kerchief from her secretly, and thus laying the snare for her final ruin. The Ensign had a little daughter, a child three years of age, who was much loved by Disdemona, who took her and pressed her to her bosom; whilst at the same instant this traitor, who had extreme dexterity of hand, drew the kerchief from her sash so cunningly that she did not notice him, and overjoyed he took his leave of her.

Disdemona, ignorant of what had happened, returned home, and, busy with other thoughts, forgot the handkerchief. But a few days afterwards, looking for it and not finding it, she was in alarm, lest the Moor should ask her for it, as he oft was wont to do. Meanwhile, the wicked Ensign seizing a fit opportunity, went to the Captain of the troop, and with crafty malice left the handkerchief at the head of his bed without his discovering the trick until the following morning, when, on his getting out of bed, the handkerchief fell upon the floor, and he set his foot upon it. And not being able to imagine how it had come to his house, knowing that it belonged to Disdemona, he resolved to give it to her; and waiting until the Moor had gone from home, he went to the back door and knocked. It seemed as if fate conspired with the Ensign to work the death of the unhappy Disdemona. Just at that time the Moor returned home, and hearing a knocking at the back door, he went to the window, and in a rage exclaimed, "Who knocks there?" The Captain, hearing the Moor's voice, and fearing lest he should come downstairs and attack him, took to flight without answering a word. The Moor went down, and opening the door hastened into the street and looked about, but in vain. Then, returning into the house in great anger, he demanded of his wife who it was that had knocked at the door. Disdemona replied, as was true, that she did not know; but the Moor said, "It seemed to me the Captain."

"I know not," answered Disdemona, "whether it was he or another person."

The Moor restrained his fury, great as it was, wishing to do nothing before consulting the Ensign, to whom he hastened instantly, and told him all that had passed, praying him to gather from the Captain all he could respecting the affair. The Ensign, overjoyed at the occurrence, promised the Moor to do as he requested, and one day he took occasion to speak with the Captain when the

Moor was so placed that he could see and hear them as they conversed. And whilst talking to him of every other subject than of Disdemona, he kept laughing all the time aloud, and feigning astonishment, he made various movements with his head and hands, as if listening to some tale of marvel. As soon as the Moor saw the Captain depart, he went up to the Ensign to hear what he had said to him. And the Ensign, after long entreaty, at length said, "He has hidden nothing from me and has told me that he has been used to visit your wife whenever you went from home, and that on the last occasion she gave him this handkerchief which you presented to her when you married her."

The Moor thanked the Ensign, and it seemed now clear to him, that should he find Disdemona not to have the handkerchief, it was all true that the Ensign had told to him. One day, therefore, after dinner, in conversation with his wife on various subjects, he asked her for the kerchief. The unhappy lady, who had been in great fear of this, grew red as fire at this demand; and to hide the scarlet of her cheeks, which was closely noted by the Moor, she ran to a chest and pretended to seek the handkerchief, and after hunting for it a long time, she said, "I know not how it is -- I cannot find it; can you, perchance, have taken it?"

"If I had taken it," said the Moor, "why should I ask it of you? But you will look better another time."

On leaving the room, the Moor fell to meditating how he should put his wife to death, and likewise the Captain of the troop, so that their deaths should not be laid to his charge. And as he ruminated over this day and night, he could not prevent his wife's observing that he was not the same towards her as he had been wont; and she said to him again and again, "What is the matter? What troubles you? How comes it that you, who were the most light-hearted man in the world, are now so melancholy?"

The Moor feigned various reasons in reply to his wife's questioning, but she was not satisfied, and, although conscious that she had given the Moor no cause, by act or deed, to be so troubled, yet she feared that he might have grown wearied of her; and she would say the Ensign's wife, "I know not what to say of the Moor; he used to be all love towards me; but within these few days he has become another man; and much I fear that I shall prove a warning to young girls not to marry against the wishes of their parents, and that the Italian ladies may learn from me not to wed a man who nature and habitude of life estrange from us. But as I know the Moor is on such terms of friendship with your husband,

and communicates to him all of his affairs, I pray you, if you have heard from him aught that you may tell me of, fail not to befriend me." And as she said this, she wept bitterly.

The Ensign's wife, who knew the whole truth (her husband wishing to make use of her to compass the death of Disdemona), but could never consent to such a project, dared not, from fear of her husband, disclose a single circumstance: all she said was, "Beware lest you give any cause of suspicion to your husband, and show to him by every means your fidelity and love." "Indeed I do so," replied Disdemona, "but it is all of no avail."

Meanwhile the Moor sought in every way to convince himself of what he fain would have found untrue, and he prayed the Ensign to contrive that he might see the handkerchief in the Captain's possession. Though this was difficult for the villain, he promised nevertheless to use every means to produce the proof. Now the Captain had a woman at home who did wonderful embroidery work on fine linen, and when she saw the handkerchief which belonged to the Moor's wife, she resolved, before it was returned to her, to work one like it. As she was engaged in this task, the Ensign observed her standing at a window, where she could be seen by all the passer-bys in the street, and he pointed her out to the Moor, who was now perfectly convinced of his wife's guilt. Then he arranged with the Ensign to slay Disdemona and the Captain of the troop, treating them as it seemed they both deserved. And the Moor prayed the Ensign that he would kill the Captain, promising eternal gratitude to him. But the Ensign at first refused to undertake so dangerous a task, the Captain being a man of equal skill and courage; until at length, after much entreating and being richly paid, the Moor prevailed on him to promise to attempt the deed.

Having formed this resolution, the Ensign, going out one dark night, sword in hand, met the Captain on his way to visit a courtesan, and struck him a blow on his right thigh, which cut off his leg and felled him to the earth. Then the Ensign was on the point of putting an end to his life, when the Captain, who was a courageous man and used to the sight of blood and death, drew his sword, and, wounded as he was, kept on his defense, exclaiming with a loud voice, "I'm murdered!" Thereupon the Ensign, hearing the people come running up, with some of the soldiers who were lodged thereabouts, took to his heels to escape being caught; then turning about again, he joined the crowd, pretending to have been attracted by the noise. And when he saw the Captain's leg cut off, he judged that if not already dead, the blow must, at all events, end his life; and whilst in his heart he was rejoiced at this, yet he feigned to compassionate the Captain as he had been his brother.

The next morning the tidings of this affair spread through the whole city, and reached the ears of Disdemona; whereat she, who was kindhearted and little dreamed that any ill would betide her, evinced the greatest grief at the calamity. This served but to confirm the Moor's suspicions, and he went to seek the Ensign, and said to him, "Do you know that my wife is in such grief at the Captain's accident that she is well nigh gone mad?"

"And what could you expect, seeing he is her very soul?" replied the Ensign.

"Ay, soul forsooth!" exclaimed the Moor; "I'll draw the soul from out her body; call me no man if that I fail to shut the world upon this wretch."

Then they consulted of one means and another -- poison and daggers -- to kill poor Disdemona, but could resolve on nothing. At length the Ensign said, "A plan comes to my mind, which will give you satisfaction and raise cause for no suspicion. It is this: the house in which you live is very old, and the ceiling of your chamber has many cracks; I purpose we take a stocking, filled with sand, and beat Disdemona with it till she dies; thus will her body bear no signs of violence. When she is dead we can pull down a portion of the ceiling, and thus make it seem as if a rafter falling on her head had killed the lady. Suspicion cannot rest on you, since all men will impute her death to accident."

This cruel counsel pleased the Moor, and he only waited for a fitting time to execute the plot. One night, when he and Disdemona had retired to bed, the Ensign, whom the Moor had concealed in a closet which opened into the chamber, raised a noise in the closet, according to a concerted plan; whereat the Moor said to his wife, "Did you not hear that noise?"

"Indeed I heard it," she replied.

"Rise," said the Moor, "and see what 'tis."

The unhappy Disdemona rose from the bed, and the instant she approached the closet, out rushed the Ensign, and being strong and stout of nerve, he beat her cruelly with the bag of sand across her back; upon which Disdemona fell to the ground, scarce able to draw her breath; but with the little voice she had left, she called upon the Moor for aid. But the Moor, leaping from bed, exclaimed, "Thou wickedest of women, thus has thy falseness found its just reward, the recompense to wives who, counterfeiting love, place horns upon their husbands' brows."

The wretched lady, hearing those words, and feeling that she was near her end (for the Ensign had given her another blow), appealed to the justice of Heaven, since justice here had failed her, in proof of her fidelity and truth; and as she was thus calling Heaven to witness, the wicked Ensign inflicted a third blow, under which she sank lifeless to the floor.

Then the Ensign and the Moor, laying Disdemona on the bed and wounding her head, pulled down part of the ceiling of the chamber, as they had arranged; whereupon the Moor began to call aloud for help, exclaiming that the house was falling. Hearing this uproar, the neighbors all came running up, and there found Disdemona lying dead beneath a rafter -- a sight which, from the good life of that poor lady, did fill all hearts with sorrow.

On the following day Disdemona was buried, followed to the grave by the universal grief of the people. But Heaven, the just rewarder of all hearts, willed not that so wicked a deed should go unpunished. Ere long the Moor, whom Disdemona had loved more than her own life, began to feel such sorrow at her loss that he went wandering about as one bereft of reason, searching in every part of the spouse. And reflecting in his thoughts that the Ensign had been the cause that he had lost, with Disdemona, all joy in life, he conceived so deep a hatred to that wicked man he could not bear to set eyes on him, and had it not been for his fear of the inviolable justice of the Signoria of Venice, he would have slain him openly. But being unable to do this with safety, he deprived him of his rank, and would not allow him to remain in his Company; whereat such an enmity arose between the two that no greater or more deadly can be imagined.

The Ensign, that wickedst of all bad men, now turned his thought to injuring the Moor; and seeking out the Captain, whose wound was by this time healed, and who went about with a wooden leg in place of the one that had been cut off, he said to him, " 'Tis time you should be avenged for your lost limb; and if you will come with me to Venice, I'll tell you who the malefactor is, whom I dare not mention to you here for many reasons; and I will bring you proofs."

The Captain of the troop, whose anger returned fiercely but without knowing why, thanked the Ensign, and went with him to Venice. On arriving there the Ensign told him it was the Moor who had cut off his leg, on account of the suspicion he had formed of Disdemona's conduct with him; and for that reason he had slain her, and then spread the report that the ceiling had fallen and killed her. Upon hearing which, the Captain accused the Moor to the Signoria, both of having cut off his leg and killed his wife, and called the Ensign to witness the truth of what he said. The Ensign declared both charges to be true, for that the Moor had disclosed to him the whole plot, and had tried to persuade him to perpetrate both crimes; and that, having afterwards killed his wife out of jealousy he had conceived, he had narrated to him the manner in which he had perpetrated her death.

The Signoria of Venice, when the heard of the cruelty inflicted by a barbarian upon a lady of their city, commanded the Moor should be arrested in Cyprus, and be brought to Venice, where, with many tortures, they sought to draw from him the truth. But the Moor, bearing with unyielding courage all the torment, denied the whole charge so resolutely that no confession could be drawn from him. But, although by his constancy and firmness he escaped death, he was, after being confined for several days in prison, condemned to perpetual banishment, in which he was eventually slain by the kinsfolk of Disdemona, as he merited.

The Ensign returned to his own country, and, following up his wonted villainy, he accused one of his companions of having sought to persuade him to kill an enemy of his, who was a man of noble rank; whereupon this person was arrested and put to the torture; but the Ensign was likewise tortured to make him prove the truth of his accusations; and he was tortured so that his body ruptured, upon which he was removed from prison and taken home, where he died a miserable death. Thus did Heaven avenge the innocence of Disdemona; and all these events were narrated by the Ensign's wife, who was privy to the whole, after his death, as I have told them here.

KING LEAR – Holinshed, Sydney and Spenser

There are several main sources for this famous tragedy, three of which are provided in this section.

RAPHAEL HOLINSHED

The story of Leir, as told by *Holinshed* in *The second Booke of the historie of England,* chapters. v, vi.

Leir the sonne of Baldud, was admitted ruler ouer the Britaines, in the yeere of the world 3105, at what time Ioas raigned as yet in Iuda. This Leir was a prince of right noble demeanor, gouerning his land and subiects in great wealth. He made the towne of Caerlier nowe called Leicester, which standeth vpon the riuer of Sore. It is written that he had by his wife three daughters without other issue, whose names were Gonorilla, Regan, and Cordeilla, which daughters he greatly loued, but specially Cordeilla the yoongest farre aboue the two elder. When this Leir therefore was come to great yeeres, & began to waxe vnweldie through age, he thought to vnderstand the affections of his daughters towards him, and preferre hir whome he best loued, to the succession ouer the kingdome. Whervpon he first asked Gonorilla the eldest, how well shee loued him: who calling hir gods to record, protested, that she loued him more than hir owne life, which by right and reason shoulde be most deere vnto hir. With which answer the father being well pleased, turned to the second, and demanded of hir how well she loued him: who answered (confirming hir saiengs with great othes) that she loued him more than toung could expresse, and farre aboue all other creatures of the world.

Then called he his yoongest daughter Cordeilla before him, and asked of hir what account she made of him: vnto whome she made this answer as followeth: Knowing the great loue and fatherlie zeale that you haue always borne towards me, (for the which I maie not answere you otherwise than I thinke, and as my conscience leadeth me) I protest vnto you, that I haue loued you euer, and will continuallie (while I liue) loue you as my naturall father. And if you would more vnderstand of the loue that I beare you, assertaine your selfe, that so much as you haue, so much you are worth, and so much I loue you, and no more. The father being nothing content with this answer, married his two eldest daughters, the one vnto Henninus, the Duke of Cornewal, and the other vnto Maglanus, the Duke of Albania, betwixt whome he willed and ordeined that his land should be deuided after his death, and the one halfe thereof immediatelie should be assigned to them in hand: but for the third daughter Cordeilla he reserued nothing.

Neuertheles it fortuned that one of the princes of Gallia (which now is called France) whose name was Aganippus, hearing of the beautie, womanhood, and good conditions of the said Cordeilla, desired to haue hir in mariage, and sent ouer to hir father, requiring that he mighte haue hir to wife: to whome answere was made, that he might haue his daughter, but as for anie dower he could haue none, for all was promised and assured to hir other sisters alreadie. Aganippus notwithstanding this answer of deniall to receiue anie thing by way of dower with Cordeilla, tooke hir to wife, onlie moued thereto (I saie) for respect of hir person and amiable vertues. This Aganippus was one of the twelue kings that ruled Gallia in those daies, as in the Brittish historie it is recorded. But to proceed.

After that Leir was fallen into age, the two dukes that had married his two eldest daughters, thinking long yer the gouernment of the land did come to their hands, arose against him in armour, and reft from him the gouernance of the land, vpon conditions to be continued for terme of life: by the which he was put to his portion, that is, to liue after a rate assigned to him for the maintenance of his estate, which in processe of time was diminished as well by Maglanus as by Henninus. But the greatest griefe that Leir tooke, was to see the vnkindnesse of his daughters, which seemed to thinke that all was too much which their father had, the same being neuer so little: in so much, that going from the one to the other, he was brought to that miserie, that scarslie they would allow him one seruaunt to waite upon him.

In the end, such was the vnkindnesse, or (as I maie saie) the vnnaturalnesse which he found in his two daughters, notwithstanding their faire and pleasant words vttered in time past, that being constreined of necessitie, he fled the land, and sailed into Gallia, there to seeke some comfort of his youngest daughter Cordeilla whom before time he hated. The ladie Cordeilla hearing that he was arriued in poore estate, she first sent to him priuilie a certeine summe of monie to apparell himselfe withall, and to reteine a certein number of seruants that might attende vpon him in honorable wise, as apperteined to the estate which he had borne: and then so accompanied, she appointed him to come to the court, which he did, and was so ioifullie, honorablie, and louinglie receiued, both by his sonne in law Aganippus, and also by his daughter Cordeilla, that his hart was greatlie comforted: for he was no lesse honored, than if he had beene king of the whole Countrie himselfe.

Now when he had informed his son in law and his daughter in what sort he had beene vsed by his other daughters, Aganippus caused a mightie armie to be put in readinesse, and likewise a greate nauie of ships to be rigged, to passe ouer into Britaine with Leir his father in law, to see him againe restored to his kingdome. It was accorded, that Cordeilla should also go with him to take possession of the land, the which he promised to leaue vnto hir, as the rightfull inheritour after his decesse, notwithstanding any former grant made to hir sisters or to their husbands in anie maner of wise.

Herevpon, when this armie and nauie of ships were readie, Leir and his daughter Cordeilla with hir husband tooke the sea, and arriuing in Britaine, fought with their enimies, and discomfited them in battell, in the which Maglanus and Henninus were slaine: and then was Leir restored to his kingdome, which he ruled after this by the space of two yeeres, and then died, fortie yeeres after he first began to reigne. His bodie was buried at Leicester in a vaut vnder the chanell of the Riuer of Sore beneath the towne.

Cordeilla, the yoongest daughter of Leir was admitted Q. and supreme gouernesse of Britaine, in the yeere of the world 3155, before the bylding of

Rome 54, Uzia was then reigning in Juda, and Jeroboam ouer Israell. This Cordeilla after hir father's deceasse ruled the land of Britaine right worthilie during the space of fiue yeeres, in which meane time hir husband died, and then about the end of those fiue yeeres, hir two nephewes Margan and Cunedag, sonnes to hir aforesaid sisters, disdaining to be vnder the gouernment of a woman, leuied warre against hir, and destroied a great part of the land, and finallie tooke hir prisoner, and laid hir fast in ward, wherewith she tooke suche griefe, being a woman of a manlie courage, and despairing to recouer libertie, there she slue hirselfe '

PHILIP SIDNEY

The following extract from Sir Philip SIdney's *Arcadia* (1598) contains the story of *The pitifull state, and story of the Paphlagonian vnkinde king, and his kind sonne, first related by the son, then by the blind father'.*

It was in the kingdome of *Galacia,* the season being (as in the depth of winter) verie cold, and as then sodainlie growne to so extreame and foule a storme, that neuer any winter (I thinke) brought forth a fowler child: so that the Princes were euen compelled by the haile, that the pride of the winde blew into their faces, to seeke some shrowding place which a certain hollow rocke offering vnto them, they made it their shield against the tempests furie. And so staying there, till the violence thereof was passed, they heard the speach of a couple, who not perceiuing them, being hid within that rude canapie, held a straunge and pitifull disputation, which made them step out, yet in such sort, as they might see vnseene. There they perceiued an aged man, and a young, scarcelie come to the age of a man, both poorely arrayed, extreamely weather-beaten; the olde man blind, the young man leading him: and yet through all those miseries, in both there seemed to appeare a kind of noblenesse, not sutable to that affliction. But the first words they heard, were these of the old man. Well *Leonatus* (said he) since I cannot perswade thee to leade me to that which should end my griefe, and thy trouble, let me now intreat thee to leaue me: feare not, my miserie cannot be greater then it is, and nothing doth become me but miserie: feare not the daunger of my blind steps, I cannot fall worse then I am: and do not I pray thee, do not obstinately continue to infect thee with my wretchednesse: but flie, flie from this region only worthie of me. Deare father (answered he) do not take away from me the only remnant of my happinesse: while I haue power to do you seruice, I am not whollie miserable. Ah my sonne (said he, and with that he groned, as if sorrow straue to bleake his heart) how euill fits it me to haue such a sonne, and how much doth thy kindnesse vpbraid my wickednesse? These dolefull speeches, and some others to like purpose (well shewing they had not bene borne to the fortune they were in,) moued the Princes to go out vnto them, and aske the younger what they were? Sirs (answered he with a good grace, and made the more agreeable by a certaine noble kind of piteousnesse) I see well you are straungers, that know not our miserie, so well here knowne, that no man dare know, but that we must be miserable. Indeed our state is such, as though nothing is so needfull vnto vs as pitie, yet nothing is more dangerous vnto vs, then to make our selues so knowne as may stirre pitie; but your presence promiseth that crueltie shall not ouer-runne hate: and if it did, in truth our state is sunke below the degree of feare.

This old man (whom I leade) was lately rightfull Prince of this countrie of *Paphlagonia* , by the hard-hearted vngratefulnesse of a sonne of his, depriued, not onely of his kingdome (whereof no forraine forces were euer able to spoyle him) but of his sight, the riches which Nature graunts to the poorest creatures. Whereby, and by other his vnnaturall dealings, he hath bene driuen to such griefe, as euen now he would haue had me to haue led him to the top of this rocke, thence to cast himselfe headlong to death: and so would haue made me, who receiued my life of him, to be the worker of his destruction. But noble Gentlemen, said he, if either of you haue a father, and feele what dutifull affection is engraffed in a sonnes heart, let me intreat you to conueigh this afflicted Prince to some place of rest and securitie: amongst your worthie acts it shall be none of the least, that a king of such might and fame, & so vniustlie oppressed, is in any sort by you relieued.

But before they could make him answere, his father beganne to speake. Ah my sonne, said he, how euill an Historian are you, that leaue out the chiefe knot of all the discourse? my wickednesse, my wickednesse: and if thou doest it to spare my eares, (the only sense now left me proper for knowledge) assure thy selfe thou doest mistake me: and I take witnesse of that Sunne which you see (with that he cast vp his blind eyes, as if he would hunt for light) and wish my selfe in worse case then I do wish my selfe, which is as euill as may be, if I speake vntrulie, that nothing is so welcome to my thoughts, as the publishing of my shame. Therefore know you Gentlemen (to whom from my heart I wish that it may not proue some ominous foretoken of misfortune to haue met with such a miser as I am) that whatsoeuer my son (o God, that truth binds me to reproch him with the name of my son) hath said is true. But besides those truthes, this also is true, that hauing had in lawfull mariage, of a mother fit to beare royall children, this sonne (such a one as partly you see, and better shall know by my short declaration) and so enioyed the expectations in the world of him, till he was growne to iustifie their expectations (so as I needed enuie no father for the chiefe comfort of mortalitie, to leaue another ones-selfe after me) I was caried by a bastard sonne of mine (if at least I be bound to beleeue the words of that base woman my concubine, his mother) first to mislike, then to hate, lastlie to destroy, or to do my best to destroy this sonne (I thinke you thinke) vndeseruing destruction. What wayes he vsed to bring me to it, if I should tell you, I should tediouslie trouble you with as much poisonous hypocrisie, desperate fraud, smooth malice, hidden ambition, and smiling enuie, as in anie liuing person could be harboured: but I list it not; no remembrance of naughtinesse delights me but mine owne; and me thinks, the accusing his traps might in some maner excuse my fault, which certainlie I lothe to do. But the conclusion is, that I gaue orders to some seruants of mine, whom I thought as apt for such charities as my selfe, to leade him out into a forrest, and there to kill him.

But those theeues (better natured to my son then myselfe) spared his life, letting him go to learne to liue poorely: which he did, giuing himselfe to be a priuate souldier in a countrey here by: but as he was ready to be greatly aduanced for some noble peeces of seruice which he did, he heard newes of me: who (drunke in my affection to that vnlawfull and vnnaturall sonne of mine) suffered my selfe so to be gouerned by hlm, that all fauours and punishments passed by him, all offices and places of importance distributed to his fauorites; so that ere I was aware, I had left my selfe nothing but the name of a King: which he shortly wearie of too, with many indignities (if any thing may be called an indignitie, which was laid vpon me) threw me out of my seat, and put out my eyes; and then (proud in his tyrannie) let me go, neither imprisoning, nor killing me; but rather delighting to make me feele my miserie; miserie indeed, if euer there were anie; full of wretchednesse, fuller of disgrace, and fullest of guiltinesse. And as he came to the crowne by so vniust means, as vniustlie he kept it, by force of straunger souldiers in *Cittadels*, the neasts of tyrannie, and murderers of libertie; disarming all his owne countrimen, that no man durst shew himself a wel-willer of mine: to say the truth (I thinke) few of them being so (considering my cruell follie to my good sonne, and foolish kindnesse to my vnkind bastard:) but if there were any who felt a pitie of so great a fall, and had yet any sparkes of vnslaine dutie left in them towards me; yet durst they not shew it, scarcelie with giuing me almes at their doores; which yet was the onlie sustenance of my distressed life, no bodie daring to shew so much charitie, as to lend me a hand to guide my darke steps: till this sonne of mine (God knowes, worthy of a more vertuous, and more fortunate father) forgetting my abhominable wrongs not recking daunger, and neglecting the present good way hee was in of doing himselfe good, came hither to do this kind office you see him performe towards me, to my vnspeakeable griefe; not onlie because his kindnesse is a glasse euen to my blind eyes of my naughtinesse, but that aboue all griefes, it grieues me he should desperatelie aduenture the losse of his well-deseruing life for mine, that yet owe more to Fortune for my deserts, as if he would carie mudde in a chest of Chrystall: for well I know, he that now raigneth, how much so euer (and with good reason) he despiseth me, of all men despised; yet he will not let slip any aduantage to make away him, whose iust title (ennobled by courage & goodnesse) may one day shake the seat of a neuer secure tyrannie. And for this cause I craued of him to leade me to the top of this rocke, indeed I must confesse, with meaning to free him from so serpentine a companion as I am. But he finding what I purposed, onely therein since he was borne, shewed himselfe disobedient vnto me. And now Gentlemen, you haue the true storie, which I pray you publish to the world, that my mischieuous proceedings may be the glorie of his filiall pietie, the onlie reward now left for so great a merite. And if it may be, let me obtaine that of you, which my sonne denies me: for neuer was there more pity in sauing any, then in ending me, both because thein my agonie shall end, & so you shal preserue this excellent young man, who else wilfully followes his owne ruine.

The matter in it self lamentable, lamentably expressed by the old Prince (which needed not take to himselfe the gestures of pitie, since his face could not put of the markes thereof) greatly moued the two Princes to compassion, which could not stay in such harts as theirs without seeking remedie. But by and by the occasion was presented: for *Plexirtus* (so was the bastard called) came thether with fortie horse, onely of purpose to murder this brother; of whose comming he had soone aduertisement, and thought no eyes of sufficient credite in such a matter, but his owne; and therefore came him selfe to be actor, and spectator. And as soone as he came, not regarding the weake (as he thought) garde of but two men, commaunded some of his followers to set their handes to his, in the killing of *Leonatus.* But the young Prince (though not otherwise armed but with a sworde) how falsely soeuer he was dealt with by others, would not betray him selfe: but brauely drawing it out, made the death of the first that assaulted him, warne his fellowes to come more warily after him. But then *Pyrocles* and *Musidorus* were quickly become parties (so iust a defence deseruing as much as old friendship) and so did behaue them among that companie (more iniurious, then valiant) that many of them lost their liues for their wicked maister.

Yet perhaps had the number of them at last preuailed, if the King of *Pontus* (lately by them made so) had not come vnlooked for to their succour. Who (hauing had a dreame which had fixt his imagination vehemently vpon some great daunger, presently to follow those two Princes whom he most deerely loued) was come in all hast, following as well as he could their tracke with a hundreth horses in that countrie, which he thought (considering who then raigned) a fit place inough to make the stage of any Tragedie.

But then the match had ben so ill made for *Plexirtus,* that his ill-led life, & worse gotten honour should haue tumbled together to destruction; had there not come in *Tydeus & Telenor,* with fortie or fiftie in their suit, to the defence of *Plexirtus.* These two were brothers, of the noblest house of that country, brought vp from their infancie with *Plexirtus:* men of such prowesse, as not to know feare in themselues, and yet to teach it others that should deale with them: for they had often made their liues triumph ouer most terrible daungers; neuer dismayed and euer fortunate; and truely no more setled in their valure, then disposed to goodnesse and iustice, if either they had lighted on a better friend, or could haue learned to make friendship a child, and not the father of Vertue. But bringing vp (rather then choise) hauing first knit their minds vnto him, (indeed craftie inough, eyther to hide his faultes, or neuer to shew them, but when they might pay home) they willingly held out the course, rather to satisfie him, then al the world; and rather to be good friendes, then good men: so as though they did not like the euill he did, yet they liked him that did the euill; and though not councellors of the offence, yet protectors of the offender. Now they hauing heard of this sodaine going out, with so small a company, in a country full of euill-wishing minds toward him (though they knew not the cause) followed him; till they found him in such case as they were to venture their liues, or else he to loose his: which they did with such force of minde and bodie, that truly I may iustly say, *Pyrocles & Musidorus* had neuer till then found any, that could make them so well repeate their hardest lesson in the feates of armes. And briefly so they did, that if they ouercame not; yet were they not ouercome, but caried away that vngratefull maister of theirs to a place of securitie; howsoeuer the Princes laboured to the contrary. But this matter being thus far begun, it became not the constancie of the Princes so to leaue it; but in all hast making forces both in *Pontus* and *Phrygia* , they had in fewe dayes, lefte him but only that one strong place where he was. For feare hauing bene the onely knot that had fastned his people vnto him, that once vntied by a greater force, they all scattered from him; like so many birdes, whose cage had bene broken.

In which season the blind King (hauing in the chief cittie of his Realme, set the crowne vpon his sonne *Leonatus* head) with many teares (both of ioy and sorrow) setting forth to the whole people, his owne fault & his sonnes vertue, after he had kist him, and forst his sonne to accept honour of him (as of his newe-become subiect) euen in a moment died, as it should seeme: his hart broken with vnkindnes & affliction, stretched so farre beyond his limits with this excesse of comfort, as it was able no longer to keep safe his roial spirits. But the new King (hauing no lesse louingly performed all duties to him dead, then aliue) pursued on the siege of his vnnatural brother, asmuch for the reuenge of his father, as for the establishing of his owne quiet. In which siege truly I cannot but acknowledge the prowesse of those two brothers, then whom the Princes neuer found in all their trauell two men of greater habilitie to performe, nor of habler skill for conduct.

But *Plexirtus* finding, that if nothing else, famin would at last bring him to destruction, thought better by humblenes to creepe, where by pride he could not march. For certainely so had nature formed him, & the exercise of craft conformed him to all turnings of sleights, that though no man had lesse goodnes in his soule then he, no man could better find the places whence arguments might grow of goodnesse to another: though no man felt lesse pitie, no man could tel better how to stir pitie: no man more impudent to deny, where proofes were not manifest; no man more ready to confesse with a repenting manner of aggravating his owne euil, where denial would but make the fault fowler. Now he tooke this way, that hauing gotten a pasport for one (that pretended he would put *Plexirtus* aliue into his hands) to speak with the King his brother, he him selfe (though much against the minds of the valiant brothers, who rather wished to die in braue defence) with a rope about his necke, barefooted, came to offer himselfe to the discretion of *Leonatus.* Where what submission he vsed, how cunningly in making greater the faulte he made the faultines the lesse, how artificially he could set out the torments of his owne conscience, with the burdensome comber he had found of his ambitious desires, how finely seeming to desire nothing but death, as ashamed to liue, he begd life, in the refusing it, I am not cunning inough to be able to expresse: but so fell out of it, that though at first sight *Leonatus* saw him with no other eie, then as the murderer of his father; & anger already began to paint reuenge in many colours, ere long he had not only gotten pitie, but pardon, and if not an excuse of the fault past, yet an opinion of future amendment: while the poore villaines (chiefe ministers of his wickedness, now betraied by the author thereof,) were deliuered to many cruell sorts of death; he so handling it, that it rather seemed, he had rather come into the defence of an vnremediable mischiefe already committed, then that they had done it at first by his consent.

EDMUND SPENSER

An extract from Spenser’s famous poem *The Faery Queene* , 1590, Second Booke.

27. Next him King Leyr in happy peace long raind,

But had no issue male him to succeed,

But three faire daughters, which were well uptraind

In all that seemed fit for kingly seed;

Mongst whom his realme he equally decreed

To have divided. Tho when feeble age

Nigh to his utmost date he saw proceed,

He cald his daughters, and with speeches sage

Inquyrd, which of them most did love her parentage.

28. The eldest Gonorill gan to protest,

That she much more than her owne life him lov'd;

And Regan greater love to him profest

Then all the world, when ever it were proov'd;
But Cordeill said she loved him, as behoov'd:
Whose simple answere, wanting colours faire
To paint it forth, him to displeasance moov'd,
That in his crowne he counted her no haire,
But 'twixt the other twaine his kingdom whole did shaire.

29. So wedded th' one to Maglan King of Scots.
And th' other to the King of Cambria,
And 'twixt them shayrd his realme by equall lots;
But without dowre, the wise Cordelia
Was sent to Aganip of Celtia.
Their aged syre, thus eased of his crowne,
A private life led in Albania
With Gonorill, long had in great renowne,
That nought him griev'd to beene from rule deposed downe.

30. But true it is that, when the oyle is spent,
The light goes out, and weeke is throwne away;
So when he had resignd his regiment,
His daughter gan despise his drouping day,

And wearie waxe of his coutinuall stay;

Tho to his daughter Regan he repayrd,

Who him at first well used every way;

But when of his departure she despayrd,

Her bountie she abated, and his cheare empayrd.

31. The wretched man gan then avise too late,

That love is not, where most it is profest;

Too truely tryde in his extremest state;

At last resolv'd likewise to prove the rest,

He to Cordelia him selfe addrest,

Who with entyre affection him receav'd,

As for her syre and king her seemed best;

And after all an army strong she leav'd,

To war on those, which him had of his realme bereav'd,

32. So to his crowne she him restor'd againe,

In which he dyde, made ripe for death by eld,

And after wild it should to her remaine:

Who peacefully the same long time did weld,

And all men's harts in dew obedience held;

Till that her sisters' children, woxen strong

Through proud ambition, against her rebeld,

And overcommen kept in prison long,

Till wearie of that wretched life her selfe she hong.

MACBETH – Holinshed’s Chronicles

This extract from Holinshed’s historical work was the primary source for this famous tragedy.

Furthermore, they murmured closelie amongest themselues, how the king was onlie become friend to the commons & cleargie of his realme, hauing no respect to the nobilitie, but rather declared himselfe to be an vtter enimie thereof, so that he was vnwoorthie to haue the rule of the nobles and gentlemen, vnles he knew better what belonged to their degrée. This murmuring did spread not onelie among them in the Iles, but also through all the other parts of his realme, so that they ceased not to speake verie euil of the gouernement of things. In the meane time the king fell into a languishing disease, not so gréeuous as strange, that none of his physicians could perceiue what to make of it. For there was séene in him no token, that either choler, melancholie, flegme, or any other vicious humor did any thing abound, whereby his bodie should be brought into such decaie and consumption (so as there remained vnneth anie thing vpon him saue skin and bone.)

And sithens it appeared manifestlie by all outward signes and tokens, that naturall moisture did nothing faile in the vitall spirits, his colour also was fresh and faire to behold, with such liuelines of looks, that moe was not to be wished for; he had also a temperat desire and appetite to his meate & drinke, but yet could he not sléepe in the night time by anie prouocations that could be deuised, but still fell into excéeding sweats, which by no means might be restreined. The physicians perceiuing all their medicines to want due effect, yet to put him in some comfort of helpe, declared to him that they would send for some cunning physicians into forreigne parts, who happilie being inured with such kind of diseases, should easilie cure him, namelie so soone as the spring of the yeare was once come, which of it selfe should helpe much therevnto.

Howbeit the king, though he had small hope of recouerie, yet had he still a diligent care vnto the due administration of his lawes and good orders of his realme, deuising oft with his councell about the same. But when it was vnderstood into what a perillous sicknesse he was fallen, there were no small number, that contemning the authoritie of the magistrats, began to practise a rebellion. And amongst the chiefest were those of Murrey land, who slaieng sundrie of the kings officers, began to rage in most cruell wise against all such as were not consenting to their misordered tumult. The kings physicians forbad in anie wise, that the king should be aduertised of such businesse, for doubt of increasing his sicknes with trouble of mind about the same. But about that present time there was a murmuring amongst the pople, how the king was vexed with no naturall sicknesse, by by sorcerie and magicall art, practised by a sort of witches dwelling in a towne of Murrey land, called Fores.

Wherevpon, albeit the author of this secret talke was not knowne: yet being brought to the kings eare, it caused him to send foorthwith certeine wittie persons thither, to inquire of the truth. They that were thus sent, dissembling the cause of their iornie, were receiued in the darke of the night into the castell of Fores by the lieutenant of the same, called Donwald, who continuing faithfull to the king, had kept that castell against the rebels to the kings vse. Vnto him therefore these messengers declared the cause of their comming, requiring his aid for the accomplishment of the kings pleasure.

The souldiers, which laie there in garrison, had an inkling that here was some such matter in hand as was talked of amongst the people; by reason that one of them kept as concubine a yoong woman, which was daughter to one of the witches as his paramour, who told him the whole maner vsed by hir mother & other hir companions, with their intent also, which was to make awaie the king. The souldier hauing learned this of his lemman, told the same to his fellowes, who made report to Donwald, and hée shewed it to the kings messengers, and therewith sent for the yoong damosell which the souldier kept, as then being within the castell, and caused hir vpon streict examination to confesse the whole matter as she had séene and knew. Wherevpon learning by hir confession in what house in the towne it was where they wrought

their mischiefous mysterie, he sent foorth souldiers about the middest of the night, who breaking into the house, found one of the witches rosting vpon a woodden broch an image of wax at the fire, resembling in each feature the kings person, made and deuised (as is to be thought) by craft and art of the diuell: an other of them sat reciting certeine words of inchantment, and still basted the image with a certeine liquor verie busilie.

The souldiers finding them occupied in this wise, tooke them togither with the image, and led them into the castell, where being streictlie examined for what purpose they went about such manner of inchantment, they answered, to the end to make away the king: for as the image did waste afore the fire, so did the bodie of the king breake foorth in sweat. And as for the words of the inchantment, they serued to keepe him still waking from sléepe, so that as the wax euer melted, so did the kings flesh: by the which meanes it should haue come to passe, that when the wax was once cleane consumed, the death of the king should immediatlie follow. So were they taught by euill spirits, and hired to worke the feat by the nobles of Murrey land. The standers by, that heard such an abhominable tale told by these witches, streightwaies brake the image, and caused the witches (according as they had well deserued) to bée burnt to death.

It was said, that the king at the verie same time that these things were a doing within the castell of Fores, was deliuered of his languor, and slept that night without anie sweat breaking foorth vpon him at all, & the next daie being restored to his strength, was able to doo anie maner of thing that lay in man to doo, as though he had not béene sicke before anie thing at all. But how soeuer it came to passe, truth it is, that when he was restored to his perfect health, he gathered a power of men, & with the same went into Murrey land against the rebels there, and chasing them from thence, he pursued them into Rosse, and from Rosse into Cathnesse, where apprehending them, he brought them backe vnto Fores, and there caused them to be hanged vp, on gallows and gibets.

Amongest them there were also certeine yoong gentlemen, right beautifull and goodlie personages, being neere of kin vnto Donwald capteine of the castell, and had béene persuaded to be partakers with the other rebels, more through the fraudulent counsell of diuerse wicked persons, than of their owne accord: wherevpon the foresaid Donwald lamenting their case, made earnest labor and sute to the king to haue begged their pardon; but hauing a plaine deniall, he conceiued such an inward malice towards the king (though he shewed it not outwardlie at the first) that the same continued still boiling in his stomach, and ceased not, till through setting on of his wife, and in reuenge of such vnthankefulnesse, hée found meanes to murther the king within the foresaid castell of Fores where he vsed to soiourne. For the king being in that countrie, was accustomed to lie most commonlie within the same castell, hauing a speciall trust in Donwald, as a man whom he neuer suspected.

But Donwald, not forgetting the reproch which his linage had susteined by the execution of those his kinsmen, whome the king for a spectacle to the people had caused to be hanged, could not but shew manifest tokens of great griefe at home amongst his familie: which his wife perceiuing, ceassed not to trauell with him, till she vnderstood what the cause was of his displeasure. Which at length when she had learned by his owne relation, she as one that bare no lesse malice in hir heart towards the king, for the like cause on hir behalfe, than hir husband did for his friends, counselled him (sith the king oftentimes vsed to lodge in his house without anie gard about him, other than the garrison of the castell, which was wholie at his commandement) to make him awaie, and shewed him the meanes wherby he might soonest accomplish it.

Donwald thus being the more kindled in wrath by the words of his wife, determined to follow hir aduise in the execution of so heinous an act. Whervpon deuising with himselfe for a while, which way hée might best accomplish his curssed intent, at length gat opportunitie, and sped his purpose as followeth. It chanced that the king vpon the daie before he purposed to depart foorth of the castell, was long in his oratorie at his praiers, and there continued till it was late in the night. At the last, comming foorth, he called such afore him as had

faithfullie serued him in pursute and apprehension of the rebels, and giuing them heartie thanks, he bestowed sundrie honorable gifts amongst them, of the which number Donwald was one, as he that had béene euer accounted a most faithfull seruant to the king.

At length, hauing talked with them a long time, he got him into his pruie chamber, onelie with two of his chamberlains, who hauing brought him to bed came foorth againe, and then fell to banketting with Donwald and his wife, who had prepared diuerse delicate dishes, and sundrie sorts of drinks for their reare supper or collation, wherat they sate vp so long, till they had charged their stomachs with such full gorges, that their heads were no sooner got to the pillow, but asléepe they were so fast, that a man might haue remooued the chamber ouer them, sooner than to haue awaked them out of their droonken sleepe.

Then Donwald, though he abhorred the act greatlie in heart, yet through instigation of his wife hee called foure of his seruants vnto him (whome he had made priuie to his wicked intent before, and framed to his purpose with large gifts) and now declaring vnto them, after what sort they should worke the feat, they gladlie obeied his instructions, & spéedilie going about the murther, they enter the chamber (in which the king laie) a little before cocks crow, where they secretlie cut his throte as he lay sléeping, without anie buskling at all: and immediately by a posterne gate they caried foorth the dead bodie into the fields, and throwing it vpon an horsse there prouided readie for that purpose, they conuey it vnto a place, about two miles distant from the castell, where they staied, and gat certeine labourers to helpe them to turne the course of a little riuer running through the fields there, and digging a déepe hole in the channell, they burie the bodie in the same, ramming it vp with stones and grauell so closelie, that setting the water in the right course againe, no man could perceiue that anie thing had béene newlie digged there. This they did by order appointed them by Donwald as is reported, for that the bodie should not be found, & by bléeding (when Donwald should be present) declare him to be guilie of the murther. For such an opinion men haue, that the dead corps of anie man being slaine, will bléed abundantlie if the murtherer be present. But for what consideration soeuer they buried him there, they had no sooner finished the worke, but that they slue them whose helpe they vsed herein, and streightwaies therevpon fled into Orknie.

Donwald, about the time that the murther was in dooing, got him amongst them that kept the watch, and so continued in companie with them all the residue of the night. But in the morning when the noise was raised in the kings chamber how the king was slaine, his bodie conueied awaie, and the bed all beraied with bloud; he with the watch ran thither, as though he had knowne nothing of he matter, and breaking into the chamber, and finding cakes of bloud in the bed, and on the floore about the sides of it, he foothwith slue the chamberleins, as guiltie of that heinous murther, and then like a mad man running to and fro, he ransacked euerie corner within the castell, as though it had béene to haue seene if he might haue found either the bodie, or anie of the murtherers hid in anie priuie place: but at length comming to the posterne gate, and finding it open he burdened the chamberleins whome he had slaine, with all the fault, they hauing the keies of the gates committed to their kéeping all the night, and therefore it could not be otherwise (said he) but they were of counsell in the committing of that most detestable murther.

Finallie, such was his ouer earnest diligence in the seuere inquisition and triall of the offendors héerein, that some of the lords began to mislike the matter, and to smell foorth shrewd tokens, that he should not be altogither cleare himselfe. But for so much as they were in that countrie, where he had the whole rule, what by reason of his friends and authoritie togither, they doubted to vtter what they thought, till time and place should better serue therevnto, and héervpon got them awaie euerie man to his home. For the space of six moneths togither, after this heinous murhter thus committed, there appéered no sunne by day, nor moone by night in anie part of the realme, but still was the skie couered with continuall clouds, and sometimes such outragious winds arose, with lightenings and tempests, that the people were in great feare of present destruction.

Later on in the chronicles:

Monstruous sights also that were seen within the Scottish kingdom that year were these: Horses in Lothian, being of singular beauty and swiftness, did eat their own flesh and would in no wise taste any other meat. In Angus there was a gentlewoman brought forth a child without eyes, nose, hand, or foot. There was a sparhawk also

strangled by an owl. Neither was it any less wonder than the sun, as before is said, was continually covered with clouds for six months' space. But all men understood that the abominable murder of king Duff was the cause hereof…”

ANTHONY AND CLEOPATRA – Thomas North's translation of Plutarch's *Lives*

Shakespeare's main source of inspiration for this tragedy was Thomas North's 1579 translation of Plutarch's *Lives* , a collection of biographical sketches of famous Greeks and Romans. This extract covers the romance and fatal doom of the two lovers.

F or Anthony was a plain man without subtilty, and therefore over late found out the foul faults they committed against him: but when heAntonius' simplicity. heard of them he was much offended, and would plainly confess it unto them whom his officers had done injury unto by countenance of his authority. He had a noble mind, as well to punish offenders, as to reward well-doers: and yet he did exceed more in giving, than in punishing. Now for his outrageous manner of railing heAntonius' manners. commonly used, mocking and flouting of every man, that was remedied by itself. For a man might as boldly exchange a mock with him, and he was as well contented to be mocked, as to mock others. But yet it oftentimes marred all. For he thought that those which told him so plainly and truly in mirth, would never flatter him in good earnest in any matter of weight. But thus he was easily abused by the praises they gave him, not finding how these flatterers mingled their flattery, under this familiar and plain manner of speech unto him, as a fine device to make difference of meats with sharp and tart sauce, and also to keep him by this frank jesting and bourding with him at the table, that their common flattery should not be troublesome unto him as men do easily mislike to have too much of one thing: and that they handled him finely thereby, when they would give him place in any matter of weight and follow his counsel, that it might not appear to him they did it so much to please him, but because they were ignorant, and understood not so much as he did. Antonius being thus inclined, the last and extremest mischief of all other (to wit, the love of Cleopatra) lighted on him, who did waken and stir up many vices yet hidden in him, and were never seen to any: and if any spark of goodness or hope of rising were left him, Cleopatra quenched it straight, and made it worse than before. The manner how he fell in love with her was this. Antonius, going to make war with the Parthians,Antonius' love to Cleopatra whom he sent for into Cilicia. sent to command Cleopatra to appear personally before him, when he came into Cilicia, to answer unto such accusations as were laid against her, being this: that she had aided Cassius and Brutus in their war against him. The messenger sent unto Cleopatra to make this summons unto her was called Dellius: who when he had throughly considered her beauty, the excellent grace and sweetness of her tongue, he nothing mistrusted that Antonius would do any hurt to so noble a Lady, but rather assured himself that within few days she should be in great favour with him. Thereupon he did her great honour, and persuaded her to come into Cilicia as honourably furnished, as she could possible, and bade her not to be afraid at all of Antonius, for he was a more courteous Lord than any that she had ever seen. Cleopatra, on th’ other side, believing Dellius' words, and guessing by the former access and credit she had with Julius Caesar and Cneius Pompey (the son of Pompey the great) only for her beauty: she began to have good hope that she might more easily win Antonius. For Caesar and Pompey knew her when she was but a young thing, and knew not then what the world meant: but now she went to Antonius at the age when a woman's beauty is at the prime, and she also of best judgement. So, she furnished herself with a world of gifts, store of gold and silver, and of riches and other sumptuous ornaments as is credible enough she might bring from so great a house, and from so wealthy and rich a realm as Egypt was. But yet she carried nothing with her wherein she trusted more than in herself, and in the charms and enchantment of her passing beauty and grace.The wonderful sumptuousness of Cleopatra, queen of Egypt, going unto Antonius. Therefore when she was sent unto by divers letters, both from Antonius himself, and also from his friends, she made so light of it and mocked Antonius so much, that she disdained to set forward otherwise, but to take her barge in the river of Cydnus, the poop whereof was of gold, the sails of purple, and the oars of silver, which kept stroke in rowing after the sound of the music of flutes, hautboys, citherns, viols, and such other instruments as they playedCydnus fl. upon in the barge. And now for the person of herself: she was laid under a pavilion of cloth of gold of tissue, apparelled and attired like the goddess Venus commonly drawn in picture: and hard by her, on either hand of her, pretty fair boys apparelled as painters do set forth god Cupid, with little fans in their hands, with the which they fanned wind upon her. Her Ladies and gentlewomen also, the fairest of them were apparelled like the nymphs Nereides (which are the mermaids of the waters) and like the Graces, some steering the helm, others tending the tackle and ropes of the barge, out of the which there came a wonderful passing sweet savour of perfumes, that perfumed the wharf's side, pestered with innumerable multitudes of people. Some of them followed the barge tall alongst the river's side: others also ran out of the city to see her coming in. So that in th’ end, there ran such multitudes of people one after another to see her, that Antonius was left post alone in the market place in his lmperial seat to give audience: and there went a rumour in the people's mouths, that the goddess Venus was come to play with the god Bacchus, for the general good of all Asia. When Cleopatra landed, Antonius sent to invite her to supper to him. But she sent him word again, he should do better rather to come and sup with her. Antonius therefore, to shew himself courteous unto her at her arrival, was contented to obey her, and went to supperThe sumptuous preparations of the suppers of Cleopatra and Antonius. to her: where he found such passing sumptuous fare, that no tongue can express it. But amongst all other things, he most wondered at the infinite number of lights and torches hanged on the top. of the house, giving light in every place, so artificially set and ordered by devices, some round, some square, that it was the rarest thing to behold that eye could discern, or that ever books could mention. The next night, Antonius feasting her contended to pass her in magnificence and fineness: but she overcame him in both. So that he himself began to scorn the gross service of his house, in respect of Cleopatra's sumptuousness and fineness. And, when Cleopatra found Antonius' jests and slents to be but gross and soldier like in plain manner, she gave it him Cleopatra's finely, and without fear taunted him throughly.Cleopatra's beauty Now her beauty (as it is reported) was not so passing, as unmatchable of other women, nor yet such as upon present view did enamour men with her: but so sweet was her company and conversation, that a man could not possibly but be taken. And besides her beauty, the good grace she had to talk and discourse, her courteous nature that tempered her words and deeds, was a spur that pricked to the quick. Furthermore, besides all these, her voice and words were marvellous pleasant: for her tongue was an instrument of music to divers sports and pastimes, the which she easily turned to any language that pleased her. She spake unto few barbarous people by interpreter, but made them answer herself, or at least the most part of them: as the Ethiopians, the Arabians, the Troglodytes, the Hebrews, the Syrians, the Medes, and the Parthians, and to many others also, whose languages she had learned. Whereas divers of her progenitors, the kings of Egypt, could scarce learn the Egyptian tongue only, and many of them forgot to speak the Macedonian. Now Antonius was so ravished with the love of Cleopatra, that though his wife Fulvia had great wars, and much ado with Caesar for his affairs, and that the army of the

Parthians (the which the king's Lieutenants had given to the only leading of Labienus) was now assembled in Mesopotamia ready to invade Syria: yet, as though all this had nothing touched him, he yielded himself to go with Cleopatra into Alexandria, where he spent and lost in childish sports (as a man might say) and idle pastimes the most precious thing a man can spend, as Antiphon saith: and that is, time. ForAn order set up by Antonius and Cleopatra they made an order between them, which they called. *Amimetobion* (as much to say, no life comparable and matchable with it) one feasting each other by turns, and in cost exceeding all measure and reason. And for proof hereof, I have heard myThe excessive expenses of Antonius and Cleopatra in Egypt. grandfather Lamprias report, that one Philotas a Physician, born in the city of Amphissa, told him that he was at that present time in Alexandria, and studied Physic: and that, having acquaintance with one of Antonius' cooks, he took him with him to Antonius' house, (being a young man desirous to see things) to shew him the wonderful sumptuous charge and preparation of one only supper. When he was in the kitchen, and saw a world of diversities of meats, and amongst others, eight wild boars roasted whole: he began to wonder at it, and said,’ Sure you have a great number of guests to supper.'Eight wild boars roasted whole. The cook fell a-laughing, and answered him,’ No ‘(quoth he) ‘not many guests, nor above him, twelve in all: but yet all that is boiled or roasted must be served in whole, or else it would be marred straight. For Antonius peradventure will sup presently, or it may be a pretty while hence, or likely enough he will defer it longer, for that he hath drunk well to-day, or else hath had some other great matters in hand: and therefore we do not dress one supper only, but many suppers, because we are un-Philotas, a Physician born in Amphissa, reporter of this feast. certain of the hour he will sup in.’ Philotas the Physician told my grandfather this tale, and said moreover, that it was his chance shortly after to serve the eldest son of the said Antonius, whom he had by his wife Fulvia: and that he sat comPhilotas, Physician to the younger Antonius monly at his table with his other friends, when he did not dine nor sup with his father. It chanced one day there came a Physician that was so full of words that he made every man weary of him at the board:Philotas' subtle proposition. but Philotas, to stop his mouth, put out a subtle proposition to him: ‘It is good in some sort to let a man drink cold water that hath an ague: every man that hath an ague hath it in some sort: ergo, it is good for a man that hath an ague to drink cold water.’ The Physician was so gravelled and amated withal, that he had not a word more to say. Young Antonius burst out in such a laughing at him, and was so glad of it, that he said unto him: ‘Philotas, take all that, I give it thee:’ shewing him his cupboard full of plate, with great pots of gold and silver. Philotas thanked him, and told him he thought himself greatly bound to him for this liberality, but he would never have thought that he had had power to have given so many things, and of so great value. But much more he marvelled, when shortly after one of young Antonius' men brought him home all the pots in a basket, bidding him set his mark and stamp upon them, and to lock them up. Philotas returned the bringer of them, fearing to be reproved if he took them. Then the young gentleman Antonius said unto him: ‘Alas, poor man, why dost thou make it nice to take them? Knowest thou not that it is the son of Antonius that gives them thee, and is able to do it? If thou wilt not believe me, take rather the ready money they come to: because my father peradventure may ask for some of the plate, for the antique and excellent workmanship of them.’ This I have heard my grandfather tell oftentimes. But now again to Cleopatra.Plato writeth of four kind of flattery. Plato writeth that there are four kinds of flattery: but Cleopatra divided it into many kinds. For she, were it in sport or in matter of earnest, still devised sundry new delights to have Antonius at commandment,Cleopatra Queen of all flatterers. never leaving him night nor day, nor once letting him go out of her sight. For she would play at dice with him, drink with him, and hunt commonly with him, and also be with him when he went to any exercise or activity of body. And sometime also, when he would go up and down the city disguised like a slave in the night, and would peer into poor men's windows and their shops, and scold and brawl with them within the house: Cleopatra would be also in a chambermaid's array, and amble up and down the streets with him, so that oftentimes Antonius bare away both mocks and blows. Now, though most men misliked this manner, yet the Alexandrians were commonly glad of this jollity, and liked it well, saying very gallantly and wisely, that Antonius shewed them a comical face, to wit, a merry countenance: and the Romans a tragical face, to say, a grim look. But to reckon up all the foolish sports they made, revelling in this sort, it were too fond a part of me, and therefore I will only tell you one among theAntonius' fishing in Egypt rest. On a time he went to angle for fish, and when he could take none he was as angry as could be, because Cleopatra stood by. Wherefore he secretly commanded the fishermen, that when he cast in his line, they should straight dive under the water, and put a fish on his hook which they had taken before: and so snatched up his angling rod, and brought up fish twice or thrice. Cleopatra found it straight, yet she seemed not to see it, but wondered at his excellent fishing: but, when she was alone by herself among her own people, she told them how it was, and bade them the next morning to be on the water to see the fishing. A number of people came to the haven, and got into the fisher-boats to see this fishing. Antonius then threw in his line, and Cleopatra straight commanded one of her men to dive under water before Antonius' men, and to put some old salt fish upon his bait, like unto those that are brought out of the country of Pont. When he had hung the fish on his hook, Antonius, thinking he had taken a fish indeed, snatched up his line presently. Then they all fell a-laughing. Cleopatra laughing also, said unto him: ‘Leave us (my Lord) Egyptians (which dwell in the country of Pharus and Canobus) your angling rod: this is not thy profession: thou must hunt after conquering of realms and countries.’ Now Antonius delighting in these fond and childish pastimes, very ill news were brought him from two places. The first from Rome, that hisThe wars of Lucius Antonius and Fulvia against Octavius Caesar. brother Lucius and Fulvia his wife fell out first between themselves, and afterwards fell to open war with Caesar, and had brought all to nought, that they were both driven to fly out of Italy. The second news, as bad as the first: that Labienus conquered all Asia with the army of the Parthians, from the river of Euphrates, and from Syria, unto the countries of Lydia and Ionia. Then began Antonius with much ado, a little to rouse himself, as if he had been wakened out of a deep sleep, and as a man may say, coming out of a great drunkenness. So, first of all he bent himself against the Parthians, and went as far as the country of Phoenicia: but there he received lamentable letters from his wife Fulvia. Whereupon he straight returned towards Italy with two hundred sail: and as he went, took up his friends by the way that fled out of Italy to come to him. By them he was informed, that his wife Fulvia was the only cause *of* this war: who, being of a peevish, crooked, and troublesome nature, had purposely raised this uproar in Italy, in hopeThe death of Fulvia, Antonius' wife. thereby to withdraw him from Cleopatra. But by good fortune his wife Fulvia, going to meet with Antonius, sickened by the way, and died in the city of Sicyon: and therefore Octavius Caesar and he were the easilier made friends together. For when Antonius landed in Italy, and that men saw Caesar asked nothing of him, and that Antonius on the other side laid all the fault and burden on his wife Fulvia: the friends of both parties would not suffer them to unrip any old matters, and to prove or defend who had the wrong or right, and who was theAll the Empire of Rome divided between the Triumviri first procurer of this war, fearing to make matters Empire of worse between them: but they made them divided friends together, and divided the Empire of Rome between them, making the sea Ionlium the bounds of their division. For they gave all the provinces Eastward unto Antonius: and the countries Westward unto Caesar: and left Africk unto Lepidus: and made a law, that they three one after another should make their friends Consuls, when they would not be themselves. This seemed to be a sound counsel, but yet it was to be confirmed with a straiter bond, which fortune offered thus. There was Octavia the eldestOctavia, the half sister of Octavius Caesar, and daughter of Ancharia which was not Caesar's mother sister of Caesar, not by one mother, for she came of Aneharia, and Caesar himself afterwards of Accia. It is reported that he dearly loved his sister Octavia, for indeed she was a noble Lady, and left the widow of her first husband Caius Marcellus, who died not long before: and it seemed also that Antonius had been widower ever since the death of his wife Fulvia. For he denied not that he kept Cleopatra, but so did he not confess that he had her as his wife: and so with reason he did defend the love he bare unto this Egyptian Cleopatra. Thereupon every man did set forward this marriage, hoping thereby that this Lady Octavia, having an excellent grace, wisdom, and honesty, joined unto so rare a beauty, that when she were with Antonius (he loving her as so worthy a Lady deserveth) she should be a good mean to keep good love and amity betwixt her brother and him. So,A law at Rome for marrying of widows. when Caesar and he had made the match between them, they both went to Rome about this marriage, although it was against the law that a widow should be married within ten months after her husband's death. Howbeit the Senate dispensed with the law, and so the marriageAntonius married Octavia, Octavius Caesar's half-sister. proceeded accordingly. Sextus Pompeius at that time kept in Sicilia, and so made many an inroad into Italy with a great number of pinnaces and other pirates' ships, of the which were Captains two notable pirates, Menus and Menecrates, who so scoured all the sea thereabouts, that none durst peep out with a sail. Furthermore, Sextus Pompeius had dealt very friendly with Antonius, for he had courteously received his mother, when she fled out of Italy with Fulvia: and therefore theyAntonius and Octavius Caesar do make peace with Sextus Pompeius. thought good to make peace with him. So they met all three together by the mount of Misenum, upon a hill that runneth far into the sea: Pompey having his ships riding hard by at anchor, and Antonius and Caesar their armies upon the shore side, directly over against him. Now, after they had agreed that Sextus Pompeius should have Sicile and Sardinia, with this condition, that he should rid the sea of all thieves and pirates, and make it safe for passengers, and withal that he should send a certain of wheat to Rome: one of them did feast another, and drew cuts who should begin. It was Pompeius' chance to invite them first, Whereupon Antonius asked him: ‘And where shall we sup?’ ‘There,’ said Pompey, and shewed him his admiral galley which had six banks of oars: ‘That’ (saidSextus Pompeius' taunt to Antonius. he) ‘is my father's house they have left me.’ He spake it to taunt Antonius, because he had his father's house, that was Pompey the great. So he cast anchors enow into the sea to make his galley fast, and then built a bridge of wood to convey them to his galley from the head of mount Misenum: and there he welcomed them, and made them great cheer. Now in thesextus Pompeius being offered wonderful great fortune, for his honesty and faith's sake refussed it. midst of the feast, when they fell to be merry with Antonius' love unto Cleopatra, Menas the pirate came to Pompey, and, whispering in his ear, said unto him: ‘Shall I cut the cables of the anchors, and make thee lord not only of Sicile and Sardinia, but of the whole Empire of Rome besides?’. Pompey, having paused awhile upon it, at length answered him: ‘Thou shouldst have done it, and never have told it me, but now we must content us with that we have. As for myself, I was never taught to break my faith, nor to be counted a traitor.' The other two also did likewise feast him in their camp, and then he returned into Sicile. Antonius, after this agreement made, sent Ventidius before into Asia to stay the Parthians, and to keep them they should come no further: and he himself in the meantime, to gratify Caesar, was contented to be chosen Julius Caesar's priest and sacrificer, and so they jointly together dispatched all great matters concerning the state of the Empire. But in all other manner of sports and exercises, wherein they passed the time away the one with the other, Antonius was ever inferior unto Caesar, and always lost, which grieved him much. With Antonius there was a soothsayer or astronomer of Egypt, that could cast a figure, and judge of men's nativities, to tell them what should happen to them.Antonius told by a Soothsayer that his fortune was inferior unto Octavius Caesar. He, either to please Cleopatra, or else for that he found it so by his art, told Antonius plainly, that his fortune (which of itself was excellent good, and very great,) was altogether blemished and obscured by Caesar's fortune: and therefore he counselled him utterly to leave his company, and to get him as far from him as he could. ‘For thy Demon,’ said he, ‘(that is to say, the good angel and spirit that keepeth thee) ‘is afraid of his: and being courageous and high when he is alone, becometh fearful and timorous when he cometh near unto the other.’ Howsoever it was, the eventsAntonius unfortunate in sport and earnest against Octavius Caesar. ensuing proved the Egyptian's words true. For it is said that as often as they two drew cuts for pastime, who should have anything, or whether they played at dice, Antonius alway lost. Oftentimes, when they were disposed to see cock-fight, or quails that were taught to fight one with another, Caesar's cocks or quails did ever overcome, The which spited Antonius in his mind, although he made no outward shew of it: and therefore he believed the Egyptian the better. In fine, he recommended the affairs of his house unto Caesar, and went out of Italy with Octavia his wife, whom he carried into Greece, after he had had a daughter by her. So Antonius lying all the winter at Athens, news came unto him of the victories of Ventidius, who had overcome the Parthians in battle, in the which also were slain Labienus and Pharnabates, the chiefest Captain king Orodes had. For these good news he feasted allOroder, king of Parthia. Athens, and kept open house for all the

Grecians, and many games of price were played at Athens, of the which he himself would be judge. Wherefore, leaving his guard, his axes, and tokens of his Empire at his house, he came into the show place (or lists) where these games were played, in a long gown and slippers after the Grecian fashion, and they carried tip-staves before him, as marshals' men do carry before the Judges to make place: and he himself in person was a stickler to part the young men, when they had fought enough. After that, preparingVentidius notable victory of the Parthians. to go to the wars, he made him a garland of the holy Olive, and carried a vessel with him of the water of the fountain Clepsydra, because of an Oracle he had received that so commanded him. In the meantime, Ventidius once again overcame Pacorus (Orodes' son king of Parthia) in a battle fought in theThe death of Pacorus, the king of Parthia's son. country of Cyrrestica, he being come again with a great army to invade Syria: at which battle was slain a great number of the Parthians, and among them Pacorus the king's own son slain. This noble exploit, as famous as ever any was, was a full revenge to the Romans of the shame and loss they had received before by the death of Marcus Crassus: and he made the Parthians fly, and glad to keep themselves within the confines and territories of Mesopotamia and Media, after they had thrice together been overcome in several battles. Howbeit Ventidius durst not undertake to follow them any further, fearing lest he should have gotten Antonius' displeasure by it. Notwithstanding, he led his army against them that had rebelled, and conquered them again: amongst whom he besieged Antiochus, king of Commagena, who offered him to give a thousand talents to be pardoned his rebellion, and promised ever after to be at Antonius' commandment. But Ventidius made him answer, that he should send unto Antonius, who was not far off, and would not suffer Ventidius to make any peace with Antiochus, to the end that yet this little exploit should pass in his name, and that they should not think he did anything but by his Lieutenant Ventidius. The siege grew very long, because they that were in the town, seeing they could not be received upon no reasonable composition, determined valiantly to defend themselves to the last man. Thus Antonius did nothing, and yet received great shame, repenting him much that he took not their first offer. And yet at last he was glad to make truce with Antiochus, and to take three hundred talents for composition. Thus, after he had set order for the state and affairs of Syria, he returned again to Athens: and having given Ventidius such honours as he deserved, he sent him to Rome, to triumph for the Parthians.Ventidius the only man of the Romans that triumphed for the Parthuni. Ventidius was the only man that ever triumphed of the Parthians until this present day, a mean man born, and of no noble house nor family: who only came to that he attained unto through Antonius' friendship, the which delivered him happy occasion to achieve to great matters. And yet, to say truly, he did so well quit himself in all his enterprises that he confirmed that which was spoken of Antonius and Caesar: to wit, that they were alway more fortunate when they made war by their Lieutenants, than by themselves. For Sossius, one of Antonius' Lieutenants in Syria, did notable good service: and Canidius, whom he had also left his Lieutenant in the borders of Armenia, did conquer it all. So did he also overcome the kings of the IberiansCanidius' conquests. and Albanians, and went on with his conquests unto mount Caucasus. By these conquests the fame of Antonius' power increased more and more, and grew dreadful unto all the barbarous nations. But Antonius, notwithstanding, grew to be marvellously offended withNew dis. pleasures betwixt Antonius and Octavius. Caesar, upon certain reports that had been brought unto him: and so took sea to go towards Italy with three hundred sail. And, because those of Brundusium would not receive his army into their haven, he went further unto Tarentum. There his wife Octavia, that came out of Greece with him, besought him to send her unto her brother: the which he did.   Octavia at that time was great with child, and moreover had a second daughter by him, and yet she put herself in journey, and met with her brother Octavius Caesar by the way, who brought his two chief friends, Maecenas and Agrippa, with him. SheThe words of Octavia unto Maecenas and Agrippa. took them aside, and with all the instance she could possible, entreated them they would not suffer her, that was the happiest woman of the world, to become now the most wretched and unfortunatest creature of all other. ‘For now,’ said she, ‘every man's eyes do gaze on me, that am the sister of one of the Emperors and wife of the other. And if the worst counsel take place (which the gods forbid) and that they grow to wars: for yourselves, it is uncertain to which of them two the gods have assigned the victory, or overthrow. But for me, on which side soever victory fall, my state can be but most miserable still.’ These words of Octavia so softened Caesar's heart, that he went quickly unto Tarentum. But it was a noble sight for them that wereOctavia pacifieth the quarrel betwixt Antonius and her brother, Octavius Caesar. present, to see so great an army by land not to stir, and so many ships afloat in the road quietly and safe: and, furthermore, the meeting and kindness of friends, lovingly embracing one another. First, Antonius feasted Caesar, which he granted unto for his sister's sake. Afterwards they agreed together, that Caesar should give Antonius two legions to go against the Parthians: and that Antonius should let Caesar have a hundred galleys armed with brazen spurs at the prows. Besides all this, Octavia obtained of her husband twenty brigantines for her brother: and of her brother for her husband, a thousand armed men. After they had taken leave of each other, Caesar went immediately to make war with Sextus Pompeius, to get

Sicilia into his hands. Antonius also, leaving his wife Octavia and little children begotten of her with Caesar, and his other children which he had by Fulvia, he went directly into Asia. Then began this pestilent plague and mischief of Cleopatra's love (which had slept a long time, and seemed to have been utterly forgotten, and that Antonius had given place to better counsel) again to kindle, and to be in force,Plato calleth concupiscence the horse of the mind. so soon as Antonius came near unto Syria. And in the end, the horse of the mind, as Plato termeth it, that is so hard of rein (I mean the unreined lust of concupiscence) did put out of Antonius head all honest and commendable thoughts: for he sent Fonteius Capito to bring Cleopatra into Syria. Unto whom, to welcome her, he gave no trifling things: but unto that sheAntonius sent for Cleopatra into Syria. had already he added the provinces of Phoenicia, those of the nethermost Syria, the Isle of Cyprus, and a great part of Cilicia, and that country ofAntonius gave great provinces unto Cleopatra. Jewry where the true balm is, and that part of Arabia where the Nabathaeans do dwell, which stretcheth out towards the Ocean. These great gifts much misliked the Romans. But now, though Antonius did easily give away great seigniories, realms, and mighty nations unto some private men, and that also he took from otherAntigonu. king of Jewry, the first king; beheaded by An tonius. kings their lawful realms, (as from Antigonus king Of the Jews, whom he openly beheaded, where never king before had suffered like death) yet all this did not so much offend the Romans, as the unmeasurable honours which he did unto Cleopatra. But yet he did much more aggravate their malice and illAntonius' twins by Cleopatra, and their names. will towards him, because that Cleopatra having brought him two twins, a son and a daughter, he named his son Alexander, and his daughter Cleopatra, and gave them to their surnames, the Sun to the one, and the Moon to the other. This notwithstanding, he, that could finely cloak his shameful deeds with fine words, said that the greatness and magnificence of the Empire of Rome appeared most, not where the Romans took, but where they gave much: and nobility was multiplied amongst men by the posterity of kings, when they left of their seed in divers places: and that by this means his first ancestor was begotten of Hercules, who had not left the hope and continuance of his line and posterity in the womb of one only woman, fearing Solon's laws, or regarding the ordinances of men touching the procreation of children: but that he gave it unto nature, and established the foundation of many noble races and families in divers places. Now, when Phraates had slain his father Orodes andPhraates slew his father Orodes, king of Parthia. possessed the kingdom, many gentlemen of Parthia forsook him, and fled from him. Amongst them was Monaeses, a nobleman, and of great authority among his countrymen, who came unto Antonius, that received him, and compared his fortune unto Themistocles, and his own riches and magnificence unto the kings of Persia. For he gave Monaeses three cities, Larissa, Arethusa, and Hierapolis, which was called before Bombyce. Howbeit the king of Parthia shortly after called him home again, upon his faith and word. Antonius was glad to let him go, hoping thereby to steal upon Phraates unprovided. For he sent unto him, and told him that they would remain good friends, and have peace together, so he would but only redeliver the standards and ensigns of the Romans, which the Parthians had won in the battle where Marcus Crassus was slain, and the men also that remained yet prisoners of this overthrow. In the meantime he sent Cleopatra back into Egypt, and took his way towards Arabia and Armenia, and there took a general muster of all his army he had together, and of the kings his confederates that were come by his commandment to aid him, being a marvellous number: of the which the chiefest was Artavasdes, king of Armenia,Antonius' great and puissant army. who did furnish him with six thousand horsemen and seven thousand footmen. There were also of the Romans about three-score thousand footmen, and of horsemen (Spaniards and Gauls reckoned for Romans) to the number of ten thousand, and of other nations thirty thousand men, reckoning together the horsemen and light-armed footmen. This so great and puissant army, which made the Indians quake for fear, dwelling about the country of the Bactrians, and all Asia also to tremble, served him to no purpose, and all for the love he bare to Cleopatra. For the earnest great desire he had to lie all winter with herAntonius drunk with the love of Cleopatra. made him begin his war out of due time, and for haste to put all in hazard, being so ravished and enchanted with the sweet poison of her love, that he had no other thought but of her, and how he might quickly return again, more than how he might overcome his enemies. For first of all, where he should have wintered in Armenia to refresh his men, wearied with the long journey they had made, having come eight thousand furlongs, and then at the beginning of the spring to go and invade Media, before the Parthians should stir out of their houses and garrisons: he could tarry no lenger, but led them forthwith unto the province of Atropatene, leaving Armenia on the left hand, and foraged all the country. Furthermore, making all the haste he could, he left behind him engines of battery which were carried with him in three hundred carts, (among the which also there was a ram four-score foot long) being things most necessary for him, and the which he could not get again for money, if they were once lost or marred. For the high provinces of Asia have no trees growing of such height and length, neither strong nor straight enough, to make suchlike engines of battery. This notwithstanding, he left them all behind him, as a hindrance to bring his matters and intent speedily to pass: and left a certain number of men to keep them, and gave them in charge unto one Tatianus. Then he wentAntonius besiegeth the cry of Phraata in Medna. to besiege the city of Phraata, being the chiefest and greatest city the king of Media had, where his wife and children were. Then he straight found his own fault, and the want of his artillery he left behind him, by the work he had in hand: for he was fain, for lack of a breach (where his men might come to the sword with their enemies that defended the wall) to force a mount of earth hard to the walls of the city, the which by little and little with great labour rose to some height. In the meantime, King Phraates came down with a great army: who understanding that Antonius had left his engines of battery behind him, he sent a great number of horsemen before, which environed Tatianus with all his carriage, and slew him, and ten thousand men he had with him. After this, the barbarous people took these engines ofThe Parthians took Antomus' engines of battery. battery, and burnt them, and got many prisoners, amongst whom they took also King Polemon. This discomfiture marvellously troubled all Antonius' army, to receive so great an overthrow (beyond their expectation) at the beginning of their journey: insomuch that Artabazus, king of the Armenians, despairing of the good success of the Romans, departed with his men, notwithstanding that he was himself the first procurer of this war and journey. On the other side the Parthians came courageously unto Antonius' camp, who lay at the siege of their chiefest city, and cruelly reviled and threatened him. Antonius therefore fearing that if he lay still and did nothing his men's hearts would fail them: he took ten legions, with three cohorts or ensigns of the Praetors (which are companies appointed for the guard of the General) and all his horsemen, and carried them out to forage, hoping thereby he should easily allure the Parthians to fight a battle. But when he had marched about a day's journey from his camp, he saw the Parthians wheeling round about him to give him the onset, and to skirmish with him, when he would think to march his way. Therefore he set out his signal of battle, and yet caused his tents and fardels to be trussed up, as though he meant not to fight, but only to lead his men back again. Then he marched before the army of the barbarous people, the which was marshalled like a crescent or half moon: and commanded his horsemen, that as soon as they thought the legions were near enough unto their enemies to set upon the voward, that then they should set spurs to their horses, and begin the charge. The Parthians standing in battle ray,Battle betwixt the Parthians and Antonius. beholding the countenance of the Romans as they marched, they, appeared to be soldiers indeed, to see them march in so good array as was possible.The Romans' good order in their march. For in their march they kept the ranks a like space one from another, not straggling out of order, and shaking their pikes, speaking never a word. But so soon as the alarum was given, the horsemen suddenly turned head upon the Parthians, and with great cries gave charge on them: who at the first received their charge courageously, for they were joined nearer than within an arrow's shoot. But when the legions also came to join with them, shouting out aloud, and rattling of their armours, the Parthians' horses and themselves were so afraid and amazed withal, that they all turned tail and fled, before the Romans could come to the sword with them. Then Antonius followed them hard in chase, being in great good hope by this conflict to have brought to end all, or the most part, of this war. But after that his footmen had chased them fifty furlongs off, and the horsemen also thrice as far, they found in all but thirty prisoners taken, and about four score men only slain. But this did much discourage them, when they considered with themselves, that obtaining the victory they had slain so few of their enemies: and where they were overcome, they lost as many of their men, as they had done at the overthrow when the carriage was taken. The next morning, Antonius' army trussed up their carriage, and marched back towards their camp: and by the way in their return they met at the first a few of the Parthians: then going further they met a few moe. So at length, when they all came together, they reviled them and troubled them on every side, as freshly and courageously as if they had not been overthrown: so that the Romans very hardly got to their camp with safety. The Medes on the other side, that were besieged in their chief city of Phraata, made a sally out upon them that kept the mount, which they had forced and cast against the wall of the city, and drave them for fear from the mount theyDecimation, a martial punishment. kept. Antonius was so offended withal, that he executed the Decimation. For he divided his men by ten legions, and then of them he put the tenth legion to death, on whom the lot fell: and, to the other nine, he caused them to have barley given them instead of wheat. Thus this war fell out troublesome unto both parties, and the end thereof much more fearful. For Antonius could look for no other of his side, but famine: because he could forage no more, nor fetch in any victuals, without great loss of his men. Phraates on the other side, he knew well enough that he could bring the Parthians to anything else but to lie in camp abroad in the winter. Therefore he was afraid that if the Romans continued their siege all winter long, and made war with him still, that his men would forsake him, and specially because the time of the year went away apace, and the air waxed cloudy and cold, in the equinoctial autumn. There upon he called to mind this device. He gave theThe craft of the Parthians agaist the Romans chiefest of his gentlemen of the Parthians charge, that when they met the Romans out of their camp, going to forage, or to water their horse, or for some other provision, that they should not distress them too much but should suffer them to carry somewhat away, and greatly commend their valiantness and hardiness, for the which their king did esteem them the more, and not without cause. After these first baits and allurements, they began by little and little to come nearer unto them, and to talk with them a-horseback, greatly blaming Antonius' selfwill that did not give their King Phraates occasion to make a good peace, who desired nothing more than to save the lives of so goodly a company of valiant men: but that he was too fondly bent to abide two of the greatest and most dreadful enemies he could have, to wit: winter, and famine, the which they should hardly away withal, though the Parthians did the best they could to aid and accompany them. These words being oftentimes brought to Antonius, they made him a little pliant, for the good hope he had of his return: but yet he would not send unto the king of Parthia, before they had first asked these barbarous people that spake so courteously unto his men, whether they spake it of themselves, or that they were their master's words. When they told them the king himself said so, and did persuade them further not to fear or mistrust them: then Antonius sent some of his friends unto the king, to make demand for the delivery of the ensigns and prisoners he had of the Romans, since the overthrow of Crassus: to the end it should not appear that, if he asked nothing, they should think he were glad that he might only scape with safety out of the danger he was in. The king of Parthia answered him: that for the ensigns and prisoners he demanded, he should not break his head about it: notwithstanding, that if he would presently depart without delay, he might depart in peaceable manner, and without danger.Antonius returneth from the journey of the Parthians. Wherefore Antonius, after he had given his men some time to truss up their carriage, he raised his camp, and took his way to depart. But though he had an excellent tongue at will, and very gallant to entertain his soldiers and men of war, and that he could passingly well do it, as well or better than any Captain in his time: yet being ashamed for respects, he would not speak unto them at his removing, but willed Domitius Ænobarbus to do it. Many of them took this in very ill part, and thought that he did it in disdain of them: but the most part of them presently understood the truth of it, and were also ashamed. Therefore they thought it their duties to carry the like respect unto their Captain that their Captain did unto them: and so they became the more obedient unto him. So Antonius was minded to return the same way he came, being a plain barren country without wood. But there came a soldier to him born in the country of the Mardlans, who, by oft frequenting the Parthians of long time, know their fashions very well, and had also shewed himself very true and faithful to the Romans, in the battle where Antonius' engines of battery and carriage were taken away. This man came unto Antonius to counsel him to beware how he went that way, and to make his army a prey, being heavily armed, unto so great a number of horsemen, all archers in the open field, where they should have nothing to let them to compass him round about: and that this was Phraates' fetch, to offer him so friendly conditions and courteous words to make him raise his siege, that he might afterwards meet him as he would in the plains: howbeit, that he would guide him, if he thought good, another way on the right hand through woods and mountains, a far nearer way, and where he should find great plenty of all, things needful for his army. Antonius, hearing what he said, called his council together to consult upon it. For after he had made peace with the Parthians, he was loath to give them cause to think he mistrusted them: and on th' other side also he would gladly shorten his way, and pass by places well inhabited, where he might be provided of all things necessary: therefore he asked the Mardian what pledge he would put in to perform that he promised. The Mardian gave himself to be bound hand and foot, till he had brought his army into the country of Armenia. So he guided the army thus bound, two days together, without any trouble or sight of enemy. But the third day, Antonius thinking the Parthians would no more follow him, and trusting therein, suffered the soldiers to march in disorder as every man listed. The Mardian perceiving that the dams of a river were newly broken up, which they should have passed over, and that the river had overflown the banks and drowned all the way they should have gone: he guessed straight that the Parthians had done it, and had thus broken it open, to stay the Romans for getting too far before them. Thereupon he bade AntoniusThe Parthians do set upon Antonius in h, return. look to himself, and told him that his enemies were not far from thence. Antonius having set his men in order, as he was placing of his archers and slingmen to resist the enemies, and to drive them back, they descried the Parthians that wheeled round about the army to compass them in on every side, and to break their ranks, and their light armed men gave charge upon them. So, after they had hurt many of the Romans with their arrows, and that they themselves were also hurt by them with their darts and plummets of lead: they, retired a little, and then came again and gave charge, until that the horsemen of the Gauls turned their horses and fiercely galloped towards them, that they dispersed them so, as all that day they gathered no more together. Thereby Antonius knew what to do, and did not only strengthen the rearward of his army, but both the flanks also, with darters and slingmen, and made his army march in a square battle: commanding the horsemen, that when the enemies should come to assail them, they should drive them back, but not follow them too far. Thus the Parthians four days after, seeing they did no more hurt to the Romans, than they also received of them, they were not so hot upon them as they were commanded, but excusing themselves by the winter that troubled them, they determined to return back again. The rift day, FlaviusThe bold act of Flavius Gallus. Gallus, a valiant man of his hands, that had charge in the army, came unto Antonius to pray him to let him have some moe of his light armed men than were already in the rearward, and some of the horsemen that were in the voward, hoping thereby to do some notable exploit. Antonius granting them unto him, when the enemies came according to their manner to set upon the tail of the army, and to skirmish with them, Flavius courageously made them retire, but not, as they were wont to do before, to retire and join presently with their army, for he over-roshly thrust in among them to fight it out at the sword. The Captains that had the leading of the rearward, seeing Havius stray too far from the army, they sent unto him to will him to retire, but he would not hearken to it. And it is reported also, that Titius himself the Treasurer took the ensigns, and did what he could to make the ensign bearers return back, reviling Flavius Gallus, because that through his folly and desperateness he caused many honest and valiant men to be both hurt and slain to no purpose. Gallus also fell out with him, and commanded his men to stay. Wherefore Titius returned again into the army, and Gallus still overthrowing and driving the enemies back whom he met in the voward, he was not ware that he was compassed in. Then seeing himself environed of all sides, he sent unto the army, that they should come and aid him: but there the Captains that led the legions (among the whichCanidius' fault, Antonius' Captain. Canidius, a man of great estimation about Antonius, made one) committed many faults. For, where they should have made head with the whole army upon the Parthians, they sent him aid by small companies: and when they were slain, they sent him others also. So that by their beastliness and lack of consideration they, had like to have made all the army fly, if Antonius himself had not come from the front of the battle with the third legion, the which came through the midst of them that fled, until they came to front of the enemies, and that they stayed them from chasing any further. Howbeit at this last conflict there were slain no lessFlavius Gallus slain. Antonius' care of them that were wounded. than three thousand men, and five thousand besides brought sore hurt into the camp, and amongst them also Flavius Gallus, whose body was shot through in four places, whereof he died. Antonius went to the tents to visit and comfort the sick and wounded, and for pity's sake he could not refrain from weeping: and they also, shewing him the best countenance they could, took him by the hand, and prayed him to go and be dressed, and not to trouble himself for them, most reverently calling him their Emperor and Captain: and that, for themselves, they were whole and safe, so that he had his health. For indeed, to say truly, there was not at that time any Emperor or Captain that had so great and puissant an army as his together, both for lusty youths and courage of the soldiers, as also for their patience to away with so great pains and trouble. Further more, the obedience and reverence they shewedThe love and reverence of the soldiers unto Antonius. unto their captain, with a marvellous carnest love and good will, was so great, and all were indifferently (as well great as small, the noble men as mean men, the Captains and soldiers) so earnestly bent to esteem Antonius good will and favour above their own life and safety, that in this point of martial discipline, the ancient Romans could not have done any more. But divers things were cause thereof, as we have toldThe rare and singular Rifts of Antonius. you before: Antonius' nobility and ancient house, his eloquence, his plain nature, his liberality and magnificence, and his familiarity to sport and to be merry in company: but specially the care he took at that time to help, visit, and lament those that were sick and wounded, seeing every man to have that which was meet for him: that was of such force and effect, as it made them that were sick and wounded to love him better, and were more desirous to do him service, than those that were whole and sound. This victory so encouraged the enemies (who otherwise were weary to follow Antonius any further) that all night long they kept the fields, and hovered about the Romans' camp, thinking that they would presently fly, and then that they should take the spoil of their camp. So the next morning, by break of day, there were gathered together a far greater number of the Parthians than they, were before. For the rumour was, that there were not much fewer than forty thousand horse, because their king sent thither even the very guard about his person, as unto a most certain and assured victory, that they might be partners of the spoil and booty they hoped to haveThe king of Parthm never came to fight in the field. had: for, as touching the king himself, he was never in any conflict or battle. Then Antonius, desirous to speak to his soldiers, called for a black gown, to appear the more pitiful to them: but his friends did dissuade him from it. Therefore he put on his coat armour, and being so apparelled made an oration to his army: in the which he highly commended them that had overcome and driven back their enemies, and greatly rebuked them that had cowardly turned their backs. So that those which had overcome prayed him to be of good cheer: the other also to clear themselves willingly offered to take the lots of Decimation if he thought good, or otherwise to receive what kind of punishment it should please him to lay upon them, so that he would forget any more to mislike, or to be offended with them. Antonius, seeing that, did lift up his hands to heaven, and made his prayer to the gods, that if in exchange of his former victories theyAntonius' charitable prayer to the goods for his army. would now send him some bitter adversity: then that all might light on himself alone, and that they would give the victory to the rest of his army. The next morning they gave better order on every side of the army, and so marched forward: so that when the Parthians thought to return again to assail them, they came far short of the reckoning. For where they thought to come not to fight but to spoil and make havoc of all, when they came near them, they were sore hurt with their slings and darts, and such other javelins as the Romans darted at them, and the Parthians found them as rough and desperate in fight, as if they had been fresh men they had dealt withal. Whereupon their hearts began again to fail them. But yet, when the Romans came to go down any steep hills or mountains, then they would set on them with their arrows, because the Romans could go down but fair and softly. But then again, the soldiers of the legionThe Romans' *testudo* and covering against shot. that carried great shields returned back, and enclosed them that were naked or light armed in the midst amongst them, and did kneel of one knee on the ground, and so set down their shields before them: and they, of the second rank also covered them of the first rank, and the third also covered the second, and so from rank to rank all were covered. Insomuch that this manner of covering and shading themselves with shields was devised after the fashion of laying tiles upon houses, and, to sight, was like the degrees of a Theatre, and is a most strong defence and bulwark against all arrows and shot that falleth upon it. When the Parthian, saw this countenance of the Roman soldiers of the legion, which kneeled on the ground in that sort upon one knee, supposing that they had been wearied with travail they laid down their bows, and took their spears and lances, and came to fight with them man for man. Then the Romans suddenly rose upon their feet, and with the darts that they threw from them they slew the foremost, and put the rest to flight, and so did they the next days that followed. But by means of these dangers and lets Antonius' army could win no way in a day, by reason whereof they suffered great famine: for they could have but little corn, and yet were they driven daily to right for it, and besides that, they had no instruments to grind it, to make bread of it. For the most part of them had been left behind, because the beasts that carried them were either dead, or else employed to carry them thatGreat famine in Antonius' army. were sore and wounded, For the famine was so extreme great, that the eight part of a bushel of wheat was sold for fifty Drachmas, and they sold barley bread by the weight of silver. In the end, they were compelled to live off herbs and roots, but they found few of them that men do commonly eat of, and were enforced to taste of them that were never eaten before: among the which there was one that killed them, and made them out of their wits. For he that had once eaten of it,A deadly herb incurable without wine his memory was gone from him, and he knew no manner of thing, but only busied himself in digging and hurling of stones from one place to another, as though it had been a matter of great weight and to be done with all possible speed. All the camp over, men were busily stooping to the ground, digging and carrying of stones from one place to another: but at the last they cast up a great deal of choler, and died suddenly, because they lacked wine, which was the only sovereign remedy to cure that disease. It is reported that Antonius seeing such a number of his men die daily, and that the Parthians left them not, neither would suffer them to be at rest: he oftentimes cried out sighing, and said: ‘O, ten thousand!’ He hadThe valiantness of ten thousand Grecians, whom Xenophon brought away after the overthrow of Cyrus. the valiantness of ten thousand Grecians in such admiration, whom Xenophon brought away after the overthrow of Cyrus: because they had come a farther journey from Babylon, and had also fought against much moe enemies many times told than themselves, and yet came home with safety. The Parthians therefore, seeing that they could not break the good order of the army of the Romans, and contrarily that they themselves were oftentimes put to flight, and wellfavouredly beaten, they fell again to their old crafty subtleties. For when they found any of the Romans scattered from the army to go forage, to seek some corn, or otherThe Parthians very subtile and crafty people. victuals, they would come to them as if they had been their friends, and showed them their bows unbent, saying that themselves also did return home to their country as they did, and that they would follow them no further, howbeit that they should yet have cer

- Here lies a wretched corse, of wretched soul bereft,

- Seek not my name: a plague consume you wicked wretches left.

It is reported that Timon himself when he lived made this epitaph: for that which is commonly rehearsed was not his but made by the Poet Callimachus:

- Here lie I Timon, who alive all living men did hate,

- Pass by, and curse thy fill: but pass, and stay not here thy gate.

Many other things could we tell you of this Timon, but, this little shall suffice at this present. But now to return to Antonius again. Canidius himself came to bring him news, that he had lost all his army by land at Actium. On th' other side he was advertised also, that Herodes king of* Jewry, who had also certain legions and bands with him, was revolted unto Caesar, and all the other kings in like manner: so that, saving those that were about him, he had none left him. All this notwithstanding did nothing trouble him, and it seemed that he was contented to forgoAntonius rioting in Alexandria after his great loss and over throw *Togavirilis* all his hope, and so to be rid of all his care and troubles. Thereupon he left his solitary house he had built in the sea which he called Timoneon, and Cleopatra received him into her royal palace. He was no sooner come thither, but he straight setAntyllus the eldest son of Antonius by his wife Fulvia. all the city of rioting and banqueting again, and himself to liberality and gifts. He caused the son of Julius Caesar and Cleopatra to be enrolled (according to the manner of the Romans) amongst the number of young men: and gave Antyllus, his eldest son he had by Fulvia, the man's gown, the which was a plain gown without guard or embroidery of purple. For these things there was kept great feasting, banqueting, and dancing in Alexandria many days together. Indeed they did break their first order they had set down,An ordered erected by Antonius and Cleopatra called Synapothancemenon revoking the former called Amimetobion. which they called Amimetobion (as much to say, no life comparable), and did set up another, which Synapothanumenon (signifying the order and agreement of those that will die together), the which in exceeding sumptuousness and cost was not inferior to the first. For their friends made themselves to be enrolled in this order of those that would die together, and so made great feasts one to another: for every, man, when it came to his turn, feasted their whole company and fraternity. Cleopatra in the meantime was very careful in gathering all sorts of poisons together to destroy men. Now, to make proof of those poisons which made men die with least pain, she tried it upon condemned men in prison. For,Cleopatra very busy in proving the force of poison. when she saw the poisons that were sudden and vehement, and brought speedy death with grievous torments, and, in contrary manner, that such as were more mild and gentle had not that quick speed and force to make one die suddenly: she afterwards went about to prove the stinging of snakes and adders, and made some to be applied unto men in her sight, some in one sort and some in another. So, when she had daily made divers and sundry proofs, she found none of all them she had proved so fit as the biting of an Aspic, the which only causeth a heaviness of the head, without swoundingThe property of the biting of an Aspic. or complaining, and bringeth a great desire also to sleep, with a little sweat in the face, and so by little and little taketh away the senses and vital powers, no living creature perceiving that the patients feel any pain. For they are so sorry when anybody waketh them, and taketh them up, as those that being taken out of a sound sleep are very heavy and desirous to sleep. This notwithstanding, Antonius and Cleopatra send Ambassadors unto Octavius Caesar. they sent Ambassadors unto Octavius Caesar in Asia, Cleopatra requesting the realm of Egypt for her children, and Antonius praying that he might be suffered to live at Athens like a private man, if Caesar would not let him remain in Egypt. And, because they had no other men of estimation about them, for that some were fled, and those that remained, they did not greatly trust them: they were enforced to send Euphronius the schoolmaster of their children. For Alexas Laodicean, who was brought into Antonius'house and favour by means of Timagenes, and afterwards was in greater credit with him than any other Grecian (for that he had alway been one of Cleopatra's ministers to win Antonius, and to overthrow all his good determinations to use his wife Octavia well) him Antonius had sent unto Herodes king of Jewry, hoping still to keep him his friend, that he should not revolt from him. But he remained there, and betrayed Antonius. For where he should have kept Herodes from revolting from him, he persuaded him to turn to Caesar: and trusting King Herodes, he presumed to come in Caesar's presence. Howbeit Herodes did him no pleasure: for he was presently taken prisoner, and sent in chains to his own country, and there by Caesar's commandment put to death. Thus was Alexas in Antonius' lifetime put toAlexas'th reason justly punished. death for betraying of him. Furthermore, Caesar would not grant unto Antonius' requests: but for Cleopatra, he made her answer, that he would deny her nothing reasonable, so that she would either put Antonius to death, or drive him out of her country. Therewithal he sent Thyreus one of his men unto her, a very wise and discreet man, who, bringing letters of credit from a young Lord unto a noble Lady, and that besides greatly liked her beauty, might easily by his eloquence have persuaded her. He was longer in talk with her than any man else was, and the Queen herself also did him great honour: insomuch as he made Antonius jealous of him. Whereupon Antonius caused him to be taken and wellfavouredly whipped, and so sent him unto Caesar: and bade him tell him that he made him angry with him, because he shewed himself proud and disdainful towards him, and now specially when he was easy to be angered, by reason of his present misery. ‘To bc short, if this mislike thee,’ said he, ‘thou hast Hipparchus one of my enfranchised bondmen with thee: hang him if thou wilt, whip him at thy pleasure, that we may cry quittance.’ From thenceforth Cleopatra, to clear herself of the suspicion he had of her, she made more of him than ever she did. For first of all, where she did solemnize the day of her birth very meanly and sparingly, fit for her present misfortune, she now in contrary manner did keep it with such solemnity, that she exceeded all measure of sumptuousness and magnificence: so that the guests that were bidden to the feasts, and came poor, went away rich. Now, things passing thus, Agrippa by divers letters sent one after another unto Caesar, prayed him to return to Rome, because the affairs there did of necessity require his person and presence. Thereupon he did defer the war till the next year following: but when winter was done, he returned again through Syria by the coast of Africk, to make wars against Antonius, and his other Captains. When the city of Pelusium wasPelusium was yielded up to Octavius Caesar. taken, there ran a rumour in the city, that Seleucus, by Cleopatra's consent, had surrendered the same. But to clear herself that she did not, Cleopatra brought Seleucus' wife and children unto Antonius, to be revenged of them at his pleasure. Furthermore, Cleopatra had long before made many sumptuous tombsCleopatra's monuments set up by the temple of Isis. and monuments, as well for excellency of workmanship as for height and greatness of building, joining hard to the temple of Isis. Thither she caused to be brought all the treasure and precious things she had of the ancient kings her predecessors: as gold, silver, emeralds, pearls, ebony, ivory, and cinnamon, and besides all that, a marvellous number of torches, faggots, and flax. So Octavius Caesar being afraid to lose such a treasure and mass of riches, and that this woman for spite would set it afire, and burn it every whit: he always sent some one or other unto her from him, to put her in good comfort, whilst he in the meantime drew near the city with his army. So Caesar came, and pitched his camp hard by the city, in the place where they run and manage their horses. Antonius made a sally upon him, and fought very valiantly, so that he drave Caesar's horsemen back, fighting with his men even into their camp. Then he came again to the palace, greatly boasting of this victory, and sweetly kissed Cleopatra, armed as he was when he came from the fight, recommending one of his men of arms unto her, that had valiantly fought in this skirmish. Cleopatra to reward his manliness gave him an armour and head-piece of clean gold: howbeit the man at arms, when he had received this rich gift, stale away by night, and went to Caesar. Antonius sent again to challenge Caesar to fight with him hand to hand. Caesar answered him, that he had many other ways to die than so. Then Antonius, seeing there was no way more honourable for him to die than fighting valiantly, he determined to set up his rest, both by sea and land. So, being at supper (as it is reported), he commanded his officers and household servants that waited on him at his board, that they should fill his cups full, and make as much of him as they could: ‘For,’ said he, ‘you know not whether you 'shall do so much for me tomorrow or not, or whether you 'shall serve another master: and it may be you shall see me ‘o more, but a dead body.’ This notwithstanding, perceiving that his friends and men fell a-weeping to hear him say so: to salve that he had spoken, he added this more unto it, that he would not lead them to battle, where he thought not rather safely to return with victory, than valiantly to die with honour. Furthermore, the self same night within little of midnight, when all the city was quiet, full of fear and sorrow, thinking what would be the issue and end of this war: it is said that suddenly they heard a marvellous sweet harmony of sundry sorts of instrumentsStrange noises heard, and nothing seen. of music, with the cry of a multitude of people, as they had been dancing, and had sung as they use in Bacchus’ feasts, with movings and turnings after the manner of the Satyrs: and it seemed that this dance went through the city unto the gate that opened to the enemies, and that all the troop that made this noise they heard went out of the city at that gate. Now, such as in reason sought the depth of the interpretation of this wonder, thought that it was the God unto whom Antonius bare singular devotion to counterfeit and resemble him, that did forsake them. The next morning by break of day, he went to set those few footmen he had in order upon the hills adjoining unto the city: and there he stood to behold his galleys which departed from the haven, and rowed against the galleys of his enemies, and so stood still, looking what exploit his soldiers in them would do. ButAntonius navy do yield themselves unto Caesar. when by force of rowing they were come near unto them, they first saluted Caesar's men, and then Caesar's men re-saluted them also, and of two armies made but one, and then did all togetherAntonius overthrown by Octavius Caesar. row toward the city. When Antonius saw that his men did forsake him, and yielded unto Caesar, and that his footmen were broken and overthrown:Cleopatra flieth into her tomb or monument. he then fled into the city, crying out that Cleopatra had betrayed him unto them, with whom he had made war for her sake. Then she, being afraid of his fury, fled into the tomb which she had caused to be made, and there locked the doors unto her, and shut all the springs of the locks with great bolts, and in the meantime sent unto Antonius to tell him that she was dead. Antonius, believing it, said unto himself: ‘What dost thou look for further, Antonius, sith spiteful fortune hath taken from thee the only joy thou hadst, for whom thou yet reservedst thy life?’ When he had said these words, he went into a chamber and unarmed himself, and being naked said thus: ‘O Cleopatra, it grieveth me not that I have lost thy company, for I will not be long from thee: but I am sorry that, having been so great a Captain and Emperor, I am indeed condemned to be judged of less courage and noble mind than a woman.’ Now he had a man of his called Eros, whom he loved and trusted much, and whom he had long before caused to swear unto him, that he should kill him when he did commandEros, antonius' servant, slew himself. him: and then he willed him to keep his promise. His man drawing his sword lift it up as though he had meant to have stricken his master: but turning his head at one side he thrust his sword into himself, and fell down dead at his master's foot. Antonius did thrust his sword into himself, but died not presently. Then said Antonius, ‘O noble Eros, I thank thee for this, and it is valiantly done of thee, to shew me what I should do to myself, which thou couldst not do for me.’ Therewithal he took his sword, and thrust it into his belly, and so fell down upon a little bed. The wound he had killed him not presently, for the blood stinted a little when he was laid: and when he came somewhat to himself again, he prayed them that were about him to despatch him. But they all fled out of the chamber, and left him crying out and tormenting himself: until at last there came a secretary unto him called Diomedes, who was commandedAntonius carried unto Cleopatra's tomb. to bring him into the tomb or monument where Cleopatra was. When he heard that she was alive, he very earnestly prayed his men to carry his body thither, and so he was carried in his men's arms into the entry of the monument. Notwithstanding, Cleopatra would not open the gates, but came to the high windows, and cast out certain chains and ropes, in the which Antonius was trussed: and Cleopatra her own self, with two women only, which she had suffered to come with her into these monuments, triced Antonius up. They that were present to behold it said they never saw soA lamentable sight to see Antonius and Cleopatra. pitiful a sight. For they plucked up poor Antonius all bloody as he was, and drawing on with pangs of death, who holding up his hands to Cleopatraraised up himself as well as he could. It was a hard thing for these women to do, to lift him up: but Cleopatra stooping down with her head, putting to all her strength to her uttermost power, did lift him up with much ado, and never let go her hold, with the help of the women beneath that bade her be of good courage, and were as sorry to see her labour so, as she herself. So when she had gotten him in after that sort, and laid him on a bed, she rent her garments upon him, clapping her breast, and scratching her face and stomach. Then she dried up his blood that had berayed his face, and called him her Lord, her husband, and Emperor, forgetting her own misery and calamity, for the pity and compassion she took of him. Antonius made her cease her lamenting, and called for wine, either because he was athirst, or else for that he thought thereby to hasten his death. When he had drunk, he earnestly prayed her, and persuaded her, that she would seek to save her life, if she could possible, without reproach and dishonour: and that chiefly she should trust Proculeius above any man else about Caesar. And, as for himself, that she should not lament nor sorrow for the miserable change of his fortune at the end of his days: but rather that she should think him the more fortunate for the former triumphs and honours he had received, considering that while he lived he was the noblest and greatest Prince of the world, and that now he was overcome not cowardly, but valiantly, a Roman by another Roman. As Antonius gave the last gasp, Proculeius came that was sent from Caesar. For after Antonius had thrust his sword in himself, as they carried him into the tombs and monuments of Cleopatra, one of his guard called DercetaeusThe death of

Antonius. took his sword with the which he had stricken himself, and hid it: then he secretly stale away, and brought Octavius Caesar the first news of his death, and shewed him his sword that was bloodied, Caesar hearing these news straight withdrew himself Octavius Caesar lamenteth Antonius' death. into a secret place of his tent, and there burst out with tears, lamenting his hard and mlserable fortune that had been his friend and brother-in- law, his equal in the Empire, and companion with him in sundry great exploits and battles. Then he called for all his friends, and shewed them the letters Antonius had written to him, and his answers also sent him again, during their quarrel and strife: and how fiercely and proudly the other answered him to all just and reasonable matters he wrote unto him. After this, he sent Proculeius,Proculeius sent by Octavius Caesar to bring Cleopatra alive. and commanded him to do what he could possible to to get Cleopatra alive, fearing lest otherwise all the treasure would be lost: and furthermore, he thought that if he could take Cleopatra, and bring her alive to Rome, she would marvellously beautify and set out his triumph. But Cleopatra would never put herself into Proculeius' hands, although they spake together. For Proculeius came to the gates that were very thick and strong, and surely barred, but yet there were some cranews through the which her voice might be heard, and so they without understood, that Cleopatra demanded the kingdom of Egypt for her sons: and that Proculeius answered her, that she should be of good cheer, and not be afraid to refer all unto Caesar. After he had viewed the place very well, he came and reported her answer unto Caesar. Who immediately sent Gallus to speak once again with her, and bade him purposely hold her with talk, whilst Proculeius did set up a ladder against that high window by the which Antonius was triced up, and came down into the monument with two of his men, hard by the gate where Cleopatra stood to hear what Gallus said unto her. One of her women which was shut in her monuments with her saw Proculeius by chance as he came down, and shrieked out: ‘O poor Cleopatra, thou art taken.’ Then, when she saw Proculeius behind her as she came from the gate, she thought to have stabbed herself in with a short dagger she ware of purpose by her side. But Proculeius came suddenly upon her, and taking her by both theCleopatra taken. hands said unto her: ‘Cleopatra, first thou shalt do thyself great wrong, and secondly unto Caesar, to deprive him of the occasion and opportunity openly to shew his bounty and mercy, and to give his enemies cause to accuse the most courteous and noble Prince that ever was, and to appeach him, as though he were a cruel and merciless man that were not to be trusted.’ So even as he spake the word, he took her dagger from her, and shook her clothes for fear of any poison hidden about her. Afterwards Caesar sent one of his enfranchised men called Epaphroditus, whom he straightly charged to look well unto her, and to beware in any case that she made not herself away: and, for the rest, to use her with all the courtesy possible. And for himself, he in theCaesar took the city of Alexandria. Caesar greatly honoured Arnus the Philosopher. meantime entered the city of Alexandria, and as he went, talked with the Philosopher Arrius, and held him by the hand, to the end that his countrymen should reverence him the more, because they saw Caesar so highly esteem and honour him. Then he went into the show place of exercises, and so up to his chair of state which was prepared for him of a great height: and there, according to his commandment, all the people of Alexandria were assembled, who, quaking for fear, fell down on their knees before him, and craved mercy. Caesar bade them all stand up, and told them openly that he forgave the people, and pardoned the felonies and offences they had committed against him in this war: First, for the founder's sake of the same city, which was Alexander the Great: secondly, for the beauty of the city, which he much esteemed and wondered at: thirdly, for the love he bare unto his very friend Arrius. Thus did Caesar honour Arrius, who craved pardon for himself and many others, and specially forPhilostratus, the eloquentest Orator in his time for present speech upon a sudden. Philostratus, the eloquentest man of all the so-phisters and Orators of his time for present and sudden speech: howbeit he falsely named himself an Academic Philosopher. Therefore Caesar, that hated his nature and conditions, would not hear his suit. Thereupon he let his grey beard grow long, and followed Arrius step by step in a long mourning gown, still buzzing in his ears this Greek verse:

- A wise man if that he be wise indeed,

- May by a wise man have the better speed.

Caesar understanding this, not for the desire he had to deliver Philostratus of his fear, as to rid Arrius of malice and envy that might have fallen out against him, he pardoned him. Now, touching Antonius' sons, Antyllus hisAntyllus, Antonius eldest son by Fulvia slain. eldest son by Fulvia was slain, because his schoolmaster Theodorus did betray him unto the soldiers, who strake off his head. And the villain took a precious stone of great value from his neck, the which he did sew in his girdle, and afterwards denied that he had it: but it was found about him, and so Caesar trussed him up for it. For Cleopatra's children, they were very honourably kept, with their governors and train that waited on them. But for Caesarion, who was said to be Julius Caesar's son, his mother Cleopatra had sent him unto the Indians through Ethiopia, with a great sum of money. But one of his governors also called Rhodon, even such another as

Theodorus, persuaded him to return into his country, and told him that Caesar sent for him to give him his mother's kingdom. So, as Caesar was determining with himself what he should do, Arrius said unto him:The saying of Arnus the Philosopher.

‘Too many Caesars is not good,’

alluding unto a certain verse of Homer that saith:

Too many Lords doth not well.

Therefore Caesar did put Caesarion to death, afterCaesarion, Cleopatra's son, put to death. the death of his mother Cleopatra. Many Princes, great kings, and Captains did crave Antonius' body of Octavius Caesar, to give him honourable burial:Cleopatra burieth Antonius. but Caesar would never take it from Cleopatra, who did sumptuously and royally bury him with her own hands, whom Caesar suffered to take as much as she would to bestow upon his funerals. Now was she altogether overcome with sorrow and passion of mind, for she had knocked her breast so pitifully, that she had martyred it, and in divers places had raised ulcers and inflammations, so that she fell into a fever withal: whereof she was very glad, hoping thereby to have good colour to abstainOlympus, Cleopatra's Physician. from meat, and that so she might have died easily without any trouble. She had a Physician called Olympus, whom she made privy of her intent, to th' end he should help her to rid her out of her life: as Olympus writeth himself, who wrote a book of all these things. But Caesar mistrusted the matter, by many conjectures he had, and therefore did put her in fear, and threatened her to put her children to shameful death. With these threats Cleopatra for fear yielded straight, as she would have yielded unto strokes, and afterwards suffered herself to be cured and dieted as they listed. Shortly after, Caesar came himself in person to see her and to comfort her. CleopatraCaesar came to see Cleopatra. being laid upon a little low bed in poor estate, when she saw Caesar come into her chamber, she suddenly rose up, naked in her smock, and fell down at his feet marvellously disfigured: both for that she had plucked her hair from her head, as also for that she had martyredCleopatra a martyred creature through her own passion and fury. all her face with her nails, and besides, her voice was small and trembling, her eyes sunk into her head with continual blubbering: and moreover they might see the most part of her stomach torn in sunder. To be short, her body was not much better than her mind: yet her good grace and comeliness and the force of her beauty was not altogether defaced. But notwithstanding this ugly and pitiful state of hers, yet she showed herself within by her outward looks and countenance. When Caesar had made her lie down again, and sate by her bed's side, Cleopatra began to clear and excuse herself for that she had done, laying all to the fear she had of Antonius: Caesar, in contrary manner, reproved her in every point. Then she suddenly altered her speech, and prayed him to pardon her, as though she were afraid to die, and desirous to live. At length, she gave him a brief and memorial of all the ready money and treasure she had. But by chance there stood Seleucus by, one of herSeleucus one of Cleopatra's Treasurers. Treasurers, who to seem a good servant, came straight to Caesar to disprove Cleopatra, that she had not set in all, but kept many things back of purpose. Cleopatra was in such a rage with him, that she flew upon him, and took him by the hair of the head, and boxed him wellfavouredly. Caesar fell a-laughing,Cleopatra beat her treasurer before Octavius Caesar. and parted the fray. ‘Alas,’ said she, ‘O Caesar, is not this a great shame and reproach, that thou having vouchsafed to take the pains to come unto me, and hast done me this honour, poor wretch and caitiff creature, brought into this pitiful and miserableCleopatra's words unto Caesar. estate, and that mine own servants should come now to accuse me: though it may be I have reserved some jewels and trifles meet for women, but not for me (poor soul) to set out myself withal, but meaning to give some pretty presents and gifts unto Octavia and Livia, that they, making means and intercession for me to thee, thou mightest yet extend thy favour and mercy upon me?’ Caesar was glad to hear her say so, persuading himself thereby that she had yet a desire to save her life. So he made her answer, that he did not only give her that to dispose of at her pleasure which she had kept back, but further promised to use her more honourably and bountifully than she would think for: and so he took his leave of her, supposing he had deceived her, but indeed he was deceived himself. There was a young gentlemanCleopatra finely deceiveth Octavius Caesar, as though she desired to live. Cornelius Dolabella, that was one of Caesar's very great familiars, and besides did bear no evil will unto Cleopatra. He sent her word secretly as she had requested him, that Caesar determined to take his journey through Syria, and that within three days he would send heraway before with her children. When this was told Cleopatra, she requested Caesar that it would please him to suffer her to offer the last oblations of the dead unto the soul of Antonius. This being granted her, she was carried to the place where his tomb was, and there falling down on her knees, embracing the tomb with her women, the tears running down her cheeks, she began to speak in this sort: ‘O my dear Lord Antonius,Cleopatra's lamentation over Antonius' tomb. not long sithence I buried thee here, being a freewoman: and now I offer unto thee the funeral sprinklings and oblations, being a captive and prisoner, and yet I am forbidden and kept from tearing and murdering this captive body of mine with blows, which they carefully guard and keep, only to triumph of thee: look therefore henceforth for no other honours, offerings, nor sacrifices from me, for these are the last which Cleopatra can give thee, sith now they carry her away. Whilst we lived together, nothing could sever our companies: but now at our death I fear me they will make us change our countries. For as thou, being a Roman, hast been buried in Egypt: even so wretched creature I, an Egyptian, shall be buried in Italy, which shall be all the good that I have received by thy country. If therefore the gods where thou art now have any power and authority, sith our gods here have forsaken us, suffer not thy true friend and lover to be carried away alive, that in me they triumph of thee: but receive me with thee, and let me be buried in one self tomb with thee. For though my griefs and miseries be infinite, yet none hath grieved me more, nor that I could less bear withal, than this small time which I have been driven to live alone without thee.' Then, having ended these doleful plaints, and crowned the tomb with garlands and sundry nosegays, and marvellous lovingly embraced the same, she commanded they should prepare her bath, and when she had bathed and washed herself she fell to her meat, and was sumptuously served. Now whilst she was at dinner, there came a countryman, and brought her a basket. The soldiers that warded at the gates asked him straight what he had in his basket. He opened the basket, and took out the leaves that covered the figs, and shewed them that they were figs he brought. They all of them marvelled to see so goodly figs. The countryman laughed to hear them, and bade them take some if they would. They believed he told them truly, and so bade him carry them in. After Cleopatra had dined, she sent a certain table written and sealed unto Caesar, and commanded them all to go out of the tombs where she was, but the two women: then she shut the doors to her. Caesar, when he received this table, and began to read her lamentation and petition, requesting him that he would let her be buried with Antonius, found straight what she meant, and thought to have gone thither himself: howbeit he sent one before in all haste that might be, to see what it was. Her death was very sudden.The death of Cleopatra. For those whom Caesar sent unto her ran thither in all haste possible, and found the soldiers standing at the gate, mistrusting nothing, nor understanding of her death. But when they had opened the doors, they found Cleopatra stark dead, laid upon a bed of gold, attired and arrayed in her royal robes, and one of herCleopatra's two waiting women dead with her. two women, which was called Iras, dead at her feet: and her other woman called Charmion half dead, and trembling, trimming the Diadem which Cleopatra ware upon her head. One of the soldiers, seeing her, angrily said unto her: 'Is that well done, Charmion?'

‘Very well,’ said she again, ‘and meet for a Princess descended from the race of so many noble kings.’ She said no more, but fell down dead hard by the bed. Some report that this Aspic was brought unto her in the basket with figs, and that she had commanded them to hide it under the fig-leaves, that when she should think to take out the figs, the Aspic should bite her before she should see her: howbeit that, when she would have taken away the leaves for the figs, she perceived it, and said, ‘Art thou here then?’ And so, her arm being naked, she putCleopatra killed with the biting of an Aspic. it to the Aspic to be bitten. Other say again, she kept it in a box, and that she did prick and thrust it with a spindle of gold, so that the Aspic being angered withal, leapt out with great fury, and bit her in the arm. Howbeit few can tell the troth. For they report also that she had hidden poison in a hollow razor which she carried in the hair of her head: and yet was there no mark seen of her body, or any sign discerned that she was poisoned, neither also did they find this serpent in her tomb. But it was reported only, that there were seenThe image of Cleopatra carried in triumph at Rome with an Aspic biting of her arm. certain fresh steps or tracks where it had gone, on the tomb side toward the sea, and specially by the door's side. Some say also, that they found two little pretty bitings in her arm, scant to be discerned, the which it seemeth Caesar himself gave credit unto, because in his triumph he carried Cleopatra's image, with an Aspic biting of her arm. And thus goeth the report of her death. Now Caesar, though he was marvellous sorry for the death of Cleopatra, yet he wondered at her noble mind and courage, and therefore commanded she should be nobly buried, and laid by Antonius: and willed also that her two women should have honourable burial. Cleopatra died being eight-and-thirty year old, after she hadThe age of Cleopatra and Antonius. reigned two-and-twenty years, and governed above fourteen of them with Antonius. And for Antonius, some say that he lived three-and-fifty years: and others say, six-and-fifty. All his statues, images and metals were plucked down and overthrown, saving those of Cleopatra which stood still in their places, by means of Archibius one of her friends, who gave Caesar a thousand talents that they should not be handled as those of Antonius were. Antonius left seven children by three wives, of the which Caesar did put Antyllus, the eldest son he had by Fulvia, to death. Octavia his wife took all the rest, and brought them up with hers, and married Cleopatra, Antonius' daughter, unto Juba, a marvellous courteous and goodlyOf Antonius' issue came Emperors. Prince. And Antonius, the son of Fulvia, came to be so great, that next unto Agrippa, who was in greatest estimation about Caesar, and next unto the children of Livia, which were the second in estimation, he had the third place. Furthermore, Octavia having had two daughters by her first husband Marcellus, and a son also called Marcellus, Caesar married his daughter unto that Marcellus, and so did adopt him for his son. And Octavia also married one of her daughters unto Agrippa. But when Marcellus was dead, after he had been married a while, Octavia perceiving that her brother Caesar was very busy to choose some one among his friends, whom he trusted best to make his son-in-law: she persuaded him that Agrippa should marry his daughter (Marcellus' widow) and leave her own daughter. Caesar first was contented withal, and then Agrippa: and so she afterwards took away her daughter and married her unto Antonius, and Agrippa married Julia, Caesar's daughter. Now there remained two daughters more of Octavia and Antonius. Domitius ænobarbus married the one: and the other, which was Antonia, so fair and virtuous a young Lady, was married unto Drusus, the son of Livla, and son-in-law of Caesar. Of this marriage came Germanicus and Claudius: of the which, Claudius afterwards came to be Emperor. And of the sons of Germanicus, the one whose name was Caius came also to be Emperor: who, after he had licentiously reigned a time, was slain, with his wife and daughter. Agrippina also, having a son by her first husband ænobarbus called Lucius Domitius, was afterwards married unto Claudius, who adopted her son, and called him Nero Germanicus. This Nero was Emperor in our time, and slew his own mother, and had almost destroyed the Empire of Rome, through his madness and wicked life, being the fift Emperor of Rome after Antonius.

CORIOLANUS – Thomas North's translation of Plutarch's *Lives*

Shakespeare's primary source for *Coriolanus* was taken from Plutarch's *Lives* , which was translated by Thomas North in 1579. The extract below provides the life of Coriolanus by North.

T he house of the Martians at Rome was of the number of the Patricians, out of the which have sprung many noble personages, whereof Ancus Martius was one, King Numa's daughter's son, who was King of Rome after Tullus Hostilius.

Publius and Quintius Martius brought the water by conduits to Rome.

Of the same house were Publius and Quintus, who brought to Rome their best water they had, by conduits. Censorinus also came of that family, that was so surnamed, because the people had chosen him Censor twice.

Censorinus' law.

Through whose persuasion they made a law, that no man from thenceforth might require or enjoy the Censorship twice. Caius Martius, whose life we intend now to write, being left an orphan by his father, was brought up under his mother a widow; who taught us by experience, that orphanage bringeth many discommodities to a child, but doth not hinder him to become an honest man, and to excel in virtue above the common sort: as they that are meanly born wrongfully do complain, that it is the occasion of their casting away, for that no man in their youth taketh any care of them to see them well brought up, and taught that were meet . This man also is a good proof to confirm some men's opinions: That a rare and excellent wit, untaught, cloth bring forth many good and evil things together: as a fat soil that lieth unmanured bringeth forth both herbs and weeds. For this Martius' natural wit and great heart did marvellously stir up his courage to do and attempt notable acts. But on the other side, for lack of education, he was so choleric and impatient, that he would yield to no living creature: which made him churlish, uncivil, and altogether unfit for any man's conversation . Yet men marvelling much at his constancy, that he was never overcome with pleasure nor money, and how he would endure easily all manner of pains and travails : thereupon they well liked and commended his stoutness and temperancy But for all that they could not be acquainted with him, as one citizen useth to be with another in the city: his behaviour was so unpleasant to them by reason of a certain insolent and stern manner he had, which, because he was too lordly, was disliked.

The benefit of learning.

And to say truly, the greatest benefit that learning bringeth unto men is this: that it teacheth men that be rude and rough of nature, by compass and rule of reason, to be civil and courteous, and to like better the mean state than the higher. Now in those days, valiantness was honoured in Rome above all other virtues. which they call virtus, by the name of virtue itself, as including in that general name all other special virtues besides.

What this word Virtus signifieth.

So that virtus in the Latin was as much as valiantness.

But Martius being more inclined to the wars than any other gentleman of his time, began from his childhood to give himself to handle weapons, and daily did exercise himself therein: and he esteemed outward armour to no purpose, unless one were naturally armed within. Moreover he did so exercise his body to hardness and all kind of activity, that he was very swift in running, strong in wrestling' and mighty in griping , so that no man could ever cast him. insomuch as those that would try masteries with him for strength and nimbleness, would say when they were overcome: that all was by reason of his natural strength and hardness of ward , that never yielded to any pain or toil he took upon him.

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Coriolanus' first going to wars.

The first time he went to the wars, being but a stripling, was when Tarquin surnamed the proud (that had been king of Rome, and was driven out for his pride, after many attempts made by sundry battles to come in again, wherein he was ever overcome) did come to Rome with all the aid of the Latins, and many other people of Italy: even as it were to set up his whole rest upon a battle by them, who with a great and mighty army had undertaken to put him into his kingdom again, not so much to pleasure him, as to overthrow the power of the Romans, whose greatness they both feared and envied. In this battle, wherein were many hot and sharp encounters of either party , Martius valiantly fought in the sight of the Dictator: and a Roman soldier being thrown to the ground even hard by him, Martius straight bestrid him, and slew the enemy, with his own hands, that had before overthrown the Roman.

Coriolanus crowned with a garland of oaken boughs.

Hereupon, after the battle was won, the Dictator did not forget so noble an act, and therefore first of all he crowned Martius with a garland of oaken boughs. For whosoever saveth the life of a Roman, it is a manner among them, to honour him with such a garland. This was, either because the law did this honour to the oak, in favour of the Arcadians, who by the oracle of Apollo were in old time called eaters of acorns: or else because the soldiers might easily in every place come by oaken boughs: or lastly, because they thought it very necessary, to give him that had saved a citizen's life, a crown of this tree to honour him, being properly dedicated unto Jupiter, the patron and protector of cities, and thought amongst other wild trees to bring forth a profitable fruit, and of plants to be the strongest.

The goodness of the oak.

Moreover, men at the first beginning did use acorns for their bread, and honey for their drink: and further, the oak did feed their beasts, and give them birds, by taking glue from the oaks, with the which they made bird-lime to catch silly birds. They say that Castor and Pollux appeared in this battle, and that incontinently after the battle, men saw them in the marketplace at Rome, all their horses being on a white foam: and they were the first that brought news of the victory, even in the same place where remaineth at this present a temple built in the honour of them, near unto the fountain. And this is the cause why the day of this victory (which was the fifteenth of July) is consecrated yet to this day unto Castor and Pollux.

Too sudden honour in youth killeth further desire of fame.

Moreover it is daily seen, that honour and reputation lighting on young men before their time, and before they have any great courage by nature, the desire to win more dieth straight in them, which easily happeneth, the same having no deep root in them before. Where contrariwise, the first honour that valiant minds do come unto, cloth quicken up their appetite, hasting them forward as with force of wind, to enterprise things of high-deserving praise. For they esteem not to receive reward for service done, but rather take it for a remembrance and encouragement, to make them do better in time to come: and be ashamed also to cast their honour. at their heels, not seeking to increase it still by like desert of worthy valiant deeds.

Coriolanus' noble endeavor to continue well deserving.

This desire being bred in Martius, he strained still to pass himself in manliness: and being desirous to shew a daily increase of his valiantness, his noble service did still advance his fame, bringing in spoils upon spoils from the enemies. Whereupon, the captains that came afterwards (for envy of them that went before) did contend who should most honour him, and who should bear most honourable testimony of his valiantness. Insomuch as the Romans having many wars and battles in those days, Coriolanus was at them all: and there was not a battle fought, from whence he returned not with some reward of honour. And as for other , the only respect that made them valiant, was that they hoped to have honour: but touching Martius, the only thing that made him to love honour was the joy he saw his mother did take of him. For he thought nothing made him so happy and honourable, as that his mother might hear every body praise and commend him, that she might always see him return with a crown upon his head, and that she might still embrace him with tears running down her cheeks for joy: which desire they say Epaminondas did avow and confess to have been in him, as to think himself a most happy and blessed man, that his father and mother in their life time had seen the victory he wan in the plain of Leuctres.

Coriolanus and Epaminondas did both place their desire for honour alike.

Now as for Epaminondas, he had this good hap, to have his father and mother living, to be partakers of his joy and prosperity: but Martius thinking all due to his mother, that had been also due to his father if he had lived, did not only content himself to rejoice and honour her, but at her desire took a wife also, by whom he had two children, and yet never left his mother's house therefore .

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The obedience of Coriolanus to his mother.

Now he being grown to great credit and authority in Rome for his valiantness, it fortuned there grew sedition in the city, because the Senate did favour the rich against the people, who did complain of the sore oppression of usurers, of whom they borrowed money.

Extremity of usary complained of at Rome by the people.

For those that had little, were yet spoiled of that little they had by their creditors, for lack of ability to pay the usury: who offered their goods to be sold to them that would give most. And such as had nothing left, their bodies were laid hold on, and they were made their bondmen, notwithstanding all the wounds and cuts they shewed, which they had received in many battles, fighting for defence of their country and commonwealth: of the which, the last war they made was against the Sabines, wherein they fought upon the promise the rich men had made them, that from thenceforth they would intreat them more gently, and also upon the word of Marcus Valerius chief of the Senate, who, by authority of the council, and in the behalf of the rich, said they should perform that they had promised. But after that they had faithfully served in this last battle of all, where they overcame their enemies, seeing they were never a whit the better, nor more gently intreated, and that the Senate would give no ear to them, but made as though they had forgotten the former promise, and suffered them to be made slaves and bondmen to their creditors, and besides, to be turned out of all that ever they had: they fell then even to flat rebellion and mutiny, and to stir up dangerous tumults within the city. The Romans' enemies hearing of this rebellion, did straight enter the territories of Rome with a marvellous great power , spoiling and burning all as they came. Whereupon the Senate immediately made open proclamation by sound of trumpet, that all those that were of lawful age to carry weapon, should come and enter their names into the muster-master's book, to go to the wars: but no man obeyed their commandment. Whereupon their chief magistrates and many of the Senate began to be of divers opinions among themselves. For some thought it was reason , they should somewhat yield to the poor people's request, and that they should a little qualify the severity of the law. Other held hard against that opinion, and that was Martius for one.

Martius Coriolanus against the people.

For he alleged, that the creditors' losing their money they had lent was not the worst thing that was herein: but that the lenity that was favoured was a beginning of disobedience, and that the proud attempt of the communally was, to abolish law, and to bring all to confusion. Therefore he said, if the Senate were wise, they should betimes prevent and quench this ill-favoured and worse meant beginning.

The Senate met many days in consultation about it: but in the end they concluded nothing.

The people leave the city and do go to the Holy Hill.

The poor common people, seeing no redress, gathered themselves one day together; and one encouraging another, they all forsook the city, and encamped themselves upon a hill, called at that day the Holy Hill, along the river of Tiber, offering no creature any hurt or violence, or making any shew of actual rebellion, saving that they cried as they went up and down, that the rich men had driven them out of the city, and that throughout all Italy they might find air, water, and ground to bury them in. Moreover, they said, to dwell at Rome was nothing else but to be slain, or hurt with continual wars and fighting, for defence of the rich men's goods. . The Senate, being afraid of their departure, did send unto them certain of the pleasantest old men, and the most acceptable to the people among them. Of those Menenius Agrippa was he, who was sent for chief man of the message from the Senate. He, after many good persuasions and gentle requests made to the people, on the behalf of the Senate, knit up his oration in the end with a notable tale, in this manner:

An excellent tale told by Menenius Agrippa to pacify the people.

That "on a time all the members of man's body did rebel against the belly, complaining of it, that it only remained in the midst of the body without doing any thing, neither did bear any labour to the maintenance of the rest: whereas all other parts and members did labour painfully , and were very careful , to satisfy the appetites and desires of the body. And so the belly, all this notwithstanding, laughed at their folly, and said: It is true, I first receive all meats that nourish man's body: but afterwards I send it again to the nourishment of other parts of the same. Even so (quoth he) O you, my masters, and citizens of Rome, the reason is alike between the Senate and you. For matters being well digested, and their counsels throughly examined, touching the benefit of the commonwealth, the Senators are cause of the common commodity that cometh unto every one of you."

The first beginning of Tribuni plebis.

These persuasions pacified the people conditionally, that the Senate would grant there should be yearly chosen five Magistrates, which they now call Tribuni plebis, whose office should be to defend the poor people from violence and oppression. So Junius Brutus and Sicinius Vellutus were the first tribunes of the people that were chosen, who had only been the causers and procurers of this sedition. Hereupon, the city being grown again to good quiet and unity, the people immediately went to the wars, strewing that they had a good will to do better than ever they did, and to be very willing to obey the Magistrates in that they would command concerning the wars. . Martius also, though it liked him nothing to see the greatness of the people thus increased, considering it was to the prejudice and imbasing of the Nobility, and also saw that other noble Patricians were troubled as well as himself: he did persuade the Patricians, to shew themselves no less forward and willing to fight for their country than the common people were: and to let them know by their deeds and acts, that they did not so much pass the people in power and riches, as they did exceed them in true nobility and valiantness.

The city of Corioles beseiged by Consul Cominius.

In the country of the Volsces, against whom the Romans made war at that time, there was a principal city and of most fame, that was called Corioles, before the which the Consul Cominius did lay siege. Wherefore all the other Volsces, fearing lest that city should be taken by assault, they came from all parts of the country to save it, intending to give the Romans battle before the city, and to give an onset on them in two several places. The Consul Cominius understanding this, divided his army also into two parts; and taking the one part with himself, he marched towards them that were drawing to the city out of the country:

Titus Latius, a valiant Roman.

and the other part of his army he left in the camp with Titus Latius (one of the valiantest men the Romans had at that time) to resist those that would make any sally out of the city upon them. So the Coriolanus, making small account of them that lay in camp before the city, made a sally out upon them, in the which at the first the Coriolans had the better, and drave the Romans back again into the trenches of their camp. But Martius being there at that time, running out of the camp with a few men with him, he slew the first enemies he met withal, and made the rest of them stay upon the sudden, crying out to the Romans that had turned their backs, and calling them again to fight with a loud voice.

The property of a soldier.

For he was even such another, as Cato would have a soldier and a captain to be, not only terrible and fierce to lay about him, but to make the enemy afeard with the sound of his voice, and grimness of his countenance. Then there flocked about him immediately a great number of Romans: whereat the enemies were so afeard , that they gave back presently . But Martius, not staying so, did chase and follow them to their own gates, that fled for life. And there perceiving that the Romans retired back, for the great number of darts and arrows which flew about their ears from the walls of the city, and that there was not one man amongst them that durst venture himself to follow the flying enemies into their city, for that it was full of men of war very well armed and appointed, he did encourage his fellows with words and deeds, crying out to them, "that fortune had opened the gates of the city, more for the followers than the fliers." But all this notwithstanding, few had the hearts to follow him. Howbeit Martius, being in the throng amongst the enemies, thrust himself into the gates of the city, and entered the same among them that fled, without that any one of them durst at the first turn their face upon him, or offer to stay him. But he, looking about him, and seeing he was entered the city with very few men to help him, and perceiving he was environed by his enemies that gathered round about to set upon him, did things, as it is written, wonderful and incredible, as well for the force of his hand, as also for the agility of his body; and with a wonderful courage and valiantness he made a lane through the midst of them, and overthrew also those he laid at : that some he made run to the furthest part of the city, and other for fear he made yield themselves, and to let fall their weapons before him. By this means Martius, that was gotten out, had some leisure to bring the Romans with more safety into the city.

The city of Corioles taken.

The city being taken in this sort, the most part of the soldiers began incontinently to spoil, to carry away, and to look up the booty they had won. But Martius was marvellous angry with them, and cried out on them, that it was no time now to look after spoil, and to run straggling here and there to enrich themselves, whilst the other Consul and their fellow-citizens peradventure were fighting with their enemies: and how that, leaving the spoil, they should seek to wind themselves out of danger and peril. Howbeit, cry and say to them what he could, very few of them would hearken to him. Wherefore taking those that willingly offered themselves to follow him, he went out of the city, and took his way toward that part where he understood the rest of the army was, exhorting and intreating them by the way that followed him, not to be fainthearted; and oft holding up his hands to heaven, he besought the gods to be gracious and favourable unto him, that he might come in time to the battle, and in a good hour to hazard his life in defence of his countrymen.

Soldiers' testaments.

Now the Romans when they were put in battle ray , and ready to take their targets on their arms, and to gird them upon their arming-coats , had a custom to make their wills at that very instant, without any manner of writing, naming him only whom they would make their heir in the presence of three or four witnesses. Martius came just to that reckoning, whilst the soldiers were doing after that sort, and that the enemies were approached so near, as one stood in view of the other. When they saw him at his first coming all bloody, and in a sweat, and but with a few men following him, some thereupon began to be afeard . But soon after, when they saw him run with a lively cheer to the Consul, and to take him by the hand, declaring how he had taken the city of Corioles, and that they saw the Consul Cominius also kiss and imbrace him, then there was not a man but took heart again to him, and began to be of good courage; some hearing him report, from point to point, the happy success of this exploit, and other also conjecturing it by seeing their gestures afar off. Then they all began to call upon the Consul to march forward, and to delay no longer, but to give charge upon the enemy. Martius asked him how the order of their enemy's battle was, and on which side they had placed their best fighting men. The Consul made him answer, that he thought the bands which were in the vaward of their battle were those of the Antiates, whom they esteemed to be the warlikest men, and which, for valiant courage, would give no place to any of the host of their enemies.

Then prayed Martius to be set directly against them. The Consul granted him, greatly praising his courage.

By Coriolanus' means, the Volsci were overcome in battle.

Then Martius, when both armies came almost to join, advanced himself a good space before his company, and went so fiercely to give charge on the vaward that came right against him, that they could stand no longer in his hands: he made such a lane through them, and opened a passage into the battle of the enemies. But the two wings of either side turned one to the other, to compass him in between them: which the Consul Cominius perceiving, he sent thither straight of the best soldiers he had about him. So the battle was marvellous bloody about Martius, and in a very short space many were slain in the place. But in the end the Romans were so strong, that they distressed the enemies, and brake their array: and scattering them, made them fly. Then they prayed Martius that he would retire to the camp, because they saw he was able to do no more, he was already so wearied with the great pain he had taken and so faint with the great wounds he had upon him. But Martius answered them, that it was not for conquerors to yield, nor to be fainthearted: and thereupon began afresh to chase those that fled, until such time as the army of the enemies was utterly overthrown, and numbers of them slain and taken prisoners

. The next morning betimes, Martius went to the Consul, and the other Romans with him. There the Consul Cominius going up to his chair of state, in the presence of the whole army, gave thanks to the gods for so great, glorious, and prosperous a victory: then he spake to Martius, whose valiantness he commended beyond the moon, both for that he himself saw him do with his eyes, as also for that Martius had reported unto him.

The tenth part of the enemies' goods offered Martius for reward of his service by Cominius the Consul.

So in the end he willed willed Martius, that he should choose out of all the horses they had taken of their enemies, and of all their goods they had won (whereof there was great store) ten of every sort which he liked best, before any distribution should be made to other.

Valiancy rewarded with honour in the field.

Besides this great honourable offer he had made him, he gave him, in testimony testimony that he had won that day the price of prowess above all other, a goodly horse with a caparison , and all furniture to him: which the whole army beholding, did marvellously praise and commend.

Martius' noble answer and refusal.

But Martius, stepping forth, told the Consul he most thankfully accepted the gift of his horse, and was a glad man besides, that his service had deserved his general's commendation: and as for his other offer, which was rather a mercenary reward than a honourable recompence, he would have none of it, but was contented to have his equal part with the other soldiers. " Only, this grace (said he) I crave and beseech you to grant me. Among the Volsces there is an old friend and host of mine, an honest wealthy man, and now a prisoner; who, living before in great wealth in his own country, liveth now a poor prisoner, in the hands of his enemies: and yet notwithstanding all this his misery and misfortune, it would do me great pleasure if I could save him from this one danger, to keep him from being sold as a slave." The soldiers hearing Martius' words, made a marvellous great shout among them, and there were more that wondered at his great contentation and abstinence, when they saw so little covetousness in him, than they were that highly praised and extolled his valiantness. For even they themselves that did somewhat malice and envy his glory, to see him thus honoured and passingly praised, did think him so much the more worthy of an honourable recompence for his valiant service, as the more carelessly he refused the great offer made unto him for his profit; and they esteemed more the virtue that was in him, that made him refuse such rewards, than that which made them to be offered to him, as unto a worthy person. For it is far more commendable, to use riches well, than to be valiant: and yet it is better not to desire them than to use them welt

. After this shout and noise of the assembly was somewhat appeased, the Consul Cominius began to speak in this sort: "we cannot compel Martius to take these gifts we offer him if he will not receive them, but we will give him such a reward for the noble service he hath done, as he cannot refuse.

Martius surnamed Coriolanus by the Consul.

Therefore we do order and decree, that henceforth he be called Coriolanus, unless his valiant acts have won him that name before our nomination." And so ever since, he still bare the third name of Coriolanus.

How the Romans came to have three names.

And thereby it appeareth, that the first name the Romans have, as Caius, was as our Christian name now. The second, as Martius, was the name of the house and family they came of. The third was some addition given, either for some act or notable service, or for some mark on their face, or of some shape of their body, or else for some special virtue they had. Even so did the Grecians in old time give additions to princes, by reason of some notable act worthy memory. As when they have called some Soter and Callinicos, as much to say as saviour and conqueror. Or else of some notable apparent mark on one's face, or on his body, they have called him Phiscon and Grypos: as ye would say, gorebelly , and hooknosed; or else for some virtue, as Euergetes and Philadelphes, to wit, a benefactor, and lover of his brethren. Orotherwise for one's great felicity, as Eudaemon: as much to say as fortunate. For so was the second of the Battes surnamed. And some kings have had surnames of jest and mockery. As one of the Antigones that was called Doson, to say, the Giver: who was ever promising, and never giving.

Names of mockery among the Romans.

And one of the Ptolomees was called Lamyros: to say, conceitive . The Romans use , more than any other nation, to give names of mockery in this sort. As, there was one Metellus, surnamed Diadematus, the banded, because he carried a band about his head of long time , by reason of a sore he had in his forehead. One other of his own family was called Celer, the quick-fly, because a few days after the death of his father, he shewed the people the cruel fight of fencers at unrebated swords, which they found wonderful for the shortness of time. Other had their surnames derived of some accident at their birth. As to this day they call him Proculeius, that is born, his father being in some far voyage: and him Posthumius, that is born after the death of his father. And when of two brethren twins, the one cloth die, and the other surviveth, they call the survivor Vopiscus. Sometime also they give surnames derived of some mark or misfortune of the body: as Sylla, to say, crook-nosed: Niger, black: Rufus, red: Caecus, blind: Claudus, lame. They did wisely in this thing to accustom men to think, that neither the loss of their sight, nor other such misfortunes as may chance to men, are any shame or disgrace unto them; but the manner was to answer boldly to such names, as if they were called by their proper names. Howbeit these matters would be better amplified in other stories than this.

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Sedition at Rome, by reason of famine.

Now when this war was ended, the flatterers of the people began to stir up sedition again, without any new occasion, or just matter offered of complaint. For they did ground this second insurrection against the Nobility and Patricians upon the people's misery and misfortune, that could not but fall out , by reason of the former discord and sedition between them and the Nobility. Because the most part of the arable land, within the territory of Rome, was become heathy and barren for lack of ploughing, for that they had no time nor mean to cause corn to be brought them out of other countries to sow, by reason of their wars; which made the extreme dearth they had among them. Now those busy prattlers that sought the people's goodwill by such flattering words, perceiving great scarcity of corn to be within the city: and though there had been plenty enough, yet the common people had no money to buy it: they spread abroad false tales and rumours against the Nobility, that they, in revenge of the people, had practised and procured the extreme dearth among them. Furthermore, in the midst of this stir, there came ambassadors to Rome from the city of Velitres, that offered up their city to the Romans, and prayed them they would send new inhabitants to replenish the same: because the plague had been so extreme among them, and had killed such a number of them, as there was not left alive the tenth person of the people that had been there before. So the wise men of Rome began to think, that the necessity of the Velitrians fell out in a most happy hour; and how, by this occasion , it was very meet, in so great a scarcity of victuals, to disburden Rome of a great number of citizens: and by this means as well to take away this new sedition, and utterly to rid it out of the city, as also to clear the same of many mutinous and seditious persons, being the superfluous ill humours that grievously fed this disease.

Velitres made a colony to Rome.

Hereupon the Consuls pricked out all those by a bill , whom they intended to send to Velitres, to go dwell there as in form of a colony: and they levied out all the rest that remained in the city of Rome, a great number to go against the Volsces, hoping, by the mean of foreign war, to pacify their sedition at home.

Two practices to remove the sedition at Rome.

Moreover they imagined, when the poor with the rich. and the mean sort with the Nobility, should by this device be abroad in the wars, and in one camp, and in one service, and in one like danger: that then they would be more quiet and loving together.

Sicinius and Brutus, Tribunes of the people, against both those devices.

But Sicinius and Brutus, two seditious Tribunes, spake against either of these devices, and cried out upon the noble men, that under the gentle name of a Colony, they would cloak and colour the most cruel and unnatural fact as might be: because they sent their poor citizens into a sore infected city and pestilent air, full of dead bodies unburied, and there also to dwell under the tuition of a strange god, that had so cruelly persecuted his people. " This were (said they) even as much, as if the Senate should headlong cast down the people into a most bottomless pit; and are not yet contented to have famished some of the poor citizens heretofore to death, and to put other of them even to the mercy of the plague: but afresh they have procured a voluntary war, to the end they would leave behind no kind of misery and ill, wherewith the poor silly people should not be plagued, and only because they are weary to serve the rich." The common people, being set on a broil and bravery with these words, would not appear when the Consuls called their names by a bill , to prest them for the wars, neither would they be sent out to this new colony: insomuch as the Senate knew not well what to say or to do in the matter. . Martius then, who was now grown to great credit, and a stout man besides, and of great reputation with the noblest men of Rome, rose up, and openly spake against these flattering Tribunes.

Coriolanus offendeth the people.

And for the replenishing of the city of Velitres, he did compel those that were chosen, to go thither and to depart the city, upon great penalties to him that should disobey: but to the wars the people by no means would be brought or constrained.

Coriolanus invadeth the Antiates and bringeth rich spoils home.

So Martius, taking his friends and followers with him, and such as he could by fair words intreat to go with him, did run certain forays into the dominion of the Antiates, where he met with great plenty of corn, and had a marvellous great spoil, as well of cattle as of men he had taken prisoners, whom he brought away with him, and reserved nothing for himself. Afterwards, having brought back again all his men that went out with him, safe and sound to Rome, and every man rich and loaden with spoil: then the home-tarriers and house-doves that kept Rome still, began to repent them that it was not their hap to go with him, and so envied both them that had sped so well in this journey; and also, of malice to Martius, they spited to see his credit and estimation increase still more and more, because they accounted him to be a great hinderer of the people.

Shortly after this, Martius stood for the Consulship: and the common people favoured his suit, thinking it would be a shame to them to deny and refuse the chiefest noble man of blood, and most worthy person of Rome, and specially him that had done so great service and good to the commonwealth.

The manner of suing at Rome.

For the custom of Rome was at that time, that such as did sue for any office, should for certain days before be in the marketplace, only with a poor gown on their backs, and without any coat underneath, to pray the citizens to remember them at the day of election:

Whereupon this means of suing was devised.

which was thus devised, either to move the people the more, by requesting them in such mean apparel, or else because they might shew them their wounds they had gotten in the wars in the service of the commonwealth, as manifest marks and testimonies of their valiantness.

Officers given then by desert, without favour or corruption.

Now it is not to be thought that the suitors went thus loose in a simple gown in the marketplace, without any coat under it, for fear and suspicion of the common people: for offices of dignity in the city were not then given by favour or corruption. It was but of late time, and long after this, that buying and selling fell out in election of officers, and that the voices of the electors were bought for money. But after corruption had once gotten way into the election of offices, it hath run from man to man, even to the very sentence of judges, and also among captains in the wars: so as in the end, that only fumed commonwealths into kingdoms, by making arms subject to money. Therefore me thinks he had reason that said:

Banquets and money given, only destroyers of commonwealths.

"he that first made banquets and gave money to the common people, was the first that took away authority, and destroyed commonwealth." But this pestilence crept in by little and little, and did secretly win ground still , continuing a long time in Rome, before it was openly known and discovered. For no man can tell who was the first man that bought the people's voices for money, nor that corrupted the sentence of the Judges.

Anytus then Athenian the first that with money corrupted the sentence of the judge, and voices of the people.

Howbeit at Athens some hold opinion, that Anytus, the son of Anthemion, was the first that fed the judges with money, about the end of the wars of Peloponnesus, being accused of treason for yielding up the fort of Pyle at that time, when the golden and unfoiled age remained yet whole in judgment at Rome.

Now Martius, following this custom, shewed many wounds and cuts upon his body, which he had received in seventeen years' service at the wars, and in many sundry battles, being ever the foremost man that did set out feet to fight. So that there was not a man among the people but was ashamed of himself, to refuse so valiant a man: and one of them said to another, "we must needs choose him

Consul, there is no remedy." But when the day of election was come, and that Martius came to the marketplace with great pomp, accompanied with all the Senate and the whole Nobility of the city about him, who sought to make him Consul with the greatest instance and intreaty they could, or ever attempted for any man or matter: then the love and goodwill of the common people turned straight to an hate and envy toward him, fearing to put this office of sovereign authority into his hands, being a man somewhat partial towards the Nobility, and of great credit and authority amongst the Patricians, and as one they might doubt would take away altogether the liberty from the people. Whereupon, for these considerations, they refused Martius in the end, and made two other that were suitors, Consuls. The Senate, being marvellously offended with the people, did account the shame of this refusal rather to redound to themselves than to Martius but Martius took it in far worse part than the Senate, and was out of all patience. For he was a man too full of passion and choler, and too much given over to selfwill and opinion , as one of a high mind and great courage, that lacked the gravity and affability that is gotten with judgment of learning and reason, which only is to be looked for in a governor of State: and that remembered not how wilfulness is the thing the thing of the world, which a governor of a commonwealth, for pleasing , should shun, being that which Plato called 'solitariness';

The fruit of selfwill and obstinacy.

as in the end, all men that are wilfully given to a self-opinion and obstinate mind, and who will never yield to other's reason but to their own. remain without company, and forsaken of all men. For a man that will live in the world must needs have patience, which lusty bloods make but a mock at. So Martius, being a stout man of nature, that never yielded in any respect, as one thinking that to overcome always and to have the upper hand in all matters, was a token of magnanimity and of no base and faint courage , which spitteth out anger from the most weak and passioned part of the heart, much like the matter of an impostume : went home to his house, full freighted with spite and malice against, the people, being accompanied with all the lustiest young gentlemen, whose minds were nobly bent, as those that came of noble race, and commonly used for to follow and honour him. But then specially they flocked about him, and kept him company to his much harm, for they did but kindle and inflame his choler more and more, being sorry with him for the injury the people offered him; because he was their captain and leader to the wars, that taught them all martial discipline, and stirred up in them a noble emulation of honour and valiantness, and yet, without envy, praising them that deserved best.

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Great store of corn brought to Rome.

In the mean season there came great plenty of corn to Rome, that had been bought, part in Italy, and part was sent out of Sicily, as given by Gelon the tyrant of Syracusa: so that many stood in great hope, that the dearth of victuals being holpen , the civil dissension would also cease. The Senate sat in council upon it immediately; the common people stood also about the palace where the council was kept, gaping what resolution would fall out : persuading themselves that the corn they had bought should be sold good cheap , and that which was given should be divided by the poll , without paying any penny; and the rather, because certain of the Senators amongst them did so wish and persuade the same. But Martius, standing upon his feet, did somewhat sharply take up those who went about to gratify the people therein: and called them people-pleasers, and traitors to the Nobility.

Coriolanus' oration against the insolency of the people.

" Moreover," he said, "they nourished against themselves the naughty seed and cockle of insolence and sedition, which had been sowed and scattered abroad amongst the people, which they should have cut off, if they had been wise, in their growth: and not (to their own destruction) have suffered the people to establish a magistrate for themselves, of so great power and authority as that man had to whom they had granted it. Who was also to be feared, because he obtained what he would , and did nothing but what he listed , neither passed for any obedience to the Consuls, but lived in all liberty; acknowledging no superior to command him, saving the only heads and authors of their faction, whom he called his magistrates. Therefore," said he, "they that gave counsel and persuaded, that the corn should be given out to the common people gratis, as they used to do in the cities of Greece, where the people had more absolute power, did but only nourish their disobedience, which would break out in the end, to the utter ruin and overthrow of the whole state. For they will not think it is done in recompence of their service past, sithence they know well enough they have so oft refused to go to the wars when they were commanded: neither for their mutinies when they went with us, whereby they have rebelled and forsaken their country: neither for their accusations which their flatterers have preferred unto them, and they have received, and made good against the Senate: but they will rather judge, we give and grant them this as abasing ourselves, and standing in fear of them, and glad to flatter them every way. By this means their disobedience will still grow worse and worse: and they will never leave to practice new sedition and uproars. Therefore it were a great folly for us, methinks, to do it: yea, shall I say more? we should, if we were wise, take from them their Tribuneship, which most manifestly is the embasing of the Consulship, and the cause of the division of the city. The state whereof, as it standeth, is not now as it was wont to be, but becometh dismembered in two factions, which maintains always civil dissension and discord between us, and will never suffer us again to be united into one body."

Martius dilating the matter with many such like reasons, won all the young men, and almost all the rich men to his opinion: insomuch as they out , that he was the only man, and alone in the city, who stood out against the people, and never flattered them. There were only a few old men that spake against him, fearing lest some mischief fall out upon it , as indeed there followed no great good afterward. For the Tribunes of the people, being present at this consultation of the Senate, when they saw that the opinion of Martius was confirmed with the more voices, they left the Senate, and went down to the people, crying out for help, and that they would assemble to save their Tribunes.

Sedition at Rome for Coriolanus.

Hereupon the people ran on head in tumult together, before whom the words that Martius spake in the Senate were openly reported: which the people so stomached , that even in that fury they were ready to fly upon the whole Senate. But the Tribunes laid all the fault and burthen wholly upon Martius, and sent their sergeants forthwith to arrest him, presently to appear in person before the people, to answer the words he had spoken in the Senate. Martius stoutly withstood these officers that came to arrest him. Then the Tribunes in their own persons, accompanied with the Aediles, went to fetch him by force, and so laid violent hands upon him. Howbeit the noble Patricians gathering together about him, made the Tribunes give back , and laid sore upon the Aediles: so for that time the night parted them, and the tumult appeased. The next morning betimes, the Consuls seeing the people in an uproar, running to the marketplace out of all parts of the city, they were afraid lest all the city would together by the ears: wherefore assembling the Senate in all haste, they declared how it stood them upon , to appease the fury of the people with some gentle words or grateful decrees in their favour: and moreover, like wise men they should consider, it was now no time to stand at defence and in contention, nor yet to fight for honour against the commonalty, they being fallen to so great an extremity, and offering such imminent danger. Wherefore they were to consider temperately of things, and to deliver some present and gentle pacification. The most part of the Senators that were present at this council, thought this opinion best, and gave their consents unto it. Whereupon the Consuls rising out of council, went to speak unto the people as gently as they could, and they did pacify their fury and anger, purging the Senate of all the unjust accusations laid upon them, and used great modesty in persuading them, and also in reproving the faults they had committed. And as for the rest, that touched the sale of corn, they promised there should be no disliking offered them in the price.

So the most part of the people being pacified, and appearing so plainly by the great silence that was among them, as yielding to the Consuls and liking well of their words: the Tribunes then of the people rose out of their seats, and said: " Forasmuch as the Senate yielded unto reason, the people also for their part, as became them, did likewise give place unto them: but notwithstanding, they would that Martius should come in person to answer to the articles they had devised.

Articles against Coriolanus.

First, whether he had not solicited and procured the Senate to change the present state of the commonweal, and to take the sovereign authority out of the people's hands? Next, when he was sent for by authority of their officers, why he did contemptuously resist and disobey? Lastly, seeing he had driven and beaten the Aediles into the marketplace before all the world: if, in doing this, he had not done as much as in him lay, to raise civil wars, and to set one citizen against another?" All this was spoken to one of these two ends, either that Martius, against his nature, should be constrained to humble himself and to abase his haughty and fierce mind: or else, if he continued still in his stoutness , he should incur the people's displeasure and ill-will so far, that he should never possibly win them again. Which they hoped would rather fall out so, than otherwise: as indeed they guessed unhappily, considering Martius' nature and disposition. . So Martius came and presented himself to answer their accusations against him, and the people held their peace, and gave attentive ear, to hear what he would say.

Coriolanus' stoutness in defense of himself.

But where they thought to have heard very humble and lowly words come from him, he began not only to use his wonted boldness of speaking (which of itself was very rough and unpleasant, and did more aggravate his accusation, than purge his innocency) but also gave himself in his words to thunder, and look therewithal so grimly, as though he made no reckoning of the matter. This stirred coals among the people, who were in wonderful fury at it, and their hate and malice grew so toward him, that they could hold no longer, bear, nor endure his bravery and careless boldness.

Sicinius the Tribune pronounceth sentence of death upon Martius.

Whereupon Sicinius, the cruellest and stoutest of the Tribunes, after he had whispered a little with his companions, did openly pronounce, in the face of all the people, Martius as condemned by the Tribunes to die. Then presently he commanded the Aediles to apprehend him, and carry him straight to the rock Tarpeian, and to cast him headlong down the same. When the Aediles came to lay hands upon Martius to do that they were commanded, divers of the people themselves thought it too cruel and violent a deed. The noblemen, being much troubled to see so much force and rigour used, began to cry aloud 'help Martius': so those that laid hands on him being repulsed, they compassed him in round among themselves, and some of them, holding up their hands to the people, besought them not to handle him thus cruelly. But neither their words nor crying out could aught prevail, the tumult and hurlyburly was so great, until such time as the Tribunes' own friends and kinsmen, weighing with themselves the impossibleness to convey Martius to execution without great slaughter and murder of the nobility, did persuade and advise not to proceed in so violent and extraordinary a sort, as to put such a man to death without lawful process in law, but that they should refer the sentence of his death to the free voice of the people. Then Sicinius, bethinking himself a little, did ask the Patricians, for what cause they took Martius out of the officers' hands that went to do execution? The Patricians asked him again, why they would of themselves so cruelly and wickedly put to death so noble and valiant a Roman as Martius was, and that without law and justice? "Well then," said Sicinius, "if that be the matter, let there be no quarrel or dissension against the people: for they do grant your demand, that his cause shall be heard according to the law.

Coriolanus hath day given him to answer the people.

Therefore," said he to Martius, "we do will and charge you to appear before the people, the third day of our next sitting and assembly here, to make your purgation for such articles as shall be objected against you, that by free voice the people may give sentence upon you as shall please them. The noblemen were glad then of the adjournment, and were much pleased they had gotten Martius out of this danger.

In the mean space before the third day of their next session came about , the same being kept every ninth day continually at Rome, whereupon they call it now in Latin Nundinae: there fell out war against the Antiates, which gave some hope to the nobility that this adjournment would come to little effect, thinking that this war would hold them so long, as that the fury of the people against him would be well suaged , or utterly forgotten, by reason of the trouble of the wars. But contrary to expectation, the peace was concluded presently with the Antiates, and the people returned again to Rome. Then the Patricians assembled oftentimes together, to consult how they might stand to Martius, and keep the Tribunes from occasion to cause the people to mutine again, and rise against the Nobility. And there Appius Claudius (one that was taken ever as an heavy enemy to the people) did avow and protest, that they would utterly abase the authority of the Senate, and destroy the commonweal, if they would suffer the common people to have authority by voices to give judgment against the Nobility. On the other side again, the most ancient Senators, and such as were given to favour the common people, said: " that when the people should see they had authority of life and death in their hands, they would not be so cruel and fierce, but gentle and civil . More also, that it was not for contempt of Nobility or the Senate that they sought to have the authority of justice in their hands, as a pre-eminence and prerogative of honour: but because they feared, that themselves should be contemned and hated of the Nobility. So as they were persuaded, that so soon as they gave them authority to judge by voices, they would leave all envy and malice to condemn any."

Martius, seeing the Senate in great doubt how to resolve , partly for the love and goodwill the nobility did bear him, and partly for the fear they stood in of the people: asked aloud of the Tribunes, 'what matter they would burden him with?'

Coriolanus accused that he sought to be king.

The Tribunes answered him, 'that they would shew how he did aspire to be King, and would prove that all his actions tended to usurp tyrannical power over Rome.' Martius with that, rising upon his feet, said: 'that thereupon he did willingly offer himself to the people, to be tried upon that accusation: and that if it were proved by him, he had so much as once thought of any such matter, that he would then refuse no kind of punishment they would offer him: conditionally (quoth he) that you charge me with nothing else beside, and that ye do not also abuse the Senate.' They promised they would not. Under these conditions the judgment was agreed upon, and the people assembled. . And first of all the Tribunes would in any case (whatsoever became of it) that the people should proceed to give their voices by Tribes, and not by hundreds: for by this means the multitude of the poor needy people (and all such rabble as had nothing to lose, and had less regard of honesty before their eyes) came to be of greater force (because their voices were numbered by the poll) than the noble honest citizens, whose persons and purse did dutifully serve the commonwealth in their wars. And then, when the Tribunes saw they could not prove he went about to make himself King, they began to broach afresh the former words that Martius had spoken in the Senate, in hindering the distribution of the corn at mean price unto the common people, and persuading also to take the office of Tribuneship from them. And for the third, they charged him anew, that he had not made the common distribution of the spoil he had gotten in the invading the territories of the Antiates: but had of his own authority divided it among them who were with him in that journey. But this matter was most strange of all to Martius, looking least to have been burdened with that as with any matter of offence. Whereupon being burdened on the sudden, and having no ready excuse to make even at that instant: he began to fall a praising of the soldiers that had served with him in that journey. But those that were not with him, being the greater number, cried out so loud, and made such a noise, that he could not be heard.

Coriolanus banished forever.

To conclude, when they came to tell the voices of the Tribes, there were three voices odd, which condemned him to be banished for ever. After declaration of the sentence, the people made such joy, as they never rejoiced more for any battle they had won upon their enemies, they were so brave and lively, and went home so jocundly from the assembly, for triumph of this sentence. The Senate again, in contrary manner , were as sad and heavy, repenting themselves beyond measure, that they had not rather determined to have done and suffered anything whatsoever, before the common people should so arrogantly and outrageously have abused their authority. There needed no difference of garments, I warrant you, nor outward shows, to know a Plebeian from a Patrician, for they were easily discerned by their looks. For he that was on the people's side looked cheerfully on the matter: but he that was sad and hung down his head, he was sure of the noblemen's side:

saving Martius alone,

Coriolanus' constant mind in adversity.

who neither in his countenance nor in his gait did ever shew himself abashed, or once let fall his great courage: but he only, of all other gentlemen that were angry at his fortune, did outwardly shew no manner of passion, nor care at all of himself. Not that he did patiently bear and temper his evil hap in respect of any reason he had, or by his quiet condition: but because

The force of anger.

he was so carried away with the vehemency of anger and desire of revenge, that he had no sense nor feeling of the hard state he was in: which the common people judge not to be sorrow, although indeed it be the very same. For when sorrow (as you would say) is set on fire, then it is converted into spite and malice, and driveth away for that time all faintness of heart and natural fear. And this is the cause why the choleric man is so altered and mad in his actions, as a man set on fire with a burning ague: for when a man's heart is troubled within, his pulse will beat marvellous strongly. Now that Martius was even in that taking it appeared true soon after by his doings. For when he was come home to his house again, and had taken his leave of his mother and wife, finding them weeping and shrieking out for sorrow, and had also comforted and persuaded them to be content with his chance: he went immediately to the gate of the city, accompanied with a great number of Patricians, that brought him thither, from whence he went on his way with three or four of his friends only, taking nothing with him, nor requesting anything of any man. So he remained a few days in the country at his houses, turmoiled with sundry sorts and kinds of thoughts, such as the fire of his choler did stir up. . In the end, seeing he could resolve no way to take a profitable or honourable course, but only was pricked forward still to be revenged of the Romans: he thought to raise up some great wars against them, by their nearest neighbours. Whereupon he thought it his best way, first to stir up the Volsces against them, knowing they were yet able enough in strength and riches to encounter them, notwithstanding their former losses they had received not long before, and that their power was not so much impaired, as their malice and desire was increased to be revenged of the Romans.

Tullus Aufidius, a great person among the Volsces.

Now in the city of Antium there was one called Tullus Aufidius, who for his riches, as also for his nobility and valiantness, was honoured among the Volsces as a king. Martius knew very well that Tullus did more malice and envy him than he did all the Romans besides: because that many times, in battles where they met, they were ever at the encounter one against another, like lusty courageous youths striving in all emulation of honour, and had encountered many times together. Insomuch as, besides the common quarrel between them, there was bred a marvellous private hate one against another. Yet notwithstanding, considering that Tullus Aufidius was a man of a great mind, and that he above all other of the Volsces most desired revenge of the Romans, for the injuries they had done unto them: he did an act that confirmed the words of an ancient poet to be true, who said:

It is a thing full hard, man's anger to withstand,

If it be stiffly bent to take an enterprise in hand.

For then most men will have the thing that they desire,

Although it cost their lives therefore, such force hath wicked ire.

And so did he. For he disguised himself in such array and attire, as he thought no man could ever have known him for the person he was, seeing him in that apparel he had upon his back: and as Homer said of Ulysses:

So did he enter into the enemies' town.

Coriolanus disguised goes to Antium, a city of the Volsces.

It was even twilight when he entered the city of Antium, and many people met him in the streets, but no man knew him. So he went directly to Tullus Aufidius' house, and when he came thither, he him up straight to the chimney-hearth, and sat him down, and spake not a word to any man, his face all muffled over. They of the house spying him, wondered what he should be, and yet they durst not bid him rise. For ill-favouredly muffled and disguised as he was, yet there appeared a certain majesty in his countenance and in his silence: whereupon they went to Tullus, who was at supper, to tell him of the strange disguising of this man. Tullus rose presently from the board, and coming towards him, asked him what he was, and wherefore he came. Then Martius unmuffled himself, and after he had paused awhile, making no answer, he said unto him:

Coriolanus' oration to Tullus Aufidius.

"If thou knowest me not yet, Tullus, and, seeing me, cost not perhaps believe me to be the man I am indeed, I must of necessity bewray myself to be that I am. I am Caius Martius, who hath done to thyself particularly, and to all the Volsces generally, great hurt and mischief, which I cannot deny for my surname of Coriolanus that I hear. For I never had other benefit nor recompence of the true and painful service I have done, and the extreme dangers I have been in, but this only surname: a good memory and witness of the malice and displeasure thou shouldest bear me. Indeed the name only remaineth with me: for the rest the envy and cruelty of the people of Rome have taken from me, by the sufferance of the dastardly nobility and magistrates, who have forsaken me, and let me be banished by the people. This extremity hath now driven me to come as a poor suitor, to take thy chimney-hearth, not of any hope I have to save my life thereby for if I had feared death, I would not have come hither to have put myself in hazard: but pricked forward with desire to be revenged of them that thus have banished me; which now I do begin, in putting my person into the hands of their enemies. Wherefore, if thou hast any heart to be wrecked of the injuries thy enemies have done thee, speed thee now, and let my misery serve thy turn, and so use it as my service may be a benefit to the Volsces: promising thee, that I will fight with better good will for all you than I did when I w as against you, knowing that they fight more valiantly who know the force of the enemy, than such as have never proved it. And if it be so that thou dare not, and that thou art weary to prove fortune any more, then am I also weary to live any longer. And it were no wisdom in thee, to save the life of him, who hath been heretofore thy mortal enemy, and whose service now can nothing help nor pleasure thee." Tullus, hearing what he said, was a marvellous glad man, and taking him by the hand, he said unto him: " Stand up, O Martius, and be of good cheer, for in proffering thyself unto us thou doest us great honour: and by this means thou mayest hope also of greater things at all the Volsces' hands. So he feasted him for that time, and entertained him in the honourablest manner he could, talking with him of no other matter at that present: but within few days after they fell to consultation together, in what sort they should begin their wars.

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Great Dissension at Rome about Martius' banishment.

Now on the other side, the city of Rome was in marvellous uproar and discord, the nobility against the commonalty, and chiefly for Martius' condemnation and banishment. Moreover the priests, the soothsayers, and private men also, came and declared to the Senate certain sights and wonders in the air, which they had seen, and were to be considered of: amongst the which such a vision happened: There was a citizen of Rome called Titus Latinus, a man of mean quality and condition, but otherwise an honest sober man, given to a quiet life, without superstition, and much less to vanity or lying. This man had a vision in his dream, in the which he thought that Jupiter appeared unto him, and commanded him to signify to the Senate, that they had caused a very vile lewd dancer to go before the procession: and said, the first time this vision had appeared unto him, he made no reckoning of it: and coming again another time into his mind, he made not much more account of the matter than before. In the end, he saw one of his sons die, who had the best nature and condition of all his brethren: and suddenly he himself was so taken in all his limbs, that he became lame and impotent. Hereupon he told the whole circumstance of this vision before the Senate, sitting upon his little couch or bed, whereon he was carried on men's arms: and he had no sooner reported this vision to the Senate, but he presently felt his body and limbs restored again to their former strength and use. So raising up himself upon his couch, he got up on his feet at that instant, and walked home to his house, without help of any man. The Senate being amazed at this matter, made diligent enquiry to understand the truth: and in the end they found there was such a thing: There was one that had delivered a bondman of his that had offended him into the hands of other slaves and bondmen, and had commanded them to whip him up and down the marketplace, and afterwards to kill him: and as they had him in execution , whipping him cruelly, they did so martyr the poor wretch, that, for the cruel smart and pain he felt, he turned and writhed his body in strange and pitiful sort. The procession by chance came by even at the same time, and many that followed it were heartily moved and offended with the sight, saying: that this was no good sight to behold, nor meet to be met in procession time. But for all this, there was nothing done: saving they blamed and rebuked him that punished his slave so cruelly. For the Romans at that time did use their bondmen very gently, because they themselves did labour with their own hands, and lived with them and among them: and therefore they did use them the more gently and familiarly. For the greatest punishment they gave a slave that had offended, was this.

The Romans' manner of punishing their slaves.

They made him carry a limmer on his shoulders that is fastened to the axletree of a coach, and compelled him to go up and down in that sort amongst all their neighbours. He that had once abidden this punishment, and was seen in that manner, was proclaimed and cried in every market-town: so that no man would ever trust him after, and they called him

Whereaof Furcifer came.

Furcifer, because the Latins call the wood that runneth into the axletree of the coach Furca, as much to say as a fork.

Now when Latinus had made report to the Senate of the vision that had happened to him, they were devising whom this unpleasant dancer should be, that went before the procession. Thereupon certain that stood by remembered the poor slave that was so cruelly whipped through the marketplace, whom they afterwards put to death: and the thing that made him remember it; was the strange and rare manner of h s punishment. The priests hereupon were repaired unto for their advice: they were wholly of opinion, that it was the whipping of the slave. So they caused the slave's master to be punished, and began again a new procession, and all other shows and sights in honour of Jupiter. But hereby appeareth plainly,

A ceremony instituted by king Numa touching religion.

how king Numa did wisely ordain all other ceremonies concerning devotion to the gods, and specially this custom which he established, to bring the people to religion. For when the magistrates, bishops, priests, or other religious ministers go about any divine service or matter of religion, an herald ever goeth before them, crying out aloud hoc age: as to say, do this, or mind this. Hereby they are specially commanded, wholly to dispose themselves to serve God, leaving all other business and matters aside: knowing well enough, that whatsoever most men do, they do it as in a manner constrained unto it.

The superstition of the Romans.

But the Romans did ever use to begin again their sacrifices, processions, plays, and such like shows done in honour of the gods, not only upon such an occasion, but upon lighter causes than that. As, when they went on procession through the city, and did carry the images of their gods and such other like holy relics upon open hallowed coaches or chariots, called in Latin Thensae

Thensa, one of the coachhorses that drew them stood still and would draw no more, and because also the coach-man took the reins of his bridle with the left hand, they ordained that the procession should be begun again anew. Of late time also, they did renew and begin a sacrifice thirty times one after another, because they thought still there fell out one fault or other in the same: so holy and devout were they to the gods.

. Now Tullus and Martius had secret conference with the greatest personages of the city of Antium, declaring unto them that now they had good time offered them to make war with the Romans, while they were in dissension one with another. They answered them, they were ashamed to break the league, considering that they were sworn to keep peace for two years.

The Romans gave the Volsces occasion of was.

Howbeit, shortly after, the Romans gave them great occasion to make war with them. For on a holy day, common plays being kept in Rome, upon some suspicion or [else report, they made proclamation by sound of trumpet, that all the Volsces should avoid out of Rome before sunset. Some think this was a craft and deceit of Martius, who

Martius Coriolanus' crafty accusation of the Volsces.

sent one to Rome to the Consuls to accuse the Volsces falsely, advertising them how they had made a conspiracy to set upon them while they were busy in seeing these games, and also to set their city on fire. This open proclamation made all the Volsces more offended with the Romans than ever they were before: and Tullus, aggravating the matter, did so inflame the Volsces against them, that in the end they sent their ambassadors to Rome, to summon them to deliver their lands and towns again, which they had taken from them in times past, or to look for present wars. The Romans, hearing this, were marvellously nettled: and made no other answer but this: " If the Volsces be the first that begin war, the Romans will be the last that will end it." Incontinently upon return of the Volsces' ambassadors and delivery of the Romans' answer, Tullus caused an assembly general to be made of the Volsces, and concluded to make war upon the Romans. This done, Tullus did counsel them to take Martius into their service, and not to mistrust him for the remembrance of anything past, but boldly to trust him in any matter to come: for he would do them more service in fighting for them than ever he did them displeasure in fighting against them.

Coriolanus chosen general of the Volsces with Tullus Aufidius against the Romans.

So Martius was called forth, who spake so excellently in the presence of them all, that he was thought no less eloquent in tongue than warlike in show: and declared himself both expert in wars, and wise with valiantness. Thus he was joined in commission with Tullus as general of the Volsces, having absolute authority between them to follow and pursue the wars. But Martius, fearing lest tract of time to bring this army together with all the munition and furniture of the Volsces would rob him of the mean he had to execute his purpose and intent, left order with the rulers and chief of the city to assemble the rest of their power, and to prepare all necessary provision for the camp.

Coriolanus invadeth the territories of the Romans.

Then he, with the lightest soldiers he had, and that were willing to follow him, stole away upon the sudden, and marched with all speed, and entered the territories of Rome before the Romans heard any news of his coming. Insomuch as the Volsces found such spoil in the fields, as they had more than they could spend in their camp, and were weary to drive and carry away that they had. Howbeit, the gain of the spoil and the hurt they did to the Romans in this invasion was the least part of his intent: for his

A fine device to make the commonalty suspect the nobility.

chiefest purpose was, to increase still the malice and dissension between the nobility and the commonalty: and to draw that on, he was very careful to keep the noblemen's lands and goods safe from harm and burning, but spoiled all the whole country besides, and would suffer no man to take or hurt anything of the noblemen's. This made greater stir and broil between the nobility and the people than was before.

Great heart-burning betwixt the nobility and the people.

For the noblemen fell out with the people because they had so unjustly banished a man of so great velour and power. The people, on the other side, accused the nobility, how they had procured Martius to make these wars to be revenged of them: because it pleased them to see their goods burnt and spoiled before their eyes, whilst themselves were well at ease, and did behold the people's losses and misfortunes, knowing their own goods safe and out of danger: and how the war was not made against the noblemen, that had the enemy abroad to keep that they had in safety. Now Martius, having done his first exploit (which made the Volsces bolder, and less fearful of the Romans), brought home all the army again without loss of any man.

After their whole army (which was marvellous great, and very forward to service) was assembled in one camp, they agreed to leave part of it for garrison in the country about, and the other part should go on and make the war upon the Romans. So Martius bade Tullus choose, and take which of the two charges he liked best. Tullus made him answer, he knew by experience that Martius was no less valiant than himself, and how he ever had better fortune and good hap in all battles than himself had. Therefore he thought it best for him to have the leading of those that would make the wars abroad, and himself would keep home, to provide for the safety of the cities of his country, and to furnish the camp also of all necessary provision abroad. . So Martius, being stronger than before, went first of all unto the city of Cercees , inhabited by the Romans, who willingly yielded themselves, and therefore had no hurt. From thence he entered the country of the Latins, imagining the Romans would fight with him there to defend the Latins, who were their confederates, and had many times sent unto the Romans for their aid. But on the one side, the people of Rome were very ill willing to go: and on the other side, the Consuls being upon going out of their office, would not hazard themselves for so small a time: so that the ambassadors of the Latins returned home again, and did no good. Then Martius did besiege their cities, and having taken by force the town of the Tolerinians, Vicanians, Pedanians, and the Bolanians, who made resistance, he sacked all their goods and took them prisoners. Such as did yield themselves willingly unto him, he was as careful as possible might be to defend them from hurt: and because they should receive no damage by his will , he removed his camp as far from their confines as he could.

Afterwards, he took the city of Boles by assault, being about an hundred furlong from Rome, where he had a marvellous great spoil, and put every man to the sword that was able to carry weapon. The other Volsces that were appointed to remain in garrison for defence of their country, hearing this good news, would tarry no longer at home, but armed themselves and ran to Martius' camp, saying they did acknowledge no other captain but him. Hereupon his fame ran through all Italy, and every one praised him for a valiant captain, for that, by change of one man for another, such and so strange events fell out in the state. In this while , all went still to wrack at Rome. For, to come into the field to fight with the enemy, they could not abide to hear of it, they were one so much against another, and full of seditious words, the nobility against the people, and the people against the nobility. Until they had intelligence at the length , that the enemies had laid siege to the city of Lavinium,

Lavinium built by Aeneas.

in the which were all the temples and images of their gods their protectors, and from whence came first their ancient original, for that Aeneas at his first arrival into Italy did build that city. Then fell there out a marvellous sudden change of mind among the people, and far more strange and contrary in the nobility. For the people thought it good to repeal the condemnation and exile of Martius. The Senate, assembled upon it, would in no case yield to that: who either did it of a selfwill to be contrary to the people's desire: or because Martius should not return thorough the grace and favour of the people. Or else, because they were throughly angry and offended with him, that he would set upon the whole, being offended but by a few, and in his doings would shew himself an open enemy besides unto his country: notwithstanding the most part of them took the wrong they had done him in marvellous ill part, and as if the injury had been done unto themselves. Report being made of the Senate's resolution, the people found themselves in a straight : for they could authorise and confirm nothing by their voices, unless it had been first propounded and ordained by the Senate.

But Martius, hearing this stir about him, was in a greater rage with them than before: inasmuch as he raised his siege incontinently before the city of Lavinium, and going towards Rome, lodged his camp within forty furlong of the city, at the ditches called Cluiliae. His incamping so near Rome did put all the whole city in a wonderful fear: howbeit for the present time it appeased the sedition and dissension betwixt the nobility and the people. For there was no consul, senator, nor magistrate, that durst once contrary the opinion of the people for the calling home again of Martius. . When they saw the women in a marvellous fear, running up and down the city: the temples of the gods full of old people, weeping bitterly in their prayers to the gods: and finally, not a man either wise or hardy to provide for their safety: then they were ale of opinion, that the people had reason to call home Martius again, to reconcile themselves to him, and that the Senate, on the contrary part, were in marvellous great fault to be angry and in choler with him, when it stood them upon rather to have gone out and intreated him.

Romans send ambassadors to Coriolanus to treat of peace.

So they all agreed together to send ambassadors unto him, to let him understand how his countrymen did call him home again, and restored him to all his goods, and besought him to deliver them from this war. The ambassadors that were sent were Martius' familiar friends and acquaintance, who looked at the least for a courteous welcome of him, as of their familiar friend and kinsman. Howbeit they found nothing less: for at their coming they were brought through the camp to the place where he was set in his chair of state, with a marvellous and an unspeakable majesty, having the chiefest men of the Volsces about him: so he commanded them to declare openly the cause of their coming. Which they delivered in the most humble and lowly words they possibly could devise, and with all modest countenance and behaviour agreeable to the same. When they had done their message, for the injury they had done him, he answered them very hotly and in great choler: but as general of the Volsces he willed them to restore unto the Volsces all their lands and cities they had taken from them in former wars: and moreover, that they should give them the like honour and freedom of Rome as they had before given to the Latins. For otherwise they had no other mean to end this war, if they did not grant these honest and just conditions of peace. Thereupon he gave them thirty days respite to make him answer. So the ambassadors returned straight to Rome, and Martius forthwith departed with his army out of the territories of the Romans.

The first occasion of the Volsces' envy to Coriolanus.

This was the first matter wherewith the Volsces (that most envied Martius' glory and authority) did charge Martius with. Among those, Tullus was chief: who though he had received no private injury or displeasure of Martius, yet the common fault and imperfection of man's nature wrought in him, and it grieved him to see his own reputation blemished through Martius' great fame and honour, and so himself to be less esteemed of the Volsces than he was before. This fell out the more, because every man honoured Martius, and thought he only could do all, and that all other governors and captains must be content with such credit and authority as he would please to countenance them with. From hence they derived all their first accusations and secret murmurings against Martius. For private captains, conspiring against him, were very angry with him: and gave it out, that the removing of the camp was a manifest treason , not of the towns, nor forts, nor of arms, but of time and occasion , which was a loss of great importance, because it was that which in reason might both loose and bind all, and preserve the whole. Now Martius having given the Romans thirty days respite for their answer, and specially because the wars have not accustomed to make any great changes in less space of time than that, he thought it good yet , not to lie asleep and idle all the while, but went and destroyed the lands of the enemies' allies, and took seven great cities of theirs well inhabited, and the Romans durst not once put themselves into the field to come to their aid and help, they were so fainthearted, so mistrustful, and loth besides to make wars. Insomuch as they properly resembled the bodies paralytic and loosed of their limbs and members, as those which through the palsy have lost all their sense and feeling. . Wherefore, the time of peace expired, Martius being returned into the dominions of the Romans again with all his army, they

Another ambassade sent to Coriolanus.

sent another ambassade unto him, to pray peace, and the remove of the Volsces out of their country: that afterwards they might with better leisure fall to such agreements together as should be thought most meet and necessary. For the Romans were no men that would ever yield for fear. But if he thought the Volsces had any ground to demand reasonable articles and conditions, all that they would reasonably ask should be granted unto by the Romans, who of themselves would willingly yield to reason, conditionally, that they did lay down arms. Martius to that answered: 'that, as general of the Volsces, he would reply nothing unto it: but yet, as a Roman citizen, he would counsel them to let fall their pride, and to be conformable to reason, if they were wise: and that they should return again within three days, delivering up the articles agreed upon, which he had first delivered them. Otherwise, that he would no more give them assurance or safe conduct to return again into his camp with such vain and frivolous messages.'

When the ambassadors were returned to Rome, and had reported Martius' answer to the Senate: their city being in extreme danger, and as it were in a terrible storm or tempest, they threw out (as the common proverb saith) their holy anchor.

The priests and soothsayers sent to Coriolanus.

For then they appointed all the bishops, priests, ministers of the gods, and keepers of holy things, and all the augurs or soothsayers, which foreshew things to come by observation of the flying of birds (which is an old ancient kind of prophesying and divination amongst the Romans) to go to Martius, apparelled as when they do their sacrifices: and first to intreat him to leave off war, and then that he would speak to his countrymen, and conclude peace with the Volsces. Martius suffered them to come into his camp, but yet he granted them nothing the more , neither did he entertain them or speak more courteously to them, than he did the first time that they came unto him, saving only that he willed them to take the one of the two: either to accept peace under the first conditions offered, or else to receive war. When all this goodly rabble of superstitious priests were returned, it was determined in council that none should go out of the gates of the city, and that they should watch and ward upon the walls to repulse their enemies if they came to assault them: referring themselves and all their hope to time, and fortune's uncertain favour, not knowing otherwise how to remedy the danger. Now all the city was full of tumult, fear, and marvellous doubt what would happen, until at the length there fell out such a like matter, as Homer ofttimes said they would least have thought of. For in great matters, that happen seldom, Homer saith, and crieth out in this sort:

The goddess Pallas she, with her fair glistering eyes,

Did put into his mind such thoughts, and made him so devise.

And in another place:

But sure some god hath tane out of the people's mind
Both wit and understanding eke, and have therewith assigned
Some other simple spirit, instead thereof to bide,
That so they might their doings all, for lack of wit, misguide.

And in another place:

The people of themselves did either it consider,
Or else some god instructed them, and so they join'd together.

Many reckon not of Homer, as referring matters unpossible , and fables of no likelihood or troth, unto man's reason, freewill, or judgment, which indeed is not his meaning. But things true and likely, he maketh to depend of our own freewill and reason. For he oft speaketh these words:

I have thought it in my noble heart.

And in another place:

Achilles angry was, and sorry for to hear
Him so to say, his heavy breast was fraught with pensive fear.

And in another place:

Bellerophon (she) could not move with her fair tongue,

So honest and so virtuous he was, the rest among.

But in wondrous and extraordinary things, which are done by secret inspirations and motions, he cloth not say that God taketh away from man his choice and freedom of will, but that he cloth move it: neither that he cloth work desire in us, but objecteth to our minds certain imaginations whereby we are led to desire, and thereby cloth not make this our action forced, but openeth the way to our will, and addeth thereto courage and hope of success. For either we must say, that the gods meddle not with the causes and beginnings of our actions: or else what other means have they to help and further men? It is apparent that they handle not our bodies, nor move not our feet and hands, when there is occasion to use them: but that part of our mind from which these motions proceed, is induced thereto, or carried away by such objects and reasons, as God offereth unto it.

. Now the Roman ladies and gentlewomen did visit all the temples and gods of the same, to make their prayers unto them: but the greatest ladies (and more part of them) were continually about the a]tar of Jupiter Capitolin, among which troup by name, was Valeria, Publicola's own sister; the selfsame Publicola, who did such notable service to the Romans,

Valeria Publicola's sister.

both in peace and wars, and was dead also certain years before, as we have declared in his life. His sister Valeria was greatly honoured and reverenced among all the Romans: and did so modestly and wisely behave herself, that she did not shame nor dishonour the house she came of. So she suddenly fell into such a fancy, as we have rehearsed before, and had (by some god, as I think) taken hold of a noble device. Whereupon she rose and the other ladies with her, and they all together went straight to the house of

Volumnia, Martius' mother.

Volumnia, Martius' mother: and coming in to her, found her, and Martius' wife her daughter-in-law, set together, and having her husband Martius' young children in her lap. Now all the train of these ladies sitting in a ring round about her, Valeria first began to speak in this sort unto her:

The words of Valeria unto Volumnia and Virgilia.

"We ladies are come to visit you ladies (my lady Volumnia and Virgilia) by no direction from the Senate, nor commandment of other magistrate, but through the inspiration (as I take it) of some god above: who, having taken compassion and pity of our prayers, hath moved us to come unto you, to intreat you in a matter, as well beneficial for us as also for the whole citizens in general, but to yourselves in special (if it please you to credit me), and shall redound to your more fame and glory, than the daughters of the Sabines obtained in former age, when they procured loving peace, instead of hateful war, between their fathers and their husbands. Come on, good ladies, and let us go all together unto Martius, to intreat him to take pity upon us, and also to report the truth unto him, how much you are bound unto the citizens: who notwithstanding they have sustained great hurt and losses by him, yet they have not hitherto sought revenge upon your persons by any discourteous usage, neither ever conceived any such thought or intent against you, but to deliver you safe into his hands, though thereby they look for no better grace or clemency from him." When Valeria had spoken this unto them, all the other ladies together, with one voice, confirmed that she had said. Then Volumnia in this sort did answer her:

The answer of Volumnia to the Roman ladies.

"My good ladies, we are partakers with you of the common misery and calamity of our country, and yet our grief exceedeth yours the more, by reason of our particular misfortune, to feel the loss of my son Martius' former valiancy and glory, and to see his person environed now with our enemies in arms, rather to see him forthcoming and safe kept than of any love to defend his person. But yet the greatest grief of our heaped mishaps is to see our poor country brought to such extremity, that all the hope of the safety and preservation thereof is now unfortunately cast upon us simple women: because we know not what account he will make of us, since he hath cast from him all care of his natural country and commonweal, which heretofore he hath holden more dear and precious than either his mother, wife, or children. Notwithstanding, if ye think we can do good, we will willingly do what you will have us; bring us to him, I pray you. For if we cannot prevail, we may yet die at his feet, as humble suitors for the safety of our country."

Her answer ended, she took her daughter-in-law and Martius' children with her, and being accompanied with all the other Roman ladies, they went in troup together unto the Volsces' camp: whom when they saw, they of themselves did both pity and reverence her, and there was not a man among them that once durst say a word unto hen Now was Martius set then in his chair of state, with all the honours of a general, and when he had spied the women coming afar off, he marvelled what the matter meant: but afterwards knowing his wife which came foremost, he determined at the first to persist in his obstinate and inflexible rancour. But overcome in the end with natural affection, and being altogether altered to see them, his heart would not serve him to tarry their coming to his chair, but coming down in haste he went to meet them, and first he kissed his mother, and embraced her a pretty while, then his wife and little children. And nature so wrought with him that the tears fell from his eyes, and he could not keep himself from making much of them, but yielded to the affection of his blood, as if he had been violently carried with the fury of a most swift running stream.

After he had thus lovingly received them, and perceiving that his mother Volumnia would begin to speak to him, he called the chiefest of the council of the Volsces to hear what she would say. Then she spake in this sort:

The oration of Volumnia unto her son Coriolanus.

"If we held our peace, my son, and determined not to speak, the state of our poor bodies, and present sight of our raiment, would easily bewray to thee what life we have led at home, since thy exile and abode abroad; but think now with thyself, how much more unfortunate than all the women living, we are come hither, considering that the sight which should be most pleasant to all other to behold, spiteful fortune had made most fearful to us: making myself to see my son, and my daughter here her husband, besieging the walls of his native country: so as that which is the only comfort to all other in their adversity and misery, to pray unto the gods and to call to them for aid, is the only thing which plungeth us into most deep perplexity. For we cannot, alas! together pray both for victory to our country and for safety of thy life also: but a world of grievous curses, yea, more than any mortal enemy can heap upon us, are forcibly wrapt up in our prayers. For the bitter sop of most hard choice is offered thy wife and children, to forego one of the two: either to lose the person of thyself, or the nurse of their native country. For myself, my son, I am determined not to tarry till fortune, in my lifetime, do make an end of this war. For if I cannot persuade thee, rather to do good unto both parties than to overthrow and destroy the one, preferring love and nature before the malice and calamity of wars, thou shalt see, my son, and trust unto it, thou shalt no sooner march forward to assault thy country, but thy foot shall tread upon thy mother's womb, that brought thee first into this world. And I may not defer to see the day, either that my son be led prisoner in triumph by his natural countrymen, or that he himself do triumph of them, and of his natural country. For if it were so, that my request tended to save thy country, in destroying the Volsces, I must confess, thou wouldest hardly and doubtfully resolve on that. For as, to destroy thy natural country, it is altogether unmeet and unlawful, so were it not just, and less honourable, to betray those that put their trust in thee. But my only demand consisteth, to make a gaol-delivery of all evils, which delivereth equal benefit and safety both to the one and the other, but most honourable for the Volsces. For it shall appear, that, having victory in their hands, they have of special favour granted us singular graces, peace, and amity, albeit themselves have no less part of both than we. Of which good, if so it came to pass, thyself is the only author, and so hast thou the only honour. But if it fail and fall out contrary, thyself alone deservedly shalt carry the shameful reproach and burthen of either party. So, though the end of war be uncertain, yet this notwithstanding is most certain, that, if it be thy chance to conquer, this benefit shalt thou reap of thy goodly conquest, to be chronicled the plague and destroyer of thy country. And if fortune overthrow thee, then the world will say, that, through desire to revenge thy private injuries, thou hast for ever undone thy good friends, who did most lovingly and courteously receive thee."

Martius gave good ear unto his mother's words, without interrupting her speech at all, and after she had said what she would, he held his peace a pretty while, and answered not a word. Hereupon she began again to speak unto him, and said: " My son, why cost thou not answer me? Dost thou think it good altogether to give place unto thy choler and desire of revenge, and thinkest thou it not honesty for thee to grant thy mother's request, in so weighty a cause? Dost thou take it honourable for a noble man to remember the wrongs and injuries done him, and cost not in like case think it an honest noble man's part, to be thankful for the goodness that parents do shew to their children, acknowledging the duty and reverence they ought to bear unto them? No man living is more bound to shew himself thankful in all parts and respects than thyself: who so unnaturally shewest all ingratitude. Moreover (my son) thou hast sorely taken of thy country, exacting grievous payments upon them, in revenge of the injuries offered thee; besides, thou hast not hitherto shewed thy poor mother any courtesy. And therefore it is not only honest , but due unto me, that without compulsion I should obtain my so just and reasonable request of thee. But since by reason I cannot persuade thee to it, to what purpose do I defer my last hope?" And with these words, herself, his wife, and children fell down upon their knees before him.

Coriolanus' compassion of his mother.

Martius, seeing that, could refrain no longer, but went straight and lift her up, crying out, " Oh mother, what have you done to me?" And holding her hard by the right hand, "Oh mother," said he, " you have won a happy victory for your country, but mortal and unhappy for your son: for I see myself vanquished by you alone." These words being spokes openly, he spake a little apart with his mother and wife, and then let them return again to Rome, for so they did request him; and so remaining in camp that night, the next morning he dislodged , and

Coriolanus withdraweth his army from Rome.

marched homeward into the Volsces' country again, who were not all of one mind, nor all alike contented. For some misliked him and that he had done: other), being well pleased that peace should be made, said that neither the one nor the other deserved blame nor reproach. other , though they misliked that was done, did not think him an ill man for that he did, but said he was not to be blamed, though he yielded to such a forcible extremity. Howbeit no man contraried his departure, but all obeyed his commandment, more for respect of his worthiness and valiancy than for fear of his authority.

. Now the citizens of Rome plainly shewed in what fear and danger their city stood of this war, when they were delivered. For so soon as the watch upon the walls of the city perceived the Volsces' camp to remove, there was not a temple in the city but was presently set open, and full of men wearing garlands of flowers upon their heads, sacrificing to the gods, as they were wont to do upon the news of some great obtained victory. And this common joy was yet more manifestly shewed by the honourable courtesies the whole Senate and people did bestow on their ladies. For they were all throughly persuaded, and did certainly believe, that the ladies only were cause of the saving of the city and delivering themselves from the instant danger of the war. Whereupon the Senate ordained that the magistrates, to gratify and honour these ladies, should grant them all that they would require.

The temple of Fortune built for the women.

And they only requested that they would build a temple of Fortune for the women, unto the building whereof they offered themselves to defray the whole charge of the sacrifices and other ceremonies belonging to the service of the gods. Nevertheless the Senate, commending their goodwill and forwardness, ordained that the temple and image should be made at the common charge of the city. Notwithstanding that, the ladies gathered money among them, and made with the same a second image of Fortune, which the Romans say did speak as they offered her up in the temple and did set her in her place: and they affirm, that she spake these words:

The image of Fortune spake to the ladies at Romen.

"Ladies, ye have devoutly offered me up."

Moreover, that she spake that twice together: making us to believe things that never were, and are not to be credited. For to see images that seem to sweat or weep, or to put forth any humour red or bloody, it is not a thing unpossible . For wood and stone do commonly receive certain moisture, whereof are ingendered humours, which do yield of themselves, or do take of the air, many sorts and kinds of spots and colours: by which signs and tokens it is not amiss, me think, that the gods sometimes do warn men of things to come. And it is possible also, that these images and statues do sometimes put forth sounds like unto sighs or mourning, when in the midst or bottom of the same there is made some violent separation or breaking asunder of things blown or devised therein: but that a body which hath neither life nor soul should have any direct or exquisite words formed in it by express voice, that is altogether unpossible . For the soul nor God himself can distinctly speak without a body, having necessary organs and instruments meet for the parts of the same, to form and utter distinct words. But where stories many times do force us to believe a thing reported to be true, by many grave testimonies: there we must say, that it is some passion contrary to our five natural senses, which being begotten in the imaginative part or understanding draweth an opinion unto itself, even as we do in our sleeping. For many times we think we hear that we do not hear, and we imagine we see that we see not. Yet notwithstanding, such as are godly bent and zealously given to think on heavenly things, so as they can no way be drawn from believing that which is spoken of them, they have this reason to ground the foundation of their belief upon;

Of the omnipotency of God.

that is, the omnipotency of God, which is wonderful, and hath no manner of resemblance or likeness of proportion unto ours, but is altogether contrary, as touching our nature, our moving, our art, and our force: and therefore, if he do any thing unpossible to us, or do bring forth and devise things above man's common reach and understanding, we must not therefore think it unpossible at all. For if in other things he is far contrary to us, much more in his works and secret operations he far passeth all the rest: but the most part of God's doings, as Heraclitus saith, for lack of faith, are hidden and unknown unto us.

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Tullus Aufidius seeketh to kill Coriolanus.

Now when Martius was returned again into the city of Antium from his voyage, Tullus, that hated and could no longer abide him for the fear he had of his authority, sought diverse means to make him away; thinking, if he let slip that present time, he should never recover the like and fit occasion again. Wherefore Tullus, having procured many other of his confederacy, required Martius might be deposed from his estate, to render up account to the Volsces of his charge and government. Martius, fearing to become a private man again under Tullus being general (whose authority was greater otherwise than any other among all the Volsces), answered: he was willing to give up his charge, and would resign it into the hands of the lords of the Volsces, if they did all command him, as by all their commandment he received it. And moreover, that he would not refuse even at that present to give up an account unto the people, if they would tarry the hearing of it The people hereupon called a common council, in which assembly there were certain orators appointed that stirred up the common people against him: and when they had told their tales, Martius rose up to make them answer. Now, notwithstanding the mutinous people made a marvellous great noise, yet when they saw him, for the reverence they bare unto his valiantness, they quieted themselves, and gave him audience to allege with leisure what he could for his purgation . Moreover, the honestest men of the Antiates, and who most rejoiced in peace, shewed by their countenance that they would hear him willingly and judge also according to their conscience. Whereupon Tullus, fearing that, if he did let him speak, he would prove his innocency to the people, because amongst other things he had an eloquent tongue; besides that the first good service he had done to the people of the Volsces did win him more favour than these last accusations could purchase him displeasure: and furthermore, the offence they laid to his charge was a testimony of the goodwill they ought him; for they would never have thought he had done them wrong for that they took not the city of Rome, if they had not been very near taking of it by means of his approach and conduction . For these causes Tullus thought he might no longer delay his pretence and enterprise, neither to tarry for the mutining and rising of the common people against him: wherefore those that were of the conspiracy began to cry out that he was not to be heard, and that they would not suffer a traitor to usurp tyrannical power over the tribe of the Volsces, who would not yield up his state and authority.

Coriolanus murdered in the city of Antium.

And in saying these words, they all fell upon him, and killed him in the marketplace, none of the people once offering to rescue him. .

Coriolanus' funeral.

Howbeit it is a clear case, that this murder was not generally consented unto of the most part of the Volsces: for men came out of all parts to honour his body, and did honourably bury him; setting out his tomb with great store of armour and spoils, as the tomb of a worthy person and great captain. The Romans, understanding of his death, shewed no other honour or malice, saving that they granted the ladies their request they made, that they might mourn ten months for him: and that was the full time they used to wear blacks for the death of their fathers, brethren, or husbands,

The time of mourning appointed by Numa.

according to Numa Pompilius' order who stablished the same, as we have enlarged more amply in the description of his life. Now Martius being dead, the whole state of the Volsces heartily wished him alive again. For, first of all, they fell out with the Aeques (who were their friends and confederates) touching preheminence and place: and this quarrel grew on so far between them, that frays and murders fell out upon it one with another.

Tullus Aufidius slain in battle.

After that, the Romans overcame them in battle, in which Tullus was slain in the field, and the flower of all their force was put to the sword: so that they were compelled to accept most shameful conditions of peace, in yielding themselves subject unto the conquerors, and promising to be obedient at their commandment.

PERICLES – John Gower’s *Confessio Amantis*

Book VIII of John Gower’s *Confessio Amantis* (1393) provided Shakespeare with the main source of the late play *Pericles* .

Incipit Liber Octavus

Que favet ad vicium vetus hec modo regula confert,

Nec novus e contra qui docet ordo placet.

Cecus amor dudum nondum sua lumina cepit,

Quo Venus impositum devia fallit iter.

The myhti god, which unbegunne

Stant of himself and hath begunne

Alle othre thinges at his wille,

The hevene him liste to fulfille

Of alle joie, where as he

Sit inthronized in his See,

And hath hise Angles him to serve,

Suche as him liketh to preserve,

So that thei mowe noght forsueie:
Bot Lucifer he putte aweie,
With al the route apostazied
Of hem that ben to him allied,
Whiche out of hevene into the helle
From Angles into fendes felle;
Wher that ther is no joie of lyht,
Bot more derk than eny nyht
The peine schal ben endeles;
And yit of fyres natheles
Ther is plente, bot thei ben blake,
Wherof no syhte mai be take.
Thus whan the thinges ben befalle,
That Luciferes court was falle
Wher dedly Pride hem hath conveied,
Anon forthwith it was pourveied
Thurgh him which alle thinges may;
He made Adam the sexte day
In Paradis, and to his make
Him liketh Eve also to make,
And bad hem cresce and multiplie.

For of the mannes Progenie,
Which of the womman schal be bore,
The nombre of Angles which was lore,
Whan thei out fro the blisse felle,
He thoghte to restore, and felle
In hevene thilke holy place
Which stod tho voide upon his grace.
Bot as it is wel wiste and knowe,
Adam and Eve bot a throwe,
So as it scholde of hem betyde,
In Paradis at thilke tyde
Ne duelten, and the cause why,
Write in the bok of Genesi,
As who seith, alle men have herd,
Hou Raphael the fyri swerd
In honde tok and drof hem oute,
To gete here lyves fode aboute
Upon this wofull Erthe hiere.
Metodre seith to this matiere,
As he be revelacion
It hadde upon avision,

Hou that Adam and Eve also

Virgines comen bothe tuo

Into the world and were aschamed,

Til that nature hem hath reclamed

To love, and tauht hem thilke lore,

That ferst thei keste, and overmore

Thei don that is to kinde due,

Wherof thei hadden fair issue.

A Sone was the ferste of alle,

And Chain be name thei him calle; 60

Abel was after the secounde,

And in the geste as it is founde,

Nature so the cause ladde,

Tuo douhtres ek Dame Eve hadde,

The ferste cleped Calmana

Was, and that other Delbora.

Thus was mankinde to beginne;

Forthi that time it was no Sinne

The Soster forto take hire brother,

Whan that ther was of chois non other: 70

To Chain was Calmana betake,

And Delboram hath Abel take,
In whom was gete natheles
Of worldes folk the ferste encres.
Men sein that nede hath no lawe,
And so it was be thilke dawe
And laste into the Secounde Age,
Til that the grete water rage,
Of Noeh which was seid the flod,
The world, which thanne in Senne stod,
Hath dreint, outake lyves Eyhte.
Tho was mankinde of litel weyhte;
Sem, Cham, Japhet, of these thre,
That ben the Sones of Noe5,
The world of mannes nacion
Into multiplicacion
Was tho restored newe ayein
So ferforth, as the bokes sein,
That of hem thre and here issue
Ther was so large a retenue,
Of naciouns seventy and tuo;
In sondri place ech on of tho

The wyde world have enhabited.
Bot as nature hem hath excited,
Thei token thanne litel hiede,
The brother of the Sosterhiede
To wedde wyves, til it cam
Into the time of Habraham.
Whan the thridde Age was begunne,
The nede tho was overrunne,
For ther was poeple ynouh in londe:
Thanne ate ferste it cam to honde,
That Sosterhode of mariage
Was torned into cousinage,
So that after the rihte lyne
The Cousin weddeth the cousine.
For Habraham, er that he deide,
This charge upon his servant leide,
To him and in this wise spak,
That he his Sone Isaa5c
Do wedde for no worldes good,
Bot only to his oghne blod:
Wherof this Servant, as he bad,

Whan he was ded, his Sone hath lad
To Bathuel, wher he Rebecke
Hath wedded with the whyte necke;
For sche, he wiste wel and syh,
Was to the child cousine nyh.
And thus as Habraham hath tawht,
Whan Isaa5c was god betawht,
His Sone Jacob dede also,
And of Laban the dowhtres tuo,
Which was his Em, he tok to wyve,
And gat upon hem in his lyve,
Of hire ferst which hihte Lie,
Sex Sones of his Progenie,
And of Rachel tuo Sones eke:
The remenant was forto seke,
That is to sein of foure mo,
Wherof he gat on Bala tuo,
And of Zelpha he hadde ek tweie.
And these tuelve, as I thee seie,
Thurgh providence of god himselve
Ben seid the Patriarkes tuelve;

Of whom, as afterward befell,
The tribes tuelve of Irahel
Engendred were, and ben the same
That of Hebreus tho hadden name,
Which of Sibrede in alliance
For evere kepten thilke usance
Most comunly, til Crist was bore.
Bot afterward it was forbore
Amonges ous that ben baptized;
For of the lawe canonized
The Pope hath bede to the men,
That non schal wedden of his ken
Ne the seconde ne the thridde.
Bot thogh that holy cherche it bidde,
So to restreigne Mariage,
Ther ben yit upon loves Rage
Full manye of suche nou aday
That taken wher thei take may.
For love, which is unbesein
Of alle reson, as men sein,
Thurgh sotie and thurgh nycete,

Of his voluptuosite
He spareth no condicion
Of ken ne yit religion,
Bot as a cock among the Hennes,
Or as a Stalon in the Fennes, 160
Which goth amonges al the Stod,
Riht so can he nomore good,
Bot takth what thing comth next to honde.
Mi Sone, thou schalt understonde,
That such delit is forto blame.
Forthi if thou hast be the same
To love in eny such manere,
Tell forth therof and schrif thee hiere.
Mi fader, nay, god wot the sothe,
Mi feire is noght of such a bothe, 170
So wylde a man yit was I nevere,
That of mi ken or lief or levere
Me liste love in such a wise:
And ek I not for what emprise
I scholde assote upon a Nonne,
For thogh I hadde hir love wonne,

It myhte into no pris amonte,
So therof sette I non acompte.
Ye mai wel axe of this and that,
Bot sothli forto telle plat,
In al this world ther is bot on
The which myn herte hath overgon;
I am toward alle othre fre.
Full wel, mi Sone, nou I see
Thi word stant evere upon o place,
Bot yit therof thou hast a grace,
That thou thee myht so wel excuse
Of love such as som men use,
So as I spak of now tofore.
For al such time of love is lore,
And lich unto the bitterswete;
For thogh it thenke a man ferst swete,
He schal wel fielen ate laste
That it is sour and may noght laste.
For as a morsell envenimed,
So hath such love his lust mistimed,
And grete ensamples manyon

A man mai finde therupon.
At Rome ferst if we beginne,
Ther schal I finde hou of this sinne
An Emperour was forto blame,
Gayus Caligula be name,
Which of his oghne Sostres thre
Berefte the virginite:
And whanne he hadde hem so forlein,
As he the which was al vilein,
He dede hem out of londe exile.
Bot afterward withinne a while
God hath beraft him in his ire
His lif and ek his large empire:
And thus for likinge of a throwe
For evere his lust was overthrowe.
Of this sotie also I finde,
Amon his Soster ayein kinde,
Which hihte Thamar, he forlay;
Bot he that lust an other day
Aboghte, whan that Absolon
His oghne brother therupon,

Of that he hadde his Soster schent,
Tok of that Senne vengement 220
And slowh him with his oghne hond:

And thus thunkinde unkinde fond.
And forto se more of this thing,
The bible makth a knowleching,
Wherof thou miht take evidence
Upon the sothe experience.
Whan Lothes wif was overgon
And schape into the salte Ston,
As it is spoke into this day,
Be bothe hise dowhtres thanne he lay, 230
With childe and made hem bothe grete,
Til that nature hem wolde lete,
And so the cause aboute ladde
That ech of hem a Sone hadde,
Moab the ferste, and the seconde
Amon, of whiche, as it is founde,
Cam afterward to gret encres
Tuo nacions: and natheles,

For that the stockes were ungoode,

The branches mihten noght be goode; 240

For of the false Moabites

Forth with the strengthe of Amonites,

Of that thei weren ferst misgete,

The poeple of god was ofte upsete

In Irahel and in Judee,

As in the bible a man mai se.

Lo thus, my Sone, as I thee seie,

Thou miht thiselve be beseie

Of that thou hast of othre herd:

For evere yit it hath so ferd, 250

Of loves lust if so befalle

That it in other place falle

Than it is of the lawe set,

He which his love hath so beset

Mote afterward repente him sore.

And every man is othres lore;

Of that befell in time er this

The present time which now is

May ben enformed hou it stod,

And take that him thenketh good,
And leve that which is noght so.
Bot forto loke of time go,
Hou lust of love excedeth lawe,
It oghte forto be withdrawe;
For every man it scholde drede,
And nameliche in his Sibrede,
Which torneth ofte to vengance:
Wherof a tale in remembrance,
Which is a long process to hiere,
I thenke forto tellen hiere.
Of a Cronique in daies gon,
The which is cleped Pantheon,
In loves cause I rede thus,
Hou that the grete Antiochus,
Of whom that Antioche tok
His ferste name, as seith the bok,
Was coupled to a noble queene,
And hadde a dowhter hem betwene:
Bot such fortune cam to honde,
That deth, which no king mai withstonde,

Bot every lif it mote obeie,
This worthi queene tok aweie.
The king, which made mochel mone,
Tho stod, as who seith, al him one
Withoute wif, bot natheles
His doghter, which was piereles
Of beaute, duelte aboute him stille.
Bot whanne a man hath welthe at wille,
The fleissh is frele and falleth ofte,
And that this maide tendre and softe,
Which in hire fadres chambres duelte,
Withinne a time wiste and felte:
For likinge and concupiscence
Withoute insihte of conscience
The fader so with lustes blente,
That he caste al his hole entente
His oghne doghter forto spille.
This king hath leisir at his wille
With strengthe, and whanne he time sih,
This yonge maiden he forlih:
And sche was tendre and full of drede,

Sche couthe noght hir Maidenhede
Defende, and thus sche hath forlore
The flour which she hath longe bore.
It helpeth noght althogh sche wepe,
For thei that scholde hir bodi kepe
Of wommen were absent as thanne;
And thus this maiden goth to manne,
The wylde fader thus devoureth
His oghne fleissh, which non socoureth,
And that was cause of mochel care.
Bot after this unkinde fare
Out of the chambre goth the king,
And sche lay stille, and of this thing,
Withinne hirself such sorghe made,
Ther was no wiht that mihte hir glade,
For feere of thilke horrible vice.
With that cam inne the Norrice
Which fro childhode hire hadde kept,
And axeth if sche hadde slept,
And why hire chiere was unglad.
Bot sche, which hath ben overlad

Of that sche myhte noght be wreke,

For schame couthe unethes speke;

And natheles mercy sche preide

With wepende yhe and thus sche seide:

"Helas, mi Soster, waileway,

That evere I sih this ilke day!

Thing which mi bodi ferst begat

Into this world, onliche that

Mi worldes worschipe hath bereft."

With that sche swouneth now and eft,

And evere wissheth after deth,

So that welnyh hire lacketh breth.

That other, which hire wordes herde,

In confortinge of hire ansuerde,

To lette hire fadres fol desir

Sche wiste no recoverir:

Whan thing is do, ther is no bote,

So suffren thei that suffre mote;

Ther was non other which it wiste.

Thus hath this king al that him liste

Of his likinge and his plesance,

And laste in such continuance,
And such delit he tok therinne,
Him thoghte that it was no Sinne;
And sche dorste him nothing withseie.
Bot fame, which goth every weie,
To sondry regnes al aboute
The grete beaute telleth oute
Of such a maide of hih parage:
So that for love of mariage
The worthi Princes come and sende,
As thei the whiche al honour wende,
And knewe nothing hou it stod.
The fader, whanne he understod,
That thei his dowhter thus besoghte,
With al his wit he caste and thoghte
Hou that he myhte finde a lette;
And such a Statut thanne he sette,
And in this wise his lawe he taxeth,
That what man that his doghter axeth,
Bot if he couthe his question
Assoile upon suggestion

Of certein thinges that befelle,
The whiche he wolde unto him telle,
He scholde in certein lese his hed.
And thus ther weren manye ded,
Here hevedes stondende on the gate,
Till ate laste longe and late,
For lacke of ansuere in the wise,
The remenant that weren wise
Eschuieden to make assay.
Til it befell upon a day
Appolinus the Prince of Tyr,
Which hath to love a gret desir,
As he which in his hihe mod
Was likende of his hote blod,
A yong, a freissh, a lusti knyht,
As he lai musende on a nyht
Of the tidinges whiche he herde,
He thoghte assaie hou that it ferde.
He was with worthi compainie
Arraied, and with good navie
To schipe he goth, the wynd him dryveth,

And seileth, til that he arryveth:

Sauf in the port of Antioche

He londeth, and goth to aproche

The kinges Court and his presence.

Of every naturel science,

Which eny clerk him couthe teche,

He couthe ynowh, and in his speche

Of wordes he was eloquent;

And whanne he sih the king present,

He preith he moste his dowhter have.

The king ayein began to crave,

And tolde him the condicion,

Hou ferst unto his question

He mote ansuere and faile noght,

Or with his heved it schal be boght:

And he him axeth what it was.

The king declareth him the cas

With sturne lok and sturdi chiere,

To him and seide in this manere:

"With felonie I am upbore,

I ete and have it noght forbore

Mi modres fleissh, whos housebonde

Mi fader forto seche I fonde,

Which is the Sone ek of my wif.

Hierof I am inquisitif;   410

And who that can mi tale save,

Al quyt he schal my doghter have;

Of his ansuere and if he faile,

He schal be ded withoute faile.

Forthi my Sone," quod the king,

"Be wel avised of this thing,

Which hath thi lif in jeupartie."

Appolinus for his partie,

Whan he this question hath herd,

Unto the king he hath ansuerd   420

And hath rehersed on and on

The pointz, and seide therupon:

"The question which thou hast spoke,

If thou wolt that it be unloke,

It toucheth al the privete

Betwen thin oghne child and thee,

And stant al hol upon you tuo."

The king was wonder sory tho,
And thoghte, if that he seide it oute,
Than were he schamed al aboute.
With slihe wordes and with felle
He seith, "Mi Sone, I schal thee telle,
Though that thou be of litel wit,
It is no gret merveile as yit,
Thin age mai it noght suffise:
Bot loke wel thou noght despise
Thin oghne lif, for of my grace
Of thretty daies fulle a space
I grante thee, to ben avised."
And thus with leve and time assised
This yonge Prince forth he wente,
And understod wel what it mente,
Withinne his herte as he was lered,
That forto maken him afered
The king his time hath so deslaied.
Wherof he dradde and was esmaied,
Of treson that he deie scholde,
For he the king his sothe tolde;

And sodeinly the nyhtes tyde,
That more wolde he noght abide,
Al prively his barge he hente
And hom ayein to Tyr he wente:
And in his oghne wit he seide
For drede, if he the king bewreide,
He knew so wel the kinges herte,
That deth ne scholde he noght asterte,
The king him wolde so poursuie.
Bot he, that wolde his deth eschuie,
And knew al this tofor the hond,
Forsake he thoghte his oghne lond,
That there wolde he noght abyde;
For wel he knew that on som syde
This tirant of his felonie
Be som manere of tricherie
To grieve his bodi wol noght leve.
Forthi withoute take leve,
Als priveliche as evere he myhte,
He goth him to the See be nyhte
In Schipes that be whete laden:

Here takel redy tho thei maden 470
And hale up Seil and forth thei fare.
Bot forto tellen of the care
That thei of Tyr begonne tho,
Whan that thei wiste he was ago,
It is a Pite forto hiere.
They losten lust, they losten chiere,
Thei toke upon hem such penaunce,
Ther was no song, ther was no daunce,
Bot every merthe and melodie
To hem was thanne a maladie; 480
For unlust of that aventure
Ther was noman which tok tonsure,
In doelful clothes thei hem clothe,
The bathes and the Stwes bothe
Thei schetten in be every weie;
There was no lif which leste pleie
Ne take of eny joie kepe,
Bot for here liege lord to wepe;
And every wyht seide as he couthe,
"Helas, the lusti flour of youthe, 490

Our Prince, oure heved, our governour,

Thurgh whom we stoden in honour,

Withoute the comun assent

Thus sodeinliche is fro ous went!"

Such was the clamour of hem alle.

Bot se we now what is befalle

Upon the ferste tale plein,

And torne we therto ayein.

Antiochus the grete Sire,

Which full of rancour and of ire

His herte berth, so as ye herde,

Of that this Prince of Tyr ansuerde,

He hadde a feloun bacheler,

Which was his prive consailer,

And Taliart be name he hihte:

The king a strong puison him dihte

Withinne a buiste and gold therto,

In alle haste and bad him go

Strawht unto Tyr, and for no cost

Ne spare he, til he hadde lost

The Prince which he wolde spille.

And whan the king hath seid his wille,
This Taliart in a Galeie
With alle haste he tok his weie:
The wynd was good, he saileth blyve,
Til he tok lond upon the ryve
Of Tyr, and forth with al anon
Into the Burgh he gan to gon,
And tok his In and bod a throwe.
Bot for he wolde noght be knowe,
Desguised thanne he goth him oute;
He sih the wepinge al aboute,
And axeth what the cause was,
And thei him tolden al the cas,
How sodeinli the Prince is go.
And whan he sih that it was so,
And that his labour was in vein,
Anon he torneth hom ayein,
And to the king, whan he cam nyh,
He tolde of that he herde and syh,
Hou that the Prince of Tyr is fled,
So was he come ayein unsped.

The king was sori for a while,
Bot whan he sih that with no wyle
He myhte achieve his crualte,
He stinte his wraththe and let him be.
Bot over this now forto telle
Of aventures that befelle
Unto this Prince of whom I tolde,
He hath his rihte cours forth holde
Be Ston and nedle, til he cam
To Tharse, and there his lond he nam.
A Burgeis riche of gold and fee
Was thilke time in that cite,
Which cleped was Strangulio,
His wif was Dionise also:
This yonge Prince, as seith the bok,
With hem his herbergage tok;
And it befell that Cite so
Before time and thanne also,
Thurgh strong famyne which hem ladde
Was non that eny whete hadde.
Appolinus, whan that he herde

The meschief, hou the cite ferde,
Al freliche of his oghne yifte
His whete, among hem forto schifte,
The which be Schipe he hadde broght,
He yaf, and tok of hem riht noght.
Bot sithen ferst this world began,
Was nevere yit to such a man
Mor joie mad than thei him made:
For thei were alle of him so glade,
That thei for evere in remembrance
Made a figure in resemblance
Of him, and in the comun place
Thei sette him up, so that his face
Mihte every maner man beholde,
So as the cite was beholde;
It was of latoun overgilt:
Thus hath he noght his yifte spilt.
Upon a time with his route
This lord to pleie goth him oute,
And in his weie of Tyr he mette
A man, the which on knees him grette,

And Hellican be name he hihte,
Which preide his lord to have insihte
Upon himself, and seide him thus,
Hou that the grete Antiochus
Awaiteth if he mihte him spille.
That other thoghte and hield him stille,
And thonked him of his warnynge,
And bad him telle no tidinge,
Whan he to Tyr cam hom ayein,
That he in Tharse him hadde sein.
Fortune hath evere be muable
And mai no while stonde stable:
For now it hiheth, now it loweth,
Now stant upriht, now overthroweth,
Now full of blisse and now of bale,
As in the tellinge of mi tale
Hierafterward a man mai liere,
Which is gret routhe forto hiere.
This lord, which wolde don his beste,
Withinne himself hath litel reste,
And thoghte he wolde his place change

And seche a contre more strange.

Of Tharsiens his leve anon

He tok, and is to Schipe gon:

His cours he nam with Seil updrawe,

Where as fortune doth the lawe, 600

And scheweth, as I schal reherse,

How sche was to this lord diverse,

The which upon the See sche ferketh.

The wynd aros, the weder derketh,

It blew and made such tempeste,

Non ancher mai the schip areste,

Which hath tobroken al his gere;

The Schipmen stode in such a feere,

Was non that myhte himself bestere,

Bot evere awaite upon the lere, 610

Whan that thei scholde drenche at ones.

Ther was ynowh withinne wones

Of wepinge and of sorghe tho;

This yonge king makth mochel wo

So forto se the Schip travaile:

Bot al that myhte him noght availe;

The mast tobrak, the Seil torof,
The Schip upon the wawes drof,
Til that thei sihe a londes cooste.
Tho made avou the leste and moste,
Be so thei myhten come alonde;
Bot he which hath the See on honde,
Neptunus, wolde noght acorde,
Bot altobroke cable and corde,
Er thei to londe myhte aproche,
The Schip toclef upon a roche,
And al goth doun into the depe.
Bot he that alle thing mai kepe
Unto this lord was merciable,
And broghte him sauf upon a table,
Which to the lond him hath upbore;
The remenant was al forlore,
Wherof he made mochel mone.
Thus was this yonge lord him one,
Al naked in a povere plit:
His colour, which whilom was whyt,
Was thanne of water fade and pale,

And ek he was so sore acale

That he wiste of himself no bote,

It halp him nothing forto mote 640

To gete ayein that he hath lore.

Bot sche which hath his deth forbore,

Fortune, thogh sche wol noght yelpe,

Al sodeinly hath sent him helpe,

Whanne him thoghte alle grace aweie;

Ther cam a Fisshere in the weie,

And sih a man ther naked stonde,

And whan that he hath understonde

The cause, he hath of him gret routhe,

And onliche of his povere trouthe 650

Of suche clothes as he hadde

With gret Pite this lord he cladde.

And he him thonketh as he scholde,

And seith him that it schal be yolde,

If evere he gete his stat ayein,

And preide that he wolde him sein

If nyh were eny toun for him.

He seide, "Yee, Pentapolim,

Wher bothe king and queene duellen."
Whanne he this tale herde tellen,
He gladeth him and gan beseche
That he the weie him wolde teche:
And he him taghte; and forth he wente
And preide god with good entente
To sende him joie after his sorwe.
It was noght passed yit Midmorwe,
Whan thiderward his weie he nam,
Wher sone upon the Non he cam.
He eet such as he myhte gete,
And forth anon, whan he hadde ete,
He goth to se the toun aboute,
And cam ther as he fond a route
Of yonge lusti men withalle;
And as it scholde tho befalle,
That day was set of such assisse,
That thei scholde in the londes guise,
As he herde of the poeple seie,
Here comun game thanne pleie;
And crid was that thei scholden come

Unto the gamen alle and some
Of hem that ben delivere and wyhte,
To do such maistrie as thei myhte.
Thei made hem naked as thei scholde,
For so that ilke game wolde,
As it was tho custume and us,
Amonges hem was no refus:
The flour of al the toun was there
And of the court also ther were,
And that was in a large place
Riht evene afore the kinges face,
Which Artestrathes thanne hihte.
The pley was pleid riht in his sihte,
And who most worthi was of dede
Receive he scholde a certein mede
And in the cite bere a pris.
Appolinus, which war and wys
Of every game couthe an ende,
He thoghte assaie, hou so it wende,
And fell among hem into game:
And there he wan him such a name,

So as the king himself acompteth

That he alle othre men surmonteth,

And bar the pris above hem alle.

The king bad that into his halle

At Souper time he schal be broght;

And he cam thanne and lefte it noght,

Withoute compaignie al one:

Was non so semlich of persone,

Of visage and of limes bothe,

If that he hadde what to clothe. 710

At Soupertime natheles

The king amiddes al the pres

Let clepe him up among hem alle,

And bad his Mareschall of halle

To setten him in such degre

That he upon him myhte se.

The king was sone set and served,

And he, which hath his pris deserved

After the kinges oghne word,

Was mad beginne a Middel bord, 720

That bothe king and queene him sihe.

He sat and caste aboute his yhe
And sih the lordes in astat,
And with himself wax in debat
Thenkende what he hadde lore,
And such a sorwe he tok therfore,
That he sat evere stille and thoghte,
As he which of no mete roghte.
The king behield his hevynesse,
And of his grete gentillesse
His doghter, which was fair and good
And ate bord before him stod,
As it was thilke time usage,
He bad to gon on his message
And fonde forto make him glad.
And sche dede as hire fader bad,
And goth to him the softe pas
And axeth whenne and what he was,
And preith he scholde his thoghtes leve.
He seith, "Ma Dame, be your leve
Mi name is hote Appolinus,
And of mi richesse it is thus,

Upon the See I have it lore.
The contre wher as I was bore,
Wher that my lond is and mi rente,
I lefte at Tyr, whan that I wente:
The worschipe of this worldes aghte,
Unto the god ther I betaghte."
And thus togedre as thei tuo speeke,
The teres runne be his cheeke.
The king, which therof tok good kepe,
Hath gret Pite to sen him wepe,
And for his doghter sende ayein,
And preide hir faire and gan to sein
That sche no lengere wolde drecche,
Bot that sche wolde anon forth fecche
Hire harpe and don al that sche can
To glade with that sory man.
And sche to don hir fader heste
Hir harpe fette, and in the feste
Upon a Chaier which thei fette
Hirself next to this man sche sette:
With harpe bothe and ek with mouthe

To him sche dede al that sche couthe
To make him chiere, and evere he siketh,
And sche him axeth hou him liketh.
"Ma dame, certes wel," he seide,
"Bot if ye the mesure pleide
Which, if you list, I schal you liere,
It were a glad thing forto hiere."
"Ha, lieve sire," tho quod sche,
"Now tak the harpe and let me se
Of what mesure that ye mene."
Tho preith the king, tho preith the queene,
Forth with the lordes alle arewe,
That he som merthe wolde schewe;
He takth the Harpe and in his wise
He tempreth, and of such assise
Singende he harpeth forth withal,
That as a vois celestial
Hem thoghte it souneth in here Ere,
As thogh that he an Angel were.
Thei gladen of his melodie,
Bot most of alle the compainie

The kinges doghter, which it herde,
And thoghte ek hou that he ansuerde,
Whan that he was of hire opposed,
Withinne hir herte hath wel supposed
That he is of gret gentilesse.
Hise dedes ben therof witnesse
Forth with the wisdom of his lore;
It nedeth noght to seche more,
He myhte noght have such manere,
Of gentil blod bot if he were.
Whanne he hath harped al his fille,
The kinges heste to fulfille,
Awey goth dissh, awey goth cuppe,
Doun goth the bord, the cloth was uppe,
Thei risen and gon out of halle.
The king his chamberlein let calle,
And bad that he be alle weie
A chambre for this man pourveie,
Which nyh his oghne chambre be.

"It schal be do, mi lord," quod he.

Appolinus of whom I mene

Tho tok his leve of king and queene

And of the worthi Maide also,

Which preide unto hir fader tho,

That sche myhte of that yonge man

Of tho sciences whiche he can 810

His lore have; and in this wise

The king hir granteth his aprise,

So that himself therto assente.

Thus was acorded er thei wente,

That he with al that evere he may

This yonge faire freisshe May

Of that he couthe scholde enforme;

And full assented in this forme

Thei token leve as for that nyht.

And whanne it was amorwe lyht, 820

Unto this yonge man of Tyr

Of clothes and of good atir

With gold and Selver to despende

This worthi yonge lady sende:

And thus sche made him wel at ese,

And he with al that he can plese
Hire serveth wel and faire ayein.
He tawhte hir til sche was certein
Of Harpe, of Citole and of Rote,
With many a tun and many a note
Upon Musique, upon mesure,
And of hire Harpe the temprure
He tawhte hire ek, as he wel couthe.
Bot as men sein that frele is youthe,
With leisir and continuance
This Mayde fell upon a chance,
That love hath mad him a querele
Ayein hire youthe freissh and frele,
That malgre wher sche wole or noght,
Sche mot with al hire hertes thoght
To love and to his lawe obeie;
And that sche schal ful sore abeie.
For sche wot nevere what it is,
Bot evere among sche fieleth this:
Thenkende upon this man of Tyr,
Hire herte is hot as eny fyr,

And otherwhile it is acale;

Now is sche red, nou is sche pale

Riht after the condicion

Of hire ymaginacion; 850

Bot evere among hire thoghtes alle,

Sche thoghte, what so mai befalle,

Or that sche lawhe, or that sche wepe,

Sche wolde hire goode name kepe

For feere of wommanysshe schame.

Bot what in ernest and in game,

Sche stant for love in such a plit,

That sche hath lost al appetit

Of mete, of drinke, of nyhtes reste,

As sche that not what is the beste; 860

Bot forto thenken al hir fille

Sche hield hire ofte times stille

Withinne hir chambre, and goth noght oute:

The king was of hire lif in doute,

Which wiste nothing what it mente.

Bot fell a time, as he out wente

To walke, of Princes Sones thre

Ther come and felle to his kne;
And ech of hem in sondri wise
Besoghte and profreth his servise, 870
So that he myhte his doghter have.
The king, which wolde his honour save,
Seith sche is siek, and of that speche
Tho was no time to beseche;
Bot ech of hem do make a bille
He bad, and wryte his oghne wille,
His name, his fader and his good;
And whan sche wiste hou that it stod,
And hadde here billes oversein,
Thei scholden have ansuere ayein. 880
Of this conseil thei weren glad,
And writen as the king hem bad,
And every man his oghne bok
Into the kinges hond betok,
And he it to his dowhter sende,
And preide hir forto make an ende
And wryte ayein hire oghne hond,
Riht as sche in hire herte fond.

The billes weren wel received,
Bot sche hath alle here loves weyved,
And thoghte tho was time and space
To put hire in hir fader grace,
And wrot ayein and thus sche saide:
"The schame which is in a Maide
With speche dar noght ben unloke,
Bot in writinge it mai be spoke;
So wryte I to you, fader, thus:
Bot if I have Appolinus,
Of al this world, what so betyde,
I wol non other man abide.
And certes if I of him faile,
I wot riht wel withoute faile
Ye schull for me be dowhterles."
This lettre cam, and ther was press
Tofore the king, ther as he stod;
And whan that he it understod,
He yaf hem ansuer by and by,
Bot that was do so prively,
That non of othres conseil wiste.

Thei toke her leve, and wher hem liste
Thei wente forth upon here weie.
The king ne wolde noght bewreie
The conseil for no maner hihe,
Bot soffreth til he time sihe:
And whan that he to chambre is come,
He hath unto his conseil nome
This man of Tyr, and let him se
The lettre and al the privete,
The which his dowhter to him sente:
And he his kne to grounde bente
And thonketh him and hire also,
And er thei wenten thanne atuo,
With good herte and with good corage
Of full Love and full mariage
The king and he ben hol acorded.
And after, whanne it was recorded
Unto the dowhter hou it stod,
The yifte of al this worldes good
Ne scholde have mad hir half so blythe:
And forth withal the king als swithe,

For he wol have hire good assent,
Hath for the queene hir moder sent.
The queene is come, and whan sche herde
Of this matiere hou that it ferde,
Sche syh debat, sche syh desese,
Bot if sche wolde hir dowhter plese,
And is therto assented full.
Which is a dede wonderfull,
For noman knew the sothe cas
Bot he himself, what man he was; 940
And natheles, so as hem thoghte,
Hise dedes to the sothe wroghte
That he was come of gentil blod:
Him lacketh noght bot worldes good,
And as therof is no despeir,
For sche schal ben hire fader heir,
And he was able to governe.
Thus wol thei noght the love werne
Of him and hire in none wise,
Bot ther acorded thei divise 950
The day and time of Mariage.

Wher love is lord of the corage,
Him thenketh longe er that he spede;
Bot ate laste unto the dede
The time is come, and in her wise
With gret offrende and sacrifise
Thei wedde and make a riche feste,
And every thing which was honeste
Withinnen house and ek withoute
It was so don, that al aboute
Of gret worschipe, of gret noblesse
Ther cride many a man largesse
Unto the lordes hihe and loude;
The knyhtes that ben yonge and proude,
Thei jouste ferst and after daunce.
The day is go, the nyhtes chaunce
Hath derked al the bryhte Sonne;
This lord, which hath his love wonne,
Is go to bedde with his wif,
Wher as thei ladde a lusti lif,
And that was after somdel sene,
For as thei pleiden hem betwene,

Thei gete a child betwen hem tuo,
To whom fell after mochel wo.
Now have I told of the spousailes.
Bot forto speke of the mervailes
Whiche afterward to hem befelle,
It is a wonder forto telle.
It fell adai thei riden oute,
The king and queene and al the route,
To pleien hem upon the stronde,
Wher as thei sen toward the londe
A Schip sailende of gret array.
To knowe what it mene may,
Til it be come thei abide;
Than sen thei stonde on every side,
Endlong the schipes bord to schewe,
Of Penonceals a riche rewe.
Thei axen when the ship is come:
Fro Tyr, anon ansuerde some,
And over this thei seiden more
The cause why thei comen fore
Was forto seche and forto finde

Appolinus, which was of kinde
Her liege lord: and he appiereth,
And of the tale which he hiereth
He was riht glad; for thei him tolde,
That for vengance, as god it wolde,
Antiochus, as men mai wite,
With thondre and lyhthnynge is forsmite; 1000
His doghter hath the same chaunce,
So be thei bothe in o balance.
"Forthi, oure liege lord, we seie
In name of al the lond, and preie,
That left al other thing to done,
It like you to come sone
And se youre oghne liege men
With othre that ben of youre ken,
That live in longinge and desir
Til ye be come ayein to Tyr." 1010
This tale after the king it hadde
Pentapolim al overspradde,
Ther was no joie forto seche;
For every man it hadde in speche

And seiden alle of on acord,
"A worthi king schal ben oure lord:
That thoghte ous ferst an hevinesse
Is schape ous now to gret gladnesse."
Thus goth the tidinge overal.
Bot nede he mot, that nede schal: 1020
Appolinus his leve tok,
To god and al the lond betok
With al the poeple long and brod,
That he no lenger there abod.
The king and queene sorwe made,
Bot yit somdiel thei weren glade
Of such thing as thei herden tho:
And thus betwen the wel and wo
To schip he goth, his wif with childe,
The which was evere meke and mylde 1030
And wolde noght departe him fro,
Such love was betwen hem tuo.
Lichorida for hire office
Was take, which was a Norrice,
To wende with this yonge wif,

To whom was schape a woful lif.
Withinne a time, as it betidde,
Whan thei were in the See amidde,
Out of the North they sihe a cloude;
The storm aros, the wyndes loude
Thei blewen many a dredful blast,
The welkne was al overcast,
The derke nyht the Sonne hath under,
Ther was a gret tempeste of thunder:
The Mone and ek the Sterres bothe
In blake cloudes thei hem clothe,
Wherof here brihte lok thei hyde.
This yonge ladi wepte and cride,
To whom no confort myhte availe;
Of childe sche began travaile,
Wher sche lay in a Caban clos:
Hire woful lord fro hire aros,
And that was longe er eny morwe,
So that in anguisse and in sorwe
Sche was delivered al be nyhte
And ded in every mannes syhte;

Bot natheles for al this wo
A maide child was bore tho.
Appolinus whan he this knew,
For sorwe a swoune he overthrew, 1060
That noman wiste in him no lif.
And whanne he wok, he seide, "Ha, wif,
Mi lust, mi joie, my desir,
Mi welthe and my recoverir,
Why schal I live, and thou schalt dye?
Ha, thou fortune, I thee deffie,
Nou hast thou do to me thi werste.
Ha, herte, why ne wolt thou berste,
That forth with hire I myhte passe?
Mi peines weren wel the lasse." 1070
In such wepinge and in such cry
His dede wif, which lay him by,
A thousend sithes he hire kiste;
Was nevere man that sih ne wiste
A sorwe unto his sorwe lich;
For evere among upon the lich
He fell swounende, as he that soghte

His oghne deth, which he besoghte
Unto the goddes alle above
With many a pitous word of love;
Bot suche wordes as tho were
Yit herde nevere mannes Ere,
Bot only thilke whiche he seide.
The Maister Schipman cam and preide
With othre suche as be therinne,
And sein that he mai nothing winne
Ayein the deth, bot thei him rede,
He be wel war and tak hiede,
The See be weie of his nature
Receive mai no creature
Withinne himself as forto holde,
The which is ded: forthi thei wolde,
As thei conseilen al aboute,
The dede body casten oute.
For betre it is, thei seiden alle,
That it of hire so befalle,
Than if thei scholden alle spille.
The king, which understod here wille

And knew here conseil that was trewe,
Began ayein his sorwe newe   1100
With pitous herte, and thus to seie:

"It is al reson that ye preie.
I am," quod he, "bot on al one,
So wolde I noght for mi persone
Ther felle such adversite.
Bot whan it mai no betre be,
Doth thanne thus upon my word,
Let make a cofre strong of bord,
That it be ferm with led and pich."
Anon was mad a cofre sich,   1110
Al redy broght unto his hond;
And whanne he sih and redy fond
This cofre mad and wel enclowed,
The dede bodi was besowed
In cloth of gold and leid therinne.
And for he wolde unto hire winne
Upon som cooste a Sepulture,
Under hire heved in aventure

Of gold he leide Sommes grete
And of jeueals a strong beyete
Forth with a lettre, and seide thus:
"I, king of Tyr Appollinus,
Do alle maner men to wite,
That hiere and se this lettre write,
That helpeles withoute red
Hier lith a kinges doghter ded:
And who that happeth hir to finde,
For charite tak in his mynde,
And do so that sche be begrave
With this tresor, which he schal have."
Thus whan the lettre was full spoke,
Thei haue anon the cofre stoke,
And bounden it with yren faste,
That it may with the wawes laste,
And stoppen it be such a weie,
That it schal be withinne dreie,
So that no water myhte it grieve.
And thus in hope and good believe
Of that the corps schal wel aryve,

Thei caste it over bord als blyve.
The Schip forth on the wawes wente;
The prince hath changed his entente,
And seith he wol noght come at Tyr
As thanne, bot al his desir
Is ferst to seilen unto Tharse.
The wyndy Storm began to skarse,
The Sonne arist, the weder cliereth,
The Schipman which behinde stiereth,
Whan that he sih the wyndes saghte,
Towardes Tharse his cours he straghte.
Bot now to mi matiere ayein,
To telle as olde bokes sein,
This dede corps of which ye knowe
With wynd and water was forthrowe
Now hier, now ther, til ate laste
At Ephesim the See upcaste
The cofre and al that was therinne.
Of gret merveile now beginne
Mai hiere who that sitteth stille;
That god wol save mai noght spille.

Riht as the corps was throwe alonde,

Ther cam walkende upon the stronde

A worthi clerc, a Surgien,

And ek a gret Phisicien,

Of al that lond the wisest on,

Which hihte Maister Cerymon;

Ther were of his disciples some.

This Maister to the Cofre is come,

He peiseth ther was somwhat in,

And bad hem bere it to his In, 1170

And goth himselve forth withal.

Al that schal falle, falle schal;

Thei comen hom and tarie noght;

This Cofre is into chambre broght,

Which that thei finde faste stoke,

Bot thei with craft it have unloke.

Thei loken in, where as thei founde

A bodi ded, which was bewounde

In cloth of gold, as I seide er,

The tresor ek thei founden ther 1180

Forth with the lettre, which thei rede.

And tho thei token betre hiede;

Unsowed was the bodi sone,

And he, which knew what is to done,

This noble clerk, with alle haste

Began the veines forto taste,

And sih hire Age was of youthe,

And with the craftes whiche he couthe

He soghte and fond a signe of lif.

With that this worthi kinges wif 1190

Honestely thei token oute,

And maden fyres al aboute;

Thei leide hire on a couche softe,

And with a scheete warmed ofte

Hire colde brest began to hete,

Hire herte also to flacke and bete.

This Maister hath hire every joignt

With certein oile and balsme enoignt,

And putte a liquour in hire mouth,

Which is to fewe clerkes couth, 1200

So that sche coevereth ate laste;

And ferst hire yhen up sche caste,

And whan sche more of strengthe cawhte,

Hire Armes bothe forth sche strawhte,

Hield up hire hond and pitously

Sche spak and seide, "Ha, wher am I?

Where is my lord, what world is this?"

As sche that wot noght hou it is.

Bot Cerymon the worthi leche

Ansuerde anon upon hire speche 1210

And seith, "Ma dame, yee ben hiere,

Where yee be sauf, as yee schal hiere

Hierafterward; forthi as nou

Mi conseil is, conforteth you:

For trusteth wel withoute faile,

Ther is nothing which schal you faile,

That oghte of reson to be do."

Thus passen thei a day or tuo;

Thei speke of noght as for an ende,

Til sche began somdiel amende, 1220

And wiste hireselven what sche mente.

Tho forto knowe hire hol entente,

This Maister axeth al the cas,

Hou sche cam there and what sche was.
"Hou I cam hiere wot I noght,"
Quod sche, "bot wel I am bethoght
Of othre thinges al aboute":
Fro point to point and tolde him oute
Als ferforthli as sche it wiste.
And he hire tolde hou in a kiste
The See hire threw upon the lond,
And what tresor with hire he fond,
Which was al redy at hire wille,
As he that schop him to fulfille
With al his myht what thing he scholde.
Sche thonketh him that he so wolde,
And al hire herte sche discloseth,
And seith him wel that sche supposeth
Hire lord be dreint, hir child also;
So sih sche noght bot alle wo.
Wherof as to the world nomore
Ne wol sche torne, and preith therfore
That in som temple of the Cite,
To kepe and holde hir chastete,

Sche mihte among the wommen duelle.
Whan he this tale hir herde telle,
He was riht glad, and made hire knowen
That he a dowhter of his owen
Hath, which he wol unto hir yive
To serve, whil thei bothe live,
In stede of that which sche hath lost;
Al only at his oghne cost
Sche schal be rendred forth with hire.
She seith, "Grant mercy, lieve sire,
God quite it you, ther I ne may."
And thus thei drive forth the day,
Til time com that sche was hol;
And tho thei take her conseil hol,
To schape upon good ordinance
And make a worthi pourveance
Ayein the day whan thei be veiled.
And thus, whan that thei be conseiled,
In blake clothes thei hem clothe,
This lady and the dowhter bothe,
And yolde hem to religion.

The feste and the profession

After the reule of that degre

Was mad with gret solempnete,

Where as Diane is seintefied;

Thus stant this lady justefied 1270

In ordre wher sche thenkth to duelle.

Bot now ayeinward forto telle

In what plit that hire lord stod inne:

He seileth, til that he may winne

The havene of Tharse, as I seide er;

And whanne he was aryved ther,

And it was thurgh the Cite knowe,

Men myhte se withinne a throwe,

As who seith, al the toun at ones,

That come ayein him for the nones, 1280

To yiven him the reverence,

So glad thei were of his presence:

And thogh he were in his corage

Desesed, yit with glad visage

He made hem chiere, and to his In,

Wher he whilom sojourned in,

He goth him straght and was resceived.
And whan the presse of poeple is weived,
He takth his hoste unto him tho,
And seith, "Mi frend Strangulio,
Lo, thus and thus it is befalle,
And thou thiself art on of alle,
Forth with thi wif, whiche I most triste.
Forthi, if it you bothe liste,
My doghter Thaise be youre leve
I thenke schal with you beleve
As for a time; and thus I preie,
That sche be kept be alle weie,
And whan sche hath of age more,
That sche be set to bokes lore.
And this avou to god I make,
That I schal nevere for hir sake
Mi berd for no likinge schave,
Til it befalle that I have
In covenable time of age
Beset hire unto mariage."
Thus thei acorde, and al is wel,

And forto resten him somdel,

As for a while he ther sojorneth,

And thanne he takth his leve and torneth 1310

To Schipe, and goth him hom to Tyr,

Wher every man with gret desir

Awaiteth upon his comynge.

Bot whan the Schip com in seilinge,

And thei perceiven it is he,

Was nevere yit in no cite

Such joie mad as thei tho made;

His herte also began to glade

Of that he sih the poeple glad.

Lo, thus fortune his hap hath lad; 1320

In sondri wise he was travailed,

Bot hou so evere he be assailed,

His latere ende schal be good.

And forto speke hou that it stod

Of Thaise his doghter, wher sche duelleth,

In Tharse, as the Cronique telleth,

Sche was wel kept, sche was wel loked,

Sche was wel tawht, sche was wel boked,

So wel sche spedde hir in hire youthe
That sche of every wisdom couthe,
That forto seche in every lond
So wys an other noman fond,
Ne so wel tawht at mannes yhe.

Bot wo worthe evere fals envie!
For it befell that time so,
A dowhter hath Strangulio,
The which was cleped Philotenne:
Bot fame, which wole evere renne,
Cam al day to hir moder Ere,
And seith, wher evere hir doghter were
With Thayse set in eny place,
The comun vois, the comun grace
Was al upon that other Maide,
And of hir doghter noman saide.
Who wroth but Dionise thanne?
Hire thoghte a thousend yer til whanne
Sche myhte ben of Thaise wreke
Of that sche herde folk so speke.

And fell that ilke same tyde,

That ded was trewe Lychoride, 1350

Which hadde be servant to Thaise,

So that sche was the worse at aise,

For sche hath thanne no servise

Bot only thurgh this Dionise,

Which was hire dedlich Anemie

Thurgh pure treson and envie.

Sche, that of alle sorwe can,

Tho spak unto hire bondeman,

Which cleped was Theophilus,

And made him swere in conseil thus, 1360

That he such time as sche him sette

Schal come Thaise forto fette,

And lede hire oute of alle sihte,

Wher as noman hire helpe myhte,

Upon the Stronde nyh the See,

And there he schal this maiden sle.

This cherles herte is in a traunce,

As he which drad him of vengance

Whan time comth an other day;

Bot yit dorste he noght seie nay,

Bot swor and seide he schal fulfille

Hire hestes at hire oghne wille.

The treson and the time is schape,

So fell it that this cherles knape

Hath lad this maiden ther he wolde

Upon the Stronde, and what sche scholde

Sche was adrad; and he out breide

A rusti swerd and to hir seide,

"Thou schalt be ded." "Helas!" quod sche,

"Why schal I so?" "Lo thus," quod he,

"Mi ladi Dionise hath bede,

Thou schalt be moerdred in this stede."

This Maiden tho for feere schryhte,

And for the love of god almyhte

Sche preith that for a litel stounde

Sche myhte knele upon the grounde,

Toward the hevene forto crave,

Hire wofull Soule if sche mai save:

And with this noise and with this cry,

Out of a barge faste by,

Which hidd was ther on Scomerfare,

Men sterten out and weren ware

Of this feloun,and he to go,

And sche began to crie tho,

"Ha, mercy, help for goddes sake!

Into the barge thei hire take,

As thieves scholde, and forth thei wente.

Upon the See the wynd hem hente,

And malgre wher thei wolde or non,

Tofor the weder forth thei gon,

Ther halp no Seil, ther halp non Ore,

Forstormed and forblowen sore

In gret peril so forth thei dryve,

Til ate laste thei aryve

At Mitelene the Cite.

In havene sauf and whan thei be,

The Maister Schipman made him boun,

And goth him out into the toun,

And profreth Thaise forto selle.

On Leonin it herde telle,

Which Maister of the bordel was,

And bad him gon a redy pas
To fetten hire, and forth he wente,
And Thaise out of his barge he hente,
And to this bordeller hir solde.
And he, that be hire body wolde
Take avantage, let do crye,
That what man wolde his lecherie
Attempte upon hire maidenhede,
Lei doun the gold and he schal spede.
And thus whan he hath crid it oute
In syhte of al the poeple aboute,
He ladde hire to the bordel tho.

No wonder is thogh sche be wo:
Clos in a chambre be hireselve,
Ech after other ten or tuelve
Of yonge men to hire in wente;
Bot such a grace god hire sente,
That for the sorwe which sche made
Was non of hem which pouer hade
To don hire eny vileinie.

This Leonin let evere aspie,

And waiteth after gret beyete;

Bot al for noght, sche was forlete,

That mo men wolde ther noght come.

Whan he therof hath hiede nome,

And knew that sche was yit a maide,

Unto his oghne man he saide,

That he with strengthe ayein hire leve

Tho scholde hir maidenhod bereve. 1440

This man goth in, bot so it ferde,

Whan he hire wofull pleintes herde

And he therof hath take kepe,

Him liste betre forto wepe

Than don oght elles to the game.

And thus sche kepte hirself fro schame,

And kneleth doun to therthe and preide

Unto this man, and thus sche seide:

"If so be that thi maister wolde

That I his gold encresce scholde, 1450

It mai noght falle be this weie:

Bot soffre me to go mi weie

Out of this hous wher I am inne,
And I schal make him forto winne
In som place elles of the toun,
Be so it be religioun,
Wher that honeste wommen duelle.
And thus thou myht thi maister telle,
That whanne I have a chambre there,
Let him do crie ay wyde where, 1460
What lord that hath his doghter diere,
And is in will that sche schal liere
Of such a Scole that is trewe,
I schal hire teche of thinges newe,
Which as non other womman can
In al this lond." And tho this man
Hire tale hath herd, he goth ayein,
And tolde unto his maister plein
That sche hath seid; and therupon,
Whan than he sih beyete non 1470
At the bordel be cause of hire,
He bad his man to gon and spire
A place wher sche myhte abyde,

That he mai winne upon som side
Be that sche can: bot ate leste
Thus was sche sauf fro this tempeste.
He hath hire fro the bordel take,
Bot that was noght for goddes sake,
Bot for the lucre, as sche him tolde.
Now comen tho that comen wolde 1480
Of wommen in her lusty youthe,
To hiere and se what thing sche couthe:
Sche can the wisdom of a clerk,
Sche can of every lusti werk
Which to a gentil womman longeth,
And some of hem sche underfongeth
To the Citole and to the Harpe,
And whom it liketh forto carpe
Proverbes and demandes slyhe,
An other such thei nevere syhe, 1490
Which that science so wel tawhte:
Wherof sche grete yiftes cawhte,
That sche to Leonin hath wonne;
And thus hire name is so begonne

Of sondri thinges that sche techeth,

That al the lond unto hir secheth

Of yonge wommen forto liere.

Nou lete we this maiden hiere,

And speke of Dionise ayein

And of Theophile the vilein,

Of whiche I spak of nou tofore.

Whan Thaise scholde have be forlore,

This false cherl to his lady

Whan he cam hom, al prively

He seith, "Ma Dame, slain I have

This maide Thaise, and is begrave

In prive place, as ye me biede.

Forthi, ma dame, taketh hiede

And kep conseil, hou so it stonde."

This fend, which this hath understonde,

Was glad, and weneth it be soth:

Now herkne, hierafter hou sche doth.

Sche wepth, sche sorweth, sche compleigneth,

And of sieknesse which sche feigneth

Sche seith that Taise sodeinly
Be nyhte is ded, "as sche and I
Togedre lyhen nyh my lord."
Sche was a womman of record,
And al is lieved that sche seith;
And forto yive a more feith,
Hire housebonde and ek sche bothe
In blake clothes thei hem clothe,
And made a gret enterrement;
And for the poeple schal be blent,
Of Thaise as for the remembrance,
After the real olde usance
A tumbe of latoun noble and riche
With an ymage unto hir liche
Liggende above therupon
Thei made and sette it up anon.
Hire Epitaffe of good assisse
Was write aboute, and in this wise
It spak: "O yee that this beholde,
Lo, hier lith sche, the which was holde
The faireste and the flour of alle,

Whos name Thai5sis men calle.

The king of Tyr Appolinus

Hire fader was: now lith sche thus.

Fourtiene yer sche was of Age,

Whan deth hir tok to his viage."   1540

Thus was this false treson hidd,

Which afterward was wyde kidd,

As be the tale a man schal hiere.

Bot forto clare mi matiere,

To Tyr I thenke torne ayein,

And telle as the Croniqes sein.

Whan that the king was comen hom,

And hath left in the salte fom

His wif, which he mai noght foryete,

For he som confort wolde gete, 1550

He let somoune a parlement,

To which the lordes were asent;

And of the time he hath ben oute,

He seth the thinges al aboute,

And told hem ek hou he hath fare,

Whil he was out of londe fare;

And preide hem alle to abyde,
For he wolde at the same tyde
Do schape for his wyves mynde,
As he that wol noght ben unkinde.
Solempne was that ilke office,
And riche was the sacrifice,
The feste reali was holde:
And therto was he wel beholde;
For such a wif as he hadde on
In thilke daies was ther non.
Whan this was do, thanne he him thoghte
Upon his doghter, and besoghte
Suche of his lordes as he wolde,
That thei with him to Tharse scholde,
To fette his doghter Taise there:
And thei anon al redy were,
To schip they gon and forth thei wente,
Til thei the havene of Tharse hente.
They londe and faile of that thei seche
Be coverture and sleyhte of speche:
This false man Strangulio,

And Dionise his wif also,

That he the betre trowe myhte,

Thei ladden him to have a sihte

Wher that hir tombe was arraied.

The lasse yit he was mispaied,

And natheles, so as he dorste,

He curseth and seith al the worste

Unto fortune, as to the blinde,

Which can no seker weie finde;

For sche him neweth evere among,

And medleth sorwe with his song.

Bot sithe it mai no betre be,

He thonketh god and forth goth he

Seilende toward Tyr ayein.

Bot sodeinly the wynd and reyn

Begonne upon the See debate,

So that he soffre mot algate

The lawe which Neptune ordeigneth;

Wherof fulofte time he pleigneth,

And hield him wel the more esmaied

Of that he hath tofore assaied.

So that for pure sorwe and care,
Of that he seth his world so fare, 1600
The reste he lefte of his Caban,
That for the conseil of noman
Ayein therinne he nolde come,
Bot hath benethe his place nome,
Wher he wepende al one lay,
Ther as he sih no lyht of day.
And thus tofor the wynd thei dryve,
Til longe and late thei aryve
With gret distresce, as it was sene,
Upon this toun of Mitelene, 1610
Which was a noble cite tho.
And hapneth thilke time so,
The lordes bothe and the comune
The hihe festes of Neptune
Upon the stronde at the rivage,
As it was custumme and usage,
Sollempneliche thei besihe.
Whan thei this strange vessel syhe
Come in, and hath his Seil avaled,

The toun therof hath spoke and taled. 1620
The lord which of the cite was,
Whos name is Athenagoras,
Was there, and seide he wolde se
What Schip it is, and who thei be
That ben therinne: and after sone,
Whan that he sih it was to done,
His barge was for him arraied,
And he goth forth and hath assaied.
He fond the Schip of gret Array,
Bot what thing it amonte may, 1630
He seth thei maden hevy chiere,
Bot wel him thenkth be the manere
That thei be worthi men of blod,
And axeth of hem hou it stod;
And thei him tellen al the cas,
Hou that here lord fordrive was,
And what a sorwe that he made,
Of which ther mai noman him glade.
He preith that he here lord mai se,
Bot thei him tolde it mai noght be, 1640

For he lith in so derk a place,
That ther may no wiht sen his face:
Bot for al that, thogh hem be loth,
He fond the ladre and doun he goth,
And to him spak, bot non ansuere
Ayein of him ne mihte he bere
For oght that he can don or sein;
And thus he goth him up ayein.
Tho was ther spoke in many wise
Amonges hem that weren wise, 1650
Now this, now that, bot ate laste
The wisdom of the toun this caste,
That yonge Taise were asent.
For if ther be amendement
To glade with this woful king,
Sche can so moche of every thing,
That sche schal gladen him anon.
A Messager for hire is gon,
And sche cam with hire Harpe on honde,
And seide hem that sche wolde fonde 1660
Be alle weies that sche can,

To glade with this sory man.
Bot what he was sche wiste noght,
Bot al the Schip hire hath besoght
That sche hire wit on him despende,
In aunter if he myhte amende,
And sein it schal be wel aquit.
Whan sche hath understonden it,
Sche goth hir doun, ther as he lay,
Wher that sche harpeth many a lay
And lich an Angel sang withal;
Bot he nomore than the wal
Tok hiede of eny thing he herde.
And whan sche sih that he so ferde,
Sche falleth with him into wordes,
And telleth him of sondri bordes,
And axeth him demandes strange,
Wherof sche made his herte change,
And to hire speche his Ere he leide
And hath merveile of that sche seide.
For in proverbe and in probleme
Sche spak, and bad he scholde deme

In many soubtil question:
Bot he for no suggestioun
Which toward him sche couthe stere,
He wolde noght o word ansuere,
Bot as a madd man ate laste
His heved wepende awey he caste,
And half in wraththe he bad hire go.
Bot yit sche wolde noght do so,
And in the derke forth sche goth,
Til sche him toucheth, and he wroth,
And after hire with his hond
He smot: and thus whan sche him fond
Desesed, courtaisly sche saide,
"Avoi, mi lord, I am a Maide;
And if ye wiste what I am,
And out of what lignage I cam,
Ye wolde noght be so salvage."
With that he sobreth his corage
And put awey his hevy chiere.
Bot of hem tuo a man mai liere
What is to be so sibb of blod:

Non wiste of other hou it stod,
And yit the fader ate laste
His herte upon this maide caste,
That he hire loveth kindely,
And yit he wiste nevere why.
Bot al was knowe er that thei wente;
For god, which wot here hol entente,
Here hertes bothe anon descloseth.
This king unto this maide opposeth,
And axeth ferst what was hire name,
And wher sche lerned al this game,
And of what ken that sche was come.
And sche, that hath hise wordes nome,
Ansuerth and seith, "My name is Thaise,
That was som time wel at aise:
In Tharse I was forthdrawe and fed,
Ther lerned I, til I was sped,
Of that I can. Mi fader eke
I not wher that I scholde him seke;
He was a king, men tolde me:
Mi Moder dreint was in the See."

Fro point to point al sche him tolde,
That sche hath longe in herte holde,
And nevere dorste make hir mone
Bot only to this lord al one,
To whom hire herte can noght hele,
Torne it to wo, torne it to wele,
Torne it to good, torne it to harm.
And he tho toke hire in his arm,
Bot such a joie as he tho made
Was nevere sen; thus be thei glade,
That sory hadden be toforn.
Fro this day forth fortune hath sworn
To sette him upward on the whiel;
So goth the world, now wo, now wel:
This king hath founde newe grace,
So that out of his derke place
He goth him up into the liht,
And with him cam that swete wiht,
His doghter Thaise, and forth anon
Thei bothe into the Caban gon
Which was ordeigned for the king,

And ther he dede of al his thing,
And was arraied realy.
And out he cam al openly,
Wher Athenagoras he fond,
The which was lord of al the lond:
He preith the king to come and se
His castell bothe and his cite,
And thus thei gon forth alle in fiere,
This king, this lord, this maiden diere.
This lord tho made hem riche feste
With every thing which was honeste,
To plese with this worthi king,
Ther lacketh him no maner thing:
Bot yit for al his noble array
Wifles he was into that day,
As he that yit was of yong Age;
So fell ther into his corage
The lusti wo, the glade peine
Of love, which noman restreigne
Yit nevere myhte as nou tofore.
This lord thenkth al his world forlore,

Bot if the king wol don him grace;
He waiteth time, he waiteth place,
Him thoghte his herte wol tobreke,
Til he mai to this maide speke 1770
And to hir fader ek also
For mariage: and it fell so,
That al was do riht as he thoghte,
His pourpos to an ende he broghte,
Sche weddeth him as for hire lord;
Thus be thei alle of on acord.
Whan al was do riht as thei wolde,
The king unto his Sone tolde
Of Tharse thilke traiterie,
And seide hou in his compaignie 1780
His doghter and himselven eke
Schull go vengance forto seke.
The Schipes were redy sone,
And whan thei sihe it was to done,
Withoute lette of eny wente
With Seil updrawe forth thei wente
Towardes Tharse upon the tyde.

Bot he that wot what schal betide,
The hihe god, which wolde him kepe,
Whan that this king was faste aslepe,
Be nyhtes time he hath him bede
To seile into an other stede:
To Ephesim he bad him drawe,
And as it was that time lawe,
He schal do there his sacrifise;
And ek he bad in alle wise
That in the temple amonges alle
His fortune, as it is befalle,
Touchende his doghter and his wif
He schal beknowe upon his lif.
The king of this Avisioun
Hath gret ymaginacioun,
What thing it signefie may;
And natheles, whan it was day,
He bad caste Ancher and abod;
And whil that he on Ancher rod,
The wynd, which was tofore strange,
Upon the point began to change,

And torneth thider as it scholde.
Tho knew he wel that god it wolde,
And bad the Maister make him yare,
Tofor the wynd for he wol fare
To Ephesim, and so he dede.
And whanne he cam unto the stede
Where as he scholde londe, he londeth
With al the haste he may, and fondeth
To schapen him be such a wise,
That he may be the morwe arise
And don after the mandement
Of him which hath him thider sent.
And in the wise that he thoghte,
Upon the morwe so he wroghte;
His doghter and his Sone he nom,
And forth unto the temple he com
With a gret route in compaignie,
Hise yiftes forto sacrifie.
The citezeins tho herden seie
Of such a king that cam to preie
Unto Diane the godesse,

And left al other besinesse, 1830

Thei comen thider forto se

The king and the solempnete.

With worthi knyhtes environed

The king himself hath abandoned

Into the temple in good entente.

The dore is up, and he in wente,

Wher as with gret devocioun

Of holi contemplacioun

Withinne his herte he made his schrifte;

And after that a riche yifte 1840

He offreth with gret reverence,

And there in open Audience

Of hem that stoden thanne aboute,

He tolde hem and declareth oute

His hap, such as him is befalle,

Ther was nothing foryete of alle.

His wif, as it was goddes grace,

Which was professed in the place,

As sche that was Abbesse there,

Unto his tale hath leid hire Ere: 1850

Sche knew the vois and the visage,
For pure joie as in a rage
Sche strawhte unto him al at ones,
And fell aswoune upon the stones,
Wherof the temple flor was paved.
Sche was anon with water laved,
Til sche cam to hirself ayein,
And thanne sche began to sein:
"Ha, blessed be the hihe sonde,
That I mai se myn housebonde,
That whilom he and I were on!"
The king with that knew hire anon,
And tok hire in his Arm and kiste;
And al the toun thus sone it wiste.
Tho was ther joie manyfold,
For every man this tale hath told
As for miracle, and were glade,
Bot nevere man such joie made
As doth the king, which hath his wif.
And whan men herde hou that hir lif
Was saved, and be whom it was,

Thei wondren alle of such a cas:
Thurgh al the Lond aros the speche
Of Maister Cerymon the leche
And of the cure which he dede.
The king himself tho hath him bede,
And ek this queene forth with him,
That he the toun of Ephesim
Wol leve and go wher as thei be,
For nevere man of his degre
Hath do to hem so mochel good;
And he his profit understod,
And granteth with hem forto wende.
And thus thei maden there an ende,
And token leve and gon to Schipe
With al the hole felaschipe.
This king, which nou hath his desir,
Seith he wol holde his cours to Tyr.
Thei hadden wynd at wille tho,
With topseilcole and forth they go,
And striken nevere, til thei come
To Tyr, where as thei havene nome,

And londen hem with mochel blisse.
Tho was ther many a mowth to kisse,
Echon welcometh other hom,
Bot whan the queen to londe com,
And Thaise hir doghter be hir side,
The joie which was thilke tyde
Ther mai no mannes tunge telle:
Thei seiden alle, "Hier comth the welle
Of alle wommannysshe grace."
The king hath take his real place,
The queene is into chambre go:
Ther was gret feste arraied tho;
Whan time was, thei gon to mete,
Alle olde sorwes ben foryete,
And gladen hem with joies newe:
The descoloured pale hewe
Is now become a rody cheke,
Ther was no merthe forto seke,
Bot every man hath that he wolde.
The king, as he wel couthe and scholde,
Makth to his poeple riht good chiere;

And after sone, as thou schalt hiere,
A parlement he hath sommoned,
Wher he his doghter hath coroned
Forth with the lord of Mitelene,
That on is king, that other queene:
And thus the fadres ordinance
This lond hath set in governance,
And seide thanne he wolde wende
To Tharse, forto make an ende
Of that his doghter was betraied.
Therof were alle men wel paied,
And seide hou it was forto done:
The Schipes weren redi sone,
And strong pouer with him he tok;
Up to the Sky he caste his lok,
And syh the wynd was covenable.
Thei hale up Ancher with the cable,
The Seil on hih, the Stiere in honde,
And seilen, til thei come alonde
At Tharse nyh to the cite;
And whan thei wisten it was he,

The toun hath don him reverence.
He telleth hem the violence,
Which the tretour Strangulio
And Dionise him hadde do
Touchende his dowhter, as yee herde;
And whan thei wiste hou that it ferde,
As he which pes and love soghte,
Unto the toun this he besoghte,
To don him riht in juggement.
Anon thei were bothe asent
With strengthe of men, and comen sone,
And as hem thoghte it was to done,
Atteint thei were be the lawe
And diemed forto honge and drawe,
And brent and with the wynd toblowe,
That al the world it myhte knowe:
And upon this condicion
The dom in execucion
Was put anon withoute faile.
And every man hath gret mervaile,
Which herde tellen of this chance,

And thonketh goddes pourveance,
Which doth mercy forth with justice.
Slain is the moerdrer and moerdrice
Thurgh verray trowthe of rihtwisnesse,
And thurgh mercy sauf is simplesse 1960
Of hire whom mercy preserveth;
Thus hath he wel that wel deserveth.
Whan al this thing is don and ended,
This king, which loved was and frended,
A lettre hath, which cam to him
Be Schipe fro Pentapolim,
Be which the lond hath to him write,
That he wolde understonde and wite
Hou in good mynde and in good pes
Ded is the king Artestrates, 1970
Wherof thei alle of on acord
Him preiden, as here liege lord,
That he the lettre wel conceive
And come his regne to receive,
Which god hath yove him and fortune;
And thus besoghte the commune

Forth with the grete lordes alle.
This king sih how it was befalle,
Fro Tharse and in prosperite
He tok his leve of that Cite
And goth him into Schipe ayein:
The wynd was good, the See was plein,
Hem nedeth noght a Riff to slake,
Til thei Pentapolim have take.
The lond, which herde of that tidinge,
Was wonder glad of his cominge;
He resteth him a day or tuo
And tok his conseil to him tho,
And sette a time of Parlement,
Wher al the lond of on assent
Forth with his wif hath him corouned,
Wher alle goode him was fuisouned.
Lo, what it is to be wel grounded:
For he hath ferst his love founded
Honesteliche as forto wedde,
Honesteliche his love he spedde
And hadde children with his wif,

And as him liste he ladde his lif;
And in ensample his lif was write,
That alle lovers myhten wite
How ate laste it schal be sene
Of love what thei wolden mene.
For se now on that other side,
Antiochus with al his Pride,
Which sette his love unkindely,
His ende he hadde al sodeinly,
Set ayein kinde upon vengance,
And for his lust hath his penance.
Lo thus, mi Sone, myht thou liere
What is to love in good manere,
And what to love in other wise:
The mede arist of the servise;
Fortune, thogh sche be noght stable,
Yit at som time is favorable
To hem that ben of love trewe.
Bot certes it is forto rewe
To se love ayein kinde falle,
For that makth sore a man to falle,

As thou myht of tofore rede.

Forthi, my Sone, I wolde rede 2020

To lete al other love aweie,

Bot if it be thurgh such a weie

As love and reson wolde acorde.

For elles, if that thou descorde,

And take lust as doth a beste,

Thi love mai noght ben honeste;

For be no skile that I finde

Such lust is noght of loves kinde.

Mi fader, hou so that it stonde,

Youre tale is herd and understonde, 2030

As thing which worthi is to hiere,

Of gret ensample and gret matiere,

Wherof, my fader, god you quyte.

Bot in this point miself aquite

I mai riht wel, that nevere yit

I was assoted in my wit,

Bot only in that worthi place

Wher alle lust and alle grace

Is set, if that danger ne were.

Bot that is al my moste fere:
I not what ye fortune acompte,
Bot what thing danger mai amonte
I wot wel, for I have assaied;
For whan myn herte is best arraied
And I have al my wit thurghsoght
Of love to beseche hire oght,
For al that evere I skile may,
I am concluded with a nay:
That o sillable hath overthrowe
A thousend wordes on a rowe
Of suche as I best speke can;
Thus am I bot a lewed man.
Bot, fader, for ye ben a clerk
Of love, and this matiere is derk,
And I can evere leng the lasse,
Bot yit I mai noght let it passe,
Youre hole conseil I beseche,
That ye me be som weie teche
What is my beste, as for an ende.
Mi Sone, unto the trouthe wende

Now wol I for the love of thee,

And lete alle othre truffles be.

The more that the nede is hyh,

The more it nedeth to be slyh

To him which hath the nede on honde.

I have wel herd and understonde,

Mi Sone, al that thou hast me seid,

And ek of that thou hast me preid,

Nou at this time that I schal

As for conclusioun final

Conseile upon thi nede sette:

So thenke I finaly to knette

This cause, where it is tobroke,

And make an ende of that is spoke.

For I behihte thee that yifte

Ferst whan thou come under my schrifte,

That thogh I toward Venus were,

Yit spak I suche wordes there,

That for the Presthod which I have,

Min ordre and min astat to save,

I seide I wolde of myn office

To vertu more than to vice
Encline, and teche thee mi lore.
Forthi to speken overmore
Of love, which thee mai availe,
Tak love where it mai noght faile:
For as of this which thou art inne,
Be that thou seist it is a Sinne,
And Sinne mai no pris deserve,
Withoute pris and who schal serve,
I not what profit myhte availe.
Thus folweth it, if thou travaile,
Wher thou no profit hast ne pris,
Thou art toward thiself unwis:
And sett thou myhtest lust atteigne,
Of every lust thende is a peine,
And every peine is good to fle;
So it is wonder thing to se,
Why such a thing schal be desired.
The more that a Stock is fyred,
The rathere into Aisshe it torneth;
The fot which in the weie sporneth

Fulofte his heved hath overthrowe;
Thus love is blind and can noght knowe
Wher that he goth, til he be falle:
Forthi, bot if it so befalle
With good conseil that he be lad,
Him oghte forto ben adrad.
For conseil passeth alle thing
To him which thenkth to ben a king;
And every man for his partie
A kingdom hath to justefie,
That is to sein his oghne dom.
If he misreule that kingdom,
He lest himself, and that is more
Than if he loste Schip and Ore
And al the worldes good withal:
For what man that in special
Hath noght himself, he hath noght elles,
Nomor the perles than the schelles;
Al is to him of o value:
Thogh he hadde at his retenue
The wyde world ryht as he wolde,

Whan he his herte hath noght withholde
Toward himself, al is in vein.
And thus, my Sone, I wolde sein,
As I seide er, that thou aryse,
Er that thou falle in such a wise
That thou ne myht thiself rekevere;
For love, which that blind was evere,
Makth alle his servantz blinde also.
My Sone, and if thou have be so,
Yit is it time to withdrawe,
And set thin herte under that lawe,
The which of reson is governed
And noght of will. And to be lerned,
Ensamples thou hast many on
Of now and ek of time gon,
That every lust is bot a while;
And who that wole himself beguile,
He may the rathere be deceived.
Mi Sone, now thou hast conceived
Somwhat of that I wolde mene;
Hierafterward it schal be sene

If that thou lieve upon mi lore;
For I can do to thee nomore
Bot teche thee the rihte weie:

Now ches if thou wolt live or deie.
Mi fader, so as I have herd
Your tale, bot it were ansuerd,
I were mochel forto blame.
Mi wo to you is bot a game,
That fielen noght of that I fiele;
The fielinge of a mannes Hiele
Mai noght be likned to the Herte:
I mai noght, thogh I wolde, asterte,
And ye be fre from al the peine
Of love, wherof I me pleigne.
It is riht esi to comaunde;
The hert which fre goth on the launde
Not of an Oxe what him eileth;
It falleth ofte a man merveileth
Of that he seth an other fare,
Bot if he knewe himself the fare,

And felt it as it is in soth,
He scholde don riht as he doth,
Or elles werse in his degre:
For wel I wot, and so do ye,
That love hath evere yit ben used,
So mot I nedes ben excused. 2170
Bot, fader, if ye wolde thus
Unto Cupide and to Venus
Be frendlich toward mi querele,
So that myn herte were in hele
Of love which is in mi briest,
I wot wel thanne a betre Prest
Was nevere mad to my behove.
Bot al the whiles that I hove
In noncertein betwen the tuo,
And not if I to wel or wo 2180
Schal torne, that is al my drede,
So that I not what is to rede.
Bot for final conclusion
I thenke a Supplicacion
With pleine wordes and expresse

Wryte unto Venus the goddesse,
The which I preie you to bere
And bringe ayein a good ansuere.
Tho was betwen mi Prest and me
Debat and gret perplexete:
Mi resoun understod him wel,
And knew it was sothe everydel
That he hath seid, bot noght forthi
Mi will hath nothing set therby.
For techinge of so wis a port
Is unto love of no desport;
Yit myhte nevere man beholde
Reson, wher love was withholde,
Thei be noght of o governance.
And thus we fellen in distance,
Mi Prest and I, bot I spak faire,
And thurgh mi wordes debonaire
Thanne ate laste we acorden,
So that he seith he wol recorden
To speke and stonde upon mi syde
To Venus bothe and to Cupide;

And bad me wryte what I wolde,
And seith me trewly that he scholde
Mi lettre bere unto the queene.
And I sat doun upon the grene
Fulfilt of loves fantasie,
And with the teres of myn ije
In stede of enke I gan to wryte
The wordes whiche I wolde endite
Unto Cupide and to Venus,
And in mi lettre I seide thus.
The wofull peine of loves maladie,
Ayein the which mai no phisique availe,
Min herte hath so bewhaped with sotie,
That wher so that I reste or I travaile,
I finde it evere redy to assaile
Mi resoun, which that can him noght defende:
Thus seche I help, wherof I mihte amende.
Ferst to Nature if that I me compleigne,
Ther finde I hou that every creature
Som time ayer hath love in his demeine,
So that the litel wrenne in his mesure

Hath yit of kinde a love under his cure;
And I bot on desire, of which I misse:
And thus, bot I, hath every kinde his blisse.
The resoun of my wit it overpasseth,
Of that Nature techeth me the weie
To love, and yit no certein sche compasseth
Hou I schal spede, and thus betwen the tweie
I stonde, and not if I schal live or deie.
For thogh reson ayein my will debate,
I mai noght fle, that I ne love algate.
Upon miself is thilke tale come,
Hou whilom Pan, which is the god of kinde,
With love wrastlede and was overcome:
For evere I wrastle and evere I am behinde,
That I no strengthe in al min herte finde,
Wherof that I mai stonden eny throwe;
So fer mi wit with love is overthrowe.
Whom nedeth help, he mot his helpe crave,
Or helpeles he schal his nede spille:
Pleinly thurghsoght my wittes alle I have,
Bot non of hem can helpe after mi wille;

And als so wel I mihte sitte stille,

As preie unto mi lady eny helpe:

Thus wot I noght wherof miself to helpe.

Unto the grete Jove and if I bidde,

To do me grace of thilke swete tunne,

Which under keie in his celier amidde

Lith couched, that fortune is overrunne,

Bot of the bitter cuppe I have begunne,

I not hou ofte, and thus finde I no game;

For evere I axe and evere it is the same.

I se the world stonde evere upon eschange,

Nou wyndes loude, and nou the weder softe;

I mai sen ek the grete mone change,

And thing which nou is lowe is eft alofte;

The dredfull werres into pes fulofte

Thei torne; and evere is Danger in o place,

Which wol noght change his will to do me grace.

Bot upon this the grete clerc Ovide,

Of love whan he makth his remembrance,

He seith ther is the blinde god Cupide,

The which hath love under his governance,

And in his hond with many a fyri lance   2270
He woundeth ofte, ther he wol noght hele;
And that somdiel is cause of mi querele.
Ovide ek seith that love to parforne
Stant in the hond of Venus the goddesse,
Bot whan sche takth hir conseil with Satorne,
Ther is no grace, and in that time, I gesse,
Began mi love, of which myn hevynesse
Is now and evere schal, bot if I spede:
So wot I noght miself what is to rede.
Forthi to you, Cupide and Venus bothe,   2280
With al myn hertes obeissance I preie,
If ye were ate ferste time wrothe,
Whan I began to love, as I you seie,
Nou stynt, and do thilke infortune aweie,
So that Danger, which stant of retenue
With my ladi, his place mai remue.
O thou Cupide, god of loves lawe,
That with thi Dart brennende hast set afyre
Min herte, do that wounde be withdrawe,
Or yif me Salve such as I desire: 2290

For Service in thi Court withouten hyre
To me, which evere yit have kept thin heste,
Mai nevere be to loves lawe honeste.
O thou, gentile Venus, loves queene,
Withoute gult thou dost on me thi wreche;
Thou wost my peine is evere aliche grene
For love, and yit I mai it noght areche:
This wold I for my laste word beseche,
That thou mi love aquite as I deserve,
Or elles do me pleinly forto sterve.
Whanne I this Supplicacioun
With good deliberacioun,
In such a wise as ye nou wite,
Hadde after min entente write
Unto Cupide and to Venus,
This Prest which hihte Genius
It tok on honde to presente,
On my message and forth he wente
To Venus, forto wite hire wille.
And I bod in the place stille,
And was there bot a litel while,

Noght full the montance of a Mile,
Whan I behield and sodeinly
I sih wher Venus stod me by.
So as I myhte, under a tre
To grounde I fell upon mi kne,
And preide hire forto do me grace:
Sche caste hire chiere upon mi face,
And as it were halvinge a game
Sche axeth me what is mi name.
"Ma dame," I seide, "John Gower."
"Now John," quod sche, "in my pouer
Thou most as of thi love stonde;
For I thi bille have understonde,
In which to Cupide and to me
Somdiel thou hast compleigned thee,
And somdiel to Nature also.
Bot that schal stonde among you tuo,
For therof have I noght to done;
For Nature is under the Mone
Maistresse of every lives kinde,
Bot if so be that sche mai finde

Som holy man that wol withdrawe
His kindly lust ayein hir lawe;
Bot sielde whanne it falleth so,
For fewe men ther ben of tho,
Bot of these othre ynowe be,
Whiche of here oghne nycete
Ayein Nature and hire office
Deliten hem in sondri vice,
Wherof that sche fulofte hath pleigned,
And ek my Court it hath desdeigned
And evere schal; for it receiveth
Non such that kinde so deceiveth.
For al onliche of gentil love
Mi court stant alle courtz above
And takth noght into retenue
Bot thing which is to kinde due,
For elles it schal be refused.
Wherof I holde thee excused,
For it is manye daies gon,
That thou amonges hem were on
Which of my court hast ben withholde;

So that the more I am beholde
Of thi desese to commune,
And to remue that fortune,
Which manye daies hath the grieved.
Bot if my conseil mai be lieved,
Thou schalt ben esed er thou go
Of thilke unsely jolif wo,
Wherof thou seist thin herte is fyred:
Bot as of that thou hast desired
After the sentence of thi bille,
Thou most therof don at my wille,
And I therof me wole avise.

For be thou hol, it schal suffise:
Mi medicine is noght to sieke
For thee and for suche olde sieke,
Noght al per chance as ye it wolden,
Bot so as ye be reson scholden,
Acordant unto loves kinde.
For in the plit which I thee finde,
So as mi court it hath awarded,

Thou schalt be duely rewarded;
And if thou woldest more crave,
It is no riht that thou it have."
Venus, which stant withoute lawe
In noncertein, bot as men drawe
Of Rageman upon the chance,
Sche leith no peis in the balance,
Bot as hir lyketh forto weie;
The trewe man fulofte aweie
Sche put, which hath hir grace bede,
And set an untrewe in his stede.
Lo, thus blindly the world sche diemeth
In loves cause, as tome siemeth:
I not what othre men wol sein,
Bot I algate am so besein,
And stonde as on amonges alle
Which am out of hir grace falle:
It nedeth take no witnesse,
For sche which seid is the goddesse,
To whether part of love it wende,
Hath sett me for a final ende

The point wherto that I schal holde.
For whan sche hath me wel beholde,
Halvynge of scorn, sche seide thus:
"Thou wost wel that I am Venus,
Which al only my lustes seche;
And wel I wot, thogh thou beseche
Mi love, lustes ben ther none,
Whiche I mai take in thi persone;
For loves lust and lockes hore
In chambre acorden neveremore,
And thogh thou feigne a yong corage,
It scheweth wel be the visage
That olde grisel is no fole:
There ben fulmanye yeres stole
With thee and with suche othre mo,
That outward feignen youthe so
And ben withinne of pore assay.
Min herte wolde and I ne may
Is noght beloved nou adayes;
Er thou make eny suche assaies
To love, and faile upon the fet,

Betre is to make a beau retret;
For thogh thou myhtest love atteigne,
Yit were it bot an ydel peine,
Whan that thou art noght sufficant
To holde love his covenant.
Forthi tak hom thin herte ayein,
That thou travaile noght in vein,
Wherof my Court may be deceived.
I wot and have it wel conceived,
Hou that thi will is good ynowh;
Bot mor behoveth to the plowh,
Wherof the lacketh, as I trowe:
So sitte it wel that thou beknowe
Thi fieble astat, er thou beginne
Thing wher thou miht non ende winne.
What bargain scholde a man assaie,
Whan that him lacketh forto paie?
Mi Sone, if thou be wel bethoght,
This toucheth thee; foryet it noght:
The thing is torned into was;
That which was whilom grene gras,

Is welked hey at time now.
Forthi mi conseil is that thou
Remembre wel hou thou art old."
Whan Venus hath hir tale told,
And I bethoght was al aboute,
Tho wiste I wel withoute doute,
That ther was no recoverir;
And as a man the blase of fyr
With water quencheth, so ferd I;
A cold me cawhte sodeinly,
For sorwe that myn herte made
Mi dedly face pale and fade
Becam, and swoune I fell to grounde.
And as I lay the same stounde,
Ne fully quik ne fully ded,
Me thoghte I sih tofor myn hed
Cupide with his bowe bent,
And lich unto a Parlement,
Which were ordeigned for the nones,
With him cam al the world at ones
Of gentil folk that whilom were

Lovers, I sih hem alle there
Forth with Cupide in sondri routes.
Min yhe and as I caste aboutes,
To knowe among hem who was who,
I sih wher lusty Youthe tho,
As he which was a Capitein,
Tofore alle othre upon the plein
Stod with his route wel begon,
Here hevedes kempt, and therupon
Garlandes noght of o colour,
Some of the lef, some of the flour,
And some of grete Perles were;
The newe guise of Beawme there,
With sondri thinges wel devised,
I sih, wherof thei ben queintised.
It was al lust that thei with ferde,
Ther was no song that I ne herde,
Which unto love was touchende;
Of Pan and al that was likende
As in Pipinge of melodie
Was herd in thilke compaignie

So lowde, that on every side
It thoghte as al the hevene cride 2480
In such acord and such a soun
Of bombard and of clarion
With Cornemuse and Schallemele,
That it was half a mannes hele
So glad a noise forto hiere.
And as me thoghte, in this manere
Al freissh I syh hem springe and dance,
And do to love her entendance
After the lust of youthes heste.
Ther was ynowh of joie and feste, 2490
For evere among thei laghe and pleie,
And putten care out of the weie,
That he with hem ne sat ne stod.
And overthis I understod,
So as myn Ere it myhte areche,
The moste matiere of her speche
Was al of knyhthod and of Armes,
And what it is to ligge in armes
With love, whanne it is achieved.

Ther was Tristram, which was believed
With bele Ysolde, and Lancelot
Stod with Gunnore, and Galahot
With his ladi, and as me thoghte,
I syh wher Jason with him broghte
His love, which that Creusa hihte,
And Hercules, which mochel myhte,
Was ther berende his grete Mace,
And most of alle in thilke place
He peyneth him to make chiere
With Eolen, which was him diere.
These. s, thogh he were untrewe
To love, as alle wommen knewe,
Yit was he there natheles
With Phedra, whom to love he ches:
Of Grece ek ther was Thelamon,
Which fro the king Lamenedon
At Troie his doghter refte aweie,
Eseonen, as for his preie,
Which take was whan Jason cam
Fro Colchos, and the Cite nam

In vengance of the ferste hate;

That made hem after to debate,

Whan Priamus the newe toun

Hath mad. And in avisioun

Me thoghte that I sih also

Ector forth with his brethren tuo;

Himself stod with Pantaselee,

And next to him I myhte se,

Wher Paris stod with faire Eleine,

Which was his joie sovereine;

And Troilus stod with Criseide,

Bot evere among, althogh he pleide,

Be semblant he was hevy chiered,

For Diomede, as him was liered,

Cleymeth to ben his parconner.

And thus full many a bacheler,

A thousend mo than I can sein,

With Yowthe I sih ther wel besein

Forth with here loves glade and blithe.

And some I sih whiche ofte sithe

Compleignen hem in other wise;

Among the whiche I syh Narcise
And Piramus, that sory were.
The worthy Grek also was there,
Achilles, which for love deide:
Agamenon ek, as men seide,
And Menelay the king also
I syh, with many an other mo,
Which hadden be fortuned sore
In loves cause. And overmore
Of wommen in the same cas,
With hem I sih wher Dido was,
Forsake which was with Enee;
And Phillis ek I myhte see,
Whom Demephon deceived hadde;
And Adriagne hir sorwe ladde,
For These.s hir Soster tok
And hire unkindely forsok.
I sih ther ek among the press
Compleignende upon Hercules
His ferste love Deyanire,
Which sette him afterward afyre:

Medea was there ek and pleigneth
Upon Jason, for that he feigneth,
Withoute cause and tok a newe;
Sche seide, "Fy on alle untrewe!"
I sih there ek Deijdamie,
Which hadde lost the compaignie
Of Achilles, whan Diomede
To Troie him fette upon the nede. 2570
Among these othre upon the grene
I syh also the wofull queene
Cleopatras, which in a Cave
With Serpentz hath hirself begrave
Alquik, and so sche was totore,
For sorwe of that sche hadde lore
Antonye, which hir love hath be:
And forth with hire I sih Tisbee,
Which on the scharpe swerdes point
For love deide in sory point;   2580
And as myn Ere it myhte knowe,
Sche seide, "Wo worthe alle slowe!"
The pleignte of Progne and Philomene

Ther herde I what it wolde mene,

How Tere.s of his untrouthe

Undede hem bothe, and that was routhe;

And next to hem I sih Canace,

Which for Machaire hir fader grace

Hath lost, and deide in wofull plit.

And as I sih in my spirit, 2590

Me thoghte amonges othre thus

The doghter of king Priamus,

Polixena, whom Pirrus slowh,

Was there and made sorwe ynowh,

As sche which deide gulteles

For love, and yit was loveles.

And forto take the desport,

I sih there some of other port,

And that was Circes and Calipse,

That cowthen do the Mone eclipse, 2600

Of men and change the liknesses,

Of Artmagique Sorceresses;

Thei hielde in honde manyon,

To love wher thei wolde or non.

Bot above alle that ther were
Of wommen I sih foure there,
Whos name I herde most comended:
Be hem the Court stod al amended;
For wher thei comen in presence,
Men deden hem the reverence, 2610
As thogh they hadden be goddesses,
Of al this world or Emperesses.
And as me thoghte, an Ere I leide,
And herde hou that these othre seide,
"Lo, these ben the foure wyves,
Whos feith was proeved in her lyves:
For in essample of alle goode
With Mariage so thei stode,
That fame, which no gret thing hydeth,
Yit in Cronique of hem abydeth." 2620
Penolope that on was hote,
Whom many a knyht hath loved hote,
Whil that hire lord Ulixes lay
Full many a yer and many a day
Upon the grete Siege of Troie:

Bot sche, which hath no worldes joie
Bot only of hire housebonde,
Whil that hir lord was out of londe,
So wel hath kept hir wommanhiede,
That al the world therof tok hiede,
And nameliche of hem in Grece.
That other womman was Lucrece,
Wif to the Romain Collatin;
And sche constreigned of Tarquin
To thing which was ayein hir wille,
Sche wolde noght hirselven stille,
Bot deide only for drede of schame
In keping of hire goode name,
As sche which was on of the beste.
The thridde wif was hote Alceste,
Which whanne Ametus scholde dye
Upon his grete maladye,
Sche preide unto the goddes so,
That sche receyveth al the wo
And deide hirself to yive him lif:

Lo, if this were a noble wif.

The ferthe wif which I ther sih,

I herde of hem that were nyh

Hou sche was cleped Alcione,

Which to Seyix hir lord al one

And to nomo hire body kepte;

And whan sche sih him dreynt, sche lepte

Into the wawes where he swam,

And there a Sefoul sche becam,

And with hire wenges him bespradde

For love which to him sche hadde.

Lo, these foure were tho

Whiche I sih, as me thoghte tho,

Among the grete compaignie

Which Love hadde forto guye:

Bot Youthe, which in special

Of Loves Court was Mareschal,

So besy was upon his lay,

That he non hiede where I lay

Hath take. And thanne, as I behield,

Me thoghte I sih upon the field,

Where Elde cam a softe pas

Toward Venus, ther as sche was.

With him gret compaignie he ladde,

Bot noght so manye as Youthe hadde: 2670

The moste part were of gret Age,

And that was sene in the visage,

And noght forthi, so as thei myhte,

Thei made hem yongly to the sihte:

Bot yit herde I no pipe there

To make noise in mannes Ere,

Bot the Musette I myhte knowe,

For olde men which souneth lowe,

With Harpe and Lute and with Citole.

The hovedance and the Carole, 2680

In such a wise as love hath bede,

A softe pas thei dance and trede;

And with the wommen otherwhile

With sobre chier among thei smyle,

For laghtre was ther non on hyh.

And natheles full wel I syh

That thei the more queinte it made

For love, in whom thei weren glade.
And there me thoghte I myhte se
The king David with Bersabee,
And Salomon was noght withoute;
Passende an hundred on a route
Of wyves and of Concubines,
Juesses bothe and Sarazines,
To him I sih alle entendant:
I not if he was sufficant,
Bot natheles for al his wit
He was attached with that writ
Which love with his hond enseleth,
Fro whom non erthly man appeleth.
And overthis, as for a wonder,
With his leon which he put under,
With Dalida Sampson I knew,
Whos love his strengthe al overthrew.
I syh there Aristotle also,
Whom that the queene of Grece so
Hath bridled, that in thilke time
Sche made him such a Silogime,

That he foryat al his logique;
Ther was non art of his Practique,
Thurgh which it mihte ben excluded
That he ne was fully concluded
To love, and dede his obeissance.
And ek Virgile of aqueintance
I sih, wher he the Maiden preide,
Which was the doghter, as men seide,
Of themperour whilom of Rome;
Sortes and Plato with him come,
So dede Ovide the Poete.
I thoghte thanne how love is swete,
Which hath so wise men reclamed,
And was miself the lasse aschamed,
Or forto lese or forto winne
In the meschief that I was inne:
And thus I lay in hope of grace.
And whan thei comen to the place
Wher Venus stod and I was falle,
These olde men with o vois alle
To Venus preiden for my sake.

And sche, that myhte noght forsake
So gret a clamour as was there,
Let Pite come into hire Ere;
And forth withal unto Cupide
Sche preith that he upon his side
Me wolde thurgh his grace sende
Som confort, that I myhte amende,
Upon the cas which is befalle.
And thus for me thei preiden alle
Of hem that weren olde aboute,
And ek some of the yonge route,
Of gentilesse and pure trouthe
I herde hem telle it was gret routhe,
That I withouten help so ferde.

And thus me thoghte I lay and herde.
Cupido, which may hurte and hele
In loves cause, as for myn hele
Upon the point which him was preid
Cam with Venus, wher I was leid
Swounende upon the grene gras.

And, as me thoghte , anon ther was
On every side so gret presse,
That every lif began to presse,
I wot noght wel hou many score,
Suche as I spak of now tofore,
Lovers, that comen to beholde,
Bot most of hem that weren olde:
Thei stoden there at thilke tyde,
To se what ende schal betyde
Upon the cure of my sotie.
Tho myhte I hiere gret partie
Spekende, and ech his oghne avis
Hath told, on that, an other this:
Bot among alle this I herde,
Thei weren wo that I so ferde,
And seiden that for no riote
An old man scholde noght assote;
For as thei tolden redely,
Ther is in him no cause why,
Bot if he wolde himself benyce;
So were he wel the more nyce.

And thus desputen some of tho,
And some seiden nothing so,
Bot that the wylde loves rage
In mannes lif forberth non Age;
Whil ther is oyle forto fyre,
The lampe is lyhtly set afyre,
And is fulhard er it be queynt,
Bot only if it be som seint,
Which god preserveth of his grace.
And thus me thoghte, in sondri place
Of hem that walken up and doun
Ther was diverse opinioun:
And for a while so it laste,
Til that Cupide to the laste,
Forth with his moder full avised,
Hath determined and devised
Unto what point he wol descende.
And al this time I was liggende
Upon the ground tofore his yhen,
And thei that my desese syhen
Supposen noght I scholde live;

Bot he, which wolde thanne yive
His grace, so as it mai be,
This blinde god which mai noght se,
Hath groped til that he me fond;
And as he pitte forth his hond
Upon my body, wher I lay,
Me thoghte a fyri Lancegay,
Which whilom thurgh myn herte he caste,
He pulleth oute, and also faste
As this was do, Cupide nam
His weie, I not where he becam,
And so dede al the remenant
Which unto him was entendant,
Of hem that in Avision
I hadde a revelacion,
So as I tolde now tofore.
Bot Venus wente noght therfore,
Ne Genius, whiche thilke time
Abiden bothe faste byme.
And sche which mai the hertes bynde
In loves cause and ek unbinde,

Er I out of mi trance aros,
Venus, which hield a boiste clos,
And wolde noght I scholde deie,
Tok out mor cold than eny keie
An oignement, and in such point
Sche hath my wounded herte enoignt,
My temples and my Reins also.
And forth withal sche tok me tho
A wonder Mirour forto holde,
In which sche bad me to beholde
And taken hiede of that I syhe;
Wherinne anon myn hertes yhe
I caste, and sih my colour fade,
Myn yhen dymme and al unglade,
Mi chiekes thinne, and al my face
With Elde I myhte se deface,
So riveled and so wo besein,
That ther was nothing full ne plein,
I syh also myn heres hore.
Mi will was tho to se nomore
Outwith, for ther was no plesance;

And thanne into my remembrance
I drowh myn olde daies passed,
And as reson it hath compassed,
I made a liknesse of miselve
Unto the sondri Monthes twelve,
Wherof the yeer in his astat
Is mad, and stant upon debat,
That lich til other non acordeth.
For who the times wel recordeth,
And thanne at Marche if he beginne,
Whan that the lusti yeer comth inne,
Til Augst be passed and Septembre,
The myhty youthe he may remembre
In which the yeer hath his deduit
Of gras, of lef, of flour, of fruit,
Of corn and of the wyny grape.
And afterward the time is schape
To frost, to Snow, to Wind, to Rein,
Til eft that Mars be come ayein:
The Wynter wol no Somer knowe,
The grene lef is overthrowe,

The clothed erthe is thanne bare,
Despuiled is the Somerfare,
That erst was hete is thanne chele.
And thus thenkende thoghtes fele,
I was out of mi swoune affraied,
Wherof I sih my wittes straied,
And gan to clepe hem hom ayein.
And whan Resoun it herde sein
That loves rage was aweie,
He cam to me the rihte weie,
And hath remued the sotie
Of thilke unwise fantasie,
Wherof that I was wont to pleigne,
So that of thilke fyri peine
I was mad sobre and hol ynowh.
Venus behield me than and lowh,
And axeth, as it were in game,
What love was. And I for schame
Ne wiste what I scholde ansuere;
And natheles I gan to swere
That be my trouthe I knew him noght;

So ferr it was out of mi thoght,
Riht as it hadde nevere be.
"Mi goode Sone," tho quod sche,
"Now at this time I lieve it wel,
So goth the fortune of my whiel;
Forthi mi conseil is thou leve."
"Ma dame," I seide, "be your leve,
Ye witen wel, and so wot I,
That I am unbehovely
Your Court fro this day forth to serve:
And for I may no thonk deserve,
And also for I am refused,
I preie you to ben excused.
And natheles as for the laste,
Whil that my wittes with me laste,
Touchende mi confession
I axe an absolucion
Of Genius, er that I go."
The Prest anon was redy tho,
And seide, "Sone, as of thi schrifte
Thou hast ful pardoun and foryifte;

Foryet it thou, and so wol I."

"Min holi fader, grant mercy,"

Quod I to him, and to the queene

I fell on knes upon the grene, 2900

And tok my leve forto wende.

Bot sche, that wolde make an ende,

As therto which I was most able,

A Peire of Bedes blak as Sable

Sche tok and heng my necke aboute;

Upon the gaudes al withoute

Was write of gold, Por reposer.

"Lo," thus sche seide, "John Gower,

Now thou art ate laste cast,

This have I for thin ese cast, 2910

That thou nomore of love sieche.

Bot my will is that thou besieche

And preie hierafter for the pes,

And that thou make a plein reles

To love, which takth litel hiede

Of olde men upon the nede,

Whan that the lustes ben aweie:

Forthi to thee nys bot o weie,
In which let reson be thi guide;
For he may sone himself misguide,
That seth noght the peril tofore.
Mi Sone, be wel war therfore,
And kep the sentence of my lore
And tarie thou mi Court nomore,
Bot go ther vertu moral duelleth,
Wher ben thi bokes, as men telleth,
Whiche of long time thou hast write.
For this I do thee wel to wite,
If thou thin hele wolt pourchace,
Thou miht noght make suite and chace,
Wher that the game is nought pernable;
It were a thing unresonable,
A man to be so overseie.
Forthi tak hiede of that I seie;
For in the lawe of my comune
We be noght schape to comune,
Thiself and I, nevere after this.
Now have y seid al that ther is

Of love as for thi final ende:
Adieu, for y mot fro the wende."
And with that word al sodeinly,
Enclosid in a sterred sky,
Venus, which is the qweene of love,
Was take in to hire place above,
More wiste y nought wher sche becam.
And thus my leve of hire y nam,
And forth with al the same tide
Hire prest, which wolde nought abide,
Or be me lief or be me loth,
Out of my sighte forth he goth,
And y was left with outen helpe.
So wiste I nought wher of to yelpe,
Bot only that y hadde lore
My time, and was sori ther fore.
And thus bewhapid in my thought,
Whan al was turnyd in to nought,
I stod amasid for a while,
And in my self y gan to smyle
Thenkende uppon the bedis blake,

And how they weren me betake,
For that y schulde bidde and preie.
And whanne y sigh non othre weie
Bot only that y was refusid,
Unto the lif which y hadde usid
I thoughte nevere torne ayein:
And in this wise, soth to seyn,
Homward a softe pas y wente,
Wher that with al myn hol entente
Uppon the point that y am schryve
I thenke bidde whil y live.
He which withinne daies sevene
This large world forth with the hevene
Of his eternal providence
Hath mad, and thilke intelligence
In mannys soule resonable
Hath schape to be perdurable,
Wherof the man of his feture
Above alle erthli creature
Aftir the soule is immortal,
To thilke lord in special,

As he which is of alle thinges
The creatour, and of the kynges
Hath the fortunes uppon honde,
His grace and mercy forto fonde
Uppon my bare knes y preie,
That he this lond in siker weie
Wol sette uppon good governance.
For if men takyn remembrance
What is to live in unite,
Ther ys no staat in his degree
That noughte to desire pes,
With outen which, it is no les,
To seche and loke in to the laste,
Ther may no worldes joye laste.
Ferst forto loke the Clergie,
Hem oughte wel to justefie
Thing which belongith to here cure,
As forto praie and to procure
Oure pes toward the hevene above,
And ek to sette reste and love
Among ous on this erthe hiere.

For if they wroughte in this manere
Aftir the reule of charite,
I hope that men schuldyn se
This lond amende. And ovyr this,
To seche and loke how that it is
Touchende of the chevalerie,
Which forto loke, in som partie
Is worthi forto be comendid,
And in som part to ben amendid,
That of here large retenue
The lond is ful of maintenue,
Which causith that the comune right
In fewe contrees stant upright.
Extorcioun, contekt, ravine
Withholde ben of that covyne,
Aldai men hierin gret compleignte
Of the desease, of the constreignte,
Wher of the poeple is sore oppressid:
God graunte it mote be redressid.
For of knyghthode thordre wolde
That thei defende and kepe scholde

The comun right and the fraunchise
Of holy cherche in alle wise,
So that no wikke man it dere,
And ther fore servith scheld and spere:
Bot for it goth now other weie,
Oure grace goth the more aweie.
And forto lokyn ovyrmore,
Wher of the poeple pleigneth sore,
Toward the lawis of oure lond,
Men sein that trouthe hath broke his bond
And with brocage is goon aweie,
So that no man can se the weie
Wher forto fynde rightwisnesse.
And if men sechin sikernesse
Uppon the lucre of marchandie,
Compassement and tricherie
Of singuler profit to wynne,
Men seyn, is cause of mochil synne,
And namely of divisioun,
Which many a noble worthi toun
Fro welthe and fro prosperite

Hath brought to gret adversite.
So were it good to ben al on,
For mechil grace ther uppon
Unto the Citees schulde falle,
Which myghte availle to ous alle,
If these astatz amendid were,
So that the vertus stodyn there
And that the vices were aweie:
Me thenkth y dorste thanne seie,
This londis grace schulde arise.
Bot yit to loke in othre wise,
Ther is a stat, as ye schul hiere,
Above alle othre on erthe hiere,
Which hath the lond in his balance:
To him belongith the leiance
Of Clerk, of knyght, of man of lawe;
Undir his hond al is forth drawe
The marchant and the laborer;
So stant it al in his power
Or forto spille or forto save.
Bot though that he such power have,

And that his myghtes ben so large,

He hath hem nought withouten charge,

To which that every kyng ys swore:

So were it good that he ther fore

First un to rightwisnesse entende,

Wherof that he hym self amende

Toward his god and leve vice,

Which is the chief of his office;

And aftir al the remenant

He schal uppon his covenant

Governe and lede in such a wise,

So that ther be no tirandise,

Wherof that he his poeple grieve,

Or ellis may he nought achieve

That longith to his regalie.

For if a kyng wol justifie

His lond and hem that beth withynne,

First at hym self he mot begynne,

To kepe and reule his owne astat,

That in hym self be no debat

Toward his god: for othre wise

Ther may non erthly kyng suffise
Of his kyngdom the folk to lede,
Bot he the kyng of hevene drede.
For what kyng sett hym uppon pride
And takth his lust on every side 3090
And wil nought go the righte weie,
Though god his grace caste aweie
No wondir is, for ate laste
He schal wel wite it mai nought laste,
The pompe which he secheth here.
Bot what kyng that with humble chere
Aftir the lawe of god eschuieth
The vices, and the vertus suieth,
His grace schal be suffisant
To governe al the remenant 3100
Which longith to his duite;
So that in his prosperite
The poeple schal nought ben oppressid,
Wherof his name schal be blessid,
For evere and be memorial.
And now to speke as in final,

Touchende that y undirtok
In englesch forto make a book
Which stant betwene ernest and game,
I have it maad as thilke same
Which axe forto ben excusid,
And that my bok be nought refusid
Of lered men, whan thei it se,
For lak of curiosite:
For thilke scole of eloquence
Belongith nought to my science,
Uppon the forme of rethoriqe
My wordis forto peinte and pike,
As Tullius som tyme wrot.
Bot this y knowe and this y wot,
That y have do my trewe peyne
With rude wordis and with pleyne,
In al that evere y couthe and myghte,
This bok to write as y behighte,
So as siknesse it soffre wolde;
And also for my daies olde,
That y am feble and impotent,

I wot nought how the world ys went.
So preye y to my lordis alle
Now in myn age, how so befalle,
That y mot stonden in here grace:
For though me lacke to purchace
Here worthi thonk as by decerte,
Yit the symplesse of my poverte
Desireth forto do plesance
To hem undir whos governance
I hope siker to abide.
But now uppon my laste tide
That y this book have maad and write,
My muse doth me forto wite,
And seith it schal be for my beste
Fro this day forth to take reste,
That y nomore of love make,
Which many an herte hath overtake,
And ovyrturnyd as the blynde
Fro reson in to lawe of kynde;
Wher as the wisdom goth aweie
And can nought se the ryhte weie

How to governe his oghne estat,
Bot everydai stant in debat
Withinne him self, and can nought leve.
And thus forthy my final leve
I take now for evere more,
Withoute makynge any more,
Of love and of his dedly hele,
Which no phisicien can hele.
For his nature is so divers,
That it hath evere som travers
Or of to moche or of to lite,
That pleinly mai noman delite,
Bot if him faile or that or this.
Bot thilke love which that is
Withinne a mannes herte affermed,
And stant of charite confermed,
Such love is goodly forto have,
Such love mai the bodi save,
Such love mai the soule amende,
The hyhe god such love ous sende
Forthwith the remenant of grace;

So that above in thilke place
Wher resteth love and alle pes,
Oure joie mai ben endeles.
Explicit iste liber, qui transeat, obsecro liber,
Vt sine liuore vigeat lectoris in ore.
Qui sedet in scannis celi det vt ista lohannis
Perpetuis annis stet pagina grata Britannis,
Derbeie Comiti, recolunt quem laude periti,
Vade liber purus, sub eo requiesce futurus.

The End

THE WINTER’S TALE – Greene’s Poem

Pandosto: The Triumph of Time is a prose romance written by Robert Greene and first published in 1588. This work was popular during Shakespeare’s time and the plot inspired *The Winter's Tale* . The entire tale is provided below.

PANDOSTO.

THE TRIUMPH OF TIME.

Wherein is discouvred by a pleasant Historie, that although by the meanes of sinister fortune, Truth may be concealed yet by Time in spight of fortune it is most manifestly reuealed.

Pleasant for age to avoyde drowsie thoughtes, profitable for youth to eschue other wanton pastimes, and bringing to both a desired content.

Temporis filia veritas .

By Robert Greene, Maister of Artes in Cambridge.

Omne tulit punctum qui miscuit utile dulci .

To the Gentlemen
Readers, health.

The paultring poet Aphranivs being blamed for troubling the Emperour Traian with so many doting Poems: aduentured notwithstanding, still to present him with rude and homely verses, excusing himselfe with the curtesie of the Emperour, which did as friendly accept, as he fondly offered. So Gentlemen, if anie condemne my rashnesse for trobling your eares with so many vnlearned Pamphlets: I will straight shroud my selfe vnder the shadow of your courtesies, and with Afranivs, lay the blame on you, as well for friendly reading them, as on my selfe for fondly penning them: Hoping though fond curious, or rather currish bacbiters, breath out slaunderour speeches: yet the courteous Readers (whom I feare to offend) will requite my trauile, at the least with silence: and in this hope I rest: wishing you health and happinesse.

Robert Greene.

To the Right Honovrable
George Clifford Earle of Cumberland,
Robert Greene wisheth increase
of honour and vertue.

The Rascians (right honourable) when by long gazing against the Sun, they became half blind, recover their sights by looking on the blacke Loade stone. Vnicornes being glutted with brousing on rootes of Lycoras, sharpen their stomacks with crushing bitter grasse.

Alexander vouchsafed as well to smile at the crooked picture of Vulcan, as to wonder at the curious counterfeite of Venus. The mind is sometimes delighted as much with small trifles as with sumptuous triumphs, and as well pleased with hearing of Pans homely fancies, as of Hercules renowmed labours.

Sillie Baucis could not serve Iupiter in a silver plate, but in a woodden dish. All that honour Esculapius, decke not his shrine with Iewels. Apollo gives Oracles as well to the poore man for his mite, as to the rich man for his treasure. The stone Hebites is not so much liked for the colour, as for vertue: and pitts are not to be measured by the worth, but by the will. Mison that vnskilfull Painter of Greece, aduentured to giue vnto Darius the shield of Pallas, so roughly shadowed, as he smiled more at the folly of the man, than at the imperfection of his art. So I present vnto your honour the Triumph of time, so rudely finished, as I feare your honour will rather frowne at my impudencie, than laugh at at my ignorancie: But I hope my willing minde shall excuse my slender skill, and your honours curtesie shadow my rashnesse.

The Epistle Dedicatorie.

They which feare the biting of vipers do carry in their hands the plumes of a Phoenix. Phydias drewe Vulcan sitting in a chaire of Iuorie. Caesars Crow durst never cry, *Aue* , but when she was pearked on the Capitoll. And I seeke to shrowd this imperfect Pamphlet vnder your honours patronage, doubting the dint of such inuenomed vipers, as seeke with their slaunderous reproches to carpe at all, beeing oftentimes, most vnlearned of all: and assure my selfe, that your honours renowmend valour, and vertuous disposition shall be a sufficient defence to protect me from the poysoned tongues of such scorning Sycophants, hoping that as Iupiter vouchsafed to lodge in Philemons thatched cottage: and Philip of Macedon, to take a bunch of grapes of a countrey pesant: so I hope your honour, measuring my worke by my will, & waighing more the minde than the matter, will, when you haue cast a glaunce at this toy, with Minerua, vnder your golden Target cover a deformed Owle. And in this hope I rest, wishing vnto you, and the vertuous Countesse your wife: such happie successe as your honours can desire, or imagine.

Your Lordships most dutifully to command:

Robert Greene.

Among al the passions wherewith humane mindes are perplexed, there is none that so galleth with restlesse despight, as the infectious soare of ielousy: for all other griefes are either to bee appeased with sensible perswasions, to be cured with wholesome counsell, to be relieued in want, or by tract of time to be worne out (Iealousie only excepted) which is so sawsed with suspitious doubtes, and pinching mistrust, that whoso seekes by friendly counsaile to rase out this hellish passion, it forthwith suspecteth that he giueth this aduise to couer his owne guiltinesse. Yea, who so is payned with this restlesse torment doubteth all, distrusteth himselfe, is alwayes frozen with feare, and fired with suspition, hauing that wherein consists all his ioy, to be the breeder of his misery. Yea, it is such a heauy enemy to that holy estate of matrimony, sowing betweene the married couples such deadly seeds of secret hatred, as Loue being once rased out by spitefull distrust, there oft ensueth bloudy reuenge, as this ensuing Historie manifestly prooueth: wherein Pandosto (furiously incensed by causelesse iealousie) procured the death of his most louing and loyall wife, and his owne endlesse sorrow and misery.

In the Countrey of Bohemia there raigned a king called Pandosto, whose fortunate successe in warres against his foes, and bountifull curtesie towardes his friendes in peace, made him to be greatly feared and loued of all men. This Pandosto had to wife a Ladie called Bellaria, by birth royall, learned by education, faire by nature, by vertues famous, so that it was hard to iudge whether her beautie, fortune, or vertue, wanne the greatest commendations. These two lincked together in perfect loue, led their liues with such fortunate content, that their Subiects greatly reioyced to see their quiet disposition. They had not beene married long, but Fortune (willing to increase their happines) lent them a sonne, so adorned with the gifts of nature, as the perfection of the child greatly augmented the loue of the parentes, and the ioys of their commons: in so much that the Bohemians, to shew their inward ioyes by outward actions, made bonefires and triumphs throughout all the kingdome, appointing iustes and turneyes for the honour of their young Prince: whether resorted not onely his Nobles, but also divers kings and princes which were his neighbours, willing to showe their friendship they ought to Pandosto, and to win fame and glory by their prowesse and valour. Pandosto, whose minde was fraught with princely liberalitie, entertayned the kings, princes, and noblemen with such submisse curtesie and magnificall bounty, that they all saw how willing he was to gratifie their good willes, making a generall feast for his subiects which continued by the space of xx. dayes: all which time the iustes and turnies were kept to the great content both of the Lordes and Ladies there present. This solemne tryumph boing once ended, the assembly taking their leave of Pandosto and Bellaria: the young sonne (who was called Garinter) was nursed vp in the house to the great ioy and content of the parents. Fortune enuious of such happy successe, willing to showe some signe of her inconstancy, turned her wheele, and darkned their bright sunne of prosperity, with the misty cloudes of mishap and misery. For it so happened that Egistus King of Sycilia, who in his youth had bin brought vp with Pandosto, desirous to shew that neither tracte of time, nor distance of place could diminish their former friendship, prouided a nauy of ships, and sailed into Bohemia to visite his old friend and companion, who hearing of his arriuall, went himselfe in person, and his wife Bellaria, accompanied with a great traine of lords and ladies, to meet Egistus: and espying him, alighted from his horse, embraced him very louingly, protesting, that nothing in the world could haue hapned more acceptable to him then his comming, wishing his wife to welcome his olde friend and acquaintance, who (to showe how she liked him whom her husband loued) intertayned him with such familiar curtesie, as Egistus perceiued himselfe to bee very well welcome. After they had thus saluted and embraced ech other, they mounted againe on horse backe and rode toward the Citie, deuising and recounting, how being children they had passed their youth in friendely pastimes: where, by the meanes of the Citizens, Egistus was receiued with triumphs and shewes in such sort, that he maruelled how on so small a warning they coulde make such preparation. Passing the streetes thus with such rare sights, they rode on to the Pallace, where Pandosto entertained Egistus and his Sycilians with such banqueting and sumptuous cheare, so royally, as they all had cause to commend his Princely liberalitie, yea, the verie basest slave that was knowen to come from Sycilia was vsed with such curtesie, that Egistus might easily perceiue how both hee and his were honored for his friendes sake. Bellaria (who in her time was the flower of curtesie), willing to shew how vnfainedly shee loued her husband by his friends intertainement, vsed him likewise so familiarly, that her countenance bewrayed how her mind was affected towards him: oftentimes comming her selfe into his bed chamber, to see that nothing shuld be amisse to mislike him. This honest familiaritie increased daily more and more betwixt them: for Bellaria noting in Egistus a Princely and bountifull minde adorned with sundry and excellent qualities, and Egistus finding in her a vertuous and curteous disposition, there grew such a secret vniting of their affections, that the one could not well be without the company of th'other: in so much that when Pandosto was busied with such vrgent affairs, that hee could not bee present with his friend Egistus, Bellaria would walke with him into the garden, where they two in priuat and pleasant deuises would passe away the time to both their contents. This custome still continuing betwixt them, a certaine melancholy passion entring the minde of Pandosto, drave him into sundry and doubtfull thoughts. First, he called to mind the beauty of his wife Bellaria, the comelines and brauerie of his friend Egistus, thinking that loue was above all lawes, and therefore to be stayed with no law: that it was hard to put fier and flaxe together without burning: that their open pleasures might breede his secret displeasures. He considereth with himselfe that Egistus was a man, and must needs loue: that his wife was a woman, and therefore subiect to loue, and that where fancy forced, friendship was of no force. These and such like doubtful thoughtes a long time smothering in his stomach, began at last to kindle in his mind a secret mistrust, which increased by suspition, grew at last to a flaming iealousie, that so tormented him as he could take no rest. He then began to measure al their actions and to misconstrue of their too priuate familiarity, iudging that it was not for honest affection, but for disordinat fancy, so as he began to watch them more narrowly, to see if he coulde get any true or certain proofe to confirm his doubtfull suspition. While thus he noted their looks and gestures, and suspected their thoughts and meanings, they two seely soules who doubted nothing of this his treacherous intent, frequented daily ech others company, which draue him into such a franticke passion, that he beganne to beare a secret hate to Egistus, and a lowering countenance to Bellaria, who maruelling at such vnaccustomed frowns, began to cast beeyond the moone, and to enter into M. sundry thoughts, which way she shuld offend her husband: but finding in herself a cleare conscience, ceased to muse, till such time as she might find fit opportunity to demand the cause of his dumps. In the meane time Pandostoes minde was so far charged with iealousie, that he no longer doubted, but was assured (as he thought) that his friend Egistus had entered a wrong point in his tables, and so had playd him false play: whereupon desirous to reuenge so great an iniury, he thought best to dissemble the grudge with a faire and friendly countenance: and so vnder the shape of a friend, to shew him the tricke of a foe. Deuising with himselfe a long time how he might best put away Egistus without suspition of treacherous murder, concluded at last to poison him, which opinion pleasing his humour, he became resolute in his determination, and the better to bring the matter to passe, he called to him his cupbearer, with whom in secret he brake the matter: promising to him for the performance thereof, to give him 1000. crowns of yearely revenues: his cupbearer, either being of a good conscience, or willing for fashion sake, to deny such a blody request, began with great reasons to perswade Pandosto from his determinate mischiefe: shewing him what an offence murther was to the Gods: how such vnnatural actions did more displease the heavens, than men: and that causeles crueltie did seldome or neuer escape without reuenge: he laid before his face, that Egistus was his friend, a king, and one that was come into his kingdome, to confirme a league of perpetuall amitie betwixt them, that he had and did shew him a most friendly countenance, how Egistus was not onely honoured of his owne people by obedience, but also loued of the Bohemians for his curtesie. And that if he now should without any iust or manifest cause, poison him, it would not only be a great dishonor to his Maiesty, and a meanes to sow perpetuall enmitie betweene the Sycilians and the Bohemians, but also his own subiects would repine at such trecherous crueltie. These and such like perswasions of Franion (for so was his cupbearer called) could no whit preuaile to disswade him from his deuilish enterprise, but remaining resolute in his determination, his furie so fiered with rage, as it could not be appeased with reason: he began with bitter tauntes to take vp his man, and to lay before him two baites: preferment, and death: saying that if he would poyson Egistus, he should advance him to high dignities: if he refused to do it of an obstinate minde, no torture should be to great to requite his disobedience. Franion seeing that to perswade Pandosto any more, was but to striue against the streame: consented as soone as oportunitie would give him leave to dispatch Egistus, wherewith Pandosto remained somewhat satisfied, hoping now he shoulde bee fully reuenged of such mistrusted iniuries, intending also assoone as Egistus was dead, to giue his wife a sop of the same sawce, and so be rid of those which were the cause of his restles sorrow. While thus he liued in this hope, Franion beeing secret in his chamber, began to meditate with himselfe in these termes.

Ah Franion, treason is loued of many, but the traitor hated of all: vniust offences may for a time escape without danger, but neuer without reuenge, thou art seruant to a king, and must obey at commaund: yet Franion, against law and conscience, it is not good to resist a tyrant with armes, nor to please an vniust king with obedience. What shalt thou do? Folly refused gold, and frensie preferment, wisedome seeketh after dignity, and counsell looketh for gaine. Egistus is a stranger, to thee, and Pandosto thy soueraigne: thou hast little cause to respect the one, and oughtest to haue great care to obey the other. Thinke this Franion, that a pound of gold is worth a tunne of lead, great gifts are litle Gods, and preferment to a meane man, is a whetstone to courage: there is nothing sweeter than promotion, nor lighter than report: care not then though most count thee a traitor, so all call thee rich. Dignity (Franion) aduanceth thy posterity, and euill report can hurt but thy selfe. Know this, where Eagles build, Faulcons may pray: where Lyons haunt. Foxes may steale. Kings are knowen to commaunde, seruaunts are blamelesse to consent: feare not thou then to lift at Egistus. Pandosto shall beare the burthen. Yea, but Franion, conscience is a worme that euer biteth, but never ceaseth: that which is rubbed with the stone Galactites will neuer be hot. Flesh dipped in the sea Aegeum, will neuer bee sweete: the hearbe Tragion being once bit with an Aspis neuer groweth, and conscience once stained with innocent bloud, is alwaies tied to a guiltie remorse. Prefer thy content before riches, and a cleare minde before dignity: so being poore thou shalt haue rich peace, or els rich, thou shalt enioy disquiet.

Franion hauing muttered out these or such like wordes, seeing either he must dye with a cleare minde, or live with a spotted conscience: he was so combered with diuers cogitations that he could take no rest: vntill at last he determined to breake the matter to Egistus: but fearing that the king should either suspect or heare of such matters, he concealed the deuise till oportunity would permit him to reueale it. Lingring thus in doubtfull feare, in an euening he went to Egistus lodging, and desirous to breake with him of certaine affaires that touched the king, after all were commaunded out of the chamber. Franion made manifest the whole conspiracie, which Pandosto had deuised against him, desiring Egistus not to accompt him a traitor for bewraying his maisters counsell, but to thinke that hee did it for conscience, hoping that although his maister inflamed with rage, or incensed by some sinister reportes, or slaunderous speaches, had imagined such causelesse mischief: yet when time should pacifie his anger, and try those tale bearers but flattering Parasites, then hee would count him as a faithfull seruaunt, that with such care had kept his masters credit. Egistus had not fully heard Franion tell forth his tale, but a quaking feare possessed all his limmes, thinking that there was some treason wrought, and that Franion did but shaddow his craft with these false colours: wherefore he began to waxe in choler, and saide that he doubted not Pandosto, sith he was his friend, and there had neuer as yet beene any breach of amitie: he had not sought to inuade his landes, to conspire with his enemies, to disswade his subjectes from their allegeiance: but in word and thought he rested his at all times: he knew not therefore any cause that should moue Pandosto to seeke his death, but suspected it to bee a compacted knauery of the Bohemians, to bring the King and him at oddes. Franion staying him in the midest of his talke, told him that to dally with Princes was with the swannes to sing against their death, and that if the Bohemians had intended any such secret mischiefe, it might haue beene better brought to passe then by reuealing the conspiracy: therefore his Maiestie did ill to misconstrue of his good meaning, sith his intent was to hinder treason, not to become a traitor and to confirme his premises, if it please his Maiesty to flee into Sycilia for the safegarde of his life, hee woulde goe with him: and if then hee found not such a practise to bee pretended, let his imagined trechery be repayed with most monstrous tormentes. Egistus hearing the solemne protestation of Franion: began to consider, that in loue and kingdomes, neither faith, nor lawe is to bee respected: doubting that Pandosto thought by his death to destroy his men, and with speedie warre to inuade Sycilia: these and such doubtes throughlie weighed, hee gaue great thankes to Franion, promising if hee might with life returne to Syracusa, that hee would create him a Duke in Sycilia: crauing his counsell how hee might escape out of the countrey. Franion, who hauing some small skill in Nauigation, was well acquainted with the Ports and Hauens, and knew euery daunger in the Sea, ioyning in counsell with the Maister of Egistus Nauie, rigged all their ships, and setting them a float let them lie at anker, to be in the more readinesse when time and winde should serue. Fortune although blind, yet by chance fauoring this iust cause, sent them within 6. daies a good gale of winde, which Franion seeing fit for their purpose, to put Pandosto out of suspition, the night before they should saile, he went to him and promised, that the next daie he would put the deuice in practise, for he had got such a forcible poison as the very smell thereof should procure sodaine death. Pandosto was ioyfull to heare this good newes and thought euery houre a day till he might be glutted with bloudy reuenge, but his suit had but il successe: for Egistus fearing that delay might breede daunger, and willing that the grasse should not be cut fromvunder his feete, taking bagge and baggage with the helpe of Franion, conueied himselfe and his men out of a posterne gate of the city so secretly and speedely that without any suspition they got to the sea shoare, where, with many a bitter curse taking their leave of Bohemia, they went aboord, weighing their Ancres and hoisting saile, th*[e]* y passed as fast as winde and sea would permit towards Sycilia; Egistus being a ioyfull man, that he had safely past such trecherous perils. But as they were quietly floating on the sea, so Pandosto and his Citizens were in an vproare: for seeing that the Sycilians without taking their leaue were fled away by night, the Bohemians feared some treason, and the King thought that without question his suspition was true, seeing his cupbearer had bewrayed the summe of his secret pretence: whereupon he began to imagine, that Franion and his wife Bellaria had conspired with Egistus, and that the feruent affection she beare him, was the onely meanes of his secret departure, in so much that incensed with rage, he commaunded that his wife shoulde be carried to straight prison, vntil they heard further of his pleasure. The guarde vnwilling to lay their hands on such a vertuous Princesse, and yet fearing the kings fury, went very sorrowfully to fulfill their charge, comming to the Queenes lodging, they found her playing with her young sonne Garinter, vnto whom with teares doing the message: Bellaria astonished at such a hard censure, and finding her cleare conscience a sure aduocate to pleade in her case, went to the prison most willingly: where with sighs and teares shee past away the time till shee might come to her triall.

But Pandosto, whose reason was suppressed with rage, and whose vnbridled folly was incensed with fury: seeing Franion had bewrayed his secrets, and that Egistus might well be railed on, but not reuenged: determined to wreeke all his wrath on poore Bellaria, he therefore caused a generall proclamation to be made through all his Realme, that the Queene and Egistus had by the helpe of Franion not onely committed most incestuous adulterie, but also had conspired the Kings death: whereupon the Traitor Franion was fled away with Egistus, and Bellaria was most iustly imprisoned. This Proclamation being once blazed through the countrey, although the vertuous disposition of the Queene did halfe discredit the contents: yet the sodaine and speedy passage of Egistus, and the secret departure of Franion induced them (the circumstances throughly considered) to thinks that both the Proclamation was true, and the King greatly iniured: yet they pitied her case, as sorrowfull that so good a Lady should be crossed with such aduerse Fortune. But the King, whose restlesse rage would admit no pity, thought that although he might sufficiently requite his wiues falshoode with the bitter plague of pinching penury, yet his minde should neuer be glutted with reuenge, till he might haue fit time and oportunity to repay the treachery *[of]* Egistus with a fatall injurie. But a curst Cow hath oft times shorte hornes, and a willing mind, but a weake arme: for Pandosto although he felt; that reuenge was a spurre to warre, and that enuie alwaies proffereth steele, yet he saw, that Egistus was not onely of great puissance, and prowesse to withstand him, but also had many Kings of his alliance to aide him, if neede should serve: for he married to the Emperours daughter of Russia. These and the like considerations something daunted Pandosto his courage, so that he was content rather to put vp a manifest iniury with peace, than hunt after reuenge *[with]* dishonor and losse; determining since Egistus had escaped scotfree, that Bellaria should pay for all at an vnreasonyble price.

Remayning thus resolute in his determination, Bellaria continuing still in prison, and hearing the contents of the Proclamation, knowing that her minde was neuer touched with such affection, nor that Egistus had euer offered her such discurtesie, would gladly haue come to her answere, that both shee might haue knowne her vniust accusers, and cleared her selfe of that guiltlesse crime.

But Pandosto was so enflamed with rage, and infected with Jealousie as he would not vouchsafe to heare her nor admit any iust excuse, so that shee was faine to make a vertue of her neede, and with patience to beare these heauy iniuries. As thus she lay crossed with calamities (a great cause to increase her griefe) she found her selfe quicke with childe: which assoone as she felt stir in her bodie, she burst foorth into bitter teares, exclaiming against fortune in these tearmes.

Alas, Bellaria, how infortunate art thou because fortunate, better hadst thou beene borne a begger than a Prince: so shouldest thou haue bridled Fortune with want, where now shee sporteth her selfe with thy plenty. Ah happy life where poore thoughtes, and meane desires liue in secure content, not fearing Fortune because too low. For Fortune, thou seest now Bellaria, that care is a companion to honor, not to pouertie, that high Caedars are frushed with tempests, when low shrubs are not toucht with the wind: precious Diamonds are cut with the file, when despised peables lie safe in the sand: Delphos is sought to by Princes, not beggers: and Fortunes altars smoke with Kings presents, not with poore mens gifts. Happy are such, Bellaria, that curse Fortune for contempt, not fear, and may wish they were, not sorrow they haue beene. Thou art a Princesse, Bellaria, and yet a prisoner, borne to the one by discent, assigned to the other by despite, accused without cause, and therefore oughtest to die without care: for patience is a shield against Fortune, and a guiltlesse minde yeeldeth not to sorrow. Ah, but infamie galleth vnto death, and liueth after death: Report is plumed with times feathers, and Enuie oftentimes soundeth Fames trumpet: thy suspected adulterie shall flie in the aire, and thy knowne vertues shall lie hid in the Earth: one Moale staineth a whole face, and what is once spotted with Infamy can hardly be worne out with time. Die then Bellaria, Bellaria die: for if the Gods should say thou art guiltlesse, yet enuie would heare the Gods, but neuer beleeue the Gods. Ah haplesse wretch, cease these tearmes: desperat thoughts are fit for them that feare shame, not for such as hope for credite. Pandosto hath darkened thy fame, but shall neuer discredit thy vertues. Suspition may enter a false action, but proofe shall neuer put in his plea: care not then for envie, sith report hath a blister on her tongue: and let sorrow bite them which offende, not touch thee that arte faultlesse. But alas poore soule, howe canst thou but sorrow? Thou art with child, and by him that in steed of kind pitie pincheth thee in cold prison. And with that such gasping sighes so stopped her breath, that she could not vtter any mo words, but wringing her hands, and gushing forth streames of teares, shee passed away the time with bitter complaints.

The Jaylor pitying these her heauie passions, thinking that if the king knew she were with childe, he would somwhat appease his furie, and release her from prison, went in all haste, and certified Pandosto what the effect of Bellarias complaint was: who no sooner heard the Jaylour say she was with child, but as one possessed with a phrensie, he rose vp in a rage, swearing that she and the bastard brat she was withall, should die, if the Gods themselues said no: thinking that surely by computation of time, that Egistus and not he, was father to the child. This suspitious thought galled a fresh this halfe healed sore, insomuch as hee could take no rest, vntill he might mitigate his choler with a iust reuenge, which happened presently after. For Bellaria was brought to bed of a faire and beautifull daughter, which no sooner Pandosto heard, but he determined that both Bellaria and the yong infant should be burnt with fire. His Nobles, hearing of the Kings cruell sentence, sought by perswasions to diuert him from this bloody determination: laying before his face the innocency of the child, and vertuous disposition of his wife, how she had continually loued and honoured him so tenderly, that without due proof he could not, nor ought not to appeach her of that crime. And if she had faulted, yet it were more honorable to pardon with mercy, then to punish with extremity, and more Kingly, to be commended of pitie, than accused of rigor. And as for the child, if he should punish it for the mothers offence, it were to striue against nature and iustice: and that vnnaturall actions doe more offend the Gods then men: how causelesse crueltie, nor innocent bloud neuer scapes without reuenge. These and such like reasons could not appease his rage, but he rested resolute in this, that Bellaria being an adulteresse, the child was a bastard, and he would not suffer that such an infamous brat should call him father. Yet at last (seeing his noble men were importunate vpon him) he was content to spare the childs life, and yet to put it to a worser death. For he found out this deuise that seeing (as he thought) it came by Fortune, so he would commit it to the charge of Fortune, and therefore he caused a little cock-boat to be prouided, wherein he meant to put the babe, and then send it to the mercie of the seas, and the destinies. From this his Peeres in no wise could perswade him, but that he sent presently two of his Gard to fetch the child, who being come to the prison, and with weeping teares recounting their maisters message: Bellaria no sooner heard the rigorous resolution of her mercilesse husband, but she fell downe in a sound, so that all thought she had bin dead, yet at last being come to her selfe, she cried and scriched out in this wise.

Alas sweete infortunate babe, scarse borne before enuied by fortune: would the day of thy birth had beene the tearme of thy life, then shouldest thou haue made an ende to care, and preuented thy fathers rigor. Thy faults cannot yet deserve such hatefull reuenge, thy daies are too shorte for so sharpe a doome, but thy vntimely death must pay thy mothers debtes, and her guiltlesse crime must be thy gastly curse. And shalt thou sweete babe be committed to fortune? When thou art already spited by Fortune: shall the seas be thy harbour, and the hard boat thy cradle? Shall thy tender mouth insteede of sweete kisses, be nipped with bitter stormes? Shalt thou haue the whistling windes for thy Lullabie, and the salt sea fome in steede of sweete milke? Alas, what destinies would assigne such hard hap? What father would be so cruell? Or what Gods will not reuenge such rigor? Let me kisse thy lips (sweet infant) and wet thy tender cheekes with my teares, and put this chaine about thy little necke, that if fortune saue thee, it may helpe to succour thee. Thus, since thou must goe to surge in the gastful seas, with a sorrowfull kisse I bid thee farewell, and I pray the Gods thou mayst farewell. Such, and so great was her griefe, that her vitall spirits being suppressed with sorow, she fell downe againe in a traunce, hauing her sences so sotted with care, that after she was reuiued, yet she lost her memorie, and lay for a great time without moouing as one in a traunce. The gard left her in this perplexitie, and carried the child to the King, who quite deuoyde of pity, commanded that without delay it should be put into the boate, hauing neither saile nor other to guide it, and so to be carried into the midst of the sea, and there left to the winde and waue as the destinies please to appoint. The very shipmen seeing the sweete countenance of the yong babe, began to accuse the King of rigor, and to pity the childs hard fortune: but feare constrained them to that which their nature did abhorre: so that they placed it in one of the ends of the boat, and with a few green bows made a homely cabin to shrowd it as they could from wind and weather: hauing thus trimmed the boat they tied it to a ship, and so haled it into the maine sea, and then cut insunder the corde, which they had no sooner done, but there arose a mighty tempest, which tossed the little boat so vehemently in the waues, that the ship men thought it could not long continue without sinking, yea the storme grew so great, that with much labour and perill they got to the shoare. But leaving the child to her fortunes. Againe to Pandosto, who not yet glutted with sufficient reuenge, deuised which way he should best increase his wives calamitie. But first assembling his Nobles and Counsellours, hee called her for the more reproch into open Court, where it was obiected against her, that she had committed adulterie with Egistus, and conspired with Franion to poyson Pandosto her husband, but their pretence being partely spied, she counselled them to flie away by night for their better safetie. Bellaria, who standing like a prisoner at the bar, feeling in herselfe a cleare conscience to withstand her false accusers: seeing that no lesse than death could pacifie her husbands wrath, waxed bold, and desired that she might haue lawe and lustice, for mercy she neither craued nor hoped, and that those periured wretches, which had falsly accused her to the king, might be brought before her face, to giue in evidence. Pandosto, whose rage and iealousie was such, no reason, nor equitie could appease, tolde her, that for her accusers they, were of such credit, as their wordes were sufficient witnes, and that the sodaine and secret flight of Egistus and Franion confirmed that which they had confessed: and as for her, it was her part to deny such a monstrous crime, and to be impudent in forswearing the fact, since she had past al shame in committing the fault: but her stale countenance should stand for no coyne, for as the bastard which she bare was serued, so she should with some cruel death be requited. Bellaria no whit dismaied with this rough reply, tolde her husband Pandosto that he spake vpon choler, and not conscience: for her vertuous life had bin ever such, as no spot of suspition could ever stain. And if she had borne a frendly countenance to Egistus, it was in respect he was his friend, and not for any lusting affection: therefore if she were condemned without any further proofe, it was rigour, and not law. The noblemen which sate in iudgment, said that Bellaria spake reason, and intreated the king that the accusers might be openly examined, and sworne, if then the evidence were such, as the Jury might find her guilty (for seeing she was a Prince) shee ought to be tried by her peeres, then let her haue such punishment as the extremitie of the law will assigne to such malefactors. The king presently made answer, that in this case he might, and would dispence with the law, and that the Jury being once panneled, they should take his word for sufficient evidence, otherwise he would make the prowdest of them repent it. The noblemen seeing the king in choler, were al whist, but Bellaria whose life then hung in the ballance, fearing more perpetuall infamie, then momentary death, told the king, if his furie might stand for a Lawe, that it were vaine to haue the Jury yeeld their verdit, and therefore she fell downe vpon her knees, and desired the king that for the loue he bare to his yong sonne Garinter, whome she brought into the world, that hee would grant her a request, the which was this, that it would please his majesty to send six of his noble men whom hee best trusted, to the Isle of Delphos, there to enquire of the Oracle of Apollo, whether she had committedæadulterie with Egistus, or conspired to poyson with Franion: and if the God Apollo, who by his divine essence knew all secrets, gave answere that shee was guiltie, shee were content to suffer any torment, were it neuer so terrible. The request was so reasonable, that Pandosto could not for shame deny it, vnlesse hee would be counted of all his subiectes more wilfull then wise. He therefore agreed, that with as much speede as might be there should be certaine Embassadors dispatched to the Ile of Delphos: and in the meane season he commaunded that his wife should be kept in close prison. Bellaria hauing obtained this grant, was now more carefull for her little babe that floatedæon the seas, then sorrowful for her owne mishap. For of that she doubted: of her selfe she was assured, knowing if Apollo should give Oracle according to the thoughts of the hart, yet the sentence should go on her side, such was the cleerenes of her mind in this case. But Pandosto (whose suspitious head still remained in one song) chose out six of his Nobilitie, whom he knew were scarse indifferent men in the Queens behalfe, and prouiding all things fit for their iourney, sent them to Delphos: they willing to fulfill the kings command, and desirous to see the situation and custome of the Iland, dispatched their affaires with as much speed as might be, and embarked themselues to the voyage, which (the wind and weather seruing fit for their purpose) was soone ended. For within three weekes they arrived at Delphos, where they were no sooner set on lande, but with great deuotion they went to the Temple of Apollo, and there offring sacrifice to the God, and gifts to the Priest, as the custome was, they humbly craued an answere of their demand: they had not long kneeled at the Altar, but Apollo with a loude voice said: Bohemians, what you finde behind the Alter take, and depart. They forthwith obeying the Oracle founde a scroule of parchment, wherein was written these words in letters of golde.

The Oracle.

Suspition is no proofe: Iealousie is an vnequall Iudge: Bellaria is chaste: Egistus blameless: Franion a true subject: Pandosto treacherous: his babe an innocent, and the king shal liue without an heire: if that which is lost be not found.

As soone as they had taken out this scrol, the priest of the god commaunded them that they should not presume to reade it, before they came in the presence of Pandosto: vnlesse they would incurre the displeasure of Apollo. The Bohemian lords carefully obeying his commaund, taking their leaue of the priest, with great reuerence departed out of the Temple, and went to their ships, and as soone as wind would permit them, sailed toward Bohemia, whither in short time they safely arrived, and with great triumph issuing out of their ships, went to the kings pallace, whom they found in his chamber accompanied with other noble men: Pandosto no sooner saw them, but with a merry countenance hee welcomed them home, asking what newes: they told his maiestie that they had received an answer of the god written in a scroll, but with this charge, that they should not reade the contents before they came in the presence of the king, and with that they deliuered him the parchment: but his noblemen entreated him that sith therein was contained either the safety of his wives life and honesty, or her death and perpetuall infamy, that hee would haue his nobles and commons assembled in the iudgement hall, where the queene brought in as a prisoner should heare the contents: if she were found guilty by the oracle of the god, then al should haue cause to thinke his rigor proceeded of due desert: if her grace were found faultlesse, then she should bee cleered before al, sith she had bin accused openly. This pleased the King so, that he appointed the day, and assembled al his lords and commons, and caused the Queene to be brought in before the iudgement seate, commaunding that the inditement shuld be read, wherein she was accused of adulterie with Egistus, and of conspiracie with Franion: Bellaria hearing the contents, was no whit astonished, but made this cheerefull aunswere.

If the diuine powers be priuy to humane actions (as no doubt they are) I hope my patience shal make fortune blush, and my vnspottedælife shall staine spitefully discredit. For, althogh lying report hath sought to appeach mine honor, and suspition hath intended to soile my credite with infamy: yet where vertue keepeth the fort, report and suspition may assaile, but neuer sacke: how I haue led my life before Egistus comming, I appeale Pandosto to the gods, and to thy conscience. What hath past between him and me, the gods only know, and I hope will presently reueale: that I loued Egistus I can not deny that I honored him I shame not to confesse: to the one I was forced by his vertues, to the other for his dignities. But as touching lasciuious lust, I say Egistus is honest, and hope my selfe to be found without spot: for Franion, I can neyther accuse him, nor excuse him: for I was not priuy to his departure, and that this is true which I haue here rehearsed, I referre my selfe to the diuine oracle.

Bellaria had no sooner sayd, but the King commanded that one of his Dukes should reade the contents of the scroll: which after the commons had heard, they gaue a great shout, rejoicing and clapping their hands that the Queene was cleere of that false accusation: but the king whose conscience was a witnesse against him of his witlesse fury, and false suspected iealousie, was so ashamed of his rash folly, that he intretedæhis nobles to perswade Bellaria to forgive, and forget these iniuries: promising not onely to shew himselfe a loyall and louing husband, but also to reconcile himselfe to Egistus and Franion: reuealing then before them all the cause of their secrete flight, and how trecherously he thought to haue practized his death, if the good mind of his cupbearer had not preuented his purpose. As thus he was relating the whole matter, there was worde brought him that his yong son Garinter was sodainly dead, which newes so soone as Bellaria heard, surcharged before with extreme ioy, and now suppressed with heauy sorrow, her vitall spirites were so stopped, that she fell downe presently dead, and could neuer be reuived. This sodaine sight so appalled the kings sences, that he sunke from his seat in a swounde, so as he was faine to be caried by his nobles to his pallace, where he lay by the space of three dayes without speach: his commons were as men in dispaire, so diuersely distressed: there was nothing but mourning and lamentation to be heard throughout all Bohemia: their young Prince dead, their vertuous Queene bereaued of her life, and their king and soveraigne in great hazard: this tragicall discourse of fortune so daunted them, as they went like shadowes, not men: yet somewhat to comforte their heauy hearts, they heard that Pandosto was come to himselfe, and had recouered his speach, who as in a fury brayed out these bitter speaches.

O miserable Pandosto, what surer witnes then conscience: what thoughtes more sower then suspition: What plague more bad then Iealousie: Unnatural actions offend the Gods, more than men, and causelesse cruelty neuer scapes without reuenge: I haue committed such a bloudy fact, as repent I may, but recal I cannot. Ah Iealousie, a hel to the mind and a horrour to the conscience, suppressing reason, and inciting rage: a worse passion then phrensie, a greater plague than madnes. Are the Gods iust: Then let them reuenge such brutish crueltie: my innocent babe I haue drowned in the seas: my louing wife I haue slaine with slaunderous suspition: my trusty friend I haue sought to betray, and yet the Gods are slacke to plague such offences. Ah vniust Apollo, Pandosto is the man that hath committed the fault: why should Garinter, seely child, abide the paine: Wel, sith the Gods mean to prolong my daies, to increase my dolour, I will offer my guilty bloud a sacrifice to those sacklesse soules, whose lives are lost by my rigorous folly. And with that he reached at a rapier, to haue murdered himselfe, but his Peeres being present, stayed him from such a bloudy act: perswading him to thinke, that the commonwealth consisted on his safety, and that those sheepe could not but perish, that wanted a sheepheard: wishing that if he woulde not liue for himselfe, yet he should haue care of his subiects, and to put such fancies out of his mind, sith in sores past helpe, salues do not heale, but hurt: and in things past cure, care is a corasiue: with these and such like perswasions the king was ouercome, an began somewhat to quiet his minde: so that assoone as hee could goe abroad, hee caused his wife to be embalmed, and wrapt in lead with her yong sonne Garinter: erecting a rich and famous Sepulchre, wherein he intumbed them both, making such solemne obsequies at her funeral, as all Bohemia might perceiue he did greatly repent him of his forepassed folly: causing this Epitaph to be ingrauen on her Tombe in letters of gold:

The Epitaph.

Here lies intommbde Bellaria, faire,
Falsly accused to be vnchaste:
Cleared by Apollos sacred doome,
Yet slaine by Iealousie at last.

What ere thou be that passest by,
Curse him that causde this Queene to die.,

This Epitaph being ingrauen, Pandosto would once a day repaire to the Tombe, and there with watry plaints bewaile his misfortune: coueting no other companion but sorrow, nor no other harmonie, but repentance. But leauing him to his dolorous passions, at last let vs come to shewe the tragicall discourse of the yong infant.

Who beeing tossed with winde, and wave, floated two whole dayes without succour, readie at euerie puffe to be drowned in the sea, till at last the tempest ceased, and the little boate was driuen with the tide into the coast of Sycilia, where sticking vpon the sands, it rested. Fortune mynding to be wanton, willing to shew that as she hath wrinckles on her browes: so shee hath dimples in her cheekes: thought after so many sower looks, to lend a fayned smile, and after a puffing storme, to bring a pretty calme: she began thus to dally. It fortuned a poore mercenary shepheard, that dwelled in Sycilia, who got his liuing by other mens flockes, missed one of his sheepe, and thinking it had straied into the covert, that was hard by, sought very diligently to find that which he could not see, fearing either that the wolves, or Eagles had vndone him (for he was so poore, as a sheepe was halfe his substance) wandered down toward the sea cliffes, to see if perchance the sheep was browseing on the sea Iuie, whereon they greatly do feed, but not finding her there, as he was ready to returne to his flock, hee heard a child cry: but knowing there was no house neere, thought he had mistaken the sound, and that it was the bleating of his sheep. Wherefore looking more narrowly, as he cast his eie to the Sea, he spied a little boat, from whence as he attentively listened, he might heare the cry to come: standing a good while in a maze, at last he went to the shoare, and wading to the boat, as he looked in, he saw the little babe lying al alone, ready to die for hunger and colde, wrapped in a mantle of scarlet, richly imbrodered with gold, and hauing a chayne about the necke. The shepeheard, who before had neuer seene so faire a babe, nor so rich iewels, thought assuredly, that it was some little god, and began with great deuotion to knocke on his breast. The Babe, who wrythed with the head, to seek for the pap, began againe to cry afresh, whereby the poore man knew that it was a child, which by some sinister means was driuen thither by distresse of weather: maruelling how such a seely infant, which by the mantle, and the chaine, could not be but borne of noble parentage, shuld be so hardly crossed with deadly mishap. The poore shepheard perplexed thus with diuers thoughts, tooke pity of the child, and determined with himself to cary it to the K. that there it might be brought vp, according to the worthinesse of birth: for his ability could not affoord to foster it, though his minde was willing to further it. Taking therefore the childe in his armes, as he folded the mantle together, the better to defend it from cold, there fell downe at his foot a very faire and rich purse, wherein he found a great summe of gold: which sight so reuiued the shepherds spirits as he was greatly rauished with ioy, and danted with feare: ioyful to see such a summe in his power: feareful if it should be known, that it might breede his further danger. Necessity wisht him at the least, to retaine the gold, though he would not keep the child: the simplicity of his conscience feared him from such deceitful bribery. Thus was the poore man perplexed with a doubtful Dilemma, vntil at last the couetousnese of the coine overcame him: for what will not the greedy desire of golde cause a man to doe? So that he was resolued in himselfe to foster the child, and with the summe to relieue his want: resting thus resolute in this point, he left seeking of his sheepe, and as couertly, and secretly as he coulde, went by a byway to his house, least any of his neighbours should perceiue his carriage: assoone as hee was got home, entring in at the doore, the child began to cry, which his wife hearing, and seeing her husband with a young babe in armes, began to be somewhat ielous, yet marveiling that her husband should be so wanton abroad, sith he was so quiet at home: but as women are naturally given to beleeve the worst, so his wife thinking it was some bastard, began to crowe against her goodman, and taking vp a cudgell (for the most maister went breechlesse) sware solemnly that she would make clubs trumps, if he brought any bastard brat within her doores. The goodman seeing his wife in her maiestie with her mace in her hand, thought it was time to bowe for feare of blowes, and desired her to be quiet, for there was none such matter: but if she could hold her peace, they were made for euer: and with that he told her the whole matter, how hee had found the childe in a little boate, without any succour, wrapped in that costlie mantle, and hauing that rich chaine about the necke: but at last when he shewed her the purse full of golde, she began to simper something sweetely, and taking her husband about the necke, kisied him after her homely fashion: saying that she hoped God had seene their want, and now ment to relieue their pouertie, and seeing they could get no children, had sent them this little babe to be their heire. Take heede in any case (quoth the shepheard) that you be secret, and blabbe it not out when you meete with your gossippes, for if you doe, we are like not onely to loose the golde and iewels, but our other goodes and liues. Tush (quoth his wife) profit is a good hatch before the doore: feare not, I haue other things to talke of then of this: but I pray you let vs lay vp the money surely, and the iewels, least by any mishap it be espied. After that they had set all things in order, the shepheard went to his sheepe with a merry note, and the good wife learned to sing lullaby at home with her yong babe, wrapping it in a homely blanket in steed of a rich mantle, nourishing it so cleanly and carefully as it began to bee a iolly girle, insomuch that they began both of them to be verie fonde of it, seeing as it waxed in age, so it increased in beautie. The shepheard euery night at his comming home, would sing and daunce it on his knee, and prattle, that in a short time it began to speake and call him Dad, and her Mam: at last when it grew to ripe yeares, that it was about seuen yeares olde, the shepheard left keeping of other mens sheepe, and with the money he found in the purse, he bought him the lease of a prettie farme, and got a small flocke of sheepe, which when Fawnia (for so they named the childe) came to the age of ten yeares, hee set her to keepe, and shee with such diligence performed her charge as the sheepe prospered maruellously vnder her hands. Fawnia thought Porrus had been her father, and Mopsa her mother, (for so was the shepheard and his wife called) honoured and obeyed them with such reuerence, that all the neighbours praysed the dutifull obedience of the childe. Porrus grewe in a short time to bee a man of some wealth, and credite: for fortune so fauoured him in hauing no charge but Fawnia, that he began to purchase land, intending after his death to giue it to his daughter: so that diuerse rich farmers sonnes came as wooers to his house: for Fawnia was something cleanly attyred, beeing of such singular beautie and excellent witte, that whoso sawe her, would haue thought she had bene some heauenly nymph, and not a mortall creature: insomuch, that when she came to the age of sixteene yeeres, shee so increased with exquisite perfection both of bodie and mind, as her natural disposition did bewray that she was borne of some high parentage: but the people thinking she was daughter to the shephard Porrus, rested onley amazed at her beautie and wit: yea she woon such fauour and commendations in every mans eye, as her beautie was not only praysed in the countrey, but also spoken of in the Court: yet such was her submisse modestie, that although her prayse dayly increased, her minde was no whit puffed vp with pride, but humbled her selfe as became a countrey mayd and the daughter of a poore sheepheard. Every day she went forth with her sheepe to the field, keeping them with such care and diligence, as all men thought she was very painfull, defending her face from the heat of the sunne with no other vaile, but with a garland made of bowes and flowers: which attire became her so gallantly, as she seemed to be the Goddesse Flora her selfe for beautie. Fortune, who all this while had shewed a friendly face, began now to turne her backe, and to shew a lowring countenance, intending as shee had given Fawnia a slender checke, so she would give her a harder mate: to bring which to passe, she laid her traine on this wise. Egistus had but one onely sonne called Dorastus, about the age of twentie yeeres: a Prince so decked and adorned with the giftes of nature: so fraught with beautie and vertuous qualities, as not onely his father ioyed to haue so good a sonne, and all his commons reioyced that God had sent them such a noble Prince to succeede in the Kingdome. Egistus placing al his ioy in the perfection of his sonne: seeing that he was now mariageable, sent Ambassadors to the king of Denmarke, to intreate a mariage betweene him and his daughter, who willingly consenting, made answere, that the next spring if it please Egistus with his sonne to come into Denmarke, hee doubted not, but they should agree vpon reasonable conditions. Egistus resting satisfied with this friendly answere, thought conuenient in the meane time to breake with his Sonne: finding therefore on a day fit oportunitie, he spake to him in these fatherly tearmes.

Dorastus, thy youth warneth me to prevent the woorst, and mine age to provide the best. Oportunities neglected, are signes of folly: actions measured by time, are seldome bitten with repentance: thou art yong, and I old: age hath taught me that, which thy youth cannot yet conceive.

I therefore will counsell thee as a father, hoping thou wilt obey as a child. Thou seest my white hayres are blossomes for the graue, and thy fresh colour fruite for time and fortune, so that it behoooueth mee to thinke how to die, and for thee to care how to liue. My crowne I must leave by death, and thou enioy my kingdome by succession, wherein I hope thy vertue and prowesse shall bee such, as though my subjectes want my person, yet they shall see in thee my perfection. That nothing either may fayle to satisfie thy mind, or increase thy dignities, the onely care I haue, is to see thee well married before I die, and thou become old.

Dorastus who from his infancie, delighted rather to dye with Mars in the field, then to dally with Venus in the chamber: fearing to displease his father, and yet not willing to be wed, made him this reuerent answere.

Sir, there is no greater bond than duetie, nor no straiter law then nature: disobedience in youth is often galled with despight in age. The commaund of the father ought to be a constraint to the child: so parents willes are lawes, so they passe not all lawes: may it please your grace therefore to appoint whome I shall loue, rather then by deniall I should be appeached of disobedience: I rest content to loue, though it bee the onely thing I hate.

Egistus hearing his sonne to flye so farre from the marke, began to be somewhat chollericke, and therefore made him his hasty aunswere.

What Dorastus canst thou not loue? Commeth this cynicall passion of prone desires, or peeuish frowardnesse. What dost thou think thy selfe too good for all, or none good inough for thee. I tell thee: Dorastus, there is nothing sweeter then youth, nor swifter decreasing, while it is increasing. Time past with folly may be repented, but not recalled. If thou marry in age, thy wiues fresh couloures will breede in thee dead thoughts and suspition, and thy white hayres her lothesomnesse and sorrow. For Venus affections are not fed with kingdomes, or treasures, but with youthfull conceits and sweete amours. Vulcan was allotted to shake the tree, but Mars allowed to reape the fruite. Yeeld Dorastus to thy fathers perswasions, which may preuent thy perils. I haue chosen thee a wife, faire by nature, royall by birth, by vertues famous, learned by education, and ritch by possessions, so that it is hard to iudge whether her bountie, or fortune, her beauty, or vertue, be of greater force: I mean, Dorastus, Euphrania daughter and heire to the King of Denmarke.

Egistus pausing here a while, looking when his sonne should make him answere, and seeing that he stood still as one in a traunce, he shooke him vp thus sharply.

Well Dorastus take heede, the tree Alpya wasteth not with fire, but withereth with the dew: that which loue nourisheth not, perisheth with hate: if thou like Euphrania thou breedest my content, and in louing her thou shalt my loue, otherwise: and with that hee flung from his sonne in a rage, leauing him a sorrowfull man, in that he had by deniall displeased his father, and halfe angrie with himselfe that he could not yeelde to that passion, whereto both reason and his Father perswaded him: but see how fortune is plumed with times feathers, and how shee can minister straunge causes to breede strange effects.

It happened not long after this, that there was a meeting of all the Farmers daughters in Sycilia, whither Fawnia was also bidden as the Mistresse of the feast, who hauing attired herselfe in her best garments, went among the rest of her companions to the merrie meeting: there spending the day in such homely pastimes as shepheards vse. As the euening grew on, and their sports ceased, each taking their leaue at other, Fawnia desiring one of her companions to beare her companie, went home by the flocke, to see if they were well folded, and as they returned, it fortuned that Dorastus (who all that day had bene hawking, and kild store of game) incountred by the way these two mayds, and casting his eye suddenly on Fawnia, he was halfe afrayd, fearing that with Acteon he had seene Diana: for hee thought such exquisite perfection could not be found in anie mortall creature. As thus he stood in a maze, one of his Pages told him, that the mayde with the garland on her head was Fawnia, the faire shepheard, whose beautie was so much talked of in the court. Dorastus desirous to see if nature had adorned her mind with any inward qualities, as she had decked her bodie with outward shape, began to question with her whose daughter she was, of what age, and how she had beene trained vp, who answered him with such modest reuerence and sharpnes of wit, that Dorastus thought her outward beautie was but a counterfeit to darken her inward qualities, wondring how so courtly behauiour could be found in so simple a cottage, and cursing fortune that had shadowed wit and beautie with such hard fortune. And thus he held her a long while with chat, Beautie seeing him at discouert, thought not to lose the vantage, but stroke him so deepely with an inuenomed shaft, as he wholly lost his libertie, and became a slaue to Loue, which before contemned loue, glad now to gaze on a poore shepherd, who before refused the offer of a rich Princesse: for the perfection of Fawnia had so fired his fancie as he felt his mind greatly chaunged, and his affections altered, cursing Loue that had wrought such a chaunge, and blaming the basenesse of his mind that would make such a choice: but thinking these were but passionate toyes that might be thrust out at pleasure, to avoid the Syren that enchanted him, he put spurres to his horse, and bad this faire shepherd farewell.

Fawnia (who all this while had marked the princely gesture of Dorastus) seeing his face so well featured, and each lim so perfectly framed, began greatly to praise his perfection, commending him so long, till she found her selfe faultie, and perceiued that if she waded but a little further, she might slip ouer the shoes: she therefore seekeing to quench that fier which neuer was put out, went home, and fayning her selfe not well at ease, got her to bed: where casting a thousand thoughts in her head, she could take no rest: for if she waked, she began of call to minde his beautie, and thinking to beguile such thoughts with sleepe, she then dreamed of his perfection: pestered thus with these vnacquainted passions, she passed the night as she could in short slumbers.

Dorastus (who all this while rode with a flea in his eare) could not by any meanes forget the sweete fauour of Fawnia, but rested so bewitched with her wit and beautie, as he could take no rest. He felt fancie to giue the assault, and his wounded mind ready to yeeld as vanquished: yet he began with diuers considerations to suppresse this frantick affection, calling to minde, that Fawnia was a shepherd, one not worthy to be looked at of a Prince, much lesse to be loued of such a potentate, thinking what a discredit it were to himselfe, and what a griefe it would be to his father, blaming fortune and accusing his own folly, that should be so fond as but once to cast a glaunce at such a country slut. As thus he was raging against himselfe, Loue, fearing if she dallie long, to loose her champion, stept more nigh, and gaue him such a fresh wound as it pearst him at the heart, that he was faine to yeeld, maugre his face, and to forsake the companie and get him to his chamber: where being solemnly set, he burst into these passionate tearmes.

Ah, Dorastus, art thou alone? No not alone, while thou art tried with these vnacquaintedæpassions. Yeeld to fancie, thou canst not by thy fathers counsell, but in a frenzie thou art by iust destinies. Thy father were content, if thou couldest loue, and thou therefore discontent, because thou dost loue. O diuine Loue, feared of men because honoured of the gods, not to be suppressed by wisdome, because not to be comprehended by reason: without Law, and therefore aboue all Law.

How now Dorastus, why doest thou blaze that with prayses, which thou hast cause to blaspheme with curses? Yet why should they curse Loue which are in Loue?

Blush Dorastus at thy fortune, thy choyce, thy loue: thy thoughts cannot be vttered without shame, nor thy affections without discredit. Ah Fawnia, sweet Fawnia, thy beauty Fawnia. Shamest not thou Dorastus to name one vnfitte for thy birth, thy dignities, thy kingdomes? Die Dorastus, Dorastus die, better hadst thou perish with high desires, than liue in base thoughts. Yea but, beautie must be obeyed, because it is beautie, yet framed of the Gods to feede the eye, not to fetter the heart.

Ah, but he that striueth against Loue, shooteth with them of Scyrum agaynst the winde, and with the Cockeatrice pecketh against the steele. I will therefore obey, because I must obey. Fawnia, yea Fawnia shall be my fortune, in spight of fortune. The Gods aboue disdaine not to loue women beneath. Phoebus liked Sibilla, Iupiter, Io, and why not I then Fawnia, one something inferiour to these in birth, but farre superiour to them in beautie, borne to be a Shepherd, but worthy to be a Goddesse.

Ah Dorastus, wilt thou so forget thy selfe as to suffer affection to suppresse wisedome, and Loue to violate thine honor? How sower will thy choice be to thy father, sorowfull to thy subiects, to thy friends a griefe, most gladsome to thy foes? Subdue then thy affection, and cease to loue her whom thou couldst not loue, vnlesse blinded with too much loue. Tush I talke to the wind, and in seeking to preuent the causes, I further the effects. I will yet praise Fawnia, honor, yea and loue Fawnia, and at this day follow content, not counsell. Do Dorastus, thou canst but repent: and with that his Page came into the chamber, whereupon he ceased from complaints, hoping that time would weare out that which fortune had wrought. As thus he was pained, so poore Fawnia was diuersly perplexed: for the next morning getting vp very early, she went to her sheepe, thinking with hard labours to passe away her new conceived amours, beginning very busily to drive them to the field, and then to shift the folds, at last (wearied with toyle) she sate her downe, where (poore soule) she was more tried with fond affections: for loue began to assault her, in so much that as she sate vpon the side of a hill, she began to accuse her owne folly in these tearmes.

Infortunate Fawnia, and therefore infortunate because Fawnia, thy shepherds hooke sheweth thy poore state, thy proud desires an aspiring mind: the one declareth thy want, the other thy pride. No bastard hauke must soare so high as the Hobbie, no fowle gaze against the Sunne but the Eagle, actions wrought against nature reape despight, and thoughts above Fortune disdaine.

Fawnia, thou art a shepheard, daughter to poore Porrus: if thou rest content with this, thou art like to stande, if thou climbe thou art sure to fall. The herb Anita growing higher then sixe inches becommeth a weede. Nylus flowing more then twelve cubits procureth a dearth. Daring affections that passe measure, are cut short by time or fortune: suppresse then Fawnia those thoughts which thou mayest shame to expresse. But ah Fawnia, loue is a Lord, who will command by power, and constraine by force.

Dorastus, ah Dorastus is the man I loue, the woorse is thy hap, and the lesse cause hast thou to hope. Will Eagles catch at flyes, will Cedars stoupe to brambles, or mighty Princes looke at such homely trulles? No, no, thinke this, Dorastus disdaine is greater then thy desire, he is a Prince respecting his honor, thou a beggars brat forgetting thy calling. Cease then not onely to say, but to thinke to loue Dorastus, and dissemble thy loue Fawnia, for better it were to die with griefe, then to liue with shame: yet in despight of loue I will sigh, to see if I can sigh out loue. Fawnia somewhat appeasing her griefs with these pithy perswasions, began after her wonted manner to walke about her sheepe, and to keepe them from straying into the corne, suppressing her affection with the due consideration of her base estate, and with the impossibilities of her loue, thinking it were frensie, not fancy, to couet that which the very destinies did deny her to obtaine.

But Dorastus was more impatient in his passions: for loue so fiercely assayled him, that neither company, nor musicke could mittigate his martirdome, but did rather farre the more increase his malady: shame would not let him craue counsaile in this case, nor feare of his fathers displeasure reueile it to any secrete friend: but hee was faine to make a Secretarie of himselfe, and to participate his thoughtes with his owne troubled minde. Lingring thus awhile in doubtfull suspence, at lost stealing secretly from the court without either men or Page, hee went to see if hee could espy Fawnia walking abroad in the field, but as one hauing a great deale more skill to retriue the partridge with his spaniels, then to hunt after such a strange pray, he sought, but was little the better: which crosse lucke draue him into a great choler, that hee began both to accuse loue and fortune. But as he was ready to retire, he saw Fawnia sitting all alone vnder the side of a hill, making a garlande of such homely flowers as the fieldes did afoord. This sight so reuiued his spirites that he drew nigh, with more iudgement to take a view of her singular perfection, which he found to bee such, as in that country attire shee stained all the courtly Dames of Sicilia. While thus he stoode gazing with pearcing lookes on her surpassing beautie, Fawnia cast her eye aside, and spyed Dorastus, with sodaine sight made the poore girl to blush, and to die her christall cheeks with a vermilion red: which gaue her such a grace, as shee seemed farre more beautifull. And with that she rose vp, saluting the Prince with such modest curtesies, as hee wondred how a country mayd could aford such courtly behaviour. Dorastus, repaying her curtesie with a smiling countenance, began to parly with her on this manner.

Faire mayde (quoth he) either your want is great, or a shepheards life very sweet, that your delight is in such country labours. I can not conceiue what pleasure you should take, vnlesse you meane to imitate the nimphes, being your selfe so like a Nymph. To put me out of this doubt, shew me what is to be commended in a shepheardes life, and what pleasures you to counteruaile these drudging labours. Fawnia with blushing face made him this ready aunswere.

Sir, what richer state then content, or what sweeter life then quiet, we shepheards are not borne to honor, nor beholding vnto beau*[t]* y, the lesse care we to feare fame or fortune: we count our attire braue inough if warme inough, and our foode dainty, if to suffice nature: our greatest enemy is the wolfe, our only care in safe keeping our flocke: in steed of courtly ditties we spend the daies with country songs: our amorous conceites are homely thoughtes: delighting as much to talke of Pan and his countrey prankes: as Ladies to tell of Venus and her wanton toyes. Our toile is in shifting the foldes, and looking to the Lambes easie labours: oft singing and telling tales, homely pleasures: our greatest wealth not to couet, our honor not to climbe, our quiet not to care. Enuy looketh not so lowe as shepheards: Shepheards gaze not so high as ambition: we are rich in that we are poore with content, and proud only in this that we no cause to be proud.

This witty answere of Fawnia so inflamed Dorastus fancy as he commended himselfe for making so good a choice, thinking, if her birth were aunswerable to her wit and beautie, that she were a fit mate for the most famous prince in the world. He therefore beganne to sift her more narrowly on this manner.

Fawnia. I see thou art content with country labours, because thou knowest not courtly pleasures: I commend thy wit, and pitie thy want: but wilt thou leave thy fathers cottage, and serue a courtlie mistresse.

Sir (quoth she) beggars ought not to striue against fortune nor to gaze after honour, lest either their fall bee greater, or they become blind. I am borne to toyle for the court, not in the Court, my nature vnfit for their nurture, better liue then in meane degree, than in high disdaine.

Well saide Fawnia (quoth Dorastus) I gesse at thy thoughts, thou art in loue with some country shepheard.

No sir (quoth she) shepherds cannot loue, that are so simple, and maides may not loue that are so young.

Nay therefore (quoth Dorastus) maids must loue, because they are yong, for Cupid is a child, and Venus, though old, is painted with fresh colours.

I grant (said she) age may be painted with new shadows, and youth may haue imperfect affections: but what arte concealeth in one ignorance reuealeth in the other. Dorastus seeing Fawnia held him so hard, thought it was vaine so long to beate about the bush: therefore he thought to haue giuen her a fresh charge: but he was so preuented by certain of his men, who missing their master, came posting to seeke him: seeing that he was gone foorth all alone, yet before they drew so nie that they might heare their talke, he vsed these speeches.

Why Fawnia, perhaps I loue thee, and then thou must needes yeelde, for thou knowest I can commaund and constraine. Trueth sir (quoth she) but not to loue: for constrained loue is force, not loue: and know this sir, mine honesty is such, as I had rather die than be a concubine even vnto a king, and my birth is so base as I am vnfit to bee a wife to a poore farmer. Why then, quoth he, thou canst not loue Dorastus? yes said Fawnia, when Dorastus becomes a shepheard, and with that the presence of his men broke off their parle, so that he went with them to the pallace, and left Fawnia sitting still on the hill side, who seeing that the night drew on, shifted her fouldes, and busied her selfe about other worke to drive away such fond fancies as began to trouble her braine. But all this could not preuaile, for the beautie of Dorastus had made such a deepe impression in her heart, as it could not be worne out without cracking, so that she was forced to blame her owne folly in this wise.

Ah Fawnia, why doest thou gaze against the Sunne, or catch at the wind: stars are to be looked at with the eye, not reached at with the hand: thoughts are to be measured by fortunes, not by desires: falles come not by sitting lowe, but by climing too high: what then, shall all feare to fall, because some hap to fal? No, lucke commeth by lot, and fortune windeth those threedes which the destinies spin. Thou art fauored Fawnia of a prince, and yet thou art so fond to reiect desired fauours: thou hast denial at thy tounges end, and desire at thy hearts bottome: a womans fault, to spurne at that with her foot, which she greedily catcheth at with her hand: Thou louest Dorastus, Fawnia, and yet seemest to lower. Take heede, if he retire, thou wilt repent: for vnles he loue, thou canst but die. Die then Fawnia: for Dorastus doth but iest: the lion neuer prayeth on the mouse, nor faulcons stoupe not to dead stales. Sit downe then in sorrow, cease to loue, and content thy selfe, that Dorastus will vouchsafe to flatter Fawnia, though not to fancie Fawnia. Heigh ho: Ah foole, it were seemelier for thee to whistle as a Sheapheard, than to sigh as a louer, and with that she ceased from these perplexed passions, folding her sheep, and hying home to her poore cottage. But such was the inconstant sorrowe of Dorastus to thinke on the witte and beautie of Fawnia, and to see how fond hee was being a prince: and how froward she was being a beggar, then he began to loose his wonted appetite, to looke pale and wan: insteed of mirth, to feede on melancholy: for courtly daunces to vse cold dumpes: insomuch that not only his owne men, but his father and all the Court began to maruell at his sodain change, thinking that some lingring sicknes had broght him into this state: wherefore he caused Phisitions to come, but Dorastus neither woulde let them minister, nor so much as suffer them to see his vrine: but remained stil so oppressed with these passions, as hee feared in himselfe a farther inconuenience. His honor wished him to cease from such folly, but Loue forced him to follow fancie: yea and in despight of honour, loue wonne the conquest, so that his hot desires caused him to finde new deuises, for hee presently made himselfe a shepheardes coate, that he might go vnknowne, and with the lesse suspition to prattle with Fawnia, and conueyed it secretly into a thicke grove hard ioyning to the Pallace, whither finding fit time, and opportunity, he went all alone, and putting off his Princely apparell, got on those shepheards robes, and taking a great hooke in his hand (which he had also gotten) he went very anciently to find out the mistresse of his affection: but as he went by the way, seeing himselfe clad in such vnseemely ragges, hee began to smile at his owne folly, and to reproue his fondnesse in these tearmes.

Well said Dorastus, thou keepest a right decorum, base desires and homely attires: thy thoughtes are fit for none but a shepheard, and thy apparell such as only become a shepheard. A strange change from a Prince to a pesant. What is it thy wretched fortune or thy wilful folly: Is it thy cursed destinies? Or thy crooked desires, that appointeth thee this penance? Ah Dorastus thou canst but loue, and vnlesse thou loue thou art like to perish for loue*[.]* Yet, fond foole, choose flowers, not weedes: Diamonds, not peables: Ladies, which may honour thee: not shepheards which maie disgrace thee. Venus is painted in silkes, not in ragges: and Cupid treadeth on disdaine, when he reacheth at dignity. And yet Dorastus shame not at thy shepheards weede: the heauenly Gods haue sometime earthly thoughtes: Neptune became a Ram, Iupiter a Bull, Apollo a shepheard: they Gods, and yet in loue: and thou a man appointed to loue.

Deuising thus with himselfe, hee drew nigh to the place where Fawnia was keeping her sheepe, who casting her eie aside, and seeing such a manerly shepheard, perfectly limmed, and comming with so good a pace, she began halfe to forget Dorastus, and to favor this pretie shepheard, whom she thought she might both loue and obtaine: but as she was in these thoughtes, she perceiued then, it was the yong prince Dorastus, wherfore she rose vp and reuerently saluted him. Dorastus taking her by the hand, repayed her curtesie with a sweete kisse, and praying her to sit downe by him, he began thus to lay the battery.

If thou marvell Fawnia at my strange attire, thou wouldest more muse at my vnaccustomed thoughts: the one disgraceth but my outward shape, the other disturbeth my inward sences. I loue Fawnia, and therefore what loue liketh I cannot mislike. Fawnia, thou hast promised to loue, and I hope thou wilt performe no lesse: I fulfilled thy request, and nowe thou canst but grant my desire. Thou wert content to loue Dorastus when he ceast to be a Prince, and to become a shepheard, and see I haue made the change, and therefore not to misse of my choice.

Truth, quoth Fawnia, but all that weare cooles are not Monkes: painted Eagles are pictures, not Eagles, Zeusis Grapes were like Grapes, yet shadowes: rich cloathing make not princes: nor homely attire beggers: shepheardes are not called shepheards, because they weere hookes and bags, but that they are borne poore, and liue to keep sheepe, so this attire hath not made Dorastus a shepherd, but to seeme like a shepheard.

Well Fawnia, answered Dorastus: were I a shepherd I could not but like thee, and being a prince I am forst to loue thee. Take heed Fawnia, be not proud of beauties painting, for it is a flower that fadeth in the blossome. Those which disdaine in youth, are despised in age: Beauties shadowes are trickt vp with times colours, which being set to drie in the sunne are stained with the sunne, scarce pleasing the sight ere they begin not to be worth the sight, not much vnlike the herbe Ephemeron, which flourisheth in the morning and is withered before the sunne setting: if my desire were against law, thou mightest iustly deny me by reason, but I loue thee Fawnia not to misuse thee as a concubine, but to vse thee as my wife: I can promise no more, and meane to performe no lesse.

Fawnia hearing this solemne protestation of Dorastus, could no longer withstand the assault, but yeelded vp the fort in these friendly tearmes.

Ah Dorastus, I shame to expresse that thou forcest me with thy sugred speech to confesse: my base birth causeth the one, and thy high dignities the other. Beggars thoughts ought not to reach so far as kings, and yet my desires reach as high as princes. I dare not say Dorastus I loue thee, because I am a shepherd, but the gods know I haue honoured Dorastus (pardon if I say amisse) yea and loued Dorastus with such dutiful affection as Fawnia can performe, or Dorastus desire:

I yeeld, not overcome with prayers, but with loue, resting Dorastus handmaid ready to obey his will, if no preiudice at all to his honour, nor to my credit.

Dorastus hearing this friendly conclusion of Fawnia, embraced her in his armes, swearing that neither distance, time, nor aduerse fortune should diminish his affection: but that in despight of the destinies he would remaine loyall vnto death. Hauing thus plight their troth each to other, seeing they could not haue the full fruition of their loue in Sycilia, for that Egistus consent would neuer be graunted to so meane a match, Dorastus determined as soone as time and oportunitie would give them leave, to prouide a great masse of money, and many rich and costly iewels, for the easier carriage, and then to transport themselves and their treasure into Italy, where they should leade a contented life, vntil such time as either he could be reconciled to his father, or else by succession come to the kingdome. This deuise was geatly praised of Fawnia, for she feared if the King his father shuld but heare of the contract, that his furie would be such as no lesse than death would stand for payment: she therefore tolde him, that delay bred danger: that many mishaps did fall out betweene the cup and the lip, and that to auoide anger, it were best with as much speede as might be, to pass out of Sycilia, lest fortune might preuent their pretence with some newe despight: Dorastus, whom loue pricked forward with desire, promised to dispatch his affaires with as great haste, as either time or oportunity would giue him leaue: and so resting vpon this point, after many imbracings and sweet kisses they departed.

Dorastus hauing taken his leaue of his best beloued Fawnia, went to the grove where he had his rich apparel, and there vncasing him selfe as secretly as might be, hiding vp his shepheards attire, till occasion should serue againe to vse it: he went to the pallace, shewing by his merry countenaunce, that either the state of his body was amended, or the case of his mind greatly redressed. Fawnia poore soule was no lesse ioyfull, that beeing a shepheard, fortune had fauoured her so, as to rewarde her with the loue of a Prince, hoping in time to be aduanced from the daughter of a poore farmer, to bee the wife of a rich King: so that she thought euery houre a yeare, till by their departure they might preuent daunger, not ceasing still to goe everie day to her sheepe, not so much for the care of her flocke, as for the desire she had to see her loue and Lord Dorastus: who oftentimes when oportunity would serue, repaired thither to feede his fancie with the sweete content of Fawnias presence: and although he never went to visit her, but in his shepheards ragges, yet his oft repaire made him not only suspected, but knowne to diuerse of their neighbours: who for the good will they bare to old Porrus, told him secretly of the matter, wishing him to keepe his daughter at home, least shee went so ofte to the field that she brought him home a young sonne: for they feared that Fawnia beeing so beautifull, the yong prince would allure her to folly. Porrus was striken into a dump at these newes, so that thanking his neighbours for their good will: he hyed him home to his wife, and calling her aside, wringing his hands, and shedding foorth teares, he brake the matter to her in these tearmes.

I am afraid wife, that my daughter Fawnia hath made her selfe so fine, that she will buy repentance too deare. I heare newes, which if they be true, some will wish they had not proued true. It is told me by my neighbours, that Dorastus the Kings sonne begins to looke at our daughter Fawnia: which if it be so, I will not giue her a halfepenie for her honestie at the yeeres ende. I tell thee wife, nowadayes beauty is a great stale to trap yong men, and faire wordes and sweete promises are two great enemies to maidens honestie: and thou knowest where poore men intreat, and cannot obtaine, there Princes may commaund, and will obtaine. Though kings sonnes daunce in nets, they may not be seene: but poore mens faultes are spied at a little hole: Well, it is a hard case where Kings lusts are lawes, and that they should bind poore men to that, which they themselves wilfully breake.

Peace husband (quoth his wife) take heede what you say: speake no more than you shoulde, least you heare what you would not, great streames are to bee stopped by sleight, not by force: and princes to be perswaded by submission, not by rigor: do what you can, but no more than you may, least in sauing Fawnias maidenhead, you loose your owne head. Take heede I say, it is ill iesting with edged tooles, and bad sporting with Kings. The Wolfe had his skinne pulled over his eares for but looking into the Lions den. Tush wife (quoth he) thou speakest like a foole, if the King should knowe that Dorastus had begotten our daughter with childe (as I feare it will fall out little better) the Kings furie would be such, as no doubt wee should both loose our goods and lives: necessitie therefore hath no lawe, and I will preuent this mischiefe with a new deuise that is come in my head, which shall neither offende the King, nor displease Dorastus. I meane to take the chaine and the iewels that I found with Fawnia, and carrie them to the King, letting him then to vnderstand how she is none of my daughter, but that I found her beaten vp with the water alone in a little boat wrapped in a rich Mantle, wherein was inclosed this treasure. By this meanes I hope the King will take Fawnia into his seruice, and wee whatsoever chaunceth shall be blamelesse. This deuice pleased the good wife very well, so that they determined assoone as they might knowe the King at leasure, to make him priuie to this case. In the meane time Dorastus was not slacke in his affaires, but applied his matters with such diligence, that he prouided all thinges fit for their iourney. Treasure and iewels he had gotten great store, thinking there was no better friend than money in a straunge countrey: rich attire he had provided for Fawnia, and, because he could not bring the matter to passe without the helpe and aduice of some one, he made an olde seruant of his called Capnio, who had serued him from his childhoode, priuie to his affaires: who seeing no perswasions could prevaile to diuert him from his setled determination, gave his consent, and dealt so secretly in the cause, that within short space he had gotten a ship readie for their passage: the Mariners seeing a fit gale of winde for their purpose, wished Capnio to make no delayes, least if they pretermitted this good weather, they might stay long ere they had such a faire winde. Capnio fearing that his negligence should hinder the iourney, in the night time conueyed the trunkes full of treasure into the shippe, and by secret meanes let Fawnia vnderstande, that the next morning they meant to depart: shee vpon this newes slept very little that night, but got her vp very early, and wente to her sheepe, looking euery minute when she should see Dorastus, who taried not long, for feare delay might breede daunger, but came as fast as he could gallop, and without any great circumstance tooke Fawnia vp behinde him, and rode to the n where the ship lay, which was not three quarters of a mile distant from that place. He no sooner came there, but the Marriners were readie with their cockeboate to set them aboord, where beeing coucht togither in a Cabben, they past away the time in recounting their olde loues, till their man Capnio could come. Porrus who had heard that this morning the King would goe abroad to take the aire, called in haste to his wife to bring him his holy day hose, and his best Jacket, that he might goe like an honest substantiall man to tell his tale. His wife a good cleanly wench, brought him all things fitte, and spunged him vp very handsomlie, giuing him the chaine and iewels in a little boxe, which Porrus for the more safetie put in his bosome. Having thus all his trinkets in a readinesse, taking his staffe in his hand, he bad his wife kisse him for good lucke, and so hee went towards the Pallace. But as he was going, fortune (who meant to shewe him a little false play) preuented his purpose in this wise.

He met by chaunce in his way Capnio, who trudging as fast as he could with a littly coffer vnder his arme to the ship, and spying Porrus, whom he knew to be Fawnias Father, going towards the Pallace, being a wylie fellow, began to doubt the worst, and therefore crost him the way, and askt him whither he was going so early this morning.

Porrus (who knew by his face that he was one of the Court) meaning simply, told him that the Kings son Dorastus dealt hardly with him: for he had but one Daughter who was a little Beautifull, and that his neighbours told him the young Prince had allured her to folly, he went therefore now to complaine to the King how greatly he was abused.

Capnio (who straight way smelt the whole matter) began to sooth him in his talke, and said, that Dorastus dealt not like a Prince to spoyle any poore mans daughter in that sort: he therefore would do the best for him he could, because he knew he was an honest man. But (quoth Capnio) you lose your labour in going to the Pallace, for the King meanes this day to take the aire of the sea, and to go aboord of a ship that lyes in the n, I am going before, you see, to prouide all things in a redinesse, and if you will follow my counsell, turne back with me to the hauen, where I will set you in such a fit place as you may speake to the King at your pleasure. Porrus giuing credit to Capnios smooth tale, gave him a thousand thanks for his friendly aduise, and went with him to the hauen, making all the way his complaints of Dorastus, yet concealing secretly the chaine and the iewels. Assone as they were come to the sea side, the marriners seeing Capnio, came a land with their cockeboate, who stil dissembling the matter, demanded of Porrus if he would go see the ship, who vnwilling and fearing the worst, because he was not well acquainted with Capnio made his excuse that he could not brooke the Sea, therefore would not trouble him.

Capnio, seeing that by faire meanes he could not get him aboord, commanded the mariners that by violence they should carrie him into the shippe, who like sturdy knaves hoisted the poore shepheard on their backs, and bearing him to the boate, lanched from the land.

Porrus seeing himselfe so cunningly betrayed, durst not crie out, for hee saw it would not prevaile, but began to intreate Capnio and the mariners to be good to him, and to pittie his estate, he was but a poore man that liued by his labour: they laughing to see the shepheard so afrayde, made as much haste as they could, and set him aboord. Porrus was no sooner in the ship, but hee sawe Dorastus walking with Fawnia, yet hee scarse knew hir: for she had attired herselfe in rich apparell, which so increased her beautie, that she resembled rather an Angell than a creature.

Dorastus and Fawnia, were halfe astonished to see the olde shepheard, maruelling greatly what winde had brought him thither, til Capnio told them all the whole discourse: how Porrus was going to make his complaint to the King, if by pollicie he had not preuented him, and therefore now sith he was aboord, for the avoyding of further danger it were best to carrie him into Italie.

Dorastus praised greatly his mans deuise, and allowed of his counsaile: but Fawnia, (who still feared Porrus, as her father) began to blush for shame, that by her meanes hee should either incure daunger or displeasure.

The old shepherd hearing this hard sentence, that he should on such a sodaine bee caried from his wife, his countrey, and kinsfolke, into a forraine land amongest straungers, began with bitter teares to make his complaint, and on his knees to intreate Dorastus, that pardoning his vnaduised follie he would give him leaue to go home: swearing that hee would keepe all things as secret as they could wish. But these protestations could not preuaile, although Fawnia intreated Dorastus verie earnestly, but the mariners hoisting their maine sailes weyed ankers, and hailed into the deepe, where we leaue them to the fauor of the wind and seas, and returne to Egistus.

Who hauing appointed this day to hunt in one of his Forrests called for his Sonne Dorastus to go sport himselfe, because he saw that of late hee began to lowre: but his men made answere that hee was gone abroad none knewe whither, except he were gone to the groue to walke all alone, as his custome was to doe euery day.

The King willing to waken him out of his dumpes, sent one of his men to goe seeke him, but in vaine, for at last he returned, but finde him he could not, so that the king went himselfe to goe see the sport: where passing away the day, returning at night from hunting, hee asked for his sonne, but he could not be heard of, which drave the king into a great choler: whereupon most of his noble men and other courtiers, posted abroad to seeke him, but they could not heare of him through all Sicilia, onely they missed Capnio his man, which againe made the king suspect that hee was not gone farre.

Two or three dayes being passed, and no newes heard of Dorastus, Egistus began to feare that he was deuoured with some wilde beastes, and vpon that made out a great troupe of men to goe seeke him: who coasted through all the Countrey, and searched in euery daungerous and secret place, vntill at last they met with a Fisherman that was sitting in a little couert hard by the sea side mending his nettes, when Dorastus and Fawnia tooke shipping: who being examined if he either knewe or heard where the Kings sonne was, without any secrecie at all reuealed the whole matter, how he was sayled two daies past, and had in his company his man Capnio, Porrus and his faire Daughter Fawnia. This heauie newes was presently caried to the king, who halfe dead for sorrow commaunded Porrus wife to be sent for: she being come to the Pallace, after due examination, confessed that her neighbours had oft tolde her that the kings sonne was too familier with Fawnia her daughter: wherenpon her husband fearing the worst, about two dayes past (hearing the King should goe an hunting) rose earely in the morning and went to make his complaint, but since she neither heard of him, nor saw him. Egistus perceyuing the womans vnfeigned simplicitie, let her depart without incurring further displeasure, conceiving such secret greife for his Sonnes recklesse follie, that he had so forgotten his honour and parentage, by so base a choise to dishonor his father, and discredit himselfe, that with very care and thought he fell into a quartan feuer, which was so vnfit for his aged yeares and complexion, that he became so weake, as the Phisitions would graunt him no life.

But his sonne Dorastus little regarded either father, country: or kingdome, in respect of his Lady Fawnia, for fortune smyling on his young nouice, lent him so luckie a gale of wind, for the space of a day and a night, that the Mariners lay and slept vpon the hatches: but on the next morning about the breake of the day, the aire began to be ouercast, the winds to rise, the seas to swell, yea presently there arose such a fearfull tempest, as the ship was in danger to be swallowed vp with euery sea, the maine mast with the violence of the wind was thrown ouer boord, the sayles were torne, the tackling went in sunder, the storme raging still so furiously that poore Fawnia was almost dead for feare, but that she was greatly comforted with the presence of Dorastus. The tempest continued three dayes, all which time the Mariners euery minute looked for death, and the aire was so darkned with cloudes that the Maister could not tell by his compasse in what coast they were. But vpon the fourth day about ten of the clocke, the wind began to cease, the sea to wax calme, and the sky to be cleare, and the Mariners descryed the coast of Bohemia, shooting of their ordinance for ioy that they had escaped such a fearefull tempest.

Dorastus hearing that they were arrived at some harbour, sweetly kissed Fawnia, and bad her be of good cheare: when they told him that the Port belonged vnto the cheife Cittie of Bohemia where Pandosto kept his Court, Dorastus began to be sad: knowing that his Father hated no man so much as Pandosto, and that the king himselfe had sought secretly to betray Egistus: this considered, he was halfe afrayd to go on land, but that Capnio counselled him to chaunge his name and his country, vntill such time as they could get some other Barke to transport them into Italy. Dorastus liking this devise made his case privie to the Marriners, rewarding them bountifully for their paynes, and charging them to say that he was a Gentleman of Trapalonia called Meleagrus. The shipman willing to shew what friendship they could to Dorastus, promised to be as secret as they could, or hee might wish, and vpon this they landed in a little Village a mile distant from the Citie, where after they had rested a day, thinking to make provision for their mariage the fame of Fawnias beautie was spread throughout all the Citie, so that came to the ears of Pandosto: who then being about the age of fiftie, had notwithstanding yong and fresh affections: so that he desired greatly to see Fawnia, and to bring this matter the better to passe, hearing they had but one man, and how they rested at a very homely house: he caused them to be apprehended as spies, and sent a dozen of his guard to take them: who being come to their lodging, tolde them the kings message. Dorastus no whit dismaied, accompanied with Fawnia and Capnio, went to the court (for they left Porrus to keepe the stuffe) who being admitted to the kings presence, Dorastus and Fawnia with humble obeysance saluted his Majestie.

Pandosto amazed at the singular perfection of Fawnia, stood half astonished, viewing her beautie, so that he had almost forgot himselfe what he had to doe: at last with stearne countenance he demaunded their names, and of what countrey they were, and what caused them to land in Bohemia. Sir (quoth Dorastus) know that my name Meleagrus is a Knight borne and brought vp in Trapalonia, and this Gentlewoman, whom I meane to take to my wife is an Italian borne in Padua, from whence I haue now brought her. The cause I so small a traine with me, is for that her friends vnwilling to consent, I intended secretly to conuey her into Trapalonia: whether as I was sayling, by distresse of weather I was driuen into these coasts: thus haue you heard my name, my country, and the cause of my voyage. Pandosto starting from his seat as one in choller made this rough reply.

Meleagrus, I feare this smooth tale hath but small trueth, and that thou couerest a foule skin with faire paintings. No doubt this Ladie by her grace and beautie is of hier degree more meete for a mightie Prince, than for a simple knight, and thou like a periured traitor hath bereft her of her parents, to their present griefe, and her insuing sorrow. Till therefore I heare more of her parentage and of thy calling, I wil stay you both here in Bohemia.

Dorastus, in whome rested nothing but kingly valour, was not able to suffer the reproches of Pandosto, but that he made him this answer.

It is not meete for a king, without due proofe to appeach any man of ill behauiour, nor vpon suspition to inferre beleefe: straungers ought to be entertained with curtesie: not to be intreated with crueltie, least beeing forced by want to put vp injuries the gods reuenge their cause with rigor.

Pandosto hearing Dorastus vtter these wordes, commaunded that he should straight be committed to prison, vntill such time as they heard further of his pleasure, but as for Fawnia, he charged that she should be entertained in the Court, with such curtesie as belonged to a straunger and her calling. The rest of the shipmen he put into the Dungeon.

Hauing thus hardly handled the supposed Trapalonians: Pandosto contrarie to his aged yeares began to bee somewhat tickled with the beautie of Fawnia, insomuch that he could take no rest, but cast in his old head a thousand new devises: at last he fell into these thoughtes.

How art thou pestred Pandosto with fresh affections, and vnfit fancies, wishing to possesse with an vnwilling minde, and a hote desire troubled with a cold disdaine? Shall thy minde yeelde in age to that thou hast resisted in youth? Peace Pandosto, blabbe not out that which thou mayest bee ashamed to reueale to thy selfe. Ah Fawnia is beautifull, and it is not for thine honour (fond foole) to name her that is thy captive, and another mans concubine. Alas, I reach at that with my hande which my hart would faine refuse: playing like the bird Ibis in Egypt, which hateth Serpents, yet feedeth on her egges.

Tush hote desires turne oftentimes to colde disdaine: Loue is brittle, where appetite, not reason beares the sway: Kings thoughts ought not to climbe so high as the heauens, but to looke no lower then honour: better it is to pecke at the starres with the young Eagles, than to prey on dead carkasses with the Vulture: tis more honourable for Pandosto to die by concealing Loue, then to enioy such vnfit Loue. Doth Pandosto then loue: Yea: Whome: A maid vnknowne, yea and perhappes, immodest, stragled out of her owne country: beautifull, but not therefore chaste: comely in body, but perhappes crooked in minde. Cease then Pandosto to looke at Fawnia, much lesse to loue her: be not overtaken with a womans beautie, whose eies are framed by art to inamour, whose hearte is framed by nature to inchaunt, whose false teares knowe their true times, and whose sweete wordes pearce deeper then sharpe swords. Here Pandosto from his talke, but not from his loue: for although he sought by reason, and wisedome to suppresse this franticke affection: yet he could take no rest, the beauty of Fawnia had made such a deepe impression in his heart. But on a day walking abroad into a Parke which was hard adjoyning to his house, he sent by one of his seruants for Fawnia, vnto whom he vttered these words.

Fawnia, I commend thy beautie and wit, and now pitie thy distresse and want: but if thou wilt forsake Sir Meliagrus, whose pouertie, though a Knight, is not able to maintaine an estate aunswerable to thy beautie, and yeelde thy consent to Pandosto, I will both increase thee with dignities and riches. No sir, answered Fawnia: Meliagrus is a knight that hath wonne me by loue, and none but hee shall weare me: his sinister mischance shall not diminish my affection, but rather increase my good will: thinke not though your Grace hath imprisoned him without cause, that feare shall make me yeeld my consent: I had rather be

Meliagrus wife, and a beggar, then liue in plentie, and be Pandostos Concubine.

Pandosto, hearing the assured aunswere of Fawnia, woulde, notwithstanding, prosecute his suit to the vttermost: seeking with faire wordes and great promises to scale the fort of her chastitie, swearing that if she would graunt to his desire, Meleagrus should not only be set at libertie, but honored in his courte amongst his Nobles: but these alluring baytes could not intise her minde from the loue of her new betrothed mate Meleagrus: which Pandosto seeing, he left her alone for that time to consider more of the demaund. Fawnia being alone by her selfe, began to enter into these solitarie meditations.

Ah, infortunate Fawnia, thou seest to desire aboue fortune, is to striue against the Gods and fortune. Who gazeth at the sunne weakeneth his sight: they which stare at the sky, fall oft into deepe pits: haddest thou rested content to beene a shepheard, thou neededst not to haue feared mischance: better had it beene for thee, by sitting low, to haue had quiet, then by climing high to haue fallen into miserie. But alas I feare not mine owne daunger, but Dorastus displeasure. Ah sweete Dorastus, thou art a Prince, but now a prisoner, by too much loue, procuring thine owne losse: haddest thou not loued Fawnia thou haddest bine fortunate, shall I then be false to him that hath forsaken kingdomes for my cause, no, woulde my death might deliuer him, so mine honour might be preserved. With that, fetching a deepe sigh, she ceased from her complaints, and went againe to the Palace, inioyning a liberty without content, and profered pleasure with smal ioy. But poore Dorastus lay all this while in close prison, being pinched with a hard restraint, and pained with the burden of colde, and heauy irons, sorrowing sometimes that his fond affection had procured him this mishap, that by the disobedience of his parentes, he had wrought his owne despight: an other while cursing the Gods, and fortune, that they should crosse him with such sinister chance: vttering at last his passions in these words.

Ah vnfortunate wretch borne to mishappe, nowe thy follie hath his desert: Art thou not worthy for thy base minde to haue bad fortune: could the destinies fauour thee, which hast forgot thine honor and dignities: wil not the Gods plague him with despight that payneth his father with disobedience. Oh Gods, if any fauour or iustice be left, plague me, but fauour poore Fawnia, and shrowd her from the tirannies of wretched Pandosto, but let my death free her from mishap, and then welcome death: Dorastus payned with these heavie passions, sorrowed and sighed, but in vayne, for which hee vsed the more patience. But againe to Pandosto, who broyling at the heat of vnlawfull lust coulde take no rest but still felt his minde disquieted with his new loue, so that his nobles and subiects maruelled greatly at this sodaine alteration, not beeing able to coniecture the cause of this his continued care: Pandosto thinking euery hour a yere till he had talked once againe with Fawnia, sent for her secretly into his chamber, whither though Fawnia vnwillingly comming, Pandosto entertained her very courteously vsing these familiar speeches, which Fawnia answered as shortly in this wise.

Pandosto.

Fawnia, are you become lesse wilfull and more wise, to preferre the loue of a king before the liking of a poore knight: I thinke ere this you thinke it is better to be fauoured of a king then of a subiect.

Fawnia.

Pandosto, the body is subject to victories, but the mind not to be subdued by conquest, honesty is to be preferred before honour, and a dramme of faith weigheth downe a tun of gold. I promised Meleagrus to loue, and will performe no lesse.

Pandosto.

Fawnia, I know thou art not so vnwise in thy choice, as to refuse the offer of a king, nor so ingratefull as to dispise a good turne: thou art now in that place where I may commaund, and yet thou seest I intreate, my power is such as I may compell by force, and yet I sue by prayers: yeeld Fawnia thy loue to him which burneth in thy loue, Meleagrus shall be set free, thy countrymen discharged, and thou both loued and honoured.

Fawnia.

I see, Pandosto, where lust ruleth it is a miserable thing to be a virgin, but know this, that I will alwaies preferre fame before life, and rather choose death then dishonour.

Pandosto seeing that there was in Fawnia a determinate courage to loue Meleagrus, and a resolution without feare to hate him fleeing away from her in a rage: swearing if in short time she would not be wonne by reason: he would forget all courtesie, and compel her to grant by rigour: but these threatning words no whit dismayed Fawnia: but that she still both despighted and despised Pandosto. While thus these two louers stroue, the one to winne loue, the other to liue in hate: Egistus heard certaine newes by marchauts of Bohemia, that his son Dorastus was imprisoned by Pandosto, which made him feare greatly that his sonne should be but hardly intreated: yet considering that Bellaria and hee was cleared by the Oracle of Apollo from that crime wherewith Pandosto had vniustly charged them, he thought best to send with all speede to Pandosto, that he should set free his sonne Dorastus, and put to death Fawnia and her father Porrus: finding this by the aduise of counsaile the speediest remedy to release his son, he caused presently two of his ships to be rigged and thoroughly furnished with prouision of men and victuals, and sent diuers of his nobles, embassadores into Bohemia: who willing to obey their king, and recieue their yong prince: made no delayes, for feare of danger, but with as much speed as might be, sailed towards Bohemia: the winde and seas fauoured them greatly, which made them hope of some good happe, for within three dayes they were landed: which Pandosto no sooner heard of their arrivall, but he in person went to meete them, intreating them with such sumptuous and familiar curtesie, that they might well perceiue how sory hee was for the former iniuries he had offered to their king, and how willing (if it might be) to make amends. As Pandosto made report to them, how one Meleagrus a knight of Trapolonia was lately ariued with a lady called Fawnia in his land, comming very suspitiously, accompanied onely with one seruant, and an old shepheard. The embassadours perceiued by the halfe, what the whole tale meant, and began to coniecture, that it was Dorastus, who for feare to bee knowen, had changedæhis name: but dissembling the matter, they shortly arriued at the court, where after they had bin very solemnely and sumptuously feasted, the noblemen of Sicilia being gathered togither, they made reporte of their embassage: where they certified Pandosto that Meleagrus was sonne and heire to the king Egistus, and that his name was Dorastus: how contrarie to the kings minde hee had priuily conueied away that Fawnia, intending to marry her, being but daughter to that poore shepheard Porrus: whereupon the Kings request was, that Capnio, Fawnia, and Porrus might be murthered and put to death and that his sonne Dorastus might bee sent home in safetie. Pandosto hauing attentively and with great marvelle heard their Embassage, willing to reconcile himselfe to Egistus, and to shew him how greatly he esteemed his labor: although loue and fancy forbad him to hurt Fawnia, yet in despite of loue he determined to execute Egistus will without mercy, and therefore he presently sent for Dorastus out of prison, who marvelling at his vnlooked for curtesie, found at his comming to the kings presence, that which he least doubted of, his fathers Embassadours: who no sooner saw him, but with great reuerence they honored him: and Pandosto embracing Dorastus, set him by him very louingly in a chaire of estate. Dorastus ashamed that his folly was bewrayed, sate a long time as one in a muse, till Pandosto told him the summe of his fathers embassage: which he had no sooner heard, but he was toucht at the quicke, for the cruell sentence that was pronounced against Fawnia: but neither could his sorrow nor perswasions preuaile, for Pandosto commaunded that Fawnia, Porrus, and Capnio, shoulde bee brought to his presence: who were no sooner come, but Pandosto hauing his former loue turned to a disdainfull hate, began to rage against Fawnia in these termes.

Thou disdainfull vassall, thou currish kite, assigned by the destinies to base fortune, and yet with an aspiring minde gazing after honor: how durst thou presume, being a beggar, to match with a Prince: By thy alluring lookes to inchant the sonne of a King to leaue his owne countrie to fulfill thy disordinate lusts. O despitefull minde, a proud heart in a beggar is not vnlike to a great fire in a small cottage, which warmeth not the house, but burneth it: assure thy self thou shalt die, and thou olde doating foole, whose folly hath bin such, as to suffer thy daughter to reach aboue thy fortune, looke for no other meede, but the like punishment. But Capnio, thou which hast betrayed the king, and has consented to the vnlawfull lust of thy lord and master, I knowe not how iustly I may plague thee: death is too easie a punishment for thy falsehoode, and to liue (if not in extreme miserie) were not to shew thee equitie. I therefore award that thou shalt thine eies put out, and continually till thou diest, grinde in a mill like a brute beast. The feare of death brought a sorrowfull silence vpon Fawnia and Capnio, but Porrus seeing no hope of life, burst forth into these speeches.

Pandosto, and yee noble embassadours of Sycilia, seeing without cause I am condemned to die: I am yet glad I haue opportunitie to disburden my conscience before my death: I will tell you as much as I know, and yet no more than is true: whereas I am accused that I bin a supporter of Fawnias pride, and she disdained as a vile beggar, so it is that I am neither father vnto her, nor she daughter vnto me.

For so it hapned that I being a poore sheepherd in Sycilia, living by keeping other mens flockes: one of my sheepe straying downe to the sea side, as I went to seeke her, I saw a little boate driven vpon the shoare, wherein I found a babe of sixe daies old, wrapped in a mantle of scarlet, hauing about the necke this chaine: I pittying the child, and desirous of the treasure, carried it home to my wife, who with great care nursed it vp, and set it to keepe sheep. Here is the chaine and the iewels, and this Fawnia is the child whom I found in the boat. What she is, or of what parentage, I know not, but this I am assured of that she is none of mine.

Pandosto would scarce suffer him to tell out his tale, but that he required the time of the yeere, the manner of the boat, and other circumstances, which when he found agreeing to his count, he suddenly leapt from his seate, and kissed Fawnia, wetting her tender cheeks with his tears, and crying my daughter Fawnia, ah sweete Fawnia, I am thy father, Fawnia. This sodaine passion of the king draue them all into a maze, especially Fawnia and Dorastus. But when the king had breathed himselfe a while in this new ioy, he rehearsed before the Embassadours the whole matter, how hee hadde intreated his wife Bellaria for iealousie, and that this was the child whome hee sent to floate in the seas.

Fawnia was not more ioyfull that she had found such a father, then Dorastus was glad he should get such a wife. The Embassadors reioyced that their yong Prince had made such a choice, that those kingdoms which through enmitie had long time bene disseuered, should now through perpetuall amitie be vnited and reconciled. The Citizens and subiects of Bohemia (hearing that the King had found againe his daughter, which was supposed dead, ioyfull that there was an heire apparant to their kingdome) made bonfires and shows throughout the Citie: The Courtiers and Knights appointed Justs and Turneyes to signifie their willing minds in gratifying the Kings hap.

Eighteene dayes being past in these princely sports, Pandosto willing to recompence old Porrus, of a shepheard made him a Knight: which done, prouiding a sufficient Nauie to receiue him and his retinue, accompanied with Dorastus, Fawnia, and the Sicilian Embassadours, he sailed towards Sicilia, where he was most princely entertained by Egistus: who hearing this comicall euent, reioyced greatly at his sonnes good hap, and without delay (to the perpetuall ioy of the two yong louers) celebrated the marriage: which was no sooner ended, but Pandosto (calling to mind how first he betrayed his friend Egistus, how his iealousie was the cause of Bellarias death, that contrarie to the lawe of nature hee had lusted after his owne daughter) moued with these desperat thoughts, he fell into a melancholie fit, and to close vp the Comedie with a Tragicall stratageme, he slue him selfe, whose death being many daies bewailed of Fawnia, Dorastus, and his deere friend Egistus, Dorastus taking his leaue of his father, went with his wife and the dead corps into Bohemia, where after they were sumptuously intoombed, Dorastus ended his dayes in contented quiet.

FINIS.

CYMBELINE - Geoffrey of Monmouth’s *History*

This extract from Book 4 of Geoffrey of Monmouth’s *History of the Kings of Britain* provides the main source for the late play *Cymbeline.*

[11]

After seven years had expired, Cassibellaun died and was buried at York. He was succeeded by Tenuantius, duke of Cornwall, and brother of Androgeus: for Androgeus was gone to Rome with Caesar. Tenuantius therefore, now wearing the crown, governed the kingdom with diligence. He was a warlike man, and a strict observer of justice. After him Kymbelinus his son was advanced to the throne, being a great soldier, and brought up by Augustus Caesar. He had contracted so great a friendship with the Romans, that he freely paid them tribute when he might have very well refused it. In his days was born our Lord Jesus Christ, by whose precious blood mankind was redeemed from the devil, under whom they had been before enslaved.

[12]

Kymbelinus, when he had governed Britain ten years, begat two sons, the elder named Guiderius, the other Arviragus. After his death the government fell to Guiderius. This prince refused to pay tribute to the Romans; for which reason Claudius, who was now emperor, marched against him. He was attended in this expedition by the commander of his army, who was called in the British tongue, Leuis Hamo, by whose advice the following war was to be carried on. This man, therefore, arriving at the city of Portcestre, began to block up the gates with a wall, and denied the citizens all liberty of passing out. For his design was either to reduce them to subjection by famine, or kill them without mercy.

THE TWO NOBLE KINSMEN – Chaucer's *The Knight's Tale*

The Knight's Tale is the first tale from Geoffrey Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales* . The story introduces many typical aspects of knighthood such as courtly love and ethical dilemmas and is Shakespeare's main source for his late collaboration with John Fletcher – *The Two Noble Kinsmen* . The tale is composed in iambic pentameter, with 10 syllables for every line. To aid the reader, difficult words are glossed with a * beside each line.

WHILOM*, as olde stories tellen us, *formerly
There was a duke that highte* Theseus. *was called
Of Athens he was lord and governor,
And in his time such a conqueror
That greater was there none under the sun.
Full many a riche country had he won.
What with his wisdom and his chivalry,
He conquer'd all the regne of Feminie,
That whilom was y-cleped Scythia;
And weddede the Queen Hippolyta
And brought her home with him to his country
With muchel* glory and great solemnity, *great
And eke her younge sister Emily,
And thus with vict'ry and with melody
Let I this worthy Duke to Athens ride,
And all his host, in armes him beside.

And certes, if it n'ere* too long to hear, *were not
I would have told you fully the mannere,
How wonnen* was the regne of Feminie, *won
By Theseus, and by his chivalry;
And of the greate battle for the nonce
Betwixt Athenes and the Amazons;
And how assieged was Hippolyta,
The faire hardy queen of Scythia;
And of the feast that was at her wedding
And of the tempest at her homecoming.
But all these things I must as now forbear.
I have, God wot, a large field to ear* *plough;
And weake be the oxen in my plough;
The remnant of my tale is long enow.
I will not *letten eke none of this rout*. *hinder any of
Let every fellow tell his tale about, this company*
And let see now who shall the supper win.
There *as I left,* I will again begin. *where I left off*

This Duke, of whom I make mentioun,
When he was come almost unto the town,
In all his weal, and in his moste pride,

He was ware, as he cast his eye aside,
Where that there kneeled in the highe way
A company of ladies, tway and tway,
Each after other, clad in clothes black:
But such a cry and such a woe they make,
That in this world n'is creature living,
That hearde such another waimenting* *lamenting
And of this crying would they never stenten*, *desist
Till they the reines of his bridle henten*. *seize
"What folk be ye that at mine homecoming
Perturben so my feaste with crying?"
Quoth Theseus; "Have ye so great envy
Of mine honour, that thus complain and cry?
Or who hath you misboden*, or offended? *wronged
Do telle me, if it may be amended;
And why that ye be clad thus all in black?"

The oldest lady of them all then spake,
When she had swooned, with a deadly cheer*, *countenance
That it was ruthe* for to see or hear. *pity
She saide; "Lord, to whom fortune hath given
Vict'ry, and as a conqueror to liven,
Nought grieveth us your glory and your honour;
But we beseechen mercy and succour.
Have mercy on our woe and our distress;
Some drop of pity, through thy gentleness,
Upon us wretched women let now fall.
For certes, lord, there is none of us all
That hath not been a duchess or a queen;
Now be we caitives*, as it is well seen: *captives
Thanked be Fortune, and her false wheel,
That *none estate ensureth to be wele*. *assures no continuance of
And certes, lord, t'abiden your presence prosperous estate*
Here in this temple of the goddess Clemence
We have been waiting all this fortenight:
Now help us, lord, since it lies in thy might.

"I, wretched wight, that weep and waile thus,
Was whilom wife to king Capaneus,

That starf* at Thebes, cursed be that day: *died
And alle we that be in this array,
And maken all this lamentatioun,
We losten all our husbands at that town,
While that the siege thereabouten lay.
And yet the olde Creon, wellaway!
That lord is now of Thebes the city,
Fulfilled of ire and of iniquity,
He for despite, and for his tyranny,
To do the deade bodies villainy*, *insult
Of all our lorde's, which that been y-slaw, *slain
Hath all the bodies on an heap y-draw,
And will not suffer them by none assent
Neither to be y-buried, nor y-brent*, *burnt
But maketh houndes eat them in despite."
And with that word, withoute more respite
They fallen groff,* and cryden piteously; *grovelling
"Have on us wretched women some mercy,
And let our sorrow sinken in thine heart."

This gentle Duke down from his courser start
With hearte piteous, when he heard them speak.
Him thoughte that his heart would all to-break,
When he saw them so piteous and so mate* *abased
That whilom weren of so great estate.
And in his armes he them all up hent*, *raised, took
And them comforted in full good intent,
And swore his oath, as he was true knight,
He woulde do *so farforthly his might* *as far as his power went*
Upon the tyrant Creon them to wreak*, *avenge
That all the people of Greece shoulde speak,
How Creon was of Theseus y-served,
As he that had his death full well deserved.
And right anon withoute more abode* *delay
His banner he display'd, and forth he rode
To Thebes-ward, and all his, host beside:
No ner* Athenes would he go nor ride, *nearer
Nor take his ease fully half a day,
But onward on his way that night he lay:

And sent anon Hippolyta the queen,
And Emily her younge sister sheen* *bright, lovely
Unto the town of Athens for to dwell:
And forth he rit*; there is no more to tell. *rode

The red statue of Mars with spear and targe* *shield
So shineth in his white banner large
That all the fieldes glitter up and down:
And by his banner borne is his pennon
Of gold full rich, in which there was y-beat* *stamped
The Minotaur which that he slew in Crete
Thus rit this Duke, thus rit this conqueror
And in his host of chivalry the flower,
Till that he came to Thebes, and alight
Fair in a field, there as he thought to fight.
But shortly for to speaken of this thing,
With Creon, which that was of Thebes king,
He fought, and slew him manly as a knight
In plain bataille, and put his folk to flight:
And by assault he won the city after,
And rent adown both wall, and spar, and rafter;
And to the ladies he restored again
The bodies of their husbands that were slain,
To do obsequies, as was then the guise*. *custom

But it were all too long for to devise* *describe
The greate clamour, and the waimenting*, *lamenting
Which that the ladies made at the brenning* *burning
Of the bodies, and the great honour
That Theseus the noble conqueror
Did to the ladies, when they from him went:
But shortly for to tell is mine intent.
When that this worthy Duke, this Theseus,
Had Creon slain, and wonnen Thebes thus,
Still in the field he took all night his rest,
And did with all the country as him lest*. *pleased
To ransack in the tas* of bodies dead, *heap
Them for to strip of *harness and of **weed, *armour* *clothes
The pillers* did their business and cure, *pillagers

After the battle and discomfiture.
And so befell, that in the tas they found,
Through girt with many a grievous bloody wound,
Two younge knightes *ligging by and by* *lying side by side*
Both in *one armes*, wrought full richely: *the same armour*
Of whiche two, Arcita hight that one,
And he that other highte Palamon.
Not fully quick*, nor fully dead they were, *alive
But by their coat-armour, and by their gear,
The heralds knew them well in special,
As those that weren of the blood royal
Of Thebes, and *of sistren two y-born*. *born of two sisters*
Out of the tas the pillers have them torn,
And have them carried soft unto the tent
Of Theseus, and he full soon them sent
To Athens, for to dwellen in prison
Perpetually, he *n'olde no ranson*. *would take no ransom*
And when this worthy Duke had thus y-done,
He took his host, and home he rit anon
With laurel crowned as a conquerour;
And there he lived in joy and in honour
Term of his life; what needeth wordes mo'?
And in a tower, in anguish and in woe,
Dwellen this Palamon, and eke Arcite,
For evermore, there may no gold them quite* *set free

Thus passed year by year, and day by day,
Till it fell ones in a morn of May
That Emily, that fairer was to seen
Than is the lily upon his stalke green,
And fresher than the May with flowers new
(For with the rose colour strove her hue;
I n'ot* which was the finer of them two), *know not
Ere it was day, as she was wont to do,
She was arisen, and all ready dight*, *dressed
For May will have no sluggardy a-night;
The season pricketh every gentle heart,
And maketh him out of his sleep to start,
And saith, "Arise, and do thine observance."

This maketh Emily have remembrance
To do honour to May, and for to rise.
Y-clothed was she fresh for to devise;
Her yellow hair was braided in a tress,
Behind her back, a yarde long I guess.
And in the garden at *the sun uprist* *sunrise
She walketh up and down where as her list.
She gathereth flowers, party* white and red, *mingled
To make a sotel* garland for her head, *subtle, well-arranged
And as an angel heavenly she sung.
The greate tower, that was so thick and strong,
Which of the castle was the chief dungeon
(Where as these knightes weren in prison,
Of which I tolde you, and telle shall),
Was even joinant* to the garden wall, *adjoining
There as this Emily had her playing.

Bright was the sun, and clear that morrowning,
And Palamon, this woful prisoner,
As was his wont, by leave of his gaoler,
Was ris'n, and roamed in a chamber on high,
In which he all the noble city sigh*, *saw
And eke the garden, full of branches green,
There as this fresh Emelia the sheen
Was in her walk, and roamed up and down.
This sorrowful prisoner, this Palamon
Went in his chamber roaming to and fro,
And to himself complaining of his woe:
That he was born, full oft he said, Alas!
And so befell, by aventure or cas*, *chance
That through a window thick of many a bar
Of iron great, and square as any spar,
He cast his eyes upon Emelia,
And therewithal he blent* and cried, Ah! *started aside
As though he stungen were unto the heart.
And with that cry Arcite anon up start,
And saide, "Cousin mine, what aileth thee,
That art so pale and deadly for to see?
Why cried'st thou? who hath thee done offence?

For Godde's love, take all in patience
Our prison*, for it may none other be. *imprisonment
Fortune hath giv'n us this adversity'.
Some wick'* aspect or disposition *wicked
Of Saturn, by some constellation,
Hath giv'n us this, although we had it sworn,
So stood the heaven when that we were born,
We must endure; this is the short and plain.

This Palamon answer'd, and said again:
"Cousin, forsooth of this opinion
Thou hast a vain imagination.
This prison caused me not for to cry;
But I was hurt right now thorough mine eye
Into mine heart; that will my bane* be. *destruction
The fairness of the lady that I see
Yond in the garden roaming to and fro,
Is cause of all my crying and my woe.
I *n'ot wher* she be woman or goddess, *know not whether*
But Venus is it, soothly* as I guess, *truly
And therewithal on knees adown he fill,
And saide: "Venus, if it be your will
You in this garden thus to transfigure
Before me sorrowful wretched creature,
Out of this prison help that we may scape.
And if so be our destiny be shape
By etern word to dien in prison,
Of our lineage have some compassion,
That is so low y-brought by tyranny."

And with that word Arcita *gan espy* *began to look forth*
Where as this lady roamed to and fro
And with that sight her beauty hurt him so,
That if that Palamon was wounded sore,
Arcite is hurt as much as he, or more.
And with a sigh he saide piteously:
"The freshe beauty slay'th me suddenly
Of her that roameth yonder in the place.
And but* I have her mercy and her grace, *unless

That I may see her at the leaste way,
I am but dead; there is no more to say."
This Palamon, when he these wordes heard,
Dispiteously* he looked, and answer'd: *angrily
"Whether say'st thou this in earnest or in play?"
"Nay," quoth Arcite, "in earnest, by my fay*. *faith
God help me so, *me lust full ill to play*." *I am in no humour
This Palamon gan knit his browes tway. for jesting*
"It were," quoth he, "to thee no great honour
For to be false, nor for to be traitour
To me, that am thy cousin and thy brother
Y-sworn full deep, and each of us to other,
That never for to dien in the pain ,
Till that the death departen shall us twain,
Neither of us in love to hinder other,
Nor in none other case, my leve* brother; *dear
But that thou shouldest truly farther me
In every case, as I should farther thee.
This was thine oath, and mine also certain;
I wot it well, thou dar'st it not withsayn*, *deny
Thus art thou of my counsel out of doubt,
And now thou wouldest falsely be about
To love my lady, whom I love and serve,
And ever shall, until mine hearte sterve* *die
Now certes, false Arcite, thou shalt not so
I lov'd her first, and tolde thee my woe
As to my counsel, and my brother sworn
To farther me, as I have told beforn.
For which thou art y-bounden as a knight
To helpe me, if it lie in thy might,
Or elles art thou false, I dare well sayn,"

This Arcita full proudly spake again:
"Thou shalt," quoth he, "be rather* false than I, *sooner
And thou art false, I tell thee utterly;
For par amour I lov'd her first ere thou.
What wilt thou say? *thou wist it not right now* *even now thou
Whether she be a woman or goddess. knowest not*
Thine is affection of holiness,

And mine is love, as to a creature:
For which I tolde thee mine aventure
As to my cousin, and my brother sworn
I pose*, that thou loved'st her beforn: *suppose
Wost* thou not well the olde clerke's saw, *know'st
That who shall give a lover any law?
Love is a greater lawe, by my pan,
Than may be giv'n to any earthly man:
Therefore positive law, and such decree,
Is broke alway for love in each degree
A man must needes love, maugre his head.
He may not flee it, though he should be dead,
All be she maid, or widow, or else wife. *whether she be*
And eke it is not likely all thy life
To standen in her grace, no more than I
For well thou wost thyselfe verily,
That thou and I be damned to prison
Perpetual, us gaineth no ranson.
We strive, as did the houndes for the bone;
They fought all day, and yet their part was none.
There came a kite, while that they were so wroth,
And bare away the bone betwixt them both.
And therefore at the kinge's court, my brother,
Each man for himselfe, there is no other.
Love if thee list; for I love and aye shall
And soothly, leve brother, this is all.
Here in this prison musten we endure,
And each of us take his Aventure."

Great was the strife and long between these tway,
If that I hadde leisure for to say;
But to the effect: it happen'd on a day
(To tell it you as shortly as I may),
A worthy duke that hight Perithous
That fellow was to the Duke Theseus
Since thilke* day that they were children lite** *that* *little
Was come to Athens, his fellow to visite,
And for to play, as he was wont to do;
For in this world he loved no man so;

And he lov'd him as tenderly again.
So well they lov'd, as olde bookes sayn,
That when that one was dead, soothly to sayn,
His fellow went and sought him down in hell:
But of that story list me not to write.
Duke Perithous loved well Arcite,
And had him known at Thebes year by year:
And finally at request and prayere
Of Perithous, withoute ranson
Duke Theseus him let out of prison,
Freely to go, where him list over all,
In such a guise, as I you tellen shall
This was the forword*, plainly to indite, *promise
Betwixte Theseus and him Arcite:
That if so were, that Arcite were y-found
Ever in his life, by day or night, one stound* *moment
In any country of this Theseus,
And he were caught, it was accorded thus,
That with a sword he shoulde lose his head;
There was none other remedy nor rede*. *counsel
But took his leave, and homeward he him sped;
Let him beware, his necke lieth *to wed*. *in pledge*

How great a sorrow suff'reth now Arcite!
The death he feeleth through his hearte smite;
He weepeth, waileth, crieth piteously;
To slay himself he waiteth privily.
He said; "Alas the day that I was born!
Now is my prison worse than beforn:
Now is me shape eternally to dwell *it is fixed for me*
Not in purgatory, but right in hell.
Alas! that ever I knew Perithous.
For elles had I dwelt with Theseus
Y-fettered in his prison evermo'.
Then had I been in bliss, and not in woe.
Only the sight of her, whom that I serve,
Though that I never may her grace deserve,
Would have sufficed right enough for me.
O deare cousin Palamon," quoth he,

"Thine is the vict'ry of this aventure,
Full blissfully in prison to endure:
In prison? nay certes, in paradise.
Well hath fortune y-turned thee the dice,
That hast the sight of her, and I th' absence.
For possible is, since thou hast her presence,
And art a knight, a worthy and an able,
That by some cas*, since fortune is changeable, *chance
Thou may'st to thy desire sometime attain.
But I that am exiled, and barren
Of alle grace, and in so great despair,
That there n'is earthe, water, fire, nor air,
Nor creature, that of them maked is,
That may me helpe nor comfort in this,
Well ought I *sterve in wanhope* and distress. *die in despair*
Farewell my life, my lust*, and my gladness. *pleasure
Alas, *why plainen men so in commune *why do men so often complain
Of purveyance of God*, or of Fortune, of God's providence?*
That giveth them full oft in many a guise
Well better than they can themselves devise?
Some man desireth for to have richess,
That cause is of his murder or great sickness.
And some man would out of his prison fain,
That in his house is of his meinie* slain. *servants
Infinite harmes be in this mattere.
We wot never what thing we pray for here.
We fare as he that drunk is as a mouse.
A drunken man wot well he hath an house,
But he wot not which is the right way thither,
And to a drunken man the way is slither*. *slippery
And certes in this world so fare we.
We seeke fast after felicity,
But we go wrong full often truely.
Thus we may sayen all, and namely* I, *especially
That ween'd*, and had a great opinion, *thought
That if I might escape from prison
Then had I been in joy and perfect heal,
Where now I am exiled from my weal.
Since that I may not see you, Emily,

I am but dead; there is no remedy."

Upon that other side, Palamon,
When that he wist Arcita was agone,
Much sorrow maketh, that the greate tower
Resounded of his yelling and clamour
The pure* fetters on his shinnes great *very
Were of his bitter salte teares wet.

"Alas!" quoth he, "Arcita, cousin mine,
Of all our strife, God wot, the fruit is thine.
Thou walkest now in Thebes at thy large,
And of my woe thou *givest little charge*. *takest little heed*
Thou mayst, since thou hast wisdom and manhead*, *manhood, courage
Assemble all the folk of our kindred,
And make a war so sharp on this country
That by some aventure, or some treaty,
Thou mayst have her to lady and to wife,
For whom that I must needes lose my life.
For as by way of possibility,
Since thou art at thy large, of prison free,
And art a lord, great is thine avantage,
More than is mine, that sterve here in a cage.
For I must weep and wail, while that I live,
With all the woe that prison may me give,
And eke with pain that love me gives also,
That doubles all my torment and my woe."

Therewith the fire of jealousy upstart
Within his breast, and hent* him by the heart *seized
So woodly*, that he like was to behold *madly
The box-tree, or the ashes dead and cold.
Then said; "O cruel goddess, that govern
This world with binding of your word etern* *eternal
And writen in the table of adamant
Your parlement* and your eternal grant, *consultation
What is mankind more *unto you y-hold* *by you esteemed
Than is the sheep, that rouketh* in the fold! *lie huddled together
For slain is man, right as another beast;

And dwelleth eke in prison and arrest,
And hath sickness, and great adversity,
And oftentimes guilteless, pardie* *by God
What governance is in your prescience,
That guilteless tormenteth innocence?
And yet increaseth this all my penance,
That man is bounden to his observance
For Godde's sake to *letten of his will*, *restrain his desire*
Whereas a beast may all his lust fulfil.
And when a beast is dead, he hath no pain;
But man after his death must weep and plain,
Though in this worlde he have care and woe:
Withoute doubt it maye standen so.
"The answer of this leave I to divines,
But well I wot, that in this world great pine* is; *pain, trouble
Alas! I see a serpent or a thief
That many a true man hath done mischief,
Go at his large, and where him list may turn.
But I must be in prison through Saturn,
And eke through Juno, jealous and eke wood*, *mad
That hath well nigh destroyed all the blood
Of Thebes, with his waste walles wide.
And Venus slay'th me on that other side
For jealousy, and fear of him, Arcite."

Now will I stent* of Palamon a lite**, *pause* *little
And let him in his prison stille dwell,
And of Arcita forth I will you tell.
The summer passeth, and the nightes long
Increase double-wise the paines strong
Both of the lover and the prisonere.
I n'ot* which hath the wofuller mistere**. *know not* *condition
For, shortly for to say, this Palamon
Perpetually is damned to prison,
In chaines and in fetters to be dead;
And Arcite is exiled *on his head on peril of his head*
For evermore as out of that country,
Nor never more he shall his lady see.
You lovers ask I now this question,

Who lieth the worse, Arcite or Palamon?
The one may see his lady day by day,
But in prison he dwelle must alway.
The other where him list may ride or go,
But see his lady shall he never mo'.
Now deem all as you liste, ye that can,
For I will tell you forth as I began.

When that Arcite to Thebes comen was,
Full oft a day he swelt*, and said, "Alas!" *fainted
For see this lady he shall never mo'.
And shortly to concluden all his woe,
So much sorrow had never creature
That is or shall be while the world may dure.
His sleep, his meat, his drink is *him byraft*, *taken away from him*
That lean he wex*, and dry as any shaft. *became
His eyen hollow, grisly to behold,
His hue sallow, and pale as ashes cold,
And solitary he was, ever alone,
And wailing all the night, making his moan.
And if he hearde song or instrument,
Then would he weepen, he might not be stent*. *stopped
So feeble were his spirits, and so low,
And changed so, that no man coulde know
His speech, neither his voice, though men it heard.
And in his gear* for all the world he far'd *behaviour
Not only like the lovers' malady
Of Eros, but rather y-like manie* *madness
Engender'd of humours melancholic,
Before his head in his cell fantastic.
And shortly turned was all upside down,
Both habit and eke dispositioun,
Of him, this woful lover Dan* Arcite. *Lord
Why should I all day of his woe indite?
When he endured had a year or two
This cruel torment, and this pain and woe,
At Thebes, in his country, as I said,
Upon a night in sleep as he him laid,
Him thought how that the winged god Mercury

Before him stood, and bade him to be merry.
His sleepy yard* in hand he bare upright; *rod
A hat he wore upon his haires bright.
Arrayed was this god (as he took keep*) *notice
As he was when that Argus took his sleep;
And said him thus: "To Athens shalt thou wend*; *go
There is thee shapen* of thy woe an end." *fixed, prepared
And with that word Arcite woke and start.
"Now truely how sore that e'er me smart,"
Quoth he, "to Athens right now will I fare.
Nor for no dread of death shall I not spare
To see my lady that I love and serve;
In her presence *I recke not to sterve.*" *do not care if I die*
And with that word he caught a great mirror,
And saw that changed was all his colour,
And saw his visage all in other kind.
And right anon it ran him ill his mind,
That since his face was so disfigur'd
Of malady the which he had endur'd,
He mighte well, if that he *bare him low, lived in lowly fashion*
Live in Athenes evermore unknow,
And see his lady wellnigh day by day.
And right anon he changed his array,
And clad him as a poore labourer.
And all alone, save only a squier,
That knew his privity* and all his cas**, *secrets* *fortune
Which was disguised poorly as he was,
To Athens is he gone the nexte* way. *nearest
And to the court he went upon a day,
And at the gate he proffer'd his service,
To drudge and draw, what so men would devise*. *order
And, shortly of this matter for to sayn,
He fell in office with a chamberlain,
The which that dwelling was with Emily.
For he was wise, and coulde soon espy
Of every servant which that served her.
Well could he hewe wood, and water bear,
For he was young and mighty for the nones*, *occasion
And thereto he was strong and big of bones

To do that any wight can him devise.

A year or two he was in this service,
Page of the chamber of Emily the bright;
And Philostrate he saide that he hight.
But half so well belov'd a man as he
Ne was there never in court of his degree.
He was so gentle of conditioun,
That throughout all the court was his renown.
They saide that it were a charity
That Theseus would *enhance his degree*, *elevate him in rank*
And put him in some worshipful service,
There as he might his virtue exercise.
And thus within a while his name sprung
Both of his deedes, and of his good tongue,
That Theseus hath taken him so near,
That of his chamber he hath made him squire,
And gave him gold to maintain his degree;
And eke men brought him out of his country
From year to year full privily his rent.
But honestly and slyly* he it spent, *discreetly, prudently
That no man wonder'd how that he it had.
And three year in this wise his life be lad*, *led
And bare him so in peace and eke in werre*, *war
There was no man that Theseus had so derre*. *dear
And in this blisse leave I now Arcite,
And speak I will of Palamon a lite*. *little

In darkness horrible, and strong prison,
This seven year hath sitten Palamon,
Forpined*, what for love, and for distress. *pined, wasted away
Who feeleth double sorrow and heaviness
But Palamon? that love distraineth* so, *afflicts
That wood* out of his wits he went for woe, *mad
And eke thereto he is a prisonere
Perpetual, not only for a year.
Who coulde rhyme in English properly
His martyrdom? forsooth*, it is not I; *truly
Therefore I pass as lightly as I may.

It fell that in the seventh year, in May
The thirde night (as olde bookes sayn,
That all this story tellen more plain),
Were it by a venture or destiny
(As when a thing is shapen* it shall be), *settled, decreed
That soon after the midnight, Palamon
By helping of a friend brake his prison,
And fled the city fast as he might go,
For he had given drink his gaoler so
Of a clary , made of a certain wine,
With *narcotise and opie* of Thebes fine, *narcotics and opium*
That all the night, though that men would him shake,
The gaoler slept, he mighte not awake:
And thus he fled as fast as ever he may.
The night was short, and *faste by the day* close at hand was
That needes cast he must himself to hide*. the day during which
And to a grove faste there beside he must cast about, or contrive,
With dreadful foot then stalked Palamon. to conceal himself.*
For shortly this was his opinion,
That in the grove he would him hide all day,
And in the night then would he take his way
To Thebes-ward, his friendes for to pray
On Theseus to help him to warray*. *make war
And shortly either he would lose his life,
Or winnen Emily unto his wife.
This is th' effect, and his intention plain.

Now will I turn to Arcita again,
That little wist how nighe was his care,
Till that Fortune had brought him in the snare.
The busy lark, the messenger of day,
Saluteth in her song the morning gray;
And fiery Phoebus riseth up so bright,
That all the orient laugheth at the sight,
And with his streames* drieth in the greves** *rays* *groves
The silver droppes, hanging on the leaves;
And Arcite, that is in the court royal
With Theseus, his squier principal,
Is ris'n, and looketh on the merry day.

And for to do his observance to May,
Remembering the point* of his desire, *object
He on his courser, starting as the fire,
Is ridden to the fieldes him to play,
Out of the court, were it a mile or tway.
And to the grove, of which I have you told,
By a venture his way began to hold,
To make him a garland of the greves*, *groves
Were it of woodbine, or of hawthorn leaves,
And loud he sang against the sun so sheen*. *shining bright
"O May, with all thy flowers and thy green,
Right welcome be thou, faire freshe May,
I hope that I some green here getten may."
And from his courser*, with a lusty heart, *horse
Into the grove full hastily he start,
And in a path he roamed up and down,
There as by aventure this Palamon
Was in a bush, that no man might him see,
For sore afeard of his death was he.
Nothing ne knew he that it was Arcite;
God wot he would have *trowed it full lite*. *full little believed it*
But sooth is said, gone since full many years,
The field hath eyen*, and the wood hath ears, *eyes
It is full fair a man *to bear him even*, *to be on his guard*
For all day meeten men at *unset steven*. *unexpected time
Full little wot Arcite of his fellaw,
That was so nigh to hearken of his saw*, *saying, speech
For in the bush he sitteth now full still.
When that Arcite had roamed all his fill,
And *sungen all the roundel* lustily, *sang the roundelay*
Into a study he fell suddenly,
As do those lovers in their *quainte gears*, *odd fashions*
Now in the crop*, and now down in the breres**, *tree-top
Now up, now down, as bucket in a well. **briars
Right as the Friday, soothly for to tell,
Now shineth it, and now it raineth fast,
Right so can geary* Venus overcast *changeful
The heartes of her folk, right as her day
Is gearful*, right so changeth she array. *changeful

Seldom is Friday all the weeke like.
When Arcite had y-sung, he gan to sike*, *sigh
And sat him down withouten any more:
"Alas!" quoth he, "the day that I was bore!
How longe, Juno, through thy cruelty
Wilt thou warrayen* Thebes the city? *torment
Alas! y-brought is to confusion
The blood royal of Cadm' and Amphion:
Of Cadmus, which that was the firste man,
That Thebes built, or first the town began,
And of the city first was crowned king.
Of his lineage am I, and his offspring
By very line, as of the stock royal;
And now I am *so caitiff and so thrall*, *wretched and enslaved*
That he that is my mortal enemy,
I serve him as his squier poorely.
And yet doth Juno me well more shame,
For I dare not beknow* mine owen name, *acknowledge
But there as I was wont to hight Arcite,
Now hight I Philostrate, not worth a mite.
Alas! thou fell Mars, and alas! Juno,
Thus hath your ire our lineage all fordo* *undone, ruined
Save only me, and wretched Palamon,
That Theseus martyreth in prison.
And over all this, to slay me utterly,
Love hath his fiery dart so brenningly* *burningly
Y-sticked through my true careful heart,
That shapen was my death erst than my shert.
Ye slay me with your eyen, Emily;
Ye be the cause wherefore that I die.
Of all the remnant of mine other care
Ne set I not the *mountance of a tare*, *value of a straw*
So that I could do aught to your pleasance."

And with that word he fell down in a trance
A longe time; and afterward upstart
This Palamon, that thought thorough his heart
He felt a cold sword suddenly to glide:
For ire he quoke*, no longer would he hide. *quaked

And when that he had heard Arcite's tale,
As he were wood*, with face dead and pale, *mad
He start him up out of the bushes thick,
And said: "False Arcita, false traitor wick'*, *wicked
Now art thou hent*, that lov'st my lady so, *caught
For whom that I have all this pain and woe,
And art my blood, and to my counsel sworn,
As I full oft have told thee herebeforn,
And hast bejaped* here Duke Theseus, *deceived, imposed upon
And falsely changed hast thy name thus;
I will be dead, or elles thou shalt die.
Thou shalt not love my lady Emily,
But I will love her only and no mo';
For I am Palamon thy mortal foe.
And though I have no weapon in this place,
But out of prison am astart* by grace, *escaped
I dreade* not that either thou shalt die, *doubt
Or else thou shalt not loven Emily.
Choose which thou wilt, for thou shalt not astart."

This Arcite then, with full dispiteous* heart, *wrathful
When he him knew, and had his tale heard,
As fierce as lion pulled out a swerd,
And saide thus; "By God that sitt'th above,
N'ere it that thou art sick, and wood for love, *were it not*
And eke that thou no weap'n hast in this place,
Thou should'st never out of this grove pace,
That thou ne shouldest dien of mine hand.
For I defy the surety and the band,
Which that thou sayest I have made to thee.
What? very fool, think well that love is free;
And I will love her maugre* all thy might. *despite
But, for thou art a worthy gentle knight,
And *wilnest to darraine her by bataille*, *will reclaim her
Have here my troth, to-morrow I will not fail, by combat*
Without weeting* of any other wight, *knowledge
That here I will be founden as a knight,
And bringe harness* right enough for thee; *armour and arms
And choose the best, and leave the worst for me.

And meat and drinke this night will I bring
Enough for thee, and clothes for thy bedding.
And if so be that thou my lady win,
And slay me in this wood that I am in,
Thou may'st well have thy lady as for me."
This Palamon answer'd, "I grant it thee."
And thus they be departed till the morrow,
When each of them hath *laid his faith to borrow*. *pledged his faith*

O Cupid, out of alle charity!
O Regne* that wilt no fellow have with thee! *queen
Full sooth is said, that love nor lordeship
Will not, *his thanks*, have any fellowship. *thanks to him*
Well finden that Arcite and Palamon.
Arcite is ridd anon unto the town,
And on the morrow, ere it were daylight,
Full privily two harness hath he dight*, *prepared
Both suffisant and meete to darraine* *contest
The battle in the field betwixt them twain.
And on his horse, alone as he was born,
He carrieth all this harness him beforn;
And in the grove, at time and place y-set,
This Arcite and this Palamon be met.
Then change gan the colour of their face;
Right as the hunter in the regne* of Thrace *kingdom
That standeth at a gappe with a spear
When hunted is the lion or the bear,
And heareth him come rushing in the greves*, *groves
And breaking both the boughes and the leaves,
Thinketh, "Here comes my mortal enemy,
Withoute fail, he must be dead or I;
For either I must slay him at the gap;
Or he must slay me, if that me mishap:"
So fared they, in changing of their hue
As far as either of them other knew. *When they recognised each
There was no good day, and no saluting, other afar off*
But straight, withoute wordes rehearsing,
Evereach of them holp to arm the other,
As friendly, as he were his owen brother.

And after that, with sharpe speares strong
They foined* each at other wonder long. *thrust
Thou mightest weene*, that this Palamon *think
In fighting were as a wood* lion, *mad
And as a cruel tiger was Arcite:
As wilde boars gan they together smite,
That froth as white as foam, *for ire wood*. *mad with anger*
Up to the ancle fought they in their blood.
And in this wise I let them fighting dwell,
And forth I will of Theseus you tell.

The Destiny, minister general,
That executeth in the world o'er all
The purveyance*, that God hath seen beforn; *foreordination
So strong it is, that though the world had sworn
The contrary of a thing by yea or nay,
Yet some time it shall fallen on a day
That falleth not eft* in a thousand year. *again
For certainly our appetites here,
Be it of war, or peace, or hate, or love,
All is this ruled by the sight* above. *eye, intelligence, power
This mean I now by mighty Theseus,
That for to hunten is so desirous —
And namely* the greate hart in May — *especially
That in his bed there dawneth him no day
That he n'is clad, and ready for to ride
With hunt and horn, and houndes him beside.
For in his hunting hath he such delight,
That it is all his joy and appetite
To be himself the greate harte's bane* *destruction
For after Mars he serveth now Diane.
Clear was the day, as I have told ere this,
And Theseus, with alle joy and bliss,
With his Hippolyta, the faire queen,
And Emily, y-clothed all in green,
On hunting be they ridden royally.
And to the grove, that stood there faste by,
In which there was an hart, as men him told,
Duke Theseus the straighte way doth hold,

And to the laund* he rideth him full right, *plain
There was the hart y-wont to have his flight,
And over a brook, and so forth on his way.
This Duke will have a course at him or tway
With houndes, such as him lust* to command. *pleased
And when this Duke was come to the laund,
Under the sun he looked, and anon
He was ware of Arcite and Palamon,
That foughte breme*, as it were bulles two. *fiercely
The brighte swordes wente to and fro
So hideously, that with the leaste stroke
It seemed that it woulde fell an oak,
But what they were, nothing yet he wote*. *knew
This Duke his courser with his spurres smote,
And at a start he was betwixt them two, *suddenly*
And pulled out a sword and cried, "Ho!
No more, on pain of losing of your head.
By mighty Mars, he shall anon be dead
That smiteth any stroke, that I may see!
But tell to me what mister* men ye be, *manner, kind
That be so hardy for to fighte here
Withoute judge or other officer,
As though it were in listes royally.
This Palamon answered hastily,
And saide: "Sir, what needeth wordes mo'?
We have the death deserved bothe two,
Two woful wretches be we, and caitives,
That be accumbered* of our own lives, *burdened
And as thou art a rightful lord and judge,
So give us neither mercy nor refuge.
And slay me first, for sainte charity,
But slay my fellow eke as well as me.
Or slay him first; for, though thou know it lite*, *little
This is thy mortal foe, this is Arcite
That from thy land is banisht on his head,
For which he hath deserved to be dead.
For this is he that came unto thy gate
And saide, that he highte Philostrate.
Thus hath he japed* thee full many year, *deceived

And thou hast made of him thy chief esquier;
And this is he, that loveth Emily.
For since the day is come that I shall die
I make pleinly* my confession, *fully, unreservedly
That I am thilke* woful Palamon, *that same
That hath thy prison broken wickedly.
I am thy mortal foe, and it am I
That so hot loveth Emily the bright,
That I would die here present in her sight.
Therefore I aske death and my jewise*. *judgement
But slay my fellow eke in the same wise,
For both we have deserved to be slain."

This worthy Duke answer'd anon again,
And said, "This is a short conclusion.
Your own mouth, by your own confession
Hath damned you, and I will it record;
It needeth not to pain you with the cord;
Ye shall be dead, by mighty Mars the Red.

The queen anon for very womanhead
Began to weep, and so did Emily,
And all the ladies in the company.
Great pity was it as it thought them all,
That ever such a chance should befall,
For gentle men they were, of great estate,
And nothing but for love was this debate
They saw their bloody woundes wide and sore,
And cried all at once, both less and more,
"Have mercy, Lord, upon us women all."
And on their bare knees adown they fall
And would have kissed his feet there as he stood,
Till at the last *aslaked was his mood* *his anger was
(For pity runneth soon in gentle heart); appeased*
And though at first for ire he quoke and start
He hath consider'd shortly in a clause
The trespass of them both, and eke the cause:
And although that his ire their guilt accused
Yet in his reason he them both excused;

As thus; he thoughte well that every man
Will help himself in love if that he can,
And eke deliver himself out of prison.
Of women, for they wepten ever-in-one:* *continually
And eke his hearte had compassion
And in his gentle heart he thought anon,
And soft unto himself he saide: "Fie
Upon a lord that will have no mercy,
But be a lion both in word and deed,
To them that be in repentance and dread,
As well as-to a proud dispiteous* man *unpitying
That will maintaine what he first began.
That lord hath little of discretion,
That in such case *can no division*: *can make no distinction*
But weigheth pride and humbless *after one*." *alike*
And shortly, when his ire is thus agone,
He gan to look on them with eyen light*, *gentle, lenient*
And spake these same wordes *all on height. aloud*

"The god of love, ah! benedicite*, *bless ye him
How mighty and how great a lord is he!
Against his might there gaine* none obstacles, *avail, conquer
He may be called a god for his miracles
For he can maken at his owen guise
Of every heart, as that him list devise.
Lo here this Arcite, and this Palamon,
That quietly were out of my prison,
And might have lived in Thebes royally,
And weet* I am their mortal enemy, *knew
And that their death li'th in my might also,
And yet hath love, *maugre their eyen two*, *in spite of their eyes*
Y-brought them hither bothe for to die.
Now look ye, is not this an high folly?
Who may not be a fool, if but he love?
Behold, for Godde's sake that sits above,
See how they bleed! be they not well array'd?
Thus hath their lord, the god of love, them paid
Their wages and their fees for their service;
And yet they weene for to be full wise,

That serve love, for aught that may befall.
But this is yet the beste game* of all, *joke
That she, for whom they have this jealousy,
Can them therefor as muchel thank as me.
She wot no more of all this *hote fare*, *hot behaviour*
By God, than wot a cuckoo or an hare.
But all must be assayed hot or cold;
A man must be a fool, or young or old;
I wot it by myself *full yore agone*: *long years ago*
For in my time a servant was I one.
And therefore since I know of love's pain,
And wot how sore it can a man distrain*, *distress
As he that oft hath been caught in his last*, *snare
I you forgive wholly this trespass,
At request of the queen that kneeleth here,
And eke of Emily, my sister dear.
And ye shall both anon unto me swear,
That never more ye shall my country dere* *injure
Nor make war upon me night nor day,
But be my friends in alle that ye may.
I you forgive this trespass *every deal*. *completely*
And they him sware *his asking* fair and well, *what he asked*
And him of lordship and of mercy pray'd,
And he them granted grace, and thus he said:

"To speak of royal lineage and richess,
Though that she were a queen or a princess,
Each of you both is worthy doubteless
To wedde when time is; but natheless
I speak as for my sister Emily,
For whom ye have this strife and jealousy,
Ye wot* yourselves, she may not wed the two *know
At once, although ye fight for evermo:
But one of you, *all be him loth or lief,* *whether or not he wishes*
He must *go pipe into an ivy leaf*: *"go whistle"*
This is to say, she may not have you both,
All be ye never so jealous, nor so wroth.
And therefore I you put in this degree,
That each of you shall have his destiny

As *him is shape*; and hearken in what wise *as is decreed for him*
Lo hear your end of that I shall devise.
My will is this, for plain conclusion
Withouten any replication*, *reply
If that you liketh, take it for the best,
That evereach of you shall go where *him lest*, *he pleases
Freely without ransom or danger;
And this day fifty weekes, *farre ne nerre*, *neither more nor less*
Evereach of you shall bring an hundred knights,
Armed for listes up at alle rights
All ready to darraine* her by bataille, *contend for
And this behete* I you withoute fail *promise
Upon my troth, and as I am a knight,
That whether of you bothe that hath might,
That is to say, that whether he or thou
May with his hundred, as I spake of now,
Slay his contrary, or out of listes drive,
Him shall I given Emily to wive,
To whom that fortune gives so fair a grace.
The listes shall I make here in this place.
And God so wisly on my soule rue, *may God as surely have
As I shall even judge be and true. mercy on my soul*
Ye shall none other ende with me maken
Than one of you shalle be dead or taken.
And if you thinketh this is well y-said,
Say your advice*, and hold yourselves apaid**. *opinion* *satisfied
This is your end, and your conclusion."
Who looketh lightly now but Palamon?
Who springeth up for joye but Arcite?
Who could it tell, or who could it indite,
The joye that is maked in the place
When Theseus hath done so fair a grace?
But down on knees went every *manner wight*, *kind of person*
And thanked him with all their heartes' might,
And namely* these Thebans *ofte sithe*. *especially* oftentimes*
And thus with good hope and with hearte blithe
They take their leave, and homeward gan they ride
To Thebes-ward, with his old walles wide.

I trow men woulde deem it negligence,
If I forgot to telle the dispence* *expenditure
Of Theseus, that went so busily
To maken up the listes royally,
That such a noble theatre as it was,
I dare well say, in all this world there n'as*. *was not
The circuit a mile was about,
Walled of stone, and ditched all without.
*Round was the shape, in manner of compass,
Full of degrees, the height of sixty pas* *see note*
That when a man was set on one degree
He letted* not his fellow for to see. *hindered
Eastward there stood a gate of marble white,
Westward right such another opposite.
And, shortly to conclude, such a place
Was never on earth made in so little space,
For in the land there was no craftes-man,
That geometry or arsmetrike* can**, *arithmetic* *knew
Nor pourtrayor*, nor carver of images, *portrait painter
That Theseus ne gave him meat and wages
The theatre to make and to devise.
And for to do his rite and sacrifice
He eastward hath upon the gate above,
In worship of Venus, goddess of love,
Done make an altar and an oratory; *caused to be made*
And westward, in the mind and in memory
Of Mars, he maked hath right such another,
That coste largely of gold a fother*. *a great amount
And northward, in a turret on the wall,
Of alabaster white and red coral
An oratory riche for to see,
In worship of Diane of chastity,
Hath Theseus done work in noble wise.
But yet had I forgotten to devise* *describe
The noble carving, and the portraitures,
The shape, the countenance of the figures
That weren in there oratories three.

First in the temple of Venus may'st thou see

Wrought on the wall, full piteous to behold,
The broken sleepes, and the sikes* cold, *sighes
The sacred teares, and the waimentings*, *lamentings
The fiery strokes of the desirings,
That Love's servants in this life endure;
The oathes, that their covenants assure.
Pleasance and Hope, Desire, Foolhardiness,
Beauty and Youth, and Bawdry and Richess,
Charms and Sorc'ry, Leasings* and Flattery, *falsehoods
Dispence, Business, and Jealousy,
That wore of yellow goldes* a garland, *sunflowers
And had a cuckoo sitting on her hand,
Feasts, instruments, and caroles and dances,
Lust and array, and all the circumstances
Of Love, which I reckon'd and reckon shall
In order, were painted on the wall,
And more than I can make of mention.
For soothly all the mount of Citheron,
Where Venus hath her principal dwelling,
Was showed on the wall in pourtraying,
With all the garden, and the lustiness*. *pleasantness
Nor was forgot the porter Idleness,
Nor Narcissus the fair of *yore agone*, *olden times*
Nor yet the folly of King Solomon,
Nor yet the greate strength of Hercules,
Th' enchantments of Medea and Circes,
Nor of Turnus the hardy fierce courage,
The rich Croesus *caitif in servage. abased into slavery*
Thus may ye see, that wisdom nor richess,
Beauty, nor sleight, nor strength, nor hardiness
Ne may with Venus holde champartie*, *divided possession
For as her liste the world may she gie*. *guide
Lo, all these folk so caught were in her las* *snare
Till they for woe full often said, Alas!
Suffice these ensamples one or two,
Although I could reckon a thousand mo'.

The statue of Venus, glorious to see
Was naked floating in the large sea,

And from the navel down all cover'd was
With waves green, and bright as any glass.
A citole in her right hand hadde she,
And on her head, full seemly for to see,
A rose garland fresh, and well smelling,
Above her head her doves flickering
Before her stood her sone Cupido,
Upon his shoulders winges had he two;
And blind he was, as it is often seen;
A bow he bare, and arrows bright and keen.

Why should I not as well eke tell you all
The portraiture, that was upon the wall
Within the temple of mighty Mars the Red?
All painted was the wall in length and brede* *breadth
Like to the estres* of the grisly place *interior chambers
That hight the great temple of Mars in Thrace,
In thilke* cold and frosty region, *that
There as Mars hath his sovereign mansion.
In which there dwelled neither man nor beast,
With knotty gnarry* barren trees old *gnarled
Of stubbes sharp and hideous to behold;
In which there ran a rumble and a sough*, *groaning noise
As though a storm should bursten every bough:
And downward from an hill under a bent* *slope
There stood the temple of Mars Armipotent,
Wrought all of burnish'd steel, of which th' entry
Was long and strait, and ghastly for to see.
And thereout came *a rage and such a vise*, *such a furious voice*
That it made all the gates for to rise.
The northern light in at the doore shone,
For window on the walle was there none
Through which men mighten any light discern.
The doors were all of adamant etern,
Y-clenched *overthwart and endelong crossways and lengthways*
With iron tough, and, for to make it strong,
Every pillar the temple to sustain
Was tunne-great*, of iron bright and sheen. *thick as a tun (barrel)
There saw I first the dark imagining

Of felony, and all the compassing;
The cruel ire, as red as any glede*, *live coal
The picke-purse, and eke the pale dread;
The smiler with the knife under the cloak,
The shepen* burning with the blacke smoke *stable
The treason of the murd'ring in the bed,
The open war, with woundes all be-bled;
Conteke* with bloody knife, and sharp menace. *contention, discord
All full of chirking* was that sorry place. *creaking, jarring noise
The slayer of himself eke saw I there,
His hearte-blood had bathed all his hair:
The nail y-driven in the shode* at night, *hair of the head
The colde death, with mouth gaping upright.
Amiddes of the temple sat Mischance,
With discomfort and sorry countenance;
Eke saw I Woodness* laughing in his rage, *Madness
Armed Complaint, Outhees*, and fierce Outrage; *Outcry
The carrain* in the bush, with throat y-corve**, *corpse* *slashed
A thousand slain, and not *of qualm y-storve*; *dead of sickness*
The tyrant, with the prey by force y-reft;
The town destroy'd, that there was nothing left.
Yet saw I brent* the shippes hoppesteres, *burnt
The hunter strangled with the wilde bears:
The sow freting* the child right in the cradle; *devouring
The cook scalded, for all his longe ladle.
Nor was forgot, *by th'infortune of Mart* *through the misfortune
The carter overridden with his cart; of war*
Under the wheel full low he lay adown.
There were also of Mars' division,
The armourer, the bowyer*, and the smith, *maker of bows
That forgeth sharp swordes on his stith*. *anvil
And all above depainted in a tower
Saw I Conquest, sitting in great honour,
With thilke* sharpe sword over his head *that
Hanging by a subtle y-twined thread.
Painted the slaughter was of Julius,
Of cruel Nero, and Antonius:
Although at that time they were yet unborn,
Yet was their death depainted there beforn,

By menacing of Mars, right by figure,
So was it showed in that portraiture,
As is depainted in the stars above,
Who shall be slain, or elles dead for love.
Sufficeth one ensample in stories old,
I may not reckon them all, though I wo'ld.

The statue of Mars upon a carte* stood *chariot
Armed, and looked grim as he were wood*, *mad
And over his head there shone two figures
Of starres, that be cleped in scriptures,
That one Puella, that other Rubeus.
This god of armes was arrayed thus:
A wolf there stood before him at his feet
With eyen red, and of a man he eat:
With subtle pencil painted was this story,
In redouting* of Mars and of his glory. *reverance, fear

Now to the temple of Dian the chaste
As shortly as I can I will me haste,
To telle you all the descriptioun.
Depainted be the walles up and down
Of hunting and of shamefast chastity.
There saw I how woful Calistope,
When that Dian aggrieved was with her,
Was turned from a woman to a bear,
And after was she made the lodestar*: *pole star
Thus was it painted, I can say no far*; *farther
Her son is eke a star as men may see.
There saw I Dane turn'd into a tree,
I meane not the goddess Diane,
But Peneus' daughter, which that hight Dane.
There saw I Actaeon an hart y-maked*, *made
For vengeance that he saw Dian all naked:
I saw how that his houndes have him caught,
And freten* him, for that they knew him not. *devour
Yet painted was, a little farthermore
How Atalanta hunted the wild boar;
And Meleager, and many other mo',

For which Diana wrought them care and woe.
There saw I many another wondrous story,
The which me list not drawen to memory.
This goddess on an hart full high was set*, *seated
With smalle houndes all about her feet,
And underneath her feet she had a moon,
Waxing it was, and shoulde wane soon.
In gaudy green her statue clothed was,
With bow in hand, and arrows in a case*. *quiver
Her eyen caste she full low adown,
Where Pluto hath his darke regioun.
A woman travailing was her beforn,
But, for her child so longe was unborn,
Full piteously Lucina gan she call,
And saide; "Help, for thou may'st best of all."
Well could he painte lifelike that it wrought;
With many a florin he the hues had bought.
Now be these listes made, and Theseus,
That at his greate cost arrayed thus
The temples, and the theatre every deal*, *part
When it was done, him liked wonder well.

But stint* I will of Theseus a lite**, *cease speaking* *little
And speak of Palamon and of Arcite.
The day approacheth of their returning,
That evereach an hundred knights should bring,
The battle to darraine* as I you told; *contest
And to Athens, their covenant to hold,
Hath ev'reach of them brought an hundred knights,
Well-armed for the war at alle rights.
And sickerly* there trowed** many a man, *surely **believed
That never, sithen* that the world began, *since
For to speaken of knighthood of their hand,
As far as God hath maked sea and land,
Was, of so few, so noble a company.
For every wight that loved chivalry,
And would, *his thankes, have a passant name*, *thanks to his own
Had prayed, that he might be of that game, efforts, have a
And well was him, that thereto chosen was. surpassing name*

For if there fell to-morrow such a case,
Ye knowe well, that every lusty knight,
That loveth par amour, and hath his might
Were it in Engleland, or elleswhere,
They would, their thankes, willen to be there,
T' fight for a lady; Benedicite,
It were a lusty* sighte for to see. *pleasing
And right so fared they with Palamon;
With him there wente knightes many one.
Some will be armed in an habergeon,
And in a breast-plate, and in a gipon*; *short doublet.
And some will have *a pair of plates* large; *back and front armour*
And some will have a Prusse* shield, or targe; *Prussian
Some will be armed on their legges weel;
Some have an axe, and some a mace of steel.
There is no newe guise*, but it was old. *fashion
Armed they weren, as I have you told,
Evereach after his opinion.
There may'st thou see coming with Palamon
Licurgus himself, the great king of Thrace:
Black was his beard, and manly was his face.
The circles of his eyen in his head
They glowed betwixte yellow and red,
And like a griffin looked he about,
With kemped* haires on his browes stout; *combed
His limbs were great, his brawns were hard and strong,
His shoulders broad, his armes round and long.
And as the guise* was in his country, *fashion
Full high upon a car of gold stood he,
With foure white bulles in the trace.
Instead of coat-armour on his harness,
With yellow nails, and bright as any gold,
He had a beare's skin, coal-black for old*. *age
His long hair was y-kempt behind his back,
As any raven's feather it shone for black.
A wreath of gold *arm-great*, of huge weight, *thick as a man's arm*
Upon his head sate, full of stones bright,
Of fine rubies and clear diamants.
About his car there wente white alauns*, *greyhounds

Twenty and more, as great as any steer,
To hunt the lion or the wilde bear,
And follow'd him, with muzzle fast y-bound,
Collars of gold, and torettes* filed round. *rings
An hundred lordes had he in his rout* *retinue
Armed full well, with heartes stern and stout.

With Arcita, in stories as men find,
The great Emetrius the king of Ind,
Upon a *steede bay* trapped in steel, *bay horse*
Cover'd with cloth of gold diapred* well, *decorated
Came riding like the god of armes, Mars.
His coat-armour was of *a cloth of Tars*, *a kind of silk*
Couched* with pearls white and round and great *trimmed
His saddle was of burnish'd gold new beat;
A mantelet on his shoulders hanging,
Bretful* of rubies red, as fire sparkling. *brimful
His crispe hair like ringes was y-run,
And that was yellow, glittering as the sun.
His nose was high, his eyen bright citrine*, *pale yellow
His lips were round, his colour was sanguine,
A fewe fracknes* in his face y-sprent**, *freckles* *sprinkled
Betwixte yellow and black somedeal y-ment* *mixed
And as a lion he *his looking cast* *cast about his eyes*
Of five and twenty year his age I cast* *reckon
His beard was well begunnen for to spring;
His voice was as a trumpet thundering.
Upon his head he wore of laurel green
A garland fresh and lusty to be seen;
Upon his hand he bare, for his delight,
An eagle tame, as any lily white.
An hundred lordes had he with him there,
All armed, save their heads, in all their gear,
Full richely in alle manner things.
For trust ye well, that earles, dukes, and kings
Were gather'd in this noble company,
For love, and for increase of chivalry.
About this king there ran on every part
Full many a tame lion and leopart.

And in this wise these lordes *all and some* *all and sundry*
Be on the Sunday to the city come
Aboute prime, and in the town alight.

This Theseus, this Duke, this worthy knight
When he had brought them into his city,
And inned* them, ev'reach at his degree, *lodged
He feasteth them, and doth so great labour
To *easen them*, and do them all honour, *make them comfortable*
That yet men weene* that no mannes wit *think
Of none estate could amenden* it. *improve
The minstrelsy, the service at the feast,
The greate giftes to the most and least,
The rich array of Theseus' palace,
Nor who sate first or last upon the dais.
What ladies fairest be, or best dancing
Or which of them can carol best or sing,
Or who most feelingly speaketh of love;
What hawkes sitten on the perch above,
What houndes liggen* on the floor adown, *lie
Of all this now make I no mentioun
But of th'effect; that thinketh me the best
Now comes the point, and hearken if you lest.* *please

The Sunday night, ere day began to spring,
When Palamon the larke hearde sing,
Although it were not day by houres two,
Yet sang the lark, and Palamon right tho* *then
With holy heart, and with an high courage,
Arose, to wenden* on his pilgrimage *go
Unto the blissful Cithera benign,
I meane Venus, honourable and digne*. *worthy
And in her hour he walketh forth a pace
Unto the listes, where her temple was,
And down he kneeleth, and with humble cheer* *demeanour
And hearte sore, he said as ye shall hear.

"Fairest of fair, O lady mine Venus,
Daughter to Jove, and spouse of Vulcanus,

Thou gladder of the mount of Citheron!
For thilke love thou haddest to Adon
Have pity on my bitter teares smart,
And take mine humble prayer to thine heart.
Alas! I have no language to tell
Th'effecte, nor the torment of mine hell;
Mine hearte may mine harmes not betray;
I am so confused, that I cannot say.
But mercy, lady bright, that knowest well
My thought, and seest what harm that I feel.
Consider all this, and *rue upon* my sore, *take pity on*
As wisly* as I shall for evermore *truly
Enforce my might, thy true servant to be,
And holde war alway with chastity:
That make I mine avow*, so ye me help. *vow, promise
I keepe not of armes for to yelp,* *boast
Nor ask I not to-morrow to have victory,
Nor renown in this case, nor vaine glory
Of *prize of armes*, blowing up and down, *praise for valour*
But I would have fully possessioun
Of Emily, and die in her service;
Find thou the manner how, and in what wise.
I *recke not but* it may better be *do not know whether*
To have vict'ry of them, or they of me,
So that I have my lady in mine arms.
For though so be that Mars is god of arms,
Your virtue is so great in heaven above,
That, if you list, I shall well have my love.
Thy temple will I worship evermo',
And on thine altar, where I ride or go,
I will do sacrifice, and fires bete*. *make, kindle
And if ye will not so, my lady sweet,
Then pray I you, to-morrow with a spear
That Arcita me through the hearte bear
Then reck I not, when I have lost my life,
Though that Arcita win her to his wife.
This is th' effect and end of my prayere, —
Give me my love, thou blissful lady dear."
When th' orison was done of Palamon,

His sacrifice he did, and that anon,
Full piteously, with alle circumstances,
All tell I not as now his observances. *although I tell not now*
But at the last the statue of Venus shook,
And made a signe, whereby that he took
That his prayer accepted was that day.
For though the signe shewed a delay,
Yet wist he well that granted was his boon;
And with glad heart he went him home full soon.

The third hour unequal that Palamon
Began to Venus' temple for to gon,
Up rose the sun, and up rose Emily,
And to the temple of Dian gan hie.
Her maidens, that she thither with her lad*, *led
Th' incense, the clothes, and the remnant all
That to the sacrifice belonge shall,
The hornes full of mead, as was the guise;
There lacked nought to do her sacrifice.
Smoking* the temple full of clothes fair, *draping
This Emily with hearte debonnair* *gentle
Her body wash'd with water of a well.
But how she did her rite I dare not tell;
But* it be any thing in general; *unless
And yet it were a game* to hearen all *pleasure
To him that meaneth well it were no charge:
But it is good a man to *be at large*. *do as he will*
Her bright hair combed was, untressed all.
A coronet of green oak cerriall
Upon her head was set full fair and meet.
Two fires on the altar gan she bete,
And did her thinges, as men may behold
In Stace of Thebes , and these bookes old.
When kindled was the fire, with piteous cheer
Unto Dian she spake as ye may hear.

"O chaste goddess of the woodes green,
To whom both heav'n and earth and sea is seen,
Queen of the realm of Pluto dark and low,

Goddess of maidens, that mine heart hast know
Full many a year, and wost* what I desire, *knowest
To keep me from the vengeance of thine ire,
That Actaeon aboughte* cruelly: *earned; suffered from
Chaste goddess, well wottest thou that I
Desire to be a maiden all my life,
Nor never will I be no love nor wife.
I am, thou wost*, yet of thy company, *knowest
A maid, and love hunting and venery*, *field sports
And for to walken in the woodes wild,
And not to be a wife, and be with child.
Nought will I know the company of man.
Now help me, lady, since ye may and can,
For those three formes that thou hast in thee.
And Palamon, that hath such love to me,
And eke Arcite, that loveth me so sore,
This grace I pray thee withoute more,
As sende love and peace betwixt them two:
And from me turn away their heartes so,
That all their hote love, and their desire,
And all their busy torment, and their fire,
Be queint*, or turn'd into another place. *quenched
And if so be thou wilt do me no grace,
Or if my destiny be shapen so
That I shall needes have one of them two,
So send me him that most desireth me.
Behold, goddess of cleane chastity,
The bitter tears that on my cheekes fall.
Since thou art maid, and keeper of us all,
My maidenhead thou keep and well conserve,
And, while I live, a maid I will thee serve.

The fires burn upon the altar clear,
While Emily was thus in her prayere:
But suddenly she saw a sighte quaint*. *strange
For right anon one of the fire's *queint
And quick'd* again, and after that anon *went out and revived*
That other fire was queint, and all agone:
And as it queint, it made a whisteling,

As doth a brande wet in its burning.
And at the brandes end outran anon
As it were bloody droppes many one:
For which so sore aghast was Emily,
That she was wellnigh mad, and gan to cry,
For she ne wiste what it signified;
But onely for feare thus she cried,
And wept, that it was pity for to hear.
And therewithal Diana gan appear
With bow in hand, right as an hunteress,
And saide; "Daughter, stint* thine heaviness. *cease
Among the goddes high it is affirm'd,
And by eternal word writ and confirm'd,
Thou shalt be wedded unto one of tho* *those
That have for thee so muche care and woe:
But unto which of them I may not tell.
Farewell, for here I may no longer dwell.
The fires which that on mine altar brenn*, *burn
Shall thee declaren, ere that thou go henne*, *hence
Thine aventure of love, as in this case."
And with that word, the arrows in the case* *quiver
Of the goddess did clatter fast and ring,
And forth she went, and made a vanishing,
For which this Emily astonied was,
And saide; "What amounteth this, alas!
I put me under thy protection,
Diane, and in thy disposition."
And home she went anon the nexte* way. *nearest
This is th' effect, there is no more to say.

The nexte hour of Mars following this
Arcite to the temple walked is
Of fierce Mars, to do his sacrifice
With all the rites of his pagan guise.
With piteous* heart and high devotion *pious
Right thus to Mars he said his orison
"O stronge god, that in the regnes* old *realms
Of Thrace honoured art, and lord y-hold* *held
And hast in every regne, and every land

Of armes all the bridle in thine hand,
And *them fortunest as thee list devise*, *send them fortune
Accept of me my piteous sacrifice. as you please*
If so be that my youthe may deserve,
And that my might be worthy for to serve
Thy godhead, that I may be one of thine,
Then pray I thee to *rue upon my pine, pity my anguish*
For thilke* pain, and thilke hote fire, *that
In which thou whilom burned'st for desire
Whenne that thou usedest* the beauty *enjoyed
Of faire young Venus, fresh and free,
And haddest her in armes at thy will:
And though thee ones on a time misfill*, *were unlucky
When Vulcanus had caught thee in his las*, *net
And found thee ligging* by his wife, alas! *lying
For thilke sorrow that was in thine heart,
Have ruth* as well upon my paine's smart. *pity
I am young and unconning*, as thou know'st, *ignorant, simple
And, as I trow*, with love offended most *believe
That e'er was any living creature:
For she, that doth* me all this woe endure, *causes
Ne recketh ne'er whether I sink or fleet* *swim
And well I wot, ere she me mercy hete*, *promise, vouchsafe
I must with strengthe win her in the place:
And well I wot, withoute help or grace
Of thee, ne may my strengthe not avail:
Then help me, lord, to-morr'w in my bataille,
For thilke fire that whilom burned thee,
As well as this fire that now burneth me;
And do* that I to-morr'w may have victory. *cause
Mine be the travail, all thine be the glory.
Thy sovereign temple will I most honour
Of any place, and alway most labour
In thy pleasance and in thy craftes strong.
And in thy temple I will my banner hong*, *hang
And all the armes of my company,
And evermore, until that day I die,
Eternal fire I will before thee find
And eke to this my vow I will me bind:

My beard, my hair that hangeth long adown,
That never yet hath felt offension* *indignity
Of razor nor of shears, I will thee give,
And be thy true servant while I live.
Now, lord, have ruth upon my sorrows sore,
Give me the victory, I ask no more."

The prayer stint* of Arcita the strong, *ended
The ringes on the temple door that hong,
And eke the doores, clattered full fast,
Of which Arcita somewhat was aghast.
The fires burn'd upon the altar bright,
That it gan all the temple for to light;
A sweete smell anon the ground up gaf*, *gave
And Arcita anon his hand up haf*, *lifted
And more incense into the fire he cast,
With other rites more and at the last
The statue of Mars began his hauberk ring;
And with that sound he heard a murmuring
Full low and dim, that saide thus, "Victory."
For which he gave to Mars honour and glory.
And thus with joy, and hope well to fare,
Arcite anon unto his inn doth fare.
As fain* as fowl is of the brighte sun. *glad

And right anon such strife there is begun
For thilke* granting, in the heav'n above, *that
Betwixte Venus the goddess of love,
And Mars the sterne god armipotent,
That Jupiter was busy it to stent*: *stop
Till that the pale Saturnus the cold,
That knew so many of adventures old,
Found in his old experience such an art,
That he full soon hath pleased every part.
As sooth is said, eld* hath great advantage, *age
In eld is bothe wisdom and usage*: *experience
Men may the old out-run, but not out-rede*. *outwit
Saturn anon, to stint the strife and drede,
Albeit that it is against his kind,* *nature

Of all this strife gan a remedy find.
"My deare daughter Venus," quoth Saturn,
"My course*, that hath so wide for to turn, *orbit
Hath more power than wot any man.
Mine is the drowning in the sea so wan;
Mine is the prison in the darke cote*, *cell
Mine the strangling and hanging by the throat,
The murmur, and the churlish rebelling,
The groyning*, and the privy poisoning. *discontent
I do vengeance and plein* correction, *full
I dwell in the sign of the lion.
Mine is the ruin of the highe halls,
The falling of the towers and the walls
Upon the miner or the carpenter:
I slew Samson in shaking the pillar:
Mine also be the maladies cold,
The darke treasons, and the castes* old: *plots
My looking is the father of pestilence.
Now weep no more, I shall do diligence
That Palamon, that is thine owen knight,
Shall have his lady, as thou hast him hight*. *promised
Though Mars shall help his knight, yet natheless
Betwixte you there must sometime be peace:
All be ye not of one complexion,
That each day causeth such division,
I am thine ayel*, ready at thy will; *grandfather
Weep now no more, I shall thy lust* fulfil." *pleasure
Now will I stenten* of the gods above, *cease speaking
Of Mars, and of Venus, goddess of love,
And telle you as plainly as I can
The great effect, for which that I began.

Great was the feast in Athens thilke* day; *that
And eke the lusty season of that May
Made every wight to be in such pleasance,
That all that Monday jousten they and dance,
And spenden it in Venus' high service.
But by the cause that they shoulde rise
Early a-morrow for to see that fight,

Unto their reste wente they at night.
And on the morrow, when the day gan spring,
Of horse and harness* noise and clattering *armour
There was in the hostelries all about:
And to the palace rode there many a rout* *train, retinue
Of lordes, upon steedes and palfreys.
There mayst thou see devising* of harness *decoration
So uncouth* and so rich, and wrought so weel *unkown, rare
Of goldsmithry, of brouding*, and of steel; *embroidery
The shieldes bright, the testers*, and trappures** *helmets
Gold-hewen helmets, hauberks, coat-armures; **trappings
Lordes in parements* on their coursers, *ornamental garb ;
Knightes of retinue, and eke squiers,
Nailing the spears, and helmes buckeling,
Gniding* of shieldes, with lainers** lacing; *polishing
There as need is, they were nothing idle: **lanyards
The foamy steeds upon the golden bridle
Gnawing, and fast the armourers also
With file and hammer pricking to and fro;
Yeomen on foot, and knaves* many one *servants
With shorte staves, thick* as they may gon**; *close* *walk
Pipes, trumpets, nakeres*, and clariouns, *drums
That in the battle blowe bloody souns;
The palace full of people up and down,
There three, there ten, holding their questioun*, *conversation
Divining* of these Theban knightes two. *conjecturing
Some saiden thus, some said it shall he so;
Some helden with him with the blacke beard,
Some with the bald, some with the thick-hair'd;
Some said he looked grim, and woulde fight:
He had a sparth* of twenty pound of weight. *double-headed axe
Thus was the halle full of divining* *conjecturing
Long after that the sunne gan up spring.
The great Theseus that of his sleep is waked
With minstrelsy, and noise that was maked,
Held yet the chamber of his palace rich,
Till that the Theban knightes both y-lich* *alike
Honoured were, and to the palace fet*. *fetched
Duke Theseus is at a window set,

Array'd right as he were a god in throne:
The people presseth thitherward full soon
Him for to see, and do him reverence,
And eke to hearken his hest* and his sentence**. *command* *speech
An herald on a scaffold made an O,
Till the noise of the people was y-do*: *done
And when he saw the people of noise all still,
Thus shewed he the mighty Duke's will.
"The lord hath of his high discretion
Considered that it were destruction
To gentle blood, to fighten in the guise
Of mortal battle now in this emprise:
Wherefore to shape* that they shall not die, *arrange, contrive
He will his firste purpose modify.
No man therefore, on pain of loss of life,
No manner* shot, nor poleaxe, nor short knife *kind of
Into the lists shall send, or thither bring.
Nor short sword for to stick with point biting
No man shall draw, nor bear it by his side.
And no man shall unto his fellow ride
But one course, with a sharp y-grounden spear:
*Foin if him list on foot, himself to wear. *He who wishes can
And he that is at mischief shall be take*, fence on foot to defend
And not slain, but be brought unto the stake, himself, and he that
That shall be ordained on either side; is in peril shall be taken*
Thither he shall by force, and there abide.
And if *so fall* the chiefetain be take *should happen*
On either side, or elles slay his make*, *equal, match
No longer then the tourneying shall last.
God speede you; go forth and lay on fast.
With long sword and with mace fight your fill.
Go now your way; this is the lordes will.
The voice of the people touched the heaven,
So loude cried they with merry steven*: *sound
God save such a lord that is so good,
He willeth no destruction of blood.

Up go the trumpets and the melody,
And to the listes rode the company

By ordinance, throughout the city large, *in orderly array*
Hanged with cloth of gold, and not with sarge*. *serge
Full like a lord this noble Duke gan ride,
And these two Thebans upon either side:

And after rode the queen and Emily,
And after them another company
Of one and other, after their degree.
And thus they passed thorough that city
And to the listes came they by time:
It was not of the day yet fully prime*. *between 6 & 9 a.m.
When set was Theseus full rich and high,
Hippolyta the queen and Emily,
And other ladies in their degrees about,
Unto the seates presseth all the rout.
And westward, through the gates under Mart,
Arcite, and eke the hundred of his part,
With banner red, is enter'd right anon;
And in the selve* moment Palamon *self-same
Is, under Venus, eastward in the place,
With banner white, and hardy cheer* and face *expression
In all the world, to seeken up and down
So even* without variatioun *equal
There were such companies never tway.
For there was none so wise that coulde say
That any had of other avantage
Of worthiness, nor of estate, nor age,
So even were they chosen for to guess.
And *in two ranges faire they them dress*. *they arranged themselves
When that their names read were every one, in two rows*
That in their number guile* were there none, *fraud
Then were the gates shut, and cried was loud;
"Do now your devoir, younge knights proud
The heralds left their pricking* up and down *spurring their horses
Now ring the trumpet loud and clarioun.
There is no more to say, but east and west
In go the speares sadly* in the rest; *steadily
In go the sharpe spurs into the side.
There see me who can joust, and who can ride.

There shiver shaftes upon shieldes thick;
He feeleth through the hearte-spoon the prick.
Up spring the speares twenty foot on height;
Out go the swordes as the silver bright.
The helmes they to-hewen, and to-shred*; *strike in pieces
Out burst the blood, with sterne streames red.
With mighty maces the bones they to-brest*. *burst
He through the thickest of the throng gan threst*. *thrust
There stumble steedes strong, and down go all.
He rolleth under foot as doth a ball.
He foineth* on his foe with a trunchoun, *forces himself
And he him hurtleth with his horse adown.
He through the body hurt is, and *sith take*, *afterwards captured*
Maugre his head, and brought unto the stake,
As forword* was, right there he must abide. *covenant
Another led is on that other side.
And sometime doth* them Theseus to rest, *caused
Them to refresh, and drinken if them lest*. *pleased
Full oft a day have thilke Thebans two *these
Together met and wrought each other woe:
Unhorsed hath each other of them tway* *twice
There is no tiger in the vale of Galaphay,
When that her whelp is stole, when it is lite* *little
So cruel on the hunter, as Arcite
For jealous heart upon this Palamon:
Nor in Belmarie there is no fell lion,
That hunted is, or for his hunger wood* *mad
Or for his prey desireth so the blood,
As Palamon to slay his foe Arcite.
The jealous strokes upon their helmets bite;
Out runneth blood on both their sides red,
Sometime an end there is of every deed
For ere the sun unto the reste went,
The stronge king Emetrius gan hent* *sieze, assail
This Palamon, as he fought with Arcite,
And made his sword deep in his flesh to bite,
And by the force of twenty is he take,
Unyielding, and is drawn unto the stake.
And in the rescue of this Palamon

The stronge king Licurgus is borne down:
And king Emetrius, for all his strength
Is borne out of his saddle a sword's length,
So hit him Palamon ere he were take:
But all for nought; he was brought to the stake:
His hardy hearte might him helpe naught,
He must abide when that he was caught,
By force, and eke by composition*. *the bargain
Who sorroweth now but woful Palamon
That must no more go again to fight?
And when that Theseus had seen that sight
Unto the folk that foughte thus each one,
He cried, Ho! no more, for it is done!
I will be true judge, and not party.
Arcite of Thebes shall have Emily,
That by his fortune hath her fairly won."
Anon there is a noise of people gone,
For joy of this, so loud and high withal,
It seemed that the listes shoulde fall.

What can now faire Venus do above?
What saith she now? what doth this queen of love?
But weepeth so, for wanting of her will,
Till that her teares in the listes fill* *fall
She said: "I am ashamed doubteless."
Saturnus saide: "Daughter, hold thy peace.
Mars hath his will, his knight hath all his boon,
And by mine head thou shalt be eased soon."
The trumpeters with the loud minstrelsy,
The heralds, that full loude yell and cry,
Be in their joy for weal of Dan* Arcite. *Lord
But hearken me, and stinte noise a lite,
What a miracle there befell anon
This fierce Arcite hath off his helm y-done,
And on a courser for to shew his face
He *pricketh endelong* the large place, *rides from end to end*
Looking upward upon this Emily;
And she again him cast a friendly eye
(For women, as to speaken *in commune, generally*

They follow all the favour of fortune),
And was all his in cheer*, as his in heart. *countenance
Out of the ground a fire infernal start,
From Pluto sent, at request of Saturn
For which his horse for fear began to turn,
And leap aside, and founder* as he leap *stumble
And ere that Arcite may take any keep*, *care
He pight* him on the pummel** of his head. *pitched* *top
That in the place he lay as he were dead.
His breast to-bursten with his saddle-bow.
As black he lay as any coal or crow,
So was the blood y-run into his face.
Anon he was y-borne out of the place
With hearte sore, to Theseus' palace.
Then was he carven* out of his harness. *cut
And in a bed y-brought full fair and blive* *quickly
For he was yet in mem'ry and alive,
And always crying after Emily.

Duke Theseus, with all his company,
Is come home to Athens his city,
With alle bliss and great solemnity.
Albeit that this aventure was fall*, *befallen
He woulde not discomforte* them all *discourage
Then said eke, that Arcite should not die,
He should be healed of his malady.
And of another thing they were as fain*. *glad
That of them alle was there no one slain,
All* were they sorely hurt, and namely** one, *although* *especially
That with a spear was thirled* his breast-bone. *pierced
To other woundes, and to broken arms,
Some hadden salves, and some hadden charms:
And pharmacies of herbs, and eke save* *sage, Salvia officinalis
They dranken, for they would their lives have.
For which this noble Duke, as he well can,
Comforteth and honoureth every man,
And made revel all the longe night,
Unto the strange lordes, as was right.
Nor there was holden no discomforting,

But as at jousts or at a tourneying;
For soothly there was no discomfiture,
For falling is not but an aventure*. *chance, accident
Nor to be led by force unto a stake
Unyielding, and with twenty knights y-take
One person all alone, withouten mo',
And harried* forth by armes, foot, and toe, *dragged, hurried
And eke his steede driven forth with staves,
With footmen, bothe yeomen and eke knaves*, *servants
It was *aretted him no villainy:* *counted no disgrace to him*
There may no man *clepen it cowardy. call it cowardice*
For which anon Duke Theseus *let cry, — caused to be proclaimed*
To stenten* alle rancour and envy, — *stop
The gree* as well on one side as the other, *prize, merit
And either side alike as other's brother:
And gave them giftes after their degree,
And held a feaste fully dayes three:
And conveyed the kinges worthily
Out of his town a journee* largely *day's journey
And home went every man the righte way,
There was no more but "Farewell, Have good day."
Of this bataille I will no more indite
But speak of Palamon and of Arcite.

Swelleth the breast of Arcite and the sore
Increaseth at his hearte more and more.
The clotted blood, for any leache-craft* *surgical skill
Corrupteth and is *in his bouk y-laft* *left in his body*
That neither *veine blood nor ventousing, blood-letting or cupping*
Nor drink of herbes may be his helping.
The virtue expulsive or animal,
From thilke virtue called natural,
Nor may the venom voide, nor expel
The pipes of his lungs began to swell
And every lacert* in his breast adown *sinew, muscle
Is shent* with venom and corruption. *destroyed
Him gaineth* neither, for to get his life, *availeth
Vomit upward, nor downward laxative;
All is to-bursten thilke region;

Nature hath now no domination.
And certainly where nature will not wirch,* *work
Farewell physic: go bear the man to chirch.* *church
This all and some is, Arcite must die.
For which he sendeth after Emily,
And Palamon, that was his cousin dear,
Then said he thus, as ye shall after hear.

"Nought may the woful spirit in mine heart
Declare one point of all my sorrows' smart
To you, my lady, that I love the most:
But I bequeath the service of my ghost
To you aboven every creature,
Since that my life ne may no longer dure.
Alas the woe! alas, the paines strong
That I for you have suffered and so long!
Alas the death, alas, mine Emily!
Alas departing* of our company! *the severance
Alas, mine hearte's queen! alas, my wife!
Mine hearte's lady, ender of my life!
What is this world? what aske men to have?
Now with his love, now in his colde grave
Al one, withouten any company.
Farewell, my sweet, farewell, mine Emily,
And softly take me in your armes tway,
For love of God, and hearken what I say.
I have here with my cousin Palamon
Had strife and rancour many a day agone,
For love of you, and for my jealousy.
And Jupiter so *wis my soule gie*, *surely guides my soul*
To speaken of a servant properly,
With alle circumstances truely,
That is to say, truth, honour, and knighthead,
Wisdom, humbless*, estate, and high kindred, *humility
Freedom, and all that longeth to that art,
So Jupiter have of my soul part,
As in this world right now I know not one,
So worthy to be lov'd as Palamon,
That serveth you, and will do all his life.

And if that you shall ever be a wife,
Forget not Palamon, the gentle man."

And with that word his speech to fail began.
For from his feet up to his breast was come
The cold of death, that had him overnome*. *overcome
And yet moreover in his armes two
The vital strength is lost, and all ago*. *gone
Only the intellect, withoute more,
That dwelled in his hearte sick and sore,
Gan faile, when the hearte felte death;
Dusked* his eyen two, and fail'd his breath. *grew dim
But on his lady yet he cast his eye;
His laste word was; "Mercy, Emily!"
His spirit changed house, and wente there,
As I came never I cannot telle where.
Therefore I stent*, I am no divinister**; *refrain* *diviner
Of soules find I nought in this register.
Ne me list not th' opinions to tell
Of them, though that they writen where they dwell;
Arcite is cold, there Mars his soule gie.* *guide
Now will I speake forth of Emily.

Shriek'd Emily, and howled Palamon,
And Theseus his sister took anon
Swooning, and bare her from the corpse away.
What helpeth it to tarry forth the day,
To telle how she wept both eve and morrow?
For in such cases women have such sorrow,
When that their husbands be from them y-go*, *gone
That for the more part they sorrow so,
Or elles fall into such malady,
That at the laste certainly they die.
Infinite be the sorrows and the tears
Of olde folk, and folk of tender years,
In all the town, for death of this Theban:
For him there weepeth bothe child and man.
So great a weeping was there none certain,
When Hector was y-brought, all fresh y-slain,

To Troy: alas! the pity that was there,
Scratching of cheeks, and rending eke of hair.
"Why wouldest thou be dead?" these women cry,
"And haddest gold enough, and Emily."
No manner man might gladden Theseus,
Saving his olde father Egeus,
That knew this worlde's transmutatioun,
As he had seen it changen up and down,
Joy after woe, and woe after gladness;
And shewed him example and likeness.
"Right as there died never man," quoth he,
"That he ne liv'd in earth in some degree*, *rank, condition
Right so there lived never man," he said,
"In all this world, that sometime be not died.
This world is but a throughfare full of woe,
And we be pilgrims, passing to and fro:
Death is an end of every worldly sore."
And over all this said he yet much more
To this effect, full wisely to exhort
The people, that they should them recomfort.
Duke Theseus, with all his busy cure*, *care
Casteth about, where that the sepulture *deliberates*
Of good Arcite may best y-maked be,
And eke most honourable in his degree.
And at the last he took conclusion,
That there as first Arcite and Palamon
Hadde for love the battle them between,
That in that selve* grove, sweet and green, *self-same
There as he had his amorous desires,
His complaint, and for love his hote fires,
He woulde make a fire*, in which th' office *funeral pyre
Of funeral he might all accomplice;
And *let anon command* to hack and hew *immediately gave orders*
The oakes old, and lay them *on a rew in a row*
In culpons*, well arrayed for to brenne**. *logs* *burn
His officers with swifte feet they renne* *run
And ride anon at his commandement.
And after this, Duke Theseus hath sent
After a bier, and it all oversprad

With cloth of gold, the richest that he had;
And of the same suit he clad Arcite.
Upon his handes were his gloves white,
Eke on his head a crown of laurel green,
And in his hand a sword full bright and keen.
He laid him *bare the visage* on the bier, *with face uncovered*
Therewith he wept, that pity was to hear.
And, for the people shoulde see him all,
When it was day he brought them to the hall,
That roareth of the crying and the soun'.
Then came this woful Theban, Palamon,
With sluttery beard, and ruggy ashy hairs,
In clothes black, y-dropped all with tears,
And (passing over weeping Emily)
The ruefullest of all the company.
And *inasmuch as* the service should be *in order that*
The more noble and rich in its degree,
Duke Theseus let forth three steedes bring,
That trapped were in steel all glittering.
And covered with the arms of Dan Arcite.
Upon these steedes, that were great and white,
There satte folk, of whom one bare his shield,
Another his spear in his handes held;
The thirde bare with him his bow Turkeis*, *Turkish.
Of brent* gold was the case** and the harness: *burnished* *quiver
And ride forth *a pace* with sorrowful cheer** *at a foot pace*
Toward the grove, as ye shall after hear. **expression

The noblest of the Greekes that there were
Upon their shoulders carried the bier,
With slacke pace, and eyen red and wet,
Throughout the city, by the master* street, *main
That spread was all with black, and wondrous high
Right of the same is all the street y-wrie.* *covered
Upon the right hand went old Egeus,
And on the other side Duke Theseus,
With vessels in their hand of gold full fine,
All full of honey, milk, and blood, and wine;
Eke Palamon, with a great company;

And after that came woful Emily,
With fire in hand, as was that time the guise*, *custom
To do th' office of funeral service.

High labour, and full great appareling* *preparation
Was at the service, and the pyre-making,
That with its greene top the heaven raught*, *reached
And twenty fathom broad its armes straught*: *stretched
This is to say, the boughes were so broad.
Of straw first there was laid many a load.
But how the pyre was maked up on height,
And eke the names how the trees hight*, *were called
As oak, fir, birch, asp*, alder, holm, poplere, *aspen
Willow, elm, plane, ash, box, chestnut, lind*, laurere, *linden, lime
Maple, thorn, beech, hazel, yew, whipul tree,
How they were fell'd, shall not be told for me;
Nor how the goddes* rannen up and down *the forest deities
Disinherited of their habitatioun,
In which they wonned* had in rest and peace, *dwelt
Nymphes, Faunes, and Hamadryades;
Nor how the beastes and the birdes all
Fledden for feare, when the wood gan fall;
Nor how the ground aghast* was of the light, *terrified
That was not wont to see the sunne bright;
Nor how the fire was couched* first with stre**, *laid* *straw
And then with dry stickes cloven in three,
And then with greene wood and spicery*, *spices
And then with cloth of gold and with pierrie*, *precious stones
And garlands hanging with full many a flower,
The myrrh, the incense with so sweet odour;
Nor how Arcita lay among all this,
Nor what richess about his body is;
Nor how that Emily, as was the guise*, *custom
Put in the fire of funeral service; *appplied the torch*
Nor how she swooned when she made the fire,
Nor what she spake, nor what was her desire;
Nor what jewels men in the fire then cast
When that the fire was great and burned fast;

Nor how some cast their shield, and some their spear,
And of their vestiments, which that they wear,
And cuppes full of wine, and milk, and blood,
Into the fire, that burnt as it were wood*; *mad
Nor how the Greekes with a huge rout* *procession
Three times riden all the fire about
Upon the left hand, with a loud shouting,
And thries with their speares clattering;
And thries how the ladies gan to cry;
Nor how that led was homeward Emily;
Nor how Arcite is burnt to ashes cold;
Nor how the lyke-wake* was y-hold *wake
All thilke* night, nor how the Greekes play *that
The wake-plays*, ne keep** I not to say: *funeral games* *care
Who wrestled best naked, with oil anoint,
Nor who that bare him best *in no disjoint. in any contest*
I will not tell eke how they all are gone
Home to Athenes when the play is done;
But shortly to the point now will I wend*, *come
And maken of my longe tale an end.

By process and by length of certain years
All stinted* is the mourning and the tears *ended
Of Greekes, by one general assent.
Then seemed me there was a parlement
At Athens, upon certain points and cas*: *cases
Amonge the which points y-spoken was
To have with certain countries alliance,
And have of Thebans full obeisance.
For which this noble Theseus anon
Let* send after the gentle Palamon, *caused
Unwist* of him what was the cause and why: *unknown
But in his blacke clothes sorrowfully
He came at his commandment *on hie*; *in haste*
Then sente Theseus for Emily.
When they were set*, and hush'd was all the place *seated
And Theseus abided* had a space *waited
Ere any word came from his wise breast
His eyen set he there as was his lest, *he cast his eyes

And with a sad visage he sighed still, wherever he pleased*
And after that right thus he said his will.
"The firste mover of the cause above
When he first made the faire chain of love,
Great was th' effect, and high was his intent;
Well wist he why, and what thereof he meant:
For with that faire chain of love he bond* *bound
The fire, the air, the water, and the lond
In certain bondes, that they may not flee:
That same prince and mover eke," quoth he,
"Hath stablish'd, in this wretched world adown,
Certain of dayes and duration
To all that are engender'd in this place,
Over the whiche day they may not pace*, *pass
All may they yet their dayes well abridge.
There needeth no authority to allege
For it is proved by experience;
But that me list declare my sentence*. *opinion
Then may men by this order well discern,
That thilke* mover stable is and etern. *the same
Well may men know, but that it be a fool,
That every part deriveth from its whole.
For nature hath not ta'en its beginning
Of no *partie nor cantle* of a thing, *part or piece*
But of a thing that perfect is and stable,
Descending so, till it be corruptable.
And therefore of His wise purveyance* *providence
He hath so well beset* his ordinance,
That species of things and progressions
Shallen endure by successions,
And not etern, withouten any lie:
This mayst thou understand and see at eye.
Lo th' oak, that hath so long a nourishing
From the time that it 'ginneth first to spring,
And hath so long a life, as ye may see,
Yet at the last y-wasted is the tree.
Consider eke, how that the harde stone
Under our feet, on which we tread and gon*, *walk
Yet wasteth, as it lieth by the way.

The broade river some time waxeth drey*. *dry
The greate townes see we wane and wend*. *go, disappear
Then may ye see that all things have an end.
Of man and woman see we well also, —
That needes in one of the termes two, —
That is to say, in youth or else in age,-
He must be dead, the king as shall a page;
Some in his bed, some in the deepe sea,
Some in the large field, as ye may see:
There helpeth nought, all go that ilke* way: *same
Then may I say that alle thing must die.
What maketh this but Jupiter the king?
The which is prince, and cause of alle thing,
Converting all unto his proper will,
From which it is derived, sooth to tell
And hereagainst no creature alive,
Of no degree, availeth for to strive.
Then is it wisdom, as it thinketh me,
To make a virtue of necessity,
And take it well, that we may not eschew*, *escape
And namely what to us all is due.
And whoso grudgeth* ought, he doth folly, *murmurs at
And rebel is to him that all may gie*. *direct, guide
And certainly a man hath most honour
To dien in his excellence and flower,
When he is sicker* of his goode name. *certain
Then hath he done his friend, nor him*, no shame *himself
And gladder ought his friend be of his death,
When with honour is yielded up his breath,
Than when his name *appalled is for age*; *decayed by old age*
For all forgotten is his vassalage*. *valour, service
Then is it best, as for a worthy fame,
To dien when a man is best of name.
The contrary of all this is wilfulness.
Why grudge we, why have we heaviness,
That good Arcite, of chivalry the flower,
Departed is, with duty and honour,
Out of this foule prison of this life?
Why grudge here his cousin and his wife

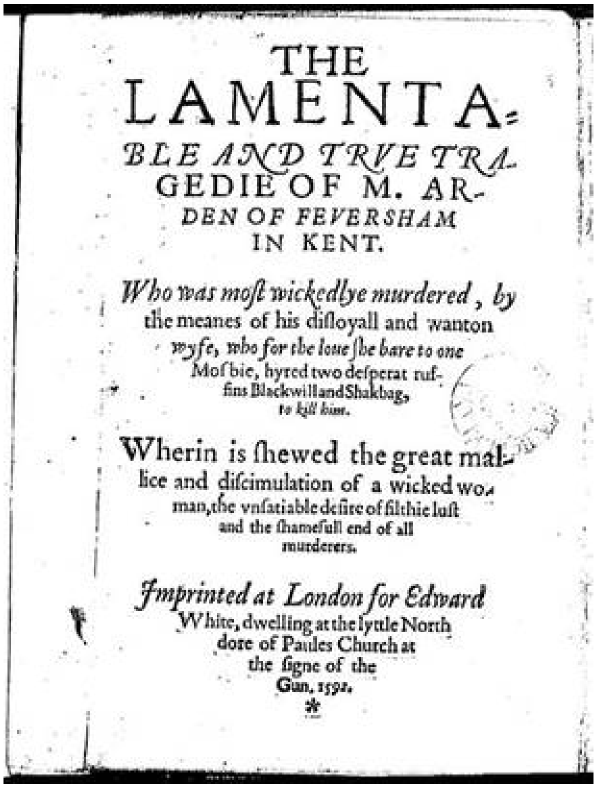
Of his welfare, that loved him so well?
Can he them thank? nay, God wot, neverdeal*, — *not a jot
That both his soul and eke themselves offend*, *hurt
And yet they may their lustes* not amend**. *desires* *control
What may I conclude of this longe serie*, *string of remarks
But after sorrow I rede* us to be merry, *counsel
And thanke Jupiter for all his grace?
And ere that we departe from this place,
I rede that we make of sorrows two
One perfect joye lasting evermo':
And look now where most sorrow is herein,
There will I first amenden and begin.
"Sister," quoth he, "this is my full assent,
With all th' advice here of my parlement,
That gentle Palamon, your owen knight,
That serveth you with will, and heart, and might,
And ever hath, since first time ye him knew,
That ye shall of your grace upon him rue*, *take pity
And take him for your husband and your lord:
Lend me your hand, for this is our accord.
Let see now of your womanly pity. *make display*
He is a kinge's brother's son, pardie*. *by God
And though he were a poore bachelere,
Since he hath served you so many a year,
And had for you so great adversity,
It muste be considered, *'lieveth me*. *believe me*
For gentle mercy *oweth to passen right*." *ought to be rightly
Then said he thus to Palamon the knight; directed*
"I trow there needeth little sermoning
To make you assente to this thing.
Come near, and take your lady by the hand."
Betwixte them was made anon the band,
That hight matrimony or marriage,
By all the counsel of the baronage.
And thus with alle bliss and melody
Hath Palamon y-wedded Emily.
And God, that all this wide world hath wrought,
Send him his love, that hath it dearly bought.
For now is Palamon in all his weal,

Living in bliss, in riches, and in heal*. *health
And Emily him loves so tenderly,
And he her serveth all so gentilly,
That never was there worde them between
Of jealousy, nor of none other teen*. *cause of anger
Thus endeth Palamon and Emily
And God save all this faire company.

The Apocryphal Plays

ARDEN OF FAVERSHAM

This play was entered into the Register of the Stationers Company on 3 April 1592, and printed later that same year by Edward White. It depicts the murder of Arden by his wife Alice and her lover, and their subsequent discovery and punishment. The play is notable as perhaps the earliest surviving example of domestic tragedy, a form of Renaissance play depicting local crimes rather than far-off and historical events. Some believe Thomas Kyd wrote this play, while others still believe Shakespeare had a hand in its composition.



THE
LAMENTABLE
AND TRVE TRAGEDIE
OF M. ARDEN
OF FEVERSHAM
IN KENT.

Who was moſt wickedlye murdered, by
the meanes of his diſloyall and wanton
wyfe, who for the loue ſhe bare to one
Moſbie, hyred two deſperat ruffins
Blackwill and Shakbag,
to kill him.

Wherin is ſhewed the great mallice
and diſcimulation of a wicked woman,
the vnſatiable deſire of filthie luſt
and the ſhamefull end of all
murderers.

Imprinted at London for Edward
White, dwelling at the lyttle North
dore of Paules Church at
the ſigne of the
Gun. 1592.

The 1592 Quarto of the play

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DRAMATIS PERSONAE

Thomas Arden, Gentleman, of Feversham

Franklin, his Friend

MOSBIE

Clarke, a Painter

Adam Fowle, Landlord of the Flower-de-Luce

Bradshaw, a Goldsmith

Michael, Arden's Servant Greene

Richard Reede, a Sailor

Murderers : Shakebag, Black Will

A Prentice

A Ferryman

Lord Cheiny, and his Men

Mayor of Feversham, and Watch

Alice, Arden's Wife

Susan, Mosbie's Sister

ACT I

A Room in Arden's House.

Enter Arden and Franklin.

Franklin . Arden, cheer up thy spirits, and droop no more !
My gracious Lord, the Duke of Somerset,
Hath freely given to thee and to thy heirs.
By letters patents from his Majesty,
All the lands of the Abbey of Feversham.
Here are the deeds,
He hands them.
Sealed and subscribed with his name and the
king's :
Read them, and leave this melancholy mood.

Arden . Franklin, thy love prolongs my weary life ;
And but for thee how odious were this life, lo
That shows me nothing but torments my soul,
And those foul objects that offend mine eyes !
Which makes me wish that for this veil of heaven
The earth hung over my head and covered me.
Love-letters pass 'twixt Mosbie and my wife,

And they have privy meetings in the town :
Nay, on his finger did I spy the ring
Which at our marriage-day the priest put on.

Can any grief be half so great as this ?

Franklin . Comfort thyself, sweet friend ; it is not
strange That women will be false and wavering.

Arden . Ay, but to dote on such a one as he
Is monstrous, Franklin, and intolerable.

Franklin . Why, what is he ?

Arden . A botcher, and no better at the first ;
Who, by base brokage getting some small stock,
Crept into service of a nobleman.
And by his servile flattery and fawning
Is now become the steward of his house,
And bravely jets it in his silken gown.

Franklin . No nobleman will countenance such a peasant.

Arden . Yes, the Lord Clifford, he that loves not me.
But through his favour let him not grow proud ;
For were he by the Lord Protector backed.
He should not make me to be pointed at.
I am by birth a gentleman of blood,
And that injurious ribald, that attempts
To violate my dear wife's chastity
(For dear I hold her love, as dear as heaven)
Shall on the bed which he thinks to defile
See his dissevered joints and sinews torn,
Whilst on the planchers pants his weary body,
Smeared in the channels of his lustful blood.

Franklin . Be patient, gentle friend, and learn of me
To ease thy grief and save her chastity :
Intreat her fair ; sweet words are fittest engines
To race the flint walls of a woman's breast.

In any case be not too jealous.

Nor make no question of her love to thee ;
But, as securely, presently take horse,
And lie with me at London all this term ;
For women, when they may, will not,
But, being kept back, straight grow outrageous.

Arden . Though this abhors from reason, yet I'll try it,
And call her forth and presently take leave.

How ! Alice !
Here enters Alice.

Alice . Husband, what mean you to get up so early ?
Summer-nights are short, and yet you rise ere day.

Had I been wake, you had not risen so soon.

Arden . Sweet love, thou knowest that we two. Ovid-like,
Have often chid the morning when it 'gan to peep.
And often wished that dark night's purblind steeds
Would pull her by the purple mantle back,

And cast her in the ocean to her love.
But this night, sweet Alice, thou hast killed my heart :

I heard thee call on Mosbie in thy sleep.

Alice . 'Tis like I was asleep when I named him,
For being awake he comes not in my thoughts.

Arden . Ay, but you started up and suddenly.
Instead of him, caught me about the neck.

Alice . Instead of him? why, who was there but you?
And where but one is, how can I mistake ?

Franklin . Arden, leave to urge her over-far.

Arden . Nay, love, there is no credit in a dream ;
Let it suffice I know thou lovest me well.

Alice . Now I remember whereupon it came :
Had we no talk of Mosbie yesternight ?

Franklin . Mistress Alice, I heard you name him once or twice.

Alice . And thereof came it, and therefore blame not me.

Arden . I know it did, and therefore let it pass.
I must to London, sweet Alice, presently.

Alice . But tell me, do you mean to stay there long ?

Arden . No longer there till my affairs be done.

Franklin . He will not stay above a month at most.

Alice . A month ? ay me ! Sweet Arden, come again
Within a day or two, or else I die.

Arden . I cannot long bAA from thee, gentle Alice.
Whilst Michael fetch our horses from the field.
Franklin and I will down unto the quay ;
For I have certain goods there to unload.

Meanwhile prepare our breakfast, gentle Alice ;
For yet ere noon we 'll take horse and away.

Exeunt Arden and Franklin.

Alice . Ere noon he means to take horse and away !
Sweet news is this. O that some airy spirit
Would in the shape and likeness of a horse
Gallop with Arden 'cross the Ocean,
And throw him from his back into the waves !
Sweet Mosbie is the man that hath my heart :

And he usurps it, having nought but this.
That I am tied to him by marriage.
Love is a God, and marriage is but words ;
And therefore Mosbie's title is the best.
Tush ! whether it be or no, he shall be mine,
In spite of him, of Hymen, and of rites.

Here enters Adam of the Flower-de-luce.
And here comes Adam of the Flower-de-luce ;

I hope he brings me tidings of my love.
— How now, Adam, what is the news with you ?
Be not afraid ; my husband is now from home,

Adam. He whom you wot of, Mosbie, Mistress Alice,
Is come to town, and sends you word by me no
In any case you may not visit him.

Alice. Not visit him?

Adam. No, nor take no knowledge of his being here.

Alice. But tell me, is he angry or displeased ?

Adam. It should seem so, for he is Avondrous sad.

Alice. Were he as mad as raving Hercules,
I 'll see him, I ; and were thy house of force,
These hands of mine should race it to the ground,
Unless that thou wouldst bring me to my love.

Adam. Nay, and you be so impatient, I 'll be gone.

Alice. Stay, Adam, stay ; thou wert wont to be my friend.
Ask Mosbie how I have incurred his wrath ;
Bear him from me these pair of silver dice,
With which we played for kisses many a time,
And when I lost, I won, and so did he ; —
Such winning and such losing Jove send me !

And bid him, if his love do not decline.
To come this morning but along my door,
And as a stranger but salute me there :
This may he do without suspect or fear.

Adam. I'll tell him what you say, and so farewell.
Exit Adam.

Alice. Do, and one day I'll make amends for all. —
I know he loves me well, but dares not come.

Because my husband is so jealous.

And these my narrow-prying neighbours blab,
Hinder our meetings when we would confer.
But, if I live, that block shall be removed.
And, Mosbie, thou that comes to me by stealth,
Shalt neither fear the biting speech of men.
Nor Arden's looks ; as surely shall he die
As I abhor him and love only thee.

Here enters Michael.
How now, Michael, whither are you going ?

Michael. To fetch my master's nag.
I hope you'll think on me.

Alice. Ay ; but, Michael, see you keep your oath,
And be as secret as you are resolute.

Michael. I'll see he shall not live above a week.

Alice. On that condition, Michael, here's my hand :
None shall have Mosbie's sister but thyself.

Michael. I understand the painter here hard by
Hath made report that he and Sue is sure.

Alice. There 's no such matter, Michael ; believe it not.

Michael. But he hath sent a dagger sticking in a heart.
With a verse or two stolen from a painted cloth,
The which I hear the wench keeps in her chest.
Well, let her keep it ! I shall find a fellow
That can both write and read and make rhyme too.
And if I do — well, I say no more :
I'll send from London such a taunting letter
As she shall eat the heart he sent with salt
And fling the dagger at the painter's head.

Alice. What needs all this ? I say that Susan 's thine.

Michael. Why, then I say that I will kill my master,
Or anything that you will have me do.

Alice. But, Michael, see you do it cunningly.

Michael. Why, say I should be took, I'll ne'er confess
That you know anything ; and Susan, being a maid.

May beg me from the gallows of the sheriff.

Alice. Trust not to that, Michael.

Michael. You cannot tell me, I have seen it, I.
But, mistress, tell her, whether I live or die,
I'll make her more worth than twenty painters can ;
For I will rid mine elder brother away,
And then the farm of Bolton is mine own.
Who would not venture upon house and land,
When he may have it for a right down blow ?
Here enters Mosbie.

Alice. Yonder comes Mosbie. Michael, get tnee gone,
And let not him nor any know thy drifts.

Exit Michael.
Mosbie, my love !

Mosbie. Away, I say, and talk not to me now.

Alice. A word or two, sweet heart, and then I will.
'Tis yet but early days, thou needst not fear.

Mosbie. Where is your husband ?

Alice. 'Tis now high water, and he is at the quay.

Mosbie. There let him be ; henceforward know me not.

Alice. Is this the end of all thy solemn oaths ?
Is this the fruit thy reconcilement buds ?
Have I for this given thee so many favours,
Incurred my husband's hate, and, out alas I
Made shipwreck of mine honour for thy sake ?
And dost thou say ' henceforward know me not ' ?
Remember, when I lock'd thee in my closet,

What were thy words and mine ; did we not both
Decree to murder Arden in the night ?
The heavens can witness, and the world can tell,
Before I saw that falsehood look of thine,
'Fore I was tangled with thy 'ticing speech,
Arden to me was dearer than my soul, —
And shall be still : base peasant, get thee gone,
And boast not of thy conquest over me,
Gotten by witchcraft and mere sorcery !
For what hast thou to countenance my love,
Being descended of a noble house,
And matched already with a gentleman
Whose servant thou may'st be !— and so farewell.

Mosbie. Ungentle and unkind Alice, now I see
That which I ever feared, and find too true :

A woman's love is as the lightning-flame.
Which even in bursting forth consumes itself.
To try thy constancy have I been strange ;
Would I had never tried, but lived in hope !

Alice. What need'st thou try me whom thou ne'er found false ?

Mosbie. Yet pardon me, for love is jealous.

Alice. So lists the sailor to the mermaid's song,
So looks the traveller to the basilisk :
I am content for to be reconciled,
And that, I know, will be mine overthrow.

Mosbie. Thine overthrow ? first let the world dissolve.

Alice. Nay, Mosbie, let me still enjoy thy love,
And happen what will, I am resolute.
My saving husband hoards up bags of gold
To make our children rich, and now is he
Gone to unload the goods that shall be thine,
And he and Franklin will to London straight.

Mosbie. To London, Alice ? if thou 'lt be ruled by me,
We'll make him sure enough for coming there.

Alice. Ah, would we could !

Mosbie. I happened on a painter yesternight,
The only cunning man of Christendom ;
For he can temper poison with his oil,
That whoso looks upon the work he draws
Shall, with the beams that issue from his sight,
Suck venom to his breast and slay himself.
Sweet Alice, he shall draw thy counterfeit,
That Arden may, by gazing on it, perish.

Alice. Ay, but Mosbie, that is dangerous,
For thou, or I, or any other else.

Coming into the chamber where it hangs, may die.

Mosbie. Ay, but we'll have it covered with a cloth
And hung up in the study for himself.

Alice. It may not be, for when the picture's drawn, Arden, I know, will come and show it me.

Mosbie. Fear not ; we'll have that shall serve the turn.
This is the painter's house ; I'll call him forth.

Alice. But Mosbie, I'll have no such picture, I.

Mosbie. I pray thee leave it to my discretion.
How! Clarke!

Here enters Clarke.
Oh, you are an honest man of your word ! you
served me well.

Clarke. Why, sir, I'll do it for you at any time,
Provided, as you have given your word,
I may have Susan Mosbie to my wife.
For, as sharp-witted poets, whose sweet verse
Make heavenly gods break off their nectar draughts
And lay their ears down to the lowly earth.
Use humble promise to their sacred Muse,

So we that are the poets' favourites
Must have a love : ay, Love is the painter's muse,
That makes him frame a speaking countenance,
A weeping eye that witnesses heart's grief.
Then tell me, Master Mosbie, shall I have her ?

Alice. 'Tis pity but he should ; he 'll use her well.

Mosbie. Clarke, here's my hand: my sister shall be thine.

Clarke. Then, brother, to requite this courtesy,
You shall command my life, my skill, and all.

Alice. Ah, that thou couldst be secret.

Mosbie. Fear him not ; leave ; I have talked sufficient

Clarke. You know not me that ask such questions.
Let it suffice I know you love him well,
And fain would have your husband made away :
Wherein, trust me, you show a noble mind,

That rather than you'll live with him you hate,
You'll venture life, and die with him you love.

The like will I do for my Susan's sake.

Alice. Yet nothing could inforce me to the deed
But Mosbie's love. Might I without control
Enjoy thee still, then Arden should not die :
But seeing I cannot, therefore let him die.

Mosbie. Enough, sweet Alice ; thy kind words makes me melt.
Your trick of poisoned pictures we dislike;
Some other poison would do better far.

Alice. Ay, such as might be put into his broth,
And yet in taste not to be found at all.

Clarke. I know your mind, and here I have it for you.
Put but a dram of this into his drink,
Or any kind of broth that he shall eat,
And he shall die within an hour after.

Alice. As I am a gentlewoman, Clarke, next day
Thou and Susan shall be married.

Mosbie. And I'll make her dowry more than I'll talk of, Clarke.

Clarke. Yonder 's your husband. Mosbie, I'll be gone.
Here enters Arden and Franklin.

Alice. In good time see where my husband comes.
Master Mosbie, ask him the question yourself.

Exit Clarke.

Mosbie. Master Arden, being at London yesternight,
The Abbey lands, whereof you are now possessed,
Were offered me on some occasion
By Greene, one of Sir Antony Ager's men :

I pray you, sir, tell me, are not the lands yours ?
Hath any other interest herein ?

Arden. Mosbie, that question we'll decide anon.
Alice, make ready my breakfast, I must hence.

Exit Alice.
As for the lands, Mosbie, they are mine
By letters patents from his Majesty.
But I must have a mandate for my wife ;
They say you seek to rob me of her love :
Villain, what makes thou in her company ?

She 's no companion for so base a groom.

Mosbie. Arden, I thought not on her, I came to thee ;
But rather than I pocket up this wrong.

Franklin. What will you do, sir ?

Mosbie. Revenge it on the proudest of you both.
Then Arden draws forth Mosbie's sword.

Arden. So, sirrah ; you may not wear a sword,
The statute makes against artificers ;
I warrant that I do. Now use your bodkin,
Your Spanish needle, and your pressing iron,
For this shall go with me ; and mark my words,
You goodman botcher, 'tis to you I speak :
The next time that I take thee near my house,
Instead of legs I'll make thee crawl on stumps.

Mosbie. Ah, Master Arden, you have injured me :
I do appeal to God and to the world.

Franklin. Why, canst thou deny thou wert a botcher once?

Mosbie. Measure me what I am, not what I was.

Arden. Why, what art thou now but a velvet drudge,
A cheating steward, and base-minded peasant 1

Mosbie. Arden, now thou hast belched and vomited
The rancorous venom of thy mis-swoll'n heart,

Hear me but speak : as I intend to live
With God and his elected saints in heaven,
I never meant more to solicit her ;
And that she knows, and all the world shall see.
I loved her once ; — sweet Arden, pardon me,
I could not choose, her beauty fired my heart !
But time hath quenched these over-raging coals ;
And, Arden, though I now frequent thy house,
'Tis for my sister's sake, her waiting-maid.
And not for hers. Mayest thou enjoy her long:
Hell-fire and wrathful vengeance light on me,
If I dishonour her or injure thee.

Arden. Mosbie, with these thy protestations
The deadly hatred of my heart's appeased
And thou and I'll be friends, if this prove true.
As for the base terms I gave thee late,
Forget them, Mosbie : I had cause to speak,
When all the knights and gentlemen of Kent
Make common table-talk of her and thee.

Mosbie. Who lives that is not touched with slanderous tongues !

Franklin. Then, Mosbie, to eschew the speech of men,
Upon whose general bruit all honour hangs,
Forbear his house.

Arden. Forbear it ! nay, rather frequent it more :
The world shall see that I distrust her not.
To warn him on the sudden from my house
Were to confirm the rumour that is grown.

Mosbie. By my faith, sir, you say true.
And therefore will I sojourn here a while.
Until our enemies have talked their fill ;
And then, I hope, they '11 cease, and at last confess
How causeless they have injured her and me.

Arden. And I will lie at London all this term
To let them see how light I weigh their words.

Here enters Alice.

Alice. Husband, sit down ; your breakfast will be cold.

Arden. Come, Master Mosbie, will you sit with us ?

Mosbie. I cannot eat, but I'll sit for company.

Arden. Sirrah Michael, see our horse be ready.

Alice. Husband, why pause ye ? why eat you not ?

Arden. I am not well ; there 's something in this broth
That is not wholesome : didst thou make it, Alice ?

Alice. I did, and that's the cause it likes not you.
Then she throws down the broth on the ground.
There 's nothing that I do can please your taste ;
You were best to say I would have poisoned you.
I cannot speak or cast aside my eye,
But he imagines I have stepped awry.

Here's he that you cast in my teeth so oft :
Now will I be convinced or purge myself.
I charge thee speak to this mistrustful man,
Thou that wouldst see me hang, thou, Mosbie, thou:
What favour hast thou had more than a kiss
At coming or departing from the town ?

Mosbie. You wrong yourself and me to cast these doubts :
Your loving husband is not jealous.

Arden. Why, gentle Mistress Alice, cannot I be ill
But you'll accuse yourself?
Franklin, thou hast a box of mithridate ;
I'll take a little to prevent the worst.

Franklin. Do so, and let us presently take horse ;
My life for yours, ye shall do well enough.

Alice. Give me a spoon, I'll eat of it myself;
Would it were full of poison to the brim,
Then should my cares and troubles have an end.

Was ever silly woman so tormented !

Arden. Be patient, sweet love ; I mistrust not thee.

Alice. God will revenge it, Arden, if thou dost;
For never woman loved her husband better
Than I do thee.

Arden. I know it, sweet Alice ; cease to complain,
Lest that in tears I answer thee again,

Franklin. Come, leave this dallying, and let us away.

Alice. Forbear to wound me with that bitter word ;
Arden shall go to London in my arms.

Arden. Loth am I to depart, yet I must go.

Alice. Wilt thou to London, then, and leave me here ?
Ah, if thou love me, gentle Arden, stay.
Yet, if thy business be of great import

Go, if thou wilt, I'll bear it as I may ;
But write from London to me every week,
Nay, every day, and stay no longer there
Than thou must needs, lest that I die for sorrow.

Arden. I'll write unto thee every other tide.
And so farewell, sweet Alice, till we meet next.

Alice. Farewell, husband, seeing you'll have it so ;
And, Master Franklin, seeing you take him hence,
In hope you 'll hasten him home, I'll give you this.
And then she kisseth him.

Franklin. And if he stay, the fault shall not be mine.
Mosbie, farewell, and see you keep your oath.

Mosbie. I hope he is not jealous of me now.

Arden. No, Mosbie, no ; hereafter think of me
As of your dearest friend, and so farewell.

Exeunt Arden, Franklin, and Michael.

Alice. I am glad he is gone ; he was about to stay,
But did you mark me then how I brake off?

Mosbie. Ay, Alice, and it was cunningly performed.
But what a villain is that painter Clarke !

Alice. Was it not a goodly poison that he gave ?
Why, he's as well now as he was before.
It should have been some fine confection
That might have given the broth some dainty taste :

This powder was too gross and populous.

Mosbie. But had he eaten but three spoonfuls more,
Then had he died and our love continued.

Alice. Why, so it shall, Mosbie, albeit he live.

Mosbie. It is unpossible, for I have sworn

Never hereafter to solicit thee,
Or, whilst he lives, once more importune thee.

Alice. Thou shalt not need, I will importune thee.
What? shall an oath make thee forsake my love?
As if I have not sworn as much myself
And given my hand unto him in the church !
Tush, Mosbie ; oaths are words, and words is wind,
And wind is mutable : then, I conclude,
'Tis childishness to stand upon an oath.

Mosbie. Well proved, Mistress Alice ; yet by your leave
I 'II keep mine unbroken whilst he lives.

Alice. Ay, do, and spare not, his time is but short ;
For if thou beest as resolute as I,
We'll have him murdered as he walks the streets.
In London many alehouse ruffians keep,
Which, as I hear, will murder men for gold.
They shall be soundly fee'd to pay him home.

Here enters Greene.

Mosbie. Alice, what's he that comes yonder? knowest thou him ?

Alice. Mosbie, be gone : I hope 'tis one that comes
To put in practice our intended drifts.
Exit Mosbie

Greene. Mistress Arden, you are well met.
I am sorry that your husband is from home,
Whenas my purposed journey was to him :
Yet all my labour is not spent in vain,
For I suppose that you can full discourse
And flat resolve me of the thing I seek.

Alice. What is it, Master Greene. If that I may
Or can with safety, I will answer you.

Greene. I heard your husband hath the grant of late,
Confirmed by letters patents from the king,
Of all the lands of the Abbey of Feversham,

Generally intitled, so that all former grants
Are cut off ; whereof I myself had one ;
But now my interest by that is void.

This is all, Mistress Arden ; is it true or no.

Alice. True, Master Greene ; the lands are his in state,
And whatsoever leases were before
Are void for term of Master Arden's life ;
He hath the grant under the Chancery seal.

Greene. Pardon me, Mistress Arden, I must speak,
For I am touched. Your husband doth me wrong
To wring me from the little land I have.
My living is my life, and only that
Resteth remainder of my portion.
Desire of wealth is endless in his mind,
And he is greedy-gaping still for gain ;
Nor cares he though young gentlemen do beg.

So he may scrape and hoard up in his pouch.

But, seeing he hath ta'en my lands, I'll value life
As careless as he is careful for to get :
And tell him this from me, I'll be revenged,
And so as he shall wish the Abbey lands
Had rested still within their former state.

Alice. Alas, poor gentleman, I pity you,
And woe is me that any man should want !
God knows 'tis not my fault ; but wonder not
Though he be hard to others, when to me, —
Ah, Master Greene, God knows how I am used.

Greene. Why, Mistress Arden, can the crabbed churl
Use you unkindly ? respects he not your birth,
Your honourable friends, nor what you brought ?
Why, all Kent knows your parentage and what you are.

Alice. Ah, Master Greene, be it spoken in secret here,
I never live good day with him alone :
When he 's at home, then have I froward looks,
Hard words and blows to mend the match withal j

And though I might content as good a man,

Yet doth he keep in every corner trulls ;

And when he's weary with his trugs at home.

Then rides he straight to London ; there, for sooth,

He revels it among such filthy ones

As counsels him to make away his wife.

Thus live I daily in continual fear,

In sorrow ; so despairing of redress

As every day I wish with hearty prayer

That he or I were taken forth the world.

Greene. Now trust me. Mistress Alice, it grieveth me

So fair a creature should be so abused.

Why, who would have thought the civil sir so sullen ?

He looks so smoothly. Now, fie upon him, churl!

And if he live a day, he lives too long.

But frolic, woman ! I shall be the man

Shall set you free from all this discontent ;

And if the churl deny my interest

And will not yield my lease into my hand,
I 'II pay him home, whatever hap to me.

Alice. But speak you as you think ?

Greene. Ay, God 's my witness, I mean plain dealing,
For I had rather die than lose my land.

Alice. Then, Master Greene, be counselled by me :
Indanger not yourself for such a churl,
But hire some cutter for to cut him short,
And here 's ten pound to wager them withal ;
When he is dead, you shall have twenty more.
And the lands whereof my husband is possess'd
Shall be intitled as they were before.

Greene. Will you keep promise with me ?

Alice. Or count me false and perjured whilst I live.

Greene. Then here 's my hand, I'll have him so dispatched.

I'll up to London straight, I'll thither post,
And never rest till I have compassed it.
Till then farewell.

Alice. Good fortune follow all your forward thoughts.
Exit Greene.
And whosoever doth attempt the deed,
A happy hand I wish, and so farewell. —
All this goes well : Mosbie, I long for thee
To let thee know all that I have contrived.
Here enters Mosbie and Clarke,

Mosbie. How, now, Alice, what's the news?

Alice. Such as will content thee well, sweetheart.

Mosbie. Well, let them pass a while, and tell me, Alice,
How have you dealt and tempered with my sister ?

What, will she have my neighhour Clarke, or no ?

Alice. What, Master Mosbie ! let him woo himself !
Think you that maids look not for fair words ?
Go to her, Clarke ; she 's all alone within ;
Michael my man is clean out of her books.

Clarke. I thank you, Mistress Arden, I will in ;
And if fair Susan and I can make a gree,
You shall command me to the uttermost,
As far as either goods or life may stretch.

Exit Clarke.

Mosbie. Now, Alice, let 's hear thy news.

Alice. They be so good that I must laugh for joy,
Before I can begin to tell my tale.

Mosbie. Let 's hear them, that I may laugh for company.

Alice. This morning, Master Greene, Dick Greene I mean,
From whom my husband had the Abbey land,

Came hither, railing, for to know the truth

Whether my husband had the lands by grant.

I told him all, whereat he stormed amain

And swore he would cry quittance with the churl,

And, if he did deny his interest,

Stab him, whatsoever did befall himself.

Whenas I saw his choler thus to rise,

I whetted on the gentleman with words ;

And, to conclude, Mosbie, at last we grew

To composition for my husband's death.

I gave him ten pound for to hire knaves,

By some device to make away the churl ;

When he is dead, he should have twenty more

And repossess his former lands again.

On this we 'greed, and he is ridden straight

To London, for to bring his death about.

Mosbie. But call you this good news ?

Alice. Ay, sweetheart, be they not .'

Mosbie. 'Twere cheerful news to hear the churl were dead ;
But trust me, Alice, I take it passing ill
You would be so forgetful of our state
To make recount of it to every groom.
What ! to acquaint each stranger with our drifts,
Chiefly in case of murder, why, 'tis the way
To make it open unto Arden's self
And bring thyself and me to ruin both.

Forewarned, forearmed ; who threats his enemy.
Lends him a sword to guard himself withal.

Alice. I did it for the best.

Mosbie. Well, seeing 'tis done, cheerly let it pais.
You know this Greene ; is he not religious ?

A man, I guess, of great devotion ?

Alice. He is.

Mosbie. Then, sweet Alice, let it pass : I have a drift

Will quiet all, whatever is amiss.

Here eiiters Clarke and Susan.

Alice. How now, Clarke ? have you found me false?

Did I not plead the matter hard for you ?

Clarke. You did.

Mosbie. And what ? wilt be a match ?

Clarke. A match, I' faith, sir : ay, the day is mine.

The painter lays his colours to the life,

His pencil draws no shadows in his love.

Susan is mine.

Alice. You make her blush.

Mosbie. What, sister, is it Clarke must be the man ?

Susan. It resteth in your grant ; some words are past,
And haply we be grown unto a match,
If you be willing that it shall be so.

Mosbie. Ah, Master Clarke, it resteth at my grant :
You see my sister 's yet at my dispose,
But, so you'll grant me one thing I shall ask,
I am content my sister shall be yours.

Clarke. What is it, Master Mosbie ?

Mosbie. I do remember once in secret talk
You told me how you could compound by art
A crucifix impoisoned,
That whoso look upon it should wax blind
And with the scent be stifled, that ere long
He should die poisoned that did view it well.

I would have you make me such a crucifix.
And then I'll grant my sister shall be yours.

Clarke. Though I am loth, because it toucheth life,

Yet, rather or I'll leave sweet Susan's love,

I'll do it, and with all the haste I may.

But for whom is it ?

Alice. Leave that to us. Why, Clarke, is it possible

That you should paint and draw it out yourself,

The colours being baleful and impoisoned,

And no ways prejudice yourself withal ?

Mosbie. Well questioned, Alice ; Clarke, how answer you that?

Clarke. Very easily : I'll tell you straight

How I do work of these impoisoned drugs.

I fasten on my spectacles so close

As nothing can any way offend my sight ;

Then, as I put a leaf within my nose,

So put I rhubarb to avoid the smell.

And softly as another work I paint.

Mosbie. 'Tis very well ; but against when shall I have it?

Clarke. Within this ten days.

Mosbie. 'Twill serve the turn.
Now, Alice, let's in and see what cheer you keep.

I hope, now Master Arden is from home.
You'll give me leave to play your husband's part.

Alice. Mosbie, you know, who 's master of my heart.
He well may be the master of the house.

Exeunt.

ACT II

SCENE I

Country between Feversham and London.

Enter Greene and Bradshaw.

Bradshaw. See you them that comes yonder, Master Greene ?

Greene. Ay, very well : do you know them ?
Here enters Black Will and Shakebag.

Bradshaw. The one I know not, but he seems a knave
Chiefly for bearing the other company ;
For such a slave, so vile a rogue as he.
Lives not again upon the earth.
Black Will is his name. I tell you. Master Greene,
At Boulogne he and I were fellow-soldiers,
Where he played such pranks
As all the camp feared him for his villainy lo
I warrant you he bears so bad a mind
That for a crown he'll murder any man.

Greene. The fitter is he for my purpose, marry !

Will. How now, fellow Bradshaw? Whither away so early ?

Bradshaw. O Will, times are changed : no fellows now,
Though we were once together in the field ;
Yet thy friend to do thee any good I can.

Will. Why, Bradshaw, was not thou and I fellow-soldiers at Boulogne, where I was a corporal, and thou but a base mercenary groom? No fellows now ! because you are a goldsmith and have a little plate in your shop ! You were glad to call me 'fellow Will,' and with a curtsey to the earth, * One snatch, good corporal,' when I stole the half ox from John the victualer, and domineer'd with it amongst good fellows in one night.

Bradshaw. Ay, Will, those days are past with me.

Will. Ay, but they be not past with me, for I keep that same honourable mind still. Good neighbour Bradshaw, you are too proud to be my fellow ; but were it not that I see more company coming down the hill, I would be fellows with you once more, and share crowns with you too. But let that pass, and

tell me whither you go.

Bradshaw. To London, Will, about a piece of service,

Wherein haply thou mayest pleasure me.

Will. What is it?

Bradshaw. Of late Lord Cheiny lost some plate.

Which one did bring and sold it at my shop,

Saying he served Sir Antony Cooke.

A search was made, the plate was found with me,

And I am bound to answer at the 'size.

Now, Lord Cheiny solemnly vows, if law

Will serve him, he'll hang me for his plate.

Now I am going to London upon hope

To find the fellow. Now, Will, I know

Thou art acquainted with such companions.

Will. What manner of man was he ?

Bradshaw. A lean-faced writhen knave,
Hawk-nosed and very hollow-eyed,
With mighty furrows in his stormy brows ;
Long hair down his shoulders curled ;
His chin was bare, but on his upper lip
A mutchado, which he wound about his ear.

Will. What apparel had he ?

Bradshaw. A watchet satin doublet all-to torn,
The inner side did bear the greater show ;
A pair of thread-bare velvet hose, seam rent,
A worsted stocking rent above the shoe,
A livery cloak, but all the lace was off ;
'Twas bad, but yet it served to hide the plate.

Will. Sirrah Shakebag, canst thou remember since we trolled the bowl at Sittingburgh, where I broke the tapster's head of the Lion with a cudgel-stick ?

Shakebag. Ay, very well, Will.

Will. Why, it was with the money that the plate was sold for. Sirrah Bradshaw, what wilt thou give him that can tell thee who sold thy plate ?

Bradshaw. Who, I pray thee, good Will ?

Will. Why_, 'twas one Jack Fitten. He's now in Newgate for stealing a horse, and shall be arraigned the next 'size.

Bradshaw. Why, then let Lord Cheiny seek Jack Fitten forth,
For I'll back and tell him who robbed him of his plate.
This cheers my heart ; Master Greene, I'll leave you,
For I must to the Isle of Sheppy with speed.

Greene. Before you go, let me intreat you
To carry this letter to Mistress Arden of Feversham
And humbly recommend me to herself.

Bradshaw. That will I, Master Greene, and so farewell.

Here, Will, there 's a crown for thy good news.

Exit Bradshaw.

Will. Farewell, Bradshaw ; I'll drink no water for thy
sake whilst this lasts. — Now, gentleman, shall we
have your company to London ?

Greene. Nay, stay, sirs :
A little more I needs must use your help.

And in a matter of great consequence.
Wherein if you'll be secret and profound,
I'll give you twenty angels for your pains.

Will. How? twenty angels? give my fellow George
Shakebag and me twenty angels? And if thou 'lt
have thy own father slain, that thou may'st inherit
his land, we'll kill him.

Shakebag. Ay, thy mother, thy sister, thy brother, or all thy kin.

Greene. Well, this it is : Arden of Feversham
Hath highly wronged me about the Abbey land,
That no revenge but death will serve the turn.
Will you two kill him? here's the angels down,
And I will lay the platform of his death.

Will. Plat me no platforms ; give me the money, and
I'll stab him as he stands pissing against a wall, but
I'll kill him.

Shakebag. Where is he ?

Greene. He is now at London, in Aldersgate Street.

Shakebag. He 's dead as if he had been condemned by
an Act of Parliament, if once Black Will and I swear his death.

Greene. Here is ten pound, and when he is dead,
Ye shall have twenty more.

Will. My fingers itches to be at the peasant. Ah, that
I might be set a work thus through the year, and
that murder would grow to an occupation, that a
man might follow without danger of law : — zounds, I
warrant I should be warden of the company I Come,
let us be going, and we 'U bait at Rochester, where
I'll give thee a gallon of sack to handsel the match withal.

Exeut

SCENE II

London. A Street near St. Paul's.

Enter Michael.

Michael. I have gotten such a letter as will touch the
painter : And thus it is :

Here enters Arden and Franklin and hears Michael
read this letter.

* My duty remembered, Mistress Susan, hoping in God
you be in good health, as I Michael was at the

making hereof. This is to certify you that as the turtle true, when she hath lost her mate, sitteth alone, so I, mourning for your absence, do walk up and down Paul's till one day I fell asleep and lost my master's pantofles. Ah, Mistress Susan, abolish that paltry painter, cut him off by the shins with a frowning look of your crabbed countenance, and think upon Michael, who, drunk with the dregs of your favour, will cleave as fast to your love as a plaster of pitch to a galled horse-back. Thus hoping you will let my passions penetrate, or rather impetrate mercy of your meek hands, I end.

' Yours, Michael, or else not Michael.'

Arden. Why, you paltry knave,
Stand you here loitering, knowing my affairs,
What haste my business craves to send to Kent ?

Franklin. Faith, friend Michael, this is very ill,
Knowing your master hath no more but you,

And do ye slack his business for your own ?

Arden. Where is the letter, sirrah? let me see it.
Then he gives him the letter.

See, Master Franklin, here's proper stuff:
Susan my maid, the painter, and my man,
A crew of harlots, all in love, forsooth ;
Sirrah, let me hear no more of this.

Nor for thy life once write to her a word.
Here enters Greene, Will, and Shakebag.

Wilt thou be married to so base a trull ?
'Tis Mosbie's sister : come I once at home,
I'll rouse her from remaining in my house.
- Now, Master Franklin, let us go walk in Paul's ;
Come but a turn or two, and then away.

Exeunt.

Greene. The first is Arden, and that 's his man,
The other is Franklin, Arden's dearest friend.

Will. Zounds, I'll kill them all three.

Greene. Nay, sirs, touch not his man in any case ;
But stand close, and take you fittest standing.

And at his coming forth speed him. :
To the Nag's Head, there is this coward's haunt.

But now I'll leave you till the deed be done.
Exit Greene.

Shakebag. If he be not paid his own, ne'er trust Shakebag.

Will. Sirrah Shakebag, at his coming forth I'll run him
through, and then to the Blackfriars, and there
take water and away.

Shakebag. Why, that's the best ; but see thou miss him not.

Will. How can I miss him, when I think on the forty
angels I must have more ?

Here enters Prentice.

Prentice. 'Tis very late ; I were best shut up my stall,
for here will be old filching, when the press comes
forth of Paul's.
Then lets he down his window, and
it breaks Black Will's head.

Will. Zounds, draw, Shakebag, I am almost killed.

Prentice. We'll tame you, I warrant.

Will. Zounds, I am tame enough already.
Here eftters Arden, Franklin, and Michael.

Arden. What troublesome fray or mutiny is this?

Franklin. 'Tis nothing but some brabling paltry fray,

Devised to pick men's pockets in the throng.

Arden. Is't nothing else? come, Franklin, let's away,

Exeunt.

Will. What 'mends shall I have for my broken head ?

Prentice. Marry, this 'mends, that if you get you not
away all the sooner, you shall be well beaten and
sent to the Counter.
Exit Prentice.

Will. Well, I'll be gone, but look to your signs, for I'll
pull them down all. Shakebag, my broken head
grieves me not so much as by this means Arden hath escaped.
Here enters Greene.

I had a glimpse of him and his companion.

Greene. Why, sirs, Arden 's as well as I ; I met him and
Franklin going merrily to the ordinary. What, dare you not do it?

Will. Yes, sir, we dare do it ; but, were my consent to
give again, we would not do it under ten pound
more. I value every drop of my blood at a French
crown. I have had ten pound to steal a dog, and we
have no more here to kill a man ; but that a bargain
is a bargain, and so forth, you should do it yourself.

Greene. I pray thee, how came thy head broke ?

Will. Why, thou seest it is broke, dost thou not ?

Shakebag. Standing against a stall, watching Arden's
coming, a boy let down his shop-window and broke
his head; whereupon arose a brawl, and in the
tumult Arden escaped us and passed by unthought
on. But forbearance is no acquittance ; another
time we'll do it, I warrant thee.

Greene. I pray thee, Will, make clean thy bloody brow,
And let us bethink us on some other place
Where Arden may be met with handsomely.
Remember how devoutly thou hast sworn
To kill the villain ; think upon thine oath.

Will. Tush, I have broken five hundred oaths !
But wouldst thou charm me to effect this deed,
Tell me of gold, my resolution's fee ;
Say thou seest Mosbie kneeling at my knees,
Offering me service for my high attempt,
And sweet Alice Arden, with a lap of crowns,
Comes with a lowly curtsey to the earth,
Saying ' Take this but for thy quarterage,
Such yearly tribute will I answer thee.'
Why, this would steel soft-mettled cowardice,
WAith which Black Will was never tainted yet.
I tell thee, Greene, the forlorn traveller,
Whose lips are glued with summer's parching heat.
Ne'er longed so much to see a running brook
As I to finish Arden's tragedy.

Seest thou this gore that cleaveth to my face?
From hence ne'er will I wash this bloody stain,
Till Arden's heart be panting in my hand.

Greene. Why, that's well said ; but what saith Shakebag ?

Shakebag. I cannot paint my valour out with words :
But, give me place and opportunity,
Such mercy as the starven lioness.
When she is dry sucked of her eager young,
Shows to the prey that next encounters her,
On Arden so much pity would I take.

Greene. So should it fare with men of firm resolve.
And now, sirs, seeing that this accident
Of meeting him in Paul's hath no success.
Let us bethink us of some other place
Whose earth may swallow up this Arden's blood.
Here enters Michael.

See, yonder comes his man : and wot you what ?
The foolish knave's in love with Mosbie's sister,
And for her sake, whose love he cannot get
Unless Mosbie solicit his suit.

The villain hath sworn the slaughter of his master.
We'll question him, for he may stead us much, —
How now, Michael, whither are you going?

Michael. My master hath new supped.
And I am going to prepare his chamber.

Greene. Where supped Master Arden ?

Michael. At the Nag's Head, at the eighteen pence ordinary. How now, Master Shakebag.' what, Black Will ! God's dear lady, how chance your face is so bloody ?

Will. Go to, sirrah, there is a chance in it ; this sauciness in you will make you be knocked.

Michael. Nay, an you be offended, I'll be gone.

Greene. Stay, Michael, you may not escape us so.
Michael, I know you love your master well.

Michael. Why, so I do ; but wherefore urge you that ?

Greene. Because I think you love your mistress better.

Michael. So think not I ; but say, i'faith, what, if I should?

Shakebag. Come to the purpose, Michael ; we hear
You have a pretty love in Feversham.

Michael. Why, have I two or three, what 's that to thee !

Will. You deal too mildly with the peasant. Thus it is :
'Tis known to us that you love Mosbie's sister ;
We know besides that you have ta'en your oath
To further Mosbie to your mistress' bed,

And kill your master for his sister's sake.
Now, sir, a poorer coward than yourself
Was never fostered in the coast of Kent :
How comes it then that such a knave as you
Dare swear a matter of such consequence ?

Greene. Ah, Will

Will. Tush, give me leave, there 's no more but this :
Sith thou hast sworn, we dare discover all ;
And hadst thou or should'st thou utter it,
We have devised a complat under hand,
Whatever shall betide to any of us.
To send thee roundly to the devil of hell.
And therefore thus : I am the very man,
Marked in my birth-hour by the destinies.
To give an end to Arden's life on earth ;
Thou but a member but to whet the knife
Whose edge must search the closet of his breast :
Thy office is but to appoint the place,
And train thy master to his tragedy ;

Mine to perform it when occasion serves.
Then be not nice, but here devise with us
How and what way we may conclude his death.

Shakebag. So shalt thou purchase Mosbie for thy friend,
And by his friendship gain his sister's love.

Greene. So shall thy mistress be thy favourer,
And thou disburdened of the oath thou made.

Michael. Well, gentlemen, I cannot but confess,
Sith you have urged me so apparently,
That I have vowed my master Arden's death ;
And he whose kindly love and liberal hand
Doth challenge nought but good deserts of me,
I will deliver over to your hands. So
This night come to his house at Aldersgate :
The doors I'll leave unlock'd against you come.
No sooner shall ye enter through the latch,
Over the threshold to the inner court,
But on your left hand shall you see the stairs

That leads directly to my master's chamber :

There take him and dispose him as ye please.
Now it were good we parted company ;
What I have promised, I will perform.

Will. Should you deceive us, 'twould go wrong with you.

Michael. I will accomplish all I have revealed.

Will. Come, let 's go drink : choler makes me as dry as a dog.
Exeunt Will, Greene, and Shakebag.

Manet Michael.

Michael. Thus feeds the lamb securely on the down,
Whilst through the thicket of an arbour brake
The hunger-bitten wolf o'erpries his haunt
And takes advantage for to eat him up.
Ah, harmless Arden, how hast thou misdone,
That thus thy gentle life is levelled at ?

The many good turns that thou hast done to me.
Now must I quittance with betraying thee.
I that should take the weapon in my hand
And buckler thee from ill-intending foes.
Do lead thee with a wicked fraudful smile,
As unsuspected, to the slaughter-house.
So have I sworn to Mosbie and my mistress,
So have I promised to the slaughtermen ;
And should I not deal currently with them.
Their lawless rage would take revenge on me.

Tush, I will spurn at mercy for this once :
Let pity lodge where feeble women lie,
I am resolved, and Arden needs must die.
Exit Michael.

ACT III

SCENE I

A Room in Franklin's House at Alder's gate.

Enter Arden and Franklin.

Arden. No, Franklin, no : if fear or stormy threats,
If love of me or care of womanhood,
If fear of God or common speech of men,
WTio mangle credit with their wounding words,
And couch dishonour as dishonour buds,
Might join repentance in her wanton thoughts,
No question then but she would turn the leaf
And sorrow for her dissolution ;
But she is rooted in her wickedness.
Perverse and stubborn, not to be reclaimed ; lo
Good counsel is to her as rain to weeds,
And reprehension makes her vice to grow
As Hydra's head that plenished by decay.
Her faults, methink, are painted in my face,
For every searching eye to overread ;
And Mosbie's name, a scandal unto mine,
Is deeply trenched in my blushing brow.
Ah, Franklin, Franklin, when I think on this,

My heart's grief rends my other powers
Worse than the conflict at the hour of death.

Franklin. Gentle Arden, leave this sad lament :
She will amend, and so your griefs will cease ;
Or else she 'll die, and so your sorrows end.
If neither of these two do haply fall,
Yet let your comfort be that others bear
Your woes, twice doubled all, with patience.

Arden. My house is irksome ; there I cannot rest.

Franklin. Then stay with me in. London ; go not home.

Arden. Then that base Mosbie doth usurp my room
And makes his triumph of my being thence.
At home or not at home, where'er I be,
Here, here it lies, ah Franklin, here it lies
That will not out till wretched Arden dies.
Here enters Michael.

Franklin. Forget your griefs a while ; here comes your man.

Arden. What a-clock is 't, sirrah ?

Michael. Almost ten.

Arden. See, see, how runs away the weary time !
Come, Master Franklin, shall we go to bed ?
Exeunt Arden and Michael,
Manet Franklin.

Franklin. I pray you, go before : I'll follow you.
— Ah, what a hell is fretful jealousy !
What pity-moving words, what deep-fetched sighs,
What grievous groans and overlading woes
Accompanies this gentle gentleman !
Now will he shake his care-oppressed head,
Then fix his sad eyes on the sullen earth.
Ashamed to gaze upon the open world ;
Now will he cast his eyes up towards the heavens,
Looking that ways for redress of wrong :

Sometimes he seeketh to beguile his grief
And tells a story with his careful tongue ;
Then comes his wife's dishonour in his thoughts
And in the middle cutteth off his tale,
Pouring fresh sorrow on his weary limbs.
So woe-begone, so inly charged with woe,
Was never any lived and bare it so.

Here enters Michael.

Michael. My master would desire you come to bed.

Franklin. Is he himself already in his bed .'
Exit Franklin. Manet Michael.

Michael. He is, and fain would have the light away.
— Conflicting thoughts, encamped in my breast,
Awake me with the echo of their strokes
And I, a judge to censure either side,
Can give to neither wished victory.
My master's kindness pleads to me for life

With just demand, and I must grant it him :
My mistress she hath forced me with an oath,
For Susan's sake, the which I may not break.

For that is nearer than a master's love :
That grim-faced fellow, pitiless Black Will,
And Shakebag, stern in bloody stratagem,
— Two rougher ruffians never lived in Kent, —
Have sworn my death, if I infringe my vow,
A dreadfal thing to be considered of.
Methinks I see them with their bolstered hair
Staring and grinning in thy gentle face.
And in their ruthless hands their daggers drawn,
Insulting o'er thee with a peck of oaths.
Whilst thou submissive, pleading for relief,
Art mangled by their ireful instruments.
Methinks I hear them ask where Michael is,
And pitiless Black Will cries : ' Stab the slave !
The peasant will detect the tragedy ! '
The wrinkles in his foul death-threat'ning face
Gapes open wide, like graves to swallow men.

My death to him is but a merriment.
And he will murder me to make him sport.
He comes, he comes ! ah. Master Franklin, help I
Call on the neighbours, or we are but dead !

Here enters Franklin and Arden.

Franklin. What dismal outcry calls me from my rest ?

Arden. What hath occasioned such a fearful cry?
Speak, Michael: hath any injured thee?

Michael. Nothing, sir ; but as I fell asleep,
Upon the threshold leaning to the stairs,
I had a fearful dream that troubled me,
And in my slumber thought I was beset
With murderer thieves that came to rifle me.
My trembling joints witness my inward fear :

I crave your pardons for disturbing you.

Arden. So great a cry for nothing I ne'er heard.
Michael, are the doors fast locked and all things safe?

Michael. I cannot tell ; I think I locked the doors.

Arden. I like not this, but I'll go see myself. —
Ne'er trust me but the doors were all unlocked:

This negligence not half contenteth me.
Get you to bed, and if you love my favour,
Let me have no more such pranks as these.
Come, Master Franklin, let us go to bed.

Franklin. Ay, by my faith ; the air is very cold.
Michael, farewell ; I pray thee dream no more.

Exeunt.

SCENE II

Outside Franklin's house.

Here enters Will, Greene, and Shakebag.

Shakebag. Black night hath hid the pleasures of the day,

And sheeting darkness overhangs the earth.

And with the black fold of her cloudy robe

Obscures us from the eyesight of the world,

In which sweet silence such as we triumph.

The lazy minutes linger on their time,

As loth to give due audit to the hour,

Till in the watch our purpose be complete

And Arden sent to everlasting night.

Greene, get you gone, and linger here about, lo

And at some hour hence come to us again.

Where we will give you instance of his death.

Greene. Speed to my wish, whose will so e'er says no ;

And so I'll leave you for an hour or two.

Exit Greene.

Will. I tell thee, Shakebag, would this thing were done :
I am so heavy that I can scarce go ;
This drowsiness in me bodes little good.

Shakebag. How now. Will ? become a precis'.an ?
Nay, then let's go sleep, when bugs and fears
Shall kill our courages with their fancy's work.

Will. Why, Shakebag, thou mistakes me much,
And wrongs me too in telling me of fear.

Were 't not a serious thing we go about.
It should be slipt till I had fought with thee,
To let thee know I am no coward, I.
I tell thee, Shakebag, thou abusest me.

Shakebag. Why, thy speech bewrayed an inly kind of fear,
And savoured of a weak relenting spirit.
Go forward now in that we have begun,
And afterwards attempt me when thou darest.

Will. And if I do not, heaven cut me off!
But let that pass, and show me to this house,
Where thou shalt see I'll do as much as Shakebag.

Shakebag. This is the door; but soft, methinks 'tis shut.
The villain Michael hath deceived us.

Will. Soft, let me see, Shakebag ; 'tis shut indeed.
Knock with thy sword, perhaps the slave will hear.

Shakebag. It will not be ; the white-livered peasant
Is gone to bed, and laughs us both to scorn.

Will. And he shall buy his merriment as dear
As ever coistril bought so little sport :
Ne'er let this sword assist me when I need,
But rust and canker after I have sworn.
If I, the next time that I meet the hind,
Lop not away his leg, his arm, or both.

Shakebag. And let me never draw a sword again.
Nor prosper in the twilight, cockshut light.

When I would fleece the wealthy passenger.
But lie and languish in a loathsome den.
Hated and spit at by the goers-by,
And in that death may die unpitied.
If I, the next time that I meet the slave,
Cut not the nose from off the coward's face
And trample on it for this villainy.

Will. Come, let 's go seek out Greene ; I know he 'll swear.

Shakebag. He were a villain, an he would not swear.
'Twould make a peasant swear among his boys,
That ne'er durst say before but ' yea ' and ' no,'
To be thus flouted of a coistril.

Will. Shakebag, let's seek out Greene, and in the morning
At the alehouse butting Arden's house
Watch the out-coming of that prick-eared cur.

And then let me alone to handle him.

Exeunt.

SCENE III

Room in Franklin's house as before.

Here enters Arden Franklin and Michael

Arden. Sirrah, get you back to Billingsgate
And learn what time the tide will serve our turn ;
Come to us in Paul's. First go make the bed,
And afterwards go hearken for the flood.

Exit Michael.

Come, Master Franklin, you shall go with me.
This night I dreamt that, being in a park,
A toil was pitched to overthrow the deer.
And I upon a little rising hill
Stood whistly watching for the herd's approach.
Even there, methoughts, a gentle slumber took me,

And summoned all my parts to sweet repose;
But in the pleasure of this golden rest
An ill-thewed foster had removed the toil,
And rounded me with that beguiling home
Which late, methought, was pitched to cast the deer.
With that he blew an evil-sounding horn,
And at the noise another herdman came.
With falchion drawn, and bent it at my breast,
Crying aloud, ' Thou art the game we seek ! '
With this I woke and trembled every joint,
Like one obscured in alittle bush,
That sees a lion foraging about,
And, when the dreadful forest-king is gone,
He pries about with timorous suspect
Throughout the thorny casements of the brake,
And will not think his person dangerless.
But quakes and shivers, though the cause be gone:
So, trust me, Franklin, when I did awake,
I stood in doubt whether I waked or no :

Such great impression took this fond surprise.

God grant this vision bedeem me any good.

Franklin. This fantasy doth rise from Michael's fear.
Who being awaked with the noise he made.
His troubled senses yet could take no rest ;
And this, I warrant you, procured your dream.

Arden. It may be so, God frame it to the best :
But oftentimes my dreams presage too true.

Franklin. To such as note their nightly fantasies,
Some one in twenty may incur belief;
But use it not, 'tis but a mockery. 40

Arden. Come, Master Franklin ; we'll now walk in Paul's
And dine together at the ordinary.
And by my man's direction draw to the quay,
And with the tide go down to Feversham.

Say, Master Franklin, shall it not be so ?

Franklin. At your good pleasure, sir ; I'll bear you company.

Exeunt.

SCENE IV

A Idersgate.

Here enters Michael at the door.

Here enters Greene, Will, and Shakebag at another door.

Will. Draw, Shakebag, for here 's that villain Michael.

Greene. First, Will, let 's hear what he can say.

Will. Speak, milksop slave, and never after speak.

Michael. For God's sake, sirs, let me excuse myself:
For here I swear, by heaven and earth and all,
I did perform the utmost of my task.
And left the doors unbolted and unlocked.

But see the chance : Franklin and my master
Were very late conferring in the porch,
And Franklin left his napkin where he sat
With certain gold knit in it, as he said.
Being in bed, he did bethink himself,
And coming down he found the doors unshut :
He locked the gates, and brought away the keys,
For which offence my master rated me.
But now I am going to see what flood it is,
For with the tide my master will away ;
Where you may front him well on Rainham Down,
A place well-fitting such a stratagem.

Will. Your excuse hath somewhat mollified my choler.
Why now, Greene, 'tis better now nor e'er it was.

Greene. But, Michael, is this true?

Michael. As true as I report it to be true.

Shakebag. Then, Michael, this shall be your penance, To feast us all at the Salutation,

Where we will plat our purpose thoroughly.

Greene. And, Michael, you shall bear no news of this tide.

Because they two may be in Rainham Down

Before your master.

Michael. Why, I'll agree to anything you 'll have me.

So you will except of my company.

Exeunt.

SCENE V

Arden's House at Feversham.

Here enters Mosbie.

Mosbie. Disturbed thoughts drives me from company
And dries my marrow with their watchfulness ;
Continual trouble of my moody brain
Feebles my body by excess of drink,
And nips me as the bitter north-east wind
Doth check the tender blossoms in the spring.
Well fares the man, howe'er his cates do taste,
That tables not with foul suspicion ;
And he but pines amongst his delicates.
Whose troubled mind is stuffed with discontent.
My golden time was when I had no gold ;
Though then I wanted, yet I slept secure ;
My daily toil begat me night's repose.
My night's repose made daylight fresh to me.
But since I climbed the top-bough of the tree

And sought to build my nest among the clouds.

Each gentle stirry gale doth shake my bed.
And makes me dread my downfall to the earth.

But whither doth contemplation carry me ?
The way I seek to find, where pleasure dwells,
Is hedged behind me that I cannot back,
But needs must on, although to danger's gate.
Then, Arden, perish thou by that decree ;
For Greene doth ear the land and weed thee up
To make my harvest nothing but pure corn.
And for his pains I'll hive him up a while,
And after smother him to have his wax :
Such bees as Greene must never live to sting.
Then is there Michael and the painter too,
Chief actors to Arden's overthrow ;
Who when they shall see me sit in Arden's seat,
They will insult upon me for my meed.

Or fright me by detecting of his end.

I'll none of that, for I can cast a bone
To make these curs pluck out each other's throat.
And then am I sole ruler of mine own.
Yet Mistress Arden lives ; but she's myself,
And holy Church rites makes us two but one.

But what for that ? I may not trust you, Alice :
You have supplanted Arden for my sake,
And will extirpen me to plant another.
'Tis fearful sleeping in a serpent's bed,
And I will cleanly rid my hands of her.
Here enters Alice.

But here she comes, and I must flatter her.
— How now, Alice ? what, sad and passionate ?

Make me partaker of thy pensiveness :
Fire divided burns with lesser force.

Alice. But I will dam that fire in my breast
Till by the force thereof my part consume.

Ah, Mosbie !

Mosbie. Such deep pathaires, like to a cannon's burst
Discharged against a ruinated wall,
Breaks my relenting heart in thousand pieces.
Ungentle Alice, thy sorrow is my sore ;
Thou know'st it well, and 'tis thy policy
To forge distressful looks to wound a breast
Where lies a heart that dies when thou art sad.
It is not love that loves to anger love.

Alice. It is not love that loves to murder love.

Mosbie. How mean you that ?

Alice. Thou knowest how dearly Arden loved me.

Mosbie. And then ?

Alice. And then — conceal the rest, for 'tis too bad,

Lest that my words be carried with the wind,
And published in the world to both our shames.
I pray thee, Mosbie, let our springtime wither ;
Our harvest else will yield but loathsome weeds.
Forget, I pray thee, what hath passed betwin us,
For how I blush and tremble at the thoughts !

Mosbie. What ? are you changed ?

Alice. Ay, to my former happy life again,
From title of an odious strumpet's name
To honest Arden's wife, not Arden's honest wife.
Ha, Mosbie ! 'tis thou has rifled me of that
And made me slanderous to all my kin ;
Even in my forehead is thy name ingraven,
A mean artificer, that low-born name.
I was bewitched : woe worth the hapless hour
And all the causes that enchanted me !

Mosbie. Nay, if you ban, let me breathe curses forth,
And if you stand so nicely at your fame.

Let me repent the credit I have lost.
I have neglected matters of import
That would have stated me above thy state,
Forslowed advantages, and spurned at time :
Ay, Fortune's right hand Mosbie hath forsook
To take a wanton giglot by the left.

I left the marriage of an honest maid.
Whose dowry would have weighed down all thy wealth.

Whose beauty and demeanour far exceeded thee :
This certain good I lost for changing bad.

And wrapt my credit in thy company.
I was bewitched, — that is no theme of thine.

And thou unhallowed has enchanted me.
But I will break thy spells and exorcisms,
And put another sight upon these eyes
That showed my heart a raven for a dove.

Thou art not fair, I viewed thee not till now ;
Thou art not kind, till now I knew thee not ;
And now the rain hath beaten off thy gilt,
Thy worthless copper shows thee counterfeit
It grieves me not to see how foul thou art,
But mads me that ever I thought thee fair.
Go, get thee gone, a copesmate for thy hinds ;
I am too good to be thy favourite.

Alice. Ay, now I see, and too soon find it true,
Which often hath been told me by my friends,
That Mosbie loves me not but for my wealth.
Which too incredulous I ne'er believed.
Nay, hear me speak, Mosbie, a word or two ; lo
I'll bite my tongue if it speak bitterly.

Look on me, Mosbie, or I'll kill myself:
Nothing shall hide me from thy stormy look.
If thou cry war, there is no peace for me ;
I will do penance for offending thee.
And burn this prayer-book, where I here use

The holy word that had converted me.
See, Mosbie, I v/ill tear away the leaves,
And all the leaves, and in this golden cover
Shall thy sweet phrases and thy letters dwell ;
And thereon will I chiefly meditate.

And hold no other sect but such devotion.
Wilt thou not look ? is all thy love o'erwhelmed ?

Wilt thou not hear? What malice stops thine ears?
Why speaks thou not ? what silence ties thy tongue ?

Thou hast been sighted as the eagle is.
And heard as quickly as the fearful hare,
And spoke as smoothly as an orator,
When I have bid thee hear or see or speak,
And art thou sensible in none of these?
Weigh all thy good turns with this little fault,
And I deserve not Mosbie's muddy looks.
A fence of trouble is not thickened still :

Be clear again, I'll ne'er more trouble thee.

Mosbie. O no, I am a base artificer :
My wings are feathered for a lowly flight.

Mosbie ? fie ! no, not for a thousand pound.
Make love to you "i why, 'tis unpardonable ;
We beggars must not breathe where gentles are.

Alice. Sweet Mosbie is as gentle as a king,
And I too blind to judge him otherwise.
Flowers do sometimes spring in fallow lands,
Weeds in gardens, roses grow on thorns ;
So, whatsoe'er my Mosbie's father was.
Himself is valued gentle by his worth.

Mosbie. Ah, how you women can insinuate,
And clear a trespass with your sweet-set tongue !
I will forget this quarrel, gentle Alice,
Provided I'll be tempted so no more.

Here enters Bradshaw.

Alice. Then with thy lips seal up this new-made match.

Mosbie. Soft, Alice, here comes somebody.

Alice. How now, Bradshaw, what 's the news with you?

Bradshaw. I have little news, but here 's a letter
That Master Greene importuned me to give you.

Alice. Go in, Bradshaw ; call for a cup of beer ;
'Tis almost supper-time, thou shalt stay with us.

Exit Bradshaw.

Then she reads the letter.

We have missed of our purpose at London, but shall
perform it by the way. We thank our neighbour

Bradshaw. — Yours, Richard Greene.
How likes my love the tenor of this letter ?

Mosbie. Well, were his date completed and expired.

Alice. Ah, would it were ! Then comes my happy hour :
Till then my bliss is mixed with bitter gall.

Come, let us in to shun suspicion.

Mosbie. Ay, to the gates of death to follow thee. \Exeunt.

SCENE VI

Country near Rochester.

Here enters Greene Will and Shakebag.

Shakebag. Come, Will, see thy tools be in a readiness !
Is not thy powder dank, or will thy flint strike fire ?

Will. Then ask me if my nose be on my face,
Or whether my tongue be frozen in my mouth.

Zounds, here's a coil !
You were best swear me on the interrogatories
How many pistols I have took In hand,
Or whether I love the smell of gunpowder,
Or dare abide the noise the dag will make,
Or will not wink at flashing of the fire.
I pray thee, Shakebag, let this answer thee,
That I have took more purses in this down
Than e'er thou handledst pistols in thy life.

Shakebag. Ay, haply thou has picked more in a throng:
But, should I brag what booties I have took,
I think the overplus that 's more than thine
Would mount to a greater sum of money
Then either thou or all thy kin are worth.
Zounds, I hate them as I hate a toad
That carry a muscado in their tongue,
And scarce a hurting weapon in their hand.

Will. O Greene, intolerable !

It is not for mine honour to bear this.

Why, Shakebag, I did serve the king at Boulogne,

And thou canst brag of nothing that thou hast done.

Shakebag. Why, so can Jack of Feversham,

That sounded for a fillip on the nose,

When he that gave it him holloed in his ear.

And he supposed a cannon-bullet hit him.

Then they fight.

Greene. I pray you, sirs, list to Asop's talk :

Whilst two stout dogs were striving for a bone,

There comes a cur and stole it from them both ;

So, while you stand striving on these terms of manhood,

Arden escapes us, and deceives us all.

Shakebag. Why, he begun.

Will. And thou shalt find I'll end ;

I do but slip it until better time :

But, if I do forget

Then he kneels down and holds up his hands to heaven.

Greene. Well, take your fittest standings, and once more

Lime well your twigs to catch this wary bird.

I'll leave you, and at your dag's discharge

Make towards, like the longing water-dog

That coucheth till the fowling-piece be off.

Then seizeth on the prey with eager mood.

Ah, might I see him stretching forth his limbs.

As I have seen them beat their wings ere now !

Shakebag. Why, that thou shalt see, if he come this way.

Greene. Yes, that he doth, Shakebag, I warrant thee :

But brawl not when I am gone in any case.

But, sirs, be sure to speed him when he comes,

And in that hope I'll leave you for an hour.

Exit Greene.

Here enters Arden, Franklin, and Michael.

Michael. 'Twere best that I went back to Rochester :
The horse halts downright ; it were not good
He travelled in such pain to Feversham ;
Removing of a shoe may haply help it.

Arden. Well, get you back to Rochester ; but, sirrah, see
Ye o'ertake us ere we come to Rainham Down,
For 't will be very late ere we get home.

Michael. Ay, God he knows, and so doth Will and Shakebag,
That thou shalt never go further than that down ;
And therefore have I pricked the horse on purpose,
Because I would not view the massacre.
Exit Michael.

Arden. Come, Master Franklin, onwards with your tale.

Franklin. I do assure you, sir, you task me much :
A heavy blood is gathered at my heart,

And on the sudden is my wind so short
As hindereth the passage of my speech ;
So fierce a qualm yet ne'er assailed me.

Arden. Come, Master Franklin, let us go on softly :
The annoyance of the dust or else some meat
You ate at dinner cannot brook with you.
I have been often so, and soon amended.

Franklin. Do you remember where my tale did leave?

Arden. Ay, where the gentleman did check his wife.

Franklin. She being reprehended for the fact.
Witness produced that took her with the deed,
Her glove brought in which there she left behind.
And many other assured arguments.

Her husband asked her whether it were not so.

Arden. Her answer then? I wonder how she looked, Having-forsworn it with such vehement oaths,

And at the instant so approved upon her.

Franklin. First did she cast her eyes down to the earth,

Watching the drops that fell amain from thence ;

Then softly draws she forth her handkercher,

And modestly she wipes her tear-stained face ;

Them hemmed she out, to clear her voice should seem,

And with a majesty addressed herself

To encounter all their accusations. —

Pardon me, Master Arden, I can no more ;

This fighting at my heart makes short my wind.

Arden. Come, we are almost now at Rainham Down :

Your pretty tale beguiles the weary way ;

I would you were in state to tell it out.

Shakebag. Stand close. Will, I hear them coming,

Here enters Lord Cheiny with his men.

Will. Stand to it, Shakebag, and be resolute.

L. Cheiny. Is it so near night as it seems,

Or will this black-faced evening have a shower?

— What, Master Arden ? you are well met,

I have longed this fortnight's day to speak with you :

You are a stranger, man, in the Isle of Sheppy.

Arden. Your honour's always ! bound to do you service.

L. Cheiny. Come you from London, and ne'er a man with you ?

Arden, My man 's coming after, but here 's

My honest friend that came along with me.

L. Cheiny. My Lord Protector's man I take you to be.

Franklin. Ay, my good lord, and highly bound to you.

L. Cheiny. You and your friend come home and sup with me.

Arden. I beseech your honour pardon me ;

I have made a promise to a gentleman,

My honest friend, to meet him at my house ; Io

The occasion is great, or else would I wait on you.

L. Cheiny. Will you come to-morrow and dine with me, And bring your honest friend along with you .

I have divers matters to talk with you about.

Arden. To-morrow we'll wait upon your honour.
L. Cheiny. One of you stay my horse at the top of the hill.
— What ! Black Will ? for whose purse wait you ?
Thou wilt be hanged in Kent, when all is done.

Will. Not hanged, God save your honour ;
I am your bedesman, bound to pray for you.
L. Cheiny. I think thou ne'er said'st prayer in all thy life.—
One of you give him a crown : —
And, sirrah, leave this kind of life ;
If thou beest tainted for a penny-matter,
And come in question, surely thou wilt truss.
— Come, Master Arden, let us be going ;
Your way and mine lies four miles together.

Exeunt.

Manet Black Will and Shakebag.

Will. The devil break all your necks at four miles' end !

Zounds, I could kill myself for very anger !

His lordship chops me in,

Even when my dag was levelled at his heart.

I would his crown were molten down his throat.

Shakebag. Arden, thou hast wondrous holy luck.

Did ever man escape as thou hast done?

Well, I'll discharge my pistol at the sky,

For by this bullet Arden might not die.

Here enters Greene.

Greene. What, is he down? is he dispatched?

Shakebag. Ay, in health towards Feversham, to shame us all.

Greene. The devil he is ! why, sirs, how escaped he?

Shakebag. When we were ready to shoot,
Comes my Lord Cheiny to prevent his death.

Greene. The Lord of Heaven hath preserved him.

Will. Preserved a fig ! The Lord Cheiny hath preserved him,
And bids him to a feast to his house at Shorlow.
But by the way once more I'll meet with him,
And, if all the Cheinies in the world say no,
I'll have a bullet in his breast to-morrow.
Therefore come, Greene, and let us to Feversham.

Greene. Ay, and excuse ourselves to Mistress Arden :
O, how she 'll chafe when she hears of this !

Shakebag. Why, I'll warrant you she 'll think we dare not do it.

Will. Why, then let us go, and tell her all the matter,
And plat the news to cut him off to-morrow.

Exeunt.

ACT IV

SCENE I

Arden's house at Faversham.

Here enters Arden and his wife, Franklin, and Michael

Arden. See how the hours, the gardant of heaven's gate,

Have by their toil removed the darksome clouds,

That Sol may well discern the trampled path

Wherein he wont to guide his golden car ;

The season fits ; come, Franklin, let 's away.

Alice. I thought you did pretend some special hunt,

That made you thus cut short the time of rest.

Arden. It was no chase that made me rise so early,

But, as I told thee yesternight, to go

To the Isle of Sheppy, there to dine with my Lord Cheiny ; lo

For so his honour late commanded me.

Alice. Ay, such kind husbands seldom want excuses ;
Home is a wild cat to a wandering wit.
The time hath been, — would God it were not past, —
That honour's title nor a lord's command
Could once have drawn you from these arms of mine.
But my deserts or your desires decay,
Or both ; yet if true love may seem desert,
I merit still to have thy company.

Franklin. Why, I pray you, sir, let her go along with us ;
I am sure his honour will welcome her
And us the more for bringing her along.

Arden. Content ; sirrah, saddle your mistress' nag.

Alice. No, begged favour merits little thanks ;
If I should go, our house would run away.

Or else be stolen ; therefore I'll stay behind.

Arden. Nay, see how mistaking you are ! I pray thee, go.

Alice. No, no, not now.

Arden. Then let me leave thee satisfied in this,
That time nor place nor persons alter me,
But that I hold thee dearer than my life.

Alice. That will be seen by your quick return.

Arden. And that shall be ere night, and if I live.
Farewell, sweet Alice, we mind to sup with thee.

Exit Alice.

Franklin. Come, Michael, are our horses ready ?

Michael. Ay, your horse are ready, but I am not ready,
for I have lost my purse, with six and thirty
shillings in it, with taking up of my master's nag.

Franklin. Why, I pray you, let us go before,

Whilst he stays behind to seek his purse.

Arden. Go to, sirrah, see you follow us to the Isle of Sheppy

To my Lord Cheiny's, where we mean to dine.

Exeunt Arden and Franklin. Manet Michael.

Michael. So, fair weather after you, for before you lies

Black Will and Shakebag in the broom close, too

close for you : they 'll be your ferrymen to long home.

Here enters the Painter.

But who is this ? the painter, my corrival, that

would needs win Mistress Susan.

Clarke. How now, Michael? how doth my mistress and all at home ?

Michael. Who? Susan Mosbie? she is your mistress, too ?

Clarke. Ay, how doth she and all the rest ?

Michael. All 's well but Susan ; she is sick.

Clarke. Sick? Of what disease?

Michael. Of a great fever.

Clarke. A fear of what ?

Michael. A great fever,

Clarke. A fever? God forbid !

Michael. Yes, faith, and of a lordaine, too, as big as yourself.

Clarke. O, Michael, the spleen prickles you. Go to,
you carry an eye over Mistress Susan.

Michael. I' faith, to keep her from the painter.

Clarke. Why more from a painter than from a serving
creature like yourself?

Michael. Because you painters make but a painting table of a pretty wench, and spoil her beauty with blotting.

Clarke. What mean you by that ?

Michael. Why, that you painters paint lambs in the lining of wenches' petticoats, and we serving-men put horns to them to make them become sheep.

Clarke. Such another word will cost you a cuff or a knock.

Michael. What, with a dagger made of a pencil ? Faith, 'tis too weak, and therefore thou too weak to win Susan.

Clarke. Would Susan's love lay upon this stroke.
Then he breaks Michael's head.

Here enters Mosbie, Greene and Alice.

Alice. I'll lay my life, this is for Susan's love.

Stayed you behind your master to this end ?
Have you no other time to brable in
But now when serious matters are in hand ? —
Say, Clarke, hast thou done the thing thou promised .?

Clarke. Ay, here it is ; the very touch is death

Alice. Then this, I hope, if all the rest do fail,
Will catch Master Arden,
And make him wise in death that lived a fool.
Why should he thrust his sickle in our corn,
Or what hath he to do with thee, my love,
Or govern me that am to rule myself?
Forsooth, for credit sake, I must leave thee I
Nay, he must leave to live that we may love.

May live, may love ; for what is life but love ?
And love shall last as long as life remains,
And life shall end before my love depart.

Mosbie. Why, what is love without true constancy ?

Like to a pillar built of many stones.
Yet neither with good mortar well compact
Nor with cement to fasten it in the joints,
But that it shakes with every blast of wind,
And, being touched, straight falls unto the earth,
And buries all his haughty pride in dust.
No, let our love be rocks of adamant,
Which time nor place nor tempest can asunder.

Greene. Mosbie, leave protestations now,
And let us bethink us what we have to do.
Black Will and Shakebag I have placed i' the broom,
Close watching Arden's coming ; let's to them
And see what they have done.
Exeunt,

SCENE II

The Kentish Coast opposite the Isle of Sheppy.

Here enters Arden and Franklin.

Arden. Oh, ferryman, where art thou ?

Here enters the Ferryman.

Ferryman, Here, here, go before to the boat, and I will follow you.

Arden. We have great haste ; I pray thee, come away.

Ferryman. Fie, what a mist is here !

Arden. This mist, my friend, is mystical.
Like to a good companion's smoky brain,
That was half drowned with new ale overnight.

Ferryman. 'Twere pity but his skull were opened to make more chimney room. lo

Franklin. Friend, what 's thy opinion of this mist?

Ferryman. I think 'tis like to a curst wife in a little house, that never leaves her husband till she have driven him out at doors with a wet pair of eyes ; then looks he as if his house were a-fire, or some of his friends dead.

Arden. Speaks thou this of thine own experience?

Ferryman. Perhaps, ay ; perhaps, no : For my wife is as other women are, that is to say, governed by the moon.

Franklin. By the moon ? how, I pray thee ?

Ferryman. Nay, thereby lies a bargain, and you shall not have it fresh and fasting.

Arden. Yes, I pray thee, good ferryman.

Ferryman. Then for this once ; let it be midsummer moon, but yet my wife has another moon.

Franklin. Another moon .?

Ferryman. Ay, and it hath influences and eclipses.

Arden. Why, then, by this reckoning you sometimes
play the man in the moon ?

Ferryman. Ay, but you had not best to meddle with
that moon, lest I scratch you by the face with my bramble-bush.

Arden. I am almost stifled with this fog; come, let's away.

Franklin. And, sirrah, as we go, let us have some more
of your bold yeomanry.

Ferryman. Nay, by my troth, sir, but flat knavery.

Exeunt.

SCENE III

Another place on the coast.

Here enters Will at one door and Shakebag at another.

Shakebag. Oh, Will, where art thou ?

Will. Here, Shakebag, almost in hell's mouth, where I
cannot see my way for smoke.

Shakebag. I pray thee speak still that we may meet by
the sound, for I shall fall into some ditch or other,
unless my feet see better than my eyes.

Will. Didst thou ever see better weather to run away
with another man's wife, or play with a wench at pot-finger?

Shakebag. No ; this were a fine world for chandlers, if
this weather would last ; for then a man should
never dine nor sup without candle-light. But,
sirrah Will, what horses are those that passed ?

Will. Why, didst thou hear any ?

Shakebag. Ay, that I did.

Will. My life for thine, 'twas Arden, and his companion,
and then all our labour's lost.

Shakebag. Nay, say not so, for if it be they, they may
haply lose their way as we have done, and then we
may chance meet with them.

Will. Come, let us go on like a couple of blind pilgrims.
Then Shakebag falls into a ditch.

Shakebag. Help, Will, help, I am almost drowned.
Here enters the Ferryman.

Ferryman. Who 's that that calls for help ?

Will. 'Twas none here, 'twas thou thyself.

Ferryman. I came to help him that called for help.
Why, how now ? who is this that 's in the ditch ?

You are well enough served to go without a guide
such weather as this.

Will. Sirrah, what companies hath passed your ferry this morning ?

Ferryman. None but a couple of gentlemen, that went
to dine at my Lord Cheiny's.

Will. Shakebag, did not I tell thee as much .

Ferryman. Why, sir, will you have any letters carried to them ?

Will. No, sir ; get you gone.

Ferryman. Did you ever see such a mist as this ?

Will. No, nor such a fool as will rather be bought than get his way.

Ferryman. Why, sir, this is no Hough-Monday ; you
are deceived. — What 's his name, I pray you, sir ?

Shakebag. His name is Black Will.

Ferryman. I hope to see him one day hanged upon a hill.

Exit Ferryman.

Shakebag. See how the sun hath cleared the foggy mist,

Now we have missed the mark of our intent.

Here enters Greene, Mosbie and Alice.

Mosbie. Black Will and Shakebag, what make you here?

What, is the deed done ? is Arden dead ?

Will. What could a blinded man perform in arms ?

Saw you not how till now the sky was dark,

That neither horse nor man could be discerned ?

Yet did we hear their horses as they passed.

Greene. Have they escaped you, then, and passed the ferry?

Shakebag. Ay, for a while ; but here we two will stay,

And at their coming back meet with them once more.
Zounds, I was ne'er so toiled in all mylife
In following so slight a task as this.

Mosbie. How cam'st thou so berayed .

Will. With making false footing in the dark ;
He needs would follow them without a guide.

Alice. Here 's to pay for a fire and good cheer :
Get you to Faversham to the Flower-de-luce,
And rest yourselves until some other time,

Greene. Let me alone ; it most concerns my state.

Will. Ay, Mistress Arden, this will serve the turn,
In case we fall into a second fog.

Exeunt Greene, Will and Shakebag.

Mosbie. These knaves will never do it, let us give it over.

Alice. First tell me how you like my new device :

Soon, when my husband is returning back.

You and I both marching arm in arm,

Like loving friends, we'll meet him on the way,

And boldly beard and brave him to his teeth.

When words grow hot and blows begin to rise,

I'll call those cutters forth your tenement,

Who, in a manner to take up the fray,

Shall wound my husband Hornsby to the death.

Mosbie. A fine device ! why, this deserves a kiss.

Exeunt.

SCENE IV

The open country.

Here enters Dick Reede and a Sailor.

Sailor. Faith, Dick Reede, it is to little end :
His conscience is too liberal, and he too niggardly
To part from any thing may do thee good.

Reede. He is coming from Shorlow as I understand ;
Here I'll intercept him, for at his house
He never will vouchsafe to speak with me.
If prayers and fair entreaties will not serve,
Or make no battery in his flinty breast,
Here enters Franklin, Arden and Michael.

I'll curse the carle, and see what that will do.
See where he comes to further my intent !
Master Arden, I am now bound to the sea ;
My coming to you was about the plat
Of ground which wrongfully you detain from me.
Although the rent of it be very small.
Yet it will help my wife and children,
Which here I leave in Faversham, God knows,
Needy and bare : for Christ's sake, let them have it !

Arden. Franklin, hearest thou this fellow speak ?
That which he craves I dearly bought of him,
Although the rent of it was ever mine.
Sirrah, you that ask these questions.
If with thy clamorous impeaching tongue
Thou rail on me, as I have heard thou dost,
I'll lay thee up so close a twelve-month's day,
As thou shalt neither see the sun nor moon.
Look to it, for, as surely as I live,
I'll banish pity if thou use me thus.

Reede. What, wilt thou do me wrong and threat me too.
Nay, then, I'll tempt thee, Arden, do thy worst.
God, I beseech thee, show some miracle
On thee or thine, in plaguing thee for this.
That plot of ground which thou detains from me,
I speak it in an agony of spirit.

Be ruinous and fatal unto thee !
Either there be butchered by thy dearest friends,
Or else be brought for men to wonder at.

Or thou or thine miscarry in that place.

Or there nm mad and end thy cursed days !

Franklin. Fie, bitter knave, bridle thine envious tongue ;
For curses are like arrows shot upright,
Which falling down light on the shooter's head.

Reede. Light where they will ! Were I upon the sea,
As oft I have in many a bitter storm,
And saw a dreadful southern flaw at hand,
The pilot quaking at the doubtful storm,
And all the sailors praying on their knees,
Even in that fearful time would I fall down,
And ask of God, whate'er betide of me,
Vengeance on Arden or some misevent
To show the world what wrong the carle hath done.
This charge I'll leave with my distressful wife,
My children shall be taught such prayers as these ;
And thus I go, but leave my curse with thee.

Exeunt Reede and Sailor.

Arden. It is the railingest knave in Christendom,

And oftentimes the villain will be mad ;

It greatly matters not what he says.

But I assure you I ne'er did him wrong.

Franklin. I think so, Master Arden.

Arden. Now that our horses are gone home before.

My wife may haply meet me on the way.

For God knows she is grown passing kind of late.

And greatly changed from

The old humour of her wonted frowardness.

And seeks by fair means to redeem old faults.

Franklin. Happy the change that alters for the best I

But see in any case you make no speech

Of the cheer we had at my Lord Cheiny's,

Although most bounteous and liberal,

For that will make her think herself more wronged,

In that we did not carry her along ;

For sure she grieved that she was left behind.

Arden. Come, Franklin, let us strain to mend our pace,

And take her unawares playing the cook.

Here enters Alice and Mosbie.

For I believe she'll strive to mend our cheer.

Franklin. Why, there 's no better creatures in the world,

Than women are when they are in good humours.

Arden. Who is that? Mosbie? what, so familiar?

Injurious strumpet, and thou ribald knave,

Untwine those arms.

Alice. Ay, with a sugared kiss let them untwine.

Arden. Ah, Mosbie ! perjured beast ! bear this and all !

Mosbie. And yet no horned beast ; the horns are thine.

Franklin. O monstrous ! Nay, then it is time to draw.

Alice. Help, help ! they murder my husband.

Here enters Will and Shakebag.

Shakebag. Zounds, who injures Master Mosbie ? Help,
Will ! I am hurt.

Mosbie. I may thank you. Mistress Arden, for this wound.

Exeunt Mosbie, Will, and Shakebag.

Alice. Ah, Arden, what folly blinded thee ?
Ah, jealous harebrained man, what hast thou done !
When we, to welcome thee with intended sport,
Came lovingly to meet thee on thy way,
Thou drewst thy sword, enraged with jealousy,
And hurt thy friend whose thoughts were free from harm :
All for a worthless kiss and joining arms,
Both done but merrily to try thy patience.

And me unhappy that devised the jest,
Which, though begun in sport, yet ends in blood !

Franklin. Marry, God defend me from such a jest !

Alice. Could'st thou not see us friendly smile on thee.
When we joined arms, and when I kissed his cheek ?

Hast thou not lately found me over-kind?
Did'st thou not hear me cry 'they murder thee'?

Called I not help to set my husband free ?
No, ears and all were witched ; ah me accursed
To link in liking with a frantic man !
Henceforth I'll be thy slave, no more thy wife.

For with that name I never shall content thee.
If I be merry, thou straightways thinks me light ;
If sad, thou sayest the sullens trouble me ;
If well attired, thou thinks I will be gadding ;
If homely, I seem sluttish in thine eye : no

Thus am I still, and shall be while I die.

Poor wench abused by thy misgovernment !

Arden. But is it for truth that neither thou nor he
Intendedst malice in your misdemeanour?

Alice. The heavens can witness of our harmless thoughts

Arden. Then pardon me, sweet Alice, and forgive this fault
Forget but this and never see the like.
Impose me penance, and I will perform it,
For in thy discontent I find a death, —
A death tormenting more than death itself

Alice. Nay, had'st thou loved me as thou dost pretend,
Thou wouldst have marked the speeches of thy friend,
Who going wounded from the place, he said
His skin was pierced only through my device ;
And if sad sorrow taint thee for this fault.
Thou would'st have followed him, and seen him dressed.

And cried him mercy whom thou hast misdone :
Ne'er shall my heart be eased till this be done.

Arden. Content thee, sweet Alice, thou shalt have thy will,
Whate'er it be. For that I injured thee,
And wronged my friend, shame scourgeth my offence ;
Come thou thyself, and go along with me,
And be a mediator 'twixt us two.

Franklin. Why, Master Arden ! know you what you do?
Will you follow him that hath dishonoured you ?

Alice. Why, canst thou prove I have been disloyal ?

Franklin. Why, Mosbie taunted your husband with the horn.

Alice. Ay, after he had reviled him
By the injurious name of perjured beast :
He knew no wrong could spite a jealous man
More than the hateful naming of the horn.

Franklin. Suppose 'tis true ; yet is it dangerous
To follow him whom he hath lately hurt.

Alice. A fault confessed is more than half amends ;
But men of such ill spirit as yourself
Work crosses and debates 'twixt man and wife.

Arden. I pray thee, gentle Franklin, hold thy peace :
I know my wife counsels me for the best.
I'll seek out Mosbie where his wound is dressed,
And salve this hapless quarrel if I may.

Exeunt Arden and Alice.

Franklin. He whom the devil drives must go perforce.
Poor gentleman, how soon he is bewitched !

And yet, because his wife is the instrument.
His friends must not be lavish in their speech.

Exit Franklin.

ACT V

SCENE I

A Street in Feversham,

Here enters Will, Shakebag and Greene.

Will. Sirrah Greene, when was I so long in killing a man?

Greene. I think we shall never do it ; let us give it over.

Shakebag. Nay, Zounds ! we'll kill him, though we be
hanged at his door for our labour.

Will. Thou knowest, Greene, that I have lived in London this twelve years, where I have made some go
upon wooden legs for taking the wall on me ; divers
with silver noses for saying 'There goes Black Will !'

I have cracked as many blades as thou hast nuts.

Greene. O monstrous lie ! lo

Will. Faith, in a manner I have. The bawdy-houses have paid me tribute ; there durst not a whore set up, unless she have agreed with me first for opening her shop-windows. For a cross word of a tapster I have pierced one barrel after another with my dagger, and held him by the ears till all his beer hath run out. In Thames Street a brewer's cart was like to have run over me : I made no more ado, but went to the clerk and cut all the notches of his tallies and beat them about his head. I and my company have taken the constable from his watch, and carried him about the fields on a coltstaff. I have broken a sergeant's head with his own mace, and bailed whom I list with my sword and buckler. All the tenpenny-alehouses-men would stand every morning with a quart-pot in their hand, saying, 'Will it please your worship drink?' He that had not done so, had been sure to have had his sign pulled down and his lattice borne away the next night. To conclude, what have I not done? yet cannot do this ; doubtless, he is preserved by miracle.

Here enters Alice and Michael.

Greene. Hence, Will ! here comes Mistress Arden.

Alice. Ah, gentle Michael, art thou sure they 're friends ?

Michael. Why, I saw them when they both shook hands.
When Mosbie bled, he even wept for sorrow,
And railed on Franklin that was cause of all.
No sooner came the surgeon in at doors.
But my master took to his purse and gave him money,
And, to conclude, sent me to bring you word
That Mosbie, Franklin, Bradshaw, Adam Fowle,
With divers of his neighbours and his friends,
Will come and sup with you at our house this night.

Alice. Ah, gentle Michael, run thou back again,
And, when my husband walks into the fair,

Bid Mosbie steal from him and come to me ;

And this night shall thou and Susan be made sure.

Michael. I'll go tell him.

Alice. And as thou goest, tell John cook of our guests,

And bid him lay it on, spare for no cost.

Exit Michael.

Will. Nay, and there be such cheer, we will bid ourselves. —

Mistress Arden, Dick Greene and I do mean to sup with you.

Alice. And welcome shall you be. Ah, gentlemen,

How missed you of your purpose yesternight ?

Greene. 'Twas 'long of Shakebag, that unlucky villain.

Shakebag. Thou dost me wrong; I did as much as any.

Will. Nay then. Mistress Arden, I'll tell you how it was :

When he should have locked with both his hilts,
He in a bravery flourished o'er his head ;
With that comes Franklin at him lustily,
And hurts the slave ; with that he slinks away.
Now his way had been to have come hand and feet,
one and two round, at his costard ; he like a fool
bears his sword-point half a yard out of danger.
I lie here for my life ; if the devil come, and he
have no more strength than I have fence, he shall
never beat me from this ward, I'll stand to it ; a
buckler in a skilful hand is as good as a castle ;
nay, 'tis better than a sconce, for I have tried it.
Mosbie, perceiving this, began to faint :
With that comes Arden with his arming sword,
And thrust him through the shoulder in a trice.

Alice. Ay, but I wonder why you both stood still.

Will. Faith, I was so amazed, I could not strike.

Alice. Ah, sirs, had he yesternight been slain,

For every drop of his detested blood
I would have crammed in angels in thy fist.
And kissed thee, too, and hugged thee in my arms.

Will. Patient yourself, we cannot help it now.
Greene and we two will dog him through the fair,
And stab him in the crowd, and steal away.
Here enters Mosbie.

Alice. It is unpossible ; but here comes he
That will, I hope, invent some surer means.

Sweet Mosbie, hide thy arm, it kills my heart.

Mosbie. Ay, Mistress Arden, this is your favour.

Alice. Ah, say not so ; for when I saw thee hurt,
I could have took the weapon thou let'st fall,
And run at Arden ; for I have sworn
That these mine eyes, offended with his sight,
Shall never close till Arden's be shut up.

This night I rose and walked about the chamber,
And twice or thrice I thought to have murdered him.

Mosbie. What, in the night ? then had we been undone.

Alice. Why, how long shall he live?

Mosbie. Faith, Alice, no longer than this night. —
Black Will and Shakebag, will you two perform
The complot that I have laid ?

Will. Ay, or else think me a villain.

Greene. And rather than you shall want, I'll help myself.

Mosbie. You, Master Greene, shall single Franklin forth,
And hold him with a long tale of strange news,
That he may not come home till supper-time.
I'll fetch Master Arden home, and we like friends
Will play a game or two at tables here.

Alice. But what of all this ? how shall he be slain?

Mosbie. Why, Black Will and Shakebag locked within the counting-house
Shall at a certain watchword given rush forth.

Will. What shall the watchword be ?

Mosbie. ' Now I take you ' ; that shall be the word :
But come not forth before in any case.

Will. I warrant you. But who shall lock me in ?

Alice. That will I do ; thou'st keep the key thyself

Mosbie. Come, Master Greene, go you along with me.
See all things ready, Alice, against we come.

Alice. Take no care for that ; send you him home.
Exeunt Mosbie and Greene.

And if he e'er go forth again, blame me.

Come, Black Will, that in mine eyes art fair ;
Next unto Mosbie do I honour thee ;
Instead of fair words and large promises
My hands shall play you golden harmony :
How like you this ? say, will you do it, sirs ?

Will. Ay, and that bravely, too. Mark my device :
Place Mosbie, being a stranger, in a chair.

And let your husband sit upon a stool.
That I may come behind him cunningly.
And with a towel pull him to the ground,
Then stab him till his flesh be as a sieve ;
That done, bear him behind the Abbey,
That those that find him murdered may suppose
Some slave or other killed him for his gold.

Alice. A fine device ! you shall have twenty pound,
And, when he is dead, you shall have forty more.
And, lest you might be suspected staying here,
Michael shall saddle you two lusty geldings ;

Ride whither you will, to Scotland, or to Wales,
I'll see you shall not lack, where'er you be.

Will. Such words would make one kill a thousand men !
Give me the key : which is the counting-house ?

Alice. Here would I stay and still encourage you ;
But that I know how resolute you are.

Shakebag. Tush, you are too faint-hearted; we must do it.

Alice. But Mosbie will be there, whose very looks
Will add unwonted courage to my thought,
And make me the first that shall adventure on him.

Will. Tush, get you gone ; 'tis we must do the deed.
When this door opens next, look for his death.

Exeunt Will and Shakebag.

Alice. Ah, would he now were here that it might open !

I shall no more be closed in Arden's arms,
That like the snakes of black Tisiphone
Sting me with their embracings ! Mosbie's arms
Shall compass me, and, were I made a star,
I would have none other spheres but those.

There is no nectar but in Mosbie's lips !
Had chaste Diana kissed him, she like me
Would grow love-sick, and from her watery bower
Fling down Endymion and snatch him up :
Then blame not me that slay a silly man
Not half so lovely as Endymion.

Here enters Michael.

Michael. Mistress, my master is coming hard by.

Alice. Who comes with him ?

Michael. Nobody but Mosbie.

Alice. That's well, Michael. Fetch in the tables, and
when thou hast done, stand before the counting-house door.

Michael. Why so ?

Alice. Black Will is locked within to do the deed.

Michael. What ? shall he die to-night ?

Alice. Ay, Michael.

Michael. But shall not Susan know it ?

Alice. Yes, for she'll be as secret as ourselves.

Michael. That 's brave. I'll go fetch the tables.

Alice. But, Michael, hark to me a word or two :
When my husband is come in, lock the street-door ;
He shall be murdered, or the guests come in.
Exit Michael.

Here enters Arden and Mosbie.

Husband, what mean you to bring Mosbie home ?
Although I wished you to be reconciled,
'Twas more for fear of you than love of him.
Black Will and Greene are his companions,
And they are cutters, and may cut you short :

Therefore I thought it good to make you friends.
But wherefore do you bring him hither now?

You have given me my supper with his sight.

Mosbie. Master Arden, methinks your wife would have me gone.

Arden. No, good Master Mosbie ; women will be prating.
Alice, bid him welcome ; he and I are friends.

Alice. You may enforce me to it, if you will ;
But I had rather die than bid him welcome.
His company hath purchased me ill friends,

And therefore will I ne'er frequent it more.

Mosbie. — Oh, how cunningly she can dissemble !

Arden. Now he is here, you will not serve me so.
Alice, I pray you be not angry or displeased ;
I'll bid him welcome, seeing you'll have it so.
You are welcome. Master Mosbie ; will you sit down?

Mosbie. I know I am welcome to your loving husband ;
But for yourself, you speak not from your heart.

Alice. And if I do not, sir, think I have cause.

Mosbie. Pardon me. Master Arden ; I'll away.

Arden. No, good Master Mosbie.

Alice. We shall have guests enough, though you go hence.

Mosbie. I pray you, Master Arden, let me go.

Arden. I pray thee, Mosbie, let her prate her fill.

Alice. The doors are open, sir, you may be gone.

Michael. — Nay, that's a He, for I have locked the doors.

Arden. Sirrah, fetch me a cup of wine, I'll make them friends.
And, gentle Mistress Alice, seeing you are so stout,
You shall begin ! frown not, I'll have it so.

Alice. I pray you meddle with that you have to do.

Arden. Why, Alice ! how can I do too much for him
Whose life I have endangered without cause."

Alice. 'Tis true ; and, seeing 'twas partly through my means,
I am content to drink to him for this once.
Here, Master Mosbie ! and I pray you, henceforth
Be you as strange to me as I to you.
Your company hath purchased me ill friends,

And I for you, God knows, have undeserved
Been ill spoken of in every place ;
Therefore henceforth frequent my house no more.

Mosbie. I'll see your husband in despite of you.
Yet, Arden, I protest to thee by heaven,
Thou ne'er shalt see me more after this night,
I'll go to Rome rather than be forsworn.

Arden. Tush, I'll have no such vows made in my house.

Alice. Yes, I pray you, husband, let him swear ;
And, on that condition, Mosbie, pledge me here.

Mosbie. Ay, as willingly as I mean to live.

Arden. Come, Alice, is our supper ready yet ?

Alice. It will by then you have played a game at tables.

Arden. Come, Master Mosbie, what shall we play for?

Mosbie. Three games for a French crown, sir, and please you.

Arden. Content.

Then they play at the tables. Enter Will and Shakebag.

Will. — Can he not take him yet? what a spite is that?

Alice. — Not yet, Will ; take heed he see thee not.

Will. — I fear he will spy me as I am coming.

Michael. — To prevent that, creep betwixt my legs.

Mosbie. One ace, or else I lose the game.

Arden. Marry, sir, there 's two for failing.

Mosbie. Ah, Master Arden, ' now I can take you.'

When Will pulls him down with a towel.

Arden. Mosbie ! Michael ! Alice ! what will you do ?

Will. Nothing but take you up, sir, nothing else.

Mosbie. There 's for the pressing iron you told me of.
Stabs kim.

Shakebag. And there 's for the ten pound in my sleeve.
Stabs him.

Alice. What ! groans thou ? nay, then give me the weapon !
Take this for hindering Mosbie's love and mine.

She stabs him.

Michael. O, mistress !

Will. Ah, that villain will betray us all.

Mosbie. Tush, fear him not ; he will be secret.

Michael. Why, dost thou think I will betray myself?

Shakebag. In Southwark dwells a bonny northern lass,
The widow Chambly ; I'll to her house now,
And if she will not give me harborough,
I'll make booty of the quean even to her smock.

Will. Shift for yourselves ; we two will leave you now.

Alice. First lay the body in the counting-house.
Then they lay the body in the Counting-house.

Will. We have our gold ; Mistress Alice, adieu ;
Mosbie, farewell, and Michael, farewell too.

Exeunt.

Enter Susan.

Susan. Mistress, the guests are at the doors.
Hearken, they knock : what, shall I let them in ?

Alice. Mosbie, go thou and bear them company.

Exit Mosbie.

And, Susan, fetch water and wash away this blood.

Susan. The blood cleaveth to the ground and will not out.

Alice. But with my nails I'll scrape away the blood ; —
The more I strive, the more the blood appears !

Susan. What's the reason, Mistress, can you tell ?

Alice. Because I blush not at my husband's death.

Here enters Mosbie.

Mosbie. How now ? what 's the matter ? is all well ?

Alice. Ay, well, if Arden were alive again.
In vain we strive, for here his blood remains.

Mosbie. Why, strew rushes on it, can you not ?
This wench doth nothing : fall unto the work.

Alice. 'Twas thou that made me murder him.

Mosbie. What of that ?

Alice. Nay, nothing, Mosbie, so it be not known.

Mosbie. Keep thou it close, and 'tis unpossible.

Alice. Ah, but I cannot ! was he not slain by me?
My husband's death torments me at the heart.

Mosbie. It shall not long torment thee, gentle Alice ;
I am thy husband, think no more of him.

Here enters Adam Fowle and Bradshaw.

Bradshaw. How now, Mistress Arden? what ail you weep?

Mosbie. Because her husband is abroad so late.
A couple of ruffians threatened him yesternight.

And she, poor soul, is afraid he should be hurt.

Adam. Is 't nothing else ? tush, he'll be here anon.
Here enters Greene.

Greene. Now, Mistress Arden, lack you any guests ?

Alice. Ah, Master Greene, did you see my husband lately?

Greene. I saw him walking behind the Abbey even now.
Here enters Franklin.

Alice. I do not like this being out so late. —
Master Franklin, where did you leave my husband ?

Franklin. Believe me I saw him not since morning.
Fear you not, he'll come anon ; meantime
You may do well to bid his guests sit down.

Alice. Ay, so they shall ; Master Bradshaw, sit you there ;
I pray you, be content, I'll have my will.

Master Mosbie, sit you in my husband's seat.

Michael. — Susan, shall thou and I wait on them ?
Or, an thou sayest the word, let us sit down too.

Susan. — Peace, we have other matters now in hand.
I fear me, Michael, all will be bewrayed.

Michael. — Tush, so it be known that I shall marry thee
in the morning, I care not though I be hanged ere
night. But to prevent the worst, I'll buy some ratsbane.

Susan. — Why, Michael, wilt thou poison thyself?

Michael. — No, but my mistress, for I fear she'll tell.

Susan. — Tush, Michael ; fear not her, she's wise enough.

Mosbie. Sirrah Michael, give's a cup of beer. —
Mistress Arden, here 's to your husband.

Alice. My husband !

Franklin. What ails you, woman, to cry so suddenly ?

Alice. Ah, neighbours, a sudden qualm came o'er my heart ;
My husband being forth torments my mind.
I know something 's amiss, he is not well ;
Or else I should have heard of him ere now.

Mosbie. — She will undo us through her foolishness.

Greene. Fear not. Mistress Arden, he's well enough.

Alice. Tell not me ; I know he is not well :
He was not wont for to stay thus late.
Good Master Franklin, go and seek him forth,
And if you find him, send him home to me,

And tell him what a fear he hath put me in.

Franklin. — I like not this ; I pray God all be well.
I'll seek him out, and find him if I can.

Exeunt Franklin, Mosbie, and Greene.

Alice. — Michael, how shall I do to rid the rest away?

Michael. — Leave that to my charge, let me alone.
'Tis very late. Master Bradshaw,
And there are many false knaves abroad,
And you have many narrow lanes to pass.

Bradshaw. Faith, friend Michael, and thou sayest true.
Therefore I pray thee light 's forth and lend 's a link.

Exeunt Bradshaw, Adam, and Michael.

Alice. Michael, bring them to the doors, but do not stay ;
You know I do not love to be alone

— Go, Susan, and bid thy brother come :

But wherefore should he come? Here is nought but fear ;

Stay, Susan, stay, and help to counsel me.

Susan. Alas. I counsel ! fear frights away my wits.

Then they open the counting-house door and look upon Arden.

Alice. See, Susan, where thy quondam master lies.

Sweet Arden, smeared in blood and filthy gore.

Susan. My brother, you, and I shall rue this deed.

Alice. Come, Susan, help to lift his body forth,

And let our salt tears be his obsequies.

Here enters Mosbie and Greene.

Mosbie. How now, Alice, whither will you bear him ?

Alice. Sweet Mosbie, art thou come ? Then weep that will:

I have my wish in that I joy thy sight.

Greene. Well, it behoves us to be circumspect.

Mosbie. Ay, for Franklin thinks that we have murdered him.

Alice. Ay, but he cannot prove it for his life.
We'll spend this night in dalliance and in sport.

Here enters Michael.

Michael. O mistress, the Mayor and all the watch
Are coming towards out house with glaives and bills

Alice. Make the door fast ; let them not come in.

Mosbie. Tell me, sweet Alice, how shall I escape ?

Alice. Out at the back-door, over the pile of wood,
And for one night lie at the Flower-de-luce.

Mosbie. That is the next way to betray myself.

Greene. Alas, Mistress Arden, the watch will take me hers,

And cause suspicion, where else would be none.

Alice. Why, take that way that Master Mosbie doth ;

But first convey the body to the fields.

Then they bear the body into the fields.

Mosbie. Until to-morrow, sweet Alice, now farewell :

And see you confess nothing in any case.

Greene. Be resolute. Mistress Alice, betray us not,

But cleave to us as we will stick to you.

Exeut Mosbie and Greene

Alice. Now, let the judge and juries do their worst :

My house is clear, and now I fear them not.

Susan. As we went, it snowed all the way.

Which makes me fear our footsteps will be spied.

Alice. Peace, fool, the snow will cover them again.

Susan. But it had done before we came back again.

Alice. Hark, hark, they knock ! go, Michael, let them in.
Here enters the Mayor and the Watch.

How now. Master Mayor, have you brought my husband home ?

Mayor. I saw him come into your house an hour ago.

Alice. You are deceived ; it was a Londoner.

Mayor. Mistress Arden, know you not one that is called Black Will ?

Alice. I know none such : what mean these questions ?

Mayor. I have the Council's warrant to apprehend him.

Alice. — I am glad it is no worse.

Why, Master Mayor, think you I harbour any such ?

Mayor. We are informed that here he is ;
And therefore pardon us, for we must search.

Alice. Ay, search, and spare you not, through every room :
Were my husband at home, you would not offer this.

Here enters Franklin.
Master Franklin, what mean you come so sad ?

Franklin. Arden, thy husband and my friend, is slain.

Alice. Ah, by whom ? Master Franklin, can you tell ?

Franklin. I know not ; but behind the Abbey
There he lies murdered in most piteous case.

Mayor. But, Master Franklin, are you sure 'tis he ?

Franklin. I am too sure ; would God I were deceived.

Alice. Find out the murderers, let them be known.

Franklin. Ay, so they shall : come you along with us.

Alice. Wherefore ?

Franklin. Know you this hand-towel and this knife ?

Susan. — Ah, Michael, through this thy negligence
Thou hast betrayed and undone us all.

Michael. — I was so afraid I knew now what I did :
I thought I had thrown them both into the well.

Alice. It is the pig's blood we had to supper.
But wherefore stay you? find out the murderers.

Mayor. I fear me you'll prove one of them yourself.

Alice. I one of them ? what mean such questions ?

Franklin. I fear me he was murdered in this house
And carried to the fields ; for from that place
Backwards and forwards may you see
The print of many feet within the snow.
And look about this chamber where we are,
And you shall find part of his guiltless blood ;
For in his slipshoe did I find some rushes,
Which argueth he was murdered in this room.

Mayor. Look in the place where he was wont to sit.
See, see ! his blood ! it is too manifest.

Alice. It is a cup of wine that Michael shed.

Michael. Ay, truly.

Franklin. It is his blood, which, strumpet, thou hast shed.
But if I live, thou and thy 'complices
Which have conspired and wrought his death shall rue it.

Alice. Ah, Master Franklin, God and heaven can tell
I loved him more than all the world beside.

But bring me to him, let me see his body.

Franklin. Bring that villain and Mosbie's sister too ;
And one of you go to the Flower-de-luce,
And seek for Mosbie, and apprehend him too.

Exeunt.

SCENE II

An obscure street in London.

Here enters Shakebag solus.

Shakebag. The widow Chambly in her husband's days I kept;
And now he 's dead, she is grown so stout
She will not know her old companions.
I came thither, thinking to have had harbour

As I was wont,
And she was ready to thrust me out at doors ;
But whether she would or no, I got me up,
And as she followed me, I spurned her down the stairs,
And broke her neck, and cut her tapster's throat,
And now I am going to fling them in the Thames.

I have the gold ; what care I though it be known!
I'll cross the water and take sanctuary.

Exit.

SCENE III

Arden's House at Feversham.

Here enters the Mayor, Mosbie, Alice, Franklin,

Michael, and Susan.

Mayor. See, Mistress Arden, where your husband lies ;
Confess this foul fault and be penitent.

Alice. Arden, sweet husband, what shall I say?
The more I sound his name, the more he bleeds ;
This blood condemns me, and in gushing forth
Speaks as it falls, and asks me why I did it.
Forgive me, Arden : I repent me now,
And, would my death save thine, thou should'st not die.
Rise up, sweet Arden, and enjoy thy love,
And frown not on me when we meet in heaven :
In heaven I'll love thee, though on earth I did not

Mayor. Say, Mosbie, what made thee murder him ?

Franklin. Study not for an answer ; look not down :
His purse and girdle found at thy bed's head
Witness sufficiently thou didst the deed ;
It bootless is to swear thou didst it not.

Mosbie. I hired Black Will and Shakebag, ruffians both,
And they and I have done this murderous deed.

But wherefore stay we ? Come and bear me hence.

Franklin. Those ruffians shall not escape ; I will up to London,

And get the Councirs warrant to apprehend them.

Exeunt.

SCENE IV

The Kentish Coast.

Here enters Will.

Will. Shakebag, I hear, hath taken sanctuary,

But I am so pursued with hues and cries

For petty robberies that I have done,

That I can come unto no sanctuary.

Therefore must I in some oyster-boat

At last be fain to go on board some hoy.

And so to Flushing. There is no staying here.

At Sittingburgh the watch was like to take me, And had not I with my buckler covered my head.

And run full blank at all adventures,

I am sure I had ne'er gone further than that place ;

For the constable had twenty warrants to apprehend me.

Besides that, I robbed him and his man once at Gadshill.

Farewell, England ; I'll to Flushing now.

Exit Will

SCENE V

Justice-room at Feversham,

Here enters the Mayor, Mosbie, Alice A Michael, SusanA

and Bradshaw.

Mayor. Come, make haste and bring away the prisoners.

Bradshaw. Mistress Arden, you are now going to God,

And I am by the law condemned to die

About a letter I brought from Master Greene,

I pray you, Mistress Arden, speak the truth :

Was I ever privy to your intent or no.

Alice. What should I say? You brought me such a a letter,
But I dare swear thou knewest not the contents.
Leave now to trouble me with worldly things,
And let me meditate upon my saviour Christ,
Whose blood must save me for the blood I shed.

Mosbie. How long shall I live in this hell of grief?
Convey me from the presence of that strumpet.

Alice. Ah, but for thee I had never been a strumpet.
What cannot oaths and protestations do,
When men have opportunity to woo ?
I was too young to sound thy villainies,
But now I find it and repent too late.

Susan. Ah, gentle brother, wherefore should I die ?
I knew not of it till the deed was done.

Mosbie. For thee I mourn more than for myself ;
But let it suffice, I cannot save thee now.

Michael. And if your brother and my mistress
Had not promised me you in marriage,
I had ne'er given consent to this foul deed.

Mayor. Leave to accuse each other now,
And listen to the sentence I shall give.
Bear Mosbie and his sister to London straight,
Where they in Smithfield must be executed ;
Bear Mistress Arden unto Canterbury,
Where her sentence is she must be burnt ;
Michael and Bradshaw in Feversham must suffer death.

Alice. Let my death make amends for all my sins.

Mosbie. Fie upon women ! this shall be my song ;
But bear me hence, for I have lived too long.

Susan. Seeing no hope on earth, in heaven is my hope.

Michael. Faith, I care not, seeing I die with Susan.

Bradshaw. My blood be on his head that gave the sentence.

Mayor. To speedy execution with them all I

Exeunt.

SCENE VI

Here enters Franklin,

Franklin . Thus have you seen the truth of Arden's death.
As for the ruffians, Shakebag and Black Will,
The one took sanctuary, and, being sent for out,
Was murdered in Southwark as he passed
To Greenwich, where the Lord Protector lay.
Black Will was burned in Flushing on a stage ;
Greene was hanged at Osbridge in Kent ;
The painter fled and how he died we know not.

But this above the rest is to be noted :
Arden lay murdered in that plot of ground
Which he by force and violence held from Reede ;
And in the grass his body's print was seen
Two years and more after the deed was done.
Gentlemen, we hope you'll pardon this naked tragedy,
Wherein no filed points are foisted in
To make it gracious to the ear or eye ;

For simple truth is gracious enough,

And needs no other points of glosing stuff.

Exit.

THE BIRTH OF MERLIN

OR

THE CHILD HATH FOUND HIS FATHER

This Jacobean play was first performed in 1622 at the Curtain Theatre in Shoreditch and features a comic depiction of the birth of the fully grown Merlin to a country girl, and also features figures from Arthurian legend, including Uther Pendragon, Vortigern and Aurelius Ambrosius. The play was first published in 1662, in a quarto printed by Thomas Johnson for the booksellers Francis Kirkman and Henry Marsh. That first edition attributed the play to Shakespeare and William Rowley. *The Birth of Merlin* is one of two plays published in the seventeenth century as a Shakespearean collaboration, the other being *The Two Noble Kinsmen* . Most scholars reject the attribution to Shakespeare and believe that the play is Rowley's, perhaps with a different collaborator.

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Scene I.

Scene II.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

AURELIUS, King of Brittain.

VORTIGER, King of (Welsh) Brittain.

UTER PENDRAGON the Prince, Brother to AURELIUS.

DONOBERT, a Nobleman, and Father to CONSTANTIA and MODESTIA.

The Earl of GLOUCESTER, and Father to EDWYN.

EDOLL, Earl of Chester, and General to King AURELIUS.

CADOR, Earl of Cornwall, and Suitor to CONSTANTIA.
EDWYN, Son to the Earl of GLOUCESTER, and Suitor to MODESTIA.

TOCLIO and OSWALD, two Noblemen.
MERLIN the Prophet.

ANSELME the Hermit, after Bishop of Winchester.
Clown, brother to JONE, mother of MERLIN.

Sir NICHODEMUS NOTHING, a Courtier.
The Devil, father of MERLIN.

OSTORIUS, the Saxon General.
OCTA, a Saxon Nobleman
PROXIMUS, a Saxon Magician.
Two Bishops.

Two Saxon Lords.
Two of EDOLS Captains.

Two Gentlemen.

A little Antick Spirit.

ARTESIA, Sistor to OSTORIUS the Saxon General

CONSTANTIA and MODESTIA, Daughters to DONOBERT.

JONE GOE-TOO'T, Mother of MERLIN.

A Waiting-woman to ARTESIA.

LUCINA, Queen of the Shades.

The Scene Ancient Britain.

ACT I.

Scene I.

A Room In The Castle Of Lord DONOBERT.)

Enter DONOBERT, GLOUCESTER, CADOR, EDWIN, CONSTANTIA And MODESTIA.

CADOR.

You teach me language, sir, as one that knows

The Debt of Love I owe unto her Vertues;

Wherein like a true Courtier I have fed

My self with hope of fair Success, and now

Attend your wisht consent to my long Suit.

DONO.

Believe me, youthful Lord,

Time could not give an opportunity

More fitting your desires, always provided,

My Daughters love be suited with my Grant.

CADOR.

'Tis the condition, sir, her Promise seal'd.

DONO.

Ist so, Constantia.

CONSTAN.

I was content to give him words for oathes;
He swore so oft he lov'd me-

DONO.

That thou believest him?

CONST.

He is a man, I hope.

DONO.

That's in the trial, Girl.

CONST.

However, I am a woman, sir.

DONO.

The Law's on thy side then: sha't have a Husband,
I, and a worthy one. Take her, brave Cornwal,

And make her happiness great as our wishes.

CADOR.

Sir, I thank you.

GLOST.

Double the fortunes of the day, my Lord,
And crown my wishes too: I have a son here,
Who in my absence would protest no less
Unto your other Daughter.

DONO.

Ha, Gloucester, is it so? what says Lord Edwin?
Will she protest as much to thee?

EDWIN.

Else she must want some of her Sisters faith, Sir.

MODESTA.

Of her credulity much rather, Sir:

My Lord, you are a Soldier, and methinks

The height of that Profession should diminish

All heat of Loves desires,

Being so late employ'd in blood and ruins.

EDWIN.

The more my Conscience tyes me to repair

The worlds losses in a new succession.

MODEST.

Necessity, it seems, ties your affections them,

And at that rate I would unwillingly

Be thrust upon you; a wife is a dish soon cloys, sir.

EDWIN.

Weak and diseased appetites it may.

MODEST.

Most of your making have dull stomacks, sir.

DONO.

If that be all, Girl, thou shalt quicken him;
Be kinde to him, Modesta: Noble Edwin,
Let it suffice, what's mine in her speaks yours;
For her consent, let your fair suit go on,
She is a woman, sir, and will be won.

EDWIN.

You give me comfort, sir.

Enter TOCLIO.

DONO.

Now, Toclio?

TOCLIO.

The King, my honor'd Lords, requires your presence,
And calls a Councel for return of answer
Unto the parling enemy, whose Embassadors

Are on the way to Court.

DONO.

So suddenly?

Chester, it seems, has ply'd them hard at war,

They sue so fast for peace, which by my advice

They ne're shall have, unless they leave the Realm.

Come, noble Gloucester, let's attend the King.

It lies, sir, in your Son to do me pleasure,

And save the charges of a Wedding Dinner;

If you'l make haste to end your Love affairs,

One cost may give discharge to both my cares.

Exit DONO., GLOST.

EDWIN.

I'le do my best.

CADOR.

Now, Toclio, what stirring news at court?

TOCLIO.

Oh, my Lord, the Court's all fill'd with rumor, the City with news, and

the Country with wonder, and all th bells i'th'Kingdom mst proclaim it,

we have a new Holy-day a coming.

CONSTA.

A holy-day! for whom? for thee?

TOCLIO.

Me, Madam! 'sfoot! I'de be loath that any man should make a holy-day for me yet:

In brief, 'tis thus: there's here arrived at Court,

Sent by the Earl of Chester to the King,

A man of rare esteem for holyness,

A reverent hermit, that by miracle

Not onely saved our army,

But without aid of man o'rethrew

The pagan Host, and with such wonder, sir, As might confirm a Kingdom to his faith.

EDWIN.

This is strange news, indeed; where is he?

TOCLIO.

In conference with the King, that much respects him.

MODEST.

Trust me, I long to see him.

TOCLIO.

Faith, you will finde no great pleasure in him, for ought that I can see, lady. They say he is half a Prophet too: would he could tell me any news of the lost Prince; there's twenty Talents offer'd to him that finds him.

CADOR.

Such news was breeding in the morning.

TOCLIO.

And now it has birth and life, sir. If fortune bless me, I'le once more search those words where then we lost him; I know not yet what fate may follow me.

Exit.

CADOR.

Fortune go with you, sir. Come, fair Mistriss,
Your Sister and Lord Edwin are in gam,
And all their wits at stake to win the Set.

CONSTA.

My sister has the hand yet; we had best leave them:
She will be out anon as well as I;
He wants but cunning to put in a Dye.

Exit CADOR, CONSTAN.

EDWIN.

You are a cunning Gamester, Madam.

MODEST.

It is a desperate Game, indeed, this Marriage,

Where there's no winning without loss to either.

EDWIN.

Why, what but your perfection, noble Lady,

Can bar the worthiness of this my suit?

If so you please I count my happiness

From difficult obtaining, you shall see

My duty and observance.

MODEST.

There shall be place to neither, noble sir;

I do beseech you, let this mild Reply

Give answer to your suit: for here I vow,

If e're I change my Virgin name, by you

It gains or looses.

EDWIN.

My wishes have their crown.

MODEST.

Let them confine you then,

As to my promise you give faith and credence.

EDWIN.

In your command my willing absence speaks it. Exit.

MODEST.

Noble and vertuous: could I dream of Marriage,

I should affect thee, Edwin. Oh, my soul,

Here's something tells me that these best of creatures,

These models of the world, weak man and woman,

Should have their souls, their making, life, and being,

To some more excellent use: if what the sense

Calls pleasure were our ends, we might justly blame

Great natures wisdom, who rear'd a building

Of so much art and beauty to entertain

A guest so far incertain, so imperfect:

If onely speech distinguish us from beasts,

Who know no inequality of birth or place, But still to fly from goodness: oh, how base

Were life at such a rate! No, no, that power

That gave to man his being, speech and wisdom,

Gave it for thankfulness. To him alone

That made me thus, may I whence truly know,

I'le pay to him, not man, the love I owe.   Exit.

Scene II

The British Court.)

Flourish Cornets. Enter AURELIUS, King Of Brittain, DONOBERT, GLOUCESTER,

CADOR, EDWIN, TOCLIO, OSWOLD And Attendants.

AURELIUS.

No tiding of our brother yet? Tis strange,

So ne're the Court, and in our own Land too,

And yet no news of him: oh, this loss

Tempers the sweetness of our happy conquests

With much untimely sorrow.

DONO.

Royal sir,

His safety being unquestion'd should to time

Leave the redress of sorrow: were he dead,

Or taken by the foe, our fatal loss

Had wanted no quick Herald to disclose it.

AURELIUS.

That hope alone sustains me,

Nor will we be so ingrateful unto heaven

To question what we fear with what we enjoy

Is answer of our message yet return'd

From that religious man, the holy Hermit,

Sent by the Earl of Chester to confirm us

In that miraculous act? For 'twas no less:

Our Army being in rout, nay, quite o'rethrown,

As Chester writes, even then this holy man,

Arm'd with his cross and staff, went smiling on,

And boldly fronts the foe; at sight of whom

The Saxon stood amaz'd: for, to their seeming,

Above the Hermit's head appear'd such brightness,

Such clear and glorious beams, as if our men

March't all in fire; wherewith the Pagans fled,

And by our troops were all to death pursu'd.

GLOUCESTER.

'Tis full of wonder, sir.

AUREL.

Oh, Gloucester, he's a jewel worth a Kingdom.

Where's Oswold with his answer?

OSWOLD.

'Tis here, my Royal Lord.

AUREL.

In writing? willl he not sit with us?

OSWO.

His Orizons perform'd, he bad me say,

He would attend with all submission.

AUREL.

Proceed to councel then; and let some give order,

The Embassadors being come to take our answer,

The have admittance. Oswold, Toclio,

Be it your charge! - (Exeunt OS. And TOCLIO)

And now, my lords, observe

The holy councel of this reverend Hermit:

(reads) As you respect your safety, limit not

That onely power that has protected you;

Trust not an open enemy too far,

He's yet a looser, and knows you have won;

Mischiefs not ended are but then begun.

ANSELME The HERMIT.

DONO.

Powerful and pithie, which my advice confirms:

No man leaves physick when his sickness slakes,

But doubles the receipts: the word of Peace
Seems fair to blood-shot eyes, but being appli'd
With such a medicine as blinds all the sight
Argues desire of Cure, but not of Art.

AUREL.
You argue from defects;if both the name
And the condition of the Peace be one,
It is to be prefer'd, and in the offer,
Made by the Saxon, I see nought repugnant.

GLOST.
The time of Truce requir'd for thirty days
Carries suspicion in it, since half that space
Will serve to strengthen their weakned Regiment.

CADOR.
Who in less time will undertake to fre
Our Country from them?

EDWIN.

Leave that unto our fortune.

DONO.

Is not our bold and hopeful General
Still Master of the field, their Legions faln,
The rest intrencht for fear, half starv'd, and wounded,
And shall we now give o're our fair advantage?
'Fore heaven, my Lord, the danger is far more
In trusting to their words than to their weapons.

Enter OSWOLD.

OSWOLD.

The Embassadors are come, sir.

AUREL.

Conduct them in.
We are resolv'd, my Lords, since policy fail'd
In the beginning, it shall have no hand

In the conclusion.

That heavenl;y power that hath so well begun

Their fatal overthrow, I know, can end it:

From which fair hope my self will give them answer.

Flourish Cornets. Enter ARTESIA With The Saxon Lords.

DONO.

What's here? a woman Orator?

AUREL.

Peace, Donobert! - Speak, what are you, Lady?

ARTES.

The sister of the Saxon General,

Warlike Ostorius the East Anglese King;

My name Artesia, who in terms of love

Brings peace and health to great Aurelius,

Wishing she may return as fair a present

As she makes tender of.

AUREL.

The fairest present e're mine eyes were blest with! -
Command a chair there for this Saxon Beauty: -
Sit, Lady, we'l confer: your warlike brother
Sues for a peace you say?

ARTES.

With endless love unto your State and Person.

AUREL.

He's sent a moving Orator, believe me. -
What thinkst thou, Donobert?

DONO.

Believe me, sir, were I but yong agen,
This gilded pill might take my stomack quickly.

AUREL.

True, thou art old: how soon we do forget

Our ownd efects! Fair damsel, - oh, my tongue
Turns Traitor, and will betray my heart - sister to
Our enemy: - 'sdeath, her beauty mazes me,
I cannot speak if I but look on here. -
What's that we did conclude?

DONO.
This, Royal Lord -

AUREL.
Pish, thou canst not utter it: -
Fair'st of creatures, tell the King your Brother,
That we, in love - ha! - and honor to our Country,
Command his Armies to depart our Realm.
But if you please, fair soul - Lord Donobert,
Deliver you our pleasure.

DONO.

I shall, sir:
Lady, return, and certifie your brother -

AUREL.

Thou art too blunt and rude! return so soon?

Fie, let her stay, and send some messenger

To certifie our pleasure.

DONO.

What meanes your Grace?

AUREL.

To give her time of rest to her long Journey;

We would not willingly be thought uncivil.

ARTES.

Great King of Brittain, let it not seem strange,

To embrace the Princely Offers of a friend,

Whose vertues with thine own, in fairest merit,

Both States in Pace and Love may now inherit.

AUREL.

She speakes of Love agen:

Sure, 'tis my fear, she knows I do not hate her.

ARTES.

Be, then, thy self, most great Aurelius,

And let not envy nor a deeper sin

In these thy Councellors deprive thy goodness

Of that fair honor we in seeking peace

Give first to thee, who never use to sue

But force our wishes. Yet, if this seems light,

Oh, let my sex, though worthless your respect,

Take the report of thy humanity,

Whose mild and vertuous life loud fame displayes,

As being o'recome by one so worthy praise.

AUREL.

She has an Angels tongue. - Speak still.

DONO.

This flattery is gross, sir; hear no more on't. -

Lady, these childish complements are needless;

You have your answer, and believe it, madam,
His Grace, though yong, doth wear within his breast
Too grave a Councellor to be seduc't
By smoothing flattery or oyly words.

ARTES.

I come not, sir, to wooe him.

DONO.
'Twere folly, if you should; you must not wed him.

AUR.
Shame take thy tongue!   Being old and weak thy self,
Thou doat'st and looking on thine own defects,
Speak'st what thou'dst wish in me. Do I command
The deeds of others, mine own act not free?

Be pleas'd to smile or frown, we respect neither:
My will and rule shall stand and fall together.
Most fair Artesia, see the king descends

To give thee welcome with these warlike Saxons,
And now on equal terms both sues and grants:
Instead of Truce, let a perpetual League
Seal our united bloods in holy marriage;
Send the East Angles King this happy news,
That thou with me hast made a League for ever,
And added to his state a friend and brother.

Speak, dearest Love, dare you confirm this Title?

ARTES.

I were no woman to deny a good
So high and noble to my fame and Country.

AUREL.

Live, then, a Queen in Brittain.

GLOST.

He meanes to marry her.

DONO.

Death! he shall marry the devil first! Marry a Pagan, an Idolater?

CADOR.

He has won her quickly.

EDWIN.

She was woo'd afore she came, sure,
Or came of purpose to conclude the Match.

AUREL.

Who dares oppose our will? My Lord of Gloucester,
Be you Embassador unto our Brother,
The Brother of our Queen Artesia;
Tell him for such our entertainment looks him,
Our marriage adding to the happiness
Of our intended joys; mans good or ill
In this like waves agree, come double still.

Enter HERMIT

Who's this? the Hermit? Welcome, my happiness!
Our Countries hope, most reverent holy man,
I wanted but thy blessing to make perfect
The infinite sum of my felicity.

HERMIT.
Alack, sweet Prince, that happiness is yonder,
Felicity and thou art far asunder;
This world can never give it.

AUREL.
Thou art deceiv'd: see here what I have found,
Beauty, Alliance, Peace, and strength of Friends,
All in this all exceeding excellence:

The League's confirm'd.

HERMIT.
With whom, dear Lord?

AUREL.

With the great Brother of this Beauteous woman,
The Royal Saxon King.

HERMIT.

Oh, then I see,
And fear thou art too near thy misery.

What magick could so linck thee to this mischief?
By all the good that thou hast reapt by me,
Stand further from destruction.

AUREL.

Speak as a man, and I shall hope to obey thee.

HERMIT.

Idolaters, get hence! fond King, let go:
Thou hug'st thy ruine and thy Countries woe.

DONO.

Well spoke, old Father; too him, bait him soundly.

Now, by heavens blest Lady, I can scarce keep patience.

1. SAXON LORD.

What devil is this?

2. SAXON LORD.

That cursed Christian, by whose hellish charmes
Our army was o'rethrown.

HERMIT.

Why do you dally, sir? Oh, tempt not heaven;
Warm not a serpent in your naked bosom:

Discharge them from your Court.

AUREL.

Thou speak'st like madness!
Command the frozen shepherd to the shade,
When he sits warm i'th'Sun; the fever sick
To add more heat unto his burning pain:

These may obey,'tis less extremity

Then thou enjoynst to me. Cast but thine eye

Upon this beauty, do it, I'le forgive thee,

Though jealousie in other findes no pardon;

Then say thou dost not love; I shall then swear

Th'art immortal and no earthly man.

Oh, blame then my mortality, not me.

HERMIT.

It is thy weakness brings thy misery,

Unhappy Prince.

AUREL.

Be milder in thy doom.

HERMIT.

'Tis you that must indure heavens doom, which faln

Remember's just.

ARTES.

Thou shalt not live to see it. - How fares my Lord?
If my poor presence breed dislike, great Prince,
I am no such neglected soul, will seek
To tie you to your word.

AUREL.
My word, dear Love! may my Religion,
Crown, State and Kingdom fail, when I fail thee.
Command Earl Chester to breal up the camp
Without disturbance to our Saxon friends;
Send every hour swift posts to hasten on
The King her Brother, to conclude this League,
This endless happy Peace of Love and Marriage;
Till when provide for Revels, and give charge
That nought be wanting which (may) make our Triumphs
Sportful and free to all. If such fair blood
Ingender ill, man must not look for good.

(Exit All But HERMIT. Florish

Enter MODESTIA, Reading In A Book.

MODESTA.

How much the oft report of this blest Hermit
Hath won on my desires; I must behold him:
And sure this should be he. Oh, the world's folly,
Proud earth and dust, how low a price bears goodness!

All that should make man absolute shines in him.
Much reverent Sir, may I without offence
Give interruption to your holy thoughts?

HERMIT.

What would you, Lady?

MODESTA.

That which till now ne're found a language in me:
I am in love.

HER.

In Love? with what?

MODEST.

With vertue.

HER.

There's no blame in that.

MODEST.

Nay, sir, with you, with your Religious Life,

Your Vertue, Goodness, if there be a nmae

To express affection greater, that,

That I would learn and utter: Reverent Sir,

If there be any thing to bar my suit,

Be charitable and expose it; your prayers

Are the same Orizons which I will number.

Holy Sir,

Keep not instruction back from willingness,

Possess me of that knowledge leads you on

To this humility; for well I know

Were greatness good, you would not live so low.

HER.

Are you a Virgin?

MODEST.

Yes, Sir.

HER.

Your name?

MODEST.

Modesta.

HER.

Your name and vertues meet, a Modest Virgin:
Live ever in the sanctimonious way
To Heaven and Happiness. There's goodness in you,
I must instruct you further. Come, look up,
Behold yon firmament: there sits a power,

Whose foot-stool is this earth. Oh, learn this lesson,

And practise it: he that will climb so high,

Must leave no joy beneath to move his eye.   (Exit.

MODEST.

I apprehend you, sir: on Heaven I fix my love,

Earth gives us grief, our joys are all above;

For this was man in innocence naked born,

To show us wealth hinders our sweet return. (Exit.

ACT II.

Scene I.

A Forest.)

Enter CLOWN And His Sister Great With Childe.

CLOWN.

Away, follow me no further, I am none of thy brother. What, with Childe?
great with Childe and knows not whose the Father on't! I am asham'd to
call thee Sister.

JOAN.

Believe me, Brother, he was a Gentleman.

CLOWN.

Nay, I believe that; he gives arms, and legs too, and has made you the Herald to blaze 'em: but, Joan, Joan, sister Joan, can you tell me his name that did it? how shall we call my Cousin, your bastard, when we have it?

JOAN.

Alas, I know not the Gentlemans name, Brother.
I met him in these woods the last great hunting;
He was so kinde and proffer'd me so much,
As I had not the heart to ask him more.

CLOWN.

Not his name? why, this showes your Country breeding now; had you been brought up i'th'City, you'd have got a Father first, and the childe afterwards: hast thou no markes to know him by?

JOAN.

He had most rich Attire, a fair Hat and Feather, a gilt Sword, and most excellent Hangers.

CLOWN.

Pox on his Hangers, would he had been gelt for his labor.

JOAN.

Had you but heard him swear, you would have thought-

CLOWN

I, as you did; swearing and lying goes together still. Did his Oathes get you with Childe? we shall have a roaring Boy then, yfaith.

Well, sister, I must leave you.

JOAN.

Dear Brother, stay, help me to finde him out, I'le ask no further.

CLOWN.

'Sfoot, who should I finde? who should I ask for?

JOAN.

Alas, I know not, he uses in these woods,

And these are witness of his oathes and promise.

CLOWN.

We are like to have a hot suit on't, when our best witness's but

a Knight a'th'Post.

JOAN.

Do but enquire this Forrest, I'le go with you;

Some happy fate may guide us till we meet him.

CLOWN.

Meet him? and what name shall we have for him, when we meet him?

'Sfoot, thou neither knowst him nor canst tell what to call him.

Was ever man so tyr'd with such a business, to have a sister got
with child, and not know who did it? Well, you shalll see him, I'le
do my best for you, Ile make Proclamation; if these Woods and Trees,
as you say, will bear any witness, let them answer. Oh, yes: if there
be any man that wants a name will come in for conscience sake, and
acknowledge himself to be a Whore-Master, he shal have that laid to
his charge in an hour, he shall not be rid on in an age; if he have Lands,
he shall have an heir; if he have patience, he shall have a wife;
if he have neither Lands nor patience, he shall have a whore.
So ho, boy, so ho, so, so.

(Within) PRINCE UTER.
So ho, boy, so ho, illo ho, illo ho.

CLOWN.

Hark, hark, sister, there's one hollows to us; what a wicked world's this!
a man cannot so soon name a whore, but a knave comes presently: and see
where he is; stand close a while, sister.

Enter PRINCE UTER.

PRINCE.

How like a voice that Eccho spake, but oh,
My thoughts are lost for ever in amaazement.
Could I but meet a man to tell her beauties,
These trees would bend their tops to kiss the air
That from my lips should give her praises up.

CLOWN.

He talks of a woman, sister.

JOAN.

This may be he, brother.

CLOWN.

View him well; you see, he has a fair Sword, but his Hangers are faln.

PRINCE.

Here I did see her first, here view her beauty:

Oh, had I known her name, I had been happy.

CLOWN.

Sister, this is he, sure; he knows not thy name neither. A couple of wise fools yfaith, to get children, and know not one another.

PRINCE.

You weeping leaves, upon whose tender cheeks
Doth stand a flood of tears at my complainy,
Who heard my vows and oathes -

CLOWN.

Law, Law, he has been a great swearer too; tis he, sister.

PRINCE.

For having overtook her;
As I have seen a forward blood-hound strip
The swifter of the cry, ready to seize
His wished hopes, upon the sudden view,
Struck with astonishment, at his arriv'd prey,

Instead of seizure stands at fearful bay;
Or like to Marius soldiers, who, o'retook,
The eye sight killing Gorgon at one look
Made everlasting stand: so fear'd my power,
Whose cloud aspir'd the Sun, dissolv'd a shower.
Pigmalion, then I tasted thy sad fate,
Whose Ivory picture and my fair were one:

Our dotage past imagination.
I saw and felt desire -

CLOWN.
Pox a your fingering! did he feel, sister?

PRINCE.
But enjoy'd not.
Oh fate, thou hadst thy days and nights to feed
On calm affection; one poor sight was all,
Converts my pleasure to perpetual thrall:
Imbracing thine, thou lostest breath and desire,
So I, relating mine, will here expire.

For here I vow to you mounrful plants,

Who were the first made happy by her fame,

Never to part hence, till I know her name.

CLOWN.

Give me thy hand, sister, The Childe has found his Father. This is he, sure; as I am a man, had I been a woman, these kinde words would have won me. I should have had a great belly too, that's certain. Well, I'le speak to him. - Most honest and fleshly minded Gentleman, give me your hand, sir.

PRINCE.

Ha, what art thou, that thus rude and boldy darest

Take notice of a wretch much ally'd

To misery as I am?

CLOWN.

Nay, Sir, for our aliance, I shall be found to be a poor brother in Law of your worships: the Gentlewoman you spake on is my sister: you see whata claw she spreads; her name is Jane Go-too't. I am her elder, but she has been at it before me; 'tis a womans fault.

- Pox a this bashfulness! come forward, Jug, prethee, speak to him.

PRINCE.

Have you e're seen me, Lady?

CLOWN.

See ye? ha, ha! It seems she has felt you too: here's a yong Go-too't a coming, sir; she is my sister; we all love to Go-too't, as well as your worship. She's a Maid yet, but you make make her a wife, when you please, sir.

PRINCE.

I am amaz'd with wonder: Tell me, woman,
What sin have you committed worthy this?

JOAN.

Do you not know me, sir?

PRINCE.

Know thee! as I do thunder, hell, and mischief;

Witch, scullion, hag!

CLOWN.

I see he wll marry her; he speaks so like a husband.

PRINCE.

Death! I will cut their tongues out for ths blasphemy.

Strumpet, villain, where have you ever seen me?

CLOWN.

Speak for yourself, with a pox to ye.

PRINCE.

Slaves, Ile make you curse your selves for this temptation.

JOAN.

Oh, sir, if ever you did speak to me, it was in smoother phrase,

in fairer language.

PRINCE.

Lightning consume me, if I ever saw thee.

My rage o'reflowes my blood, all patience flies me. (Beats HER).

CLOWN.

Hold, I beseech you sir, I have nothing to say to you.

JOAN.

Help, help! murder, murder!

Enter TOCLIO And OSWOLD.

TOCLIO.

Make haste, Sir, this way the sound came, it was a (th') wood.

OSWOLD.

See where she is, and the Prince, the price of all our wishes.

CLOWN.

The Prince, say ye? ha's made a poor Subject of me, I am sure.

TOCLIO.

Sweet Prince, noble Uter, speak, how fare you, sir?

OSWOLD.

Dear sir, recal your self; your fearful absence
Hath won too much already on the grief
Of our sad King, from whom our laboring search
Hath had this fair success in meeting you.

TOCLIO.

His silence and his looks argue distraction.

CLOWN.

Nay, he's mad, sure, he will not acknowledge my sister, nor the childe neither.

OSWOLD.

Let us entreat your Grace along with us;

Your sight will bring new life to the King your Brother.

TOCLIO.

Will you go, sir?

PRINCE.

Yes, any whether; guide me, all's hell I see;

Mam may change air, but not his mistery.

(Exit PRINCE, TOCLIO)

JOAN.

Lend me one word with you, sir.

CLOWN.

Well said, sister, he has a Feather, and fair Hangers too, this may be he.

OSWOLD.

What would you, fair one?

JOAN.

Sure, I have seen you in these woods e're this.

OSWOLD.

Trust me, never; I never saw this place,

Till at this time my friend conducted me.

JOAN.

The more's my sorrow then.

OSWOLD.

Would I could comfort you.

I am a Bachelor, but it seems you have

A husband, you have beenfouly o'reshot else.

CLOWN.

A womans fault, we are all subject to go to't, sir.

Enter TOCLIO.

TOCLIO.

Oswold, away; the prince will not stir a foot without you.

OSWOLD.

I am coming. Farewel, woman.

TOCLIO.

Prithee, make haste.

(Exit OSWOLD).

JOAN.

Good sir, but one word with you, e're you leave us.

TOCLIO.

With me, fair soul?

CLOWN.

Shee'l have a fling at him too; the Childe must have a Father.

JOAN.

Have you ne'er seen me, sir?

TOCLIO.

Seen thee? 'Sfoot, I have seen many fair faces in my time: prithee, look up, and do not weep so. Sure, pretty wanton, I have seen this face before.

JOAN.

It is enough, though you ne're see me more. (Sinks Down).

TOCLIO.

'Sfoot, she's faln: this palce is inchanted, sure; look to the woman, fellow. (Exit)

CLOWN.

Oh, she's dead, she's dead! As you are a man, stay and help, sir. - Joan, Joan, sister Joan, why, Joan Go-too't, I say; will you cast away your self, and your childe, and me too? what do, you mean, sister?

JOAN.

Oh, give me pardon, sir; 'twas too much joy
Opprest my loving thoughts; I know you were
Too noble to deny me - ha! Where is he?

CLOWN.

Who, the Gentleman? he's gone, sister.

JOAN.

Oh! I am undone, then! Run, tell him I did
But faint for joy; dear brother, haste; why dost thou stay?

Oh, never cease, till he give answer to thee.

CLOWN.

He: which he? what do you call him, tro?

JOAN.

Unnatural brother,
Shew me the path he took; why dost thou dally?

Speak, oh, which way went he?

CLOWN.

This way, that way, through the bushes there.

JOAN.

Were it through fire,
The Journey's easie, winged with sweet desire. (Exit)

CLOWN.

Hey day, there's some hope of this yet. Ile follow here for kindreds sake;
if she miss of her purpose now, she'l challenge all she findes, I see;
for if we ever meet with a two-leg'd creature in the whole Kingdom,
the Childe shall have a Father, that's certain.
(Exit)

Scene II

An Ante-chamber At The British Court.)

Loud Musick. Enter Two With The Sword And Mace, CADOR, EDWIN,

Two Bishops, AURELIUS, OSTORIUS, Leading ARTESIA Crown'd, CONSTANCIA,

MODESTIA, OCTA, PROXIMUS A Magician, DONOBERT, GLOUCESTER, OSWOLD, TOCLIO;

All Pass Over The Stage.

Manet DONOBERT, GLOUCESTER, EDWIN, CADOR.

DONO.

Come, Gloucester, I do not like this hasty Marriage.

GLOUCESTER.

She was quickly wooed and won: not six days since

Arrived an enemy to sue for Peace,

And now crown'd Queen of Brittain; this is strange.

DONO.

Her brother too made as quick speed in coming,

Leaving his Saxons and his starved Troops,

To take the advantage, whilst 'twas offer'd.
'Fore heaven, I fear the King's too credulous;
Our Army is discharg'd too.

GLOUCESTER.

Yes, and our General commanded home.
Son Edwin, have you seen him since?

EDWIN.

He's come to Court, but will not view the presence,
Nor speak unto the King; he's so discontent
At this so strange aliance with the Saxon,
As nothing can perswade his patience.

CADOR.

You know his humor will indure no check,
No, if the King oppose it:
All crosses feeds both his spleend and his impatience;
Those affections are in him like powder,
Apt to inflame with every little spark,

And blow up all his reason.

GLOUCESTER.

Edo of Chester is a noble Soldier.

DONO.,

So is he, by the Rood, ever most faithful

To the King and Kingdom, how e're his passions guide him.

Enter EDOLL With Captains.

CADOR.

See where he comes, my Lord.

OMNES.

Welcome to Court, brave Earl.

EDOL.

Do not deceive me by your flatteries:

Is not the Saxon here? the League confirm'd?
The Marriage ratifi'd? the Court divided
With Pagan Infidels, the least part Christians,
At least in their commands? Oh, the gods!
It is a thought that takes away my sleep,
And dulls my sense so I scarcely know you:
Prepare my horses, Ile away to Chester.

CAPT.

What shall we do with our Companies, my Lord?

EDOL.

Keep them at home to increase Cuckolds,
And get some Cases for your Captainships;
Smooth up your brows, the wars has spoil'd your faces,
And few will now regard you.

DONO.

Preserve your patience, Sir.

EDOL.

Preserve your Honors, Lords, your Countries Safety,

Your Lives and Lands from strangers. What black devil

Could so bewitch a King, so to discharge

A Royal Army in the height of conquest,

Nav, even already made victorious,

To gie such credit to an enemy,

A starved foe, a stragling fugitive,

Beaten beneath our feet, so low dejected,

So servile, and so base, as hope of life

Had won them all to leave the Land for ever?

DONO.

It was the Kings will.

EDOL.

It was your want of wisdom,

That should have laid before his tender youth

The dangers of a State, where forain Powers

Bandy for Soveraignty with Lawful Kings;

Whoe being settled once, to assure themselves, Will never fail to seek the blood and life

Of all competitors.

DONO.

Your words sound well, my Lord, and point at safety,

Both for the Realm and us; but why did you,

Within whose power it lay, as General,

With full Commission to dispose the wr,

Lend ear to parly witht he weakned foe?

EDOL.

Oh the good Gods!

CADOR.

And on that parly came this Embassie.

EDOL.

You will hear me?

EDWIN.

Your letters did delcare it to the King,

Both of the Peace, and all Conditions

Brought by this Saxon Lady, whose fond love

Has thus bewitched him.

EDOL.

I will curse you all as black as hell,

Unless you hear me; your gross mistake would make

Wisdom her self run madding through the streets,

And quarrel with her shadow. Death!

Why kill'd ye not that woman?

DONO.

GLOST.

Oh, my Lord!

EDOL.

The great devil take me quick, had I been by,

And all the women of the world were barren,

She should have died, e're he had married her

On these conditions.

CADOR.

It is not reason that directs you thus.

EDOL.

Then I have none, for all I have directs me.

Never was man so palpably abus'd,

So basely marted, bought and sold to scorn.

My Honor, Fame, and hopeful Victories,

The loss of Time, Expences, Blood, and Fortunes,

All vanisht into nothing.

EDWIN.

This rage is vain, my Lord:

What the King does nor theym nor you can help.

EDOL.

My Sword must fail me then/

CADOR.

'Gainst whom will you expose it?

EDOL.

What's that to you? 'gainst all the devils in hell,
To guard my country.

EDWIN.

These are airy words.

EDOL.

Sir, you tread too hard upon my patience.

EDWIN.

I speak the duty of a Subjects faith,
And say agen, had you been here in presnce,
What the King did, you had not dar'd to cross it.

EDOL.

I will trample on his Life and Soul that says it.

CADOR.

My Lord!

EDWIN.

Come, come.

EDOL.

Now, before heaven -

CADOR.

Dear sir!

EDOL.

Not dare? thou liest beneath thy lungs.

GLOUCESTER.

No more, son edwin.

EDWIN.

I have done, sir; I take my leave.

EDOL.

But thou shalt not, you shall take no leave of me, Sir.

DONO.

For wisdoms sake, my Lord -

EDOL.

Sir, I'le leave him, and you, and all of you,
The Court and King, and let my Sword and friends
Shuffle for Edols safety: stayn you here,
And hug the Saxons, till they cut your throats,
Or bring the Land to servile slavery.

Such yokes of baseness Chester must not suffer.
Go, and repent betimes those foul misdeeds,
For in this League all our whole Kingdom bleeds,

Which Ile prevent, or perish.

Exit EDOL, CAPT.

GLOST.

See how his rage transports him!

CADOR.

These passions set apart, a braver soldier
Breathes not i'th'world this day.

DONO.

I wish his own worth do not court his ruine.
The King must Rule, and we must learn to obay,
True vertue still directs the noble way.

Scene III.

Hall Of State In The Palace.)

Loud Musick. Enter AURELIUS, ARTESIA, OSTORIUS, OCTA, PROXIMUS,

TOCLIO, OSWOLD, HERMIT.

AUREL.

Why is the Court so dull? me thinks, each room

And angle of our Palace should appear

Stuck full of objects fit for mirth and triumphs,

To show our high content. Oswold, fill wine!

Must we begin the Revels? Be it so, then!

Reach me the cup: Ile now begin a Health

To our lov'd Queen, the bright Artesia,

The Royal Saxon King, our warlike brother.

Go and command all the whole Court to pledge it.

Fill to the Hermit there! Most reverent Anselme,

Wee' do thee Honor first, to pledge my Queen.

HER.

I drink no healths, great King, and if I did,
I would be loath to part with health to those
That have no power to give it back agen.

AUREL.
Mistake not, it is the argument of Love
And Duty to our Queen and us.

ARTES.
But he ows none, it seems.

HER.
I do to vertue, madam: temperate minds
Covets that health to drink, which nature gives
In every spring to man; he that doth hold
His body but a Tenement at will,
Bestows no cost, but to repair what's ill:
Yet if your healths or heat of Wine, fair Princes,
Could this old frame or these cras'd limbes restore,
Or keep out death or sickness, then fill more,
I'le make fresh way for appetite; if no,

On such a prodigal who would wealth bestow?

OSTORIUS.

He speaks not like a guest to grace a wedding.

Enter TOCLIO.

ARTES.

No, sir, but like an envious impostor.

OCTA.

A Christian slave, a Cinick.

OSTOR.

What vertue could decline your Kingly spirit
To such respect of him whose magicak spells
Met with your vanquisht Troops, and turn'd your Arms
To that necessity of fight, which, thro dispair
Of any hope to stand but by his charms,

Had been defeated in a bloody conquest?

OCTA.

'Twas magick, hellbred magick did it, sir,

And that's a course, my Lord, which we esteem

In all our Saxon Wars until the last

And lowest ebbe of servile treachery.

AUREL.

Sure, you are deceiv', it was the hand of heaven

That in his vertue gave us victory.

Is there a power in man that can strike fear

Thorough a general camp, or create spirits

In recreant bosoms above present sense?

OSTOR.

To blind the sense there may, with apparition

Of well arm'd troops within themselves are air,

Form'd into humane shapes, and such that day

Were by that Sorceror rais'd to cross our fortunes.

AUREL.

There is a law tells us that words want force

To make deeds void; examples must be shown

By instances alike, e're I believe it.

OSTOR.

'Tis easily perform'd believe me, sir:

Propose your own desires, and give but way

To what our Magick here shall straight perform,

And then let his or our deserts be censur'd.

AUREL.

We could not wish a greater happiness

Then what this satisfaction brings with it.

Let him proceed, fair brother.

OSTOR.

He shall, sir.

Com, learned Proximus, this task be thine:

Let thy great charms confound the opinion

This Christian by his spells hath falsly won.

PROX.

Great King, propound your wishes, then:
What persons, of what State, what numbers, or how arm'd,
Please your own thoughts; they shall appear before you.

AUREL.
Strange art! What thinkst thou, reverent Hermit?

HER.
Let him go on, sir.

AUREL.

Wilt thou behold his cunning?

HER.
Right gladly, sir; it will be my joy to tell,
That I was here to haugh at him and hell.

AUREL.

I like thy confidence.

ARTES.

His sawcy impudence! Proceed to th'trial.

PROX.

Speak your desires, my Lord, and be it place't
In any angle underneath the Moon,
The center of the Earth, the Sea, the Air,
The region of the fire, nay, hell it self,
And I'le present it.

AUREL.

Wee'l have no sight so fearful, onely this:
If all thy art can reach it, show me here
The two great Champions of the Trojan War,
Achilles and brave Hector, our great Ancestor,
Both in their warlike habits, Armor, Shields,

And Weapons then in use for fight.

PROX.

'Tis done, my Lord, command a halt and silence,

As each man willl respect his life or danger.

Armel, Plesgeth!

Enter SPIRITS.

SPIRITS.

Quid vis?

PROX.

Attend me.

AUREL.

The Apparition comes; on our displeasure,

Let all keep place and silence.

Within Drums Beat Marches.

Enter PROXIMUS, Bringing In HECTOR, Attir'd And Arm'd After The

Trojan Manner, With Target, Sword, And Battel-ax, A Trumpet Before Him,

And A SPIRIT In Flame Colours With A Torch; At The Other Door ACHILLES

With His Spear And Falchon, A Trumpet, And A SPIRIT In Black Before Him;

rumpets Sound Alarm, And They Manage Their Weapons To Begin The Fight:

And After Some Charges, The HERMIT Steps Between Them At Which Seeming

Amaz'd The SPIRITS Tremble. Thunder Within.

PROX.

What means this stay, bright Armel, Plesgeth?

Why fear you and fall back?

Renew the Alarms, and enforce the Combat,

Or hell or darkness circles you for ever.

ARM.

We dare not.

PROX.

Ha!

PLESGETH.

Our charms are all dissolv'd: Armel, away!

'Tis worse then heell to us, whilest here we stay.

Exit All.

HER.

What! at a Non-plus, sir? command them back, for shame.

PROX.

What poer o're-aws my Spells? Return, you Hell-hounds!

Armel, Plesgeth, double damnation seize you!

By all the Infernal powers, the prince of devils

Is in this Hermits habit: what else could force

My Spirits quake or tremble thus?

HER.

Weak argument to hide your want of skill:

Does the devil fear the devil, or war with hell?
They have not been acquainted long, it seems.
Know, mis-believing Pagan, even that Power,
That overthrew your Forces, still lets you see,
He onely can controul both hell and thee.

PROX.
Disgrace and mischief! Ile enforce new charms,
New spells, and spirits rais'd from the low Abyss
Of hells unbottom'd depths.

AUREL.
We have enough, sir;
Give o're your charms, wee'l find some other time
To praise your Art. I dare not but acknowledge
That heavenly Power my heart stands witness to:
Be not dismaid, my Lords, at this disaster,
Nor thou, my fairest Queen: we'l change the Scene
To some more pleasing sports. Lead to your Chamber.

How 'ere in this thy pleasures finde a croos,
Our joy's too fixed here to suffer loss.

TOCLIO.

Which I shall adde to, sir, with news I bring:

The Prince, your Brother, lives.

AUREL.

Ha!

TOCLIO.

And comes to grace this high and heaven-knit Marriage.

AUREL.

Why dos thou flatter me, to make me think
Such happiness attends me?

Enter PRINCE UTER And OSWOLD.

TOCLIO.

His presence speaks my truth, sir.

DONO.

Force me, 'tis he: look, Gloucester.

GLOST.

A blessing beyond hope, sir.

AUREL.

Ha! 'tis he: welcome, my second Comfort.
Artesia, Dearest Love, it is my Brother,
My Princely Brother, all my Kingdoms hope:
Oh, give him welcome, as thou lov'st my health.

ARTES.

You have so free a welcome, sir, from me,
As this your presence has such power, I swear,
O're me, a stranger, that I must forget
My Countrey, Name, and Friends, and count this place

My Joy and Birth-right.

PRINCE.

'Tis she! 'tis she, I swear! oh, ye good gods, 'tis she!
Thatfqace within those woods where first I saw her,
Captived my senses, and thus many moneths
Bar'd me from all society of men.
How came she to this place,
Brother Aurelius? Speak that Angels name,
Her heaven-blest name, oh, speak it quickly, Sir.

AUREL.

It is Artesia, the Royal Saxon Princes.

PRINCE.

A woman, and no Deity, no feigned shape,
To mock the reason of admiring sense,
On whom a hope as low as mine may live,
Love, and enjoy, dear Brother, may it not?

AUREL.

She is all the Good or Vertue thou canst name,

My Wife, my Queen.

PRINCE.

Ha! your wife!

ARTES.

Which you shall finde, sir, if that time and fortune

May make my love but worthy of your tryal.

PRINCE.

Oh!

AUREL.

What troubles you, dear Brother?

Why with so strange and fixt an eye dost thou

Behold my Joys?

ARTES.

You are not well, sir.

PRINCE.

Yes, yes. - O, you immortal powers,

Why has poor man so many entrances

For sorrow to creep in at, when our sense

Is much too weak to hold his happiness?

Oh, say, I was born deaf: and let your silence

Confirm in me the knowing my defect;

At least be charitable to conceal my sin,

For hearing is no less in me, dear Brother.

AUREL.

No more!

I see thou art a Rival in the Joys

Of my high Bliss. Come, my Artesia;

The Day's most prais'd when 'tis ecclipst by Night,

Great Good must have as great Ill opposite.

PRINCE.

Stay, hear but a word; yet now I think on't,

This is your Wedding-night, and were it mine,

I should be angry with least loss of time.

ARTES.

Envy speaks no such words, has no such looks.

PRINCE.

Sweet rest unto you both.

AUREL.

Lights to our Nuptial Chamber.

ARTES.

Could you speak so,

I would not fear how much my grief did grow.

AUREL.

Lights to our Chamber; on, on, set on!

(Exeunt. Manet PRINCE.

PRINCE.

'Could you speak so,

I would not fear how much my griefs did grow.'

Those were her very words; sure, I am waking:

She wrung me by the hand, and spake them to me

With a most passionate affection.

Perhaps she loves, and now repents her choice,

In marriage with my brother. Oh, fond man,

How darest thou trust thy Traitors thoughts, thus to

Betreay thyself? 'twas but a waking dream

Wherein thou madest thy wishes speak, not her,

In which thy foolish hopes strives to prolong

A wretched being. So sickly children play

With health lov'd toys, whuch for a time delay,

But do not cure the fit. Be, then, a man,

Meet that destructon which thou canst not flie.

From not to live, make it thy best to die,

And call her now, whom thou didst hope to wed, Thy brothers wife: thou art too nere a kin,

And such an act above all name's a sin

Not to be blotted out; heaven pardon me!

She's banisht from my bosom now for ever.

To lowest ebbes men justly hope a flood;

When vice grows barren, all desires are good.

Enter Waiting Gentlewoman with a Jewel.

GENT.

The noble Prince, I take it, sir?

PRINCE.

You speak me what I should be, Lady.

GENT.

Know, by that name, sir, Queen Artesia greets you.

PRINCE.

Alas, good vertue, how is she mistaken!

GENT.

Commanding her affection in this Jewel, sir.

PRINCE.

She binds my service to her: ha! a Jewel; 'tis

A fair one, trust me, and methinks, it much

Resembles something I have seen with her.

GEN.

It is an artificial crab, Sir.

PRINCE.

A creature that geos backward.

GENT.

True, from the way it looks.

PRINCE.

There is no moral in it aludes to her self?

GENT.

'Tis your construction gives you that, sir;

She's a woman.

PRINCE.

And, like this, may use her legs and eyes

Two several ways.

GENT.

Just like the Sea-crab,

Which on the Mussel prayes, whils he bills at a stone.

PRINCE.

Pretty in troth. Prithee, tell me, art thou honest?

GENT.

I hope I seem no other, sir.

PRINCE.

And those that seem so are sometimes bad enough.

GENT.

If they will accuse themselves for want of witness,
Let them, I am not so foolish.

PRINCE.

I see th'art wise.

Come, speak me truly: what is the greatest sin?

GENT.

That which man never acted; what has been done
Is as the least, common to all as one.

PRINCE.

Dost think thy Lady is of thy opinion?

GENT.

She's a bad Scholar else; I have brought her up,
And she dares owe me still.

PRINCE.

I, 'tis a fault in greatness, they dare owe
Many, e're they pay one. But darest thou
Expose thy scholar to my examining?

GENT.

Yes, in good troth, sir, and pray put her to't too;
'Tis a hard lesson, if she answer it not.

PRINCE.

Thou know'st the hardest?

GENT.

As far as a woman may, sir.

PRINCE.

I commend thy plainness.

When wilt thou bring me to thy Lady?

GENT.

Next opportunity I attend you, sir.

PRINCE.

Thanks, take this, and commend me to her.

GENT.

Think of your Sea-crab, sir, I pray.

(Exit.

PRINCE.

Oh, by any means, Lady -

What should all this tend to?

If it be Love, or Lust, that thus incites her,

The sin is horrid and incestuous;

If to betray my life, what hopes she by it?

Yes, it may be a practice 'twist themselves,

To expel the Brittains and ensure the State

Through our destructions; all this may be

Valid, with a deeper reach in villany

Then all my thoughts can guess at; - however,

I will confer with her, and if I finde

Lust hath given Life to Envy in her minde,

I may prevent the danger: so men wise

By the same step by which they fell, may rise.

Vices are Vertues, if so thought and seen,

And Trees with foulest roots branch soonest green.

(Exit.

ACT 3.

Scene I.

Before the Palace of King AURELIUS.)

Enter CLOWN and his Sister.

CLOWN.

Come, sister, thou that art all fool, all mad-woman.

JOAN.

Prithee, have patience, we are now at Court.

CLOWN.

At Court! ha, ha, that proves thy madness: was there ever any woman
in thy taking travel'd to Court for a husband? 'Slid, 'tis enough
for them to get children, and the City to keep 'em, and the Countrey
to finde Nurses: every thing must be done in his due place, sister.

JOAN.

Be but content a while; for, sure, I know
This Journey will be happy. Oh, dear brother,
This night my sweet Friend came to comfort me;
I saw him and embrac't him in mine arms.

CLOWN.
Why did you not hold him, and call me to help you?

JOAN.
Alas, I thought I had been with him still,
But when I wak't -

CLOWN.
Ah! pox of all Loger-heads, then you were but in a Dream all this while,
and we may still go look him. Well, since we are come to Court,
ast your Cats eyes about you, and either finde him out you dreamt on,
or some other, for Ile trouble my self no further.

Ent(er) DONO(bert), CADOR, Edw(in), & TOCLIO.

See, see, here comes more Courtiers; look about you; come, pray, view 'em all well; the old man has none of the marks about him, the other have both Swords and Feathers: what thinkest thou of that tall yong Gentleman?

JOAN.

He much resembles him; but, sure, my friend,
Brother, was not so high of stature.

CLOWN.

Oh, beast, wast thou got a childe with a short thing too?

DONO.

Come, come, Ile hear no more on't: Go, Lord Edwin,
Teller her, this day her sister shall be married
To Cador, Ear of Cornwal; so shall she
To thee, brave Edwin, if she'l have my blessing.

EDWIN.

She is addicted to a single Life,
She will not hear of Marriage.

DONO.

Tush, fear it not: go you from me to her,

Use your best skill, my Lord, and if you fail,

I have a trick shall do it: haste, haste about it.

EDWIN.

Sir, I am gone;

My hope is in your help more then my own.

DONO.

And worthy Toclio, to your care I must

Commend this business.

For Lights and Musick, and what else is needful.

TOCLIO.

I shall, my Lord.

CLOWN.

We would intreat a word, sir.

Come forward, sister.

(Ex. DONO, Toc., CADOR.

EDWIN.

What lackst thou, fellow?

CLOWN.

I lack a father for a childe, sir.

EDWIN.

How! a God-father?

CLOWN.

No, sir, we mean the own father: it may be you, sir, for any thing we know; I think the childe is like you.

EDWIN.

Like me! prithee, where is it?

CLOWN.

Nay, 'tis not born yet, sir, 'tis forth coming, you see; the childe
must have a father: what do you think of my sister?

EDWIN.

Why, I think if she ne're had husband, she's a whore, and thou a fool.
Farewell. (Exit.

CLOWN.

I thank you, sir. Well, pull up thy hear, sister; if there be any
Law i'th'Court, this fellow shall father it, 'cause he uses me so scurvily.
There's a great Wedding towards, they say; we'l amongst them for a husband
for thee.

Enter SIR NICODEMUS with a Letter.

If we miss there, Ile have another bout with him that abus'd me.
See! look, there comes another Hat and Feather, this should be a
close Letcher, he's reading of a Love-Letter.

SIR NIC.

Earl Cador's Mariage, and a Masque to grace it.
So, so.
This night shall make me famous for Presentments. -
How now, what are you?

CLOWN.

A couple of Great Brittains you may see by our bellies, sir.

SIR NIC.
And what of this, sir?

CLOWN.
Why, thus the matter stands, sir: There's one of your Courtiers
Hunting Nags has made a Gap through another man's Inclosure. Now, sir,
here's the questions, who should be at charge of a Fur-bush to stop it?

SIR NIC.

Ha, ha, this is out of my element: the Law must end it.

CLOWN.

You Worship says well: for, surely, I think some lawyer had a hand in the business, we have such a troublesom Issue.

SIR NIC.

But what's thy business with me now?

CLOWN.

Nay, sir, the business is done already, you may see by my sisters belly.

SIR NIC.

Oh, now I finde thee: this Gentlewoman, it seems, has been humbled.

CLOWN.

As low as the ground would give her leave, sir, and your Worship knows this: though there be many fathers without children, yet to have a childe without a father were most unnatural.

SIR NIC.

That's true, ifaith, I never heard of a childe yet that e're begot his father.

CLOWN.

Why, true, you say wisely, sir.

SIR NIC.

And therefore I conclude, that he that got the childe is without all question the father of it.

CLOWN.

I, now you come to the matter, sir; and our suit is to your worship for the discovery of this father.

SIR NIC.

Why, lives he in the Court here?

JOAN.

Yes, sir, and I desire but Marriage.

SIR NIC.

And does the knave refuse it? Come, come, be merry, wench; he shall marry thee, and keep the childe too, if my Knighthood can do any thing. I am bound by mine Orders to help distressed Ladies, and can there be a greater injury to a woman with childe, then to lack a father for't? I am asham'd of your simpleness: Come, come, give me a Courtiers Fee for my pains, and Ile be thy Advocate my self, and justice shall be found; nay, Ile sue the Law for it; but give me my Fee first.

CLOWN.

If all the money I have i'th'world will do it, you shall have it, sir.

SIR NIC.

An Angel does it.

CLOWN.

Nay, there's two, for your better eye sight, sir.

SIR NIC.

Why, well said! Give me thy hand, wench, Ile teach thee a trick
for all this, shall get a father for thy childe presently, and this
it is, mark now: You meet a man, as you meet me now, thou claimest
Marriage of me, and layest the childe to my charge; I deny it: push,
that's nothing , hold thy Claim fast, thy words carries it, and no Law
can withstand it.

CLOWN.

Ist possible?

SIR NIC.

Past all opposition; her own word carries it: let her challenge any man,
the childe shall call him Father; there's atrick for your money now.

CLOWN.

Troth, sir, we thank you, we'l make use of your trick, and go no
further to seek the childe a Father, for we challenge you, Sir:
sister, lay it to him, he shall marry thee, I shall have a worshipful
old man to my brother.

SIR NIC.

Ha, ha, I like thy pleasantness.

JOAN.

Nay, indeed, Sir, I do challenge you.

CLOWN.

You think we jest, sir?

SIR NIC.

I, by my troth, do i. I like thy wit, yfaith: thou shalt live at Court with me; didst never hear of Nicodemus Nothing? I am the man.

CLOWN.

Nothing? 'slid, we are out agen: thou wast never got with childe with nothing, sure.

JOAN.

I know not what to say.

SIR NIC.

Never grieve, wench, show me the man, and process shall fly out.

CLOWN.

'Tis enough for us to finde the children, we look that you should finde the Father, and therefore either do us justice, or we'l stand to our first challenge.

SIR NIC.

Would you have justice without an Adversary? unless you can show me the man, I can do you no good in it.

CLOWN.

Why, then I hope you'l do us no harm, sir; you'l restore my money.

SIR NIC.

What, my Fee? marry, Law forbid it!
Finde out the party, and you shall have justice,
Your fault clos'd up, and all shall be amended,

The Childe, his Father, and the Law (def-)ended.

(Exit.

CLOWN.

Well, he has deserv'd his Fee, indeed, for he has brought our suit to a quick end, I promise you, and yet the Childe has never a Father; nor we have no more mony to seek after him. A shame of all lecherous placcats! now you look like a Cat had newly kitten'd; what will you do now, tro? Follow me no further, lest I beat your brains out.

JOAN.

Impose upon me any punishment,
Rather than leave me now.

CLOWN.

Well, I think I am bewitcht with thee; I cannot finde in my heart to forsake her. There was never sister would have abus'd a poor brother as thou hast done; I am even pin'd away with fretting, there's nothing but flesh and bones about me. Well, and I had my money agen, it were some comfort.

Hark sister, *[Thunder]* , does it not thunder?

JOAN.

Oh yes, most fearfully: What shall we do, brother?

CLOWN.

Marry, e'ene get some shelter, e're the storm catch us: away,
let's away, I prithee.

Enter the DEVIL in mans habit, richly attir'd, his feet and his head horrid.

JOAN.

Ha, 'tis he! Stay, brother, dear brother, stay.

CLOWN.

What's the matter now?

JOAN.

My love, my friend is come; yonder he goes.

CLOWN.

Where, where? show me where; I'le stop him, if the devil be not in him.

JOAN.

Look there, look yonder!

Oh, dear friend, pity my distress,

For heaven and goodness, do but speak to me.

DEVIL.

She calls me, and yet drives me headlong from her.

Poor mortal, thou and I are much uneven,

Thou must not speak of goodness nor of heaven,

If I confer with thee; but be of comfort:

Whilst men do breath, and Brittains name be known,

The fatal fruit thou bear'st within thy womb

Shall here be famous till the day of doom.

CLOWN.

'Slid, who's that that talks so? I can see no body.

JOAN.

Then art thou blind or mad. See where he goes,
And beckons me to come; oh, lead me forth,
I'll follow thee in spight of fear or death. (Exit.

CLOWN.

Oh brave! she'l run to the devil for a husband; she's stark mad, sure, and talks to a shaddow, for I could see no substance: well, I'le after her; the childe was got by chance, and the father must be found at all adventure. (Exit.

Scene II.

The Porch of a Church.)

Enter HERMIT, MODESTA and EDWIN.

MODESTA.

Oh, reverent sir, by you my hear hath reacht
At the large hopes of holy Piety,

And for this I craved your company,

Here in your sight religiously to vow

My chaste thoughts up to heavem, and make you now

The witness of my faith.

HER.

Angels assist thy hopes.

EDWIN.

What meanes my Love? thou art my promis'd wife.

MODEST.

To part with willingly what friends and life

Can make no good assurance of.

EDWIN.

Oh, finde remorse, fair soul, to love and merit,

And yet recant thy vow.

MODEST.

Never:

This world and I are parted now for ever.

HER.

To finde the way to bliss, oh, happy woman,

Th'ast learn'd the hardest Lesson well, I see.

Now show thy fortitude and constancy:

Let these thy friends thy sad departure weep,

Thou shalt but loose the wealth thou could'st not keep.

My contemplation calls me, I must leave ye.

EDWIN.

O, reverent Sir, perswade not her to leave me.

HER.

My Lord, I do not, nor to cease to love ye;

O onely pray her faith may fixed stand;

Marriage was blest, I know, ith heavens own hand. (Exit.

EDWIN.

You hear him, Lady, 'tis not a virgins state,

But sanctity of life, must make you happy.

MODEST.

Good sir, you say you love me; gentle Edwin,

Even by that love I do beseech you, leave me.

EDWIN.

Think of your fathers tears, your weeping friends,

Whom cruel grief makes pale and bloodless for you.

MODEST.

Would I were dead to all.

EDWIN.

Why do you weep?

MODEST.

Oh, who would live to see

How men with care and cost seek misery?

EDWIN.

Why do you seek it then? What joy, what pleasure

Can give you comfort in a single life?

MODEST.

The contemplation of a happy death,

Which is to me so pleasing that I think

No torture could divert me: What's this world,

Wherein you'd have me walk, but a sad passage

To a dread Judgement-Seat, from whence even now

We are but bail'd, upon our good abearing,

Till that great Sessiosn come, when Death, the Cryer,

Will surely summon us and all to appear,

To plead us guilty or our bail to clear?

What musick's this? (Soft Musick.

Enter two Bishops, DONOBERT, GLOUCESTER, CADOR, CONSTANCIA, OSWOLD, TOCLIO.

EDWIN.

Oh, now resolve, and think upon my love!

This soudns the Marriage of your beauteous sister,

Vertuous Constancia, with the noble Cador.

Look, and behold this pleasure.

MODEST.

Cover me with night,

It is a vanity not worth the sight.

DONO.

See, see, she's yonder.

Pass on, son Cador, Daughter Constancia,

I beseech you all, unless she first move speech,

Salute her not. - Edwin, what good success?

EDWIN.

Nothing as yet, unless this object take her.

DONO.

See, see, her eye is fixt upon her sister;

Seem careless all, and take no notice of her: -

On afore there; come, my Constancia.

MODEST.

Not speak to me, nor dain to cast an eye,

To look on my despised poverty?

I must be more charitable; - pray, stay, Lady,

Are not you she whom I did once call sister?

CONSTAN.

I did acknowledge such a name to one,

Whilst she was worthy of it, in whose folly,

Since you neglect your fame and friends together,

In you I drown'd a sisters name for ever.

MODEST.

Your looks did speak no less.

GLOST.

It now begins to work, this sight has moved her.

DONO.

I knew this trick would take, or nothing.

MODEST.

Though you disdain in me a sisters name,
Yet charity, me thinks, should be so strong
To instruct e're you reject. I am a wretch,
Even follies instance, who perhaps have er'd,
Not having known the goodness bears so high
And fair a show in you; which being exprest,
I may recant this low despised life,
And please those friends whom I mov'd to grief.

CADOR.

She is coming, yfaith; be merry, Edwin.

CONSTA.

Since you desire instruction, you shall have it.
What ist should make you thus desire to live

Vow'd to a single life?

MODEST.

Because I know I cannot flie from death.

Oh, my good, sister, I beseech you, hear me:

This world is but a Masque, catching weak eyes

With what is not our selves but our disguise,

A Vizard that falls off, the Dance being done,

And leaves Deaths Glass for all to look upon;

Our best happiness here lasts but a night,

Whose burning Tapers makes false Ware seem right.

Who knows not this, and will not now provide

Some better shift before his shame be spy'd,

And knowing this vain world at last will leave him,

Shake off those robes that help but to deceive him?

CONST.

Her words are powerful, I am amaz'd to hear this!

DONO.

Her soul's inchanted with infected Spells.

Leave her, best Girl; for now in thee

Ile seek the fruits of Age, Posterity. -

Out o'my sight! sure, I was half asleep

Or drunk, when I begot thee.

CONST.

Good sir, forbear. What say you to that, sister?

The joy of children, a blest Mothers Name!

Oh, who without much grief can loose such Fame?

MODEST.

Who can enjoy it without sorrow rather?

And that most certain where the joy's unsure,

Seeing the fruit that we beget endure

So many miseries, that oft we pray

The Heavens to shut up their afflicted day;

At best we do but bring forth Heirs to die,

And fill the Coffins of our enemy.

CONST.

Oh, my soul!

DONO.

Hear her no more, Constancia,

She's sure bewitcht with Error; leave her, Girl.

CONST.

The I must leave all goodness, sir: away

Stand off, I say.

DONO.

How's this?

CONST.

I have no father, friend, no husband now;

All are but borrowed robes, in which we masque

To waste and spend the time, when all our Life

Is but one good betwixt two Ague-days,

Which from the first e're we have time to praise,
A second Fever takes us: Oh, my best sister,
My souls eternal friend, forgive the rashness
Of my distemper'd tongue; for how could she,
Knew not her self, know thy felicity,
From which worlds cannot now remove me?

DONO.

Art thou mad too, fond woman? what's thy meeting?

CONST.

To seek eternal happiness in heaven,
Which all this world affords not.

CADOR.

Think of thy Vow, thou art my promis'd Wife.

CONST.

Pray, trouble me no further.

OMNES.

Strange alteration!

CADOR.

Why do you stand at gaze, you sacred Priests?
You holy men, be equal to the Gods,
And consummate my Marriage with this woman.

Bishop.

Her self gives barr, my Lord, to your desires
And our performance; 'tis against the Law
And Orders of the Church to force a Marriage.

CADOR.

How am I wrong'd! Was this your trick, my Lord?

DONO.

I am abus'd past sufferance;
Grief and amazement strive which Sense of mine
Shall loose her being first. Yet let me call thee Daughter.

CADOR.

Me, Wife.

CONST.

Your words are air, you speak of want to wealth,

And wish her sickness, newly rais'd to health.

DONO.

Bewitched Girls, tempt notan old mans fury,

That hath no strength to uphold his feeble age,

But what your sights give life to: oh, beware,

And do not make me curse you.

(Kneel.) MODEST.

Dear father,

Here at your feet we kneel, grant us but this,

That in your sight and hearing, this good Hermit

May plead our Cause; which, if it shall not give

Such satisfaction as your Age desires,

We will submit to you.

CONST.

You gave us life;
Save not our bodies, but our souls from death.

DONO.

This gives some comfort yet: Rise with my blessings. -
Have patience, noble Cador, worthy Edwin;
Send for the Hermit that we may confer.
For, sure, Religion tyes you not to leave
Your careful Father thus; if so it be,
Take you content, and give all grief to me.

(Exeunt.

Scene III.

A cave in the Forest.)

Thunder and Lightning; Enter DEVIL.

DEVIL.

Mix light and darkness; earth and heaven dissolve,
Be of one piece agen, and turn to Chaos;
Break all your works, you powers and spoil the world,
Or, if you will maintain earth still, give way
And life to this abortive birth now coming,
Whose fame shall add unto your oracles.
Lucina, Hecate, dereadful Queen of Night,
Bright Proserpine, be pleas'd for Ceres love,
From Stigian darkness summon up the Fates,
And in a moment bring them quickly hither,
Lest death do vent her birth and her together.

(Thunder.
Assist, you spirits of infernal deeps,
Squint ey'd Erictho, midnight Incubus,
Rose, rise to aid this birth prodigious.

Enter LUCINA and the three Fates.

Thanks, Hecate; hail, sister to the Gods!
There lies your way, haste with the Fates, and help,
Give quick dispatch unto her laboring throws,
To bring this mixture of infernal seed
To humane being;
(Exit Fates.
And to beguil her pains, till back you come,
Antick shall dance and Musick fill the room. -

(Dance.

DEVIL.

Thanks, Queen of Shades.

LUCINA.
Farewel, great servant to th'infernal King.
In honor of this child, the Fates shall bring
All their assisting powers of Knowledge, Arts,
Learning, Wisdom, all the hidden parts

Of all-admiring Prophecy, to fore-see

The event of times to come: his Art shall stand

A wall of brass to guard the Brittain Land.

Even from this minute, all his Arts appears

Manlike in Judgement, Person, State and years.

Upon his brest the Fates have fixt his name,

And since his birth palce was this forrest here,

They now have nam'd him Merlin Silvester.

DEVIL.

And Merlins name in Brittany shall live,

Whilst men inhabit here or Fates can give

Power to amazing wonder; envy shall weep,

And mischief sit and shake her ebbone wings,

Whilst all the world of Merlins magick sings.

(Exit.

Scene IV.

The Forest.)

Enter CLOWN.

CLOWN.

Well, I wonder how my poor sister does, after all this thundering;
I think she's dead, for I can hear no tidings of her. Those woods
yields small comfort for her; I could meet nothing but a swinherds wife,
keeping hogs by the Forestside, but neither she nor none of her sowes
would stir a foot to help us; indeed, I think she durst not trust
her self amongst the trees with me, for I must needs confess I offer'd
some kindness to her. Well, I would fain know what's become of my sister:
if she have brought me a yong Cousin, his face may be a picture to finde
his Father by. So oh! sister Joan, Joan Go-too't, where art thou?

(Within) JOAN.

Here, here, brother, stay but a while, I come to thee.

CLOWN.

O brave! she's alive still, I know her voice; she speaks, and speaks cherfully, methinks. How now, what Moon-calf has she got with her?

Enter JOAN and MERLIN with a Book.

JOAN.

Come, my dear Merlin, why dost thou fix thine eye
So deeply on that book?

MERLIN.
To sound the depth
Of Arts, of Learning, Wisdom, Knowledge.

JOAN.
Oh, my dear, dear son,
Those studies fits thee when thou art a man.

MERLIN.
Why, mother, I can be but half a man at best,
And that is your mortality; the rest
In me is spirit; 'tis not meat, nor time,

That gives this growth and bigness; no, my years
Shall be more strange then yet my birth appears.
Look, mother, there's my Uncle.

JOAN.

How doest thou know him, son? thou never saw'st him.

MERLIN.

Yet I know him, and know the pains he has taken for ye, to finde out my Father. - Give me your hand, good Uncle.

CLOWN.

Ha, ha, I'de laugh at that, yfaith. Do you know me, sir?

MERLIN.

Yes, by the same token that even now you kist the swinherds-wife i'th'woods, and would have done more, if she would have let you, Uncle.

CLOWN.

A witch, a witch, a witch, sister: rid him out of your company, he is either a witch or a conjurer; he could never have known this else.

JOAN.

Pray, love him, brother, he is my son.

CLOWN.

Ha, ha, this is worse than all the rest, yfaith; by my beard he is more like your husband. Let me see, is your great belly gone?

JOAN.

Yes, and this the happy fruit.

CLOWN.

What, this Hartichoke? A Childe born with a beard on his face?

MERLIN.

Yes, and strong legs to go, and teeth to eat.

CLOWN.

You can nurse up your self, then? There's some charges sav'd for Soap and Caudle. 'Slid, I have heard of some that have been born with teeth, but never none with such a talking tongue before.

JOAN.

Come, come, you must use him kindly, brother;

Did you but know his worth, you would make much of him.

CLOWN.

Maker much of a Moncky? This is worse than Tom Thumb, that let a fart in his Mothers belly; a Childe to speake, eat, and go the first hour of his birth; nay, such a Baby as had need of a Barber before he was born too; why, sister, this is monstrous, and shames all our kindred.

JOAN.

That thus 'gainst nature and our common births

The comes thus furnisht to salute the world,

Is power of Fates, and gift of his great father.

CLOWN.

Why, of what profession is your father, sir?

MERLIN.

He keeps a Hot-house i'th'Low Countries; will you see him, sir?

CLOWN.

See him? why, sister, has the childe found his father?

MER.

Yes, and Ile fetch him, Uncle. (Exit.

CLOWN.

Do not Uncle, me, till I know your kindred: for my conscience, some Baboon begot thee. - Surely, thou art horribly deceived, sister, this Urchin cannot be of thy breeding; I shall be asham'd to call him cousin, though his father be a Gentleman.

Enter MERLIN and DEVIL.

MERLIN.

Now, my kinde Uncle, see:

The Childe has found his Father, this is he.

CLOWN.

The devil it is; ha, ha, is this your sweet-heart, sister?
have we run through the Countrey, haunted the City, and examin'd
the Court to finde out a Gallant with a Hat and Feather,
and a silken Sword, and golden Hangers, and do you now bring me
to a Ragamuffin with a face like a Frying-pan?

JOAN.

Fie, brother, you mistake, behold him better.

CLOWN.

How's this? do you juggle with me, or mine eyes matches?
Hat and Feather, Sword and Hangers, and all! this is a Gallant indeed,
sister; this has all the marks of him we look for.

DEVIL.

And you have found him now, sir:
Give me your hand, I now must call you brother.

CLOWN.

Not till you have married my sister, for all this while she's
but your whore, sir.

DEVIL.

Thou art too plain, Ile satisfy that wrong
To her, and thee, and all, with liberal hand:

Come, why art thou fearful?

CLOWN.

Nay, I am not afraid, and you were the devil, sir.

DEVIL.

Thou needst not; keep with thy sister still,
And Ile supply your wants, you shall lack nothing
That gold and wealth shall purchase.

CLOWN.

Thank you, brother: we have gone many a weary step to finde you:

you may be a husband for a Lady, for you are far fetcht and dear bought, I assure you. Pray, how should I call you son, my cousin here?

DEVIL.

His name is Merlin.

CLOWN.

Merlin? Your hand, cousin Merlin; for your fathers sake I accept you to my kindred: if you grow in all things as your Beard does, you will be talkt on. By your Mothers side, cousin, you come of the Go-too'ts, Suffolk bred, but our standing house is at Hocklye i'th'Hole, and Layton-buzzard. For your father, no doubt you may from him claim Titles of Worship, but I cannot describe it; I think his Ancestors came first from Hell-bree in Wales, cousin.

DEVIL.

No matter whence we do derive our Name:
All Brittany shall ring of Merlin's fame,
And wonder at his acts. Go hence to Wales,
There live a while; there Vortiger the King
Builds Castles and strong Holds, which cannot stand,

Unless supported by yong Merlins hand.
There shall thy fame begin: Wars are a breeding;
The Saxons practise Treason, yet unseen,
Which shortly shall break out. - Fair Love, farewel;
Dear son and brother, here must I leave you all,
Yet still I will be near at Merlins call.

(Exit.

MERL.

Will you go, Uncle?

CLOWN.

Ues, Ile follow you cousin. - Well, I do most horribly begin to suspect my kindred; this brother in law of mine is the Devil, sure, and though he hide his horns with his Hat and Feather, I spi'd his cloven foot for all his cunning.

(Exit.

Scene V.

The British Court.)

Enter OSTORIUS, OCTA and PROXIMUS.

OSTOR.

Come, come, tie calls our close Complots to action.

Go, Proximus with winged speed flie hence,

Hye thee to Wales: salute great Vortiger

With these our Letters; bid the King to arms,

Tell him we have new friends, more Forces landed

In Norfolk and Northumberlan; bid him

Make haste to meet us; if he keep his word,

Wee'l part the Realm between us.

OCTA.

Bend all thine Art to quit that late disgrace

The Christian Hermit gave thee; make thy revenge

Both sure and home.

PROXIMUS.

That thought, sir, spurs me on,
Till I have wrought their swift destruction.

(Exit.

OSTOR.

Go, then, and prosper. Octa, be vigilant:
Speak, are the Forst pssesst? the Guards made sure?
Revolve, I pray, on how large consequence
The bare event and sequel of our hopes
Joyntly consists, that have embark't our lives
Upon the hazzard of the least miscarriage.

OCTA.

All's sure: the Queen your sister hath contrived
The cunning Plot so sure, as at an instant
The Brothers shall be both surpriz'd and taken.

OSTOR.

And both shall die; yet one a while must live,

Till we by him have gather'd strength and power
To meet bold Edol, their stern General,
That now, contrary to the Kings comand,
Hath re-united all his cashier'd Troops,
And this way beats his drums to threaten us.

OCTA.

The our Plot's discover'd.

OSTOR.

Come, th'art a fool, his Army and his life
Is given unto us: where is the Queen my sister?

OCTA.

In conference with the Prince.

OSTOR.

Bring the Guards nearer, all is fair and good;
Their Conference, I hope, shall end in blood.

(Exeunt.

Scene VI.

A Room in the Palace.)

Enter PRINCE and ARTESIA.

ARTES.

Come, come, you do but flatter;

What you term Love is but a Dream of blood,

Wakes with enjoying, and with open eyes

Forgot, contemn'd and lost.

PRINCE.

I must be wary, her words are dangerous. -

True, we'l speak of Love no more, then.

ARTES.

Nay, if you will, you may;

'Tis but in jest, and yet so children play

With fiery flames, and covet what is bright,

But, feeling his effects, abhor the light.

Pleasure us like a Building, the more high,

The narrower still it grows; Cedars do dye

Soonest at top.

PRINCE.

How does your instance suit?

ARTES.

From Art and Nature to make sure the root,

And lay a fast foundation, e're I try

The incertain Changes of a wavering Skie.

Make your example thus. - You have a kiss, -

Was it not pleasing?

PRINCE.

Above all name to express it.

ARTES.

Yet now the plasure's gone,

And you have lost your joys possession.

PRINCE.

Yet when you please, this flood may ebb again.

ARTES.

But where it never ebbs, there runs the main.

PRINCE.

Who can attain such hopes?

ARTES.

Ile show the way to it, give you

A taste once more of what you may enjoy.

(Kiss.

PRINCE.

Impudent whore! -

I were more false than Atheism can be,

Should I not call this high felicity.

ARTES.

If I should trust your faith, alas, I fear,

You soon would change belief.

PRINCE.

I would covet Martyrdom to Make't confirm'd.

ARTES.

Give me your hand on that you'l keep your word?

PRINCE.

I will.

ARTES.

Enough: Help, husband, king Aurelius, help!

Rescue betraid Artesia.

PRINCE.

Nay, then 'tis I that am betraid, I see;

Yet with thy blood Ile end thy Treachery.

ARTES.

How now! what troubles you? Is this you, sir,

That but even now would suffer Martyrdom

To win your hopes, and is there now such terror

In names of men to fright you? nay, then I see

What mettle you are made on.

PRINCE.

Ha! was it but tryal? then I ask your pardon:

What a dull slave was I to be so fearful! -

Ile trust her now no more, yet try the utmost. -

I am resolved, no brother, no man breathing,

Were he my bloods begetter, should withhold
Me from your love; I'd leap into his bosom,
And from his brest pull forth that happiness
Heaven had reserved in you for my enjoying.

ARTES.

I, now you speak a Lover like a Prince! -
Treason, treason!

PRINCE.

Agen?

ARTES.

Help, Saxon Princes: Treason!

Enter OSTORIUS, OCTA, &c.

OSTOR.

Rescue the Queen: strike down the Villain.

Enter EDOLL, AURELIUS, DONOBERT, CADOR, EDWIN, TOCLIO, OSWOLD,

at the other Door.

EDOL.

Call in the Guards: the Prince in danger!

Fall back,dear Sir, my brest shall buckler you.

AUREL.

Beat down their weapons!

EDOL.

Slave, wert thou made of brass, my sword shall bite thee.

AUREL.

Withdraw, on pain of death: where is the Traitor?

ARTES.

Oh, save your life, my Lord; let it suffice,

My beauty forc't mine own captivity.

AUREL.

Who did attempt to wrong thee?

PRINCE.

Hear me, Sir.

AUREL.

Oh, my sad soul! was't thou?

ARTES.

Oh, do not stand to speak; one minutes stay

Prevents a second speech for ever.

AUREL.

Make our Guards strong:

My dear Artesia, let us know thy wrongs

And our own dangers.

ARTES.

The prince your brother, with these Brittain Lords,

Have all agreed to take me hence by force

And marry me to him.

PRINCE.

The Devil shall wed thee first:

Thy baseness and thy lust confound and rot thee!

ARTES.

He courted me even now, and in mine ear

Sham'd not to plead his most dishonest love,

And their attempts to seize your sacred person,

Either to shut you up within some prison,

Or, which is worse, I fear, to murther you.

OMNES BRITTAINS.

'Tis all as false as hell.

EDOL.

And as foul as she is.

ARTES.

You know me, Sir?

EDOL.

Yes, Deadly Sin, we know you,
And shall discover all your villainy.

AUREL.

Chester, forbear!

OSTOR.

Their treasons, sir, are plain:
Why are their Souldiers lodg'd so near the Court?

OCTA.

Nay, why came he in arms so suddenly?

EDOL.

You fleering Anticks, do not wake my fury.

OCTA.

Fury!

EDOL.

Ratsbane, do not urge me.

ARTES.

Good sir, keep farther from them.

PRINCE.

O my sick heart!

She is a witch by nature, devil by art.

AUREL.

Bite thine own slanderous tongue; 'tis thou art false.

I have observ'd your passions long ere this.

OSTOR.

Stand on your guard, my Lord, we are your friends,
And all our Force is yours.

EDOL.

To spoil and rob the Kingdom.

AUREL.

Sir, be silent.

EDOL.

Silent! how long? till Doomsday? shall I stand by,
And hear mine Honor blasted with foul Treason,
The State half lost, and your life endanger'd,

Yet be silent?

ARTES.

Yes, my blunt Lord, unless you speak your Treasons.
Sir, let your Guards, as Traitors, seize them all,
And then let tortures and devulsive racks
Force a Confession from them.

EDOL.

Wilde-fire and Brimstone eat thee!
Har me, sir.

AUREL.

Sir, Ile not hear you.

EDOL.
But you shall. Not hear me!
Were the worlds Monarch, Cesar, living, he should hear me.

I tell you, Sir, these serpents have betraid
Your Life and Kingdom: does not every day
Bring tidings of mpre swarms of lowsie slaves,
The offal fugitives of barren Germany,
That land upon our Coasts, and by our neglect
Settle in Norfolk and Northumberland?

OSTOR.

They come as Aids and Safeguards to the King.

OCTA.

Has he not need, when Vortiger's in arms,
and you raise Powers, 'tis thought, to joyn with him?

EDOL.

Peace, you pernicious Rat.

DONO.

Prithee, forbear.

EDOL.

Away! suffer a gilded rascal,

A low-bred despicable creeper, an insulting Toad,

To spit his poison'd venome in my face!

OCTA.

Sir, sir!

EDOL.

Do not reply, you Cur; for, by the Gods,

Tho' the Kings presence guard thee, I shall break all patience,

And, like a Lion rous'd to spoil, shall run

Foul-mouth'd upon thee, and devour thee quick. -

Speak, sir: will you forsake these scorpions,

Or stay till they have stung you to the heart?

AUREL.

Y'are traitors all. This is our wife, our Queen:

Brother Ostorius, troop your Saxons up,

We'l hence to Winchester, (and) raise more powers,

To man with strength the Castle Camilot. -
Go hence, false men, joyn you with Vortiger,
The murderer of our brother Constantine:

We'l hunt both him and you with dreadful vengance.
Since Brittain fails, we' trust to forrain friends,
And guard our person from your traitorous ends.

(Exeunt AUREL., OSTOR., OCTA, ARTES., TOC., OSW.

EDWIN.

He's sure bewitcht.

GLOST.

What counsel now for safety?

DONO.

Onely this, sir: with all the speed we can,
Preserve the person of the King and Kingdom.

CADOR.

Which to effect, 'tis best march hence to Wales,
And set on Vortiger before he joyn
His Forces with the Saxons.

EDWIN.

On, then, with speed for Wales and Vortiger!
That tempest once o'reblown, we come, Ostorius,
To meet thy traiterous Saxons, thee and them,
That with advantage thus have won the King,
To back your factions and to work our ruines.
This, by the Gods and my good Sword, I'le set
In bloody lines upon thy Burgonet.

(Exeunt.

ACT 4.

Scene I.

Before a Ruined Castle in Wales.)

Enter CLOWN, MERLIN, and a little antick SPIRIT.

MER.

How now, Uncle? why do you search your pockets so?

Do you miss any thing?

CLOWN.

Ha! Cousin Merlin, I hope your beard does not overgrow your honesty; I pray, remember, you are made up of sisters thread, I am your mothers brother, whosoever was your father.

MERLIN.

Why, wherein can you task my duty, Uncle?

CLOWN.

Your self or your page it must be, I have kept no other company since your mother bound your head to my Protectorship; I do feel a fault of one side; either it was that Sparrowhawk, or a Cast of Merlins, for I find a Covy of Cardecu's sprung out of my pocket.

MERLIN.

Why, do you want any money, Uncle? Sirrah, had you any from him?

CLOWN.

Deny it not, for my pockets are witness against you.

SPIRIT.

Yes, I had, to teach you better wit to look to it.

CLOWN.

Pray, use your fingers better, and my wit may serve as it is, sir.

MERLIN.

Well, restore it.

SPIRIT.

There it is.

CLOWN.

I, there's some honesty in this; 'twas a token from your invisible Father, Cousin, which I would not have to go invisibly from me agen.

MER.

Well, you are sure you have it now, Uncle?

CLOWN.

Yes, and mean to keep it now from your pages filching fingers too.

SPIRIT.

If you have it so sure, pray show it me agen.

CLOWN.

Yes, my little juggler, I dare show it. Ha, cleanly conveyance agen! ye have no invisible fingers, have ye? 'Tis gone, certainly.

SPIRIT.

Why, sir, I toucht you not.

MER.

Why, look you, Uncle, I have it now: how ill do you look to it!
here, keep it safer.

CLOWN.

Ha, ha, this is fine, yfaith. I must keep some other company,
if you have these slights of hand.

MERLIN.

Come, come, Uncle, 'tis all my Art, which shall not offend you, sir,
onely I give you a taste of it to show you sport.

CLOWN.

Oh, but 'tis ill jesting with a mans pocket, tho'. But I am glad to
see you cunning, Cousin, for now will I warrant thee a living till thou diest.
You have heard the news in Wales here?

MER.

Uncle, let me prevent your care and counsel,
'Twill give you better knowledge of my cunning.
You would prefer me now, in hope of gain,
To Vortiger, King of the Welch Brittains,
To whom are all the Artists summon'd now,
That seeks the secrets of futurity.:
The Bards, the Druids, Wizards, Conjurers,
Not au Auraspex with his whistling spells,
No Capnomanster with his musty fumes,
No Witch or Juggler, but is thither sent,
To calculate the strange and fear'd event
Of his prodigious Castle, now in building,
Where all the labors of the painful day
Are ruin'd still i'th'night, and to this place
You would have me go.

CLOWN.
Well, if thy mother were not my sister, I would say she was a witch
that begot thee; but this is thy father, not thy mother wit.
Thou hast taken my tale into thy mouth, and spake my thoughts before me;
therefore away, shuffle thyself amongst the Conjurers, and be a made man

before thou comest to age.

MER.

Nay, but stay, Uncle, you overslip my dangers:
The Prophecies and all the cunning Wizards
Have certifi'd the King that this his Castle
Can never stand, till the foundation's laid
With Mortar temper'd with the fatal blood
If such a childe whose father was no mortal.

CLOWN.

What's this to thee? If the devil were thy father, wast not thy mother born at Carmarden? Diggon for that, then; and then it must be a childes blood, and who will take thee for a childe with such a beard of thy face? Is there not diggon for that too, Cousin?

MERLIN.

I must not go: lend me your ear a while,
Ile give you reasons to the contrary.

Enter two Gentlemen.

1. GENTLE.

Sure, this is an endless piece of work the King has sent us about!

2. GENTLE.

Kings may do it, man; the like has been done to finde out the Unicorn.

1. GENTLE.

Which will be sooner found, I think, than this fiend begotten childe we seek for.

2. GENTLE.

Pox of those Conjurers that would speak of such a one, and yet all their cunning could not tell us where to finde him.

1. GENTLE.

I Wales they say assuredly he lives; come, let's enquire further.

MER.

Uncle, your perswasions must not prevail with me: I know mine enemies better then you do.

CLOWN.

I say, th'art a bastard then, if thou disobey thine Uncle: was not
Joan Go-too't, thy mother, my sister? If the devil were thy father,
what kin art thou to any man alive but Bailys and Brokers?
and they are but brothers in Law to thee neither.

1. GENTLE.

How's this? I think we shall speed here.

2. GENTLE.

I, and unlook't for too: go ne're and listen to them.

CLOWN.

Hast thou a beard to hide it? wil't thou show thy self a childe?
wil't thou have more hair then wit? Wil't thou deny thy mother,
because no body knows thy father? Or shall thine Uncle be an ass?

1. GENTLE.

Bless ye, friend: pray, what call you this small Gentlemans name?

CLOWN.

Small, ir? a small man may be a great Gentleman: his father may be of an ancient house, for ought we know, sir.

2. GENTLE.

Why? do you not know his father?

CLOWN.

No, nor you neither, I think, unless the devil be in ye.

1. GENTLE.

What is his name, sir?

CLOWN.

His name is my Cousin, sir, his education is my sisters son, but his maners are his own.

MERLIN.

Why ask ye, Gentlemen?   my name is Merlin.

CLOWN.

Yes, and a Goshawk was his father, for ought we know; for I am sure his mother was a Wind-sucker.

2. GENTLE.

He has a mother, then?

CLOWN.

As sure as I have a sister, sir.

1. GENTLE.

But his father you leave doubtful.

CLOWN.

Well, Sir, as wise men as you doubt whether he had a father or no?

1. GENTLE.

Sure, this is he we seek for.

2. GENT.

I think no less: and, sir, we let you know

The King hath sent for you.

CLOWN.

The more childe he; and he had bin rul'd by me,

He should have gone before he was sent for.

1. GENT.

May we not see his mother?

CLOWN.

Yes, and feel her too, if you anger her; a devilish thing,

I can tell ye, she has been. Ile go fetch her.

(Exit.

2. GENT.

Sir, it were fit you did resolve for speed, You must unto the King.

MER.

My Service, sir,

Shall need no strict command, it shall obey

Most peacably; but needless 'tis to fetch

What is brought home: my journey may be staid,

The King is coming hither

With the same quest you bore before him; hark,

This drum will tell ye.

(Within Drums beat a low March.

1. GENT.

This is some cunning indeed, sir.

Florish. Enter VORTIGER, reading a letter, PROXIMUS,

with Drum and Soldiers, *etc.*

VORTI.

Still in our eye your message, Proximus,
We keep to spur our speed:
Ostorius and Octa we shall salute
With succor against Prince uter and Aurelius,
Whom now we hear incamps at Winchester.
There's nothing interrupts our way so much
As doth the erection of this fatal Castle,
That spite of all our Art and daily labor,
The night still ruines.

PROX.
As erst I did affirm, still I maintain,
The fiend begotten childe must be found ou,
Whose blood gives strength to the foundation;
It cannot stand else.

Enter CLOWN and JOAN, MERLIN.

VORTI.
Ha! Is't so?
Then, Proximus, by this intelligence

He should be found: speak, is this he you tell of?

CLOWN.

Yes, Sir, and I his Uncle, and she his mother.

VORTI.

And who is his father?

CLOWN.

Why, she, his mother, can best tell you that, and yet I think the childe be wise enough, for he has found his father.

VORT.

Woman, is this thy son?

JOAN.

It is, my Lord.

VOR.

What was his father? Or where lives he?

MERL.
Mother, speak freely and unastonisht;
That which you dar'd to act, dread not to name.

JOAN.
In which I shall betray my sin and shame.
But since it must be so, then know, great King,
All that my self yet knows of him is this:
In pride of blood and beauty I did live,
My glass the Altar was, my face the Idol;
Such was my peevish love unto my self,
That I did hate all other; such disdain
Was in my scornful eye that I suppos'd
No mortal creature worthy to enjoy me.
Thus with the Peacock I beheld my train,
But never saw the blackness of my feet;
Oft have I chid the winds for breathing on me,
And curst the Sun, fearing to blast my beauty.
In midst of this most leaprous disease,

A seeming fair yong man appear'd unto me,
In all things suiting my aspiring pride,
And with him brought along a conquering power,
To which my frailty yielded; from whose embraces
This issue came; what more he is, I know not.

VORTI.

Some Incubus or Spirit of the night
Begot him then, for, sure, no mortal did it.

MER.

No matter who, my Lord; leave further quest,
Since, 'tis as hurtful as unnecessary
More to enquire; Go to the cause, my Lord,
Why you have sought me thus?

VORTI.

I doubt not but thou knowst; yet, to be plain,
I sought thee for thy blood.

MER.

By whose direction?

PROX.

By mine;
My Art infalable instructed me,
Upon thy blood must the foundation rise
Of the Kings building; it cannot stand else.

MER.

Hast thou such leisure to enquire my Fate,
And let thine own hang carelss over thee?
Knowst thou what pendelous mischief roofs thy head,
How fatal, and how sudden?

PROX.

Pish!

Bearded abortive, thou foretel my danger!
My Lord, he trifles to delay his own.

MER.

No, I yield my self: and here before the King

Make good thine Augury, as I shall mine.

If thy fate fall not, thou hast spoke all truth,

And let my blood satisfie the Kings desires:

If thou th self wilt write thine Epitaph,

Dispatch it quickly, there's not a minutes time

'Twixt thee and thy death.

PROX.

Ha, ha, ha!

(A stone falls and kills PROXIMUS.

MER.

I, so thou mayest die laughing.

VORTI.

Ha! This is above admiration: look, is he dead?

CLOWN.

Yes, sir, here's brains to make morter on, if you'l use them.

Cousin Merlin, there's no more of this stone fruit ready to fall,

is there? I pray, give your Uncle a little fair warning.

MER.

Remove that shape of death. An now, my Lord,

For clear satisfaction of your doubts,

Merlin will show the fatal cause that keeps

Your Castle down and hinders your proceedings,

Stand there, and by an apparition see

The labor and end of all your destiny.

Mother and Uncle, you must be absent.

CLOWN.

Is your father coming, Cousin?

MER.

Nay, you must be gone.

JOAN.

Come, you'l offend him, brother.

CLOWN.

I would fain see my Brother i'law; if you were married, I might lawfully call him so.

(Exeunt JOAN and CLOWN.)

MERLIN strikes his wand. Thunder and Lightning; two Dragons appear, a White and a Red; theym fight a while, and pause.

VOR.

What means this stay?

MER.

Be not amaz'd, my Lord, for on the victory,
Of loss or gain, as these two Champions ends,
Your fate, your life, and kingdom all depends;

Therefore observe it well.

VOR.

I shall: heaven be auspicious to us.

(Thunder: The two Dragons fight agen, and the White Dragon

drives off the Red.

VOR.

The conquest is on the white Dragons part.

Now, Merlin, faithfully expound the meaning.

MER.

Your grace must then not be offended with me.

VOR.

It is the weakest part I found in thee,

To doubt of me so slightly. Shall I blame

My prophet that foretells me of my dangers?

Thy cunning I approve most excellent.

MER.

Then know, my Lord, there is a dampish Cave,

The nightly habitation of these Dragons,

Vaulted beneath where you would build your Castle,

Whose enmity and nightly combats there

Maintain a constant ruine of your labors.

To make it more plain, the Dragons, then,

Your self betoken anbd the Saxon King;

The vaquisht Red is, sir, your dreadful Emblem.

VOR.

Oh, my fate!

MER.

Nay, youmust hear with patience, Royal sir.

You slew the lawful King Constantius:

'Twas a red deed, your Crown his blood did cement.

The English Saxon, first brought in by you

For aid against Constantius brethren,

Is the white horror who now, knit together,

Have driven and shut you up in these wilde mountains;

And though they now seek to unite with friendship,

It is to wound your bosom, not embrace it,

And with an utter extirpation

To rout the Brittains out, and plant the English.

Seek for your safety, Sir, and spend no time

To build the(e) airy Castles; for Prince Uter,

Armed with vengeance for his brothers blood,

Is hard upon you. If you mistrust me,

And to my words crave witness, sir, then know,

Here comes a messenger to tell you so.

(Exit MER.

Enter MESSENGER.

MESSEN.

My Lord! Prince Uter!

VORT.

And who else, sir?

MESSEN.

Edol, the great General.

VORT.

The great Devil! they are coming to meet us?

MESSEN.

With a full power, my Lord.

VORT.

With a full vengeance,
They mean to meet us; so! we are ready
To their confront. At full march, double footing,
We'l loose no ground, nor shall their numbers fright us:
If it be Fate, it cannot be withstood;
We got our Crown so, be it lost in blood.

(Exeunt.

Scene II.

Open Country in Wales.)

Enter PRINCE UTER, EDOL, CADOR, EDWIN, TOCLIO, with Drum and Soldiers.

PRINCE.

Stay, and advice; hold, drum!

EDOL.

Beat, slave! why do you pause?

Why make a stand? where are our enemies?

Or do you mean to fight among our selves?

PRINCE.

Nay, noble Edol,

Let us here take counsel, it cannot hurt,

It is the surest Garison to safety.

EDOL.

Fie on such slow delays! so fearful men,

That are to pass over a flowing river,

Stand on the bank to parly of the danger,

Till the tide rise, and then be swallowed.

Is not the King in field?

CADOR.

Proud Vortiger, the Trator, is in field.

EDWIN.

The Murderer and Usurper.

EDOL.

Let him be the devil, so I may fight with him.

For heavens love, sir, march on! Oh, my patience!

Will you delay, untill the Saxons come
To aid his party?

(A Tucket.

PRINCE.

There's no such fear: prithee, be calm a while.
Hark! it seems by this, he comes or sends to us.

EDOL.

If it be for parly, I will drown the summons,
If all our drums and hoarseness choke me not.

Enter CAPTAIN.

PRINCE.

Nay, prithee, hear. - From whence art thou?

CAP.

From the King Vortiger.

EDOL.

Traitor, there's none such: Alarum drum; strike slave,
Or, by mine honor, I will break thy head,
And beat thy drums heads both about thine ears.

PRINCE.

Hold, noble Edol,
Let's hear what Articles he can inforce.

EDOL.

What articles or what conditions
Can you expect to value half your wrong,
Unless he kill himself by thousand tortures,
And send his carcase to appease your vengeance
For the foul murder of Constantius,
And that's not a tenth part neither.

PRINCE.

'Tis tru,
My brothers blood is crying to me now;

I do applaud thy counsel: hence, be gone! -

(Exit CAPT.

We'l hear no parly now but by our swords.

EDOL.
And those shall speak home in death killing words:

Alarum to the fight; sound, sound the Alarum.

(Exeunt.

Scene III.

A Field of Battle.)

Alarum. Enter EDOL, driving all Vortigers Force before him, then Exit.

Enter PRINCE UTER pursuing VORTIGER.

VORT.

Dost follow me?

PRINCE.

Yes, to thy death I will.

VORT.

Stay, be advis'd;

I would not be the onely fall of Princes,

I slew thy brother.

PRINCE.

Thou didst, black Traitor,

And in that vengeance I pursue thee.

VORT.

Take mercy for thyself, and flie my sword,

Save thine own life as asatisfaction,

Which here I give thee for thy brothers death.

PRINCE.

Give what's thine own: a Traitors heart and head,

That's all thou art right Lord of. The Kingdom

Which thou usurp'st, thou most unhappy Tyrant,

Is leaving thee; the Saxons wich thou broughtst

To back thy usurpations, are grown great,

And where they seat themselves, do hourly seek

To blot the Records of old Brute and Brittains

From memory of men, calling themselves

Hingest-men, and Hingest-land, that no more

The Brittain name be known: all this by thee,

Thou base destroyer of thy Native Countrey.

Enter EDOL.

EDOL.

What, stand you talking?

(Fight.

PRINCE.

Hold, Edol.

ED.

Hold out, my sword,
And listen not to King or Princes word;
There's work enough abroad, this task is mine.

(Alarum.

PRINCE.

Prosper thy Valour, as thy Vertues shine.

(Exeunt.

Scene IV.

Another Part of the Field of Battle.)

Enter CADOR and EDWIN.

CADOR.

Bright Victory her self fights on our part,

And, buckled in a golden Beaver, rides

Triumphantly before us.

EDW.

Justice is with her,

Who ever takes the true and rightful cause.

Let us not lag behinde them.

Enter PRINCE.

CADOR.

Here comes the Prince. How goes our fortunes, Sir?

PRINCE.

Hopeful and fair, brave Cador.

Proud Vortiger, beat down by Edols sword,

Was rescu'd by the following multitudes,

And now for safety's fled unto a Castle

Here standing on the hill: but I have sent

A cry of hounds as violent as hunger,

To break his stony walls; or, if they fail,

We'l send in wilde fire to dislodge him thence,

Or burn them all with flaming violence.

(Exeunt.

Scene V.

Another Part of the Field.)

Blazing Star Appears.

Florish Tromp. Enter PRINCE UTER, EDOL, CADOR, EDWIN, TOCLIO, with Drum and Soldiers.

PRIN.

Look, Edol:
Still this fiery exalation shoots
His frightful horrors on th'amazed world;
See, in the beam that's 'bout his flaming ring,
A Dragons head appears, from out whose mouth
Two flaming flakes of fire stretch East and West.

EDOL.

And see, from forth the body of the Star

Seven smaller blazing streams directly point
On this affrighted Kingdom.

CADOR.
'Tis a dreadful Meteor.

EDWIN.

And doth portend strange fears.

PRINCE.
This is no Crown of Peace; this angry fire
Hath something more to burn then Vortiger;
If it alone were pointed at his fall,
It would pull in his blazing Piramids
And be appeas'd, for Vortiger is dead.

EDOL.

These never come without their large effects.

PRINCE.

The will of heaven be done! our sorrow's this,
We want a mistick Pithon to expound
This fiery Oracle.

CADOR.

Oh no, my Lord,
You have the best that ever Brittain bred;
And durst I prophecy of your Prophet, sir,
None like him shall succeed him.

PRINCE.

You mean Merlin?

CADOR.

True, sir, wonderous Merlin;
He met us in the way, and did foretell
The fortunes of this day successful to us.

EDWIN.

He's sure about the Camp; send for him, sir.

CADOR

He told the bloody Vortiger his fate,

And truely too, and if I could give faith

To any Wizards skill, it should be Merlin.

Enter MERLIN and CLOWN.

CADOR.

And see, my Lord, as if to satisfie

Your Highness pleasure, Merlin is come.

PRINCE.

See,

The Comet's in his eye, disturb him not.

EDOL.

With what a piercing judgement he beholds it!

MER.

Whither will Heaven and Fate translate this Kingdom?
What revolutions, rise and fall of Nations
Is figur'd yonder in that Star, that sings
The change of Brittians State and death of Kings?
Ha! He's dead already; how swiftly mischief creeps!
Thy fatal end, sweet Prince, even Merlin weeps.

PRINCE.

He does foresee some evil, his action shows it,
For, e're he does expound, he weeps the story.

EDOL.

There's another weeps too. Sirrah, dost thou understand what thou lamentst for?

CLOWN.

No, sir, I am his Uncle, and weep because my Cousin weeps; flesh and blood cannot forbear.

PRINCE.

Gentle Merlin, speak thy prophetick knowledge

In explanation of this fiery horror,

From which we gather from thy mournful tears

Much sorrow and disaster in it.

MER.

'Tis true,

Fair Prince, but you must hear the rest with patience.

PRINCE.

I vow I will, tho' it portend my ruine.

MER.

There's no such fear.

This brought the fiery fall of Vortiger,

And yet not him alone: this day is faln

A King more good, the glory of our Land,

The milde and gentle, sweet Aurelius.

PRINCE.

Our brother!

EDWIN.

Forefend it heaven!

MER.

He at his Palace Royal, sir,

At Winchester, this day is dead and poison'd.

CADOR.

By whom? Or what means, Merlin?

MER.

By the Traiterous Saxons.

EDOL.

I ever fear'd as much: that devil Ostorius

And the damn'd witch Artesia, sure, has done it.

PRINCE.

Poison'd! oh, look further, gentle Merlin, Behold the Star agen, and do but finde

Revenge for mne, though it cost thousand lives,

And mine the foremost.

MER.

Comfort your self, the heavens have given it fully:

All the portentous ills to you is told.

Now hear a happy story, sir, from me

To you and to your fair posterity.

CLOWN.

Me thinks, I see something like a peel'd Onion; it makes me weep agen.

MER.

Be silent, Uncle, you'e be forc't else.

CLOWN.

Can you not finde in the Star, Cousin, whether I can hold

my tongue or no?

EDOL.

Yes, I must cut it out.

CLOWN.

Phu, you speak without book, sir, my Cousin Merlin knows.

MER.

True, I must tie it up. Now speak your pleasure, Uncle.

CLOWN.

Hum, hum, hum, hum.

MER.

So, so. -

Now observe, my Lord, and there behold,

Above yon flame-hair'd beam that upward shoots,

Appears a Dragons head, out of whose mouth

To streaming lights point their flame-feather'd darts

Contrary ways, yet both shall have their aims:

Agin behold, from the ignifirent body
Seven splendant and illustrious rays are spred,
All speaking Heralds to this Brittain Isle,
And thus they are expounded: The Dragons head
Is the Herogliphick that figures out
Your Princeley self, that here must reign a King;
Those by-form'd fires that from the Dragons mouth
Shoot East and West, emblem two Royal babes,
Which shall proceed from you, a son and daughter.
Her pointed constellation Northwest bending,
Crowns Her a Queen in Ireland, of whom first springs
That Kingdoms Title to the Brittain Kings.

CLOWN.

Hum, hum, hum.

MER.

But of your Son thus Fate and Merlin tells:
All after times shall fill their Chronicles
With fame of his renown, whose warlike sword

Shall pass through fertile France and Germany;
Nor shall his conquering foot be forc't to stand,
Till Romes Imperial Wreath hath crown'd his Fame
With Monarch of the West, from whose seven hillls,
With Conquest and contributory Kings,
He back returns to inlarge the Brittain bounds,
His Heraldry adorn'd, with thirteen Crowns.

CLOWN.

Hum, hum, hum.

MER.

He to the world shall add another Worthy,
And, as a Loadstone, for his prowess draw
A train of Marshal Lovers to his Court:
It shall be then the best of Knighthoods honor,
At Winchester to fill his Castle Hall,
And at his Royal Table sit and feast
In warlike orders, all their arms round hurl'd,
As if they meant to circumscribe the world.

(he touches the Clowns mouth with his wand.

CLOWN.

Hum, hum, hum: oh, thatI could speak a little!

MER.
I know your mind, Uncle; agen be silent.

(strikes agen.

PRINCE.
Thou speakst of wonders, Merlin; prithee go on,
Declare at full this Constellation.

MER.
Those seven beams pointing downward, sir, betoken
The troubles of this Land, which then shall meet
With other Fate: War and Dissension strives
To make division, till seven Kings agree
To draw this Kingdom to a Hepterchy.

PRINCE.

Thine art hath made such proof that we believe
Thy words authentia: be ever neer us,
My Prophet and the Guide of all my actions.

MER.

My service shall be faithful to your person,
And all my studies for my Countries safety.

CLOWN.

Hum, hum, hum.

MER.

Come, you are releast, sir.

CLOWN.

Cousin, pray, help me to my tongue agen; you do not mean I shall be dumb still, I hope?

MER.

Why, hast thou not thy tongue?

CLOWN.

Ha! yes, I feel it now, I was so long dumb, I could not well tell
whether I spake or no.

PRINCE.

Is't thy advice we presently pursue
The bloody Saxons, that have slain my brother?

MER.

With your best speed, my Lord;
Prosperity will kep you company.

CADOR.

Take, then, your Title with you, Royal Prince,
'Twill adde unto our strength: Long live King Uter!

EDOL.

Put the Addition to't that Heaven hath given you:

The DRAGON is your Emblem, bear it bravely,

And so live long and ever happy, styl'd

Uter-Pendragon, lawful King of Britain.

PRINCE.

Thanks, Edol, we imbrace the name and title,

And in our Sheild and Standard shall the figure

Of a Red Dragon still be born before us,

To fright the bloody Saxons. Oh, my Aurelius,

Sweet rest thy soul; let thy disturbed spirit

Esxpect revenge; think what it would, it hath:

The Dragon's coming in his fiery wrath.

(Exeunt.

ACT 5.

Scene I.

A barren Waste, a huge Rock appearing.)

Enter JOAN fearfully, the DEVIL following her.

JOAN.

Hence, thou black horror! is thy lustful fire
Kindled agen? Not thy loud throated thunder
Nor thy adulterate infernal Musick
Shall e're bewitch me more: oh, too too much
Is past already.

DEVIL.

Why dost thou fly me?
I come a Lover to thee, to imbrace
And gently twine thy body in mine arms.

JOAN.

Out, thou Hell-hound!

DEVIL.

What hound so e're I be,

Fawning and sporting as I would with thee,

Why should I not be stroakt and plaid withal?

Will't thou not thank the Lion might devour thee,

If he shall let thee pass?

JOAN.

Yes, thou art he;

Free me, and Ile thank thee.

DEVIL.

Why, whither wouldst?

I am at home with thee, thou art mine own,

Have we not charge of family together?

Where is your son?

JOAN.

Oh, darkness cover me!

DEVIL.

There is a pride which thou hast won by me,

The mother of a fame, shall never die.

Kings shall have need of written Chronicles

To keep their names alive, but Merlin none;

Ages to ages shall like Sabalists

Report the wonders of his name and glory,

While there are tongues and times to tell his story.

JOAN.

Oh, rot my memory before my flesh,

Let him be called some hell or earth-bred monster,

That ne're had hapless woman for a mother!

Sweet death, deliver me! Hence from my sight:

Why shouldst thou now appear? I had no pride

Nor lustful thought about me, to conjure

And call thee to my ruine, when as at first

Thy cursed person became visible.

DEVIL.

I am the same I was.

JOAN.

But I am chang'd

DEVIL.

Agen Ile change thee to the same thou wert,

To quench my lust. - Come forth, by thunder led,

My Coajutors in the spoils of mortals.

(Thunder

Enter SPIRIT.

Claspe in your Ebon arms that prize of mine,

Mount her as high as palled Hecate;

And on this rock Ile stand to cast up fumes

And darkness o're the blew fac'd firmament:

From brittain and from Merlin Ile remove her.

They ne're shall meet agen.

JOAN.

Help me some saving hand,

If not too late, I cry: let mercy come!

Enter MERLIN.

MER.

Stay, you black slaves of night, let loose your hold,

Set her down safe, or by th'infernal Stix,

Ile binde you up with exorcisms so strong,

That all the black pentagoron of hell

Shall ne're relase you. Save your selves and vanish!

(Exit SPIRIT.

DEVIL.

Ha! What's he?

MER.

The Childe has found his Father. Do you not know me?

DEVIL.

Merlin!

JOAN.

Oh, help me, gentle son.

MER.

Fear not, they shall not hurt you.

DEVIL.

Relievest thou her to disobey thy father?

MER.

Obedience is no lesson in your school;
Nature and kind to her commands my duty;
The part that you begot was against kinde,
So all I ow to you is to be unkind.

DEVIL.

Ile blast thee, slave, to death, and on this rock
Stick thee (as) an eternal Monument.

MER.

Ha, ha, thy powers too weak; what art thou, devil,
But an inferior, lustful Incubus,
Taking advantage of the wanton flesh,
Wherwith thou dost beguile the ignorant?
Put off the form of thy humanity,
And cral upon thy speck;ed belly, serpent,
Or Ile unclasp the jaws of Achoron,
And fix thee ever in the local fire.

DEVIL.

Traitor to hell! curse that I e're begot thee!

MER.

Thou didst beget thy scourge: storm not, nor stir;
The power of Merlins Art is all confirm'd
In the Fates decretals. Ile ransack hell,

And make thy masters bow unto my spells.
Thou first shall taste it. -

(Thunder and Lightning in the Rock.

Tenibrarum princeps, devitiarum & infirorum Deus, hunc Incubum in ignis eterni abisum accipite, aut in hoc carcere tenebroso in sempeternum astringere mando.

(the Rock incloses him.

So! there beget earthquakes or some noisom damps,
for never shalt thou touch a woman more. -
How chear you, mother?

JOAN.
Oh, now my son is my deliverer,
Yet I must name him with my deepest sorrow.

(Alarum afar off.

MER.

Take comfort now: past times are ne're recal'd;

I did foresee your mischief, and prevent it.

Hark, how the sounds of war now call me hence

To aid Pendragon that in battail stands

Against the Saxons, from whose aid

Merlin must not be absent. Leave this soyl,

And Ile conduct you to a place retir'd,

Which I by art have rais'd, call'd Merlins Bower.

There shall you dwell with solitary sighs,

With grones and passions your companions,

To weep away this felsh you have offended with,

And leave all bare unto your aierial soul:

And when you die, I will erect a Monument

Upon the verdant Plains of Salisbury,

No King shall have so high a sepulchre,

With pendulous stones that I wll hang by art,

Where neither Lime nor Morter shalbe us'd,

A dark Enigma to the memory,

For none shall have the power to number them, -

A place that I will hollow for your rest, Where no Night-hag shall walk, nor Warewolf tread,

Where Merlins Mother shall be sepulcher'd

(Exeunt.

Scene II.

The British Camp.)

Enter DONOBERT, Goster and HERMIT.

DONO.

Sincerely, Gloucester, I have told you all:

My Daughters are both vow'd to Single Life,

And this day gone unto the Nunnery,

Though I begot them to another end,

And fairly promis'd them in Marriage,

One to Earl Cador, t'other to your son,

My worthy friend, the Earl of Gloucester.

Those lost, I am lost: they are lost, all's lost.

Answer me this, then: Ist a sin to marry?

HERMIT.

Oh no, my Lord.

DONO.

Go to, then, Ile go no further with you;

I perswade you to no ill; perswade you then,

That I perswade you well.

GLOUCESTER.

'Twill be a good Office in you, sir.

Enter CADOR and EDWIN.

DONO.

Which since they thus neglect,

My memory shall lose them now for ever. -
See, see, the Noble Lords, their promis'd Husbands!

Had Fate so pleas'd, you might have call'd me Father.

EDWIN.
Those hopes are past, my Lord; for even this minute
We saw them both enter the Monastery,
Secluded from the world and men for ever.

CADOR.

'Tis both our griefs we cannot, Sir:
But from the King take you the Times joy from us:
The Saxon King Ostorius slain and Octa fled,
That Woman-fury, Queen Artesia,
Is fast in hold, and forc't to re-deliver
London and Winchester (which she had fortifi'd)
To Princely uter, lately styl'd Pendragon,
Who now triumphantly is marching hither
To be invested with the Brittain Crown.

DONO.

The joy of this shall banish from my breast
All thought that I was Father to two Children,
Two stubborn Daughters, that have left me thus.
Let my arms embrace, and call you Sons,
For, by the Honor of my Fathers House,
I'le part my estate most equally betwixt you.

EDWIN, CADOR.

Sir y'are most noble!

Flor. Tromp. Enter EDOL with Drum and Colours, OSWOLD bearing the Standard, TOCLIO the Sheild, with the Red Dragon pictur'd in'em, two Bishops with the Crown, PRINCE UTER, MERLIN, ARTESIA bound, Guard, and CLOWN.

PRINCE.

Set up our Sheild and Standard, noble Soldiers.
We have firm hope that, tho' our Dragon sleep,

Merlin will us and our fair Kingdom keep.

CLOWN.

As his Uncle lives, I warrant you.

GLOST.

Happy Restorer of the Brittains fame,

Uprising Sun, let us salute thy glory:

Ride in a day perpetual about us,

And no night be in thy thrones zodiack.

Why do we stay to binde those Princely browes

With this Imperial Honor?

PRINCE.

Stay, noble Gloucester:

That monster first must be expel'd our eye,

Or we shall take no joy in it.

DONO.

If that be hindrance, give her quick Judgement, And send her hence to death; she has long deserv'd it.

EDOL.

Let my Sentence stand for all: take her hence,
And stake her carcase in the burning Sun,
Till it be parcht and dry, and then fley off
Her wicked skin, and stuff the pelt with straw
To be shown up and down at Fairs and Markets:

Two pence a piece to see so foul a Monster.
Will be a fair Monopoly, and worth the begging.

ARTES.

Ha, ha, ha!

EDOL.

Dost laugh, Erictho?

ARTES.

Yes, at thy poor invention.

Is there no better torture-monger?

DONO.

Burn her to dust.

ARTES.

That's a Phoenix death, and glorious.

EDOL.

I, that's to good for her.

PRINCE.

Alive she shall be buried, circled in a wall.

Thou murdress of a King, there starve to death.

ARTES.

The Ile starve death when he comes for his prey, And i'th'mean time Ile live upon your curses.

EDOL.

I, 'tis diet good enough; away with her.

ARTES.

With joy, my best of wishes is before;

Thy brother's poison'd, but I wanted more.

(Exit.

PRINCE.

Why does our Prophet Merlin stand apart,

Sadly observing these our Ceremonies,

And not applaud our joys with thy hid knowledge?

Let thy divining Art now satisfie

Some part of my desires; for well I know,

'Tis in thy power to show the full event,

That shall both end our Reign and Chronicle.

Speak, learned Merlin, and resolve my fears,

Whether by war we shal expel the Saxons,

Or govern what we hold with beauteous peace
In Wales and Brittain?

MER.
Long happiness attend Pendragons Reign!

What Heaven decress, fate hath no power to alter:
The Saxons, sir, will keep the ground they have,
And by supplying numbers still increase,
Till Brittain be no more. So please your Grace,
I will in visible apparitions
Present you Prophecies which shall concern
Succeeding Princes which my Art shall raise,
Till men shall call these times the latter days.

PRINCE.
Do it, my Merlin,
And Crown me with much joy and wonder.

MERLIN strikes. Hoeboys. Enter a King in Armour, his Sheild
quarter'd with thirteen Crowns. At the other door enter divers

Princes who present their Crowns to him at his feet, and do him homage; then enters Death and strikes him; he, growing sick, Crowns Constantine.

Exeunt.

MER.

This King, my Lord, presents your Royal Son,
Who in his prime of years shall be so fortunate,
That thirteen several Princes shall present
Their several Crowns unto him, and all Kings else
Shall so admire his fame and victories,
That they shall all be glad,
Either through fear or love, to do him homage;
But death (who neither favors the weak nor valliant)
In the middest of all his glories soon shall seize him,
Scarcely permitting him to appoint one
In all his purchased Kingdoms to succeed him.

PRINCE.

Thanks to our Prophet
For this so wish'd for satisfaction;
And hereby now we learn that always Fate

Must be observ'd, what ever that decree:

All future times shall still record this Story,

Of Merlin's learned worth and Arthur's glory.

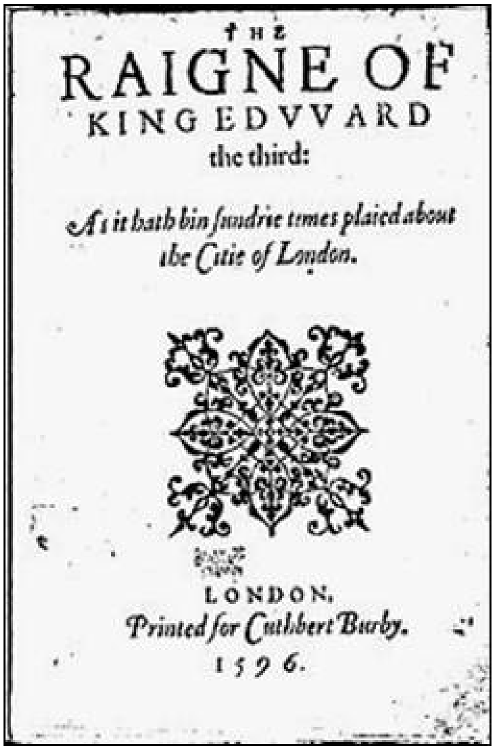
(Exeunt OMNES.

FINIS.

KING EDWARD III

This play was printed anonymously in 1596 and is now believed to be partly written by Shakespeare. The play contains many gibes at Scotland and the Scottish people, which has led some critics to think that it is the work that incited George Nicolson, Queen Elizabeth's agent in Edinburgh, to protest against the portrayal of Scots on the London stage in a 1598 letter to William Cecil, Lord Burghley. This would explain why the play was not included in the First Folio of Shakespeare's works, which was published after the Scottish King James had succeeded to the English throne in 1603.

Like most of Shakespeare's history plays, the source is Raphael Holinshed's *Chronicles* , while Jean Froissart's *Chronicles* is also a major source for this play.



THE
RAIGNE OF
KING EDVVARD
the third:

*As it hath bin ſundrie times plaied about
the Citie of London.*

LONDON,
Printed for Cuthbert Burby.
1596.

The 1596 Quarto printing

King Edward III (1312-1377)

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DRAMATIS PERSONAE

EDWARD THE THIRD, King of England.

EDWARD, Prince of Wales, his Son.
Earl of WARWICK.
Earl of DERBY.
Earl of SALISBURY.
Lord AUDLEY.
Lord PERCY.
LODOWICK, Edward's Confident.
Sir WILLIAM MOUNTAGUE.
Sir JOHN COPLAND.
Two ESQUIRES, and a HERALD, English.
ROBERT, styling himself Earl, of Artois.
Earl of MONTFORT, and
GOBIN DE GREY.
JOHN, King of France.
CHARLES, and PHILIP, his Sons.
Duke of LORRAIN.
VILLIERS, a French Lord.
King of BOHEMIA, Aid to King John.
A POLISH CAPTAIN, Aid to King John.
Six CITIZENS of Calais.
A CAPTAIN, and
A POOR INHABITANT, of the same.
Another CAPTAIN.
A MARINER.
Three HERALDS; and
Four other FRENCHMEN.
DAVID, King of Scotland.
Earl DOUGLAS; and
Two MESSENGERS, Scotch.

PHILIPPA, Edward's Queen.
Countess of SALISBURY.
A FRENCH WOMAN.

Lords, and divers other Attendants; Heralds, Officers, Soldiers, &c.

Scene, dispers'd; in England, Flanders, and France.

ACT I. SCENE I. London . A Room of State in the Palace. Flourish.

[Enter King Edward, Derby, Prince Edward, Audley, and
Artois.]

KING EDWARD.
Robert of Artois, banished though thou be
From France, thy native Country, yet with us
Thou shalt retain as great a Seigniorie:
For we create thee Earl of Richmond here.
And now go forwards with our pedigree:
Who next succeeded Phillip le Bew?

ARTOIS.
Three sons of his, which all successfully
Did sit upon their father's regal Throne,
Yet died, and left no issue of their loins.

KING EDWARD.
But was my mother sister unto those?

ARTOIS.
She was, my Lord; and only Isabel
Was all the daughters that this Phillip had,
Whom afterward your father took to wife;
And from the fragrant garden of her womb
Your gracious self, the flower of Europe's hope,
Derived is inheritor to France.
But note the rancor of rebellious minds:
When thus the lineage of le Bew was out,
The French obscured your mother's Privilege,
And, though she were the next of blood, proclaimed
John, of the house of Valois, now their king:

The reason was, they say, the Realm of France,
Replete with Princes of great parentage,
Ought not admit a governor to rule,
Except he be descended of the male;
And that's the special ground of their contempt,
Wherewith they study to exclude your grace:
But they shall find that forged ground of theirs
To be but dusty heaps of brittle sand.
Perhaps it will be thought a heinous thing,
That I, a French man, should discover this;
But heaven I call to record of my vows:
It is not hate nor any private wrong,
But love unto my country and the right,
Provokes my tongue, thus lavish in report.
You are the lineal watchman of our peace,
And John of Valois indirectly climbs;
What then should subjects but embrace their King?
Ah, where in may our duty more be seen,
Than striving to rebate a tyrant's pride
And place the true shepherd of our commonwealth?

KING EDWARD.
This counsel, Artois, like to fruitful showers,
Hath added growth unto my dignity;
And, by the fiery vigor of thy words,
Hot courage is engendered in my breast,
Which heretofore was raked in ignorance,
But now doth mount with golden wings of fame,
And will approve fair Isabel's descent,
Able to yoke their stubborn necks with steel,
That spurn against my sovereignty in France.

[Sound a horn.]

A messenger?—Lord Audley, know from whence.

[Exit Audley, and returns.]

AUDLEY.

The Duke of Lorrain, having crossed the seas,
Entreats he may have conference with your highness.

KING EDWARD.
Admit him, Lords, that we may hear the news.

[Exeunt Lords. King takes his State. Re-enter Lords; with Lorrain, attended.]

Say, Duke of Lorrain, wherefore art thou come?

LORRAIN.
The most renowned prince, King John of France,
Doth greet thee, Edward, and by me commands,
That, for so much as by his liberal gift
The Guyen Dukedom is entailed to thee,
Thou do him lowly homage for the same.
And, for that purpose, here I summon thee,
Repair to France within these forty days,
That there, according as the custom is,
Thou mayst be sworn true liegeman to our King;
Or else thy title in that province dies,
And he him self will repossess the place.

KING EDWARD.
See, how occasion laughs me in the face!
No sooner minded to prepare for France,
But straight I am invited,—nay, with threats,
Upon a penalty, enjoined to come:
Twere but a childish part to say him nay.—
Lorrain, return this answer to thy Lord:
I mean to visit him as he requests;
But how? not servilely disposed to bend,
But like a conqueror to make him bow.
His lame unpolished shifts are come to light;
And truth hath pulled the vizard from his face,
That set a gloss upon his arrogance.
Dare he command a fealty in me?
Tell him, the Crown that he usurps, is mine,
And where he sets his foot, he ought to kneel.

Tis not a petty Dukedom that I claim,
But all the whole Dominions of the Realm;
Which if with grudging he refuse to yield,
I'll take away those borrowed plumes of his,
And send him naked to the wilderness.

LORRAIN.
Then, Edward, here, in spite of all thy Lords,
I do pronounce defiance to thy face.

PRINCE EDWARD.
Defiance, French man? we rebound it back,
Even to the bottom of thy master's throat.
And, be it spoke with reverence of the King,
My gracious father, and these other Lords,
I hold thy message but as scurrilous,
And him that sent thee, like the lazy drone,
Crept up by stealth unto the Eagle's nest;
>From whence we'll shake him with so rough a storm,
As others shall be warned by his harm.

WARWICK.
Bid him leave of the Lyons case he wears,
Least, meeting with the Lyon in the field,
He chance to tear him piecemeal for his pride.

ARTOIS.
The soundest counsel I can give his grace,
Is to surrender ere he be constrained.
A voluntary mischief hath less scorn,
Than when reproach with violence is borne.

LORRAIN.
Degenerate Traitor, viper to the place
Where thou was fostered in thine infancy,
Bearest thou a part in this conspiracy?

[He draws his sword.]

KING EDWARD.

Lorrain, behold the sharpness of this steel:

[Drawing his.]

Fervent desire that sits against my heart,
Is far more thorny pricking than this blade;
That, with the nightingale, I shall be scared,
As oft as I dispose my self to rest,
Until my colours be displayed in France:
This is my final Answer; so be gone.

LORRAIN.
It is not that, nor any English brave,
Afflicts me so, as doth his poisoned view,
That is most false, should most of all be true.

[Exeunt Lorrain, and Train.]

KING EDWARD.
Now, Lord, our fleeting Bark is under sail;
Our gage is thrown, and war is soon begun,
But not so quickly brought unto an end.

[Enter Mountague.]

But wherefore comes Sir William Mountague?
How stands the league between the Scot and us?

MOUNTAGUE.
Cracked and dissevered, my renowned Lord.
The treacherous King no sooner was informed
Of your with drawing of your army back,
But straight, forgetting of his former oath,
He made invasion on the bordering Towns:
Barwick is won, Newcastle spoiled and lost,
And now the tyrant hath begirt with siege
The Castle of Rocksborough, where inclosed
The Countess Salisbury is like to perish.

KING EDWARD.

That is thy daughter, Warwick, is it not?
Whose husband hath in Brittain served so long
About the planting of Lord Mountford there?

WARWICK.
It is, my Lord.

KING EDWARD.
Ignoble David! hast thou none to grieve
But silly Ladies with thy threatening arms?
But I will make you shrink your snaily horns!
First, therefore, Audley, this shall be thy charge,
Go levy footmen for our wars in France;
And, Ned, take muster of our men at arms:
In every shire elect a several band.
Let them be Soldiers of a lusty spirit,
Such as dread nothing but dishonor's blot;
Be wary, therefore, since we do commence
A famous War, and with so mighty a nation.
Derby, be thou Ambassador for us
Unto our Father in Law, the Earl of Henalt:
Make him acquainted with our enterprise,
And likewise will him, with our own allies
That are in Flanders, to solicit to
The Emperour of Almaigne in our name.
My self, whilst you are jointly thus employed,
Will, with these forces that I have at hand,
March, and once more repulse the traitorous Scot.
But, Sirs, be resolute: we shall have wars
On every side; and, Ned, thou must begin
Now to forget thy study and thy books,
And ure thy shoulders to an Armor's weight.

PRINCE EDWARD.
As cheerful sounding to my youthful spleen
This tumult is of war's increasing broils,
As, at the Coronation of a king,
The joyful clamours of the people are,
When Ave, Caesar! they pronounce aloud.

Within this school of honor I shall learn
Either to sacrifice my foes to death,
Or in a rightful quarrel spend my breath.
Then cheerfully forward, each a several way;
In great affairs tis nought to use delay.

[Exeunt.]

ACT I. SCENE II. Roxborough. Before the Castle.

[Enter the Countess.]

COUNTESS.
Alas, how much in vain my poor eyes gaze
For succour that my sovereign should send!
Ah, cousin Mountague, I fear thou wants
The lively spirit, sharply to solicit
With vehement suit the king in my behalf:
Thou dost not tell him, what a grief it is
To be the scornful captive of a Scot,
Either to be wooed with broad untuned oaths,
Or forced by rough insulting barbarism;
Thou doest not tell him, if he here prevail,
How much they will deride us in the North,
And, in their wild, uncivil, skipping gigs,
Bray forth their Conquest and our overthrow
Even in the barren, bleak, and fruitless air.

[Enter David and Douglas, Lorrain.]

I must withdraw, the everlasting foe
Comes to the wall; I'll closely step aside,
And list their babble, blunt and full of pride.

KING DAVID.
My Lord of Lorrain, to our brother of France
Commend us, as the man in Christendom

That we most reverence and entirely love.
Touching your embassage, return and say,
That we with England will not enter parley,
Nor never make fair weather, or take truce;
But burn their neighbor towns, and so persist
With eager Rods beyond their City York.
And never shall our bonny riders rest,
Nor rusting canker have the time to eat
Their light borne snaffles nor their nimble spurs,
Nor lay aside their Jacks of Gymould mayle,
Nor hang their staves of grained Scottish ash
In peaceful wise upon their City walls,
Nor from their buttoned tawny leathern belts
Dismiss their biting whinyards, till your King
Cry out: Enough, spare England now for pity!
Farewell, and tell him that you leave us here
Before this Castle; say, you came from us,
Even when we had that yielded to our hands.

LORRAIN.
I take my leave, and fairly will return
Your acceptable greeting to my king.

[Exit Lorrain.]

KING DAVID.
Now, Douglas, to our former task again,
For the division of this certain spoil.

DOUGLAS.
My liege, I crave the Lady, and no more.

KING DAVID.
Nay, soft ye, sir; first I must make my choice,
And first I do bespeak her for my self.

DOUGLAS.
Why then, my liege, let me enjoy her jewels.

KING DAVID.

Those are her own, still liable to her,
And who inherits her, hath those with all.

[Enter a Scot in haste.]

MESSENGER.
My liege, as we were pricking on the hills,
To fetch in booty, marching hitherward,
We might descry a might host of men;
The Sun, reflecting on the armour, shewed
A field of plate, a wood of picks advanced.
Bethink your highness speedily herein:
An easy march within four hours will bring
The hindmost rank unto this place, my liege.

KING DAVID.
Dislodge, dislodge! it is the king of England.

DOUGLAS.
Jemmy, my man, saddle my bonny black.

KING DAVID.
Meanst thou to fight, Douglas? we are too weak.

DOUGLAS.
I know it well, my liege, and therefore fly.

COUNTESS.
My Lords of Scotland, will ye stay and drink?

KING DAVID.
She mocks at us, Douglas; I cannot endure it.

COUNTESS.
Say, good my Lord, which is he must have the Lady,
And which her jewels? I am sure, my Lords,
Ye will not hence, till you have shared the spoils.

KING DAVID.
She heard the messenger, and heard our talk;

And now that comfort makes her scorn at us.

[Another messenger.]

MESSENGER.
Arm, my good Lord! O, we are all surprised!

COUNTESS.
After the French ambassador, my liege,
And tell him, that you dare not ride to York;
Excuse it that your bonny horse is lame.

KING DAVID.
She heard that too; intolerable grief!
Woman, farewell! Although I do not stay…

[Exeunt Scots.]

COUNTESS.
Tis not for fear, and yet you run away.—
O happy comfort, welcome to our house!
The confident and boisterous boasting Scot,
That swore before my walls they would not back
For all the armed power of this land,
With faceless fear that ever turns his back,
Turned hence against the blasting North-east wind
Upon the bare report and name of Arms.

[Enter Mountague.]

O Summer's day! See where my Cousin comes!

MOUNTAGUE.
How fares my Aunt? We are not Scots;
Why do you shut your gates against your friends?

COUNTESS.
Well may I give a welcome, Cousin, to thee,
For thou comst well to chase my foes from hence.

MOUNTAGUE.
The king himself is come in person hither;
Dear Aunt, descend, and gratulate his highness.

COUNTESS.
How may I entertain his Majesty,
To shew my duty and his dignity?

[Exit, from above.]

[Enter King Edward, Warwick, Artois, with others.]

KING EDWARD.
What, are the stealing Foxes fled and gone,
Before we could uncouple at their heels?

WARWICK.
They are, my liege; but, with a cheerful cry,
Hot hounds and hardy chase them at the heels.

[Enter Countess.]

KING EDWARD.
This is the Countess, Warwick, is it not?

WARWICK.
Even she, my liege; whose beauty tyrants fear,
As a May blossom with pernicious winds,
Hath sullied, withered, overcast, and done.

KING EDWARD.
Hath she been fairer, Warwick, than she is?

WARWICK.
My gracious King, fair is she not at all,
If that her self were by to stain her self,
As I have scene her when she was her self.

KING EDWARD.
What strange enchantment lurked in those her eyes,

When they excelled this excellence they have,
That now her dim decline hath power to draw
My subject eyes from persing majesty,
To gaze on her with doting admiration?

COUNTESS.
In duty lower than the ground I kneel,
And for my dull knees bow my feeling heart,
To witness my obedience to your highness,
With many millions of a subject's thanks
For this your Royal presence, whose approach
Hath driven war and danger from my gate.

KING EDWARD.
Lady, stand up; I come to bring thee peace,
How ever thereby I have purchased war.

COUNTESS.
No war to you, my liege; the Scots are gone,
And gallop home toward Scotland with their hate.

KING EDWARD.
Least, yielding here, I pine in shameful love,
Come, we'll pursue the Scots;—Artois, away!

COUNTESS.
A little while, my gracious sovereign, stay,
And let the power of a mighty king
Honor our roof; my husband in the wars,
When he shall hear it, will triumph for joy;
Then, dear my liege, now niggard not thy state:
Being at the wall, enter our homely gate.

KING EDWARD.
Pardon me, countess, I will come no near;
I dreamed to night of treason, and I fear.

COUNTESS.
Far from this place let ugly treason lie!

KING EDWARD.
No farther off, than her conspiring eye,
Which shoots infected poison in my heart,
Beyond repulse of wit or cure of Art.
Now, in the Sun alone it doth not lie,
With light to take light from a mortal eye;
For here two day stars that mine eyes would see
More than the Sun steals mine own light from me,
Contemplative desire, desire to be
In contemplation, that may master thee!
Warwick, Artois, to horse and let's away!

COUNTESS.
What might I speak to make my sovereign stay?

KING EDWARD.
What needs a tongue to such a speaking eye,
That more persuades than winning Oratory?

COUNTESS.
Let not thy presence, like the April sun,
Flatter our earth and suddenly be done.
More happy do not make our outward wall
Than thou wilt grace our inner house withal.
Our house, my liege, is like a Country swain,
Whose habit rude and manners blunt and plain
Presageth nought, yet inly beautified
With bounties, riches and faire hidden pride.
For where the golden Ore doth buried lie,
The ground, undecked with nature's tapestry,
Seems barren, sere, unfertile, fructless, dry;
And where the upper turf of earth doth boast
His pied perfumes and party coloured coat,
Delve there, and find this issue and their pride
To spring from ordure and corruption's side.
But, to make up my all too long compare,
These ragged walls no testimony are,
What is within; but, like a cloak, doth hide
>From weather's Waste the under garnished pride.

More gracious then my terms can let thee be,
Intreat thy self to stay a while with me.

KING EDWARD.
As wise, as fair; what fond fit can be heard,
When wisdom keeps the gate as beauty's guard?—
It shall attend, while I attend on thee:
Come on, my Lords; here will I host to night.

[Exeunt.]

ACT II. SCENE I. The Same. Gardens of the Castle.

[Enter Lodowick.]

LODOWICK.
I might perceive his eye in her eye lost,
His ear to drink her sweet tongue's utterance,
And changing passion, like inconstant clouds
That rack upon the carriage of the winds,
Increase and die in his disturbed cheeks.
Lo, when she blushed, even then did he look pale,
As if her cheeks by some enchanted power
Attracted had the cherry blood from his:
Anon, with reverent fear when she grew pale,
His cheeks put on their scarlet ornaments;
But no more like her oriental red,
Than Brick to Coral or live things to dead.
Why did he then thus counterfeit her looks?
If she did blush, twas tender modest shame,
Being in the sacred presence of a King;
If he did blush, twas red immodest shame,
To veil his eyes amiss, being a king;
If she looked pale, twas silly woman's fear,
To bear her self in presence of a king;
If he looked pale, it was with guilty fear,
To dote amiss, being a mighty king.

Then, Scottish wars, farewell; I fear twill prove
A lingering English siege of peevish love.
Here comes his highness, walking all alone.

[Enter King Edward.]

KING EDWARD.
She is grown more fairer far since I came hither,
Her voice more silver every word than other,
Her wit more fluent. What a strange discourse
Unfolded she of David and his Scots!
'Even thus', quoth she, 'he spake', and then spoke broad,
With epithites and accents of the Scot,
But somewhat better than the Scot could speak:
'And thus', quoth she, and answered then her self—
For who could speak like her but she her self—
Breathes from the wall an Angel's note from Heaven
Of sweet defiance to her barbarous foes.
When she would talk of peace, me thinks, her tongue
Commanded war to prison; when of war,
It wakened Caesar from his Roman grave,
To hear war beautified by her discourse.
Wisdom is foolishness but in her tongue,
Beauty a slander but in her fair face,
There is no summer but in her cheerful looks,
Nor frosty winter but in her disdain.
I cannot blame the Scots that did besiege her,
For she is all the Treasure of our land;
But call them cowards, that they ran away,
Having so rich and fair a cause to stay.—
Art thou there, Lodowick? Give me ink and paper.

LODOWICK.
I will, my liege.

KING EDWARD.
And bid the Lords hold on their play at Chess,
For we will walk and meditate alone.

LODOWICK.
I will, my sovereign.

[Exit Lodowick.]

KING EDWARD.
This fellow is well read in poetry,
And hath a lusty and persuasive spirit;
I will acquaint him with my passion,
Which he shall shadow with a veil of lawn,
Through which the Queen of beauties Queen shall see
Her self the ground of my infirmity.

[Enter Lodowick.]

KING EDWARD.

hast thou pen, ink, and paper ready, Lodowick?

LODOWICK.
Ready, my liege.

KING EDWARD.
Then in the summer arbor sit by me,
Make it our counsel house or cabinet:
Since green our thoughts, green be the conventicle,
Where we will ease us by disburdening them.
Now, Lodowick, invocate some golden Muse,
To bring thee hither an enchanted pen,
That may for sighs set down true sighs indeed,
Talking of grief, to make thee ready groan;
And when thou writest of tears, encouch the word
Before and after with such sweet laments,
That it may raise drops in a Tartar's eye,
And make a flintheart Scythian pitiful;
For so much moving hath a Poet's pen:
Then, if thou be a Poet, move thou so,
And be enriched by thy sovereign's love.
For, if the touch of sweet concordant strings
Could force attendance in the ears of hell,

How much more shall the strains of poets' wit
Beguile and ravish soft and humane minds?

LODOWICK.
To whom, my Lord, shall I direct my stile?

KING EDWARD.
To one that shames the fair and sots the wise;
Whose bod is an abstract or a brief,
Contains each general virtue in the world.
Better than beautiful thou must begin,
Devise for fair a fairer word than fair,
And every ornament that thou wouldest praise,
Fly it a pitch above the soar of praise.
For flattery fear thou not to be convicted;
For, were thy admiration ten times more,
Ten times ten thousand more the worth exceeds
Of that thou art to praise, thy praises worth.
Begin; I will to contemplate the while:
Forget not to set down, how passionate,
How heart sick, and how full of languishment,
Her beauty makes me.

LODOWICK.
Write I to a woman?

KING EDWARD.
What beauty else could triumph over me,
Or who but women do our love lays greet?
What, thinkest thou I did bid thee praise a horse?

LODOWICK.
Of what condition or estate she is,
Twere requisite that I should know, my Lord.

KING EDWARD.
Of such estate, that hers is as a throne,
And my estate the footstool where she treads:
Then maist thou judge what her condition is

By the proportion of her mightiness.
Write on, while I peruse her in my thoughts.—
Her voice to music or the nightingale—
To music every summer leaping swain
Compares his sunburnt lover when she speaks;
And why should I speak of the nightingale?
The nightingale sings of adulterate wrong,
And that, compared, is too satyrical;
For sin, though sin, would not be so esteemed,
But, rather, virtue sin, sin virtue deemed.
Her hair, far softer than the silk worm's twist,
Like to a flattering glass, doth make more fair
The yellow Amber:—like a flattering glass
Comes in too soon; for, writing of her eyes,
I'll say that like a glass they catch the sun,
And thence the hot reflection doth rebound
Against the breast, and burns my heart within.
Ah, what a world of descant makes my soul
Upon this voluntary ground of love!—
Come, Lodowick, hast thou turned thy ink to gold?
If not, write but in letters Capital
My mistress' name, and it will gild thy paper:
Read, Lord, read;
Fill thou the empty hollows of mine ears
With the sweet hearing of thy poetry.

LODOWICK.
I have not to a period brought her praise.

KING EDWARD.
Her praise is as my love, both infinite,
Which apprehend such violent extremes,
That they disdain an ending period.
Her beauty hath no match but my affection;
Hers more than most, mine most and more than more:
Hers more to praise than tell the sea by drops,
Nay, more than drop the massy earth by sands,
And sand by sand print them in memory:
Then wherefore talkest thou of a period

To that which craves unended admiration?
Read, let us hear.

LODOWICK.
'More fair and chaste than is the queen of shades,'—

KING EDWARD.
That line hath two faults, gross and palpable:
Comparest thou her to the pale queen of night,
Who, being set in dark, seems therefore light?
What is she, when the sun lifts up his head,
But like a fading taper, dim and dead?
My love shall brave the eye of heaven at noon,
And, being unmasked, outshine the golden sun.

LODOWICK.
What is the other fault, my sovereign Lord?

KING EDWARD.
Read o'er the line again.

LODOWICK.
'More fair and chaste'—

KING EDWARD.
I did not bid thee talk of chastity,
To ransack so the treasure of her mind;
For I had rather have her chased than chaste.
Out with the moon line, I will none of it;
And let me have her likened to the sun:
Say she hath thrice more splendour than the sun,
That her perfections emulate the sun,
That she breeds sweets as plenteous as the sun,
That she doth thaw cold winter like the sun,
That she doth cheer fresh summer like the sun,
The she doth dazzle gazers like the sun;
And, in this application to the sun,
Bid her be free and general as the sun,
Who smiles upon the basest weed that grows

As lovingly as on the fragrant rose.
Let's see what follows that same moonlight line.

LODOWICK.
'More fair and chaste than is the queen of shades,
More bold in constance'—

KING EDWARD.
In constance! than who?

LODOWICK.
'Than Judith was.'

KING EDWARD.
O monstrous line! Put in the next a sword,
And I shall woo her to cut of my head.
Blot, blot, good Lodowick! Let us hear the next.

LODOWICK.
There's all that yet is done.

KING EDWARD.
I thank thee then; thou hast done little ill,
But what is done, is passing, passing ill.
No, let the Captain talk of boisterous war,
The prisoner of emured dark constraint,
The sick man best sets down the pangs of death,
The man that starves the sweetness of a feast,
The frozen soul the benefit of fire,
And every grief his happy opposite:
Love cannot sound well but in lover's tongues;
Give me the pen and paper, I will write.

[Enter Countess.]

But soft, here comes the treasurer of my spirit.—
Lodowick, thou knowst not how to draw a battle;
These wings, these flankers, and these squadrons
Argue in thee defective discipline:
Thou shouldest have placed this here, this other here.

COUNTESS.
Pardon my boldness, my thrice gracious Lords;
Let my intrusion here be called my duty,
That comes to see my sovereign how he fares.

KING EDWARD.
Go, draw the same, I tell thee in what form.

LODOWICK.
I go.

[Exit Lodowick.]

COUNTESS.
Sorry I am to see my liege so sad:
What may thy subject do to drive from thee
Thy gloomy consort, sullome melancholy?

KING EDWARD.
Ah, Lady, I am blunt and cannot straw
The flowers of solace in a ground of shame:—
Since I came hither, Countess, I am wronged.

COUNTESS.
Now God forbid that any in my house
Should think my sovereign wrong! Thrice gentle King,
Acquaint me with your cause of discontent.

KING EDWARD.
How near then shall I be to remedy?

COUNTESS.
As near, my Liege, as all my woman's power
Can pawn it self to buy thy remedy.

KING EDWARD.
If thou speakst true, then have I my redress:
Engage thy power to redeem my Joys,
And I am joyful, Countess; else I die.

COUNTESS.
I will, my Liege.

KING EDWARD.
Swear, Countess, that thou wilt.

COUNTESS.
By heaven, I will.

KING EDWARD.
Then take thy self a little way a side,
And tell thy self, a King doth dote on thee;
Say that within thy power it doth lie
To make him happy, and that thou hast sworn
To give him all the Joy within thy power:
Do this, and tell me when I shall be happy.

COUNTESS.
All this is done, my thrice dread sovereign:
That power of love, that I have power to give,
Thou hast with all devout obedience;
Employ me how thou wilt in proof thereof.

KING EDWARD.
Thou hearst me say that I do dote on thee.

COUNTESS.
If on my beauty, take it if thou canst;
Though little, I do prize it ten times less;
If on my virtue, take it if thou canst,
For virtue's store by giving doth augment;
Be it on what it will, that I can give
And thou canst take away, inherit it.

KING EDWARD.
It is thy beauty that I would enjoy.

COUNTESS.
O, were it painted, I would wipe it off
And dispossess my self, to give it thee.

But, sovereign, it is soldered to my life:
Take one and both; for, like an humble shadow,
It haunts the sunshine of my summer's life.

KING EDWARD.
But thou maist lend it me to sport with all.

COUNTESS.
As easy may my intellectual soul
Be lent away, and yet my body live,
As lend my body, palace to my soul,
Away from her, and yet retain my soul.
My body is her bower, her Court, her abbey,
And she an Angel, pure, divine, unspotted:
If I should leave her house, my Lord, to thee,
I kill my poor soul and my poor soul me.

KING EDWARD.
Didst thou not swear to give me what I would?

COUNTESS.
I did, my liege, so what you would I could.

KING EDWARD.
I wish no more of thee than thou maist give:—
Nor beg I do not, but I rather buy—
That is, thy love; and for that love of thine
In rich exchange I tender to thee mine.

COUNTESS.
But that your lips were sacred, my Lord,
You would profane the holy name of love.
That love you offer me you cannot give,
For Caesar owes that tribute to his Queen;
That love you beg of me I cannot give,
For Sara owes that duty to her Lord.
He that doth clip or counterfeit your stamp
Shall die, my Lord; and will your sacred self
Commit high treason against the King of heaven,

To stamp his Image in forbidden metal,
Forgetting your allegiance and your oath?
In violating marriage sacred law,
You break a greater honor than your self:
To be a King is of a younger house
Than to be married; your progenitour,
Sole reigning Adam on the universe,
By God was honored for a married man,
But not by him anointed for a king.
It is a penalty to break your statutes,
Though not enacted with your highness' hand:
How much more, to infringe the holy act,
Made by the mouth of God, sealed with his hand?
I know, my sovereign, in my husband's love,
Who now doth loyal service in his wars,
Doth but so try the wife of Salisbury,
Whither she will hear a wanton's tale or no,
Lest being therein guilty by my stay,
>From that, not from my liege, I turn away.

[Exit.]

KING EDWARD.
Whether is her beauty by her words dying,
Or are her words sweet chaplains to her beauty?
Like as the wind doth beautify a sail,
And as a sail becomes the unseen wind,
So do her words her beauties, beauties words.
O, that I were a honey gathering bee,
To bear the comb of virtue from this flower,
And not a poison sucking envious spider,
To turn the juice I take to deadly venom!
Religion is austere and beauty gentle;
Too strict a guardian for so fair a ward!
O, that she were, as is the air, to me!
Why, so she is, for when I would embrace her,
This do I, and catch nothing but my self.
I must enjoy her; for I cannot beat
With reason and reproof fond love a way.

[Enter Warwick.]

Here comes her father: I will work with him,
To bear my colours in this field of love.

WARWICK.
How is it that my sovereign is so sad?
May I with pardon know your highness grief;
And that my old endeavor will remove it,
It shall not cumber long your majesty.

KING EDWARD.
A kind and voluntary gift thou proferest,
That I was forward to have begged of thee.
But, O thou world, great nurse of flattery,
Why dost thou tip men's tongues with golden words,
And peise their deeds with weight of heavy lead,
That fair performance cannot follow promise?
O, that a man might hold the heart's close book
And choke the lavish tongue, when it doth utter
The breath of falsehood not charactered there!

WARWICK.
Far be it from the honor of my age,
That I should owe bright gold and render lead;
Age is a cynic, not a flatterer.
I say again, that if I knew your grief,
And that by me it may be lessened,
My proper harm should buy your highness good.

KING EDWARD.
These are the vulgar tenders of false men,
That never pay the duty of their words.
Thou wilt not stick to swear what thou hast said;
But, when thou knowest my grief's condition,
This rash disgorged vomit of thy word
Thou wilt eat up again, and leave me helpless.

WARWICK.

By heaven, I will not, though your majesty
Did bid me run upon your sword and die.

KING EDWARD.
Say that my grief is no way medicinable
But by the loss and bruising of thine honour.

WARWICK.
If nothing but that loss may vantage you,
I would accompt that loss my vantage too.

KING EDWARD.
Thinkst that thou canst unswear thy oath again?

WARWICK.
I cannot; nor I would not, if I could.

KING EDWARD.
But, if thou dost, what shall I say to thee?

WARWICK.
What may be said to any perjured villain,
That breaks the sacred warrant of an oath.

KING EDWARD.
What wilt thou say to one that breaks an oath?

WARWICK.
That he hath broke his faith with God and man,
And from them both stands excommunicate.

KING EDWARD.
What office were it, to suggest a man
To break a lawful and religious vow?

WARWICK.
An office for the devil, not for man.

KING EDWARD.
That devil's office must thou do for me,

Or break thy oath, or cancel all the bonds
Of love and duty twixt thy self and me;
And therefore, Warwick, if thou art thy self,
The Lord and master of thy word and oath,
Go to thy daughter; and in my behalf
Command her, woo her, win her any ways,
To be my mistress and my secret love.
I will not stand to hear thee make reply:
Thy oath break hers, or let thy sovereign die.

[Exit.]

WARWICK.
O doting King! O detestable office!
Well may I tempt my self to wrong my self,
When he hath sworn me by the name of God
To break a vow made by the name of God.
What, if I swear by this right hand of mine
To cut this right hand off? The better way
Were to profane the Idol than confound it:
But neither will I do; I'll keep mine oath,
And to my daughter make a recantation
Of all the virtue I have preacht to her:
I'll say, she must forget her husband Salisbury,
If she remember to embrace the king;
I'll say, an oath may easily be broken,
But not so easily pardoned, being broken;
I'll say, it is true charity to love,
But not true love to be so charitable;
I'll say, his greatness may bear out the shame,
But not his kingdom can buy out the sin;
I'll say, it is my duty to persuade,
But not her honesty to give consent.

[Enter Countess.]

See where she comes; was never father had
Against his child an embassage so bad?

COUNTESS.
My Lord and father, I have sought for you:
My mother and the Peers importune you
To keep in presence of his majesty,
And do your best to make his highness merry.

WARWICK.
[Aside.] How shall I enter in this graceless arrant?
I must not call her child, for where's the father
That will in such a suit seduce his child?
Then, 'wife of Salisbury'; shall I so begin?
No, he's my friend, and where is found the friend
That will do friendship such indammagement?

[To the Countess.]

Neither my daughter nor my dear friend's wife,
I am not Warwick, as thou thinkst I am,
But an attorney from the Court of hell,
That thus have housed my spirit in his form,
To do a message to thee from the king.
The mighty king of England dotes on thee:
He that hath power to take away thy life,
Hath power to take thy honor; then consent
To pawn thine honor rather than thy life:
Honor is often lost and got again,
But life, once gone, hath no recovery.
The Sun, that withers hay, doth nourish grass;
The king, that would disdain thee, will advance thee.
The Poets write that great Achilles' spear
Could heal the wound it made: the moral is,
What mighty men misdo, they can amend.
The Lyon doth become his bloody jaws,
And grace his forragement by being mild,
When vassel fear lies trembling at his feet.
The king will in his glory hide thy shame;
And those that gaze on him to find out thee,
Will lose their eye-sight, looking in the Sun.
What can one drop of poison harm the Sea,

Whose huge vastures can digest the ill
And make it loose his operation?
The king's great name will temper thy misdeeds,
And give the bitter potion of reproach,
A sugared, sweet and most delicious taste.
Besides, it is no harm to do the thing
Which without shame could not be left undone.
Thus have I in his majesty's behalf
Appareled sin in virtuous sentences,
And dwell upon thy answer in his suit.

COUNTESS.
Unnatural besiege! woe me unhappy,
To have escaped the danger of my foes,
And to be ten times worse injured by friends!
Hath he no means to stain my honest blood,
But to corrupt the author of my blood
To be his scandalous and vile solicitor?
No marvel though the branches be then infected,
When poison hath encompassed the root:
No marvel though the leprous infant die,
When the stern dame invenometh the Dug.
Why then, give sin a passport to offend,
And youth the dangerous reign of liberty:
Blot out the strict forbidding of the law,
And cancel every cannon that prescribes
A shame for shame or penance for offence.
No, let me die, if his too boistrous will
Will have it so, before I will consent
To be an actor in his graceless lust.

WARWICK.
Why, now thou speakst as I would have thee speak:
And mark how I unsay my words again.
An honorable grave is more esteemed
Than the polluted closet of a king:
The greater man, the greater is the thing,
Be it good or bad, that he shall undertake:
An unreputed mote, flying in the Sun,

Presents a greater substance than it is:
The freshest summer's day doth soonest taint
The loathed carrion that it seems to kiss:
Deep are the blows made with a mighty Axe:
That sin doth ten times aggravate it self,
That is committed in a holy place:
An evil deed, done by authority,
Is sin and subornation: Deck an Ape
In tissue, and the beauty of the robe
Adds but the greater scorn unto the beast.
A spatious field of reasons could I urge
Between his glory, daughter, and thy shame:
That poison shews worst in a golden cup;
Dark night seems darker by the lightning flash;
Lilies that fester smell far worse than weeds;
And every glory that inclines to sin,
The shame is treble by the opposite.
So leave I with my blessing in thy bosom,
Which then convert to a most heavy curse,
When thou convertest from honor's golden name
To the black faction of bed blotting shame.

COUNTESS.
I'll follow thee; and when my mind turns so,
My body sink my soul in endless woe!

[Exeunt.]

ACT II. SCENE II. The Same. A Room in the Castle.

[Enter at one door Derby from France, At an other door
Audley with a Drum.]

DERBY.
Thrice noble Audley, well encountered here!
How is it with our sovereign and his peers?

AUDLEY.
Tis full a fortnight, since I saw his highness
What time he sent me forth to muster men;
Which I accordingly have done, and bring them hither
In fair array before his majesty.

What news, my Lord of Derby, from the Emperor?

DERBY.
As good as we desire: the Emperor
Hath yielded to his highness friendly aid,
And makes our king lieutenant general
In all his lands and large dominions;
Then via for the spatious bounds of France!

AUDLEY.
What, doth his highness leap to hear these news?

DERBY.
I have not yet found time to open them;
The king is in his closet, malcontent;
For what, I know not, but he gave in charge,
Till after dinner none should interrupt him:
The Countess Salisbury and her father Warwick,
Artois and all look underneath the brows.

AUDLEY.
Undoubtedly, then, some thing is amiss.

[Trumpet within.]

DERBY.
The Trumpets sound, the king is now abroad.

[Enter the King.]

AUDLEY.
Here comes his highness.

DERBY.

Befall my sovereign all my sovereign's wish!

KING EDWARD.
Ah, that thou wert a Witch to make it so!

DERBY.
The Emperour greeteth you.

[Presenting Letters.]

KING EDWARD.
—Would it were the Countess!

DERBY.
And hath accorded to your highness suite.

KING EDWARD.
—Thou liest, she hath not; but I would she had.

AUDLEY.
All love and duty to my Lord the King!

KING EDWARD.
Well, all but one is none.—What news with you?

AUDLEY.
I have, my liege, levied those horse and foot
According to your charge, and brought them hither.

KING EDWARD.
Then let those foot trudge hence upon those horse
According to our discharge, and be gone.—
Darby, I'll look upon the Countess' mind anon.

DERBY.
The Countess' mind, my liege?

KING EDWARD.
I mean the Emperour:—leave me alone.

AUDLEY.
What is his mind?

DERBY.
Let's leave him to his humor.

[Exeunt.]

KING EDWARD.
Thus from the heart's aboundance speaks the tongue;
Countess for Emperour: and indeed, why not?
She is as imperator over me
And I to her
Am as a kneeling vassal, that observes
The pleasure or displeasure of her eye.

[Enter Lodowick.]

What says the more than Cleopatra's match
To Caesar now?

LODOWICK.
That yet, my liege, ere night
She will resolve your majesty.

[Drum within.]

KING EDWARD.
What drum is this that thunders forth this march,
To start the tender Cupid in my bosom?
Poor shipskin, how it brawls with him that beateth it!
Go, break the thundring parchment bottom out,
And I will teach it to conduct sweet lines
Unto the bosom of a heavenly Nymph;
For I will use it as my writing paper,
And so reduce him from a scolding drum
To be the herald and dear counsel bearer
Betwixt a goddess and a mighty king.
Go, bid the drummer learn to touch the Lute,
Or hang him in the braces of his drum,

For now we think it an uncivil thing,
To trouble heaven with such harsh resounds:
Away!

[Exit.]

The quarrel that I have requires no arms
But these of mine: and these shall meet my foe
In a deep march of penetrable groans;
My eyes shall be my arrows, and my sighs
Shall serve me as the vantage of the wind,
To whirl away my sweetest artillery.
Ah, but, alas, she wins the sun of me,
For that is she her self, and thence it comes
That Poets term the wanton warrior blind;
But love hath eyes as judgement to his steps,
Till too much loved glory dazzles them.—

[Enter Lodowick.]

How now?

LODOWICK.
My liege, the drum that stroke the lusty march,
Stands with Prince Edward, your thrice valiant son.

[Enter Prince Edward.]

KING EDWARD.
I see the boy; oh, how his mother's face,
Modeled in his, corrects my strayed desire,
And rates my heart, and chides my thievish eye,
Who, being rich enough in seeing her,
Yet seeks elsewhere: and basest theft is that
Which cannot cloak it self on poverty.—
Now, boy, what news?

PRINCE EDWARD.
I have assembled, my dear Lord and father,
The choicest buds of all our English blood

For our affairs in France; and here we come
To take direction from your majesty.

KING EDWARD.
Still do I see in him delineate
His mother's visage; those his eyes are hers,
Who, looking wistely on me, make me blush:
For faults against themselves give evidence;
Lust is fire, and men like lanthornes show
Light lust within them selves, even through them selves.
Away, loose silks of wavering vanity!
Shall the large limit of fair Brittain
By me be overthrown, and shall I not
Master this little mansion of my self?
Give me an Armor of eternal steel!
I go to conquer kings; and shall I not then
Subdue my self? and be my enemy's friend?
It must not be.—Come, boy, forward, advance!
Let's with our colours sweet the Air of France.

[Enter Lodowick.]

LODOWICK.
My liege, the Countess with a smiling cheer
Desires access unto your Majesty.

KING EDWARD.
Why, there it goes! That very smile of hers
Hath ransomed captive France, and set the King,
The Dauphin, and the Peers at liberty.—
Go, leave me, Ned, and revel with thy friends.

[Exit Prince Edward.]

Thy mother is but black, and thou, like her,
Dost put it in my mind how foul she is.—
Go, fetch the Countess hither in thy hand,
And let her chase away these winter clouds,
For she gives beauty both to heaven and earth.

[Exit Lodowick.]

The sin is more to hack and hew poor men,
Than to embrace in an unlawful bed
The register of all rarities
Since Letherne Adam till this youngest hour.

[Enter Countess escorted by Lodowick.]

Go, Lodowick, put thy hand into my purse,
Play, spend, give, riot, waste, do what thou wilt,
So thou wilt hence awhile and leave me here.

[Exit Lodowick.]

Now, my soul's playfellow, art thou come
To speak the more than heavenly word of yea
To my objection in thy beauteous love?

COUNTESS.
My father on his blessing hath commanded—

KING EDWARD.
That thou shalt yield to me?

COUNTESS.
Aye, dear my liege, your due.

KING EDWARD.
And that, my dearest love, can be no less
Than right for right and tender love for love.

COUNTESS.
Then wrong for wrong and endless hate for hate.—
But,—sith I see your majesty so bent,
That my unwillingness, my husband's love,
Your high estate, nor no respect respected
Can be my help, but that your mightiness
Will overbear and awe these dear regards—
I bind my discontent to my content,

And what I would not I'll compel I will,
Provided that your self remove those lets
That stand between your highness' love and mine.

KING EDWARD.
Name them, fair Countess, and, by heaven, I will.

COUNTESS.
It is their lives that stand between our love,
That I would have choked up, my sovereign.

KING EDWARD.
Whose lives, my Lady?

COUNTESS.
My thrice loving liege,
Your Queen and Salisbury, my wedded husband,
Who living have that title in our love,
That we cannot bestow but by their death.

KING EDWARD.
Thy opposition is beyond our Law.

COUNTESS.
So is your desire: if the law
Can hinder you to execute the one,
Let it forbid you to attempt the other.
I cannot think you love me as you say,
Unless you do make good what you have sworn.

KING EDWARD.
No more; thy husband and the Queen shall die.
Fairer thou art by far than Hero was,
Beardless Leander not so strong as I:
He swom an easy current for his love,
But I will through a Hellespont of blood,
To arrive at Cestus where my Hero lies.

COUNTESS.
Nay, you'll do more; you'll make the River to

With their heart bloods that keep our love asunder,
Of which my husband and your wife are twain.

KING EDWARD.
Thy beauty makes them guilty of their death
And gives in evidence that they shall die;
Upon which verdict I, their Judge, condemn them.

COUNTESS.
[Aside.] O perjured beauty, more corrupted Judge!
When to the great Star-chamber o'er our heads
The universal Sessions calls to count
This packing evil, we both shall tremble for it.

KING EDWARD.
What says my fair love? is she resolute?

COUNTESS.
Resolute to be dissolute; and, therefore, this:
Keep but thy word, great king, and I am thine.
Stand where thou dost, I'll part a little from thee,
And see how I will yield me to thy hands.

[Turning suddenly upon him, and shewing two Daggers.]

Here by my side doth hang my wedding knifes:
Take thou the one, and with it kill thy Queen,
And learn by me to find her where she lies;
And with this other I'll dispatch my love,
Which now lies fast a sleep within my heart:
When they are gone, then I'll consent to love.
Stir not, lascivious king, to hinder me;
My resolution is more nimbler far,
Than thy prevention can be in my rescue,
And if thou stir, I strike; therefore, stand still,
And hear the choice that I will put thee to:
Either swear to leave thy most unholy suit
And never hence forth to solicit me;
Or else, by heaven, this sharp pointed knife

Shall stain thy earth with that which thou would stain,
My poor chaste blood. Swear, Edward, swear,
Or I will strike and die before thee here.

KING EDWARD.
Even by that power I swear, that gives me now
The power to be ashamed of my self,
I never mean to part my lips again
In any words that tends to such a suit.
Arise, true English Lady, whom our Isle
May better boast of than ever Roman might
Of her, whose ransacked treasury hath taskt
The vain endeavor of so many pens:
Arise, and be my fault thy honor's fame,
Which after ages shall enrich thee with.
I am awakened from this idle dream.—
Warwick, my Son, Darby, Artois, and Audley!
Brave warriors all, where are you all this while?

[Enter all.]

Warwick, I make thee Warden of the North:
Thou, Prince of Wales, and Audley, straight to Sea;
Scour to New-haven; some there stay for me:
My self, Artois, and Darby will through Flanders,
To greet our friends there and to crave their aide.
This night will scarce suffice a faithful lover;
For, ere the Sun shall gild the eastern sky,
We'll wake him with our Marshall harmony.

[Exeunt.]

ACT III. SCENE I. Flanders. The French Camp.

[Enter King John of France, his two sons, Charles of
Normandy, and Phillip, and the Duke of Lorrain.]

KING JOHN.
Here, till our Navy of a thousand sail
Have made a breakfast to our foe by Sea,
Let us encamp, to wait their happy speed.—
Lorraine, what readiness is Edward in?
How hast thou heard that he provided is
Of marshall furniture for this exploit?

LORRAINE.
To lay aside unnecessary soothing,
And not to spend the time in circumstance,
Tis bruited for a certainty, my Lord,
That he's exceeding strongly fortified;
His subjects flock as willingly to war,
As if unto a triumph they were led.

CHARLES.
England was wont to harbour malcontents,
Blood thirsty and seditious Catelynes,
Spend thrifts, and such as gape for nothing else
But changing and alteration of the state;
And is it possible
That they are now so loyal in them selves?

LORRAINE.
All but the Scot, who solemnly protests,
As heretofore I have informed his grace,
Never to sheath his Sword or take a truce.

KING JOHN.
Ah, that's the anchorage of some better hope!
But, on the other side, to think what friends
King Edward hath retained in Netherland,
Among those ever-bibbing Epicures,
Those frothy Dutch men, puft with double beer,
That drink and swill in every place they come,
Doth not a little aggravate mine ire;
Besides, we hear, the Emperor conjoins,
And stalls him in his own authority;

But, all the mightier that their number is,
The greater glory reaps the victory.
Some friends have we beside domestic power;
The stern Polonian, and the warlike Dane,
The king of Bohemia, and of Sicily,
Are all become confederates with us,
And, as I think, are marching hither apace.

[Drum within.]

But soft, I hear the music of their drums,
By which I guess that their approach is near.

[Enter the King of Bohemia, with Danes, and a
Polonian Captain, with other soldiers, another way.]

KING OF BOHEMIA.
King John of France, as league and neighborhood
Requires, when friends are any way distrest,
I come to aide thee with my country's force.

POLONIAN CAPTAIN.
And from great Musco, fearful to the Turk,
And lofty Poland, nurse of hardy men,
I bring these servitors to fight for thee,
Who willingly will venture in thy cause.

KING JOHN.
Welcome, Bohemian king, and welcome all:
This your great kindness I will not forget.
Besides your plentiful rewards in Crowns,
That from our Treasury ye shall receive,
There comes a hare brained Nation, decked in pride,
The spoil of whom will be a treble gain.
And now my hope is full, my joy complete:
At Sea, we are as puissant as the force
Of Agamemnon in the Haven of Troy;
By land, with Zerxes we compare of strength,
Whose soldiers drank up rivers in their thirst;

Then Bayardlike, blind, overweaning Ned,
To reach at our imperial diadem
Is either to be swallowed of the waves,
Or hacked a pieces when thou comest ashore.

[Enter Mariner.]

MARINER.
Near to the coast I have descried, my Lord,
As I was buy in my watchful charge,
The proud Armado of king Edward's ships:
Which, at the first, far off when I did ken,
Seemed as it were a grove of withered pines;
But, drawing near, their glorious bright aspect,
Their streaming Ensigns, wrought of coloured silk,
Like to a meadow full of sundry flowers,
Adorns the naked bosom of the earth:
Majestical the order of their course,
Figuring the horned Circle of the Moon:
And on the top gallant of the Admiral
And likewise all the handmaids of his train
The Arms of England and of France unite
Are quartered equally by Heralds' art:
Thus, tightly carried with a merry gale,
They plough the Ocean hitherward amain.

KING JOHN.
Dare he already crop the Fleur de Luce?
I hope, the honey being gathered thence,
He, with the spider, afterward approached,
Shall suck forth deadly venom from the leaves.—
But where's our Navy? how are they prepared
To wing them selves against this flight of Ravens?

MARINER.
They, having knowledge, brought them by the scouts,
Did break from Anchor straight, and, puffed with rage,
No otherwise then were their sails with wind,
Made forth, as when the empty Eagle flies,

To satisfy his hungry griping maw.

KING JOHN.
There's for thy news. Return unto thy bark;
And if thou scape the bloody stroke of war
And do survive the conflict, come again,
And let us hear the manner of the fight.

[Exit Mariner.]

Mean space, my Lords, tis best we be dispersed
To several places, least they chance to land:
First you, my Lord, with your Bohemian Troops,
Shall pitch your battailes on the lower hand;
My eldest son, the Duke of Normandy,
Together with the aide of Muscovites,
Shall climb the higher ground another way;
Here in the middle cost, betwixt you both,
Phillip, my youngest boy, and I will lodge.
So, Lors, be gone, and look unto your charge:
You stand for France, an Empire fair and large.

[Exeunt.]

Now tell me, Phillip, what is thy concept,
Touching the challenge that the English make?

PHILLIP.
I say, my Lord, claim Edward what he can,
And bring he ne'er so plain a pedigree,
Tis you are in the possession of the Crown,
And that's the surest point of all the Law:
But, were it not, yet ere he should prevail,
I'll make a Conduit of my dearest blood,
Or chase those straggling upstarts home again.

KING JOHN.
Well said, young Phillip! Call for bread and Wine,
That we may cheer our stomachs with repast,
To look our foes more sternly in the face.

[A Table and Provisions brought in. The battle hard a far off.]

Now is begun the heavy day at Sea:
Fight, Frenchmen, fight; be like the field of Bears,
When they defend their younglings in the Caves!
Stir, angry Nemesis, the happy helm,
That, with the sulphur battles of your rage,
The English Fleet may be dispersed and sunk.

[Shot.]

PHILLIP.
O Father, how this echoing Cannon shot,
Like sweet harmony, digests my eats!

KING JOHN.
Now, boy, thou hearest what thundering terror tis,
To buckle for a kingdom's sovereignty:
The earth, with giddy trembling when it shakes,
Or when the exhalations of the air
Breaks in extremity of lightning flash,
Affrights not more than kings, when they dispose
To shew the rancor of their high swollen hearts.

[Retreat.]

Retreat is sounded; one side hath the worse;
O, if it be the French, sweet fortune, turn;
And, in thy turning, change the forward winds,
That, with advantage of a favoring sky,
Our men may vanquish, and the other fly!

[Enter Mariner.]

My heart misgives:—say, mirror of pale death,
To whom belongs the honor of this day?
Relate, I pray thee, if thy breath will serve,
The sad discourse of this discomfiture.

MARINER.

I will, my Lord.
My gracious sovereign, Franch hath ta'en the foil,
And boasting Edward triumphs with success.
These Iron hearted Navies,
When last I was reporter to your grace,
Both full of angry spleen, of hope, and fear,
Hasting to meet each other in the face,
At last conjoined; and by their Admiral
Our Admiral encountered many shot:
By this, the other, that beheld these twain
Give earnest penny of a further wrack,
Like fiery Dragons took their haughty flight;
And, likewise meeting, from their smoky wombs
Sent many grim Ambassadors of death.
Then gan the day to turn to gloomy night,
And darkness did as well enclose the quick
As those that were but newly reft of life.
No leisure served for friends to bid farewell;
And, if it had, the hideous noise was such,
As each to other seemed deaf and dumb.
Purple the Sea, whose channel filled as fast
With streaming gore, that from the maimed fell,
As did her gushing moisture break into
The crannied cleftures of the through shot planks.
Here flew a head, dissevered from the trunk,
There mangled arms and legs were tossed aloft,
As when a whirl wind takes the Summer dust
And scatters it in middle of the air.
Then might ye see the reeling vessels split,
And tottering sink into the ruthless flood,
Until their lofty tops were seen no more.
All shifts were tried, both for defence and hurt:
And now the effect of valor and of force,
Of resolution and of cowardice,
We lively pictures; how the one for fame,
The other by compulsion laid about;
Much did the Nonpareille, that brave ship;
So did the black snake of Bullen, then which
A bonnier vessel never yet spread sail.

But all in vain; both Sun, the Wind and tide,
Revolted all unto our foe men's side,
That we perforce were fain to give them way,
And they are landed.—Thus my tale is done:
We have untimely lost, and they have won.

KING JOHN.
Then rests there nothing, but with present speed
To join our several forces all in one,
And bid them battle, ere they range too far.
Come, gentle Phillip, let us hence depart;
This soldier's words have pierced thy father's heart.

[Exeunt.]

ACT III. SCENE II. Picardy. Fields near Cressi.

[Enter two French men; a woman and two little
Children meet them, and other Citizens.]

ONE.
Well met, my masters: how now? what's the news?
And wherefore are ye laden thus with stuff?
What, is it quarter day that you remove,
And carry bag and baggage too?

TWO.
Quarter day? Aye, and quartering day, I fear:
Have ye not heard the news that flies abroad?

ONE.
What news?

THREE.
How the French Navy is destroyed at Sea,
And that the English Army is arrived.

ONE.
What then?

TWO.
What then, quoth you? why, ist not time to fly,
When envy and destruction is so nigh?

ONE.
Content thee, man; they are far enough from hence,
And will be met, I warrant ye, to their cost,
Before they break so far into the Realm.

TWO.
Aye, so the Grasshopper doth spend the time
In mirthful jollity, till Winter come;
And then too late he would redeem his time,
When frozen cold hath nipped his careless head.
He, that no sooner will provide a Cloak,
Then when he sees it doth begin to reign,
May, peradventure, for his negligence,
Be throughly washed, when he suspects it not.
We that have charge and such a train as this,
Must look in time to look for them and us,
Least, when we would, we cannot be relieved.

ONE.
Belike, you then despair of all success,
And think your Country will be subjugate.

THREE.
We cannot tell; tis good to fear the worst.

ONE.
Yet rather fight, then, like unnatural sons,
Forsake your loving parents in distress.

TWO.
Tush, they that have already taken arms
Are many fearful millions in respect
Of that small handful of our enemies;

But tis a rightful quarrel must prevail;
Edward is son unto our late king's sister,
When John Valois is three degrees removed.

WOMAN.
Besides, there goes a Prophesy abroad,
Published by one that was a Friar once,
Whose Oracles have many times proved true;
And now he says, the time will shortly come,
When as a Lyon, roused in the west,
Shall carry hence the fluerdeluce of France:
These, I can tell ye, and such like surmises
Strike many French men cold unto the heart.

[Enter a French man.]

FOUR.
Fly, country men and citizens of France!
Sweet flowering peace, the root of happy life,
Is quite abandoned and expulst the land;
In stead of whom ransacked constraining war
Sits like to Ravens upon your houses' tops;
Slaughter and mischief walk within your streets,
And, unrestrained, make havoc as they pass;
The form whereof even now my self beheld
Upon this fair mountain whence I came.
For so far of as I directed mine eyes,
I might perceive five Cities all on fire,
Corn fields and vineyards, burning like an oven;
And, as the reaking vapour in the wind
Turned but aside, I like wise might discern
The poor inhabitants, escaped the flame,
Fall numberless upon the soldiers' pikes.
Three ways these dreadful ministers of wrath
Do tread the measures of their tragic march:
Upon the right hand comes the conquering King,
Upon the left his hot unbridled son,
And in the midst our nation's glittering host,
All which, though distant yet, conspire in one,

To leave a desolation where they come.
Fly therefore, Citizens, if you be wise,
Seek out some habitation further off:
Here is you stay, your wives will be abused,
Your treasure shared before your weeping eyes;
Shelter you your selves, for now the storm doth rise.
Away, away; me thinks I hear their drums:—
Ah, wretched France, I greatly fear thy fall;
Thy glory shaketh like a tottering wall.

[Exeunt.]

ACT III. SCENE III. The same. Drums.

[Enter King Edward, and the Earl of Darby, With
Soldiers, and Gobin de Grey.]

KING EDWARD.
Where's the French man by whose cunning guide
We found the shallow of this River Somme,
And had directions how to pass the sea?

GOBIN.
Here, my good Lord.

KING EDWARD.
How art thou called? tell me thy name.

GOBIN.
Gobin de Graie, if please your excellence.

KING EDWARD.
Then, Gobin, for the service thou hast done,
We here enlarge and give thee liberty;
And, for recompense beside this good,
Thou shalt receive five hundred marks in gold.—
I know not how, we should have met our son,

Whom now in heart I wish I might behold.

[Enter Artois.]

ARTOIS.
Good news, my Lord; the prince is hard at hand,
And with him comes Lord Awdley and the rest,
Whom since our landing we could never meet.

[Enter Prince Edward, Lord Awdley, and Soldiers.]

KING EDWARD.
Welcome, fair Prince! How hast thou sped, my son,
Since thy arrival on the coast of France?

PRINCE EDWARD.
Successfully, I thank the gracious heavens:
Some of their strongest Cities we have won,
As Harflew, Lo, Crotay, and Carentigne,
And others wasted, leaving at our heels
A wide apparent field and beaten path
For solitariness to progress in:
Yet those that would submit we kindly pardoned,
But who in scorn refused our proffered peace,
Endured the penalty of sharp revenge.

KING EDWARD.
Ah, France, why shouldest thou be thus obstinate
Against the kind embracement of thy friends?
How gently had we thought to touch thy breast
And set our foot upon thy tender mould,
But that, in froward and disdainful pride,
Thou, like a skittish and untamed colt,
Dost start aside and strike us with thy heels!
But tell me, Ned, in all thy warlike course,
Hast thou not seen the usurping King of France?

PRINCE EDWARD.
Yes, my good Lord, and not two hours ago,
With full a hundred thousand fighting men—

Upon the one side of the river's bank
And on the other both, his multitudes.
I feared he would have cropped our smaller power:
But happily, perceiving your approach,
He hath with drawn himself to Cressey plains;
Where, as it seemeth by his good array,
He means to bid us battle presently.

KING EDWARD.
He shall be welcome; that's the thing we crave.

[Enter King John, Dukes of Normandy and Lorrain,
King of Boheme, young Phillip, and Soldiers.]

KING JOHN.
Edward, know that John, the true king of France,
Musing thou shouldst encroach upon his land,
And in thy tyranous proceeding slay
His faithful subjects and subvert his Towns,
Spits in thy face; and in this manner following
Obraids thee with thine arrogant intrusion:
First, I condemn thee for a fugitive,
A thievish pirate, and a needy mate,
One that hath either no abiding place,
Or else, inhabiting some barren soil,
Where neither herb or fruitful grain is had,
Doest altogether live by pilfering:
Next, insomuch thou hast infringed thy faith,
Broke leage and solemn covenant made with me,
I hold thee for a false pernicious wretch:
And, last of all, although I scorn to cope
With one so much inferior to my self,
Yet, in respect thy thirst is all for gold,
Thy labour rather to be feared than loved,
To satisfy thy lust in either part,
Here am I come, and with me have I brought
Exceeding store of treasure, pearl, and coin.
Leave, therefore, now to persecute the weak,
And armed entering conflict with the armed,

Let it be seen, mongest other petty thefts,
How thou canst win this pillage manfully.

KING EDWARD.
If gall or wormwood have a pleasant taste,
Then is thy salutation honey sweet;
But as the one hath no such property,
So is the other most satirical.
Yet wot how I regard thy worthless taunts:
If thou have uttered them to foil my fame
Or dim the reputation of my birth,
Know that thy wolvish barking cannot hurt;
If slyly to insinuate with the world,
And with a strumpet's artificial line
To paint thy vicious and deformed cause,
Be well assured, the counterfeit will fade,
And in the end thy foul defects be seen;
But if thou didst it to provoke me on,
As who should say I were but timorous.
Or, coldly negligent, did need a spur,
Bethink thy self how slack I was at sea,
How since my landing I have won no towns,
Entered no further but upon the coast,
And there have ever since securely slept.
But if I have been other wise employed,
Imagine, Valois, whether I intend
To skirmish, not for pillage, but for the Crown
Which thou dost wear; and that I vow to have,
Or one of us shall fall into his grave.

PRINCE EDWARD.
Look not for cross invectives at our hands,
Or railing execrations of despite:
Let creeping serpents, hid in hollow banks,
Sting with their tongues; we have remorseless swords,
And they shall plead for us and our affairs.
Yet thus much, briefly, by my father's leave:
As all the immodest poison of thy throat
Is scandalous and most notorious lies,

And our pretended quarrel is truly just,
So end the battle when we meet to day:
May either of us prosper and prevail,
Or, luckless, curst, receive eternal shame!

KING EDWARD.
That needs no further question; and I know,
His conscience witnesseth, it is my right.—
Therefore, Valois, say, wilt thou yet resign,
Before the sickles thrust into the Corn,
Or that inkindled fury turn to flame?

KING JOHN.
Edward, I know what right thou hast in France;
And ere I basely will resign my Crown,
This Champion field shall be a pool of blood,
And all our prospect as a slaughter house.

PRINCE EDWARD.
Aye, that approves thee, tyrant, what thou art:
No father, king, or shepherd of thy realm,
But one, that tears her entrails with thy hands,
And, like a thirsty tyger, suckst her blood.

AUDLEY.
You peers of France, why do you follow him
That is so prodigal to spend your lives?

CHARLES.
Whom should they follow, aged impotent,
But he that is their true borne sovereign?

KING EDWARD.
Obraidst thou him, because within his face
Time hath ingraved deep characters of age?
Know, these grave scholars of experience,
Like stiff grown oaks, will stand immovable,
When whirl wind quickly turns up younger trees.

DARBY.

Was ever any of thy father's house
King but thyself, before this present time?
Edward's great linage, by the mother's side,
Five hundred years hath held the scepter up:
Judge then, conspiratours, by this descent,
Which is the true borne sovereign, this or that.

PHILIP.
Father, range your battles, prate no more;
These English fain would spend the time in words,
That, night approaching, they might escape unfought.

KING JOHN.
Lords and my loving Subjects, now's the time,
That your intended force must bide the touch.
Therefore, my friends, consider this in brief:
He that you fight for is your natural King;
He against whom you fight, a foreigner:
He that you fight for, rules in clemency,
And reins you with a mild and gentle bit;
He against whom you fight, if he prevail,
Will straight inthrone himself in tyranny,
Makes slaves of you, and with a heavy hand
Curtail and curb your sweetest liberty.
Then, to protect your Country and your King,
Let but the haughty Courage of your hearts
Answer the number of your able hands,
And we shall quickly chase these fugitives.
For what's this Edward but a belly god,
A tender and lascivious wantoness,
That thother day was almost dead for love?
And what, I pray you, is his goodly guard?
Such as, but scant them of their chines of beef
And take away their downy featherbeds,
And presently they are as resty stiff,
As twere a many over ridden jades.
Then, French men, scorn that such should be your Lords,
And rather bind ye them in captive bands.

ALL FRENCHMEN.
Vive le Roy! God save King John of France!

KING JOHN.
Now on this plain of Cressy spread your selves,—
And, Edward, when thou darest, begin the fight.

[Exeunt King John, Charles, Philip, Lorrain, Boheme, and Forces.]

KING EDWARD.
We presently will meet thee, John of France:—
And, English Lords, let us resolve this day,
Either to clear us of that scandalous crime,
Or be intombed in our innocence.
And, Ned, because this battle is the first
That ever yet thou foughtest in pitched field,
As ancient custom is of Martialists,
To dub thee with the tip of chivalry,
In solemn manner we will give thee arms.
Come, therefore, Heralds, orderly bring forth
A strong attirement for the prince my son.

[Enter four Heralds, bringing in a coat armour, a helmet, a lance, and a shield.]

KING EDWARD.
Edward Plantagenet, in the name of God,
As with this armour I impale thy breast,
So be thy noble unrelenting heart
Walled in with flint of matchless fortitude,
That never base affections enter there:
Fight and be valiant, conquer where thou comest!
Now follow, Lords, and do him honor to.

DARBY.
Edward Plantagenet, prince of Wales,
As I do set this helmet on thy head,
Wherewith the chamber of thy brain is fenst,
So may thy temples, with Bellona's hand,
Be still adorned with laurel victory:

Fight and be valiant, conquer where thou comest!

AUDLEY.
Edward Plantagenet, prince of Wales,
Receive this lance into thy manly hand;
Use it in fashion of a brazen pen,
To draw forth bloody stratagems in France,
And print thy valiant deeds in honor's book:
Fight and be valiant, vanquish where thou comest!

ARTOIS.
Edward Plantagenet, prince of Wales,
Hold, take this target, wear it on thy arm;
And may the view thereof, like Perseus' shield,
Astonish and transform thy gazing foes
To senseless images of meager death:
Fight and be valiant, conquer where thou comest!

KING EDWARD.
Now wants there nought but knighthood, which deferred
We leave, till thou hast won it in the field.

PRINCE EDWARD.
My gracious father and ye forward peers,
This honor you have done me, animates
And cheers my green, yet scarce appearing strength
With comfortable good presaging signs,
No other wise than did old Jacob's words,
When as he breathed his blessings on his sons.
These hallowed gifts of yours when I profane,
Or use them not to glory of my God,
To patronage the fatherless and poor,
Or for the benefit of England's peace,
Be numb my joints, wax feeble both mine arms,
Wither my heart, that, like a sapless tree,
I may remain the map of infamy.

KING EDWARD.
Then thus our steeled Battles shall be ranged:

The leading of the vaward, Ned, is thine;
To dignify whose lusty spirit the more,
We temper it with Audly's gravity,
That, courage and experience joined in one,
Your manage may be second unto none:
For the main battles, I will guide my self;
And, Darby, in the rearward march behind,
That orderly disposed and set in ray,
Let us to horse; and God grant us the day!

[Exeunt.]

ACT III. SCENE IV. The Same.

[Alarum. Enter a many French men flying. After them Prince Edward, running. Then enter King John and Duke of Lorrain.]

KING JOHN.
Oh, Lorrain, say, what mean our men to fly?
Our number is far greater than our foes.

LORRAIN.
The garrison of Genoaes, my Lord,
That came from Paris weary with their march,
Grudging to be so suddenly imployd,
No sooner in the forefront took their place,
But, straight retiring, so dismayed the rest,
As likewise they betook themselves to flight,
In which, for haste to make a safe escape,
More in the clustering throng are pressed to death,
Than by the enemy, a thousand fold.

KING JOHN.
O hapless fortune! Let us yet assay,
If we can counsel some of them to stay.

[Exeunt.]

ACT III. SCENE V. The Same.

[Enter King Edward and Audley.]

KING EDWARD.
Lord Audley, whiles our son is in the chase,
With draw our powers unto this little hill,
And here a season let us breath our selves.

AUDLEY.
I will, my Lord.

[Exit. Sound Retreat.]

KING EDWARD.
Just dooming heaven, whose secret providence
To our gross judgement is inscrutable,
How are we bound to praise thy wondrous works,
That hast this day given way unto the right,
And made the wicked stumble at them selves!

[Enter Artois.]

ARTOIS.
Rescue, king Edward! rescue for thy son!

KING EDWARD.
Rescue, Artois? what, is he prisoner,
Or by violence fell beside his horse?

ARTOIS.
Neither, my Lord: but narrowly beset
With turning Frenchmen, whom he did pursue,
As tis impossible that he should scape,
Except your highness presently descend.

KING EDWARD.

Tut, let him fight; we gave him arms to day,
And he is laboring for a knighthood, man.

[Enter Derby.]

DARBY.
The Prince, my Lord, the Prince! oh, succour him!
He's close incompast with a world of odds!

KING EDWARD.
Then will he win a world of honor too,
If he by valour can redeem him thence;
If not, what remedy? we have more sons
Than one, to comfort our declining age.

[Enter Audley.]

Renowned Edward, give me leave, I pray,
To lead my soldiers where I may relieve
Your Grace's son, in danger to be slain.
The snares of French, like Emmets on a bank,
Muster about him; whilest he, Lion like,
Intangled in the net of their assaults,
Franticly wrends, and bites the woven toil;
But all in vain, he cannot free him self.

KING EDWARD.
Audley, content; I will not have a man,
On pain of death, sent forth to succour him:
This is the day, ordained by destiny,
To season his courage with those grievous thoughts,
That, if he breaketh out, Nestor's years on earth
Will make him savor still of this exploit.

DARBY.
Ah, but he shall not live to see those days.

KING EDWARD.
Why, then his Epitaph is lasting praise.

AUDLEY.
Yet, good my Lord, tis too much willfulness,
To let his blood be spilt, that may be saved.

KING EDWARD.
Exclaim no more; for none of you can tell
Whether a borrowed aid will serve, or no;
Perhaps he is already slain or ta'en.
And dare a Falcon when she's in her flight,
And ever after she'll be haggard like:
Let Edward be delivered by our hands,
And still, in danger, he'll expect the like;
But if himself himself redeem from thence,
He will have vanquished cheerful death and fear,
And ever after dread their force no more
Than if they were but babes or Captive slaves.

AUDLEY.
O cruel Father! Farewell, Edward, then!

DARBY.
Farewell, sweet Prince, the hope of chivalry!

ARTOIS.
O, would my life might ransom him from death!

KING EDWARD.
But soft, me thinks I hear

[Retreat sounded.]

The dismal charge of Trumpets' loud retreat.
All are not slain, I hope, that went with him;
Some will return with tidings, good or bad.

[Enter Prince Edward in triumph, bearing in his hands his chivered Lance, and the King of Boheme, borne before, wrapped in the Colours. They run and imbrace him.]

AUDLEY.

O joyful sight! victorious Edward lives!

DERBY.
Welcome, brave Prince!

KING EDWARD.
Welcome, Plantagenet!

PRINCE EDWARD.

[Kneels and kisses his father's hand.]

First having done my duty as beseemed,
Lords, I regreet you all with hearty thanks.
And now, behold, after my winter's toil,
My painful voyage on the boisterous sea
Of wars devouring gulfs and steely rocks,

I bring my fraught unto the wished port,
My Summer's hope, my travels' sweet reward:
And here, with humble duty, I present
This sacrifice, this first fruit of my sword,
Cropped and cut down even at the gate of death,
The king of Boheme, father, whom I slew;
Whose thousands had entrenched me round about,
And lay as thick upon my battered crest,
As on an Anvil, with their ponderous glaves:
Yet marble courage still did underprop
And when my weary arms, with often blows,
Like the continual laboring Wood-man's Axe
That is enjoined to fell a load of Oaks,
Began to faulter, straight I would record
My gifts you gave me, and my zealous vow,
And then new courage made me fresh again,
That, in despite, I carved my passage forth,
And put the multitude to speedy flight.
Lo, thus hath Edward's hand filled your request,
And done, I hope, the duty of a Knight.

KING EDWARD.

Aye, well thou hast deserved a knighthood, Ned!
And, therefore, with thy sword, yet reaking warm

[His Sword borne by a Soldier.]

With blood of those that fought to be thy bane.
Arise, Prince Edward, trusty knight at arms:
This day thou hast confounded me with joy,
And proud thy self fit heir unto a king.

PRINCE EDWARD.
Here is a note, my gracious Lord, of those
That in this conflict of our foes were slain:
Eleven Princes of esteem, Four score Barons,
A hundred and twenty knights, and thirty thousand
Common soldiers; and, of our men, a thousand.

KING EDWARD.
Our God be praised! Now, John of France, I hope,
Thou knowest King Edward for no wantoness,
No love sick cockney, nor his soldiers jades.
But which way is the fearful king escaped?

PRINCE EDWARD.
Towards Poitiers, noble father, and his sons.

KING EDWARD.
Ned, thou and Audley shall pursue them still;
My self and Derby will to Calice straight,
And there be begirt that Haven town with siege.
Now lies it on an upshot; therefore strike,
And wistly follow, whiles the game's on foot.
What Picture's this?

PRINCE EDWARD.
A Pelican, my Lord,
Wounding her bosom with her crooked beak,
That so her nest of young ones may be fed
With drops of blood that issue from her heart;
The motto Sic & vos, 'and so should you'.

[Exeunt.]

ACT IV. SCENE I. Bretagne. Camp of the English.

[Enter Lord Mountford with a Coronet in his hand; with him the Earl of Salisbury.]

MOUNTFORD.
My Lord of Salisbury, since by your aide
Mine enemy Sir Charles of Blois is slain,
And I again am quietly possessed
In Brittain's Dukedom, know that I resolve,
For this kind furtherance of your king and you,
To swear allegiance to his majesty:
In sign whereof receive this Coronet,
Bear it unto him, and, withal, mine oath,
Never to be but Edward's faithful friend.

SALISBURY.
I take it, Mountfort. Thus, I hope, ere long
The whole Dominions of the Realm of France
Will be surrendered to his conquering hand.

[Exit Mountford.]

Now, if I knew but safely how to pass,
I would at Calice gladly meet his Grace,
Whether I am by letters certified
That he intends to have his host removed.
It shall be so, this policy will serve:—
Ho, whose within? Bring Villiers to me.

[Enter Villiers.]

Villiers, thou knowest, thou art my prisoner,
And that I might for ransom, if I would,
Require of thee a hundred thousand Francs,

Or else retain and keep thee captive still:
But so it is, that for a smaller charge
Thou maist be quit, and if thou wilt thy self.
And this it is: Procure me but a passport
Of Charles, the Duke of Normandy, that I
Without restraint may have recourse to Callis
Through all the Countries where he hath to do;
Which thou maist easily obtain, I think,
By reason I have often heard thee say,
He and thou were students once together:
And then thou shalt be set at liberty.
How saiest thou? wilt thou undertake to do it?

VILLIERS.
I will, my Lord; but I must speak with him.

SALISBURY.
Why, so thou shalt; take Horse, and post from hence:
Only before thou goest, swear by thy faith,
That, if thou canst not compass my desire,
Thou wilt return my prisoner back again;
And that shall be sufficient warrant for me.

VILLIERS.
To that condition I agree, my Lord,
And will unfainedly perform the same.

[Exit.]

SALISBURY.
Farewell, Villiers.—
Thus once i mean to try a French man's faith.

[Exit.]

ACT IV. SCENE II. Picardy. The English Camp

before Calais.

[Enter King Edward and Derby, with Soldiers.]

KING EDWARD.
Since they refuse our proffered league, my Lord,
And will not ope their gates, and let us in,
We will intrench our selves on every side,
That neither vituals nor supply of men
May come to succour this accursed town:
Famine shall combat where our swords are stopped.

[Enter six poor Frenchmen.]

DERBY.
The promised aid, that made them stand aloof,
Is now retired and gone an other way:
It will repent them of their stubborn will.
But what are these poor ragged slaves, my Lord?

KING EDWARD.
Ask what they are; it seems, they come from Callis.

DERBY.
You wretched patterns of despair and woe,
What are you, living men or gliding ghosts,
Crept from your graves to walk upon the earth?

POOR.
No ghosts, my Lord, but men that breath a life
Far worse than is the quiet sleep of death:
We are distressed poor inhabitants,
That long have been diseased, sick, and lame;
And now, because we are not fit to serve,
The Captain of the town hath thrust us forth,
That so expense of victuals may be saved.

KING EDWARD.
A charitable deed, no doubt, and worthy praise!

But how do you imagine then to speed?
We are your enemies; in such a case
We can no less but put ye to the sword,
Since, when we proffered truce, it was refused.

POOR.
And if your grace no otherwise vouchsafe,
As welcome death is unto us as life.

KING EDWARD.
Poor silly men, much wronged and more distressed!
Go, Derby, go, and see they be relieved;
Command that victuals be appointed them,
And give to every one five Crowns a piece.

[Exeunt Derby and Frenchmen.]

The Lion scorns to touch the yielding prey,
And Edward's sword must flesh it self in such
As wilful stubbornness hath made perverse.

[Enter Lord Percy.]

KING EDWARD.
Lord Percy! welcome: what's the news in England?

PERCY.
The Queen, my Lord, comes here to your Grace,
And from her highness and the Lord viceregent
I bring this happy tidings of success:
David of Scotland, lately up in arms,
Thinking, belike, he soonest should prevail,
Your highness being absent from the Realm,
Is, by the fruitful service of your peers
And painful travel of the Queen her self,
That, big with child, was every day in arms,
Vanquished, subdued, and taken prisoner.

KING EDWARD.
Thanks, Percy, for thy news, with all my heart!

What was he took him prisoner in the field?

PERCY.
A Esquire, my Lord; John Copland is his name:
Who since, intreated by her Majesty,
Denies to make surrender of his prize
To any but unto your grace alone;
Whereat the Queen is grievously displeased.

KING EDWARD.
Well, then we'll have a Pursiuvant despatched,
To summon Copland hither out of hand,
And with him he shall bring his prisoner king.

PERCY.
The Queen's, my Lord, her self by this at Sea,
And purposeth, as soon as wind will serve,
To land at Callis, and to visit you.

KING EDWARD.
She shall be welcome; and, to wait her coming,
I'll pitch my tent near to the sandy shore.

[Enter a French Captain.]

CAPTAIN.
The Burgesses of Callis, mighty king,
Have by a counsel willingly decreed
To yield the town and Castle to your hands,
Upon condition it will please your grace
To grant them benefit of life and goods.

KING EDWARD.
They will so! Then, belike, they may command,
Dispose, elect, and govern as they list.
No, sirra, tell them, since they did refuse
Our princely clemency at first proclaimed,
They shall not have it now, although they would;
I will accept of nought but fire and sword,
Except, within these two days, six of them,

That are the wealthiest merchants in the town,
Come naked, all but for their linen shirts,
With each a halter hanged about his neck,
And prostrate yield themselves, upon their knees,
To be afflicted, hanged, or what I please;
And so you may inform their masterships.

[Exeunt Edward and Percy.]

CAPTAIN.
Why, this it is to trust a broken staff:
Had we not been persuaded, John our King
Would with his army have relieved the town,
We had not stood upon defiance so:
But now tis past that no man can recall,
And better some do go to wrack them all.

[Exit.]

ACT IV. SCENE III. Poitou. Fields near Poitiers. The French camp; Tent of the Duke of Normandy.

[Enter Charles of Normandy and Villiers.]

CHARLES.
I wonder, Villiers, thou shouldest importune me
For one that is our deadly enemy.

VILLIERS.
Not for his sake, my gracious Lord, so much
Am I become an earnest advocate,
As that thereby my ransom will be quit.

CHARLES.
Thy ransom, man? why needest thou talk of that?
Art thou not free? and are not all occasions,
That happen for advantage of our foes,

To be accepted of, and stood upon?

VILLIERS.
No, good my Lord, except the same be just;
For profit must with honor be comixt,
Or else our actions are but scandalous.
But, letting pass their intricate objections,
Wilt please your highness to subscribe, or no?

CHARLES.
Villiers, I will not, nor I cannot do it;
Salisbury shall not have his will so much,
To claim a passport how it pleaseth himself.

VILLIERS.
Why, then I know the extremity, my Lord;
I must return to prison whence I came.

CHARLES.
Return? I hope thou wilt not;
What bird that hath escaped the fowler's gin,
Will not beware how she's ensnared again?
Or, what is he, so senseless and secure,
That, having hardly past a dangerous gul,
Will put him self in peril there again?

VILLIERS.
Ah, but it is mine oath, my gracious Lord,
Which I in conscience may not violate,
Or else a kingdom should not draw me hence.

CHARLES.
Thine oath? why, tat doth bind thee to abide:
Hast thou not sworn obedience to thy Prince?

VILLIERS.
In all things that uprightly he commands:
But either to persuade or threaten me,
Not to perform the covenant of my word,
Is lawless, and I need not to obey.

CHARLES.
Why, is it lawful for a man to kill,
And not, to break a promise with his foe?

VILLIERS.
To kill, my Lord, when war is once proclaimed,
So that our quarrel be for wrongs received,
No doubt, is lawfully permitted us;
But in an oath we must be well advised,
How we do swear, and, when we once have sworn,
Not to infringe it, though we die therefore:
Therefore, my Lord, as willing I return,
As if I were to fly to paradise.

CHARLES.
Stay, my Villiers; thine honorable min
Deserves to be eternally admired.
Thy suit shall be no longer thus deferred:
Give me the paper, I'll subscribe to it;
And, wheretofore I loved thee as Villiers,
Hereafter I'll embrace thee as my self.
Stay, and be still in favour with thy Lord.

VILLIERS.
I humbly thank you grace; I must dispatch,
And send this passport first unto the Earl,
And then I will attend your highness pleasure.

CHARLES.
Do so, Villiers;—and Charles, when he hath need,
Be such his soldiers, howsoever he speed!

[Exit Villiers.]

[Enter King John.]

KING JOHN.
Come, Charles, and arm thee; Edward is entrapped,
The Prince of Wales is fallen into our hands,
And we have compassed him; he cannot escape.

CHARLES.
But will your highness fight to day?

KING JOHN.
What else, my son? he's scarce eight thousand strong,
And we are threescore thousand at the least.

CHARLES.
I have a prophecy, my gracious Lord,
Wherein is written what success is like
To happen us in this outrageous war;
It was delivered me at Cresses field
By one that is an aged Hermit there.
[Reads.] 'When feathered foul shall make thine army tremble,
And flint stones rise and break the battle ray,
Then think on him that doth not now dissemble;
For that shall be the hapless dreadful day:
Yet, in the end, thy foot thou shalt advance
As far in England as thy foe in France.'

KING JOHN.
By this it seems we shall be fortunate:
For as it is impossible that stones
Should ever rise and break the battle ray,
Or airy foul make men in arms to quake,
So is it like, we shall not be subdued:
Or say this might be true, yet in the end,
Since he doth promise we shall drive him hence
And forage their Country as they have done ours,
By this revenge that loss will seem the less.
But all are frivolous fancies, toys, and dreams:
Once we are sure we have ensnared the son,
Catch we the father after how we can.

[Exeunt.]

ACT IV. SCENE IV. The same. The English Camp.

[Enter Prince Edward, Audley, and others.]

PRINCE EDWARD.
Audley, the arms of death embrace us round,
And comfort have we none, save that to die
We pay sower earnest for a sweeter life.
At Cressey field out Clouds of Warlike smoke
Choked up those French mouths & dissevered them;
But now their multitudes of millions hide,
Masking as twere, the beauteous burning Sun,
Leaving no hope to us, but sullen dark
And eyeless terror of all ending night.

AUDLEY.
This sudden, mighty, and expedient head
That they have made, fair prince, is wonderful.
Before us in the valley lies the king,
Vantaged with all that heaven and earth can yield;
His party stronger battled than our whole:
His son, the braving Duke of Normandy,
Hath trimmed the Mountain on our right hand up
In shining plate, that now the aspiring hill
Shews like a silver quarry or an orb,
Aloft the which the Banners, bannarets,
And new replenished pendants cuff the air
And beat the winds, that for their gaudiness
Struggles to kiss them: on our left hand lies
Phillip, the younger issue of the king,
Coating the other hill in such array,
That all his guilded upright pikes do seem
Straight trees of gold, the pendants leaves;
And their device of Antique heraldry,
Quartered in colours, seeming sundry fruits,
Makes it the Orchard of the Hesperides:
Behind us too the hill doth bear his height,
For like a half Moon, opening but one way,
It rounds us in; there at our backs are lodged
The fatal Crossbows, and the battle there
Is governed by the rough Chattillion.

Then thus it stands: the valley for our flight
The king binds in; the hills on either hand
Are proudly royalized by his sons;
And on the Hill behind stands certain death
In pay and service with Chattillion.

PRINCE EDWARD.
Death's name is much more mighty than his deeds;
Thy parcelling this power hath made it more.
As many sands as these my hands can hold,
Are but my handful of so many sands;
Then, all the world, and call it but a power,
Easily ta'en up, and quickly thrown away:
But if I stand to count them sand by sand,
The number would confound my memory,
And make a thousand millions of a task,
Which briefly is no more, indeed, than one.
These quarters, squadrons, and these regiments,
Before, behind us, and on either hand,
Are but a power. When we name a man,
His hand, his foot, his head hath several strengths;
And being all but one self instant strength,
Why, all this many, Audley, is but one,
And we can call it all but one man's strength.
He that hath far to go, tells it by miles;
If he should tell the steps, it kills his heart:
The drops are infinite, that make a flood,
And yet, thou knowest, we call it but a Rain.
There is but one France, one king of France,
That France hath no more kings; and that same king
Hath but the puissant legion of one king,
And we have one: then apprehend no odds,
For one to one is fair equality.

[Enter an Herald from King John.]

PRINCE EDWARD.
What tidings, messenger? be plain and brief.

HERALD.
The king of France, my sovereign Lord and master,
Greets by me his foe, the Prince of Wales:
If thou call forth a hundred men of name,
Of Lords, Knights, Squires, and English gentlemen,
And with thy self and those kneel at his feet,
He straight will fold his bloody colours up,
And ransom shall redeem lives forfeited;
If not, this day shall drink more English blood,
Than ere was buried in our British earth.
What is the answer to his proffered mercy?

PRINCE EDWARD.
This heaven, that covers France, contains the mercy
That draws from me submissive orizons;
That such base breath should vanish from my lips,
To urge the plea of mercy to a man,
The Lord forbid! Return, and tell the king,
My tongue is made of steel, and it shall beg
My mercy on his coward burgonet;
Tell him, my colours are as red as his,
My men as bold, our English arms as strong:
Return him my defiance in his face.

HERALD.
I go.

[Exit.]

[Enter another Herald.]

PRINCE EDWARD.
What news with thee?

HERALD.
The Duke of Normandy, my Lord & master,
Pitying thy youth is so ingirt with peril,
By me hath sent a nimble jointed jennet,
As swift as ever yet thou didst bestride,

And therewithall he counsels thee to fly;
Else death himself hath sworn that thou shalt die.

PRINCE EDWARD.
Back with the beast unto the beast that sent him!
Tell him I cannot sit a coward's horse;
Bid him to day bestride the jade himself,
For I will stain my horse quite o'er with blood,
And double gild my spurs, but I will catch him;
So tell the carping boy, and get thee gone.

[Exit Herald.]

[Enter another Herald.]

HERALD.
Edward of Wales, Phillip, the second son
To the most mighty christian king of France,
Seeing thy body's living date expired,
All full of charity and christian love,
Commends this book, full fraught with prayers,
To thy fair hand and for thy hour of life
Intreats thee that thou meditate therein,
And arm thy soul for her long journey towards—
Thus have I done his bidding, and return.

PRINCE EDWARD.
Herald of Phillip, greet thy Lord from me:
All good that he can send, I can receive;
But thinkst thou not, the unadvised boy
Hath wronged himself in thus far tendering me?
Happily he cannot pray without the book—
I think him no divine extemporall—,
Then render back this common place of prayer,
To do himself good in adversity;
Beside he knows not my sins' quality,
And therefore knows no prayers for my avail;
Ere night his prayer may be to pray to God,
To put it in my heart to hear his prayer.

So tell the courtly wanton, and be gone.

HERALD.
I go.

[Exit.]

PRINCE EDWARD.
How confident their strength and number makes them!—
Now, Audley, sound those silver wings of thine,
And let those milk white messengers of time
Shew thy times learning in this dangerous time.
Thy self art bruis'd and bit with many broils,
And stratagems forepast with iron pens
Are texted in thine honorable face;
Thou art a married man in this distress,
But danger woos me as a blushing maid:
Teach me an answer to this perilous time.

AUDLEY.
To die is all as common as to live:
The one ince-wise, the other holds in chase;
For, from the instant we begin to live,
We do pursue and hunt the time to die:
First bud we, then we blow, and after seed,
Then, presently, we fall; and, as a shade
Follows the body, so we follow death.
If, then, we hunt for death, why do we fear it?
If we fear it, why do we follow it?
If we do fear, how can we shun it?
If we do fear, with fear we do but aide
The thing we fear to seize on us the sooner:
If we fear not, then no resolved proffer
Can overthrow the limit of our fate;
For, whether ripe or rotten, drop we shall,
As we do draw the lottery of our doom.

PRINCE EDWARD.
Ah, good old man, a thousand thousand armors

These words of thine have buckled on my back:
Ah, what an idiot hast thou made of life,
To seek the thing it fears! and how disgraced
The imperial victory of murdering death,
Since all the lives his conquering arrows strike
Seek him, and he not them, to shame his glory!
I will not give a penny for a life,
Nor half a halfpenny to shun grim death,
Since for to live is but to seek to die,
And dying but beginning of new life.
Let come the hour when he that rules it will!
To live or die I hold indifferent.

[Exeunt.]

ACT IV. SCENE V. The same. The French Camp.

[Enter King John and Charles.]

KING JOHN.
A sudden darkness hath defaced the sky,
The winds are crept into their caves for fear,
The leaves move not, the world is hushed and still,
The birds cease singing, and the wandering brooks
Murmur no wonted greeting to their shores;
Silence attends some wonder and expecteth
That heaven should pronounce some prophesy:
Where, or from whom, proceeds this silence, Charles?

CHARLES.
Our men, with open mouths and staring eyes,
Look on each other, as they did attend
Each other's words, and yet no creature speaks;
A tongue-tied fear hath made a midnight hour,
And speeches sleep through all the waking regions.

KING JOHN.

But now the pompous Sun, in all his pride,
Looked through his golden coach upon the world,
And, on a sudden, hath he hid himself,
That now the under earth is as a grave,
Dark, deadly, silent, and uncomfortable.

[A clamor of ravens.]

Hark, what a deadly outery do I hear?

CHARLES.
Here comes my brother Phillip.

KING JOHN.
All dismayed:

[Enter Phillip.]

What fearful words are those thy looks presage?

PHILLIP.
A flight, a flight!

KING JOHN.
Coward, what flight? thou liest, there needs no flight.

PHILLIP.
A flight.

KING JOHN.
Awake thy craven powers, and tell on
The substance of that very fear in deed,
Which is so ghastly printed in thy face:
What is the matter?

PHILLIP.
A flight of ugly ravens
Do croak and hover o'er our soldiers' heads,
And keep in triangles and cornered squares,
Right as our forces are embattled;

With their approach there came this sudden fog,
Which now hath hid the airy floor of heaven
And made at noon a night unnatural
Upon the quaking and dismayed world:
In brief, our soldiers have let fall their arms,
And stand like metamorphosed images,
Bloodless and pale, one gazing on another.

KING JOHN.
Aye, now I call to mind the prophesy,
But I must give no entrance to a fear.—
Return, and hearten up these yielding souls:
Tell them, the ravens, seeing them in arms,
So many fair against a famished few,
Come but to dine upon their handy work
And prey upon the carrion that they kill:
For when we see a horse laid down to die,
Although he be not dead, the ravenous birds
Sit watching the departure of his life;
Even so these ravens for the carcasses
Of those poor English, that are marked to die,
Hover about, and, if they cry to us,
Tis but for meat that we must kill for them.
Away, and comfort up my soldiers,
And sound the trumpets, and at once dispatch
This little business of a silly fraud.

[Exit Phillip.]

[Another noise. Salisbury brought in by a French Captain.]

CAPTAIN.
Behold, my liege, this knight and forty mo',
Of whom the better part are slain and fled,
With all endeavor sought to break our ranks,
And make their way to the encompassed prince:
Dispose of him as please your majesty.

KING JOHN.

Go, & the next bough, soldier, that thou seest,
Disgrace it with his body presently;
For I do hold a tree in France too good
To be the gallows of an English thief.

SALISBURY.
My Lord of Normandy, I have your pass
And warrant for my safety through this land.

CHARLES.
Villiers procured it for thee, did he not?

SALISBURY.
He did.

CHARLES.
And it is current; thou shalt freely pass.

KING JOHN.
Aye, freely to the gallows to be hanged,
Without denial or impediment.
Away with him!

CHARLES.
I hope your highness will not so disgrace me,
And dash the virtue of my seal at arms:
He hath my never broken name to shew,
Charactered with this princely hand of mine:
And rather let me leave to be a prince
Than break the stable verdict of a prince:
I do beseech you, let him pass in quiet.

KING JOHN.
Thou and thy word lie both in my command;
What canst thou promise that I cannot break?
Which of these twain is greater infamy,
To disobey thy father or thy self?
Thy word, nor no mans, may exceed his power;
Nor that same man doth never break his word,
That keeps it to the utmost of his power.

The breach of faith dwells in the soul's consent:
Which if thy self without consent do break,
Thou art not charged with the breach of faith.
Go, hang him: for thy license lies in me,
And my constraint stands the excuse for thee.

CHARLES.
What, am I not a soldier in my word?
Then, arms, adieu, and let them fight that list!
Shall I not give my girdle from my waste,
But with a gardion I shall be controlled,
To say I may not give my things away?
Upon my soul, had Edward, prince of Wales,
Engaged his word, writ down his noble hand
For all your knights to pass his father's land,
The royal king, to grace his warlike son,
Would not alone safe conduct give to them,
But with all bounty feasted them and theirs.

KING JOHN.
Dwelst thou on precedents? Then be it so!
Say, Englishman, of what degree thou art.

SALISBURY.
An Earl in England, though a prisoner here,
And those that know me, call me Salisbury.

KING JOHN.
Then, Salisbury, say whether thou art bound.

SALISBURY.
To Callice, where my liege, king Edward, is.

KING JOHN.
To Callice, Salisbury? Then, to Callice pack,
And bid the king prepare a noble grave,
To put his princely son, black Edward, in.
And as thou travelst westward from this place,
Some two leagues hence there is a lofty hill,

Whose top seems topless, for the embracing sky
Doth hide his high head in her azure bosom;
Upon whose tall top when thy foot attains,
Look back upon the humble vale beneath—
Humble of late, but now made proud with arms—
And thence behold the wretched prince of Wales,
Hooped with a bond of iron round about.
After which sight, to Callice spur amain,
And say, the prince was smothered and not slain:
And tell the king this is not all his ill;
For I will greet him, ere he thinks I will.
Away, be gone; the smoke but of our shot
Will choke our foes, though bullets hit them not.

[Exit.]

ACT IV. SCENE VI. The same. A Part of the Field of Battle.

[Alarum. Enter prince Edward and Artois.]

ARTOIS.
How fares your grace? are you not shot, my Lord?

PRINCE EDWARD.
No, dear Artois; but choked with dust and smoke,
And stepped aside for breath and fresher air.

ARTOIS.
Breath, then, and to it again: the amazed French
Are quite distract with gazing on the crows;
And, were our quivers full of shafts again,
Your grace should see a glorious day of this:—
O, for more arrows, Lord; that's our want.

PRINCE EDWARD.

Courage, Artois! a fig for feathered shafts,
When feathered fowls do bandy on our side!
What need we fight, and sweat, and keep a coil,
When railing crows outscold our adversaries?
Up, up, Artois! the ground it self is armed
With Fire containing flint; command our bows
To hurl away their pretty colored Ew,
And to it with stones: away, Artois, away!
My soul doth prophecy we win the day.

[Exeunt.]

ACT IV. SCENE VII. The same. Another Part of the Field of Battle.

[Alarum. Enter King John.]

KING JOHN.
Our multitudes are in themselves confounded,
Dismayed, and distraught; swift starting fear
Hath buzzed a cold dismay through all our army,
And every petty disadvantage prompts
The fear possessed abject soul to fly.
My self, whose spirit is steel to their dull lead,
What with recalling of the prophecy,
And that our native stones from English arms
Rebel against us, find myself attainted
With strong surprise of weak and yielding fear.

[Enter Charles.]

CHARLES.
Fly, father, fly! the French do kill the French,
Some that would stand let drive at some that fly;
Our drums strike nothing but discouragement,
Our trumpets sound dishonor and retire;
The spirit of fear, that feareth nought but death,
Cowardly works confusion on it self.

[Enter Phillip.]

PHILLIP.
Pluck out your eyes, and see not this day's shame!
An arm hath beat an army; one poor David
Hath with a stone foiled twenty stout Goliahs;
Some twenty naked starvelings with small flints,
Hath driven back a puissant host of men,
Arrayed and fenced in all accomplements.

KING JOHN.
Mordieu, they quait at us, and kill us up;
No less than forty thousand wicked elders
Have forty lean slaves this day stoned to death.

CHARLES.
O, that I were some other countryman!
This day hath set derision on the French,
And all the world will blurt and scorn at us.

KING JOHN.
What, is there no hope left?

PHILLIP.
No hope, but death, to bury up our shame.

KING JOHN.
Make up once more with me; the twentieth part
Of those that live, are men inow to quail
The feeble handful on the adverse part.

CHARLES.
Then charge again: if heaven be not opposed,
We cannot lose the day.

KING JOHN.
On, away!

[Exeunt.]

ACT IV. SCENE VIII. The same. Another Part of the Field of Battle.

[Enter Audley, wounded, & rescued by two squires.]

ESQUIRE.
How fares my Lord?

AUDLEY.
Even as a man may do,
That dines at such a bloody feast as this.

ESQUIRE.
I hope, my Lord, that is no mortal scar.

AUDLEY.
No matter, if it be; the count is cast,
And, in the worst, ends but a mortal man.
Good friends, convey me to the princely Edward,
That in the crimson bravery of my blood
I may become him with saluting him.
I'll smile, and tell him, that this open scar
Doth end the harvest of his Audley's war.

[Exeunt.]

ACT IV. SCENE IX. The same. The English Camp.

[Enter prince Edward, King John, Charles, and all, with Ensigns spread.]

PRINCE EDWARD.
Now, John in France, & lately John of France,
Thy bloody Ensigns are my captive colours;
And you, high vaunting Charles of Normandy,
That once to day sent me a horse to fly,
Are now the subjects of my clemency.
Fie, Lords, is it not a shame that English boys,
Whose early days are yet not worth a beard,
Should in the bosom of your kingdom thus,
One against twenty, beat you up together?

KING JOHN.
Thy fortune, not thy force, hath conquered us.

PRINCE EDWARD.

An argument that heaven aides the right.

[Enter Artois with Phillip.]

See, see, Artois doth bring with him along
The late good counsel giver to my soul.
Welcome, Artois; and welcome, Phillip, too:
Who now of you or I have need to pray?
Now is the proverb verified in you,
'Too bright a morning breeds a louring day.'

[Sound Trumpets. Enter Audley.]

But say, what grim discouragement comes here!
Alas, what thousand armed men of France
Have writ that note of death in Audley's face?
Speak, thou that wooest death with thy careless smile,
And lookst so merrily upon thy grave,
As if thou were enamored on thine end:
What hungry sword hath so bereaved thy face,
And lopped a true friend from my loving soul?

AUDLEY.
O Prince, thy sweet bemoaning speech to me
Is as a mournful knell to one dead sick.

PRINCE EDWARD.
Dear Audley, if my tongue ring out thy end,
My arms shall be thy grave: what may I do
To win thy life, or to revenge thy death?
If thou wilt drink the blood of captive kings,
Or that it were restorative, command
A Health of kings' blood, and I'll drink to thee;
If honor may dispense for thee with death,
The never dying honor of this day
Share wholly, Audley, to thy self, and live.

AUDLEY.
Victorious Prince,—that thou art so, behold
A Caesar's fame in king's captivity—

If I could hold him death but at a bay,
Till I did see my liege thy royal father,
My soul should yield this Castle of my flesh,
This mangled tribute, with all willingness,
To darkness, consummation, dust, and Worms.

PRINCE EDWARD.
Cheerily, bold man, thy soul is all too proud
To yield her City for one little breach;
Should be divorced from her earthly spouse
By the soft temper of a French man's sword?
Lo, to repair thy life, I give to thee
Three thousand Marks a year in English land.

AUDLEY.
I take thy gift, to pay the debts I owe:
These two poor Esquires redeemed me from the French
With lusty & dear hazard of their lives:
What thou hast given me, I give to them;
And, as thou lovest me, prince, lay thy consent
To this bequeath in my last testament.

PRINCE EDWARD.
Renowned Audley, live, and have from me
This gift twice doubled to these Esquires and thee:
But live or die, what thou hast given away
To these and theirs shall lasting freedom stay.
Come, gentlemen, I will see my friend bestowed
With in an easy Litter; then we'll march
Proudly toward Callis, with triumphant pace,
Unto my royal father, and there bring
The tribute of my wars, fair France his king.

[Exit.]

ACT V. SCENE I. Picardy . The English Camp before

Calais.

[Enter King Edward, Queen Phillip, Derby, soldiers.]

KING EDWARD.
No more, Queen Phillip, pacify your self;
Copland, except he can excuse his fault,
Shall find displeasure written in our looks.
And now unto this proud resisting town!
Soldiers, assault: I will no longer stay,
To be deluded by their false delays;
Put all to sword, and make the spoil your own.

[Enter six Citizens in their Shirts, bare foot, with halters about their necks.]

ALL.
Mercy, king Edward, mercy, gracious Lord!

KING EDWARD.
Contemptuous villains, call ye now for truce?
Mine ears are stopped against your bootless cries:—
Sound, drums alarum; draw threatening swords!

FIRST CITIZEN.
Ah, noble Prince, take pity on this town,
And hear us, mighty king:
We claim the promise that your highness made;
The two days' respite is not yet expired,
And we are come with willingness to bear
What torturing death or punishment you please,
So that the trembling multitude be saved.

KING EDWARD.
My promise? Well, I do confess as much:
But I do require the chiefest Citizens
And men of most account that should submit;
You, peradventure, are but servile grooms,
Or some felonious robbers on the Sea,
Whom, apprehended, law would execute,

Albeit severity lay dead in us:
No, no, ye cannot overreach us thus.

SECOND CITIZEN.
The Sun, dread Lord, that in the western fall
Beholds us now low brought through misery,
Did in the Orient purple of the morn
Salute our coming forth, when we were known;
Or may our portion be with damned fiends.

KING EDWARD.
If it be so, then let our covenant stand:
We take possession of the town in peace,
But, for your selves, look you for no remorse;
But, as imperial justice hath decreed,
Your bodies shall be dragged about these walls,
And after feel the stroke of quartering steel:
This is your doom;—go, soldiers, see it done.

QUEEN PHILLIP.
Ah, be more mild unto these yielding men!
It is a glorious thing to stablish peace,
And kings approach the nearest unto God
By giving life and safety unto men:
As thou intendest to be king of France,
So let her people live to call thee king;
For what the sword cuts down or fire hath spoiled,
Is held in reputation none of ours.

KING EDWARD.
Although experience teach us this is true,
That peaceful quietness brings most delight,
When most of all abuses are controlled;
Yet, insomuch it shall be known that we
As well can master our affections
As conquer other by the dint of sword,
Phillip, prevail; we yield to thy request:
These men shall live to boast of clemency,
And, tyranny, strike terror to thy self.

SECOND CITIZEN.
Long live your highness! happy be your reign!

KING EDWARD.
Go, get you hence, return unto the town,
And if this kindness hath deserved your love,
Learn then to reverence Edward as your king.—

[Exeunt Citizens.]

Now, might we hear of our affairs abroad,
We would, till gloomy Winter were o'er spent,
Dispose our men in garrison a while.
But who comes here?

[Enter Copland and King David.]

DERBY.
Copland, my Lord, and David, King of Scots.

KING EDWARD.
Is this the proud presumptuous Esquire of the North,
That would not yield his prisoner to my Queen?

COPLAND.
I am, my liege, a Northern Esquire indeed,
But neither proud nor insolent, I trust.

KING EDWARD.
What moved thee, then, to be so obstinate
To contradict our royal Queen's desire?

COPLAND.
No wilful disobedience, mighty Lord,
But my desert and public law at arms:
I took the king my self in single fight,
And, like a soldiers, would be loath to lose
The least pre-eminence that I had won.
And Copland straight upon your highness' charge
Is come to France, and with a lowly mind

Doth vale the bonnet of his victory:
Receive, dread Lord, the custom of my fraught,
The wealthy tribute of my laboring hands,
Which should long since have been surrendered up,
Had but your gracious self been there in place.

QUEEN PHILLIP.
But, Copland, thou didst scorn the king's command,
Neglecting our commission in his name.

COPLAND.
His name I reverence, but his person more;
His name shall keep me in allegiance still,
But to his person I will bend my knee.

KING EDWARD.
I pray thee, Phillip, let displeasure pass;
This man doth please me, and I like his words:
For what is he that will attempt great deeds,
And lose the glory that ensues the same?
All rivers have recourse unto the Sea,
And Copland's faith relation to his king.
Kneel, therefore, down: now rise, king Edward's knight;
And, to maintain thy state, I freely give
Five hundred marks a year to thee and thine.

[Enter Salisbury.]

Welcome, Lord Salisbury: what news from Brittain?

SALISBURY.
This, mighty king: the Country we have won,
And John de Mountford, regent of that place,
Presents your highness with this Coronet,
Protesting true allegiance to your Grace.

KING EDWARD.
We thank thee for thy service, valiant Earl;
Challenge our favour, for we owe it thee.

SALISBURY.
But now, my Lord, as this is joyful news,
So must my voice be tragical again,
And I must sing of doleful accidents.

KING EDWARD.
What, have our men the overthrow at Poitiers?
Or is our son beset with too much odds?

SALISBURY.
He was, my Lord: and as my worthless self
With forty other serviceable knights,
Under safe conduct of the Dauphin's seal,
Did travail that way, finding him distressed,
A troop of Lances met us on the way,
Surprised, and brought us prisoners to the king,
Who, proud of this, and eager of revenge,
Commanded straight to cut off all our heads:
And surely we had died, but that the Duke,
More full of honor than his angry sire,
Procured our quick deliverance from thence;
But, ere we went, 'Salute your king', quoth he,
'Bid him provide a funeral for his son:
To day our sword shall cut his thread of life;
And, sooner than he thinks, we'll be with him,
To quittance those displeasures he hath done.'
This said, we past, not daring to reply;
Our hearts were dead, our looks diffused and wan.
Wandering, at last we climed unto a hill,
>From whence, although our grief were much before,
Yet now to see the occasion with our eyes
Did thrice so much increase our heaviness:
For there, my Lord, oh, there we did descry
Down in a valley how both armies lay.
The French had cast their trenches like a ring,
And every Barricado's open front
Was thick embossed with brazen ordinance;
Here stood a battaile of ten thousand horse,
There twice as many pikes in quadrant wise,

Here Crossbows, and deadly wounding darts:
And in the midst, like to a slender point
Within the compass of the horizon,
As twere a rising bubble in the sea,
A Hasle wand amidst a wood of Pines,
Or as a bear fast chained unto a stake,
Stood famous Edward, still expecting when
Those dogs of France would fasten on his flesh.
Anon the death procuring knell begins:
Off go the Cannons, that with trembling noise
Did shake the very Mountain where they stood;
Then sound the Trumpets' clangor in the air,
The battles join: and, when we could no more
Discern the difference twixt the friend and foe,
So intricate the dark confusion was,
Away we turned our watery eyes with sighs,
As black as powder fuming into smoke.
And thus, I fear, unhappy have I told
The most untimely tale of Edward's fall.

QUEEN PHILLIP.
Ah me, is this my welcome into France?
Is this the comfort that I looked to have,
When I should meet with my beloved son?
Sweet Ned, I would thy mother in the sea
Had been prevented of this mortal grief!

KING EDWARD.
Content thee, Phillip; tis not tears will serve
To call him back, if he be taken hence:
Comfort thy self, as I do, gentle Queen,
With hope of sharp, unheard of, dire revenge.—
He bids me to provide his funeral,
And so I will; but all the Peers in France
Shall mourners be, and weep out bloody tears,
Until their empty veins be dry and sere:
The pillars of his hearse shall be his bones;
The mould that covers him, their City ashes;
His knell, the groaning cries of dying men;

And, in the stead of tapers on his tomb,
An hundred fifty towers shall burning blaze,
While we bewail our valiant son's decease.

[After a flourish, sounded within, enter an herald.]

HERALD.
Rejoice, my Lord; ascend the imperial throne!
The mighty and redoubted prince of Wales,
Great servitor to bloody Mars in arms,
The French man's terror, and his country's fame,
Triumphant rideth like a Roman peer,
And, lowly at his stirrup, comes afoot
King John of France, together with his son,
In captive bonds; whose diadem he brings
To crown thee with, and to proclaim thee king.

KING EDWARD.
Away with mourning, Phillip, wipe thine eyes;—
Sound, Trumpets, welcome in Plantagenet!

[Enter Prince Edward, king John, Phillip, Audley, Artois.]

As things long lost, when they are found again,
So doth my son rejoice his father's heart,
For whom even now my soul was much perplexed.

QUEEN PHILLIP.
Be this a token to express my joy,

[Kisses him.]

For inward passion will not let me speak.

PRINCE EDWARD.
My gracious father, here receive the gift.

[Presenting him with King John's crown.]

This wreath of conquest and reward of war,

Got with as mickle peril of our lives,
As ere was thing of price before this day;
Install your highness in your proper right:
And, herewithall, I render to your hands
These prisoners, chief occasion of our strife.

KING EDWARD.
So, John of France, I see you keep your word:
You promised to be sooner with our self
Than we did think for, and tis so in deed:
But, had you done at first as now you do,
How many civil towns had stood untouched,
That now are turned to ragged heaps of stones!
How many people's lives mightst thou have saved,
That are untimely sunk into their graves!

KING JOHN.
Edward, recount not things irrevocable;
Tell me what ransom thou requirest to have.

KING EDWARD.
Thy ransom, John, hereafter shall be known:
But first to England thou must cross the seas,
To see what entertainment it affords;
How ere it falls, it cannot be so bad,
As ours hath been since we arrived in France.

KING JOHN.
Accursed man! of this I was foretold,
But did misconster what the prophet told.

PRINCE EDWARD.
Now, father, this petition Edward makes
To thee, whose grace hath been his strongest shield,
That, as thy pleasure chose me for the man
To be the instrument to shew thy power,
So thou wilt grant that many princes more,
Bred and brought up within that little Isle,
May still be famous for like victories!

And, for my part, the bloody scars I bear,
And weary nights that I have watched in field,
The dangerous conflicts I have often had,
The fearful menaces were proffered me,
The heat and cold and what else might displease:
I wish were now redoubled twenty fold,
So that hereafter ages, when they read
The painful traffic of my tender youth,
Might thereby be inflamed with such resolve,
As not the territories of France alone,
But likewise Spain, Turkey, and what countries else
That justly would provoke fair England's ire,
Might, at their presence, tremble and retire.

KING EDWARD.
Here, English Lords, we do proclaim a rest,
An intercession of our painful arms:
Sheath up your swords, refresh your weary limbs,
Peruse your spoils; and, after we have breathed
A day or two within this haven town,
God willing, then for England we'll be shipped;
Where, in a happy hour, I trust, we shall
Arrive, three kings, two princes, and a queen.

FINIS.

LOCRINE

This play depicts the legendary Trojan founders of England and of Troynovant (London). *Locrine* was entered in the Stationers' Register on July 20, 1594, and published in 1595 in a quarto issued by the printer Thomas Creede. The title page of the 1595 quarto advertised the play as "Newly set foorth, overseene and corrected, / By W. S." An identification of "W. S." with William Shakespeare apparently led to the play's inclusion among the seven works that Philip Chetwinde added to the second impression of his Shakespeare Third Folio in 1664 — which in turn led to the inclusion of *Locrine* in the Shakespeare Apocrypha. The play's stiff, formal verse is not Shakespearean — but the extant text of *Locrine* does show evidence of revision. The authorship of the original play has been assigned to several dramatists of the era, George Peele and Robert Greene being the two most common candidates.

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DRAMATIS PERSONAE.

BRUTUS, King of Britain.

LOCRINE, his son.
CAMBER, his son.
ALBANACT, his son.
CORINEIUS, brother to Brutus.
ASSARACHUS, brother to Brutus.
THRASIMACHUS, brother to Brutus.
DEBON, an old Officer.
HUMBER, King of the Scythians.
HUBBA, his son.
THRASSIER, a Scythian Commander.
STRUMBO, clown.
TRUMPART, clown.
OLIVER, clown.
WILLIAM, clown.

GWENDOLINE, Corineius his Daughter, married to Locrine.
ESTRILD, Humber's Wife.
ATE, the Goddess of Revenge.

Ghosts of Albanact, and Corineius.

ACT I. PROLOGUE.

Enter Ate with thunder and lightning all in black, with a burning torch in one hand, and a bloody sword in the other hand, and presently let there come forth a Lion running after a Bear or any other beast; then come forth an Archer who must kill the Lion in a dumb show, and then depart. Remain Ate.

ATE.
In paenam sectatur & umbra.
A Mighty Lion, ruler of the woods,
Of wondrous strength and great proportion,
With hideous noise scaring the trembling trees,
With yelling clamors shaking all the earth,
Traverst the groves, and chased the wandering beasts.
Long did he range amid the shady trees,
And drave the silly beasts before his face,

When suddenly from out a thorny bush,
A dreadful Archer with his bow ybent,
Wounded the Lion with a dismal shaft.
So he him stroke that it drew forth the blood,
And filled his furious heart with fretting ire;
But all in vain he threatened teeth and paws,
And sparkleth fire from forth his flaming eyes,
For the sharp shaft gave him a mortal wound.
So valiant Brute, the terror of the world,
Whose only looks did scare his enemies,
The Archer death brought to his latest end.
Oh what may long abide above this ground,
In state of bliss and healthful happiness.

[Exit.]

ACT I. SCENE I.

Enter Brutus carried in a chair, Locrine, Camber, Albanact, Corineius, Gwendoline, Assarachus, Debon, Thrasimachus.

BRUTUS.
Most loyal Lords and faithful followers,
That have with me, unworthy General,
Passed the greedy gulf of Ocean,
Leaving the confines of fair Italy,
Behold, your Brutus draweth nigh his end,
And I must leave you, though against my will.
My sinews shrunk, my numbed senses fail,
A chilling cold possesseth all my bones;
Black ugly death, with visage pale and wan,
Presents himself before my dazzled eyes,
And with his dart prepared is to strike.
These arms my Lords, these never daunted arms,
That oft have quelled the courage of my foes,
And eke dismay'd my neighbours arrogancy,

Now yield to death, o'erlaid with crooked age,
Devoid of strength and of their proper force,
Even as the lusty cedar worn with years,
That far abroad her dainty odor throws,
Mongst all the daughters of proud Lebanon.
This heart, my Lords, this near appalled heart,
That was a terror to the bordering lands,
A doeful scourge unto my neighbor Kings,
Now by the weapons of unpartial death,
Is clove asunder and bereft of life,
As when the sacred oak with thunderbolts,
Sent from the fiery circuit of the heavens,
Sliding along the air's celestial vaults,
Is rent and cloven to the very roots.
In vain, therefore, I strangle with this foe;
Then welcome death, since God will have it so.

ASSARACHUS.
Alas, my Lord, we sorrow at your case,
And grieve to see your person vexed thus;
But what so ere the fates determined have,
It lieth not in us to disannul,
And he that would annihilate his mind,
Soaring with Icarus too near the sun,
May catch a fall with young Bellerophon.
For when the fatal sisters have decreed
To separate us from this earthly mould,
No mortal force can countermand their minds:
Then, worthy Lord, since there's no way but one,
Cease your laments, and leave your grievous moan.

CORINEIUS.
Your highness knows how many victories,
How many trophies I erected have
Triumphantly in every place we came.
The Grecian Monarch, warlike Pandrassus,
And all the crew of the Molossians;
Goffarius, the arm strong King of Gauls,
And all the borders of great Aquitaine,

Have felt the force of our victorious arms,
And to their cost beheld our chivalry.
Where ere Aurora, handmaid of the Sun,
Where ere the Sun, bright guardiant of the day,
Where ere the joyful day with cheerful light,
Where ere the light illuminates the world,
The Trojan's glory flies with golden wings,
Wings that do soar beyond fell ennui's flight.
The fame of Brutus and his followers
Pierceth the skies, and with the skies the throne
Of mighty Jove, Commander of the world.
Then worthy Brutus, leave these sad laments;
Comfort your self with this your great renown,
And fear not death though he seem terrible.

BRUTUS.
Nay, Corineius, you mistake my mind
In construing wrong the cause of my complaints.
I feared to yield my self to fatal death!
God knows it was the least of all my thoughts;
A greater care torments my very bones,
And makes me tremble at the thought of it,
And in you, Lordings, doth the substance lie.

THRASI.
Most noble Lord, if ought your loyal peers
Accomplish may, to ease your lingering grief,
I, in the name of all, protest to you,
That we will boldly enterprise the same,
Were it to enter to black Tartarus,
Where triple Cerberus with his venomous throat,
Scarreth the ghosts with high resounding noise.
We'll either rent the bowels of the earth,
Searching the entrails of the brutish earth,
Or, with his Ixion's overdaring son,
Be bound in chains of everduring steel.

BRUTUS.
Then harken to your sovereign's latest words,

In which I will unto you all unfold
Our royal mind and resolute intent:—
When golden Hebe, daughter to great Jove,
Covered my manly cheeks with youthful down,
Th' unhappy slaughter of my luckless sire,
Drove me and old Assarachus, mine eame,
As exiles from the bounds of Italy:
So that perforce we were constrained to fly
To Graecia's Monarch noble Pandrassus.
There I alone did undertake your cause,
There I restored your antique liberty,
Though Graecia frowned, and all Mollossia stormed,
Though brave Antigonus, with martial band,
In pitched field encountered me and mine,
Though Pandrassus and his contributories,
With all the route of their confederates,
Sought to deface our glorious memory
And wipe the name of Trojans from the earth,
Him did I captivate with this mine arm,
And by compulsion forced him to agree
To certain articles which there we did propound.
From Graecia through the boisterous Hellespont,
We came unto the fields of Lestrigon,
Whereas our brother Corineius was,
Since when we passed the Cicillian gulf,
And so transfretting the Illirian sea,
Arrived on the coasts of Aquitaine,
Where with an army of his barbarous Gauls
Goffarius and his brother Gathelus
Encountering with our host, sustained the foil.
And for your sakes my Turnus there I lost,
Turnus that slew six hundred men at arms
All in an hour, with his sharp battle-axe.
From thence upon the strons of Albion
To Corus haven happily we came,
And quelled the giants, come of Albion's race,
With Gogmagog son to Samotheus,
The cursed Captain of that damned crew.
And in that Isle at length I placed you.

Now let me see if my laborious toils,
If all my care, if all my grievous wounds,
If all my diligence were well employed.

CORINEIUS.
When first I followed thee & thine, brave king,
I hazarded my life and dearest blood,
To purchase favour at your princely hands,
And for the same in dangerous attempts
In sundry conflicts and in diverse broils,
I showed the courage of my manly mind.
For this I combated with Gathelus,
The brother to Goffarius of Gaul;
For this I fought with furious Gogmagog,
A savage captain of a savage crew;
And for these deeds brave Cornwall I received,
A grateful gift given by a gracious King:
And for this gift, this life and dearest blood,
Will Corineius spend for Brutus good.

DEB.
And what my friend, brave prince, hath vowed to you,
The same will Debon do unto his end.

BRUTUS.
Then, loyal peers, since you are all agreed,
And resolute to follow Brutus hosts,
Favor my sons, favor these Orphans, Lords,
And shield them from the dangers of their foes.
Locrine, the column of my family,
And only pillar of my weakened age,
Locrine, draw near, draw near unto thy sire,
And take thy latest blessings at his hands:
And for thou art the eldest of my sons,
Be thou a captain to thy brethren,
And imitate thy aged father's steps,
Which will conduct thee to true honor's gate;
For if thou follow sacred virtue's lore,
Thou shalt be crowned with a laurel branch,

And wear a wreath of sempiternal fame,
Sorted amongst the glorious happy ones.

LOCRINE.
If Locrine do not follow your advise,
And bear himself in all things like a prince
That seeks to amplify the great renown
Left unto him for an inheritage
By those that were his ancestors,
Let me be flung into the Ocean,
And swallowed in the bowels of the earth,
Or let the ruddy lightning of great Jove
Descend upon this my devoted head.

BRUTUS.

[Taking Gwendoline by the hand.]

But for I see you all to be in doubt,
Who shall be matched with our royal son,
Locrine, receive this present at my hand,
A gift more rich than are the wealthy mines
Found in the bowels of America.
Thou shalt be spoused to fair Gwendoline;
Love her, and take her, for she is thine own,
If so thy uncle and her self do please.

CORINEIUS.
And herein how your highness honors me
It cannot now be in my speech expressed;
For careful parents glory not so much
At their honour and promotion,
As for to see the issue of their blood
Seated in honor and prosperity.

GWENDOLINE.
And far be it from any maiden's thoughts
To contradict her aged father's will.
Therefore, since he to whom I must obey

Hath given me now unto your royal self,
I will not stand aloof from off the lure,
Like crafty dames that most of all deny
That which they most desire to possess.

BRUTUS.

[Turning to Locrine. Locrine kneeling.]

Then now, my son, thy part is on the stage,
For thou must bear the person of a King.

[Puts the Crown on his head.]

Locrine, stand up, and wear the regal Crown,
And think upon the state of Majesty,
That thou with honor well mayest wear the crown.
And if thou tendrest these my latest words,
As thou requirest my soul to be at rest,
As thou desirest thine own security,
Cherish and love thy new betrothed wife.

LOCRINE.
No longer let me well enjoy the crown,
Than I do honour peerless Gwendoline.

BRUTUS.
Camber.

CAMBER.
My Lord.

BRUTUS.
The glory of mine age,
And darling of thy mother Imogen,
Take thou the South for thy dominion.
From thee there shall proceed a royal race,
That shall maintain the honor of this land,
And sway the regal scepter with their hands.

[Turning to Albanact.]

And Albanact, thy father's only joy,
Youngest in years, but not the youngest in mind,
A perfect pattern of all chivalry,
Take thou the North for thy dominion,
A country full of hills and ragged rocks,
Replenished with fierce untamed beasts,
As correspondent to thy martial thoughts,
Live long, my sons, with endless happiness,
And bear firm concordance amongst your selves.
Obey the counsels of these fathers grave,
That you may better bear out violence.—
But suddenly, through weakness of my age,
And the defect of youthful puissance,
My malady increaseth more and more,
And cruel death hasteneth his quickened pace,
To dispossess me of my earthly shape.
Mine eyes wax dim, overcast with clouds of age,
The pangs of death compass my crazed bones;
Thus to you all my blessings I bequeath,
And with my blessings, this my fleeting soul
My glass is run, and all my miseries
Do end with life; death closeth up mine eyes,
My soul in haste flies to the Elysian fields.

[He dieth.]

LOCRINE.
Accursed stars, damned and accursed stars,
To abbreviate my noble father's life!
Hard-hearted gods, and too envious fates,
Thus to cut off my father's fatal thread!
Brutus, that was a glory to us all,
Brutus, that was a terror to his foes,
Alas, too soon, by Demagorgon's knife,
The martial Brutus is bereft of life!

CORINEIUS.

No sad complaints may move just Aeacus,
No dreadful threats can fear judge Rhodomanth.
Wert thou as strong as mighty Hercules,
That tamed the huge monsters of the world,
Playedst thou as sweet, on the sweet sounding lute,
As did the spouse of fair Eurydice,
That did enchant the waters with his noise,
And made stones, birds, and beasts, to lead a dance,
Constrained the hilly trees to follow him,
Thou couldst not move the judge of Erebus,
Nor move compassion in grim Pluto's heart;
For fatal Mors expecteth all the world,
And every man must tread the way of death.
Brave Tantalus, the valiant Pelops' sire,
Guest to the gods, suffered untimely death,
And old Tithonus, husband to the morn,
And eke grim Minos, whom just Jupiter
Deigned to admit unto his sacrifice.
The thundering trumpets of blood-thirsty Mars,
The fearful rage of fell Tisiphone,
The boistrous waves of humid Ocean,
Are instruments and tools of dismal death.
Then, novel cousin, cease to mourn his chance,
Whose age & years were signs that he should die.
It reseth now that we inter his bones,
That was a terror to his enemies.
Take up the course, and, princes, hold him dead,
Who while he lived, upheld the Trojan state.
Sound drums and trumpets; march to Troinouant,
There to provide our chieftain's funeral.

[Exeunt.]

ACT 1. SCENE 2. The house of Strumbo.

[Enter Strumbo above in a gown, with ink and paper in his hand, saying:—]

STRUMBO.

Either the four elements, the seven planets, and all the particular stars of the pole Antastick, are adversative against me, or else I was begotten and born in the wane of the Moon, when every thing as Lactantius in his fourth book of Consultations doth say, goeth asward. Aye, masters, aye, you may laugh, but I must weep; you may joy, but I must sorrow; shedding salt tears from the watery fountains of my most dainty fair eyes, along my comely and smooth cheeks, in as great plenty as the water runneth from the buckingtubs, or red wine out of the hogs heads: for trust me, gentlemen and my very good friends, and so forth, the little god, nay the desparate god Cuprit, with one of his vengible birdbolts, hath shot me unto the heel: so not only, but also, oh fine phrase, I burn, I burn, and I burn a, in love, in love, and in love a. Ah, Strumbo, what hast thou seen? not Dina with the Ass Tom? Yea, with these eyes thou hast seen her, and therefore pull them out, for they will work thy bale. Ah, Strumbo, hast thou heard? not the voice of the Nightingale, but a voice sweeter than hers. Yea, with these ears hast thou heard it, and therefore cut them off, for they have caused thy sorrow. Nay, Strumbo, kill thy self, drown thy self, hang thy self, starve thy self. Oh, but then I shall leave my sweet heart. Oh my heart! Now, pate, for thy master! I will dite an eloquent love-pistle to her, and then she hearing the grand verbosity of my scripture, will love me presently.

[Let him write a little and then read.]

My pen is naught; gentlemen, lend me a knife. I think the more haste the worst speed.

[Then write again, and after read.]

So it is, mistress Dorothy, and the sole essence of my soul, that the little sparkles of affection kindled in me towards your sweet self hath now increased to a great flame, and will ere it be long consume my poor heart, except you, with the pleasant water of your secret fountain, quench the furious heat of the same. Alas, I am a gentleman of good fame and name, majestical, in parrel comely, in gate portly. Let not therefore your gentle heart be so hard as to despise a proper tall, young man of a handsome life, and by despising him, not only, but also to kill him. Thus expecting time and tide, I bid you farewell. Your servant, Signior Strumbo.

Oh wit! Oh pate! O memory! O hand! O ink! O paper! Well, now I will send it away. Trompart, Trompart! what a villain is this? Why, sirra, come when your master calls you. Trompart!

[Trompart, entering, saith:]

TROMPART.
Anon, sir.

STRUMBO.

Thou knowest, my pretty boy, what a good mast I have been to thee ever since I took thee into my service.

TROMPART.
Aye, sir.

STRUMBO.

And how I have cherished thee always, as if you had been the fruit of my loins, flesh of my flesh, and bone of my bone.

TROMPART.
Aye, sir.

STRUMBO.

Then show thy self herein a trusty servant, and carry this letter to mistress Dorothy, and tell her—

[Speaking in his ear. Exit Trompart.]

Nay, masters, you shall see a marriage by and by. But here she comes. Now must I frame my amorous passions.

[Enter Dorothy and Trompart.]

DOROTHY.

Signior Strumbo, well met. I received your letters by your man here, who told me a pitiful story of your anguish, and so understanding your passions were so great, I came hither speedily.

STRUMBO.

Oh my sweet and pigsney, the fecundity of my ingenie is not so great, that may declare unto you the sorrowful sobs and broken sleeps, that I suffered for your sake; and therefore I desire you to receive me into your familiarity.

For your love doth lie,
As near and as nigh
Unto my heart within,
As mine eye to my nose,
My leg unto my hose,
And my flesh unto my skin.

DOROTHY.

Truly, Master Strumbo, you speak too learnedly for me to understand the drift of your mind, and therefore tell your tale in plain terms, and leave off your dark riddles.

STRUMBO.

Alas, mistress Dorothy, this is my luck, that when I most would, I cannot be understood; so that my great learning is an inconvenience unto me. But to speak in plain terms, I love you, mistress Dorothy, if you like to accept me into your familiarity.

DOROTHY.
If this be all, I am content.

STRUMBO.

Sayest thou so, sweet wench; let me lick thy toes. Farewell, mistress.

[Turning to the people.]

If any of you be in love, provide ye a capcase full of new coined words, and then shall you soon have the succado de labres, and something else.

[Exeunt.]

ACT I. SCENE 3. An apartment in the palace.

[Enter Locrine, Gwendoline, Camber, Albanact, Corineius,
Assarachus, Debon, Thrasimachus.]

LOCRINE.
Uncle, and princes of brave Britany,
Since that our noble father is entombed,
As best beseemed so brave a prince as he,
If so you please, this day my love and I,
Within the temple of Concordia,
Will solemnize our royal marriage.

THRASIMACHUS.
Right noble Lord, your subjects every one,
Must needs obey your highness at command;
Especially in such a cause as this,
That much concerns your highness great content.

LOCRINE.
Then frolic, lordings, to fair Concord's walls,
Where we will pass the day in knightly sports,
The night in dancing and in figured masks,
And offer to God Risus all our sports

[Exeunt.]

ACT II. PROLOGUE.

[Enter Ate as before. After a little lightning and thundering, let there come forth this show:—Perseus and Andromeda, hand in hand, and Cepheus also, with swords and targets. Then let there come out of an other door, Phineus, all black in armour, with Aethiopians after him, driving in Perseus, and having taken away Andromeda, let them depart, Ate remaining, saying:]

ATE.
Regit omnia numen.
When Perseus married fair Andromeda,
The only daughter of king Cepheus,
He thought he had established well his Crown,
And that his kingdom should for aie endure.
But, lo, proud Phineus with a band of men,
Contrived of sun-burnt Aethiopians,
By force of arms the bride he took from him,
And turned their joy into a flood of tears.
So fares it with young Locrine and his love,
He thinks this marriage tendeth to his weal;
But this foul day, this foul accursed day,
Is the beginning of his miseries.
Behold where Humber and his Scithians
Approacheth nigh with all his warlike train.
I need not, I, the sequel shall declare,
What tragic chances fall out in this war.

ACT II. SCENE I.

[Enter Humber, Hubba, Estrild, Segar, and their soldiers.]

HUMBER.
At length the snail doth clime the highest tops,
Ascending up the stately castle walls;
At length the water with continual drops,
Doth penetrate the hardest marble stone;
At length we are arrived in Albion.
Nor could the barbarous Dacian sovereign,
Nor yet the ruler of brave Belgia,
Stay us from cutting over to this Isle,
Whereas I hear a troop of Phrigians

Under the conduct of Postumius' son,
Have pitched up lordly pavilions,
And hope to prosper in this lovely Isle.
But I will frustrate all their foolish hope,
And teach them that the Scithian Emperour
Leads fortune tied in a chain of gold,
Constraining her to yield unto his will,
And grace him with their regal diadem,
Which I will have mauger their treble hosts,
And all the power their petty kings can make.

HUBBA.
If she that rules fair Rhamnis' golden gate
Grant us the honour of the victory,
As hitherto she always favoured us,
Right noble father, we will rule the land,
Enthronized in seats of Topaz stones,
That Locrine and his brethren all may know,
None must be king but Humber and his son.

HUMBER.
Courage, my son, fortune shall favour us,
And yield to us the coronet of bay,
That decked none but noble conquerours.
But what saith Estrild to these regions?
How liketh she the temperature thereof?
Are they not pleasant in her gracious eyes?

ESTRILD.
The plains, my Lord, garnished with Flora's wealth,
And overspread with party colored flowers,
Do yield sweet contentation to my mind.
The airy hills enclosed with shady groves,
The groves replenished with sweet chirping birds,
The birds resounding heavenly melody,
Are equal to the groves of Thessaly,
Where Phoebus with the learned Ladies nine,
Delight themselves with music harmony,
And from the moisture of the mountain tops,

The silent springs dance down with murmuring streams,
And water all the ground with crystal waves.
The gentle blasts of Eurus, modest wind,
Moving the pittering leaves of Silvan's woods,
Do equal it with Temp's paradise;
And thus consorted all to one effect,
Do make me think these are the happy Isles,
Most fortunate, if Humber may them win.

HUBBA.
Madam, where resolution leads the way,
And courage follows with imboldened pace,
Fortune can never use her tyranny;
For valiantness is like unto a rock
That standeth in the waves of Ocean,
Which though the billows beat on ever side,
And Boreas fell with his tempestuous storms
Bloweth upon it with a hideous clamour,
Yet it remaineth still unmoveable.

HUMBER.
Kingly resolved, thou glory of thy sire.
But, worthy Segar, what uncouth novelties
Bringst thou unto our royal majesty?

SEGAR.
My Lord, the youngest of all Brutus' sons,
Stout Albanact, with millions of men,
Approacheth nigh, and meaneth, ere the morn,
To try your force by dint of fatal sword.

HUMBER.
Tut, let him come with millions of hosts;
He shall find entertainment good enough.
Yea, fit for those that are our enemies:
For we'll receive them at the lance's points,
And massacre their bodies with our blades:
Yea, though they were in number infinite,
More than the mighty Babylonian queen,

Semiramis the ruler of the West,
Brought gainst the Emperour of the Scithians;
Yet would we not start back one foot from them:
That they might know we are invincible.

HUBBA.
Now, by great Jove, the supreme king of heaven,
And the immortal gods that live therein,
When as the morning shows his cheerful face,
And Lucifer, mounted upon his steed,
Brings in the chariot of the golden sun,
I'll meet young Albanact in the open field,
And crack my lance upon his burganet,
To try the valour of his boyish strength.
There will I show such ruthful spectacles
And cause so great effusion of blood,
That all his boys shall wonder at my strength:
As when the warlike queen of Amazon,
Penthisilea, armed with her lance,
Girt with a corslet of bright shining steel,
Couped up the faintheart Graecians in the camp.

HUMBER.
Spoke like a warlike knight, my noble son;
Nay, like a prince that seeks his father's joy.
Therefore, tomorrow, ere fair Titan shine,
And bashful Eos, messenger of light,
Expels the liquid sleep from out men's eyes,
Thou shalt conduct the right wing of the host;
The left wing shall be under Segar's charge,
The rearward shall be under me my self.
And lovely Estrild, fair and gracious,
If fortune favour me in mine attempts,
And make the Queen of lovely Albion,
Come, let us in and muster up our train,
And furnish up our lusty soldiers,
That they may be a bulwark to our state,
And bring our wished joys to perfect end.

ACT II. SCENE II.

[Enter Strumbo, Dorothy, Trompart, cobbling shoes and singing. To them enter Captain.]

TROMPART.
We Cobblers lead a merry life:

ALL.
Dan, dan, dan, dan:

STRUMBO.
Void of all ennui and strife:

ALL.
Dan diddle dan.

DOROTHY.
Our ease is great, our labour small:

ALL.
Dan, dan, dan, dan.

STRUMBO.
And yet our gains be much withall:

ALL.
Dan diddle dan.

DOROTHY.
With this art so fine and fair:

ALL.
Dan, dan, dan, dan.

TROMPART.
No occupation may compare:

ALL.
Dan diddle dan.

DOROTHY.
For merry pastime and joyful glee:

ALL.
Dan, dan, dan, dan.

STRUMBO.
Most happy men we Cobblers be:

ALL.
Dan diddle dan.

TROMPART.
The can stands full of nappy ale:

ALL.
Dan, dan, dan, dan.

STRUMBO.

In our shop still withouten fail:

ALL.
Dan diddle dan.

DOROTHY.
This is our meat, this is our food:

ALL.
Dan, dan, dan, dan.

TROMPART.
This brings us to a merry mood:

ALL.
Dan diddle dan.

STRUMBO.
This makes us work for company:

ALL.
Dan, dan, dan, dan.

DOROTHY.
To pull the tankards cheerfully:

ALL.
Dan diddle dan.

TROMPART.
Drink to thy husband, Dorothy,

ALL.
Dan, dan, dan, dan.

DOROTHY.
Why, then, my Strumbo, there's to thee:

ALL.
Dan diddle dan.

STRUMBO.
Drink thou the rest, Trompart, amain:

ALL.
Dan, dan, dan, dan.

DOROTHY.
When that is gone, we'll fill't again:

ALL.
Dan diddle dan.

CAPTAIN.
The poorest state is farthest from annoy.
How merrily he sitteth on his stool!
But when he sees that needs he must be pressed,
He'll turn his note and sing another tune.
Ho, by your leave, master Cobbler.

STRUMBO.

You are welcome, gentleman. What will you? any old shoes or buskins? or will you have your shoes clouted? I will do them as well as any Cobbler in Cathnes whatsoever.

CAPTAIN.

[Showing him press money.]

O master Cobbler, you are far deceived in me, for don you see this? I come not to buy any shoes, but to buy your self; come, sir, you must be a soldier in the king's cause.

STRUMBO.

Why, but hear you, sir; has your king any commission to take any man against his will. I promise you, I can scant believe it; or did he give you commission?

CAPTAIN.
O sir, ye need not care for that; I need no commission.
Hold, here: I command you, in the name of our king
Albanact, to appear tomorrow in the town-house of
Cathnes.

STRUMBO.

King Nactaball! I cry God mercy! what have we to do with him, or he with us? But you, sir master capontail, draw your pasteboard, or else I promise you, I'll give you a canuasado with a bastinado over your shoulders, and teach you to come hither with your implements.

CAPTAIN.

I pray thee, good fellow, be content; I do the king's command.

STRUMBO.
Put me out of your book, then.

CAPTAIN.
I may not.

STRUMBO.

[Snatching up the staff.]

No! Well, come, sir, will your stomach serve you? by gog's blue hood and halidom, I will have a bout with you.

[Fight both. Enter Thrasimachus.]

THRASIMACHUS.
How now, what noise, what sudden clamor's this?
How now, my captain and the cobbler so hard at it?
Sirs, what is your quarrel?

CAPTAIN.
Nothing, sir, but that he will not take press money.

THRASIMACHUS.
Here, good fellow; take it at my command,
Unless you mean to be stretched.

STRUMBO.

Truly, master gentleman, I lack no money; if you please, I will resign it to one of these poor fellows.

THRASIMACHUS.
No such matter,
Look you be at the common house tomorrow.

[Exit Thrasimachus and the captain.]

STRUMBO.

O, wife, I have spun a fair thread! If I had been quiet, I had not been pressed, and therefore well may I wayment. But come, sirrah, shut up, for we must to the wars.

[Exeunt.]

ACT II. SCENE III. The camp of Albanact.

[Enter Albanact, Debon, Thrasimachus, and the Lords.]

ALBA.
Brave cavalries, princes of Albany,
Whose trenchant blades with our deceased sire,
Passing the frontiers of brave Graecia,
Were bathed in our enemies' lukewarm blood,
Now is the time to manifest your wills,
Your haughty minds and resolutions.
Now opportunity is offered
To try your courage and your earnest zeal,
Which you always protest to Albanact;
For at this time, yea, at this present time,
Stout fugitives, come from the Scithians' bounds,
Have pestered every place with mutinies.
But trust me, Lordings, I will never cease
To persecute the rascal runnagates,
Till all the rivers, stained with their blood,
Shall fully show their fatal overthrow.

DEBON.
So shall your highness merit great renown,
And imitate your aged father's steps.

ALBA.
But tell me, cousin, camest thou through the plains?
And sawest thou there the fain heart fugitives
Mustering their weather-beaten soldiers?
What order keep they in their marshalling?

THRASIMACHUS.
After we passed the groves of Caledone,
Where murmuring rivers slide with silent streams,
We did behold the straggling Scithians' camp,
Replete with men, stored with munition;
There might we see the valiant minded knights
Fetching careers along the spacious plains.
Humber and Hubba armed in azure blue,
Mounted upon their coursers white as snow,

Went to behold the pleasant flowering fields;
Hector and Troialus, Priamus lovely sons,
Chasing the Graecians over Simoeis,
Were not to be compared to these two knights.

ALBA.
Well hast thou painted out in eloquence
The portraiture of Humber and his son,
As fortunate as was Policrates;
Yet should they not escape our conquering swords,
Or boast of ought but of our clemency.

[Enter Strumbo and Trompart, crying often;
Wild fire and pitch, wild fire and pitch, &c.]

THRASIMACHUS.
What, sirs! what mean you by these clamors made,
These outcries raised in our stately court?

STRUMBO.
Wild fire and pitch, wild fire and pitch.

THRASIMACHUS.
Villains, I say, tell us the cause hereof?

STRUMBO.
Wild fire and pitch, &c.

THRASIMACHUS.
Tell me, you villains, why you make this noise,
Or with my lance I will prick your bowels out.

ALBA.
Where are your houses, where's your dwelling place?

STRUMBO.

Place? Ha, ha, ha! laugh a month and a day at him. Place! I cry God mercy: why, do you think that such poor honest men as we be, hold our habitacles in kings' palaces? Ha, ha, ha! But because you seem to be an abominable chieftain, I will tell you our state.

From the top to the toe,
From the head to the shoe;
From the beginning to the ending,
From the building to the burning.

This honest fellow and I had our mansion cottage in the suburbs of this city, hard by the temple of Mercury. And by the common soldiers of the Shitens, the Scithians— what do you call them?—with all the suburbs were burnt to the ground, and the ashes are left there, for the country wives to wash bucks withall.

And that which grieves me most,
My loving wife,
(O cruel strife!)
The wicked flames did roast.
And therefore, captain crust,
We will continually cry,
Except you seek a remedy
Our houses to reedify
Which now are burnt to dust.

BOTH CRY.
Wild fire and pitch, wild fire and pitch.

ALBA.
Well, we must remedy these outrages,
And throw revenge upon their hateful heads.
And you, good fellows, for your houses burnst,
We will remunerate you store of gold,
And build your houses by our palace gate.

STRUMBO.

Gate! O petty treason to my person! nowhere else but by your backside? Gate! Oh how I am vexed in my collar! Gate! I cry God mercy! Do you hear, master king? If you mean to gratify such poor men as we be, you must build our houses by the Tavern.

ALBA.

It shall be done, sir.

STRUMBO.

Near the Tavern, aye! by lady, sir, it was spoken like a good fellow. Do you hear, sir? when our house is builded, if you do chance to pass or repass that way, we will bestow a quart of the best wine upon you.

[Exit.]

ALBA.
It grieves me, lordings, that my subjects' goods
Should thus be spoiled by the Scithians,
Who, as you see, with lightfoot foragers
Depopulate the places where they come.
But cursed Humber thou shalt rue the day
That ere thou camest unto Cathnesia.

[Exeunt.]

ACT II. SCENE IV. The camp of Humber.

[Enter Humber, Hubba, Trussier, and their soldiers.]

HUMBER.
Hubba, go take a coronet of our horse,
As many lancers, and light armed knights
As may suffice for such an enterprise,
And place them in the grove of Caledon.
With these, when as the skirmish doth increase,
Retire thou from the shelters of the wood,
And set upon the weakened Troyans' backs,
For policy joined with chivalry
Can never be put back from victory.

[Exit. Albanact enter and say (clowns with him).]

ALBA.
Thou base born Hun, how durst thou be so bold
As once to menace warlike Albanact,
The great commander of these regions?
But thou shalt buy thy rashness with thy death,
And rue too late thy over bold attempts;
For with this sword, this instrument of death,
That hath been drenched in my foe-men's blood,
I'll separate thy body from they head,
And set that coward blood of thine abroach.

STRUMBO.
Nay, with this staff, great Strumbo's instrument,
I'll crack thy cockscomb, paltry Scithian.

HUMBER.
Nor wreak I of thy threat, thou princox boy,
Nor do I fear thy foolish insolency;
And but thou better use thy bragging blade,
Then thou doest rule thy overflowing tongue,
Superbious Brittain, thou shalt know too soon
The force of Humber and his Scithians.

[Let them fight. Humber and his soldiers run in.]

STRUMBO.
O horrible, terrible.

[Exit.]

ACT II. SCENE V. Another part of the field of battle.

[Sound the alarm. Enter Humber and his soldiers.]

HUMBER.
How bravely this young Brittain, Albanact,
Darteth abroad the thunderbolts of war,

Beating down millions with his furious mood,
And in his glory triumphs over all,
Moving the mass squadrants of the ground;
Heaps hills on hills, to scale the starry sky,
As when Briareus, armed with an hundreth hands,
Flung forth an hundreth mountains at great Jove,
And when the monstrous giant Monichus
Hurled mount Olympus at great Mars his target,
And shot huge caedars at Minerva's shield.
How doth he overlook with haughty front
My fleeting hosts, and lifts his lofty face
Against us all that now do fear his force,
Like as we see the wrathful sea from far,
In a great mountain heaped, with hideous noise,
With thousand billows beat against the ships,
And toss them in the waves like tennis balls.

[Sound the alarm.]

Aye me, I fear my Hubba is surprised.

[Sound again. Enter Albanact.]

ALBA.
Follow me, soldiers, follow Albanact;
Pursue the Scithians flying through the field:
Let none of them escape with victory;
That they may know the Brittains' force is more
Than all the power of the trembling Huns.

THRASIMACHUS.
Forward, brave soldiers, forward! keep the chase.
He that takes captive Humber or his son
Shall be rewarded with a crown of gold.

[Sound alarm, then let them fight, Humber give back, Hubba enter at their backs, and kill Debon, let Strumbo fall down, Albanact run in, and afterwards enter wounded.]

ALBA.

Injurious fortune, hast thou crossed me thus?
Thus, in the morning of my victories,
Thus, in the prime of my felicity,
To cut me off by such hard overthrow!
Hadst thou no time thy rancor to declare,
But in the spring of all my dignities?
Hadst thou no place to spit thy venom out,
But on the person of young Albanact?
I, that ere while did scare mine enemies,
And drove them almost to a shameful flight,
I, that ere while full lion-like did fare
Amongst the dangers of the thick thronged pikes,
Must now depart most lamentably slain
By Humber's treacheries and fortune's spites.
Cursed be her charms, damned be her cursed charms
That doth delude the wayward hearts of men,
Of men that trust unto her fickle wheel,
Which never leaveth turning upside down.
O gods, O heavens, allot me but the place
Where I may find her hateful mansion!
I'll pass the Alps to watery Meroe,
Where fiery Phoebus in his chariot,
The wheels whereof are decked with Emeralds,
Casts such a heat, yea such a scorching heat,
And spoileth Flora of her checquered grass;
I'll overrun the mountain Caucasus,
Where fell Chimaera in her triple shape
Rolleth hot flames from out her monstrous paunch,
Searing the beasts with issue of her gorge;
I'll pass the frozen Zone where icy flakes,
Stopping the passage of the fleeting ships,
Do lie like mountains in the congealed sea:
Where if I find that hateful house of hers,
I'll pull the pickle wheel from out her hands,
And tie her self in everlasting bands.
But all in vain I breath these threatenings;
The day is lost, the Huns are conquerors,
Debon is slain, my men are done to death,
The currents swift swim violently with blood

And last, O that this last night so long last,
My self with wounds past all recovery
Must leave my crown for Humber to possess.

STRUMBO.

Lord have mercy upon us, masters, I think this is a holy day; every man lies sleeping in the fields, but, God knows, full sore against their wills.

THRASIMACHUS.
Fly, noble Albanact, and save thy self.
The Scithians follow with great celerity,
And there's no way but flight, or speedy death;
Fly, noble Albanact, and save thy self.

[Exit Thrasimachus. Sound the alarm.]

ALBA.
Nay, let them fly that fear to die the death,
That tremble at the name of fatal mors.
Never shall proud Humber boast or brag himself
That he hath put young Albanact to flight;
And least he should triumph at my decay,
This sword shall reave his master of his life,
That oft hath saved his master's doubtful life:
But, oh, my brethren, if you care for me,
Revenge my death upon his traitorous head.

Et vos queis domus est nigrantis regia ditis,
Qui regitis rigido stigios moderamine lucos:
Nox coeci regina poli, furialis Erinnis,
Diique deaeque omnes, Albanum tollite regem,
Tollite flumineis undis rigidaque palude.
Nune me fata vocant, loc condam pectore ferrum.

[Thrusts himself through. Enter Trompart.]

TROMPART.
O, what hath he done? his nose bleeds.
But, oh, I smell a fox:

Look where my master lies. Master, master.

STRUMBO.
Let me alone, I tell thee, for I am dead.

TROMPART.
Yet one word, good master.

STRUMBO.
I will not speak, for I am dead, I tell thee.

TROMPART.

And is my master dead? O sticks and stones, brickbats and bones, and is my master dead? O you cockatrices and you bablatrices, that in the woods dwell: You briers and brambles, you cook's shops and shambles, come howl and yell. With howling & screeking, with wailing and weeping, come you to lament, O Colliers of Croyden, and rustics of Royden, and fishers of Kent; For Strumbo the cobbler, the fine merry cobbler of Cathnes town: At this same stour, at this very hour, lies dead on the ground. O master, thieves, thieves, thieves.

STRUMBO.

Where be they? cox me tunny, bobekin! let me be rising. Be gone; we shall be robbed by and by.

[Exeunt.]

ACT II. SCENE VI. The camp of the Huns.

[Enter Humber, Hubba, Segar, Thrassier, Estrild, and the soldiers.]

HUMBER.
Thus from the dreadful shocks of furious Mars,
Thundering alarms, and Rhamnusias' drum,
We are retired with joyful victory.
The slaughtered Troyans, squeltring in their blood,

Infect the air with their carcasses,
And are a prey for every ravenous bird.

ESTRILD.
So perish they that are our enemies!
So perish they that love not Humber's weal,
And mighty Jove, commander of the world,
Protect my love from all false treacheries.

HUMBER.
Thanks, lovely Estrild, solace to my soul.
But, valiant Hubba, for thy chivalry,
Declared against the men of Albany,
Lo, here a flowering garland wreathed of bay,
As a reward for thy forward mind.

[Set it on his head.]

HUBBA.
This unexpected honor, noble sire,
Will prick my courage unto braver deeds,
And cause me to attempt such hard exploits,
That all the world shall sound of Hubba's name.

HUMBER.
And now, brave soldiers, for this good success,
Carouse whole cups of Amazonian wine,
Sweeter than nectar or Ambrosia,
And cast away the clods of cursed care,
With goblets crowned with Semeleius' gifts.
Now let us march to Abis' silver streams,
That clearly glide along the Champaign fields,
And moist the grassy meads with humid drops.
Sound drums & trumpets, sound up cheerfully,
Sith we return with joy and victory.

[Exeunt.]

ACT III. PROLOGUE.

[Enter Ate as before. The dumb show. A Crocodile sitting on a river's rank, and a little Snake stinging it. Then let both of them fall into the water.]

ATE.
Scelera in authorem cadunt.
High on a bank by Nilus' boistrous streams,
Fearfully sat the Aegiptian Crocodile,
Dreadfully grinding in her sharp long teeth
The broken bowels of a silly fish.
His back was armed against the dint of spear,
With shields of brass that shined like burnished gold;
And as he stretched forth his cruel paws,
A subtle Adder, creeping closely near,
Thrusting his forked sting into his claws,
Privily shed his poison through his bones;
Which made him swell, that there his bowels burst,
That did so much in his own greatness trust.
So Humber, having conquered Albanact,
Doth yield his glory unto Locrine's sword.
Mark what ensues and you may easily see,
That all our life is but a Tragedy.

ACT III. SCENE I. Troynouant. An apartment in the Royal Palace.

[Enter Locrine, Gwendoline, Corineius, Assaracus,
Thrasimachus, Camber.]

LOCRINE.
And is this true? Is Albanactus slain?
Hath cursed Humber, with his straggling host,
With that his army made of mungrel curs,
Brought our redoubted brother to his end?
O that I had the Thracian Orpheus' harp,

For to awake out of the infernal shade
Those ugly devils of black Erebus,
That might torment the damned traitor's soul!
O that I had Amphion's instrument,
To quicken with his vital notes and tunes
The flinty joints of every stony rock,
By which the Scithians might be punished!
For, by the lightening of almighty Jove,
The Hun shall die, had he ten thousand lives:
And would to God he had ten thousand lives,
That I might with the armstrong Hercules
Crop off so vile an Hydra's hissing heads!
But say me, cousin, for I long to hear,
How Albanact came by untimely death.

THRASIMACHUS.
After the traitrous host of Scithians
Entered the field with martial equipage,
Young Albanact, impatient of delay,
Led forth his army gainst the straggling mates,
Whose multitude did daunt our soldiers' minds.
Yet nothing could dismay the forward prince,
But with a courage most heroical,
Like to a lion mongst a flock of lambs,
Made havoc of the faintheart fugitives,
Hewing a passage through them with his sword.
Yea, we had almost given them the repulse,
When suddenly, from out the silent wood,
Hubba, with twenty thousand soldiers,
Cowardly came upon our weakened backs,
And murthered all with fatal massacre.
Amongst the which old Debon, martial knight,
With many wounds was brought unto the death,
And Albanact, oppressed with multitude,
Whilst valiantly he felled his enemies,
Yielded his life and honour to the dust.
He being dead, the soldiers fled amain,
And I alone escaped them by flight,
To bring you tidings of these accidents.

LOCRINE.
Not aged Priam, King of stately Troy,
Grand Emperor of barbarous Asia,
When he beheld his noble minded sons
Slain traitorously by all the Mermidons,
Lamented more than I for Albanact.

GWENDOLINE.
Not Hecuba, the queen of Ilium
When she beheld the town of Pergamus,
Her palace, burnst with all devouring flames,
Her fifty sons and daughters fresh of hue
Murthered by wicked Pirrhus' bloody sword,
Shed such sad tears as I for Albanact.

CAMBER.
The grief of Niobe, fair Athen's queen,
For her seven sons, magnanimous in field,
For her seven daughters, fairer than the fairest,
Is not to be compared with my laments.

CORINEIUS.
In vain you sorrow for the slaughtered prince,
In vain you sorrow for his overthrow;
He loves not most that doth lament the most,
But he that seeks to venge the injury.
Think you to quell the enemy's warlike train
With childish sobs and womanish laments?
Unsheath your swords, unsheath your conquering swords,
And seek revenge, the comfort for this sore.
In Cornwall, where I hold my regiment,
Even just ten thousand valiant men at arms
Hath Corineius ready at command:
All these and more, if need shall more require,
Hath Corineius ready at command.

CAMBER.
And in the fields of martial Cambria,
Close by the boistrous Iscan's silver streams,

Where lightfoot fairies skip from bank to bank,
Full twenty thousand brave courageous knights,
Well exercised in feats of chivalry,
In manly manner most invincible,
Young Camber hath with gold and victual:
All these and more, if need shall more require,
I offer up to venge my brother's death.

LOCRINE.
Thanks, loving uncle, and good brother, too;
For this revenge, for this sweet word, revenge
Must ease and cease my wrongful injuries.
And by the sword of bloody Mars, I swear,
Ne'er shall sweet quiet enter this my front,
Till I be venged on his traitorous head
That slew my noble brother Albanact.
Sound drums and trumpets; muster up the camp.
For we will straight march to Albania.

[Exeunt.]

ACT III. SCENE II. The banks of the river, afterward the Humber.

[Enter Humber, Estrild, Hubba, Trussier, and the soldiers.]

HUMBER.
Thus are we come, victorious conquerors,
Unto the flowing current's silver streams,
Which, in memorial of our victory,
Shall be agnominated by our name,
And talked of by our posterity:
For sure I hope before the golden sun
Posteth his horses to fair Thetis' plains,
To see the water turned into blood,
And change his bluish hue to rueful red,

By reason of the fatal massacre
Which shall be made upon the virent plains.

[Enter the ghost of Albanact.]

GHOST.
See how the traitor doth presage his harm,
See how he glories at his own decay,
See how he triumphs at his proper loss;
O fortune wild, unstable, fickle, frail!

HUMBER.
Me thinks I see both armies in the field:
The broken lances climb the crystal skies;
Some headless lie, some breathless on the ground,
And every place is strewed with carcasses.
Behold! the grass hath lost his pleasant green,
The sweetest sight that ever might be see.

GHOST.
Aye, traitorous Humber, thou shalt find it so.
Yea, to thy cost thou shalt the same behold,
With anguish, sorrow, and with sad laments.
The grassy plains, that now do please thine eyes,
Shall ere the night be coloured all with blood;
The shady groves which now inclose thy camp
And yield sweet savours to thy damned corps,
Shall ere the night be figured all with blood:
The profound stream, that passeth by thy tents,
And with his moisture serveth all thy camp,
Shall ere the night converted be to blood,—
Yea, with the blood of those thy straggling boys;
For now revenge shall ease my lingering grief,
And now revenge shall glut my longing soul.

HUBBA.
Let come what will, I mean to bear it out,
And either live with glorious victory,
Or die with fame renowned for chivalry.

He is not worthy of the honey comb,
That shuns the hives because the bees have stings:
That likes me best that is not got with ease,
Which thousand dangers do accompany;
For nothing can dismay our regal mind,
Which aims at nothing but a golden crown,
The only upshot of mine enterprises.
Were they enchanted in grim Pluto's court,
And kept for treasure mongst his hellish crew,
I would either quell the triple Cerberus
And all the army of his hateful hags,
Or roll the stone with wretched Sisiphos.

HUMBER.
Right martial be thy thoughts my noble son,
And all thy words savour of chivalry.—

[Enter Segar.]

But warlike Segar, what strange accidents
Makes you to leave the warding of the camp.

SEGAR.
To arms, my Lord, to honourable arms!
Take helm and targe in hand; the Brittains come,
With greater multitude than erst the Greeks
Brought to the ports of Phrygian Tenidos.

HUMBER.
But what saith Segar to these accidents?
What counsel gives he in extremities?

SEGAR.
Why this, my Lord, experience teacheth us:
That resolution is a sole help at need.
And this, my Lord, our honour teacheth us:
That we be bold in every enterprise.
Then since there is no way but fight or die,
Be resolute, my Lord, for victory.

HUMBER.
And resolute, Segar, I mean to be.
Perhaps some blissful star will favour us,
And comfort bring to our perplexed state.
Come, let us in and fortify our camp,
So to withstand their strong invasion.

[Exeunt.]

ACT III. SCENE III. Before the hut of a peasant.

[Enter Strumbo, Trompart, Oliver, and his son
William following them.]

STRUMBO.

Nay, neighbour Oliver, if you be so what, come, prepare your self. You shall find two as stout fellows of us, as any in all the North.

OLIVER.

No, by my dorth, neighbor Strumbo. Ich zee dat you are a man of small zideration, dat will zeek to injure your old vriends, one of your vamiliar guests; and derefore, zeeing your pinion is to deal withouten reazon, ich and my zon William will take dat course, dat shall be fardest vrom reason. How zay you, will you have my daughter or no?

STRUMBO.

A very hard question, neighbour, but I will solve it as I may. What reason have you to demand it of me?

WILLIAM.

Marry, sir, what reason had you, when my sister was in the barn, to tumble her upon the hay, and to fish her belly.

STRUMBO.
Mass, thou saist true. Well, but would you have me
marry her therefore? No, I scorn her, and you. Aye,
I scorn you all.

OLIVER.
You will not have her then?

STRUMBO.
No, as I am a true gentleman.

WILLIAM.
Then will we school you, ere you and we part hence.

[They fight. Enter Margery and snatch the staff out of her brother's hand, as he is fighting.]

STRUMBO.
Aye, you come in pudding time, or else I had dressed them.

MARGERY.

You, master saucebox, lobcock, cockscomb, you slopsauce, lickfingers, will you not hear?

STRUMBO.
Who speak you to? me?

MARGERY.

Aye, sir, to you, John lackhonesty, little wit. Is it you that will have none of me?

STRUMBO.

No, by my troth, mistress nicebice. How fine you can nickname me. I think you were brought up in the university of bridewell; you have your rhetoric so ready at your tongue's end, as if you were never well warned when your were young.

MARGERY.

Why then, goodman cods-head, if you will have none of me, farewell.

STRUMBO.
If you be so plain, mistress drigle dragle, fare you well.

MARGERY.

Nay, master Strumbo, ere you go from hence, we must have more words. You will have none of me?

[They both fight.]

STRUMBO.
Oh my head, my head! leave, leave, leave! I will, I will,
I will!

MARGERY.
Upon that condition I let thee alone.

OLIVER.

How now, master Strumbo? hath my daughter taught you a new lesson?

STRUMBO.

Aye, but hear you, goodman Oliver; it will not be for my ease to have my head broken every day; therefore remedy this and we shall agree.

OLIVER.

Well, zon, well—for you are my zon now—all shall be remedied. Daughter, be friends with him.

[Shake hands. Exeunt Oliver, William, and Margery.]

STRUMBO.

You are a sweet nut! The devil crack you. Masters, I think it be my luck; my first wife was a loving quiet wench, but this, I think, would weary the devil. I would she might be burnt as my other wife was. If not, I must run to the halter for help. O codpiece, thou hast done thy master! this it is to be meddling with warm plackets.

[Exeunt.]

ACT III. SCENE IV. The camp of Locrine.

[Enter Locrine, Camber, Corineius, Thrasimachus,
Assarachus.]

LOCRINE.
Now am I guarded with an host of men,
Whose haughty courage is invincible:
Now am I hemmed with troops of soldiers,
Such as might force Bellona to retire,
And make her tremble at their puissance:
Now sit I like the mighty god of war,
When, armed with his coat of Adament,
Mounted his chariot drawn with mighty bulls,
He drove the Argives over Xanthus' streams:
Now, cursed Humber, doth thy end draw nigh.
Down goes the glory of thy victories,
And all the fame, and all thy high renown
Shall in a moment yield to Locrine's sword.
Thy bragging banners crossed with argent streams,
The ornaments of thy pavilions,
Shall all be capituated with this hand,
And thou thy self, at Albanactus' tomb,
Shalt offered be in satisfaction
Of all the wrongs thou didst him when he lived.—
But canst thou tell me, brave Thrasimachus,
How far we are distant from Humber's camp?

THRASIMACHUS.
My Lord, within yon foul accursed grove,
That bears the tokens of our overthrow,
This Humber hath intrenched his damned camp.
March on, my Lord, because I long to see

The treacherous Scithians squeltring in their gore.

LOCRINE.
Sweet fortune, favour Locrine with a smile,
That I may venge my noble brother's death;
And in the midst of stately Troinouant,
I'll build a temple to thy deity
Of perfect marble and of Iacinthe stones,
That it shall pass the high Pyramids,
Which with their top surmount the firmament.

CAMBER.
The armstrong offspring of the doubled night,
Stout Hercules, Alemena's mighty son,
That tamed the monsters of the threefold world,
And rid the oppressed from the tyrant's yokes,
Did never show such valiantness in fight,
As I will now for noble Albanact.

CORINEIUS.
Full four score years hath Corineius lived,
Sometime in war, sometime in quiet peace,
And yet I feel my self to be as strong
As erst I was in summer of mine age,
Able to toss this great unwieldy club
Which hath been painted with my foemen's brains;
And with this club I'll break the strong array
Of Humber and his straggling soldiers,
Or lose my life amongst the thickest prease,
And die with honour in my latest days.
Yet ere I die they all shall understand
What force lies in stout Corineius' hand.

THRASIMACHUS.
And if Thrasimachus detract the fight,
Either for weakness or for cowardice,
Let him not boast that Brutus was his eame,
Or that brave Corineius was his sire.

LOCRINE.
Then courage, soldiers, first for your safety,
Next for your peace, last for your victory.

[Exeunt.]

ACT III. SCENE V. The field of battle.

[Sound the alarm. Enter Hubba and Segar at one door, and Corineius at the other.]

CORINEIUS.
Art thou that Humber, prince of fugitives,
That by thy treason slewst young Albanact?

HUBBA.
I am his son that slew young Albanact,
And if thou take not heed, proud Phrigian,
I'll send thy soul unto the Stigian lake,
There to complain of Humber's injuries.

CORINEIUS.
You triumph, sir, before the victory,
For Corineius is not so soon slain.
But, cursed Scithians, you shall rue the day
That ere you came into Albania.
So perish thy that envy Brittain's wealth,
So let them die with endless infamy;
And he that seeks his sovereign's overthrow,
Would this my club might aggravate his woe.

[Strikes them both down with his club.]

ACT III. SCENE VI. Another part of the field.

[Enter Humber.]

HUMBER.
Where may I find some desert wilderness,
Where I may breath out curse as I would,
And scare the earth with my condemning voice;
Where every echoes repercussion
May help me to bewail mine overthrow,
And aide me in my sorrowful laments?
Where may I find some hollow uncoth rock,
Where I may damn, condemn, and ban my fill
The heavens, the hell, the earth, the air, the fire,
And utter curses to the concave sky,
Which may infect the airy regions,
And light upon the Brittain Locrine's head?
You ugly sprites that in Cocitus mourn,
And gnash your teeth with dolorous laments:
You fearful dogs that in black Laethe howl,
And scare the ghosts with your wide open throats:
You ugly ghosts that, flying from these dogs,
Do plunge your selves in Puryflegiton:
Come, all of you, and with your shriking notes
Accompany the Brittains' conquering host.
Come, fierce Erinnis, horrible with snakes;
Come, ugly Furies, armed with your whips;
You threefold judges of black Tartarus,
And all the army of you hellish fiends,
With new found torments rack proud Locrine's bones!
O gods, and stars! damned be the gods & stars
That did not drown me in fair Thetis' plains!
Curst be the sea, that with outrageous waves,
With surging billows did not rive my ships
Against the rocks of high Cerannia,
Or swallow me into her watery gulf!
Would God we had arrived upon the shore
Where Poliphemus and the Cyclops dwell,
Or where the bloody Anthrophagie
With greedy jaws devours the wandering wights!

[Enter the ghost of Albanact.]

But why comes Albanact's bloody ghost,
To bring a corsive to our miseries?
Is't not enough to suffer shameful flight,
But we must be tormented now with ghosts,
With apparitions fearful to behold?

GHOST.
Revenge! revenge for blood!

HUMBER.
So nought will satisfy your wandering ghost
But dire revenge, nothing but Humber's fall,
Because he conquered you in Albany.
Now, by my soul, Humber would be condemned
To Tantal's hunger or Ixion's wheel,
Or to the vulture of Prometheus,
Rather than that this murther were undone.
When as I die I'll drag thy cursed ghost
Through all the rivers of foul Erebus,
Through burning sulphur of the Limbo-lake,
To allay the burning fury of that heat
That rageth in mine everlasting soul.

GHOST.
Vindicta, vindicta.

[Exeunt.]

ACT IV. PROLOGUE.

[Enter Ate as before. Then let there follow Omphale, daughter to the king of Lydia, having a club in her hand, and a lion's skin on her back, Hercules following with a distaff. Then let Omphale turn about, and taking off her pantole, strike Hercules on the head; then let them depart, Ate remaining, saying:]

Quem non Argolici mandota severa Tyranni,
Non potuit Juno vincere, vicit amor.

Stout Hercules, the mirror of the world,
Son to Alemena and great Jupiter,
After so many conquests won in field,
After so many monsters quelled by force,
Yielded his valiant heart to Omphale,
A fearful woman void of manly strength.
She took the club, and wear the lion's skin;
He took the wheel, and maidenly gan spin.
So martial Locrine, cheered with victory,
Falleth in love with Humber's concubine,
And so forgetteth peerless Gwendoline.
His uncle Corineius storms at this,
And forceth Locrine for his grace to sue.
Lo here the sum, the process doth ensue.

[Exit.]

ACT IV. SCENE I. The camp of Locrine.

[Enter Locrine, Camber, Corineius, Assaracus,
Thrasimachus, and the soldiers.]

LOCRINE.
Thus from the furty of Bellona's broils,
With sound of drum and trumpets' melody,
The Brittain king returns triumphantly.
The Scithians slain with great occasion
Do equalize the grass in multitude,
And with their blood have stained the streaming brooks,
Offering their bodies and their dearest blood
As sacrifice to Albanactus' ghost.
Now, cursed Humber, hast thou paid thy due,
For thy deceits and crafty treacheries,
For all thy guiles and damned strategems,

With loss of life, and everduring shame.
Where are thy horses trapped with burnished gold,
Thy trampling coursers ruled with foaming bits?
Where are thy soldiers, strong and numberless,
Thy valiant captains and thy noble peers?
Even as the country clowns with sharpest scythes
Do mow the withered grass from off the earth,
Or as the ploughman with his piercing share
Renteth the bowels of the fertile fields,
And rippeth up the roots with razours keen:
So Locrine with his mighty curtleaxe
Hath cropped off the heads of all thy Huns;
So Locrine's peers have daunted all thy peers,
And drove thin host unto confusion,
That thou mayest suffer penance for thy fault,
And die for murdering valiant Albanact.

CORINEIUS.
And thus, yea thus, shall all the rest be served
That seek to enter Albion gainst our wills.
If the brave nation of the Troglodites,
If all the coalblack Aethiopians,
If all the forces of the Amazons,
If all the hosts of the Barbarian lands,
Should dare to enter this our little world,
Soon should they rue their overbold attempts,
That after us our progeny may say,
There lie the beasts that sought to usurp our land.

LOCRINE.
Aye, they are beasts that seek to usurp our land,
And like to brutish beasts they shall be served.
For mighty Jove, the supreme king of heaven,
That guides the concourse of the Meteors,
And rules the motion of the azure sky,
Fights always for the Brittains' safety.—
But stay! me thinks I hear some shriking noise,
That draweth near to our pavilion.

[Enter the soldiers leading in Estrild.]

ESTRILD.
What prince so ere, adorned with golden crown,
Doth sway the regal scepter in his hand,
And thinks no chance can ever throw him down,
Or that his state shall everlasting stand:
Let him behold poor Estrild in this plight,
The perfect platform of a troubled wight.
Once was I guarded with manortial bands,
Compassed with princes of the noble blood;
Now am I fallen into my foemen's hands,
And with my death must pacific their mood.
O life, the harbour of calamities!
O death, the haven of all miseries!
I could compare my sorrows to thy woe,
Thou wretched queen of wretched Pergamus,
But that thou viewdst thy enemies' overthrow.
Night to the rock of high Caphareus,
Thou sawest their death, and then departedst thence;
I must abide the victor's insolence.
The golds that pitied thy continual grief
Transformed thy corps, and with thy corps thy care;
Poor Estrild lives despairing of relief,
For friends in trouble are but few and rare.
What, said I few? Aye! few or none at all,
For cruel death made havoc of them all.
Thrice happy they whose fortune was so good,
To end their lives, and with their lives their woes!
Thrice hapless I, whom fortune so withstood,
That cruelly she gave me to my foes!
Oh, soldiers, is there any misery,
To be compared to fortune's treachery.

LOCRINE.
Camber, this same should be the Scithian queen.

CAMBER.
So may we judge by her lamenting words.

LOCRINE.
So fair a dame mine eyes did never see;
With floods of woe she seems overwhelmed to be.

CAMBER.
O Locrine, hath she not a cause for to be sad?

LOCRINE.

[At one side of the stage.]

If she have cause to weep for Humber's death,
And shed salt tears for her overthrow,
Locrine may well bewail his proper grief,
Locrine may move his own peculiar woe.
He, being conquered, died a speedy death,
And felt not long his lamentable smart:
I, being conqueror, live a lingering life,
And feel the force of Cupid's sudden stroke.
I gave him cause to die a speedy death,
He left me cause to wish a speedy death.
Oh that sweet face painted with nature's dye,
Those roseall cheeks mixed with a snowy white,
That decent neck surpassing ivory,
Those comely breasts which Venus well might spite,
Are like to snares which wily fowlers wrought,
Wherein my yielding heart is prisoner caught.
The golden tresses of her dainty hair,
Which shine like rubies glittering with the sun,
Have so entrapt poor Locrine's lovesick heart,
That from the same no way it can be won.
How true is that which oft I heard declared,
One dram of joy, must have a pound of care.

ESTRILD.
Hard is their fall who, from a golden crown,
Are cast into a sea of wretchedness.

LOCRINE.

Hard is their thrall who by Cupid's frown
Are wrapt in waves of endless carefulness.

ESTRILD.
Oh kingdom, object to all miseries.

LOCRINE.
Oh love, the extremest of all extremities.

[Let him go into his chair.]

FIRST SOLDIER.
My lord, in ransacking the Scithian tents,
I found this Lady, and to manifest
That earnest zeal I bear unto your grace,
I here present her to your majesty.

SECOND SOLDIER.
He lies, my Lord; I found the Lady first,
And here present her to your majesty.

FIRST SOLDIER.
Presumptuous villain, wilt thou take my prize?

SECOND SOLDIER.
Nay, rather thou deprivest me of my right.

FIRST SOLDIER.
Resign thy title, cative, unto me,
Or with my sword I'll pierce thy coward's loins.

SECOND SOLDIER.
Soft words, good sir, tis not enough to speak;
A barking dog doth seldom strangers bite.

LOCRINE.
Unreverent villains, strive you in our sight?
Take them hence, Jailor, to the dungeon;
There let them lie and try their quarrel out.
But thou, fair princess, be no whit dismayed,

But rather joy that Locrine favours thee.

ESTRILD.
How can he favor me that slew my spouse?

LOCRINE.
The chance of war, my love, took him from thee.

ESTRILD.
But Locrine was the causer of his death.

LOCRINE.
He was an enemy to Locrine's state,
And slew my noble brother Albanact.

ESTRILD.
But he was linked to me in marriage bond,
And would you have me love his slaughterer?

LOCRINE.
Better to live, than not to live at all.

ESTRILD.
Better to die renowned for chastity,
Than live with shame and endless infamy.
What would the common sort report of me,
If I forget my love, and cleave to thee?

LOCRINE.
Kings need not fear the vulgar sentences.

ESTRILD.
But Ladies must regard their honest name.

LOCRINE.
Is it a shame to live in marriage bonds?

ESTRILD.
No, but to be a strumpet to a king.

LOCRINE.
If thou wilt yield to Locrine's burning love,
Thou shalt be queen of fair Albania.

ESTRILD.
But Gwendoline will undermine my state.

LOCRINE.
Upon mine honor, thou shalt have no harm.

ESTRILD.
Then lo, brave Locrine, Estrild yields to thee;
And by the gods, whom thou doest invocate,
By the dead ghost of thy deceased sire,
By thy right hand and by thy burning love,
Take pity on poor Estrild's wretched thrall.

CORINEIUS.
Hath Locrine then forgot his Gwendoline,
That thus he courts the Scithian's paramour?
What, are the words of Brute so soon forgot?
Are my deserts so quickly out of mind?
Have I been faithful to thy sire now dead,
Have I protected thee from Humber's hands,
And doest thou quite me with ungratitude?
Is this the guerdon for my grievous wounds,
Is this the honour for my labor's past?
Now, by my sword, Locrine, I swear to thee,
This injury of thine shall be repaid.

LOCRINE.
Uncle, scorn you your royal sovereign,
As if we stood for cyphers in the court?
Upbraid you me with those your benefits?
Why, it was a subject's duty so to do.
What you have done for our deceased sire,
We know, and all know you have your reward.

CORINEIUS.

Avaunt, proud princox; bravest thou me withall?
Assure thy self, though thou be Emperor,
Thou ne'er shalt carry this unpunished.

CAMBER.
Pardon my brother, noble Corineius;
Pardon this once and it shall be amended.

ASSARACHUS.
Cousin, remember Brutus' latest words,
How he desired you to cherish them;
Let not this fault so much incense your mind,
Which is not yet passed all remedy.

CORINEIUS.
Then, Locrine, lo, I reconcile my self;
But as thou lovest thy life, so love thy wife.
But if thou violate those promises,
Blood and revenge shall light upon thy head.
Come, let us back to stately Troinouant,
Where all these matters shall be settled.

LOCRINE.

[To himself.]

Millions of devils wait upon thy soul!
Legions of spirits vex thy impious ghost!
Ten thousand torments rack thy cursed bones!
Let every thing that hath the use of breath
Be instruments and workers of thy death!

[Exeunt.]

ACT IV. SCENE II. A forest.

[Enter Humber alone, his hair hanging over his shoulders, his arms all bloody, and a dart in one hand.]

HUMBER.
What basilisk was hatched in this place,
Where every thing consumed is to nought?
What fearful Fury haunts these cursed groves,
Where not a root is left for Humber's meat?
Hath fell Alecto, with invenomed blasts,
Breathed forth poison in these tender plains?
Hath triple Cerberus, with contagious foam,
Sowed Aconitum mongst these withered herbs?
Hath dreadful Fames with her charming rods
Brought barrenness on every fruitful tree?
What, not a root, no fruit, no beast, no bird,
To nourish Humber in this wilderness?
What would you more, you fiends of Erebus?
My very entrails burn for want of drink,
My bowels cry, Humber, give us some meat.
But wretched Humber can give you no meat;
These foul accursed groves afford no meat,
This fruitless soil, this ground, brings forth no meat.
The gods, hard hearted gods, yield me no meat.
Then how can Humber give you any meat?

[Enter Strumbo with a pitchfork, and a scotch-cap, saying:]

STRUMBO.

How do you, masters, how do you? how have you scaped hanging this long time? Yfaith, I have scaped many a scouring this year; but I thank God I have past them all with a good couragio, couragio, & my wife & I are in great love and charity now, I thank my manhood & my strength. For I will tell you, masters: upon a certain day at night I came home, to say the very truth, with my stomach full of wine, and ran up into the chamber where my wife soberly sat rocking my little baby, leaning her back against the bed, singing lullaby. Now, when she saw me come with my nose foremost, thinking that I had been drunk, as I was indeed, she snatched up a faggot stick in her hand, and came furiously marching towards me with a big face, as though she would have eaten me at a bit; thundering out these words unto me: Thou drunken knave, where hast thou been so long? I shall teach thee how to beknight me an other time; and so she began to play knaves' trumps. Now, although I trembled, fearing she would set her ten commandments in my face, I ran within her, and taking her lustily by the middle, I carried her valiantly to the bed, and flinging her upon it, flung my self upon her; and there I delighted her so with the sport I made, that ever after she would call me sweet husband, and so banished brawling for ever. And to see the good will of the wench! she bought with her portion a yard of land, and by that I am now become one of the richest men in our parish. Well, masters, what's a clock? is it now breakfast time; you shall see what meat I have here for my breakfast.

[Let him sit down and pull out his vittails.]

HUMBER.
Was ever land so fruitless as this land?
Was ever grove so graceless as this grove?
Was ever soil so barren as this soil?
Oh no: the land where hungry Fames dwelt
May no wise equalize this cursed land;
No, even the climate of the torrid zone
Brings forth more fruit than this accursed grove.
Ne'er came sweet Ceres, ne'er came Venus here;
Triptolemus, the god of husbandmen,
Ne'er sowed his seed in this foul wilderness.
The hunger-bitten dogs of Acheron,
Chased from the ninefold Puriflegiton,
Have set their footsteps in this damned ground.
The iron hearted Furies, armed with snakes,
Scattered huge Hydras over all the plains,
Which have consumed the grass, the herbs, the trees;
Which have drunk up the flowing water springs.

[Strumbo, hearing his voice, shall start up and put meat in his pocket, seeking to hide himself.]

Thou great commander of the starry sky,
That guidest the life of every mortal wight,
From the inclosures of the fleeting clouds
Fain down some food, or else I faint and die:

Pour down some drink, or else I faint and die.
O Jupiter, hast thou sent Mercury
In clownish shape to minister some food?
Some meat! some meat! some meat!

STRUMBO.
O, alas, sir, ye are deceived. I am not Mercury;
I am Strumbo.

HUMBER.
Give me some meat, villain; give me some meat,
Or gainst this rock I'll dash thy cursed brains,
And rent thy bowels with my bloody hands.
Give me some meat, villain; give me some meat!

STRUMBO.

By the faith of my body, good fellow, I had rather give an whole oxe than that thou shouldst serve me in that sort. Dash out my brains? O horrible! terrible! I think I have a quarry of stones in my pocket.

[Let him make as though he would give him some,
and as he putteth out his hand, enter the ghost of
Albanact, and strike him on the hand: and so
Strumbo runs out, Humber following him. Exit.]

ALBANACT'S GHOST.
Lo, here the gift of fell ambition,
Of usurpation and of treachery!
Lo, here the harms that wait upon all those
That do intrude themselves in other's lands,
Which are not under their dominion.

[Exit.]

ACT IV. SCENE III. A chamber in the Royal Palace.

[Enter Locrine alone.]

LOCRINE.
Seven years hath aged Corineius lived,
To Locrine's grief, and fair Estrild's woe,
And seven years more he hopeth yet to live.
Oh supreme Jove, annihilate this thought!
Should he enjoy the air's fruition?
Should he enjoy the benefit of life?
Should he contemplate the radiant sun,
That makes my life equal to dreadful death?
Venus, convey this monster fro the earth,
That disobeyeth thus thy sacred hests!
Cupid, convey this monster to dark hell,
That disanulls thy mother's sugared laws!
Mars, with thy target all beset with flames,
With murthering blade bereave him of his life,
That hindreth Locrine in his sweetest joys!
And yet, for all his diligent aspect,
His wrathful eyes, piercing like Linces' eyes,
Well have I overmatched his subtilty.
Nigh Deurolitum, by the pleasant Lee,
Where brackish Thamis slides with silver streams,
Making a breach into the grassy downs,
A curious arch, of costly marble fraught,
Hath Locrine framed underneath the ground;
The walls whereof, garnished with diamonds,
With ophirs, rubies, glistering emeralds,
And interlast with sun-bright carbuncles,
Lighten the room with artificial day:
And from the Lee with water-flowing pipes
The moisture is derived into this arch,
Where I have placed fair Estrild secretly.
Thither eftsoons, accompanied with my page,
I covertly visit my heart's desire,
Without suspicion of the meanest eye;
For love aboundeth still with policy:
And thither still means Locrine to repair,
Till Atropos cut off mine uncle's life.

[Exit.]

ACT IV. SCENE IV. The entrance of a cave, near which runs the river, afterward the Humber.]

[Enter Humber alone, saying:]

HUMBER.
O vita misero longa, foelici brevis,
Eheu! malorum fames extremum malum.

Long have I lived in this desert cave,
With eating haws and miserable roots,
Devouring leaves and beastly excrements.
Caves were my beds, and stones my pillow-bears,
Fear was my sleep, and horror was my dream,
For still me thought, at every boisterous blast,
Now Locrine comes, now, Humber, thou must die:
So that for fear and hunger, Humber's mind
Can never rest, but always trembling stands,
O, what Danubius now may quench my thirst?
What Euphrates, what lightfoot Euripus,
May now allay the fury of that heat,
Which, raging in my entrails, eats me up?
You ghastly devils of the ninefold Styx,
You damned ghosts of joyless Acheron,
You mournful souls, vexed in Abyss' vaults,
You coalblack devils of Avernus' pond,
Come, with your fleshhooks rent my famished arms,
These arms that have sustained their master's life.
Come, with your razors rip my bowels up,
With your sharp fireforks crack my sterved bones:
Use me as you will, so Humber may not live.
Accursed gods, that rule the starry poles,
Accursed Jove, king of the cursed gods,
Cast down your lightning on poor Humber's head,

That I may leave this deathlike life of mine!
What, hear you not? and shall not Humber die?
Nay, I will die, though all the gods say nay!
And, gentle Aby, take my troubled corps,
Take it and keep it from all mortal eyes,
That none may say, when I have lost my breath,
The very floods conspired gainst Humber's death.

[Fling himself into the river.]

[Enter the ghost of Albanact.]

ALBANACT'S GHOST.
En coedem sequitur coedes, in coede quiesco.
Humber is dead! joy heavens! leap earth! dance trees!
Now mayest thou reach thy apples, Tantalus,
And with them feed thy hunger-bitten limbs!
Now, Sisiphus, leave tumbling of thy rock,
And rest thy restless bones upon the same!
Unbind Ixion, cruel Rhadamanth,
And lay proud Humber on the whirling wheel.
Back will I post to hell mouth Taenarus,
And pass Cocitus, to the Elysian fields,
And tell my father Brutus of these news.

[Exit.]

ACT V. PROLOGUE.

[Enter Ate as before. Jason, leading Creon's daughter. Medea, following, hath a garland in her hand, and putting it on Creon's daughter's head, setteth it on fire, and then, killing Jason and her, departeth.]

ATE.
Non tam Tinacriis exaestuat Aetna cavernis,
Laesae furtivo quam cor mulieris amore.

Medea, seeing Jason leave her love,
And choose the daughter of the Theban king,
Went to her devilish charms to work revenge;
And raising up the triple Hecate,
With all the rout of the condemned fiends,
Framed a garland by her magic skill,
With which she wrought Jason and Creons.
So Gwendoline, seeing her self misused,
And Humber's paramour possess her place,
Flies to the dukedom of Cornubia,
And with her brother, stout Thrasimachus,
Gathering a power of Cornish soldiers,
Gives battle to her husband and his host,
Nigh to the river of great Mertia.
The chances of this dismal massacre
That which insueth shortly will unfold.

[Exit.]

ACT V. SCENE I. A chamber in the Royal Palace.

[Enter Locrine, Camber, Assarachus, Thrasimachus.]

ASSARACHUS.
But tell me, cousin, died my brother so?
Now who is left to helpless Albion?
That as a pillar might uphold our state,
That might strike terror to our daring foes?
Now who is left to hapless Brittain,
That might defend her from the barbarous hands
Of those that still desire her ruinous fall,
And seek to work her downfall and decay?

CAMBER.
Aye, uncle, death is our common enemy,
And none but death can match our matchless power:
Witness the fall of Albioneus' crew,

Witness the fall of Humber and his Huns.
And this foul death hath now increased our woe,
By taking Corineius from this life,
And in his room leaving us worlds of care.

THRASIMACHUS.
But none may more bewail his mournful hearse,
Than I that am the issue of his loins.
Now foul befall that cursed Humber's throat,
That was the causer of his lingering wound.

LOCRINE.
Tears cannot raise him from the dead again.
But where's my Lady, mistress Gwendoline?

THRASIMACHUS.
In Cornwall, Locrine, is my sister now,
Providing for my father's funeral.

LOCRINE.
And let her there provide her mourning weeds
And mourn for ever her own widow-hood.
Ne'er shall she come within our palace gate,
To countercheck brave Locrine in his love.
Go, boy, to Devrolitum, down the Lee,
Unto the arch where lovely Estrild lies.
Bring her and Sabren straight unto the court;
She shall be queen in Gwendoline's room.
Let others wail for Corineius' death;
I mean not so to macerate my mind
For him that barred me from my heart's desire.

THRASIMACHUS.
Hath Locrine, then, forsook his Gwendoline?
Is Corineius' death so soon forgot?
If there be gods in heaven, as sure there be,
If there be fiends in hell, as needs there must,
They will revenge this thy notorious wrong,
And power their plagues upon thy cursed head.

LOCRINE.
What! prat'st thou, peasant, to thy sovereign?
Or art thou strooken in some extasy?
Doest thou not tremble at our royal looks?
Dost thou not quake, when mighty Locrine frowns?
Thou beardless boy, wer't not that Locrine scorns
To vex his mind with such a heartless child,
With the sharp point of this my battle-axe,
I would send thy soul to Puriflegiton.

THRASIMACHUS.
Though I be young and of a tender age,
Yet will I cope with Locrine when he dares.
My noble father with his conquering sword,
Slew the two giants, kings of Aquitaine.
Thrasimachus is not so degenerate
That he should fear and tremble at the looks
Or taunting words of a venerian squire.

LOCRINE.
Menacest thou thy royal sovereign,
Uncivil, not beseeming such as you?
Injurious traitor (for he is no less
That at defiance standeth with his king)
Leave these thy taunts, leave these thy bragging words,
Unless thou mean to leave thy wretched life.

THRASIMACHUS.
If princes stain their glorious dignity
With ugly spots of monstrous infamy,
They leese their former estimation,
And throw themselves into a hell of hate.

LOCRINE.
Wilt thou abuse my gentle patience,
As though thou didst our high displeasure scorn?
Proud boy, that thou mayest know thy prince is moved,
Yea, greatly moved at this thy swelling pride,
We banish thee for ever from our court.

THRASIMACHUS.
Then, losell Locrine, look unto thy self,
Thrasimachus will venge this injury.

[Exit.]

LOCRINE.
Farewell, proud boy, and learn to use thy tongue.

ASSARACHUS.
Alas, my Lord, you should have called to mind
The latest words that Brutus spake to you:
How he desired you, by the obedience
That children ought to bear unto the sire,
To love and favour Lady Gwendoline.
Consider this, that if the injury
Do move her mind, as certainly it will,
War and dissention follows speedily.
What though her power be not so great as yours?
Have you not seen a mighty elephant
Slain by the biting of a silly mouse?
Even so the chance of war inconstant is.

LOCRINE.
Peace, uncle, peace, and cease to talk hereof;
For he that seeks, by whispering this or that,
To trouble Locrine in his sweetest life,
Let him persuade himself to die the death.

[Enter the Page, with Estrild and Sabren.]

ESTRILD.
O, say me, Page, tell me, where is the king?
Wherefore doth he send for me to the court?
Is it to die? is it to end my life?
Say me, sweet boy, tell me and do not feign!

PAGE.

No, trust me, madame; if you will credit the little honesty that is yet left me, there is no such danger as you fear. But prepare your self; yonder's the king.

ESTRILD.
Then, Estrild, life thy dazzled spirits up,
And bless that blessed time, that day, that hour,
That warlike Locrine first did favour thee.
Peace to the king of Brittainy, my love!
Peace to all those that love and favour him!

LOCRINE.

[Taking her up.]

Doth Estrild fall with such submission
Before her servant, king of Albion?
Arise, fair Lady; leave this lowly cheer.
Life up those looks that cherish Locrine's heart,
That I may freely view that roseall face,
Which so intangled hath my lovesick breast.
Now to the court, where we will court it out,
And pass the night and day in Venus' sports.
Frolic, brave peers; be joyful with your king.

[Exeunt.]

ACT V. SCENE II. The camp of Gwendoline.

[Enter Gwendoline, Thrasimachus, Madan, and the soldiers.]

GWENDOLINE.
You gentle winds, that with your modest blasts
Pass through the circuit of the heavenly vault,
Enter the clouds unto the throne of Jove,
And there bear my prayers to his all hearing ears.
For Locrine hath forsaken Gwendoline,
And learnt to love proud Humber's concubine.
You happy sprites, that in the concave sky

With pleasant joy enjoy your sweetest love,
Shed forth those tears with me, which then you shed,
When first you would your ladies to your wills.
Those tears are fittest for my woeful case,
Since Locrine shuns my nothing pleasant face.
Blush heavens, blush sun, and hide thy shining beams;
Shadow thy radiant locks in gloomy clouds;
Deny thy cheerful light unto the world,
Where nothing reigns but falsehood and deceit.
What said I? falsehood? Aye, that filthy crime,
For Locrine hath forsaken Gwendoline.
Behold the heavens do wail for Gwendoline.
The shining sun doth blush for Gwendoline.
The liquid air doth weep for Gwendoline.
The very ground doth groan for Gwendoline.
Aye, they are milder than the Brittain king,
For he rejecteth luckless Gwendoline.

THRASIMACHUS.
Sister, complaints are bootless in this cause;
This open wrong must have an open plague,
This plague must be repaid with grievous war,
This war must finish with Locrine's death;
His death will soon extinguish our complaints.

GWENDOLINE.
O no, his death will more augment my woes.
He was my husband, brave Thrasimachus,
More dear to me than the apple of mine eye,
Nor can I find in heart to work his scathe.

THRASIMACHUS.
Madame, if not your proper injuries,
Nor my exile, can move you to revenge,
Think on our father Corineius' words;
His words to us stands always for a law.
Should Locrine live that caused my father's death?
Should Locrine live that now divorceth you?
The heavens, the earth, the air, the fire reclaims,

And then why should all we deny the same?

GWENDOLINE.
Then henceforth, farewell womanish complaints!
All childish pity henceforth, then, farewell!
But, cursed Locrine, look unto thy self,
For Nemesis, the mistress of revenge,
Sits armed at all points on our dismal blades;
And cursed Estrild, that inflamed his heart,
Shall, if I live, die a reproachful death.

MADAN.
Mother, though nature makes me to lament
My luckless father's froward lechery,
Yet, for he wrongs my Lady mother thus,
I, if I could, my self would work his death.

THRASIMACHUS.
See, madame, see, the desire of revenge
Is in the children of a tender age!
Forward, brave soldiers, into Mertia,
Where we shall brave the coward to his face.

[Exeunt.]

ACT V. SCENE III. The camp of Locrine.

[Enter Locrine, Estrild, Sabren, Assarachus, and the soldiers.]

LOCRINE.
Tell me, Assarachus, are the Cornish chuffes
In such great number come to Mertia?
And have they pitched there their petty host,
So close unto our royal mansion?

ASSARACHUS.
They are, my Lord, and mean incontinent

To bid defiance to your majesty.

LOCRINE.
It makes me laugh, to think that Gwendoline
Should have the heart to come in arms gainst me.

ESTRILD.
Alas, my Lord, the horse will run amain,
When as the spur doth gall him to the bone.
Jealousy, Locrine, hath a wicked sting.

LOCRINE.
Sayest thou so, Estrild, beauty's paragon?
Well, we will try her choler to the proof,
And make her know, Locrine can brook no braves.
March on, Assarachus; thou must lead the way,
And bring us to their proud pavilion.

[Exeunt.]

ACT V. SCENE IV. The field of battle.

[Enter the ghost of Corineius, with thunder and lightening.]

CORINEIUS' GHOST.
Behold, the circuit of the azure sky
Throws forth sad throbs and grievous suspires,
Prejudicating Locrine's overthrow.
The fire casteth forth sharp darts of flames,
The great foundation of the triple world
Trembleth and quaketh with a mighty noise,
Presaging bloody massacres at hand.
The wandering birds that flutter in the dark,
When hellish night, in cloudy chariot seated,
Casteth her mists on shady Tellus' face,
With sable mantles covering all the earth,
Now flies abroad amid the cheerful day,

Foretelling some unwonted misery.
The snarling curs of darkened Tartarus,
Sent from Avernus' ponds by Radamanth,
With howling ditties pester every wood.
The watery ladies and the lightfoot fawns,
And all the rabble of the woody Nymphs,
All trembling hide themselves in shady groves,
And shroud themselves in hideous hollow pits.
The boisterous Boreas thundreth forth revenge;
The stony rocks cry out on sharp revenge;
The thorny bush pronounceth dire revenge.

[Sound the alarm.]

Now, Corineius, stay and see revenge,
And feed thy soul with Locrine's overthrow.
Behold, they come; the trumpets call them forth;
The roaring drums summon the soldiers.
Lo, where their army glistereth on the plains!
Throw forth thy lightning, mighty Jupiter,
And power thy plagues on cursed Locrine's head.

[Stand aside.]

[Enter Locrine, Estrild, Assarachus, Sabren and their soldiers at one door: Thrasimachus, Gwendoline, Madan and their followers at an other.]

LOCRINE.
What, is the tiger started from his cave?
Is Gwendoline come from Cornubia,
That thus she braveth Locrine to the teeth?
And hast thou found thine armour, pretty boy,
Accompanied with these thy straggling mates?
Believe me, but this enterprise was bold,
And well deserveth commendation.

GWENDOLINE.
Aye, Locrine, traitorous Locrine! we are come,
With full pretence to seek thine overthrow.

What have I done, that thou shouldst scorn me thus?
What have I said, that thou shouldst me reject?
Have I been disobedient to thy words?
Have I bewrayed thy Arcane secrecy?
Have I dishonoured thy marriage bed
With filthy crimes, or with lascivious lusts?
Nay, it is thou that hast dishonoured it:
Thy filthy minds, o'ercome with filthy lusts,
Yieldeth unto affections filthy darts.
Unkind, thou wrongst thy first and truest feer;
Unkind, thou wrongst thy best and dearest friend;
Unkind, thou scornst all skilfull Brutus' laws,
Forgetting father, uncle, and thy self.

ESTRILD.
Believe me, Locrine, but the girl is wise,
And well would seem to make a vestal Nun.
How finely frames she her oration!

THRASIMACHUS.
Locrine, we came not here to fight with words,
Words that can never win the victory;
But for you are so merry in your frumps,
Unsheath your swords, and try it out by force,
That we may see who hath the better hand.

LOCRINE.
Thinkst thou to dare me, bold Thrasimachus?
Thinkst thou to fear me with thy taunting braves,
Or do we seem too weak to cope with thee?
Soon shall I shew thee my fine cutting blade,
And with my sword, the messenger of death,
Seal thee an acquitance for thy bold attempts.

[Exeunt.]

[Sound the alarm. Enter Locrine, Assarachus, and a soldier at one door; Gwendoline, Thrasimachus, at an other; Locrine and his followers driven back. Then let Locrine & Estrild enter again in a maze.]

LOCRINE.
O fair Estrild, we have lost the field;
Thrasimachus hath won the victory,
And we are left to be a laughing stock,
Scoft at by those that are our enemies.
Ten thousand soldiers, armed with sword & shield,
prevail against an hundreth thousand men;
Thrasimachus, incensed with fuming ire,
Rageth amongst the faintheart soldiers,
Like to grim Mars, when covered with his targe
He fought with Diomedes in the field,
Close by the banks of silver Simois.

[Sound the alarm.]

O lovely Estrild, now the chase begins;
Ne'er shall we see the stately Troynouant,
Mounted on the coursers garnished all with pearls;
Nor shall we view the fair Concordia,
Unless as captives we be thither brought.
Shall Locrine then be taken prisoner
By such a youngling as Thrasimachus?
Shall Gwendoline captivate my love?
Ne'er shall mine eyes behold that dismal hour;
Ne'er will I view that ruthful spectacle,
For with my sword, this sharp curtleaxe,
I'll cut in sunder my accursed heart.
But O! you judges of the ninefold Styx,
Which with incessant torments rack the ghosts
Within the bottomless Abissus' pits,
You gods, commanders of the heavenly spheres,
Whose will and laws irrevocable stands,
Forgive, forgive, this foul accursed sin!
Forget, O gods, this foul condemned fault!
And now, my sword, that in so many fights

[Kiss his sword.]

Hast saved the life of Brutus and his son,

End now his life that wisheth still for death;
Work now his death that wisheth still for death;
Work now his death that hateth still his life.
Farewell, fair Estrild, beauty's paragon,
Framed in the front of forlorn miseries!
Ne'er shall mine eyes behold thy sunshine eyes,
But when we meet in the Elysian fields;
Thither I go before with hastened pace.
Farewell, vain world, and thy inticing snares!
Farewell, foul sin, and thy inticing pleasures!
And welcome, death, the end of mortal smart,
Welcome to Locrine's overburthened heart!

[Thrust himself through with his sword.]

ESTRILD.
Break, heart, with sobs and grievous suspires!
Stream forth, you tears, from forth my watery eyes;
Help me to mourn for warlike Locrine's death!
Pour down your tears, you watery regions,
For mighty Locrine is bereft of life!
O fickle fortune! O unstable world!
What else are all things that this globe contains,
But a confused chaos of mishaps,
Wherein, as in a glass, we plainly see,
That all our life is but a Tragedy?
Since mighty kings are subject to mishap—
Aye, mighty kings are subject to mishap!—
Since martial Locrine is bereft of life,
Shall Estrild live, then, after Locrine's death?
Shall love of life bar her from Locrine's sword?
O no, this sword, that hath bereft his life,
Shall now deprive me of my fleeting soul;
Strengthen these hands, O mighty Jupiter,
That I may end my woeful misery.
Locrine, I come; Locrine, I follow thee.

[Kill her self.]

[Sound the alarm. Enter Sabren.]

SABREN.
What doleful sight, what ruthful spectacle
Hath fortune offered to my hapless heart?
My father slain with such a fatal sword,
My mother murthered by a mortal wound?
What Thracian dog, what barbarous Mirmidon,
Would not relent at such a rueful case?
What fierce Achilles, what had stony flint,
Would not bemoan this mournful Tragedy?
Locrine, the map of magnanimity,
Lies slaughtered in this foul accursed cave,
Estrild, the perfect pattern of renown,
Nature's sole wonder, in whose beauteous breasts
All heavenly grace and virtue was inshrined:
Both massacred are dead within this cave,
And with them dies fair Pallas and sweet love.
Here lies a sword, and Sabren hath a heart;
This blessed sword shall cut my cursed heart,
And bring my soul unto my parents' ghosts,
That they that live and view our Tragedy
May mourn our case with mournful plaudities.

[Let her offer to kill her self.]

Ay me, my virgin's hands are too too weak,
To penetrate the bulwark of my breast;
My fingers, used to tune the amorous lute,
Are not of force to hold this steely glaive.
So I am left to wail my parents' death,
Not able for to work my proper death.
Ah, Locrine, honored for thy nobleness!
Ah, Estrild, famous for thy constancy!
Ill may they fare that wrought your mortal ends!

[Enter Gwendoline, Thrasimachus, Madan, and the soldiers.]

GWENDOLINE.

Search, soldiers, search, find Locrine and his love;
Find the proud strumpet, Humber's concubine,
That I may change those her so pleasing looks
To pale and ignominious aspect.
Find me the issue of their cursed love,
Find me young Sabren, Locrine's only joy,
That I may glut my mind with lukewarm blood,
Swiftly distilling from the bastard's breast.
My father's ghost still haunts me for revenge,
Crying, Revenge my overhastened death.
My brother's exile and mine own divorce
Banish remorse clean from my brazen heart,
All mercy from mine adamantine breasts.

THRASIMACHUS.
Nor doth thy husband, lovely Gwendoline,
That wonted was to guide our stailess steps,
Enjoy this light; see where he murdered lies
By luckless lot and froward frowning fate;
And by him lies his lovely paramour,
Fair Estrild, gored with a dismal sword;—
And as it seems, both murdered by themselves,
Clasping each other in their feebled arms,
With loving zeal, as if for company
Their uncontented corps were yet content
To pass foul Stix in Charon's ferry-boat.

GWENDOLINE.
And hath proud Estrild then prevented me?
Hath she escaped Gwendoline's wrath
Violently, by cutting off her life?
Would God she had the monstrous Hydra's lives,
That every hour she might have died a death
Worse than the swing of old Ixion's wheel;
And every hour revive to die again,
As Titius, bound to housles Caucason,
Doth feed the substance of his own mishap,
And every day for want of food doth die,
And every night doth live, again to die.

But stay! methinks I hear some fainting voice,
Mournfully weeping for their luckless death.

SABREN.
You mountain nymphs, which in these deserts reign,
Cease off your hasty chase of savage beasts;
Prepare to see a heart oppressed with care;
Address your ears to hear a mournful style!
No humane strength, no work can work my weal,
Care in my heart so tyrant like doth deal.
You Dryads and lightfoot Satyri,
You gracious Faries which, at evening tide,
Your closets leave with heavenly beauty stored,
And on your shoulders spread your golden locks;
You savage bears in caves and darkened dens,
Come wail with me the martial Locrine's death;
Come mourn with me for beauteous Estrild's death.
Ah! loving parents, little do you know
What sorrow Sabren suffers for your thrall.

GWENDOLINE.
But may this be, and is it possible?
Lives Sabren yet to expiate my wrath?
Fortune, I thank thee for this courtesy;
And let me never see one prosperous hour,
If Sabren die not a reproachful death.

SABREN.
Hard hearted death, that, when the wretched call,
Art furthest off, and seldom hearest at all;
But, in the midst of fortune's good success,
Uncalled comes, and sheers our life in twain:
When will that hour, that blessed hour, draw nigh,
When poor distressed Sabren may be gone?
Sweet Atropos, cut off my fatal thread!
What art thou death? shall not poor Sabren die?

GWENDOLINE.

[Taking her by the chin shall say thus.]

Yes, damsel, yes; Sabren shall surely die,
Though all the world should seek to save her life;
And not a common death shall Sabren die,
But after strange and grievous punishments
Shortly inflicted upon thy bastard's head,
Thou shalt be cast into the cursed streams,
And feed the fishes with thy tender flesh.

SABREN.
And thinkst thou then, thou cruel homicide,
That these thy deeds shall be unpunished?
No, traitor, no; the gods will venge these wrongs,
The fiends of hell will mark these injuries.
Never shall these blood-sucking masty curs,
Bring wretched Sabren to her latest home;
For I my self, in spite of thee and thine,
Mean to abridge my former destinies,
And that which Locrine's sword could not perform,
This pleasant stream shall present bring to pass.

[She drowneth her self.]

GWENDOLINE.
One mischief follows on another's neck.
Who would have thought so young a maid as she
With such a courage would have sought her death?
And for because this River was the place
Where little Sabren resolutely died,
Sabren for ever shall this same be called.
And as for Locrine, our deceased spouse,
Because he was the son of mighty Brute,
To whom we owe our country, lives and goods,
He shall be buried in a stately tomb,
Close by his aged father Brutus' bones,
With such great pomp and great solemnity,
As well beseems so brave a prince as he.
Let Estrild lie without the shallow vaults,

Without the honour due unto the dead,
Because she was the author of this war.
Retire, brave followers, unto Troynouant,
Where we shall celebrate these exequies,
And place young Locrine in his father's tomb.

[Exeunt omnes.]

[Enter Ate.]

ATE.
Lo here the end of lawless treachery,
Of usurpation and ambitious pride;
And they that for their private amours dare
Turmoil our land, and set their broils abroach,
Let them be warned by these premises.
And as a woman was the only cause
That civil discord was then stirred up,
So let us pray for that renowned maid,
That eight and thirty years the scepter swayed,
In quiet peace and sweet felicity;
And every wight that seeks her grace's smart,
Would that this sword were pierced in his heart!

[Exit.]

[Finis.]

THE LONDON PRODIGAL

A comedy set in London, this play tells the story of a prodigal son, who eventually learns the error of his ways. The play was published in quarto in 1605 by the stationer Nathaniel Butter, and printed by Thomas Cotes. In 1664 it was one of the seven plays that publisher Philip Chetwinde added to the second impression of his Third Folio of Shakespeare's plays. The play was not entered into the Stationers' Register, but it is attributed to Shakespeare on the title page of the first edition. This attribution is widely rejected by scholars.

The London Prodigal has been dated as early as 1591 and as late as 1604. It is one of a long series of prodigal son plays that reach back as far as the Bible.

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DRAMATIS PERSONAE

M. FLOWERDALE (Senior), a Merchant trading at Venice.

MATTH. FLOWERDALE, his Prodigal Son.
M. FLOWERDALE (Junior), Brother to the Merchant.
SIR LANCELOT SPURCOCK, of Lewsome in Kent.
FRANCES, LUCY, DELIA, Daughters to Sir Lancelot Spurcock.
DAFFODIL, ARTICHOKE, Servants to Sir Lancelot Spurcock.
SIR ARTHUR GREENSHOOD, a Commander, in love with Lucy.
OLIVER, a Devonshire Clothier, in love with Lucy.
WEATHERCOCK, a Parasite to Sir Lancelot Spurcock.
TOM CIVET, in love with Frances.
DICK and RALPH, two cheating Gamesters.
RUFFIAN, a Pander to Mistress Apricot a Bawd.
SHERIFF and OFFICERS.
A CITIZEN and his wife.
Drawers.

The Scene: London (and the Parts adjacent).

ACT I.

SCENE I. London. A room in Flowerdale Junior's house.

[Enter old Flowerdale and his brother.]

FATHER.
Brother, from Venice, being thus disguised,
I come to prove the humours of my son.
How hath he borne himself since my departure,
I leaving you his patron and his guide?

UNCLE.
Ifaith, brother, so, as you will grieve to hear,
And I almost ashamed to report it.

FATHER.

Why, how ist, brother? what, doth he spend beyond the allowance I left him?

UNCLE.

How! beyond that? and far more: why, your exhibition is nothing. He hath spent that, and since hath borrowed; protested with oaths, alleged kindred to wring money from me,—by the love I bore his father, by the fortunes might fall upon himself, to furnish his wants: that done, I have had since his bond, his friend and friend's bond. Although I know that he spends is yours; yet it grieves me to see the unbridled wildness that reins over him.

FATHER.

Brother, what is the manner of his life? how is the name of his offences? If they do not relish altogether of damnation, his youth may privilege his wantonness: I myself ran an unbridled course till thirty, nay, almost till forty;—well, you see how I am: for vice, once looked into with the eyes of discretion, and well-balanced with the weights of reason, the course past seems so abominable, that the Landlord of himself, which is the heart of the body, will rather entomb himself in the earth, or seek a new Tenant to remain in him:—which once settled, how much better are they that in their youth have known all these vices, and left it, than those that knew little, and in their age runs into it? Believe me, brother, they that die most virtuous hath in their youth lived most vicious, and none knows the danger of the fire more than he that falls into it. But say, how is the course of his life? let's hear his particulars.

UNCLE.

Why, I'll tell you, brother; he is a continual swearer, and a breaker of his oaths, which is bad.

FATHER.

I grant indeed to swear is bad, but not in keeping those oaths is better: for who will set by a bad thing? Nay, by my faith, I hold this rather a virtue than a vice. Well, I pray, proceed.

UNCLE.
He is a mighty brawler, and comes commonly by the worst.

FATHER.

By my faith, this is none of the worst neither, for if he brawl and be beaten for it, it will in time make him shun it: For what brings man or child more to virtue than correction? What reigns over him else?

UNCLE.
He is a great drinker, and one that will forget himself.

FATHER.

O best of all! vice should be forgotten; let him drink on, so he drink not churches. Nay, and this be the worst, I hold it rather a happiness in him, than any iniquity. Hath he any more attendants?

UNCLE.
Brother, he is one that will borrow of any man.

FATHER.

Why, you see, so doth the sea: it borrows of all the small currents in the world, to increase himself.

UNCLE.
Aye, but the sea pales it again, and so will never your son.

FATHER.
No more would the sea neither, if it were as dry as my son.

UNCLE.

Then, brother, I see you rather like these vices in your son, than any way condemn them.

FATHER.

Nay, mistake me not, brother, for tho I slur them over now, as things slight and nothing, his crimes being in the bud, it would gall my heart, they should ever reign in him.

FLOWERDALE.
Ho! who's within? ho!

[Flowerdale knocks within.]

UNCLE.
That's your son, he is come to borrow more money.

FATHER.

For Godsake give it out I am dead; see how he'll take it. Say I have brought you news from his father. I have here drawn a formal will, as it were from my self, which I'll deliver him.

UNCLE.
Go to, brother, no more: I will.

FLOWERDALE.
[Within.] Uncle, where are you, Uncle?

UNCLE.
Let my cousin in there.

FATHER.
I am a sailor come from Venice, and my name is Christopher.

[Enter Flowerdale.]

FLOWERDALE.
By the Lord, in truth, Uncle—

UNCLE.
In truth would a served, cousin, without the Lord.

FLOWERDALE.

By your leave, Uncle, the Lord is the Lord of truth. A couple of rascals at the gate set upon me for my purse.

UNCLE.
You never come, but you bring a brawl in your mouth.

FLOWERDALE.
By my truth, Uncle, you must needs lend me ten pound.

UNCLE.
Give my cousin some small beer here.

FLOWERDALE.

Nay, look you, you turn it to a jest now: by this light, I should ride to Croyden fair, to meet Sir Lancelot Spurcock. I should have his daughter Lucy, and for scurvy ten pound, a man shall lose nine hundred three-score and odd pounds, and a daily friend beside. By this hand, Uncle, tis true.

UNCLE.
Why, any thing is true for ought I know.

FLOWERDALE.

To see now! why, you shall have my bond, Uncle, or Tom White's, James Brock's, or Nick Hall's: as good rapier and dagger men, as any be in England. Let's be damned if we do not pay you: the worst of us all will not damn ourselves for ten pound. A pox of ten pound!

UNCLE.
Cousin, this is not the first time I have believed you.

FLOWERDALE.

Why, trust me now, you know not what may fall. If one thing were but true, I would not greatly care, I should not need ten pound, but when a man cannot be believed,—there's it.

UNCLE.
Why, what is it, cousin?

FLOWERDALE.

Marry, this, Uncle: can you tell me if the Katern-hue be come home or no?

UNCLE.
Aye, marry, ist.

FLOWERDALE.

By God I thank you for that news. What, ist in the pool, can you tell?

UNCLE.
It is; what of that?

FLOWERDALE.

What? why then I have six pieces of velvet sent me; I'll give you a piece, Uncle: for thus said the letter,—a piece of Ashcolour, a three piled black, a colour de roi, a crimson, a sad green, and a purple: yes, yfaith.

UNCLE.
From whom should you receive this?

FLOWERDALE.

From who? why, from my father; with commendations to you, Uncle, and thus he writes: I know, said he, thou hast much troubled thy kind Uncle, whom God-willing at my return I will see amply satisfied. Amply, I remember was the very word, so God help me.

UNCLE.
Have you the letter here?

FLOWERDALE.

Yes, I have the letter here, here is the letter: no, yes, no;—let me see, what breeches wore I a Saturday? let me see: a Tuesday my Salamanca; a Wednesday my peach colour Satin; a Thursday my Vellour; a Friday my Salamanca again; a Saturday—let me see—a Saturday,—for in those breeches I wore a Saturday is the letter: O, my riding breeches, Uncle, those that you thought been velvet; in those very breeches is the letter.

UNCLE.
When should it be dated?

FLOWERDALE.

Marry, Decimo tertio septembris—no, no—decimo tertio Octobris;
Aye, Octobris, so it is.

UNCLE.

Decimo tertio Octobris! and here receive I a letter that your father died in June: how say you, Kester?

FATHER.

Yes, truly, sir, your father is dead, these hands of mine holp to wind him.

FLOWERDALE.
Dead?

FATHER.
Aye, sir, dead.

FLOWERDALE.
Sblood, how should my father come dead?

FATHER.
Yfaith, sir, according to the old Proverb:
The child was born and cried, became man,
After fell sick, and died.

UNCLE.
Nay, cousin, do not take it so heavily.

FLOWERDALE.

Nay, I cannot weep you extempore: marry, some two or three days hence, I shall weep without any stintance. But I hope he died in good memory.

FATHER.

Very well, sir, and set down every thing in good order; and the Katherine and Hue you talked of, I came over in: and I saw all the bills of lading, and the velvet that you talked of, there is no such aboard.

FLOWERDALE.
By God, I assure you, then, there is knavery abroad.

FATHER.
I'll be sworn of that: there's knavery abroad,
Although there were never a piece of velvet in Venice.

FLOWERDALE.
I hope he died in good estate.

FATHER.
To the report of the world he did, and made his will,
Of which I am an unworthy bearer.

FLOWERDALE.
His will! have you his will?

FATHER.
Yes, sir, and in the presence of your Uncle
I was willed to deliver it.

UNCLE.

I hope, cousin, now God hath blessed you with wealth, you will not be unmindful of me.

FLOWERDALE.

I'll do reason, Uncle, yet, yfaith, I take the denial of this ten pound very hardly.

UNCLE.
Nay, I denied you not.

FLOWERDALE.
By God, you denied me directly.

UNCLE.
I'll be judged by this good fellow.

FATHER.
Not directly, sir.

FLOWERDALE.

Why, he said he would lend me none, and that had wont to be a direct denial, if the old phrase hold. Well, Uncle, come, we'll fall to the Legacies: (reads) 'In the name of God, Amen. Item, I bequeath to my brother Flowerdale three hundred pounds, to pay such trivial debts as I owe in London. Item, to my son Matt Flowerdale, I bequeath two bale of false dice; Videlicet, high men and low men, fullomes, stop cater traies, and other bones of function.' Sblood, what doth he mean by this?

UNCLE.
Proceed, cousin.

FLOWERDALE.

"These precepts I leave him: let him borrow of his oath, for of his word no body will trust him. Let him by no means marry an honest woman, for the other will keep her self. Let him steal as much as he can, that a guilty conscience may bring him to his destinate repentance."—I think he means hanging. And this were his last will and Testament, the Devil stood laughing at his bed's feet while he made it. Sblood, what, doth he think to fop of his posterity with Paradoxes?

FATHER.
This he made, sir, with his own hands.

FLOWERDALE.

Aye, well; nay, come, good Uncle, let me have this ten pound. Imagine you have lost it, or been robbed of it, or misreckoned your self so much: any way to make it come easily off, good Uncle.

UNCLE.
Not a penny.

FATHER.
Yfaith, lend it him, sir. I my self have an estate in the
City worth twenty pound: all that I'll engage for him; he
saith it concerns him in a marriage.

FLOWERDALE.
Aye, marry, it doth. This is a fellow of some sense, this:
Come, good Uncle.

UNCLE.
Will you give your word for it, Kester?

FATHER.
I will, sir, willingly.

UNCLE.

Well, cousin, come to me some hour hence, you shall have it ready.

FLOWERDALE.
Shall I not fail?

UNCLE.
You shall not, come or send.

FLOWERDALE.
Nay, I'll come my self.

FATHER.
By my troth, would I were your worship's man.

FLOWERDALE.
What, wouldst thou serve?

FATHER.
Very willingly, sir.

FLOWERDALE.

Why, I'll tell thee what thou shalt do: thou saith thou hast twenty pound: go into Burchin Lane, put thy self into clothes; thou shalt ride with me to Croyden fair.

FATHER.
I thank you, sir; I will attend you.

FLOWERDALE.
Well, Uncle, you will not fail me an hour hence?

UNCLE.
I will not, cousin.

FLOWERDALE.
What's thy name? Kester?

FATHER.
Aye, sir.

FLOWERDALE.
Well, provide thy self: Uncle, farewell till anon.

[Exit Flowerdale.]

UNCLE.
Brother, how do you like your son?

FATHER.
Yfaith, brother, like a mad unbridled colt,
Or as a Hawk, that never stooped to lure:
The one must be tamed with an iron bit,
The other must be watched, or still she is wild.
Such is my son; awhile let him be so:
For counsel still is folly's deadly foe.
I'll serve his youth, for youth must have his course,

For being restrained, it makes him ten times worse;
His pride, his riot, all that may be named,
Time may recall, and all his madness tamed.

[Exeunt.]

SCENE II. The high street in Croydon. An inn appearing, with an open drinking booth before it.

[Enter Sir Lancelot, Master Weathercock, Daffodil,
Artichoke, Lucy, and Frances.]

LANCELOT.
Sirrah Artichoke, get you home before,
And as you proved yourself a calf in buying,
Drive home your fellow calves that you have bought.

ARTICHOKE.

Yes, forsooth; shall not my fellow Daffodil go along with me?

LANCELOT.
No, sir, no; I must have one to wait on me.

ARTICHOKE.
Daffodil, farewell, good fellow Daffodil.
You may see, mistress, I am set up by the halves;
Instead of waiting on you, I am sent to drive home calves.

LANCELOT.
Yfaith, Frances, I must turn away this Daffodil,
He's grown a very foolish saucy fellow.

FRANCES.
Indeed law, father, he was so since I had him:
Before he was wise enough for a foolish servingman.

WEATHERCOCK.
But what say you to me, Sir Lancelot?

LANCELOT.
O, about my daughters? well, I will go forward.
Here's two of them, God save them: but the third,
O she's a stranger in her course of life.
She hath refused you, Master Weathercock.

WEATHERCOCK.
Aye, by the Rood, Sir Lancelot, that she hath,
But had she tried me,
She should a found a man of me indeed.

LANCELOT.
Nay be not angry, sir, at her denial.
She hath refused seven of the worshipfulest
And worthiest housekeepers this day in Kent:
Indeed she will not marry, I suppose.

WEATHERCOCK.
The more fool she.

LANCELOT.

What, is it folly to love Chastity?

WEATHERCOCK.
No, mistake me not, Sir Lancelot,
But tis an old proverb, and you know it well,
That women dying maids lead apes in hell.

LANCELOT.
That's a foolish proverb, and a false.

WEATHERCOCK.
By the mass I think it be, and therefore let it go:
But who shall marry with mistress Frances?

FRANCES.
By my troth, they are talking of marrying me, sister.

LUCY.
Peace, let them talk;
Fools may have leave to prattle as they walk.

DAFFODIL.
Sentesses still, sweet mistress;
You have a wit, and it were your Alliblaster.

LUCY.

Yfaith, and thy tongue trips trenchmore.

LANCELOT.
No, of my knighthood, not a suitor yet:
Alas, God help her, silly girl, a fool, a very fool:
But there's the other black-brows, a shrewd girlie,
She hath wit at will, and suitors two or three:
Sir Arthur Greenshield one, a gallant knight,
A valiant soldier, but his power but poor.
Then there's young Oliver, the Devonshire lad,
A wary fellow, marry, full of wit,
And rich by the rood: but there's a third all air,
Light as a feather, changing as the wind:
Young Flowerdale.

WEATHERCOCK.
O he, sir, he's a desperate dick indeed.
Bar him you house.

LANCELOT.
Fie, not so, he's of good parentage.

WEATHERCOCK.
By my fai' and so he is, and a proper man.

LANCELOT.
Aye, proper, enough, had he good qualities.

WEATHERCOCK.
Aye, marry, there's the point, Sir Lancelot,
For there's an old saying:
Be he rich, or be he poor,
Be he high, or be he low:
Be he born in barn or hall,
Tis manners makes the man and all.

LANCELOT.
You are in the right, Master Weathercock.

[Enter Monsieur Civet.]

CIVET.

Soul, I think I am sure crossed, or witched with an owl. I have haunted them, Inn after Inn, booth after booth, yet cannot find them: ha, yonder they are; that's she. I hope to God tis she! nay, I know tis she now, for she treads her shoe a little awry.

LANCELOT.
Where is this Inn? we are past it, Daffodil.

DAFFODIL.
The good sign is here, sir, but the back gate is before.

CIVET.

Save you, sir. I pray, may I borrow a piece of a word with you?

DAFFODIL.
No pieces, sir.

CIVET.

Why, then, the whole. I pray, sir, what may yonder gentlewomen be?

DAFFODIL.

They may be ladies, sir, if the destinies and mortalities work.

CIVET.
What's her name, sir?

DAFFODIL.

Mistress Frances Spurcock, Sir Lancelot Spurcock's daughter.

CIVET.
Is she a maid, sir?

DAFFODIL.

You may ask Pluto, and dame Proserpine that: I would be loath to be riddled, sir.

CIVET.
Is she married, I mean, sir?

DAFFODIL.

The Fates knows not yet what shoemaker shall make her wedding shoes.

CIVET.

I pray, where Inn you sir? I would be very glad to bestow the wine of that gentlewoman.

DAFFODIL.
At the George, sir.

CIVET.
God save you, sir.

DAFFODIL.
I pray your name, sir?

CIVET.
My name is Master Civet, sir.

DAFFODIL.
A sweet name. God be with you, good Master Civet.

[Exit Civet.]

LANCELOT.
Aye, have we spied you, stout Sir George?
For all your dragon, you had best sells good wine,
That needs no yule-bush: well, we'll not sit by it,
As you do on your horse. This room shall serve:
Drawer, let me have sack for us old men:
For these girls and knaves small wines are best.
A pint of sack, no more.

DRAWER.
A quart of sack in the three Tuns.

LANCELOT.

A pint, draw but a pint.—Daffodil, call for wine to make your selves drink.

FRANCES.
And a cup of small beer, and a cake, good Daffodil.

[Enter young Flowerdale.]

FLOWERDALE.
How now? fie, sit in the open room? now, good Sir

Lancelot, & my kind friend worshipful Master
Weathercock! What, at your pint? a quart for shame.

LANCELOT.
Nay, Royster, by your leave we will away.

FLOWERDALE.
Come, give's some Music, we'll go dance. Begone,
Sir Lancelot? what, and fair day too?

LUCY.
Twere foully done, to dance within the fair.

FLOWERDALE.

Nay, if you say so, fairest of all fairs, then I'll not dance. A pox upon my tailor, he hath spoiled me a peach colour satin shirt, cut upon cloth of silver, but if ever the rascal serve me such another trick, I'll give him leave, yfaith, to put me in the calendar of fools: and you, and you, Sir Lancelot and Master Weathercock. My goldsmith too, on tother side—I bespoke thee, Lucy, a carkenet of gold, and thought thou shouldst a had it for a fairing, and the rogue puts me in rearages for Orient Pearl: but thou shalt have it by Sunday night, wench.

[Enter the Drawer.]

DRAWER.

Sir, here is one hath sent you a pottle of rennish wine, brewed with rosewater.

FLOWERDALE.
To me?

DRAWER.
No, sir, to the knight; and desires his more acquaintance.

LANCELOT.
To me? what's he that proves so kind?

DAFFODIL.

I have a trick to know his name, sir. He hath a month's mind here to mistress Frances, his name is Master Civet.

LANCELOT.
Call him in, Daffodil.

FLOWERDALE.

O I know him, sir, he is a fool, but reasonable rich; his father was one of these lease-mongers, these corn-mongers, these money-mongers, but he never had the wit to be a whore-monger.

[Enter Master Civet.]

LANCELOT.
I promise you, sir, you are at too much charge.

CIVET.

The charge is small charge, sir; I thank God my father left me wherewithal: if it please you, sir, I have a great mind to this gentlewoman here, in the way of marriage.

LANCELOT.
I thank you, sir: please you come to Lewsome,
To my poor house, you shall be kindly welcome:
I knew your father, he was a wary husband.—
To pale here, Drawer.

DRAWER.
All is paid, sir: this gentleman hath paid all.

LANCELOT.
Yfaith, you do us wrong,
But we shall live to make amends ere long:
Master Flowerdale, is that your man?

FLOWERDALE.
Yes, faith, a good old knave.

LANCELOT.
Nay, then I think
You will turn wise, now you take such a servant:
Come, you'll ride with us to Lewsome; let's away.
Tis scarce two hours to the end of day.

[Exit Omnes.]

ACT II.

SCENE I. A road near Sir Lancelot Spurcock's house, in Kent.

[Enter Sir Arthur Greenshood, Oliver, Lieutenant and Soldiers.]

ARTHUR.
Lieutenant, lead your soldiers to the ships,
There let them have their coats, at their arrival
They shall have pay: farewell, look to your charge.

SOLDIER.

Aye, we are now sent away, and cannot so much as speak with our friends.

OLIVER.

No, man; what, ere you used a zutch a fashion, thick you cannot take your leave of your vrens?

ARTHUR.
Fellow, no more. Lieutenant, lead them off.

SOLDIER.

Well, if I have not my pay and my clothes, I'll venture a running away tho I hang for't.

ARTHUR.
Away, sirrah, charm your tongue.

[Exit Soldiers.]

OLIVER.
Been you a presser, sir?

ARTHUR.
I am a commander, sir, under the King.

OLIVER.

Sfoot, man, and you be ne'er zutch a commander, should a spoke with my vrens before I should agone, so should.

ARTHUR.

Content yourself, man, my authority will stretch to press so good a man as you.

OLIVER.
Press me? I deuve ye, press scoundrels, and thy messels:
Press me! chee scorns thee, yfaith: For seest thee, here's
a worshipful knight knows cham not to be pressed by thee.

[Enter Sir Lancelot, Weathercock, young Flowerdale, old Flowerdale, Lucy, Frances.]

LANCELOT.
Sir Arthur, welcome to Lewsome, welcome by my troth.
What's the matter, man? why are you vexed?

OLIVER.
Why, man, he would press me.

LANCELOT.
O fie, Sir Arthur, press him? he is a man of reckoning.

WEATHERCOCK.
Aye, that he is, Sir Arthur, he hath the nobles,
The golden ruddocks he.

ARTHUR.
The fitter for the wars: and were he not
In favour with your worships, he should see,
That I have power to press so good as he.

OLIVER.
Chill stand to the trial, so chill.

FLOWERDALE.

Aye, marry, shall he, press-cloth and karsie, white pot and drowsen broth: tut, tut, he cannot.

OLIVER.

Well, sir, tho you see vlouten cloth and karsie, chee a zeen zutch a karsie coat wear out the town sick a zilken jacket, as thick a one you wear.

FLOWERDALE.
Well said, vlitan vlattan.

OLIVER.

Aye, and well said, cocknell, and bo-bell too: what, doest think cham a veard of thy zilken coat? nefer vere thee.

LANCELOT.
Nay, come, no more, be all lovers and friends.

WEATHERCOCK.
Aye, tis best so, good master Oliver.

FLOWERDALE.
Is your name master Oliver, I pray you?

OLIVER.
What tit and be tit, and grieve you.

FLOWERDALE.

No, but I'd gladly know if a man might not have a foolish plot out of master Oliver to work upon.

OLIVER.

Work thy plots upon me! stand aside:—work thy foolish plots upon me! chill so use thee, thou weart never so used since thy dame bound thy head. Work upon me?

FLOWERDALE.
Let him come, let him come.

OLIVER.

Zirrah, zirrah, if it were not vor shame, chee would a given thee zutch a whisterpoop under the ear, chee would a made thee a vanged an other at my feet: stand aside, let me loose, cham all of a vlaming fire-brand; Stand aside.

FLOWERDALE.
Well, I forbear you for your friend's sake.

OLIVER.

A vig for all my vrens! doest thou tell me of my vrens?

LANCELOT.
No more, good master Oliver; no more,
Sir Arthur. And, maiden, here in the sight
Of all your suitors, every man of worth,
I'll tell you whom I fainest would prefer
To the hard bargain of your marriage bed.—
Shall I be plain among you, gentlemen?

ARTHUR.
Aye, sir, tis best.

LANCELOT.
Then, sir, first to you:—
I do confess you a most gallant knight,
A worthy soldier, and an honest man:
But honesty maintains not a french-hood,
Goes very seldom in a chain of gold,
Keeps a small train of servants: hath few friends.—
And for this wild oats here, young Flowerdale,
I will not judge: God can work miracles,
But he were better make a hundred new,
Then thee a thrifty and an honest one.

WEATHERCOCK.

Believe me, he hath bit you there, he hath touched you to the quick, that hath he.

FLOWERDALE.

Woodcock a my side! why, master Weathercock, you know I am honest, however trifles—

WEATHERCOCK.
Now, by my troth, I know no otherwise.
O your old mother was a dame indeed:
Heaven hath her soul, and my wives too, I trust:
And your good father, honest gentleman,
He is gone a Journey, as I hear, far hence.

FLOWERDALE.
Aye, God be praised, he is far enough.
He is gone a pilgrimage to Paradice,
And left me to cut a caper against care.
Lucy, look on me that am as light as air.

LUCY.
Yfaith, I like not shadows, bubbles, breath
I hate a light a love, as I hate death.

LANCELOT.
Girl, hold thee there: look on this Devonshire lad:
Fat, fair, and lovely, both in purse and person.

OLIVER.

Well, sir, cham as the Lord hath made me. You know me well, uyine: cha have three-score pack a karsie, and black-em hal, and chief credit beside, and my fortunes may be so good as an others, zo it may.

LUCY.

[Aside to Arthur.] Tis you I love, whatsoever others say.

ARTHUR.
Thanks, fairest.

FLOWERDALE.

[Aside to Father.] What, wouldnst thou have me quarrel with him?

FATHER.
Do but say he shall hear from you.

LANCELOT.
Yet, gentleman, howsoever I prefer
This Devonshire suitor, I'll enforce no love;
My daughter shall have liberty to choose
Whom she likes best; in your love suit proceed:
Not all of you, but only one must speed.

WEATHERCOCK.
You have said well: indeed, right well.

[Enter Artichoke.]

ARTICHOKE.

Mistress, here's one would speak with you. My fellow Daffodil hath him in the cellar already: he knows him; he met him at Croyden fair.

LANCELOT.
O, I remember, a little man.

ARTICHOKE.
Aye, a very little man.

LANCELOT.
And yet a proper man.

ARTICHOKE.
A very proper, very little man.

LANCELOT .
His name is Monsieur Civet.

ARTICHOKE.
The same, sir.

LANCELOT.
Come, Gentlemen, if other suitors come,
My foolish daughter will be fitted too:
But Delia my saint, no man dare move.

[Exeunt all but young Flowerdale and Oliver, and old Flowerdale.]

FLOWERDALE.
Hark you, sir, a word.

OLIVER.
What haan you to say to me now?

FLOWERDALE.
Ye shall hear from me, and that very shortly.

OLIVER.

Is that all? vare thee well, chee vere thee not a vig.

[Exit Oliver.]

FLOWERDALE.
What if he should come now? I am fairly dressed.

FATHER.
I do not mean that you shall meet with him,
But presently we'll go and draw a will:
Where we'll set down land that we never saw,
And we will have it of so large a sum,
Sir Lancelot shall entreat you take his daughter:
This being formed, give it Master Weathercock,
And make Sir Lancelot's daughter heir of all:

And make him swear never to show the will
To any one, until that you be dead.
This done, the foolish changing Weathercock
Will straight discourse unto Sir Lancelot
The form and tenor of your Testament.
Nor stand to pause of it, be ruled by me:
What will ensue, that shall you quickly see.

FLOWERDALE.
Come, let's about it: if that a will, sweet Kit,
Can get the wench, I shall renown thy wit.

[Exit Omnes.]

SCENE II. A room in Sir Lancelot's house.

[Enter Daffodil.]

DAFFODIL.
Mistress, still froward? No kind looks
Unto your Daffodil? now by the Gods—

LUCY.
Away, you foolish knave, let my hand go.

DAFFODIL.
There is your hand, but this shall go with me:
My heart is thine, this is my true love's fee.

LUCY.
I'll have your coat stripped o'er your ears for this,
You saucy rascal.

[Enter Lancelot and Weathercock.]

LANCELOT.
How now, maid, what is the news with you?

LUCY.
Your man is something saucy.

[Exit Lucy.]

LANCELOT.
Go to, sirrah, I'll talk with you anon.

DAFFODIL.
Sir, I am a man to be talked withal,
I am no horse, I tro:
I know my strength, then no more than so.

WEATHERCOCK.
Aye, by the matkins, good Sir Lancelot,
I saw him the other day hold up the bucklers,
Like an Hercules. Yfaith, God a mercy, lad,
I like thee well.

LANCELOT.
Aye, I like him well: go, sirrah, fetch me a
  cup of wine,
That ere I part with Master Weathercock,
We may drink down our farewell in French wine.

WEATHERCOCK.
I thank you, sir, I thank you, friendly knight,
I'll come and visit you, by the mouse-foot I will:
In the meantime, take heed of cutting Flowerdale.
He is a desperate dick, I warrant you.

LANCELOT.

He is, he is: fill, Daffodil, fill me some wine. Ha, what wears he on his arm? My daughter Lucy's bracelet. Aye, tis the same.—Ha to you, Master Weathercock.

WEATHERCOCK.

I thank you, sir: Here, Daffodil, an honest fellow and a tall thou art. Well, I'll take my leave, good knight, and hope to have you and all your daughters at my poor house; in good sooth I must.

LANCELOT.

Thanks, Master Weathercock, I shall be bold to trouble you, be sure.

WEATHERCOCK.
And welcome heartily; farewell.

[Exit Weathercock.]

LANCELOT.

Sirrah, I saw my daughter's wrong, and withal her bracelet on your arm: off with it, and with it my livery too. have I care to see my daughter matched with men of worship, and are you grown so bold? Go, sirrah, from my house, or I'll whip you hence.

DAFFODIL.
I'll not be whipped, sir, there's your livery.
This is a servingman's reward: what care I?
I have means to trust to: I scorn service, I.

[Exit Daffodil.]

LANCELOT.
Aye, a lusty knave, but I must let him go,
Our servants must be taught what they should know.

[Exit.]

SCENE III. The same.

[Enter Sir Arthur and Lucy.]

LUCY.
Sir, as I am a maid, I do affect
You above any suitor that I have,
Although that soldiers scarce knows how to love.

ARTHUR.
I am a soldier, and a gentleman,
Knows what belongs to war, what to a lady:
What man offends me, that my sword shall right:
What woman loves me, I am her faithful knight.

LUCY.
I neither doubt your valour, nor your love,
But there be some that bares a soldier's form,
That swears by him they never think upon,
Goes swaggering up and down from house to house,
Crying God peace: and—

ARTHUR.
Yfaith, Lady, I'll discry you such a man,
of them there be many which you have spoke of,
That bear the name and shape of soldiers,
Yet God knows very seldom saw the war:
That haunt your taverns, and your ordinaries,
Your ale-houses sometimes, for all a-like
To uphold the brutish humour of their minds,
Being marked down, for the bondmen of despair:
Their mirth begins in wine, but ends in blood,
Their drink is clear, but their conceits are mud.

LUCY.
Yet these are great gentlemen soldiers.

ARTHUR.
No, they are wretched slaves,
Whose desperate lives doth bring them timeless graves.

LUCY.
Both for your self, and for your form of life,
If I may choose, I'll be a soldier's wife.

[Exeunt.]

SCENE IV. The same.

[Enter Sir Lancelot and Oliver.]

OLIVER.
And tyt trust to it, so then.

LANCELOT.
Assure your self,
You shall be married with all speed we may:
One day shall serve for Frances and for Lucy.

OLIVER.

Why che would vain know the time, for providing wedding raiments.

LANCELOT.

Why, no more but this: first get your assurance made, touching my daughter's jointer; that dispatched, we will in two days make provision.

OLIVER.
Why, man, chil have the writings made by tomorrow.

LANCELOT.

Tomorrow be it then: let's meet at the king's head in fish street.

OLIVER.
No, fie, man, no, let's meet at the Rose at Temple-Bar,
That will be nearer your counsellor and mine.

LANCELOT.
At the Rose be it then, the hour nine:
He that comes last forfeits a pint of wine.

OLIVER.
A pint is no payment, let it be a whole quart or nothing.

[Enter Artichoke.]

ARTICHOKE.

Master, here is a man would speak with Master Oliver: he comes from young Master Flowerdale.

OLIVER.
Why, chill speak with him, chill speak with him.

LANCELOT.

Nay, son Oliver, I'll surely see what young Flowerdale hath sent to you. I pray God it be no quarrel.

OLIVER.
Why, man, if he quarrel with me, chill give him, his hands full.

[Enter old Flowerdale.]

FATHER.
God save you, good Sir Lancelot.

LANCELOT.
Welcome, honest friend.

FATHER.
To you and yours my master wisheth health,
But unto you, sir, this, and this he sends:
There is the length, sir, of his rapier,
And in that paper shall you know his mind.

OLIVER.
Here, chill meet him, my vrend, chill meet him.

LANCELOT.
Meet him! you shall not meet the ruffian, fie.

OLIVER.

And I do not meet him, chill give you leave to call me cut; where ist, sirrah, where ist? where ist?

FATHER.
The letter shows both the time and place,
And if you be a man, then keep your word.

LANCELOT.
Sir, he shall not keep his word, he shall not meet.

FATHER.
Why, let him choose, he'll be the better known
For a base rascal, and reputed so.

OLIVER.

Zirrah, zirrah: and tweare not an old fellow, and sent after an arrant, chid give thee something, but chud be no money: But hold thee, for I see thou art somewhat testorne; hold thee, there's vorty shillings: bring thy master a veeld, chil give thee vorty more; look thou bring him: chil mall him, tell him, chill mar his dauncing tressels, chil use him, he was ne'er so used since his dam bound his head; chill make him for capyring any more, chy vor thee.

FATHER.
You seem a man, stout and resolute,
And I will so report, what ere befall.

LANCELOT.
And fall out ill, assure your master this,
I'll make him fly the land, or use him worse.

FATHER.
My master, sir, deserves not this of you,
And that you'll shortly find.

LANCELOT.
Thy master is an unthrift, you a knave,
And I'll attach you first, next clap him up
Or have him bound unto his good behavior.

OLIVER.

I would you were a sprite, if you do him any harm for this. And you do, chill ne'er see you, nor any of yours, while chill have eyes open: what, do you think, chil be abaffled up and down the town for a messell and a scoundrel? no, chy vor you: zirrah, chil come; zay no more, chil come, tell him.

FATHER.
Well, sir, my Master deserves not this of you,
And that you'll shortly find.

[Exit.]

LANCELOT.
No matter, he's an unthrift; I defy him.
Now, gentle son, let me know the place.

OLIVER.
No, chy vore you.

LANCELOT.
Let me see the note.

OLIVER.

Nay, chill watch you for zutch a trick. But if che meet him, zoe, if not, zoe: chill make him know me, or chill know why I shall not, chill vare the worse.

LANCELOT.
What, will you then neglect my daughter's love?
Venture your state and hers, for a loose brawl?

OLIVER.

Why, man, chill not kill him; marry, chill veze him too, and again; and zoe God be with you, vather. What, man, we shall meet tomorrow.

[Exit.]

LANCELOT.
Who would a thought he had been so desperate.
Come forth, my honest servant Artichoke.

[Enter Artichoke.]

ARTICHOKE.
Now, what's the matter? some brawl toward, I warrant you.

LANCELOT.
Go get me thy sword bright scoured, thy buckler mended.
O for that knave, that villain Daffodil would have done
good service. But to thee.

ARTICHOKE.

Aye, this is the tricks of all you gentlemen, when you stand in need of a good fellow. O for that Daffodil, O where is he? but if you be angry, and it be but for the wagging of a straw, then: out a doors with the knave, turn the coat over his ears. This is the humour of you all.

LANCELOT.
O for that knave, that lusty Daffodil.

ARTICHOKE.

Why, there tis now: our year's wages and our vails will scarce pay for broken swords and bucklers that we use in our quarrels. But I'll not fight if Daffodil be a tother side, that's flat.

LANCELOT.

Tis no such matter, man. Get weapons ready, and be at London ere the break of day: watch near the lodging of the Devonshire youth, but be unseen: and as he goes out, as he will go out, and that very early without doubt—

ARTICHOKE.

What, would you have me draw upon him, as he goes in the street?

LANCELOT.

Not for a world, man: into the fields; for to the field he goes, there to meet the desperate Flowerdale. Take thou the part of Oliver my son, for he shall be my son, and marry Lucy. Doest understand me, knave?

ARTICHOKE.

Aye, sir, I do understand you, but my young mistress might be better provided in matching with my fellow Daffodil.

LANCELOT.
No more; Daffodil is a knave:
That Daffodil is a most notorious knave.

[Exit Artichoke.]

[Enter Weathercock.]

Master Weathercock, you come in happy time. The desperate Flowerdale hath writ a challenge: And who think you must answer it, but the Devonshire man, my son Oliver?

WEATHERCOCK.
Marry, I am sorry for it, good Sir Lancelot,
But if you will be ruled by me, we'll stay the fury.

LANCELOT.
As how, I pray?

WEATHERCOCK.

Marry, I'll tell you: by promising young Flowerdale the red lipped Lucy.

LANCELOT.
I'll rather follow her unto her grave.

WEATHERCOCK.

Aye, Sir Lancelot, I would have thought so too, but you and I have been deceived in him: come read this will, or deed, or what you call it, I know not. Come, come, your spectacles I pray.

LANCELOT.
Nay, I thank God, I see very well.

WEATHERCOCK.

Marry, bless your eyes, mine hath been dim almost this thirty years.

LANCELOT.
Ha, what is this? what is this?

WEATHERCOCK.
Nay, there is true love, indeed:
He gave it to me but this very morn,
And bid me keep it unseen from any one.
Good youth, to see how men may be deceived!

LANCELOT.
Passion of me, what a wretch am I
To hate this loving youth: he hath made me,
Together with my Lucy he loves so dear,
Executors of all his wealth.

WEATHERCOCK.
All, all, good man; he hath given you all.

LANCELOT.
Three ships now in the straits & homeward bound,
Two Lordships of two hundred pound a year,
The one in Wales, the other in Gloucestershire:
Debts and accounts are thirty thousand pound;
Plate, money, jewels, 16 thousand more;

Two housen furnished well in Cole-man street:
Beside whatsoever his Uncle leaves to him,
Being of great demeans and wealth at Peckham.

WEATHERCOCK.
How like you this, good knight? how like you this?

LANCELOT.
I have done him wrong, but now I'll make amends,
The Devonshire man shall whistle for a wife:
He marry Lucy! Lucy shall be Flowerdale's.

WEATHERCOCK.
Why, that is friendly said.
Let's ride to London and prevent their match,
By promising your daughter to that lovely lad.

LANCELOT.
We'll ride to London:—or it shall not need,
We'll cross to Dedfort-strand, and take a boat.
Where be these knaves? what, Artichoke? what, Fop?

[Enter Artichoke.]

ARTICHOKE.
Here be the very knaves, but not the merry knaves.

LANCELOT.

Here, take my cloak, I'll have a walk to Dedford.

ARTICHOKE.

Sir, we have been scouring of our swords and bucklers in your defence.

LANCELOT.

Defence me no defence! let your swords rust, I'll have no fighting: Aye, let blows alone; bid Delia see all things be in readiness against the wedding. We'll have two at once, and that will save charges, Master Weathercock.

ARTICHOKE.
Well, we will do it, sir.

[Exit Omnes.]

ACT III.

SCENE I. A walk before Sir Lancelot's house.

[Enter Civet, Frances, and Delia.]

CIVET.

By my truth, this is good luck, I thank God for this. In good sooth, I have even my heart's desire: sister Delia, now I may boldly call you so, for your father hath frank and freely given me his daughter Frances.

FRANCES.
Aye, by my troth, Tom; thou hast my good will too, for
I thank God I longed for a husband, and, would I might
never stir, for one his name was Tom.

DELIA.
Why, sister, now you have your wish.

CIVET.

You say very true, sister Delia: and I prithee call me nothing but Tom and I'll call thee sweetheart, and Frances: will it not do well, sister Delia?

DELIA.
It will do very well with both of you.

FRANCES.
But, Tom, must I go as I do now when I am married?

CIVET.
No, Frances, I'll have thee go like a Citizen
In a garded gown, and a French-hood.

FRANCES.

By my troth, that will be excellent indeed.

DELIA.
Brother, maintain your wife to your estate:
Apparel you yourself like to your father,
And let her go like to your ancient mother.
He sparing got his wealth, left it to you;
Brother, take heed of pride, it soon bids thrift adieu.

CIVET.

So as my father and my mother went! that's a jest indeed: why she went in a fringed gown, a single ruffle, and a white cap; and my father in a mocado coat, a pair of red satin sleeves, and a canvas back.

DELIA.
And yet his wealth was all as much as yours,

CIVET.

My estate, my estate, I thank God, is forty pound a year, in good leases and tenements, besides twenty mark a year at cuckolds-haven, and that comes to us all by inheritance.

DELIA.
That may, indeed, tis very fitly plied.
I know not how it comes, but so it falls out,
That those whose fathers have died wondrous rich,
And took no pleasure but to gather wealth,
Thinking of little that they leave behind

For them, they hope, will be of their like mind,—
But it falls out contrary: forty years sparing
Is scarce three seven years spending,—never caring
What will ensue, when all their coin is gone,
And all too late, then thrift is thought upon:
Oft have I heard, that pride and riot kissed,
And then repentence cries, 'for had I wist.'

CIVET.

You say well, sister Delia, you say well: but I mean to live within my bounds: for look you, I have set down my rest thus far, but to maintain my wife in her French-hood, and her coach, keep a couple of geldings, and a brace of gray hounds, and this is all I'll do.

DELIA.
And you'll do this with forty pound a year?

CIVET.
Aye, and a better penny, sister.

FRANCES.
Sister, you forget that at cuckolds-haven.

CIVET.
By my troth, well remembered, Frances;
I'll give thee that to buy thee pins.

DELIA.
Keep you the rest for points: alas the day.
Fools shall have wealth, tho all the world say nay:
Come, brother, will you in? dinner stays for us.

CIVET.
Aye, good sister, with all my heart.

FRANCES.
Aye, by my troth, Tom, for I have a good stomach.

CIVET.
And I the like, sweet Frances. No, sister, do not think
I'll go beyond my bounds.

DELIA.
God grant you may not.

[Exit Omnes.]

SCENE II. London. The street before young Flowerdale's house.

[Enter young Flowerdale and his father, with foils in their hands.]

FLOWERDALE.

Sirrah Kit, tarry thou there, I have spied Sir Lancelot, and old Weathercock coming this way; they are hard at hand. I will by no means be spoken withal.

FATHER.
I'll warrant you; go, get you in.

[Enter Lancelot and Weathercock.]

LANCELOT.
Now, my honest friend, thou doest belong to Master
Flowerdale.

FATHER.
I do, sir.

LANCELOT.
Is he within, my good fellow?

FATHER.
No, sir, he is not within.

LANCELOT.
I prithee, if he be within, let my speak with him.

FATHER.

Sir, to tell you true, my master is within, but indeed would not be spoke withal: there be some terms that stands upon his reputation, therefore he will not admit any conference till he hath shook them off.

LANCELOT.
I prithee tell him his very good friend, Sir Lancelot
Spurcock, entreats to speak with him.

FATHER.

By my troth, sir, if you come to take up the matter between my master and the Devonshire man, you do not but beguile your hopes, and lose your labour.

LANCELOT.

Honest friend, I have not any such thing to him; I come to speak with him about other matters.

FATHER.

For my master, sir, hath set down his resolution, either to redeem his honour, or leave his life behind him.

LANCELOT.

My friend, I do not know any quarrel touching thy master or any other person: my business is of a different nature to him, and I prithee so tell him.

FATHER.
For howsoever the Devonshire man is, my master's mind
is bloody: that's a round o,
And therefore, sir, entreat is but vain:

LANCELOT.
I have no such thing to him, I tell thee once again.

FATHER.
I will then so signify to him.

[Exit Father.]

LANCELOT.
Aye, sirrah, I see this matter is hotly carried,
But I'll labour to dissuade him from it.—

[Enter Flowerdale.]

Good morrow, Master Flowerdale.

FLOWERDALE.

Good morrow, good Sir Lancelot; good morrow, Master Weathercock. By my troth, gentlemen, I have been a reading over Nick Matchivill; I find him good to be known, not to be followed: a pestilent humane fellow. I have made certain annotations of him such as they be.—And how ist Sir Lancelot? ha? how ist? A mad world, men cannot live quiet in it.

LANCELOT.
Master Flowerdale, I do understand there is
Some jar between the Devonshire man and you.

FATHER.
They, sir? they are good friends as can be.

FLOWERDALE.
Who? Master Oliver and I? as good friends as can be.

LANCELOT.

It is a kind of safety in you to deny it, and a generous silence, which too few are indued withal: But, sir, such a thing I hear, and I could wish it otherwise.

FLOWERDALE.

No such thing, Sir Lancelot, a my reputation, as I am an honest man.

LANCELOT.
Now I do believe you, then, if you do
Engage your reputation there is none.

FLOWERDALE.

Nay, I do not engage my reputation there is not. You shall not bind me to any condition of hardness: but if there be anything between us, then there is; if there be not, then there is not: be or be not, all is one.

LANCELOT.

I do perceive by this, that there is something between you, and I am very sorry for it.

FLOWERDALE.

You may be deceived, Sir Lancelot. The Italian hath a pretty paying, Questo—I have forgot it too, tis out of my head, but in my translation, ift hold, thus: If thou hast a friend, keep him; if a foe, trip him.

LANCELOT.

Come, I do see by this there is somewhat between you, and, before God, I could wish it other wise.

FLOWERDALE.

Well what is between us can hardly be altered. Sir Lancelot, I am to ride forth tomorrow. That way which I must ride, no man must deny me the sun; I would not by any particular man be denied common and general passage. If any one saith, Flowerdale, thou passest not this way: my answer is, I must either on or return, but return is not my word, I must on: if I cannot, then, make my way, nature hath done the last for me, and there's the fine.

LANCELOT.

Master Flowerdale, every man hath one tongue, and two ears: nature, in her building, is a most curious work-master.

FLOWERDALE.

That is as much as to say, a man should hear more than he should speak.

LANCELOT.

You say true, and indeed I have heard more than at this time I will speak.

FLOWERDALE.
You say well.

LANCELOT.

Slanders are more common than truths, Master Flowerdale: but proof is the rule for both.

FLOWERDALE.

You say true; what do you call him hath it there in his third canton.

LANCELOT.
I have heard you have been wild: I have believed it.

FLOWERDALE.
Twas fit, twas necessary.

LANCELOT.

But I have seen somewhat of late in you, that hath confirmed in my an opinion of goodness toward you.

FLOWERDALE.
Yfaith, sir, I am sure I never did you harm: some good
I have done, either to you or yours, I am sure you know
not; neither is it my will you should.

LANCELOT.
Aye, your will, sir.

FLOWERDALE.
Aye, my will, sir? sfoot, do you know ought of my will?
Begod, and you do, sir, I am abused.

LANCELOT.

Go, Master Flowerdale; what I know, I know: and know you thus much out of my knowledge, that I truly love you. For my daughter, she's yours. And if you like a marriage better than a brawl, all quirks of reputation set aside, go with me presently: And where you should fight a bloody battle, you shall be married to a lovely lady.

FLOWERDALE.
Nay but, Sir Lancelot—

LANCELOT.

If you will not embrace my offer, yet assure your self thus much, I will have order to hinder your encounter.

FLOWERDALE.
Nay, but hear me, Sir Lancelot.

LANCELOT.

Nay, stand not you upon imputative honour. Tis merely unsound, unprofitable, and idle inferences: your business is to wed my daughter, therefore give me your present word to do it. I'll go and provide the maid, therefore give me your present resolution, either now or never.

FLOWERDALE.
Will you so put me to it?

LANCELOT.

Aye, afore God, either take me now, or take me never. Else what I thought should be our match, shall be our parting; so fare you well forever.

FLOWERDALE.
Stay: fall out what may fall, my love is above all: I will come.

LANCELOT.
I expect you, and so fare you well.

[Exit Sir Lancelot.]

FATHER.
Now, sir, how shall we do for wedding apparel?

FLOWERDALE.
By the mass, that's true: now help, Kit;
The marriage ended, we'll make amends for all.

FATHER.
Well, no more, prepare you for your bride,
We will not want for clothes, what so ere betide.

FLOWERDALE.
And thou shalt see, when once I have my dower,
In mirth we'll spend full many a merry hour:
As for this wench I not regard a pin,
It is her gold must bring my pleasures in.

[Exit.]

FATHER.
Ist possible, he hath his second living,
Forsaking God, himself to the devil giving?
But that I knew his mother firm and chaste,
My heart would say my head she had disgraced:
Else would I swear he never was my son,
But her fair mind so foul a deed did shun.

[Enter Uncle.]

UNCLE.
How now, brother, how do you find your son?

FATHER.
O brother, heedless as a libertine,
Even grown a master in the school of vice,
One that doth nothing but invent deceit:
For all the day he humours up and down,
How he the next day might deceive his friend.
He thinks of nothing but the present time:
For one groat ready down, he'll pay a shilling,
But then the lender must needs stay for it.
When I was young, I had the scope of youth,
Both wild, and wanton, careless and desperate:
But such made strains as he's possessed withal,
I thought it wonder for to dream upon.

UNCLE.
I told you so, but you would not believe it.

FATHER.
Well, I have found it, but one thing comforts me:
Brother, tomorrow he's to be married
To beauteous Lucy, Sir Lancelot Spurcock's daughter.

UNCLE.
Ist possible?

FATHER.
Tis true, and thus I mean to curb him.
This day, brother, I will you shall arrest him:
If any thing will tame him, it must be that,
For he is ranked in mischief, chained to a life,
That will increase his shame, and kill his wife.

UNCLE.
What, arrest him on his wedding day?
That were unchristian, and an unhumane part:
How many couple even for that very day
Hath purchased 7 year's sorrow afterward?
Forbear him then today, do it tomorrow,
And this day mingle not his joy with sorrow.

FATHER.
Brother, I'll have it done this very day,
And in the view of all, as he comes from Church:
Do but observe the course that he will take.
Upon my life he will forswear the debt:
And for we'll have the sum shall not be slight,
Say that he owes you near three thousand pound:

Good brother, let it be done immediately.

UNCLE.
Well, seeing you will have it so,
Brother, I'll do it, and straight provide the Sheriff.

FATHER.
So, brother, by this means shall we perceive
What Sir Lancelot in this pinch will do:
And how his wife doth stand affected to him—
Her love will then be tried to the uttermost—
And all the rest of them. Brother, what I will do,
Shall harm him much, and much avail him too.

[Exit.]

SCENE III. A high road near London.

[Enter Oliver: afterwards Sir Arthur Greenshood.]

OLIVER.

Cham assured thick be the place, that the scoundrel appointed to meet me: if a come, zo: if a come not, zo. And che war avise, he should make a coystrell an us, ched vese him, and che vang him in hand; che would hoist him, and give it him to and again, zo chud: Who bin a there? Sir Arthur! chil stay aside.

ARTHUR.

I have dogged the Devonshire man into the field,
For fear of any harm that should befall him:
I had an inkling of that yesternight,
That Flowerdale and he should meet this morning:
Tho, of my soul, Oliver fears him not,
Yet for I'd see fair play on either side,
Made me to come, to see their valours tried.
God morrow to Master Oliver.

OLIVER.
God an good morrow.

ARTHUR.
What, Master Oliver, are you angry?

OLIVER.
Why an it be, tit and grieven you?

ARTHUR.
Not me at all, sir, but I imagine by
Your being here thus armed, you stay for some
That you should fight withall.

OLIVER.

Why, and he do, che would not dezire you to take his part.

ARTHUR.

No, by my troth, I think you need it not,
For he you look for, I think means not to come.

OLIVER.

No, and che war assur a that, ched avese him in another place.

[Enter Daffodil.]

DAFFODIL.
O Sir Arthur, Master Oliver, aye me!
Your love, and yours, and mine, sweet mistress Lucy,
This morn is married to young Flowerdale.

ARTHUR.
Married to Flowerdale! tis impossible.

OLIVER.
Married, man, che hope thou doest but jest,
To make an a volowten merriment of it.

DAFFODIL.
O, tis too true. Here comes his Uncle.

[Enter Flowerdale, Sheriff, Officers.]

UNCLE.
God morrow, Sir Arthur, good morrow, master Oliver.

OLIVER.
God and good morn, Master Flowerdale. I pray you tellen us,
Is your scoundrel kinsman married?

UNCLE.

Master Oliver, call him what you will, but he is married to Sir Lancelot's daughter here.

ARTHUR.
Unto her?

OLIVER.
Aye, ha the old yellow zarved me thick trick?
Why, man, he was a promise, chil chud a had her.
Is a zitch a vox? chil look to his water, che vor him.

UNCLE.
The music plays, they are coming from the Church.
Sheriff, do your Office: fellows, stand stoutly to it.

[Enter all to the Wedding.]

OLIVER.

God give you joy, as the old zaid Proverb is, and some zorrow among. You met us well, did you not?

LANCELOT.

Nay, be not angry, sir, the fault is in me. I have done all the wrong, kept him from coming to the field to you, as I might, sir, for I am a Justice, and sworn to keep the peace.

WEATHERCOCK.

Aye, marry, is he, sir, a very Justice, and sworn to keep the peace: you must not disturb the wedding.

LANCELOT.
Nay, never frown nor storm, sir; if you do,
I'll have an order taken for you.

OLIVER.
Well, well, chill be quiet.

WEATHERCOCK.
Master Flowerdale! Sir Lancelot, look you who here is.
Master Flowerdale.

LANCELOT.
Master Flowerdale, welcome with all my heart.

FLOWERDALE.
Uncle, this is she, yfaith: master under-sheriff,
Arrest me? at whose suit? draw, Kit.

UNCLE.
At my suit, sir.

LANCELOT.
Why, what's the matter, Master Flowerdale?

UNCLE.

This is the matter, sir: this unthrift here hath cozened you, and hath had of me, in several sums, three thousand pound.

FLOWERDALE.
Why, Uncle, Uncle.

UNCLE.

Cousin, cousin, you have uncled me, and if you be not staid, you'll prove a cozener unto all who know you.

LANCELOT.
Why, sir, suppose he be to you in debt
Ten thousand pound, his state to me appears,
To be at least three thousand a year.

UNCLE.
O sir, I was too late informed of that plot,
How that he went about to cozen you:
And formed a will, and sent it
To your good friend here, Master Weathercock,
In which was nothing true, but brags and lies.

LANCELOT.
Ha, hath he not such Lordships, lands, and ships?

UNCLE.
Not worth a groat, not worth a halfpenny, he.

LANCELOT.
I pray, tell us true, be plain, young Flowerdale?

FLOWERDALE.

My uncle here's mad, and disposed to do my wrong, but here's my man, an honest fellow, by the lord, and of good credit, knows all is true.

FATHER.
Not I, sir.
I am too old to lie, I rather know
You forged a will, where every line you writ,
You studied where to coat your lands might lie.

WEATHERCOCK.

And I prithee, where be they, honest friend?

FATHER.
Yfaith, no where, sir, for he hath none at all.

WEATHERCOCK.
Benedicite, we are o'er wretched, I believe.

LANCELOT.
I am cozened, and my hopefulst child undone.

FLOWERDALE.

You are not cozened, nor is she undone. They slander me, by this light they slander me: Look you, my uncle here's an usurer, and would undo me, but I'll stand in law; do you but bail me, you shall do no more: you, brother Civet, and Master Weathercock, do but bail me, and let me have my marriage money paid me, and we'll ride down, and there your own eyes shall see, how my poor tenants there will welcome me. You shall but bail me, you shall do no more, and, you greedy gnat, their bail will serve.

UNCLE.
Aye, sir, I'll ask no better bail.

LANCELOT.
No, sir, you shall not take my bail, nor his,
Nor my son Civet's; I'll not deal with him:
Let's Uncle make false dice with his false bones,

I will not have to do with him: mocked, gulled, & wronged!
Come, girl, though it be late, it falls out well,
Thou shalt not live with him in beggar's hell.

LUCY.
He is my husband, & high heaven doth know,
With what unwillingness I went to Church.
But you enforced me, you compelled me to it:
The holy Church-man pronounced these words but now:
I must not leave my husband in distress,
Now I must comfort him, not go with you.

LANCELOT.
Comfort a cozener? on my curse, forsake him.

LUCY.
This day you caused me on your curse to take him:
Do not, I pray, my grieved soul oppress,
God knows my heart doth bleed at his distress.

LANCELOT.
O Master Weathercock,
I must confess I forced her to this match,
Led with opinion his false will was true.

WEATHERCOCK.
Aye, he hath over-reached me too.

LANCELOT.

She might have lived like Delia, in a happy virgin's state.

DELIA.
Father, be patient, sorrow comes too late.

LANCELOT.
And on her knees she begged & did entreat,
If she must needs taste a sad marriage life,
She craved to be Sir Arthur Greenshood's wife.

ARTHUR.
You have done her & me the greater wrong.

LANCELOT.
O, take her yet.

ARTHUR.
Not I.

LANCELOT.
Or, Master Oliver, accept my child,
And half my wealth is yours.

OLIVER.
No, sir, chil break no laws.

LUCY.
Never fear, she will not trouble you.

DELIA.
Yet, sister, in this passion,
Do not run headlong to confusion.
You may affect him, though not follow him.

FRANCES.
Do, sister; hang him, let him go.

WEATHERCOCK.
Do, faith, Mistress Lucy, leave him.

LUCY.
You are three gross fools, let me alone.
I swear I'll live with him in all his moan.

OLIVER.
But an he have his legs at liberty,
Cham averd he will never live with you.

ARTHUR.

Aye, but he is now in hucksters handling for running away.

LANCELOT.
Huswife, you hear how you and I am wronged,
And if you will redress it yet you may:
But if you stand on terms to follow him,
Never come near my sight nor look on me,
Call me not father, look not for a groat,
For all thy portion I will this day give
Unto thy sister Frances.

FRANCES.

How say you to that, Tom, I shall have a good deal. Besides I'll be a good wife: and a good wife is a good thing, I can tell.

CIVET.

Peace Frances, I would be sorry to see thy sister cast away, as I am a gentleman.

LANCELOT.
What, are you yet resolved?

LUCY.
Yes, I am resolved.

LANCELOT.
Come then, away; or now, or never, come.

LUCY.
This way I turn, go you unto your feast,
And I to weep, that am with grief oppressed.

LANCELOT.
For ever fly my sight: come, gentlemen,
Let's in, I'll help you to far better wives than her.
Delia, upon my blessing talk not to her.
Bace Baggage, in such hast to beggary?

UNCLE.
Sheriff, take your prisoner to your charge.

FLOWERDALE.
Uncle, be-god you have used me very hardly,
By my troth, upon my wedding day.

[Exit all but Lucy, young Flowerdale, his father,
Uncle, Sheriff, and Officers.]

LUCY.
O Master Flowerdale, but hear me speak;
Stay but a little while, good Master Sheriff,
If not for him, for my sake pity him:
Good sir, stop not your ears at my complaint,
My voice grows weak, for women's words are faint.

FLOWERDALE.
Look you, Uncle, she kneels to you.

UNCLE.
Fair maid, for you, I love you with my heart,
And grieve, sweet soul, thy fortune is so bad,
That thou shouldst match with such a graceless youth.
Go to thy father, think not upon him,
Whom hell hath marked to be the son of shame.

LUCY.
Impute his wildness, sir, unto his youth,
And think that now is the time he doth repent:
Alas, what good or gain can you receive,
To imprison him that nothing hath to pay?
And where nought is, the king doth lose his due;
O, pity him, as God shall pity you.

UNCLE.
Lady, I know his humours all too well,
And nothing in the world can do him good,
But misery it self to chain him with.

LUCY.
Say that your debts were paid, then is he free?

UNCLE.
Aye, virgin, that being answered, I have done,
But to him that is all as impossible,
As I to scale the high Pyramids.
Sheriff, take your prisoner: Maiden, fare thee well.

LUCY.
O go not yet, good Master Flowerdale:
Take my word for the debt, my word, my bond.

FLOWERDALE.
Aye, by God, Uncle, and my bond too.

LUCY.
Alas, I ne'er ought nothing but I paid it,
And I can work; alas, he can do nothing:
I have some friends perhaps will pity me,
His chiefest friends do seek his misery.
All that I can or beg, get, or receive,
Shall be for you: O do not turn away;
Methinks, within, a face so reverent,
So well experienced in this tottering world,
Should have some feeling of a maiden's grief:
For my sake, his father's, and your brother's sake,
Aye, for your soul's sake that doth hope for joy,
Pity my state: do not two souls destroy.

UNCLE.
Fair maid, stand up; not in regard of him,
But in pity of thy hapless choice,
I do release him. Master Sheriff, I thank you:
And, officers, there is for you to drink.
Here, maid, take this money; there is a 100 angels:
And for I will be sure he shall not have it,
Here, Kester, take it you, and use it sparingly,
But let not her have any want at all.
Dry your eyes, niece, do not too much lament
For him, whose life hath been in riot spent:
If well he useth thee, he gets him friends,

If ill, a shameful end on him depends.

[Exit Uncle.]

FLOWERDALE.
A plague go with you for an old fornicator.
Come, Kit, the money; come, honest Kit.

FATHER.
Nay, by my faith, sir, you shall pardon me.

FLOWERDALE.

And why, sir, pardon you? give me the money, you old rascal, or I shall make you.

LUCY.
Pray, hold your hands: give it him, honest friend.

FATHER.
If you be so content, with all my heart.

FLOWERDALE.

Content, sir: sblood, she shall be content, whether she will or no. A rattle baby come to follow me! Go, get you gone to the greasy chuff your father, bring me your dowry, or never look on me.

FATHER.
Sir, she hath forsook her father and all her friends for you.

FLOWERDALE.
Hang thee, her friends and father altogether.

FATHER.
Yet part with something to provide her lodging.

FLOWERDALE.

Yes, I mean to part with her and you, but if I part with one angel, hang me at a post. I'll rather throw them at a cast at dice, as I have done a thousand of their fellows.

FATHER.
Nay, then, I will be plain, degenerate boy.
Thou hadst a father would have been ashamed.

FLOWERDALE.
My father was an ass, an old ass.

FATHER.
Thy father? proud, licentious villain!
What, are you at your foils? I'll foil with you.

LUCY.

Good sir, forbear him.

FATHER.
Did not this whining woman hang on me,
I'd teach thee what it was to abuse thy father:
Go! hang, beg, starve, dice, game, that when all is gone,
Thou mayest after despair and hang thyself.

LUCY.
O, do not curse him.

FATHER.
I do not curse him, and to pray for him were vain;
It grieves me that he bears his father's name.

FLOWERDALE.

Well, you old rascal, I shall meet with you. Sirrah, get you gone; I will not strip the livery over your ears, because you paid for it: but do not use my name, sirrah, do you hear? look you do not use my name, you were best.

FATHER.
Pay me the twenty pound, then, that I lent you,
Or give me security, when I may have it.

FLOWERDALE.

I'll pay thee not a penny, and for security, I'll give thee none. Minckins, look you do not follow me, look you do not: If you do, beggar, I shall slit your nose.

LUCY.
Alas, what shall I do?

FLOWERDALE.
Why, turn whose, that's a good trade,
And so perhaps I'll see thee now and then.

[Exit Flowerdale.]

LUCY.
Alas the day that ever I was born.

FATHER.
Sweet mistress, do not weep, I'll stick to you.

LUCY.
Alas, my friend, I know not what to do.
My father and my friends, they have despised me:
And I, a wretched maid, thus cast away,
Knows neither where to go, nor what to say.

FATHER.
It grieves me at the soul, to see her tears
Thus stain the crimson roses of her cheeks.—
Lady, take comfort, do not mourn in vain.
I have a little living in this town,

The which I think comes to a hundred pound,
All that and more shall be at your dispose.
I'll straight go help you to some strange disguise,
And place you in a service in this town,
Where you shall know all, yet yourself unknown:
Come, grieve no more, where no help can be had,
Weep not for him that is more worse than bad.

LUCY.
I thank you, sir.

[Exeunt.]

ACT IV.

SCENE I. A room in Sir Lancelot Spurcock's house in Kent.

[Enter Sir Lancelot, Master Weathercock and them.]

OLIVER.

Well, cha a bin zerved many a sluttish trick, but such a lerripoop as thick yeh was ne'er a sarved.

LANCELOT.
Son Civet, daughter Frances, bear with me,
You see how I am pressed down with inward grief,
About that luckless girl, your sister Lucy.

But tis fallen out with me,
As with many families beside,
They are most unhappy, that are most beloved.

CIVET.

Father, tis so, tis even fallen out so, but what remedy? set hand to your heart, and let it pass. Here is your daughter Frances and I, and we'll not say, we'll bring forth as witty children, but as pretty children as ever she was: tho she had the prick and praise for a pretty wench. But, father, done is the mouse: you'll come?

LANCELOT.
Aye, son Civet, I'll come.

CIVET.
And you, Master Oliver?

OLIVER.

Aye, for che a vext out this veast, chill see if a gan make a better veast there.

CIVET.
And you, Sir Arthur?

ARTHUR.
Aye, sir, although my heart be full,
I'll be a partner at your wedding feast.

CIVET.

And welcome all indeed, and welcome: come, Frances are you ready?

FRANCES.

Jesu, how hasty these husbands are. I pray, father, pray to God to bless me.

LANCELOT.
God bless thee, and I do: God make thee wise,
Send you both joy: I wish it with wet eyes.

FRANCES.
But, Father, shall not my sister Delia go along with us?
She is excellent good at cookery and such things.

LANCELOT.
Yes, marry, shall she: Delia, make you ready.

DELIA.

I am ready, sir. I will first go to Greenwich, from thence to my cousin Chesterfields, and so to London.

CIVET.

It shall suffice, good sister Delia, it shall suffice, but fail us not, good sister; give order to cooks, and others, for I would not have my sweet Frances to soil her fingers.

FRANCES.

No, by my troth, not I: a gentlewoman, and a married gentlewoman too, to be companions to cooks and kitchen-boys! not I, yfaith: I scorn that.

CIVET.
Why, I do not mean thou shalt, sweet heart; thou seest
I do not go about it: well farewell to you. God's pity,
Master Weathercock, we shall have your company too?

WEATHERCOCK.
With all my heart, for I love good cheer.

CIVET.
Well, God be with you all. Come, Frances.

FRANCES.

God be with you, father, God be with you, Sir Arthur, Master Oliver, and Master Weathercock, sister, God be with you all: God be with you, father, God be with you every one.

[Exeunt Civet and Frances.]

WEATHERCOCK.

Why, how now, Sir Arthur? all a mort? Master Oliver,
how now man?
Cheerly, Sir Lancelot, and merrily say,
Who can hold that will away?

LANCELOT.
Aye, she is gone indeed, poor girl, undone.
But when they'll be self-willed, children must smart.

ARTHUR.
But, sir, that she is wronged, you are the chiefest cause,
Therefore tis reason, you redress her wrong.

WEATHERCOCK.
Indeed you must, Sir Lancelot, you must.

LANCELOT.
Must? who can compel me, Master Weathercock?
I hope I may do what I list.

WEATHERCOCK.
I grant you may, you may do what you list.

OLIVER.

Nay, but and you be well evisen, it were not good by this vrampolness, and vrowardness, to cast away as pretty a dowsabell, as any chould chance to see in a Sommers day. Chil tell you what chall do. Chil go spy up and down the town, and see if I can hear any tale or tidings of her, and take her away from thick a messell, vor cham ashured, he'll but bring her to the spoil. And so var you well; we shall meet at your son Civet's.

LANCELOT.
I thank you, sir, I take it very kindly.

ARTHUR.
To find her out, I'll spend my dearest blood:
So well I loved her, to affect her good.

[Exit both.]

LANCELOT.
O Master Weathercock,
What hap had I, to force my daughter
From Master Oliver, and this good knight
To one that hath no goodness in his thought?

WEATHERCOCK.
Ill luck, but what remedy?

LANCELOT.
Yes, I have almost devised a remedy:
Young Flowerdale is sure a prisoner.

WEATHERCOCK.
Sure, nothing more sure.

LANCELOT.
And yet perhaps his Uncle hath released him.

WEATHERCOCK.
It may be very like, no doubt he hath.

LANCELOT.
Well, if he be in prison, I'll have warrants
To 'tach my daughter till the law be tried,
For I will sue him upon cozenage.

WEATHERCOCK.
Marry, may you, and overthrow him too.

LANCELOT.
Nay, that's not so, I may chance be soft,
And sentence past with him.

WEATHERCOCK.
Believe me, so he may, therefore take heed.

LANCELOT.
Well, howsoever, yet I will have warrants:
In prison, or at liberty, all's one:
You will help to serve them, Master Weathercock?

[Exit Omnes.]

SCENE II. A street in London.

[Enter Flowerdale.]

FLOWERDALE.

A plague of the devil! the devil take the dice! The dice, and the devil, and his dam go together. Of all my hundred golden angels, I have not left me one denier: A pox of come a five, what shall I do? I can borrow no more of my credit: there's not any of my acquaintance, man, nor boy, but I have borrowed more or less off: I would I knew where to take a good purse, and go clear away; by this light, I'll venture for it. God's lid, my sister Delia! I'll rob her, by this hand.

[Enter Delia, and Artichoke.]

DELIA.
I prithee, Artichoke, go not so fast:
The weather is hot, and I am something weary.

ARTICHOKE.

Nay, I warrant you, mistress Delia, I'll not tire you with leading; we'll go a extreme moderate pace.

FLOWERDALE.
Stand, deliver your purse.

ARTICHOKE.
O lord, thieves, thieves!

[Exit Artichoke.]

FLOWERDALE.
Come, come, your purse, lady, your purse.

DELIA.
That voice I have heard often before this time.
What, brother Flowerdale become a thief?

FLOWERDALE.
Aye, a plague on't, I thank your father. But, sister, come,
your money, come! What,
The world must find me, I am borne to live,
Tis not a sin to steal, when none will give.

DELIA.
O God, is all grace banished from they heart?
Think of the shame that doth attend this fact.

FLOWERDALE.
Shame me no shame; come, give me your purse.
I'll bind you, sister, least I fair the worse.

DELIA.
No, bind me not! hold, there is all I have,
And would that money would redeem thy shame.

[Enter Oliver, Sir Arthur, and Artichoke.]

ARTICHOKE.
Thieves, thieves, thieves!

OLIVER.
Thieves? where, man? why, how now mistress Delia?
Ha you a liked to bin a robbed?

DELIA.

No, Master Oliver; tis Master Flowerdale, he did but jest with me.

OLIVER.

How, Flowerdale, that scoundrel? sirrah, you meeten us well: vang thee that.

FLOWERDALE.

Well, sir, I'll not meddle with you, because I have a charge.

DELIA.
Here, brother Flowerdale, I'll lend you this same money.

FLOWERDALE.
I thank you, sister.

OLIVER.

I wad you were ysplit, and you let the mezell have a penny. But since you cannot keep it, chil keep it myself.

ARTHUR.
Tis pity to relieve him in this sort,
Who makes a triumphant life his daily sport.

DELIA.
Brother, you see how all men censure you,
Farewell, and I pray God amend your life.

OLIVER.

Come, chill bring you along, and you safe enough from twenty such scoundrels as thick a one is. Farewell and be hanged, zirrah, as I think so thou wilt be shortly. Come, Sir Arthur.

[Exit all but Flowerdale.]

FLOWERDALE.
A plague go with you for a karsie rascal.
This Devonshire man, I think, is made all of pork,
His hands made only for to heave up packs:

His heart as fat and big as his face;
As differing far from all brave gallant minds
As I to serve the hogs, and drink with hinds,
As I am very near now. Well, what remedy?
When money, means, and friends do grow so small,
Then farewell life, and there's an end of all.

[Exit.]

SCENE III. Another street. Before Civet's house.

[Enter Father, Lucy like a Dutch Frau, Civet, and his wife mistress Frances.]

CIVET.
By my troth, god a mercy for this, good Christopher,
I thank thee for my maid, I like her very well. How
doest thou like her, Frances?

FRANCES.

In good sadness, Tom, very well, excellent well; she speaks so prettily.—I pray what's your name?

LUCY.
My name, forsooth, be called Tanikin.

FRANCES.

By my troth, a fine name. O Tanikin, you are excellent for dressing one's head a new fashion.

LUCY.
Me sall do every ting about da head.

CIVET.
What countrywoman is she, Kester?

FATHER.
A dutch woman, sir.

CIVET.
Why then she is outlandish, is she not?

FATHER.
I, sir, she is.

FRANCES.

O, then, thou canst tell how to help me to cheeks and ears?

LUCY.
Yes, mistress, very vell.

FATHER.

Cheeks and ears! why, mistress Frances, want you cheeks and ears? methinks you have very fair ones.

FRANCES.
Thou art a fool indeed. Tom, thou knowest what I mean.

CIVET.

Aye, aye, Kester, tis such as they wear a their heads. I prithee, Kit, have her in, and shew her my house.

FATHER.
I will, sir. Come, Tanikin.

FRANCES.
O Tom, you have not bussed me today, Tom.

CIVET.
No, Frances, we must not kiss afore folks. God save me,
Frances,

[Enter Delia, and Artichoke.]

See yonder my sister Delia is come. Welcome, good sister.

FRANCES.

Welcome, good sister, how do you like the tier of my head?

DELIA.
Very well, sister.

CIVET.

I am glad you're come, sister Delia, to give order for supper; they will be here soon.

ARTICHOKE.

Aye, but if good luck had not served, she had not been here now: filching Flowerdale had like to peppered us; but for Master Oliver, we had been robbed.

DELIA.
Peace, sirrah, no more.

FATHER.
Robbed! by whom?

ARTICHOKE.
Marry, by none but by Flowerdale; he is turned thief.

CIVET.

By my faith, but that is not well; but God be praised for your escape. Will you draw near, sister?

FATHER.

Sirrah, come hither. Would Flowerdale, he that was my master, a robbed you? I prithee, tell me true.

ARTICHOKE.
Yes, yfaith, even that Flowerdale, that was thy master.

FATHER.

Hold thee, there is a French crown, and speak no more of this.

ARTICHOKE.
Not I, not a word.—Now do I smell knavery:
In every purse Flowerdale takes, he is half:
And gives me this to keep counsel.—No, not a word I.

FATHER.
Why, God a mercy.

FRANCES.

Sister, look here, I have a new Dutch maid, and she speaks so fine, it would do your heart good.

CIVET.
How do you like her, sister?

DELIA.
I like your maid well.

CIVET.

Well, dear sister, will you draw near, and give directions for supper? guests will be here presently.

DELIA.
Yes, brother; lead the way; I'll follow you.

[Exit all but Delia and Lucy.]

Hark you, Dutch frau, a word.

LUCY.
Vat is your vill wit me?

DELIA.
Sister Lucy, tis not your broken language,
Nor this same habit, can disguise your face
From I that know you: pray tell me, what means this?

LUCY.
Sister, I see you know me; yet be secret.
This borrowed shape, that I have ta'en upon me,

Is but to keep myself a space unknown,
Both from my father, and my nearest friends,
Until I see how time will bring to pass
The desperate course of Master Flowerdale.

DELIA.
O he is worse than bad, I prithee leave him,
And let not once thy heart to think on him.

LUCY.
Do not persuade me once to such a thought.
Imagine yet, that he is worse than naught:
Yet one hour's time may all that ill undo,
That all his former life did run into.
Therefore kind sister do not disclose my estate:
If ere his heart doth turn, tis nere too late.

DELIA.
Well, seeing no counsel can remove your mind,
I'll not disclose you that art wilful blind.

LUCY.
Delia, I thank you. I now must please her eyes,
My sister Frances, neither fair nor wise.

[Exit Omnes.]

ACT V.

SCENE I. Scene before Civet's house.

[Enter Flowerdale solus.]

FLOWERDALE.

On goes he that knows no end of his journey. I have passed the very utmost bounds of shifting. I have no course now but to hang myself: I have lived since yesterday two a clock of a spice-cake I had at a burial: and for drink, I got it at an Ale-house among Porters, such as will bear out a man, if he have no money indeed—I mean out of their companies, for they are men of good carriage. Who comes here? The two Conycatchers, that won all my money of me. I'll try if they'll lend me any.

[Enter Dick and Rafe.]

What, Master Richard, how do you? How doest thou, Rafe? By God, gentlemen, the world grows bare with me: will you do as much as lend me an angel between you both. You know you won a hundred of me the other day.

RAFE.

How, an angel? God damn us, if we lost not every penny, within an hour after thou wert gone.

FLOWERDALE.
I prithee lend me so much as will pay for my supper.
I'll pay you again, as I am a gentleman.

RAFE.
Yfaith, we have not a farthing, not a mite:
I wonder at it, Master Flowerdale,
You will so carelessly undo yourself.
Why, you will lose more money in an hour,
Than any honest man spend in a year.
For shame, betake you to some honest Trade,
And live not thus so like a Vagabond.

[Exit both.]

FLOWERDALE.
A Vagabond, indeed! more villains you:
They gave me counsel that first cozened me:
Those Devils first brought me to this I am,
And being thus, the first that do me wrong.
Well, yet I have one friend left in store:
Not far from hence there dwells a Cockatrice,
One that I first put in a satin gown,
And not a tooth that dwells within her head,
But stands me at the least in 20 pound:
Her will I visit now my coin is gone,
And, as I take it, here dwells the Gentlewoman.
What ho, is Mistress Apricot within?

[Enter Ruffian.]

RUFFIAN.
What saucy Rascal is that which knocks so boldly?
O, is it you? old spend-thrift, are you here?
One that is turned Cozener about this town:
My Mistress saw you, and sends this word by me:
Either be packing quickly from the door,
Or you shall have such a greeting sent you straight,

As you will little like on: you had best be gone.

FLOWERDALE.
Why so, this is as it should be: being poor,
Thus art thou served by a vile painted whore.
Well, since thy damned crew do so abuse thee,
I'll try of honest men, how they will use me.

[Enter an ancient Citizen.]

Sir, I beseech you to take compassion of a man, one whose Fortunes have been better than at this instant they seem to be: but if I might crave of you some such little portion, as would bring me to my friends, I should rest thankful, until I had requited so great a courtesy.

CITIZEN.
Fie, fie, young man, this course is very bad,
Too many such have we about this City,
Yet for I have not seen you in this sort,
Nor noted you to be a common beggar:
Hold, there's an angel, to bear your charges down.
Go to your friends, do not on this depend:
Such bad beginnings oft have worser ends.

[Exit Citizen.]

FLOWERDALE.

Worser ends: nay, if it fall out no worse than in old angels I care not. Nay, now I have had such a fortunate beginning, I'll not let a sixpenny-purse escape me. By the mass, here comes another.

[Enter a Citizen's wife with a torch before her.]

God bless you, fair mistress. Now would it please you, gentlewoman, to look into the wants of a poor GentleMan, a younger brother, I doubt not but God will treble restore it back again: one that never before this time demanded penny, halfpenny, nor farthing.

CITIZEN'S WIFE. Stay, Alexander. Now, by my troth, a very proper man, and tis great pity: hold, my friend, there's all the money I have about me, a couple of shillings, and God bless thee.

FLOWERDALE.

Now God thank you, sweet Lady: if you have any friend, or Garden-house, where you may employ a poor gentleman as your friend, I am yours to command in all secret service.

CITIZEN'S WIFE. I thank you, good friend. I prithee let me see that again I gave thee: there is one of them a brass shilling; give me them, and here is half a crown in gold. *[He gives it her.]* Now, out upon thee, Rascal! secret service! what doest thou make of me? it were a good deed to have thee whipped. Now I have my money again, I'll see thee hanged before I give thee a penny. Secret service! On, good Alexander.

[Exit both.]

FLOWERDALE.

This is villainous luck. I perceive dishonesty will not thrive: here comes more. God forgive me, Sir Arthur, and Master Oliver: afore God, I'll speak to them.

[Enter Sir Arthur, and M. Oliver.]

God save you, Sir Arthur: God save you, Master Oliver.

OLIVER.

Byn you there, zirrah? come, will you ytaken yourself to your tools, Coystrell?

FLOWERDALE.
Nay, master Oliver, I'll not fight with you.
Alas, sir, you know it was not my doings,
It was only a plot to get Sir Lancelot's daughter:
By God, I never meant you harm.

OLIVER.
And whore is the Gentlewoman thy wife, Mezell?
Whore is shee, Zirrah, ha?

FLOWERDALE.

By my troth, Master Oliver, sick, very sick; and God is my judge, I know not what means to make for her, good Gentlewoman.

OLIVER.
Tell me true, is she sick? tell me true, itch vise thee.

FLOWERDALE.

Yes, faith, I tell you true: Master Oliver, if you would do me the small kindness, but to lend me forty shillings: so God help me, I will pay you so soon as my ability shall make me able, as I am a gentleman.

OLIVER.

Well, thou zaist thy wife is zick: hold, there's vorty shillings; give it to thy wife. Look thou give it her, or I shall zo veze thee, thou wert not so vezed this zeven year; look to it.

ARTHUR.
Yfaith, Master Oliver, it is in vain
To give to him that never thinks of her.

OLIVER.
Well, would che could yvind it.

FLOWERDALE.
I tell you true, Sir Arthur, as I am a gentleman.

OLIVER.
Well fare you well, zirrah: come, Sir Arthur.

[Exit both.]

FLOWERDALE.
By the Lord, this is excellent.
Five golden angels compassed in an hour!
If this trade hold, I'll never seek a new.
Welcome, sweet gold: and beggary, adieu.

[Enter Uncle and Father.]

UNCLE.
See, Kester, if you can find the house.

FLOWERDALE.

Who's here? my Uncle, and my man Kester? By the mass, tis they. How do you, Uncle, how dost thou, Kester? By my troth, Uncle, you must needs lend me some money: the poor gentlewoman my wife, so God help me, is very sick. I was robbed of the hundred angels you gave me; they are gone.

UNCLE.
Aye, they are gone indeed; come, Kester, away.

FLOWERDALE.
Nay, Uncle, do you hear? good Uncle.

UNCLE.
Out, hypocrite, I will not hear thee speak;
Come, leave him, Kester.

FLOWERDALE.
Kester, honest Kester.

FATHER.
Sir, I have nought to say to you. Open the door,

Tanikin: thou hadst best lock it fast, for there's a
false knave without.

FLOWERDALE.
You are an old lying Rascal, so you are.

[Exit both.]

[Enter Lucy.]

LUCY.
Vat is de matter? Vat be you, yonker?

FLOWERDALE.

By this light, a Dutch Frau: they say they are called kind. By this light, I'll try her.

LUCY.
Vat bin you, yonker? why do you not speak?

FLOWERDALE.

By my troth, sweet heart, a poor gentleman that would desire of you, if it stand with your liking, the bounty of your purse.

[Enter Father.]

LUCY.

O here, God, so young an armine.

FLOWERDALE.

Armine, sweet-heart? I know not what you mean by that, but I am almost a beggar.

LUCY.

Are you not a married man? vere bin your wife? Here is all I have: take dis.

FLOWERDALE.
What, gold, young Frau? this is brave.

FATHER.
—If he have any grace, he'll now repent.

LUCY.
Why speak you not? were be your vife?

FLOWERDALE.

Dead, dead, she's dead; tis she hath undone me: spent me all I had, and kept rascals under mine nose to brave me.

LUCY.
Did you use her vell?

FLOWERDALE.

Use her? there's never a gentlewoman in England could be better used than I did her. I could but coach her; her diet stood me in forty pound a month, but she is dead and in her grave my care are buried.

LUCY.
Indeed, dat vas not scone.

FATHER.
—He is turned more devil than he was before.

FLOWERDALE.
Thou doest belong to Master Civet here, doest thou not?

LUCY.
Yes me do.

FLOWERDALE.

Why, there's it: there's not a handful of plate but belongs to me, God's my judge: if I had but such a wench as thou art, there's never a man in England would make more of her, than I would do, so she had any stock.

[They call within: O, why, Tanikin.]

LUCY.
Stay, one doth call; I shall come by and by again.

FLOWERDALE.
By this hand, this Dutch wench is in love with me.
Were it not admiral to make her steal all Civet's
plate, and run away.

FATHER.
Twere beastly. O Master Flowerdale,
Have you no fear of God, nor conscience?
What do you mean by this wild course you take?

FLOWERDALE.
What do I mean? why, to live, that I mean.

FATHER.
To live in this sort? fie upon the course:
Your life doth show, you are a very coward.

FLOWERDALE.
A coward? I pray, in what?

FATHER.
Why, you will borrow sixpence of a boy.

FLOWERDALE.

Snails, is there such cowardice in that? I dare borrow it of a man, I, and of the tallest man in England, if he will lend it me. Let me borrow how I can, and let them come by it how they dare. And it is well known, I might a rid out a hundred times if I would: so I might.

FATHER.
It was not want of will, but cowardice.
There is none that lends to you, but know they gain:
And what is that but only stealth in you?
Delia might hang you now, did not her heart
Take pity of you for her sister's sake.
Go, get you hence, least, lingering where you stay,
You fall into their hands you look not for.

FLOWERDALE.

I'll tarry here, till the Dutch Frau comes, if all the devils in hell were here.

[Exit Father.]

[Enter Sir Lancelot, Master Weathercock, and
Artichoke.]

LANCELOT.
Where is the door? are we not past it, Artichoke?

ARTICHOKE.

Bith mass, here's one; I'll ask him. Do you hear, sir? What, are you so proud? do you hear? which is the way to Master Civet's house? what will you not speak? O me, this is filching Flowerdale.

LANCELOT.
O wonderful, is this lewd villain here?
O you cheating Rogue, you cut-purse coni-catcher,
What ditch, you villain, is my daughter's grave?
A cozening rascal, that must make a will,
Take on him that strict habit—very that,
When he should turn to angel—a dying grace.
I'll father in law you, sir, I'll make a will!
Speak, villain, where's my daughter?
Poisoned, I warrant you, or knocked a the head
And to abuse good Master Weathercock,
With his forged will, and Master Weathercock
To make my grounded resolution,
Than to abuse the Devonshire gentleman:
Go, away with him to prison.

FLOWERDALE.
Wherefore to prison? sir, I will not go.

[Enter Master Civet, his wife, Oliver, Sir Arthur,
Father, and Uncle, Delia.]

LANCELOT.

O here's his Uncle! welcome, gentlemen, welcome all. Such a cozener, gentlemen, a murderer too, for any thing I know: my daughter is missing: hath been looked for, cannot be found. A vild upon thee.

UNCLE.
He is my kinsman, although his life be wild;
Therefore, in God's name, do with him what you will.

LANCELOT.
Marry, to prison.

FLOWERDALE.
Wherefore to prison? snick up, I owe you nothing.

LANCELOT.
Bring forth my daughter then: away with him.

FLOWERDALE.
Go seek your daughter; what do you lay to my charge.

LANCELOT.
Suspicion of murder: go, away with him.

FLOWERDALE.
Murder, you dogs? I murder your daughter!
Come, Uncle, I know you'll bail me.

UNCLE.

Not I, were there no more, than I the Jailor, thou the prisoner.

LANCELOT.
Go; away with him.

[Enter Lucy like a Frau.]

LUCY.
O my life, here; where will you ha de man?
Vat ha de yonker done?

WEATHERCOCK.
Woman, he hath killed his wife.

LUCY.
His vife: dat is not good, dat is not seen.

LANCELOT.
Hang not upon him, huswife; if you do, I'll lay you by him.

LUCY.
Have me no oder way dan you have him:
He tell me dat he love me heartily.

FRANCES.

Lead away my maid to prison! why, Tom, will you suffer that?

CIVET.

No, by your leave, father, she is no vagrant: she is my wife's chamber maid, & as true as the skin between any man's brows here.

LANCELOT.
Go to, you're both fools:
Son Civet, of my life, this is a plot,
Some straggling counterfeit preferred to you,
No doubt to rob you of your plate and jewels.
I'll have you led away to prison, trull.

LUCY.
I am no trull, neither outlandish Frau.
Nor he, nor I shall to the prison go:
Know you me now? nay, never stand amazed.
Father, I know I have offended you,
And though that duty wills me bend my knees
To you in duty and obedience:
Yet this ways do I turn, and to him yield
My love, my duty and my humbleness.

LANCELOT.
Bastard in nature! kneel to such a slave?

LUCY.
O Master Flowerdale, if too much grief
Have not stopped up the organs of your voice,
Then speak to her that is thy faithful wife:
Or doth contempt of me thus tie thy tongue?

Turn not away, I am no Aethiope,
No wanton Cressida, nor a changing Helen:
But rather one made wretched by thy loss.
What, turnst thou still from me? O then
I guess thee woefulst among hapless men.

FLOWERDALE.
I am, indeed, wife, wonder among wives!
Thy chastity and virtue hath infused
Another soul in me, red with defame,
For in my blushing cheeks is seen my shame.

LANCELOT.
Out, hypocrite. I charge thee, trust him not.

LUCY.
Not trust him? by the hopes of after bliss,
I know no sorrow can be compared to his.

LANCELOT.
Well, since thou wert ordained to beggary,
Follow thy fortune; I defy thee, I.

OLIVER.

Ywood che were so well ydoussed as was ever white cloth in a tocking mill, and che ha not made me weep.

FATHER.
If he hath any grace, he'll now repent.

ARTHUR.
It moves my heart.

WEATHERCOCK.
By my troth, I must weep, I can not choose.

UNCLE.
None but a beast would such a maid misuse.

FLOWERDALE.
Content thy self, I hope to win his favour,
And to redeem my reputation lost:
And, gentlemen, believe me, I beseech you:
I hope your eyes shall behold such change,
As shall deceive your expectation.

OLIVER.
I would che were ysplit now, but che believe him.

LANCELOT.
How, believe him?

WEATHERCOCK.

By the mackins, I do.

LANCELOT.
What, do you think that ere he will have grace?

WEATHERCOCK.
By my faith, it will go hard.

OLIVER.

Well, che vor ye, he is changed: and Master Flowerdale, in hope you been so, hold, there's vorty pound toward your zetting up: what, be not ashamed; vang it, man, vang it: be a good husband, loven your wife: and you shall not want for vorty more, I che vor thee.

ARTHUR.
My means are little, but if you'll follow me,
I will instruct my ablest power:
But to your wife I give this diamond,
And prove true diamond fair in all your life.

FLOWERDALE.
Thanks, good Sir Arthur, Master Oliver,
You being my enemy, and grown so kind,
Binds me in all endeavor to restore—

OLIVER.

What! restore me no restorings, man. I have vorty pound more for Lucy; here, vang it: Zouth, chil devie London else. What, do not think me a Mezel or a Scoundrel to throw away my money: che have a hundred pound more to pace of any good spotation: I hope your vader and your uncle here wil vollow my examples.

UNCLE.

You have guessed right of me; if he leave of this course of life, he shall be mine heir.

LANCELOT.
But he shall never get a groat of me:
A cozener, a deceiver, one that killed
His painful father, honest gentleman
That passed the fearful danger of the sea,
To get him living and maintain him brave.

WEATHERCOCK.
What, hath he killed his father?

LANCELOT.
Aye, sir, with conceit of his wild courses.

FATHER.
Sir, you are misinformed.

LANCELOT.
Why, thou old knave, thou toldst me so thy self.

FATHER.
I wronged him then: and toward my Master's stock,
There's twenty nobles for to make amends.

FLOWERDALE.
No, Kester, I have troubled thee, and wronged thee more.
What thou in love gives, I in love restore.

FRANCES.

Ha, ha, sister, there you played bo-peep with Tom. What shall I give her toward household? Sister Delia, shall I give her my fan?

DELIA.
You were best ask your husband.

FRANCES.
Shall I, Tom?

CIVET.

Aye, do, Frances; I'll buy thee a new one, with a longer handle.

FRANCES.

A russet one, Tom.

CIVET.
Aye, with russet feathers.

FRANCES.

Here, sister, there's my fan towad household, to keep you warm.

LUCY.
I thank you, sister.

WEATHERCOCK.

Why this is well, and toward fair Lucy's stock, here's forty shillings: and forty good shillings more, I'll give her, marry. Come, Sir Lancelot, I must have you friends.

LANCELOT.
Not I, all this is counterfeit;
He will consume it, were it a million.

FATHER.
Sir, what is your daughter's dower worth?

LANCELOT.
Had she been married to an honest man,

It had been better than a thousand pound.

FATHER.
Pay it him, and I'll give you my bond,
To make her jointer better worth than three.

LANCELOT.
Your bond, sir? why, what are you?

FATHER.
One whose word in London, though I say it,
Will pass there for as much as yours.

LANCELOT.
Wert not thou late that unthrift's serving-man?

FATHER.
Look on me better, now my scar is off.
Ne'er muse, man, at this metamorphosis.

LANCELOT.
Master Flowerdale!

FLOWERDALE.
My father! O, I shame to look on him.
Pardon, dear father, the follies that are past.

FATHER.
Son, son, I do, and joy at this thy change,
And applaud thy fortune in this virtuous maid,
Whom heaven hath sent to thee to save thy soul

LUCY.
This addeth joy to joy, high heaven be praised.

FATHER.
I caused that rumour to be spread myself,
Because I'd see the humours of my son,
Which to relate the circumstance is needless:
And, sirrah, see you run no more into
That same disease:
For he that's once cured of that malady,
Of Riot, Swearing, Drunkenness, and Pride,
And falls again into the like distress,
That fever is deadly, doth till death endure:
Such men die mad as of a callenture.

FLOWERDALE.
Heaven helping me, I'll hate the course as hell.

UNCLE.
Say it and do it, cousin, all is well.

LANCELOT.
Well, being in hope you'll prove an honest man,

I take you to my favour. Brother Flowerdale,
Welcome with all my heart: I see your care
Hath brought these acts to this conclusion,
And I am glad of it: come, let's in and feast.

OLIVER.
Nay, zoft you awhile: you promised to make Sir
Arthur and me amends. Here is your wisest daughter;
see which ans she'll have.

LANCELOT.
A God's name, you have my good will, get hers.

OLIVER.
How say you then, damsel, tyters hate?

DELIA.
I, sir, am yours.

OLIVER.

Why, then, send for a Vicar, and chil have it dispatched in a trice, so chill.

DELIA.
Pardon me, sir, I mean I am yours,
In love, in duty, and affection,
But not to love as wife: shall ne'er be said,
Delia was buried married, but a maid.

ARTHUR.
Do not condemn yourself forever,
Virtuous fair, you were born to love.

OLIVER.

Why, you say true, Sir Arthur, she was ybere to it so well as her mother: but I pray you shew us some zamples or reasons why you will not marry.

DELIA.
Not that I do condemn a married life,
For tis no doubt a sanctimonious thing:
But for the care and crosses of a wife,
The trouble in that world that children bring;
My vow is in heaven in earth to live alone,
Husbands, howsoever good, I will have none.

OLIVER.

Why, then che will live Bachelor too. Che zet not a vig by a wife, if a wife zet not a vig by me. Come, shalls go to dinner?

FATHER.
Tomorrow I crave your companies in Mark-lane:
Tonight we'll frolic in Master Civet's house,
And to each health drink down a full carouse.

FINIS

THE PURITAN

OR THE WIDOW OF WATLING STREET

This comedy was first published in 1607 and is often attributed to Thomas Middleton, but also belongs to the Shakespeare Apocrypha due to the title page bearing an attribution to "W.S.". *The Puritan* probably dates from the year 1606. Some of its incidents are drawn from a contemporary work called *The Merry Conceited Jests of George Peele* , which attributes to the writer George Peele a number of tricks and jokes that can be found in previous popular literature. It contains an allusion to an almanac that specifies 15 July as a Tuesday, which was true only of 1606 in the first decade of the 17th century (although the author may not have intended it to be accurate). And the play's interest in corporal oaths may be related to the demands for oaths of allegiance from Catholics following the Gunpowder Plot.

Entered into the Stationers' Register on 6 August 1607, *The Puritan* was published in quarto format before the end of the year by the printer George Eld. The title page states that the play was performed by the Children of Paul's, one of the boys' acting companies of the era, and attributes its authorship to "W. S." These initials were first identified with Shakespeare by Edward Archer in his 1656 play list, published in his edition of The Old Law. The Puritan was later added to the second impression of the Shakespeare Third Folio (1664) by publisher Philip Chetwinde, bringing the play into the Shakespeare Apocrypha. The modern scholarly consensus rejects the identification of "W. S." with Shakespeare.

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DRAMATIS PERSONAE

Lady Plus, a Citizens Widow.
Frances,
Moll, her two Daughters.
Sir Godfrey, Brother-in-Law to the Widow Plus.
Master Edmond, Son to the Widow Plus.
George Pye-boord, a Scholar and a Citizen.
Peter Skirmish, an old Soldier.
Captain Idle, a Highway-man.
Corporal Oath, a vain-glorious Fellow.
Nichols St. Antlings,
Simon St. Mary Overies,
Frailty, Servingmen to the Lady Plus.
Sir Oliver Muckhill, a Suitor to the Lady Plus.
Sir John Penny-Dub, a Suitor to Moll.
Sir Andrew Tipstaff, a Suitor to Frances.
The Sheriff of London.
Puttock,
Ravenshaw, Two of the Sheriffs Sergeants.
Dogson, a Yeoman.
A Noble-man.
A Gentleman Citizen.
Officers.

The Scene London.

ACTUS 1.

SCENE I. A Garden behind the widow's house.

[Enter the Lady Widdow-Plus, her two daughters Frank and Moll, her husband's Brother an old Knight Sir Godfrey, with her Son and heir Master Edmond, all in mourning apparel, Edmond in a Cyrpess Hat. The Widdow wringing her hands, and bursting out Into passion, as newly come from the Burial of her husband.

WIDOW.

Oh, that ever I was borne, that ever I was borne!

SIR GODFREY.

Nay, good Sister, dear sister, sweet sister, be of good comfort; show your self a woman, now or never.

WIDOW.

Oh, I have lost the dearest man, I have buried the sweetest husband that ever lay by woman.

SIR GODFREY.

Nay, give him his due, he was indeed an honest, virtuous, Discreet, wise man,--he was my Brother, as right as right.

WIDOW.

O, I shall never forget him, never forget him; he was a man so well given to a woman--oh!

SIR GODFREY.

Nay, but, kind Sister, I could weep as much as any woman, but, alas, our tears cannot call him again: me thinks you are well read, Sister, and know that death is as common as Homo, a common name to all men:--a man shall be taken when he's making water.--Nay, did not the learned Parson, Master Pigman, tell us e'en now, that all Flesh is frail, we are borne to die, Man ha's but a time: with such like deep and profound persuasions, as he is a rare fellow, you know, and an excellent Reader: and for example, (as there are examples aboundance,) did not Sir Humfrey Bubble die tother day? There's a lusty Widdow; why, she cried not above half an hour--for shame, for shame! Then followed him old Master Fulsome, the Usurer: there's a wise Widdow; why, she cried ne'er a whit at all.

WIDOW.

O, rank not me with those wicked women: I had a husband Out-shined 'em all.

SIR GODFREY.

Aye, that he did, yfaith: he out-shined 'em all.

WIDOW.

Doost thou stand there and see us all weep, and not once shed a tear for thy father's death? oh, thou ungratious son and heir, thou!

EDMOND.

Troth, Mother, I should not weep, I'm sure; I am past a child, I hope, to make all my old School fellows laugh at me; I should be mocked, so I should. Pray, let one of my Sisters weep for me. I'll laugh as much for her another time.

WIDOW.

Oh, thou past-Grace, thou! out of my sight, thou graceless imp, thou grievest me more than the death of thy Father! oh, thou stubborn only son! hadst thou such an honest man to thy Father--that would deceive all the world to get riches for thee--and canst thou not afford a little salt water? he that so wisely did quite over-throw the right heir of those lands, which now you respect not: up every morning betwixt four and five; so duly at Westminster Hall every Term-Time, with all his Cards and writings, for thee, thou wicked Absolon-- oh, dear husband!

EDMOND.

Weep, quotha? I protest I am glad he's Churched; for now he's gone, I shall spend in quiet.

FRANCES.

Dear mother, pray cease; half your Tears suffice. Tis time for you to take truce with your eyes; Let me weep now.

WIDOW.

Oh, such a dear knight! such a sweet husband have I lost, have I lost!--If Blessed be the coarse the rain rains upon, he had it pouring down.

SIR GODFREY.

Sister, be of good cheer, we are all mortal our selves. I come upon you freshly. I near speak without comfort, hear me what I shall say:--my brother ha's left you wealthy, y'are rich.

WIDOW.

Oh!

SIR GODFREY.

I say y'are rich: you are also fair.

WIDOW.

Oh!

SIR GODFREY.

Go to, y'are fair, you cannot smother it; beauty will come to light; nor are your years so far enter'd with you, but that you will be sought after, and may very well answer another husband; the world is full of fine Gallants, choice enow, Sister,--for what should we do with all our Knights, I pray, but to marry rich widows, wealthy Citizens' widows, lusty fair-browed Ladies? go to, be of good comfort, I say: leave snobbing and weeping--Yet my Brother was a kind hearted man--I would not have the Elf see me now!--Come, pluck up a woman's heart--here stands your Daughters, who be well estated, and at maturity will also be enquir'd after with good husbands, so all these tears shall be soon dried up and a better world than ever--What, Woman? you must not weep still; he's dead, he's buried--yet I cannot choose but weep for him!

WIDOW.

Marry again! no! let me be buried quick then! And that same part of Quire whereon I tread To such intent, O may it be my grave; And that the priest may turn his wedding prayers, E'en with a breath, to funeral dust and ashes! Oh, out of a million of millions, I should ne'er find such a husband; he was unmatchable,--unmatchable! nothing was too hot, nor too dear for me, I could not speak of that one thing, that I had not: beside I had keys of all, kept all, receiv'd all, had money in my purse, spent what I would, came home when I would, and did all what I would. Oh, my sweet husband! I shall never have the like.

SIR GODFREY.

Sister, ne'er say so; he was an honest brother of mine, and so, and you may light upon one as honest again, or one as honest again may light upon you: that's the properer phrase, indeed.

WIDOW.

Never! Oh, if you love me, urge it not.

[Kneels.]

Oh may I be the by-word of the world, The common talk at Table in the mouth Of every Groom and Waiter, if e'er more I entertain the carnal suite of Man!

MOLL.

I must kneel down for fashion too.

FRANCES.

And I, whom never man as yet hath scald, E'ev in this depth of general sorrow, vow Never to marry, to sustain such loss As a dear husband seems to be, once dead.

MOLL.

I lov'd my father well, too; but to say, Nay, vow, I would not marry for his death-- Sure, I should speak false Latin, should I not? I'd as soon vow never to come in Bed. Tut! Women must live by th' quick, and not by th' dead.

WIDOW.

Dar Copy of my husband, oh let me kiss thee. How like is this Model! This brief Picture

[Drawing out her husband's Picture.]

Quickens my tears: my sorrows are renew'd At this fresh sight.

SIR GODFREY.

Sister--

WIDOW.

Away, All honesty with him is turn'd to clay. Oh my sweet husband, oh--

FRANCES.

My dear father!

[Exeunt mother and Frances.]

MOLL.

Here's a pulling, indeed! I think my Mother weeps for all the women that ever buried husbands; for if from time to time all the Widowers' tears in England had been bottled up, I do not think all would have filled a three-half-penny Bottle. Alas, a small matter bucks a hand-kercher,--and sometimes the spittle stands to nie Saint Thomas a Watrings. Well, I can mourn in good sober sort as well as another; but where I spend one tear for a dead Father, I could give twenty kisses for a quick husband.

[Exit Moll.]

SIR GODFREY.

Well, go thy ways, old Sir Godfrey, and thou mayest be proud on't, thou hast a kind loving sister-in-law; how constant! how passionate! how full of April the poor soul's eyes are! Well, I would my Brother knew on't, he would then know what a kind wife he had left behind him: truth, and twere not for shame that the Neighbours at th' next garden should hear me, between joy and grief I should e'en cry out-right!

[Exit Sir Godfrey.]

EDMOND.

So, a fair riddance! My father's laid in dust; his Coffin and he is like a whole-meat-pye, and the worms will cut him up shortly.

Farewell, old Dad, farewell. I'll be curb'd in no more. I perceived a son and heir may quickly be made a fool, and he will be one, but I'll take another order.--Now she would have me weep for him, for-sooth, and why? because he cozn'd the right heir, being a fool, and bestow'd those Lands upon me his eldest Son; and therefore I must weep for him, ha, ha. Why, all the world knows, as long as twas his pleasure to get me, twas his duty to get for me: I know the law in that point; no Attorney can gull me. Well, my Uncle is an old Ass, and an Admirable Cockscomb. I'll rule the Roast my self. I'll be kept under no more; I know what I may do well enough by my Father's Copy: the Law's in mine own hands now: nay, now I know my strength, I'll be strong enough for my Mother, I warrant you.

[Exit.]

SCENE II. A street.

[Enter George Pye-board, a scholar and a Citizen, and unto him an old soldier, Peter Skirmish.]

PYE.

What's to be done now, old Lad of War? thou that wert wont to be as hot as a turn-spit, as nimble as a fencer, and as lousy as a school-master; now thou art put to silence like a Sectary.--War sits now like a Justice of peace, and does nothing. Where be your Muskets, Caleiuers and Hotshots? in Long-lane, at Pawn, at Pawn.--Now keys are your only Guns, Key-guns, Key-guns, and Bawds the Gunners, who are your Sentinels in peace, and stand ready charg'd to give warning, with hems, hums, and pockey-coffs; only your Chambers are licenc'st to play upon you, and Drabs enow to give fire to 'em.

SKIRMISH.

Well, I cannot tell, but I am sure it goes wrong with me, for since the cessure of the wars, I have spent above a hundred crowns out a purse. I have been a soldier any time this forty years, and now I perceive an old soldier and an old Courtier have both one destiny, and in the end turn both into hob-nails.

PYE.

Pretty mystery for a begger, for indeed a hob-nail is the true emblem of a begger's shoe-sole.

SKIRMISH.

I will not say but that war is a blood-sucker, and so; but, in my conscience, (as there is no soldier but has a piece of one, though it be full of holes like a shot Antient; no matter, twill serve to swear by) in my conscience, I think some kind of Peace has more hidden oppressions, and violent heady sins, (though looking of a gentle nature) then a profest war.

PYE.

Troth, and for mine own part, I am a poor Gentleman, and a Scholar: I have been matriculated in the University, wore out six Gowns there, seen some fools, and some Scholars, some of the City, and some of the Country, kept order, went bare-headed over the Quadrangle, eat my Commons with a good stomach, and Battled with Discretion; at last, having done many slights and tricks to maintain my wit in use (as my brain would never endure me to be idle,) I was expeld the University, only for stealing a Cheese out of Jesus College.

SKIRMISH.

Ist possible?

PYE.

Oh! there was one Welshman (God forgive him) pursued it hard; and never left, till I turned my staff toward London, where when I came, all my friends were pitt-hold, gone to Graves, (as indeed there was but a few left before.) Then was I turned to my wits, to shift in the world, to tower among Sons and Heirs, and Fools, and Gulls, and Lady's eldest Sons, to work upon nothing, to feed out of Flint, and ever since has my belly been much beholding to my brain. But, now, to return to you, old Skirmish: I say as you say, and for my part wish a Turbulency in the world, for I have nothing to lose but my wits, and I think they are as mad as they will be: and to strengthen your Argument the more, I say an honest war is better than a bawdy peace, as touching my profession. The multiplicity of Scholars, hatcht and nourisht in the idle Calms of peace, makes 'em like Fishes one devour another; and the community of Learning has so played upon affections, and thereby almost Religion is come about to Phantasy, and discredited by being too much spoken off-in so many and mean mouths, I my self, being a Scholar and a Graduate, have no other comfort by my learning, but the Affection of my words, to know how Scholar-like to name what I want, and can call my self a Begger both in Greek and Latin: and therefore, not to cog with Peace, I'll not be afraid to say, 'tis a great Breeder, but a barren Nourisher: a great getter of Children, which mus either be Thieves or Rich-men, Knaves or Beggers.

SKIRMISH.

Well, would I had been born a Knave then, when I was born a Begger; for if the truth were known, I think I was begot when my Father had never a penny in his purse.

PYE.

Puh, faint not, old Skirmish; let this warrant thee, Facilis Descensus Averni, 'tis an easy journey to a Knave; thou mayest be a Knave when thou wilt; and Peace is a good Madam to all other professions, and an arrant Drab to us, let us handle her accordingly, and by our wits thrive in despite of her; for since the law lives by quarrels, the Courtier by smooth God-morrows; and every profession makes it self greater by imperfections, why not we then by shifts, wiles, and forgeries? and seeing our brains are our only Patrimonies, let's spend with judgment, not like a desperate son and heir, but like a sober and discreet Templar,--one that will never march beyond the bounds of his allowance. And for our thriving means, thus: I my self will put on the Deceit of a Fortune-teller.

SKIRMISH.

A Fortune-teller? Very proper.

PYE.

And you of a figure-caster, or a Conjurer.

SKIRMISH.

A Conjurer?

PYE.

Let me alone; I'll instruct you, and teach you to deceive all eyes, but the Devil's.

SKIRMISH.

Oh aye, for I would not deceive him, and I could choose, of all others.

PYE.

Fear not, I warrant you; and so by those means we shall help one another to Patients, as the condition of the age affords creatures enow for cunning to work upon.

SKIRMISH.

Oh wondrous! new fools and fresh Asses.

PYE.

Oh, fit, fit! excellent.

SKIRMISH.

What, in the name of Conjuring?

PYE.

My memory greets me happily with an admirable subject to gaze upon: The

Lady-Widdow, who of late I saw weeping in her Garden for the death of her Husband; sure she 'as but a watrish soul, and half on't by this time is dropt out of her Eyes: device well managed may do good upon her: it stands firm, my first practise shall be there.

SKIRMISH.

You have my voice, George.

PYE.

Sh'as a gray Gull to her Brother, a fool to her only son, and an Ape to her youngest Daughter.--I overheard 'em severally, and from their words I'll derive my device; and thou, old Peter Skirmish, shall be my second in all slights.

SKIRMISH.

Ne'er doubt me, George Pye-board,--only you must teach me to conjure.

[Enter Captain Idle, pinioned, and with a guard of Officers passeth over the Stage.]

PYE.

Puh, I'll perfect thee, Peter.--How now? what's he?

SKIRMISH.

Oh George! this sight kills me. Tis my sworn Brother, Captain Idle.

PYE.

Captain Idle!

SKIRMISH.

Apprehended for some felonious act or other. He has started out, h'as made a Night on't, lackt silver. I cannot but commend his resolution; he would not pawn his Buff-Jerkin. I would either some of us were employed, or might pitch our Tents at Usurers' doors, to kill the slaves as they peep out at the Wicket.

PYE.

Indeed, those are our ancient Enemies; they keep our money in their hands, and make us to be hangd for robbing of 'em. But, come, let's follow after to the Prison, and know the Nature of his offence; and what we can steed him in, he shall be sure of; and I'll uphold it still, that a charitable Knave is better then a soothing Puritain.

[Exeunt.]

SCENE III. A Street.

[Enter at one door Corporal Oath, a Vain-glorious fellow; and at the other, three of the Widdow Puritain's Servingmen, Nicholas Saint-Tantlings, Simon Saint-Mary-Overaries, and Frailty, in black scurvy mourning coats, and Books at their Girdles, as coming from Church. They meet.]

NICHOLAS.

What, Corporal Oath? I am sorry we have met with you, next our hearts; you are the man that we are forbidden to keep company withall. We must not swear I can tell you, and you have the name for swearing.

SIMON.

Aye, Corporal Oath, I would you would do so much as forsake us, sir; we cannot abide you, we must not be seen in your company.

FRAILTY.

There is none of us, I can tell you, but shall be soundly whipt for swearing.

CORPORAL.

Why, how now, we three? Puritanical Scrape-shoes, Flesh a good Fridays! a hand.

ALL.

Oh!

CORPORAL.

Why, Nicholas Saint-Tantlings, Simon Saint Mary Ovaries, ha's the De'el possest you, that you swear no better? you half-Christned Catomites, you ungod-mothered Varlets, do's the first lesson teach you to be proud, and the second to be Cockscombs? proud Cockscombs! not once to do duty to a man of Mark!

FRAILTY.

A man of Mark, quatha! I do not think he can shew a Begger's Noble.

CORPORAL.

A Corporal, a Commander, one of spirit, that is able to blow you up all dry with your Books at your Girdles.

SIMON.

We are not taught to believe that, sir, for we know the breath of man is weak.

[Corporal breathes upon Frailty.]

FRAILTY.

Foh, you lie, Nicholas; for here's one strong enough. Blow us up, quatha: he may well blow me above twelve-score off an him. I warrant, if the wind stood right, a man might smell him from the top of Newgate, to the Leads of Ludgate.

CORPORAL.

Sirrah, thou Hollow-Book of Max-candle--

NICHOLAS.

Aye, you may say what you will, so you swear not.

CORPORAL.

I swear by the--

NICHOLAS.

Hold, hold, good Corporal Oath; for if you swear once, we shall all fall down in a swoon presently.

CORPORAL.

I must and will swear: you quivering Cockscombs, my Captain is imprisoned, and by Vulcan's Leather Cod-piece point--

NICHOLAS.

O Simon, what an oath was there.

FRAILTY.

If he should chance to break it, the poor man's Breeches would fall down about his heels, for Venus allows him but one point to his hose.

CORPORAL.

With these my Bully-Feet I will thump ope the Prison doors, and brain the Keeper with the begging Box, but I'll see my honest sweet Captain Idle at liberty.

NICHOLAS.

How, Captain Idle? my old Aunt's son, my dear Kinsman, in Capadochio?

CORPORAL.

Aye, thou Church-peeling, thou Holy-paring, religious outside, thou! if thou hadst any grace in thee, thou would'st visit him, relieve him, swear to get him out.

NICHOLAS.

Assure you, Corporal, indeed-lam tis the first time I heard on't.

CORPORAL.

Why do't now, then, Marmaset: bring forth thy yearly-wages, let not a Commander perish!

SIMON.

But, if he be one of the wicked, he shall perish.

NICHOLAS.

Well, Corporal, I'll e'en them along with you, to visit my Kinsman: if I can do him any good, I will,--but I have nothing for him. Simon Saint Mary Ovaries and Frailty, pray make a lie for me to the Knight my Master, old Sir Godfrey.

CORPORAL.

A lie? may you lie then?

FRAILTY.

O, aye, we may lie, but we must not swear.

SIMON.

True, we may lie with our Neighbor's wife, but we must not swear wedid so.

CORPORAL.

Oh, an excellent Tag of religion!

NICHOLAS.

Oh Simon, I have thought upon a sound excuse; it will go currant: say that I am gone to a Fast.

SIMON.

To a Fast? very good.

NICHOLAS.

Aye, to a Fast, say, with Master Fullbelly the Minister.

SIMON.

Master Fullbelly? an honest man: he feeds the flock well, for he's an excellent feeder.

[Exit Corporal, Nicholas.]

FRAILTY.

Oh, aye, I have seen him eat up a whole Pig, and afterward fall to the pittitoes.

[Exit Simon and Frailty.]

SCENE IV.

The Prison, Marshalsea.

[Enter Captain Idle at one door, and later Pye-board and old soldier at the other. George Pye-board, speaking within.]

PYE.

Pray turn the key.

SKIRMISH.

Turn the key, I pray.

CAPTAIN.

Who should those be? I almost know their voices.-- O my friends!

[Entering.]

Ya're welcome to a smelling Room here. You newly took leave of the air; ist not a strange savour?

PYE.

As all prisons have: smells of sundry wretches, Who, tho departed, leave their scents behind 'em. By Gold, Captain, I am sincerely sorry for thee.

CAPTAIN.

By my troth, George, I thank thee; but pish,--what must be, must be.

SKIRMISH.

Captain, what do you lie in for? ist great? what's your offence?

CAPTAIN.

Faith, my offence is ordinary,--common: A Highway; and I fear me my penalty will be ordinary and common too: a halter.

PYE.

Nay, prophecy not so ill; it shall go h

eard, But I'll shift for thy life.

CAPTAIN.

Whether I live or die, thou'art an honest George. I'll tell you--silver flowed not with me, as it had done, (for now the tide runs to Bawds and flatterers.) I had a start out, and by chance set upon a fat steward, thinking his purse had been as pursey as his body; and the slave had about him but the poor purchase of ten groats: notwithstanding, being descried, pursued, and taken, I know the Law is so grim, in respect of many desperate, unsettled soldiers, that I fear me I shall dance after their pipe for't.

SKIRMISH.

I am twice sorry for you, Captain: first that your purchase was so small, and now that your danger is so great.

CAPTAIN.

Push, the worst is but death,--ha you a pipe of Tobacco about you?

SKIRMISH.

I think I have there abouts about me.

[Captain blows a pipe.]

CAPTAIN.

Here's a clean Gentleman, too, to receive.

PYE.

Well, I must cast about some happy slight. Work brain, that ever didst thy Master right!

CAPTAIN.

Keeper! let the key be turn'd!

[Corporal and Nicholas within.]

NICHOLAS.

Aye, I pray, Master keeper, give's a cast of your office.

CAPTAIN.

How now? more Visitants?--what, Corporal Oath?

PYE.

Corporal?

SKIRMISH.

Corporal?

CORPORAL.

In prison, honest Captain? this must not be.

NICHOLAS.

How do you, Captain Kinsman>

CAPTAIN.

Good Cockscomb! what makes that pure, starch'd fool here?

NICHOLAS.

You see, Kinsman, I am somewhat bold to call in, and see how you do. I heard you were safe enough, and I was very glad on't that it was no worse.

CAPTAIN.

This is a double torture now,--this fool by'th book Do's vex me more than my imprisonment. What meant you, Corporal, to hook him hither?

CORPORAL.

Who, he? he shall relieve thee, and supply thee; I'll make him do 't.

CAPTAIN.

[Aside, to Oath.] Fie, what vain breath you spend! he supply? I'll sooner expect mercy from a Usurer when my bond's Forfeited, sooner kindness from a Layer when my money's spent: Nay, sooner charity from the devil, than good from a Puritan! I'll look for relief from him, when Lucifer is restor'd to his blood, and in Heaven again.

NICHOLAS.

I warrant, my Kinsman's talking of me, for my left ear burns most tyrannically.

PYE.

Captain Idle, what's he there? he looks like a Monkey upward, and a Crane down-ward.

CAPTAIN.

Pshaw, a foolish Cousin of mine; I must thank God for him.

PYE.

Why, the better subject to work a scape upon; thou shalt o'en change clothes with him, and leave him here, and so--

CAPTAIN.

Push, I publish't him e'en now to my Corporal: he will be damned, ere he do me so much good; why, I know a more proper, a more handsome device than that, if the slave would be sociable. Now, goodman Fleer-face.

NICHOLAS.

Oh, my Cousin begins to speak to me now: I shall be acquainted with him again, I hope.

SKIRMISH.

Look what ridiculous Raptures take hold of his wrinkles.

PYE.

Then, what say you to this device? a happy one, Captain?

CAPTAIN.

Speak low, George; Prison Rats have wider ears than those in Malt-lofts.

NICHOLAS.

Cousin, if it lay in my power, as they say--to--do--

CAPTAIN.

Twould do me an exceeding pleasure, indeed, that, but ne'er talk forder on't: the fool will be hang'd, ere he do't.

[To the Corporal.]

CORPORAL.

Pax, I'll thump 'im to't.

PYE.

Why, do but try the Fopster, and break it to him bluntly.

CAPTAIN.

And so my disgrace will dwell in his Jaws, and the slave slaver out our purpose to his Master, for would I were but as sure on't as I am sure he will deny to do't.

NICHOLAS.

I would be heartily glad, Cousin, if any of my friendships, as they say, might--

stand--ah--

PYE.

Why, you see he offers his friendship foolishly to you already.

CAPTAIN.

Aye, that's the hell on't, I would he would offer it wisely.

NICHOLAS.

Verily, and indeed la, Cousin--

CAPTAIN.

I have took note of thy fleers a good while: if thou art minded to do me good--as thou gapst upon me comfortably, and giv'st me charitable faces, which indeed is but a fashion in you all that are Puritains--wilt soon at night steal me thy Master's chain?

NICHOLAS.

Oh, I shall swoon!

PYE.

Corporal, he starts already.

CAPTAIN.

I know it to be worth three hundred Crowns, and with the half of that I can buy my life at a Brokers, at second hand, which now lies in pawn to th' Law: if this thou refuse to do, being easy and nothing dangerous, in that thou art held in good opinion of thy Master, why tis a palpable Argument thou holdst my life at no price, and these thy broken and unioynted offers are but only created in thy lip, now borne, and now buried, foolish breath only. What, woult do't? shall I look for happiness in thy answer?

NICHOLAS.

Steal my Master's chain, qu'the? no, it shall ne'er be said, that Nicholas Saint Tantlings committed Bird-lime!

CAPTAIN.

Nay, I told you as much; did I not? tho he be a Puritain, yet he will be a true man.

NICHOLAS.

Why, Cousin, you know tis written, thou shalt not steal.

CAPTAIN.

Why, and fool, thou shalt love thy Neighbour, and help him in extremities.

NICHOLAS.

Mass, I think it be, indeed: in what Chapter's that, Cousin?

CAPTAIN.

Why, in the first of Charity, the 2. Verse.

NICHOLAS.

The first of Charity, quatha! that's a good jest; there's no such Chapter in my book!

CAPTAIN.

No, I knew twas torn out of thy Book, and that makes so little in thy heart.

PYE.

Come, let me tell you, ya're too unkind a Kinsman, yfaith; the Captain loving you so dearly, aye, like the Pomwater of his eye, and you to be so uncomfortable: fie, fie.

NICHOLAS.

Pray, do not wish me to be hangd: any thing else that I can do, had it been to rob, I would ha don't; but I must not steal: that's the word, the literal, thou shalt not steal; and would you wish me to steal, then?

PYE.

No, faith, that were too much, to speak truth: why, woult thou nim it from him?

NICHOLAS.

That I will!

PYE.

Why, ynough, bully; he shall be content with that, or he shall ha none; let me alone with him now! Captain, I ha dealt with your Kinsman in a Corner; a good, kind-natured fellow, me thinks: go to, you shall not have all your own asking, you shall bate somewhat on't: he is not contented absolutely, as you would say, to steal the chain from him,-- but to do you a pleasure, he will nim it from him.

NICHOLAS.

Aye, that I will, Cousin.

CAPTAIN.

Well, seeing he will do no more, as far as I see, I must be contented with that.

CORPORAL.

Here's no notable gullery!

PYE.

Nay, I'll come nearer to you, Gentleman: because we'll have only but a help and a mirth on't, the knight shall not lose his chain neither, but it shall be only laid out of the way some one or two days.

NICHOLAS.

Aye, that would be good indeed, Kinsman.

PYE.

For I have a farder reach to profit us better by the missing on't only, than if we had it out-right, as my discourse shall make it known to you.--When thou hast the chain, do but convey it out at back-door into the Garden, and there hang it close in the Rosemary bank but for a small season; and by that harmless device, I know how to wind Captain Idle out of prison: the Knight thy Master shall get his pardon and release him, and he satisfy thy Master with his own chain, and wondrous thanks on both hands.

NICHOLAS.

That were rare indeed, la: pray, let me know how.

PYE.

Nay, tis very necessary thou shouldst know, because thou must be employed as an Actor.

NICHOLAS.

An Actor? O no, that's a Player; and our Parson rails again Players mightily, I can tell you, because they brought him drunk up'oth Stage once,--as he will be horribly drunk.

CORPORAL.

Mass, I cannot blame him then, poor Church-spout.

PYE.

Why, as an Intermedler, then?

NICHOLAS.

Aye, that, that.

PYE.

Give me Audience, then: when the old Knight thy Master has raged his fill for the loss of the chain, tell him thou hast a Kinsman in prison, of such exquisite Art, that the devil himself is French Lackey to him, and runs bare-headed by his horse-belly (when he has one) whom he will cause with most Irish Dexterity to fetch his chain, tho twere hid under a mine of sea-coal, and ne'er make Spade or Pickaxe his instruments: tell him but this, with farder instructions thou shalt receive from me, and thou shoust thy self a Kinsman indeed.

CORPORAL.

A dainty Bully.

SKIRMISH.

An honest Book-keeper.

CAPTAIN.

And my three times thrice honey Cousin.

NICHOLAS.

Nay, grace of God, I'll rob him on't suddenly, and hang it in the Rosemary bank; but I bear that mind, Cousin, I would not steal any thing, me thinks, for mine own Father.

SKIRMISH.

He bears a good mind in that, Captain!

PYE.

Why, well said; he begins to be an honest felow, faith.

CORPORAL.

In troth, he does.

NICHOLAS.

You see, Cousin, I am willing to do you any kindness, always saving my self harmless.

[Exit Nicholas.]

CAPTAIN.

Why, I thank thee; fare thee well, I shall requite it.

CORPORAL.

Twill be good for thee, Captain, that thou has such an egregious Ass to thy Cousin.

CAPTAIN.

Aye, is he not a fine fool, Corporal? But, George, thou talkst of Art and Conjuring; How shall that be?

PYE.

Puh, be't not in your care: Leave that to me and my directions. Well, Captain, doubt not thy delivery now, E'en with the vantage, man, to gain by prison, As my thoughts prompt me: hold on, brain and plot! I aim at many cunning far events, All which I doubt not but to hit at length. I'll to the Widdow with a quaint assault. Captain, be merry.

CAPTAIN.

Who, I? Kerrie, merry, Buff-Jerkin.

PYE.

Oh, I am happy in more slights, and one will knit strong in another.--Corporal Oath.

CORPORAL.

Hoh, Bully?

PYE.

And thou, old Peter Skirmish; I have a necessary task for you Both.

SKIRMISH.

Lay't upon, George Pye-board.

CORPORAL.

What ere it be, we'll manage it.

PYE.

I would have you two maintain a quarrel before the Lady Widdow's door, and draw your swords i'th edge of the Evening; clash a little, clash, clash.

CORPORAL.

Fuh! Let us alone to make our Blades ring noon, Tho it be after Supper.

PYE.

I know you can. And out of that false fire, I doubt not but to raise strange belief--And, Captain, to countenance my device the better, and grace my words to the Widdow, I have a good plain Satin suit, that I had of a young Reveller t'other night: for words pass not regarded now a days, unless they come from a good suit of clothes, which the Fates and my wits have bestowed upon me. Well, Captain Idle, if I did not highly love thee, I would ne'er be seen within twelve score of a prison, for I protest at this instant, I walk in great danger of small debts; I owe money to several Hostesses, and you know such Jills will quickly be upon a man's Jack.

CAPTAIN.

True, George.

PYE.

Fare thee well, Captain. Come, Corporal and Ancient! thou Shalt hear more news next time we greet thee.

CORPORAL.

More news! Aye, by yon Bear at Bridge-Foot in heaven shalt thou.

[Exeunt Pye-board, Skirmish, and Oath.]

CAPTAIN.

Enough: my friends, farewell. This prison shows as if Ghosts did part in Hell.

ACTUS II.

SCENE I. A room in the widow's house.

[Enter Moll youngest Daughter to the Widdow: alone.]

MOLL.

Not Marry? forswear Marriage? why, all women know 'tis as honorable a thing as to lie with a man; and I to spite my Sisters vow the more, have entertained a suitor already, a fine gallant Knight of the last Feather: he says he will Coach me too, and well appoint me, allow me money to Dice withall, and many such pleasing protestations he sticks upon my lips; indeed, his short-winded Father ith' Country is wondrous wealthy, a most abominable Farmer, and therefore he may doote in time: troth, I'll venture upon him. Women are not without ways enow to help them-selves: if he prove wise and good as his word, why, I shall love him, and use him kindly: and if he prove an Ass, why, in a quarter of an hour's warning I can transform him into an Ox;--there comes in my Relief again.

[Enter Frailty.]

FRAILTY.

O, Mistress Moll, Mistress Moll.

MOLL.

How now? what's the news?

FRAILTY.

The Knight your suitor, sir John Penny-Dub--

MOLL.

Sir John Penny-Dub? where? where?

FRAILTY.

He's walking in the Gallery.

MOLL.

Has my Mother seen him yet?

FRAILTY.

O no, she's--spitting in the Kitchen.

MOLL.

Direct him hither softly, good Frailty,-- I'll meet him half way.

FRAILTY.

That's just like running a Tilt; but I hope he'll break nothing this time.

[Exit.]

[Enter Sir John Penny-Dub.]

MOLL.

'Tis happiness my Mother saw him not: O welcome, good Sir John.

PENNY-DUB. I thank you, faith.--Nay, you must stand me, till I kiss you: 'tis the fashion every where, I-faith, and I came from Court enow.

MOLL.

Nay, the Fates forfend that I should anger the fashion!

PENNY-DUB. Then, not forgetting the sweet of new ceremonies, I first fall back, then recovering my self, make my honour to your lip thus: and then accost it.

MOLL.

Trust me, very pretty, and moving; y'are worthy on't, sir.

[Kissing: Enter Widdow and Sir Godfrey.]

O, my Mother, my Mother! now she's here, we'll steal into the Gallery.

[Exeunt.]

SIR GODFREY.

Nay, Sister, let Reason rule you, do not play the fool; stand not in your own light. You have wealthy offers, large tendrings; do not withstand your good fortune: who comes a wooing to you, I pray? no small fool; a rich Knight ath City, Sir Oliver Muck-Hill--no small fool I can tell you: and Furthermore, as I heard late by your Maid-servants, (as your Maid-servants will say to me any thing, I thank 'em) both your Daughters are not without Suitors, aye, and worthy ones too! one a Brisk Courtier, Sir Andrew Tip-Staff, suitor a far off to your eldest Daughter, and the third a huge-wealthy Farmer's son, a fine young Country Knight, they call him Sir John Penny-Dub: a good name, marry; he may have it coined when he lacks money. What blessings are these, Sister!

WIDDOW.

Tempt me not, Satan.

SIR GODFREY.

Satan? do I look like Satan? I hope the Devil's not so old as I, I tro.

WIDDOW.

You wound my senses, Brother, when you name A suitor to me:--oh, I cannot abide it, I take in poison, when I hear one nam'd.

[Enter Simon.]

How now, Simon? where's my son Edmund?

SIMON.

Verily Madame, he is at vain Exercise, dripping in the Tennis-court.

WIDDOW.

At Tennis-court? oh, now his father's gone, I shall have no rule with him; oh, wicked Edmond, I might well compare this with the Prophecy in the Chronicle, tho far inferior: as Harry of Monmouth won all, and Harry of Windsor lost all; so Edmund of Bristow, that was the Father, got all, and Edmond of London, that's his son now, will spend all.

SIR GODFREY.

Peace, Sister, we'll have him reformed, there's hope on him yet, tho it be but a little.

[Enter Frailty.]

FRAILTY.

Forsooth, Madam, there are two or three Archers at door would very gladly speak with your Ladyship.

WIDDOW.

Archers?

SIR GODFREY.

Your husband's Fletcher, I warrant.

WIDDOW.

Oh! Let them come near, they bring home things of his. Troth, I should ha forgot 'em. How now, Villain? Which be those Archers?

[Enter the suitors Sir Andrew Tipstaff, Sir Oliver Muckhill, and Penny-dub.]

FRAILTY.

Why, do you not see 'em before you? are not these Archers? what do you call 'em? Shooters: Shooters and Archers are all one, I hope.

WIDDOW.

Out, ignorant slave.

MUCK-HILL. Nay, pray be patient, Lady, We come in way of honorable love.

TIP-STAFF. We do.

PENNY-DUB. We do.

MUCK-HILL. To you.

TIP-STAFF. And to your Daughters.

PENNY-DUB. And to your Daughters.

WIDDOW.

O, why will you offer me this Gentlemen? indeed I will not look upon you--when the Tears are scarce out of mine Eyes, not yet washt off from my Cheeks, and my deer husband's body scarce so cold as the Coffin, what reason have you to offer it? I am not like some of your Widdows that will bury one in the Evening, and be sure to another ere morning. Pray, away; pray, take your answers, good Knights, and you be sweet Knights. I have vow'd never to marry;--and so have my daughters too!

PENNY-DUB. Aye, two of you have, but the third's a good wench!

MUCK-HILL. Lady, a shrewd answer, marry; the best is, tis but the first, and he's a blunt wooer, that will leave for one sharp answer.

TIP-STAFF. Where be your daughters, Lady? I hope they'll give us better encouragements.

WIDDOW.

Indeed, they'll answer you so; tak't a my word, they'll give you the very same answer Verbatim, truly la.

PENNY-DUB. Mum: Moll's a good wench still, I know what she'll do.

MUCK-HILL. Well, Lady, for this time we'll take our leaves, hoping for better comfort.

WIDDOW.

O never, never! and I live these thousand years! and you be good Knights, do not hope; twill be all Vain, Vain,--look you, put off all your suits, and you come to me again.

[Exeunt Sir John and Sir Andrew.]

FRAILTY.

Put off all their suits, quatha? Aye, that's the best wooing of a Widdow, indeed, when a man's Nonsuited; that is, when he's a bed with her.

[Going out, Muckhill and Sir Godfrey.]

MUCK-HILL. Sir Godfrey, here's twenty Angels more: work hard for me; there's life int yet.

[Exit Muckhill.]

SIR GODFREY.

Fear not, Sir Oliver Muckhill, I'll stick close for you; leave all with me.

[Enter George Pye-board, the scholar.]

PYE.

By your leave, Lady Widdow.

WIDDOW.

What, another suitor now?

PYE.

A suitor! no, I protest, Lady, if you'd give me your self, I'd not be troubled with you.

WIDDOW.

Say you so, Sir? then you're the better welcome, sir.

PYE.

Nay, Heaven bless me from a Widdow, unless I were sure to bury her speedily!

WIDDOW.

Good bluntness: well, your business, sir?

PYE.

Very needful; if you were in private once.

WIDDOW.

Needful? brother, pray leave us; and you, sir.

FRAILTY.

I should laugh now, if this blunt fellow should put 'em all by side the stirrup, and vault into the saddle himself. I have seen as mad a trick.

[Exit Frailty.]

[Enter Daughters.]

WIDDOW.

Now Sir?--here's none but we--Daughters, forbear.

PYE.

O no, pray, let 'em stay, for what I have to speak importeth equally to them as to you.

WIDDOW.

Then you may stay.

PYE.

I pray bestow on me a serious ear, For what I speak is full of weight and fear.

WIDDOW.

Fear?

PYE.

Aye, ift pass unregarded, and uneffected; Else peace and joy:--I pray, Attention. Widdow, I have been a mere stranger for these parts that you live in, nor did I ever know the Husband of you, and Father of them, but I truly know by certain spiritual Intelligence, that he is in Purgatory.

WIDDOW.

Purgatory? tuh; that word deserves to be spit upon. I wonder that a man of sober tongue, as you seem to be, should have the folly to believe there's such a place.

PYE.

Well, Lady, in cold blood I speak it; I assure you that there is a Purgatory, in which place I know your husband to reside, and wherein he is like to remain, till the dissolution of the world, till the last general Bon-fire, when all the earth shall melt into nothing and the Seas scald their finny labourers; so long is his abidance, unless you alter the property of your purpose, together with each of your Daughters theirs; that is, the purpose of single life in your self and your eldest Daughter, and the speedy determination of marriage in your youngest.

MOLL.

How knows he that? what, has some Devil told him?

WIDDOW.

Strange he should know our thoughts:--Why, but, Daughter, have you purposed speedy Marriage?

PYE.

You see she tells you aye, for she says nothing. Nay, give me credit as you please. I am a stranger to you, and yet you see I know your determinations, which must come to me Metaphysically, and by a super-natural intelligence.

WIDDOW.

This puts Amazement on me.

FRANCES.

Know our secrets!

MOLL.

I'd thought to steal a marriage: would his tongue Had dropt out when be blabbed it!

WIDDOW.

But, sir, my husband was too honest a dealing man to be now in any purgatories--

PYE.

O, Do not load your conscience with untruths; Tis but mere folly now to gild him o'er, That has past but for Copper. Praises here Cannot unbind him there: confess but truth. I know he got his wealth with a hard grip: Oh hardly, hardly.

WIDDOW.

This is most strange of all: how knows he that?

PYE.

He would eat fools and ignorant heirs clean up; And had his drink from many a poor man's brow, E'en as their labour brewed it. He would scrape riches to him most unjustly; The very dirt between his nails was Ill-got, And not his own,--oh, I groan to speak on't, The thought makes me shudder--shudder!

WIDDOW.

It quakes me too, now I think on't.--Sir, I am much grieved, that you, a stranger, should so deeply wrong my dead husband!

PYE.

Oh!

WIDDOW.

A man that would keep Church so duly; rise early, before his servants, and e'en for Religious hast, go ungartered, unbuttoned, nay, sir Reverence, untrust, to Morning Prayer.

PYE.

Oh, uff.

WIDDOW.

Dine quickly upon high-days, and when I had great guests, would e'en shame me and rise from the Table, to get a good seat at an after-noon Sermon.

PYE.

There's the devil, there's the devil! true, he thought it Sactity enough, if he had killed a man, so tad been done in a Pew, or undone his Neighbour, so ta'd been near enough to th' Preacher. Oh,--a Sermon's a fine short cloak of an hour long, and will hide the upper-part of a dissembler.--Church! Aye, he seemed all Church, and his conscience was as hard as the Pulpit!

WIDDOW.

I can no more endure this.

PYE.

Nor I, widdow, endure to flatter.

WIDDOW.

Is this all your business with me?

PYE.

No, Lady, tis but the induction too'te. You may believe my strains, I strike all true, And if your conscience would leap up to your tongue, your self would affirm it: and that you shall perceive I know of things to come as well as I do of what is present, a Brother of your husband's shall shortly have a loss.

WIDDOW.

A loss; marry, heaven forfend! Sir Godfrey, my brother?

PYE.

Nay, keep in your wonders, will I have told you the fortunes of you all; which are more fearful, if not happily prevented: --for your part and your daughters, if there be not once this day some blood-shed before your door, whereof the human creature dies, two of you--the elder--shall run mad.

MOTHER AND FRANCES.

Oh!

MOLL.

That's not I yet!

PYE.

And with most impudent prostitution show your naked bodies to the view of all beholders.

WIDDOW.

Our naked bodies? fie, for shame!

PYE.

Attend me: and your younger daughter be strocken dumb.

MOLL.

Dumb? out, alas: tis the worst pain of all for a Woman. I'd rather be mad, or run naked, or any thing: dumb?

PYE.

Give ear: ere the evening fall upon Hill, Bog, and Meadow, this my speech shall have past probation, and then shall I be believed accordingly.

WIDDOW.

If this be true, we are all shamed, all undone.

MOLL.

Dumb? I'll speak as much as ever I can possible before evening!

PYE.

But if it so come to pass (as for your fair sakes I wish it may) that this presage of your strange fortunes be prevented by that accident of death and blood-shedding which I before told you of: take heed upon your lives that two of you, which have vow'd never to marry, seek you out husbands with all present speed, and you, the third, that have such a desire to out-strip chastity, look you meddle not with a husband.

MOLL.

A double torment.

PYE.

The breach of this keeps your father in Purgatory, and the punishments that shall follow you in this world would with horror kill the Ear should hear 'em related.

WIDDOW.

Marry? why I vowed never to marry.

FRANCES.

And so did I.

MOLL.

And I vowed never to be such an Ass, but to marry: what a cross Fortune's this!

PYE.

Ladies, tho I be a Fortune-teller, I cannot better Fortunes; you have 'em from me as they are revealed to me: I would they were to your tempers, and fellows with your bloods, that's all the bitterness I would you.

WIDDOW.

Oh, 'tis a just vengeance for my husband's hard purchases.

PYE.

I wish you to be-think your selves, and leave 'em.

WIDDOW.

I'll to Sir Godfrey, my Brother, and acquaint him with these fearful presages.

FRANCES.

For, Mother, they portend losses to him.

WIDDOW.

Oh, aye, they do, they do. If any happy issue crown thy words, I will reward thy cunning.

PYE.

'Tis enough Lady; I wish no higher.

[Exit Widdow and Frances.]

MOLL.

Dumb! and not marry, worse! Neither to speak, nor kiss, a double curse.

[Exit.]

PYE.

So all this comes well about yet. I play the Fortune-teller as well as if I had had a Witch to my Grannam: for by good happiness, being in my Hostesses' Garden, which neighbours the Orchard o the Widdow, I laid the hole of mine ear to a hole in the wall, and heard 'em make these vows, and speak those words upon which I wrought these advantages; and to encourage my forgery the more, I may now perceive in 'em a natural simplicity which will easily swallow an abuse, if any covering be over it: and to confirm my former presage to the Widdow, I have advised old Peter Skirmish, the Soldier, to hurt Corporal Oath upon the Leg; and in that hurry I'll rush amongst 'em, and in stead of giving the Corporal some Cordial to comfort him, I'll power into his mouth a potion of a sleepy Nature, to make him seem as dead; for the which the old soldier being apprehended, and ready to be born to execution, I'll step in, and take upon me the cure of the dead man, upon pain of dying the condemned's death: the Corporal will wake at his minute, when the sleepy force has wrought it self, and so shall I get my self into a most admired opinion, and under the pretext of that cunning, beguile as I see occasion: and if that foolish Nicholas Saint Tantlings keep true time with the chain, my plot will be sound, the Captain delivered, and my wits applauded among scholars and soldiers for ever.

[Exit Pye-board.]

SCENE II. A Garden.

[Enter Nicholas Saint Tantlings with the chain.]

NICHOLAS.

Oh, I have found an excellent advantage to take away the chain: my Master put it off e'en now to say on a new Doublet, and I sneak't it away by little and little most Puritanically. We shall have good sport anon when ha's missed it about my Cousin the Conjurer. The world shall see I'm an honest man of my word, for now I'm going to hang it between Heaven and Earth among the Rosemary branches.

[Exit Nicholas.]

ACTUS 3.

SCENE I. The street before the Widow's house.

[Enter Simon Saint Mary-Ovaries and Frailty.]

FRAILTY.

Sirrah Simon Saint Mary-Ovaries, my Mistress sends away all her suitors and puts fleas in their ears.

SIMON.

Frailty, she does like an honest, chaste, and virtuous woman; for widdows ought not to wallow in the puddle of iniquity.

FRAILTY.

Yet, Simon, many widdows will do't, what so comes on't.

SIMON.

True, Frailty, their filthy flesh desires a Conjunction Copulative. What strangers are within, Frailty?

FRAILTY.

There's none, Simon, but Master Pilfer the Tailor: he's above with Sir Godfrey praising of a Doublet: and I must trudge anon to fetch Master Suds, the Barber.

SIMON.

Master Suds,--a good man; he washes the sins of the Beard clean.

[Enter old Skirmish the soldier.]

SKIRMISH.

How now, creatures? what's a clock?

FRAILTY.

Why, do you take us to be Jack ath' Clock-house?

SKIRMISH.

I say again to you what's a clock.

SIMON.

Truly la, we go by the clock our conscience: all worldly Clocks, we know, go false, and are set by drunken Sextons.

SKIRMISH.

Then what's a clock in your conscience?--oh, I must break off, here comes the corporal--hum, hum!--what's a clock?

[Enter Corporal.]

CORPORAL.

A clock? why, past seventeen.

FRAILTY.

Past seventeen? nay, ha's met with his match now, Corporal Oath will fit him.

SKIRMISH.

Thou doost not bawk or baffle me, doost thou? I am a Soldier--past seventeen!

CORPORAL.

Aye, thou art not angry with the figures, art thou? I will prove it unto thee: 12. and 1. is thirteen, I hope, 2. fourteen, 3. fifteen, 4. sixteen, and 5. Seventeen; then past seventeen: I will take the Dials part in a just cause.

SKIRMISH.

I say 'tis but past five, then.

CORPORAL.

I'll swear 'tis past seventeen, then: doost thou not know numbers? Canst thou not cast?

SKIRMISH.

Cast? dost thou speak of my casting ith' street?

CORPORAL.

Aye, and in the Market place.

SIMON.

Clubs, clubs, clubs!

[Simon runs in.]

FRAILTY.

Aye, I knew by their shuffling, Clubs would be Trump; mass, here's the Knave, and he can do any good upon 'em: Clubs, clubs, clubs.

[Enter Pye-board.]

CORPORAL.

O villain, thou hast opened a vein in my leg.

PYE.

How no! for shame, for shame; put up, put up.

CORPORAL.

By yon blue Welkin, 'twas out of my part, George, to be hurt on the leg.

[Enter Officers.]

PYE.

Oh peace now--I have a Cordial here to comfort thee.

OFFICER.

Down with 'em, down with em; lay hands upon the villain.

SKIRMISH.

Lay hands on me?

PYE.

I'll not be seen among em now.

[Exit Pye-board.]

CORPORAL.

I'm hurt, and had more need have Surgeons Lay hands upon me then rough Officers.

OFFICER.

Go, carry him to be dressed then.

[Exeunt some of the Sheriff's Officers with Corporal Oath.]

This mutinous Soldier shall along with me to prison.

SKIRMISH.

To prison? where's George?

OFFICER.

Away with him.

[Exeunt with Skirmish.]

[Re-enter Pye-board.]

PYE.

So. All lights as I would wish. The amazed widdow Will plant me strongly now in her belief, And wonder at the virtue of my words: For the event turns those presages from em Of being mad and dumb, and begets joy Mingled with admiration. These empty creatures, Soldier and Corporal, were but ordained As instruments for me to work upon. Now to my patient; here's his potion.

[Exit Pye-board.]

SCENE II. An apartment in the Widow's house.]

[Enter the Widdow with her two Daughters.]

WIDDOW.

O wondrous happiness, beyond our thoughts: O lucky fair event! I think our fortunes, Were blest e'en in our Cradles: we are quitted Of all those shameful violent presages By this rash bleeding chance.

Go, Frailty, run, and know, Whether he be yet living, or yet dead, That here before my door received his hurt.

FRAILTY.

Madam, he was carried to the superiour, but if he had no money when he came there, I warrant he's dead by this time.

[Exit Frailty.]

FRANCES.

Sure, that man is a rare fortune-teller; never looked upon our hands, nor upon any mark about us: a wondrous fellow, surely.

MOLL.

I am glad, I have the use of my tongue yet: tho of nothing else. I shall find the way to marry too, I hope, shortly.

WIDDOW.

O where's my Brother, Sir Godfrey? I would he were here, that I might relate to him how prophetically the cunning Gentleman spoke in all things.

[Enter Sir Godfrey in a rage.]

SIR GODFREY.

O my Chain, my Chain! I have lost my Chain. Where be these Villains, Varlets?

WIDDOW.

Oh! has lost his Chain.

SIR GODFREY.

My Chain, my chain!

WIDDOW.

Brother, be patient, hear me speak: you know I told you that a cunning man told me that you should have a loss, and he has prophecied so true.

SIR GODFREY.

Out, he's a villain, to prophecy of the loss of my chain: twas worth above three hundred Crowns,--besides, twas my Fathers, my fathers fathers, my Grand-fathers huge grant-fathers. I had as lieve ha lost my Neck, as the chain that hung about it. O, my chain, my chain!

WIDDOW.

Oh, brother, who can be against a misfortune! tis happy twas no more.

SIR GODFREY.

No, more! O goodly godly sister, would you had me lost more? my best gown, too, with the cloth of gold-lace? my holiday Gascoines, and my Jerkin set with pearl? No more!

WIDDOW.

Oh, Brother! you can read--

SIR GODFREY.

But I cannot read where my chain is.--What strangers have been here? you let in strangers, Thieves, and Catch-poles; how comes it gone? there was none above with me but my Tailor; and my Tailor will not--steal, I hope?

MOLL.

No, he's afraid of a chain!

[Enter Frailty.]

WIDDOW.

How now, sirrah? the news?

FRAILTY.

O Mistress, he may well be called a Corporal now, for his corps are as dead as a cole Capons.

WIDDOW.

More happiness.

SIR GODFREY.

Sirrah, what's this to my chain? where's my chain, knave?

FRAILTY.

Your chain, sir?

SIR GODFREY.

My chain is lost, villain.

FRAILTY.

I would he were hang'd in chains that has it then for me. Alas, sir, I saw none of your chain, since you were hung with it your self.

SIR GODFREY.

Out, varlet! it had full three thousand Links. I have oft told it over at my prayers: Over and over, full three thousand Links.

FRAILTY.

Had it so, sir: sure, it cannot be lost then; I'll put you in that comfort.

SIR GODFREY.

Why, why?

FRAILTY.

Why, if your chain had so many Links, it cannot choose but come to light.

[Enter Nicholas.]

SIR GODFREY.

Delusion! now, long Nicholas, where's my chain?

NICHOLAS.

Why, about your Neck, ist not, sir?

SIR GODFREY.

About my neck, Varlet! My chain is lost. Tis stole away, I'm robbed.

WIDDOW.

Nay, Brother, show your self a man.

NICHOLAS.

Aye, if it be lost or stole, if he would be patient, Mistress, I could bring him to a Cunning Kinsman of mine that would fetcht again with a Sesarara.

SIR GODFREY.

Canst thou? I will be patient: say, where dwells he?

NICHOLAS.

Marry, he dwells now, Sir, where he would not dwell, and he could choose: in the Marshalsea, sir; but he's a exlent fellow if he were out; has traveled all the world o'er, he, and been in the seven and twenty Provinces; why, he would make it be fetcht, Sir, if twere rid a thousand mile out of town.

SIR GODFREY.

An admirable fellow: what lies he for?

NICHOLAS.

Why, he did but rob a Steward of ten groats tother Night, as any man would ha done, and there he lies fort.

SIR GODFREY.

I'll make his peace: a Trifle! I'll get his pardon, Beside a bountiful reward. I'll about it. But see the Clerks, the Justice will do much. I will about it straight: good sister, pardon me. All will be well, I hope, and turn to good, The name of Conjurer has laid my blood.

[Exeunt.]

SCENE III.

A street.

[Enter two servants with Yeoman Dogson to arrest the Scholar, George Pyeboard.]

PUT.

His Hostess where he lies will trust him no longer: she has feed me to arrest him; and if you will accompany me, because I know not of what Nature the Scholar is, whether desperate or swift, you shall share with me, Servant Raven-shaw. I have the good Angell to arrest him.

RAVEN.

Troth, I'll take part with thee, then, Sergeant, not for the sake of the money so much, as for the hate I bear to a Scholar: why, Sergeant, tis Natural in us, you know, to hate Scholars, natural: besides, the will publish our imperfections, Knaveries, and Convayances upon Scaffolds and Stages.

PUT.

Aye, and spitefully, too; troth, I have wondered how the slaves could see into our breasts so much, when our doublets are buttoned with Pewter.

RAVEN.

Aye, and so close without yielding; oh, they're parlous fellows, they will search more with their wits than a Constable with all his officers.

PUT.

Whist, whist, whist! Yeoman Dogson Yeoman Dogson.

DOGSON.

Ha, what says Sergeant?

PUT.

Is he in the Pothecaries shop still?

DOGSON.

Aye, aye.

PUT.

Have an eye, have an eye.

RAVEN.

The best is, Sergeant, if he be a true Scholar, he wears no weapon, I think.

PUT.

No, no, he wears no weapon.

RAVEN.

Mass, I am right glad of that: 'tas put me in better heart. Nay, if I clutch him once, let me alone to drag him if he be stiff-necked. I have been one of the six my self, that has dragged as tall men of their hands, when their weapons have been gone, as ever bastinadoed a Sergeant--I have done, I can tell you.

DOGSON.

Sergeant Puttock, Sergeant Puttock.

PUT.

Hoh.

DOGSON.

He's coming out single.

PUT.

Peace, peace, be not too greedy; let him play a little, let him play a litle: we'll jerk him up of a sudden. I ha fished in my time.

RAVEN.

Aye, and caught many a fool, Sergeant.

[Enter Pyeboard.]

PYE.

I parted now from Nicholas: the chain's couched, And the old Knight has spent his rage upont; The widdow holds me in great Admiration For cunning Art: mongst joys I am 'een lost, For my device can no way now be crossed. And now I must to prison to the captain, And there--

PUT.

I arrest you, sir.

PYE.

Oh--I spoke truer then I was a ware, I must to prison indeed.

PUT.

They say you're a scholar: nay, sir--Yeoman Dogson, have care to his arms--you'll rail again Sergeants, and stage 'em! you tickle their vices!

PYE.

Nay, use me like a Gentleman, I'm little less.

PUT.

You a Gentleman? That's a good Jest, ifaith; can a Scholar be a Gentleman,--when a Gentleman will not be a Scholar? look upon your wealthy Citizen's sons, whether they be Scholars or no, that are Gentlemen by their father's trades: a Scholar a Gentleman!

PYE.

Nay, let Fortune drive all her stings into me, she cannot hurt that in me: a Gentleman is Accidens Inseperable to my blood.

RAVEN.

A rablement, nay, you shall have a bloody rablement upon you, I warrant you.

PUT.

Go, Yeoman Dogson, before, and Enter the Action 'ith Counter.

PYE.

Pray do not hand me Cruelly, I'll go,

[Exit Dogson.]

Whether you please to have me.

PUT.

Oh, he's tame; let him loose, sergeant.

PYE.

Pray, at whose suit is this?

PUT.

Why at your Hostesses suit where you lie, Mistress Cunnyburrow, for bed and board, the sum four pound five shillings and five pence.

PYE.

I know the sum too true, yet I presumed Upon a farder day; well, tis my stars And I must bear it now, tho never harder. I swear now, my device is crossed indeed. Captain must lie bite: this is Deceit's seed.

PUT.

Come, come away.

PYE.

Pray, give me so much time as to knit my garter, and I'll a way with you.

PUT.

Well, we must be paid for this waiting upon you, this is no pains to attend thus.

[Pyeboard making to tie his garter.]

PYE.

I am now wretched and miserable. I shall ne'er recover of this disease: hot Iron gnaw their fists! they have struck a Fever into my shoulder, which I shall ne'er shake out again, I fear me, till with a true Habeas Corpus the Sexton remove me. Oh, if I take prison once, I shall be pressed to death with Actions, but not so happy as speedily; perhaps I may be forty year a pressing, till I be a thin old man; That, looking through the grates, men may look through me. All my means is confounded: what shall I do? has my wits served me so long, and now give me the slip (like a Trained servant) when I have most need of 'em? no device to keep my poor carcass fro these Puttocks?--yes, happiness! have I a paper about me now? yes, too! I'll try it, it may hit: Extremity is Touch-stone unto wit. Aye, aye.

PUT.

Sfoot, how many yards are in thy Garters, that thou art so long a tying on them? come away, sir.

PYE.

Troth, Sergeant, I protest, you could never ha took me at a worse time; for now at this instant I have no lawful picture about me.

PUT.

Slid, how shall we come by our fees then?

RAVEN.

We must have fees, Sirra.

PYE.

I could ha wisht, ifaith, that you had took me half an hour hence for your own sake; for I protest, if you had not crossed me, I was going in great joy to receive five pound of a Gentleman, for the Device of a Mask here, drawn in this paper.

But now, come, I must be contented: tis but so much lost, and answerable to the rest of my fortunes.

PUT.

Why, how far hence dwells that Gentleman?

RAVEN.

Aye, well said, sergeant, tis good to cast about for money.

PUT.

Speak; if it be not far--

PYE.

We are but a little past it, the next street behind us.

PUT.

Slid, w have waited upon you grievously already: if you'll say you'll be liberal when you hate, give us double fees, and spend upon's, why we'll show you that kindness, and go along with you to the Gentleman.

RAVEN.

Aye, well said still, sergeant, urge that.

PYE.

Troth, if it will suffice, it shall be all among you; for my part I'll not pocket a penny: my hostess shall have her four pound five shillings, and bate me the five pence, and the other fifteen shillings I'll spend upon you.

RAVEN.

Why, now thou art a good Scholar.

PUT.

An excellent Scholar, ifaith; has proceeded very well alate; come, we'll along with you.

[Exeunt with him: passing in they knock at the door with a Knocker withinside.]

SCENE IV. A gallery in a gentleman's house.

[Enter a servant.]

SERVANT.

Who knocks? who's at door? we had need of a Porter.

PYE.

A few friends here:--pray, is the Gentleman your master within?

SERVANT.

Yes, is your business to him?

PYE.

Aye, he knows it, when he see's me: I pray you, have you forgot me?

SERVANT.

Aye, by my troth, sir. Pray come near; I'll in and tell him of you: please you to walk here in the Gallery till he comes.

PYE.

We will attend his worship.--Worship, I think, for so much the Posts at his door should signify, and the fair coming in, and the wicket; else I neither knew him nor his worship, but 'tis happiness he is within doors, what so ere he be; if he be not too much a formal Citizen, he may do me good.-- Sergeant and Yeoman, how do you like this house? ist not most wholesomely plotted?

RAVEN.

Troth, prisoner, an exceeding fine house.

PYE.

Yet I wonder how he should forget me,--for he ne'er knew me.--No matter, what is forgot in you will be remembered in your Master. A pretty comfortable room this, me thinks: You have no such rooms in prison now?

PUT.

Oh, dog-holes toote.

PYE.

Dog-holes, indeed. I can tell you, I have great hope to have my Chamber here shortly, nay, and diet too, for he's the most free-heartedst Gentleman where he takes: you would little think it! and what a fine Gallery were here for me to walk and study, and make verses.

PUT.

O, it stands very pleasantly for a Scholar.

[Enter Gentleman.]

PYE.

Look what maps, and pictures, and devices, and things: neatly, delicately--mass, here he comes: he should be a Gentleman; I like his Beard well.--All happiness to your worship.

GENTLEMAN.

You're kindly welcome, sir.

PUT.

A simple salutation.

RAVEN.

Mass, it seems the Gentleman makes great account of him.

PYE.

I have the thing here for you, sir.

I beseech you conceal me, sir, I'm undone else,--I have the Mask here for you, sir, Look you, sir.--I beseech your worship first to pardon my rudeness, for my extremes makes me bolder than I would be. I am a poor Gentleman and a Scholar, and now most unfortunately fallen into the Fangs of unmerciful officers, arrested for debt, which tho small, I am not able to compass, by reason I'm destitute of lands, money, and friends; so that if I fall into the hungry swallow of the prison, I am like utterly to perish, and with fees and extortions be pincht clean to the bone. Now, if ever pity had interest in the blood of a Gentleman, I beseech you vouchsafe but to favour that means of my escape, which I have already thought upon.

GENTLEMAN.

Go forward.

PUT.

I warrant he likes it rarely.

PYE.

In the plundge of my extremities, being giddy, and doubtful what to do, at least it was put into my labouring thoughts, to make happy use of this paper; and to blear their unlettered eyes, I told them there was a Device for a Mask drawn int', and that (but for their interception,) I was going to a Gentleman to receive my reward for't: they, greedy at this word, and hoping to make purchase of me, offered their attendance, to go along with me. My hap was to make bold with your door, Sir, which my thoughts showed me the most fairest and comfortablest entrance, and I hope I have happened right upon understanding and pity: may it please your good Worship, then, but to uphold my Device, which is to let one of your men put me out at back-door, and I shall be bound to your worship for ever.

GENTLEMAN.

By my troth, an excellent device.

PUT.

An excellent device, he says; he likes it wonderfully.

GENTLEMAN.

A my faith, I never heard a better.

RAVEN.

Hark, he swears he never heard a better, Sergeant.

PUT.

O, there's no talk on't, he's an excellent Scholar, and especially for a Mask.

GENTLEMAN.

Give me your Paper, your Device; I was never better pleased in all my life: good wit, brave wit, finely wrought! come in, sir, and receive your money, sir.

PYE.

I'll follow your good Worship.-- You heard how he liked it now?

PUT.

Puh, we know he could not choose but like it: go thy ways; thou art a witty fine fellow, ifaith, thou shalt discourse it to us at Tavern anon, wilt thou?

pye. Aye, aye, that I will. Look, Sergeants, here are Maps, and pretty toys: be doing in the mean time. I shall quickly have told out the money, you know.

PUT.

Go, go, little villain, fetch thy chinck. I begin to love thee; I'll be drunk to night in thy company.

PYE.

[Aside.] This Gentleman I may well call a part Of my salvation, in these earthly evils, For he has saved me from three hungry Devils.

[Exit George.]

PUT.

Sirrah Sergeant, these Maps are pretty painted things, but I could ne'er fancy 'em yet: me thinks they're too busy, and full of Circles and Conjurations; they say all the world's in one of them, but I could ne'er find the Counter in the Poultry.

RAVEN.

I think so: how could you find it? for you know, it stands behind the houses.

DOGSON.

Mass, that's true; then we must look ath' back-side fort. Sfoot, here's nothing, all's bare.

RAVEN.

I warrant thee, that stands for the Counter, for you know there's a company of bare fellows there.

PUT.

Faith, like enough, Sergeant; I never marked so much before. Sirrah Sergeant, and Yeoman, I should love these Maps out a cry now, if we could see men peep out of door in em: oh, we might have em in a morning to our Break-fast so finely, and ne'er knock our heels to the ground a whole day for em.

RAVEN.

Aye, marry, sir, I'd buy one then my self. But this talk is by the way: where shall's sup to night? Five pound receiv'd! let's talk of that. I have a trick worth all: you two shall bear him to 'th Tavern, whilst I go close with his Hostess, and work out of her. I know she would be glad of the sum to finger money, because she knows tis but a desperate debt, and full of hazard. What will you say, if I bring it to pass that the Hostess shall be contented with one half for all; and we to share tother fifty-shillings, bullies?

PUT.

Why, I would call thee King of Sergeants, and thou shouldst be Chronicled in the Counter book for ever.

RAVEN.

Well, put it to me, we'll make a Night on't, yfaith.

DOGSON.

Sfoot, I think he receives a more money, he stays so long.

PUT.

He tarries long, indeed: may be, I can tell you, upon the good liking ont the Gentleman may prove more bountiful.

RAVEN.

That would be rare; we'll search him.

PUT.

Nay, be sure of it, we'll search him! and make him light enough.

[Enter the Gentleman.]

RAVEN.

Oh, here comes the Gentleman. By your leave, sir.

GENTLEMAN.

God you god den, sirs,--would you speak with me?

PUT.

No, not with your worship, sir; only we are bold to stay for a friend of ours that went in with your worship.

GENTLEMAN.

Who? not the scholar?

PUT.

Yes, e'en he, and it please your worship.

GENTLEMAN.

Did he make you stay for him? he did you wrong, then: why, I can assure you he's gone above an hour ago.

RAVEN.

How, sir?

GENTLEMAN.

I paid him his money, and my man told me he went out at back-door.

PUT.

Back-door?

GENTLEMAN.

Why, what's the matter?

PUT.

He was our prisoner, sir; we did arrest him.

GENTLEMAN.

What! he was not! you the Sheriff's Officers! You were to blame then. Why did you no make known to me as much? I could have kept him for you: I protest he received all of me in Britain Gold of the last coining.

RAVEN.

Vengeance dog him with't!

PUT.

Sfott, has he guiled us so?

DOGSON.

Where shall we sup now Sergeant?

PUT.

Sup, Simon, now! eat Porridge for a month. Well, we cannot impute it to any lack of good-will in your Worship,--you did but as another would have done: twas our hard fortunes to miss the purchase, but if e'er we clutch him again, the Counter shall charm him.

RAVEN.

The hole shall rot him.

DOGSON.

Amen

[Exeunt.]

GENTLEMAN.

So, Vex out your Lungs without doors. I am proud, It was my hap to help him; it fell fit. He went not empty neither for his wit. Alas, poor wretch, I could not blame his brain To labour his delivery, to be free From their unpitying fangs--I'm glad it stood Within my power to do a Scholar good.

[Exit.]

SCENE V. A room in the Marshalsea prison.

[Enter in the Prison, meeting, George and Captain, George coming in muffled.]

CAPTAIN.

How now, who's that? what are you?

PYE.

The same that I should be, Captain.

CAPTAIN.

George Pyeboard, honest George? why camst thou in half fac'd, muffled so?

PYE.

Oh, Captain, I thought we should ne'er ha laught again, never spent frolick hour again.

CAPTAIN.

Why? why?

PYE.

I coming to prepare thee, and with news As happy as thy quick delivery, Was trac'd out by the sent, arrested, Captain.

CAPTAIN.

Arrested, George!

PYE.

Arrested: gesse, gesse; how many Dogs do you think I'd upon me?

CAPTAIN.

Dogs? I say? I know not.

PYE.

Almost as many as George Stone the Bear: Three at once, three at once.

CAPTAIN.

How didst thou shake 'em off, then?

PYE.

The time is busy, and calls upon out wits. Let it suffice, Here I stand safe, and scapt by miracle. Some other hour shall tell thee, when we'll steep Our eyes in laughter. Captain, my device Leans to thy happiness, for ere the day Be spent toth' Girdle, thou shalt be set free. The Corporal's in his first sleep, the Chain is missed, Thy Kinsman has exprest thee, and the old Knight With Palsey-hams now labours thy release: What rests is all in thee, to Conjure, Captain.

CAPTAIN.

Conjure! sfoot, George, you know the devil a conjuring I can conjure.

PYE.

The Devil of conjuring? Nay, by my fay, I'd not have thee do so much, Captain, as the Devil a conjuring: look here, I ha brought thee a circle ready charactered and all.

CAPTAIN.

Sfoot, George, art in thy right wits? doost know what thou sayest? why doost talk to a Captain of conjuring? didst thou ever hear of a Captain conjure in thy life? doost cal't a Circle? tis too wide a thing, me thinks: had it been a lesser Circle, then I knew what to have done.

PYE.

Why, every fool knows that, Captain: nay, then, I'll not cog with you, Captain; if you'll stay and hang the next Sessions, you may.

CAPTAIN.

No, by my faith, George: come, come, let's to conjuring, let's to conjuring.

PYE.

But if you look to be released--as my wits have took pain to work it, and all means wrought to farther it-- besides to put crowns in your purse, to make you a man of better hopes, and whereas before you were a Captain or poor Soldier, to make you now a Commander of rich fools, (which is truly the only best purchase peace can allow you) safer then High-ways, Heath, or Cunny-groves, and yet a far better booty; for your greatest thieves are never hangd, never hangd, for, why, they're wise, and cheat within doors: and we geld fools of more money in one night, then your false tailed Gelding will purchase in a twelve-month's running; which confirms the old Beldam saying, he's wisest, that keeps himself warmest; that is, he that robs by a good fire--

CAPTAIN.

Well opened, yfaith, George; thou has pulled that saying out of the husk.

PYE.

Captain Idle, tis no time now to delude or delay: the old Knight will be here suddenly. I'll perfect you, direct you, tell you the trick on't: tis nothing.

CAPTAIN.

Sfoot, George, I know not what to say toot: conjure? I shall be hand ere I conjure.

PYE.

Nay, tell not me of that, Captain; you'll ne'er conjure after you're hangd, I warrant you. Look you, sir, a parlous matter, sure! First, to spread your circle upon the ground, then, with a little conjuring ceremony, as I'll have an Hackney-man's wand silvered ore a purpose for you,--then arriving in the circle, with a huge word, and a great trample, as for instance:--have you never seen a stalking-stamping Player, that will raise a tempest with his tongue, and thunder with his heels?

CAPTAIN.

O yes, yes, yes: often, often.

PYE.

Why, be like such a one, for any thing will blear the old Knight's eyes: for you must note that he'll ne'er dare to venture into the room, only perhaps peep fearfully through the Key hold, to see how the Play goes forward.

CAPTAIN.

Well, I may go about it when I will, but mark the end ont: I shall but shame my self, ifaith, George. Speak big words, and stamp and stare, and he look in at Key-hold! why, the very thought of that would make me laugh out-right, and spoil all: nay, I'll tell thee, George, when I apprehend a thing once, I am of such a laxative laughter, that if the Devil himself stood by, I should laugh in his face.

PYE.

Puh, that's but the babe of a man, and may easily be husht; as to think upon some disaster, some sad misfortune, as the death of thy Father ithe Country!

CAPTAIN.

Sfoot, that would be the more to drive me into such an extasy, that I should ne'er lin laughing.

PYE.

Why, then, think upon going to hanging else.

CAPTAIN.

Mass, that's well remembred; now I'll do well, I warrant thee, ne'er fear me now: but how shall I do, George, for boisterous words, and horrible names?

PYE.

Puh, any fustian invocations, Captain, will serve as well as the best, so you rant them out well; or you may go to a Pothecaries shop, and take all the words from the Boxes.

CAPTAIN.

Troth, and you say true, George; there's strange words enow to raise a hundred Quack-salvers, tho they be ne'er so poor when they begin. But here lies the fear on't, how if in this false conjuration, a true Devil should pop up indeed?

PYE.

A true Devil, Captain? why there was ne'er such a one: nay, faith, he that has this place is as false a Knave as our last Church-warden.

CAPTAIN.

Then he's false enough a conscience, ifaith, George.

[The Crie at Marshalsea.]

CRIE PRISONERS.

Good Gentlemen over the way, send your relief. Good Gentlemen over the way,--Good sir Godfrey!

PYE.

He's come, he's come.

NICHOLAS.

Master, that's my Kinsman yonder in the Buff-jerkin--Kinsman, that's my Master yonder ith' Taffetie Hat--pray salute him entirely!

[They salute: and Pyeboard salutes Master Edmond.]

SIR GODFREY.

Now, my friend.

PYE.

May I pertake your name, sir?

EDMOND.

My name is Master Edmond.

PYE.

Master Edmond?--are you not a Welshman, sir?

EDMOND.

A Welshman? why?

PYE.

Because Master is your Christian name, and Edmond your sir name.

EDMOND.

O no; I have more names at home: Master Edmond Plus is my full name at length.

PYE.

O, cry you mercy, sir. *[Whispering]*

CAPTAIN.

I understand that you are my Kinsman's good Master, and in regard of that, the best of my skill is at your service: but had you fortuned a mere stranger, and made no means to me by acquaintance, I should have utterly denied to have been the man; both by reason of the act past in Parliament against Conjurers and Witches, as also, because I would not have my Art vulgar, trite, and common.

SIR GODFREY.

I much commend your care therein, good Captain Conjurer, and that I will be sure to have it private enough, you shall doot in my Sister's house,--mine own house, I may call it, for both our charges therein are proportioned.

CAPTAIN.

Very good, sir--what may I call your loss, sir?

SIR GODFREY.

O you may call't a great loss, sir, a grievous loss, sir; as goodly a Chain of gold, tho I say it, that wore it: how sayest thou, Nicholas?

NICHOLAS.

O 'twas as delicious a Chain a Gold! Kinsman, you know,--

SIR GODFREY.

You know? did you know't, Captain?

CAPTAIN.

Trust a fool with secrets!--Sir, he may say I know: his meaning is, because my Art is such, that by it I may gather a knowledge of all things.

SIR GODFREY.

Aye, very true.

CAPTAIN.

A pax of all fools--the excuse struck upon my tongue like Ship-pitch upon a Mariner's gown, not to come off in haste-- Ber-lady, Knight, to loose such a fair Chain a gold were a foul loss. Well, I can put you in this good comfort on't: if it be between Heaven and Earth, Knight, I'll ha't for you.

SIR GODFREY.

A wonderful Conjurer!--O, aye, tis between heaven and earth, I warrant you; it cannot go out of the realm.--I know tis some-where above the earth.

CAPTAIN.

Aye, nigher the earth then thou wotst on.

SIR GODFREY.

For, first, my Chain was rich, and no rich thing shall enter into heaven, you know.

NICHOLAS.

And as for the Devil, Master, he has no need on't, for you know he ha's a great chain of his own.

SIR GODFREY.

Thou sayest true, Nicholas, but he has put off that now; that lies by him.

CAPTAIN.

Faith, Knight, in few words, I presume so much upon the power of my Art; that I could warrant your Chain again.

SIR GODFREY.

O dainty Captain!

CAPTAIN.

Marry, it will cost me much sweat; I were better go to sixteen whot-houses.

SIR GODFREY.

Aye, good man, I warrant thee.

CAPTAIN.

Beside great vexation of Kidney and Liver.

NICHOLAS.

O, twill tickle you here-abouts, Coozen, because you have not been used toot.

SIR GODFREY.

No? have you not been used too't, Captain?

CAPTAIN.

Plague of all fools still!--Indeed, Knight, I have not used it a good while, and therefore twill strain me so much the more, you know.

SIR GODFREY.

Oh, it will, it will.

CAPTAIN.

What plunges he puts me to! were not this Knight a fool, I had been twice spoiled now; that Captain's worse than accurst that has an ass to his Kinsman. Sfoot, I fear he will drivell't out before I come toot.--Now, sir--to come to the point in deed--you see I stick here in the jaw of the Marshalsea, and cannot doo't.

SIR GODFREY.

Tut, tut, I know thy meaning; thou wouldst say thou'rt a prisoner. I tell thee thou'rt none.

CAPTAIN.

How none? why, is not this the Marshallsea?

SIR GODFREY.

Woult hear me speak? I hard of thy rare conjuring; My chain was lost; I sweat for thy release, As thou shalt do the like at home for me. Keeper.

[Enter Keeper.]

KEEPER.

Sir.

SIR GODFREY.

Speak, is not this man free?

KEEPER.

Yes, at his pleasure, sir, the fee's discharged.

SIR GODFREY.

Go, go, I'll discharge them I.

KEEPER.

I thank your worship.

[Exit Keeper.]

CAPTAIN.

Now, trust me, yar a dear Knight. Kindness unexpected! oh, there's nothing to a free Gentle man.--I will conjure for you, sir, till Froth come through my Buff-jerkin!

SIR GODFREY, Nay, then thou shalt not pass with so little a bounty, for at the first sight of my chain again, Forty fine Angells shall appear unto thee.

CAPTAIN.

Twil be a glorious show, ifaith, Knight, a very fine show; but are all these of your own house? are you sure of that, sir?

SIR GODFREY.

Aye, aye--no, no, what's he yonder, talking with my wild Nephew? pray heaven, he give him good counsel.

CAPTAIN.

Who, he? he's a rare friend of mine, an admirable fellow, Knight, the finest fortune-teller.

SIR GODFREY.

Oh, tis he indeed that came to my Lady sister, and foretold the loss of my chain. I am not angry with him now, for I see twas my fortune to loose it.--By your leave, Master Fortune-teller, I had a glimpse on you at home at my Sisters the

Widdows, there you prophesied of the loss of a chain:--simply tho I stand here, I was he that lost it.

PYE.

Was it you, sir?

EDMOND.

A my troth, Nuckle, he's the rarest fellow: has told me my fortune so right; I find it so right to my nature.

SIR GODFREY.

What ist? God send it a good one!

EDMOND.

O, tis a passing good one, Nuncle: for he says I shall prove such an excellent gamester in my time, that I shall spend all faster then my father got it.

SIR GODFREY.

There's a fortune, in deed!

EDMOND.

Nay, it hits my humour so pat.

SIR GODFREY.

Aye, that will be the end ont: will the Curse of the beggar prevail so much, that the son shall consume that foolishly, which the father got craftily? Aye, aye, aye; twill, twill, twill.

PYE.

Stay, stay, stay.

[Pyeboard with an Almanack and the Captain.]

CAPTAIN.

Turn over, George.

PYE.

June--July: here, July; that's this month. Sunday thirteen, yester day forteen, to day fifteen.

CAPTAIN.

Look quickly for the fifteen day:--if within the compass of these two days there would be some Boystrous storm or other, it would be the best, I'd defer him off till then: some tempest, and it be thy will.

PYE.

Here's the fifteen day--hot and fair.

CAPTAIN.

Puh, would t'ad been hot and foul.

PYE.

The sixteen day; that's to morrow: the morning for the most part fair and pleasant--

CAPTAIN.

No luck.

PYE.

But about high-noon, lightning and thunder.

CAPTAIN.

Lightning and thunder! admirable, best of all: I'll conjure to morrow just at high noon, George.

PYE.

Happen but true to morrow, Almanack, and I'll give thee leave to lie all the year after.

CAPTAIN.

Sir, I must crave your patience, to bestow this day upon me, that I may furnish my self strongly. I sent a spirit into Lancashire tother day, to fetch back a knave Drover, and I look for his return this evening. To morrow morning my friend here and I will come and break-fast with you.

SIR GODFREY.

Oh, you shall be both most welcome.

CAPTAIN.

And about Noon, without fail, I purpose to conjure.

SIR GODFREY.

Mid noon will be a fine time for you.

EDMOND.

Conjuring! do you mean to conjure at our house to morrow, sir?

CAPTAIN.

Marry, do I, sir: tis my intent, young Gentleman.

EDMOND.

By my troth, I'll love you while I live fort. O rare, Nicholas, we shall have conjuring to morrow.

NICHOLAS.

Puh! Aye, I could ha told you of that.

CAPTAIN.

Law, he could ha told him of that! fool, cockscomb, could ye?

EDMOND.

Do you hear me, sir? I desire more acquaintance on you: you shall earn some money of me, now I know you can conjure; but can you fetch any that is lost?

CAPTAIN.

Oh, any thing that's lost.

EDMOND.

Why, look you, sir, I tel't you as a friend and a Conjurer, I should marry a Poticaries daughter, and twas told me she lost her maidenhead at Stonie-stratford; now if you'll do but so much as conjure fort, and make all whole again--

CAPTAIN.

That I will, sir.

EDMOND.

By my troth, I thanks you, la.

CAPTAIN.

A little merry with your sister's son, sir.

SIR GODFREY.

Oh, a simple young man, very simple: come, Captain, and you, sir, we'll e'en part with a gallon of wine till to morrow break-fast.

PYE AND CAPTAIN.

Troth, agreed, sir.

NICHOLAS.

Kinsman--Scholar?

PYE.

Why, now thou art a good Knave, worth a hundred Brownists.

NICHOLAS.

Am I indeed, la? I thank you truly, la.

[Exeunt.]

ACTUS 4.

SCENE I. An apartment in the Widow's house.

[Enter Moll, and Sir John Pennydub.]

PENNY.

But I hope you will not serve a Knight so, Gentlewoman, will you? to cashier him, and cast him off at your pleasure? what, do you thiunk I was dubbed for nothing? no, by my faith, Ladies daughter.

MOLL.

Pray, Sir John Pennydub, let it be deferred awhile. I have as big a heart to marry as you can have; but as the Fortune-teller told me--

PENNY.

Pax a'th Fortune-teller! would Derecke had been his fortune seven year ago, to cross my love thus! did he know what case I was in? why, this is able to make a man drown himself in's Father's fish-pond.

MOLL.

And then he told me more-over, Sir John, that the breach of it kept my Father in Purgatory.

PENNY.

In Purgatory? why let him purge out his heart there, what have we to do with that? there's Philistions enow there to cast his water: is that any matter to us? how can he hinder our love? why, let him be hangd now he's dead!--Well, have I rid my post day and night, to bring you merry news of my father's death, and now--

MOLL.

Thy Father's death? is the old Faarmer dead?

PENNY.

As dead as his Barn door, Moll.

MOLL.

And you'll keep your word with me now, Sir John, that I shall have my Coach and my Coach-man?

PENNY.

Aye, faith.

MOLL.

And two white Horses with black Feathers to draw it?

PENNY.

Too.

MOLL.

A guarded Lackey to run befor't, and pied liveries to come trashing after't.

PENNY.

Thou shalt, Moll.

MOLL.

And to let me have money in my purse to go whether I will.

PENNY.

All this.

MOLL.

Then come what so ere comes on't, we'll be made sure together before the Maids a' the Kitchen.

[Exeunt.]

SCENE II. A room in the Widow's house, with a door at the side, leading to another apartment.

[Enter Widdow, with her eldest Daughter Frances and Frailty.]

WIDOW.

How now? where's my Brother, Sir Godfrey? went he forth this morning?

FRAILTY.

O no, Madame, he's above at break-fast, with, sir reverence, a Conjurer.

WIDOW.

A Conjurer? what manner a fellow is he?

FRAILTY.

Oh, a wondrous rare fellow, Mistress, very strongly made upward, for he goes in a Buff-jerkin: he says he will fetch Sir Godfrey's Chain again, if it hang between heaven and earth.

WIDOW.

What, he will not? then he's an exlent fellow, I warrant. How happy were that woman to be blest with such a Husband! a man a cunning! how do's he look, Frailty? very swartly, I warrant, with black beard, scorcht cheeks, and smoky eyebrows.

FRAILTY.

Fooh, he's neither smoke-dried, nor scorcht, nor black, nor nothing. I tell you, Madame, he looks as fair to see to, as one of us; I do not think but if you saw him once, you'd take him to be a Christian.

FRANCES.

So fair, and yet so cunning: that's to be wonderd at, Mother.

[Enter Sir Oliver Muckhill, and Sir Andrew Tipstaff.]

MUCK.

Bless you, sweet Lady.

TIP.

And you, fair Mistress.

[Exit Frailty.]

WIDOW.

Coades? what do you mean, Gentlemen? fie, did I not give you your answers?

MUCK.

Sweet Lady.

WIDOW.

Well, I will not stick with you now for a kiss. Daughter, kiss the Gentleman for once.

FRANCES.

Yes, forsooth.

TIP.

I'm proud of such a favour.

WIDOW.

Truly la, sir Oliver, y'are much to blame to come again, when you know my mind, so well deliverd as a Widdow could deliver a thing.

MUCK.

But I expect a farther comfort, Lady.

WIDOW.

Why la you now, did I not desire you to put off your suit quite and clean, when you came to me again? how say you? did I not?

MUCK.

But the sincere love which my heart bears you--

WIDOW.

Go to, I'll cut you off: and Sir Oliver, to put you in comfort a far off, my fortune is read me: I must marry again.

MUCK.

O blest fortune!

WIDOW.

But not as long as I can choose;--nay, I'll hold out well.

MUCK.

Yet are my hopes now fairer.

[Enter Frailty.]

FRAILTY.

O Madam, Madam.

WIDOW.

How now, what's the haste?

[In her ear.]

TIP.

Faith, Mistress Frances, I'll maintain you gallantly.

I'll bring you to Court, wean you among the fair society of ladies, poor Kinswomen of mine, in cloth of silver: beside, you shall have your Monkey, your Parrot, your Muskrat, and your pisse, pisse, pisse.

FRANCES.

It will do very well.

WIDOW.

What, dos he mean to conjure here then? how shall I do be rid of these Knights?--Please you, Gentlemen, to walk a while ith Garden: go gather a pink, or a Lily-flower.

BOTH.

With all our hearts, Lady, and court us favourd.

[Exit. Within Sir Godfrey.]

SIR GODFREY.

Step in, Nicholas; look, is the coast clear.

NICHOLAS.

Oh, as clear as a Cat's eye, sir.

SIR GODFREY.

Then enter, Captain Conjurer:--now--how like you your Room, sir?

[Enter Sir Godfrey, Captain Pyeboard, Edmond, Nicholas.]

CAPTAIN.

O, wonderful convenient.

EDMOND.

I can tell you, Captain, simply tho it lies here, tis the fairest Room in my Mother's house: as dainty a Room to Conjure in, me thinks--why, you may bid, I cannot tell how many devils welcome in't; my Father has had twenty here at once.

PYE.

What, devils?

EDMOND.

Devils? no, Deputies, and the wealthiest men he could get.

SIR GODFREY.

Nay, put by your chats now, fall to your business roundly: the feskewe of the Dial is upon the Chrisse-crosse of Noon, but oh, hear me, Captain, a qualm comes ore my stomach.

CAPTAIN.

Why, what's the matter, sir?

SIR GODFREY.

Oh, how if the devil should prove a knave, and tear the hangings?

CAPTAIN.

Fuh, I warrant you, Sir Godfrey.

EDMOND.

Aye, Nuncle, or spit fire up'oth ceiling!

SIR GODFREY.

Very true, too, for tis but thin plastered, and twill quickly take hold a the laths, and if he chance to spit downward too, he will burn all the boards.

CAPTAIN.

My life for yours, Sir Godfrey.

SIR GODFREY.

My Sister is very curious and dainty ore this Room, I can tell, and therefore if he must needs spit, I pray desire him to spit ith Chimney.

PYE.

Why, assure you, Sir Godfrey, he shall not be brought up with so little manners to spit and spaul a'th flower.

SIR GODFREY.

Why, I thank you, good Captain; pray have a care. Aye, fall to your Circle; we'll not trouble you, I warrant you: come, we'll in to the next Room, and be cause we'll be sure to keep him out there, we'll bar up the door with some of the Godlies zealous work.

EDMOND.

That will be a find device, Nuncle, and because the ground shall be as holy as the door, I'll tear two or three rosaries in pieces, and strew the leaves about the Chamber.

[Thunders.]

Oh, the devil already.

[Runs in.]

PYE.

Sfoot, Captain, speak somewhat for shame; it lightens and thunders before thou wilt begin: why, when?

CAPTAIN.

Pray, peace, George,--thou'lt make me laugh anon and spoil all.

PYE.

Oh, now it begins again: now, now, now, Captain.

CAPTAIN.

Rumbos--ragdayon, pur, pur, colucundrion, Hois-Plois.

SIR GODFREY.

Oh admirable Conurer! has fetcht Thunder already:

[Sir Godfrey through the keyhole; within.]

PYE.

Hark, hark! again, Captain!

CAPTAIN.

Benjamino,--gaspois--kay--gosgothoteron--umbrois.

SIR GODFREY.

Oh, I would the devil would come away quickly, he has no conscience to put a man to such pain.

PYE.

Again!

CAPTAIN.

Floste--Kakopumpos--dragone--Leloomenos--hodge--podge.

PYE.

Well said, Captain.

SIR GODFREY.

So long a coming? oh, would I had ne'er begun't now, for I fear me these roaring tempests will destroy all the fruits of the earth, and tread upon my corn--oh!--ith Country.

CAPTAIN.

Gog de gog, hobgoblin, huncks, hounslow, hockley te coome parke.

WIDOW.

[At the door.] O brother, brother, what a tempests ith Garden: sure there's some

conjuration abroad.

SIR GODFREY.

Tis at home, sister!

PYE.

By and by, I'll step in, Captain.

CAPTAIN.

Nunck--Nunck--Rip--Gascoynes, Ipis, Drip--Dropite.

SIR GODFREY.

He drips and drops, poor man! alas, alas.

PYE.

Now I come.

CAPTAIN.

O Sulphure Sooteface--

PYE.

Arch-conjurer, what wouldst thou with me?

SIR GODFREY.

O the devil, sister, ith dining Chamber! sing, Sister, I warrant you that will keep him out: quickly, quickly, quickly.

[Goes in.]

PYE.

So, so, so, I'll release thee: ynough, Captain, ynough; allow us some time to laugh a little: they're shuddering and shaking by this time, as if an Earth-quake were in their kidneys.

CAPTAIN.

Sirrah, Goerge, how wast, how wast? did I doo't well ynough?

PYE.

Woult believe me, Captain? better then any Conjurer, for here was no harm in this, and yet their horrible expectation satisfied well. You were much beholding to thunder and lightning at this time: it gracst you well I can tell you.

CAPTAIN.

I must needs say so, George. Sirrah, if we could ha convoid hither cleanly a cracker or a fire-wheel t'ad been admirable.

PYE.

Blurt, blurt! there's nothing remains to put thee to pain now, Captain.

CAPTAIN.

Pain? I protest, George, my heels are sorer, then a Whitson Morris-dancer.

PYE.

All's past now,--only to reveal that the chains ith Garden where thou knowst it has lain these two days.

CAPTAIN.

But I fear that fox Nicholas has revealed it already.

PYE.

Fear not, Captain, you must put it to'th venture now. Nay, tis time: call upon e'm, take pity on e'm, for I believe some of 'em are in a pitiful case by this time.

CAPTAIN.

Sir Godfrey? Nicholas, Kinsman--Sfoot, they're fast at it still, George. Sir Godfrey!

SIR GODFREY.

Oh, is that the devil's voice? how comes he to know my name?

CAPTAIN.

Fear not, Sir Godfrey, all's quieted.

SIR GODFREY.

What, is he laid?

CAPTAIN.

Laid; and has newly dropt your chain ith Garden.

SIR GODFREY.

Ith Garden! in our Garden?

CAPTAIN.

Your Garden.

SIR GODFREY.

O sweet Conjurer! where abouts there?

CAPTAIN.

Look well about a bank of Rosemary.

SIR GODFREY.

Sister, the Rosemary bank! come, come, there's my chain, he says.

WIDOW.

Oh happiness! run, run.

[Supposed to go.]

EDMOND.

Captain Conjurer?

[Edmond at keyhole.]

CAPTAIN.

Who? Master Edmond?

EDMOND.

Aye, Master Edmond: may I come in safely, without danger, think you?

CAPTAIN.

Fuh, long ago: tis all as twas at first. Fear nothing, pray come near--how now, man?

EDMOND.

Oh this Room's mightily hot, ifaith: slid, my shirt sticks to my Belly already. What a steam the Rogue has left behind him! foh, this room must be aired, Gentlemen; it smells horribly of Brimstone--let's open the windows.

PYE.

Faith, master Edmond, tis but your conceit.

EDMOND.

I would you could make me believe that, ifaith. Why, do you think I cannot smell his savour from another? yet I take it kindly from you, because you would not put me in a fear, ifaith; a my troth, I shall love you for this the longest day of my life.

CAPTAIN.

Puh, tis nothing, sir: love me when you see more.

EDMOND.

Mass, now I remember, I'll look whether he has singed the hangings or no.

PYE.

Captain, to entertain a little sport till they come, make him believe you'll charm him invisible: he's apt to admire any thing, you see. Let him alone to give force too'te.

CAPTAIN.

Go, retire to yonder end then.

EDMOND.

I protest you are a rare fellow, are you not?

CAPTAIN.

O master Edmond, you know but the least part of me yet: why, now at this instant I could but florish my wand thrice o'er your head, and charm you invisible.

EDMOND.

What, you could not? make me walk invisible, man! I should laugh at that, ifaith; troth, I'll requite your kindness and you'll do't, good Captain conjurer.

CAPTAIN.

Nay, I should hardly deny you such a small kindness, Master Edmond Plus: why, look you, sir, tis no more but this and thus and again, and now yar invisible!

EDMOND.

Am I, ifaith? who would think it?

CAPTAIN.

You see the fortune-teller yonder at farder end ath chamber: go toward him, do what you will with him; he shall ne'er find you.

EDMOND.

Say you so? I'll try that, ifaith,--

[Justles him.]

PYE.

How now? Captain, who's that justled me?

CAPTAIN.

Justled you? I saw no body.

EDMOND.

Ha, ha, ha!--say twas a spirit.

CAPTAIN.

Shall I?--may be some spirit that haunts the circle.

[Edmond pulls him by the Nose.]

PYE.

O my nose again! pray conjure then, Captain.

EDMOND.

Troth, this is exlent; I may do any knavery now and never be Seen,--and now I remember me, Sir Godfrey my Uncle abused me Tother day, and told tales of me to my Mother--Troth, now I'm Invisible, I'll hit him a sound wherrit ath' ear, when he comes out ath' garden.--I may be revengd on him now finely.

[Enter Sir Godfrey, Widdow, Frances, Nicholas with the Chain.]

SIR GODFREY.

I have my Chain again, my Chain's found again. O sweet Captain, O admirable Conjurer. *[Edmond strikes him.]* Oh! what mean you by that, Nephew?

EDMOND.

Nephew? I hope you do not know me, Uncle?

WIDOW.

Why did you strike your Uncle, sir?

EDMOND.

Why, Captain, am I not invisible?

CAPTAIN.

A good jest, George!--not now you are not, Sir. Why, did you not see me when I did uncharm you?

EDMOND.

Not I by my troth, Captain. Then pray you pardon me, Uncle; I thought I'd been invisible when I struck you.

SIR GODFREY.

So, you would doo't? go,--y'are a foolish Boy, And were I not o'er-come with greater joy, I'd make you taste correction.

EDMOND.

Correction, push!--no, neither you nor my Mother shall think to whip me as you have done.

SIR GODFREY.

Captain, my joy is such, I know not how to thank you: let me embrace you, hug you. O my sweet Chain! Gladness 'een makes me giddy. Rare man! twas as just ith' Rosemary bank, as if one should ha' laid it there--oh, cunning, cunning!

WIDOW.

Well, seeing my fortune tells me I must marry, let me marry a man of wit, a man of parts. Here's a worthy Captain, and 'tis a fine Title truly la to be a Captain's Wife. A Captain's Wife, it goes very finely; beside all the world knows that a worthy Captain is a fit Companion to any Lord, then why not a sweet bed-fellow for any Lady,--I'll have it so--

[Enter Frailty.]

FRAILTY.

O Mistress, Gentlemen, there's the bravest sight coming along this way.

WIDOW.

What brave sight?

FRAILTY.

Oh, one going to burying, & another going to hanging.

WIDOW.

A rueful sight.

PYE.

Sfoot, Captain, I'll pawn my life the Corporal's confined, and old Skirmish the soldier going to execution, and 'tis now full about the time of his waking; hold out a little longer, sleepy potion, and we shall have exlent admiration; for I'll take upon me the cure of him.

SCENE III. The street before the Widow's house.

[Enter the Coffin of the Corporal, the soldier bound, and lead by Officers, the Sheriff there. From the house, Sir Godfrey, the Widow, Idle, Pyeboard, Edmond, Frailty, and Nicholas.]

FRAILTY.

Oh here they come, here they come!

PYE.

Now must I close secretly with the Soldier, prevent his impatience, or else all's discovered.

WIDOW.

O lamentable seeing! these were those Brothers, that fought and bled before our door.

SIR GODFREY.

What, they were not, Sister?

SKIRMISH.

George, look toot, I'll peach at Tyburn else.

PYE.

Mum,--Gentles all, vouchsafe me audience, and you especially, Master Sheriff: Yon man is bound to execution, Because he wounded this that now lies coffined?

SHERIFF.

True, true; he shall have the law,--and I know the law.

PYE.

But under favour, Master Sheriff, if this man had been cured and safe again, he should have been released then?

SHERIFF.

Why make you question of that, Sir?

PYE.

Then I release him freely, and will take upon me the death that he should die, if within a little season, I do not cure him to his proper health again.

SHERIFF.

How Sir? recover a dead man? That were most strange of all.

[Frances comes to him.]

FRANCES.

Sweet Sir, I love you dearly, and could wish my best part yours,--oh do not undertake such an impossible venture.

PYE.

Love you me? then for your sweet sake I'll doo't: Let me entreat the corpse to be set down.

SHERIFF.

Bearers, set down the Coffin.--This were wonderful, and worthy Stoes Chronicle.

PYE.

I pray bestow the freedom of the air upon our wholesome Art.-- Mass, his cheeks begin to receive natural warmth: nay, good Corporal, wake betime, or I shall have a longer sleep then you.--Sfoot, if he should prove dead indeed now, he were fully revenged upon me for making a property on him, yet I had rather run upon the Ropes, then have the Rope like a Tetter run upon me.

Oh--he stirs--he stirs again--look, Gentlemen, he recovers, he starts, he rises.

SHERIFF.

Oh, oh, defend us!--out, alas.

PYE.

Nay, pray be still; you'll make him more giddy else:--he knows no body yet.

CORPORAL.

Zounes: where am I? covered with Snow? I marvel.

PYE.

Nay, I knew he would swear the first thing he did, as soon as ever he came to life again.

CORPORAL.

Sfoot, Hostess, some hot Porridge,--oh, oh, lay on a dozen of Fagots in the Moon parlor, there.

PYE.

Lady, you must needs take a little pity of him, yfaith, and send him in to your Kitchen fire.

WIDOW.

Oh, with all my heart, sir. Nicholas and Frailty, help to bear him in.

NICHOLAS.

Bear him in, quatha? pray call out the Maids, I shall ne'er have the heart to doo't, indeed la.

FRAILTY.

Nor I neither, I cannot abide to handle a Ghost of all men.

CORPORAL.

Sblood, let me see: where was I drunk last night, heh--

WIDOW.

Oh, shall I bid you once again take him away?

FRAILTY.

Why, we're as fearful as you, I warrant you--oh--

WIDOW.

Away, villains; bid the Maids make him a Cawdle presently to settle his brain,--or a Posset of Sack; quickly, quickly.

[Exeunt Frailty and Nicholas, pushing in the corpses.]

SHERIFF.

Sir, what so ere you are, I do more then admire you.

WIDOW.

O, aye, if you knew all, Master Sheriff, as you shall do, you would say then, that here were two of the rarest men within the walls of Christendome.

SHERIFF.

Two of 'em? O wonderful. Officers, I discharge you, set him free, all's in tune.

SIR GODFREY.

Aye, and a banquet ready by this time, Master Sheriff, to which I most cheerfully invite you, and your late prisoner there. see you this goodly chain, sir? mun, no more words, twas lost, and is found again; come, my inestimable bullies, we'll talk of your noble Acts in sparkling Charnico, and in stead of a Jester, we'll ha the ghost ith white sheet sit at upper end a'th Table.

SHERIFF.

Exlent merry, man, yfaith.

[Exeunt all but Frances.]

FRANCES.

Well, seeing I am enjoined to love and marry, My foolish vow thus I cashier to Air Which first begot it.--Now, love, play thy part; The scholar reads his lecture in my heart.

[Exit.]

ACTUS 5

SCENE. I. The street before the Widow's house.

[Enter in haste Master Edmond and Frailty.]

EDMOND.

This is the marriage morning for my mother and my sister.

FRAILTY.

O me, Master Edmund; we shall ha rare doings.

EDMOND.

Nay, go, Frailty, run to the Sexton; you know my mother will be married at Saint Antlings. Hie thee, tis past five; bid them open the Church door; my sister is almost ready.

FRAILTY.

What, all ready, Master Edmond?

EDMOND.

Nay, go, hie thee: first run to the Sexton, and run to the Clarke, and then run to Master Pigman the Parson, and then run to the Milliner, and then run home again.

FRAILTY.

Here's run, run, run--

EDMOND.

But hark, Frailty.

FRAILTY.

What, more yet?

EDMOND.

Has the maids remembered to strew the way to the Church.

FRAILTY.

Fagh, an hour ago; I helpt 'em my self.

EDMOND.

Away, away, away, away then.

FRAILTY.

Away, away, away then.

[Exit Frailty.]

EDMOND.

I shall have a simple Father inlaw, a brave Captain able to beat all our street: Captain Idle. Now my Lady Mother will be fitted for a delicate name: my Lady Idle, my Lady Idle, the finest name that can be for a woman; and then the Scholar, Master Pyeboard, for my sister Frances, that will be Mistress Frances Pyeboard.--Mistress Frances Pyeboard! they'll keep a good table I warrant you. Now all the knights' noses are put out of joint; they may go to a bone setters now.

[Enter Captain and Pyeboard.]

Hark, hark! oh who comes here with two Torches before 'em? my sweet Captain, and my fine Scholar! oh, how bravely they are shot up in one night; they look like fine Brittains now, me thinks. Here's a gallant change, ifaith: slid, they have hir'd men and all by the clock.

CAPTAIN.

Master Edmond, kind, honest, dainty Master Edmond.

EDMOND.

Fogh, sweet Captain Father inlaw, a rare perfume, ifaith.

PYE.

What, are the Brides stirring? may we steal upon 'em, thinkst thou, Master Edmond?

EDMOND.

Faw, there e'en upon readiness, I can assure you, for they were at their Torch e'en now: by the same token I tumbled down the stairs.

PYE.

Alas, poor Master Edmond.

[Enter musicians.]

CAPTAIN.

O, the musicians! I pray thee, Master Edmond, call 'em in and liquor 'em a little.

EDMOND.

That I will, sweet Captain father in law, and make each of them as drunk as a common fiddler.

[Exeunt omnes.]

SCENE II. The same.

[Enter Sir John Pennydub, and Moll above lacing of her clothes.]

PENNYDUB.

Whewh, Mistress Moll, Mistress Moll.

MOLL.

Who's there?

PENNYDUB.

Tis I.

MOLL.

Who? Sir John Pennydub? O you're an early cock, ifaith: who would have thought you to be so rare a stirrer?

PENNYDUB.

Preethe, Moll, let me come up.

MOLL.

No, by my faith, Sir John, I'll keep you down, for you Knights are very dangerous in once you get above.

PENNYDUB.

I'll not stay, ifaith.

MOLL.

Ifaith, you shall stay, for, Sir John, you must note the nature of the Climates:

your Northern wench in her own Country may well hold out till she be fifteen, but if she touch the South once, and come up to London, here the Chimes go presently after twelve.

PENNYDUB.

O th'art a mad wench, Moll, but I pree thee make haste, for the priest is gone before.

MOLL.

Do you follow him, I'll not be long after.

[Exeunt.]

SCENE III. A room in Sir Oliver Muckhill's house.

[Enter Sir Oliver Muckhill, Sir Andrew Tipstaff, and old Skirmish talking.]

MUCK.

O monstrous, un-heard of forgery.

TIP.

Knight, I never heard of such villainy in our own country in my life.

MUCH.

Why, 'tis impossible; dare you maintain your words?

SKIRMISH.

Dare we? een to their wezen pipes. We know all their plots, they cannot squander with us; they have knavishly abused us, made only properties on's to advance their selves upon our shoulders, but they shall rue their abuses. This morning they are to be married.

MUCK.

Tis too true; yet if the Widdow be not too much besotted on slights and forgeries, the revelation of their villainies will make 'em loathsome: and to that end, be it in private to you, I sent late last night to an honorable personage, to whom I am much indebted in kindness, as he is to me, and therefore presume upon the payment of his tongue, and that he will lay out good words for me: and to speak truth, for such needful occasions, I only preserve him in bond, and some-times he may do me more good here in the City by a free word of his mouth, then if he had paid one half in hand, and took Doomesday for t'other.

TIP.

In troth, Sir, without soothing be it spoken, you have publisht much judgment in these few words.

MUCK.

For you know, what such a man utters will be though effectual and to weighty purpose, and therefore into his mouth we'll put the approved theme of their forgeries.

SKIRMISH.

And I'll maintain it, Knight, if ye'll be true.

[Enter a servant.]

MUCK.

How now, fellow?

SERVANT.

May it please you, Sir, my Lord is newly lighted from his Coach.

MUCK.

Is my Lord come already? His honor's early. You see he loves me well: up before seven! Trust me, I have found his night capt at eleven. There's good hope yet; come, I'll relate all to him.

[Exeunt.]

SCENE IV. A street ; a church appearing.

[Enter the two Bridegrooms, Captain and Scholar; after them, Sir Godfrey and Edmond, Widdow changed in apparel, Mistress Frances led between two Knights, Sir John Pennydub and Moll: there meets them a Noble man, Sir Oliver Muckhill, and Sir Andrew Tipstaff.]

NOBLE.

By your leave, Lady.

WIDOW.

My Lord, your honour is most chastely welcome.

NOBLE.

Madam, tho I came now from court, I come now from court, I come not to flatter you: upon whom can I justly cast this blot, but upon your own forehead, that know not ink from milk? such is the blind besotting in the state of an unheaded woman that's a widdow. For it is the property of all you that are widdowes (a hand full excepted) to hate those that honestly and carefully love you, to the maintenance of credit, state, and posterity, and strongly to dote on those, that only love you to undo you: who regard you least are best regarded, who hate you most are best beloved.

And if there be but one man amongst ten thousand millions of men that is accurst, disastrous, and evilly planeted, whom Fortune beats most, whom God hates most, and all Societies esteem least, that man is sure to be a husband.--Such is the peevish Moon that rules your bloods. An Impudent fellow best woes you, a flattering lip best wins you, or in a mirth who talks roughliest is most sweetest; nor can you distinguish truth from forgeries, mists from Simplicity: witness those two deceitful monsters that you have entertaind for bride-grooms.

WIDOW.

Deceitful!

PYE.

All will out.

CAPTAIN.

Sfoot, who has blabd, George? that foolish Nicholas?

NOBLE.

For what they have besotted your easy blood withall wear nought but forgeries: the fortune telling for husbands, the conjuring for the chain Sir Godfrey heard the falshod of: all mere knavery, deceit, and coozenage.

WIDOW.

O wonderful! Indeed I wondred that my husband with all his Craft could not keep himself out of purgatory.

SIR GODFREY.

And I more wonder that my chain should be gone and my Tailor had none of it.

MOLL.

And I wondred most of all that I should be tied from marriage, having such a mind too't. Come, Sir John Pennydub, fair weather on our side; the moon has changed since yester night.

PYE.

The Sting of every evil is with-in me.

NOBLE.

And that you may perceive I fain not with you, behold their fellow actor in those forgeries; who, full of Spleen and envy at their so sudden advancements, revealed all their plot in anger.

PYE.

Base Soldier, to reveal us/

WIDOW.

Ist possible we should be blinded so, and our eye open?

NOBLE.

Widdow, will you now believe that false, which too soon you believed true?

WIDOW.

O, to my shame I do.

SIR GODFREY.

But under favour, my Lord, my chain was truly lost and strangely found again.

NOBLE.

Resolve him of that, Soldier.

SKIRMISH.

In few words, Knight, then, thou were the arch-gull of all.

SIR GODFREY.

How, Sir?

SKIRMISH.

Nay, I'll prove it: for the chain was but hid in the rosemary bank all this while, and thou gotst him out of prison to Conjure for it, who did it admirably fustianly; for indeed what need any others when he knew where it was?

SIR GODFREY.

O villainy of villainies! But how came my chain there?

SKIRMISH.

Where's truly la, in deed la, he that will not swear, but lie, He that will not steal, But rob: pure Nicholas Saint Antlings?

SIR GODFREY.

O Villain! one of our society, Deemd always holy, pure, religious. A Puritan a thief, when wast ever heard? Sooner we'll kill a man then Steal, thou knowst. Out, slave! I'll rend my lion from thy back With mine own hands.

NICHOLAS.

Dear Master, oh.

NOBLE.

Nay, Knight, dwell in patience. And now, widdow, being so near the Church, twer great pity, nay uncharity, to send you home again without a husband: draw nearer you of true worship, state and credit, that should not stand so far off from a widdow, and suffer forged shapes to come between you. Not that in these I blemish the true Title of a Captain, or blot the fair margent of a Scholar; For I honor worthy and deserving parts in the one, and cherish fruitful Vertues in the other. Come Lady, and you, Virgin; bestow your eyes and your purest affections upon men of estimation both in Court and City, that hath long wooed you, and both with there hearts and wealth sincerely love you.

SIR GODFREY.

Good Sister, do: Sweet little Franke, these are men of reputation; you shall be welcome at Court: a great credit for a Citizen, sweet Sister.

NOBLE.

Come, her silence does consent too't.

WIDDOW.

I know not with what face--

NOBLE.

Pah, pah! why, with your own face; they desire no other.

WIDDOW.

Pardon me, worthy Sirs; I and my daughter have wrongd your loves.

MUCK.

Tis easily pardon'd, Lady, If you vouchsafe it now.

WIDDOW.

With all my soul.

FRANCES.

And I with all my heart.

MOLL.

And I, Sir John, with soul, heart, lights and all.

SIR JOHN.

They are all mine, Moll.

NOBLE.

Now, Lady, What honest Spirit but will applaud your choice, And gladly furnish you with hand and voice? A happy change which makes e'en heaven rejoice. Come, enter into your Joys, you shall not want For fathers now; I doubt it not, believe me, But that you shall have hands enough to give ye.

THE SECOND MAIDEN'S TRAGEDY

This Jacobean play was written in 1611 and performed in the same year by the King's Men. The manuscript that survives is the copy that was sent to the censor, and therefore includes his notes and deletions. It is now generally believed to be by Thomas Middleton.

The play's original title is unknown. The manuscript bears no title, and the censor, George Buc, added a note beginning "This second Maiden's Tragedy (for it hath no name inscribed)...". Buc was comparing the play to Beaumont and Fletcher's *The Maid's Tragedy* .

In 1994 a professional handwriting expert, Charles Hamilton, claimed the manuscript of this play to be the lost Shakespearean play *Cardenio* . Most literary scholars reject his argument and the position of mainstream literary scholarship is that the play is by Thomas Middleton, though the play does draw on elements of *Don Quixote* , as *Cardenio* is assumed to have done.

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DRAMATIS PERSONAE

The TYRANT, the usurping king

GOVIANUS, the deposed king

MEMPHONIUS }

SOPHONIRUS } nobles

HELVETIUS }

FIRST and SECOND NOBLES

The LADY, daughter to Helvetius, afterwards her spirit

VOTARIUS, friend to Anselmus

ANSELMUS, brother to Govianus

The WIFE to Anselmus

LEONELLA, her waiting-woman

BELLARIUS, lover to Leonella

A GUARD

SERVANT to Govianus

FIRST and SECOND FELLOWS

FOUR SOLDIERS

PAGE to Govianus

TWO SERVANTS to Anselmus

Nobles, Fellows, Attendants to the Tyrant] Acts and Scenes

ACT I.i. The court

Enter the new usurping Tyrant; the Nobles of his faction, Memphonius, Sophonirus, Helvetius, with others; the right heir Govianus, deposed. A sennet.

TYRANT

Thus high, my lords, your powers and constant loves

Hath fixed our glories like unmoved stars

That know not what it is to fall or err.

We're now the kingdom's love, and he that was

Flattered awhile so stands before us now

Readier for doom than dignity.

GOVIANUS

So much

Can the adulterate friendship of mankind,

False fortune's sister, bring to pass on kings,

And lay usurpers sunning in their glories

Like adders in warm beams.

TYRANT

There was but one

In whom my heart took pleasure (amongst women),

One in the whole creation, and in her

You dared to be my rival. Was't not bold?

Now we are king, she'll leave the lower path

And find the way to us. Helvetius,

It is thy daughter. Happier than a king

And far above him, for she kneels to thee

Whom we have kneeled to, richer in one smile

That came from her than she in all thy blessings!

If thou be'st proud, thou art to be forgiven;

It is no deadly sin in thee. While she lives,

High lust is not more natural to youth

Than that to thee: be not afraid to die in't;

'Tis but the sin of joy. There is no gladness

But has a pride it lives by--that's the oil

That feeds it into flames. Let her be sent for,

And honourably attended, as beseems

Her that we make our queen. My *[lords]* Memphonius

And Sophonirus, take into your care

The royal business of my heart. Conduct her
With a respect equal with that to us.

If more, it shall be pardon'd; so still err.
You honour us, but ourself honours her.

MEMPHONIUS
[Aside] Strange fortune! Does he make his queen of her?

Exit Memphonius.

SOPHONIRUS
[Aside] I have a wife; would she were so preferred!
I could be but her subject; so I'm now.
I allow her her one friend to stop her mouth
And keep her quiet; give him his table free,
And the huge feeding of his great stone-horse
With which he rides in pomp about the city
Only to speak to gallants in bay-windows.
Marry, his lodging he pays dearly for:

He gets me all my children; there I save by't.
Beside, I draw my life out by the bargain
Some twelve years longer than the times appointed,
When my young prodigal gallant kicks up's heels
At one and thirty, and lies dead and rotten
Some five and forty years before I'm coffined.
'Tis the right way to keep a woman honest;
One friend is barricado to a hundred
And keeps 'em out. Nay, more, a husband's sure
To have his children all of one man's getting,
And he that performs best can have no better.
I'm e'en as happy then that save a labour.

Exit Sophonirus.

TYRANT

Thy honours with thy daughter's love shall rise;
I shall read thy deservings in her eyes.

HELVETIUS

Oh, may they be eternal books of pleasure, To show you all delight!

GOVIANUS

The loss of her sits closer to my heart
Than that of kingdom or the whorish pomp
Of this world's titles that with flattery swells us
And makes us die like beasts fat for destruction.
Oh, she's a woman, and her eye will stand
Upon advancement, never weary yonder;
But when she turns her head by chance and sees
The fortunes that are my companions,
She'll snatch her eyes off, and repent the looking.

TYRANT

'Tis well advised. We doom thee, Govianus,
To banishment forever from our kingdom.

GOVIANUS

What could be worse to one whose heart is locked
Up in another's bosom? Banishment!
And why not death? Is that too easy for me?

TYRANT

But that the world would call our way to dignity
A path of blood,
It should be the first act in all our reign.

GOVIANUS

She's lost forever. *[To Nobles]* Farewell, virtuous men,
Too honest for your greatness! Now y'are mightier
Than when we knew the kingdom, your styles heavier.
Then, ponderous nobility, farewell.

[FIRST] NOBLE

How's that, sir?

GOVIANUS

Weighty and serious. Oh, sir, is it you?
I knew you one and twenty and a lord
When your discretion sucked. Is't come from nurse yet?
You scorn to be a scholar; you were born better.

You have good lands; that's the best grounds of learning.
If you can conster but your doctor's bill,
Pierce your wife's waiting-women, and decline your tenants
Till they're all beggars, with new fines and rackings,
Y'are scholar good enough for a lady's son
That's born to living. If you list to read,
Ride but to th' city and bestow your looks
On the court library, the mercers' books;
They'll quickly furnish you. Do but entertain
A tailor for your tutor, to expound
All the hard stuff to you, by what name and title
Soever they be called.

[FIRST] NOBLE

I thank you, sir.

GOVIANUS

'Tis happy you have learned so much manners,
Since you have so little wit. Fare you well, sir.

TYRANT

Let him be stayed awhile.

[SECOND] NOBLE

Stay!

[FIRST] NOBLE

You must stay, sir.

GOVIANUS

He's not so honest, sure, to change his mind,
Revoke his doom. Hell has more hope on him.

TYRANT

We have not ended yet; the worst part's coming.
Thy banishment were gentle were that all.
But, t'afflict thy soul, before thou goest
Thou shalt behold the heav'n that thou must lose,
In her that must be mine.
Then to be banished, then to be deprived,
Shows the full torment we provide for thee.

GOVIANUS

Here's a right tyrant now; he will not bate me

Th' affliction of my soul; he will have all parts

Suffer together.

Enter [Memphonius and Sophonirus] with the Lady clad in black.

Now I see my loss;

I never shall recover't. My mind's beggared.

TYRANT

Black! Whence risse that cloud? Can such a thing be seen

In honour's glorious day, the sky so clear?

Why mourns the kingdom's mistress? Does she come

To meet advancement in a funeral garment?

Back! She forgot herself. 'Twas too much joy

That bred this error, and we heartily pardon't.

Go, bring me her hither like an illustrious bride

With her best beams about her: let her jewels

Be worth ten cities; that beseems our mistress,

And not a widow's case, a suit to weep in.

LADY

I am not to be altered.

TYRANT

How!

LADY

I have a mind

That must be shifted ere I cast off these,

Or I shall wear strange colours. 'Tis not titles

Nor all the bastard honours of this frame

That I am taken with. I come not hither

To please the eye of glory, but of goodness,

And that concerns not you, sir; you're for greatness.

I dare not deal with you. I have found my match,

And I will never loose him.

GOVIANUS

If there be man

Above a king in fortunes, read my story

And you shall find him there. Farewell, poor kingdom.

[To Tyrant] Take it to help thee; thou hast need on't now.

I see thee in distress, more miserable

Than some thou lay'st taxations on, poor subjects.

Thou art all beset with storms, more overcast

Than ever any man that brightness flattered.

'Tis only wretchedness to be there with thee,

And happiness to be here.

TYRANT

Sure some dream crowned me.

If it were possible to be less than nothing,

I wake the man you seek for. There's the kingdom

Within yon valley fixed, while I stand here

Kissing false hopes upon a frozen mountain,

Without the confines. I am he that's banished;

The king walks yonder, chose by her affection,

Which is the surer side, for where she goes

Her eye removes the court. What is he here

Can spare a look? They're all employed on her.

Helvetius! Thou art not worth the waking neither.

I lose but time in thee. Go sleep again.
Like an old man, thou canst do nothing;
Thou tak'st no pain at all to earn thine honours.
Which way shall we be able to pay thee
To thy content, when we receive not ours?
The master of the work must needs decay
When he wants means and sees his servant play.

HELVETIUS

[To Lady] Have I bestowed so many blessings on thee
And do they all return to me in a curse?
Is that the use I ha' for 'em? Be not to me
A burden ten times heavier than my years.
Thou'dst wont to be kind to me and observe
What I thought pleasing. Go, entreat the king.

LADY

I will do more for you, sir; y'are my father.
I'll kiss him too.

[Kisses Govianus.]

HELVETIUS

How am I dealt withal!

LADY

Why, that's the usurper, sir; this is the king.

I happened righter than you thought I had.
And were all kingdoms of the earth his own
As sure as this is not, and this dear gentleman
As poor as virtue and almost as friendless,
I would not change this misery for that sceptre,
Wherein I had part with him. Sir, be cheerful.
'Tis not the reeling fortune of great state
Or low condition that I cast mine eye at;
It is the man I seek, the rest I loose
As things unworthy to be kept or noted.
Fortunes are but the outsides of true worth;
It is the mind that sets his master forth.

TYRANT

Has there so many bodies been hewn down,

Like trees in progress, to cut out a way

That was ne'er known, for us and our affections,

And is our game so crossed? There stands the first

Of all her kind that ever refused greatness.

A woman to set light by sovereignty!

What age bring her forth and hide that book?

'Tis their desire most commonly to rule

More than their part comes to: sometimes their husbands.

HELVETIUS

'Tis in your power, my lord, to force her to you

And pluck her from his arms.

TYRANT

Thou talk'st unkindly;

That had been done before thy thought begot it

If my affection could be so hard-hearted

To stand upon such payment. It must come

Gently and kindly, like a debt of love,

Or 'tis not worth receiving.

GOVIANUS

Now, usurper,

I wish no happier freedom than the banishment

That thou hast laid upon me.

TYRANT

[Aside] Oh, he kills me

At mine own weapon! 'Tis I that live in exile

Should she forsake the land. I'll feign some cause

Far from the grief itself to call it back.--

That doom of banishment was but lent to thee

To make a trial of thy factious spirit,

Which flames in thy desire. Thou wouldst be gone:

There is some combination betwixt thee

And foreign plots; thou hast some powers to raise,

Which to prevent, thy banishment we revoke,

Confine thee to thy house nearest our court,

And place a guard about thee. Lord Memphonius, See it effected.

MEMPHONIUS

With best care, my lord.

GOVIANUS

Confine me? Here's my liberty in mine arms;

I wish no better to bring me consent.

Love's best freedom is close prisonment.

Exeunt Lady and Govianus *[with Memphonius]* .

TYRANT

Methinks the day e'en darkens at her absence.

I stand as in a shade, when a great cloud

Muffles the sun, whose beams shine afar off

On tow'rs and mountains, but I keep the valleys,

The place that is last served.

HELVETIUS

My lord.

TYRANT

Your reason, sir.

HELVETIUS

Your grace is mild to all but your own bosom.

They should have both been sent to several prisons,

And not committed to each other's arms.

There's a hot durance. He'll ne'er wish more freedom.

TYRANT

'Tis true; let 'em be both forced back.

Stay, we command you!

Thou talk'st not like a statesman. Had my wrath

Took hold of such extremity at first,

They'd lived suspectful still, warned by their fears;

Where, now that liberty makes 'em more secure,

I'll take 'em at my pleasure. It gives thee

Freer access to play the father for us

And ply her to our will.

HELVETIUS

Mass, so it does,

Let a man think on't twice! Your grace hath happened

Upon a strange way, yet it proves the nearest.

TYRANT

Nay, more, to vex his soul give command straight

They be divided into several rooms,

Where he may only have a sight of her,

To his mind's torment, but his arms and lips

Locked up like felons from her.

HELVETIUS

Now you win me.

I like that cruelty passing well, my lord.

TYRANT

Give order with all speed.

HELVETIUS

Though I be old,

I need no spur, my lord. Honour pricks me.

I do beseech your grace, look cheerfully.

You shall not want content, if it be locked

In any blood of mine: the key's your own;

You shall command the wards.

TYRANT

Say'st thou so, sir?

I were ingrateful, then, should I see thee

Want honour, that provides content for me.

Exeunt. A flourish.

ACT I.ii. Anselmus' house

Enter Lord Anselmus, the deposed king's brother, with his friend Votarius.

VOTARIUS

Pray, sir, confine your thoughts and excuse me.

Methinks the deposed king your brother's sorrow

Should find you business enough.

ANSELMUS

How, Votarius!

Sorrow for him? Weak ignorance talks not like thee.

Why, he was never happier.

VOTARIUS

Pray prove that, sir.

ANSELMUS

H'as lost the kingdom, but his mind's restored.

Which is the larger empire? Prithee tell me.

Dominions have their limits; the whole earth

Is but a prisoner, nor the sea her jailor,

That with a silver hoop locks in her body;

They're fellow prisoners, though the sea look bigger
Because he is in office and pride swells him.
But the unbounded kingdom of the mind
Is as unlimitable as heav'n,
That glorious court of spirits, all honest courtiers.
Sir, if thou lov'st me, turn thine eye to me
And look not after him that needs thee not.
My brother's well attended; peace and pleasure
Are never from his sight. He has his mistress;
She brought those servants and bestowed them on him.
But who brings mine?

VOTARIUS

Had you not both long since
By a kind, worthy lady, your chaste wife?

ANSELMUS

That's it that I take pains with thee to be sure of.
What true report can I send to my soul
Of that I know not? We must only think
Our ladies are good people, and so live with 'em,

A fine security for them! Our own thoughts
Make the best fools of us; next to them, our wives.

But say she's all chaste, yet, is that her goodness?
What labour is't for woman to keep constant
That's never tried or tempted? Where's her fight?
The war's within her breast, her honest anger
Against the impudence of flesh and hell.
So let me know the lady of my rest
Or I shall never sleep well. Give not me
The thing that is thought good, but what's approved so.
So wise men choose. Oh, what a lazy virtue
Is chastity in a woman if no sin
Should lay temptation to't! Prithee set to her,
And bring my peace along with thee.

VOTARIUS
You put to me
A business that will do my words more shame
Than ever they got honour among women.
Lascivious courtings among sinful mistresses

Come ever seasonably, please best.
But let the boldest ruffian touch the ear
Of modest ladies with adulterous sounds,
Their very looks confound him and force grace
Into that cheek where impudence sets her seal.
That work is never undertook with courage
That makes his master blush. However, sir,
What profit can return to you by knowing
That which you do already, with more toil?
Must a man needs, in having a rich diamond,
Put it between a hammer and an anvil
And, not believing the true worth and value,
Break it in pieces to find out the goodness,
And in the finding lose it? Good sir, think on't!
Nor does it taste of wit to try their strengths
That are created sickly, nor of manhood.
We ought not to put blocks in women's ways,
For some too often fall upon plain ground.

Let me dissuade you, sir.

ANSELMUS

Have I a friend?
And has my love so little interest in him
That I must trust some stranger with my heart
And go to seek him out?

VOTARIUS

Nay, hark you, sir.
I am so jealous of your weakness
That, rather than you should lie prostituted
Before a stranger's triumph, I would venture
A whole hour's shaming for you.

ANSELMUS

Be worth thy word, then.

Enter Wife.

Yonder she comes. *[Aside]* I'll have an ear to you both.
I love to have such things at the first hand. *[Retires.]*

VOTARIUS

[Aside] I'll put him off with somewhat; guile in this

Falls in with honest dealing. Oh, who could move

Adultery to yon face? So rude a sin

May not come near the meekness of her eye.

My client's cause looks so dishonestly

I'll ne'er be seen to plead in't.

WIFE

What, Votarius!

VOTARIUS

Good morrow, virtuous madam.

WIFE

Was my lord

Seen lately here?

VOTARIUS

He's newly walked forth, lady.

WIFE

How was he attended?

VOTARIUS

Faith, I think with none, madam.

WIFE

That sorrow for the king his brother's fortune

Prevails too much with him, and leads him strangely

From company and delight.

VOTARIUS

[Aside] How she's beguiled in him!

There's no such natural touch, search all his bosom.--

That grief's too bold with him indeed, sweet madam,

And draws him from the pleasure of his time,

But 'tis a business of affection

That must be done. We owe a pity, madam,

To all men's misery, but especially

To those afflictions that claim kindred of us:

We're forced to feel 'em; all compassion else

Is but a work of charity, this, of nature,
And ties our pity in a bond of blood.

WIFE
Yet, sir, there is a date set to all sorrows.

Nothing is everlasting in this world.
Your counsel will prevail; persuade him, good sir,
To fall into life's happiness again
And leave the desolate path. I want his company.
He walks at midnight in thick shady woods
Where scarce the moon is starlight. I have watched him
In silver nights when all the earth was dressed
Up like a virgin in white innocent beams;
Stood in my window, cold and thinly clad,
T'observe him through the bounty of the moon
That liberally bestowed her graces on me.
And when the morning dew began to fall,
Then was my time to weep. H'as lost his kindness,
Forgot the way of wedlock, and become
A stranger to the joys and rites of love.

He's not so good as a lord ought to be;
Pray tell him so from me, sir.

VOTARIUS

That will I, madam.

Exit Wife.

Now must I dress a strange dish for his humour.

ANSELMUS

[Aside] Call you this courting? Life, not one word near it!
There was no syllable but was twelve score off.
My faith, hot temptation! Woman's chastity
In such a conflict had great need of one
To keep the bridge. 'Twas dangerous for the time.
Why, what fantastic faiths are in these days
Made without substance! Whom should a man trust
In matters about love?

[Comes forward.]

VOTARIUS

Mass, here he comes too!

ANSELMUS

How now, Votarius? What's the news for us?

VOTARIUS

You set me to a task, sir, that will find

Ten ages work enough, and then unfinished.

Bring sin before her? Why, it stands more quaking

Than if a judge should frown on't. Three such fits

Would shake it into goodness, and quite beggar

The under-kingdom. Not the art of man,

Woman, or devil--

ANSELMUS

Oh, peace, man! Prithee, peace!

VOTARIUS

Can make her fit for lust.

ANSELMUS

Yet again, sir?

Where lives that mistress of thine, Votarius,

That taught thee to dissemble? I'd fain learn.

She makes good scholars.

VOTARIUS

How, my lord!

ANSELMUS

Thou art the son of falsehood. Prithee leave me.

How truly constant, charitable, and helpful

Is woman unto woman in affairs

That touch affection and the peace of spirit,

But man to man how crooked and unkind!

I thank my jealousy I heard thee all,

For I heard nothing; now thou'rt sure I did.

VOTARIUS

Now, by this light, then, wipe but off this score,
Since y'are so bent, and if I ever run
In debt again to falsehood and dissemblance
For want of better means, tear the remembrance of me
From your best thoughts.

ANSELMUS

For thy vow's sake, I pardon thee.
Thy oath is now sufficient watch itself
Over thy actions. I discharge my jealousy;
I ha' no more use for't now. To give thee way,
I'll have an absence made purposely for thee
And presently take horse. I'll leave behind me
An opportunity that shall fear no starting;
Let but thy pains deserve it.

VOTARIUS

I am bound to't.

ANSELMUS

For a small time, farewell, then. Hark thee--

VOTARIUS

Oh, good sir,

It will do wondrous well!

Exit Anselmus.

What a wild seed

Suspicion sows in him, and takes small ground for't!

How happy were this lord if he would leave

To tempt his fate and be resolved he were so;

He would be but too rich.

Man has some enemy still that keeps him back

In all his fortunes, and his mind is his,

And that's a mighty adversary. I had rather

Have twenty kings my enemies than that part,

For let me be at war with earth and hell

So that be friends with me. I ha' sworn to make

A trial of her faith; I must put on.

Enter Wife.

A courtier's face and do't; mine own will shame me.

WIFE

This is most strange of all. How one distraction
Seconds another!

VOTARIUS

What's the news, sweet madam?

WIFE

H'as took his horse, but left his leave untaken.
What should I think on't, sir? Did ever lord
Depart so rudely from his lady's presence?

VOTARIUS

Did he forget your lip?

WIFE

He forgot all
That nobleness remembers.

VOTARIUS

I'm ashamed on him.

Let me help, madam, to repair his manners

And mend that unkind faith.

[Attempts to kiss her.]

WIFE

Sir, pray forbear!

You forget worse than he.

VOTARIUS

[Aside] So virtue save me,

I have enough already.

WIFE

'Tis himself

Must make amends, good sir, for his own faults.

VOTARIUS

[Aside] I would he'd do't, then, and ne'er trouble me in't.--

But, madam, you perceive he takes the course

To be far off from that. He's rode from home;

But his unkindness stays, and keeps with you.

Let whose will please his wife, he rides his horse;

That's all the care he takes. I pity you, madam;

Y'ave an unpleasing lord: would 'twere not so.

I should rejoice with you.

You're young; the very spring's upon you now:

The roses on your cheeks are but new blown.

Take you together, y'are a pleasant garden

Where all the sweetness of man's comfort breathes.

But what is it to be a work of beauty

And want the heart that should delight in you?

You still retain your goodness in yourselves,

But then you lose your glory, which is all.

The grace of every benefit is the use,

And is't not pity you should want your grace?

Look you like one whose lord should walk in groves

About the peace of midnight? Alas, madam,

'Tis to me wondrous how you should spare the day

From amorous clips, much less the general season

When all the world's a gamester.

That face deserves a friend of heart and spirit,

Discourse, and motion, indeed such a one

That should observe you, madam, without ceasing,

And not a weary lord.

WIFE

Sure I was married, sir,

In a dear year of love, when scarcity

And famine of affection vexed poor ladies,

Which makes my heart so needy; it ne'er knew

Plenty of comfort yet.

VOTARIUS

Why, that's your folly,

To keep your mind so miserably, madam.

Change into better times; I'll lead you to 'em.

What bounty shall your friend expect for his!
Oh, you that can be hard to your own heart,
How would you use your friend's? If I thought kindly,
I'd be the man myself should serve your pleasure.

WIFE

How, sir!

VOTARIUS

Nay, and ne'er miss you too. I'd not come sneaking
Like a retainer once a week or so
To show myself before you for my livery.
I'd follow business like a household servant;
Carry my work before me, and dispatch
Before my lord be up, and make no words on't:

The sign of a good servant.

WIFE

'Tis not friendly done, sir,
To take a lady at advantage thus,

Set all her wrongs before her, and then tempt her.

VOTARIUS

[Aside] Heart, I grow fond myself! 'Twas well she waked me
Before the dead sleep of adultery took me;
'Twas stealing on me. Up, you honest thoughts,
And keep watch for your master! I must hence:

I do not like my health; 't 'as a strange relish.
Pray heav'n I plucked mine eyes back time enough!
I'll never see her more. I praised the garden,
But little thought a bed of snakes lay hid in't.

WIFE

[Aside] I know not how I am. I'll call my woman.--
Stay, for I fear thou'rt too far gone already.

VOTARIUS

[Aside] I'll see her but once more. Do thy worst, love;
Thou art too young, fond boy, to master me.--
I come to tell you, madam, and that plainly,

I'll see your face no more. Take 't how you please.

WIFE

You will not offer violence to me, sir,

In my lord's absence? What does that touch you

If I want comfort?

VOTARIUS

Will you take your answer?

WIFE

It is not honest in you to tempt woman;

When her distresses take away her strength,

How is she able to withstand her enemy?

VOTARIUS

I would fain leave your sight and I could possible.

WIFE

What is't to you, good sir, if I be pleased

To weep myself away, and run thus violently

Into the arms of death, and kiss destruction?
Does this concern you now?

VOTARIUS
Ay, marry, does it!
What serve these arms for but to pluck you back,
These lips but to prevent all other tasters
And keep that cup of nectar for themselves?
[Aside] Heart, I'm beguiled again! Forgive me, heav'n;
My lips have been naught with her. Sin's mere witchcraft.
Break all the engines of life's frame in pieces,
I will be master once, and whip the boy
Home to his mother's lap. Face, fare thee well.

Exit Votarius.

WIFE
Votarius? Sir? My friend? Thanks heav'n, he's gone,
And he shall never come so near again.
I'll have my frailty watched ever; henceforward
I'll no more trust it single; it betrays me

Into the hands of folly! Where's my woman?

Enter Leonella.

My trusty Leonella!

LEONELLA

Call you, madam?

WIFE

Call I; I want attendance. Where are you?

LEONELLA

Never far from you, madam.

WIFE

Pray be nearer,

Or there is some that will and thank you too;

Nay, perhaps bribe you to be absent from me.

LEONELLA

How, madam!

WIFE

Is that strange to a lady's woman?

There are such things i' th' world, many such buyers

And sellers of a woman's name and honour,

Though you be young in bribes, and never came

To the flesh market yet. Beshrew your heart

For keeping so long from me!

LEONELLA

What ail you, madam?

WIFE

Somewhat commands me, and takes all the power

Of myself from me.

LEONELLA

What should that be, lady?

WIFE

When did you see Votarius?

LEONELLA

[Aside] Is that next?

Nay, then, I have your ladyship in the wind.--

I saw him lately, madam.

WIFE

Whom didst see?

LEONELLA

Votarius.

WIFE

What have I to do with him

More than another man? Say he be fair,

And his parts proper both of mind and body,

You praise him but in vain in telling me so.

LEONELLA

[Aside] Yea, madam, are you prattling in your sleep?

'Tis well my lord and you lie in two beds.

WIFE

I was ne'er so ill. I thank you, Leonella,

My negligent woman! Here you showed your service.

LEONELLA

[Aside] Life, have I power or means to stop a sluice

At a high water? What would sh'ave me do in't?

WIFE

I charge thee, while thou liv'st with me, henceforward

Use not an hour's absence from my sight.

Exit *[Wife]* .

LEONELLA

By my faith, madam, you shall pardon me.

I have a love of mine own to look to,

And he must have his breakfast. Pist! Bellarius!

Enter Bellarius muffled in his cloak.

BELLARIUS

Leonella?

LEONELLA

Come forth, and show yourself a gentleman,
Although most commonly they hide their heads
As you do there, methinks. And why a taffety muffler?
Show your face, man. I'm not ashamed on you.

BELLARIUS

I fear the servants.

LEONELLA

And they fear their mistress, and ne'er think on you.

Their thoughts are upon dinner and great dishes.
If one thing hap (impossible to fail to,
I can see so far in't) you shall walk boldly, sir,
And openly in view through every room

About the house; and let the proudest meet thee,

I charge you give no way to 'em.

BELLARIUS

How thou talk'st!

LEONELLA

I can avoid the fool, and give you reason for't.

BELLARIUS

'Tis more than I should do, if I asked more on thee.

I prithee tell me how.

LEONELLA

With ease, i'faith, sir.

My lady's heart is wondrous busy, sir,

About the entertainment of a friend too,

And she and I must bear with one another

Or we shall make but a mad house betwixt us.

BELLARIUS

I'm bold to throw my cloak off at this news,

Which I ne'er durst before, and kiss thee freelier!

What is he, sirrah?

LEONELLA

Faith, an indifferent fellow

With good long legs, a near friend of my lord's.

BELLARIUS

A near friend of my lady's, you would say!

His name, I prithee?

LEONELLA

One Votarius, sir.

BELLARIUS

What sayest thou?

LEONELLA

He walks under the same title.

BELLARIUS

The only enemy that my life can show me!

LEONELLA

Your enemy? Let my spleen then alone with him.

Stay you your anger; I'll confound him for you.

BELLARIUS

As how, I prithee?

LEONELLA

I'll prevent his venery;

He shall ne'er lie with my lady.

BELLARIUS

Troth, I thank you!

Life, that's the way to save him! Art thou mad?

Whereas the other way he confounds himself

And lies more naked to revenge and mischief.

LEONELLA

Then let him lie with her, and the devil go with him!

He shall have all my furtherance.

BELLARIUS

Why, now you pray heartily, and speak to purpose.

Exeunt.

ACT II.i. Govianus' house

Enter the Lady of Govianus, with a Servant.

LADY

Who is't would speak with us?

SERVANT

My lord your father.

LADY

My father? Pray make haste; he waits too long.

Entreat him hither.

[Exit Servant.]

In despite of all
The tyrant's cruelties, we have got that friendship
E'en of the guard that he has placed about us:
My lord and I have free access together,
As much as I would ask of liberty.
They'll trust us largely now, and keep sometimes
Three hours from us, a rare courtesy
In jailor's children.

Enter Helvetius.

Some mild news, I hope,
Comes with my father. No, his looks are sad.

There is some further tyranny. Let it fall;
Our constant suff'rings shall amaze it.

[Kneels to Helvetius.]

HELVETIUS
Rise;
I will not bless thee. Thy obedience
Is after custom, as most rich men pray,
Whose saint is only fashion and vainglory.

So 'tis with thee in thy dissembled duty:
There is no religion in't, no reverent love,
Only for fashion and the praise of men.

LADY
Why should you think so, sir?

HELVETIUS
Think? You come too late
If you seek there for me. I know't and see't.

I'll sooner give my blessing to a drunkard,
Whom the ridiculous power of wine makes humble
As foolish use makes thee. Base-spirited girl,
That canst not think above disgrace and beggary
When glory is set for thee and thy seed,
Advancement for thy father, beside joy
Able to make a latter spring in me
In this my fourscore summer, and renew me
With a reversion yet of heat and youth!
But the dejection of thy mind and spirit
Makes me, thy father, guilty of a fault
That draws thy birth in question, and e'en wrongs
Thy mother in her ashes being at peace
With heav'n and man. Had not her life and virtues
Been seals unto her faith, I should think thee now
The work of some hired servant, some house-tailor,
And no one part of my endeavour in thee!
Had I neglected greatness, or not rather
Pursued almost to my eternal hazard,
Thou'dst ne'er been a lord's daughter.

LADY

Had I been

A shepherd's, I'd been happier and more peaceful.

HELVETIUS

Thy very seed will curse thee in thy age

When they shall hear the story of thy weakness:

How in thy youth thy fortunes tendered thee

A kingdom for thy servant, which thou lefts

Basely to serve thyself. What dost thou in this

But merely cozen thy posterity

Of royalty and succession, and thyself

Of dignity present?

LADY

Sir, your king did well

'Mongst all his nobles to pick out yourself

And send you with these words. His politic grace

Knew what he did, for well he might imagine

None else should have been heard; they'd had their answer

Before the question had been half way thorough.

But, dearest sir, I owe to you a reverence,
A debt which both begins and ends with life,
Never till then discharged, 'tis so long-lasting.
Yet could you be more precious than a father,
Which, next a husband, is the richest treasure
Mortality can show us, you should pardon me
(And yet confess too that you found me kind)
To hear your words, though I withstood your mind.

HELVETIUS

Say you so, daughter? Troth, I thank you kindly.
I am in hope to rise well by your means,
Or you to raise yourself. We're both beholding to you.
Well, since I cannot win you, I commend you;
I praise your constancy and pardon you.
Take Govianus to you, make the most of him;
Pick out your husband there, so you'll but grant me
One light request that follows.

LADY

Heaven forbid else, sir!

HELVETIUS

Give me the choosing of your friend, that's all.

LADY

How, sir? My friend? A light request indeed.

Somewhat too light, sir, either for my wearing

Or your own gravity, and you look on't well.

HELVETIUS

Push, talk like a courtier, girl, not like a fool!

Thou know'st the end of greatness, and hast wit

Above the flight of twenty feathered mistresses

That glister in the sun of princes' favours.

Thou hast discourse in thee, fit for a king's fellowship,

A princely carriage and astonishing presence.

What should a husband do with all this goodness?

Alas, one end an't is too much for him;

Nor is it fit a subject should be master

Of such a jewel. 'Tis in the king's power

To take it for the forfeit; but I come

To bear thee gently to his bed of honours,

All force forgotten. He commends him to thee

With more than the humility of a servant,

That since thou wilt not yield to be his queen,

Be yet his mistress: he shall be content

With that or nothing; he shall ask no more.

And with what easiness that is performed,

Most of your women know. Having a husband,

That kindness costs thee nothing; y'ave that in

All over and above to your first bargain,

And that's a brave advantage for a woman

If she be wise, as I suspect not thee.

And having youth, and beauty, and a husband,

Thou'st all the wish of woman. Take thy time, then;

Make thy best market.

LADY

Can you assure me, sir,

Whether my father spake this, or some spirit

Of evil-wishing that has for a time

Hired his voice of him, to beguile me that way, Presuming on his power and my obedience?

I'd gladly know, that I might frame my answer

According to the speaker.

HELVETIUS

How now, baggage!

Am I in question with thee? Does thy scorn cast

So think an ignorance before thine eyes

That I am forgotten too? Who is't speaks to thee

But I thy father?

Enter Govianus discharging a pistol. *[Helvetius falls.]*

GOVIANUS

The more monstrous he!

Art down but with the bare voice of my fury?

Up, ancient sinner; thou'rt but mocked with death.

I missed thee purposely; thank this dear creature.

Oh, hast thou been anything beside her father

I'd made a fearful separation on thee:

I would have sent thy soul to a darker prison

Than any made of clay, and thy dead body

As a token to the lustful king thy master!

Art thou struck down so soon with the short sound

Of this small earthen instrument, and dost thou

So little fear th' eternal noise of hell?

What's she? Does she not bear thy daughter's name?

How stirs thy blood, sir? Is there a dead feeling

Of all things fatherly and honest in thee?

Say thou couldst be content, for greatness' sake,

To end the last act of thy life in panderism

(As you perhaps will say your betters do),

Must it needs follow that unmanly sin

Can work upon the weakness of no woman

But hers whose name and honour natural love

Bids thee preserve more charily than eyesight,

Health, or thy sense? Can promotion's thirst

Make such a father? Turn a grave old lord

To a white-headed squire? Make him so base

To buy his honours with his daughter's soul

And the perpetual shaming of his blood?
Hast thou the leisure, thou forgetful man,
To think upon advancement at these years?
What wouldst thou do with greatness? Dost thou hope
To fray death with't, or hast thou that conceit
That honour will restore thy youth again?
Thou art but mocked, old fellow: 'tis not so;
Thy hopes abuse thee. Follow thine own business
And list not to the sirens of the world.
Alas, thou hadst more need kneel at an altar
Than to a chair of state,
And search thy conscience for thy sins of youth:
That's work enough for age; it needs no greater.
Thou'rt called within: thy very eyes look inward
To teach thy thoughts the way, and thy affections;
But miserable notes that conscience sings
That cannot truly pray, for flattering kings.

HELVETIUS

This was well searched indeed, and without favouring.
Blessing reward thee! Such a wound as mine

Did need a pitiless surgeon. Smart on, soul;
Thou't feel the less hereafter. Sir, I thank you;
I ever saw my life in a false glass
Until this friendly hour. With what fair faces
My sins would look on me! But now truth shows 'em,
How loathsome and how monstrous are their forms.

[Kneels to Govianus.]

Be you my king and master still; henceforward
My knee shall know no other earthly lord.
Well may I spend this life to do you service,
That sets my soul in her eternal way.

GOVIANUS
Rise, rise, Helvetius!

HELVETIUS
I'll see both your hands
Set to my pardon first.

GOVIANUS

Mine shall bring hers.

LADY

Now, sir, I honour you for your goodness chiefly.

Y'are my most worthy father: you speak like him;

The first voice was not his. My joy and reverence

Strive which should be most seen. *[As they raise him]* Let our hands, sir,

Raise you from earth thus high, and may it prove

The first ascent of your immortal rising,

Never to fall again.

HELVETIUS

A spring of blessings

Keep ever with thee, and the fruit thy lord's.

GOVIANUS

I ha' lost an enemy and have found a father.

Exeunt.

ACT II.ii. Anselmus' house

Enter Votarius sadly.

VOTARIUS

All's gone; there's nothing but the prodigal left:
I have played away my soul at one short game
Where e'en the winner loses.

Pursuing sin, how often did I shun thee!
How swift art thou afoot, beyond man's goodness,
Which has a lazy pace! So was I catched.
A curse upon the cause! Man in these days
Is not content to have his lady honest,
And so rest pleased with her without more toil,
But he must have her tried, forsooth, and tempted;
And when she proves a quean then he lies quiet,
Like one that has a watch of curious making,
Thinking to be more cunning than the workman,

Never gives over tamp'ring with the wheels
Till either spring be weakened, balance bowed,
Or some wrong pin put in, and so spoils all.
How I could curse myself! Most business else
Delight*[s]* in the dispatch; that's the best grace to't.
Only this work of blind, repented lust
Hangs shame and sadness on his master's cheek.
Yet wise men take no warning--

Enter Wife.

Nor can I now.
Her very sight strikes my repentance backward;
It cannot stand against her. Chamber thoughts
And words that have sport in 'em, they're for ladies.

WIFE

My best and dearest servant!

VOTARIUS

Worthiest mistress!

Enter Leonella.

[LEONELLA]

Madam!

WIFE

Who's that? My woman? She's myself.

Proceed, sir.

LEONELLA

Not if you love your honour, madam.

I came to give you warning my lord's come.

VOTARIUS

How!

WIFE

My lord!

LEONELLA

[Aside] Alas, poor vessels, how this tempest tosses 'em!

They're driven both asunder in a twinkling;

Down goes the sails here, and main mast yonder.

Here rides a bark with better fortune yet;

I fear no tossing, come what weather will.

I have a trick to hold out water still.

VOTARIUS

[Aside] His very name shoots like a fever through me,

Now hot, now cold. Which cheek shall I turn toward him,

For fear he should read guiltiness in my looks?

I would he would keep from home like a wise man;

'Tis no place for him now. I would not see him

Of any friend alive. It is not fit

We two should come together; we have abused

Each other mightily: he used me ill

To employ me thus, and I ha' used him worse.

I'm too much even with him.

Enter Anselmus.

Yonder's a sight on him.

WIFE

My loved and honoured lord! Most welcome, sir.

[They kiss.]

LEONELLA

[Aside] Oh, there's a kiss! Methinks my lord might taste

Dissimulation rank in't, if he had wit.

He takes but of the breath of his friend's lip.

A second kiss is here, but that she keeps

For her first friend. We women have no cunning!

WIFE

You parted strangely from me.

ANSELMUS

That's forgotten.

Votarius! I make speed to be in thine arms.

[Embraces Votarius.]

VOTARIUS

You never come too soon, sir.

ANSELMUS

How goes business?

VOTARIUS

Pray think upon some other subject, sir.

What news at court?

ANSELMUS

Pish, answer me!

VOTARIUS

Alas, sir, would you have me work by wonders,

To strike fire out of ice? Y'are a strange lord, sir.

Put me to possible things and find 'em finished

At your return to me. I can say no more.

ANSELMUS

[Taking him aside] I see by this thou didst not try her throughly.

VOTARIUS

How, sir, not throughly! By this light, he lives not

That could make trial of a woman better.

ANSELMUS

I fear thou wast too slack.

VOTARIUS

Good faith, you wrong me, sir.

She never found it so.

ANSELMUS

Then I've a jewel,

And nothing shall be thought too precious for her.

I may advance my forehead and boast purely.

Methinks I see her worth with clear eyes now.

Oh, when a man's opinion is at peace,

'Tis a fine life to marry! No state's like it.

[To Wife] My worthy lady, freely I confess

To thy wronged heart, my passion had alate

Put rudeness on me, which I now put off.

I will no more seem so unfashionable

For pleasure and the chamber of a lady.

WIFE

I'm glad you're changed so well, sir.

VOTARIUS

[Aside] Thank himself for't.

Exeunt Wife and Anselmus.

LEONELLA

[Aside] This comes like physic when the party's dead.

Flows kindness now, when 'tis so ill deserved?

This is the fortune still. Well, for this trick,

I'll save my husband and his friend a labour;

I'll never marry as long as I'm honest,
For commonly queans have the kindest husbands.

Exit Leonella, manet Votarius.

VOTARIUS
I do not like his company now; 'tis irksome.
His eye offends me. Methinks 'tis not kindly
We two should live together in one house,
And 'tis impossible to remove me hence.
I must not give way first. She is my mistress,
And that's a degree kinder than a wife.
Women are always better to their friends
Than to their husbands, and more true to them.
Then let the worst give place, whom she 'as least need on,
He that can best be spared, and that's her husband.
I do not like his overboldness with her;
He's too familiar with the face I love.
I fear the sickness of affection;
I feel a grudging on't. I shall grow jealous
E'en of that pleasure which she has by law,

I shall go so near with her!

Enter Bellarius passing over the stage.

Ha, what's he?
Life, 'tis Bellarius, my rank enemy!

Mine eye snatched so much sight of him. What's his business?
His face half darkened, stealing through the house
With a whoremaster's pace: I like it not.
This lady will be served like a great woman,
With more attendants, I perceive, than one;
She has her shift of friends. My enemy one?
Do we both shun each other's company
In all assemblies public, at all meetings,
And drink to one another in one mistress?
My very thought's my poison. 'Tis high time
To seek for help. Where is our head physician?
A doctor of my making and that lecher's!
Oh, woman, when thou once leav'st to be good,
Thou car'st not who stands next thee! Every sin

Is a companion for thee, for thy once-cracked honesty

Is like the breaking of whole money:

It never comes to good, but wastes away.

Enter Anselmus.

ANSELMUS

Votarius.

VOTARIUS

Ha!

ANSELMUS

We miss you, sir, within.

VOTARIUS

I missed you more without. Would you had come sooner, sir!

ANSELMUS

Why, what's the business?

VOTARIUS

You should ha' seen a fellow,

A common bawdy-house ferret, one Bellarius,

Steal through this room, his whorish barren face

Three-quarters muffled. He is somewhere hid

About the house, sir.

ANSELMUS

Which way took the villain,

That marriage felon, one that robs the mind,

Twenty times worse than any highway striker?

Speak, which way took he?

VOTARIUS

Marry, my lord, I think--

Let me see, which way was't now? Up yon stairs.

ANSELMUS

The way to chamb'ring! Did not I say still

All thy temptations were too faint and lazy?
Thou didst not play 'em home.

VOTARIUS

To tell you true, sir,
I found her yielding ere I left her last,
And wavering in her faith.

ANSELMUS

Did not I think so?

VOTARIUS

That makes me suspect him.

ANSELMUS

Why, partial man!
Couldst thou hide this from me, so dearly sought for,
And rather waste thy pity upon her?

Thou'rt not so kind as my heart praised thee to me.
Hark!

VOTARIUS

'Tis his footing, certain.

ANSELMUS

Are you chambered?

I'll fetch you from aloft.

Exit Anselmus.

VOTARIUS

He takes my work
And toils to bring me ease. This use I'll make on him:
His care shall watch to keep all strange thieves out
Whiles I familiarly go in and rob him
Like one that knows the house.

But how has rashness and my jealousy used me!
Out of my vengeance to mine enemy
Confessed her yielding, I have locked myself

From mine own liberty with that key. Revenge
Does no man good but to his greatest harm.
Suspect and malice, like a mingled cup,
Made me soon drunk. I knew not what I spoke,
And that may get me pardon.

Enter Anselmus, a dagger in his hand, with Leonella.

LEONELLA

Why, my lord!

ANSELMUS

Confess, thou mystical panderess! Run, Votarius,
To the back gate; the guilty slave leaped out
And scaped me so. This strumpet locked him up
In her own chamber!

Exit Votarius.

LEONELLA

Hold, my lord! I might;

He is my husband, sir!

ANSELMUS

Oh, soul of cunning!
Came that arch-subtlety from thy lady's counsel
Or thine own sudden craft? Confess to me
How oft thou hast been a bawd to their close actions,
Or all thy light goes out!

LEONELLA

My lord, believe me,
In troth, I love a man too well myself
To bring him to my mistress.

ANSELMUS

Leave thy sporting,
Or my next offer makes thy heart weep blood!

LEONELLA

Oh, spare that strength, my lord, and I'll reveal
A secret that concerns you, for this does not.

ANSELMUS

Back, back, my fury, then:

It shall not touch thy breast. Speak freely. What is't?

LEONELLA

Votarius and my lady are false gamesters;

They use foul play, my lord.

ANSELMUS

Thou liest!

LEONELLA

Reward me then

For all together; if it prove not so,

I'll never bestow time to ask your pity.

ANSELMUS

Votarius and thy lady! 'Twill ask days

Ere it be settled in belief. So, rise;

Go get thee to thy chamber.

Exit.

LEONELLA

A pox on you!

You hindered me of better business, thank you.

H'as frayed a secret from me; would he were whipped!

Faith, from a woman a thing's quickly slipped.

Exit.

ACT II.iii. The court

Enter the Tyrant with Sophonirus, Memphonius, and other Nobles. A flourish.

TYRANT

My joys have all false hearts; there's nothing true to me

That's either kind or pleasant. I'm hardly dealt withal.

I must not miss her; I want her sight too long.

Where's this old fellow?

SOPHONIRUS

Here's one, my lord, of threescore and sev'nteen.

TYRANT

Push, that old limber ass puts in his head still!

Helvetius! Where is he?

MEMPHONIUS

Not yet returned, my lord.

Enter Helvetius.

TYRANT

Your lordship lies.

Here comes the kingdom's father. Who amongst you

Dares say this worthy man has not made speed?

I would fain hear that fellow.

SOPHONIRUS

[Aside] I'll not be he.

I like the standing of my head too well

To have it mended.

TYRANT

[To Helvetius] Thy sight quickens me.

I find a better health when thou art present

Than all times else can bring me! Is the answer

As pleasing as thyself?

HELVETIUS

Of what, my lord?

TYRANT

Of what? Fie, no! He did not say so, did he?

SOPHONIRUS

Oh, no, my lord, not he spoke no such word.

[Aside] I'll say as he would ha't, for I'd be loath

To have my body used like butcher's meat.

TYRANT

When comes she to our bed?

HELVETIUS

Who, my lord?

TYRANT

Hark!

You heard that plain amongst you?

SOPHONIRUS

Oh, my lord,

As plain as my wife's tongue, that drowns a sance bell.

[Aside] Let me alone to lay about for honour;

I'll shift for one.

TYRANT

When comes the lady, sir,

That Govianus keeps?

HELVETIUS

Why, that's my daughter.

TYRANT

Oh, is it so? Have you unlocked your memory?

What says she to us?

HELVETIUS

Nothing.

TYRANT

How thou tempt'st us!

What didst thou say to her, being sent from us?

HELVETIUS

More than was honest, yet it was but little.

TYRANT

How cruelly thou work'st upon our patience,

Having advantage 'cause thou art her father!

But be not bold too far; if duty leave thee,

Respect will fall from us.

HELVETIUS

Have I kept life

So long till it looks white upon my head,

Been threescore years a courtier, and a flatterer

Not above threescore hours, which time's repented

Amongst my greatest follies, and am I at these days

Fit for no place but bawd to mine own flesh?

You'll prefer all your old courtiers to good services.

If your lust keep but hot some twenty winters,

We are like to have a virtuous world of wives,

Daughters, and sisters, besides kinswomen

And cousin-germans removed up and down

Where'er you please to have 'em! Are white hairs

A colour fit for panders and flesh-brokers,

Which are the honoured ornaments of age,

To which e'en kings owe reverence as they're men
And greater in their goodness than their greatness?
And must I take my pay all in base money?
I was a lord born, set by all court grace,
And am I thrust now to a squire's place?

TYRANT

How comes the moon to change so in this man
That was at full but now in all performance,
And swifter than my wishes? I beshrew that virtue
That busied herself with him. She might have found
Some other work; the man was fit for me
Before she spoiled him. She has wronged my heart in't
And marred me a good workman. Now his art fails him,
What makes the man at court? This is no place
For fellows of no parts; he lives not here
That puts himself from action when we need him.
I take off all thy honours and bestow 'em
On any of this rank that will deserve 'em.

SOPHONIRUS

My lord, that's I. Trouble your grace no further.

I'll undertake to bring her to your bed

With some ten words. Marry, they're special charms:

No lady can withstand 'em; a witch taught me 'em.

If you doubt me, I'll leave my wife in pawn

For my true loyalty, and your majesty

May pass away the time till I return.

I have a care in all things.

TYRANT

That may thrive best

Which the least hope looks after, but, however,

Force shall help nature. I'll be too sure now.

Thy willingness may be fortunate; we employ thee.

SOPHONIRUS

Then I'll go fetch my wife, and take my journey.

TYRANT

Stay, we require no pledge; we think thee honest.

SOPHONIRUS

[Aside] Troth, the worse luck for me; we had both been made by't:

It was the way to make my wife great too.

TYRANT

[To Helvetius] I'll teach thee to be wide and strange to me!

Thou't feel thyself light shortly. I'll not leave thee

A title to put on, but the bare name

That men must call thee by, and know thee miserable.

HELVETIUS

'Tis miserable, king, to be of thy making

And leave a better workman. If thy honours

Only keep life in baseness, take 'em to thee,

And give 'em to the hungry. There's one gapes.

SOPHONIRUS

One that will swallow you, sir, for that jest,

And all your titles after.

HELVETIUS

The devil follow 'em!

There's room enough for him too. Leave me, thou king,

As poor as truth; the gentlewoman I now serve,

And never will forsake her for her plainness:

That shall not alter me!

TYRANT

No? Our guard within there!

Enter Guard.

[GUARD]

My lord?

TYRANT

Bear that old fellow to our castle prisoner.

Give charge he be kept close.

HELVETIUS

Close prisoner?

Why, my heart thanks thee. I shall have more time
And liberty to virtue in one hour
Than all those threescore years I was a courtier.

So by imprisonment I sustain great loss:
Heav'n opens to that man the world keeps close.

Exit *[with Guard]* .

SOPHONIRUS

[Aside] But I'll not go to prison to try that.
Give me the open world; there's a good air.

TYRANT

I would fain send death after him, but I dare not;
He knows I dare not: that would give just cause
Of her unkindness everlasting to me.
His life may thank his daughter. Sophonirus,
Here, take this jewel, bear it as a token
To our heart's saint. 'Twill do thy words no harm.
Speech may do much, but wealth's a greater charm

Than any made of words, and, to be sure,

If one or both should fail, I provide farther.

Call forth those resolute fellows whom our clemency

Saved from a death of shame in time of war

For field offenses. Give 'em charge from us

They arm themselves with speed, beset the house

Of Govianus round, that if thou fail'st,

Or stay'st beyond the time thou leav'st with them,

They may with violence break in themselves

And seize on her for our use.

Exeunt. Manet Sophonirus.

SOPHONIRUS

They're not so saucy

To seize on her for their own, I hope,

As there are many knaves will begin first

And bring their lords the bottom. I have been served so

A hundred times myself, by a scurvy page

That I kept once;

But my wife loved him, and I could not help it.

A flourish. Exit.

ACT III.i. Govianus' house

Enter Govianus with his Lady and a Servant.

GOVIANUS

What is he?

SERVANT

An old lord come from court.

GOVIANUS

He should be wise by's years; he will not dare

To come about such business: 'tis not man's work.

Art sure he desired conference with thy lady?

SERVANT

Sure, sir.

GOVIANUS

Faith, thou'rt mistook; 'tis with me, certain.

Let's do the man no wrong; go, know it truly, sir.

SERVANT

[Aside] This a strange humour, we must know things twice.

Exit.

GOVIANUS

There's no man is so dull but he will weigh

The work he undertakes, and set about it

E'en in the best sobriety of judgment,

With all his senses watchful. Then his guilt

Does equal his for whom 'tis undertaken.

Enter Servant.

What says he now?

SERVANT

E'en as he said at first, sir.

H'as business to my lady from the king.

GOVIANUS

Still from the king! He will not come near, will he?

SERVANT

Yes, when he knows he shall, sir.

GOVIANUS

I cannot think it.

Let him be tried.

SERVANT

Small trial will serve him, I warrant you, sir.

[Exit.]

GOVIANUS

Sure honesty has left man. Has fear forsook him?

Yes, faith, there is no fear where there's no grace.

LADY

What way shall I devise to give him his answer?

Denial is not strong enough to serve, sir.

GOVIANUS

No, 't must have other helps.

Enter Sophonirus.

I see he dares.

Oh, patience, I shall lose a friend of thee!

SOPHONIRUS

I bring thee, precious lady, this dear stone

And commendations from the king my master.

GOVIANUS

[Drawing his sword] I set before thee, panderous lord, this steel,

And much good do't thy heart! Fall to, and spare not!

[Stabs Sophonirus.]

LADY

'Las, what have you done, my lord?

GOVIANUS

Why, sent a bawd

Home to his lodging; nothing else, sweetheart.

SOPHONIRUS

Well, you have killed me, sir, and there's an end;

But you'll get nothing by the hand, my lord,

When all your cards are counted. There be gamesters,

Not far off, will set upon the winner

And make a poor lord on you ere th'ave left you.

I'm fetched in like a fool to pay the reck'ning,

Yet you'll save nothing by't.

GOVIANUS

What riddle's this?

SOPHONIRUS

There she stands by thee now, who yet ere midnight

Must lie by the king's side.

GOVIANUS

Who speaks that lie?

SOPHONIRUS

One hour will make it true: she cannot scape

No more than I from death; y'ave a great gain on't

And you look well about you, that's my comfort:

The house is round beset with armed men

That know their time, when to break in and seize on her.

LADY

My lord!

GOVIANUS

'Tis boldly done to trouble me

When I've such business to dispatch. Within there!

Enter Servant.

[SERVANT]

My lord?

GOVIANUS

Look out, and tell me what thou seest.

[Exit Servant.]

SOPHONIRUS

How quickly now my death will be revenged,

Before the king's first sleep! I depart laughing

To think upon the deed.

[Dies.]

GOVIANUS

'Tis thy banquet.

Down, villain, to thy everlasting weeping,

That canst rejoice so in the rape of virtue,
And sing light tunes in tempests, when near shipwrecked,
And have no plank to save us!

Enter Servant.

Now, sir, quickly.

SERVANT
Which way soe'er I cast mine eye, my lord,
Out of all parts a' th' house, I may see fellows
Gathered in companies and all whispering
Like men for treachery busy--

LADY
'Tis confirmed.

SERVANT
Their eyes still fixed upon the doors and windows.

GOVIANUS

I think thou'st never done; thou lov'st to talk on't.

'Tis fine discourse. Prithee find other business.

SERVANT

Nay, I am gone. I'm a man quickly sneaped.

Exit.

GOVIANUS

H'as flattered me with safety for this hour.

LADY

Have you leisure to stand idle? Why, my lord,

It is for me they come.

GOVIANUS

For thee, my glory,

The riches of my youth, it is for thee.

LADY

Then is your care so cold? Will you be robbed
And have such warning of the thieves? Come on, sir!
Fall to your business; lay your hands about you.
Do not think scorn to work. A resolute captain
Will rather fling the treasure of his bark
Into whales' throats than pirates should be gorged with't.
Be not less man than he. Thou art master yet,
And all's at thy disposing. Take thy time;
Prevent mine enemy. Away with me;
Let me no more be seen. I'm like that treasure
Dangerous to him that keeps it. Rid thy hands on't.

GOVIANUS

I cannot loose thee so.

LADY

Shall I be taken
And lost the cruel'st way? Then wouldst thou curse
That love that sent forth pity to my life,
Too late thou wouldst.

GOVIANUS

Oh, this extremity!

Hast thou no way to scape 'em but in soul?

Must I meet peace in thy destruction

Or will it ne'er come at me?

'Tis a most miserable way to get it.

I had rather be content to live without it

Than pay so dear for't, and yet lose it too.

LADY

Sir, you do nothing; there's no valour in you.

Y'are the worst friend to a lady in affliction

That ever love made his companion.

For honour's sake, dispatch me! Thy own thoughts

Should stir thee to this act more than my weakness.

The sufferer should not do't. I speak thy part,

Dull and forgetful man, and all to help thee!

Is it thy mind to have me seized upon

And borne with violence to the tyrant's bed,

There forced unto the lust of all his days?

GOVIANUS

Oh, no, thou liv'st no longer now I think on't.

I take thee at all hazard.

LADY

Oh, stay! Hold, sir!

GOVIANUS

Lady,

What had you made me done now? You never cease

Till you prepare me cruel 'gainst my heart,

And then you turn 't upon my hand and mock me.

LADY

Cowardly flesh,

Thou show'st thy faintness still; I felt thee shake

E'en when the storm came near thee. Thou'rt the same.

But 'twas not for thy fear I put death by;

I had forgot a chief and worthy business

Whose strange neglect would have made me forgotten

Where I desire to be remembered most.

I will be ready straight, sir.

[Kneels in prayer.]

GOVIANUS

Oh, poor lady,

Why might not she expire now in that prayer,

Since she must die, and never try worse ways?

'Tis not so happy, for we often see

Condemned men sick to death, yet 'tis their fortune

To recover to their execution

And rise again in heath to set in shame!

What if I steal a death unseen of her now,

And close up all my miseries, with mine eyes?

Oh, fie!

And leave her here alone? That were unmanly.

LADY

My lord, be now as sudden as you please, sir.
I am ready to your hand.

GOVIANUS
But that's not ready.
'Tis the hard'st work that ever man was put to;
I know not which way to begin to come to't.
Believe me, I shall never kill thee well;
I shall but shame myself. It were but folly,
Dear soul, to boast of more than I can perform.

I shall not have the power to do thee right in't.
Thou deserv'st death with speed, a quick dispatch,
The pain but of a twinkling, and so sleep.
If I do't, I shall make thee live too long
And so spoil all that way. I prithee excuse me.

LADY
I should not be disturbed and you did well, sir.
I have prepared myself for rest and silence
And took my leave of words. I am like one

Removing from her house, that locks up all,
And rather than she would displace her goods,
Makes shift with anything for the time she stays.
Then look not for more speech; th' extremity speaks
Enough to serve us both had we no tongues!

Knock.

Hark!

WITHIN

Lord Sophonirus!

GOVIANUS

Which hand shall I take?

LADY

Art thou yet ignorant? There is no way
But through my bosom.

GOVIANUS

Must I lose thee then?

LADY

Th'are but thine enemies that tell thee so.

His lust may part me from thee, but death, never;

Thou canst not lose me there, for, dying thine,

Thou dost enjoy me still. Kings cannot rob thee.

Knock.

WITHIN

Do you hear, my lord?

LADY

Is it yet time, or no?

Honour remember thee!

GOVIANUS

I must; come. Prepare thyself.

LADY

Never more dearly welcome.

[Govianus] runs at her *[with his sword]* and falls by the way in a sound.

Alas, sir!

My lord, my love! Oh, thou poor-spirited man!

He's gone before me. Did I trust to thee,

And hast thou served me so? Left all the work

Upon my hand, and stole away so smoothly?

There was not equal suffering shown in this;

And yet I cannot blame thee. Every man

Would seek his rest. Eternal peace sleep with thee!

[Taking his sword] Thou art my servant now; come, thou hast lost

A fearful master, but art now preferred

Unto the service of a resolute lady,

One that knows how to employ thee, and scorns death

As much as great men fear it. Where's hell's ministers,

The tyrant's watch and guard? 'Tis of much worth,

When with this key the prisoner can slip forth!

Kills herself. Knock.

GOVIANUS

How now! What noise is this? I heard doors beaten.

A great knocking again.

Where are my servants? Let men knock so loud

Their master cannot sleep!

Knock.

WITHIN

The time's expired,

And we'll break in, my lord!

GOVIANUS

Ha! Where's my sword?

I had forgot my business. *[Sees the Lady.]* Oh, 'tis done,

And never was beholding to my hand!

Was I so hard to thee, so respectless of thee,

To put all this to thee? Why, it was more
Than I was able to perform myself
With all the courage that I could take to me.

It tired me; I was fain to fall, and rest.
And hast thou, valiant woman, overcome
Thy honour's enemies with thine own white hand,
Where virgin-victory sits, all without help?
Eternal praise go with thee! Spare not now;
Make all the haste you can. I'll plant this bawd
Against the door, the fittest place for him,
That when with ungoverned weapons they rush in,
Blinded with fury, they may take his death
Into the purple number of their deeds,
And wipe it off from mine.

[Places the body of Sophonirus against the door.] Knock within.

How now, forbear!
My lord's at hand.

WITHIN

My lord, and ten lords more,

I hope the king's officers are above 'em all.

[They attempt to open the door.]

GOVIANUS

Life, what do you do? Take heed!

Enter the Fellows well weaponed *[and stab Sophonirus]* .

Bless the old man!

My lord, All-Ass, my lord, he's gone!

FIRST *[FELLOW]*

Heart, farewell he, then!

We have no eyes to pierce thorough inch boards.

'Twas his own folly. The king must be served,

And shall. The best is, we shall ne'er be hanged for't,

There's such a number guilty.

GOVIANUS

Poor my lord!

He went some twice ambassador, and behaved himself

So wittily in all his actions!

SECOND *[FELLOW]*

My lord! What's she?

GOVIANUS

Let me see.

What should she be? Now I remember her.

Oh, she was a worthy creature

Before destruction grew so inward with her!

FIRST *[FELLOW]*

Well, for her worthiness, that's no work of ours.

You have a lady, sir; the king commands her

To court with speed, and we must force her thither.

GOVIANUS

Alas, she'll never strive with you; she was born

E'en with the spirit of meekness. Is't for the king?

FIRST *[FELLOW]*

For his own royal and most gracious lust,

Or let me ne'er be trusted.

GOVIANUS

Take her, then.

SECOND *[FELLOW]*

Spoke like an honest subject, by my troth.

I'll do the like myself to serve my prince.

Where is she, sir?

GOVIANUS

Look but upon yon face,

Then do but tell me where you think she is.

SECOND *[FELLOW]*

Life, she's not here!

GOVIANUS

She's yonder.

FIRST *[FELLOW]*

Faith, she's gone

Where we shall ne'er come at her, I see that.

GOVIANUS

No, nor thy master neither. Now I praise

Her resolution; 'tis a triumph to me

When I see those about her.

SECOND *[FELLOW]*

How came this, sir?

The king must know.

GOVIANUS

From yon old fellow's prattling.

All your intents he revealed largely to her,

And she was troubled with a foolish pride

To stand upon her honour, and so died.

'Twas a strange trick of her. Few of your ladies

In ord'nary will believe it: they abhor it;

They'll sooner kill themselves with lust than for it.

FIRST *[FELLOW]*

We have done the king good service to kill him,

More than we were aware on; but this news

Will make a mad court. 'Twill be a hard office

To be a flatterer now; his grace will run

Into so many moods there'll be no finding on him:

As good seek a wild hare without a hound now.

A vengeance of your babbling! These old fellows

Will hearken after secrets as their lives,

But keep 'em in e'en as they keep their wives.

ALL *[FELLOWS]*

We have watched fairly.

Exeunt *[with the body of Sophonirus]* . Manet Govianus.

GOVIANUS

What a comfort 'tis
To see 'em gone without her! Faith, she told me
Her everlasting sleep would bring me joy,
Yet I was still unwilling to believe her,
Her life was so sweet to me, like some man
In time of sickness that would rather wish,
To please his fearful flesh, his former health
Restored to him, than death; when, after trial,
If it were possible, ten thousand worlds
Could not entice him to return again
And walk upon the earth from whence he flew.
So stood my wish, joyed in her life and breath;
Now gone, there is no heav'n but after death!
Come, thou delicious treasure of mankind,
To him that knows what virtuous woman is
And can discretely love her. The whole world
Yields not a jewel like her, ransack rocks
And caves beneath the deep. Oh, thou fair spring

Of honest and religious desires,
Fountain of weeping honour, I will kiss thee
After death's marble lip! Thou'rt cold enough
To lie entombed now by my father's side.
Without offence in kin*[d]* red there I'll place thee,
With one I loved the dearest next thee.

Help me to mourn, all that love chastity.

Exit *[with her body]* .

ACT IV.i. Anselmus' house

Enter Votarius with Anselmus' *[Wife]* .

VOTARIUS

[Prithee] forgive me, madam; come, thou shalt.

WIFE

I'faith, 'twas strangely done, sir.

VOTARIUS

I confess it.

WIFE

Is that enough to help it, sir? 'Tis easy

To draw a lady's honour in suspicion,

But not so soon recovered and confirmed

To the first faith again from whence you brought it.

Your wit was fetched out about other business

Or such forgetfulness had never seized you.

VOTARIUS

'Twas but an overflowing, a spring tide

In my affection, raised by too much love,

And that's the worst words you can give it, madam.

WIFE

Jealous of me?

VOTARIUS

Life, you'd 'a' sworn yourself, madam,

Had you been in my body, and changed cases,

To see a fellow with a guilty pace

Glide through the room, his face three quarters nighted,

As if a deed of darkness had hung on him--

WIFE

I tell you twice, 'twas my bold woman's friend.

Hell take her impudence!

VOTARIUS

Why, I have done, madam.

WIFE

Y'ave done too late, sir. Who shall do the rest now?

Confessed me yielding! Was thy way too free?

Why didst thou long to be restrained? Pray speak, sir.

VOTARIUS

A man cannot cozen you of the sin of weakness,

Or borrow it of a woman for one hour,

But how he's wondered at, where, search your lives,

We shall ne'er find it from you. We can suffer you

To play away your days in idleness,

And hide your imperfections with our loves,

Or the most part of you would appear strange creatures,

And now 'tis but our chance to make an offer

And snatch at folly, running, yet to see

How earnest y'are against us, as if we had robbed you

Of the best gift your natural mother left you!

WIFE

'Tis worth a kiss, i'faith, and thou shalt ha't

Were there not one more left for my lord's supper.

And now, sir, I've bethought myself.

VOTARIUS

That's happy!

WIFE

You say we're weak, but the best wits on you all
Are glad of our advice, for aught I see,
And hardly thrive without us.

VOTARIUS
I'll say so too.
To give you encouragement and advance your virtues
'Tis not good always to keep down a woman.

WIFE
Well, sir, since y'ave begun to make my lord
A doubtful man of me, keep on that course
And ply his faith still with that poor belief
That I'm inclining unto wantonness.
Take heed you pass no further now.

VOTARIUS
Why, dost think
I'll be twice mad together in one moon?
That were too much for any freeman's son
After his father's funeral.

WIFE

Well, then thus, sir.

Upholding still the same, as being emboldened

By some loose glance of mine, you shall attempt,

After y'ave placed my lord in some near closet,

To thrust yourself into my chamber rudely,

As if the game went forward to your thinking.

Then leave the rest to me. I'll so reward thee

With bitterness of words--but prithee pardon 'em--

My lord shall swear me into honesty

Enough to serve his mind all his life after.

Nay, for a need, I'll draw some rapier forth,

That shall come near my hand as 'twere by chance,

And set a lively face upon my rage.

But fear thou nothing; I too dearly love thee

To let harm touch thee.

VOTARIUS

Oh, it likes me rarely!

I'll choose a precious time for't.

WIFE

Go thy ways; I'm glad I had it for thee.

Exit Votarius. Enter Leonella.

[LEONELLA]

Madam, my lord entreats your company.

WIFE

Pshaw ye!

LEONELLA

Pshaw ye!

My lords entreats your company.

WIFE

What *[now]* ?

Are ye so short-heeled?

LEONELLA

I am as my betters are, then!

WIFE

How came you by such impudence alate, minion?
Y'are not content to entertain your playfellow
In your own chamber closely, which I think
Is large allowance for a lady's woman.
There's many a good knight's daughter is in service
And cannot get such favour of her mistress
But what she has by stealth; she and the chambermaid
Are glad of one between 'em: and must you
Give such bold freedom to your long-nosed fellow
That every room must take a taste of him?

LEONELLA

Does that offend your ladyship?

WIFE

How think you, forsooth?

LEONELLA

Then he shall do't again!

WIFE

What!

LEONELLA

And again, madam,

So often till it please your ladyship;

And when you like it, he shall do't no more.

WIFE

What's this?

LEONELLA

I know no difference, virtuous madam,

But in love all have privilege alike.

WIFE

Y'are a bold quean!

LEONELLA

And are not you my mistress?

WIFE

This well, i'faith!

LEONELLA

[Aside] You spare not your own flesh no more than I;

Hell take me and I spare you!

WIFE

[Aside] Oh, the wrongs

That ladies do their honours when they make

Their slaves familiar with their weaknesses!

They're ever thus rewarded for that deed:

They stand in fear e'en of the grooms they feed.

I must be forced to speak my woman fair now,

And be first friends with her. Nay, all too little.

She may undo me at her pleasure else;

She knows the way so well, myself not better.

My wanton folly made a key for her

To all the private treasure of my heart;

She may do what she list.--Come, Leonella,

I am not angry with thee.

LEONELLA

Pish!

WIFE

Faith, I am not.

LEONELLA

Why, what care I and you be?

WIFE

Prithee forgive me.

LEONELLA

I have nothing to say to you.

WIFE

Come, thou shalt wear this jewel for my sake.

A kiss, and friends; we'll never quarrel more.

LEONELLA

Nay, choose you, faith. The best is, and you do,

You know who'll have the worst on't.

WIFE

[Aside] True: myself.

LEONELLA

[Aside] Little thinks she I have set her forth already.

I please my lord, yet keep her in awe too.

WIFE

One thing I had forgot: I prithee, wench,

Steal to Votarius closely and remember him

To wear some privy armour then about him,

That I may feign a fury without fear.

LEONELLA

Armour? When, madam?

WIFE

See now, I chid thee

When I least thought upon thee; thou'rt my best hand:

I cannot be without thee. Thus then, sirrah.

To beat away suspicion from the thoughts

Of ruder list'ning servants about house,

I have advised Votarius at fit time

Boldly to force his way into my chamber,

The admittance being denied him, and the passage

Kept strict by thee, my necessary woman.

La, there I should ha' missed thy help again!

At which attempt, I'll take occasion

To dissemble such an anger, that the world

Shall ever after swear us to their thoughts

As clear and free from any fleshly knowledge

[As] nearest kindred are, or ought to be,

Or what can more express it, if that failed.

LEONELLA

You know I'm always at your service, madam.

But why some privy armour?

WIFE

Marry, sweetheart,

The best is yet forgotten. Thou shalt hang

A weapon in some corner of the chamber,

Yonder, or there--

LEONELLA

Or anywhere. Why, i'faith, madam,

Do you think I'm to learn now to hang a weapon?

As much as I'm uncapable of what follows,

I've all your mind without book. Think it done, madam.

WIFE

Thanks, my good wench. I'll never call thee worse.

Exit Wife.

LEONELLA

Faith, y'are like to ha't again, and you do, madam.

Enter Bellarius.

BELLARIUS

What, art alone?

LEONELLA

Cuds me, what make you here, sir?

You're a bold, long-nosed fellow!

BELLARIUS

How!

LEONELLA

So my lady says.

Faith, she and I have had a bout for you, sir,

But she got nothing by't.

BELLARIUS

Did not I say still

Thou wouldst be too adventurous?

LEONELLA

Ne'er a whit, sir!

I made her glad to seek my friendship first.

BELLARIUS

By my faith, that showed well. If you come off

So brave a conqueress, to't again, and spare not.

I know not which way you should get more honour.

LEONELLA

She trusts me now to cast a mist, forsooth,

Before the servants' eyes. I must remember

Votarius to come once with privy armour

Into her chamber, when with a feigned fury

And rapier drawn, which I must lay a' purpose

Ready for her dissemblance, she will seem

T'act wonders for her juggling honesty.

BELLARIUS

I wish no riper vengeance. Canst conceive me?

Votarius is my enemy.

LEONELLA

That's stale news, sir.

BELLARIUS

Mark what I say to thee. Forget of purpose

That privy armour; do not bless his soul

With so much warning, nor his hated body

With such sure safety. Here express thy love.

Lay some empoisoned weapon next her hand,

That in that play he may be lost forever;

I'd have him kept no longer. Away with him!

One touch will set him flying; let him go.

LEONELLA

Bribe me but with a kiss, it shall be so.

Exeunt.

ACT IV.ii. The court

Enter Tyrant wondrous *[discontentedly]* , Nobles *[including Memphonius]* afar off.

[FIRST] NOBLE

My lord.

TYRANT

Begone, or never see life more!

I'll send thee far enough from court! Memphonius!

Where's he now?

MEMPHONIUS

Ever at your highness' service.

TYRANT

How dar'st thou be so near when we have threatened

Death to thy fellow? Have we lost our power,

Or thou thy fear? Leave us, in time of grace;

'Twill be too late anon.

MEMPHONIUS

[Aside] I think 'tis so

With thee already.

TYRANT

Dead! And I so healthful!

There's no equality in this. Stay!

MEMPHONIUS

Sir?

TYRANT

Where is that fellow brought the first report to us?

MEMPHONIUS

He waits without.

TYRANT

I charge thee, give command

That he be executed speedily,

As thou't stand firm thyself.

MEMPHONIUS

[Aside] Now, by my faith,

His tongue has helped his neck to a sweet bargain!

Exit Memphonius.

TYRANT

Her own fair hand so cruel! Did she choose

Destruction before me? Was I no better?

How much am I exalted to my face,

And, where I would be graced, how little worthy!

There's few kings know how rich they are in goodness,

Or what estate they have in grace and virtue.

There is so much deceit in glozers' tongues, The truth is taken from us. We know nothing

But what is for their purpose: that's our stint;

We are allowed no more. Oh, wretched greatness!

I'll cause a sessions for my flatterers

And have 'em all hanged up. 'Tis done too late.

Oh, she's destroyed, married to death and silence,

Which nothing can divorce: riches, nor laws,

Nor all the violence that this frame can raise.

I've lost the comfort of her sight forever.

I cannot call this life that flames within me,

But everlasting torment lighted up

To show my soul her beggary! A new joy

Is come to visit me in spite of death.

It takes me of that sudden, I'm ashamed

Of my provision, but a friend will bear.

Within there!

Enter [Soldiers] .

FIRST SOLDIER

Sir?

SECOND SOLDIER

My lord?

TYRANT

The men I wished for,

For secrecy and employment. Go, give order

That Govianus be released.

FOURTH SOLDIER

Released, sir?

TYRANT

Set free!

[Exit Fourth Soldier.]

And then I trust he will fly the kingdom

And never know my purpose. Run, sir, you;

Bring me the keys of the cathedral straight.

FIRST SOLDIER

[Aside] Are you so holy now? Do you curse all day

And go to pray at midnight?

Exit.

TYRANT

Provide you, sirs, close lanthorns and a pickaxe.

Away, be speedy!

SECOND SOLDIER

[Aside] Lanthorns and a pickaxe?

Life, does he mean to bury himself alive, trow?

[Exeunt Second and Third Soldiers.]

TYRANT

Death nor the marble prison my love sleeps in

Shall keep her body locked from mine arms;

I must not be so cozened. Though her life

Was like a widow's state made o'er in policy
To defeat me and my too-confident heart,
'Twas a most cruel wisdom to herself,
As much to me that loved her.

Enter [First Soldier with keys] .

What, returned?

FIRST SOLDIER

Here be the keys, my lord.

TYRANT

I thank thy speed.

[Enter Second and Third Soldiers with lanterns and a pickaxe.]

Here comes the rest full furnished. Follow me,
And wealth shall follow you.

Exit.

FIRST SOLDIER

Wealth! By this light,

We go to rob a church. I hold my life

The money will ne'er thrive; that's a sure saw:

"What's got from grace is ever spent in law."

Exeunt. Enter *[Memphonius]* .

[MEMPHONIUS]

What strange fits grow upon him! Here alate

His soul has got a very dreadful leader.

What should he make in the cathedral now,

The hour so deep in night? All his intents

Are contrary to man, in spirit or blood.

He waxes heavy in his noble minds;

His moods are such, they cannot bear the weight,

Nor will not long, if there be truth in whispers.

The honourable father of the state,

Noble Helvetius, all the lords agree

By some close policy shortly to set free.

[Exit.]

ACT IV.iii. A cathedral, before the Lady's tomb

Enter the Tyrant *[with Soldiers]* again at a farther door, which opened brings *[them]* to the tomb where the Lady lies buried. The tomb here discovered, richly set forth.

TYRANT

Softly, softly.

Let's give this place the peace that it requires.

The vaults e'en chide our steps with murmuring sounds,

For making bold so late. It must be done.

FIRST SOLDIER

I fear nothing but the whorish ghost of a quean I kept once. She swore she would so haunt me I should never pray in quiet for her, and I have kept myself from church this fifteen year to prevent her.

TYRANT

The monument woos me; I must run and kiss it.

Now trust me if the tears do not e'en stand

Upon the marble. What slow springs have I!

'Twas weeping to itself before I came.

How pity strikes e'en through insensible things

And makes them shame our dullness!

Thou house of silence, and the calms of rest

After tempestuous life, I claim of thee

A mistress, one of the most beauteous sleepers

That ever lay so cold, not yet due to thee

By natural death, but cruelly forced hither

Many a fair year before the world could spare her.

We miss her 'mongst the glories of our court

When they be numbered up. All thy still strength,

Thou grey-eyed monument, shall not keep her from us.

[To Second Soldier] Strike, villain, though the echo rail us all

Into ridiculous deafness! Pierce the jaws

Of this cold, ponderous creature.

SECOND SOLDIER

Sir!

TYRANT

Why strik'st thou not?

SECOND SOLDIER

I shall not hold the axe fast, I'm afraid, sir.

TYRANT

Oh, shame of men! A soldier and so limber?

SECOND SOLDIER

'Tis out of my element to be in a church, sir.

Give me the open field and turn me loose, sir.

TYRANT

True, there thou hast room enough to run away.

[To First Solider] Take thou the axe from him.

FIRST SOLDIER

I beseech your grace,

'Twill come to a worse hand. You'll find us all

Of one mind for the church, I can assure you, sir.

TYRANT

Nor thou?

THIRD SOLDIER

I love not to disquiet ghosts,

Of any people living; that's my humour, sir!

TYRANT

Oh, slaves of one opinion! Give me't from thee,

Thou man made out of fear! *[Seizes the axe.]*

SECOND SOLDIER

[Aside] By my faith, I'm glad

I'm rid on't. I that was ne'er before in cathedral

And have the batt'ring of a lady's tomb

Lie hard upon my conscience at first coming:

I should get much by that! It shall be a warning to me;

I'll ne'er come here again.

TYRANT

[Striking the tomb] No, wilt not yield?

Art thou so loath to part from her?

FIRST SOLDIER

[Aside] Life, what means he?

Has he no feeling with him? By this light, if I be not afraid to stay any longer, I'm a stone-cutter. Very fear will go nigh to turn me of some religion or other, and so make me forfeit my lieutenantship.

TYRANT

Oh, have we got the mastery? Help, you vassals!

Freeze you in idleness and can see us sweat?

SECOND SOLDIER

We sweat with fear as much as work can make us.

TYRANT

Remove the stone that I may see my mistress.

Set to your hands, you villains, and that nimbly, Or the same axe shall make you all fly open!

ALL *[SOLDIERS]*

Oh, good my lord!

TYRANT

I must not be delayed!

FIRST SOLDIER

This is ten thousand times worse than ent'ring upon a breach.
'Tis the first stone that ever I took off
From any lady; marry, I have brought 'em many:
Fair diamonds, sapphires, rubies.

[They remove the stone.]

TYRANT

Oh, blessed object!
I never shall be weary to behold thee;
I could eternally stand thus and see thee.
Why, 'tis not possible death should look so fair;

Life is not more illustrious when health smiles on't.

She's only pale, the colour of the court,

And most attractive; mistresses most strive for't

And their lascivious servants best affect it.

Where be these lazy hands again?

SOLDIERS

My lord!

TYRANT

Take up her body.

FIRST SOLDIER

How, my lord!

TYRANT

Her body!

FIRST SOLDIER

She's dead, my lord!

TYRANT

True; if she were alive,

Such slaves as you should not come near to touch her.

Do't, and with all best reverence; place her here.

FIRST SOLDIER

Not only, sir, with reverence, but with fear.

You shall have more than your own asking once.

I am afraid of nothing but she'll rise

At the first jog, and save us all a labour.

SECOND SOLDIER

Then we were best take her up and never touch her.

FIRST SOLDIER

Life, how can that be? Does fear make thee mad?

I've took up many a woman in my days,

But never with less pleasure, I protest!

TYRANT

Oh, the moon rises! What reflection

Is thrown about this sanctified building

E'en in a twinkling! How the monuments glister,

As if death's palaces were all massy silver

And scorned the name of marble! Art thou cold?

I have no faith in't yet; I believe none.

Madam! 'Tis I, sweet lady. Prithee speak!

'Tis thy love calls on thee, thy king, thy servant.

No? Not a word? All prisoners to pale silence?

I'll prove a kiss.

FIRST SOLIDER

[Aside] Here's fine chill venery!

'Twould make a pander's heels ache. I'll be sworn

All my teeth chatter in my head to see't.

TYRANT

By th' mass, thou'rt cold indeed! Beshrew thee for't!

Unkind to thine own blood? Hard-hearted lady!
What injury hast thou offered to the youth
And pleasure of thy days! Refuse the court
And steal to this hard lodging: was that wisdom?
Oh, I could chide thee with mine eye brimful,
And weep out my forgiveness when I ha' done!

Nothing hurt thee but want of woman's counsel:
Hadst thou but asked th' opinion of most ladies,
Thou'dst never come to this; they would have told thee
How dear a treasure life and youth had been.
'Tis that they fear to lose; the very name
Can make more gaudy tremblers in a minute
Than heaven or sin or hell: those are last thought on.
And where got'st thou such boldness from the rest
Of all thy timorous sex, to do a deed here
Upon thyself would plunge the world's best soldier
And make him twice bethink him, and again,

And yet give over? Since thy life has left me,
I'll clasp the body for the spirit that dwelt in't,
And love the house still for the mistress' sake.
Thou art mine now, spite of destruction
And Govianus, and I will possess thee.
I once read of a Herod, whose affection
Pursued a virgin's love, as I did thine,
Who for the hate she owed him killed herself,
As thou too rashly didst, without all pity.
Yet he preserved her body dead in honey,
And kept her long after her funeral.
But I'll unlock the treasure house of art
With keys of gold, and bestow all on thee.

Here, slaves, receive her humbly from our arms.
Upon your knees, you villains! All's too little
If you should sweep the pavement with your lips.

FIRST SOLDIER

[Aside] What strange brooms he invents!

TYRANT

So reverently
Bear her before us gently to our palace.
Place you the stone again where first we found it.

Exeunt *[with body]* . Manet First Soldier.

FIRST SOLDIER

Life, must this on now to deceive all comers
And covet emptiness? 'Tis for all the world
Like a great city-pie brought to a table
Where there be many hands that lay about:
The lid's shut close when all the meat's picked out,
Yet stands to make a show and cozen people.

Exit.

ACT IV.iv. The Lady's tomb

Enter Govianus in black, a book in his hand, his Page carrying a torch before him.

GOVIANUS

Already mine eye melts. The monument
No sooner stood before it but a tear
Ran swiftly from me to express her duty.
Temple of honour, I salute thee early,
The time that my griefs rise. Chamber of peace,
Where wounded virtue sleeps locked from the world,
I bring to be acquainted with thy silence
Sorrows that love no noise; they dwell all inward,
Where truth and love in every man should dwell.

Be ready, boy; give me the strain again.
'Twill show well here; whilst in my grief's devotion
At every rest mine eye lets fall a bead
To keep the number perfect.

Govianus kneels at the tomb *[wondrous]* passionately. His Page sings.

The song.

If ever pity were well placed
On true desert and virtuous honour,
It could ne'er be better graced;
Freely then bestow 't upon her.

Never lady earned her fame
In virtue's war with greater strife;
To preserve her constant name
She gave up beauty, youth, and life.
There she sleeps,
And here he weeps,
The lord unto so rare a wife.

Weep, weep, and mourn lament,
You virgins that pass by her,
For if praise come by death again,
I doubt few will lie nigh her.

GOVIANUS

Thou art an honest boy. 'Tis done like one
That has a feeling of his master's passions

And the unmatched worth of his dead mistress.

Thy better years shall find me good to thee,

When understanding ripens in thy soul,

Which truly makes the man, and not long time.

Prithee withdraw a little, and attend me

At cloister door.

PAGE

It shall be done, my lord.

[Exit.]

GOVIANUS

Eternal maid of honour, whose chaste body

Lies here like virtue's close and hidden seed,

To spring forth glorious to eternity

At the everlasting harvest--

WITHIN

I am not here.

GOVIANUS

What's that? Who is not here? I'm forced to question it.

Some idle sounds the beaten vaults send forth.

On a sudden, in a kind of noise like a wind, the doors clattering, the tombstone flies open, and a great light appears in the midst of the tomb; his Lady, as went out, standing just before him all in white, stuck with jewels, and a great crucifix on her breast.

Mercy, look to me! Faith, I fly to thee!

Keep a strong watch about me! Now thy friendship!

Oh, never came astonishment and fear

So pleasing to mankind! I take delight

To have my breast shake and my hair stand stiff.

If this be horror, let it never die!

Came all the pains of hell in that shape to me,

I should endure 'em smiling. Keep me still

In terror, I beseech thee. I'd not change

This fever for felicity of man

Or all the pleasures of ten thousand ages.

LADY

Dear lord, I come to tell you all my wrongs.

GOVIANUS

Welcome! Who wrongs the spirit of my love?

Thou art above the injuries of blood;

They cannot reach thee now. What dares offend thee?

No life that has the weight of flesh upon't

And treads as I do can now wrong my mistress.

LADY

The peace that death allows me is not mine;

The monument is robbed. Behold, I'm gone;

My body taken up.

GOVIANUS

'Tis gone indeed!

What villain dares so fearfully run in debt

To black eternity?

LADY

He that dares do more:

The tyrant!

GOVIANUS

All the miseries below

Reward his boldness!

LADY

I am now at court

In his own private chamber. There he woos me

And plies his suit to me with as serious pains

As if the short flame of mortality

Were lighted up again in my cold breast,

Folds me within his arms and often sets

A sinful kiss upon my senseless lip,

Weeps when he sees the paleness of my cheek,

And will send privately for a hand of art

That may dissemble life upon my face

To please his lustful eye.

GOVIANUS

Oh, piteous wrongs!

Inhuman injuries without grace or mercy!

LADY

I leave 'em to thy thought, dearest of men.

My rest is lost; thou must restore 't again.

GOVIANUS

Oh, fly me not so soon!

LADY

Farewell, true lord.

Exit Lady.

GOVIANUS

I cannot spare thee yet. I'll make myself

Over to death too, and we'll walk together

Like loving spirits; I prithee let's do so!

She's snatched away by fate, and I talk sickly.

I must dispatch this business upon earth

Before I take that journey.

I'll to my brother for his aid or counsel.

So wrong'd! Oh, heav'n, put armour on my spirit!

Her body I will place in her first rest,

Or in th' attempt lock death into my breast.

Exit.

ACT V.i. Anselmus' house, the bedchamber

Enter Votarius with Anselmus the husband.

VOTARIUS

You shall stand here, my lord, unseen, and hear all.

Do I deal now like a right friend with you?

ANSELMUS

Like a most faithful.

VOTARIUS

You shall have her mind e'en as it comes to me,

Though I undo her by't. Your friendship, sir,

Is the sweet mistress that I only serve.

I prize the roughness of a man's embrace

Before the soft lips of a hundred ladies.

ANSELMUS

And that's an honest mind of thee.

VOTARIUS

Lock yourself, sir,

Into that closet, and be sure none see you.

Trust not a creature. We'll have all run clear

E'en as the heart affords it.

ANSELMUS

'Tis a match, sir.

[Retires to closet.]

VOTARIUS

Troth, he says true there. 'Tis a match indeed.

He does not know the strength of his own words,

For, if he did, there were no mast'ring on him!

H'as cleft the pin in two with a blind man's eyes.

Though I shoot wide, I'll cozen him of the game.

Exit. [Enter] Leonella above in a gallery with her love Bellarius.

LEONELLA

Dost thou see thine enemy walk?

BELLARIUS

I would I did not.

LEONELLA

Prithee rest quiet, man; I have fee'd one for him:

A trusty catchpole, too, that will be sure on him.

Thou know'st this gallery well: 'tis at thy use now;

'T'as been at mine full often. Thou mayst sit

Like a most private gallant in yon corner,

See all the play and ne'er be seen thyself.

BELLARIUS

Therefore I chose it.

LEONELLA

Thou shalt see my lady

Play her part naturally, more to the life

Than she's aware on.

BELLARIUS

There must I be pleased.

Thou'rt one of the actors; thou't be missed anon.

LEONELLA

Alas, a woman's action's always ready.

Yet I'll down now I think on't.

BELLARIUS

Do; 'tis time, i'faith.

Descendet Leonella.

ANSELMUS

[Aside] I know not yet where I should plant belief,
I am so strangely toss'd between two tales.
I'm told by my wife's woman the deed's done,
And in Votarius' tongue 'tis yet to come:
The castle is but upon yielding yet;
'Tis not delivered up. Well, we shall find
The mystery shortly. I will entertain
The patience of a prisoner i' th' meantime.

Locks himself in. Enter Anselmus' *[Wife]* and Leonella.

WIFE

[Aside to her] Is all set ready, wench?

LEONELLA

Push, madam, all.

WIFE

[Aloud] Tell me not so. She lives not for a lady

That has less peace than I.

LEONELLA

Nay, good sweet madam,

You would not think how much this passion alters you.

It drinks up all the beauty of your cheek;

I promise you, madam, you have lost much blood.

WIFE

Let it draw death upon me, for till then

I shall be mistress of no true content.

Who could endure hourly temptation

And bear it as I do?

LEONELLA

Nay, that's most certain,

Unless it were myself, again. I can do't;

I suffer the like daily. You should complain, madam.

WIFE

Which way? Were that wisdom? Prithee, wench, to whom?

LEONELLA

To him that makes all whole again, my lord,

To one that, if he be a kind, good husband,

Will let you bear no more than you are able.

WIFE

Thou know'st not what thou speak'st. Why, my lord's he

That gives him the house-freedom, all his boldness,

Keeps him a' purpose here to war with me.

LEONELLA

Now I hold wiser of my lord than so.

He knows the world; he would not be so idle.

WIFE

I speak sad truth to thee. I am not private

In mine own chamber, such his imprudence is.

Nay, my repenting time is scarce blessed from him;

He will offend my prayers.

LEONELLA

Out upon him!

I believe, madam, he's of no religion.

WIFE

He serves my lord, and that's enough for him,

And *[preys]* upon poor ladies like myself:

There's all the gentleman's devotion!

LEONELLA

Marry, the devil of hell give him his blessing!

WIFE

Pray watch the door, and suffer none to trouble us
Unless it be my lord.

LEONELLA

[Aside] 'Twas finely spoke, that;
My lord indeed is the most trouble to her.

Now must I show a piece of service here.
How do I spend my days! Life, shall I never
Get higher than a lady's doorkeeper?
I must be married as my lady is, first,
And then my maid may do as much for me.

WIFE

Oh, miserable time! Except my lord
Do wake in honourable pity to me
And rid this vicious gamester from his house,
Whom I have checked so often, here I vow
I'll imitate my noble sister's fate,
Late mistress to the worthy Govianus,
And cast away my life as *[she]* did hers.

Enter Votarius to the door within.

LEONELLA

Back! Y'are too forward, sir. There's no coming for you.

VOTARIUS

How, Mistress Len, my lady's smock-woman!

Am I no farther in your duty yet?

LEONELLA

Duty! Look for't of them you keep under, sir.

VOTARIUS

You'll let me in?

LEONELLA

Who would you speak withal?

VOTARIUS

With the best lady you make curtsy to.

LEONELLA

She will not speak with you.

VOTARIUS

Have you her mind?

I scorn to take her answer of her broker.

LEONELLA

Madam!

WIFE

What's there? How now, sir, what's your business?

We see your boldness plain.

VOTARIUS

I came to see you, madam.

WIFE

Farewell, then; though 'twas impudence too much

When I was private.

VOTARIUS

Madam!

WIFE

Life, he was born

To beggar all my patience!

VOTARIUS

I'm bold

Still to prefer my love. Your woman hears me not.

WIFE

Where's modesty and honour? Have I not thrice

Answered thy lust?

LEONELLA

[Aside] Byrlady, I think oft'ner.

WIFE

And dar'st thou yet look with temptation on us?

Since nothing will prevail, come death, come vengeance!

I will forget the weakness of my kind

And force thee from my chamber!

[Thrusts at him with the sword.]

VOTARIUS

How now, lady!

'Ud's life, you prick me, madam!

WIFE

[Aside to him] Prithee peace;

I will not hurt thee.--Will you yet be gone, sir?

LEONELLA

He's upon going, I think.

VOTARIUS

Madam! Heart, you deal false with me! Oh, I feel it!

Y'are a most treacherous lady! This thy glory?

My breast is all afire! Oh!

[Dies.]

LEONELLA

Ha, ha, ha!

ANSELMUS

[Coming from the closet] Ha! I believe her constancy too late,

Confirmed e'en in the blood of my best friend!

[Seizing the sword] Take thou my vengeance, thou bold, perjurious strumpet,

That durst accuse thy virtuous lady falsely!

Kills Leonella. Enter Bellarius *[descending from the gallery]* .

BELLARIUS

[Aside] Oh, deadly poison after a sweet banquet!

What make I here? I had forgot my heart.

I am an actor too, and never thought on't;

The blackness of this season cannot miss me.--

[Drawing a sword] Sirrah, you, lord!

WIFE

Is he there? Welcome, ruin!

BELLARIUS

There is a life due to me in that bosom

For this poor gentlewoman.

ANSELMUS

And art thou then receiver?

I'll pay thee largely, slave, for thy last scape!

They make a dangerous pass at one another. The Wife purposely runs between, and is killed by them both.

WIFE

I come, Votarius!

[Dies.]

ANSELMUS

[To Bellarius] Hold, if manhood guide thee!

[Kneeling beside his Wife] Oh, what has fury done?

BELLARIUS

What has it done now?

Why, killed an honourable whore, that's all.

ANSELMUS

Villain, I'll seal that lie upon thy heart!

A constant lady!

BELLARIUS

To the devil, as could be!

Heart, must I prick you forward? Either up

Or, sir, I'll take my chance. Thou couldst kill her

Without repenting that deserved more pity, And spend'st thy time and tears upon a quean--

ANSELMUS

Slave!

BELLARIUS

That was deceived once in her own deceit!

[They fight and wound each other mortally.]

As I am now. The poison I prepared
Upon that weapon for mine enemy's bosom
Is bold to take acquaintance of my blood too,
And serves us both to make up death withal.

ANSELMUS

I ask no more of destiny but to fall
Close by the chaste side of my virtuous mistress.
If all the treasure of my weeping strength
Be left so wealthy but to purchase that,
I have the dear wish of a great man's spirit.

[Dragging himself to her] Yet favour me, oh, yet! *[Reaching her]* I thank thee, fate.

I expire cheerfully and give death a smile.

Anselmus *[seemingly]* dies.

BELLARIUS

Oh, rage! I pity now mine enemy's flesh.

Enter Govianus with Servants.

GOVIANUS

Where should he be?

FIRST SERVANT

My lady, sir, will tell you.

She's in her chamber here.

SECOND SERVANT

[Seeing the bodies] Oh, my lord!

GOVIANUS

Peace!

My honourable brother, madam, all,

So many dreadful deeds, and not one tongue

Left to proclaim 'em?

BELLARIUS

Yes, here, if a voice

Some minute long may satisfy your ear;

I've that time allowed it.

GOVIANUS

'Tis enough.

Bestow it quickly ere death snatch it from thee.

BELLARIUS

That lord, your brother, made his friend Votarius

To tempt his lady. She was won to lust,

The act revealed here by her serving-woman.

But that wise, close adulteress, stored with art

To prey upon the weakness of that lord,

Dissembled a great rage upon her love
And indeed killed him; which so won her husband,
He slew this right discoverer in his fury,
Who being my mistress, I was moved in heart
To take some pains with him, and h'as paid me for't.

As for the cunning lady, I commend her.
She performed that which never woman tried:

She ran upon two weapons and so died.
Now you have all, I hope I shall sleep quiet.

Dies.

ANSELMUS
Oh, thunder that awakes me e'en from death
And makes me curse my confidence with cold lips!
I feel his words in flames about by soul;
H'as more than killed me.

GOVIANUS

Brother!

ANSELMUS

I repent the smile

That I bestowed on destiny! A whore!

[To Wife] I fling thee thus from my believing breast

With all the strength I have; my rage is great

Although my veins grow beggars. Now I sue

To die far from thee; may we never meet!

Were my soul bid to joy's eternal banquet,

And were assured to find thee there a guest,

I'd sup with torments and refuse that feast.

Oh, thou beguiler of man's easy trust!

"The serpent's wisdom is in women's lust."

Dies.

GOVIANUS

Is death so long a-coming to mankind

It must be met halfways? 'Las, the full time

Is to eternity but a minute, a *[.]*

Was that so long to stay? Oh, cruel speed!

There's few men pay their debts before their day;

If they be ready at their time, 'tis well,

And but a few that are so. What strange haste

Was made among these people! My heart weeps for't.

[To Servants] Go, bear those bodies to a place more comely.

[Servants carry out the bodies.]

Brother, I came for thy advice, but I

Find thee so ill a counsellor to thyself

That I repent my pains and depart sighing.

The body of my love is still at court;

I am not well to think on't. The poor spirit

Was with me once again about it, troth,

And I can put it off no more for shame,

Though I desire to have it haunt me still

And never give me over, 'tis so pleasing.

I must to court. I've plighted my faith to't;

'T'as opened me the way to the revenge.

Tyrant, I'll run thee on a dangerous shelf, Though I be forced to fly this land myself.

Exit.

ACT V.ii. The court

Enter Tyrant with attendants.

TYRANT

In vain my spirit wrestles with my blood;

Affection will be mistress here on earth.

The house is hers; the soul is but a tenant.

I ha' tasked myself but with the abstinence

Of one poor hour, yet cannot conquer that;

I cannot keep from sight of her so long:

I starve mine eye too much. Go, bring her forth,

As we have caused her body to be decked

In all the glorious riches of our palace.

[Exit an attendant.]

Our mind has felt a famine for the time;

All comfort has been dear and scarce with us.

The times are altered since. Strike on, sweet harmony!

Music.

A braver world comes toward us.

Enter [First and Second] Soldiers with the Lady. They bring the body in a chair, dressed up in black velvet which sets out the paleness of the hands and face, and a fair chain of pearl 'cross her breast, and the crucifix above it. He stands silent awhile, letting the music play, beckoning the Soldiers that bring her in to make obeisance to her, and he himself makes a low honour to the body and kisses the hand. A song within, in voices.

Song.

Oh, what is beauty, that's so much adored?

A flatt'ring glass that cozens her beholders.
One night of death makes it look pale and horrid;
The dainty preserved flesh, how soon it moulders.
To love it living it bewitcheth many,
But after life is seldom heard of any.

FIRST SOLDIER

[Aside] By this hand, mere idolatry. I make curtsy

To my damnation. I have learned so much,

Though I could never know the meaning yet

Of all my Latin prayers, nor ne'er sought for't.

TYRANT

How pleasing art thou to us even in death!

I love thee yet, above all women living,

And shall do sev'n year hence.

I can see nothing to be mended in thee

But the too constant paleness of thy cheek.

I'd give the kingdom but to purchase there

The breadth of a red rose, in natural colour,

And think it the best bargain

That ever king made yet; but fate's my hindrance,

And I must only rest content with art,

And that I'll have in spite on't! Is he come, sir?

SECOND SOLDIER

Who, my lord?

TYRANT

Dull! The fellow that we sent

For a court schoolmaster, a picture-drawer,

A ladies' forenoon tutor. Is he come, sir?

FIRST SOLDIER

Not yet returned, my lord.

TYRANT

The fool belike

Makes his choice carefully, for so we charged him,

To fit our close deeds with some private hand.

It is no shame for thee, most silent mistress,

To stand in need of art,

When youth and all thy warm friends has forsook thee.

Women alive are glad to seek her friendship

To make up the fair number of their graces,

Or else the reck'ning would fall short sometimes,

And servants would look out for better wages.

Enter Third Soldier with Govianus *[disguised]* .

SECOND SOLIDER

He's come, my lord.

TYRANT

Depart, then.

[Exeunt First and Second Soldiers and attendants. Manet Third Soldier.]

Is that he?

THIRD SOLDIER

The privat'st I could get, my lord.

GOVIANUS

[Aside] Oh, heav'n, marry patience to my spirit!

Give me a sober fury, I beseech thee,

A rage that may not overcharge my blood

And do myself most hurt! *[To the Lady]* 'Tis strange to me

To see thee here at court, and gone from hence.

Didst thou make haste to leave the world for this?

And kept in the worst corner!

Oh, who dares play with destiny but he

That wears security so thick upon him

The thought of death and hell cannot pierce through!

TYRANT

[To Third Soldier] 'Twas circumspectly carried. Leave us; go.

[Exit Third Soldier.]

Be nearer, sir. Thou'rt much commended to us.

GOVIANUS

It is the hand, my lord, commends the workman.

TYRANT

Thou speak'st both modesty and truth in that.

We need that art that thou art master of.

GOVIANUS

My king is master both of that and me.

TYRANT

Look on yon face and tell me what it wants.

GOVIANUS

Which, that, sir?

TYRANT

That! What wants it?

GOVIANUS

Troth, my lord,

Some thousand years' sleep and a marble pillow.

TYRANT

What's that? *[Aside]* Observe it still: all the best arts

Hath the most fools and drunkards to their masters.--

Thy apprehension has too gross a film

To be employed at court. What colour wants she?

GOVIANUS

By my troth, all, sir. I see none she has,

Nor none she cares for.

TYRANT

[Aside] I am overmatched here.

GOVIANUS

A lower chamber with less noise were kindlier
For her, poor woman, whatsoe'er she was.

TYRANT

But how if we be pleased to have it thus,
And thou well hired to do what we command?
Is not your work for money?

GOVIANUS

Yes, my lord.

I would not trust at court and I could choose.

TYRANT

Let but thy art hide death upon her face,
That now looks fearfully on us, and but strive
To give our eye delight in that pale part
Which draws so many pities from these springs,
And thy reward for't shall outlast thy end,

And reach to thy friend's fortunes, and his friend.

GOVIANUS

Say you so, my lord? I'll work out my heart, then,
But I'll show art enough.

TYRANT

About it, then.
I never wished so seriously for health
After long sickness.

GOVIANUS

[Aside] A religious trembling shakes me by the hand
And bids me put by such unhallowed business,
But revenge calls for't, and it must go forward.
'Tis time the spirit of my love took rest;
Poor soul, 'tis weary, much abused and toiled.

[He paints her face and secretly applies poison to her lips.]

TYRANT

Could I now send for one to renew heat

Within her bosom, that were a fine workman!

I should but too much love him. But alas,

'Tis as unpossible for living fire

To take hold there,

As for dead ashes to burn back again

Into those hard, tough bodies whence they fell.

Life is removed from her now, as the warmth

Of the bright sun from us when it makes winter

And kills with unkind coldness. So is't yonder;

An everlasting frost hangs now upon her.

And as in such a season men will force

A heat into their bloods with exercise,

In spite of extreme weather, so shall we

By art force beauty on yon lady's face

Though death sit frowning on't a storm of hail

To beat it off. Our pleasure shall prevail.

GOVIANUS

My lord.

TYRANT

Hast done so soon?

GOVIANUS

That's as your grace
Gives approbation.

TYRANT

Oh, she lives again!
She'll presently speak to me. Keep her up;
I'll have her swoon no more: there's treachery in't.

Does she not feel warm to thee?

GOVIANUS

Very little, sir.

TYRANT

The heat wants cherishing, then. Our arms and lips
Shall labour life into her. Wake, sweet mistress!
'Tis I that call thee at the door of life. *[Kisses her.]* Ha!
I talk so long to death, I'm sick myself.

Methinks an evil scent still follows me.

GOVIANUS

Maybe 'tis nothing but the colour, sir,
That I laid on.

TYRANT

Is that so strong?

GOVIANUS

Yes, faith, sir,
'Twas the best poison I could get for money.

[Removes his disguise.]

TYRANT

Govianus!

GOVIANUS

Oh, thou sacrilegious villain!

Thou thief of rest, robber of monuments!
Cannot the body after funeral
Sleep in the grave for thee? Must it be raised
Only to please the wickedness of thine eye?

Does all things end with death and not thy lust?
Hast thou devised a new way to damnation,
More dreadful than the soul of any sin
Did ever pass yet between earth and hell?

Dost strive to be particularly plagued

Above all ghosts beside? Is thy pride such

Thou scorn'st a partner in thy torments too?

TYRANT

What fury gave thee boldness to attempt

This deed, for which I'll doom thee with a death

Beyond the Frenchman's tortures?

GOVIANUS

I smile at thee.

Draw all the death that ever mankind suffered

Unto one head to help thine own invention,

And make my end as rare as this thy sin

And full as fearful to the eyes of women,

My spirit shall fly singing to his lodging

In midst of that rough weather. Doom me, tyrant.

Had I feared death, I'd never appeared noble

To seal this act upon me, which e'en honours me

Unto my mistress' spirit: it loves me for't.

I told my heart 'twould prove destruction to't,

Who, hearing 'twas for her, charged me to do't.

TYRANT

Thy glories shall be shortened! Who's within there?

Enter the ghost *[of the Lady]* in the same form as the *[body of the]* Lady is dress'd in the chair.

I called not thee, thou enemy to firmness,

Mortality's earthquake!

GOVIANUS

Welcome to mine eyes

As is the dayspring from the morning's womb

Unto that wretch whose nights are tedious

As liberty to captives, health to labourers,

And life still to old people, never weary on't,

So welcome art thou to me! The deed's done,

Thou queen of spirits; he has his end upon him.

Thy body shall return to rise again,

For thy abuser falls, and has no pow'r

To vex thee farther now.

[LADY]

My truest love,

Live ever honoured here and blessed above.

[Exit.]

TYRANT

Oh, if there be a hell for flesh and spirit,

'Tis built within this bosom!

Enter Nobles *[including Memphonius]* .

My lords, treason!

GOVIANUS

Now, death, I'm for thee. Welcome!

TYRANT

Your king's poisoned!

MEMPHONIUS

The king of heav'n be praised for't!

TYRANT

Lay hold on him,

On Govianus!

MEMPHONIUS

E'en with the best loves

And truest hearts that ever subjects owed.

TYRANT

How's that? I charge you both, lay hands on him!

MEMPHONIUS

Look you, my lord, your will shall be obeyed.

Enter Helvetius.

Here comes another; we'll have his hand too.

HELVETIUS

You shall have both mine, if that work go forward,

Beside my voice and knee.

TYRANT

Helvetius!

Then my destruction was confirmed amongst 'em;

Premeditation wrought it! Oh, my torments!

ALL *[NOBLES]*

Live Govianus long our virtuous king!

Flourish.

TYRANT

That thunder strikes me dead.

[Dies.]

GOVIANUS

I cannot better
Reward my joys than with astonished silence,
For all the wealth of words is not of power
To make up thanks for you, my honoured lords!
I'm like a man plucked up from many waters,
That never looked for help, and am here placed
Upon this cheerful mountain where prosperity
Shoots forth her richest beam.

MEMPHONIUS

Long-injured lord,

The tyranny of his actions grew so weighty,

His life so vicious--

HELVETIUS

To which this is witness--

Monster in sin!--this, the disquieted body

Of my too resolute child in honour's war--

MEMPHONIUS

That he become as hateful to our minds--

HELVETIUS

As death's unwelcome to a house of riches,

Or what can more express it.

GOVIANUS

Well, he's gone,

And all the kingdom's evils perish with him.

And since the body of that virtuous lady

Is taken from her rest, in memory

Of her admired mistress, 'tis our will

It receive honour dead, as it took part

With us in all afflictions when it lived.

Here place her in this throne; crown her our queen,

The first and last that ever we make ours,

Her constancy strikes so much firmness in us.

That honour done, let her be solemnly borne

Unto the house of peace from whence she came

As queen of silence.

The spirit *[of the Lady]* enters again and stays to go out with the body, as it were attending it.

Oh, welcome, blessed spirit!

Thou need'st not mistrust me; I have a care

As jealous as thine own. We'll see it done

And not believe report. Our zeal is such

We cannot reverence chastity too much.

Lead on!

I would those ladies that fill honour's rooms

Might all be borne so honest to their tombs.

Recorders or other solemn music plays them out.

FINIS

SIR JOHN OLDCASTLE

This apocryphal play tells the story of John Oldcastle, a controversial 14th-15th century rebel, and Protestant martyr. Like other subjects of Elizabethan history plays, Sir John Oldcastle was an actual person, a soldier and Lollard dissenter, who was hanged and burned for heresy and treason in 1417 — thus earning himself the status of a Protestant martyr. The play was originally published anonymously in 1601, printed by Valentine Simmes for the bookseller Thomas Pavier. In 1619, a new edition carried an attribution to Shakespeare. The Diary of Philip Henslowe records that the play was written by Anthony Munday, Michael Drayton, Richard Hathwaye and Robert Wilson. An entry in Henslowe's Diary records a later payment to Drayton for a second part to the play, which has not survived; because of this fact, the extant play has sometimes been called *Sir John Oldcastle, Part I* .

In 1664, the play was one of the seven dramas added to the second impression of the Shakespeare Third Folio by publisher Philip Chetwinde. Many believe that Shakespeare originally named his popular character Sir John Falstaff "John Oldcastle" after the same historical figure, and that Lord Cobham, a descendant of the real John Oldcastle, complained, forcing Shakespeare to change the name. There is both textual and external evidence for this belief. In *Henry IV, Part One* , Falstaff's name is always unmetrical, suggesting a name change after the original composition; Prince Hal refers to Falstaff as "my old lad of the castle" in the first act of the play; the epilogue to *Henry IV, Part II* , moreover, explicitly disavows any connection between Falstaff and Oldcastle, a dancer declaring:

"...where, for anything I know, Falstaff shall die of a sweat, unless already 'a be killed with your hard opinions; for Oldcastle died a martyr and this is not the man".

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DRAMATIS PERSONAE

King Henry the Fifth.
Sir John Oldcastle, Lord Cobham.
Harpoole, Servant to the Lord Cobham.
Lord Herbert, with Gough his man.
Lord Powis, with Owen and Davy his men.
The Mayor of Hereford, and Sheriff of Herefordshire, with Bailiffs
  and Servants.
Two Judges of Assize.

The Bishop of Rochester and Clun his Sumner.
Sir John the Parson of Wrotham, and Doll his Concubine.
The Duke of Suffolk.
The Earl of Huntington.
The Earl of Cambridge.
Lord Scroop and Lord Grey.
Chartres the French Agent.
Sir Roger Acton.
Sir Richard Lee.
M. Bourn, M. Beverly, and Murley the Brewer of Dunstable, rebels.
M. Butler, Gentleman of the Privy Chamber.
Lady Cobham and Lady Powis.
Cromer, Sheriff of Kent.
Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports.
Lieutenant of the Tower.
The Mayor, Constable, and Gaoler of S. Albans.
A Kentish Constable and an Ale-man.
Soldiers and old men begging.
Dick and Tom, servants to Murley.
An Irishman.
An Host, Hostler, a Carrier and Kate.

THE PROLOGUE.

The doubtful Title (Gentlemen) prefixt
Upon the Argument we have in hand,
May breed suspence, and wrongfully disturb
The peaceful quiet of your settled thoughts.
To stop which scruple, let this brief suffice:
It is no pampered glutton we present,
Nor aged Counsellor to youthful sin,
But one, whose virtue shone above the rest,
A valiant Martyr and a virtuous peer;
In whose true faith and loyalty expressed
Unto his sovereign, and his country's weal,

We strive to pay that tribute of our Love,
Your favours merit. Let fair Truth be graced,
Since forged invention former time defaced.

ACT I. SCENE I. Hereford. A street.

[Enter Lord Herbert, Lord Powis, Owen, Gough, Davy, and several other followers of the lords Herbert and Powis; they fight. In the fight, enter the Sheriff and two of his men.]

SHERIFF.
My Lords, I charge ye in his Highness' name,
To keep the peace, you, and your followers.

HERBERT.
Good Master Sheriff, look unto your self.

POWIS.
Do so, for we have other business.

[Profer to fight again.]

SHERIFF.
Will ye disturb the Judges, and the Assize?
Hear the King's proclamation, ye were best.

POWIS.
Hold then, let's hear it.

HERBERT.
But be brief, ye were best.

BAILIFF.
Oyes!

DAVY.
Cousin, make shorter O, or shall mar your Yes.

BAILIFF.
Oyes!

OWEN.
What, has her nothing to say but O yes?

BAILIFF.
Oyes!

DAVY.
O nay! pye Cosse plut down with her, down with her!
A Pawesse! a Pawesse!

GOUGH.
A Herbert! a Herbert! and down with Powis!

[Helter skelter again.]

SHERIFF.
Hold, in the King's name, hold.

OWEN.
Down i' tha knave's name, down.

[In this fight, the Bailiff is knocked down, and the Sheriff and the other run away.]

HERBERT.
Powesse, I think thy Welsh and thou do smart.

POWIS.
Herbert, I think my sword came near thy heart.

HERBERT.
Thy heart's best blood shall pay the loss of mine.

GOUGH.
A Herbert! a Herbert!

DAVY.

A Pawesse! a Pawesse!

[As they are lifting their weapons, enter the Mayor of
Hereford, and his Officers and Towns-men with clubs.]

MAYOR.
My Lords, as you are liege men to the Crown,
True noblemen, and subjects to the King,
Attend his Highness' proclamation,
Commanded by the Judges of Assize,
For keeping peace at this assembly.

HERBERT.
Good Master Mayor of Hereford be brief.

MAYOR.
Sergeant, without the ceremony of Oyes,
Pronounce aloud the proclamation.

SERVANT.

The King's Justices, perceiving what public mischief may ensue this private quarrel, in his majesty's name do straightly charge and command all persons, of what degree soever, to depart this city of Hereford, except such as are bound to give attendance at this Assize, and that no man presume to wear any weapon, especially welsh-hooks, forest bills—

OWEN.
Haw, no pill nor wells hoog? ha?

MAYOR.
Peace, and hear the proclamation.

SERVANT.

And that the Lord Powesse do presently disperse and discharge his retinue, and depart the city in the King's peace, he and his followers, on pain of imprisonment.

DAVY.
Haw? pud her Lord Pawesse in prison? A Pawes!
A Pawesse! cossone live and tie with her Lord.

GOUGH.
A Herbert! a Herbert!

[In this fight the Lord Herbert is wounded, and falls to the ground; the Mayor and his company go away, crying clubs; Powesse runs away; Gough and other of Herbert's faction busy themselves about Herbert; enter the two Judges in their robes, the Sheriff and his Bailiffs afore them, &c.]

FIRST JUDGE.
Where's the Lord Herbert? is he hurt or slain?

SHERIFF.
He's here, my Lord.

SECOND JUDGE.
How fares his Lordship, friends?

GOUGH.
Mortally wounded, speechless; he cannot live.

FIRST JUDGE.
Convey him hence; let not his wounds take air,
And get him dressed with expedition.

[Ex. Herbert & Gough.]

Master Mayor of Hereford, Master Shrieve o' the shire,
Commit Lord Powesse to safe custody,
To answer the disturbance of the peace,
Lord Herbert's peril, and his high contempt
Of us, and you the King's commissioners.
See it be done with care and diligence.

SHERIFF.
Please it your Lordship, my Lord Powesse is gone
Past all recovery.

SECOND JUDGE.
Yet let search be made,
To apprehend his followers that are left.

SHERIFF.
There are some of them. Sirs, lay hold of them.

OWEN.
Of us? and why? what has her done, I pray you?

SHERIFF.
Disarm them, Bailiffs.

MAYOR.
Officers, assist.

DAVY.
Hear you, Lor shudge, what resson is for this?

OWEN.
Cosson pe puse for fighting for our Lord?

FIRST JUDGE.
Away with them.

DAVY.
Harg you, my Lord.

OWEN.
Gough my Lord Herbert's man's a shitten kanave.

DAVY.
Ise live and tie in good quarrel.

OWEN.
Pray you do shustice; let all be preson.

DAVY.
Prison! no.
Lord shudge, I wool give you pale, good suerty.

SECOND JUDGE.
What Bail? what sureties?

DAVY.
Her coozin ap Ries, ap Evan, ap Morris, ap Morgan, ap Lluellyn, ap Madoc, ap Meredith, ap Griffen, ap Davy, ap Owen, ap Shinken Shones.

SECOND JUDGE.
Two of the most sufficient are ynow.

SHERIFF.
And 't please your Lordship, these are all but one.

FIRST JUDGE.
To Jail with them, and the Lord Herbert's men;
We'll talk with them, when the Assize is done.

[Exeunt.]

Riotous, audacious, and unruly Grooms,
Must we be forced to come from the Bench,
To quiet brawls, which every Constable
In other civil places can suppress?

SECOND JUDGE.
What was the quarrel that caused all this stir?

SHERIFF.
About religion, as I heard, my Lord.
Lord Powesse detracted from the power of Rome,
Affirming Wickliffe's doctrine to be true,
And Rome's erroneous. Hot reply was made
By the lord Herbert, they were traitors all
That would maintain it: Powesse answered,
They were as true, as noble, and as wise
As he, that would defend it with their lives;
He named for instance sir John Oldcastle
The Lord Cobham: Herbert replied again,
"He, thou, and all are traitors that so hold."

The lie was given, the several factions drawn,
And so enraged, that we could not appease it.

FIRST JUDGE.
This case concerns the King's prerogative,
And's dangerous to the State and common wealth.
Gentlemen, Justices, master Mayor, and master Shrieve,
It doth behoove us all, and each of us
In general and particular, to have care
For suppressing of all mutinies,
And all assemblies, except soldiers' musters
For the King's preparation into France.
We hear of secret conventicles made,
And there is doubt of some conspiracies,
Which may break out into rebellious arms
When the King's gone, perchance before he go:
Note as an instance, this one perilous fray;
What factions might have grown on either part,
To the destruction of the King and Realm.
Yet, in my conscience, sir John Oldcastle,
Innocent of it, only his name was used.
We, therefore, from his Highness give this charge:
You, master Mayor, look to your citizens;
You, master Sheriff, unto your shire; and you
As Justices, in every one's precinct,
There be no meetings. When the vulgar sort
Sit on their Ale-bench, with their cups and cans,
Matters of state be not their common talk,
Nor pure religion by their lips profaned.
Let us return unto the Bench again,
And there examine further of this fray.

[Enter a Bailiff and a Servant.]

SHERIFF.
Sirs, have ye taken the lord Powesse yet?

BAILIFF.
No, nor heard of him.

SERVANT.
No, he's gone far enough.

SECOND JUDGE.
They that are left behind shall answer all.

[Exeunt.]

ACT I. SCENE II. Eltham. An antechamber in the palace.

[Enter Suffolk, Bishop of Rochester, Butler, parson of Wrotham.]

SUFFOLK.
Now, my lord Bishop, take free liberty
To speak your mind: what is your suit to us?

BISHOP.
My noble Lord, no more than what you know,
And have been oftentimes invested with:
Grievous complaints have past between the lips
Of envious persons to upbraid the Clergy,
Some carping at the livings which we have,
And others spurning at the ceremonies
That are of ancient custom in the church.
Amongst the which, Lord Cobham is a chief:
What inconvenience may proceed hereof,
Both to the King and to the commonwealth,
May easily be discerned, when like a frenzy
This innovation shall possess their minds.
These upstarts will have followers, to uphold
Their damned opinion, more than Harry shall
To undergo his quarrel gainst the French.

SUFFOLK.

What proof is there against them to be had,
That what you say the law may justify?

BISHOP.
They give themselves the name of Protestants,
And meet in fields and solitary groves.

SIR JOHN.
Was ever heard, my Lord, the like til now?
That thieves and rebels—sblood, heretics,
Plain heretics, I'll stand tooth to their teeth—
Should have, to colour their vile practices,
A title of such worth as Protestant?

[Enter one with a letter.]

SUFFOLK.
O, but you must not swear; it ill becomes
One of your coat to rap out bloody oaths.

BISHOP.
Pardon him, good my Lord, it is his zeal;
An honest country prelate, who laments
To see such foul disorder in the church.

SIR JOHN.
There's one—they call him Sir John Oldcastle—
He has not his name for naught: for like a castle
Doth he encompass them within his walls;
But till that castle be subverted quite,
We ne'er shall be at quiet in the realm.

BISHOP.
That is not our suit, my Lord, that he be ta'en,
And brought in question for his heresy.
Beside, two letters brought me out of Wales,
Wherein my Lord Hereford writes to me,
What tumult and sedition was begun,
About the Lord Cobham at the Sises there,
(For they had much ado the calm the rage),

And that the valiant Herbert is there slain.

SUFFOLK.
A fire that must be quenched. Well, say no more,
The King anon goes to the counsel chamber,
There to debate of matters touching France:
As he doth pass by, I'll inform his grace
Concerning your petition: Master Butler,
If I forget, do you remember me.

BUTLER.
I will, my Lord.

[Offer him a purse.]

BISHOP.
Not for a recompence,
But as a token of our love to you,
By me my Lords of the clergy do present
This purse, and in it full a thousand Angels,
Praying your Lordship to accept their gift.

SUFFOLK.
I thank them, my Lord Bishop, for their love,
But will not take they money; if you please
To give it to this gentleman, you may.

BISHOP.
Sir, then we crave your furtherance herein.

BUTLER.
The best I can, my Lord of Rochester.

BISHOP.
Nay, pray ye take it; trust me but you shall.

SIR JOHN.
—Were ye all thee upon New Market heath,
You should not need strain curtsey who should ha't;
Sir John would quickly rid ye of that care.

SUFFOLK.
The King is coming. Fear ye not, my Lord;
The very first thing I will break with him
Shall be about your matter.

[Enter King Henry and Huntington in talk.]

KING.
My Lord of Suffolk,
Was it not said the Clergy did refuse
To lend us money toward our wars in France?

SUFFOLK.
It was, my Lord, but very wrongfully.

KING.
I know it was, for Huntington here tells me,
They have been very bountiful of late.

SUFFOLK.
And still they vow, my gracious Lord, to be so,
Hoping your majesty will think of them
As of your loving subjects, and suppress
All such malicious errors as begin
To spot their calling, and disturb the church.

KING.
God else forbid: why, Suffolk, is there
Any new rupture to disquiet them?

SUFFOLK.
No new, my Lord; the old is great enough,
And so increasing as, if not cut down,
Will breed a scandal to your royal state,
And set your Kingdom quickly in an uproar.
The Kentish knight, Lord Cobham, in despite
Of any law, or spiritual discipline,
Maintains this upstart new religion still,
And divers great assemblies by his means
And private quarrels are commenced abroad,

As by this letter more at large, my liege,
Is made apparent.

KING.
We do find it here:
There was in Wales a certain fray of late,
Between two noblemen, but what of this?
Follows it straight, Lord Cobham must be he
Did cause the same? I dare be sworn, good knight,
He never dreamt of any such contention.

BISHOP.
But in his name the quarrel did begin,
About the opinion which he held, my liege.

KING.
How if it did? was either he in place,
To take part with them, or abet them in it?
If brabling fellows, whose inkindled blood,
Seethes in their fiery veins, will needs go fight,
Making their quarrels of some words that past
Either of you, or you, amongst their cups,
Is the fault yours, or are they guilty of it?

SUFFOLK.
With pardon of your Highness, my dread lord,
Such little sparks, neglected, may in time
Grow to a might flame: but that's not all;
He doth, beside, maintain a strange religion,
And will not be compelled to come to mass.

BISHOP.
We do beseech you, therefore, gracious prince,
Without offence unto your majesty,
We may be bold to use authority.

KING.
As how?

BISHOP.

To summon him unto the Arches,
Where such offences have their punishment.

KING.
To answer personally? is that your meaning?

BISHOP.
It is, my lord.

KING.
How, if he appeal?

BISHOP.
He cannot, my Lord, in such a case as this.

SUFFOLK.
Not where Religion is the plea, my lord.

KING.
I took it always, that our self stood out,
As a sufficient refuge, unto whom
Not any but might lawfully appeal.
But we'll not argue now upon that point.
For Sir John Oldcastle, whom you accuse,
Let me entreat you to dispence awhile
With your high title of pre-eminence.

[In scorn.]

Report did never yet condemn him so,
But he hath always been reputed loyal:
And in my knowledge I can say thus much,
That he is virtuous, wise, and honourable.
If any way his conscience be seduced,
To waver in his faith, I'll send for him,
And school him privately; if that serve not,
Then afterward you may proceed against him.
Butler, be you the messenger for us,
And will him presently repair to court.

[Exeunt.]

SIR JOHN.
How now, my lord, why stand you discontent?
In sooth, me thinks the King hath well decreed.

BISHOP.
Yea, yea, sir John, if he would keep his word;
But I perceive he favours him so much,
As this will be to small effect, I fear.

SIR JOHN.
Why, then, I'll tell you what y'are bets to do:
If you suspect the King will be but cold
In reprehending him, send you a process too
To serve upon him: so you may be sure
To make him answer 't, howsoe'er it fall.

BISHOP.
And well remembered! I will have it so.
A Sumner shall be sent about it straight.

[Exit.]

SIR JOHN.
Yea, do so. In the mean space this remains
For kind sir John of Wrotham, honest Jack.
Me thinks the purse of gold the Bishop gave
Made a good show; it had a tempting look.
Beshrew me, but my fingers' ends to itch
To be upon those rudduks. Well, tis thus:
I am not as the world does take me for;
If ever wolf were clothed in sheep's coat,
Then I am he,—old huddle and twang, yfaith,
A priest in show, but in plain terms a thief.
Yet, let me tell you too, an honest thief,
One that will take it where it may be spared,
And spend it freely in good fellowship.
I have as many shapes as Proteus had,

That still, when any villainy is done,
There may be none suspect it was sir John.
Besides, to comfort me,—for what's this life,
Except the crabbed bitterness thereof,
Be sweetened now and then with lechery?—
I have my Doll, my concubine, as twere,
To frolic with, a lusty bouncing girl.
But whilst I loiter here, the gold may scape,
And that must not be so. It is mine own;
Therefore, I'll meet him on his way to court,
And shrive him of it: there will be the sport.

[Exit.]

ACT I. SCENE III. Kent. An outer court before lord Cobham's house.

[Enter three or four poor people: some soldiers, some old men.]

FIRST.
God help! God help! there's law for punishing,
But there's no law for our necessity:
There be more stocks to set poor soldiers in,
Than there be houses to relieve them at.

OLD MAN.
Faith, housekeeping decays in every place,
Even as Saint Peter writ, still worse and worse.

FOURTH.

Master mayor of Rochester has given commandment, that none shall go abroad out of the parish; and they have set an order down forsooth, what every poor householder must give towards our relief: where there be some ceased, I may say to you, had almost as much need to beg as we.

FIRST.
It is a hard world the while.

OLD MAN.
If a poor man come to a door to ask for God's sake,
they ask him for a license, or a certificate from a
Justice.

SECOND.

Faith we have none but what we bear upon our bodies, our maimed limbs, God help us.

FOURTH.
And yet, as lame as I am, I'll with the king into France,
if I can crawl but a shipboard. I had rather be slain in
France, than starve in England.

OLD MAN.

Ha, were I but as lusty as I was at the battle of Shrewbury, I would not do as I do: but we are now come to the good lord Cobham's, to the best man to the poor that is in all Kent.

FOURTH.
God bless him! there be but few such.

[Enter Lord Cobham with Harpoole.]

COBHAM.
Thou peevish, froward man, what wouldst thou have?

HARPOOLE.
This pride, this pride, brings all to beggary.
I served your father, and your grandfather;

Show me such two men now!
No! No! Your backs, your backs, the devil and pride,
Has cut the throat of all good housekeeping.—
They were the best Yeomens' masters,
That ever were in England.

COBHAM.
Yea, except thou have a crew of seely knaves
And sturdy rogues still feeding at my gate,
There is no hospitality with thee.

HARPOOLE.

They may sit at the gat well enough, but the devil of any thing you give them, except they will eat stones.

COBHAM.
Tis long, then, of such hungry knaves as you.

[Pointing to the beggars.]

Yea, sir, here's your retinue; your guests be come.
They know their hours, I warrant you.

OLD MAN.
God bless your honour! God save the good Lord Cobham
And all his house!

SOLDIER.
Good your honour, bestow your blessed alms
Upon poor men.

COBHAM.
Now, sir, here be your Alms knights. Now are you
As safe as the Emperour.

HARPOOLE.
My Alms knights! nay, th' are yours.

It is a shame for you, and I'll stand too 't;
Your foolish alms maintains more vagabonds,
Than all the noblemen in Kent beside.
Out, you rogues, you knaves! work for your livings!—
Alas, poor men! O Lord, they may beg their hearts out,
There's no more charity amongst men than amongst
So many mastiff dogs!—What make you here,
You needy knaves? Away, away, you villains.

SECOND SOLDIER.
I beseech you, sir, be good to us.

COBHAM.

Nay, nay, they know thee well enough. I think that all the beggars in this land are thy acquaintance. Go bestow your alms; none will control you, sir.

HARPOOLE.

What should I give them? you are grown so beggarly, you have scarce a bit of bread to give at your door. You talk of your religion so long, that you have banished charity from amongst you; a man may make a flax shop in your kitchen chimneys, for any fire there is stirring.

COBHAM.

If thou wilt give them nothing, send them hence: let them not stand here starving in the cold.

HARPOOLE.

Who! I drive them hence? If I drive poor men from your door, I'll be hanged; I know not what I may come to my self. Yea, God help you, poor knaves; ye see the world, yfaith! Well, you had a mother: well, God be with thee, good Lady; thy soul's at rest. She gave more in shirts and smocks to poor children, than you spend in your house, & yet you live a beggar too.

COBHAM.

Even the worst deed that ere my mother did was in relieving such a fool as thou.

HARPOOLE.

Yea, yea, I am a fool still. With all your wit you will die a beggar; go too.

COBHAM.

Go, you old fool; give the poor people something. Go in, poor men, into the inner court, and take such alms as there is to be had.

SOLDIER.
God bless your honor.

HARPOOLE.

Hang you, rogues, hang you; there's nothing but misery amongst you; you fear no law, you.

[Exit.]

OLD MAN.

God bless you, good master Rafe, God save your life; you are good to the poor still.

[Enter the Lord Powis disguised, and shroud himself.]

COBHAM.
What fellow's yonder comes along the grove?
Few passengers there be that know this way:
Me thinks he stops as though he stayed for me,
And meant to shroud himself amongst the bushes.
I know the Clergy hate me to the death,
And my religion gets me many foes:
And this may be some desperate rogue, suborned
To work me mischief.—As it pleaseth God!
If he come toward me, sure I'll stay his coming—
Be he but one man—what so'er he be.

[The Lord Powis comes on.]

I have been well acquainted with that face.

POWIS.
Well met, my honorable lord and friend.

COBHAM.
You are welcome, sir, what ere you be;
But of this sudden, sir, I do not know you.

POWIS.
I am one that wisheth well unto your honor;
My name is Powis, an old friend of yours.

COBHAM.
My honorable lord, and worthy friend,
What makes your lordship thus alone in Kent,
And thus disguised in this strange attire?

POWIS.
My Lord, an unexpected accident
Hath at this time inforc'd me to these parts;
And thus it hapt:—Not yet full five days since,
Now at the last Assize at Hereford,
It chanced that the lord Herbert and my self,

Mongst other things, discoursing at the table,
Did fall in speech about some certain points
Of Wickliffe's doctrine gainst the papacy
And the religion catholique, maintained
Through the most part of Europe at this day.
This wilful teasty lord stuck not to say
That Wickliffe was a knave, a schismatic,
His doctrine devilish and heretical,
And what soe'er he was maintained the same,
Was traitor both to God and to his country.
Being moved at his peremptory speech,
I told him some maintained those opinions,
Men, and truer subjects than lord Herbert was:
And he replying in comparisons,
Your name was urged, my lord, gainst his challenge,
To be a perfect favourer of the truth.
And to be short, from words we fell to blows,
Our servants and our tenants taking parts—
Many on both sides hurt—and for an hour
The broil by no means could be pacified,
Until the Judges, rising from the bench,
Were in their persons forced to part the fray.

COBHAM.
I hope no man was violently slain.

POWIS.
Faith, none, I trust, but the lord Herbert's self,
Who is in truth so dangerously hurt,
As it is doubted he can hardly scape.

COBHAM.
I am sorry, my good lord, of these ill news.

POWIS.
This is the cause that drives me into Kent,
To shroud my self with you, so good a friend,
Until I hear how things do speed at home.

COBHAM.
Your lordship is most welcome unto Cobham;
But I am very sorry, my good lord,
My name was brought in question in this matter,
Considering I have many enemies,
That threaten malice, and do lie in wait
To take advantage of the smallest thing.
But you are welcome: and repose your lordship,
And keep your self here secret in my house,
Until we hear how the lord Herbert speeds.
Here comes my man.

[Enter Harpoole.]

Sirra, what news?

HARPOOLE.

Yonder's one master Butler of the privy chamber, is sent unto you from the King.

POWIS.
I pray God the lord Herbert be not dead,
And the King, hearing whither I am gone,
Hath sent for me.

COBHAM.
Comfort your self my lord, I warrant you.

HARPOOLE.

Fellow, what ails thee? doost thou quake? dost thou shake? dost thou tremble? ha?

COBHAM.

Peace, you old fool! Sirra, convey this gentleman in the back way, and bring the other into the walk.

HARPOOLE.
Come, sir; you are welcome, if you love my lord.

POWIS.
God have mercy, gentle friend.

[Exeunt.]

COBHAM.
I thought as much: that it would not be long,
Before I heard of something from the King
About this matter.

[Enter Harpoole with Master Butler.]

HARPOOLE.
Sir, yonder my lord walks, you see him;
I'll have your men into the Cellar the while.

COBHAM.
Welcome, good master Butler.

BUTLER.
Thanks, my good lord: his Majesty doth commend
His love unto your lordship,
And wills you to repair unto the court.

COBHAM.
God bless his Highness, and confound his enemies!
I hope his Majesty is well.

BUTLER.
In health, my lord.

COBHAM.
God long continue it! Me thinks you look
As though you were not well: what ails you, sir?

BUTLER.
Faith, I have had a foolish odd mischance,
That angers me: coming over Shooters hill,
There came a fellow to me like a Sailor,
And asked me money; and whilst I stayed my horse
To draw my purse, he takes th' advantage of
A little bank and leaps behind me, whips
My purse away, and with a sudden jerk,
I know not how, threw me at least three yards
Out of my saddle. I never was so robbed
In all my life.

COBHAM.

I am very sorry, sir, for your mischance. We will send our warrant forth, to stay such suspicious persons as shall be found. Then, master Butler, we will attend you.

BUTLER.
I humbly thank your lordship, I will attend you.

ACT II. SCENE I. The same.

[Enter the Sumner.]

SUMNER.

I have the law to warrant what I do; and though the Lord Cobham be a noble man, that dispenses not with law: I dare serve process were a five noble men. Though we Sumners make sometimes a mad slip in a corner with a pretty wench, a Sumner must not go always by seeing: a man may be content to hide his eyes, where he may feel his profit. Well, this is my Lord Cobham's house if I can devise to speak with him; if not, I'll clap my citation upon's door: so my lord of Rochester bid me. But me thinks here comes one of his men.

[Enter Harpoole.]

HARPOOLE.

Welcome, good fellow, welcome; who wouldst thou speak with?

SUMNER.

With my lord Cobham I would speak, if thou be one of his men.

HARPOOLE.

Yes, I am one of his men, but thou canst not speak with my lord.

SUMNER.
May I send to him then?

HARPOOLE.
I'll tell thee that, when I know thy errand.

SUMNER.
I will not tell my errand to thee.

HARPOOLE.

Then keep it to thy self, and walk like a knave as thou camest.

SUMNER.
I tell thee, my lord keeps no knaves, sirra.

HARPOOLE.

Then thou servest him not, I believe: what lord is thy master?

SUMNER
My lord of Rochester.

HARPOOLE.

In good time! And what wouldst thou have with my lord Cobham?

SUMNER.

I come, by virtue of a process, to ascite him to appear before my lord in the court at Rochester.

HARPOOLE.
[Aside.] Well, God grant me patience! I could eat this
conger. My lord is not at home; therefore it were good,
Sumner, you carried your process back.

SUMNER.

Why, if he will not be spoken withal, then will I leave it here; and see you that he take knowledge of it.

HARPOOLE.
Swounds, you slave, do you set up your bills here! go to;
take it down again. Doest thou know what thou dost?
Dost thou know on whom thou servest process?

SUMNER.
Yes, marry, do I; Sir John Oldcastle, Lord Cobham.

HARPOOLE.

I am glad thou knowest him yet: and, sirra, dost not thou know, that the lord

Cobham is a brave lord, that keeps good beef and beer in his house, and every day feeds a hundred poor people at's gate, and keeps a hundred tall fellows?

SUMNER.
What's that to my process?

HARPOOLE.
Marry, this, sir! is this process parchment?

SUMNER.
Yes, marry.

HARPOOLE.
And this seal wax?

SUMNER.
It is so.

HARPOOLE.

If this be parchment, & this wax, eat you this parchment and this wax, or I will make parchment of your skin, and beat your brains into wax: Sirra Sumner, dispatch; devour, sirra, devour.

SUMNER.

I am my lord of Rochester's Sumner; I came to do my office, and thou shalt answer it.

HARPOOLE.

Sirra, no railing, but betake you to your teeth. Thou shalt eat no worse than thou bringst with thee: thou bringst it for my lord, and wilt thou bring my lord worse than thou wilt eat thy self?

SUMNER.
Sirra, I brought it not my lord to eat.

HARPOOLE.

O, do you sir me now? all's one for that: but I'll make you eat it, for bringing it.

SUMNER.
I cannot eat it.

HARPOOLE.

Can you not? sblood I'll beat you until you have a stomach.

[He beats him.]

SUMNER.
O hold, hold, good master serving-man! I will eat it.

HARPOOLE.

Be champing, be chawing, sir; or I'll chaw you, you rogue! the purest of the honey! Tough wax is the purest of the honey.

SUMNER.
O Lord, sir! oh! oh!

[He eats.]

HARPOOLE.

Feed, feed! wholesome, rogue, wholesome! Cannot you, like an honest Sumner, walk with the devil your brother, to fetch in your Bailiffs' rents, but you must come to a noble man's house with process? Sblood! if thy seal were as broad as the lead that covers Rochester church, thou shouldst eat it.

SUMNER.
O, I am almost choked! I am almost choked!

HARPOOLE.

Who's within there? will you shame my Lord? is there no beer in the house? Butler! I say.

[Enter Butler.]

BUTLER.
Here, here.

HARPOOLE.
Give him Beer.

[He drinks.]

There; tough old sheepskin's bare, dry meat.

SUMNER.
O sir, let me go no further; I'll eat my word.

HARPOOLE.

Yea, marry, sit! so I mean: you shall eat more than your own word, for I'll make you eat all the words in the process. Why, you drab monger, cannot the secrets of all the wenches in a shire serve your turn, but you must come hither with a citation? with a pox! I'll cite you. *[He has then done.]* A cup of sack for the Sumner.

BUTLER.
Here, sir, here.

HARPOOLE.
Here, slave, I drink to thee.

SUMNER.

I thank you, sir.

HARPOOLE.

Now if thou findst thy stomach well—because thou shalt see my Lord keep's meat in's house—if thou wilt go in, thou shalt have a piece of beef to the break fast.

SUMNER.

No, I am very well, good Master serving-man, I thank you; very well sir.

HARPOOLE.

I am glad on't. Then be walking towards Rochester to keep your stomach warm; and Sumner, if I may know you disturb a good wench within this Diocese; if I do not make thee eat her petticoat, if there were four yards of Kentish cloth in't, I am a villain.

SUMNER.
God be with you, Master serving-man.

[Exit.]

HARPOOLE.
Farewell, Sumner.

[Enter Constable.]

CONSTABLE.
God save you Master Harpoole.

HARPOOLE.
Welcome, Constable, welcome, Constable; what news with thee?

CONSTABLE.

And't please you, Master Harpoole, I am to make hue and cry, for a fellow with one eye that has robbed two Clothiers, and am to crave your hindrance, for to search all suspected places; and they say there was a woman in the company.

HARPOOLE.
Hast thou been at the Alehouse? hast thou sought there?

CONSTABLE.

I durst not search, sir, in my Lord Cobham's liberty, except I had some of his servants, which are for my warrant.

HARPOOLE.

An honest Constable! an honest Constable! Call forth him that keeps the Alehouse here.

CONSTABLE.
Ho! who's within there?

[Enter Ale-man.]

ALE MAN.
Who calls there? come near a God's name! Oh, is't you,
Master Constable and Master Harpoole? you are welcome
with all my heart. What make you here so early this morning?

HARPOOLE.

Sirra, what strangers do you lodge? there is a robbery done this morning, and we are to search for all suspected persons.

ALE MAN.

God's bores! I am sorry for't: yfaith, sir, I lodge no body but a good honest merry priest,—they call him sir John a Wrotham— and a handsome woman that is his niece, that he says he has some suit in law for; and as they go up & down to London, sometimes they lie at my house.

HARPOOLE.
What, is he here in thy house now?

ALE MAN.

She is, sir. I promise you, sir, he is a quiet man; and because he will not trouble too many rooms, he makes the woman lie every night at his bed's feet.

HARPOOLE.

Bring her forth! Constable, bring her forth! let's see her, let's see her.

ALE MAN.
Dorothy, you must come down to Master Constable.

DOLL.
Anon, forsooth.

[She enters.]

HARPOOLE.
Welcome, sweet lass, welcome.

DOLL.
I thank you, good Master serving-man, and master
Constable also.

HARPOOLE.

A plump girl by the mass, a plump girl! Ha, Doll, ha!
Wilt thou forsake the priest, and go with me?

CONSTABLE.

A! well said, Master Harpoole; you are a merry old man, yfaith. Yfaith, you will never be old. Now, by the mack, a pretty wench indeed!

HARPOOLE.

Ye old mad merry Constable, art thou advised of that. Ha, well said, Doll! fill some ale here.

DOLL.

[Aside.] Oh, if I wist this old priest would not stick to me, by Jove, I would ingle this old serving-man.

HARPOOLE.

Oh you old mad colt! yfaith, I'll feak you! fill all the pots in the house there.

CONSTABLE.

Oh, well said, Master Harpoole! you are heart of oak when all's done.

HARPOOLE.
Ha, Doll, thou hast a sweet pair of lips, by the mass.

DOLL.

Truly you are a most sweet old man, as ever I saw; by my troth, you have a face, able to make any woman in love with you.

HARPOOLE.
Fill, sweet Doll; I'll drink to thee.

DOLL.
'I pledge you, sir, and thank you therefore,
And I pray you let it come.'

HARPOOLE.

[Embracing her.] Doll, canst thou love me? A mad merry lass! would to God I had never seen thee!

DOLL.
I warrant you, you will not out of my thoughts this
twelvemonth; truly you are as full of favour, as a man may be.
Ah, these sweet grey locks! by my troth, they are most lovely.

CONSTABLE.
God boores, master Harpoole, I will have one buss too.

HARPOOLE.
No licking for you, Constable! hand off, hand off!

CONSTABLE.
Bur lady, I love kissing as well as you.

DOLL.

Oh, you are an odd boy; you have a wanton eye of your own! ah, you sweet sugar lipped wanton, you will win as many women's hearts as come in your company.

[Enter Priest.]

WROTHAM.

Doll, come hither.

HARPOOLE.
Priest, she shall not.

DOLL.
I'll come anon, sweet love.

WROTHAM.
Hand off, old fornicator.

HARPOOLE.

Vicar, I'll sit here in spite of thee. Is this fit stuff for a priest to carry up and down with him?

WROTHAM.

Ah, sirra, dost thou not know that a good fellow parson may have a chapel of ease, where his parish Church is far off?

HARPOOLE.
You whoreson stoned Vicar!

WROTHAM.
You old stale ruffin! you lion of Cotswold!

HARPOOLE.
Swounds, Vicar, I'll geld you!

[Flies upon him.]

CONSTABLE.
Keep the King's peace!

DOLL.
Murder! murder! murder!

ALE MAN.

Hold! as you are men, hold! for God's sake be quiet! Put up your weapons; you draw not in my house.

HARPOOLE.
You whoreson bawdy priest!

WROTHAM.
You old mutton monger!

CONSTABLE.
Hold, sir John, hold!

DOLL.

[To the Priest.] I pray thee, sweet hear, be quiet. I was but sitting to drink a pot of ale with him, even as kind a man as ever I met with.

HARPOOLE.
Thou art a thief, I warrant thee.

WROTHAM.

Then I am but as thou hast been in thy days. Let's not be ashamed of our trade; the King has been a thief himself.

DOLL.
Come, be quiet. Hast thou sped?

WROTHAM.
I have, wench: here be crowns, yfaith.

DOLL.
Come, let's be all friends then.

CONSTABLE.

Well said, mistress Dorothy, yfaith.

HARPOOLE.
Thou art the maddest priest that ever I met with.

WROTHAM.

Give me thy hand, thou art as good a fellow. I am a singer, a drinker, a bencher, a wencher! I can say a mass, and kiss a lass! Faith, I have a parsonage, and because I would not be at too much charges, this wench serves me for a sexton.

HARPOOLE.
Well said, mad priest, we'll in and be friends.

[Exeunt.]

ACT II. SCENE II. London. A room in the Axe Inn, without Bishop-gate.

[Enter sir Roger Acton, master Bourne, master Beverly, and William Murley the brewer of Dunstable.]

ACTON.
Now, master Murley, I am well assured
You know our arrant, and do like the cause,
Being a man affected as we are.

MURLEY.

Mary, God dild ye, dainty my dear! no master, good sir Roger Acton Knight, master Bourne, and master Beverly esquires, gentlemen, and justices of the peace—no master I, but plain William Murley, the brewer of Dunstable, your honest neighbour, and your friend, if ye be men of my profession.

BEVERLY.
Professed friends to Wickliffe, foes to Rome.

MURLEY.
Hold by me, lad; lean upon that staff, good master
Beverly: all of a house. Say your mind, say your mind.

ACTON.
You know our faction now is grown so great,
Throughout the realm, that it begins to smoke
Into the Clergy's eyes, and the King's ear.
High time it is that we were drawn to head,
Our general and officers appointed;
And wars, ye wot, will ask great store of coin.
Able to strength our action with your purse,
You are elected for a colonel
Over a regiment of fifteen bands.

MURLEY.

Fue, paltry, paltry! in and out, to and fro! be it more or less, upon occasion. Lord have mercy upon us, what a world is this! Sir Roger Acton, I am but a Dunstable man, a plain brewer, ye know: will lusty Cavaliering captains, gentlemen, come at my calling, go at my bidding? Dainty my dear, they'll do a god of wax, a horse or cheese, a prick and a pudding. No, no, ye must appoint some lord, or knight at least, to that place.

BOURNE.
Why, master Murley, you shall be a Knight:
Were you not in election to be shrieve?
Have ye not past all offices but that?
Have ye not wealth to make your wife a lady?
I warrant you, my lord, our General
Bestows that honor on you at first sight.

MURLEY.
Mary, God dild ye, dainty my dear!
But tell me, who shall be our General?

Where's the lord Cobham, sir John Oldcastle,
That noble alms-giver, housekeeper, virtuous,
 Religious gentleman? Come to me there, boys,
Come to me there!

ACTON.
Why, who but he shall be our General?

MURLEY.
And shall he knight me, and make me colonel?

ACTON.
My word for that: sir William Murley, knight.

MURLEY.

Fellow sir Roger Acton, knight, all fellows—I mean in arms—how strong are we? how many partners? Our enemies beside the King are might: be it more or less upon occasion, reckon our force.

ACTON.
There are of us, our friends, and followers,
Three thousand and three hundred at the least;
Of northern lads four thousand, beside horse;
>From Kent there comes with sir John Oldcastle
Seven thousand; then from London issue out,
Of masters, servants, strangers, prentices,
Forty odd thousands into Ficket field,
Where we appoint our special rendezvous.

MURLEY.
Fue, paltry, paltry, in and out, to and fro! Lord have
mercy upon us, what a world is this! Where's that
Ficket field, sir Roger?

ACTON.
Behind saint Giles in the field near Holborne.

MURLEY.
Newgate, up Holborne, S. Giles in the field, and to
Tiborne: an old saw. For the day, for the day?

ACTON.
On Friday next, the fourteenth day of January.

MURLEY.
Tyllie vallie, trust me never if I have any liking of that
day! fue, paltry, paltry! Friday, quoth a! Dismal day!
Childermass day this year was Friday.

BEVERLY.
Nay, master Murley, if you observe the days,
We make some question of your constancy.
All days are like to men resolved in right.

MURLEY.
Say Amen, and say no more; but say, and hold,
master Beverly: Friday next, and Ficket field,
and William Murley, and his merry men shall be
all one. I have half a score jades that draw my
beer carts,
And every jade shall bear a knave,
And every knave shall wear a jack,
And every jack shall have a skull,
And every skull shall shew a spear,
And every spear shall kill a foe
At Ficket field, at Ficket field.
John and Tom, and Dick and Hodge,
And Rafe and Robin, William & George,
And all my knaves shall fight like men,
At Ficket field on Friday next.

BOURNE.
What sum of money mean you to disburse?

MURLEY.
It may be modestly, decently, soberly, and handsomely

I may bring five hundred pound.

ACTON.
Five hundred, man! five thousand's not enough!
A hundred thousand will not pay our men
Two months together. Either come prepared
Like a brave Knight, and martial Colonel,
In glittering gold, and gallant furniture,
Bringing in coin a cart load at he least,
And all your followers mounted on good horse,
Or never come disgraceful to us all.

BEVERLY.
Perchance you may be chosen Treasurer.
Ten thousand pound's the least that you can bring.

MURLEY.

Paltry, paltry! in and out, to and fro, upon occasion I have ten thousand pound to spend, and ten too. And rather than the Bishop shall have his will of me for my conscience, it shall out all. Flame and flax, flame and flax! it was got with water and malt, and it shall fly with fire and gun powder. Sir Roger, a cart load of money till the axetree crack, my self and my men in Ficket field on Friday next: remember my Knighthood, and my place. There's my hand; I'll be there.

[Exit.]

ACTON.
See what Ambition may persuade men to,
In hope of honor he will spend himself.

BOURNE.
I never thought a Brewer half so rich.

BEVERLY.
Was never bankerout Brewer yet but one,
With using too much malt, too little water.

ACTON.
That's no fault in Brewers now-adays.
Come, away, about our business.

[Exeunt.]

ACT II. SCENE III. An audience-chamber in the palace at Eltham.

[Enter King Henry, Suffolk, Butler, and Oldcastle kneeling to the King.]

KING.
Tis not enough, Lord Cobham, to submit;
You must forsake your gross opinion.
The Bishops find themselves much injured,
And though, for some good service you have done,
We for our part are pleased to pardon you,
Yet they will not so soon be satisfied.

COBHAM.
My gracious Lord, unto your Majesty,
Next unto my God, I owe my life:
And what is mine, either by nature's gift,
Or fortune's bounty, all is at your service.
But, for obedience to the Pope of Rome,
I owe him none, nor shall his shaveling priests
That are in England alter my belief.
If out of holy Scripture they can prove,
That I am in an error I will yield,
And gladly take instruction at their hands;
But otherwise, I do beseech your grace,
My conscience may not be encroached upon.

KING.
We would be loath to press our subjects' bodies,
Much less their souls, the dear redeemed part

Of him that is the ruler of us all;
Yet let me counsel ye, that might command:
Do not presume to tempt them with ill words,
Nor suffer any meetings to be had
Within your house, but to the uttermost,
Disperse the flocks of this new gathering sect.

COBHAM.
My liege, if any breathe, that dares come forth,
And say my life in any of these points
Deserves th'attaindor of ignoble thoughts,
Here stand I, craving no remorse at all,
But even the utmost rigor may be shown.

KING.
Let it suffice; we know your loyalty.
What have you there?

COBHAM.
A deed of clemency;
Your Highness' pardon for Lord Powis' life,
Which I did beg, and you, my noble Lord,
Of gracious favour did vouchsafe to grant.

KING.
But yet it is not signed with our hand.

COBHAM.
Not yet, my Liege.

[One ready with pen and ink.]

KING.
The fact, you say, was done,
Not of prepensed malice, but by chance.

COBHAM.
Upon mine honor so, no otherwise.

KING.

There is his pardon; bid him make amends,

[Writes.]

And cleanse his soul to God for his offence.
What we remit, is but the body's scourge—

[Enter Bishop.]

How now, Lord Bishop?

BISHOP.
Justice, dread Sovereign!
As thou art King, so grant I may have justice.

KING.
What means this exclamation? let us know.

BISHOP.
Ah, my good Lord, the state's abused,
And our decrees most shamefully profaned.

KING.
How? or by whom?

BISHOP.
Even by this heretic,
This Jew, this Traitor to your majesty.

COBHAM.
Prelate, thou liest, even in thy greasy maw,
Or whosoever twits me with the name
Of either traitor, or of heretic.

KING.

Forbear, I say: and, Bishop, shew the cause >From whence this late abuse hath been derived.

BISHOP.
Thus, mighty King:—By general consent,
A messenger was sent to cite this Lord,
To make appearance in the consistory;
And coming to his house, a ruffian slave,
One of his daily followers, met the man,
Who, knowing him to be a parroter,
Assaults him first and after, in contempt
Of us and our proceedings, makes him cate
The written process, parchment, scale and all:
Whereby his master neither was brought forth,
Nor we but scorned for our authority.

KING.
When was this done?

BISHOP.
At six a clock this morning.

KING.
And when came you to court?

COBHAM.
Last night, my Lord.

KING.
By this it seems, he is not guilty of it,
And you have done him wrong t'accuse him so.

BISHOP.
But it was done, my lord, by his appointment,
Or else his man durst ne'er have been so bold.

KING.
Or else you durst be bold to interrupt,
And fill our ears with frivolous complaints.
Is this the duty you do bear to us?
Was't not sufficient we did pass our word
To send for him, but you, misdoubting it,
Or—which is worse—intending to forestall

Our regal power, must likewise summon him?
This savors of Ambition, not of zeal,
And rather proves you malice his estate,
Than any way that he offends the law.
Go to, we like it not; and he your officer,
That was employed so much amiss herein,
Had his desert for being insolent.

[Enter Huntington.]

So, Cobham, when you please you may depart.

COBHAM.
I humbly bid farewell unto my liege.

[Exit.]

KING.
Farewell.—What's the news by Huntington?

HUNTINGTON.
Sir Roger Acton and a crew, my Lord,
Of bold seditious rebels are in Arms,
Intending reformation of Religion.
And with their Army they intend to pitch
In Ficket field, unless they be repulsed.

KING.
So near our presence? Dare they be so bold?
And will proud war, and eager thirst of blood,
Whom we had thought to entertain far off,
Press forth upon us in our native bounds?
Must we be forced to hansell our sharp blades
In England here, which we prepared for France?
Well, a God's name be it! What's their number, say,
Or who's the chief commander of this rout?

HUNTINGTON.
Their number is not known, as yet, my Lord,
But tis reported Sir John Oldcastle

Is the chief man on whom they do depend.

KING.
How, the Lord Cobham?

HUNTINGTON.
Yes, my gracious Lord.

BISHOP.
I could have told your majesty as much
Before he went, but that I saw your Grace
Was too much blinded by his flattery.

SUFFOLK.
Send post, my Lord, to fetch him back again.

BUTLER.
Traitor unto his country, how he smoothed,
And seemed as innocent as Truth it self!

KING.
I cannot think it yet he would be false;
But if he be, no matter; let him go.
We'll meet both him and them unto their woe.

[Exeunt all but Bishop.]

BISHOP.
This falls out well, and at the last I hope
To see this heretic die in a rope.

ACT III. SCENE I. An avenue leading to lord Cobham's house in Kent.

[Enter Earl of Cambridge, Lord Scroop, Gray, and
Chartres the French factor.]

SCROOP.
Once more, my Lord of Cambridge, make rehearsal,
How you do stand entitled to the Crown.
The deeper shall we print it in our minds,
And every man the better be resolved,
When he perceives his quarrel to be just.

CAMBRIDGE.
Then thus, Lord Scroop, sir Thomas Gray, & you,
Monsieur de Chartres, agent for the French:—
This Lionel, Duke of Clarence, as I said,
Third son of Edward (England's King) the third,
Had issue Phillip, his sole daughter and heir;
Which Phillip afterward was given in marriage
To Edmund Mortimer, the Earl of March,
And by him had a son called Roger Mortimer;
Which Roger, likewise, had of his descent
Edmund, Roger, Anne, and Eleanor—
Two daughters and two sons—but those three
Died without issue. Anne, that did survive,
And now was left her father's only heir,
My fortune was to marry, being too
By my grandfather of Kind Edward's line:
So of his sirname, I am called, you know,
Richard Plantagenet. My father was
Edward, the Duke of York, and son and heir
To Edmund Langley, Edward the third's fifth son.

SCROOP.
So that it seems your claim comes by your wife,
As lawful heir to Roger Mortimer,
The son of Edmund, which did marry Phillip,
Daughter and heir to Lionel, Duke of Clarence.

CAMBRIDGE.
True, for this Harry and his father both,
Harry the first, as plainly doth appear,
Are false intruders and usurp the Crown.
For when young Richard was at Pomfret slain,

In him the title of prince Edward died,
That was the eldest of king Edward's sons:
William, of Hatfield, and their second brother,
Death in his nonage had before bereft:
So that my wife, derived from Lionel,
Third son unto king Edward, ought proceed,
And take possession of the Diadem
Before this Harry, or his father king,
Who fetched their title but from Lancaster,
Forth of that royal line. And being thus,
What reason ist but she should have her right?

SCROOP.
I am resolved our enterprise is just.

GRAY.
Harry shall die, or else resign his crown.

CHARTRES.
Perform but that, and Charles, the king of France,
Shall aid you, lords, not only with his men,
But send you money to maintain your wars.
Five hundred thousand crowns he bade me profer,
If you can stop but Harry's voyage for France.

SCROOP.
We never had a fitter time than now,
The realm in such division as it is.

CAMBRIDGE.
Besides, you must persuade ye, there is due
Vengeance for Richard's murder, which, although
It be deferred, yet will it fall at last,
And now as likely as another time.
Sin hath had many years to ripen in,
And now the harvest cannot be far off,
Wherein the weeds of usurpation
Are to be cropped, and cast into the fire.

SCROOP.
No more, earl Cambridge; here I plight my faith,
To set up thee and thy renowned wife.

GRAY.
Gray will perform the same, as he is knight.

CHARTRES.
And to assist ye, as I said before,
Charters doth gage the honor of his king.

SCROOP.
We lack but now Lord Cobham's fellowship,
And then our plot were absolute indeed.

CAMBRIDGE.
Doubt not of him, my lord; his life's pursued
By the incensed Clergy, and of late,
Brought in displeasure with the king, assures
He may be quickly won unto our faction.
Who hath the articles were drawn at large
Of our whole purpose?

GRAY.
That have I, my Lord.

CAMBRIDGE.
We should not now be far off from his house;
Our serious conference hath beguiled the way.
See where his castle stands. Give me the writing.
When we are come unto the speech of him,
Because we will not stand to make recount,
Of that which hath been said, here he shall read

[Enter Cobham.]

Our minds at large, and what we crave of him.

SCROOP.
A ready way. Here comes the man himself,

Booted and spurred; it seems he hath been riding.

CAMBRIDGE.
Well met, lord Cobham.

COBHAM.
My lord of Cambridge?
Your honor is most welcome into Kent,
And all the rest of this fair company.
I am new come from London, gentle Lords;
But will ye not take Cowling for your host,
And see what entertainment it affords?

CAMBRIDGE.
We were intended to have been your guests:
But now this lucky meeting shall suffice
To end our business, and defer that kindness.

COBHAM.
Business, my lord? what business should you have
But to be merry? We have no delicates,
But this I'll promise you: a piece of venison,
A cup of wine, and so forth—hunters' fare;
And if you please, we'll strike the stag our selves
Shall fill our dishes with his well-fed flesh.

SCROOP.
That is, indeed, the thing we all desire.

COBHAM.
My lords and you shall have your choice with me.

CAMBRIDGE.
Nay, but the stag which we desire to strike
Lives not in Cowling; if you will consent,
And go with us, we'll bring you to a forest,
Where runs a lusty herd; amongst the which
There is a stag superior to the rest,
A stately beast that, when his fellows run,
He leads the race, and beats the sullen earth,

As though he scorned it, with his trampling hooves.
Aloft he bears his head, and with his breast,
Like a huge bulwark, counter-checks the wind:
And when he standeth still, he stretcheth forth
His proud ambitious neck, as if he meant
To wound the firmament with forked horns.

COBHAM.
Tis pity such a goodly beast should die.

CAMBRIDGE.
Not so, sir John, for he is tyrannous,
And gores the other deer, and will not keep
Within the limits are appointed him.
Of late he's broke into a several,
Which doth belong to me, and there he spoils
Both corn and pasture. Two of his wild race,
Alike for stealth and covetous encroaching,
Already are removed; if he were dead,
I should not only be secure from hurt,
But with his body make a royal feast.

SCROOP.
How say you, then; will you first hunt with us?

COBHAM.
Faith, Lords, I like the pastime; where's the place>

CAMBRIDGE.
Peruse this writing; it will shew you all,
And what occasion we have for the sport.

[He reads.]

COBHAM.
Call ye this hunting, my lords? Is this the stag
You fain would chase—Harry our dread king?
So we may make a banquet for the devil,
And in the stead of wholesome meat, prepare
A dish of poison to confound our selves.

CAMBRIDGE.
Why so, lord Cobham? See you not our claim?
And how imperiously he holds the crown?

SCROOP.
Besides, you know your self is in disgrace,
Held as a recreant, and pursued to death.
This will defend you from your enemies,
And stablish your religion through the land.

COBHAM.
Notorious treason! yet I will conceal *[Aside.]*
My secret thoughts, to sound the depth of it.
My lord of Cambridge, I do see your claim,
And what good may redound unto the land
By prosecuting of this enterprise.
But where are the men? where's power and furniture
To order such an action? We are weak;
Harry, you know's a mighty potentate.

CAMBRIDGE.
Tut, we are strong enough: you are beloved,
And many will be glad to follow you;
We are the like, and some will follow us.
Besides, there is hope from France: here's an ambassador
That promiseth both men and money too.
The commons likewise (as we hear) pretend
A sudden tumult; we will join with them.

COBHAM.
Some likelihood, I must confess, to speed;
But how shall I believe this is plain truth?
You are, my lords, such men as live in Court,
And highly have been favoured of the king,
Especially lord Scroop, whom oftentimes
He maketh choice of for his bedfellow;
And you, lord Gray, are of his privy counsel:
Is not this a train to entrap my life?

CAMBRIDGE.
Then perish may my soul! What, think you so?

SCROOP.
We'll swear to you.

GRAY.
Or take the sacrament.

COBHAM.
Nay, you are noble men, and I imagine,
As you are honorable by birth and blood,
So you will be in heart, in thought, in word.
I crave no other testimony but this:
That you would all subscribe, and set your hands
Unto this writing which you gave to me.

CAMBRIDGE.
With all our hearts. Who hath any pen and ink?

SCROOP.
My pocket should have one: yea, here it is.

CAMBRIDGE.
Give it me, lord Scroop.—There is my name.

SCROOP.
And there is my name.

GRAY.
And mine.

COBHAM.
Sir, let me crave,
That you would likewise write your name with theirs,
For confirmation of your master's word,
The king of France.

CHARTRES.
That will I, noble Lord.

COBHAM.
So now this action is well knit together,
And I am for you. Where's our meeting, lords?

CAMBRIDGE.
Here, if you please, the tenth of July next.

COBHAM.
In Kent? agreed: now let us in to supper.
I hope your honors will not away to night.

CAMBRIDGE.
Yes, presently; for I have far to ride,
About soliciting of other friends.

SCROOP.
And we would not be absent from the court,
Lest thereby grow suspicion in the king.

COBHAM.
Yet taste a cup of wine before ye go.

CAMBRIDGE.
Not now, my lord, we thank you: so farewell.

[Exeunt all but Cobham.]

COBHAM.
Farewell, my noble lords.—My noble lords?
My noble villains, base conspirators.
How can they look his Highness in the face,
Whom they so closely study to betray?
But I'll not sleep until I make it known.
This head shall not be burdened with such thoughts,
Nor in this heart will I conceal a deed
Of such impiety against my king.
Madam, how now?

[Enter Harpoole and the rest.]

LADY COBHAM.
You are welcome home, my Lord.
Why seem ye so disquiet in your looks?
What hath befallen you that disquiets your mind?

LADY POWIS.
Bad news, I am afraid, touching my husband.

COBHAM.
Madam, not so: there is your husband's pardon.
Long may ye live, each joy unto the other.

POWIS.
So great a kindness as i know not how
To make reply; my sense is quite confounded.

COBHAM.
Let that alone: and madam, stay me not,
For I must back unto the court again
With all the speed I can. Harpoole, my horse.

LADY COBHAM.
So soon, my Lord? what, will you ride all night?

COBHAM.
All night or day; it must be so, sweet wife.
Urge me not why or what my business is,
But get you in. Lord Powis, bear with me,
And madam, think your welcome ne'er the worse:
My house is at your use. Harpoole, away.

HARPOOLE.
Shall I attend your lordship to the court?

COBHAM.
Yes, sir; your gelding! mount you presently.

[Exeunt.]

LADY COBHAM.

I prithee, Harpoole, look unto thy Lord.
I do not like this sudden posting back.

POWIS.
Some earnest business is a foot belike;
What e'er it be, pray God be his good guide.

LADY POWIS.
Amen! that hath so highly us bested.

LADY COBHAM.
Come, madam, and my lord, we'll hope the best;
You shall not into Wales till he return.

POWIS.
Though great occasion be we should depart,
Yet madam will we stay to be resolved
Of this unlooked for, doubtful accident.

[Exeunt.]

ACT III. SCENE II. A road near Highgate.

[Enter Murley and his men, prepared in some filthy order for war.]

MURLEY.

Come, my hearts of flint, modestly, decently, soberly, and handsomely, no man afore his Leader; follow your master, your Captain, your Knight that shall be, for the honor of Meal-men, Millers, and Malt-men. Dunne is the mouse. Dick and tom, for the credit of Dunstable, ding down the enemy to morrow; ye shall not come into the field like beggars. Where be Leonard and Laurence, my two loaders? Lord have mercy upon us, what a world is this? I would give a couple of shillings for a dozen of good feathers for ye, and forty pence for as many scarfs to set ye out withal. Frost and snow! a man has no heart to fight till he be brave.

DICK.

Master, I hope we be no babes. For our manhood, our bucklers and our town footballs can bear witness: and this light parrel we have shall off, and we'll fight naked afore we run away.

TOM.

Nay, I am of Laurence mind for that, for he means to leave his life behind him; he and Leonard, your two loaders, are making their wills because they have wives. Now we Bachelors bid our friends scramble for our goods if we die: but, master, pray ye, let me ride upon Cutte.

MURLEY.

Meal and salt, wheat and malt, fire and tow, frost and snow! why, Tom, thou shalt. Let me see: here are you, William and George are with my cart, and Robin and Hodge holding my own two horses: proper men, handsome men, tall men, true men.

DICK.

But, master, master, me thinks you are a mad man to hazard your own person and a cart load of money too.

TOM.

Yea, and, master, there's a worse matter in't. If it be as I heard say, we go to fight against all the learned Bishops, that should give us their blessing; and if they curse us, we shall speed ne'er the better.

DICK.

Nay, bir lady, some say the King takes their part; and, master, dare you fight against the King?

MURLEY.

Fie, paltry, paltry! in and out, to and fro, upon occasion; if the King be so unwise to come there, we'll fight with him too.

TOM.
What, if ye should kill the King?

MURLEY.
Then we'll make another.

DICK.
Is that all? do ye not speak treason?

MURLEY.

If we do, who dare trip us? we come to fight for our conscience, and for honor. Little know you what is in my bosom; look here, mad knaves, a pair of gilt spurs.

TOM.

A pair of golden spurs? Why do you not put them on your heels? Your bosom's no place for spurs.

MURLEY.

Be't more or less upon occasion, Lord have mercy upon us, Tom, th'art a fool, and thou speakest treason to knighthood. Dare any wear golden or silver spurs till he be a knight? No, I shall be knighted to morrow, and then they shall on. Sirs, was it ever read in the church book of Dunstable, that ever malt man was made knight?

TOM.

No, but you are more: you are meal-man, maltman, miller, corn-master and all.

DICK.
Yea, and half a brewer too, and the devil and all for wealth.
You bring more money with you, than all the rest.

MURLEY.

The more's my honor. I shall be a knight to morrow! Let me spose my men: Tom upon cut, Dick upon hob, Hodge upon Ball, Raph upon Sorell, and Robin upon the forehorse.

[Enter Acton, Bourne, and Beverly.]

TOM.
Stand, who comes there?

ACTON.
All friends, good fellow.

MURLEY.
Friends and fellows, indeed, sir Roger.

ACTON.
Why, thus you shew your self a Gentleman,
To keep your day, and come so well prepared.
Your cart stands yonder, guarded by your men,
Who tell me it is loaden with coin.

What sum is there?

MURLEY.

Ten thousand pound, sir Roger: and modestly, decently, soberly, and handsomely, see what I have here against I be knighted.

ACTON.
Gilt spurs? tis well.

MURLEY.
But where's your army, sir?

ACTON.
Dispersed in sundry villages about:
Some here with us in Highgate, some at Finchley,
Totnam, Enfield, Edmunton, Newington,
Islington, Hogsdon, Pancredge, Kensington;
Some nearer Thames, Ratcliffe, Blackwall and Bow;
But our chief strength must be the Londoners,
Which, ere the Sun to morrow shine,
Will be near fifty thousand in the field.

MURLEY.

Mary, God dild ye, dainty my dear! but upon occasion, sir Roger Acton, doth not the King know of it, and gather his power against us?

ACTON.
No, he's secure at Eltham.

MURLEY.
What do the Clergy?

ACTON.
Fear extremely, yet prepare no force.

MURLEY.

In and out, to and fro, Bully my boikin, we shall carry the world afore us! I vow by my worship, when I am knighted, we'll take the King napping, if he stand on their part.

ACTON.
This night we few in Highgate will repose.
With the first cock we'll rise and arm our selves,
To be in Ficket field by break of day,
And there expect our General.

MURLEY.
Sir John Oldcastle? what if he come not?

BOURNE.
Yet our action stands.
Sir Roger Acton may supply his place.

MURLEY.
True, Master Bourne, but who shall make me knight?

BEVERLY.
He that hath power to be our General.

ACTON.
Talk not of trifles; come, let's away.
Our friends of London long till it be day.

[Exeunt.]

ACT III. SCENE III. A high road in Kent.

[Enter sir John of Wrotham and Doll.]

DOLL.
By my troth, thou art as jealous a man as lives.

PRIEST.

Canst thou blame me, Doll? thou art my lands, my goods, my jewels, my wealth, my purse. None walks within xl. miles of London, but a plies thee as truly as the parish does the poor man's box.

DOLL.

I am as true to thee as the stone is in the wall; and thou knowest well enough, sir John, I was in as good doing, when I came to thee, as any wench need to be; and therefore thou hast tried me, that thou hast: by God's body, I will not be kept as I have been, that I will not.

PRIEST.

Doll, if this blade hold, there's not a peddlar walks with a pack, but thou shalt as boldly choose of his wares, as with thy ready money in a Merchant's shop. We'll have as good silver as the King coins any.

DOLL.
What, is all the gold spent you took the last day from the
Courtier?

PRIEST.

Tis gone, Doll, tis flown; merely come, merely gone: he comes a horse back that much pay for all. We'll have as good meat as money can get, and as good gowns as can be bought for gold. Be merry, wench, the maltman comes on Monday.

DOLL.

You might have left me at Cobham, until you had been better provided for.

PRIEST.

No, sweet Doll, no: I do not like that. Yond old ruffian is not for the priest: I do not like a new clerk should come in the old belfry.

DOLL.
Ah, thou art a mad priest, yfaith.

PRIEST.

Come, Doll; I'll see thee safe at some alehouse here at Cray, and the next sheep that comes shall leave his fleece.

[Exeunt.]

ACT III. SCENE IV. Blackheath.

[Enter the King, Suffolk and Butler.]

KING.
[In great haste.] My lord of Suffolk, post away for life,
And let our forces of such horse and foot,
As can be gathered up by any means,
Make speedy rendezvous in Tuttle fields.
It must be done this evening, my Lord;
This night the rebels mean to draw to head
Near Islington, which if your speed prevent not,
If once they should unite their several forces,

Their power is almost thought invincible.
Away, my Lord; I will be with you soon.

SUFFOLK.
I go, my Sovereign, with all happy speed.

[Exit.]

KING.
Make haste, my lord of Suffolk, as you love us.
Butler, post you to London with all speed;
Command the Mayor and shrieves, on their allegiance,
The city gates be presently shut up
And guarded with a strong sufficient watch,
And not a man be suffered to pass
Without a special warrant from our self.
Command the Postern by the Tower be kept,
And proclamation, on the pain of death,
That not a citizen stir from his doors,
Except such as the Mayor and Shrieves shall choose
For their own guard and safety of their persons.
Butler, away; have care unto my charge.

BUTLER.
I go, my Sovereign.

KING.
Butler!

BUTLER.
My Lord.

KING.
Go down by Greenwich, and command a boat
At the Friar's bridge attend my coming down.

BUTLER.
I will, my Lord.

[Exit.]

KING.
It's time, I think, to look unto rebellion,
When Acton doth expect unto his aid
No less than fifty thousand Londoners.
Well, I'll to Westminster in this disguise,
To hear what news is stirring in these brawls.

[Enter sir John and Doll.]

SIR JOHN.
Stand, true-man! says a thief.

KING.
Stand, thief! says a true man. How if a thief?

SIR JOHN.
Stand, thief, too.

KING.

Then, thief or true-man, I see I must stand. I see, how soever the world wags, the trade of thieving yet will never down. What art thou?

SIR JOHN.
A good fellow.

KING.
So am I too. I see thou dost know me.

SIR JOHN.

If thou be a good fellow, play the good fellow's part: deliver thy purse without more ado.

KING.
I have no money.

SIR JOHN.

I must make you find some before we part. If you have no money, you shall have war: as many sound dry blows as your skin can carry.

KING.
Is that the plain truth?

SIR JOHN.

Sirra, no more ado; come, come, give me the money you have. Dispatch, I cannot stand all day.

KING.

Well, if thou wilt needs have it, there tis: just the proverb, one thief robs another. Where the devil are all my old thieves, that were wont to keep this walk? Falstaff, the villain, is so fat, he cannot get on's horse, but me thinks Poines and Peto should be stirring here about.

SIR JOHN.
How much is there on't, of thy word?

KING.
A hundred pound in Angels, on my word.
The time has been I would have done as much
For thee, if thou hadst past this way, as I have now.

SIR JOHN.
Sirra, what art thou? thou seem'st a gentleman.

KING.
I am no less; yet a poor one now, for thou hast all my money.

SIR JOHN.

>From whence cam'st thou?

KING.

>From the court at Eltham.

SIR JOHN.
Art thou one of the King's servants?

KING.
Yes, that I am, and one of his chamber.

SIR JOHN.

I am glad thou art no worse; thou mayest the better spare thy money: & thinkst thou thou mightst get a poor thief his pardon, if he should have need.

KING.
Yes, that I can.

SIR JOHN.
Wilt thou do so much for me, when I shall have occasion?

KING.
Yes, faith will I, so it be for no murther.

SIR JOHN.

Nay, I am a pitiful thief; all the hurt I do a man, I take but his purse; I'll kill no man.

KING.
Then, of my word, I'll do it.

SIR JOHN.
Give me thy hand of the same.

KING.
There tis.

SIR JOHN.

Me thinks the King should be good to thieves, because he has been a thief himself, though I think now he be turned true-man.

KING.

Faith, I have heard indeed he has had an ill name that way in his youth; but how canst thou tell he has been a thief?

SIR JOHN.

How? Because he once robbed me before I fell to the trade my self; when that foul villainous guts, that led him to all that rogery, was in's company there, that Falstaff.

KING.

[Aside.] Well, if he did rob thee then, thou art but even with him now, I'll be sworn.—Thou knowest not the king now, I think, if thou sawest him?

SIR JOHN.
Not I, yfaith.

KING.
[Aside.] So it should seem.

SIR JOHN.

Well, if old King Henry had lived, this King that is now had made thieving the best trade in England.

KING.
Why so?

SIR JOHN.

Because he was the chief warden of our company. It's pity that e'er he should have been a King; he was so brave a thief. But, sirra, wilt remember my pardon if need be?

KING.
Yes, faith, will I.

SIR JOHN.

Wilt thou? well then, because thou shalt go safe—for thou mayest hap (being so early) be met with again before thou come to Southwark—if any man, when he should bid thee good morrow, bid thee stand, say thou but Sir John, and he will let thee pass.

KING.
Is that the word? well, then, let me alone.

SIR JOHN.

Nay, sirra, because I think indeed I shall have some occasion to use thee, & as thou comest oft this way, I may light on thee another time not knowing thee, here! I'll break this Angel. Take thou half of it; this is a token betwixt thee and me.

KING.
God have mercy; farewell.

[Exit.]

SIR JOHN.

O my fine golden slaves! here's for thee, wench, yfaith. Now, Doll, we will revel in our bower! this is a tithe pig of my vicarage. God have mercy, neighbour Shooters hill; you paid your tithe honestly. Well, I hear there is a company of rebels up against the King, got together in Ficket field near Holborne, and as it is thought here in Kent, the King will be there to night in's own person; well, I'll to the King's camp, and it shall go hard, but, if there be any doings, I'll make some good boot amongst them.

[Exit.]

ACT IV. SCENE I. A field near London. King Henry's camp.

[Enter King Henry, Suffolk, Huntington, and two with lights.]

KING.
My lords of Suffolk and of Huntington,
Who scouts it now? or who stands Sentinels?
What men of worth? what Lords do walk the round?

SUFFOLK.
May it please your Highness—

KING.
Peace, no more of that.
The King's asleep; wake not his majesty
With terms nor titles; he's at rest in bed.
Kings do not use to watch themselves; they sleep,

And let rebellion and conspiracy
Revel and havoc in the common wealth.—
Is London looked unto?

HUNTINGTON.
It is, my Lord:
Your noble Uncle Exeter is there,
Your brother Gloucester and my Lord of Warwick,
Who, with the mayor and the Aldermen,
Do guard the gates, and keep good rule within;
The Earl of Cambridge and sir Thomas Gray
Do walk the Round; Lord Scroop and Butler scout.
So, though it please your majesty to jest,
Were you in bed, well might you take your rest.

KING.
I thank ye, Lords, but you do know of old,
That I have been a perfect night-walker.
London, you say, is safely looked unto—
Alas, poor rebels, there your aid must fail—
And the Lord Cobham, sir John Oldcastle,
He's quiet in Kent. Acton, ye are deceived;
Reckon again, you count without your host;
To morrow you shall give account to us.
Til when, my friends, this long cold winter's night
How can we spend? King Harry is a sleep
And all his Lords, these garments tell us so;
All friends at football, fellows all in field,
Harry, and Dick, and George. Bring us a drum;
Give us square dice, we'll keep this court of guard
For all good fellows companies that come.
Where's that mad priest ye told me was in Arms,
To fight, as well as pray, if need required?

SUFFOLK.
He's in the Camp, and if he know of this,
I undertake he would not be long hence.

KING.

Trip, Dick; trip, George.

[They trip.]

HUNTINGTON.
I must have the dice.
What do we play at?

[They play at dice.]

SUFFOLK.
Passage, if ye please.

HUNTINGTON.
Set round then; so, at all.

KING.
George, you are out.
Give me the dice. I pass for twenty pound.
Here's to our lucky passage into France.

HUNTINGTON.
Harry, you pass indeed, for you sweep all.

SUFFOLK.
A sign king Harry shall sweep all in France.

[Enter Sir John.]

SIR JOHN.
Edge ye, good fellows; take a fresh gamester in.

KING.
Master Parson? We play nothing but gold.

SIR JOHN.

And, fellow, I tell thee that the priest hath gold. Gold? sblood, ye are but beggarly soldiers to me. I think I have more gold than all you three.

HUNTINGTON.
It may be so, but we believe it not.

KING.
Set, priest, set. I pass for all that gold.

SIR JOHN.
Ye pass, indeed.

KING.
Priest, hast thou any more?

SIR JOHN.
Zounds, what a question's that?
I tell thee I have more than all you three.
At these ten Angels!

KING.
I wonder how thou comest by all this gold;
How many benefices hast thou, priest?

SIR JOHN.

Yfaith, but one. Dost wonder how I come by gold? I wonder rather how poor soldiers should have gold; for I'll tell thee, good fellow: we have every day tithes, offerings, christenings, weddings, burials; and you poor snakes come seldom to a booty. I'll speak a proud word: I have but one parsonage, Wrotham; tis better than the Bishopric of Rochester. There's ne'er a hill, heath, nor down in all Kent, but tis in my parish: Barham down, Chobham down, Gad's Hill, Wrotham hill, Black heath, Cock's heath, Birchen wood, all pay me tithe. Gold, quoth a? ye pass not for that.

SUFFOLK.
Harry, ye are out; now, parson, shake the dice.

SIR JOHN.

Set, set; I'll cover ye at all. A plague on't, I am out: the devil, and dice, and a wench, who will trust them?

SUFFOLK.
Sayest thou so, priest? Set fair; at all for once.

KING.
Out, sir; pay all.

SIR JOHN.
Sblood, pay me angel gold.
I'll none of your cracked French crowns nor pistolets.
Pay me fair angel gold, as I pay you.

KING.
No cracked French crowns? I hope to see more cracked
French crowns ere long.

SIR JOHN.

Thou meanest of French men's crowns, when the King is in France.

HUNTINGTON.
Set round, at all.

SIR JOHN.
Pay all: this is some luck.

KING.
Give me the dice, tis I must shred the priest:
At all, sir John.

SIR JOHN.

The devil and all is yours. At that! Sdeath, what casting is this?

SUFFOLK.
Well thrown, Harry, yfaith.

KING.
I'll cast better yet.

SIR JOHN.

Then I'll be hanged. Sirra, hast thou not given thy soul to the devil for casting?

KING.
I pass for all.

SIR JOHN.
Thou passest all that e'er I played withal.
Sirra, dost thou not cog, nor foist, nor slur?

KING.
Set, parson, set; the dice die in my hand:
When parson, when? what, can ye find no more?
Already dry? wast you bragged of your store?

SIR JOHN.
All's gone but that.

HUNTINGTON.
What? half a broken angel?

SIR JOHN.
Why sir, tis gold.

KING.
Yea, and I'll cover it.

SIR JOHN.
The devil do ye good on't, I am blind, ye have blown me up.

KING.
Nay, tarry, priest; ye shall not leave us yet.
Do not these pieces fit each other well?

SIR JOHN.
What if they do?

KING.
Thereby begins a tale:
There was a thief, in face much like Sir John—
But twas not he, that thief was all in green—
Met me last day at Black Heath, near the park,
With him a woman. I was all alone
And weaponless, my boy had all my tools,
And was before providing me a boat.
Short tale to make, sir John—the thief, I mean—
Took a just hundreth pound in gold from me.
I stormed at it, and swore to be revenged
If e'er we met. He, like a lusty thief,
Brake with his teeth this Angel just in two
To be a token at our meeting next,
Provided I should charge no Officer
To apprehend him, but at weapon's point
Recover that and what he had beside.
Well met, sir John; betake ye to your tools
By torch light, for, master parson, you are he
That had my gold.

SIR JOHN.

Zounds, I won 't in play, in fair square play, of the keeper of Eltham park; and that I will maintain with this poor whinyard, be you two honest men to stand and look upon's, and let's alone, and take neither part.

KING.
Agreed! I charge ye do not budget a foot.
Sir John, have at ye.

SIR JOHN.
Soldier, ware your sconce.

[Here, as they are ready to strike, enter Butler and draws his weapon and steps betwixt them.]

BUTLER.
Hold, villains, hold! my Lords, what do you mean,
To see a traitor draw against the King?

SIR JOHN.
The King! God's will, I am in a proper pickle.

KING.
Butler, what news? why dost thou trouble us?

BUTLER.
Please it your Highness, it is break of day,
And as I scouted near to Islington,
The gray eyed morning gave me glimmering
Of armed men coming down Highgate hill,
Who by their course are coasting hitherward.

KING.
Let us withdraw, my Lords. Prepare our troops
To charge the rebels, if there be such cause.

For this lewd priest, this devilish hypocrite,
That is a thief, a gamester, and what not,
Let him be hanged up for example sake.

SIR JOHN.

Not so my gracious sovereign. I confess that I am a frail man, flesh and blood as other are: but, set my imperfections aside, by this light, ye have not a taller man, nor a truer subject to the Crown and State, than Sir John of Wrotham.

KING.

Will a true subject rob his King?

SIR JOHN.
Alas, twas ignorance and want, my gracious liege.

KING.
Twas want of grace. Why, you should be as salt
To season others with good document,
Your lives as lamps to give the people light,
As shepherds, not as wolves to spoil the flock.
Go hang him, Butler.

BUTLER.
Didst thou not rob me?

SIR JOHN.

I must confess I saw some of your gold. But, my dread Lord, I am in no humor for death; therefore, save my life. God will that sinners live; do not you cause me die. Once in their lives the best may go astray, and if the world say true, your self (my liege) have been a thief.

KING.
I confess I have,
But I repent and have reclaimed my self.

SIR JOHN.
So will I do, if you will give me time.

KING.
Wilt thou? My lords, will you be his sureties?

HUNTINGTON.
That when he robs again, he shall be hanged.

SIR JOHN.
I ask no more.

KING.
And we will grant thee that.
Live and repent, and prove an honest man,
Which when I hear, and safe return from France,
I'll give thee living: till then take thy gold;
But spend it better than at cards or wine,
For better virtues fit that coat of thine.

SIR JOHN.

Vivat Rex & curat lex! My liege, if ye have cause of battle, ye shall see Sir John of Wrotham bestir himself in your quarrel.

[Exeunt.]

ACT IV. SCENE II. A field of Battle near London.

[After an alarum enter Harry, Suffolk, Huntington, Sir John, bringing forth Acton, Beverley, and Murley prisoners.]

KING.
Bring in those traitors, whose aspiring minds
Thought to have triumpht in our overthrow.
But now ye see, base villains, what success
Attends ill actions wrongfully attempted.
Sir Roger Acton, thou retainst the name
Of knight, and shouldst be more discreetly tempered,
Than join with peasants: gentry is divine,
But thou hast made it more than popular.

ACTON.
Pardon, my Lord; my conscience urged me to it.

KING.
Thy conscience? then thy conscience is corrupt,

For in thy conscience thou art bound to us,
And in thy conscience thou shouldst love thy country;
Else what's the difference twixt a Christian
And the uncivil manners of the Turk?

BEVERLEY.
We meant no hurt unto your majesty,
But reformation of Religion.

KING.
Reform Religion? was it that ye sought?
I pray who gave you that authority?
Belike, then, we do hold the scepter up
And sit within the throne but for a cipher.
Time was, good subjects would make known their grief
And pray amendment, not enforce the same,
Unless their King were tyrant, which I hope
You cannot justly say that Harry is.
What is that other?

SUFFOLK.
A maltman, my Lord,
And dwelling in Dunstable as he says.

KING.
Sirra, what made you leave your barley broth,
To come in armour thus against your King?

MURLEY.

Fie, paltry, paltry; to and fro, in and out upon occasion; what a world's this! Knighthood (my liege) twas knighthood brought me hither. They told me I had wealth enough to make my wife a lady.

KING.
And so you brought those horses which we saw,
Trapped all in costly furniture, and meant
To wear these spurs when you were knighted once?

MURLEY.
In and out upon occasion, I did.

KING.
In and out upon occasion, therefore,
You shall be handed, and in the stead of wearing
These spurs upon your heels, about your neck
They shall bewray your folly to the world.

SIR JOHN.
In and out upon occasion, that goes hard.

MURLEY.

Fie, paltry, paltry, to and fro; good my liege, a pardon. I am sorry for my fault.

KING.
That comes too late: but tell me, went there none
Beside sir Roger Acton, upon whom
You did depend to be your governour?

MURLEY.
None, none, my Lord, but sir John Oldcastle.

KING.
Bears he part in this conspiracy?

[Enter Bishop.]

ACTON.
We looked, my Lord, that he would meet us here.

KING.
But did he promise you that he would come?

ACTON.
Such letters we received forth of Kent.

BISHOP.
Where is my Lord the King?—Health to your grace.
Examining, my Lord, some of these caitive rebels,
It is a general voice amongst them all,
That they had never come unto this place,
But to have met their valiant general,
The good Lord Cobham, as they title him:
Whereby, my Lord, your grace may now perceive,
His treason is apparent, which before
He sought to colour by his flattery.

KING.
Now, by my royalty, I would have sworn
But for his conscience, which I bear withal,
There had not lived a more true hearted subject.

BISHOP.
It is but counterfeit, my gracious lord,
And therefore, may it please your majesty
To set your hand unto this precept here,
By which we'll cause him forthwith to appear,
And answer this by order of the law.

KING.
Bishop, not only that, but take commission
To search, attach, imprison, and condemn
This most notorious traitor as you please.

BISHOP.
It shall be done, my Lord, without delay.—
So now I hold, Lord Cobham, in my hand,
That which shall finish thy disdained life.

KING.
I think the iron age begins but now,
(Which learned poets have so often taught)
Wherein there is no credit to be given,
To either words, or looks, or solemn oaths.
For if there were, how often hath he sworn,

How gently tuned the music of his tongue,
And with what amiable face beheld he me,
When all, God knows, was but hypocricy.

[Enter Cobham.]

COBHAM.
Long life and prosperous reign unto my lord.

KING.
Ah, villain, canst thou wish prosperity,
Whose heart includeth naught but treachery?
I do arrest thee here my self, false knight,
Of treason capital against the state.

COBHAM.
Of treason, mighty prince? your grace mistakes.
I hope it is but in the way of mirth.

KING.
Thy neck shall feel it is in earnest shortly.
Darst thou intrude into our presence, knowing
How heinously thou hast offended us?
But this is thy accustomed deceit;
Now thou perceivest thy purpose is in vain,
With some excuse or other thou wilt come,
To clear thy self of this rebellion.

COBHAM.
Rebellion, good my Lord? I know of none.

KING.
If you deny it, here is evidence.
See you these men? you never counseled,
Nor offered them assistance in their wars?

COBHAM.
Speak, sirs. Not one but all; I crave no favour.
Have ever I been conversant with you,
Or written letters to encourage you,

Or kindled but the least or smallest part
Of this your late unnatural rebellion?
Speak, for I dare the uttermost you can.

MURLEY.
In and out upon occasion, I know you not.

KING.
No? didst not say that sir John Oldcastle
Was one with whom you purposed to have met?

MURLEY.
True, I did say so, but in what respect?
Because I heard it was reported so.

KING.
Was there no other argument but that?

ACTON.
To clear my conscience ere I die, my lord,
I must confess, we have no other ground
But only Rumor, to accuse this lord,
Which now I see was merely fabulous.

KING.
The more pernitious you to taint him then,
Whom you knew not was faulty, yea or no.

COBHAM.
Let this, my Lord, which I present your grace,
Speak for my loyalty: read these articles,
And then give sentence of my life or death.

KING.
Earl Cambridge, Scroop, and Gray corrupted
With bribes from Charles of France, either to win
My Crown from me, or secretly contrive
My death by treason? Is this possible?

COBHAM.

There is the platform, and their hands, my lord,
Each severally subscribed to the same.

KING.
Oh never heard of, base ingratitude!
Even those I hug within my bosom most
Are readiest evermore to sting my heart.
Pardon me, Cobham, I have done thee wrong;
Hereafter I will live to make amends.
Is, then, their time of meeting no near hand?
We'll meet with them, but little for their ease,
If God permit. Go, take these rebels hence;
Let them have martial law: but as for thee,
Friend to thy king and country, still be free.

[Exeunt.]

MURLEY.
Be it more or less, what a world is this?
Would I had continued still of the order of knaves,
And never sought knighthood, since it costs so dear.
Sir Roger, I may thank you for all.

ACTON.
Now tis too late to have it remedied,
I prithee, Murley, do not urge me with it.

HUNTINGTON.
Will you away, and make no more to do?

MURLEY.
Fie, paltry, paltry! to and fro, as occasion serves;
If you be so hasty, take my place.

HUNTINGTON.
No, good sir knight, you shall begin in your hand.

MURLEY.
I could be glad to give my betters place.

[Exeunt.]

ACT IV. SCENE III. Kent. Court before lord Cobham's house.

[Enter Bishop, lord Warden, Cromer the Shrieve,
Lady Cob, and attendants.]

BISHOP.
I tell ye, Lady, it's not possible
But you should know where he conveys himself,
And you have hid him in some secret place.

LADY COBHAM.
My Lord, believe me, as I have a soul,
I know not where my lord my husband is.

BISHOP.
Go to, go to, ye are an heretic,
And will be forced by torture to confess,
If fair means will not serve to make ye tell.

LADY COBHAM.
My husband is a noble gentleman,
And need not hide himself for any fact
That ere I heard of; therefore wrong him not.

BISHOP.
Your husband is a dangerous schismatic,
Traitor to God, the King, and common wealth:
And therefore, master Croamer, shrieve of Kent,
I charge you take her to your custody,
And seize the goods of Sir John Oldcastle
To the King's use. Let her go in no more,
To fetch so much as her apparel out.
There is your warrant from his majesty.

LORD WARDEN.
Good my Lord Bishop, pacify your wrath

Against the Lady.

BISHOP.
Then let her confess
Where Oldcastle her husband is concealed.

LORD WARDEN.
I dare engage mine honor and my life,
Poor gentlewoman, she is ignorant
And innocent of all his practises,
If any evil by him be practised.

BISHOP.
If, my Lord Warden? nay, then I charge you,
That all the cinque Ports, whereof you are chief,
Be laid forthwith, that he escape us not.
Shew him his highness' warrant, Master Shrieve.

LORD WARDEN.
I am sorry for the noble gentleman—

[Enter Oldcastle and Harpoole.]

BISHOP.
Peace, he comes here; now do your office.

COBHAM.
Harpoole, what business have we here in hand?
What makes the Bishop and the Sheriff here?
I fear my coming home is dangerous,
I would I had not made such haste to Cobham.

HARPOOLE.

Be of good cheer, my Lord: if they be foes, we'll scramble shrewdly with them: if they be friends, they are welcome. One of them (my Lord Warden) is your friend; but me thinks my lady weeps; I like not that.

CROAMER.

Sir John Oldcastle, Lord Cobham, in the King's majesty's name, I arrest ye of high treason.

COBHAM.
Treason, Master Croamer?

HARPOOLE.
Treason, Master Shrieve? sblood, what treason?

COBHAM.
Harpoole, I charge thee, stir not, but be quiet still.
Do ye arrest me, Master Shrieve, for treason?

BISHOP.
Yea, of high treason, traitor, heretic.

COBHAM.
Defiance in his face that calls me so.
I am as true a loyal gentleman
Unto his highness as my proudest enemy.
The King shall witness my late faithful service,
For safety of his sacred majesty.

BISHOP.
What thou art the king's hand shall testify:
Shewt him, Lord Warden.

COBHAM.
Jesu defend me!
Is't possible your cunning could so temper
The princely disposition of his mind,
To sign the damage of a loyal subject?
Well, the best is, it bears an antedate,
Procured by my absence, and your malice,
But I, since that, have shewd my self as true
As any churchman that dare challenge me.

Let me be brought before his majesty;
If he acquit me not, then do your worst.

BISHOP.
We are not bound to do king offices
For any traitor, schismatic, nor heretic.
The king's hand is our warrant for our work,
Who is departed on his way for France,
And at Southhampton doth repose this night.

HARPOOLE.

O that it were the blessed will of God, that thou and I were within twenty mile of it, on Salisbury plan! I would lose my head if ever thou broughtst thy head hither again.

[Aside.]

COBHAM.
My Lord Warden o' the cinque Ports, & my Lord of
Rochester, ye are joint Commissioners: favor me so much,
On my expence to bring me to the king.

BISHOP.
What, to Southhampton?

COBHAM.
Thither, my good Lord,
And if he do not clear me of all guilt,
And all suspicion of conspiracy,
Pawning his princely warrant for my truth:
I ask no favour, but extremest torture.
Bring me, or send me to him, good my Lord:
Good my Lord Warden, Master Shrieve, entreat.

[Here the Lord Warden, and Croamer uncover the Bishop, and secretly whispers with him.]

Come hither, lady—nay, sweet wife, forbear
To heap one sorrow on another's neck:
Tis grief enough falsely to be accused,
And not permitted to acquit my self;
Do not thou with thy kind respective tears,
Torment thy husband's heart that bleeds for thee,
But be of comfort. God hath help in store
For those that put assured trust in him.
Dear wife, if they commit me to the Tower,
Come up to London to your sister's house:
That being near me, you may comfort me.
One solace find I settled in my soul,
That I am free from treason's very thought:
Only my conscience for the Gospel's sake
Is cause of all the troubles I sustain.

LADY COBHAM.
O my dear Lord, what shall betide of us?
You to the Tower, and I turned out of doors,
Our substance seized unto his highness' use,
Even to the garments longing to our backs.

HARPOOLE.
Patience, good madame, things at worst will mend,
And if they do not, yet our lives may end.

BISHOP.
Urge it no more, for if an Angel spake,
I swear by sweet saint Peter's blessed keys,
First goes he to the Tower, then to the stake.

CROAMER.
But by your leave, this warrant doth not stretch
To imprison her.

BISHOP.
No, turn her out of doors,

[Lord Warden and Oldcastle whisper.]

Even as she is, and lead him to the Tower,
With guard enough for fear of rescuing.

LADY COBHAM.
O, God requite thee, thou blood-thirsty man.

COBHAM.
May it not be, my Lord of Rochester?
Wherein have I incurred your hate so far,
That my appeal unto the King's denied?

BISHOP.
No hate of mine, but power of holy church,
Forbids all favor to false heretics.

COBHAM.
Your private malice, more than public power,
Strikes most at me, but with my life it ends.

HARPOOLE.
O that I had the Bishop in that fear,

[Aside.]

That once I had his Sumner by our selves!

CROAMER.
My Lord, yet grant one suit unto us all,
That this same ancient serving man may wait
Upon my lord his master in the Tower.

BISHOP.
This old iniquity, this heretic?
That, in contempt of our church discipline,
Compelled my Sumner to devour his process!
Old Ruffian past-grace, upstart schismatic,
Had not the King prayed us to pardon ye,
Ye had fried for it, ye grizzled heretic.

HARPOOLE.

Sblood, my lord Bishop, ye do me wrong. I am neither heretic nor puritan, but of the old church: I'll swear, drink ale, kiss a wench, go to mass, eat fish all Lent, and fast Fridays with cakes and wine, fruit and spicery, shrive me of my old sins afore Easter, and begin new afore whitsontide.

CROAMER.
A merry, mad, conceited knave, my lord.

HARPOOLE.
That knave was simply put upon the Bishop.

BISHOP.
Well, God forgive him and I pardon him.
Let him attend his master in the Tower,
For I in charity wish his soul no hurt.

COBHAM.
God bless my soul from such cold charity!

BISHOP.
Too th' Tower with him, and when my leisure serves,
I will examine him of Articles.
Look, my lord Warden, as you have in charge,
The Shrive perform his office.

LORD WARDEN.
Yes, my lord.

[Enter the Sumner with books.]

BISHOP.
What bringst thou there? what, books of heresy?

SUMNER.

Yea, my lord, here's not a latin book, no, not so much as our lady's Psalter.

Here's the Bible, the testament, the Psalms in meter, the sickman's salve, the treasure of gladness, and all in English, not so much but the Almanac's English.

BISHOP.
Away with them, to the fire with them, Clun!
Now fie upon these upstart heretics.
All English! burn them, burn them quickly, Clun!

HARPOOLE.

But do not, Sumner, as you'll answer it, for I have there English books, my lord, that I'll not part with for your Bishopric: Bevis of Hampton, Owlglass, the Friar and the Boy, Eleanor Rumming, Robin hood, and other such godly stories, which if ye burn, by this flesh, I'll make ye drink their ashes in Saint Marget's ale.

[Exeunt.]

ACT IV. SCENE IV. The entrance of the Tower.

[Enter Bishop of Rochester with his men in livery coats.]

FIRST SERVANT.
Is it your honor's pleasure we shall stay,
Or come back in the afternoon to fetch you?

BISHOP.
Now you have brought me here into the Tower,
You may go back unto the Porters Lodge,
And send for drink or such things as you want,
Where if I have occasion to employ you,
I'll send some officer to call you to me.
Into the city go not, I command you:
Perhaps I may have present need to use you.

SECOND SERVANT.
We will attend your worship here without.

BISHOP.
Do so, I pray you.

THIRD SERVANT.
Come, we may have a quart of wine at the Rose at
Barking, I warrant you, and come back an hour before
he be ready to go.

FIRST SERVANT.
We must hie us then.

THIRD SERVANT.
Let's away.

[Exeunt.]

BISHOP.
Ho, Master Lieutenant.

LIEUTENANT.
Who calls there?

BISHOP.
A friend of yours.

LIEUTENANT.
My lord of Rochester! your honor's welcome.

BISHOP.
Sir, here's my warrant from the Counsel,
For conference with sir John Oldcastle,
Upon some matter of great consequence.

LIEUTENANT.
Ho, sir John!

HARPOOLE.

Who calls there?

LIEUTENANT.
Harpoole, tell Sir John, that my lord of Rochester
Comes from the counsel to confer with him.

HARPOOLE.
I will, sir.

LIEUTENANT.
I think you may as safe without suspicion,
As any man in England, as I hear,
For it was you most labored his commitment.

BISHOP.
I did, sir, and nothing repent it, I assure you.

[Enter sir John Oldcastle and Harpoole.]

Master Leiftenant, I pray you give us leave,
I must confer here with sir John a little.

LIEUTENANT.
With all my heart, my lord.

HARPOOLE.

[Aside.] My lord, be ruled by me: take this occasion while tis offered, and on my life your lordship shall escape.

COBHAM.
No more, I say; peace, lest he should suspect it.

BISHOP.

Sir John, I am come unto you from the lords of his highness' most honorable counsel, to know if yet you do recant your errors, conforming you unto the holy church.

COBHAM.
My lord of Rochester, on good advise,
I see my error, but yet, understand me,
I mean not error in the faith I hold,
But error in submitting to your pleasure;
Therefore, your lordship, without more to do,
Must be a means to help me to escape.

BISHOP.
What means, thou heretic?
Darst thou but lift thy hand against my calling?

COBHAM.
No, not to hurt you for a thousand pound.

HARPOOLE.

Nothing but to borrow your upper garments a little; not a word more, for if you do, you die: peace, for waking the children. There; put them on; dispatch, my lord. The window that goes out into the leads is sure enough, I told you that before: there, make you ready; I'll convey him after, and bind him surely in the inner room.

[Carries the bishop into the Tower, and returns.]

COBHAM.
This is well begun; God send us happy speed,
Hard shift you see men make in time of need, Harpoole.

[Puts on the bishop's cloak.]

HARPOOLE.
Here my Lord; come, come away.

[Enter serving men again.]

FIRST SERVANT.
I marvel that my lord should stay so long.

SECOND SERVANT.
He hath sent to seek us, I dare lay my life.

THIRD SERVANT.
We come in good time; see, where he is coming.

HARPOOLE.

I beseech you, good my lord of Rochester, be favourable to my lord and master.

COBHAM.
The inner rooms be very hot and close,
I do not like this air here in the Tower.

HARPOOLE.
His case is hard my lord.—You shall safely get out of the
Tower; but I will down upon them, in which time get
you away.

COBHAM.
Fellow, thou troublest me.

HARPOOLE.

Hear me, my Lord!—Hard under Islington wait you my coming; I will bring my Lady, ready with horses to convey you hence.

COBHAM.
Fellow, go back again unto thy Lord and counsel him.

HARPOOLE.
Nay, my good lord of Rochester, I'll bring you to Saint
Albans through the woods, I warrant you.

COBHAM.
Villain, away.

HARPOOLE.
Nay, since I am past the Tower's liberty, thou part'st not so.

[He draws.]

COBHAM.
Clubs, clubs, clubs!

FIRST SERVANT.
Murther, murther, murther!

SECOND SERVANT.
Down with him!

[They fight.]

THIRD SERVANT.
A villain traitor!

HARPOOLE.
You cowardly rogues!

[Sir John escapes.]

[Enter Lieutenant and his men.]

LIEUTENANT.
Who is so bold as dare to draw a sword,
So near unto the entrance of the Tower?

FIRST SERVANT.
This ruffian, servant to sir John Oldcastle,
Was like to have slain my Lord.

LIEUTENANT.
Lay hold on him.

HARPOOLE.
Stand off, if you love your puddings.

[Rochester calls within.]

BISHOP.
Help, help, help! Master Lieutenant, help!

LIEUTENANT.
Who's that within? some treason in the Tower
Upon my life. Look in; who's that which calls?

[Enter Rochester bound.]

LIEUTENANT.
Without your cloak, my lord of Rochester?

HARPOOLE.
There, now it works, then let me speed, for now
Is the fittest time for me to scape away.

[Exit.]

LIEUTENANT.
Why do you look so ghastly and affrighted?

BISHOP.
Oldcastle, that traitor, and his man,
When you had left me to confer with him,
Took, bound, and stript me, as you see,
And left me lying in his inner chamber,
And so departed, and I—

LIEUTENANT.
And you? ne'er say that the Lord Cobham's man
Did here set upon you like to murther you.

FIRST SERVANT.
And so he did.

BISHOP.
It was upon his master then he did,
That in the brawl the traitor might escape.

LIEUTENANT.
Where is this Harpoole?

SECOND SERVANT.
Here he was even now.

LIEUTENANT.
Where? can you tell?

SECOND SERVANT.
They are both escaped.

LIEUTENANT.
Since it so happens that he is escaped,
I am glad you are a witness of the same,
It might have else been laid unto my charge,
That I had been consenting to the fact.

BISHOP.
Come, search shall be made for him with expedition,
The havens laid that he shall not escape,
And hue and cry continue through England,
To find this damned, dangerous heretic.

[Exeunt.]

ACT V. SCENE I. A room in lord Cobham's house in Kent.

[Enter Cambridge, Scroop, and Gray, as in a chamber, and set down at a table, consulting about their treason: King Harry and Suffolk listening at the door.]

CAMBRIDGE.
In mine opinion, Scroop hath well advised,
Poison will be the only aptest mean,
And fittest for our purpose to dispatch him.

GRAY.
But yet there may be doubt in their delivery.
Harry is wise; therefore, Earl of Cambridge,
I judge that way not so convenient.

SCROOP.
What think ye then of this? I am his bedfellow,
And unsuspected nightly sleep with him.
What if I venture in those silent hours,
When sleep hath sealed up all mortal eyes,
To murder him in bed? how like ye that?

CAMBRIDGE.
Herein consists no safety for your self,
And, you disclosed, what shall become of us?
But this day (as ye know) he will aboard—
The winds so fair—and set away for France.
If, as he goes, or entering in the ship,
It might be done, then it were excellent.

GRAY.
Why any of these, or, if you will, I'll cause
A present sitting of the Counsel, wherein
I will pretend some matter of such weight
As needs must have his royal company,
And so dispatch him in the Counsel chamber.

CAMBRIDGE.
Tush, yet I hear not any thing to purpose.
I wonder that lord Cobham stays so long;
His counsel in this case would much avail us.

[They rise from the table, and the King steps in to them, with his Lords.]

SCROOP.
What, shall we rise thus, and determine nothing?

KING.
That were a shame indeed; no, sit again,
And you shall have my counsel in this case.

If you can find no way to kill this King,
Then you shall see how I can further ye:
Scroop's way of poison was indifferent,
But yet, being bedfellow unto the King,
And unsuspected sleeping in his bosom,
In mine opinion, that's the likelier way,
For such false friends are able to do much,
And silent night is Treason's fittest friend.
Now, Cambridge, in his setting hence for France,
Or by the way, or as he goes abroad,
To do the deed, what was indifferent too,
Yet somewhat doubtful, might I speak my mind.
For many reasons needless now to urge.
Mary, Lord Gray came something near the point:
To have the King at counsel, and there murder him,
As Caesar was, amongst his dearest friends:
None like to that, if all were of his mind.
Tell me, oh tell me, you, bright honor's stains,
For which of all my kindnesses to you,
Are ye become thus traitors to your king,
And France must have the spoil of harry's life?

ALL.
Oh pardon us, dread lord.

[All kneeling.]

KING.
How, pardon ye? that were a sin indeed.
Drag them to death, which justly they deserve,

[They lead them away.]

And France shall dearly buy this villainy,
So soon as we set footing on her breast.
God have the praise for our deliverance;
And next, our thanks, Lord Cobham, is to thee,
True perfect mirror of nobility.

[Exeunt.]

ACT V. SCENE II. A high road near St. Albans.

[Enter Priest and Doll.]

SIR JOHN.
Come, Doll, come; be merry, wench.
Farewell, Kent, we are not fond for thee.
Be lusty, my lass, come, for Lancashire,
We must nip the Boung for these crowns.

DOLL.

Why, is all the gold spent already that you had the other day?

SIR JOHN.

Gone, Doll, gone; flown, spent, vanished: the devil, drink and the dice has devoured all.

DOLL.
You might have left me in Kent, that you might, until
you had been better provided, I could have stayed at
Cobham.

SIR JOHN.

No, Doll, no, I'll none of that; Kent's too hot, Doll, Kent's too hot. The weathercock of Wrotham will crow no longer: we have pluckt him, he has lost his feathers; I have pruned him bare, left him thrice; is moulted, is moulted, wench.

DOLL.

Faith, sir John, I might have gone to service again; old master Harpoole told me he would provide me a mistress.

SIR JOHN.

Peace, Doll, peace. Come, mad wench, I'll make thee an honest woman; we'll into Lancashire to our friends: the troth is, I'll marry thee. We want but a little money to buy us a horse, and to spend by the way; the next sheep that comes shall lose his fleece, we'll have these crowns, wench, I warrant thee.

[Enter the Irish man with his master slain.]

Stay, who comes here? some Irish villain, me thinks, that has slain a man, and draws him out of the way to rifle him. Stand close, Doll, we'll see the end.

[The Irish man falls to rifle his master.]

IRISHMAN.

Alas, poe mester, Sir Rishard Lee, be saint Patrick is rob and cut thy trote for dee shaine, and dy money, and dee gold ring be me truly: is love thee well, but now dow be kill, thee bee shitten kanave.

SIR JOHN.
Stand, sirra; what art thou?

IRISHMAN.
Be saint Patrick, mester, is pore Irisman, is a leufter.

SIR JOHN.

Sirra, sirra, you are a damned rogue; you have killed a man here, and rifled him of all that he has. Sblood, you rogue, deliver, or I'll not leave you so much as an

Irish hair above your shoulders, you whoreson Irish dog. Sirra, untruss presently; come, off and dispatch, or by this cross I'll fetch your head off as clean as a bark.

IRISHMAN.

Wee's me, saint Patrick! Ise kill me mester for chain and his ring, and nows be rob of all: mee's undoo.

[Priest robs him.]

SIR JOHN.

Avant, you rascal! Go, sirra, be walking. Come, Doll, the devil laughs, when one thief robs another: come, mad wench, we'll to saint Albans, and revel in our bower; hey, my brave girl.

DOLL.
O thou art old sir John when all's done, yfaith.

[Exeunt.]

ACT V. SCENE III. St. Albans. The entrance of a carrier's inn.

[Enter the host of the Bell with the Irish man.]

IRISHMAN.

Be me tro, mester, is pore Irisman, is want ludging, is have no money, is starve and cold: good mester, give her some meat; is famise and tie.

HOST.

Yfaith, my fellow, I have no lodging, but what I keep for my guess, that I may not disappoint: as for meat thou shalt have such as there is, & if thou wilt lie in the barn, there's fair straw, and room enough.

IRISHMAN.
Is thank my mester hartily, de straw is good bed for me.

HOST.
Ho, Robin!

ROBIN.
Who calls?

HOST.
Shew this poor Irishman into the barn; go, sirra.

[Exeunt.]

[Enter carrier and Kate.]

CLUB.

Ho, who's within here? who looks to the horses? God's hat! here's fine work: the hens in the manger, and the hogs in the litter. A bots found you all; here's a house well looked to, yvaith.

KATE.
Mas, goffe Club, I'se very cawd.

CLUB.
Get in, Kate, get in to fire and warm thee. Ho! John
Hostler.

[Enter Hostler.]

HOSTLER.

What, gaffer Club? welcome to saint Albans. How does all our friends in Lancashire?

CLUB.
Well, God have mercy, John; how does Tom; where's he?

HOSTLER.

O, Tom is gone from hence; he's at the three horse-loves at Stony-stratford. How does old Dick Dunne?

CLUB.
God's hat, old Dunne has been moyerd in a slough in
Brickhill-lane, a plague found it; yonder is such
abomination weather as never was seen.

HOSTLER.

God's hat, thief, have one half peck of peas and oats more for that: as I am John Ostler, he has been ever as good a jade as ever travelled.

CLUB.
Faith, well said, old Jack; thou art the old lad still.

HOSTLER.
Come, Gaffer Club, unload, unload, and get to supper, and
I'll rub dun the while. Come.

[Exeunt.]

ACT V. SCENE IV. The same. A room in the carrier's inn.

[Enter the host, sir John Oldcastle, and Harpoole.]

HOST.

Sir, you are welcome to this house, to such as here is with all my heart, but, by the mass, I fear your lodging will be the worst. I have but two beds, and they are both in a chamber, and the carrier and his daughter lies in the one, and you and your wife must lie in the other.

COBHAM.
In faith, sir, for my self I do not greatly pass.
My wife is weary, and would be at rest,
For we have travelled very far today;
We must be content with such as you have.

HOST.
But I cannot tell how to do with your man.

HARPOOLE.
What, hast thou never an empty room in thy house for me?

HOST.
Not a bed, by my troth: there came a poor Irish man, and
I lodged him in the barn, where he has fair straw, though
he have nothing else.

HARPOOLE.

Well, mine host, I pray thee help me to a pair of fair sheets, and I'll go lodge with him.

HOST.

By the mass, that thou shalt; a good pair of hempen sheets, were never lain in: Come.

[Exeunt.]

ACT V. SCENE V. The same. A street.

[Enter Constable, Mayor, and Watch.]

MAYOR.
What? have you searched the town?

CONSTABLE.

All the town, sir; we have not left a house unsearched that uses to lodge.

MAYOR.
Surely, my lord of Rochester was then deceived,
Or ill informed of sir John Oldcastle,
Or if he came this way he's past the town.
He could not else have scaped you in the search.

CONSTABLE.
The privy watch hath been abroad all night,
And not a stranger lodgeth in the town
But he is known; only a lusty priest
We found in bed with a pretty wench,
That says she is his wife—yonder at the sheeres;
But we have charged the host with his forth coming
Tomorrow morning.

MAYOR.
What think you best to do?

CONSTABLE.

Faith, master mayor, here's a few straggling houses beyond the bridge, and a little Inn where carriers use to lodge, though I think sure he would ne'er lodge there: but we'll go search, & the rather, because there came notice to the town the last night of an Irish man, that had done a murder, whom we are to make search for.

MAYOR.

Come, I pray you, and be circumspect.

[Exeunt.]

ACT V. SCENE VI. The same. Before the Carrier's Inn. Enter Watch.

FIRST WATCH.
First beset the house, before you begin the search.

SECOND WATCH.
Content; every man take a several place.

[Here is heard a great noise within. Keep, keep, strike him down there, down with him]]

[Enter Constable with the Irish man in Harpoole's apparel.]

CONSTABLE.

Come, you villainous heretic, confess where your master is.

IRISHMAN.
Vat mester?

MAYOR.

Vat mester, you counterfeit rebel? this shall not serve your turn.

IRISHMAN.
Be sent Patrick I ha no mester.

CONSTABLE.

Where's the lord Cobham, sir John Oldcastle, that lately is escaped out of the Tower?

IRISHMAN.
Vat lort Cobham?

MAYOR.
You counterfeit, this shall not serve you; we'll torture
you, we'll make you to confess where that arch-heretic,
Lord Cobham, is: come, bind him fast.

IRISHMAN.
Ahone, ahone, ahone, a Cree!

CONSTABLE.
Ahone, you crafty rascal!

[Exeunt.]

ACT V. SCENE VII. The same. The yard of the Inn.

[Lord Cobham comes out in his gown stealing.]

COBHAM.

Harpoole, Harpoole, I hear a marvelous noise about the house: God warrant us, I fear we are pursued: what, Harpoole.

HARPOOLE.
[Within.] Who calls there?

COBHAM.
Tis I; dost thou not hear a noise about the house?

HARPOOLE.

Yes, mary, do I:—zwounds, I can not find my hose; this Irish rascal that was lodged with me all night hath stolen my apparel, and has left me nothing but a lowsy mantle, and a pair of brogues. Get up, get up, and if the carrier and his wench be asleep, change you with them as he hath done with me, and see if we can escape.

[Exit lord Cobham.]

[A hoise again heard about the house, a pretty while; then enter the Constable, meeting Harpoole in the Irish man's apparel.]

CONSTABLE.

Stand close, here comes the Irish man that did the murther; by all tokens, this is he.

MAYOR.
And perceiving the house beset, would get away.
Stand, sirra.

HARPOOLE.
What are thou that bidst me stand?

CONSTABLE.

I am the Officer, and am come to search for an Irish man, such a villain as thy self, that hast murthered a man this last night by the high way.

HARPOOLE.
Sblood, Constable, art thou mad? am I an Irish man?

MAYOR.

Sirra, we'll find you an Irish man before we part: lay hold upon him.

CONSTABLE.
Make him fast. O thou bloody rogue!

[Enter Lord Cobham and his lady in the carrier and wenches apparel.]

COBHAM.
What, will these Ostlers sleep all day?
Good morrow, good morrow. Come, wench, come.
Saddle! saddle! Now afore God too fair days, ha?

CONSTABLE.
Who comes there?

MAYOR.
Oh, tis Lancashire carrier; let him pass.

COBHAM.
What, will no body open the gates here?
Come, let's int stable to look to our capons.

[Exeunt Cobham and his Lady.]

[The carrier calling.]

CLUB.

[Calling.] Host! why ostler! zwooks, here's such a bomination company of boys. A pox of this pigsty at the house end: it fills all the house full of fleas. Ostler! ostler!

[Enter Ostler.]

OSTLER.
Who calls there? what would you have?

CLUB.

Zwooks, do you rob your guests? do you lodge rogues and slaves, and scoundrels, ha? they ha stolen our clothes here: why, ostler!

OSTLER.
A murrein choke you, what a bawlin you keep.

[Enter Host.]

HOST.
How now, what would the carrier have? look up there.

OSTLER.

They say that the man and woman that lay by them have stolen their clothes.

HOST.
What, are the strange folks up yet that come in yester night?

CONSTABLE.
What, mine host, up so early?

HOST.
What, master Mayor, and master Constable!

MAYOR.
We are come to seek for some suspected persons,
And such as here we found, have apprehended.

[Enter the Carrier and Kate in lord Cobham and ladies apparel.]

CONSTABLE.
Who comes here?

CLUB.

Who comes here? a plague found ome! you bawl, quoth a! ods hat, I'll forzwear your house: you lodged a fellow and his wife by that ha run away with our parrel, and left us such gew-gaws here!—Come Kate, come to me, thowse dizeard, yfaith.

MAYOR.
Mine host, know you this man?

HOST.
Yes, master Mayor, I'll give my word for him. Why, neighbor
Club, how comes this gear about?

KATE.

Now, a fowl ont, I can not make this gew-gaw stand on my head: now the lads and the lasses won flout me too too—

CONSTABLE.
How came this man and woman thus attired?

HOST.

Here came a man and woman hither this last night, which I did take for substantial people, and lodged all in one chamber by these folks, me thinks, have been so bold to change apparel, and gone away this morning ere they rose.

MAYOR.

That was that villain traitor, Oldcastle, that thus escaped us: make out hue and cry yet after him, keep fast that traitorous rebel, his servant, there: farewell, mine host.

CARRIER.
Come, Kate Owdham, thou and Ise trimly dizard.

[Exeunt.]

ACT V. SCENE VIII. A wood near St. Albans.

[Enter sir John Oldcastle, and his Lady disguised.]

COBHAM.
Come, Madam, happily escaped; here let us sit.
This place is far remote from any path,
And here awhile our weary limbs may rest,
To take refreshing, free from the pursuit
Of envious Rochester.

LADY COBHAM.
But where, my Lord,
Shall we find rest for our disquiet minds?
There dwell untamed thoughts that hardly stop,
To such abasement of disdained rags.
We were not wont to travel thus by night,
Especially on foot.

COBHAM.
No matter, love;
Extremities admit no better choice,
And were it not for thee, say froward time
Imposed a greater task, I would esteem it
As lightly as the wind that blows upon us;
But in thy sufference I am doubly tasked.
Thou wast not wont to have the earth thy stool,
Nor the moist dewy grass thy pillow, nor
Thy chamber to be the wide horizon.

LADY COBHAM.
How can it seem a trouble, having you
A partner with me in the worst I feel?
No, gentle Lord, your presence would give ease
To death it self, should he now seize upon me.
Behold what my foresight hath underta'en

[Here's bread and cheese & a bottle.]

For fear we faint; they are but homely cates,
Yet sauced with hunger, they may seem as sweet
As greater dainties we were wont to taste.

COBHAM.
Praise be to him whose plenty sends both this
And all things else our mortal bodies need;
Nor scorn we this poor feeding, nor the state
We now are in, for what is it on earth,
Nay, under heaven, continues at a stay?
Ebbs not the sea, when it hath overflown?
Follows not darkness when the day is gone?
And see we not sometime the eye of heaven
Dimmed with overflying clouds: there's not that work
Of careful nature, or of cunning art,
(How strong, how beauteous, or how rich it be)
But falls in time to ruin. Here, gentle Madame,
In this one draught I wash my sorrow down.

[Drinks.]

LADY COBHAM.
And I, encouraged with your cheerful speech,
Will do the like.

COBHAM.
Pray God poor Harpoole come.
If he should fall into the Bishop's hands,
Or not remember where we bade him meet us,
It were the thing of all things else, that now
Could breed revolt in this new peace of mind.

LADY COBHAM.
Fear not, my Lord, he's witty to devise,
And strong to execute a present shift.

COBHAM.
That power be still his guide hath guided us!
My drowsy eyes wax heavy: early rising,

Together with the travel we have had,
Make me that I could gladly take a nap,
Were I persuaded we might be secure.

LADY COBHAM.
Let that depend on me: whilst you do sleep,
I'll watch that no misfortune happen us.
Lay then your head upon my lap, sweet Lord,
And boldly take your rest.

COBHAM.
I shall, dear wife,
Be too much trouble to thee.

LADY COBHAM.
Urge not that;
My duty binds me, and your love commands.
I would I had the skill with tuned voice
To draw on sleep with some sweet melody,
But imperfection, and unaptness too,
Are both repugnant: fear insert the one,
The other nature hath denied me use.
But what talk I of means to purchase that,
Is freely happened? sleep with gentle hand
Hath shut his eye-lids. Oh victorious labour,
How soon thy power can charm the bodies sense?
And now thou likewise climbst unto my brain,
Making my heavy temples stoop to thee.
Great God of heaven from danger keep us free.

[Both sleep.]

[Enter sir Richard Lee, and his men.]

LEE.
A murder closely done, and in my ground?
Search carefully, if any where it were,
This obscure thicket is the likeliest place.

SERVANT.

Sir, I have found the body stiff with cold,
And mangled cruelly with many wounds.

LEE.
Look if thou knowest him, turn his body up.—
Alack, it is my son, my son and heir,
Whom two years since I sent to Ireland,
To practice there the discipline of war,
And coming home (for so he wrote to me)
Some savage heart, some bloody devilish hand,
Either in hate, or thirsting for his coin,
Hath here sluiced out his blood. Unhappy hour,
Accursed place, but most inconstant fate,
That hadst reserved him from the bullet's fire,
And suffered him to scape the wood-karn's fury,
Didst here ordain the treasure of his life,
(Even here within the arms of tender peace,
And where security gave greatest hope)
To be consumed by treason's wasteful hand!
And what is most afflicting to my soul,
That this his death and murther should be wrought
Without the knowledge by whose means twas done.

SECOND SERVANT.
Not so, sir; I have found the authors of it.
See where they sit, and in their bloody fists,
The fatal instruments of death and sin.

LEE.
Just judgement of that power, whose gracious eye,
Loathing the sight of such a heinous fact,
Dazzled their senses with benumbing sleep,
Till their unhallowed treachery were known!
Awake, ye monsters; murderers, awake;
Tremble for horror; blush, you cannot choose,
Beholding this inhumane deed of yours.

COBHAM.
What mean you, sir, to trouble weary souls,

And interrupt us of our quiet sleep?

LEE.
Oh devilish! can you boast unto your selves
Of quiet sleep, having within your hearts
The guilt of murder waking, that with cries
Deafs the loud thunder, and solicits heaven
With more than Mandrake's shrieks for your offence?

LADY COBHAM.
What murder? you upbraid us wrongfully.

LEE.
Can you deny the fact? see you not here
The body of my son by you mis-done?
Look on his wounds, look on his purple hue:
Do we not find you where the deed was done?
Were not your knives fast closed in your hands?
Is not this cloth an argument beside,
Thus stained and spotted with his innocent blood?
These speaking characters, were nothing else
To plead against ye, would convict you both.
Bring them away, bereavers of my joy.
At Hartford, where the Sizes now are kept,
Their lives shall answer for my son's lost life.

COBHAM.
As we are innocent, so may we speed.

LEE.
As I am wronged, so may the law proceed.

[Exeunt.]

ACT V. SCENE IX. St. Albans.

[Enter bishop of Rochester, constable of St. Albans, with sir John of Wrotham, Doll his wench, and the Irishman in Harpoole's apparel.]

BISHOP.
What intricate confusion have we here?
Not two hours since we apprehended one,
In habit Irish, but in speech not so:
And now you bring another, that in speech
Is altogether Irish, but in habit
Seems to be English: yea and more than so,
The servant of that heretic Lord Cobham.

IRISHMAN.
Fait, me be no servant of the lord Cobham,
Me be Mack Chane of Vister.

BISHOP.
Otherwise called Harpoole of Kent; go to, sir,
You cannot blind us with your broken Irish.

SIR JOHN.
Trust me, my Lord Bishop, whether Irish,
Or English, Harpoole or not Harpoole, that
I leave to be decided by the trial:
But sure I am this man by face and speech
Is he that murdered young sir Richard Lee—
I met him presently upon the fact—
And that he slew his master for that gold;
Those jewels, and that chain I took from him.

BISHOP.
Well, our affairs do call us back to London,
So that we cannot prosecute the cause,
As we desire to do; therefore we leave
The charge with you, to see they be conveyed
To Hartford Sise: both this counterfeit
And you, sir John of Wrotham, and your wench,
For you are culpable as well as they,
Though not for murder, yet for felony.
But since you are the means to bring to light

This graceless murder, you shall bear with you
Our letters to the Judges of the bench,
To be your friends in what they lawful may.

BISHOP.
So, away with them.

[Exeunt.]

ACT V. SCENE X. Hertford. A Hall of Justice.

[Enter Gaoler and his man, bringing forth Oldcastle.]

GAOLER.
Bring forth the prisoners, see the court prepared;
The Justices are coming to the bench.
So, let him stand; away, and fetch the rest.

[Exeunt.]

COBHAM.
Oh, give me patience to endure this scourge,
Thou that art fountain of that virtuous stream,
And though contempt, false witness, and reproach
Hang on these iron gyves, to press my life
As low as earth, yet strengthen me with faith,
That I may mount in spirit above the clouds.

[Enter Gaoler, bringing in Lady Oldcastle and
Harpoole.]

Here comes my lady: sorrow, tis for her
Thy wound is grievous; else I scoff at thee.
What, and poor Harpoole! art thou ith bryars too?

HARPOOLE.
Ifaith, my Lord, I am in, get out how I can.

LADY COBHAM.
Say, gentle Lord, for now we are alone,
And may confer, shall we confess in brief,
Of whence, and what we are, and so prevent
The accusation is commenced against us?

COBHAM.
What will that help us? being known, sweet love,
We shall for heresy be put to death,
For so they term the religion we profess.
No, if it be ordained we must die,
And at this instant, this our comfort be,
That of the guilt imposed, our souls are free.

HARPOOLE.
Yea, yea, my lord, Harpoole is so resolved.
I wreak of death the less, in that I die
Not by the sentence of that envious priest
The Bishop of Rochester: oh, were it he,
Or by his means that I should suffer here,
It would be double torment to my soul.

LADY COBHAM.
Well, be it then according as heaven please.

[Enter lord Judge, two Justices, Mayor of Saint Albans, lord Powesse and his lady, and old sir Richard Lee: the Judge and Justices take their places.]

JUDGE.
Now, Master Mayor, what gentleman is that,
You bring with you before us and the bench?

MAYOR.
The Lord Powis, if it like your honor,
And this his Lady, travelling toward Wales,
Who, for they lodged last night within my house,
And my Lord Bishop did lay search for such,

Were very willing to come on with me,
Lest for their sakes suspicion me might wrong.

JUDGE.
We cry your honor mercy, good my Lord,
Wilt please ye take your place. Madame, your ladyship
May here or where you will repose your self,
Until this business now in hand be past.

LADY POWIS.
I will withdraw into some other room,
So that your Lordship and the rest be pleased.

JUDGE.
With all our hearts: attend the Lady there.

LORD POWIS.
Wife, I have eyed yond prisoners all this while,
And my conceit doth tell me, tis our friend,
The noble Cobham, and his virtuous Lady.

LADY POWIS.
I think no less: are they suspected, trow ye,
For doing of this murder?

LORD POWIS.
What is means
I cannot tell, but we shall know anon.
Mean space as you pass by them, ask the question,
But do it secretly, you be not seen,
And make some sign that I may know your mind.

LADY POWIS.
My Lord Cobham? madam?

[As she passeth over the stage by them.]

COBHAM.
No Cobham now, nor madam, as you love us,
But John of Lancashire, and Ione his wife.

LADY POWIS.
Oh tell, what is it that our love can do,
To pleasure you? for we are bound to you.

COBHAM.
Nothing but this, that you conceal our names;
So, gentle lady, pass for being spied.

LADY POWIS.
My heart I leave, to bear part of your grief.

[Exit.]

JUDGE.
Call the prisoners to the bar. Sir Richard Lee,
What evidence can you bring against these people,
To prove them guilty of the murder done?

LEE.
This bloody towel and these naked knives,
Beside we found them sitting by the place,
Where the dead body lay, within a bush.

JUDGE.
What answer you why law should not proceed,
According to the evidence given in,
To tax ye with the penalty of death?

COBHAM.
That we are free from murder's very thoughts,
And know not how the gentleman was slain.

FIRST JUSTICE.
How came this linen cloth so bloody then?

LADY COBHAM.
My husband hot with travelling, my lord,
His nose gushed out a bleeding, that was it.

SECOND JUSTICE.

But wherefore were your sharp edged knives unsheathed?

LADY COBHAM.
To cut such simple victual as we had.

JUDGE.
Say we admit this answer to those articles,
What made ye in so private a dark nook,
So far remote from any common path,
As was the thick where the dead corpse was thrown?

COBHAM.
Journeying, my lord, from London from the term,
Down into Lancashire where we do dwell,
And what with age and travel being faint,
We gladly sought a place where we might rest,
Free from resort of other passengers,
And so we strayed into that secret corner.

JUDGE.
These are but ambages to drive of time,
And linger Justice from her purposed end.
But who are these?

[Enter the Constable, bringing in the Irishman, sir
John of Wrotham, and Doll.]

CONSTABLE.
Stay Judgement, and release those innocents,
For here is he, whose hand hath done the deed,
For which they stand indicted at the bar,—
This savage villain, this rude Irish slave.
His tongue already hath confessed the fact,
And here is witness to confirm as much.

SIR JOHN.
Yes, my good Lords, no sooner had he slain
His loving master for the wealth he had,

But I upon the instant met with him,
And what he purchased with the loss of blood:
With strokes I presently bereaved him of;
Some of the which is spent, the rest remaining
I willingly surrender to the hands
Of old sir Richard Lee, as being his.
Beside, my Lord Judge, I greet your honor
With letters from my Lord of Rochester.

[Delivers a letter.]

LEE.
Is this the wolf whose thirsty throat did drink
My dear son's blood? art thou the snake
He cherished, yet with envious piercing sting
Assailed him mortally? foul stigmatic,
Thou venom of the country where thou livedst,
And pestilence of this: were it not that law
Stands ready to revenge thy cruelty,
Traitor to God, thy master, and to me,
These hands should be thy executioner.

JUDGE.
Patience, sir Richard Lee, you shall have justice,
And he the guerdon of his base desert.
The fact is odious; therefore, take him hence,
And being hanged until the wretch be dead,
His body after shall be handed in chains
Near to the place where he did act the murder.

IRISHMAN.

Prethee, Lord shudge, let me have mine own clothes, my strouces there, and let me be hanged in a with after my cuntry—the Irish—fashion.

[Exit.]

JUDGE.

Go to; away with him. And now, sir John,
Although by you this murther came to light,
And therein you have well deserved, yet upright law,
So will not have you be excused and quit,
For you did rob the Irishman, by which
You stand attainted here of felony.
Beside, you have been lewd, and many years
Led a lascivious, unbeseeming life.

SIR JOHN.

Oh but, my Lord, he repents, sir John repents, and he will mend.

JUDGE.
In hope thereof, together with the favour,
My Lord of Rochester entreats for you,
We are content you shall be proved.

SIR JOHN.
I thank you good Lordship.

JUDGE.
These other falsely here accused, and brought
In peril wrongfully, we in like sort
Do set at liberty, paying their fees.

LORD POWIS.
That office, if it please ye, I will do,
For countries sake, because I know them well.
They are my neighbours, therefore of my cost
Their charges shall be paid.

LEE.
And for amends,
Touching the wrong unwittingly I have done,
There are a few crowns more for them to drink.

[Gives them a purse.]

JUDGE.
Your kindness merits praise, sir Richard Lee:
So let us hence.

[Exeunt all but Lord Powis and Oldcastle.]

LORD POWIS.
But Powis still must stay.
There yet remains a part of that true love
He owes his noble friend unsatisfied,
And unperformed, which first of all doth bind me
To gratulate your lordship's safe delivery,
And then entreat, that since unlooked for thus
We here are met, your honor would vouchsafe,
To ride with me to Wales, where to my power,
(Though not to quittance those great benefits,
I have received of you) yet both my house,
My purse, my servants, and what else I have,
Are all at your command. Deny me not;
I know the Bishop's hate pursues ye so,
As there's no safety in abiding here.

COBHAM.
Tis true, my Lord, and God forgive him for it.

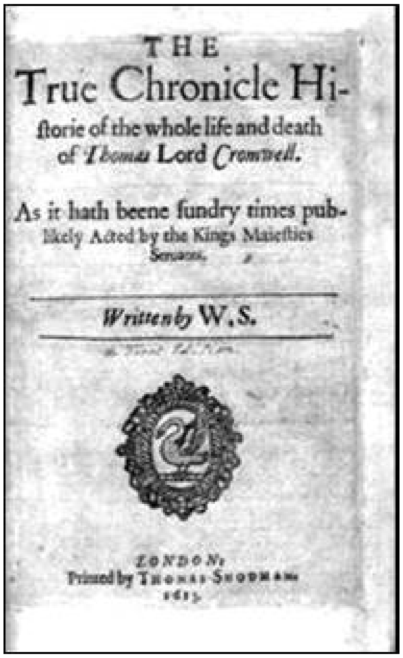
LORD POWIS.
Then, let us hence: you shall be straight provided
Of lusty geldings, and once entered Wales,
Well may the Bishop hunt, but, spite his face,
He never more shall have the game in chase.

[Exeunt.]

FINIS.

THOMAS LORD CROMWELL

This history play details the life of Thomas Cromwell, 1st Earl of Essex, the minister of King Henry VIII of England. The play was entered into the Stationers' Register on August 11, 1602, and was published in quarto later the same year by bookseller William Cotton. The title page specifies that the play was acted by The Lord Chamberlain's Men, and attributes the play to a "W. S." The "W. S." was first identified as Shakespeare when publisher Philip Chetwinde added the play to the second impression of his Shakespeare Third Folio in 1664. Modern scholars reject the attribution to Shakespeare, but have disagreed on almost every other aspect of the play, and it has been dated as early as 1582–3 and as late as 1599–1600. The text is viewed as primarily political commentary or religious propaganda.



THE
True Chronicle Hi-
ſtorie of the whole life and death
of *Thomas* Lord *Cromwell.*

As it hath beene ſundry times pub-
likely Acted by the Kings Maieſties
Seruants.

Written by W. S.

LONDON,
Printed by THOMAS SNODHAM.
1613.

Title page of the 1613 Quarto printing

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DRAMATIS PERSONAE

OLD CROMWELL, a Black-smith at Putney.
Young THOMAS CROMWELL his son.
HODGE, WILL, and TOM, old Cromwell's servants.
Earl of BEDFORD and his Host.
Dukes of NORFOLK and SUFFOLK.
Sir CHRISTOPHER HALES.
Cardinal WOLSEY.
Sir THOMAS MOOR.

GARDINER Bishop of Winchester.
Sir RALPH SADLER.
M. BOUSER a Merchant.
BANISTER, a broken Merchant and his wife.
BAGOT, a cruel covetous Broker.
FRISKIBALL a Florentine Merchant.
The Governours of the ENGLISH house at ANTWERP.
States and Officers of BONONIA.
Goodman SEELY and his wife JOAN.
CHORUS.
A POST.
MESSENGERS.
USHERS and SERVANTS.
LIEUTENANT OF THE TOWER.
TWO CITIZENS.
TWO MERCHANTS.

ACT I. SCENE I. Putney. The entrance of a smith's shop.

[Enter three Smiths, Hodge and two other, old Cromwell's men.]

HODGE.

Come, masters, I think it be past five a clock; is it not time we were at work: my old Master he'll be stirring anon.

FIRST SMITH.

I cannot tell whether my old master will be stirring or no: but I am sure I can hardly take my afternoon's nap, for my young Master Thomas, he keeps such a quile in his study, with the Sun, and the Moon, and the seven stars, that I do verily think he'll read out his wife.

HODGE.

He skill of the stars! there's goodman Car of Fulhum, he that carried us to the strong Ale, where goody Trundell had her maid got with child: O he knows the stars. He'll tickle you Charles Waine in nine degrees. That same man will tell you goody Trundell when her Ale shall miscarry, only by the stars.

SECOND SMITH.

Aye, that's a great virtue; indeed I think Thomas be no body in comparison to him.

FIRST SMITH.
Well, masters, come, shall we to our hammers?

HODGE.

Aye, content; first let's take our morning's draught, and then to work roundly.

SECOND SMITH.
Aye, agreed; go in, Hodge.

[Exit omnes.]

ACT I. SCENE II. The same.

[Enter young Cromwell.]

CROMWELL.
Good morrow, morn, I do salute thy brightness.
The night seems tedious to my troubled soul,
Whose black obscurity binds in my mind
A thousand sundry cogitations:
And now Aurora, with a lively dye,
Adds comfort to my spirit that mounts on high—
Too high indeed, my state being so mean.
My study, like a mineral of gold,
Makes my heart proud, wherein my hopes enrolled;
My books is all the wealth I do possess.

[Here within they must beat with their hammers.]

And unto them I have engaged my heart.
O learning, how divine thou seems to me:
Within whose arms is all felicity.
Peace with your hammers! leave your knocking there:
You do disturb my study and my rest.
Leave off, I say, you mad me with the noise.

[Enter Hodge and the two Men.]

HODGE.

Why, how now, Master Thomas, how now? Will you not let us work for you?

CROMWELL.
You fret my heart, with making of this noise.

HODGE.

How, fret your heart? Aye, but Thomas, you'll fret your father's purse if you let us from working.

SECOND SMITH.
Aye, this tis for him to make him a gentleman. Shall
we leave work for your musing? that's well, I faith;
But here comes my old master now.

[Enter Old Cromwell.]

OLD CROMWELL.
You idle knaves, what, are you loitering now?
No hammers walking and my work to do!
What, not a heat among your work to day?

HODGE.
Marry, sir, your son Thomas will not let us work at all.

OLD CROMWELL.
Why, knave, I say, have I thus carked & car'd

And all to keep thee like a gentleman;
And dost thou let my servants at their work,
That sweat for thee, knave, labour thus for thee?

CROMWELL.
Father, their hammers do offend my study.

OLD CROMWELL.
Out of my doors, knave, if thou likest it not.
I cry you mercy! is your ears so fine?
I tell thee, knave, these get when I do sleep;
I will not have my Anvil stand for thee.

CROMWELL.
There's money, father, I will pay your men.

[He throws money among them.]

OLD CROMWELL.
Have I thus brought thee up unto my cost,
In hope that one day thou wouldst relieve my age,
And art thou now so lavish of thy coin,
To scatter it among these idle knaves.

CROMWELL.
Father, be patient, and content your self.
The time will come I shall hold gold as trash:
And here I speak with a presaging soul,
To build a palace where now this cottage stands,
As fine as is King Henry's house at Sheene.

OLD CROMWELL.
You build a house! you knave, you'll be a beggar.
Now, afore God, all is but cast away,
That is bestowed upon this thriftless lad.
Well, had I bound him to some honest trade,
This had not been, but it was his mother's doing,
To send him to the University.
How? build a house where now this cottage stands,
As fair as that at Sheene!—*[Aside.]* He shall not hear me.

A good boy Tom! I con thee thank Tom!
Well said Tom! gramarcies Tom!—
Into your work, knaves; hence, you saucy boy.

[Exit all but young Cromwell.]

CROMWELL.
Why should my birth keep down my mounting spirit?
Are not all creatures subject unto time:
To time, who doth abuse the world,
And fills it full of hodge-podge bastardy?
There's legions now of beggars on the earth,
That their original did spring from Kings:
And many Monarchs now whose fathers were
The riffe-raffe of their age: for Time and Fortune
Wears out a noble train to beggary,
And from the hunghill minions do advance
To state and mark in this admiring world.
This is but course, which in the name of Fate
Is seen as often as it whirls about:
The River Thames, that by our door doth pass,
His first beginning is but small and shallow:
Yet keeping on his course, grows to a sea.
And likewise Wolsey, the wonder of our age,
His birth as mean as mine, a Butcher's son,
Now who within this land a greater man?
Then, Cromwell, cheer thee up, and tell thy soul,
That thou maist live to flourish and control.

[Enter Old Cromwell.]

OLD CROMWELL.
Tom Cromwell! what, Tom, I say!

CROMWELL.
Do you call, sir.

OLD CROMWELL.

Here is master Bowser come to know if you have dispatched his petition for the

Lords of the counsel or no.

CROMWELL.
Father, I have; please you to call him in.

OLD CROMWELL.
That's well said, Tom; a good lad, Tom.

[Enter Master Bowser.]

BOWSER.

Now, Master Cromwell, have you dispatched this petition?

CROMWELL.
I have, sir; here it is: please you peruse it.

BOWSER.
It shall not need; we'll read it as we go by water:
And, Master Cromwell, I have made a motion
May do you good, and if you like of it.
Our Secretary at Antwerp, sir, is dead,
And the Merchants there hath sent to me,
For to provide a man fit for the place:
Now I do know none fitter than your self,
If with your liking it stand, master Cromwell.

CROMWELL.
With all my heart, sir, and I much am bound,
In love and duty for your kindness shown.

OLD CROMWELL.

Body of me, Tom, make haste, least some body get between thee and home, Tom. I thank you, good master Bowser, I thank you for my boy; I thank you always, I thank you most heartily, sir. Ho, a cup of Beer there for master Bowser.

BOWSER.
It shall not need, sir. Master Cromwell, will you go?

CROMWELL.
I will attend you, sir.

OLD CROMWELL.

Farewell, Tom; God bless thee, Tom; God speed thee, good Tom.

[Exit omnes.]

ACT I. SCENE III. London. A street before Frescobald's house.

[Enter Bagot, a Broker, solus.]

BAGOT.
I hope this day is fatal unto some,
And by their loss must Bagot seek to gain.
This is the lodging of master Friskiball,
A liberal Merchant, and a Florentine,
To whom Banister owes a thousand pound,
A Merchant Banckrout, whose Father was my master.
What do I care for pity or regard?
He once was wealthy, but he now is fallen,
And this morning have I got him arrested,
At the suit of master Friskiball,
And by this means shall I be sure of coin,
For doing this same good to him unknown:
And in good time, see where the merchant comes.

[Enter Friskiball.]

BAGOT.
Good morrow to kind master Friskiball.

FRISKIBALL.
Good morrow to your self, good master Bagot,
And what's the news, you are so early stirring:
It is for gain, I make no doubt of that.

BAGOT.
It is for the love, sir, that I bear to you.
When did you see your debtor Banister?

FRISKIBALL.
I promise you, I have not seen the man
This two months day; his poverty is such,
As I do think he shames to see his friends.

BAGOT.
Why, then, assure your self to see him straight,
For at your suit I have arrested him,
And here they will be with him presently.

FRISKIBALL.
Arrest him at my suit? you were to blame.
I know the man's misfortune to be such,
As he's not able for to pay the debt,
And were it known to some he were undone.

BAGOT.
This is your pitiful heart to think it so,
But you are much deceived in Banister.
Why such as he will break for fashion sake,
And unto those they owe a thousand pound,
Pay scarce a hundred. O, sir, beware of him.
The man is lewdly given to Dice and Drabs,
Spends all he hath in harlots' companies;
It is no mercy for to pity him.
I speak the truth of him, for nothing else,
But for the kindness that I bear to you.

FRISKIBALL.
If it be so, he hath deceived me much,

And to deal strictly with such a one as he—
Better severe than too much lenity.
But here is Master Banister himself,
And with him, as I take, the officers.

[Enter Banister, his wife, and two officers.]

BANISTER.
O master Friskiball, you have undone me.
My state was well nigh overthrown before,
Now altogether down-cast by your means.

MISTRESS BANISTER.
O master Friskiball, pity my husband's case.
he is a man hath lived as well as any,
Till envious fortune and the ravenous sea
Did rob, disrobe, and spoil us of our own.

FRISKIBALL.
Mistress Banister, I envy not your husband,
Nor willingly would I have used him thus,
But that I hear he is so lewdly given,
Haunts wicked company, and hath enough
To pay his debts, yet will not be known thereof.

BANISTER.
This is that damned Broker, that same Bagot,
Whom I have often from my Frencher fed.
Ingrateful Villain for to use me thus!

BAGOT.
What I have said to him is naught but truth.

MISTRESS BANISTER.
What thou hast said springs from an envious heart.
A Cannibal that doth eat men alive!
But here upon my knee, believe me, sir,
And what I speak, so help me God, is true:
We scarce have meat to feed our little babes.
Most of our Plate is in that Broker's hand,

Which, had we money to defray our debt,
O think,. we would not bide that penury.
Be merciful, kind master Friskiball.
My husband, children, and my self will eat
But one meal a day, the other will
We keep and sell
As part to pay the debt we owe to you:
If ever tears did pierce a tender mind,
Be pitiful, let me some favour find.

BAGOT.
Be not you so mad, sir, to believe her tears.

FRISKIBALL.
Go to, I see thou art an envious man.
Good mistress Banister, kneel not to me;
I pray rise up, you shall have your desire.
Hold; officers, be gone, there's for your pains.—
You know you owe to me a thousand pound:
Here, take my hand; if ear God make you able,
And place you in your former state again,
Pay me: but if still your fortune frown,
Upon my faith I'll never ask you crown:
I never yet did wrong to men in thrall,
For God doth know what to my self may fall.

BANISTER.
This unexpected favour, undeserved,
Doth make my heart bleed inwardly with joy.
Ne'er may ought prosper with me is my own,
If I forget this kindness you have shown.

MISTRESS BANISTER.
My children in their prayers, both night and day,
For your good fortune and success shall pray.

FRISKIBALL.
I thank you both; I pray, do dine with me.
Within these three days, if God give me leave,

I will to Florence, to my native home.
Bagot, hold; there's a Portague to drink,
Although you ill deserved it by your merit.
Give not such cruel scope unto your heart;
Be sure the ill you do will be requited.
Remember what I say, Bagot; farewell.
Come, Master Banister; you shall with me.
My fare is but simple, but welcome heartily.

[Exit all but Bagot.]

BAGOT.
A plague go with you; would you had eat your last!
Is this the thanks I have for all my pains?
Confusion light upon you all for me.
Where he had wont to give a score of crowns,
Doth he now foist me with a Portague?
Well, I will be revenged upon this Banister.
I'll to his creditors, buy all the debts he owes,
As seeming that I do it for good will.
I am sure to have them at an easy rate,
And when tis done, in christendom he stays not,
But I'll make his heart to ache with sorrow:
And if that Banister become my debtor,
By heaven and earth I'll make his plague the greater.

[Exit Bagot.]

ACT II.

[Enter Chorus.]

CHORUS.
Now, gentlemen, imagine that young Cromwell is
In Antwerp ledger for the English Merchants:
And Banister, to shun this Bagot's hate,
Hearing that he hath got some of his debts,

Is fled to Antwerp, with his wife and children;
Which Bagot hearing is gone after them:
And thither sends his bills of debt before,
To be revenged on wretched Banister.
What doth fall out, with patience sit and see,
A just requital of false treachery.

[Exit.]

ACT II. SCENE I. Antwerp.

[Cromwell in his study with bags of money before him casting of account.]

CROMWELL.
Thus far my reckoning doth go straight & even,
But, Cromwell, this same ployding fits not thee:
Thy mind is altogether set on travel,
And not to live thus cloistered like a Nun.
It is not this same trash that i regard,
Experience is the jewel of my heart.

[Enter a Post.]

POST.
I pray, sir, are you ready to dispatch me?

CROMWELL.
Yes; here's those sums of money you must carry;
You go so far as Frankford, do you not?

POST.
I do, sir.

CROMWELL.
Well, prithee make all the hate thou canst,
For there be certain English gentlemen
Are bound for Venice, and my happily want,

And if that you should linger by the way:
But in hope that you'll make good speed,
There's two Angels to buy you spurs and wands.

POST.
I thank you, sir; this will add wings indeed.

[Exit Post.]

CROMWELL.
Gold is of power would make an Eagle speed.

[Enter Mistress Banister.]

What gentlewoman is this that grieves so much?
It seems she doth address her self to me.

MISTRESS BANISTER.
God save you, sir, sir; pray, is your name master Cromwell?

CROMWELL.
My name is Thomas Cromwell, gentlewoman.

MISTRESS BANISTER.
Know you not one Bagot, sir, that's come to Antwerp?

CROMWELL.
No, trust me, I never saw the man,
But here are bills of debt I have received,
Against one Banister, a Merchant fallen into decay.

MISTRESS BANISTER.
Into decay, indeed, long of that wretch.
I am the wife to woeful Banister:
And by that bloody villain am pursued
From London here to Antwerp.
My husband he is in the governour's hands,
And God no doubt will treble bless your gain.

CROMWELL.

Good mistress Banister, what I can, I will,
In any thing that lies within my power.

MISTRESS BANISTER.
O speak to Bagot, that same wicked wretch,
An Angel's voice may move a damned devil.

CROMWELL.
Why, is he come to Antwerp, as you here?

MISTRESS BANISTER.
I heard he landed some two hours since.

CROMWELL.
Well, mistress Banister, assure your self.
I'll speak to Bagot in your own behalf,
And win him to all the pity that I can.
Mean time, to comfort you in your distress,
Receive these Angels to relieve your need,
And be assured that what I can effect
To do you good, no way I will neglect.

MISTRESS BANISTER.
That mighty God, that knows each mortal's heart,
Keep you from trouble, sorrow, grief, and smart.

[Exit Mistress Banister.]

CROMWELL.
Thanks, courteous woman, for thy hearty prayer.
It grieves my soul to see her misery,
But we that live under the work of fate,
May hope the best, yet knows not to what state
Our stars and destinies hath us assigned.
Fickle is fortune and her face is blind.

[Exit.]

ACT II. SCENE II. A street in Antwerp.

[Enter Bagot solus.]

BAGOT.
So all goes well; it is as I would have it.
Banister he is with the Governour
And shortly shall have guives upon his heels.
It glads my heart to think upon the slave;
I hope to have his body rot in prison,
And after here his wife to hang her self,
And all his children die for want of food.
The Jewels that I have brought to Antwerp
Are recond to be worth five thousand pound,
Which scarcely stood me in three hundreth pound.
I bought them at an easy kind of rate;
I care not which way they came by them
That sold them me, it comes not near my heart:
And least thy should be stolen—as sure they are—
I thought it meet to sell them here in Antwerp,
And so have left them in the Governour's hand,
Who offers me within two hundreth pound
Of all my price. But now no more of that:
I must go see and if my bills be safe,
The which I sent to master Cromwell,
That if the wind should keep me on the sea,
He might arrest him here before I came:

[Enter Cromwell.]

And in good time, see where he is. God save you sir.

CROMWELL.
And you: pray pardon me, I know you not.

BAGOT.
It may be so, sir, but my name is Bagot,
The man that sent to you the bills of debt.

CROMWELL.
O, the man that pursues Banister.
Here are the bills of debt you sent to me:
As for the man, you know best where he is.
It is reported you have a flinty heart,
A mind that will not stoop to any pity,
An eye that knows not how to shed a tear,
A hand that's always open for reward;
But, master Bagot, would you be ruled by me,
You should turn all these to the contrary.
Your heart should still have feeling of remorse,
Your mind according to your state be liberal
To those that stand in need and in distress;
Your hand to help them that do stand in want,
Rather than with your poise to hold them down;
For every ill turn show your self more kind;
Thus should I do; pardon, I speak my mind.

BAGOT.
Aye, sir, you speak to hear what I would say,
But you must live, I know, as well as I:
I know this place to be extortion,
And tis not for a man to keep him,
But he must lie, cog with his dearest friend,
And as for pity, scorn it, hate all conscience.
But yet I do commend your wit in this,
To make a show of what I hope you are not;
But I commend you and tis well done:
This is the only way to bring your gain.

CROMWELL.
My gain! I had rather chain me to an oar,
And like a slave there toil out all my life,
Before I'd live so base a slave as thou:
I, like an hypocrite, to make a show
Of seeming virtue and a devil within!
No, Bagot, would thy conscience were as clear:
Poor Banister ne'er had been troubled here.

BAGOT.
Nay, good master Cromwell; be not angry, sir.
I know full well you are no such man;
But if your conscience were as white as Snow,
It will be thought that you are other wise.

CROMWELL.
Will it be thought that I am other wise?
Let them that think so know they are deceived.
Shall Cromwell live to have his faith misconstered?
Antwerp, for all the wealth within thy Town,
I will not stay here not two hours longer.
As good luck serves, my accounts are all made even;
Therefore I'll straight unto the treasurer.
Bagot, I know you'll to the governour;
Commend me to him, say I am bound to travail,
To see the fruitful parts of Italy,
And as you ever bore a Christian mind,
Let Banister some favour of you find.

BAGOT.
For your sake, sir, I'll help him all I can—
[Aside.] To starve his heart out ere he get a groat.
So, master Cromwell, do I take my leave,
For I must straight unto the governour.

[Exit Bagot.]

CROMWELL.
Farewell, sir; pray you remember what I said.—
No, Cromwell, no; thy heart was ne'er so base,
To live by falsehood or by brokery!
But 't falles out well, I little it repent;
Hereafter, time in travel shall be spent.

[Enter Hodge, his father's man.]

HODGE.

Your son Thomas, quoth you: I have been Thomast! I had thought it had been no such matter to a gone by water: for at Putney I'll go you to Parish-garden for two pence, sit as still as may be, without any wagging or jolting in my guts, in a little boat too: here we were scarce four mile in the great green water, but I—thinking to go to my afternoon's urgings, as twas my manner at home—but I felt a kind of rising in my guts. At last one a the Sailors spying of me, be a good cheer, says he, set down thy victuals, and up with it, thou hast nothing but an Eel in thy belly. Well toot went I, to my victuals went the Sailors, and thinking me to be a man of better experience than any in the ship, asked me what Wood the ship was made of: they all swore I told them as right as if I had been acquainted with the Carpenter that made it. At last we grew near land, and I grew villainous hungry, went to my bag: the devil a bit there was. The Sailors had tickled me; yet I cannot blame them: it was a part of kindness, for I in kindness told them what Wood the ship was made of, and they in kindness eat up my victuals, as indeed one good turn asketh another. Well, would I could find my master Thomas in this Dutch Town; he might put some English Beer into my belly.

CROMWELL.
What, Hodge, my father's man? by my hand, welcome!
How doth my father? what's the news at home?

HODGE.

Master Thomas, O God, master Thomas, your hand, glove and all. This is to give you to understanding that your father is in health, and Alice Downing here hath sent you a Nutmeg, & Bess Makewater a race of Ginger; my fellow Will & Tom hath between them sent you a dozen of points, & good man Tolle of the Goat a pair of mittens; my self came in person: and this is all the news.

CROMWELL.
Gramarcy, good Hodge, and thou art welcome to me,
But in as ill a time thou comest as may be:
For I am travelling into Italy.
What sayest thou, Hodge? wilt thou bear me company?

HODGE.

Will I bear thee company, Tom? What tell'st me of Italy? were it to the furthest part of Flanders, I would go with thee, Tom. I am thine in all weal and woe, thy own to command. What, Tom! I have passed the rigorous waves of Neptune's blasts; I tell you, Thomas, I have been in the danger of the floods; and when I have seen Boreas begin to play the Ruffin with us, then would I down of my knees and call upon Vulcan.

CROMWELL.
And why upon him?

HODGE.
Because, as this same fellow Neptune is God of the Seas, so
Vulcan is Lord over the Smiths, and therefore, I, being a
Smith, thought his Godhead would have some care yet of me.

CROMWELL.
A good conceit, but tell me, hast thou dined yet?

HODGE.
Thomas, to speak the truth, not a bit yet I.

CROMWELL.
Come, go with me; thou shalt have cheer good store.
And farewell, Antwerp, if I come no more.

HODGE.
I follow thee, sweet Tom, I follow thee.

[Exit omnes.]

ACT II. SCENE III. Another street in the same.

[Enter the Governour of the English house, Bagot, Banister, his wife, and two officers.]

GOVERNOUR.
Is Cromwell gone then, say you, master Bagot?
What dislike, I pray? what was the cause?

BAGOT.

To tell you true, a wild brain of his own;
Such youth as they cannot see when they are well:
He is all bent to travail, that's his reason,
And doth not love to eat his bread at home.

GOVERNOUR.
Well, good fortune with him, if the man be gone.
We hardly shall find such a one as he,
To fit our turns; his dealings were so honest.
But now, sir, for your Jewels that I have,
What do you say? will you take my prise?

BAGOT.
O, sir, you offer too much underfoot.

GOVERNOUR.
Tis but two hundred pound between us, man.
What's that in payment of five thousand pound?

BAGOT.
Two hundred pound! birlady, sir, tis great:
Before I got so much, it made me sweat.

GOVERNOUR.
Well, Master Bagot, I'll profer you fairly.
You see this Merchant, master Banister,
Is going now to prison at your suit.
His substance all is gone; what would you have?
Yet in regard I knew the man of wealth—
Never dishonest dealing, but such mishaps
Hath fallen on him, may light on me or you—
There is two hundred pound between us;
We will divide the same: I'll give you one,
On that condition you will set him free:
His state is nothing, that you see your self,
And where naught is, the King must lose his right.

BAGOT.
Sir, sir, you speak out of your love,

Tis foolish love, sir, sure, to pity him:
Therefore, content your self; this is my mind:
To do him good I will not bate a penny.

BANISTER.
This is my comfort: though thou doost no good,
A mighty ebb follows a mighty flood.

MISTRESS BANISTER.
O thou base wretch, whom we have fostered
Even as a Serpent for to poison us,
If God did ever right a woman's wrong,
To that same God I bend and bow my heart,
To let his heavy wrath fall on thy head,
By whom my hopes and joys are butchered.

BAGOT.
Alas, fond woman, I pray thee, pray thy worst;
The Fox fares better still when he is curst.

[Enter Master Bowser, a Merchant.]

GOVERNOUR.
Master Bowser! you're welcome, sir, from England.
What's the best news? how doth all our friends?

BOWSER.
They are all well and do commend them to you:
There's letters from your brother and your son:
So fair you well, sir; I must take my leave.
My haste and business doth require such.

GOVERNOUR.
Before you dine, sir? What, go you out of town?

BOWSER.
Aye, faith, unless I hear some news in town,
I must away; there is no remedy.

GOVERNOUR.

Master Bowser, what is your business? may I know it?

BOWSER.
You may, sir, and so shall all the City.
The King of late hath had his treasury robbed,
And of the choicest jewels that he had:
The value of them was some seven thousand pound.
The fellow that did steal these jewels, he is hanged,
And did confess that for three hundred pound
He sold them to one Bagot dwelling in London:
Now Bagot's fled, and, as we hear, to Antwerp,
And hither am I come to seek him out;
And they that first can tell me of his news
Shall have a hundred pound for their reward.

BANISTER.
How just is God to right the innocent.

GOVERNOUR.
Master Bowser, you come in happy time:
Here is the villain Bagot that you seek,
And all those jewels have I in my hands.
Officers, look to him, hold him fast.

BAGOT.
The devil ought me a shame, and now hath paid it.

BOWSER.
Is this that Bagot? fellows, bear him hence.
We will not now stand for his reply.
Lade him with Irons; we will have him tried
In England, where his villainies are known.

BAGOT.
Mischief, confusion, light upon you all!
O hang me, drown me, let me kill my self!
Let go my arms; let me run quick to hell.

BOWSER.
Away, bear him away; stop the slave's mouth.

[They carry him away.]

MISTRESS BANISTER.
Thy works are infinite, great God of heaven.

GOVERNOUR.
I heard this Bagot was a wealthy fellow.

BOWSER.
He was indeed, for when his goods were seized,
Of Jewels, coin, and Plate within his house,
Was found the value of five thousand pound;
His furniture fully worth half so much,
Which being all strained for, for the King,
He frankly gave it to the Antwerp merchants,
And they again, out of their bounteous mind,
Hath to a brother of their company,
A man decayed by fortune of the Seas,
Given Bagot's wealth, to set him up again,
And keep it for him: his name is Banister.

GOVERNOUR.
Master Bowser, with this happy news
You have revived two from the gates of death:
This is that Banister, and this his wife.

BOWSER.
Sir, I am glad my fortune is so good,
To bring such tidings as may comfort you.

BANISTER.
You have given life unto a man deemed dead,
For by these news, my life is newly bred.

MISTRESS BANISTER.
Thanks to my God, next to my Sovereign King,
And last to you that these good hopes doth bring.

GOVERNOUR.
The hundred pound I must receive as due

For finding Bagot, I freely give to you.

BOWSER.
And, Master Banister, if so you please,
I'll bear you company, when you cross the Seas.

BANISTER.
If it please you, sir; my company is but mean.
Stands with your liking, I'll wait on you.

GOVERNOUR.
I am glad that all things do accord so well:
Come, Master Bowser, let us in to dinner:
And, Mistress Banister, be merry, woman!
Come, after sorrow now let's cheer your spirit;
Knaves have their due, and you but what you merit.

[Exit omnes.]

ACT III. SCENE I. The principal bridge at Florence.

[Enter Cromwell and Hodge in their shirts, and without Hats.]

HODGE.

Call ye this seeing of fashions? Marry, would I had stayed at Putney still. O, Master Thomas, we are spoiled, we are gone.

CROMWELL.
Content thee, man, this is but fortune.

HODGE.

Fortune; a plague of this Fortune makes me go wetshod; the rogues would not leave me a shoe to my feet. For my hose, they scorned them with their heels; but for my Doublet and Hat, O Lord, they embraced me, and unlaced me, and took away my clothes, and so disgraced me.

CROMWELL.
Well, Hodge, what remedy? What shift shall we make now?

HODGE.

Nay, I know not. For begging I am naught, for stealing worse: by my troth, I must even fall to my old trade, to the Hammer and the Horse heels again: but now the worst is, I am not acquainted with the humor of the horses in this country, whether they are not coltish, given much to kicking, or no; for when I have one leg in my hand, if he should up and lay tother on my chops, I were gone: there lay I, there lay Hodge.

CROMWELL.
Hodge, I believe thou must work for us both.

HODGE.

O, Master Thomas, have not I told you of this? have not I many a time and often said, Tom, or Master Thomas, learn to make a Horseshoe, it will be your own another day: this was not regarded. Hark you, Thomas, what do you call the fellows that robbed us?

CROMWELL.
The Bandetti.

HODGE.
The Bandetti, do you call them? I know not what they are called
here, but I am sure we call them plain thieves in England. O
Thomas, that we were now at Putney, at the ale there.

CROMWELL.
Content thee, man; here set up these two bills,
And let us keep our standing on the bridge:
The fashion of this country is such,
If any stranger be oppressed with want,
To write the manner of his misery,
And such as are disposed to succour him,
Will do it. What, hast thou set them up?

HODGE.

Aye, they're up; God send some to read them, and not only to read them, but also to look on us; and not altogether to look on us,

[One stands at one end, and one at tother.]

But to relieve us. O cold, cold, cold.

[Enter Friskiball, the Merchant, and reads the bills.]

FRISKIBALL.
What's here? two Englishmen robbed by the Bandetti!
One of them seems to be a gentleman.
Tis pity that his fortune was so hard,
To fall into the desperate hands of thieves.
I'll question him of what estate he is.
God save you, sir; are you an Englishman?

CROMWELL.
I am, sir, a distress Englishman.

FRISKIBALL.
And what are you, my friend?

HODGE.

Who? I, sir? by my troth, I do not know my self what I am now, but, sir, I was a smith, sir, a poor Farrier of Putney. That's my master, sir, yonder. I was robbed for his sake, sir.

FRISKIBALL.
I see you have been met by the Bandetti,
And therefore need not ask how you came thus.
But, Friskiball, why doost thou question them
Of their estate and not relieve their need?
Sir, the coin I have about me is not much:
There's sixteen Ducats for to clothe your selves,
There's sixteen more to buy your diet with,
And there's sixteen to pay for your horse hire:
Tis all the wealth, you see, my purse possesses,
But if you please for to enquire me out,

You shall not want for ought that I can do.
My name is Friskiball, a Florence Merchant,
A man that always loved your nation.

CROMWELL.
This unexpected favour at your hands,
Which God doth know if ever I shall requite it—
Necessity makes me to take your bounty,
And for your gold can yield you naught but thanks.
Your charity hath helped me from despair;
Your name shall still be in my hearty prayer.

FRISKIBALL.
It is not worth such thanks. Come to my house;
Your want shall better be relieved then thus.

CROMWELL.
I pray, excuse me; this shall well suffice
To bear my charges to Bononia,
Whereas a noble Earl is much distressed:
An Englishman, Russell, the Earl of Bedford,
Is by the French King sold unto his death:
It may fall out, that I may do him good;
To save his life, I'll hazard my heart blood.
Therefore, kind sir, thanks for your liberal gift;
I must be gone to aide him; there's no shift.

FRISKIBALL.
I'll be no hinderer to so good an act.
Heaven prosper you in that you go about!
If Fortune bring you this way back again,
Pray let me see you: so I take my leave;
All good a man can wish, I do bequeath.

[Exit Friskiball.]

CROMWELL.
All good that God doth send light on your head;
There's few such men within our climate bred.

How say you now, Hodge? is not this good fortune?

HODGE.

How say you? I'll tell you what, master Thomas; if all men be of this Gentleman's mind, let's keep our standings upon this Bridge: we shall get more here with begging in one day, than I shall with making Horseshoes in a whole year.

CROMWELL.
No Hodge, we must begone unto Bononia,
There to relieve the noble Earl of Bedford:
Where, if I fail not in my policy,
I shall deceive their subtle treachery.

HODGE.
Nay, I'll follow you. God bless us from the thieving
Bandettoes again.

[Exit omnes.]

ACT III. SCENE II. A room in an hotel.

[Enter Bedford and his Host.]

BEDFORD.
Am I betrayed? was Bedford born to die
By such base slaves in such a place as this?
Have I escaped so many times in France,
So many battles have I over passed,
And made the French stir when they heard my name;
And am I now betrayed unto my death?
Some of their hearts' blood first shall pay for it.

HOST.
They do desire, my Lord, to speak with you.

BEDFORD.
The traitors do desire to have my blood,
But by my birth, my honour, and my name,
By all my hopes, my life shall cost them dear.
Open the door; I'll venture out upon them,
And if I must die, then I'll die with honour.

HOST.
Alas, my Lord, that is a desperate course;
They have begirt you round about the house;
Their meaning is to take you prisoner,
And so to send your body unto France.

BEDFORD.
First shall the Ocean be as dry as sand,
Before alive they send me unto France:
I'll have my body first bored like a Sieve,
And die as Hector, gainst the Mirmidons,
Ere France shall boast Bedford's their prisoner.
Treacherous France, that, gainst the law of arms,
Hath here betrayed thy enemy to death.
But be assured, my blood shall be revenged
Upon the best lives that remains in France.—

[Enter a Servant.]

Stand back, or else thou run'st upon thy death.

MESSENGER.
Pardon, my Lord; I come to tell your honour,
That they have hired a Neopolitan,
Who by his Oratory hath promised them,
Without the shedding of one drop of blood,
Into their hands safe to deliver you,
And therefore craves none but himself may enter
And a poor swain that attends on him.

[Exit servant.]

BEDFORD.

A Neopolitan? bid him come in.
Were he as cunning in his Eloquence
As Cicero, the famous man of Rome,
His words would be as chaff against the wind.
Sweet tongued Ulysses that made Ajax mad,
Were he and his tongue in this speaker's head,
Alive he wins me not; then, tis no conquest dead.

[Enter Cromwell like a Neopolitan, and Hodge with him.]

CROMWELL.
Sir, are you the master of the house?

HOST.
I am, sir.

CROMWELL.
By this same token you must leave this place,
And leave none but the Earl and I together,
And this my Peasant here to tend on us.

HOST.
With all my heart. God grant, you do some good.

[Exit Host. Cromwell shuts the door.]

BEDFORD.
Now, sir, what's you will with me?

CROMWELL.
Intends your honour not to yield your self?

BEDFORD.
No, good man goose, not while my sword doth last.
Is this your eloquence for to persuade me?

CROMWELL.
My Lord, my eloquence is for to save you.
I am not, as you judge, a Neopolitan,
But Cromwell, your servant, and an Englishman.

BEDFORD.
How? Cromwell? not my Farrier's son?

CROMWELL.
The same, sir, and am come to succour you.

HODGE.
Yes, faith, sir; and I am Hodge, your poor Smith.
Many a time and oft have I shoed your Dapper Gray.

BEDFORD.
And what avails it me that thou art here?

CROMWELL.
It may avail, if you'll be ruled by me.
My Lord, you know the men of Mantua
And these Bononians are at deadly strife,
And they, my Lord, both love and honour you.
Could you but get out of the Mantua port,
Then were you safe despite of all their force.

BEDFORD.
Tut, man, thou talkest of things impossible.
Dost thou not see that we are round beset?
How, then, is it possible we should escape?

CROMWELL.
By force we cannot, but by policy.
Put on the apparel here that Hodge doth wear,
And give him yours—the States, they know you not,
For, as I think, they never saw your face—
And at a watch-word must I call them in,
And will desire, that we safe may pass
To Mantua, where I'll say my business lies.
How doth your Honor like of this devise?

BEDFORD.
O wondrous good! But wilt thou venter, Hodge?

HODGE.

Will I?—
O noble Lord, I do accord,
In anything I can,
And do agree, to set thee free,
Do fortune what she can.

BEDFORD.
Come, then, let's change our apparel straight.

CROMWELL.
Go, Hodge; make haste, least they chance to call.

HODGE.
I warrant you I'll fit him with a suit.

[Exit Earl & Hodge.]

CROMWELL.
Heavens grant this policy doth take success,
And that the Earl may safely scape away.
And yet it grieves me for this simple wretch,
For fear they should offer him violence:
But of two evils, tis best to shun the greatest,
And better is it that he lives in thrall,
Than such a Noble Earl as he should fall.
Their stubborn hearts, it may be, will relent,
Since he is gone to whom their hate is bent.—
My Lord, have you dispatched?

[Enter Bedford like the Clown, and Hodge in his cloak and his Hat.]

BEDFORD.
How doost thou like us, Cromwell? is it well?

CROMWELL.
O, my Lord, excellent: Hodge, how doost feel thy self?

HODGE.

How do I feel my self? why, as a Noble man should do. O, how I feel honor come creeping on! My Nobility is wonderful melancholy: Is it not most Gentlemen like to be melancholy?

CROMWELL.

Yes, Hodge; now go sit down in his study, and take state upon thee.

HODGE.

I warrant you, my Lord; let me alone to take state upon me: but hark you, my Lord, do you feel nothing bite about you?

BEDFORD.
No, trust me, Hodge.

HODGE.

Aye, they know they want their pasture; it's a strange thing of this vermine, they dare not meddle with Nobility.

CROMWELL.
Go, take thy place, Hodge; I'll call them in.—

[Hodge sits in the study, and Cromwell calls in the States.]

All is done, enter and if you please.

[Enter the States and Officers, with Halberts.]

GOVERNOUR.
What, have you won him? will he yield himself?

CROMWELL.
I have, an't please you, and the quiet Earl
Doth yield himself to be disposed by you.

GOVERNOUR.
Give him the money that we promised him;
So let him go, whether it please himself.

CROMWELL.

My business, sir, lies unto Mantua,
Please you to give me safe conduct thether.

GOVERNOUR.
Go and conduct him to the Mantua Port,
And see him safe delivered presently.

[Exit Cromwell and Bedford.]

Go draw the curtains, let us see the Earl.—
O, he is writing; stand apart awhile.

HODGE.

Fellow William, I am not as I have been: I went from you a Smith, I write to you as a Lord. I am, at this present writing, among the Polonian Sasiges. I do commend my Lordship to Raphe & to Roger, to Bridget & to Doritie, & so to all the youth of Putney.

GOVERNOUR.
Sure, these are the names of English Noblemen,
Some of his special friends, to whom he writes:
But stay, he doth address himself to sing.

[Here he sings a song.]

My Lord, I am glad you are so frolic and so blithe:
Believe me, noble Lord, if you knew all,
You'd change your merry vein to sudden sorrow.

HODGE.
I change my merry vein? no, thou Bononian, no.
I am a Lord—and therefore let me go—
And do defy thee and thy Sasigis;
Therefore stand off, and come not near my honor.

GOVERNOUR.
My Lord, this jesting cannot serve your turn.

HODGE.

Doost think, thou black Bononian beast,
That I do flout, do gibe, or jest,
No, no, thou Beer-pot, know that I,
A noble Earl, a Lord pardie—

[A Trumpet sounds.]

GOVERNOUR.
What means this Trumpet's sound?

[Enter a Messenger.]

CITIZEN.
One come from the States of Mantua.

GOVERNOUR.
What would you with us? speak, thou man of Mantua.

MESSENGER.
Men of Bononia, this my message is:
To let you know the Noble Earl of Bedford
Is safe within the town of Mantua,
And wills you send the peasant that you have,
Who hath deceived your expectation;
Or else the States of Mantua have vowed
They will recall the truce that they have made,
And not a man shall stir from forth your town,
That shall return, unless you send him back.

GOVERNOUR.
O this misfortune, how it mads my heart!
The Neopolitan hath beguiled us all.
Hence with this fool! what shall we do with him,
The Earl being gone? a plague upon it all.

HODGE.
No, I'll assure you, I am no Earl, but a smith, sir;
One Hodge, a smith at Putney, sir;
One that hath gulled you, that hath bored you, sir.

GOVERNOUR.
Away with him! take hence the fool you came for.

HODGE.
Aye, sir, and I'll leave the greater fool with you.

MESSENGER.
Farewell, Bononians. Come, friend, a long with me.

HODGE.
My friend, afore; my Lordship will follow thee.

[Exit.]

GOVERNOUR.
Well, Mantua, since by thee the Earl is lost,
Within few days I hope to see thee crossed.

[Exit omnes.]

[Enter Chorus.]

CHORUS.
Thus far you see how Cromwell's fortune passed.
The Earl of Bedford, being safe in Mantua,
Desires Cromwell's company into France,
To make requital for his courtesy:
But Cromwell doth deny the Earl his suit,
And tells him that those parts he meant to see,
he had not yet set footing on the land,
And so directly takes his way to Spain:
The Earl to France, and so they both do part.
Now let your thoughts, as swift as is the wind,
Skip some few years, that Cromwell spent in travel,
And now imagine him to be in England,
Servant unto the master of the Rules,
Where in short time he there began to flourish.
An hour shall show you what few years did cherish.

[Exit.]

ACT III. SCENE III. London. A room in Sir Christopher Hales's house.

[The Music plays, they bring out the banquet. Enter Sir Christopher Hales, and Cromwell, and two servants.]

HALES.
Come, sirs, be careful of your master's credit,
And as our bounty now exceeds the figure
Of common entertainment: so do you
With looks as free as is your master's soul,
Give formal welcome to the thronged tables,
That shall receive the Cardinal's followers
And the attendants of the Lord Chancellor.
But all my care, Cromwell, depends on thee.
Thou art a man differing from vulgar form,
And by how much thy spirit is ranked bove these
In rules of Art, by so much it shines brighter
By travel whose observance pleads his merit,
In a most learned, yet unaffecting spirit,
Good Cromwell, cast an eye of fair regard
Bout all my house, and what this ruder flesh,
Through ignorance, or wine, do miscreate,
Salve thou with courtesy: if welcome want,
Full bowls and ample banquets will seem scant.

CROMWELL.
Sir, what soever lies in me,
Assure you, I will shew my utmost duty.

[Exit Cromwell.]

HALES.
About it, then; the Lords will straight be here.—
Cromwell, thou hast those parts would rather suit
The service of the state, than of my house.

I look upon thee with a loving eye,
That one day will prefer thy destiny.

[Enter Messenger.]

MESSENGER.
Sir, the Lords be at hand.

HALES.
They are welcome; bid Cromwell straight attend us,
And look you all things be in perfect readiness.

[The Music plays. Enter Cardinal Wolsey, Sir Thomas More and Gardiner.]

WOLSEY.
O, sir Christopher,
You are too liberal. What, a banket to?

HALES.
My Lords, if words could show the ample welcome,
That my free heart affords you, I could then
Become a prater, but I now must deal
Like a feast Politician with your Lordships;
Defer your welcome till the banket end,
That it may then salve our defect of fair:
Yet Welcome now and all that tend on you.

WOLSEY.
Thanks to the kind master of the Rules.

Come and sit down; sit down, sir Thomas More.
Tis strange, how that we and the Spaniard differ.
Their dinner is our banquet after dinner,
And they are men of active disposition.
This I gather: that by their sparing meat
Their body is more fitter for the wars,
And if that famine chance to pinch their maws,
Being used to fast it breeds less pain.

HALES.
Fill me some Wine: I'll answer Cardinal Wolsey.
My Lord, we English are of more freer souls
Than hungerstarved and ill complexioned spaniards.
They that are rich in Spain spare belly food,
To deck their backs with an Italian hood,
And Silks of Civil: And the poorest Snake,
That feeds on Lemons, Pilchers, and near heated
His pallet with sweet flesh, will bear a case
More fat and gallant than his starved face.
Pride, the Inquisition, and this belly evil,
Are, in my judgement, Spain's three headed devil.

MORE.
Indeed it is a plague unto their nation,
Who stagger after in blind imitation.

HALES.
My Lords, with welcome, I present your Lordships
A solemn health.

MORE.
I love health well, but when as healths do bring
Pain to the head and bodies sufeiting,
Then cease I healths.—
Nay, spill not, friend, for though the drops be small,
Yet have they force, to force men to the wall.

WOLSEY.
Sir Christopher, is that your man?

HALES.
And like your grace; he is a Scholar and
A Lingest, one that hath travelled many parts
Of Christendom, my Lord.

WOLSEY.
My friend, come nearer; have you been a traveller?

CROMWELL.

My Lord, I have added to my knowledge the low Countries,
France, Spain, Germany, and Italy:
And though small gain of profit I did find,
Yet did it please my eye, content my mind.

WOLSEY.
What do you think of the several states
And princes' Courts as you have travelled?

CROMWELL.
My Lord, no Court with England may compare,
Neither for state nor civil government:
Lust dwells in France, in Italy, and Spain,
From the poor peasant to the Prince's train,
In Germany and Holland riot serves,
And he that most can drink, most he deserves:
England I praise not, for I here was borne,
But that she laugheth the others unto scorn.

WOLSEY.
My Lord, there dwells within that spirit
More than can be discerned by outward eye.
Sir Christopher, will you part with your man?

HALES.
I have sought to profer him to your Lordship,
And now I see he hath prefered himself.

WOLSEY.
What is thy name?

CROMWELL.
Cromwell, my Lord.

WOLSEY.

Then, Cromwell, here we make thee Solicitor of our causes, and nearest next our self. Gardiner give you kind welcome to the man.

[Gardiner embraces him.]

MORE.
My Lord, you are a royal Winer,
Have got a man besides your bounteous dinner.
Well, Knight, pray we come no more:
If we come often, thou maist shut thy door.

WOLSEY.
Sir Christopher, hadst thou given me half thy lands,
Thou couldest not have pleased me so much as with
This man of thine. My infant thoughts do spell:
Shortly his fortune shall be lifted higher;
True industry doth kindle honour's fire.
And so, kind master of the Rules, farewell.

HALES.
Cromwell, farewell.

CROMWELL.
Cromwell takes his leave of you,
That near will leave to love and honour you.

[Exit omnes. The Music plays, as they go in.]

ACT IV.

[Enter Chorus.]

CHORUS.
Now Cromwell's highest fortunes doth begin.
Wolsey, that loved him as he did his life,
Committed all his treasure to his hands.
Wolsey is dead, and Gardiner, his man,
Is now created Bishop of Winchester:
Pardon if we omit all Wolsey's life,
Because our play depends on Cromwell's death.
Now sit and see his highest state of all;
His haight of rising and his sudden fall.

Pardon the errors is all ready past,
And live in hope the best doth come at last:
My hope upon your favour doth depend,
And look to have your liking ere the end.

[Exit.]

ACT IV. SCENE I. The same. A public walk.

[Enter Gardiner Bishop of Winchester, The Dukes of Norfolk, and of Suffolk, Sir Thomas More, Sir Christopher Hales, and Cromwell.]

NORFOLK.
Master Cromwell, since Cardinal Wolsey's death,
His majesty is given to understand
There's certain bills and writings in your hand,
That much concerns the state of England.
My Lord of Winchester, is it not so?

GARDINER.
My Lord of Norfolk, we two wear whilom fellows;
And, master Cromwell, though our master's love
Did bind us, while his love was to the King,
It is not boot now to deny these things,
Which may be prejudicial to the state:
And though that God hath raised my fortune higher
Than any way I looked for or deserved,
Yet my life no longer with me dwell,
Than I prove true unto my Sovereign:
What say you, master Cromwell? have you those
   writings?
Aye, or no?

CROMWELL.
Here are the writings, and upon my knees,
I give them up unto the worthy Dukes
Of Suffolk and of Norfolk: he was my Master,

And each virtuous part,
That lived in him, I tendered with my heart;
But what his head complotted gainst the state
My country's love commands me that to hate.
His sudden death I grieve for, not his fall,
Because he sought to work my country's thrall.

SUFFOLK.
Cromwell, the King shall hear of this thy duty,
Whom I assure my self will well reward thee;
My Lord let's go unto his Majesty,
And show these writings which he longs to see.

[Exit Norfolk and Suffolk.]

[Enter Bedford hastily.]

BEDFORD.
How now, who's this?
Cromwell, by my soul! welcome to England:
Thou once didst save my life, didst not Cromwell?

CROMWELL.
If I did so, 'tis greater glory for me,
That you remember it, than of my self
Vainly to report it.

BEDFORD.
Well, Cromwell, now is the time,
I shall commend thee to my Sovereign:
Cheer up thy self, for I will raise thy state.
A Russell yet was never found ingrate.

[Exit.]

HALES.
O how uncertain is the wheel of state.
Who lately greater than the Cardinal,
For fear, and love? and now who lower lies?
Gay honours are but Fortune's flatteries,

And whom this day pride and promotion swells,
To morrow envy and ambition quells.

MORE.
Who sees the Cob-web intangle the poor Fly,
May boldly say the wretches death is nigh.

GARDINER.
I knew his state and proud ambition
Was too too violent to last over-long.

HALES.
Who soars too near the sun with golden wings,
Melts them, to ruin his own fortune brings.

[Enter the Duke of Suffolk.]

SUFFOLK.
Cromwell, kneel down in King Henry's name.—
Arise sir Thomas Cromwell; thus begins thy fame.

[Enter the Duke of Norfolk.]

NORFOLK.
Cromwell, the majesty of England,
For the good liking he conceives of thee,
Makes thee master of the jewel house,
Chief Secretary to himself, and with all,
Creates thee one of his highness' privy Counsel.

[Enter the Earl of Bedford.]

BEDFORD.
Where is sir Thomas Cromwell? is he knighted?

SUFFOLK.
He is, my Lord.

BEDFORD.
Then to add honour to his name,

The King creates him Lord keeper of
His privy Seal, and master of the Rules,
Which you sir Christopher do now enjoy;
The King determines higher place for you.

CROMWELL.
My Lords,
These honors are too high for my desert.

MORE.
O content thee, man; who would not choose it?
Yet thou art wise in seeming to refuse it.

GARDINER.
Here's honors, titles, and promotions:
I fear this climbing will have a sudden fall.

NORFOLK.
Then come, my Lords; let's altogether bring
This new made Counselor to England's King.

[Exit all but Gardiner.]

GARDINER.
But Gardiner means his glory shall be dimmed.
Shall Cromwell live a greater man than I?
My envy with his honour now is bred;
I hope to shorten Cromwell by the head.

[Exit.]

ACT IV. SCENE II. London. A street before Cromwell's house.

[Enter Friskiball very poor.]

FRISKIBALL.

O Friskiball, what shall become of thee?
Where shalt thou go, or which way shalt thou turn
Fortune, that turns her too unconstant wheel,
Hath turned thy wealth and riches in the Sea.
All parts abroad where ever I have been
Grows weary of me, and denies me succour;
My debtors, they that should relieve my want,
Forswears my money, says they owe me none:
They know my state too mean to bear out law,
And here in London, where I oft have been,
And have done good to many a wretched man,
I am now most wretched here, despised my self.
In vain it is, more of their hearts to try;
Be patient, therefore, lay thee down and die.

[He lies down.]

[Enter good man Seely, and his wife Joan.]

SEELY.

Come, Joan, come; let's see what he'll do for us now. Iwis we have done for him, when many a time and often he might have gone a hungry to bed.

WIFE.

Alas, man, now he is made a Lord, he'll never look upon us; he'll fulfill the old Proverb: Set beggars a horse-back, and they'll ride.—A, welliday for my Cow! such as he hath made us come behind hand: we had never pawned our Cow else to pay our rent.

SEELY.

Well, Joan, he'll come this way: and by God's dickers, I'll tell him roundly of it, and if he were ten Lords: a shall know that I had not my Cheese and my Bacon for nothing.

WIFE.

Do you remember, husband, how he would mooch up my Cheese cakes? he hath forgot this now, but we'll remember him.

SEELY.
Aye, we shall have now three flaps with a Fox tail; but,
I faith, I'll gibber a joint, but I'll tell him his own. Stay,
who comes here? O stand up; here he comes; stand up.

[Enter Hodge very fine with a Tipstaff; Cromwell, the Mace carried before him; Norfolk, and Suffolk, and attendants.]

HODGE.
Come, away with these beggars here; rise up, sirra.
Come, out the good people: run afore there, ho!

[Friskiball riseth, and stands a far off.]

SEELY.

Aye, we are kicked away, now we come for our own; the time hath been he would a looked more friendly upon us. And you, Hodge, we know you well enough, though you are so fine.

CROMWELL.
Come hither, sirrah.—Stay, what men are these?
My honest Host of Hounslow and his wife!
I owe thee money, father, do I not?

SEELY.

Aye, by the body of me, dooest thou. Would thou wouldest pay me: good four pound it is, I have a the post at home.

CROMWELL.
I know tis true. Sirra, give him ten Angels:
And look your wife and you do stay to dinner:
And while you live, I freely give to you
Four pound a year, for the four pound I ought you.

SEELY.

Art not changed, art old Tom still! Now God bless the good Lord Tom. Home, Joan, home; I'll dine with my Lord Tom to day, and thou shalt come next week. Fetch my Cow; home, Joan, home.

WIFE.

Now God bless thee, my good Lord Tom; I'll fetch my cow presently.

[Exit Wife.]

[Enter Gardiner.]

CROMWELL.
Sirra, go to yon stranger; tell him I
Desire him stay at dinner. I must speak
With him.

GARDINER.
My Lord of Norfolk, see you this same bubble,
That same puff? but mark the end, my Lord,
Mark the end.

NORFOLK.
I promise you, I like not something he hath done,
But let that pass; the King doth love him well.

CROMWELL.
God morrow to my Lord of Winchester.
I know you bear me hard about the Abbey lands.

GARDINER.
Have I not reason, when religion is wronged?
You had no colour for what you have done.

CROMWELL.
Yes; the abolishing of Antichrist,
And of this Popish order from our Realm.
I am no enemy to religion,
But what is done, it is for England's good.
What did they serve for but to feed a sort

Of lazy Abbots and of full fed Friars?
They neither plow, nor sow, and yet they reap
The fat of all the Land, and suck the poor:
Look, what was theirs, is in King Henry's hands;
His wealth before lay in the Abbey lands.

GARDINER.
Indeed these things you have alleged, my Lord,
When God doth know the infant yet unborn
Will curse the time the Abbeys were pulled down.
I pray, now where is hospitality?
Where now may poor distressed people go,
For to relieve their need, or rest their bones,
When weary travel doth oppress their limbs?
And where religious men should take them in,
Shall now be kept back with a Mastiff do,
And thousand thousand—

NORFOLK.
O, my Lord, no more: things past redress
Tis bootless to complain.

CROMWELL.
What, shall we to the Convocation house?

NORFOLK.
We'll follow you, my Lord; pray, lead the way.

[Enter Old Cromwell like a Farmer.]

OLD CROMWELL.
How? one Cromwell made Lord Keeper since I
  left Putney
And dwelt in Yorkshire. I never heard better news:
I'll see that Cromwell, or it shall go hard.

CROMWELL.
My aged father! state set aside,
Father, on my knee I crave your blessing:
One of my servants go and have him in;

At better leisure will we talk with him.

OLD CROMWELL.
Now if I die, how happy were the day!
To see this comfort rains forth showers of joy.

[Exit Old Cromwell.]

NORFOLK.
This duty in him shows a kind of grace.

CROMWELL.
Go on before, for time draws on apace.

[Exit all buy Friskiball.]

FRISKIBALL.
I wonder what this Lord would have with me.
His man so strictly gave me charge to stay:
I never did offend him to my knowledge.
Well, good or bad, I mean to bide it all;
Worse than I am now never can befall.

[Enter Banister and his wife.]

BANISTER.
Come, wife, I take it be almost dinner time,
For master Newton, and master Crosby sent
To me last night, they would come dine with me,
And take their bond in: I pray thee, hie thee home,
And see that all things be in readiness.

MISTRESS BANISTER.
They shall be welcome, husband; I'll go before.—
But is not that man master Friskiball?

[She runs and embraces him.]

BANISTER.
O heavens, it is kind master Friskiball!

Say sir, what hap hath brought you to this pass?

FRISKIBALL.
The same that brought you to your misery.

BANISTER.
Why would you not acquaint me with your state?
Is Banister your poor friend quite forgot:
Whose goods, whose love, whose life and all is yours?

FRISKIBALL.
I thought your usage would be as the rest,
That had more kindness at my hands than you,
Yet looked askance, when as they saw me poor.

MISTRESS BANISTER.
If Banister should bear so base a heart,
I never would look my husband in the face,
But hate him as I would a Cockatrise.

BANISTER.
And well thou mightest, should Banister deal so.
Since that I saw you, sir, my state is mended:
And for the thousand pound I owe to you,
I have it ready for you, sir, at home;
And though I grieve your fortune is so bad,
Yet that my hap's to help you make me glad.
And now, sir, will it please you walk with me?

FRISKIBALL.
Not yet I cannot, for the Lord Chancellor
Hath here commanded me to wait on him,
For what I know not: pray God tis for my good.

BANISTER.
never make doubt of that; I'll warrant you,
He is as kind a noble gentleman
As ever did possess the place he hath.

MISTRESS BANISTER.

Sir, my brother is his steward; if you please,
We'll go along and bear you company:
I know we shall not want for welcome there.

FRISKIBALL.
With all my heart: but what's become of Bagot?

BANISTER.
He is hanged, for buying jewels of the King's.

FRISKIBALL.
A just reward for one so impious.
The time draws on, sir; will you go along?

BANISTER.
I'll follow you, kind master Friskiball.

[Exit Omnes.]

ACT IV. SCENE III. The same. Another street.

[Enter two Merchants.]

FIRST MERCHANT.
Now, master Crosby, I see you have a care,
To keep your word, in payment of your money.

SECOND MERCHANT.
By my faith, I have reason upon a bond;
Three thousand pound is too much to forfeit.
Yet I doubt not Master Banister.

FIRST MERCHANT.
By my faith, your sum is more than mine,
And yet i am not much behind you too,
Considering that to day I paid at court.

SECOND MERCHANT.
Mass, and well remembered,
What's the reason the Lord Cromwell's men
Wear such long skirts upon their coats.
They reach almost down to their very ham.

FIRST MERCHANT.
I will resolve you, sir; and thus it is:
The Bishop of Winchester, that loves not Cromwell,
As great men are envied, as well as less—
A while ago there was a jar between them,
And it was brought to my Lord Cromwell's ear,
That Bishop Gardiner would sit on his skirt;
Upon which word, he made his men long Blue coats,
And in the Court wore one of them himself:
And meeting with the Bishop, quoth he, 'My Lord,
Here's skirt enough now for your Grace to sit on;'
Which vexed the Bishop to the very heart.
This is the reason why they wear long coats.

SECOND MERCHANT.
Tis always seen, and mark it for a rule,
That one great man will envy still another:
But tis a thing that nothing concerns me.
What, shall we now to Master Banister's?

FIRST MERCHANT.
Aye, come, we'll pay him royally for our dinner.

[Exit.]

ACT IV. SCENE IV. The same. A room in Cromwell's house.

[Enter the Usher and the Shewer, the meat goes over the stage.]

USHER.
Uncover there, Gentlemen.

[Enter Cromwell, Bedford, Suffolk, Old Cromwell,
Friskiball, goodman Seely, and attendants.]

CROMWELL.
My noble Lords of Suffolk and of Bedford,
Your honors' welcome to poor Cromwell's house.
Where is my father? nay, be covered, Father.
Although that duty to these noble men
Doth challenge it, yet I'll make bold with them.
Your head doth bear the calendar of care.
What, Cromwell covered and his Father bare!
It must not be. Now, sir, to you. Is not
Your name Friskiball and a Florentine?

FRISKIBALL.
My name was Friskiball, till cruel fate
Did rob me of my name and of my state.

CROMWELL.
What fortune brought you to this country now?

FRISKIBALL.
All other parts hath left me succourless,
Save only this. Because of debts I have,
I hope to gain for to relieve my want.

CROMWELL.
Did you not once, upon your Florence bridge,
Help two distressed men, robbed by the Bandetti?—
His name was Cromwell.

FRISKIBALL.
I never made my brain a calendar
Of any good I did;
I always loved this nation with my heart.

CROMWELL.

I am that Cromwell that you there relieved.
Sixteen Ducats you gave me for to clothe me,
Sixteen to bear my charges by the way,
And sixteen more I had for my horse hire:
There be those several sums justly returned,
Yet with injustice, serving at my need,
And to repay them without interest.
Therefore receive of me these four several bags;
In each of them there is four hundred mark;
And bring me the names of all your debitors,
And if they will not see you paid, I will:
O God forbid, that I should see him fall,
That helped me in my greatest need of all.
Here stands my Father that first gave me life,
Alas, what duty is too much for him?
This man in time of need did save my life,
And therefore I cannot do too much for him.
By this old man I often times was fed,
Else might I have gone supperless to bed.
Such kindness have I had of these three men,
That Cromwell no way can repay again.
Now in to dinner, for we stay too long,
And to good stomachs is no greater wrong.

[Exit omnes.]

ACT IV. SCENE V. The same. A room in the Bishop of Winchester's house.

[Enter Gardiner in his study, and his man.]

GARDINER.
Sirra, where be those men I caused to stay?

SERVANT.
They do attend your pleasure, sir, within.

GARDINER.
Bid them come hither, and stay you without:—
For by those men, the Fox of this same land,
That makes a Goose of better than himself,
We'll worry him unto his latest home,
Or Gardiner will fail in his intent.
As for the Dukes of Suffolk and Norfolk,
Whom I have sent for to come speak with me,
Howsoever, outwardly they shadow it,
Yet in their hearts I know they love him not:
As for the Earl of Bedford, he is but one,
And dares not gainsay what we do set down.

[Enter the two witnesses.]

Now, my friends, you know I saved your lives,
When by the law you had deserved death,
And then you promised me upon your oaths,
To venture both your lives to do me good.

BOTH WITNESSES.
We swore no more than that we will perform.

GARDINER.
I take your words; and that which you must do
Is service for your God, and for your King:
To root a rebel from this flourishing land,
One that's an enemy unto the Church:
And therefore must you take your solemn oaths,
That you heard Cromwell, the Lord Chancellor,
Did wish a dagger at King Henry's heart.
Fear not to swear it, for I heard him speak it;
Therefore we'll shield you from ensuing harms.

SECOND WITNESS.
If you will warrant us the deed is good,
We'll undertake it.

GARDINER.

Kneel down, and I will here absolve you both.
This Crucifix I lay upon your head,
And sprinkle holy-water on your brows.
The deed is meritorious that you do,
And by it shall you purchase grace from heaven.

FIRST WITNESS.
Now, sir, we'll undertake it, by our souls.

SECOND WITNESS.
For Cromwell never loved none of our sort.

GARDINER.
I know he doth not, and for both of you,
I will prefer you to some place of worth:
Now get you in, until I call for you,
For presently the Dukes means to be here.

[Exit witnesses.]

Cromwell, sit fast, thy time's not long to reign.
The Abbeys that were pulled down by thy means
Is now a mean for me to pull thee down:
Thy pride also thy own head lights upon,
For thou art he hath changed religion:—
But now no more, for here the Dukes are come.

[Enter Suffolk, Norfolk, and the Earl of Bedford.]

SUFFOLK.
Goodden to my Lord Bishop.

NORFOLK.
How fares my Lord? what, are you all alone?

GARDINER.
No, not alone, my Lords; my mind is troubled;
I know your honours muse wherefore I sent,
And in such haste. What, came you from the King?

NORFOLK.
We did, and left none but Lord Cromwell with him.

GARDINER.
O, what a dangerous time is this we live in!
There's Thomas Wolsey, he's already gone,
And Thomas More, he followed after him:
Another Thomas yet there doth remain,
That is far worse than either of those twain,
And if with speed, my Lords, we not pursue it,
I fear the King and all the land will rue it.

BEDFORD.
Another Thomas! pray God it be not Cromwell.

GARDINER.
My Lord of Bedford, it is that traitor Cromwell.

BEDFORD.
Is Cromwell false? my heart will never think it.

SUFFOLK.
My Lord of Winchester, what likelihood,
Or proof have you of this his treachery?

GARDINER.
My Lord, too much.—Call in the men within.

[Enter witnesses.]

These men, my Lord, upon their oaths affirm,
That they did hear Lord Cromwell in his garden,
Wished a dagger sticking at the heart
Of our King Henry. What is this but treason?

BEDFORD.
If it be so, my heart doth bleed with sorrow.

SUFFOLK.
How say you friends? what, did you hear these words?

FIRST WITNESS.
We did, and like your grace.

NORFOLK.
In what place was Lord Cromwell when he spake them?

SECOND WITNESS.
In his Garden, where we did attend a suit,
Which we had waited for two year and more.

SUFFOLK.
How long ist since you heard him speak these words?

SECOND WITNESS.
Some half year since.

BEDFORD.
How chance that you concealed it all this time?

FIRST WITNESS.
His greatness made us fear, that was the cause.

GARDINER.
Aye, aye, his greatness; that's the cause indeed;
And to make his treason here more manifest,
He calls his servants to him round about,
Tells them of Wolsey's life, and of his fall,
Says that himself hath many enemies,
And gives to some of them a Park or Manor,
To others Leases, Lands to other some:
What need he do thus in his prime of life,
And if he were not fearful of his death?

SUFFOLK.
My Lord, these likelihoods are very great.

BEDFORD.
Pardon me, Lords, for I must needs depart;
Their proofs are great, but greater is my heart.

[Exit Bedford.]

NORFOLK.
My friends, take heed of that which you have said.
Your souls must answer what your tongues reports:
Therefore, take heed, be wary what you do.

SECOND WITNESS.
My Lord, we speak no more but truth.

NORFOLK.
Let them
Depart.—My Lord of Winchester, let these men
Be close kept until the day of trial.

GARDINER.
They shall, my Lord: ho, take in these two men.

[Exit witnesses.]

My Lords, if Cromwell have a public trial,
That which we do is void by his denial;
You know the king will credit none but him.

NORFOLK.
Tis true, he rules the King even as he pleases.

SUFFOLK.
How shall we do for to attach him, then?

GARDINER.
Marry, my Lords, thus: by an Act he made himself,
With an intent to entrap some of our lives,
And this it is: If any Counsellor
Be convicted of high treason, he shall
Be executed without a public trial.
This Act, my Lords, he caused the King to make.

SUFFOLK.
A did indeed, and I remember it,

And now it is like to fall upon himself.

NORFOLK.
Let us not slack it, tis for England's good.
We must be wary, else he'll go beyond us.

GARDINER.
Well hath your Grace said, my Lord of Norfolk;
Therefore let us presently to Lambeth.
Thether comes Cromwell from the Court to night.
Let us arrest him, send him to the Tower,
And in the morning, cut off the traitor's head.

NORFOLK.
Come, then, about it, let us guard the town.
This is the day that Cromwell must go down.

GARDINER.
Along, my Lords.—Well, Cromwell is half dead;
He shaked my heart, but I will shave his head.

[Exeunt.]

ACT V. SCENE I. A street in London.

[Enter Bedford solus.]

BEDFORD.
My soul is like a water troubled,
And Gardiner is the man that makes it so.
O, Cromwell, I do fear they end is near:
Yet I'll prevent their malice if I can.
And in good time, see where the man doth come,
Who little knows how nears his day of doom.

[Enter Cromwell with his train. Bedford makes as though he would speak to him: he goes on.]

CROMWELL.
You're well encountered, my good Lord of Bedford.
I see your honour is addressed to talk;
Pray pardon me, I am sent for to the king,
And do not know the business yet my self.
So fare you well, for I must needs be gone.

[Exit all the train.]

BEDFORD.
You must; well, what remedy?
I fear too soon you must be gone indeed.
The king hath business, but little doest thou know,
Whose busy for thy life: thou thinks not so.

[Enter Cromwell and the train again.]

CROMWELL.
The second time well met, my Lord of Bedford;
I am very sorry that my haste is such.
Lord Marquess Dorset being sick to death,
I must receive of him the privy seal.
At Lambeth, soon, my Lord, we'll talk our fill.

[Exit the train.]

BEDFORD.
How smooth and easy is the way to death!

[Enter a servant.]

MESSENGER.
My Lord, the dukes of Norfolk and of Suffolk,
Accompanied with the Bishop of Winchester,
Entreats you to come presently to Lambeth,
On earnest matters that concerns the state.

BEDFORD.
To Lambeth! so: go fetch me pen and ink.
I and Lord Cromwell there shall talk enough;

Aye, and our last, I fear, and if he come.

[He writes a letter.]

Here, take this letter, and bear it to Lord Cromwell.
Bid him read it; say it concerns him near:
Away, begone, make all the haste you can.
To Lambeth do I go a woeful man.

[Exit.]

ACT V. SCENE II. A street near the Thames.

[Enter Cromwell and his train.]

CROMWELL.
Is the Barge ready? I will straight to Lambeth,
And if this one day's business once were past,
I'd take my ease to morrow after trouble.—
How now, my friend, wouldst thou speak with me?

[The Messenger brings him the letter; he puts it in his pocket.]

MESSENGER.
Sir, here's a letter from my Lord of Bedford.

CROMWELL.
O good, my friend, commend me to thy Lord.
Hold, take those Angels; drink them for thy pains.

MESSENGER.
He doth desire your grace to read it,
Because he says it doth concern you near.

CROMWELL.
Bid him assure himself of that. Farewell.
To morrow, tell him, shall he hear from me.—

Set on before there, and away to Lambeth.

[Exeunt omnes.]

ACT V. SCENE III. Lambeth.

[Enter Winchester, Suffolk, Norfolk, Bedford,
Sargeant at arms, the Herald, and halberts.]

GARDINER.
Halberts, stand close unto the waterside;
Sargeant at arms, be bold in your office;
Herald, deliver your proclamation.

HERALD.

This is to give notice to all the king's subjects: The late Lord Cromwell, Lord Chancellor of England, Vicar general over the realm, him to hold and esteem as a traitor against the Crown and dignity of England: So God save the king.

GARDINER.
Amen.

BEDFORD.
Amen,—and root thee from the land,
For whilst thou livest truth cannot stand.

NORFOLK.
Make a lane there, the traitor's at hand.
Keep back Cromwell's men;
Drown them if they come on.—Sargeant, your office.

[Enter Cromwell, they make a lane with their halberts.]

CROMWELL.
What means my Lord of Norfolk by these words?
Sirs, come along.

GARDINER.
Kill them, if they come on.

SARGEANT.
Lord Cromwell, in king Henry's name,
I do arrest your honour of high treason.

CROMWELL.
Sargeant, me of treason?

[Cromwell's men offer to draw.]

SUFFOLK.
Kill them, if they draw a sword.

CROMWELL.
Hold; I charge you, as you love me, draw not a sword.
Who dares accuse Cromwell of treason now?

GARDINER.
This is no place to reckon up your crime;
Your Dove-like looks were viewed with serpent's eyes.

CROMWELL.
With serpent's eyes, indeed, by thine they were;
But Gardiner do thy worst, I fear thee not.
My faith, compared with thine, as much shall pass,
As doth the Diamond excel the glass.
Attached of treason, no accusers by!
Indeed, what tongue dares speak so foul a lie?

NORFOLK.
My Lord, my Lord, matters are too well known,
And it is time the king had note thereof.

CROMWELL.
The king! let me go to him face to face;
No better trial I desire than that:
Let him but say that Cromwell's faith was feigned,
Then let my honour and my name be stained.

If ever my heart against my king was set,
O let my soul in Judgement answer it:
Then, if my faith's confirmed with his reason,
Gainst whom hath Cromwell, then, committed treason?

SUFFOLK.
My Lord, your matter shall be tried;
Mean time, with patience content your self.

CROMWELL.
Perforce I must with patience be content.
O dear friend Bedford, doest thou stand so near?
Cromwell rejoiceth one friend sheds a tear.
And whether ist? which way must Cromwell now?

GARDINER.
My Lord, you must unto the tower. Lieutenant,
Take him to your charge.

CROMWELL.
Well, where you please; yet before I part,
Let me confer a little with my men.

GARDINER.
As you go by water, so you shall.

CROMWELL.
I have some business present to impart.

NORFOLK.
You may not stay. Lieutenant, take your charge.

CROMWELL.
Well, well, my Lord, you second Gardiner's text.
Norfolk, farewell; thy turn will be the next.

[Exit Cromwell and the Lieutenant.]

GARDINER.
His guilty conscience makes him rave, my Lord.

NORFOLK.
Aye, let him talk; his time is short enough.

GARDINER.
My Lord of Bedford, come; you weep for him,
That would not shed half a tear for you.

BEDFORD.
It grieves me for to see his sudden fall.

GARDINER.
Such success wish I to traitors still.

[Exeunt.]

ACT V. SCENE IV. London. A street.

[Enter two Citizens.]

FIRST CITIZEN.
Why, can this news be true? ist possible?
The great Lord Cromwell arrested upon treason!
I hardly will believe it can be so.

SECOND CITIZEN.
It is too true, sir; would it were otherwise,
Condition I spent half the wealth I had.
I was at Lambeth, saw him there arrested,
And afterward committed to the Tower.

FIRST CITIZEN.
What, wast for treason that he was committed?

SECOND CITIZEN.
Kind, noble Gentleman! I may rue the time.
All that I have, I did enjoy by him,
And if he die, then all my state is gone.

FIRST CITIZEN.
It may be doubted that he shall not die,
Because the King did favour him so much.

SECOND CITIZEN.
O sir, you are deceived in thinking so.
The grace and favour he had with the king
Hath caused him have so many enemies:
He that in court secure will keep himself,
Must not be great, for then he is envied at.
The Shrub is safe, when as the Cedar shakes;
For where the King doth love above compare,
Of others they as much more envied are.

FIRST CITIZEN.
Tis pity that this noble man should fall,
He did so many charitable deeds.

SECOND CITIZEN.
Tis true, and yet you see in each estate,
There's none so good, but some one doth him hate.
And they before would smile him in the face,
Will be the formost to do him disgrace:
What, will you go along unto the Court?

FIRST CITIZEN.
I care not if I do, and hear the news,
How men will judge what shall become of him.

SECOND CITIZEN.
Some will speak hardly, some will speak in pity.
Go you to the Court, I'll unto the City;
There I am sure to hear more news than you.

FIRST CITIZEN.
Why, then, soon will we meet again.

[Exit.]

ACT V. SCENE V. A room in the Tower.

[Enter Cromwell in the Tower.]

CROMWELL.
Now, Cromwell, hast thou time to meditate,
And think upon thy state, and of the time.
Thy honours came unsought, aye, and unlooked for;
Thy fall as sudden, and unlooked for too.
What glory was in England that I had not?
Who in this land commanded more than Cromwell?
Except the King who greater than my self?
But now I see, what after ages shall:
The greater men, more sudden is their fall.
And now do I remember the Earl of Bedford
Was very desirous for to speak to me,
And afterward sent to me a letter,
The which I think I have still in my pocket.
Now may I read it, for I now have leisure,
And this I take it is. *[He reads the Letter.]*
My Lord, come not this night to Lambeth,
For if you do, your state is overthrown.
And much I doubt your life, and if you come;
Then if you love your self, stay where you are,
O God! had I but read this letter,
Then had I been free from the Lion's paw;
Deferring this to read until to morrow,
I spurned at joy, and did embrace my sorrow.

[Enter the Lieutenant of the Tower and officers.]

Now, master Lieutenant, when's this day of death?

LIEUTENANT.
Alas, my Lord, would I might never see it.
Here are the Dukes of Suffolk and of Norfolk,
Winchester, Bedford, and sir Richard Ratcliffe,

With others, but why they come I know not.

CROMWELL.
No matter wherefore, Cromwell is prepared;
For Gardiner has my state and life ensnared.
Bid them come in, or you shall do them wrong,
For here stands he, whom some thinks lives too long.
Learning kills learning, and instead of Ink
To dip his Pen, Cromwell's heart blood doth drink.

[Enter all the Nobles.]

NORFOLK.
Good morrow, Cromwell. What, alone, so sad?

CROMWELL.
One good among you, none of you are bad.—
For my part, it best fits me be alone;
Sadness with me, not I with any one.
What, is the king acquainted with my cause?

NORFOLK.
We have, and he hath answered us, my Lord.

CROMWELL.
How, shall I come to speak with him my self?

GARDINER.

The King is so advertised of your guilt, he will by no means admit you to his presence.

CROMWELL.
No way admit me? am I so soon forgot?
Did he but yesterday embrace my neck,
And said that Cromwell was even half himself,
And is his Princely ears so much bewitched
With scandalous ignomy, and slanderous speeches,
That now he dooth deny to look on me?
Well, my Lord of Winchester, no doubt but you

Are much in favour with his Majesty:
Will you bear a letter from me to his grace?

GARDINER.
Pardon me, I'll bear no traitor's letters.

CROMWELL.
Ha! Will you do this kindness then? Tell him
By word of mouth, what I shall say to you?

GARDINER.
That will I.

CROMWELL.
But, on your honour, will you?

GARDINER.
Aye, on my honor.

CROMWELL.
Bear witness, Lords.—Tell him when he hath known you,
And tried your faith but half so much as mine,
He'll find you to be the falsest hearted man
In England. Pray, tell him this.

BEDFORD.
Be patient, good my Lord, in these extremes.

CROMWELL.
My kind and honorable Lord of Bedford,
I know your honor always loved me well;
But, pardon me, this still shall be my theme;
Gardiner is the cause makes Cromwell so extreme.
Sir Ralph Sadler, pray, a word with you:
You were my man, and all that you possess
Came by my means; to requite all this,
Will you take this letter here of me,
And give it with your own hands to the king?

SADLER.

I kiss your hand, and never will I rest,
Ere to the king this will be delivered.

[Exit Sadler.]

CROMWELL.
Why yet Cromwell hath one friend in store.

GARDINER.
But all the haste he makes shall be but vain.—
Here's a discharge for your prisoner,
To see him executed presently.—
My Lord, you hear the tenor of your life.

CROMWELL.
I do embrace it, welcome my last date,
And of this glistering world I take last leave:
And, noble Lords, I take my leave of you.—
As willingly I go to meet with death,
As Gardiner did pronounce it with his breath:
From treason is my heart as white as snow,
My death only procured by my foe.
I pray, commend me to my Sovereign king,
And tell him in what sort his Cromwell died,
To lose his head before his cause were tried:
But let his Grace, when he shall hear my name,
Say only this: Gardiner procured the same.

[Enter young Cromwell.]

LIEUTENANT.
Here is your son, come to take his leave.

CROMWELL.
To take his leave! Come hither, Harry Cromwell.
Mark, boy, the last words that I speak to thee.
Flatter not Fortune, neither fawn upon her;
Gape not for state, yet lose no spark of honor;
Ambition, like the plague see thou eschew it;
I die for treason, boy, and never knew it.

Yet let thy faith as spotless be as mine,
And Cromwell's virtues in thy face shall shine.
Come, go along and see me leave my breath,
And I'll leave thee upon the flower of death.

SON.
O, father, I shall die to see that wound;
Your blood being spilt will make my heart to sound.

CROMWELL.
How, boy, not look upon the Axe!
How shall I do then to have my head stroke off?
Come on, my child, and see the end of all,
And after say that Gardiner was my fall.

GARDINER.
My Lord, you speak it of an envious heart;
I have done no more than law and equity.

BEDFORD.
O, good my Lord of Winchester, forbear;
It would a better seemed you to been absent,
Than with your words disturb a dying man.

CROMWELL.
Who me, my Lord? no, he disturbs not me.
My mind he stirs not, though his mighty shock
Hath brought mo' peers' heads down to the block.
Farewell, my boy! all Cromwell can bequeath,
My hearty blessing; so I take my leave.

HANGMAN.
I am your death's man; pray, my Lord, forgive me.

CROMWELL.
Even with my soul. Why, man, thou art my Doctor,
And brings me precious Physic for my soul.—
My Lord of Bedford, I desire of you,
Before my death, a corporal embrace.

[Bedford comes to him, Cromwell embraces him.]

Farewell, great Lord; my love I do commend,
My heart to you; my soul to heaven I send.
This is my joy that, ere my body fleet,
Your honoured arms is my true winding sheet.
Farewell, dear Bedford; my peace is made in heaven.
Thus falls great Cromwell a poor ell in length,
To rise to unmeasured height, winged with new strength,
The land of Worms, which dying men discover,
My soul is shrined with heaven's celestial cover.

[Exit Cromwell and the officers, and others.]

BEDFORD.
Well, farewell, Cromwell, the truest friend,
That ever Bedford shall possess again.—
Well, Lords, I fear, when this man is dead,
You'll wish in vain that Cromwell had a head.

[Enter one with Cromwell's head.]

OFFICER.
Here is the head of the deceased Cromwell.

BEDFORD.
Pray thee, go hence, and bear his head away
Unto his body; inter them both in clay.

[Enter Sir Ralph Sadler.]

SADLER.
Ho now, my Lords: what, is Lord Cromwell dead?

BEDFORD.
Lord Cromwell's body now doth want a head.

SADLER.
O God! a little speed had saved his life.
Here is a kind reprieve come from the king,

To bring him straight unto his majesty.

SUFFOLK.
Aye, aye, sir Ralph, reprieves comes now too late.

GARDINER.
My conscience now tells me this deed was ill:
Would Christ that Cromwell were alive again.

NORFOLK.
Come, let us to the king, whom well I know,
Will grieve for Cromwell, that his death was so.

[Exeunt omnes.]

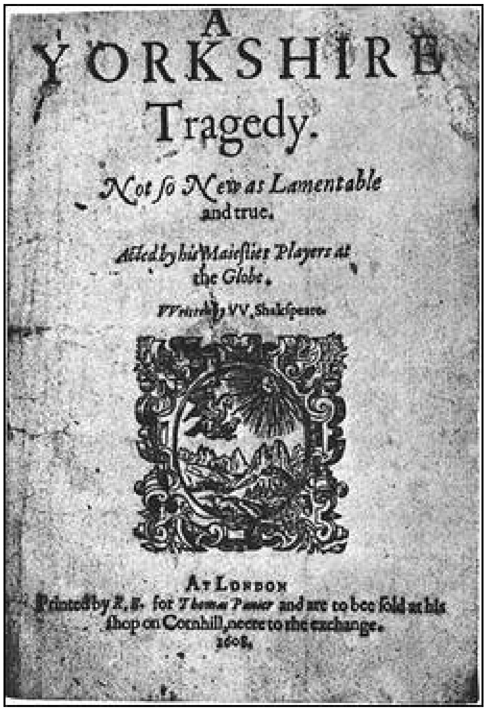
FINIS.

A YORKSHIRE TRAGEDY

This Jacobean tragedy was first printed in 1608. The play was originally assigned to Shakespeare, though most modern critics reject the attribution, favouring Thomas Middleton as the play's author. *A Yorkshire Tragedy* was entered into the Stationers' Register on May 2, 1608. The play was published soon after in a quarto issued by bookseller Thomas Pavier, who had published *Sir John Oldcastle* , another apocryphal play of 1600. The title page of the quarto repeats the attribution to "W. Shakspeare," and states that the play was acted by the King's Men at the Globe Theatre.

The play is unusual in consisting of only ten scenes. The original printed text identifies the work as "ALL'S ONE. OR, One of the foure Plaies in one, called a York-Shire Tragedy...." This plainly implies that the existing play was one of a quartet of related works that were performed on stage together. The play's genre is domestic tragedy, a subgenre of the Renaissance theatre focusing on the downfalls of ordinary people. One of the earliest examples is *Arden of Faversham* , which also belongs in the Shakespeare Apocrypha.

The plot is based on the biographical account of Walter Calverley of Calverley Hall, Yorkshire, who was executed on August 5, 1605 for murdering two of his children and stabbing his wife. The crimes were a well-known scandal of the day; a pamphlet on the case was issued in June 1605, with a ballad following in July.



A
YORKSHIRE
Tragedy.

Not ſo New as Lamentable
and true.

Acted by his Maieſties Players at
the Globe.

VVritten by VV. Shakſpeare.

AT LONDON
Printed by R. B. for *Thomas Pauier* and are to bee ſold at his
ſhop on Cornhill, neere to the exchange.
1608.

The 1608 Quarto printing

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DRAMATIS PERSONAE

OLIVER }

RALPH } serving-men of a house in Yorkshire

SAM }

A Boy

The WIFE

The HUSBAND

Four GENTLEMEN

A SERVANT

The MASTER of a College

The SON

A MAID

A LUSTY SERVANT

KNIGHT, a magistrate

Officers]

Scene i. A house in Yorkshire

Enter Oliver and Ralph, two serving-men.

OLIVER

Sirrah Ralph, my young mistress is in such a pitiful, passionate humour for the long absence of her love.

RALPH

Why, can you blame her? Why, apples hanging longer on the tree then when they are ripe *[make]* so many fallings. Viz, mad wenches, because they are not gathered in time, are fain to drop of themselves, and then 'tis common, you know, for every man to take 'em up.

OLIVER

Mass, thou sayest true, 'tis common indeed. But, sirrah, is neither our young master returned, nor our fellow Sam come from London?

RALPH

Neither of either, as the puritan bawd says. *[Noise within]* 'Slid, I hear Sam; Sam's come, [here's] tarry. Come, i'faith, now my nose itches for news.

OLIVER

And so does mine elbow.

SAM

[Calls within] Where are you there?

[Enter Sam and a Boy.]

Boy, look you walk my horse with discretion; I have rid him simply. I warrant his skin sticks to his back with very heat; if 'a should catch cold and get the cough of the lungs, I were well served, were I not?

[Exit Boy.]

What, Ralph and Oliver!

AMBO

Honest fellow Sam, welcome, i'faith! What tricks hast thou brought from London?

[Sam is] furnished with things from London *[which he now presents]* .

SAM

You see I am hang'd after the truest fashion: three hats, and two glasses bobbling upon 'em, two rebato wires upon my breast, a cap-case by my side, a brush at my back, an almanac in my pocket, and three ballads in my codpiece. Nay, I am the true picture of a common serving-man.

OLIVER

I'll swear thou art. Thou mayest set up when thou wilt. There's many a one begins with less, I can tell thee, that proves a rich man ere he dies. But what's the news from London, Sam?

RALPH

Ay, that's well fed. What's the news from London, sirrah? My young mistress keeps such a puling for her love.

SAM

Why? The more fool she, ay, the more ninnyhammer she.

OLIVER

Why, Sam, why?

SAM

Why, he's married to another long ago.

AMBO

I'faith, ye jest.

SAM

Why, did you not know that till now? Why, he's married, beats his wife, and has two or three children by her: for you must note that any woman bears the more when she is beaten.

RALPH

Ay, that's true, for she bears the blows.

OLIVER

Sirrah Sam, I would not for two years' wages my young mistress knew so much. She'd run upon the left hand of her wit, and ne'er be her own woman again.

SAM

And I think she was blest in her cradle, that he never came in her bed. Why, he has consumed all, pawned his lands, and made his university brother stand in wax for him. There's a fine phrase for a scrivener. Puh, he owes more than his skin's worth.

OLIVER

Is't possible?

SAM

Nay, I'll tell you moreover he calls his wife whore as familiarly as one would call *[Moll and Doll]* , and his children bastards as naturally as can be. But what have we here? [Pulls out two poking-sticks] I thought 'twas somewhat pulled down my breeches: I quite forget my two poting-sticks. These came from London; now anything is good here that came from London.

OLIVER

Ay, farfetched, you know.

SAM

But speak in your conscience, i'faith: have not we as good poting-sticks i' th' country as need to be put i' th' fire? The mind of a thing is all, the mind of a thing is all. And as thou saidst e'en now, farfetched is the best thing for ladies.

OLIVER

Ay, and for waiting gentlewomen, too.

SAM

But Ralph, what, is our beer *[sour]* this thunder?

OLIVER

No, no, it holds countenance yet.

SAM

Why then, follow me. I'll teach you the finest humour to be drunk it; I learn'd it at London last week.

AMBO

Ay, faith, let's hear it, let's hear it.

SAM

The bravest humour, 'twould do a man good to be drunk in't. They call it knighting in London, when they drink upon their knees.

AMBO

Faith, that's excellent!

[SAM]

Come, follow me. I'll give you all the degrees on't in order.

Exeunt.

Scene ii. Outside the Husband's house, near Yorkshire

Enter Wife.

WIFE

What will become of us? All will away.
My husband never ceases in expense,
Both to consume his credit and his house.
And 'tis set down by Heaven's just decree,
That riot's child must needs be beggary.

Are these the virtues that his youth did promise:
Dice, and voluptuous meetings, midnight revels,
Taking his bed with surfeits, ill-beseeming
The ancient honour of his house and name?
And this not all: but that which kills me most,
When he recounts his losses and false fortunes,
The weakness of his state so much dejected,
Not as a man repentant, but half mad.

His fortunes cannot answer his expense.
He sits and sullenly locks up his arms,

Forgetting Heaven looks downward, which makes him
Appear so dreadful, that he frights my heart;
Walks heavily, as if his soul were on earth,
Not penitent for those his sins are past,
But vex'd his money cannot make them last:
A fearful melancholy, ungodly sorrow.
Oh, yonder he comes; now in despite of ills,
I'll speak to him, and I will hear him speak,
And do my best to drive it from his heart.

Enter Husband.

HUSBAND

Pox o' th' last throw, it made
Five hundred angels vanish from my sight!
I'm damn'd, I'm damn'd: the angels have forsook me!
Nay, 'tis certainly true, for he that has no coin
Is damn'd in this world: he's gone, he's gone.

WIFE

Dear husband.

HUSBAND

Oh, most punishment of all, I have a wife!

WIFE

I do entreat you as you love your soul,

Tell me the cause of this your discontent.

HUSBAND

A vengeance strip thee naked, thou art cause,

Effect, quality, property, thou, thou, thou!

Exit Husband.

WIFE

Bad turn'd to worse? Both beggary of the soul,

As of the body; and so much unlike

Himself at first, as if some vexed spirit

Had got his form upon him.

Enter Husband.

[Aside] He comes again.

He says I am the cause: I never yet

Spoke less than words of duty and of love.

HUSBAND

[Aside] If marriage be honourable, then cuckolds are honourable, for they cannot be made without marriage. Fool! What meant I to marry to get beggars? Now must my eldest son be a knave or nothing. He cannot live *[upon the soil]* , for he will have no land to maintain him: that mortgage sits like a snaffle upon mine inheritance, and makes me chew upon iron. My second son must be a promoter, and my third a thief, or an underputter, a slave pander. Oh beggary, beggary, to what base uses does thou put a man!

I think the devil scorns to be a bawd:

He bears himself more proudly, has more care on's credit.

Base, slavish, abject, filthy poverty!

WIFE

Good sir, by all our vows I do beseech you,

Show me the true cause of your discontent.

HUSBAND

Money, money, money, and thou must supply me!

WIFE

Alas, I am the *[least]* cause of your discontent;

Yet what is mine, either in rings or jewels,

Use to your own desire. But I beseech you,

As y'are a gentleman by many bloods,

Though I myself be out of your respect,

Think on the state of these three lovely boys

You have been father to.

HUSBAND

Puh! Bastards, bastards,

Bastards, begot in tricks, begot in tricks!

WIFE

Heaven knows how those words wrong me! But I may

Endure these griefs among a thousand more.

Oh, call to mind your lands already *[mortgaged]* ,

Yourself wound into debts, your hopeful brother

At the university in bonds for you,

Like to be [seiz'd] upon. And--

HUSBAND

Ha' done, thou harlot,

Whom though for fashion sake I married,

I never could abide? Thinkst thou thy words

Shall kill my pleasures? Fall off to thy friends,

Thou and thy bastards beg: I will not bate

A whit in humour.--Midnight, still I love you

And revel in your company. Curb'd in,

Shall it be said in all societies

That I broke custom, that I flagg'd in money?

No, those thy jewels I will play as freely

As when my state was fullest.

WIFE

Be it so.

HUSBAND

Nay, I protest, and take that for an earnest!

Spurns her.

I will forever hold thee in contempt,

And never touch the sheets that cover thee;

But be divorc'd in bed till thou consent

Thy dowry shall be sold to give new life

Unto those pleasures which I most affect.

WIFE

Sir, do but turn a gentle eye on me,

And what the law shall give me leave to do

You shall command.

HUSBAND

Look it be done.

Holding his hands in his pockets.

Shall I want dust and like a slave

Wear nothing in my pockets but my hands

To fill them up with nails?

Oh, much against my blood! Let it be done;

I was never made to be a looker on.

A bawd to dice? I'll shake the drabs myself

And make 'em yield. I say, look it be done!

WIFE

I take my leave; it shall.

HUSBAND

Speedily, speedily!

Exit Wife.

I hate the very hour I chose a wife, a trouble, trouble, three children like three evils hang upon me! Fie, fie, fie, strumpet and bastards, strumpet and bastards!

Enter three Gentlemen hearing him.

FIRST GENTLEMAN

Still do those loathsome thoughts jar on your tongue,

Yourself to stain the honour of your wife,

Nobly descended. Those whom men call mad

Endanger others, but he's more than mad

That wounds himself, whose own words do proclaim

Scandals unjust, to foil his better name:

It is not fit. I pray, forsake it.

SECOND GENTLEMAN

Good sir, let modesty reprove you.

THIRD GENTLEMAN

Let honest kindness sway so much with you.

HUSBAND

God-den, I thank you, sir. How do you? Adieu. I'm glad to see you. Farewell.

Exit Gentlemen.

Instructions! Admonitions!

Enter Servant.

How now, sirrah, what would you?

SERVANT

Only to certify to you, sir, that my mistress was met by the way, by these who were sent for her to London by her honourable uncle, your worship's late guardian.

HUSBAND

So, sir, then she is gone and so may you be.

But let her look that the thing be done she wots of,

Or Hell will stand more pleasant than her house at home.

[Exit Servant.] Enter a *[Fourth]* Gentleman.

FOURTH GENTLEMAN

Well or ill met, I care not.

HUSBAND

No, nor I.

FOURTH GENTLEMAN

I am come with confidence to chide you.

HUSBAND

Who, me? Chide me? Do't finely, then: let it not move me, for if thou chid'st me, angry I shall strike.

FOURTH GENTLEMAN

Strike thine own *[follies]* , for it is they

Deserve to be well beaten. We are now in private;

There's none but thou and I. Thou'rt fond and peevish,

An unclean rioter, thy lands and credit

Lie now both sick of a consumption.

I am sorry for thee: that man spends with shame

That with his riches does consume his name,

And such art thou.

HUSBAND

Peace!

FOURTH GENTLEMAN

No, thou shalt hear me further.

Thy father's and forefathers' worthy honours,

Which were our [country's] monuments, our grace, Follies in thee begin now to deface.

The springtime of thy youth did fairly promise

Such a most fruitful summer to thy friends,

It scarce can enter into men's beliefs

Such dearth should hang on thee. We that see it

Are sorry to believe it. In thy change

This voice into all places will be hurl'd:

Thou and the devil *[have]* deceived the world.

HUSBAND

I'll not endure thee!

FOURTH GENTLEMAN

But of all the worst:

Thy virtuous wife, right honourably allied,

Thou hast proclaimed a strumpet.

HUSBAND

Nay, then, I know thee:

Thou art her champion, thou, her private friend,

The party you wot on.

FOURTH GENTLEMAN

Oh, ignoble thought!

I am past my patient blood. Shall I stand idle

And see my reputation touch'd to death?

HUSBAND

'T'as gall'd you this, has it?

FOURTH GENTLEMAN

No, monster, I will prove

My thoughts did only tend to virtuous love.

[HUSBAND]

Love of her virtues? There it goes!

FOURTH GENTLEMAN

Base spirit,

To lay thy hate upon the fruitful honour

Of thine own bed!

They *[draw their swords and]* fight, and the Husband's hurt.

HUSBAND

Oh!

FOURTH GENTLEMAN

Woult thou yield it yet?

HUSBAND

Sir, sir, I have not done with you.

GENTLEMAN

I hope, nor ne'er shall do.

Fight again.

HUSBAND

Have you got tricks?

Are you in cunning with me?

FOURTH GENTLEMAN

No, plain and right.

He needs no cunning that for truth doth fight.

Husband *[is wounded and]* falls down.

HUSBAND

Hard fortune, am I leveled with the ground?

FOURTH GENTLEMAN

Now, sir, you lie at mercy.

HUSBAND

Ay, you slave!

FOURTH GENTLEMAN

Alas, that hate should bring us to our grave!

You see my sword's not thirsty for your life.

I am sorrier for your wound than yourself.

Y'are of a virtuous house: show virtuous deeds;
'Tis not your honour, 'tis your folly bleeds.
Much good has been expected in your life:
Cancel not all men's hopes. You have a wife
Kind and obedient: heap not wrongful shame
On her, your posterity. Let only sin be sore,
And by this fall, rise never to fall more.

And so I leave you.

Exit Gentleman.

HUSBAND

Has the dog left me then
After his tooth hath left me? Oh, my heart
Would fain leap after him; revenge, I say!
I'm mad to be reveng'd! My strumpet wife,
It is thy quarrel that rips thus my flesh,
And makes my breast spit blood! But thou shalt bleed.
Vanquish'd? Got down? Unable e'en to speak?

Surely 'tis want of money makes men weak.

Ay, 'twas that o'erthrew me; I'd ne'er been down else.

Exit.

Scene iii. The Husband's house, a room above

Enter Wife in a riding suit with a serving-man.

SERVANT

Faith, mistress, if it might not be presumption

In me to tell you so, for his excuse,

You had small reason, knowing his abuse.

WIFE

I grant I had, but alas,

Why should our faults at home be spread abroad?

'Tis grief enough within doors. At first sight

Mine uncle could run o'er his prodigal life

As perfectly as if his serious eye

Had numbered all his follies,

Knew of his mortgag'd lands, his friends in bonds,

Himself withered with debts; and in that minute

Had I added his usage and unkindness,

'Twould have confounded every thought of good:

Where now, fathering his riots *[on]* his youth,

Which time and tame experience will shake off,

Guessing his kindness to me--as I smoothed him

With all the skill I had, though his deserts

Are in form uglier than an unshap'd bear--

He's ready to prefer him to some office

And place at court, a good and sure relief

To all his stooping fortunes; 'twill be a means, I hope,

To make new league between us, and redeem

His virtues with his lands.

SERVANT

I should think so, mistress. If he should not now be kind to you and love you, and cherish you up, I should think the devil himself kept open house in him.

WIFE

I doubt not but he will now. Prithee, leave me; I think I hear him coming.

SERVANT

I am gone.

Exit.

WIFE

By this good means I shall preserve my lands,

And free my husband out of usurers' hands:

Now there is no need of sale. My uncle's kind;

I hope, if aught, this will content his mind.

Here comes my husband.

Enter Husband.

HUSBAND

Now, are you come? Where's the money, let's see the money. Is the rubbish sold, those wiseacres, your lands? Why, when! The money, where is't? Pour't down, down with it, down with it! I say, pour't o' th' ground; let's see't, let's see't!

WIFE

Good sir, keep but in patience, and I hope

My words shall like you well. I bring you better

Comfort than the sale of my dowry.

HUSBAND

Hah? What's that?

WIFE

Pray, do not fright me, sir, but vouchsafe me hearing. My uncle, glad of your kindness to me and mild usage--

For so I made it to him--has in pity

Of your declining fortunes, provided

A place for you at court of worth and credit,

Which so much overjoyed me.

HUSBAND

Out on thee, filth!

Over and overjoyed, when I'm in torments?

Spurns her.

Thou politic whore, subtler than nine devils, was this thy journey to *[nuncle]* , to set down the history of me, of my state and fortunes? Shall I that dedicated myself to pleasure be now confin'd in service to crouch and stand like an old man i' th' hams, my hat off, I that never could abide to uncover my head i' th' church, base slut?

This fruit bears thy complaints!

WIFE

Oh, Heaven knows

That my complaints were praises, and best words

Of you, and your estate: only my friends

Knew of your mortgag'd lands, and were possess'd

Of every accident before I came.

If thou suspect it but a plot in me

To keep my dowry, or for mine own good

Or my poor children's--though it suits a mother

To show a natural care in their reliefs,

Yet I'll forget myself to calm your blood--

Consume it, as your pleasure counsels you;

And all I wish, e'en clemency affords,

Give me but comely looks and modest words.

HUSBAND

Money, whore, money, or I'll--

[The Husband draws his dagger.] Enter a servant very hastily. *[The Husband speaks]* to his man.

What the devil? How now? Thy hasty news?

Servant in a fear.

SERVANT

May it please you, sir.

HUSBAND

What? May I not look upon my dagger? Speak, villain, or I will execute the point on thee: quick, short!

SERVANT

Why, sir, a gentleman from the university stays below to speak with you.

HUSBAND

From the university? So, university:
That long word runs through me.

Exeunt *[Husband and Servant]* . Wife alone.

WIFE

Was ever wife so wretchedly beset?
Had not this news stepp'd in between, the point
Had offered violence to my breast.
That which some women call great misery
Would show but little here, would scarce be seen
Amongst my miseries. I may compare
For wretched fortunes with all wives that are;
Nothing will please him, until all be nothing.
He calls it slavery to be prefer'd;
A place of credit, a base servitude.
What shall become of me, and my poor children,
Two here, and one at nurse, my pretty beggars?
I see how ruin with a palsy hand
Begins to shake the ancient *[feet]* to dust;
The heavy weight of sorrow draws my lids

Over my dankish eyes, I can scarce see.

Thus grief will last; it wakes and sleeps with me.

Scene iv. The Husband's house

Enter the Husband with the Master of the College.

HUSBAND

Pray you draw near, sir, y'are exceeding welcome.

MASTER

That's my doubt, I fear; I come not to be welcome.

HUSBAND

Yes, howsoever.

MASTER

'Tis not my fashion, sir, to dwell in long circumstance, but to be plain and effectual, therefore to the purpose. The cause of my setting forth was piteous and lamentable. That hopeful young gentleman, your brother, whose virtues we all love dearly through your default and unnatural negligence, lies in bond executed for your debt, a prisoner, all his studies amazed, his hope strook dead, and the pride of his youth muffled in these dark clouds of oppression.

HUSBAND

Hum, um, um.

MASTER

Oh, you have killed the towardest hope of all our university! Wherefore without repentance and amends, expect *[ponderous]* and sudden judgments to fall grievously upon you. Your brother, a man who profited in his divine employments, might have made ten thousand souls fit for Heaven, now by your careless courses cast in prison which you must answer for; and assure your spirit it will come home at length.

HUSBAND

Oh, God, oh.

MASTER

Wifmen think ill of you, others speak ill of you, no man loves you; nay, even those whom honesty condemns, condemn you. And take this from the virtuous affection I bear your brother, never look for prosperous hour, good thought, quiet sleeps, contented walks, nor anything that makes man perfect till you redeem him. What is your answer? How will you bestow him? Upon desperate misery, or better hopes? I suffer till I hear your answer.

HUSBAND

Sir, you have much wrought with me. I feel you in my soul; you are your arts' master. I never had sense till now; your syllables have cleft me. Both for your words and pains I thank you: I cannot but acknowledge grievous wrongs done to my brother, mighty, mighty, mighty wrongs. Within there?

Enter a serving-man.

[SERVANT]

Sir.

HUSBAND

Fill me a bowl of wine.

Exit Servant for wine.

Alas, poor brother,

Bruis'd with an execution for my sake!

MASTER

A bruise indeed makes many a mortal

Sore till the grave cure 'em.

Enter [Servant] with wine.

HUSBAND

Sir, I begin to you; y'have chid your welcome.

MASTER

I could have wish'd it better for your sake.

I pledge you, sir, to the kind man in prison.

HUSBAND

Let it be so.

Drink both.

Now, sir, if you please to spend but a few minutes in a walk about my grounds below, my man shall attend you. I doubt not but by that time to be furnish'd of a sufficient answer, and therein my brother fully satisfied.

MASTER

Good sir, in that the angels would be pleas'd, and the world's murmurs calm'd, and I should say I set forth then upon a lucky day.

Exit Master *[with Servant]* .

HUSBAND

Oh thou confused man, thy pleasant sins have undone thee, thy damnation has beggar'd thee! That Heaven should say we must not sin, and yet made women, gives our senses way to find pleasure, which being found, confounds us. Why should we know those things so much misuse us? Oh, would virtue had been forbidden, we should then have proved all virtuous, for 'tis our blood to love what we are forbidden! Had not drunkenness been forbidden, what man would have been fool to a beast, and zany to a swine to show tricks in the mire? What is there in three dice to make a man draw thrice three thousand acres into the compass of a round little table, and with the gentleman's palsy in the hand, shake out his posterity? Thieves or beggars; 'tis done, I ha' done't, i'faith! Terrible, horrible misery! How well was I left, very well, very well! My lands showed like a full moon about me, but now the moon's i' th' last quarter, waning, waning. And I am mad to think that moon was mine: mine and my father's, and my forefathers', generations, generations. Down goes the house of us, down, down, it sinks. Now is the name a beggar, begs in me that name which hundreds of years has made this shire famous: in me, and my posterity runs out. In my seed five are made miserable besides myself. My riot is now my brother's jailer, my wife's sighing, my three boys' penury, and mine own confusion.

Tears his hair.

Why sit my hairs upon my cursed head?

Will not this poison scatter them? Oh, my brother's

In execution among devils

That stretch him and make him give. And I in want,

Not able for to live, nor to redeem him.

Divines and dying men may talk of Hell,

But in my heart her several torments dwell.

Slavery and misery! Who in this case

Would not take up money upon his soul,

Pawn his salvation, live at interest?

I that did ever in abundance dwell,

For me to want, exceeds the throes of Hell!

Enter s his little Son with a top and a scourge.

SON

What ails you, father? Are you not well? I cannot scourge my top as long as you stand so: you take up all the room with your wide legs. Puh, you cannot make me afear'd with this; I fear no vizards, nor bugbears.

Husband takes up the child by the skirts of his long coat in one hand and draws his dagger with th' other.

HUSBAND

Up, sir, for here thou hast no inheritance left!

SON

Oh, what will you do, father? I am your white boy.

HUSBAND

Thou shalt be my red boy; take that!

Strikes him.

SON

Oh, you hurt me, father!

HUSBAND

My eldest beggar, thou shalt not live to ask an usurer bread, to cry at a great man's gate, or follow "Good your honour!" by a coach; no, nor your brother. 'Tis charity to brain you.

SON

How shall I learn now my head's broke?

[The Husband] stabs him.

HUSBAND

Bleed, bleed, rather than beg, beg;

Be not thy name's disgrace.

Spurn thou thy fortunes first if they be base.

Come view thy second brother. Fates,

My children's blood shall spin into your faces!

You shall see

How confidently we scorn beggary!

Exit with his Son.

Scene v. The Husband's house, the room above

Enter a Maid with a child in her arms, the mother *[Wife]* by her asleep.

MAID

Sleep, sweet babe: sorrow makes thy mother sleep.

It bodes small good when *[Heaven]* falls so deep.

Hush, pretty boy, thy hopes might have been better;

'Tis lost at dice what ancient honours won,

Hard when the father plays away the son;

Nothing but misery serves in this house.

Ruin and desolation, oh!

Enter Husband with the boy bleeding.

HUSBAND

Whore, give me that boy!

Strives with her for the child.

MAID

Oh, help, help! Out, alas! Murder, murder!

HUSBAND

Are you gossiping, prating, sturdy quean?

I'll break your clamour with your neck downstairs:

Tumble, tumble, headlong!

Throws her down.

So, the surest way to charm a woman's tongue

Is break her neck: a politician did it.

SON

Mother, mother, I am kill'd, mother!

[The Wife] wakes.

WIFE

Ha, who's that cried? Oh me, my children!

Both, both, both bloody, bloody!

Catches up the youngest.

HUSBAND

Strumpet, let go the boy, let go the beggar!

WIFE

Oh, my sweet husband!

HUSBAND

Filth, harlot!

WIFE

Oh, what will you do, dear husband?

HUSBAND

Give me the bastard!

WIFE

Your own sweet boy!

HUSBAND

There are too many beggars!

WIFE

Good my husband--

HUSBAND

Dost thou prevent me still?

Stabs at the child in her arms.

WIFE

Oh God!

HUSBAND

Have at his heart!

WIFE

Oh, my dear boy!

[The Husband] gets it from her.

HUSBAND

Brat, thou shalt not live to shame thy house!

WIFE

Oh Heaven!

She's hurt and sinks down.

HUSBAND

And perish now, be gone!

There's whores enow, and want would make thee one!

Enter a Lusty Servant.

LUSTY SERVANT

Oh, sir, what deeds are these?

HUSBAND

Base slave, my vassal,

Comest thou between my fury to question me?

LUSTY SERVANT

Were you the devil, I would hold you, sir.

HUSBAND

Hold me? Presumption, I'll undo thee for't!

LUSTY SERVANT

'Sblood, you have undone us all, sir.

HUSBAND

Tug at thy master?

LUSTY SERVANT

Tug at a monster!

HUSBAND

Have I no power? Shall my slave fetter me?

[The Husband wrestles with the Servant.]

LUSTY SERVANT

Nay then, the devil wrastles! I am thrown!

HUSBAND

Oh, villain, now I'll tug thee, now I'll tear thee!

Overcomes him *[and kicks him with his spurs]* .

Set quick spurs to my vassal, bruise him, trample him!

So, I think thou wilt not follow me in haste.

My horse stands ready saddled; away, away!

Now to my brat at nurse, my sucking beggar:

Fates, I'll not leave you one to trample on!

Scene vi. The Husband's house, the room below

[The Husband enters and] the Master meets him.

MASTER

How is't with you, sir?

Methinks you look of a distracted colour.

HUSBAND

Who, I, sir? 'Tis but your fancy.

Please you walk in, sir, and I'll soon resolve you.

I want one small part to make up the sum,

And then my brother shall rest satisfied.

MASTER

I shall be glad to see it, sir. I'll attend you.

Exeunt.

Scene vii. The Husband's house, the room above

LUSTY SERVANT

Oh, I am scarce able to heave up myself:

H'as so bruis'd me with his devilish weight,

And torn my flesh with his blood-hasty spur.

A man before of easy constitution

Till now, Hell's power supplied to his soul's wrong.

Oh, how damnation can make weak men strong!

Enter Master and two Servants.

Oh, the most piteous deed, sir, since you came!

MASTER

A deadly greeting! Has he summ'd up this
To satisfy his brother? Here's another:
And by the bleeding infants, the dead mother!

WIFE

Oh, oh!

MASTER

Surgeons, surgeons! She recovers life!

One of his men all faint and bloodied!

LUSTY SERVANT

Follow; our murderous master has took horse

To kill his child at nurse! Oh, follow quickly!

MASTER

I am the readiest; it shall be my charge

To raise the town upon him!

LUSTY SERVANT

Good sir, do follow him.

Exeunt Master and Servants.

WIFE

Oh, my children!

LUSTY SERVANT

How is it with my most afflicted mistress?

WIFE

Why do I now recover? Why half live?

To see my children bleed before mine eyes,

A sight able to kill a mother's breast

Without an executioner! What, art thou mangled, too?

LUSTY SERVANT

I, thinking to prevent what his quick mischiefs had so soon acted, came and rush'd upon him.

We struggled, but a fouler strength than his

O'erthrew me with his arms; then did he bruise me

And rent my flesh, and robb'd me of my hair

Like a man mad in execution,

Made me unfit to rise and follow him.

WIFE

What is it has beguil'd him of all grace

And stole away humanity from his breast,

To slay his children, purpos'd to kill his wife,

And spoil his servants?

Enter two Servants.

AMBO

Please you, leave this most accursed place;

A surgeon waits within.

WIFE

Willing to leave it.

'Tis guilty of sweet blood, innocent blood.

Murder has took this chamber with full hands,

And will ne'er out as long as the house stands.

Exeunt.

Scene viii. A road just outside Yorkshire

Enter Husband as being thrown off his horse, and falls.

HUSBAND

Oh, stumbling jade, the spavin overtake thee, the fifty diseases stop thee!

Oh, I am sorely bruis'd! Plague founder thee!

Thou runn'st at ease and pleasure, heart, of chance

To throw me now with a flight o' th' town,

In such plain even ground! 'Sfoot, a man may dice upon't, and throw away the meadows, filthy beast!

CRY WITHIN

Follow, follow, follow!

HUSBAND

Ha? I hear sounds of men, like hew and cry.

Up, up, and struggle to thy horse! Make on!

Dispatch that little beggar and all's done!

[CRY WITHIN]

Here, this way, this way!

HUSBAND

At my back? Oh,

What fate have I! My limbs deny me go.

My will is bated; beggary claims a part.

Oh, could I here reach to the infant's heart!

Enter Master of the College, three Gentlemen, and others with halberds. *[They]* find him.

ALL

Here, here, yonder, yonder!

MASTER

Unnatural, flinty, more than barbarous:

The Scythians in their marble-hearted fates

Could not have acted more remorseless deeds

In their relentless natures than these of thine!

Was this the answer I long waited on,

The satisfaction of thy prisoned brother?

HUSBAND

Why, he can have no more on's than our skins,

And some of 'em want but fleaing.

FIRST GENTLEMAN

Great sins have made him impudent.

MASTER

H'as shed so much blood that he cannot blush.

SECOND GENTLEMAN

Away with him; bear him along to the justice!

A gentleman of worship dwells at hand;

There shall his deeds be blaz'd.

HUSBAND

Why, all the better.

My glory 'tis to have my action known.

I grieve for nothing, but I miss'd of one.

MASTER

There's little of a father in that grief.

Bear him away.

Exeunt.

Scene ix. The Knight's house

Enter s a Knight with two or three Gentlemen.

KNIGHT

Endangered so his wife? Murdered his children?

FOURTH GENTLEMAN

So the cry comes.

KNIGHT

I am sorry I e'er knew him,

That ever he took life and natural being

From such an honoured stock and fair descent

Till this black minute without stain or blemish.

FOURTH GENTLEMAN

Here come the men.

Enter the Master of the College and the rest, with the *[Husband]* prisoner.

KNIGHT

The serpent of his house?

I'm sorry for this time that I am in place of justice.

MASTER

Please you, sir.

KNIGHT

Do not repeat it twice: I know too much.

Would it had ne'er been thought on.

Sir, I bleed for you.

FOURTH GENTLEMAN

Your father's sorrows are alive in men:

What made you show such monstrous cruelty?

HUSBAND

In a word, sir,

I have consum'd all, play'd away Longacre,

And I thought it the charitablest deed I could do

To cozen beggary, and knock my house o' th' head.

KNIGHT

Oh, in a cooler blood you will repent it!

HUSBAND

I repent now, that one's left unkill'd,

My brat at nurse. Oh, I would full fain have wean'd him!

KNIGHT

Well, I do not think but in tomorrow's judgment

The terror will sit closer to your soul

When the dread thought of death remembers you;

To further which, take this sad voice from me:

Never was act play'd more unnaturally.

HUSBAND

I thank you, sir.

KNIGHT

Go, lead him to the jail,

Where justice claims all; there must pity fail.

HUSBAND

Come, come, away with me.

Exit *[the Husband as]* prisoner.

MASTER

Sir, you deserve the worship of your place;

Would all did so: in you the law is grace.

KNIGHT

It is my wish it should be so. Ruinous man,

The desolation of his house, the blot

Upon his predecessors' honour'd name:

That man is nearest shame that is past shame.

[Exeunt.]

Scene x. Outside the Husband's house

Enter Husband with the officers, the Master and Gentlemen as going by his house.

HUSBAND

I am right against my house, seat of my ancestors.

I hear my wife's alive, but much endangered:

Let me entreat to speak with her before

The prison gripe me.

Enter his Wife brought in a chair.

[FIRST] GENTLEMAN

See, here she comes of herself.

WIFE

Oh, my sweet husband, my dear distressed husband,
Now in the hands of unrelenting laws,
My greatest sorrow, my extremest bleeding,
Now my soul bleeds!

HUSBAND

How now? Kind to me? Did I not wound thee, left thee for dead?

WIFE

Tut, far greater wounds did my breast feel:

Unkindness strikes a deeper wound than steel.
You have been still unkind to me.

HUSBAND

Faith, and so I think I have.
I did my murthers roughly out of hand,

Desperate and sudden, but thou hast devis'd

A fine way now to kill me; thou hast given mine eyes

Seven wounds a piece. Now glides the devil from

Me, departs at every joint, heaves up my nails!

Oh, catch him! New torments that were [ne'er] invented!

Bind him one thousand more, you blessed angels,

In that pit bottomless! Let him not rise

To make men act unnatural tragedies,

To spread into a father, and in fury,

Make him his children's executioners,

Murder his wife, his servants, and who not!

For that man's dark where Heaven is quite forgot.

WIFE

Oh, my repentant husband!

HUSBAND

My dear soul, whom I too much have wrong'd,

For death I die, and for this have I long'd.

WIFE

Thou shouldst not--be assured--for these faults die,

If the law could forgive as soon as I.

Children laid out.

HUSBAND

What sight is yonder?

WIFE

Oh, our two bleeding boys laid forth upon the threshold!

HUSBAND

Here's weight enough to make a heartstring crack!

Oh, were it lawful that your pretty souls

Might look from Heaven into your father's eyes,

Then should you see the penitent glasses melt,

And both your murthers shoot upon my cheeks!

But you are playing in the angels' laps,

And will not look on me,

Who, void of grace, kill'd you in beggary.

Oh, that I might my wishes now attain,

I should then wish you living were again,

Though I did beg with you, which thing I fear'd!

Oh, 'twas the enemy my eyes so blear'd!

Oh, would you could pray Heaven me to forgive

That will unto my end repentant live!

WIFE

It makes me e'en forget all other sorrows

And leaven part with this. Come, will you go?

HUSBAND

I'll kiss the blood I spilt and then I go:

My soul is bloodied, well may my lips be so.

[He kisses the children.]

Farewell, dear wife, now thou and I must part;

I of thy wrongs repent me with my heart.

WIFE

Oh, stay, thou shalt not go!

HUSBAND

That's but in vain; you must see it so.

Farewell, ye bloody ashes of my boys;

My punishments are their eternal joys.

Let every father look into my deeds,

And then their heirs may prosper while mine bleeds.

WIFE

More wretched am I now in this distress

Than former sorrows made me.

Exeunt Husband *[and Officers guarding him]* with halberds.

MASTER

Oh kind wife, be comforted!

One joy is yet unmurdered:

You have a boy at nurse: your joy's in him.

WIFE

Dearer than all is my poor husband's life.

Heaven give my body strength, which yet is faint

With much expense of blood, and I will kneel,

Sue for his life, number up all my friends

To plead for pardon my dear husband's life.

MASTER

Was it in man to wound so kind a creature?

I'll ever praise a woman for thy sake.

I must return with grief, my answer's set.

I shall bring news weighs heavier than the debt:

Two brothers, one in bond lies overthrown,

This on a deadlier execution.

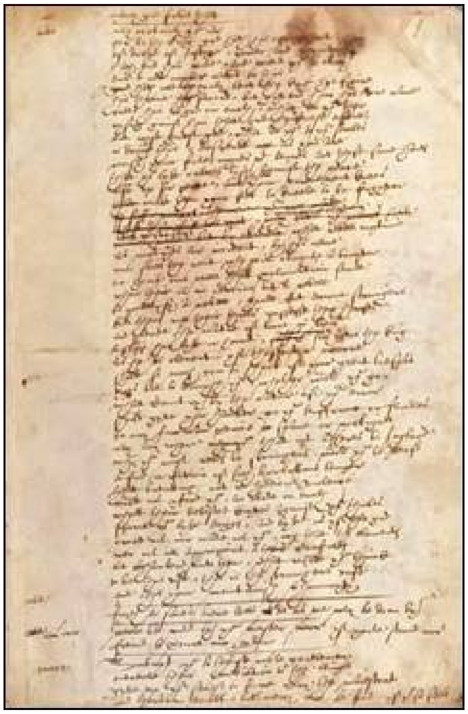
Finis.

SIR THOMAS MORE

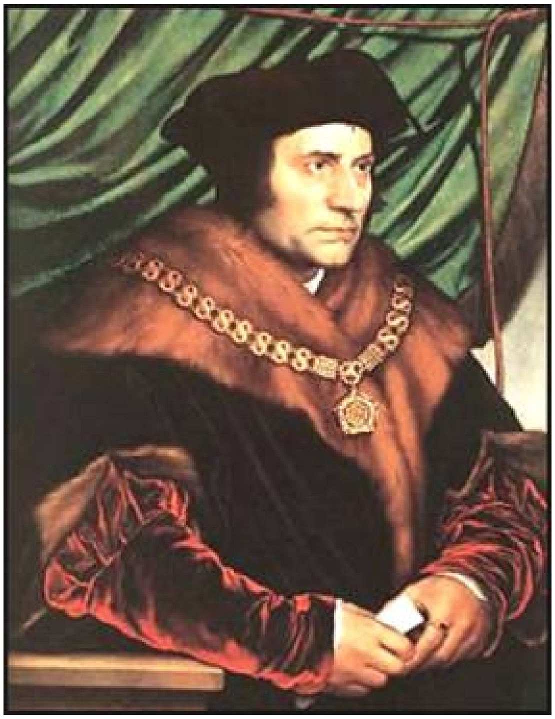
This play depicts the life of Thomas More, Henry VIII’s ill-fated adviser. The text survives only in a single manuscript, now owned by the British Library. Its main claim to fame is that three pages of it may have been written in Shakespeare's hand, but the manuscript is also important for what it reveals about censorship of Elizabethan drama.

The Shakespearean appearance of the additions to the play was first noted in 1871-2, by Richard Simpson, a prominent Shakespeare scholar of that era, and by James Spedding, editor of the works of Sir Francis Bacon. In 1916, the paleographer Sir Edward Maunde Thompson judged the addition in Hand D to be in Shakespeare's handwriting. The case was strengthened in 1923, with the publication of *Shakespeare's Hand in the Play of Sir Thomas More* , by a quintet of major scholars, who analyzed the play from multiple perspectives, all of which led to the same affirmative conclusion.

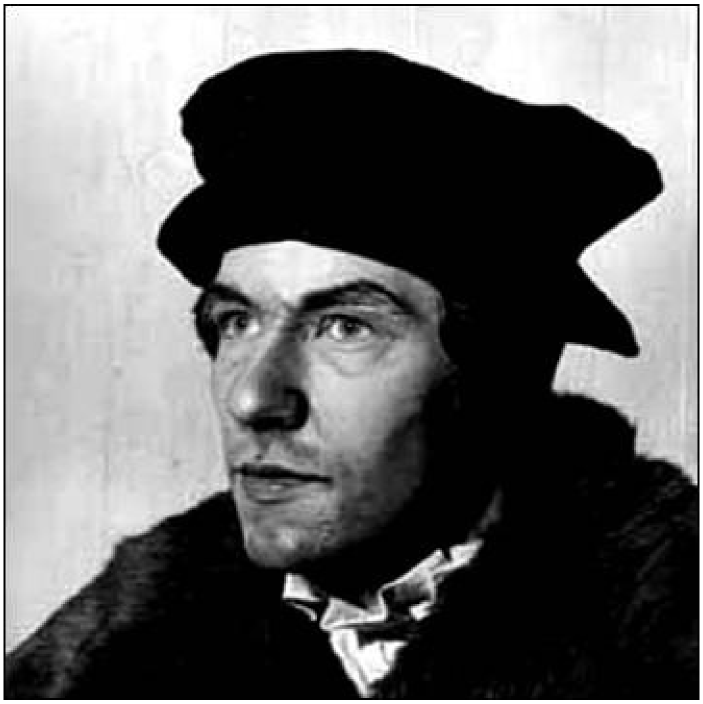
The play dramatises events in More's life, both real and legendary, in an episodic manner unified only by the rise and fall of More's fortunes. It begins with the Ill May Day events of 1517, in which More, as undersheriff of London, quells riots directed at immigrants living in London. In these scenes, More is made to express a doctrine of passive submission to civil authority which, while hardly appropriate to his fame, is pure late-Tudor orthodoxy.



Facsimile of the page written by 'Hand D', supposedly by Shakespeare



Sir Thomas Moore



Sir Ian McKellen in the title role during the play’s first performance in 1964

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ACT III.

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DRAMATIS PERSONAE.

Earl of SHREWSBURY.
Earl of SURREY.
Sir THOMAS PALMER.
Sir ROGER CHOMLEY.
Sir THOMAS MORE.
Lord Mayor.
Aldermen.
SURESBY, a Justice.
Other Justices.
Sheriffs.
Recorder.
Sergeant at Arms.
Clerk of the Council.
ERASMUS.
Bishop of Rochester.
ROPER, son-in-law to MORE.
JOHN LINCOLN, a broker.
GEORGE BETTS.
His brother (the 'Clown').
WILLIAMSON, a carpenter.
SHERWIN, a goldsmith.
FRANCIS DE BARDE, Lombard.
CAVELER, Lombard.
LIFTER, a cutpurse.
SMART, plaintiff against him.
HARRY, ROBIN, KIT, and others, Prentices.
MORRIS.
FAULKNER, his servant.
Players.
GOUGH.
CATESBY.

RANDALL.
Butler.
Brewer.
Porter.
Horsekeeper.
CROFTS.
DOWNES.
Lieutenant of the Tower.
Warders of the Tower.
Gentleman Porter of the Tower.
Hangman.

Lords, Gentlemen, Officers, Messengers, Guard, Attendants.

Lady MORE.
Lady Mayoress.
Mistress ROPER, daughter to MORE.
Another daughter to MORE.
DOLL, wife to WILLIAMSON.
A Poor Woman.
Ladies.

ACT I.

SCENE I. London. A Street.

[Enter, at one end, John Lincoln, with the two Bettses together; at the other end, enters Francis de Barde and Doll a lusty woman, he haling her by the arm.]

DOLL.
Whether wilt thou hale me?

BARDE.
Whether I please; thou art my prize, and I plead purchase of thee.

DOLL.

Purchase of me! away, ye rascal! I am an honest plain carpenters wife, and though I have no beauty to like a husband, yet whatsoever is mine scorns to stoop to a stranger: hand off, then, when I bid thee!

BARDE.
Go with me quietly, or I'll compel thee.

DOLL.

Compel me, ye dog's face! thou thinkst thou hast the goldsmith's wife in hand, whom thou enticedst from her husband with all his plate, and when thou turndst her home to him again, madst him, like an ass, pay for his wife's board.

BARDE.
So will I make thy husband too, if please me.

[Enter Caveler with a pair of doves; Williamson the carpenter, and
Sherwin following him.]

DOLL.
Here he comes himself; tell him so, if thou darst.

CAVELER.
Follow me no further; I say thou shalt not have them.

WILLIAMSON.
I bought them in Cheapside, and paid my money for them.

SHERWIN.

He did, sir, indeed; and you offer him wrong, both to take them from him, and not restore him his money neither.

CAVELER.

If he paid for them, let it suffice that I possess them: beefs and brews may serve such hinds; are pigeons meat for a coarse carpenter?

LINCOLN.

It is hard when Englishmen's patience must be thus jetted on by strangers, and they not dare to revenge their own wrongs.

GEORGE.
Lincoln, let's beat them down, and bear no more of these abuses.

LINCOLN.
We may not, Betts: be patient, and hear more.

DOLL.

How now, husband! what, one stranger take they food from thee, and another thy wife! by our Lady, flesh and blood, I think, can hardly brook that.

LINCOLN.

Will this gear never be otherwise? must these wrongs be thus endured?

GEORGE.
Let us step in, and help to revenge their injury.

BARDE.

What art thou that talkest of revenge? my lord ambassador shall once more make your Major have a check, if he punish thee for this saucy presumption.

WILLIAMSON.

Indeed, my lord Mayor, on the ambassador's complaint, sent me to Newgate one day, because (against my will) I took the wall of a stranger: you may do any thing; the goldsmith's wife and mine now must be at your commandment.

GEORGE.
The more patient fools are ye both, to suffer it.

BARDE.

Suffer it! mend it thou or he, if ye can or dare. I tell thee, fellows, and she were the Mayor of London's wife, had I her once in my possession, I would keep her in spite of him that durst say nay.

GEORGE.
I tell thee, Lombard, these words should cost thy best cape, were I
not curbed by duty and obedience: the Mayor of London's wife!
Oh God, shall it be thus?

DOLL.

Why, Betts, am not I as dear t m husband as my lord Mayor's wife to him? and wilt thou so neglectly suffer thine own shame?—Hands off, proud stranger! or, by him that bought me, if men's milky hearts dare not strike a stranger, yet women beat them down, ere they bear these abuses.

BARDE.
Mistress, I say you shall along with me.

DOLL.

Touch not Doll Williamson, least she lay thee along on God's dear earth.—And you, sir *[To Caveler]* , that allow such coarse cates to carpenters, whilst pigeons, which they pay for, must serve your dainty appetite, deliver them back to my husband again, or I'll call so many women to mine assistance as will not leave one inch untorn of thee: if our husbands must be bridled by law, and forced to bear your wrongs, their wives will be a little lawless, and soundly beat ye.

CAVELER.

Come away, De Barde, and let us go complain to my lord ambassador.

[Exeunt Ambo.]

DOLL.

Aye, go, and send him among us, and we'll give him his welcome too.—I am ashamed that freeborn Englishmen, having beaten strangers within their own homes, should thus be braved and abused by them at home.

SHERWIN.

It is not our lack of courage in the cause, but the strict obedience that we are bound to. I am the goldsmith whose wrongs you talked of; but how to redress yours or mine own is a matter beyond our abilities.

LINCOLN.

Not so, not so, my good friends: I, though a mean man, a broker by profession, and named John Lincoln, have long time winked at these wild enormities with mighty impatience, and, as these two brethren here (Betts by name) can witness, with loss of mine own life would gladly remedy them.

GEORGE.
And he is in a good forwardness, I tell ye, if all hit right.

DOLL.
As how, I prithee? tell it to Doll Williamson.

LINCOLN.

You know the Spittle sermons begin the next week: I have drawn a bill of our wrongs and the strangers' insolences.

GEORGE.

Which he means the preachers shall there openly publish in the pulpit.

WILLIAMSON.

Oh, but that they would! yfaith, it would tickle our strangers thoroughly.

DOLL.

Aye, and if you men durst not undertake it, before God, we women would. Take an honest woman from her husband! why, it is intolerable.

SHERWIN.
But how find ye the preachers affected to our proceeding?

LINCOLN.

Master Doctor Standish hath answered that it becomes not him to move any such thing in his sermon, and tells us we must move the Mayor and aldermen to reform it, and doubts not but happy success will ensue on statement of our wrongs. You shall perceive there's no hurt in the bill: here's a couple of it; I pray ye, hear it.

ALL.
With all our hearts; for God's sake, read it.

LINCOLN.

[Reads.] To you all, the worshipful lords and masters of this city, that will take compassion over the poor people your neighbors, and also of the great importable hurts, losses, and hinderances, whereof proceedeth extreme poverty to all the king's subjects that inhabit within this city and suburbs of the same: for so it is that aliens and strangers eat the bread from the fatherless children, and take the living from all the artificers and the intercourse from all the merchants, whereby poverty is so much increased, that every man bewaileth the misery of other; for craftsmen be brought to beggary, and merchants to neediness: wherefore, the premises considered, the redress must be of the common knit and united to one part: and as the hurt and damage grieveth all men, so must all men see to their willing power for remedy, and not suffer the said aliens in their wealth, and the natural born men of this region to come to confusion.

DOLL.
Before God, tis excellent; and I'll maintain the suit to be honest.

SHERWIN.
Well, say tis read, what is your further meaning in the matter?

GEORGE.

What! marry, list to me. No doubt but this will store us with friends enow, whose names we will closely keep in writing; and on May day next in the morning we'll go forth a Maying, but make it the worst May day for the strangers that ever they saw. How say ye? do ye subscribe, or are ye faint-hearted revolters?

DOLL.
Hold thee, George Betts, there's my hand and my heart: by the
Lord, I'll make a captain among ye, and do somewhat to be talk of
for ever after.

WILLIAMSON.

My masters, ere we part, let's friendly go and drink together, and swear true secrecy upon our lives.

GEORGE.
There spake an angel. Come, let us along, then.

[Exeunt.]

SCENE II. London. The Sessions House.

[An arras is drawn, and behind it as in sessions sit the Lord Mayor, Justice Suresby, and other Justices; Sheriff More and the other Sheriff sitting by. Smart is the plaintiff, Lifter the prisoner at the bar. Recorder, Officers.]

LORD MAYOR.
Having dispatched our weightier businesses,
We may give ear to petty felonies.
Master Sheriff More, what is this fellow?

MORE.
My lord, he stands indicted for a purse;
He hath been tried, the jury is together.

LORD MAYOR.
Who sent him in?

SURESBY.
That did I, my lord:
Had he had right, he had been hanged ere this;
The only captain of the cutpurse crew.

LORD MAYOR.
What is his name?

SURESBY.
As his profession is, Lifter, my lord,
One that can lift a purse right cunningly.

LORD MAYOR.
And is that he accuses him?

SURESBY.
The same, my lord, whom, by your honors leave,
I must say somewhat too, because I find
In some respects he is well worthy blame.

LORD MAYOR.
Good Master Justice Suresby, speak your mind;
We are well pleased to give you audience.

SURESBY.
Hear me, Smart; thou art a foolish fellow:
If Lifter be convicted by the law,
As I see not how the jury can acquit him,
I'll stand too 't thou art guilty of his death.

MORE.
My lord, that's worthy the hearing.

LORD MAYOR.
Listen, then, good Master More.

SURESBY.
I tell thee plain, it is a shame for thee,
With such a sum to tempt necessity;
No less than ten pounds, sir, will serve your turn,
To carry in your purse about with ye,
To crake and brag in taverns of your money:
I promise ye, a man that goes abroad
With an intent of truth, meeting such a booty,
May be provoked to that he never meant.
What makes so many pilferers and felons,
But such fond baits that foolish people lay
To tempt the needy miserable wretch?

Ten pounds, odd money; this is a pretty sum
To bear about, which were more safe at home.
Fore God, twere well to fine ye as much more

[Lord Mayor and More whisper.]

To the relief of the poor prisoners,
To teach ye be more careful of your own,
In sooth, I say ye were but rightly served,
If ye had lost as much as twice ten pounds.

MORE.
Good my lord, sooth a point or two for once,
Only to try conclusions in this case.

LORD MAYOR.
Content, good Master More: we'll rise awhile,
And, till the jury can return their verdict,
Walk in the garden.—How say ye, Justices?

ALL.
We like it well, my lord; we'll follow ye.

[Exeunt Lord Mayor and Justices.]

MORE.
Nay, plaintiff, go you too;—and officers,

[Exeunt Smart.]

Stand you aside, and leave the prisoner
To me awhile.—Lifter, come hither.

LIFTER.
What is your worship's pleasure?

MORE.
Sirrah, you know that you are known to me,
And I have often saved ye from this place,
Since first I came in office: thou seest beside,

That Justice Suresby is thy heavy friend,
By all the blame that he pretends to Smart,
For tempting thee with such a sum of money.
I tell thee what; devise me but a means
To pick or cut his purse, and, on my credit,
And as I am a Christian and a man,
I will procure they pardon for that jest.

LIFTER.
Good Master Shrieve, seek not my overthrow:
You know, sir, I have many heavy friends,
And more indictments like to come upon me.
You are too deep for me to deal withal;
You are known to be one of the wisest men
That is in England: I pray ye, Master Sheriff,
Go not about to undermine my life.

MORE.
Lifter, I am true subject to my king;
Thou much mistake me: and, for thou shall not think
I mean by this to hurt thy life at all,
I will maintain the act when thou hast done it.
Thou knowest there are such matters in my hands,
As if I pleased to give them to the jury,
I should not need this way to circumvent thee.
All that I aim at is a merry jest:
Perform it, Lifter, and expect my best.

LIFTER.
I thank your worship: God preserve your life!
But Master Justice Suresby is gone in;
I know not how to come near where he is.

MORE.
Let me alone for that; I'll be thy setter;
I'll send him hither to thee presently,
Under the colour of thine own request,
Of private matters to acquaint him with.

LIFTER.
If ye do so, sir, then let me alone;
Forty to one but then his purse is gone.

MORE.
Well said: but see that thou diminish not
One penny of the money, but give it me;
It is the cunning act that credits thee.

LIFTER.
I will, good Master Sheriff, I assure ye.

[Exeunt More.]

I see the purpose of this gentleman
Is but to check the folly of the Justice,
For blaming others in a desperate case,
Wherein himself may fall as soon as any.
To save my life, it is a good adventure:
Silence there, ho! now doth the Justice enter.

[Enter Justice Suresby.]

SURESBY.
Now, sirrah, now, what is your will with me?
Wilt thou discharge thy conscience like an honest man?
What sayest to me, sirrah? be brief, be brief.

LIFTER.
As brief, sir, as I can.—
[Aside.] If ye stand fair, I will be brief anon.

SURESBY.
Speak out, and mumble not; what sayest thou, sirrah?

LIFTER.
Sir, I am charged, as God shall be my comfort,
With more than's true.

SURESBY.

Sir, sir, ye are indeed, with more than's true,
For you are flatly charged with felony;
You're charged with more than truth, and that is theft;
More than a true man should be charged withal;
Thou art a varlet, that's no more than true.
Trifle not with me; do not, do not, sirrah;
Confess but what thou knowest, I ask no more.

LIFTER.
There be, sir, there be, if't shall please your worship—

SURESBY.
There be, varlet! what be there? tell me what there be.
Come off or on: there be! what be there, knave?

LIFTER.
There be, sir, diverse very cunning fellows,
That, while you stand and look them in the face,
Will have your purse.

SURESBY.
Th'art an honest knave:
Tell me what are they? where they may be caught?
Aye, those are they I look for.

LIFTER.
You talk of me, sir;
Alas, I am a puny! there's one indeed
Goes by my name, he puts down all for purses;
He'll steal your worship's purse under your nose.

SURESBY.
Ha, ha! Art thou so sure, varlet?
Well, well,
Be as familiar as thou wilt, my knave;
Tis this I long to know.

LIFTER.
And you shall have your longing ere ye go.—
This fellow, sir, perhaps will meet ye thus,

Or thus, or thus, and in kind complement
Pretend acquaintance, somewhat doubtfully;
And these embraces serve—

SURESBY.
Aye, marry, Lifter, wherefor serve they?

[Shrugging gladly.]

LIFTER.
Only to feel
Whether you go full under sail or no,
Or that your lading be aboard your bark.

SURESBY.
In plainer English, Lifter, if my purse
Be stored or no?

LIFTER.
Ye have it, sir.

SURESBY.
Excellent, excellent.

LIFTER.
Then, sir, you cannot but for manner's sake
Walk on with him; for he will walk your way,
Alleging either you have much forgot him,
Or he mistakes you.

SURESBY.
But in this time has he my purse or no?

LIFTER.
Not yet, sir, fie!—
[Aside.} No, nor I have not yours.—

[Enter Lord Mayor, &c.]

But now we must forbear; my lords return.

SURESBY.
A murren on't!—Lifter, we'll more anon:
Aye, thou sayest true, there are shrewd knaves indeed:

[He sits down.]

But let them gull me, widgen me, rook me, fop me!
Yfaith, yfaith, they are too short for me.
Knaves and fools meet when purses go:
Wise men look to their purses well enough.

MORE.
[Aside.] Lifter, is it done?

LIFTER.
[Aside.] Done, Master Shreeve; and there it is.

MORE.
[Aside.] Then build upon my word. I'll save thy life.

RECORDER.
Lifter, stand to the bar:
The jury have returned the guilty; thou must die,
According to the custom.—Look to it, Master Shreeve.

LORD MAYOR.
Then, gentlemen, as you are wont to do,
Because as yet we have no burial place,
What charity your meaning's to bestow
Toward burial of the prisoners now condemned,
Let it be given. There is first for me.

RECORDER.
And there for me.

ANOTHER.
And me.

SURESBY.
Body of me, my purse is gone!

MORE.
Gone, sir! what, here! how can that be?

LORD MAYOR.
Against all reason, sitting on the bench.

SURESBY.
Lifter, I talked with you; you have not lifted me? ha!

LIFTER.
Suspect ye me, sir? Oh, what a world is this!

MORE.
But hear ye, master Suresby; are ye sure
Ye had a purse about ye?

SURESBY.
Sure, Master Shrieve! as sure as you are there,
And in it seven pounds, odd money, on my faith.

MORE.
Seven pounds, odd money! what, were you so mad,
Being a wise man and a magistrate,
To trust your purse with such a liberal sum?
Seven pounds, odd money! fore God, it is a shame,
With such a sum to tempt necessity:
I promise ye, a man that goes abroad
With an intent of truth, meeting such a booty,
May be wrought to that he never thought.
What makes so many pilferers and felons,
But these fond baits that foolish people lay
To tempt the needy miserable wretch?
Should he be taken now that has your purse,
I'd stand to't, you are guilty of his death;
For, questionless, he would be cast by law.
Twere a good deed to fine ye as much more,
To the relief of the poor prisoners,
To teach ye lock your money up at home.

SURESBY.

Well, Master More, you are a merry man;
I find ye, sir, I find ye well enough.

MORE.
Nay, ye shall see, sir, trusting thus your money,
And Lifter here in trial for like case,
But that the poor man is a prisoner,
It would be now suspected that he had it.
Thus may ye see what mischief often comes
By the fond carriage of such needless sums.

LORD MAYOR.
Believe me, Master Suresby, this is strange,
You, being a man so settled in assurance,
Will fall in that which you condemned in other.

MORE.
Well, Master Suresby, there's your purse again,
And all your money: fear nothing of More;
Wisdom still keeps the mean and locks the door.

SCENE III. London. A state apartment.

[Enter the Earls of Shrewsbury and Surrey, Sir Thomas Palmer, and Sir Roger Cholmley.]

SHREWSBURY.
My lord of Surrey, and Sir Thomas Palmer
Might I with patience tempt your grave advise,
I tell ye true, that in these dangerous times
I do not like this frowning vulgar brow:
My searching eye did never entertain
A more distracted countenance of grief
Than I have late observed
In the displeased commons of the city.

SURREY.

Tis strange that from his princely clemency,
So well a tempered mercy and a grace,
To all the aliens in this fruitful land,
That this high-crested insolence should spring
From them that breathe from his majestic bounty,
That, fattened with the traffic of our country,
Already leaps into his subject's face.

PALMER.
Yet Sherwin, hindered to commence his suit
Against De Barde by the ambassador,
By supplication made unto the king,
Who having first enticed away his wife,
And got his plate, near worth four hundred pound,
To grieve some wronged citizens that found
This vile disgrace oft cast into their teeth,
Of late sues Sherwin, and arrested him
For money for the boarding of his wife.

SURREY.
The more knave Barde, that, using Sherwin's goods,
Doth ask him interest for the occupation.
I like not that, my lord of Shrewsbury:
He's ill bested that lends a well paced horse
Unto a man that will not find him meet.

CHOLMLEY.
My lord of Surrey will be pleasant still.

PALMER.
Aye, being then employed by your honors
To stay the broil that fell about the same,
Where by persuasion I enforced the wrongs,
And urged the grief of the displeased city,
He answered me, and with a solemn oath,
That, if he had the Mayor of London's wife,
He would keep her in despite of any English.

SURREY.

Tis good, Sir Thomas, then, for you and me;
Your wife is dead, and I a bachelor:
If no man can possess his wife alone,
I am glad, Sir Thomas Palmer, I have none.

CHOLMLEY.
If a take a wife, a shall find her meet.

SURREY.
And reason good, Sir Roger Cholmley, too.
If these hot Frenchmen needsly will have sport,
They should in kindness yet defray the charge:
Tis hard when men possess our wives in quiet,
And yet leave us in, to discharge their diet.

SHREWSBURY.
My lord, our catours shall not use the market
For our provision, but some stranger now
Will take the vittailes from him he hath bought:
A carpenter, as I was late informed,
Who having bought a pair of doves in Cheap,
Immediately a Frenchman took them from him,
And beat the poor man for resisting him;
And when the fellow did complain his wrongs,
He was severely punished for his labor.

SURREY.
But if the English blood be once but up,
As I perceive their hearts already full,
I fear me much, before their spleens be cold,
Some of these saucy aliens for their pride
Will pay for 't soundly, wheresoere it lights:
This tide of rage that with the eddy strives,
I fear me much, will drown too many lives.

CHOLMLEY.
Now, afore God, your honors, pardon me:
Men of your place and greatness are to blame.
I tell ye true, my lords, in that his majesty

Is not informed of this base abuse
And daily wrongs are offered to his subjects;
For, if he were, I know his gracious wisdom
Would soon redress it.

[Enter a Messenger.]

SHREWSBURY.
Sirrah, what news?

CHOLMLEY.
None good, I fear.

MESSENGER.
My lord, ill news; and worse, I fear, will follow,
If speedily it be not looked unto:
The city is in an uproar, and the Mayor
Is threatened, if he come out of his house.
A number poor artificers are up
In arms and threaten to avenge their wrongs.

CHOLMLEY.
We feared what this would come unto:
This follows on the doctors publishing
The bill of wrongs in public at the Spittle.

SHREWSBURY.
That Doctor Beale may chance beshrew himself
For reading of the bill.

PALMER.
Let us go gather forces to the Mayor,
For quick suppressing this rebellious route.

SURREY.
Now I bethink myself of Master More,
One of the sheriffs, a wise and learned gentleman,
And in especial favour with the people:
He, backed with other grave and sober men,
May by his gentle and persuasive speech

Perhaps prevail more than we can with power.

SHREWSBURY.
Believe me, but your honor well advises:
Let us make haste; for I do greatly fear
Some of their graves this morning's work will bear.

[Exeunt.]

ACT II.

SCENE I. Cheapside.

[Enter three or four Apprentices of trades, with a pair of cudgels.]

HARRY.
Come, lay down the cudgels. Ho, Robin, you met us well at
Bunhill, to have you with us a Maying this morning.

ROBIN.

Faith, Harry, the head drawer at the Miter by the great Conduit called me up, and we went to breakfast into St. Anne lane. But come, who begins? in good faith, I am clean out of practise. When wast at Garrets school, Harry?

HARRY.
Not this great while, never since I brake his ushers head, when he
played his scholars prize at the Star in Bread-street. I use all to
George Philpots at Dowgate; he's the best backswordman in
England.

KIT.
Bate me an ace of that, quoth Bolton.

HARRY.

I'll not bate ye a pin on 't, sir; for, by this cudgel, tis true.

KIT.

I will cudgel that opinion out of ye: did you break an ushers head, sir?

HARRY.
Aye, marry, did I, sir.

KIT.
I am very glad on 't: you shall break mine too, and ye can.

HARRY.
Sirrah, I prithee, what art thou?

KIT.

Why, I am a prentice as thou art; seest thou now? I'll play with thee at blunt here in Cheapside, and when thou hast done, if thou beest angry, I'll fight with thee at sharp in Moore fields. I have a sword to serve my turn in a favor. . . . come Julie, to serve . . . .

SCENE II. Saint Martins-le-Grand.

[Enter Lincoln, two Bettses, Williamson, Sherwin, and other, armed; Doll in a shirt of mail, a headpiece, sword, and buckler; a crew attending.]

CLOWN.
Come, come; we'll tickle their turnips, we'll butter their boxes.
Shall strangers rule the roost? yes; but we'll baste the roost. Come,
come; a flaunt, a flaunt!

GEORGE.
Brother, give place, and hear John Lincoln speak.

CLOWN.
Aye, Lincoln my leader,

And Doll my true breeder,
With the rest of our crew,
Shall ran tan tarra ran;
Do all they what they can.
Shall we be bobbed, braved? no:
Shall we be held under? no;
We are freeborne,
And do take scorn
To be used so.

DOLL.

Peace there, I say! hear Captain Lincoln speak; keep silence, till we know his mind at large.

CLOWN.

Then largely deliver; speak, bully: and he that presumes to interrupt thee in thy oration, this for him.

LINCOLN.
Then, gallant bloods, you whose free souls do scorn
To bear the inforced wrongs of aliens,
Add rage to resolution, fire the houses
Of these audacious strangers. This is St. Martins,
And yonder dwells Mutas, a wealthy Piccardy,
At the Green Gate,
De Barde, Peter Van Hollocke, Adrian Martine,
With many more outlandish fugitives.
Shall these enjoy more privilege than we
In our own country? let's, then, become their slaves.
Since justice keeps not them in greater awe,
We be ourselves rough ministers at law.

CLOWN.

Use no more swords, nor no more words, but fire the houses; brave captain courageous, fire me their houses.

DOLL.

Aye, for we may as well make bonfires on May day as at midsummer: we'll alter the day in the calendar, and set it down in flaming letters.

SHERWIN.
Stay!
No, that would much endanger the whole city,
Whereto I would not the least prejudice.

DOLL.
No, nor I neither; so may mine own house be burned for company.
I'll tell ye what: we'll drag the strangers into More fields, and there
bombast them till they stink again.

CLOWN.
And that's soon done; for they smell for fear already.

GEORGE.
Let some of us enter the strangers' houses,
And, if we find them there, then bring them forth.

DOLL.
But if ye bring them forth ere ye find them, I'll ne'er allow of that.

CLOWN.
Now, Mars, for thy honor,
Dutch or French,
So it be a wench,
I'll upon her.

[Exeunt some and Sherwin.]

WILLIAMSON.
Now, lads, sure shall we labor in our safety.
I hear the Mayor hath gathered men in arms,
And that Shreeve More an hour ago rised
Some of the Privy Counsel in at Ludgate:
Force now must make our peace, or else we fall;
'Twill soon be known we are the principal.

DOLL.

And what of that? if thou beest afraid, husband, go home again, and hide they head; for, by the Lord, I'll have a little sport, now we are at it.

GEORGE.
Let's stand upon our swords, and, if they come,
Receive them as they were our enemies.

[Enter Sherwin and the rest.]

CLOWN.
A purchase, a purchase! we have found, we ha found—

DOLL.
What?

CLOWN.

Nothing; not a French Fleming nor a Fleming French to be found; but all fled, in plain English.

LINCOLN.
How now! have you found any?

SHERWIN.
No, not one; they're all fled.

LINCOLN.
Then fire the houses, that, the Mayor being busy
About the quenching of them, we may escape;
Burn down their kennels: let us straight away,
Least this day prove to us an ill May day.

CLOWN.
Fire, fire! I'll be the first:
If hanging come, tis welcome; that's the worst.

[Exeunt.]

SCENE III. The Guildhall.

[Enter at one door Sir Thomas More and Lord Mayor; at another door Sir John Munday hurt.]

LORD MAYOR.
What, Sir John Munday, are you hurt?

SIR JOHN.
A little knock, my lord. There was even now
A sort of prentices playing at cudgels;
I did command them to their masters' houses;
But now, I fear me, they are gone to join
With Lincoln, Sherwin, and their dangerous train.

MORE.
The captains of this insurrection
Have taken themselves to arms, and came but now
To both the Counters, where they have released
Sundry indebted prisoners, and from thence
I hear that they are gone into St. Martins,
Where they intend to offer violence
To the amazed Lombards: therefore, my lord,
If we expect the safety of the city,
Tis time that force or parley do encounter
With these displeased men.

[Enter a Messenger.]

LORD MAYOR.
How now! what news?

MESSENGER.
My lord, the rebels have broke open Newgate,
From whence they have delivered many prisoners,
Both felons and notorious murderers,
That desperately cleave to their lawless train.

LORD MAYOR.

Up with the drawbridge, gather some forces
To Cornhill and Cheapside:—and, gentlemen,
If diligence be weighed on every side,
A quiet ebb will follow this rough tide.

[Enter Shrewsbury, Surrey, Palmer, and Cholmley.]

SHREWSBURY.
Lord Mayor, his majesty, receiving notice
Of this most dangerous insurrection,
Hath sent my lord of Surrey and myself,
Sir Thomas Palmer and our followers,
To add unto your forces our best means
For pacifying of this mutiny.
In God's name, then, set on with happy speed!
The king laments, if one true subject bleed.

SURREY.
I hear they mean to fire the Lombards' houses:
Oh power, what art thou in a madman's eyes!
Thou makest the plodding idiot bloody-wise.

MORE.
My lords, I doubt not but we shall appease
With a calm breath this flux of discontent:
To call them to a parley, questionless—

PALMER.
May fall out good: tis well said, Master More.

MORE.
Let's to these simple men; for many sweat
Under this act, that knows not the law's debt
Which hangs upon their lives; for silly men
Plod on they know not how, like a fool's pen,
That, ending, shows not any sentence writ,
Linked but to common reason or slightest wit:
These follow for no harm; but yet incur
Self penalty with those that raised this stir.

A God's name, on, to calm our private foes
With breath of gravity, not dangerous blows!

SCENE IV. St. Martin's Gate.

[Enter Lincoln, Doll, Clown, George Betts, Williamson, others; and a Sergeant at Arms.]

LINCOLN.

Peace, hear me: he that will not see a red herring at a Harry groat, butter at elevenpence a pound, meal at nine shillings a bushel, and beef at four nobles a stone, list to me.

GEORGE.
It will come to that pass, if strangers be suffered. Mark him.

LINCOLN.

Our country is a great eating country; ergo, they eat more in our country than they do in their own.

CLOWN.
By a halfpenny loaf, a day, troy weight.

LINCOLN.

They bring in strange roots, which is merely to the undoing of poor prentices; for what's a sorry parsnip to a good heart?

WILLIAMSON.

Trash, trash; they breed sore eyes, and tis enough to infect the city with the palsey.

LINCOLN.

Nay, it has infected it with the palsey; for these bastards of dung, as you know they grow in dung, have infected us, and it is our infection will make the city shake, which partly comes through the eating of parsnips.

CLOWN.
True; and pumpkins together.

SERGEANT.
What say ye to the mercy of the king?
Do ye refuse it?

LINCOLN.

You would have us upon this, would you? no, marry, do we not; we accept of the king's mercy, but we will show no mercy upon the strangers.

SERGEANT.
You are the simplest things that ever stood
In such a question.

LINCOLN.
How say ye now, prentices? prentices simple! down with him!

ALL.
Prentices simple! prentices simple!

[Enter the Lord Mayor, Surrey, Shrewsbury, More.]

LORD MAYOR.
Hold! in the king's name, hold!

SURREY.
Friends, masters, countrymen—

LORD MAYOR.
Peace, how, peace! I charge you, keep the peace!

SHREWSBURY.
My masters, countrymen—

WILLIAMSON.

The noble earl of Shrewsbury, let's hear him.

GEORGE.
We'll hear the earl of Surrey.

LINCOLN.
The earl of Shrewsbury.

GEORGE.
We'll hear both.

ALL.
Both, both, both, both!

LINCOLN.
Peace, I say, peace! are you men of wisdom, or what are you?

SURREY.
What you will have them; but not men of wisdom.

ALL.
We'll not hear my lord of Surrey; no, no, no, no, no! Shrewsbury, Shrewsbury!

MORE.
Whiles they are o'er the bank of their obedience,
Thus will they bear down all things.

LINCOLN.
Sheriff More speaks; shall we hear Sheriff More speak?

DOLL.
Let's hear him: a keeps a plentyful shrievaltry, and a made my brother Arthur Watchins Seriant Safes yeoman: let's hear Shrieve More.

ALL.
Shrieve More, More, More, Shrieve More!

MORE.

Even by the rule you have among yourselves,
Command still audience.

ALL.
Surrey, Surrey! More, More!

LINCOLN:
Peace, peace, silence, peace.

GEORGE.
Peace, peace, silence, peace.

MORE.
You that have voice and credit with the number
Command them to a stillness.

LINCOLN.

A plague on them, they will not hold their peace; the dual cannot rule them.

MORE.
Then what a rough and riotous charge have you,
To lead those that the dual cannot rule?—
Good masters, hear me speak.

DOLL.

Aye, by th' mass, will we, More: th' art a good housekeeper, and I thank thy good worship for my brother Arthur Watchins.

ALL.
Peace, peace.

MORE.
Look, what you do offend you cry upon,
That is, the peace: not one of you here present,
Had there such fellows lived when you were babes,
That could have topped the peace, as now you would,
The peace wherein you have till now grown up
Had been ta'en from you, and the bloody times

Could not have brought you to the state of men.
Alas, poor things, what is it you have got,
Although we grant you get the thing you seek?

GEORGE.

Marry, the removing of the strangers, which cannot choose but much advantage the poor handicrafts of the city.

MORE.
Grant them removed, and grant that this your noise
Hath chid down all the majesty of England;
Imagine that you see the wretched strangers,
Their babies at their backs and their poor luggage,
Plodding tooth ports and costs for transportation,
And that you sit as kings in your desires,
Authority quite silent by your brawl,
And you in ruff of your opinions clothed;
What had you got? I'll tell you: you had taught
How insolence and strong hand should prevail,
How order should be quelled; and by this pattern
Not one of you should live an aged man,
For other ruffians, as their fancies wrought,
With self same hand, self reasons, and self right,
Would shark on you, and men like ravenous fishes
Would feed on one another.

DOLL.
Before God, that's as true as the Gospel.

LINCOLN.
Nay, this is a sound fellow, I tell you: let's mark him.

MORE.
Let me set up before your thoughts, good friends,
On supposition; which if you will mark,
You shall perceive how horrible a shape
Your innovation bears: first, tis a sin
Which oft the apostle did forewarn us of,

Urging obedience to authority;
And twere no error, if I told you all,
You were in arms against your God himself.

ALL.
Marry, God forbid that!

MORE.
Nay, certainly you are;
For to the king God hath his office lent
Of dread, of justice, power and command,
Hath bid him rule, and willed you to obey;
And, to add ampler majesty to this,
He hath not only lent the king his figure,
His throne and sword, but given him his own name,
Calls him a god on earth. What do you, then,
Rising gainst him that God himself installs,
But rise against God? what do you to your souls
In doing this? O, desperate as you are,
Wash your foul minds with tears, and those same hands,
That you like rebels lift against the peace,
Lift up for peace, and your unreverent knees,
Make them your feet to kneel to be forgiven!
Tell me but this: what rebel captain,
As mutinies are incident, by his name
Can still the rout? who will obey a traitor?
Or how can well that proclamation sound,
When there is no addition but a rebel
To qualify a rebel? You'll put down strangers,
Kill them, cut their throats, possess their houses,
And lead the majesty of law in line,
To slip him like a hound. Say now the king
(As he is clement, if th' offender mourn)
Should so much come to short of your great trespass
As but to banish you, whether would you go?
What country, by the nature of your error,
Should give you harbor? go you to France or Flanders,
To any German province, to Spain or Portugal,
Nay, any where that not adheres to England,—

Why, you must needs be strangers: would you be pleased
To find a nation of such barbarous temper,
That, breaking out in hideous violence,
Would not afford you an abode on earth,
Whet their detested knives against your throats,
Spurn you like dogs, and like as if that God
Owed not nor made not you, nor that the claimants
Were not all appropriate to your comforts,
But chartered unto them, what would you think
To be thus used? this is the strangers case;
And this your mountanish inhumanity.

ALL.
Faith, a says true: let's do as we may be done to.

LINCOLN.

We'll be ruled by you, Master More, if you'll stand our friend to procure our pardon.

MORE.
Submit you to these noble gentlemen,
Entreat their mediation to the king,
Give up yourself to form, obey the magistrate,
And there's no doubt but mercy may be found,
If you so seek.
To persist in it is present death: but, if you
Yield yourselves, no doubt what punishment
You in simplicity have incurred, his highness
In mercy will most graciously pardon.

ALL.
We yield, and desire his highness' mercy.

[They lay by their weapons.]

MORE.
No doubt his majesty will grant it you:
But you must yield to go to several prisons,
Till that his highness' will be further known.

ALL.
Most willingly; whether you will have us.

SHREWSBURY.
Lord Mayor, let them be sent to several prisons,
And there, in any case, be well intreated.—
My lord of Surrey, please you to take horse,
And ride to Cheapside, where the aldermen
Are with their several companies in arms;
Will them to go unto their several wards,
Both for the stay of furth mutiny,
And for the apprehending of such persons
As shall contend.

SURREY.
I go, my noble lord.

[Exit Surrey.]

SHREWSBURY.
We'll straight go tell his highness these good news;
Withal, Shrieve More, I'll tell him how your breath
Hath ransomed many a subject from sad death.

[Exit Shrewsbury and Cholmley.]

LORD MAYOR.
Lincoln and Sherwin, you shall both to Newgate;
The rest unto the Counters.

PALMER.
Go guard them hence: a little breath well spent
Cheats expectation in his fairest event.

DOLL.

Well, Sheriff More, thou hast done more with thy good words than all they could with their weapons: give me thy hand, keep thy promise now for the king's pardon, or, by the Lord, I'll call thee a plain coney-catcher.

LINCOLN.
Farewell, Shrieve More; and as we yield by thee,
So make our peace; then thou dealst honestly.

CLOWN.
Aye, and save us from the gallows, else a devil's double honestly!

[They are led away.]

LORD MAYOR.
Master Shrieve More, you have preserved the city
From a most dangerous fierce commotion;
For, if this limb of riot here in St. Martins
Had joined with other branches of the city
That did begin to kindle, twould have bred
Great rage; that rage much murder would have fed.
Not steel, but eloquence hath wrought this good:
You have redeemed us from much threatened blood.

MORE.
My lord and brethren, what I here have spoke,
My country's love, and next the city's care,
Enjoined me to; which since it thus prevails,
Think, God hath made weak More his instrument
To thwart sedition's violent intent.
I think twere best, my lord, some two hours hence
We meet at the Guildhall, and there determine
That thorough every ward the watch be clad
In armor, but especially proud
That at the city gates selected men,
Substantial citizens, do ward tonight,
For fear of further mischief.

LORD MAYOR.
It shall be so:
But yond me thinks my lord of Shrewsbury.

[Enter Shrewsbury.]

SHREWSBURY.

My lord, his majesty sends loving thanks
To you, your brethren, and his faithful subjects,
Your careful citizens.—But, Master More, to you
A rougher, yet as kind, a salutation:
A knights creation is this knightly steel.
Rise up, Sir Thomas More.

MORE.
I thank his highness for thus honoring me.

SHREWSBURY.
This is but first taste of his princely favor:
For it hath pleased his high majesty
(Noting your wisdom and deserving merit)
To put this staff of honor in your hand,
For he hath chose you of his Privy Council.

MORE.
My lord, for to deny my sovereign's bounty
Were to drop precious stones into the heaps
Whence they first came;
To urge my imperfections in excuse,
Were all as stale as custom: no, my lord,
My service is my kings; good reason why,—
Since life or death hangs on our sovereign's eye.

LORD MAYOR.
His majesty hath honored much the city
In this his princely choice.

MORE.
My lord and brethren,
Though I depart for court my love shall rest
With you, as heretofore, a faithful guest.
I now must sleep in court, sound sleeps forbear;
The chamberlain to state is public care:
Yet, in this rising of my private blood,
My studious thoughts shall tend the city's good.

[Enter Crofts.]

SHREWSBURY.
How now, Crofts! what news?

CROFTS.
My lord, his highness sends express command
That a record be entered of this riot,
And that the chief and capital offenders
Be thereon straight arraigned, for himself intends
To sit in person on the rest tomorrow
At Westminster.

SHREWSBURY.
Lord Mayor, you hear your charge.—
Come, good Sir Thomas More, to court let's hie;
You are th' appeaser of this mutiny.

MORE.
My lord, farewell: new days begets new tides;
Life whirls bout fate, then to a grave it slides.

[Exeunt severally.]

ACT III.

SCENE I. Cheapside.

[Enter Master Sheriff, and meet a Messenger.]

SHERIFF.
Messenger, what news?

MESSENGER.
Is execution yet performed?

SHERIFF.
Not yet; the carts stand ready at the stairs,
And they shall presently away to Tibourne.

MESSENGER.
Stay, Master Shrieve; it is the council's pleasure,
For more example in so bad a case,
A gibbet be erected in Cheapside,
Hard by the Standard; whether you must bring
Lincoln and those that were the chief with him,

[Enter Officers.]

To suffer death, and that immediately.

SHERIFF.
It shall be done, sir.

[Exit Messenger.]

—Officers, be speedy;
Call for a gibbet, see it be erected;
Others make haste to Newgate, bid them bring
The prisoners hither, for they here must die:
Away, I say, and see no time be slacked.

OFFICERS.
We go, sir.

[Exit some severally; others set up the gibbet.]

SHERIFF.
That's well said, fellow; now you do your duty.—
God for his pity help these troublous times!
The streets stopped up with gazing multitudes:
Command our armed officers with halberds
Make way for entrance of the prisoners;
Let proclamation once again be made.
That every householder, on pain of death,
Keep in his prentices, and every man
Stand with a weapon ready at his door,
As he will answer to the contrary.

OFFICER.
I'll see it done, sir.

[Exit.]

[Enter another Officer.]

SHERIFF.
Bring them away to execution:
The writ is come above two hours since:
The city will be fined for this neglect.

OFFICER.
There's such a press and multitude at Newgate,
They cannot bring the carts onto the stairs,
To take the prisoners in.

SHERIFF.
Then let them come on foot;
We may not dally time with great command.

OFFICER.
Some of the bench, sir, think it very fit
That stay be made, and give it out abroad
The execution is deferred till morning,
And, when the streets shall be a little cleared,

To chain them up, and suddenly dispatch it.

SHERIFF.
Stay; in mean time me thinks they come along:
See, they are coming. So, tis very well:

[The prisoners are brought in, well guarded.]

Bring Lincoln there the first unto the tree.

CLOWN.
I, for I cry lug, sir.

LINCOLN.
I knew the first, sir, did belong to me:
This the old proverb now complete doth make,
That Lincoln should be hanged for London's sake.

[He goes up.]

A God's name, let us to work. Fellow, dispatch:
I was the foremost man in this rebellion,
And I the foremost that must die for it.

DOLL.
Bravely, John Lincoln, let thy death express,
That, as thou liv'dst a man, thou diest no less.

LINCOLN.
Doll Williamson, thine eyes shall witness it.—
Then to all you that come to view mine end
I must confess, I had no ill intent,
But against such as wronged us over much:
And now I can perceive it was not fit
That private men should carve out their redress,
Which way they list; no, learn it now by me,—
Obedience is the best in each degree:
And asking mercy meekly of my king,
I patiently submit me to the law;
But God forgive them that were cause of it!

And, as a Christian, truly from my heart
I likewise crave they would forgive me too
(As freely as I do forgive their wrong)
That others by example of the same
Henceforth be warned to attempt the like
Gainst any alien that repaireth hither.
Fare ye well, all: the next time that we meet,
I trust in heaven we shall each other greet.

[He leaps off.]

DOLL.
Farewell, John Lincoln: say all what they can,
Thou liv'dst a good fellow, and diedst an honest man.

CLOWN.

Would I wear so fair on my journey! the first stretch is the worst, me thinks.

SHERIFF.
Bring Williamson there forward.

DOLL.
Good Master Shrieve, I have an earnest suit,
And, as you are a man, deny't me not.

SHERIFF.
Woman, what is it? be it in my power,
Thou shalt obtain it.

DOLL.
Let me die next, sir; that is all I crave:
You know not what a comfort you shall bring
To my poor heart, to die before my husband.

SHERIFF.
Bring her to death; she shall have her desire.

CLOWN.
Sir, and I have a suit for you too.

SHERIFF.
What is it?

CLOWN.

That, as you have hanged Lincoln first, and will hang her next, so you will not hang me at all.

SHERIFF.

Nay, you set ope' the Counter gates, and you must hang for the folly.

CLOWN.
Well, then, so much for it!

DOLL.
Sir, your free bounty much contents my mind.
Commend me to that good shrieve Master More,
And tell him, had't not been for his persuasion,
John Lincoln had not hung here as he does:
We would first have locked us up in Leadenhall,
And there been burnt to ashes with the roof.

SHERIFF.
Woman, what Master More did was a subject's duty,
And hath so pleased our gracious lord the king,
That he is hence removed to higher place,
And made of council to his majesty.

DOLL.
Well is he worthy of it, by my troth,
An honest, wise, well spoken gentleman;
Yet would I praise his honesty much more,
If he had kept his word, and saved our lives:
But let that pass; men are but men, and so
Words are but words, and pays not what men owe.—
You, husband, since perhaps the world may say
That through my means thou comest thus to thy end,
Here I begin this cup of death to thee,
Because thou shalt be sure to taste no worse

Than I have taken that must go before thee.
What though I be a woman? that's no matter;
I do owe God a death, and I must pay him.
Husband, give me thy hand; be not dismayed;
This chair being chaired, then all our debt is paid.
Only two little babes we leave behind us,
And all I can bequeath them at this time
Is but the love of some good honest friend,
To bring them up in charitable sort:
What, masters! he goes upright that never halts,
And they may live to mend their parents' faults.

WILLIAMSON.
Why, well said, wife; yfaith, thou cheerest my heart:
Give me thy hand; let's kiss, and so let's part.

[He kisses her on the ladder.]

DOLL.
The next kiss, Williamson, shall be in heaven.—
Now cheerily, lads! George Betts, a hand with thee;
And thine too, Rafe, and thine, good honest Sherwin.
Now let me tell the women of this town,
No stranger yet brought Doll to lying down:
So long as I an Englishman can see,
Nor French nor Dutch shall get a kiss of me;
And when that I am dead, for me yet say,
I died in scorn to be a stranger's prey.

[A great shout and noise, cry within 'Pardon, pardon, pardon, pardon! Room for the Earl of Surrey, room there, room!'.]

[Enter Surrey.]

SURREY.
Save the man's life, if it be possible.

SHERIFF.
It is too late, my lord; he's dead already.

SURREY.
I tell ye, Master Sheriff, you are too forward,
To make such haste with men unto their death;
I think your pains will merit little thanks,
Since that his highness is so merciful
As not to spill the blood of any subject.

SHERIFF.
My noble lord, would we so much had known!
The Councils' warrant hastened our dispatch;
It had not else been done so suddenly.

SURREY.
Sir Thomas More humbly upon his knee
Did beg the lives of all, since on his word
They did so gently yield: the king hath granted it,
And made him Lord High Chancellor of England.
According as he worthily deserves.
Since Lincoln's life cannot be had again,
Then for the rest, from my dread sovereign's lips,
I here pronounce free pardon for them all.

ALL.
God save the king, God save the king!
My good Lord Chancellor, and the Earl of Surrey!

[Flinging up caps.]

DOLL.
And Doll desires it from her very heart,
More's name may live for this right noble part;
And whensoere we talk of ill May day,
Praise More….

SURREY.
In hope his highness' clemency and mercy,
Which in the arms of mild and meek compassion
Would rather clip you, as the loving nurse
Oft doth the wayward infant, then to leave you

To the sharp rod of justice, so to draw you
To shun such lewd assemblies as beget
Unlawful riots and such traitorous acts,
That, striking with the hand of private hate,
Maim your dear country with a public wound:—
Oh God, that Mercy, whose majestic brow
Should be unwrinkled, and that awful Justice,
Which looketh through a vail of sufferance
Upon the frailty of the multitude,
Should with the clamours of outrageous wrongs
Be stirred and wakened thus to punishment!—
But your deserved death he doth forgive:
Who gives you life, pray all he long may live.

ALL.
God save the king, God save the king!
My good Lord Chancellor, and the Earl of Surrey!

[Exeunt.]

SCENE II. Chelsea. A Room in More's House.

[A table being covered with a green carpet, a state cushion on it, and the Purse and Mace lying thereon, enter Sir Thomas More.]

MORE.
it is in heaven that I am thus and thus;
And that which we profanely term our fortunes
Is the provision of the power above,
Fitted and shaped just to that strength of nature
Which we are borne withal. Good God, good Go,
That I from such an humble bench of birth
Should step as twere up to my country's head,
And give the law out there! I, in my father's life,
To take prerogative and tithe of knees
From elder kinsmen, and him bind by my place
To give the smooth and dexter way to me

That owe it him by nature! Sure, these things,
Not physicked by respect, might turn our blood
To much corruption: but, More, the more thou hast,
Either of honor, office, wealth, and calling,
Which might excite thee to embrace and hub them,
The more doe thou in serpents' natures think them;
Fear their gay skins with thought of their sharp state;
And let this be thy maxim, to be great
Is when the thread of hayday is once 'spon,
A bottom great wound up great undone.—
Come on, sir: are you ready?

[Enter Randall, attired like Sir Thomas More.]

RANDALL.

Yes, my lord, I stand but on a few points; I shall have done presently. Before God, I have practised your lordship's shift so well, that I think I shall grow proud, my lord.

MORE.
Tis fit thou shouldst wax proud, or else thou'lt ne'er
Be near allied to greatness. Observe me, sirrah.
The learned clark Erasmus is arrived
Within our English court: last night I hear
He feasted with our honored English poet,
The Earl of Surrey; and I learned today
The famous clark of Rotterdam will visit
Sir Thomas More. Therefore, sir, take my seat;
you are Lord Chancellor: dress your behavior
According to my carriage; but beware
You talk not over much, for twill betray thee:
Who prates not much seems wise; his wit few scan;
While the tongue blabs tales of the imperfect man.
I'll see if great Erasmus can distinguish
Merit and outward ceremony.

RANDALL.

If I do not serve a share for playing of your lordship well, let me be yeoman usher to your sumpter, and be banished from wearing of a gold chain forever.

MORE.
Well, sir, I'll hide our motion: act my part
With a firm boldness, and thou winst my heart.

[Enter the Shrieve, with Faulkner a ruffian, and Officers.]

How now! what's the matter?

FAULKNER.

Tug me not, I'm no bear. 'Sblood, if all the dogs in Paris Garden hung at my tail, I'd shake 'em off with this, that I'll appear before no king christened but my good Lord Chancellor.

SHRIEVE.
We'll christen you, sirrah.—Bring him forward.

MORE.
How now! what tumults make you?

FAULKNER.
The azured heavens protect my noble Lord Chancellor!

MORE.
What fellow's this?

SHRIEVE.
A ruffian, my lord, that hath set half the city in an uproar.

FAULKNER.
My lord—

SHRIEVE.

There was a fray in Paternoster-row, and because they would not be parted, the street was choked up with carts.

FAULKNER.
My noble lord, Paniar Allies throat was open.

MORE.
Sirrah, hold your peace.

FAULKNER.

I'll prove the street was not choked, but is as well as ever it was since it was a street.

SHRIEVE.
This fellow was a principal broacher of the broil.

FAULKNER.

'Sblood, I broached none; it was broached and half run out, before I had a lick at it.

SHRIEVE.
And would be brought before no justice but your honor.

FAULKNER.
I am hailed, my noble lord.

MORE.
No ear to choose for every trivial noise
but mine, and in so full a time? Away!
You wrong me, Master Shrieve: dispose of him
At your own pleasure; send the knave to Newgate.

FAULKNER.
To Newgate! 'sblood, Sir Thomas More, I appeal, I appeal from
Newgate to any of the two worshipful Counters.

MORE.
Fellow, whose man are you, that are thus lusty?

FAULKNER.
My name's Jack Faulkner; I serve, next under God and my prince,

Master Morris, secretary to my Lord of Winchester.

MORE.
A fellow of your hair is very fit
To be a secretary's follower!

FAULKNER.

I hope so, my lord. The fray was between the Bishops' men of Ely and Winchester; and I could not in honor but part them. I thought it stood not with my reputation and degree to come to my questions and answers before a city justice: I knew I should to the pot.

MORE.
Thou hast been there, it seems, too late already.

FAULKNER.

I know your honor is wise and so forth; and I desire to be only cathecized or examined by you, my noble Lord Chancellor.

MORE.
Sirrah, sirrah, you are a busy dangerous ruffian.

FAULKNER.
Ruffian!

MORE.
How long have you worn this hair?

FAULKNER.
I have worn this hair ever since I was born.

MORE.
You know that's not my question, but how long
Hath this shag fleece hung dangling on they head?

FAULKNER.

How long, my lord? why, sometimes thus long, sometimes lower, as the Fates and humors please.

MORE.
So quick, sir, with me, ha? I see, good fellow,
Thou lovest plain dealing. Sirrah, tell me now,
When were you last at barbers? how long time
Have you upon your head worn this shag hair?

FAULKNER.

My lord, Jack Faulkner tells no Aesops fables: troth, I was not at barbers this three years; I have not been cut not will not be cut, upon a foolish vow, which, as the Destinies shall direct, I am sworn to keep.

MORE.
When comes that vow out?

FAULKNER.
Why, when the humors are purged, not this three years.

MORE.
Vows are recorded in the court of Heaven,
For they are holy acts. Young man, I charge thee
And do advise thee, start not from that vow:
And, for I will be sure thou shalt not shrieve,
Besides, because it is an odious sight
To see a man thus hairy, thou shalt lie
In Newgate till thy vow and thy three years
Be full expired.—Away with him!

FAULKNER.
My lord—

MORE.
Cut off this fleece, and lie there but a month.

FAULKNER.
I'll not lose a hair to be Lord Chancellor of Europe.

MORE.

To Newgate, then. Sirrah, great sins are bred
In all that body where there's a foul head.
Away with him.

[Exeunt all except Randall.]

[Enter Surrey, Erasmus, and Attendants.]

SURREY.
Now, great Erasmus, you approach the presence
Of a most worthy learned gentleman:
This little isle holds not a truer friend
Unto the arts; nor doth his greatness add
A feigned flourish to his worthy parts;
He's great in study; that's the statist's grace,
That gains more reverence than the outward place.

ERASMUS.
Report, my lord, hath crossed the narrow seas,
And to the several parts of Christendom,
Hath borne the fame of your Lord Chancellor:
I long to see him, whom with loving thoughts
I in my study oft have visited.
Is that Sir Thomas More?

SURREY.
It is, Erasmus:
Now shall you view the honorablest scholar,
The most religious politician,
The worthiest counsellor that tends our state.
That study is the general watch of England;
In it the prince's safety, and the peace
That shines upon our commonwealth, are forged
By loyal industry.

ERASMUS.
I doubt him not
To be as near the life of excellence
As you proclaim him, when his meanest servants

Are of some weight: you saw, my lord, his porter
Give entertainment to us at the gate
In Latin good phrase; what's the master, then,
When such good parts shine in his meanest men?

SURREY.
His Lordship hath some weighty business;
For, see, yet he takes no notice of us.

ERASMUS.
I think twere best I did my duty to him
In a short Latin speech.—
Qui in celiberima patria natus est ett gloriosa, plus habet negotii ut
in lucem veniat quam qui—

RANDALL.
I prithee, good Erasmus, be covered. I have forsworn speaking of Latin, else, as I am true counsellor, I'd tickle you with a speech. Nay, sit, Erasmus;—sit, good my Lord of Surrey. I'll make my lady come to you anon, if she will, and give you entertainment.

ERASMUS.
Is this Sir Thomas More?

SURREY.
Oh good Erasmus, you must conceive his vain:
He's ever furnished with these conceits.

RANDALL.

Yes, faith, my learned poet doth not lie for that matter: I am neither more nor less than merry Sir Thomas always. Wilt sup with me? by God, I love a parlous wise fellow that smells of a politician better than a long progress.

[Enter Sir Thomas More.]

SURREY.
We are deluded; this is not his lordship.

RANDALL.

I pray you, Erasmus, how long will the Holland cheese in your country keep without maggots?

MORE.
Fool, painted barbarism, retire thyself
Into thy first creation!

[Exit Randall.]

Thus you see,
My loving learned friends, how far respect
Waits often on the ceremonious train
Of base illiterate wealth, whilst men of schools,
Shrouded in poverty, are counted fools.
Pardon, thou reverent German, I have mixed
So slight a jest to the fair entertainment
Of thy most worthy self; for know, Erasmus,
Mirth wrinkles up my face, and I still crave,
When that forsakes me I may hug my grave.

ERASMUS.
Your honor's merry humor is best physic
Unto your able body; for we learn
Where melancholy chokes the passages
Of blood and breath, the erected spirit still
Lengthens our days with sportful exercise:
Study should be the saddest time of life.
The rest a sport exempt from thought of strife.

MORE.
Erasmus preacheth gospel against physic,
My noble poet.

SURREY.
Oh, my Lord, you tax me
In that word poet of much idleness:
It is a study that makes poor our fate;
Poets were ever thought unfit for state.

MORE.

O, give not up fair poesy, sweet lord,
To such contempt! That I may speak my heart,
It is the sweetest heraldry of art,
That sets a difference 'tween the tough sharp holly
And tender bay tree.

SURREY.
Yet, my lord,
It is become the very logic number
To all mechanic sciences.

MORE.
Why, I'll show the reason:
This is no age for poets; they should sing
To the loud canon heroica facta;
Qui faciunt reges heroica carmina laudant:
And, as great subjects of their pen decay,
Even so unphysicked they do melt away.

[Enter Master Morris.]

Come, will your lordship in?—My dear Erasmus—
I'll hear you, Master Morris, presently.—
My lord, I make you master of my house:
We'll banquet here with fresh and staid delights,
The Muses music here shall cheer our sprites;
The cates must be but mean where scholars sit,
For they're made all with courses of neat wit.

[Exeunt Surrey, Erasmus, and Attendants.]

How now, Master Morris?

MORRIS.
I am a suitor to your lordship in behalf of a servant of mine.

MORE.
The fellow with long hair? good Master Morris,
Come to me three years hence, and then I'll hear you.

MORRIS.

I understand your honor: but the foolish knave has submitted himself to the mercy of a barber, and is without, ready to make a new vow before your lordship, hereafter to leave cavil.

MORE.
Nay, then, let's talk with him; pray, call him in.

[Enter Faulkner and Officers.]

FAULKNER.
Bless your honor! a new man, my lord

MORE.
Why, sure, this is not he.

FAULKNER.

And your lordship will, the barber shall give you a sample of my head: I am he in faith, my lord; I am ipse.

MORE.
Why, now thy face is like an honest man's:
Thou hast played well at this new cut, and won.

FAULKNER.
No, my lord; lost all that ever God sent me.

MORE.
God sent thee into the world as thou art now,
With a short hair. How quickly are three years
Run out of Newgate!

FAULKNER.

I think so, my lord; for there was but a hair's length between my going thither and so long time.

MORE.

Because I see some grace in thee, go free.—
Discharge him, fellows.—Farewell, Master Morris.—
Thy head is for thy shoulders now more fit;
Thou hast less hair upon it, but more wit.

[Exit.]

MORRIS.
Did not I tell thee always of these locks?

FAULKNER.

And the locks were on again, all the goldsmiths in Cheapside should not pick them open. 'Sheart, if my hair stand not on end when I look for my face in a glass, I am a polecat. Here's a lousy jest! but, if I notch not that rogue Tom barber, that makes me look thus like a Brownist, hang me! I'll be worse to the nitticall knave than ten tooth drawings. Here's a head, with a pox!

MORRIS.
What ails thou? art thou mad now?

FAULKNER.

Mad now! nails, if loss of hair cannot mad a man, what can? I am deposed, my crown is taken from me. More had been better a scoured Moreditch than a notched me thus: does he begin sheepshearing with Jack Faulkner?

MORRIS.
Nay, and you feed this vein, sir, fare you well.

FAULKNER.
Why, farewell, frost. I'll go hang myself out for the Poll Head.
Make a Saracen of Jack?

MORRIS.
Thou desperate knave! for that I see the devil
Wholly gets hold of thee—

FAULKNER.
The devil's a damned rascal.

MORRIS.
I charge thee, wait on me no more; no more
Call me thy master.

FAULKNER.
Why, then, a word, Master Morris.

MORRIS.
I'll hear no words, sir; fare you well.

FAULKNER.
'Sblood, farewell.

MORRIS.
Why dost thou follow me?

FAULKNER.

Because I'm an ass. Do you set your shavers upon me, and then cast me off? must I condole? have the Fates played the fools? am I their cut? now the poor sconce is taken, must Jack march with bag and baggage?

[Weeps.]

MORRIS.
You coxcomb!

FAULKNER.
Nay, you ha' poached me; you ha' given me a hair; it's here, hear.

MORRIS.
Away, you kind ass! come, sir, dry your eyes:
Keep you old place, and mend these fooleries.

FAULKNER.

I care not to be turned off, and 'twere a ladder, so it be in my humor, or the Fates beckon to me. Nay, pray, sir, if the Destinies spin me a fine thread, Faulkner flies another pitch; and to avoid the headache hereafter, before I'll be a hairmonger, I'll be a whoremonger.

[Exeunt.]

SCENE III. Chelsea. Ante-chamber in More's House.

[Enter a Messenger to More.]

MESSENGER.
My honorable lord, the Mayor of London,
Accompanied with his lady and her train,
Are coming hither, and are hard at hand,
To feast with you: a servant's come before,
To tell your lordship of there near approach.

MORE.
Why, this is cheerful news: friends go and come:
Reverend Erasmus, who delicious words
Express the very soul and life of wit,
Newly took sad leave of me, and with tears
Troubled the silver channel of the Thames,
Which, glad of such a burden, proudly swelled
And on her bosom bore him toward the sea:
He's gone to Rotterdam; peace go with him!
He left me heavy when he went from hence;
But this recomforts me; the kind Lord Mayor,
His brethren aldermen, with their fair wives,
Will feast this night with us: why, so it should be;
More's merry heart lives by good company.—
Good gentlemen, be careful; give great charge
Our diet be made dainty for the taste;
For, of all people that the earth affords,
The Londoners fare richest at their boards.

[Exeunt.]

ACT IV.

SCENE I. Chelsea. A Room in More's House.

[Enter Sir Thomas More, Master Roper, and Servingmen setting stools.]

MORE.
Come, my good fellows, stir, be diligent;
Sloth is an idle fellow, leave him now;
The time requires your expeditious service.
Place me here stools, to set the ladies on.—
Son Roper, you have given order for the banquet?

ROPER.
I have, my lord, and every thing is ready.

[Enter his Lady.]

MORE.
Oh, welcome, wife! give you direction
How women should be placed; you know it best.
For my Lord Mayor, his brethren, and the rest,
Let me alone; men best can order men.

LADY.
I warrant ye, my lord, all shall be well.
There's one without that stays to speak with ye,
And bade me tell ye that he is a player.

MORE.
A player, wife!—One of ye bid him come in.

[Exit one.]

Nay, stir there, fellows; fie, ye are too slow!
See that your lights be in a readiness:
The banquet shall be here.—Gods me, madame,

Leave my Lady Mayoress! both of us from the board!
And my son Roper too! what may our guests think?

LADY.
My lord, they are risen, and sitting by the fire.

MORE.
Why, yet go you and keep them company;
It is not meet we should be absent both.

[Exit Lady.]

[Enter Player.]

Welcome, good friend; what is you will with me?

PLAYER.
My lord, my fellows and myself
Are come to tender ye our willing service,
So please you to command us.

MORE.
What, for a play, you mean?
Whom do ye serve?

PLAYER.
My Lord Cardinal's grace.

MORE.
My Lord Cardinal's players! now, trust me, welcome;
You happen hither in a lucky time,
To pleasure me, and benefit yourselves.
The Mayor of London and some aldermen,
His lady and their wives, are my kind guests
This night at supper: now, to have a play
Before the banquet, will be excellent.—
How think you, son Roper?

ROPER.
'Twill do well, my lord,

And be right pleasing pastime to your guests.

MORE.
I prithee, tell me, what plays have ye?

PLAYER.
Diverse, my lord: The Cradle of Security,
His nail o' the head, Impatient Poverty,
The play of Four Peas, Dives and Lazarus,
Lusty Juventus, and The Marriage of Wit and Wisdom.

MORE.
The Marriage of Wit and Wisdom! that, my lads;
I'll none but that; the theme is very good,
And may maintain a liberal argument:
To marry wit to wisdom, asks some cunning;
Many have wit, that may come short of wisdom.
We'll see how Master poet plays his part,
And whether wit or wisdom grace his art.—
Go, make him drink, and all his fellows too.—
How many are ye?

PLAYER.
Four men and a boy, sir.

MORE.
But one boy? then I see,
There's but few women in the play.

PLAYER.
Three, my lord; Dame Science, Lady Vanity,
And Wisdom she herself.

MORE.
And one boy play them all? by our Lady, he's laden.
Well, my good fellow, get ye straight together,
And make ye ready with what haste ye may.—
Proud their supper gainst the play be done,
Else shall we stay our guests here over long.—
Make haste, I pray ye.

PLAYER.
We will, my lord.

[Exit Servant and Player.]

MORE.
Where are the waits? go, big them play,
To spend the time a while.

[Enter Lady.]

How now, madame?

LADY.
My lord, th' are coming hither.

MORE.
Th' are welcome. Wife, I'll tell ye one thing;
One sport is somewhat mended; we shall have
A play tonight, The Marriage of Wit and Wisdom,
And acted by my good Lord Cardinal's players;
How like ye that, wife?

LADY.
My lord, I like it well.
See, they are coming.

[The waits plays; enter Lord Mayor, so many Aldermen as may, the Lady Mayoress in scarlet, with other Ladies and Sir Thomas More's Daughters; Servants carrying lighted torches by them.]

MORE.
Once again, welcome, welcome, my good Lord Mayor,
And brethren all, for once I was your brother,
And so I am still in heart: it is not state
That can our love from London separate.
True, upstart fools, by sudden fortune tried,
Regard their former mates with naught but pride.
But they that cast an eye still whence they came,
Know how they rose, and how to use the same.

LORD MAYOR.
My lord, you set a gloss on London's fame,
And make it happy ever by your name.
Needs must we say, when we remember More,
'Twas he that drove rebellion from our door
With grave discretions mild and gentle breath,
Oh, how our city is by you renowned,
And with your virtues our endeavors crowned!

MORE.
No more, my good Lord Mayor: but thanks to all,
That on so short a summons you would come
To visit him that holds your kindness dear.—
Madame, you are not merry with my Lady Mayoress
And these fair ladies; pray ye, seat them all:—
And here, my lord, let me appoint your place;—
The rest to seat themselves:—nay, I'll weary ye;
You will not long in haste to visit me.

LADY.
Good madame, sit; in sooth, you shall sit here.

LADY MAYORESS.
Good madame, pardon me; it may not be.

LADY.
In troth, I'll have it so: I'll sit here by ye.—
Good ladies, sit.—More stools here, ho!

LADY MAYORESS.
It is your favour, madame, makes me thus
Presume above my merit.

LADY.
When we come to you,
Then shall you rule us as we rule you here.
Now must I tell ye, madame, we have a play,
To welcome ye withal; how good so ere,
That know not I; my lord will have it so.

MORE.
Wife, hope the best; I am sure they'll do their best:
They that would better, comes not at their feast.
My good Lord Cardinal's players, I thank them for it,
Play us a play, to lengthen out your welcome:
They say it is The Marriage of Wit and Wisdom,
A theme of some import, how ere it prove;
But, if art fail, we'll inch it out with love.—

[Enter a Servant.]

What, are they ready?

SERVANT.
My lord, one of the players craves to speak with you.

MORE.
With me! where is he?

[Enter Inclination, the Vice, ready.]

INCLINATION.
Here, my lord.

MORE.
How now! what's the matter?

INCLINATION.

We would desire your honor but to stay a little; one of my fellows is but run to Oagles for a long beard for young Wit, and he'll be here presently.

MORE.

A long beard for young Wit! why, man, he may be without a beard till he come to marriage, for wit goes not all by the hair. When comes Wit in?

INCLINATION.
In the second scene, next to the Prologue, my lord.

MORE.

Why, play on till that scene come, and by that time Wit's beard will be grown, or else the fellow returned with it. And what part playest thou?

INCLINATION.
Inclination the Vice, my lord.

MORE.

Gramercies, now I may take the vice if I list: and wherefore hast thou that bridle in thy hand?

INCLINATION.
I must be bridled anon, my lord.

MORE.

And thou beest not saddled too, it makes no matter, for then Wit's inclination may gallop so fast, that he will outstrip Wisdom, and fall to folly.

INCLINATION.

Indeed, so he does to Lady Vanity; but we have no folly in our play.

MORE.

Then there's no wit in 't, I'll be sworn: folly waits on wit, as the shadow on the body, and where wit is ripest there folly still is readiest. But begin, I prithee: we'll rather allow a beardless Wit than Wit all beard to have no brain.

INCLINATION.

Nay, he has his apparel on too, my lord, and therefore he is the readier to enter.

MORE.
Then, good Inclination, begin at a venter.—

[Exit Inclination.]

My Lord Mayor,

Wit lacks a beard, or else they would begin:
I'd lend him mine, but that it is too thin.
Silence, they come.

[The trumpet sounds; enter the Prologue.]

PROLOGUE.
Now, for as much as in these latter days,
Throughout the whole world in every land,
Vice doth increase, and virtue decays,
Iniquity having the upper hand;
We therefore intend, good gentle audience,
A pretty short interlude to play at this present,
Desiring your leave and quiet silence,
To show the same, as is meet and expedient,
It is called The Marriage of Wit and Wisdom,
A matter right pithy and pleasing to hear,
Whereof in brief we will show the whole sum;
But I must be gone, for Wit doth appear.

[Exit. Enter Wit ruffling, and Inclination the Vice.]

WIT.
In an arbor green, asleep whereas I lay,
The birds sang sweetly in the midst of the day,
I dreamed fast of mirth and play,—
In youth is pleasure, in youth is pleasure,
Methought I walked still to and fro,
And from her company I could not go;
But when I waked, it was not so,—
In youth is pleasure, in youth is pleasure.
Therefore my heart is surely plight,
Of her alone to have a sight,
Which is my joy and heart's delight,—
In youth is pleasure, in youth is pleasure.

MORE.

Mark ye, my lord, this is Wit without a beard: what will he be by that time he comes to the commodity of a beard?

INCLINATION.
Oh, sir, the ground is the better on which she doth go;
For she will make better cheer with a little she can get,
Than many a one can with a great banquet of meat.

WIT.
And is her name Wisdom?

INCLINATION.
I, sir, a wife most fit
For you, my good master, my dainty sweet Wit.

WIT.
To be in her company my heart it is set:
Therefore I prithee to let us begone;
For unto Wisdom Wit hath inclination.

INCLINATION.
Oh, sir, she will come her self even anon;
For I told her before where we would stand.
And then she said she would beck us with her hand.—
Back with these boys and saucy great knaves!

[Flourishing a dagger.]

What, stand ye here so big in your braves?
My dagger about your coxcombs shall walk,
If I may but so much as hear ye chat or talk.

WIT.
But will she take pains to come for us hither?

INCLINATION.
I warrant ye; therefore you must be familiar with her;
When she commeth in place,
You must her embrace
Somewhat handsomely,
Least she think it danger,

Because you are a stranger,
To come in your company.

WIT.
I warrant thee, Inclination, I will be busy:
Oh, how Wit longs to be in Wisdom's company!

[Enter Lady Vanity singing, and beckoning with her hand.]

VANITY.
Come hither, come hither, come hither, come:
Such cheer as I have, thou shalt have some.

MORE.
This is Lady Vanity, I'll hold my life:—
Beware, good Wit, you take not her to wife.

INCLINATION.
What, unknown honesty? a word in your ear.

[She offers to depart.]

You shall not be gone as yet, I swear:
Here's none but friends, you need not to fray;
This young gentleman loves ye, therefore you must stay.

WIT.
I trust in me she will think no danger,
For I love well the company of fair women;
And though to you I am a stranger,
Yet Wit may pleasure you now and then.

VANITY.
Who, you? nay, you are such a holy man,
That to touch on you dare not be bold;
I think you would not kiss a young woman,
If one would give ye twenty pound in gold.

WIT.
Yes, in good sadness, lady, that I would:

I could find in my heart to kiss you in your smock.

VANITY.
My back is broad enough to bear that mock;
For it hath been told me many a time
That you would be seen in no such company as mine.

WIT.
Not Wit in the company of Lady Wisdom?
Oh Jove, for what do I hither come?

INCLINATION.
Sir, she did this nothing else but to prove
Whether a little thing would you move
To be angry and fret:
What, and if one said so?
Let such trifling matters go
And with a kind kiss come out of her debt.—

Is Luggins come yet with the beard?

[Enter another Player.]

PLAYER.
No, faith, he is not come: alas, what shall we do?

INCLINATION.

Forsooth, we can go no further till our fellow Luggins come; for he plays Good Council, and now he should enter, to admonish Wit that this is Lady Vanity, and not Lady Wisdom.

MORE.

Nay, and it be no more but so, ye shall not tarry at a stand for that; we'll not have our play marred for lack of a little good council: till your fellow come, I'll give him the best council that I can.—Pardon me, my Lord Mayor; I love to be merry.—

Oh…Wit, thou art now on the bow hand,

And blindly in thine own opinion dost stand.
I tell thee, this naughty lewd Inclination
Does lead thee amiss in a very strange fashion:
This is not Wisdom, but Lady Vanity;
Therefore list to Good Council, and be ruled by me.

INCLINATION.
In troth, my lord, it is as right to Lugginses part as can be.—Speak, Wit.

MORE.
Nay, we will not have our audience disappointed, if I can help it.

WIT.
Art thou Good Council, and will tell me so?
Wouldst thou have Wit from Lady Wisdom to go?
Thou art some deceiver, I tell thee verily,
In saying that this is Lady Vanity.

MORE.
Wit, judge not things by the outward show;
The eye oft mistakes, right well you do know:
Good Council assures thee upon his honesty,
That this is not Wisdom, but Lady Vanity.

[Enter Luggins with the beard.]

INCLINATION.
Oh, my lord, he is come; now we shall go forward.

MORE.
Art thou come? well, fellow, I have hoped to save thine honesty a little. Now, if thou canst give Wit any better council than I have done, spare not: there I leave him to they mercy.
But by this time, I am sure, our banquet's ready:
My lord and ladies, we will taste that first,
And then they shall begin the play again,
Which through the fellow's absence, and by me,
Instead of helping, hath been hindered.—
Prepare against we come.—Lights there, I say!—

Thus fools oft times do help to mar the play.

[Exeunt all but players.]

WIT.
Fie, fellow Luggins, you serve us handsomely; do ye not, think ye?

LUGGINS.

Why, Oagle was not within, and his wife would not let me have the beard; and, by my troth, I ran so fast that I sweat again.

INCLINATION.

Do ye hear, fellows? would not my lord make a rare player? oh, he would uphold a company beyond all hope, better than Mason among the king's players! Did ye mark how extemprically he fell to the matter, and spake Lugginses part almost as it is in the very book set down?

WIT.

Peace; do ye know what ye say? my lord a player! let us not meddle with any such matters: yet I may be a little proud that my lord hath answered me in my part. But come, let us go, and be ready to begin the play again.

LUGGINS.
I, that's the best, for now we lack nothing.

[Enter a Servingman.]

MAN.
Where be these players?

ALL.
Here, sir.

MAN.
My lord is sent for to the court,
And all the guests do after supper part;
And, for he will not trouble you again,

By me for your reward a sends 8 angels,
With many thanks. But sup before you go:
It is his will you should be fairly entreated:
Follow, I pray ye.

WIT.
This, Luggins, is your negligence;
Wanting Wit's beard brought things into dislike;
For otherwise the play had been all seen,
Where now some curious citizen disgraced it,
And discommending it, all is dismissed.

VICE.

Fore God, a says true. But hear ye, sirs: 8 angels, ha! my lord would never give 8 angels more or less for 12d; other it should be 3l, 5l, or ten li.; there's 20s wanting, sure.

WIT.
Twenty to one, tis so. I have a trick: my lord comes; stand aside.

[Enter More, with Attendants with Purse and Mace.]

MORE.
In haste to counsel! what's the business now,
That all so late his highness sends for me?—
What seekst thou, fellow?

WIT.

Nay, nothing: your lordship sent 8 angels by your man, and I have lost two of them in the rishes.

MORE.

Wit, look to that:—8 angels! I did send them ten.—Who gave it them?

MAN.
I, my lord; I had no more about me;
But by and by they shall rescue the rest.

MORE.
Well, Wit, twas wisely done; thou playest Wit well indeed,
Not to be thus deceived of thy right.—
Am I a man, by office truly ordained
Equally to decide true right his own,
And shall I have deceivers in my house?
Then what avails my bounty, when such servants
Deceive the poor of what the Master gives?
Go on, and pull his coat over his ears:
There are too many such.—Give them their right.—
Wit, let thy fellows thank thee: twas well done;
Thou now deservest to match with Lady Wisdom.

[Exit More with Attendants.]

VICE.

God a mercy, Wit!—Sir, you had a master Sir Thomas More more; but now we shall have more.

LUGGINS.

God bless him! I would there were more of his mind! a loves our quality; and yet he's a learned man, and knows what the world is.

CLOWN.

Well, a kind man, and more loving than many other: but I think we ha' met with the first….

LUGGINS.

First served his man that had our angels; and he may chance dine with Duke Humphrey tomorrow, being turned away today. Come, let's go.

CLOWN.

And many such rewards would make us all ride, and horse us with the best nags in Smithfield.

[Exeunt.]

SCENE II. Whitehall. The Council chamber.

[Enter the Earls of Shrewsbury, Surrey, Bishop of Rochester, and other Lords; severally, doing courtesy to each other; Clerk of the Council waiting bareheaded.]

SURREY.
Good morrow to my Lord of Shrewsbury.

SHREWSBURY.
The like unto the honoured Earl of Surrey.
Yond comes my Lord of Rochester.

ROCHESTER.
Good morrow, my good lords.

SURREY.
Clerk of the Council, what time is't of day?

CLERK.
Past eight of clock, my lord.

SHREWSBURY.
I wonder that my good Lord Chancellor
Doth stay so long, considering there's matters
Of high importance to be scanned upon.

SURREY.
Clerk of the Council, certify his lordship
The lords expect him here.

ROCHESTER.
It shall not need;
Yond comes his lordship.

[Enter Sir Thomas More, with Purse and Mace borne before him.]

MORE.
Good morrow to this fair assembly.
Come, my good lords, let's sit. Oh serious square!

[They sit.]

Upon this little board is daily scanned
The health and preservation of the land;
We the physicians that effect this good,
Now by choice diet, anon by letting blood;
Our toil and careful watching brings the king
In league with slumbers, to which peace doth sing.—
Avoid the room there!—
What business, lords, today?

SHREWSBURY.
This, my good lord;
About the entertainment of the emperor
Gainst the perfidious French into our pay.

SURREY.
My lords, as tis the custom in this place
The youngest should speak first, so, if I chance
In this case to speak youngly, pardon me.
I will agree, France now hath her full strength,
As having new recovered the pale blood
Which war sluiced forth; and I consent to this,
That the conjunction of our English forces
With arms of Germany may soon bring
This prize of conquest in. But, then, my lords,
As in the moral hunting twixt the lion
And other beasts, force joined with greed
Frighted the weaker sharers from their parts;
So, if the empire's sovereign chance to put
His plea of partnership into war's court,
Swords should decide the difference, and our blood
In private tears lament his entertainment.

SHREWSBURY.
To doubt the worst is still the wise man's shield,
That arms him safely: but the world knows this,
The emperor is a man of royal faith;
His love unto our sovereign brings him down
From his imperial seat, to march in pay
Under our English flag, and wear the cross,
Like some high order, on his manly breast;
Thus serving, he's not master of himself,
But, like a colonel commanding other,
Is by the general over-awed himself.

ROCHESTER.
Yet, my good lord—

SHREWSBURY.
Let me conclude my speech.
As subjects share no portion in the conquest
Of their true sovereign, other than the merit
That from the sovereign guerdons the true subject;
So the good emperor, in a friendly league
Of amity with England, will not soil
His honor with the theft of English spoil.

MORE.
There is no question but this entertainment
Will be most honorable, most commodious.
I have oft heard good captains wish to have
Rich soldiers to attend them, such as would fight
Both for their lives and livings; such a one
Is the good emperor: I would to God,
We had ten thousand of such able men!
Hah, then there would appear no court, no city,
But, where the wars were, they would pay themselves.
Then, to prevent in French wars England's loss,
Let German flags wave with our English cross.

[Enter Sir Thomas Palmer.]

PALMER.
My lords, his majesty hath sent by me
These articles enclosed, first to be viewed,
And then to be subscribed to: I tender them
In that due reverence which befits this place.

[With great reverence.]

MORE.
Subscribe these articles! stay, let us pause;
Our conscience first shall parley with our laws.—
My Lord of Rochester, view you the paper.

ROCHESTER.
Subscribe to these! now, good Sir Thomas Palmer,
Beseech the king that he will pardon me:
My heart will check my hand whilst I do write;
Subscribing so, I were an hypocrite.

PALMER.
Do you refuse it, then, my lord?

ROCHESTER.
I do, Sir Thomas.

PALMER.
Then here I summon you forthwith t' appear
Before his majesty, to answer there
This capital contempt.

ROCHESTER.
I rise and part,
In lieu of this to tender him my heart.

[He riseth.]

PALMER.
Wilt please your honor to subscribe, my lord?

MORE.

Sir, tell his highness, I entreat
Some time for to bethink me of this task:
In the meanwhile I do resign mine office
Into my sovereign's hands.

PALMER.
Then, my lord,
Hear the prepared order from the king:
On your refusal, you shall straight depart
Unto your house at Chelsea, till you know
Our sovereign's further pleasure.

MORE.
Most willingly I go.—
My lords, if you will visit me at Chelsea,
We'll go a fishing, and with a cunning net,
Not like weak film, we'll catch none but the great:
Farewell, my noble lords. Why, this is right:
Good morrow to the sun, to state good night!

[Exit More.]

PALMER.
Will you subscribe, my lords?

SURREY.
Instantly, good Sir Thomas,
We'll bring the writing unto our sovereign.

[They write.]

PALMER.
My Lord of Rochester,
You must with me, to answer this contempt.

ROCHESTER.
This is the worst,
Who's freed from life is from all care exempt.

[Exit Rochester and Palmer.]

SURREY.
Now let us hasten to our sovereign.
Tis strange that my Lord Chancellor should refuse
The duty that the law of God bequeaths
Unto the king.

SHREWSBURY.
Come, let us in. No doubt
His mind will alter, and the bishop's too:
Error in learned heads hath much to do.

[Exeunt.]

SCENE III. Chelsea.

[Enter the Lady More, her two Daughters, and Master Roper, as walking.]

ROPER.
Madame, what ails ye for to look so sad?

LADY MORE.
Troth, son, I know not what; I am not sick,
And yet I am not well. I would be merry;
But somewhat lies so heavy on heart,
I cannot choose but sigh. You are a scholar;
I pray ye, tell me, may one credit dreams?

ROPER.
Why ask you that, dear madame?

LADY MORE.
Because tonight I had the strangest dream
That ere my sleep was troubled with. Me thought twas night,
And that the king and queen went on the Thames
In barges to hear music: my lord and I
Were in a little boat me thought,—Lord, Lord,
What strange things live in slumbers!—and, being near,

We grappled to the barge that bare the king.
But after many pleasing voices spent
In that still moving music house, me though
The violence of the stream did sever us
Quite from the golden fleet, and hurried us
Unto the bridge, which with unused horror
We entered at full tide: thence some slight shoot
Being carried by the waves, our boat stood still
Just opposite the Tower, and there it turned
And turned about, as when a whirl-pool sucks
The circled waters: me thought that we both cried,
Till that we sunk: where arm in arm we died.

ROPER.
Give no respect, dear madame, to fond dreams:
They are but slight illusions of the blood.

LADY MORE.
Tell me not all are so; for often dreams
Are true diviners, either of good or ill:
I cannot be in quiet till I hear
How my lord fares.

ROPER.
[aside.] No it.—Come hither, wife:
I will not fright thy mother, to interpret
The nature of a dream; but trust me, sweet,
This night I have been troubled with thy father
Beyond all thought.

ROPER'S WIFE.
Truly, and so have I:
Methought I saw him here in Chelsea Church,
Standing upon the roodloft, now defac'd;
And whilst he kneeled and prayed before the image,
It fell with him into the upper-choir,
Where my poor father lay all stained in blood.

ROPER.

Our dreams all meet in one conclusion,
Fatal, I fear.

LADY MORE.
What's that you talk? I pray ye, let me know it.

ROPER'S WIFE.
Nothing, good mother.

LADY MORE.
This is your fashion still; I must know nothing.
Call Master Catesby; he shall straight to court,
And see how my lord does: I shall not rest,
Until my heart leave panting on his breast.

[Enter Sir Thomas More merrily, Servants attending.]

DAUGHTER.
See where my father comes, joyful and merry.

MORE.
As seamen, having passed a troubled storm,
Dance on the pleasant shore; so I—oh, I could speak
Now like a poet! now, afore God, I am passing light!—
Wife, give me kind welcome: thou wast wont to blame
My kissing when my beard was in the stubble;
But I have been trimmed of late; I have had
A smooth court shaving, in good faith, I have.—

[Daughters kneel.]

God bless ye!—Son Roper, give me your hand.

ROPER.
Your honor's welcome home.

MORE.
Honor! ha ha!—And how dost, wife?

ROPER.

He bears himself most strangely.

LADY MORE.
Will your lordship in?

MORE.
Lordship! no, wife, that's gone:
The ground was slight that we did lean upon.

LADY MORE.
Lord, that your honor ne'er will leave these jests!
In faith, it ill becomes ye.

MORE.
Oh, good wife,
Honor and jests are both together fled;
The merriest councillor of England's dead.

LADY MORE.
Who's that, my lord?

MORE.
Still lord! the Lord Chancellor, wife.

LADY MORE.
That's you.

MORE.
Certain; but I have changed my life.
Am I not leaner than I was before?
The fat is gone; my title's only More.
Contented with one style, I'll live at rest:
They that have many names are not still best.
I have resigned mine office: count'st me not wise?

LADY MORE.
Oh God!

MORE.
Come, breed not female children in your eyes:

The king will have it so.

LADY MORE.
What's the offense?

MORE.
Tush, let that pass; we'll talk of that anon.
The king seems a physician to my fate;
His princely mind would train me back to state.

ROPER.
Then be his patient, my most honored father.

MORE.
Oh, son Roper,
Ubi turpis est medicine, sanari piget!—
No, wife, be merry;—and be merry, all:
You smiled at rising, weep not at my fall.
Let's in, and hear joy like to private friends,
Since days of pleasure have repentant ends:
The light of greatness is with triumph born;
It sets at midday oft with public scorn.

SCENE IV. The Tower.

[Enter the Bishop of Rochester, Surrey, Shrewsbury, Lieutenant of the Tower, and Warders with weapons.]

ROCHESTER.
Your kind persuasions, honorable lords,
I can but thank ye for; but in this breast
There lives a soul that aims at higher things
Than temporary pleasing earthly kings.
God bless his highness even with all my heart!—
We shall meet one day, though that now we part.

SURREY.

We not misdoubt, your wisdom can discern
What best befits it; yet in love and zeal
We could entreat, it might be otherwise.

SHREWSBURY.
No doubt, your fatherhood will by yourself
Consider better of the present case,
And grow as great in favor as before.

ROCHESTER.
For that, as pleaseth God. In my restraint
From wordly causes, I shall better see
Into myself than at proud liberty:
The Tower and I will privately confer
Of things, wherein at freedom I may err.
But I am troublesome unto your honors,
And hold ye longer than becomes my duty.—
Master Lieutenant, I am now your charge;
And though you keep my body, yet my love
Waits on my king and you, while Fisher lives.

SURREY.
Farewell, my Lord of Rochester; we'll pray
For your release, and labour't as we may.

SHREWSBURY.
Thereof assure yourself; so do we leave ye,
And to your happy private thoughts bequeath ye.

[Exeunt Lords.]

ROCHESTER.
Now, Master Lieutenant, on; a God's name, go!
And with as glad a mind go I with you
As ever truant bade the school adieu.

[Exeunt.]

SCENE V. Chelsea. A Room in More's House.

[Enter Sir Thomas More, his Lady, Daughters, Master Roper,
Gentlemen, and Servants, as in his house at Chelsea.]

MORE.
Good morrow, good son Roper.—
Sit, good madame,

[Low stools.]

Upon an humble seat; the time so craves;
Rest your good heart on earth, the roof of graves:
You see the floor of greatness is uneven;
The cricket and high throne alike near heaven.—
Now, daughters, you that like to branches spread,
And give best shadow to a private house,
Be comforted, my girls; your hopes stand fair:
Virtue breeds gentry, she makes the best heir.

BOTH DAUGHTERS.
Good morrow to your honor.

MORE.
Nay, good night rather;
Your honor's crest-fain with your happy father.

ROPER.
Oh, what formality, what square observance,
Lives in a little room! here public care
Gags not the eyes of slumber; here fierce riot
Ruffles not proudly in a coat of trust,
Whilst, like a pawn at chess, he keeps in rank
With kings and mighty fellows; yet indeed
Those men that stand on tiptoe smile to see
Him pawn his fortunes.

MORE.
True, son,….

Nor does the wanton tongue here screw itself
Into the ear, that like a vise drinks up
The iron instrument.

LADY MORE.
We are here at peace.

MORE.
Then peace, good wife.

LADY MORE.
For, keeping still in compass, a strange point
In times new navigation we have sailed
Beyond our course.

MORE.
Have done.

LADY MORE.
We are exiled the court.

MORE.
Still thou harpest on that:
Tis sin for to deserve that banishment;
But he that ne'er knew court, courts sweet content.

LADY MORE.
Oh, but, dear husband—

MORE.
I will not hear thee, wife;
The winding labyrinth of thy strange discourse
Will ne'er have end. Sit still; and, my good wife,
Entreat thy tongue be still; or, credit me,
Thou shalt not understand a word we speak;
We'll talk in Latin.
Humida vallis raros patitur fulminis ictus,
More rest enjoys the subject meanly bred
Than he that bears the kingdom in his head.
Great men are still musicians, else the world lies;

They learn low strains after the notes that rise.

ROPER.
Good sir, be still yourself, and but remember
How in this general court of short-lived pleasure,
The world, creation is the ample food
That is digested in the maw of time:
If man himself be subject to such ruin,
How shall his garment, then, or the loose points
That tie respect unto his awful place,
Avoid destruction? Most honored father-in-law,
The blood you have bequeathed these several hearts
To nourish your posterity, stands firm;
And, as with joy you led us first to rise,
So with like hearts we'll lock preferment's eyes.

MORE.
Close them not, then, with tears: for that ostent
Gives a wet signal of your discontent.
If you will share my fortunes, comfort then;
An hundred smiles for one sigh: what! we are men:
Resign wet passion to these weaker eyes,
Which proves their sex, but grants it ne'er more wise.
Let's now survey our state. Here sits my wife,
And dear esteemed issue; yonder stand
My loving servants: now the difference
Twixt those and these. Now you shall hear my speak
Like More in melancholy. I conceive that nature
Hath sundry metals, out of which she frames
Us mortals, each in valuation
Outprizing other: of the finest stuff
The finest features come: the rest of earth,
Receive base fortune even before their birth;
Hence slaves have their creation; and I think
Nature provides content for the base mind;
Under the whip, the burden, and the toil,
Their low-wrought bodies drudge in patience;
As for the prince in all his sweet-gorged maw,
And his rank flesh, that sinfully renews

The noon's excess in the night's dangerous surfeits.
What means or misery from our birth doth flow
Nature entitles to us; that we owe:
But we, being subject to the rack of hate,
Falling from happy life to bondage state,
Having seen better days, now know the lack
Of glory that once reared each high-fed back.
But you, that in your age did ne'er view better,
Challenged not fortune for your thriftless debter.

CATESBY.
Sir, we have seen far better days than these.

MORE.
I was the patron of those days, and know
Those were but painted days, only for show.
Then grieve not you to fall with him that gave them:
Generosis servis gloriosum mori.
Dear Gough, thou art my learned secretary;
You, Master Catesby, steward of my house;
The rest like you have had fair time to grow
In sun-shine of my fortunes. But I must tell ye,
Corruption is fled hence with each man's office;
Bribes, that make open traffic twixt the soul
And netherland of hell, deliver up
Their guilty homage to the second lords.
Then, living thus untainted, you are well:
Truth is no pilot for the land of hell.

[Enter a Servant.]

SERVANT.
My lord, there are new lighted at the gate
The Earls of Surrey and of Shrewsbury,
And they expect you in the inner court.

MORE.
Entreat their lordships come into the hall.

[Exit Servant.]

LADY MORE.
Oh, God, what news with them?

MORE.
Why, how now, wife!
They are but come to visit their old friend.

LADY MORE.
Oh, God, I fear, I fear!

MORE.
What shouldst thou fear, fond woman?
Justum, si fractus illabatur orbis, inpavidum ferient ruinae.
Here let me live estranged from great men's looks;
They are like golden flies on leaden hooks.

[Enter the Earls, Downs with his mace, and Attendants.]

SHREWSBURY.
Good morrow, good Sir Thomas.

[Kind salutations.]

SURREY.
Good day, good madame.

MORE.
Welcome, my good lords.
What ails your lordships look so melancholy?
Oh, I know; you live in court, and the court diet
Is only friend to physic.

SURREY.
Oh, Sir Thomas,
Our words are now the kings, and our sad looks
The interest of your love! We are sent to you
From our mild sovereign, once more to demand
If you'll subscribe unto those articles

He sent ye th' other day: be well advised;
For, on mine honor, lord, grave Doctor Fisher
Bishop of Rochester, at the self same instant
Attached with you, is sent unto the Tower
For the like obstinacy: his majesty
Hath only sent you prisoner to your house;
But, if you now refuse for to subscribe,
A stricter course will follow.

LADY MORE.
Oh, dear husband!

[Kneeling and weeping.]

BOTH DAUGHTERS.
Dear father!

MORE.
See, my lords,
This partner and these subjects to my flesh
Prove rebels to my conscience! But, my good lords,
If I refuse, must I unto the Tower?

SHREWSBURY.
You must, my lord; here is an officer
Ready for to arrest you of high treason.

LADY MORE AND DAUGHTERS.
Oh, God, oh, God!

ROPER.
Be patient, good madam.

MORE.
Aye, Downs, ist thou? I once did save thy life,
When else by cruel riotous assault
Thou hadst been torn in pieces: thou art reserved
To be my summoner to yond spiritual court.
Give me thy hand; good fellow, smooth thy face:
The diet that thou drinkst is spic'd with mace,

And I could ne'er abide it; 'twill not disgest,
Twill lie too heavily, man, on my weak breast.

SHREWSBURY.
Be brief, my lord, for we are limited
Unto an hour.

MORE.
Unto an hour! tis well:
The bell soon shall toll my knell.

LADY MORE.
Dear loving husband, if you respect not me,
Yet think upon your daughters.

[Kneeling.]

MORE.
Wife, stand up; I have bethought me,
And I'll now satisfy the king's good pleasure.

[Pointing to himself.]

BOTH DAUGHTERS.
Oh, happy alteration!

SHREWSBURY.
Come, then, subscribe, my lord.

SURREY.
I am right glad of this your fair conversion.

MORE.
Oh, pardon me!
I will subscribe to go unto the Tower
With all submissive willingness, and thereto add
My bones to strengthen the foundation
Of Julius Caesar's palace. Now, my lord,
I'll satisfy the king, even with my blood;
Now will I wrong your patience.—Friend, do thine office.

DOWNES.

Sir thomas More, Lord Chancellor of England, I arrest you in the king's name of high treason.

MORE.
Gramercies, friend.
To a great prison, to discharge the strife
Commenc'd twixt conscience and my frailer life,
More now must march. Chelsea, adieu, adieu!
Strange farewell! thou shalt ne'er more see More true,
For I shall ne'er see thee more.—Servants, farewell.—
Wife, mar not thine indifferent face; be wise:
More's widow's husband, he must make thee rise.—
Daughters….: —what's here, what's here?
Mine eye had almost parted with a tear.—
Dear son, possess my virtue, that I ne'er gave.—
Grave More thus lightly walks to a quick grave.

ROPER.
Curae leves loquuntur, ingentes stupent.

MORE.
You that way in; mind you my course in prayer:
By water I to prison, to heaven through air.

[Exeunt.]

ACT V.

SCENE I. The Tower Gate.

[Enter the Warders of the Tower, with halbards.]

FIRST WARDER.
Ho, make a guard there!

SECOND WARDER.
Master Lieutenant gives a straight command,
The people be avoided from the bridge.

THIRD WARDER.
From whence is he committed, who can tell?

FIRST WARDER.
From Durham House, I hear.

SECOND WARDER.
The guard were waiting there are hour ago.

THIRD WARDER.
If he stay long, he'll not get near the wharf,
There's such a crowd of boats upon the Thames.

SECOND WARDER.
Well, be it spoken without offence to any,
A wiser or more virtuous gentleman
Was never bred in England.

THIRD WARDER.
I think, the poor will bury him in tears:
I never heard a man, since I was born,
So generally bewailed of every one.

[Enter a Poor Woman.]

What means this woman?—Whether doost thou press?

FIRST WARDER.
This woman will be trod to death anon.

SECOND WARDER.
What makest thou here?

WOMAN.
To speak with that good man, Sir Thomas More.

SECOND WARDER.
To speak with him! he's not Lord Chancellor.

WOMAN.
The more's the pity, sir, if it pleased God.

SECOND WARDER.
Therefore, if thou hast a petition to deliver,
Thou mayst keep it now, for any thing I know.

WOMAN.
I am a poor woman, and have had (God knows)
A suit this two year in the Chancery;
And he hath all the evidence I have
Which should I lose, I am utterly undone.

SECOND WARDER.
Faith, and I fear thoult hardly come by am now;
I am sorry for thee, even with all my heart.

[Enter the Lords with Sir Thomas More, and Attendants, and enter Lieutenant and Gentleman Porter.]

Woman, stand back, you must avoid this place;
The lords must pass this way into the Tower.

MORE.
I thank your lordships for your pains thus far
To my strong house.

WOMAN.
Now, good Sir Thomas More, for Christ's dear sake,
Deliver me my writings back again
That do concern my title.

MORE.
What, my old client, are thou got hither too?

Poor silly wretch, I must confess indeed,
I had such writings as concern thee near;
But the king has ta'en the matter into his own hand;
He has all I had: then, woman, sue to him;
I cannot help thee; thou must bear with me.

WOMAN.
Ah, gentle heart, my soul for thee is sad!
Farewell the best friend that the poor e'er had.

[Exit Woman.]

GENTLEMAN PORTER.
Before you enter through the Towergate,
Your upper garment, sir, belongs to me.

MORE.
Sir, you shall have it; there it is.

[He gives him his cap.]

GENTLEMAN PORTER.
The upmost on your back, sir; you mistake me.

MORE.
Sir, now I understand ye very well:
But that you name my back,
Sure else my cap had been the uppermost.

SHREWSBURY.
Farewell, kind lord; God send us merry meeting!

MORE.
Amen, my lord.

SURREY.
Farewell, dear friend; I hope your safe return.

MORE.
My lord, and my dear fellow in the Muses,

Farewell; farewell, most noble poet.

LIEUTENANT.
Adieu, most honored lords.

[Exeunt Lords.]

MORE.
Fair prison, welcome; yet, methinks,
For thy fair building tis too foul a name.
Many a guilty soul, and many an innocent,
Have breathed their farewell to thy hollow rooms.
I oft have entered into thee this way;
Yet, I thank God, ne'er with a clear conscience
Than at this hour:
This is my comfort yet, how hard sore
My lodging prove, the cry of the poor suitor,
Fatherless orphan, or distressed widow,
Shall not disturb me in my quiet sleep.
On, then, a God's name, to our close abode!
God is as strong here as he is abroad.

[Exeunt.]

SCENE II. More's House.

[Enter Butler, Porter, and Horsekeeper several ways.]

BUTLER.
Robin brewer, how now, man! what cheer, what cheer?

BREWER.

Faith, Ned butler, sick of thy disease; and these our other fellows here, Rafe horsekeeper and Giles porter, sad, sad; they say my lord goes to his trial today.

HORSEKEEPER.

To it, man! why, he is now at it, God send him well to speed!

PORTER.

Amen; even as i wish to mine own soul, so speed it with my honorable lord and master, Sir Thomas More.

BUTLER.

I cannot tell, I have nothing to do with matters above my capacity; but, as God judge me, if I might speak my mind, I think there lives not a more harmless gentleman in the universal world.

BREWER.

Nor a wiser, nor a merrier, nor an honester; go to, I'll put that in upon mine own knowledge.

PORTER.

Nay, and ye bait him his due of his housekeeping, hang ye all! ye have many Lord Chancellor's comes in debt at the year's end, and for very housekeeping.

HORSEKEEPER.

Well, he was too good a lord for us, and therefore, I fear, God himself will take him: but I'll be hanged, if ever I have such an other service.

BREWER.

Soft, man, we are not discharged yet: my lord may come home again, and all will be well.

BUTLER.
I much mistrust it; when they go to raining once, there's ever foul
weather for a great while after. But soft; here comes Master
Gough and Master Catesby: now we shall hear more.

[Enter Gough and Catesby with a paper.]

HORSEKEEPER.

Before God, they are very sad; I doubt my lord is condemned.

PORTER.
God bless his soul! and a fig then for all wordly condemnation.

GOUGH.
Well said, Giles porter, I commend thee for it;
Twas spoken like a well affected servant
Of him that was a kind lord to us all.

CATESBY.
Which now no more he shall be; for, dear fellows,
Now we are masterless, though he may live
So long as please the king: but law hath made him
A dead man to the world, and given the axe his head,
But his sweet soul to live among the saints.

GOUGH.
Let us entreat ye to go call together
The rest of your sad fellows (by the rule
Y'are just seven score), and tell them what we hear
A virtuous honorable lord hath done
Even for the meanest follower that he had.
This writing found my lady in his study,
This instant morning, wherein is set down
Each servant's name, according to his place
And office in the house: on every man
He frankly hath bestown twenty nobles,
The best and worst together, all alike,
Which Master Catesby here forth will pay ye.

CATESBY.
Take it as it is meant, a kind remembrance
Of a fair kinder lord, with whose sad fall
He gives up house and farewell to us all:
Thus the fair spreading oak falls not alone,
But all the neighbor plants and under-trees
Are crushed down with his weight. No more of this:
Come, and receive your due, and after go

Fellow-like hence, copartners of one woe.

[Exeunt.]

SCENE III. The Tower.

[Enter Sir Thomas More, the Lieutenant, and a Servant attending, as in his chamber in the Tower.]

MORE.
Master Lieutenant, is the warrant come?
If it be so, a God's name, let us know it.

LIEUTENANT.
My lord, it is.

MORE.
Tis welcome, sir, to me with all my heart;
His blessed will be done!

LIEUTENANT.
Your wisdom, sir, hath been so well approved,
And your fair patience in imprisonment
Hath ever shewn such constancy of mind
And Christian resolution in all troubles,
As warrant us you are not unprepared.

MORE.
No, Master Lieutenant;
I thank my God, I have peace of conscience,
Though the world and I are at a little odds:
But we'll be even now, I hope, ere long.
When is the execution of your warrant?

LIEUTENANT.
Tomorrow morning.

MORE.

So, sir, I thank ye; I have not lived so ill, I fear to die. Master Lieutenant, I have had a sore fit of the stone tonight; but the king hath sent me such a rare receipt, I thank him, as I shall not need to fear it much.

LIEUTENANT.
In life and death still merry Sir Thomas More.

MORE.
Sirrah fellow, reach me the urinal:

[He gives it him.]

Ha! let me see (there's) gravel in the water;
(And yet I see no grave danger in that)
The man were likely to live long enough,
So pleased the king.—Here, fellow, take it.

SERVANT.
Shall I go with it to the doctor, sir?

MORE.
No, save thy labour; we'll cossen him of a fee:
Thou shalt see me take a dram tomorrow morning,
Shall cure the stone, I warrant; doubt it not.—
Master Lieutenant, what news of my Lord of Rochester?

LIEUTENANT.
Yesterday morning was he put to death.

MORE.
The peace of soul sleep with him!
He was a learned and a reverend prelate,
And a rich man, believe me.

LIEUTENANT.
If he were rich, what is Sir Thomas More,
That all this while hath been Lord Chancellor?

MORE.
Say ye so, Master Lieutenant? what do ye think
A man, that with my time had held my place,
Might purchase?

LIEUTENANT.
Perhaps, my lord, two thousand pound a year.

MORE.
Master Lieutenant, I protest to you,
I never had the means in all my life
To purchase one poor hundred pound a year:
I think I am the poorest Chancellor
That ever was in England, though I could wish,
For credit of the place, that my estate were better.

LIEUTENANT.
It's very strange.

MORE.
It will be found as true.
I think, sir, that with most part of my coin
I have purchased as strange commodities
As ever you heard tell of in your life.

LIEUTENANT.
Commodities, my lord!
Might I (without offence) enquire of them?

MORE.
Croutches, Master Lieutenant, and bare cloaks;
For halting soldiers and poor needy scholars
Have had my gettings in the Chancery:
To think but what a cheat the crown shall have
By my attainder! I prithee, if thou beest a gentleman,
Get but a copy of my inventory.
That part of poet that was given me
Made me a very unthrift;
For this is the disease attends us all,

Poets were never thrifty, never shall.

[Enter Lady More mourning, Daughters, Master Roper.]

LIEUTENANT.
Oh, noble More!—
My lord, your wife, your son-in-law, and daughters.

MORE.
Son Roper, welcome;—welcome, wife, and girls.
Why do you weep? because I live at ease?
Did you not see, when I was Chancellor,
I was so clogged with suitors every hour,
I could not sleep, nor dine, nor sup in quiet?
Here's none of this; here I can sit and talk
With my honest keeper half a day together,
Laugh and be merry: why, then, should you weep?

ROPER.
These tears, my lord, for this your long restraint
Hope had dried up, with comfort that we yet,
Although imprisoned, might have had your life.

MORE.
To live in prison, what a life were that!
The king (I thank him) loves me more then so.
Tomorrow I shall be at liberty
To go even whether I can,
After I have dispatched my business.

LADY MORE.
Ah, husband, husband, yet submit yourself!
Have care of your poor wife and children.

MORE.
Wife, so I have; and I do leave you all
To his protection hath the power to keep you
Safer than I can,—
The father of the widow and the orphans.

ROPER.
The world, my lord, hath ever held you wise;
And 't shall be no distaste unto your wisdom,
To yield to the opinion of the state.

MORE.
I have deceived myself, I must acknowledge;
And, as you say, son Roper, to confess the same,
It will be no disparagement at all.

LADY MORE.
His highness shall be certified thereof
Immediately.

[Offering to depart.]

MORE.
Nay, hear me, wife; first let me tell ye how:
I thought to have had a barber for my beard;
Now, I remember, that were labour lost,
The headsman now shall cut off head and all.

ROPER'S WIFE.
Father, his majesty, upon your meek submission,
Will yet (they say) receive you to his grace
In as great credit as you were before.

MORE.
……..
Has appointed me to do a little business.
If that were past, my girl, thou then shouldst see
What I would say to him about that matter;
But I shall be so busy until then,
I shall not tend it.

DAUGHTER.
Ah, my dear father!

LADY MORE.
Dear lord and husband!

MORE.
Be comforted, good wife, to live and love my children;
For with thee leave I all my care of them.—
Son Roper, for my sake that have loved thee well,
And for her virtue's sake, cherish my child.—
Girl, be not proud, but of thy husband's love;
Ever retain thy virtuous modesty;
That modesty is such a comely garment
As it is never out of fashion, sits as fair
upon the meaner woman as the empress;
No stuff that gold can buy is half so rich,
Nor ornament that so becomes a woman.
Live all and love together, and thereby
You give your father a rich obsequy.

BOTH DAUGHTERS.
Your blessing, dear father.

MORE.
I must be gone—God bless you!—
To talk with God, who now doth call.

LADY MORE.
Aye, my dear husband!

MORE.
Sweet wife, good night, good night:
God send us all his everlasting light!

ROPER.
I think, before this hour,
More heavy hearts ne'er parted in the Tower.

[Exeunt.]

SCENE IV. Tower Hill.

[Enter the Sheriffs of London and their Officers at one door, the Warders with their halbards at another.]

SECOND SHERIFF.
Officers, what time of day ist?

OFFICER.
Almost eight o'clock.

SECOND SHERIFF.
We must make haste then, least we stay too long.

SECOND WARDER.
Good morrow, Master Shrieves of London; Master Lieutenant
Wills ye repair to the limits of the Tower,
There to receive your prisoner.

FIRST SHERIFF.
Go back, and tell his worship we are ready.

SECOND SHERIFF.
Go bid the officers make clear the way,
There may be passage for the prisoner.

[Enter Lieutenant and his Guard, with More.]

MORE.
Yet, God be thanked, here's a fair day toward,
To take our journey in. Master Lieutenant,
It were fair walking on the Tower leads.

LIEUTENANT.
And so it might have liked my sovereign lord,
I would to God you might have walked there still!

[He weeps.]

MORE.
Sir, we are walking to a better place.
Oh, sir, your kind and loving tears

Are like sweet odors to embalm your friend!
Thank your good lady; since I was your guest,
She has made me a very wanton, in good sooth.

LIEUTENANT.
Oh, I had hoped we should not yet have parted!

MORE.
But I must leave ye for a little while;
Within an hour or two you may look for me;
But there will be so many come to see me,
That I shall be so proud, I will not speak;
And, sure, my memory is grown so ill,
I fear I shall forget my head behind me.

LIEUTENANT.
God and his blessed angels be about ye!—
Here, Master Shrieves, receive your prisoner.

MORE.
Good morrow, Master Shrieves of London, to ye both:
I thank ye that ye will vouchsafe to meet me;
I see by this you have not quite forgot
That I was in times past, as you are now,
A sheriff of London.

SECOND SHERIFF.
Sir, then you know our duty doth require it.

MORE.
I know it well, sir, else I would have been glad
You might have saved a labour at this time.
Ah, Master Sheriff, you and I have been of old acquaintance! you were a patient auditor of mine, when I read the divinity lecture at St. Lawrence's.

SECOND SHERIFF.
Sir Thomas More, I have heard you oft,
As many other did, to our great comfort.

MORE.
Pray God, you may so now, with all my heart!
And, as I call to mind,
When I studied the law in Lincoln's Inn,
I was of council with ye in a cause.

SECOND SHERIFF.
I was about to say so, good Sir Thomas……

MORE.
Oh, is this the place?
I promise ye, it is a goodly scaffold:
In sooth, I am come about a headless errand,
For I have not much to say, now I am here.
Well, let's ascend, a God's name:
In troth, methinks, your stair is somewhat weak;
I prithee, honest friend, lend me thy hand
To help me up; as for my coming down,
Let me alone, I'll look to that myself.

[As he is going up the stairs, enters the Earls of Surrey and
Shrewsbury.]

My Lords of Surrey and Shrewsbury, give me your hands. Yet before we….ye see, though it pleaseth the king to raise me thus high, yet I am not proud, for the higher I mount, the better I can see my friends about me. I am now on a far voyage, and this strange wooden horse must bear me thither; yet I perceive by your looks you like my bargain so ill, that there's not one of ye all dare enter with me. Truly, here's a most sweet gallery; *[Walking.]* I like the air of it better than my garden at Chelsea. By your patience, good people, that have pressed thus into my bedchamber, if you'll not trouble me, I'll take a sound sleep here.

SHREWSBURY.
My lord, twere good you'ld publish to the world
Your great offence unto his majesty.

MORE.

My lord, I'll bequeath this legacy to the hangman, *[Gives him his gown.]* and do it instantly. I confess, his majesty hath been ever good to me; and my offence to his highness makes me of a state pleader a stage player (though I am old, and have a bad voice), to act this last scene of my tragedy. I'll send him (for my trespass) a reverend head, somewhat bald; for it is not requisite any head should stand covered to so high majesty: if that content him not, because I think my body will then do me small pleasure, let him but bury it, and take it.

SURREY.
My lord, my lord, hold conference with your soul;
You see, my lord, the time of life is short.

MORE.

I see it, my good lord; I dispatched that business the last night. I come hither only to be let blood; my doctor here tells me it is good for the headache.

HANGMAN.
I beseech thee, my lord, forgive me!

MORE.
Forgive thee, honest fellow! why?

HANGMAN.
For your death, my lord.

MORE.

O, my death? I had rather it were in thy power to forgive me, for thou hast the sharpest action against me; the law, my honest friend, lies in thy hands now: here's thy fee *[His purse.]* ; and, my good fellow, let my suit be dispatched presently; for tis all one pain, to die a lingering death, and to live in the continual mill of a lawsuit. But I can tell thee, my neck is so short, that, if thou shouldst behead an hundred noblemen like myself, thou wouldst ne'er get credit by it; therefore (look ye, sir), do it handsomely, or, of my word, thou shalt never deal with me hereafter.

HANGMAN.
I'll take an order for that, my lord.

MORE.

One thing more; take heed thou cutst not off my beard: oh, I forgot; execution passed upon that last night, and the body of it lies buried in the Tower.—Stay; ist not possible to make a scape from all this strong guard? it is. There is a thing within me, that will raise And elevate my better part bove sight Of these same weaker eyes; and, Master Shrieves, For all this troop of steel that tends my death, I shall break from you, and fly up to heaven. Let's seek the means for this.

HANGMAN.
My lord, I pray ye, put off your doublet.

MORE.
Speak not so coldly to me; I am hoarse already;
I would be loathe, good fellow, to take more.
Point me the block; I ne'er was here before.

HANGMAN.
To the east side, my lord.

MORE.
Then to the east
We go to sigh; that o'er, to sleep in rest.
Here More forsakes all mirth; good reason why;
The fool of flesh must with her frail life die.
No eye salute my trunk with a sad tear:
Our birth to heaven should be thus, void of fear.

[Exit with Hangman, etc.]

SURREY.
A very learned worthy gentleman
Seals error with his blood. Come, we'll to court.
Let's sadly hence to perfect unknown fates,
Whilst he tends prograce to the state of states.

FINIS

FAIR EM

THE MILLER'S DAUGHTER OF MANCHESTER

This comedy was written approximately in 1590. It was bound together with *Mucedorus* and *The Merry Devil of Edmonton* in a volume labelled "Shakespeare. Vol. I" in the library of Charles II — though scholarly opinion universally rejects the attribution to Shakespeare. *Fair Em* was published in quarto twice before the closing of the theatres in 1642. Edward Phillips, in his *Theatrum Poetarum* (1675), states that *Fair Em* was written by Robert Greene, though Greene ridiculed the play's author and parodies two lines from the closing scene in his 1591 pamphlet *Farewell to Folly* .

In the main plot, William the Conqueror falls in love with the image on the shield that the Marquess of Lubeck carries in a tournament. In disguise, William travels to the court of King Zweno of Denmark to see the original of the portrait. Once there, he falls in love with Marianna, a Swedish princess held hostage at the Danish court. Marianna, however, is faithful to her suitor, Lubeck, and has no interest in William; but the king's daughter Blanche becomes infatuated with the newcomer. The ladies stage a plot, in which William absconds with the woman he thinks is Marianne; in doing so he gets in trouble with Zweno, who is under the same mistaken impression. When the woman's true identity is revealed — she is of course Blanche — William accepts her as his wife. Lubeck and Marianne are left, happily, to each other. In the subplot, Em, the beautiful daughter of the miller of Manchester, is wooed by three suitors, Valingford, Mountney, and Manvile.

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SCENE I.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE.

WILLIAM the Conqueror.

ZWENO, King of Denmark.
Duke DIROT.

Marquis of Lubeck.
MOUNTNEY.

MANVILLE.
ROZILIO.

DIMARCH.
Danish Embassador.

The Miller of Manchester.

TROTTER, his Man.

Citizen of Chester.

BLANCH, Princess of Denmark.

MARIANA, Princess of Suethia.

Fair EM, the Miller's Daughter.

ELINER, the Citizen's Daughter.

English and Danish Nobles.

Soldiers, Countrymen, and Attendants.

Actus Primus. Scaena Prima.

Scene: Windsor. A State Apartment.

ACT I. SCENE 1

[Enter William the Conqueror; Marques Lubeck, with a picture;

Mountney; Manville; Valingford; and Duke Dirot.]

MARQUES.

What means fair Britain's mighty Conqueror
So suddenly to cast away his staff,
And all in passion to forsake the tylt?

D. DIROT.

My Lord, this triumph we solemnise here
Is of mere love to your increasing joys,
Only expecting cheerful looks for all;
What sudden pangs than moves your majesty
To dim the brightness of the day with frowns?

WILLIAM THE CONQUEROR.

Ah, good my Lords, misconster not the cause;
At least, suspect not my displeased brows:
I amorously do bear to your intent,
For thanks and all that you can wish I yield.
But that which makes me blush and shame to tell
Is cause why thus I turn my conquering eyes
To cowards looks and beaten fantasies.

MOUNTNEY.

Since we are guiltless, we the less dismay
To see this sudden change possess your cheer,
For if it issue from your own conceits
Bred by suggestion of some envious thoughts,
Your highness wisdom may suppress it straight.
Yet tell us, good my Lord, what thought it is
That thus bereaves you of your late content,
That in advise we may assist your grace,
Or bend our forces to revive your spirits.

WILLIAM THE CONQUEROR.

Ah, Marques Lubeck, in thy power it lies
To rid my bosom of these thralled dumps:
And therefore, good my Lords, forbear a while
That we may parley of these private cares,
Whose strength subdues me more than all the world.

VALINGFORD.

We go and wish thee private conference

Publicke afffects in this accustomed peace.

[Exit all but William and the Marques.]

WILLIAM.

Now, Marques, must a Conquerer at arms

Disclose himself thrald to unarmed thoughts,

And, threatnd of a shadow, yield to lust.

No sooner had my sparkling eyes beheld

The flames of beauty blazing on this piece,

But suddenly a sense of miracle,

Imagined on thy lovely Maistre's face,

Made me abandon bodily regard,

And cast all pleasures on my wounded soul:

Then, gentle Marques, tell me what she is,

That thus thou honourest on thy warlike shield;

And if thy love and interest be such

As justly may give place to mine,

That if it be, my soul with honors wing

May fly into the bosom of my dear;

If not, close them, and stoop into my grave!

MARQUES.

If this be all, renowned Conquerer,

Advance your drooping spirits, and revive

The wonted courage of your Conquering mind;

For this fair picture painted on my shield

Is the true counterfeit of lovely Blaunch,

Princess and daughter to the King of Danes,

Whose beauty and excess of ornaments

Deserves another manner of defence,

Pomp and high person to attend her state

Then Marques Lubeck any way presents.

Therefore her vertues I resign to thee,

Already shrined in thy religious breast,

To be advanced and honoured to the full;

Nor bear I this an argument of love,

But to renown fair Blaunch, my Sovereigns child

In every place where I by arms may do it.

WILLIAM.

Ah, Marques, thy words bring heaven unto my soul,

And had I heaven to give for thy reward,
Thou shouldst be throned in no unworthy place.
But let my uttermost wealth suffice thy worth,
Which here I vow; and to aspire the bliss
That hangs on quick achievement of my love,
Thy self and I will travel in disguise,
To bring this Lady to our Brittain Court.

MARQUES.
Let William but bethink what may avail,
And let me die if I deny my aide.

WILLIAM.
Then thus: The Duke Dirot, and Therle Dimarch,
Will I leave substitutes to rule my Realm,
While mighty love forbids my being here;
And in the name of Sir Robert of Windsor
Will go with thee unto the Danish Court.
Keep Williams secrets, Marques, if thou love him.
Bright Blaunch, I come! Sweet fortune, favour me,
And I will laud thy name eternally.

[Exeunt.]

SCENE II.

Manchester. The Interior of a Mill.

[Enter the Miller and Em, his daughter.]

MILLER.

Come, daughter, we must learn to shake of pomp,

To leave the state that earst beseemd a Knight

And gentleman of no mean discent,

To undertake this homelie millers trade:

Thus must we mask to save our wretched lives,

Threatned by Conquest of this hapless Yle,

Whose sad invasions by the Conqueror

Have made a number such as we subject

Their gentle necks unto their stubborn yoke

Of drudging labour and base peasantry.

Sir Thomas Godard now old Goddard is,

Goddard the miller of fair Manchester.
Why should not I content me with this state,
As good Sir Edmund Trofferd did the flaile?
And thou, sweet Em, must stoop to high estate
To join with mine that thus we may protect
Our harmless lives, which, led in greater port,
Would be an envious object to our foes,
That seek to root all Britains Gentry
From bearing countenance against their tyranny.

EM.

Good Father, let my full resolved thoughts
With settled patiens to support this chance
Be some poor comfort to your aged soul;
For therein rests the height of my estate,
That you are pleased with this dejection,
And that all toils my hands may undertake
May serve to work your worthiness content.

MILLER.

Thanks, my dear Daughter.

These thy pleasant words
Transfer my soul into a second heaven:
And in thy settled mind my joys consist,
My state revived, and I in former plight.
Although our outward pomp be thus abased,
And thralde to drudging, stayless of the world,
Let us retain those honorable minds
That lately governed our superior state,
Wherein true gentry is the only mean
That makes us differ from base millers borne.
Though we expect no knightly delicates,
Nor thirst in soul for former soverainty,
Yet may our minds as highly scorn to stoop
To base desires of vulgars worldliness,
As if we were in our precedent way.
And, lovely daughter, since thy youthful years
Must needs admit as young affections,
And that sweet love unpartial perceives
Her dainty subjects through every part,
In chief receive these lessons from my lips,
The true discovers of a Virgins due,

Now requisite, now that I know thy mind
Something enclined to favour Manvils suit,
A gentleman, thy Lover in protest;
And that thou maist not be by love deceived,
But try his meaning fit for thy desert,
In pursuit of all amorous desires,
Regard thine honour. Let not vehement sighs,
Nor earnest vows importing fervent love,
Render thee subject to the wrath of lust:
For that, transformed to form of sweet delight,
Will bring thy body and thy soul to shame.
Chaste thoughts and modest conversations,
Of proof to keep out all inchaunting vows,
Vain sighs, forst tears, and pitiful aspects,
Are they that make deformed Ladies fair,
Poor rich: and such intycing men,
That seek of all but only present grace,
Shall in perseverance of a Virgins due
Prefer the most refusers to the choice
Of such a soul as yielded what they thought.
But ho: where is Trotter?

[Here enters Trotter, the Millers man, to them: And they
within call to him for their gryste.]

TROTTER.
Wheres Trotter? why, Trotter is here. Yfaith, you and your
daughter go up and down weeping and wamenting, and keeping of
a wamentation, as who should say, the Mill would go with your wamenting.

MILLER.
How now, Trotter? why complainest thou so?

TROTTER.
Why, yonder is a company of young men and maids, keep such a
stir for their grist, that they would have it before my stones
be ready to grind it. But, yfaith, I would I could break wind
enough backward: you should not tarry for your gryst, I
warrant you.

MILLER.

Content thee, Trotter, I will go pacify them.

TROTTER.

Iwis you will when I cannot. Why, look, you have a Mill—
Why, whats your Mill without me? Or rather, Mistress, what
were I without you?

[Here he taketh Em about the neck.]

EM.

Nay, Trotter, if you fall achyding, I will give you over.

TROTTER.

I chide you, dame, to amend you. You are too fine to be a
Millers daughter; for if you should but stoop to take up the
tole dish, you will have the cramp in your finger at least
ten weeks after.

MILLER.

Ah, well said, Trotter; teach her to play the good huswife, and thou shalt have her to thy wife, if thou canst get her good will.

TROTTER.

Ah, words wherein I see Matrimony come loaden with kisses to salute me! Now let me alone to pick the Mill, to fill the hopper, to take the tole, to mend the sails, yea, and to make the mill to go with the very force of my love.

[Here they must call for their gryst within.]

TROTTER.

I come, I come; yfaith, now you shall have your gryst, or else Trotter will trot and amble himself to death.

[They call him again. Exit.]

SCENE III.

The Danish Court.

[Enter king of Denmark, with some attendants, Blanch his daughter, Mariana, Marques Lubeck, William disguised.]

KING OF DENMARK.

Lord Marques Lubecke, welcome home.
Welcome, brave Knight, unto the Denmark King,
For Williams sake, the noble Norman Duke,
So famous for his fortunes and success,
That graceth him with name of Conqueror:

Right double welcome must thou be to us.

ROBERT WINDSOR.

And to my Lord the king shall I recount
Your graces courteous entertainment,
That for his sake vouchsafe to honor me,
A simple Knight attendant on his grace.

KING OF DENMARK.

But say, Sir Knight, what may I call your name?

ROBERT WINDSOR.

Robert Windsor, and like your Majesty.

KING OF DENMARK.

I tell thee, Robert, I so admire the man
As that I count it heinous guilt in him
That honors not Duke William with his heart.

Blanch, bid this stranger welcome, good my girl.

BLANCH.

Sir,
Shouyld I neglect your highness charge herein,
It might be thought of base discourtesy.

Welcome, Sir Knight, to Denmark, heartily.

ROBERT WINDSOR.

Thanks gentle Lady. Lord Marques, who is she?

LUBECK.

That same is Blanch, daughter to the King.

The substance of the shadow that you saw.

ROBERT WINDSOR.

May this be she, for whom I crost the Seas?

I am ashamed to think I was so fond.

In whom there's nothing that contents my mind:

Ill head, worse featured, uncomely, nothing courtly;

Swart and ill favoured, a Colliers sanguine skin.

I never saw a harder favoured slut.

Love her? for what? I can no whit abide her.

KIND OF DENMARK.

Mariana, I have this day received letters

From Swethia, that lets me understand

Your ransom is collecting there with speed,

And shortly shalbe hither sent to us.

MARIANA.

Not that I find occasion of mislike

My entertainment in your graces court,

But that I long to see my native home—

KING OF DENMARK.

And reason have you, Madam, for the same.

Lord Marques, I commit unto your charge

The entertainment of Sir Robert here;

Let him remain with you within the Court,

In solace and disport to spend the time.

ROBERT WINDSOR.

I thank your highness, whose bounden I remain.

[Exit King of Denmark. Blanch speaketh this secretly at one end of the stage.]

Unhappy Blanch, what strange effects are these

That works within my thoughts confusedly?

That still, me thinks, affection draws me on,
To take, to like, nay more, to love this Knight?

ROBERT WINDSOR.
A modest countenance; no heavy sullen look;
Not very fair, but richly deckt with favour;
A sweet face, an exceeding dainty hand;
A body were it framed of wax
By all the cunning artists of the world,
It could not better be proportioned.

LUBECK.
How now, Sir Robert? in a study, man?

Here is no time for contemplation.

ROBERT WINDSOR.
My Lord, there is a certain odd conceit,
Which on the sudden greatly troubles me.

LUBECK.

How like you Blanch? I partly do perceive

The little boy hath played the wag with you.

SIR ROBERT.

The more I look the more I love to look.

Who says that Mariana is not fair?

I'll gage my gauntlet gainst the envious man

That dares avow there liveth her compare.

LUBECK.

Sir Robert, you mistake your counterfeit.

This is the Lady which you came to see.

SIR ROBERT.

Yes, my Lord: She is counterfeit in deed,

For there is the substance that best contents me.

LUBECK.

That is my love. Sir Robert, you do wrong me.

ROBERT.

The better for you, sir, she is your Love—

As for the wrong, I see not how it grows.

LUBECK.

In seeking that which is anothers right.

ROBERT.

As who should say your love were privileged,

That none might look upon her but your self.

LUBECK.

These jars becomes not our familiarity,

Nor will I stand on terms to move your patience.

ROBERT.

Why, my Lord, am

Not I of flesh and blood as well as you?

Then give me leave to love as well as you.

LUBECK.

To Love, Sir Robert? but whom? not she I Love?
Nor stands it with the honor my state
To brook corrivals with me in my love.

ROBERT.

So, Sir, we are thorough for that Lady.
Ladies, farewell. Lord Marques, will you go?
I will find a time to speak with her, I trowe.

LUBECK.

With all my heart. Come, Ladies, will you walk?

[Exit.]

SCENE IV.

The English Court.

[Enter Manvile alone, disguised.]

MANVILE.

Ah, Em! the subject of my restless thoughts,

The Anvil whereupon my heart doth be

Framing thy state to thy desert—

Full ill this life becomes thy heavenly look,

Wherein sweet love and vertue sits enthroned.

Bad world, where riches is esteemd above them both,

In whose base eyes nought else is bountifull!

A Millers daughter, says the multitude,

Should not be loved of a Gentleman.

But let them breath their souls into the air,

Yet will I still affect thee as my self,

So thou be constant in thy plighted vow.

But here comes one—I will listen to his talk.

[Manvile stays, hiding himself.]

[Enter Valingford at another door, disguised.]

VALINGFORD.

Go, William Conqueror, and seek thy love
Seek thou a minion in a foreign land,
Whilest I draw back and court my love at home.
The millers daughter of fair Manchester
Hath bound my feet to this delightsome soil,
And from her eyes do dart such golden beams
That holds my heart in her subjection.

MANVILE.

He ruminates on my beloved choice:
God grant he come not to prevent my hope.

But here's another, him I'll listen to.

[Enter Mountney, disguised, at another door.]

LORD MOUNTNEY.

Nature unjust, in utterance of thy art,

To grace a peasant with a Princes fame!

Peasant am I, so to misterm my love:

Although a millers daughter by her birth,

Yet may her beauty and her vertues well suffice

To hide the blemish of her birth in hell,

Where neither envious eyes nor thought can pierce,

But endless darkness ever smother it.

Go, William Conqueror, and seek thy love,

Whilest I draw back and court mine own the while,

Decking her body with such costly robes

As may become her beauties worthiness;

That so thy labors may be laughed to scorn,

And she thou seekest in foreign regions

Be darkened and eclipst when she arrives

By one that I have chosen nearer home.

MANVILE.

What! comes he too, to intercept my love?

Then hie thee Manvile to forestall such foes.

[Exit Manvile.]

MOUNTNEY.

What now, Lord Valingford, are you behind?

The king had chosen you to go with him.

VALINGFORD.

So chose he you, therefore I marvel much
That both of us should linger in this sort.
What may the king imagine of our stay?

MOUNTNEY.

The king may justly think we are to blame:
But I imagined I might well be spared,
And that no other man had borne my mind.

VALINGFORD.

The like did I: in friendship then resolve
What is the cause of your unlookt for stay?

MOUNTNEY.

Lord Valingford, I tell thee as a friend,

Love is the cause why I have stayed behind.

VALINGFORD.

Love, my Lord? of whom?

MOUNTNEY.

Em, the millers daughter of Manchester.

VALINGFORD.

But may this be?

MOUNTNEY.

Why not, my Lord? I hope full well you know

That love respects no difference of state,

So beauty serve to stir affection.

VALINGFORD.

But this it is that makes me wonder most:

That you and I should be of one conceit

I such a strange unlikely passion.

MOUNTNEY.

But is that true? My Lord, I hope you do but jest.

VALINGFORD.

I would I did; then were my grief the less.

MOUNTNEY.

Nay, never grieve; for if the cause be such

To join our thoughts in such a Simpathy,

All envy set aside, let us agree

To yield to eithers fortune in this choice.

VALINGFORD.

Content, say I: and what so ere befall,

Shake hands, my Lord, and fortune thrive at all.

[Exeunt.]

ACT II.

SCENE I. Manchester. The Mill.

[Enter Em and Trotter, the Millers man, with a kerchife on his head, and an Urinall in his hand.]

EM.

Trotter, where have you been?

TROTTER.

Where have I been? why, what signifies this?

EM.

A kerchiefe, doth it not?

TROTTER.

What call you this, I pray?

EM.

I say it is an Urinall.

TROTTER.

Then this is mystically to give you to understand, I have been at the Phismicaries house.

EM.

How long hast thou been sick?

TROTTER.

Yfaith, even as long as I have not been half well, and that hath been a long time.

EM.

A loitering time, I rather imagine.

TROTTER.

It may be so: but the Phismicary tells me that you can help Me.

EM.

Why, any thing I can do for recovery of thy health be right

well assured of.

TROTTER.

Then give me your hand.

EM.

To what end?

TROTTER.

That the ending of an old indenture is the beginning of a new bargain.

EM.

What bargain?

TROTTER.

That you promised to do any thing to recover my health.

EM.

On that condition I give thee my hand.

TROTTER.

Ah, sweet Em!

[Here he offers to kiss her.]

EM.

How now, Trotter! your masters daughter?

TROTTER.

Yfaith, I aim at the fairest.

Ah, Em, sweet Em!
Fresh as the flower,
That hath pour
To wound my heart,
And ease my smart,
Of me, poor thief,
In prison bound—

EM.

So all your rhyme
Lies on the ground.
But what means this?

TROTTER.

Ah, mark the device—
For thee, my love,
Full sick I was,
In hazard of my life.
Thy promise was
To make me whole,
And for to be my wife.
Let me enjoy
My love, my dear,
And thou possess
Thy Trotter here.

EM.

But I meant no such matter.

TROTTER.

Yes, woos, but you did. I'll go to our Parson, Sir John, and he shall mumble up the marriage out of hand.

EM.

But here comes one that will forbid the Banes.

[Here enters Manvile to them.]

TROTTER.

Ah, Sir, you come too late.

MANVILE.

What remedy, Trotter?

EM.

Go, Trotter, my father calls.

TROTTER.

Would you have me go in, and leave you two here?

EM.

Why, darest thou not trust me?

TROTTER.

Yes, faith, even as long as I see you.

EM.

Go thy ways, I pray thee heartily.

TROTTER.

That same word (heartily) is of great force. I will go. But
I pray, sir, beware you come not too near the wench.

[Exit Trotter.]

MANVILE.

I am greatly beholding to you.

Ah, Maistres, sometime I might have said, my love,

But time and fortune hath bereaved me of that,

And I, an object in those gratious eyes,

That with remorse earst saw into my grief,

May sit and sigh the sorrows of my heart.

EM.

In deed my Manvile hath some cause to doubt,

When such a Swain is rival in his love!

MANVILE.

Ah, Em, were he the man that causeth this mistrust,

I should esteem of thee as at the first.

EM.

But is my love in earnest all this while?

MANVILE.

Believe me, Em, it is not time to jest,

When others joys, what lately I possest.

EM.

If touching love my Manvile charge me thus,

Unkindly must I take it at his hands,

For that my conscience clears me of offence.

MANVILE.

Ah, impudent and shameless in thy ill,

That with thy cunning and defraudful tongue

Seeks to delude the honest meaning mind!

Was never heard in Manchester before

Of truer love then hath been betwixt twain:

And for my part how I have hazarded

Displeasure of my father and my friends,

Thy self can witness. Yet notwithstanding this,

Two gentlemen attending on Duke William,

Mountney and Valingford, as I heard them named,

Oft times resort to see and to be seen

Walking the street fast by thy fathers door, Whose glauncing eyes up to the windows cast

Gives testies of their Maisters amorous heart.

This, Em, is noted and too much talked on,

Some see it without mistrust of ill—

Others there are that, scorning, grin thereat,

And saith, 'There goes the millers daughters wooers'.

Ah me, whom chiefly and most of all it doth concern,

To spend my time in grief and vex my soul,

To think my love should be rewarded thus,

And for thy sake abhor all womenkind!

EM.

May not a maid look upon a man

Without suspitious judgement of the world?

MANVILE.

If sight do move offence, it is the better not to see.

But thou didst more, unconstant as thou art,

For with them thou hadst talk and conference.

EM.

May not a maid talk with a man without mistrust?

MANVILE.

Not with such men suspected amorous.

EM.

I grieve to see my Manviles jealousy.

MANVILE.

Ah, Em, faithful love is full of jealousy.
So did I love thee true and faithfully,
For which I am rewarded most unthankfully.

[Exit in a rage. Manet Em.]

EM.

And so away? What, in displeasure gone,
And left me such a bittersweet to gnaw upon?
Ah, Manvile, little wottest thou

How near this parting goeth to my heart.
Uncourteous love, whose followers reaps reward
Of hate, disdain, reproach and infamy,
The fruit of frantike, bedlome jealousy!

[Here enter Mountney to Em.]

But here comes one of these suspitious men:
Witness, my God, without desert of me,
For only Manvile, honor I in heart,
Nor shall unkindness cause me from him to start.

MOUNTNEY.
For this good fortune, Venus, be thou blest,
To meet my love, the mistress of my heart,
Where time and place gives opportunity
At full to let her understand my love.

[He turns to Em and offers to take her by the hand, and she goes from him.]

Fair mistress, since my fortune sorts so well,

Hear you a word. What meaneth this?

Nay, stay, fair Em.

EM.

I am going homewards, sir.

MOUNTNEY.

Yet stay, sweet love, to whom I must disclose

The hidden secrets of a lovers thoughts,

Not doubting but to find such kind remorse

As naturally you are enclined to.

EM.

The Gentleman, your friend, Sir,

I have not seen him this four days at the least.

MOUNTNEY.

Whats that to me?

I speak not, sweet, in person of my friend,

But for my self, whom, if that love deserve
To have regard, being honourable love,
Not base affects of loose lascivious love,
Whom youthful wantons play and dally with,
But that unites in honourable bands of holy rites,
And knits the sacred knot that Gods—

[Here Em cuts him off.]

EM.
What mean you, sir, to keep me here so long?
I cannot understand you by your signs;
You keep a pratling with your lips,
But never a word you speak that I can hear.

MOUNTNEY.
What, is she deaf? a great impediment.

Yet remedies there are for such defects.
Sweet Em, it is no little grief to me,
To see, where nature in her pride of art

Hath wrought perfections rich and admirable—

EM.

Speak you to me, Sir?

MOUNTNEY.

To thee, my only joy.

EM.

I cannot hear you.

MOUNTNEY.

Oh, plague of Fortune! Oh hell without compare!

What boots it us to gaze and not enjoy?

EM.

Fare you well, Sir.

[Exit Em. Manet Mountney.]

MOUNTNEY.

Fare well, my love. Nay, farewell life and all!
Could I procure redress for this infirmity,
It might be means she would regard my suit.
I am acquainted with the Kings Physicians,
Amongst the which theres one mine honest friend,
Seignior Alberto, a very learned man.

His judgement will I have to help this ill.
Ah, Em, fair Em, if Art can make thee whole,
I'll buy that sence for thee, although it cost me dear.
But, Mountney, stay: this may be but deceit,
A matter fained only to delude thee,
And, not unlike, perhaps by Valingford.
He loves fair Em as well as I—
As well as I? ah, no, not half so well.
Put case: yet may he be thine enemy,
And give her counsell to dissemble thus.
I'll try the event and if it fall out so,

Friendship, farewell: Love makes me now a foe.

[Exit Mountney.]

SCENE II.

An Ante-Chamber at the Danish Court.

[Enter Marques Lubeck and Mariana.]

MARIANA.

Trust me, my Lord, I am sorry for your hurt.

LUBECK.

Gramercie, Madam; but it is not great:

Only a thrust, prickt with a Rapiers point.

MARIANA.

How grew the quarrel, my Lord?

LUBECK.

Sweet Lady, for thy sake. There was this last night two masks in one company, my self the formost. The other strangers were: amongst the which, when the Musick began to sound the Measures, each Masker made choice of his Lady; and one, more forward than the rest, stept towards thee, which I perceiving, thrust him aside, and took thee my self. But this was taken in so ill part that at my coming out of the court gate, with justling together, it was my chance to be thrust into the arm. The doer thereof, because he was the original cause of the disorder at that inconvenient time, was presently committed, and is this morning sent for to answer the matter. And I think here he comes.

[Here enters Sir Robert of Windsor with a Gaylor.]

What, Sir Robert of Windsor, how now?

SIR ROBERT.

Yfaith, my Lord, a prisoner: but what ails your arm?

LUBECK.

Hurt the last night by mischance.

SIR ROBERT.

What, not in the mask at the Court gate?

LUBECK.

Yes, trust me, there.

SIR ROBERT.

Why then, my Lord, I thank you for my nights lodging.

LUBECK.

And I you for my hurt, if it were so. Keeper, away, I
discharge you of your prisoner.

[Exit the Keeper.]

SIR ROBERT.

Lord Marques, you offered me disgrace to shoulder me.

LUBECK.
Sir, I knew you not, and therefore you must pardon me, and
the rather it might be alleged to me of mere simplicity to
see another dance with my Maistris, disguised, and I my self
in presence. But seeing it was our happs to damnify each
other unwillingly, let us be content with our harms, and lay
the fault where it was, and so become friends.

SIR ROBERT.
Yfaith, I am content with my nights lodging, if you be content
with your hurt.

LUBECK.
Not content that I have it, but content to forget how I came by it.

SIR ROBERT.

My Lord, here comes Lady Blaunch, lets away.

[Enter Blaunch.]

LUBECK.

With good will. Lady, you will stay?

[Exit Lubeck and Sir Robert.]

MARIANA.

Madam—

BLAUNCH.

Mariana, as I am grieved with thy presence: so am I not offended for thy absence; and were it not a breach to modesty, thou shouldest know before I left thee.

MARIANA.

How near is this humor to madness! If you hold on as you begin, you are in a pretty way to scolding.

BLAUNCH.

To scolding, huswife?

MARIANA.

Madam, here comes one.

[Here enters one with a letter.]

BLAUNCH.

There doth in deed. Fellow, wouldest thou have any thing with any body here?

MESSENGER.

I have a letter to deliver to the Lady Mariana.

BLAUNCH.

Give it me.

MESSENGER.

There must none but she have it.

[Blaunch snatcheth the letter from him. Et exit messenger.]

BLAUNCH.

Go to, foolish fellow. And therefore, to ease the anger I
sustain, I'll be so bold to open it. Whats here? Sir
Robert greets you well? You, Mastries, his love, his life?
Oh amorous man, how he entertains his new Maistres; and
bestows on Lubeck, his od friend, a horn night cap to keep in his witt.

MARIANA.

Madam, though you have discourteously read my letter, yet I
pray you give it me.

BLAUNCH.

Then take it: there, and there, and there!

[She tears it. Et exit Blaunch.]

MARIANA.

How far doth this differ from modesty! Yet will I gather up the pieces, which happily may shew to me the intent thereof, though not the meaning.

[She gathers up the pieces and joins them.]

'Your servant and love, sir Robert of Windsor, Alias William the Conqueror, wisheth long health and happiness'. Is this William the Conqueror, shrouded under the name of sir Robert of Windsor? Were he the Monarch of the world he should not disposess Lubeck of his Love.   Therefore I will to the Court, and there, if I can, close to be friends with Lady Blaunch; and thereby keep Lubeck, my Love, for my self, and further the Lady Blaunch in her suit, as much as I may.

[Exit.]

SCENE III.

Manchester.   The Mill.

[Enter Em sola.]

EM.

Jealousy, that sharps the lovers sight,

And makes him conceive and conster his intent,

Hath so bewitched my lovely Manvils senses

That he misdoubts his Em, that loves his soul;

He doth suspect corrivals in his love,

Which, how untrue it is, be judge, my God!

But now no more—Here commeth Valingford;

Shift him off now, as thou hast done the other.

[Enter Valingford.]

VALINGFORD.

See how Fortune presents me with the hope I lookt for.

Fair Em!

EM.

Who is that?

VALINGFORD.

I am Valingford, thy love and friend.

EM.

I cry you mercy, Sir; I thought so by your speech.

VALINGFORD.

What aileth thy eyes?

EM.

Oh blind, Sir, blind, stricken blind, by mishap, on a sudden.

VALINGFORD.

But is it possible you should be taken on such a sudden? Infortunate Valingford, to be thus crost in thy love! Fair Em, I am not a little sorry to see this thy hard hap. Yet nevertheless, I am acquainted with a learned Phisitian that will do any thing for thee at my request. To him will I resort, and enquire his judgement, as concerning the recovery of so excellent a sense.

EM.

Oh Lord Sir: and of all things I cannot abide Phisicke, the very name thereof to me is odious.

VALINGFORD.

No? not the thing will do thee so much good? Sweet Em, hether I cam to parley of love, hoping to have found thee in thy woonted prosperity; and have the gods so unmercifully thwarted my expectation, by dealing so sinisterly with thee, sweet Em?

EM.

Good sir, no more, it fits not me
To have respect to such vain fantasies
As idle love presents my ears withall.
More reason I should ghostly give my self
To sacred prayers for this my former sin,
For which this plague is justly fallen upon me,

Then to harken to the vanities of love.

VALINGFORD.

Yet, sweet Em,
Accept this jewell at my hand, which I
Bestowe on thee in token of my love.

EM.

A jewell, sir! what pleasure can I have
In jewels, treasure, or any worldly thing
That want my sight that should deserne thereof?
Ah, sir, I must leave you:
The pain of mine eyes is so extreme,
I cannot long stay in a place. I take my leave.

[Exit Em.]

VALINGFORD.

Zounds, what a cross is this to my conceit! But, Valingford, search the depth of this devise. Why may not this be fained subteltie, by Mountneys invention, to the intent that I seeing such occasion should leave off my suit and not any more persist to solicit her of love? I'll try the event; if I can by any means perceive the effect of this deceit to be procured by his means, friend Mountney, the one of us is like to repent our bargain.

[Exit.]

ACT III.

SCENE I. The Danish Court.

[Enter Mariana and Marques Lubeck.]

LUBECK.

Lady,
Since that occasion, forward in our good,
Presenteth place and opportunity,
Let me intreat your woonted kind consent

And friendly furtherance in a suit I have.

MARIANA.
My Lord, you know you need not to intreat,
But may command Mariana to her power,
Be it no impeachment to my honest fame.

LUBECK.
Free are my thoughts from such base villainy
As may in question, Lady, call your name:
Yet is the matter of such consequence,
Standing upon my honorable credit,
To be effected with such zeal and secrecy
As, should I speak and fail my expectation,
It would redound greatly to my prejudice.

MARIANA.
My Lord, wherein hath Mariana given you
Occasion that you should mistrust, or else
Be jealous of my secrecy?

LUBECK.

Mariana, do not misconster of me:
I not mistrust thee, nor thy secrecy;
Nor let my love misconster my intent,
Nor think thereof but well and honorable.

Thus stands the case:
Thou knowest from England hether came with me
Robert of Windsor, a noble man at Arms,
Lusty and valiant, in spring time of his years:

No marvell then though he prove amorous.

MARIANA.
True, my Lord, he came to see fair Blanch.

LUBECK.
No, Mariana, that is not it. His love to Blanch
Was then extinct, when first he saw thy face.
'Tis thee he loves; yea, thou art only she

That is maistres and commander of his thoughts.

MARIANA.

Well, well, my Lord, I like you, for such drifts
Put silly Ladies often to their shifts.
Oft have I heard you say you loved me well,
Yea, sworn the same, and I believed you too.
Can this be found an action of good faith
Thus to dissemble where you found true love?

LUBECK.

Mariana, I not dissemble, on mine honour,
Nor fails my faith to thee. But for my friend,
For princely William, by whom thou shalt possess
The title of estate and Majesty,
Fitting thy love, and vertues of thy mind—
For him I speak, for him do I intreat,
And with thy favour fully do resign
To him the claim and interest of my love.
Sweet Mariana, then, deny me not:
Love William, love my friend, and honour me,

Who else is clean dishonored by thy means.

MARIANA.

Borne to mishap, my self am only she

On whom the Sun of Fortune never shined:

But Planets ruled by retrogard aspect

Foretold mine ill in my nativity.

LUBECK.

Sweet Lady, cease, let my intreaty serve

To pacify the passion of thy grief,

Which, well I know, proceeds of ardent love.

MARIANA.

But Lubeck now regards not Mariana.

LUBECK.

Even as my life, so love I Mariana.

MARIANA.

Why do you post me to another then?

LUBECK.

He is my friend, and I do love the man.

MARIANA.

Then will Duke William rob me of my Love?

LUBECK.

No, as his life Mariana he doth love.

MARIANA.

Speak for your self, my Lord, let him alone.

LUBECK.

So do I, Madam, for he and I am one.

MARIANA.

Then loving you I do content you both.

LUBECK.

In loveing him, you shall content us both:
Me, for I crave that favour at your hands,
He, for he hopes that comfort at your hands.

MARIANA.
Leave off, my Lord, here comes the Lady Blaunch.

[Enter Blaunch to them.]

LUBECK.

Hard hap to break us of our talk so soon!
Sweet Mariana, do remember me.

[Exit Lubeck.]

MARIANA.

Thy Mariana cannot chose but remember thee.

BLAUNCH.

Mariana, well met. You are very forward in your Love?

MARIANA.

Madam, be it in secret spoken to your self, if you will but follow the complot I have invented, you will not think me so forward as your self shall prove fortunate.

BLAUNCH.

As how?

MARIANA.

Madam, as thus: It is not unknowen to you that Sir Robert of Windsor, a man that you do not little esteem, hath long importuned me of Love; but rather then I will be found false or unjust to the Marques Lubeck, I will, as did the constant lady Penelope, undertake to effect some great task.

BLAUNCH.

What of all this?

MARIANA.

The next time that Sir Robert shall come in his woonted sort to solicit me with Love, I will seem to agree and like of any thing that the Knight shall demaund, so far foorth as it be no impeachment to my chastity: And, to conclude, point some place for to meet the man, for my conveyance from the Denmark Court: which determined upon, he will appoint some certain time for our departure: whereof you having intelligence, you may soon set down a plot to wear the English Crown, and than—

BLANCH.

What then?

MARIANA.

If Sir Robert prove a King and you his Queen, how than?

BLANCH.

Were I assured of the one, as I am persuaded of the other,

there were some possibility in it. But here comes the man.

MARIANA.

Madam, begone, and you shall see I will work to your desire

and my content.

[Exit Blanch.]

WILLIAM CON.

Lady, this is well and happily met.

Fortune hetherto hath beene my foe,

And though I have oft sought to speak with you,

Yet still I have been crot with sinister happs.

I cannot, Madam, tell a loving tale

Or court my Maistres with fabulous discourses,

That am a souldier sworn to follow arms:

But this I bluntly let you understand,

I honor you with such religious Zeal

As may become an honorable mind.
Nor may I make my love the siege of Troy,
That am a stranger in this Country.
First, what I am I know you are resolved,
For that my friend hath let you that to understand,
The Marques Lubeck, to whom I am so bound
That whilest I live I count me only his.

MARIANA.
Surely you are beholding to the Marques,
For he hath been an earnest spokes-man in your cause.

WILLIAM.
And yields my Lady, then, at his request,
To grace Duke William with her gratious love?

MARIANA.
My Lord, I am a prisoner,
And hard it were to get me from the Court.

WILLIAM.

An easy matter to get you from the Court,
If case that you will thereto give consent.

MARIANA.
Put case I should, how would you use me than?

WILLIAM.

Not otherwise but well and honorably.
I have at Sea a ship that doth attend,
Which shall forthwith conduct us into England,
Where when we are, I straight will marry thee.
We may not stay deliberating long,
Least that suspicion, envious of our weal,
Set in a foot to hinder our pretence.

MARIANA.
But this I think were most convenient,
To mask my face, the better to scape unknowen.

WILLIAM.

A good devise: till then, Farwell, fair love.

MARIANA.

But this I must intreat your grace,

You would not seek by lust unlawfully

To wrong my chaste determinations.

WILLIAM.

I hold that man most shameless in his sin

That seeks to wrong an honest Ladies name

Whom he thinks worthy of his marriage bed.

MARIANA.

In hope your oath is true,

I leave your grace till the appointed time.

[Exit Mariana.]

WILLIAM.

O happy William, blessed in th love,

Most fortunate in Mariana's love!

Well, Lubeck, well, this courtesy of thine
I will requite, if God permit me life.

[Exit.]

SCENE II.

Manchester. Near the Mill.

[Enter Valingford and Mountney at two sundry doors, looking angrily each on other with Rapiers drawn.]

MOUNTNEY.

Valingford, so hardly I disgest
An injury thou hast profered me,
As, were it not that I detest to do
What stands not with the honor of my name,
Thy death should pay thy ransom of thy fault.

VALINGFORD.

And, Mountney, had not my revenging wrath,

Incenst with more than ordinary love,
Been loth for to deprive thee of thy life,
Thou hadst not lived to brave me as thou doest.
Wretch as thou art,
Wherein hath Valingford offended thee?
That honourable bond which late we did
Confirm in presence of the Gods,
When with the Conqueror we arrived here,
For my part hath been kept inviolably,
Till now too much abused by thy villainy,
I am inforced to cancel all those bands,
By hating him which I so well did love.

MOUNTNEY.

Subtle thou art, and cunning in thy fraud,
That, giving me occasion of offence,
Thou pickst a quarrell to excuse thy shame.
Why, Valingford, was it not enough for thee
To be a rival twixt me and my love,
But counsell her, to my no small disgrace,
That, when I came to talk with her of love,

She should seem deaf, as faining not to hear?

VALINGFORD.

But hath she, Mountney, used thee as thou sayest?

MOUNTNEY.

Thou knowest too well she hath:

Wherein thou couldest not do me greater injury.

VALINGFORD.

Then I perceive we are deluded both.

For when I offered many gifts of Gold,

And Jewels to entreat for love,

She hath refused them with a coy disdain,

Alledging that she could not see the Sun.

The same conjectured I to be thy drift,

That faining so she might be rid of me.

MOUNTNEY.

The like did I by thee. But are not these
Naturall impediments?

VALINGFORD.

In my conjecture merely counterfeit:
Therefore lets join hands in friendship once again,
Since that the jar grew only by conjecture.

MOUNTNEY.
With all my heart: Yet lets try the truth hereof.

VALINGFORD.
With right good will. We will straight unto her father,
And there to learn whither it be so or no.

[Exeunt.]

SCENE III.

Outside the Danish Palace.

[Enter William and Blanch disguised, with a mask over her face.]

WILLIAM.

Come on, my love, the comfort of my life.
Disguised thus we may remain unknowen,
And get we once to Seas, I force no then,
We quickly shall attain the English shore.

BLAUNCH.

But this I urge you with your former oath:
You shall not seek to violate mine honour,
Until our marriage rights be all performed.

WILLIAM.

Mariana, here I swear to thee by heaven,
And by the honour that I bear to Arms,
Never to seek or crave at hands of thee
The spoil of honourable chastity,
Until we do attain the English coast,

Where thou shalt be my right espoused Queen.

BLANCH.

In hope your oath proceedeth from your heart,
Let's leave the Court, and betake us to his power
That governs all things to his mighty will,
And will reward the just with endless joy,
And plague the bad with most extreme annoy.

WILLIAM.

Lady, as little tarriance as we may,
Lest some misfortune happen by the way.

[Exit Blanch and William.]

SCENE IV.

Manchester. The Mill.

[Enter the Miller, his man Trotter, and Manville.]

MILLER.

I tell you, sir, it is no little grief to me, you should
so hardly conseit of my daughter, whose honest report,
though I say it, was never blotted with any title of defamation.

MANVILLE.

Father Miller, the repair of those gentlemen to your house
hath given me great occasion to mislike.

MILLER.

As for those gentlemen, I never saw in them any evil intreaty.
But should they have profered it, her chaste mind hath proof
enough to prevent it.

TROTTER.

Those gentlemen are so honest as ever I saw: For yfaith one
of them gave me six pence to fetch a quart of Seck.—See,
maister, here they come.

[Enter Mountney and Valingford.]

MILLER.

Trotter, call Em. Now they are here together, I'll have this matter throughly debated.

[Exit Trotter.]

MOUNTNEY.

Father, well met. We are come to confer with you.

MANVILLE.

Nay, with his daughter rather.

VALINGFORD.

Thus it is, father, we are come to crave your friendship in a matter.

MILLER.

Gentlemen, as you are strangers to me, yet by the way of courtesy you shall demand any reasonable thing at my hands.

MANVILLE.

What, is the matter so forward they came to crave his good will?

VALINGFORD.

It is given us to understand that your daughter is sodenly become both blind and deaf.

MILLER.

Marie, God forbid! I have sent for her. In deed, she hath kept her chamber this three days. It were no little grief to me if it should be so.

MANVILLE.

This is God's judgement for her treachery.

[Enter Trotter, leading Em.]

MILLER.

Gentlemen, I fear your words are too true. See where Trotter comes leading of her.—What ails my Em? Not blind, I hope?

EM.

[Aside.] Mountney and Valingford both together! And Manville, to whom I have faithfully vowed my love! Now, Em, suddenly help thy self.

MOUNTNEY.

This is no desembling, Valingford.

VALINGFORD.

If it be, it is cunningly contrived of all sides.

EM.

[Aside to Trotter.] Trotter, lend me thy hand, and as thou lovest me, keep my counsell, and justify what so ever I say and I'll largely requite thee.

TROTTER.

Ah, thats as much as to say you would tell a monstrous, terrible, horrible, outragious lie, and I shall sooth it—

no, berlady!

EM.

My present extremity will me,—if thou love me, Trotter.

TROTTER.

That same word love makes me to do any thing.

EM.

Trotter, wheres my father?

TROTTER.

Why, what a blind dunce are you, can you not see? He standeth right before you.

[He thrusts Em upon her father.]

EM.

Is this my father?—Good father, give me leave to sit where

I may not be disturbed, sith God hath visited me both of my sight and hearing.

MILLER.

Tell me, sweet Em, how came this blindness? Thy eyes are lovely to look on, and yet have they lost the benefit of their sight. What a grief is this to thy poor father!

EM.

Good father, let me not stand as an open gazing stock to every one, but in a place alone, as fits a creature so miserable.

MILLER.

Trotter, lead her in, the utter overthrow of poor Goddards joy and only solace.

[Exit the Miller, Trotter and Em.]

MANVILLE.

Both blind and deaf! Then is she no wife for me; and glad am I so good occasion is hapned: Now will I away to Chester, and leave these gentlemen to their blind fortune.

[Exit Manville.]

MOUNTNEY.

Since fortune hath thus spitefully crost our hope, let us
leave this quest and harken after our King, who is at this
day landed at Lirpoole.

[Exit Mountney.]

VALINGFORD.

Go, my Lord, I'll follow you.—Well, now Mountney is gone,
I'll stay behind to solicit my love; for I imagine that I
shall find this but a fained invention, thereby to have us
leave off our suits.

[Exit Valingford.]

SCENE V.

The Danish Court.

[Enter Marques Lubeck and the King of Denmark, angerly with some attendants.]

ZWENO K.

Well, Lubeck, well, it is not possible
But you must be consenting to this act?
Is this the man so highly you extold?

And play a part so hateful with his friend?
Since first he came with thee into the court,
What entertainment and what coutenance
He hath received, none better knows than thou.
In recompence whereof, he quites me well
To steal away fair Mariana my prisoner,
Whose ransom being lately greed upon,
I am deluded of by this escape.
Besides, I know not how to answer it,
When she shall be demanded home to Swethia.

LUBECK.

My gracious Lord, conjecture not, I pray,
Worser of Lubeck than he doth deserve:
Your highness knows Mariana was my love,
Sole paragon and mistress of my thoughts.
Is it likely I should know of her departure,
Wherein there is no man injured more than I?

ZWENO.

That carries reason, Marques, I confess.
Call forth my daughter. Yet I am pesuaded
That she, poor soul, suspected not her going:
For as I hear, she likewise loved the man,
Which he, to blame, did not at all regard.

[Enter Rocillio and Mariana.]

ROCILLIO.

My Lord, here is the Princess Mariana;
It is your daughter is conveyed away.

ZWENO.

What, my daughter gone?
Now, Marques, your villainy breaks forth.
This match is of your making, gentle sir,
And you shall dearly know the price thereof.

LUBECK.
Knew I thereof, or that there was intent
In Robert thus to steal your highness daughter,
Let leavens in Justice presently confound me.

ZWENO.
Not all the protestations thou canst use
Shall save thy life. Away with him to prison!
And, minion, otherwise it cannot be
But you are an agent in this treachery.
I will revenge it throughly on you both.
Away with her to prison! Heres stuff in deed!
My daughter stolen away!—

It booteth not thus to disturb my self,

But presently to send to English William,

To send me that proud knight of Windsor hither,

Here in my Court to suffer for his shame,

Or at my pleasure to be punished there,

Withall that Blanch be sent me home again,

Or I shall fetch her unto Windsors cost,

Yea, and Williams too, if he deny her me.

[Exit Zweno and the rest.]

SCENE VI.

England. Camp of the Earl Demarch.

[Enter William, taken with soldiers.]

WILLIAM.

Could any cross, could any plague be worse?

Could heaven or hell, did both conspire in one

To afflict my soul, invent a greater scourge

Then presently I am tormented with?

Ah, Mariana, cause of my lament,

Joy of my heart, and comfort of my life!

For tho I breath my sorrows in the air

And tire my self, or silently I sigh,

My sorrows affiicts my soul with equal passion.

SOLDIER.

Go to, sirha, put up, it is to small purpose.

WILLIAM.

Hency, villains, hence! dare you lay your hands

Upon your Soveraigne?

SOLDIER.

Well, sir, we will deal for that.

But here comes one will remedy all this.

[Enter Demarch.]

My Lord, watching this night in the camp,

We took this man, and know not what he is:

And in his company was a gallant dame,

A woman fair in outward shew she seemed,

But that her face was masked, we could not see

The grace and favour of her countenance.

DEMARCH.

Tell me, good fellow, of whence and what thou art.

SOLDIER.

Why do you not answer my Lord?

He takes scorn to answer.

DEMARCH.

And takest thou scorn to answer my demand?

Thy proud behaviour very well deserves

This misdemeanour at the worst be construed.

Why doest thou neither know, nor hast thou heard,
That in the absence of the Saxon Duke
Demarch is his especial Substitute
To punish those that shall offend the laws?

WILLIAM.
In knowing this, I know thou art a traitor;
A rebel, and mutinous conspirator.
Why, Demarch, knowest thou who I am?

DEMARCH.
Pardon, my dread Lord, the error of my sense,
And misdemeaner to your princely excellencie.

WILLIAM.
Why, Demarch,
What is the cause my subjects are in arms?

DEMARCH.
Free are my thoughts, my dread and gratious Lord,
From treason to your state and common weal;

Only revengement of a private grudge
By Lord Dirot lately profered me,
That stands not with the honor of my name,
Is cause I have assembled for my guard
Some men in arms that may withstand his force,
Whose settled malice aimeth at my life.

WILLIAM.

Where is Lord Dirot?

DEMARCH.

In arms, my gratious Lord,
Not past two miles from hence, as credibly
I am assertained.

WILLIAM.

Well; come, let us go.
I fear I shall find traitors of you both.

[Exit.]

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

Chester.   Before the Citizen's House.

[Enter the Citizen of Chester, and his daughter Elner, and
Manville.]

CITIZEN.

In deed, sir, it would do very well if you could intreat your
father to come hither: but if you think it be too far, I care
not much to take horse and ride to Manchester. I am sure my
daughter is content with either. How sayest thou, Elner, art thou not?

ELNER.

As you shall think best I must be contented.

MANVILLE.

Well, Elner, farewell. Only thus much, I pray: make all
things in a readiness, either to serve here, or to carry
thither with us.

CITIZEN.

As for that, sir, take you no care; and so I betake you to your journey.

[Exit Manville.]

[Enter Valingford.]

But soft, what gentleman is this?

VALINGFORD.

God speed, sir. Might a man crave a word or two with you?

CITIZEN.

God forbid else, sir; I pray you speak your pleasure.

VALINGFORD.

The gentleman that parted from you, was he not of Manchester, his father living there of good account?

CITIZEN.

Yes, marry is he, sir. Why do you ask? Belike you have had some acquaintance with him.

VALINGFORD.

I have been acquainted in times past, but, through his double dealing, I am growen weary of his company. For, be it spoken to you, he hath been acquainted with a poor millers daughter, and diverse times hath promist her marriage. But what with his delays and flouts he hath brought her into such a taking that I fear me it will cost her her life.

CITIZEN.

To be plain with you, sir, his father and I have been of old acquaintance, and a motion was made between my daughter and his son, which is now throughly agreed upon, save only the place appointed for the marriage, whether it shall be kept here or at Manchester; and for no other occasion he is now ridden.

ELNER.

What hath he done to you, that you should speak so ill of the man?

VALINGFORD.
Oh, gentlewoman, I cry you mercy: he is your husband that shall be.

ELNER.
If I knew this to be true, he should not be my husband were he never so good: And therefore, good father, I would desire you to take the pains to bear this gentleman company to Manchester, to know whether this be true or no.

CITIZEN.
Now trust me, gentleman, he deals with me very hardly, knowing how well I meant to him; but I care not much to ride to Manchester, to know whether his fathers will be he should deal with me so badly. Will it please you, sir, to go in? We will presently take horse and away.

VALINGFORD.

If it please you to go in, I'll follow you presently.

[Exit Elner and her father.]

Now shall I be revenged on Manville, and by this means get Em to my wife; and therefore I will straight to her fathers and inform them both of all that is happened.

[Exit.]

SCENE II.

The English Court.

[Enter William, the Ambassador of Denmark, Demarch, and other attendants.]

WILLIAM.

What news with the Denmark Embassador?

EMBASSADOR.

Marry, thus:
The King of Denmark and my Sovereign
Doth send to know of thee what is the cause
That injuriously, against the law of arms,
Thou hast stolen away his only daughter Blaunch,
The only stay and comfort of his life.
Therefore by me
He willeth thee to send his daughter Blaunch,
Or else foorthwith he will levy such an host,
As soon shall fetch her in dispite of thee.

WILLIAM.

Embassador, this answer I return thy King.
He willeth me to send his daughter Blaunch,
Saying, I conveyed her from the Danish court,
That never yet did once as think thereof.
As for his menacing and daunting threats,

I nill regard him nor his Danish power;

For if he come to fetch her foorth my Realm

I will provide him such a banquet here,

That he shall have small cause to give me thanks.

EMBASSADOR.

Is this your answer, then?

WILLIAM.

It is; and so begone.

EMBASSADOR.

I go; but to your cost.

[Exit Embassador.]

WILLIAM.

Demarch, our subjects, earst levied in civil broils,

Muster foorthwith, for to defend the Realm.

In hope whereof, that we shall find you true, We freely pardon this thy late offence.

DEMARCH.

Most humble thanks I render to your grace.

[Exeunt.]

SCENE III.

Manchester. The Mill.

[Enter the Miller and Valingford.]

MILLER.

Alas, gentleman, why should you trouble your self so much, considering the imperfections of my daughter, which is able to with-draw the love of any man from her, as already it hath done in her first choice. Maister Manville hath forsaken her, and at Chester shall be married to a mans daughter of no little wealth. But if my daughter knew so much, it would go very near her heart, I fear me.

VALINGFORD.

Father miller, such is the entire affection to your daughter, as no misfortune whatsoever can alter. My fellow Mountney, thou seest, gave quickly over; but I, by reason of my good meaning, am not so soon to be changed, although I am borne off with scorns and denial.

[Enter Em to them.]

MILLER.

Trust me, sir, I know not what to say. My daughter is not to be compelled by me; but here she comes her self: speak to her and spare not, for I never was troubled with love matters so much before.

EM.

[Aside.] Good Lord! shall I never be rid of this importunate man? Now must I dissemble blindness again. Once more for thy sake, Manville, thus am I inforced, because I shall

complete my full resolved mind to thee. Father, where are you?

MILLER.

Here, sweet Em. Answer this gentleman, that would so fayne enjoy thy love.

EM.

Where are you, sir? will you never leave this idle and vain pursuit of love? Is not England stord enough to content you, but you must still trouble the poor contemptible maid of Manchester?

VALINGFORD.

None can content me but the fair maid of Manchester.

EM.

I perceive love is vainly described, that, being blind himself, would have you likewise troubled with a blind wife, having the benefit of your eyes. But neither follow him so much in folly, but love one in whom you may better delight.

VALINGFORD.

Father Miller, thy daughter shall have honor by graunting me her love. I am a Gentleman of king Williams Court, and no mean man in king Williams favour.

EM.

If you be a Lord, sir, as you say, you offer both your self and me great wrong: yours, as apparent, in limiting your love so unorderly, for which you rashly endure reprochement; mine, as open and evident, when, being shut from the vanities of this world, you would have me as an open gazing stock to all the world; for lust, not love, leads you into this error. But from the one I will keep me as well as I can, and yield the other to none but to my father, as I am bound by duty.

VALINGFORD.

Why, fair Em, Manville hath forsaken thee, and must at Chester be married: which if I speak otherwise than true, let thy father speak what credibly he hath heard.

EM.

But can it be Manville will deal so unkindly to reward my justice with such monstrous ungentleness? Have I dissembled for thy sake, and doest thou now thus requite it? In deed these many days I have not seen him, which hath made me marvel at his long absence. But, father, are you assured of the words he spake were concerning Manville?

MILLER.

In sooth, daughter, now it is foorth I must needs confirm it: Maister Manville hath forsaken thee, and at Chester must be married to a mans daughter of no little wealth. His own father procures it, and therefore I dare credit it; and do thou believe it, for trust me, daughter, it is so.

EM.

Then, good father, pardon the injury that I have done to you, only causing your grief, by over-fond affecting a man so trothless. And you likewise, sir, I pray hold me excused, a I hope this cause will allow sufficiently for me: My love to Manville, thinking he would requite it, hath made me double with my father and you, and many more besides, which I will no longer hide from you. That inticing speeches should not beguile me, I have made my self deaf to any but to him; and lest any mans person should please me more than his, I have dissembled the want of sight: Both which shadows of my irrevocable affections I have not spared to confirm before him, my father, and all other amorous soliciters—wherewith not made acquainted, I perceive my true intent hath wrought mine own sorrow, and seeking by love to be regarded, am cut of with contempt, and dispised.

MILLER.
Tell me, sweet Em, hast thou but fained all this while for his love, that hath so descourteously forsaken thee?

EM.
Credit me, father, I have told you the troth; wherewith I desire you and Lord Valingford not to be displeased. For ought else I shall say, let my present grief hold me excused. But, may I live to see that ungrateful man justly rewarded for his treachery, poor Em would think her self not a little happy. Favour my departing at this instant; for my troubled

thought desires to meditate alone in silence.

[Exit Em.]

VALINGFORD.

Will not Em shew one cheerful look on Valingford?

MILLER.
Alas, sir, blame her not; you see she hath good cause, being so handled by this gentleman: And so I'll leave you, and go comfort my poor wench as well as I may.

[Exit the Miller.]

VALINGFORD.

Farewell, good father.

[Exit Valingford.]

ACT V.

SCENE I.

Open country in England.

[Enter Zweno, king of Denmark, with Rosilio and other attendants.]

ZWENO.

Rosilio, is this the place whereas the Duke William should meet me?

ROSILIO.

It is, and like your grace.

ZWENO.

Go, captain! Away, regard the charge I gave:
See all our men be martialed for the fight.
Dispose the Wards as lately was devised;
And let the prisoners under several guards
Be kept apart, until you hear from us.
Let this suffise, you know my resolution.

If William, Duke of Saxons, be the man,
That by his answer sent us, he would seem,
Not words, but wounds: not parlays, but alarms,
Must be decider of this controversy.

Rosilio, stay with me; the rest begone.

[Exeunt.]

[Enter William, and Demarch with other attendants.]

WILLIAM.
All but Demarch go shroud you out of sight;
For I will go parlay with the Prince my self.

DEMARCH.
Should Zweno by this parlay call you foorth,
Upon intent injuriously to deal,
This offereth too much opportunity.

WILLIAM.

No, no, Demarch,
That were a breach against the law of Arms:

Therefore begone, and leave us here alone.

[Exeunt.]

I see that Zweno is maister of his word.
Zweno, William of Saxony greeteth thee,
Either well or ill, according to thy intent.
If well thou wish to him and Saxony,
He bids thee friendly welcome as he can.
If ill thou wish to him and Saxony,
He must withstand thy malice as he may.

ZWENO.
William,
For other name and title give I none
To him, who, were he worthy of those honours
That Fortune and his predecessors left,
I ought, by right and humaine courtesy,

To grace his style with Duke of Saxony;
But, for I find a base, degenerate mind,
I frame my speech according to the man,
And not the state that he unworthy holds.

WILLIAM.
Herein, Zweno, dost thou abase thy state,
To break the peace which by our ancestors
Hath heretofore been honourably kept.

ZWENO.
And should that peace for ever have been kept,
Had not thy self been author of the breach:
Nor stands it with the honor of my state,
Or nature of a father to his child,
That I should so be robbed of my daughter,
And not unto the utmost of my power
Revenge so intolerable an injury.

WILLIAM.

Is this the colour of your quarrel, Zweno?

I well perceive the wisest men may err.

And think you I conveyed away your daughter Blanch?

ZWENO.

Art thou so impudent to deny thou didst,

When that the proof thereof is manifest?

WILLIAM.

What proof is there?

ZWENO.

Thine own confession is sufficient proof.

WILLIAM.

Did I confess I stole your daughter Blanch?

ZWENO.

Thou didst confess thou hadst a Lady hence.

WILLIAM.

I have, and do.

ZWENO.

Why, that was Blanch, my daughter.

WILLIAM.

Nay, that was Mariana,

Who wrongfully thou detainest prisoner.

ZWENO.

Shameless persisting in thy ill!

Thou doest maintain a manifest untroth,

As she shall justify unto thy teeth.

Rosilio, fetch her and the Marques hether.

[Exit Rosilio for Mariana.]

WILLIAM.

It cannot be I should be so deceived.

DEMARCH.

I heard this night among the souldiers
That in their watch they took a pensive Lady,
Who, at the appointment of the Lord Dirot,
Is yet in keeping. What she is I know not:
Only thus much I over-heard by chance.

WILLIAM.

And what of this?

DEMARCH.

I may be Blaunch, the Kind of Denmarks daughter.

WILLIAM.

It may be so: but on my life it is not;
Yet, Demarch, go, and fetch her straight.

[Exit Demarch.]

[Enter Rosilio with the Marques.]

ROSILIO.

Pleaseth your highness, here is the Marques and Mariana.

ZWENO.
See here, Duke William, your competitors,
That were consenting to my daughters scape.
Let them resolve you of the truth herein.
And here I vow and solemnly protest,
That in thy presence they shall lose their heads,
Unless I hear where as my daughter is.

WILLIAM.
Oh, Marques Lubeck, how it grieveth me,
That for my sake thou shouldest indure these bonds,
Be judge my soul that feels the marytrdom!

MARQUES.

Duke William, you know it is for your cause,

It pleaseth thus the King to misconceive of me,

And for his pleasure doth me injury.

[Enter Demarch with the Lady Blaunch.]

DEMARCH.

May it please your highness,

Here is the Lady whom you sent me for.

WILLIAM.

Away, Demarch! what tellest thou me of Ladies?

I so detest the dealing of their sex,

As that I count a lovers state to be

The base and vildest slavery in the world.

DEMARCH.

What humors are these? Here's a strange alteration!

ZWENO.

See, Duke William, is this Blaunch or no?

You know her if you see her, I am sure.

WILLIAM.

Zweno, I was deceived, yea utterly deceived;

Yet this is she: this same is Lady Blaunch.

And for mine error, here I am content

To do whatsoever Zweno shall set down.

Ah, cruel Mariana, thus to use

The man which loved and honored thee with his heart!

MARIANA.

When first I came into your highness court,

And William often importing me of love,

I did devise, to ease the grief your daughter did sustain,

She should meet Sir William masked, as I it were.

This put in proof did take so good effect,

As yet it seems his grace is not resolved,

But is was I which he conveyed away.

WILLIAM.

May this be true? It cannot be but true.

Was it Lady Blaunch which I conveyed away?

Unconstant Mariana, thus to deal

With him which meant to thee nought but faith!

BLAUNCH.

Pardon, dear father, my follies that are past,

Wherein I have neglected my duty,

Which I in reverence ought to shew your grace;

For, led by love, I thus have gone astray,

And now repent the errors I was in.

ZWENO.

Stand up, dear daughter: though thy fault deserves

For to be punisht in the extremest sort,

Yet love, that covers multitude of sins,

Makes love in parents wink at childrens faults.

Sufficeth, Blaunch, thy father loves thee so,

Thy follies past he knows but will not know.

And here, Duke William, take my daughter to thy wife,
For well I am assured she loves thee well.

WILLIAM.
A proper conjunction! as who should say,
Lately come out of the fire,
I would go thrust my self into the flame.
Let Maistres nice go Saint it where she list,
And coyly quaint it with dissembling face.
I hold in scorn the fooleries that they use:
I being free, will never subject my self
To any such as she is underneath the Sun.

ZWENO.

Refusest thou to take my daughter to thy wife?
I tell thee, Duke, this rash denial may bring
More mischief on thee then thou canst avoid.

WILLIAM.
Conseit hath wrought such general dislike,

Through the false dealing of Mariana,

That utterly I do abhore their sex.

They are all disloyal, unconstant, all unjust:

Who tries as I have tried, and finds as I have found,

Will say theres so such creatures on the ground.

BLANCH.

Unconstant Knight, though some deserve no trust,

Theres others faithful, loving, loyal, and just.

[Enter to them Valingford with Em and the Miller, and

Mountney, and Manville, and Elner.]

WILLIAM.

How now, Lord Valingford, what makes these women here?

VALINGFORD.

Here be two women, may it please your grace,

That are contracted to one man, and are

In strife whether shall have him to their husband.

WILLIAM.

Stand foorth, women, and say,

To whether of you did he first give his faith.

EM.

To me, forsooth.

ELNER.

To me, my gratious Lord.

WILLIAM.

Speak, Manville: to whether didst thou give thy faith?

MANVILLE.

To say the troth, this maid had first my love.

ELNER.

Yes, Manville, but there was no witness by.

EM.

Thy conscience, Manville, is a hundred witnesses.

ELNER.

She hath stolen a conscience to serve her own turn; but you are deceived, yfaith, he will none of you.

MANVILLE.

In deed, dread Lord, so dear I held her love
As in the same I put my whole delight;
But some impediments, which at that instant hapned,
Made me forsake her quite;
For which I had her fathers frank consent.

WILLIAM.

What were the impediments?

MANVILLE.

Why, she could neither hear nor see.

WILLIAM.

Now she doth both. Maiden, how were you cured?

EM.

Pardon, my Lord, I'll tell your grace the troth,

Be it not imputed to me as discredit.

I loved this Manville so much, that still my thought,

When he was absent, did present to me

The form and feature of that countenance

Which I did shrine an idol in mine heart.

And never could I see a man, methought,

That equaled Manville in my partial eye.

Nor was there any love between us lost,

But that I held the same in high regard,

Until repair of some unto our house,

Of whom my Manville grew thus jealous

As if he took exception I vouchsafed

To hear them speak, or saw them when they came:

On which I straight took order with my self,

To void the scrupule of his conscience,
By counterfaiting that I neither saw nor heard,
Any ways to rid my hands of them.
All this I did to keep my Manvilles love,
Which he unkindly seeks for to reward.

MANVILLE.
And did my Em, to keep her faith with me,
Dissemble that she neither heard nor saw?
Pardon me, sweet Em, for I am only thine.

EM.

Lay off thy hands, disloyal as thou art!
Nor shalt thou have possession of my love,
That canst so finely shift thy matters off.
Put case I had been blind, and could not see—
As often times such visitations falls
That pleaseth God, which all things doth dispose—
Shouldest thou forsake me in regard of that?
I tell thee Manville, hadst thou been blind,

Or deaf, or dumb, or else what impediments might
Befall to man, Em would have loved and kept,
And honoured thee: yea begged, if wealth had failed,
For thy relief.

MANVILLE.

Forgive me, sweet Em.

EM.

I do forgive thee, with my heart,
And will forget thee too, if case I can:
But never speak to me, nor seem to know me.

MANVILLE.

Then farewell, frost! Well fare a wench that will!
Now, Elner, I am thine own, my girl.

ELNER.

Mine, Manville? thou never shalt be mine.

I so detest thy villainy,

That whilest I live I will abhor thy company.

MANVILLE.

Is it come to this? Of late I had choice of twain,

On either side, to have me to her husband,

And now am utterly rejected of them both.

VALINGFORD.

My Lord, this gentleman, when time was,

Stood something in our light,

And now I think it not amiss

To laugh at him that sometime scorned at us.

MOUNTNEY.

Content my Lord, invent the form.

VALINGFORD.

Then thus.—

WILLIAM.

I see that women are not general evils,

Blanch is fair: Methinks I see in her

A modest countenance, a heavenly blush.

Zweno, receive a reconciled for,

Not as thy friend, but as thy son in law,

If so that thou be thus content.

ZWENO.

I joy to see your grace so tractable.

Here, take my daughter Blanch;

And after my decease the Denmark crown.

WILLIAM.

Now, sir, how stands the case with you?

MANVILLE.

I partly am persuaded as your grace is,

My lord, he is best at ease that medleth least.

VALINGFORD.

Sir, may a man
Be so bold as to crave a word with you?

MANVILLE.

Yea, two or three: what are they?

VALINGFORD.

I say, this maid will have thee to her husband.

MOUNTNEY.

And I say this: and thereof will I lay
An hundred pound.

VALINGFORD.

And I say this: whereon I will lay as much.

MANVILLE.

And I say neither: what say you to that?

MOUNTNEY.

If that be true, then are we both deceived.

MANVILLE.

Why, it is true, and you are both deceived.

MARQUES.

In mine eyes this is the proprest wench;

Might I advise thee, take her unto thy wife.

ZWENO.

It seems to me, she hath refused him.

MARQUES.

Why, theres the spite.

ZWENO.

If one refuse him, yet may he have the other.

MARQUES.

He will ask but her good will, and all her friends.

ZWENO.

Might I advise thee, let them both alone.

MANVILLE.

Yea, thats the course, and thereon will I stand.

Such idle love hencefoorth I will detest.

VALINGFORD.

The Fox will eat no grapes, and why?

MOUNTNEY.

I know full well, because they hand too high.

WILLIAM.

And may it be a Millers daughter by her birth?

I cannot think but she is better borne.

VALINGFORD.

Sir Thomas Goddard hight this reverent man

Famed for his vertues, and his good success:

Whose fame hath been renowmed through the world.

WILLIAM.

Sir Thomas Goddard, welcome to thy Prince;

And, fair Em, frolic with thy good father;

As glad am I to find Sir Thomas Goddard,

As good Sir Edmund Treford, on the plains:

He like a sheepheard, and thou our country Miller.

MILLER.

And longer let not Goddard live a day

Then he in honour loves his soveraigne.

WILLIAM.

But say, Sir Thomas, shall I give thy daughter?

MILLER.

Goddard, and all that he hath,
Doth rest at the pleasure of your Majesty.

WILLIAM.

And what says Em to lovely Valingford?
It seemed he loved you well, that for your sake
Durst leave his King.

EM.

Em rests at the pleasure of your highness:
And would I were a wife for his desert.

WILLIAM.

Then here, Lord Valingford, receive fair Em.
Here take her, make her thy espoused wife.
Then go we in, that preparation may be made,
To see these nuptials solemnly performed.

[Exeunt all. Sound drums and Trumpets.]

FINIS

MUCEDORUS

Surviving in seventeen quartos, this was the most widely printed extant play of its time. It has been attributed to Shakespeare, but this theory is generally not accepted by scholars and *Mucedorus* is generally classified as apocryphal. The play was revised and expanded in 1610 with additional scenes, and was performed before King James I.

The play opens with a contest of insults between the abstract characters Comedy and Envy. Envy declares that she will turn this pleasant comedy into a tragedy. Comedy challenges Envy to do so and claims that mirth will triumph in the end. *Mucedorus* goes on to tell the tale of the Prince of Valencia, who has heard that Amadine, the daughter of the king of Aragon, is extraordinarily beautiful, and therefore he has decided to disguise himself as a shepherd so that he can sneak into Aragon to see her himself. Meanwhile, Amadine and her arranged fiancé Segasto are being chased through the woods by a bear. Segasto flees and leaves Amadine to fend for herself, but Mucedorus kills the bear off stage and saves her. She thanks him and requests that he escort her back to Aragon.

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ACT V. SCENE II. Open Place near the Court of the King of Arragon.

EPILOGUE.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE.

Eight persons may easily play it.

THE KING and ROMBELO, for one.
KING VALENCIA, for one.
MUCEDORUS the prince of Valencia, for one.
ANSELMO, for one.
AMADINE the King's daughter of Arragon, for one.
SEGASTO a Noble man, for one.
ENVY; TREMELIO a Captain; BREMO a wild man, for one.
COMEDY, a BOY, an OLD WOMAN, ARIENA Amadine's maid, for one.
COLLEN a Counselor, a MESSENGER, for one.
MOUSE the Clown, for one.

THE PROLOGUE.

Most sacred Majesty, whose great deserts
Thy Subject England, nay, the World, admires:
Which Heaven grant still increase: O may your Praise,
Multiplying with your hours, your Fame still raise;
Embrace your Counsel; Love, with Faith, them guide,
That both, as one, bench by each other's side.
So may your life pass on and run so even,
That your firm zeal plant you a Throne in Heaven,

Where smiling Angels shall your guardians be
From blemished Traitors, stained with Perjury:
And as the night's inferiour to the day,
So be all earthly Regions to your sway.
Be as the Sun to Day, the Day to Night;
For, from your Beams, Europe shall borrow light.
Mirth drown your bosom, fair Delight your mind,
And may our Pastime your Contentment find.

[Exit.]

INDUCTION.

[Enter Comedy joyful with a garland of bays in her hand.]

Why so! thus do I hope to please:
Music revives, and mirth is tolerable,
Comedy, play thy part and please,
Make merry them that comes to joy with thee:
Joy, then, good gentles; I hope to make you laugh.
Sound forth Bellona's silver tuned strings.
Time fits us well, the day and place is ours.

[Enter Envy, his arms naked, besmeared with blood.]

ENVY.
Nay, stay, minion, there lies a block.
What, all on mirth! I'll interrupt your tale
And mix your music with a tragic end.

COMEDY.
What monstrous ugly hag is this,
That dares control the pleasures of our will?
Vaunt, churlish cur, besmeared with gory blood,
That seemst to check the blossoms of delight,
And stifle the sound of sweet Bellona's breath:
Blush, monster, blush, and post away with shame,

That seekst disturbance of a goddess' deeds.

ENVY.
Post hence thy self, thou counter-checking trull;
I will possess this habit, spite of thee,
And gain the glory of thy wished port:
I'll thunder music shall appall the nymphs,
And make them shiver their clattering strings:
Flying for succour to their dankish caves.

[Sound drums within and cry, 'stab! stab!']

Hearken, thou shalt hear a noise
Shall fill the air with a shrilling sound,
And thunder music to the gods above:
Mars shall himself breathe down
A peerless crown upon brave envy's head,
And raise his chivall with a lasting fame.
In this brave music Envy takes delight,
Where I may see them wallow in their blood,
To spurn at arms and legs quite shivered off,
And hear the cries of many thousand slain.
How likst thou this, my trull? this sport alone for me!

COMEDY.
Vaunt, bloody cur, nurst up with tiger's sap,
That so dost seek to quail a woman's mind.
Comedy is mild, gentle, willing for to please,
And seeks to gain the love of all estates:
Delighting in mirth, mixt all with lovely tales,
And bringeth things with treble joy to pass.
Thou, bloody, Envious, disdainer of men's joy,
Whose name is fraught with bloody stratagems,
Delights in nothing but in spoil and death,
Where thou maist trample in their luke warm blood,
And grasp their hearts within thy cursed paws:
Yet vail thy mind, revenge thou not on me;
A silly woman begs it at thy hands:
Give me the leave to utter out my play,

Forbear this place, I humbly crave thee: hence,
And mix not death amongst pleasing comedies,
That treats naught else but pleasure and delight.
If any spark of human rests in thee,
Forbear, be gone, tender the suite of me.

ENVY.
Why so I will; forbearance shall be such
As treble death shall cross thee with despite,
And make thee mourn where most thou joyest,
Turning thy mirth into a deadly dole,
Whirling thy pleasures with a peal of death,
And drench thy methods in a sea of blood:
This will I do, thus shall I bear with thee;
And more to vex thee with a deeper spite,
I will with threats of blood begin thy play,
Favoring thee with envy and with hate.

COMEDY.
Then, ugly monster, do thy worst,
I will defend them in despite of thee:
And though thou thinkst with tragic fumes
To brave my play unto my deep disgrace,
I force it not, I scorn what thou canst do;
I'll grace it so, thy self shall it confess
From tragic stuff to be a pleasant comedy.

ENVY.
Why then, Comedy, send thy actors forth
And I will cross the first steps of their tread:
Making them fear the very dart of death.

COMEDY.
And I'll defend them maugre all thy spite:
So, ugly fiend, farewell, till time shall serve,
That we may meet to parle for the best.

ENVY.
Content, Comedy; I'll go spread my branch,

And scattered blossoms from mine envious tree
Shall prove to monsters, spoiling of their joys.

[Exit.]

ACT I. SCENE I. Valentia. The Court.

[Sound. Enter Mucedorus and Anselmo his friend.]

MUCEDORUS.
Anselmo.

ANSELMO.
My Lord and friend.

MUCEDORUS.
True, my Anselmo, both thy Lord and friend
Whose dear affections bosom with my heart,
And keep their domination in one orb.

ANSELMO.
Whence near disloyalty shall root it forth,
But faith plant firmer in your choice respect.

MUCEDORUS.
Much blame were mine, if I should other deem,
Nor can coy Fortune contrary allow:
But, my Anselmo, loth I am to say
I must estrange that friendship—
Misconsture not, tis from the Realm, not thee:
Though Lands part Bodies, Hearts keep company.
Thou knowst that I imparted often have
Private relations with my royal Sire,
Had as concerning beautious Amadine,
Rich Aragon's bright Jewel, whose face (some say)
That blooming Lilies never shone so gay,
Excelling, not excelled: yet least Report

Does mangle Verity, boasting of what is not,
Wing'd with Desire, thither I'll straight repair,
And be my Fortunes, as my Thoughts are, fair.

ANSELMO.
Will you forsake Valencia, leave the Court,
Absent you from the eye of Sovereignty?
Do not, sweet Prince, adventure on that task,
Since danger lurks each where: be won from it.

MUCEDORUS.
Desist dissuasion,
My resolution brooks no battery;
Therefore, if thou retain thy wonted form,
Assist what I intend.

ANSELMO.
Your miss will breed a blemish in the Court,
And throw a frosty dew upon that Beard,
Whose front Valencia stoops to.

MUCEDORUS.
If thou my welfare tender, then no more;
Let Love's strong magic charm thy trivial phrase,
Wasted as vainly as to gripe the Sun:
Augment not then more answers; lock thy lips,
Unless thy wisdom suite me with disguise,
According to my purpose.

ANSELMO.
That action craves no counsel,
Since what you rightly are will more command,
Than best usurped shape.

MUCEDORUS.
Thou still art opposite is disposition:
A more obscure servile habillament
Beseems this enterprise.

ANSELMO.

Than like a Florentine or Mountebank?

MUCEDORUS.
Tis much too tedious; I dislike thy judgement:
My mind is grafted on an humbler stock.

ANSELMO.
Within my Closet does there hang a Cassock,
Though base the weed is; twas a Shepherds,
Which I presented in Lord Julio's Mask.

MUCEDORUS.
That, my Anselmo, and none else but that,
Mask Mucedorus from the vulgar view!
That habit suits my mind; fetch me that weed.

[Exit Anselmo.]

Better than Kings have not disdained that state,
And much inferiour, to obtain their mate.

[Enter Anselmo with a Shepherd's coat.]

So!
Let our respect command thy secrecy.
At once a brief farewell:
Delay to lovers is a second hell.

[Exit Mucedorus.]

ANSELMO.
Prosperity forerun thee; Awkward chance
Never be neighbour to thy wishes' venture:
Content and Fame advance thee; ever thrive,
And Glory thy mortality survive.

[Exit.]

ACT I. SCENE II. A Forest in Arragon.

[Enter Mouse with a bottle of Hay.]

MOUSE.

O horrible, terrible! Was ever poor Gentleman so scared out of his seven Senses? A Bear? nay, sure it cannot be a Bear, but some Devil in a Bear's Doublet: for a Bear could never have had that agility to have frighted em. Well, I'll see my Father hanged, before I'll serve his Horse any more: Well, I'll carry home my Bottle of Hay, and for once make my Father's Horse turn puritan and observe Fasting days, for he gets not a bit. But soft! this way she followed me, therefore I'll take the other Path; and because I'll be sure to have an eye on him, I will take hands with some foolish Creditor, and make every step backward.

[As he goes backwards the Bear comes in, and he tumbles over, and runs away and leaves his bottle of Hay behind him.]

ACT I. SCENE III. The same.

[Enter Segasto running and Amadine after him, being pursued by a bear.]

SEGASTO.
Oh fly, Madam, fly or else we are but dead.

AMADINE.
Help, Segasto, help! help, sweet Segasto, or else
I die.

SEGASTO.
Alas, madam, there is no way but flight;
Then haste and save your self.

[Segasto runs away.]

AMADINE.
Why then I die; ah help me in distress!

[Enter Mucedorus like a shepherd with a sword drawn and a bear's head in his hand.]

MUCEDORUS.
Stay, Lady, stay, and be no more dismayed.
That cruel beast most merciless and fell,
Which hath bereaved thousands of their lives,
Affrighted many with his hard pursues,
Prying from place to place to find his prey,
Prolonging thus his life by others' death,
His carcass now lies headless, void of breath.

AMADINE.
That foul deformed monster, is he dead?

MUCEDORUS.
Assure your self thereof, behold his head:
Which if it please you, Lady, to accept,
With willing heart I yield it to your majesty.

AMADINE.
Thanks, worthy shepherd, thanks a thousand times.
This gift, assure thy self, contents me more
Than greatest bounty of a mighty prince,
Although he were the monarch of the world.

MUCEDORUS.
Most gracious goddess, more than mortal wight,
Your heavenly hue of right imports no less,
Most glad am I in that it was my chance
To undertake this enterprise in hand,
Which doth so greatly glad your princely mind.

AMADINE.
No goddess, shepherd, but a mortal wight,
A mortal wight distressed as thou seest:
My father here is king of Arragon.
I Amadine his only daughter am,
And after him sole heir unto the crown.

Now, where as it is my father's will
To marry me unto Segasto, one,
Whose wealth through father's former usury
Is known to be no less than wonderful,
We both of custom oftentimes did use,
Leaving the court, to walk within the fields
For recreation, especially in the spring,
In that it yields great store of rare delights:
And passing further than our wonted walks,
Scarce were entered within these luckless woods,
But right before us down a steep fall hill
A monstrous ugly bear did hie him fast,
To meet us both. I faint to tell the rest,
Good shepherd, but suppose the ghastly looks,
The hideous fears, the thousand hundred woes,
Which at this instant Amadine sustained.

MUCEDORUS.
Yet, worthy princess, let thy sorrow cease,
And let this sight your former joys revive.

AMADINE.
Believe me, shepherd, so it doth no less.

MUCEDORUS.
Long may they last unto your heart's content.
But tell me, Lady, what is become of him,
Segasto called, what is become of him?

AMADINE.
I know not, I; that know the powers divine,
But God grant this: that sweet Segasto live.

MUCEDORUS.
Yet hard hearted he in such a case,
So cowardly to save himself by flight:
And leave so brave a princess to the spoil.

AMADINE.

Well, shepherd, for thy worthy valour tried,
Endangering thy self to set me free,
Unrecompensed, sure, thou shalt not be.
In court thy courage shall be plainly known:
Throughout the Kingdom will I spread thy name,
To thy renown and never dying fame:
And that thy courage may be better known,
Bear thou the head of this most monstrous beast
In open sight to every courtiers view:
So will the king my father thee reward.
Come, let's away, and guard me to the court.

MUCEDORUS.
With all my heart.

[Exeunt.]

ACT I. SCENE IV. Outskirts of the Forest.

[Enter Segasto solus.]

SEGASTO.
When heaps of harms to hover over head,
Tis time as then, some say, to look about,
And of ensuing harms to choose the least:
But hard, yea hapless, is that wretches chance,
Luckless his lot and caytiffe like acourste,
At whose proceedings fortune ever frowns.
My self I mean, most subject unto thrall,
For I, the more I seek to shun the worst,
The more by proof I find myself accurst:
Ere whiles assaulted with an ugly bear,
Fair Amadine in company all alone,
Forthwith by flight I thought to save my self,
Leaving my Amadine unto her shifts:
For death it was for to resist the bear,
And death no less of Amadine's harms to hear.

Accursed I in lingering life thus long!
In living thus, each minute of an hour
Doth pierce my heart with darts of thousand deaths:
If she by flight her fury do escape,
What will she think?
Will she not say—yea, flatly to my face,
Accusing me of mere disloyalty—
A trusty friend is tried in time of need,
But I, when she in danger was of death
And needed me, and cried, Segasto, help:
I turned my back and quickly ran away.
Unworthy I to bear this vital breath!
But what! what needs these plaints?
If Amadine do live, then happy I;
She will in time forgive and so forget:
Amadine is merciful, not Juno like,
In harmful heart to harbor hatred long.

[Enter Mouse, the Clown, running, crying: clubs.]

MOUSE.

Clubs, prongs, pitchforks, bills! O help! a bear, a bear, a bear, a bear!

SEGASTO.

Still bears, and nothing else but bears. Tell me, sirrah, where she is.

MOUSE.

O sir, she is run down the woods: I see her white head and her white belly.

SEGASTO.
Thou talkest of wonders, to tell me of white bears.
But, sirra, didst thou ever see any such?

MOUSE.

No, faith, I never saw any such, but I remember my father's words: he bade me take heed I was not caught with a white bear.

SEGASTO.
A lamentable tale, no doubt.

MOUSE.

I tell you what, sir, as I was going a field to serve my father's great horse, & carried a bottle of hay upon my head—now do you see, sir—I, fast hoodwinked, that I could see nothing, perceiving the bear coming, I threw my hay into the hedge and ran away.

SEGASTO.
What, from nothing?

MOUSE.

I warrant you, yes, I saw something, for there was two load of thorns besides my bottle of hay, and that made three.

SEGASTO.
But tell me, sirra, the bear that thou didst see,
Did she not bear a bucket on her arm?

MOUSE.

Ha, ha, ha! I never saw bear go a milking in my life. But hark you, sir, I did not look so high as her arm: I saw nothing but her white head, and her white belly.

SEGASTO.
But tell me, sirra, where dost thou dwell?

MOUSE.
Why, do you not know me?

SEGASTO.
Why no, how should I know thee?

MOUSE.

Why, then, you know no body, and you know not me. I tell you, sir, I am the goodman rats son of the next parish over the hill.

SEGASTO.
Goodman rats son: why, what's thy name?

MOUSE.
Why, I am very near kin unto him.

SEGASTO.
I think so, but what's thy name?

MOUSE.

My name? I have a very pretty name; I'll tell you what my name is: my name is Mouse.

SEGASTO.
What, plain Mouse?

MOUSE.

Aye, plain mouse with out either welt or guard. But do you hear, sir, I am but a very young mouse, for my tail is scarce grown out yet; look you here else.

SEGASTO.
But, I pray thee, who gave thee that name?

MOUSE.

Faith, sir, I know not that, but if you would fain know, ask my father's great horse, for he hath been half a year longer with my father than I have.

SEGASTO.
This seems to be a merry fellow;
I care not if I take him home with me.
Mirth is a comfort to a troubled mind,
A merry man a merry master makes.
How saist thou, sirra, wilt thou dwell with me?

MOUSE.

Nay, soft, sir, two words to a bargain: pray you, what occupation are you?

SEGASTO.
No occupation, I live upon my lands.

MOUSE.

Your lands! away, you are no master for me: why, do you think that I am so mad, to go seek my living in the lands amongst the stones, briars, and bushes, and tear my holy day apparel? not I, by your leave.

SEGASTO.
Why, I do not mean thou shalt.

MOUSE.
How then?

SEGASTO.

Why, thou shalt be my man, and wait upon me at the court.

MOUSE.
What's that?

SEGASTO.
Where the King lies.

MOUSE.
What's that same King, a man or woman?

SEGASTO.
A man as thou art.

MOUSE.

As I am? hark you, sir; pray you, what kin is he to good man king of our parish, the church warden?

SEGASTO.
No kin to him; he is the King of the whole land.

MOUSE.

King of the land! I never see him.

SEGASTO.

If thou wilt dwell with me, thou shalt see him every day.

MOUSE.

Shall I go home again to be torn in pieces with bears? no, not I. I will go home & put on a clean shirt, and then go drown my self.

SEGASTO.

Thou shalt not need; if thou wilt dwell with me, thou shalt want nothing.

MOUSE.

Shall I not? then here's my hand; I'll dwell with you. And hark you, sir, now you have entertained me, I will tell you what I can do: I can keep my tongue from picking and stealing, and my hands from lying and slandering, I warrant you, as well as ever you had man in all your life.

SEGASTO.
Now will I to court with sorrowful heart, rounded with
  doubts.
If Amadine do live, then happy I:
Yea, happy I, if Amadine do live.

[Exeunt.]

ACT II. SCENE I. The Camp of the King of Arragon.

[Enter the King with a young prince prisoner, Amadine,
Tremelio, with Collen and counselors.]

KING.
Now, brave Lords, our wars are brought to end,
Our foes to the foil, and we in safety rest:

It us behooves to use such clemency
In peace as valour in the war
It is as great honor to be bountiful
At home as to be conquerors in the field.
Therefore, my Lords, the more to my content,
Your liking, and your country's safeguard,
We are disposed in marriage for to give
Our daughter to Lord Segasto here,
Who shall succeed the diadem after me,
And reign hereafter as I tofore have done,
Your sole and lawful King of Arragon:
What say you, Lordings, like you of my advise?

COLLEN.

And please your Majesty, we do not only allow of your highness pleasure, but also vow faithfully in what we may to further it.

KING.
Thanks, good my Lords, if long Adrostus live,
He will at full requite your courtesies.
Tremelio,
In recompense of thy late valour done,
Take unto thee the Catalonea prince,
Lately our prisoner taken in the wars.
Be thou his keeper, his ransom shall be thine:
We'll think of it when leisure shall afford:
Mean while, do use him well; his father is a King.

TREMELIO.
Thanks to your Majesty: his usage shall be such,
As he thereat shall think no cause to grutce.

[Exeunt Tremelio and Prince.]

KING.
Then march we on to court, and rest our wearied limbs.
But, Collen, I have a tale in secret kept for thee:
When thou shalt hear a watch word from thy king,

Think then some weighty matter is at hand
That highly shall concern our state,
Then, Collen, look thou be not far from me:
And for thy service thou to fore hast done,
Thy trueth and valour proud in every point,
I shall with bounties thee enlarge therefore:
So guard us to the court.

COLLEN.
What so my sovereign doth command me do,
With willing mind I gladly yield consent.

[Exeunt.]

ACT II. SCENE II. The same.

[Enter Segasto, and the Clown with weapons about him.]

SEGASTO.
Tell me, sirra, how do you like your weapons?

MOUSE.
O very well, very well, they keep my sides warm.

SEGASTO.

They keep the dogs from your shins very well, do they not?

MOUSE.

How, keep the dogs from my shins? I would scorn but my shins should keep the dogs from them.

SEGASTO.
Well, sirra, leaving idle talk, tell me:
Dost thou know captain Tremelio's chamber?

MOUSE.
Aye, very well; it hath a door.

SEGASTO.
I think so, for so hath every chamber.
But does thou know the man?

MOUSE.
Aye, forsooth, he hath a nose on his face.

SEGASTO.
Why so hath every one.

MOUSE.
That's more than I know.

SEGASTO.

But doest thou remember the captain, that was here with the king even now, that brought the young prince prisoner?

MOUSE.
O, very well.

SEGASTO.
Go unto him and bid him come to me. Tell him
I have a matter in secret to impart to him.

MOUSE.
I will, master:—master, what's his name?

SEGASTO.
Why, captain Tremelio.

MOUSE.

O, the meal man. I know him very well. He brings meal every Saturday. But hark you, master, must I bid him come to you or must you come to him?

SEGASTO.

No, sir, he must come to me.

MOUSE.

Hark you, master, how if he be not at home? What shall I do then?

SEGASTO.
Why, then thou leavest word with some of his folks.

MOUSE.

Oh, master, if there be no body within, I will leave word with his dog.

SEGASTO.
Why, can his dog speak?

MOUSE.
I cannot tell; wherefore doth he keep his chamber else?

SEGASTO.
To keep out such knaves as thou art.

MOUSE.
Nay, be lady, then go your self.

SEGASTO.
You will go, sir, will ye not?

MOUSE.
Yes, marry, will I. O tis come to my head:
And a be not within, I'll bring his chamber to you.

SEGASTO.
What, wilt thou pluck down the King's house?

MOUSE.

Nay, be lady, I'll know the price of it first. Master, it is such a hard name, I have forgotten it again. I pray you, tell me his name.

SEGASTO.

I tell thee, captain Tremelio.

MOUSE.
Oh, captain treble knave, captain treble knave.

[Enter Tremelio.]

TREMELIO.
How now, sirra, doost thou call me?

MOUSE.
You must come to my master, captain treble knave.

TREMELIO.
My Lord Segasto, did you send for me?

SEGASTO.
I did, Tremelio. Sirra, about your business.

MOUSE.
Aye, marry: what's that, can you tell?

SEGASTO.
No, not well.

MOUSE.

Marry, then, I can: straight to the kitchen dresser, to John the cook, and get me a good piece of beef and brewis, and then to the buttery hatch to Thomas the butler for a jack of beer, and there for an hour I'll so be labour my self! therefore, I pray you, call me not till you think I have done, I pray you, good master.

SEGASTO.
Well, sir, away.

[Exit Mouse.]

Tremelio, this it is: thou knowest the valour of Segasto spread through all the kingdom of Arragon, and such as hath found triumph and favours, never daunted at any time; but now a shepherd is admired at in court for worthiness, and

Segasto's honour laid a side. My will, therefore, is this, that thou dost find some means to work the shepherd's death. I know thy strength sufficient to perform my desire, & thy love no other wise than to revenge my injuries.

TREMELIO.
It is not the frowns of a shepherd that Tremelio fears.
Therefore, account it accomplished, what I take in hand.

SEGASTO.
Thanks, good Tremelio, and assure they self,
What I promise that will I perform.

TREMELIO.
Thanks, my good Lord, and in good time see where
He cometh: stand by a while, and you shall see
Me put in practise your intended drifts.
Have at thee, swain, if that I hit thee right.

[Enter Mucedorus.]

MUCEDORUS.
Viled coward, so without cause to strike a man.
Turn, coward, turn; now strike and do thy worst.

[Mucedorus killeth him.]

SEGASTO.
Hold, shepherd, hold; spare him, kill him not!
Accursed villain, tell me, what hast thou done?
Ah, Tremelio, trusty Tremelio!
I sorrow for thy death, and since that thou,
Living, didst prove faithful to Segasto,
So Segasto now, living, shall honour
The dead corpse of Tremelio with revenge.
Bloodthirsty villain,
Born and bred to merciless murther,
Tell me, how durst thou be so bold at once
To lay thy hands upon the least of mine?
Assure thy self,
Thou shalt be used according to the law.

MUCEDORUS.
Segasto, cease, these threats are needless.
Accuse not me of murther, that have done
Nothing but in mine own defence.

SEGASTO.
Nay, shepherd, reason not with me.
I'll manifest thy fact unto the King,
Whose doom will be thy death, as thou deservest.
What ho, Mouse, come away!

[Enter Mouse.]

MOUSE.
Why how now, what's the matter?
I thought you would be calling before I had done.

SEGASTO.
Come, help; away with my friend.

MOUSE.
Why, is he drunk? cannot he stand on his feet?

SEGASTO.
No, he is not drunk, he is slain.

MOUSE.
Flaine? no, by Lady, he is not flaine.

SEGASTO.
He's killed, I tell thee.

MOUSE.
What, do you use to kill your friends?
I will serve you no longer.

SEGASTO.
I tell thee, the shepherd killed him.

MOUSE.

O, did a so? but, master, I will have all his apparel if I carry him away.

SEGASTO.
Why, so thou shalt.

MOUSE.

Come, then, I will help; mas, master, I think his mother song looby to him, he is so heavy.

[Exeunt Segasto and Mouse.}

MUCEDORUS.
Behold the fickle state of man, always mutable,
Never at one. Sometimes we feed on fancies
With the sweet of our desires; sometimes again
We feel the heat of extreme misery.
Now am I in favour about the court and country.
To morrow those favours will turn to frowns:
To day I live revenged on my foe,
To morrow I die, my foe revenged on me.

[Exit.]

ACT II. SCENE III. The Forest.

[Enter Bremo, a wild man.]

BREMO.
No passengers this morning? what, not one?
A chance that seldom doth befall.
What, not one? then lie thou there,
And rest thyself till I have further need,
Now, Bremo, sith thy leisure so affords—
An endless thing. Who knows not Bremo's strength,
Who like a king commands within these woods?
The bear, the boar, dares not abide my sight,

But hastes away to save themselves by flight:
The crystal waters in the bubbling brooks,
When I come by, doth swiftly slide away,
And claps themselves in closets under banks,
Afraid to look bold Bremo in the face:
The aged oaks at Bremo's breath do bow,
And all things else are still at my command.
Else what would I?
Rent them in pieces and pluck them from the earth,
And each way else I would revenge my self.
Why who comes here with whom I dare not fight?
Who fights with me & doth not die the death?
Not one: What favour shews this sturdy stick to those,
That here within these woods are combatants with me?
Why, death, and nothing else but present death.
With restless rage I wander through these woods,
No creature here but feareth Bremo's force,
Man, woman, child, beast and bird,
And every thing that doth approach my sight,
Are forced to fall if Bremo once but frown.
Come, cudgel, come, my partner in my spoils,
For here I see this day it will not be;
But when it falls that I encounter any,
One pat sufficeth for to work my will.
What, comes not one? then let's begone;
A time will serve when we shall better speed.

[Exit.]

ACT II. SCENE IV. Arragon. a Room of State in the Court.

[Enter the King, Segasto, the Shepherd, and the Clown, with others.]

KING.
Shepherd, thou hast heard thin accusers;

Murther is laid to thy charge.
What canst thou say? thou hast deserved death.

MUCEDORUS.
Dread sovereign, I must needs confess,
I slew this captain in mine own defence,
Not of any malice, but by chance;
But mine accuser hath a further meaning.

SEGASTO.
Words will not here prevail,
I seek for justice, & justice craves his death.

KING.
Shepherd, thine own confession hath condemned thee.
Sirra, take him away, 7 do him to execution straight.

MOUSE.
So he shall, I warrant him; but do you hear, master
King, he is kin to a monkey, his neck is bigger than
his head.

SEGASTO.

Come, sirra, away with him, and hang him about the middle.

MOUSE.

Yes, forsooth, I warrant you: come on, sir. A, so like a sheep biter a looks!

[Enter Amadine and a boy with a bear's head.]

AMADINE.
Dread sovereign and wellbeloved sire,
On bended knees I crave the life of this
Condemned shepherd, which heretofore preserved
The life of thy sometime distressed daughter.

KING.
Preserved the life of my sometime distress daughter?

How can that be? I never knew the time
Wherein thou wast distressed; I never knew the day
But that I have maintained thy state,
As best beseemed the daughter of a king.
I never saw the shepherd until now.
How comes it, then, that he preserved thy life?

AMADINE.
Once walking with Segasto in the woods,
Further than our accustomed manner was,
Right before us, down a steep fall hill,
A monstrous ugly bear doth hie him fast
To meet us both: now whether this be true,
I refer it to the credit of Segasto.

SEGASTO.
Most true, and like your majesty.

KING.
How then?

AMADINE.
The bear, being eager to obtain his prey,
Made forward to us with an open mouth,
As if he meant to swallow us both at once;
The sight whereof did make us both to dread,
But specially your daughter Amadine,
Who, for I saw no succour incident
But in Segasto's valour, I grew desperate,
And he most cowardlike began to fly—
Left me distressed to be devoured of him.
How say you, Segasto, is it not true?

KING.
His silence verifies it to be true. What then?

AMADINE.
Then I amazed, distressed, all alone,
Did hie me fast to scape that ugly bear,

But all in vain, for, why, he reached after me,
And hardly I did oft escape his paws,
Till at the length this shepherd came,
And brought to me his head.
Come hither boy: lo, here it is,
Which I present unto your majesty.

KING.
The slaughter of this bear deserves great fame.

SEGASTO.
The slaughter of a man deserves great blame.

KING.
Indeed occasion oftentimes so falls out.

SEGASTO.
Tremelio in the wars, O King, preserved thee.

AMADINE.
The shepherd in the woods, o king, preserved me.

SEGASTO.
Tremelio fought when many men did yield.

AMADINE.
So would the shepherd, had he been in field.

MOUSE.
So would my master, had he not run away.

SEGASTO.
Tremelio's force saved thousands from the foe.

AMADINE.
The shepherd's force would have saved thousands more.

MOUSE.
Aye, shipsticks, nothing else.

KING.
Segasto, cease to accuse the shepherd,
His worthiness deserves a recompense,
All we are bound to do the shepherd good:
Shepherd, whereas it was my sentence, thou shouldst die,
So shall my sentence stand, for thou shalt die.

SEGASTO.
Thanks to your majesty.

KING.
But soft, Segasto, not for this offence.—
Long maist thou live, and when the sisters shall decree
to cut in twain the twisted thread of life,
Then let him die: for this I set thee free:
And for thy valour I will honour thee.

MUCEDORUS.
Thanks to your majesty.

KING.

Come, daughter, let us now depart, to honour the worthy valour of the shepherd with our rewards.

[Exeunt.]

MOUSE.

O master, hear you, you have made a fresh hand now you would be slow, you; why, what will you do now? you have lost me a good occupation by the means. Faith, master, now I cannot hang the shepherd, I pray you, let me take the pains to hang you: it is but half an hour's exercise.

SEGASTO.
You are still in your knavery, but sith a I cannot
have his life I will procure his banishment for ever.
Come one, sirra.

MOUSE.

Yes, forsooth, I come.—Laugh at him, I pray you.

[Exeunt.]

ACT III. SCENE I. Grove near the Court.

[Enter Mucedorus solus.]

MUCEDORUS.
From Amadine and from her father's court,
With gold and silver and with rich rewards,
Flowing from the banks of golden treasuries,—
More may I boast and say: but I,
Was never shepheard in such dignity.

[Enter the messenger and the clown.]

MESSENGER.
All hail, worthy shepherd.

MOUSE.
All reign, lowly shepherd..

MUCEDORUS.
Welcome, my friends; from whence come you?

MESSENGER.

The King and Amadine greets thee well, and after greetings done, bids thee depart the court: shepherd, begone.

MUCEDORUS.
Whose words are these? came these from Amadine?

MESSENGER.
Aye, from Amadine.

MOUSE.

Aye, from Amadine.

MUCEDORUS.
Ah, luckless fortune, worse than Phaeton's tale,
My former bliss is now become my bale.

MOUSE.
What, wilt thou poison thy self?

MUCEDORUS.
My former heaven is now become my hell.

MOUSE.
The worse ale house that I ever came in, in all my life.

MUCEDORUS.
What shall I do?

MOUSE.
Even go hang thy self half an hour.

MUCEDORUS.
Can Amadine so churlishly command,
To banish the shepherd from her Father's court?

MESSENGER.
What should shepherds do in the court?

MOUSE.
What should shepherds do amongst us? have we not
Lords enough on us in the court?

MUCEDORUS.
Why, shepherds are men, and kings are no more.

MESSENGER.
Shepherds are men and masters over their flock.

MOUSE.
That's a lie: who pays them their wages then?

MESSENGER.

Well, you are always interrupting of me, but you are best look to him, least you hang for him when he is gone.

[Exit.]

[The Clown sings.]

MOUSE.
And you shall hang for company,
For leaving me alone.
Shepherd, stand forth and hear thy sentence:
Shepherd, begone within three days in pain of
My displeasure: shepherd, begone; shepherd, begone;
begone, begone, begone, shepherd, shepherd, shepherd.

[Exit.]

MUCEDORUS.
And must I go, and must I needs depart?
Ye goodly groves, partakers of my songs
In time tofore when fortune did not frown,
Pour forth your plaints and wail a while with me;
And thou bright sun, my comfort in the cold,
Hide, hide thy face and leave me comfortless;
Ye wholesome herbs, and sweet smelling favors,
Ye each thing else prolonging life of man,
Change, change your wonted course, that I,
Wanting your aide, in woeful sort may die.

[Enter Amadine and Ariana her maid.]

AMADINE.
Ariana, if any body ask for me,
Make some excuse till I return.

ARIANA.
What and Segasto call?

AMADINE.
Do thou the like to him; I mean not to stay long.

[Exit Ariana.]

MUCEDORUS.
This voice so sweet my pining spirits revives.

AMADINE.
Shepherd, well met; tell me how thou doest.

MUCEDORUS.
I linger life, yet wish for speedy death.

AMADINE.
Shepherd, although thy banishment already
Be decreed, and all against my will,
Yet Amadine—

MUCEDORUS.
Ah, Amadine, to hear of banishment
Is death, aye, double death to me,
But since I must depart, one thing I crave.

AMADINE.
Say on with all my heart.

MUCEDORUS.
That in absence, either far or near,
You honor me, as servant, with your name.

AMADINE.
Not so.

MUCEDORUS.
And why?

AMADINE.
I honour thee, as sovereign, with my heart.

MUCEDORUS.
A shepherd and a sovereign? nothing like.

AMADINE.
Yet like enough where there is no dislike.

MUCEDORUS.
Yet great dislike, or else no banishment.

AMADINE.
Shepherd, it is only
Segasto that procures thy banishment.

MUCEDORUS.
Unworthy wights are most in jealousy.

AMADINE.
Would God they would free thee from banishment,
Or likewise banish me.

MUCEDORUS.
Amen, say I, to have your company.

AMADINE.
Well, shepherd, sith thou sufferest this for my sake,
With thee in exile also let me live—
On this condition, shepherd, thou canst love.

MUCEDORUS.
No longer love, no longer let me live!

AMADINE.

Of late I loved one indeed, now love I none but only thee.

MUCEDORUS.
Thanks, worthy princess; I borne likewise,
Yet smother up the blast,
I dare not promise what I may perform.

AMADINE.
Well, shepherd, hark what I shall say:
I will return unto my Father's court,
There for to provide me of such necessaries,
As for our journey I shall think most fit;
This being done, i will return to thee.
Do thou, therefore, appoint the place where we may meet.

MUCEDORUS.
Down in the valley where I slew the bear:
And there doth grow a fair broad branched beech,
That overshades a well; so who comes first
Let them abide the happy meeting of us both.
How like you this?

AMADINE.
I like it very well.

MUCEDORUS.
Now, if you please, you may appoint the time.

AMADINE.
Full three hours hence, God willing, I will return.

MUCEDORUS.
The thanks that Paris gave the Grecian queen
The like doth Mucedorus yield.

AMADINE.
Then, Mucedorus, for three hours farewell.

[Exit.]

MUCEDORUS.
Your departure, lady, breeds a privy pain.

[Exit.]

ACT III. SCENE II. The Court.

[Enter Segasto solus.]

SEGASTO.
Tis well, Segasto, that thou hast thy will;
Should such a shepherd, such a simple swain
As he, eclipse the credit famous through
The court? No, ply, Segasto, ply:
Let it not in Arragon be said,
A shepherd hath Segasto's honour won.

[Enter Mouse the clown calling his master.]

MOUSE.
What ho, master, will you come away?

SEGASTO.

Will you come hither? I pray you, what's the matter?

MOUSE.
Why, is it not past eleven a clock?

SEGASTO.
How then, sir?

MOUSE.
I pray you, come away to dinner.

SEGASTO.
I pray you, come hither.

MOUSE.
Here's such a do with you! will you never come?

SEGASTO.

I pray you, sir, what news of the message I sent you about?

MOUSE.
I tell you all the messes be on the table already.
There wants not so much as a mess of mustard
half an hour ago.

SEGASTO.
Come, sir, your mind is all upon your belly;
You have forgotten what I did bid you do.

MOUSE.

Faith, I know nothing, but you bade me go to breakfast.

SEGASTO.
Was that all?

MOUSE.

Faith, I have forgotten it; the very scent of the meat hath made me forget it quite.

SEGASTO.
You have forgotten the arrant I bid you do?

MOUSE.
What arrant? an arrant knave, or arrant whore?

SEGASTO.

Why, thou knave, did I not bid thee banish the shepherd?

MOUSE.
O, the shepherd's bastard.

SEGASTO.
I tell thee, the shepherd's banishment.

MOUSE.
I tell you the shepherd's bastard shall be well kept;
I'll look to it myself else; but I pray you, come away
to dinner.

SEGASTO.

Then you will not tell me whether you have banished him or no?

MOUSE.

Why, I cannot say banishment, and you would give me a thousand pounds to say so.

SEGASTO.

Why, you whoreson slave, have you forgotten that I sent you and another to drive away the shepherd.

MOUSE.

What an ass are you; here's a stir indeed: here's 'message,' 'arrant,' 'banishment,' and I cannot tell what.

SEGASTO.

I pray you, sir, shall I know whether you have drove him away?

MOUSE.

Faith, I think I have; and you will not believe me, ask my staff.

SEGASTO.
Why, can thy staff tell?

MOUSE.
Why, he was with me to.

SEGASTO.
Then happy I that have obtained my will.

MOUSE.
And happier I, if you would go to dinner.

SEGASTO.
Come, sirra, follow me.

MOUSE.

I warrant you, I will not loose an inch of you, now you are going to dinner.—I promise you, I thought seven year before I could get him away.

[Exeunt.]

ACT III. SCENE III. The Forest.

[Enter Amadine sola.]

AMADINE.
God grant my long delay procures no harm
Nor this my tarrying frustrate my pretence.
My Mucedorus surely stays for me,
And thinks me over long: at length I come
My present promise to perform.
Ah, what a thing is firm unfained love!
What is it which true love dares not tempt?
My father he may make, but I must match;
Segasto loves, but Amadine must like,
Where likes her best; compulsion is a thrall:
No, no, the hearty choice is all in all,
The shepherd's virtue Amadine esteems.
But, what, me thinks my shepherd is not come.
I muse at that, the hour is sure at hand:
Well here I'll rest till Mucedorus come.

[She sits her down.]

[Enter Bremo looking about, hastily taketh hold of her.]

BREMO.
A happy prey! now, Bremo, feed on flesh.
Dainties, Bremo, dainties, thy hungry panch to fill!
Now glut thy greedy guts with luke warm blood!
Come, fight with me, I long to see thee dead.

AMADINE.
How can she fight that weapons cannot wield?

BREMO.
What, canst not fight? then lie thou down and die.

AMADINE.
What, must I die?

BREMO.
What needs these words? I thirst to suck thy blood.

AMADINE.
Yet pity me and let me live a while.

BREMO.
No pity I, I'll feed upon thy flesh,
I'll tear thy body piecemeal joint from joint.

AMADINE.
Ah, now I want my shepherd's company.

BREMO.
I'll crush thy bones betwixt two oaken trees.

AMADINE.
Haste, shepherd, haste, or else thou comst too late.

BREMO.
I'll suck the sweetness from thy marie bones.

AMADINE.
Ah spare, ah spare to shed my guiltless blood!

BREMO.
With this my bat will I beat out thy brains.
Down, down, I say, prostrate thy self upon the ground.

AMADINE.
Then, Mucedorus, farewell; my hoped joys, farewell.

Yea, farewell life, and welcome present death!

[She kneels.]

To thee, O God, I yield my dying ghost.

BREMO.
Now, Bremo, play thy part.—
How now, what sudden chance is this?
My limbs do tremble and my sinews shake,
My unweakened arms have lost their former force:
Ah Bremo, Bremo, what a foil hast thou,
That yet at no time ever wast afraid
To dare the greatest gods to fight with thee,

[He strikes.]

And now want strength for one down driving blow!
Ah, how my courage fails when I should strike:
Some new come spirit, abiding in my breast,
Sayth, 'spare her, Bremo, spare her, do not kill.'
Shall I spare her which never spared any?
To it, Bremo, to it, say again.—
I cannot wield my weapons in my hand;
Me thinks I should not strike so fair a one:
I think her beauty hath bewitched my force
Or else with in me altered nature's course.
Aye, woman, wilt thou live in woods with me?

AMADINE.
Fain would I live, yet loath to live in woods.

BREMO.

Thou shalt not choose, it shall be as I say, & therefore, follow me.

[Exit.]

ACT III. SCENE IV. The same.

[Enter Mucedorus solus.]

MUCEDORUS.
It was my will an hour ago and more,
As was my promise, for to make return,
But other business hindered my pretence.
It is a world to see when man appoints,
And purposely one certain thing decrees,
How many things may hinder his intent.
What one would wish, the same is farthest off:
But yet th' appointed time cannot be past,
Nor hath her presence yet prevented me.
Well, here I'll stay, and expect her coming.

[They cry within, 'hold him, stay him, hold.']

Some one or other is pursued, no doubt;
Perhaps some search for me: tis good
To doubt the worst, therefore I'll begone.

[Exit.]

ACT III. SCENE V. The same.

[Cry within 'hold him, hold him.' Enter Mouse the Clown with a pot.]

MOUSE.

Hold him, hold him, hold him! here's a stir indeed. Here came hue after the crier: and I was set close at mother Nips' house, and there I called for three pots of ale, as tis the manner of us courtiers. Now, sirra, I had taken the maiden head of two of them. Now, as I was lifting up the third to my mouth, there came: hold him, hold him! now I could not tell whom to catch hold on, but I am sure I caught one: perchance a may be in this pot. Well, I'll see: mas, I cannot see him yet; well, I'll look a little further. Mas, he is a little slave, if a be here. Why, here's no body. All this goes well yet: but if the old trot should come for her pot—aye, marry, there's the matter, but I care not; I'll face her out, and call her old rusty, dusty, musty, fusty, crusty firebrand, and worse than all that, and so face her out of her pot: but soft, here she comes.

[Enter the old woman.]

OLD WOMAN.
Come on, you knave: where's my pot, you knave?

MOUSE.

Go look your pot: come not to me for your pot twere good for you.

OLD WOMAN.
Thou liest, thou knave; thou hast my pot.

MOUSE.
You lie, and you say it. I your pot! I know what
I'll say.

OLD WOMAN.
Why, what wilt thou say?

MOUSE.
But say I have him, and thou darst.

OLD WOMAN.

Why, thou knave, thou hast not only my pot but my drink unpaid for.

MOUSE.
You lie like an old—I will not say whore.

OLD WOMAN.
Dost thou call me whore? I'll cap thee for my pot.

MOUSE.

Cap me & thou darest, search me whether I have it or no.

[She searcheth him, and he drinketh over her head and casts down the pot; she stumbleth at it; then they fall together by the ears; she takes her pot and goes out. Exit.]

[Enter Segasto.]

SEGASTO.
How now, sirra, what's the matter?

MOUSE.
Oh, flies, master, flies.

SEGASTO.
Flies? where are they?

MOUSE.
Oh here, master, all about your face.

SEGASTO.
Why, thou liest; I think thou art mad.

MOUSE.
Why, master, I have killed a duncart full at the least.

SEGASTO.
Go to, sirra! leaving this idle talk, give ear to me.

MOUSE.

How? give you one of my ears? not & you were ten masters.

SEGASTO.
Why, sir, I bid you give ear to my words.

MOUSE.

I tell you I will not be made a curtall for no man's pleasure.

SEGASTO.

I tell thee, attend what I say: go thy ways straight and rear the whole town.

MOUSE.

How? rear the town? even go your self; it is more than I can do: why, do you think I can rear a town, that can scarce rear a pot of ale to my head? I should rear a town, should I not?

SEGASTO.

Go to the custable and make a privy search, for the shepherd is run away with the King's daughter.

MOUSE.

How? is the shepherd run away with the king's daughter? or is the king's daughter run away with the shepherd?

SEGASTO.
I cannot tell, but they are both gone together.

MOUSE.

What a fool is she to run away with the shepherd! why, I think I am a little handsomer man than the shepherd my self; but tell me, master, must I make a privy search, or search in the privy?

SEGASTO.
Why, doest thou think they will be there?

MOUSE.
I cannot tell.

SEGASTO.

Well, then, search every where; leave no place unsearched for them.

[Exit.]

MOUSE.

Oh now am I in office; now will I to that old firebrand's house & will not leave one place unsearched: nay, I'll to her ale stand & drink as long as I can stand, &

when I have done, I'll let out all the rest, to see if he be not bid in the barrel. & I find him not there, I'll to the cupboard; I'll not leave one corner of her house unsearched: yfaith, ye old crust, I will be with you now.

[Exit.]

ACT IV. SCENE I. Valentia. The Court.

[Sound Music.]

[Enter the King of Valentia, Anselmo, Roderigo,
Lord Borachius, with others.]

KING OF VALENTIA.
Enough of Music, it but adds to torment;
Delights to vexed spirits are as Dates
Set to a sickly man, which rather cloy than comfort:
Let me entreat you to entreat no more.

RODERIGO.
Let your strings sleep; have done there.

[Let the music cease.]

KING OF VALENTIA.
Mirth to a soul disturb'd are embers turn'd,
Which sudden gleam with molestation,
But sooner loose their sight fort;
Tis Gold bestowed upon a Rioter,
Which not relieves, but murders him: Tis a Drug
Given to the healthful, Which infects, not cures.
How can a Father that hath lost his Son,
A Prince both wise, virtuous, and valiant,
Take pleasure in the idle acts of Time?
No, no; till Mucedorus I shall see again,
All joy is comfortless, all pleasure pain.

ANSELMO.
Your son my lord is well.

KING OF VALENTIA.
I pre-thee, speak that thrice.

ANSELMO.
The Prince, you Son, is safe.

KING OF VALENTIA.
O where, Anselmo? surfeit me with that.

ANSELMO.
In Aragon, my Liege;
And at his parture, Bound my secrecy,
By his affectious love, not to disclose it:
But care of him, and pity of your age,
Makes my tongue blab what my breast vow'd
 concealment.

KING OF VALENTIA.
Thou not deceivest me?
I ever thought thee What I find thee now,
An upright, loyal man. But what desire,
Or young-fed humour Nurst within the brain,
Drew him so privately to Aragon?

ANSELMO.
A forcing Adamant:
Love, mixt with fear and doubtful jealousy,
Whether report guilded a worthless trunk,
Or Amadine deserved her high extolment.

KING OF VALENTIA.
See our provision be in readiness;
Collect us followers of the comeliest hue
For our chief guardians, we will thither wend:
The crystal eye of Heaven shall not thrice wink,
Nor the green Flood six times his shoulders turn,
Till we salute the Aragonian King.

Music speak loudly now, the season's apt,
For former dolours are in pleasure wrapt.

[Exeunt omnes.]

ACT IV. SCENE II. The Forest.

[Enter Mucedorus to disguise himself.]

MUCEDORUS.
Now, Mucedorus, whither wilt thou go?
Home to thy father, to thy native soil,
Or try some long abode within these woods?
Well, I will hence depart and hie me home.—
What, hie me home, said? that may not be;
In Amadine rests my felicity.
Then, Mucedorus, do as thou didst decree:
Attire thee hermit like within these groves,
Walk often to the beach and view the well,
Makes settles there and seat thy self thereon,
And when thou feelest thy self to be a thirst,
Then drink a hearty draught to Amadine.
No doubt she thinks on thee,
And will one day come pledge thee at this well.
Come, habit, thou art fit for me:

[He disguiseth himself.]

No shepherd now, a hermit I must be.
Me thinks this fits me very well;
Now must I learn to bear a walking staff,
And exercise some gravity withall.

[Enter the Clown.]

MOUSE.

Here's throw the wods, and throw the wods, to look out a shepherd & a stray king's daughter: but soft, who have we here? what art thou?

MUCEDORUS.
I am a hermit.

MOUSE.

An emmet? I never saw such a big emmet in all my life before.

MUCEDORUS.

I tell you, sir, I am an hermit, one that leads a solitary life within these woods.

MOUSE.

O, I know thee now, thou art he that eats up all the hips and haws; we could not have one piece of fat bacon for thee all this year.

MUCEDORUS.

Thou dost mistake me; but I pray thee, tell me what dost thou seek in these woods?

MOUSE.

What do I seek? for a stray King's daughter run away with a shepherd.

MUCEDORUS.
A stray King's daughter run away with a shepherd.
Wherefore? canst thou tell?

MOUSE.

Yes, that I can; tis this: my master and Amadine, walking one day abroad, nearer to these woods than they were used—about what I can not tell—but toward them comes running a great bear. Now my master, he played the man and run away, & Amadine crying after him: now, sir, comes me a shepherd & strikes off the bear's head. Now whether the bear were dead before or no I cannot tell, for bring twenty bears before me and bind their hands & feet and I'll kill them all:—now ever since Amadine hath been in love with the shepherd, and for good will she's even run away with the shepherd.

MUCEDORUS.
What manner of man was a? canst describe him unto me?

MOUSE.

Scribe him? aye, I warrant you, that I can: a was a little, low, broad, tall, narrow, big, well favoured fellow, a jerkin of white cloth, and buttons of the same cloth.

MUCEDORUS.

Thou describest him well, but if I chance to see any such, pray you, where shall I find you, or what's your name?

MOUSE.
My name is called master mouse.

MUCEDORUS.

Oh, master mouse, I pray you what office might you bear in the court?

MOUSE.
Marry, sir, I am a rusher of the stable.

MUCEDORUS.
O, usher of the table.

MOUSE.

Nay, I say rusher and I'll prove mine office good; for look, sir, when any comes from under the sea or so, and a dog chance to blow his nose backward, then with a whip I give him the good time of the day, and straw rushes presently: therefore, I am a rusher, a high office, I promise ye.

MUCEDORUS.
But where shall I find you in the Court?

MOUSE.

Why, where it is best being, either in the kitchen a eating or in the buttery drinking: but if you come, I will provide for thee a piece of beef & brewis knockle deep in fat; pray you, take pains, remember master mouse.

[Exit.]

MUCEDORUS.
Aye, sir, I warrant I will not forget you. Ah, Amadine,
What should become of thee?
Whither shouldst thou go so long unknown?
With watch and ward each passage is beset,
So that she cannot long escape unknown.
Doubtless she hath lost her self within these woods
And wandring to and fro she seeks the well,
Which yet she cannot find; therefore will I seek her out.

[Exit.]

ACT IV. SCENE III. The same.

[Enter Bremo and Amadine.]

BREMO.
Amadine, how like you Bremo & his woods?

AMADINE.
As like the woods of Bremo's cruelty:
Though I were dumb and could not answer him,
The beasts themselves would with relenting tears
Bewail thy savage and unhumane deeds.

BREMO.
My love, why dost thou murmur to thy self?
Speak louder, for thy Bremo hears thee not.

AMADINE.
My Bremo? no, the shepherd is my love.

BREMO.
Have I not saved thee from sudden death,
Giving thee leave to live that thou mightst love?
And dost thou whet me on to cruelty?
Come kiss me, sweet, for all my favours past.

AMADINE.
I may not, Bremo, and therefore pardon me.

BREMO.
See how she flings away from me; I will follow
And give a rend to her. Deny my love!
Ah, worm of beauty, I will chastice thee;
Come, come, prepare thy head upon the block.

AMADINE.
Oh, spare me, Bremo, love should limit life,
Not to be made a murderer of him self.
If thou wilt glut thy loving heart with blood,
Encounter with the lion or the bear,
And like a wolf pray not upon a lamb.

BREMO.
Why then dost thou repine at me?
If thou wilt love me thou shalt be my queen:
I will crown thee with a chaplet made of Ivy,
And make the rose and lily wait on thee:
I'll rend the burley branches from the oak,
To shadow thee from burning sun.
The trees shall spread themselves where thou dost go,
And as they spread, I'll trace along with thee.

AMADINE.
[Aside.] You may, for who but you?

BREMO.
Thou shalt be fed with quails and partridges,
With black birds, larks, thrushes and nightingales.
Thy drink shall be goat's milk and crystal water,

Distilled from the fountains & the clearest springs.
And all the dainties that the woods afford.
I'll freely give thee to obtain thy love.

AMADINE.
[Aside.] You may, for who but you?

BREMO.
The day I'll spend to recreate my love
With all the pleasures that I can devise,
And in the night I'll be thy bedfellow,
And lovingly embrace thee in mine arms.

AMADINE.
[Aside.] One may, so may not you.

BREMO.
The satyrs & the woodnymphs shall attend on thee
And lull thee a sleep with music's sound,
And in the morning when thou dost awake,
The lark shall sing good morn to my queen,
And whilst he sings, I'll kiss my Amadine.

AMADINE.
[Aside.] You may, for who but you?

BREMO.
When thou art up, the wood lanes shall be strawed
With violets, cowslips, and sweet marigolds
For thee to trample and to trace upon,
And I will teach thee how to kill the deer,
To chase the hart and how to rouse the roe,
If thou wilt live to love and honour me.

AMADINE.
[Aside.] You may, for who but you?

[Enter Mucedorus.]

BREMO.

Welcome, sir,
An hour ago I looked for such a guest.
Be merry, wench, we'll have a frolic feast:
Here's flesh enough to suffice us both.
Stay, sirra, wilt thou fight or dost thou yeel to die?

MUCEDORUS.
I want a weapon; how can I fight?

BREMO.
Thou wants a weapon? why then thou yeelst to die.

MUCEDORUS.
I say not so I do not yield to die.

BREMO.
Thou shalt not choose. I long to see thee dead.

AMADINE.
Yet spare him, Bremo, spare him.

BREMO.
Away, I say, I will not spare him.

MUCEDORUS.
Yet give me leave to speak.

BREMO.
Thou shalt not speak.

AMADINE.
Yet give him leave to speak for my sake.

BREMO.
Speak on, but be not over long.

MUCEDORUS.
In time of yore, when men like brutish beasts
Did lead their lives in loathsome cells and woods
And wholly gave themselves to witless will,

A rude unruly rout, then man to man
Became a present prey, then might prevailed,
The weakest went to walls:
Right was unknown, for wrong was all in all.
As men thus lived in this great outrage,
Behold one Orpheus came, as poets tell,
And them from rudeness unto reason brought,
Who led by reason soon forsook the woods.
Instead of caves they built them castles strong;
Cities and towns were founded by them then:
Glad were they, they found such ease,
And in the end they grew to perfect amity;
Weighing their former wickedness,
They termed the time wherein they lived then
A golden age, a goodly golden age.
Now, Bremo, for so I hear thee called,
if men which lived tofore as thou dost now,
Wily in wood, addicted all to spoil,
Returned were by worthy Orpheus' means,
Let me like Orpheus cause thee to return
From murder, bloodshed and like cruelty.
What, should we fight before we have a cause?
No, let's live and love together faithfully.
I'll fight for thee.

BREMO.
Fight for me or die: or fight or else thou diest.

AMADINE.
Hold, Bremo, hold!

BREMO.
Away, I say, thou troublest me.

AMADINE.
You promised me to make me your queen.

BREMO.
I did, I mean no less.

AMADINE.
You promised that I should have my will.

BREMO.
I did, I mean no less.

AMADINE.
Then save this hermit's life, for he may save us both.

BREMO.

At thy request I'll spare him, but never any after him. Say, hermit, what canst thou do?

MUCEDORUS.
I'll wait on thee, sometime upon the queen. Such
Service shalt thou shortly have as Bremo never had.

[Exeunt.]

ACT IV. SCENE IV. The Court.

[Enter Segasto, the Clown, and ROMBELO.]

SEGASTO.
Come, sirs; what, shall I never have you find out
Amadine and the shepherd?

MOUSE.

And I have been through the woods, and through the woods, and could see nothing but an emet.

ROMBELO.
Why, I see thousand emets; thou meanest a little one?

MOUSE.
Nay, that emet that I saw was bigger than thou art.

ROMBELO.
Bigger than I? what a fool have you to your man:
I pray you, master, turn him away.

SEGASTO.
But dost thou hear? was he not a man?

MOUSE.

I think he was, for he said he did lead a saltseller life about the woods.

SEGASTO.
Thou wouldest say a solitary life about the woods.

MOUSE.
I think it was so, indeed.

ROMBELO.
I thought what a fool thou art.

MOUSE.

Thou art a wise man! why, he did nothing but sleep since he went.

SEGASTO.
But tell me, Mouse, how did he go?

MOUSE.

In a white gown and a white hat on his head, and a staff in his hand.

SEGASTO.

I thought so: it was a hermit that walked a solitary life in the woods. Well, get you to dinner, and after never leave seeking till you bring some news of them, or I'll hang you both.

[Exit.]

MOUSE.
How now, Rombelo? what shall we do now?

ROMBELO.
Faith, I'll home to dinner, and afterward to sleep.

MOUSE.
Why, then, thou wilt be hanged.

ROMBELO.
Faith, I care not, for i know I shall never find them:
well, I'll once more abroad, & if I cannot find them,
I'll never come home again.

MOUSE.

I tell thee what, Rombelo, thou shalt go in at one end of the wood and I at the other, and we will meet both together at the midst.

ROMBELO.
Content! let's away to dinner.

[Exeunt.]

ACT V. SCENE I. The Forest.

[Enter Mucedorus solus.]

MUCEDORUS.
Unknown to any here within these woods
With bloody Bremo do I led my life.
The monster, he doth murther all he meets,
He spareth none and none doth him escape.
Who would continue, who but only I,
In such a cruel cutthroat's company?
Yet Amadine is there; how can I choose?
Ah, silly soul, how often times she sits
And sighs, and calls: 'come, shepherd, come,
Sweet Mucedorus, come and set me free;
When Mucedorus present stands her by:

But here she comes.

[Enter Amadine.]

What news, fair Lady, as you walk these woods.

AMADINE.
Ah, hermit, none but bad & such as thou knowest.

MUCEDORUS.
How do you like your Bremo and his woods?

AMADINE.
Not my Bremo nor Bremo his woods.

MUCEDORUS.
And why not yours? me thinks he loves you well.

AMADINE.
I like him not, his love to me is nothing worth.

MUCEDORUS.
Lady, in this me thinks you offer wrong,
To hate the man that ever loves you best.

AMADINE.
Ah hermit, I take no pleasure in his love;
Neither yet doth Bremo like me best.

MUCEDORUS.
Pardon my boldness, fair lady: sith we both
May safely talk now out of Bremo's sight,
Unfold to me, if so you please, the full discourse
How, when, and why you came into these woods,
And fell into this bloody butcher's hands.

AMADINE.
Hermit, I will;
Of late a worthy shepherd I did love.

MUCEDORUS.
A shepherd, lady? sure a man unfit
To match with you.

AMADINE.
Hermit, this is true, and when we had—

MUCEDORUS.
Stay there, the wild man comes.
Refer the rest until another time.

[Enter Bremo.]

BREMO.
What secret tale is this? what whispering have we here?
Villain, I charge thee tell thy tale again.

MUCEDORUS.
If needs I must, lo, here it is again:
When as we both had lost the sight of thee,
It grieved us both, but specially thy queen,
Who in thy absence ever fears the worst,
Least some mischance befall your royal grace.
'Shall my sweet Bremo wander through the woods?
Toil to and fro for to redress my want,
Hazard his life; and all to cherish me?
I like not this,' quoth she,
And thereupon craved to know of me
If I could teach her handle weapons well.
My answer was I had small skill therein,
But glad, most mighty king, to learn of thee.
And this was all.

BREMO.
Wast so? none can dislike of this.
I'll teach
You both to fight: but first, my queen, begin.
Here, take this weapon; see how thou canst use it.

AMADINE.

This is too big, I cannot wield it in my arm.

BREMO.
Ist so? we'll have a knotty crabtree staff
For thee.—But, sirra, tell me, what saist thou?

MUCEDORUS.
With all my heart I willing am to learn.

BREMO.
Then take my staff & see how canst wield it.

MUCEDORUS.
First teach me how to hold it in my hand.

BREMO.
Thou holdest it well.
Look how he doth; thou maist the sooner learn.

MUCEDORUS.
Next tell me how and when tis best to strike.

BREMO.
Tis best to strike when time doth serve,
Tis best to loose no time.

MUCEDORUS.
[Aside.] Then now or never is my time to strike.

BREMO.
And when thou strikest, be sure thou hit the head.

MUCEDORUS.
The head?

BREMO.
The very head.

MUCEDORUS.
Then have at thine! *[He strikes him down head.]*

So, lie there and die,
A death no doubt according to desert,
or else a worse as thou deservest a worse.

AMADINE.
It glads my heart this tyrant's death to see.

MUCEDORUS.
Now, lady, it remains in you
To end the tale you lately had begun,
Being interrupted by this wicked wight.
You said you loved a shepherd.

AMADINE.
Aye, so I do, and none but only him,
And will do still as long as life shall last.

MUCEDORUS.
But tell me, lady; sith I set you free,
What course of life do you intend to take?

AMADINE.
I will disguised wander through the world,
Till I have found him out.

MUCEDORUS.
How if you find your shepherd in these woods?

AMADINE.
Ah, none so happy then as Amadine.

[He discloseth himself.]

MUCEDORUS.
In tract of time a man may alter much;
Say, Lady, do you know your shepherd well?

AMADINE.
My Mucedorus! hath he set me free?

MUCEDORUS.
Mucedorus he hath set thee free.

AMADINE.
And lived so long unknown to Amadine!

MUCEDORUS.
Aye that's a question where of you may not be resolved.
You know that I am banisht from the court;
I know likewise each passage is best,
So that we cannot long escape unknown:
Therefore my will is this, that we return
Right through the thickets to the wild man's cave,
And there a while live on his provision,
Until the search and narrow watch be past.
This is my counsel, and I think it best.

AMADINE.
I think the very same.

MUCEDORUS.
Come, let's begone.

[Enter the Clown who searches and falls over the wild man and so carry him away.]

MOUSE.

Nay, soft, sir; are you here? a bots on you! I was like to be hanged for not finding you. We would borrow a certain stray king's daughter of you: a wench, a wench, sir, we would have.

MUCEDORUS.
A wench of me! I'll make thee eat my sword.

MOUSE.

Oh Lord! nay, and you are so lusty, I'll call a cooling card for you. Ho, master, master, come away quickly.

[Enter Segasto.]

SEGASTO.
What's the matter?

MOUSE.
Look, master, Amadine & the shepherd: oh, brave!

SEGASTO.
What, minion, have I found you out?

MOUSE.
Nay, that's a lie, I found her out myself.

SEGASTO.
Thou gadding huswife,
What cause hadst thou to gad abroad,
When as thou knowest our wedding day so nigh?

AMADINE.
Not so, Segasto, no such thing in hand;
Shew your assurance, then I'll answer you.

SEGASTO.
Thy father's promise my assurance is.

AMADINE.
But what he promist he hath not performed.

SEGASTO.
It rests in thee for to perform the same.

AMADINE.
Not I.

SEGASTO.
And why?

AMADINE.
So is my will, and therefore even so.

MOUSE.
Master, with a nonie, nonie, no!

SEGASTO.
Aye, wicked villain, art thou here?

MUCEDORUS.
What needs these words? we weigh them not.

SEGASTO.

We weigh them not, proud shepherd! I scorn thy company.

MOUSE.
We'll not have a corner of thy company.

MUCEDORUS.
I scorn not thee, nor yet the least of thine.

MOUSE.

That's a lie, a would have killed me with his pugsnando.

SEGASTO.
This stoutness, Amadine, contents me not.

AMADINE.
Then seek an other that may you better please.

MUCEDORUS.
Well, Amadine, it only rests in thee
Without delay to make thy choice of three:
There stands Segasto, here a shepherd stands,
There stands the third; now make thy choice.

MOUSE.
A Lord at the least I am.

AMADINE.
My choice is made, for I will none but thee.

SEGASTO.
A worthy mate, no doubt, for such a wife.

MUCEDORUS.
And, Amadine, why wilt thou none but me?
I cannot keep thee as thy father did;
I have no lands for to maintain thy state.
Moreover, if thou mean to be my wife,
Commonly this must be thy use:
To bed at midnight, up at four,
Drudge all day and trudge from place to place,
Whereby our daily vittel for to win;
And last of all, which is the worst of all,
No princess then but plain a shepherd's wife.

MOUSE.
Then, god ge you go morrow, goody shepherd!

AMADINE.
It shall not need; if Amadine do live,
Thou shalt be crowned king of Arragon.

MOUSE.

Oh, master, laugh! when he's King, then I'll be a queen.

MUCEDORUS.
Then know that which ne'er tofore was known:
I am no shepherd, no Arragonian I,
But born of Royal blood—my father's of
Valentia King, my mother queen—who for
Thy secret sake took this hard task in hand.

AMADINE.
Ah how i joy my fortune is so good.

SEGASTO.
Well now i see, Segasto shall not speed;
But, Mucedorus, I as much do joy,
To see thee here within our Court of Arragon,

As if a kingdom had befain me. This time
I with my heart surrender it to thee.

[He giveth her unto him.]

And loose what right to Amadine I have.

MOUSE.
What a barn's door, and born where my father
Was cunstable! a bots on thee, how dost thee?

MUCEDORUS.
Thanks, Segasto; but yet you leveled at the crown.

MOUSE.
Master, bear this and bear all.

SEGASTO.
Why so, sir?

MOUSE.
He says you take a goose by the crown.

SEGASTO.
Go to, sir: away, post you to the king,
Whose heart is fraught with careful doubts,
Glad him up and tell him these good news,
And we will follow as fast as we may.

MOUSE.
I go, master; I run, master.

[Exeunt.]

ACT V. SCENE II. Open Place near the Court of the King of Arragon.

[Enter the King and Collen.]

KING.
Break, heart, and end my paled woes,
My Amadine, the comfort of my life,
How can I joy except she were in sight?
Her absence breeds sorrow to my soul
And with a thunder breaks my heart in twain.

COLLEN.
Forbear those passions, gentle King,
And you shall see twill turn unto the best,
And bring your soul to quiet and to joy.

KING.
Such joy as death, I do assure me that,
And naught but death, unless of her I hear,
And that with speed; I cannot sigh thus long—
But what a tumult do I hear within?

[The cry within, 'joy and happiness!']

COLLEN.
I hear a noise of over-passing joy
Within the court; my Lord, be of good comfort—
And here comes one in haste.

[Enter the Clown running.]

MOUSE.
A King! a King! a King!

COLLEN.
Why, how now, sirra? what's the matter?

MOUSE.
O, tis news for a king, 'tis worth money.

KING.

Why, sirra, thou shalt have silver and gold if it be good.

MOUSE.
O, tis good, tis good. Amadine—

KING.
Oh, what of her? tell me, & I will make thee a knight.

MOUSE.
How a spright? no, by lady, I will not be a spright.
Masters, get ye away; if I be a spright, I shall be so lean
I shall make you all afraid.

COLLEN.
Thou sot, the King means to make thee a gentleman.

MOUSE.
Why, I shall want parrell.

KING.
Thou shalt want for nothing.

MOUSE.
Then stand away, trick up thy self: here they come.

[Enter Segasto, Mucedorus, and Amadine.]

AMADINE.
My gratious father, pardon thy disloyal daughter.

KING.
What do mine eyes behold? my daughter Amadine?
Rise up, dear daughter & let these, my embracing arms,
Show some token of thy father's joy,
Which ever since thy departure hath languished in sorrow.

AMADINE.
Dear father, never were your sorrows
Greater than my griefs,
Never you so desolate as I comfortless;

Yet, nevertheless, acknowledging my self
To be the cause of both, on bended knees
I humbly crave your pardon.

KING.
I'll pardon thee, dear daughter: but as for him—

AMADINE.
Ah, father, what of him?

KING.
As sure as I am a king, and wear the crown,
I will revenge on that accursed wretch.

MUCEDORUS.
Yet, worthy prince, work not thy will in wrath;
Show favour.

KING.
Aye, such favour as thou deservest.

MUCEDORUS.
I do deserve the daughter of a king.

KING.
Oh, impudent! a shepherd and so insolent!

MUCEDORUS.
No shepherd I, but a worthy prince.

KING.
In fair conceit, not princely born.

MUCEDORUS.
Yes, princely born: my father is a king,
My mother Queen, and of Valentia both.

KING.
What, Mucedorus! welcome to our court.
What cause hadst thou to come to me disguised?

MUCEDORUS.
No cause to fear; I caused no offence
But this:
Desiring thy daughter's virtues for to see
Disguised my self from out my father's court.
Unknown to any, in secret I did rest,
And passed many troubles near to death;
So hath your daughter my partaker been,
As you shall know hereafter more at large,
Desiring you, you will give her to me,
Even as mine own and sovereign of my life;
Then shall I think my travels are well spent.

KING.
With all my heart, but this—
Segasto claims my promise made to fore,
That he should have her as his only wife,
Before my counsel when we came from war.
Segasto, may I crave thee let it pass,
And give Amadine as wife to Mucedorus?

SEGASTO.
With all my heart, were it far a greater thing,
And what I may to furnish up there rites
With pleasing sports and pastimes you shall see.

KING.
Thanks, good Segasto, I will think of this.

MUCEDORUS.
Thanks, good my Lord, & while I live
Account of me in what I can or may.

AMADINE.
And, good Segasto, these great courtesies
Shall not be forgot.

MOUSE.

Why, hark you, master: bones, what have you done? What, given away the wench you made me take such pains for? you are wise indeed! mas, and I had known of that I would have had her my self! faither, master, now we may go to breakfast with a woodcoke pie.

SEGASTO.
Go, sir, you were best leave this knavery.

KING.
Come on, my Lords, let's now to court,
Where we may finish up the joyfullest day
That ever hapt to a distressed King.
Were but thy Father, the Valencia Lord,
Present in view of this combining knot.

[A shout within. Enter a Messenger.]

What shout was that?

MESSENGER.
My Lord, the great Valencia King,
Newly arrived, entreats your presence.

MUCEDORUS.
My Father?

KING OF ARRAGON.
Prepared welcomes give him entertainment:
A happier Planet never reigned than that,
Which governs at this hour.

[Sound. Enter the King of Valencia, Anselmo, Rodrigo, Borachius, with others; the King runs and embraces his Son.]

KING OF VALENCIA.
Rise, honour of my age, food to my rest:
Condemn not mighty King of Aragon
My rude behaviour, so compelled by Nature,
That manners stood unknowledged.

KING OF ARRAGON.

What we have to recite would tedious prove
By declaration; therefore, in, and feast:
To morrow the performance shall explain,
What Words conceal; till then, Drums speak,
   Bells ring,
Give plausive welcomes to our brother King.

[Sound Drums and Trumpets. Exeunt omnes.]

EPILOGUE.

[Enter Comedy and Envy.]

COMEDY.
How now, Envy? what, blushest thou all ready?
Peep forth, hide not thy head with shame,
But with a courage praise a woman's deeds.
Thy threats were vain, thou couldst do me no hurt.
Although thou seemdst to cross me with despite,
I overwhelmed, and turned upside down thy block
And made thy self to stumble at the same.

ENVY.
Though stumbled, yet not overthrown.
Thou canst not draw my heart to mildness;
Yet must I needs confess thou hast done well,
And played thy part with mirth and pleasant glee:
Say all this, yet canst thou not conquer me;
Although this time thou hast got—yet not the conquest
   neither—
A double revenge another time I'll have.

COMEDY.
Envy, spit thy gall;
Plot, work, contrive; create new fallacies,
Teem from thy Womb each minute a black Traitor,
Whose blood and thoughts have twins conception:

Study to act deeds yet unchronicled,
Cast native Monsters in the molds of Men,
Case vicious Devils under sancted Rochets,
Unhasp the Wicket where all perjureds roost,
And swarm this Ball with treasons: do thy worst;
Thou canst not hell-hound cross my star to night,
Nor blind that glory, where I wish delight.

ENVY.
I can, I will.

COMEDY.
Nefarious Hag, begin,
And let us tug, till one the mastery win.

ENVY.
Comedy, thou art a shallow Goose;
I'll overthrow thee in thine own intent,
And make thy fall my Comic merriment.

COMEDY.
Thy policy wants gravity; thou art
Too weak. Speak, Fiend, as how?

ENVY.
Why, thus:
From my foul Study will I hoist a Wretch,
A lean and hungry Meager Cannibal,
Whose jaws swell to his eyes with chawing Malice:
And him I'll make a Poet.

COMEDY.
What's that to th' purpose?

ENVY.
This scrambling Raven, with his needy Beard,
Will I whet on to write a Comedy,
Wherein shall be compos'd dark sentences,
Pleasing to factious brains:
And every other where place me a Jest,

Whose high abuse shall more torment than blows:
Then I my self (quicker than Lightning)
Will fly me to a puissant magistrate,
And weighting with a Trencher at his back,
In midst of jollity, rehearse those gauls,
(With some additions)
So lately vented in your Theater.
He, upon this, cannot but make complaint,
To your great danger, or at least restraint.

COMEDY.
Ha, ha, ha! I laugh to hear thy folly;
This is a trap for Boys, not Men, nor such,
Especially desertful in their doings,
Whose stay'd discretion rules their purposes.
I and my faction do eschew those vices.
But see, O see! the weary Sun for rest
Hath lain his golden compass to the West,
Where he perpetual bide and ever shine,
As David's off-spring, in his happy Clime.
Stoop, Envy, stoop, bow to the Earth with me,
Let's beg our Pardons on our bended knee.

[They kneel.]

ENVY.
My Power has lost her Might; Envy's date's expired.
Yon splendant Majesty hath felled my sting,
And I amazed am.

[Fall down and quake.]

COMEDY.
Glorious and wise Arch-Caesar on this earth,
At whose appearance, Envy's stroken dumb,
And all bad things cease operation:
Vouchsafe to pardon our unwilling error,
So late presented to your Gracious view,
And we'll endeavour with excess of pain,

To please your senses in a choicer strain.
Thus we commit you to the arms of Night,
Whose spangled carcass would, for your delight,
Strive to excell the Day; be blessed, then:
Who other wishes, let him never speak.

ENVY.
Amen.
To Fame and Honour we commend your rest;
Live still more happy, every hour more blest.

FINIS.

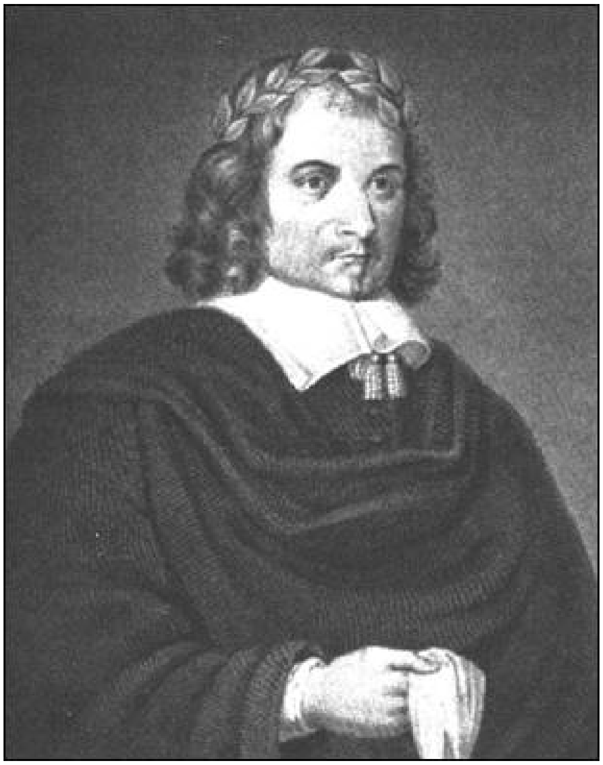
THE MERRY DEVIL OF EDMONTON

This comedy concerns the magician, Peter Fabel, nicknamed the Merry Devil. Scholars have conjectured dates of authorship for the play as early as 1592, though most favour a date in the 1600–4 period. *The Merry Devil of Edmonton* enters the historical record in 1604, when it is mentioned in a contemporary work called the *Black Booke* . The play was entered into the Stationers' Register on October 22, 1607, and published the next year, in a quarto printed by Henry Ballard for the bookseller Arthur Johnson.

The play was performed at Court on May 8, 1608 and was also one of the twenty plays that the King's Men acted at Court in the Christmas season of 1612–13 during the festivities celebrating the wedding of Princess Elizabeth, the daughter of King James I, with Frederick V, Elector Palatine.

Publisher Humphrey Moseley obtained the rights to the play and re-registered it on September 9, 1653 as a work by Shakespeare. Moseley's attribution to Shakespeare was repeated by Edward Archer in his 1656 play list, and by Francis Kirkman in his list of 1661. The play was bound with *Fair Em* and *Mucedorus* in a book titled "Shakespeare. Vol. I" in the library of Charles II.

As its publishing history indicates, the play was popular with audiences and it was mentioned by Ben Jonson in the Prologue to his play *The Devil is an Ass* . While *The Merry Devil of Edmonton* was a King's Men play and Shakespeare may have had a minor role in its creation, it has no distinctive aspects of his style. Individual 19th-century critics attempted to attribute the play to Michael Drayton or to Thomas Heywood; but their attributions have not been judged credible by other scholars. Many scholars now believe it to be the work of the popular Jacobean playwright Thomas Dekker.



Thomas Dekker, the likely author of the play

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DRAMATIS PERSONAE

Sir Arthur Clare.

Sir Richard Mounchensey.

Sir Ralph Jerningham.

Henry Clare.

Raymond Mounchensey.

Frank Jerningham.

Sir John *[a Priest]* .

Banks *[the Miller of Waltham]* .

Smug *[the Smith of Edmonton]* .

Bilbo.

[Blague the] Host.

Brian.

[Raph, Brian's man.]

[Friar Hildersham.]

[Benedick.]

[Chamberlaine.]

[Coreb, a Spirit.]

Fabel *[the Merry Devil]* .

Lady Clare.

Millisent.

Abbess.

Sexton.

Nuns and Attendants.

The Prologue.

Your silence and attention, worthy friends,

That your free spirits may with more pleasing sense

Relish the life of this our active scene:

To which intent, to calm this murmuring breath,

We ring this round with our invoking spells;

If that your listning ears be yet prepard
To entertain the subject of our play,
Lend us your patience.
Tis Peter Fabell, a renowned Scholler,
Whose fame hath still been hitherto forgot
By all the writers of this latter age.
In Middle-sex his birth and his abode,
Not full seven mile from this great famous City,
That, for his fame in sleights and magicke won,
Was calde the merry Friend of Emonton.
If any here make doubt of such a name,
In Edmonton yet fresh unto this day,
Fixt in the wall of that old antient Church,
His monument remayneth to be seen;
His memory yet in the mouths of men,
That whilst he lived he could deceive the Devill.
Imagine now that whilst he is retirde
From Cambridge back unto his native home,
Suppose the silent, sable visagde night
Casts her black curtain over all the World;
And whilst he sleeps within his silent bed,

Toiled with the studies of the passed day,
The very time and hour wherein that spirit
That many years attended his command,
And often times twixt Cambridge and that town
Had in a minute borne him through the air,
By composition twixt the fiend and him,
Comes now to claim the Scholler for his due.

[Draw the Curtains.]

Behold him here, laid on his restless couch,
His fatal chime prepared at his head,
His chamber guarded with these sable slights,
And by him stands that Necromanticke chair,
In which he makes his direfull invocations,
And binds the fiends that shall obey his will.
Sit with a pleased eye, until you know
The Commicke end of our sad Tragique show.

[Exit.]

INDUCTION.

[The Chime goes, in which time Fabell is oft seen to stare about him, and hold up his hands.]

FABELL.

What means the tolling of this fatal chime?

O, what a trembling horror strikes my heart!

My stiffned hair stands upright on my head,

As do the bristles of a porcupine.

[Enter Coreb, a Spirit.]

COREB.

Fabell, awake, or I will bear thee hence

Headlong to hell.

FABELL.

Ha, ha,

Why dost thou wake me? Coreb, is it thou?

COREB.

Tis I.

FABELL.

I know thee well: I hear the watchful dogs

With hollow howling tell of thy approach;

The lights burn dim, affrighted with thy presence;

And this distemperd and tempestuous night

Tells me the air is troubled with some Devill.

COREB.

Come, art thou ready?

FABELL.

Whither? or to what?

COREB.

Why, Scholler, this the hour my date expires;

I must depart, and come to claim my due.

FABELL.

Hah, what is thy due?

COREB.

Fabell, thy self.

FABELL.

O, let not darkness hear thee speak that word,
Lest that with force it hurry hence amain,
And leave the world to look upon my woe:
Yet overwhelm me with this globe of earth,
And let a little sparrow with her bill
Take but so much as she can bear away,
That, every day thus losing of my load,
I may again in time yet hope to rise.

COREB.

Didst thou not write thy name in thine own blood, And drewst the formall deed twixt thee and me,

And is it not recorded now in hell?

FABELL.

Why comst thou in this stern and horrid shape,

Not in familiar sort, as thou wast wont?

COREB.

Because the date of thy command is out,

And I am master of thy skill and thee.

FABELL.

Coreb, thou angry and impatient spirit,

I have earnest business for a private friend;

Reserve me, spirit, until some further time.

COREB.

I will not for the mines of all the earth.

FABELL.

Then let me rise, and ere I leave the world,

Dispatch some business that I have to do;
And in mean time repose thee in that chair.

COREB.
Fabell, I will.

[Sit down.]

FABELL.
O, that this soul, that cost so great a price
As the dear precious blood of her redeemer,
Inspired with knowledge, should by that alone
Which makes a man so mean unto the powers,
Even lead him down into the depth of hell,
When men in their own pride strive to know more
Then man should know!
For this alone God cast the Angels down.
The infinity of Arts is like a sea,
Into which, when man will take in hand to sail
Further then reason, which should be his pilot,
Hath skill to guide him, losing once his compass,

He falleth to such deep and dangerous whirl-pools
As he doth lose the very sight of heaven:
The more he strives to come to quiet harbor,
The further still he finds himself from land.
Man, striving still to find the depth of evil,
Seeking to be a God, becomes a Devil.

COREB.

Come, Fabell, hast thou done?

FABELL.

Yes, yes; come hither.

COREB.

Fabell, I cannot.

FABELL.

Cannot?—What ails your hollownes?

COREB.

Good Fabell, help me.

FABELL.

Alas, where lies your grief? Some Aqua-vitae!
The Devil's very sick, I fear he'll die,
For he looks very ill.

COREB.

Darst thou deride the minister of darkness?
In Lucifer's dread name Coreb conjures thee
To set him free.

FABELL.

I will not for the mines of all the earth,
Unless thou give me liberty to see
Seven years more, before thou seize on me.

COREB.

Fabell, I give it thee.

FABELL.

Swear, damned fiend.

COREB.

Unbind me, and by hell I will not touch thee,

Till seven years from this hour be full expired.

FABELL.

Enough, come out.

COREB.

A vengeance take thy art!

Live and convert all piety to evil:

Never did man thus over-reach the Devil.

No time on earth like Phaetontique flames

Can have perpetual being. I'll return

To my infernall mansion; but be sure,

Thy seven years done, no trick shall make me tarry,

But, Coreb, thou to hell shalt Fabell carry.

[Exit.]

FABELL.

Then thus betwixt us two this variance ends,

Thou to thy fellow Fiends, I to my friends.

[Exit.]

ACT I.

SCENE I. The George Inn, Waltham.

[Enter Sir Arthur Clare, Dorcas, his Lady, Milliscent, his daughter, young Harry Clare; the men booted, the gentlewomen in cloaks and safeguards. Blague, the merry host of the George, comes in with them.]

HOST.

Welcome, good knight, to the George at Waltham, my free-hold, my tenements, goods and chattels. Madam, here's a room is the very Homer and Iliad of a lodging, it hath none of the four elements in it; I built it out of the Center, and I drink ne'er the less sack. Welcome, my little waste of maiden-heads! What? I serve the good Duke of Norfolk.

CLARE.

God a mercy, my good host Blague:

Thou hast a good seat here.

HOST.

Tis correspondent or so: there's not a Tartarian nor a Carrier shall breath upon your geldings; they have villainous rank feet, the rogues, and they shall not sweat in my linen. Knights and Lords too have been drunk in my house, I thank the destinies.

HARRY.

Pre' thee, good sinful Innkeeper, will that corruption, thine Ostler, look well to my gelding. Hay, a pox a these rushes!

HOST.

You Saint Dennis, your gelding shall walk without doors, and cool his feet for his masters sake. By the body of S. George, I have an excellent intellect to go steal some venison: now, when wast thou in the forest?

HARRY.

Away, you stale mess of white-broth! Come hither, sister, let me help you.

CLARE.

Mine Host, is not Sir Richard Mounchensey come yet, according to our appointment, when we last dined here?

HOST.

The knight's not yet apparent.—Marry, here's a forerunner that summons a parle, and saith, he'll be here top and top-gallant presently.

CLARE.

Tis well, good mine host; go down, and see breakfast be provided.

HOST.

Knight, thy breath hath the force of a woman, it takes me down; I am for the baser element of the kitchen: I retire like a valiant soldier, face point blank to the foe-man, or, like a Courtier, that must not shew the Prince his posteriors; vanish to know my canuasadoes, and my interrogatories, for I serve the good Duke of Norfolk.

[Exit.]

CLARE.

How doth my Lady? are you not weary, Madam?

Come hither, I must talk in private with you;

My daughter Milliscent must not over-hear.

MILLISCENT.

Aye, whispring; pray God it tend my good!

Strange fear assails my heart, usurps my blood.

CLARE.

You know our meeting with the knight Mounchensey
Is to assure our daughter to his heir.

DORCAS.

Tis, without question.

CLARE.

Two tedious winters have past o'er, since first
These couple lov'd each other, and in passion
Glued first their naked hands with youthful moisture—
Just so long, on my knowledge.

DORCAS.

And what of this?

CLARE.

This morning should my daughter lose her name,

And to Mounchenseys house convey our arms,
Quartered within his scutcheon; th' affiance, made
Twist him and her, this morning should be sealed.

DORCAS.

I know it should.

CLARE.

But there are crosses, wife; here's one in Waltham,
Another at the Abbey, and the third
At Cheston; and tis ominous to pass
Any of these without a pater-noster.
Crosses of love still thwart this marriage,
Whilst that we two, like spirits, walk in night
About those stony and hard hearted plots.

MILLISCENT.

O God, what means my father?

CLARE.

For look you, wife, the riotous old knight

Hath o'rerun his annual revenue

In keeping jolly Christmas all the year:

The nostrils of his chimney are still stuft

With smoke, more chargeable then Cane-tobacco;

His hawks devour his fattest dogs, whilst simple,

His leanest curs eat him hounds carrion.

Besides, I heard of late, his younger brother,

A Turkey merchant, hath sure suck'de the knight

By means of some great losses on the sea,

That, you conceive me, before God all is naught,

His seat is weak: thus, each thing rightly scanned,

You'll se a flight, wife, shortly of his land.

MILLISCENT.

Treason to my hearts truest sovereign:

How soon is love smothered in foggy gain!

DORCAS.

But how shall we prevent this dangerous match?

CLARE.

I have a plot, a trick, and this is it-
Under this colour I'll break off the match:
I'll tell the knight that now my mind is changd
For marrying of my daughter, for I intend
To send her unto Cheston Nunry.

MILLISCENT.

O me accurst!

CLARE.

There to become a most religious Nun.

MILLISCENT.

I'll first be buried quick.

CLARE.

To spend her beauty in most private prayers.

MILLISCENT.

I'll sooner be a sinner in forsaking
Mother and father.

CLARE.

How dost like my plot?

DORCAS.

Exceeding well; but is it your intent
She shall continue there?

CLARE.

Continue there? Ha, ha, that were a jest!
You know a virgin may continue there
A twelve month and a day only on trial.
There shall my daughter sojourn some three months,
And in mean time I'll compass a fair match
Twixt youthful Jerningham, the lusty heir
Of Sir Raph Jerningham, dwelling in the forest-
I think they'll both come hither with Mounchensey.

DORCAS.

Your care argues the love you bear our child;

I will subscribe to any thing you'll have me.

[Exeunt.]

MILLISCENT.

You will subscribe it! good, good, tis well;

Love hath two chairs of state, heaven and hell.

My dear Mounchensey, thou my death shalt rue,

Ere to my heart Milliscent prove untrue.

[Exit.]

SCENE II. The same.

[Enter Blague.]

HOST.

Ostlers, you knaves and commanders, take the horses of the knights and competitors: your honourable hulks have put into harborough, they'll take in fresh water here, and I have provided clean chamber-pots. Via, they come!

[Enter Sir Richard Mounchesney, Sir Raph Jerningham, young

Frank Jerningham, Raymond Mounchesney, Peter Fabell, and

Bilbo.]

HOST.

The destinies be most neat Chamberlains to these swaggering puritans, knights of the subsidy.

SIR MOUNCHESNEY.

God a mercy, good mine host.

SIR JERNINGHAM.

Thanks, good host Blague.

HOST.

Room for my case of pistolles, that have Greek and Latin bullets in them; let me cling to your flanks, my nimble Giberalters, and blow wind in your calves to make them swell bigger. Ha, I'll caper in mine own fee-simple; away with puntillioes and Orthography! I serve the good Duke of Norfolk. Bilbo, Titere tu, patulae recubans sub tegmine fagi.

BILBO.

Truly, mine host, Bilbo, though he be somewhat out of fashion, will be your only blade still. I have a villanous sharp stomach to slice a breakfast.

HOST.

Thou shalt have it without any more discontinuance, releases, or atturnement. What! we know our terms of hunting and the sea-card.

BILBO.

And do you serve the good duke of Norfolk still?

HOST.

Still, and still, and still, my souldier of S. Quintins: come, follow me; I have Charles waine below in a but of sack, t'will glister like your Crab-fish.

BILBO.

You have fine Scholler-like terms; your Coopers Dixionary is your only book to study in a celler, a man shall find very strange words in it. Come, my host, let's serve the good duke of Norfolk.

HOST.

And still, and still, and still, my boy, I'll serve the good duke of Norfolk.

[Exeunt Host and Bilbo.]

[Enter Sir Arthur Clare, Harry Clare, and Milliscent.]

JERNINGHAM.

Good Sir Arthur Clare!

CLARE.

What Gentleman is that? I know him not.

MOUNCHESNEY.

Tis Master Fabell, Sir, a Cambridge scholler,

My son's dear friend.

CLARE.

Sir, I intreat you know me.

FABELL.

Command me, sir; I am affected to you

For your Mounchensey's sake.

CLARE.

Alas, for him,

I not respect whether he sink or swim:

A word in private, Sir Raph Jerningham.

RAYMOND.

Me thinks your father looketh strangely on me:

Say, love, why are you sad?

MILLISCENT.

I am not, sweet;

Passion is strong, when woe with woe doth meet.

CLARE.

Shall's in to breakfast? after we'll conclude
The cause of this our coming: in and feed,
And let that usher a more serious deed.

MILLISCENT.

Whilst you desire his grief, my heart shall bleed.

YOUNG JERNINGHAM.

Raymond Mounchesney, come, be frolick, friend,
This is the day thou hast expected long.

RAYMOND.

Pray God, dear Jerningham, it prove so happy.

JERNINGHAM.

There's nought can alter it. Be merry, lad!

FABELL.

There's nought shall alter it. Be lively, Raymond!

Stand any opposition gainst thy hope,

Art shall confront it with her largest scope.

[Exeunt.]

SCENE III. The same.

[Peter Fabell, solus.]

FABELL.

Good old Mounchensey, is thy hap so ill,

That for thy bounty and thy royall parts

Thy kind alliance should be held in scorn,

And after all these promises by Clare

Refuse to give his daughter to thy son,

Only because thy Revenues cannot reach

To make her dowage of so rich a jointure

As can the heir of wealthy Jerningham?

And therefore is the false fox now in hand

To strike a match betwixt her and th' other;

And the old gray-beards now are close together,

Plotting it in the garden. Is't even so?

Raymond Mounchensey, boy, have thou and I

Thus long at Cambridge read the liberall Arts,

The Metaphysickes, Magicke, and those parts

Of the most secret deep philosophy?

Have I so many melancholy nights

Watch'd on the top of Peter-house highest Tower?

And come we back unto our native home,

For want of skill to lose the wench thou lov'st?

We'll first hang Envill in such rings of mist

As never rose from any dampish fen:

I'll make the brind sea to rise at Ware,

And drown the marshes unto Stratford bridge;

I'll drive the Deer from Waltham in their walks,

And scatter them like sheep in every field.

We may perhaps be crost, but, if we be,

He shall cross the devil, that but crosses me.

[Enter Raymond and young Jerningham and young Clare.]

But here comes Raymond, disconsolate and sad,
And here's the gallant that must have the wench.

JERNINGHAM.

I pri'thee, Raymond, leave these solemn dumps:
Revive thy spirits, thou that before hast been
More watchful then the day-proclaiming cock,
As sportive as a Kid, as frank and merry
As mirth herself.
If ought in me may thy content procure,
It is thine own, thou mayst thy self assure.

RAYMOND.
Ha, Jerningham, if any but thy self
Had spoke that word, it would have come as cold
As the bleak Northern winds upon the face Of winter.
From thee they have some power upon my blood;
Yet being from thee, had but that hollow sound

Come from the lips of any living man,
It might have won the credit of mine ear;
From thee it cannot.

JERNINGHAM.
If I understand thee, I am a villain:

What, dost thou speak in parables to thy friends?

CLARE.
Come, boy, and make me this same groning love,
Troubled with stitches and the cough a'th lungs,
That wept his eyes out when he was a child,
And ever since hath shot at hudman-blind,
Make him leap, caper, jerk, and laugh, and sing,
And play me horse-tricks;
Make Cupid wanton as his mother's dove:

But in this sort, boy, I would have thee love.

FABELL.

Why, how now, mad-cap? What, my lusty Franke,

So near a wife, and will not tell a friend?

But you will to this geere in hugger-mugger;

Art thou turned miser, Rascall, in thy loves?

JERNINGHAM.

Who, I? z'blood, what should all you see in me, that I should look like a married man, ha? Am I bald? are my legs too little for my hose? If I feel any thing in my forehead, I am a villain: do I wear a night-cap? Do I bend in the hams? What dost thou see in me, that I should be towards marriage, ha?

CLARE.

What, thou married? let me look upon thee, Rogue; who has given out this of thee? how camst thou into this ill name? What company hast thou been in, Rascall?

FABELL.

You are the man, sir, must have Millescent:

The match is making in the garden now;

Her jointure is agreed on, and th' old men,

Your fathers, mean to lanch their busy bags;

But in mean time to thrust Mountchensey off,

For colour of this new intended match,
Fair Millescent to Cheston must be sent,
To take the approbation for a Nun.
Ne'er look upon me, lad, the match is done.

JERNINGHAM.

Raymond Mountchensey, now I touch thy grief
With the true feeling of a zealous friend.
And as for fair and beauteous Millescent,
With my vain breath I will not seek to slubber
Her angel like perfections; but thou know'st
That Essex hath the Saint that I adore.
Where ere did we meet thee and wanton springs,
That like a wag thou hast not laught at me,
And with regardless jesting mockt my love?
How many a sad and weary summer night
My sighs have drunk the dew from off the earth,
And I have taught the Niting-gale to wake,
And from the meadows spring the early Lark
An hour before she should have list to sing:
I have loaded the poor minutes with my moans,

That I have made the heavy slow passed hours
To hang like heavy clogs upon the day.
But, dear Mountchensey, had not my affection
Seased on the beauty of another dame,
Before I would wrong the chase, and overgive love
Of one so worthy and so true a friend,
I will abjure both beauty and her sight,
And will in love become a counterfeit.

MOUNTCHENSEY.

Dear Jerningham, thou hast begot my life,
And from the mouth of hell, where now I sate,
I feel my spirit rebound against the stars:
Thou hast conquerd me, dear friend, in my free soul;
Their time nor death can by their power controul.

FABELL.

Franke Jerningham, thou art a gallant boy;
And were he not my pupil, I would say
He were as fine a mettled gentleman,
Of as free spirit, and of as fine a temper

As is in England; and he is a man
That very richly may deserve thy love.
But, noble Clare, this while of our discourse,
What may Mounchensey's honour to thy self
Exact upon the measure of thy grace?

CLARE.
Raymond Mounchensey, I would have thee know,
He does not breath this air,
Whose love I cherish, and whose soul I love
More than Mounchensey's:
Nor ever in my life did see the man
Whom, for his wit and many vertuous parts,
I think more worthy of my sister's love.
But since the matter grows unto this pass,
I must not seem to cross my Father's will;
But when thou list to visit her by night,
My horses sadled, and the stable door
Stands ready for thee; use them at thy pleasure.
In honest marriage wed her frankly, boy,
And if thou getst her, lad, God give thee joy!

MOUNTCHENSEY.

Then, care, away! let fates my fall pretend,

Backt with the favours of so true a friend!

FABELL.

Let us alone, to bussell for the set;

For age and craft with wit and Art have met.

I'll make my spirits to dance such nightly jigs

Along the way twixt this and Totnam cross,

The Carriers jades shall cast their heavy packs,

And the strong hedges scarse shall keep them in:

The Milk-maids Cuts shall turn the wenches off,

And lay the Dossers tumbling in the dust:

The frank and merry London prentises,

That come for cream and lusty country cheer,

Shall lose their way; and, scrambling in the ditches,

All night shall whoop and hollow, cry and call,

Yet none to other find the way at all.

MOUNTCHENSEY.

Pursue the project, scholler: what we can do

To help indeavour, join our lives thereto!

[Exeunt.]

ACT II.

SCENE I. Waltham: The house of Banks.

[Enter Banks, Sir John and Smug.]

BANKS.

Take me with you, good Sir John! A plague on thee, Smug, and thou touchest liquor, thou art founderd straight. What, are your brains always water-mills? must they ever run round?

SMUG.

Banks, your ale is a Philistine fox; z'hart, there's fire i'th tail on't; you are a rogue to charge us with Mugs i'th rereward. A plague of this wind; O, it tickles our catastrophe.

SIR JOHN.

Neighbour Banks of Waltham, and Goodman Smug, the honest Smith of Edmonton, as I dwell betwixt you both at Enfield, I know the taste of both your ale houses, they are good both, smart both. Hem, Grass and hay! we are all mortal; let's live till we die, and be merry; and there's an end.

BANKS.

Well said, Sir John, you are of the same humor still; and doth the water run the same way still, boy?

SMUG.

Vulcan was a rogue to him; Sir John, lock, lock, lock fast, Sir John; so, sir John. I'll one of these years, when it shall please the Goddesses and the destinies, be drunk in your company; that's all now, and God send us health: shall I swear I love you?

SIR JOHN.

No oaths, no oaths, good neighbour Smug! We'll wet our lips together and hug; Carrouse in private, and elevate the hart, and the liver and the lights,—and the lights, mark you me, within us; for hem, Grass and hay! we are all mortall, let's live till we die, and be Merry, and there's an end.

BANKS.

But to our former motion about stealing some venison; whither go we?

SIR JOHN.

Into the forest, neighbour Banks, into Brian's walk, the mad keeper.

SMUG.

Z'blood! I'll tickle your keeper.

BANKS.

Yfaith, thou art always drunk when we have need of thee.

SMUG.

Need of me? z'hart, you shall have need of me always while there's iron in an Anvil.

BANKS.

Master Parson, may the Smith go, think you, being in this taking?

SMUG.

Go? I'll go in spite of all the belles in Waltham.

SIR JOHN.

The question is, good neighbour Banks—let me see: the Moon shines to night,—there's not a narrow bridge betwixt this and the forest,—his brain will be settled ere night; he may go, he may go, neighbour Banks. Now we want none but the company of mine host Blague at the George at Waltham; if he were here, our Consort were full. Look where comes my good host, the Duke of Norfolk's man! and how? and how? a hem, grass and hay! we are not yet mortall; let's live till we die, and be merry; and there's an end.

[Enter Host.]

HOST.

Ha, my Castilian dialogues! and art thou in breath still, boy? Miller, doth the match hold? Smith, I see by thy eyes thou hast been reading little Geneva print: but wend we merrily to the forest, to steal some of the king's Deer. I'll meet you at the time appointed: away, I have Knights and Colonels at my house, and must tend the Hungarions. If we be scard in the forest, we'll meet in the Church-porch at Enfield; ist Correspondent?

BANKS.

Tis well; but how, if any of us should be taken?

SMITH.

He shall have ransom, by the Lord.

HOST.

Tush, the knave keepers are my bosonians and my pensioners. Nine a clock! be valiant, my little Gogmagogs; I'll fence with all the Justices in Hartford shire. I'll have a Buck till I die; I'll slay a Doe while I live; hold your bow straight and steady. I serve the good duke of Norfolk.

SMUG.

O rare! who, ho, ho, boy!

SIR JOHN.

Peace, neighbor Smug. You see this is a Boor, a Boor of the country, an illiterate Boor, and yet the Citizen of good fellows: come, let's provide; a hem, Grass and hay! we are not yet all mortall; we'll live till we die, and be merry, and there's an end. Come, Smug1

SMUG.

Good night, Waltham—who, ho, ho, boy!

[Exeunt.]

SCENE II. The George Inn.

[Enter the Knights and Gentlemen from breakfast again.]

OLD MOUNTCHESNEY.

Nor I for thee, Clare, not of this.

What? hast thou fed me all this while with shalles.

And com'st to tell me now, thou lik'st it not?

CLARE.

I do not hold thy offer competent;

Nor do I like th' assurance of thy Land,

The title is so brangled with thy debts.

OLD MOUNTCHESNEY.

Too good for thee; and, knight, thou knowst it well,

I fawnd not on thee for thy goods, not I;

Twas thine own motion; that thy wife doth know.

LADY.

Husband, it was so; he lies not in that.

CLARE.

Hold thy chat, queane.

OLD MOUNTCHESNEY.

To which I hearkned willingly, and the rather,

Because I was persuaded it proceeded

From love thou bor'st to me and to my boy;

And gav'st him free access unto thy house,

Here he hath not behaved him to thy child,

But as befits a gentleman to do:

Nor is my poor distressed state so low,

That I'll shut up my doors, I warrant thee.

CLARE.

Let it suffice, Mountchensey, I mislike it;

Nor think thy son a match fit for my child.

MOUNTCHENSEY.

I tell thee, Clare, his blood is good and clear
As the best drop that panteth in thy veins:
But for this maid, thy fair and vertuous child,
She is no more disparaged by thy baseness
Then the most orient and the pretious jewell,
Which still retains his lustre and his beauty,
Although a slave were owner of the same.

CLARE.

She is the last is left me to bestow,
And her I mean to dedicate to God.

MOUNTCHENSEY.

You do, sir?

CLARE.

Sir, sir, I do, she is mine own.

MOUNTCHENSEY.

And pity she is so!

Damnation dog thee and thy wretched pelf!

[Aside.]

CLARE.

Not thou, Mountchensey, shalt bestow my child.

MOUNTCHENSEY.

Neither shouldst thou bestow her where thou mean'st.

CLARE.

What wilt thou do?

MOUNTCHENSEY.

No matter, let that be;
I will do that, perhaps, shall anger thee:
Thou hast wrongd my love, and, by God's blessed Angell,
Thou shalt well know it.

CLARE.

Tut, brave not me.

MOUNTCHENSEY.

Brave thee, base Churle! were't not for man-hood sake—

I say no more, but that there be some by

Whose blood is hotter then ours is,

Which being stird might make us both repent

This foolish meeting. But, Harry Clare,

Although thy father have abused my friendship,

Yet I love thee, I do, my noble boy,

I do, yfaith.

LADY.

Aye, do, do!

Fill the world with talk of us, man, man;

I never lookt for better at your hands.

FABELL.

I hop'd your great experience and your years

Would have proved patience rather to your soul,

Then with this frantique and untamed passion

To whet their skeens; and, but for that

I hope their friendships are too well confirmd,

And their minds temperd with more kindly heat,

Then for their froward parents soars

That they should break forth into publique brawles—

How ere the rough hand of th' untoward world

Hath moulded your proceedings in this matter,

Yet I am sure the first intent was love:

Then since the first spring was so sweet and warm,

Let it die gently; ne'er kill it with a scorn.

RAY.

O thou base world, how leprous is that soul

That is once lim'd in that polluted mud!

Oh, sir Arthur, you have startled his free active spirits

With a too sharp spur for his mind to bear.

Have patience, sir: the remedy to woe

Is to leave what of force we must forgo.

MILLISCENT.

And I must take a twelve months approbation,

That in mean time this sole and private life

At the years end may fashion me a wife:

But, sweet Mounchensey, ere this year be done,

Thou'st be a frier, if that I be a Nun.

And, father, ere young Jerningham's I'll be,

I will turn mad to spite both him and thee.

CLARE.

Wife, come, to horse, and huswife, make you ready;

For, if I live, I swear by this good light,

I'll see you lodged in Chesson house to night.

[Exeunt.]

MOUNTCHESNEY.

Raymond, away! Thou seest how matters fall.

Churle, hell consume thee, and thy pelf, and all!

FABELL.

Now, Master Clare, you see how matters fadge;

Your Milliscent must needs be made a Nune.

Well, sir, we are the men must ply this match:

Hold you your peace, and be a looker on,

And send her unto Chesson—where he will,

I'll send me fellows of a handful hie

Into the Cloysters where the Nuns frequent,

Shall make them skip like Does about the Dale,

And with the Lady prioress of the house

To play at leap-frog, naked in their smocks,

Until the merry wenches at their mass

Cry teehee weehee;

And tickling these mad lasses in their flanks,

They'll sprawl, and squeak, and pinch their fellow Nuns.

Be lively, boys, before the wench we lose,

I'll make the Abbas wear the Cannons hose.

[Exeunt.]

SCENE III. The same.

[Enter Harry Clare, Frank Jerningham, Peter Fabell, and

Milliscent.]

HARRY CLARE.

Spight now hath done her worst; sister, be patient.

JERNINGHAM.

Forewarned poor Raymonds company! O heaven!

When the composure of weak frailty meet

Upon this mart of durt, O, then weak love

Must in her own unhappiness be silent,

And winck on all deformities.

MILLISCENT.

Tis well:

Where's Raymond, brother? where's my dear Mounchensey?

Would we might weep together and then part;

Our sighing parle would much ease my heart.

FABELL.
Sweet beauty, fold your sorrows in the thought
Of future reconcilement: let your tears
Shew you a woman; but be no farther spent
Then from the eyes; for, sweet, experience says
That love is firm that's flattered with delays.

MILLISCENT.

Alas, sir, think you I shall ere be his?

FABELL.
As sure as parting smiles on future bliss.
Yond comes my friend: see, he hath doted
So long upon your beauty, that your want
Will with a pale retirement waste his blood;
For in true love Musicke doth sweetly dwell:

Severed, these less worlds bear within them hell.

[Enter Mounchensey.]

MOUNCHENSEY.

Harry and Francke, you are enjoined to wain
Your friendship from me; we must part: the breath
Of all advised corruption—pardon me!
Faith, I must say so;—you may think I love you;
I breath not, rougher spight do sever us;
We'll meet by stealth, sweet friend,—by stealth, you twain;
Kisses are sweetest got with struggling pain.

JERNINGHAM.

Our friendship dies not, Raymond.

MOUNCHENSEY.

Pardon me:
I am busied; I have lost my faculties,
And buried them in Milliscent's clear eyes.

MILLISCENT.

Alas, sweet Love, what shall become of me?
I must to Chesson to the Nunry,
I shall ne'er see thee more.

MOUNCHENSEY.
How, sweet?

I'll be thy votary, we'll often meet:
This kiss divides us, and breathes soft adieu,—
This be a double charm to keep both true.

FABELL.
Have done: your fathers may chance spy your parting.
Refuse not you by any means, good sweetness,
To go unto the Nunnery; far from hence
Must we beget your love's sweet happiness.
You shall not stay there long; your harder bed
Shall be more soft when Nun and maid are dead.

[Enter Bilbo.]

MOUNCHENSEY.

Now, sirra, what's the matter?

BILBO.

Marry, you must to horse presently; that villainous old gouty churl, Sir Arthur Clare, longs till he be at the Nunry.

HARRY CLARE.

How, sir?

BILBO.

O, I cry you mercy, he is your father, sir, indeed; but I am sure that there's less affinity betwixt your two natures then there is between a broker and a cutpurse.

MOUNCHENSEY.

Bring my gelding, sirra.

BILBO.

Well, nothing grieves me, but for the poor wench; she must now cry vale to Lobster pies, hartichokes, and all such meats of mortality; poor gentlewoman, the sign must not be in virgo any longer with her, and that me grieves full well.

Poor Milliscent

Must pray and repent:

O fatal wonder!

She'll now be no fatter,

Love must not come at her

Yet she shall be kept under.

[Exit.]

JERNINGHAM.

Farewell, dear Raymond.

HARRY CLARE.

Friend, adieu.

MILLISCENT.

Dear sweet,

No joy enjoys my heart till we next meet.

[Exeunt.]

FABELL.

Well, Raymond, now the tide of discontent

Beats in thy face; but, er't be long, the wind

Shall turn the flood. We must to Waltham abbey,

And as fair Milliscent in Cheston lives,

A most unwilling Nun, so thou shalt there

Become a beardless Novice; to what end,

Let time and future accidents declare:

Taste thou my sleights, thy love I'll only share.

MOUNCHENSEY.

Turn friar? Come, my good Counsellor, let's go,

Yet that disguise will hardly shroud my woe.

[Exeunt.]

ACT III.

SCENE I. Cheston Priory.

[Enter the Prioress of Cheston, with a Nun or two, Sir Arthur Clare, Sir Raph Jerningham, Henry and Francke, the Lady, and Bilbo, with Millisent.]

LADY CLARE.

Madam,
The love unto this holy sisterhood,
And our confirmd opinion of your zeal
Hath truly won us to bestow our Child
Rather on this then any neighbouring Cell.

PRIORESS.

  Jesus daughter, Mary's child,
  Holy matron, woman mild,
  For thee a mass shall still be said,
  Every sister drop a bead;

And those again succeeding them

For you shall sing a Requiem.

FRANK.

The wench is gone, harry; she is no more a woman of this world: mark her well, she looks like a Nun already. What thinkst on her?

HARRY.

By my faith, her face comes handsomely to 't. But peace, let's hear the rest.

SIR ARTHUR.

Madam, for a twelvemonths approbation,

We mean to make this trial of our child.

Your care and our dear blessing in mean time

We pray may prosper this intended work.

PRIORESS.

May your happy soul be blithe,

That so truly pay your tithe:

He who many children gave,

  Tis fit that he one child should have.

  Then, fair virgin, hear my spell,

  For I must your duty tell.

MILLISCENT.

—Good men and true, stand together, and hear your charge.

PRIORESS.

  First, a mornings take your book,

  The glass wherein your self must look;

Your young thoughts, so proud and jolly,

Must be turnd to motions holy;

For your busk, attires, and toys

Have your thoughts on heavenly joys;

And for all your follies past

You must do penance, pray, and fast.

BILBO.

—Let her take heed of fasting; and if ever she hurt her self with praying, I'll ne'er trust beast.

MILLISCENT.

—This goes hard, berladye!

PRIORESS.

You shall ring the sacring bell,
Keep your hours, and tell your knell,
Rise at midnight at your matins,
Read your Psalter, sing your latins,
And when your blood shall kindle pleasure,
Scourge your self in plenteous measure.

MILLISCENT.

—Worse and worse, by Saint Mary.

FRANK.

—Sirra Hal, how does she hold her countenance? Well, go thy ways, if ever thou prove a Nun, I'll build an Abbey.

HARRY.

—She may be a Nun; but if ever she prove an Anchoress, I'll dig her grave with my nails.

FRANK.

—To her again, mother!

HARRY.

—Hold thine own, wench!

PRIORESS.

You must read the mornings mass,

You must creep unto the Cross,

Put cold ashes on your head,

Have a hair cloth for your bed.

BILBO.

—She had rather have a man in her bed.

PRIORESS.

Bid your beads, and tell your needs,

Your holy Avies, and you Creeds;
Holy maid, this must be done,
If you mean to live a Nun.

MILLISCENT.
—The holy maid will be no Nun.

SIR ARTHUR.
Madam, we have some business of import,
And must be gone.
Wilt please you take my wife into your closet,
Who further will acquaint you with my mind;
And so, good madam, for this time adieu.

[Exeunt women.]

SIR RALPH.
Well now, Francke Jerningham, how sayest thou?
To be brief,—
What wilt thou say for all this, if we two,
Her father and my self, can bring about,

That we convert this Nun to be a wife,

And thou the husband to this pretty Nun?

How, then, my lad? ha, Francke, it may be done.

HARRY.

—Aye, now it works.

FRANCKE.

O God, sir, you amaze me at your words;

Think with your self, sir, what a thing it were

To cause a recluse to remove her vow:

A maimed, contrite, and repentant soul,

Ever mortified with fasting and with prayer,

Whose thoughts, even as her eyes, are fixd on heaven,

To draw a virgin, thus devour'd with zeal,

Back to the world: O impious deed!

Nor by the Canon Law can it be done

Without a dispensation from the Church:

Besides, she is so prone unto this life,

As she'll even shriek to hear a husband named.

BILBO.

Aye, a poor innocent she! Well, here's no knavery; he flouts the old fools to their teeth.

SIR RAPH.

Boy, I am glad to hear

Thou mak'st such scruple of that conscience;

And in a man so young as in your self,

I promise you tis very seldom seen.

But Franke, this is a trick, a mere devise,

A sleight plotted betwixt her father and my self,

To thrust Mounchensey's nose besides the cushion;

That, being thus behard of all access,

Time yet may work him from her thoughts,

And give thee ample scope to thy desires.

BILBO.

—A plague on you both for a couple of Jews!

HENRY.

—How now, Franke, what say you to that?

FRANCKE.

—Let me alone, I warrant thee.—

Sir, assured that this motion doth proceed

From your most kind and fatherly affection,

I do dispose my liking to your pleasure:

But for it is a matter of such moment

As holy marriage, I must crave thus much,

To have some conference iwth my ghostly father,

Friar Hildersham, here by, at Waltham Abbey,

To be absolude of things that it is fit

None only but my confessor should know.

SIR RAPH.

With all my heart: he is a reverend man;

And to morrorw morning we will meet all at the Abbey,

Where by th' opinion of that reverend man

We will proceed; I like it passing well.

Till then we part, boy; aye, think of it; farewell!
A parent's care no mortal tongue can tell.

[Exeunt.]

SCENE II. Before the Priory Gate.

[Enter Sir Arthur Clare, and Raymond Mounchensey, like a
Friar.]

SIR ARTHUR.
Holy young Novice, I have told you now
My full intent, and do refer the rest
To your professed secrecy and care:
And see,
Our serious speech hath stolen upon the way,
That we are come unto the Abbey gate.
Because I know Mountchensey is a fox,
That craftily doth overlook my doings,
I'll not be seen, not I. Tush, I have done:

I had a daughter, but she's now a Nun.
Farewell, dear son, farewell.

MOUNTCHENSEY.

Fare you well!—Aye, you have done!
Your daughter, sir, shall not be long a Nun.
O my rare Tutor! never mortal brain
Plotted out such a mass of policy;
And my dear bosom is so great with laughter,
Begot by his simplicity and error,
My soul is fallen in labour with her joy.
O my true friends, Franke Jerningham and Clare,
Did you now know but how this jest takes fire—
That good sir Arthur, thinking me a novice,
Hath even poured himself into my bosom,
O, you would vent your spleens with tickling mirth!
But, Raymond, peace, and have an eye about,
For fear perhaps some of the Nuns look out.
  Peace and charity within,

Never touch't with deadly sin;
I cast my holy water pure
On this wall and on this door,
That from evil shall defend,
And keep you from the ugly fiend:
Evil spirit, by night nor day,
Shall approach or come this way;
Elf nor Fairy, by this grace,
Day nor night shall haunt this place.
Holy maidens!

[Knock.]

[Answer within.] Who's that which knocks? ha, who's there?

MOUNTCHENSEY.

Gentle Nun, here is a Friar.

[Enter Nun.]

NUN.

A Friar without, now Christ us save!
Holy man, what wouldst thou have?

MOUNTCHENSEY.
Holy maid, I hither come
From Friar and father Hildersome,
By the favour and the grace
Of the Prioress of this place,
Amongst you all to visit one
That's come for approbation;
Before she was as now you are,
The daughter of Sir Arthur Clare,
But since she now became a Nune,
Call'd Milliscnet of Edmunton.

NUN.
Holy man, repose you there;
This news I'll to our Abbess bear,
To tell her what a man is sent,
And your message and intent.

MOUNTCHENSEY.

Benedicite.

NUN.

Benedicite.

[Exit.]

MOUNTCHENSEY.

Do, my good plump wench; if all fall right,
I'll make your sisterhood one less by night.
Now happy fortune speed this merry drift,
I like a wench comes roundly to her shrift.

[Enter Lady, Milliscent.]

LADY.

Have Friars recourse then to the house of Nuns?

MILLISCENT.

Madam, it is the order of this place,
When any virgin comes for approbation,—
Lest that for fear or such sinister practise
She should be forced to undergo this veil,
Which should proceed from conscience and devotion,—
A visitor is sent from Waltham house,
To take the true confession of the maid.

LADY.

Is that the order? I commend it well:
You to your shrift, I'll back unto the cell.

[Exit.]

MOUNTCHENSEY.

Life of my soul! bright Angel!

MILLISCENT.

What means the Friar?

MOUNTCHENSEY.

O Milliscent, tis I.

MILLISCENT.

My heart misgives me; I should know that voice.

You? who are you? The holy virgin bless me!

Tell me your name: you shall, ere you confess me.

MOUNTCHENSEY.

Mountchensey, thy true friend.

MILLISCENT.

My Raymond, my dear heart!

Sweet life, give leave to my distracted soul,

To wake a little from this swoon of joy.

By what means camst thou to assume this shape?

MOUNTCHENSEY.

By means of Peter Fabell, my kind Tutor,

Who in the habit of Friar Hildersham,

Franke Jerningham's old friend and confessor,

Helped me to act the part of priestly novice,

Plotted by Franke, by Fabell and my self,

And so delivered to Sir Arthur Clare,

Who brought me here unto the Abbey gate,

To be his Nun-made daughter's visitor.

MILLISCENT.

You are all sweet traitors to my poor old father.

O my dear life! I was a dream't to night

That, as I was a praying in mine Psalter,

There came a spirit unto me as I kneeled,

And by his strong persuasions tempted me

To leave this Nunry; and me thought

He came in the most glorious Angel shape, That mortal eye did ever look upon.

Ha, thou art sure that spirit, for there's no form

Is in mine eye so glorious as thine own.

MOUNTCHENSEY.

O thou Idolatress, that dost this worship

To him whose likeness is but praise of thee!

Thou bright unsetting star, which through this veil,

For very envy, mak'st the Sun look pale!

MILLISCENT.

Well, visitor, lest that perhaps my mother

Should think the Friar too strickt in his decrees,

I this confess to my sweet ghostly father:

If chast pure love be sin, I must confess,

I have offended three years now with thee.

MOUNTCHENSEY.

But do you yet repent you of the same?

MILLISCENT.

Yfaith, I cannot.

MOUNTCHENSEY.

Nor will I absolve thee
Of that sweet sin, though it be venial;
Yet have the penance of a thousand kisses,
And I enjoin you to this pilgrimage:
That in the evening you bestow your self
Here in the walk near to the willow ground,
Where I'll be ready both with men and horse
To wait your coming, and convey you hence
Unto a lodge I have in Enfield chase.
No more reply, if that you yield consent—
I see more eyes upon our stay are bent.

MILLISCENT.

Sweet life, farewell! Tis done: let that suffice;
What my tongue fails, I send thee by mine eyes.

[Exit]

[Enter Fabell, Clare, and Jerningham.]

JERNINGHAM.

Now, Visitor, how does this new made Nun?

CLARE.

Come, come, how does she, noble Capouchin?

MOUNTCHENSEY.

She may be poor in spirit, but for the flesh,
Tis fat and plump, boys. Ah, rogues, there is
A company of girls would turn you all Friars.

FABELL.

But how, Mountchensey? how, lad, for the wench?

MOUNTCHENSEY.

Sound, lads, yfaith; I thank my holy habit, I have confest her, and the Lady Prioress

Hath given me ghostly counsel with her blessing.

And how say ye, boys,

If I be chose the weekly visitor?

CLARE.

Z'blood, she'll have nere a Nun unbagd to sing mass then.

JERNINGHAM.

The Abbot of Waltham will have as many Children to put to nurse as he has calves in the Marsh.

MOUNTCHENSEY.

Well, to be brief, the Nun will soon at night turn tippit; if I can but devise to quit her cleanly of the Nunry, she is mine own.

FABELL.

But, Sirra Raymond,

What news of Peter Fabell at the house?

MOUNTCHENSEY.

Tush, he's the only man;

A Necromancer and a Conjurer

That works for young Mountchensey altogether;

And if it be not for Friar Benedick,

That he can cross him by his learned skill,

The Wench is gone;

Fabell will fetch her out by very magick.

FABELL.

Stands the wind there, boy? keep them in that key.

The wench is ours before to-morrow day.

Well, Hal and Frank, as ye are gentlemen,

Stick to us close this once! You know your fathers

Have men and horse lie ready still at Chesson,

To watch the coast be clear, to scout about,

And have an eye unto Mountchensey's walks:

Therefore you two may hover thereabouts,

And no man will uspect you for the matter;

Be ready but to take her at our hands,

Leave us to scamble for her getting out.

JERNINGHAM.

Z'blood, if all Herford-shire were at our heels,

We'll carry her away in spite of them.

CLARE.

But whither, Raymond?

MOUNTCHENSEY.

To Brian's upper lodge in Enfield Chase;

He is mine honest Friend and a tall keeper;

I'll send my man unto him presently

T' acquaint him with your coming and intent.

FABELL.

Be brief and secret.

MOUNTCHENSEY.

Soon at night remember

You bring your horses to the willow ground.

JERNINGHAM.

Tis done; no more!

CLARE.

We will not fail the hour.

My life and fortune now lies in your power.

FABELL.

About our business! Raymond, let's away!

Think of your hour; it draws well of the day.

[Exit.]

ACT IV.

SCENE I. Enfield Chase.

[Enter Blague, Smug, and Sir John.]

BLAGUE.

Come, ye Hungarian pilchers, we are once more come under the zona torrida of the forest. Let's be resolute, let's fly to and again; and if the devil come, we'll put him to his Interrogatories, and not budge a foot. What? s'foot, I'll put fire into you, ye shall all three serve the good Duke of Norfolk.

SMUG.

Mine host, my bully, my pretious consull, my noble Holofernes, I have been drunk i' thy house twenty times and ten, all's for that: I was last night in the third heavens, my brain was poor, it had yest in 't; but now I am a man of action; is 't not so, lad?

BANKS.

Why, now thou hast two of the liberall sciences about thee, wit and reason, thou maist serve the Duke of Europe.

SMUG.

I will serve the Duke of Christendom, and do him more credit in his celler then all the plate in his buttery; is 't not so, lad?

SIR JOHN.

Mine host and Smug, stand there; Banks, you and your horse keep together; but lie close, shew no tricks, for fear of the keeper. If we be scared, we'll meet in the Church-porch at Enfield.

SMUG.

Content, sir John.

BANKS.

Smug, dost not thou remember the tree thou felst out of last Night?

SMUG.

Tush, and 't had been as high as the Abbey, I should nere have hurt my self; I have fallen into the river, coming home from Waltham, and scapt drowning.

SIR JOHN.

Come, sever, fear no sprits! We'll have a Buck presently; we have watched later then this for a Doe, mine Host.

HOST.

Thou speakst as true as velvet.

SIR JOHN.

Why then, come! Grass and hay, *etc.*

[Exeunt.]

[Enter Clare, Jerningham, and Milliscent.]

CLARE.

Franke Jerningham!

JERNINGHAM.

Speak softly, rogue; how now?

CLARE.

S'foot, we shall lose our way, it's so dark; whereabouts are we?

JERNINGHAM.

Why, man, at Potters gate; the way lies right: hark! the clock strikes at Enfield;

what's the hour?

CLARE.

Ten, the bell says.

JERNINGHAM.

A lies in's throat, it was but eight when we set out of

Chesson. Sir John and his Sexton are at ale to night, the

clock runs at random.

CLARE.

Nay, as sure as thou liv'st, the villanous vicar is abroad in the chase this dark night: the stone Priest steals more venison then half the country.

JERNINGHAM.

Milliscent, how dost thou?

MILLISCENT.

Sir, very well.

I would to God we were at Brians lodge.

CLARE.

We shall anon; z'ounds, hark! What means this noise?

JERNINGHAM.

Stay, I hear horsemen.

CLARE.

I hear footmen too.

JERNINGHAM.

Nay, then I have it: we have been discovered,

And we are followed by our fathers men.

MILLISCENT.

Brother and friend, alas, what shall we do?

CLARE.

Sister, speak softly, or we are descried.
They are hard upon us, what so ere they be,
Shadow your self behind this brake of fern,
We'll get into the wood, and let them pass.

[Enter Sir John, Blague, Smug, and Banks, one after another.]

SIR JOHN.

Grass and hay! we are all mortall; the keepers abroad, and there's an end.

BANKS.
Sir John!

SIR JOHN.

Neighbour Banks, what news?

BANKS.

Z'wounds, Sir John, the keepers are abroad; I was hard by 'am.

SIR JOHN.

Grass and hay! where's mine host Blague?

BLAGUE.

Here, Metrapolitane. The philistines are upon us, be silent; let us serve the good Duke of Norfolk. But where is Smug?

SMUG.

Here; a pox on ye all, dogs; I have kild the greatest Buck in Brians walk. Shift for your selves, all the keepers are up: let's meet in Enfield church porch; away, we are all taken else.

[Exeunt.]

[Enter Brian, with his man, and his hound.]

BRIAN.

Raph, hearst thou any stirring?

RAPH.

I heard one speak here hard by, in the bottom. Peace, Maister, speak low; zownes, if I did not hear a bow go off, and the Buck bray, I never heard deer in my life.

BRIAN.

When went your fellows out into their walks?

RAPH.

An hour ago.

BRIAN.

S'life, is there stealers abroad, and they cannot hear
Of them: where the devil are my men to night?
Sirra, go up the wind towards Buckleyes lodge.
I'll cast about the bottom with my hound,
And I will meet thee under Cony ocke.

RAPH.

I will, Sir.

BRIAN.

How now? by the mass, my hound stays upon something; hark, hark, Bowman, hark, hark, there!

MILLISCENT.

Brother, Frank Jerningham, brother Clare!

BRIAN.

Peace; that's a woman's voice! Stand! who's there? Stand, or I'll shoot.

MILLISCENT.

O Lord! hold your hands, I mean no harm, sir.

BRIAN.

Speak, who are you?

MILLISCENT.

I am a maid, sir; who? Master Brian?

BRIAN.

The very same; sure, I should know her voice;

Mistris Milliscent?

MILLISCENT.

Aye, it is I, sir.

BRIAN.

God for his passion! what make you here alone?

I lookd for you at my lodge an hour ago.

What means your company to leave you thus?

Who brought you hither?

MILLISCENT.

My brother, Sir, and Master Jerningham,

Who, hearing folks about us in the Chase,

Feard it had been sir Ralph and my father,

Who had pursude us, thus dispearsed our selves,

Till they were past us.

BRIAN.

But where be they?

MILLISCENT.

They be not far off, here about the grove.

[Enter Clare and Jerningham.]

CLARE.

Be not afraid, man, I heard Brian's tongue,

That's certain.

JERNINGHAM.

Call softly for your sister.

CLARE.

Milliscent!

MILLISCENT.

Aye, brother, here.

BRIAN.

Maister Clare!

CLARE.

I told you it was Brian.

BRIAN.

Who's that? Maister Jerningham: you are a couple of hot-shots; does a man commit his wench to you, to put her to grass at this time of night

JERNINGHAM.

We heard a noise about her in the chase,

And fearing that our fathers had pursued us, Severd our selves.

CLARE.

Brian, how hapd'st thou on her?

BRIAN.

Seeking for stealers are abroad to night,

My hound stayed on her, and so found her out.

CLARE.

They were these stealers that affrighted us;

I was hard upon them, when they horst their Deer,

And I perceive they took me for a keeper.

BRIAN.

Which way took they?

JERNINGHAM.

Towards Enfield.

BRIAN.

A plague upon 't, that's that damned Priest, and Blague of the George, he that serves the good Duke of Norfolk.

[A noise within: Follow, follow, follow.]

CLARE.

Peace, that's my father's voice.

BRIAN.

Z'ownds, you suspected them, and now they are here indeed.

MILLISCENT.

Alas, what shall we do?

BRIAN.

If you go to the lodge, you are surely taken;

Strike down the wood to Enfield presently, And if Mounchensey come, I'll send him t'yee.

Let me alone to bussle with your father;

I warrant you that I will keep them play

Till you have quit the chase; away, away!

[Exeunt all but Brian.]

Who's there?

[Enter the Knights.]

SIR RAPH.

In the king's name, pursue the Ravisher!

BRIAN.

Stand, or I'll shoot.

SIR ARTHUR.

Who's there?

BRIAN.

I am the keeper that do charge you stand;

You have stolen my Deer.

SIR ARTHUR.

We stolen thy Deer? we do pursue a thief.

BRIAN.

You are arrant thieves, and ye have stolen my Deer.

SIR RAPH.

We are Knights; Sir Arthur Clare, and Sir Raph Jerningham.

BRIAN.

The more your shame, that Knights should be such thieves.

SIR ARTHUR.

Who, and what art thou?

BRIAN.

My name is Brian, keeper of this walk.

SIR ARTHUR.

O Brian, a villain!

Thou hast received my daughter to thy lodge.

BRIAN.

You have stolen the best Deer in my walk to night. My Deer!

SIR ARTHUR.

My daughter!

Stop not my way!

BRIAN.

What make you in my walk? you have stolen the best Buck in my walk to night.

SIR ARTHUR.

My daughter!

BRIAN.

My Deer!

SIR RAPH.

Where is Mountchensey?

BRIAN.

Where's my Buck?

SIR ARTHUR.

I will complain me of thee to the King.

BRIAN.

I'll complain unto the King you spoil his game:

Tis strange that men of your account and calling

Will offer it!

I tell you true, Sir Arthur and Sir Raph,

That none but you have only spoild my game.

SIR ARTHUR.

I charge you, stop us not!

BRIAN.

I charge you both ye get out of my ground!

Is this a time for such as you,

Men of your place and of your gravity,

To be abroad a thieving? tis a shame;

And, afore God, if I had shot at you,

I had served you well enough.

[Exeunt.]

SCENE II. Enfield Churchyard.

[Enter Banks the Miller, wet on his legs.]

BANKS.

S'foot, here's a dark night indeed! I think I have been in fifteen ditches between this and the forest. Soft, here's Enfield Church: I am so wet with climing over into an orchard for to steal some filberts. Well, here I'll sit in the Church porch, and wait for the rest of my consort.

[Enter the Sexton.]

SEXTON.

Here's a sky as black as Lucifer. God bless us! here was goodman Theophilus buried; he was the best Nutcracker that ever dwelt in Enfield. Well, tis 9. a clock, tis time to ring curfew. Lord bless us, what a white thing is that in the Church porch! O Lord, my legs are too weak for my body, my hair is too stiff for my night-cap, my heart fails; this is the ghost of Theophilus. O Lord, it follows me! I cannot say my prayers, and one would give me a thousand pound. Good spirit, I have bowled and drunk and followed the hounds with you a thousand times, though I have not the spirit now to deal with you. O Lord!

[Enter Priest.]

PRIEST.

Grass and hey, we are all mortall. Who's there?

SEXTON.

We are grass and hay indeed; I know you to be Master

Parson by your phrase.

PRIEST.

Sexton!

PRIEST.

I, sir.

PRIEST.

For mortalities sake, What's the matter?

SEXTON.

O Lord, I am a man of another element; Master Theophilus Ghost is in the Church porch. There was a hundred Cats, all fire, dancing here even now, and they are clomb up to the top of the steeple; I'll not into the belfry for a world.

PRIEST.

O good Salomon; I have been about a deed of darkness to night: O Lord, I saw fifteen spirits in the forest, like white bulls; if I lie, I am an arrant thief: mortality haunts us—grass and hay! the devils at our heels, and let's hence to the parsonage.

[Exeunt.]

[The Miller comes out very softly.]

MILLER.

What noise was that? tis the watch, sure; that villanous unlucky rogue, Smug, is tain, upon my life; and then all our villeny comes out; I heard one cry, sure.

[Enter Host Blague.]

HOST.

If I go steal any more venison, I am a Paradox: s'foot, I can scarce bear the sin of my flesh in the day, tis so heavy; if I turn not honest, and serve the good Duke of Norfolk, as true mareterraneum skinker should do, let me never look higher then the element of a Constable.

MILLER.

By the Lord, there are some watchmen; I hear them name
Maister Constable; I would to God my Mill were an Eunuch,
and wanted her stones, so I were hence.

HOST.

Who's there?

MILLER.

Tis the Constable, by this light; I'll steal hence, and if
I can meet mine host Blague, I'll tell him how Smug is
tain, and will him to look to himself.

[Exit.]

HOST.

What the devil is that white thing? this same is a Churchyard, and I have heard that ghosts and villenous goblins have been seen here.

[Enter Sexton and Priest.]

PRIEST.

Grass and hay! O, that I could conjure! we saw a spirit here in the Churchyard; and in the fallow field there's the devil with a man's body upon his back in a white sheet.

SEXTON.

It may be a woman's body, Sir John.

PRIEST.

If she be a woman, the sheets damn her; Lord bless us, what a night of mortality is this!

HOST.

Priest!

PRIEST.

Mine host!

HOST.

Did you not see a spirit all in white cross you at the stile?

SEXTON.

O no, mine host; but there sate one in the porch; I have not breath ynough left to bless me from the Devil.

HOST.

Who's that?

PRIEST.

The Sexton, almost frighted out of his wits. Did you see

Banks or Smug?

HOST.

No, they are gone to Waltham, sure: I would fain hence; come, let's to my house: I'll ne'er serve the duke of Norfolk in this fashion again whilst I breath. If the devil be amongst us, tis time to hoist sail, and cry roomer. Keep together; Sexton, thou art secret, what? let's be comfortable one to Another.

PRIEST.

We are all mortal, mine host.

HOST.

True; and I'll serve God in the night hereafter afore the

Duke of Norfolk.

[Exeunt.]

ACT V.

SCENE I. An Inn opposite the George, Waltham.

[Enter Sir Arthur Clare and Sir Ralph Jerningham, trussing their points as new up.]

SIR RAPH.

Good morrow, gentle knight.

A happy day after your short nights rest.

SIR ARTHUR.

Ha, ha, sir Raph, stirring so soon indeed?

Birlady, sir, rest would have done right well;

Our riding late last night has made me drowsy.

Go to, go to, those days are gone with us.

SIR RAPH.

Sir Arthur, Sir Arthur, care go with those days, Let 'am even go together, let 'am go!

Tis time, yfaith, that we were in our graves,

When Children leave obedience to their parents,

When there's no fear of God, no care, no duty.

Well, well, nay, nay, it shall not do, it shall not;

No, Mountchensey, thou'st hear on't, thou shalt,

Thou shalt, yfaith!

I'll hang thy Son, if there be law in England.

A man's Child ravisht from a Nunry!

This is rare!

Well, well, there's one gone for Friar Hildersam.

SIR ARTHUR.

Nay, gentle Knight, do not vex thus, It will but hurt your health. You cannot grieve more then I do, but to what end? But hark you, Sir Raph, I was about to say something—it makes no matter. But heark you in your ear: the Friar's a knave; but God forgive me, a man cannot tell neither; s'foot, I am so out of patience, I know not what to say.

SIR RAPH.

There's one went for the Friar an hour ago. Comes he not yet? s'foot, if I do find knavery unders cowl, I'll tickle him, I'll firk him. Here, here, he's here, he's here. Good morrow, Friar; good morrow, gentle Friar.

[Enter Hildersham.]

SIR ARHTUR.

Good morrow, father Hildersham, good morrow.

HILDERSHAM.

Good morrow, reverend Knights, unto you both.

SIR ARTHUR.

Father, how now? you hear how matters go;

I am undone, my child is cast away.

You did your best, at least I think the best;

But we are all crost; flatly, all is dasht.

HILDERSHAM.

Alas, good knights, how might the matter be?

Let me understand your grief for Charity.

SIR ARTHUR.

Who does not understand my griefs? Alas, alas!
And yet ye do not! Will the Church permit
A nun in approbation of her habit
To be ravished?

HILDERSHAM.

A holy woman, benedicite!
Now God forfend that any should presume
To touch the sister of a holy house.

SIR ARTHUR.

Jesus deliver me!

SIR RAPH.

Why, Millisent, the daughter of this Knight
Is out of Chesson taken the last night.

HILDERSHAM.

Was that fair maiden late become a nun?

SIR RAPH.

Was she, quotha? Knavery, knavery, knavery; I smell it, I smell it, yfaith; is the wind in that door? is it even so? doost thou ask me that now?

HILDERSHAM.

It is the first time that I ere heard of it.

SIR ARTHUR.

That's very strange.

SIR RAPH.

Why, tell me, Friar, tell me; thou art counted a holy man; do not play the hypocrite with me, nor bear with me. I cannot dissemble: did I ought but by thy own consent? by thy allowance? nay, further, by thy warrant?

HILDERSHAM.

Why, Reverend knight—

SIR RAPH.

Unreverend Friar—

HILDERSHAM.

Nay, then give me leave, sir, to depart in quiet; I had hoped you had sent for me to some other end.

SIR ARTHUR.

Nay, stay, good Friar; if any thing hath hapd

About this matter in thy love to u,

That thy strickt order cannot justify,

Admit it be so, we will cover it.

Take no care, man:

Disclaim me yet thy counsell and advise,

The wisest man that is may be o'erreacht.

HILDERSHAM.

Sir Arthur, by my order and my faith,

I know not what you mean.

SIR RAPH.

By your order and your faith?
This is most strange of all: Why, tell me, Friar,
Are not you Confessor to my Son Francke?

HILDERSHAM.
Yes, that I am.

SIR RAPH.
And did not this good knight here and my self
Confess with you, being his ghostly Father,
To deal with him about th' unbanded marriage
Betwixt him and that fair young Millisent?

HILDERSHAM.

I never heard of any match intended.

SIR ARTHUR.

Did not we break our minds that very time,

That our device of making her a Nun

Was but a colour and a very plot

To put by young Mountchensey? Ist not true?

HILDERSHAM.

The more I strive to know what you should mean,

The less I understand you.

SIR RAPH.

Did not you tell us still how Peter Fabell

At length would cross us, if we took not heed?

HILDERSHAM.

I have heard of one that is a great magician,

But he's about the University.

SIR RAPH.

Did not you send your novice Benedic

To persuade the girl to leave Mountchensey's love,

To cross that Peter Fabell in his art,

And to that purpose made him visitor?

HILDERSHAM.

I never sent my novice from the house,

Nor have we made our visitation yet.

SIR ARTHUR.

Never sent him? Nay, did he not go?

And did not I direct him to the house,

And confer with him by the way? and did he not

Tell me what charge he had received from you,

Word by word, as I requested at your hands?

HILDERSHAM.

That you shall know; he came along with me,

And stays without. Come hither, Benedic!

[Enter Benedic.]

Young Benedic, were you ere sent by me

To Chesson Nunnery for a visitor?

BENEDIC.

Never, sir, truly.

SIR RAPH.

Stranger then all the rest!

SIR ARTHUR.

Did not I direct you to the house?

Confer with you

From Waltham Abbey unto Chesson wall?

BENEDIC.

I never saw you, sir, before this hour.

SIR RAPH.

The devill thou didst not! Hoe, Chamberlen!

[Enter Chamberlaine.]

CHAMB.

Anon, anon.

SIR RAPH.

Call mine host Blague hither!

CHAMB.

I will send one over to see if he be up; I think he be scarce stirring yet.

SIR RAPH.

Why, knave, didst thou not tell me an hour ago, mine host was up?

CHAMB.

Aye, sir, my Master's up.

SIR RAPH.

You knave, is a up, and is a not up? Dost thou mock me?

CHAMB.

Aye, sir, my M. is up; but I think M. Blague indeed be not Stirring.

SIR RAPH.

Why, who's thy Master? is not the Master of the house thy Master?

CHAMB.

Yes, sir; but M. Blague dwells over the way.

SIR ARTHUR.

Is not this the George? Before God, there's some villany in this.

CHAMB.

Sfoot, our signs removed; this is strange!

[Exeunt.]

SCENE II. The George Inn .

[Enter Blague, trussing his points.]

BLAGUE.

Chamberlen, speak up to the new lodgings, bid Nell look well to the baked meats.

[Enter Sir Arthur and Sir Raph.]

How now, my old Jenerts bauke my house, my castle? lie in

Waltham all night, and not under the Canopy of your host

Blague's house?

SIR ARTHUR.

Mine host, mine host, we lay all night at the George in

Waltham; but whether the George be your fee-simple or no,

tis a doubtful question: look upon your sign.

HOST.

Body of Saint George, this is mine overthwart neighbour hath done this to seduce my blind customers. I'll tickle his Catastrophe for this; if I do not indite him at next assisses for Burglary, let me die of the yellows; for I see tis no boot in these days to serve the good Duke of Norfolk. The villanous world is turned manger; one Jade deceives another, and your Ostler plays his part commonly for the fourth share. Have we Comedies in hand, you whoreson, villanous male London Letcher?

SIR ARTHUR.

Mine host, we have had the moylingst night of it that ever we had in our lives.

HOST.

Ist certain?

SIR RAPH.

We have been in the Forest all night almost.

HOST.

S'foot, how did I miss you? hart, I was a stealing a Buck there.

SIR ARTHUR.

A plague on you; we were stayed for you.

HOST.

Were you, my noble Romans? Why, you shall share; the venison is a footing. Sine Cerere and Baccho friget Venus; That is, there's a good breakfast provided for a marriage that's in my house this morning.

SIR ARTHUR.

A marriage, mine host?

HOST.

A conjunction copulative; a gallant match between your daughter and M. Raymond Mountchensey, young Juventus.

SIR ARTHUR.

How?

HOST.

Tis firm, tis done. We'll shew you a president i'th civil law fort.

SIR RAPH.

How? married?

HOST.

Leave tricks and admiration. There's a cleanly pair of sheets

in the bed in Orchard chamber, and they shall lie there. What?

I'll do it; I'll serve the good Duke of Norfolk.

SIR ARTHUR.

Thou shalt repent this, Blague.

SIR RAPH.

If any law in England will make thee smart for this, expect it with all severity.

HOST.

I renounce your defiance; if you parle so roughly, I'll barracado my gates against you. stand fair, bully; Priest, come off from the rereward! What can you say now? Twas done in my house; I have shelter i'th Court for't. D'yee see yon bay window? I serve the good duke of Norfolk, and tis his lodging. Storm, I care not, serving the good Duke of Norfolk: thou art an actor in this, and thou shalt carry fire in thy face eternally.

[Enter Smug, Mountchensey, Harry Clare, and Milliscent.]

SMUG.

Fire, s'blood, there's no fire in England like your Trinidado sack. Is any man here humorous? We stole the venison, and we'll justify it: say you now!

HOST.

In good sooth, Smug, there's more sack on the fire, Smug.

SMUG.

I do not take any exceptions against your sack; but it you'll lend me a pick staff, I'll cudgle them all hence, by this hand.

HOST.

I say thou shalt in to the Celler.

SMUG.

S'foot, mine Host, shalls not grapple? Pray, pray you; I could fight now for all the world like a Cockatrices ege; shals not serve the Duke of Norfolk?

[Exit.]

HOST.

In, skipper, in!

SIR ARTHUR.

Sirra, hath young Mountchensey married your sister?

HARRY CLARE.

Tis Certain, Sir; here's the priest that coupled them, the parties joined, and the honest witness that cried Amen.

MOUNTCHENSEY.

Sir Arthur Clare, my new created Father, I beseech you, hear me.

SIR ARTHUR.

Sir, Sir, you are a foolish boy; you ahve done that you cannot answer; I dare be bound to seize her from you; for she's a profest Nun.

MILLISCENT.

With pardon, sir, that name is quite undone;

This true-love knot cancels both maid and Nun.

When first you told me I should act that part,

How cold and bloody it crept o'er my heart!

To Chesson with a smiling brow I went;

But yet, dear sir, it was to this intent,

That my sweet Raymond might find better means

To steal me thence. In brief, disguised he came,

Like Novice to old father Hildersham;

His tutor here did act that cunning part,

And in our love hath joined much wit to art.

CLARE.

Is't even so?

MILLISCENT.

With pardon therefore we intreat your smiles;

Love thwarted turns itself to thousand wiles.

CLARE.

Young Master Jerningham, were you an actor
In your own love's abuse?

JERNINGHAM.

My thoughts, good sir,
Did labour seriously unto this end,
To wrong my self, ere I'd abuse my friend.

HOST.

He speaks like a Batchelor of musicke, all in numbers.
Knights, if I had known you would have let this covy of
Patridges sit thus long upon their knees under my sign
post, I would have spread my door with old Coverlids.

SIR ARTHUR.

Well, sir, for this your sign was removed, was it?

HOST.

Faith, we followed the directions of the devill, Master Peter

Fabell; and Smug, Lord bless us, could never stand upright since.

SIR ARTHUR.

You, sir, twas you was his minister that married them?

SIR JOHN.

Sir, to prove my self an honest man, being that I was last night in the forrest stealing Venison—now, sir, to have you stand my friend, if that matter should be called in question, I married your daughter to this worthy gentleman.

SIR ARTHUR.

I may chance to requite you, and make your neck crack for't.

SIR JOHN.

If you do, I am as resolute as my Neighbour vicar of Waltham

Abbey; a hem, Grass and hay, we are all mortall; let's live

till we be hangd, mine host, and be merry, and there's an end.

[Enter Fabell.]

FABELL.

Now, knights, I enter; now my part begins.

To end this difference, know, at first I knew

What you intended, ere your love took flight

From old Mountchensey; you, sir Arthur Clare,

Were minded to have married this sweet beauty

To young Franke Jerningham; to cross which match,

I used some pretty sleights; but I protest

Such as but sate upon the skirts of Art;

No conjurations, nor such weighty spells

As tie the soul to their performancy.

These for his love, who once was my dear pupil,

Have I effected. Now, me thinks, tis strange

That you, being old in wisdom, should thus knit

Your forehead on this match, since reason fails;

No law can curb the lovers rash attempt;

Years, in resisting this, are sadly spent.

Smile, then, upon your daughter and kind son,

And let our toil to future ages prove,

The devil of Edmonton did good in Love.

SIR ARTHUR.

Well, tis in vain to cross the providence:

Dear Son, I take thee up into my heart;

Rise, daughter; this is a kind father's part.

HOST.

Why, Sir John, send for Spindles noise presently: Ha, ert be night, I'll serve the good Duke of Norfolk.

PRI.

Grass and hay, mine Host, let's live till we die, and be merry, and there's an end.

SIR ARTHUR.

What, is breakfast ready, mine Host?

HOST.

Tis, my little Hebrew.

SIR ARTHUR.

Sirra, ride strait to Chesson Nunry,

Fetch thence my Lady; the house, I know,

By this time misses their young votary.

Come, knights, let's in!

BILBO.

I will to horse presently, sir.—A plague a my Lady, I shall miss a good breakfast. Smug, how chance you cut so plaguely behind, Smug?

SMUG.

Stand away; I'll founder you else.

BILBO.

Farewell, Smug, thou art in another element.

SMUG.

I will be by and by; I will be Saint George again.

SIR ARTHUR.

Take heed the fellow do not hurt himself.

SIR RAPH.

Did we not last night find two S. Georges here?

FABELL.

Yes, Knights, this martialist was one of them.

CLARE.

Then thus conclude your night of merriment!

[Exeunt Omnes.]

FINIS

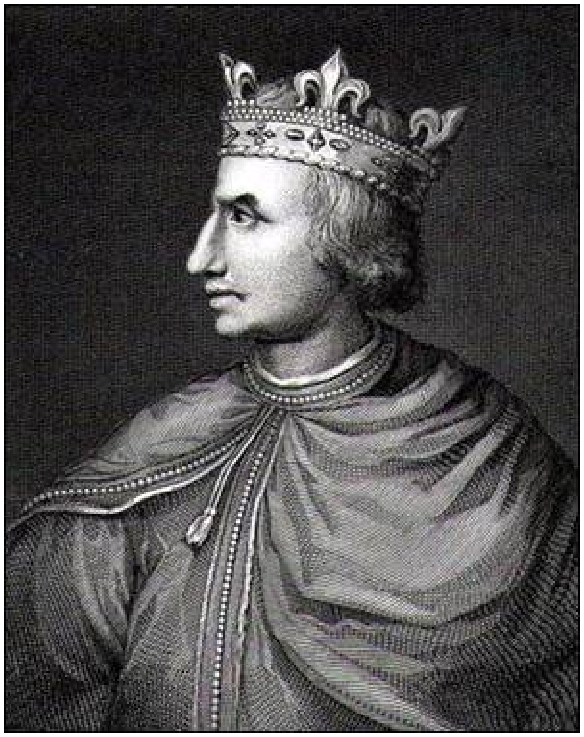
EDMUND IRONSIDE

OR

WAR HATH MADE ALL FRIENDS

This anonymous play depicts the life of Edmund II of England. Some critics have suggested it is an early work of Shakespeare. The play was never published in its own era and the unique copy of the text was preserved in a rare manuscript now in the British Museum. According to the scholar Eric Sams, *Edmund Ironside* contains 260 words or usages first used by Shakespeare himself, with 635 instances of rare words also used by him. However, this argument has failed to convince the majority of Shakespearean scholars.

Edmund Ironside tells the tale of King Canutus (Canute the Great), who faces an insurgency of the native English population led by Edmund II. Unbeknownst to them, they face a mutual enemy, a traitorous noble named Edricus, who hopes to take the crown for himself.



Edmund II

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DRAMATIS PERSONAE

English

Edmund Ironside, King of the Saxons, son of Ethelred the Unready

Alfric, his general Officers

Ulfkettle Godwin

Aylward Gunthranus

Archbishop of York

Emma, widow of Ethelred, Stepmother of Edmund Her sons

Alfred

Edward (later the Confessor)

Two hostages, Sons of Leofric and Turkillus

Edrick, a poor man

His Wife, mother of Edricus

Stitch, her son by Edrick

Danes

Canutus, Prince of Denmark, son of King Sveyn Forkbeard Officers

Uskataulf Swetho

English Renegades

Leofric, Earl of Chester

Turkillus, Duke of Norfolk

Earl of Southampton, ally of Canute

Egina, his daughter, later wife of Canute

Edricus, Earl of Mercia

Archbishop of Canterbury

Chorus

Messengers, Herald, Danish and English Soldiers, Poor Danes, Bailiffs, Bluecoats

Scene: England, 1016

ACT 1

Scene I.I: Southampton

[Enter Canutus, Archbishop of Canterbury, Earl of Southampton, Edricus, Leofric, Turkillus, Uskataulf and Swetho. They sit at a table.]

CANUTUS: Archbishop and you other English peers

I hear how Ethelredus late your king

my tributary, is departed life

and how his son prince Edmund wears the crown

without the notice of your free consent
or homage unto me, his sovereign.
Yourselves, lords spiritual and temporal,
besides the due my father's conquest claims
have chosen me,
and by a universal sound decree ...
have solemnly throughout this little world
proclaimed me heir-apparent to the crown
when Ethelredus lived.
Then let not this young upstart prince of prates *[He riseth.]*
curb your proceedings with untutored words
but finish boldly what you have begun:
resist his private coronation
and put not up this vild dishonor done
unto you, chief commanders of the realm,
as though you were not worth the sending-for. ...

CANTERBURY: Indeed his rashness is unportable
and merely nothing but a proud contempt
against us of the clergy and the rest
that have for public profit of the realm

for peace, for quiet and utility
elected prince Canutus for our king,
whose valor we have proved unto our cost,
whose love unto the church we need not doubt,
whose care for all we may rely upon,
and whose true bounty is so notable ...
that even his foes admire and honor him,
when th' other what he is I need not tell
'tis too well known. I would I could say well;
but this I say and swear -- were I myself *[He riseth.]*
professed a soldier or a man at arms,
as I am one deprived from the world
and from my cradle called to serve the Lord,
I would with lance approve his title naught
and plead your coronation with my sword.

CANUTUS: Stout-hearted bishop, spoken like a man! ...
Would all the English lords were of thy mind.

SOUTHAMPTON: Am I not ready to defend your right
with force of arms as doth become a knight?

LEOFRIC: I ne'er was slack or hindmost of the rest,
but ever first and foremost with the best.

EDRICUS: Had I not been a help unto your father
whenas he first arrived in Albion,
you ne'er had stood in question for the crown
nor had your father's wars so prospered.
'Twas I that first did counsel Ethelred ...
to pay you tribute and to buy your league,
whereby we emptied all the treasury;
and had not gold failed, you had ne'er been king.
I had a navy once (the time when 'twas
in Ethelredus' days, your father living),
with which I should have met you on the sea
within the straits of England, and Iwis
had then no little vantage on your ships;
yet I as favoring your party most,
gave way and let you land without resistance, ...

and for that fact rest foully scandalized.

Was it not I that gave intelligence
of all the councils of king Ethelred
unto your father? Did not I, I pray,
feign sickness, weakness, disadvantages
whenas the king sent me to fight with him?
Was I not causer of your good success
in all your actions since your father's death,
as namely in that battle lately fought
between yourself and Edmund Ironside, ...

where I fled from him and did succor you?
Then since the only ladder upon which
your father climbed to get and you to hold
this gotten kingdom was my diligence,
I hope you will not *[let]* the least motion
of an ill thought creep in to hinder me,
nor do I think you used this speech by me.

CANUTUS: Why, what need all this repetition?
Good faith, I meant no harm in saying so.

Why should I doubt you? Wherefore should I fear? ...
You never yet deceived me.
I cannot speak, but some or other straight
misconsters me.
Why, by my troth, my lord, I meant not you,
but those that cleave to Edmund Ironside
and hang in part against my government.
Calm ye, therefore, and be not discontent.

SOUTHAMPTON: In token then, you mean as you have said:
honor my castle with the name of court
and take a subject's welcome from his heart ...

to signify you love my town and me.
[Uskataulf whispereth in Canutus' ear.]

USKATAULF: Why, that's a trifle, mighty sovereign.

Yield unto him in this petition.
It will confirm the people's hearts to you
and make him live and die to honor you.

CANUTUS: I willingly descend to your request
and will this night be with you at your place.

SOUTHAMPTON: I'll go before, to countenance your grace.
[Exit Southampton. Enter a company of countrymen naking a noise.]

COUNTRYMEN: Where is the king, that he may right our wrong?

CANUTUS: The king is here; who is it calls the king? ...
I am your king. Speak, gentle countrymen,
what lawless hand hath done you injury?

1 COUNTRY: Renowned Canutus, we are all Danes by birth,
the remnant of thy needy followers,
who when thy father lived, lived here secure
and dwelt among the fattest of this land.
We then did yoke the Saxons and compelled
their stubborn necks to ear the fallow fields.
We then did force them honor us as lords
and be our slaves, our drudges and our dogs. ...

But now (I know not what the cause should be
unless the instigation of their prince,
young Ironside, or else their stubborn nature)
they all rebel and with conjoined force
assault us manly, and from every part
of this perturbed island banish us.
We are not able to resist their powers,
but fall like leaves before the northern wind.
Huge heaps of us lie dead in every place,
and we unless you help, shall all be slain. ...

ALL: Help, help, Canutus, help and succor us!

CANUTUS: Good countrymen, Canutus will not see you wronged,
for yet the spirit of my father Sveyn
runs in these veins, which I will shed,
even drop by drop, ere I will see you harmed.
Go in, good friends, and pacify yourselves.
Be confident in me, and if I live,
I plant you in your former quiet states.

Swetho, look to them; they shall be your care.

[Exit Swetho with the poor Danes.]

Now lords, let not this sudden rumor daunt ...

Your manly hearts. Though Edmund be so strong,

we are as strong, and stronger far than he.

Then tell me, shall we now assail him?

Say, Uskataulf, what is to be done?

USKATAULF: You may, my lord, yet be remembered now

against what nation you are bound to war,

a generation like the chosen Jews:

stubborn, unwieldy, fierce and wild to tame,

scorning to be compelled against their wills,

abhorring servitude as having felt ...

the overloading burden of the same.

EDRICUS: Indeed my countrymen are factious

and must be reined with a marking-stall.

Curb them, my lord, and bridle but their wills

and you shall find them mild and tractable.
If that you use them as your father did,
they dare not, nay they will not look awry,
but serve you as your slaves by conquest due.
But if you lay the team upon their necks
and let them have but any scope to run, ...
why then be sure they'll gad as they were galled
and neither know themselves nor yet your grace,
for lenity doth cause them to rebel
'cause they are ignorant of living well.

USKATAULF: List how this flattering mate soothes up the king
and doth abuse his gracious sufferance.
Base, vild, insinuating sycophant,
degenerate bastard, falsely bred,
foul mother-killing Viper, traitor, slave,
the scum of vices, all the ill that may be. ...
Who would excite the king to tyranny
against his countrymen but only he?

I am a Dane, renowned sovereign:

you have experience of my loyalty
and that my counsel is not mercenary.
If I were wise enough to give advice,
you should not prove a tyrant but a king.
A tyrant is abhorred of God and man,
whenas a king loved and honored.
Accomptest thou, Edricus, the Saxons fools ...

or rather hardy, wise and valorous?
Their names discover what their natures are,
more hard than stones, and yet not stones indeed.
In fight, more than stones detesting flight;
in peace, as soft as wax, wise, provident.
Witness the many combats they have fought
Denmark, our country's loss by them and theirs
with many other witnesses of worth.
How often they have driven us to our shifts
and made us take the sea for our defense ...

when we in number have been three to one.
Oh you deceive yourself and eke the king

in wishing him so much against himself.
Recall the former perils we have passed,
whose dear-bought times are freshly yet in mind,
the tyranny your father Sveynus used
in tithing people, killing 9 of 10.
What did ensue? Why loss of many holds,
bloodshed and war, rebellion, sword and fire;
for they are Englishmen, easy to rule ...

with lenity, so they be used like men:
patient of right, impatient of wrong,
brooking no tyranny in any sort,
but hating and revenging it with death;
therefore I counsel you, if it might stand,
to win their hearts, not by severity
but by your favor, love and lenity.

CANUTUS: Good Uskataulf, I allow your speech
and praise your counsel by my own consent.

I will endeavor to suppress my rage ...

and quench the burning choler of my heart,
which sometimes so inflames my inward parts
as I fall out with my best-loved friends.
I will therefore so moderate myself
as Englishmen shall think me English-born.
I will be mild and gentle to my foes
if gentleness can win their stubborn hearts.
But let us hence, my lords, by this the earl
expects us at Southampton; there we'll rest
till we consult if peace or war be best. ...
[Exit omnes. Leofric pulls Turkillus by the sleeve as he is going and stays him.]

LEOFRIC: A word, my lord.

TURKILLUS: ~~~ So you use no blows.

LEOFRIC: I think you noble, virtuous, secret, wise;
else would I not have opened my intent,
which doth so much concern our private good,
to you in private. So it is, my lord.
I have oft noted your discontented gait,

which measured by my own do well declare
the mind that rules your body is not pleased;
and since so sweet a symphony appears ...
betwixt our bodies' discontent, I judge
our mind's disturbance to be only one
caused from the sad neglect of these strange days.
Oh what a grief is it to noble bloods
to see each base-born groom promoted up,
each dunghill brat arreared to dignity,
each flatterer esteemed virtuous,
when the true, noble, virtuous gentlemen
are scorned, disgraced and held in obloquy.

Base Edricus, a traitor to his king, ...
is held in honor: we two trusty subjects
are feared, suspected, and have liberty
only to live, yet not in liberty;
for what is it but prisonment or worse
whenas our children, blood of our own blood,
are kept close prisoners, pledges for our faiths?
King Edmund, who indeed is our true king,

for good regard of merit and desert,
for honor, fame and true nobility,
is rightly termed mirror of majesty. ...
Canutus is a prudent, noble prince
and loves to hear him called so, too, too much
but I will tell you this: as long as we
take part against our sovereign Ironside,
we are but traitors, therefore --

TURKILLUS: Stay, noble Chester, for I spy your drift.
To heap as many titles on your head
as you have poured on mine, were but your due;
yet to cut off such troiting thieves of time,
I say 'Amen' to your intention, ...
which is to leave Canutus and his court
and fly to Edmund, our true, lawful king;
but lest you should suspect my secrecy
by being won so soon to your device,
I here assure you that this very plot
hath long been hammering in my troubled brain;
and had you not prevented my intent,

I should ere long have moved you herein;
but what shall then become of our two boys,
who are our pledges? They shall surely die. ...

LEOFRIC: Tut, 'tis no matter: if they die, they die.
They cannot suffer in a better time,
nor for a better cause, their country's good.

We gave them life; for us they shed their blood.

TURKILLUS: He that sent them can send us more again.
Then let us hence, delay of time is vain. *[Exeunt.]*

Scene I.2

[Enter Edricus solus.]

EDRICUS: What shall I think of him that means to beg
and can thus finely live upon his wit?
I was as mean as any basely born.

Fie, say not so, it will discredit thee.

Tut, no man hears me. Aye, but think not so,

for it will make thy peacock's plumes fall down

if one such abject thought possess thy mind.

'Tis strange to see how I am favored,

possess my dukedom and Canutus' grace

and am the chief of all his counselors; ...

whenas my betters are exiled the court,

being discountenanced and out of grace.

They cannot dissemble as I can:

cloak, cozen, cog and flatter with the king;

crouch and seem courteous; promise and protest;

say much, do naught, in all things use deceit;

tell troth to no man; carry tales abroad;

whisper close secrets in the giddy air;

be a news monger; feed the king with sooths;

please all men's humors with humility ...

which he must do that is a courtier

and minds to keep in favor with the king.

He that had heard my story from the end:

how many treasons I have practiced,
how many vild things I have brought to pass
and what great wonders have been compassed
by this deep-reaching pate, would think Iwis
I had been bound apprentice to deceit
and from my birthday studied villainy.

I understand Prince Edmund's up in arms, ...
lays hold upon occasion's sluggy lock;
and whilst Canutus here securely sleeps,
he wins with ease what we with pain have got.
Mass, if he do, and fortune favor him,
I will so work as I'll be in his grace
and keep my living and myself unhurt;
but if Canutus chance to gain again,
then I am his, for I can gloze with all,
and yet indeed, to say the very troth,
rather of both I love Canutus best, ...
for Edmund's father first did raise me up
and from a plowman's son promoted me
to be a duke for all my villainy,

and so as often as I look on him,

I must remember what he did for me

and whence I did descend and what I am,

which thoughts abase my state most abjectly.

Therefore I hate him and desire his death

and will procure his end in what I can;

but for Canutus, he doth honor me ...

because he knows not whence I did descend.

Therefore of the two I love Canutus best;

yet I can play an Ambodexter's part and

swear I love, yet hate him with my heart. *[Exit.]*

Scene I.3

[Enter Edmund and Alfric the general under the king.]

EDMUND: Yet are ye sure, my lord, that all is fit?

Are all my soldiers furnished for this war?

What, have they meat and drink to their content?

Do not the captains pince them of their pay?

ALFRIC: Assure your majesty, my care is such
as I do daily oversee them all
and cause the meanest soldier to be served
and have his fill of meat and drink that's good
without controlment, check or menaces;
for th'only means to mar a soldier's fight -- ...

pinch him of meat and pay and pinch his might.

EDMUND: Then do ye well, for I am of this mind --
he that for private base commodity
will starve his soldiers or keep back their pay;
he that to deck himself in gorgeous 'tire
will see his men go naked, die for cold,
is a plain cutthroat to the commonwealth.
A worthy captain, seeing a tall soldier
march barefoot, halting, plucked off his own shoes
and gave them to the soldier, saying 'Fellow, ...

when I want shoes, then give me these again.'

But captains nowadays

pluck off their soldiers' shoes, nay sell their lives

to make them rich and gallant to the eye.

[Enter Turkillus and Leofric.]

But soft, what are yon two strangers?

TURKILLUS: We are rebellious traitors to your grace, *[They kneel.]*

born Englishmen but strangers to ourselves,

who in remorse of conscience, knowing well

we have in taking part with Danish Canutus

deserved death, come of our own free wills ...

either to suffer for our heinous facts [acts ?]

or else embrace our pardons, which we crave

even as hereafter we shall merit it.

EDMUND: Rise up, Turkillus; Leofric, arise.

Give me your hands and with your hands your hearts.

I more esteem the life of one true subject

than the destruction of a thousand foes.

One sheep that was lost I more rejoice to find
than twenty other which I never missed.
A friend of whose return I stood in doubt ...

is more welcome to me than forty other.
Oh that when strangers cannot conquer us,
we should conspire with them against ourselves!
England, if ever war thy face doth spoil,
thank not thy outward foe but inward friend;
for thou shalt never perish till that day
when thy right hand shall make thy heart away.
Go in, brave lords: your sight doth me more joy
than Agamemnon when he conquered Troy. *[Exeunt omnes.]*

ACT II

Scene II.1

[Drum and trumpets sound. Enter a banquet. Then enter Canutus, Southampton, Archbishop, Uskataulf and Swetho, Edricus.]

CANUTUS: My lord, my lord, you are too bountiful.
Half this expense would well have satisfied
the homely stomachs of our soldiers
and entertained ourself right royally.

Where is your daughter?

SOUTHAMPTON: ~~~ She shall give attendance
to wait upon your grace at dinner time.

CANUTUS: Nay, good my lord, unless you give
her leave to sit at board and find me table talk,
I shall not think myself a welcome guest. ...

SOUTHAMPTON: May I crave pardon of your majesty.
My daughter, being young in years and manners,
is far unfit to keep a Queen's estate.

CANUTUS: I'faith, my lord, you are too scrupulous,
too unadvised, too fearful without cause,

to stand upon such nice excuses.
I love to see a table furnished,
and sure I will not sit till she comes in.

SOUTHAMPTON: Egina, daughter, come away, sweet girl.
[Enter Egina.]
The king will have thee dine with him today. ...

Be not too coy, nor yet too flexible.
If chance he proffer any courtesy,
behave yourself in honorable sort
and answer him with modesty and mirth.

A means may be to make thee Queen.

CANUTUS: What, is your daughter come? Welcome, fair lady.
Your presence is as welcome as the day
after a long and weary watchful night.
Sit down, fair lady. Sit down, noble lord.

Fill me a cup of wine. Here's to the health ...

where if he lives till you have conquered him,
none after him dares renovate the wars.

CANUTUS: Sweetly and wisely answered, noble queen,
for by that name if heaven and thou consent,
by sunset all the camp shall wish thee health.
My lord, what say you to this motion?

SOUTHAMPTON: As it shall please your royal majesty,
dispose of me and whatsoe'er is mine.

CANUTUS: Madam, pleaseth it you to be a queen? ...

EGINA: What my dread sovereign and my father wills
I dare not, nay I will not, contradict.

CANUTUS: Then for a manual seal receive this kiss,
[He kisseth her.]
the chief dumb utterer of the heart's intent;
and noble father -- now I'll call you so --
if this rash-seeming match do like you well,

deliver me possession presently
of this fair lady, your beloved child,
and we will straight to church and celebrate
the duties which belong to marriages. ...
Bishop of Canterbury, you will marry us
without the sibert-asking, will ye not?

CANTERBURY: I am prepared if every part be pleased.

CANUTUS: Faith, I am pleased.

ARCHBISHOP: ~~~ But what say you?

EGINA: I say a woman's silence is consent.

CANUTUS: Why, here's a match extempore, small ado
about a weighty matter. Some perhaps
would have consumed millions to effect
what I by some spent breath have compassed. ...
Lords, let us in, for I intend to be
espoused tonight with all solemnity.

After our marriage we do mean to go
to meet in open field our open foe. *[Exeunt omnes.]*

Scene II.2

[Enter Edrick, a poor man, his wife, and Stitch.]

EDRICK: Nay, Stitch, and you once see my son you'll swear he is
a bouncer, all in silks and gold, vengeable rich.

STITCH: How say you that?

WIFE: I can tell you, you may bless the day that ever you
happed into his service, he is a man every hairs-breadth,
a most vild brave man i' faith.

STITCH: Then we shall be well met, for I love bravery and
cleanliness out of all cry, and indeed of all things I
cannot brook an ill-favored face, hang him that wants
a good face. ...

EDRICK: You are of my mind, we may say 'a pox of all good faces' and never hurt our own.

STITCH: We may indeed, God be praised. But what house is this? How far off are we from Southampton?

WIFE: Why, we are in the town. Th' king Canutus lies here now, and my son is here, and all our neighbors will be here today at the bridal for alms. *[Enter Edricus.]*

EDRICUS: Whoso desires to mount a lofty pitch
must bear himself against the stubborn wind
and shun base common popularity. ...

STITCH: Who is this?

WIFE: Oh 'tis my son. Make ye handsome, tie your garters for shame, wipe your shoes, mend your shirt-band.

EDRICK: Oh let me go to him first. God save ye, son.

EDRICUS: A pox upon him, 'tis the knave my father.
Good fellow, hast thou any suit to us?

Deliver up thy supplication.

EDRICK: Oh sir, ye know me well enough:
I am goodman Edrick, your father.

EDRICUS: My father, grout-head? Sir knave, I say you lie, ...
you whoreson cuckold, you base vagabond,
you slave, you mongrel peasant, dolt and fool,
can'st thou not know a duke from common men?

WIFE: By my troth, I learned him all these names to call his father
when he was a child, and see if he can forget them yet.
Oh he is a wise man, for in faith my husband is none
of his father, for indeed a soldier begot him of me
as I went once to a fair. But son, know ye me?

EDRICUS: Thee, old hag, witch, quean, slut, drab, whore and thief:

how should I know thee, black Egyptian? ...

WIFE: This is his old tricks, husband. Come, come, son:

I am sure ye know me.

EDRICUS: Aye, if not too well.
Wherefore comes yon sheep-biter? You, sir knave,
you are my brother, are ye not I pray?

STITCH: No sir, and it like ye.

EDRICUS: It likes me very well. What is your name?
Wherefore came ye hither?

WIFE: His name is Stitch, my son, we came with him
to help him to your service. ...

EDRICUS: You answer for him, gossip -- wants he tongue?

STITCH: No sir, I have tongue enough if that be good.

[He shows his tongue.]

EDRICUS: What can ye do?

STITCH: Anything, dress a horse, scour a chamber pot, go to plow, thrash, dick and indeed what not.

EDRICUS: Canst make clean shoes?

STITCH: Who, I? It is part of my occupation; you win my heart. I am a cobbler for need, I can piece a shoe as well as the best. Wipe a shoe? Look you here else -- give me your foot.

EDRICUS: Stay, not so hasty. ...
We that by sly devices mean to mount
and creep into opinion by deceit
must not of all things have a scholar know
our practices; we must suppress good wits
and keep them under; we must favor fools
and with promotions win their shallow pates.
A ready wit would quickly wind us out

and pry into our secret treacheries
and wade as deep in policy as we.

But such loose-brained windy-headed slaves; ...
such block-heads, dolts, fools, dunces, idiots,
such logger-headed rogues are best for us;
for we may work their wills to what we will
and win their hearts with gold to anything.
Come hither, Stitch. This villain and quean
that brought thee hither claim an interest
in my nobility, whenas God knows
my noble father died long since in wars,
being Duke of Mercia then as I am now.

Therefore -- but first to cut off long delays, ...
I entertain thee for my chamberlain;
and as thou shalt prove secret, trusty, true,
I will reward thee with some higher place.

But first, to try thee, fetch the constable.
Yet stay awhile. They would suspect the truth.

I'll have thee, when thou seest me gone away,
beat these two beggars hence and teach them how
they shall hereafter choose a meaner son.
Wilt thou be trusty, wilt thou cudgel them?

STITCH: Never take care for that; I'll beat them, they ...

were never better beaten since they were born.

EDRICUS: Aye, do so, Stitch, I prithee beat them well,
hark ye, and see them whipped out of the town,
and if they speak or prattle, curse or rave,
for every word give them ten blows, sweet slave.

EDRICK: Oh son, son, stay!

STITCH: Son, son, with a pestilence. You are much like to be his father and you his mother. You brought me hither --

EDRICK: Aye.

STITCH: -- and I must beat you hence, and if you desire ...
to know why, you must hereafter learn to find
a meaner man for your son than my lord is.
[He beats them about the stage.]

WIFE: He is my son. Oh! Oh! Oh good Stitch, hold thy hand!. *[Exeunt.]*

Scene II.3

[Enter Canutus, Archbishop, Edricus, Uskataulf, Swetho.]

CANUTUS: Then are they gone, 'tis certain they are fled?

Turkillus and Leofric: who would have thought it?
Did I not use them well, gave them good words,
rewarded their endeavors, and besides
graced them as much as any person here?

EDRICUS: You used them but too well, and let me say
your lenity did cause them run away.

CANUTUS: Have we not pledges of their loyalty?

EDRICUS: Ye have, my lord.

CANUTUS: ~~~ Their eldest sons, I think? ...

EDRICUS: True, but they know you are too merciful.

CANUTUS: They are deceived, for since they have disturbed
the settled solace of our marriage day
and daunted our determined merriments
with causeless flight, to plague their fathers' fact,
I'll lay the treason on their children's back
and make their guiltless shoulders bear the burthen.
Fetch me the pledges, Swetho, and with them
some bloody varlet from the Danish host,
and let him bring an axe, a block and knife ...
along with him, but do it quickly, Swetho,
and come again as fast.

EDRICUS: What doth your grace intend to do with them?

CANUTUS: I'll cut their hands and noses off.

EDRICUS: Your judgment doth not far enough extend
unto the height of runaways' desert.
Death is too light a punishment for traitors,
and loss of hands and nose is less than death.

USKATAULF: If an honest man had said so, I would
have liked it never the worse. ...

CANUTUS: This punishment is worse than loss of life,
for it is a stinging corsive to their souls
as often as they do behold themselves
lopped and bereft of those two ornaments
which necessary use doth daily crave.
Again, it giveth others daily cause
to think how traitors should be handled,
whereas the memory of present death
is quickly buried in oblivion,

doing no good but whilst it is in doing. ...

A traitor may be likened to a tree,

which being shred and topped when it is green,

doth for one twig which from the same was cut

yield twenty arms, yea twenty arms for one,

but being hacked and mangled with an axe,

the root dies and piecemeal rots away.

Even so with traitors. Cut me off their heads,

still more out of the self-same stock will sprout,

but plague them with the loss of needful members

as eyes, nose, hands, ears, feet or any such; ...

oh these are cutting cards unto their souls,

earmark to know a traitorous villain by,

even as a brand is to descry a thief.

These desperate persons for example's sake,

these ruffians, these all-daring lusty bloods,

these court appendixes, these madcap lads,

these nothing-fearing hotspurs that attend

our royal court -- tell them of hanging cheer,

they'll say it is a trick or two above ground;

tell them of quartering or the heading axe, ...

they'll swear beheading is a gallant death,
and he is a dastard that doth fear to die;
but say to them, you shall be branded
or your hands cut off, or your nostrils slit;
then shallow fear makes their quivering tongues
to speak abruptly -- 'rather let us die
than we should suffer this vild ignominy'.
A valiant heart esteemeth light of death,
but honorable minds are jealous of
honorable names, then to be marked, ...
which robs them of their honors, likewise robs
their hearts of joy; and like to irksome owls,
they will be bashful to be seen abroad.

USKATAULF: Alas, poor souls, it was against their wills
that their hard-hearted fathers broke the league.

EDRICUS: Alas, poor souls, it is against their wills
that they must lose their noses and their hands.
[Enter Swetho, the two pledges, and Stitch with an axe.]

CANUTUS: Come on, gentlemen, 'cause I have found
your fathers trusty as they promised
unto my father and to me; ...
therefore I mean to make you worthy men
such as the world shall afterward report
did suffer torments for their country's good.
Come on, I say, prepare your visages
to bear the tokens of eternity; prepare
your noses, bid your hands adieu,
because your sires have proved themselves so true.

1 PLEDGE: Rather than this, oh kill us presently;
these being gone, we do abhor our lives,
and having these we loathe to live accursed, ...
accompted traitors to our native soil.
Suffer us first to try our stripling force
with any giant of your Cyclops' size,
and let our arms fight once before our deaths
to wreak their malice on their masters' foes,
so let us perish like to gentlemen,
like to ourselves, and like to Englishmen.

CANUTUS: Look how cold water cast on burning coals
doth make the fire more fervently to flame;
even so your tears doth add unto my rage ...

and makes it hotter when it 'gins to cool.
'Tis not my pleasure you should suffer death,
'cause I believe 'twould ease your fathers' griefs;
'tis not my pleasure you should try your powers
so I should give you honors undeserved
and you perchance might so redeem yourselves;
but you shall see our judgments straight performed.
Do execution on them presently!
I'll teach your fathers if they do not know
what 'tis to violate a lawful oath. ...
I'll teach them what it is to play with kings,
presuming on their mercy: come I say,
what trifle ye? Delay no more the time,
for you must suffer for your fathers' crime.

2 PLEDGE: What sir, must you cut off my hands?

STITCH: Aye, and your noses too, 'twere pity in faith to mar two such faces. Boys, will you change beards with me?

1 PLEDGE: You shall not touch my nose with those base hands:
by heaven, I'll sooner cut it off myself!

STITCH: You will think a worse pair than these a good ...

pair ere night. How they'll look when their noses be off!
Everyone will take them for Frenchmen.

CANUTUS: Dispatch, I say, I must not stay so long:

the more you delay the time, the worse you speed.

1 PLEDGE: Give me the axe, I'll quickly execute
this direful judgment on my guiltless hands.

STITCH: With all my heart, you save me a labor.

CANUTUS: Stay, unadvised villain, hold thy hand,

or I will hack thee piecemeal with thy axe.

Why, art thou mad, to give thy enemy ...

an instrument to kill thyself and me?

Cut off his hands first, then deliver it him. *[He cuts off one hand.]*

So, cut off th'other. *[He cuts off the other hand.]*

Now sir, fight your fill.

1 PLEDGE: Let these my stumps crave vengeance at thy hands,

thou judge of judges and thou king of kings!

CANUTUS: Cut off his nose, then let him pray again:

perchance his praying mitigates his pain. *[He cuts off his nose.]*

1 PLEDGE: Pour thy vengeance on this bloody Dane,

and let him die some unheard monstrous death! ...

CANUTUS: Make quick dispatch to execute the other.

I am sure you will not now be pardoned?

2 PLEDGE: Not I, thou murthering stony-hearted Dane.
I am resolved to suffer this and more
to do my father or my country good;
they gave me life; for them I'll shed my blood.
[He cuts off his hands and nose.]

1 PLEDGE: Now thou hast spit thy venom, bloody king,
we do return defiance in thy face.

CANUTUS: Sirs, temper well your tongues and be advised
if not, I'll cut them shorter by an inch. ...
Remember that you both have lost your hands
because your father did abuse their tongues
in perjury; go quickly away
and tell your traitorous fathers what I say.

2 PLEDGE: We go but to thy cost, proud Danish Canute,
throughout this isle thy tyranny to bruit.

1 PLEDGE: We go thy cruel butchery to ring.
Oh England, never trust a foreign king. *[Exit pledges.]*

EDRICUS: Ha, ha, ha.

CANUTUS: ~~~ Why laughest thou, Edricus? ...

EDRICUS: I cannot choose, to see the villains rave.

STITCH: And I must needs laugh to bear my master company.
[Enter a messenger running.]

CANUTUS: What news with thee?

MESSENGER: Renowned Canutus, thy forces in the north,
which thou did'st send 'gainst Edmund Ironside,
are clean dispersed and piecemeal overthrown
by him, as these letters signify.
[Canutus reads and then sayeth]

CANUTUS: 'Tis wonderful, what, twenty thousand slain
of common soldiers? This unwelcome news
nips like a hoary frost our springing hopes ...

and makes my fearful soldiers hang their heads.

Come hither, Edricus, void the company

that you and I may talk in secrecy. *[Exit omnes.]*

Ah Edricus, what had I best to do

to raze out this dishonorable blot

out of the brass-leaved book of living fame?

Shall it be said hereafter when report

shall celebrate my noble father's acts

that Canutus did lose what noble Sveynus got?

Shall it be said that Edmund Ironside, ...

unfriended, poor, forsaken, desolate,

did overthrow the power of mighty Canutus,

whose wealth was great, friends more, but forces most?

Never since Edmund was of force to bear

a massy helmet and a curtle-axe

could I return a victor from the field

unless, as I remember, thou betrayedst

the gallant stripling once into our hands.

Then had not valor hewed him through our troops,

that day had made an end of all our griefs; ...

but now, what now? Oh tell me if thou knowest
how shall I extribute my stock and name
that after-age may not report my shame?

EDRICUS: Despair not, noble king, time comes in time.
Know ye not 'tis a deed of policy
in fickle Chance to cross your mightiness,
for else in time you might dismount the queen
and throw her headlong from her rolling stone
and take her whirling wheel into your hand.

I tell your grace, Chance ever envies wise men ...
and favors fools, promoting them aloft.
But as for this flea-spot of dishonor,
the greatest monarchs have endured more,
even blinking Philip's son, and many more
whose repetition were needless to recite.

CANUTUS: I prithee flatter still, on, on, what more?

Speak we of Fortune, honest sycophant?

Chance favoreth not a fool in favoring thee;
thy flattery is gracious in her eye.
Come hither, Edricus. Oh strange miracle: ...

see you not in the heavens prodigious signs?
Look how the sun looks pale, the moon shines red,
the stars appear in the perturbed heaven
like little comets, and not twelve o'clock.

What is the cause then, that the stars are seen?

EDRICUS: I see them well, my lord, yet know no cause,
unless it shows the fall of Ironside.

CANUTUS: Surely it doth. Look now, they are all gone.
'Tis night, 'tis dark, beware ye stumble not;
lend me your hand, but first go fetch a torch *[Exit Edricus.]* ...
to light me to my tent -- make haste I pray.
He's gone to fetch a torch to light the day! *[Enter Edricus.]*

EDRICUS: My lord, the misty vapors were so thick they almost quenched the torch.

CANUTUS: True as all the rest. I say thy wit is thick.
Gross flattery, all-soothing sycophant,
doth blind thy eyes and will not let thee see
that others see thou art a flatterer.
Amend, amend thy life; learn to speak truth.

For shame do not, in thy declining age -- ...
Children may see thy lies, they are so plain.

Oh whilst ye live, from flattery refrain.

EDRICUS: It stands not with my zeal and plighted faith
otherwise to say than as your highness saith:
your grace is able to give all their due
to make truth lie and likewise make lies true.

CANUTUS: I would it lay in me to make thee true,
but who can change the Ethiopian's hue? *[Exeunt.]*

ACT III

Scene III.1

[Enter at one door the Archbishop of Canterbury,
at the other the Archbishop of York.]

CANTERBURY: Why bends not the presumptuous knee of York
when Canterbury speaks? Cannot the curse
of God and me, the metropolitan
under the Pope of all Dominions
within this realm of England, cause thee fear,
proud, irreligious prelate? Know my power
stretcheth beyond thy compass even as much
as Rome doth mine. Then quiver when I curse,
and like a child indeed prostrate thyself
before my feet, that thy humility ...
may move me to absolve thy former sins
and set thee free from hell's damnation.

YORK: Traitor to God and to thy lawful king,
where thou dost bless I curse, where curse I bless.
As thou art bishop, my commission
stretcheth as far as thine, and let me say
unless thou leave thy contumelious threats --
further than mine? No, Canterbury, no,
I humble me to God and not to thee.

A traitor, a betrayer of his king, ...
a rebel, a profane priest, a Pharisee,
a parasite, an enemy to peace,
a foe to truth and to religion:
I say I will not bend myself to him,
and such a one art thou, and therefore hear,
unless repentance bend thy stubborn heart,
I here pronounce the curse of God and man
upon thy soul, and so farewell and mend. *[York offers to depart.]*

CANTERBURY: Stay, York, and hear me speak. Thy puffy words,
thy windy threats, thy railing curses, light ...
upon thy stubborn neck unless with speed

thou dost forsake the part of Ironside
and cleave unto Canutus; and more, submit thyself
to me thy head, and to our mother church.
Reply not, bishop, for I seal thy lips
with my irrevocable bitter curse
if one untoward word slip from thy tongue.

YORK: So heapest thou coal of fire upon thy head
and blessest me with cursing, impious priest.

Oh let me die whenas I leave my king, ...
a true-born prince, for any foreigner.

CANTERBURY: Oh I could eat thee. Now my crozier staff
longs to be pelting that old hoary pate.
My hands do quake with rage.

YORK: You are a champion for the devil and Canutus;
I fly not from thy curses but thy strokes. *[Exit York.]*

CANTERBURY: I'll follow thee with curses and with clubs.

[Exit Canterbury.]

Scene III.2

[Enter Canutus, Southampton, Edricus, Uskataulf, Swetho,
herald-at-arms and soldiers.]

CANUTUS: Go to yon city which we mean to sack:
new Troy, the state of Edmund Ironside;
command a parley at the city gates;
bid them choose whether they will let us in
or else withstand the utmost of our wrath
and be consumed to ashes and to coals
with flaming fire, which whilom did destroy
their mother city, quondam called Troy.
[The herald departeth from the king to the walls sounding
his trumpet. The bailiffs appear above.]

HERALD: Canutus, king of England, prince of Danes,
greets you by me, his trusty messenger, ...

commanding you to serve him as your lord,

bidding you wait on him as on your king,

and you shall be entreated lovingly;

if not, he is prepared with fire and sword

to raze your city. Thus he sends you word.

1 BAILIFF: Go tell your master thus we answer him:

his ships that proudly ride upon the Thames

shall anchor on the ground where he abides,

borne by the bloodshed of our carcasses,

and we compelled by thirst to suck the stream ...

of this fair river dry, so that his men

may dry-shod march over the floating deeps

ere we will let him enter in these gates

or ope our lips to call him sovereign.

Tell him we are resolved to keep him back;

tell him we are no traitors, but are sworn

to be King Edmund's liege-men while we live,

and if he stay, that shall he soon perceive.

HERALD: Advise you, bailiffs, what is best to do;

incur not danger with security. ...
Canutus is your king, then him obey,
and to his gentle message say not nay.

BAILIFFS: We are resolved to put Canutus back.
He comes not here; his threats are spent in vain.

HERALD: I fear your wills will put your wits to pain
and you repent it when it is too late.

1 BAILIFF: You have your answers. Soldiers, guard the gate.
[Bailiffs depart; herald returneth.]

HERALD: Their answer, good my lord, is negative,
full of haughty courage and disdainful pride.
This little peace hath brought their stomachs up, ...

which makes them to disdain your princely mercy.

CANUTUS: And dare they thus refuse my proffered grace?
Set they so light by my commandment?

Assault the city, batter down the walls,
scale all the turrets, rush the gates asunder --
why slack ye, soldiers? Who is foremost man
to give a valiant onset on the town?
[Assail the walls. Enter a messenger.]

MESSENGER: Worthy commander of these warlike troops,
Edmund your foe is coming hitherward
with a choice company of armed men, ...
intending to surprise you suddenly.

CANUTUS: He is welcome, though I hope unto his cost.
We are beholding to his excellence
that he vouchsafe for safeguard of his town
to yield himself without compulsion.
We are as forward and as fit as he
to give his force an equal counterbuff,
though he suppose to take us unawares.
Now, noble lords, or never, show your might
to put his men to sword and him to flight. ...

SOUTHAMPTON: He that gives back, let him be slain
by his next fellow that doth second him.
If Englishmen at first begin to fly,
Southampton willingly for them will die.

USKATAULF: This day shall manifestly be known
how Danes have better hearts than Englishmen
and bodies answerable to the same,
else let them lose their everlasting fame.

EDRICUS: The day is yours before the fight begins,
great and renowned prince, fair England's king, ...
for emulation which doth sometime lose,
now doth assure you of the victory.
See you not how the English lords contend,
who should excel in feats of chivalry
and creep up farthest in your highness' grace?
On th' other side, behold brave-minded Danes,
scorning to o'er-match in feats of arms,
strive who should compass most by power or wit
to amplify your honorable fame.

The soldiers are not slothful in this stir ...
but ready, forward prompt and fit to fight,
expecting gladly that delightsome hour
when they shall grapple with their enemies.
Then in assurance of this happy day,
arm to the fight; it is in vain to stay.

CANUTUS: I do presume on this to win the field,
but all my striving is to get the crown. *[Sound drum within.]*
Soft, what churlish drum doth ring so rude a peal
within the hearing of our armed troops?
[Enter Edmund with soldiers.]
'Tis Edmund! Strike up drums, and trumpets sound! ...
I'll not delay my hopes with any parley.

[Alarum. They fight. Edmund drives Canutus off the stage.
The drum sounds afar off.]

Scene III.3

Enter Chorus, attired in black, saying:]

CHORUS: The fight is hot, but Canutus is o'ercome,
and Edmund hunts him out from place to place.
He flies to Worcester; Edmund follows him.

The way is long, and I am waxen faint.
I fain would have you understand the truth
and see the battles acted on the stage
but that their length will be too tedious;
then in dumb shows I will explain at large
their fights, their flights and Edmund's victory,
for as they strived to conquer and to kill, ...
even so we strive to purchase your good will.

[Alarums. Enter Canutus flying, Edmund following.
They fight. The two kings parley, sound a retreat and part.]
CHORUS: Canutus is beholding to the gracious sun,
who, grieved to see such heaps of carcasses
lie mangled and besmeared in their gore,

made haste and went to rest before his time
so that the kings for want of light agreed
to part until Aurora raise the lark,
and now 'tis morning and they join to fight.
[Alarum. Enter Canutus at one door and Edmund at the other.
They fight. Canutus gives back and flies. Enter the soldiers of Edmund
pursuing Canutus and his lords. Edricus takes a dead man's head
upon his sword's point, holding it up to Edmund's soldiers. They fly.

Enter Edmund again, cheering them up, and makes Canutus fly.]
CHORUS: Edricus, perceiving Canutus to have the worst,
and Edmund like to triumph in their fall, ...
out of the bowels of a traitorous heart,
brought forth this subtle dangerous stratagem.
Whilst the two battles dealt the dole of death
and Edmund in the forefront stoutly fought
with words encouraging his soldiers
and with rude strokes discouraging the Danes,
Edricus took up an English dead man's head,
and sticking it upon his bloody sword
unto the vanward of King Edmund's troops,

held his despiteful and most speedy course, ...
telling the soldiers Edmund Ironside
was slain, bidding the soldiers yield
or fly the field and trust unto their heels.
The soldiers in amaze began to fly;
then Edmund, hearing of this stratagem,
amongst the thickest of his enemies,
gave notice that he lived a conqueror.

His soldiers, taking heart, returned and fought.
His enemies, despairing, run away.

Edmund returns in triumph on the stage, ...
but Canutus returns in passion and in rage.
What after happens, with your patience,
the entering actors gives intelligence. *[Exit.]*

Scene III.4

[Enter Edmund Ironside with lords and soldiers.]

EDMUND: Praised be the eternal bulwark of this land,

the fortress of my crown, in Whom I trust,

that hath thus discomfited my foes

by His omnipotent all-conquering arm.

And worthy lords, triumphant warriors

whose valors echo through the mouth of fame

and writes you worthies in the book of life

maugre the envy of detraction,

we render hearty thanks to each of you

for fighting in our rights with such bold spirits. ...

Continue to be valiant, and if God

make us once happy in a peaceful reign,

I'll guerdon every soldier bounteously

that lifts a weapon to defend our right.

Let us not loiter opportunity,

but follow Danish Canute and force him fly.

On, march afore, sound trumpets, strike up drums,

let shrieking fifes tell Canute that Edmund comes!

[The soldiers shout and exeunt.]

Scene III.5

[Enter Canutus, Edricus, with other lords and soldiers.]

CANUTUS: A plague upon you all for arrant cowards!
Look how a dunghill cock, not rightly bred,
doth come into the pit with greater grace,
brustling his feathers, setting up his plumes,
clapping his wings and crowing louder out
than doth a cock of game that means to fight;
yet after when he feels the spurs to prick,
crakes like a craven and bewrays himself;
even so my big-boned Danes, addressed to fight
as thought they meant to scale the cope of heaven ...
and like the giants grapple with the gods,
at first encounter rush upon their foes
but straight retire -- retire? Nay, run away
as men distraught with lightning from above
or dastards feared with a sudden fray.

EDRICUS: Renowned sovereign, do not fret yourself.

Fortune in turning will exalt your state
and change the countenance of her cloudy brow.
Now you must hope for better still and better,
and Edmund must expect still worse and worse. ...

A low'ring morning proves a fairer day.
Fortune's ill-favored frown shows she will smile
on you and frown on Ironside.

CANUTUS: What tellst thou me of Fortune and her frowns,
of her sour visage and her rolling stone?

Thy tongue rolls headlong into flattery.
Now by these heavens above our wretched heads,
ye are but cowards, every one of you.
Edmund is blessed. Oh had I but his men,
I would not doubt to conquer all the world ...
in shorter time than Alexander did;
but all my Danes are Braggadocios
and I accursed to be the general
of such a flock of fearful runaways.

SOUTHAMPTON: Remember you have lost ten thousand men,
all English-born except a thousand Danes.
Your pensive looks will kill them that survive
if thus to choler you give liberty.

CANUTUS: It were no matter if they all were slain;
then they should never run away again. ...

USKATAULF: My noble lord, our countrymen are safe.
In all these broils English 'gainst English fight.

The Danes or none or very few are slain.

CANUTUS: *[Turns towards Uskataulf.]*
It was a sign ye fled and did not fight.
Is't not a dishonor unto you
to see a foreign nation fight for me,
whenas my home-bred countrymen do run,
leaving their king amongst his enemies?

EDRICUS: Give not such scope to humorous discontent: ...
we are all partners of your private griefs;
kings are the heads, and if the head but ache,
the little finger is distempered;
we grieve to see you grieved, which hurteth us
and yet avails not to assuage your grief.
You are the sun, my lord, we marigolds,
whenas you shine we spread ourselves abroad
and take our glory from your influence,
but when you hide your face or darken it
with th' least encounter of a cloudy look, ...
we close our eyes as partners of your woes,
drooping our heads as grass down-weighed with dew.
Then clear ye up, my lord, and cheer up us;
for now our valors are extinguished
and all our force lies drowned in brinish tears
as jewels in the bottom of the sea.
I do beseech your grace to hear me speak. *[Edricus talks to him.]*

SOUTHAMPTON: I do not like this humor in my son;
'twill quite discourage all his followers.

USKATAULF: He stops his ears to all persuasions; ...

his council cannot be admitted speech:
his father Sveyn was much more patient
and could as well brook loss as victory.

CANUTUS: These words proceed not from a shallow brain.

EDRICUS: Praise the event, my lord: the end is all.
In the meantime I'll go write to Ironside
craving forgiveness, and insinuate
his yielding favor. He is pitiful,
and I am rare in moving passion.
I know the prince will quickly credit me ...
and put affiance in my smooth pretense,
but whatsoe'er he doth or minds to do,
you shall be sure to have intelligence;
but, good my lord, leave me a little while
to private contemplation, for my head
swims full of plots and other stratagems

of great avail, and I must empty it.

CANUTUS: God prosper what thou dost intend.

EDRICUS: Pray to the devil: God is not my friend.

[Exeunt (Canutus). Manet Edricus.]

Stitch, what, Stitch, call in Stitch! *[Enter Stitch.] ...*

STITCH: Here's a stitching indeed, you have made Stitch have a stitch in his side with coming so hastily after dinner.

EDRICUS: Why, villain, darst thou eat meat in these troublesome times?

STITCH: Dare I eat meat? Aye, and eat Time, be he never so troublesome. My lord, were Mars himself
made of beef and brewis I durst in
this choleric stomach devour him quick.

EDRICUS: Sure, y'are a tall man.

STITCH: Aye sir, at the end of a fray and beginning of a feast.

EDRICUS: Well, fetch me paper and a cornegraph. ...

STITCH: A horn-grafter? What's that, sir?

EDRICUS: Sirrah, I mean an inkhorn.

STITCH: You mean well, sir. A blackhorn, you have dipped your pen in many a man's inkhorn besides your own. *[Exit Stitch.]*

EDRICUS: My state may be compared unto his
that ventures all his credit and his wealth
upon the fickle hazard of a die.
The crown I level at, I venture life,
the dearest jewel and of greatest price
that any mortal hath possession of. ...
My life is sweet, yet will I venture it
at all or nothing. Trust a mother-wit.
[Enter Stitch with paper and an inkhorn.]

STITCH: Here, sir. I would never have men that are unmarried

~~~ so unprovided as they should be
compelled to borrow horns of young men,
nor would I have young men to borrow inkhorns of
married men. Oh, it is perilous when their foreheads
proves blushing papers to bewray young buds.

EDRICUS: Sirrah, be gone, but be not far from hence.
I presently shall have occasion ...

to employ you in some serious business.

STITCH: I will be absent when you call, I warrant you.
[Exit Stitch. Edricus sits down, writeth and blotteth.]

EDRICUS: Nay, try thy wits, thou writest for a wager;
'tis not for gold but grace and for thy life,
a thing that would put spirit in a block
and be a whetstone to a blunter head.
With what exordion shall I win his heart?

How shall I tie his ears to my discourse?
~~~

A schoolboy hath a readier wit than I.

I never tried my barren sconce till now, ...
and now I see I am not Edricus,
but a most blockish and dull-pated hind,
graveled at such an easy enterprise.

What standest thou trifling and delaying time?
Fetch fire from heaven and mix it with thy ink,
gather Parnassus' dew and write with that,
pluck Cyllen's feathers and make pens with them,
borrow the Muses' aid and let them breathe
some dulcet and melodious harmony,
some never-heard-of words into thy pate. ...
[He writeth and blotteth.]
Ah, fool, how hard it is to write for life!
Had I now written for my mistress' love,
I could have filled my pen and raised my speech
unto the highest step of flattery.
Had I now written for another man,
to save his life or get him into grace,

why all the world might have given place to me
for sugared lines and phrases past compare.
Had I been now in favor with the king
and had endeavored to flatter him, ...
my pen would have distilled golden drops
and varied terms enchanting Cerberus.

But now I know not how or what to write.
To flatter were to aggravate my fault,
for anger would sift out my vild intent.
Plainly to write were to accuse myself
and be a witness 'gainst my guilty soul.
Yet write I will and in the plainest sort,
for that is cousin-german unto truth,
Truth needs no colors. Though I mean to lie, ...
my simple writing shall deceive his eye. *[He writeth and sayeth.]*
Aye, so. Oh rare-conceited piece of work,
how cunningly thou canst convert thy shape
into an angel when thou dost intend
to flatter the plain honest-meaning king. *[He folds it up.]*
Now for a swift wing-footed messenger

to fly in post that I might follow him.

It more behooves me to be circumspect

and with my life to trust none but myself.

Swifter than sure is no good messenger, ...

and now I think on't -- oh 'tis excellent --

I'll for this once deliver it myself,

but in disguisement of my man's attire,

so I may safely go and understand

how Edmund is addicted unto me

and how all matters now are managed.

Stitch! Stitch! *[Enter Stitch.]*

STITCH: Your will, sir?

EDRICUS: My will is that you will uncase, for I mean to change apparel.

STITCH: Why sir, you'll not turn wise-man, will you? ...

EDRICUS: Yes, fool, for this once. Come, I say, when?

STITCH: Marry, sir, when I see some boot coming roundly from you, for I promise you I will not change without boot.

EDRICUS: But I will, sirrah; come, dispatch.

STITCH: Well sir, since there is shift but I must change shifts,
~~~ I am contented.
By my troth, sir, methinks y'are a properer man by odds
in those that ye were in these. I would I could persuade
him to believe me, then it should be known by his
apparel what a fool I have made of him. Sir, shall we
change living and lordship and name and all? ...

EDRICUS: Aye, Stitch, for this once thou shalt be Lord Edricus
and I Stitch. Look you keep in till I come home, I advise you,
and behave yourself like a lord.

STITCH: I warrant you, good Stitch, I'll be lordly enough.
Farewell, honest Stitch; farewell, fool. *[Exit Stitch.]*

EDRICUS: Now am I Edricus and Edricus' man,
the secretary and the messenger,
~~~

all to effect with counterfeiting guile

experiments of matchless policy.

Well, this plain suit doth now contain more wit

than for so mean a piece of cloth is fit. *[Exit Edricus.]*

Scene III.6

[Enter Stitch in his lord's attire, with blue-coats after him.]

STITCH: Come on, ye blue-coated slaves, you that wear

satin doublets never but at good times, and

wear a blue coat but once in a year; come on,

I say, ye trencher-scraping cutters, ye cloak-bag

carriers, ye sword and buckler carriers,

ye rubbers of horse-heels, ye devourers

of fat oxen, ye swillers of March beer; come after

me, I say, take example after my virtue how

to mount. I proceeding from the loins of a

man very little better than a gentleman, am ...

now by my virtue and good education to be

your master, your upholders, the staff of your
lives and maintainer of your masterships.
Uncover, ye rogues! So. Cover! So. Sirrah,
take my cloak, bear you my rapier! So. I
am somewhat humorous, and it becomes me
well. Follow me, follow! How I can play
the lords part! Oh what a fool is my master
to change his nobility for my worship.

ROGER: 'Blood, sir, or Sir Stitch, you must go in; ...

here's a following! We must wait on you, must we?

STITCH: "Blood, sir, you must go in' -- oh hold me,
hold me, I am choleric. Why, ye shake-rag,
had ye never a lord under your girdle? Plain
Sir Stitch without welt or guard: why, how
now, you malapert knave, have ye forgot all good manners?

ROGER: Good manners be your speed.

STITCH: Why, this 'tis to keep familiar serving-man.

As I am a Lord, by my honor I will ...

revenge it with putting you out of my house.

You fellows, take example by his punishment.

Follow me just three foot behind, not above

or beneath, and Roger Rakehell, for your

sauciness, come you last. *[Exeunt.]*

ACT IV

Scene IV.I

[Enter Edmund Ironside, Alfric, Godwin, Aylward with Edricus, disguised.]

EDMUND: What wind doth cause your master write to us?

All is not well, I doubt. Give me the letter.

[The letter]

Prepare Perillus' bull to punish me

or some new never-heard-of torturing pain
to scourge me for my foul ingratitude.
Rumor did raise suspicion in my heart,
as it hath lately done within your breast
by some who envied my prosperity,
my love and zeal unto your majesty,
that you were doubtful of my spotless truth ...
and meant to cut me off by cutting short
my headless body with a bloody axe.
This on a sudden coming to my ear,
it pared my heart and struck me to the quick,
causing me flee the court to save my life
as sadly as the late-espoused man
grieves to depart from his new-married wife.
How many sighs I fetched at my depart,
how many times I turned to come again,
how oft I plained, how often I did weep, ...

were too too long to write or you to read.
But having now considered with myself
my over-light belief too credulous,

I come again like to a strayed sheep
tainted, God wot, with naught but ignorance.
Oh take me to your mercy, or if not so,
kill me yourself! Death is the end of woe.
[Finis letter.]

EDMUND: Hear ye, my lords, this humble supplication?

Your master is become an orator, ...
but tell him Edmund is not lunatic,
so like a woman to be won with words.

EDRICUS: This cottons *[not]* according to my mind.
The king is angry. See, he faceth me;
his color comes and goes. I hold my life
he knows me. Would I were well away.

EDMUND: Hark ye, my lords, what would you say
if yon plain fellow should be Edricus?

ALFRIC: I think not so, my lord..

EDMUND: ~~~ I'll quickly know. ...
Come hither, fellow. Tell thy master thus --
[He pulls the velvet patch off his face.]
what, Edricus, is't you? I thought no less.

You meant some good, no doubt. Tell me the truth:
what was the reason you came thus disguised?

EDRICUS: Now wit, or never, help. Poor naked truth
hath ta'en away suspicion of deceit.
I need no art; art cannot help me now.
Then plainly thus. Renowned sovereign,
I came thus plainly to your majesty
disguised in clown's attire to sound the truth -- ...
what opinion, if good or bad,
you had of me; and if I found it good,
I had determined to bewray myself;
if otherwise, I meant with secret speed
to leave my native country and to exile
myself from England, sailing into Spain,

whereas I meant in contemplation,
in pilgrimage and prayers for your grace
to end my life. *[Enter a messenger, running.]*

MESSENGER: Haste, haste, King Edmund, to relieve thy land, ...

which is oppressed by multitudes of Danes.
They swarm along thy coasts like little gnats
over a river in a summer's night,
or like to bees when they begin to flight:

so comes these Danes prepared fit to fight.
Their battle-main of threescore thousand men
with bristle-pointed spears which upright stand
shows like a new-shred grove of ashes tall
or else a wood of pines and cedars small.
Their flags and banners, yellow, blue and red, ...

resembles much the weeds in ripened corn.
Their drums and trumpets, with a dreadful sound
of clashing armor and fire-breathing steeds,

sounds like the fearful thunder sent from heaven,
mixed with Aeolus' boist'rous northern breath.
They prey upon thy subjects cruelly,
like hungry tigers upon silly kids,
sparing not ancient men for reverence,
nor women for *[their]* imbecility,
nor guiltless babes for their unspotted life, ...

nor holy men, their madness is so rife.

EDMUND: A sunshine day is quickly overcast.
A springing bud is killed with a blast.
I see my state is fickle and unsure;
there is nothing in this world can firmly dure.
Yet courage, lords, we were and are the same;
our hearts are sound, our bodies are not lame;
then let not fear dismay your warlike might.
God fights for us, God will defend the right.

Base Edricus, thou wert the fatal crow ...
that by thy horrid voice this news did show

thou cam'st to gain with cursed treachery
the surname of vild nickname -- 'Policy'.
Right did I think whenas the fox did preach,
he meant to get a goose within his reach;
right did I guess, when with thy oily speech,
thou did'st my pardon and my grace beseech,
some mischief was abroach. But God above
doth always at a pinch my patron prove,
and we have now learned, though to our bale, ...
not to believe each smooth-face forged tale.

EDRICUS: Now, my most gracious lord, as God shall help me,
my coming was only for this intent:
to unfold Canutus' coming and bewray
matters of secret to your majesty,
counsels of great avail, rare stratagems
plotted by Canutus, which now shall die with me
if you seem any whit suspicious.

EDMUND: I prithee hark, let me hear some of them.
[Edricus talketh with Edmund secretly. Alfric pulls him back.]

ALFRIC: Traitor, darst thou presume ...
to speak unto thy sovereign? Good my lord,
as God shall help me, you will be entrapped.

EDRICUS: Traitor? Remember this: malice hath a perfect memory.

EDMUND: Alfric, you are to blame: you do forget yourself.
Age makes ye dote, know I not what to do
without your telling? Go to, hold your peace.

AYLWARD: Alfric, your comb is cut, yet will I speak.
King, I am sworn to counsel thee aright;
and though I die, I will not hold my tongue.
Remember he hath often broke his faith ...
and fled away from you; remember too
he comes from Canutus, thy utter enemy;
remember he is a traitorous flatterer,
a villain, and a damned hypocrite.

EDMUND: Peace, Aylward, hold your tongue:

my youth in some things overruns your age;

'tis policy to grant him audience,

nay further, grace, may further, if he craves

perhaps the leading *[of]* our army too.

For thus I think it stands: he hath promised Canutus, ...

having the leading of our forces

to yield to him, seeming as though compelled,

having first given an onset on the foe

for color's sake. But we will over-match him,

for whilst the force of Canute, on policy

retires by Edric's drift, then we will take

the opportunity and rush with speed

upon his troops, who unprepared to fight

and trusting upon Edric's policy, ...

shall all come prey unto our soldiers.

How like you this?

ALFRIC: ~~~ It cannot hap amiss.

EDMUND: Come hither, Edricus. *[They whisper. Edmund saith]*

~~~~~~ I'faith, you lie. *[They whisper again.]*
Tut, tut, it cannot be. *[They whisper again.]*
If this be true, I pardon thee for all
and will reward thee with deserved grace.
I will not doubt it, faith, I think 'tis true
though it were not, in hope thou wilt amend.
Go, let us in and let all quarrels end, ...
for now I mean indeed to credit thee
by being captain-general of my army.

EDRICUS: Duty and thanks I give, 'tis all I have.
[Aside.] See what dissimulation brings to pass,
how quickly I can make the king an ass. *[Exeunt.]*

Scene IV.2

[Enter Emma, her two sons Alfred and Edward in each hand,
Gunthranus going before.]

EMMA: Sweet boys, born to be crossed before your time,
~~~~~~

oh let me kiss you ere you go away.
Cursed be the cause of your departing thus,
the persecution of these bloody Danes,
whose unrelenting eyes delight to see
the full conclusion of our tragedy.

ALFRED: Good mother, sorrow not though we depart:
we shall be welcome to our uncle Richard
and safer there than in this troubled isle,
which like the reeling sea is tossed with war. ...
Here we are ever in continual broils;
there in tranquility, in peace and rest;
here in the midst of unknown enemies;
there in the arms of true-approved friends;
here danger imminent doth compass us;
there friends and friendly counsel shall defend us;
therefore rejoice we are escaped the Danes,
whose greedy maws devours the Saxons' blood
like hungry lions, void of any good.

EMMA: Good boy, in whom thy father's feature lives, ...

though death hath seized him in his wasteful arms.
If I could moderate my grieved mind
without remembrance whatere now I was,
then should my grief diminish with my tears;
but memory, the afflicter of the soul,
bids me remember how I was a Queen,
how Ethelredus was my lawful lord,
how Normand's Duke was my renowned sire,
how England was my pleasure's paradise,
and how time was when time did wait on me. ...
All these are but bellows to the fire
to burn my heart, consumed afore with sighths.
Alfred, Ned, is a child: thou art of age
to take example by my misery
not to believe foul fortune's flattery.

EDWARD: Good mother, weep not; if ye do, I'll cry.

EMMA: Ah, my pretty heart,
hast thou a feeling of my passion?

Then I will weep the more to ease my heart;
I'll mourn for thee, for him, and for myself, ...
for England and for Edmund Ironside,
whose part God prosper, heaven defend the right.

GUNTHRANUS: Madam, your helpless tears are but a means
to draw more tears from us to drown our hearts.

EMMA: Why, man, I weep to ease and not to load.
I trow the more I shed, the less I have;
and as my tears waste, so my cares consume.
To dam my eyes were but to drown my heart
like Hecuba, the woeful Queen of Troy,
who having no avoidance for her grief, ...
ran mad for sorrow 'cause she could not weep;
but, good Gunthranus, to omit vain talk,
since I have heretofore approved thy faith,
I make a choice of thee amongst the rest
of many friends to guide my little boys
and to conduct them into Normandy.
Entreat my brother for to entreat them well;

they are his nephews and his sister's joy.
If anything amiss should light on them,
the same on me should be redoubled. ...

GUNTHRANUS: Madam, even by the living God I vow
I will attend and watch them as my soul,
knowing Duke Richard will accompt of them
as nigh of blood unto his royal self.

EMMA: Then farewell, boys, the comfort of my life.
[They offer to depart.]
Yet come again, ye shall not so depart.
If that we die, we'll choose to die together:

dying or living, we will be together.
Fond woman, bless them and then let them go;
that is the safest way to keep them safe: ...
then farewell again. God bless you both. *[They offer to depart.]*
But soft awhile, I have not said my mind.
First let me wash your face in mother's tears,
then sob out sighths to overload the earth

and cast a misty fog upon the air, *[She embraceth them.]*
that no inquiring foe may find you out.
Oh let your sanctuary be my lap,
[She sits down, setting Edward on her knee and Alfred on her arm]
your refuge, your sepulchers and your graves.

A cradle fits you better than a ship.

GUNTHRANUS: See, see Dame Nature's operation, ...
what force it breeds within a mother's mind.

None feels a mother's sorrow but a mother.
This Queen hath not her peer upon the earth
for wisdom, suffering, and for patience,
for cloaking sorrow and dissembling grief
and bearing all things with a constant mind;
yet can she not conceal affection so,
but that it breaketh forth like hidden fire. *[Emma riseth.]*

EMMA: Fie, fie, hide Nature's fond indulgency.
Depart, sweet boys. God keep you in your way. *[They offer to depart.]*

Come hither, Alfred. Ned, I prithee, stay. ...

I will go with you to the foaming haven

and take my farewell of my darlings there. *[Exeunt omnes.]*

Scene IV.3

[Enter Canutus with a letter in his hand, with him Uskataulf,

Swetho, Southampton, Archbishop of Canterbury, Egina, with soldiers.]

CANUTUS: Courage, brave captains, conquest is at hand.

This letter comes from trusty Edricus

and certifies me that he is in grace

with Edmund Ironside, and how he leads

the vantguard of the prince's army.

Now he assures me of the victory

without the loss of many soldiers,

for he will disappoint the warlike youth

and flee to us, leaving him desolate;

wherefore, brave soldiers, put forth all your might ...

to quail their stomachs at the first approach.
He that doth take the prince in fight or flight
shall have his ransom and *[be]* dubbed a knight.

1 SOLDIER: I'll venture hard to make Joan my wife a lady.

2 SOLDIER: The king shall 'scape my fingers narrowly.

1 SOLDIER: Mass, if I had steel sides as he hath Ironsides,
I would gore him then, that I would.

4 SOLDIER: What if miss the king, I'll have a duke,
an earl, a lord, a knight or gentleman.

SOUTHAMPTON: Or nobody, and then you'll hit it. ...
Tell not your chickens, sirs, ere they be hatched,
perchance the eggs are rotten in the nest;
then all your brooding hopes is cast away,
and you remain as rich as new-shorn sheep.
I never loved to gain by treachery,
for that again was lost by treachery.

I do remember hardy Hannibal

did use these words at won Tarentum's loss:

Eadem arte qua prius coepimus

Tarentum omisumus ...

Fraud won Tarentum, fraud Tarentum lost,

so Hannibal reaps his labor for his cost.

[The drums sound afar off.]

CANUTUS: So, Edmund, so thou comst unto thy cost.

Thy roaring drum presageth thy mishap,

ringing thy soul's knell with a hollow voice.

As thine doth mourn, so let our drum rejoice.

[The drums sound. Enter Edmund with Edricus, other

lords and soldiers. They fight, Canutus gives et exeunt.]

Scene IV.4

[Enter at one door Canutus and at th' other Edricus.]

CANUTUS: Edricus!

EDRICUS: My lord! Hie, cheer your flying troops
and bid them stay a while for victory.
Whenas you see me lead my men aloof,
then take occasion and assail the prince;
and I'll be absent when he needs me most
and present for your best avail. Make haste.

CANUTUS: How much I love thee, Edricus, heavens do know,
and I with gifts one day will manifest. *[Exit Canute.]*

EDRICUS: So, Edric, now thy plotform is afoot, ...

and one shall die; it skills no matter which.
If Edmund, Canute shall quickly follow him;
If Canute, then Edmund shall not stay behind.
Whilst they with eager blows assail each other,
I here remain a neuter, free from fear,
not taking part with Canute, not Ironside,
before I see who gets the victory.
Yet had I rather have Canutus conquer

and privily will aid him with supplies
rather than Edmund should escape the field. ...

[Alarm. Enter Edmund chasing off Canutus. Edricus backs Canutus.
Edmund flies. Exeunt and return, Canutus with Edricus.]

CANUTUS: Thanks, worthy Edric, for this victory.
This day had made an end of me and mine,
hadst thou not backed us with thy warlike troops.

Know ye Edmund be escaped or no?

EDRICUS: Edmund is gone, and I must after him.
To stay long here would breed suspicion.
Then mighty Canute, live long a conqueror;
and when thou hast the crown, remember me.

CANUTUS: If I forget thee, God forget my suit
when like a sinner I do humbly pray. ...
Forget thee, Edric? God above doth see
how good a heart I ever bore to thee.

EDRICUS: Then, noble Canutus, I pawn a soldier's faith.

By my best blood and by my after-hopes,

I will remain to thee and to thy heirs

as true, as false to Edmund Ironside.

Let us not linger here. Muster your men

and make them ready for a new assault.

I will to Edmund and excuse myself,

and how I served him now I'll serve him then. *[Exeunt.]*

ACT V

Scene V.I

[Enter Edmund Ironside, Alfric, Ulfkettle, Godwin, others.]

EDMUND: Vild Edricus, all this proceeds from him;

I saved his life, and he doth thirst for mine.

Ungrateful wretch, hellish incarnate devil!

For sure no man was ever so unkind

unto his king and loving countrymen.
Disloyal and unfaithful sycophant,
it grieves my vexed soul to think on thee.

ALFRIC: Let it not grieve you, rather joy to think
you are escaped from the hands of him
that sought like Judas to betray his lord ...

into the hands of bloodthirsty Danes.

ULFKETTLE: Surely, my lord, you are highly favored
of God, who sees each human action,
that he hath given you warning with small loss
of the contagious mind of Edricus.
[Enter Edricus with his hand in a scarf, halting, with him Stitch.]

STITCH: Master, I would not wish you halt.

EDRICUS: Why so?

STITCH: Marry, sir, you know Alfric is a cripple and the proverb is 'tis ill halting before a cripple.

He'll perceive it. ...

EDRICUS: Had he as many *[eyes]* as Juno's bird,
or could pierce millstones with his searching sight,
he (by his leave) should not my halting find.
I halt not in the thigh but in the mind.

-- All hail unto my gracious sovereign!

STITCH: Master, you'll bewray yourself, do you say
'all hail' and yet bear your arm in a scarf? That's hale indeed.

EDRICUS: All hail unto my gracious sovereign!

EDMUND: Judas, thy next part is to kiss my cheek
and then commit me unto Caiaphas. ...

EDRICUS: I understand not what your highness means.

EDMUND: Oh heavens, oh impudent, ungodly wretch!

EDRICUS: I hope your grace doth not exclaim on me.

EDMUND: On thee? Hence, graceless wretch, grace me no more.
Is there none here that will lay hold on him?
His sight, his breath, his fell infectious tongue
is venomer than is the Basilisk's.

EDRICUS: Is this a guerdon for my scars and hurts,
for all my bruises and my broken joints?
Is this a hire for my hardiness ...

and valiant onset on the enemies?
Are these my wages which I won with blood,
blood of myself and proudest Dane that fought?
Doth Edmund thus reward his followers
that pawn their lives for him and in his cause?
Then bootless have I skirmished so long
and sent so many Danes unto their graves;
in vain have I lift up my wasting arm

and brandished my falchion o'er thy foes;
in vain this curtle-axe was reared aloft, ...
which made a lane throughout thy foemen's troops;
in vain my lance did overthrow and spoil;
in vain I live, to be requited thus.

STITCH: In vain -- what a vain vein my master is in!

EDMUND: Did'st thou not fly, vild traitor, to my foe?

EDRICUS: Who, I?

EDMUND: Even thou.

EDRICUS: Thus forward friends are quitted with suspect;
thus envy blasts the well-deserving wight;
thus the unskillful blames the warrior; ...
thus, thus, detraction hinders virtuous course.
Fled I, my lord? Canutus can report
'twas he that should have fled had succor come.
Fled I, my lord? Your eyes were witnesses

how far my heart was free from dastard flight;
but this it is to be a man-at-arms
when his desert is recompensed with hate
and resolution wronged with ignorance.
For shame, my lords, spurn not against the truth;
thirst not to drink the blood of innocents. ...

EDMUND: Why, Edricus, can'st thou deny thy flight?

EDRICUS: No, gracious lord, I must confess I fled,
forced from Canutus, not to him, for aid;
and that 'tis true, I by your grace's leave
will prove on him that dares affirm a no.

EDMUND: I saw thee flee myself with these my eyes.

ULFKETTLE: And I, my lord, am witness to the same.

GODWIN: And I, my lord, will prove it, by your favor.

EDRICUS: I would the king would give me leave to speak.

STITCH: And you will prove them blind, I hold my life. ...

EDMUND: I give thee leave: speak for thyself and spare not.

EDRICUS: Seeing your grace so forward to the fight,
viewing the Dane to march so bravely on,
pricked forth with shame, I as the foremost man
(not suffering the Dane to set on us
or to approach your grace without a blow)
stepped forth intending to encounter them
and to assail the rearward with my band
till you upon the forefront held them play;
but see how good intents are ever thwarted. ...
Ere I could get the wind to compass them,
your drums' retreat did cause your forces flee;
yet fled not I a foot until such time
as quite bereft of hope I was compelled.
Witness this arm, this serviceable arm,
that in despite of death did save my life:
witness these scars, which if your grace will see,

they'll tell my foes unto their face they lie.

STITCH: Oh horrible scars, scars like blazing stars,
well counterfeited, master. ...

EDMUND: If this be true, I was too credulous.

EDRICUS: If it be true, my lord? Assure yourself
your grace was misinformed if otherwise,
and that my man can verify.

STITCH: Take heed what ye say, master: I can verify
nothing. Marry, I can verify anything. If you'll say so,
I'll swear to it, that 'tis false, I mean.

EDMUND: Then, Edricus, 'twas I that wronged thee
and I that will in all things make amends.

Bury unkindness in oblivion ...
and ne'er remember our suspicion.

EDRICUS: 'Twas not your highness but some fawning mate
that put mistrust into your grace's head,
hoping by my downfall to raise himself;
but heavens defend the wronged innocent.

EDMUND: Let this suffice, thou hast confirmed our love,
and Edricus, we mind to honor thee
with public notice of thy loyalty.

EDRICUS: See, see, what wit and will can bring about.
Canutus pays me for my villainy, ...

and Edmund loves me for my treachery.

STITCH: Give a man luck and cast him over the gallows. *[Exeunt omnes.]*

Scene V.II

[Enter Canutus reading of letter. With him Southampton, Archbishop
of Canterbury, Egina, Uskataulf and Swetho with soldiers.]

CANUTUS: My lord, my heart is firmly bound to you,
and I am pressed to do you any service;
but Edmund is grown strange to me of late,
and I am not familiar with his thoughts.
When I have once regained opinion,
I will not fail to be your faithful agent;
in meantime make ye strong to hold him play,
for he is coming with a mighty power.

By'r lady, this goes hard, these news are naught.
Is Edmund now grown wary? Then I doubt ...
I ne'er shall see the day I long have sought;
but I must bear a semblance of good news,
lest these perceive our hopes to falter;
and that would clean discourage all their hearts,
for all presume on Edric's policy.

SOUTHAMPTON: Son, is't good news?

CANUTUS: ~~~ My lord, exceeding good.

EGINA: Give me the letter.

CANUTUS: ~~~ Not for all the world.
I dare not trust myself with reading it ...

lest I, o'er-cloyed with joy, should play the blab.
Let this suffice: I am now confident
upon sure-grounded confirmations
that Edmund is my own. He writes to me
that he is coming with a mighty host,
but *[saith he]* be not you discomfited,
for were they millions, half should fight for you
and turn their weapons upon Ironside.

SOUTHAMPTON: 'Tis strange the prince should be so credulous.
[The drum sounds far off.]

CANUTUS: Yon drum doth tell us Edmund Ironside, ...
unwitting of his overthrow at hand,
comes gallantly attended on by troops

of horse and footmen to his funeral.

Oh that thou knewst thy dying day so nigh,

That thou mightest make thee fit to go to God.

In faith it grieves *[me]* at the very heart

to see him come so unprepared for death.

[Enter Edmund, Emma, Archbishop of York, Edricus, Alfric,

Godwin, Aylward, Ulfkettle, Leofric and Turkillus.]

EDMUND: Behold where Canute comes marching bravely on.

Methinks yon sight would make a sick man sound. ...

[They march along the stage, one after another.]

Canutus!

CANUTUS: Edmund!

EDMUND: The ground thou standst upon is Ironside's.

CANUTUS: The ground I stand on, Edmund, is mine own,

fallen to me not successively indeed,

but by forfeiture as copyhold,

rent-run and wanting reparations,
falls to the lord. Even so thy father's land,
for want of tribute-paying long since due,
I seize upon as lord to thee and that.

EDMUND: But for thou shalt perceive that Edmund can ...
temper the unruly stomach of his rage
and moderate his lusty youthful blood,
which springs through every vein to fly at thee,
not half these words without controlling strokes
should from thy lips have vomited their spleen.
Oh, how my heart beats! Much ado I have
to make it quiet till I answer thee.

Art thou the lord of me and of my land?
Uncivil Canutus, knowest thou to whom thou speakest?

This heart scorns all subjection, ...
and this head looks o'er the world; these feet
were made to tread o'er kings, Canutus, over thee.
Nay, storm not, Canutus. Learn how to mix thy speech

with more beseeming terms, and govern thou
thy surly terms with reason, not with rage.
I say I am a king: so art not thou;
therefore I am thy better. I say more --
I have a kingdom: this I stand upon
is mine. Thou standst upon my ground.

I say this land is mine, Canutus, it is mine. ...

CANUTUS: By usurpation thine, by conquest mine.
Who knows not conquest is inheritage?

EDMUND: So rape and theft is true possession
if malefactors go unpunished.

CANUTUS: It seems indeed possession is of force,
for by possession you withhold my crown.

EDMUND: Nay, you and Sveyn your gripple-minded dad,
by treason, not by force of valiant arms,
against all justice, law and equity,

did first intrude yourselves and then extrude ...

our woeful subjects from their native home,

and that I come to prove, and therefore thus -- *[He draweth.]*

CANUTUS: Then to confute thy forged argument,

thus argue I; my sword is reason's proof. *[He draweth.]*

EDMUND: That is, of force to put back reason's proof,

which proves you, like your sword, unreasonable.

[They train their soldiers (about) the stage. Edricus speaketh.]

EDRICUS: Edmund is strong, Canutus is weak in *[part]* ,

Edmund gracious in the people's eyes;

Canutus is not so, what had I best to do?

Fain would I have Canutus win, and he is weak; ...

I would have Edmund lose, and he is strong.

Oh gracious stars, inspire my nimble wit

with some device, and as I ever have,

I will employ it to some villainy.

Soft, let me see -- oh, it is excellent!

Fountain of wit, the spring of policy,

the flower of treason and of villainy.

How much undecent is it that this cap,

this homely cape should overload this crow

when thou deservest a crown of beaten gold. ...

But to the matter. So it needs must fadge,

for can I bring them to a single fight,

whosoever hath the better, yet shall I

be gracious in his eye, as who should say

I was the causer of his victory.

Besides, I shall insinuate myself

into the bosom of opinion

and be esteemed my country's buckler.

Well, I'll about it, meaning no man good

but that my speech may shed king Edmund's blood. ...

[The armies make towards one another when Edricus standing between sayeth]

EDRICUS: Renowned Edmund, first I speak to thee.

Let these my words, proceeding from true zeal,

beg at thy ears a little audience;
and worthy Canutus, sheathe up thy slaught'ring sword
till I have spoke my mind, that all may see
my words proceed from perfect piety.

EDMUND: Edricus, be brief.

CANUTUS: Go to, I'll stay a little, but be not tedious.

ALFRIC: When the fox preaches, then beware the geese.

EDRICUS: What strive you for, imperious Ironside? ...
Renowned Canutus, what do you level at?
We daily to appease your mortal wars
offer our slaughtered bodies to the sword,
yet neither of you have the upper hand.
Today he that was foiled tomorrow foils;
he that even now did faintly sound retreat
renews again the fight with double force:
thus in quandaries hangs the victory
and wavering fortune frowns and smiles on both.

Canutus is not to be overcome ...
because his brother Sveyn doth succor him;
and Edmund likewise is invincible,
for force and valor hews him through his foes.

What then is the' end of this your endless grudge?
None other but when all your men be slain,
you then must fight alone or else accord,
and he that then is king shall rule no men
nor govern nations, for consuming war
will quite devour this solitary isle,
not leaving any over whom to rule ...
nor to resist foreign invasions.
If love of kingdoms be the cause of this,
suppress the boiling of your haughty minds;
you have approved your soldiers' forwardness,
then now at last shake hands and join in league;
agree like noble kings and part the land;
have now compassion of this little isle,
whose soil is manured with carcasses

and made a sea with blood of innocents;
but if your emulation be so great ...
that either scorns to have competitors
and brook not equals in your dignities,
fight then alone that would be kings alone:
let not all perish for the wills of two,
but let your swords decide whose title's best.

EDMUND: Edric, thou hitst the mark I level at.
Thy counsel, coming from a zealous heart,
fits in all points our expectation.
Know I accept thereof and offer here
to prove even hand in single fight ...

which of us two shall wear the diadem.

CANUTUS: Edmund, Report shall never whet her tongue
upon Canutus to eternize thee.
I scorn to stain my reputation
with abject titles of pale cowardice
to make thee famous in opinion's mouth.

I here accept thy challenge and his speech,
glad of so fit a time to be revenged
for all those foul dishonors thou hast done
and glad for sparing of that guiltless blood ...
which in our quarrels this day had been shed.
Oh, had this day been but a year ago,
many a tall man had been now alive,
many a salt tear had been now unshed
by father's for their son's unhappy deaths,
by mothers for their children's wretched ends
and widows for their husbands' timeless want;
but I am glad this long-expected hour
at last is come.

EGINA: ~~~ My lord, you shall not fight. ...

CANUTUS: My lady, but I will. Will you fight for me?

Give her my sword and shield.
[Edmund and Emma talks together. Edmund turns away.]

EMMA: Yet hear me, good my lord.
Will you on whom the state doth sole depend
our welfare, all the realm's, your friends, and kinsfolk,
hazard the loss of all upon the chance
of fickle fortune, since the better man
is sooner killed by over-hardiness
than an advised coward? Good my lord,
it is undecent you should fight with him, ...
being no king nor having aught to lose.

EDMUND: Madam, his life is even to him as dear
as mine to me. Besides, he is a prince
of noble blood and high-resolved spirit;
and if he were not, yet my cause being good
and justice on my side, I would not fear --
nay, could not with my honor but accept
the speech of Edric and in single fight
approve my title lawful, good and right.
Then madam, be content, and you shall see ...

the God in whom I trust will succor me.

Were he Golias, I the little king,
I would not fear, him on his knees to bring;
but he hath rather cause to doubt of me,
I being big and far more strong than he.
[Egina talks with Canutus, Canutus turns away.]

CANUTUS: I had rather fight with him than scold with you.

EGINA: I cannot speak but straight you say I scold.

CANUTUS: Then, sweeting, you must learn your tongue to hold.
Nay, now you'll blubber. Go to, take this kiss
and pray for me. Why stay you, Ironside? ...

EDMUND: Because I think thou art not fit to die,
but rather with Egina fit to cry.
My lords, I do command you, for your lives,
None be so hardy as to succor me
or to approach us ere the fight be done;
but if I die to make my sepulcher
even in the place whereas I took my death,

setting my crown upon Canutus' head
and do to him as to your sovereign.

CANUTUS: Even so, brave followers, I will you do ...

to Edmund here if Edmund conquer me.
Sound drums and trumpets with your warlike noise!

Either begin my joy or end my joys.
[The trumpets sound. The armies do compass the two
kings in the midst. They fight.]
Stay, hold thy hand, I prithee, breathe awhile.

EDMUND: Not till thou yieldst or dies.
[Edmund draws Canutus about.]

CANUTUS: Stay, Edmund,
'tis not for I fear thy fortitude
that thus I crave thee stay, but that I want
the use of breath to prosecute the fight.

EDMUND: Then breathe awhile: I give thee leave to rest. ...

EDRICUS: I fear Canutus will be overcome;
then shall I wish my tongue, the cause thereof
had been cut out when it began to speak,
for I desire to drink king Edmund's blood
because he ever sought to do me good.

SOUTHAMPTON: Egina, be content. I warrant you, aye
Canutus will do well enough.

EGINA: ~~~ I fear him much.

EDMUND: What, are ye ready?

CANUTUS: ~~~ Aye, to be thy death. ...
[They fight again. Edmund drives Canutus back about the stage.]
Stay, Edmund, stay, Canutus yields to thee.

EDRICUS: What, will he basely yield? The devil forfend.

CANUTUS: Take which of these thou wilt, my hand or sword:
my hand brings friendship firm, immovable;
my sword brings enmity irrevocable.

EDMUND: Brave Canutus, in yielding thou hast won.
That which thy sword could never do,
thy tongue hath brought to pass by gentle speech.
Canutus, take my hand; here lies my sword.

Edmund is thine, his thine, himself and all; ...
now let us strive who shall demerit best
by mutual kindness who shall be termed a friend.

CANUTUS: How pleasant are these speeches to my ears,
Aeolian music to my dancing heart,
Ambrosian dainties to my starved maw,
sweet-passing Nectar to my thirsty throat,
rare cullises to my sick-glutted mind,
refreshing ointments to my wearied limbs,
and heavenly physic to my earth-sick soul,
which erst was surfeited with woe and war. ...

EDMUND: Let me embrace thee, war-begotten friend. *[They embrace.]*
God grant as brothers we may long embrace
and, sweet Egina, for thy husband's sake,
in sigh of love, this kiss from Edmund take. *[Edmund kisses Egina.]*
But, lords, why stand you still, grieve you to see
Canutus and your king so well agree?

ALFRIC: The inward solace which our hearts conceive
to see peace grow where foul debate was sown,
to see sweet concord spring from discord's womb,
to see war bring forth love and amity, ...
to see two mortal foes prove faithful friends,
and Mars drink milk instead of purple blood,
doth force our tongues, our hearts' chief orators,
to show with silence joy unspeakable.
Yet, lords, behold, even as you do embrace,
so in dumb shows we all unite our hearts. *[The lords embrace.]*

TURKILLUS: Remember, Leofric, our children's loss.

LEOFRIC: Turkillus, I do, and must serve the time
and wait upon occasion for revenge.
A day of mirth begins a woeful year, ...

as sudden storms do follow sunshine clear.

EDMUND: Now, noble lords, let us like friends consult
upon partition of this noble isle.

Yourself shall choose which part you think is best:
the east or west, the right hand or the left.
My court is yours, my counselors are yours,
my friends your friends, thy foe my enemy,
my people yours, my treasure and myself
all are your own, for you shall all command.

CANUTUS: Thanks, noble brother and my second self. ...

In all thy acts thou dost excel thyself.
Foul shame on them that are thy enemies,
and vengeance light on them that think thee ill.

EDMUND: Go *[we]* unto our coasts and feast us there,

and there conclude an everlasting peace.

Sound drums and trumpets! Here ends *[woeful war]* .

Thus hand in hand and heart in heart we go.

EDRICUS: And I for one. 'Tis meet it should be so.

[Aside.] Thus wise men can dissemble what they think,

and till occasion fits them, sleeping wink. ...

But I have sworn and I will keep my vow,

By heaven Ill be revenged on both of you.

[They go hand in hand out of the stage, Edricus leading the drum.]

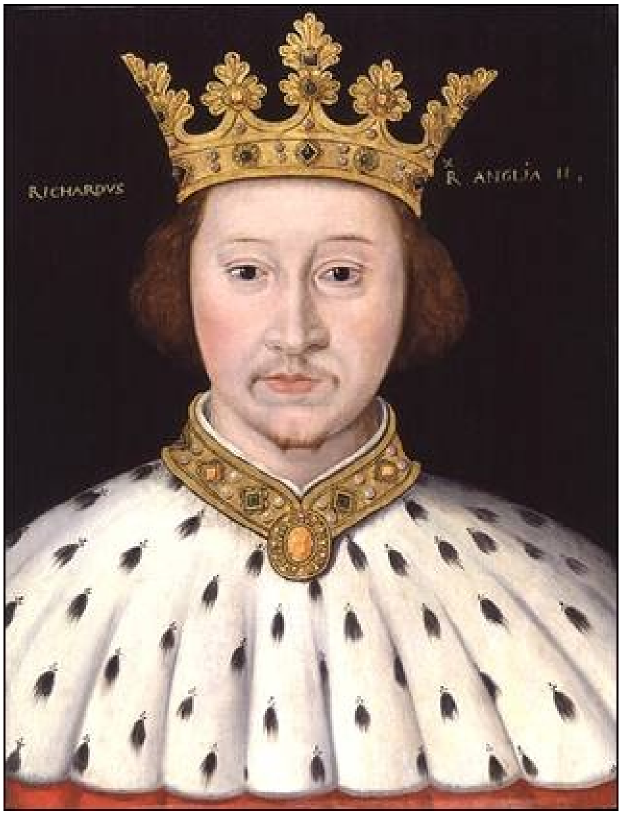
FINIS

THOMAS OF WOODSTOCK

OR

RICHARD THE SECOND PART ONE

This incomplete manuscript depicts events in the reign of King Richard II. Some scholars have attributed the work to Shakespeare, though it does not usually appear in the major editions of Shakespeare’s Apocrypha. The play is often cited as being a probable influence upon Shakespeare's *Richard II* , as well as possibly his *Henry IV* plays. It depicts events immediately prior to *Richard II* and provides explanations for the behaviour of many of Shakespeare's characters in that play.



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DRAMATIS PERSONAE

Thomas of Woodstock, Duke of Gloucester and Lord Protector of England
John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster
Edmund of Langley, Duke of York (Uncles to King Richard II)
Earl of Arundel, Lord Admiral of England
Earl of Surrey
Sir Thomas Cheyney

King Richard II
Sir Henry Greene, a favourite of King Richard's
Sir Edward Bagot, another favourite
Sir William Bushy, another favourite
Sir Robert Tresilian, a lawyer
Nimble, a lawyer's devil

Crosby, a law officer
Fleming, a law officer
Richard Exton, Lord Mayor of London
Simon Ignorance, Bailiff of Dunstable
Cowtail, a grazier

Cynthia, a personage in a masque

Sheriff (Shrieve) of Kent
Sheriff (Shrieve) of Northumberland
Lapoole, Governor of Calais

The Ghost of the Black Prince
The Ghost of King Edward III

Anne of Bohemia, Queen of England
Duchess of Gloucester, wife of Thomas of Woodstock
Duchess of Ireland

Also Servants, Maids, Courtiers, Law-officers, Soldiers, Archers, Knights

Act I, Scene 1 *[A house near London]*

Omnes

Lights, lights, bring torches, knaves!

Lancaster

Shut to the gates,

Let no man out until the house be searched.

York

Call for our coaches, let us away good brother

Now by the blest saints, I fear we are poisoned all.

Arundel

Poisoned my Lord?

Lancaster

Ay, ay, good Arundel, it is high time begone.

May heaven be blest for this prevention.

York

God, for thy mercy! would our cousin King

So cozen us, to poison us in our meat?

Lancaster

Has no man here some helping antidote

For fear already we have taken some dram?

What thinkest thou, Cheyney, thou first broughtst the

Tidings. are we not poisoned, thinkest thou?

Cheyney

Fear not, my Lords.

That mischievous potion was as yet unserved.

It was a liquid bane dissolved in wine

Which after supper should have been caroused

To young King Richard's health.

Lancaster

Good in faith! are his Uncles' deaths become

Health to King Richard? how came it out?

Sir Thomas Cheyney, pray resolve us.

Cheyney

A Carmelite friar, my Lord, revealed the plot

And should have acted it, but touched in conscience

He came to your good brother, the Lord Protector,

And so disclosed it; who straight sent me to you.

York

The Lord protect him for it, ay, and our cousin

King. high heaven be judge, we wish all good to him.

Lancaster

A heavy charge, good Woodstock, hast thou had

To be protector to so wild a prince

So far degenerate from his noble father

Whom the trembling French the black prince called

Not of a swart and melancholy brow

(For sweet and lovely was his countenance)

But that he made so many funeral days

In mournful France: the warlike battles won

At Crecy field, Poitiers, Artoise and Maine

Made all France groan under his conquering arm.

But heaven forestalled his diadem on earth

To place him with a royal crown in heaven.

Rise may his dust to glory! ere he would have done

A deed so base unto his enemy,

Much less unto the brothers of his father,

He would first have lost his royal blood in drops,

Dissolved the strings of his humanity

And lost that livelihood that was preserved

To make his (unlike) son a wanton King.

York

Forbear, good John-of-Gaunt; believe me, brother

We may do wrong unto our cousin King.

I fear his flattering minions more than him.

Lancaster

By the blest virgin, noble Edmund York

I am past all patience. poison his subjects,

His royal Uncles! why, the proud Castilian

Where John-of-Gaunt writes King and sovereign,

Would not throw off their vild and servile yoke

By treachery so base. patience, gracious Heaven!

Arundel

A good invoke, right princely Lancaster,

Calm thy high spleen. sir Thomas Cheyney here

Can tell the circumstance; pray give him leave.

Lancaster

Well, let him speak.

Cheyney

It is certainly made known, my reverend Lords,

To your loved brother, and the good protector
That not King Richard but his flatterers
Sir Henry Greene, joined with sir Edward Bagot,
and that sly Machiavel Tresilian,
(whom now the King elects for Lord Chief Justice)
Had all great hands in this conspiracy.

Lancaster

By blessed Mary I will confound them all.

York

Your spleen confounds yourself.

Lancaster

By Kingly Edward's soul, my royal father,
I will be revenged at full on all their lives.

York

Nay, if your rage break to such high extremes
You will prevent yourself, and lose revenge.

Lancaster

Why Edmund, canst thou give a reason yet

Though we, so near in blood, his hapless Uncles,

(His grandsire Edward's sons; his father's brothers)

Should thus be made away, why might it be

That Arundel and Surrey here should die?

Surrey

Some friend of theirs wanted my earldom sore.

Arundel

Perhaps my office of the admiralty,

If a better and more fortunate hand could govern it

I would it were none of mine,

Yet thus much can I say; and make my praise

No more than merit a wealthier prize

Did never yet take harbour in our roads

Than I to England brought. you all can tell,

Full threescore sail of tall and lusty ships

And six great carracks fraught with oil and wines

I brought King Richard in abundance home

So much, that plenty hath so staled our palates
As that a tun of high-prized wines of France
Is hardly worth a mark of English money.
If service such as this done to my country
Merit my heart to bleed, let it bleed freely.

Lancaster
We will bleed together, warlike Arundel.
Cousin of Surrey, princely Edmund York
Let us think on some revenge: if we must die
Ten thousand souls shall keep us company.

York
Patience, good Lancaster. tell me, kind Cheyney
How does thy master, our good brother Woodstock
Plain Thomas, for by the rood so all men call him
For his plain dealing, and his simple clothing.
Let others jet in silk and gold, says he,
A coat of English frieze, best pleaseth me.
How thinks his unsophisticated plainness
Of these bitter compounds? fears he no drug

Put in his broth? shall his healths be secure?

Cheyney

Faith my Lord, his mind suits with his habit

Homely and plain; both free from pride and envy

And therein will admit distrust to none.

Enter Thomas of Woodstock *in frieze. The mace [afore] him.* The Lord mayor Exton*, and others with lights afore them.*

Cheyney

And see, his Grace himself is come to greet you.

By your leave there, room for my Lord Protector's Grace!

York & Lancaster

Health to your Grace.

Woodstock

I salute your healths, good brothers, pray pardon

Me, I will speak with you anon. hie thee, good Exton!

Good Lord Mayor, I do beseech ye prosecute
With your best care a means for all our safeties.
Mischief hath often double practices;
Treachery wants not his second stratagem.

Who knows but steel may hit, though poison fail?
Alack the day, the night is made a veil
To shadow mischief. set, I beseech,
Strong guard and careful to attend the city.

Our lady help, we know not who are friends.
Our foes are grown so mighty, pray be careful.

Lord Mayor
Your friends are great in London, good my Lord.
I will front all dangers, trust it on my word.

Woodstock
Thanks from my heart I swear. afore my God
I know not which way to bestow myself
The time is so busy and so dangerous too.

Why how now, brothers? how fares good John-of-Gaunt?

Thou art vexed I know; thou grievest, kind Edmund York.
Arundel and Surrey, noble kinsmen
I know ye all are discontented much;
But be not so. afore my God I swear
King Richard loves you all: and credit me
The princely gentleman is innocent
Of this black deed, and base conspiracy.
Speak, speak, how is it with princely Lancaster?

Lancaster
Sick Gloucester, sick. we all are weary
And fain we would lie down to rest ourselves
But that so many serpents lurk in the grass
We dare not sleep.

Woodstock
Enough, enough
Good brother, I have found out the disease.

When the head aches, the body is not healthful.

King Richard is wounded with a wanton humour,

Lulled and secured by flattering sycophants;

But it is not deadly yet, it may be cured.

Some vein let blood where the corruption lies

And all shall heal again.

York

Then lose no time, lest it grow ulcerous.

The false Tresilian, Greene and Bagot

Run naught but poison, brother, spill them all.

Lancaster

They guide the nonage King; it is they protect him.

Ye wear the title of protectorship

But like an under-officer, as though

Yours were derived from theirs; faith, you are too plain.

Woodstock

In my apparel, you will say.

Lancaster

Good faith, in all.

The commons murmur against the dissolute King

Treason is whispered at each common table

As customary as their thanks to heaven.

Men need not gaze up to the sky to see

Whether the sun shine clear or no, it is found

By the small light should beautify the ground.

Conceit you me, a blind man thus much sees:

He wants his eyes to whom we bend our knees.

Arundel

You all are princes of the royal blood

Yet like great oaks ye let the ivy grow

To eat your hearts out with his false embraces.

Ye understand, my Lord?

Woodstock

Ay, ay, good coz, as if ye plainly said

Destroy those flatterers and tell King Richard
He does abase himself to countenance them.

Soft, soft!
Fruit that grows high is not securely plucked,
We must use ladders and by steps ascend
Till by degrees we reach the altitude.

You conceit me too? pray be smooth awhile.
Tomorrow is the solemn nuptial day
Betwixt the King and virtuous Anne-a-Beame
The emperor's daughter, a right gracious lady
That is come to England for King Richard's love.
Then, as you love his grace, and hate his flatterers,
Discountenace not the day with the least frown,
Be ignorant of what ye know. afore my god
I have good hope this happy marriage, brothers,
Of this so noble and religious princess
Will mildly calm his headstrong youth, to see
And shun those stains that blurs his majesty.
If not, by good King Edward's bones, our royal father,

I will remove those hinderers of his health,

Though it cost my head.

York & Lancaster

On these conditions, brother, we agree.

Arundel

And I.

Surrey

And I.

Lancaster

To hide our hate is soundest policy.

York

And brother Gloucester, since it is your pleasure

To have us smooth our sullen brows with smiles

We would have you suit your outside to your heart

And like a courtier cast this country habit

For which the coarse and vulgar call your Grace

By the title of plain Thomas: yet we doubt not
Tomorrow we shall have good hope to see
Your high protectorship in bravery.

Woodstock
No no, good York, this is as fair a sight,
My heart in this plain frieze sits true and right.
In this I will serve my King as true and bold
As if my outside were all trapped in gold.

Lancaster
By Mary but you shall not, brother Woodstock!
What, the marriage day to Richard and his Queen,
And will ye so disgrace the state and realm?

We will have you brave, in faith!

Woodstock Well, well
For your sakes, brothers, and this solemn day
For once I will sumpter a gaudy wardrobe, but it is more
Than I have done (I vow) this twenty years.

Afore my God the King could not have entreated me
To leave this habit, but your wills be done.

Let us hie to court: you all your wishes have:
One weary day, plain Thomas will be brave.

Act I, Scene 2 *[A house near London]*

Enter Greene, Bagot *and* Tresilian, *in rage* Tresilian

Nay, good sir Henry, King Richard calls for you.

Bagot

Prithee sweet Greene

Visit his highness and forsake these passions.

Green

'Sblood I am vexed, Tresilian mad me not,

Thyself and I and all are now undone.

The Lords at London are secured from harm,

The plot is revealed. black curses seize the traitor!

Bagot

Eternal torments whip that Carmelite!

Tresilian

A deeper hell than limbo patrum hold him,

A fainting villain, confusion crush his soul!

Bagot

Could the false slave recoil, and swore their deaths!

Green

Mischief devour him! had it but taken effect

On Lancaster and Edmund Duke of York

(Those headstrong Uncles to the gentle King)

The third brother, plain Thomas, the protector

Had quickly been removed; but since it is thus

Our safeties must be cared for, and it is best

To keep us near the person of the King.

Had they been dead, we had ruled the realm and him.

Bagot

So shall we still so long as Richard lives.

I know he cannot brook his stubborn Uncles.

Come, think not on it: cheer thee, Tresilian

Here is better news for thee: we have so wrought

With Kingly Richard, that by his consent

You are already mounted on your footcloth

(Your scarlet or your purple, which ye please)

And shortly are to underprop the name,

Mark me, Tresilian, of Lord Chief Justice of England.

Tresilian

Hum, hum, hum. legit or non legit? methinks already

I sit upon the bench with dreadful frowns

Frighting the lousy rascals,

And when the jury once cries "guilty" could pronounce

"Lord have mercy on thee", with a brow

As rough and stern as surly rhadamanth;

Or when a fellow talks, cry "take him, jailor,

Clap bolts of iron on his heels and hands!"

Chief Justice, my Lords! hum, hum, hum.

I will wear the office in his true ornament.

Green

But good your honour, as it will shortly be,

You must observe and fashion to the time

The habit of your laws. the King is young

Ay, and a little wanton, so perhaps are we:
Your laws must not be beadles then, Tresilian,
To punish your benefactors, look to that.

Tresilian
How sir, to punish you, the minions to the King,
The jewels of his heart, his dearest loves?
Zounds, I will screw and wind the stubborn law
To any fashion that shall like you best.
It shall be law, what I shall say is law,
And what is most suitable to all your pleasures.

Bagot
Thanks to your Lordship which is yet to come!

Green
Farewell, Tresilian, still be near the court.
Anon King Richard shall confirm thy state.
We must attend his Grace to Westminster
To the high nuptials of fair Anne-a-Beame,
That must be now his wife and England's Queen.

Tresilian

So, let them pass. Tresilian, now bethink thee.

Hum, Lord Chief Justice: methinks already

I am swelled more plump than erst I was.

Authority is a dish that feeds men fat,

An excellent delicate: yet best be wise,

No state is secure without some enemies.

The Dukes will frown; why, I can look as grim

As John-of-Gaunt, and all that frown with him.

But yet until mine office be put on

By Kingly Richard, I will conceal myself:

Framing such subtle laws that janus-like

May with a double face salute them both.

I will search my brain and turn the leaves of law:

Wit makes us great, greatness keeps fools in awe.

My man there, ho! where is Nimble?

[Enter] Nimble

Nimble

As Nimble as an eel, sir. did ye call, sir?

Tresilian

Sir! look out some better phrase: salute again.

Nimble

I know no other, sir, unless you will be frenchified,

And let me lay the Monsieur to your charge, or sweet

Signior.

Tresilian

Neither. It is higher yet. Nimble, thou buckram

scribe, think once again.

Nimble

Neither sir: nor Monsieur: nor Signior. what should

I call him, trow? He is monstrously translated

suddenly! At first, when we were schoolfellows, then

I called him Sirrah, but since he became my master I

pared away the "ah" and served him with the Sir. What

title he has got now, I know not, but I will try
further. Has your Worship any employment for me?

Tresilian

Thou gross uncaput, no, thou speakest not yet.

Nimble

My mouth was open I am sure. if your Honour
would please to hear me.

Tresilian

Ha, Honour sayest thou? Ay, now thou hittest it,
Nimble.

Nimble

I knew I should wind about ye till I had your honour.

Tresilian

Nimble, bend thy knee.

The Lord chief justice of England speaks to thee.

Nimble

The Lord be praised! We shall have a flourishing commonwealth, sir.

Tresilian

Peace, let me speak to thee.

Nimble

Yes, anything, so your honour pray not for me, I care not; for now you are Lord Chief Justice, if ever ye cry, Lord have mercy upon me, I shall hang for it, sure!

Tresilian

No. Those fearful words shall not be pronounced against thee, Nimble.

Nimble

Thank ye, my Lord. Nay, and you will stand between me and the gallows, I will be an arrant thief, sure, if

I cannot pick up my crumbs by the law quickly, I will
cast away my buckram bags and be a highway lawyer now,
certainly.

Tresilian
Canst thou remember, Nimble, how by degrees I rose,
since first thou knewest me? I was first a schoolboy.

Nimble
Ay, saving your honour's speech, your worshipful
tail was whipped for stealing my dinner out of my
satchel. You were ever so crafty in your childhood,
that I knew your worship would prove a good lawyer.

Tresilian
Interrupt me not. Those days thou knewest, I say,
from whence I did become a plodding clerk,
from which I bounced, as thou dost now, in buckram
to be a pleading lawyer (and there I stayed)
till by the King I was Chief Justice made.
Nimble, I read this discipline to thee

to stir thy mind up still to industry.

Nimble

Thank your good Lordship.

Tresilian

Go to thy mistress: lady you now must call her.
Bid her remove her household up to London;
tell her our fortunes, and with how much peril
we have attained this place of eminence.
Go and remove her.

Nimble

With a habeas corpus or a surssararis, I assure ye.
And so I leave your Lordship, always hoping of your
Wonted favour, that when I have passed the London
Bridge of affliction I may arrive with you at the
Westminster hall of promotion, and then I care not.

Tresilian

Thou shalt; thou hast an executing look

and I will put the axe into thy hand.

I rule the law: thou by the law shalt stand.

Nimble

I thank your Lordship, and a fig for the rope then!

Act I, Scene 3: *London, the Court*]

Sound a sennet. Enter in great state King Richard *and* Queen Anne, *crowned* : Lancaster, York Arundel, Surrey, Greene, Bagot; *and* Woodstock *very brave; the* Duchess of Gloucester *and the* Duchess of Ireland.

King

Bagot and Greene, next to the fair Queen Anne

Take your high places, by King Richard's side

And give fair welcome to our Queen and bride.

Uncles of Woodstock, York, and Lancaster,

Make full our wishes, and salute our Queen;

Give all your welcomes to fair Anne-a-Beame.

Lancaster

I hope sweet prince, her Grace mistakes us not

To make our hearts the worser part of us:

Our tongues have in our English eloquence

(Harsh though it is) pronounced her welcomes many

By oaths and loyal protestations

To which we add a thousand infinites;

But in a word, fair Queen, forever welcome!

Woodstock

Let me prevent the rest, for mercy's sake!

If all their welcomes be as long as thine

This health will not go round this week, by the mass!

Sweet Queen, and cousin, now I will call you so,

In plain and honest phrase, welcome to England!

Think they speak all in me, and you have seen

All England cry with joy, "God bless the Queen",

And so afore my God I know they wish it.

Only I fear my duty not misconstered,

Nay, nay, King Richard, afore God I will speak the truth!

Sweet Queen, you have found a young and wanton choice,

A wild-head, yet a Kingly gentleman;

A youth unsettled; yet he is princely bred

Descended from the royalest bloods in Europe,

The Kingly stock of England and of France.

Yet he is a hare-brain, a very wag in faith,

But you must bear, Madam: alas, he is but a blossom;

But his maturity I hope you will find

True English bred, a King loving and kind.

King

I thank ye for your double praise, good Uncle.

Woodstock

Ay, ay good coz, I am plain Thomas, by the rood

I will speak the truth.

Queen

My sovereign Lord, and you true English peers

Your all-accomplished honours have so tied

My senses by a magical restraint

In the sweet spells of this your fair demeanours,

That I am bound and charmed from what I was:

My native country I no more remember

But as a tale told in my infancy,

The greatest part forgot: and that which is,

Appears to England's fair elysium

Like brambles to the cedars, coarse to fine,

Or like the wild grape to the fruitful vine.

And, having left the earth where I was bred

And English made, let me be Englished:

They best shall please me shall me English call.

My heart, great King, to you; my love to all.

King

Gramercy, man, thou highly honourest me.

York

And blest is England in this sweet accord.

Woodstock

Afore my God, sweet Queen, our English ladies

And all the women that this isle contains

Shall sing in praise of this your memory

And keep records of virtuous Anne-a-Beame

Whose discipline hath taught them womanhood.

What erst seemed well by custom, now looks rude.

Our women, till your coming, fairest cousin

Did use like men to straddle when they ride,

But you have taught them now to sit aside.

Yet (by your leave) young practice often reels;

I have seen some of your scholars kick up both their

heels!

Duchess of Gloucester

What have you seen, my Lord?

Woodstock

Nay, nay, nothing, wife.

I see little without spectacles thou knowest.

King

Trust him not, Aunt, for now he is grown so brave

He will be courting, ay, and kissing too.

Nay, Uncle! now I will do as much for you,

And lay your faults all open to the world!

Woodstock

Ay, ay, do, do.

King

I am glad you are grown so careless: now by my crown

I swear, good Uncles York and Lancaster,

When you this morning came to visit me

I did not know him in this strange attire.

How comes this golden metamorphosis

From homespun housewifery? speak, good Uncle!

I never saw you hatched and gilded thus.

Woodstock

I am no stoic, my dear sovereign cousin,

To make my plainness seem canonical,

But to allow myself such ornaments

As might be fitting for your nuptial day

And coronation of your virtuous Queen;
But were the eye of day once closed again
Upon this back they never more should come.

King
You have much graced the day. but, noble Uncle
I did observe what I have wondered at:
As we, today, rode on to Westminster
Methought your horse, that wont to tread the ground
And pace as if he kicked it, scornfully,
Mound and curvet, like strong Bucephalus,
Today he trod as slow and melancholy
As if his legs had failed to bear his load.

Woodstock
And can ye blame the beast? afore my God
He was not wont to bear such loads. indeed,
A hundred oaks upon these shoulders hang
To make me brave upon your wedding day,
And more than that: to make my horse more tire,
Ten acres of good land are stitched up here.

You know, good coz, this was not wont to be.

King

In your tother hose, Uncle?

Green

No, nor his frieze coat neither!

Woodstock

Ay, ay, mock on. my tother hose, say ye?

There is honest plain dealing in my tother hose.
Should this fashion last I must raise new rents,
Undo my poor tenants, turn away my servants,
And guard myself with lace; nay, sell more land
And Lordships too, by the rood. hear me King Richard:
If thus I jet in pride, I still shall lose;
But I will build castles in my tother hose.

Queen

The King but jests, my Lord; and you grow angry.

Woodstock

Tother hose! did some here wear that fashion

They would not tax and pill the commons so!

York

(Sfoot, he forewarned us, and will break

Out himself.)

Lancaster

No matter, we will back him though it grows to blows.

Woodstock

Scoff ye my plainness, I will talk no riddles,

Plain Thomas will speak plainly: there is Bagot there,

And Greene -

Green

And what of them, my Lord?

Woodstock

Upstarts, come down, you have no places there;

Here is better men to Grace King Richard's chair,

If it pleased him Grace them so.

King

Uncle, forbear.

Woodstock

These cuts the columns that should prop thy house

They tax the poor, and I am scandaled for it

That by my fault those late oppressions rise

To set the commons in a mutiny

That London even itself was sacked by them.

And who did all these rank commotions point at?

Even at these two: Bagot here, and Greene,

With false Tresilian, whom your Grace we hear

Hath made chief justice. well, well, be it so.

Mischief on mischief sure will shortly flow.

Pardon my speech, my Lord, since now we are all so
Brave to Grace Queen Anne, this day we will spend in
Sport; but in my tother hose, I will tickle them for it.

Green
Come, come, ye dote, my Lord.

Lancaster
Dote, sir? know ye to whom ye speak?

King
No more, good Uncles. Come, sweet Greene, have done.
(I will wring them all for this, by England's crown).

Why is our Lord Protector so outrageous?

Woodstock
Because thy subjects have such outrage shown them
By these thy flatterers. let the sun dry up
What the unwholesome fog hath choked the ground with.
Here is Arundel, thy ocean's admiral

Hath brought thee home a rich and wealthy prize,

Taken three score sail of ships, and six great carracks

All richly laden; let those goods be sold

To satisfy those borrowed sums of coin

Their pride hath forced from the needy commons:

To salve which inconvenience I beseech your Grace

You would vouchsafe to let me have the sale

And distribution of those goods.

King

Our word, good Uncle, is already passed,

Which cannot with our honour be recalled:

Those wealthy prizes already are bestowed

On these our friends.

Lords

On them, my Lord?

King

Yes. Who storms at it?

Woodstock

Shall cankers eat the fruit

That planting and good husbandry hath nourished?

Green Cankers?!

York

Ay, cankers! caterpillars!

Lancaster

Worse than consuming fires

That eats up all their furies falls upon.

King

Once more be still.

Who is it that dares encounter with our will?

We did bestow them, hear me, kind Uncles:

We shall ere long be past protectorship

Then will we rule ourself, and even till then

We let ye know those gifts are given to them.

We did it, Woodstock.

Woodstock

Ye have done ill, then.

King

Ha, dare ye say so?

Woodstock

Dare I? afore my God I will speak, King Richard,

Were I assured this day my head should off.

I tell ye sir, my allegiance stands excused

In justice of the cause. Ye have done ill.

The sun of mercy never shine on me

But I speak truth. when warlike Arundel,

Beset at sea, fought for those wealthy prizes

He did with fame advance the English cross,

Still crying "courage in King Richard's name."

For thee he won them, and do thou enjoy them,

He will fetch more honours home. But had he known

That kites should have enjoyed the eagle's prize

The fraught had swum unto thine enemies.

King

So, sir. We will soothe your vexed spleen, good Uncle

And mend what is amiss. To those slight gifts

Not worth acceptance, thus much more we add:

Young Henry Greene shall be Lord Chancellor,

Bagot, Lord Keeper of our privy seal,

Tresilian, learned in our kingdom's laws,

Shall be Chief Justice. By them and their directions

King Richard will uphold his government.

Green

Change no more words, my Lord, ye do deject

Your Kingly majesty to speak to such

Whose homespun judgments, like their frosty beards

Would blast the blooming hopes of all your Kingdom.

Were I as you, my Lord -

Queen

Oh, gentle Greene, throw no more fuel on
But rather seek to mitigate this heat.
Be patient, Kingly Richard, quench this ire.

Would I had tears of force to stint this fire!

King
Beshrew the churls that make my Queen so sad.
But by my grandsire Edward's Kingly bones,
My princely father's tomb, King Richard swears
We will make them weep these wrongs in bloody tears.
Come, fair Queen Anne-a-Beame. Bagot and Greene,
Keep by King Richard's side; but as for you,
We will shortly make your stiff obedience bow.

Bagot
Remember this, my Lords:
We keep the Seal: our strength you all shall know.

Green
And we are chancellor: we love you well, think so.

York

God for his mercy! shall we brook these braves,

Disgraced and threatened thus by fawning knaves?

Lancaster

Shall we that were great Edward's princely sons

Be thus outbraved by flattering sycophants?

Woodstock

Afore my God and holy saints I swear

But that my tongue hath liberty to show

The inly passions boiling in my breast,

I think my overburthened heart would break.

What then may we conjecture? What is the cause

Of this remiss and inconsiderate dealing

Urged by the King and his confederates,

But hate to virtue, and a mind corrupt

With all preposterous rude misgovernment?

Lancaster

These prizes taken by warlike Arundel
Before his face are given those flatterers.

Surrey

It is his custom to be prodigal
To any but to those do best deserve.

Arundel

Because he knew you would bestow them well
He gave it such as for their private gain
Neglect both honour and their country's good.

Lancaster

How now, what noise is this?

York

Some posts, it seems: pray heaven the news be good.

Woodstock

Amen. I pray, for England's happiness.
Speak, speak, what tidings Cheyney?

Cheyney

Of war, my Lord and civil dissension:

the men of Kent and Essex do rebel.

Woodstock

I thought no less; and always feared as much.

Cheyney

The Shrieves in post have sent unto your Grace

That order be taken to stay the commons

For fear rebellion rise in open arms.

Woodstock

Now, headstrong Richard, shalt thou reap the fruit

Thy lewd licentious wilfulness hath sown.

I know not which way to bestow myself!

York

There is no standing on delay, my Lords, These hot eruptions must have some redress

Or else in time they will grow incurable.

Woodstock

The commons, they rebel: and the King all careless.

Here is wrong on wrong, to stir more mutiny.

Afore my God I know not what to do.

Lancaster

Take open arms. join with the vexed commons

And hale his minions from his wanton side.

Their heads cut off, the people is satisfied.

Woodstock

Not so, not so! alack the day, good brother

We may not so affright the tender prince.

We will bear us nobly, for the kingdom's safety

And the King's honour. therefore list to me.

You, brother Gaunt, and noble Arundel

Shall undertake, by threats, or fair entreaty,

To pacify the murmuring commons' rage;
And whiles you there employ your service hours
We presently will call a parliament
And have their deeds examined thoroughly;
Where, if by fair means we can win no favour
Nor make King Richard leave their companies,
We will thus resolve, for our dear country's good
To right her wrongs, or for it spend our bloods.

Lancaster

About it then, we for the commons, you for the
Court.

Woodstock

Ay, ay. Good Lancaster, I pray be careful.
Come, brother York, we soon shall right all wrong,
And send some headless from the court ere long.

Exuent

Act II, Scene 1

[Scene 1: *Westminster*]

Trumpets sound. Enter King Richard, Greene, Bagot, Bushy Scroope, Tresilian, *and others.*

King

thus shall King Richard suit his princely train

despite his uncle's pride. embrace us, gentlemen.

sir Edward Bagot, Bushy, Greene, and Scroope,

your youths are fitting to our tender years

and such shall beautify our princely throne.

fear not my uncles, nor their proudest strength

for I will buckler ye against them all.

Green

thanks, dearest lord, let me have Richard's love

and like a rock unmoved my state shall stand

scorning the proudest peer that rules the land.

Bushy

your uncles seek to overturn your state,

to awe ye like a child, that they alone

may at their pleasures thrust you from the throne.

Scroope
as if the sun were forced to decline
before his dated time of darkness comes.

Bagot
sweet King, set courage to authority
and let them know the power of majesty.

Green
may not the lion roar, because he is young?
what are your uncles but as elephants
that set their aged bodies to the oak?

you are the oak against whose stock they lean:
fall from them once, and then destroy them ever.
be thou no stay, King Richard, to their strength
but as a tyrant unto tyranny,
and so confound them all eternally.

Tresilian

law must extend unto severity

when subjects dare to brave their sovereign.

King

Tresilian, thou art lord chief justice now,

who should be learned in the laws but thee?

resolve us therefore what thou thinkest of them

seek to subvert their King and sovereign.

Tresilian

as of the King's rebellious enemies:

as underminers of his sacred state;

which, in the greatest prince or mightiest peer

that is a subject to your majesty,

is nothing less than treason capital,

and he a traitor that endeavours it. [Bushy *reads a book*]

King

attaint them then, arrest them and condemn them.

Green

hale them to the block and cut off all their heads,

and then King Richard claim the government.

King

see it be done, Tresilian, speedily.

Tresilian

that course is all too rash, my gracious lord.

All

too rash for what?

Tresilian

it must be done with greater policy

for fear the people rise in mutiny.

King

ay, there is the fear: the commons love them well

and all applaud the wily Lancaster,

the counterfeit relenting Duke of York

together with our fretful uncle Woodstock
with greater reverence than King Richard's self.
but time shall come, when we shall yoke their necks
and make them bend to our obedience.

how now, what readest thou, Bushy?

Bushy
the monument of english chronicles,
containing acts and memorable deeds
of all your famous predecessor Kings.

King
what findest thou of them?

Bushy
examples strange and wonderful, my lord.

the end of treason even in mighty persons:
for here it is said your royal grandfather
although but young, and under government,

took the protector then, proud mortimer,
and on a gallows fifty foot in height
he hung him for his pride and treachery.

King
why should our proud protector then presume
and we not punish him, whose treason is vilder far
than ever was rebellious mortimer's?
prithee read on. examples such as these
will bring us to our Kingly grandsire's spirit.
what is next?

Bushy
the battle full of dread and doubtful fear
was fought betwixt your father and the french.

Bushy
then the black prince, encouraging his soldiers,
being in number but 7750, gave the onset to the
french King's puissant army, which were numbered to
68000, and in one hour got the victory, slew 6000 of

the french soldiers, took prisoners of Dukes, earls,
knights and gentlemen to the number 1700, and of
the common sort 10000; so the prisoners that were
taken were twice so many as the englishmen were in
number. besides, the thrice renowned prince took with
his own hand King John of France and his son prisoners.
this was called the battle of poitiers, and
was fought on monday the nineteenth of september, 1356,
my lord.

King
a victory most strange and admirable.

never was conquest got with such great odds.
oh, princely Edward, had thy son such hap,
such fortune and success to follow him,
his daring uncles and rebellious peers
durst not control and govern as they do.
but these bright shining trophies shall awake me,
and as we are his body's counterfeit,
so will we be the image of his mind,

and die but we will attain his virtuous deeds.
what next ensues, good Bushy? read the rest.

Bushy

here is set down, my princely sovereign,
the certain time and day when you were born.

King

our birthday sayest thou? is that noted there?

Bushy

it is, my lord.

King

prithee let me hear it,
for thereby hangs a secret mystery
which yet our uncle strangely keeps from us.
on, Bushy.

Bushy

upon the third of april 1365 was lord Richard, son to the black prince, born at Bordeaux.

King

stay; let me think awhile. read it again.

Bushy

upon the third of april 1365 was lord Richard son to
the black prince born at Bordeaux.

King

1365? what year is this?

Green

it is now, my lord, 1387.

King

by that account, the third of april next
our age is numbered two and twenty years.
oh treacherous men that have deluded us,
we might have claimed our right a twelvemonth since!

shut up thy book, good Bushy. Bagot, Greene,
King Richard in his throne will now be seen.

this day I will claim my right, my Kingdom's due.
our uncles well shall know they but intrude:

for which we will smite their base ingratitude.
[*A knock within.* Bagot *to the door and returns*]
Bagot
Edmund of Langley, Duke of York, (my lord)
sent from the lord protector and the peers
doth crave admittance to your royal presence.

King
our uncle Edmund. so. were it not he
we would not speak with him, but go admit him.
Woodstock and Gaunt are stern and troublesome
but York is gentle, mild and generous;
and therefore we admit his conference.

Enter York Bagot

he comes, my lord.

King

methinks it is strange, my good and reverent uncle,

you and the rest should thus malign against us,

and every hour with rude and bitter taunts

abuse King Richard and his harmless friends.

we had a father, that once called ye brother:

a grandsire too, that titled you his son;

but could they see how you have wronged King Richard

their ghosts would haunt ye; and in dead of night

fright all your quiet sleeps with horrid fears.

I pray, stand up, we honour reverend years

in meaner subjects. good uncle, rise and tell us:

what further mischiefs are there now devised

to torture and afflict your sovereign with?

York

my royal lord, even by my birth I swear,

my father's tomb, and faith to heaven I owe,

your uncles' thoughts are all most honourable.
and to that end the good protector sends me
to certify your sacred majesty
the peers of England now are all assembled
to hold a parliament at Westminster,
and humbly crave you highness would be there
to sit in council touching such affairs
as shall concern your country's government.

King
have they so soon procured a parliament?

without our knowledge too? it is somewhat strange.
yet say, good uncle, we will meet them straight.

York
the news to all will be most wished and welcome.
I take my leave, and to your grace I swear
as I am subject loyal, just and true,
we will nothing do to hurt the realm nor you.

King

we shall believe you, uncle. go attend him. [*Exit* York]

yes, we will meet them, but with such intent

as shall dismiss their sudden parliament

till we be pleased to summon and direct it.

come, sirs, to Westminster, attend our state.

this day shall make you ever fortunate.

the third of april, Bushy, note the time,

our age accomplished, crown and Kingdom is mine.

Exeunt

Act II, Scene 2: *Westminster*]

Flourish [of trumpets]. Enter Lancaster, Arundel, Surrey: *The* Queen *and* Duchess of Gloucester: Woodstock *[with] petitions and the mace* : Cheyney. York *meets them in haste.*

Woodstock

Now, brother York, what says King Richard, ha?

York

his highness will be here immediately.

Woodstock
go, cousin Surrey, greet the parliament,
tell them the King is coming, give these petitions
to the knights and burgesses of the lower house,
sent from each several shire of all the Kingdom.

these copies I will keep, and show his highness.
pray make haste.

Surrey
I will, my lord. *Exit*

Queen
pity King Richard's youth, most reverend uncles
and in your high proceedings gently use him.
think of his tender years: what is now amiss
his riper judgment shall make good and perfect
to you, and to the Kingdom's benefit.

York

alack, sweet Queen. you and our lord the King

have little cause to fear our just proceedings.

we will fall beneath his feet, and bend our knees

so he cast off those hateful flatterers

that daily ruinate his state and Kingdom.

Woodstock

go in, sweet ladies, comfort one another.

this happy parliament shall make all even

and plant sure peace betwixt the King and realm.

may heaven direct your wisdoms to provide

for England's honour and King Richard's good.

York

believe no less, sweet Queen. attend her highness.

Flourish [of trumpets]. Exeunt [Queen and Duchess]

Arundel

the King is come, my lords.

Woodstock

stand from the door then: make way, Cheyney.

[Trumpets] sound a flourish. Enter King, Bagot, Bushy, Greene, Scroope *and others.*

Green

yonder is your uncles, my lord.

King

ay, with our plain protector!

full of complaints, sweet Greene, I will wage my crown.

Bagot

give them fair words, and smooth awhile.

the toils are pitched, and you may catch them quickly.

King

why, how now, uncle? what, disrobed again

of all your golden rich abiliments?

Woodstock

ay, ay, good coz, I am now in my tother hose,
I am now myself, plain Thomas, and by the rood
in these plain hose I will do the realm more good
than these that pill the poor, to jet in gold.

King
nay, be not angry, uncle.

Woodstock
be you then pleased, good coz, to hear me speak
and view thy subjects' sad petitions.
see here, King Richard, whilst thou livest at ease
lulling thyself in nice security,
thy wronged Kingdom is in a mutiny.
from every province are the people come
with open mouths exclaiming on the wrongs
thou and these upstarts have imposed on them.
shame is deciphered on thy palace gate,
confusion hangeth over thy wretched head,
mischief is coming and in storms must fall:
the oppression of the poor to heaven doth call.

King
well, well, good uncle, these your bitter taunts
against my friends and me will one day cease.

but what is the reason you have sent for us?

Lancaster
to have your grace confirm this parliament
and set your hand to certain articles
most needful for your state and Kingdom's quiet.

King
where are those articles?

Arundel
the states and burgesses of the parliament
attend with duty to deliver them.

York
please you ascend your throne. we will call them in.

King

we will ask a question first, and then we will see
them; for trust me, reverent uncles, we have sworn
we will not sit upon our royal throne
until this question be resolved at full.

reach me that paper, Bushy. hear me, princes:
we had a strange petition here delivered us.
a poor man's son, his father being deceased,
gave him in charge unto a rich man's hands
to keep him and the little land he had
till he attained to one and twenty years.
the poor revenue amounts but to three crowns,
and yet the insatiate churl denies his right
and bars him of his fair inheritance.
tell me, I pray: will not our english laws
enforce this rich man to resign his due?

Woodstock

there is no let to bar it, gracious soverign.

afore my god, sweet prince, it joys my soul
to see your grace in person thus to judge his cause.

York
such deeds as this will make King Richard shine
above his famous predecessor Kings
if thus he labour to establish right.

King
the poor man then had wrong, you all confess?

Woodstock
and shall have right, my liege, to quit his wrong.

King
then, Woodstock, give us right, for we are
wronged.
thou art the rich, and we the poor man's son.
the realms of England, France, and Ireland
are those three crowns thou yearly keepest from us.
is it not a wrong when every mean man's son

may take his birthright at the time expired,
and we, the principal, being now attained
almost to two and twenty years of age
cannot be suffered to enjoy our own
nor peaceably possess our father's right?

Woodstock
was this the trick, sweet prince! alack the day,
you need not thus have doubled with your friends.
the right I hold, even with my heart I render
and wish your grace had claimed it long ago.

thou hadst rid mine age of mickle care and woe.
and yet I think I have not wronged your birthright:
for if the times were searched I guess your grace
is not so full of years till april next.
but be it as it will. lo, here, King Richard,
I thus yield up my sad protectorship:

a heavy burthen has thou taken from me.
long mayst thou live in peace and keep thine own

that truth and justice may attend thy throne.

Gives the Mace up King

then in the name of heaven we thus ascend it

and here we claim our fair inheritance

of fruitful England, France, and Ireland,

superior lord of scotland; and the rights

belonging to our great dominions.

here, uncles, take the crown from Richard's hand

and once more place it on our Kingly head.

this day we will be new enthronished.

Woodstock

with all our hearts, my lord. trumpets, be ready.

A Flourish All

long live King Richard, of that name the second

the sovereign lord of England's ancient rights!

King

we thank ye all. so. now we feel ourself.

our body could not fill this chair till now,

it was scanted to us by protectorship.
but now we let ye know King Richard rules
and will elect and choose, place and displace
such officers as we ourself shall like of.
and first, my lords, because your age is such
as pity it were ye should be further pressed
with weighty business of the common weal,
we here dismiss ye from the council table
and will that you remain not in our court.
deliver up your staves. and hear ye, Arundel,
we do discharge ye of the admiralty.

Scroope, take his office and his place in council.

Scroope
I thank your highness.

York
here, take my staff, good cousin. York thus leaves
thee. thou leanest on staves that will at length
deceive thee.

Lancaster

there lie the burthen of old Lancaster;

and may he perish that succeeds my place!

King

so, sir, we will observe your humour.

sir henry Greene, succeed our uncle York,

and Bushy take the staff of Lancaster.

Bushy

I thank your grace: his curses fright not me.

I will keep it to defend your majesty.

Woodstock

what transformation do mine eyes behold

as if the world were topsy-turvy turned!

hear me, King Richard.

King

plain Thomas, I will not hear ye.

Green

ye do not well to move his majesty.

Woodstock

hence, flatterer, or by my soul I will kill thee!

(shall England, that so long was governed

by grave experience, of white-headed age,

be subject now to rash unskilful boys?)

then force the sun run backward to the east,

lay atlas' burthen on a pigmy's back,

appoint the sea his times to ebb and flow;

and that as easily may be done as this.

King

give up your council staff, we will hear no more.

Woodstock

my staff, King Richard? see, coz, here it is:

full ten years' space within a prince's hand, a soldier and a faithful councillor,

this staff hath always been discreetly kept;

nor shall the world report an upstart groom

did glory in the honours Woodstock lost;

and therefore, Richard, thus I sever it.

there, let him take it, shivered, cracked and broke

as will the state of England be ere long

by this rejecting true nobility.

farewell, King Richard. I will to plashey, brothers,

if ye ride through essex, call and see me.

if once the pillars and supporters quail

how can the strongest castle choose but fail?

Lords

and so will he ere long. come, come, let us leave

them.

Bushy

ay, ay, your places are supplied sufficiently.

Exeunt the Lords [with Arundel]

Scroope

old doting graybeard!

before god, my lord, had they not been your uncles

I had broke my council staff about their heads.

Green

we will have an act for this: it shall be henceforth

counted high treason for any fellow with a gray beard

to come within forty foot of the court gates.

Bagot

ay, or a great-bellied doublet. we will alter

the Kingdom presently.

Green

pox on it, we will not have a beard amongst us, we will

shave the country and the city too, shall we not,

Richard?

King

do what ye will, we will shield and buckler ye.

we will have a guard of archers to attend us;

and they shall daily wait on us and you.
send proclamations straight in Richard's name
to abridge the laws our late protector made.

let some be sent to seek Tresilian forth.

Bagot

seek him! hang him, he lurks not far off I warrant.
and this news come abroad once, ye shall have him
here presently.

King

would he were come. his counsel would direct you
well.

Green

troth, I think I shall trouble myself but with a
few counsellors. what cheer shall we have to dinner,
King Richard?

King

no matter what today. we will mend it shortly.
the hall at Westminster shall be enlarged
and only serve us for a dining room,
wherein I will daily feast ten thousand men.

Green
an excellent device! the commons have murmured
against us a great while, and there is no such means as
meat to stop their mouths.

Scroope
sfoot, make their gate wider. let us first
fetch their money and bid them to dinner afterwards.

Green
'sblood, and I were not a councillor, I could find
in myself to dine at a tavern today, sweet King.

shall us be merry?

Scroope

we must have money to buy new suits, my lord.

the fashion that we wear are gross and stale.
we will go sit in council to devise some new.

All
a special purpose to be thought upon!
it shall be the first thing we will do.

King
come, wantons, come. if Gloucester hear of this
he will say our council guides us much amiss.
dismiss the parliament our uncles called,
and tell the peers it is our present pleasure
that each man parts unto his several home.
when we are pleased, they shall have summons sent
and with King Richard hold a parliament.
set forward.

Green
you of the council march before the King;

I will support his arm.

King

gramercy, Greene.

Trumpets sound [a] flourish. Exeunt.

Act II, Scene 3: The Queen's apartment, Westminster]

Enter the Queen, *the* Duchess of Gloucester, *the* Duchess of Ireland, *and other maids with shirts and bands and other linen.*

Queen

tell me, dear aunt, has Richard so forgot

the types of honour and nobility

so to disgrace his good and reverent uncles?

Duchess of Gloucester

madam, it is true. no sooner had he claimed

the full possession of his government

but my dear husband and his noble brethren

were all dismissed from the council table,

banished the court, and even before their faces their offices bestowed on several grooms.

Duchess of Ireland
my husband Ireland, that unloving lord
(god pardon his amiss, he now is dead)
King Richard was the cause he left my bed.

Queen
no more, good cousin. could I work the means,
he should not so disgrace his dearest friends.
alack the day! though I am England's Queen
I meet sad hours and wake when others sleep.

he meets content, but care with me must keep.
distressed poverty overspreads the Kingdom:
in essex, Surrey, Kent and middlesex
are seventeen thousand poor and indigent
which I have numbered; and to help their wants
my jewels and my plate are turned to coin
and shared amongst them. oh, riotous Richard,
a heavy blame is thine for this distress,

that dost allow thy polling flatterers
to gild themselves with others' miseries.

Duchess of Gloucester
wrong not yourself with sorrow, gentle Queen,
unless that sorrow were a helping means
to cure the malady you sorrow for.

Queen
the sighs I vent are not mine own, dear aunt.
I do not sorrow in mine own behalf
nor now repent with peevish frowardness
and wish I never had seen this english shore,
but think me happy in King Richard's love.

no, no, good aunt, this troubles not my soul:
it is England's subjects' sorrow I sustain,
I fear they grudge against their sovereign.

Duchess of Gloucester
fear not that, madam, England is not mutinous;

it is peopled all with subjects, not with outlaws.
though Richard (much misled by flatterers)
neglects, and throws his sceptre carelessly,
yet none dares rob him of his Kingly rule.

Duchess of Ireland
besides, your virtuous charity, fair Queen
so graciously hath won the commons' love
as only you have power to stay their rigour.

Queen
the wealth I have shall be the poor's revenue
as sure as it were confirmed by parliament.
this mine own industry, and sixty more
I daily keep at work, is all their own.
the coin I have, I send them, would it were more.
to satisfy my fears, or pay those sums
my wanton lord hath forced from needy subjects.
I would want myself. go, let those trunks be filled
with those our labours to relieve the poor.

let them be carefully distributed.
for those that now shall want, we will work again,
and tell them ere two days we shall be furnished.

Cheyney
what, is the court removing? whither goes that
trunk?

Maid
it is the Queen's charity, sir, of needful clothing
to be distributed amongst the poor.

Cheyney
why, there is one blessing yet, that England hath
a virtuous Queen, although a wanton King.
good health, sweet princess. believe me, madam,
you have quick utterance for your housewifery.
your grace affords good pennyworths sure, ye sell so
fast! pray heaven your gettings quit your swift
return.

Queen

amen; for it is from heaven I look for recompense.

Cheyney

no doubt, fair Queen, the righteous powers will
quit you for these religious deeds of charity.
but to my message:
health to your majesty! my lord the Duke
entreats your grace prepare with him to horse.

he will this night ride home to plashey house.

Duchess of Gloucester

madam, ye hear I am sent for.

Queen then begone:
leave me alone in desolation.

Duchess of Ireland

adieu, good aunt, I will see ye shortly there.
King Richard's kindred are not welcome here.

Queen

will ye all leave me then? oh woe is me,

I now am crowned a Queen of misery.

Duchess of Gloucester

where didst thou leave my husband, Cheyney,

speak!

Cheyney

accompenied with the Dukes of York and Lancaster

who, as I guess, intend to ride with him,

for which he wished me haste your grace's presence.

Duchess of Gloucester

thou seest the passions of the Queen are such

I may not too abruptly leave her highness;

but tell my lord I will see him presently.

Queen

sawest thou King Richard, Cheyney? prithee, tell me:

what revels keep his flattering minions?

Cheyney
they sit in council to devise strange fashions,
and suit themselves in wild and antic habits
such as this Kingdom never yet beheld:
french hose, italian cloaks, and spanish hats,
polonian shoes with peaks a handful long,
tied to their knees with chains of pearl and gold.
their plumed tops fly waving in the air
a cubit high above their wanton heads.
Tresilian with King Richard likewise sits
devising taxes, and strange shifts for money
to build again the hall at Westminster
to feast and revel in; and when abroad they come,
four hundred archers in a guard attends them.

Queen
oh, certain ruin of this famous Kingdom!
fond Richard, thou buildest a hall to feast in
and starvest thy wretched subjects to erect it.

woe to those men that thus incline thy soul

to these remorseless acts and deeds so foul!

Flourish [within]

Duchess of Gloucester

the trumpets tell us that King Richard is coming.

I will take my leave, fair Queen; but credit me

ere many days, again I will visit ye.

Duchess of Ireland

I will home to Langley, with my uncle York,

and there lament alone my wretched state.

Exeunt both the Duchesses

Queen

blest heaven conduct ye both. Queen Anne alone

for Richard's follies still must sigh and groan.

Exit Queen

Act III, Scene 1

Scene 1: London: the Court]

Sound a sennet. Enter King Richard, Bagot, Bushy, Greene *and* Scroope, *very richly attired in new fashions; and* Treslian, *whispering with the King. A guard of archers after them.*

King

Come, my Tresilian.

Thus like an emperor shall King Richard reign

and you so many Kings attendant on him.

our guard of archers, keep the doors, I charge ye,

let no man enter to disturb our pleasures.

thou toldest me, kind Tresilian, thou hadst devised

blank charters, to fill up our treasury

opening the chests of hoarding cormorants

that laugh to see their Kingly sovereign lack.

let us know the means, we may applaud thy wit.

Tresilian

see here, my lord: only with parchment, innocent

sheepskins. ye see here is no fraud, no clause, no

deceit in the writing.

All

why, there is nothing writ!

Tresilian

there is the trick on it!

these blank charters shall be forthwith sent

to every Shrieve through all the shires of England,

with charge to call before them presently

all landed men, freeholders, Farmers, Grasiers,

or any else that have ability.

then in your highness' name they shall be charged

to set their names, and forthwith seal these blanks.

that done, these shall return to court again,

but cartloads of money soon shall follow them.

Scroope

excellent Tresilian!

Bushy

noble lord chief justice!

Bagot

where should his grace get such a councillor!

Green

not if his beard were off! prithee Tresilian,

off with it. sfoot, thou seest we have not a beard

amongst us! thou sendest our barbers there to poll

the whole country. sfoot, let some shave thee!

Bushy

it would become thee better in faith, and make thee

look more grim when thou sitst in judgment.

Tresilian

I tell ye, gallants: I will not lose a hair of my

lordship and King Richard's favour for the pope's

revenues.

Enter the Queen Green

by your leave, there, give way to the Queen!

King

now, Anne-a-Beame, how cheers my dearest Queen?
is it holiday, my love? believe me, lords,
it is strange to take her from her sempstery;
she and her maids are all for housewifery.
shalt work no more, sweet nan, now Richard is King,
and peers and people all shall stoop to him.

we will have no more protecting uncles, trust me!
prithee look smooth and bid these nobles welcome.

Queen

whom my lord favours must to me be welcome.

King

these are our councillors, I tell ye, lady,
and these shall better grace King Richard's court
than all the doting heads that late controlled us.
thou seest already we begin to alter
the vulgar fashions of our homespun Kingdom.
I tell thee, nan, the states of christendom

shall wonder at our english royalty.

we held a council to devise these suits:
sir henry Greene devised this fashion shoe,
Bushy this peak; Bagot and Scroope set forth
this kind coherence betwixt the toe and knee
to have them chained together lovingly;
and we as sovereign did confirm them all.

suit they not quaintly, nan? sweet Queen, resolve me.

Queen
I see no fault that I dare call a fault.
but would your grace consider with advice
what you have done unto your reverent uncles?
(my fears provoke me to be bold, my lord)
they are your noble kinsmen, to revoke the
sentence were -

King
an act of folly, nan! King's words are laws.

if we infringe our word, we break our law.
no more of them, sweet Queen.

Tresilian
madam, what is done was with advice enough.
the King is now at years and hath shook off
the servile yoke of mean protectorship.

Bushy
his highness can direct himself sufficient.
why should his pleasures then be curbed by any
as if he did not understand his state?

King
they tell thee true, sweet love. come, ride with me
and see today my hall at Westminster
which we have builded now to feast our friends.

Green
do, do, good madam. prithee sweet King, let us ride

somewhither and it be but to show ourselves. sfoot,
our devices here are like jewels kept in caskets, or
good faces in masks, that grace not the owners because
they are obscured. if our fashions be not published,
what glory is in the wearing?

King
we will ride through London only to be gazed at.

fair Anne-a-Beame, you shall along with us.
at Westminster shalt see my sumptuous hall,
my royal tables richly furnished
where every day I feast ten thousand men;
to furnish out which feast I daily spend
thirty fat oxen and three hundred sheep,
with fish and fowl in numbers numberless.
not all our chronicles shall point a King
to match our bounty, state, and royalty.
or let all our successors yet to come
strive to exceed me, and if they forbid it,
let records say, only King Richard did it.

Queen

oh but, my lord, it will tire your revenues
to keep this festival a year together!

King

as many days as I write England's King
we will maintain that bounteous festival.
Tresilian, look to your blank charters speedily,
send them abroad with trusty officers;
and Bagot, see a messenger be sent
to call our uncle Woodstock home to the court.
not that we love his meddling company,
but that the raged commons loves his plainness
and should grow mutinous about these blanks.
we will have him near us. within his arrow's length,
we stand secure: we can restrain his strength.
see it be done. come, Anne, to our great hall
where Richard keeps his gorgeous festival.
[Trumpets] sound. Exeunt. Manet Tresilian Tresilian
within there ho!

Enter Crosby *and* Fleming Crosby

your lordship's pleasure?

Tresilian

what, are those blanks dispatched?

Fleming

they are all trussed up, my lord, in several

packets.

Tresilian

where is Nimble? where is that varlet?

Enter Nimble [*in peaked shoes with knee-chains*]

Nimble

as Nimble as a morris dancer, now my bells are on.

how do ye like the rattling of my chains, my lord?

Tresilian

oh, villain, thou wilt hang in chains for this.

art thou crept into the court fashion, knave?

Nimble

alas, my lord, ye know I have followed your lordship without ever a rag since ye ran away from the court once; and I pray let me follow the fashion a little, to show myself a courtier.

Tresilian

go spread those several blanks throughout the Kingdom, and here is commission with the council's hands with charge to every Shrieve and officer to assist and aid you; and when they are sealed and signed, see ye note well such men's ability as set their hands to them. inquire what rents, what lands, or what revenues they spend by the year, and let me straight receive intelligence. besides, I would have you use yourselves so cunningly to mark who grudges, or but speaks amiss of good King Richard, myself, or any of his new councillors. attach them all for privy whisperers and send them up. I have a trick in law

shall make King Richard seize into his hands
the forfeiture of all their goods and lands.
Nimble, take thou these blanks, and see you take
especial note of them.

Nimble
I will take the ditty, sir, but you shall set a note
to it, for if any man shall speak but an ill word of
anything that is written here -

Tresilian
why, ass, there is nothing.

Nimble
and would ye have them speak ill of nothing? that is
strange. but I mean, my lord, if they should but give
this paper an ill word, as to say, "I will tear this
paper", or worse, "I will rend this paper", or fouler
words than that, as to say, "I will bumfiddle your
paper," if there be any such, I have a black book for
them, my lord, I warrant ye.

Tresilian

be it your greatest care to be severe.

Crosby and Fleming, pray be diligent.

Crosby

we shall, my lord.

Nimble

but how if we meet with some ignoramus fellows,

my lord, that cannot write their minds. what shall

they do?

Tresilian

if they but set to their marks, it is good.

Nimble

we shall meddle with no women in the blanks,

shall we?

Tresilian

rich widows, none else; for a widow is as much as

man and wife.

Nimble

then a widow is a hermaphrodite, both cut and

long tail. and if she cannot write, she shall set her

mark to it?

Tresilian

what else, sir?

Nimble

but if she have a daughter, she shall set her

mother's mark to it?

Tresilian

meddle with none but men and widows, sir,

I charge ye.

Nimble

well, sir, I shall see a widow's mark then: i

never saw none yet!

Tresilian

you have your lessons perfect, now begone:

be bold and swift in execution. *Exit Tresilian* Nimble

god be ' ye, my lord. we will domineer over the

vulgar like so many saint georges over the poor dragons.

come, sirs, we are like to have a flourishing commonwealth,

in faith!

Exeunt

Act III, Scene 2: Plashey House, Essex]

Enter Woodstock, Lancaster *and* York, *at Plashey.*

Woodstock

come, my good brothers, here at plashey house

I will bid you welcome with as true a heart

as Richard with a false, and mind corrupt

disgraced our names and thrust us from his court.

Lancaster

beshrew him that repines, my lord, for me.

I lived with care at court, I now am free.

York

come, come, let us find some other talk. I think

not on it. I never slept soundly when I was amongst

them, so let them go. this house of plashey, brother,

stands in a sweet and pleasant air, in faith.

it is near the thames and circled round with trees

that in the summer serve for pleasant fans

to cool ye, and in winter strongly break the stormy winds that else would nip ye too.

Woodstock
and in faith, old York,
we have all need of some kind wintering.

we are beset (heaven shield) with many storms.
and yet these trees at length will prove to me
like Richard and his riotous minions.
their wanton heads so oft play with the winds
throwing their leaves so prodigally down,
they will leave me cold at last; and so will they
make England wretched; and, in the end, themselves.

Lancaster
if Westminster hall devour as it has begun
it were better it were ruined lime and stone.

Woodstock
afore my god, I late was certified
that at one feast was served ten thousand dishes.

York

he daily feasts, they say, ten thousand men

and every man must have his dish, at least.

Woodstock

thirty fat oxen and three hundred sheep

serve but one day's expenses.

Lancaster

a hundred scarcely can suffice his guard.

a camp of soldiers feeds not like those bowmen.

Woodstock

but how will these expenses be maintained?

York

oh, they say there are strange tricks come forth

to fetch in money. what they are, I know not.

Woodstock

you have heard of the fantastic suits they wear?

never was english King so habited.

Lancaster

we could allow his clothing, brother Woodstock,

but we have four Kings more, are equalled with him.

there is Bagot, Bushy, wanton Greene, and Scroope

in state and fashion without difference.

York

indeed, they are more than Kings; for they rule him.

Woodstock

come, come, our breaths reverberate the wind.

we talk like good divines, but cannot cure

the grossness of the sin. or shall we speak

like all-commanding wise astronomers,

and flatly say, such a day shall be fair?

and yet it rains, whether he will or no.

so may we talk; but thus will Richard do.

Enter Cheyney, *with blanks* Lancaster

how now, Cheyney, what drives thee on so fast?

Cheyney

if I durst, I would say (my lord)

Tresilian drives me, one half as ill,

I am still the pursuivant of unhappy news.

here is blank charters, my lord. I pray, behold them,

sent from King Richard and his councillors.

Woodstock

thou makest me blank at very sight of them!

what must these?

Lancaster

they appear in shape of obligations.

Cheyney

they are no less, the country is full of them.
commissions are come down to every Shrieve
to force the richest subjects of the land
to set their hands, and forthwith seal these blanks
and then the bond must afterwards be paid:
that shall confirm a due debt to the King
as much or little as they please to point it.

Lancaster
oh, strange unheard-of vild taxation!

Woodstock
who is it can help my memory a little?
has not this ever been held a principle:
"there is nothing spoke or done that has not been?"

York
it was a maxim ere I had a beard.

Woodstock
it is now found false, an open heresy!

this is a thing was never spoke nor done.

blank charters call ye them? if any age

keep but a record of this policy

(I phrase it too, too well) flat villainy,

let me be chronicled apostata,

rebellious to my god and country both!

Lancaster

how do the people entertain these blanks?

Cheyney

with much dislike, yet some for fear have signed

them; others there be, refuse and murmur strongly.

Woodstock

afore my god I cannot blame them for it.

he might as well have sent defiance to them.

oh, vulture England, wilt thou eat thine own?

can they be rebels called, that now turn head?

I speak but what I fear, not what I wish.
this foul oppression will withdraw all duty,
and in the commons' hearts hot rancours breed
to make our country's bosom shortly bleed.

Lancaster
what shall we do to seek for remedy?

York
let each man hie him to his several home
before the people rise in mutiny,
and, in the mildest part of lenity,
seek to restrain them from rebellion,
for what can else be looked for? promise redress;
that eloquence is best in this distress.

Lancaster
York counsels well. let us haste away.

the time is sick. we must not use delay.

York

let us still confer by letters.

Woodstock

content, content,

so friends may parley, even in banishment.

farewell, good brothers. Cheyney, conduct them forth.

Exuent all but Woodstock

adieu, good York and Gaunt, farewell forever.

I have a sad presage comes suddenly

that I shall never see these brothers more.

on earth, I fear, we never more shall meet.

of Edward the third's seven sons we three are left

to see our father's Kingdom ruinate.

I would my death might end the misery

my fear presageth to my wretched country.

the commons will rebel without all question,

and before my god, I have no eloquence

to stay this uproar, I must tell them plain we all are struck, but must not strike again.

Enter a Servant

how now? what news?

Servant

there is a horseman at the gate, my lord.

he comes from the King, he says, to see your grace.

Woodstock

to see me, sayest thou? a' god's name, let him

come, he brings no blank charters with him.

prithee, bid him alight and enter.

Servant

I think he dares not for fouling on his feet, my

lord, I would have him alight, but he swears as

he is a courtier, he will not off on his horseback till

the inner gate be open.

Woodstock

passion of me, that is strange. I prithee, give him

satisfaction, open the inner gate. what might this

fellow be?

Servant

some fine fool: he is attired very fantastically,

and talks as foolishly.

Woodstock

go let him in, and when your have done, bid Cheyney

come and speak with me.

Servant

I will, my lord.

Enter a Spruce Courtier on horseback

come on, sir, ye may ride into my lord's cellar now,

and ye will sir.

Courtier

prithee, fellow, stay and take my horse.

Servant

I have business for my lord, sir, I cannot.

Courtier

a rude swain, by heaven, but stay, here walks another. hearest ta, thou, fellow? is this plashey house?

Woodstock

ye should have asked that question before ye came in, sir. but this is it.

Courtier

the hinds are all most rude and gross. I prithee, walk my horse.

Woodstock

I have a little business, sir.

Courtier

thou shalt not lose by it. I will give thee a tester
for thy pains.

Woodstock

I shall be glad to earn money, sir.

Courtier

prithee, do, and know thy duty. thy head is too
saucy.

Woodstock

cry ye mercy, I did not understand your worship's
calling.

Courtier

the Duke of Gloucester lies here, does he not?

Woodstock

marry, does he, sir.

Courtier is he within?

Woodstock

he is not far off, sir. he was here even now.

Courtier

ah, very good, walk my horse well, I prithee, he has travelled hard and he is hot in faith. I will in and speak with the Duke, and pay thee presently.

Woodstock

I make no doubt sir. oh, strange metamorphosis! is it possible that this fellow that is all made of fashions should be an englishman? no marvel if he know not me, being so brave, and I so beggarly. well, I shall earn money to enrich me now and it is the first I earned, by the rood, this forty year. come on, sir, you have sweat hard about this haste, yet I think you know little of the business. why so I say! you are a very indifferent beast, you will follow any man that will lead you. now, truly, sir, you look but even

leanly on it. you feed not in Westminster hall a-days,
where so many sheep and oxen are devoured. I am afraid
they will eat you shortly, if you tarry amongst them.
you are pricked more with the spur than the provender,
I see that. I think your dwelling be at hackney when
you are at home, is it not? you know not the Duke
neither, no more than your master, and yet I think
you have as much wit as he. faith, say a man should
steal ye and feed ye fatter, could ye run away with
him lustily?
ah, your silence argues a consent, I see, by the
mass, here comes company. we had been both taken if
we had, I see.

Enter Cheyney, Courtier, *and Servants* Cheyney
saw ye not my lord at the gate, say ye?

why, I left him there but now.

Courtier

in sooth I saw no creature, sir, only an old groom

I got to walk my horse.

Cheyney

a groom, say ye! sfoot, it is my lord, the Duke.

what have ye done? this is somewhat too coarse!

your grace should be an hostler to this fellow!

Courtier

I do beseech your grace's pardon. the error was

in the mistake; your plainness did deceive me.

please it your grace to redeliver.

Woodstock

no, by my faith. I will have my money first.

promise is a promise.

Courtier

I know your grace's goodness will refuse it.

Woodstock

think not so nicely of me; indeed, I will not.

Courtier

if you so please, there is your tester.

Woodstock

if you so please, there is your horse, sir.

now pray you tell me, is your haste to me?

Courtier

most swift and serious, from his majesty.

Woodstock

what, from King Richard, my dear lord and kinsman?

go, sirrah, take you his horse, lead him to the stable,

meat him well, I will double his reward. there is twelve

pence for ye.

Servant

I thank your grace. *Exit with the horse*

Woodstock

now, sir, your business.

Courtier

his majesty commends him to your grace.

Woodstock

this same is a rare fashion you have got at court.

of whose devising was it, I pray?

Courtier

I assure your grace, the King his council sat three

days about it.

Woodstock

by my faith, their wisdoms took great pains, I assure ye.

the state was well employed the whiles, by the rood.

then this at court is all the fashion now?

Courtier

the King himself doth wear it;

whose most gracious majesty sent me in haste.

Woodstock

this peak doth strangely well become the foot.

Courtier

this peak, the King doth likewise wear, being a

polonian peak; and me did his highness pick from forth

the rest.

Woodstock

he could not have picked out such another,

I assure ye.

Courtier

I thank your grace that picks me out so well;

but as I said, his highness would request -

Woodstock

but this most fashionable chain, that links as it were
the toe and knee together?

Courtier

in a most kind coherence, so it like your grace;
for these two parts, being in operation and quality
different, as for example: the toe a disdainer or
spurner; the knee a dutiful and most humble orator.
this chain doth, as it were, so toeify the knee and so
kneeify the toe, that between both it makes a most
methodical coherence, or coherent method.

Woodstock

it is most excellent, sir, and full of art. please ye
walk in.

Courtier

my message tendered, I will tend your grace.

Woodstock

cry ye mercy, have you a message to me?

Courtier
his majesty, most affectionately, and like a royal
kinsman,
entreats your grace's presence at the court.

Woodstock
is that your message sir? I must refuse it, then.
my english plainness will not suit that place,
the court is too fine for me. my service here
will stand in better stead, to quench the fire
those blanks have made. I would they were all burnt,
or he were hanged that first devised them, sir.
they stir the country so. I dare not come
and so excuse me, sir. if the King think it ill,
he thinks amiss. I am plain Thomas still.

the rest I will tell ye as ye sit at meat.
furnish a table, Cheyney, call for wine.

come, sir, ye shall commend me to the King.

tell him I will keep these parts in peace to him.

Exeunt

Act III, Scene 3: *The market square, Dunstable*]

Enter Master Ignorance, *the Bailey of Dunstable,* Crosby, Fleming, *and* Nimble, *with blanks* . [*Officers with bills in attendance*]

Crosby

dispatch, good mr Bailey, the market is almost done,

you see. it is rumored that the blanks are come and the

rich choughs begin to flock out of the town already.

you have seen the high Shrieve's warrant and the

council's commission, and therefore I charge ye in the

King's name, be ready to assist us.

Bailey

nay, look ye sir. be not too pestiferous, I beseech

ye. I have begun myself and sealed one of your blanks

already, and by my example there is more shall follow.

I know my place and calling, my name is ignorance and

I am Bailey of dunstable. I cannot write nor read,
I confess it, mo more could my father, nor his father
nor none of the ignorants this hundred year, I assure ye.

Nimble
your name proclaims no less, sir, and it has been a
most learned generation.

Bailey
though I cannot write, I have set my mark, ecce
signum! read it I beseech ye.

Nimble
the mark of simon ignorance, the Bailey of dunstable,
being a sheephook with a tarbox at end on it.

Bailey
very right. it was my mark ever since I was an
innocent and therefore, as I say, I have begun and
will assist ye. for here be rich whoresons in the
town, I can tell ye, that will ye the slip and ye look

not to it.

Fleming

we therefore presently will divide ourselves. you two shall stay here whiles we, mr ignorance, with some of your brethren, the men of dunstable, walk through the town noting the carriage of the people. they say there are strange songs and libels cast about the market place against my lord Tresilian and the rest of the King's young counsellors. if such there be, we will have some aid and attach them speedily.

Bailey

ye shall do well, sir, and for your better aiding, if you can but find out my brother, mr ignoramus, he will be most pestiferous unto ye, I assure ye.

Crosby

I am afraid he will not be found, sir, but we will inquire. come, fellow Fleming and Nimble, look to the whisperers I charge ye.

Nimble

I warrant ye. come, mr Bailey, let your billmen

retire till we call them; and you and I will here

shadow ourselves and write down their speeches.

Bailey

nay, you shall write and I will mark, sir.

Enter a Farmer, a Butcher, and a Grazier, very hastily

and see, see, here come some already, all rich

chubbs, by the mass. I know them all, sir.

Farmer

tarry, tarry, good neighbours, take a knave with

ye! what a murrain! is there a bear broke loose in

the town, that ye make such haste from the market?

Grasier

a bear? no, nor a lion baited neither. I tell ye,

neighbour, I am more afraid of the bee than the bear.

there is wax to be used today, and I have no seal about me. I may tell you in secret, here is a dangerous world towards. neighbour, you are a Farmer, and I hope here is none but god and good company. we live in such a state, I am even almost weary of all, I assure ye. here is my other neighbour, the Butcher, that dwells at hockley, has heard his landlord tell strange tidings. we shall be all hoisted and we tarry here, I can tell ye.

Nimble

they begin to murmur. I will put them down all for whisperers. mr Bailey, what is he that talks so?

Bailey

his name is cowtail, a rich Grasier, and dwells here hard by at leighton buzzard.

Nimble

cowtail, a Grasier, dwelling at leighton, buzzard, my Bailey?

Bailey

right, sir. listen again, sir.

Farmer

ah, sirrah? and what said the good knight your
landlord, neighbour?

Butcher

marry, he said, but I will not stand to anything, I
tell ye that aforehand. he said that King Richard's
new counsellors (god amend them) had crept into honester
men's places than themselves were; and that the King's
uncles and the old lords were all banished the
court. and he said flatly we should never have a
merry world as long as it was so.

Nimble

Butcher, you and your landlord will be both hanged
for it.

Butcher

and then he said there is one Tresilian, a lawyer,

that has crept in amongst them and is now a lord forsooth,

and he has sent down into every country of England

a sort of black chapters.

Farmer

black chapters? a' god's name, neighbour, out

of what black book were they taken?

Grasier

come, come. they are blank charters, neighbours.

I heard of them afore, and therefore I made

such haste away. they are sent down to the high

Shrieve with special charge that every man that is of

any credit or worship in the country must set their

hands and seal to them, for what intent I know not. I

say no more, I smell something.

Farmer

well, well, my masters. let us be wise. we are

not all one man's sons. they say there are whispering
knaves abroad. let us hie us home, for I assure ye,
it was told me where I broke my fast this afternoon that
there were above three score gentlemen in our shire
that had set their hands and seals to those blank
charters already.

Grasier
now god amend them for it, they have given an ill
example we shall be forced to follow.

Butcher
I would my wife and children were at jerusalem
with all the wealth! I would make shift for one, I warrant
them. come, neighbours, let us be gone.

Nimble
step forward with your bills, mr Bailey. not too
fast, sirs! I charge ye in the King's name to stand
till we have done with ye.

Omnes

saint benedicite, what must we do now, trow?

Bailey

be not so pestiferous, my good friends and neighbours.

you are men of wealth and credit in the country

and therefore as I myself and others have begun, I

charge ye in his highness' name presently to set your

hands and seals to these blank charters.

Grasier

jesu, receive my soul, I am departed!

Farmer

I am even struck to at heart too.

Butcher

alas, sir, we are poor men, what should our hands

do?

Bailey

there is no harm I warrant ye. what need you fear,

when ye see Bailey ignorance has sealed before ye?

Grasier

I pray ye let us see them, sir.

Nimble

here, ye bacon-fed pudding-eaters, are ye afraid

of a sheepskin?

Grasier

mass! it is somewhat darkly written.

Farmer

ay, ay, it was done in the night, sure.

Grasier

mass, neighbours, here is nothing that I see.

Butcher

and can it be any harm, think ye, to set your

hands to nothing? these blank charters are but little
pieces of parchment. let us set our marks to them, and
be rid of a knave's company.

Farmer
as good at first as last, we can be but undone.

Grasier
ay and our own hands undoes us, that is the
worst on it. lend us your pen, sir.

Butcher
we must all venture, neighbours, there is no
remedy.

Nimble
they grumble as they do it. I must put them down
for whisperers and grumblers. come, have you done yet?

Grasier
ay, sir. (would you and they were sodden for my

swine!)

Nimble

here is wax, then. I will seal them for ye, and you

shall severally take them off, and then deliver them

as your deeds.

come you boar's grease, take off this

seal here. so! this is your deed.

Farmer

faith, sir, in some respect it is and it is not.

Nimble

and this is yours.

Grasier

ay, sir, against my will, I swear.

Nimble

ox-jaw, take off this seal! you will deliver your

deed with a good conscience?

Butcher

there it is, sir, against my conscience, god is my

witness. I hope ye have done with us now, sir.

Nimble

no, ye caterpillars, we have worse matters against

ye yet. sirrah, you know what your landlord told ye,

concerning my lord Tresilian, and King Richard's new

favourites; and more than that, you know your own

speeches; and therefore mr Bailey, let some of your

billmen away with them to the high Shrieve's presently,

either to put in bail, or be sent up to the court

for privy whisperers.

Bailey

their offenses are most pestiferous. away with

them!

Omnes

now out alas, we shall all to hanging, sure!

Nimble

hanging? nay, that is the least on it, ye shall

tell me that a twelvemonth hence else.

Exeunt Officers with the three men

stand close, mr Bailey; we shall catch more of these

traitors presently.

Bailey

you shall find me most pestiferous to assist ye;

and so I pray ye, commend my service to your good lord

and master. come, sir, stand close; I see -

Enter a Schoolmaster and a Servingman Servant

nay, sweet mr Schoolmaster, let us hear it again, I

beseech ye.

Schoolmaster

patientia. you are a servingman, I am a scholar. I

have shown art and learning in these verses, I assure

ye, and yet if they were well searched they are little

better than libels. but the carriage of a thing is
all, sir. I have covered them rarely.

Servant
sfoot, the country is so full of intelligencers that
two men can scarce walk together but they are attached
for whisperers.

Schoolmaster
this paper shall wipe their noses, and they shall
not boo to a goose for it; for I will have these verses
sung to their faces by one of my schoolboys, wherein
I will tickle them all, in faith. shalt hear else.
but first let us look there be no pitchers with ears,
nor needles with eyes about us.

Servant
come, come, all is safe I warrant ye.

Schoolmaster
mark then. here I come over them for their blank

charters; shalt hear else.

will ye buy any parchment knives?
we sell for little gain:
whoever are weary of their lives
they will rid them of their pain.
blank charters they are called
a vengeance on the villain,
I would he were both flayed and balled:
god bless my lord Tresilian.

is it not rare?

Nimble
oh rascals! they are damned three hundred fathom deep
already.

Schoolmaster
nay, look ye, sir, there can be no exceptions taken
for this last line helps all, wherein with a kind of
equivocation I say "god bless my lord Tresilian." do

ye mark, sir? now here, in the next verse I run over

all these flatterers in the court by name. ye shall

see else:

a poison may be Green,

but Bushy can be no fagot:

god mend the King and bless the Queen,

and it is no matter for Bagot.

for Scroope, he does no good;

but if you will know the villain,

his name is now to be understood:

god bless my lord Tresilian.

how like ye this, sir?

Servant

most excellent, in faith, sir.

Nimble

oh, traitors! mr Bailey, do your authority.

Bailey

two most pestiferous traitors. lay hold of them,
I charge ye.

Servant
what mean ye, sir?

Nimble
nay, talk not, for if ye had a hundred lives they
were all hanged. ye have spoken treason in the ninth
degree.

Schoolmaster
treason? patientia, good sir, we spoke not a word.

Bailey
be not so pestiferous. mine ears have heard your
examinations, wherein you uttered most shameful treason,
for ye said, "god bless my lord Tresilian."

Schoolmaster
I hope there is no treason in that, sir.

Nimble

that shall be tried. come, mr Bailey: their hands

shall be bound under a horse's belly and sent up to

him presently, they will both be hanged, I warrant them.

Servant

well, sir, if we be: we will speak more ere we be

hanged, in spite of ye.

Nimble

ay, ay, when you are hanged, speak what you will, we

care not. away with them.

Exeunt Schoolmaster and Servingman [with Officer]

ye see, mr Bailey, what knaves are abroad now you are

here: it is time to look about, ye see.

Bailey

I see there are knaves abroad indeed, sir. I speak

for mine own part. I will do my best to reform the

pestiferousness of the time, and as for example I have

set my mark to the charters, so will I set mine eyes
to observe these dangerous cases.

Enter one a-whistling Nimble
close again, mr Bailey: here comes another whisperer,
I see by some, oh villain! he whistles treason!
I will lay hold of him myself.

Whistler
out alas, what do ye mean, sir?

Nimble
a rank traitor, mr Bailey: lay hold on him, for he
has most erroneously and rebelliously whistled
treason.

Whistler
whistled treason! alas, sir, how can that be?

Bailey
very easily, sir. there is a piece of treason that

flies up and down the country in the likeness of a ballad, and this being the very tune of it, thou hast whistled treason.

Whistler

alas, sir, ye know I spake not a word.

Nimble

that is all one, if any man whistles treason it is as ill as speaKing it. mark me, mr Bailey: the bird whistles that cannot speak, and yet there be birds in a mAnner that can speak too. your raven will call ye rascal, your crow will call ye knave, mr Bailey. ergo, he that can whistle can speak, and therefore this fellow hath both spoke and whistled treason. how say you, Bailey ignorance?

Bailey

ye have argued well, sir, but ye shall hear me sift him nearer, for I do not think but there are greater heads in this matter, and therefore, my good fellow,

be not pestiferous, but say and tell the truth. who
did set you a-work? or who was the cause of your whistling?
or did any man say to you, "go whistle"?

Whistler
not any man, woman or child, truly, sir.

Bailey
no? how durst you whistle, then? or what cause had
ye to do so?

Whistler
the truth is, sir. I had lost two calves out of my
pasture, and being in search for them, from the top of
the hill I might spy you two in the bottom here, and
took ye for my calves sir; and that made me come
whistling down for joy, in hope I had found them.

Nimble
more treason yet! he take a courtier and a Bailey
for two calves! to limbo with him. he shall be quartered

and then hanged.

Whistler

good mr Bailey, be pitiful.

Bailey

why, look ye, sir, he makes a pitiful fellow of a

Bailey too! away with him. yet stay awhile, here

comes your fellows, sir.

Enter Crosby *and* Fleming Crosby

now, mr Bailey, are your blanks sealed yet?

Bailey

they are, sir, and we have done this day most

strange and pestiferous service, I assure ye, sir.

Fleming

your care shall be rewarded. come, fellow Nimble,

we must to court about other employments. there are

already thirteen thousand blanks signed and returned to the

Shrieves, and seven hundred sent up to the court for
whisperers, out of all which my lord will fetch a
round sum, I doubt it not. come, let us away.

Nimble
ay, ay. we will follow. come, ye sheepbiter. here is
a traitor of all traitors that not only speaks, but
has whistled treason. come, come, sir, I will spoil
your whistle, I warrant ye!

Exeunt

Act IV, Scene 1

[Scene 1: London]

Enter Tresilian *with writings, and a man with bags of money.*

Tresilian
sirrah, are the bags sealed?

Servant yes, my lord.

Tresilian

then take my keys; and lock the money in my study

safe. bar and make sure, I charge ye, so, be gone.

Servant

I will, my lord.

Tresilian

so, seven thousand pounds from Bedford, Buckingham and

Oxford shires, these blanks already have returned the

King. so then there is four for me and three for him; our

pains in this must needs be satisfied. good husbands

will make hay while the sun shines and so must we, for

thus conclude these times. so men be rich enough,

they are good enough. let fools make conscience how

they get their coin. I will please the King and keep me

in his grace, for princes' favours purchase land apace.

these blanks that I have scattered in the realm

shall double his revenues to the crown.

Enter Bushy *and* Scroope Scroope

now, lord Tresilian, is this coin come yet?

Bushy

King Richard wants money, you are too slack,

Tresilian.

Tresilian

some shires have sent; and more, my lords, will

follow. these sealed blanks I now have turned to

bonds and these shall down to norfolk presently.

the choughs with much ado have signed and sealed,

and here is a secret note my men have sent

of all their yearly estates amounts unto,

and by this note I justly tax their bonds.

here is a fat whoreson in his russet slops

and yet may spend three hundred pounds by the year:

the third of which the hogs-face owes the King.

here is his bond for it, with his hand and seal

and so by this I will sort each several sum:

the thirds of all shall to King Richard come.
how like you this, my lords?

Scroope
most rare, Tresilian. hang them, cods-heads,
shall they spend money and King Richard lack it?

Bushy
are not their lives and lands and livings his?
then rack them thoroughly.

Tresilian
oh, my lords, I have set a trick afoot for ye; and
ye follow it hard and get the King to sign it, you will
be all Kings by it.

Bushy
the farming out the Kingdom? tush, Tresilian, it is
half granted already, and had been fully concluded,
had not the messenger returned so unluckily from the

Duke of Gloucester, which a little moved the King at his
uncle's stubborness. but to make all whole, we have
left that smooth-faced flattering Greene to follow
him close and he will never leave till he has done it,
I warrant ye.

Scroope
there is no question on it; King Richard will betake
himself to a yearly stipend, and we four by lease must
rent the Kingdom.

Enter Bagot Bushy
rent it, ay rack it too, ere we forfeit our
leases, and we had them once. how now, Bagot, what
news?

Bagot
all rich and rare: the realm must be divided presently
and we four must farm it. the leases are a-making
and for seven thoudand pounds a month the Kingdom is our own,
boys.

Bushy

sfoot, let us differ for no price and it were

seventy thousand pounds a month we will make somebody pay for it.

Scroope

where is his highness?

Bagot

he will be here presently to seal the writings.

he is a little angry that the Duke comes not, but that

will vanish quickly. on with your soothest faces, ye

wenching rascals. humour him finely, and you are all

made by it.

Enter King Richard, Greene, *and others* Bushy

see, see! he comes; and that flattering hound

Greene close at his elbow.

Scroope

come, come, we must all flatter if we mean to live by it.

King

our uncle will not come, then?

Green

that was his answer, flat and resolute.

King

was ever subject so audacious?

Bagot

and can your grace, my lord, digest these wrongs?

King

yes, as a mother that beholds her child

dismembered by a bloody tyrant's sword.

I tell thee, Bagot, in my heart remains

such deep impressions of his churlish taunts

as nothing can remove the gall thereof

till with his blood mine eyes be satisfied.

Green

sfoot, raise powers, my lord, and fetch him
thence perforce.

King

I dare not, Greene, for whilst he keeps in the
country there is no meddling, he is so well beloved
as all the realm will rise in arms with him.

Tresilian

sfoot, my lord, an you would fain have him, I have a
trick shall fetch him from his house at plashey in
spite of all his favourites.

Green

let us have it, Tresilian, thy wit must help or all is
dashed else.

Tresilian

then thus, my lord: whiles the Duke securely revels

in the country, we will have some trusty friends disguise
themselves like masquers and this night ride down to plashey,
and in the name of some near-adjoining
friends, offer their sports to make him merry, which
he no doubt will thankfully accept. then in the masque
we will have it so devised (the dance being done and the
room voided) then upon some occasion single the Duke
alone, thrust him in a masquing suit, clap a vizard on
his face, and so convey him out of the house at
pleasure.

Scroope
how if he cry, and call for help?

Tresilian
what serves your drums but to drown his cries?

and, being in a masque, it will never be suspected.

Green
good, in faith, and to help it, my lord Lapoole,

the governor of calais, is new come over, who, with a troop of soldiers closely ambushed in the woods, near the house, shall shrowd themselves till the masque be ended. then, the Duke being attached, he shall be there ready to receive him, hurry him away to the thames' side, where a ship shall be laid ready for his coming, so clap him under hatches, hoist sails, and secretly convey him out of the realm to calais, and so by this means ye shall prevent all mischief, for neither of your uncles nor any of the Kingdom shall know what is become of him.

King
I like it well, sweet Greene; and by my crown
we will be in the masque ourself, and so shall you.
get horses ready, this night we will ride to plashey;
but see ye carry it close and secretly,
for whilst this plot is a-working for the Duke
I will set a trap for York and Lancaster.
go, Tresilian, let proclamations straight be sent
wherein thou shalt accuse the Dukes of treason,

and then attach, condemn, and close imprison them.
lest the commons should rebel against us
we will send unto the King of France for aid,
and in requital we will surrender up
our forts of guynes and calais to the french.
let crown and Kingdom waste, yea life and all,
before King Richard see his true friends fall.
give order our disguises be made ready,
and let Lapoole provide the ship and soldiers.

we will not sleep, by heaven, till we have seized him.

Bushy
(sfoot, urge our suit again, he will forget it
else.)

King
these traitors once surprised, then all is sure:

our Kingdom is quiet and your state is secure.

Green

most true, sweet King: and then your grace, as you promised, farming out the Kingdom to us four shall not need to trouble yourself with any business, this old turkey-cock Tresilian shall look to the law, and we will govern the land most rarely.

King

so, sir. the love of thee and these, my dearest Greene, hath won King Richard to consent to that for which all foreign Kings will point at us.
and of the meanest subject of our land
we shall be censured strangely, when they tell
how our great father toiled his royal person
spending his blood to purchase towns in France;
and we his son, to ease our wanton youth
become a landlord to this warlike realm,
rent out our Kingdom like a pelting farm
that erst was held, as fair as babylon,
the maiden conqueress to all the world.

Green

sfoot, what need you care what the world talks?

you still retain the name of King, and if any disturb

ye, we four comes presently from the four parts of the Kingdom,

with four puissant armies to assist you.

King

you four must be all then, for I think nobody else

will follow you, unless it be to hanging!

Green

why Richard, King Richard, will ye be as good as

your word, and seal the writings? sfoot, and thou

dost not and I do not join with thine uncles and turn

traitor, would I might be turned to a toadstool.

King

very well, sir. they did well to choose you for

their orator, that has King Richard's love and heart

in keeping. your suit is granted, sir. let us see the

writings.

All

they are here, my lord.

King

view them Tresilian, then we will sign and seal

them. look to your bargain, Greene, and be no loser,

for if ye forfeit or run behind hand with me, I swear

I will both imprison and punish ye soundly.

Green

forfeit, sweet King? 'sblood, I will sell their

houses ere I will forfeit my lease, I warrant thee.

King

if they be stubborn, do, and spare not. rack them

soundly and we will maintain it. remember ye not the

proviso enacted in our last parliament, that no statute,

were it never so profitable for the commonwealth

should stand in any force against our proceedings?

Green

it is true, my lord, then what should hinder ye to

accomplish anything that may best please your Kingly

spirit to determine?

King

true, Greene, and we will do it in spite of them.

is it just, Tresilian?

Tresilian

most just, my liege. these gentlemen here, sir

henry Greene, sir Edward Bagot, sir william Bushy, and

sir Thomas Scroope, all jointly here stand bound to

pay your majesty, or your deputy, wherever you remain,

seven thousand pounds a month for this your Kingdom; for which

your grace, by these writings, surrenders to their

hands: all your crown lands, lordships, manors, rents,

taxes, subsidies, fifteens, imposts, foreign customs,

staples for wool, tin, lead, and cloth; all forfeitures

of goods or lands confiscate, and all other duties that is, shall, or may appertain to the King or crown's revenues, and for non-payment of the sum or sums aforesaid, your majesty to seize the lands and goods of the said gentlemen above named, and their bodies to be imprisoned at your grace's pleasure.

King

how like you that, Greene? believe me, if you fail,

I will not favour ye a day.

Green

I will ask no favour at your hands, sir.

ye shall have your money at your day, and then do your worst, sir!

King

it is very good. set to your hands and seals.

Tresilian, we make you our deputy to receive this money.

look strictly to them, I charge ye.

Tresilian

if the money come not to my hands at the time

appointed, I will make them smoke for it.

Green

ay, ay, you are an upright justice, sir, we fear

ye not. here, my lord, they are ready, signed and sealed.

Tresilian

deliver them to his majesty all together, as your

special deeds.

Omnes

we do, with humble thanks unto his majesty that

makes us tenants to so rich a lordship.

King

keep them, Tresilian; now will we sign and seal

to you. never had english subjects such a landlord.

Green

nor ever had english King such subjects as we four,
that are able to farm a whole Kingdom and pay him rent for it.

King
look that ye do. we shall expect performance
speedily. there is your indenture, signed and sealed,
which as our Kingly deed we here deliver.

Green
thou never didst a better deed in thy life, sweet
bully, thou mayst now live at ease, we will toil for
thee, and send thy money in tumbling.

King
we shall see your care, sir.
reach me the map, we may allot their portions,
and part the realm amongst them equally.
you four shall here by us divide yourselves
into the nine and thirty shires and counties of my Kingdom, parted
thus: (come stand by me and mark those shires assigned
ye). Bagot, thy lot: betwixt the thames and sea thus

lies: Kent, Surrey, sussex, hampshire, berkshire,
wiltshire, dorsetshire, somersetshire, devonshire,
cornwall, those parts are thine as amply, Bagot, as
the crown is mine.

Bagot
all thanks, love, duty to my princely sovereign.

King
Bushy, from thee shall stretch his government
over these lands that lie in wales, together
with our counties of Gloucester, worcester, hereford,
shropshire, staffordshire and cheshire. there is thy lot.

Bushy
thanks to my King that thus hath honoured me.
sir Thomas Scroope, from trent to tweed thy lot
is parted thus: all Yorkshire, derbyshire, lancashire,
cumberland, westmoreland, and Northumberland.

receive thy lot, thy state and government.

Scroope

with faith and duty to your highness' throne.

King

now, my Greene, what have I left for thee?

Green

sfoot, and you will give me nothing, then goodnight
landlord! since ye have served me last, and I be not
the last shall pay your rent, never trust me!

King

I kept thee last to make thy part the greatest.
see here, sweet Greene:

these shires are thine, even from the thames to trent:
thou here shalt lie, in the middle of my land.

Green

that is best in the winter. is there any pretty wenches in my government?

King

guess that by this: thou hast London, middlesex,
essex, suffolk, norfolk, cambridgeshire,
hertfordshire, bedfordshire, bucKinghamshire,
oxfordshire, northamptonshire; rutlandshire,
leicestershire, warwickshire, huntingdonshire,
and lincolnshire. there is your portion, sir.

Green

'slid, I will rule like a King amongst them,
and thou shalt reign like an emperor over us.

King

thus have I parted my whole realm amongst ye.
be careful of your charge and government.
and now to attach our stubborn uncles,
let warrants be sent down, Tresilian,
for Gaunt and York, Surrey and Arundel
whiles we this night at plashey suddenly

surprise plain Woodstock. being parted thus

we shall with greater ease arrest and take them.

your places are not sure while they have breath,

therefore pursue them hard: those traitors gone,

the staves are broke the people lean upon,

and you may guide and rule then at your pleasures.

away to plashey, let our masque be ready.

beware plain Thomas, for King Richard comes

resolved with blood to wash all former wrongs.

Exeunt

Act IV, Scene 2: Plashey House, Essex]

Enter Woodstock *and his* Duchess, *with a gentleman* , Cheyney *and others*
Woodstock

the Queen so sick! come, come, make haste good

wife, thou wilt be belated, sure, it is night already!

on with thy cloak and mask! to horse, to horse!

Duchess of Gloucester

good troth, my lord I have no mind to ride.
I have been dull and heavy all this day,
my sleeps were troubled with sad dreams last night,
and I am full or fear and heaviness.

pray let me ride tomorrow.

Woodstock
what, and the Queen so sick? away for shame!

stay for a dream? thou hast dreamt I am sure ere this!

Duchess of Gloucester
never so fearful were my dreams till now.
had they concerned myself, my fears were past;
but you were made the object of mine eye
and I beheld you murdered cruelly.

Woodstock ha, murdered?
alack, good lady, didst thou dream of me?

take comfort, then, all dreams are contrary.

Duchess of Gloucester
pray god it prove so, for my soul is fearful,
the vision did appear so lively to me.
methoughts as you were ranging through the woods
an angry lion with a herd of wolves
had in an instant round encompassed you;
when to your rescue, against the course of kind,
a flock of silly sheep made head against them,
bleating for help, against whom the forest King
roused up his strength, and slew both you and them.

this fear affrights me.

Woodstock
afore my god thou art foolish, I will tell thee all
thy dream. thou knowest last night we had some private
talk about the blanks the country is taxed withal,
where I compared the state (as now it stands,
meaning King Richard and his harmful flatterers)

unto a savage herd of ravening wolves,

the commons to a flock of silly sheep

who, whilst their slothful shepherd careless stood,

those forest thieves broke in, and sucked their blood.

and this thy apprehension took so deep

the form was portrayed lively in thy sleep.

come, come, it is nothing. what, are the horses ready?

Cheyney

they are, my lord.

Woodstock

where is the gentleman that brought this message?

where lies the Queen, sir?

Servant

at sheen, my lord: most sick, and so much altered

as those about her fear her sudden death.

Woodstock

forfend it heaven! away, make haste I charge ye.
what, weeping now? afore my god thou art fond!

come, come, I know thou art no augurer of ill.
dry up thy tears, this kiss, and part. farewell!

Duchess of Gloucester
that farewell from your lips to me sounds ill.
wherever I go, my fears will follow still.

Woodstock
see her to horseback, Cheyney.
Exeunt Duchess *and the rest. Manet* Woodstock
before my god, it is late,
and but the important business craves such haste,
she had not gone from plashey house tonight.
but woe is me the good Queen Anne is sick
and (by my soul) my heart is sad to hear it:
so good a lady, and so virtuous,
this realm for many ages could not boast of.
her charity hath stayed the commons' rage

that would ere this have shaken Richard's chair
or set all England on a burning fire.
and, before my god, I fear, when she is gone
this woeful land will all to ruin run.

Enter Cheney
how now, Cheyney! what, is thy lady gone yet?

Cheyney
she is, my lord, with much unwillingness,
and it is so dark I cannot blame her grace.
the lights of heaven are shut in pitchy clouds
and flakes of fire run tilting through the sky
like dim ostents to some great tragedy.

Woodstock
god bless good Anne-a-Beame. I fear her death
will be the tragic scene the sky foreshows us.
when Kingdoms change, the very heavens are
troubled.
pray god King Richard's wild behaviour

force not the powers of heaven to frown upon us.
my prayers are still for him. what thinkest thou,
Cheyney. may not plain Thomas live a time, to see
this state attain her former royalty?
before god I doubt it not. my heart is merry,
and I am suddenly inspired for mirth.

ha, what sport shall we have tonight, Cheyney?

Cheyney
I am glad to see your grace addicted so
for I have news of sudden mirth to tell ye
which, till I heard ye speak, I durst not utter:

we shall have a masque tonight, my lord.

Woodstock
ha, a masque sayest thou? what are they, Cheyney?

Cheyney
it seems, my lord, some country gentlemen,

to show their dear affection to your grace
proffer their sports this night to make you merry.
their drums have called for entrance twice already.

Woodstock
are they so near? I prithee let them enter.
tell them we do embrace their loves most kindly.

give order through the house that all observe them.
we must accept their loves, although the times
are no way suited now for masks and revels.
what, ho, within there!

Enter Servants Servant my lord?

Woodstock
prepare a banquet: call for lights and music. [*Exit a Servant*]
they come in love, and we will accept it so.

some sports does well, we are all too full of woe.

Enter Cheyney Cheyney

they are come, my lord.

Woodstock

they all are welcome, Cheyney, set me a chair.

we will behold their sports in spite of care.

Flourish [of] cornets. Then a great shout and winding of horns. Then enter Cynthia Cynthia

from the clear orb of our ethereal sphere

bright cynthia comes to hunt and revel here.

the groves of calydon and arden woods

of untamed monsters, wild and savage herds,

we and our knights have freed, and hither come

to hunt these forests, where we hear there lies

a cruel tusked boar, whose terror flies

through this large Kingdom, and with fear and dread

strikes her amassed greatness pale and dead.

and, having viewed from far these towers of stone,

we heard the people midst their joy and moan

extol to heaven a faithful prince and peer

that keeps a court of love and pity here.

reverend and mild his looks: if such there be

this state directs, great prince, that you are he;

and ere our knights to this great hunting go,

before your grace they would some pastime show

in sprightly dancing. thus they bade me say

and wait an answer to return or stay.

Woodstock

nay, for heaven's pity let them come, I prithee.

pretty device, in faith! stand by, make room there!

stir, stir, good fellows, each man to his task!

we shall have a clear night, the moon directs

the masque.

Music. Enter King, Greene, Bushy, Bagot, *like Diana's knights, led in by four other knights,*

in green, with horns about their necks and boarspears in their hands.

Woodstock

ha, country sports say ye? before god it is courtly.

a general welcome, courteous gentlemen.

and when I see your faces, I will give each man more
particular. if your entertainment fail your merit,
I must ask pardon: my lady is from home
and most of my attendance waiting on her.
but we will do what we can to bid you welcome.
afore my god, it joys my heart to see
amidst these days of woe and misery
ye find a time for harmless mirth and sport.
but it is your loves, and we will be thankful for it.
ah, sirrah, ye come like knights to hunt the boar indeed;
and heaven he knows we had need of helping hands,
so many wild boars roots and spoil our lands
that England almost is destroyed by them.

I care not if King Richard heard me speak it:
I wish his grace all good, high heaven can tell,
but there is a fault in some, alack the day.
his youth is led by flatterers much astray.
but he is our King and god's great deputy,
and if ye hunt to have me second ye
in any rash attempt against his state,

afore my god, I will never consent unto it.

I ever yet was just and true to him,

and so will still remain, what is now amiss

our sins have caused, and we must bide heaven's will.

I speak my heart: I am plain Thomas still.

come, come, a hall, and music there! your dance being

done,

a banquet stands prepared to bid you welcome.

Music. They dance. Then a drum [heard] afar off; [and] enter Cheyney
Woodstock

how now, Cheyney! is this banquet ready?

Cheyney

there is no time, I fear, for banqueting.

my lord, I wish your grace be provident,

I fear your person is betrayed, my lord.

the house is round beset with armed soldiers.

Woodstock ha, soldiers?

afore my god, the commons all are up, then.

they will rebel against the King, I fear me,

and flock to me to back their bold attempts.
go arm the household, Cheyney. *Exit* Cheyney
hear me, gentlemen.

before god I do not like this whispering.
if your intents be honest, show your faces.

King
guard fast the doors and seize him presently!
this is the cave, that keeps the tusked boar
that roots up England's vineyards uncontrolled.
Bagot, arrest him! if for help he cry
drown all his words, with drums, confusedly.

Woodstock
am I betrayed?

Bagot
ye cannot escape, my lord, the toils are pitched
and all your household fast in hold ere this.
Thomas of Woodstock: Duke of Gloucester,

earl of cambridge and of bucKingham,
I here arrest thee in King Richard's name
of treason to the crown, his state and realm.

Woodstock
I will put in bail, and answer to the law.
speak, is King Richard here?

All
no, no, my lord, away with him!

Woodstock
villains, touch me not!
I am descended of the royal blood, King Richard's uncle,
his grandsire's son; his princely father's brother.

becomes it princes to be led like slaves?

King
put on a vizard. stop his cries.

Woodstock

ha, who bids them so? I know that voice full

well.

afore my god, false men, King Richard is here!

turn thee, thou headstrong youth, and speak again!

by thy dead father's soul I charge thee hear me

so heaven may help me at my greatest need

as I have wished thy good and England's safety.

Bagot

you are still deceived, my lord, the King is

not here.

Bushy

on with his masquing suit, and bear him hence.

we will lead ye fairly to King Richard's presence.

Woodstock

nay, from his presence to my death you will lead me;

and I am pleased I shall not live to see
my country's ruin, and his misery.
thou hearest me well, proud King, and well mayst
boast that thou betrayedest me here so suddenly,
for had I known thy secret treachery
nor thou, nor these thy flattering minions,
with all your strengths had wronged plain Woodstock
thus. but use your wills. your uncles Gaunt and
York will give you thanks for this; and the poor commons,
when they shall hear of these your unjust proceedings.

King
stop his mouth, I say, we will hear no more.

Woodstock
good heaven, forgive me, pray ye forbear awhile
I will speak but one word more, indeed I will.
some man commend me to my virtuous wife
tell her her dreams have taken effect indeed:
by wolves and lions now must Woodstock bleed.

King

deliver him to Lapoole. the ship lies ready.

convey him over to calais speedily,

there use him as we gave directions.

sound up your drums, our hunting sports are done,

and when you are past the house, cast by your habits

and mount your horses with all swiftest haste.

the boar is taken, and our fears are past.

Exeunt

Act IV, Scene 3: Sheen House.]

Enter Crosby, Fleming, *and* Nimble Crosby

come sirs, attend, my lord is coming forth.

the high Shrieves of Kent and Northumberland

with twenty gentlemen are all arrested

for privy whisperers against the state;

in which I know my lord will find some trick

to seize their goods, and then there is work for us.

Nimble

nay, there will be work for the hangman first; then

we rifle the goods, and my lord seizes the lands.

if these seven hundred whisperers that are taken come off

lustily, he will have the devil and all shortly.

Enter Tresilian, *with the Shrieves of Kent and Northumberland, with Officers.*

Fleming

see, see, they are coming.

Tresilian

call for a marshal there! commit the traitors.

Shrieve of Kent
we do beseech your honour hear us speak.

Tresilian
sir, we will not hear ye. the proof is too plain
against ye. becomes it you, sir, being Shrieve of
Kent, to stay the blanks King Richard sent abroad,
revile our messengers, refuse the charters,
and spurn like traitors against the King's decrees?

Shrieve of Kent
my lord: I plead our ancient liberties
recorded and enrolled in the King's crown office,
wherein the men of Kent are clear discharged
of fines, fifteens, or any other taxes:

forever given them by the conqueror.

Tresilian

you are still deceived: those charters were not sent
to abrogate your ancient privilege,
but for his highness' use they were devised
to gather and collect amongst his subjects
such sums of money as they well might spare,
and he in their defence must hourly spend.
is not the subjects' wealth at the King's will?

what, is he lord of lives and not of lands?
is not his high displeasure present death?

and dare ye stir his indignation so?

Shrieve of Northumberland
we are free-born, my lord, yet do confess
our lives and goods, are at the King's dispose:
but how, my lord, like to a gentle prince
to take or borrow what we best may spare;
and not, like bondslaves, force it from our hands.

Tresilian

presumptuous traitors, that will we try on you.
will you set limits to the King's high pleasure?

away to prison! seize their goods and lands.

Shrieve of Kent
much good may it do ye, my lord. the care is
taken; as good die there as here abroad be slain.

Shrieve of Northumberland
well, god forgive both you and us, my lord:
your hard oppressions have undone the state
and made all England poor and desolate.

Tresilian
why suffer ye their speech? to prison hie!
there let them perish, rot, consume, and die!
Exeunt [Officers] with the Shrieves
art thou there, Nimble?

Nimble

I am here, my lord. and since your lordship is now

employed to punish traitors, I am come to present myself unto you.

Tresilian

what, for a traitor?

Nimble

no, my lord, but for a discoverer of the strangest

traitor that was ever heard of, for by the plain

arithmetic of my capacity, I have found out the

very words a traitor spoke that has whistled treason.

Tresilian

how is that, whistle treason?

Nimble

most certain, my lord, I have a trick for it: if a

carman do but whistle, I will find treason in it,

I warrant ye.

Tresilian

thou art a rare statesman. Nimble, thou hast a
reaching head.

Nimble
I will put treason into any man's head, my lord, let
him answer it as he can. and then, my lord, we have
got a Schoolmaster, that teaches all the country to
sing treason, and like a villain he says:
god bless your lordship.

Tresilian
thou art a most strange discoverer. where are these
traitors?

Nimble
all in prison, my lord. mr ignorance, the Bailey of
dunstable, and i, have taken great pains about them.
besides, here is a note of seven hundred whisperers,
most on them sleepy knaves. we pulled them out of bedfordshire.

Tresilian

let us see the note. seven hundred whispering traitors;
monstrous villains! we must look to these:
of all the sort these are most dangerous,
to stir rebellion against the King and us...

what are they, Crosby? are the rebels wealthy?

Crosby
fat choughs, my lord, all landed men. rich Farmers
Grasiers and such fellows, that having been but a
little pinched with imprisonment, begin already to
offer their lands for liberty.

Tresilian
we will not be nice to take their offers, Crosby,
their lands are better than their lives to us,
and without lands they shall not ransom lives.
go sirs, to terrify the traitors more,
ye shall have warrants straight to hang them all;
then if they proffer lands, and put in bail
to make a just surrender speedily,

let them have lives, and after, liberty.
but those that have not lands nor goods to pay,
let them be whipped, then hanged. make haste away.

Nimble

well, then: I see my whistler must be whipped: he has but two calves to live on, and has lost them too. and for my Schoolmaster, I will have him march about the market place with ten dozen of rods at his girdle the very day he goes a-feasting, and every one of his scholars shall have a jerk at him. come, sirs.

Tresilian

away and leave us. here comes sir Edward Bagot.

Enter Bagot. *Exeunt* Nimble, [Crosby, *and the others*]

Bagot

right happily met, my lord Tresilian.

Tresilian

you are well returned to court, sir Edward, to this sad house of sheen, made comfortless

by the sharp sickness of the good Queen Anne.

Bagot

King Richard is come and gone to visit her.

sad for her weak estate, he sits and weeps.

her speech is gone. only at sight of him

she heaved her hands and closed her eyes again,

and whether alive, or dead, is yet uncertain.

Enter Bushy Tresilian

here comes sir william Bushy. what tidings, sir?

Bushy

the King is a widower, sir. fair Anne-a-Beame

hath breathed her last farewell to all the realm.

Tresilian

peace with her soul, she was a virtuous lady.

how takes King Richard this her sudden death?

Bushy

fares like a madman: rends his princely hair,

beats his sad breast, falls grovelling on the earth

all careless of his state, wishing to die

and even in death to keep her company.

but that which makes his soul more desperate,

amidst this heat of passion, weeping comes

his aunt the Duchess, Woodstock's hapless wife,

with tender love and comfort,

at sight of whom his griefs again redoubled,

calling to mind the lady's woeful state,

as yet all ignorant of her own mishap.

he takes her in his arms, weeps on her breast,

and would have there revealed her hubsand's fall

amidst his passions, had not Scroope and Greene

by violence borne him to an inward room;

where still he cries to get a messenger

to send to calais to reprieve his uncle.

Bagot

I do not like those passions.

if he reveal the plot we all shall perish.

where is the Duchess?

Bushy

with much ado we got her leave the presence

with an intent in haste to ride to plashey.

Tresilian

she will find sad comforts there. would all were well.

a thousand dangers round enclose our state.

Bagot

and we will break through, my lord, in spite of fate.

come, come, be merry, good Tresilian.

Enter the King *and* Scroope

here comes King Richard, all go comfort him.

Scroope

my dearest lord, forsake these sad laments.

no sorrows can suffice to make her live.

King

then let sad sorrow kill King Richard too,
for all my earthly joys with her must die
and I am killed with cares eternally.
for Anne-a-Beame is dead, forever gone!
she was too virtuous to remain with me,
and heaven hath given her higher dignity.

oh, god, I fear, even here begins our woe:
her death is but chorus to some tragic scene
that shortly will confound our state and realm.
such sad events black mischiefs still attend,
and bloody acts, I fear, must crown the end.

Bagot

presage not so, sweet prince, your state is strong.

your youthful hopes with expectation crowned.
let not one loss so many comforts drown.

King

despair and madness seize me. oh, my dear friends,
what loss can be compared to such a Queen?

down with this house of sheen, go ruin all!
pull down her buildings, let her turrets fall!
forever lay it waste and desolate
that english King may never here keep court,
but to all ages leave a sad report,
when men shall see these ruined walls of sheen
and sighing say, here died King Richard's Queen.
for which we will have it wasted lime and stone
to keep a monument of Richard's moan.
oh, torturing grief!

Bushy

dear liege, all tears for her are vain oblations,
her quiet soul rests in celestial peace:

with joy of that, let all your sorrows cease.

King

send post to calais and bid Lapoole forbear

on pain of life, to act our sad decree.

for heaven's love, go, prevent the tragedy.

we have too much provoked the powers divine

and here repent thy wrongs, good uncle Woodstock;

the thought whereof confounds my memory.

if men might die when they would appoint the time,

the time is now King Richard would be gone;

for as a fearful thunderclap doth strike

the soundest body of the tallest oak,

yet harmless leaves the outward bark untouched,

so is King Richard struck. come, come let us go.

my wounds are inward. inward burns my woe.

Exeunt

Act V, Scene 1

Scene 1: The castle, Calais]

Enter Lapoole *with a light, after him* Two Murderers.

Lapoole

come sirs, be resolute. the time serves well
to act the business you have taken in hand.
the Duke is gone to rest, the room is voided,
no ear can hear his cries, be fearless bold
and win King Richard's love, with heaps of gold.

are all your instruments for death made ready?

1st Murderer

all fit to the purpose. see, my lord, here is
first a towel with which we do intend to strangle
him; but if he strive and this should chance to fail,
I will maul his old mazzard with his hammer, knock him
down like an ox, and after cut his throat. how like ye this?

Lapoole

no, wound him not,

it must be done so fair and cunningly

as if he died a common natural death,

for so we must give out to all that ask.

2nd Murderer

there is no way then, but to smother him.

Lapoole

I like that best; yet one thing let me tell ye:

think not your work contrived so easily

as if ye were to match some common man.

believe me, sirs, his countenance is such,

so full of dread and lordly majesty,

mixed with such mild and gentle behaviour

as will (except you be resolved at full)

strike you with fear even with his princely looks.

1st Murderer

not and he looked as grim as hercules,

as stern and terrible as the devil himself!

Lapoole

it is well resolved. retire yourselves awhile,
stay in the next withdrawing chamber there
and when occasion serves, I will call ye forth.

2nd Murderer

do but beckon with your finger, my lord,
and like vultures we come flying and seize him
presently.
Exeunt [the] Two Murderers Lapoole
do so. now by my fairest hopes, I swear
the boldness of these villains to this murder
makes me abhor them and the deed forever.
horror of conscience, with the King's command
fights a fell combat in my fearful breast.

the King commands his uncle here must die.
and my sad conscience bids the contrary

and tells me that his innocent blood thus spilt
heaven will revenge. murder is a heinous guilt,
a seven times crying sin. accursed man,
the further that I wade in this foul act
my troubled senses are the more distract,
confounded and tormented past my reason.
but there is no lingering: either he must die
or great King Richard vows my tragedy.

then betwixt two evils it is good to choose the least:
let danger fright faint fools, I will save mine own
and let him fall to black destruction.
He draws the curtains . [Woodstock *discovered in his bed*]
he sleeps upon his bed. the time serves fitly,
I will call the murderers in. sound music there,
to rock his senses in eternal slumbers. *Music [within]*
sleep, Woodstock, sleep. thou never more shalt wake.
this town of calais shall forever tell,
within her castle walls plain Thomas fell. *Exit*
Thunder and lightning. Enter the Ghost of the Black Prince.

1st Ghost

night horror and the eternal shrieks of death
intended to be done this dismal night
hath shook fair England's great cathedral,
and from my tomb elate at canterbury
the ghost of Edward the black prince is come
to stay King Richard's rage, my wanton son.
Thomas of Woodstock, wake! thy brother calls thee.
thou royal issue of King Edward's loins,
thou art beset with murder, rise and fly.

if here thou stay, death comes and thou must die.
still dost thou sleep? oh, I am nought but air!
had I the vigour of my former strength
when thou beheldest me fight at crecy field
where, hand to hand, I took King John of France
and his bold sons my captive prisoners,
I would shake these stiff supporters of thy bed
and drag thee from this dull security.

oh, yet for pity wake! prevent thy doom!

thy blood upon my son will surely come,

for which, dear brother Woodstock, haste and fly,

prevent his ruin and thy tragedy.

Woodstock

oh! *Thunder. Exit* Ghost

Enter Edward the Third's Ghost.

2nd Ghost

sleepest thou so soundly and pale death so nigh?

Thomas of Woodstock, wake, my son, and fly!

thy wrongs have roused thy royal father's ghost

and from his quiet grave King Edward is come

to guard thy innocent life, my princely son,

behold me here: sometime fair England's lord.

seven warlike sons I left, yet being gone

no one succeeded in my Kingly throne,

Richard of Bordeaux, my accursed grandchild,

cut off your titles to the Kingly state

and now your lives and all would ruinate:

murders his grandsire's sons: his father's brothers:
becomes a landlord to my Kingly titles,
rents out my crown's revenues, racks my subjects
that spent their bloods with me in conquering France,
beheld me ride in state through London streets
and at my stirrup lowly footing by
four captive Kings to grace my victory.
yet that nor this his riotous youth can stay
till death hath taken his uncles all away.
thou fifth of Edward's sons, get up and fly!

haste thee to England, close and speedily!
thy brothers York and Gaunt are up in arms,
go join with them: prevent thy further harms.
the murderers are at hand: awake, my son!
this hour fortells thy sad destruction. *Exit* Ghost

Woodstock
oh, good angels, guide me, stay thou blessed

spirit,
thou royal shadow of my Kingly father,
return again! I know thy reverend looks.
with thy dear sight once more recomfort me,
put by the fears my trembling heart foretells
and here is made apparent to my sight
by dreams and visions of this dreadful night.
upon my knees I beg it. ha! protect me, heaven!

the doors are all made fast! it was but my fancy:
all is whist and still, and nothing here appears
but the vast circuit of this empty room.
thou blessed hand of mercy, guide my senses!
afore my god, methoughts as here I slept
I did behold in lively form and substance
my father Edward and my warlike brother
both gliding by my bed, and cried to me
to leave this place, to save my life, and fly.
lighten my fears, dear lord. I here remain
a poor old man, thrust from my native country
kept and imprisoned in a foreign Kingdom.

if I must die, bear record, righteous heaven,

how I have nightly waked for England's good,

and yet to right her wrongs would spend my blood.

send thy sad doom, King Richard: take my life.

Enter Lapoole *and the* Murderers

I wish my death might ease my country's grief.

Lapoole

(we are prevented: back retire again,

he is risen from his bed. what fate preserves him?)

my lord, how fare you?

Woodstock

thou canst not kill me villain!

god's holy angel guards a just man's life

and with his radiant beams as bright as fire

will guard and keep his righteous innocence.

I am a prince. thou darest not murder me.

Lapoole

your grace mistakes, my lord.

Woodstock

what art thou, speak!

Lapoole

Lapoole, my lord, this city's governor.

Woodstock

Lapoole, thou art King Richard's flatterer.

oh, you just gods! record their treachery,

judge their foul wrongs, that under show of friendship

betrayed my simple, kind, intendiments!

my heart misgave it was no time for revels

when you, like masquers, came, disguised, to plashey

joined with that wanton King to trap my life,

for that, I know is the end his malice aims at.

this castle, and my secret sending hither

imports no less. therefore I charge ye tell me:

even by the virtue of nobility,

and partly, too, on that allegiance

thou owest the offspring of King Edward's house,
if aught thou knowest to prejudice my life,
thou presently reveal, and make it known.

Lapoole
nay, good my lord, forbear that fond suspicion.

Woodstock
I tell thee, poole: there is no less intended.
why am I sent thus from my native country,
but here at calais to be murdered?

and that Lapoole, confounds my patience.
this town of calais where I spent my blood
to make it captive to the english King,
before whose walls great Edward lay encamped
with his seven sons almost for fourteen months;
where the black prince, my brother, and myself
the peers of England, and our royal father,
fearless of wounds, never left till it was won,
and was it to make a prison for his son?

oh, righteous heavens, why do you suffer it?

Lapoole
disquiet not your thoughts, my gracious lord.
there is no hurt intended, credit me,
although awhile your freedom be abridged.
I know the King: if you would but submit
and write your letters to his majesty,
your reconcilement might be easily wrought.

Woodstock
for what should I submit, or ask his mercy?
had I offended, with all low submission
I would lay my neck under the block before him
and willingly endure the stroke of death.
but if not so, why should my fond entreaties
make my true loyalty appear like treason?

no, no, Lapoole, let guilty men beg pardons.
my mind is clear; and I must tell ye, sir,
princes have hearts like pointed diamonds

that will in sunder burst afore they bend,
and such lives here! though death King Richard send,
yet fetch me pen and ink, I will write to him
not to entreat, but to admonish him
that he forsake his foolish ways in time
and learn to govern like a virtuous prince:
call home his wise and reverend counsellors,
thrust from his court those cursed flatterers
that hourly work the realm's confusion.
this counsel if he follow may in time
pull down those mischiefs that so fast do climb.

Lapoole
here is pen and paper, my lord, will it please
ye write?

Woodstock
anon I will: shut to the doors and leave me.
goodnight, Lapoole, and pardon me I prithee
that my sad fear made question of thy faith.
my state is fearful, and my mind was troubled

even at thy entrance, with most fearful visions;
which made my passions more extreme and hasty.
out of my better judgment I repent it,
and will reward thy love. once more, goodnight.

Lapoole
good rest unto your grace, (I mean in death.
this dismal night, thou breathest thy latest breath.
he sits to write, I will call the murderers in
to steal behind and closely strangle him.) *Exit*

Woodstock
so help me heaven, I know not what to write,
what style to use, nor how I should begin:

my method is too plain, to greet a King.
I will nothing say to excuse or clear myself,
for I have nothing done that needs excuse;
but tell him plain, though here I spend my blood.

Enter both the Murderers

I wish his safety and all England's good.

1st Murderer

creep close to his back, ye rogue, be ready with
the towel, when I have knocked him down, to strangle
him.

2nd Murderer

do it quickly whilst his back is towards ye, ye
damned villain; if thou lettest him speak but a word,
we shall not kill him.

1st Murderer

I will watch him for that, down of your knees and
creep, ye rascal.

Woodstock
have mercy, god! my sight of the sudden fails me.
I cannot see my paper, my trembling fingers will not

hold my pen. a thick congealed mist overspreads the
chamber. I will rise and view the room.

1st Murderer

not too fast for falling!

Woodstock

what villain hand hath done a deed so bad,
to drench his black soul in a prince's blood?

1st Murderer

do ye prate, sir? take that and that. zounds,
put the towel about his throat and strangle him quickly,
ye slave, or by the heart of hell, I will fell thee too.

2nd Murderer

it is done, ye damned slave. pull ye dog, and pull
thy soul to hell in doing it, for thou hast killed the
truest subject, that ever breathed in England.

1st Murderer

pull, rogue, pull! think of the gold we shall have for doing it, and then let him, and thee, go to the devil together. bring in the feather-bed and roll him up in that till he be smothered and stifled, and life and soul pressed out together. quickly, ye hellhound!

2nd Murderer

here here, ye cannibal. zounds he kicks and sprawls. lie on his breast, ye villain!

1st Murderer

let him sprawl and hang. he is sure enough for speaking. pull off the bed now, smooth down his hair and beard. close his eyes and set his neck right: why so. all fine and cleanly: who can say that this man was murdered now?

[*Re-enter* Lapoole]

Lapoole

what, is he dead?

2nd Murderer

as a door-nail, my lord. what will ye do with his

body?

Lapoole

take it up gently, lay him in his bed.

then shut the door, as if he there had died.

1st Murderer

it cannot be perceived otherwise, my lord.

never was murder done with such rare skill.

at our return we shall expect reward, my lord.

Lapoole

it is ready told.

bear in the body, then return and take it.

Exeunt [Murderers] with the body

within there ho!

Enter Soldiers Soldier my lord?

Lapoole

be ready with your weapons, soldiers.

guard the room.

there is two false traitors entered the Duke's chamber,

plotting to bear him thence, betray the castle,

deliver up the town and all our lives

to the french forces that are hard at hand

to second their attempts. therefore stand close,

and as they enter, seize them presently.

our will is your warrant: use no further words

but hew them straight in pieces with your swords.

Soldier

I warrant ye, my lord, and their skins were scaled

with brass, we have swords will pierce them. come,

sirs, be ready.

[*Re-enter the* Two Murderers]

1st Murderer

come, ye miching rascal, the deed is done and all

things performed rarely. we will take our reward, steal

close out of the town, buy us fresh geldings, spur cut

and ride till we are past all danger, I warrant thee.

Lapoole

give their reward there! quick I say!

Soldier

down with the traitors! kill the villains!

Both

hell and the devil! zounds! hold, ye rascals!

They kill the Murderers Lapoole

drag hence their bodies, hurl them in the sea:

the black reward of death is a traitor's pay.

Exeunt soldiers with their bodies

so, this was well performed. now who but we
can make report of Woodstock's tragedy?

only he died a natural death at calais:
so must we give it out or else King Richard
through europe's Kingdoms will be hardly censured.
his headstrong uncles, York and Lancaster,
are up, we hear, in open arms against him;
the gentlemen and commons of the realm
missing the good old Duke, their plain protector,
break their allegiance to their sovereign lord
and all revolt upon the baron's sides;
to help which harm, I will over to England straight,
and with the old troops of soldiers taken from calais,
I will back King Richard's power, for should he fail
(and his great uncles get the victory)
his friends are sure to die; but if he win,
they fall, and we shall rise, whilst Richard is King.

Exit [Lapoole]

Act V, Scene 2: Open country]

Drums. March within. Enter Tresilian *and* Nimble *with armour.*

Tresilian

these proclamations we have sent abroad,

wherein we have accused the Dukes of treason,

will daunt their pride and make the people leave them.

I hope no less, at least. where art thou, Nimble?

Nimble

so loaden with armour, I cannot stir, my lord.

Tresilian

whose drums were those that beat even now?

Nimble

King Richard's drums, my lord: the young lords are

pressing soldiers.

Tresilian

oh, and do they take their press with willingness?

Nimble

as willing as a punk, that is pressed on a

feather-bed, they take their pressing apiece with great

patience. marry, the lords no sooner turn their

backs, but they run away like sheep, sir.

Tresilian

they shall be hanged like dogs for it.

what, dares the slaves refuse their sovereign?

Nimble

they say the proclamation is false, my lord;

and they will not fight against the King's friends.

Tresilian

so, I feared as much, and since it is come to this

I must provide betime and seek for safety,
for now the King and our audacious peers
are grown to such a height of burning rage
as nothing now can quench their kindled ire
but open trial, by the sword and lance;
and then I fear King Richard's part will fail.

Nimble, our soldiers run, thou sayest?

Nimble

ay, by my troth, my lord. and I think it is our
best course to run after them, for if they run now,
what will they do when the battle begins? if we tarry
here and the King's uncles catch us, we are sure to be
hanged my lord, have ye no trick of law to defend
us? no demur or writ of error to remove us?

Tresilian

Nimble, we must be wise.

Nimble

then let us not stay to have more wit beaten into
our heads, I like not that, my lord.

Tresilian
I am a man for peace, and not for war.

Nimble
and yet they say you have made more wrangling
in the land than all the wars have done these seven years.

Tresilian
this battle will revenge their base exclaims.

but hearest thou, Nimble, I will not be there today.
one man amongst so many is no maim,
therefore I will keep aloof, till all be done.
if good, I stay; if bad, away I run.
Nimble, it shall be so. I will neither fight nor die;
but, thus resolved, disguise myself and fly. *Exit*

Nimble

it is the wisest course, my lord. and I will go put

off mine armour that I may run lustily too. *Exit*

Act V, Scene 3: Open country]

Enter with Drum and Colours, York, Lancaster, Arundel, Surrey, *with the* Duchess of Gloucester, Cheyney, *and* Soldiers.

Lancaster

go to our tents, dear sister, cease your sorrows.

we will revenge our noble brother's wrongs

and force that wanton tyrant to reveal

the death of his dear uncle: harmless Woodstock,

so traitorously betrayed.

York

alack, good man,

it was an easy task to work on him,

his plainness was too open to their view.

he feared no wrong because his heart was true.

good sister, cease your weeping. there is none here

but are as full of woe and touched as near.
conduct and guard her, Cheyney, to the tent.
expect to hear severest punishment
on all their heads that have procured his harms,
struck from the terror of our threatening arms.

Duchess of Gloucester

may all the powers of heaven assist your hands,
and may their sins sit heavy on their souls
that they in death, this day, may perish all
that traitorously conspired good Woodstock's fall.
Exeunt Cheyney *and the* Duchess Lancaster
if he be dead, by good King Edward's soul
we will call King Richard to a strict account
for that and for his realm's misgovernment.
you peers of England, raised in righteous arms
here to re-edify our country's ruin,
join all your hearts and hands never to cease
till with our swords we work fair England's peace. *Drums*

Arundel

most princely Lancaster, our lands and lives
are to these just proceedings ever vowed.

Surrey
those flattering minions that overturns the state
this day in death shall meet their endless fate!

York
never such vipers were endured so long
to grip, and eat the hearts of all the Kingdom.

Lancaster
this day shall here determinate all wrongs.
the meanest man taxed by their foul oppressions
shall be permitted freely to accuse,
and right they shall have to regain their own;
or all shall sink to dark confusion.
[Drum]s sound[ed with] in York
how now, what drums are these?

Enter Cheyney Cheyney

to arms, my lords, the minions of the King
are swiftly marching on to give ye battle.

Lancaster
they march to death then, Cheyney. dare the
traitors
presume to brave the field with english princes?

York
where is King Richard? he was resolved but lately
to take some hold of strength, and so secure him.

Cheyney
knowing their states were all so desperate,
it seems they have persuaded otherwise,
for now he comes with full resolve to fight.
Lapoole this morning is arrived at court
with the calais soldiers and some french supplies
to back this now intended enterprise.

Lancaster

those new supplies have spurred their forward hopes

and thrust their resolutions boldly on

to meet with death and sad destruction.

York

their drums are near. just heaven, direct this deed

and as our cause deserves, our fortunes speed.

[Drums, and They] march about

Enter with Drum and Colours, the King, Greene, Bushy, Bagot, Scroope, Lapoole,

and Soldiers. They march about.

King

although we could have easily surprised,

dispersed and overthrown your rebel troops

that draw your swords against our sacred person,

the highest god's anointed deputy,

breaking your holy oaths to heaven and us:

yet of our mild and princely clemency

we have forborne; that by this parliament

we might be made partaker of the cause

that moved ye rise in this rebellious sort.

Lancaster
hast thou, King Richard, made us infamous?
by proclamations false and impudent
hast thou condemned us in our absence too
as most notorious traitors to the crown?
betrayed our brother Woodstock's harmless life,
and sought base means to put us all to death?
and dost thou now plead dotish ignorance
why we are banded thus in our defense?

Green
methinks your treasons to his majesty,
raising his subjects against his royal life,
should make ye beg for mercy at his feet.

King
you have forgotten, uncle Lancaster,
how you in prison murdered cruelly
a friar Carmelite because he was

to bring in evidence against your grace
of most ungracious deeds and practices.

Lancaster
and you, my lord, remember not so well
that by that Carmelite at London once,
when at a supper, you would have poisoned us.

York
for shame, King Richard, leave this company
that like dark clouds obscure the sparkling stars
of thy great birth, and true nobility.

Arundel
yield to your uncles. who but they should have
the guidance of your sacred state and council?

Bagot
yield first your heads, and so he shall be sure
to keep his person and his state secure.

King
and by my crown, if still you thus persist
your heads and hearts ere long shall answer it.

Arundel
not till ye send for more supplies from France,
for England will not yield ye strength to do it.

York
thou well mayst doubt their loves that lost their
hearts.
ungracious prince, cannot thy native country
find men to back this desperate enterprise?

Lancaster
his native country! why, that is France my lords!
at Bordeaux was he born, which place allures
and ties his deep affections still to France.
Richard is english blood: not english born.
thy mother travailed in unhappy hours
when she, at Bordeaux, left her heavy load.

the soil is fat for wines, not fit for men,
and England now laments that heavy time.
her royalties are lost: her state made base;
and thou no King, but landlord now become
to this great state that terrored christendom.

King
I cannot brook these braves. let drums sound death,
and strike at once to stop this traitor's breath.

Bagot
stay, my dear lord; and once more hear me,
princes.
the King was minded, ere this brawl began,
to come to terms of composition.

Lancaster
let him revoke the proclamations,
clear us of all supposed crimes of treason,
reveal where our good brother Gloucester keeps,
and grant that these pernicious flatterers

may by the law be tried, to quit themselves
of all such heinous crimes alleged against them,
and we will lay down our weapons at thy feet.

King's Men
presumptuous traitors!

Lord's Men traitors!

King
again we double it: rebellious traitors!
traitors to heaven and us. draw all your swords
and fling defiance to those traitorous lords.

King's Men
let our drums thunder and begin the fight.

Lord's Men
just heaven protect us and defend the right.

Exeunt [severally]

Act V, Scene 4: Open Country]

Alarum. Enter Green. Cheyney *meets [him] armed.*

Cheyney

stand, traitor! for thou canst not escape my sword.

Green

what villain fronts me with the name of traitor?

was it thou, false Cheyney? now by King Richard's love

I will tilt thy soul out for that base reproach.

I would thy master and the late protector

with both his treacherous brothers, Gaunt and York,

were all opposed, with thee, to try these arms:

I would seal it on all your hearts. *Alarum*

Cheyney

this shall suffice

to free the Kingdom from thy villainies.

They fight. [then] enter Arundel Arundel thou huntest a noble game, right warlike Cheyney:

cut but this ulcer off, thou healest the Kingdom.
yield thee, false traitor, most detested man
that settest King Richard against his reverent uncles
to shed the royal blood and make the realm
weep for their timeless desolation.
cast down thy weapons, for by this my sword
we will bear thee from this place, alive or dead.

Green
come both then. I will stand firm and dare your
worst. he that flies from it, be his soul accursed!
[*They fight and* Greene *is slain*]
Arundel
so may the foes of England fall in blood.
most desolate traitor! up with his body, Cheyney,
and hale it to the tent of Lancaster.
[*Enter* Kin]g, Bagot, Bushy, Scroope *and Soldiers* Cheyney
stand firm, my lord. here is rescue.

Arundel

courage, then!

we will bear his body hence in spite of them.

They fight. To them enter Lancaster, York, *and* Surrey, *and beat themn away* .

[*Exeunt fighting, all but the* King]

King

oh, princely youth, King Richard's dearest friend!

what heavy star this day had dominance

to cut off all thy flowering youthful hopes?

prosper, proud rebels! as you dealt by him

hard-hearted uncles, unrelenting churls,

that here have murdered all my earthly joys!

oh my dear Greene, wert thou alive to see

how I will revenge thy timeless tragedy

on all their heads that did but lift a hand

to hurt this body, that I held so dear

even by this kiss and by my crown I swear--

Alarum. Enter Bagot, Bushy, *and* Scroope *to the* King.

Bagot

away, my lord! stand not to wail his death.

the field is lost; our soldiers shrink and fly:

Lapoole is taken prisoner by the lords.
hie to the tower. there is no help in swords.

Scroope
still to continue war were childishness.
their odds a mountain, ours a molehill is.

Bushy
let us fly to London, and make strong the tower.
loud proclamations post throughout the camp
with promise of reward to all that take us.
get safety for our lives, my princely lord.

if here we stay, we shall be all betrayed.

King
oh, my dear friends, the fearful wrath of heaven
sits heavy on our heads for Woodstock's death.
blood cries for blood; and that almighty hand
permits not murder unrevenged to stand.

come, come, we yet may hide ourselves from worldly
strength,
but heaven will find us out, and strike at length.
each lend a hand to bear this load of woe
that erst King Richard loved and tendered so.

Exeunt [bearing the body of Greene]

Act V, Scene 5: Open Country]

Enter Tresilian *disguised, and* Nimble Tresilian
where art thou, Nimble?

Nimble
as light as a feather, my lord. I have put off my
shoes, that I might run lustily. the battle is lost
and they are all prisoners. what shall we do, my lord?
yonder is a ditch. we may run along that and never be
seen, I warrant ye.

Tresilian

I did suspect no less; and so it is fallen:

the day is lost; and dashed are all our hopes.
King Richard is taken prisoner by the peers.
oh, that I were upon some steepy rock
where I might tumble headlong to the sea
before those cruel lords do seize on me!

Nimble
oh that I were transformed into a mouse, that i
might creep into any hole in the house and I cared
not.

Tresilian
come, Nimble, it is no time to use delay.
I will keep me in this poor disguise awhile
and so, unknown, prolong my weary life
in hope King Richard shall conclude my peace. *Sound Retreat*
hark, hark, the trumpets call the soldiers back,
retreat is sounded, now the time serves fit
and we may steal from hence. away good Nimble.

Nimble

nay, stay my lord! 'slid, and ye go that way, farewell;

but and you will be ruled by me, I have thought of

a trick that ye shall escape them all most bravely.

Tresilian

bethink thyself, good Nimble. quickly, man!

Nimble

I will meditate, my lord; and then I am for ye.

(now, Nimble, show thyself a man of valour. think

of thy fortunes. it is a hanging matter if thou conceal him.

besides there is a thousand marks for him that

takes him, with the Duke's favours, and free pardon.

besides he is but a coward. he would never have run

from the battle else. saint tantony, assist me, I will

set upon him presently.)

my lord, I have thought upon this trick:

I must take ye prisoner.

Tresilian how prisoner?

Nimble

there is no way to escape else. then must I carry

ye to the King's uncles, who presently condemns ye, for

a traitor, sends ye away to hanging, and then

"god bless my lord Tresilian."

Tresilian

wilt thou betray thy master, villain?

Nimble

ay, if my master be a villain. you think it is

nothing for a man to be hanged for his master? you

heard not the proclamation?

Tresilian

what proclamation?

Nimble

oh, sir, all the country is full of them, that whosoever

sees you, does not presently take ye, and bring

ye to the lords, shall be hanged for his labour.

therefore no more words, lest I raise the whole camp

upon ye. ye see one of your own swords of justice

drawn over ye. therefore go quietly lest I cut your

head off and save the hangman a labour.

Tresilian o, villain!

Nimble

no more words. away, sir! *Exeunt*

Act V, Scene 6: Open country]

Sound a retreat then a flourish, [and] enter with Drums and Colours Lancaster, Cheyney, Arundel, Surrey *and* Soldiers, *with* Lapoole, Bushy, *and* Scroope *[as] prisoners.*

Lancaster

thus princely Edward's sons, in tender care

of wanton Richard and their father's realm,

have toiled to purge fair England's pleasant field

of all those rancorous weeds that choked the grounds
and left her pleasant meads like barren hills.
who is it can tell us which way Bagot fled?

Arundel
some say to Bristowe, to make strong the castle.

Lancaster
see that the port is belayed. he will fly the land,
for England hath no hold can keep him from us.
had we Tresilian hanged, then all were sure.

where slept our scouts that he escaped the field?

Cheyney
he fled, they say, before the fight began.

Lancaster
our proclamations soon shall find him forth,
the root and ground of all these vild abuses.

Enter Nimble, *with* Tresilian, *bound and guarded* Lancaster

how now, what traitor is

there?

Nimble

the traitor now is taken.

I here present the villain,

and if ye needs will know his name,

god bless my lord Tresilian.

Cheyney

Tresilian, my lord, attached and apprehended by

his man!

Nimble

yes, and it please ye, my lord, it was I that took

him. I was once a trampler in the law after him, and

I thank him he taught me this trick, to save myself

from hanging.

Lancaster

thou art a good lawyer and hast removed the cause
from thyself fairly.

Nimble
I have removed it with a habeas corpus; and then I
took him with surssararis, and bound him in this bond
to answer it. nay, I have studied for my learning, I
can tell ye, my lord. there was not a stone between
Westminster hall and temple bar but I have told them
every morning.

Arundel
what moved thee, being his man, to apprehend him?

Nimble
partly for these causes: first, the fear of the
proclamation, for I have plodded in plowden and can
find no law…

The play was left incomplete

VORTIGERN AND ROWENA

This play was touted as a newly discovered work by Shakespeare when it first appeared in 1796, but was eventually revealed to be a hoax, created by the prominent forger William Henry Ireland. Its first and only performance was April 2, 1796, receiving ridicule from the audience.

Hearing of a newly recovered "lost" Shakespeare play, Irish playwright Richard Brinsley Sheridan purchased the rights to the first production at Drury Lane Theatre in London for £300 and the promise of half the revenues to Ireland's family. After reading the play, Sheridan noted its relative simplicity compared to Shakespeare's known works. Actor John Philip Kemble, the manager of Drury Lane, who was to play the title role in the play's only production, had serious doubts about Vortigern's authenticity. Irish Shakespearean scholar Edmond Malone published An Inquiry into the Authenticity of Certain Miscellaneous Papers and Legal Instruments on March 21, 1796, about the authenticity of *Vortigern and Rowena* and the other documents "discovered" by Ireland. The play did have its supporters; Henry James Pye and James Bland Burgess wrote prologues for it, while Robert Merry wrote an epilogue.

The story begins as the King of the Britons Constantius offers half his crown to his adviser Vortigern for his loyal service. Vortigern immediately plots the king's murder in order to take the crown for himself.

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SCENE *the Gate of Cæsar's Tower.*

PREFACE.

It is now near three years since the Play, which the following sheets present to the Public, was represented at the Theatre Royal Drury Lane. The fate which it underwent, and the decision of the audience, are well known. Notwithstanding that decision, the Editor has at length, agreeably to his promise, made at the time of that representation, again laid it before the public, which if it exposes it to the test of a more accurate criticism, will give it the opportunity of a more unbiassed and temperate examination.

They, who are at all conversant with dramatic concerns, must know that the opinion of large assemblies, promiscuously composed of all orders and classes, must depend on a variety of circumstances, local, temporary and accidental.

Where no stronger or worse motives interfere, fashion and caprice too often give the direction; but spleen and interest are made more powerful agents; and by their industry and activity, even the master puppet, be he in sock or buskin, may be gained, and the public may be too easily and unwarily led by premature and precipitate conclusions.

No man who recollects what was said and written in the public prints concerning this piece, on the eve of its representation, and the ludicrous manner in which the principal character was sustained, can deny, that the Editor has a right to complain of the most illiberal and injurious treatment.

Every undue stratagem, and every mean and petty artifice, was resorted to within doors and without, to prejudice the public mind; and one more deeply interested than had then, or has yet appeared, though a professed trader on the subject of Shakespeare, on the day before the representation, under the title of "An Enquiry into the Authenticity of certain miscellaneous Papers, &c. &c" with this view, and the further expectation of helping off a few copies, sent into the world a volume long before promised, and long since forgotten.

This mass of dulness and self-conceit, consisting of about 430 pages, established nothing; and was built on principles (if it is not an abuse to apply to such trash a term so respectable) that could not possibly establish any thing. In every one of the instances which, with such a weak and overweening confidence, he so very idly brought forward, he has been exposed; and in some of them has been himself the author and detector of his own childishness, incapacity and ignorance.

Neither the index-lore, or the alphabetical, lexicographical, labours of this sagacious discoverer, or his congenial followers or associates, nor any declaration since made from a quarter once domestic to the Editor, through which something like genuine information might naturally have been expected, can induce him to believe that great part of the mass of papers in his possession are the fabrication of any individual, or set of men of the present day.

A fruitless expectation, that Time, the discoverer of Truth, might ere this have withdrawn that veil of mystery which yet involves this transaction, has alone given occasion to delay in this publication. The Editor had been happy to have been able to have penetrated it; and to have assigned to its proper owner each fragment and each whole.

As to the merits or demerits of the play now before the public, the Editor does not in the smallest degree consider himself responsible any where, or in any way. He sold the piece with "all its imperfections on its head," after various cool and deliberate readings, and stated candidly all he had been told relative to it; all that, which from various circumstances, he had at that time no reason to doubt or discredit.

After the play was contracted for, some alterations were deemed necessary to fit it for representation. It was much too long, and consequently many passages were expunged; and in one historical fact, thought too gross for the public ear, *viz.* the incestuous passion of the king towards his daughter, it underwent some further alterations; but excepting these particulars, it stands nearly as in the original.

In this state it was delivered to the Theatre, with a request, or rather *intreaty* , that all further alteration, deemed necessary, should be made by the acting manager, or any other person competent to the business: to this request he received the following official answer from Mr. Kemble:-- "That the play would be acted faithfully from the copy sent to the theatre;" and it was accordingly acted, literally from the Manuscript delivered to the house. This conduct was, as the Editor believes, unprecedented in the management of a Theatre, and must warrant him in concluding that in the judgment of the acting manager, the play wanted no aid or alteration.

Be these matters as they may, this piece is laid before the public with such interpolations by the Editor, as he presumes it was the duty of the acting manager to have made previous to its representation.

The lines printed within the inverted commas were not in the play-house copy, and consequently were not spoken.

The Editor feels, and here begs leave to acknowledge, his obligations to his friend William Linley, Esq. for his skill in composing the three songs in this piece, in which he is universally allowed to have shewn much taste and judgment; he likewise professes himself much indebted to Mrs. Jordan and Mrs. Powell, for their very spirited exertions, and excellent acting on this occasion; and could he with truth or justice make the smallest acknowledgement to Mr. Kemble and his fellow tragedian Mr. Phillimore, he has little doubt, but that, whoever may have been the author of the piece, it might still have been received, and might have promoted the interests of the Theatre.

Norfolk-Street

Strand, 1799

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

CONSTANTIUSMr. Bensley.
AURELIUS.......Mr. Barrymore.

UTER................Mr. Caulfield.
VORTIGERN....Mr. Kemble.

WORTIMERUSMr. Whitfield.
CATAGRINUS.Mr. Trueman.

PASCENTIUS..Mr. C. Kemble.
HENGIST.........Mr. Benson.

HORSUS..........Mr. Phillimore.
FOOL................Mr. King.

SERVANT........Master De Camp.
PAGE................Master Gregson.

EDMUNDA.....Mrs. Powell.

FLAVIA...........Mrs. Jordan.

ROWENA........Miss Miller.

ATTENDANTS ON EDMUNDAMiss Leake.

Miss Tidwell.

Miss Heard.

Barons, Officers, Guards, &c., &c.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

A large Hall, discovers CONSTANTIUS,

VORTIGERN, WORTIMERUS, CATAGRINUS,

PASCENTIUS, *and Attendants.*

CONSTANTIUS.

Good Vortigern! as peace doth bless our isle,
And the loud din of war no more affrights us,
And as my soul hath plac'd thee next herself,
'Tis our desire that thou deny'st us not,
That, which anon we crave thee to accept,
For though most weighty be our proffer'd task,
We trust thy goodness will not yet refuse,
For we have always found thee soft by nature,
And like the pelican, e'en with thy blood,
Ready to succour and relieve.

VORTIGERN.

Most gracious sov'reign! to command is thine,
And as a subject mine is to obey.

CONSTANTIUS.

Such was the answer we did here expect,
And farther now we shall explain our meaning;
As frozen age we find doth fast approach,

And state affairs lie heavy with ourself,
We here to thee half of our pow'r resign,
That thy reward may pace with this thy labour.
To this our proposition what reply?

VORTIGERN

Oh! my most noble, good, and bounteous lord,
These honours are indeed so great, so weighty,
I fear lest like a garment too confin'd,
They aukwardly should press upon the wearer.
Therefore, my gracious lord! let one more worthy,
I do beseech thee, bear them.

CONSTANTIUS.

Nay! nay! this thy excuse will not suffice us,
E'en here, we do await thy full consent,
And, that we may more speedily conclude,
We do require of thee that thou should'st sign
These papers, by the which thou wilt become
Jointly with ourself, King of this our realm.

VORTIGERN.

I shall, my lord, obey your high command.

[*Signs the paper*.

CONSTANTIUS.

We shall await your coming at our palace.

[*Exit Constantius.*

VORTIGERN.

Fortune, I thank thee!

Now is the cup of my ambition full!

And by this rising tempest in my blood

I feel the fast approach of greatness which

E'en like a peasant stoops for my acceptance.

But hold! O conscience, how is it with thee?

Why dost thou pinch me thus, for should I heed thee,

Then must my work crumble and fall to nought;

Come then thou soft, thou double-fac'd deceit!

Come dearest flatt'ry! come direst murder!

Attend me quick, and prompt me to the deed!
What! jointly wear the crown? No! I will all!
And that my purpose may soon find its end,
This, my good King, must I unmannerly
Push from his seat and fill myself the chair;
Welcome then glittering mark of royalty!
And with thy pleasing yet oppressive weight,
Bind fast this firm, and this determin'd brow.
But ere I do proceed, let caution guide me,
For though the trunk and body of the tree
Be thus within my gripe, still do I fear
Those boughs which stand so near and close allied,
Which will, ere long, yield seeds for their revenge.
Then since my soul e'en murder must commit,
To gratify my thirst for royalty,
Why should I play the child, or like a niggard,
By sparing, mar and damn my cause for ever?
No! as the blow strikes one, all three shall fall!
Then shall I, giant-like, and void of dread,

Uprear my royal and encircled brow,
And in the face of the Omnipotent
Bid bold defiance.--
This my determination then shall be,
And firm as adamant the end I'll see.

SCENE II.

A Chamber in VORTIGERN's *Palace.*

Enter EDMUNDA *and* FLAVIA.

FLAVIA.

"Dearest mother! why let watery grief
"Like a corroding and slow malady
"Nip thus the fairest and most beauteous pearl,
"That ever art of man by stealth or cunning
"Drew from the azure vault of brightest heav'n,
"To grace this earth?"--Oh! my beloved mother!

Turn, turn those tear worn eyes, and let one smile,
One cheering look of sweet serenity,
Beam forth to comfort my afflicted soul!

EDMUNDA.

Oh! heavens! my gentle Flavia! would I could!
But this corroding pensive melancholy
Most venom like, destroys its nourisher.
Oh! Vortigern, my lov'd, once loving husband,
Why rend this bursting heart with cold disdain,
E'en the poor culprit brought before his judge
May boldly plead his cause; but I alas!
Most innocent, and ignorant of my fault,
Must bear the weight of judgment.

Enter PASCENTIUS.

FLAVIA.

What news of good import, my dearest brother,
Does this thy eager joy cloak from us?

PASCENTIUS.

Oh! I have tidings I would fain make known,
But they are of such wond'rous magnitude
That I can scarcely give them utterance.

EDMUNDA.

Oh! speak my child! my dear Pascentius, speak,
For much thy mother consolation needs.

PASCENTIUS.

The King then, madam, in his royal bounty,
Hath jointly with himself, conferr'd the sway
Of this our mighty kingdom, on my father.

EDMUNDA.

Now woe indeed hath made her masterpiece!
Ambition thou! thou art mine enemy;
Thy idle dreams have forc'd my husband from me;
Thy honey'd visions have deprived my soul
Of that alone which made life worth retaining;

Yes, thou art now, alas! become a flow'r
That by the radiance of the sun is parch'd,
And lacking drops of succour, droops and dies.

Enter FOOL, *whimsically attired, with his Bells and Ladle.*

PASCENTIUS.

Whither so fast, good Fool?

FOOL.

Good Fool, say'st thou! marry, these are sweet words, that do not often fall to our lot; but let me tell you, good master, fools have excellent wits, and those that ha' none will gladly go flatter, lest the fool's folly should make them still more foolish.

PASCENTIUS.

But, prithee, tell us what is thine affair?

FOOL.

Oh! my affair is weighty indeed, being
burdened with the speech o' royalty.

PASCENTIUS.

And wherefore so?

FOOL.

I pray you stay your patience but awhile,
and I will tell you; thou dost expect nought
from the Fool, but folly; but from a king thou
wouldst a cunning speech.

PASCENTIUS.

And is't no so?

FOOL.

Oh! no, by my troth, our good sovereign
hath unto my noble master betrayed great lack of policy.

PASCENTIUS.

How so?

FOOL.

Why your wise man will tell you, the crown doth gall the wearer; but marry! I will shew myself the fool indeed, for I do say the half oft pinches more than the whole.

PASCENTIUS.

Thou wouldst be witty, Fool!

FOOL.

Marry, say not I would be, but that I am so; for let me tell you, the wit of your Fool is true wit, being solely his own, no man coveting it; whereas that of your wise man comes from books, and from those who went before. But wherefore should I thus lose wind? my wit being

folly, is not by your wise man understood; there-
fore, I'll to the purpose. My master is made
half King, and sends me his swift Mercury, to
tell your gentle ladyship his honour's pleasure.

EDMUNDA.

Prithee, be brief, and tell thine errand quickly.

FOOL.

An please you then, my sweet mistress,
he wills that you do put on your best attire, and
that you do straight attend him, and go before
th' other half o'th' crown.

EDMUNDA.

We shall be ready at command.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

Another Apartment in VORTIGERN's *Palace.*

Enter VORTIGERN.

VORTIGERN.

Thus far, then have my deeds a sanction found,
For still each morn doth the resplendent sun
Dart forth its golden rays, to grace my sight.

O what an inconsistent thing is man!
There was a time when e'en the thought of murder
Would have congeal'd my very mass of blood;
"And, as a tree, on the approaching storm,
"E'en so my very frame would shake and tremble:"
But now I stand not at the act itself,
Which breaks all bonds of hospitality.--
To me, the King hath ever been most kind;
Yea, even lavish of his princely favours,--
And this his love I do requite with murder!

And wherefore this? What! for a diadem,
The which I purchase at no less a cost
Than even the perdition of my soul;
Still at that self same price will I obtain it.
The rooted hate the Britons bear the Scots
Is unto me an omen most propitious;
I have dispatch'd my secret emisaries,
And the young princes sons of the old King,
(A long time since for study sent to Rome)
Even for them have I prepared honours:
For ere the moon shall twice have fill'd her orb,
Death shall provide for them a crown immortal!

Enter Servant.

SERVANT.

Two officers, my lord! await your leisure.

VORTIGERN.

Well, shew them to our presence.

Enter Murderers.

Have ye concluded,

Is your answer ready?

MURDERER.

We have consider'd all,

And on your promis'd bounty undertake

A speedy execution.

VORTIGERN.

You are agreed?

BOTH.

Yes, my good lord.

VORTIGERN.

Listen then awhile!

This night Constantius gives a feast at which

He wills I should be present, mark me well,

For I will give the signal, and retire.
Then tarry not, but do it on the instant.

MURDERER.

Fear not, my noble lord, we are resolv'd.
[*Exeunt.*

VORTIGERN.

Now then good King prepare thee for the worst.
For ere the thick and noisome air of night
Shall with damned Hecate's baneful spells be fill'd,
Thou must from hence to the cold bed of death,
To whom alike peasant and king are slaves.
Come then black night, and hood the world in darkness,
Seal close the hearts of those I have suborn'd,
That pity may not turn them from their purpose.
[*Exit.*

SCENE IV.

A Chamber in CONSTANTIUS' *Palace.*

Enter CONSTANTIUS *with a Groom.*

CONSTANTIUS.

Here place the light, now hasten to the hall,
And unto Vortigern present this ring,
Pledge of my sacred friendship, and alliance,
Tell him I fain would see him in the the morning--
Farewel, good Page! I now would be alone.
[*Exit Page.*
O sleep, thou nourisher of man and babe!
Soother of every sorrow, that can'st bury
The care-distracted mind in sweet oblivion,
To thee, O gentle pow'r! I pawn my soul!
Here then, on my bended knee, great God,
Let me implore thy grace, and look for mercy;

"Though thou hast plac'd me sovereign over men,
"And on my brow hath fix'd a diadem;
"Yet am I subject still to human frailty,
"And naught can boast more than my meanest vassal."
How wisely hast thou fram'd thy work of nature,
Even the smallest reptile hath its instinct,
Aye, is as nicely form'd as man, himself.

Both too must die, both rot and come to dust.
Yet man hath one great property besides,
A never fading, an immortal soul!
Upon that thought I rest my happiness.

[Lies on the couch.

Enter two Murderers.

FIRST MURDERER.
"Oh! if one spot did fully his pure soul
"In heaven hath he wip'd it clean away,
"With this his sweet unfeigned oraison.

SECOND MURDERER.

"'Tis true--

"The King to us hath ever been most kind,

"We've serv'd and gained honours under him;

"'Twould have disgrac'd the name of Murderer

"Had we to cold death sent him unprepar'd.

"For e'en the rigid law itself allows

"To most crimes most daring, most atrocious,

"A time to pray, a time to ask for mercy.

FIRST MURDERER.

"Why how now?

Hast thou forgot thine errand,

"Wast sent here to prate thus,

"Or to fulfil thy promise?

"I'll do't, nor this thy dagger will I sheath

"'Till reaking with his blood.

SECOND MURDERER.

"Yet one moment I pray thee, comrade!

FIRST MURDERER.

"I tell thee I will not.
"For as I am a man and soldier,
"So will I scorn to break my promis'd vow.

SECOND MURDERER.

"Thou shalt not yet,
"For statue like, here will I fix myself
"Till thou dost hear me out.
"Oh! is't not most manlike, that we stain
"Our hands with blood that ne'er did us offend?
"Is't not most serpent like, to sting sweet sleep,
"Which even from the giant takes all strength,
"And makes man taste of that which is to come?

"Let us, I pray thee friend, turn from the deed!
"I cannot, dare not, nay! I will not do't--

FIRST MURDERER.

"Coward, take hence that poor unmanly carcase,

"Or this my steel shall work a double end.

SECOND MURDERER.

"Lay on then! for I will defend the King,"

"And may the Gods aid this my good design."

[They fight, second Murderer dies behind the Scenes.

The King awakes.

CONSTANTIUS.

"Vassal, I say! what means this bloody deed?

"This bold intrusion in our royal presence?

"Can majesty command no more respect,

"But, that our very sleep must be disturb'd

"With murder, rude and most licentious?

MURDERER.

"Why plainly then! I do not fear thy presence, "And to be brief with thee, thine hour is come!

KING.

"Traitor and villain, what would'st thou?

MURDERER.

"Nay then, an thou dost speak so rudely,
"Take thy reward.
[Stabs him.

KING.

"Oh! I die, sweet Heaven receive my soul!
"Forgive, oh pardon this his crime!

"I come! bliss! bliss! is my reward for ever.
[Dies.

MURDERER.

"Farewell, good King! and thou my comrade too!"

Now for my fouler purpose, that done!
Hence on time's wing will I to Vortigern,
And this my two edg'd work to him unfold.

[Exit.

SCENE V.

Enter VORTIGERN *with Guards, as*
having viewed the dead body of the King,
behind the Scenes.

VORTIGERN.
O! this preposterous and inhuman act,
Doth stir up pity in the blackest hell.
Heav'n's aspect did foretell some ill this night,
For each dread shrieking minister of darkness,
Did chatter forth his rude and dismal song,
While bellowing thunder shook the troubled earth,

"And the livid, and flaky lightning,

"Widely burst ope each crack in Heav'n's high portal."

Have ye the traitor seiz'd? Is he yet dead?

OFFICER.

Hard by, my lord, he lies reeking in's blood,

Despair and horror mastered each man's breast;

The attempt to check their rage would have been useless,

His body is become one gaping wound.

VORTIGERN.

O! my good friends, wou'd you had spar'd his life,

And that your zeal had been more temperate,

For by the workings of my soul, I find

This was the instrument, but not the head.

OFFICER.

Name him you deem the murderer, good my lord?

VORTIGERN.

Be silent and mark well that I shall say,

The Scots you know do bear us enmity,

Many of rank do tarry in our Court;

On them the guilt of this foul murder rests.

I pray you instantly dispatch the guard,

And seize each Scotsman ye shall chance to meet;

I will go summon all the lords to council,

And well consider that 'twere best to do.

[Exeunt.

SCENE VI.

Assembly of Barons.

Enter VORTIGERN.

VORTIGERN.

Oh! my thrice noble and right worthy Peers,

We are now met upon the heaviest summons

That ever yet did occupy our thoughts;
The sparkling drop which graces every eye,
And fain wou'd deluge every manly cheek,
Denotes the brimful sorrow of each heart;
Pity disgraces not the manlike brow,
And yet it suits but ill the present crisis,
When our best strength and wisdom both are needful,
To stem this black, this damn'd conspiracy;
For bloody war and foul rebellion lurk
Beneath the mask of cruel treachery,
Which i'th' present is so plainly shewn,
By the brutal deed of these vile Scotsmen!
Then let not drowsy thought deter our purpose,
Nor basely rot in us the plant of justice,
The clamorous people call aloud for sentence,
Should we delay, it will go hard with us.

FIRST BARON.

Trusting to thee, our noble good Protector,
We do, without delay, pronounce as guilty,
The perpetrators of this crying deed.

We also do, with general accord,
Beseech you bear the office of a King,
Until the Princes do return from Rome;
For on Aurelius, now the elder son
Of our deceased King the election lights;
Well do we know how tedious is this task,
How full of trouble and perplexity!
But we do also know thee for a man,
Most good, most perfect, and most merciful!

VORTIGERN.

I fear good Barons you do flatter me!
I thought ere this, to have resigned the weight,
Which the late King had heap'd upon my shoulders;
But mark the sad reverse, for even now,
You double this my load, and bear me down;
Oh! you ha' struck me where I am indeed
Most vulnerable--"*The voice o'th' people!"*
For them I will surrender liberty.
Dispatch to Rome the messengers I pray,
And let Aurelius know, that he is called

To wear this gold, this forked diadem,
That gives to man the sway of sovereignty.

SECOND BARON.

My lord! the people, Barons, all do thank you
For this your kind compliance with their will;
To morrow's dawn shall see the packets ready,
And we will then consult what messengers
Shall to the princes bear, these heavy tidings.

VORTIGERN.

'Tis well! I do commend your zealous care;
And now, good friends, one mournful change remains,
To attend the burial of our murdered King;
Oh! 'twas a nipping blast, which suddenly
Bereft us of our first, our sweetest plant,
Both King and Father it hath stolen from us;
"But wherefore do I strive to ope anew,
"Those gates which bar the course of liquid sorrow?
"No! rather let your big griefs pine unseen,
"Where cold restraint can neither chide curb ye,"

Farewel! time then be yours until to-morrow.

[Exeunt.

SCENE VII.

A Hall in VORTIGERN's *Palace.*

Enter VORTIGERN.

VORTIGERN.

How stands it now--then am I but Protector?

Oh! 'tis an attribute my soul abhors,

To sovereignty a pander and a slave,

That looks with wistful eyes upon the crown,

And dares not touch it; O! I will none on't.

Curse on those lords that did award me this,

Whose justice needs must force them keep the crown

For those, who by descent, do most deserve it.

By heav'ns, I'll pour my bitter vengeance down

For this their slow and niggardly promotion.

Yet as they did award and give me sway

Until the Prince Aurelius should return,

Then is it mine most sure! the Princes cannot

From their cold graves return to take it from me!

Their wish'd-for death is sure, yet do I dread--

For here within, there lurks a messenger

That cautions me, and fain would ha' me fear.

What ho! without I say! who attends there.

Enter Servant.

VORTIGERN.

Are there no letters yet arrived from Rome?

SERVANT.

No, my good liege.

VORTIGERN.

Nor messengers?

SERVANT.

Neither, my gracious sir.

VORTIGERN.

Retire a while.

[Exit Servant.

Nor messengers nor letters! this alarms me;
But what care I, e'en let the Princes come,
When come, there's room enough i'th' ground for them.
But soft! and let me weigh my present state,
For much I fear these barons proffer'd friendship.
"Their niggardly shew of liberality
"Suits ill my lofty aim, and but the semblance wears
"Of that my soul is thirsting for--Dominion!
"Not rivetted by closer ties their Chief, tho' friendly,
"May swerve and prove a foe."--
Yet I've a lure that shall ensnare that chief,

My daughter's hand! but if she shou'd refuse,

Then were my purpose baffled, or destroy'd.

Is it not strange, a flinty heart like mine,

Should stagger thus at thinking of a daughter?

Flavia! whose fondest love to young Aurelius,

Now sojourning at Rome, hath long been pledg'd!

Yet what of that! shall she, a whining girl,

Oppose a father's and a monarch's will?

My firm resolve once know, will shake that mind

Which in her gentlest moments nature fram'd;

This work atchiev'd each lord his aid shall lend,

And to my will the haughtiest crest shall bend.

[Exit.

SCENE VIII.

London. The Palace.

Enter FLAVIA *and* PASCENTIUS.

FLAVIA.

Oh! heav'ns! in thy great mercy thou hast led me
To that dear object I so long have sought
Through ev'ry secret winding o'th' palace.

PASCENTIUS.

My Flavia say!
What is't hath ruffled thus thy gentle bosom?
I fear our father hath occasion'd this,
For late as passing through the hall I saw him,
He paced to and fro in great disorder,
Sometimes in deep thought lost, he'd stop and pause,
Then o'er his troubled breast crossing his arms,
Would utter words, but in a voice so low,
That they distill'd themselves i'th' gentle air.
Tho' I did thrice address him, yet he brake
Abruptly from me, and no answer made.
I never saw the conflict of his soul.

So plainly in his countenance pourtray'd.

FLAVIA.

Alas! 'tis true! I too have seen my father;
And harshly has he urg'd my breach of vow
To my Aurelius, and to pledge my love
To one my soul abhors! say then, my brother,
Is that kind friendship for my lov'd Aurelius,
Which first in years of infancy took root,
Is it yet untainted? Speak truly brother--
And are thy vows of frienship to thy sister
Pure and unspotted as the face of heav'n!

And wilt thou save her?

PASCENTIUS.

'Tis not in my nature
To act a treach'rous or ungenerous part!

FLAVIA.

Enough, enough, I meant not to offend;

That I'm about to ask is truly urgent,

Nor more nor less than our own banishment.

PASCENTIUS.

Th' impending exile is to me most strange,

But if thy dearest mother thou can'st leave,

Then must it be most pressing; I consent,

And will not ruffle thee by further question.

But silence for a while, here comes the Fool.

Of him some tidings we perchance may hear.

Enter FOOL.

FLAVIA.

Speak, Fool, when did'st last see my gentle mother?

FOOL.

Rather ask, when 'twas that i e'er saw

thy father in such sort before; marry, he did

never speak so roundly to me. Of old, your
Fool did make your sage one tremble, but my
foolship hath not found it so. Times must indeed be bad, when fools lack wit to battle wise
mens ire; nay, but I have legs, therefore can
run; a heart, that's merry, but wou'd be more
so, an 'twas drench'd with sack from my ladle;
but no matter, that's empty, till you gentle chuse
to fill it, then by your leaves we'll walk, and
carry our wits where they'll chance meet better fare.

PASCENTIUS.

Nay, nay, come hither Fool, be not too hasty;
This fellow's true and honest, and, dear sister,
Might well our purpose serve, wilt thou consent
That in our service he be bound?

FLAVIA.

Of me ask nothing, but pursue that council
Which in thy riper wisdom shall seem meet.

PASCENTIUS.

What's thy purpose, Fool?

FOOL.

To quit thy father.

PASCENTIUS.

What think'st o'me for a master?

FOOL.

Nay, o'that I think not, for thou wou'dst
joke, but an thou dost, thou hast rare impudence
to do't i'th' presence of a fool.
When thy beard is somewhat blacker,
When thy years have made thee riper,
When in thy purse the pounds thou'lt tell,
And for a brothel thou't not sell
Thy patrimony, and thy lands,
Why marry, an I should then find nought more

suiting, my charity shall bid me follow thee, and
teach thee the ways o'this slippery world.

FLAVIA.

O tarry not, for we must hence away;
What hour is it?

PASCENTIUS.

Near five o'th' clock.
Yon brilliant mass o'fire the golden sun,
Hath just saluted with a blushing kiss,
That partner of his bed the vasty sea.

FOOL.

Yea, and your father wills that you do soon
salute your beds, for he hath order'd that supper
be instantly brought into the hall.

FLAVIA.

Good heav'n's! so soon, O my Pascentius, Each moment lost is an eternity.

[Exeunt.

FOOL.

Nay, then ye are gone and ha left your

poor Fool behind. Methinks I love that young

master; nay, I know not how 'tis, but my legs

wou'd needs go follow him; yet master Fool, is

this wisdom? for they say the legs should ne'er

carry away the brains; yet let me see, cannot I,

in my folly, now form this saying, and turn it to

mine own conceit? I ha hit it; for it matters

not what comes o' my brains, for men say they are

good for naught, but my legs are; therefore, let

the better o'th' two serve as guide for the other.

I'll away then, and follow him.

[Exit.

ACT II.

SCENE I.

Rome.

Enter AURELIUS *and* UTER,

CONSTANTIUS' *two Brothers.*

UTER.

E'en now in Rome have we for seven long years

Made this our wearisome and constant sojourn,

I would we were again in Britain.

AURELIUS.

Even so good Uter stands it with myself,

Nay, an thou yearn'st to see thy native land,

How is it then with me that there have left

The jewel of my soul, my dearest Flavia!

UTER.

Nay, good my brother, patience yet a little,

All will be well, Flavia doth love you still.

AURELIUS.

I cannot, will not bear this absence longer.

Enter Servant.

SERVANT.

A messenger, my lords, attends without

On business of great import.

AURELIUS.

Whence comes he?

SERVANT.

From Britain.

AURELIUS.

From Britain say'st thou! then admit him straight.

[Exit Servant.

Enter Messenger.

MESSENGER.

My gracious lord, are you the eldest son

Of our good King Constantius?

AURELIUS.

Even so.

MESSENGER.

This packet then, I fear, will news contain

The most afflicting.

AURELIUS *reads.*

These letters we in haste dispatch'd to tell you,

Of your dear father's death, and to forewarn you

Of your own danger--Murder most foul hath ta'en him.
Vortigern on the Scots hath laid the murder;
But under this pretence much lies conceal'd.

Till you arrive, he is to rule deputed:
But as you prize your lives return not yet.

AURELIUS.

Oh! horror! horror! my dear father murder'd!

UTER.

By whom? speak, Messenger, where, when, and how?

MESSENGER.

The plot, good Princes, hath been deeply laid.

AURELIUS.

This is indeed most foul! say on, my friend,
Speak quickly, I intreat thee!

MESSENGER.

Then thus 'tis--Vortigern hath done the deed;
His love of splendour, pomp and sovereignty,
And his great int'rest in the people's minds,
All, all did prompt him to this hellish act.

AURELIUS.

Uter, oh heavens! the father of my Flavia!

It is impossible! It cannot be!

UTER.

Oh! this indeed is damned treachery.
My dear Aurelius, let not stupor choak
The worthy feeling of a just revenge;
Courage, Aurelius! courage, my dear brother!

AURELIUS.

Speak on, speak on, and end thy sad discourse!

MESSENGER.

Thy friends in Britain long suspected this,
And to each port did send their trusty spies,
To learn what vessels there for Rome were bound,
And haply that which did transport me here,
Was to have brought your executioners.

AURELIUS.

Oh! would it had been so. Uter support me!

UTER.

Let us retire a while my gentle brother,
Hereafter we will send and question *thee*
On these thy tidings, and their direful cause.
[Exeunt.

SCENE II.

Rome.

Enter AURELIUS, UTER, *and* MESSENGER.

AURELIUS.

Our friends in England then have thought it fitting,
That on receipt o'these, your woeful letters,
We should with all speed hie us into Scotland?

MESSENGER.

E'en so did they instruct for weighty reasons.
"Know, Vortigern did alway hate the Scots,
"And hath oft times during your father's reign,
"Fram'd laws, most burthensome unto that people.
"But the keen tooth of hatred and revenge,
"With double fury now will shew itself;
"For every noble Scot then found in London,
"Hath suffer'd under this fell tiger's fangs,
"And this to direst rage, hath stirr'd their blood."
Your story told, will raise you aid of thousands,
Three years of plenty have, among the Britons,

Sown seeds of luxury and baneful riot,
Therefore, they're unprepar'd, nor think of war.

UTER.

Are vessels ready to convey us thither?

MESSENGER.

Yes, my good lord.

AURELIUS.

Come, brother, let's away then with all speed--
But wer't not better that we change these habits?

MESSENGER.

No! no, your Roman vestments will disguise you,
And may in Scotland greatly aid your cause.

AURELIUS.

Then be it so--farewell to thee, O! Rome;
I ne'er did think that upon quitting thee,

My brimful heart wou'd thus run o'er with sorrow.

[Exeunt.

SCENE III.

A Hall, discovers VORTIGERN, EDMUNDA,
WORTIMER, *&c. at Supper.*

VORTIGERN.

Seek, Wortimer, thy brother and thy sister:
Tell them it suits but ill their present years,
To tarry thus, when summon'd to our presence.

WORTIMER.
My gracious father, I obey.

EDMUNDA.

O! dearest husband, calm thy ruffled soul,

They mean not to offend your grace; perchance

They know not of your wish for their attendance.

VORTIGERN.

Peace then, and with thy words, whet not I pray

That wrath, which kindles sore within my breast!

Again, dost hear me, bid thy tongue be silent,

'Twere better else thou did'st retire.

EDMUNDA.

I go, and though a vulture gnaw my heart,

I'd bear it all with meekness and with patience,

Rather than this my voice shou'd e'er offend thee.

[Exit.

WORTIMER.

My gracious Sir, I've search'd the chambers through,

And call'd aloud, but answer had I none,

Save but my own words, return'd upon mine ear, In airy sound.

VORTIGERN.

What! scorn'd and thus defied, I will not bear it,

Send for my prating wife, and shou'd I find

That she in any wise did aid their flight,

Let her beware of my revenge.--What ho!

Enter Servant.

VORTIGERN.

Quick to my wife, and say I'd speak with her.

As yet from those dull sluggards sent to Rome,

No tidings have I heard. But here she comes.

Enter EDMUNDA.

EDMUNDA.

What is your pleasure, Sir?

VORTIGERN.

Where are my recreant son and daughter gone;
Nay, think not with those eye drops to deceive me,
Tell me I say, thou know'st full well their flight!

EDMUNDA.

If in these veins doth run the blood of life,
Or there be truth on earth, I know not of them.

VORTIGERN.

Deceive me not I say, thou speak'st most false,
I know the quality of women's eyes,
That in a breath can weep, can laugh, or frown,
Say not these waters flow for loss o' them;
I know thee well, thou hast conspir'd with them;
'Twere better thou mak'st known their hiding place.

EDMUNDA.

O! Sir, these tears do stop my pow'r o'speech,
Which wou'd again vouch that I uttered.

VORTIGERN.

It is most false, but look to't, and dost hear me,
Come not athwart me and my purposes,
Lest thou shoud'st add to that fierce hate I bear thee.
[Exit VORTIGERN.

EDMUNDA.
And can this be? these ears were sure deceiv'd.
Yet I sleep not, nor is my brain distemper'd,
It was not so, he said not he did hate me;
O! heav'ns, in your great mercy aid me now,
And if your pleasure be not to torment
Man's poor existence in this span of life,
Aid me to bear my weight o'miseries!
Oh! yet again! my son and daughter gone,
And tell me not the cause o'this their flight.

My brain grows hot. I can no longer bear it.
Forbid his presence too! O! I am distracted!
And sleep will quiet me, I'll to the poppy
And with its juices drench these feverous lips!
O! I ha' need of med'cine and of comfort;

Again my wits do wander, I'll retire,

And left the bleak winds battle with my head,

I'll to my couch and lay me on its pillow.

[Exit.

SCENE IV.

A Wood.

Enter PASCENTIUS, FLAVIA *disguised,*

and FOOL.

PASCENTIUS.

Speak, dearest sister, say, how fares it with thee?

For those soft limbs were form'd for gentler usage,

But cheer thee up, my Flavia, whilst I'm with thee,

Thou must not faint, if there be comfort near

I'll seek it, and from out the tiger's jaw

I'll tear thee food, or if the thirsty lion
Should stand betwixt me and the bubbling brook,
This arm shou'd find a passage to his heart.
But an thou need'st nor food, nor element,
Then will I sit and comfort thy sweet tears,
And as the smaller stream doth oft times mingle,
And add its nothingness to the vast sea,
So on thy streaming cheek will I let fall
One pitying tear, one tender drop of sorrow.

FLAVIA.

Oh! gentle, excellent, most loving brother,
It is my aching heart which thus o'ercomes me,
Wretch that I am! what hath my mother done,
That lacking pity I could leave her thus,
How can her drooping heart bear this sad shock?
Can her meek soul my father's rage encounter;
No, no, impossible! then am I wretched.
Then O! you righteous and all powerful Judge,
If breath of man, with pure soul offer'd up,
Can touch you, or obtain your gentle hearing,

Behold a maiden for a mother begs,

And on her bended knee sues for protection.

Let some kind angel, minister of mercy,

Pour on her wounded soul the balm of comfort,

And in the place of overwhelming sorrow,

Let the dear plant of smiling joy bud forth;

And shou'd she weep, then may her dewy tears

Be those of tender peace and charity.

FOOL.

Be my troth, mine eyes did never water

so before, sweet mistress, an thou hast charm'd

thy Fool, methinks the choir o'angels needs must

listen to thy pray'r; and yet these underprops

o'mine do sorely ach, and wherefore shou'd they?

for an I do eat, then am I loaded, and do bear it

well, but now that I am empty, these porters

won't carry me, this is strange, and needs more

wisdom to unveil, than lies in my poor foolish brain.

FLAVIA.

Methinks I'd sit and rest me here a-while.

PASCENTIUS.

Then to the shade of yon imperial oak

I'll lead thee, there thou calmly may'st repose;

Our honest knave here, he shall sing the while,

And sooth thy sad and secret melancholy.

FOOL.

Why, to be brief good master, I needs

wou'd sing, but that gentle lady hath crack'd the

strings o'my voice; an 'twill please you weep,

marry I'll take the loudest pipe, and shou'd I fail

in giving entertaiment, why then I'll to Paul's,

and there i'the presence of Bonner, be whipp'd for a slanderer.

PASCENTIUS.

I pray thee Fool do as I list.

FOOL.

Now then I'll pipe, but my troth you

seem sad, and needs will me to sing merrily; well,

an folly will please you, I'll to't straight.

FOOL *sings* .

A Fool must needs be merry,
Lack, lack, and a well a day,
And in his shoes must bury
His sorrow and all his care;
Then is not the Fool's lot hard,
Is not his mind sore treated,
Do not his friends of's poor brains
Make physic for their senses?

Then lack, lack and well a day.
But in this our world 'tis true,
Lack, lack and well a day,
We our old friends change for new,
When they no longer suit us;
Then heigh-ho poor dobbins all,

Be sharp with men I pray you,

They carry fool's minds indeed,

Yet are but knaves I tell you.

Then lack, lack, ah! well a day.

FLAVIA.

Good honest Fool, I do sincerely thank thee.

FOOL.

Nay, nay, say not so, an I had flatter'd, why then perchance I had merited this, but i'faith gentle lady, he that says nought, save the bare truth, doth oft times meet but a bare compliment. But an you do flatter, methinks the compliment will favour more of untruth, than did the flattery, but thus it goes with our slippery world.

PASCENTIUS.

Who is it comes this way?

FLAVIA.

Let us retire,

Perchance it may be one of our pursuers.

FOOL.

An thou'lt listen a while to me I'll tell

thee thou need'st not fear, 'tis but the Post on's

way to your father's palace.

Enter POST.

PASCENTIUS.

Friend, thou out runnest almost speed itself;

Whither ar't bound?

POST.

I am for London, Sir.

PASCENTIUS.

Nay stop one moment, I conjure thee stop!
Say what these tidings that demand such haste?

POST.

That which my packets do contain.

PASCENTIUS.

An thou will tell me their contents, there's gold.

FOOL.

Now, i'troth, thou'lt unlock letters, packets, and all, look, look, the knave doth handle it with good grace, sirrah an thou play'dst on David's harp, thy fingers ne'er wou'd move so glibly o'er the strings, as o'er yon gold, do'st hear me.

POST.

Thy gold indeed doth please, it fills my purse,
And though it should not, yet what matters it?
I am well fee'd for telling that alone,

Which every simple peasant soon must know,

Then thus it is; Vortigern is accus'd

Of the base murder of Constantius!

FLAVIA.

Heavens!

POST.

Yea, and even now the Princes marching hither

From Scotland, with them bring a numerous army.

PASCENTIUS.

Alas my father! yet I do beseech thee,

How know they this? Who was't instructed them?

POST

Swift messengers dispatch'd by friends to Rome,

Further I know not--therefore must away.

[Exit Post .

FOOL.

Go to, go to, I do believe thee; marry
an thou art humble, thy purse is somewhat prouder. Good Sir, wer't not best we put on, I am
faint at heart; marry 'tis pity my wits did not fill
their owner, as well as those who do beg them.

PASCENTIUS.

Let's on, and yet what course is't fit we take?
The night doth throw his sooty mantle round,
And robs us of the cheering light of day.

FLAVIA.

Oh! Wou'd this night cou'd pluck my sorrow from me,
Or that the long eternal sleep of death
Wou'd close life's wretched, weary pilgrimage.

PASCENTIUS.

Oh! Sister an thou lov'st me grieve not so.

FLAVIA.

If charity be meek, so will I be,

And where thou lead'st, resign'd I'll follow thee.

FOOL.

Marry, an you'll listen to a fool, perchance

he may for once speek wisely.

PASCENTIUS.

Out with thy council then.

FOOL.

Thus it is--chance hath made me your

fool, and chance will now that your fool speak

something like wisdom; marry is not this the

road to Scotland? Do'st understand me?

PASCENTIUS.

Truly, I understand thee.

FOOL.

To't again, what say'st thou o'joining the

young Princes on their march?

PASCENTIUS.

It is mostly wisely utter'd, my good Fool.

Come gentle sister, we'll to th'skirt o'th' wood,

And find some cottage that may serve to night,

As 'twere a palace--all will yet be well.

[Exeunt.

ACT III.

SCENE I.

An Assembly of Barons.

VORTIGERN.

To you have been explained our late dispatches,
Say, did we not invite these Princes home,
And tender them the crown? Yet we do find
They come with foreign aid and civil war,
To bear the sway and empire over us:

Can any present say why this shou'd be?

FIRST BARON.

No! they're the sons of our late King, 'tis true,
As such, the elder doth by right inherit
The crown and kingdom, and in their defence,
Our lives, yea, and our very best heart's blood
Were truly offer'd, which we now revoke.
And since they tear the bowels of our land,
And come with blood and naked sword to court us,
We'll to the field, and when bright victory

Hath with the sacred laurel bound our brows,

The Princes' heads in triumph shall be borne

Throughout our ranks; rebellion's just reward!

SECOND BARON.

Then are they traitors to their God and country.

THIRD BARON.

And as the crown is now untenanted,

'Tis fit the most deserving brow shou'd wear it.

FIRST BARON

If any one there be that doth deserve it,

'Tis he that hath it even now in trust.

ALL.

Then be it his!

FIRST BARON.

Girt tight the drum, and sound yon brazen trumpet,

Let it proclaim aloud, our firm decree:

Aurelius and his brother both are traitors,

And 'gainst their mother country do rebel.

[Trumpet sounds.

SECOND BARON.

Nay, stop not there; but let them bellow on,

'Till with their clamorous noise they shame the thunder,

And o'er the earth, and e'en to heaven proclaim,

Vortigern our King! our lawful sov'reign.

VORTIGERN.

The exigencies of the state demand

My quick consent, I therefore give it you.

And when the crown shall on my front be bound,

My faithful soul shall prize the sacred trust,

My arm be nerv'd to fight in its defence.

BARONS.

All hail great Vortigern of Britain King!

[Trumpet sounds.

VORTIGERN.

My lords, vain compliment would suit but ill
The present time, I therefore briefly thank you:

But ere we part I fain would crave your hearing.
Our troops have now been long disus'd to war,
Yet do not think I mean their fame to tarnish,
Or on a Briton thrown the damned slur
Of shameful cowardice, no, my good lords!
But though their ribs do serve as castle walls,
And fast imprison their strong lion hearts,
Yet e'en the lion, when full gorg'd with food,
Will bask, and tamely lay him down to sleep;
Then in such sort, hath undisturbed peace,
And want of custom, (nature's substitute,
That changes e'en our very properties)
Soften'd their manhood. Then 'twere policy

That we should court the Saxons to our aid.
This too will in our Britons raise the flame
Of bright and generous emulation.

Say, lords! doth this my proposition please you?

FIRST BARON.
We do approve, and thank its noble author.

VORTIGERN.
You, my good lord, then do I here depute,
Jointly with Catagrine our second born,
That you with speed repair to Saxony;
Our eldest shall at home command the Britons,
Time needs your haste, therefore use no delay,
Your country calls, so look you quick obey.

[Exeunt.

SCENE II.

A distant View of the Sea.

Enter AURELIUS *and* UTER, *(with the Scottish army) as just disembarked, habited as Britons.*

AURELIUS.

O dearest soil, blest mother earth, hail to thee!
Fain wou'd my feel play wanton on thy breast,
And skip with joy to tread thee once again.
'Tis not to wound thee that I thus do come
In glitt'ring steel and dire array of war,
But as my right to claim thee for mine own.

UTER.

Brother, each lip for thee sends forth a blessing;
And with the smile that buds on ev'ry face,
Alike expands a ray of happiness.
Never did I before blame nature's work,

But now I fain wou'd quarrel with her hests,
For that in me, she caus'd a lack of years;
Else had these prayers, these blessings all been mine!
To have a crown and kingdom at comand
Is but as dross; but thus to have them come,
Might from their airy beds the angels draw
To taste the joys of this our mortal earth.
Throughout the camp now all is hush'd in silence,
And Morpheus, with his leaden wings outspread,
Hath on each eyelid laid the weight of slumber.
[Exit Uter.

AURELIUS.

Then, as the general, the task is mine
To thank that mighty God whose name alone
Doth carry awe, and strikes the soul with fear.
Here prostate then I fall before thy face,
And, tho' unworthy of thy mercy, pray;--
If giant form doth more enlarge the mind,
Would that my front did with the mountains vie;
That so my heat amazed brain might work

Thoughts suiting more this vast immensity!
O most expanded, O most fertile mind!
When thou would'st copulate with thoughts like this,
Thou art mere nothingness; or when the lips
Do pour forth boisterous and high sounding words,
They back again to the poor mortal brain,
And scoff at thy presumption.
"O God! why shou'd I, a mere speck on earth,
"Tear thousands from their wives, children, and homes!
"O! wherefore from this transitory sleep,
"That now doth steal from their inward cares,
"Should I send thousands to cold dreary death?

"'Tis true, I am a King, and what of that?
"Is not life dear to them, as 'tis to me?
"O! peasant, envy not the prince's lot;
"Thy page in life's great book is not foul charg'd,
"And like to ours besmear'd with dying breaths.
"O! had I lives myself enough to answer
"The ravenous and greedy jaws of death,
"That will on these my friends, my soldiers,

"Such havoc make, and wanton gluttony!

"Father of mercy, great God, spare this blood!

"And if I must alone receive the crown,

"Bedeck'd with purple gore, I here resign it."

[Exit.

SCENE III.

Gates of London.

Enter CATAGRINUS, HENGIST *and* HORSUS,

with Saxon Troops, in grand Procession.

CATAGRINUS.

Here let us halt, and let the trumpet sound.

[Trumpet sounds, Officer appears on the walls.

OFFICER.

Say, be ye friends of foes?

CATAGRINUS.

My father sent us hence to Saxony;

Go, say our embassy is now fulfill'd;

[Trumpet sounds.

Yet soft, that sound proclaims his quick approach.

HENGIST.

Throughout the ranks let each man be prepar'd,

To hail our new ally, King Vortigern.

SCENE IV.

Gates open.

VORTIGERN *appears in Robes of Majesty,* *followed by the Barons and British Troops.*

CATAGRINUS *kneels to* VORTIGERN.

VORTIGERN.

Rise, my dear son! thou'rt welcome here again.

And you brave Saxons, greet we to our land.

HENGIST.

We come, great sir, to fight in thy defence,
And from thy kingdom wipe away rebellion.

VORTIGERN.

Give me thy hand, brave General, and with it,
Exchange we mutually a soldier's faith.
Here let our British troops in friendship join,
And with the Saxons share our present joy.
[Exeunt.

SCENE V.

The Country.

Enter FLAVIA, PASCENTIUS, *and* FOOL.

PASCENTIUS.

Why sister thus shou'd grief usurp thy cheek?
O mingle not so much of lily die
With thy sweet rosy blood, thou'rt cold as death,
Pine not in silence thus!

FLAVIA.

I'll sit me down and court sweet music's aid.

She sings.

 She sang while from her eye ran down
The silvery drop of sorrow,
 From grief she stole away the crown,

Sweet patience too did borrow.
Pensive she sat while fortune frown'd,
And smiling woo'd sad melancholy.

II.

Keen anguish fain wou'd turn her heart,
 And sour her gentle mind;
But charity still kept her part,
 And meekness to her soul did bind.
She bow'd content,
Heav'd forth one sigh,
Sang, wept, then turn'd to melancholy.

III.

Careless her locks around her hung,
 And strove to catch each dewy tear,
The plaintive bird in pity sung,
 And breath'd his sorrow in her ear.
Amaz'd she look'd,
And thank'd his care,
Then sunk once more to melancholy.

PASCENTIUS.

O! why sing thus? thou dost join woe to woe,

Thy grief methinks demands more cheering notes.

FLAVIA.

Oh! brother, this strange frame that keeps in life,

Is almost sick and weary of its tenant.

Tho' short hath been its course, yet fickle fortune

Hath with it wanton made, and blown it

To and fro, a toy for this merc'less world.

PASCENTIUS.

Listen, I pray thee now, to reason's voice;

Were it not strange, if thou alone shou'dst 'scape

The numerous ills and buffets of the world?

FOOL.

I'troth, thou hast wisely spoken.

PASCENTIUS.

Dost think so, my good Fool?

FOOL.

Marry, aye, do I; an I'll thee why,
thy speech hath not wearied the Fool, therefore
'tis a wise speech.

PASCENTIUS.

Thou'rt then a judge?

FOOL.

Aye, and a righteous one too, dost mark
me, 'tis your Fool alone will make a true report.

PASCENTIUS

I understand thee not.

FOOL.

The more's the pity. He that doth, or

well speak, or write, will be prais'd by fools

only, for look ye, envy doth sting those that have

knowledge, and makes them fear lest their wise

heads should be outwitted, therefore again, 'tis

your Fool alone that is your upright judge, cause

forsooth, his brains are not in plenty; but those

which he hath are at's own disposal.

PASCENTIUS.

This road methinks shou'd lead us on our way

To the Prince's camp! Fool, go you on before.

[As they retire, enter Captain and Soldiers.

CAPTAIN.

Not quite so fast, good master, prithee halt.

FLAVIA.

What, guards! O brother, now we are undone.

PASCENTIUS.

Be calm, be calm, the troops are not my father's.

Wil't please you, sir inform us whence you came?

CAPTAIN.

From Scotland, sir.

FLAVIA.

Then O good heav'ns protect me!

PASCENTIUS.

And who is your commander?

CAPTAIN.

One whose merit
Outweighs whatever yet did breathe on earth;
If ye be Britons, as your looks bespeak,
Then shew your wonted quality of justice;

Did ye not 'fore the awful face of Heaven,
Proclaim Constantius as your lawful King,
When on his head was pour'd the sacred oil?

PASCENTIUS.

But he is now no more.

CAPTAIN.

Yet hath he two sons living,
Whose souls, for purity, I can compare
Unto this bright unspotted canopy.

PASCENTIUS.

Are ye bound towards the camp?

CAPTAIN.

We are, and if you're upright men and true,
Thither you'll follow, and there wield the sword
For justice, truth, and your anointed King.
Yet in this hallow'd cause we wou'd not force you,
But lead into the fold with gentleness,

Each sheep that may unknowingly have strayed,

And broke from out its bounds, and flowery pasture.

PASCENTIUS.

Proceed then, and we'll follow; tell me, sister,

Doth not your heart beat high?

FLAVIA.

Yea, it swells so, this little breast in truth.

Can scarce contain it.--

How shall we bear the meeting?

FOOL.

I troth, merrily, merrily as I do; 'tis true

I am a Briton, but then am I not a Fool? And

ne'er will I put my folly to the test. Think'st

thou I'll risk my brains for mine anointed King?

Nay, nay in this affair mine heels shall be my

guide, and quick teach me the way to run.

[Exeunt.

SCENE VI.

A Chamber in the Palace.

Enter EDMUNDA, *and Attendants* .

EDMUNDA.

I will not to my chamber then I tell ye.

FIRST MAID.

Beseech you madam to return again,
For so did your physician order--

EDMUNDA.

Come hither pretty maid, look at me well;
Now say, hath he so order'd it, or not?

FIRST MAID.

Indeed he hath.

EDMUNDA.

Nay, get thee gone,--a maid, and still so false!

Go to, live I not yet? Am I then call'd?
And hath my sweet-heart death yet fondly clasp'd me;
Say! hath the heavy passing bell yet sounded,
And hail'd me to my snug and chilly chamber?

SECOND MAID.

Madam, I fear your reason wanders.

EDMUNDA.

Aye, aye! I understand thee, it is flown;
My poor brain, alas! is sore distemper'd.
[Strikes her forehead.
Sweet, sweet, come from yon branch here's food for thee,
My pretty birds come back, I will not harm ye,

My bosom as your little nest is warm,
And is as soft, aye, and full of comfort too.

Nay stop! it is too warm, come not! 'twill burn ye.

SECOND MAID.

My tears do flow for her so plenteously,
That I have left me in no power to help her.

EDMUNDA.

O! you great Gods! why pelt ye thus my brain,
And with your thunders loud, cause such dire outrage
Within this little ball, this, O! this nothing!

Tell me high Heaven, is this your justice?
Did I not nourish them, aye, teach them, love them?
Yes, little drops, Oh! come, cool my poor face;
Speak! aye, ye come I know to say I did.

Now please your highness, and what wou'd you more?
Say, are not here a host of witnesses?

Longer, O let me not detain the Court,
For in such plenty they do now rush forth,
That you, Sir, you who fill yon seat of justice,
Must throw away your gown and swim for life.

FIRST MAID.

Will't please we lead you in?

EDMUNDA.

I'gin indeed to think I do need support,
For I am even weaker than a babe.
Hush! hush! come hither both, I'll tell you something;
Now then your ears, I'm mad, ha! ha! ha!
Say! is not this Whitsuntide?

SECOND MAID.

Aye an't please you madam.

EDMUNDA.

Then listen.

She sings

Last Whitsunday they brought me
Roses, and lilies fair,
Violets too they gave me
To bind my auburn hair;
But then my face look'd smiling,
Cause that my babes were near,
Now yon stinging nettle bring,
'Twill better suit this tear.

How you like this?

FIRST MAID.

Excellently well, madam.

EDMUNDA.

The time has been! when thus thou might'st have said,

What, must these poor eyes never see them more?

And have I need of these vile rags; off! off!
I'll follow thee to th' extreme point o'th' world,
And naked bear thy icy mountains cold,
And the dread scorches o'that ball of fire
'Till I have found them i'the antipodes;
Shou'd I not meet them there, I will rail so!--
Pardon these starts! in troth I will not harm ye,
Indeed, indeed, I'm wrong'd! most sadly wrong'd!
Did these sweet notes then charm ye? then I'll die,
For look you, I will then sing sweeter far,
Than dying swan at ninety and nine years!
Lack, lack, a day! I'm faint! your arm sweet maid.
There is my gage, farewell; good night, sweet! good night!--
[Exeunt.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

AURELIUS' *Camp.*

Enter AURELIUS, UTER, PASCENTIUS,
and FLAVIA.

AURELIUS.

You then escaped disguised in man's attire?

FLAVIA.

'Tis true I did, but ne'er did rapier yet
Adorn a side less fitting to support it.

AURELIUS.

To you Pascentius my best thanks are due.

PASCENTIUS.

Nay, nay, 'tis little that to me you owe.

FLAVIA.

Indeed, but for his aid, I long ere this
Had broke my sacred vow, and wedded death.

UTER.

Brother, the enemy is near at hand,
Straight let us forth, and range our troops for battle.

AURELIUS.

Go you before and swift I'll follow.
Now to thy care my dearest friend, I trust
Thy beauteous sister, and my sweetest love.
Should victory proclaim the day our own,
All will be well; but shou'd the loss be ours,
To Heav'ns just guard I must resign you both.
Two trusty servants have I placed without,
Who will conduct you westward of our camp,
If we be beaten, thither we'll retreat:
Haste! fare thee well, sweet love.

FLAVIA.

This token let me brace around thine arm,

Think of me in the field, nor let revenge

Blot from thy gen'rous breast the sense of pity.

AURELIUS.

O! cruel fortune, so soon to wrench from me

This lovely form, to steal this beauteous hand,

And offer to my grasp this weighty steel.

[Exeunt.

SCENE II.

The Camp of HENGIST.

Enter HENGIST *and* HORSUS.

HENGIST.

Have Vortigern's brave sons yet ta'en their station?

HORSUS.

Yea, to our right the Briton's strength is form'd.

HENGIST.
Then bid them wait the enemies attack.

[Exit Horsus.
Now, O yet Gods! prove but propitious to me;
And yield me but the victory this day:
A mightier force I've summon'd to this island,
And with them my fair daughter will arrive;
If then her beauty catch this vicious King,
E'en as mine own I'll hail this fertile land,
And these brave Britons by my arts and arms,
Bind to a foreign yoke.
[Exit.

SCENE III.

A Wood.

Enter Britons and Saxons, they encounter
the Scots, and after a hard contest, the Scots are defeated.

Enter AURELIUS *and* UTER.

AURELIUS.

O brother! fortune frowns, the day is lost.

UTER.

But it hath cost them dear!
Rally then our troops, and march them towards the West.

[Exeunt.

SCENE IV.

Another part of the Field.

Enter FLAVIA *and* PASCENTIUS.

PASCENTIUS.

Be of good cheer, tho' they have lost the day,
Yet was the victory most dearly bought,
The Scots too in good order have retir'd.

Enter HORSUS.

Say, what's thy business in this bloody field,
And who's that maid who bears thee company?
It should seem that thou hast fought and conquer'd,
And hast in triumph seiz'd on this fair prize.

PASCENTIUS.

I, Sir, am her protector.

HORSUS.

If thou'lt resign her, here is gold for thee.

PASCENTIUS.

Although my peasant habit shews me poor,
Yet covers it a soul that boldly scorns thee;
I am a Briton, Sir, will that suffice thee?

HORSUS.

Vile stripling! dost thou know me?

PASCENTIUS.

I do not.

HORSUS.

Thou shalt repent this!

PASCENTIUS.

Approach her not, if yet thou lov'st thyself.

HORSUS.

Thy lack of years doth save thee from my wrath,

Thou beardless boy who thus doth ape the man,

Once more I tell thee!--

FLAVIA.

O Pascentius, O my brother!

PASCENTIUS.

Fear not, he shall not harm thee gentle Flavia.

(To Horsus.) Insolent presumptuous slave! what would'st thou?

HORSUS.

I'll make thee dearly answer for thy rashness.

[The fight, and Horsus falls.

O I am wounded! speak, what is thy name?

But thou art brave, and I forgive thee this.
Good youth approach, I fain would tell thee something,
But O! I'm faint, death's cold and heavy hand
Doth rest like ice upon my parting soul.
Go to the King I pray thee,
Bid him beware of Hengist.

[Dies.

PASCENTIUS.

I now lament the deed that I have done.

FLAVIA.

O sadly doth repentance sit on us.

PASCENTIUS.

How soon this lord of the creation dies;
The erran'st coward now may spurn at him!

FLAVIA.

Sure he make some mention of our father,

And bade us tell him to beware of Hengist.

PASCENTIUS.

Something methinks he spoke to that effect,

This must our father know.

[Exeunt.

SCENE V.

A Wood.

Enter HENGIST *and Officer.*

HENGIST.

Hath Horsus yet been found?

OFFICER.

Thrice hath the field with greatest care been search'd,

But all in vain.

HENGIST.

Then have I lost my first, my dearest friend,

If he be slain, by the great Gods I swear,

I will revenge him on these Scottishmen;

But whither are the Princes now retir'd?

OFFICER.

Towards Badon Hill.

HENGIST.

How fare our troops?

OFFICER.

But ill, nay, very ill.

HENGIST.

Indeed! and sayest thou so?

OFFICER.

The day was bloody and it cost us dear,

The Scots were firm, and fought us man to man;

Four thousand lives were lost.

HENGIST.

Good Heav'ns!

Enter another Officer.

What's thy business?

SECOND OFFICER.

Fourteen thousand troops have join'd our army,

And with them your daughter; but look, she comes!

Enter ROWENA.

HENGIST.

Welcome Rowena!

(Rowena kneels.)

ROWENA.

O! joy once more to see my father's face.

HENGIST.

Rise, rise my child!

ROWENA.

First with my kisses let me 'dew this hand;

And with these arms embrace my father's neck.

Enter Soldier.

SOLDIER.

From London, Vortigern is on his march!

And comes in haste to greet your late success.

HENGIST.

'Tis well! go straight, put all in readiness.
Retire! I wou'd be private with my daughter.

OFFICER.

We obey, my lord.

[Exeunt Officers.

HENGIST.

Daughter, thou heard'st but now o'th' King's approach.

ROWENA.
Your Officer so express'd it!

HENGIST.

True! and do'st hear, much rests with thee to do.

ROWENA.

If ought, dear father, my poor services
Can aid thee, but command;--and I'll obey.

HENGIST.

Thus then it is--I shall prepare a feast,
And greet the King with joy and merriment;
Women I know have very many ways,
And subtle traps to catch the hearts of men:
So practice all your arts to win his love.

ROWENA.

But shou'd I fail?

HENGIST.

Nay, do not fear it; I do know him well.

Come to my tent, and there we'll weigh this business.

[Exeunt.

SCENE VI.

A magnificent Feast, VORTIGERN *on*
a Throne, HENGIST, WORTIMERUS,
CATAGRINUS, *Lords and Ladies, with*
Attendants.

VORTIGERN.

To mirth we dedicate this noble feast!

And you brave Hengist we do greet withal.

HENGIST.

O! my most gracious King, I am unworthy.

VORTIGERN.

Thou did'st fight manfully, and bravely conquer.

Wine there! a health to Hengist! would that Horsus
Were likewise here!

LORDS.

The King doth drink.

HENGIST.

Thou sentest for me, noble Sir, to fight;
I have done nought save that I promised;
Had I play'd other than the soldier's part,
Then had I tarnished the Saxon name.

[Hengist speaks to one of the Lords aside.

VORTIGERN.

Thou, Hengist, at our hands hast well deserv'd;
We will consider, and reward thy labours.

Enter ROWENA.

Ye heavenly powers! what lovely maid is this, Whose form might raise the blush in Dian's cheek?

HENGIST.

Rowena, Sir, my daughter, and your slave.

(Rowena kneels.)

ROWENA.
All hail, great King!

VORTIGERN.

O thou most lovely maiden!
Here let me pledge thee in this golden cup.
On its smooth brim I pray thee print a kiss,
That so I may inhale the roseate sweets,
And taste the nectar of those vermil lips.
[Takes the cup and drinks.
This seat is empty, fair Rowena, take it,
And wou'd it were that which Jove's wife doth hold!

CATAGRINUS.

It is Edmunda's place, the queen's, our mother's.

VORTIGERN.

Peace! she is unworthy of that station.

WORTIMERUS.

She, Sir, *is* queen, and tho' she is not present,
Most righteously the law awards it her.
She that usurps it, breaks that sacred law--

VORTIGERN.

How, do ye murmur, must I then humble
And stoop the neck to bear my children's yoke?
Begone, I say, lest that my present wrath
Make me forget the place by blood I hold,
And break the tie 'twixt father and his child.

WORTIMERUS.

We shall retire, my lord!

VORTIGERN.

Here sit, bright maid, if I presage not vainly,

Thou shalt, ere long, have right to take this place.

ROWENA.

How can I merit love of such a King?

An humble vassal only.

VORTIGERN.

Thy meekness and fair looks have won my soul,

O! let thy tongue here title me thy lord!

ROWENA.

Already, Sir, have I avow'd you King.

VORTIGERN.

And therefore here I do proclaim thee Queen.
Good Hengist speak! wilt thou consent hereto?

HENGIST.

My lord! that honour is too weighty.

VORTIGERN.

Then speak, my lords, what say ye to my choice?
True, I am married, and my wife doth live;
Yet none methinks by law can here be bound,
When the dread wrath of Heav'n doth shew itself,
And on his wedded wife doth send down madness.

FIRST LORD.

Methinks the law shou'd then proclaim it void.

VORTIGERN.

Be it then void; and here I pledge myself,
To take this lovely maiden to my wife.

To thee, good Hengist, we resign all Kent,
As a sure earnest of our future bounty;
Proclaim it in the camp, and let each man
Receive in largess from our royal coffers,
That massy ore, which long hath lain entomb'd,
And now shall we reward our soldier's toils.

SECOND LORD.

The law allows not this, it is not justice.

THIRD LORD.

That power lies in the Barons, not the King.

VORTIGERN.

What! dare ye then dispute it?

ALL BUT FIRST LORD.

We do.

THIRD LORD.

And while the pow'r remains that's vested in us,
We ne'er will countenance such vile injustice,
That tramples our dearest country's rights.

VORTIGERN.

Take heed, lest you repent this your rashness.
[Exeunt Lords.

SCENE closes, VORTIGERN comes forward.

VORTIGERN.

O! these vile petty kings do make more uproar
E'en than above, the thund'ring god himself.
To-morrow be the nuptials then proclaim'd;
And that Guorongus, that proud lord of Kent,
Who boldly in our presence call'd for justice,
His lands, his property, and all his titles,
We do invest in Hengist and his line.

[Hengist bows.

VORTIGERN TO ROWENA.

Give me thy hand; let us retire, my Queen!

[Exeunt.

SCENE VII.

An Anti-Chamber.

Enter WORTIMERUS *and* CATAGRINUS.

WORTIMERUS.

Shall we in quiet tamely suffer this?
See our most excellent and gentle mother,
In bold defiance of all sacred laws,
So basely treated?

CATAGRINUS.

Do they then think our substance form'd of flint;
Or that our hearts are adamant itself?
Where is our brother? our dearest sister?

I fear, indeed, they had just cause for flight.

WORTIMERUS.

Let's to the Princes, and our troops will follow.

They like not the rude treatment of these Saxons!

CATAGRINUS.

I do accept thine offer.

Enter Lords.

SECOND LORD.

Most gentle Princes, whither are ye bound?

WORTIMERUS.

To quit oppression, and to seek for justice.

THIRD LORD.

Under your banners then we do enlist.

CATAGRINUS.

Speak, what hath now been done that thus ye quit

Your King, your country, and your weighty trust?

SECOND LORD.

The King, on the pretext of malady,

Most basely hath divorc'd your mother from him,

And means to take to Rowena for his wife.

WORTIMERUS.

Gods!

SECOND LORD.

And, her proud father, Hengist, to enrich,

He hath despoil'd me of mine heritage,

And from my sweet, my lovely babes cut off

Their rights, and ta'en from me my vast estate.

WORTIMERUS.

Then look you quick repair towards our camp, Thither in secret we'll convey our mother;

So fare ye well, good lords.

[Exeunt.

SCENE VIII.

Enter AURELIUS, UTER, PASCENTIUS,

and FLAVIA.

AURELIUS.

Though bloody battle calls us forth again,

I'll rather part with life, with all on earth,

Than leave thee, Flavia, unprotected.

UTER.

Hengist hath pitch'd on t'other side of Badon;

The noise of arms, and distant hum of soldiers,

Bespeak their hasty preparation;

'Twere best to attack them early in the morn.

AURELIUS.

Then be it so.

PASCENTIUS.

And yet I must not 'gainst my father arm!

FLAVIA.

Indeed, thou'dst arm against thy sister too;
Who wou'd protect me then, or calm my fear;
Who sit and tell me tales of hope? O! no one:
It were too much, you cannot, must not leave me.

Enter Officer.

OFFICER.

Two sons of Vortigern do crave admittance.

Enter WORTIMERUS *and* CATAGRINUS.

WORTIMERUS.

My brother and my sister here!

CATAGRINUS.

O! joy unthought of! Oh! unlook'd-for bliss!

FLAVIA.

Say! speak! how fares it with my gentle mother?

WORTIMERUS.

Beseech thee, ask me not of her sad story.

FLAVIA.

Sad, say'st thou? Heav'n forefend; she is not dead?

WORTIMERUS.

Calm thyself, dearest sister, she lives still.

FLAVIA.

O! where, where, tell me, that with these moist tears
I may rain comfort on her wounded soul.

WORTIMERUS.

Let us retire.

SCENE IX.

Enter the Saxon and British Armies; they
fight, and the Saxons are routed.

Enter HENGIST *and Officer.*

HENGIST.

All, all is lost. Fly, fly to the king's tent,
Bid him to London speedily repair;

Away, away, tarry not on your life
A curse upon his sons for quitting us;
Shou'd they but follow up this victory,
My hopes, my every wish, for ever's blasted.

Enter WORTIMERUS.

HENGIST.

Vile traitor both to your liege king and father,
What blasted fiend, blacker than hell itself,
Cou'd prompt thee to this damned treachery?

WORTIMERUS.

Can'st thou, vile Saxon, thou base braggart, ask it?
'Tis thou, and on thy soul I'll prove it so.

HENGIST.

Ask where's thy queen, and then I'll answer thee!

WORTIMERUS.

Dares thus thy tongue with notes unmannerly
My heartstrings tear asunder? Fiend, have at thee.
[They fight, Hengist falls.

HENGIST.

Thine hand be blasted for this fatal blow.
And must then all my hopes lie buried here?

WORTIMERUS.

Yea, and thou need'st not much of Kent's domain,
A little mole-hill now will serve!

HENGIST.

Yet chance one lives, that may avenge this deed;
'Tis the brave Horsus, 'tis my noble friend.

WORTIMERUS.

He fought his last,--
On him were found the secrets of thy plot:

Wou'dst thou not have enthrall'd my countrymen;

Was not thy daughter to have basely poison'd

Her king, and husband, and then wert not thou

To have seiz'd the crown? O! villain! villain! traitor!

HENGIST.

Yea, all, had I but liv'd a little longer.

Hell, swallow me not up! nor ope thy jaws

So wide. The fiends do tug and strain my heartstrings,

They burst, they crack--Oh! curs'd ambition! Oh!

[Dies.

Enter CATAGRINUS.

CATAGRINUS.

All, all is ours, the ranks are broken--

They fly before us, come, let's follow them.

Good heav'ns, who's this?

[Looking to the body of Hengist.

WORTIMERUS.

Hengist himself.

CATAGRINUS.

What, was it thou that this vile monster fell'd?

WORTIMERUS.

Ay, marry; but he fought indeed like one
That begg'd a little time to save his soul.

CATAGRINUS.

Our father hath towards London ta'en his flight,
But yet Rowena is our prisoner.

WORTIMERUS.

That's well indeed! come let us on and join them.

[Exeunt.

SCENE X.

VORTIGERN's *Palace.*

Enter VORTIGERN *and First Baron.*

FIRST BARON.

Speed, my most gracious lord, think on your safety,

They course your troops, and dreadful is the carnage.

VORTIGERN.

Where are my sons?

FIRST BARON.

Let not your tongue curse me when I shall say.

VORTIGERN.

Speak quick!

FIRST BARON.

With all their troops they join'd the enemy,

And took with them their mother.

Enter Officer.

VORTIGERN.

Well, Sir, and what more tidings do you bring?

OFFICER.

To London's lofty walls they follow'd us.

VORTIGERN.

I care not an' they follow'd you to hell:

Speak, vassal! coward, speak! where is Rowena?

OFFICER.

Alas, I fear me, Sir, she's ta'en a prisoner.

VORTIGERN.

Then all is lost indeed!--Thou sweetest death!

Bury but in this bosom thy fell dart,

And I will bless thee for the gentle deed.

OFFICER.

Shall I go forth, my lord, and man the walls?

VORTIGERN.

Do as thou wilt,--

Good friend, I'd speak with thee.

OFFICER.

What, Sir, are your commands?

VORTIGERN.

Thou art an old and ever faithful servant.

OFFICER.

My means have not kept pace with my desires.

VORTIGERN.

I know thee well! wou'dst thou not serve me, friend?

OFFICER.

Aye, my good lord! put me but to the test,
And you shall see me smile at death himself.

VORTIGERN.

I take thee at thy word; hold here my sword,
And but one friendly office render me;
Flinch not, strike deep and home; here lies my heart.

OFFICER.

O! if each drop that were to issue from thee,
Were a most precious jewel, and the whole

Were my reward, by heav'n I wou'd not do't!

VORTIGERN.

Thou, coward, what, afraid? O! shame, fie on't.

OFFICER.

Consider, Sir, your Queen yet lives.

VORTIGERN.

Thou art in the right; to arms then; out,
Bring me my burnished shield, my weighty ax.
And man the northern gate, let every bell
Sound forth each brazen note until it rouse
Our tombed fathers from their silent graves,
To come and aid us at this pinch of time.
Ring till the very steeples totter down.

Mark well my orders, he that flinches, dies.
If ought of murmur's heard, choak it with death.

Away, away, and now for victory.

ACT V.

SCENE I.

Apartment in VORTIGERN's *Palace.*

EDMUNDA *on a Couch,*

FLAVIA *and* PASCENTIUS.

Soft Music.

EDMUNDA.

Indeed, my gentle maid, indeed, thou'rt kind, And by those tears that glaze thy lovely eyes,

'Twould seem that truly thou did'st pity me.

FLAVIA.

Pity thee, O Gods!

EDMUNDA.

Nay, wherefore weep ye both,

'Tis long, long since I was thus kindly treated,

Your pardon, but I fear you scoff at me.

PASCENTIUS.

Doth she yet know you?

FLAVIA.

Wou'd to Heaven she did.

EDMUNDA.

And yet there was a maid that once did love me,

Heigh ho! she went alack! I know not whither,
Thou ne'er did'st see her, else what I shall say
Methinks wou'd make thee vain, but yet indeed,
Thou seem'st right well to ape her pretty manners.

FLAVIA.

This is too much, I cannot bear all this.

EDMUNDA.

Nay, nay, why shou'dst thou wail and tremble so?
'Till this I thought that grief was only mine;
It is not fair to rob me of all comfort,
I thought thee honest, but indeed the world
Doth flatter, fawn, and stroke upon the face,
And sadly censure when the back is turn'd.

PASCENTIUS.

O! dearest mother, say, dost thou not know me?

EDMUNDA.

Aye, aye, right well, thou'rt one by name a man;

Thy form is well enough, and thou may'st pass;

But hast thou a heart for melting pity?

For better a brute,--

Than lack it under that most godlike form:

And yet I do thee wrong,--for even now

Thou didst add graces to that manly cheek,

With scalding tears! and for whom do you this?

For one that neither asks, nor merits it.

Enter WORTIMERUS *and* CATAGRINUS.

WORTIMERUS.

How doth she now?

PASCENTIUS.

Alas! she wanders yet, her mind's diseas'd.

FLAVIA.

I am that maiden lost, your loving daughter.

EDMUNDA.

Bring here my glasses, stand before me here!
Now, now, I'll judge thee well, I'll see this straight,
And first her look was mild, in this thou'lt do;
Then she was kind, most excellent, and good,
Well, and so seemest thou; now for the last,
O! her heart was,--but thine I cannot see,
There thou deceivest me, I know thee not.
Yet if thou be my daughter,
On thy forehead is a mark,--
Away then with those locks from off thy front:

Now, let me look! O! gods, 'tis she, 'tis she.

PASCENTIUS.

She faints, she faints! this shock is too afflicting
For her poor shatter'd, and disabled frame.

FLAVIA.

O! dearest, kindest, and most gentle mother.

EDMUNDA.

Indeed, my brain is something cooler now,

I shou'd know you, Sir, and you too, nay all!

I'm very faint, alas, this joy o'ercomes me!

FLAVIA.

Sweet mother, you need rest, we'll lead you in.

EDMUNDA.

Then be it so, and wilt thou sit and watch me?

FLAVIA.

Aye, and I'll kneel and pray, and sometimes weep.

EDMUNDA.

Lead then, I'll in to rest, come follow me.

[Exeunt.

Enter AURELIUS *and* UTER.

AURELIUS.

The breach is made, the southern gate is forc'd,

Yet still doth he hold out, and hath ta'en flight

E'en to the tower, and there he'll wait the siege.

UTER.

Aurelius, your fair prisoner is no more.

AURELIUS.

How say'st thou?

UTER.

Rowena hath ta'en poison and is dead.

AURELIUS.

Then hath a wicked soul taken its flight

From the most lovely frame that e'er was form'd,

To charm or to deceive.

[Exeunt.

SCENE II.

Cæsar's Tower.

Enter First Baron and Officer.

BARON.

Is the King yet safe?

OFFICER.

He is, my lord.

BARON.

Are many troops with us?

OFFICER.

Two thousand full well arm'd; and braver men
Ne'er buckled on their limbs the glitt'ring steel.

O! what a fight it was to see the King.
No sooner had he reach'd the bridge, but firm,
And with a voice that wrung each coward heart,
He hail'd them to come on. Here then he stood,
In his right hand griping his massy ax,
Whilst with the left he held the brazen chain,--
Nor did he budge until each hardy soldier
Safely within the walls had entered.
Then waving thrice his cased hand in air,
And with a nod that spread pale fear around,
And seem'd to animate his bloody plume,
Triumphantly he bad them all defiance;
Then slowly turning with a horrid frown,

Soldiers, he cry'd, soldiers! break down the draw-bridge.
Like hail, in flight we pour'd on them our arrows,
Until their blood had stain'd the moat around us,--
But look, my lord, here comes the King.

Enter VORTIGERN.

VORTIGERN.

Why stand ye here, like folks, catching the air
What! think ye this to be your mistress' chamber?

BARON.

My gracious Prince, we wait your orders here.

VORTIGERN.

Then fight I say.
Go get ye hence.--

BARON.

I go.

VORTIGERN.

No, no, thou must stay here, thou'rt my sole prop;
I sicken fast, and 'gin again to flag.
Pour forth, I pray thee now, some flatt'ring words,
For I am weary, and my lamp of life
Doth sadly linger, and wou'd fain go out,
For look you, my poor soul is sore diseas'd.

BARON.

Courage, my noble Sir.--

VORTIGERN.

Time was, alas! I needed not this spur.
But here's a secret, and a stinging thorn,
That wounds my troubled nerves, O! conscience! conscience!
When thou didst cry, I strove to stop thy mouth,
By boldy thrusting on thee dire ambition,
Then I did think myself indeed a god!

But I was sore-deceiv'd, for as I pass'd,
And travers'd in proud triumph the Basse-court,
There I saw death clad in most hideous colours,
A sight it was that did appal my soul,
Yea, curdled thick this mass of blood within me.
Full fifty breathless bodies struck my sight,
And some with gaping mouths did seem to mock me,
Whilst others smiling in cold death itself,
Scoffingly bad me look on that, which soon
Wou'd wrench from off my brow this sacred crown,
And make me too a subject, like themselves;
Subject! to whom? To thee, O sovereign death!
Who hast for thy domain this world immense;
Church-yards and charnel-houses are thy haunts,
And hospitals thy sumptuous palaces,
And when thou would'st be merry, thou dost chuse
The gaudy chamber of a dying King.
O! then thou dost ope wide thy hideous jaws,
And with rude laughter, and fantastic tricks,
Thou clap'st thy rattling fingers to thy sides;
And when this solemn mockery is ended,

With icy had thou tak'st him by the feet,
And upward so, till thou dost reach the heart,
And wrap him in the cloak of lasting night.

BARON.

Let not, my lord! your thoughts sink you thus low,
But be advis'd, for should your gallant troops
Behold you thus, they might fall sick with fear.

Enter an Officer.

OFFICER.

My lord! my lord!

VORTIGERN.

Wherefore dost tremble thus, paper-fac'd knave!
What news shou'd make thee break thus rudely in?

OFFICER.

Indeed, indeed, I fear to tell you, Sir.

VORTIGERN.

Speak, vassal, speak! my soul defies thy tongue.

OFFICER.

Your newly married Queen--

VORTIGERN.

Speak, what of her?

OFFICER.

My lord, she hath ta'en poision, and is dead.

VORTIGERN.

Nay, shrink not from me now, be not afraid,
There, lie my sword! and with it all my hopes.

LORD.

Yet we may hope--

VORTIGERN.

O! friend, let not thy tongue delude with hope,
Too long against the Almighty have I fought.

Hope now is vain--I will not hear of it.

OFFICER.

Yet is the breach not made, and we are strong,
Still we may out, my lord, and beat them off.

VORTIGERN.

Can wicked souls e'er stand before the just;
Can strength outweigh the mighty hand of God?
No, no, never, never--O! repentance,
Why dost thou linger thus to ask admittance?
Thou com'st, alas! too late, thou'rt stale and nauseous.

Where, where is now the good old murder'd King?
In fields of bliss, where guilty souls ne'er come.

Enter another Officer.

SECOND OFFICER.

All, all is lost, the post is ta'en by storm;

The breach is made, they pour in fast upon us.

VORTIGERN.

If it be so, then will I out and die;

Now aid, ye gods! but if ye will not hear,

E'en then on hell I call again for succour!

My friends have boldly stemm'd this tide of war,

And shall I flinch at last and play the woman?

Let any but Aurelius meet my arm,

And this my sword shall ope a gate so wide,

That the imprison'd soul shall take its flight,

And either seek the murder'd King above,

Or down and join me in the pit below.

[Exeunt.

SCENE III.

The Basse-Court of the Tower.

Enter AURELIUS *and* UTER.

UTER.

Where, brother, are the sons of Vortigern?

AURELIUS.

I bade them with their gentle mother stay,
For much 'twould have offended righteous Heav'n,
If 'gainst their father they had join'd with us.
For here there always is a sacred tie,
Which suffers not a son's unlifted hand,
To strike a father, be he ne'er so vile.

Did he not give him birth, and nourish him?
And when thy direst foe becomes thy slave,
Say, shouldst thou use revenge? No, rather shame him

With pity and all-softening charity;
Then on a golden bed thou lay'st thy soul,
And art on earth a blessed angel.

UTER.

Brother, I do commend thee for this deed,
Worthy a Prince, worthy a Briton too.

But come! now, for this tyrant Vortigern!

Enter Officer.

AURELIUS.

What's the news?

OFFICER.

Th' ill fated King doth flee tow'rds Cæsar's Tow'r,
And half his troops have fall'n into our hands.

AURELIUS.

Did ye obey mine orders?

OFFICER.

Aye, my good lord, in ev'ry circumstance.

AURELIUS.

Then Uter look, you march towards that same tow'r;
Let me, ye gods! but meet with this vile traitor,
And shou'd his soul not shrink beneath this sword,
Heav'n has no justice.

[Exeunt.

SCENE *the Gate of Cæsar's Tower.*

Enter Lord and Troops.

LORD.

In, in for they do scar our very backs,

And score us cowards in our hasty flight.

Enter VORTIGERN.

VORTIGERN.

Give me another sword, I have so clogg'd
And badged this with blood, and slipp'ry gore,
That it doth mock my gripe. A sword, I say.

LORD.

Here, here, my noble lord!

VORTIGERN.

As with their bloods I stain'd my reeking blade,
From summit of the Tow'r the raven croak'd,
Th' heavy-wing'd crow did chatter o'er my head,
And seem'd to bear black laurels for this brow!
Yet did not erst the sun-defying eagle
O'er the world-conquering Macedonian hero,
Flutter, and lead his way to victory?

Then from thy jarring throat spit pestilence,--
And bird of hell, I'll take thee for my guide.

LORD.

The troops are enter'd,--please you follow them?

VORTIGERN.
I love not to be shut in walls of flint;
My soul likes better this vast field of air!
Let them come on.

LORD.

Consider, my dear lord, think of your safety.

VORTIGERN.
Must we then die? then wherefore in a door,
And rot with famine and with pale-fac'd hunger?
No, it were better die nobly, full-stomach'd,
Than linger out a six week's tedious siege.--

Do as you list, here firmly will I stand.

LORD.

Is it your pleasure they shall then proceed?

VORTIGERN.

Aye, e'en to it straight.--

Nay stop! why shou'd all these be doom'd to death?

The crime is mine, not theirs.--

Enter AURELIUS.

AURELIUS.

Villain and traitor, at thy word I take thee.

VORTIGERN.

Ah!--thy face the semblance of thy father's bears!

Thine eyes do pierce more than thy steel-clad arm.

Were fifty brave souls in that body cas'd, Proudly I'd scorn them all, but alas! thy looks--

AURELIUS.

Thou perjured wretch! thou most abhorred villain!

VORTIGERN.

Prate on, prate on; 'tis true I merit this;
But go not yet too far, lest, stripling boy,
You shou'd to indignation raise this blood,
Which thou hast turn'd from out its wonted course,
And make it fall on thee.

AURELIUS.

Alike, I do defy thy rage and thee;
Where is my father!

VORTIGERN.

Curse upon thee, thou grat'st my soul,
O! if around this tatter'd conscience, e'er
Did cling repentance, I now cast it off.

[They fight and pause.

Yet stand aloof, and hear me yet a while?

AURELIUS.

I will not.

VORTIGERN.

'Twere better that thou should'st, left waxing warm
I rise, and pour upon thy unform'd limbs
That rage which 'gins to swell within my veins,
And lays a double murder on my soul.

AURELIUS.

Come on, come on, I say!

[They fight, Vortigern is thrown to the ground.

Now, tyrant, now, I have thee in my power.

VORTIGERN.

Dost think I'll blanch my face, and be a coward?

A lily coward? No! strike then--

I ne'er will ask thy mercy.

AURELIUS.

Now, traytor, where's my father?

VORTIGERN.

Murdered.

AURELIUS.

And by whom?

VORTIGERN.

Is not the crown thine own?

AURELIUS.

Aye, and is so by right; then speak, I say.

VORTIGERN.

I will not, boy, had'st thou ten thousand voices,

And lungs of brass to give them utterance,

I would not answer ought.

AURELIUS.

Then die!

(FLAVIA *comes forward.*

FLAVIA.

O stop, Aurelius!

He is still my father!

VORTIGERN.

My daughter here! then curse thy tardy hand,

That lingers so in doing of its office;

Strike, strike, I do beseech thee, for I'm sick,

And do abhor the very light of Heaven.

FLAVIA.

O! mercy! on my knees I beg for mercy.

VORTIGERN.

'Twas I, 'twas I, this hand thy father murdered.

AURELIUS.

And say'st thou this, e'en to my face?

VORTIGERN.

Aye, to thy face, and in thy ears I'll din it,
'Till thou for mercy's sake shalt strike the blow.

Enter WORTIMERUS, CATAGRINUS,
Soldiers, Lords, &c.

WORTIMERUS.

What! my father?

AURELIUS.

My Flavia, for thy sake I grant him life.

VORTIGERN.

In charity then I pray ye bear me hence!

AURELIUS.

Aye, lead him towards the Friars.

VORTIGERN.

Yea, where ye list, but take me from this sight.

[Vortigern is led out.

AURELIUS.

How fares Edmunda?

WORTIMERUS.

Her mind is somewhat better, yet she's feeble.

AURELIUS.

Well! of your father doth she e'er say ought?

WORTIMERUS.

Aye, truly, but she haply thinks him dead.

Enter UTER.

UTER

Of all, the King hath truly made confession,
To you he justly renders up the crown,
And bade me hail you rightful King of Britain.

(All Kneel.)

ALL.

Hail to Aurelius,

Lawful King of Britain.

PASCENTIUS *enters.*

PASCENTIUS to AURELIUS.

Vortigern on thee bestows our sister,
And bade me, in his name, present her hand--

AURELIUS.

Which I do kiss, and with the self same breath,
Do hail her wife, and Britain's lovely Queen.

ALL.

All hail to Flavia, Queen of Britain.

AURELIUS.

Much, we confess, we owe to all here present;
Each distinct service we shall well repay,
As best befits the dignity of our state;
To-morrow, Lords, we'll meet at Westminster,

For your ripe ages, and experience,

Must teach our young and giddy years the way,

To sow content after these dismal times.

[Curtain drops.

" FOOL *comes forward."*

"Methinks but now I heard some gentles say,

"Where's master Fool? I'troth he's run away.

"Right! for look you, when there be danger near,

"He then most courage hath who most doth fear;

"Besides, observe, I came not here to fight,

"Let him that dares, say nay, for I am right;

"I will not out and risk a knocking down,

"For though I like our King, I like my crown;

"Besides, there is a time for Fools to play,

"But then they must have nought, save good to say.

"Chance you will ask if this be tragedy,

"We kill indeed, yet still 'tis comedy;

"For none save bad do fall, which draws no tear, "Nor lets compassion sway your tender ear;

"Play! we'll grant it--the story ye have read,

"For 'tis well chronicled in Hollinshed;

"Give then your plaudits, and when that be done,

"Your Fool shall bow, and thank ye ev'ry one."

FINIS.

EPILOGUE,

Written by the late ROBERT MERRY, Esq.

Spoken by Mrs. Jordan.

Ye solemn critics! wheresoe'er you're seated,

To grant a favour may you be entreated?

For which I'll pay you proper adoration,

And strive to please you--that is my vocation:

Then do not frown, but give due share of praise,

Nor rend from Shakespeare's tomb the sacred bays.

The scatter'd flow'rs! he left benignly save!

Posthumous flow'rs! the garland of the grave!

What tho' he lived two hundred years ago,

He knew you very well, as I will shew:

His pencil sketch'd you, and that seldom errs;

You're all, whate'er you think, *his* characters.

How!--do you doubt it?--cast your eyes around,

In ev'ry corner of his house they're found.

Observe the jolly grazier in the pit,

Why, he is Falstaff, fat, and full of wit;--

In fun and feasting places his delight,

And with his Dolly emulates the Knight.

Look at that youth, whose countenance of woe

Denotes a tender-hearted Romeo;

He only wishes, tho' he dare not speak,

To be a glove to touch his Juliet's cheek;

While she, from yonder terrace, smiles serene,

And longs with him to play the garden scene.

But O! I tremble now,--there sits a man,

Rugged and rough, a very Caliban!

He growls out his displeasure--'tis a shame!

Do, dear Miranda! make the monster tame.
And you, my pretty Beatrice, don't fret,
Your Benedick is fond of a coquette.
For tho' he vows he'll think no more about you,
He means to marry--he can't live without you.
Kind faithful Imogens are here, to charm us,
Mad Edgars, Ancient Pistols to alarm us,
And Hotspurs too, who seek the glorious boon,
"To pluck bright honour from the pale-fac'd moon."
Besides, we have our Touchstones, Shylocks dire,
Iagos false, and many a shallow Squire.
Nay, there are ladies, who in their own houses,
Are Desdemonas, plagu'd with jealous spouses.
'Tis true, there is some change, I must confess,
Since Shakespeare's time, at least in point of dress.
The ruffs are gone, and the long female waist
Yields to the Grecian more voluptuous taste;
While the circling braids the copious tresses bind,
And the bare neck spreads beautiful behind.

Our senators and peers no longer go

Like men in armour glitt'ring in a row;

But, for the cloak and pointed beard we note

The close-cropt head, and the little short great-coat.

Yet is the modern Briton still the same,
Eager to cherish, and averse to blame;
Foe to deception, ready to defend,
A kind protector and a gen'rous friend.

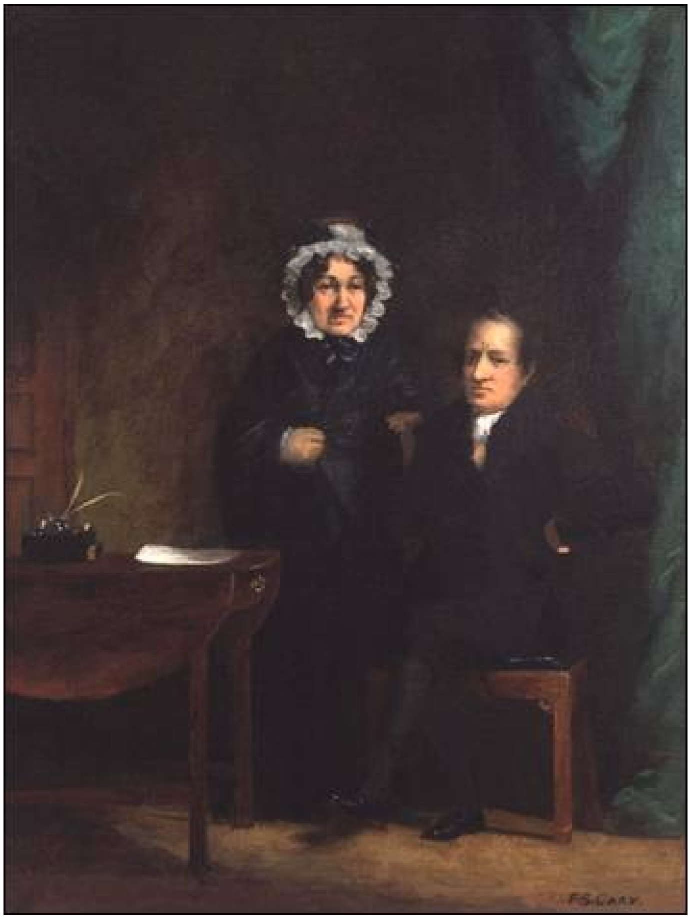
The Adaptations

A nineteenth century engraving imagining Shakespeare's family life in Statford-upon-Avon

TALES FROM SHAKESPEARE by Charles and Mary Lamb

ILLUSTRATED BY ARTHUR RACKHAM

This children's book was written by Charles Lamb and his sister Mary in 1807 and illustrated by Arthur Rackham in 1899. The aim of the book was to make the archaic language and complicated storyline of Shakespeare’s works simpler for children to read and comprehend. Mary Lamb was responsible for most of the comedies, while Charles penned most of the tragedies, writing the preface between them. Next to his essays, this book is Charles’ best-known work. All 20 adaptations are provided in this edition with their original illustrations.



Charles and Mary Lamb

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PREFACE

The following Tales are meant to be submitted to the young reader as an introduction to the study of Shakespeare, for which purpose his words are used whenever it seemed possible to bring them in; and in whatever has been added to give them the regular form of a connected story, diligent care has been taken to select such words as might least interrupt the effect of the beautiful English tongue in which he wrote: therefore, words introduced into our language since his time have been as far as possible avoided.

In those tales which have been taken from the Tragedies, the young readers will perceive, when they come to see the source from which these stories are derived, that Shakespeare's own words, with little alteration, recur very frequently in the narrative as well as in the dialogue; but in those made from the Comedies the writers found themselves scarcely ever able to turn his words into the narrative form: therefore it is feared that, in them, dialogue has been made use of too frequently for young people not accustomed to the dramatic form of writing. But this fault, if it be a fault, has been caused by an earnest wish to give as much of Shakespeare's own words as possible: and if the "*He said* ," and "*She said* ," the question and the reply, should sometimes seem tedious to their young ears, they must pardon it, because it was the only way in which could be given to them a few hints and little foretastes of the great pleasure which awaits them in their elder years, when they come to the rich treasures from which these small and valueless coins are extracted; pretending to no other merit than as faint and imperfect stamps of Shakespeare's matchless image. Faint and imperfect images they must be called, because the beauty of his language is too frequently destroyed by the necessity of changing many of his excellent words into words far less expressive of his true sense, to make it read something like prose; and even in some few places, where his blank verse is given unaltered, as hoping from its simple plainness to cheat the young readers into the belief that they are reading prose, yet still his language being transplanted from its own natural soil and wild poetic garden, it must want much of its native beauty.

It has been wished to make these Tales easy reading for very young children. To the utmost of their ability the writers have constantly kept this in mind; but the subjects of most of them made this a very difficult task. It was no easy matter to give the histories of men and women in terms familiar to the apprehension of a very young mind. For young ladies too, it has been the intention chiefly to write; because boys being generally permitted the use of their fathers' libraries at a much earlier age than girls are, they frequently have the best scenes of Shakespeare by heart, before their sisters are permitted to look into this manly book; and, therefore, instead of recommending these Tales to the perusal of young gentlemen who can read them so much better in the originals, their kind assistance is rather requested in explaining to their sisters such parts as are hardest for them to understand: and when they have helped them to get over the difficulties, then perhaps they will read to them (carefully selecting what is proper for a young sister's ear) some passage which has pleased them in one of these stories, in the very words of the scene from which it is taken; and it is hoped they will find that the beautiful extracts, the select passages, they may choose to give their sisters in this way will be much better relished and understood from their having some notion of the general story from one of these imperfect abridgments;—which if they be fortunately so done as to prove delightful to any of the young readers, it is hoped that no worse effect will result than to make them wish themselves a little older, that they may be allowed to read the Plays at full length (such a wish will be neither peevish nor irrational). When time and leave of judicious friends shall put them into their hands, they will discover in such of them as are here abridged (not to mention almost as many more, which are left untouched) many surprising events and turns of fortune, which for their infinite variety could not be contained in this little book, besides a world of sprightly and cheerful characters, both men and women, the humour of which it was feared would be lost if it were attempted to reduce the length of them.

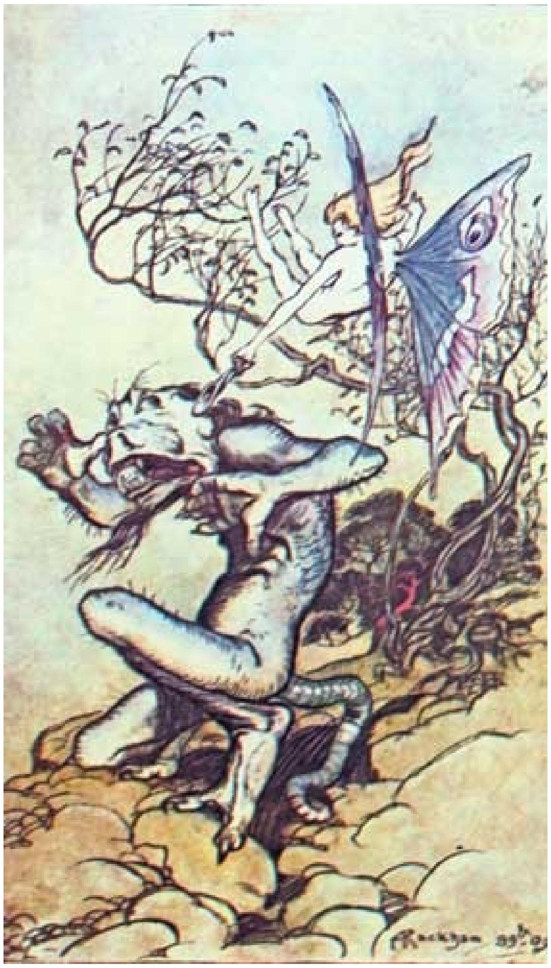
What these Tales shall have been to the *young* readers, that and much more it is the writers' wish that the true Plays of Shakespeare may prove to them in older years—enrichers of the fancy, strengtheners of virtue, a withdrawing from all selfish and mercenary thoughts, a lesson of all sweet and honourable thoughts and actions, to teach courtesy, benignity, generosity, humanity: for of examples, teaching these virtues, his pages are full.

THE TEMPEST

THE TEMPEST

There was a certain island in the sea, the only inhabitants of which were an old man, whose name was Prospero, and his daughter Miranda, a very beautiful young lady. She came to this island so young, that she had no memory of having seen any other human face than her father's.

They lived in a cave or cell, made out of a rock; it was divided into several apartments, one of which Prospero called his study; there he kept his books, which chiefly treated of magic, a study at that time much affected by all learned men: and the knowledge of this art he found very useful to him; for being thrown by a strange chance upon this island, which had been enchanted by a witch called Sycorax, who died there a short time before his arrival, Prospero, by virtue of his art, released many good spirits that Sycorax had imprisoned in the bodies of large trees, because they had refused to execute her wicked commands. These gentle spirits were ever after obedient to the will of Prospero. Of these Ariel was the chief.



WHEN CALIBAN WAS LAZY AND NEGLECTED HIS WORK, ARIEL WOULD COME SLILY AND PINCH HIM

The lively little sprite Ariel had nothing mischievous in his nature, except that he took rather too much pleasure in tormenting an ugly monster called Caliban, for he owed him a grudge because he was the son of his old enemy Sycorax. This Caliban, Prospero found in the woods, a strange misshapen thing, far less human in form than an ape: he took him home to his cell, and taught him to speak; and Prospero would have been very kind to him, but the bad nature which Caliban inherited from his mother Sycorax, would not let him learn anything good or useful: therefore he was employed like a slave, to fetch wood, and do the most laborious offices; and Ariel had the charge of compelling him to these services.

When Caliban was lazy and neglected his work, Ariel (who was invisible to all eyes but Prospero's) would come slily and pinch him, and sometimes tumble him down in the mire; and then Ariel, in the likeness of an ape, would make mouths at him. Then swiftly changing his shape, in the likeness of a hedgehog, he would lie tumbling in Caliban's way, who feared the hedgehog's sharp quills would prick his bare feet. With a variety of such-like vexatious tricks Ariel would often torment him, whenever Caliban neglected the work which Prospero commanded him to do.

Having these powerful spirits obedient to his will, Prospero could by their means command the winds, and the waves of the sea. By his orders they raised a violent storm, in the midst of which, and struggling with the wild sea-waves that every moment threatened to swallow it up, he showed his daughter a fine large ship, which he told her was full of living beings like themselves. "O my dear father," said she, "if by your art you have raised this dreadful storm, have pity on their sad distress. See! the vessel will be dashed to pieces. Poor souls! they will all perish. If I had power, I would sink the sea beneath the earth, rather than the good ship should be destroyed, with all the precious souls within her."

"Be not so amazed, daughter Miranda," said Prospero; "there is no harm done. I have so ordered it, that no person in the ship shall receive any hurt. What I have done has been in care of you, my dear child. You are ignorant who you are, or where you came from, and you know no more of me, but that I am your father, and live in this poor cave. Can you remember a time before you came to this cell? I think you cannot, for you were not then three years of age."

"Certainly I can, sir," replied Miranda.

"By what?" asked Prospero; "by any other house or person? Tell me what you can remember, my child."

Miranda said, "It seems to me like the recollection of a dream. But had I not once four or five women who attended upon me?"

Prospero answered, "You had, and more. How is it that this still lives in your mind? Do you remember how you came here?"

"No, sir," said Miranda, "I remember nothing more."

"Twelve years ago, Miranda," continued Prospero, "I was Duke of Milan, and you were a princess, and my only heir. I had a younger brother, whose name was Antonio, to whom I trusted everything; and as I was fond of retirement and deep study, I commonly left the management of my state affairs to your uncle, my false brother (for so indeed he proved). I, neglecting all worldly ends, buried among my books, did dedicate my whole time to the bettering of my mind. My brother Antonio being thus in possession of my power, began to think himself the duke indeed. The opportunity I gave him of making himself popular among my subjects awakened in his bad nature a proud ambition to deprive me of my dukedom: this he soon effected with the aid of the King of Naples, a powerful prince, who was my enemy."

"Wherefore," said Miranda, "did they not that hour destroy us?"

"My child," answered her father, "they durst not, so dear was the love that my people bore me. Antonio carried us on board a ship, and when we were some leagues out at sea, he forced us into a small boat, without either tackle, sail, or mast: there he left us, as he thought, to perish. But a kind lord of my court, one Gonzalo, who loved me, had privately placed in the boat, water, provisions, apparel, and some books which I prize above my dukedom."

"O my father," said Miranda, "what a trouble must I have been to you then!"

"No, my love," said Prospero, "you were a little cherub that did preserve me. Your innocent smiles made me bear up against my misfortunes. Our food lasted till we landed on this desert island, since when my chief delight has been in teaching you, Miranda, and well have you profited by my instructions."

"Heaven thank you, my dear father," said Miranda. "Now pray tell me, sir, your reason for raising this sea-storm?"

"Know then," said her father, "that by means of this storm, my enemies, the King of Naples, and my cruel brother, are cast ashore upon this island."

Having so said, Prospero gently touched his daughter with his magic wand, and she fell fast asleep; for the spirit Ariel just then presented himself before his master, to give an account of the tempest, and how he had disposed of the ship's company, and though the spirits were always invisible to Miranda, Prospero did not choose she should hear him holding converse (as would seem to her) with the empty air.

"Well, my brave spirit," said Prospero to Ariel, "how have you performed your task?"

Ariel gave a lively description of the storm, and of the terrors of the mariners; and how the king's son, Ferdinand, was the first who leaped into the sea; and his father thought he saw his dear son swallowed up by the waves and lost. "But he is safe," said Ariel, "in a corner of the isle, sitting with his arms folded, sadly lamenting the loss of the king, his father, whom he concludes drowned. Not a hair of his head is injured, and his princely garments, though drenched in the sea-waves, look fresher than before."

"That's my delicate Ariel," said Prospero. "Bring him hither: my daughter must see this young prince. Where is the king, and my brother?"

"I left them," answered Ariel, "searching for Ferdinand, whom they have little hopes of finding, thinking they saw him perish. Of the ship's crew not one is missing; though each one thinks himself the only one saved: and the ship, though invisible to them, is safe in the harbour."

"Ariel," said Prospero, "thy charge is faithfully performed: but there is more work yet."

"Is there more work?" said Ariel. "Let me remind you, master, you have promised me my liberty. I pray, remember, I have done you worthy service, told you no lies, made no mistakes, served you without grudge or grumbling."

"How now!" said Prospero. "You do not recollect what a torment I freed you from. Have you forgot the wicked witch Sycorax, who with age and envy was almost bent double? Where was she born? Speak; tell me."

"Sir, in Algiers," said Ariel.

"O was she so?" said Prospero. "I must recount what you have been, which I find you do not remember. This bad witch, Sycorax, for her witch-crafts, too terrible to enter human hearing, was banished from Algiers, and here left by the sailors; and because you were a spirit too delicate to execute her wicked commands, she shut you up in a tree, where I found you howling. This torment, remember, I did free you from."

"Pardon me, dear master," said Ariel, ashamed to seem ungrateful; "I will obey your commands."

"Do so," said Prospero, "and I will set you free." He then gave orders what further he would have him do; and away went Ariel, first to where he had left Ferdinand, and found him still sitting on the grass in the same melancholy posture.

"O my young gentleman," said Ariel, when he saw him, "I will soon move you. You must be brought, I find, for the Lady Miranda to have a sight of your pretty person. Come, sir, follow me." He then began singing,

"Full fathom five thy father lies:
Of his bones are coral made;
Those are pearls that were his eyes:
Nothing of him that doth fade,
But doth suffer a sea-change
Into something rich and strange.
Sea-nymphs hourly ring his knell:
Hark! now I hear them,—Ding-dong, bell."

This strange news of his lost father soon roused the prince from the stupid fit into which he had fallen. He followed in amazement the sound of Ariel's voice, till it led him to Prospero and Miranda, who were sitting under the shade of a large tree. Now Miranda had never seen a man before, except her own father.

"Miranda," said Prospero, "tell me what you are looking at yonder."

"O father," said Miranda, in a strange surprise, "surely that is a spirit. Lord! how it looks about! Believe me, sir, it is a beautiful creature. Is it not a spirit?"

"No, girl," answered her father; "it eats, and sleeps, and has senses such as we have. This young man you see was in the ship. He is somewhat altered by grief, or you might call him a handsome person. He has lost his companions, and is wandering about to find them."

Miranda, who thought all men had grave faces and grey beards like her father, was delighted with the appearance of this beautiful young prince; and Ferdinand, seeing such a lovely lady in this desert place, and from the strange sounds he had heard, expecting nothing but wonders, thought he was upon an enchanted island, and that Miranda was the goddess of the place, and as such he began to address her.

She timidly answered, she was no goddess, but a simple maid, and was going to give him an account of herself, when Prospero interrupted her. He was well pleased to find they admired each other, for he plainly perceived they had (as we say) fallen in love at first sight: but to try Ferdinand's constancy, he resolved to throw some difficulties in their way: therefore advancing forward, he addressed the prince with a stern air, telling him, he came to the island as a spy, to take it from him who was the lord of it. "Follow me," said he, "I will tie you neck and feet together. You shall drink sea-water; shell-fish, withered roots, and husks of acorns shall be your food." "No," said Ferdinand, "I will resist such entertainment, till I see a more powerful enemy," and drew his sword; but Prospero, waving his magic wand, fixed him to the spot where he stood, so that he had no power to move.

Miranda hung upon her father, saying, "Why are you so ungentle? Have pity, sir; I will be his surety. This is the second man I ever saw, and to me he seems a true one."

"Silence," said the father: "one word more will make me chide you, girl! What! an advocate for an impostor! You think there are no more such fine men, having seen only him and Caliban. I tell you, foolish girl, most men as far excel this, as he does Caliban." This he said to prove his daughter's constancy; and she replied, "My affections are most humble. I have no wish to see a goodlier man."

"Come on, young man," said Prospero to the Prince; "you have no power to disobey me."

"I have not indeed," answered Ferdinand; and not knowing that it was by magic he was deprived of all power of resistance, he was astonished to find himself so strangely compelled to follow Prospero: looking back on Miranda as long as he could see her, he said, as he went after Prospero into the cave, "My spirits are all bound up, as if I were in a dream; but this man's threats, and the weakness which I feel, would seem light to me if from my prison I might once a day behold this fair maid."

Prospero kept Ferdinand not long confined within the cell: he soon brought out his prisoner, and set him a severe task to perform, taking care to let his daughter know the hard labour he had imposed on him, and then pretending to go into his study, he secretly watched them both.

Prospero had commanded Ferdinand to pile up some heavy logs of wood. Kings' sons not being much used to laborious work, Miranda soon after found her lover almost dying with fatigue. "Alas!" said she, "do not work so hard; my father is at his studies, he is safe for these three hours; pray rest yourself."

"O my dear lady," said Ferdinand, "I dare not. I must finish my task before I take my rest."

"If you will sit down," said Miranda, "I will carry your logs the while." But this Ferdinand would by no means agree to. Instead of a help Miranda became a hindrance, for they began a long conversation, so that the business of log-carrying went on very slowly.

Prospero, who had enjoined Ferdinand this task merely as a trial of his love, was not at his books, as his daughter supposed, but was standing by them invisible, to overhear what they said.

Ferdinand inquired her name, which she told, saying it was against her father's express command she did so.

Prospero only smiled at this first instance of his daughter's disobedience, for having by his magic art caused his daughter to fall in love so suddenly, he was not angry that she showed her love by forgetting to obey his commands. And he listened well pleased to a long speech of Ferdinand's, in which he professed to love her above all the ladies he ever saw.

In answer to his praises of her beauty, which he said exceeded all the women in the world, she replied, "I do not remember the face of any woman, nor have I seen any more men than you, my good friend, and my dear father. How features are abroad, I know not; but, believe me, sir, I would not wish any companion in the world but you, nor can my imagination form any shape but yours that I could like. But, sir, I fear I talk to you too freely, and my father's precepts I forget."

At this Prospero smiled, and nodded his head, as much as to say, "This goes on exactly as I could wish; my girl will be Queen of Naples."

And then Ferdinand, in another fine long speech (for young princes speak in courtly phrases), told the innocent Miranda he was heir to the crown of Naples, and that she should be his queen.

"Ah! sir," said she, "I am a fool to weep at what I am glad of. I will answer you in plain and holy innocence. I am your wife if you will marry me."

Prospero prevented Ferdinand's thanks by appearing visible before them.

"Fear nothing, my child," said he; "I have overheard, and approve of all you have said. And, Ferdinand, if I have too severely used you, I will make you rich amends, by giving you my daughter. All your vexations were but trials of your love, and you have nobly stood the test. Then as my gift, which your true love has worthily purchased, take my daughter, and do not smile that I boast she is above all praise." He then, telling them that he had business which required his presence, desired they would sit down and talk together till he returned; and this command Miranda seemed not at all disposed to disobey.

When Prospero left them, he called his spirit Ariel, who quickly appeared before him, eager to relate what he had done with Prospero's brother and the King of Naples. Ariel said he had left them almost out of their senses with fear, at the strange things he had caused them to see and hear. When fatigued with wandering about, and famished for want of food, he had suddenly set before them a delicious banquet, and then, just as they were going to eat, he appeared visible before them in the shape of a harpy, a voracious monster with wings, and the feast vanished away. Then, to their utter amazement, this seeming harpy spoke to them, reminding them of their cruelty in driving Prospero from his dukedom, and leaving him and his infant daughter to perish in the sea; saying, that for this cause these terrors were suffered to afflict them.

The King of Naples, and Antonio the false brother, repented the injustice they had done to Prospero; and Ariel told his master he was certain their penitence was sincere, and that he, though a spirit, could not but pity them.

"Then bring them hither, Ariel," said Prospero: "if you, who are but a spirit, feel for their distress, shall not I, who am a human being like themselves, have compassion on them? Bring them, quickly, my dainty Ariel."

Ariel soon returned with the king, Antonio, and old Gonzalo in their train, who had followed him, wondering at the wild music he played in the air to draw them on to his master's presence. This Gonzalo was the same who had so kindly provided Prospero formerly with books and provisions, when his wicked brother left him, as he thought, to perish in an open boat in the sea.

Grief and terror had so stupefied their senses, that they did not know Prospero. He first discovered himself to the good old Gonzalo, calling him the preserver of his life; and then his brother and the king knew that he was the injured Prospero.

Antonio with tears, and sad words of sorrow and true repentance, implored his brother's forgiveness, and the king expressed his sincere remorse for having assisted Antonio to depose his brother: and Prospero forgave them; and, upon their engaging to restore his dukedom, he said to the King of Naples, "I have a gift in store for you too;" and opening a door, showed him his son Ferdinand playing at chess with Miranda.

Nothing could exceed the joy of the father and the son at this unexpected meeting, for they each thought the other drowned in the storm.

"O wonder!" said Miranda, "what noble creatures these are! It must surely be a brave world that has such people in it."

The King of Naples was almost as much astonished at the beauty and excellent graces of the young Miranda, as his son had been. "Who is this maid?" said he; "she seems the goddess that has parted us, and brought us thus together." "No, sir," answered Ferdinand, smiling to find his father had fallen into the same mistake that he had done when he first saw Miranda, "she is a mortal, but by immortal Providence she is mine; I chose her when I could not ask you, my father, for your consent, not thinking you were alive. She is the daughter to this Prospero, who is the famous Duke of Milan, of whose renown I have heard so much, but never saw him till now: of him I have received a new life: he has made himself to me a second father, giving me this dear lady."

"Then I must be her father," said the king; "but oh! how oddly will it sound, that I must ask my child forgiveness."

"No more of that," said Prospero: "let us not remember our troubles past, since they so happily have ended." And then Prospero embraced his brother, and again assured him of his forgiveness; and said that a wise over-ruling Providence had permitted that he should be driven from his poor dukedom of Milan, that his daughter might inherit the crown of Naples, for that by their meeting in this desert island, it had happened that the king's son had loved Miranda.

These kind words which Prospero spoke, meaning to comfort his brother, so filled Antonio with shame and remorse, that he wept and was unable to speak; and the kind old Gonzalo wept to see this joyful reconciliation, and prayed for blessings on the young couple.

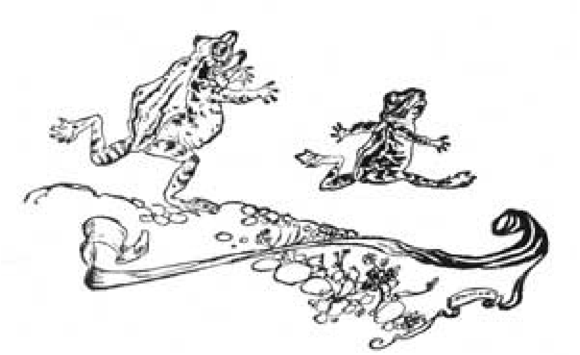
Prospero now told them that their ship was safe in the harbour, and the sailors all on board her, and that he and his daughter would accompany them home the next morning. "In the meantime," says he, "partake of such refreshments as my poor cave affords; and for your evening's entertainment I will relate the history of my life from my first landing in this desert island." He then called for Caliban to prepare some food, and set the cave in order; and the company were astonished at the uncouth form and savage appearance of this ugly monster, who (Prospero said) was the only attendant he had to wait upon him.

Before Prospero left the island, he dismissed Ariel from his service, to the great joy of that lively little spirit; who, though he had been a faithful servant to his master, was always longing to enjoy his free liberty, to wander uncontrolled in the air, like a wild bird, under green trees, among pleasant fruits, and sweet-smelling flowers. "My quaint Ariel," said Prospero to the little sprite when he made him free, "I shall miss you; yet you shall have your freedom." "Thank you, my dear master," said Ariel; "but give me leave to attend your ship home with prosperous gales, before you bid farewell to the assistance of your faithful spirit; and then, master, when I am free, how merrily I shall live!" Here Ariel sung this pretty song:

"Where the bee sucks, there suck I;
In a cowslip's bell I lie:
There I crouch when owls do cry
On the bat's back I do fly
After summer merrily.
Merrily, merrily shall I live now

Under the blossom that hangs on the bough."

Prospero then buried deep in the earth his magical books and wand, for he was resolved never more to make use of the magic art. And having thus overcome his enemies, and being reconciled to his brother and the King of Naples, nothing now remained to complete his happiness, but to revisit his native land, to take possession of his dukedom, and to witness the happy nuptials of his daughter and Prince Ferdinand, which the king said should be instantly celebrated with great splendour on their return to Naples. At which place, under the safe convoy of the spirit Ariel, they, after a pleasant voyage, soon arrived.



A MIDSUMMER NIGHT’S DREAM

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

There was a law in the city of Athens which gave to its citizens the power of compelling their daughters to marry whomsoever they pleased; for upon a daughter's refusing to marry the man her father had chosen to be her husband, the father was empowered by this law to cause her to be put to death; but as fathers do not often desire the death of their own daughters, even though they do happen to prove a little refractory, this law was seldom or never put in execution, though perhaps the young ladies of that city were not unfrequently threatened by their parents with the terrors of it.

There was one instance, however, of an old man, whose name was Egeus, who actually did come before Theseus (at that time the reigning Duke of Athens), to complain that his daughter Hermia, whom he had commanded to marry Demetrius, a young man of a noble Athenian family, refused to obey him, because she loved another young Athenian, named Lysander. Egeus demanded justice of Theseus, and desired that this cruel law might be put in force against his daughter.

Hermia pleaded in excuse for her disobedience, that Demetrius had formerly professed love for her dear friend Helena, and that Helena loved Demetrius to distraction; but this honourable reason, which Hermia gave for not obeying her father's command, moved not the stern Egeus.

Theseus, though a great and merciful prince, had no power to alter the laws of his country; therefore he could only give Hermia four days to consider of it: and at the end of that time, if she still refused to marry Demetrius, she was to be put to death.

When Hermia was dismissed from the presence of the duke, she went to her lover Lysander, and told him the peril she was in, and that she must either give him up and marry Demetrius, or lose her life in four days.

Lysander was in great affliction at hearing these evil tidings; but recollecting that he had an aunt who lived at some distance from Athens, and that at the place where she lived the cruel law could not be put in force against Hermia (this law not extending beyond the boundaries of the city), he proposed to Hermia that she should steal out of her father's house that night, and go with him to his aunt's house, where he would marry her. "I will meet you," said Lysander, "in the wood a few miles without the city; in that delightful wood where we have so often walked with Helena in the pleasant month of May."

To this proposal Hermia joyfully agreed; and she told no one of her intended flight but her friend Helena. Helena (as maidens will do foolish things for love) very ungenerously resolved to go and tell this to Demetrius, though she could hope no benefit from betraying her friend's secret, but the poor pleasure of following her faithless lover to the wood; for she well knew that Demetrius would go thither in pursuit of Hermia.

The wood, in which Lysander and Hermia proposed to meet was the favourite haunt of those little beings known by the name of *Fairies* .

Oberon the king, and Titania the queen of the Fairies, with all their tiny train of followers, in this wood held their midnight revels.

Between this little king and queen of sprites there happened, at this time, a sad disagreement; they never met by moonlight in the shady walks of this pleasant wood, but they were quarrelling, till all their fairy elves would creep into acorn-cups and hide themselves for fear.

The cause of this unhappy disagreement was Titania's refusing to give Oberon a little changeling boy, whose mother had been Titania's friend; and upon her death the fairy queen stole the child from its nurse, and brought him up in the woods.

The night on which the lovers were to meet in this wood, as Titania was walking with some of her maids of honour, she met Oberon attended by his train of fairy courtiers.

"Ill met by moonlight, proud Titania," said the fairy king. The queen replied, "What, jealous Oberon, is it you? Fairies, skip hence; I have forsworn his company." "Tarry, rash fairy," said Oberon; "am not I thy lord? Why does Titania cross her Oberon? Give me your little changeling boy to be my page."

"Set your heart at rest," answered the queen; "your whole fairy kingdom buys not the boy of me." She then left her lord in great anger. "Well, go your way," said Oberon: "before the morning dawns I will torment you for this injury."

Oberon then sent for Puck, his chief favourite and privy counsellor.

Puck, (or as he was sometimes called, Robin Goodfellow) was a shrewd and knavish sprite, that used to play comical pranks in the neighbouring villages; sometimes getting into the dairies and skimming the milk, sometimes plunging his light and airy form into the butter-churn, and while he was dancing his fantastic shape in the churn, in vain the dairy-maid would labour to change her cream into butter: nor had the village swains any better success; whenever Puck chose to play his freaks in the brewing copper, the ale was sure to be spoiled. When a few good neighbours were met to drink some comfortable ale together, Puck would jump into the bowl of ale in the likeness of a roasted crab, and when some old goody was going to drink he would bob against her lips, and spill the ale over her withered chin; and presently after, when the same old dame was gravely seating herself to tell her neighbours a sad and melancholy story, Puck would slip her three-legged stool from under her, and down toppled the poor old woman, and then the old gossips would hold their sides and laugh at her, and swear they never wasted a merrier hour.

"Come hither, Puck," said Oberon to this little merry wanderer of the night; "fetch me the flower which maids call *Love in Idleness* ; the juice of that little purple flower laid on the eyelids of those who sleep, will make them, when they awake, dote on the first thing they see. Some of the juice of that flower I will drop on the eyelids of my Titania when she is asleep; and the first thing she looks upon when she opens her eyes she will fall in love with, even though it be a lion or a bear, a meddling monkey, or a busy ape; and before I will take this charm from off her sight, which I can do with another charm I know of, I will make her give me that boy to be my page."

Puck, who loved mischief to his heart, was highly diverted with this intended frolic of his master, and ran to seek the flower; and while Oberon was waiting the return of Puck, he observed Demetrius and Helena enter the wood: he overheard Demetrius reproaching Helena for following him, and after many unkind words on his part, and gentle expostulations from Helena, reminding him of his former love and professions of true faith to her, he left her (as he said) to the mercy of the wild beasts, and she ran after him as swiftly as she could.

The fairy king, who was always friendly to true lovers, felt great compassion for Helena; and perhaps, as Lysander said they used to walk by moonlight in this pleasant wood, Oberon might have seen Helena in those happy times when she was beloved by Demetrius. However that might be, when Puck returned with the little purple flower, Oberon said to his favourite, "Take a part of this flower; there has been a sweet Athenian lady here, who is in love with a disdainful youth; if you find him sleeping, drop some of the love-juice in his eyes, but contrive to do it when she is near him, that the first thing he sees when he awakes may be this despised lady. You will know the man by the Athenian garments which he wears." Puck promised to manage this matter very dexterously: and then Oberon went, unperceived by Titania, to her bower, where she was preparing to go to rest. Her fairy bower was a bank, where grew wild thyme, cowslips, and sweet violets, under a canopy of wood-bine, musk-roses, and eglantine. There Titania always slept some part of the night; her coverlet the enamelled skin of a snake, which, though a small mantle, was wide enough to wrap a fairy in.

He found Titania giving orders to her fairies, how they were to employ themselves while she slept. "Some of you," said her majesty, "must kill cankers in the musk-rose buds, and some wage war with the bats for their leathern wings, to make my small elves coats; and some of you keep watch that the clamorous owl, that nightly hoots, come not near me: but first sing me to sleep." Then they began to sing this song:—

"You spotted snakes with double tongue,
Thorny hedgehogs, be not seen;
Newts and blind-worms do no wrong
Come not near our Fairy Queen.
Philomel, with melody,
Sing in our sweet lullaby,
Lulla, lulla, lullaby; lulla, lulla, lullaby;
Never harm, nor spell, nor charm,
Come our lovely lady nigh;
So good night with lullaby."

When the fairies had sung their queen asleep with this pretty lullaby, they left her to perform the important services she had enjoined them. Oberon then softly drew near his Titania, and dropped some of the love-juice on her eyelids, saying, —

"What thou seest when thou dost wake,
Do it for thy true-love take."

But to return to Hermia, who made her escape out of her father's house that night, to avoid the death she was doomed to for refusing to marry Demetrius. When she entered the wood, she found her dear Lysander waiting for her, to conduct her to his aunt's house; but before they had passed half through the wood, Hermia was so much fatigued, that Lysander, who was very careful of this dear lady, who had proved her affection for him even by hazarding her life for his sake, persuaded her to rest till morning on a bank of soft moss, and lying down himself on the ground at some little distance, they soon fell fast asleep. Here they were found by Puck, who, seeing a handsome young man asleep, and perceiving that his clothes were made in the Athenian fashion, and that a pretty lady was sleeping near him, concluded that this must be the Athenian maid and her disdainful lover whom Oberon had sent him to seek; and he naturally enough conjectured that, as they were alone together, she must be the first thing he would see when he awoke; so, without more ado, he proceeded to pour some of the juice of the little purple flower into his eyes. But it so fell out, that Helena came that way, and, instead of Hermia, was the first object Lysander beheld when he opened his eyes; and strange to relate, so powerful was the love-charm, all his love for Hermia vanished away, and Lysander fell in love with Helena.

Had he first seen Hermia when he awoke, the blunder Puck committed would have been of no consequence, for he could not love that faithful lady too well; but for poor Lysander to be forced by a fairy love-charm to forget his own true Hermia, and to run after another lady, and leave Hermia asleep quite alone in a wood at midnight, was a sad chance indeed.

Thus this misfortune happened. Helena, as has been before related, endeavoured to keep pace with Demetrius when he ran away so rudely from her; but she could not continue this unequal race long, men being always better runners in a long race than ladies. Helena soon lost sight of Demetrius; and as she was wandering about, dejected and forlorn, she arrived at the place where Lysander was sleeping. "Ah!" said she, "this is Lysander lying on the ground: is he dead or asleep?" Then, gently touching him, she said, "Good sir, if you are alive, awake." Upon this Lysander opened his eyes, and (the love-charm beginning to work) immediately addressed her in terms of extravagant love and admiration; telling her she as much excelled Hermia in beauty as a dove does a raven, and that he would run through fire for her sweet sake; and many more such lover-like speeches. Helena, knowing Lysander was her friend Hermia's lover, and that he was solemnly engaged to marry her, was in the utmost rage when she heard herself addressed in this manner; for she thought (as well she might) that Lysander was making a jest of her. "Oh!" said she, "why was I born to be mocked and scorned by every one? Is it not enough, is it not enough, young man, that I can never get a sweet look or a kind word from Demetrius; but you, sir, must pretend in this disdainful manner to court me? I thought, Lysander, you were a lord of more true gentleness." Saying these words in great anger, she ran away; and Lysander followed her, quite forgetful of his own Hermia, who was still asleep.

When Hermia awoke, she was in a sad fright at finding herself alone. She wandered about the wood, not knowing what was become of Lysander, or which way to go to seek for him. In the meantime Demetrius not being able to find Hermia and his rival Lysander, and fatigued with his fruitless search, was observed by Oberon fast asleep. Oberon had learnt by some questions he had asked of Puck, that he had applied the love-charm to the wrong person's eyes; and now having found the person first intended, he touched the eyelids of the sleeping Demetrius with the love-juice, and he instantly awoke; and the first thing he saw being Helena, he, as Lysander had done before, began to address love-speeches to her; and just at that moment Lysander, followed by Hermia (for through Puck's unlucky mistake it was now become Hermia's turn to run after her lover) made his appearance; and then Lysander and Demetrius, both speaking together, made love to Helena, they being each one under the influence of the same potent charm.

The astonished Helena thought that Demetrius, Lysander, and her once dear friend Hermia, were all in a plot together to make a jest of her.

Hermia was as much surprised as Helena: she knew not why Lysander and Demetrius, who both before loved her, were now become the lovers of Helena; and to Hermia the matter seemed to be no jest.

The ladies, who before had always been the dearest of friends, now fell to high words together.

"Unkind Hermia," said Helena, "it is you have set Lysander on to vex me with mock praises; and your other lover Demetrius, who used almost to spurn me with his foot, have you not bid him call me Goddess, Nymph, rare, precious, and celestial? He would not speak thus to me, whom he hates, if you did not set him on to make a jest of me. Unkind Hermia, to join with men in scorning your poor friend. Have you forgot our school-day friendship? How often, Hermia, have we two, sitting on one cushion, both singing one song, with our needles working the same flower, both on the same sampler wrought; growing up together in fashion of a double cherry, scarcely seeming parted! Hermia, it is not friendly in you, it is not maidenly to join with men in scorning your poor friend."

"I am amazed at your passionate words," said Hermia: "I scorn you not; it seems you scorn me." "Ay, do," returned Helena, "persevere, counterfeit serious looks, and make mouths at me when I turn my back; then wink at each other, and hold the sweet jest up. If you had any pity, grace, or manners, you would not use me thus."

While Helena and Hermia were speaking these angry words to each other, Demetrius and Lysander left them, to fight together in the wood for the love of Helena.

When they found the gentlemen had left them, they departed, and once more wandered weary in the wood in search of their lovers.

As soon as they were gone, the fairy king, who with little Puck had been listening to their quarrels, said to him, "This is your negligence, Puck; or did you do this wilfully?" "Believe me, king of shadows," answered Puck, "it was a mistake; did not you tell me I should know the man by his Athenian garments? However, I am not sorry this has happened, for I think their jangling makes excellent sport." "You heard," said Oberon, "that Demetrius and Lysander are gone to seek a convenient place to fight in. I command you to overhang the night with a thick fog, and lead these quarrelsome lovers so astray in the dark, that they shall not be able to find each other. Counterfeit each of their voices to the other, and with bitter taunts provoke them to follow you, while they think it is their rival's tongue they hear. See you do this, till they are so weary they can go no farther; and when you find they are asleep, drop the juice of this other flower into Lysander's eyes, and when he awakes he will forget his new love for Helena, and return to his old passion for Hermia; and then the two fair ladies may each one be happy with the man she loves, and they will think all that has passed a vexatious dream. About this quickly, Puck, and I will go and see what sweet love my Titania has found."

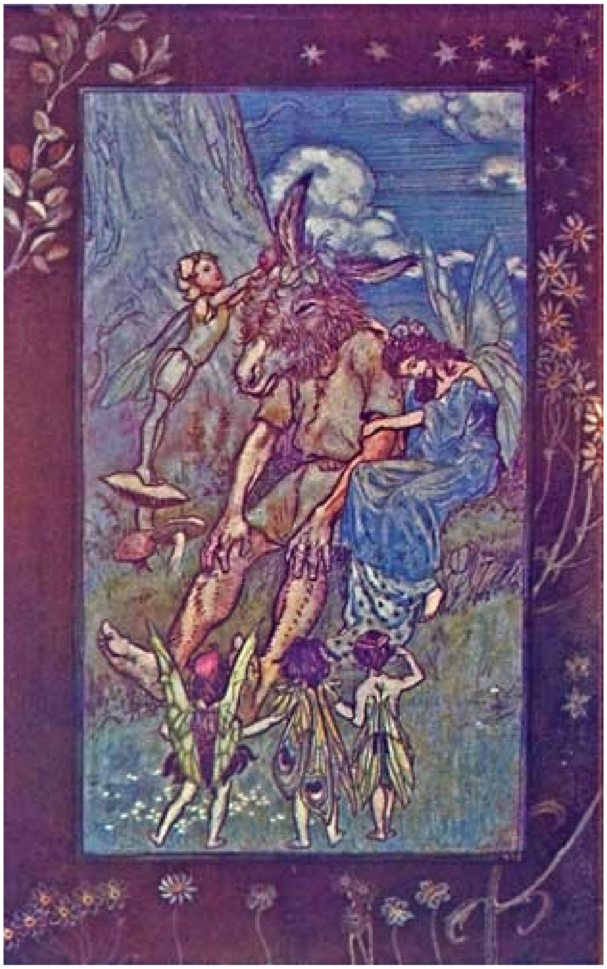
Titania was still sleeping, and Oberon seeing a clown near her, who had lost his way in the wood, and was likewise asleep: "This fellow," said he, "shall be my Titania's true love;" and clapping an ass's head over the clown's, it seemed to fit him as well as if it had grown upon his own shoulders. Though Oberon fixed the ass's head on very gently, it awakened him, and rising up, unconscious of what Oberon had done to him, he went towards the bower where the fairy queen slept.

"Ah! what angel is that I see?" said Titania, opening her eyes, and the juice of the little purple flower beginning to take effect: "are you as wise as you are beautiful?"

"Why, mistress," said the foolish clown, "if I have wit enough to find the way out of this wood, I have enough to serve my turn."

"Out of the wood do not desire to go," said the enamoured queen. "I am a spirit of no common rate. I love you. Go with me, and I will give you fairies to attend upon you."

She then called four of her fairies: their names were, Pease-blossom, Cobweb, Moth, and Mustard-seed.



WHERE IS PEASE-BLOSSOM?

"Attend," said the queen, "upon this sweet gentleman; hop in his walks, and gambol in his sight; feed him with grapes and apricots, and steal for him the honey-bags from the bees. Come, sit with me," said she to the clown, "and let me play with your amiable hairy cheeks, my beautiful ass! and kiss your fair large ears, my gentle joy!"

"Where is Pease-blossom?" said the ass-headed clown, not much regarding the fairy queen's courtship, but very proud of his new attendants.

"Here, sir," said little Pease-blossom.

"Scratch my head," said the clown. "Where is Cobweb?"

"Here, sir," said Cobweb.

"Good Mr. Cobweb," said the foolish clown, "kill me the red humble bee on the top of that thistle yonder; and, good Mr. Cobweb, bring me the honey-bag. Do not fret yourself too much in the action, Mr. Cobweb, and take care the honey-bag break not; I should be sorry to have you overflown with a honey-bag. Where is Mustard-seed?"

"Here, sir," said Mustard-seed: "what is your will?"

"Nothing," said the clown, "good Mr. Mustard-seed, but to help Mr. Pease-blossom to scratch; I must go to a barber's, Mr. Mustard-seed, for methinks I am marvellous hairy about the face."

"My sweet love," said the queen, "what will you have to eat? I have a venturous fairy shall seek the squirrel's hoard, and fetch you some new nuts."

"I had rather have a handful of dried pease," said the clown, who with his ass's head had got an ass's appetite. "But, I pray, let none of your people disturb me, for I have a mind to sleep."

"Sleep, then," said the queen, "and I will wind you in my arms. O how I love you! how I dote upon you!"

When the fairy king saw the clown sleeping in the arms of his queen, he advanced within her sight, and reproached her with having lavished her favours upon an ass.

This she could not deny, as the clown was then sleeping within her arms, with his ass's head crowned by her with flowers.

When Oberon had teased her for some time, he again demanded the changeling boy; which she, ashamed of being discovered by her lord with her new favourite, did not dare to refuse him.

Oberon, having thus obtained the little boy he had so long wished for to be his page, took pity on the disgraceful situation into which, by his merry contrivance, he had brought his Titania, and threw some of the juice of the other flower into her eyes; and the fairy queen immediately recovered her senses, and wondered at her late dotage, saying how she now loathed the sight of the strange monster.

Oberon likewise took the ass's head from off the clown, and left him to finish his nap with his own fool's head upon his shoulders.

Oberon and his Titania being now perfectly reconciled, he related to her the history of the lovers, and their midnight quarrels; and she agreed to go with him and see the end of their adventures.

The fairy king and queen found the lovers and their fair ladies, at no great distance from each other, sleeping on a grass-plot; for Puck, to make amends for his former mistake, had contrived with the utmost diligence to bring them all to the same spot, unknown to each other; and he had carefully removed the charm from off the eyes of Lysander with the antidote the fairy king gave to him.

Hermia first awoke, and finding her lost Lysander asleep so near her, was looking at him and wondering at his strange inconstancy. Lysander presently opening his eyes, and seeing his dear Hermia, recovered his reason which the fairy charm had before clouded, and with his reason, his love for Hermia; and they began to talk over the adventures of the night, doubting if these things had really happened, or if they had both been dreaming the same bewildering dream.

Helena and Demetrius were by this time awake; and a sweet sleep having quieted Helena's disturbed and angry spirits, she listened with delight to the professions of love which Demetrius still made to her, and which, to her surprise as well as pleasure, she began to perceive were sincere.

These fair night-wandering ladies, now no longer rivals, became once more true friends; all the unkind words which had passed were forgiven, and they calmly consulted together what was best to be done in their present situation. It was soon agreed that, as Demetrius had given up his pretensions to Hermia, he should endeavour to prevail upon her father to revoke the cruel sentence of death which had been passed against her. Demetrius was preparing to return to Athens for this friendly purpose, when they were surprised with the sight of Egeus, Hermia's father, who came to the wood in pursuit of his runaway daughter.

When Egeus understood that Demetrius would not now marry his daughter, he no longer opposed her marriage with Lysander, but gave his consent that they should be wedded on the fourth day from that time, being the same day on which Hermia had been condemned to lose her life; and on that same day Helena joyfully agreed to marry her beloved and now faithful Demetrius.

The fairy king and queen, who were invisible spectators of this reconciliation, and now saw the happy ending of the lovers' history, brought about through the good offices of Oberon, received so much pleasure, that these kind spirits resolved to celebrate the approaching nuptials with sports and revels throughout their fairy kingdom.

And now, if any are offended with this story of fairies and their pranks, as judging it incredible and strange, they have only to think that they have been asleep and dreaming, and that all these adventures were visions which they saw in their sleep: and I hope none of my readers will be so unreasonable as to be offended with a pretty harmless Midsummer Night's Dream.

THE WINTER’S TALE

THE WINTER'S TALE

Leontes, King of Sicily, and his queen, the beautiful and virtuous Hermione, once lived in the greatest harmony together. So happy was Leontes in the love of this excellent lady, that he had no wish ungratified, except that he sometimes desired to see again, and to present to his queen, his old companion and school-fellow, Polixenes, King of Bohemia. Leontes and Polixenes were brought up together from their infancy, but being, by the death of their fathers, called to reign over their respective kingdoms, they had not met for many years, though they frequently interchanged gifts, letters, and loving embassies.

At length, after repeated invitations, Polixenes came from Bohemia to the Sicilian court, to make his friend Leontes a visit.

At first this visit gave nothing but pleasure to Leontes. He recommended the friend of his youth to the queen's particular attention, and seemed in the presence of his dear friend and old companion to have his felicity quite completed. They talked over old times; their school-days and their youthful pranks were remembered, and recounted to Hermione, who always took a cheerful part in these conversations.

When, after a long stay, Polixenes was preparing to depart, Hermione, at the desire of her husband, joined her entreaties to his that Polixenes would prolong his visit.

And now began this good queen's sorrow; for Polixenes refusing to stay at the request of Leontes, was won over by Hermione's gentle and persuasive words to put off his departure for some weeks longer. Upon this, although Leontes had so long known the integrity and honourable principles of his friend Polixenes, as well as the excellent disposition of his virtuous queen, he was seized with an ungovernable jealousy. Every attention Hermione showed to Polixenes, though by her husband's particular desire, and merely to please him, increased the unfortunate king's jealousy; and from being a loving and a true friend, and the best and fondest of husbands, Leontes became suddenly a savage and inhuman monster. Sending for Camillo, one of the lords of his court, and telling him of the suspicion he entertained, he commanded him to poison Polixenes.

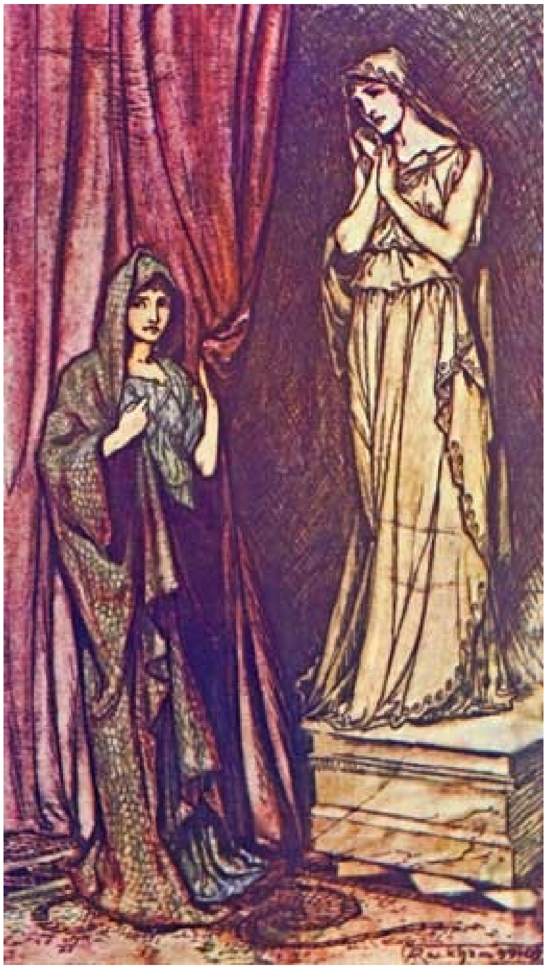
Camillo was a good man; and he, well knowing that the jealousy of Leontes had not the slightest foundation in truth, instead of poisoning Polixenes, acquainted him with the king his master's orders, and agreed to escape with him out of the Sicilian dominions; and Polixenes, with the assistance of Camillo, arrived safe in his own kingdom of Bohemia, where Camillo lived from that time in the king's court, and became the chief friend and favourite of Polixenes.

The flight of Polixenes enraged the jealous Leontes still more; he went to the queen's apartment, where the good lady was sitting with her little son Mamillius, who was just beginning to tell one of his best stories to amuse his mother, when the king entered, and taking the child away, sent Hermione to prison.

Mamillius, though but a very young child, loved his mother tenderly; and when he saw her so dishonoured, and found she was taken from him to be put into a prison, he took it deeply to heart, and drooped and pined away by slow degrees, losing his appetite and his sleep, till it was thought his grief would kill him.

The king, when he had sent his queen to prison, commanded Cleomenes and Dion, two Sicilian lords, to go to Delphos, there to inquire of the oracle at the temple of Apollo, if his queen had been unfaithful to him.

When Hermione had been a short time in prison, she was brought to bed of a daughter; and the poor lady received much comfort from the sight of her pretty baby, and she said to it, "My poor little prisoner, I am as innocent as you are."



PAULINA DREW BACK THE CURTAIN WHICH CONCEALED THIS FAMOUS STATUE

Hermione had a kind friend in the noble-spirited Paulina, who was the wife of Antigonus, a Sicilian lord; and when the lady Paulina heard her royal mistress was brought to bed, she went to the prison where Hermione was confined; and she said to Emilia, a lady who attended upon Hermione, "I pray you, Emilia, tell the good queen, if her majesty dare trust me with her little babe, I will carry it to the king, its father; we do not know how he may soften at the sight of his innocent child." "Most worthy madam," replied Emilia, "I will acquaint the queen with your noble offer; she was wishing to-day that she had any friend who would venture to present the child to the king." "And tell her," said Paulina, "that I will speak boldly to Leontes in her defence." "May you be for ever blessed," said Emilia, "for your kindness to our gracious queen!" Emilia then went to Hermione, who joyfully gave up her baby to the care of Paulina, for she had feared that no one would dare venture to present the child to its father.

Paulina took the new-born infant, and forcing herself into the king's presence, notwithstanding her husband, fearing the king's anger, endeavoured to prevent her, she laid the babe at its father's feet, and Paulina made a noble speech to the king in defence of Hermione, and she reproached him severely for his inhumanity, and implored him to have mercy on his innocent wife and child. But Paulina's spirited remonstrances only aggravated Leontes' displeasure, and he ordered her husband Antigonus to take her from his presence.

When Paulina went away, she left the little baby at its father's feet, thinking when he was alone with it, he would look upon it, and have pity on its helpless innocence.

The good Paulina was mistaken: for no sooner was she gone than the merciless father ordered Antigonus, Paulina's husband, to take the child, and carry it out to sea, and leave it upon some desert shore to perish.

Antigonus, unlike the good Camillo, too well obeyed the orders of Leontes; for he immediately carried the child on ship-board, and put out to sea, intending to leave it on the first desert coast he could find.

So firmly was the king persuaded of the guilt of Hermione, that he would not wait for the return of Cleomenes and Dion, whom he had sent to consult the oracle of Apollo at Delphos; but before the queen was recovered from her lying-in, and from her grief for the loss of her precious baby, he had her brought to a public trial before all the lords and nobles of his court. And when all the great lords, the judges, and all the nobility of the land were assembled together to try Hermione, and that unhappy queen was standing as a prisoner before her subjects to receive their judgment, Cleomenes and Dion entered the assembly, and presented to the king the answer of the oracle, sealed up; and Leontes commanded the seal to be broken, and the words of the oracle to be read aloud, and these were the words:—"*Hermione is innocent, Polixenes blameless, Camillo a true subject, Leontes a jealous tyrant, and the king shall live without* *an heir if that which is lost be not found.* " The king would give no credit to the words of the oracle: he said it was a falsehood invented by the queen's friends, and he desired the judge to proceed in the trial of the queen; but while Leontes was speaking, a man entered and told him that the Prince Mamillius, hearing his mother was to be tried for her life, struck with grief and shame, had suddenly died.

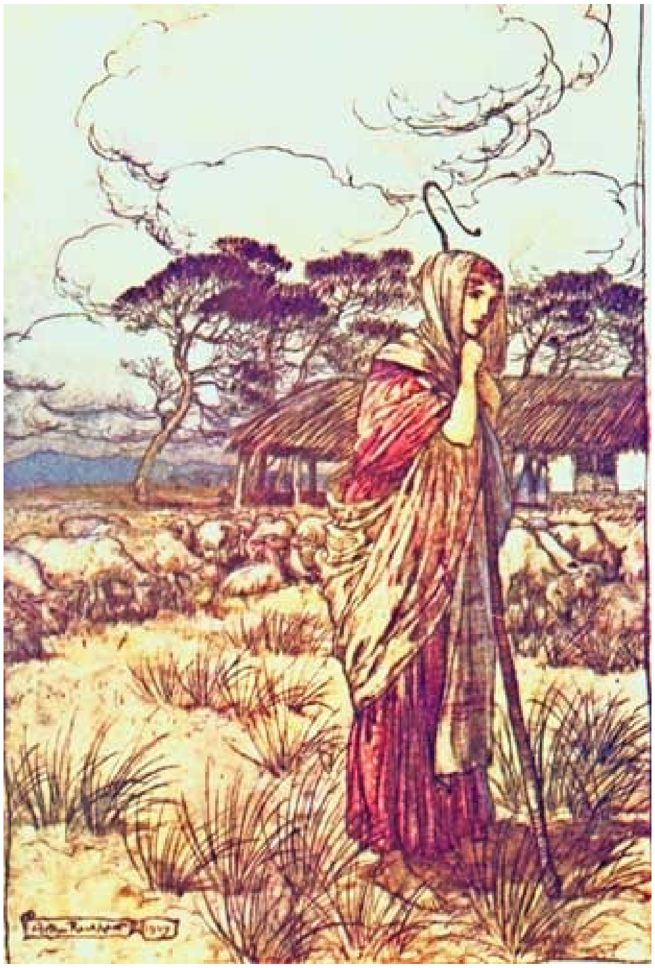
Hermione, upon hearing of the death of this dear affectionate child, who had lost his life in sorrowing for her misfortune, fainted; and Leontes, pierced to the heart by the news, began to feel pity for his unhappy queen, and he ordered Paulina, and the ladies who were her attendants, to take her away, and use means for her recovery. Paulina soon returned, and told the king that Hermione was dead.

When Leontes heard that the queen was dead, he repented of his cruelty to her; and now that he thought his ill-usuage had broken Hermione's heart, he believed her innocent; and now he thought the words of the oracle were true, as he knew "if that which was lost was not found," which he concluded was his young daughter, he should be without an heir, the young Prince Mamillius being dead; and he would give his kingdom now to recover his lost daughter: and Leontes gave himself up to remorse, and passed many years in mournful thoughts and repentant grief.

The ship in which Antigonus carried the infant princess out to sea was driven by a storm upon the coast of Bohemia, the very kingdom of the good King Polixenes. Here Antigonus landed, and here he left the little baby.

Antigonus never returned to Sicily to tell Leontes where he had left his daughter, for as he was going back to the ship, a bear came out of the woods, and tore him to pieces; a just punishment on him for obeying the wicked order of Leontes.

The child was dressed in rich clothes and jewels; for Hermione had made it very fine when she sent it to Leontes, and Antigonus had pinned a paper to its mantle, and the name of *Perdita* written thereon, and words obscurely intimating its high birth and untoward fate.



PERDITA

This poor deserted baby was found by a shepherd. He was a humane man, and so he carried the little Perdita home to his wife, who nursed it tenderly; but poverty tempted the shepherd to conceal the rich prize he had found: therefore he left that part of the country, that no one might know where he got his riches, and with part of Perdita's jewels he bought herds of sheep, and became a wealthy shepherd. He brought up Perdita as his own child, and she knew not she was any other than a shepherd's daughter.

The little Perdita grew up a lovely maiden; and though she had no better education than that of a shepherd's daughter, yet so did the natural graces she inherited from her royal mother shine forth in her untutored mind, that no one from her behaviour would have known she had not been brought up in her father's court.

Polixenes, the King of Bohemia, had an only son, whose name was Florizel. As this young prince was hunting near the shepherd's dwelling, he saw the old man's supposed daughter; and the beauty, modesty, and queen-like deportment of Perdita caused him instantly to fall in love with her. He soon, under the name of Doricles, and in the disguise of a private gentleman, became a constant visitor at the old shepherd's house. Florizel's frequent absences from court alarmed Polixenes; and setting people to watch his son, he discovered his love for the shepherd's fair daughter.

Polixenes then called for Camillo, the faithful Camillo, who had preserved his life from the fury of Leontes, and desired that he would accompany him to the house of the shepherd, the supposed father of Perdita.

Polixenes and Camillo, both in disguise, arrived at the old shepherd's dwelling while they were celebrating the feast of sheep-shearing; and though they were strangers, yet at the sheep-shearing every guest being made welcome, they were invited to walk in, and join in the general festivity.

Nothing but mirth and jollity was going forward. Tables were spread, and great preparations were making for the rustic feast. Some lads and lasses were dancing on the green before the house, while others of the young men were buying ribands, gloves, and such toys, of a pedlar at the door.

While this busy scene was going forward, Florizel and Perdita sat quietly in a retired corner, seemingly more pleased with the conversation of each other, than desirous of engaging in the sports and silly amusements of those around them.

The king was so disguised that it was impossible his son could know him: he therefore advanced near enough to hear the conversation. The simple yet elegant manner in which Perdita conversed with his son did not a little surprise Polixenes: he said to Camillo, "This is the prettiest low-born lass I ever saw; nothing she does or says but looks like something greater than herself, too noble for this place."

Camillo replied, "Indeed she is the very queen of curds and cream."

"Pray, my good friend," said the king to the old shepherd, "what fair swain is that talking with your daughter?" "They call him Doricles," replied the shepherd. "He says he loves my daughter; and, to speak truth, there is not a kiss to choose which loves the other best. If young Doricles can get her, she shall bring him that he little dreams of;" meaning the remainder of Perdita's jewels; which, after he had bought herds of sheep with part of them, he had carefully hoarded up for her marriage portion.

Polixenes then addressed his son. "How now, young man!" said he: "your heart seems full of something that takes off your mind from feasting. When I was young, I used to load my love with presents; but you have let the pedlar go, and have bought your lass no toy."

The young prince, who little thought he was talking to the king his father, replied, "Old sir, she prizes not such trifles; the gifts which Perdita expects from me are locked up in my heart." Then turning to Perdita, he said to her, "O hear me, Perdita, before this ancient gentleman, who it seems was once himself a lover; he shall hear what I profess." Florizel then called upon the old stranger to be a witness to a solemn promise of marriage which he made to Perdita, saying to Polixenes, "I pray you, mark our contract."

"Mark your divorce, young sir," said the king, discovering himself. Polixenes then reproached his son for daring to contract himself to this low-born maiden, calling Perdita "shepherd's-brat, sheep-hook," and other disrespectful names; and threatening, if ever she suffered his son to see her again, he would put her, and the old shepherd her father, to a cruel death.

The king then left them in great wrath, and ordered Camillo to follow him with Prince Florizel.

When the king had departed, Perdita, whose royal nature was roused by Polixenes' reproaches, said, "Though we are all undone, I was not much afraid; and once or twice I was about to speak, and tell him plainly that the selfsame sun which shines upon his palace, hides not his face from our cottage, but looks on both alike." Then sorrowfully she said, "But now I am awakened from this dream, I will queen it no further. Leave me, sir; I will go milk my ewes and weep."

The kind-hearted Camillo was charmed with the spirit and propriety of Perdita's behaviour; and perceiving that the young prince was too deeply in love to give up his mistress at the command of his royal father, he thought of a way to befriend the lovers, and at the same time to execute a favourite scheme he had in his mind.

Camillo had long known that Leontes, the King of Sicily, was become a true penitent; and though Camillo was now the favoured friend of King Polixenes, he could not help wishing once more to see his late royal master and his native home. He therefore proposed to Florizel and Perdita that they should accompany him to the Sicilian court, where he would engage Leontes should protect them, till, through his mediation, they could obtain pardon from Polixenes, and his consent to their marriage.

To this proposal they joyfully agreed; and Camillo, who conducted everything relative to their flight, allowed the old shepherd to go along with them.

The shepherd took with him the remainder of Perdita's jewels, her baby clothes, and the paper which he had found pinned to her mantle.

After a prosperous voyage, Florizel and Perdita, Camillo and the old shepherd, arrived in safety at the court of Leontes. Leontes, who still mourned his dead Hermione and his lost child, received Camillo with great kindness, and gave a cordial welcome to Prince Florizel. But Perdita, whom Florizel introduced as his princess, seemed to engross all Leontes' attention: perceiving a resemblance between her and his dead queen Hermione, his grief broke out afresh, and he said, such a lovely creature might his own daughter have been, if he had not so cruelly destroyed her. "And then, too," said he to Florizel, "I lost the society and friendship of your brave father, whom I now desire more than my life once again to look upon."

When the old shepherd heard how much notice the king had taken of Perdita, and that he had lost a daughter, who was exposed in infancy, he fell to comparing the time when he found the little Perdita, with the manner of its exposure, the jewels and other tokens of its high birth; from all which it was impossible for him not to conclude that Perdita and the king's lost daughter were the same.

Florizel and Perdita, Camillo and the faithful Paulina, were present when the old shepherd related to the king the manner in which he had found the child, and also the circumstance of Antigonus' death, he having seen the bear seize upon him. He showed the rich mantle in which Paulina remembered Hermione had wrapped the child; and he produced a jewel which she remembered Hermione had tied about Perdita's neck, and he gave up the paper which Paulina knew to be the writing of her husband; it could not be doubted that Perdita was Leontes' own daughter: but oh! the noble struggles of Paulina, between sorrow for her husband's death, and joy that the oracle was fulfilled, in the king's heir, his long-lost daughter being found. When Leontes heard that Perdita was his daughter, the great sorrow that he felt that Hermione was not living to behold her child, made him that he could say nothing for a long time, but, "O thy mother, thy mother!"

Paulina interrupted this joyful yet distressful scene, with saying to Leontes, that she had a statue newly finished by that rare Italian master, Julio Romano, which was such a perfect resemblance of the queen, that would his majesty be pleased to go to her house and look upon it, he would be almost ready to think it was Hermione herself. Thither then they all went; the king anxious to see the semblance of his Hermione, and Perdita longing to behold what the mother she never saw did look like.

When Paulina drew back the curtain which concealed this famous statue, so perfectly did it resemble Hermione, that all the king's sorrow was renewed at the sight: for a long time he had no power to speak or move.

"I like your silence, my liege," said Paulina, "it the more shows your wonder. Is not this statue very like your queen?"

At length the king said, "O, thus she stood, even with such majesty, when I first wooed her. But yet, Paulina, Hermione was not so aged as this statue looks." Paulina replied, "So much the more the carver's excellence, who has made the statue as Hermione would have looked had she been living now. But let me draw the curtain, sire, lest presently you think it moves."

The king then said, "Do not draw the curtain; Would I were dead! See, Camillo, would you not think it breathed? Her eye seems to have motion in it." "I must draw the curtain, my liege," said Paulina. "You are so transported, you will persuade yourself the statue lives." "O, sweet Paulina," said Leontes, "make me think so twenty years together! Still methinks there is an air comes from her. What fine chisel could ever yet cut breath? Let no man mock me, for I will kiss her." "Good my lord, forbear!" said Paulina. "The ruddiness upon her lip is wet; you will stain your own with oily painting. Shall I draw the curtain?" "No, not these twenty years," said Leontes.

Perdita, who all this time had been kneeling, and beholding in silent admiration the statue of her matchless mother, said now, "And so long could I stay here, looking upon my dear mother."

"Either forbear this transport," said Paulina to Leontes, "and let me draw the curtain; or prepare yourself for more amazement. I can make the statue move indeed; ay, and descend from off the pedestal, and take you by the hand. But then you will think, which I protest I am not, that I am assisted by some wicked powers."

"What you can make her do," said the astonished king, "I am content to look upon. What you can make her speak, I am content to hear; for it is as easy to make her speak as move."

Paulina then ordered some slow and solemn music, which she had prepared for the purpose, to strike up; and, to the amazement of all the beholders, the statue came down from off the pedestal, and threw its arms around Leontes' neck. The statue then began to speak, praying for blessings on her husband, and on her child, the newly-found Perdita.

No wonder that the statue hung upon Leontes' neck, and blessed her husband and her child. No wonder; for the statue was indeed Hermione herself, the real, the living queen.

Paulina had falsely reported to the king the death of Hermione, thinking that the only means to preserve her royal mistress' life; and with the good Paulina, Hermione had lived ever since, never choosing Leontes should know she was living, till she heard Perdita was found; for though she had long forgiven the injuries which Leontes had done to herself, she could not pardon his cruelty to his infant daughter.

His dead queen thus restored to life, his lost daughter found, the long-sorrowing Leontes could scarcely support the excess of his own happiness.

Nothing but congratulations and affectionate speeches were heard on all sides. Now the delighted parents thanked Prince Florizel for loving their lowly-seeming daughter; and now they blessed the good old shepherd for preserving their child. Greatly did Camillo and Paulina rejoice that they had lived to see so good an end of all their faithful services.

And as if nothing should be wanting to complete this strange and unlooked-for joy, King Polixenes himself now entered the palace.

When Polixenes first missed his son and Camillo, knowing that Camillo had long wished to return to Sicily, he conjectured he should find the fugitives here; and, following them with all speed, he happened to just arrive at this, the happiest moment of Leontes' life.

Polixenes took a part in the general joy; he forgave his friend Leontes the unjust jealousy he had conceived against him, and they once more loved each other with all the warmth of their first boyish friendship. And there was no fear that Polixenes would now oppose his son's marriage with Perdita. She was no "sheep-hook" now, but the heiress of the crown of Sicily.

Thus have we seen the patient virtues of the long-suffering Hermione rewarded. That excellent lady lived many years with her Leontes and her Perdita, the happiest of mothers and of queens.

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

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There lived in the palace at Messina two ladies, whose names were Hero and Beatrice. Hero was the daughter, and Beatrice the niece, of Leonato, the governor of Messina.

Beatrice was of a lively temper, and loved to divert her cousin Hero, who was of a more serious disposition, with her sprightly sallies. Whatever was going forward was sure to make matter of mirth for the light-hearted Beatrice.

At the time the history of these ladies commences some young men of high rank in the army, as they were passing through Messina on their return from a war that was just ended, in which they had distinguished themselves by their great bravery, came to visit Leonato. Among these were Don Pedro, the Prince of Arragon; and his friend Claudio, who was a lord of Florence; and with them came the wild and witty Benedick, and he was a lord of Padua.

These strangers had been at Messina before, and the hospitable governor introduced them to his daughter and his niece as their old friends and acquaintance.

Benedick, the moment he entered the room, began a lively conversation with Leonato and the prince. Beatrice, who liked not to be left out of any discourse, interrupted Benedick with saying, "I wonder that you will still be talking, Signior Benedick: nobody marks you." Benedick was just such another rattle-brain as Beatrice, yet he was not pleased at this free salutation; he thought it did not become a well-bred lady to be so flippant with her tongue; and he remembered, when he was last at Messina, that Beatrice used to select him to make her merry jests upon. And as there is no one who so little likes to be made a jest of as those who are apt to take the same liberty themselves, so it was with Benedick and Beatrice; these two sharp wits never met in former times but a perfect war of raillery was kept up between them, and they always parted mutually displeased with each other. Therefore when Beatrice stopped him in the middle of his discourse with telling him nobody marked what he was saying, Benedick, affecting not to have observed before that she was present, said, "What, my dear Lady Disdain, are you yet living?" And now war broke out afresh between them, and a long jangling argument ensued, during which Beatrice, although she knew he had so well approved his valour in the late war, said that she would eat all he had killed there: and observing the prince take delight in Benedick's conversation, she called him "the prince's jester." This sarcasm sunk deeper into the mind of Benedick than all Beatrice had said before. The hint she gave him that he was a coward, by saying she would eat all he had killed, he did not regard, knowing himself to be a brave man; but there is nothing that great wits so much dread as the imputation of buffoonery, because the charge comes sometimes a little too near the truth: therefore Benedick perfectly hated Beatrice when she called him "the prince's jester."

The modest lady Hero was silent before the noble guests; and while Claudio was attentively observing the improvement which time had made in her beauty, and was contemplating the exquisite graces of her fine figure (for she was an admirable young lady), the prince was highly amused with listening to the humorous dialogue between Benedick and Beatrice; and he said in a whisper to Leonato, "This is a pleasant-spirited young lady. She were an excellent wife for Benedick." Leonato replied to this suggestion, "O, my lord, my lord, if they were but a week married, they would talk themselves mad." But though Leonato thought they would make a discordant pair, the prince did not give up the idea of matching these two keen wits together.

When the prince returned with Claudio from the palace, he found that the marriage he had devised between Benedick and Beatrice was not the only one projected in that good company, for Claudio spoke in such terms of Hero, as made the prince guess at what was passing in his heart; and he liked it well, and he said to Claudio, "Do you affect Hero?" To this question Claudio replied, "O my lord, when I was last at Messina, I looked upon her with a soldier's eye, that liked, but had no leisure for loving; but now, in this happy time of peace, thoughts of war have left their places vacant in my mind, and in their room come thronging soft and delicate thoughts, all prompting me how fair young Hero is, reminding me that I liked her before I went to the wars." Claudio's confession of his love for Hero so wrought upon the prince, that he lost no time in soliciting the consent of Leonato to accept of Claudio for a son-in-law. Leonato agreed to this proposal, and the prince found no great difficulty in persuading the gentle Hero herself to listen to the suit of the noble Claudio, who was a lord of rare endowments, and highly accomplished, and Claudio, assisted by his kind prince, soon prevailed upon Leonato to fix an early day for the celebration of his marriage with Hero.

Claudio was to wait but a few days before he was to be married to his fair lady; yet he complained of the interval being tedious, as indeed most young men are impatient when they are waiting for the accomplishment of any event they have set their hearts upon: the prince, therefore, to make the time seem short to him, proposed as a kind of merry pastime that they should invent some artful scheme to make Benedick and Beatrice fall in love with each other. Claudio entered with great satisfaction into this whim of the prince, and Leonato promised them his assistance, and even Hero said she would do any modest office to help her cousin to a good husband.

The device the prince invented was, that the gentlemen should make Benedick believe that Beatrice was in love with him, and that Hero should make Beatrice believe that Benedick was in love with her.

The prince, Leonato, and Claudio began their operations first: and watching upon an opportunity when Benedick was quietly seated reading in an arbour, the prince and his assistants took their station among the trees behind the arbour, so near that Benedick could not choose but hear all they said; and after some careless talk the prince said, "Come hither, Leonato. What was it you told me the other day—that your niece Beatrice was in love with signior Benedick? I did never think that lady would have loved any man." "No, nor I neither, my lord," answered Leonato. "It is most wonderful that she should so dote on Benedick, whom she in all outward behaviour seemed ever to dislike." Claudio confirmed all this with saying that Hero had told him Beatrice was so in love with Benedick, that she would certainly die of grief, if he could not be brought to love her; which Leonato and Claudio seemed to agree was impossible, he having always been such a railer against all fair ladies, and in particular against Beatrice.

The prince affected to hearken to all this with great compassion for Beatrice, and he said, "It were good that Benedick were told of this." "To what end?" said Claudio; "he would but make sport of it, and torment the poor lady worse." "And if he should," said the prince, "it were a good deed to hang him; for Beatrice is an excellent sweet lady, and exceeding wise in everything but in loving Benedick." Then the prince motioned to his companions that they should walk on, and leave Benedick to meditate upon what he had overheard.

Benedick had been listening with great eagerness to this conversation; and he said to himself when he heard Beatrice loved him, "Is it possible? Sits the wind in that corner?" And when they were gone, he began to reason in this manner with himself: "This can be no trick! they were very serious, and they have the truth from Hero, and seem to pity the lady. Love me! Why it must be requited! I did never think to marry. But when I said I should die a bachelor, I did not think I should live to be married. They say the lady is virtuous and fair. She is so. And wise in everything but loving me. Why, that is no great argument of her folly. But here comes Beatrice. By this day, she is a fair lady. I do spy some marks of love in her." Beatrice now approached him, and said with her usual tartness, "Against my will I am sent to bid you come in to dinner." Benedick, who never felt himself disposed to speak so politely to her before, replied, "Fair Beatrice, I thank you for your pains:" and when Beatrice, after two or three more rude speeches, left him, Benedick thought he observed a concealed meaning of kindness under the uncivil words she uttered, and he said aloud, "If I do not take pity on her, I am a villain. If I do not love her, I am a Jew. I will go get her picture."

The gentleman being thus caught in the net they had spread for him, it was now Hero's turn to play her part with Beatrice; and for this purpose she sent for Ursula and Margaret, two gentlewomen who attended upon her, and she said to Margaret, "Good Margaret, run to the parlour; there you will find my cousin Beatrice talking with the prince and Claudio. Whisper in her ear, that I and Ursula are walking in the orchard, and that our discourse is all of her. Bid her steal into that pleasant arbour, where honeysuckles, ripened by the sun, like ungrateful minions, forbid the sun to enter." This arbour, into which Hero desired Margaret to entice Beatrice, was the very same pleasant arbour where Benedick had so lately been an attentive listener.

"I will make her come, I warrant, presently," said Margaret.

Hero, then taking Ursula with her into the orchard, said to her, "Now, Ursula, when Beatrice comes, we will walk up and down this alley, and our talk must be only of Benedick, and when I name him, let it be your part to praise him more than ever man did merit. My talk to you must be how Benedick is in love with Beatrice. Now begin; for look where Beatrice like a lapwing runs close by the ground, to hear our conference." They then began; Hero saying, as if in answer to something which Ursula had said, "No, truly, Ursula. She is too disdainful; her spirits are as coy as wild birds of the rock." "But are you sure," said Ursula, "that Benedick loves Beatrice so entirely?" Hero replied, "So says the prince, and my lord Claudio, and they entreated me to acquaint her with it; but I persuaded them, if they loved Benedick, never to let Beatrice know of it." "Certainly," replied Ursula, "it were not good she knew his love, lest she made sport of it." "Why, to say truth," said Hero, "I never yet saw a man, how wise soever, or noble, young, or rarely featured, but she would dispraise him." "Sure sure, such carping is not commendable," said Ursula. "No," replied Hero, "but who dare tell her so? If I should speak, she would mock me into air." "O! you wrong your cousin," said Ursula: "she cannot be so much without true judgment, as to refuse so rare a gentleman as signior Benedick." "He hath an excellent good name," said Hero: "indeed, he is the first man in Italy, always excepting my dear Claudio." And now, Hero giving her attendant a hint that it was time to change the discourse, Ursula said, "And when are you to be married, madam?" Hero then told her, that she was to be married to Claudio the next day, and desired she would go in with her, and look at some new attire, as she wished to consult with her on what she would wear on the morrow. Beatrice, who had been listening with breathless eagerness to this dialogue, when they went away, exclaimed, "What fire is in mine ears? Can this be true? Farewell, contempt and scorn, and maiden pride, adieu! Benedick, love on! I will requite you, taming my wild heart to your loving hand."

It must have been a pleasant sight to see these old enemies converted into new and loving friends, and to behold their first meeting after being cheated into mutual liking by the merry artifice of the good-humoured prince. But a sad reverse in the fortunes of Hero must now be thought of. The morrow, which was to have been her wedding-day, brought sorrow on the heart of Hero and her good father Leonato.

The prince had a half-brother, who came from the wars along with him to Messina. This brother (his name was Don John) was a melancholy, discontented man, whose spirits seemed to labour in the contriving of villanies. He hated the prince his brother, and he hated Claudio, because he was the prince's friend, and determined to prevent Claudio's marriage with Hero, only for the malicious pleasure of making Claudio and the prince unhappy; for he knew the prince had set his heart upon this marriage, almost as much as Claudio himself; and to effect this wicked purpose, he employed one Borachio, a man as bad as himself, whom he encouraged with the offer of a great reward. This Borachio paid his court to Margaret, Hero's attendant; and Don John, knowing this, prevailed upon him to make Margaret promise to talk with him from her lady's chamber window that night, after Hero was asleep, and also to dress herself in Hero's clothes, the better to deceive Claudio into the belief that it was Hero; for that was the end he meant to compass by this wicked plot.

Don John then went to the prince and Claudio, and told them that Hero was an imprudent lady, and that she talked with men from her chamber window at midnight. Now this was the evening before the wedding, and he offered to take them that night, where they should themselves hear Hero discoursing with a man from her window; and they consented to go along with him, and Claudio said, "If I see anything to-night why I should not marry her, to-morrow in the congregation, where I intended to wed her, there will I shame her." The prince also said, "And as I assisted you to obtain her, I will join with you to disgrace her."

When Don John brought them near Hero's chamber that night, they saw Borachio standing under the window, and they saw Margaret looking out of Hero's window, and heard her talking with Borachio: and Margaret being dressed in the same clothes they had seen Hero wear, the prince and Claudio believed it was the lady Hero herself.

Nothing could equal the anger of Claudio, when he had made (as he thought) this discovery. All his love for the innocent Hero was at once converted into hatred, and he resolved to expose her in the church, as he had said he would, the next day; and the prince agreed to this, thinking no punishment could be too severe for the naughty lady, who talked with a man from her window the very night before she was going to be married to the noble Claudio.

The next day, when they were all met to celebrate the marriage, and Claudio and Hero were standing before the priest, and the priest, or friar, as he was called, was proceeding to pronounce the marriage ceremony, Claudio, in the most passionate language, proclaimed the guilt of the blameless Hero, who, amazed at the strange words he uttered, said meekly, "Is my lord well, that he does speak so wide?"

Leonato, in the utmost horror, said to the prince, "My lord, why speak not you?" "What should I speak?" said the prince; "I stand dishonoured, that have gone about to link my dear friend to an unworthy woman. Leonato, upon my honour, myself, my brother, and this grieved Claudio, did see and hear her last night at midnight talk with a man at her chamber window."

Benedick, in astonishment at what he heard, said, "This looks not like a nuptial."

"True, O God!" replied the heart-struck Hero; and then this hapless lady sunk down in a fainting fit, to all appearance dead. The prince and Claudio left the church, without staying to see if Hero would recover, or at all regarding the distress into which they had thrown Leonato. So hard-hearted had their anger made them.

Benedick remained, and assisted Beatrice to recover Hero from her swoon, saying, "How does the lady?" "Dead, I think," replied Beatrice in great agony, for she loved her cousin; and knowing her virtuous principles, she believed nothing of what she had heard spoken against her. Not so the poor old father; he believed the story of his child's shame, and it was piteous to hear him lamenting over her, as she lay like one dead before him, wishing she might never more open her eyes.

But the ancient friar was a wise man, and full of observation on human nature, and he had attentively marked the lady's countenance when she heard herself accused, and noted a thousand blushing shames to start into her face, and then he saw an angel-like whiteness bear away those blushes, and in her eye he saw a fire that did belie the error that the prince did speak against her maiden truth, and he said to the sorrowing father, "Call me a fool; trust not my reading, nor my observation; trust not my age, my reverence, nor my calling, if this sweet lady lie not guiltless here under some biting error."

When Hero had recovered from the swoon into which she had fallen, the friar said to her, "Lady, what man is he you are accused of?" Hero replied, "They know that do accuse me; I know of none:" then turning to Leonato, she said, "O my father, if you can prove that any man has ever conversed with me at hours unmeet, or that I yesternight changed words with any creature, refuse me, hate me, torture me to death."

"There is," said the friar, "some strange misunderstanding in the prince and Claudio;" and then he counselled Leonato, that he should report that Hero was dead; and he said that the death-like swoon in which they had left Hero would make this easy of belief; and he also advised him that he should put on mourning, and erect a monument for her, and do all rites that appertain to a burial. "What shall become of this?" said Leonato; "What will this do?" The friar replied, "This report of her death shall change slander into pity: that is some good; but that is not all the good I hope for. When Claudio shall hear she died upon hearing his words, the idea of her life shall sweetly creep into his imagination. Then shall he mourn, if ever love had interest in his heart, and wish that he had not so accused her; yea, though he thought his accusation true."

Benedick now said, "Leonato, let the friar advise you; and though you know how well I love the prince and Claudio, yet on my honour I will not reveal this secret to them."

Leonato, thus persuaded, yielded; and he said sorrowfully, "I am so grieved, that the smallest twine may lead me." The kind friar then led Leonato and Hero away to comfort and console them, and Beatrice and Benedick remained alone; and this was the meeting from which their friends, who contrived the merry plot against them, expected so much diversion; those friends who were now overwhelmed with affliction, and from whose minds all thoughts of merriment seemed for ever banished.

Benedick was the first who spoke, and he said, "Lady Beatrice, have you wept all this while?" "Yea, and I will weep a while longer," said Beatrice. "Surely," said Benedick, "I do believe your fair cousin is wronged." "Ah!" said Beatrice, "how much might that man deserve of me who would right her!" Benedick then said, "Is there any way to show such friendship? I do love nothing in the world so well as you: is not that strange?" "It were as possible," said Beatrice, "for me to say I loved nothing in the world so well as you; but believe me not, and yet I lie not. I confess nothing, nor I deny nothing. I am sorry for my cousin." "By my sword," said Benedick, "you love me, and I protest I love you. Come, bid me do anything for you." "Kill Claudio," said Beatrice. "Ha! not for the wide world," said Benedick; for he loved his friend Claudio, and he believed he had been imposed upon. "Is not Claudio a villain, that has slandered, scorned, and dishonoured my cousin?" said Beatrice: "O that I were a man!" "Hear me, Beatrice!" said Benedick. But Beatrice would hear nothing in Claudio's defence; and she continued to urge on Benedick to revenge her cousin's wrongs: and she said, "Talk with a man out of the window; a proper saying! Sweet Hero! she is wronged; she is slandered; she is undone. O that I were a man for Claudio's sake! or that I had any friend, who would be a man for my sake! but valour is melted into courtesies and compliments. I cannot be a man with wishing, therefore I will die a woman with grieving." "Tarry, good Beatrice," said Benedick: "by this hand I love you." "Use it for my love some other way than swearing by it," said Beatrice. "Think you on your soul that Claudio has wronged Hero?" asked Benedick. "Yea," answered Beatrice; "as sure as I have a thought, or a soul." "Enough," said Benedick; "I am engaged; I will challenge him. I will kiss your hand, and so leave you. By this hand, Claudio shall render me a dear account! As you hear from me, so think of me. Go, comfort your cousin."

While Beatrice was thus powerfully pleading with Benedick, and working his gallant temper by the spirit of her angry words, to engage in the cause of Hero, and fight even with his dear friend Claudio, Leonato was challenging the prince and Claudio to answer with their swords the injury they had done his child, who, he affirmed, had died for grief. But they respected his age and his sorrow, and they said, "Nay, do not quarrel with us, good old man." And now came Benedick, and he also challenged Claudio to answer with his sword the injury he had done to Hero; and Claudio and the prince said to each other, "Beatrice has set him on to do this." Claudio nevertheless must have accepted this challenge of Benedick, had not the justice of Heaven at the moment brought to pass a better proof of the innocence of Hero than the uncertain fortune of a duel.

While the prince and Claudio were yet talking of the challenge of Benedick, a magistrate brought Borachio as a prisoner before the prince. Borachio had been overheard talking with one of his companions of the mischief he had been employed by Don John to do.

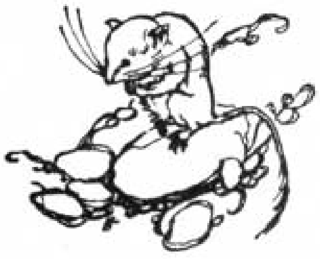
Borachio made a full confession to the prince in Claudio's hearing, that it was Margaret dressed in her lady's clothes that he had talked with from the window, whom they had mistaken for the lady Hero herself; and no doubt continued on the minds of Claudio and the prince of the innocence of Hero. If a suspicion had remained it must have been removed by the flight of Don John, who, finding his villanies were detected, fled from Messina to avoid the just anger of his brother.

The heart of Claudio was sorely grieved when he found he had falsely accused Hero, who, he thought, died upon hearing his cruel words; and the memory of his beloved Hero's image came over him, in the rare semblance that he loved it first; and the prince asking him if what he heard did not run like iron through his soul, he answered, that he felt as if he had taken poison while Borachio was speaking.

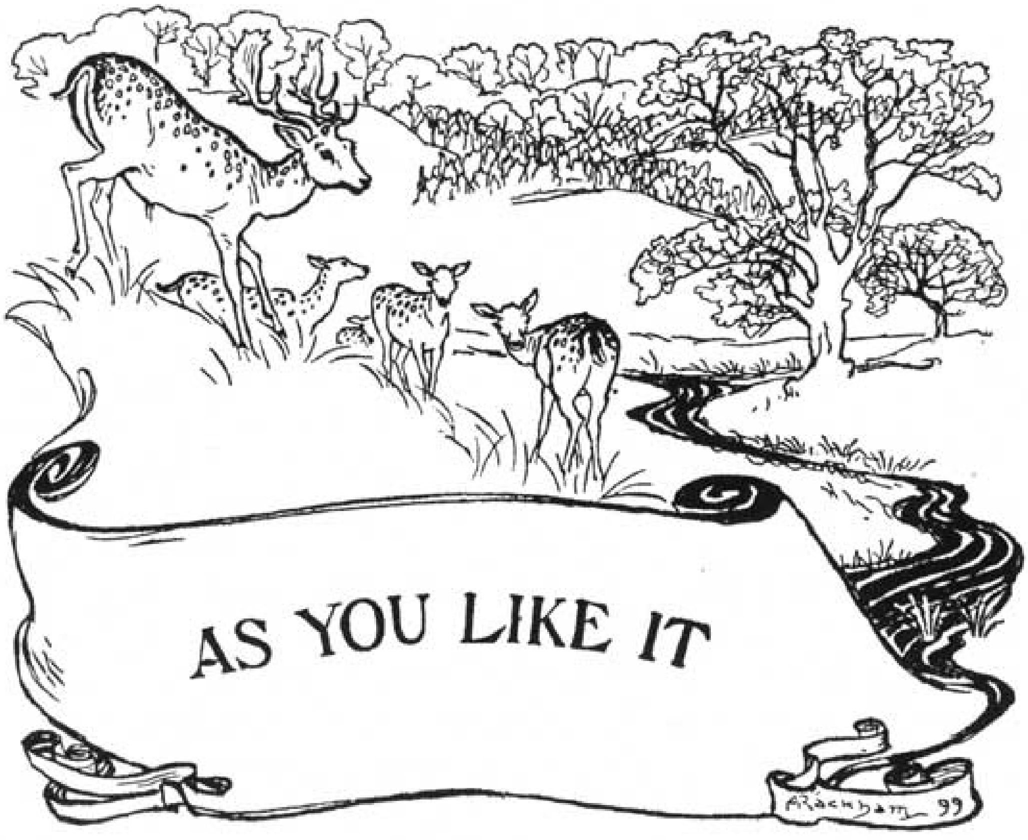
And the repentant Claudio implored forgiveness of the old man Leonato for the injury he had done his child; and promised, that whatever penance Leonato would lay upon him for his fault in believing the false accusation against his betrothed wife, for her dear sake he would endure it.

The penance Leonato enjoined him was, to marry the next morning a cousin of Hero's, who, he said, was now his heir, and in person very like Hero. Claudio, regarding the solemn promise he made to Leonato, said, he would marry this unknown lady, even though she were an Ethiop: but his heart was very sorrowful, and he passed that night in tears, and in remorseful grief, at the tomb which Leonato had erected for Hero.

When the morning came, the prince accompanied Claudio to the church, where the good friar, and Leonato and his niece, were already assembled, to celebrate a second nuptial; and Leonato presented to Claudio his promised bride; and she wore a mask, that Claudio might not discover her face. And Claudio said to the lady in the mask, "Give me your hand, before this holy friar; I am your husband, if you will marry me." "And when I lived I was your other wife," said this unknown lady; and, taking off her mask, she proved to be no niece (as was pretended), but Leonato's very daughter, the Lady Hero herself. We may be sure that this proved a most agreeable surprise to Claudio, who thought her dead, so that he could scarcely for joy believe his eyes; and the prince, who was equally amazed at what he saw, exclaimed, "Is not this Hero, Hero that was dead?" Leonato replied, "She died, my lord, but while her slander lived." The friar promised them an explanation of this seeming miracle, after the ceremony was ended; and was proceeding to marry them, when he was interrupted by Benedick, who desired to be married at the same time to Beatrice. Beatrice making some demur to this match, and Benedick challenging her with her love for him, which he had learned from Hero, a pleasant explanation took place; and they found they had both been tricked into a belief of love, which had never existed, and had become lovers in truth by the power of a false jest: but the affection, which a merry invention had cheated them into, was grown too powerful to be shaken by a serious explanation; and since Benedick proposed to marry, he was resolved to think nothing to the purpose that the world could say against it; and he merrily kept up the jest, and swore to Beatrice, that he took her but for pity, and because he heard she was dying of love for him; and Beatrice protested, that she yielded but upon great persuasion, and partly to save his life, for she heard he was in a consumption. So these two mad wits were reconciled, and made a match of it, after Claudio and Hero were married; and to complete the history, Don John, the contriver of the villany, was taken in his flight, and brought back to Messina; and a brave punishment it was to this gloomy, discontented man, to see the joy and feastings which, by the disappointment of his plots, took place in the palace in Messina.



AS YOU LIKE IT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During the time that France was divided into provinces (or dukedoms as they were called) there reigned in one of these provinces an usurper, who had deposed and banished his elder brother, the lawful duke.

The duke, who was thus driven from his dominions, retired with a few faithful followers to the forest of Arden; and here the good duke lived with his loving friends, who had put themselves into a voluntary exile for his sake, while their land and revenues enriched the false usurper; and custom soon made the life of careless ease they led here more sweet to them than the pomp and uneasy splendour of a courtier's life. Here they lived like the old Robin Hood of England, and to this forest many noble youths daily resorted from the court, and did fleet the time carelessly, as they did who lived in the golden age. In the summer they lay along under the fine shade of the large forest trees, marking the playful sports of the wild deer; and so fond were they of these poor dappled fools, who seemed to be the native inhabitants of the forest, that it grieved them to be forced to kill them to supply themselves with venison for their food. When the cold winds of winter made the duke feel the change of his adverse fortune, he would endure it patiently, and say, "These chilling winds which blow upon my body are true counsellors; they do not flatter, but represent truly to me my condition; and though they bite sharply, their tooth is nothing like so keen as that of unkindness and ingratitude. I find that howsoever men speak against adversity, yet some sweet uses are to be extracted from it; like the jewel, precious for medicine, which is taken from the head of the venomous and despised toad." In this manner did the patient duke draw a useful moral from everything that he saw; and by the help of this moralising turn, in that life of his, remote from public haunts, he could find tongues in trees, books in the running brooks, sermons in stones, and good in everything.

The banished duke had an only daughter, named Rosalind, whom the usurper, Duke Frederick, when he banished her father, still retained in his court as a companion for his own daughter Celia. A strict friendship subsisted between these ladies, which the disagreement between their fathers did not in the least interrupt, Celia striving by every kindness in her power to make amends to Rosalind for the injustice of her own father in deposing the father of Rosalind; and whenever the thoughts of her father's banishment, and her own dependence on the false usurper, made Rosalind melancholy, Celia's whole care was to comfort and console her.

One day, when Celia was talking in her usual kind manner to Rosalind, saying, "I pray you, Rosalind, my sweet cousin, be merry," a messenger entered from the duke, to tell them that if they wished to see a wrestling match, which was just going to begin, they must come instantly to the court before the palace; and Celia, thinking it would amuse Rosalind, agreed to go and see it.

In those times wrestling, which is only practised now by country clowns, was a favourite sport even in the courts of princes, and before fair ladies and princesses. To this wrestling match, therefore, Celia and Rosalind went. They found that it was likely to prove a very tragical sight; for a large and powerful man, who had been long practised in the art of wrestling, and had slain many men in contests of this kind, was just going to wrestle with a very young man, who, from his extreme youth and inexperience in the art, the beholders all thought would certainly be killed.

When the duke saw Celia and Rosalind, he said, "How now, daughter and niece, are you crept hither to see the wrestling? You will take little delight in it, there is such odds in the men: in pity to this young man, I would wish to persuade him from wrestling. Speak to him, ladies, and see if you can move him."

The ladies were well pleased to perform this humane office, and first Celia entreated the young stranger that he would desist from the attempt; and then Rosalind spoke so kindly to him, and with such feeling consideration for the danger he was about to undergo, that instead of being persuaded by her gentle words to forego his purpose, all his thoughts were bent to distinguish himself by his courage in this lovely lady's eyes. He refused the request of Celia and Rosalind in such graceful and modest words, that they felt still more concern for him; he concluded his refusal with saying, "I am sorry to deny such fair and excellent ladies anything. But let your fair eyes and gentle wishes go with me to my trial, wherein if I be conquered there is one shamed that was never gracious; if I am killed, there is one dead that is willing to die; I shall do my friends no wrong, for I have none to lament me; the world no injury, for in it I have nothing; for I only fill up a place in the world which may be better supplied when I have made it empty."

And now the wrestling match began. Celia wished the young stranger might not be hurt; but Rosalind felt most for him. The friendless state which he said he was in, and that he wished to die, made Rosalind think that he was like herself, unfortunate; and she pitied him so much, and so deep an interest she took in his danger while he was wrestling, that she might almost be said at that moment to have fallen in love with him.

The kindness shown this unknown youth by these fair and noble ladies gave him courage and strength, so that he performed wonders; and in the end completely conquered his antagonist, who was so much hurt, that for a while he was unable to speak or move.

The Duke Frederick was much pleased with the courage and skill shown by this young stranger; and desired to know his name and parentage, meaning to take him under his protection.

The stranger said his name was Orlando, and that he was the youngest son of Sir Rowland de Boys.

Sir Rowland de Boys, the father of Orlando, had been dead some years; but when he was living, he had been a true subject and dear friend of the banished duke: therefore, when Frederick heard Orlando was the son of his banished brother's friend, all his liking for this brave young man was changed into displeasure, and he left the place in very ill humour. Hating to hear the very name of any of his brother's friends, and yet still admiring the valour of the youth, he said, as he went out, that he wished Orlando had been the son of any other man.

Rosalind was delighted to hear that her new favourite was the son of her father's old friend; and she said to Celia, "My father loved Sir Rowland de Boys, and if I had known this young man was his son, I would have added tears to my entreaties before he should have ventured."

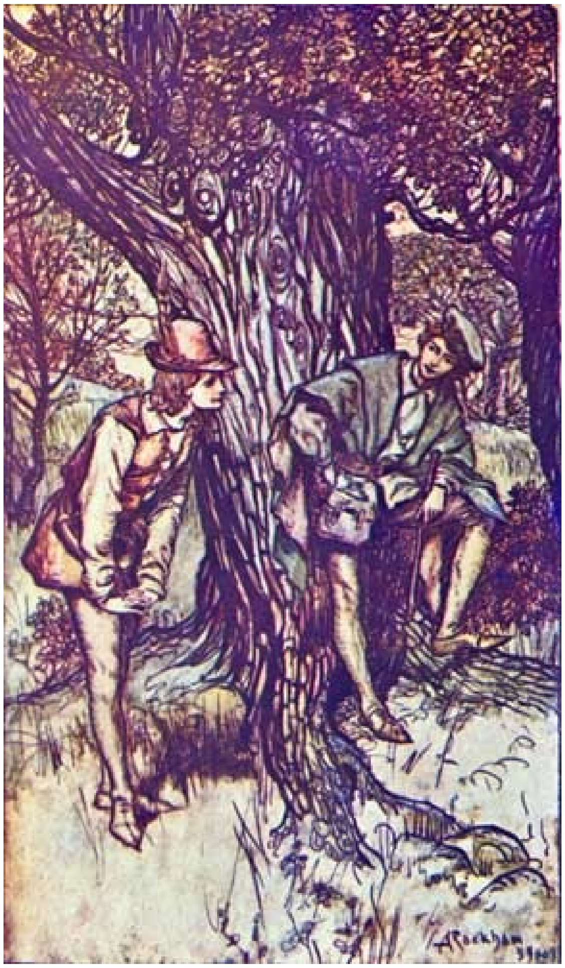
The ladies then went up to him; and seeing him abashed by the sudden displeasure shown by the duke, they spoke kind and encouraging words to him; and Rosalind, when they were going away, turned back to speak some more civil things to the brave young son of her father's old friend; and taking a chain from off her neck, she said, "Gentleman, wear this for me. I am out of suits with fortune, or I would give you a more valuable present."

When the ladies were alone, Rosalind's talk being still of Orlando, Celia began to perceive her cousin had fallen in love with the handsome young wrestler, and she said to Rosalind, "Is it possible you should fall in love so suddenly?" Rosalind replied, "The duke, my father, loved his father dearly." "But," said Celia, "does it therefore follow that you should love his son dearly? for then I ought to hate him, for my father hated his father; yet I do not hate Orlando."

Frederick being enraged at the sight of Sir Rowland de Boys' son, which reminded him of the many friends the banished duke had among the nobility, and having been for some time displeased with his niece, because the people praised her for her virtues, and pitied her for her good father's sake, his malice suddenly broke out against her; and while Celia and Rosalind were talking of Orlando, Frederick entered the room, and with looks full of anger ordered Rosalind instantly to leave the palace, and follow her father into banishment; telling Celia, who in vain pleaded for her, that he had only suffered Rosalind to stay upon her account. "I did not then," said Celia, "entreat you to let her stay, for I was too young at that time to value her; but now that I know her worth, and that we so long have slept together, rose at the same instant, learned, played, and eat together, I cannot live out of her company." Frederick replied, "She is too subtle for you; her smoothness, her very silence, and her patience speak to the people, and they pity her. You are a fool to plead for her, for you will seem more bright and virtuous when she is gone; therefore open not your lips in her favour, for the doom which I have passed upon her is irrevocable."

When Celia found she could not prevail upon her father to let Rosalind remain with her, she generously resolved to accompany her; and leaving her father's palace that night, she went along with her friend to seek Rosalind's father, the banished duke, in the forest of Arden.

Before they set out, Celia considered that it would be unsafe for two young ladies to travel in the rich clothes they then wore; she therefore proposed that they should disguise their rank by dressing themselves like country maids. Rosalind said it would be a still greater protection if one of them was to be dressed like a man; and so it was quickly agreed on between them, that as Rosalind was the tallest, she should wear the dress of a young countryman, and Celia should be habited like a country lass, and that they should say they were brother and sister, and Rosalind said she would be called Ganymede, and Celia chose the name of Aliena.



GANYMEDE ASSUMED THE FORWARD MANNERS OFTEN SEEN IN YOUTHS WHEN THEY ARE BETWEEN BOYS AND MEN

In this disguise, and taking their money and jewels to defray their expenses, these fair princesses set out on their long travel; for the forest of Arden was a long way off, beyond the boundaries of the duke's dominions.

The Lady Rosalind (or Ganymede as she must now be called) with her manly garb seemed to have put on a manly courage. The faithful friendship Celia had shown in accompanying Rosalind so many weary miles, made the new brother, in recompense for this true love, exert a cheerful spirit, as if he were indeed Ganymede, the rustic and stout-hearted brother of the gentle village maiden, Aliena.

When at last they came to the forest of Arden, they no longer found the convenient inns and good accommodations they had met with on the road; and being in want of food and rest, Ganymede, who had so merrily cheered his sister with pleasant speeches and happy remarks all the way, now owned to Aliena that he was so weary, he could find in his heart to disgrace his man's apparel, and cry like a woman; and Aliena declared she could go no farther; and then again Ganymede tried to recollect that it was a man's duty to comfort and console a woman, as the weaker vessel; and to seem courageous to his new sister, he said, "Come, have a good heart, my sister Aliena; we are now at the end of our travel, in the forest of Arden." But feigned manliness and forced courage would no longer support them; for though they were in the forest of Arden, they knew not where to find the duke: and here the travel of these weary ladies might have come to a sad conclusion, for they might have lost themselves, and perished for want of food; but providentially, as they were sitting on the grass, almost dying with fatigue and hopeless of any relief, a countryman chanced to pass that way, and Ganymede once more tried to speak with a manly boldness, saying, "Shepherd, if love or gold can in this desert place procure us entertainment, I pray you bring us where we may rest ourselves; for this young maid, my sister, is much fatigued with travelling, and faints for want of food."

The man replied that he was only a servant to a shepherd, and that his master's house was just going to be sold, and therefore they would find but poor entertainment; but that if they would go with him, they should be welcome to what there was. They followed the man, the near prospect of relief giving them fresh strength; and bought the house and sheep of the shepherd, and took the man who conducted them to the shepherd's house to wait on them; and being by this means so fortunately provided with a neat cottage, and well supplied with provisions, they agreed to stay here till they could learn in what part of the forest the duke dwelt.

When they were rested after the fatigue of their journey, they began to like their new way of life, and almost fancied themselves the shepherd and shepherdess they feigned to be; yet sometimes Ganymede remembered he had once been the same Lady Rosalind who had so dearly loved the brave Orlando, because he was the son of old Sir Rowland, her father's friend; and though Ganymede thought that Orlando was many miles distant, even so many weary miles as they had travelled, yet it soon appeared that Orlando was also in the forest of Arden: and in this manner this strange event came to pass.

Orlando was the youngest son of Sir Rowland de Boys, who, when he died, left him (Orlando being then very young) to the care of his eldest brother Oliver, charging Oliver on his blessing to give his brother a good education, and provide for him as became the dignity of their ancient house. Oliver proved an unworthy brother; and disregarding the commands of his dying father, he never put his brother to school, but kept him at home untaught and entirely neglected. But in his nature and in the noble qualities of his mind Orlando so much resembled his excellent father, that without any advantages of education he seemed like a youth who had been bred with the utmost care; and Oliver so envied the fine person and dignified manners of his untutored brother, that at last he wished to destroy him; and to effect this he set on people to persuade him to wrestle with the famous wrestler, who, as has been before related, had killed so many men. Now, it was this cruel brother's neglect of him which made Orlando say he wished to die, being so friendless.

When, contrary to the wicked hopes he had formed, his brother proved victorious, his envy and malice knew no bounds, and he swore he would burn the chamber where Orlando slept. He was overheard making this vow by one that had been an old and faithful servant to their father, and that loved Orlando because he resembled Sir Rowland. This old man went out to meet him when he returned from the duke's palace, and when he saw Orlando, the peril his dear young master was in made him break out into these passionate exclamations: "O my gentle master, my sweet master, O you memory of old Sir Rowland! why are you virtuous? why are you gentle, strong, and valiant? and why would you be so fond to overcome the famous wrestler? Your praise is come too swiftly home before you." Orlando, wondering what all this meant, asked him what was the matter. And then the old man told him how his wicked brother, envying the love all people bore him, and now hearing the fame he had gained by his victory in the duke's palace, intended to destroy him, by setting fire to his chamber that night; and in conclusion, advised him to escape the danger he was in by instant flight; and knowing Orlando had no money, Adam (for that was the good old man's name) had brought out with him his own little hoard, and he said, "I have five hundred crowns, the thrifty hire I saved under your father, and laid by to be provision for me when my old limbs should become unfit for service; take that, and he that doth the ravens feed be comfort to my age! Here is the gold; all this I give to you: let me be your servant; though I look old I will do the service of a younger man in all your business and necessities." "O good old man!" said

Orlando, "how well appears in you the constant service of the old world! You are not for the fashion of these times. We will go along together, and before your youthful wages are spent, I shall light upon some means for both our maintenance."

Together then this faithful servant and his loved master set out; and Orlando and Adam travelled on, uncertain what course to pursue, till they came to the forest of Arden, and there they found themselves in the same distress for want of food that Ganymede and Aliena had been. They wandered on, seeking some human habitation, till they were almost spent with hunger and fatigue. Adam at last said, "O my dear master, I die for want of food, I can go no farther!" He then laid himself down, thinking to make that place his grave, and bade his dear master farewell. Orlando, seeing him in this weak state, took his old servant up in his arms, and carried him under the shelter of some pleasant trees; and he said to him, "Cheerly, old Adam, rest your weary limbs here awhile, and do not talk of dying!"

Orlando then searched about to find some food, and he happened to arrive at that part of the forest where the duke was; and he and his friends were just going to eat their dinner, this royal duke being seated on the grass, under no other canopy than the shady covert of some large trees.

Orlando, whom hunger had made desperate, drew his sword, intending to take their meat by force, and said, "Forbear and eat no more; I must have your food!" The duke asked him, if distress had made him so bold, or if he were a rude despiser of good manners? On this Orlando said, he was dying with hunger; and then the duke told him he was welcome to sit down and eat with them. Orlando hearing him speak so gently, put up his sword, and blushed with shame at the rude manner in which he had demanded their food. "Pardon me, I pray you," said he: "I thought that all things had been savage here, and therefore I put on the countenance of stern command; but whatever men you are, that in this desert, under the shade of melancholy boughs, lose and neglect the creeping hours of time; if ever you have looked on better days; if ever you have been where bells have knolled to church; if you have ever sat at any good man's feast; if ever from your eyelids you have wiped a tear, and know what it is to pity or be pitied, may gentle speeches now move you to do me human courtesy!" The duke replied, "True it is that we are men (as you say) who have seen better days, and though we have now our habitation in this wild forest, we have lived in towns and cities, and have with holy bell been knolled to church, have sat at good men's feasts, and from our eyes have wiped the drops which sacred pity has engendered; therefore sit you down, and take of our refreshment as much as will minister to your wants." "There is an old poor man," answered Orlando, "who has limped after me many a weary step in pure love, oppressed at once with two sad infirmities, age and hunger; till he be satisfied, I must not touch a bit." "Go, find him out, and bring him hither," said the duke; "we will forbear to eat till you return." Then Orlando went like a doe to find its fawn and give it food; and presently returned, bringing Adam in his arms; and the duke said, "Set down your venerable burthen; you are both welcome:" and they fed the old man, and cheered his heart, and he revived, and recovered his health and strength again.

The duke inquired who Orlando was; and when he found that he was the son of his old friend, Sir Rowland de Boys, he took him under his protection, and Orlando and his old servant lived with the duke in the forest.

Orlando arrived in the forest not many days after Ganymede and Aliena came there, and (as has been before related) bought the shepherd's cottage.

Ganymede and Aliena were strangely surprised to find the name of Rosalind carved on the trees, and love-sonnets, fastened to them, all addressed to Rosalind; and while they were wondering how this could be, they met Orlando, and they perceived the chain which Rosalind had given him about his neck.

Orlando little thought that Ganymede was the fair Princess Rosalind, who, by her noble condescension and favour, had so won his heart that he passed his whole time in carving her name upon the trees, and writing sonnets in praise of her beauty: but being much pleased with the graceful air of this pretty shepherd-youth, he entered into conversation with him, and he thought he saw a likeness in Ganymede to his beloved Rosalind, but that he had none of the dignified deportment of that noble lady; for Ganymede assumed the forward manners often seen in youths when they are between boys and men, and with much archness and humour talked to Orlando of a certain lover, "who," said he, "haunts our forest, and spoils our young trees with carving Rosalind upon their barks; and he hangs odes upon hawthorns, and elegies on brambles, all praising this same Rosalind. If I could find this lover, I would give him some good counsel that would soon cure him of his love."

Orlando confessed that he was the fond lover of whom he spoke, and asked Ganymede to give him the good counsel he talked of. The remedy Ganymede proposed, and the counsel he gave him, was that Orlando should come every day to the cottage where he and his sister Aliena dwelt: "And then," said Ganymede, "I will feign myself to be Rosalind, and you shall feign to court me in the same manner as you would do if I was Rosalind, and then I will imitate the fantastic ways of whimsical ladies to their lovers, till I make you ashamed of your love; and this is the way I propose to cure you." Orlando had no great faith in the remedy, yet he agreed to come every day to Ganymede's cottage, and feign a playful courtship; and every day Orlando visited Ganymede and Aliena, and Orlando called the shepherd Ganymede his Rosalind, and every day talked over all the fine words and flattering compliments which young men delight to use when they court their mistresses. It does not appear, however, that Ganymede made any progress in curing Orlando of his love for Rosalind.

Though Orlando thought all this was but a sportive play (not dreaming that Ganymede was his very Rosalind), yet the opportunity it gave him of saying all the fond things he had in his heart, pleased his fancy almost as well as it did Ganymede's, who enjoyed the secret jest in knowing these fine love-speeches were all addressed to the right person.

In this manner many days passed pleasantly on with these young people; and the good-natured Aliena, seeing it made Ganymede happy, let him have his own way, and was diverted at the mock-courtship, and did not care to remind Ganymede that the Lady Rosalind had not yet made herself known to the duke her father, whose place of resort in the forest they had learnt from Orlando. Ganymede met the duke one day, and had some talk with him, and the duke asked of what parentage he came. Ganymede answered that he came of as good parentage as he did, which made the duke smile, for he did not suspect the pretty shepherd-boy came of royal lineage. Then seeing the duke look well and happy, Ganymede was content to put off all further explanation for a few days longer.

One morning, as Orlando was going to visit Ganymede, he saw a man lying asleep on the ground, and a large green snake had twisted itself about his neck. The snake, seeing Orlando approach, glided away among the bushes. Orlando went nearer, and then he discovered a lioness lie crouching, with her head on the ground, with a cat-like watch, waiting until the sleeping man awaked (for it is said that lions will prey on nothing that is dead or sleeping). It seemed as if Orlando was sent by Providence to free the man from the danger of the snake and lioness; but when Orlando looked in the man's face, he perceived that the sleeper who was exposed to this double peril, was his own brother Oliver, who had so cruelly used him, and had threatened to destroy him by fire; and he was almost tempted to leave him a prey to the hungry lioness; but brotherly affection and the gentleness of his nature soon overcame his first anger against his brother; and he drew his sword, and attacked the lioness, and slew her, and thus preserved his brother's life both from the venomous snake and from the furious lioness; but before Orlando could conquer the lioness, she had torn one of his arms with her sharp claws.

While Orlando was engaged with the lioness, Oliver awaked, and perceiving that his brother Orlando, whom he had so cruelly treated, was saving him from the fury of a wild beast at the risk of his own life, shame and remorse at once seized him, and he repented of his unworthy conduct, and besought with many tears his brother's pardon for the injuries he had done him. Orlando rejoiced to see him so penitent, and readily forgave him: they embraced each other; and from that hour Oliver loved Orlando with a true brotherly affection, though he had come to the forest bent on his destruction.

The wound in Orlando's arm having bled very much, he found himself too weak to go to visit Ganymede, and therefore he desired his brother to go and tell Ganymede, "whom," said Orlando, "I in sport do call my Rosalind," the accident which had befallen him.

Thither then Oliver went, and told to Ganymede and Aliena how Orlando had saved his life: and when he had finished the story of Orlando's bravery, and his own providential escape, he owned to them that he was Orlando's brother, who had so cruelly used him; and then he told them of their reconciliation.

The sincere sorrow that Oliver expressed for his offences made such a lively impression on the kind heart of Aliena, that she instantly fell in love with him;

and Oliver observing how much she pitied the distress he told her he felt for his fault, he as suddenly fell in love with her. But while love was thus stealing into the hearts of Aliena and Oliver, he was no less busy with Ganymede, who hearing of the danger Orlando had been in, and that he was wounded by the lioness, fainted; and when he recovered, he pretended that he had counterfeited the swoon in the imaginary character of Rosalind, and Ganymede said to Oliver, "Tell your brother Orlando how well I counterfeited a swoon." But Oliver saw by the paleness of his complexion that he did really faint, and much wondering at the weakness of the young man, he said, "Well, if you did counterfeit, take a good heart, and counterfeit to be a man." "So I do," replied Ganymede, truly, "but I should have been a woman by right."

Oliver made this visit a very long one, and when at last he returned back to his brother, he had much news to tell him; for besides the account of Ganymede's fainting at the hearing that Orlando was wounded, Oliver told him how he had fallen in love with the fair shepherdess Aliena, and that she had lent a favourable ear to his suit, even in this their first interview; and he talked to his brother, as of a thing almost settled, that he should marry Aliena, saying, that he so well loved her, that he would live here as a shepherd, and settle his estate and house at home upon Orlando.

"You have my consent," said Orlando. "Let your wedding be to-morrow, and I will invite the duke and his friends. Go and persuade your shepherdess to agree to this: she is now alone; for look, here comes her brother." Oliver went to Aliena; and Ganymede, whom Orlando had perceived approaching, came to inquire after the health of his wounded friend.

When Orlando and Ganymede began to talk over the sudden love which had taken place between Oliver and Aliena, Orlando said he had advised his brother to persuade his fair shepherdess to be married on the morrow, and then he added how much he could wish to be married on the same day to his Rosalind.

Ganymede, who well approved of this arrangement, said that if Orlando really loved Rosalind as well as he professed to do, he should have his wish; for on the morrow he would engage to make Rosalind appear in her own person, and also that Rosalind should be willing to marry Orlando.

This seemingly wonderful event, which, as Ganymede was the Lady Rosalind, he could so easily perform, he pretended he would bring to pass by the aid of magic, which he said he had learnt of an uncle who was a famous magician.

The fond lover Orlando, half believing and half doubting what he heard, asked Ganymede if he spoke in sober meaning. "By my life I do," said Ganymede; "therefore put on your best clothes, and bid the duke and your friends to your wedding; for if you desire to be married to-morrow to Rosalind, she shall be here."

The next morning, Oliver having obtained the consent of Aliena, they came into the presence of the duke, and with them also came Orlando.

They being all assembled to celebrate this double marriage, and as yet only one of the brides appearing, there was much of wondering and conjecture, but they mostly thought that Ganymede was making a jest of Orlando.

The duke, hearing that it was his own daughter that was to be brought in this strange way, asked Orlando if he believed the shepherd-boy could really do what he had promised; and while Orlando was answering that he knew not what to think, Ganymede entered, and asked the duke, if he brought his daughter, whether he would consent to her marriage with Orlando. "That I would," said the duke, "if I had kingdoms to give with her." Ganymede then said to Orlando, "And you say you will marry her if I bring her here." "That I would," said Orlando, "if I were king of many kingdoms."

Ganymede and Aliena then went out together, and Ganymede throwing off his male attire, and being once more dressed in woman's apparel, quickly became Rosalind without the power of magic; and Aliena changing her country garb for her own rich clothes, was with as little trouble transformed into the Lady Celia.

While they were gone, the duke said to Orlando, that he thought the shepherd Ganymede very like his daughter Rosalind; and Orlando said, he also had observed the resemblance.

They had no time to wonder how all this would end, for Rosalind and Celia in their own clothes entered; and no longer pretending that it was by the power of magic that she came there, Rosalind threw herself on her knees before her father, and begged his blessing. It seemed so wonderful to all present that she should so suddenly appear, that it might well have passed for magic; but Rosalind would no longer trifle with her father, and told him the story of her banishment, and of her dwelling in the forest as a shepherd-boy, her cousin Celia passing as her sister.

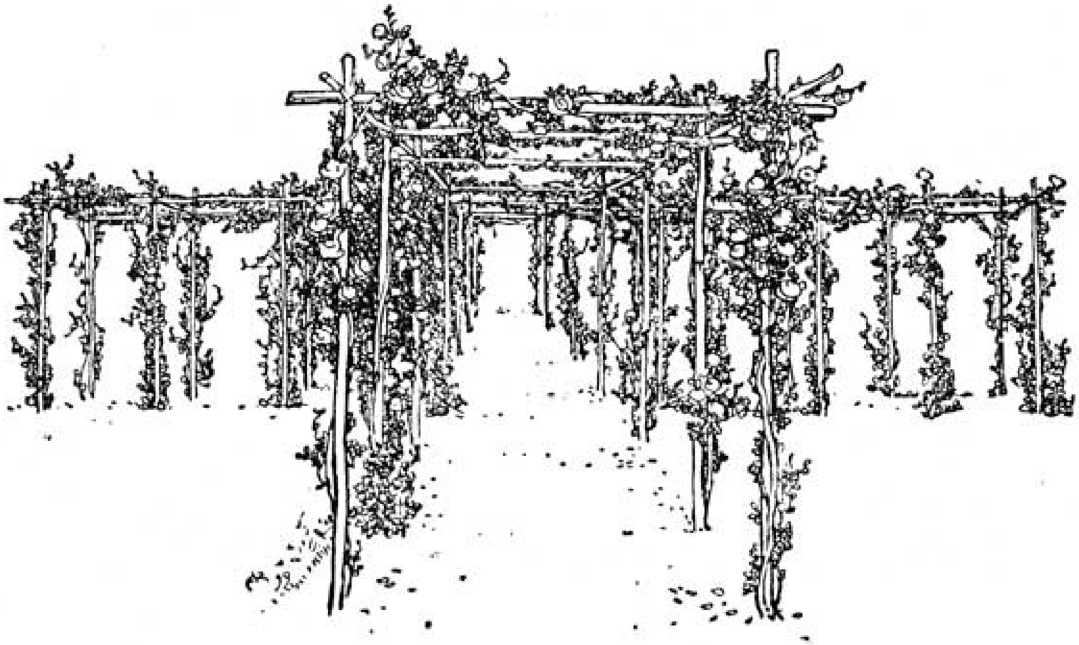
The duke ratified the consent he had already given to the marriage; and Orlando and Rosalind, Oliver and Celia, were married at the same time. And though their wedding could not be celebrated in this wild forest with any of the parade or splendour usual on such occasions, yet a happier wedding-day was never passed: and while they were eating their venison under the cool shade of the pleasant trees, as if nothing should be wanting to complete the felicity of this good duke and the true lovers, an unexpected messenger arrived to tell the duke the joyful news, that his dukedom was restored to him.

The usurper, enraged at the flight of his daughter Celia, and hearing that every day men of great worth resorted to the forest of Arden to join the lawful duke in his exile, much envying that his brother should be so highly respected in his adversity, put himself at the head of a large force, and advanced towards the forest, intending to seize his brother, and put him with all his faithful followers to the sword; but, by a wonderful interposition of Providence, this bad brother was converted from his evil intention; for just as he entered the skirts of the wild forest, he was met by an old religious man, a hermit, with whom he had much talk, and who in the end completely turned his heart from his wicked design. Thenceforward he became a true penitent, and resolved, relinquishing his unjust dominion, to spend the remainder of his days in a religious house. The first act of his newly-conceived penitence was to send a messenger to his brother (as has been related) to offer to restore to him his dukedom, which he had usurped so long, and with it the lands and revenues of his friends, the faithful followers of his adversity.

This joyful news, as unexpected as it was welcome, came opportunely to heighten the festivity and rejoicings at the wedding of the princesses. Celia complimented her cousin on this good fortune which had happened to the duke, Rosalind's father, and wished her joy very sincerely, though she herself was no longer heir to the dukedom, but by this restoration which her father had made, Rosalind was now the heir: so completely was the love of these two cousins unmixed with anything of jealousy or of envy.

The duke had now an opportunity of rewarding those true friends who had stayed with him in his banishment; and these worthy followers, though they had patiently shared his adverse fortune, were very well pleased to return in peace and prosperity to the palace of their lawful duke.

THE TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA



THE
TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA

There lived in the city of Verona two young gentlemen, whose names were Valentine and Proteus, between whom a firm and uninterrupted friendship had long subsisted. They pursued their studies together, and their hours of leisure were always passed in each other's company, except when Proteus visited a lady he was in love with; and these visits to his mistress, and this passion of Proteus for the fair Julia, were the only topics on which these two friends disagreed; for Valentine, not being himself a lover, was sometimes a little weary of hearing his friend for ever talking of his Julia, and then he would laugh at Proteus, and in pleasant terms ridicule the passion of love, and declare that no such idle fancies should ever enter his head, greatly preferring (as he said) the free and happy life he led, to the anxious hopes and fears of the lover Proteus.

One morning Valentine came to Proteus to tell him that they must for a time be separated, for that he was going to Milan. Proteus, unwilling to part with his friend, used many arguments to prevail upon Valentine not to leave him: but Valentine said, "Cease to persuade me, my loving Proteus. I will not, like a sluggard, wear out my youth in idleness at home. Home-keeping youths have ever homely wits. If your affection were not chained to the sweet glances of your honoured Julia, I would entreat you to accompany me, to see the wonders of the world abroad; but since you are a lover, love on still, and may your love be prosperous!"

They parted with mutual expressions of unalterable friendship. "Sweet Valentine, adieu!" said Proteus; "think on me, when you see some rare object worthy of notice in your travels, and wish me partaker of your happiness."

Valentine began his journey that same day towards Milan; and when his friend had left him, Proteus sat down to write a letter to Julia, which he gave to her maid Lucetta to deliver to her mistress.

Julia loved Proteus as well as he did her, but she was a lady of a noble spirit, and she thought it did not become her maiden dignity too easily to be won; therefore she affected to be insensible of his passion, and gave him much uneasiness in the prosecution of his suit.

And when Lucetta offered the letter to Julia, she would not receive it, and chid her maid for taking letters from Proteus, and ordered her to leave the room. But she so much wished to see what was written in the letter, that she soon called in her maid again; and when Lucetta returned, she said, "What o'clock is it?" Lucetta, who knew her mistress more desired to see the letter than to know the time of day, without answering her question, again offered the rejected letter. Julia, angry that her maid should thus take the liberty of seeming to know what she really wanted, tore the letter in pieces, and threw it on the floor, ordering her maid once more out of the room. As Lucetta was retiring, she stopped to pick up the fragments of the torn letter; but Julia, who meant not so to part with them, said, in pretended anger, "Go, get you gone, and let the papers lie; you would be fingering them to anger me."

Julia then began to piece together as well as she could the torn fragments. She first made out these words, "Love-wounded Proteus;" and lamenting over these and such like loving words, which she made out though they were all torn asunder, or, she said *wounded* (the expression "Love-wounded Proteus" giving her that idea), she talked to these kind words, telling them she would lodge them in her bosom as in a bed, till their wounds were healed, and that she would kiss each several piece, to make amends.

In this manner she went on talking with a pretty ladylike childishness, till finding herself unable to make out the whole, and vexed at her own ingratitude in destroying such sweet and loving words, as she called them, she wrote a much kinder letter to Proteus than she had ever done before.

Proteus was greatly delighted at receiving this favourable answer to his letter; and while he was reading it, he exclaimed, "Sweet love, sweet lines, sweet life!" In the midst of his raptures he was interrupted by his father. "How now!" said the old gentleman; "what letter are you reading there?"

"My lord," replied Proteus, "it is a letter from my friend Valentine, at Milan."

"Lend me the letter," said his father: "let me see what news."

"There are no news, my lord," said Proteus, greatly alarmed, "but that he writes how well beloved he is of the Duke of Milan, who daily graces him with favours; and how he wishes me with him, the partner of his fortune."

"And how stand you affected to his wish?" asked the father.

"As one relying on your lordship's will, and not depending on his friendly wish," said Proteus.

Now it had happened that Proteus' father had just been talking with a friend on this very subject: his friend had said, he wondered his lordship suffered his son to spend his youth at home, while most men were sending their sons to seek preferment abroad; "some," said he, "to the wars, to try their fortunes there, and some to discover islands far away, and some to study in foreign universities; and there is his companion Valentine, he is gone to the Duke of Milan's court. Your son is fit for any of these things, and it will be a great disadvantage to him in his riper age not to have travelled in his youth."

Proteus' father thought the advice of his friend was very good, and upon Proteus telling him that Valentine "wished him with him, the partner of his fortune," he at once determined to send his son to Milan; and without giving Proteus any reason for this sudden resolution, it being the usual habit of this positive old gentleman to command his son, not reason with him, he said, "My will is the same as Valentine's wish;" and seeing his son look astonished, he added, "Look not amazed, that I so suddenly resolve you shall spend some time in the Duke of Milan's court; for what I will I will, and there is an end. To-morrow be in readiness to go. Make no excuses; for I am peremptory."

Proteus knew it was of no use to make objections to his father, who never suffered him to dispute his will; and he blamed himself for telling his father an untruth about Julia's letter, which had brought upon him the sad necessity of leaving her.

Now that Julia found she was going to lose Proteus for so long a time, she no longer pretended indifference; and they bade each other a mournful farewell, with many vows of love and constancy. Proteus and Julia exchanged rings, which they both promised to keep for ever in remembrance of each other; and thus, taking a sorrowful leave, Proteus set out on his journey to Milan, the abode of his friend Valentine.

Valentine was in reality what Proteus had feigned to his father, in high favour with the Duke of Milan; and another event had happened to him, of which Proteus did not even dream, for Valentine had given up the freedom of which he used so much to boast, and was become as passionate a lover as Proteus.

She who had wrought this wondrous change in Valentine was the Lady Silvia, daughter of the Duke of Milan, and she also loved him; but they concealed their love from the duke, because although he showed much kindness for Valentine, and invited him every day to his palace, yet he designed to marry his daughter to a young courtier whose name was Thurio. Silvia despised this Thurio, for he had none of the fine sense and excellent qualities of Valentine.

These two rivals, Thurio and Valentine, were one day on a visit to Silvia, and Valentine was entertaining Silvia with turning everything Thurio said into ridicule, when the duke himself entered the room, and told Valentine the welcome news of his friend Proteus' arrival. Valentine said, "If I had wished a thing, it would have been to have seen him here!" And then he highly praised Proteus to the duke, saying, "My lord, though I have been a truant of my time, yet hath my friend made use and fair advantage of his days, and is complete in person and in mind, in all good grace to grace a gentleman."

"Welcome him then according to his worth," said the duke. "Silvia, I speak to you, and you, Sir Thurio; for Valentine, I need not bid him do so." They were here interrupted by the entrance of Proteus, and Valentine introduced him to Silvia, saying, "Sweet lady, entertain him to be my fellow-servant to your ladyship."

When Valentine and Proteus had ended their visit, and were alone together, Valentine said, "Now tell me how all does from whence you came? How does your lady, and how thrives your love?" Proteus replied, "My tales of love used to weary you. I know you joy not in a love discourse."

"Ay, Proteus," returned Valentine, "but that life is altered now. I have done penance for condemning love. For in revenge of my contempt of love, love has chased sleep from my enthralled eyes. O gentle Proteus, Love is a mighty lord, and hath so humbled me, that I confess there is no woe like his correction, nor no such joy on earth as in his service. I now like no discourse except it be of love. Now I can break my fast, dine, sup, and sleep, upon the very name of love."

This acknowledgment of the change which love had made in the disposition of Valentine was a great triumph to his friend Proteus. But "friend" Proteus must be called no longer, for the same all-powerful deity Love, of whom they were speaking (yea, even while they were talking of the change he had made in Valentine), was working in the heart of Proteus; and he, who had till this time been a pattern of true love and perfect friendship, was now, in one short interview with Silvia, become a false friend and a faithless lover; for at the first sight of Silvia all his love for Julia vanished away like a dream, nor did his long friendship for Valentine deter him from endeavouring to supplant him in her affections; and although, as it will always be, when people of dispositions naturally good become unjust, he had many scruples before he determined to forsake Julia, and become the rival of Valentine; yet he at length overcame his sense of duty, and yielded himself up, almost without remorse, to his new unhappy passion.

Valentine imparted to him in confidence the whole history of his love, and how carefully they had concealed it from the duke her father, and told him, that, despairing of ever being able to obtain his consent, he had prevailed upon Silvia to leave her father's palace that night, and go with him to Mantua; then he showed Proteus a ladder of ropes, by help of which he meant to assist Silvia to get out of one of the windows of the palace after it was dark.

Upon hearing this faithful recital of his friend's dearest secrets, it is hardly possible to be believed, but so it was, that Proteus resolved to go to the duke, and disclose the whole to him.

This false friend began his tale with many artful speeches to the duke, such as that by the laws of friendship he ought to conceal what he was going to reveal, but that the gracious favour the duke had shown him, and the duty he owed his grace, urged him to tell that which else no worldly good should draw from him. He then told all he had heard from Valentine, not omitting the ladder of ropes, and the manner in which Valentine meant to conceal them under a long cloak.

The duke thought Proteus quite a miracle of integrity, in that he preferred telling his friend's intention rather than he would conceal an unjust action, highly commended him, and promised him not to let Valentine know from whom he had learnt this intelligence, but by some artifice to make Valentine betray the secret himself. For this purpose the duke awaited the coming of Valentine in the evening, whom he soon saw hurrying towards the palace, and he perceived somewhat was wrapped within his cloak, which he concluded was the rope-ladder.

The duke upon this stopped him, saying, "Whither away so fast, Valentine?"—"May it please your grace," said Valentine, "there is a messenger that stays to bear my letters to my friends, and I am going to deliver them." Now this falsehood of Valentine's had no better success in the event than the untruth Proteus told his father.

"Be they of much import?" said the duke.

"No more, my lord," said Valentine, "than to tell my father I am well and happy at your grace's court."

"Nay then," said the duke, "no matter; stay with me a while. I wish your counsel about some affairs that concern me nearly." He then told Valentine an artful story, as a prelude to draw his secret from him, saying that Valentine knew he wished to match his daughter with Thurio, but that she was stubborn and disobedient to his commands, "neither regarding," said he, "that she is my child, nor fearing me as if I were her father. And I may say to thee, this pride of hers has drawn my love from her. I had thought my age should have been cherished by her childlike duty. I now am resolved to take a wife, and turn her out to whosoever will take her in. Let her beauty be her wedding dower, for me and my possessions she esteems not."

Valentine, wondering where all this would end, made answer, "And what would your grace have me to do in all this?"

"Why," said the duke, "the lady I would wish to marry is nice and coy, and does not much esteem my aged eloquence. Besides, the fashion of courtship is much changed since I was young: now I would willingly have you to be my tutor to instruct me how I am to woo."

Valentine gave him a general idea of the modes of courtship then practised by young men, when they wished to win a fair lady's love, such as presents, frequent visits, and the like.

The duke replied to this, that the lady did refuse a present which he sent her, and that she was so strictly kept by her father, that no man might have access to her by day.

"Why then," said Valentine, "you must visit her by night."

"But at night," said the artful duke, who was now coming to the drift of his discourse, "her doors are fast locked."

Valentine then unfortunately proposed that the duke should get into the lady's chamber at night by means of a ladder of ropes, saying he would procure him one fitting for that purpose; and in conclusion advised him to conceal this ladder of ropes under such a cloak as that which he now wore. "Lend me your cloak," said the duke, who had feigned this long story on purpose to have a pretence to get off the cloak; so upon saying these words, he caught hold of Valentine's cloak, and throwing it back, he discovered not only the ladder of ropes, but also a letter of Silvia's, which he instantly opened and read; and this letter contained a full account of their intended elopement. The duke, after upbraiding Valentine for his ingratitude in thus returning the favour he had shown him, by endeavouring to steal away his daughter, banished him from the court and city of Milan for ever; and Valentine was forced to depart that night, without even seeing Silvia.

While Proteus at Milan was thus injuring Valentine, Julia at Verona was regretting the absence of Proteus; and her regard for him at last so far overcame her sense of propriety, that she resolved to leave Verona, and seek her lover at Milan; and to secure herself from danger on the road, she dressed her maiden Lucetta and herself in men's clothes, and they set out in this disguise, and arrived at Milan soon after Valentine was banished from that city through the treachery of Proteus.

Julia entered Milan about noon, and she took up her abode at an inn; and her thoughts being all on her dear Proteus, she entered into conversation with the innkeeper, or host, as he was called, thinking by that means to learn some news of Proteus.

The host was greatly pleased that this handsome young gentleman (as he took her to be), who from his appearance he concluded was of high rank, spoke so familiarly to him; and being a good-natured man, he was sorry to see him look so melancholy; and to amuse his young guest, he offered to take him to hear some fine music, with which, he said, a gentleman that evening was going to serenade his mistress.

The reason Julia looked so very melancholy was, that she did not well know what Proteus would think of the imprudent step she had taken; for she knew he had loved her for her noble maiden pride and dignity of character, and she feared she should lower herself in his esteem: and this it was that made her wear a sad and thoughtful countenance.

She gladly accepted the offer of the host to go with him, and hear the music; for she secretly hoped she might meet Proteus by the way.

But when she came to the palace whither the host conducted her, a very different effect was produced to what the kind host intended; for there, to her heart's sorrow, she beheld her lover, the inconstant Proteus, serenading the Lady Silvia with music, and addressing discourse of love and admiration to her. And Julia overheard Silvia from a window talk with Proteus, and reproach him for forsaking his own true lady, and for his ingratitude to his friend Valentine; and then Silvia left the window, not choosing to listen to his music and his fine speeches; for she was a faithful lady to her banished Valentine, and abhorred the ungenerous conduct of his false friend Proteus.

Though Julia was in despair at what she had just witnessed, yet did she still love the truant Proteus; and hearing that he had lately parted with a servant, she contrived with the assistance of her host, the friendly innkeeper, to hire herself to Proteus as a page; and Proteus knew not she was Julia, and he sent her with letters and presents to her rival Silvia, and he even sent by her the very ring she gave him as a parting gift at Verona.

When she went to that lady with the ring, she was most glad to find that Silvia utterly rejected the suit of Proteus; and Julia, or the page Sebastian as she was called, entered into conversation with Silvia about Proteus' first love, the forsaken Lady Julia. She putting in (as one may say) a good word for herself, said she knew Julia; as well she might, being herself the Julia of whom she spoke; telling how fondly Julia loved her master Proteus, and how his unkind neglect would grieve her: and then she with a pretty equivocation went on: "Julia is about my height, and of my complexion, the colour of her eyes and hair the same as mine:" and indeed Julia looked a most beautiful youth in her boy's attire. Silvia was moved to pity this lovely lady, who was so sadly forsaken by the man she loved; and when Julia offered the ring which Proteus had sent, refused it, saying, "The more shame for him that he sends me that ring; I will not take it; for I have often heard him say his Julia gave it to him. I love thee, gentle youth, for pitying her, poor lady! Here is a purse; I give it you for Julia's sake." These comfortable words coming from her kind rival's tongue cheered the drooping heart of the disguised lady.

But to return to the banished Valentine; who scarce knew which way to bend his course, being unwilling to return home to his father a disgraced and banished man: as he was wandering over a lonely forest, not far distant from Milan, where he had left his heart's dear treasure, the Lady Silvia, he was set upon by robbers, who demanded his money.

Valentine told them that he was a man crossed by adversity, that he was going into banishment, and that he had no money, the clothes he had on being all his riches.

The robbers, hearing that he was a distressed man, and being struck with his noble air and manly behaviour, told him if he would live with them, and be their chief, or captain, they would put themselves under his command; but that if he refused to accept their offer, they would kill him.

Valentine, who cared little what became of himself, said he would consent to live with them and be their captain, provided they did no outrage on women or poor passengers.

Thus the noble Valentine became, like Robin Hood, of whom we read in ballads, a captain of robbers and outlawed banditti; and in this situation he was found by Silvia, and in this manner it came to pass.

Silvia, to avoid a marriage with Thurio, whom her father insisted upon her no longer refusing, came at last to the resolution of following Valentine to Mantua, at which place she had heard her lover had taken refuge; but in this account she was misinformed, for he still lived in the forest among the robbers, bearing the name of their captain, but taking no part in their depredations, and using the authority which they had imposed upon him in no other way than to compel them to show compassion to the travellers they robbed.

Silvia contrived to effect her escape from her father's palace in company with a worthy old gentleman, whose name was Eglamour, whom she took along with her for protection on the road. She had to pass through the forest where Valentine and the banditti dwelt; and one of these robbers seized on Silvia, and would also have taken Eglamour, but he escaped.

The robber who had taken Silvia, seeing the terror she was in, bid her not be alarmed, for that he was only going to carry her to a cave where his captain lived, and that she need not be afraid, for their captain had an honourable mind, and always showed humanity to women. Silvia found little comfort in hearing she was going to be carried as a prisoner before the captain of a lawless banditti. "O Valentine," she cried, "this I endure for thee!"

But as the robber was conveying her to the cave of his captain, he was stopped by Proteus, who, still attended by Julia in the disguise of a page, having heard of the flight of Silvia, had traced her steps to this forest. Proteus now rescued her from the hands of the robber; but scarce had she time to thank him for the service he had done her, before he began to distress her afresh with his love suit; and while he was rudely pressing her to consent to marry him, and his page (the forlorn Julia) was standing beside him in great anxiety of mind, fearing lest the great service which Proteus had just done to Silvia should win her to show him some favour, they were all strangely surprised with the sudden appearance of Valentine, who, having heard his robbers had taken a lady prisoner, came to console and relieve her.

Proteus was courting Silvia, and he was so much ashamed of being caught by his friend, that he was all at once seized with penitence and remorse; and he expressed such a lively sorrow for the injuries he had done to Valentine, that Valentine, whose nature was noble and generous, even to a romantic degree, not only forgave and restored him to his former place in his friendship, but in a sudden flight of heroism he said, "I freely do forgive you; and all the interest I have in Silvia, I give it up to you." Julia, who was standing beside her master as a page, hearing this strange offer, and fearing Proteus would not be able with this new-found virtue to refuse Silvia, fainted, and they were all employed in recovering her: else would Silvia have been offended at being thus made over to Proteus, though she could scarcely think that Valentine would long persevere in this overstrained and too generous act of friendship. When Julia recovered from the fainting fit, she said, "I had forgot, my master ordered me to deliver this ring to Silvia." Proteus, looking upon the ring, saw that it was the one he gave to Julia, in return for that which he received from her, and which he had sent by the supposed page to Silvia. "How is this?" said he, "this is Julia's ring: how came you by it, boy?" Julia answered, "Julia herself did give it me, and Julia herself hath brought it hither."

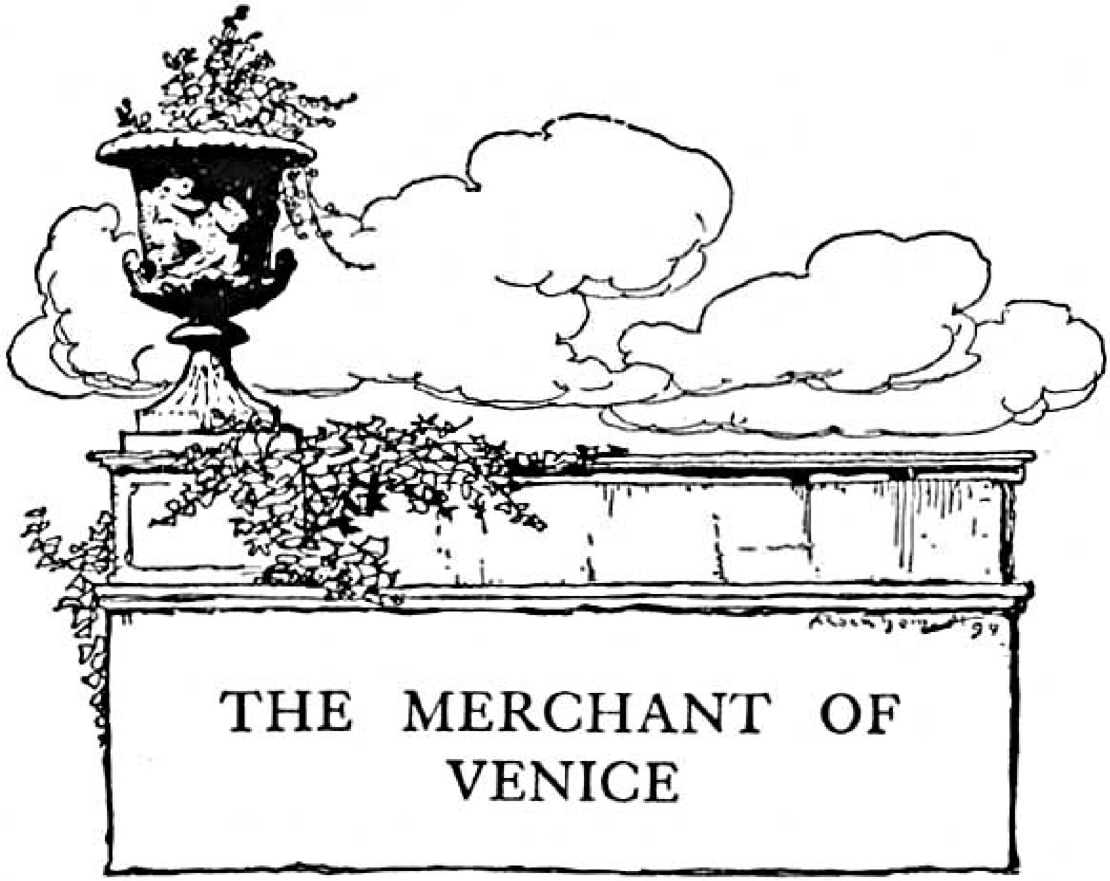
Proteus, now looking earnestly upon her, plainly perceived that the page Sebastian was no other than the Lady Julia herself; and the proof she had given of her constancy and true love so wrought in him, that his love for her returned into his heart, and he took again his own dear lady, and joyfully resigned all pretensions to the Lady Silvia to Valentine, who had so well deserved her.

Proteus and Valentine were expressing their happiness in their reconciliation, and in the love of their faithful ladies when they were surprised with the sight of the Duke of Milan and Thurio, who came there in pursuit of Silvia.

Thurio first approached, and attempted to seize Silvia, saying, "Silvia is mine." Upon this Valentine said to him in a very spirited manner, "Thurio, keep back: if once again you say that Silvia is yours, you shall embrace your death. Here she stands, take but possession of her with a torch! I dare you but to breathe upon my love." Hearing this threat, Thurio, who was a great coward, drew back, and said he cared not for her, and that none but a fool would fight for a girl who loved him not.

The duke, who was a very brave man himself, said now in great anger, "The more base and degenerate in you to take such means for her as you have done, and leave her on such slight conditions." Then turning to Valentine, he said, "I do applaud your spirit, Valentine, and think you worthy of an empress' love. You shall have Silvia, for you have well deserved her." Valentine then with great humility kissed the duke's hand, and accepted the noble present which he had made him of his daughter with becoming thankfulness: taking occasion of this joyful minute to entreat the good-humoured duke to pardon the thieves with whom he had associated in the forest, assuring him, that when reformed and restored to society, there would be found among them many good, and fit for great employment; for the most of them had been banished, like Valentine, for state offences, rather than for any black crimes they had been guilty of. To this the ready duke consented: and now nothing remained but that Proteus, the false friend, was ordained, by way of penance for his love-prompted faults, to be present at the recital of the whole story of his loves and falsehoods before the duke; and the shame of the recital to his awakened conscience was judged sufficient punishment: which being done, the lovers, all four, returned back to Milan, and their nuptials were solemnised in the presence of the duke, with high triumphs and feasting.

THE MERCHANT OF VENICE



Shylock, the Jew, lived at Venice: he was an usurer, who had amassed an immense fortune by lending money at great interest to Christian merchants. Shylock, being a hard-hearted man, exacted the payment of the money he lent with such severity that he was much disliked by all good men, and particularly by Antonio, a young merchant of Venice; and Shylock as much hated Antonio, because he used to lend money to people in distress, and would never take any interest for the money he lent; therefore there was great enmity between this covetous Jew and the generous merchant Antonio. Whenever Antonio met Shylock on the Rialto (or Exchange), he used to reproach him with his usuries and hard dealings, which the Jew would bear with seeming patience, while he secretly meditated revenge.

Antonio was the kindest man that lived, the best conditioned, and had the most unwearied spirit in doing courtesies; indeed, he was one in whom the ancient Roman honour more appeared than in any that drew breath in Italy. He was greatly beloved by all his fellow-citizens; but the friend who was nearest and dearest to his heart was Bassanio, a noble Venetian, who, having but a small patrimony, had nearly exhausted his little fortune by living in too expensive a manner for his slender means, as young men of high rank with small fortunes are too apt to do. Whenever Bassanio wanted money, Antonio assisted him; and it seemed as if they had but one heart and one purse between them.

One day Bassanio came to Antonio, and told him that he wished to repair his fortune by a wealthy marriage with a lady whom he dearly loved, whose father, that was lately dead, had left her sole heiress to a large estate; and that in her father's lifetime he used to visit at her house, when he thought he had observed this lady had sometimes from her eyes sent speechless messages, that seemed to say he would be no unwelcome suitor; but not having money to furnish himself with an appearance befitting the lover of so rich an heiress, he besought Antonio to add to the many favours he had shown him, by lending him three thousand ducats.

Antonio had no money by him at that time to lend his friend; but expecting soon to have some ships come home laden with merchandise, he said he would go to Shylock, the rich money-lender, and borrow the money upon the credit of those ships.

Antonio and Bassanio went together to Shylock, and Antonio asked the Jew to lend him three thousand ducats upon any interest he should require, to be paid out of the merchandise contained in his ships at sea. On this, Shylock thought within himself, "If I can once catch him on the hip, I will feed fat the ancient grudge I bear him; he hates our Jewish nation; he lends out money gratis, and among the merchants he rails at me and my well-earned bargains, which he calls interest. Cursed be my tribe if I forgive him!" Antonio finding he was musing within himself and did not answer, and being impatient for the money, said, "Shylock, do you hear? will you lend the money?" To this question the Jew replied, "Signior Antonio, on the Rialto many a time and often you have railed at me about my monies and my usuries, and I have borne it with a patient shrug, for sufferance is the badge of all our tribe; and then you have called me unbeliever, cut-throat dog, and spit upon my Jewish garments, and spurned at me with your foot, as if I was a cur. Well then, it now appears you need my help; and you come to me, and say, *Shylock, lend me monies* . Has a dog money? Is it possible a cur should lend three thousand ducats? Shall I bend low and say, Fair sir, you spit upon me on Wednesday last, another time you called me dog, and for these courtesies I am to lend you monies." Antonio replied, "I am as like to call you so again, to spit on you again, and spurn you too. If you will lend me this money, lend it not to me as to a friend, but rather lend it to me as to an enemy, that, if I break, you may with better face exact the penalty."—"Why, look you," said Shylock, "how you storm! I would be friends with you, and have your love. I will forget the shames you have put upon me. I will supply your wants, and take no interest for my money." This seemingly kind offer greatly surprised Antonio; and then Shylock, still pretending kindness, and that all he did was to gain Antonio's love, again said he would lend him the three thousand ducats, and take no interest for his money; only Antonio should go with him to a lawyer, and there sign in merry sport a bond, that if he did not repay the money by a certain day, he would forfeit a pound of flesh, to be cut off from any part of his body that Shylock pleased.

"Content," said Antonio: "I will sign to this bond, and say there is much kindness in the Jew."

Bassanio said Antonio should not sign to such a bond for him; but still Antonio insisted that he would sign it, for that before the day of payment came, his ships would return laden with many times the value of the money.

Shylock, hearing this debate, exclaimed, "O, father Abraham, what suspicious people these Christians are! Their own hard dealings teach them to suspect the thoughts of others. I pray you tell me this, Bassanio: if he should break his day, what should I gain by the exaction of the forfeiture? A pound of man's flesh, taken from a man, is not so estimable, nor profitable neither, as the flesh of mutton or beef. I say, to buy his favour I offer this friendship: if he will take it, so; if not, adieu."

At last, against the advice of Bassanio, who, notwithstanding all the Jew had said of his kind intentions, did not like his friend should run the hazard of this shocking penalty for his sake, Antonio signed the bond, thinking it really was (as the Jew said) merely in sport.

The rich heiress that Bassanio wished to marry lived near Venice, at a place called Belmont: her name was Portia, and in the graces of her person and her mind she was nothing inferior to that Portia, of whom we read, who was Cato's daughter, and the wife of Brutus.

Bassanio being so kindly supplied with money by his friend Antonio, at the hazard of his life, set out for Belmont with a splendid train, and attended by a gentleman of the name of Gratiano.

Bassanio proving successful in his suit, Portia in a short time consented to accept of him for a husband.

Bassanio confessed to Portia that he had no fortune, and that his high birth and noble ancestry was all that he could boast of; she, who loved him for his worthy qualities, and had riches enough not to regard wealth in a husband, answered with a graceful modesty, that she would wish herself a thousand times more fair, and ten thousand times more rich, to be more worthy of him; and then the accomplished Portia prettily dispraised herself, and said she was an unlessoned girl, unschooled, unpractised, yet not so old but that she could learn, and that she would commit her gentle spirit to be directed and governed by him in all things; and she said, "Myself and what is mine, to you and yours is now converted. But yesterday, Bassanio, I was the lady of this fair mansion, queen of myself, and mistress over these servants; and now this house, these servants, and myself, are yours, my lord; I give them with this ring;" presenting a ring to Bassanio.

Bassanio was so overpowered with gratitude and wonder at the gracious manner in which the rich and noble Portia accepted of a man of his humble fortunes, that he could not express his joy and reverence to the dear lady who so honoured him, by anything but broken words of love and thankfulness; and taking the ring, he vowed never to part with it.

Gratiano and Nerissa, Portia's waiting-maid, were in attendance upon their lord and lady, when Portia so gracefully promised to become the obedient wife of Bassanio; and Gratiano, wishing Bassanio and the generous lady joy, desired permission to be married at the same time.

"With all my heart, Gratiano," said Bassanio, "if you can get a wife."

Gratiano then said that he loved the Lady Portia's fair waiting gentlewoman Nerissa, and that she had promised to be his wife, if her lady married Bassanio. Portia asked Nerissa if this was true. Nerissa replied, "Madam, it is so, if you approve of it." Portia willingly consenting, Bassanio pleasantly said, "Then our wedding-feast shall be much honoured by your marriage, Gratiano."

The happiness of these lovers was sadly crossed at this moment by the entrance of a messenger, who brought a letter from Antonio containing fearful tidings. When Bassanio read Antonio's letter, Portia feared it was to tell him of the death of some dear friend, he looked so pale; and inquiring what was the news which had so distressed him, he said, "O sweet Portia, here are a few of the unpleasantest words that ever blotted paper; gentle lady, when I first imparted my love to you, I freely told you all the wealth I had ran in my veins; but I should have told you that I had less than nothing, being in debt." Bassanio then told Portia what has been here related, of his borrowing the money of Antonio, and of Antonio's procuring it of Shylock the Jew, and of the bond by which Antonio had engaged to forfeit a pound of flesh, if it was not repaid by a certain day: and then Bassanio read Antonio's letter; the words of which were, "*Sweet Bassanio, my ships are all lost, my bond to the Jew is forfeited, and since in paying it is impossible I should live, I could wish to see you at my death; notwithstanding, use your pleasure; if your love for me do not persuade you to come, let not my letter.* " "O, my dear love," said Portia, "despatch all business, and begone; you shall have gold to pay the money twenty times over, before this kind friend shall lose a hair by my Bassanio's fault; and as you are so dearly bought, I will dearly love you." Portia then said she would be married to Bassanio before he set out, to give him a legal right to her money; and that same day they were married, and Gratiano was also married to Nerissa; and Bassanio and Gratiano, the instant they were married, set out in great haste for Venice, where Bassanio found Antonio in prison.

The day of payment being past, the cruel Jew would not accept of the money which Bassanio offered him, but insisted upon having a pound of Antonio's flesh. A day was appointed to try this shocking cause before the Duke of Venice, and Bassanio awaited in dreadful suspense the event of the trial.

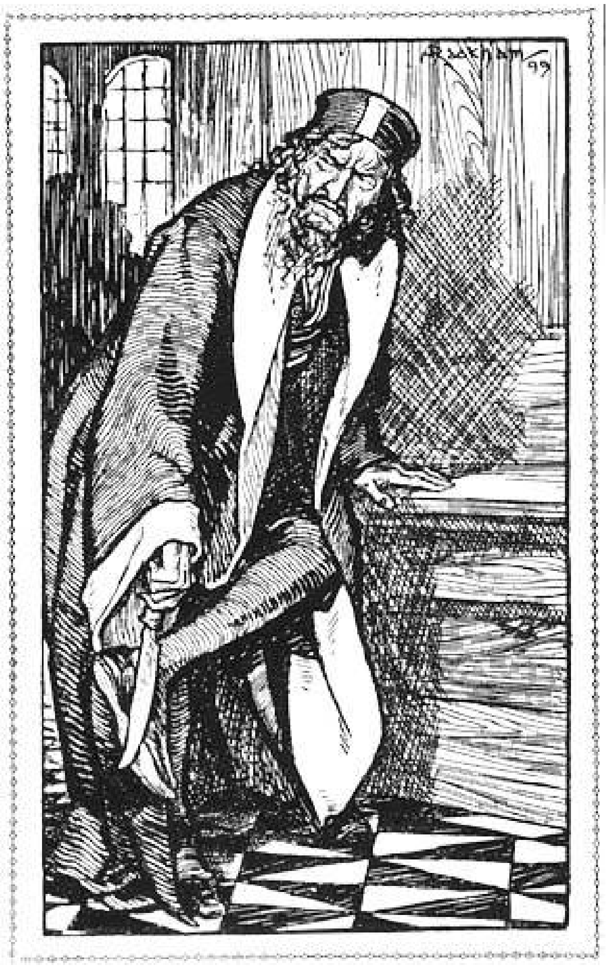
When Portia parted with her husband, she spoke cheeringly to him, and bade him bring his dear friend along with him when he returned; yet she feared it would go hard with Antonio, and when she was left alone, she began to think and consider within herself, if she could by any means be instrumental in saving the life of her dear Bassanio's friend; and notwithstanding when she wished to honour her Bassanio, she had said to him with such a meek and wife-like grace, that she would submit in all things to be governed by his superior wisdom, yet being now called forth into action by the peril of her honoured husband's friend, she did nothing doubt her own powers, and by the sole guidance of her own true and perfect judgment, at once resolved to go herself to Venice, and speak in Antonio's defence.

Portia had a relation who was a counsellor in the law; to this gentleman, whose name was Bellario, she wrote, and stating the case to him, desired his opinion, and that with his advice he would also send her the dress worn by a counsellor. When the messenger returned, he brought letters from Bellario of advice how to proceed, and also everything necessary for her equipment.

Portia dressed herself and her maid Nerissa in men's apparel, and putting on the robes of a counsellor, she took Nerissa along with her as her clerk; and setting out immediately, they arrived at Venice on the very day of the trial. The cause was just going to be heard before the duke and senators of Venice in the senate-house, when Portia entered this high court of justice, and presented a letter from Bellario, in which that learned counsellor wrote to the duke, saying, he would have come himself to plead for Antonio, but that he was prevented by sickness, and he requested that the learned young doctor Balthasar (so he called Portia) might be permitted to plead in his stead. This the duke granted, much wondering at the youthful appearance of the stranger, who was prettily disguised by her counsellor's robes and her large wig.

And now began this important trial. Portia looked around her, and she saw the merciless Jew; and she saw Bassanio, but he knew her not in her disguise. He was standing beside Antonio, in an agony of distress and fear for his friend.

The importance of the arduous task Portia had engaged in gave this tender lady courage, and she boldly proceeded in the duty she had undertaken to perform: and first of all she addressed herself to Shylock; and allowing that he had a right by the Venetian law to have the forfeit expressed in the bond, she spoke so sweetly of the noble quality of *mercy* , as would have softened any heart but the unfeeling Shylock's; saying, that it dropped as the gentle rain from heaven upon the place beneath; and how mercy was a double blessing, it blessed him that gave, and him that received it; and how it became monarchs better than their crowns, being an attribute of God himself; and that earthly power came nearest to God's, in proportion as mercy tempered justice; and she bid Shylock remember that as we all pray for mercy, that same prayer should teach us to show mercy. Shylock only answered her by desiring to have the penalty forfeited in the bond. "Is he not able to pay the money?" asked Portia. Bassanio then offered the Jew the payment of the three thousand ducats as many times over as he should desire; which Shylock refusing, and still insisting upon having a pound of Antonio's flesh, Bassanio begged the learned young counsellor would endeavour to wrest the law a little, to save Antonio's life. But Portia gravely answered, that laws once established must never be altered. Shylock hearing Portia say that the law might not be altered, it seemed to him that she was pleading in his favour, and he said, "A Daniel is come to judgment! O wise young judge, how I do honour you! How much elder are you than your looks!"



SHYLOCK WAS SHARPENING A LONG KNIFE

Portia now desired Shylock to let her look at the bond; and when she had read it, she said, "This bond is forfeited, and by this the Jew may lawfully claim a pound of flesh, to be by him cut off nearest Antonio's heart." Then she said to Shylock, "Be merciful: take the money, and bid me tear the bond." But no mercy would the cruel Shylock show; and he said, "By my soul I swear, there is no power in the tongue of man to alter me."—"Why then, Antonio," said Portia, "you must prepare your bosom for the knife:" and while Shylock was sharpening a long knife with great eagerness to cut off the pound of flesh, Portia said to Antonio, "Have you anything to say?" Antonio with a calm resignation replied, that he had but little to say, for that he had prepared his mind for death. Then he said to Bassanio, "Give me your hand, Bassanio! Fare you well! Grieve not that I am fallen into this misfortune for you. Commend me to your honourable wife, and tell her how I have loved you!" Bassanio in the deepest affliction replied, "Antonio, I am married to a wife, who is as dear to me as life itself; but life itself, my wife, and all the world, are not esteemed with me above your life: I would lose all, I would sacrifice all to this devil here, to deliver you."

Portia hearing this, though the kind-hearted lady was not at all offended with her husband for expressing the love he owed to so true a friend as Antonio in these strong terms, yet could not help answering, "Your wife would give you little thanks, if she were present, to hear you make this offer." And then Gratiano, who loved to copy what his lord did, thought he must make a speech like Bassanio's, and he said, in Nerissa's hearing, who was writing in her clerk's dress by the side of Portia, "I have a wife, whom I protest I love; I wish she were in heaven, if she could but entreat some power there to change the cruel temper of this currish Jew." "It is well you wish this behind her back, else you would have but an unquiet house," said Nerissa.

Shylock now cried out impatiently, "We trifle time; I pray pronounce the sentence." And now all was awful expectation in the court, and every heart was full of grief for Antonio.

Portia asked if the scales were ready to weigh the flesh; and she said to the Jew, "Shylock, you must have some surgeon by, lest he bleed to death." Shylock, whose whole intent was that Antonio should bleed to death, said, "It is not so named in the bond." Portia replied, "It is not so named in the bond, but what of that? It were good you did so much for charity." To this all the answer Shylock would make was, "I cannot find it; it is not in the bond." "Then," said Portia, "a pound of Antonio's flesh is thine. The law allows it, and the court awards it. And you may cut this flesh from on his breast. The law allows it and the court awards it." Again Shylock exclaimed, "O wise and upright judge! A Daniel is come to judgment!" And then he sharpened his long knife again, and looking eagerly on Antonio, he said, "Come, prepare!"

"Tarry a little, Jew," said Portia; "there is something else. This bond here gives you no drop of blood; the words expressly are, 'a pound of flesh.' If in the cutting off the pound of flesh you shed one drop of Christian blood, your lands and goods are by the law to be confiscated to the state of Venice." Now as it was utterly impossible for Shylock to cut off the pound of flesh without shedding some of Antonio's blood, this wise discovery of Portia's, that it was flesh and not blood that was named in the bond, saved the life of Antonio; and all admiring the wonderful sagacity of the young counsellor, who had so happily thought of this expedient, plaudits resounded from every part of the senate-house; and Gratiano exclaimed, in the words which Shylock had used, "O wise and upright judge! mark, Jew, a Daniel is come to judgment!"

Shylock, finding himself defeated in his cruel intent, said with a disappointed look, that he would take the money; and Bassanio, rejoiced beyond measure at Antonio's unexpected deliverance, cried out, "Here is the money!" But Portia stopped him, saying, "Softly; there is no haste; the Jew shall have nothing but the penalty: therefore prepare, Shylock, to cut off the flesh; but mind you shed no blood: nor do not cut off more nor less than just a pound; be it more or less by one poor scruple, nay if the scale turn but by the weight of a single hair, you are condemned by the laws of Venice to die, and all your wealth is forfeited to the senate." "Give me my money, and let me go," said Shylock. "I have it ready," said Bassanio: "here it is."

Shylock was going to take the money, when Portia again stopped him, saying, "Tarry, Jew; I have yet another hold upon you. By the laws of Venice, your wealth is forfeited to the state, for having conspired against the life of one of its citizens, and your life lies at the mercy of the duke; therefore, down on your knees, and ask him to pardon you."

The duke then said to Shylock, "That you may see the difference of our Christian spirit, I pardon you your life before you ask it; half your wealth belongs to Antonio, the other half comes to the state."

The generous Antonio then said that he would give up his share of Shylock's wealth, if Shylock would sign a deed to make it over at his death to his daughter and her husband; for Antonio knew that the Jew had an only daughter who had lately married against his consent to a young Christian, named Lorenzo, a friend of Antonio's, which had so offended Shylock, that he had disinherited her.

The Jew agreed to this: and being thus disappointed in his revenge, and despoiled of his riches, he said, "I am ill. Let me go home; send the deed after me, and I will sign over half my riches to my daughter."—"Get thee gone, then," said the duke, "and sign it; and if you repent your cruelty and turn Christian, the state will forgive you the fine of the other half of your riches."

The duke now released Antonio, and dismissed the court. He then highly praised the wisdom and ingenuity of the young counsellor, and invited him home to dinner. Portia, who meant to return to Belmont before her husband, replied, "I humbly thank your grace, but I must away directly." The duke said he was sorry he had not leisure to stay and dine with him; and turning to Antonio, he added, "Reward this gentleman; for in my mind you are much indebted to him."

The duke and his senators left the court; and then Bassanio said to Portia, "Most worthy gentleman, I and my friend Antonio have by your wisdom been this day acquitted of grievous penalties, and I beg you will accept of the three thousand ducats due unto the Jew." "And we shall stand indebted to you over and above," said Antonio, "in love and service evermore."

Portia could not be prevailed upon to accept the money; but upon Bassanio still pressing her to accept of some reward, she said, "Give me your gloves; I will wear them for your sake;" and then Bassanio taking off his gloves, she espied the ring which she had given him upon his finger: now it was the ring the wily lady wanted to get from him to make a merry jest when she saw her Bassanio again, that made her ask him for his gloves; and she said, when she saw the ring, "and for your love I will take this ring from you." Bassanio was sadly distressed that the counsellor should ask him for the only thing he could not part with, and he replied in great confusion, that he could not give him that ring, because it was his wife's gift, and he had vowed never to part with it; but that he would give him the most valuable ring in Venice, and find it out by proclamation. On this

Portia affected to be affronted, and left the court, saying, "You teach me, sir, how a beggar should be answered."

"Dear Bassanio," said Antonio, "let him have the ring; let my love and the great service he has done for me be valued against your wife's displeasure." Bassanio, ashamed to appear so ungrateful, yielded, and sent Gratiano after Portia with the ring; and then the *clerk* Nerissa, who had also given Gratiano a ring, she begged his ring, and Gratiano (not choosing to be outdone in generosity by his lord) gave it to her. And there was laughing among these ladies to think, when they got home, how they would tax their husbands with giving away their rings, and swear that they had given them as a present to some woman.

Portia, when she returned, was in that happy temper of mind which never fails to attend the consciousness of having performed a good action; her cheerful spirits enjoyed everything she saw: the moon never seemed to shine so bright before; and when that pleasant moon was hid behind a cloud, then a light which she saw from her house at Belmont as well pleased her charmed fancy, and she said to Nerissa, "That light we see is burning in my hall; how far that little candle throws its beams, so shines a good deed in a naughty world;" and hearing the sound of music from her house, she said, "Methinks that music sounds much sweeter than by day."

And now Portia and Nerissa entered the house, and dressing themselves in their own apparel, they awaited the arrival of their husbands, who soon followed them with Antonio; and Bassanio presenting his dear friend to the Lady Portia, the congratulations and welcomings of that lady were hardly over, when they perceived Nerissa and her husband quarrelling in a corner of the room. "A quarrel already?" said Portia. "What is the matter?" Gratiano replied, "Lady, it is about a paltry gilt ring that Nerissa gave me, with words upon it like the poetry on a cutler's knife; *Love me, and leave me not.* "

"What does the poetry or the value of the ring signify?" said Nerissa. "You swore to me when I gave it to you, that you would keep it till the hour of death; and now you say you gave it to the lawyer's clerk. I know you gave it to a woman."—"By this hand," replied Gratiano, "I gave it to a youth, a kind of boy, a little scrubbed boy, no higher than yourself; he was clerk to the young counsellor that by his wise pleading saved Antonio's life: this prating boy begged it for a fee, and I could not for my life deny him." Portia said, "You were to blame, Gratiano, to part with your wife's first gift. I gave my lord Bassanio a ring, and I am sure he would not part with it for all the world." Gratiano, in excuse for his fault, now said, "My lord Bassanio gave his ring away to the counsellor, and then the boy, his clerk, that took some pains in writing, he begged my ring."

Portia, hearing this, seemed very angry, and reproached Bassanio for giving away her ring; and she said, Nerissa had taught her what to believe, and that she knew some woman had the ring. Bassanio was very unhappy to have so offended his dear lady, and he said with great earnestness, "No, by my honour, no woman had it, but a civil doctor, who refused three thousand ducats of me, and begged the ring, which when I denied him, he went displeased away. What could I do, sweet Portia? I was so beset with shame for my seeming ingratitude, that I was forced to send the ring after him. Pardon me, good lady; had you been there, I think you would have begged the ring of me to give the worthy doctor."

"Ah!" said Antonio, "I am the unhappy cause of these quarrels."

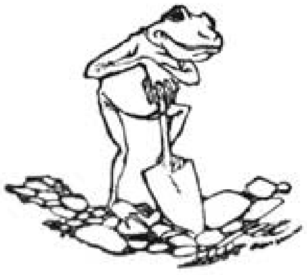
Portia bid Antonio not to grieve at that, for that he was welcome notwithstanding; and then Antonio said, "I once did lend my body for Bassanio's sake; and but for him to whom your husband gave the ring, I should have now been dead. I dare be bound again, my soul upon the forfeit, your lord will never more break his faith with you."—"Then you shall be his surety," said Portia; "give him this ring, and bid him keep it better than the other."

When Bassanio looked at this ring, he was strangely surprised to find it was the same he gave away; and then Portia told him how she was the young counsellor, and Nerissa was her clerk; and Bassanio found, to his unspeakable wonder and delight, that it was by the noble courage and wisdom of his wife that Antonio's life was saved.

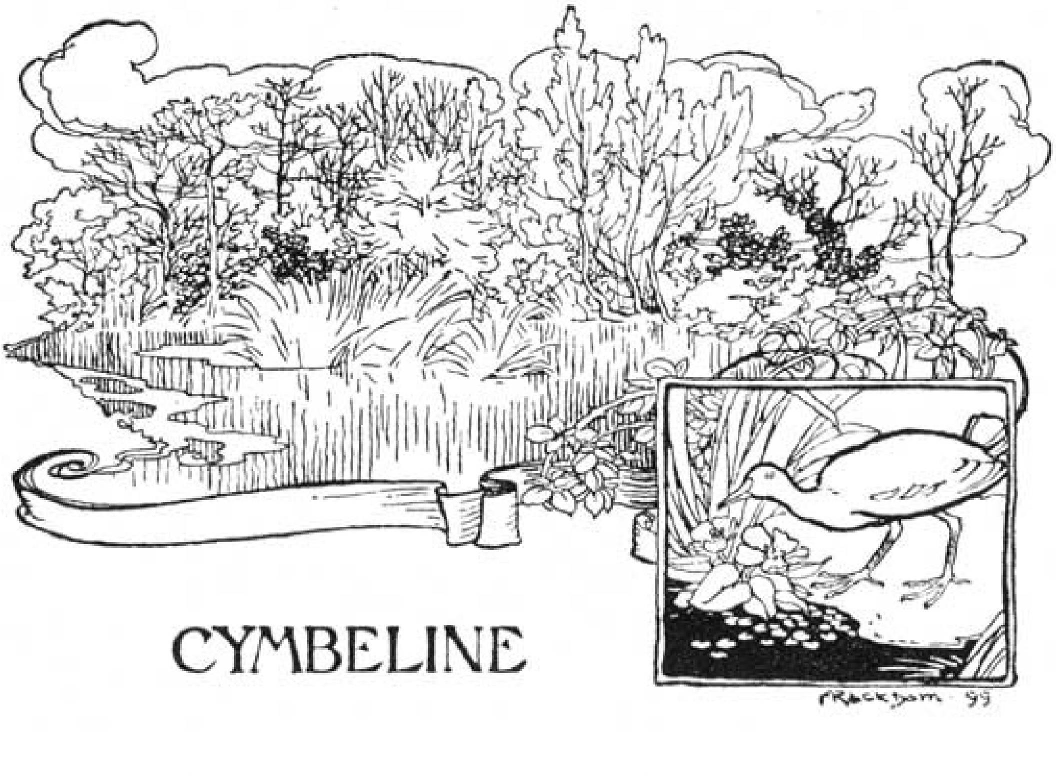
And Portia again welcomed Antonio, and gave him letters which by some chance had fallen into her hands, which contained an account of Antonio's ships, that were supposed lost, being safely arrived in the harbour. So these tragical beginnings of this rich merchant's story were all forgotten in the unexpected good fortune which ensued; and there was leisure to laugh at the comical adventure of the rings, and the husbands that did not know their own wives: Gratiano merrily swearing, in a sort of rhyming speech, that

——while he lived, he'd fear no other thing

So sore, as keeping safe Nerissa's ring.

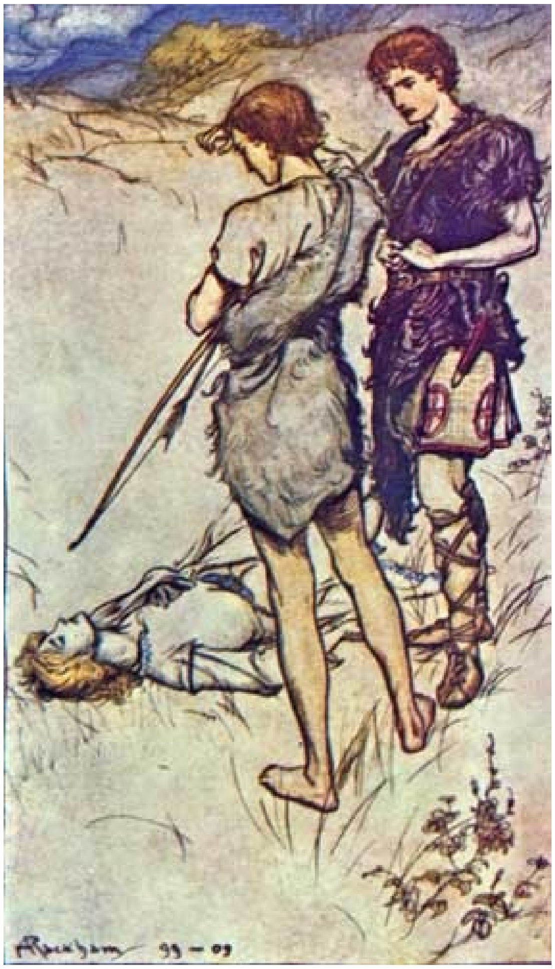


CYMBELINE


CYMBELINE
A Rackham 99

During the time of Augustus Cæsar, Emperor of Rome, there reigned in England (which was then called Britain) a king whose name was Cymbeline.

Cymbeline's first wife died when his three children (two sons and a daughter) were very young. Imogen, the eldest of these children, was brought up in her father's court; but by a strange chance the two sons of Cymbeline were stolen out of their nursery, when the eldest was but three years of age, and the youngest quite an infant; and Cymbeline could never discover what was become of them, or by whom they were conveyed away.



IMOGEN'S TWO BROTHERS THEN CARRIED HER TO A SHADY COVERT

Cymbeline was twice married: his second wife was a wicked, plotting woman, and a cruel stepmother to Imogen, Cymbeline's daughter by his first wife.

The queen, though she hated Imogen, yet wished her to marry a son of her own by a former husband (she also having been twice married): for by this means she hoped upon the death of Cymbeline to place the crown of Britain upon the head of her son Cloten; for she knew that, if the king's sons were not found, the Princess Imogen must be the king's heir. But this design was prevented by Imogen herself, who married without the consent or even knowledge of her father or the queen.

Posthumus (for that was the name of Imogen's husband) was the best scholar and most accomplished gentleman of that age. His father died fighting in the wars for Cymbeline, and soon after his birth his mother died also for grief at the loss of her husband.

Cymbeline, pitying the helpless state of this orphan, took Posthumus (Cymbeline having given him that name, because he was born after his father's death), and educated him in his own court.

Imogen and Posthumus were both taught by the same masters, and were playfellows from their infancy; they loved each other tenderly when they were children, and their affection continuing to increase with their years, when they grew up they privately married.

The disappointed queen soon learnt this secret, for she kept spies constantly in watch upon the actions of her daughter-in-law, and she immediately told the king of the marriage of Imogen with Posthumus.

Nothing could exceed the wrath of Cymbeline, when he heard that his daughter had been so forgetful of her high dignity as to marry a subject. He commanded Posthumus to leave Britain, and banished him from his native country for ever.

The queen, who pretended to pity Imogen for the grief she suffered at losing her husband, offered to procure them a private meeting before Posthumus set out on his journey to Rome, which place he had chosen for his residence in his banishment: this seeming kindness she showed, the better to succeed in her future designs in regard to her son Cloten; for she meant to persuade Imogen, when her husband was gone, that her marriage was not lawful, being contracted without the consent of the king.

Imogen and Posthumus took a most affectionate leave of each other. Imogen gave her husband a diamond ring, which had been her mother's, and Posthumus promised never to part with the ring; and he fastened a bracelet on the arm of his wife, which he begged she would preserve with great care, as a token of his love; they then bid each other farewell, with many vows of everlasting love and fidelity.

Imogen remained a solitary and dejected lady in her father's court, and Posthumus arrived at Rome, the place he had chosen for his banishment.

Posthumus fell into company at Rome with some gay young men of different nations, who were talking freely of ladies: each one praising the ladies of his own country, and his own mistress. Posthumus, who had ever his own dear lady in his mind, affirmed that his wife, the fair Imogen, was the most virtuous, wise and constant lady in the world.

One of those gentlemen, whose name was Iachimo, being offended that a lady of Britain should be so praised above the Roman ladies, his country-women, provoked Posthumus by seeming to doubt the constancy of his so highly-praised wife; and at length, after much altercation, Posthumus consented to a proposal of Iachimo's, that he (Iachimo) should go to Britain, and endeavour to gain the love of the married Imogen. They then laid a wager, that if Iachimo did not succeed in this wicked design, he was to forfeit a large sum of money; but if he could win Imogen's favour, and prevail upon her to give him the bracelet which Posthumus had so earnestly desired she would keep as a token of his love, then the wager was to terminate with Posthumus giving to Iachimo the ring, which was Imogen's love present when she parted with her husband. Such firm faith had Posthumus in the fidelity of Imogen, that he thought he ran no hazard in this trial of her honour.

Iachimo, on his arrival in Britain, gained admittance, and a courteous welcome from Imogen, as a friend of her husband; but when he began to make professions of love to her, she repulsed him with disdain, and he soon found that he could have no hope of succeeding in his dishonourable design.

The desire Iachimo had to win the wager made him now have recourse to a stratagem to impose upon Posthumus, and for this purpose he bribed some of Imogen's attendants, and was by them conveyed into her bedchamber, concealed in a large trunk, where he remained shut up till Imogen was retired to rest, and had fallen asleep; and then getting out of the trunk, he examined the chamber with great attention, and wrote down everything he saw there, and particularly noticed a mole which he observed upon Imogen's neck, and then softly unloosing the bracelet from her arm, which Posthumus had given to her, he retired into the chest again; and the next day he set on for Rome with great expedition, and boasted to Posthumus that Imogen had given him the bracelet, and likewise permitted him to pass a night in her chamber: and in this manner Iachimo told his false tale: "Her bedchamber," said he, "was hung with tapestry of silk and silver, the story was *the proud Cleopatra when she met her Anthony* , a piece of work most bravely wrought."

"This is true," said Posthumus; "but this you might have heard spoken of without seeing."

"Then the chimney," said Iachimo, "is south of the chamber, and the chimney-piece is *Diana bathing* ; never saw I figures livelier expressed."

"This is a thing you might have likewise heard," said Posthumus; "for it is much talked of."

Iachimo as accurately described the roof of the chamber; and added, "I had almost forgot her andirons; they were *two winking Cupids* made of silver, each on one foot standing." He then took out the bracelet, and said, "Know you this jewel, sir? She gave me this. She took it from her arm. I see her yet; her pretty action did outsell her gift, and yet enriched it too. She gave it me, and said, *she prized it once.* " He last of all described the mole he had observed upon her neck.

Posthumus, who had heard the whole of this artful recital in an agony of doubt, now broke out into the most passionate exclamations against Imogen. He delivered up the diamond ring to Iachimo, which he had agreed to forfeit to him, if he obtained the bracelet from Imogen.

Posthumus then in a jealous rage wrote to Pisanio, a gentleman of Britain, who was one of Imogen's attendants, and had long been a faithful friend to

Posthumus; and after telling him what proof he had of his wife's disloyalty, he desired Pisanio would take Imogen to Milford-Haven, a seaport of Wales, and there kill her. And at the same time he wrote a deceitful letter to Imogen, desiring her to go with Pisanio, for that finding he could live no longer without seeing her, though he was forbidden upon pain of death to return to Britain, he would come to Milford-Haven, at which place he begged she would meet him. She, good unsuspecting lady, who loved her husband above all things, and desired more than her life to see him, hastened her departure with Pisanio, and the same night she received the letter she set out.

When their journey was nearly at an end, Pisanio, who, though faithful to Posthumus, was not faithful to serve him in an evil deed, disclosed to Imogen the cruel order he had received.

Imogen, who, instead of meeting a loving and beloved husband, found herself doomed by that husband to suffer death, was afflicted beyond measure.

Pisanio persuaded her to take comfort, and wait with patient fortitude for the time when Posthumus should see and repent his injustice: in the meantime, as she refused in her distress to return to her father's court, he advised her to dress herself in boy's clothes for more security in travelling; to which advice she agreed, and thought in that disguise she would go over to Rome, and see her husband, whom, though he had used her so barbarously, she could not forget to love.

When Pisanio had provided her with her new apparel, he left her to her uncertain fortune, being obliged to return to court; but before he departed he gave her a phial of cordial, which he said the queen had given him as a sovereign remedy in all disorders.

The queen, who hated Pisanio because he was a friend to Imogen and Posthumus, gave him this phial, which she supposed contained poison, she having ordered her physician to give her some poison, to try its effects (as she said) upon animals; but the physician, knowing her malicious disposition, would not trust her with real poison, but gave her a drug which would do no other mischief than causing a person to sleep with every appearance of death for a few hours. This mixture, which Pisanio thought a choice cordial, he gave to Imogen, desiring her, if she found herself ill upon the road, to take it; and so, with blessings and prayers for her safety and happy deliverance from her undeserved troubles, he left her.

Providence strangely directed Imogen's steps to the dwelling of her two brothers, who had been stolen away in their infancy. Bellarius, who stole them away, was a lord in the court of Cymbeline, and having been falsely accused to the king of treason, and banished from the court, in revenge he stole away the two sons of Cymbeline, and brought them up in a forest, where he lived concealed in a cave. He stole them through revenge, but he soon loved them as tenderly as if they had been his own children, educated them carefully, and they grew up fine youths, their princely spirits leading them to bold and daring actions; and as they subsisted by hunting, they were active and hardy, and were always pressing their supposed father to let them seek their fortune in the wars.

At the cave where these youths dwelt it was Imogen's fortune to arrive. She had lost her way in a large forest, through which her road lay to Milford-Haven (from which she meant to embark for Rome); and being unable to find any place where she could purchase food, she was with weariness and hunger almost dying; for it is not merely putting on a man's apparel that will enable a young lady, tenderly brought up, to bear the fatigue of wandering about lonely forests like a man. Seeing this cave, she entered, hoping to find some one within of whom she could procure food. She found the cave empty, but looking about she discovered some cold meat, and her hunger was so pressing, that she could not wait for an invitation, but sat down and began to eat. "Ah," said she, talking to herself, "I see a man's life is a tedious one; how tired am I! for two nights together I have made the ground my bed: my resolution helps me, or I should be sick. When Pisanio showed me Milford-Haven from the mountain top, how near it seemed!" Then the thoughts of her husband and his cruel mandate came across her, and she said, "My dear Posthumus, thou art a false one!"

The two brothers of Imogen, who had been hunting with their reputed father, Bellarius, were by this time returned home. Bellarius had given them the names of Polydore and Cadwal, and they knew no better, but supposed that Bellarius was their father; but the real names of these princes were Guiderius and Arviragus.

Bellarius entered the cave first, and seeing Imogen, stopped them, saying, "Come not in yet; it eats our victuals, or I should think it was a fairy."

"What is the matter, sir?" said the young men. "By Jupiter," said Bellarius again, "there is an angel in the cave, or if not, an earthly paragon." So beautiful did Imogen look in her boy's apparel.

She, hearing the sound of voices, came forth from the cave, and addressed them in these words: "Good masters, do not harm me; before I entered your cave, I had thought to have begged or bought what I have eaten. Indeed I have stolen nothing, nor would I, though I had found gold strewed on the floor. Here is money for my meat, which I would have left on the board when I had made my meal, and parted with prayers for the provider." They refused her money with great earnestness. "I see you are angry with me," said the timid Imogen; "but, sirs, if you kill me for my fault, know that I should have died if I had not made it."

"Whither are you bound?" asked Bellarius, "and what is your name?"

"Fidele is my name," answered Imogen. "I have a kinsman, who is bound for Italy; he embarked at Milford-Haven, to whom being going, almost spent with hunger, I am fallen into this offence."

"Prithee, fair youth," said old Bellarius, "do not think us churls, nor measure our good minds by this rude place we live in. You are well encountered; it is almost night. You shall have better cheer before you depart, and thanks to stay and eat it. Boys, bid him welcome."

The gentle youths, her brothers, then welcomed Imogen to their cave with many kind expressions, saying they would love her (or, as they said, *him*) as a brother; and they entered the cave, where (they having killed venison when they were hunting) Imogen delighted them with her neat housewifery, assisting them in preparing their supper; for though it is not the custom now for young women of high birth to understand cookery, it was then, and Imogen excelled in this useful art; and, as her brothers prettily expressed it, Fidele cut their roots in characters, and sauced their broth, as if Juno had been sick, and Fidele were her dieter. "And then," said Polydore to his brother, "how angel-like he sings!"

They also remarked to each other, that though Fidele smiled so sweetly, yet so sad a melancholy did overcloud his lovely face, as if grief and patience had together taken possession of him.

For these her gentle qualities (or perhaps it was their near relationship, though they knew it not) Imogen (or, as the boys called her, *Fidele*) became the doting-piece of her brothers, and she scarcely less loved them, thinking that but for the memory of her dear Posthumus, she could live and die in the cave with these wild forest youths; and she gladly consented to stay with them, till she was enough rested from the fatigue of travelling to pursue her way to Milford-Haven.

When the venison they had taken was all eaten and they were going out to hunt for more, Fidele could not accompany them because she was unwell. Sorrow, no doubt, for her husband's cruel usage, as well as the fatigue of wandering in the forest, was the cause of her illness.

They then bid her farewell, and went to their hunt, praising all the way the noble parts and graceful demeanour of the youth Fidele.

Imogen was no sooner left alone than she recollected the cordial Pisanio had given her, and drank it off, and presently fell into a sound and death-like sleep.

When Bellarius and her brothers returned from hunting, Polydore went first into the cave, and supposing her asleep, pulled off his heavy shoes, that he might tread softly and not awake her; so did true gentleness spring up in the minds of these princely foresters; but he soon discovered that she could not be awakened by any noise, and concluded her to be dead, and Polydore lamented over her with dear and brotherly regret, as if they had never from their infancy been parted.

Bellarius also proposed to carry her out into the forest, and there celebrate her funeral with songs and solemn dirges, as was then the custom.

Imogen's two brothers then carried her to a shady covert, and there laying her gently on the grass, they sang repose to her departed spirit, and covering her over with leaves and flowers, Polydore said, "While summer lasts and I live here, Fidele, I will daily strew thy grave. The pale primrose, that flower most like thy face; the blue-bell, like thy clear veins; and the leaf of eglantine, which is not sweeter than was thy breath; all these will I strew over thee. Yea, and the furred moss in winter, when there are no flowers to cover thy sweet corse."

When they had finished her funeral obsequies they departed very sorrowful.

Imogen had not been long left alone, when, the effect of the sleepy drug going off, she awaked, and easily shaking off the slight covering of leaves and flowers they had thrown over her, she arose, and imagining she had been dreaming, she said, "I thought I was a cave-keeper, and cook to honest creatures; how came I here covered with flowers?" Not being able to find her way back to the cave, and seeing nothing of her new companions, she concluded it was certainly all a dream; and once more Imogen set out on her weary pilgrimage, hoping at last she should find her way to Milford-Haven, and thence get a passage in some ship bound for Italy; for all her thoughts were still with her husband Posthumus, whom she intended to seek in the disguise of a page.

But great events were happening at this time, of which Imogen knew nothing; for a war had suddenly broken out between the Roman emperor Augustus Cæsar and Cymbeline, the King of Britain; and a Roman army had landed to invade Britain, and was advanced into the very forest over which Imogen was journeying. With this army came Posthumus.

Though Posthumus came over to Britain with the Roman army he did not mean to fight on their side against his own countrymen, but intended to join the army of Britain, and fight in the cause of his king who had banished him.

He still believed Imogen false to him; yet the death of her he had so fondly loved, and by his own orders too (Pisanio having written him a letter to say he had obeyed his command, and that Imogen was dead), sat heavy on his heart, and therefore he returned to Britain, desiring either to be slain in battle, or to be put to death by Cymbeline for returning home from banishment.

Imogen, before she reached Milford-Haven, fell into the hands of the Roman army; and her presence and deportment recommending her, she was made a page to Lucius, the Roman general.

Cymbeline's army now advanced to meet the enemy, and when they entered this forest, Polydore and Cadwal joined the king's army. The young men were eager to engage in acts of valour, though they little thought they were going to fight for their own royal father: and old Bellarius went with them to the battle. He had long since repented of the injury he had done to Cymbeline in carrying away his sons; and having been a warrior in his youth, he gladly joined the army to fight for the king he had so injured.

And now a great battle commenced between the two armies, and the Britons would have been defeated, and Cymbeline himself killed, but for the extraordinary valour of Posthumus and Bellarius and the two sons of Cymbeline. They rescued the king, and saved his life, and so entirely turned the fortune of the day, that the Britons gained the victory.

When the battle was over, Posthumus, who had not found the death he sought for, surrendered himself up to one of the officers of Cymbeline, willing to suffer the death which was to be his punishment if he returned from banishment.

Imogen and the master she served were taken prisoners, and brought before Cymbeline, as was also her old enemy Iachimo, who was an officer in the Roman army; and when these prisoners were before the king, Posthumus was brought in to receive his sentence of death; and at this strange juncture of time, Bellarius with Polydore and Cadwal were also brought before Cymbeline, to receive the rewards due to the great services they had by their valour done for the king. Pisanio, being one of the king's attendants, was likewise present.

Therefore there were now standing in the king's presence (but with very different hopes and fears) Posthumus and Imogen, with her new master the Roman general; the faithful servant Pisanio, and the false friend Iachimo; and likewise the two lost sons of Cymbeline, with Bellarius, who had stolen them away.

The Roman general was the first who spoke; the rest stood silent before the king, though there was many a beating heart among them.

Imogen saw Posthumus, and knew him, though he was in the disguise of a peasant; but he did not know her in her male attire: and she knew Iachimo, and she saw a ring on his finger which she perceived to be her own, but she did not know him as yet to have been the author of all her troubles: and she stood before her own father a prisoner of war.

Pisanio knew Imogen, for it was he who had dressed her in the garb of a boy. "It is my mistress," thought he; "since she is living, let the time run on to good or bad." Bellarius knew her too, and softly said to Cadwal, "Is not this boy revived from death?"—"One sand," replied Cadwal, "does not more resemble another than that sweet rosy lad is like the dead Fidele."—"The same dead thing alive," said Polydore. "Peace, peace," said Bellarius; "if it were he, I am sure he would have spoken to us."—"But we saw him dead," again whispered Polydore. "Be silent," replied Bellarius.

Posthumus waited in silence to hear the welcome sentence of his own death; and he resolved not to disclose to the king that he had saved his life in the battle, lest that should move Cymbeline to pardon him.

Lucius, the Roman general, who had taken Imogen under his protection as his page, was the first (as has been before said) who spoke to the king. He was a man of high courage and noble dignity, and this was his speech to the king:—

"I hear you take no ransom for your prisoners, but doom them all to death: I am a Roman, and with a Roman heart will suffer death. But there is one thing for which I would entreat." Then bringing Imogen before the king, he said, "This boy is a Briton born. Let him be ransomed. He is my page. Never master had a page so kind, so duteous, so diligent on all occasions, so true, so nurse-like. He hath done no Briton wrong, though he hath served a Roman. Save him, if you spare no one beside."

Cymbeline looked earnestly on his daughter Imogen. He knew her not in that disguise; but it seemed that all-powerful Nature spake in his heart, for he said, "I have surely seen him, his face appears familiar to me. I know not why or wherefore I say, Live, boy; but I give you your life, and ask of me what boon you will, and I will grant it you. Yea, even though it be the life of the noblest prisoner I have."

"I humbly thank your highness," said Imogen.

What was then called granting a boon was the same as a promise to give any one thing, whatever it might be, that the person on whom that favour was conferred chose to ask for. They all were attentive to hear what thing the page would ask for; and Lucius her master said to her, "I do not beg my life, good lad, but I know that is what you will ask for."—"No, no, alas!" said Imogen, "I have other work in hand, good master; your life I cannot ask for."

This seeming want of gratitude in the boy astonished the Roman general.

Imogen then, fixing her eye on Iachimo, demanded no other boon than this: that Iachimo should be made to confess whence he had the ring he wore on his finger.

Cymbeline granted her this boon, and threatened Iachimo with the torture if he did not confess how he came by the diamond ring on his finger.

Iachimo then made a full acknowledgment of all his villany, telling, as has been before related, the whole story of his wager with Posthumus, and how he had succeeded in imposing upon his credulity.

What Posthumus felt at hearing this proof of the innocence of his lady cannot be expressed. He instantly came forward, and confessed to Cymbeline the cruel sentence which he had enjoined Pisanio to execute upon the princess; exclaiming wildly, "O Imogen, my queen, my life, my wife! O Imogen, Imogen, Imogen!"

Imogen could not see her beloved husband in this distress without discovering herself, to the unutterable joy of Posthumus, who was thus relieved from a weight of guilt and woe, and restored to the good graces of the dear lady he had so cruelly treated.

Cymbeline, almost as much overwhelmed as he with joy, at finding his lost daughter so strangely recovered, received her to her former place in his fatherly affection, and not only gave her husband Posthumus his life, but consented to acknowledge him for his son-in-law.

Bellarius chose this time of joy and reconciliation to make his confession. He presented Polydore and Cadwal to the king, telling him they were his two lost sons, Guiderius and Arviragus.

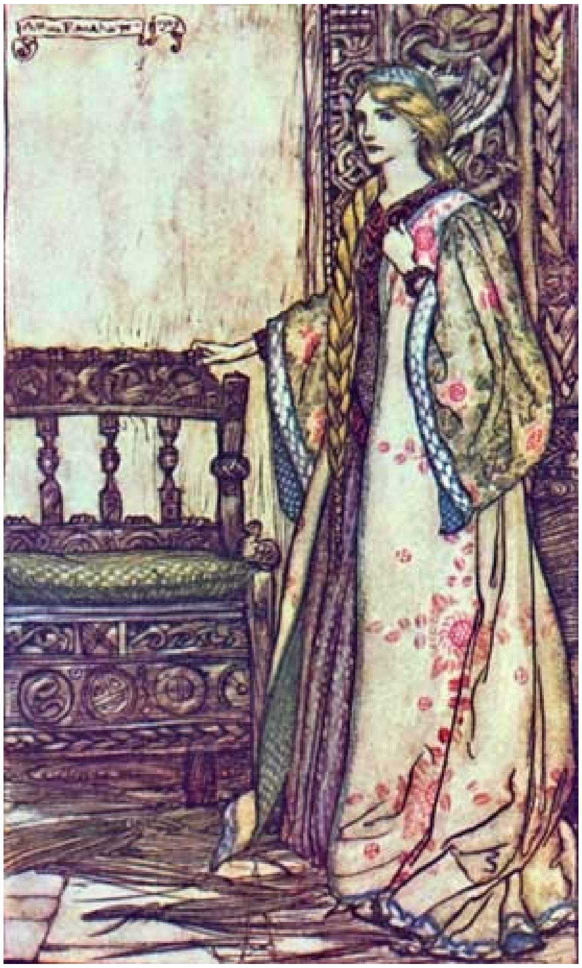
Cymbeline forgave old Bellarius; for who could think of punishments at a season of such universal happiness? To find his daughter living, and his lost sons in the persons of his young deliverers, that he had seen so bravely fight in his defence, was unlooked-for joy indeed!

Imogen was now at leisure to perform good services for her late master, the Roman general Lucius, whose life the king her father readily granted at her request; and by the mediation of the same Lucius a peace was concluded between the Romans and the Britons, which was kept inviolate many years.

How Cymbeline's wicked queen, through despair of bringing her projects to pass, and touched with remorse of conscience, sickened and died, having first lived to see her foolish son Cloten slain in a quarrel which he had provoked, are events too tragical to interrupt this happy conclusion by more than merely touching upon. It is sufficient that all were made happy who were deserving; and even the treacherous Iachimo, in consideration of his villany having missed its final aim, was dismissed without punishment.

KING LEAR

Lear, King of Britain, had three daughters; Goneril, wife to the Duke of Albany; Regan, wife to the Duke of Cornwall; and Cordelia, a young maid, for whose love the King of France and Duke of Burgundy were joint suitors, and were at this time making stay for that purpose in the court of Lear.



CORDELIA

The old king, worn out with age and the fatigues of government, he being more than fourscore years old, determined to take no further part in state affairs, but to leave the management to younger strengths, that he might have time to prepare for death, which must at no long period ensue. With this intent he called his three daughters to him, to know from their own lips which of them loved him best, that he might part his kingdom among them in such proportions as their affection for him should seem to deserve.

Goneril, the eldest, declared that she loved her father more than words could give out, that he was dearer to her than the light of her own eyes, dearer than life and liberty, with a deal of such professing stuff, which is easy to counterfeit where there is no real love, only a few fine words delivered with confidence being wanted in that case. The king, delighted to hear from her own mouth this assurance of her love, and thinking truly that her heart went with it, in a fit of fatherly fondness bestowed upon her and her husband one third of his ample kingdom.

Then calling to him his second daughter, he demanded what she had to say. Regan, who was made of the same hollow metal as her sister, was not a whit behind in her professions, but rather declared that what her sister had spoken came short of the love which she professed to bear for his highness; insomuch that she found all other joys dead, in comparison with the pleasure which she took in the love of her dear king and father.

Lear blessed himself in having such loving children, as he thought; and could do no less, after the handsome assurances which Regan had made, than bestow a third of his kingdom upon her and her husband, equal in size to that which he had already given away to Goneril.

Then turning to his youngest daughter Cordelia, whom he called his joy, he asked what she had to say, thinking no doubt that she would glad his ears with the same loving speeches which her sisters had uttered, or rather that her expressions would be so much stronger than theirs, as she had always been his darling, and favoured by him above either of them. But Cordelia, disgusted with the flattery of her sisters, whose hearts she knew were far from their lips, and seeing that all their coaxing speeches were only intended to wheedle the old king out of his dominions, that they and their husbands might reign in his lifetime, made no other reply but this,—that she loved his majesty according to her duty, neither more nor less.

The king, shocked with this appearance of ingratitude in his favourite child, desired her to consider her words, and to mend her speech, lest it should mar her fortunes.

Cordelia then told her father, that he was her father, that he had given her breeding, and loved her; that she returned those duties back as was most fit, and did obey him, love him, and most honour him. But that she could not frame her mouth to such large speeches as her sisters had done, or promise to love nothing else in the world. Why had her sisters husbands, if (as they said) they had no love for anything but their father? If she should ever wed, she was sure the lord to whom she gave her hand would want half her love, half of her care and duty; she should never marry like her sisters, to love her father all.

Cordelia, who in earnest loved her old father even almost as extravagantly as her sisters pretended to do, would have plainly told him so at any other time, in more daughter-like and loving terms, and without these qualifications, which did indeed sound a little ungracious; but after the crafty flattering speeches of her sisters, which she had seen drawn such extravagant rewards, she thought the handsomest thing she could do was to love and be silent. This put her affection out of suspicion of mercenary ends, and showed that she loved, but not for gain; and that her professions, the less ostentatious they were, had so much the more of truth and sincerity than her sisters'.

This plainness of speech, which Lear called pride, so enraged the old monarch—who in his best of times always showed much of spleen and rashness, and in whom the dotage incident to old age had so clouded over his reason, that he could not discern truth from flattery, nor a gay painted speech from words that came from the heart—that in a fury of resentment he retracted the third part of his kingdom which yet remained, and which he had reserved for Cordelia, and gave it away from her, sharing it equally between her two sisters and their husbands, the Dukes of Albany and Cornwall; whom he now called to him, and in presence of all his courtiers bestowing a coronet between them, invested them jointly with all the power, revenue, and execution of government, only retaining to himself the name of king; all the rest of royalty he resigned; with this reservation, that himself, with a hundred knights for his attendants, was to be maintained by monthly course in each of his daughters' palaces in turn.

So preposterous a disposal of his kingdom, so little guided by reason, and so much by passion, filled all his courtiers with astonishment and sorrow; but none of them had the courage to interpose between this incensed king and his wrath, except the Earl of Kent, who was beginning to speak a good word for Cordelia, when the passionate Lear on pain of death commanded him to desist; but the good Kent was not so to be repelled. He had been ever loyal to Lear, whom he had honoured as a king, loved as a father, followed as a master; and he had never esteemed his life further than as a pawn to wage against his royal master's enemies, nor feared to lose it when Lear's safety was the motive; nor now that Lear was most his own enemy, did this faithful servant of the king forget his old principles, but manfully opposed Lear, to do Lear good; and was unmannerly only because Lear was mad. He had been a most faithful counsellor in times past to the king, and he besought him now, that he would see with his eyes (as he had done in many weighty matters), and go by his advice still; and in his best consideration recall this hideous rashness: for he would answer with his life, his judgment that Lear's youngest daughter did not love him least, nor were those empty-hearted whose low sound gave no token of hollowness. When power bowed to flattery, honour was bound to plainness. For Lear's threats, what could he do to him, whose life was already at his service? That should not hinder duty from speaking.

The honest freedom of this good Earl of Kent only stirred up the king's wrath the more, and like a frantic patient who kills his physician, and loves his mortal disease, he banished this true servant, and allotted him but five days to make his preparations for departure; but if on the sixth his hated person was found within the realm of Britain, that moment was to be his death. And Kent bade farewell to the king, and said, that since he chose to show himself in such fashion, it was but banishment to stay there; and before he went, he recommended Cordelia to the protection of the gods, the maid who had so rightly thought, and so discreetly spoken; and only wished that her sisters' large speeches might be answered with deeds of love; and then he went, as he said, to shape his old course to a new country.

The King of France and Duke of Burgundy were now called in to hear the determination of Lear about his youngest daughter, and to know whether they would persist in their courtship to Cordelia, now that she was under her father's displeasure, and had no fortune but her own person to recommend her: and the Duke of Burgundy declined the match, and would not take her to wife upon such conditions; but the King of France, understanding what the nature of the fault had been which had lost her the love of her father, that it was only a tardiness of speech, and the not being able to frame her tongue to flattery like her sisters, took this young maid by the hand, and saying that her virtues were a dowry above a kingdom, bade Cordelia to take farewell of her sisters and of her father, though he had been unkind, and she should go with him, and be queen of him and of fair France, and reign over fairer possessions than her sisters: and he called the Duke of Burgundy in contempt a waterish duke, because his love for this young maid had in a moment run all away like water.

Then Cordelia with weeping eyes took leave of her sisters, and besought them to love their father well, and make good their professions: and they sullenly told her not to prescribe to them, for they knew their duty; but to strive to content her husband, who had taken her (as they tauntingly expressed it) as Fortune's alms. And Cordelia with a heavy heart departed, for she knew the cunning of her sisters, and she wished her father in better hands than she was about to leave him in.

Cordelia was no sooner gone, than the devilish dispositions of her sisters began to show themselves in their true colours. Even before the expiration of the first month, which Lear was to spend by agreement with his eldest daughter Goneril, the old king began to find out the difference between promises and performances. This wretch having got from her father all that he had to bestow, even to the giving away of the crown from off his head, began to grudge even those small remnants of royalty which the old man had reserved to himself, to please his fancy with the idea of being still a king. She could not bear to see him and his hundred knights. Every time she met her father, she put on a frowning countenance; and when the old man wanted to speak with her, she would feign sickness, or anything to get rid of the sight of him; for it was plain that she esteemed his old age a useless burden, and his attendants an unnecessary expense: not only she herself slackened in her expressions of duty to the king, but by her example, and (it is to be feared) not without her private instructions, her very servants affected to treat him with neglect, and would either refuse to obey his orders, or still more contemptuously pretend not to hear them. Lear could not but perceive this alteration in the behaviour of his daughter, but he shut his eyes against it as long as he could, as people commonly are unwilling to believe the unpleasant consequences which their own mistakes and obstinacy have brought upon them.

True love and fidelity are no more to be estranged by *ill* , than falsehood and hollow-heartedness can be conciliated by *good* , *usage* . This eminently appears in the instance of the good Earl of Kent, who, though banished by Lear, and his life made forfeit if he were found in Britain, chose to stay and abide all consequences, as long as there was a chance of his being useful to the king his master. See to what mean shifts and disguises poor loyalty is forced to submit sometimes; yet it counts nothing base or unworthy, so as it can but do service where it owes an obligation!

In the disguise of a serving man, all his greatness and pomp laid aside, this good earl proffered his services to the king, who, not knowing him to be Kent in that disguise, but pleased with a certain plainness, or rather bluntness in his answers, which the earl put on (so different from that smooth oily flattery which he had so much reason to be sick of, having found the effects not answerable in his daughter), a bargain was quickly struck, and Lear took Kent into his service by the name of Caius, as he called himself, never suspecting him to be his once great favourite, the high and mighty Earl of Kent.

This Caius quickly found means to show his fidelity and love to his royal master: for Goneril's steward that same day behaving in a disrespectful manner to Lear, and giving him saucy looks and language, as no doubt he was secretly encouraged to do by his mistress, Caius, not enduring to hear so open an affront put upon his majesty, made no more ado but presently tripped up his heels, and laid the unmannerly slave in the kennel; for which friendly service Lear became more and more attached to him.

Nor was Kent the only friend Lear had. In his degree, and as far as so insignificant a personage could show his love, the poor fool, or jester, that had been of his palace while Lear had a palace, as it was the custom of kings and great personages at that time to keep a fool (as he was called) to make them sport after serious business: this poor fool clung to Lear after he had given away his crown, and by his witty sayings would keep up his good humour, though he could not refrain sometimes from jeering at his master for his imprudence in uncrowning himself, and giving all away to his daughters; at which time, as he rhymingly expressed it, these daughters

For sudden joy did weep
And he for sorrow sung,
That such a king should play bo-peep
And go the fools among.

And in such wild sayings, and scraps of songs, of which he had plenty, this pleasant honest fool poured out his heart even in the presence of Goneril herself, in many a bitter taunt and jest which cut to the quick: such as comparing the king to the hedge-sparrow, who feeds the young of the cuckoo till they grow old enough, and then has its head bit off for its pains; and saying, that an ass may know when the cart draws the horse (meaning that Lear's daughters, that ought to go behind, now ranked before their father); and that Lear was no longer Lear, but the shadow of Lear: for which free speeches he was once or twice threatened to be whipped.

The coolness and falling off of respect which Lear had begun to perceive, were not all which this foolish fond father was to suffer from his unworthy daughter: she now plainly told him that his staying in her palace was inconvenient so long as he insisted upon keeping up an establishment of a hundred knights; that this establishment was useless and expensive, and only served to fill her court with riot and feasting; and she prayed him that he would lessen their number, and keep none but old men about him, such as himself, and fitting his age.

Lear at first could not believe his eyes or ears, nor that it was his daughter who spoke so unkindly. He could not believe that she who had received a crown from him could seek to cut off his train, and grudge him the respect due to his old age. But she, persisting in her undutiful demand, the old man's rage was so excited, that he called her a detested kite, and said that she spoke an untruth; and so indeed she did, for the hundred knights were all men of choice behaviour and sobriety of manners, skilled in all particulars of duty, and not given to rioting or feasting, as she said. And he bid his horses to be prepared, for he would go to his other daughter, Regan, he and his hundred knights; and he spoke of ingratitude, and said it was a marble-hearted devil, and showed more hideous in a child than the sea-monster. And he cursed his eldest daughter Goneril so as was terrible to hear; praying that she might never have a child, or if she had, that it might live to return that scorn and contempt upon her which she had shown to him: that she might feel how sharper than a serpent's tooth it was to have a thankless child. And Goneril's husband, the Duke of Albany, beginning to excuse himself for any share which Lear might suppose he had in the unkindness, Lear would not hear him out, but in a rage ordered his horses to be saddled, and set out with his followers for the abode of Regan, his other daughter. And Lear thought to himself how small the fault of Cordelia (if it was a fault) now appeared, in comparison with her sister's, and he wept; and then he was ashamed that such a creature as Goneril should have so much power over his manhood as to make him weep.

Regan and her husband were keeping their court in great pomp and state at their palace; and Lear despatched his servant Caius with letters to his daughter, that she might be prepared for his reception, while he and his train followed after. But it seems that Goneril had been before-hand with him, sending letters also to Regan, accusing her father of waywardness and ill humours, and advising her not to receive so great a train as he was bringing with him. This messenger arrived at the same time with Caius, and Caius and he met: and who should it be but Caius's old enemy the steward, whom he had formerly tripped up by the heels for his saucy behaviour to Lear. Caius not liking the fellow's look, and suspecting what he came for, began to revile him, and challenged him to fight, which the fellow refusing, Caius, in a fit of honest passion, beat him soundly, as such a mischief-maker and carrier of wicked messages deserved; which coming to the ears of Regan and her husband, they ordered Caius to be put in stocks, though he was a messenger from the king her father, and in that character demanded the highest respect: so that the first thing the king saw when he entered the castle, was his faithful servant Caius sitting in that disgraceful situation.

This was but a bad omen of the reception which he was to expect; but a worse followed, when, upon inquiry for his daughter and her husband, he was told they were weary with travelling all night, and could not see him; and when lastly, upon his insisting in a positive and angry manner to see them, they came to greet him, whom should he see in their company but the hated Goneril, who had come to tell her own story, and set her sister against the king her father!

This sight much moved the old man, and still more to see Regan take her by the hand; and he asked Goneril if she was not ashamed to look upon his old white beard. And Regan advised him to go home again with Goneril, and live with her peaceably, dismissing half of his attendants, and to ask her forgiveness; for he was old and wanted discretion, and must be ruled and led by persons that had more discretion than himself. And Lear showed how preposterous that would sound, if he were to go down on his knees, and beg of his own daughter for food and raiment, and he argued against such an unnatural dependence, declaring his resolution never to return with her, but to stay where he was with Regan, he and his hundred knights; for he said that she had not forgot the half of the kingdom which he had endowed her with, and that her eyes were not fierce like Goneril's, but mild and kind. And he said that rather than return to Goneril, with half his train cut off, he would go over to France, and beg a wretched pension of the king there, who had married his youngest daughter without a portion.

But he was mistaken in expecting kinder treatment of Regan than he had experienced from her sister Goneril. As if willing to outdo her sister in unfilial behaviour, she declared that she thought fifty knights too many to wait upon him: that five-and-twenty were enough. Then Lear, nigh heart-broken, turned to Goneril and said that he would go back with her, for her fifty doubled five-and-twenty, and so her love was twice as much as Regan's. But Goneril excused herself, and said, what need of so many as five-and-twenty? or even ten? or five? when he might be waited upon by her servants, or her sister's servants? So these two wicked daughters, as if they strove to exceed each other in cruelty to their old father, who had been so good to them, by little and little would have abated him of all his train, all respect (little enough for him that once commanded a kingdom), which was left him to show that he had once been a king! Not that a splendid train is essential to happiness, but from a king to a beggar is a hard change, from commanding millions to be without one attendant; and it was the ingratitude in his daughters' denying it, more than what he would suffer by the want of it, which pierced this poor king to the heart; insomuch, that with this double ill-usage, and vexation for having so foolishly given away a kingdom, his wits began to be unsettled, and while he said he knew not what, he vowed revenge against those unnatural hags, and to make examples of them that should be a terror to the earth!

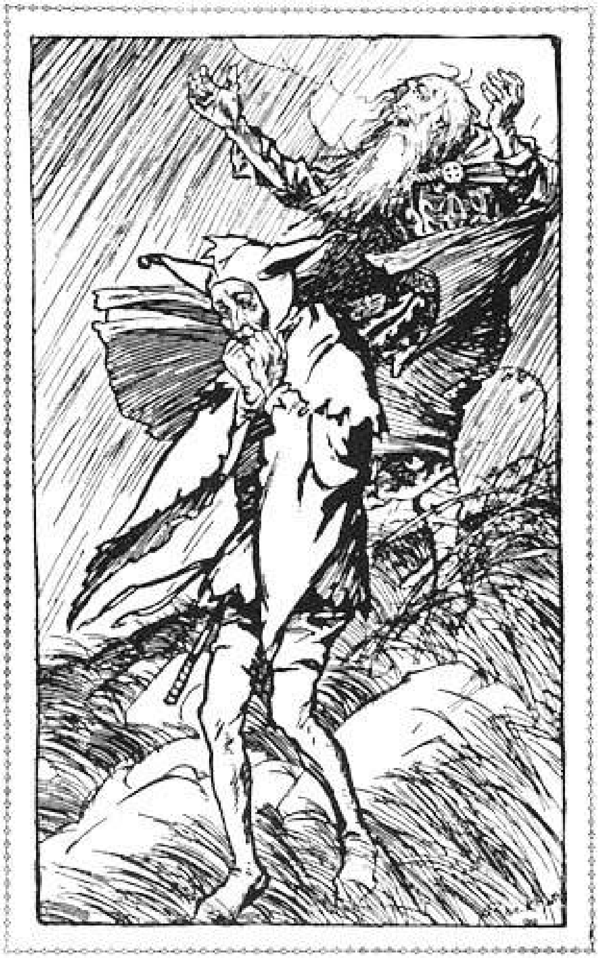
While he was thus idly threatening what his weak arm could never execute, night came on, and a loud storm of thunder and lightning with rain; and his daughters still persisting in their resolution not to admit his followers, he called for his horses, and chose rather to encounter the utmost fury of the storm abroad, than stay under the same roof with these ungrateful daughters: and they, saying that the injuries which wilful men procure to themselves are their just punishment, suffered him to go in that condition and shut their doors upon him.

The winds were high, and the rain and storm increased, when the old man sallied forth to combat with the elements, less sharp than his daughters' unkindness. For many miles about there was scarce a bush; and there upon a heath, exposed to the fury of the storm in a dark night, did King Lear wander out, and defy the winds and the thunder; and he bid the winds to blow the earth into the sea, or swell the waves of the sea till they drowned the earth, that no token might remain of any such ungrateful animal as man. The old king was now left with no other companion than the poor fool, who still abided with him, with his merry conceits striving to outjest misfortune, saying it was but a naughty night to swim in, and truly the king had better go in and ask his daughter's blessing:—

But he that has a little tiny wit.
With heigh ho, the wind and the rain!
Must make content with his fortunes fit.
Though the rain it raineth every day:

and swearing it was a brave night to cool a lady's pride.

Thus poorly accompanied, this once great monarch was found by his ever-faithful servant the good Earl of Kent, now transformed to Caius, who ever followed close at his side, though the king did not know him to be the earl; and he said, "Alas! sir, are you here? creatures that love night, love not such nights as these. This dreadful storm has driven the beasts to their hiding places. Man's nature cannot endure the affliction or the fear." And Lear rebuked him and said, these lesser evils were not felt, where a greater malady was fixed. When the mind is at ease, the body has leisure to be delicate, but the tempest in his mind did take all feeling else from his senses, but of that which beat at his heart. And he spoke of filial ingratitude, and said it was all one as if the mouth should tear the hand for lifting food to it; for parents were hands and food and everything to children.



THERE UPON A HEATH, EXPOSED TO THE FURY OF THE STORM ON A DARK NIGHT, DID KING LEAR WANDER OUT

But the good Caius still persisting in his entreaties that the king would not stay out in the open air, at last persuaded him to enter a little wretched hovel which stood upon the heath, where the fool first entering, suddenly ran back terrified, saying that he had seen a spirit. But upon examination this spirit proved to be nothing more than a poor Bedlam beggar, who had crept into this deserted hovel for shelter, and with his talk about devils frighted the fool, one of those poor lunatics who are either mad, or feign to be so, the better to extort charity from the compassionate country people, who go about the country, calling themselves poor Tom and poor Turlygood, saying, "Who gives anything to poor Tom?" sticking pins and nails and sprigs of rosemary into their arms to make them bleed; and with such horrible actions, partly by prayers, and partly with lunatic curses, they move or terrify the ignorant country-folks into giving them alms. This poor fellow was such a one; and the king seeing him in so wretched a plight, with nothing but a blanket about his loins to cover his nakedness, could not be persuaded but that the fellow was some father who had given all away to his daughters, and brought himself to that pass: for nothing he thought could bring a man to such wretchedness but the having unkind daughters.

And from this and many such wild speeches which he uttered, the good Caius plainly perceived that he was not in his perfect mind, but that his daughters' ill usage had really made him go mad. And now the loyalty of this worthy Earl of Kent showed itself in more essential services than he had hitherto found opportunity to perform. For with the assistance of some of the king's attendants who remained loyal, he had the person of his royal master removed at daybreak to the castle of Dover, where his own friends and influence, as Earl of Kent, chiefly lay; and himself embarking for France, hastened to the court of Cordelia, and did there in such moving terms represent the pitiful condition of her royal father, and set out in such lively colours the inhumanity of her sisters, that this good and loving child with many tears besought the king her husband that he would give her leave to embark for England, with a sufficient power to subdue these cruel daughters and their husbands, and restore the old king her father to his throne; which being granted, she set forth, and with a royal army landed at Dover.

Lear having by some chance escaped from the guardians which the good Earl of Kent had put over him to take care of him in his lunacy, was found by some of Cordelia's train, wandering about the fields near Dover, in a pitiable condition, stark mad, and singing aloud to himself, with a crown upon his head which he had made of straw, and nettles, and other wild weeds that he had picked up in the corn-fields. By the advice of the physicians, Cordelia, though earnestly desirous of seeing her father, was prevailed upon to put off the meeting, till by sleep and the operation of herbs which they gave him, he should be restored to greater composure. By the aid of these skilful physicians, to whom Cordelia promised all her gold and jewels for the recovery of the old king, Lear was soon in a condition to see his daughter.

A tender sight it was to see the meeting between this father and daughter; to see the struggles between the joy of this poor old king at beholding again his once darling child, and the shame at receiving such filial kindness from her whom he had cast off for so small a fault in his displeasure; both these passions struggling with the remains of his malady, which in his half-crazed brain sometimes made him that he scarce remembered where he was, or who it was that so kindly kissed him and spoke to him: and then he would beg the standers-by not to laugh at him, if he were mistaken in thinking this lady to be his daughter Cordelia! And then to see him fall on his knees to beg pardon of his child; and she, good lady, kneeling all the while to ask a blessing of him, and telling him that it did not become him to kneel, but it was her duty, for she was his child, his true and very child Cordelia! and she kissed him (as she said) to kiss away all her sisters' unkindness, and said that they might be ashamed of themselves, to turn their old kind father with his white beard out into the cold air, when her enemy's dog, though it had bit her (as she prettily expressed it), should have stayed by her fire such a night as that, and warmed himself. And she told her father how she had come from France with purpose to bring him assistance; and he said that she must forget and forgive, for he was old and foolish, and did not know what he did; but that to be sure she had great cause not to love him, but her sisters had none. And Cordelia said that she had no cause, no more than they had.

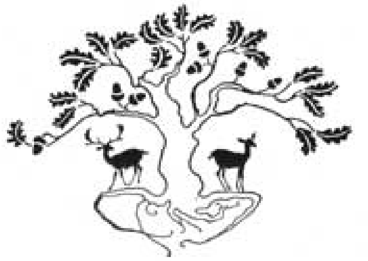
So we will leave this old king in the protection of his dutiful and loving child, where, by the help of sleep and medicine, she and her physicians at length succeeded in winding up the untuned and jarring senses which the cruelty of his other daughters had so violently shaken. Let us return to say a word or two about those cruel daughters.

These monsters of ingratitude, who had been so false to their old father, could not be expected to prove more faithful to their own husbands. They soon grew tired of paying even the appearance of duty and affection, and in an open way showed they had fixed their loves upon another. It happened that the object of their guilty loves was the same. It was Edmund, a natural son of the late Earl of Gloucester, who by his treacheries had succeeded in disinheriting his brother Edgar, the lawful heir, from his earldom, and by his wicked practices was now earl himself; a wicked man, and a fit object for the love of such wicked creatures as Goneril and Regan. It falling out about this time that the Duke of Cornwall, Regan's husband, died, Regan immediately declared her intention of wedding this Earl of Gloucester, which rousing the jealousy of her sister, to whom as well as to Regan this wicked earl had at sundry times professed love, Goneril found means to make away with her sister by poison; but being detected in her practices, and imprisoned by her husband, the Duke of Albany, for this deed, and for her guilty passion for the earl which had come to his ears, she, in a fit of disappointed love and rage, shortly put an end to her own life. Thus the justice of Heaven at last overtook these wicked daughters.

While the eyes of all men were upon this event, admiring the justice displayed in their deserved deaths, the same eyes were suddenly taken off from this sight to admire at the mysterious ways of the same power in the melancholy fate of the young and virtuous daughter, the Lady Cordelia, whose good deeds did seem to deserve a more fortunate conclusion: but it is an awful truth, that innocence and piety are not always successful in this world. The forces which Goneril and Regan had sent out under the command of the bad Earl of Gloucester were victorious, and Cordelia, by the practices of this wicked earl, who did not like that any should stand between him and the throne, ended her life in prison. Thus, Heaven took this innocent lady to itself in her young years, after showing her to the world an illustrious example of filial duty. Lear did not long survive this kind child.

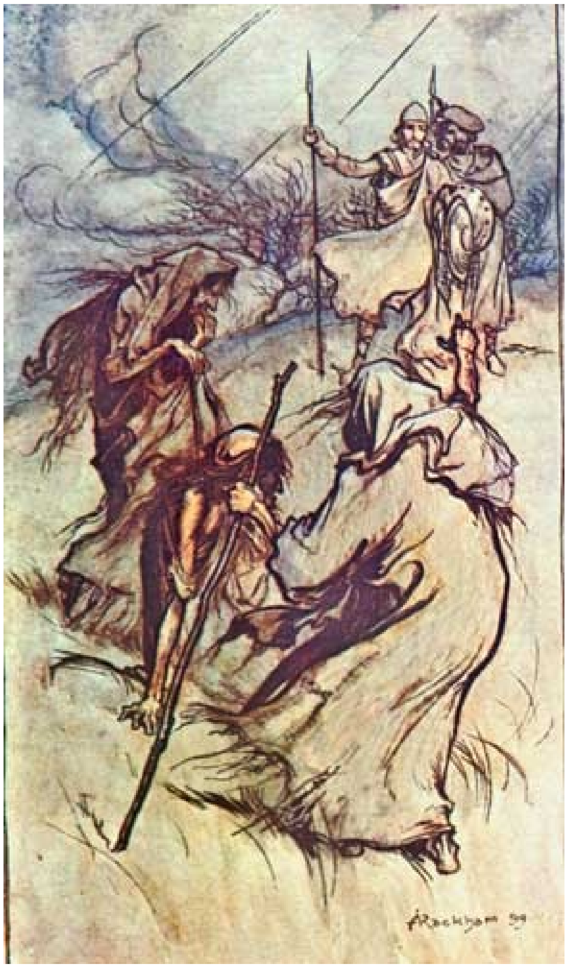
Before he died, the good Earl of Kent, who had still attended his old master's steps from the first of his daughters' ill usage to this sad period of his decay, tried to make him understand that it was he who had followed him under the name of Caius; but Lear's care-crazed brain at that time could not comprehend how that could be, or how Kent and Caius could be the same person: so Kent thought it needless to trouble him with explanations at such a time; and Lear soon after expiring, this faithful servant to the king, between age and grief for his old master's vexations, soon followed him to the grave.

How the judgment of Heaven overtook the bad Earl of Gloucester, whose treasons were discovered, and himself slain in single combat with his brother, the lawful earl; and how Goneril's husband, the Duke of Albany, who was innocent of the death of Cordelia, and had never encouraged his lady in her wicked proceedings against her father, ascended the throne of Britain after the death of Lear, is needless here to narrate; Lear and his Three Daughters being dead, whose adventures alone concern our story.



MACBETH

When Duncan the Meek reigned King of Scotland, there lived a great thane, or lord, called Macbeth. This Macbeth was a near kinsman to the king, and in great esteem at court for his valour and conduct in the wars; an example of which he had lately given, in defeating a rebel army assisted by the troops of Norway in terrible numbers.



THEY WERE STOPPED BY THE STRANGE APPEARANCE OF THREE FIGURES

The two Scottish generals, Macbeth and Banquo, returning victorious from this great battle, their way lay over a blasted heath, where they were stopped by the strange appearance of three figures like women, except that they had beards, and their withered skins and wild attire made them look not like any earthly creatures. Macbeth first addressed them, when they, seemingly offended, laid each one her choppy finger upon her skinny lips, in token of silence; and the first of them saluted Macbeth with the title of thane of Glamis. The general was not a little startled to find himself known by such creatures; but how much more, when the second of them followed up that salute by giving him the title of thane of Cawdor, to which honour he had no pretensions; and again the third bid him "All hail! king that shalt be hereafter!" Such a prophetic greeting might well amaze him, who knew that while the king's sons lived he could not hope to succeed to the throne. Then turning to Banquo, they pronounced him, in a sort of riddling terms, to be *lesser than Macbeth and greater* ! *not so happy, but much* *happier* ! and prophesied that though he should never reign, yet his sons after him should be kings in Scotland. They then turned into air, and vanished: by which the generals knew them to be the weird sisters, or witches.

While they stood pondering on the strangeness of this adventure, there arrived certain messengers from the king, who were empowered by him to confer upon Macbeth the dignity of thane of Cawdor: an event so miraculously corresponding with the prediction of the witches astonished Macbeth, and he stood wrapped in amazement, unable to make reply to the messengers; and in that point of time swelling hopes arose in his mind that the prediction of the third witch might in like manner have its accomplishment, and that he should one day reign king in Scotland.

Turning to Banquo, he said, "Do you not hope that your children shall be kings, when what the witches promised to me has so wonderfully come to pass?" "That hope," answered the general, "might enkindle you to aim at the throne; but oftentimes these ministers of darkness tell us truths in little things, to betray us into deeds of greatest consequence."

But the wicked suggestions of the witches had sunk too deep into the mind of Macbeth to allow him to attend to the warnings of the good Banquo. From that time he bent all his thoughts how to compass the throne of Scotland.

Macbeth had a wife, to whom he communicated the strange prediction of the weird sisters, and its partial accomplishment. She was a bad, ambitious woman, and so as her husband and herself could arrive at greatness, she cared not much by what means. She spurred on the reluctant purpose of Macbeth, who felt compunction at the thoughts of blood, and did not cease to represent the murder of the king as a step absolutely necessary to the fulfilment of the flattering prophecy.

It happened at this time that the king, who out of his royal condescension would oftentimes visit his principal nobility upon gracious terms, came to Macbeth's house, attended by his two sons, Malcolm and Donalbain, and a numerous train of thanes and attendants, the more to honour Macbeth for the triumphal success of his wars.

The castle of Macbeth was pleasantly situated, and the air about it was sweet and wholesome, which appeared by the nests which the martlet, or swallow, had built under all the jutting friezes and buttresses of the building, wherever it found a place of advantage; for where those birds most breed and haunt, the air is observed to be delicate. The king entered well-pleased with the place, and not less so with the attentions and respect of his honoured hostess, Lady Macbeth, who had the art of covering treacherous purposes with smiles; and could look like the innocent flower, while she was indeed the serpent under it.

The king being tired with his journey, went early to bed, and in his state-room two grooms of his chamber (as was the custom) slept beside him. He had been unusually pleased with his reception, and had made presents before he retired to his principal officers; and among the rest, had sent a rich diamond to Lady Macbeth, greeting her by the name of his most kind hostess.

Now was the middle of night, when over half the world nature seems dead, and wicked dreams abuse men's minds asleep, and none but the wolf and the murderer is abroad. This was the time when Lady Macbeth waked to plot the murder of the king. She would not have undertaken a deed so abhorrent to her sex, but that she feared her husband's nature, that it was too full of the milk of human kindness, to do a contrived murder. She knew him to be ambitious, but withal to be scrupulous, and not yet prepared for that height of crime which commonly in the end accompanies inordinate ambition. She had won him to consent to the murder, but she doubted his resolution; and she feared that the natural tenderness of his disposition (more humane than her own) would come between, and defeat the purpose. So with her own hands armed with a dagger, she approached the king's bed; having taken care to ply the grooms of his chamber so with wine, that they slept intoxicated, and careless of their charge. There lay Duncan in a sound sleep after the fatigues of his journey, and as she viewed him earnestly, there was something in his face, as he slept, which resembled her own father; and she had not the courage to proceed.

She returned to confer with her husband. His resolution had begun to stagger. He considered that there were strong reasons against the deed. In the first place, he was not only a subject, but a near kinsman to the king; and he had been his host and entertainer that day, whose duty, by the laws of hospitality, it was to shut the door against his murderers, not bear the knife himself. Then he considered how just and merciful a king this Duncan had been, how clear of offence to his subjects, how loving to his nobility, and in particular to him; that such kings are the peculiar care of Heaven, and their subjects doubly bound to revenge their deaths. Besides, by the favours of the king, Macbeth stood high in the opinion of all sorts of men, and how would those honours be stained by the reputation of so foul a murder!

In these conflicts of the mind Lady Macbeth found her husband inclining to the better part, and resolving to proceed no further. But she being a woman not easily shaken from her evil purpose, began to pour in at his ears words which infused a portion of her own spirit into his mind, assigning reason upon reason why he should not shrink from what he had undertaken; how easy the deed was; how soon it would be over; and how the action of one short night would give to all their nights and days to come sovereign sway and royalty! Then she threw contempt on his change of purpose, and accused him of fickleness and cowardice; and declared that she had given suck, and knew how tender it was to love the babe that milked her; but she would, while it was smiling in her face, have plucked it from her breast, and dashed its brains out, if she had so sworn to do it, as he had sworn to perform that murder. Then she added, how practicable it was to lay the guilt of the deed upon the drunken sleepy grooms. And with the valour of her tongue she so chastised his sluggish resolutions, that he once more summoned up courage to the bloody business.

So, taking the dagger in his hand, he softly stole in the dark to the room where Duncan lay; and as he went, he thought he saw another dagger in the air, with the handle towards him, and on the blade and at the point of it drops of blood; but when he tried to grasp at it, it was nothing but air, a mere phantasm proceeding from his own hot and oppressed brain and the business he had in hand.

Getting rid of this fear, he entered the king's room, whom he despatched with one stroke of his dagger. Just as he had done the murder, one of the grooms, who slept in the chamber, laughed in his sleep, and the other cried, "Murder," which woke them both; but they said a short prayer; one of them said, "God bless us!" and the other answered "Amen;" and addressed themselves to sleep again.

Macbeth, who stood listening to them, tried to say, "Amen," when the fellow said, "God bless us!" but, though he had most need of a blessing, the word stuck in his throat, and he could not pronounce it.

Again he thought he heard a voice which cried, "Sleep no more: Macbeth doth murder sleep, the innocent sleep, that nourishes life." Still it cried, "Sleep no more," to all the house. "Glamis hath murdered sleep, and therefore Cawdor shall sleep no more, Macbeth shall sleep no more."

With such horrible imaginations Macbeth returned to his listening wife, who began to think he had failed of his purpose, and that the deed was somehow frustrated. He came in so distracted a state, that she reproached him with his want of firmness, and sent him to wash his hands of the blood which stained them, while she took his dagger, with purpose to stain the cheeks of the grooms with blood, to make it seem their guilt.

Morning came, and with it the discovery of the murder, which could not be concealed; and though Macbeth and his lady made great show of grief, and the proofs against the grooms (the dagger being produced against them and their faces smeared with blood) were sufficiently strong, yet the entire suspicion fell upon Macbeth, whose inducements to such a deed were so much more forcible than such poor silly grooms could be supposed to have; and Duncan's two sons fled. Malcolm, the eldest, sought for refuge in the English court; and the youngest, Donalbain, made his escape to Ireland.

The king's sons, who should have succeeded him, having thus vacated the throne, Macbeth as next heir was crowned king, and thus the prediction of the weird sisters was literally accomplished.

Though placed so high, Macbeth and his queen could not forget the prophecy of the weird sisters, that, though Macbeth should be king, yet not his children, but the children of Banquo, should be kings after him. The thought of this, and that they had defiled their hands with blood, and done so great crimes, only to place the posterity of Banquo upon the throne, so rankled within them, that they determined to put to death both Banquo and his son, to make void the predictions of the weird sisters, which in their own case had been so remarkably brought to pass.

For this purpose they made a great supper, to which they invited all the chief thanes; and, among the rest, with marks of particular respect, Banquo and his son Fleance were invited. The way by which Banquo was to pass to the palace at night was beset by murderers appointed by Macbeth, who stabbed Banquo; but in the scuffle Fleance escaped. From that Fleance descended a race of monarchs who afterwards filled the Scottish throne, ending with James the Sixth of Scotland and the First of England, under whom the two crowns of England and Scotland were united.

At supper, the queen, whose manners were in the highest degree affable and royal, played the hostess with a gracefulness and attention which conciliated every one present, and Macbeth discoursed freely with his thanes and nobles, saying, that all that was honourable in the country was under his roof, if he had but his good friend Banquo present, whom yet he hoped he should rather have to chide for neglect, than to lament for any mischance. Just at these words the ghost of Banquo, whom he had caused to be murdered, entered the room and placed himself on the chair which Macbeth was about to occupy. Though Macbeth was a bold man, and one that could have faced the devil without trembling, at this horrible sight his cheeks turned white with fear, and he stood quite unmanned with his eyes fixed upon the ghost. His queen and all the nobles, who saw nothing, but perceived him gazing (as they thought) upon an empty chair, took it for a fit of distraction; and she reproached him, whispering that it was but the same fancy which made him see the dagger in the air, when he was about to kill Duncan. But Macbeth continued to see the ghost, and gave no heed to all they could say, while he addressed it with distracted words, yet so significant, that his queen, fearing the dreadful secret would be disclosed, in great haste dismissed the guests, excusing the infirmity of Macbeth as a disorder he was often troubled with.

To such dreadful fancies Macbeth was subject. His queen and he had their sleeps afflicted with terrible dreams, and the blood of Banquo troubled them not more than the escape of Fleance, whom now they looked upon as father to a line of kings who should keep their posterity out of the throne. With these miserable thoughts they found no peace, and Macbeth determined once more to seek out the weird sisters, and know from them the worst.

He sought them in a cave upon the heath, where they, who knew by foresight of his coming, were engaged in preparing their dreadful charms, by which they conjured up infernal spirits to reveal to them futurity. Their horrid ingredients were toads, bats, and serpents, the eye of a newt, and the tongue of a dog, the leg of a lizard, and the wing of the night-owl, the scale of a dragon, the tooth of a wolf, the maw of the ravenous salt-sea shark, the mummy of a witch, the root of the poisonous hemlock (this to have effect must be digged in the dark), the gall of a goat, and the liver of a Jew, with slips of the yew tree that roots itself in graves, and the finger of a dead child: all these were set on to boil in a great kettle, or cauldron, which, as fast as it grew too hot, was cooled with a baboon's blood: to these they poured in the blood of a sow that had eaten her young, and they threw into the flame the grease that had sweaten from a murderer's gibbet. By these charms they bound the infernal spirits to answer their questions.

It was demanded of Macbeth, whether he would have his doubts resolved by them, or by their masters, the spirits. He, nothing daunted by the dreadful ceremonies which he saw, boldly answered, "Where are they? let me see them." And they called the spirits, which were three. And the first arose in the likeness of an armed head, and he called Macbeth by name, and bid him beware of the thane of Fife; for which caution Macbeth thanked him; for Macbeth had entertained a jealousy of Macduff, the thane of Fife.

And the second spirit arose in the likeness of a bloody child, and he called Macbeth by name, and bid him have no fear, but laugh to scorn the power of man, for none of woman born should have power to hurt him; and he advised him to be bloody, bold, and resolute. "Then live, Macduff!" cried the king; "what need I fear of thee? but yet I will make assurance doubly sure. Thou shalt not live; that I may tell pale-hearted Fear it lies, and sleep in spite of thunder."

That spirit being dismissed, a third arose in the form of a child crowned, with a tree in his hand. He called Macbeth by name, and comforted him against conspiracies, saying, that he should never be vanquished, until the wood of Birnam to Dunsinane Hill should come against him. "Sweet bodements! good!" cried Macbeth; "who can unfix the forest, and move it from its earth-bound roots? I see I shall live the usual period of man's life, and not be cut off by a violent death. But my heart throbs to know one thing. Tell me, if your art can tell so much, if Banquo's issue shall ever reign in this kingdom?" Here the cauldron sank into the ground, and a noise of music was heard, and eight shadows, like kings, passed by Macbeth, and Banquo last, who bore a glass which showed the figures of many more, and Banquo all bloody smiled upon Macbeth, and pointed to them; by which Macbeth knew that these were the posterity of Banquo, who should reign after him in Scotland; and the witches, with a sound of soft music, and with dancing, making a show of duty and welcome to Macbeth, vanished. And from this time the thoughts of Macbeth were all bloody and dreadful.

The first thing he heard when he got out of the witches' cave, was that Macduff, thane of Fife, had fled to England, to join the army which was forming against him under Malcolm, the eldest son of the late king, with intent to displace Macbeth, and set Malcolm, the right heir, upon the throne. Macbeth, stung with rage, set upon the castle of Macduff, and put his wife and children, whom the thane had left behind, to the sword, and extended the slaughter to all who claimed the least relationship to Macduff.

These and such-like deeds alienated the minds of all his chief nobility from him. Such as could, fled to join with Malcolm and Macduff, who were now approaching with a powerful army, which they had raised in England; and the rest secretly wished success to their arms, though for fear of Macbeth they could take no active part. His recruits went on slowly. Everybody hated the tyrant; nobody loved or honoured him; but all suspected him, and he began to envy the condition of Duncan, whom he had murdered, who slept soundly in his grave, against whom treason had done its worst: steel nor poison, domestic malice nor foreign levies, could hurt him any longer.

While these things were acting, the queen, who had been the sole partner in his wickedness, in whose bosom he could sometimes seek a momentary repose from those terrible dreams which afflicted them both nightly, died, it is supposed, by her own hands, unable to bear the remorse of guilt, and public hate; by which event he was left alone, without a soul to love or care for him, or a friend to whom he could confide his wicked purposes.

He grew careless of life, and wished for death; but the near approach of Malcolm's army roused in him what remained of his ancient courage, and he determined to die (as he expressed it) "with armour on his back." Besides this, the hollow promises of the witches had filled him with a false confidence, and he remembered the sayings of the spirits, that none of woman born was to hurt him, and that he was never to be vanquished till Birnam wood should come to Dunsinane, which he thought could never be. So he shut himself up in his castle, whose impregnable strength was such as defied a siege: here he sullenly waited the approach of Malcolm. When, upon a day, there came a messenger to him, pale and shaking with fear, almost unable to report that which he had seen; for he averred, that as he stood upon his watch on the hill, he looked towards Birnam, and to his thinking the wood began to move! "Liar and slave!" cried Macbeth; "if thou speakest false, thou shalt hang alive upon the next tree, till famine end thee. If thy tale be true, I care not if thou dost as much by me;" for Macbeth now began to faint in resolution, and to doubt the equivocal speeches of the spirits. He was not to fear till Birnam wood should come to Dunsinane; and now a wood did move! "However," said he, "if this which he avouches be true, let us arm and out. There is no flying hence, nor staying here. I begin to be weary of the sun, and wish my life at an end." With these desperate speeches he sallied forth upon the besiegers, who had now come up to the castle.

The strange appearance which had given the messenger an idea of a wood moving is easily solved. When the besieging army marched through the wood of Birnam, Malcolm, like a skilful general, instructed his soldiers to hew down every one a bough and bear it before him, by way of concealing the true numbers of his host. This marching of the soldiers with boughs had at a distance the appearance which had frightened the messenger. Thus were the words of the spirit brought to pass, in a sense different from that in which Macbeth had understood them, and one great hold of his confidence was gone.

And now a severe skirmishing took place, in which Macbeth, though feebly supported by those who called themselves his friends, but in reality hated the tyrant and inclined to the party of Malcolm and Macduff, yet fought with the extreme of rage and valour, cutting to pieces all who were opposed to him, till he came to where Macduff was fighting. Seeing Macduff, and remembering the caution of the spirit who had counselled him to avoid Macduff, above all men, he would have turned, but Macduff, who had been seeking him through the whole fight, opposed his turning, and a fierce contest ensued; Macduff giving him many foul reproaches for the murder of his wife and children. Macbeth, whose soul was charged enough with blood of that family already, would still have declined the combat; but Macduff still urged him to it, calling him tyrant, murderer, hell-hound, and villain.

Then Macbeth remembered the words of the spirit, how none of woman born should hurt him; and smiling confidently he said to Macduff, "Thou losest thy labour, Macduff. As easily thou mayest impress the air with thy sword, as make me vulnerable. I bear a charmed life, which must not yield to one of woman born."

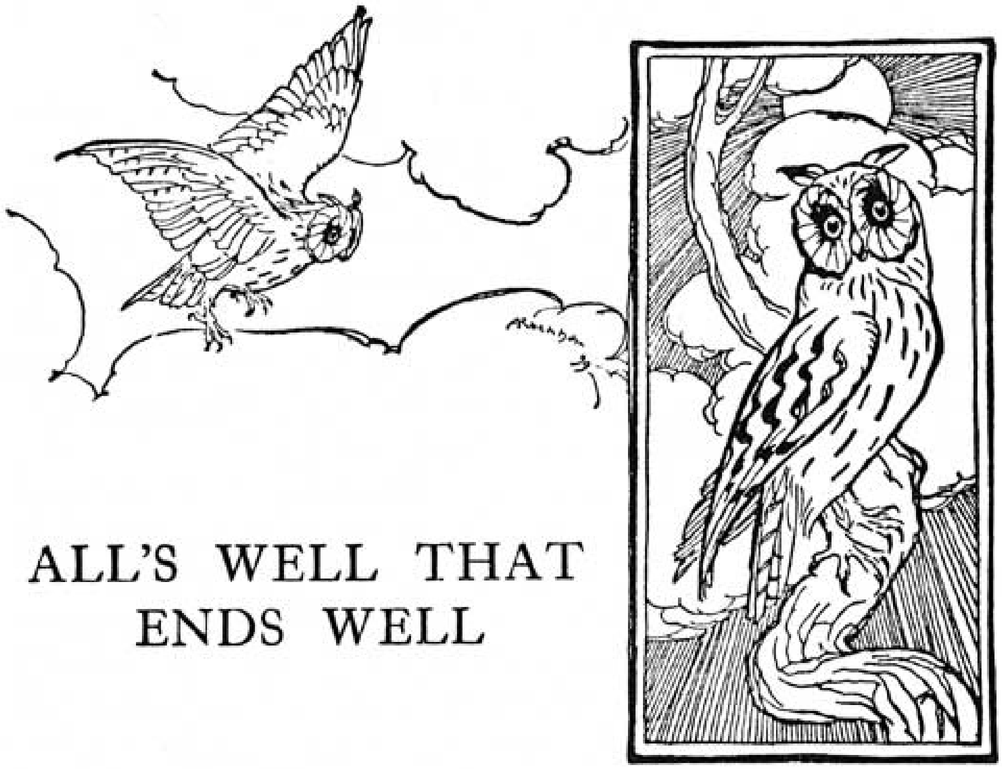
"Despair thy charm," said Macduff, "and let that lying spirit whom thou hast served, tell thee, that Macduff was never born of woman, never as the ordinary manner of men is to be born, but was untimely taken from his mother."

"Accursed be the tongue which tells me so," said the trembling Macbeth, who felt his last hold of confidence give way; "and let never man in future believe the lying equivocations of witches and juggling spirits, who deceive us in words which have double senses, and while they keep their promise literally, disappoint our hopes with a different meaning. I will not fight with thee."

"Then live!" said the scornful Macduff; "we will have a show of thee, as men show monsters, and a painted board, on which shall be written, 'Here men may see the tyrant!'"

"Never," said Macbeth, whose courage returned with despair; "I will not live to kiss the ground before young Malcolm's feet, and to be baited with the curses of the rabble. Though Birnam wood be come to Dunsinane, and thou opposed to me, who wast never born of woman, yet will I try the last." With these frantic words he threw himself upon Macduff, who, after a severe struggle, in the end overcame him, and cutting off his head, made a present of it to the young and lawful king, Malcolm; who took upon him the government which, by the machinations of the usurper, he had so long been deprived of, and ascended the throne of Duncan the Meek, amid the acclamations of the nobles and the people.

ALL’S WELL THAT ENDS WELL



Bertram, Count of Rousillon, had newly come to his title and estate, by the death of his father. The King of France loved the father of Bertram, and when he heard of his death, he sent for his son to come immediately to his royal court in Paris, intending, for the friendship he bore the late count, to grace young Bertram with his especial favour and protection.

Bertram was living with his mother, the widowed countess, when Lafeu, an old lord of the French court, came to conduct him to the king. The King of France was an absolute monarch, and the invitation to court was in the form of a royal mandate, or positive command, which no subject, of what high dignity soever, might disobey; therefore though the countess, in parting with this dear son, seemed a second time to bury her husband, whose loss she had so lately mourned, yet she dared not to keep him a single day, but gave instant orders for his departure. Lafeu, who came to fetch him, tried to comfort the countess for the loss of her late lord, and her son's sudden absence; and he said, in a courtier's flattering manner, that the king was so kind a prince, she would find in his majesty a husband, and that he would be a father to her son; meaning only, that the good king would befriend the fortunes of Bertram. Lafeu told the countess that the king had fallen into a sad malady, which was pronounced by his physicians to be incurable. The lady expressed great sorrow on hearing this account of the king's ill health, and said, she wished the father of Helena (a young gentlewoman who was present in attendance upon her) were living, for that she doubted not he could have cured his majesty of his disease. And she told Lafeu something of the history of Helena, saying she was the only daughter of the famous physician Gerard de Narbon, and that he had recommended his daughter to her care when he was dying, so that since his death she had taken Helena under her protection; then the countess praised the virtuous disposition and excellent qualities of Helena, saying she inherited these virtues from her worthy father. While she was speaking, Helena wept in sad and mournful silence, which made the countess gently reprove her for too much grieving for her father's death.

Bertram now bade his mother farewell. The countess parted with this dear son with tears and many blessings, and commended him to the care of Lafeu, saying, "Good my lord, advise him, for he is an unseasoned courtier."

Bertram's last words were spoken to Helena, but they were words of mere civility, wishing her happiness; and he concluded his short farewell to her with saying, "Be comfortable to my mother, your mistress, and make much of her."

Helena had long loved Bertram, and when she wept in sad and mournful silence, the tears she shed were not for Gerard de Narbon. Helena loved her father, but in the present feeling of a deeper love, the object of which she was about to lose, she had forgotten the very form and features of her dead father, her imagination presenting no image to her mind but Bertram's.

Helena had long loved Bertram, yet she always remembered that he was the Count of Rousillon, descended from the most ancient family in France. She of humble birth. Her parents of no note at all. His ancestors all noble. And therefore she looked up to the high-born Bertram as to her master and to her dear lord, and dared not form any wish but to live his servant, and so living to die his vassal. So great the distance seemed to her between his height of dignity and her lowly fortunes, that she would say, "It were all one that I should love a bright particular star, and think to wed it, Bertram is so far above me."

Bertram's absence filled her eyes with tears and her heart with sorrow; for though she loved without hope, yet it was a pretty comfort to her to see him every hour, and Helena would sit and look upon his dark eye, his arched brow, and the curls of his fine hair, till she seemed to draw his portrait on the tablet of her heart, that heart too capable of retaining the memory of every line in the features of that loved face.

Gerard de Narbon, when he died, left her no other portion than some prescriptions of rare and well-proved virtue, which by deep study and long experience in medicine he had collected as sovereign and almost infallible remedies. Among the rest, there was one set down as an approved medicine for the disease under which Lafeu said the king at that time languished: and when Helena heard of the king's complaint, she, who till now had been so humble and so hopeless, formed an ambitious project in her mind to go herself to Paris, and undertake the cure of the king. But though Helena was the possessor of this choice prescription, it was unlikely, as the king as well as his physicians was of opinion that his disease was incurable, that they would give credit to a poor unlearned virgin, if she should offer to perform a cure. The firm hopes that Helena had of succeeding, if she might be permitted to make the trial, seemed more than even her father's skill warranted, though he was the most famous physician of his time; for she felt a strong faith that this good medicine was sanctified by all the luckiest stars in heaven to be the legacy that should advance her fortune, even to the high dignity of being Count Rousillon's wife.

Bertram had not been long gone, when the countess was informed by her steward, that he had overheard Helena talking to herself, and that he understood from some words she uttered, she was in love with Bertram, and thought of following him to Paris. The countess dismissed the steward with thanks, and desired him to tell Helena she wished to speak with her. What she had just heard of Helena brought the remembrance of days long past into the mind of the countess; those days probably when her love for Bertram's father first began; and she said to herself, "Even so it was with me when I was young. Love is a thorn that belongs to the rose of youth; for in the season of youth, if ever we are nature's children, these faults are ours, though then we think not they are faults."

While the countess was thus meditating on the loving errors of her own youth, Helena entered, and she said to her, "Helena, you know I am a mother to you." Helena replied, "You are my honourable mistress." "You are my daughter," said the countess again: "I say I am your mother. Why do you start and look pale at my words?" With looks of alarm and confused thoughts, fearing the countess suspected her love, Helena still replied, "Pardon me, madam, you are not my mother; the Count Rousillon cannot be my brother, nor I your daughter." "Yet, Helena," said the countess, "you might be my daughter-in-law; and I am afraid that is what you mean to be, the words *mother* and *daughter* so disturb you. Helena, do you love my son?" "Good madam, pardon me," said the affrighted Helena. Again the countess repeated her question, "Do you love my son?" "Do not you love him, madam?" said Helena. The countess replied, "Give me not this evasive answer, Helena. Come, come, disclose the state of your affections, for your love has to the full appeared." Helena on her knees now owned her love, and with shame and terror implored the pardon of her noble mistress; and with words expressive of the sense she had of the inequality between their fortunes, she protested Bertram did not know she loved him, comparing her humble unaspiring love to a poor Indian, who adores the sun that looks upon his worshipper, but knows of him no more. The countess asked Helena if she had not lately an intent to go to Paris? Helena owned the design she had formed in her mind, when she heard Lafeu speak of the king's illness. "This was your motive for wishing to go to Paris," said the countess, "was it? Speak truly." Helena honestly answered, "My lord your son made me to think of this; else Paris, and the medicine, and the king, had from the conversation of my thoughts been absent then." The countess heard the whole of this confession without saying a word either of approval or of blame, but she strictly questioned Helena as to the probability of the medicine being useful to the king. She found that it was the most prized by Gerard de Narbon of all he possessed, and that he had given it to his daughter on his deathbed; and remembering the solemn promise she had made at that awful hour in regard to this young maid, whose destiny, and the life of the king himself, seemed to depend on the execution of a project (which though conceived by the fond suggestions of a loving maiden's thoughts, the countess knew not but it might be the unseen workings of Providence to bring to pass the recovery of the king, and to lay the foundation of the future fortunes of Gerard de Narbon's daughter), free leave she gave to Helena to pursue her own way, and generously furnished her with ample means and suitable attendants; and Helena set out for Paris with the blessings of the countess, and her kindest wishes for her success.

Helena arrived at Paris, and by the assistance of her friend the old Lord Lafeu, she obtained an audience of the king. She had still many difficulties to encounter, for the king was not easily prevailed on to try the medicine offered him by this fair young doctor. But she told him she was Gerard de Narbon's daughter (with whose fame the king was well acquainted), and she offered the precious medicine as the darling treasure which contained the essence of all her father's long experience and skill, and she boldly engaged to forfeit her life, if it failed to restore his majesty to perfect health in the space of two days. The king at length consented to try it, and in two days' time Helena was to lose her life if the king did not recover; but if she succeeded, he promised to give her the choice of any man throughout all France (the princes only excepted) whom she could like for a husband; the choice of a husband being the fee Helena demanded if she cured the king of his disease.

Helena did not deceive herself in the hope she conceived of the efficacy of her father's medicine. Before two days were at an end, the king was restored to perfect health, and he assembled all the young noblemen of his court together, in order to confer the promised reward of a husband upon his fair physician; and he desired Helena to look round on this youthful parcel of noble bachelors, and choose her husband. Helena was not slow to make her choice, for among these young lords she saw the Count Rousillon, and turning to Bertram, she said, "This is the man. I dare not say, my lord, I take you, but I give me and my service ever whilst I live into your guiding power." "Why, then," said the king, "young Bertram, take her; she is your wife." Bertram did not hesitate to declare his dislike to this present of the king's of the self-offered Helena, who, he said, was a poor physician's daughter, bred at his father's charge, and now living a dependent on his mother's bounty. Helena heard him speak these words of rejection and of scorn, and she said to the king, "That you are well, my lord, I am glad. Let the rest go." But the king would not suffer his royal command to be so slighted; for the power of bestowing their nobles in marriage was one of the many privileges of the kings of France; and that same day Bertram was married to Helena, a forced and uneasy marriage to Bertram, and of no promising hope to the poor lady, who, though she gained the noble husband she had hazarded her life to obtain, seemed to have won but a splendid blank, her husband's love not being a gift in the power of the King of France to bestow.

Helena was no sooner married, than she was desired by Bertram to apply to the king for him for leave of absence from court; and when she brought him the king's permission for his departure, Bertram told her that he was not prepared for this sudden marriage, it had much unsettled him, and therefore she must not wonder at the course he should pursue. If Helena wondered not, she grieved when she found it was his intention to leave her. He ordered her to go home to his mother. When Helena heard this unkind command, she replied, "Sir, I can nothing say to this, but that I am your most obedient servant, and shall ever with true observance seek to eke out that desert, wherein my homely stars have failed to equal my great fortunes." But this humble speech of Helena's did not at all move the haughty Bertram to pity his gentle wife, and he parted from her without even the common civility of a kind farewell.

Back to the countess then Helena returned. She had accomplished the purport of her journey, she had preserved the life of the king, and she had wedded her heart's dear lord, the Count Rousillon; but she returned back a dejected lady to her noble mother-in-law, and as soon as she entered the house she received a letter from Bertram which almost broke her heart.

The good countess received her with a cordial welcome, as if she had been her son's own choice, and a lady of a high degree, and she spoke kind words to comfort her for the unkind neglect of Bertram in sending his wife home on her bridal day alone. But this gracious reception failed to cheer the sad mind of Helena, and she said, "Madam, my lord is gone, for ever gone." She then read these words out of Bertram's letter: *When you can get the ring from my finger, which never shall come off, then call me husband, but in such a Then I write a Never* . "This is a dreadful sentence!" said Helena. The countess begged her to have patience, and said, now Bertram was gone, she should be her child, and that she deserved a lord that twenty such rude boys as Bertram might tend upon, and hourly call her mistress. But in vain by respectful condescension and kind flattery this matchless mother tried to soothe the sorrows of her daughter-in-law.

Helena still kept her eyes fixed upon the letter, and cried out in an agony of grief, *Till I have no wife, I have nothing in France* . The countess asked her if she found those words in the letter? "Yes, madam," was all poor Helena could answer.

The next morning Helena was missing. She left a letter to be delivered to the countess after she was gone, to acquaint her with the reason of her sudden absence: in this letter she informed her that she was so much grieved at having driven Bertram from his native country and his home, that to atone for her offence, she had undertaken a pilgrimage to the shrine of St. Jaques le Grand, and concluded with requesting the countess to inform her son that the wife he so hated had left his house for ever.

Bertram, when he left Paris, went to Florence, and there became an officer in the Duke of Florence's army, and after a successful war, in which he distinguished himself by many brave actions, Bertram received letters from his mother, containing the acceptable tidings that Helena would no more disturb him; and he was preparing to return home, when Helena herself, clad in her pilgrim's weeds, arrived at the city of Florence.

Florence was a city through which the pilgrims used to pass on their way to St. Jaques le Grand; and when Helena arrived at this city, she heard that a hospitable widow dwelt there, who used to receive into her house the female pilgrims that were going to visit the shrine of that saint, giving them lodging and kind entertainment. To this good lady, therefore, Helena went, and the widow gave her a courteous welcome, and invited her to see whatever was curious in that famous city, and told her that if she would like to see the duke's army, she would take her where she might have a full view of it. "And you will see a countryman of yours," said the widow; "his name is Count Rousillon, who has done worthy service in the duke's wars." Helena wanted no second invitation, when she found Bertram was to make part of the show. She accompanied her hostess; and a sad and mournful pleasure it was to her to look once more upon her dear husband's face. "Is he not a handsome man?" said the widow. "I like him well," replied Helena, with great truth. All the way they walked, the talkative widow's discourse was all of Bertram: she told Helena the story of Bertram's marriage, and how he had deserted the poor lady his wife, and entered into the duke's army to avoid living with her. To this account of her own misfortunes Helena patiently listened, and when it was ended, the history of Bertram was not yet done, for then the widow began another tale, every word of which sank deep into the mind of Helena; for the story she now told was of Bertram's love for her daughter.

Though Bertram did not like the marriage forced on him by the king, it seems he was not insensible to love, for since he had been stationed with the army at Florence, he had fallen in love with Diana, a fair young gentlewoman, the daughter of this widow who was Helena's hostess; and every night, with music of all sorts, and songs composed in praise of Diana's beauty, he would come under her window, and solicit her love; and all his suit to her was, that she would permit him to visit her by stealth after the family were retired to rest; but Diana would by no means be persuaded to grant this improper request, nor give any encouragement to his suit, knowing him to be a married man; for Diana had been brought up under the counsels of a prudent mother, who, though she was now in reduced circumstances, was well born, and descended from the noble family of the Capulets.

All this the good lady related to Helena, highly praising the virtuous principles of her discreet daughter, which she said were entirely owing to the excellent education and good advice she had given her; and she further said, that Bertram had been particularly importunate with Diana to admit him to the visit he so much desired that night, because he was going to leave Florence early the next morning.

Though it grieved Helena to hear of Bertram's love for the widow's daughter, yet from this story the ardent mind of Helena conceived a project (nothing discouraged at the ill success of her former one) to recover her truant lord. She disclosed to the widow that she was Helena, the deserted wife of Bertram, and requested that her kind hostess and her daughter would suffer this visit from Bertram to take place, and allow her to pass herself upon Bertram for Diana; telling them, her chief motive for desiring to have this secret meeting with her husband, was to get a ring from him, which he had said, if ever she was in possession of he would acknowledge her as his wife.

The widow and her daughter promised to assist her in this affair, partly moved by pity for this unhappy forsaken wife, and partly won over to her interest by the promises of reward which Helena made them, giving them a purse of money in earnest of her future favour. In the course of that day Helena caused information to be sent to Bertram that she was dead; hoping that when he thought himself free to make a second choice by the news of her death, he would offer marriage to her in her feigned character of Diana. And if she could obtain the ring and this promise too, she doubted not she should make some future good come of it.

In the evening, after it was dark, Bertram was admitted into Diana's chamber, and Helena was there ready to receive him. The flattering compliments and love discourse he addressed to Helena were precious sounds to her, though she knew they were meant for Diana; and Bertram was so well pleased with her, that he made her a solemn promise to be her husband, and to love her for ever; which she hoped would be prophetic of a real affection, when he should know it was his own wife, the despised Helena, whose conversation had so delighted him.

Bertram never knew how sensible a lady Helena was, else perhaps he would not have been so regardless of her; and seeing her every day, he had entirely overlooked her beauty; a face we are accustomed to see constantly, losing the effect which is caused by the first sight either of beauty or of plainness; and of her understanding it was impossible he should judge, because she felt such reverence, mixed with her love for him, that she was always silent in his presence: but now that her future fate, and the happy ending of all her love-projects, seemed to depend on her leaving a favourable impression on the mind of Bertram from this night's interview, she exerted all her wit to please him; and the simple graces of her lively conversation and the endearing sweetness of her manners so charmed Bertram, that he vowed she should be his wife. Helena begged the ring from off his finger as a token of his regard, and he gave it to her; and in return for this ring, which it was of such importance to her to possess, she gave him another ring, which was one the king had made her a present of. Before it was light in the morning, she sent Bertram away; and he immediately set out on his journey towards his mother's house.

Helena prevailed on the widow and Diana to accompany her to Paris, their further assistance being necessary to the full accomplishment of the plan she had formed. When they arrived there, they found the king was gone upon a visit to the Countess of Rousillon, and Helena followed the king with all the speed she could make.

The king was still in perfect health, and his gratitude to her who had been the means of his recovery was so lively in his mind, that the moment he saw the

Countess of Rousillon, he began to talk of Helena, calling her a precious jewel that was lost by the folly of her son; but seeing the subject distressed the countess, who sincerely lamented the death of Helena, he said, "My good lady, I have forgiven and forgotten all." But the good-natured old Lafeu, who was present, and could not bear that the memory of his favourite Helena should be so lightly passed over, said, "This I must say, the young lord did great offence to his majesty, his mother, and his lady; but to himself he did the greatest wrong of all, for he has lost a wife whose beauty astonished all eyes, whose words took all ears captive, whose deep perfection made all hearts wish to serve her." The king said, "Praising what is lost makes the remembrance dear. Well—call him hither;" meaning Bertram, who now presented himself before the king: and, on his expressing deep sorrow for the injuries he had done to Helena, the king, for his dead father's and his admirable mother's sake, pardoned him and restored him once more to his favour. But the gracious countenance of the king was soon changed towards him, for he perceived that Bertram wore the very ring upon his finger which he had given to Helena: and he well remembered that Helena had called all the saints in heaven to witness she would never part with that ring, unless she sent it to the king himself upon some great disaster befalling her; and Bertram, on the king's questioning him how he came by the ring, told an improbable story of a lady throwing it to him out of a window, and denied ever having seen Helena since the day of their marriage. The king, knowing Bertram's dislike to his wife, feared he had destroyed her: and he ordered his guards to seize Bertram, saying, "I am wrapt in dismal thinking, for I fear the life of Helena was foully snatched." At this moment Diana and her mother entered, and presented a petition to the king, wherein they begged his majesty to exert his royal power to compel Bertram to marry Diana, he having made her a solemn promise of marriage. Bertram, fearing the king's anger, denied he had made any such promise; and then Diana produced the ring (which Helena had put into her hands) to confirm the truth of her words; and she said that she had given Bertram the ring he then wore, in exchange for that, at the time he vowed to marry her. On hearing this, the king ordered the guards to seize her also; and her account of the ring differing from Bertram's, the king's suspicions were confirmed: and he said, if they did not confess how they came by this ring of Helena's, they should be both put to death. Diana requested her mother might be permitted to fetch the jeweller of whom she bought the ring, which being granted, the widow went out, and presently returned leading in Helena herself.

The good countess, who in silent grief had beheld her son's danger, and had even dreaded that the suspicion of his having destroyed his wife might possibly be true, finding her dear Helena, whom she loved with even a maternal affection, was still living, felt a delight she was hardly able to support; and the king, scarce believing for joy that it was Helena, said, "Is this indeed the wife of Bertram that I see?" Helena, feeling herself yet an unacknowledged wife, replied, "No, my good lord, it is but the shadow of a wife you see, the name and not the thing." Bertram cried out, "Both, both! O pardon!"—"O my lord," said Helena, "when I personated this fair maid, I found you wondrous kind; and look, here is your letter!" reading to him in a joyful tone those words which she had once repeated so sorrowfully, *When from my finger you can get this ring* ,—"This is done; it was to me you gave the ring. Will you be mine, now you are doubly won?" Bertram replied, "If you can make it plain that you were the lady I talked with that night, I will love you dearly ever, ever dearly." This was no difficult task, for the widow and Diana came with Helena to prove this fact; and the king was so well pleased with Diana, for the friendly assistance she had rendered the dear lady he so truly valued for the service she had done him, that he promised her also a noble husband: Helena's history giving him a hint, that it was a suitable reward for kings to bestow upon fair ladies when they perform notable services.

Thus Helena at last found that her father's legacy was indeed sanctified by the luckiest stars in heaven; for she was now the beloved wife of her dear Bertram, the daughter-in-law of her noble mistress, and herself the Countess of Rousillon.

THE TAMING OF THE SHREW

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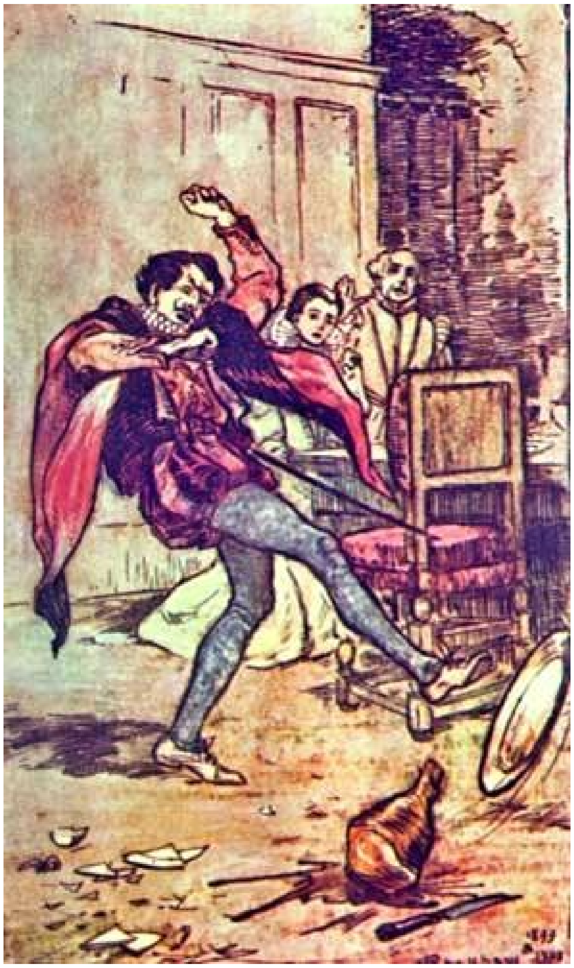
THE TAMING OF THE SHREW

Katharine, the Shrew, was the eldest daughter of Baptista, a rich gentleman of Padua. She was a lady of such an ungovernable spirit and fiery temper, such a loud-tongued scold, that she was known in Padua by no other name than Katharine the Shrew. It seemed very unlikely, indeed impossible, that any gentleman would ever be found who would venture to marry this lady, and therefore Baptista was much blamed for deferring his consent to many excellent offers that were made to her gentle sister Bianca, putting off all Bianca's suitors with this excuse, that when the eldest sister was fairly off his hands, they should have free leave to address young Bianca.



PETRUCHIO, PRETENDING TO FIND FAULT WITH EVERY DISH, THREW THE MEAT ABOUT THE FLOOR

It happened, however, that a gentleman, named Petruchio, came to Padua, purposely to look out for a wife, who, nothing discouraged by these reports of Katharine's temper, and hearing she was rich and handsome, resolved upon marrying this famous termagant, and taming her into a meek and manageable wife. And truly none was so fit to set about this herculean labour as Petruchio, whose spirit was as high as Katharine's, and he was a witty and most happy-tempered humourist, and withal so wise, and of such a true judgment, that he well knew how to feign a passionate and furious deportment, when his spirits were so calm that himself could have laughed merrily at his own angry feigning, for his natural temper was careless and easy; the boisterous airs he assumed when he became the husband of Katharine being but in sport, or more properly speaking, affected by his excellent discernment, as the only means to overcome, in her own way, the passionate ways of the furious Katharine.

A courting then Petruchio went to Katharine the Shrew; and first of all he applied to Baptista her father, for leave to woo his *gentle daughter* Katharine, as Petruchio called her, saying archly, that having heard of her bashful modesty and mild behaviour, he had come from Verona to solicit her love. Her father, though he wished her married, was forced to confess Katharine would ill answer this character, it being soon apparent of what manner of gentleness she was composed, for her music-master rushed into the room to complain that the gentle Katharine, his pupil, had broken his head with her lute, for presuming to find fault with her performance; which, when Petruchio heard, he said, "It is a brave wench; I love her more than ever, and long to have some chat with her;" and hurrying the old gentleman for a positive answer, he said, "My business is in haste, Signior Baptista, I cannot come every day to woo. You knew my father: he is dead, and has left me heir to all his lands and goods. Then tell me, if I get your daughter's love, what dowry you will give with her." Baptista thought his manner was somewhat blunt for a lover; but being glad to get Katharine married, he answered that he would give her twenty thousand crowns for her dowry, and half his estate at his death: so this odd match was quickly agreed on, and Baptista went to apprise his shrewish daughter of her lover's addresses, and sent her in to Petruchio to listen to his suit.

In the meantime Petruchio was settling with himself the mode of courtship he should pursue; and he said, "I will woo her with some spirit when she comes. If she rails at me, why then I will tell her she sings as sweetly as a nightingale; and if she frowns, I will say she looks as clear as roses newly washed with dew. If she will not speak a word, I will praise the eloquence of her language; and if she bids me leave her, I will give her thanks as if she bid me stay with her a week." Now the stately Katharine entered, and Petruchio first addressed her with "Good morrow, Kate, for that is your name, I hear." Katharine, not liking this plain salutation, said disdainfully, "They call me Katharine who do speak to me." "You lie," replied the lover; "for you are called plain Kate, and bonny Kate, and sometimes Kate the Shrew: but, Kate, you are the prettiest Kate in Christendom, and therefore, Kate, hearing your mildness praised in every town, I am come to woo you for my wife."

A strange courtship they made of it. She in loud and angry terms showing him how justly she had gained the name of Shrew, while he still praised her sweet and courteous words, till at length, hearing her father coming, he said (intending to make as quick a wooing as possible), "Sweet Katharine, let us set this idle chat aside, for your father has consented that you shall be my wife, your dowry is agreed on, and whether you will or no, I will marry you."

And now Baptista entering, Petruchio told him his daughter had received him kindly, and that she had promised to be married the next Sunday. This Katharine denied, saying she would rather see him hanged on Sunday, and reproached her father for wishing to wed her to such a mad-cap ruffian as Petruchio. Petruchio desired her father not to regard her angry words, for they had agreed she should seem reluctant before him, but that when they were alone he had found her very fond and loving; and he said to her, "Give me your hand, Kate; I will go to Venice to buy you fine apparel against our wedding day. Provide the feast, father, and bid the wedding guests. I will be sure to bring rings, fine array, and rich clothes, that my Katharine may be fine; and kiss me, Kate, for we will be married on Sunday."

On the Sunday all the wedding guests were assembled, but they waited long before Petruchio came, and Katharine wept for vexation to think that Petruchio had only been making a jest of her. At last, however, he appeared; but he brought none of the bridal finery he had promised Katharine, nor was he dressed himself like a bridegroom, but in strange disordered attire, as if he meant to make a sport of the serious business he came about; and his servant and the very horses on which they rode were in like manner in mean and fantastic fashion habited.

Petruchio could not be persuaded to change his dress; he said Katharine was to be married to him, and not to his clothes; and finding it was in vain to argue with him, to the church they went, he still behaving in the same mad way, for when the priest asked Petruchio if Katharine should be his wife, he swore so loud that she should, that, all amazed, the priest let fall his book, and as he stooped to take it up, this mad-brained bridegroom gave him such a cuff, that down fell the priest and his book again. And all the while they were being married he stamped and swore so, that the high-spirited Katharine trembled and shook with fear. After the ceremony was over, while they were yet in the church, he called for wine, and drank a loud health to the company, and threw a sop which was at the bottom of the glass full in the sexton's face, giving no other reason for this strange act, than that the sexton's beard grew thin and hungerly, and seemed to ask the sop as he was drinking. Never sure was there such a mad marriage; but Petruchio did but put this wildness on, the better to succeed in the plot he had formed to tame his shrewish wife.

Baptista had provided a sumptuous marriage feast, but when they returned from church, Petruchio, taking hold of Katharine, declared his intention of carrying his wife home instantly: and no remonstrance of his father-in-law, or angry words of the enraged Katharine, could make him change his purpose. He claimed a husband's right to dispose of his wife as he pleased, and away he hurried Katharine off: he seeming so daring and resolute that no one dared attempt to stop him.

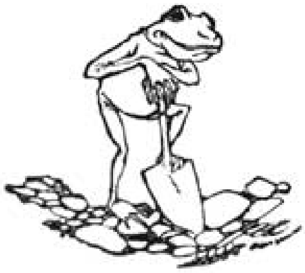
Petruchio mounted his wife upon a miserable horse, lean and lank, which he had picked out for the purpose, and himself and his servant no better mounted; they journeyed on through rough and miry ways, and ever when this horse of Katharine's stumbled, he would storm and swear at the poor jaded beast, who could scarce crawl under his burthen, as if he had been the most passionate man alive.

At length, after a weary journey, during which Katharine had heard nothing but the wild ravings of Petruchio at the servant and the horses, they arrived at his house. Petruchio welcomed her kindly to her home, but he resolved she should have neither rest nor food that night. The tables were spread, and supper soon served; but Petruchio, pretending to find fault with every dish, threw the meat about the floor, and ordered the servants to remove it away; and all this he did, as he said, in love for his Katharine, that she might not eat meat that was not well dressed. And when Katharine, weary and supperless, retired to rest, he found the same fault with the bed, throwing the pillows and bed-clothes about the room, so that she was forced to sit down in a chair, where if she chanced to drop asleep, she was presently awakened by the loud voice of her husband, storming at the servants for the ill-making of his wife's bridal-bed.

The next day Petruchio pursued the same course, still speaking kind words to Katharine, but when she attempted to eat, finding fault with everything that was set before her, throwing the breakfast on the floor as he had done the supper; and Katharine, the haughty Katharine, was fain to beg the servants would bring her secretly a morsel of food; but they being instructed by Petruchio, replied, they dared not give her anything unknown to their master. "Ah," said she, "did he marry me to famish me? Beggars that come to my father's door have food given them. But I, who never knew what it was to entreat for anything, am starved for want of food, giddy for want of sleep, with oaths kept waking, and with brawling fed; and that which vexes me more than all, he does it under the name of perfect love, pretending that if I sleep or eat, it were present death to me." Here the soliloquy was interrupted by the entrance of Petruchio: he, not meaning she should be quite starved, had brought her a small portion of meat, and he said to her, "How fares my sweet Kate? Here, love, you see how diligent I am, I have dressed your meat myself. I am sure this kindness merits thanks. What, not a word? Nay, then you love not the meat, and all the pains I have taken is to no purpose." He then ordered the servant to take the dish away. Extreme hunger, which had abated the pride of Katharine, made her say, though angered to the heart, "I pray you let it stand." But this was not all Petruchio intended to bring her to, and he replied, "The poorest service is repaid with thanks, and so shall mine before you touch the meat." On this Katharine brought out a reluctant "I thank you, sir." And now he suffered her to make a slender meal, saying, "Much good may it do your gentle heart, Kate; eat apace! And now, my honey love, we will return to your father's house, and revel it as bravely as the best, with silken coats and caps and golden rings, with ruffs and scarfs and fans and double change of finery;" and to make her believe he really intended to give her these gay things, he called in a tailor and a haberdasher, who brought some new clothes he had ordered for her, and then giving her plate to the servant to take away, before she had half satisfied her hunger, he said, "What, have you dined?" The haberdasher presented a cap, saying, "Here is the cap your worship bespoke;" on which Petruchio began to storm afresh, saying the cap was moulded in a porringer, and that it was no bigger than a cockle or walnut shell, desiring the haberdasher to take it away and make it bigger. Katharine said, "I will have this; all gentlewomen wear such caps as these."—"When you are gentle," replied Petruchio, "you shall have one too, and not till then." The meat Katharine had eaten had a little revived her fallen spirits, and she said, "Why, sir, I trust I may have leave to speak, and speak I will: I am no child, no babe; your betters have endured to hear me say my mind; and if you cannot, you had better stop your ears." Petruchio would not hear these angry words, for he had happily discovered a better way of managing his wife than keeping up a jangling argument with her; therefore his answer was, "Why, you say true; it is a paltry cap, and I love you for not liking it."—"Love me, or love me not," said Katharine, "I like the cap, and I will have this cap or none."—"You say you wish to see the gown," said Petruchio, still affecting to misunderstand her. The tailor then came forward and showed her a fine gown he had made for her. Petruchio, whose intent was that she should have neither cap nor gown, found as much fault with that. "O mercy, Heaven!" said he, "what stuff is here! What, do you call this a sleeve? it is like a demi-cannon, carved up and down like an apple tart." The tailor said, "You bid me make it according to the fashion of the times;" and Katharine said, she never saw a better fashioned gown. This was enough for Petruchio, and privately desiring these people might be paid for their goods, and excuses made to them for the seemingly strange treatment he bestowed upon them, he with fierce words and furious gestures drove the tailor and the haberdasher out of the room; and then, turning to Katharine, he said, "Well, come, my Kate, we will go to your father's even in these mean garments we now wear." And then he ordered his horses, affirming they should reach Baptista's house by dinner-time, for that it was but seven o'clock. Now it was not early morning, but the very middle of the day, when he spoke this; therefore Katharine ventured to say, though modestly, being almost overcome by the vehemence of his manner, "I dare assure you, sir, it is two o'clock, and will be supper-time before we get there." But Petruchio meant that she should be so completely subdued, that she should assent to everything he said, before he carried her to her father; and therefore, as if he were lord even of the sun, and could command the hours, he said it should be what time he pleased to have it, before he set forward; "For," he said, "whatever I say or do, you still are crossing it. I will not go to-day, and when I go, it shall be what o'clock I say it is." Another day Katharine was forced to practise her newly-found obedience, and not till he had brought her proud spirit to such a perfect subjection, that she dared not remember there was such a word as contradiction, would Petruchio allow her to go to her father's house; and even while they were upon their journey thither, she was in danger of being turned back again, only because she happened to hint it was the sun, when he affirmed the moon shone brightly at noonday. "Now, by my mother's son," said he, "and that is myself, it shall be the moon, or stars, or what I list, before I journey to your father's house." He then made as if he were going back again; but Katharine, no longer Katharine the Shrew, but the obedient wife, said, "Let us go forward, I pray, now we have come so far, and it shall be the sun, or moon, or what you please, and if you please to call it a rush candle henceforth, I vow it shall be so for me." This he was resolved to prove, therefore he said again, "I say, it is the moon."—"I know it is the moon," replied Katharine. "You lie, it is the blessed sun," said Petruchio. "Then it is the blessed sun," replied Katharine; "but sun it is not, when you say it is not. What you will have it named, even so it is, and so it ever shall be for Katharine." Now then he suffered her to proceed on her journey; but further to try if this yielding humour would last, he addressed an old gentleman they met on the road as if he had been a young woman, saying to him, "Good morrow, gentle mistress;" and asked Katharine if she had ever beheld a fairer gentlewoman, praising the red and white of the old man's cheeks, and comparing his eyes to two bright stars; and again he addressed him, saying, "Fair lovely maid, once more good day to you!" and said to his wife, "Sweet Kate, embrace her for her beauty's sake." The now completely vanquished Katharine quickly adopted her husband's opinion, and made her speech in like sort to the old gentleman, saying to him, "Young budding virgin, you are fair, and fresh, and sweet: whither are you going, and where is your dwelling? Happy are the parents of so fair a child."—"Why, how now, Kate," said Petruchio; "I hope you are not mad. This is a man, old and wrinkled, faded and withered, and not a maiden, as you say he is." On this Katharine said, "Pardon me, old gentleman; the sun has so dazzled my eyes, that everything I look on seemeth green. Now I perceive you are a reverend father: I hope you will pardon me for my sad mistake."—"Do, good old grandsire," said Petruchio, "and tell us which way you are travelling. We shall be glad of your good company, if you are going our way." The old gentleman replied, "Fair sir, and you, my merry mistress, your strange encounter has much amazed me. My name is Vincentio, and I am going to visit a son of mine who lives at Padua." Then Petruchio knew the old gentleman to be the father of Lucentio, a young gentleman who was to be married to Baptista's younger daughter, Bianca, and he made Vincentio very happy, by telling him the rich marriage his son was about to make: and they all journeyed on pleasantly together till they came to Baptista's house, where there was a large company assembled to celebrate the wedding of Bianca and Lucentio, Baptista having willingly consented to the marriage of Bianca when he had got Katharine off his hands.

When they entered, Baptista welcomed them to the wedding feast, and there was present also another newly married pair.

Lucentio, Bianca's husband, and Hortensio, the other new married man, could not forbear sly jests, which seemed to hint at the shrewish disposition of Petruchio's wife, and these fond bridegrooms seemed highly pleased with the mild tempers of the ladies they had chosen, laughing at Petruchio for his less fortunate choice. Petruchio took little notice of their jokes till the ladies were retired after dinner, and then he perceived Baptista himself joined in the laugh against him: for when Petruchio affirmed that his wife would prove more obedient than theirs, the father of Katharine said, "Now, in good sadness, son Petruchio, I fear you have got the veriest shrew of all." "Well," said Petruchio, "I say no, and therefore for assurance that I speak the truth, let us each one send for his wife, and he whose wife is most obedient to come at first when she is sent for, shall win a wager which we will propose." To this the other two husbands willingly consented, for they were quite confident that their gentle wives would prove more obedient than the headstrong Katharine; and they proposed a wager of twenty crowns, but Petruchio merrily said, he would lay as much as that upon his hawk or hound, but twenty times as much upon his wife. Lucentio and Hortensio raised the wager to a hundred crowns, and Lucentio first sent his servant to desire Bianca would come to him. But the servant returned, and said, "Sir, my mistress sends you word she is busy and cannot come."—"How," said Petruchio, "does she say she is busy and cannot come? Is that an answer for a wife?" Then they laughed at him, and said, it would be well if Katharine did not send him a worse answer. And now it was Hortensio's turn to send for his wife; and he said to his servant, "Go, and entreat my wife to come to me." "Oh ho! entreat her!" said Petruchio. "Nay, then, she needs must come."—"I am afraid, sir," said Hortensio, "your wife will not be entreated." But presently this civil husband looked a little blank, when the servant returned without his mistress; and he said to him, "How now! Where is my wife?"—"Sir," said the servant, "my mistress says, you have some goodly jest in hand, and therefore she will not come. She bids you come to her."—"Worse and worse!" said Petruchio; and then he sent his servant, saying, "Sirrah, go to your mistress, and tell her I command her to come to me." The company had scarcely time to think she would not obey this summons, when Baptista, all in amaze, exclaimed, "Now, by my *holidame* , here comes Katharine!" and she entered, saying meekly to Petruchio, "What is your will, sir, that you send for me?"—"Where is your sister and Hortensio's wife?" said he. Katharine replied, "They sit conferring by the parlour fire."—"Go, fetch them hither!" said Petruchio. Away went Katharine without reply to perform her husband's command. "Here is a wonder," said Lucentio, "if you talk of a wonder."—"And so it is," said Hortensio; "I marvel what it bodes."—"Marry, peace it bodes," said Petruchio, "and love, and quiet life, and right supremacy; and, to be short, everything that is sweet and happy." Katharine's father, overjoyed to see this reformation in his daughter, said, "Now, fair befall thee, son Petruchio! you have won the wager, and I will add another twenty thousand crowns to her dowry, as if she were another daughter, for she is changed as if she had never been."—"Nay," said Petruchio, "I will win the wager better yet, and show more signs of her new-built virtue and obedience." Katharine now entering with the two ladies, he continued, "See where she comes, and brings your froward wives as prisoners to her womanly persuasion. Katharine, that cap of yours does not become you; off with that bauble, and throw it under foot." Katharine instantly took off her cap, and threw it down. "Lord!" said Hortensio's wife, "may I never have a cause to sigh till I am brought to such a silly pass!" And Bianca, she too said, "Fie, what foolish duty call you this?" On this Bianca's husband said to her, "I wish your duty were as foolish too! The wisdom of your duty, fair Bianca, has cost me a hundred crowns since dinner-time."—"The more fool you," said Bianca, "for laying on my duty."—"Katharine," said Petruchio, "I charge you tell these headstrong women what duty they owe their lords and husbands." And to the wonder of all present, the reformed shrewish lady spoke as eloquently in praise of the wife-like duty of obedience, as she had practised it implicitly in a ready submission to Petruchio's will. And Katharine once more became famous in Padua, not as heretofore, as Katharine the Shrew, but as Katharine the most obedient and duteous wife in Padua.



THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

The states of Syracuse and Ephesus being at variance, there was a cruel law made at Ephesus, ordaining that if any merchant of Syracuse was seen in the city of Ephesus, he was to be put to death, unless he could pay a thousand marks for the ransom of his life.

Ægeon, an old merchant of Syracuse, was discovered in the streets of Ephesus, and brought before the duke, either to pay this heavy fine, or to receive sentence of death.

Ægeon had no money to pay the fine, and the duke, before he pronounced the sentence of death upon him, desired him to relate the history of his life, and to tell for what cause he had ventured to come to the city of Ephesus, which it was death for any Syracusan merchant to enter.

Ægeon said, that he did not fear to die, for sorrow had made him weary of his life, but that a heavier task could not have been imposed upon him than to relate the events of his unfortunate life. He then began his own history, in the following words:

"I was born at Syracuse, and brought up to the profession of a merchant. I married a lady, with whom I lived very happily, but being obliged to go to Epidamnum, I was detained there by my business six months, and then, finding I should be obliged to stay some time longer, I sent for my wife, who, as soon as she arrived, was brought to bed of two sons, and what was very strange, they were both so exactly alike, that it was impossible to distinguish the one from the other. At the same time that my wife was brought to bed of these twin boys, a poor woman in the inn where my wife lodged was brought to bed of two sons, and these twins were as much like each other as my two sons were. The parents of these children being exceeding poor, I bought the two boys, and brought them up to attend upon my sons.

"My sons were very fine children, and my wife was not a little proud of two such boys: and she daily wishing to return home, I unwillingly agreed, and in an evil hour we got on ship-board; for we had not sailed above a league from Epidamnum before a dreadful storm arose, which continued with such violence, that the sailors seeing no chance of saving the ship, crowded into the boat to save their own lives, leaving us alone in the ship, which we every moment expected would be destroyed by the fury of the storm.

"The incessant weeping of my wife, and the piteous complaints of the pretty babes, who, not knowing what to fear, wept for fashion, because they saw their mother weep, filled me with terror for them, though I did not for myself fear death; and all my thoughts were bent to contrive means for their safety. I tied my youngest son to the end of a small spare mast, such as seafaring men provide against storms; at the other end I bound the youngest of the twin slaves, and at the same time I directed my wife how to fasten the other children in like manner to another mast. She thus having the care of the two eldest children, and I of the two younger, we bound ourselves separately to these masts with the children; and but for this contrivance we had all been lost, for the ship split on a mighty rock, and was dashed in pieces; and we, clinging to these slender masts, were supported above the water, where I, having the care of two children, was unable to assist my wife, who with the other children was soon separated from me; but while they were yet in my sight, they were taken up by a boat of fishermen, from Corinth, (as I supposed), and seeing them in safety, I had no care but to struggle with the wild sea-waves, to preserve my dear son and the youngest slave. At length we, in our turn, were taken up by a ship, and the sailors, knowing me, gave us kind welcome and assistance, and landed us in safety at Syracuse; but from that sad hour I have never known what became of my wife and eldest child.

"My youngest son, and now my only care, when he was eighteen years of age, began to be inquisitive after his mother and his brother, and often importuned me that he might take his attendant, the young slave, who had also lost his brother, and go in search of them: at length I unwillingly gave consent, for though I anxiously desired to hear tidings of my wife and eldest son, yet in sending my younger one to find them, I hazarded the loss of him also. It is now seven years since my son left me; five years have I passed in travelling through the world in search of him: I have been in farthest Greece, and through the bounds of Asia, and coasting homewards, I landed here in Ephesus, being unwilling to leave any place unsought that harbours men; but this day must end the story of my life, and happy should I think myself in my death, if I were assured my wife and sons were living."

Here the hapless Ægeon ended the account of his misfortunes; and the duke, pitying this unfortunate father, who had brought upon himself this great peril by his love for his lost son, said, if it were not against the laws, which his oath and dignity did not permit him to alter, he would freely pardon him; yet, instead of dooming him to instant death, as the strict letter of the law required, he would give him that day to try if he could beg or borrow the money to pay the fine.

This day of grace did seem no great favour to Ægeon, for not knowing any man in Ephesus, there seemed to him but little chance that any stranger would lend or give him a thousand marks to pay the fine; and helpless and hopeless of any relief, he retired from the presence of the duke in the custody of a jailor.

Ægeon supposed he knew no person in Ephesus; but at the very time he was in danger of losing his life through the careful search he was making after his youngest son, that son and his eldest son also were both in the city of Ephesus.

Ægeon's sons, besides being exactly alike in face and person, were both named alike, being both called Antipholus, and the two twin slaves were also both named Dromio. Ægeon's youngest son, Antipholus of Syracuse, he whom the old man had come to Ephesus to seek, happened to arrive at Ephesus with his slave Dromio that very same day that Ægeon did; and he being also a merchant of Syracuse, he would have been in the same danger that his father was, but by good fortune he met a friend who told him the peril an old merchant of Syracuse was in, and advised him to pass for a merchant of Epidamnum; this Antipholus agreed to do, and he was sorry to hear one of his own countrymen was in this danger, but he little thought this old merchant was his own father.

The eldest son of Ægeon (who must be called Antipholus of Ephesus, to distinguish him from his brother Antipholus of Syracuse) had lived at Ephesus twenty years, and, being a rich man, was well able to have paid the money for the ransom of his father's life; but Antipholus knew nothing of his father, being so young when he was taken out of the sea with his mother by the fishermen that he only remembered he had been so preserved, but he had no recollection of either his father or his mother; the fishermen who took up this Antipholus and his mother and the young slave Dromio, having carried the two children away from her (to the great grief of that unhappy lady), intending to sell them.

Antipholus and Dromio were sold by them to Duke Menaphon, a famous warrior, who was uncle to the Duke of Ephesus, and he carried the boys to Ephesus when he went to visit the duke his nephew.

The Duke of Ephesus taking a liking to young Antipholus, when he grew up, made him an officer in his army, in which he distinguished himself by his great bravery in the wars, where he saved the life of his patron the duke, who rewarded his merit by marrying him to Adriana, a rich lady of Ephesus; with whom he was living (his slave Dromio still attending him) at the time his father came there.

Antipholus of Syracuse, when he parted with his friend, who advised him to say he came from Epidamnum, gave his slave Dromio some money to carry to the inn where he intended to dine, and in the meantime he said he would walk about and view the city, and observe the manners of the people.

Dromio was a pleasant fellow, and when Antipholus was dull and melancholy he used to divert himself with the odd humours and merry jests of his slave, so that the freedoms of speech he allowed in Dromio were greater than is usual between masters and their servants.

When Antipholus of Syracuse had sent Dromio away, he stood awhile thinking over his solitary wanderings in search of his mother and his brother, of whom in no place where he landed could he hear the least tidings; and he said sorrowfully to himself, "I am like a drop of water in the ocean, which seeking to find its fellow drop, loses itself in the wide sea. So I unhappily, to find a mother and a brother, do lose myself."

While he was thus meditating on his weary travels, which had hitherto been so useless, Dromio (as he thought) returned. Antipholus, wondering that he came back so soon, asked him where he had left the money. Now it was not his own Dromio, but the twin-brother that lived with Antipholus of Ephesus, that he spoke to. The two Dromios and the two Antipholuses were still as much alike as Ægeon had said they were in their infancy; therefore no wonder Antipholus thought it was his own slave returned, and asked him why he came back so soon. Dromio replied, "My mistress sent me to bid you come to dinner. The capon burns, and the pig falls from the spit, and the meat will be all cold if you do not come home." "These jests are out of season," said Antipholus: "where did you leave the money?" Dromio still answering, that his mistress had sent him to fetch Antipholus to dinner: "What mistress?" said Antipholus. "Why, your worship's wife, sir," replied Dromio. Antipholus having no wife, he was very angry with Dromio, and said, "Because I familiarly sometimes chat with you, you presume to jest with me in this free manner. I am not in a sportive humour now: where is the money? we being strangers here, how dare you trust so great a charge from your own custody?" Dromio hearing his master, as he thought him, talk of their being strangers, supposing Antipholus was jesting, replied merrily, "I pray you, sir, jest as you sit at dinner. I had no charge but to fetch you home, to dine with my mistress and her sister." Now Antipholus lost all patience, and beat Dromio, who ran home, and told his mistress that his master had refused to come to dinner, and said that he had no wife.

Adriana, the wife of Antipholus of Ephesus, was very angry when she heard that her husband said he had no wife; for she was of a jealous temper, and she said her husband meant that he loved another lady better than herself; and she began to fret, and say unkind words of jealousy and reproach of her husband; and her sister Luciana, who lived with her, tried in vain to persuade her out of her groundless suspicions.

Antipholus of Syracuse went to the inn, and found Dromio with the money in safety there, and seeing his own Dromio, he was going again to chide him for his free jests, when Adriana came up to him, and not doubting but it was her husband she saw, she began to reproach him for looking strange upon her (as well he might, never having seen this angry lady before); and then she told him how well he loved her before they were married, and that now he loved some other lady instead of her. "How comes it now, my husband," said she, "O how comes it that I have lost your love?"—"Plead you to me, fair dame?" said the astonished Antipholus. It was in vain he told her he was not her husband, and that he had been in Ephesus but two hours; she insisted on his going home with her, and Antipholus at last, being unable to get away, went with her to his brother's house, and dined with Adriana and her sister, the one calling him husband, and the other brother, he, all amazed, thinking he must have been married to her in his sleep, or that he was sleeping now. And Dromio, who followed them, was no less surprised, for the cook-maid, who was his brother's wife, also claimed him for her husband.

While Antipholus of Syracuse was dining with his brother's wife, his brother, the real husband, returned home to dinner with his slave Dromio; but the servants would not open the door, because their mistress had ordered them not to admit any company; and when they repeatedly knocked, and said they were Antipholus and Dromio, the maids laughed at them, and said that Antipholus was at dinner with their mistress, and Dromio was in the kitchen; and though they almost knocked the door down, they could not gain admittance, and at last Antipholus went away very angry, and strangely surprised at hearing a gentleman was dining with his wife.

When Antipholus of Syracuse had finished his dinner, he was so perplexed at the lady's still persisting in calling him husband, and at hearing that Dromio had also been claimed by the cook-maid, that he left the house, as soon as he could find any pretence to get away; for though he was very much pleased with Luciana, the sister, yet the jealous-tempered Adriana he disliked very much, nor was Dromio at all better satisfied with his fair wife in the kitchen: therefore both master and man were glad to get away from their new wives as fast as they could.

The moment Antipholus of Syracuse had left the house, he was met by a goldsmith, who mistaking him, as Adriana had done, for Antipholus of Ephesus, gave him a gold chain, calling him by his name; and when Antipholus would have refused the chain, saying it did not belong to him, the goldsmith replied he made it by his own orders; and went away, leaving the chain in the hands of Antipholus, who ordered his man Dromio to get his things on board a ship, not choosing to stay in a place any longer, where he met with such strange adventures that he surely thought himself bewitched.

The goldsmith who had given the chain to the wrong Antipholus, was arrested immediately after for a sum of money he owed; and Antipholus, the married brother, to whom the goldsmith thought he had given the chain, happened to come to the place where the officer was arresting the goldsmith, who, when he saw Antipholus, asked him to pay for the gold chain he had just delivered to him, the price amounting to nearly the same sum as that for which he had been arrested. Antipholus denying the having received the chain, and the goldsmith persisting to declare that he had but a few minutes before given it to him, they disputed this matter a long time, both thinking they were right: for Antipholus knew the goldsmith never gave him the chain, and so like were the two brothers, the goldsmith was as certain he had delivered the chain into his hands, till at last the officer took the goldsmith away to prison for the debt he owed, and at the same time the goldsmith made the officer arrest Antipholus for the price of the chain; so that at the conclusion of their dispute, Antipholus and the merchant were both taken away to prison together.

As Antipholus was going to prison, he met Dromio of Syracuse, his brother's slave, and mistaking him for his own, he ordered him to go to Adriana his wife, and tell her to send the money for which he was arrested. Dromio wondering that his master should send him back to the strange house where he dined, and from which he had just before been in such haste to depart, did not dare to reply, though he came to tell his master the ship was ready to sail: for he saw Antipholus was in no humour to be jested with. Therefore he went away, grumbling within himself, that he must return to Adriana's house, "Where," said he, "Dowsabel claims me for a husband: but I must go, for servants must obey their masters' commands."

Adriana gave him the money, and as Dromio was returning, he met Antipholus of Syracuse, who was still in amaze at the surprising adventures he met with; for his brother being well known in Ephesus, there was hardly a man he met in the streets but saluted him as an old acquaintance: some offered him money which they said was owing to him, some invited him to come and see them, and some gave him thanks for kindnesses they said he had done them, all mistaking him for his brother. A tailor showed him some silks he had bought for him, and insisted upon taking measure of him for some clothes.

Antipholus began to think he was among a nation of sorcerers and witches, and Dromio did not at all relieve his master from his bewildered thoughts, by asking him how he got free from the officer who was carrying him to prison, and giving him the purse of gold which Adriana had sent to pay the debt with. This talk of Dromio's of the arrest and of a prison, and of the money he had brought from Adriana, perfectly confounded Antipholus, and he said, "This fellow Dromio is certainly distracted, and we wander here in illusions;" and quite terrified at his own confused thoughts, he cried out, "Some blessed power deliver us from this strange place!"

And now another stranger came up to him, and she was a lady, and she too called him Antipholus, and told him he had dined with her that day, and asked him for a gold chain which she said he had promised to give her. Antipholus now lost all patience, and calling her a sorceress, he denied that he had ever promised her a chain, or dined with her, or had even seen her face before that moment. The lady persisted in affirming he had dined with her, and had promised her a chain, which Antipholus still denying, she further said, that she had given him a valuable ring, and if he would not give her the gold chain, she insisted upon having her own ring again. On this Antipholus became quite frantic, and again calling her sorceress and witch, and denying all knowledge of her or her ring, ran away from her, leaving her astonished at his words and his wild looks, for nothing to her appeared more certain than that he had dined with her, and that she had given him a ring, in consequence of his promising to make her a present of a gold chain. But this lady had fallen into the same mistake the others had done, for she had taken him for his brother: the married Antipholus had done all the things she taxed this Antipholus with.

When the married Antipholus was denied entrance into his own house (those within supposing him to be already there), he had gone away very angry, believing it to be one of his wife's jealous freaks, to which she was very subject, and remembering that she had often falsely accused him of visiting other ladies, he, to be revenged on her for shutting him out of his own house, determined to go and dine with this lady, and she receiving him with great civility, and his wife having so highly offended him, Antipholus promised to give her a gold chain, which he had intended as a present for his wife; it was the same chain which the goldsmith by mistake had given to his brother. The lady liked so well the thoughts of having a fine gold chain, that she gave the married Antipholus a ring; which when, as she supposed (taking his brother for him), he denied, and said he did not know her, and left her in such a wild passion, she began to think he was certainly out of his senses; and presently she resolved to go and tell Adriana that her husband was mad. And while she was telling it to Adriana, he came, attended by the jailor (who allowed him to come home to get the money to pay the debt), for the purse of money, which Adriana had sent by Dromio, and he had delivered to the other Antipholus.

Adriana believed the story the lady told her of her husband's madness must be true, when he reproached her for shutting him out of his own house; and remembering how he had protested all dinner-time that he was not her husband, and had never been in Ephesus till that day, she had no doubt that he was mad; she therefore paid the jailor the money, and having discharged him, she ordered her servants to bind her husband with ropes, and had him conveyed into a dark room, and sent for a doctor to come and cure him of his madness: Antipholus all the while hotly exclaiming against this false accusation, which the exact likeness he bore to his brother had brought upon him. But his rage only the more confirmed them in the belief that he was mad; and Dromio persisting in the same story, they bound him also, and took him away along with his master.

Soon after Adriana had put her husband into confinement, a servant came to tell her that Antipholus and Dromio must have broken loose from their keepers, for that they were both walking at liberty in the next street. On hearing this, Adriana ran out to fetch him home, taking some people with her to secure her husband again; and her sister went along with her. When they came to the gates of a convent in their neighbourhood, there they saw Antipholus and Dromio, as they thought, being again deceived by the likeness of the twin-brothers.

Antipholus of Syracuse was still beset with the perplexities this likeness had brought upon him. The chain which the goldsmith had given him was about his neck, and the goldsmith was reproaching him for denying that he had it, and refusing to pay for it, and Antipholus was protesting that the goldsmith freely gave him the chain in the morning, and that from that hour he had never seen the goldsmith again.

And now Adriana came up to him and claimed him as her lunatic husband, who had escaped from his keepers; and the men she brought with her were going to lay violent hands on Antipholus and Dromio; but they ran into the convent, and Antipholus begged the abbess to give him shelter in her house.

And now came out the lady abbess herself to inquire into the cause of this disturbance. She was a grave and venerable lady, and wise to judge of what she saw, and she would not too hastily give up the man who had sought protection in her house; so she strictly questioned the wife about the story she told of her husband's madness, and she said, "What is the cause of this sudden distemper of your husband's? Has he lost his wealth at sea? Or is it the death of some dear friend that has disturbed his mind?" Adriana replied, that no such things as these had been the cause. "Perhaps," said the abbess, "he has fixed his affections on some other lady than you his wife; and that has driven him to this state." Adriana said she had long thought the love of some other lady was the cause of his frequent absences from home. Now it was not his love for another, but the teasing jealousy of his wife's temper, that often obliged Antipholus to leave his home; and (the abbess suspecting this from the vehemence of Adriana's manner) to learn the truth, she said, "You should have reprehended him for this."—"Why, so I did," replied Adriana. "Ay," said the abbess, "but perhaps not enough." Adriana, willing to convince the abbess that she had said enough to Antipholus on this subject, replied, "It was the constant subject of our conversation: in bed I would not let him sleep for speaking of it. At table I would not let him eat for speaking of it. When I was alone with him, I talked of nothing else; and in company I gave him frequent hints of it. Still all my talk was how vile and bad it was in him to love any lady better than me."

The lady abbess, having drawn this full confession from the jealous Adriana, now said, "And therefore comes it that your husband is mad. The venomous clamour of a jealous woman is a more deadly poison than a mad dog's tooth. It seems his sleep was hindered by your railing; no wonder that his head is light: and his meat was sauced with your upbraidings; unquiet meals make ill digestions, and that has thrown him into this fever. You say his sports were disturbed by your brawls; being debarred from the enjoyment of society and recreation, what could ensue but dull melancholy and comfortless despair? The consequence is then, that your jealous fits have made your husband mad."

Luciana would have excused her sister, saying, she always reprehended her husband mildly; and she said to her sister, "Why do you hear these rebukes without answering them?" But the abbess had made her so plainly perceive her fault, that she could only answer, "She has betrayed me to my own reproof."

Adriana, though ashamed of her own conduct, still insisted on having her husband delivered up to her; but the abbess would suffer no person to enter her house, nor would she deliver up this unhappy man to the care of the jealous wife, determining herself to use gentle means for his recovery, and she retired into her house again, and ordered her gates to be shut against them.

During the course of this eventful day, in which so many errors had happened from the likeness the twin brothers bore to each other, old Ægeon's day of grace was passing away, it being now near sunset; and at sunset he was doomed to die, if he could not pay the money.

The place of his execution was near this convent, and here he arrived just as the abbess retired into the convent; the duke attending in person, that if any offered to pay the money, he might be present to pardon him.

Adriana stopped this melancholy procession, and cried out to the duke for justice, telling him that the abbess had refused to deliver up her lunatic husband to her care. While she was speaking, her real husband and his servant Dromio, who had got loose, came before the duke to demand justice, complaining that his wife had confined him on a false charge of lunacy; and telling in what manner he had broken his bands, and eluded the vigilance of his keepers. Adriana was strangely surprised to see her husband, when she thought he had been within the convent.

Ægeon, seeing his son, concluded this was the son who had left him to go in search of his mother and his brother; and he felt secure that this dear son would readily pay the money demanded for his ransom. He therefore spoke to

Antipholus in words of fatherly affection, with joyful hope that he should now be released. But to the utter astonishment of Ægeon, his son denied all knowledge of him, as well he might, for this Antipholus had never seen his father since they were separated in the storm in his infancy; but while the poor old Ægeon was in vain endeavouring to make his son acknowledge him, thinking surely that either his griefs and the anxieties he had suffered had so strangely altered him that his son did not know him, or else that he was ashamed to acknowledge his father in his misery; in the midst of this perplexity, the lady abbess and the other Antipholus and Dromio came out, and the wondering Adriana saw two husbands and two Dromios standing before her.

And now these riddling errors, which had so perplexed them all, were clearly made out. When the duke saw the two Antipholuses and the two Dromios both so exactly alike, he at once conjectured aright of these seeming mysteries, for he remembered the story Ægeon had told him in the morning; and he said, these men must be the two sons of Ægeon and their twin slaves.

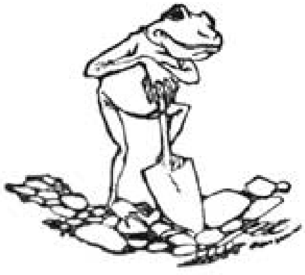
But now an unlooked-for joy indeed completed the history of Ægeon; and the tale he had in the morning told in sorrow, and under sentence of death, before the setting sun went down was brought to a happy conclusion, for the venerable lady abbess made herself known to be the long-lost wife of Ægeon, and the fond mother of the two Antipholuses.

When the fishermen took the eldest Antipholus and Dromio away from her, she entered a nunnery, and by her wise and virtuous conduct, she was at length made lady abbess of this convent, and in discharging the rites of hospitality to an unhappy stranger she had unknowingly protected her own son.

Joyful congratulations and affectionate greetings between these long separated parents and their children made them for a while forget that Ægeon was yet under sentence of death; but when they were become a little calm, Antipholus of Ephesus offered the duke the ransom money for his father's life; but the duke freely pardoned Ægeon, and would not take the money. And the duke went with the abbess and her newly-found husband and children into the convent, to hear this happy family discourse at leisure of the blessed ending of their adverse fortunes. And the two Dromios' humble joy must not be forgotten; they had their congratulations and greetings too, and each Dromio pleasantly complimented his brother on his good looks, being well pleased to see his own person (as in a glass) show so handsome in his brother.

Adriana had so well profited by the good counsel of her mother-in-law, that she never after cherished unjust suspicions, or was jealous of her husband.

Antipholus of Syracuse married the fair Luciana, the sister of his brother's wife; and the good old Ægeon, with his wife and sons, lived at Ephesus many years. Nor did the unravelling of these perplexities so entirely remove every ground of mistake for the future, but that sometimes, to remind them of adventures past, comical blunders would happen, and the one Antipholus, and the one Dromio, be mistaken for the other, making altogether a pleasant and diverting Comedy of Errors.



MEASURE FOR MEASURE

MEASURE FOR MEASURE

In the city of Vienna there once reigned a duke of such a mild and gentle temper, that he suffered his subjects to neglect the laws with impunity; and there was in particular one law, the existence of which was almost forgotten, the duke never having put it in force during his whole reign. This was a law dooming any man to the punishment of death, who should live with a woman that was not his wife; and this law, through the lenity of the duke, being utterly disregarded, the holy institution of marriage became neglected, and complaints were every day made to the duke by the parents of the young ladies in Vienna, that their daughters had been seduced from their protection, and were living as the companions of single men.

The good duke perceived with sorrow this growing evil among his subjects; but he thought that a sudden change in himself from the indulgence he had hitherto shown, to the strict severity requisite to check this abuse, would make his people (who had hitherto loved him) consider him as a tyrant; therefore he determined to absent himself a while from his dukedom, and depute another to the full exercise of his power, that the law against these dishonourable lovers might be put in effect, without giving offence by an unusual severity in his own person.

Angelo, a man who bore the reputation of a saint in Vienna for his strict and rigid life, was chosen by the duke as a fit person to undertake this important charge; and when the duke imparted his design to Lord Escalus, his chief counsellor, Escalus said, "If any man in Vienna be of worth to undergo such ample grace and honour, it is Lord Angelo." And now the duke departed from Vienna under pretence of making a journey into Poland, leaving Angelo to act as the lord deputy in his absence; but the duke's absence was only a feigned one, for he privately returned to Vienna, habited like a friar, with the intent to watch unseen the conduct of the saintly-seeming Angelo.

It happened just about the time that Angelo was invested with his new dignity, that a gentleman, whose name was Claudio, had seduced a young lady from her parents; and for this offence, by command of the new lord deputy, Claudio was taken up and committed to prison, and by virtue of the old law which had been so long neglected, Angelo sentenced Claudio to be beheaded. Great interest was made for the pardon of young Claudio, and the good old Lord Escalus himself interceded for him. "Alas," said he, "this gentleman whom I would save had an honourable father, for whose sake I pray you pardon the young man's transgression." But Angelo replied, "We must not make a scare-crow of the law, setting it up to frighten birds of prey, till custom, finding it harmless, makes it their perch, and not their terror. Sir, he must die."

Lucio, the friend of Claudio, visited him in the prison, and Claudio said to him, "I pray you, Lucio, do me this kind service. Go to my sister Isabel, who this day proposes to enter the convent of Saint Clare; acquaint her with the danger of my state; implore her that she make friends with the strict deputy; bid her go herself to Angelo. I have great hopes in that; for she can discourse with prosperous art, and well she can persuade; besides, there is a speechless dialect in youthful sorrow, such as moves men."

Isabel, the sister of Claudio, had, as he said, that day entered upon her noviciate in the convent, and it was her intent, after passing through her probation as a novice, to take the veil, and she was inquiring of a nun concerning the rules of the convent, when they heard the voice of Lucio, who, as he entered that religious house, said, "Peace be in this place!"—"Who is it that speaks?" said Isabel. "It is a man's voice," replied the nun: "Gentle Isabel, go to him, and learn his business; you may, I may not. When you have taken the veil, you must not speak with men but in the presence of the prioress; then if you speak you must not show your face, or if you show your face, you must not speak."—"And have you nuns no further privileges?" said Isabel. "Are not these large enough?" replied the nun. "Yes, truly," said Isabel: "I speak not as desiring more, but rather wishing a more strict restraint upon the sisterhood, the votarists of Saint Clare." Again they heard the voice of Lucio, and the nun said, "He calls again. I pray you answer him." Isabel then went out to Lucio, and in answer to his salutation, said, "Peace and Prosperity! Who is it that calls?" Then Lucio, approaching her with reverence, said, "Hail, virgin, if such you be, as the roses on your cheeks proclaim you are no less! can you bring me to the sight of Isabel, a novice of this place, and the fair sister to her unhappy brother Claudio?"—"Why her unhappy brother?" said Isabel, "let me ask! for I am that Isabel, and his sister."—"Fair and gentle lady," he replied, "your brother kindly greets you by me; he is in prison."—"Woe is me! for what?" said Isabel. Lucio then told her, Claudio was imprisoned for seducing a young maiden. "Ah," said she, "I fear it is my cousin Juliet." Juliet and Isabel were not related, but they called each other cousin in remembrance of their school days' friendship; and as Isabel knew that Juliet loved Claudio, she feared she had been led by her affection for him into this transgression. "She it is," replied Lucio. "Why then, let my brother marry Juliet," said Isabel. Lucio replied that Claudio would gladly marry Juliet, but that the lord deputy had sentenced him to die for his offence; "Unless," said he, "you have the grace by your fair prayer to soften Angelo, and that is my business between you and your poor brother."—"Alas!" said Isabel, "what poor ability is there in me to do him good? I doubt I have no power to move Angelo."—"Our doubts are traitors," said Lucio, "and make us lose the good we might often win, by fearing to attempt it. Go to Lord Angelo! When maidens sue, and kneel, and weep, men give like gods."—"I will see what I can do," said Isabel: "I will but stay to give the prioress notice of the affair, and then I will go to Angelo. Commend me to my brother: soon at night I will send him word of my success."

Isabel hastened to the palace, and threw herself on her knees before Angelo, saying, "I am a woful suitor to your honour, if it will please your honour to hear me."—"Well, what is your suit?" said Angelo. She then made her petition in the most moving terms for her brother's life. But Angelo said, "Maiden, there is no remedy; your brother is sentenced, and he must die."—"O just, but severe law," said Isabel: "I had a brother then—Heaven keep your honour!" and she was about to depart. But Lucio, who had accompanied her, said, "Give it not over so; return to him again, entreat him, kneel down before him, hang upon his gown.

You are too cold; if you should need a pin, you could not with a more tame tongue desire it." Then again Isabel on her knees implored for mercy. "He is sentenced," said Angelo: "it is too late."—"Too late!" said Isabel: "Why, no: I that do speak a word may call it back again. Believe this, my lord, no ceremony that to great ones belongs, not the king's crown, nor the deputed sword, the marshal's truncheon, nor the judge's robe, becomes them with one half so good a grace as mercy does."—"Pray you begone," said Angelo. But still Isabel entreated; and she said, "If my brother had been as you, and you as he, you might have slipped like him, but he, like you, would not have been so stern. I would to heaven I had your power, and you were Isabel. Should it then be thus? No, I would tell you what it were to be a judge, and what a prisoner."—"Be content, fair maid!" said Angelo: "it is the law, not I, condemns your brother. Were he my kinsman, my brother, or my son, it should be thus with him. He must die to-morrow."—"To-morrow?" said Isabel; "Oh, that is sudden: spare him, spare him; he is not prepared for death. Even for our kitchens we kill the fowl in season; shall we serve Heaven with less respect than we minister to our gross selves? Good, good, my lord, bethink you, none have died for my brother's offence, though many have committed it. So you would be the first that gives this sentence, and he the first that suffers it. Go to your own bosom, my lord; knock there, and ask your heart what it does know that is like my brother's fault; if it confess a natural guiltiness such as his is, let it not sound a thought against my brother's life!" Her last words more moved Angelo than all she had before said, for the beauty of Isabel had raised a guilty passion in his heart, and he began to form thoughts of dishonourable love, such as Claudio's crime had been; and the conflict in his mind made him to turn away from Isabel; but she called him back, saying, "Gentle my lord, turn back; hark, how I will bribe you. Good my lord, turn back!"—"How, bribe me!" said Angelo, astonished that she should think of offering him a bribe. "Ay," said Isabel, "with such gifts that Heaven itself shall share with you; not with golden treasures, or those glittering stones, whose price is either rich or poor as fancy values them, but with true prayers that shall be up to Heaven before sunrise,—prayers from preserved souls, from fasting maids whose minds are dedicated to nothing temporal."—"Well, come to me to-morrow," said Angelo. And for this short respite of her brother's life, and for this permission that she might be heard again, she left him with the joyful hope that she should at last prevail over his stern nature: and as she went away she said, "Heaven keep your honour safe! Heaven save your honour!" Which when Angelo heard, he said within his heart, "Amen, I would be saved from thee and from thy virtues:" and then, affrighted at his own evil thoughts, he said, "What is this? What is this? Do I love her, that I desire to hear her speak again, and feast upon her eyes? What is it I dream on? The cunning enemy of mankind, to catch a saint, with saints does bait the hook. Never could an immodest woman once stir my temper, but this virtuous woman subdues me quite. Even till now, when men were fond, I smiled and wondered at them."

In the guilty conflict in his mind Angelo suffered more that night than the prisoner he had so severely sentenced; for in the prison Claudio was visited by the good duke, who, in his friar's habit, taught the young man the way to heaven, preaching to him the words of penitence and peace. But Angelo felt all the pangs of irresolute guilt: now wishing to seduce Isabel from the paths of innocence and honour, and now suffering remorse and horror for a crime as yet but intentional. But in the end his evil thoughts prevailed; and he who had so lately started at the offer of a bribe, resolved to tempt this maiden with so high a bribe, as she might not be able to resist, even with the precious gift of her dear brother's life.

When Isabel came in the morning, Angelo desired she might be admitted alone to his presence: and being there, he said to her, if she would yield to him her virgin honour and transgress even as Juliet had done with Claudio, he would give her her brother's life; "For," said he, "I love you, Isabel."—"My brother," said Isabel, "did so love Juliet, and yet you tell me he shall die for it."—"But," said Angelo, "Claudio shall not die, if you will consent to visit me by stealth at night, even as Juliet left her father's house at night to come to Claudio." Isabel, in amazement at his words, that he should tempt her to the same fault for which he passed sentence upon her brother, said, "I would do as much for my poor brother as for myself; that is, were I under sentence of death, the impression of keen whips I would wear as rubies, and go to my death as to a bed that longing I had been sick for, ere I would yield myself up to this shame." And then she told him, she hoped he only spoke these words to try her virtue. But he said, "Believe me, on my honour, my words express my purpose." Isabel, angered to the heart to hear him use the word Honour to express such dishonourable purposes, said, "Ha! little honour to be much believed; and most pernicious purpose. I will proclaim thee, Angelo, look for it! Sign me a present pardon for my brother, or I will tell the world aloud what man thou art!"—"Who will believe you, Isabel?" said Angelo; "my unsoiled name, the austereness of my life, my word vouched against yours, will outweigh your accusation. Redeem your brother by yielding to my will, or he shall die to-morrow. As for you, say what you can, my false will overweigh your true story. Answer me to-morrow."

"To whom should I complain? Did I tell this, who would believe me?" said

Isabel, as she went towards the dreary prison where her brother was confined. When she arrived there, her brother was in pious conversation with the duke, who in his friar's habit had also visited Juliet, and brought both these guilty lovers to a proper sense of their fault; and unhappy Juliet with tears and a true remorse confessed that she was more to blame than Claudio, in that she willingly consented to his dishonourable solicitations.

As Isabel entered the room where Claudio was confined, she said, "Peace be here, grace, and good company!"—"Who is there?" said the disguised duke; "come in; the wish deserves a welcome."—"My business is a word or two with Claudio," said Isabel. Then the duke left them together, and desired the provost, who had the charge of the prisoners, to place him where he might overhear their conversation.

"Now, sister, what is the comfort?" said Claudio. Isabel told him he must prepare for death on the morrow. "Is there no remedy?" said Claudio.—"Yes, brother," replied Isabel, "there is; but such a one, as if you consented to it would strip your honour from you, and leave you naked."—"Let me know the point," said Claudio. "O, I do fear you, Claudio!" replied his sister; "and I quake, lest you should wish to live, and more respect the trifling term of six or seven winters added to your life, than your perpetual honour! Do you dare to die? The sense of death is most in apprehension, and the poor beetle that we tread upon, feels a pang as great as when a giant dies." "Why do you give me this shame?" said Claudio. "Think you I can fetch a resolution from flowery tenderness? If I must die, I will encounter darkness as a bride, and hug it in my arms."—"There spoke my brother," said Isabel; "there my father's grave did utter forth a voice. Yes, you must die; yet would you think it, Claudio! this outward sainted deputy, if I would yield to him my virgin honour, would grant your life. O, were it but my life, I would lay it down for your deliverance as frankly as a pin!"—"Thanks, dear Isabel," said Claudio. "Be ready to die to-morrow," said Isabel. "Death is a fearful thing," said Claudio. "And shamed life a hateful," replied his sister. But the thoughts of death now overcame the constancy of Claudio's temper, and terrors, such as the guilty only at their deaths do know, assailing him, he cried out, "Sweet sister, let me live! The sin you do to save a brother's life, nature dispenses with the deed so far, that it becomes a virtue."—"O faithless coward! O dishonest wretch!" said Isabel; "would you preserve your life by your sister's shame? O fie, fie, fie! I thought, my brother, you had in you such a mind of honour, that had you twenty heads to render up on twenty blocks, you would have yielded them up all, before your sister should stoop to such dishonour." "Nay, hear me, Isabel!" said Claudio. But what he would have said in defence of his weakness, in desiring to live by the dishonour of his virtuous sister, was interrupted by the entrance of the duke; who said, "Claudio, I have overheard what has passed between you and your sister. Angelo had never the purpose to corrupt her; what he said, has only been to make trial of her virtue. She having the truth of honour in her, has given him that gracious denial which he is most glad to receive. There is no hope that he will pardon you; therefore pass your hours in prayer, and make ready for death." Then Claudio repented of his weakness, and said, "Let me ask my sister's pardon! I am so out of love with life, that I will sue to be rid of it." And Claudio retired, overwhelmed with shame and sorrow for his fault.

The duke being now alone with Isabel, commended her virtuous resolution, saying, "The hand that made you fair, has made you good."—"O," said Isabel, "how much is the good duke deceived in Angelo! if ever he return, and I can speak to him, I will discover his government." Isabel knew not that she was even now making the discovery she threatened. The duke replied, "That shall not be much amiss; yet as the matter now stands, Angelo will repel your accusation; therefore lend an attentive ear to my advisings. I believe that you may most righteously do a poor wronged lady a merited benefit, redeem your brother from the angry law, do no stain to your own most gracious person, and much please the absent duke, if peradventure he shall ever return to have notice of this business." Isabel said, she had a spirit to do anything he desired, provided it was nothing wrong. "Virtue is bold, and never fearful," said the duke: and then he asked her, if she had ever heard of Mariana, the sister of Frederick, the great soldier who was drowned at sea. "I have heard of the lady," said Isabel, "and good words went with her name."—"This lady," said the duke, "is the wife of Angelo; but her marriage dowry was on board the vessel in which her brother perished, and mark how heavily this befell to the poor gentlewoman! for, beside the loss of a most noble and renowned brother, who in his love towards her was ever most kind and natural, in the wreck of her fortune she lost the affections of her husband, the well-seeming Angelo; who pretending to discover some dishonour in this honourable lady (though the true cause was the loss of her dowry) left her in her tears, and dried not one of them with his comfort. His unjust unkindness, that in all reason should have quenched her love, has, like an impediment in the current, made it more unruly, and Mariana loves her cruel husband with the full continuance of her first affection." The duke then more plainly unfolded his plan. It was, that Isabel should go to Lord Angelo, and seemingly consent to come to him as he desired at midnight; that by this means she would obtain the promised pardon; and that Mariana should go in her stead to the appointment, and pass herself upon Angelo in the dark for Isabel. "Nor, gentle daughter," said the feigned friar, "fear you to do this thing; Angelo is her husband, and to bring them thus together is no sin." Isabel being pleased with this project, departed to do as he directed her; and he went to apprise Mariana of their intention. He had before this time visited this unhappy lady in his assumed character, giving her religious instruction and friendly consolation, at which times he had learned her sad story from her own lips; and now she, looking upon him as a holy man, readily consented to be directed by him in this undertaking.

When Isabel returned from her interview with Angelo, to the house of Mariana, where the duke had appointed her to meet him, he said, "Well met, and in good time; what is the news from this good deputy?" Isabel related the manner in which she had settled the affair. "Angelo," said she, "has a garden surrounded with a brick wall, on the western side of which is a vineyard, and to that vineyard is a gate." And then she showed to the duke and Mariana two keys that Angelo had given her; and she said, "This bigger key opens the vineyard gate; this other a little door which leads from the vineyard to the garden. There I have made my promise at the dead of the night to call upon him, and have got from him his word of assurance for my brother's life. I have taken a due and wary note of the place; and with whispering and most guilty diligence he showed me the way twice over."—"Are there no other tokens agreed upon between you, that Mariana must observe?" said the duke. "No, none," said Isabel, "only to go when it is dark. I have told him my time can be but short; for I have made him think a servant comes along with me, and that this servant is persuaded I come about my brother." The duke commended her discreet management, and she, turning to Mariana, said, "Little have you to say to Angelo, when you depart from him, but soft and low, *Remember now my brother* !"

Mariana was that night conducted to the appointed place by Isabel, who rejoiced that she had, as she supposed, by this device preserved both her brother's life and her own honour. But that her brother's life was safe the duke was not well satisfied, and therefore at midnight he again repaired to the prison, and it was well for Claudio that he did so, else would Claudio have that night been beheaded; for soon after the duke entered the prison, an order came from the cruel deputy, commanding that Claudio should be beheaded, and his head sent to him by five o'clock in the morning. But the duke persuaded the provost to put off the execution of Claudio, and to deceive Angelo, by sending him the head of a man who died that morning in the prison. And to prevail upon the provost to agree to this, the duke, whom still the provost suspected not to be anything more or greater than he seemed, showed the provost a letter written with the duke's hand, and sealed with his seal, which when the provost saw, he concluded this friar must have some secret order from the absent duke, and therefore he consented to spare Claudio; and he cut off the dead man's head, and carried it to Angelo.

Then the duke in his own name, wrote to Angelo a letter, saying, that certain accidents had put a stop to his journey, and that he should be in Vienna by the following morning, requiring Angelo to meet him at the entrance of the city, there to deliver up his authority; and the duke also commanded it to be proclaimed, that if any of his subjects craved redress for injustice, they should exhibit their petitions in the street on his first entrance into the city.

Early in the morning Isabel came to the prison, and the duke, who there awaited her coming, for secret reasons thought it good to tell her that Claudio was beheaded; therefore when Isabel inquired if Angelo had sent the pardon for her brother, he said, "Angelo has released Claudio from this world. His head is off, and sent to the deputy." The much-grieved sister cried out, "O unhappy Claudio, wretched Isabel, injurious world, most wicked Angelo!" The seeming friar bid her take comfort, and when she was become a little calm, he acquainted her with the near prospect of the duke's return, and told her in what manner she should proceed in preferring her complaint against Angelo; and he bade her not fear if the cause should seem to go against her for a while. Leaving Isabel sufficiently instructed, he next went to Mariana, and gave her counsel in what manner she also should act.

Then the duke laid aside his friar's habit, and in his own royal robes, amidst a joyful crowd of his faithful subjects, assembled to greet his arrival, entered the city of Vienna, where he was met by Angelo, who delivered up his authority in the proper form. And there came Isabel, in the manner of a petitioner for redress, and said, "Justice, most royal duke! I am the sister of one Claudio, who, for the seducing a young maid, was condemned to lose his head. I made my suit to Lord Angelo for my brother's pardon. It were needless to tell your grace how I prayed and kneeled, how he repelled me, and how I replied; for this was of much length. The vile conclusion I now begin with grief and shame to utter. Angelo would not but by my yielding to his dishonourable love release my brother; and after much debate within myself, my sisterly remorse overcame my virtue, and I did yield to him. But the next morning betimes, Angelo, forfeiting his promise, sent a warrant for my poor brother's head!" The duke affected to disbelieve her story; and Angelo said that grief for her brother's death, who had suffered by the due course of the law, had disordered her senses. And now another suitor approached, which was Mariana; and Mariana said, "Noble prince, as there comes light from heaven, and truth from breath, as there is sense in truth and truth in virtue, I am this man's wife, and, my good lord, the words of Isabel are false; for the night she says she was with Angelo, I passed that night with him in the garden-house. As this is true, let me in safety rise, or else for ever be fixed here a marble monument." Then did Isabel appeal for the truth of what she had said to Friar Lodowick, that being the name the duke had assumed in his disguise. Isabel and Mariana had both obeyed his instructions in what they said, the duke intending that the innocence of Isabel should be plainly proved in that public manner before the whole city of Vienna; but Angelo little thought that it was from such a cause that they thus differed in their story, and he hoped from their contradictory evidence to be able to clear himself from the accusation of Isabel; and he said, assuming the look of offended innocence, "I did but smile till now; but, good my lord, my patience here is touched, and I perceive these poor distracted women are but the instruments of some greater one, who sets them on. Let me have way, my lord, to find this practice out."—"Ay, with all my heart," said the duke, "and punish them to the height of your pleasure. You, Lord Escalus, sit with Lord Angelo, lend him your pains to discover this abuse; the friar is sent for that set them on, and when he comes, do with your injuries as may seem best in any chastisement. I for a while will leave you, but stir not you, Lord Angelo, till you have well determined upon this slander." The duke then went away, leaving Angelo well pleased to be deputed judge and umpire in his own cause. But the duke was absent only while he threw off his royal robes and put on his friar's habit; and in that disguise again he presented himself before Angelo and Escalus: and the good old Escalus, who thought Angelo had been falsely accused, said to the supposed friar, "Come, sir, did you set these women on to slander Lord Angelo?" He replied, "Where is the duke? It is he who should hear me speak." Escalus said, "The duke is in us, and we will hear you. Speak justly."—"Boldly at least," retorted the friar; and then he blamed the duke for leaving the cause of Isabel in the hands of him she had accused, and spoke so freely of many corrupt practices he had observed, while, as he said, he had been a looker-on in Vienna, that Escalus threatened him with the torture for speaking words against the state, and for censuring the conduct of the duke, and ordered him to be taken away to prison. Then, to the amazement of all present, and to the utter confusion of Angelo, the supposed friar threw off his disguise, and they saw it was the duke himself.

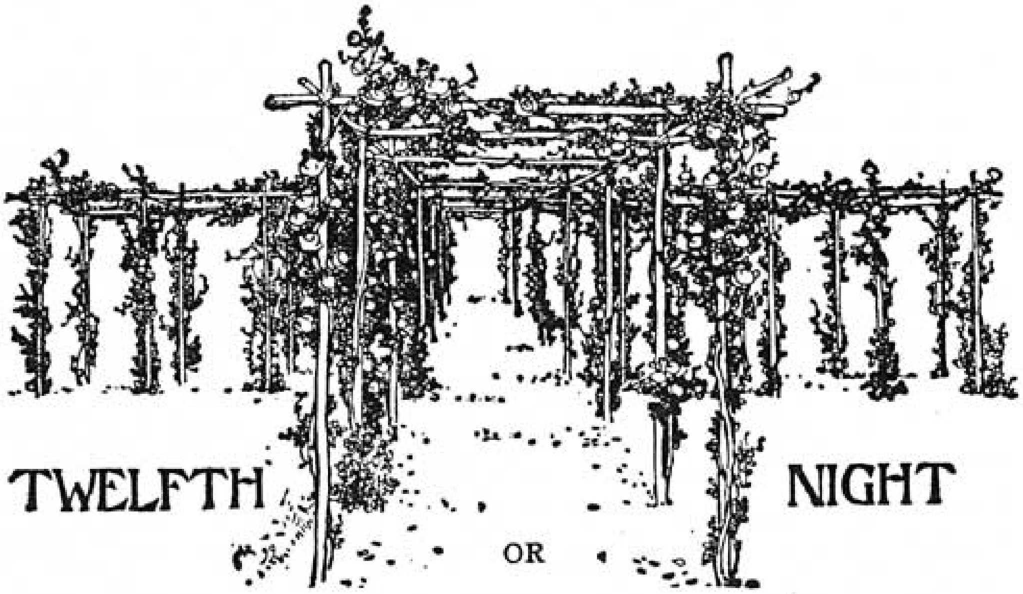
The duke first addressed Isabel. He said to her, "Come hither, Isabel. Your friar is now your prince, but with my habit I have not changed my heart. I am still devoted to your service." "O give me pardon," said Isabel, "that I, your vassal, have employed and troubled your unknown sovereignty." He answered that he had most need of forgiveness from her, for not having prevented the death of her brother—for not yet would he tell her that Claudio was living; meaning first to make a further trial of her goodness. Angelo now knew the duke had been a secret witness of his bad deeds, and he said, "O my dread lord, I should be guiltier than my guiltiness, to think I can be undiscernible, when I perceive your grace, like power divine, has looked upon my actions. Then, good prince, no longer prolong my shame, but let my trial be my own confession. Immediate sentence and death is all the grace I beg." The duke replied, "Angelo, thy faults are manifest. We do condemn thee to the very block where Claudio stooped to death; and with like haste away with him; and for his possessions, Mariana, we do instate and widow you withal, to buy you a better husband."—"O my dear lord," said Mariana, "I crave no other, nor no better man:" and then on her knees, even as Isabel had begged the life of Claudio, did this kind wife of an ungrateful husband beg the life of Angelo; and she said, "Gentle my liege, O good my lord! Sweet Isabel, take my part! Lend me your knees, and all my life to come I will lend you all my life, to do you service!" The duke said, "Against all sense you importune her. Should Isabel kneel down to beg for mercy, her brother's ghost would break his paved bed, and take her hence in horror." Still Mariana said, "Isabel, sweet Isabel, do but kneel by me, hold up your hand, say nothing! I will speak all. They say, best men are moulded out of faults, and for the most part become much the better for being a little bad. So may my husband. Oh, Isabel, will you not lend a knee?" The duke then said, "He dies for Claudio." But much pleased was the good duke, when his own Isabel, from whom he expected all gracious and honourable acts, kneeled down before him, and said, "Most bounteous sir, look, if it please you, on this man condemned, as if my brother lived. I partly think a due sincerity governed his deeds, till he did look on me.

Since it is so, let him not die! My brother had but justice, in that he did the thing for which he died."

The duke, as the best reply he could make to this noble petitioner for her enemy's life, sending for Claudio from his prison-house, where he lay doubtful of his destiny, presented to her this lamented brother living; and he said to Isabel, "Give me your hand, Isabel; for your lovely sake I pardon Claudio. Say you will be mine, and he shall be my brother too." By this time Lord Angelo perceived he was safe; and the duke, observing his eye to brighten up a little, said, "Well, Angelo, look that you love your wife; her worth has obtained your pardon: joy to you, Mariana! Love her, Angelo! I have confessed her, and know her virtue." Angelo remembered, when dressed in a little brief authority, how hard his heart had been, and felt how sweet is mercy.

The duke commanded Claudio to marry Juliet, and offered himself again to the acceptance of Isabel, whose virtuous and noble conduct had won her prince's heart. Isabel, not having taken the veil, was free to marry; and the friendly offices, while hid under the disguise of a humble friar, which the noble duke had done for her, made her with grateful joy accept the honour he offered her; and when she became Duchess of Vienna, the excellent example of the virtuous Isabel worked such a complete reformation among the young ladies of that city, that from that time none ever fell into the transgression of Juliet, the repentant wife of the reformed Claudio. And the mercy-loving duke long reigned with his beloved Isabel, the happiest of husbands and of princes.

TWELFTH NIGHT



TWELFTH NIGHT OR WHAT YOU WILL

Sebastian and his sister Viola, a young gentleman and lady of Messaline, were twins, and (which was accounted a great wonder) from their birth they so much resembled each other, that, but for the difference in their dress, they could not be known apart. They were both born in one hour, and in one hour they were both in danger of perishing, for they were shipwrecked on the coast of Illyria, as they were making a sea-voyage together. The ship, on board of which they were, split on a rock in a violent storm, and a very small number of the ship's company escaped with their lives. The captain of the vessel, with a few of the sailors that were saved, got to land in a small boat, and with them they brought Viola safe on shore, where she, poor lady, instead of rejoicing at her own deliverance, began to lament her brother's loss; but the captain comforted her with the assurance that he had seen her brother, when the ship spilt, fasten himself to a strong mast, on which, as long as he could see anything of him for the distance, he perceived him borne up above the waves. Viola was much consoled by the hope this account gave her, and now considered how she was to dispose of herself in a strange country, so far from home; and she asked the captain if he knew anything of Illyria. "Ay, very well, madam," replied the captain, "for I was born not three hours' travel from this place."—"Who governs here?" said Viola. The captain told her, Illyria was governed by Orsino, a duke noble in nature as well as dignity. Viola said, she had heard her father speak of Orsino, and that he was unmarried then. "And he is so now," said the captain; "or was so very lately, for, but a month ago, I went from here, and then it was the general talk (as you know what great ones do, the people will prattle of) that Orsino sought the love of fair Olivia, a virtuous maid, the daughter of a count who died twelve months ago, leaving Olivia to the protection of her brother, who shortly after died also; and for the love of this dear brother, they say, she has abjured the sight and company of men." Viola, who was herself in such a sad affliction for her brother's loss, wished she could live with this lady, who so tenderly mourned a brother's death. She asked the captain if he could introduce her to Olivia, saying she would willingly serve this lady. But he replied, this would be a hard thing to accomplish, because the Lady Olivia would admit no person into her house since her brother's death, not even the duke himself. Then Viola formed another project in her mind, which was, in a man's habit, to serve the Duke Orsino as a page. It was a strange fancy in a young lady to put on male attire, and pass for a boy; but the forlorn and unprotected state of Viola, who was young and of uncommon beauty, alone, and in a foreign land, must plead her excuse.

She having observed a fair behaviour in the captain, and that he showed a friendly concern for her welfare, entrusted him with her design, and he readily engaged to assist her. Viola gave him money, and directed him to furnish her with suitable apparel, ordering her clothes to be made of the same colour and in the same fashion her brother Sebastian used to wear, and when she was dressed in her manly garb, she looked so exactly like her brother that some strange errors happened by means of their being mistaken for each other; for, as will afterwards appear, Sebastian was also saved.

Viola's good friend, the captain, when he had transformed this pretty lady into a gentleman, having some interest at court, got her presented to Orsino under the feigned name of Cesario. The duke was wonderfully pleased with the address and graceful deportment of this handsome youth, and made Cesario one of his pages, that being the office Viola wished to obtain: and she so well fulfilled the duties of her new station, and showed such a ready observance and faithful attachment to her lord, that she soon became his most favoured attendant. To Cesario Orsino confided the whole history of his love for the Lady Olivia. To Cesario he told the long and unsuccessful suit he had made to one who, rejecting his long services, and despising his person, refused to admit him to her presence;

and for the love of this lady who had so unkindly treated him, the noble Orsino, forsaking the sports of the field and all manly exercises in which he used to delight, passed his hours in ignoble sloth, listening to the effeminate sounds of soft music, gentle airs, and passionate love-songs; and neglecting the company of the wise and learned lords with whom he used to associate, he was now all day long conversing with young Cesario. Unmeet companion no doubt his grave courtiers thought Cesario was for their once noble master, the great Duke Orsino.

It is a dangerous matter for young maidens to be the confidants of handsome young dukes; which Viola too soon found to her sorrow, for all that Orsino told her he endured for Olivia, she presently perceived she suffered for the love of him; and much it moved her wonder, that Olivia could be so regardless of this her peerless lord and master, whom she thought no one could behold without the deepest admiration, and she ventured gently to hint to Orsino, that it was a pity he should affect a lady who was so blind to his worthy qualities; and she said, "If a lady were to love you, my lord, as you love Olivia (and perhaps there may be one who does), if you could not love her in return, would you not tell her that you could not love, and must she not be content with this answer?" But Orsino would not admit of this reasoning, for he denied that it was possible for any woman to love as he did. He said, no woman's heart was big enough to hold so much love, and therefore it was unfair to compare the love of any lady for him, to his love for Olivia. Now, though Viola had the utmost deference for the duke's opinions, she could not help thinking this was not quite true, for she thought her heart had full as much love in it as Orsino's had; and she said, "Ah, but I know, my lord."—"What do you know, Cesario?" said Orsino. "Too well I know," replied Viola, "what love women may owe to men. They are as true of heart as we are. My father had a daughter loved a man, as I perhaps, were I a woman, should love your lordship."—"And what is her history?" said Orsino. "A blank, my lord," replied Viola: "she never told her love, but let concealment, like a worm in the bud, feed on her damask cheek. She pined in thought, and with a green and yellow melancholy, she sat like Patience on a monument, smiling at Grief." The duke inquired if this lady died of her love, but to this question Viola returned an evasive answer; as probably she had feigned the story, to speak words expressive of the secret love and silent grief she suffered for Orsino.

While they were talking, a gentleman entered whom the duke had sent to Olivia, and he said, "So please you, my lord, I might not be admitted to the lady, but by her handmaid she returned you this answer: Until seven years hence, the element itself shall not behold her face; but like a cloistress she will walk veiled, watering her chamber with her tears for the sad remembrance of her dead brother." On hearing this, the duke exclaimed, "O she that has a heart of this fine frame, to pay this debt of love to a dead brother, how will she love, when the rich golden shaft has touched her heart!" And then he said to Viola, "You know, Cesario, I have told you all the secrets of my heart; therefore, good youth, go to Olivia's house. Be not denied access; stand at her doors, and tell her, there your fixed foot shall grow till you have audience."—"And if I do speak to her, my lord, what then?" said Viola. "O then;" replied Orsino, "unfold to her the passion of my love. Make a long discourse to her of my dear faith. It will well become you to act my woes, for she will attend more to you than to one of graver aspect."

Away then went Viola; but not willingly did she undertake this courtship, for she was to woo a lady to become a wife to him she wished to marry: but having undertaken the affair, she performed it with fidelity; and Olivia soon heard that a youth was at her door who insisted upon being admitted to her presence. "I told him," said the servant, "that you were sick: he said he knew you were, and therefore he came to speak with you. I told him that you were asleep: he seemed to have a foreknowledge of that too, and said, that therefore he must speak with you. What is to be said to him, lady? for he seems fortified against all denial, and will speak with you, whether you will or no." Olivia, curious to see who this peremptory messenger might be, desired he might be admitted; and throwing her veil over her face, she said she would once more hear Orsino's embassy, not doubting but that he came from the duke, by his importunity. Viola, entering, put on the most manly air she could assume, and affecting the fine courtier language of great men's pages, she said to the veiled lady, "Most radiant, exquisite, and matchless beauty, I pray you tell me if you are the lady of the house; for I should be sorry to cast away my speech upon another; for besides that it is excellently well penned, I have taken great pains to learn it."—"Whence come you, sir?" said Olivia. "I can say little more than I have studied," replied Viola; "and that question is out of my part."—"Are you a comedian?" said Olivia. "No," replied Viola; "and yet I am not that which I play;" meaning that she, being a woman, feigned herself to be a man. And again she asked Olivia if she were the lady of the house. Olivia said she was; and then Viola, having more curiosity to see her rival's features, than haste to deliver her master's message, said, "Good madam, let me see your face." With this bold request Olivia was not averse to comply; for this haughty beauty, whom the Duke Orsino had loved so long in vain, at first sight conceived a passion for the supposed page, the humble Cesario.

When Viola asked to see her face, Olivia said, "Have you any commission from your lord and master to negotiate with my face?" And then, forgetting her determination to go veiled for seven long years, she drew aside her veil, saying, "But I will draw the curtain and show the picture. Is it not well done?" Viola replied, "It is beauty truly mixed; the red and white upon your cheeks is by Nature's own cunning hand laid on. You are the most cruel lady living, if you will lead these graces to the grave, and leave the world no copy."—"O, sir," replied Olivia, "I will not be so cruel. The world may have an inventory of my beauty. As, *item* , two lips, indifferent red; *item* , two grey eyes, with lids to them; one neck; one chin; and so forth. Were you sent here to praise me?" Viola replied, "I see what you are: you are too proud, but you are fair. My lord and master loves you. O such a love could but be recompensed, though you were crowned the queen of beauty: for Orsino loves you with adoration and with tears, with groans that thunder love, and sighs of fire."—"Your lord," said Olivia, "knows well my mind. I cannot love him; yet I doubt not he is virtuous; I know him to be noble and of high estate, of fresh and spotless youth. All voices proclaim him learned, courteous, and valiant; yet I cannot love him, he might have taken his answer long ago."—"If I did love you as my master does," said Viola, "I would make me a willow cabin at your gates, and call upon your name, I would write complaining sonnets on Olivia, and sing them in the dead of the night; your name should sound among the hills, and I would make Echo, the babbling gossip of the air, cry out *Olivia* . O you should not rest between the elements of earth and air, but you should pity me."—"You might do much," said Olivia: "what is your parentage?" Viola replied, "Above my fortunes, yet my state is well. I am a gentleman." Olivia now reluctantly dismissed Viola, saying, "Go to your master, and tell him, I cannot love him. Let him send no more, unless perchance you come again to tell me how he takes it." And Viola departed, bidding the lady farewell by the name of Fair Cruelty. When she was gone, Olivia repeated the words, *Above my fortunes, yet my state is well. I am a gentleman.* And she said aloud, "I will be sworn he is; his tongue, his face, his limbs, action, and spirit, plainly show he is a gentleman." And then she wished Cesario was the duke; and perceiving the fast hold he had taken on her affections, she blamed herself for her sudden love: but the gentle blame which people lay upon their own faults has no deep root; and presently the noble Lady Olivia so far forgot the inequality between her fortunes and those of this seeming page, as well as the maidenly reserve which is the chief ornament of a lady's character, that she resolved to court the love of young Cesario, and sent a servant after him with a diamond ring, under the pretence that he had left it with her as a present from Orsino. She hoped by thus artfully making Cesario a present of the ring, she should give him some intimation of her design; and truly it did make Viola suspect; for knowing that Orsino had sent no ring by her, she began to recollect that Olivia's looks and manner were expressive of admiration, and she presently guessed her master's mistress had fallen in love with her. "Alas," said she, "the poor lady might as well love a dream. Disguise I see is wicked, for it has caused Olivia to breathe as fruitless sighs for me as I do for Orsino."

Viola returned to Orsino's palace, and related to her lord the ill success of the negotiation, repeating the command of Olivia, that the duke should trouble her no more. Yet still the duke persisted in hoping that the gentle Cesario would in time be able to persuade her to show some pity, and therefore he bade him he should go to her again the next day. In the meantime, to pass away the tedious interval, he commanded a song which he loved to be sung; and he said, "My good Cesario, when I heard that song last night, methought it did relieve my passion much. Mark it, Cesario, it is old and plain. The spinsters and the knitters when they sit in the sun, and the young maids that weave their thread with bone, chant this song. It is silly, yet I love it, for it tells of the innocence of love in the old times."

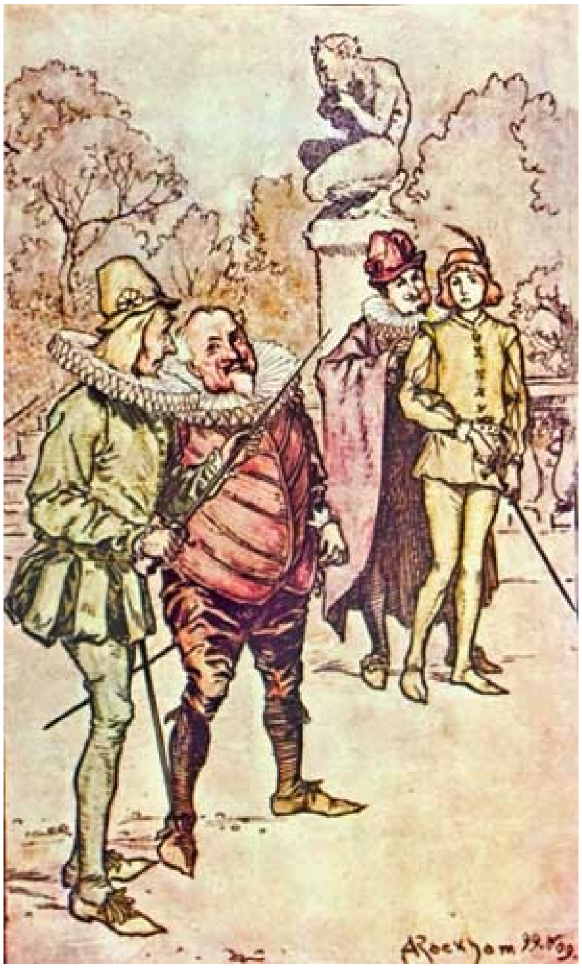
SONG

Come away, come away, Death,
And in sad cypress let me be laid;
Fly away, fly away, breath,
I am slain by a fair cruel maid.
My shroud of white stuck all with yew, O prepare it!
My part of death no one so true did share it.
Not a flower, not a flower sweet,
On my black coffin let there be strewn:
Not a friend, not a friend greet
My poor corpse, where my bones shall be thrown.
A thousand thousand sighs to save, lay me O where
Sad true lover never find my grave, to weep there!

Viola did not fail to mark the words of the old song, which in such true simplicity described the pangs of unrequited love, and she bore testimony in her countenance of feeling what the song expressed. Her sad looks were observed by Orsino, who said to her, "My life upon it, Cesario, though you are so young, your eye has looked upon some face that it loves: has it not, boy?"—"A little, with your leave," replied Viola. "And what kind of woman, and of what age is she?" said Orsino. "Of your age and of your complexion, my lord," said Viola; which made the duke smile to hear this fair young boy loved a woman so much older than himself, and of a man's dark complexion; but Viola secretly meant Orsino, and not a woman like him.

When Viola made her second visit to Olivia, she found no difficulty in gaining access to her. Servants soon discover when their ladies delight to converse with handsome young messengers; and the instant Viola arrived, the gates were thrown wide open, and the duke's page was shown into Olivia's apartment with great respect; and when Viola told Olivia that she was come once more to plead in her lord's behalf, this lady said, "I desired you never to speak of him again; but if you would undertake another suit, I had rather hear you solicit, than music from the spheres." This was pretty plain speaking, but Olivia soon explained herself still more plainly, and openly confessed her love; and when she saw displeasure with perplexity expressed in Viola's face, she said, "O what a deal of scorn looks beautiful in the contempt and anger of his lip! Cesario, by the roses of the spring, by maidhood, honour, and by truth, I love you so, that, in spite of your pride, I have neither wit nor reason to conceal my passion." But in vain the lady wooed; Viola hastened from her presence, threatening never more to come to plead Orsino's love; and all the reply she made to Olivia's fond solicitation was, a declaration of a resolution *Never to love any woman.*

No sooner had Viola left the lady than a claim was made upon her valour. A gentleman, a rejected suitor of Olivia, who had learned how that lady had favoured the duke's messenger, challenged him to fight a duel. What should poor Viola do, who, though she carried a manlike outside, had a true woman's heart, and feared to look on her own sword?



SHE BEGAN TO THINK OF CONFESSING THAT SHE WAS A WOMAN

When she saw her formidable rival advancing towards her with his sword drawn, she began to think of confessing that she was a woman; but she was relieved at once from her terror, and the shame of such a discovery, by a stranger that was passing by, who made up to them, and as if he had been long known to her, and were her dearest friend, said to her opponent, "If this young gentleman has done offence, I will take the fault on me; and if you offend him, I will for his sake defy you." Before Viola had time to thank him for his protection, or to inquire the reason of his kind interference, her new friend met with an enemy where his bravery was of no use to him; for the officers of justice coming up in that instant, apprehended the stranger in the duke's name, to answer for an offence he had committed some years before: and he said to Viola, "This comes with seeking you:" and then he asked her for a purse, saying, "Now my necessity makes me ask for my purse, and it grieves me much more for what I cannot do for you, than for what befalls myself. You stand amazed, but be of comfort." His words did indeed amaze Viola, and she protested she knew him not, nor had ever received a purse from him; but for the kindness he had just shown her, she offered him a small sum of money, being nearly the whole she possessed. And now the stranger spoke severe things, charging her with ingratitude and unkindness. He said, "This youth, whom you see here, I snatched from the jaws of death, and for his sake alone I came to Illyria, and have fallen into this danger." But the officers cared little for hearkening to the complaints of their prisoner, and they hurried him on, saying, "What is that to us?" And as he was carried away, he called Viola by the name of Sebastian, reproaching the supposed Sebastian for disowning his friend, as long as he was within hearing. When Viola heard herself called Sebastian, though the stranger was taken away too hastily for her to ask an explanation, she conjectured that this seeming mystery might arise from her being mistaken for her brother; and she began to cherish hopes that it was her brother whose life this man said he had preserved. And so indeed it was. The stranger, whose name was Antonio, was a sea-captain. He had taken Sebastian up into his ship, when, almost exhausted with fatigue, he was floating on the mast to which he had fastened himself in the storm. Antonio conceived such a friendship for Sebastian, that he resolved to accompany him whithersoever he went; and when the youth expressed a curiosity to visit Orsino's court, Antonio, rather than part from him, came to Illyria, though he knew, if his person should be known there, his life would be in danger, because in a sea-fight he had once dangerously wounded the Duke Orsino's nephew. This was the offence for which he was now made a prisoner.

Antonio and Sebastian had landed together but a few hours before Antonio met Viola. He had given his purse to Sebastian, desiring him to use it freely if he saw anything he wished to purchase, telling him he would wait at the inn, while Sebastian went to view the town; but Sebastian not returning at the time appointed, Antonio had ventured out to look for him, and Viola being dressed the same, and in face so exactly resembling her brother, Antonio drew his sword (as he thought) in defence of the youth he had saved, and when Sebastian (as he supposed) disowned him, and denied him his own purse, no wonder he accused him of ingratitude.

Viola, when Antonio was gone, fearing a second invitation to fight, slunk home as fast as she could. She had not been long gone, when her adversary thought he saw her return; but it was her brother Sebastian, who happened to arrive at this place, and he said, "Now, sir, have I met with you again? There's for you;" and struck him a blow. Sebastian was no coward; he returned the blow with interest, and drew his sword.

A lady now put a stop to this duel, for Olivia came out of the house, and she too mistaking Sebastian for Cesario, invited him to come into her house, expressing much sorrow at the rude attack he had met with. Though Sebastian was as much surprised at the courtesy of this lady as at the rudeness of his unknown foe, yet he went very willingly into the house, and Olivia was delighted to find Cesario (as she thought him) become more sensible of her attentions; for though their features were exactly the same, there was none of the contempt and anger to be seen in his face, which she had complained of when she told her love to Cesario.

Sebastian did not at all object to the fondness the lady lavished on him. He seemed to take it in very good part, yet he wondered how it had come to pass, and he was rather inclined to think Olivia was not in her right senses; but perceiving that she was mistress of a fine house, and that she ordered her affairs and seemed to govern her family discreetly, and that in all but her sudden love for him she appeared in the full possession of her reason, he well approved of the courtship; and Olivia finding Cesario in this good humour, and fearing he might change his mind, proposed that, as she had a priest in the house, they should be instantly married. Sebastian assented to this proposal; and when the marriage ceremony was over, he left his lady for a short time, intending to go and tell his friend Antonio the good fortune that he had met with. In the meantime Orsino came to visit Olivia: and at the moment he arrived before Olivia's house, the officers of justice brought their prisoner, Antonio, before the duke. Viola was with Orsino, her master; and when Antonio saw Viola, whom he still imagined to be Sebastian, he told the duke in what manner he had rescued this youth from the perils of the sea; and after fully relating all the kindness he had really shown to Sebastian, he ended his complaint with saying, that for three months, both day and night, this ungrateful youth had been with him. But now the Lady Olivia coming forth from her house, the duke could no longer attend to Antonio's story; and he said, "Here comes the countess: now Heaven walks on earth! but for thee, fellow, thy words are madness. Three months has this youth attended on me:" and then he ordered Antonio to be taken aside. But Orsino's heavenly countess soon gave the duke cause to accuse Cesario as much of ingratitude as Antonio had done, for all the words he could hear Olivia speak were words of kindness to

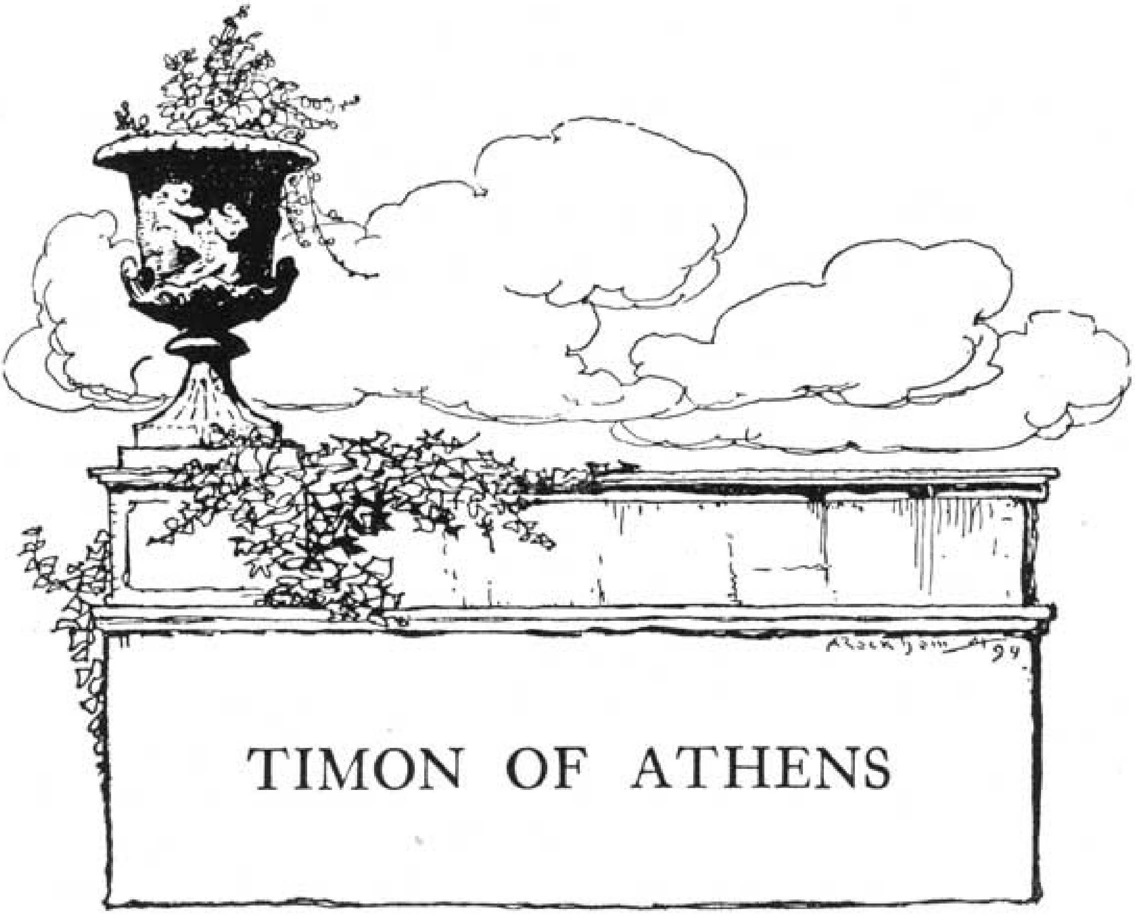
Cesario: and when he found his page had obtained this high place in Olivia's favour, he threatened him with all the terrors of his just revenge; and as he was going to depart, he called Viola to follow him, saying, "Come, boy, with me. My thoughts are ripe for mischief." Though it seemed in his jealous rage he was going to doom Viola to instant death, yet her love made her no longer a coward, and she said she would most joyfully suffer death to give her master ease. But Olivia would not so lose her husband, and she cried, "Where goes my Cesario?" Viola replied, "After him I love more than my life." Olivia, however, prevented their departure by loudly proclaiming that Cesario was her husband, and sent for the priest, who declared that not two hours had passed since he had married the Lady Olivia to this young man. In vain Viola protested she was not married to Olivia; the evidence of that lady and the priest made Orsino believe that his page had robbed him of the treasure he prized above his life. But thinking that it was past recall, he was bidding farewell to his faithless mistress, and the *young dissembler* , her husband, as he called Viola, warning her never to come in his sight again, when (as it seemed to them) a miracle appeared! for another Cesario entered, and addressed Olivia as his wife. This new Cesario was Sebastian, the real husband of Olivia; and when their wonder had a little ceased at seeing two persons with the same face, the same voice, and the same habit, the brother and sister began to question each other; for Viola could scarce be persuaded that her brother was living, and Sebastian knew not how to account for the sister he supposed drowned being found in the habit of a young man. But Viola presently acknowledged that she was indeed Viola, and his sister, under that disguise.

When all the errors were cleared up which the extreme likeness between this twin brother and sister had occasioned, they laughed at the Lady Olivia for the pleasant mistake she had made in falling in love with a woman; and Olivia showed no dislike to her exchange, when she found she had wedded the brother instead of the sister.

The hopes of Orsino were for ever at an end by this marriage of Olivia, and with his hopes, all his fruitless love seemed to vanish away, and all his thoughts were fixed on the event of his favourite, young Cesario, being changed into a fair lady. He viewed Viola with great attention, and he remembered how very handsome he had always thought Cesario was, and he concluded she would look very beautiful in a woman's attire; and then he remembered how often she had said *she loved him* , which at the time seemed only the dutiful expressions of a faithful page; but now he guessed that something more was meant, for many of her pretty sayings, which were like riddles to him, came now into his mind, and he no sooner remembered all these things than he resolved to make Viola his wife; and he said to her (he still could not help calling her *Cesario* and *boy*), "Boy, you have said to me a thousand times that you should never love a woman like to me, and for the faithful service you have done for me so much beneath your soft and tender breeding, and since you have called me master so long, you shall now be your master's mistress, and Orsino's true duchess."

Olivia, perceiving Orsino was making over that heart, which she had so ungraciously rejected, to Viola, invited them to enter her house, and offered the assistance of the good priest, who had married her to Sebastian in the morning, to perform the same ceremony in the remaining part of the day for Orsino and Viola. Thus the twin brother and sister were both wedded on the same day: the storm and shipwreck, which had separated them, being the means of bringing to pass their high and mighty fortunes. Viola was the wife of Orsino, the Duke of Illyria, and Sebastian the husband of the rich and noble countess, the Lady Olivia.

TIMON OF ATHENS



TIMON OF ATHENS

Timon, a lord of Athens, in the enjoyment of a princely fortune, affected a humour of liberality which knew no limits. His almost infinite wealth could not flow in so fast, but he poured it out faster upon all sorts and degrees of people. Not the poor only tasted of his bounty, but great lords did not disdain to rank themselves among his dependants and followers. His table was resorted to by all the luxurious feasters, and his house was open to all comers and goers at Athens. His large wealth combined with his free and prodigal nature to subdue all hearts to his love; men of all minds and dispositions tendered their services to Lord Timon, from the glass-faced flatterer, whose face reflects as in a mirror the present humour of his patron, to the rough and unbending cynic, who affecting a contempt of men's persons, and an indifference to worldly things, yet could not stand out against the gracious manners and munificent soul of Lord Timon, but would come (against his nature) to partake of his royal entertainments, and return most rich in his own estimation if he had received a nod or a salutation from Timon.

If a poet had composed a work which wanted a recommendatory introduction to the world, he had no more to do but to dedicate it to Lord Timon, and the poem was sure of sale, besides a present purse from the patron, and daily access to his house and table. If a painter had a picture to dispose of, he had only to take it to Lord Timon, and pretend to consult his taste as to the merits of it; nothing more was wanting to persuade the liberal-hearted lord to buy it. If a jeweller had a stone of price, or a mercer rich costly stuffs, which for their costliness lay upon his hands, Lord Timon's house was a ready mart always open, where they might get off their wares or their jewellery at any price, and the good-natured lord would thank them into the bargain, as if they had done him a piece of courtesy in letting him have the refusal of such precious commodities. So that by this means his house was thronged with superfluous purchases, of no use but to swell uneasy and ostentatious pomp; and his person was still more inconveniently beset with a crowd of these idle visitors, lying poets, painters, sharking tradesmen, lords, ladies, needy courtiers, and expectants, who continually filled his lobbies, raining their fulsome flatteries in whispers in his ears, sacrificing to him with adulation as to a God, making sacred the very stirrup by which he mounted his horse, and seeming as though they drank the free air but through his permission and bounty.

Some of these daily dependants were young men of birth, who (their means not answering to their extravagance) had been put in prison by creditors, and redeemed thence by Lord Timon; these young prodigals thenceforward fastened upon his lordship, as if by common sympathy he were necessarily endeared to all such spendthrifts and loose livers, who, not being able to follow him in his wealth, found it easier to copy him in prodigality and copious spending of what was their own. One of these flesh-flies was Ventidius, for whose debts, unjustly contracted, Timon but lately had paid down the sum of five talents.

But among this confluence, this great flood of visitors, none were more conspicuous than the makers of presents and givers of gifts. It was fortunate for these men if Timon took a fancy to a dog or a horse, or any piece of cheap furniture which was theirs. The thing so praised, whatever it was, was sure to be sent the next morning with the compliments of the giver for Lord Timon's acceptance, and apologies for the unworthiness of the gift; and this dog or horse, or whatever it might be, did not fail to produce from Timon's bounty, who would not be outdone in gifts, perhaps twenty dogs or horses, certainly presents of far richer worth, as these pretended donors knew well enough, and that their false presents were but the putting out of so much money at large and speedy interest. In this way Lord Lucius had lately sent to Timon a present of four milk-white horses, trapped in silver, which this cunning lord had observed Timon upon some occasion to commend; and another lord, Lucullus, had bestowed upon him in the same pretended way of free gift a brace of greyhounds, whose make and fleetness Timon had been heard to admire; these presents the easy-hearted lord accepted without suspicion of the dishonest views of the presenters; and the givers of course were rewarded with some rich return, a diamond or some jewel of twenty times the value of their false and mercenary donation.

Sometimes these creatures would go to work in a more direct way, and with gross and palpable artifice, which yet the credulous Timon was too blind to see, would affect to admire and praise something that Timon possessed, a bargain that he had bought, or some late purchase, which was sure to draw from this yielding and soft-hearted lord a gift of the thing commended, for no service in the world done for it but the easy expense of a little cheap and obvious flattery. In this way Timon but the other day had given to one of these mean lords the bay courser which he himself rode upon, because his lordship had been pleased to say that it was a handsome beast and went well; and Timon knew that no man ever justly praised what he did not wish to possess. For Lord Timon weighed his friends' affection with his own, and so fond was he of bestowing, that he could have dealt kingdoms to these supposed friends, and never have been weary.

Not that Timon's wealth all went to enrich these wicked flatterers; he could do noble and praiseworthy actions; and when a servant of his once loved the daughter of a rich Athenian, but could not hope to obtain her by reason that in wealth and rank the maid was so far above him, Lord Timon freely bestowed upon his servant three Athenian talents, to make his fortune equal with the dowry which the father of the young maid demanded of him who should be her husband. But for the most part, knaves and parasites had the command of his fortune, false friends whom he did not know to be such, but, because they flocked around his person, he thought they must needs love him; and because they smiled and flattered him, he thought surely that his conduct was approved by all the wise and good. And when he was feasting in the midst of all these flatterers and mock friends, when they were eating him up, and draining his fortunes dry with large draughts of richest wines drunk to his health and prosperity, he could not perceive the difference of a friend from a flatterer, but to his deluded eyes (made proud with the sight) it seemed a precious comfort to have so many like brothers commanding one another's fortunes (though it was his own fortune which paid all the costs), and with joy they would run over at the spectacle of such, as it appeared to him, truly festive and fraternal meeting.

But while he thus outwent the very heart of kindness, and poured out his bounty, as if Plutus, the god of gold, had been but his steward; while thus he proceeded without care or stop, so senseless of expense that he would neither inquire how he could maintain it, nor cease his wild flow of riot; his riches, which were not infinite, must needs melt away before a prodigality which knew no limits. But who should tell him so? his flatterers? they had an interest in shutting his eyes. In vain did his honest steward Flavius try to represent to him his condition, laying his accounts before him, begging of him, praying of him, with an importunity that on any other occasion would have been unmannerly in a servant, beseeching him with tears to look into the state of his affairs. Timon would still put him off, and turn the discourse to something else; for nothing is so deaf to remonstrance as riches turned to poverty, nothing is so unwilling to believe its situation, nothing so incredulous to its own true state, and hard to give credit to a reverse. Often had this good steward, this honest creature, when all the rooms of Timon's great house have been choked up with riotous feeders at his master's cost, when the floors have wept with drunken spilling of wine, and every apartment has blazed with lights and resounded with music and feasting, often had he retired by himself to some solitary spot, and wept faster than the wine ran from the wasteful casks within, to see the mad bounty of his lord, and to think, when the means were gone which brought him praises from all sorts of people, how quickly the breath would be gone of which the praise was made; praises won in feasting would be lost in fasting, and at one cloud of winter-showers these flies would disappear.

But now the time was come that Timon could shut his ears no longer to the representations of this faithful steward. Money must be had; and when he ordered Flavius to sell some of his land for that purpose, Flavius informed him, what he had in vain endeavoured at several times before to make him listen to, that most of his land was already sold or forfeited, and that all he possessed at present was not enough to pay the one half of what he owed. Struck with wonder at this presentation, Timon hastily replied, "My lands extend from Athens to Lacedaemon." "O my good lord," said Flavius, "the world is but a world, and has bounds; were it all yours to give in a breath, how quickly were it gone!"

Timon consoled himself that no villanous bounty had yet come from him, that if he had given his wealth away unwisely, it had not been bestowed to feed his vices, but to cherish his friends; and he bade the kind-hearted steward (who was weeping) to take comfort in the assurance that his master could never lack means, while he had so many noble friends; and this infatuated lord persuaded himself that he had nothing to do but to send and borrow, to use every man's fortune (that had ever tasted his bounty) in this extremity, as freely as his own. Then with a cheerful look, as if confident of the trial, he severally despatched messengers to Lord Lucius, to Lords Lucullus and Sempronius, men upon whom he had lavished his gifts in past times without measure or moderation; and to Ventidius, whom he had lately released out of prison by paying his debts, and who, by the death of his father, was now come into the possession of an ample fortune, and well enabled to requite Timon's courtesy: to request of Ventidius the return of those five talents which he had paid for him, and of each of those noble lords the loan of fifty talents; nothing doubting that their gratitude would supply his wants (if he needed it) to the amount of five hundred times fifty talents.

Lucullus was the first applied to. This mean lord had been dreaming overnight of a silver bason and cup, and when Timon's servant was announced, his sordid mind suggested to him that this was surely a making out of his dream, and that Timon had sent him such a present: but when he understood the truth of the matter, and that Timon wanted money, the quality of his faint and watery friendship showed itself, for with many protestations he vowed to the servant that he had long foreseen the ruin of his master's affairs, and many a time had he come to dinner to tell him of it, and had come again to supper to try to persuade him to spend less, but he would take no counsel nor warning by his coming: and true it was that he had been a constant attender (as he said) at Timon's feasts, as he had in greater things tasted his bounty; but that he ever came with that intent, or gave good counsel or reproof to Timon, was a base unworthy lie, which he suitably followed up with meanly offering the servant a bribe, to go home to his master and tell him that he had not found Lucullus at home.

As little success had the messenger who was sent to Lord Lucius. This lying lord, who was full of Timon's meat, and enriched almost to bursting with Timon's costly presents, when he found the wind changed, and the fountain of so much bounty suddenly stopped, at first could hardly believe it; but on its being confirmed, he affected great regret that he should not have it in his power to serve Lord Timon, for unfortunately (which was a base falsehood) he had made a great purchase the day before, which had quite disfurnished him of the means at present, the more beast he, he called himself, to put it out of his power to serve so good a friend; and he counted it one of his greatest afflictions that his ability should fail him to pleasure such an honourable gentleman.

Who can call any man friend that dips in the same dish with him? just of this metal is every flatterer. In the recollection of everybody Timon had been a father to this Lucius, had kept up his credit with his purse; Timon's money had gone to pay the wages of his servants, to pay the hire of the labourers who had sweat to build the fine houses which Lucius's pride had made necessary to him: yet, oh! the monster which man makes himself when he proves ungrateful! this Lucius now denied to Timon a sum, which, in respect of what Timon had bestowed on him, was less than charitable men afford to beggars.

Sempronius, and every one of these mercenary lords to whom Timon applied in their turn, returned the same evasive answer or direct denial; even Ventidius, the redeemed and now rich Ventidius, refused to assist him with the loan of those five talents which Timon had not lent but generously given him in his distress.

Now was Timon as much avoided in his poverty as he had been courted and resorted to in his riches. Now the same tongues which had been loudest in his praises, extolling him as bountiful, liberal, and open handed, were not ashamed to censure that very bounty as folly, that liberality as profuseness, though it had shown itself folly in nothing so truly as in the selection of such unworthy creatures as themselves for its objects. Now was Timon's princely mansion forsaken, and become a shunned and hated place, a place for men to pass by, not a place, as formerly, where every passenger must stop and taste of his wine and good cheer; now, instead of being thronged with feasting and tumultuous guests, it was beset with impatient and clamorous creditors, usurers, extortioners, fierce and intolerable in their demands, pleading bonds, interest, mortgages; iron-hearted men that would take no denial nor putting off, that Timon's house was now his jail, which he could not pass, nor go in nor out for them; one demanding his due of fifty talents, another bringing in a bill of five thousand crowns, which if he would tell out his blood by drops, and pay them so, he had not enough in his body to discharge, drop by drop.

In this desperate and irremediable state (as it seemed) of his affairs, the eyes of all men were suddenly surprised at a new and incredible lustre which this setting sun put forth. Once more Lord Timon proclaimed a feast, to which he invited his accustomed guests, lords, ladies, all that was great or fashionable in Athens. Lord Lucius and Lucullus came, Ventidius, Sempronius, and the rest. Who more sorry now than these fawning wretches, when they found (as they thought) that Lord Timon's poverty was all pretence, and had been only put on to make trial of their loves, to think that they should not have seen through the artifice at the time, and have had the cheap credit of obliging his lordship? yet who more glad to find the fountain of that noble bounty, which they had thought dried up, still fresh and running? They came dissembling, protesting, expressing deepest sorrow and shame, that when his lordship sent to them, they should have been so unfortunate as to want the present means to oblige so honourable a friend. But Timon begged them not to give such trifles a thought, for he had altogether forgotten it. And these base fawning lords, though they had denied him money in his adversity, yet could not refuse their presence at this new blaze of his returning prosperity. For the swallow follows not summer more willingly than men of these dispositions follow the good fortunes of the great, nor more willingly leaves winter than these shrink from the first appearance of a reverse; such summer birds are men. But now with music and state the banquet of smoking dishes was served up; and when the guests had a little done admiring whence the bankrupt Timon could find means to furnish so costly a feast, some doubting whether the scene which they saw was real, as scarce trusting their own eyes; at a signal given, the dishes were uncovered, and Timon's drift appeared: instead of those varieties and far-fetched dainties which they expected, that Timon's epicurean table in past times had so liberally presented, now appeared under the covers of these dishes a preparation more suitable to Timon's poverty, nothing but a little smoke and lukewarm water, fit feast for this knot of mouth-friends, whose professions were indeed smoke, and their hearts lukewarm and slippery as the water with which Timon welcomed his astonished guests, bidding them, "Uncover, dogs, and lap;" and before they could recover their surprise, sprinkling it in their faces, that they might have enough, and throwing dishes and all after them, who now ran huddling out, lords, ladies, with their caps snatched up in haste, a splendid confusion, Timon pursuing them, still calling them what they were, "smooth smiling parasites, destroyers under the mask of courtesy, affable wolves, meek bears, fools of fortune, feast-friends, time-flies." They, crowding out to avoid him, left the house more willingly than they had entered it; some losing their gowns and caps, and some their jewels in the hurry, all glad to escape out of the presence of such a mad lord, and from the ridicule of his mock banquet.

This was the last feast which ever Timon made, and in it he took farewell of Athens and the society of men; for, after that, he betook himself to the woods, turning his back upon the hated city and upon all mankind, wishing the walls of that detestable city might sink, and the houses fall upon their owners, wishing all plagues which infest humanity, war, outrage, poverty, diseases, might fasten upon its inhabitants, praying the just gods to confound all Athenians, both young and old, high and low; so wishing, he went to the woods, where he said he should find the unkindest beast much kinder than mankind. He stripped himself naked, that he might retain no fashion of a man, and dug a cave to live in, and lived solitary in the manner of a beast, eating the wild roots, and drinking water, flying from the face of his kind, and choosing rather to herd with wild beasts, as more harmless and friendly than man.

What a change from Lord Timon the rich, Lord Timon the delight of mankind, to Timon the naked, Timon the man-hater! Where were his flatterers now? Where were his attendants and retinue? Would the bleak air, that boisterous servitor, be his chamberlain, to put his shirt on warm? Would those stiff trees that had outlived the eagle, turn young and airy pages to him, to skip on his errands when he bade them? Would the cool brook, when it was iced with winter, administer to him his warm broths and caudles when sick of an overnight's surfeit? Or would the creatures that lived in those wild woods come and lick his hand and flatter him?

Here on a day, when he was digging for roots, his poor sustenance, his spade struck against something heavy, which proved to be gold, a great heap which some miser had probably buried in a time of alarm, thinking to have come again, and taken it from its prison, but died before the opportunity had arrived, without making any man privy to the concealment; so it lay, doing neither good nor harm, in the bowels of the earth, its mother, as if it had never come from thence, till the accidental striking of Timon's spade against it once more brought it to light.

Here was a mass of treasure which, if Timon had retained his old mind, was enough to have purchased him friends and flatterers again; but Timon was sick of the false world, and the sight of gold was poisonous to his eyes; and he would have restored it to the earth, but that, thinking of the infinite calamities which by means of gold happen to mankind, how the lucre of it causes robberies, oppression, injustice, briberies, violence, and murder, among men, he had a pleasure in imagining (such a rooted hatred did he bear to his species) that out of this heap, which in digging he had discovered, might arise some mischief to plague mankind. And some soldiers passing through the woods near to his cave at that instant, which proved to be a part of the troops of the Athenian captain Alcibiades, who upon some disgust taken against the senators of Athens (the Athenians were ever noted to be a thankless and ungrateful people, giving disgust to their generals and best friends), was marching at the head of the same triumphant army which he had formerly headed in their defence, to war against them; Timon, who liked their business well, bestowed upon their captain the gold to pay his soldiers, requiring no other service from him, than that he should with his conquering army lay Athens level with the ground, and burn, slay, kill all her inhabitants; not sparing the old men for their white beards, for (he said) they were usurers, nor the young children for their seeming innocent smiles, for those (he said) would live, if they grew up, to be traitors; but to steel his eyes and ears against any sights or sounds that might awaken compassion; and not to let the cries of virgins, babes, or mothers, hinder him from making one universal massacre of the city, but to confound them all in his conquest; and when he had conquered, he prayed that the gods would confound him also, the conqueror: so thoroughly did Timon hate Athens, Athenians, and all mankind.

While he lived in this forlorn state, leading a life more brutal than human, he was suddenly surprised one day with the appearance of a man standing in an admiring posture at the door of his cave. It was Flavius, the honest steward, whom love and zealous affection to his master had led to seek him out at his wretched dwelling, and to offer his services; and the first sight of his master, the once noble Timon, in that abject condition, naked as he was born, living in the manner of a beast among beasts, looking like his own sad ruins and a monument of decay, so affected this good servant, that he stood speechless, wrapped up in horror, and confounded. And when he found utterance at last to his words, they were so choked with tears, that Timon had much ado to know him again, or to make out who it was that had come (so contrary to the experience he had had of mankind) to offer him service in extremity. And being in the form and shape of a man, he suspected him for a traitor, and his tears for false; but the good servant by so many tokens confirmed the truth of his fidelity, and made it clear that nothing but love and zealous duty to his once dear master had brought him there, that Timon was forced to confess that the world contained one honest man; yet, being in the shape and form of a man, he could not look upon his man's face without abhorrence, or hear words uttered from his man's lips without loathing; and this singly honest man was forced to depart, because he was a man, and because, with a heart more gentle and compassionate than is usual to man, he bore man's detested form and outward feature.

But greater visitants than a poor steward were about to interrupt the savage quiet of Timon's solitude. For now the day was come when the ungrateful lords of Athens sorely repented the injustice which they had done to the noble Timon. For Alcibiades, like an incensed wild boar, was raging at the walls of their city, and with his hot siege threatened to lay fair Athens in the dust. And now the memory of Lord Timon's former prowess and military conduct came fresh into their forgetful minds, for Timon had been their general in past times, and a valiant and expert soldier, who alone of all the Athenians was deemed able to cope with a besieging army such as then threatened them, or to drive back the furious approaches of Alcibiades.

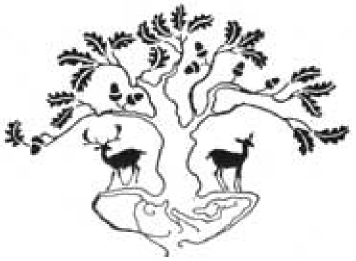
A deputation of the senators was chosen in this emergency to wait upon Timon. To him they come in their extremity, to whom, when he was in extremity, they had shown but small regard; as if they presumed upon his gratitude whom they had disobliged, and had derived a claim to his courtesy from their own most discourteous and unpiteous treatment.

Now they earnestly beseech him, implore him with tears, to return and save that city, from which their ingratitude had so lately driven him; now they offer him riches, power, dignities, satisfaction for past injuries, and public honours, and the public love; their persons, lives, and fortunes, to be at his disposal, if he will but come back and save them. But Timon the naked, Timon the man-hater, was no longer Lord Timon, the lord of bounty, the flower of valour, their defence in war, their ornament in peace. If Alcibiades killed his countrymen, Timon cared not. If he sacked fair Athens, and slew her old men and her infants, Timon would rejoice. So he told them; and that there was not a knife in the unruly camp which he did not prize above the reverendest throat in Athens.

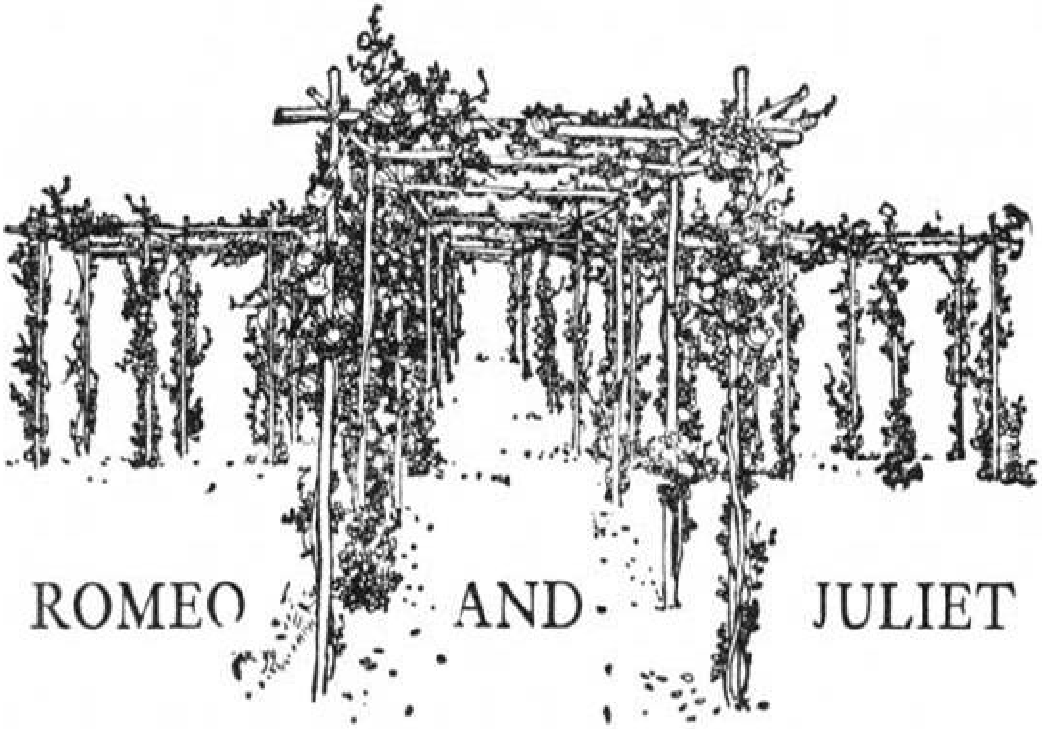
This was all the answer he vouchsafed to the weeping disappointed senators; only at parting he bade them commend him to his countrymen, and tell them, that to ease them of their griefs and anxieties, and to prevent the consequences of fierce Alcibiades' wrath, there was yet a way left, which he would teach them, for he had yet so much affection left for his dear countrymen as to be willing to do them a kindness before his death. These words a little revived the senators, who hoped that his kindness for their city was returning. Then Timon told them that he had a tree, which grew near his cave, which he should shortly have occasion to cut down, and he invited all his friends in Athens, high or low, of what degree soever, who wished to shun affliction, to come and take a taste of his tree before he cut it down; meaning, that they might come and hang themselves on it, and escape affliction that way.

And this was the last courtesy, of all his noble bounties, which Timon showed to mankind, and this the last sight of him which his countrymen had: for not many days after, a poor soldier, passing by the sea-beach, which was at a little distance from the woods which Timon frequented, found a tomb on the verge of the sea, with an inscription upon it, purporting that it was the grave of Timon the man-hater, who "While he lived, did hate all living men, and dying wished a plague might consume all caitiffs left!"

Whether he finished his life by violence, or whether mere distaste of life and the loathing he had for mankind brought Timon to his conclusion, was not clear, yet all men admired the fitness of his epitaph, and the consistency of his end; dying, as he had lived, a hater of mankind: and some there were who fancied a conceit in the very choice which he had made of the sea-beach for his place of burial, where the vast sea might weep for ever upon his grave, as in contempt of the transient and shallow tears of hypocritical and deceitful mankind.



ROMEO AND JULIET



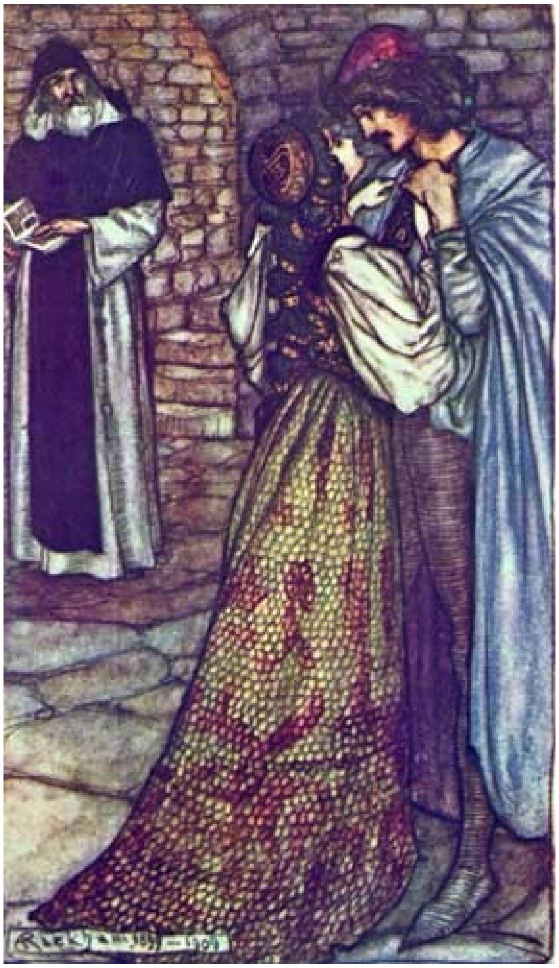
The two chief families in Verona were the rich Capulets and the Montagues. There had been an old quarrel between these families, which was grown to such a height, and so deadly was the enmity between them, that it extended to the remotest kindred, to the followers and retainers of both sides, insomuch that a servant of the house of Montague could not meet a servant of the house of Capulet, nor a Capulet encounter with a Montague by chance, but fierce words and sometimes bloodshed ensued; and frequent were the brawls from such accidental meetings, which disturbed the happy quiet of Verona's streets.

Old Lord Capulet made a great supper, to which many fair ladies and many noble guests were invited. All the admired beauties of Verona were present, and all comers were made welcome if they were not of the house of Montague. At this feast of Capulets, Rosaline, beloved of Romeo, son to the old Lord Montague, was present; and though it was dangerous for a Montague to be seen in this assembly, yet Benvolio, a friend of Romeo, persuaded the young lord to go to this assembly in the disguise of a mask, that he might see his Rosaline, and seeing her, compare her with some choice beauties of Verona, who (he said) would make him think his swan a crow. Romeo had small faith in Benvolio's words; nevertheless, for the love of Rosaline, he was persuaded to go. For Romeo was a sincere and passionate lover, and one that lost his sleep for love, and fled society to be alone, thinking on Rosaline, who disdained him, and never requited his love, with the least show of courtesy or affection; and Benvolio wished to cure his friend of this love by showing him diversity of ladies and company. To this feast of Capulets then young Romeo with Benvolio and their friend Mercutio went masked. Old Capulet bid them welcome, and told them that ladies who had their toes unplagued with corns would dance with them. And the old man was light hearted and merry, and said that he had worn a mask when he was young, and could have told a whispering tale in a fair lady's ear. And they fell to dancing, and Romeo was suddenly struck with the exceeding beauty of a lady who danced there, who seemed to him to teach the torches to burn bright, and her beauty to show by night like a rich jewel worn by a blackamoor; beauty too rich for use, too dear for earth! like a snowy dove trooping with crows (he said), so richly did her beauty and perfections shine above the ladies her companions. While he uttered these praises, he was overheard by Tybalt, a nephew of Lord Capulet, who knew him by his voice to be Romeo. And this Tybalt, being of a fiery and passionate temper, could not endure that a Montague should come under cover of a mask, to fleer and scorn (as he said) at their solemnities. And he stormed and raged exceedingly, and would have struck young Romeo dead. But his uncle, the old Lord Capulet, would not suffer him to do any injury at that time, both out of respect to his guests, and because Romeo had borne himself like a gentleman, and all tongues in Verona bragged of him to be a virtuous and well-governed youth. Tybalt, forced to be patient against his will, restrained himself, but swore that this vile Montague should at another time dearly pay for his intrusion.

The dancing being done, Romeo watched the place where the lady stood; and under favour of his masking habit, which might seem to excuse in part the liberty, he presumed in the gentlest manner to take her by the hand, calling it a shrine, which if he profaned by touching it, he was a blushing pilgrim, and would kiss it for atonement. "Good pilgrim," answered the lady, "your devotion shows by far too mannerly and too courtly: saints have hands, which pilgrims may touch, but kiss not."—"Have not saints lips, and pilgrims too?" said Romeo. "Ay," said the lady, "lips which they must use in prayer."—"O then, my dear saint," said Romeo, "hear my prayer, and grant it, lest I despair." In such like allusions and loving conceits they were engaged, when the lady was called away to her mother. And Romeo inquiring who her mother was, discovered that the lady whose peerless beauty he was so much struck with, was young Juliet, daughter and heir to the Lord Capulet, the great enemy of the Montagues; and that he had unknowingly engaged his heart to his foe. This troubled him, but it could not dissuade him from loving. As little rest had Juliet, when she found that the gentleman that she had been talking with was Romeo and a Montague, for she had been suddenly smit with the same hasty and inconsiderate passion for Romeo, which he had conceived for her; and a prodigious birth of love it seemed to her, that she must love her enemy, and that her affections should settle there, where family considerations should induce her chiefly to hate.

It being midnight, Romeo with his companions departed; but they soon missed him, for, unable to stay away from the house where he had left his heart, he leaped the wall of an orchard which was at the back of Juliet's house. Here he had not been long, ruminating on his new love, when Juliet appeared above at a window, through which her exceeding beauty seemed to break like the light of the sun in the east; and the moon, which shone in the orchard with a faint light, appeared to Romeo as if sick and pale with grief at the superior lustre of this new sun. And she, leaning her cheek upon her hand, he passionately wished himself a glove upon that hand, that he might touch her cheek. She all this while thinking herself alone, fetched a deep sigh, and exclaimed, "Ah me!" Romeo, enraptured to hear her speak, said softly, and unheard by her, "O speak again, bright angel, for such you appear, being over my head, like a winged messenger from heaven whom mortals fall back to gaze upon." She, unconscious of being overheard, and full of the new passion which that night's adventure had given birth to, called upon her lover by name (whom she supposed absent): "O Romeo, Romeo!" said she, "wherefore art thou Romeo? Deny thy father, and refuse thy name, for my sake; or if thou wilt not, be but my sworn love, and I no longer will be a Capulet." Romeo, having this encouragement, would fain have spoken, but he was desirous of hearing more; and the lady continued her passionate discourse with herself (as she thought), still chiding Romeo for being Romeo and a Montague, and wishing him some other name, or that he would put away that hated name, and for that name which was no part of himself, he should take all herself. At this loving word Romeo could no longer refrain, but taking up the dialogue as if her words had been addressed to him personally, and not merely in fancy, he bade her call him Love, or by whatever other name she pleased, for he was no longer Romeo, if that name was displeasing to her. Juliet, alarmed to hear a man's voice in the garden, did not at first know who it was, that by favour of the night and darkness had thus stumbled upon the discovery of her secret; but when he spoke again, though her ears had not yet drunk a hundred words of that tongue's uttering, yet so nice is a lover's hearing, that she immediately knew him to be young Romeo, and she expostulated with him on the danger to which he had exposed himself by climbing the orchard walls, for if any of her kinsmen should find him there, it would be death to him being a Montague. "Alack," said Romeo, "there is more peril in your eye, than in twenty of their swords. Do you but look kind upon me, lady, and I am proof against their enmity. Better my life should be ended by their hate, than that hated life should be prolonged, to live without your love."—"How came you into this place," said Juliet, "and by whose direction?"—"Love directed me," answered Romeo: "I am no pilot, yet wert thou as far apart from me, as that vast shore which is washed with the farthest sea, I should venture for such merchandise." A crimson blush came over Juliet's face, yet unseen by Romeo by reason of the night, when she reflected upon the discovery which she had made, yet not meaning to make it, of her love to Romeo. She would fain have recalled her words, but that was impossible: fain would she have stood upon form, and have kept her lover at a distance, as the custom of discreet ladies is, to frown and be perverse, and give their suitors harsh denials at first; to stand off, and affect a coyness or indifference, where they most love, that their lovers may not think them too lightly or too easily won; for the difficulty of attainment increases the value of the object. But there was no room in her case for denials, or puttings off, or any of the customary arts of delay and protracted courtship. Romeo had heard from her own tongue, when she did not dream that he was near her, a confession of her love. So with an honest frankness, which the novelty of her situation excused, she confirmed the truth of what he had before heard, and addressing him by the name of *fair Montague* (love can sweeten a sour name), she begged him not to impute her easy yielding to levity or an unworthy mind, but that he must lay the fault of it (if it were a fault) upon the accident of the night which had so strangely discovered her thoughts. And she added, that though her behaviour to him might not be sufficiently prudent, measured by the custom of her sex, yet that she would prove more true than many whose prudence was dissembling, and their modesty artificial cunning.

Romeo was beginning to call the heavens to witness, that nothing was farther from his thoughts than to impute a shadow of dishonour to such an honoured lady, when she stopped him, begging him not to swear; for although she joyed in him, yet she had no joy of that night's contract: it was too rash, too unadvised, too sudden. But he being urgent with her to exchange a vow of love with him that night, she said that she already had given him hers before he requested it; meaning, when he overheard her confession; but she would retract what she then bestowed, for the pleasure of giving it again, for her bounty was as infinite as the sea, and her love as deep. From this loving conference she was called away by her nurse, who slept with her, and thought it time for her to be in bed, for it was near to daybreak; but hastily returning, she said three or four words more to Romeo, the purport of which was, that if his love was indeed honourable, and his purpose marriage, she would send a messenger to him to-morrow, to appoint a time for their marriage, when she would lay all her fortunes at his feet, and follow him as her lord through the world. While they were settling this point, Juliet was repeatedly called for by her nurse, and went in and returned, and went and returned again, for she seemed as jealous of Romeo going from her, as a young girl of her bird, which she will let hop a little from her hand, and pluck it back with a silken thread; and Romeo was as loath to part as she; for the sweetest music to lovers is the sound of each other's tongues at night. But at last they parted, wishing mutually sweet sleep and rest for that night.



AT THE CELL OF FRIAR LAWRENCE

The day was breaking when they parted, and Romeo, who was too full of thoughts of his mistress and that blessed meeting to allow him to sleep, instead of going home, bent his course to a monastery hard by, to find Friar Lawrence. The good friar was already up at his devotions, but seeing young Romeo abroad so early, he conjectured rightly that he had not been abed that night, but that some distemper of youthful affection had kept him waking. He was right in imputing the cause of Romeo's wakefulness to love, but he made a wrong guess at the object, for he thought that his love for Rosaline had kept him waking. But when Romeo revealed his new passion for Juliet, and requested the assistance of the friar to marry them that day, the holy man lifted up his eyes and hands in a sort of wonder at the sudden change in Romeo's affections, for he had been privy to all Romeo's love for Rosaline, and his many complaints of her disdain: and he said, that young men's love lay not truly in their hearts, but in their eyes. But Romeo replying, that he himself had often chidden him for doting on Rosaline, who could not love him again, whereas Juliet both loved and was beloved by him, the friar assented in some measure to his reasons; and thinking that a matrimonial alliance between young Juliet and Romeo might happily be the means of making up the long breach between the Capulets and the Montagues; which no one more lamented than this good friar, who was a friend to both the families and had often interposed his mediation to make up the quarrel without effect; partly moved by policy, and partly by his fondness for young Romeo, to whom he could deny nothing, the old man consented to join their hands in marriage.

Now was Romeo blessed indeed, and Juliet, who knew his intent from a messenger which she had despatched according to promise, did not fail to be early at the cell of Friar Lawrence, where their hands were joined in holy marriage; the good friar praying the heavens to smile upon that act, and in the union of this young Montague and young Capulet to bury the old strife and long dissensions of their families.

The ceremony being over, Juliet hastened home, where she stayed impatient for the coming of night, at which time Romeo promised to come and meet her in the orchard, where they had met the night before; and the time between seemed as tedious to her, as the night before some great festival seems to an impatient child, that has got new finery which it may not put on till the morning.

That same day, about noon, Romeo's friends, Benvolio and Mercutio, walking through the streets of Verona, were met by a party of the Capulets with the impetuous Tybalt at their head. This was the same angry Tybalt who would have fought with Romeo at old Lord Capulet's feast. He, seeing Mercutio, accused him bluntly of associating with Romeo, a Montague. Mercutio, who had as much fire and youthful blood in him as Tybalt, replied to this accusation with some sharpness; and in spite of all Benvolio could say to moderate their wrath, a quarrel was beginning, when Romeo himself passing that way, the fierce Tybalt turned from Mercutio to Romeo, and gave him the disgraceful appellation of villain. Romeo wished to avoid a quarrel with Tybalt above all men, because he was the kinsman of Juliet, and much beloved by her; besides, this young Montague had never thoroughly entered into the family quarrel, being by nature wise and gentle, and the name of a Capulet, which was his dear lady's name, was now rather a charm to allay resentment, than a watchword to excite fury. So he tried to reason with Tybalt, whom he saluted mildly by the name of *good*

Capulet , as if he, though a Montague, had some secret pleasure in uttering that name: but Tybalt, who hated all Montagues as he hated hell, would hear no reason, but drew his weapon; and Mercutio, who knew not of Romeo's secret motive for desiring peace with Tybalt, but looked upon his present forbearance as a sort of calm dishonourable submission, with many disdainful words provoked Tybalt to the prosecution of his first quarrel with him; and Tybalt and Mercutio fought, till Mercutio fell, receiving his death's wound while Romeo and Benvolio were vainly endeavouring to part the combatants. Mercutio being dead, Romeo kept his temper no longer, but returned the scornful appellation of villain which Tybalt had given him; and they fought till Tybalt was slain by Romeo. This deadly broil falling out in the midst of Verona at noonday, the news of it quickly brought a crowd of citizens to the spot, and among them the old Lords Capulet and Montague, with their wives; and soon after arrived the prince himself, who being related to Mercutio, whom Tybalt had slain, and having had the peace of his government often disturbed by these brawls of Montagues and Capulets, came determined to put the law in strictest force against those who should be found to be offenders. Benvolio, who had been eye-witness to the fray, was commanded by the prince to relate the origin of it; which he did, keeping as near the truth as he could without injury to Romeo, softening and excusing the part which his friends took in it. Lady Capulet, whose extreme grief for the loss of her kinsman Tybalt made her keep no bounds in her revenge, exhorted the prince to do strict justice upon his murderer, and to pay no attention to Benvolio's representation, who, being Romeo's friend and a Montague, spoke partially. Thus she pleaded against her new son-in-law, but she knew not yet that he was her son-in-law and Juliet's husband. On the other hand was to be seen Lady Montague pleading for her child's life, and arguing with some justice that Romeo had done nothing worthy of punishment in taking the life of Tybalt, which was already forfeited to the law by his having slain Mercutio. The prince, unmoved by the passionate exclamations of these women, on a careful examination of the facts, pronounced his sentence, and by that sentence Romeo was banished from Verona.

Heavy news to young Juliet, who had been but a few hours a bride, and now by this decree seemed everlastingly divorced! When the tidings reached her, she at first gave way to rage against Romeo, who had slain her dear cousin, she called him a beautiful tyrant, a fiend angelical, a ravenous dove, a lamb with a wolf's nature, a serpent-heart hid with a flowering face, and other like contradictory names, which denoted the struggles in her mind between her love and her resentment: but in the end love got the mastery, and the tears which she shed for grief that Romeo had slain her cousin, turned to drops of joy that her husband lived whom Tybalt would have slain. Then came fresh tears, and they were altogether of grief for Romeo's banishment. That word was more terrible to her than the death of many Tybalts.

Romeo, after the fray, had taken refuge in Friar Lawrence's cell, where he was first made acquainted with the prince's sentence, which seemed to him far more terrible than death. To him it appeared there was no world out of Verona's walls, no living out of the sight of Juliet. Heaven was there where Juliet lived, and all beyond was purgatory, torture, hell. The good friar would have applied the consolation of philosophy to his griefs: but this frantic young man would hear of none, but like a madman he tore his hair, and threw himself all along upon the ground, as he said, to take the measure of his grave. From this unseemly state he was roused by a message from his dear lady, which a little revived him; and then the friar took the advantage to expostulate with him on the unmanly weakness which he had shown. He had slain Tybalt, but would he also slay himself, slay his dear lady, who lived but in his life? The noble form of man, he said, was but a shape of wax, when it wanted the courage which should keep it firm. The law had been lenient to him, that instead of death, which he had incurred, had pronounced by the prince's mouth only banishment. He had slain Tybalt, but Tybalt would have slain him: there was a sort of happiness in that. Juliet was alive, and (beyond all hope) had become his dear wife; therein he was most happy. All these blessings, as the friar made them out to be, did Romeo put from him like a sullen misbehaved wench. And the friar bade him beware, for such as despaired (he said) died miserable. Then when Romeo was a little calmed, he counselled him that he should go that night and secretly take his leave of Juliet, and thence proceed straightways to Mantua, at which place he should sojourn, till the friar found fit occasion to publish his marriage, which might be a joyful means of reconciling their families; and then he did not doubt but the prince would be moved to pardon him, and he would return with twenty times more joy than he went forth with grief. Romeo was convinced by these wise counsels of the friar, and took his leave to go and seek his lady, proposing to stay with her that night, and by daybreak pursue his journey alone to Mantua; to which place the good friar promised to send him letters from time to time, acquainting him with the state of affairs at home.

That night Romeo passed with his dear wife, gaining secret admission to her chamber, from the orchard in which he had heard her confession of love the night before. That had been a night of unmixed joy and rapture; but the pleasures of this night, and the delight which these lovers took in each other's society, were sadly allayed with the prospect of parting, and the fatal adventures of the past day. The unwelcome daybreak seemed to come too soon, and when Juliet heard the morning song of the lark, she would have persuaded herself that it was the nightingale, which sings by night; but it was too truly the lark which sang, and a discordant and unpleasing note it seemed to her; and the streaks of day in the east too certainly pointed out that it was time for these lovers to part. Romeo took his leave of his dear wife with a heavy heart, promising to write to her from Mantua every hour in the day; and when he had descended from her chamber-window, as he stood below her on the ground, in that sad foreboding state of mind in which she was, he appeared to her eyes as one dead in the bottom of a tomb. Romeo's mind misgave him in like manner: but now he was forced hastily to depart, for it was death for him to be found within the walls of Verona after daybreak.

This was but the beginning of the tragedy of this pair of star-crossed lovers. Romeo had not been gone many days, before the old Lord Capulet proposed a match for Juliet. The husband he had chosen for her, not dreaming that she was married already, was Count Paris, a gallant, young, and noble gentleman, no unworthy suitor to the young Juliet, if she had never seen Romeo.

The terrified Juliet was in a sad perplexity at her father's offer. She pleaded her youth unsuitable to marriage, the recent death of Tybalt, which had left her spirits too weak to meet a husband with any face of joy, and how indecorous it would show for the family of the Capulets to be celebrating a nuptial feast, when his funeral solemnities were hardly over: she pleaded every reason against the match, but the true one, namely, that she was married already. But Lord Capulet was deaf to all her excuses, and in a peremptory manner ordered her to get ready, for by the following Thursday she should be married to Paris: and having found her a husband, rich, young, and noble, such as the proudest maid in Verona might joyfully accept, he could not bear that out of an affected coyness, as he construed her denial, she should oppose obstacles to her own good fortune.

In this extremity Juliet applied to the friendly friar, always her counsellor in distress, and he asking her if she had resolution to undertake a desperate remedy, and she answering that she would go into the grave alive rather than marry Paris, her own dear husband living; he directed her to go home, and appear merry, and give her consent to marry Paris, according to her father's desire, and on the next night, which was the night before the marriage, to drink off the contents of a phial which he then gave her, the effect of which would be that for two-and-forty hours after drinking it she should appear cold and lifeless; and when the bridegroom came to fetch her in the morning, he would find her to appearance dead; that then she would be borne, as the manner in that country was, uncovered on a bier, to be buried in the family vault; that if she could put off womanish fear, and consent to this terrible trial, in forty-two hours after swallowing the liquid (such was its certain operation) she would be sure to awake, as from a dream; and before she should awake, he would let her husband know their drift, and he should come in the night, and bear her thence to Mantua. Love, and the dread of marrying Paris, gave young Juliet strength to undertake this horrible adventure; and she took the phial of the friar, promising to observe his directions.

Going from the monastery, she met the young Count Paris, and modestly dissembling, promised to become his bride. This was joyful news to the Lord Capulet and his wife. It seemed to put youth into the old man; and Juliet, who had displeased him exceedingly, by her refusal of the count, was his darling again, now she promised to be obedient. All things in the house were in a bustle against the approaching nuptials. No cost was spared to prepare such festival rejoicings as Verona had never before witnessed.

On the Wednesday night Juliet drank off the potion. She had many misgivings lest the friar, to avoid the blame which might be imputed to him for marrying her to Romeo, had given her poison; but then he was always known for a holy man: then lest she should awake before the time that Romeo was to come for her; whether the terror of the place, a vault full of dead Capulets' bones, and where Tybalt, all bloody, lay festering in his shroud, would not be enough to drive her distracted: again she thought of all the stories she had heard of spirits haunting the places where their bodies were bestowed. But then her love for Romeo, and her aversion for Paris returned, and she desperately swallowed the draught, and became insensible.

When young Paris came early in the morning with music to awaken his bride, instead of a living Juliet, her chamber presented the dreary spectacle of a lifeless corse. What death to his hopes! What confusion then reigned through the whole house! Poor Paris lamenting his bride, whom most detestable death had beguiled him of, had divorced from him even before their hands were joined. But still more piteous it was to hear the mournings of the old Lord and Lady Capulet, who having but this one, one poor loving child to rejoice and solace in, cruel death had snatched her from their sight, just as these careful parents were on the point of seeing her advanced (as they thought) by a promising and advantageous match. Now all things that were ordained for the festival were turned from their properties to do the office of a black funeral. The wedding cheer served for a sad burial feast, the bridal hymns were changed for sullen dirges, the sprightly instruments to melancholy bells, and the flowers that should have been strewed in the bride's path, now served but to strew her corse. Now, instead of a priest to marry her, a priest was needed to bury her; and she was borne to church indeed, not to augment the cheerful hopes of the living, but to swell the dreary numbers of the dead.

Bad news, which always travels faster than good, now brought the dismal story of his Juliet's death to Romeo, at Mantua, before the messenger could arrive, who was sent from Friar Lawrence to apprise him that these were mock funerals only, and but the shadow and representation of death, and that his dear lady lay in the tomb but for a short while, expecting when Romeo would come to release her from that dreary mansion. Just before, Romeo had been unusually joyful and light-hearted. He had dreamed in the night that he was dead (a strange dream, that gave a dead man leave to think), and that his lady came and found him dead, and breathed such life with kisses in his lips, that he revived, and was an emperor! And now that a messenger came from Verona, he thought surely it was to confirm some good news which his dreams had presaged. But when the contrary to this flattering vision appeared, and that it was his lady who was dead in truth, whom he could not revive by any kisses, he ordered horses to be got ready, for he determined that night to visit Verona, and to see his lady in her tomb. And as mischief is swift to enter into the thoughts of desperate men, he called to mind a poor apothecary, whose shop in Mantua he had lately passed, and from the beggarly appearance of the man, who seemed famished, and the wretched show in his show of empty boxes ranged on dirty shelves, and other tokens of extreme wretchedness, he had said at the time (perhaps having some misgivings that his own disastrous life might haply meet with a conclusion so desperate), "If a man were to need poison, which by the law of Mantua it is death to sell, here lives a poor wretch who would sell it him." These words of his now came into his mind, and he sought out the apothecary, who after some pretended scruples, Romeo offering him gold, which his poverty could not resist, sold him a poison, which, if he swallowed, he told him, if he had the strength of twenty men, would quickly despatch him.

With this poison he set out for Verona, to have a sight of his dear lady in her tomb, meaning, when he had satisfied his sight, to swallow the poison, and be buried by her side. He reached Verona at midnight, and found the churchyard, in the midst of which was situated the ancient tomb of the Capulets. He had provided a light, and a spade, and wrenching iron, and was proceeding to break open the monument, when he was interrupted by a voice, which by the name of *vile Montague* , bade him desist from his unlawful business. It was the young Count Paris, who had come to the tomb of Juliet at that unseasonable time of night, to strew flowers and to weep over the grave of her that should have been his bride. He knew not what an interest Romeo had in the dead, but knowing him to be a Montague, and (as he supposed) a sworn foe to all the Capulets, he judged that he was come by night to do some villanous shame to the dead bodies; therefore in an angry tone he bade him desist; and as a criminal, condemned by the laws of Verona to die if he were found within the walls of the city, he would have apprehended him. Romeo urged Paris to leave him, and warned him by the fate of Tybalt, who lay buried there, not to provoke his anger, or draw down another sin upon his head, by forcing him to kill him. But the count in scorn refused his warning, and laid hands on him as a felon, which Romeo resisting, they fought, and Paris fell. When Romeo, by the help of a light, came to see who it was that he had slain, that it was Paris, who (he learned in his way from Mantua) should have married Juliet, he took the dead youth by the hand, as one whom misfortune had made a companion, and said that he would bury him in a triumphal grave, meaning in Juliet's grave, which he now opened: and there lay his lady, as one whom death had no power upon to change a feature or complexion, in her matchless beauty; or as if Death were amorous, and the lean abhorred monster kept her there for his delight; for she lay yet fresh and blooming, as she had fallen to sleep when she swallowed that benumbing potion; and near her lay Tybalt in his bloody shroud, whom Romeo seeing, begged pardon of his lifeless corse, and for Juliet's sake called him *cousin* , and said that he was about to do him a favour by putting his enemy to death. Here Romeo took his last leave of his lady's lips, kissing them; and here he shook the burden of his cross stars from his weary body, swallowing that poison which the apothecary had sold him, whose operation was fatal and real, not like that dissembling potion which Juliet had swallowed, the effect of which was now nearly expiring, and she about to awake to complain that Romeo had not kept his time, or that he had come too soon.

For now the hour was arrived at which the friar had promised that she should awake; and he, having learned that his letters which he had sent to Mantua, by some unlucky detention of the messenger, had never reached Romeo, came himself, provided with a pickaxe and lantern, to deliver the lady from her confinement; but he was surprised to find a light already burning in the Capulets' monument, and to see swords and blood near it, and Romeo and Paris lying breathless by the monument.

Before he could entertain a conjecture, to imagine how these fatal accidents had fallen out, Juliet awoke out of her trance, and seeing the friar near her, she remembered the place where she was, and the occasion of her being there, and asked for Romeo, but the friar, hearing a noise, bade her come out of that place of death, and of unnatural sleep, for a greater power than they could contradict had thwarted their intents; and being frightened by the noise of people coming, he fled: but when Juliet saw the cup closed in her true love's hands, she guessed that poison had been the cause of his end, and she would have swallowed the dregs if any had been left, and she kissed his still warm lips to try if any poison yet did hang upon them; then hearing a nearer noise of people coming, she quickly unsheathed a dagger which she wore, and stabbing herself, died by her true Romeo's side.

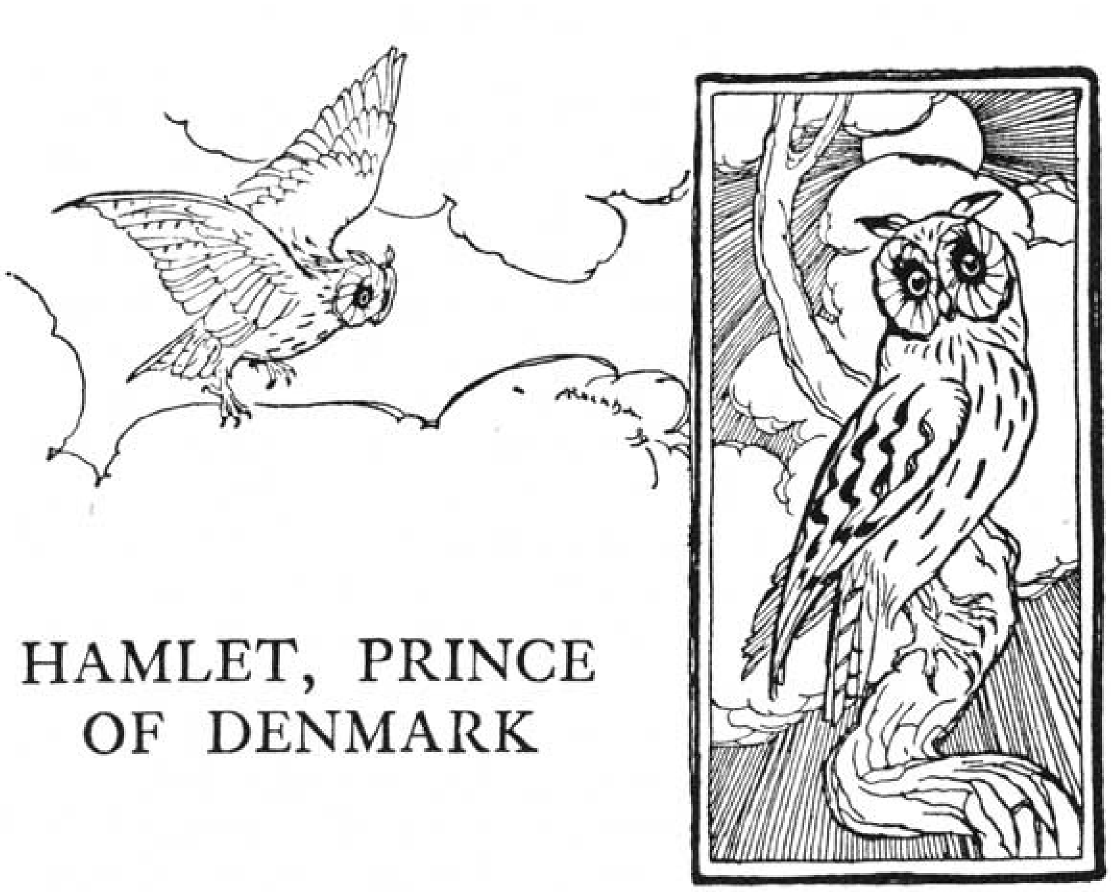
The watch by this time had come up to the place. A page belonging to Count Paris, who had witnessed the fight between his master and Romeo, had given the alarm, which had spread among the citizens, who went up and down the streets of Verona confusedly exclaiming, A Paris! a Romeo! a Juliet! as the rumour had imperfectly reached them, till the uproar brought Lord Montague and Lord Capulet out of their beds, with the prince, to inquire into the causes of the disturbance. The friar had been apprehended by some of the watch, coming from the churchyard, trembling, sighing, and weeping, in a suspicious manner. A great multitude being assembled at the Capulets' monument, the friar was demanded by the prince to deliver what he knew of these strange and disastrous accidents.

And there, in the presence of the old Lords Montague and Capulet, he faithfully related the story of their children's fatal love, the part he took in promoting their marriage, in the hope in that union to end the long quarrels between their families: how Romeo, there dead, was husband to Juliet; and Juliet, there dead, was Romeo's faithful wife; how before he could find a fit opportunity to divulge their marriage, another match was projected for Juliet, who, to avoid the crime of a second marriage, swallowed the sleeping draught (as he advised), and all thought her dead; how meantime he wrote to Romeo, to come and take her thence when the force of the potion should cease, and by what unfortunate miscarriage of the messenger the letters never reached Romeo: further than this the friar could not follow the story, nor knew more than that coming himself, to deliver Juliet from that place of death, he found the Count Paris and Romeo slain. The remainder of the transactions was supplied by the narration of the page who had seen Paris and Romeo fight, and by the servant who came with Romeo from Verona, to whom this faithful lover had given letters to be delivered to his father in the event of his death, which made good the friar's words, confessing his marriage with Juliet, imploring the forgiveness of his parents, acknowledging the buying of the poison of the poor apothecary, and his intent in coming to the monument, to die, and lie with Juliet. All these circumstances agreed together to clear the friar from any hand he could be supposed to have in these complicated slaughters, further than as the unintended consequences of his own well meant, yet too artificial and subtle contrivances.

And the prince, turning to these old lords, Montague and Capulet, rebuked them for their brutal and irrational enmities, and showed them what a scourge Heaven had laid upon such offences, that it had found means even through the love of their children to punish their unnatural hate.

And these old rivals, no longer enemies, agreed to bury their long strife in their children's graves; and Lord Capulet requested Lord Montague to give him his hand, calling him by the name of brother, as if in acknowledgment of the union of their families, by the marriage of the young Capulet and Montague; and saying that Lord Montague's hand (in token of reconcilement) was all he demanded for his daughter's jointure: but Lord Montague said he would give him more, for he would raise her a statue of pure gold, that while Verona kept its name, no figure should be so esteemed for its richness and workmanship as that of the true and faithful Juliet. And Lord Capulet in return said that he would raise another statue to Romeo. So did these poor old lords, when it was too late, strive to outgo each other in mutual courtesies: while so deadly had been their rage and enmity in past times, that nothing but the fearful overthrow of their children (poor sacrifices to their quarrels and dissensions) could remove the rooted hates and jealousies of the noble families.

HAMLET



Gertrude, Queen of Denmark, becoming a widow by the sudden death of King Hamlet, in less than two months after his death married his brother Claudius, which was noted by all people at the time for a strange act of indiscretion, or unfeelingness, or worse: for this Claudius did no ways resemble her late husband in the qualities of his person or his mind, but was as contemptible in outward appearance, as he was base and unworthy in disposition; and suspicions did not fail to arise in the minds of some, that he had privately made away with his brother, the late king, with the view of marrying his widow, and ascending the throne of Denmark, to the exclusion of young Hamlet, the son of the buried king, and lawful successor to the throne.

But upon no one did this unadvised action of the queen make such impression as upon this young prince, who loved and venerated the memory of his dead father almost to idolatry, and being of a nice sense of honour, and a most exquisite practiser of propriety himself, did sorely take to heart this unworthy conduct of his mother Gertrude: insomuch that, between grief for his father's death and shame for his mother's marriage, this young prince was overclouded with a deep melancholy, and lost all his mirth and all his good looks; all his customary pleasure in books forsook him, his princely exercises and sports, proper to his youth, were no longer acceptable; he grew weary of the world, which seemed to him an unweeded garden, where all the wholesome flowers were choked up, and nothing but weeds could thrive. Not that the prospect of exclusion from the throne, his lawful inheritance, weighed so much upon his spirits, though that to a young and high-minded prince was a bitter wound and a sore indignity; but what so galled him, and took away all his cheerful spirits, was, that his mother had shown herself so forgetful to his father's memory: and such a father! who had been to her so loving and so gentle a husband! and then she always appeared as loving and obedient a wife to him, and would hang upon him as if her affection grew to him: and now within two months, or as it seemed to young Hamlet, less than two months, she had married again, married his uncle, her dear husband's brother, in itself a highly improper and unlawful marriage, from the nearness of relationship, but made much more so by the indecent haste with which it was concluded, and the unkingly character of the man whom she had chosen to be the partner of her throne and bed. This it was, which more than the loss of ten kingdoms, dashed the spirits and brought a cloud over the mind of this honourable young prince.

In vain was all that his mother Gertrude or the king could do to contrive to divert him; he still appeared in court in a suit of deep black, as mourning for the king his father's death, which mode of dress he had never laid aside, not even in compliment to his mother upon the day she was married, nor could he be brought to join in any of the festivities or rejoicings of that (as appeared to him) disgraceful day.

What mostly troubled him was an uncertainty about the manner of his father's death. It was given out by Claudius that a serpent had stung him; but young Hamlet had shrewd suspicions that Claudius himself was the serpent; in plain English, that he had murdered him for his crown, and that the serpent who stung his father did now sit on the throne.

How far he was right in this conjecture, and what he ought to think of his mother, how far she was privy to this murder, and whether by her consent or knowledge, or without, it came to pass, were the doubts which continually harassed and distracted him.

A rumour had reached the ear of young Hamlet, that an apparition, exactly resembling the dead king his father, had been seen by the soldiers upon watch, on the platform before the palace at midnight, for two or three nights successively. The figure came constantly clad in the same suit of armour, from head to foot, which the dead king was known to have worn: and they who saw it (Hamlet's bosom friend Horatio was one) agreed in their testimony as to the time and manner of its appearance: that it came just as the clock struck twelve; that it looked pale, with a face more of sorrow than of anger; that its beard was grisly, and the colour a *sable silvered* , as they had seen it in his lifetime: that it made no answer when they spoke to it; yet once they thought it lifted up its head, and addressed itself to motion, as if it were about to speak; but in that moment the morning cock crew, and it shrunk in haste away, and vanished out of their sight.

The young prince, strangely amazed at their relation, which was too consistent and agreeing with itself to disbelieve, concluded that it was his father's ghost which they had seen, and determined to take his watch with the soldiers that night, that he might have a chance of seeing it; for he reasoned with himself, that such an appearance did not come for nothing, but that the ghost had something to impart, and though it had been silent hitherto, yet it would speak to him. And he waited with impatience for the coming of night.

When night came he took his stand with Horatio, and Marcellus, one of the guard, upon the platform, where this apparition was accustomed to walk: and it being a cold night, and the air unusually raw and nipping, Hamlet and Horatio and their companion fell into some talk about the coldness of the night, which was suddenly broken off by Horatio announcing that the ghost was coming.

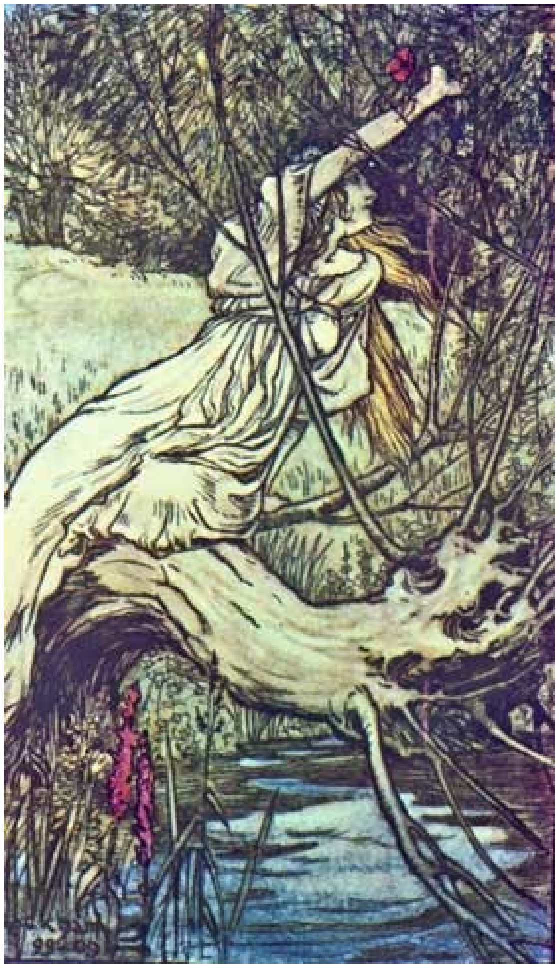
At the sight of his father's spirit, Hamlet was struck with a sudden surprise and fear. He at first called upon the angels and heavenly ministers to defend them, for he knew not whether it were a good spirit or bad; whether it came for good or evil: but he gradually assumed more courage; and his father (as it seemed to him) looked upon him so piteously, and as it were desiring to have conversation with him, and did in all respects appear so like himself as he was when he lived, that Hamlet could not help addressing him: he called him by his name, Hamlet, King, Father! and conjured him that he would tell the reason why he had left his grave, where they had seen him quietly bestowed, to come again and visit the earth and the moonlight: and besought him that he would let them know if there was anything which they could do to give peace to his spirit. And the ghost beckoned to Hamlet, that he should go with him to some more removed place, where they might be alone; and Horatio and Marcellus would have dissuaded the young prince from following it, for they feared lest it should be some evil spirit, who would tempt him to the the neighbouring sea, or to the top of some dreadful cliff, and there put on some horrible shape which might deprive the prince of his reason. But their counsels and entreaties could not alter Hamlet's determination, who cared too little about life to fear the losing of it; and as to his soul, he said, what could the spirit do to that, being a thing immortal as itself? And he felt as hardy as a lion, and bursting from them, who did all they could to hold him, he followed whithersoever the spirit led him.

And when they were alone together, the spirit broke silence, and told him that he was the ghost of Hamlet, his father, who had been cruelly murdered, and he told the manner of it; that it was done by his own brother Claudius, Hamlet's uncle, as Hamlet had already but too much suspected, for the hope of succeeding to his bed and crown. That as he was sleeping in his garden, his custom always in the afternoon, his treasonous brother stole upon him in his sleep, and poured the juice of poisonous henbane into his ears, which has such an antipathy to the life of man, that swift as quicksilver it courses through all the veins of the body, baking up the blood, and spreading a crustlike leprosy all over the skin: thus sleeping, by a brother's hand he was cut off at once from his crown, his queen, and his life: and he adjured Hamlet, if he did ever his dear father love, that he would revenge his foul murder. And the ghost lamented to his son, that his mother should so fall off from virtue, as to prove false to the wedded love of her first husband, and to marry his murderer; but he cautioned Hamlet, howsoever he proceeded in his revenge against his wicked uncle, by no means to act any violence against the person of his mother, but to leave her to heaven, and to the stings and thorns of conscience. And Hamlet promised to observe the ghost's direction in all things, and the ghost vanished.

And when Hamlet was left alone, he took up a solemn resolution, that all he had in his memory, all that he had ever learned by books or observation, should be instantly forgotten by him, and nothing live in his brain but the memory of what the ghost had told him, and enjoined him to do. And Hamlet related the particulars of the conversation which had passed to none but his dear friend Horatio; and he enjoined both to him and Marcellus the strictest secrecy as to what they had seen that night.

The terror which the sight of the ghost had left upon the senses of Hamlet, he being weak and dispirited before, almost unhinged his mind, and drove him beside his reason. And he, fearing that it would continue to have this effect, which might subject him to observation, and set his uncle upon his guard, if he suspected that he was meditating anything against him, or that Hamlet really knew more of his father's death than he professed, took up a strange resolution, from that time to counterfeit as if he were really and truly mad; thinking that he would be less an object of suspicion when his uncle should believe him incapable of any serious project, and that his real perturbation of mind would be best covered and pass concealed under a disguise of pretended lunacy.

From this time Hamlet affected a certain wildness and strangeness in his apparel, his speech, and behaviour, and did so excellently counterfeit the madman, that the king and queen were both deceived, and not thinking his grief for his father's death a sufficient cause to produce such a distemper, for they knew not of the appearance of the ghost, they concluded that his malady was love, and they thought they had found out the object.



TO THIS BROOK OPHELIA CAME

Before Hamlet fell into the melancholy way which has been related, he had dearly loved a fair maid called Ophelia, the daughter of Polonius, the king's chief counsellor in affairs of state. He had sent her letters and rings, and made many tenders of his affection to her, and importuned her with love in honourable fashion: and she had given belief to his vows and importunities. But the melancholy which he fell into latterly had made him neglect her, and from the time he conceived the project of counterfeiting madness, he affected to treat her with unkindness, and a sort of rudeness: but she, good lady, rather than reproach him with being false to her, persuaded herself that it was nothing but the disease in his mind, and no settled unkindness, which had made him less observant of her than formerly; and she compared the faculties of his once noble mind and excellent understanding, impaired as they were with the deep melancholy that oppressed him, to sweet bells which in themselves are capable of most exquisite music, but when jangled out of tune, or rudely handled, produce only a harsh and unpleasing sound.

Though the rough business which Hamlet had in hand, the revenging of his father's death upon his murderer, did not suit with the playful state of courtship, or admit of the society of so idle a passion as love now seemed to him, yet it could not hinder but that soft thoughts of his Ophelia would come between, and in one of these moments, when he thought that his treatment of this gentle lady had been unreasonably harsh, he wrote her a letter full of wild starts of passion, and in extravagant terms, such as agreed with his supposed madness, but mixed with some gentle touches of affection, which could not but show to this honoured lady that a deep love for her yet lay at the bottom of his heart. He bade her to doubt the stars were fire, and to doubt that the sun did move, to doubt truth to be a liar, but never to doubt that he loved; with more of such extravagant phrases. This letter Ophelia dutifully showed to her father, and the old man thought himself bound to communicate it to the king and queen, who from that time supposed that the true cause of Hamlet's madness was love. And the queen wished that the good beauties of Ophelia might be the happy cause of his wildness, for so she hoped that her virtues might happily restore him to his accustomed way again, to both their honours.

But Hamlet's malady lay deeper than she supposed, or than could be so cured. His father's ghost, which he had seen, still haunted his imagination, and the sacred injunction to revenge his murder gave him no rest till it was accomplished. Every hour of delay seemed to him a sin, and a violation of his father's commands. Yet how to compass the death of the king, surrounded as he constantly was with his guards, was no easy matter. Or if it had been, the presence of the queen, Hamlet's mother, who was generally with the king, was a restraint upon his purpose, which he could not break through. Besides, the very circumstance that the usurper was his mother's husband filled him with some remorse, and still blunted the edge of his purpose. The mere act of putting a fellow-creature to death was in itself odious and terrible to a disposition naturally so gentle as Hamlet's was. His very melancholy, and the dejection of spirits he had so long been in, produced an irresoluteness and wavering of purpose, which kept him from proceeding to extremities. Moreover, he could not help having some scruples upon his mind, whether the spirit which he had seen was indeed his father, or whether it might not be the devil, who he had heard has power to take any form he pleases, and who might have assumed his father's shape only to take advantage of his weakness and his melancholy, to drive him to the doing of so desperate an act as murder. And he determined that he would have more certain grounds to go upon than a vision, or apparition, which might be a delusion.

While he was in this irresolute mind there came to the court certain players, in whom Hamlet formerly used to take delight, and particularly to hear one of them speak a tragical speech, describing the death of old Priam, King of Troy, with the grief of Hecuba his queen. Hamlet welcomed his old friends, the players, and remembering how that speech had formerly given him pleasure, requested the player to repeat it; which he did in so lively a manner, setting forth the cruel murder of the feeble old king, with the destruction of his people and city by fire, and the mad grief of the old queen, running barefoot up and down the palace, with a poor clout upon that head where a crown had been, and with nothing but a blanket upon her loins, snatched up in haste, where she had worn a royal robe; that not only it drew tears from all that stood by, who thought they saw the real scene, so lively was it represented, but even the player himself delivered it with a broken voice and real tears. This put Hamlet upon thinking, if that player could so work himself up to passion by a mere fictitious speech, to weep for one that he had never seen, for Hecuba, that had been dead so many hundred years, how dull was he, who having a real motive and cue for passion, a real king and a dear father murdered, was yet so little moved, that his revenge all this while had seemed to have slept in dull and muddy forgetfulness! and while he meditated on actors and acting, and the powerful effects which a good play, represented to the life, has upon the spectator, he remembered the instance of some murderer, who seeing a murder on the stage, was by the mere force of the scene and resemblance of circumstances so affected, that on the spot he confessed the crime which he had committed. And he determined that these players should play something like the murder of his father before his uncle, and he would watch narrowly what effect it might have upon him, and from his looks he would be able to gather with more certainty if he were the murderer or not. To this effect he ordered a play to be prepared, to the representation of which he invited the king and queen.

The story of the play was of a murder done in Vienna upon a duke. The duke's name was Gonzago, his wife Baptista. The play showed how one Lucianus, a near relation to the duke, poisoned him in his garden for his estate, and how the murderer in a short time after got the love of Gonzago's wife.

At the representation of this play, the king, who did not know the trap which was laid for him, was present, with his queen and the whole court: Hamlet sitting attentively near him to observe his looks. The play began with a conversation between Gonzago and his wife, in which the lady made many protestations of love, and of never marrying a second husband, if she should outlive Gonzago; wishing she might be accursed if she ever took a second husband, and adding that no woman did so, but those wicked women who kill their first husbands. Hamlet observed the king his uncle change colour at this expression, and that it was as bad as wormwood both to him and to the queen. But when Lucianus, according to the story, came to poison Gonzago sleeping in the garden, the strong resemblance which it bore to his own wicked act upon the late king, his brother, whom he had poisoned in his garden, so struck upon the conscience of this usurper, that he was unable to sit out the rest of the play, but on a sudden calling for lights to his chamber, and affecting or partly feeling a sudden sickness, he abruptly left the theatre. The king being departed, the play was given over. Now Hamlet had seen enough to be satisfied that the words of the ghost were true, and no illusion; and in a fit of gaiety, like that which comes over a man who suddenly has some great doubt or scruple resolved, he swore to Horatio, that he would take the ghost's word for a thousand pounds. But before he could make up his resolution as to what measures of revenge he should take, now he was certainly informed that his uncle was his father's murderer, he was sent for by the queen his mother, to a private conference in her closet.

It was by desire of the king that the queen sent for Hamlet, that she might signify to her son how much his late behaviour had displeased them both, and the king, wishing to know all that passed at that conference, and thinking that the too partial report of a mother might let slip some part of Hamlet's words, which it might much import the king to know, Polonius, the old counsellor of state, was ordered to plant himself behind the hangings in the queen's closet, where he might unseen hear all that passed. This artifice was particularly adapted to the disposition of Polonius, who was a man grown old in crooked maxims and policies of state, and delighted to get at the knowledge of matters in an indirect and cunning way.

Hamlet being come to his mother, she began to tax him in the roundest way with his actions and behaviour, and she told him that he had given great offence to *his father* , meaning the king, his uncle, whom, because he had married her, she called Hamlet's father. Hamlet, sorely indignant that she should give so dear and honoured a name as father seemed to him, to a wretch who was indeed no better than the murderer of his true father, with some sharpness replied, "Mother, *you* have much offended *my father* ." The queen said that was but an idle answer. "As good as the question deserved," said Hamlet. The queen asked him if he had forgotten who it was he was speaking to? "Alas!" replied Hamlet, "I wish I could forget. You are the queen, your husband's brother's wife; and you are my mother: I wish you were not what you are." "Nay, then," said the queen, "if you show me so little respect, I will set those to you that can speak," and was going to send the king or Polonius to him. But Hamlet would not let her go, now he had her alone, till he had tried if his words could not bring her to some sense of her wicked life; and, taking her by the wrist, he held her fast, and made her sit down. She, affrighted at his earnest manner, and fearful lest in his lunacy he should do her a mischief, cried out; and a voice was heard from behind the hangings, "Help, help, the queen!" which Hamlet hearing, and verily thinking that it was the king himself there concealed, he drew his sword and stabbed at the place where the voice came from, as he would have stabbed a rat that ran there, till the voice ceasing, he concluded the person to be dead. But when he dragged for the body, it was not the king, but Polonius, the old officious counsellor, that had planted himself as a spy behind the hangings. "Oh me!" exclaimed the queen, "what a rash and bloody deed have you done!" "A bloody deed, mother," replied Hamlet, "but not so bad as yours, who killed a king, and married his brother." Hamlet had gone too far to leave off here. He was now in the humour to speak plainly to his mother, and he pursued it. And though the faults of parents are to be tenderly treated by their children, yet in the case of great crimes the son may have leave to speak even to his own mother with some harshness, so as that harshness is meant for her good, and to turn her from her wicked ways, and not done for the purpose of upbraiding. And now this virtuous prince did in moving terms represent to the queen the heinousness of her offence, in being so forgetful of the dead king, his father, as in so short a space of time to marry with his brother and reputed murderer: such an act as, after the vows which she had sworn to her first husband, was enough to make all vows of women suspected, and all virtue to be accounted hypocrisy, wedding contracts to be less than gamesters' oaths, and religion to be a mockery and a mere form of words. He said she had done such a deed, that the heavens blushed at it, and the earth was sick of her because of it. And he showed her two pictures, the one of the late king, her first husband, and the other of the present king, her second husband, and he bade her mark the difference; what a grace was on the brow of his father, how like a god he looked! the curls of Apollo, the forehead of Jupiter, the eye of Mars, and a posture like to

Mercury newly alighted on some heaven-kissing hill! this man, he said, *had been* her husband. And then he showed her whom she had got in his stead: how like a blight or a mildew he looked, for so he had blasted his wholesome brother. And the queen was sore ashamed that he should so turn her eyes inward upon her soul, which she now saw so black and deformed. And he asked her how she could continue to live with this man, and be a wife to him, who had murdered her first husband, and got the crown by as false means as a thief——and just as he spoke, the ghost of his father, such as he was in his lifetime, and such as he had lately seen it, entered the room, and Hamlet, in great terror, asked what it would have; and the ghost said that it came to remind him of the revenge he had promised, which Hamlet seemed to have forgot; and the ghost bade him speak to his mother, for the grief and terror she was in would else kill her. It then vanished, and was seen by none but Hamlet, neither could he by pointing to where it stood, or by any description, make his mother perceive it; who was terribly frightened all this while to hear him conversing, as it seemed to her, with nothing; and she imputed it to the disorder of his mind. But Hamlet begged her not to flatter her wicked soul in such a manner as to think that it was his madness, and not her own offences, which had brought his father's spirit again on the earth. And he bade her feel his pulse, how temperately it beat, not like a madman's. And he begged of her with tears, to confess herself to heaven for what was past, and for the future to avoid the company of the king, and be no more as a wife to him: and when she should show herself a mother to him, by respecting his father's memory, he would ask a blessing of her as a son. And she promising to observe his directions, the conference ended.

And now Hamlet was at leisure to consider who it was that in his unfortunate rashness he had killed: and when he came to see that it was Polonius, the father of the Lady Ophelia, whom he so dearly loved, he drew apart the dead body, and, his spirits being now a little quieter, he wept for what he had done.

The unfortunate death of Polonius gave the king a pretence for sending Hamlet out of the kingdom. He would willingly have put him to death, fearing him as dangerous; but he dreaded the people, who loved Hamlet, and the queen, who, with all her faults, doted upon the prince, her son. So this subtle king, under pretence of providing for Hamlet's safety, that he might not be called to account for Polonius' death, caused him to be conveyed on board a ship bound for England, under the care of two courtiers, by whom he despatched letters to the

English court, which in that time was in subjection and paid tribute to Denmark, requiring for special reasons there pretended, that Hamlet should be put to death as soon as he landed on English ground. Hamlet, suspecting some treachery, in the night-time secretly got at the letters, and skilfully erasing his own name, he in the stead of it put in the names of those two courtiers, who had the charge of him, to be put to death: then sealing up the letters, he put them into their place again. Soon after the ship was attacked by pirates, and a sea-fight commenced; in the course of which Hamlet, desirous to show his valour, with sword in hand singly boarded the enemy's vessel; while his own ship, in a cowardly manner, bore away, and leaving him to his fate, the two courtiers made the best of their way to England, charged with those letters the sense of which Hamlet had altered to their own deserved destruction.

The pirates, who had the prince in their power, showed themselves gentle enemies; and knowing whom they had got prisoner, in the hope that the prince might do them a good turn at court in recompense for any favour they might show him, they set Hamlet on shore at the nearest port in Denmark. From that place Hamlet wrote to the king, acquainting him with the strange chance which had brought him back to his own country, and saying that on the next day he should present himself before his majesty. When he got home, a sad spectacle offered itself the first thing to his eyes.

This was the funeral of the young and beautiful Ophelia, his once dear mistress. The wits of this young lady had begun to turn ever since her poor father's death. That he should die a violent death, and by the hands of the prince whom she loved, so affected this tender young maid, that in a little time she grew perfectly distracted, and would go about giving flowers away to the ladies of the court, and saying that they were for her father's burial, singing songs about love and about death, and sometimes such as had no meaning at all, as if she had no memory of what happened to her. There was a willow which grew slanting over a brook, and reflected its leaves on the stream. To this brook she came one day when she was unwatched, with garlands she had been making, mixed up of daisies and nettles, flowers and weeds together, and clambering up to hang her garland upon the boughs of the willow, a bough broke, and precipitated this fair young maid, garland, and all that she had gathered, into the water, where her clothes bore her up for a while, during which she chanted scraps of old tunes, like one insensible to her own distress, or as if she were a creature natural to that element: but long it was not before her garments, heavy with the wet, pulled her in from her melodious singing to a muddy and miserable death. It was the funeral of this fair maid which her brother Laertes was celebrating, the king and queen and whole court being present, when Hamlet arrived. He knew not what all this show imported, but stood on one side, not inclining to interrupt the ceremony. He saw the flowers strewed upon her grave, as the custom was in maiden burials, which the queen herself threw in; and as she threw them she said, "Sweets to the sweet! I thought to have decked thy bride-bed, sweet maid, not to have strewed thy grave. Thou shouldst have been my Hamlet's wife." And he heard her brother wish that violets might spring from her grave: and he saw him leap into the grave all frantic with grief, and bid the attendants pile mountains of earth upon him, that he might be buried with her. And Hamlet's love for this fair maid came back to him, and he could not bear that a brother should show so much transport of grief, for he thought that he loved Ophelia better than forty thousand brothers. Then discovering himself, he leaped into the grave where Laertes was, all as frantic or more frantic than he, and Laertes knowing him to be Hamlet, who had been the cause of his father's and his sister's death, grappled him by the throat as an enemy, till the attendants parted them: and Hamlet, after the funeral, excused his hasty act in throwing himself into the grave as if to brave Laertes; but he said he could not bear that any one should seem to outgo him in grief for the death of the fair Ophelia. And for the time these two noble youths seemed reconciled.

But out of the grief and anger of Laertes for the death of his father and Ophelia, the king, Hamlet's wicked uncle, contrived destruction for Hamlet. He set on Laertes, under cover of peace and reconciliation, to challenge Hamlet to a friendly trial of skill at fencing, which Hamlet accepting, a day was appointed to try the match. At this match all the court was present, and Laertes, by direction of the king, prepared a poisoned weapon. Upon this match great wagers were laid by the courtiers, as both Hamlet and Laertes were known to excel at this sword play; and Hamlet taking up the foils chose one, not at all suspecting the treachery of Laertes, or being careful to examine Laertes' weapon, who, instead of a foil or blunted sword, which the laws of fencing require, made use of one with a point, and poisoned. At first Laertes did but play with Hamlet, and suffered him to gain some advantages, which the dissembling king magnified and extolled beyond measure, drinking to Hamlet's success, and wagering rich bets upon the issue: but after a few pauses, Laertes growing warm made a deadly thrust at Hamlet with his poisoned weapon, and gave him a mortal blow. Hamlet incensed, but not knowing the whole of the treachery, in the scuffle exchanged his own innocent weapon for Laertes' deadly one, and with a thrust of Laertes' own sword repaid Laertes home, who was thus justly caught in his own treachery. In this instant the queen shrieked out that she was poisoned. She had inadvertently drunk out of a bowl which the king had prepared for Hamlet, in case, that being warm in fencing, he should call for drink: into this the treacherous king had infused a deadly poison, to make sure of Hamlet, if Laertes had failed. He had forgotten to warn the queen of the bowl, which she drank of, and immediately died, exclaiming with her last breath that she was poisoned. Hamlet, suspecting some treachery, ordered the doors to be shut, while he sought it out. Laertes told him to seek no farther, for he was the traitor; and feeling his life go away with the wound which Hamlet had given him, he made confession of the treachery he had used, and how he had fallen a victim to it: and he told Hamlet of the envenomed point, and said that Hamlet had not half an hour to live, for no medicine could cure him; and begging forgiveness of Hamlet, he died, with his last words accusing the king of being the contriver of the mischief. When Hamlet saw his end draw near, there being yet some venom left upon the sword, he suddenly turned upon his false uncle, and thrust the point of it to his heart, fulfilling the promise which he had made to his father's spirit, whose injunction was now accomplished, and his foul murder revenged upon the murderer. Then Hamlet, feeling his breath fail and life departing, turned to his dear friend Horatio, who had been spectator of this fatal tragedy; and with his dying breath requested him that he would live to tell his story to the world (for Horatio had made a motion as if he would slay himself to accompany the prince in death), and Horatio promised that he would make a true report, as one that was privy to all the circumstances. And, thus satisfied, the noble heart of Hamlet cracked; and Horatio and the bystanders with many tears commended the spirit of this sweet prince to the guardianship of angels. For Hamlet was a loving and a gentle prince, and greatly beloved for his many noble and princelike qualities; and if he had lived, would no doubt have proved a most royal and complete king to Denmark.

OTHELLO

OTHELLO

Brabantio, the rich senator of Venice, had a fair daughter, the gentle Desdemona. She was sought to by divers suitors, both on account of her many virtuous qualities, and for her rich expectations. But among the suitors of her own clime and complexion, she saw none whom she could affect: for this noble lady, who regarded the mind more than the features of men, with a singularity rather to be admired than imitated, had chosen for the object of her affections, a Moor, a black, whom her father loved, and often invited to his house.

Neither is Desdemona to be altogether condemned for the unsuitableness of the person whom she selected for her lover. Bating that Othello was black, the noble Moor wanted nothing which might recommend him to the affections of the greatest lady. He was a soldier, and a brave one; and by his conduct in bloody wars against the Turks, had risen to the rank of general in the Venetian service, and was esteemed and trusted by the state.

He had been a traveller, and Desdemona (as is the manner of ladies) loved to hear him tell the story of his adventures, which he would run through from his earliest recollection; the battles, sieges, and encounters, which he had passed through; the perils he had been exposed to by land and by water; his hair-breadth escapes, when he had entered a breach, or marched up to the mouth of a cannon; and how he had been taken prisoner by the insolent enemy, and sold to slavery;

how he demeaned himself in that state, and how he escaped: all these accounts, added to the narration of the strange things he had seen in foreign countries, the vast wilderness and romantic caverns, the quarries, the rocks and mountains, whose heads are in the clouds; of the savage nations, the cannibals who are man-eaters, and a race of people in Africa whose heads do grow beneath their shoulders: these travellers' stories would so enchain the attention of Desdemona, that if she were called off at any time by household affairs, she would despatch with all haste that business, and return, and with a greedy ear devour Othello's discourse. And once he took advantage of a pliant hour, and drew from her a prayer, that he would tell her the whole story of his life at large, of which she had heard so much, but only by parts: to which he consented, and beguiled her of many a tear, when he spoke of some distressful stroke which his youth had suffered.

His story being done, she gave him for his pains a world of sighs: she swore a pretty oath, that it was all passing strange, and pitiful, wondrous pitiful: she wished (she said) she had not heard it, yet she wished that heaven had made her such a man; and then she thanked him, and told him, if he had a friend who loved her, he had only to teach him how to tell his story, and that would woo her. Upon this hint, delivered not with more frankness than modesty, accompanied with certain bewitching prettiness, and blushes, which Othello could not but understand, he spoke more openly of his love, and in this golden opportunity gained the consent of the generous Lady Desdemona privately to marry him.

Neither Othello's colour nor his fortune were such that it could be hoped Brabantio would accept him for a son-in-law. He had left his daughter free; but he did expect that, as the manner of noble Venetian ladies was, she would choose ere long a husband of senatorial rank or expectations; but in this he was deceived; Desdemona loved the Moor, though he was black, and devoted her heart and fortunes to his valiant parts and qualities; so was her heart subdued to an implicit devotion to the man she had selected for a husband, that his very colour, which to all but this discerning lady would have proved an insurmountable objection, was by her esteemed above all the white skins and clear complexions of the young Venetian nobility, her suitors.

Their marriage, which, though privately carried, could not long be kept a secret, came to the ears of the old man, Brabantio, who appeared in a solemn council of the senate, as an accuser of the Moor Othello, who by spells and witchcraft (he maintained) had seduced the affections of the fair Desdemona to marry him, without the consent of her father, and against the obligations of hospitality.

At this juncture of time it happened that the state of Venice had immediate need of the services of Othello, news having arrived that the Turks with mighty preparation had fitted out a fleet, which was bending its course to the island of Cyprus, with intent to regain that strong post from the Venetians, who then held it; in this emergency the state turned its eyes upon Othello, who alone was deemed adequate to conduct the defence of Cyprus against the Turks. So that Othello, now summoned before the senate, stood in their presence at once as a candidate for a great state employment, and as a culprit, charged with offences which by the laws of Venice were made capital.

The age and senatorial character of old Brabantio, commanded a most patient hearing from that grave assembly; but the incensed father conducted his accusation with so much intemperance, producing likelihoods and allegations for proofs, that, when Othello was called upon for his defence, he had only to relate a plain tale of the course of his love; which he did with such an artless eloquence, recounting the whole story of his wooing, as we have related it above, and delivered his speech with so noble a plainness (the evidence of truth), that the duke, who sat as chief judge, could not help confessing that a tale so told would have won his daughter too: and the spells and conjurations which Othello had used in his courtship, plainly appeared to have been no more than the honest arts of men in love; and the only witchcraft which he had used, the faculty of telling a soft tale to win a lady's ear.

This statement of Othello was confirmed by the testimony of the Lady Desdemona herself, who appeared in court, and professing a duty to her father for life and education, challenged leave of him to profess a yet higher duty to her lord and husband, even so much as her mother had shown in preferring him (Brabantio) above *her* father.

The old senator, unable to maintain his plea, called the Moor to him with many expressions of sorrow, and, as an act of necessity, bestowed upon him his daughter, whom, if he had been free to withhold her (he told him), he would with all his heart have kept from him; adding, that he was glad at soul that he had no other child, for this behaviour of Desdemona would have taught him to be a tyrant, and hang clogs on them for her desertion.

This difficulty being got over, Othello, to whom custom had rendered the hardships of a military life as natural as food and rest are to other men, readily undertook the management of the wars in Cyprus: and Desdemona, preferring the honour of her lord (though with danger) before the indulgence of those idle delights in which new-married people usually waste their time, cheerfully consented to his going.

No sooner were Othello and his lady landed in Cyprus, than news arrived, that a desperate tempest had dispersed the Turkish fleet, and thus the island was secure from any immediate apprehension of an attack. But the war, which Othello was to suffer, was now beginning; and the enemies, which malice stirred up against his innocent lady, proved in their nature more deadly than strangers or infidels.

Among all the general's friends no one possessed the confidence of Othello more entirely than Cassio. Michael Cassio was a young soldier, a Florentine, gay, amorous, and of pleasing address, favourite qualities with women; he was handsome and eloquent, and exactly such a person as might alarm the jealousy of a man advanced in years (as Othello in some measure was), who had married a young and beautiful wife; but Othello was as free from jealousy as he was noble, and as incapable of suspecting as of doing a base action. He had employed this Cassio in his love affair with Desdemona, and Cassio had been a sort of go-between in his suit: for Othello, fearing that himself had not those soft parts of conversation which please ladies, and finding these qualities in his friend, would often depute Cassio to go (as he phrased it) a courting for him: such innocent simplicity being rather an honour than a blemish to the character of the valiant Moor. So that no wonder, if next to Othello himself (but at far distance, as beseems a virtuous wife) the gentle Desdemona loved and trusted Cassio. Nor had the marriage of this couple made any difference in their behaviour to Michael Cassio. He frequented their house, and his free and rattling talk was no unpleasing variety to Othello, who was himself of a more serious temper: for such tempers are observed often to delight in their contraries, as a relief from the oppressive excess of their own: and Desdemona and Cassio would talk and laugh together, as in the days when he went a courting for his friend.

Othello had lately promoted Cassio to be the lieutenant, a place of trust, and nearest to the general's person. This promotion gave great offence to Iago, an older officer who thought he had a better claim than Cassio, and would often ridicule Cassio as a fellow fit only for the company of ladies, and one that knew no more of the art of war or how to set an army in array for battle, than a girl. Iago hated Cassio, and he hated Othello, as well for favouring Cassio, as for an unjust suspicion, which he had lightly taken up against Othello, that the Moor was too fond of Iago's wife Emilia. From these imaginary provocations, the plotting mind of Iago conceived a horrid scheme of revenge, which should involve both Cassio, the Moor, and Desdemona, in one common ruin.

Iago was artful, and had studied human nature deeply, and he knew that of all the torments which afflict the mind of man (and far beyond bodily torture), the pains of jealousy were the most intolerable, and had the sorest sting. If he could succeed in making Othello jealous of Cassio, he thought it would be an exquisite plot of revenge, and might end in the death of Cassio or Othello, or both; he cared not.

The arrival of the general and his lady, in Cyprus, meeting with the news of the dispersion of the enemy's fleet, made a sort of holiday in the island. Everybody gave themselves up to feasting and making merry. Wine flowed in abundance, and cups went round to the health of the black Othello, and his lady the fair Desdemona.

Cassio had the direction of the guard that night, with a charge from Othello to keep the soldiers from excess in drinking, that no brawl might arise, to fright the inhabitants, or disgust them with the new-landed forces. That night Iago began his deep-laid plans of mischief: under colour of loyalty and love to the general, he enticed Cassio to make rather too free with the bottle (a great fault in an officer upon guard). Cassio for a time resisted, but he could not long hold out against the honest freedom which Iago knew how to put on, but kept swallowing glass after glass (as Iago still plied him with drink and encouraging songs), and

Cassio's tongue ran over in praise of the Lady Desdemona, whom he again and again toasted, affirming that she was a most exquisite lady: until at last the enemy which he put into his mouth stole away his brains; and upon some provocation given him by a fellow whom Iago had set on, swords were drawn, and Montano, a worthy officer, who interfered to appease the dispute, was wounded in the scuffle. The riot now began to be general, and Iago, who had set on foot the mischief, was foremost in spreading the alarm, causing the castle-bell to be rung (as if some dangerous mutiny instead of a slight drunken quarrel had arisen): the alarm-bell ringing awakened Othello, who, dressing in a hurry, and coming to the scene of action, questioned Cassio of the cause. Cassio was now come to himself, the effect of the wine having a little gone off, but was too much ashamed to reply; and Iago, pretending a great reluctance to accuse Cassio, but, as it were, forced into it by Othello, who insisted to know the truth, gave an account of the whole matter (leaving out his own share in it, which Cassio was too far gone to remember) in such a manner, as while he seemed to make Cassio's offence less, did indeed make it appear greater than it was. The result was, that Othello, who was a strict observer of discipline, was compelled to take away Cassio's place of lieutenant from him.

Thus did Iago's first artifice succeed completely; he had now undermined his hated rival, and thrust him out of his place: but a further use was hereafter to be made of the adventure of this disastrous night.

Cassio, whom this misfortune had entirely sobered, now lamented to his seeming friend Iago that he should have been such a fool as to transform himself into a beast. He was undone, for how could he ask the general for his place again? he would tell him he was a drunkard. He despised himself. Iago, affecting to make light of it, said, that he, or any man living, might be drunk upon occasion; it remained now to make the best of a bad bargain; the general's wife was now the general, and could do anything with Othello; that he were best to apply to the Lady Desdemona to mediate for him with her lord; that she was of a frank, obliging disposition, and would readily undertake a good office of this sort, and set Cassio right again in the general's favour; and then this crack in their love would be made stronger than ever. A good advice of Iago, if it had not been given for wicked purposes, which will after appear.

Cassio did as Iago advised him, and made application to the Lady Desdemona, who was easy to be won over in any honest suit; and she promised Cassio that she should be his solicitor with her lord, and rather die than give up his cause. This she immediately set about in so earnest and pretty a manner, that Othello, who was mortally offended with Cassio, could not put her off. When he pleaded delay, and that it was too soon to pardon such an offender, she would not be beat back, but insisted that it should be the next night, or the morning after, or the next morning to that at farthest. Then she showed how penitent and humbled poor Cassio was, and that his offence did not deserve so sharp a check. And when Othello still hung back, "What! my lord," said she, "that I should have so much to do to plead for Cassio, Michael Cassio, that came a courting for you, and oftentimes, when I have spoken in dispraise of you, has taken your part! I count this but a little thing to ask of you. When I mean to try your love indeed, I shall ask a weighty matter." Othello could deny nothing to such a pleader, and only requesting that Desdemona would leave the time to him, promised to receive Michael Cassio again in favour.

It happened that Othello and Iago had entered into the room where Desdemona was, just as Cassio, who had been imploring her intercession, was departing at the opposite door: and Iago, who was full of art, said in a low voice, as if to himself, "I like not that." Othello took no great notice of what he said; indeed, the conference which immediately took place with his lady put it out of his head; but he remembered it afterwards. For when Desdemona was gone, Iago, as if for mere satisfaction of his thought, questioned Othello whether Michael Cassio, when Othello was courting his lady, knew of his love. To this the general answering in the affirmative, and adding, that he had gone between them very often during the courtship, Iago knitted his brow, as if he had got fresh light on some terrible matter, and cried, "Indeed!" This brought into Othello's mind the words which Iago had let fall upon entering the room, and seeing Cassio with Desdemona; and he began to think there was some meaning in all this: for he deemed Iago to be a just man, and full of love and honesty, and what in a false knave would be tricks, in him seemed to be the natural workings of an honest mind, big with something too great for utterance: and Othello prayed Iago to speak what he knew, and to give his worst thoughts words. "And what," said Iago, "if some thoughts very vile should have intruded into my breast, as where is the palace into which foul things do not enter?" Then Iago went on to say, what a pity it were, if any trouble should arise to Othello out of his imperfect observations; that it would not be for Othello's peace to know his thoughts; that people's good names were not to be taken away for slight suspicions; and when Othello's curiosity was raised almost to distraction with these hints and scattered words, Iago, as if in earnest care for Othello's peace of mind, besought him to beware of jealousy: with such art did this villain raise suspicions in the unguarded Othello, by the very caution which he pretended to give him against suspicion. "I know," said Othello, "that my wife is fair, loves company and feasting, is free of speech, sings, plays, and dances well: but where virtue is, these qualities are virtuous. I must have proof before I think her dishonest." Then Iago, as if glad that Othello was slow to believe ill of his lady, frankly declared that he had no proof, but begged Othello to observe her behaviour well, when Cassio was by; not to be jealous nor too secure neither, for that he (Iago) knew the dispositions of the Italian ladies, his country-women, better than Othello could do; and that in Venice the wives let heaven see many pranks they dared not show their husbands. Then he artfully insinuated that Desdemona deceived her father in marrying with Othello, and carried it so closely, that the poor old man thought that witchcraft had been used. Othello was much moved with this argument, which brought the matter home to him, for if she had deceived her father, why might she not deceive her husband?

Iago begged pardon for having moved him; but Othello, assuming an indifference, while he was really shaken with inward grief at Iago's words, begged him to go on, which Iago did with many apologies, as if unwilling to produce anything against Cassio, whom he called his friend: he then came strongly to the point, and reminded Othello how Desdemona had refused many suitable matches of her own clime and complexion, and had married him, a Moor, which showed unnatural in her, and proved her to have a headstrong will; and when her better judgment returned, how probable it was she should fall upon comparing Othello with the fine forms and clear white complexions of the young Italians her countrymen. He concluded with advising Othello to put off his reconcilement with Cassio a little longer, and in the meanwhile to note with what earnestness Desdemona should intercede in his behalf; for that much would be seen in that. So mischievously did this artful villain lay his plots to turn the gentle qualities of this innocent lady into her destruction, and make a net for her out of her own goodness to entrap her: first setting Cassio on to entreat her mediation, and then out of that very mediation contriving stratagems for her ruin.

The conference ended with Iago's begging Othello to account his wife innocent, until he had more decisive proof; and Othello promised to be patient; but from that moment the deceived Othello never tasted content of mind. Poppy, nor the juice of mandragora, nor all the sleeping potions in the world, could ever again restore to him that sweet rest, which he had enjoyed but yesterday. His occupation sickened upon him. He no longer took delight in arms. His heart, that used to be roused at the sight of troops, and banners, and battle-array, and would stir and leap at the sound of a drum, or a trumpet, or a neighing war-horse, seemed to have lost all that pride and ambition which are a soldier's virtue; and his military ardour and all his old joys forsook him. Sometimes he thought his wife honest, and at times he thought her not so; sometimes he thought Iago just, and at times he thought him not so; then he would wish that he had never known of it; he was not the worse for her loving Cassio, so long as he knew it not: torn to pieces with these distracting thoughts, he once laid hold on Iago's throat, and demanded proof of Desdemona's guilt, or threatened instant death for his having belied her. Iago, feigning indignation that his honesty should be taken for a vice, asked Othello, if he had not sometimes seen a handkerchief spotted with strawberries in his wife's hand. Othello answered, that he had given her such a one, and that it was his first gift. "That same handkerchief," said Iago, "did I see Michael Cassio this day wipe his face with." "If it be as you say," said Othello, "I will not rest till a wide revenge swallow them up: and first, for a token of your fidelity, I expect that Cassio shall be put to death within three days; and for that fair devil (meaning his lady), I will withdraw and devise some swift means of death for her."

Trifles light as air are to the jealous proofs as strong as holy writ. A handkerchief of his wife's seen in Cassio's hand, was motive enough to the deluded Othello to pass sentence of death upon them both, without once inquiring how Cassio came by it. Desdemona had never given such a present to Cassio, nor would this constant lady have wronged her lord with doing so naughty a thing as giving his presents to another man; both Cassio and Desdemona were innocent of any offence against Othello: but the wicked Iago, whose spirits never slept in contrivance of villany, had made his wife (a good, but a weak woman) steal this handkerchief from Desdemona, under pretence of getting the work copied, but in reality to drop it in Cassio's way, where he might find it, and give a handle to Iago's suggestion that it was Desdemona's present.

Othello, soon after meeting his wife, pretended that he had a headache (as he might indeed with truth), and desired her to lend him her handkerchief to hold to his temples. She did so. "Not this," said Othello, "but that handkerchief I gave you." Desdemona had it not about her (for indeed it was stolen, as we have related). "How?" said Othello, "this is a fault indeed. That handkerchief an Egyptian woman gave to my mother; the woman was a witch and could read people's thoughts: she told my mother, while she kept it, it would make her amiable, and my father would love her; but, if she lost it, or gave it away, my father's fancy would turn, and he would loathe her as much as he had loved her. She dying gave it to me, and bade me, if I ever married, to give it to my wife. I did so; take heed of it. Make it a darling as precious as your eye." "Is it possible?" said the frighted lady. "'Tis true," continued Othello; "it is a magical handkerchief; a sibyl that had lived in the world two hundred years, in a fit of prophetic fury worked it; the silkworms that furnished the silk were hallowed, and it was dyed in a mummy of maidens' hearts conserved." Desdemona, hearing the wondrous virtues of the handkerchief, was ready to die with fear, for she plainly perceived she had lost it, and with it, she feared, the affections of her husband. Then Othello started, and looked as if he were going to do some rash thing, and still he demanded the handkerchief, which when she could not produce, she tried to divert her husband from too serious thoughts, and cheerfully told him she saw all his talk about the handkerchief was only to put her off from her suit about Michael Cassio, whom she went on to praise (as Iago had foretold), till Othello in perfect distraction burst out of the room, and then Desdemona, though unwillingly, began to suspect that her lord was jealous.

What cause she could have ministered to him she knew not, and then she accused herself for accusing the noble Othello, and thought to be sure that some untoward news from Venice, or some state troubles had puddled his spirits, and made his temper not so sweet as formerly. And she said, "Men are not gods, and we must not look for that observance from them when they are married, which they show us on the bridal day." And she beshrewed herself for so unkindly judging of his unkindness.

Again Othello and Desdemona met, and he accused her more plainly of being unfaithful, and of loving another man, but he did not name whom: and Othello wept, and Desdemona said, "Alas! the heavy day! why do you weep?" And Othello told her, he could have borne all sorts of evils with fortitude—poverty, and disease, and disgrace; but her infidelity had broken his heart: and he called her a weed, that looked so fair, and smelled so sweet, that the sense ached at it; and wished she had never been born. And when he had left her, this innocent lady was so stupefied with wonder at her lord's untrue suspicion of her, that a weight-like sleep came over her, and she only desired her attendant to make her bed, and to lay her wedding-sheets upon it, saying, that when people teach their babes, they do it by gentle means and easy tasks, and Othello might have chid her so; for in good faith she was but a child when she was chidden. And this was all the complaint which this gentle lady made.

Desdemona being retired to bed expecting her lord would follow her, soon fell into a slumber, the effect of her troubled spirits, when Othello entered the chamber, full of the black purpose which he had meditated of putting his lady to death. But when he saw her asleep, he thought he would not shed her blood, nor scar that white skin of hers, more white than alabaster. But he was resolved she should die; else (as he said) she would live to betray more men, as she had done him. Then he kissed her for the last time (as he said), and that kiss was so sweet, that he must needs kiss her again: and he wept, but he said they were cruel tears.

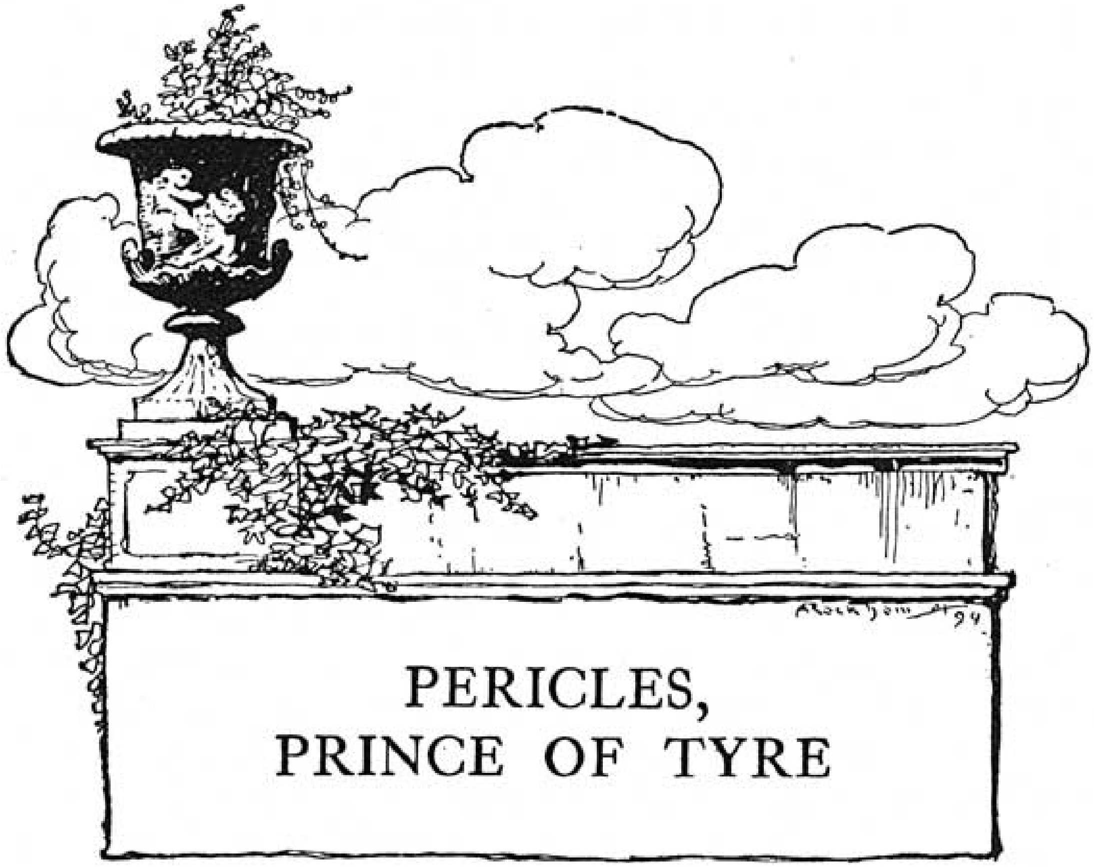
Desdemona was awakened with his kisses, and she looked upon Othello, and she saw him gnaw his under lip, and roll his eyes, and she knew he was always fatal when he looked so: and he bade her prepare for death, and to say her prayers, for he would not kill her soul. And this innocent wife, as she lay at his mercy, begged for compassion, and to know her fault, and then he named Cassio, and the handkerchief which (he said) she had given him; and as the guiltless lady was proceeding to clear herself he suddenly would hear no more, but covering her up in the bed-clothes, stifled her till she died.

In this instant of time was brought into the house Cassio, wounded and bleeding, whom Iago had set one of his creatures on to assassinate; but the fellow not succeeding in his attempt to kill Cassio (whom he wounded, but not mortally,) and being himself killed by Iago to prevent discovery, in his pockets were found certain letters, which made the guilt of Iago, and the innocence of Cassio, clear beyond all doubt; and Cassio now came to beg pardon of Othello, and to ask wherein he had offended him, that he had employed Iago to murder him.

This discovery was as a thunderstroke to Othello, who now plainly saw that he was no better than a murderer, and that his wife (poor innocent lady) had been ever faithful to him; the extreme anguish of which discovery making life insupportable, he fell upon his sword, and throwing himself upon the body of his dear injured lady, expired.

These rash acts raised much passion of horror and amazement in the bystanders, for Othello had borne a fair reputation, and till he was wrought upon by the arts of a villain, which his own noble nature never gave him leave to suspect, he was a loving and a doting husband. He had loved not wisely, but too well; and his manly eyes (when he learned his mistake), though not used to weep on every small occasion, dropped tears as fast as the Arabian trees their gum. And when he was dead all his former merits and his valiant acts were remembered. Nothing now remained for his successor but to put the utmost censure of the law in force against Iago, who was executed with strict tortures; and to send word to the state of Venice of the lamentable death of their renowned general.

PERICLES



PERICLES, PRINCE OF TYRE

Pericles, Prince of Tyre, became a voluntary exile from his dominions, to avert the dreadful calamities which Antiochus, the wicked emperor of Greece, threatened to bring upon his subjects and city of Tyre, in revenge for a discovery which the prince had made of a shocking deed which the emperor had done in secret; as commonly it proves dangerous to pry into the hidden crimes of great ones. Leaving the government of his people in the hands of his able and honest minister, Helicanus, Pericles set sail from Tyre, thinking to absent himself till the wrath of Antiochus, who was mighty, should be appeased.

The first place which the prince directed his course to was Tarsus, and hearing that the city of Tarsus was at that time suffering under a severe famine, he took with him store of provisions for its relief. On his arrival he found the city reduced to the utmost distress; and, he coming like a messenger from heaven with his unhoped-for succour, Cleon, the governor of Tarsus, welcomed him with boundless thanks. Pericles had not been here many days, before letters came from his faithful minister, warning him that it was not safe for him to stay at Tarsus, for Antiochus knew of his abode, and by secret emissaries despatched for that purpose sought his life. Upon receipt of these letters Pericles put out to sea again, amidst the blessings and prayers of a whole people who had been fed by his bounty.

He had not sailed far, when his ship was overtaken by a dreadful storm, and every man on board perished except Pericles, who was cast by the sea-waves naked on an unknown shore, where he had not wandered long before he met with some poor fishermen, who invited him to their homes, giving him clothes and provisions. The fishermen told Pericles the name of their country was Pentapolis, and that their king was Simonides, commonly called the good Simonides, because of his peaceable reign and good government. From them he also learned that King Simonides had a fair young daughter, and that the following day was her birthday, when a grand tournament was to be held at court, many princes and knights being come from all parts to try their skill in arms for the love of Thaisa, this fair princess. While the prince was listening to this account, and secretly lamenting the loss of his good armour, which disabled him from making one among these valiant knights, another fisherman brought in a complete suit of armour that he had taken out of the sea with his fishing-net, which proved to be the very armour he had lost. When Pericles beheld his own armour, he said, "Thanks, Fortune; after all my crosses you give me somewhat to repair myself. This armour was bequeathed to me by my dead father, for whose dear sake I have so loved it, that whithersoever I went, I still have kept it by me, and the rough sea that parted it from me, having now become calm, hath given it back again, for which I thank it, for, since I have my father's gift again, I think my shipwreck no misfortune."

The next day Pericles, clad in his brave father's armour, repaired to the royal court of Simonides, where he performed wonders at the tournament, vanquishing with ease all the brave knights and valiant princes who contended with him in arms for the honour of Thaisa's love. When brave warriors contended at court tournaments for the love of kings' daughters, if one proved sole victor over all the rest, it was usual for the great lady for whose sake these deeds of valour were undertaken, to bestow all her respect upon the conqueror, and Thaisa did not depart from this custom, for she presently dismissed all the princes and knights whom Pericles had vanquished, and distinguished him by her especial favour and regard, crowning him with the wreath of victory, as king of that day's happiness; and Pericles became a most passionate lover of this beauteous princess from the first moment he beheld her.

The good Simonides so well approved of the valour and noble qualities of Pericles, who was indeed a most accomplished gentleman, and well learned in all excellent arts, that though he knew not the rank of this royal stranger (for Pericles for fear of Antiochus gave out that he was a private gentleman of Tyre), yet did not Simonides disdain to accept of the valiant unknown for a son-in-law, when he perceived his daughter's affections were firmly fixed upon him.

Pericles had not been many months married to Thaisa, before he received intelligence that his enemy Antiochus was dead; and that his subjects of Tyre, impatient of his long absence, threatened to revolt, and talked of placing Helicanus upon his vacant throne. This news came from Helicanus himself, who, being a loyal subject to his royal master, would not accept of the high dignity offered him, but sent to let Pericles know their intentions, that he might return home and resume his lawful right. It was matter of great surprise and joy to Simonides, to find that his son-in-law (the obscure knight) was the renowned Prince of Tyre; yet again he regretted that he was not the private gentleman he supposed him to be, seeing that he must now part both with his admired son-in-law and his beloved daughter, whom he feared to trust to the perils of the sea, because Thaisa was with child; and Pericles himself wished her to remain with her father till after her confinement, but the poor lady so earnestly desired to go with her husband, that at last they consented, hoping she would reach Tyre before she was brought to bed.

The sea was no friendly element to unhappy Pericles, for long before they reached Tyre another dreadful tempest arose, which so terrified Thaisa that she was taken ill, and in a short space of time her nurse Lychorida came to Pericles with a little child in her arms, to tell the prince the sad tidings that his wife died the moment her little babe was born. She held the babe towards its father, saying, "Here is a thing too young for such a place. This is the child of your dead queen." No tongue can tell the dreadful sufferings of Pericles when he heard his wife was dead. As soon as he could speak, he said, "O you gods, why do you make us love your goodly gifts, and then snatch those gifts away?" "Patience, good sir," said Lychorida, "here is all that is left alive of our dead queen, a little daughter, and for your child's sake be more manly. Patience, good sir, even for the sake of this precious charge." Pericles took the new-born infant in his arms, and he said to the little babe, "Now may your life be mild, for a more blusterous birth had never babe! May your condition be mild and gentle, for you have had the rudest welcome that ever prince's child did meet with! May that which follows be happy, for you have had as chiding a nativity as fire, air, water, earth, and heaven could make to herald you from the womb! Even at the first, your loss," meaning in the death of her mother, "is more than all the joys, which you shall find upon this earth to which you are come a new visitor, shall be able to recompense."

The storm still continuing to rage furiously, and the sailors having a superstition that while a dead body remained in the ship the storm would never cease, they came to Pericles to demand that his queen should be thrown overboard; and they said, "What courage, sir? God save you!" "Courage enough," said the sorrowing prince: "I do not fear the storm; it has done to me its worst; yet for the love of this poor infant, this fresh new seafarer, I wish the storm was over." "Sir," said the sailors, "your queen must overboard. The sea works high, the wind is loud, and the storm will not abate till the ship be cleared of the dead." Though Pericles knew how weak and unfounded this superstition was, yet he patiently submitted, saying, "As you think meet. Then she must overboard, most wretched queen!" And now this unhappy prince went to take a last view of his dear wife, and as he looked on his Thaisa, he said, "A terrible childbed hast thou had, my dear; no light, no fire; the unfriendly elements forget thee utterly, nor have I time to bring thee hallowed to thy grave, but must cast thee scarcely coffined into the sea, where for a monument upon thy bones the humming waters must overwhelm thy corpse, lying with simple shells. O Lychorida, bid Nestor bring me spices, ink, and paper, my casket and my jewels, and bid Nicandor bring me the satin coffin. Lay the babe upon the pillow, and go about this suddenly, Lychorida, while I say a priestly farewell to my Thaisa."

They brought Pericles a large chest, in which (wrapped in a satin shroud) he placed his queen, and sweet-smelling spices he strewed over her, and beside her he placed rich jewels, and a written paper, telling who she was, and praying if haply any one should find the chest which contained the body of his wife, they would give her burial: and then with his own hands he cast the chest into the sea. When the storm was over, Pericles ordered the sailors to make for Tarsus. "For," said Pericles, "the babe cannot hold out till we come to Tyre. At Tarsus I will leave it at careful nursing."

After that tempestuous night when Thaisa was thrown into the sea, and while it was yet early morning, as Cerimon a worthy gentleman of Ephesus, and a most skilful physician, was standing by the sea-side, his servants brought to him a chest, which they said the sea-waves had thrown on the land. "I never saw," said one of them, "so huge a billow as cast it on our shore." Cerimon ordered the chest to be conveyed to his own house, and when it was opened he beheld with wonder the body of a young and lovely lady; and the sweet-smelling spices and rich casket of jewels made him conclude it was some great person who was thus strangely entombed: searching farther, he discovered a paper, from which he learned that the corpse which lay as dead before him had been a queen, and wife to Pericles, Prince of Tyre; and much admiring at the strangeness of that accident, and more pitying the husband who had lost this sweet lady, he said, "If you are living, Pericles, you have a heart that even cracks with woe." Then observing attentively Thaisa's face, he saw how fresh and unlike death her looks were, and he said, "They were too hasty that threw you into the sea:" for he did not believe her to be dead. He ordered a fire to be made, and proper cordials to be brought, and soft music to be played, which might help to calm her amazed spirits if she should revive; and he said to those who crowded round her, wondering at what they saw, "I pray you, gentlemen, give her air; the queen will live; she has not been entranced above five hours; and see, she begins to blow into life again; she is alive; behold, her eyelids move; this fair creature will live to make us weep to hear her fate." Thaisa had never died, but after the birth of her little baby had fallen into a deep swoon, which made all that saw her conclude her to be dead; and now by the care of this kind gentleman she once more revived to light and life; and opening her eyes, she said, "Where am I? Where is my lord? What world is this?" By gentle degrees Cerimon let her understand what had befallen her; and when he thought she was enough recovered to bear the sight, he showed her the paper written by her husband, and the jewels; and she looked on the paper, and said, "It is my lord's writing. That I was shipped at sea, I well remember, but whether there delivered of my babe, by the holy gods I cannot rightly say; but since my wedded lord I never shall see again, I will put on a vestal livery, and never more have joy." "Madam," said Cerimon, "if you purpose as you speak, the temple of Diana is not far distant from hence; there you may abide as a vestal. Moreover, if you please, a niece of mine shall there attend you." This proposal was accepted with thanks by Thaisa; and when she was perfectly recovered, Cerimon placed her in the temple of Diana, where she became a vestal or priestess of that goddess, and passed her days in sorrowing for her husband's supposed loss, and in the most devout exercises of those times.

Pericles carried his young daughter (whom he named Marina, because she was born at sea) to Tarsus, intending to leave her with Cleon, the governor of that city, and his wife Dionysia, thinking, for the good he had done to them at the time of their famine, they would be kind to his little motherless daughter. When

Cleon saw Prince Pericles, and heard of the great loss which had befallen him, he said, "O your sweet queen, that it had pleased Heaven you could have brought her hither to have blessed my eyes with the sight of her!" Pericles replied, "We must obey the powers above us. Should I rage and roar as the sea does in which my Thaisa lies, yet the end must be as it is. My gentle babe, Marina here, I must charge your charity with her. I leave her the infant of your care, beseeching you to give her princely training." And then turning to Cleon's wife, Dionysia, he said, "Good madam, make me blessed in your care in bringing up my child:" and she answered, "I have a child myself who shall not be more dear to my respect than yours, my lord;" and Cleon made the like promise, saying, "Your noble services, Prince Pericles, in feeding my whole people with your corn (for which in their prayers they daily remember you) must in your child be thought on. If I should neglect your child, my whole people that were by you relieved would force me to my duty; but if to that I need a spur, the gods revenge it on me and mine to the end of generation." Pericles, being thus assured that his child would be carefully attended to, left her to the protection of Cleon and his wife Dionysia, and with her he left the nurse Lychorida. When he went away, the little Marina knew not her loss, but Lychorida wept sadly at parting with her royal master. "O, no tears, Lychorida," said Pericles: "no tears; look to your little mistress, on whose grace you may depend hereafter."

Pericles arrived in safety at Tyre, and was once more settled in the quiet possession of his throne, while his woeful queen, whom he thought dead, remained at Ephesus. Her little babe Marina, whom this hapless mother had never seen, was brought up by Cleon in a manner suitable to her high birth. He gave her the most careful education, so that by the time Marina attained the age of fourteen years, the most deeply-learned men were not more studied in the learning of those times than was Marina. She sang like one immortal, and danced as goddess-like, and with her needle she was so skilful that she seemed to compose nature's own shapes, in birds, fruits, or flowers, the natural roses being scarcely more like to each other than they were to Marina's silken flowers. But when she had gained from education all these graces, which made her the general wonder, Dionysia, the wife of Cleon, became her mortal enemy from jealousy, by reason that her own daughter, from the slowness of her mind, was not able to attain to that perfection wherein Marina excelled: and finding that all praise was bestowed on Marina, whilst her daughter, who was of the same age, and had been educated with the same care as Marina, though not with the same success, was in comparison disregarded, she formed a project to remove Marina out of the way, vainly imagining that her untoward daughter would be more respected when Marina was no more seen. To encompass this she employed a man to murder Marina, and she well timed her wicked design, when Lychorida, the faithful nurse, had just died. Dionysia was discoursing with the man she had commanded to commit this murder, when the young Marina was weeping over the dead Lychorida. Leonine, the man she employed to do this bad deed, though he was a very wicked man, could hardly be persuaded to undertake it, so had Marina won all hearts to love her. He said, "She is a goodly creature!" "The fitter then the gods should have her," replied her merciless enemy: "here she comes weeping for the death of her nurse Lychorida: are you resolved to obey me?" Leonine, fearing to disobey her, replied, "I am resolved." And so, in that one short sentence, was the matchless Marina doomed to an untimely death. She now approached, with a basket of flowers in her hand, which she said she would daily strew over the grave of good Lychorida. The purple violet and the marigold should as a carpet hang upon her grave, while summer days did last. "Alas, for me!" she said, "poor unhappy maid, born in a tempest, when my mother died. This world to me is like a lasting storm, hurrying me from my friends." "How now, Marina," said the dissembling Dionysia, "do you weep alone? How does it chance my daughter is not with you? Do not sorrow for Lychorida, you have a nurse in me. Your beauty is quite changed with this unprofitable woe. Come, give me your flowers, the sea-air will spoil them; and walk with Leonine: the air is fine, and will enliven you. Come, Leonine, take her by the arm, and walk with her." "No madam," said Marina, "I pray you let me not deprive you of your servant:" for Leonine was one of Dionysia's attendants. "Come, come," said this artful woman, who wished for a pretence to leave her alone with Leonine, "I love the prince, your father, and I love you. We every day expect your father here; and when he comes, and finds you so changed by grief from the paragon of beauty we reported you, he will think we have taken no care of you. Go, I pray you, walk, and be cheerful once again. Be careful of that excellent complexion, which stole the hearts of old and young." Marina, being thus importuned, said, "Well, I will go, but yet I have no desire to it." As Dionysia walked away, she said to Leonine, "*Remember what I have said!* "—shocking words, for their meaning was that he should remember to kill Marina.

Marina looked towards the sea, her birthplace, and said, "Is the wind westerly that blows?" "South-west," replied Leonine. "When I was born the wind was north," said she: and then the storm and tempest, and all her father's sorrows, and her mother's death, came full into her mind; and she said, "My father, as Lychorida told me, did never fear, but cried, *Courage, good seamen* , to the sailors, galling his princely hands with the ropes, and, clasping to the masts, he endured a sea that almost split the deck." "When was this?" said Leonine. "When I was born," replied Marina: "never were wind and waves more violent;" and then she described the storm, the action of the sailors, the boatswain's whistle, and the loud call of the master, "which," said she, "trebled the confusion of the ship." Lychorida had so often recounted to Marina the story of her hapless birth that these things seemed ever present to her imagination. But here Leonine interrupted her with desiring her to say her prayers. "What mean you?" said Marina, who began to fear, she knew not why. "If you require a little space for prayer, I grant it," said Leonine; "but be not tedious, the gods are quick of ear, and I am sworn to do my work in haste." "Will you kill me?" said Marina: "alas! why?" "To satisfy my lady," replied Leonine. "Why would she have me killed?" said Marina: "now, as I can remember, I never hurt her in all my life. I never spake bad word, nor did any ill turn to any living creature. Believe me now, I never killed a mouse, nor hurt a fly. I trod upon a worm once against my will, but I wept for it. How have I offended?" The murderer replied, "My commission is not to reason on the deed, but to do it." And he was just going to kill her, when certain pirates happened to land at that very moment, who seeing Marina, bore her off as a prize to their ship.

The pirate who had made Marina his prize carried her to Mitylene, and sold her for a slave, where, though in that humble condition, Marina soon became known throughout the whole city of Mitylene for her beauty and her virtues; and the person to whom she was sold became rich by the money she earned for him. She taught music, dancing, and fine needleworks, and the money she got by her scholars she gave to her master and mistress; and the fame of her learning and her great industry came to the knowledge of Lysimachus, a young nobleman who was governor of Mitylene, and Lysimachus went himself to the house where Marina dwelt, to see this paragon of excellence, whom all the city praised so highly. Her conversation delighted Lysimachus beyond measure, for though he had heard much of this admired maiden, he did not expect to find her so sensible a lady, so virtuous, and so good, as he perceived Marina to be; and he left her, saying, he hoped she would persevere in her industrious and virtuous course, and that if ever she heard from him again it should be for her good. Lysimachus thought Marina such a miracle for sense, fine breeding, and excellent qualities, as well as for beauty and all outward graces, that he wished to marry her, and notwithstanding her humble situation, he hoped to find that her birth was noble; but ever when they asked her parentage she would sit still and weep.

Meantime, at Tarsus, Leonine, fearing the anger of Dionysia, told her he had killed Marina; and that wicked woman gave out that she was dead, and made a pretended funeral for her, and erected a stately monument; and shortly after Pericles, accompanied by his loyal minister Helicanus, made a voyage from Tyre to Tarsus, on purpose to see his daughter, intending to take her home with him: and he never having beheld her since he left her an infant in the care of Cleon and his wife, how did this good prince rejoice at the thought of seeing this dear child of his buried queen! but when they told him Marina was dead, and showed the monument they had erected for her, great was the misery this most wretched father endured, and not being able to bear the sight of that country where his last hope and only memory of his dear Thaisa was entombed, he took ship, and hastily departed from Tarsus. From the day he entered the ship a dull and heavy melancholy seized him. He never spoke, and seemed totally insensible to everything around him.

Sailing from Tarsus to Tyre, the ship in its course passed by Mitylene, where Marina dwelt; the governor of which place, Lysimachus, observing this royal vessel from the shore, and desirous of knowing who was on board, went in a barge to the side of the ship, to satisfy his curiosity. Helicanus received him very courteously and told him that the ship came from Tyre, and that they were conducting thither Pericles, their prince; "A man, sir," said Helicanus, "who has not spoken to any one these three months, nor taken any sustenance, but just to prolong his grief; it would be tedious to repeat the whole ground of his distemper, but the main springs from the loss of a beloved daughter and a wife." Lysimachus begged to see this afflicted prince, and when he beheld Pericles, he saw he had been once a goodly person, and he said to him, "Sir king, all hail, the gods preserve you, hail, royal sir!" But in vain Lysimachus spoke to him; Pericles made no answer, nor did he appear to perceive any stranger approached. And then Lysimachus bethought him of the peerless maid Marina, that haply with her sweet tongue she might win some answer from the silent prince: and with the consent of Helicanus he sent for Marina, and when she entered the ship in which her own father sat motionless with grief, they welcomed her on board as if they had known she was their princess; and they cried, "She is a gallant lady." Lysimachus was well pleased to hear their commendations, and he said, "She is such a one, that were I well assured she came of noble birth, I would wish no better choice, and think me rarely blessed in a wife." And then he addressed her in courtly terms, as if the lowly-seeming maid had been the high-born lady he wished to find her, calling her *Fair and beautiful Marina* , telling her a great prince on board that ship had fallen into a sad and mournful silence; and, as if Marina had the power of conferring health and felicity, he begged she would undertake to cure the royal stranger of his melancholy. "Sir," said Marina, "I will use my utmost skill in his recovery, provided none but I and my maid be suffered to come near him."

She, who at Mitylene had so carefully concealed her birth, ashamed to tell that one of royal ancestry was now a slave, first began to speak to Pericles of the wayward changes in her own fate, telling him from what a high estate herself had fallen. As if she had known it was her royal father she stood before, all the words she spoke were of her own sorrows; but her reason for so doing was, that she knew nothing more wins the attention of the unfortunate than the recital of some sad calamity to match their own. The sound of her sweet voice aroused the drooping prince; he lifted up his eyes, which had been so long fixed and motionless; and Marina, who was the perfect image of her mother, presented to his amazed sight the features of his dead queen. The long-silent prince was once more heard to speak. "My dearest wife," said the awakened Pericles, "was like this maid, and such a one might my daughter have been. My queen's square brows, her stature to an inch, as wand-like straight, as silver-voiced, her eyes as jewel-like. Where do you live, young maid? Report your parentage. I think you said you had been tossed from wrong to injury, and that you thought your griefs would equal mine, if both were opened." "Some such thing I said," replied Marina, "and said no more than what my thoughts did warrant me as likely." "Tell me your story," answered Pericles; "if I find you have known the thousandth part of my endurance, you have borne your sorrows like a man, and I have suffered like a girl; yet you do look like Patience gazing on kings' graves, and smiling extremity out of act. How lost you your name, my most kind virgin? Recount your story I beseech you. Come, sit by me." How was Pericles surprised when she said her name was *Marina* , for he knew it was no usual name, but had been invented by himself for his own child to signify *seaborn* : "O, I am mocked," said he, "and you are sent hither by some incensed god to make the world laugh at me." "Patience, good sir," said Marina, "or I must cease here." "Nay," said Pericles, "I will be patient; you little know how you do startle me, to call yourself Marina." "The name," she replied, "was given me by one that had some power, my father, and a king." "How, a king's daughter!" said Pericles, "and called Marina! But are you flesh and blood? Are you no fairy? Speak on; where were you born? and wherefore called Marina?" She replied, "I was called Marina, because I was born at sea. My mother was the daughter of a king; she died the minute I was born, as my good nurse Lychorida has often told me weeping. The king, my father, left me at Tarsus, till the cruel wife of Cleon sought to murder me. A crew of pirates came and rescued me, and brought me here to Mitylene. But, good sir, why do you weep? It may be, you think me an impostor. But, indeed, sir, I am the daughter to King Pericles, if good King Pericles be living." Then Pericles, terrified as he seemed at his own sudden joy, and doubtful if this could be real, loudly called for his attendants, who rejoiced at the sound of their beloved king's voice; and he said to Helicanus, "O Helicanus, strike me, give me a gash, put me to present pain, lest this great sea of joys rushing upon me, overbear the shores of my mortality. O come hither, thou that wast born at sea, buried at Tarsus, and found at sea again. O Helicanus, down on your knees, thank the holy gods! This is Marina. Now blessings on thee, my child! Give me fresh garments, mine own Helicanus! She is not dead at Tarsus as she should have been by the savage Dionysia. She shall tell you all, when you shall kneel to her and call her your very princess. Who is this?" (observing Lysimachus for the first time). "Sir," said Helicanus, "it is the governor of Mitylene, who, hearing of your melancholy, came to see you." "I embrace you, sir," said Pericles. "Give me my robes! I am well with beholding ——O heaven bless my girl! But hark, what music is that?"—for now, either sent by some kind god, or by his own delighted fancy deceived, he seemed to hear soft music. "My lord, I hear none," replied Helicanus. "None?" said Pericles; "why it is the music of the spheres." As there was no music to be heard, Lysimachus concluded that the sudden joy had unsettled the prince's understanding; and he said, "It is not good to cross him: let him have his way:" and then they told him they heard the music; and he now complaining of a drowsy slumber coming over him, Lysimachus persuaded him to rest on a couch, and placing a pillow under his head, he, quite overpowered with excess of joy, sank into a sound sleep, and Marina watched in silence by the couch of her sleeping parent.

While he slept, Pericles dreamed a dream which made him resolve to go to Ephesus. His dream was, that Diana, the goddess of the Ephesians, appeared to him, and commanded him to go to her temple at Ephesus, and there before her altar to declare the story of his life and misfortunes; and by her silver bow she swore, that if he performed her injunction, he should meet with some rare felicity. When he awoke, being miraculously refreshed, he told his dream, and that his resolution was to obey the bidding of the goddess.

Then Lysimachus invited Pericles to come on shore, and refresh himself with such entertainment as he should find at Mitylene, which courteous offer Pericles accepting, agreed to tarry with him for the space of a day or two. During which time we may well suppose what feastings, what rejoicings, what costly shows and entertainments the governor made in Mitylene, to greet the royal father of his dear Marina, whom in her obscure fortunes he had so respected. Nor did Pericles frown upon Lysimachus's suit, when he understood how he had honoured his child in the days of her low estate, and that Marina showed herself not averse to his proposals; only he made it a condition, before he gave his consent, that they should visit with him the shrine of the Ephesian Diana: to whose temple they shortly after all three undertook a voyage; and, the goddess herself filling their sails with prosperous winds, after a few weeks they arrived in safety at Ephesus.

There was standing near the altar of the goddess, when Pericles with his train entered the temple, the good Cerimon (now grown very aged) who had restored Thaisa, the wife of Pericles, to life; and Thaisa, now a priestess of the temple, was standing before the altar; and though the many years he had passed in sorrow for her loss had much altered Pericles, Thaisa thought she knew her husband's features, and when he approached the altar and began to speak, she remembered his voice, and listened to his words with wonder and a joyful amazement. And these were the words that Pericles spoke before the altar: "Hail, Diana! to perform thy just commands, I here confess myself the Prince of Tyre, who, frighted from my country, at Pentapolis wedded the fair Thaisa: she died at sea in childbed, but brought forth a maid-child called Marina. She at Tarsus was nursed with Dionysia, who at fourteen years thought to kill her, but her better stars brought her to Mitylene, by whose shores as I sailed, her good fortunes brought this maid on board, where by her most clear remembrance she made herself known to be my daughter."

Thaisa, unable to bear the transports which his words had raised in her, cried out, "You are, you are, O royal Pericles"——and fainted. "What means this woman?" said Pericles: "she dies! gentlemen, help."—"Sir," said Cerimon, "if you have told Diana's altar true, this is your wife." "Reverend gentleman, no," said Pericles: "I threw her overboard with these very arms." Cerimon then recounted how, early one tempestuous morning, this lady was thrown upon the Ephesian shore; how, opening the coffin, he found therein rich jewels, and a paper; how, happily, he recovered her, and placed her here in Diana's temple. And now, Thaisa being restored from her swoon said, "O my lord, are you not

Pericles? Like him you speak, like him you are. Did you not name a tempest, a birth, and death?" He astonished said, "The voice of dead Thaisa!" "That Thaisa am I," she replied, "supposed dead and drowned." "O true Diana!" exclaimed Pericles, in a passion of devout astonishment. "And now," said Thaisa, "I know you better. Such a ring as I see on your finger did the king my father give you, when we with tears parted from him at Pentapolis." "Enough, you gods!" cried Pericles, "your present kindness makes my past miseries sport. O come, Thaisa, be buried a second time within these arms."

And Marina said, "My heart leaps to be gone into my mother's bosom." Then did Pericles show his daughter to her mother, saying, "Look who kneels here, flesh of thy flesh, thy burthen at sea, and called Marina, because she was yielded there." "Blessed and my own!" said Thaisa: and while she hung in rapturous joy over her child, Pericles knelt before the altar, saying, "Pure Diana, bless thee for thy vision. For this, I will offer oblations nightly to thee." And then and there did Pericles, with the consent of Thaisa, solemnly affiance their daughter, the virtuous Marina, to the well-deserving Lysimachus in marriage.

Thus have we seen in Pericles, his queen, and daughter, a famous example of virtue assailed by calamity (through the sufferance of Heaven, to teach patience and constancy to men), under the same guidance becoming finally successful, and triumphing over chance and change. In Helicanus we have beheld a notable pattern of truth, of faith, and loyalty, who, when he might have succeeded to a throne, chose rather to recall the rightful owner to his possession, than to become great by another's wrong. In the worthy Cerimon, who restored Thaisa to life, we are instructed how goodness directed by knowledge, in bestowing benefits upon mankind, approaches to the nature of the gods. It only remains to be told, that Dionysia, the wicked wife of Cleon, met with an end proportionable to her deserts; the inhabitants of Tarsus, when her cruel attempt upon Marina was known, rising in a body to revenge the daughter of their benefactor, and setting fire to the palace of Cleon, burnt both him and her, and their whole household: the gods seeming well pleased, that so foul a murder, though but intentional, and never carried into act, should be punished in a way befitting its enormity.

The Poetry

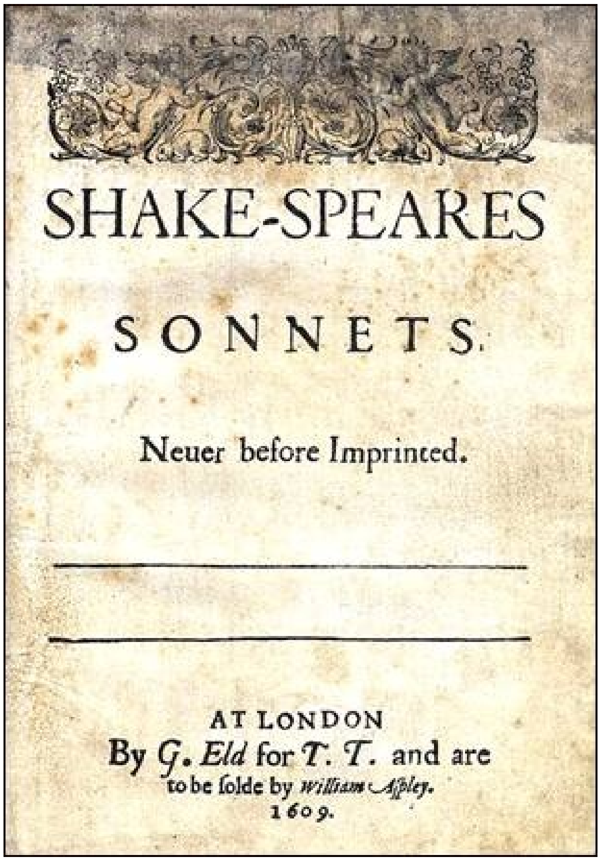
Anne Hathaway’s cottage, Stratford – the likely scene of Shakespeare’s courtship

THE SONNETS

Shakespeare’s 154 sonnets deal with themes of time, love, beauty and mortality.

All but two of the poems were first published in a 1609 quarto and sonnets 138 and 144 were previously published in the 1599 miscellany *The Passionate Pilgrim* . The quarto ends with *A Lover's Complaint* , a narrative poem of 47 seven-line stanzas written in rhyme royal.

The first 126 sonnets are written to a young man—the poet’s patron— urging him to marry and have children, in order to immortalise his beauty by passing it to the next generation. These sonnets also mention a rival poet and the poet’s own mistress. From sonnet 127 onwards, Shakespeare addresses a Dark Lady, who he confesses his love for and often speaks of in a disparaging tone. The final two sonnets are allegorical treatments of Greek epigrams referring to the "little love-god" Cupid and many scholar’s have questioned their authenticity.



SHAKE-SPEARES

SONNETS.

Neuer before Imprinted.

AT LONDON
By G. Eld for T. T. and are
to be ſolde by William Aſpley.
1609.

The first printing of the sonnets

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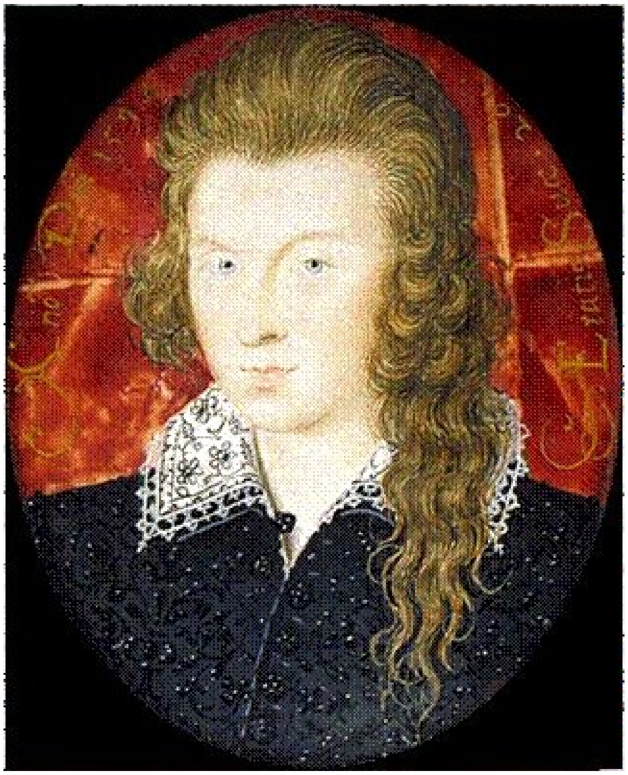


The 3rd Earl of Southampton—Shakespeare's patron to whom the sonnets are inscribed

I

From fairest creatures we desire increase,
That thereby beauty's rose might never die,
But as the riper should by time decease,

His tender heir might bear his memory:
But thou contracted to thine own bright eyes,
Feed'st thy light's flame with self-substantial fuel,
Making a famine where abundance lies,
Thy self thy foe, to thy sweet self too cruel:
Thou that art now the world's fresh ornament,
And only herald to the gaudy spring,
Within thine own bud buriest thy content,
And tender churl mak'st waste in niggarding:
Pity the world, or else this glutton be,
To eat the world's due, by the grave and thee.

II

When forty winters shall besiege thy brow,
And dig deep trenches in thy beauty's field,
Thy youth's proud livery so gazed on now,
Will be a tatter'd weed of small worth held:
Then being asked, where all thy beauty lies,
Where all the treasure of thy lusty days;
To say, within thine own deep sunken eyes,
Were an all-eating shame, and thriftless praise.
How much more praise deserv'd thy beauty's use,
If thou couldst answer 'This fair child of mine
Shall sum my count, and make my old excuse,'
Proving his beauty by succession thine!
This were to be new made when thou art old,
And see thy blood warm when thou feel'st it cold.

III

Look in thy glass and tell the face thou viewest
Now is the time that face should form another;
Whose fresh repair if now thou not renewest,

Thou dost beguile the world, unbless some mother.
For where is she so fair whose unear'd womb
Disdains the tillage of thy husbandry?
Or who is he so fond will be the tomb,
Of his self-love to stop posterity?
Thou art thy mother's glass and she in thee
Calls back the lovely April of her prime;
So thou through windows of thine age shalt see,
Despite of wrinkles this thy golden time.
But if thou live, remember'd not to be,
Die single and thine image dies with thee.

IV

Unthrifty loveliness, why dost thou spend
Upon thy self thy beauty's legacy?
Nature's bequest gives nothing, but doth lend,
And being frank she lends to those are free:
Then, beauteous niggard, why dost thou abuse
The bounteous largess given thee to give?
Profitless usurer, why dost thou use
So great a sum of sums, yet canst not live?
For having traffic with thy self alone,
Thou of thy self thy sweet self dost deceive:
Then how when nature calls thee to be gone,
What acceptable audit canst thou leave?
Thy unused beauty must be tombed with thee,
Which, used, lives th' executor to be.

V

Those hours, that with gentle work did frame
The lovely gaze where every eye doth dwell,
Will play the tyrants to the very same

And that unfair which fairly doth excel;
For never-resting time leads summer on
To hideous winter, and confounds him there;
Sap checked with frost, and lusty leaves quite gone,
Beauty o'er-snowed and bareness every where:
Then were not summer's distillation left,
A liquid prisoner pent in walls of glass,
Beauty's effect with beauty were bereft,
Nor it, nor no remembrance what it was:
But flowers distill'd, though they with winter meet,
Leese but their show; their substance still lives sweet.

VI

Then let not winter's ragged hand deface,
In thee thy summer, ere thou be distill'd:
Make sweet some vial; treasure thou some place
With beauty's treasure ere it be self-kill'd.
That use is not forbidden usury,
Which happies those that pay the willing loan;
That's for thy self to breed another thee,
Or ten times happier, be it ten for one;
Ten times thy self were happier than thou art,
If ten of thine ten times refigur'd thee:
Then what could death do if thou shouldst depart,
Leaving thee living in posterity?
Be not self-will'd, for thou art much too fair
To be death's conquest and make worms thine heir.

VII

Lo! in the orient when the gracious light
Lifts up his burning head, each under eye
Doth homage to his new-appearing sight,

Serving with looks his sacred majesty;
And having climb'd the steep-up heavenly hill,
Resembling strong youth in his middle age,
Yet mortal looks adore his beauty still,
Attending on his golden pilgrimage:
But when from highmost pitch, with weary car,
Like feeble age, he reeleth from the day,
The eyes, 'fore duteous, now converted are
From his low tract, and look another way:
So thou, thyself outgoing in thy noon:
Unlook'd, on diest unless thou get a son.

VIII

Music to hear, why hear'st thou music sadly?
Sweets with sweets war not, joy delights in joy:
Why lov'st thou that which thou receiv'st not gladly,
Or else receiv'st with pleasure thine annoy?
If the true concord of well-tuned sounds,
By unions married, do offend thine ear,
They do but sweetly chide thee, who confounds
In singleness the parts that thou shouldst bear.
Mark how one string, sweet husband to another,
Strikes each in each by mutual ordering;
Resembling sire and child and happy mother,
Who, all in one, one pleasing note do sing:
Whose speechless song being many, seeming one,
Sings this to thee: 'Thou single wilt prove none.'

IX

Is it for fear to wet a widow's eye,
That thou consum'st thy self in single life?
Ah! if thou issueless shalt hap to die,

The world will wail thee like a makeless wife;
The world will be thy widow and still weep
That thou no form of thee hast left behind,
When every private widow well may keep
By children's eyes, her husband's shape in mind:
Look! what an unthrift in the world doth spend
Shifts but his place, for still the world enjoys it;
But beauty's waste hath in the world an end,
And kept unused the user so destroys it.
No love toward others in that bosom sits
That on himself such murd'rous shame commits.

X

For shame! deny that thou bear'st love to any,
Who for thy self art so unprovident.
Grant, if thou wilt, thou art belov'd of many,
But that thou none lov'st is most evident:
For thou art so possess'd with murderous hate,
That 'gainst thy self thou stick'st not to conspire,
Seeking that beauteous roof to ruinate
Which to repair should be thy chief desire.
O! change thy thought, that I may change my mind:
Shall hate be fairer lodg'd than gentle love?
Be, as thy presence is, gracious and kind,
Or to thyself at least kind-hearted prove:
Make thee another self for love of me,
That beauty still may live in thine or thee.

XI

As fast as thou shalt wane, so fast thou grow'st,
In one of thine, from that which thou departest;
And that fresh blood which youngly thou bestow'st,

Thou mayst call thine when thou from youth convertest,
Herein lives wisdom, beauty, and increase;
Without this folly, age, and cold decay:
If all were minded so, the times should cease
And threescore year would make the world away.
Let those whom nature hath not made for store,
Harsh, featureless, and rude, barrenly perish:
Look, whom she best endow'd, she gave thee more;
Which bounteous gift thou shouldst in bounty cherish:
She carv'd thee for her seal, and meant thereby,
Thou shouldst print more, not let that copy die.

XII

When I do count the clock that tells the time,
And see the brave day sunk in hideous night;
When I behold the violet past prime,
And sable curls, all silvered o'er with white;
When lofty trees I see barren of leaves,
Which erst from heat did canopy the herd,
And summer's green all girded up in sheaves,
Borne on the bier with white and bristly beard,
Then of thy beauty do I question make,
That thou among the wastes of time must go,
Since sweets and beauties do themselves forsake
And die as fast as they see others grow;
And nothing 'gainst Time's scythe can make defence
Save breed, to brave him when he takes thee hence.

XIII

O! that you were your self; but, love you are
No longer yours, than you your self here live:
Against this coming end you should prepare,

And your sweet semblance to some other give:
So should that beauty which you hold in lease
Find no determination; then you were
Yourself again, after yourself's decease,
When your sweet issue your sweet form should bear.
Who lets so fair a house fall to decay,
Which husbandry in honour might uphold,
Against the stormy gusts of winter's day
And barren rage of death's eternal cold?
O! none but unthrifts. Dear my love, you know,
You had a father: let your son say so.

XIV

Not from the stars do I my judgement pluck;
And yet methinks I have astronomy,
But not to tell of good or evil luck,
Of plagues, of dearths, or seasons' quality;
Nor can I fortune to brief minutes tell,
Pointing to each his thunder, rain and wind,
Or say with princes if it shall go well
By oft predict that I in heaven find:
But from thine eyes my knowledge I derive,
And constant stars in them I read such art
As 'Truth and beauty shall together thrive,
If from thyself, to store thou wouldst convert';
Or else of thee this I prognosticate:
'Thy end is truth's and beauty's doom and date.'

XV

When I consider every thing that grows
Holds in perfection but a little moment,
That this huge stage presenteth nought but shows

Whereon the stars in secret influence comment;
When I perceive that men as plants increase,
Cheered and checked even by the self-same sky,
Vaunt in their youthful sap, at height decrease,
And wear their brave state out of memory;
Then the conceit of this inconstant stay
Sets you most rich in youth before my sight,
Where wasteful Time debateth with decay
To change your day of youth to sullied night,
And all in war with Time for love of you,
As he takes from you, I engraft you new.

XVI

But wherefore do not you a mightier way
Make war upon this bloody tyrant, Time?
And fortify your self in your decay
With means more blessed than my barren rhyme?
Now stand you on the top of happy hours,
And many maiden gardens, yet unset,
With virtuous wish would bear you living flowers,
Much liker than your painted counterfeit:
So should the lines of life that life repair,
Which this, Time's pencil, or my pupil pen,
Neither in inward worth nor outward fair,
Can make you live your self in eyes of men.
To give away yourself, keeps yourself still,
And you must live, drawn by your own sweet skill.

XVII

Who will believe my verse in time to come,
If it were fill'd with your most high deserts?
Though yet heaven knows it is but as a tomb

Which hides your life, and shows not half your parts.
If I could write the beauty of your eyes,
And in fresh numbers number all your graces,
The age to come would say 'This poet lies;
Such heavenly touches ne'er touch'd earthly faces.'
So should my papers, yellow'd with their age,
Be scorn'd, like old men of less truth than tongue,
And your true rights be term'd a poet's rage
And stretched metre of an antique song:
But were some child of yours alive that time,
You should live twice,—in it, and in my rhyme.

XVIII

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
Thou art more lovely and more temperate:
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,
And summer's lease hath all too short a date:
Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,
And often is his gold complexion dimm'd,
And every fair from fair sometime declines,
By chance, or nature's changing course untrimm'd:
But thy eternal summer shall not fade,
Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st,
Nor shall death brag thou wander'st in his shade,
When in eternal lines to time thou grow'st,
So long as men can breathe, or eyes can see,
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

XIX

Devouring Time, blunt thou the lion's paws,
And make the earth devour her own sweet brood;
Pluck the keen teeth from the fierce tiger's jaws,

And burn the long-liv'd phoenix, in her blood;
Make glad and sorry seasons as thou fleets,
And do whate'er thou wilt, swift-footed Time,
To the wide world and all her fading sweets;
But I forbid thee one most heinous crime:
O! carve not with thy hours my love's fair brow,
Nor draw no lines there with thine antique pen;
Him in thy course untainted do allow
For beauty's pattern to succeeding men.
Yet, do thy worst old Time: despite thy wrong,
My love shall in my verse ever live young.

XX

A woman's face with nature's own hand painted,
Hast thou, the master mistress of my passion;
A woman's gentle heart, but not acquainted
With shifting change, as is false women's fashion:
An eye more bright than theirs, less false in rolling,
Gilding the object whereupon it gazeth;
A man in hue all 'hues' in his controlling,
Which steals men's eyes and women's souls amazeth.
And for a woman wert thou first created;
Till Nature, as she wrought thee, fell a-doting,
And by addition me of thee defeated,
By adding one thing to my purpose nothing.
But since she prick'd thee out for women's pleasure,
Mine be thy love and thy love's use their treasure.

XXI

So is it not with me as with that Muse,
Stirr'd by a painted beauty to his verse,
Who heaven itself for ornament doth use

And every fair with his fair doth rehearse,
Making a couplement of proud compare'
With sun and moon, with earth and sea's rich gems,
With April's first-born flowers, and all things rare,
That heaven's air in this huge rondure hems.
O! let me, true in love, but truly write,
And then believe me, my love is as fair
As any mother's child, though not so bright
As those gold candles fix'd in heaven's air:
Let them say more that like of hearsay well;
I will not praise that purpose not to sell.

XXII

My glass shall not persuade me I am old,
So long as youth and thou are of one date;
But when in thee time's furrows I behold,
Then look I death my days should expiate.
For all that beauty that doth cover thee,
Is but the seemly raiment of my heart,
Which in thy breast doth live, as thine in me:
How can I then be elder than thou art?
O! therefore love, be of thyself so wary
As I, not for myself, but for thee will;
Bearing thy heart, which I will keep so chary
As tender nurse her babe from faring ill.
Presume not on thy heart when mine is slain,
Thou gav'st me thine not to give back again.

XXIII

As an unperfect actor on the stage,
Who with his fear is put beside his part,
Or some fierce thing replete with too much rage,

Whose strength's abundance weakens his own heart;
So I, for fear of trust, forget to say
The perfect ceremony of love's rite,
And in mine own love's strength seem to decay,
O'ercharg'd with burthen of mine own love's might.
O! let my looks be then the eloquence
And dumb presagers of my speaking breast,
Who plead for love, and look for recompense,
More than that tongue that more hath more express'd.
O! learn to read what silent love hath writ:
To hear with eyes belongs to love's fine wit.

XXIV

Mine eye hath play'd the painter and hath stell'd,
Thy beauty's form in table of my heart;
My body is the frame wherein 'tis held,
And perspective it is best painter's art.
For through the painter must you see his skill,
To find where your true image pictur'd lies,
Which in my bosom's shop is hanging still,
That hath his windows glazed with thine eyes.
Now see what good turns eyes for eyes have done:
Mine eyes have drawn thy shape, and thine for me
Are windows to my breast, where-through the sun
Delights to peep, to gaze therein on thee;
Yet eyes this cunning want to grace their art,
They draw but what they see, know not the heart.

XXV

Let those who are in favour with their stars
Of public honour and proud titles boast,
Whilst I, whom fortune of such triumph bars

Unlook'd for joy in that I honour most.
Great princes' favourites their fair leaves spread
But as the marigold at the sun's eye,
And in themselves their pride lies buried,
For at a frown they in their glory die.
The painful warrior famoused for fight,
After a thousand victories once foil'd,
Is from the book of honour razed quite,
And all the rest forgot for which he toil'd:
Then happy I, that love and am belov'd,
Where I may not remove nor be remov'd.

XXVI

Lord of my love, to whom in vassalage
Thy merit hath my duty strongly knit,
To thee I send this written embassage,
To witness duty, not to show my wit:
Duty so great, which wit so poor as mine
May make seem bare, in wanting words to show it,
But that I hope some good conceit of thine
In thy soul's thought, all naked, will bestow it:
Till whatsoever star that guides my moving,
Points on me graciously with fair aspect,
And puts apparel on my tatter'd loving,
To show me worthy of thy sweet respect:
Then may I dare to boast how I do love thee;
Till then, not show my head where thou mayst prove me.

XXVII

Weary with toil, I haste me to my bed,
The dear respose for limbs with travel tir'd;
But then begins a journey in my head

To work my mind, when body's work's expired:
For then my thoughts—from far where I abide—
Intend a zealous pilgrimage to thee,
And keep my drooping eyelids open wide,
Looking on darkness which the blind do see:
Save that my soul's imaginary sight
Presents thy shadow to my sightless view,
Which, like a jewel (hung in ghastly night,
Makes black night beauteous, and her old face new.
Lo! thus, by day my limbs, by night my mind,
For thee, and for myself, no quiet find.

XXVIII

How can I then return in happy plight,
That am debarre'd the benefit of rest?
When day's oppression is not eas'd by night,
But day by night and night by day oppress'd,
And each, though enemies to either's reign,
Do in consent shake hands to torture me,
The one by toil, the other to complain
How far I toil, still farther off from thee.
I tell the day, to please him thou art bright,
And dost him grace when clouds do blot the heaven:
So flatter I the swart-complexion'd night,
When sparkling stars twire not thou gild'st the even.
But day doth daily draw my sorrows longer,
And night doth nightly make grief's length seem stronger.

XXIX

When in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes
I all alone beweep my outcast state,
And trouble deaf heaven with my bootless cries,

And look upon myself, and curse my fate,
Wishing me like to one more rich in hope,
Featur'd like him, like him with friends possess'd,
Desiring this man's art, and that man's scope,
With what I most enjoy contented least;
Yet in these thoughts my self almost despising,
Haply I think on thee,— and then my state,
Like to the lark at break of day arising
From sullen earth, sings hymns at heaven's gate;
For thy sweet love remember'd such wealth brings
That then I scorn to change my state with kings.

XXX

When to the sessions of sweet silent thought
I summon up remembrance of things past,
I sigh the lack of many a thing I sought,
And with old woes new wail my dear time's waste:
Then can I drown an eye, unused to flow,
For precious friends hid in death's dateless night,
And weep afresh love's long since cancell'd woe,
And moan the expense of many a vanish'd sight:
Then can I grieve at grievances foregone,
And heavily from woe to woe tell o'er
The sad account of fore-bemoaned moan,
Which I new pay as if not paid before.
But if the while I think on thee, dear friend,
All losses are restor'd and sorrows end.

XXXI

Thy bosom is endeared with all hearts,
Which I by lacking have supposed dead;
And there reigns Love, and all Love's loving parts,

And all those friends which I thought buried.
How many a holy and obsequious tear
Hath dear religious love stol'n from mine eye,
As interest of the dead, which now appear
But things remov'd that hidden in thee lie!
Thou art the grave where buried love doth live,
Hung with the trophies of my lovers gone,
Who all their parts of me to thee did give,
That due of many now is thine alone:
Their images I lov'd, I view in thee,
And thou—all they—hast all the all of me.

XXXII

If thou survive my well-contented day,
When that churl Death my bones with dust shall cover
And shalt by fortune once more re-survey
These poor rude lines of thy deceased lover,
Compare them with the bett'ring of the time,
And though they be outstripp'd by every pen,
Reserve them for my love, not for their rhyme,
Exceeded by the height of happier men.
O! then vouchsafe me but this loving thought:
'Had my friend's Muse grown with this growing age,
A dearer birth than this his love had brought,
To march in ranks of better equipage:
But since he died and poets better prove,
Theirs for their style I'll read, his for his love'.

XXXIII

Full many a glorious morning have I seen
Flatter the mountain tops with sovereign eye,
Kissing with golden face the meadows green,

Gilding pale streams with heavenly alchemy;
Anon permit the basest clouds to ride
With ugly rack on his celestial face,
And from the forlorn world his visage hide,
Stealing unseen to west with this disgrace:
Even so my sun one early morn did shine,
With all triumphant splendour on my brow;
But out! alack! he was but one hour mine,
The region cloud hath mask'd him from me now.
Yet him for this my love no whit disdaineth;
Suns of the world may stain when heaven's sun staineth.

XXXIV

Why didst thou promise such a beauteous day,
And make me travel forth without my cloak,
To let base clouds o'ertake me in my way,
Hiding thy bravery in their rotten smoke?
'Tis not enough that through the cloud thou break,
To dry the rain on my storm-beaten face,
For no man well of such a salve can speak,
That heals the wound, and cures not the disgrace:
Nor can thy shame give physic to my grief;
Though thou repent, yet I have still the loss:
The offender's sorrow lends but weak relief
To him that bears the strong offence's cross.
Ah! but those tears are pearl which thy love sheds,
And they are rich and ransom all ill deeds.

XXXV

No more be griev'd at that which thou hast done:
Roses have thorns, and silver fountains mud:
Clouds and eclipses stain both moon and sun,

And loathsome canker lives in sweetest bud.
All men make faults, and even I in this,
Authorizing thy trespass with compare,
Myself corrupting, salving thy amiss,
Excusing thy sins more than thy sins are;
For to thy sensual fault I bring in sense,—
Thy adverse party is thy advocate,—
And 'gainst myself a lawful plea commence:
Such civil war is in my love and hate,
That I an accessary needs must be,
To that sweet thief which sourly robs from me.

XXXVI

Let me confess that we two must be twain,
Although our undivided loves are one:
So shall those blots that do with me remain,
Without thy help, by me be borne alone.
In our two loves there is but one respect,
Though in our lives a separable spite,
Which though it alter not love's sole effect,
Yet doth it steal sweet hours from love's delight.
I may not evermore acknowledge thee,
Lest my bewailed guilt should do thee shame,
Nor thou with public kindness honour me,
Unless thou take that honour from thy name:
But do not so, I love thee in such sort,
As thou being mine, mine is thy good report.

XXXVII

As a decrepit father takes delight
To see his active child do deeds of youth,
So I, made lame by Fortune's dearest spite,

Take all my comfort of thy worth and truth;
For whether beauty, birth, or wealth, or wit,
Or any of these all, or all, or more,
Entitled in thy parts, do crowned sit,
I make my love engrafted, to this store:
So then I am not lame, poor, nor despis'd,
Whilst that this shadow doth such substance give
That I in thy abundance am suffic'd,
And by a part of all thy glory live.
Look what is best, that best I wish in thee:
This wish I have; then ten times happy me!

XXXVIII

How can my muse want subject to invent,
While thou dost breathe, that pour'st into my verse
Thine own sweet argument, too excellent
For every vulgar paper to rehearse?
O! give thy self the thanks, if aught in me
Worthy perusal stand against thy sight;
For who's so dumb that cannot write to thee,
When thou thy self dost give invention light?
Be thou the tenth Muse, ten times more in worth
Than those old nine which rhymers invocate;
And he that calls on thee, let him bring forth
Eternal numbers to outlive long date.
If my slight muse do please these curious days,
The pain be mine, but thine shall be the praise.

XXXIX

O! how thy worth with manners may I sing,
When thou art all the better part of me?
What can mine own praise to mine own self bring?

And what is't but mine own when I praise thee?
Even for this, let us divided live,
And our dear love lose name of single one,
That by this separation I may give
That due to thee which thou deserv'st alone.
O absence! what a torment wouldst thou prove,
Were it not thy sour leisure gave sweet leave,
To entertain the time with thoughts of love,
Which time and thoughts so sweetly doth deceive,
And that thou teachest how to make one twain,
By praising him here who doth hence remain.

XL

Take all my loves, my love, yea take them all;
What hast thou then more than thou hadst before?
No love, my love, that thou mayst true love call;
All mine was thine, before thou hadst this more.
Then, if for my love, thou my love receivest,
I cannot blame thee, for my love thou usest;
But yet be blam'd, if thou thy self deceivest
By wilful taste of what thyself refusest.
I do forgive thy robbery, gentle thief,
Although thou steal thee all my poverty:
And yet, love knows it is a greater grief
To bear love's wrong, than hate's known injury.
Lascivious grace, in whom all ill well shows,
Kill me with spites yet we must not be foes.

XLI

Those pretty wrongs that liberty commits,
When I am sometime absent from thy heart,
Thy beauty, and thy years full well befits,

For still temptation follows where thou art.
Gentle thou art, and therefore to be won,
Beauteous thou art, therefore to be assail'd;
And when a woman woos, what woman's son
Will sourly leave her till he have prevail'd?
Ay me! but yet thou mightst my seat forbear,
And chide thy beauty and thy straying youth,
Who lead thee in their riot even there
Where thou art forced to break a twofold truth:—
Hers by thy beauty tempting her to thee,
Thine by thy beauty being false to me.

XLII

That thou hast her it is not all my grief,
And yet it may be said I loved her dearly;
That she hath thee is of my wailing chief,
A loss in love that touches me more nearly.
Loving offenders thus I will excuse ye:
Thou dost love her, because thou know'st I love her;
And for my sake even so doth she abuse me,
Suffering my friend for my sake to approve her.
If I lose thee, my loss is my love's gain,
And losing her, my friend hath found that loss;
Both find each other, and I lose both twain,
And both for my sake lay on me this cross:
But here's the joy; my friend and I are one;
Sweet flattery! then she loves but me alone.

XLIII

When most I wink, then do mine eyes best see,
For all the day they view things unrespected;
But when I sleep, in dreams they look on thee,

And darkly bright, are bright in dark directed.
Then thou, whose shadow shadows doth make bright,
How would thy shadow's form form happy show
To the clear day with thy much clearer light,
When to unseeing eyes thy shade shines so!
How would, I say, mine eyes be blessed made
By looking on thee in the living day,
When in dead night thy fair imperfect shade
Through heavy sleep on sightless eyes doth stay!
All days are nights to see till I see thee,
And nights bright days when dreams do show thee me.

XLIV

If the dull substance of my flesh were thought,
Injurious distance should not stop my way;
For then despite of space I would be brought,
From limits far remote, where thou dost stay.
No matter then although my foot did stand
Upon the farthest earth remov'd from thee;
For nimble thought can jump both sea and land,
As soon as think the place where he would be.
But, ah! thought kills me that I am not thought,
To leap large lengths of miles when thou art gone,
But that so much of earth and water wrought,
I must attend time's leisure with my moan;
Receiving nought by elements so slow
But heavy tears, badges of either's woe.

XLV

The other two, slight air, and purging fire
Are both with thee, wherever I abide;
The first my thought, the other my desire,

These present-absent with swift motion slide.
For when these quicker elements are gone
In tender embassy of love to thee,
My life, being made of four, with two alone
Sinks down to death, oppress'd with melancholy;
Until life's composition be recur'd
By those swift messengers return'd from thee,
Who even but now come back again, assur'd,
Of thy fair health, recounting it to me:
This told, I joy; but then no longer glad,
I send them back again, and straight grow sad.

XLVI

Mine eye and heart are at a mortal war,
How to divide the conquest of thy sight;
Mine eye my heart thy picture's sight would bar,
My heart mine eye the freedom of that right.
My heart doth plead that thou in him dost lie,—
A closet never pierc'd with crystal eyes—
But the defendant doth that plea deny,
And says in him thy fair appearance lies.
To side this title is impannelled
A quest of thoughts, all tenants to the heart;
And by their verdict is determined
The clear eye's moiety, and the dear heart's part:
As thus; mine eye's due is thy outward part,
And my heart's right, thy inward love of heart.

XLVII

Betwixt mine eye and heart a league is took,
And each doth good turns now unto the other:
When that mine eye is famish'd for a look,

Or heart in love with sighs himself doth smother,
With my love's picture then my eye doth feast,
And to the painted banquet bids my heart;
Another time mine eye is my heart's guest,
And in his thoughts of love doth share a part:
So, either by thy picture or my love,
Thy self away, art present still with me;
For thou not farther than my thoughts canst move,
And I am still with them, and they with thee;
Or, if they sleep, thy picture in my sight
Awakes my heart, to heart's and eye's delight.

XLVIII

How careful was I when I took my way,
Each trifle under truest bars to thrust,
That to my use it might unused stay
From hands of falsehood, in sure wards of trust!
But thou, to whom my jewels trifles are,
Most worthy comfort, now my greatest grief,
Thou best of dearest, and mine only care,
Art left the prey of every vulgar thief.
Thee have I not lock'd up in any chest,
Save where thou art not, though I feel thou art,
Within the gentle closure of my breast,
From whence at pleasure thou mayst come and part;
And even thence thou wilt be stol'n I fear,
For truth proves thievish for a prize so dear.

XLIX

Against that time, if ever that time come,
When I shall see thee frown on my defects,
When as thy love hath cast his utmost sum,

Call'd to that audit by advis'd respects;
Against that time when thou shalt strangely pass,
And scarcely greet me with that sun, thine eye,
When love, converted from the thing it was,
Shall reasons find of settled gravity;
Against that time do I ensconce me here,
Within the knowledge of mine own desert,
And this my hand, against my self uprear,
To guard the lawful reasons on thy part:
To leave poor me thou hast the strength of laws,
Since why to love I can allege no cause.

L

How heavy do I journey on the way,
When what I seek, my weary travel's end,
Doth teach that ease and that repose to say,
'Thus far the miles are measured from thy friend!'
The beast that bears me, tired with my woe,
Plods dully on, to bear that weight in me,
As if by some instinct the wretch did know
His rider lov'd not speed, being made from thee:
The bloody spur cannot provoke him on,
That sometimes anger thrusts into his hide,
Which heavily he answers with a groan,
More sharp to me than spurring to his side;
For that same groan doth put this in my mind,
My grief lies onward, and my joy behind.

LI

Thus can my love excuse the slow offence
Of my dull bearer when from thee I speed:
From where thou art why should I haste me thence?

Till I return, of posting is no need.
O! what excuse will my poor beast then find,
When swift extremity can seem but slow?
Then should I spur, though mounted on the wind,
In winged speed no motion shall I know,
Then can no horse with my desire keep pace;
Therefore desire, of perfect'st love being made,
Shall neigh—no dull flesh—in his fiery race;
But love, for love, thus shall excuse my jade,—
'Since from thee going, he went wilful-slow,
Towards thee I'll run, and give him leave to go.'

LII

So am I as the rich, whose blessed key,
Can bring him to his sweet up-locked treasure,
The which he will not every hour survey,
For blunting the fine point of seldom pleasure.
Therefore are feasts so solemn and so rare,
Since, seldom coming in that long year set,
Like stones of worth they thinly placed are,
Or captain jewels in the carcanet.
So is the time that keeps you as my chest,
Or as the wardrobe which the robe doth hide,
To make some special instant special-blest,
By new unfolding his imprison'd pride.
Blessed are you whose worthiness gives scope,
Being had, to triumph; being lacked, to hope.

LIII

What is your substance, whereof are you made,
That millions of strange shadows on you tend?
Since every one, hath every one, one shade,

And you but one, can every shadow lend.
Describe Adonis, and the counterfeit
Is poorly imitated after you;
On Helen's cheek all art of beauty set,
And you in Grecian tires are painted new:
Speak of the spring, and foison of the year,
The one doth shadow of your beauty show,
The other as your bounty doth appear;
And you in every blessed shape we know.
In all external grace you have some part,
But you like none, none you, for constant heart.

LIV

O! how much more doth beauty beauteous seem
By that sweet ornament which truth doth give.
The rose looks fair, but fairer we it deem
For that sweet odour, which doth in it live.
The canker blooms have full as deep a dye
As the perfumed tincture of the roses.
Hang on such thorns, and play as wantonly
When summer's breath their masked buds discloses:
But, for their virtue only is their show,
They live unwoo'd, and unrespected fade;
Die to themselves. Sweet roses do not so;
Of their sweet deaths, are sweetest odours made:
And so of you, beauteous and lovely youth,
When that shall vade, by verse distills your truth.

LV

Not marble, nor the gilded monuments
Of princes, shall outlive this powerful rhyme;
But you shall shine more bright in these contents

Than unswept stone, besmear'd with sluttish time.
When wasteful war shall statues overturn,
And broils root out the work of masonry,
Nor Mars his sword, nor war's quick fire shall burn
The living record of your memory.
'Gainst death, and all-oblivious enmity
Shall you pace forth; your praise shall still find room
Even in the eyes of all posterity
That wear this world out to the ending doom.
So, till the judgment that yourself arise,
You live in this, and dwell in lovers' eyes.

LVI

Sweet love, renew thy force; be it not said
Thy edge should blunter be than appetite,
Which but to-day by feeding is allay'd,
To-morrow sharpened in his former might:
So, love, be thou, although to-day thou fill
Thy hungry eyes, even till they wink with fulness,
To-morrow see again, and do not kill
The spirit of love, with a perpetual dulness.
Let this sad interim like the ocean be
Which parts the shore, where two contracted new
Come daily to the banks, that when they see
Return of love, more blest may be the view;
Or call it winter, which being full of care,
Makes summer's welcome, thrice more wished, more rare.

LVII

Being your slave what should I do but tend,
Upon the hours, and times of your desire?
I have no precious time at all to spend;

Nor services to do, till you require.
Nor dare I chide the world-without-end hour,
Whilst I, my sovereign, watch the clock for you,
Nor think the bitterness of absence sour,
When you have bid your servant once adieu;
Nor dare I question with my jealous thought
Where you may be, or your affairs suppose,
But, like a sad slave, stay and think of nought
Save, where you are, how happy you make those.
So true a fool is love, that in your will,
Though you do anything, he thinks no ill.

LVIII

That god forbid, that made me first your slave,
I should in thought control your times of pleasure,
Or at your hand the account of hours to crave,
Being your vassal, bound to stay your leisure!
O! let me suffer, being at your beck,
The imprison'd absence of your liberty;
And patience, tame to sufferance, bide each check,
Without accusing you of injury.
Be where you list, your charter is so strong
That you yourself may privilage your time
To what you will; to you it doth belong
Yourself to pardon of self-doing crime.
I am to wait, though waiting so be hell,
Not blame your pleasure be it ill or well.

LIX

If there be nothing new, but that which is
Hath been before, how are our brains beguil'd,
Which labouring for invention bear amiss

The second burthen of a former child!
O! that record could with a backward look,
Even of five hundred courses of the sun,
Show me your image in some antique book,
Since mind at first in character was done!
That I might see what the old world could say
To this composed wonder of your frame;
Wh'r we are mended, or wh'r better they,
Or whether revolution be the same.
O! sure I am the wits of former days,
To subjects worse have given admiring praise.

LX

Like as the waves make towards the pebbled shore,
So do our minutes hasten to their end;
Each changing place with that which goes before,
In sequent toil all forwards do contend.
Nativity, once in the main of light,
Crawls to maturity, wherewith being crown'd,
Crooked eclipses 'gainst his glory fight,
And Time that gave doth now his gift confound.
Time doth transfix the flourish set on youth
And delves the parallels in beauty's brow,
Feeds on the rarities of nature's truth,
And nothing stands but for his scythe to mow:
And yet to times in hope, my verse shall stand.
Praising thy worth, despite his cruel hand.

LXI

Is it thy will, thy image should keep open
My heavy eyelids to the weary night?
Dost thou desire my slumbers should be broken,

While shadows like to thee do mock my sight?
Is it thy spirit that thou send'st from thee
So far from home into my deeds to pry,
To find out shames and idle hours in me,
The scope and tenure of thy jealousy?
O, no! thy love, though much, is not so great:
It is my love that keeps mine eye awake:
Mine own true love that doth my rest defeat,
To play the watchman ever for thy sake:
For thee watch I, whilst thou dost wake elsewhere,
From me far off, with others all too near.

LXII

Sin of self-love possesseth all mine eye
And all my soul, and all my every part;
And for this sin there is no remedy,
It is so grounded inward in my heart.
Methinks no face so gracious is as mine,
No shape so true, no truth of such account;
And for myself mine own worth do define,
As I all other in all worths surmount.
But when my glass shows me myself indeed
Beated and chopp'd with tanned antiquity,
Mine own self-love quite contrary I read;
Self so self-loving were iniquity.
'Tis thee,—myself,—that for myself I praise,
Painting my age with beauty of thy days.

LXIII

Against my love shall be as I am now,
With Time's injurious hand crush'd and o'erworn;
When hours have drain'd his blood and fill'd his brow

With lines and wrinkles; when his youthful morn
Hath travell'd on to age's steepy night;
And all those beauties whereof now he's king
Are vanishing, or vanished out of sight,
Stealing away the treasure of his spring;
For such a time do I now fortify
Against confounding age's cruel knife,
That he shall never cut from memory
My sweet love's beauty, though my lover's life:
His beauty shall in these black lines be seen,
And they shall live, and he in them still green.

LXIV

When I have seen by Time's fell hand defac'd
The rich-proud cost of outworn buried age;
When sometime lofty towers I see down-raz'd,
And brass eternal slave to mortal rage;
When I have seen the hungry ocean gain
Advantage on the kingdom of the shore,
And the firm soil win of the watery main,
Increasing store with loss, and loss with store;
When I have seen such interchange of state,
Or state itself confounded, to decay;
Ruin hath taught me thus to ruminate—
That Time will come and take my love away.
This thought is as a death which cannot choose
But weep to have, that which it fears to lose.

LXV

Since brass, nor stone, nor earth, nor boundless sea,
But sad mortality o'ersways their power,
How with this rage shall beauty hold a plea,

Whose action is no stronger than a flower?
O! how shall summer's honey breath hold out,
Against the wrackful siege of battering days,
When rocks impregnable are not so stout,
Nor gates of steel so strong but Time decays?
O fearful meditation! where, alack,
Shall Time's best jewel from Time's chest lie hid?
Or what strong hand can hold his swift foot back?
Or who his spoil of beauty can forbid?
O! none, unless this miracle have might,
That in black ink my love may still shine bright.

LXVI

Tired with all these, for restful death I cry,
As to behold desert a beggar born,
And needy nothing trimm'd in jollity,
And purest faith unhappily forsworn,
And gilded honour shamefully misplac'd,
And maiden virtue rudely strumpeted,
And right perfection wrongfully disgrac'd,
And strength by limping sway disabled
And art made tongue-tied by authority,
And folly—doctor-like—controlling skill,
And simple truth miscall'd simplicity,
And captive good attending captain ill:
Tir'd with all these, from these would I be gone,
Save that, to die, I leave my love alone.

LXVII

Ah! wherefore with infection should he live,
And with his presence grace impiety,
That sin by him advantage should achieve,

And lace itself with his society?
Why should false painting imitate his cheek,
And steel dead seeming of his living hue?
Why should poor beauty indirectly seek
Roses of shadow, since his rose is true?
Why should he live, now Nature bankrupt is,
Beggar'd of blood to blush through lively veins?
For she hath no exchequer now but his,
And proud of many, lives upon his gains.
O! him she stores, to show what wealth she had
In days long since, before these last so bad.

LXVIII

Thus is his cheek the map of days outworn,
When beauty lived and died as flowers do now,
Before these bastard signs of fair were born,
Or durst inhabit on a living brow;
Before the golden tresses of the dead,
The right of sepulchres, were shorn away,
To live a second life on second head;
Ere beauty's dead fleece made another gay:
In him those holy antique hours are seen,
Without all ornament, itself and true,
Making no summer of another's green,
Robbing no old to dress his beauty new;
And him as for a map doth Nature store,
To show false Art what beauty was of yore.

LXIX

Those parts of thee that the world's eye doth view
Want nothing that the thought of hearts can mend;
All tongues—the voice of souls—give thee that due,

Uttering bare truth, even so as foes commend.
Thy outward thus with outward praise is crown'd;
But those same tongues, that give thee so thine own,
In other accents do this praise confound
By seeing farther than the eye hath shown.
They look into the beauty of thy mind,
And that in guess they measure by thy deeds;
Then—churls—their thoughts, although their eyes were kind,
To thy fair flower add the rank smell of weeds:
But why thy odour matcheth not thy show,
The soil is this, that thou dost common grow.

LXX

That thou art blam'd shall not be thy defect,
For slander's mark was ever yet the fair;
The ornament of beauty is suspect,
A crow that flies in heaven's sweetest air.
So thou be good, slander doth but approve
Thy worth the greater being woo'd of time;
For canker vice the sweetest buds doth love,
And thou present'st a pure unstained prime.
Thou hast passed by the ambush of young days
Either not assail'd, or victor being charg'd;
Yet this thy praise cannot be so thy praise,
To tie up envy, evermore enlarg'd,
If some suspect of ill mask'd not thy show,
Then thou alone kingdoms of hearts shouldst owe.

LXXI

No longer mourn for me when I am dead
Than you shall hear the surly sullen bell
Give warning to the world that I am fled

From this vile world with vilest worms to dwell:
Nay, if you read this line, remember not
The hand that writ it, for I love you so,
That I in your sweet thoughts would be forgot,
If thinking on me then should make you woe.
O! if,—I say you look upon this verse,
When I perhaps compounded am with clay,
Do not so much as my poor name rehearse;
But let your love even with my life decay;
Lest the wise world should look into your moan,
And mock you with me after I am gone.

LXXII

O! lest the world should task you to recite
What merit lived in me, that you should love
After my death,—dear love, forget me quite,
For you in me can nothing worthy prove;
Unless you would devise some virtuous lie,
To do more for me than mine own desert,
And hang more praise upon deceased I
Than niggard truth would willingly impart:
O! lest your true love may seem false in this
That you for love speak well of me untrue,
My name be buried where my body is,
And live no more to shame nor me nor you.
For I am shamed by that which I bring forth,
And so should you, to love things nothing worth.

LXXIII

That time of year thou mayst in me behold
When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang
Upon those boughs which shake against the cold,

Bare ruin'd choirs, where late the sweet birds sang.
In me thou see'st the twilight of such day
As after sunset fadeth in the west;
Which by and by black night doth take away,
Death's second self, that seals up all in rest.
In me thou see'st the glowing of such fire,
That on the ashes of his youth doth lie,
As the death-bed, whereon it must expire,
Consum'd with that which it was nourish'd by.
This thou perceiv'st, which makes thy love more strong,
To love that well, which thou must leave ere long.

LXXIV

But be contented: when that fell arrest
Without all bail shall carry me away,
My life hath in this line some interest,
Which for memorial still with thee shall stay.
When thou reviewest this, thou dost review
The very part was consecrate to thee:
The earth can have but earth, which is his due;
My spirit is thine, the better part of me:
So then thou hast but lost the dregs of life,
The prey of worms, my body being dead;
The coward conquest of a wretch's knife,
Too base of thee to be remembered.
The worth of that is that which it contains,
And that is this, and this with thee remains.

LXXV

So are you to my thoughts as food to life,
Or as sweet-season'd showers are to the ground;
And for the peace of you I hold such strife

As 'twixt a miser and his wealth is found.
Now proud as an enjoyer, and anon
Doubting the filching age will steal his treasure;
Now counting best to be with you alone,
Then better'd that the world may see my pleasure:
Sometime all full with feasting on your sight,
And by and by clean starved for a look;
Possessing or pursuing no delight,
Save what is had, or must from you be took.
Thus do I pine and surfeit day by day,
Or gluttoning on all, or all away.

LXXVI

Why is my verse so barren of new pride,
So far from variation or quick change?
Why with the time do I not glance aside
To new-found methods, and to compounds strange?
Why write I still all one, ever the same,
And keep invention in a noted weed,
That every word doth almost tell my name,
Showing their birth, and where they did proceed?
O! know sweet love I always write of you,
And you and love are still my argument;
So all my best is dressing old words new,
Spending again what is already spent:
For as the sun is daily new and old,
So is my love still telling what is told.

LXXVII

Thy glass will show thee how thy beauties wear,
Thy dial how thy precious minutes waste;
These vacant leaves thy mind's imprint will bear,

And of this book, this learning mayst thou taste.
The wrinkles which thy glass will truly show
Of mouthed graves will give thee memory;
Thou by thy dial's shady stealth mayst know
Time's thievish progress to eternity.
Look! what thy memory cannot contain,
Commit to these waste blanks, and thou shalt find
Those children nursed, deliver'd from thy brain,
To take a new acquaintance of thy mind.
These offices, so oft as thou wilt look,
Shall profit thee and much enrich thy book.

LXXVIII

So oft have I invoked thee for my Muse,
And found such fair assistance in my verse
As every alien pen hath got my use
And under thee their poesy disperse.
Thine eyes, that taught the dumb on high to sing
And heavy ignorance aloft to fly,
Have added feathers to the learned's wing
And given grace a double majesty.
Yet be most proud of that which I compile,
Whose influence is thine, and born of thee:
In others' works thou dost but mend the style,
And arts with thy sweet graces graced be;
But thou art all my art, and dost advance
As high as learning, my rude ignorance.

LXXIX

Whilst I alone did call upon thy aid,
My verse alone had all thy gentle grace;
But now my gracious numbers are decay'd,

And my sick Muse doth give an other place.
I grant, sweet love, thy lovely argument
Deserves the travail of a worthier pen;
Yet what of thee thy poet doth invent
He robs thee of, and pays it thee again.
He lends thee virtue, and he stole that word
From thy behaviour; beauty doth he give,
And found it in thy cheek: he can afford
No praise to thee, but what in thee doth live.
Then thank him not for that which he doth say,
Since what he owes thee, thou thyself dost pay.

LXXX

O! how I faint when I of you do write,
Knowing a better spirit doth use your name,
And in the praise thereof spends all his might,
To make me tongue-tied speaking of your fame!
But since your worth—wide as the ocean is,—
The humble as the proudest sail doth bear,
My saucy bark, inferior far to his,
On your broad main doth wilfully appear.
Your shallowest help will hold me up afloat,
Whilst he upon your soundless deep doth ride;
Or, being wrack'd, I am a worthless boat,
He of tall building, and of goodly pride:
Then if he thrive and I be cast away,
The worst was this,—my love was my decay.

LXXXI

Or I shall live your epitaph to make,
Or you survive when I in earth am rotten;
From hence your memory death cannot take,

Although in me each part will be forgotten.
Your name from hence immortal life shall have,
Though I, once gone, to all the world must die:
The earth can yield me but a common grave,
When you entombed in men's eyes shall lie.
Your monument shall be my gentle verse,
Which eyes not yet created shall o'er-read;
And tongues to be, your being shall rehearse,
When all the breathers of this world are dead;
You still shall live,—such virtue hath my pen,—
Where breath most breathes, even in the mouths of men.

LXXXII

I grant thou wert not married to my Muse,
And therefore mayst without attaint o'erlook
The dedicated words which writers use
Of their fair subject, blessing every book.
Thou art as fair in knowledge as in hue,
Finding thy worth a limit past my praise;
And therefore art enforced to seek anew
Some fresher stamp of the time-bettering days.
And do so, love; yet when they have devis'd,
What strained touches rhetoric can lend,
Thou truly fair, wert truly sympathiz'd
In true plain words, by thy true-telling friend;
And their gross painting might be better us'd
Where cheeks need blood; in thee it is abus'd.

LXXXIII

I never saw that you did painting need,
And therefore to your fair no painting set;
I found, or thought I found, you did exceed

That barren tender of a poet's debt:
And therefore have I slept in your report,
That you yourself, being extant, well might show
How far a modern quill doth come too short,
Speaking of worth, what worth in you doth grow.
This silence for my sin you did impute,
Which shall be most my glory being dumb;
For I impair not beauty being mute,
When others would give life, and bring a tomb.
There lives more life in one of your fair eyes
Than both your poets can in praise devise.

LXXXIV

Who is it that says most, which can say more,
Than this rich praise,—that you alone, are you?
In whose confine immured is the store
Which should example where your equal grew.
Lean penury within that pen doth dwell
That to his subject lends not some small glory;
But he that writes of you, if he can tell
That you are you, so dignifies his story,
Let him but copy what in you is writ,
Not making worse what nature made so clear,
And such a counterpart shall fame his wit,
Making his style admired every where.
You to your beauteous blessings add a curse,
Being fond on praise, which makes your praises worse.

LXXXV

My tongue-tied Muse in manners holds her still,
While comments of your praise richly compil'd,
Reserve their character with golden quill,

And precious phrase by all the Muses fil'd.
I think good thoughts, whilst others write good words,
And like unlettered clerk still cry 'Amen'
To every hymn that able spirit affords,
In polish'd form of well-refined pen.
Hearing you praised, I say "tis so, 'tis true,'
And to the most of praise add something more;
But that is in my thought, whose love to you,
Though words come hindmost, holds his rank before.
Then others, for the breath of words respect,
Me for my dumb thoughts, speaking in effect.

LXXXVI

Was it the proud full sail of his great verse,
Bound for the prize of all too precious you,
That did my ripe thoughts in my brain inhearse,
Making their tomb the womb wherein they grew?
Was it his spirit, by spirits taught to write,
Above a mortal pitch, that struck me dead?
No, neither he, nor his compeers by night
Giving him aid, my verse astonished.
He, nor that affable familiar ghost
Which nightly gulls him with intelligence,
As victors of my silence cannot boast;
I was not sick of any fear from thence:
But when your countenance fill'd up his line,
Then lacked I matter; that enfeebled mine.

LXXXVII

Farewell! thou art too dear for my possessing,
And like enough thou know'st thy estimate,
The charter of thy worth gives thee releasing;

My bonds in thee are all determinate.
For how do I hold thee but by thy granting?
And for that riches where is my deserving?
The cause of this fair gift in me is wanting,
And so my patent back again is swerving.
Thy self thou gav'st, thy own worth then not knowing,
Or me to whom thou gav'st it, else mistaking;
So thy great gift, upon misprision growing,
Comes home again, on better judgement making.
Thus have I had thee, as a dream doth flatter,
In sleep a king, but waking no such matter.

LXXXVIII

When thou shalt be dispos'd to set me light,
And place my merit in the eye of scorn,
Upon thy side, against myself I'll fight,
And prove thee virtuous, though thou art forsworn.
With mine own weakness, being best acquainted,
Upon thy part I can set down a story
Of faults conceal'd, wherein I am attainted;
That thou in losing me shalt win much glory:
And I by this will be a gainer too;
For bending all my loving thoughts on thee,
The injuries that to myself I do,
Doing thee vantage, double-vantage me.
Such is my love, to thee I so belong,
That for thy right, myself will bear all wrong.

LXXXIX

Say that thou didst forsake me for some fault,
And I will comment upon that offence:
Speak of my lameness, and I straight will halt,

Against thy reasons making no defence.
Thou canst not love disgrace me half so ill,
To set a form upon desired change,
As I'll myself disgrace; knowing thy will,
I will acquaintance strangle, and look strange;
Be absent from thy walks; and in my tongue
Thy sweet beloved name no more shall dwell,
Lest I, too much profane, should do it wrong,
And haply of our old acquaintance tell.
For thee, against my self I'll vow debate,
For I must ne'er love him whom thou dost hate.

XC

Then hate me when thou wilt; if ever, now;
Now, while the world is bent my deeds to cross,
Join with the spite of fortune, make me bow,
And do not drop in for an after-loss:
Ah! do not, when my heart hath 'scap'd this sorrow,
Come in the rearward of a conquer'd woe;
Give not a windy night a rainy morrow,
To linger out a purpos'd overthrow.
If thou wilt leave me, do not leave me last,
When other petty griefs have done their spite,
But in the onset come: so shall I taste
At first the very worst of fortune's might;
And other strains of woe, which now seem woe,
Compar'd with loss of thee, will not seem so.

XCI

Some glory in their birth, some in their skill,
Some in their wealth, some in their body's force,
Some in their garments though new-fangled ill;

Some in their hawks and hounds, some in their horse;
And every humour hath his adjunct pleasure,
Wherein it finds a joy above the rest:
But these particulars are not my measure,
All these I better in one general best.
Thy love is better than high birth to me,
Richer than wealth, prouder than garments' costs,
Of more delight than hawks and horses be;
And having thee, of all men's pride I boast:
Wretched in this alone, that thou mayst take
All this away, and me most wretchcd make.

XCII

But do thy worst to steal thyself away,
For term of life thou art assured mine;
And life no longer than thy love will stay,
For it depends upon that love of thine.
Then need I not to fear the worst of wrongs,
When in the least of them my life hath end.
I see a better state to me belongs
Than that which on thy humour doth depend:
Thou canst not vex me with inconstant mind,
Since that my life on thy revolt doth lie.
O! what a happy title do I find,
Happy to have thy love, happy to die!
But what's so blessed-fair that fears no blot?
Thou mayst be false, and yet I know it not.

XCIII

So shall I live, supposing thou art true,
Like a deceived husband; so love's face
May still seem love to me, though alter'd new;
Thy looks with me, thy heart in other place:
For there can live no hatred in thine eye,
Therefore in that I cannot know thy change.
In many's looks, the false heart's history
Is writ in moods, and frowns, and wrinkles strange.
But heaven in thy creation did decree
That in thy face sweet love should ever dwell;
Whate'er thy thoughts, or thy heart's workings be,
Thy looks should nothing thence, but sweetness tell.
How like Eve's apple doth thy beauty grow,
If thy sweet virtue answer not thy show!

XCIV

They that have power to hurt, and will do none,
That do not do the thing they most do show,
Who, moving others, are themselves as stone,
Unmoved, cold, and to temptation slow;
They rightly do inherit heaven's graces,
And husband nature's riches from expense;
They are the lords and owners of their faces,
Others, but stewards of their excellence.
The summer's flower is to the summer sweet,
Though to itself, it only live and die,
But if that flower with base infection meet,
The basest weed outbraves his dignity:
For sweetest things turn sourest by their deeds;
Lilies that fester, smell far worse than weeds.

XCV

How sweet and lovely dost thou make the shame
Which, like a canker in the fragrant rose,
Doth spot the beauty of thy budding name!
O! in what sweets dost thou thy sins enclose.
That tongue that tells the story of thy days,
Making lascivious comments on thy sport,
Cannot dispraise, but in a kind of praise;
Naming thy name, blesses an ill report.
O! what a mansion have those vices got
Which for their habitation chose out thee,
Where beauty's veil doth cover every blot
And all things turns to fair that eyes can see!
Take heed, dear heart, of this large privilege;
The hardest knife ill-us'd doth lose his edge.

XCVI

Some say thy fault is youth, some wantonness;
Some say thy grace is youth and gentle sport;
Both grace and faults are lov'd of more and less:
Thou mak'st faults graces that to thee resort.
As on the finger of a throned queen
The basest jewel will be well esteem'd,
So are those errors that in thee are seen
To truths translated, and for true things deem'd.
How many lambs might the stern wolf betray,
If like a lamb he could his looks translate!
How many gazers mightst thou lead away,
if thou wouldst use the strength of all thy state!
But do not so; I love thee in such sort,
As, thou being mine, mine is thy good report.

XCVII

How like a winter hath my absence been
From thee, the pleasure of the fleeting year!
What freezings have I felt, what dark days seen!
What old December's bareness everywhere!
And yet this time removed was summer's time;
The teeming autumn, big with rich increase,
Bearing the wanton burden of the prime,
Like widow'd wombs after their lords' decease:
Yet this abundant issue seem'd to me
But hope of orphans, and unfather'd fruit;
For summer and his pleasures wait on thee,
And, thou away, the very birds are mute:
Or, if they sing, 'tis with so dull a cheer,
That leaves look pale, dreading the winter's near.

XCVIII

From you have I been absent in the spring,
When proud-pied April, dress'd in all his trim,
Hath put a spirit of youth in every thing,
That heavy Saturn laugh'd and leap'd with him.
Yet nor the lays of birds, nor the sweet smell
Of different flowers in odour and in hue,
Could make me any summer's story tell,
Or from their proud lap pluck them where they grew:
Nor did I wonder at the lily's white,
Nor praise the deep vermilion in the rose;
They were but sweet, but figures of delight,
Drawn after you, you pattern of all those.
Yet seem'd it winter still, and you away,
As with your shadow I with these did play.

XCIX

The forward violet thus did I chide:
Sweet thief, whence didst thou steal thy sweet that smells,
If not from my love's breath? The purple pride
Which on thy soft cheek for complexion dwells
In my love's veins thou hast too grossly dy'd.
The lily I condemned for thy hand,
And buds of marjoram had stol'n thy hair;
The roses fearfully on thorns did stand,
One blushing shame, another white despair;
A third, nor red nor white, had stol'n of both,
And to his robbery had annex'd thy breath;
But, for his theft, in pride of all his growth
A vengeful canker eat him up to death.
More flowers I noted, yet I none could see,
But sweet, or colour it had stol'n from thee.

C

Where art thou Muse that thou forget'st so long,
To speak of that which gives thee all thy might?
Spend'st thou thy fury on some worthless song,
Darkening thy power to lend base subjects light?
Return forgetful Muse, and straight redeem,
In gentle numbers time so idly spent;
Sing to the ear that doth thy lays esteem
And gives thy pen both skill and argument.
Rise, resty Muse, my love's sweet face survey,
If Time have any wrinkle graven there;
If any, be a satire to decay,
And make time's spoils despised every where.
Give my love fame faster than Time wastes life,
So thou prevent'st his scythe and crooked knife.

CI

O truant Muse what shall be thy amends
For thy neglect of truth in beauty dy'd?
Both truth and beauty on my love depends;
So dost thou too, and therein dignified.
Make answer Muse: wilt thou not haply say,
'Truth needs no colour, with his colour fix'd;
Beauty no pencil, beauty's truth to lay;
But best is best, if never intermix'd'?
Because he needs no praise, wilt thou be dumb?
Excuse not silence so, for't lies in thee
To make him much outlive a gilded tomb
And to be prais'd of ages yet to be.
Then do thy office, Muse; I teach thee how
To make him seem long hence as he shows now.

CII

My love is strengthen'd, though more weak in seeming;
I love not less, though less the show appear;
That love is merchandiz'd, whose rich esteeming,
The owner's tongue doth publish every where.
Our love was new, and then but in the spring,
When I was wont to greet it with my lays;
As Philomel in summer's front doth sing,
And stops her pipe in growth of riper days:
Not that the summer is less pleasant now
Than when her mournful hymns did hush the night,
But that wild music burthens every bough,
And sweets grown common lose their dear delight.
Therefore like her, I sometime hold my tongue:
Because I would not dull you with my song.

CIII

Alack! what poverty my Muse brings forth,
That having such a scope to show her pride,
The argument, all bare, is of more worth
Than when it hath my added praise beside!
O! blame me not, if I no more can write!
Look in your glass, and there appears a face
That over-goes my blunt invention quite,
Dulling my lines, and doing me disgrace.
Were it not sinful then, striving to mend,
To mar the subject that before was well?
For to no other pass my verses tend
Than of your graces and your gifts to tell;
And more, much more, than in my verse can sit,
Your own glass shows you when you look in it.

CIV

To me, fair friend, you never can be old,
For as you were when first your eye I ey'd,
Such seems your beauty still. Three winters cold,
Have from the forests shook three summers' pride,
Three beauteous springs to yellow autumn turn'd,
In process of the seasons have I seen,
Three April perfumes in three hot Junes burn'd,
Since first I saw you fresh, which yet are green.
Ah! yet doth beauty like a dial-hand,
Steal from his figure, and no pace perceiv'd;
So your sweet hue, which methinks still doth stand,
Hath motion, and mine eye may be deceiv'd:
For fear of which, hear this thou age unbred:
Ere you were born was beauty's summer dead.

CV

Let not my love be call'd idolatry,
Nor my beloved as an idol show,
Since all alike my songs and praises be
To one, of one, still such, and ever so.
Kind is my love to-day, to-morrow kind,
Still constant in a wondrous excellence;
Therefore my verse to constancy confin'd,
One thing expressing, leaves out difference.
'Fair, kind, and true,' is all my argument,
'Fair, kind, and true,' varying to other words;
And in this change is my invention spent,
Three themes in one, which wondrous scope affords.
Fair, kind, and true, have often liv'd alone,
Which three till now, never kept seat in one.

CVI

When in the chronicle of wasted time
I see descriptions of the fairest wights,
And beauty making beautiful old rime,
In praise of ladies dead and lovely knights,
Then, in the blazon of sweet beauty's best,
Of hand, of foot, of lip, of eye, of brow,
I see their antique pen would have express'd
Even such a beauty as you master now.
So all their praises are but prophecies
Of this our time, all you prefiguring;
And for they looked but with divining eyes,
They had not skill enough your worth to sing:
For we, which now behold these present days,
Have eyes to wonder, but lack tongues to praise.

CVII

Not mine own fears, nor the prophetic soul
Of the wide world dreaming on things to come,
Can yet the lease of my true love control,
Supposed as forfeit to a confin'd doom.
The mortal moon hath her eclipse endur'd,
And the sad augurs mock their own presage;
Incertainties now crown themselves assur'd,
And peace proclaims olives of endless age.
Now with the drops of this most balmy time,
My love looks fresh, and Death to me subscribes,
Since, spite of him, I'll live in this poor rime,
While he insults o'er dull and speechless tribes:
And thou in this shalt find thy monument,
When tyrants' crests and tombs of brass are spent.

CVIII

What's in the brain, that ink may character,
Which hath not figur'd to thee my true spirit?
What's new to speak, what now to register,
That may express my love, or thy dear merit?
Nothing, sweet boy; but yet, like prayers divine,
I must each day say o'er the very same;
Counting no old thing old, thou mine, I thine,
Even as when first I hallow'd thy fair name.
So that eternal love in love's fresh case,
Weighs not the dust and injury of age,
Nor gives to necessary wrinkles place,
But makes antiquity for aye his page;
Finding the first conceit of love there bred,
Where time and outward form would show it dead.

CIX

O! never say that I was false of heart,
Though absence seem'd my flame to qualify,
As easy might I from my self depart
As from my soul which in thy breast doth lie:
That is my home of love: if I have rang'd,
Like him that travels, I return again;
Just to the time, not with the time exchang'd,
So that myself bring water for my stain.
Never believe though in my nature reign'd,
All frailties that besiege all kinds of blood,
That it could so preposterously be stain'd,
To leave for nothing all thy sum of good;
For nothing this wide universe I call,
Save thou, my rose, in it thou art my all.

CX

Alas! 'tis true, I have gone here and there,
And made my self a motley to the view,
Gor'd mine own thoughts, sold cheap what is most dear,
Made old offences of affections new;
Most true it is, that I have look'd on truth
Askance and strangely; but, by all above,
These blenches gave my heart another youth,
And worse essays prov'd thee my best of love.
Now all is done, save what shall have no end:
Mine appetite I never more will grind
On newer proof, to try an older friend,
A god in love, to whom I am confin'd.
Then give me welcome, next my heaven the best,
Even to thy pure and most most loving breast.

CXI

O! for my sake do you with Fortune chide,
The guilty goddess of my harmful deeds,
That did not better for my life provide
Than public means which public manners breeds.
Thence comes it that my name receives a brand,
And almost thence my nature is subdu'd
To what it works in, like the dyer's hand:
Pity me, then, and wish I were renew'd;
Whilst, like a willing patient, I will drink,
Potions of eisel 'gainst my strong infection;
No bitterness that I will bitter think,
Nor double penance, to correct correction.
Pity me then, dear friend, and I assure ye,
Even that your pity is enough to cure me.

CXII

Your love and pity doth the impression fill,
Which vulgar scandal stamp'd upon my brow;
For what care I who calls me well or ill,
So you o'er-green my bad, my good allow?
You are my all-the-world, and I must strive
To know my shames and praises from your tongue;
None else to me, nor I to none alive,
That my steel'd sense or changes right or wrong.
In so profound abysm I throw all care
Of others' voices, that my adder's sense
To critic and to flatterer stopped are.
Mark how with my neglect I do dispense:
You are so strongly in my purpose bred,
That all the world besides methinks are dead.

CXIII

Since I left you, mine eye is in my mind;
And that which governs me to go about
Doth part his function and is partly blind,
Seems seeing, but effectually is out;
For it no form delivers to the heart
Of bird, of flower, or shape which it doth latch:
Of his quick objects hath the mind no part,
Nor his own vision holds what it doth catch;
For if it see the rud'st or gentlest sight,
The most sweet favour or deformed'st creature,
The mountain or the sea, the day or night:
The crow, or dove, it shapes them to your feature.
Incapable of more, replete with you,
My most true mind thus maketh mine untrue.

CXIV

Or whether doth my mind, being crown'd with you,
Drink up the monarch's plague, this flattery?
Or whether shall I say, mine eye saith true,
And that your love taught it this alchemy,
To make of monsters and things indigest
Such cherubins as your sweet self resemble,
Creating every bad a perfect best,
As fast as objects to his beams assemble?
O! 'tis the first, 'tis flattery in my seeing,
And my great mind most kingly drinks it up:
Mine eye well knows what with his gust is 'greeing,
And to his palate doth prepare the cup:
If it be poison'd, 'tis the lesser sin
That mine eye loves it and doth first begin.

CXV

Those lines that I before have writ do lie,
Even those that said I could not love you dearer:
Yet then my judgment knew no reason why
My most full flame should afterwards burn clearer.
But reckoning Time, whose million'd accidents
Creep in 'twixt vows, and change decrees of kings,
Tan sacred beauty, blunt the sharp'st intents,
Divert strong minds to the course of altering things;
Alas! why fearing of Time's tyranny,
Might I not then say, 'Now I love you best,'
When I was certain o'er incertainty,
Crowning the present, doubting of the rest?
Love is a babe, then might I not say so,
To give full growth to that which still doth grow?

CXVI

Let me not to the marriage of true minds
Admit impediments. Love is not love
Which alters when it alteration finds,
Or bends with the remover to remove:
O, no! it is an ever-fixed mark,
That looks on tempests and is never shaken;
It is the star to every wandering bark,
Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken.
Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks
Within his bending sickle's compass come;
Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,
But bears it out even to the edge of doom.
If this be error and upon me prov'd,
I never writ, nor no man ever lov'd.

CXVII

Accuse me thus: that I have scanted all,
Wherein I should your great deserts repay,
Forgot upon your dearest love to call,
Whereto all bonds do tie me day by day;
That I have frequent been with unknown minds,
And given to time your own dear-purchas'd right;
That I have hoisted sail to all the winds
Which should transport me farthest from your sight.
Book both my wilfulness and errors down,
And on just proof surmise, accumulate;
Bring me within the level of your frown,
But shoot not at me in your waken'd hate;
Since my appeal says I did strive to prove
The constancy and virtue of your love.

CXVIII

Like as, to make our appetite more keen,
With eager compounds we our palate urge;
As, to prevent our maladies unseen,
We sicken to shun sickness when we purge;
Even so, being full of your ne'er-cloying sweetness,
To bitter sauces did I frame my feeding;
And, sick of welfare, found a kind of meetness
To be diseas'd, ere that there was true needing.
Thus policy in love, to anticipate
The ills that were not, grew to faults assur'd,
And brought to medicine a healthful state
Which, rank of goodness, would by ill be cur'd;
But thence I learn and find the lesson true,
Drugs poison him that so fell sick of you.

CXIX

What potions have I drunk of Siren tears,
Distill'd from limbecks foul as hell within,
Applying fears to hopes, and hopes to fears,
Still losing when I saw myself to win!
What wretched errors hath my heart committed,
Whilst it hath thought itself so blessed never!
How have mine eyes out of their spheres been fitted,
In the distraction of this madding fever!
O benefit of ill! now I find true
That better is, by evil still made better;
And ruin'd love, when it is built anew,
Grows fairer than at first, more strong, far greater.
So I return rebuk'd to my content,
And gain by ill thrice more than I have spent.

CXX

That you were once unkind befriends me now,
And for that sorrow, which I then did feel,
Needs must I under my transgression bow,
Unless my nerves were brass or hammer'd steel.
For if you were by my unkindness shaken,
As I by yours, you've pass'd a hell of time;
And I, a tyrant, have no leisure taken
To weigh how once I suffer'd in your crime.
O! that our night of woe might have remember'd
My deepest sense, how hard true sorrow hits,
And soon to you, as you to me, then tender'd
The humble salve, which wounded bosoms fits!
But that your trespass now becomes a fee;
Mine ransoms yours, and yours must ransom me.

CXXI

'Tis better to be vile than vile esteem'd,
When not to be receives reproach of being;
And the just pleasure lost, which is so deem'd
Not by our feeling, but by others' seeing:
For why should others' false adulterate eyes
Give salutation to my sportive blood?
Or on my frailties why are frailer spies,
Which in their wills count bad what I think good?
No, I am that I am, and they that level
At my abuses reckon up their own:
I may be straight though they themselves be bevel;
By their rank thoughts, my deeds must not be shown;
Unless this general evil they maintain,
All men are bad and in their badness reign.

CXXII

Thy gift, thy tables, are within my brain
Full character'd with lasting memory,
Which shall above that idle rank remain,
Beyond all date; even to eternity:
Or, at the least, so long as brain and heart
Have faculty by nature to subsist;
Till each to raz'd oblivion yield his part
Of thee, thy record never can be miss'd.
That poor retention could not so much hold,
Nor need I tallies thy dear love to score;
Therefore to give them from me was I bold,
To trust those tables that receive thee more:
To keep an adjunct to remember thee
Were to import forgetfulness in me.

CXXIII

No, Time, thou shalt not boast that I do change:
Thy pyramids built up with newer might
To me are nothing novel, nothing strange;
They are but dressings of a former sight.
Our dates are brief, and therefore we admire
What thou dost foist upon us that is old;
And rather make them born to our desire
Than think that we before have heard them told.
Thy registers and thee I both defy,
Not wondering at the present nor the past,
For thy records and what we see doth lie,
Made more or less by thy continual haste.
This I do vow and this shall ever be;
I will be true despite thy scythe and thee.

CXXIV

If my dear love were but the child of state,
It might for Fortune's bastard be unfather'd,
As subject to Time's love or to Time's hate,
Weeds among weeds, or flowers with flowers gather'd.
No, it was builded far from accident;
It suffers not in smiling pomp, nor falls
Under the blow of thralled discontent,
Whereto th' inviting time our fashion calls:
It fears not policy, that heretic,
Which works on leases of short-number'd hours,
But all alone stands hugely politic,
That it nor grows with heat, nor drowns with showers.
To this I witness call the fools of time,
Which die for goodness, who have lived for crime.

CXXV

Were't aught to me I bore the canopy,
With my extern the outward honouring,
Or laid great bases for eternity,
Which proves more short than waste or ruining?
Have I not seen dwellers on form and favour
Lose all and more by paying too much rent
For compound sweet; forgoing simple savour,
Pitiful thrivers, in their gazing spent?
No; let me be obsequious in thy heart,
And take thou my oblation, poor but free,
Which is not mix'd with seconds, knows no art,
But mutual render, only me for thee.
Hence, thou suborned informer! a true soul
When most impeach'd, stands least in thy control.

CXXVI

O thou, my lovely boy, who in thy power
Dost hold Time's fickle glass, his fickle hour;
Who hast by waning grown, and therein show'st
Thy lovers withering, as thy sweet self grow'st.
If Nature, sovereign mistress over wrack,
As thou goest onwards, still will pluck thee back,
She keeps thee to this purpose, that her skill
May time disgrace and wretched minutes kill.
Yet fear her, O thou minion of her pleasure!
She may detain, but not still keep, her treasure:
Her audit (though delayed) answered must be,
And her quietus is to render thee.

CXXVII

In the old age black was not counted fair,
Or if it were, it bore not beauty's name;
But now is black beauty's successive heir,
And beauty slander'd with a bastard shame:
For since each hand hath put on Nature's power,
Fairing the foul with Art's false borrowed face,
Sweet beauty hath no name, no holy bower,
But is profan'd, if not lives in disgrace.
Therefore my mistress' eyes are raven black,
Her eyes so suited, and they mourners seem
At such who, not born fair, no beauty lack,
Sland'ring creation with a false esteem:
Yet so they mourn becoming of their woe,
That every tongue says beauty should look so.

CXXVIII

How oft when thou, my music, music play'st,
Upon that blessed wood whose motion sounds
With thy sweet fingers when thou gently sway'st
The wiry concord that mine ear confounds,
Do I envy those jacks that nimble leap,
To kiss the tender inward of thy hand,
Whilst my poor lips which should that harvest reap,
At the wood's boldness by thee blushing stand!
To be so tickled, they would change their state
And situation with those dancing chips,
O'er whom thy fingers walk with gentle gait,
Making dead wood more bless'd than living lips.
Since saucy jacks so happy are in this,
Give them thy fingers, me thy lips to kiss.

CXXIX

The expense of spirit in a waste of shame
Is lust in action: and till action, lust
Is perjur'd, murderous, bloody, full of blame,
Savage, extreme, rude, cruel, not to trust;
Enjoy'd no sooner but despised straight;
Past reason hunted; and no sooner had,
Past reason hated, as a swallow'd bait,
On purpose laid to make the taker mad:
Mad in pursuit and in possession so;
Had, having, and in quest, to have extreme;
A bliss in proof,— and prov'd, a very woe;
Before, a joy propos'd; behind a dream.
All this the world well knows; yet none knows well
To shun the heaven that leads men to this hell.

CXXX

My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun;
Coral is far more red, than her lips red:
If snow be white, why then her breasts are dun;
If hairs be wires, black wires grow on her head.
I have seen roses damask'd, red and white,
But no such roses see I in her cheeks;
And in some perfumes is there more delight
Than in the breath that from my mistress reeks.
I love to hear her speak, yet well I know
That music hath a far more pleasing sound:
I grant I never saw a goddess go,—
My mistress, when she walks, treads on the ground:
And yet by heaven, I think my love as rare,
As any she belied with false compare.

CXXXI

Thou art as tyrannous, so as thou art,
As those whose beauties proudly make them cruel;
For well thou know'st to my dear doting heart
Thou art the fairest and most precious jewel.
Yet, in good faith, some say that thee behold,
Thy face hath not the power to make love groan;
To say they err I dare not be so bold,
Although I swear it to myself alone.
And to be sure that is not false I swear,
A thousand groans, but thinking on thy face,
One on another's neck, do witness bear
Thy black is fairest in my judgment's place.
In nothing art thou black save in thy deeds,
And thence this slander, as I think, proceeds.

CXXXII

Thine eyes I love, and they, as pitying me,
Knowing thy heart torment me with disdain,
Have put on black and loving mourners be,
Looking with pretty ruth upon my pain.
And truly not the morning sun of heaven
Better becomes the grey cheeks of the east,
Nor that full star that ushers in the even,
Doth half that glory to the sober west,
As those two mourning eyes become thy face:
O! let it then as well beseem thy heart
To mourn for me since mourning doth thee grace,
And suit thy pity like in every part.
Then will I swear beauty herself is black,
And all they foul that thy complexion lack.

CXXXIII

Beshrew that heart that makes my heart to groan
For that deep wound it gives my friend and me!
Is't not enough to torture me alone,
But slave to slavery my sweet'st friend must be?
Me from myself thy cruel eye hath taken,
And my next self thou harder hast engross'd:
Of him, myself, and thee I am forsaken;
A torment thrice three-fold thus to be cross'd:
Prison my heart in thy steel bosom's ward,
But then my friend's heart let my poor heart bail;
Whoe'er keeps me, let my heart be his guard;
Thou canst not then use rigour in my jail:
And yet thou wilt; for I, being pent in thee,
Perforce am thine, and all that is in me.

CXXXIV

So, now I have confess'd that he is thine,
And I my self am mortgag'd to thy will,
Myself I'll forfeit, so that other mine
Thou wilt restore to be my comfort still:
But thou wilt not, nor he will not be free,
For thou art covetous, and he is kind;
He learn'd but surety-like to write for me,
Under that bond that him as fast doth bind.
The statute of thy beauty thou wilt take,
Thou usurer, that putt'st forth all to use,
And sue a friend came debtor for my sake;
So him I lose through my unkind abuse.
Him have I lost; thou hast both him and me:
He pays the whole, and yet am I not free.

CXXXV

Whoever hath her wish, thou hast thy 'Will,'
And 'Will' to boot, and 'Will' in over-plus;
More than enough am I that vex'd thee still,
To thy sweet will making addition thus.
Wilt thou, whose will is large and spacious,
Not once vouchsafe to hide my will in thine?
Shall will in others seem right gracious,
And in my will no fair acceptance shine?
The sea, all water, yet receives rain still,
And in abundance addeth to his store;
So thou, being rich in 'Will,' add to thy 'Will'
One will of mine, to make thy large will more.
Let no unkind 'No' fair beseechers kill;
Think all but one, and me in that one 'Will.'

CXXXVI

If thy soul check thee that I come so near,
Swear to thy blind soul that I was thy 'Will',
And will, thy soul knows, is admitted there;
Thus far for love, my love-suit, sweet, fulfil.
'Will', will fulfil the treasure of thy love,
Ay, fill it full with wills, and my will one.
In things of great receipt with ease we prove
Among a number one is reckon'd none:
Then in the number let me pass untold,
Though in thy store's account I one must be;
For nothing hold me, so it please thee hold
That nothing me, a something sweet to thee:
Make but my name thy love, and love that still,
And then thou lov'st me for my name is 'Will.'

CXXXVII

Thou blind fool, Love, what dost thou to mine eyes,
That they behold, and see not what they see?
They know what beauty is, see where it lies,
Yet what the best is take the worst to be.
If eyes, corrupt by over-partial looks,
Be anchor'd in the bay where all men ride,
Why of eyes' falsehood hast thou forged hooks,
Whereto the judgment of my heart is tied?
Why should my heart think that a several plot,
Which my heart knows the wide world's common place?
Or mine eyes, seeing this, say this is not,
To put fair truth upon so foul a face?
In things right true my heart and eyes have err'd,
And to this false plague are they now transferr'd.

CXXXVIII

When my love swears that she is made of truth,
I do believe her though I know she lies,
That she might think me some untutor'd youth,
Unlearned in the world's false subtleties.
Thus vainly thinking that she thinks me young,
Although she knows my days are past the best,
Simply I credit her false-speaking tongue:
On both sides thus is simple truth suppressed:
But wherefore says she not she is unjust?
And wherefore say not I that I am old?
O! love's best habit is in seeming trust,
And age in love, loves not to have years told:
Therefore I lie with her, and she with me,
And in our faults by lies we flatter'd be.

CXXXIX

O! call not me to justify the wrong
That thy unkindness lays upon my heart;
Wound me not with thine eye, but with thy tongue:
Use power with power, and slay me not by art,
Tell me thou lov'st elsewhere; but in my sight,
Dear heart, forbear to glance thine eye aside:
What need'st thou wound with cunning, when thy might
Is more than my o'erpress'd defence can bide?
Let me excuse thee: ah! my love well knows
Her pretty looks have been mine enemies;
And therefore from my face she turns my foes,
That they elsewhere might dart their injuries:
Yet do not so; but since I am near slain,
Kill me outright with looks, and rid my pain.

CXL

Be wise as thou art cruel; do not press
My tongue-tied patience with too much disdain;
Lest sorrow lend me words, and words express
The manner of my pity-wanting pain.
If I might teach thee wit, better it were,
Though not to love, yet, love to tell me so;—
As testy sick men, when their deaths be near,
No news but health from their physicians know;—
For, if I should despair, I should grow mad,
And in my madness might speak ill of thee;
Now this ill-wresting world is grown so bad,
Mad slanderers by mad ears believed be.
That I may not be so, nor thou belied,
Bear thine eyes straight, though thy proud heart go wide.

CXLI

In faith I do not love thee with mine eyes,
For they in thee a thousand errors note;
But 'tis my heart that loves what they despise,
Who, in despite of view, is pleased to dote.
Nor are mine ears with thy tongue's tune delighted;
Nor tender feeling, to base touches prone,
Nor taste, nor smell, desire to be invited
To any sensual feast with thee alone:
But my five wits nor my five senses can
Dissuade one foolish heart from serving thee,
Who leaves unsway'd the likeness of a man,
Thy proud heart's slave and vassal wretch to be:
Only my plague thus far I count my gain,
That she that makes me sin awards me pain.

CXLII

Love is my sin, and thy dear virtue hate,
Hate of my sin, grounded on sinful loving:
O! but with mine compare thou thine own state,
And thou shalt find it merits not reproving;
Or, if it do, not from those lips of thine,
That have profan'd their scarlet ornaments
And seal'd false bonds of love as oft as mine,
Robb'd others' beds' revenues of their rents.
Be it lawful I love thee, as thou lov'st those
Whom thine eyes woo as mine importune thee:
Root pity in thy heart, that, when it grows,
Thy pity may deserve to pitied be.
If thou dost seek to have what thou dost hide,
By self-example mayst thou be denied!

CXLIII

Lo, as a careful housewife runs to catch
One of her feather'd creatures broke away,
Sets down her babe, and makes all swift dispatch
In pursuit of the thing she would have stay;
Whilst her neglected child holds her in chase,
Cries to catch her whose busy care is bent
To follow that which flies before her face,
Not prizing her poor infant's discontent;
So runn'st thou after that which flies from thee,
Whilst I thy babe chase thee afar behind;
But if thou catch thy hope, turn back to me,
And play the mother's part, kiss me, be kind;
So will I pray that thou mayst have thy 'Will,'
If thou turn back and my loud crying still.

CXLIV

Two loves I have of comfort and despair,
Which like two spirits do suggest me still:
The better angel is a man right fair,
The worser spirit a woman colour'd ill.
To win me soon to hell, my female evil,
Tempteth my better angel from my side,
And would corrupt my saint to be a devil,
Wooing his purity with her foul pride.
And whether that my angel be turn'd fiend,
Suspect I may, yet not directly tell;
But being both from me, both to each friend,
I guess one angel in another's hell:
Yet this shall I ne'er know, but live in doubt,
Till my bad angel fire my good one out.

CXLV

Those lips that Love's own hand did make,
Breathed forth the sound that said 'I hate',
To me that languish'd for her sake:
But when she saw my woeful state,
Straight in her heart did mercy come,
Chiding that tongue that ever sweet
Was us'd in giving gentle doom;
And taught it thus anew to greet;
'I hate' she alter'd with an end,
That followed it as gentle day,
Doth follow night, who like a fiend
From heaven to hell is flown away.
'I hate', from hate away she threw,
And sav'd my life, saying 'not you'.

CXLVI

Poor soul, the centre of my sinful earth,
My sinful earth these rebel powers array,
Why dost thou pine within and suffer dearth,
Painting thy outward walls so costly gay?
Why so large cost, having so short a lease,
Dost thou upon thy fading mansion spend?
Shall worms, inheritors of this excess,
Eat up thy charge? Is this thy body's end?
Then soul, live thou upon thy servant's loss,
And let that pine to aggravate thy store;
Buy terms divine in selling hours of dross;
Within be fed, without be rich no more:
So shall thou feed on Death, that feeds on men,
And Death once dead, there's no more dying then.

CXLVII

My love is as a fever longing still,
For that which longer nurseth the disease;
Feeding on that which doth preserve the ill,
The uncertain sickly appetite to please.
My reason, the physician to my love,
Angry that his prescriptions are not kept,
Hath left me, and I desperate now approve
Desire is death, which physic did except.
Past cure I am, now Reason is past care,
And frantic-mad with evermore unrest;
My thoughts and my discourse as madmen's are,
At random from the truth vainly express'd;
For I have sworn thee fair, and thought thee bright,
Who art as black as hell, as dark as night.

CXLVIII

O me! what eyes hath Love put in my head,
Which have no correspondence with true sight;
Or, if they have, where is my judgment fled,
That censures falsely what they see aright?
If that be fair whereon my false eyes dote,
What means the world to say it is not so?
If it be not, then love doth well denote
Love's eye is not so true as all men's: no,
How can it? O! how can Love's eye be true,
That is so vexed with watching and with tears?
No marvel then, though I mistake my view;
The sun itself sees not, till heaven clears.
O cunning Love! with tears thou keep'st me blind,
Lest eyes well-seeing thy foul faults should find.

CXLIX

Canst thou, O cruel! say I love thee not,
When I against myself with thee partake?
Do I not think on thee, when I forgot
Am of my self, all tyrant, for thy sake?
Who hateth thee that I do call my friend,
On whom frown'st thou that I do fawn upon,
Nay, if thou lour'st on me, do I not spend
Revenge upon myself with present moan?
What merit do I in my self respect,
That is so proud thy service to despise,
When all my best doth worship thy defect,
Commanded by the motion of thine eyes?
But, love, hate on, for now I know thy mind;
Those that can see thou lov'st, and I am blind.

CL

O! from what power hast thou this powerful might,
With insufficiency my heart to sway?
To make me give the lie to my true sight,
And swear that brightness doth not grace the day?
Whence hast thou this becoming of things ill,
That in the very refuse of thy deeds
There is such strength and warrantise of skill,
That, in my mind, thy worst all best exceeds?
Who taught thee how to make me love thee more,
The more I hear and see just cause of hate?
O! though I love what others do abhor,
With others thou shouldst not abhor my state:
If thy unworthiness rais'd love in me,
More worthy I to be belov'd of thee.

CLI

Love is too young to know what conscience is,
Yet who knows not conscience is born of love?
Then, gentle cheater, urge not my amiss,
Lest guilty of my faults thy sweet self prove:
For, thou betraying me, I do betray
My nobler part to my gross body's treason;
My soul doth tell my body that he may
Triumph in love; flesh stays no farther reason,
But rising at thy name doth point out thee,
As his triumphant prize. Proud of this pride,
He is contented thy poor drudge to be,
To stand in thy affairs, fall by thy side.
No want of conscience hold it that I call
Her 'love,' for whose dear love I rise and fall.

CLII

In loving thee thou know'st I am forsworn,
But thou art twice forsworn, to me love swearing;
In act thy bed-vow broke, and new faith torn,
In vowing new hate after new love bearing:
But why of two oaths' breach do I accuse thee,
When I break twenty? I am perjur'd most;
For all my vows are oaths but to misuse thee,
And all my honest faith in thee is lost:
For I have sworn deep oaths of thy deep kindness,
Oaths of thy love, thy truth, thy constancy;
And, to enlighten thee, gave eyes to blindness,
Or made them swear against the thing they see;
For I have sworn thee fair; more perjur'd I,
To swear against the truth so foul a lie!

CLIII

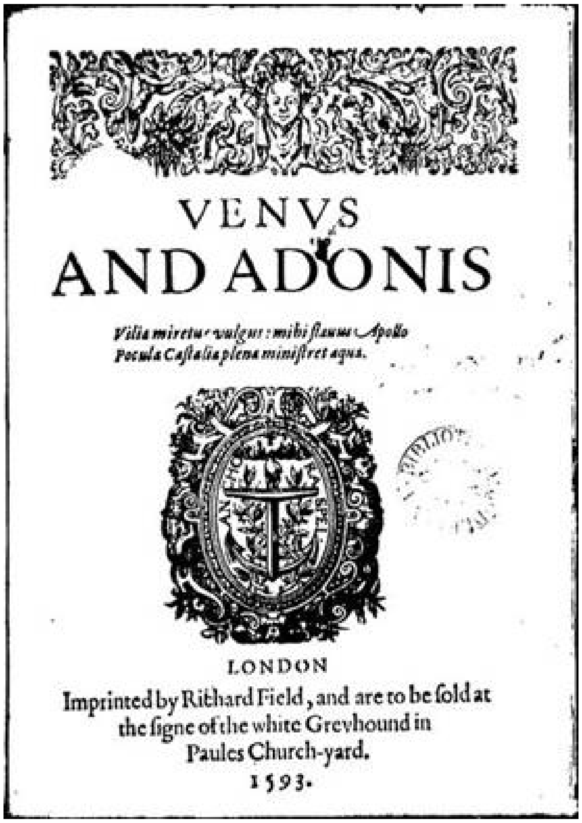
Cupid laid by his brand and fell asleep:
A maid of Dian's this advantage found,
And his love-kindling fire did quickly steep
In a cold valley-fountain of that ground;
Which borrow'd from this holy fire of Love,
A dateless lively heat, still to endure,
And grew a seeting bath, which yet men prove
Against strange maladies a sovereign cure.
But at my mistress' eye Love's brand new-fired,
The boy for trial needs would touch my breast;
I, sick withal, the help of bath desired,
And thither hied, a sad distemper'd guest,
But found no cure, the bath for my help lies
Where Cupid got new fire; my mistress' eyes.

CLIV

The little Love-god lying once asleep,
Laid by his side his heart-inflaming brand,
Whilst many nymphs that vow'd chaste life to keep
Came tripping by; but in her maiden hand
The fairest votary took up that fire
Which many legions of true hearts had warm'd;
And so the general of hot desire
Was, sleeping, by a virgin hand disarm'd.
This brand she quenched in a cool well by,
Which from Love's fire took heat perpetual,
Growing a bath and healthful remedy,
For men diseas'd; but I, my mistress' thrall,
Came there for cure and this by that I prove,
Love's fire heats water, water cools not love.

VENUS AND ADONIS

This narrative poem was written in 1592-1593 and relates a tragic love story from the Roman poet Ovid's *Metamorphoses* . It is a complex work, using constantly shifting tone and perspective to present contrasting views of the nature of love. *Venus and Adonis* was entered into the Stationers' Register on 18 April 1593 and the poem appeared later that year in a quarto edition, published and printed by Richard Field, Shakespeare’s Stratford-upon-Avon associate.

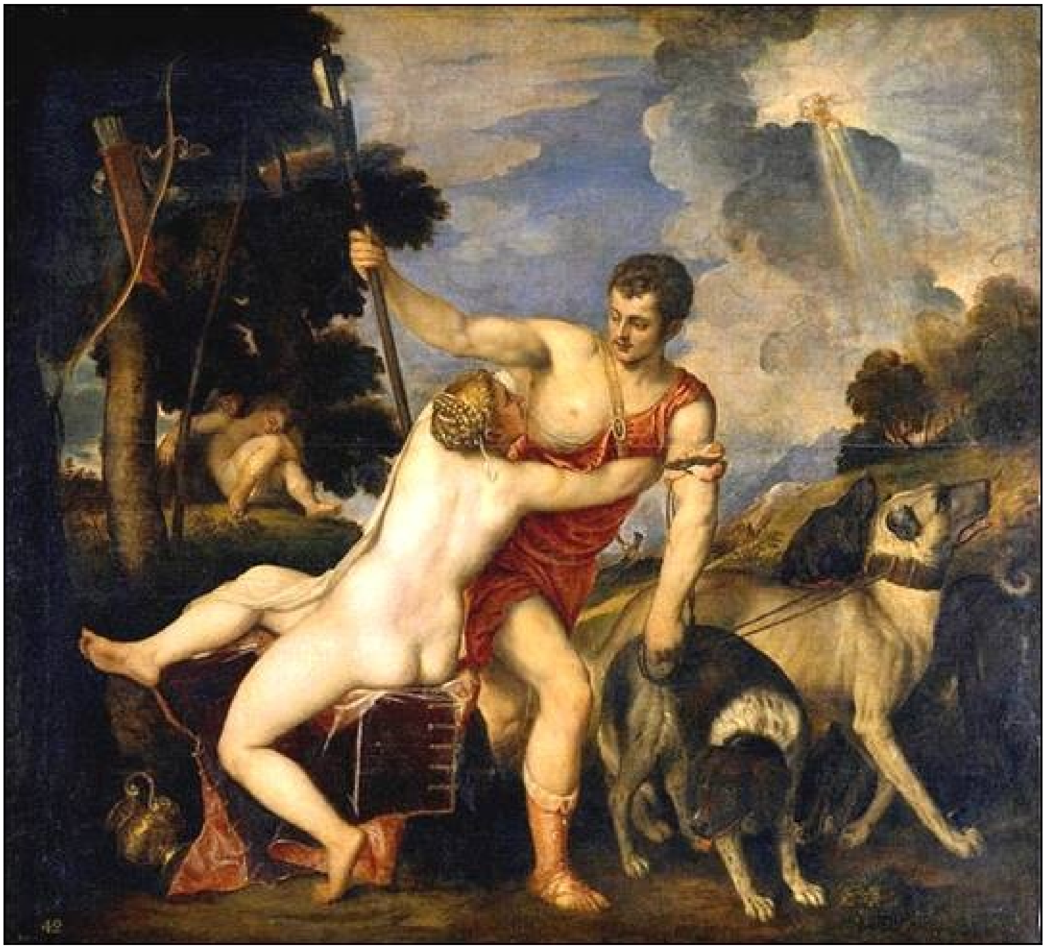


VENVS
AND ADONIS

Vilia miretur vulgus: mihi flauus Apollo
Pocula Caſtalia plena miniſtret aqua.

LONDON
Imprinted by Richard Field, and are to be ſold at
the ſigne of the white Greyhound in
Paules Church-yard.
1593.

The first Quarto, 1593



Venus and Adonis *by Titian*

VENUS AND ADONIS

'Villa miretur vulgus; mihi flavus Apollo

Pocula Castalia plena ministret aqua.'

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE HENRY WRIOTHESLEY,

EARL OF SOUHAMPTON, AND BARON OF TICHFIELD.

RIGHT HONOURABLE,

I know not how I shall offend in dedicating my unpolished lines to your lordship, nor how the world will censure me for choosing so strong a prop to support so weak a burthen: only, if your honour seem but pleased, I account myself highly praised, and vow to take advantage of all idle hours, till I have honoured you with some graver labour. But if the first heir of my invention prove deformed, I shall be sorry it had so noble a godfather, and never after ear so barren a land, for fear it yield me still so bad a harvest. I leave it to your honourable survey, and your honour to your heart's content; which I wish may always answer your own wish and the world's hopeful expectation.

Your honour's in all duty,

William Shakespeare

VENUS AND ADONIS

EVEN as the sun with purple-colour'd face
Had ta'en his last leave of the weeping morn,
Rose-cheek'd Adonis tried him to the chase;
Hunting he lov'd, but love he laugh'd to scorn;
  Sick-thoughted Venus makes amain unto him,
  And like a bold-fac'd suitor 'gins to woo him.

'Thrice fairer than myself,' thus she began,
'The field's chief flower, sweet above compare,
Stain to all nymphs, more lovely than a man,
More white and red than doves or roses are;
  Nature that made thee, with herself at strife,
  Saith that the world hath ending with thy life.

'Vouchsafe, thou wonder, to alight thy steed,
And rein his proud head to the saddle-bow;

If thou wilt deign this favour, for thy meed
A thousand honey secrets shalt thou know:
Here come and sit, where never serpent hisses;
And being set, I'll smother thee with kisses:

'And yet not cloy thy lips with loath'd satiety,
But rather famish them amid their plenty,
Making them red and pale with fresh variety;
Ten kisses short as one, one long as twenty:
A summer's day will seem an hour but short,
Being wasted in such time-beguiling sport.'

With this she seizeth on his sweating palm,
The precedent of pith and livelihood,
And, trembling in her passion, calls it balm,
Earth's sovereign salve to do a goddess good:
Being so enrag'd, desire doth lend her force
Courageously to pluck him from his horse.

Over one arm the lusty courser's rein
Under her other was the tender boy,

Who blush'd and pouted in a dull disdain,
With leaden appetite, unapt to toy;
  She red and hot as coals of glowing fire
  He red for shame, but frosty in desire. 36

The studded bridle on a ragged bough
Nimbly she fastens;—O! how quick is love:—
The steed is stalled up, and even now
To tie the rider she begins to prove:40
  Backward she push'd him, as she would be thrust,
  And govern'd him in strength, though not in lust.

So soon was she along, as he was down,
Each leaning on their elbows and their hips: 44
Now doth she stroke his cheek, now doth he frown,
And 'gins to chide, but soon she stops his lips;
And kissing speaks, with lustful language broken,
'If thou wilt chide, thy lips shall never open.'48

He burns with bashful shame; she with her tears
Doth quench the maiden burning of his cheeks;

Then with her windy sighs and golden hairs
To fan and blow them dry again she seeks: 52
  He saith she is immodest, blames her miss;
  What follows more she murders with a kiss.

Even as an empty eagle, sharp by fast,
Tires with her beak on feathers, flesh and bone,56
Shaking her wings, devouring all in haste,
Till either gorge be stuff'd or prey be gone;
Even so she kiss'd his brow, his cheek, his chin,
And where she ends she doth anew begin. 60

Forc'd to content, but never to obey,
Panting he lies, and breatheth in her face;
She feedeth on the steam, as on a prey,
And calls it heavenly moisture, air of grace; 64
  Wishing her cheeks were gardens full of flowers
  So they were dewd with such distilling showers.

Look! how a bird lies tangled in a net,
So fasten'd in her arms Adonis lies;68

Pure shame and aw'd resistance made him fret,
Which bred more beauty in his angry eyes:
  Rain added to a river that is rank
  Perforce will force it overflow the bank.72
Still she entreats, and prettily entreats,
For to a pretty ear she tunes her tale;
Still is he sullen, still he lours and frets,
'Twixt crimson shame and anger ashy-pale; 76
  Being red she loves him best; and being white,
  Her best is better'd with a more delight.

Look how he can, she cannot choose but love;
And by her fair immortal hand she swears, 80
From his soft bosom never to remove,
Till he take truce with her contending tears,
  Which long have rain'd, making her cheeks all wet;
  And one sweet kiss shall pay this countless debt.

Upon this promise did he raise his chin 85
Like a dive-dapper peering through a wave,
Who, being look'd on, ducks as quickly in;

So offers he to give what she did crave;
But when her lips were ready for his pay,
He winks, and turns his lips another way.

Never did passenger in summer's heat
More thirst for drink than she for this good turn.
Her help she sees, but help she cannot get;
She bathes in water, yet her fire must burn:
'O! pity,' 'gan she cry, 'flint-hearted boy:
'Tis but a kiss I beg; why art thou coy?

'I have been woo'd, as I entreat thee now,
Even by the stern and direful god of war,
Whose sinewy neck in battle ne'er did bow,
Who conquers where he comes in every jar;
Yet hath he been my captive and my slave,
And begg'd for that which thou unask'd shalt have.

'Over my altars hath he hung his lance,
His batter'd shield, his uncontrolled crest,
And for my sake hath learn'd to sport and dance

To toy, to wanton, dally, smile, and jest;
Scorning his churlish drum and ensign red
Making my arms his field, his tent my bed.

'Thus he that overrul'd I oversway'd,
Leading him prisoner in a red-rose chain:
Strong-temper'd steel his stronger strength obey'd,
Yet was he servile to my coy disdain.
O! be not proud, nor brag not of thy might,
For mastering her that foil'd the god of fight.

Touch but my lips with those falr lips of thine,—
Though mine be not so fair, yet are they red,—
The kiss shall be thine own as well as mine:
What seest thou in the ground? hold up thy head:
Look in mine eyeballs, there thy beauty lies;
Then why not lips on lips, since eyes in eyes?

'Art thou asham'd to kiss? then wink again,
And I will wink; so shall the day seem night;
Love keeps his revels where there are but twain;

Be bold to play, our sport is not in sight: 124
  These blue-vein'd violets whereon we lean
  Never can blab, nor know not what we mean.

'The tender spring upon thy tempting lip 127
Shows thee unripe, yet mayst thou well be tasted:
Make use of time, let not advantage slip;
Beauty within itself should not be wasted:
  Fair flowers that are not gather'd in their prime
  Rot and consume themselves in little time. 132

'Were I hard-favour'd, foul, or wrinkled-old,
Ill-nurtur'd, crooked, churlish, harsh in voice,
O'erworn, despised, rheumatic, and cold,
Thick-sighted, barren, lean, and lacking juice,136
  Then mightst thou pause, for then I were not for thee;
  But having no defects, why dost abhor me?

'Thou canst not see one winkle in my brow;139
Mine eyes are grey and bright, and quick in turning;
My beauty as the spring doth yearly grow;

My flesh is soft and plump, my marrow burning;
  My smooth moist hand, were it with thy hand felt.
  Would in thy palm dissolve, or seem to melt. 144

'Bid me discourse, I will enchant thine ear,
Or like a fairy, trip upon the green,
Or, like a nymph, with long dishevell'd hair,
Dance on the sands, and yet no footing seen: 148
  Love is a spirit all compact of fire,
  Not gross to sink, but light, and will aspire.

'Witness this primrose bank whereon I lie;151
These forceless flowers like sturdy trees support me;
Two strengthless doves will draw me through the sky,
From morn till night, even where I list to sport me:
  Is love so light, sweet boy, and may it be
  That thou shouldst think it heavy unto thee? 156

'Is thine own heart to shine own face affected?
Can thy right hand seize love upon thy left?
Then woo thyself, be of thyself rejected,

Steal thine own freedom, and complain on theft.
Narcissus so himself himself forsook,
And died to kiss his shadow in the brook.

'Torches are made to light, jewels to wear,
Dainties to taste, fresh beauty for the use,
Herbs for their smell, and sappy plants to bear;
Things growing to themselves are growth's abuse:
Seeds spring from seeds, and beauty breedeth beauty;
Thou wast begot; to get it is thy duty.

'Upon the earth's increase why shouldst thou feed,
Unless the earth with thy increase be fed?
By law of nature thou art bound to breed,
That thine may live when thou thyself art dead;
And so in spite of death thou dost survive,
In that thy likeness still is left alive.'

By this the love-sick queen began to sweat,
For where they lay the shadow had forsook them,
And Titan, tired in the mid-day heat

With burning eye did hotly overlook them,
  Wishing Adonis had his team to guide,
  So he were like him and by Venus' side.180

And now Adonis with a lazy spright,
And with a heavy, dark, disliking eye,
His louring brows o'erwhelming his fair sight,
Like misty vapours when they blot the sky,184
  Souring his cheeks, cries, 'Fie! no more of love:
  The sun doth burn my face; I must remove.'

'Ay me,' quoth Venus, 'young, and so unkind!
What bare excuses mak'st thou to be gone!188
I'll sigh celestial breath, whose gentle wind
Shall cool the heat of this descending sun:
  I'll make a shadow for thee of my hairs;191
  If they burn too, I'll quench them with my tears.

'The sun that shines from heaven shines but warm,
And lo! I lie between that sun and thee:
The heat I have from thence doth little harm,

Thine eye darts forth the fire that burneth me;
And were I not immortal, life were done
Between this heavenly and earthly sun.

'Art thou obdurate, flinty, hard as steel?
Nay, more than flint, for stone at rain relenteth:
Art thou a woman's son, and canst not feel
What 'tis to love? how want of love tormenteth?
O! had thy mother borne so hard a mind,
She had not brought forth thee, but died unkind.
'What am I that thou shouldst contemn me this?

Or what great danger dwells upon my suit?
What were thy lips the worse for one poor kiss?
Speak, fair; but speak fair words, or else be mute:
Give me one kiss, I'll give it thee again,
And one for interest if thou wilt have twain.

'Fie! lifeless picture, cold and senseless stone,
Well-painted idol, image dull and dead,
Statue contenting but the eye alone,

Thing like a man, but of no woman bred:
  Thou art no man, though of a man's complexion,
  For men will kiss even by their own direction.'   216

This said, impatience chokes her pleading tongue,
And swelling passion doth provoke a pause;
Red cheeks and fiery eyes blaze forth her wrong;
Being judge in love, she cannot right her cause:220
  And now she weeps, and now she fain would speak,
  And now her sobs do her intendments break.

Sometimes she shakes her head, and then his hand;
Now gazeth she on him, now on the ground;224
Sometimes her arms infold him like a band:
She would, he will not in her arms be bound;
  And when from thence he struggles to be gone,
  She locks her lily fingers one in one. 228

'Fondling,' she saith, 'since I have hemm'd thee here
Within the circuit of this ivory pale,
I'll be a park, and thou shalt be my deer;

Feed where thou wilt, on mountain or in dale:
Graze on my lips, and if those hills be dry,
Stray lower, where the pleasant fountains lie.

'Within this limit is relief enough,
Sweet bottom-grass and high delightful plain,
Round rising hillocks, brakes obscure and rough,
To shelter thee from tempest and from rain:
Then be my deer, since I am such a park;
No dog shall rouse thee, though a thousand bark.'

At this Adonis smiles as in disdain,
That in each cheek appears a pretty dimple:
Love made those hollows, if himself were slain,
He might be buried in a tomb so simple;
Foreknowing well, if there he came to lie,
Why, there Love liv'd, and there he could not die.

These lovely caves, these round enchanting pits,
Open'd their mouths to swallow Venus' liking.
Being mad before, how doth she now for wits?

Struck dead at first, what needs a second striking?
Poor queen of love, in thine own law forlorn,
To love a cheek that smiles at thee in scorn!

Now which way shall she turn? what shall she say?
Her words are done, her woes the more increasing;
The time is spent, her object will away,
And from her twining arms doth urge releasing:
'Pity,' she cries; 'some favour, some remorse!'
Away he springs, and hasteth to his horse.

But lo! from forth a copse that neighbours by,
A breeding jennet, lusty, young, and proud,
Adonis' tramping courier doth espy,
And forth she rushes, snorts and neighs aloud:
The strong-neck'd steed, being tied unto a tree,
Breaketh his rein, and to her straight goes he.

Imperiously he leaps, he neighs, he bounds,
And now his woven girths he breaks asunder;

The bearing earth with his hard hoof he wounds,
Whose hollow womb resounds like heaven's thunder;
  The iron bit he crusheth 'tween his teeth, 269
  Controlling what he was controlled with.

His ears up-prick'd; his braided hanging mane
Upon his compass'd crest now stand on end;272
His nostrils drink the air, and forth again,
As from a furnace, vapours doth he send:
  His eye, which scornfully glisters like fire,
  Shows his hot courage and his high desire. 276

Sometime he trots, as if he told the steps,
With gentle majesty and modest pride;
Anon he rears upright, curvets and leaps,
As who should say, 'Lo! thus my strength is tried;
  And this I do to captivate the eye281
  Of the fair breeder that is standing by.'

What recketh he his rider's angry stir,
His flattering 'Holla', or his 'Stand, I say'? 284

What cares he now for curb or pricking spur?
For rich caparisons or trapping gay?
He sees his love, and nothing else he sees,
Nor nothing else with his proud sight agrees.

Look, when a painter would surpass the life,
In limning out a well-proportion'd steed,
His art with nature's workmanship at strife,
As if the dead the living should exceed;
So did this horse excel a common one,
In shape, in courage, colour, pace and bone.

Round-hoof'd, short-jointed, fetlocks shag and long,
Broad breast, full eye, small head, and nostril wide,
High crest, short ears, straight legs and passing strong,
Thin mane, thick tail, broad buttock, tender hide:
Look, what a horse should have he did not lack,
Save a proud rider on so proud a back.

Sometimes he scuds far off, and there he stares;
Anon he starts at stirring of a feather;

To bid the wind a base he now prepares,
And whe'r he run or fly they know not whether;
For through his mane and tail the high wind sings,
Fanning the hairs, who wave like feather'd wings.

He looks upon his love, and neighs unto her;
She answers him as if she knew his mind;
Being proud, as females are, to see him woo her,
She puts on outward strangeness, seems unkind,
Spurns at his love and scorns the heat he feels,
Beating his kind embracements with her heels.

Then, like a melancholy malcontent,
He vails his tail, that, like a falling plume,
Cool shadow to his melting buttock lent:
He stamps, and bites the poor flies in his fume.
His love, perceiving how he is enrag'd,
Grew kinder, and his fury was assuag'd.

His testy master goeth about to take him;
When lo! the unback'd breeder, full of fear,

Jealous of catching, swiftly doth forsake him,
With her the horse, and left Adonis there:
As they were mad, unto the wood they hie them,
Outstripping crows that strive to overfly them.

All swoln with chafing, down Adonis sits,
Banning his boisterous and unruly beast:
And now the happy season once more fits,
That love-sick Love by pleading may be blest;
For lovers say, the heart hath treble wrong
When it is barr'd the aidance of the tongue.

An oven that is stopp'd, or river stay'd,
Burneth more hotly, swelleth with more rage:
So of concealed sorrow may be said;
Free vent of words love's fire doth assuage;
But when the heart's attorney once is mute
The client breaks, as desperate in his suit.

He sees her coming, and begins to glow,—
Even as a dying coal revives with wind,—

And with his bonnet hides his angry brow;
Looks on the dull earth with disturbed mind, 340
  Taking no notice that she is so nigh,
  For all askance he holds her in his eye.

O! what a sight it was, wistly to view
How she came stealing to the wayward boy;344
To note the fighting conflict of her hue,
How white and red each other did destroy:
  But now her cheek was pale, and by and by
  It flash'd forth fire, as lightning from the sky. 348

Now was she just before him as he sat,
And like a lowly lover down she kneels;
With one fair hand she heaveth up his hat,
Her other tender hand his fair cheek feels: 352
  His tenderer cheek receives her soft hand's print,
  As apt as new-fall'n snow takes any dint.

O! what a war of looks was then between them;
Her eyes petitioners to his eyes suing; 356

His eyes saw her eyes as they had not seen them;
Her eyes woo'd still, his eyes disdain'd the wooing:
  And all this dumb play had his acts made plain
  With tears, which, chorus-like, her eyes did rain.

Full gently now she takes him by the hand,361
A lily prison'd in a gaol of snow,
Or ivory in an alabaster band;
So white a friend engirts so white a foe:364
  This beauteous combat, wilful and unwilling,
  Show'd like two silver doves that sit abilling.

Once more the engine of her thoughts began:
'O fairest mover on this mortal round,   368
Would thou wert as I am, and I a man,
My heart all whole as thine, thy heart my wound;
  For one sweet look thy help I would assure thee,
  Though nothing but my body's bane would cure thee.'

'Give me my hand,' saith he, 'why dost thou feel it?'
'Give me my heart,' saith she, 'and thou shalt have it;

O! give it me, lest thy hard heart do steel it,
And being steel'd, soft sighs can never grave it:
Then love's deep groans I never shall regard,
Because Adonis' heart hath made mine hard.'

'For shame,' he cries, 'let go, and let me go;
My day's delight is past, my horse is gone,
And 'tis your fault I am bereft him so:

I pray you hence, and leave me here alone:
For all my mind, my thought, my busy care,
Is how to get my palfrey from the mare.'

Thus she replies: 'Thy palfrey, as he should,
Welcomes the warm approach of sweet desire:
Affection is a coal that must be cool'd;
Else, suffer'd, it will set the heart on fire:
The sea hath bounds, but deep desire hath none;
Therefore no marvel though thy horse be gone.

'How like a Jade he stood, tied to the tree,

Servilely master'd with a leathern rein! 392
But when he saw his love, his youth's fair fee,
He held such petty bondage in disdain;
  Throwing the base thong from his bending crest,
  Enfranchising his mouth, his back, his breast.396

'Who sees his true-love in her naked bed,
Teaching the sheets a whiter hue than white,
But, when his glutton eye so full hath fed,
His other agents aim at like delight?   400
  Who is so faint, that dare not be so bold
  To touch the fire, the weather being cold?

'Let me excuse thy courser, gentle boy;
And learn of him, I heartily beseech thee,404
To take advantage on presented joy
Though I were dumb, yet his proceedings teach thee.
  O learn to love, the lesson is but plain,
  And once made perfect, never lost again.408

'I know not love,' quoth he, 'nor will not know it,

Unless it be a boar, and then I chase it;
'Tis much to borrow, and I will not owe it;
My love to love is love but to disgrace it; 412
For I have heard it is a life in death,
That laughs and weeps, and all but with a breath.

'Who wears a garment shapeless and unfinish'd?
Who plucks the bud before one leaf put forth? 416
If springing things be any jot diminish'd,
They wither in their prime, prove nothing worth;
The colt that's back'd and burden'd being young
Loseth his pride, and never waxeth strong. 420

'You hurt my hand with wringing. Let us part,
And leave this idle theme, this bootless chat:
Remove your siege from my unyielding heart;
To love's alarms it will not ope the gate:424
Dismiss your vows, your feigned tears, your flattery;
For where a heart is hard they make no battery.'

'What! canst thou talk?' quoth she, 'hast thou a tongue?

O! would thou hadst not, or I had no hearing; 428
Thy mermaid's voice hath done me double wrong;
I had my load before, now press'd with bearing:
  Melodious discord, heavenly tune, harsh-sounding,
  Ear's deep-sweet music, and heart's deep-sore wounding.

'Had I no eyes but ears, my ears would love 433
That inward beauty and invisible;
Or were I deaf, thy outward parts would move
Each part in me that were but sensible: 436
  Though neither eyes nor ears, to hear nor see,
  Yet should I be in love by touching thee.

'Say, that the sense of feeling were bereft me,
And that I could not see, nor hear, nor touch, 440
And nothing but the very smell were left me,
Yet would my love to thee be still as much;
  For from the stillitory of thy face excelling
  Comes breath perfum'd that breedeth love by smelling.

'But O! what banquet wert thou to the taste, 445

Being nurse and feeder of the other four;
Would they not wish the feast might ever last,
And bid Suspicion double-lock the door,
  Lest Jealousy, that sour unwelcome guest,
  Should, by his stealing in, disturb the feast?' 448

Once more the ruby-colour'd portal open'd,
Which to his speech did honey passage yield, 452
Like a red morn, that ever yet betoken'd
Wrack to the seaman, tempest to the field,
  Sorrow to shepherds, woe unto the birds,
  Gusts and foul flaws to herdmen and to herds. 456

This ill presage advisedly she marketh:
Even as the wind is hush'd before it raineth,
Or as the wolf doth grin before he barketh,
Or as the berry breaks before it staineth, 460
  Or like the deadly bullet of a gun,
  His meaning struck her ere his words begun.

And at his look she flatly falleth down

For looks kill love, and love by looks reviveth;464
A smile recures the wounding of a frown;
But blessed bankrupt, that by love so thriveth!
  The silly boy, believing she is dead
  Claps her pale cheek, till clapping makes it red; 468

And all amaz'd brake off his late intent,
For sharply he did think to reprehend her,
Which cunning love did wittily prevent:
Fair fall the wit that can so well defend her! 472
  For on the grass she lies as she were slain
  Till his breath breatheth life in her again.

He wrings her nose, he strikes her on the cheeks,
He bends her fingers, holds her pulses hard,   476
He chafes her lips; a thousand ways he seeks
To mend the hurt that his unkindness marr'd:
  He kisses her; and she, by her good will,
  Will never rise, so he will kiss her still. 480

The night of sorrow now is turn'd to day:

Her two blue windows faintly she up-heaveth,
Like the fair sun, when in his fresh array
He cheers the morn, and all the world relieveth:
  And as the bright sun glorifies the sky,
  So is her face illumin'd with her eye;

Whose beams upon his hairless face are fix'd,
As if from thence they borrow'd all their shine.
Were never four such lamps together mix'd,
Had not his clouded with his brow's repine;
  But hers, which through the crystal tears gave light
  Shone like the moon in water seen by night.

'O! where am I?' quoth she, 'in earth or heaven,
Or in the ocean drench'd, or in the fire?

What hour is this? or morn or weary even?
Do I delight to die, or life desire?
  But now I liv'd, and life was death's annoy;
  But now I died, and death was lively joy.

'O! thou didst kill me; kill me once again:
Thy eyes' shrewd tutor, that hard heart of thine,
Hath taught them scornful tricks, and such disdain,
That they have murder'd this poor heart of mine;
And these mine eyes, true leaders to their queen,
But for thy piteous lips no more had seen.

'Long may they kiss each other for this cure!
O! never let their crimson liveries wear;
And as they last, their verdure still endure,
To drive infection from the dangerous year:
That the star-gazers, having writ on death,
May say, the plague is banish'd by thy breath.

'Pure lips, sweet seals in my soft lips imprinted,
What bargains may I make, still to be sealing?
To sell myself I can be well contented,
So thou wilt buy and pay and use good dealing;
Which purchase if thou make, for fear of slips
Set thy seal-manual on my wax-red lips.

'A thousand kisses buys my heart from me;
And pay them at thy leisure, one by one.

What is ten hundred touches unto thee?
Are they not quickly told and quickly gone? 520
  Say, for non-payment that the debt should double,
  Is twenty hundred kisses such a trouble?'

'Fair queen,' quoth he, 'if any love you owe me,
Measure my strangeness with my unripe years: 524
Before I know myself, seek not to know me;
No fisher but the ungrown fry forbears:
  The mellow plum doth fall, the green sticks fast,
  Or being early pluck'd is sour to taste. 528

'Look! the world's comforter, with weary gait
His day's hot task hath ended in the west;
The owl, night's herald, shrieks, 'tis very late;
The sheep are gone to fold, birds to their nest, 532
  And coal-black clouds that shadow heaven's light
  Do summon us to part, and bid good night.

'Now let me say good night, and so say you;
If you will say so, you shall have a kiss.' 536
'Good night,' quoth she; and ere he says adieu,
The honey fee of parting tender'd is:
  Her arms do lend his neck a sweet embrace;
  Incorporate then they seem, face grows to face. 540

Till, breathless, he disjoin'd, and backward drew
The heavenly moisture, that sweet coral mouth,
Whose precious taste her thirsty lips well knew,
Whereon they surfeit, yet complain on drouth: 544
  He with her plenty press'd, she faint with dearth,
  Their lips together glu'd, fall to the earth.

Now quick desire hath caught the yielding prey,
And glutton-like she feeds, yet never filleth; 548
Her lips are conquerors, his lips obey,
Paying what ransom the insulter willeth;
  Whose vulture thought doth pitch the price so high,
  That she will draw his lips' rich treasure dry. 552

And having felt the sweetness of the spoil,
With blindfold fury she begins to forage;
Her face doth reek and smoke, her blood doth boil,
And careless lust stirs up a desperate courage;556
  Planting oblivion, beating reason back,
  Forgetting shame's pure blush and honour's wrack.

Hot, faint, and weary, with her hard embracing,
Like a wild bird being tam'd with too much handling,
Or as the fleet-foot roe that's tir'd with chasing, 561
Or like the froward infant still'd with dandling,
  He now obeys, and now no more resisteth,
  While she takes all she can, not all she listeth. 564

What wax so frozen but dissolves with tempering,
And yields at last to every light impression?
Things out of hope are compass'd oft with venturing,
Chiefly in love, whose leave exceeds commission:568
  Affection faints not like a pale-fac'd coward,
  But then woos best when most his choice is froward.

When he did frown, O! had she then gave over,
Such nectar from his lips she had not suck'd. 572
Foul words and frowns must not repel a lover;
What though the rose have prickles, yet 'tis pluck'd:
  Were beauty under twenty locks kept fast,
  Yet love breaks through and picks them all at last.

For pity now she can no more detain him; 577
The poor fool prays her that he may depart:
She is resolv'd no longer to restrain him,
Bids him farewell, and look well to her heart, 580
  The which, by Cupid's bow she doth protest,
  He carries thence incaged in his breast.

'Sweet boy,' she says, 'this night I'll waste in sorrow,
For my sick heart commands mine eyes to watch. 584
Tell me, Love's master, shall we meet to-morrow
Say, shall we? shall we? wilt thou make the match?'
  He tells her, no; to-morrow he intends
  To hunt the boar with certain of his friends.588

'The boar!' quoth she; whereat a sudden pale,
Like lawn being spread upon the blushing rose,
Usurps her cheeks, she trembles at his tale,
And on his neck her yoking arms she throws: 592
  She sinketh down, still hanging by his neck,
  He on her belly falls, she on her back.

Now is she in the very lists of love,
Her champion mounted for the hot encounter: 596
All is imaginary she doth prove,
He will not manage her, although he mount her;
  That worse than Tantalus' is her annoy,
  To clip Elysium and to lack her joy. 600

Even as poor birds, deceiv'd with painted grapes,
Do surfeit by the eye and pine the maw,
Even so she languisheth in her mishaps,
As those poor birds that helpless berries saw. 604
  The warm effects which she in him finds missing,
  She seeks to kindle with continual kissing.

But all in vain, good queen, it will not be:
She hath assay'd as much as may be prov'd;608
Her pleading hath deserv'd a greater fee;
She's Love, she loves, and yet she is not lov'd.
  'Fie, fie!' he says, 'you crush me; let me go;
  You have no reason to withhold me so.' 612

'Thou hadst been gone,' quoth she, 'sweet boy, ere this,
But that thou told'st me thou wouldst hunt the boar.
O! be advis'd; thou know'st not what it is
With javelin's point a churlish swine to gore, 616
  Whose tushes never sheath'd he whetteth still,
  Like to a mortal butcher, bent to kill.

'On his bow-back he hath a battle set
Of bristly pikes, that ever threat his foes; 620
His eyes like glow-worms shine when he doth fret;
His snout digs sepulchres where'er he goes;
  Being mov'd, he strikes whate'er is in his way,
  And whom he strikes his crooked tushes slay. 624

'His brawny sides, with hairy bristles arm'd,
Are better proof than thy spear's point can enter;
His short thick neck cannot be easily harm'd;
Being ireful, on the lion he will venture:628
  The thorny brambles and embracing bushes,
  As fearful of him, part, through whom he rushes.

'Alas! he nought esteems that face of thine,
To which Love's eyes pay tributary gazes;632
Nor thy soft hands, sweet lips, and crystal eyne,
Whose full perfection all the world amazes;
  But having thee at vantage, wondrous dread!
  Would root these beauties as he roots the mead.

'O! let him keep his loathsome cabin still; 637
Beauty hath nought to do with such foul fiends:
Come not within his danger by thy will;
They that thrive well take counsel of their friends.
  When thou didst name the boar, not to dissemble,
  I fear'd thy fortune, and my joints did tremble.

'Didst thou not mark my face? was it not white?
Saw'st thou not signs of fear lurk in mine eye?644
Grew I not faint? And fell I not downright?
Within my bosom, whereon thou dost lie,
  My boding heart pants, beats, and takes no rest,
  But, like an earthquake, shakes thee on my breast.

'For where Love reigns, disturbing Jealousy   649
Doth call himself Affection's sentinel;
Gives false alarms, suggesteth mutiny,
And in a peaceful hour doth cry "Kill, kill!" 652
  Distempering gentle Love in his desire,
  As air and water do abate the fire.

'This sour informer, this bate-breeding spy,
This canker that eats up Love's tender spring, 656
This carry-tale, dissentious Jealousy,
That sometime true news, sometime false doth bring,
  Knocks at my heart, and whispers in mine ear
  That if I love thee, I thy death should fear:660

'And more than so, presenteth to mine eye
The picture of an angry-chafing boar,
Under whose sharp fangs on his back doth lie
An image like thyself, all stain'd with gore;
  Whose blood upon the fresh flowers being shed
  Doth make them droop with grief and hang the head.

'What should I do, seeing thee so indeed,
That tremble at the imagination?
The thought of it doth make my faint heart bleed,
And fear doth teach it divination:
  I prophesy thy death, my living sorrow,
  If thou encounter with the boar to-morrow.

'But if thou needs wilt hunt, be rul'd by me;
Uncouple at the timorous flying hare,
Or at the fox which lives by subtilty,
Or at the roe which no encounter dare:
  Pursue these fearful creatures o'er the downs,
  And on thy well-breath'd horse keep with thy hound.

'And when thou hast on foot the purblind hare,
Mark the poor wretch, to overshoot his troubles
How he outruns the winds, and with what care
He cranks and crosses with a thousand doubles:
  The many musits through the which he goes
  Are like a labyrinth to amaze his foes.

'Sometime he runs among a flock of sheep,
To make the cunning hounds mistake their smell,
And sometime where earth-delving conies keep,
To stop the loud pursuers in their yell,
  And sometime sorteth with a herd of deer;
  Danger deviseth shifts, wit waits on fear:

'For there his smell with others being mingled,
The hot scent-snuffing hounds are driven to doubt,
Ceasing their clamorous cry till they have singled
With much ado the cold fault cleanly out;
  Then do they spend their mouths: Echo replies,
  As if another chase were in the skies.

'By this, poor Wat, far off upon a hill,
Stands on his hinder legs with listening ear,
To hearken if his foes pursue him still:
Anon their loud alarums he doth hear;
And now his grief may be compared well
To one sore sick that hears the passing bell.

'Then shalt thou see the dew-bedabbled wretch
Turn, and return, indenting with the way;
Each envious briar his weary legs doth scratch,
Each shadow makes him stop, each murmur stay:
  For misery is trodden on by many,
  And being low never reliev'd by any.

'Lie quietly, and hear a little more;
Nay, do not struggle, for thou shalt not rise:
To make thee hate the hunting of the boar,
Unlike myself thou hear'st me moralize,
  Applying this to that, and so to so;
  For love can comment upon every woe.

'Where did I leave?' 'No matter where,' quoth he
'Leave me, and then the story aptly ends:716
The night is spent,' 'Why, what of that?' quoth she.
'I am,' quoth he, 'expected of my friends;
  And now 'tis dark, and going I shall fall.'
  'In night,' quoth she, 'desire sees best of all.' 720

But if thou fall, O! then imagine this,
The earth, in love with thee, thy footing trips,
And all is but to rob thee of a kiss.   723
Rich preys make true men thieves; so do thy lips
  Make modest Dian cloudy and forlorn,
  Lest she should steal a kiss and die forsworn.

'Now of this dark night I perceive the reason:
Cynthia for shame obscures her silver shine   728
Till forging Nature be condemn'd of treason,
For stealing moulds from heaven that were divine;
  Wherein she fram'd thee in high heaven's despite,
  To shame the sun by day and her by night.   732

'And therefore hath she brib'd the Destinies,
To cross the curious workmanship of nature
To mingle beauty with infirmities,
And pure perfection with impure defeature;
Making it subject to the tyranny
Of mad mischances and much misery;

'As burning fevers, agues pale and faint,
Life-poisoning pestilence and frenzies wood,
The marrow-eating sickness, whose attains
Disorder breeds by heating of the blood;
Surfeits, imposthumes, grief, and damn'd despair,
Swear nature's death for framing thee so fair.

'And not the least of all these maladies
But in one minute's fight brings beauty under:
Both favour, savour hue, and qualities,
Whereat the impartial gazer late did wonder,
Are on the sudden wasted, thaw'd and done,
As mountain-snow melts with the mid-day sun.

'Therefore, despite of fruitless chastity,
Love-lacking vestals and self-loving nuns,
That on the earth would breed a scarcity
And barren dearth of daughters and of sons,
  Be prodigal: the lamp that burns by night
  Dries up his oil to lend the world his light.

'What is thy body but a swallowing grave,
Seeming to bury that posterity
Which by the rights of time thou needs must have,
If thou destroy them not in dark obscurity?
  If so, the world will hold thee in disdain,
  Sith in thy pride so fair a hope is slain.
'So in thyself thyself art made away;
A mischief worse than civil home-bred strife,
Or theirs whose desperate hands themselves do slay,
Or butcher-sire that reeves his son of life.
  Foul-cankering rust the hidden treasure frets,
  But gold that's put to use more gold begets.'

'Nay then,' quoth Adon, 'you will fall again
Into your idle over-handled theme;
The kiss I gave you is bestow'd in vain,
And all in vain you strive against the stream;
For by this black-fac'd night, desire's foul nurse,
Your treatise makes me like you worse and worse.

'If love have lent you twenty thousand tongues,
And every tongue more moving than your own,
Bewitching like the wanton mermaid's songs,
Yet from mine ear the tempting tune is blown;
For know, my heart stands armed in mine ear,
And will not let a false sound enter there;

'Lest the deceiving harmony should run
Into the quiet closure of my breast;
And then my little heart were quite undone,
In his bedchamber to be barr'd of rest.
No, lady, no; my heart longs not to groan,
But soundly sleeps, while now it sleeps alone.

'What have you urg'd that I cannot reprove?
The path is smooth that leadeth on to danger;
I hate not love, but your device in love
That lends embracements unto every stranger.
You do it for increase: O strange excuse!
When reason is the bawd to lust's abuse.

'Call it not, love, for Love to heaven is fled,
Since sweating Lust on earth usurp'd his name;
Under whose simple semblance he hath fed
Upon fresh beauty, blotting it with blame;
Which the hot tyrant stains and soon bereaves,
As caterpillars do the tender leaves.

'Love comforteth like sunshine after rain,
But Lust's effect is tempest after sun;
Love's gentle spring doth always fresh remain,
Lust's winter comes ere summer half be done.
Love surfeits not, Lust like a glutton dies;
Love is all truth, Lust full of forged lies.

'More I could tell, but more I dare not say;
The text is old, the orator too green.
Therefore, in sadness, now I will away;
My face is full of shame, my heart of teen: 808
  Mine ears, that to your wanton talk attended
  Do burn themselves for having so offended.'

With this he breaketh from the sweet embrace 811
Of those fair arms which bound him to her breast,
And homeward through the dark laund runs apace;
Leaves Love upon her back deeply distress'd.
  Look, how a bright star shooteth from the sky
  So glides he in the night from Venus' eye; 816

Which after him she darts, as one on shore
Gazing upon a late-embarked friend,
Till the wild waves will have him seen no more,
Whose ridges with the meeting clouds contend: 820
  So did the merciless and pitchy night
  Fold in the object that did feed her sight.

Whereat amaz'd, as one that unaware
Hath dropp'd a precious jewel in the flood, 824
Or 'stonish'd as night-wanderers often are,
Their light blown out in some mistrustful wood;
  Even so confounded in the dark she lay,
  Having lost the fair discovery of her way. 828

And now she beats her heart, whereat it groans,
That all the neighbour caves, as seeming troubled,
Make verbal repetition of her moans;
Passion on passion deeply is redoubled: 832
  'Ay me!' she cries, and twenty times, 'Woe, woe!'
  And twenty echoes twenty times cry so.

She marking them, begins a wailing note,
And sings extemporally a woeful ditty; 836
How love makes young men thrall and old men dote;
How love is wise in folly foolish-witty:
  Her heavy anthem still concludes in woe,
  And still the choir of echoes answer so. 840

Her song was tedious, and outwore the night,
For lovers' hours are long, though seeming short:
If pleas'd themselves, others, they think, delight
In such like circumstance, with such like sport:844
  Their copious stories, oftentimes begun,
  End without audience, and are never done.

For who hath she to spend the night withal,
But idle sounds resembling parasites;   848
Like shrill-tongu'd tapsters answering every call,
Soothing the humour of fantastic wits?
  She says, ''Tis so:' they answer all, ''Tis so;'
  And would say after her, if she said 'No'.   852

Lo! here the gentle lark, weary of rest,
From his moist cabinet mounts up on high,
And wakes the morning, from whose silver breast
The sun ariseth in his majesty;   856
  Who doth the world so gloriously behold,
  That cedar-tops and hills seem burnish'd gold.

Venus salutes him with this fair good morrow:
'O thou clear god, and patron of all light,
From whom each lamp and shining star doth borrow
The beauteous influence that makes him bright,
  There lives a son that suck'd an earthly mother,
  May lend thee light, as thou dost lend to other'

This said, she hasteth to a myrtle grove,
Musing the morning is so much o'erworn,
And yet she hears no tidings of her love;
She hearkens for his hounds and for his horn:
  Anon she hears them chant it lustily,
  And all in haste she coasteth to the cry.

And as she runs, the bushes in the way
Some catch her by the neck, some kiss her face,
Some twine about her thigh to make her stay:
She wildly breaketh from their strict embrace,
  Like a milch doe, whose swelling dugs do ache,
  Hasting to feed her fawn hid in some brake.

By this she hears the hounds are at a bay;
Whereat she starts, like one that spies an adder
Wreath'd up in fatal folds just in his way,
The fear whereof doth make him shake and shudder;
  Even so the timorous yelping of the hounds
  Appals her senses, and her spirit confounds.

For now she knows it is no gentle chase,
But the blunt boar, rough bear, or lion proud,
Because the cry remaineth in one place,
Where fearfully the dogs exclaim aloud:
  Finding their enemy to be so curst,
  They all strain courtesy who shall cope him first.

This dismal cry rings sadly in her ear,
Through which it enters to surprise her heart;
Who, overcome by doubt and bloodless fear,
With cold-pale weakness numbs each feeling part;
  Like soldiers, when their captain once doth yield,
  They basely fly and dare not stay the field.

Thus stands she in a trembling ecstasy,
Till, cheering up her senses sore dismay'd, 896
She tells them 'tis a causeless fantasy,
And childish error, that they are afraid;
  Bids them leave quaking, bids them fear no more:
  And with that word she spied the hunted boar;

Whose frothy mouth bepainted all with red,901
Like milk and blood being mingled both together,
A second fear through all her sinews spread,
Which madly hurries her she knows not whither: 904
  This way she runs, and now she will no further,
  But back retires to rate the boar for murther.

A thousand spleens bear her a thousand ways,
She treads the path that she untreads again; 908
Her more than haste is mated with delays,
Like the proceedings of a drunken brain,
  Full of respects, yet nought at all respecting,
  In hand with all things, nought at all effecting.

Here kennel'd in a brake she finds a hound,
And asks the weary caitiff for his master,
And there another licking of his wound,
Gainst venom'd sores the only sovereign plaster;
And here she meets another sadly scowling,
To whom she speaks, and he replies with howling.

When he hath ceas'd his ill-resounding noise,
Another flap-mouth'd mourner, black and grim,
Against the welkin volleys out his voice;
Another and another answer him,
Clapping their proud tails to the ground below,
Shaking their scratch'd ears, bleeding as they go.

Look, how the world's poor people are amaz'd
At apparitions, signs, and prodigies,
Whereon with fearful eyes they long have gaz'd,
Infusing them with dreadful prophecies;
So she at these sad sighs draws up her breath,
And, sighing it again, exclaims on Death.

'Hard-favour'd tyrant, ugly, meagre, lean,931
Hateful divorce of love,'—thus chides she Death,—
'Grim-grinning ghost, earth's worm, what dost thou mean
To stifle beauty and to steal his breath,
  Who when he liv'd, his breath and beauty set
  Gloss on the rose, smell to the violet?936

'If he be dead, O no! it cannot be,
Seeing his beauty, thou shouldst strike at it;
O yes! it may; thou hast no eyes to see,
But hatefully at random dost thou hit.   940
  Thy mark is feeble age, but thy false dart
  Mistakes that aim and cleaves an infant's heart.

'Hadst thou but bid beware, then he had spoke,
And, hearing him, thy power had lost his power.944
The Destinies will curse thee for this stroke;
They bid thee crop a weed, thou pluck'st a flower.
  Love's golden arrow at him shoull have fled,
  And not Death's ebon dart, to strike him dead.948

'Dost thou drink tears, that thou provok'st such weeping?
What may a heavy groan advantage thee?
Why hast thou cast into eternal sleeping
Those eyes that taught all other eyes to see? 952
  Now Nature cares not for thy mortal vigour
  Since her best work is ruin'd with thy rigour.'

Here overcome, as one full of despair,
She vail'd her eyelids, who, like sluices, stopp'd 956
The crystal tide that from her two cheeks fair
In the sweet channel of her bosom dropp'd
  But through the flood-gates breaks the silver rain,
  And with his strong course opens them again. 960

O! how her eyes and tears did lend and borrow;
Her eyes seen in the tears, tears in her eye;
Both crystals, where they view'd each other's sorrow,
Sorrow that friendly sighs sought still to dry;964
  But like a stormy day, now wind, now rain,
  Sighs dry her cheeks, tears make them wet again.

Variable passions throng her constant woe,
As striving who should best become her grief; 968
All entertain'd, each passion labours so,
That every present sorrow seemeth chief,
But none is best; then join they all together,
Like many clouds consulting for foul weather. 972

By this, far off she hears some huntsman holloa;
A nurse's song no'er pleas'd her babe so well:
The dire imagination she did follow
This sound of hope doth labour to expel; 976
  For now reviving joy bids her rejoice,
  And flatters her it is Adonis' voice.

Whereat her tears began to turn their tide,
Being prison'd in her eye, like pearls in glass;980
Yet sometimes falls an orient drop beside,
Which her cheek melts, as scorning it should pass
  To wash the foul face of the sluttish ground,
  Who is but drunken when she seemeth drown'd.

O hard-believing love! how strange it seems
Not to believe, and yet too credulous;
Thy weal and woe are both of them extremes;
Despair and hope make thee ridiculous:
The one doth flatter thee in thoughts unlikely,
In likely thoughts the other kills thee quickly.

Now she unweaves the web that she hath wrought,
Adonis lives, and Death is not to blame;
It was not she that call'd him all to naught,
Now she adds honours to his hateful name;
She clepes him king of graves, and grave for kings,
Imperious supreme of all mortal things.

'No, no,' quoth she, 'sweet Death, I did but jest;
Yet pardon me, I felt a kind of fear
Whenas I met the boar, that bloody beast,
Which knows no pity, but is still severe;
Then, gentle shadow,—truth I must confess—
I rail'd on thee, fearing my love's decease.

'Tis not my fault: the boar provok'd my tongue;
Be wreak'd on him, invisible commander;
'Tis he, foul creature, that hath done thee wrong;
I did but act, he 's author of my slander:
  Grief hath two tongues: and never woman yet,
  Could rule them both without ten women's wit.'

Thus hoping that Adonis is alive,
Her rash suspect sile doth extenuate;
And that his beauty may the better thrive,
With Death she humbly doth insinuate;
  Tells him of trophies, statues, tombs; and stories
  His victories, his triumphs, and his glories.

'O Jove!' quoth she, 'how much a fool was I,
To be of such a weak and silly mind
To wail his death who lives and must not die
Till mutual overthrow of mortal kind;
  For he being dead, with him is beauty slain,
  And, beauty dead, black chaos comes again.

'Fie, fie, fond love! thou art so full of fear
As one with treasure laden, hemm'd with thieves
Trifles, unwitnessed with eye or ear,
Thy coward heart with false bethinking grieves.'
Even at this word she hears a merry horn
Whereat she leaps that was but late forlorn.

As falcon to the lure, away she flies;
The grass stoops not, she treads on it so light;
And in her haste unfortunately spies
The foul boar's conquest on her fair delight;
Which seen, her eyes, as murder'd with the view,
Like stars asham'd of day, themselves withdrew:

Or, as the snail, whose tender horns being hit,
Shrinks backwards in his shelly cave with pain,
And there, all smother'd up, in shade doth sit,
Long after fearing to creep forth again;
So, at his bloody view, her eyes are fled
Into the deep dark cabills of her head;

Where they resign their office and their light
To the disposing of her troubled brain; 1040
Who bids them still consort with ugly night,
And never wound the heart with looks again;
  Who, like a king perplexed in his throne,
  By their suggestion gives a deadly groan, 1044

Whereat each tributary subject quakes;
As when the wind, imprison'd in the ground,
Struggling for passage, earth's foundation shakes,
Which with cold terror doth men's minds confound.
  This mutiny each part doth so surprise 1049
  That from their dark beds once more leap her eyes;

And, being open'd, threw unwilling light
Upon the wide wound that the boar had trench'd
In his soft flank; whose wonted lily white 1053
With purple tears, that his wound wept, was drench'd:
  No flower was nigh, no grass, herb, leaf, or weed
  But stole his blood and seem'd with him to bleed.

This solemn sympathy poor Venus noteth, 1057
Over one shoulder doth she hang her head,
Dumbly she passions, franticly she doteth;
She thinks he could not die, he is not dead: 1060
  Her voice is stopp'd, her joints forget to bow,
  Her eyes are mad that they have wept till now.

Upon his hurt she looks so steadfastly,
That her sight dazzling makes the wound seem three;
And then she reprehends her mangling eye,1065
That makes more gashes where no breach should be:
  His face seems twain, each several limb is doubled;
  For oft the eye mistakes, the brain being troubled.

'My tongue cannot express my grief for one,   1069
And yet,' quoth she, 'behold two Adons dead!
My sighs are blown away, my salt tears gone,
Mine eyes are turn'd to fire, my heart to lead:1072
  Heavy heart's lead, melt at mine eyes' red fire!
  So shall I die by drops of hot desire.

'Alas! poor world, what treasure hast thou lost!
What face remains alive that's worth the viewing?
Whose tongue is music now? what canst thou boast
Of things long since, or anything ensuing? 1078
  The flowers are sweet, their colours fresh and trim;
  But true-sweet beauty liv'd and died with him.

'Bonnet nor veil henceforth no creature wear! 1081
Nor sun nor wind will ever strive to kiss you:
Having no fair to lose, you need not fear;
The sun doth scorn you, and the wind doth hiss you:
  But when Adonis liv'd, sun and sharp air 1085
  Lurk'd like two thieves, to rob him of his fair:

'And therefore would he put his bonnet on,
Under whose brim the gaudy sun would peep; 1088
The wind would blow it off, and, being gone,
Play with his locks: then would Adonis weep;
  And straight, in pity of his tender years,
  They both would strive who first should dry his tears.

'To see his face the lion walk'd along 1093
Behind some hedge, because he would not fear him;
To recreate himself when he hath sung,
The tiger would be tame and gently hear him; 1096
  If he had spoke, the wolf would leave his prey,
  And never fright the silly lamb that day.

'When he beheld his shadow in the brook,
The fishes spread on it their golden gills;   1100
When he was by, the birds such pleasure took,
That some would sing, some other in their bills
  Would bring him mulberries and ripe-red cherries
  He fed them with his sight, they him with berries.

'But this foul, grim, and urchin-spouted boar,1105
Whose downward eye still looketh for a grave,
Ne'er saw the beauteous livery that he wore;
Witness the entertainment that he gave: 1108
  If he did see his face, why then I know
  He thought to kiss him, and hath killed him so.

"'Tis true, 'tis true; thus was Adonis slain:
He ran upon the boar with his sharp spear,
Who did not whet his teeth at him again,
But by a kiss thought to persuade him there;
  And nuzzling in his flank, the loving swine
  Sheath'd unaware the tusk in his soft groin.

'Had I been tooth'd like him, I must confess,
With kissing him I should have kill'd him first;
But he is dead, and never did he bless
My youth with his; the more am I accurst.'
  With this she falleth in the place she stood,
  And stains her face with his congealed blood.

Sho looks upon his lips, and they are pale;
She takes him by the hand, and that is cold;
She whispers in his ears a heavy tale,
As if they heard the woeful words she told;
She lifts the coffer-lids that close his eyes,
Where, lo! two lamps, burnt out, in darkness lies;

Two glasses where herself herself beheld1129
A thousand times, and now no more reflect;
Their virtue lost, wherein they late excell'd,
And every beauty robb'd of his effect: 1132
  'Wonder of time,' quoth she, 'this is my spite,
  That, you being dead, the day should yet be light.

'Since thou art dead, lo! here I prophesy,
Sorrow on love hereafter shall attend: 1136
It shall be waited on with jealousy,
Find sweet beginning, but unsavoury end;
  Ne'er settled equally, but high or low;
  That all love's pleasure shall not match his woe.

'It shall be fickle, false, and full of fraud,1141
Bud and be blasted in a breathing-while;
The bottom poison, and the top o'erstraw'd
With sweets that shall the truest sight beguile: 1144
  The strongest body shall it make most weak,
  Strike the wise dumb and teach the fool to speak.

'It shall be sparing and too full of riot,
Teaching decrepit age to tread the measures; 1148
The staring ruffian shall it keep in quiet,
Pluck down the rich, enrich the poor with treasures;
  It shall be raging mad, and silly mild,
  Make the young old, the old become a child. 1152

'It shall suspect where is no cause of fear;
It shall not fear where it should most mistrust;
It shall be merciful, and too severe,
And most deceiving when it seems most just; 1156
  Perverse it shall be, where it shows most toward,
  Put fear to velour, courage to the coward.

'It shall be cause of war and dire events,
And set dissension 'twixt the son and sire; 1160
Subject and servile to all discontents,
As dry combustious matter is to fire:
  Sith in his prime Death doth my love destroy,
  They that love best their love shall not enjoy.' 1164

By this, the boy that by her side lay kill'd
Was melted like a vapour from her sight,
And in his blood that on the ground lay spill'd,
A purple flower sprung up, chequer'd with white; 1168
  Resembling well his pale cheeks, and the blood
  Which in round drops upon their whiteness stood.

She bows her head, the new-sprung flower to smell,
Comparing it to her Adonis' breath;1172
And says within her bosom it shall dwell,
Since he himself is reft from her by death:
  She drops the stalk, and in the breach appears
  Green dropping sap, which she compares to tears.

'Poor flower,' quoth she, 'this was thy father's guise,
Sweet issue of a more sweet-smelling sire,
For every little grief to wet his eyes:
To grow unto himself was his desire, 1180
  And so 'tis shine; but know, it is as good
  To wither in my breast as in his blood.

'Here was thy father's bed, here in my breast;

Thou art the next of blood, and 'tis thy right:1184

Lo! in this hollow cradle take thy rest,

My throbbing heart shall rock thee day and night:

  There shall not be one minute in an hour

  Wherein I will not kiss my sweet love's flower.'

Thus weary of the world, away she hies, 1189

And yokes her silver doves; by whose swift aid

Their mistress, mounted, through the empty skies

In her light chariot quickly is convey'd;1192

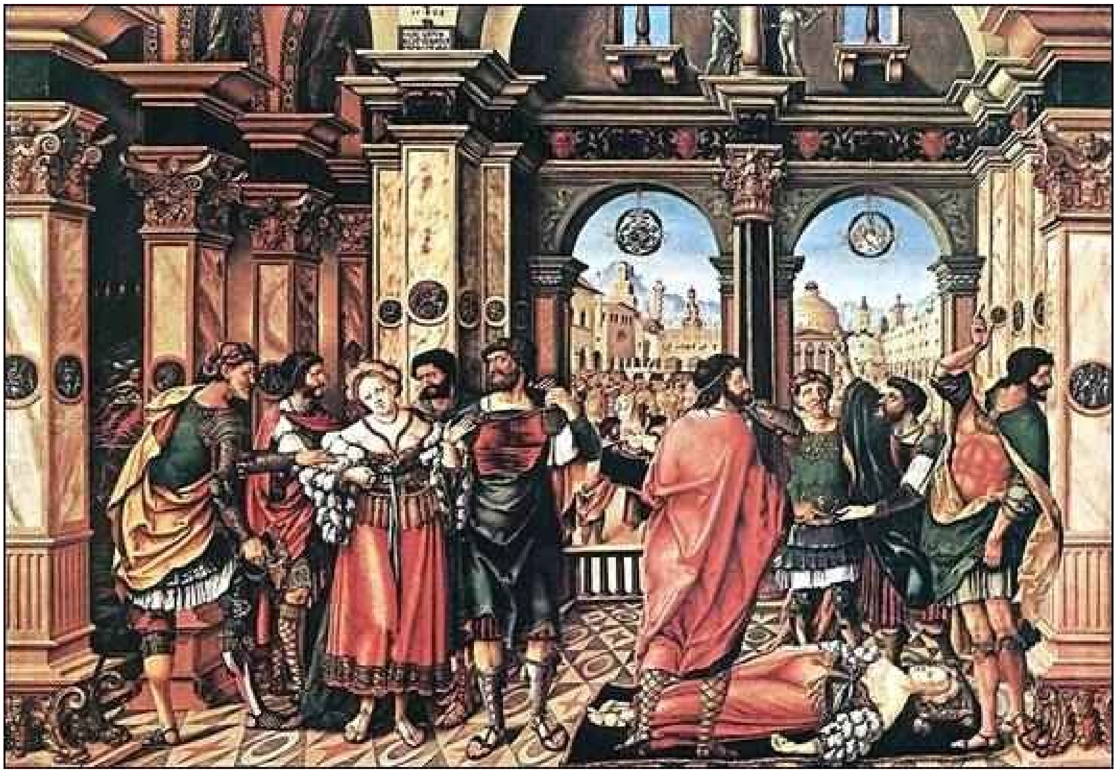
  Holding their course to Paphos, where their queen

  Means to immure herself and not be seen.

THE RAPE OF LUCRECE

This 1594 narrative poem tells the story of the legendary Lucretia. In the previous narrative poem *Venus and Adonis* Shakespeare had included a dedicatory letter to his patron, the Earl of Southampton, promising to write a "graver work". *The Rape of Lucrece* was entered into the Stationers' Register on May 9, 1594, and published later that year, in a quarto printed by Richard Field for the bookseller John Harrison. Harrison sold the book from his shop at the sign of the White Greyhound in St. Paul's Churchyard.

The poem draws on the story described in both Ovid's *Fasti* and Livy's *History of Rome* . In 509 BC, Sextus Tarquinius, son of Tarquin, the king of Rome, raped Lucretia (Lucrece), wife of Collatinus, one of the king's aristocratic retainers. As a result, Lucrece committed suicide. Her body was paraded in the Roman Forum by the king's nephew. This incited a full-scale revolt against the Tarquins led by Lucius Junius Brutus, the banishment of the royal family and the founding of the Roman republic.



The Suicide of Lucretia, by Jörg Breu the Elder

THE RAPE OF LUCRECE

TO THE

RIGHT HONOURABLE HENRY WRIOTHESLY,

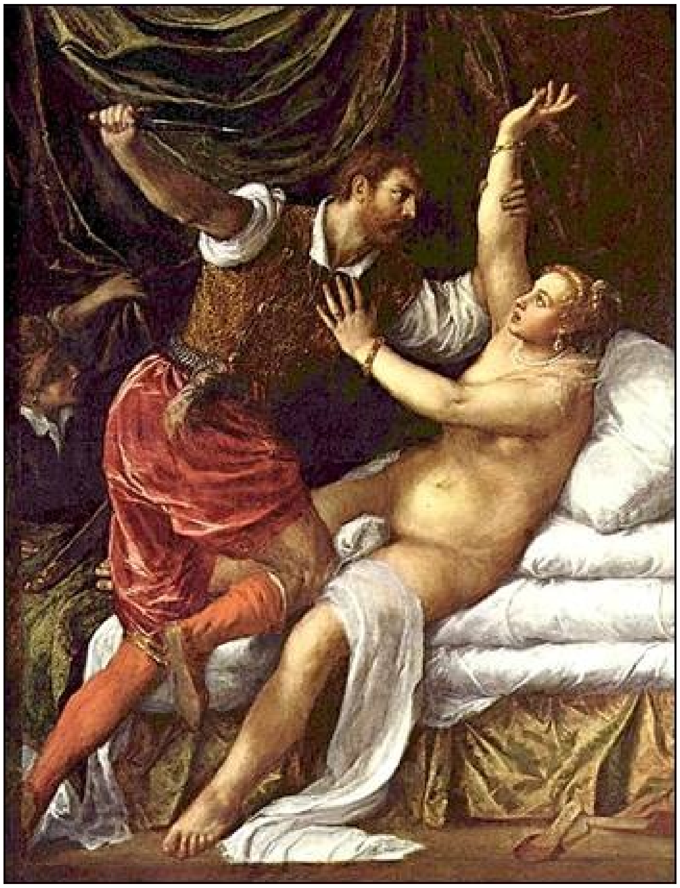
EARL OF SOUTHAMPTON, AND BARON OF TITCHFIELD.

THE love I dedicate to your Lordship is without end; whereof this pamphlet, without beginning, is but a superfluous moiety. The warrant I have of your honourable disposition, not the worth of my untutored lines, makes it assured of acceptance. What I have done is yours; what I have to do is yours; being part in all I have, devoted yours. Were my worth greater, my duty would show greater; meantime, as it is, it is bound to your Lordship, to whom I wish long life, still lengthened with all happiness.

Your Lordship's in all duty,
William Shakespeare.

THE ARGUMENT.

LUCIUS TARQUINIUS (for his excessive pride surnamed Superbus), after he had caused his own father-in-law, Servius Tullius, to be cruelly murdered, and, contrary to the Roman laws and customs, not requiring or staying for the people's suffrages, had possessed himself of the kingdom, went, accompanied with his sons and other noblemen of Rome, to besiege Ardea. During which siege the principal men of the army meeting one evening at the tent of Sextus Tarquinius, the king's son, in their discourses after supper, every one commended the virtues of his own wife; among whom Collatinus extolled the incomparable chastity of his wife Lucretia. In that pleasant humour they all posted to Rome; and intending, by their secret and sudden arrival, to make trial of that which every one had before avouched, only Collatinus finds his wife, though it were late in the night, spinning amongst her maids: the other ladies were all found dancing and revelling, or in several disports. Whereupon the noblemen yielded Collatinus the victory, and his wife the fame. At that time Sextus Tarquinius being inflamed with Lucrece's beauty, yet smothering his passions for the present, departed with the rest back to the camp; from whence he shortly after privily withdrew himself, and was (according to his estate) royally entertained and lodged by Lucrece at Collatium. The same night he treacherously stealeth into her chamber, violently ravished her, and early in the morning speedeth away. Lucrece, in this lamentable plight, hastily dispatched messengers, one to Rome for her father, another to the camp for Collatine. They came, the one accompanied with Junius Brutus, the other with Publius Valerius; and finding Lucrece attired in mourning habit, demanded the cause of her sorrow. She, first taking an oath of them for her revenge, revealed the actor, and whole manner of his dealing, and withal suddenly stabbed herself. Which done, with one consent they all vowed to root out the whole hated family of the Tarquins; and bearing the dead body to Rome, Brutus acquainted the people with the doer and manner of the vile deed, with a bitter invective against the tyranny of the king; wherewith the people were so moved, that with one consent and a general acclamation the Tarquins were all exiled, and the state government changed from kings to consuls.



The Rape of Lucretia by Titian

THE RAPE OF LUCRECE

From the besieged Ardea all in post,
Borne by the trustless wings of false desire,
Lust-breathed Tarquin leaves the Roman host,
And to Collatium bears the lightless fire
Which, in pale embers hid, lurks to aspire
  And girdle with embracing flames the waist
  Of Collatine's fair love, Lucrece the chaste.

Haply that name of chaste unhapp'ly set
This bateless edge on his keen appetite;
When Collatine unwisely did not let
To praise the clear unmatched red and white
Which triumph'd in that sky of his delight,
  Where mortal stars, as bright as heaven's beauties,
  With pure aspects did him peculiar duties.

For he the night before, in Tarquin's tent,
Unlock'd the treasure of his happy state;
What priceless wealth the heavens had him lent
In the possession of his beauteous mate;
Reckoning his fortune at such high-proud rate,
  That kings might be espoused to more fame,
  But king nor peer to such a peerless dame.

O happiness enjoy'd but of a few!
And, if possess'd, as soon decay'd and done
As is the morning's silver-melting dew
Against the golden splendour of the sun!
An expir'd date, cancell'd ere well begun:
  Honour and beauty, in the owner's arms,
  Are weakly fortress'd from a world of harms.

Beauty itself doth of itself persuade
The eyes of men without an orator;
What needeth then apologies be made,

To set forth that which is so singular?
Or why is Collatine the publisher
  Of that rich jewel he should keep unknown
  From thievish ears, because it is his own?

Perchance his boast of Lucrece' sovereignty
Suggested this proud issue of a king;
For by our ears our hearts oft tainted be:
Perchance that envy of so rich a thing,
Braving compare, disdainfully did sting
  His high-pitch'd thoughts, that meaner men should vaunt
  That golden hap which their superiors want.

But some untimely thought did instigate
His all-too-timeless speed, if none of those;
His honour, his affairs, his friends, his state,
Neglected all, with swift intent he goes
To quench the coal which in his liver glows.
  O rash false heat, wrapp'd in repentant cold,
  Thy hasty spring still blasts, and ne'er grows old!

When at Collatium this false lord arriv'd,
Well was he welcom'd by the Roman dame,
Within whose face beauty and virtue striv'd
Which of them both should underprop her fame:
When virtue bragg'd, beauty would blush for shame;
  When beauty boasted blushes, in despite
  Virtue would stain that or with silver white.

But beauty, in that white intituled,
From Venus' doves doth challenge that fair field:
Then virtue claims from beauty beauty's red,
Which virtue gave the golden age, to gild
Their silver cheeks, and call'd it then their shield;
  Teaching them thus to use it in the fight,—
  When shame assail'd, the red should fence the white.

This heraldry in Lucrece' face was seen,
Argued by beauty's red, and virtue's white:

Of either's colour was the other queen,
Proving from world's minority their right:
Yet their ambition makes them still to fight;
  The sovereignty of either being so great,
  That oft they interchange each other's seat.

Their silent war of lilies and of roses,
Which Tarquin view'd in her fair face's field,
In their pure ranks his traitor eye encloses;
Where, lest between them both it should be kill'd,
The coward captive vanquish'd doth yield
  To those two armies that would let him go,
  Rather than triumph in so false a foe.

Now thinks he that her husband's shallow tongue,
(The niggard prodigal that prais'd her so)
In that high task hath done her beauty wrong,
Which far exceeds his barren skill to show:
Therefore that praise which Collatine doth owe
  Enchanted Tarquin answers with surmise,
  In silent wonder of still-gazing eyes.

This earthly saint, adored by this devil,
Little suspecteth the false worshipper;
For unstain'd thoughts do seldom dream on evil;
Birds never lim'd no secret bushes fear:
So guiltless she securely gives good cheer
  And reverend welcome to her princely guest,
  Whose inward ill no outward harm express'd:

For that he colour'd with his high estate,
Hiding base sin in plaits of majesty;
That nothing in him seem'd inordinate,
Save sometime too much wonder of his eye,
Which, having all, all could not satisfy;
  But, poorly rich, so wanteth in his store,
  That, cloy'd with much, he pineth still for more.

But she, that never cop'd with stranger eyes,

Could pick no meaning from their parling looks,
Nor read the subtle-shining secrecies
Writ in the glassy margents of such books;
She touch'd no unknown baits, nor fear'd no hooks;
  Nor could she moralize his wanton sight,
  More than his eyes were open'd to the light.

He stories to her ears her husband's fame,
Won in the fields of fruitful Italy;
And decks with praises Collatine's high name,
Made glorious by his manly chivalry
With bruised arms and wreaths of victory:
  Her joy with heav'd-up hand she doth express,
  And, wordless, so greets heaven for his success.

Far from the purpose of his coming hither,
He makes excuses for his being there.
No cloudy show of stormy blustering weather
Doth yet in his fair welkin once appear;
Till sable Night, mother of Dread and Fear,
  Upon the world dim darkness doth display,
  And in her vaulty prison stows the day.

For then is Tarquin brought unto his bed,
Intending weariness with heavy spright;
For, after supper, long he questioned
With modest Lucrece, and wore out the night:
Now leaden slumber with life's strength doth fight;
  And every one to rest themselves betake,
  Save thieves, and cares, and troubled minds, that wake.

As one of which doth Tarquin lie revolving
The sundry dangers of his will's obtaining;
Yet ever to obtain his will resolving,
Though weak-built hopes persuade him to abstaining:
Despair to gain doth traffic oft for gaining;
  And when great treasure is the meed propos'd,
  Though death be adjunct, there's no death suppos'd.

Those that much covet are with gain so fond,
For what they have not, that which they possess
They scatter and unloose it from their bond,
And so, by hoping more, they have but less;
Or, gaining more, the profit of excess
  Is but to surfeit, and such griefs sustain,
  That they prove bankrupt in this poor-rich gain.

The aim of all is but to nurse the life
With honour, wealth, and ease, in waning age;
And in this aim there is such thwarting strife,
That one for all, or all for one we gage;
As life for honour in fell battles' rage;
  Honour for wealth; and oft that wealth doth cost
  The death of all, and all together lost.

So that in vent'ring ill we leave to be
The things we are, for that which we expect;
And this ambitious foul infirmity,
In having much, torments us with defect
Of that we have: so then we do neglect
  The thing we have; and, all for want of wit,
  Make something nothing, by augmenting it.

Such hazard now must doting Tarquin make,
Pawning his honour to obtain his lust;
And for himself himself he must forsake:
Then where is truth, if there be no self-trust?
When shall he think to find a stranger just,
  When he himself himself confounds, betrays
  To slanderous tongues and wretched hateful days?

Now stole upon the time the dead of night,
When heavy sleep had closed up mortal eyes:
No comfortable star did lend his light,
No noise but owls' and wolves' death-boding cries;
Now serves the season that they may surprise
  The silly lambs; pure thoughts are dead and still,
  While lust and murder wake to stain and kill.

And now this lustful lord leap'd from his bed,
Throwing his mantle rudely o'er his arm;
Is madly toss'd between desire and dread;
Th' one sweetly flatters, th' other feareth harm;
But honest Fear, bewitch'd with lust's foul charm,
  Doth too too oft betake him to retire,
  Beaten away by brain-sick rude Desire.

His falchion on a flint he softly smiteth,
That from the cold stone sparks of fire do fly;
Whereat a waxen torch forthwith he lighteth,
Which must be lode-star to his lustful eye;
And to the flame thus speaks advisedly:
  'As from this cold flint I enforced this fire,
  So Lucrece must I force to my desire.'

Here pale with fear he doth premeditate
The dangers of his loathsome enterprise,
And in his inward mind he doth debate
What following sorrow may on this arise;
Then looking scornfully, he doth despise
  His naked armour of still-slaughter'd lust,
  And justly thus controls his thoughts unjust:

'Fair torch, burn out thy light, and lend it not
To darken her whose light excelleth thine:
And die, unhallow'd thoughts, before you blot
With your uncleanness that which is divine!
Offer pure incense to so pure a shrine:
  Let fair humanity abhor the deed
  That spots and stains love's modest snow-white weed.

'O shame to knighthood and to shining arms!
O foul dishonour to my household's grave!
O impious act, including all foul harms!
A martial man to be soft fancy's slave!
True valour still a true respect should have;
  Then my digression is so vile, so base,
  That it will live engraven in my face.

'Yea, though I die, the scandal will survive,
And be an eye-sore in my golden coat;
Some loathsome dash the herald will contrive,
To cipher me how fondly I did dote;
That my posterity, sham'd with the note,
  Shall curse my bones, and hold it for no sin
  To wish that I their father had not been.

'What win I, if I gain the thing I seek?
A dream, a breath, a froth of fleeting joy:
Who buys a minute's mirth to wail a week?
Or sells eternity to get a toy?
For one sweet grape who will the vine destroy?
  Or what fond beggar, but to touch the crown,
  Would with the sceptre straight be strucken down?

'If Collatinus dream of my intent,
Will he not wake, and in a desperate rage
Post hither, this vile purpose to prevent?
This siege that hath engirt his marriage,
This blur to youth, this sorrow to the sage,
  This dying virtue, this surviving shame,
  Whose crime will bear an ever-during blame?

'O, what excuse can my invention make
When thou shalt charge me with so black a deed?
Will not my tongue be mute, my frail joints shake?
Mine eyes forego their light, my false heart bleed?
The guilt being great, the fear doth still exceed;
  And extreme fear can neither fight nor fly,
  But, coward-like, with trembling terror die.

'Had Collatinus kill'd my son or sire,
Or lain in ambush to betray my life,
Or were he not my dear friend, this desire
Might have excuse to work upon his wife;
As in revenge or quittal of such strife:
  But as he is my kinsman, my dear friend,
  The shame and fault finds no excuse nor end.

'Shameful it is;—ay, if the fact be known:
Hateful it is:— there is no hate in loving;
I'll beg her love;—but she is not her own;
The worst is but denial and reproving:
My will is strong, past reason's weak removing.
  Who fears a sentence or an old man's saw
  Shall by a painted cloth be kept in awe.'

Thus, graceless, holds he disputation
'Tween frozen conscience and hot-burning will,
And with good thoughts makes dispensation,
Urging the worser sense for vantage still;
Which in a moment doth confound and kill
  All pure effects, and doth so far proceed,
  That what is vile shows like a virtuous deed.

Quoth he, 'She took me kindly by the hand,
And gaz'd for tidings in my eager eyes,
Fearing some hard news from the warlike band,
Where her beloved Collatinus lies.
O how her fear did make her colour rise!
  First red as roses that on lawn we lay,
  Then white as lawn, the roses took away.

'And how her hand, in my hand being lock'd,
Forc'd it to tremble with her loyal fear;
Which struck her sad, and then it faster rock'd,
Until her husband's welfare she did hear;
Whereat she smiled with so sweet a cheer,
  That had Narcissus seen her as she stood,
  Self-love had never drown'd him in the flood.

'Why hunt I then for colour or excuses?
All orators are dumb when beauty pleadeth;
Poor wretches have remorse in poor abuses;
Love thrives not in the heart that shadows dreadeth:
Affection is my captain, and he leadeth;
  And when his gaudy banner is display'd,
  The coward fights and will not be dismay'd.

'Then, childish fear, avaunt! debating, die!
Respect and reason wait on wrinkled age!
My heart shall never countermand mine eye;
Sad pause and deep regard beseem the sage;
My part is youth, and beats these from the stage:
  Desire my pilot is, beauty my prize;
  Then who fears sinking where such treasure lies?'

As corn o'ergrown by weeds, so heedful fear
Is almost chok'd by unresisted lust.
Away he steals with opening, listening ear,
Full of foul hope, and full of fond mistrust;
Both which, as servitors to the unjust,
  So cross him with their opposite persuasion,
  That now he vows a league, and now invasion.

Within his thought her heavenly image sits,
And in the self-same seat sits Collatine:
That eye which looks on her confounds his wits;
That eye which him beholds, as more divine,
Unto a view so false will not incline;
  But with a pure appeal seeks to the heart,
  Which once corrupted takes the worser part;

And therein heartens up his servile powers,
Who, flatter'd by their leader's jocund show,
Stuff up his lust, as minutes fill up hours;
And as their captain, so their pride doth grow.
Paying more slavish tribute than they owe.
  By reprobate desire thus madly led,
  The Roman lord marcheth to Lucrece' bed.

The locks between her chamber and his will,
Each one by him enforc'd retires his ward;
But, as they open they all rate his ill,
Which drives the creeping thief to some regard,
The threshold grates the door to have him heard;
  Night-wand'ring weasels shriek to see him there;
  They fright him, yet he still pursues his fear.

As each unwilling portal yields him way,
Through little vents and crannies of the place
The wind wars with his torch, to make him stay,
And blows the smoke of it into his face,
Extinguishing his conduct in this case;
  But his hot heart, which fond desire doth scorch,
  Puffs forth another wind that fires the torch:

And being lighted, by the light he spies
Lucretia's glove, wherein her needle sticks;
He takes it from the rushes where it lies,
And griping it, the neeld his finger pricks:
As who should say this glove to wanton tricks
  Is not inur'd: return again in haste;
  Thou see'st our mistress' ornaments are chaste.

But all these poor forbiddings could not stay him;
He in the worst sense construes their denial:
The doors, the wind, the glove that did delay him,
He takes for accidental things of trial;
Or as those bars which stop the hourly dial,
  Who with a lingering stay his course doth let,
  Till every minute pays the hour his debt.

'So, so,' quoth he, 'these lets attend the time,
Like little frosts that sometime threat the spring.
To add a more rejoicing to the prime,
And give the sneaped birds more cause to sing.
Pain pays the income of each precious thing;
  Huge rocks, high winds, strong pirates, shelves and sands,
  The merchant fears, ere rich at home he lands.'

Now is he come unto the chamber door,
That shuts him from the heaven of his thought,
Which with a yielding latch, and with no more,
Hath barr'd him from the blessed thing he sought.
So from himself impiety hath wrought,
  That for his prey to pray he doth begin,
  As if the heavens should countenance his sin.

But in the midst of his unfruitful prayer,
Having solicited the eternal power,
That his foul thoughts might compass his fair fair,
And they would stand auspicious to the hour,
Even there he starts:—quoth he, 'I must de-flower;
  The powers to whom I pray abhor this fact,
  How can they then assist me in the act?

'Then Love and Fortune be my gods, my guide!
My will is back'd with resolution:
Thoughts are but dreams till their effects be tried,
The blackest sin is clear'd with absolution;
Against love's fire fear's frost hath dissolution.
  The eye of heaven is out, and misty night
  Covers the shame that follows sweet delight.'

This said, his guilty hand pluck'd up the latch,
And with his knee the door he opens wide:
The dove sleeps fast that this night-owl will catch;
Thus treason works ere traitors be espied.
Who sees the lurking serpent steps aside;
  But she, sound sleeping, fearing no such thing,
  Lies at the mercy of his mortal sting.

Into the chamber wickedly he stalks,
And gazeth on her yet unstained bed.
The curtains being close, about he walks,
Rolling his greedy eyeballs in his head:
By their high treason is his heart misled;
  Which gives the watch-word to his hand full soon
  To draw the cloud that hides the silver moon.

Look, as the fair and fiery-pointed sun,
Rushing from forth a cloud, bereaves our sight;
Even so, the curtain drawn, his eyes begun
To wink, being blinded with a greater light:
Whether it is that she reflects so bright,
  That dazzleth them, or else some shame supposed;
  But blind they are, and keep themselves enclosed.

O, had they in that darksome prison died,
Then had they seen the period of their ill!
Then Collatine again by Lucrece' side
In his clear bed might have reposed still:
But they must ope, this blessed league to kill;
  And holy-thoughted Lucrece to their sight
  Must sell her joy, her life, her world's delight.

Her lily hand her rosy cheek lies under,
Cozening the pillow of a lawful kiss;
Who, therefore angry, seems to part in sunder,
Swelling on either side to want his bliss;
Between whose hills her head entombed is:
  Where, like a virtuous monument, she lies,
  To be admir'd of lewd unhallow'd eyes.

Without the bed her other fair hand was,
On the green coverlet; whose perfect white
Show'd like an April daisy on the grass,
With pearly sweat, resembling dew of night,
Her eyes, like marigolds, had sheath'd their light,
  And canopied in darkness sweetly lay,
  Till they might open to adorn the day.

Her hair, like golden threads, play'd with her breath;
O modest wantons! wanton modesty!
Showing life's triumph in the map of death,
And death's dim look in life's mortality:
Each in her sleep themselves so beautify,
  As if between them twain there were no strife,
  But that life liv'd in death, and death in life.

Her breasts, like ivory globes circled with blue,
A pair of maiden worlds unconquered,
Save of their lord no bearing yoke they knew,
And him by oath they truly honoured.
These worlds in Tarquin new ambition bred:
  Who, like a foul usurper, went about
  From this fair throne to heave the owner out.

What could he see but mightily he noted?
What did he note but strongly he desir'd?
What he beheld, on that he firmly doted,
And in his will his wilful eye he tir'd.
With more than admiration he admir'd
  Her azure veins, her alabaster skin,
  Her coral lips, her snow-white dimpled chin.

As the grim lion fawneth o'er his prey,
Sharp hunger by the conquest satisfied,
So o'er this sleeping soul doth Tarquin stay,
His rage of lust by grazing qualified;
Slack'd, not suppress'd; for standing by her side,
  His eye, which late this mutiny restrains,
  Unto a greater uproar tempts his veins:

And they, like straggling slaves for pillage fighting,
Obdurate vassals. fell exploits effecting,
In bloody death and ravishment delighting,
Nor children's tears nor mothers' groans respecting,
Swell in their pride, the onset still expecting:
  Anon his beating heart, alarum striking,
  Gives the hot charge and bids them do their liking.

His drumming heart cheers up his burning eye,
His eye commends the leading to his hand;
His hand, as proud of such a dignity,
Smoking with pride, march'd on to make his stand
On her bare breast, the heart of all her land;
  Whose ranks of blue veins, as his hand did scale,
  Left their round turrets destitute and pale.

They, mustering to the quiet cabinet
Where their dear governess and lady lies,
Do tell her she is dreadfully beset,
And fright her with confusion of their cries:
She, much amaz'd, breaks ope her lock'd-up eyes,
  Who, peeping forth this tumult to behold,
  Are by his flaming torch dimm'd and controll'd.

Imagine her as one in dead of night
From forth dull sleep by dreadful fancy waking,
That thinks she hath beheld some ghastly sprite,
Whose grim aspect sets every joint a shaking:
What terror 'tis! but she, in worser taking,
  From sleep disturbed, heedfully doth view
  The sight which makes supposed terror true.

Wrapp'd and confounded in a thousand fears,
Like to a new-kill'd bird she trembling lies;
She dares not look; yet, winking, there appears
Quick-shifting antics, ugly in her eyes:
Such shadows are the weak brain's forgeries:
  Who, angry that the eyes fly from their lights,
  In darkness daunts them with more dreadful sights.

His hand, that yet remains upon her breast,
(Rude ram, to batter such an ivory wall!)
May feel her heart, poor citizen, distress'd,
Wounding itself to death, rise up and fall,
Beating her bulk, that his hand shakes withal.
  This moves in him more rage, and lesser pity,
  To make the breach, and enter this sweet city.

First, like a trumpet, doth his tongue begin
To sound a parley to his heartless foe,
Who o'er the white sheet peers her whiter chin,
The reason of this rash alarm to know,
Which he by dumb demeanour seeks to show;
  But she with vehement prayers urgeth still
  Under what colour he commits this ill.

Thus he replies: 'The colour in thy face,
(That even for anger makes the lily pale,
And the red rose blush at her own disgrace)
Shall plead for me and tell my loving tale:
Under that colour am I come to scale
  Thy never-conquer'd fort: the fault is thine,
  For those thine eyes betray thee unto mine.

'Thus I forestall thee, if thou mean to chide:
Thy beauty hath ensnared thee to this night,
Where thou with patience must my will abide,
My will that marks thee for my earth's delight,
Which I to conquer sought with all my might;
  But as reproof and reason beat it dead,
  By thy bright beauty was it newly bred.

'I see what crosses my attempt will bring;
I know what thorns the growing rose defends;
I think the honey guarded with a sting;
All this, beforehand, counsel comprehends:
But will is deaf, and hears no heedful friends;
  Only he hath an eye to gaze on beauty,
  And dotes on what he looks, 'gainst law or duty.

'I have debated, even in my soul,
What wrong, what shame, what sorrow I shall breed;
But nothing can Affection's course control,
Or stop the headlong fury of his speed.
I know repentant tears ensue the deed,
  Reproach, disdain, and deadly enmity;
  Yet strike I to embrace mine infamy.'

This said, he shakes aloft his Roman blade,
Which, like a falcon towering in the skies,
Coucheth the fowl below with his wings' shade,
Whose crooked beak threats if he mount he dies:
So under his insulting falchion lies
  Harmless Lucretia, marking what he tells
  With trembling fear, as fowl hear falcon's bells.

'Lucrece,' quoth he, 'this night I must enjoy thee:
If thou deny, then force must work my way,
For in thy bed I purpose to destroy thee;
That done, some worthless slave of thine I'll slay.
To kill thine honour with thy life's decay;
  And in thy dead arms do I mean to place him,
  Swearing I slew him, seeing thee embrace him.

'So thy surviving husband shall remain
The scornful mark of every open eye;
Thy kinsmen hang their heads at this disdain,
Thy issue blurr'd with nameless bastardy:
And thou, the author of their obloquy,
  Shalt have thy trespass cited up in rhymes,
  And sung by children in succeeding times.

'But if thou yield, I rest thy secret friend:
The fault unknown is as a thought unacted;
A little harm, done to a great good end,
For lawful policy remains enacted.
The poisonous simple sometimes is compacted
  In a pure compound; being so applied,
  His venom in effect is purified.

'Then, for thy husband and thy children's sake,
Tender my suit: bequeath not to their lot
The shame that from them no device can take,
The blemish that will never be forgot;
Worse than a slavish wipe, or birth-hour's blot:
  For marks descried in men's nativity
  Are nature's faults, not their own infamy.'

Here with a cockatrice' dead-killing eye
He rouseth up himself and makes a pause;
While she, the picture of pure piety,
Like a white hind under the grype's sharp claws,
Pleads in a wilderness where are no laws,
  To the rough beast that knows no gentle right,
  Nor aught obeys but his foul appetite.

But when a black-fac'd cloud the world doth threat,
In his dim mist the aspiring mountains hiding,
From earth's dark womb some gentle gust doth get,
Which blows these pitchy vapours from their biding,
Hindering their present fall by this dividing;
  So his unhallow'd haste her words delays,
  And moody Pluto winks while Orpheus plays.

Yet, foul night-working cat, he doth but dally,
While in his hold-fast foot the weak mouse panteth;
Her sad behaviour feeds his vulture folly,
A swallowing gulf that even in plenty wanteth:
His ear her prayers admits, but his heart granteth
  No penetrable entrance to her plaining:
  Tears harden lust, though marble wear with raining.

Her pity-pleading eyes are sadly fix'd
In the remorseless wrinkles of his face;
Her modest eloquence with sighs is mix'd,
Which to her oratory adds more grace.
She puts the period often from his place,
  And midst the sentence so her accent breaks,
  That twice she doth begin ere once she speaks.

She conjures him by high almighty Jove,
By knighthood, gentry, and sweet friendship's oath,
By her untimely tears, her husband's love,
By holy human law, and common troth,
By heaven and earth, and all the power of both,
  That to his borrow'd bed he make retire,
  And stoop to honour, not to foul desire.

Quoth she, 'Reward not hospitality
With such black payment as thou hast pretended;
Mud not the fountain that gave drink to thee;
Mar not the thing that cannot be amended;
End thy ill aim before the shoot be ended:
  He is no woodman that doth bend his bow
  To strike a poor unseasonable doe.

'My husband is thy friend; for his sake spare me;
Thyself art mighty; for thine own sake leave me;
Myself a weakling, do not then ensnare me;
Thou look'st not like deceit; do not deceive me;
My sighs, like whirlwinds, labour hence to heave thee.
  If ever man were mov'd with woman's moans,
  Be moved with my tears, my sighs, my groans:

'All which together, like a troubled ocean,
Beat at thy rocky and wreck-threatening heart;
To soften it with their continual motion;
For stones dissolv'd to water do convert.
O, if no harder than a stone thou art,
  Melt at my tears, and be compassionate!
  Soft pity enters at an iron gate.

'In Tarquin's likeness I did entertain thee;
Hast thou put on his shape to do him shame?
To all the host of heaven I complain me,
Thou wrong'st his honour, wound'st his princely name.
Thou art not what thou seem'st; and if the same,
  Thou seem'st not what thou art, a god, a king;
  For kings like gods should govern every thing.

'How will thy shame be seeded in thine age,
When thus thy vices bud before thy spring!
If in thy hope thou dar'st do such outrage,
What dar'st thou not when once thou art a king!
O, be remember'd, no outrageous thing
  From vassal actors can he wip'd away;
  Then kings' misdeeds cannot be hid in clay.

'This deed will make thee only lov'd for fear,
But happy monarchs still are fear'd for love:
With foul offenders thou perforce must bear,
When they in thee the like offences prove:
If but for fear of this, thy will remove;
  For princes are the glass, the school, the book,
  Where subjects eyes do learn, do read, do look.

'And wilt thou be the school where Lust shall learn?
Must he in thee read lectures of such shame:
Wilt thou be glass, wherein it shall discern
Authority for sin, warrant for blame,
To privilege dishonour in thy name?
  Thou back'st reproach against long-living laud,
  And mak'st fair reputation but a bawd.

'Hast thou command? by him that gave it thee,
From a pure heart command thy rebel will:
Draw not thy sword to guard iniquity,
For it was lent thee all that brood to kill.
Thy princely office how canst thou fulfill,
  When, pattern'd by thy fault, foul Sin may say
  He learn'd to sin, and thou didst teach the way?

'Think but how vile a spectacle it were
To view thy present trespass in another.
Men's faults do seldom to themselves appear;
Their own transgressions partially they smother:
This guilt would seem death-worthy in thy brother.
  O how are they wrapp'd in with infamies
  That from their own misdeeds askaunce their eyes!

'To thee, to thee, my heav'd-up hands appeal,
Not to seducing lust, thy rash relier;
I sue for exil'd majesty's repeal;
Let him return, and flattering thoughts retire:
His true respect will 'prison false desire,
  And wipe the dim mist from thy doting eyne,
  That thou shalt see thy state, and pity mine.'

'Have done,' quoth he: 'my uncontrolled tide
Turns not, but swells the higher by this let.
Small lights are soon blown out, huge fires abide,
And with the wind in greater fury fret:
The petty streams that pay a daily debt
  To their salt sovereign, with their fresh falls' haste,
  Add to his flow, but alter not his taste.'

'Thou art,' quoth she, 'a sea, a sovereign king;
And, lo, there falls into thy boundless flood
Black lust, dishonour, shame, misgoverning,
Who seek to stain the ocean of thy blood.
If all these petty ills shall change thy good,
  Thy sea within a puddle's womb is hears'd,
  And not the puddle in thy sea dispers'd.

'So shall these slaves be king, and thou their slave;
Thou nobly base, they basely dignified;
Thou their fair life, and they thy fouler grave;
Thou loathed in their shame, they in thy pride:
The lesser thing should not the greater hide;
  The cedar stoops not to the base shrub's foot,
  But low shrubs whither at the cedar's root.

'So let thy thoughts, low vassals to thy state'—
'No more,' quoth he; 'by heaven, I will not hear thee:
Yield to my love; if not, enforced hate,
Instead of love's coy touch, shall rudely tear thee;
That done, despitefully I mean to bear thee
  Unto the base bed of some rascal groom,
  To be thy partner in this shameful doom.'

This said, he sets his foot upon the light,
For light and lust are deadly enemies;
Shame folded up in blind concealing night,
When most unseen, then most doth tyrannize.
The wolf hath seiz'd his prey, the poor lamb cries;
  Till with her own white fleece her voice controll'd
  Entombs her outcry in her lips' sweet fold:

For with the nightly linen that she wears
He pens her piteous clamours in her head;
Cooling his hot face in the chastest tears
That ever modest eyes with sorrow shed.
O, that prone lust should stain so pure a bed!
  The spots whereof could weeping purify,
  Her tears should drop on them perpetually.

But she hath lost a dearer thing than life,
And he hath won what he would lose again.
This forced league doth force a further strife;
This momentary joy breeds months of pain,
This hot desire converts to cold disdain:
  Pure Chastity is rifled of her store,
  And Lust, the thief, far poorer than before.

Look, as the full-fed hound or gorged hawk,
Unapt for tender smell or speedy flight,
Make slow pursuit, or altogether balk
The prey wherein by nature they delight;
So surfeit-taking Tarquin fares this night:
  His taste delicious, in digestion souring,
  Devours his will, that liv'd by foul devouring.

O deeper sin than bottomless conceit
Can comprehend in still imagination!
Drunken desire must vomit his receipt,
Ere he can see his own abomination.
While lust is in his pride no exclamation
  Can curb his heat, or rein his rash desire,
  Till, like a jade, self-will himself doth tire.

And then with lank and lean discolour'd cheek,
With heavy eye, knit brow, and strengthless pace,
Feeble desire, all recreant, poor, and meek,
Like to a bankrupt beggar wails his case:
The flesh being proud, desire doth fight with Grace,
  For there it revels; and when that decays,
  The guilty rebel for remission prays.

So fares it with this faultful lord of Rome,
Who this accomplishment so hotly chas'd;
For now against himself he sounds this doom,
That through the length of times he stands disgrac'd:
Besides, his soul's fair temple is defac'd;
  To whose weak ruins muster troops of cares,
  To ask the spotted princess how she fares.

She says, her subjects with foul insurrection
Have batter'd down her consecrated wall,
And by their mortal fault brought in subjection
Her immortality, and made her thrall
To living death, and pain perpetual;
  Which in her prescience she controlled still,
  But her foresight could not forestall their will.

Even in this thought through the dark night he stealeth,
A captive victor that hath lost in gain;
Bearing away the wound that nothing healeth,
The scar that will, despite of cure, remain;
Leaving his spoil perplex'd in greater pain.
  She hears the load of lust he left behind,
  And he the burthen of a guilty mind.

He like a thievish dog creeps sadly thence;
She like a wearied lamb lies panting there;
He scowls, and hates himself for his offence;
She, desperate, with her nails her flesh doth tear;
He faintly flies, sweating with guilty fear;
  She stays, exclaiming on the direful night;
  He runs, and chides his vanish'd, loath'd delight.

He thence departs a heavy convertite;
She there remains a hopeless castaway:
He in his speed looks for the morning light;
She prays she never may behold the day;
'For day,' quoth she, 'night's scapes doth open lay;
  And my true eyes have never practis'd how
  To cloak offences with a cunning brow.

'They think not but that every eye can see
The same disgrace which they themselves behold;
And therefore would they still in darkness be,
To have their unseen sin remain untold;
For they their guilt with weeping will unfold,
  And grave, like water that doth eat in steel,
  Upon my cheeks what helpless shame I feel.'

Here she exclaims against repose and rest,
And bids her eyes hereafter still be blind.
She wakes her heart by beating on her breast,
And bids it leap from thence, where it may find
Some purer chest, to close so pure a mind.
  Frantic with grief thus breathes she forth her spite
  Against the unseen secrecy of night:

'O comfort-killing night, image of hell!
Dim register and notary of shame!
Black stage for tragedies and murders fell!
Vast sin-concealing chaos! nurse of blame!
Blind muffled bawd! dark harbour for defame!
  Grim cave of death, whispering conspirator
  With close-tongued treason and the ravisher!

'O hateful, vaporous, and foggy night!
Since thou art guilty of my cureless crime,
Muster thy mists to meet the eastern light,
Make war against proportion'd course of time!
Or if thou wilt permit the sun to climb
  His wonted height, yet ere he go to bed,
  Knit poisonous clouds about his golden head.

'With rotten damps ravish the morning air;
Let their exhal'd unwholesome breaths make sick
The life of purity, the supreme fair,
Ere he arrive his weary noontide prick;
And let thy misty vapours march so thick,
  That in their smoky ranks his smother'd light
  May set at noon and make perpetual night.

'Were Tarquin night (as he is but night's child),
The silver-shining queen he would distain;
Her twinkling handmaids too, by him defil'd,
Through Night's black bosom should not peep again:
So should I have co-partners in my pain:
  And fellowship in woe doth woe assuage,
  As palmers' chat makes short their pilgrimage.

'Where now I have no one to blush with me,
To cross their arms and hang their heads with mine,
To mask their brows, and hide their infamy;
But I alone alone must sit and pine,
Seasoning the earth with showers of silver brine,
  Mingling my talk with tears, my grief with groans,
  Poor wasting monuments of lasting moans.

'O night, thou furnace of foul-reeking smoke,
Let not the jealous day behold that face
Which underneath thy black all-hiding cloak
Immodesty lies martyr'd with disgrace!
Keep still possession of thy gloomy place,
  That all the faults which in thy reign are made,
  May likewise be sepulchred in thy shade!

'Make me not object to the tell-tale day!
The light will show, character'd in my brow,
The story of sweet chastity's decay,
The impious breach of holy wedlock vow:
Yea, the illiterate, that know not how
  To cipher what is writ in learned books,
  Will quote my loathsome trespass in my looks.

'The nurse, to still her child, will tell my story
And fright her crying babe with Tarquin's name;
The orator, to deck his oratory,
Will couple my reproach to Tarquin's shame:
Feast-finding minstrels, tuning my defame,
  Will tie the hearers to attend each line,
  How Tarquin wronged me, I Collatine.

'Let my good name, that senseless reputation,
For Collatine's dear love be kept unspotted:
If that be made a theme for disputation,
The branches of another root are rotted,
And undeserved reproach to him allotted,
  That is as clear from this attaint of mine
  As I, ere this, was pure to Collatine.

'O unseen shame! invisible disgrace!
O unfelt sore! crest-wounding, private scar!
Reproach is stamp'd in Collatinus' face,
And Tarquin's eye may read the mot afar,
How he in peace is wounded, not in war.
  Alas, how many bear such shameful blows,
  Which not themselves, but he that gives them knows!

'If, Collatine, thine honour lay in me,
From me by strong assault it is bereft.
My honey lost, and I, a drone-like bee,
Have no perfection of my summer left,
But robb'd and ransack'd by injurious theft:
  In thy weak hive a wandering wasp hath crept,
  And suck'd the honey which thy chaste bee kept.

'Yet am I guilty of thy honour's wrack;—
Yet for thy honour did I entertain him;
Coming from thee, I could not put him back,
For it had been dishonour to disdain him:
Besides, of weariness he did complain him,
  And talk'd of virtue:—O unlook'd-for evil,
  When virtue is profan'd in such a devil!

'Why should the worm intrude the maiden bud?
Or hateful cuckoos hatch in sparrows' nests?
Or toads infect fair founts with venom mud?
Or tyrant folly lurk in gentle breasts?
Or kings be breakers of their own behests?
  But no perfection is so absolute,
  That some impurity doth not pollute.

'The aged man that coffers up his gold
Is plagued with cramps, and gouts, and painful fits;
And scarce hath eyes his treasure to behold,
But like still-pining Tantalus he sits,
And useless barns the harvest of his wits;
  Having no other pleasure of his gain
  But torment that it cannot cure his pain.

'So then he hath it when he cannot use it,
And leaves it to be master'd by his young;
Who in their pride do presently abuse it:
Their father was too weak, and they too strong,
To hold their cursed-blessed fortune long.
  The sweets we wish for turn to loathed sours,
  Even in the moment that we call them ours.

'Unruly blasts wait on the tender spring;
Unwholesome weeds take root with precious flowers;
The adder hisses where the sweet birds sing;
What virtue breeds iniquity devours:
We have no good that we can say is ours,
  But ill-annexed Opportunity
  Or kills his life or else his quality.

'O Opportunity, thy guilt is great:
'Tis thou that executest the traitor's treason;
Thou set'st the wolf where he the lamb may get;
Whoever plots the sin, thou 'point'st the season;
'Tis thou that spurn'st at right, at law, at reason;
  And in thy shady cell, where none may spy him,
  Sits Sin, to seize the souls that wander by him.

'Thou mak'st the vestal violate her oath;
Thou blow'st the fire when temperance is thaw'd;
Thou smother'st honesty, thou murther'st troth;
Thou foul abettor! thou notorious bawd!
Thou plantest scandal and displacest laud:
  Thou ravisher, thou traitor, thou false thief,
  Thy honey turns to gall, thy joy to grief!

'Thy secret pleasure turns to open shame,
Thy private feasting to a public fast;
Thy smoothing titles to a ragged name,
Thy sugar'd tongue to bitter wormwood taste:
Thy violent vanities can never last.
  How comes it then, vile Opportunity,
  Being so bad, such numbers seek for thee?

'When wilt thou be the humble suppliant's friend,
And bring him where his suit may be obtain'd?
When wilt thou sort an hour great strifes to end?
Or free that soul which wretchedness hath chain'd?
Give physic to the sick, ease to the pain'd?
  The poor, lame, blind, halt, creep, cry out for thee;
  But they ne'er meet with Opportunity.

'The patient dies while the physician sleeps;
The orphan pines while the oppressor feeds;
Justice is feasting while the widow weeps;
Advice is sporting while infection breeds;
Thou grant'st no time for charitable deeds:
  Wrath, envy, treason, rape, and murder's rages,
  Thy heinous hours wait on them as their pages.

'When truth and virtue have to do with thee,
A thousand crosses keep them from thy aid;
They buy thy help; but Sin ne'er gives a fee,
He gratis comes; and thou art well appay'd
As well to hear as grant what he hath said.
  My Collatine would else have come to me
  When Tarquin did, but he was stay'd by thee.

'Guilty thou art of murder and of theft;
Guilty of perjury and subornation;
Guilty of treason, forgery, and shift;
Guilty of incest, that abomination:
An accessory by thine inclination
  To all sins past, and all that are to come,
  From the creation to the general doom.

'Mis-shapen Time, copesmate of ugly night,
Swift subtle post, carrier of grisly care,
Eater of youth, false slave to false delight,
Base watch of woes, sin's pack-horse, virtue's snare;
Thou nursest all and murtherest all that are:
  O hear me then, injurious, shifting Time!
  Be guilty of my death, since of my crime.

'Why hath thy servant, Opportunity,
Betray'd the hours thou gav'st me to repose?
Cancell'd my fortunes, and enchained me
To endless date of never-ending woes?
Time's office is to fine the hate of foes;
  To eat up errors by opinion bred,
  Not spend the dowry of a lawful bed.

'Time's glory is to calm contending kings,
To unmask falsehood, and bring truth to light,
To stamp the seal of time in aged things,
To wake the morn, and sentinel the night,
To wrong the wronger till he render right;
  To ruinate proud buildings with thy hours,
  And smear with dust their glittering golden towers:

'To fill with worm-holes stately monuments,
To feed oblivion with decay of things,
To blot old books and alter their contents,
To pluck the quills from ancient ravens' wings,
To dry the old oak's sap and cherish springs;
  To spoil antiquities of hammer'd steel,
  And turn the giddy round of Fortune's wheel;

'To show the beldame daughters of her daughter,
To make the child a man, the man a child,
To slay the tiger that doth live by slaughter,
To tame the unicorn and lion wild,
To mock the subtle, in themselves beguil'd;
  To cheer the ploughman with increaseful crops,
  And waste huge stones with little water-drops.

'Why work'st thou mischief in thy pilgrimage,
Unless thou couldst return to make amends?
One poor retiring minute in an age
Would purchase thee a thousand thousand friends,
Lending him wit that to bad debtors lends:
  O, this dread night, wouldst thou one hour come back,
  I could prevent this storm, and shun thy wrack!

'Thou cease!ess lackey to eternity,
With some mischance cross Tarquin in his flight:
Devise extremes beyond extremity,
To make him curse this cursed crimeful night:
Let ghastly shadows his lewd eyes affright;
  And the dire thought of his committed evil
  Shape every bush a hideous shapeless devil.

'Disturb his hours of rest with restless trances,
Afflict him in his bed with bedrid groans;
Let there bechance him pitiful mischances,
To make him moan; but pity not his moans:
Stone him with harden'd hearts, harder than stones;
  And let mild women to him lose their mildness,
  Wilder to him than tigers in their wildness.

'Let him have time to tear his curled hair,
Let him have time against himself to rave,
Let him have time of Time's help to despair,
Let him have time to live a loathed slave,
Let him have time a beggar's orts to crave;
  And time to see one that by alms doth live
  Disdain to him disdained scraps to give.

'Let him have time to see his friends his foes,
And merry fools to mock at him resort;
Let him have time to mark how slow time goes
In time of sorrow, and how swift and short
His time of folly and his time of sport:
  And ever let his unrecalling crime
  Have time to wail the abusing of his time.

'O Time, thou tutor both to good and bad,
Teach me to curse him that thou taught'st this ill!
At his own shadow let the thief run mad!
Himself himself seek every hour to kill!
Such wretched hands such wretched blood should spill:
  For who so base would such an office have
  As slanderous deathsman to so base a slave?

The baser is he, coming from a king,
To shame his hope with deeds degenerate.
The mightier man, the mightier is the thing
That makes him honour'd, or begets him hate;
For greatest scandal waits on greatest state.
  The moon being clouded presently is miss'd,
  But little stars may hide them when they list.

'The crow may bathe his coal-black wings in mire,
And unperceived fly with the filth away;
But if the like the snow-white swan desire,
The stain upon his silver down will stay.
Poor grooms are sightless night, kings glorious day:
  Gnats are unnoted wheresoe'er they fly,
  But eagles gazed upon with every eye.

'Out, idle words, servants to shallow fools!
Unprofitable sounds, weak arbitrators!
Busy yourselves in skill-contending schools;
Debate where leisure serves with dull debaters;
To trembling clients be you mediators:
  For me, I force not argument a straw,
  Since that my case is past the help of law.

'In vain I rail at Opportunity,
At Time, at Tarquin, and uncheerful night;
In vain I cavil with mine infamy,
In vain I spurn at my confirm'd despite:
This helpless smoke of words doth me no right.
  The remedy indeed to do me good
  Is to let forth my foul-defil'd blood.

'Poor hand, why quiver'st thou at this decree?
Honour thyself to rid me of this shame;
For if I die, my honour lives in thee;
But if I live, thou livest in my defame:
Since thou couldst not defend thy loyal dame,
  And wast afear'd to scratch her wicked foe,
  Kill both thyself and her for yielding so.'

This said, from her be-tumbled couch she starteth,
To find some desperate instrument of death:
But this no slaughter-house no tool imparteth,
To make more vent for passage of her breath;
Which, thronging through her lips, so vanisheth
  As smoke from Aetna, that in air consumes,
  Or that which from discharged cannon fumes.

'In vain,' quoth she, 'I live, and seek in vain
Some happy mean to end a hapless life.
I fear'd by Tarquin's falchion to be slain,
Yet for the self-same purpose seek a knife:
But when I fear'd I was a loyal wife:
  So am I now:—O no, that cannot be;
  Of that true type hath Tarquin rifled me.

'O! that is gone for which I sought to live,
And therefore now I need not fear to die.
To clear this spot by death, at least I give
A badge of fame to slander's livery;
A dying life to living infamy;
  Poor helpless help, the treasure stolen away,
  To burn the guiltless casket where it lay!

'Well, well, dear Collatine, thou shalt not know
The stained taste of violated troth;
I will not wrong thy true affection so,
To flatter thee with an infringed oath;
This bastard graff shall never come to growth:
  He shall not boast who did thy stock pollute
  That thou art doting father of his fruit.

Nor shall he smile at thee in secret thought,
Nor laugh with his companions at thy state;
But thou shalt know thy interest was not bought
Basely with gold, but stolen from forth thy gate.
For me, I am the mistress of my fate,
  And with my trespass never will dispense,
  Till life to death acquit my forced offence.

'I will not poison thee with my attaint,
Nor fold my fault in cleanly-coin'd excuses;
My sable ground of sin I will not paint,
To hide the truth of this false night's abuses;
My tongue shall utter all; mine eyes, like sluices,
  As from a mountain-spring that feeds a dale,
  Shall gush pure streams to purge my impure tale.'

By this; lamenting Philomel had ended
The well-tun'd warble of her nightly sorrow,
And solemn night with slow-sad gait descended
To ugly hell; when, lo, the blushing morrow
Lends light to all fair eyes that light will borrow:
  But cloudy Lucrece shames herself to see,
  And therefore still in night would cloister'd be.

Revealing day through every cranny spies,
And seems to point her out where she sits weeping,
To whom she sobbing speaks: 'O eye of eyes,
Why pryest thou through my window? leave thy peeping;
Mock with thy tickling beams eyes that are sleeping:
  Brand not my forehead with thy piercing light,
  For day hath nought to do what's done by night.'

Thus cavils she with every thing she sees:
True grief is fond and testy as a child,
Who wayward once, his mood with nought agrees.
Old woes, not infant sorrows, bear them mild;
Continuance tames the one: the other wild,
  Like an unpractis'd swimmer plunging still
  With too much labour drowns for want of skill.

So she, deep-drenched in a sea of care,
Holds disputation with each thing she views,
And to herself all sorrow doth compare;
No object but her passion's strength renews;
And as one shifts, another straight ensues:
  Sometime her grief is dumb and hath no words;
  Sometime 'tis mad, and too much talk affords.

The little birds that tune their morning's joy
Make her moans mad with their sweet melody.
For mirth doth search the bottom of annoy;
Sad souls are slain in merry company:
Grief best is pleas'd with grief's society:
  True sorrow then is feelingly suffic'd
  When with like semblance it is sympathiz'd.

'Tis double death to drown in ken of shore;
He ten times pines that pines beholding food;
To see the salve doth make the wound ache more;
Great grief grieves most at that would do it good;
Deep woes roll forward like a gentle flood;
  Who, being stopp'd, the bounding banks o'erflows;
  Grief dallied with nor law nor limit knows.

'You mocking birds,' quoth she, 'your tunes entomb
Within your hollow-swelling feather'd breasts,
And in my hearing be you mute and dumb!
(My restless discord loves no stops nor rests;
A woeful hostess brooks not merry guests:)
  Relish your nimble notes to pleasing ears;
  Distress likes dumps when time is kept with tears.

'Come, Philomel, that sing'st of ravishment,
Make thy sad grove in my dishevell'd hair:
As the dank earth weeps at thy languishment,
So I at each sad strain will strain a tear,
And with deep groans the diapason bear:
  For burthen-wise I'll hum on Tarquin still,
  While thou on Tereus descant'st better skill.

'And whiles against a thorn thou bear'st thy part,
To keep thy sharp woes waking, wretched I,
To imitate thee well, against my heart
Will fix a sharp knife, to affright mine eye;
Who, if it wink, shall thereon fall and die.
  These means, as frets upon an instrument,
  Shall tune our heart-strings to true languishment.

'And for, poor bird, thou sing'st not in the day,
As shaming any eye should thee behold,
Some dark deep desert, seated from the way,
That knows not parching heat nor freezing cold,
Will we find out; and there we will unfold
  To creatures stern sad tunes, to change their kinds:
  Since men prove beasts, let beasts bear gentle minds.'

As the poor frighted deer, that stands at gaze,
Wildly determining which way to fly,
Or one encompass'd with a winding maze,
That cannot tread the way out readily;
So with herself is she in mutiny,
  To live or die which of the twain were better,
  When life is sham'd, and Death reproach's debtor.

'To kill myself,' quoth she, 'alack! what were it,
But with my body my poor soul's pollution?
They that lose half with greater patience bear it
Than they whose whole is swallow'd in confusion.
That mother tries a merciless conclusion
  Who, having two sweet babes, when death takes one,
  Will slay the other, and be nurse to none.

'My body or my soul, which was the dearer,
When the one pure, the other made divine?
Whose love of either to myself was nearer?
When both were kept for heaven and Collatine?
Ah, me! the bark peel'd from the lofty pine,
  His leaves will wither, and his sap decay;
  So must my soul, her bark being peel'd away.

'Her house is sack'd, her quiet interrupted,
Her mansion batter'd by the enemy;
Her sacred temple spotted, spoil'd, corrupted,
Grossly engirt with daring infamy:
Then let it not be call'd impiety,
  If in this blemish'd fort I make some hole
  Through which I may convey this troubled soul.

'Yet die I will not till my Collatine
Have heard the cause of my untimely death;
That he may vow, in that sad hour of mine,
Revenge on him that made me stop my breath.
My stained blood to Tarquin I'll bequeath,
  Which by him tainted shall for him be spent,
  And as his due writ in my testament.

'My honour I'll bequeath unto the knife
That wounds my body so dishonoured.
'Tis honour to deprive dishonour'd life;
The one will live, the other being dead:
So of shame's ashes shall my fame be bred;
  For in my death I murther shameful scorn:
  My shame so dead, mine honour is new-born.

'Dear lord of that dear jewel I have lost,
What legacy shall I bequeath to thee?
My resolution, Love, shall be thy boast,
By whose example thou reveng'd mayst be.
How Tarquin must be used, read it in me:
  Myself, thy friend, will kill myself, thy foe,
  And, for my sake, serve thou false Tarquin so.

'This brief abridgement of my will I make:
My soul and body to the skies and ground;
My resolution, husband, do thou take;
Mine honour be the knife's that makes my wound;
My shame be his that did my fame confound;
  And all my fame that lives disburs'd be
  To those that live, and think no shame of me.

'Thou, Collatine, shalt oversee this will;
How was I overseen that thou shalt see it!
My blood shall wash the slander of mine ill;
My life's foul deed my life's fair end shall free it.
Faint not, faint heart, but stoutly say "so be it:"
  Yield to my hand; my hand shall conquer thee;
  Thou dead, both die, and both shall victors be.'

This plot of death when sadly she had laid,
And wip'd the brinish pearl from her bright eyes,
With untun'd tongue she hoarsely call'd her maid,
Whose swift obedience to her mistress hies;
For fleet-wing'd duty with thought's feathers flies.
  Poor Lucrece' cheeks unto her maid seem so
  As winter meads when sun doth melt their snow.

Her mistress she doth give demure good-morrow,
With soft-slow tongue, true mark of modesty,
And sorts a sad look to her lady's sorrow,
(For why her face wore sorrow's livery,)
But durst not ask of her audaciously
  Why her two suns were cloud-eclipsed so,
  Nor why her fair cheeks over-wash'd with woe.

But as the earth doth weep, the sun being set,
Each flower moisten'd like a melting eye;
Even so the maid with swelling drops 'gan wet
Her circled eyne, enforc'd by sympathy
Of those fair suns, set in her mistress' sky,
  Who in a salt-wav'd ocean quench their light,
  Which makes the maid weep like the dewy night.

A pretty while these pretty creatures stand,
Like ivory conduits coral cisterns filling:
One justly weeps; the other takes in hand
No cause, but company, of her drops spilling:
Their gentle sex to weep are often willing:
  Grieving themselves to guess at others' smarts,
  And then they drown their eyes or break their hearts.

For men have marble, women waxen minds,
And therefore are they form'd as marble will;
The weak oppress'd, the impression of strange kinds
Is form'd in them by force, by fraud, or skill:
Then call them not the authors of their ill,
  No more than wax shall be accounted evil,
  Wherein is stamp'd the semblance of a devil.

Their smoothness, like a goodly champaign plain,
Lays open all the little worms that creep;
In men, as in a rough-grown grove, remain
Cave-keeping evils that obscurely sleep:
Through crystal walls each little mote will peep:
  Though men can cover crimes with bold stern looks,
  Poor women's faces are their own faults' books.

No man inveigb against the wither'd flower,
But chide rough winter that the flower hath kill'd!
Not that devour'd, but that which doth devour,
Is worthy blame. O, let it not be hild
Poor women's faults, that they are so fulfill'd
  With men's abuses! those proud lords, to blame,
  Make weak-made women tenants to their shame.

The precedent whereof in Lucrece view,
Assail'd by night with circumstances strong
Of present death, and shame that might ensue
By that her death, to do her husband wrong:
Such danger to resistance did belong;
  The dying fear through all her body spread;
  And who cannot abuse a body dead?

By this, mild Patience bid fair Lucrece speak
To the poor counterfeit of her complaining:
'My girl,' quoth she, 'on what occasion break
Those tears from thee, that down thy cheeks are raining?
If thou dost weep for grief of my sustaining,
  Know, gentle wench, it small avails my mood:
  If tears could help, mine own would do me good.

'But tell me, girl, when went'—(and there she stay'd
Till after a deep groan) 'Tarquin from, hence?'
'Madam, ere I was up,' replied the maid,
'The more to blame my sluggard negligence:
Yet with the fault I thus far can dispense;
  Myself was stirring ere the break of day,
  And, ere I rose, was Tarquin gone away.

'But, lady, if your maid may be so bold,
She would request to know your heaviness.'
'O peace!' quoth Lucrece: 'if it should be told,
The repetition cannot make it less;
For more it is than I can well express:
  And that deep torture may be call'd a hell,
  When more is felt than one hath power to tell.

'Go, get me hither paper, ink, and pen—
Yet save that labour, for I have them here.
What should I say?—One of my husband's men
Bid thou be ready, by and by, to bear
A letter to my lord, my love, my dear;
  Bid him with speed prepare to carry it;
  The cause craves haste, and it will soon be writ.'

Her maid is gone, and she prepares to write,
First hovering o'er the paper with her quill:
Conceit and grief an eager combat fight;
What wit sets down is blotted straight with will;
This is too curious-good, this blunt and ill:
  Much like a press of people at a door,
  Throng her inventions, which shall go before.

At last she thus begins:—'Thou worthy lord
Of that unworthy wife that greeteth thee,
Health to thy person! next vouchsafe to afford
(If ever, love, thy Lucrece thou wilt see)
Some present speed to come and visit me:
  So, I commend me from our house in grief:
  My woes are tedious, though my words are brief.'

Here folds she up the tenor of her woe,
Her certain sorrow writ uncertainly.
By this short schedule Collatine may know
Her grief, but not her grief's true quality;
She dares not thereof make discovery,
  Lest he should hold it her own gross abuse,
  Ere she with blood had stain'd her stain'd excuse.

Besides, the life and feeling of her passion
She hoards, to spend when he is by to hear her;
When sighs, and groans, and tears may grace the fashion
Of her disgrace, the better so to clear her
From that suspicion which the world my might bear her.
  To shun this blot, she would not blot the letter
  With words, till action might become them better.

To see sad sights moves more than hear them told;
For then the eye interprets to the ear
The heavy motion that it doth behold,
When every part a part of woe doth bear.
'Tis but a part of sorrow that we hear:
  Deep sounds make lesser noise than shallow fords,
  And sorrow ebbs, being blown with wind of words.

Her letter now is seal'd, and on it writ
'At Ardea to my lord with more than haste;'
The post attends, and she delivers it,
Charging the sour-fac'd groom to hie as fast
As lagging fowls before the northern blast.
  Speed more than speed but dull and slow she deems:
  Extremely still urgeth such extremes.

The homely villain court'sies to her low;
And, blushing on her, with a steadfast eye
Receives the scroll, without or yea or no,
And forth with bashful innocence doth hie.
But they whose guilt within their bosoms lie
  Imagine every eye beholds their blame;
  For Lucrece thought he blush'd to see her shame:

When, silly groom! God wot, it was defect
Of spirit, life, and bold audacity.
Such harmless creatures have a true respect
To talk in deeds, while others saucily
Promise more speed, but do it leisurely:
  Even so this pattern of the worn-out age
  Pawn'd honest looks, but laid no words to gage.

His kindled duty kindled her mistrust,
That two red fires in both their faces blaz'd;
She thought he blush'd, as knowing Tarquin's lust,
And, blushing with him, wistly on him gaz'd;
Her earnest eye did make him more amaz'd:
  The more saw the blood his cheeks replenish,
  The more she thought he spied in her some blemish.

But long she thinks till he return again,
And yet the duteous vassal scarce is gone.
The weary time she cannot entertain,
For now 'tis stale to sigh, to weep, to groan:
So woe hath wearied woe, moan tired moan,
  That she her plaints a little while doth stay,
  Pausing for means to mourn some newer way.

At last she calls to mind where hangs a piece
Of skilful painting, made for Priam's Troy;
Before the which is drawn the power of Greece,
For Helen's rape the city to destroy,
Threat'ning cloud-kissing Ilion with annoy;
  Which the conceited painter drew so proud,
  As heaven (it seem'd) to kiss the turrets bow'd.

A thousand lamentable objects there,
In scorn of Nature, Art gave lifeless life:
Many a dry drop seem'd a weeping tear,
Shed for the slaughter'd husband by the wife:
The red blood reek'd, to show the painter's strife;
  The dying eyes gleam'd forth their ashy lights,
  Like dying coals burnt out in tedious nights.

There might you see the labouring pioner
Begrim'd with sweat, and smeared all with dust;
And from the towers of Troy there would appear
The very eyes of men through loopholes thrust,
Gazing upon the Greeks with little lust:
  Such sweet observance in this work was had,
  That one might see those far-off eyes look sad.

In great commanders grace and majesty
You might behold, triumphing in their faces;
In youth, quick bearing and dexterity;
And here and there the painter interlaces
Pale cowards, marching on with trembling paces;
  Which heartless peasants did so well resemble,
  That one would swear he saw them quake and tremble.

In Ajax and Ulysses, O, what art
Of physiognomy might one behold!
The face of either 'cipher'd either's heart;
Their face their manners most expressly told:
In Ajax' eyes blunt rage and rigour roll'd;
  But the mild glance that sly Ulysses lent
  Show'd deep regard and smiling government.

There pleading might you see grave Nestor stand,
As't were encouraging the Greeks to fight;
Making such sober action with his hand
That it beguiled attention, charm'd the sight:
In speech, it seem'd, his beard, all silver white,
  Wagg'd up and down, and from his lips did fly
  Thin winding breath, which purl'd up to the sky.

About him were a press of gaping faces,
Which seem'd to swallow up his sound advice;
All jointly listening, but with several graces,
As if some mermaid did their ears entice;
Some high, some low, the painter was so nice:
  The scalps of many, almost hid behind,
  To jump up higher seem'd to mock the mind.

Here one man's hand lean'd on another's head,
His nose being shadow'd by his neighbour's ear;
Here one being throng'd bears back, all boll'n and red;
Another smother'd seems to pelt and swear;
And in their rage such signs of rage they bear,
  As, but for loss of Nestor's golden words,
  It seem'd they would debate with angry swords.

For much imaginary work was there;
Conceit deceitful, so compact, so kind,
That for Achilles' image stood his spear,
Grip'd in an armed hand; himself, behind,
Was left unseen, save to the eye of mind:
  A hand, a foot, a face, a leg, a head,
  Stood for the whole to be imagined,

And from the walls of strong-besieged Troy
When their brave hope, bold Hector, march'd to field,
Stood many Trojan mothers, sharing joy
To see their youthful sons bright weapons wield;
And to their hope they such odd action yield,
  That through their light joy seemed to appear,
  (Like bright things stain'd) a kind of heavy fear,

And, from the strond of Dardan, where they fought,
To Simois' reedy banks, the red blood ran,
Whose waves to imitate the battle sought
With swelling ridges; and their ranks began
To break upon the galled shore, and than
  Retire again, till, meeting greater ranks,
  They join, and shoot their foam at Simois' banks.

To this well-painted piece is Lucrece come,
To find a face where all distress is stell'd.
Many she sees where cares have carved some,
But none where all distress and dolour dwell'd,
Till she despairing Hecuba beheld,
  Staring on Priam's wounds with her old eyes,
  Which bleeding under Pyrrhus' proud foot lies.

In her the painter had anatomiz'd
Time's ruin, beauty's wrack, and grim care's reign:
Her cheeks with chops and wrinkles were disguis'd;
Of what she was no semblance did remain:
Her blue blood, chang'd to black in every vein,
  Wanting the spring that those shrunk pipes had fed,
  Show'd life imprison'd in a body dead.

On this sad shadow Lucrece spends her eyes,
And shapes her sorrow to the beldame's woes,
Who nothing wants to answer her but cries,
And bitter words to ban her cruel foes:
The painter was no god to lend her those;
  And therefore Lucrece swears he did her wrong,
  To give her so much grief, and not a tongue.

'Poor instrument,' quoth she, 'without a sound,
I'll tune thy woes with my lamenting tongue;
And drop sweet balm in Priam's painted wound,
And rail on Pyrrhus that hath done him wrong,
And with my tears quench Troy that burns so long;
  And with my knife scratch out the angry eyes
  Of all the Greeks that are thine enemies.

'Show me the strumpet that began this stir,
That with my nails her beauty I may tear.
Thy heat of lust, fond Paris, did incur
This load of wrath that burning Troy doth bear;
Thy eye kindled the fire that burneth here:
  And here in Troy, for trespass of thine eye,
  The sire, the son, the dame, and daughter die.

'Why should the private pleasure of some one
Become the public plague of many mo?
Let sin, alone committed, light alone
Upon his head that hath transgressed so.
Let guiltless souls be freed from guilty woe:
  For one's offence why should so many fall,
  To plague a private sin in general?

'Lo, here weeps Hecuba, here Priam dies,
Here manly Hector faints, here Troilus swounds;
Here friend by friend in bloody channel lies,
And friend to friend gives unadvised wounds,
And one man's lust these many lives confounds:
  Had doting Priam check'd his son's desire,
  Troy had been bright with fame and not with fire.'

Here feelingly she weeps Troy's painted woes:
For sorrow, like a heavy-hanging bell,
Once set on ringing, with his own weight goes;
Then little strength rings out the doleful knell:
So Lucrece set a-work sad tales doth tell
  To pencill'd pensiveness and colour'd sorrow;
  She lends them words, and she their looks doth borrow.

She throws her eyes about the painting round,
And whom she finds forlorn she doth lament:
At last she sees a wretched image bound,
That piteous looks to Phrygian shepherds lent:
His face, though full of cares, yet show'd content;
  Onward to Troy with the blunt swains he goes,
  So mild, that Patience seem'd to scorn his woes.

In him the painter labour'd with his skill
To hide deceit, and give the harmless show
An humble gait, calm looks, eyes wailing still,
A brow unbent, that seem'd to welcome woe;
Cheeks neither red nor pale, but mingled so
  That blushing red no guilty instance gave,
  Nor ashy pale the fear that false hearts have.

But, like a constant and confirmed devil,
He entertain'd a show so seeming just,
And therein so ensconc'd his secret evil,
That jealousy itself cold not mistrust
False-creeping craft and perjury should thrust
  Into so bright a day such black-fac'd storms,
  Or blot with hell-born sin such saint-like forms.

The well-skill'd workman this mild image drew
For perjur'd Sinon, whose enchanting story
The credulous Old Priam after slew;
Whose words, like wildfire, burnt the shining glory
Of rich-built Ilion, that the skies were sorry,
  And little stars shot from their fixed places,
  When their glass fell wherein they view'd their faces.

This picture she advisedly perus'd,
And chid the painter for his wondrous skill;
Saying, some shape in Sinon's was abus'd;
So fair a form lodged not a mind so ill:
And still on him she gaz'd; and gazing still,
  Such signs of truth in his plain face she spied,
  That she concludes the picture was belied.

'It cannot be,' quoth she, 'that so much guile'—
(She would have said) 'can lurk in such a look;'
But Tarquin's shape came in her mind the while,
And from her tongue 'can lurk' from 'cannot' took;
'It cannot be' she in that sense forsook,
  And turn'd it thus: 'It cannot be, I find,
  But such a face should bear a wicked mind:

'For even as subtle Sinon here is painted,
So sober-sad, so weary, and so mild,
(As if with grief or travail he had fainted,)
To me came Tarquin armed; so beguil'd
With outward honesty, but yet defil'd
  With inward vice: as Priam him did cherish,
  So did I Tarquin; so my Troy did perish.

'Look, look, how listening Priam wets his eyes,
To see those borrow'd tears that Sinon sheds.
Priam, why art thou old and yet not wise?
For every tear he falls a Trojan bleeds;
His eye drops fire, no water thence proceeds;
  Those round clear pearls of his that move thy pity,
  Are balls of quenchless fire to burn thy city.

'Such devils steal effects from lightless hell;
For Sinon in his fire doth quake with cold,
And in that cold hot-burning fire doth dwell;
These contraries such unity do hold,
Only to flatter fools, and make them bold;
  So Priam's trust false Sinon's tears doth flatter,
  That he finds means to burn his Troy with water.'

Here, all enrag'd, such passion her assails,
That patience is quite beaten from her breast.
She tears the senseless Sinon with her nails,
Comparing him to that unhappy guest
Whose deed hath made herself herself detest;
  At last she smilingly with this gives o'er;
  'Fool, fool!' quoth she, 'his wounds will not be sore.'

Thus ebbs and flows the current of her sorrow,
And time doth weary time with her complaining.
She looks for night, and then she longs for morrow,
And both she thinks too long with her remaining:
Short time seems long in sorrow's sharp sustaining.
  Though woe be heavy, yet it seldom sleeps;
  And they that watch see time how slow it creeps.

Which all this time hath overslipp'd her thought,
That she with painted images hath spent;
Being from the feeling of her own grief brought
By deep surmise of others' detriment:
Losing her woes in shows of discontent.
  It easeth some, though none it ever cur'd,
  To think their dolour others have endur'd.

But now the mindful messenger, come back,
Brings home his lord and other company;
Who finds his Lucrece clad in mourning black:
And round about her tear-distained eye
Blue circles stream'd, like rainbows in the sky.
  These water-galls in her dim element
  Foretell new storms to those already spent.

Which when her sad-beholding husband saw,
Amazedly in her sad face he stares:
Her eyes, though sod in tears, look'd red and raw,
Her lively colour kill'd with deadly cares.
He hath no power to ask her how she fares,
  Both stood, like old acquaintance in a trance,
  Met far from home, wondering each other's chance.

At last he takes her by the bloodless hand,
And thus begins: 'What uncouth ill event
Hath thee befall'n, that thou dost trembling stand?
Sweet love, what spite hath thy fair colour spent?
Why art thou thus attir'd in discontent?
  Unmask, dear dear, this moody heaviness,
  And tell thy grief, that we may give redress.'

Three times with sighs she gives her sorrow fire,
Ere once she can discharge one word of woe:
At length address'd to answer his desire,
She modestly prepares to let them know
Her honour is ta'en prisoner by the foe;
  While Collatine and his consorted lords
  With sad attention long to hear her words.

And now this pale swan in her watery nest
Begins the sad dirge of her certain ending:
'Few words,' quoth she, 'shall fit the trespass best,
Where no excuse can give the fault amending:
In me more woes than words are now depending;
  And my laments would be drawn out too long,
  To tell them all with one poor tired tongue.

'Then be this all the task it hath to say:—
Dear husband, in the interest of thy bed
A stranger came, and on that pillow lay
Where thou wast wont to rest thy weary head;
And what wrong else may be imagined
  By foul enforcement might be done to me,
  From that, alas! thy Lucrece is not free.

'For in the dreadful dead of dark midnight,
With shining falchion in my chamber came
A creeping creature, with a flaming light,
And softly cried Awake, thou Roman dame,
And entertain my love; else lasting shame
  On thee and thine this night I will inflict,
  If thou my love's desire do contradict.

'For some hard-favour'd groom of thine, quoth he,
Unless thou yoke thy liking to my will,
I'll murder straight, and then I'll slaughter thee
And swear I found you where you did fulfil
The loathsome act of lust, and so did kill
  The lechers in their deed: this act will be
  My fame and thy perpetual infamy.

'With this, I did begin to start and cry,
And then against my heart he sets his sword,
Swearing, unless I took all patiently,
I should not live to speak another word;
So should my shame still rest upon record,
  And never be forgot in mighty Rome
  The adulterate death of Lucrece and her groom.

'Mine enemy was strong, my poor self weak,
And far the weaker with so strong a fear:
My bloody judge forbade my tongue to speak;
No rightful plea might plead for justice there:
His scarlet lust came evidence to swear
  That my poor beauty had purloin'd his eyes;
  And when the judge is robb'd the prisoner dies.

'O, teach me how to make mine own excuse!
Or at the least this refuge let me find;
Though my gross blood be stain'd with this abuse,
Immaculate and spotless is my mind;
That was not forc'd; that never was inclin'd
  To accessary yieldings, but still pure
  Doth in her poison'd closet yet endure.'

Lo, here, the hopeless merchant of this loss,
With head declin'd, and voice damm'd up with woe,
With sad set eyes, and wretched arms across,
From lips new-waxen pale begins to blow
The grief away that stops his answer so:
  But wretched as he is he strives in vain;
  What he breathes out his breath drinks up again.

As through an arch the violent roaring tide
Outruns the eye that doth behold his haste;
Yet in the eddy boundeth in his pride
Back to the strait that forc'd him on so fast;
In rage sent out, recall'd in rage, being past:
  Even so his sighs, his sorrows make a saw.
  To push grief on, and back the same grief draw.

Which speechless woe of his poor she attendeth,
And his untimely frenzy thus awaketh:
'Dear Lord, thy sorrow to my sorrow lendeth
Another power; no flood by raining slaketh.
My woe too sensible thy passion maketh
  More feeling-painful: let it then suffice
  To drown one woe, one pair of weeping eyes.

'And for my sake, when I might charm thee so,
For she that was thy Lucrece,—now attend me;
Be suddenly revenged on my foe,
Thine, mine, his own: suppose thou dost defend me
From what is past: the help that thou shalt lend me
  Comes all too late, yet let the traitor die;
  For sparing justice feeds iniquity.

'But ere I name him, you fair lords,' quoth she,
(Speaking to those that came with Collatine)
'Shall plight your honourable faiths to me,
With swift pursuit to venge this wrong of mine;
For 'tis a meritorious fair design
  To chase injustice with revengeful arms:
  Knights, by their oaths, should right poor ladies' harms.'

At this request, with noble disposition
Each present lord began to promise aid,
As bound in knighthood to her imposition,
Longing to hear the hateful foe bewray'd.
But she, that yet her sad task hath not said,
  The protestation stops. 'O, speak,' quoth she,
 'How may this forced stain be wip'd from me?

'What is the quality of mine offence,
Being constrain'd with dreadful circumstance?
May my pure mind with the foul act dispense,
My low-declined honour to advance?
May any terms acquit me from this chance?
  The poison'd fountain clears itself again;
  And why not I from this compelled stain?

With this, they all at once began to say,
Her body's stain her mind untainted clears;
While with a joyless smile she turns away
The face, that map which deep impression bears
Of hard misfortune, carv'd in it with tears.
  'No, no,' quoth she, 'no dame, hereafter living,
  By my excuse shall claim excuse's giving.

Here with a sigh, as if her heart would break,
She throws forth Tarquin's name: 'He, he,' she says,
But more than 'he' her poor tongue could not speak;
Till after many accents and delays,
Untimely breathings, sick and short assays,
  She utters this: 'He, he, fair lords, 'tis he,
  That guides this hand to give this wound to me.'

Even here she sheathed in her harmless breast
A harmful knife, that thence her soul unsheath'd:
That blow did bail it from the deep unrest
Of that polluted prison where it breath'd:
Her contrite sighs unto the clouds bequeath'd
  Her winged sprite, and through her wounds doth fly
  Life's lasting date from cancell'd destiny.

Stone-still, astonish'd with this deadly deed,
Stood Collatine and all his lordly crew;
Till Lucrece' father that beholds her bleed,
Himself on her self-slaughter'd body threw;
And from the purple fountain Brutus drew
  The murderous knife, and, as it left the place,
  Her blood, in poor revenge, held it in chase;

And bubbling from her breast, it doth divide
In two slow rivers, that the crimson blood
Circles her body in on every side,
Who, like a late-sack'd island, vastly stood
Bare and unpeopled, in this fearful flood.
  Some of her blood still pure and red remain'd,
  And some look'd black, and that false Tarquin stain'd.

About the mourning and congealed face
Of that black blood a watery rigol goes,
Which seems to weep upon the tainted place:
And ever since, as pitying Lucrece' woes,
Corrupted blood some watery token shows;
  And blood untainted still doth red abide,
  Blushing at that which is so putrified.

'Daughter, dear daughter,' old Lucretius cries,
'That life was mine which thou hast here depriv'd.
If in the child the father's image lies,
Where shall I live now Lucrece is unliv'd?
Thou wast not to this end from me deriv'd
  If children pre-decease progenitors,
  We are their offspring, and they none of ours.

'Poor broken glass, I often did behold
In thy sweet semblance my old age new born;
But now that fair fresh mirror, dim and old,
Shows me a bare-bon'd death by time outworn;
O, from thy cheeks my image thou hast torn!
  And shiver'd all the beauty of my glass,
  That I no more can see what once I was!

'O time, cease thou thy course and last no longer,
If they surcease to be that should survive.
Shall rotten death make conquest of the stronger,
And leave the faltering feeble souls alive?
The old bees die, the young possess their hive:
  Then live, sweet Lucrece, live again, and see
  Thy father die, and not thy father thee!'

By this starts Collatine as from a dream,
And bids Lucretius give his sorrow place;
And then in key-cold Lucrece' bleeding stream
He falls, and bathes the pale fear in his face,
And counterfeits to die with her a space;
  Till manly shame bids him possess his breath,
  And live, to be revenged on her death.

The deep vexation of his inward soul
Hath serv'd a dumb arrest upon his tongue;
Who, mad that sorrow should his use control,
Or keep him from heart-easing words so long,
Begins to talk; but through his lips do throng
  Weak words, so thick come in his poor heart's aid,
  That no man could distinguish what he said.

Yet sometime 'Tarquin' was pronounced plain,
But through his teeth, as if the name he tore.
This windy tempest, till it blow up rain,
Held back his sorrow's tide, to make it more;
At last it rains, and busy winds give o'er:
  Then son and father weep with equal strife,
  Who should weep most, for daughter or for wife.

The one doth call her his, the other his,
Yet neither may possess the claim they lay,
The father says 'She's mine,' 'O, mine she is,'
Replies her husband: 'do not take away
My sorrow's interest; let no mourner say
  He weeps for her, for she was only mine,
  And only must be wail'd by Collatine.'

'O,' quoth Lucretius, 'I did give that life
Which she too early and too late hath spill'd.'
'Woe, woe,' quoth Collatine, 'she was my wife,
I owed her, and 'tis mine that she hath kill'd.'
'My daughter' and 'my wife' with clamours fill'd
  The dispers'd air, who, holding Lucrece' life,
  Answer'd their cries, 'My daughter!' and 'My wife!'

Brutus, who pluck'd the knife from Lucrece' side,
Seeing such emulation in their woe,
Began to clothe his wit in state and pride,
Burying in Lucrece' wound his folly's show.
He with the Romans was esteemed so
  As silly-jeering idiots are with kings,
  For sportive words, and uttering foolish things:

But now he throws that shallow habit by,
Wherein deep policy did him disguise;
And arm'd his long-hid wits advisedly,
To check the tears in Collatinus' eyes.
'Thou wronged lord of Rome,' quoth he, 'arise;
  Let my unsounded self, suppos'd a fool,
  Now set thy long-experienc'd wit to school.

'Why, Collatine, is woe the cure for woe?
Do wounds help wounds, or grief help grievous deeds?
Is it revenge to give thyself a blow,
For his foul act by whom thy fair wife bleeds?
Such childish humour from weak minds proceeds:
  Thy wretched wife mistook the matter so,
  To slay herself, that should have slain her foe.

'Courageous Roman, do not steep thy heart
In such relenting dew of lamentations,
But kneel with me, and help to bear thy part,
To rouse our Roman gods with invocations,
That they will suffer these abominations,
 (Since Rome herself in them doth stand disgrac'd,)
  By our strong arms from forth her fair streets chas'd.

'Now, by the Capitol that we adore,
And by this chaste blood so unjustly stain'd,
By heaven's fair sun that breeds the fat earth's store,
By all our country rights in Rome maintain'd,
And by chaste Lucrece' soul that late complain'd
  Her wrongs to us, and by this bloody knife,
  We will revenge the death of this true wife.'

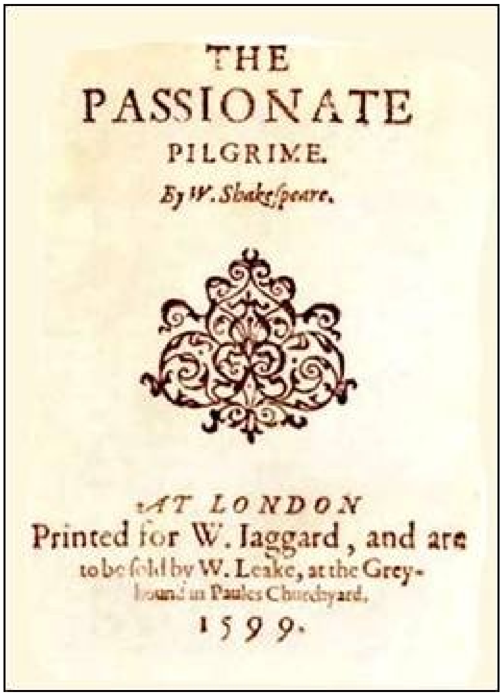
This said, he struck his hand upon his breast,
And kiss'd the fatal knife, to end his vow;
And to his protestation urg'd the rest,
Who, wondering at him, did his words allow;
Then jointly to the ground their knees they bow;
  And that deep vow, which Brutus made before,
  He doth again repeat, and that they swore.

When they had sworn to this advised doom,
They did conclude to bear dead Lucrece thence;
To show her bleeding body thorough Rome,
And so to publish Tarquin's foul offence:
Which being done with speedy diligence,
  The Romans plausibly did give consent
  To Tarquin's everlasting banishment.

THE PASSIONATE PILGRIM

First published in 1599, this is an anthology of 20 poems, which were attributed to Shakespeare on the title page. However, only five of the poems (1, 2, 3, 5 and 16) are accepted by present-day scholars as being by Shakespeare, and three of them (3, 5 and 16) are taken from the play *Love’s Labour’s Lost.*

The Passionate Pilgrim was published by William Jaggard, later the publisher of Shakespeare's First Folio. The first edition survives only in a single fragmentary copy; its date cannot be fixed with certainty since its title page is missing, though many scholars judge it likely to be from 1599, the year the second edition appeared with the attribution to Shakespeare. The title page of this second edition states that the book is to be sold by stationer William Leake; Leake had obtained the rights to Shakespeare's Venus and Adonis in 1596 and published five octavo editions of that poem (the third edition through the eighth) in the 1599–1602 period. All 20 poems are provided in this edition for your consideration.



THE
PASSIONATE
PILGRIME.
By W. Shakeſpeare.

AT LONDON
Printed for W. Iaggard, and are
to be ſold by W. Leake, at the Grey-
hound in Paules Churchyard.
1599.

The 1599 title page

THE PASSIONATE PILGRIM

I.

WHEN my love swears that she is made of truth,
I do believe her, though I know she lies,
That she might think me some untutor'd youth,
Unskilful in the world's false forgeries.
Thus vainly thinking that she thinks me young,

Although I know my years be past the best,
I smiling credit her false-speaking tongue,
Outfacing faults in love with love's ill rest.

But wherefore says my love that she is young?
And wherefore say not I that I am old?
O, love's best habit is a soothing tongue,
And age, in love, loves not to have years told.
Therefore I'll lie with love, and love with me,
Since that our faults in love thus smother'd be.

II.

Two loves I have, of comfort and despair,
That like two spirits do suggest me still;
My better angel is a man right fair,
My worser spirit a woman colour'd ill.
To win me soon to hell, my female evil
Tempteth my better angel from my side,
And would corrupt my saint to be a devil,

Wooing his purity with her fair pride.
And whether that my angel be turn'd fiend,
Suspect I may, yet not directly tell:
For being both to me, both to each friend,
I guess one angel in another's hell;
The truth I shall not know, but live in doubt,
Till my bad angel fire my good one out.

III.

Did not the heavenly rhetoric of thine eye,
'Gainst whom the world could not hold argument,
Persuade my heart to this false perjury?

Vows for thee broke deserve not punishment.
A woman I forswore; but I will prove,
Thou being a goddess, I forswore not thee:
My vow was earthly, thou a heavenly love;
Thy grace being gain'd cures all disgrace in me.
My vow was breath, and breath a vapour is;
Then, thou fair sun, that on this earth doth shine,

Exhale this vapour vow; in thee it is:
If broken, then it is no fault of mine.
If by me broke, what fool is not so wise
To break an oath, to win a paradise?

IV.

Sweet Cytherea, sitting by a brook
With young Adonis, lovely, fresh, and green,
Did court the lad with many a lovely look,
Such looks as none could look but beauty's queen.
She told him stories to delight his ear;
She showed him favors to allure his eye;
To win his heart, she touch'd him here and there,--
Touches so soft still conquer chastity.
But whether unripe years did want conceit,
Or he refused to take her figured proffer,
The tender nibbler would not touch the bait,
But smile and jest at every gentle offer:
Then fell she on her back, fair queen, and toward:

He rose and ran away; ah, fool too froward!

V.

If love make me forsworn, how shall I swear to love?

O never faith could hold, if not to beauty vow'd:
Though to myself forsworn, to thee I'll constant prove;
Those thoughts, to me like oaks, to thee like osiers bow'd.
Study his bias leaves, and makes his book thine eyes,
Where all those pleasures live that art can comprehend.
If knowledge be the mark, to know thee shall suffice;
Well learned is that tongue that well can thee commend;
All ignorant that soul that sees thee without wonder;
Which is to me some praise, that I thy parts admire:
Thine eye Jove's lightning seems, thy voice his dreadful thunder,
Which, not to anger bent, is music and sweet fire.
Celestial as thou art, O do not love that wrong,

To sing heaven's praise with such an earthly tongue.

VI.

Scarce had the sun dried up the dewy morn,
And scarce the herd gone to the hedge for shade,
When Cytherea, all in love forlorn,
A longing tarriance for Adonis made
Under an osier growing by a brook,
A brook where Adon used to cool his spleen:
Hot was the day; she hotter that did look
For his approach, that often there had been.
Anon he comes, and throws his mantle by,
And stood stark naked on the brook's green brim:
The sun look'd on the world with glorious eye,
Yet not so wistly as this queen on him.

He, spying her, bounced in, whereas he stood:
'O Jove,' quoth she, 'why was not I a flood!'

VII.

Fair is my love, but not so fair as fickle;
Mild as a dove, but neither true nor trusty;
Brighter than glass, and yet, as glass is, brittle;
Softer than wax, and yet, as iron, rusty:
A lily pale, with damask dye to grace her,
None fairer, nor none falser to deface her.

Her lips to mine how often hath she joined,
Between each kiss her oaths of true love swearing!
How many tales to please me hath she coined,
Dreading my love, the loss thereof still fearing!
Yet in the midst of all her pure protestings,
Her faith, her oaths, her tears, and all were jestings.
She burn'd with love, as straw with fire flameth;
She burn'd out love, as soon as straw outburneth;
She framed the love, and yet she foil'd the framing;
She bade love last, and yet she fell a-turning.
Was this a lover, or a lecher whether?

Bad in the best, though excellent in neither.

VIII.

If music and sweet poetry agree,
As they must needs, the sister and the brother,
Then must the love be great 'twixt thee and me,
Because thou lovest the one, and I the other.
Dowland to thee is dear, whose heavenly touch
Upon the lute doth ravish human sense;
Spenser to me, whose deep conceit is such
As, passing all conceit, needs no defence.
Thou lovest to hear the sweet melodious sound
That Phoebus' lute, the queen of music, makes;
And I in deep delight am chiefly drown'd
When as himself to singing he betakes.
One god is god of both, as poets feign;
One knight loves both, and both in thee remain.

IX.

Fair was the morn when the fair queen of love,
Paler for sorrow than her milk-white dove,
For Adon's sake, a youngster proud and wild;
Her stand she takes upon a steep-up hill:
Anon Adonis comes with horn and hounds;
She, silly queen, with more than love's good will,
Forbade the boy he should not pass those grounds:
'Once,' quoth she, 'did I see a fair sweet youth
Here in these brakes deep-wounded with a boar,
Deep in the thigh, a spectacle of ruth!

See, in my thigh,' quoth she, 'here was the sore.'
She showed hers: he saw more wounds than one,
And blushing fled, and left her all alone.

X.

Sweet rose, fair flower, untimely pluck'd, soon vaded, Pluck'd in the bud, and vaded in the spring!

Bright orient pearl, alack, too timely shaded!
Fair creature, kill'd too soon by death's sharp sting!
Like a green plum that hangs upon a tree,
And falls, through wind, before the fall should be.

I weep for thee, and yet no cause I have;
For why thou left'st me nothing in thy will:
And yet thou left'st me more than I did crave;
For why I craved nothing of thee still:
O yes, dear friend, I pardon crave of thee,
Thy discontent thou didst bequeath to me.

XI.

Venus, with young Adonis sitting by her
Under a myrtle shade, began to woo him:
She told the youngling how god Mars did try her,
And as he fell to her, so fell she to him.

'Even thus,' quoth she, 'the warlike god embraced me,'

And then she clipp'd Adonis in her arms;

'Even thus,' quoth she, 'the warlike god unlaced me,'

As if the boy should use like loving charms;

'Even thus,' quoth she, 'he seized on my lips,'

And with her lips on his did act the seizure:

And as she fetched breath, away he skips,

And would not take her meaning nor her pleasure.

Ah, that I had my lady at this bay,

To kiss and clip me till I run away!

XII.

Crabbed age and youth cannot live together:

Youth is full of pleasance, age is full of care;

Youth like summer morn, age like winter weather;

Youth like summer brave, age like winter bare.

Youth is full of sport, age's breath is short;

Youth is nimble, age is lame;

Youth is hot and bold, age is weak and cold;

Youth is wild, and age is tame.
Age, I do abhor thee; youth, I do adore thee;
O, my love, my love is young!
Age, I do defy thee: O, sweet shepherd, hie thee,
For methinks thou stay'st too long,

XIII.

Beauty is but a vain and doubtful good;
A shining gloss that vadeth suddenly;
A flower that dies when first it gins to bud;
A brittle glass that's broken presently:
A doubtful good, a gloss, a glass, a flower,
Lost, vaded, broken, dead within an hour.

And as goods lost are seld or never found,
As vaded gloss no rubbing will refresh,
As flowers dead lie wither'd on the ground,
As broken glass no cement can redress,
So beauty blemish'd once's for ever lost,

In spite of physic, painting, pain and cost.

XIV.

Good night, good rest. Ah, neither be my share:
She bade good night that kept my rest away;
And daff'd me to a cabin hang'd with care,
To descant on the doubts of my decay.

'Farewell,' quoth she, 'and come again tomorrow:'
Fare well I could not, for I supp'd with sorrow.

Yet at my parting sweetly did she smile,
In scorn or friendship, nill I construe whether:
'T may be, she joy'd to jest at my exile,
'T may be, again to make me wander thither:
'Wander,' a word for shadows like myself,
As take the pain, but cannot pluck the pelf.

XV.

Lord, how mine eyes throw gazes to the east!
My heart doth charge the watch; the morning rise
Doth cite each moving sense from idle rest.
Not daring trust the office of mine eyes,
While Philomela sits and sings, I sit and mark,
And wish her lays were tuned like the lark;

For she doth welcome daylight with her ditty,
And drives away dark dismal-dreaming night:
The night so pack'd, I post unto my pretty;
Heart hath his hope, and eyes their wished sight;
Sorrow changed to solace, solace mix'd with sorrow;
For why, she sigh'd and bade me come tomorrow.

Were I with her, the night would post too soon;
But now are minutes added to the hours;
To spite me now, each minute seems a moon;
Yet not for me, shine sun to succor flowers!

Pack night, peep day; good day, of night now borrow:

Short, night, to-night, and length thyself tomorrow.

SONNETS TO SUNDRY NOTES OF MUSIC

XVI.

IT was a lording's daughter, the fairest one of three,
That liked of her master as well as well might be,
Till looking on an Englishman, the fair'st that eye could see,
Her fancy fell a-turning.

Long was the combat doubtful that love with love did fight,
To leave the master loveless, or kill the gallant knight:
To put in practise either, alas, it was a spite
Unto the silly damsel!

But one must be refused; more mickle was the pain
That nothing could be used to turn them both to gain,

For of the two the trusty knight was wounded with disdain:
Alas, she could not help it!
Thus art with arms contending was victor of the day,
Which by a gift of learning did bear the maid away:
Then, lullaby, the learned man hath got the lady gay;
For now my song is ended.

XVII.

On a day, alack the day!
Love, whose month was ever May,
Spied a blossom passing fair,
Playing in the wanton air:
Through the velvet leaves the wind
All unseen, gan passage find;
That the lover, sick to death,
Wish'd himself the heaven's breath,
'Air,' quoth he, 'thy cheeks may blow;
Air, would I might triumph so!
But, alas! my hand hath sworn

Ne'er to pluck thee from thy thorn:

Vow, alack! for youth unmeet:
Youth, so apt to pluck a sweet.
Thou for whom Jove would swear
Juno but an Ethiope were;
And deny himself for Jove,
Turning mortal for thy love.'

XVIII.

My flocks feed not,
My ewes breed not,
My rams speed not,
All is amiss:
Love's denying,
Faith's defying,
Heart's renying,
Causer of this.
All my merry jigs are quite forgot,

All my lady's love is lost, God wot:
Where her faith was firmly fix'd in love,
There a nay is placed without remove.
One silly cross Wrought all my loss;
O frowning Fortune, cursed, fickle dame!
For now I see
Inconstancy
More in women than in men remain.
In black mourn I,
All fears scorn I,
Love hath forlorn me,
Living in thrall:
Heart is bleeding,
All help needing,
O cruel speeding,
Fraughted with gall.
My shepherd's pipe can sound no deal;
My wether's bell rings doleful knell;
My curtail dog, that wont to have play'd
Plays not at all, but seems afraid;
My sighs so deep

Procure to weep,
In howling wise, to see my doleful plight.
How sighs resound
Through heartless ground,
Like a thousand vanquish'd men in bloody fight!
Clear wells spring not,
Sweet birds sing not,
Green plants bring not
Forth their dye;
Herds stand weeping,
Flocks all sleeping,
Nymphs back peeping
Fearfully:
All our pleasure known to us poor swains,
All our merry meetings on the plains,
All our evening sport from us is fled,
All our love is lost, for Love is dead
Farewell, sweet lass,
Thy like ne'er was
For a sweet content, the cause of all my moan:
Poor Corydon

Must live alone;
Other help for him I see that there is none.

XIX.

When as thine eye hath chose the dame,
And stall'd the deer that thou shouldst strike,
Let reason rule things worthy blame,
As well as fancy partial might:
Take counsel of some wiser head,
Neither too young nor yet unwed.

And when thou comest thy tale to tell,
Smooth not thy tongue with filed talk,
Lest she some subtle practise smell,--
A cripple soon can find a halt;--
But plainly say thou lovest her well,

And set thy person forth to sell.
What though her frowning brows be bent,
Her cloudy looks will calm ere night:

And then too late she will repent
That thus dissembled her delight;
And twice desire, ere it be day,
That which with scorn she put away.

What though she strive to try her strength,
And ban and brawl, and say thee nay,
Her feeble force will yield at length,
When craft hath taught her thus to say,
'Had women been so strong as men,
In faith, you had not had it then.'

And to her will frame all thy ways;
Spare not to spend, and chiefly there
Where thy desert may merit praise,
By ringing in thy lady's ear:
The strongest castle, tower, and town,
The golden bullet beats it down.

Serve always with assured trust,
And in thy suit be humble true;

Unless thy lady prove unjust,
Press never thou to choose anew:
When time shall serve, be thou not slack
To proffer, though she put thee back.

The wiles and guiles that women work,
Dissembled with an outward show,
The tricks and toys that in them lurk,
The cock that treads them shall not know.
Have you not heard it said full oft,
A woman's nay doth stand for nought?

Think women still to strive with men,
To sin and never for to saint:
There is no heaven, by holy then,
When time with age doth them attaint.
Were kisses all the joys in bed,
One woman would another wed.

But, soft! enough, too much, I fear
Lest that my mistress hear my song,

She will not stick to round me i' the ear,
To teach my tongue to be so long:
Yet will she blush, here be it said,
To hear her secrets so bewray'd.

XX.

Live with me, and be my love,
And we will all the pleasures prove
That hills and valleys, dales and fields,
And all the craggy mountains yields.

There will we sit upon the rocks,
And see the shepherds feed their flocks,
By shallow rivers, by whose falls
Melodious birds sing madrigals.

There will I make thee a bed of roses,
With a thousand fragrant posies,
A cap of flowers, and a kirtle

Embroider'd all with leaves of myrtle.

A belt of straw and ivy buds,
With coral clasps and amber studs;
And if these pleasures may thee move,
Then live with me and be my love.

LOVE'S ANSWER.

If that the world and love were young,
And truth in every shepherd's tongue,
These pretty pleasures might me move
To live with thee and be thy love.

XXI.

As it fell upon a day
In the merry month of May,
Sitting in a pleasant shade
Which a grove of myrtles made,

Beasts did leap, and birds did sing,
Trees did grow, and plants did spring;
Every thing did banish moan,
Save the nightingale alone:
She, poor bird, as all forlorn,
Lean'd her breast up-till a thorn
And there sung the dolefull'st ditty,
That to hear it was great pity:
'Fie, fie, fie,' now would she cry;
'Tereu, tereu!' by and by;
That to hear her so complain,
Scarce I could from tears refrain;
For her griefs, so lively shown,
Made me think upon mine own.
Ah, thought I, thou mourn'st in vain!
None takes pity on thy pain:
Senseless trees they cannot hear thee;
Ruthless beasts they will not cheer thee:
King Pandion he is dead;
All thy friends are lapp'd in lead;
All thy fellow birds do sing,

Careless of thy sorrowing.
Even so, poor bird, like thee,
None alive will pity me.
Whilst as fickle Fortune smiled,
Thou and I were both beguiled.
Every one that flatters thee
Is no friend in misery.
Words are easy, like the wind;
Faithful friends are hard to find:
Every man will be thy friend
Whilst thou hast wherewith to spend;
But if store of crowns be scant,
No man will supply thy want.
If that one be prodigal,
Bountiful they will him call,
And with such-like flattering,
'Pity but he were a king;'
If he be addict to vice,
Quickly him they will entice;
If to women he be bent,
They have at commandement:

But if Fortune once do frown,
Then farewell his great renown
They that fawn'd on him before
Use his company no more.
He that is thy friend indeed,
He will help thee in thy need:
If thou sorrow, he will weep;
If thou wake, he cannot sleep;
Thus of every grief in heart
He with thee doth bear a part.
These are certain signs to know
Faithful friend from flattering foe.

THE PHOENIX AND THE TURTLE

This allegorical poem concerns the death of ideal love. Regarded by many as an obscure work, it has led to conflicting interpretations. It was first published in 1601 as a supplement to *Love's Martyr,* a long poem by Robert Chester. The "turtle" in the title refers to a turtle dove, not a reptile. Offering the allegory of an ideal marriage, the poem can be seen as an elucidation of the relationship between truth and beauty, or of fulfilled love, in the context of Renaissance Neoplatonism. Shakespeare introduces a number of other birds, drawing on earlier literature about the "parliament of birds", to portray the death of the lovers as the loss of an ideal that can only be lamented.

THE PHOENIX AND THE TURTLE

Let the bird of loudest lay,
On the sole Arabian tree,
Herald sad and trumpet be,
To whose sound chaste wings obey.

But thou, shriking harbinger,
Foul pre-currer of the fiend,
Augur of the fever's end,
To this troop come thou not near.

From this session interdict
Every fowl of tyrant wing,
Save the eagle, feather'd king:
Keep the obsequy so strict.

Let the priest in surplice white,
That defunctive music can,
Be the death-divining swan,
Lest the requiem lack his right.

And thou, treble-dated crow,
That thy sable gender mak'st
With the breath thou giv'st and tak'st,
'Mongst our mourners shalt thou go.

Here the anthem doth commence:
Love and constancy is dead;
Phoenix and the turtle fled
In a mutual flame from hence.

So they lov'd, as love in twain
Had the essence but in one;

Two distincts, division none:
Number there in love was slain.

Hearts remote, yet not asunder;
Distance, and no space was seen
'Twixt the turtle and his queen;
But in them it were a wonder.

So between them love did shine,
That the turtle saw his right
Flaming in the phoenix' sight:
Either was the other's mine.

Property was thus appall'd,
That the self was not the same;
Single nature's double name
Neither two nor one was call'd.

Reason, in itself confounded,
Saw division grow together;
To themselves yet either-neither,
Simple were so well compounded

That it cried how true a twain
Seemeth this concordant one!
Love hath reason, reason none
If what parts can so remain.

Whereupon it made this threne
To the phoenix and the dove,
Co-supreme and stars of love;
As chorus to their tragic scene.

THRENOS.

Beauty, truth, and rarity.
Grace in all simplicity,
Here enclos'd in cinders lie.

Death is now the phoenix' nest;

And the turtle's loyal breast
To eternity doth rest,

Leaving no posterity:--
'Twas not their infirmity,
It was married chastity.

Truth may seem, but cannot be:
Beauty brag, but 'tis not she;
Truth and beauty buried be.

To this urn let those repair
That are either true or fair;
For these dead birds sigh a prayer.

A LOVER'S COMPLAINT

This narrative poem was included as an appendix to the original edition of the sonnets, published by Thomas Thorpe in 1609. The poem consists of forty-seven seven-line stanzas written in the rhyme royal (with the rhyme scheme ababbcc), a metre and structure identical to that of Shakespeare's earlier poem *The Rape of Lucrece* .

Despite its appearance in the published collection of the sonnets, critics have often doubted its authorship. *A Lover's Complaint* contains many words and forms not found elsewhere in Shakespeare, including several archaisms and Latinisms, and is sometimes regarded as rhythmically and structurally awkward. Conversely, other critics have praised its quality.

A LOVER'S COMPLAINT

From off a hill whose concave womb reworded
  A plaintful story from a sist'ring vale,
  My spirits t'attend this double voice accorded,
  And down I laid to list the sad-tuned tale,
  Ere long espied a fickle maid full pale,
  Tearing of papers, breaking rings atwain,
  Storming her world with sorrow's wind and rain.

Upon her head a platted hive of straw,
  Which fortified her visage from the sun,
  Whereon the thought might think sometime it saw
  The carcase of a beauty spent and done.
  Time had not scythed all that youth begun,
  Nor youth all quit, but spite of heaven's fell rage
  Some beauty peeped through lattice of seared age.

Oft did she heave her napkin to her eyne,
  Which on it had conceited characters,
  Laund'ring the silken figures in the brine
  That seasoned woe had pelleted in tears,
  And often reading what contents it bears;
  As often shrieking undistinguished woe,
  In clamours of all size, both high and low.

Sometimes her levelled eyes their carriage ride,
  As they did batt'ry to the spheres intend;
  Sometime diverted their poor balls are tied
  To th' orbed earth; sometimes they do extend
  Their view right on; anon their gazes lend
  To every place at once, and nowhere fixed,
  The mind and sight distractedly commixed.

Her hair, nor loose nor tied in formal plat,
  Proclaimed in her a careless hand of pride;
  For some, untucked, descended her sheaved hat,
  Hanging her pale and pined cheek beside;
  Some in her threaden fillet still did bide,

  And, true to bondage, would not break from thence,
  Though slackly braided in loose negligence.

A thousand favours from a maund she drew
  Of amber, crystal, and of beaded jet,
  Which one by one she in a river threw,
  Upon whose weeping margent she was set;
  Like usury applying wet to wet,
  Or monarchs' hands that lets not bounty fall
  Where want cries some, but where excess begs all.

Of folded schedules had she many a one,
  Which she perused, sighed, tore, and gave the flood;
  Cracked many a ring of posied gold and bone,
  Bidding them find their sepulchres in mud;
  Found yet moe letters sadly penned in blood,
  With sleided silk feat and affectedly
  Enswathed and sealed to curious secrecy.

These often bathed she in her fluxive eyes,
  And often kissed, and often 'gan to tear;
  Cried, 'O false blood, thou register of lies,
  What unapproved witness dost thou bear!
  Ink would have seemed more black and damned here!
  This said, in top of rage the lines she rents,
  Big discontents so breaking their contents.

A reverend man that grazed his cattle nigh,
  Sometime a blusterer that the ruffle knew
  Of court, of city, and had let go by
  The swiftest hours observed as they flew,
  Towards this afflicted fancy fastly drew;
  And, privileged by age, desires to know
  In brief the grounds and motives of her woe.

So slides he down upon his grained bat,
  And comely distant sits he by her side;
  When he again desires her, being sat,
  Her grievance with his hearing to divide.

If that from him there may be aught applied
Which may her suffering ecstasy assuage,
'Tis promised in the charity of age.

'Father,' she says, 'though in me you behold
The injury of many a blasting hour,
Let it not tell your judgement I am old:
Not age, but sorrow, over me hath power.
I might as yet have been a spreading flower,
Fresh to myself, if I had self-applied
Love to myself, and to no love beside.

'But woe is me! too early I attended
A youthful suit-it was to gain my grace-
O, one by nature's outwards so commended
That maidens' eyes stuck over all his face.
Love lacked a dwelling and made him her place;
And when in his fair parts she did abide,
She was new lodged and newly deified.

'His browny locks did hang in crooked curls;
And every light occasion of the wind
Upon his lips their silken parcels hurls.
What's sweet to do, to do will aptly find:
Each eye that saw him did enchant the mind;
For on his visage was in little drawn
What largeness thinks in Paradise was sawn.

'Small show of man was yet upon his chin;
His phoenix down began but to appear,
Like unshorn velvet, on that termless skin,
Whose bare out-bragged the web it seemed to wear:
Yet showed his visage by that cost more dear;
And nice affections wavering stood in doubt
If best were as it was, or best without.

'His qualities were beauteous as his form,
For maiden-tongued he was, and thereof free;
Yet if men moved him, was he such a storm

As oft 'twixt May and April is to see,
When winds breathe sweet, unruly though they be.
His rudeness so with his authorized youth
Did livery falseness in a pride of truth.

'Well could he ride, and often men would say,
"That horse his mettle from his rider takes:
Proud of subjection, noble by the sway,
What rounds, what bounds, what course, what stop he makes!"
And controversy hence a question takes
Whether the horse by him became his deed,
Or he his manage by th' well-doing steed.

'But quickly on this side the verdict went:
His real habitude gave life and grace
To appertainings and to ornament,
Accomplished in himself, not in his case,
All aids, themselves made fairer by their place,
Came for additions; yet their purposed trim
Pierced not his grace, but were all graced by him.

'So on the tip of his subduing tongue
All kind of arguments and question deep,
All replication prompt, and reason strong,
For his advantage still did wake and sleep.
To make the weeper laugh, the laugher weep,
He had the dialect and different skill,
Catching all passions in his craft of will,

'That he did in the general bosom reign
Of young, of old, and sexes both enchanted,
To dwell with him in thoughts, or to remain
In personal duty, following where he haunted.
Consents bewitched, ere he desire, have granted,
And dialogued for him what he would say,
Asked their own wills, and made their wills obey.

'Many there were that did his picture get,
To serve their eyes, and in it put their mind;

Like fools that in th' imagination set
The goodly objects which abroad they find
Of lands and mansions, theirs in thought assigned;
And labouring in moe pleasures to bestow them
Than the true gouty landlord which doth owe them.

'So many have, that never touched his hand,
Sweetly supposed them mistress of his heart.
My woeful self, that did in freedom stand,
And was my own fee-simple, not in part,
What with his art in youth, and youth in art,
Threw my affections in his charmed power
Reserved the stalk and gave him all my flower.

'Yet did I not, as some my equals did,
Demand of him, nor being desired yielded;
Finding myself in honour so forbid,
With safest distance I mine honour shielded.
Experience for me many bulwarks builded
Of proofs new-bleeding, which remained the foil
Of this false jewel, and his amorous spoil.

'But ah, who ever shunned by precedent
The destined ill she must herself assay?
Or forced examples, 'gainst her own content,
To put the by-past perils in her way?
Counsel may stop awhile what will not stay;
For when we rage, advice is often seen
By blunting us to make our wills more keen.

'Nor gives it satisfaction to our blood
That we must curb it upon others' proof,
To be forbod the sweets that seems so good
For fear of harms that preach in our behoof.
O appetite, from judgement stand aloof!
The one a palate hath that needs will taste,
Though Reason weep, and cry it is thy last.

'For further I could say this man's untrue,

  And knew the patterns of his foul beguiling;
  Heard where his plants in others' orchards grew;
  Saw how deceits were gilded in his smiling;
  Knew vows were ever brokers to defiling;
  Thought characters and words merely but art,
  And bastards of his foul adulterate heart.

'And long upon these terms I held my city,
  Till thus he 'gan besiege me: "Gentle maid,
  Have of my suffering youth some feeling pity,
  And be not of my holy vows afraid.
  That's to ye sworn to none was ever said;
  For feasts of love I have been called unto,
  Till now did ne'er invite nor never woo.

'"All my offences that abroad you see
  Are errors of the blood, none of the mind;
  Love made them not; with acture they may be,
  Where neither party is nor true nor kind.
  They sought their shame that so their shame did find;
  And so much less of shame in me remains
  By how much of me their reproach contains.

'"Among the many that mine eyes have seen,
  Not one whose flame my heart so much as warmed,
  Or my affection put to th' smallest teen,
  Or any of my leisures ever charmed.
  Harm have I done to them, but ne'er was harmed;
  Kept hearts in liveries, but mine own was free,
  And reigned commanding in his monarchy.

'"Look here what tributes wounded fancies sent me,
  Of paled pearls and rubies red as blood;
  Figuring that they their passions likewise lent me
  Of grief and blushes, aptly understood
  In bloodless white and the encrimsoned mood-
  Effects of terror and dear modesty,
  Encamped in hearts, but fighting outwardly.

'"And, lo, behold these talents of their hair,
With twisted metal amorously empleached,
I have receiv'd from many a several fair,
Their kind acceptance weepingly beseeched,
With the annexions of fair gems enriched,
And deep-brained sonnets that did amplify
Each stone's dear nature, worth, and quality.

'"The diamond? why, 'twas beautiful and hard,
Whereto his invised properties did tend;
The deep-green em'rald, in whose fresh regard
Weak sights their sickly radiance do amend;
The heaven-hued sapphire and the opal blend
With objects manifold; each several stone,
With wit well blazoned, smiled, or made some moan.

'"Lo, all these trophies of affections hot,
Of pensived and subdued desires the tender,
Nature hath charged me that I hoard them not,
But yield them up where I myself must render-
That is, to you, my origin and ender;
For these, of force, must your oblations be,
Since I their altar, you enpatron me.

'"O then advance of yours that phraseless hand
Whose white weighs down the airy scale of praise;
Take all these similes to your own command,
Hallowed with sighs that burning lungs did raise;
What me your minister for you obeys
Works under you; and to your audit comes
Their distract parcels in combined sums.

'"Lo, this device was sent me from a nun,
Or sister sanctified, of holiest note,
Which late her noble suit in court did shun,
Whose rarest havings made the blossoms dote;
For she was sought by spirits of richest coat,
But kept cold distance, and did thence remove
To spend her living in eternal love.

'"But, O my sweet, what labour is't to leave
  The thing we have not, mast'ring what not strives,
  Playing the place which did no form receive,
  Playing patient sports in unconstrained gyves!
  She that her fame so to herself contrives,
  The scars of battle scapeth by the flight,
  And makes her absence valiant, not her might.

'"O pardon me in that my boast is true!
  The accident which brought me to her eye
  Upon the moment did her force subdue,
  And now she would the caged cloister fly.
  Religious love put out religion's eye.
  Not to be tempted, would she be immured,
  And now to tempt all liberty procured.

'"How mighty then you are, O hear me tell!
  The broken bosoms that to me belong
  Have emptied all their fountains in my well,
  And mine I pour your ocean all among.
  I strong o'er them, and you o'er me being strong,
  Must for your victory us all congest,
  As compound love to physic your cold breast.

'"My parts had pow'r to charm a sacred nun,
  Who, disciplined, ay, dieted in grace,
  Believed her eyes when they t'assail begun,
  All vows and consecrations giving place,
  O most potential love, vow, bond, nor space,
  In thee hath neither sting, knot, nor confine,
  For thou art all, and all things else are thine.

'"When thou impressest, what are precepts worth
  Of stale example? When thou wilt inflame,
  How coldly those impediments stand forth,
  Of wealth, of filial fear, law, kindred, fame!
  Love's arms are peace, 'gainst rule, 'gainst sense, 'gainst shame.
  And sweetens, in the suff'ring pangs it bears,

  The aloes of all forces, shocks and fears.

'"Now all these hearts that do on mine depend,
  Feeling it break, with bleeding groans they pine,
  And supplicant their sighs to your extend,
  To leave the batt'ry that you make 'gainst mine,
  Lending soft audience to my sweet design,
  And credent soul to that strong-bonded oath,
  That shall prefer and undertake my troth."

'This said, his wat'ry eyes he did dismount,
  Whose sights till then were levelled on my face;
  Each cheek a river running from a fount
  With brinish current downward flowed apace.
  O, how the channel to the stream gave grace!
  Who glazed with crystal gate the glowing roses
  That flame through water which their hue encloses.

'O father, what a hell of witchcraft lies
  In the small orb of one particular tear!
  But with the inundation of the eyes
  What rocky heart to water will not wear?
  What breast so cold that is not warmed here?
  O cleft effect! cold modesty, hot wrath,
  Both fire from hence and chill extincture hath.

'For lo, his passion, but an art of craft,
  Even there resolved my reason into tears;
  There my white stole of chastity I daffed,
  Shook off my sober guards and civil fears;
  Appear to him as he to me appears,
  All melting; though our drops this diff'rence bore:
  His poisoned me, and mine did him restore.

'In him a plenitude of subtle matter,
  Applied to cautels, all strange forms receives,
  Of burning blushes or of weeping water,
  Or swooning paleness; and he takes and leaves,
  In either's aptness, as it best deceives,

To blush at speeches rank, to weep at woes,
Or to turn white and swoon at tragic shows;

'That not a heart which in his level came
Could scape the hail of his all-hurting aim,
Showing fair nature is both kind and tame;
And, veiled in them, did win whom he would maim.
Against the thing he sought he would exclaim;
When he most burned in heart-wished luxury,
He preached pure maid and praised cold chastity.

'Thus merely with the garment of a Grace
The naked and concealed fiend he covered,
That th' unexperient gave the tempter place,
Which, like a cherubin, above them hovered.
Who, young and simple, would not be so lovered?
Ay me, I fell, and yet do question make
What I should do again for such a sake.

'O, that infected moisture of his eye,
O, that false fire which in his cheek so glowed,
O, that forced thunder from his heart did fly,
O, that sad breath his spongy lungs bestowed,
O, all that borrowed motion, seeming owed,
Would yet again betray the fore-betrayed,
And new pervert a reconciled maid.'

The Apocryphal Poetry

TO THE QUEEN

This short 18 line poem is of doubtful origin and was written on the back of an envelope, and thought to have been written as an epilogue for a performance of *As You Like It* , given at court on Shrove Tuesday in February 1599. American scholars William Ringler and Steven May discovered the poem in 1972 in the notebook of a man called Henry Stanford, who is known to have worked in the household of the Lord Chamberlain.

As the dial hand tells o'er

The same hours it had before,

Still beginning in the ending,

Circular account still lending,

So, most mighty Queen we pray,

Like the dial day by day

You may lead the seasons on,

Making new when old are gone,

That the babe which now is young

And hath yet no use of tongue

Many a Shrovetide here may bow

To that empress I do now,

That the children of these lords,

Sitting at your council boards,

May be grave and aged seen

Of her that was their fathers' queen.

Once I wish this wish again,

Heaven subscribe it with "Amen".

A FUNERAL ELEGY FOR MASTER WILLIAM PETER

In 1989 scholar and forensic linguist Donald Foster used stylometric computer analysis to attribute this poem to Shakespeare, based on an analysis of its grammatical patterns and idiosyncratic word usage. However, later analysis by scholars Gilles Monsarrat and Brian Vickers showed Foster's attribution to be premature, and that the true author may well have been the playwright John Ford.

TO MASTER JOHN PETER

of Bowhay in Devon, Esquire.

The love I bore to your brother, and will do to his memory, hath crav'd

from me this last duty of a friend; I am herein but a second to the privilege of Truth, who can warrant more in his behalf than I undertook to deliver. Exercise in this kind I will little affect, and am less addicted to, but there must be miracle in that labor which, to witness my remembrance to this departed gentleman, I would not willingly undergo. Yet whatsoever is here done, is done to him, and to him only. For whom and whose sake I will not forget to remember any friendly respects to you, or to any of those that have lov'd him for himself, and himself for his deserts.

W. S.

A FUNERAL ELEGY

Since Time, and his predestinated end,
Abridg'd the circuit of his hopeful days,
Whiles both his Youth and Virtue did intend
The good endeavors of deserving praise,
What memorable monument can last
Whereon to build his never-blemish'd name
But his own worth, wherein his life was grac'd-
Sith as [that] ever he maintain'd the same?
Oblivion in the darkest day to come,
When sin shall tread on merit in the dust,
Cannot rase out the lamentable tomb
Of his short-liv'd deserts; but still they must,
Even in the hearts and memories of men,
Claim fit Respect, that they, in every limb
Rememb'ring what he was, with comfort then
May pattern out one truly good, by him.
For he was truly good, if honest care

Of harmless conversation may commend
A life free from such stains as follies are,
Ill recompensed only in his end.
Nor can the tongue of him who lov'd him least
(If there can be minority of love
To one superlative above the rest
Of many men in steady faith) reprove
His constant temper, in the equal weight
Of thankfulness and kindness: Truth doth leave
Sufficient proof, he was in every right
As kind to give, as thankful to receive.
The curious eye of a quick-brain'd survey
Could scantly find a mote amidst the sun
Of his too-short'ned days, or make a prey
Of any faulty errors he had done-
Not that he was above the spleenful sense
And spite of malice, but for that he had
Warrant enough in his own innocence
Against the sting of some in nature bad.
Yet who is he so absolutely blest
That lives encompass'd in a mortal frame,

Sometime in reputation not oppress'd
By some in nothing famous but defame?
Such in the By-path and the Ridgeway lurk
That leads to ruin, in a smooth pretense
Of what they do to be a special work
Of singleness, not tending to offense;
Whose very virtues are, not to detract
Whiles hope remains of gain (base fee of slaves),
Despising chiefly men in fortunes wrack'd-
But death to such gives unrememb'red graves.
Now therein liv'd he happy, if to be
Free from detraction happiness it be.
His younger years gave comfortable hope
To hope for comfort in his riper youth,
Which, harvest-like, did yield again the crop
Of Education, better'd in his truth.
Those noble twins of heaven-infused races,
Learning and Wit, refined in their kind
Did jointly both, in their peculiar graces,
Enrich the curious temple of his mind;
Indeed a temple, in whose precious white

Sat Reason by Religion oversway'd,
Teaching his other senses, with delight,
How Piety and Zeal should be obey'd-
Not fruitlessly in prodigal expense
Wasting his best of time, but so content
With Reason's golden Mean to make defense
Against the assault of youth's encouragement;
As not the tide of this surrounding age
(When now his father's death had freed his will)
Could make him subject to the drunken rage
Of such whose only glory is their ill.
He from the happy knowledge of the wise
Draws virtue to reprove secured fools
And shuns the glad sleights of ensnaring vice
To spend his spring of days in sacred schools.
Here gave he diet to the sick desires
That day by day assault the weaker man,
And with fit moderation still retires
From what doth batter virtue now and then.
But that I not intend in full discourse
To progress out his life, I could display

A good man in each part exact and force
The common voice to warrant what I say.
For if his fate and heaven had decreed
That full of days he might have liv'd to see
The grave in peace, the times that should succeed
Had been best-speaking witnesses with me;
Whose conversation so untouch'd did move
Respect most in itself, as who would scan
His honesty and worth, by them might prove
He was a kind, true, perfect gentleman-
Not in the outside of disgraceful folly,
Courting opinion with unfit disguise,
Affecting fashions, nor addicted wholly
To unbeseeming blushless vanities,
But suiting so his habit and desire
As that his Virtue was his best Attire.
Not in the waste of many idle words
Car'd he to be heard talk, nor in the float
Of fond conceit, such as this age affords,
By vain discourse upon himself to dote;
For his becoming silence gave such grace

To his judicious parts, as what he spake
Seem'd rather answers which the wise embrace
Than busy questions such as talkers make.
And though his qualities might well deserve
Just commendation, yet his furnish'd mind
Such harmony of goodness did preserve
As nature never built in better kind;
Knowing the best, and therefore not presuming
In knowing, but for that it was the best,
Ever within himself free choice resuming
Of true perfection, in a perfect breast;
So that his mind and body made an inn,
The one to lodge the other, both like fram'd
For fair conditions, guests that soonest win
Applause; in generality, well fam'd,
If trim behavior, gestures mild, discreet
Endeavors, modest speech, beseeming mirth,
True friendship, active grace, persuasion sweet,
Delightful love innated from his birth,
Acquaintance unfamiliar, carriage just,
Offenseless resolution, wish'd sobriety,

Clean-temper'd moderation, steady trust,
Unburthen'd conscience, unfeign'd piety;
If these, or all of these, knit fast in one
Can merit praise, then justly may we say,
Not any from this frailer stage is gone
Whose name is like to live a longer day-
Though not in eminent courts or places great
For popular concourse, yet in that soil
Where he enjoy'd his birth, life, death, and seat
Which now sits mourning his untimely spoil.
And as much glory is it to be good
For private persons, in their private home,
As those descended from illustrious blood
In public view of greatness, whence they come.
Though I, rewarded with some sadder taste
Of knowing shame, by feeling it have prov'd
My country's thankless misconstruction cast
Upon my name and credit, both unlov'd
By some whose fortunes, sunk into the wane
Of plenty and desert, have strove to win
Justice by wrong, and sifted to embane

My reputation with a witless sin;
Yet time, the father of unblushing truth,
May one day lay ope malice which hath cross'd it,
And right the hopes of my endangered youth,
Purchasing credit in the place I lost it.
Even in which place the subject of the verse
(Unhappy matter of a mourning style
Which now that subject's merits doth rehearse)
Had education and new being; while
By fair demeanor he had won repute
Amongst the all of all that lived there,
For that his actions did so wholly suit
With worthiness, still memorable here.
The many hours till the day of doom
Will not consume his life and hapless end,
For should he lie obscur'd without a tomb,
Time would to time his honesty commend;
Whiles parents to their children will make known,
And they to their posterity impart,
How such a man was sadly overthrown
By a hand guided by a cruel heart,

Whereof as many as shall hear that sadness
Will blame the one's hard fate, the other's madness;
Whiles such as do recount that tale of woe,
Told by remembrance of the wisest heads,
Will in the end conclude the matter so,
As they will all go weeping to their beds.
For when the world lies winter'd in the storms
Of fearful consummation, and lays down
Th' unsteady change of his fantastic forms,
Expecting ever to be overthrown;
When the proud height of much affected sin
Shall ripen to a head, and in that pride
End in the miseries it did begin
And fall amidst the glory of his tide;
Then in a book where every work is writ
Shall this man's actions be reveal'd, to show
The gainful fruit of well-employed wit,
Which paid to heaven the debt that it did owe.
Here shall be reckon'd up the constant faith,
Never untrue, where once he love profess'd;
Which is a miracle in men, one saith,

Long sought though rarely found, and he is best
Who can make friendship, in those times of change,
Admired more for being firm than strange.
When those weak houses of our brittle flesh
Shall ruin'd be by death, our grace and strength,
Youth, memory and shape that made us fresh
Cast down, and utterly decay'd at length;
When all shall turn to dust from whence we came
And we low-level'd in a narrow grave,
What can we leave behind us but a name,
Which, by a life well led, may honor have?
Such honor, O thou youth untimely lost,
Thou didst deserve and hast; for though thy soul
Hath took her flight to a diviner coast,
Yet here on earth thy fame lives ever whole,
In every heart seal'd up, in every tongue
Fit matter to discourse, no day prevented
That pities not thy sad and sudden wrong,
Of all alike beloved and lamented.
And I here to thy memorable worth,
In this last act of friendship, sacrifice

My love to thee, which I could not set forth
In any other habit of disguise.
Although I could not learn, whiles yet thou wert,
To speak the language of a servile breath,
My truth stole from my tongue into my heart,
Which shall not thence be sund'red, but in death.
And I confess my love was too remiss
That had not made thee know how much I priz'd thee,
But that mine error was, as yet it is,
To think love best in silence: for I siz'd thee
By what I would have been, not only ready
In telling I was thine, but being so,
By some effect to show it. He is steady
Who seems less than he is in open show.
Since then I still reserv'd to try the worst
Which hardest fate and time thus can lay on me.
T' enlarge my thoughts was hindered at first,
While thou hadst life; I took this task upon me,
To register with mine unhappy pen
Such duties as it owes to thy desert,
And set thee as a president to men,

And limn thee to the world but as thou wert-
Not hir'd, as heaven can witness in my soul,
By vain conceit, to please such ones as know it,
Nor servile to be lik'd, free from control,
Which, pain to many men, I do not owe it.
But here I trust I have discharged now
(Fair lovely branch too soon cut off) to thee,
My constant and irrefragable vow,
As, had it chanc'd, thou mightst have done to me-
But that no merit strong enough of mine
Had yielded store to thy well-abled quill
Whereby t'enroll my name, as this of thine,
How s'ere enriched by thy plenteous skill.
Here, then, I offer up to memory
The value of my talent, precious man,
Whereby if thou live to posterity,
Though't be not as I would, 'tis as I can:
In minds from whence endeavor doth proceed,
A ready will is taken for the deed.
Yet ere I take my longest last farewell
From thee, fair mark of sorrow, let me frame

Some ampler work of thank, wherein to tell
What more thou didst deserve than in thy name,
And free thee from the scandal of such senses
As in the rancor of unhappy spleen
Measure thy course of life, with false pretenses
Comparing by thy death what thou hast been.
So in his mischiefs is the world accurs'd:
It picks out matter to inform the worst.
The willful blindness that hoodwinks the eyes
Of men enwrapped in an earthy veil
Makes them most ignorantly exercise
And yield to humor when it doth assail,
Whereby the candle and the body's light
Darkens the inward eyesight of the mind,
Presuming still it sees, even in the night
Of that same ignorance which makes them blind.
Hence conster they with corrupt commentaries,
Proceeding from a nature as corrupt,
The text of malice, which so often varies
As 'tis by seeming reason underpropp'd.
O, whither tends the lamentable spite

Of this world's teenful apprehension,
Which understands all things amiss, whose light
Shines not amidst the dark of their dissension?
True 'tis, this man, whiles yet he was a man,
Sooth'd not the current of besotted fashion,
Nor could disgest, as some loose mimics can,
An empty sound of overweening passion,
So much to be made servant to the base
And sensual aptness of disunion'd vices,
To purchase commendation by disgrace,
Whereto the world and heat of sin entices.
But in a safer contemplation,
Secure in what he knew, he ever chose
The ready way to commendation,
By shunning all invitements strange, of those
Whose illness is, the necessary praise
Must wait upon their actions; only rare
In being rare in shame (which strives to raise
Their name by doing what they do not care),
As if the free commission of their ill
Were even as boundless as their prompt desires;

Only like lords, like subjects to their will,
Which their fond dotage ever more admires.
He was not so: but in a serious awe,
Ruling the little ordered commonwealth
Of his own self, with honor to the law
That gave peace to his bread, bread to his health;
Which ever he maintain'd in sweet content
And pleasurable rest, wherein he joy'd
A monarchy of comfort's government,
Never until his last to be destroy'd.
For in the Vineyard of heaven-favored learning
Where he was double-honor'd in degree,
His observation and discreet discerning
Had taught him in both fortunes to be free;
Whence now retir'd home, to a home indeed
The home of his condition and estate,
He well provided 'gainst the hand of need,
Whence young men sometime grow unfortunate;
His disposition, by the bonds of unity,
So fast'ned to his reason that it strove
With understanding's grave immunity

To purchase from all hearts a steady love;
Wherein not any one thing comprehends
Proportionable note of what he was,
Than that he was so constant to his friends
As he would no occasion overpass
Which might make known his unaffected care,
In all respects of trial, to unlock
His bosom and his store, which did declare
That Christ was his, and he was Friendship's Rock:
A Rock of Friendship figured in his name,
Fore-shewing what he was, and what should be,
Most true presage; and he discharg'd the same
In every act of perfect amity-
Though in the complemental phrase of words
He never was addicted to the vain
Of boast, such as the common breath affords;
He was in use most fast, in tongue most plain,
Nor amongst all those virtues that forever
Adorn'd his reputation will be found
One greater than his Faith, which did persever,
Where once it was protested, alway sound.

Hence sprung the deadly fuel that reviv'd
The rage which wrought his end, for had he been
Slacker in love, he had been longer liv'd
And not oppress'd by wrath's unhappy sin-
By wrath's unhappy sin, which unadvis'd
Gave death for free good will, and wounds for love.
Pity it was that blood had not been priz'd
At higher rate, and reason set above
Most unjust choler, which untimely Drew
Destruction on itself; and most unjust,
Robb'd virtue of a follower so true
As time can boast of, both for love and trust:
So henceforth all (great glory to his blood)
Shall be but seconds to him, being good.
The wicked end their honor with their sin
In death, which only then the good begin.
Lo, here a lesson by experience taught
For men whose pure simplicity hath drawn
Their trust to be betray'd by being caught
Within the snares of making truth a pawn;
Whiles it, not doubting whereinto it enters,

Without true proof and knowledge of a friend,
Sincere in singleness of heart, adventers
To give fit cause, ere love begin to end:
His unfeign'd friendship where it least was sought,
Him to a fatal timeless ruin brought;
Whereby the life that purity adorn'd
With real merit, by this sudden end
Is in the mouth of some in manner scorn'd,
Made questionable, for they do intend,
According to the tenor of the saw
Mistook, if not observ'd (writ long ago
When men were only led by Reason's law),
That "Such as is the end, the life proves so."
Thus he, who to the universal lapse
Gave sweet redemption, off'ring up his blood
To conquer death by death, and loose the traps
Of hell, even in the triumph that it stood:
He thus, for that his guiltless life was spilt
By death, which was made subject to the curse,
Might in like manner be reprov'd of guilt
In his pure life, for that his end was worse.

But O far be it, our unholy lips
Should so profane the deity above
As thereby to ordain revenging whips
Against the day of Judgment and of Love.
The hand that lends us honor in our days
May shorten when it please, and justly take
Our honor from us many sundry ways,
As best becomes that wisdom did us make.
The second brother, who was next begot
Of all that ever were begotten yet,
Was by a hand in vengeance rude and hot
Sent innocent to be in heaven set-
Whose fame the angels in melodious choirs
Still witness to the world. Then why should he,
Well-profited in excellent desires,
Be more rebuk'd, who had like destiny?
Those saints before the everlasting throne
Who sit with crowns of glory on their heads,
Wash'd white in blood, from earth hence have not gone
All to their joys in quiet on their beds,
But tasted of the sour-bitter scourge

Of torture and affliction ere they gained
Those blessings which their sufferance did urge,
Whereby the grace fore-promis'd they attained.
Let then the false suggestions of the froward,
Building large castles in the empty air,
By suppositions fond and thoughts untoward
(Issues of discontent and sick despair)
Rebound gross arguments upon their heart
That may disprove their malice, and confound
Uncivil loose opinions which insert
Their souls into the roll that doth unsound
Betraying policies, and show their brains,
Unto their shame, ridiculous; whose scope
Is envy, whose endeavors fruitless pains,
In nothing surely prosperous, but hope-
And that same hope, so lame, so unprevailing,
It buries self-conceit in weak opinion;
Which being cross'd, gives matter of bewailing
Their vain designs, on whom want hath dominion.
Such, and of such condition, may devise
Which way to wound with defamation's spirit

(Close-lurking whisper's hidden forgeries)
His taintless goodness, his desertful merit.
But whiles the minds of men can judge sincerely,
Upon assured knowledge, his repute
And estimation shall be rumor'd clearly
In equal worth--time shall to time renew 't.
The Grave-that in his ever-empty womb
Forever closes up the unrespected
Who, when they die, die all-shall not entomb
His pleading best perfections as neglected.
They to his notice in succeeding years
Shall speak for him when he shall lie below;
When nothing but his memory appears
Of what he was, then shall his virtues grow.
His being but a private man in rank
(And yet not rank'd beneath a gentleman)
Shall not abridge the commendable thank
Which wise posterity shall give him then;
For Nature, and his therein happy Fate.
Ordain'd that by his quality of mind
T' ennoble that best part, although his state

Were to a lower blessedness confin'd.
Blood, pomp, state, honor, glory and command,
Without fit ornaments of disposition,
Are in themselves but heathenish and [profaned],
And much more peaceful is a mean condition
Which, underneath the roof of safe content,
Feeds on the bread of rest, and takes delight
To look upon the labors it hath spent
For its own sustenance, both day and night;
Whiles others, plotting which way to be great,
How to augment their portion and ambition,
Do toil their giddy brains, and ever sweat
For popular applause and power's commission.
But one in honors, like a seeled dove
Whose inward eyes are dimm'd with dignity,
Does think most safety doth remain above,
And seeks to be secure by mounting high:
Whence, when he falls, who did erewhile aspire,
Falls deeper down, for that he climbed higher.
Now men who in a lower region live
Exempt from danger of authority

Have fittest times in Reason's rules to thrive,
Not vex'd with envy of priority,
And those are much more noble in the mind
Than many that have nobleness by kind.
Birth, blood, and ancestors, are none of ours,
Nor can we make a proper challenge to them,
But virtues and perfections in our powers
Proceed most truly from us, if we do them.
Respective titles or a gracious style,
With all what men in eminence possess,
Are, without ornaments to praise them, vile:
The beauty of the mind is nobleness.
And such as have that beauty, well deserve
Eternal characters, that after death
Remembrance of their worth we may preserve,
So that their glory die not with their breath.
Else what avails it in a goodly strife
Upon this face of earth here to contend,
The good t'exceed the wicked in their life,
Should both be like obscured in their end?
Until which end, there is none rightly can

Be termed happy, since the happiness
Depends upon the goodness of the man,
Which afterwards his praises will express.
Look hither then, you that enjoy the youth
Of your best days, and see how unexpected
Death can betray your jollity to ruth
When death you think is least to be respected!
The person of this model here set out
Had all that youth and happy days could give him,
Yet could not all-encompass him about
Against th'assault of death, who to relieve him
Strook home but to the frail and mortal parts
Of his humanity, but could not touch
His flourishing and fair long-liv'd deserts,
Above fate's reach, his singleness was such-
So that he dies but once, but doubly lives,
Once in his proper self, then in his name;
Predestinated Time, who all deprives,
Could never yet deprive him of the same.
And had the Genius which attended on him
Been possibilited to keep him safe

Against the rigor that hath overgone him,
He had been to the public use a staff,
Leading by his example in the path
Which guides to doing well, wherein so few
The proneness of this age to error hath
Informed rightly in the courses true.
As then the loss of one, whose inclination
Strove to win love in general, is sad,
So specially his friends, in soft compassion
Do feel the greatest loss they could have had.
Amongst them all, she who those nine of years
Liv'd fellow to his counsels and his bed
Hath the most share in loss: for I in hers
Feel what distemperature this chance hath bred.
The chaste embracements of conjugal love,
Who in a mutual harmony consent,
Are so impatient of a strange remove
As meager death itself seems to lament,
And weep upon those cheeks which nature fram'd
To be delightful orbs in whom the force
Of lively sweetness plays, so that asham'd

Death often pities his unkind divorce.
Such was the separation here constrain'd
(Well-worthy to be termed a rudeness rather),
For in his life his love was so unfeign'd
As he was both an husband and a father-
The one in firm affection and the other
In careful providence, which ever strove
With joint assistance to grace one another
With every helpful furtherance of love.
But since the sum of all that can be said
Can be but said that "He was good" (which wholly
Includes all excellence can be display'd
In praise of virtue and reproach of folly).
His due deserts, this sentence on him gives,
"He died in life, yet in his death he lives."
Now runs the method of this doleful song
In accents brief to thee, O thou deceas'd!
To whom those pains do only all belong
As witnesses I did not love thee least.
For could my worthless brain find out but how
To raise thee from the sepulcher of dust,

Undoubtedly thou shouldst have partage now
Of life with me, and heaven be counted just
If to a supplicating soul it would
Give life anew, by giving life again
Where life is miss'd; whereby discomfort should
Right his old griefs, and former joys retain
Which now with thee are leap'd into thy tomb
And buried in that hollow vault of woe,
Expecting yet a more severer doom
Than time's strict flinty hand will let 'em know.
And now if I have level'd mine account
And reckon'd up in a true measured score
Those perfect graces which were ever wont
To wait on thee alive, I ask no more
(But shall hereafter in a poor content
Immure those imputations I sustain,
Learning my days of youth so to prevent
As not to be cast down by them again)-
Only those hopes which fate denies to grant
In full possession to a captive heart
Who, if it were in plenty, still would want

Before it may enjoy his better part;
From which detain'd, and banish'd in th' exile
Of dim misfortune, has none other prop
Whereon to lean and rest itself the while
But the weak comfort of the hapless, Hope.
And Hope must in despite of fearful change
Play in the strongest closet of my breast,
Although perhaps I ignorantly range
And court opinion in my deep'st unrest.
But whether doth the stream of my mischance
Drive me beyond myself, fast friend, soon lost,
Long may thy worthiness thy name advance
Amongst the virtuous and deserving most,
Who herein hast forever happy prov'd:
In life thou liv'dst, in death thou died'st belov'd.

FINIS

SONNETS TO SUNDRY NOTES OF MUSIC

This collection has often been attributed to Shakespeare, but only the second composition is clearly his, with lines that occur in *Love's Labour's Lost* . The fifth verse is almost universally credited to Christopher Marlowe.

I.

It was a lording's daughter, the fairest one of three,

That liked of her master as well as well might be.

Till looking on an Englishman, the fair'st that eye could see,

Her fancy fell a-turning.

Long was the combat doubtful, that love with love did fight,

To leave the master loveless, or kill the gallant knight;

To put in practice either, alas, it was a spite

Unto the silly damsel!

But one must be refused, more mickle was the pain,

That nothing could be used, to turn them both to gain,

For of the two the trusty knight was wounded with disdain:

Alas, she could not help it!

Thus art, with arms contending, was victor of the day,

Which by a gift of learnlng did bear the maid away;

Then, lullaby, the learned man hath got the lady gay;

For now my song is ended.

II.

On a day (alack the day!)
Love, whose month was ever May,
Spied a blossom passing fair,
Playing in the wanton air:
Through the velvet leaves the wind,
All unseen, 'gan passage find;
That the lover, sick to death,
Wish'd himself the heaven's breath.
Air, quoth he, thy cheeks may blow;
Air, would I might triumph so!
But, alas! my hand hath sworn
Ne'er to pluck thee from thy thorn:
Vow, alack, for youth unmeet,
Youth, so apt to pluck a sweet,
Thou for whom Jove would swear
Juno but an Ethiope were;
And deny himself for Jove,
Turning mortal for thy love.

III.

My flocks feed not,

My ewes breed not,

My rams speed not,

All is amiss:

Love is dying,

Faith's defying,

Heart's denying,

Causer of this.

All my merry jigs are quite forgot,

All my lady's love is lost, God wot:

Where her faith was firmly fix'd in love,

There a nay is plac'd without remove.

One silly cross

Wrought all my loss;

O frowning Fortune, cursed, fickle dame!

For now I see,

Inconstancy

More in women than in men remain.

In black mourn I,

All fears scorn I,

Love bath forlorn me,
Living in thrall:
Heart is bleeding,
All help needing,
(O cruel speeding!)
Fraughted with gall.
My shepherd's pipe can sound no deal,
My wether's bell rings doleful knell;
My curtail dog, that wont to have play'd,
Plays not at all, but seems afraid;
With sighs so deep,
Procures to weep,
In howling-wise, to see my doleful plight.
How sighs resound
Through heartless ground,
Like a thousand vanquish'd men in bloody fight!
Clear wells spring not,
Sweet birds sing not,
Green plants bring not
Forth; they die;
Herds stand weeping,

Flocks all sleeping,

Nymphs back peeping

Fearfully.

All our pleasure known to us poor swains,

All our merry meetings on the plains,

All our evening sport from us is fled,

All our love is lost, for Love is dead.

Farewell, sweet lass,

Thy like ne'er was

For a sweet content, the cause of all my moan:

Poor Coridon

Must live alone,

Other help for him I see that there is none.

IV.

When as thine eye hath chose the dame,

And stall'd the deer that thou shouldst strike,

Let reason rule things worthy blame,

As well as fancy partial might:

Take counsel of some wiser head,

Neither too young, nor yet unwed.

And when thou com'st thy tale to tell,
Smooth not thy tongue with filed talk,
Lest she some subtle practice smell,
(A cripple soon can find a halt:)
But plainly say thou lov'st her well,
And set thy person forth to sell.
What though her frowning brows be bent,
Her cloudy looks will calm ere night;
And then too late she will repent,
That thus dissembled her delight;
And twice desire, ere it be day,
That which with scorn she put away.
What though she strive to try her strength,
And ban and brawl, and say thee nay,
Her feeble force will yield at length,
When craft hath taught her thus to say:
'Had women been so strong as men,
In faith, you had not had it then.'
And to her will frame all thy ways;
Spare not to spend,--and chiefly there
Where thy desert may merit praise,

By ringing in thy lady's ear:

The strongest castle, tower, and town,

The golden bullet beats it down.

Serve always with assured trust,

And in thy suit be humble, true;

Unless thy lady prove unjust,

Press never thou to choose anew:

When time shall serve, be thou not slack

To proffer, though she put thee back.

The wiles and guiles that women work,

Dissembled with an outward show,

The tricks and toys that in them lurk,

The cock that treads them shall not know.

Have you not heard it said full oft,

A woman's nay doth stand for naught?

Think women still to strive with men,

To sin, and never for to saint:

There is no heaven, by holy then,

When time with age doth them attaint.

Were kisses all the joys in bed,

One woman would another wed.

But, soft! enough,--too much, I fear;
Lest that my mistress hear my song;
She'll not stick to round me i' the ear,
To teach my tongue to be so long:
Yet will she blush, here be it said,
To hear her secrets so bewray'd.

V.

Live with me, and be my love,
And we will all the pleasures prove,
That hills and valleys, dales and fields,
And all the craggy mountains yields.
There will we sit upon the rocks,
And see the shepherds feed their flocks,
By shallow rivers, by whose falls
Melodious birds sing madrigals.
There will I make thee a bed of roses,
With a thousand fragrant posies,
A cap of flowers, and a kirtle
Embroider'd all with leaves of myrtle.
A belt of straw and ivy buds,

With coral clasps and amber studs;

And if these pleasures may thee move,

Then live with me and be my love.

LOVE'S ANSWER.

If that the world and love were young,

And truth in every shepherd's tongue,

These pretty pleasures might me move

To live with thee and be thy love.

VI.

As it fell upon a day

In the merry month of May,

Sitting in a pleasant shade

Which a grove of myrtles made,

Beasts did leap, and birds did sing,

Trees did grow, and plants did spring;

Everything did banish moan,

Save the nightingale alone:

She, poor bird, as all forlorn,

Lean'd her breast up-till a thorn,

And there sung the dolefull'st ditty,

That to hear it was great pity:

Fie, fie, fie, now would she cry;

Teru, teru, by and by:

That to hear her so complain,

Scarce I could from tears refrain;

For her griefs, so lively shown,

Made me think upon mine own.

Ah, thought I, thou mourn'st in vain;

None take pity on thy pain:

Senseless trees, they cannot hear thee;

Ruthless bears, they will not cheer thee.

King Pandion, he is dead;

All thy friends are lapp'd in lead;

All thy fellow-birds do sing,

Careless of thy sorrowing.

Even so, poor bird, like thee,

None alive will pity me.

Whilst as fickle fortune smil'd,

Thou and I were both beguil'd.

Every one that flatters thee

Is no friend in misery.

Words are easy like the wind;

Faithful friends are hard to find.

Every man will be thy friend,

Whilst thou hast wherewith to spend;

But if store of crowns be scant,

No man will supply thy want.

If that one be prodigal,

Bountiful they will him call:

And with such-like flattering,

'Pity but he were a king.'

If he be addict to vice,

Quickly him they will entice;

If to women he be bent,

They have at commandement:

But if fortune once do frown,

Then farewell his great renown:

They that fawn'd on him before,

Use his company no more.

He that is thy frend indeed,

He will help thee in thy need;

If thou sorrow, he will weep;

If thou wake, he cannot sleep:

Thus of every grief in heart

He with thee doth bear a part.

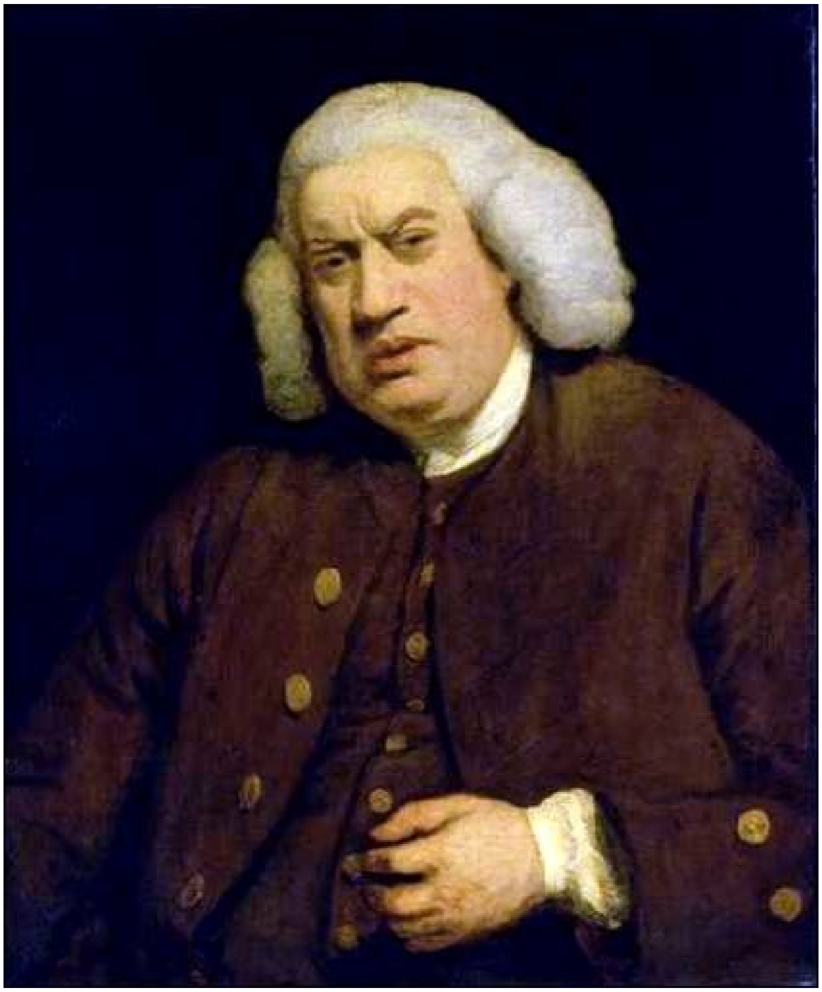
These are certain signs to know

Faithful friend from flattering foe.

The Criticism

PREFACE TO SHAKESPEARE AND NOTES ON PLAYS by Samuel Johnson

Samuel Johnson (1709-1784) was a renowned critic and author, as well as a poet, essayist, moralist, biographer, editor and lexicographer. His contribution to literature was immense, with his *Dictionary of the English Language* , published in 1755, standardising the nature of the English language. His later works included essays, an influential annotated edition of Shakespeare's plays and numerous critical books on the playwright’s oeuvre. Now, he is regarded as Shakespeare’s greatest critic and the leading expert in the literary criticism of his time.



Samuel Johnson, 1772

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PREFACE TO SHAKESPEARE

That praises are without reason lavished on the dead, and that the honours due only to excellence are paid to antiquity, is a complaint likely to be always continued by those, who, being able to add nothing to truth, hope for eminence from the heresies of paradox; or those, who, being forced by disappointment upon consolatory expedients, are willing to hope from posterity what the present age refuses, and flatter themselves that the regard which is yet denied by envy, will be at last bestowed by time.

Antiquity, like every other quality that attracts the notice of mankind, has undoubtedly votaries that reverence it, not from reason, but from prejudice. Some seem to admire indiscriminately whatever has been long preserved, without considering that time has sometimes co-operated with chance; all perhaps are more willing to honour past than present excellence; and the mind contemplates genius through the shades of age, as the eye surveys the sun through artificial opacity. The great contention of criticism is to find the faults of the moderns, and the beauties of the ancients. While an authour is yet living we estimate his powers by his worst performance, and when he is dead we rate them by his best.

To works, however, of which the excellence is not absolute and definite, but gradual and comparative; to works not raised upon principles demonstrative and scientifick, but appealing wholly to observation and experience, no other test can be applied than length of duration and continuance of esteem. What mankind have long possessed they have often examined and compared, and if they persist to value the possession, it is because frequent comparisons have confirmed opinion in its favour. As among the works of nature no man can properly call a river deep or a mountain high, without the knowledge of many mountains and many rivers; so in the productions of genius, nothing can be stiled excellent till it has been compared with other works of the same kind. Demonstration immediately displays its power, and has nothing to hope or fear from the flux of years; but works tentative and experimental must be estimated by their proportion to the general and collective ability of man, as it is discovered in a long succession of endeavours. Of the first building that was raised, it might be with certainty determined that it was round or square, but whether it was spacious or lofty must have been referred to time. The Pythagorean scale of numbers was at once discovered to be perfect; but the poems of Homer we yet know not to transcend the common limits of human intelligence, but by remarking, that nation after nation, and century after century, has been able to do little more than transpose his incidents, new name his characters, and paraphrase his sentiments.

The reverence due to writings that have long subsisted arises therefore not from any credulous confidence in the superior wisdom of past ages, or gloomy persuasion of the degeneracy of mankind, but is the consequence of acknowledged and indubitable positions, that what has been longest known has been most considered, and what is most considered is best understood.

The Poet, of whose works I have undertaken the revision, may now begin to assume the dignity of an ancient, and claim the privilege of established fame and prescriptive veneration. He has long outlived his century, the term commonly fixed as the test of literary merit. Whatever advantages he might once derive from personal allusions, local customs, or temporary opinions, have for many years been lost; and every topick of merriment or motive of sorrow, which the modes of artificial life afforded him, now only obscure the scenes which they once illuminated. The effects of favour and competition are at an end; the tradition of his friendships and his enmities has perished; his works support no opinion with arguments, nor supply any faction with invectives; they can neither indulge vanity nor gratify malignity, but are read without any other reason than the desire of pleasure, and are therefore praised only as pleasure is obtained; yet, thus unassisted by interest or passion, they have past through variations of taste and changes of manners, and, as they devolved from one generation to another, have received new honours at every transmission.

But because human judgment, though it be gradually gaining upon certainty, never becomes infallible; and approbation, though long continued, may yet be only the approbation of prejudice or fashion; it is proper to inquire, by what peculiarities of excellence Shakespeare has gained and kept the favour of his countrymen.

Nothing can please many, and please long, but just representations of general nature. Particular manners can be known to few, and therefore few only can judge how nearly they are copied. The irregular combinations of fanciful invention may delight a-while, by that novelty of which the common satiety of life sends us all in quest; but the pleasures of sudden wonder are soon exhausted, and the mind can only repose on the stability of truth.

Shakespeare is above all writers, at least above all modern writers, the poet of nature; the poet that holds up to his readers a faithful mirrour of manners and of life. His characters are not modified by the customs of particular places, unpractised by the rest of the world; by the peculiarities of studies or professions, which can operate but upon small numbers; or by the accidents of transient fashions or temporary opinions: they are the genuine progeny of common humanity, such as the world will always supply, and observation will always find. His persons act and speak by the influence of those general passions and principles by which all minds are agitated, and the whole system of life is continued in motion. In the writings of other poets a character is too often an individual; in those of Shakespeare it is commonly a species.

It is from this wide extension of design that so much instruction is derived. It is this which fills the plays of Shakespeare with practical axioms and domestick wisdom. It was said of Euripides, that every verse was a precept and it may be said of Shakespeare, that from his works may be collected a system of civil and oeconomical prudence. Yet his real power is not shown in the splendour of particular passages, but by the progress of his fable, and the tenour of his dialogue; and he that tries to recommend him by select quotations, will succeed like the pedant in Hierocles, who, when he offered his house to sale, carried a brick in his pocket as a specimen.

It will not easily be imagined how much Shakespeare excells in accommodating his sentiments to real life, but by comparing him with other authours. It was observed of the ancient schools of declamation, that the more diligently they were frequented, the more was the student disqualified for the world, because he found nothing there which he should ever meet in any other place. The same remark may be applied to every stage but that of Shakespeare. The theatre, when it is under any other direction, is peopled by such characters as were never seen, conversing in a language which was never heard, upon topicks which will never arise in the commerce of mankind. But the dialogue of this authour is often so evidently determined by the incident which produces it, and is pursued with so much ease and simplicity, that it seems scarcely to claim the merit of fiction, but to have been gleaned by diligent selection out of common conversation, and common occurrences.

Upon every other stage the universal agent is love, by whose power all good and evil is distributed, and every action quickened or retarded. To bring a lover, a lady and a rival into the fable; to entangle them in contradictory obligations, perplex them with oppositions of interest, and harrass them with violence of desires inconsistent with each other; to make them meet in rapture and part in agony; to fill their mouths with hyperbolical joy and outrageous sorrow; to distress them as nothing human ever was distressed; to deliver them as nothing human ever was delivered, is the business of a modern dramatist. For this probability is violated, life is misrepresented, and language is depraved. But love is only one of many passions, and as it has no great influence upon the sum of life, it has little operation in the dramas of a poet, who caught his ideas from the living world, and exhibited only what he saw before him. He knew, that any other passion, as it was regular or exorbitant, was a cause of happiness or calamity.

Characters thus ample and general were not easily discriminated and preserved, yet perhaps no poet ever kept his personages more distinct from each other. I will not say with Pope, that every speech may be assigned to the proper speaker, because many speeches there are which have nothing characteristical; but, perhaps, though some may be equally adapted to every person, it will be difficult to find, any that can be properly transferred from the present possessor to another claimant. The choice is right, when there is reason for choice.

Other dramatists can only gain attention by hyperbolical or aggravated characters, by fabulous and unexampled excellence or depravity, as the writers of barbarous romances invigorated the reader by a giant and a dwarf; and he that should form his expectations of human affairs from the play, or from the tale, would be equally deceived. Shakespeare has no heroes; his scenes are occupied only by men, who act and speak as the reader thinks that he should himself have spoken or acted on the same occasion: Even where the agency is supernatural the dialogue is level with life. Other writers disguise the most natural passions and most frequent incidents: so that he who contemplates them in the book will not know them in the world: Shakespeare approximates the remote, and familiarizes the wonderful; the event which he represents will not happen, but if it were possible, its effects would be probably such as he has assigned; and it may be said, that he has not only shewn human nature as it acts in real exigences, but as it would be found in trials, to which it cannot be exposed. This therefore is the praise of Shakespeare, that his drama is the mirrour of life; that he who has mazed his imagination, in following the phantoms which other writers raise up before him, may here be cured of his delirious extasies, by reading human sentiments in human language; by scenes from which a hermit may estimate the transactions of the world, and a confessor predict the progress of the passions.

His adherence to general nature has exposed him to the censure of criticks, who form their judgments upon narrower principles. Dennis and Rhymer think his Romans not sufficiently Roman; and Voltaire censures his kings as not completely royal. Dennis is offended, that Menenius, a senator of Rome, should play the buffoon; and Voltaire perhaps thinks decency violated when the Danish

Usurper is represented as a drunkard. But Shakespeare always makes nature predominate over accident; and if he preserves the essential character, is not very careful of distinctions superinduced and adventitious. His story requires Romans or kings, but he thinks only on men. He knew that Rome, like every other city, had men of all dispositions; and wanting a buffoon, he went into the senate-house for that which the senate-house would certainly have afforded him. He was inclined to shew an usurper and a murderer not only odious but despicable, he therefore added drunkenness to his other qualities, knowing that kings love wine like other men, and that wine exerts its natural power upon kings. These are the petty cavils of petty minds; a poet overlooks the casual distinction of country and condition, as a painter, satisfied with the figure, neglects the drapery.

The censure which he has incurred by mixing comick and tragick scenes, as it extends to all his works, deserves more consideration. Let the fact be first stated, and then examined.

Shakespeare's plays are not in the rigorous and critical sense either tragedies or comedies, but compositions of a distinct kind; exhibiting the real state of sublunary nature, which partakes of good and evil, joy and sorrow, mingled with endless variety of proportion and innumerable modes of combination; and expressing the course of the world, in which the loss of one is the gain of another; in which, at the same time, the reveller is hasting to his wine, and the mourner burying his friend; in which the malignity of one is sometimes defeated by the frolick of another; and many mischiefs and many benefits are done and hindered without design.

Out of this chaos of mingled purposes and casualties the ancient poets, according to the laws which custom had prescribed, selected some the crimes of men, and some their absurdities; some the momentous vicissitudes of life, and some the lighter occurrences; some the terrours of distress, and some the gayeties of prosperity. Thus rose the two modes of imitation, known by the names of tragedy and comedy, compositions intended to promote different ends by contrary means, and considered as so little allied, that I do not recollect among the Greeks or Romans a single writer who attempted both.

Shakespeare has united the powers of exciting laughter and sorrow not only in one mind, but in one composition. Almost all his plays are divided between serious and ludicrous characters, and, in the successive evolutions of the design, sometimes produce seriousness and sorrow, and sometimes levity and laughter.

That this is a practice contrary to the rules of criticism will be readily allowed; but there is always an appeal open from criticism to nature. The end of writing is to instruct; the end of poetry is to instruct by pleasing. That the mingled drama may convey all the instruction of tragedy or comedy cannot be denied, because it includes both in its alterations of exhibition, and approaches nearer than either to the appearance of life, by shewing how great machinations and slender designs may promote or obviate one another, and the high and the low co-operate in the general system by unavoidable concatenation.

It is objected, that by this change of scenes the passions are interrupted in their progression, and that the principal event, being not advanced by a due gradation of preparatory incidents, wants at last the power to move, which constitutes the perfection of dramatick poetry. This reasoning is so specious, that it is received as true even by those who in daily experience feel it to be false. The interchanges of mingled scenes seldom fail to produce the intended vicissitudes of passion. Fiction cannot move so much, but that the attention may be easily transferred; and though it must be allowed that pleasing melancholy be sometimes interrupted by unwelcome levity, yet let it be considered likewise, that melancholy is often not pleasing, and that the disturbance of one man may be the relief of another; that different auditors have different habitudes; and that, upon the whole, all pleasure consists in variety.

The players, who in their edition divided our authour's works into comedies, histories, and tragedies, seem not to have distinguished the three kinds, by any very exact or definite ideas.

An action which ended happily to the principal persons, however serious or distressful through its intermediate incidents, in their opinion constituted a comedy. This idea of a comedy continued long amongst us, and plays were written, which, by changing the catastrophe, were tragedies to-day and comedies to-morrow.

Tragedy was not in those times a poem of more general dignity or elevation than comedy; it required only a calamitous conclusion, with which the common criticism of that age was satisfied, whatever lighter pleasure it afforded in its progress.

History was a series of actions, with no other than chronological succession, independent of each other, and without any tendency to introduce or regulate the conclusion. It is not always very nicely distinguished from tragedy. There is not much nearer approach to unity of action in the tragedy of "Antony and Cleopatra", than in the history of "Richard the Second". But a history might be continued through many plays; as it had no plan, it had no limits.

Through all these denominations of the drama, Shakespeare's mode of composition is the same; an interchange of seriousness and merriment, by which the mind is softened at one time, and exhilarated at another. But whatever be his purpose, whether to gladden or depress, or to conduct the story, without vehemence or emotion, through tracts of easy and familiar dialogue, he never fails to attain his purpose; as he commands us, we laugh or mourn, or sit silent with quiet expectation, in tranquillity without indifference.

When Shakespeare's plan is understood, most of the criticisms of Rhymer and Voltaire vanish away. The play of "Hamlet" is opened, without impropriety, by two sentinels; Iago bellows at Brabantio's window, without injury to the scheme of the play, though in terms which a modern audience would not easily endure; the character of Polonius is seasonable and useful; and the Grave-diggers themselves may be heard with applause.

Shakespeare engaged in dramatick poetry with the world open before him; the rules of the ancients were yet known to few; the publick judgment was unformed; he had no example of such fame as might force him upon imitation, nor criticks of such authority as might restrain his extravagance: He therefore indulged his natural disposition, and his disposition, as Rhymer has remarked, led him to comedy. In tragedy he often writes with great appearance of toil and study, what is written at last with little felicity; but in his comick scenes, he seems to produce without labour, what no labour can improve. In tragedy he is always struggling after some occasion to be comick, but in comedy he seems to repose, or to luxuriate, as in a mode of thinking congenial to his nature. In his tragick scenes there is always something wanting, but his comedy often surpasses expectation or desire. His comedy pleases by the thoughts and the language, and his tragedy for the greater part by incident and action. His tragedy seems to be skill, his comedy to be instinct.

The force of his comick scenes has suffered little diminution from the changes made by a century and a half, in manners or in words. As his personages act upon principles arising from genuine passion, very little modified by particular forms, their pleasures and vexations are communicable to all times and to all places; they are natural, and therefore durable; the adventitious peculiarities of personal habits, are only superficial dies, bright and pleasing for a little while, yet soon fading to a dim tinct, without any remains of former lustre; but the discriminations of true passion are the colours of nature; they pervade the whole mass, and can only perish with the body that exhibits them. The accidental compositions of heterogeneous modes are dissolved by the chance which combined them; but the uniform simplicity of primitive qualities neither admits increase, nor suffers decay. The sand heaped by one flood is scattered by another, but the rock always continues in its place. The stream of time, which is continually washing the dissoluble fabricks of other poets, passes without injury by the adamant of Shakespeare.

If there be, what I believe there is, in every nation, a stile which never becomes obsolete, a certain mode of phraseology so consonant and congenial to the analogy and principles of its respective language as to remain settled and unaltered; this stile is probably to be sought in the common intercourse of life, among those who speak only to be understood, without ambition of elegance. The polite are always catching modish innovations, and the learned depart from established forms of speech, in hope of finding or making better; those who wish for distinction forsake the vulgar, when the vulgar is right; but there is a conversation above grossness and below refinement, where propriety resides, and where this poet seems to have gathered his comick dialogue. He is therefore more agreeable to the ears of the present age than any other authour equally remote, and among his other excellencies deserves to be studied as one of the original masters of our language.

These observations are to be considered not as unexceptionably constant, but as containing general and predominant truth. Shakespeare's familiar dialogue is affirmed to be smooth and clear, yet not wholly without ruggedness or difficulty; as a country may be eminently fruitful, though it has spots unfit for cultivation: His characters are praised as natural, though their sentiments are sometimes forced, and their actions improbable; as the earth upon the whole is spherical, though its surface is varied with protuberances and cavities.

Shakespeare with his excellencies has likewise faults, and faults sufficient to obscure and overwhelm any other merit. I shall shew them in the proportion in which they appear to me, without envious malignity or superstitious veneration. No question can be more innocently discussed than a dead poet's pretensions to renown; and little regard is due to that bigotry which sets candour higher than truth.

His first defect is that to which may be imputed most of the evil in books or in men. He sacrifices virtue to convenience, and is so much more careful to please than to instruct, that he seems to write without any moral purpose. From his writings indeed a system of social duty may be selected, for he that thinks reasonably must think morally; but his precepts and axioms drop casually from him; he makes no just distribution of good or evil, nor is always careful to shew in the virtuous a disapprobation of the wicked; he carries his persons indifferently through right and wrong, and at the close dismisses them without further care, and leaves their examples to operate by chance. This fault the barbarity of his age cannot extenuate; for it is always a writer's duty to make the world better, and justice is a virtue independant on time or place.

The plots are often so loosely formed, that a very slight consideration may improve them, and so carelessly pursued, that he seems not always fully to comprehend his own design. He omits opportunities of instructing or delighting which the train of his story seems to force upon him, and apparently rejects those exhibitions which would be more affecting, for the sake of those which are more easy.

It may be observed, that in many of his plays the latter part is evidently neglected. When he found himself near the end of his work, and, in view of his reward, he shortened the labour, to snatch the profit. He therefore remits his efforts where he should most vigorously exert them, and his catastrophe is improbably produced or imperfectly represented.

He had no regard to distinction of time or place, but gives to one age or nation, without scruple, the customs, institutions, and opinions of another, at the expence not only of likelihood, but of possibility. These faults Pope has endeavoured, with more zeal than judgment, to transfer to his imagined in interpolators. We need not wonder to find Hector quoting Aristotle, when we see the loves of Theseus and Hippolyta combined with the Gothic mythology of fairies. Shakespeare, indeed, was not the only violator of chronology, for in the same age Sidney, who wanted not the advantages of learning, has, in his "Arcadia", confounded the pastoral with the feudal times, the days of innocence, quiet and security, with those of turbulence, violence and adventure.

In his comick scenes he is seldom very successful, when he engages his characters in reciprocations of smartness and contest of sarcasm; their jests are commonly gross, and their pleasantry licentious; neither his gentlemen nor his ladies have much delicacy, nor are sufficiently distinguished from his clowns by any appearance of refined manners. Whether he represented the real conversation of his time is not easy to determine; the reign of Elizabeth is commonly supposed to have been a time of stateliness, formality and reserve, yet perhaps the relaxations of that severity were not very elegant. There must, however, have been always some modes of gayety preferable to others, and a writer ought to chuse the best.

In tragedy his performance seems constantly to be worse, as his labour is more. The effusions of passion which exigence forces out are for the most part striking and energetick; but whenever he solicits his invention, or strains his faculties, the offspring of his throes is tumour, meanness, tediousness, and obscurity.

In narration he affects a disproportionate pomp of diction and a wearisome train of circumlocution, and tells the incident imperfectly in many words, which might have been more plainly delivered in few. Narration in dramatick poetry is, naturally tedious, as it is unanimated and inactive, and obstructs the progress of the action; it should therefore always be rapid, and enlivened by frequent interruption. Shakespeare found it an encumbrance, and instead of lightening it by brevity, endeavoured to recommend it by dignity and splendour.

His declamations or set speeches are commonly cold and weak, for his power was the power of nature; when he endeavoured, like other tragick writers, to catch opportunities of amplification, and instead of inquiring what the occasion demanded, to show how much his stores of knowledge could supply, he seldom escapes without the pity or resentment of his reader.

It is incident to him to be now and then entangled with an unwieldy sentiment, which he cannot well express, and will not reject; he struggles with it a while, and if it continues stubborn, comprises it in words such as occur, and leaves it to be disentangled and evolved by those who have more leisure to bestow upon it.

Not that always where the language is intricate the thought is subtle, or the image always great where the line is bulky; the equality of words to things is very often neglected, and trivial sentiments and vulgar ideas disappoint the attention, to which they are recommended by sonorous epithets and swelling figures.

But the admirers of this great poet have never less reason to indulge their hopes of supreme excellence, than when he seems fully resolved to sink them in dejection, and mollify them with tender emotions by the fall of greatness, the danger of innocence, or the crosses of love. He is not long soft and pathetick without some idle conceit, or contemptible equivocation. He no sooner begins to move, than he counteracts himself; and terrour and pity, as they are rising in the mind, are checked and blasted by sudden frigidity.

A quibble is to Shakespeare, what luminous vapours are to the traveller; he follows it at all adventures, it is sure to lead him out of his way, and sure to engulf him in the mire. It has some malignant power over his mind, and its fascinations are irresistible. Whatever be the dignity or profundity of his disquisition, whether he be enlarging knowledge or exalting affection, whether he be amusing attention with incidents, or enchaining it in suspense, let but a quibble spring up before him, and he leaves his work unfinished. A quibble is the golden apple for which he will always turn aside from his career, or stoop from his elevation. A quibble poor and barren as it is, gave him such delight, that he was content to purchase it, by the sacrifice of reason, propriety and truth. A quibble was to him the fatal Cleopatra for which he lost the world, and was content to lose it.

It will be thought strange, that, in enumerating the defects of this writer, I have not yet mentioned his neglect of the unities; his violation of those laws which have been instituted and established by the joint authority of poets and of criticks.

For his other deviations from the art of writing, I resign him to critical justice, without making any other demand in his favour, than that which must be indulged to all human excellence; that his virtues be rated with his failings: But, from the censure which this irregularity may bring upon him, I shall, with due reverence to that learning which I must oppose, adventure to try how I can defend him.

His histories, being neither tragedies nor comedies, are not subject to any of their laws; nothing more is necessary to all the praise which they expect, than that the changes of action be so prepared as to be understood, that the incidents be various and affecting, and the characters consistent, natural and distinct. No other unity is intended, and therefore none is to be sought.

In his other works he has well enough preserved the unity of action. He has not, indeed, an intrigue regularly perplexed and regularly unravelled; he does not endeavour to hide his design only to discover it, for this is seldom the order of real events, and Shakespeare is the poet of nature: But his plan has commonly what Aristotle requires, a beginning, a middle, and an end; one event is concatenated with another, and the conclusion follows by easy consequence. There are perhaps some incidents that might be spared, as in other poets there is much talk that only fills up time upon the stage; but the general system makes gradual advances, and the end of the play is the end of expectation.

To the unities of time and place he has shewn no regard, and perhaps a nearer view of the principles on which they stand will diminish their value, and withdraw from them the veneration which, from the time of Corneille, they have very generally received by discovering that they have given more trouble to the poet, than pleasure to the auditor.

The necessity of observing the unities of time and place arises from the supposed necessity of making the drama credible. The criticks hold it impossible, that an action of months or years can be possibly believed to pass in three hours; or that the spectator can suppose himself to sit in the theatre, while ambassadors go and return between distant kings, while armies are levied and towns besieged, while an exile wanders and returns, or till he whom they saw courting his mistress, shall lament the untimely fall of his son. The mind revolts from evident falsehood, and fiction loses its force when it departs from the resemblance of reality.

From the narrow limitation of time necessarily arises the contraction of place. The spectator, who knows that he saw the first act at Alexandria, cannot suppose that he sees the next at Rome, at a distance to which not the dragons of Medea could, in so short a time, have transported him; he knows with certainty that he has not changed his place; and he knows that place cannot change itself; that what was a house cannot become a plain; that what was Thebes can never be Persepolis.

Such is the triumphant language with which a critick exults over the misery of an irregular poet, and exults commonly without resistance or reply. It is time therefore to tell him, by the authority of Shakespeare, that he assumes, as an unquestionable principle, a position, which, while his breath is forming it into words, his understanding pronounces to be false. It is false, that any representation is mistaken for reality; that any dramatick fable in its materiality was ever credible, or, for a single moment, was ever credited.

The objection arising from the impossibility of passing the first hour at Alexandria, and the next at Rome, supposes, that when the play opens the spectator really imagines himself at Alexandria, and believes that his walk to the theatre has been a voyage to Egypt, and that he lives in the days of Antony and Cleopatra. Surely he that imagines this, may imagine more. He that can take the stage at one time for the palace of the Ptolemies, may take it in half an hour for the promontory of Actium. Delusion, if delusion be admitted, has no certain limitation; if the spectator can be once persuaded, that his old acquaintance are Alexander and Caesar, that a room illuminated with candles is the plain of Pharsalia, or the bank of Granicus, he is in a state of elevation above the reach of reason, or of truth, and from the heights of empyrean poetry, may despise the circumscriptions of terrestrial nature. There is no reason why a mind thus wandering in extasy should count the clock, or why an hour should not be a century in that calenture of the brains that can make the stage a field.

The truth is, that the spectators are always in their senses, and know, from the first act to the last, that the stage is only a stage, and that the players are only players. They come to hear a certain number of lines recited with just gesture and elegant modulation. The lines relate to some action, and an action must be in some place; but the different actions that compleat a story may be in places very remote from each other; and where is the absurdity of allowing that space to represent first Athens, and then Sicily, which was always known to be neither Sicily nor Athens, but a modern theatre?

By supposition, as place is introduced, time may be extended; the time required by the fable elapses for the most part between the acts; for, of so much of the action as is represented, the real and poetical duration is the same. If, in the first act, preparations for war against Mithridates are represented to be made in Rome, the event of the war may, without absurdity, be represented, in the catastrophe, as happening in Pontus; we know that there is neither war, nor preparation for war; we know that we are neither in Rome nor Pontus; that neither Mithridates nor Lucullus are before us. The drama exhibits successive imitations of successive actions, and why may not the second imitation represent an action that happened years after the first; if it be so connected with it, that nothing but time can be supposed to intervene? Time is, of all modes of existence, most obsequious to the imagination; a lapse of years is as easily conceived as a passage of hours. In contemplation we easily contract the time of real actions, and therefore willingly permit it to be contracted when we only see their imitation.

It will be asked, how the drama moves, if it is not credited. It is credited with all the credit due to a drama. It is credited, whenever it moves, as a just picture of a real original; as representing to the auditor what he would himself feel, if he were to do or suffer what is there feigned to be suffered or to be done. The reflection that strikes the heart is not, that the evils before us are real evils, but that they are evils to which we ourselves may be exposed. If there be any fallacy, it is not that we fancy the players, but that we fancy ourselves unhappy for a moment; but we rather lament the possibility than suppose the presence of misery, as a mother weeps over her babe, when she remembers that death may take it from her. The delight of tragedy proceeds from our consciousness of fiction; if we thought murders and treasons real, they would please no more.

Imitations produce pain or pleasure, not because they are mistaken for realities, but because they bring realities to mind. When the imagination is recreated by a painted landscape, the trees are not supposed capable to give us shade, or the fountains coolness; but we consider, how we should be pleased with such fountains playing beside us, and such woods waving over us. We are agitated in reading the history of "Henry the Fifth", yet no man takes his book for the field of Agencourt. A dramatick exhibition is a book recited with concomitants that encrease or diminish its effect. Familiar comedy is often more powerful on the theatre, than in the page; imperial tragedy is always less. The humour of Petruchio may be heightened by grimace; but what voice or what gesture can hope to add dignity or force to the soliloquy of Cato.

A play read, affects the mind like a play acted. It is therefore evident, that the action is not supposed to be real, and it follows that between the acts a longer or shorter time may be allowed to pass, and that no more account of space or duration is to be taken by the auditor of a drama, than by the reader of a narrative, before whom may pass in an hour the life of a hero, or the revolutions of an empire.

Whether Shakespeare knew the unities, and rejected them by design, or deviated from them by happy ignorance, it is, I think, impossible to decide, and useless to inquire. We may reasonably suppose, that, when he rose to notice, he did not want the counsels and admonitions of scholars and criticks, and that he at last deliberately persisted in a practice, which he might have begun by chance. As nothing is essential to the fable, but unity of action, and as the unities of time and place arise evidently from false assumptions, and, by circumscribing the extent of the drama, lessen its variety, I cannot think it much to be lamented, that they were not known by him, or not observed: Nor, if such another poet could arise, should I very vehemently reproach him, that his first act passed at Venice, and his next in Cyprus. Such violations of rules merely positive, become the comprehensive genius of Shakespeare, and such censures are suitable to the minute and slender criticism of Voltaire:

Non usque adeo permiscuit imis
 Longus summa dies, ut non, si voce Metelli
 Serventur leges, malint a Caesare tolli.

Yet when I speak thus slightly of dramatick rules, I cannot but recollect how much wit and learning may be produced against me; before such authorities I am afraid to stand, not that I think the present question one of those that are to be decided by mere authority, but because it is to be suspected, that these precepts have not been so easily received but for better reasons than I have yet been able to find. The result of my enquiries, in which it would be ludicrous to boast of impartiality, is, that the unities of time and place are not essential to a just drama, that though they may sometimes conduce to pleasure, they are always to be sacrificed to the nobler beauties of variety and instruction; and that a play, written with nice observation of critical rules, is to be contemplated as an elaborate curiosity, as the product of superfluous and ostentatious art, by which is shewn, rather what is possible, than what is necessary.

He that, without diminution of any other excellence, shall preserve all the unities unbroken, deserves the like applause with the architect, who shall display all the orders of architecture in a citadel, without any deduction from its strength; but the principal beauty of a citadel is to exclude the enemy; and the greatest graces of a play, are to copy nature and instruct life.

Perhaps, what I have here not dogmatically but deliberately written, may recal the principles of the drama to a new examination. I am almost frighted at my own temerity; and when I estimate the fame and the strength of those that maintain the contrary opinion, am ready to sink down in reverential silence; as

Aeneas withdrew from the defence of Troy, when he saw Neptune shaking the wall, and Juno heading the besiegers.

Those whom my arguments cannot persuade to give their approbation to the judgment of Shakespeare, will easily, if they consider the condition of his life, make some allowance for his ignorance.

Every man's performances, to be rightly estimated, must be compared with the state of the age in which he lived, and with his own particular opportunities; and though to the reader a book be not worse or better for the circumstances of the authour, yet as there is always a silent reference of human works to human abilities, and as the enquiry, how far man may extend his designs, or how high he may rate his native force, is of far greater dignity than in what rank we shall place any particular performance, curiosity is always busy to discover the instruments, as well as to survey the workmanship, to know how much is to be ascribed to original powers, and how much to casual and adventitious help. The palaces of Peru or Mexico were certainly mean and incommodious habitations, if compared to the houses of European monarchs; yet who could forbear to view them with astonishment, who remembered that they were built without the use of iron?

The English nation, in the time of Shakespeare, was yet struggling to emerge from barbarity. The philology of Italy had been transplanted hither in the reign of Henry the Eighth; and the learned languages had been successfully cultivated by Lilly and More; by Pole, Cheke, and Gardiner; and afterwards by Smith, Clerk, Haddon, and Ascham. Greek was now taught to boys in the principal schools; and those who united elegance with learning, read, with great diligence, the Italian and Spanish poets. But literature was yet confined to professed scholars, or to men and women of high rank. The publick was gross and dark; and to be able to read and write, was an accomplishment still valued for its rarity.

Nations, like individuals, have their infancy. A people newly awakened to literary curiosity, being yet unacquainted with the true state of things, knows not how to judge of that which is proposed as its resemblance. Whatever is remote from common appearances is always welcome to vulgar, as to childish credulity; and of a country unenlightened by learning, the whole people is the vulgar. The study of those who then aspired to plebeian learning was laid out upon adventures, giants, dragons, and enchantments. The Death of Arthur was the favourite volume.

The mind, which has feasted on the luxurious wonders of fiction, has no taste of the insipidity of truth. A play which imitated only the common occurrences of the world, would, upon the admirers of Palmerin and Guy of Warwick, have made little impression; he that wrote for such an audience was under the necessity of looking round for strange events and fabulous transactions, and that incredibility, by which maturer knowledge is offended, was the chief recommendation of writings, to unskilful curiosity.

Our authour's plots are generally borrowed from novels, and it is reasonable to suppose, that he chose the most popular, such as were read by many, and related by more; for his audience could not have followed him through the intricacies of the drama, had they not held the thread of the story in their hands.

The stories, which we now find only in remoter authours, were in his time accessible and familliar. The fable of "As You Like It", which is supposed to be copied from Chaucer's Gamelyn, was a little pamphlet of those times; and old Mr. Cibber remembered the tale of Hamlet in plain English prose, which the criticks have now to seek in Saxo Grammaticus.

His English histories he took from English chronicles and English ballads; and as the ancient writers were made known to his countrymen by versions, they supplied him with new subjects; he dilated some of Plutarch's lives into plays, when they had been translated by North.

His plots, whether historical or fabulous, are always crouded with incidents, by which the attention of a rude people was more easily caught than by sentiment or argumentation; and such is the power of the marvellous even over those who despise it, that every man finds his mind more strongly seized by the tragedies of

Shakespeare than of any other writer; others please us by particular speeches, but he always makes us anxious for the event, and has perhaps excelled all but Homer in securing the first purpose of a writer, by exciting restless and unquenchable curiosity, and compelling him that reads his work to read it through.

The shows and bustle with which his plays abound have the same original. As knowledge advances, pleasure passes from the eye to the ear, but returns, as it declines, from the ear to the eye. Those to whom our authour's labours were exhibited had more skill in pomps or processions than in poetical language, and perhaps wanted some visible and discriminated events, as comments on the dialogue. He knew how he should most please; and whether his practice is more agreeable to nature, or whether his example has prejudiced the nation, we still find that on our stage something must be done as well as said, and inactive declamation is very coldly heard, however musical or elegant, passionate or sublime.

Voltaire expresses his wonder, that our authour's extravagancies are endured by a nation, which has seen the tragedy of Cato. Let him be answered, that Addison speaks the language of poets, and Shakespeare, of men. We find in Cato innumerable beauties which enamour us of its authour, but we see nothing that acquaints us with human sentiments or human actions; we place it with the fairest and the noblest progeny which judgment propagates by conjunction with learning, but "Othello" is the vigorous and vivacious offspring of observation impregnated by genius. Cato affords a splendid exhibition of artificial and fictitious manners, and delivers just and noble sentiments, in diction easy, elevated and harmonious, but its hopes and fears communicate no vibration to the heart; the composition refers us only to the writer; we pronounce the name of Cato, but we think on Addison.

The work of a correct and regular writer is a garden accurately formed and diligently planted, varied with shades, and scented with flowers; the composition of Shakespeare is a forest, in which oaks extend their branches, and pines tower in the air, interspersed sometimes with weeds and brambles, and sometimes giving shelter to myrtles and to roses; filling the eye with awful pomp, and gratifying the mind with endless diversity. Other poets display cabinets of precious rarities, minutely finished, wrought into shape, and polished unto brightness. Shakespeare opens a mine which contains gold and diamonds in unexhaustible plenty, though clouded by incrustations, debased by impurities, and mingled with a mass of meaner minerals.

It has been much disputed, whether Shakespeare owed his excellence to his own native force, or whether he had the common helps of scholastick education, the precepts of critical science, and the examples of ancient authours.

There has always prevailed a tradition, that Shakespeare wanted learning, that he had no regular education, nor much skill in the dead languages. Johnson, his friend, affirms, that "He had small Latin and no Greek."; who, besides that he had no imaginable temptation to falsehood, wrote at a time when the character and acquisitions of Shakespeare were known to multitudes. His evidence ought therefore to decide the controversy, unless some testimony of equal force could be opposed.

Some have imagined, that they have discovered deep learning in many imitations of old writers; but the examples which I have known urged, were drawn from books translated in his time; or were such easy coincidencies of thought, as will happen to all who consider the same subjects; or such remarks on life or axioms of morality as float in conversation, and are transmitted through the world in proverbial sentences.

I have found it remarked, that, in this important sentence, "Go before, I'll follow," we read a translation of, I prae, sequar. I have been told, that when Caliban, after a pleasing dream, says, "I cry'd to sleep again," the authour imitates Anacreon, who had, like every other man, the same wish on the same occasion.

There are a few passages which may pass for imitations, but so few, that the exception only confirms the rule; he obtained them from accidental quotations, or by oral communication, and as he used what he had, would have used more if he had obtained it.

The "Comedy of Errors" is confessedly taken from the Menaechmi of Plautus; from the only play of Plautus which was then in English. What can be more probable, than that he who copied that, would have copied more; but that those which were not translated were inaccessible?

Whether he knew the modern languages is uncertain. That his plays have some French scenes proves but little; he might easily procure them to be written, and probably, even though he had known the language in the common degree, he could not have written it without assistance. In the story of "Romeo and Juliet" he is observed to have followed the English translation, where it deviates from the Italian; but this on the other part proves nothing against his knowledge of the original. He was to copy, not what he knew himself, but what was known to his audience.

It is most likely that he had learned Latin sufficiently to make him acquainted with construction, but that he never advanced to an easy perusal of the Roman authours. Concerning his skill in modern languages, I can find no sufficient ground of determination; but as no imitations of French or Italian authours have been discovered, though the Italian poetry was then high in esteem, I am inclined to believe, that he read little more than English, and chose for his fables only such tales as he found translated.

That much knowledge is scattered over his works is very justly observed by Pope, but it is often such knowledge as books did not supply. He that will understand Shakespeare, must not be content to study him in the closet, he must look for his meaning sometimes among the sports of the field, and sometimes among the manufactures of the shop.

There is however proof enough that he was a very diligent reader, nor was our language then so indigent of books, but that he might very liberally indulge his curiosity without excursion into foreign literature. Many of the Roman authours were translated, and some of the Greek; the reformation had filled the kingdom with theological learning; most of the topicks of human disquisition had found English writers; and poetry had been cultivated, not only with diligence, but success. This was a stock of knowledge sufficient for a mind so capable of appropriating and improving it.

But the greater part of his excellence was the product of his own genius. He found the English stage in a state of the utmost rudeness; no essays either in tragedy or comedy had appeared, from which it could be discovered to what degree of delight either one or other might be carried. Neither character nor dialogue were yet understood. Shakespeare may be truly said to have introduced them both amongst us, and in some of his happier scenes to have carried them both to the utmost height.

By what gradations of improvement he proceeded, is not easily known; for the chronology of his works is yet unsettled. Rowe is of opinion, that "perhaps we are not to look for his beginning, like those of other writers, in his least perfect works; art had so little, and nature so large a share in what he did, that for ought I know," says he, "the performances of his youth, as they were the most vigorous, were the best." But the power of nature is only the power of using to any certain purpose the materials which diligence procures, or opportunity supplies. Nature gives no man knowledge, and when images are collected by study and experience, can only assist in combining or applying them. Shakespeare, however favoured by nature, could impart only what he had learned; and as he must increase his ideas, like other mortals, by gradual acquisition, he, like them, grew wiser as he grew older, could display life better, as he knew it more, and instruct with more efficacy, as he was himself more amply instructed.

There is a vigilance of observation and accuracy of distinction which books and precepts cannot confer; from this almost all original and native excellence proceeds. Shakespeare must have looked upon mankind with perspicacity, in the highest degree curious and attentive. Other writers borrow their characters from preceding writers, and diversify them only by the accidental appendages of present manners; the dress is a little varied, but the body is the same. Our authour had both matter and form to provide; for except the characters of Chaucer, to whom I think he is not much indebted, there were no writers in English, and perhaps not many in other modern languages, which shewed life in its native colours.

The contest about the original benevolence or malignity of man had not yet commenced. Speculation had not yet attempted to analyse the mind, to trace the passions to their sources, to unfold the seminal principles of vice and virtue, or sound the depths of the heart for the motives of action. All those enquiries, which from that time that human nature became the fashionable study, have been made sometimes with nice discernment, but often with idle subtilty, were yet unattempted. The tales, with which the infancy of learning was satisfied, exhibited only the superficial appearances of action, related the events but omitted the causes, and were formed for such as delighted in wonders rather than in truth. Mankind was not then to be studied in the closet; he that would know the world, was under the necessity of gleaning his own remarks, by mingling as he could in its business and amusements.

Boyle congratulated himself upon his high birth, because it favoured his curiosity, by facilitating his access. Shakespeare had no such advantage; he came to London a needy adventurer, and lived for a time by very mean employments. Many works of genius and learning have been performed in states of life, that appear very little favourable to thought or to enquiry; so many, that he who considers them is inclined to think that he sees enterprise and perseverance predominating over all external agency, and bidding help and hindrance vanish before them. The genius of Shakespeare was not to be depressed by the weight of poverty, nor limited by the narrow conversation to which men in want are inevitably condemned; the incumbrances of his fortune were shaken from his mind, "as dewdrops from a lion's mane."

Though he had so many difficulties to encounter, and so little assistance to surmount them, he has been able to obtain an exact knowledge of many modes of life, and many casts of native dispositions; to vary them with great multiplicity; to mark them by nice distinctions; and to shew them in full view by proper combinations. In this part of his performances He had none to imitate, but has himself been imitated by all succeeding writers; and it may be doubted, whether from all his successors more maxims of theoretical knowledge, or more rules of practical prudence, can be collected, than he alone has given to his country.

Nor was his attention confined to the actions of men; he was an exact surveyor of the inanimate world; his descriptions have always some peculiarities, gathered by contemplating things as they really exist. It may be observed, that the oldest poets of many nations preserve their reputation, and that the following generations of wit, after a short celebrity, sink into oblivion. The first, whoever they be, must take their sentiments and descriptions immediately from knowledge; the resemblance is therefore just, their descriptions are verified by every eye, and their sentiments acknowledged by every breast. Those whom their fame invites to the same studies, copy partly them, and partly nature, till the books of one age gain such authority, as to stand in the place of nature to another, and imitation, always deviating a little, becomes at last capricious and casual. Shakespeare, whether life or nature be his subject, shews plainly, that he has seen with his own eyes; he gives the image which he receives, not weakened or distorted by the intervention of any other mind; the ignorant feel his representations to be just, and the learned see that they are compleat.

Perhaps it would not be easy to find any authour, except Homer, who invented so much as Shakespeare, who so much advanced the studies which he cultivated, or effused so much novelty upon his age or country. The form, the characters, the language, and the shows of the English drama are his. "He seems," says Dennis, "to have been the very original of our English tragical harmony, that is, the harmony of blank verse, diversified often by dissyllable and trissyllable terminations. For the diversity distinguishes it from heroick harmony, and by bringing it nearer to common use makes it more proper to gain attention, and more fit for action and dialogue. Such verse we make when we are writing prose; we make such verse in common conversation."

I know not whether this praise is rigorously just. The dissyllable termination, which the critick rightly appropriates to the drama, is to be found, though, I think, not in Gorboduc which is confessedly before our authour; yet in Hieronnymo, of which the date is not certain, but which there is reason to believe at least as old as his earliest plays. This however is certain, that he is the first who taught either tragedy or comedy to please, there being no theatrical piece of any older writer, of which the name is known, except to antiquaries and collectors of books, which are sought because they are scarce, and would not have been scarce, had they been much esteemed.

To him we must ascribe the praise, unless Spenser may divide it with him, of having first discovered to how much smoothness and harmony the English language could be softened. He has speeches, perhaps sometimes scenes, which have all the delicacy of Rowe, without his effeminacy. He endeavours indeed commonly to strike by the force and vigour of his dialogue, but he never executes his purpose better, than when he tries to sooth by softness.

Yet it must be at last confessed, that as we owe every thing to him, he owes something to us; that, if much of his praise is paid by perception and judgement, much is likewise given by custom and veneration. We fix our eyes upon his graces, and turn them from his deformities, and endure in him what we should in another loath or despise. If we endured without praising, respect for the father of our drama might excuse us; but I have seen, in the book of some modern critick, a collection of anomalies which shew that he has corrupted language by every mode of depravation, but which his admirer has accumulated as a monument of honour.

He has scenes of undoubted and perpetual excellence, but perhaps not one play, which, if it were now exhibited as the work of a contemporary writer, would be heard to the conclusion. I am indeed far from thinking, that his works were wrought to his own ideas of perfection; when they were such as would satisfy the audience, they satisfied the writer. It is seldom that authours, though more studious of fame than Shakespeare, rise much above the standard of their own age; to add a little of what is best will always be sufficient for present praise, and those who find themselves exalted into fame, are willing to credit their encomiasts, and to spare the labour of contending with themselves.

It does not appear, that Shakespeare thought his works worthy of posterity, that he levied any ideal tribute upon future times, or had any further prospect, than of present popularity and present profit. When his plays had been acted, his hope was at an end; he solicited no addition of honour from the reader. He therefore made no scruple to repeat the same jests in many dialogues, or to entangle different plots by the same knot of perplexity, which may be at least forgiven him, by those who recollect, that of Congreve's four comedies, two are concluded by a marriage in a mask, by a deception, which perhaps never happened, and which, whether likely or not, he did not invent.

So careless was this great poet of future fame, that, though he retired to ease and plenty, while he was yet little "declined into the vale of years," before he could be disgusted with fatigue, or disabled by infirmity, he made no collection of his works, nor desired to rescue those that had been already published from the depravations that obscured them, or secure to the rest a better destiny, by giving them to the world in their genuine state.

Of the plays which bear the name of Shakespeare in the late editions, the greater part were not published till about seven years after his death, and the few which appeared in his life are apparently thrust into the world without the care of the authour, and therefore probably without his knowledge.

Of all the publishers, clandestine or professed, their negligence and unskilfulness has by the late revisers been sufficiently shown. The faults of all are indeed numerous and gross, and have not only corrupted many passages perhaps beyond recovery, but have brought others into suspicion, which are only obscured by obsolete phraseology, or by the writer's unskilfulness and affectation. To alter is more easy than to explain, and temerity is a more common quality than diligence. Those who saw that they must employ conjecture to a certain degree, were willing to indulge it a little further. Had the authour published his own works, we should have sat quietly down to disentangle his intricacies, and clear his obscurities; but now we tear what we cannot loose, and eject what we happen not to understand.

The faults are more than could have happened without the concurrence of many causes. The stile of Shakespeare was in itself ungrammatical, perplexed and obscure; his works were transcribed for the players by those who may be supposed to have seldom understood them; they were transmitted by copiers equally unskilful, who still multiplied errours; they were perhaps sometimes mutilated by the actors, for the sake of shortening the speeches; and were at last printed without correction of the press.

In this state they remained, not as Dr. Warburton supposes, because they were unregarded, but because the editor's art was not yet applied to modern languages, and our ancestors were accustomed to so much negligence of English printers, that they could very patiently endure it. At last an edition was undertaken by Rowe; not because a poet was to be published by a poet, for Rowe seems to have thought very little on correction or explanation, but that our authour's works might appear like those of his fraternity, with the appendages of a life and recommendatory preface. Rowe has been clamorously blamed for not performing what he did not undertake, and it is time that justice be done him, by confessing, that though he seems to have had no thought of corruption beyond the printer's errours, yet he has made many emendations, if they were not made before, which his successors have received without acknowledgment, and which, if they had produced them, would have filled pages and pages with censures of the stupidity by which the faults were committed, with displays of the absurdities which they involved, with ostentatious exposition of the new reading, and self congratulations on the happiness of discovering it.

Of Rowe, as of all the editors, I have preserved the preface and have likewise retained the authour's life, though not written with much elegance or spirit; it relates however what is now to be known, and therefore deserves to pass through all succeeding publications.

The nation had been for many years content enough with Mr. Rowe's performance, when Mr. Pope made them acquainted with the true state of Shakespeare's text, shewed that it was extremely corrupt, and gave reason to hope that there were means of reforming it. He collated the old copies, which none had thought to examine before, and restored many lines to their integrity; but, by a very compendious criticism, he rejected whatever he disliked, and thought more of amputation than of cure.

I know not why he is commended by Dr. Warburton for distinguishing the genuine from the spurious plays. In this choice he exerted no judgement of his own; the plays which he received, were given by Hemings and Condel, the first editors; and those which he rejected, though, according to the licentiousness of the press in those times, they were printed during Shakespeare's life, with his name, had been omitted by his friends, and were never added to his works before the edition of 1664, from which they were copied by the later printers.

This was a work which Pope seems to have thought unworthy of his abilities, being not able to suppress his contempt of "the dull duty of an editor". He understood but half his undertaking. The duty of a collator is indeed dull, yet, like other tedious tasks, is very necessary; but an emendatory critick would ill discharge his duty, without qualities very different from dulness. In perusing a corrupted piece, he must have before him all possibilities of meaning, with all possibilities of expression. Such must be his comprehension of thought, and such his copiousness of language. Out of many readings possible, he must be able to select that which best suits with the state, opinions, and modes of language prevailing in every age, and with his authour's particular cast of thought, and turn of expression. Such must be his knowledge, and such his taste. Conjectural criticism demands more than humanity possesses, and he that exercises it with most praise has very frequent need of indulgence. Let us now be told no more of the dull duty of an editor.

Confidence is the common consequence of success. They whose excellence of any kind has been loudly celebrated, are ready to conclude, that their powers are universal. Pope's edition fell below his own expectations, and he was so much offended, when he was found to have left any thing for others to do, that he past the latter part of his life in a state of hostility with verbal criticism.

I have retained all his notes, that no fragment of so great a writer may be lost; his preface, valuable alike for elegance of composition and justness of remark, and containing a general criticism on his authour, so extensive that little can be added, and so exact, that little can be disputed, every editor has an interest to suppress, but that every reader would demand its insertion.

Pope was succeeded by Theobald, a man of narrow comprehension and small acquisitions, with no native and intrinsick splendour of genius, with little of the artificial light of learning, but zealous for minute accuracy, and not negligent in pursuing it. He collated the ancient copies, and rectified many errors. A man so anxiously scrupulous might have been expected to do more, but what little he did was commonly right.

In his report of copies and editions he is not to be trusted, without examination. He speaks sometimes indefinitely of copies, when he has only one. In his enumeration of editions, he mentions the two first folios as of high, and the third folio as of middle authority; but the truth is, that the first is equivalent to all others, and that the rest only deviate from it by the printer's negligence. Whoever has any of the folios has all, excepting those diversities which mere reiteration of editions will produce. I collated them all at the beginning, but afterwards used only the first.

Of his notes I have generally retained those which he retained himself in his second edition, except when they were confuted by subsequent annotators, or were too minute to merit preservation. I have sometimes adopted his restoration of a comma, without inserting the panegyrick in which he celebrated himself for his achievement. The exuberant excrescence of diction I have often lopped, his triumphant exultations over Pope and Rowe I have sometimes suppressed, and his contemptible ostentation I have frequently concealed; but I have in some places shewn him, as he would have shewn himself, for the reader's diversion, that the inflated emptiness of some notes may justify or excuse the contraction of the rest.

Theobald, thus weak and ignorant, thus mean and faithless, thus petulant and ostentatious, by the good luck of having Pope for his enemy, has escaped, and escaped alone, with reputation, from this undertaking. So willingly does the world support those who solicite favour, against those who command reverence; and so easily is he praised, whom no man can envy.

Our authour fell then into the hands of Sir Thomas Hanmer, the Oxford editor, a man, in my opinion, eminently qualified by nature for such studies. He had, what is the first requisite to emendatory criticism, that intuition by which the poet's intention is immediately discovered, and that dexterity of intellect which dispatches its work by the easiest means. He had undoubtedly read much; his acquaintance with customs, opinions, and traditions, seems to have been large; and he is often learned without shew. He seldom passes what he does not understand, without an attempt to find or to make a meaning, and sometimes hastily makes what a little more attention would have found. He is solicitous to reduce to grammar, what he could not be sure that his authour intended to be grammatical. Shakespeare regarded more the series of ideas, than of words; and his language, not being designed for the reader's desk, was all that he desired it to be, if it conveyed his meaning to the audience.

Hanmer's care of the metre has been too violently censured. He found the measures reformed in so many passages, by the silent labours of some editors, with the silent acquiescence of the rest, that he thought himself allowed to extend a little further the license, which had already been carried so far without reprehension; and of his corrections in general, it must be confessed, that they are often just, and made commonly with the least possible violation of the text.

But, by inserting his emendations, whether invented or borrowed, into the page, without any notice of varying copies, he has appropriated the labour of his predecessors, and made his own edition of little authority. His confidence indeed, both in himself and others, was too great; he supposes all to be right that was done by Pope and Theobald; he seems not to suspect a critick of fallibility, and it was but reasonable that he should claim what he so liberally granted.

As he never writes without careful enquiry and diligent consideration, I have received all his notes, and believe that every reader will wish for more.

Of the last editor it is more difficult to speak. Respect is due to high place, tenderness to living reputation, and veneration to genius and learning; but he cannot be justly offended at that liberty of which he has himself so frequently given an example, nor very solicitous what is thought of notes, which he ought never to have considered as part of his serious employments, and which, I suppose, since the ardour of composition is remitted, he no longer numbers among his happy effusions.

The original and predominant errour of his commentary, is acquiescence in his first thoughts; that precipitation which is produced by consciousness of quick discernment; and that confidence which presumes to do, by surveying the surface, what labour only can perform, by penetrating the bottom. His notes exhibit sometimes perverse interpretations, and sometimes improbable conjectures; he at one time gives the authour more profundity of meaning than the sentence admits, and at another discovers absurdities, where the sense is plain to every other reader. But his emendations are likewise often happy and just; and his interpretation of obscure passages learned and sagacious.

Of his notes, I have commonly rejected those, against which the general voice of the publick has exclaimed, or which their own incongruity immediately condemns, and which, I suppose, the authour himself would desire to be forgotten. Of the rest, to part I have given the highest approbation, by inserting the offered reading in the text; part I have left to the judgment of the reader, as doubtful, though specious; and part I have censured without reserve, but I am sure without bitterness of malice, and, I hope, without wantonness of insult.

It is no pleasure to me, in revising my volumes, to observe how much paper is wasted in confutation. Whoever considers the revolutions of learning, and the various questions of greater or less importance, upon which wit and reason have exercised their powers, must lament the unsuccessfulness of enquiry, and the slow advances of truth, when he reflects, that great part of the labour of every writer is only the destruction of those that went before him. The first care of the builder of a new system, is to demolish the fabricks which are standing. The chief desire of him that comments an authour, is to shew how much other commentators have corrupted and obscured him. The opinions prevalent in one age, as truths above the reach of controversy, are confuted and rejected in another, and rise again to reception in remoter times. Thus the human mind is kept in motion without progress. Thus sometimes truth and errour, and sometimes contrarieties of errour, take each other's place by reciprocal invasion. The tide of seeming knowledge which is poured over one generation, retires and leaves another naked and barren; the sudden meteors of intelligence which for a while appear to shoot their beams into the regions of obscurity, on a sudden withdraw their lustre, and leave mortals again to grope their way.

These elevations and depressions of renown, and the contradictions to which all improvers of knowledge must for ever be exposed, since they are not escaped by the highest and brightest of mankind, may surely be endured with patience by criticks and annotators, who can rank themselves but as the satellites of their authours. How canst thou beg for life, says Achilles to his captive, when thou knowest that thou art now to suffer only what must another day be suffered by Achilles?

Dr. Warburton had a name sufficient to confer celebrity on those who could exalt themselves into antagonists, and his notes have raised a clamour too loud to be distinct. His chief assailants are the authours of the Canons of Criticism and of the Review of Shakespeare's Text; of whom one ridicules his errours with airy petulance, suitable enough to the levity of the controversy; the other attacks them with gloomy malignity, as if he were dragging to justice an assassin or incendiary. The one stings like a fly, sucks a little blood, takes a gay flutter, and returns for more; the other bites like a viper, and would be glad to leave inflammations and gangrene behind him. When I think on one, with his confederates, I remember the danger of Coriolanus, who was afraid that "girls with spits, and boys with stones, should slay him in puny battle;" when the other crosses my imagination, I remember the prodigy in "Macbeth",

An eagle tow'ring in his pride of place, was by a mousing owl hawk'd at and kill'd.

Let me however do them justice. One is a wit, and one a scholar. They have both shewn acuteness sufficient in the discovery of faults, and have both advanced some probable interpretations of obscure passages; but when they aspire to conjecture and emendation, it appears how falsely we all estimate our own abilities, and the little which they have been able to perform might have taught them more candour to the endeavours of others.

Before Dr. Warburton's edition, "Critical Observations on Shakespeare" had been published by Mr. Upton, a man skilled in languages, and acquainted with books, but who seems to have had no great vigour of genius or nicety of taste. Many of his explanations are curious and useful, but he likewise, though he professed to oppose the licentious confidence of editors, and adhere to the old copies, is unable to restrain the rage of emendation, though his ardour is ill seconded by his skill. Every cold empirick, when his heart is expanded by a successful experiment, swells into a theorist, and the laborious collator some unlucky moment frolicks in conjecture.

"Critical, historical and explanatory notes" have been likewise published upon Shakespeare by Dr. Grey, whose diligent perusal of the old English writers has enabled him to make some useful observations. What he undertook he has well enough performed, but as he neither attempts judicial nor emendatory criticism, he employs rather his memory than his sagacity. It were to be wished that all would endeavour to imitate his modesty who have not been able to surpass his knowledge.

I can say with great sincerity of all my predecessors, what I hope will hereafter be said of me, that not one has left Shakespeare without improvement, nor is there one to whom I have not been indebted for assistance and information. Whatever I have taken from them it was my intention to refer to its original authour, and it is certain, that what I have not given to another, I believed when I wrote it to be my own. In some perhaps I have been anticipated; but if I am ever found to encroach upon the remarks of any other commentator, I am willing that the honour, be it more or less, should be transferred to the first claimant, for his right, and his alone, stands above dispute; the second can prove his pretensions only to himself, nor can himself always distinguish invention, with sufficient certainty, from recollection.

They have all been treated by me with candour, which they have not been careful of observing to one another. It is not easy to discover from what cause the acrimony of a scholiast can naturally proceed. The subjects to be discussed by him are of very small importance; they involve neither property nor liberty; nor favour the interest of sect or party. The various readings of copies, and different interpretations of a passage, seem to be questions that might exercise the wit, without engaging the passions. But, whether it be, that "small things make mean men proud," and vanity catches small occasions; or that all contrariety of opinion, even in those that can defend it no longer, makes proud men angry; there is often found in commentaries a spontaneous strain of invective and contempt, more eager and venomous than is vented by the most furious controvertist in politicks against those whom he is hired to defame.

Perhaps the lightness of the matter may conduce to the vehemence of the agency; when the truth to be investigated is so near to inexistence, as to escape attention, its bulk is to be enlarged by rage and exclamation: That to which all would be indifferent in its original state, may attract notice when the fate of a name is appended to it. A commentator has indeed great temptations to supply by turbulence what he wants of dignity, to beat his little gold to a spacious surface, to work that to foam which no art or diligence can exalt to spirit.

The notes which I have borrowed or written are either illustrative, by which difficulties are explained; or judicial, by which faults and beauties are remarked; or emendatory, by which depravations are corrected.

The explanations transcribed from others, if I do not subjoin any other interpretation, I suppose commonly to be right, at least I intend by acquiescence to confess, that I have nothing better to propose.

After the labours of all the editors, I found many passages which appeared to me likely to obstruct the greater number of readers, and thought it my duty to facilitate their passage. It is impossible for an expositor not to write too little for some, and too much for others. He can only judge what is necessary by his own experience; and how long soever he may deliberate, will at last explain many lines which the learned will think impossible to be mistaken, and omit many for which the ignorant will want his help. These are censures merely relative and must be quietly endured. I have endeavoured to be neither superfluously copious, nor scrupulously reserved, and hope that I have made my authour's meaning accessible to many who before were frighted from perusing him, and contributed something to the publick, by diffusing innocent and rational pleasure.

The compleat explanation of an authour not systematick and consequential, but desultory and vagrant, abounding in casual allusions and light hints, is not to be expected from any single scholiast. All personal reflections, when names are suppressed, must be in a few years irrecoverably obliterated; and customs, too minute to attract the notice of law, such as mode of dress, formalities of conversation, rules of visits, disposition of furniture, and practices of ceremony, which naturally find places in familiar dialogue, are so fugitive and unsubstantial that they are not easily retained or recovered. What can be known, will be collected by chance, from the recesses of obscure and obsolete papers, perused commonly with some other view. Of this knowledge every man has some, and none has much; but when an authour has engaged the publick attention, those who can add any thing to his illustration, communicate their discoveries, and time produces what had eluded diligence.

To time I have been obliged to resign many passages, which, though I did not understand them, will perhaps hereafter be explained, having, I hope, illustrated some, which others have neglected or mistaken, sometimes by short remarks or marginal directions, such as every editor has added at his will, and often by comments more laborious than the matter will seem to deserve; but that which is most difficult is not always most important, and to an editor nothing is a trifle by which his authour is obscured.

The poetical beauties or defects I have not been very diligent to observe. Some plays have more, and some fewer judicial observations, not in proportion to their difference of merit, but because I gave this part of my design to chance and to caprice. The reader, I believe, is seldom pleased to find his opinion anticipated; it is natural to delight more in what we find or make, than in what we receive. Judgement, like other faculties, is improved by practice, and its advancement is hindered by submission to dictatorial decisions, as the memory grows torpid by the use of a table book. Some initiation is however necessary; of all skill, part is infused by precept, and part is obtained by habit; I have therefore shewn so much as may enable the candidate of criticism to discover the rest.

To the end of most plays, I have added short strictures, containing a general censure of faults, or praise of excellence; in which I know not how much I have concurred with the current opinion; but I have not, by any affectation of singularity, deviated from it. Nothing is minutely and particularly examined, and therefore it is to be supposed, that in the plays which are condemned there is much to be praised, and in these which are praised much to be condemned.

The part of criticism in which the whole succession of editors has laboured with the greatest diligence, which has occasioned the most arrogant ostentation, and excited the keenest acrimony, is the emendation of corrupted passages, to which the publick attention having been first drawn by the violence of contention between Pope and Theobald, has been continued by the persecution, which, with a kind of conspiracy, has been since raised against all the publishers of Shakespeare.

That many passages have passed in a state of depravation through all the editions is indubitably certain; of these the restoration is only to be attempted by collation of copies or sagacity of conjecture. The collator's province is safe and easy, the conjecturer's perilous and difficult. Yet as the greater part of the plays are extant only in one copy, the peril must not be avoided, nor the difficulty refused.

Of the readings which this emulation of amendment has hitherto produced, some from the labours of every publisher have advanced into the text; those are to be considered as in my opinion sufficiently supported; some I have rejected without mention, as evidently erroneous; some I have left in the notes without censure or approbation, as resting in equipoise between objection and defence; and some, which seemed specious but not right, I have inserted with a subsequent animadversion.

Having classed the observations of others, I was at last to try what I could substitute for their mistakes, and how I could supply their omissions. I collated such copies as I could procure, and wished for more, but have not found the collectors of these rarities very communicative. Of the editions which chance or kindness put into my hands I have given an enumeration, that I may not be blamed for neglecting what I had not the power to do.

By examining the old copies, I soon found that the late publishers, with all their boasts of diligence, suffered many passages; to stand unauthorised, and contented themselves with Rowe's regulation of the text, even where they knew it to be arbitrary, and with a little consideration might have found it to be wrong. Some of these alterations are only the ejection of a word for one that appeared to him more elegant or more intelligible. These corruptions I have often silently rectified; for the history of our language, and the true force of our words, can only be preserved, by keeping the text of authours free from adulteration. Others, and those very frequent, smoothed the cadence, or regulated the measure; on these I have not exercised the same rigour; if only a word was transposed, or a particle inserted or omitted, I have sometimes suffered the line to stand; for the inconstancy of the copies is such, as that some liberties may be easily permitted. But this practice I have not suffered to proceed far, having restored the primitive diction wherever it could for any reason be preferred.

The emendations, which comparison of copies supplied, I have inserted in the text; sometimes where the improvement was slight, without notice, and sometimes with an account of the reasons of the change.

Conjecture, though it be sometimes unavoidable, I have not wantonly nor licentiously indulged. It has been my settled principle, that the reading of the ancient books is probably true, and therefore is not to be disturbed for the sake of elegance, perspicuity, or mere improvement of the sense. For though much credit is not due to the fidelity, nor any to the judgement of the first publishers, yet they who had the copy before their eyes were more likely to read it right, than we who only read it by imagination. But it is evident that they have often made strange mistakes by ignorance or negligence, and that therefore something may be properly attempted by criticism, keeping the middle way between presumption and timidity.

Such criticism I have attempted to practise, and where any passage appeared inextricably perplexed, have endeavoured to discover how it may be recalled to sense, with least violence. But my first labour is, always to turn the old text on every side, and try if there be any interstice, through which light can find its way; nor would Huetius himself condemn me, as refusing the trouble of research, for the ambition of alteration. In this modest industry I have not been unsuccessful. I have rescued many lines from the violations of temerity, and secured many scenes from the inroads of correction. I have adopted the Roman sentiment, that it is more honourable to save a citizen, than to kill an enemy, and have been more careful to protect than to attack.

I have preserved the common distribution of the plays into acts, though I believe it to be in almost all the plays void of authority. Some of those which are divided in the later editions have no division in the first folio, and some that are divided in the folio have no division in the preceding copies. The settled mode of the theatre requires four intervals in the play, but few, if any, of our authour's compositions can be properly distributed in that manner. An act is so much of the drama as passes without intervention of time or change of place. A pause makes a new act. In every real, and therefore in every imitative action, the intervals may be more or fewer, the restriction of five acts being accidental and arbitrary. This Shakespeare knew, and this he practised; his plays were written, and at first printed in one unbroken continuity, and ought now to be exhibited with short pauses, interposed as often as the scene is changed, or any considerable time is required to pass. This method would at once quell a thousand absurdities.

In restoring the authour's works to their integrity, I have considered the punctuation as wholly in my power; for what could be their care of colons and commas, who corrupted words and sentences. Whatever could be done by adjusting points is therefore silently performed, in some plays with much diligence, in others with less; it is hard to keep a busy eye steadily fixed upon evanescent atoms, or a discursive mind upon evanescent truth.

The same liberty has been taken with a few particles, or other words of slight effect. I have sometimes inserted or omitted them without notice. I have done that sometimes, which the other editors have done always, and which indeed the state of the text may sufficiently justify.

The greater part of readers, instead of blaming us for passing trifles, will wonder that on mere trifles so much labour is expended, with such importance of debate, and such solemnity of diction. To these I answer with confidence, that they are judging of an art which they do not understand; yet cannot much reproach them with their ignorance, nor promise that they would become in general, by learning criticism, more useful, happier or wiser.

As I practised conjecture more, I learned to trust it less; and after I had printed a few plays, resolved to insert none of my own readings in the text. Upon this caution I now congratulate myself, for every day encreases my doubt of my emendations.

Since I have confined my imagination to the margin, it must not be considered as very reprehensible, if I have suffered it to play some freaks in its own dominion. There is no danger in conjecture, if it be proposed as conjecture; and while the text remains uninjured, those changes may be safely offered, which are not considered even by him that offers them as necessary or safe.

If my readings are of little value, they have not been ostentatiously displayed or importunately obtruded. I could have written longer notes, for the art of writing notes is not of difficult attainment. The work is performed, first by railing at the stupidity, negligence, ignorance, and asinine tastelessness of the former editors, and shewing, from all that goes before and all that follows, the inelegance and absurdity of the old reading; then by proposing something, which to superficial readers would seem specious, but which the editor rejects with indignation; then by producing the true reading, with a long paraphrase, and concluding with loud acclamations on the discovery, and a sober wish for the advancement and prosperity of genuine criticism.

All this may be done, and perhaps done sometimes without impropriety. But I have always suspected that the reading is right, which requires many words to prove it wrong; and the emendation wrong, that cannot without so much labour appear to be right. The justness of a happy restoration strikes at once, and the moral precept may be well applied to criticism, quod dubitas ne feceris.

To dread the shore which he sees spread with wrecks, is natural to the sailor. I had before my eye, so many critical adventures ended in miscarriage, that caution was forced upon me. I encountered in every page Wit struggling with its own sophistry, and Learning confused by the multiplicity of its views. I was forced to censure those whom I admired, and could not but reflect, while I was dispossessing their emenations, how soon the same fate might happen to my own, and how many of the readings which I have corrected may be some other editor defended and established.

Criticks, I saw, that other's names efface,
  And fix their own, with labour, in the place;
  Their own, like others, soon their place resign'd,
  Or disappear'd, and left the first behind.—Pope.

That a conjectural critick should often be mistaken, cannot be wonderful, either to others or himself, if it be considered that in his art there is no system, no principal and axiomatical truth that regulates subordinate positions. His chance of errour is renewed at every attempt; an oblique view of the passage a slight misapprehension of a phrase, a casual inattention to the parts connected, is sufficient to make him not only fail but fail ridiculously; and when he succeeds best, he produces perhaps but one reading of many probable, and he that suggests another will always be able to dispute his claims.

It is an unhappy state, in which danger is hid under pleasure. The allurements of emendation are scarcely resistible. Conjecture has all the joy and all the pride of invention, and he that has once started a happy change, is too much delighted to consider what objections may rise against it.

Yet conjectural criticism has been of great use in the learned world; nor is it my intention to depreciate a study, that has exercised so many mighty minds, from the revival of learning to our own age, from the Bishop of Aleria to English Bentley. The criticks on ancient authours have, in the exercise of their sagacity, many assistances, which the editor of Shakespeare is condemned to want. They are employed upon grammatical and settled languages, whose construction contributes so much to perspicuity, that Homer has fewer passages unintelligible than Chaucer. The words have not only a known regimen, but invariable quantities, which direct and confine the choice. There are commonly more manuscripts than one; and they do not often conspire in the same mistakes. Yet Scaliger could confess to Salmasius how little satisfaction his emendations gave him. Illudunt nobis conjecturae nostrae, quarum nos pudet, posteaquam in meliores cofices incidimus. And Lipsius could complain, that criticks were making faults, by trying to remove them, Ut olim vitiis, ita nunc remediis laboratur. And indeed, where mere conjecture is to be used, the emendations of Scaliger and Lipsius, notwithstanding their wonderful sagacity and erudition, are often vague and disputable, like mine or Theobald's.

Perhaps I may not be more censured for doing wrong, than for doing little; for raising in the publick expectations, which at last I have not answered. The expectation of ignorance is indefinite, and that of knowledge is often tyrannical. It is hard to satisfy those who know not what to demand, or those who demand by design what they think impossible to be done. I have indeed disappointed no opinion more than my own; yet I have endeavoured to perform my task with no slight solicitude. Not a single passage in the whole work has appeared to me corrupt, which I have not attempted to restore; or obscure, which I have not endeavoured to illustrate. In many I have failed like others; and from many, after all my efforts, I have retreated, and confessed the repulse. I have not passed over, with affected superiority, what is equally difficult to the reader and to myself, but where I could not instruct him, have owned my ignorance. I might easily have accumulated a mass of seeming learning upon easy scenes; but it ought not to be imputed to negligence, that, where nothing was necessary, nothing has been done, or that, where others have said enough, I have said no more.

Notes are often necessary, but they are necessary evils. Let him, that is yet unacquainted with the powers of Shakespeare, and who desires to feel the highest pleasure that the drama can give, read every play from the first scene to the last, with utter negligence of all his commentators. When his fancy is once on the wing, let it not stoop at correction or explanation. When his attention is strongly engaged, let it disdain alike to turn aside to the name of Theobald and Pope. Let him read on through brightness and obscurity, through integrity and corruption; let him preserve his comprehension of the dialogue and his interest in the fable. And when the pleasures of novelty have ceased, let him attempt exactness; and read the commentators.

Particular passages are cleared by notes, but the general effect of the work is weakened. The mind is refrigerated by interruption; the thoughts are diverted from the principal subject; the reader is weary, he suspects not why; and at last throws away the book, which he has too diligently studied.

Parts are not to be examined till the whole has been surveyed; there is a kind of intellectual remoteness necessary for the comprehension of any great work in its full design and its true proportions; a close approach shews the smaller niceties, but the beauty of the whole is discerned no longer.

It is not very grateful to consider how little the succession of editors has added to this authour's power of pleasing. He was read, admired, studied, and imitated, while he was yet deformed with all the improprieties which ignorance and neglect could accumulate upon him; while the reading was yet not rectified, nor his allusions understood; yet then did Dryden pronounce "that Shakespeare was the man, who, of all modern and perhaps ancient poets, had the largest and most comprehensive soul. All the images of nature were still present to him, and he drew them not laboriously, but luckily: When he describes any thing, you more than see it, you feel it too. Those who accuse him to have wanted learning, give him the greater commendation: he was naturally learned: he needed not the spectacles of books to read nature; he looked inwards, and found her there. I cannot say he is every where alike; were he so, I should do him injury to compare him with the greatest of mankind. He is many times flat and insipid; his comick wit degenerating into clenches, his serious swelling into bombast. But he is always great, when some great occasion is presented to him: No man can say, he ever had a fit subject for his wit, and did not then raise himself as high above the rest of poets,

"Quantum lenta solent inter viburna cupressi."

It is to be lamented, that such a writer should want a commentary; that his language should become obsolete, or his sentiments obscure. But it is vain to carry wishes beyond the condition of human things; that which must happen to all, has happened to Shakespeare, by accident and time; and more than has been suffered by any other writer since the use of types, has been suffered by him through his own negligence of fame, or perhaps by that superiority of mind, which despised its own performances, when it compared them with its powers, and judged those works unworthy to be preserved, which the criticks of following ages were to contend for the fame of restoring and explaining.

Among these candidates of inferiour fame, I am now to stand the judgment of the publick; and wish that I could confidently produce my commentary as equal to the encouragement which I have had the honour of receiving. Every work of this kind is by its nature deficient, and I should feel little solicitude about the sentence, were it to be pronounced only by the skilful and the learned.

SELECTED NOTES FROM SOME OF THE PLAYS

MEASURE FOR MEASURE

There is perhaps not one of Shakespeare's plays more darkened than this by the peculiarities of its Authour, and the unskilfulness of its Editors, by distortions of phrase, or negligence of transcription.

ACT I. SCENE i. (I. i. 7-9.)

Then no more remains:
But that to your sufficiency, as your worth is able,
And let them work.

This is a passage which has exercised the sagacity of the Editors, and is now to employ mine.

Sir Tho. Hanmer having caught from Mr. Theobald a hint that a line was lost, endeavours to supply it thus.

—Then no more remains,
But that to your sufficiency you join
A will to serve us, as your worth is able.

He has by this bold conjecture undoubtedly obtained a meaning, but, perhaps not, even in his own opinion, the meaning of Shakespeare.

That the passage is more or less corrupt, I believe every reader will agree with the Editors. I am not convinced that a line is lost, as Mr. Theobald conjectures, nor that the change of "but" to "put", which Dr. Warburton has admitted after some other Editor, will amend the fault. There was probably some original obscurity in the expression, which gave occasion to mistake in repetition or transcription. I therefore suspect that the Authour wrote thus,

—Then no more remains,
But that to your sufficiencies your worth is abled,
And let them work.

THEN NOTHING REMAINS MORE THAN TO TELL YOU THAT YOUR VIRTUE IS NOW INVESTED WITH POWER EQUAL TO YOUR KNOWLEDGE AND WISDOM. LET THEREFORE YOUR KNOWLEDGE AND YOUR VIRTUE NOW WORK TOGETHER. It may easily be conceived how "sufficiencies" was, by an inarticulate speaker, or inattentive hearer, confounded with "sufficiency as", and how "abled", a word very unusual, was changed into "able". For "abled", however, an authority is not wanting. Lear uses it in the same sense, or nearly the same, with the Duke. As for "sufficiencies", D. Hamilton, in his dying speech, prays that "Charles II. may exceed both the VIRTUES and SUFFICIENCIES of his father."

ACT I. SCENE ii. (I. i. 51.)

We have with a leaven'd and prepared choice.

"Leaven'd" has no sense in this place: we should read "Level'd choice". The allusion is to archery, when a man has fixed upon his object, after taking good aim.—Warburton.

No emendation is necessary. "leaven'd choice" is one of Shakespeare's harsh metaphors. His train of ideas seems to be this. "I have proceeded to you with choice mature, concocted, fermented, leaven'd." When Bread is "leaven'd", it is left to ferment: a "leavn'd" choice is therefore a choice not hasty, but considerate, not declared as soon as it fell into the imagination, but suffered to work long in the mind. Thus explained, it suits better with "prepared" than "levelled".

ACT II. SCENE ix. (II. iii. 11-12.)

Who falling in the flaws of her own youth,
Hath blister'd her report.

Who doth not see that the integrity of the metaphor requires we should read "flames of her own youth."—Warburton.

Who does not see that upon such principles there is no end of correction.

ACT III. SCENE i. (III. i. 13-15.)

Thou art not noble:
For all th' accommodations, that thou bear'st
Are nurs'd by baseness.

Dr. Warburton is undoubtedly mistaken in supposing that by "baseness" is meant "self-love" here assigned as the motive of all human actions. Shakespeare meant only to observe, that a minute analysis of life at once destroys that splendour which dazzles the imagination. Whatever grandeur can display, or luxury enjoy, is procured by "baseness", by offices of which the mind shrinks from the contemplation. All the delicacies of the table may be traced back to the shambles and the dunghill, all magnificence of building was hewn from the quarry, and all the pomp of ornaments, dug from among the damps and darkness of the mine.

ACT III. SCENE i. (III. i. 16-17.)

The soft and tender fork of a poor worm.

"Worm" is put for any creeping thing or "serpent". Shakespeare supposes falsely, but according to the vulgar notion, that a serpent wounds with his tongue, and that his tongue is "forked". He confounds reality and fiction, a serpent's tongue is "soft" but not "forked" nor hurtful. If it could hurt, it could not be soft. In Midsummer-night's Dream he has the same notion.

—With doubler tongue
Then thine, O serpent, never adder stung.

ACT III. SCENE i. (III. i. 32-4.)

Thou hast nor youth, nor age:
But as it were an after dinner's sleep,
Dreaming on both.

This is exquisitely imagined. When we are young we busy ourselves in forming schemes for succeeding time, and miss the gratifications that are before us; when we are old we amuse the languour of age with the recollection of youthful pleasures or performances; so that our life, of which no part is filled with the business of the present time, resembles our dreams after dinner, when the events of the morning are mingled with the designs of the evening.

ACT III. SCENE i. (III. i. 36-8.)

When thou'rt old and rich,
Thou hast neither heat, affection, limb, nor beauty
To make thy riches pleasant.

But how does beauty make "riches pleasant"? We should read "bounty", which compleats the sense, and is this; Thou hast neither the pleasure of enjoying riches thy self, for thou wantest vigour: nor of seeing it enjoyed by others, for thou wantest "bounty". Where the making the want of "bounty" as inseparable from old age as the want of "health", is extremely satyrical tho' not altogether just. —Warburton.

I am inclined to believe that neither man nor woman will have much difficulty to tell how "beauty makes riches pleasant". Surely this emendation, though it is elegant and ingenious, is not such as that an opportunity of inserting it should be purchased by declaring ignorance of what every one knows, by confessing insensibility of what every one feels.

ACT III. SCENE ii. (III. i. 137-8.)

Is't not a kind of incest, to take life
From thine own sister's shame?

In Isabella's declamation there is something harsh, and something forced and far-fetched. But her indignation cannot be thought violent when we consider her not only as a virgin but as a nun.

ACT IV. SCENE viii. (iv. iii. 4-5.)

First here's young Mr. Rash, &c.

This enumeration of the inhabitants of the prison affords a very striking view of the practices predominant in Shakespeare's age. Besides those whose follies are common to all times, we have four fighting men and a traveller. It is not unlikely that the originals of these pictures were then known.

ACT IV. SCENE xiii. (IV. V. 1.)

Duke. These letters at fit time deliver me.

Peter never delivers the letters, but tells his story without any credentials. The poet forgot the plot which he had formed.

ACT V. SCENE vii. (V. i. 448.)

'Till he did look on me.

The Duke has justly observed that Isabel is importuned against all sense to solicit for Angelo, yet here against all sense she solicits for him. Her argument is extraordinary.

A due sincerity govern'd his deeds,
  'Till he did look on me; since it is so,
  Let him not die. That Angelo had committed

all the crimes charged against him, as far as he could commit them, is evident. The only INTENT which his act did not overtake, was the defilement of Isabel. Of this Angelo was only intentionally guilty. Angelo's crimes were such, as must sufficiently justify punishment, whether its end be to secure the innocent from wrong, or to deter guilt by example; and I believe every reader feels some indignation when he finds him spared. From what extenuation of his crime can

Isabel, who yet supposes her brother dead, form any plea in his favour. Since he was good 'till he looked in me, let him not die. I am afraid our Varlet Poet intended to inculcate, that women think ill of nothing that raises the credit of their beauty, and are ready, however virtuous, to pardon any act which they think incited by their own charms.

ACT V. SCENE viii. (v. i. 479 foll.)

It is somewhat strange, that Isabel is not made to express either gratitude, wonder or joy at the sight of her brother.

After the pardon of two murderers Lucio might be treated by the good Duke with less harshness; but perhaps the Poet intended to show, what is too often seen, that men easily forgive wrongs which are not committed against themselves.

The novel of Cynthio Giraldi, from which Shakespeare is supposed to have borrowed this fable, may be read in Shakespeare illustrated, elegantly translated, with remarks which will assist the enquirer to discover how much absurdity Shakespeare has admitted or avoided.

I cannot but suspect that some other had new modelled the novel of Cynthio, or written a story which in some particulars resembled it, and that Cinthio was not the authour whom Shakespeare immediately followed. The Emperour in Cinthio is named Maximine, the Duke, in Shakespeare's enumeration of the persons of the drama, is called Vincentio. This appears a very slight remark; but since the Duke has no name in the play, nor is ever mentioned but by his title, why should he be called Vincentio among the "Persons", but because the name was copied from the story, and placed superfluously at the head of the list by the mere habit of transcription? It is therefore likely that there was then a story of Vincentio Duke of Vienna, different from that of Maximine Emperour of the Romans.

Of this play the light or comick part is very natural and pleasing, but the grave scenes, if a few passages be excepted, have more labour than elegance. The plot is rather intricate than artful. The time of the action is indefinite; some time, we know not how much, must have elapsed between the recess of the Duke and the imprisonment of Claudio; for he must have learned the story of Mariana in his disguise, or he delegated his power to a man already known to be corrupted. The unities of action and place are sufficiently preserved.

HENRY IV

None of Shakespeare's plays are more read than the first and second parts of Henry the fourth. Perhaps no authour has ever in two plays afforded so much delight. The great events are interesting, for the fate of kingdoms depends upon them; the slighter occurrences are diverting, and, except one or two, sufficiently probable; the incidents are multiplied with wonderful fertility of invention, and the characters diversified with the utmost nicety of discernment, and the profoundest skill in the nature of man.

The prince, who is the hero both of the comick and tragick part, is a young man of great abilities and violent passions, whose sentiments are right, though his actions are wrong; whose virtues are obscured by negligence, and whose understanding is dissipated by levity. In his idle hours he is rather loose than wicked, and when the occasion forces out his latent qualities, he is great without effort, and brave without tumult. The trifler is roused into a hero, and the hero again reposes in the trifler. This character is great, original, and just. Piercy is a rugged soldier, cholerick, and quarrelsome, and has only the soldier's virtues, generosity and courage.

But Falstaff unimitated, unimitable Falstaff, how shall I describe thee? Thou compound of sense and vice; of sense which may be admired but not esteemed, of vice which may be despised, but hardly detested. Falstaff is a character loaded with faults, and with those faults which naturally produce contempt. He is a thief, and a glutton, a coward, and a boaster, always ready to cheat the weak, and prey upon the poor; to terrify the timorous and insult the defenceless. At once obsequious and malignant, he satirises in their absence those whom he lives by flattering. He is familiar with the prince only as an agent of vice, but of this familiarity he is so proud as not only to be supercilious and haughty with common men, but to think his interest of importance to the duke of Lancaster.

Yet the man thus corrupt, thus despicable, makes himself necessary to the prince that despises him, by the most pleasing of all qualities, perpetual gaiety, by an unfailing power of exciting laughter, which is the more freely indulged, as his wit is not of the splendid or ambitious kind, but consists in easy escapes and sallies of levity, which make sport but raise no envy. It must be observed that he is stained with no enormous or sanguinary crimes, so that his licentiousness is not so offensive but that it may be borne for his mirth.

The moral to be drawn from this representation is, that no man is more dangerous than he that with a will to corrupt, hath the power to please; and that neither wit nor honesty ought to think themselves safe with such a companion when they see Henry seduced by Falstaff.

HENRY V

ACT. II. SCENE iv. (II. iii. 27-8.)

Cold as any stone. Such is the end of Falstaff,

from whom Shakespeare had promised us in his epilogue to Henry IV. that we should receive more entertainment. It happened to Shakespeare as to other writers, to have his imagination crowded with a tumultuary confusion of images, which, while they were yet unsorted and unexamined, seemed sufficient to furnish a long train of incidents, and a new variety of merriment, but which, when he was to produce them to view, shrunk suddenly from him, or could not be accommodated to his general design. That he once designed to have brought Falstaff on the scene again, we know from himself; but whether he could contrive no train of adventures suitable to his character, or could match him with no companions likely to quicken his humour, or could open no new vein of pleasantry, and was afraid to continue the same strain lest it should not find the same reception, he has here for ever discarded him, and made haste to dispatch him, perhaps for the same reason for which Addison killed Sir Roger, that no other hand might attempt to exhibit him.

Let meaner authours learn from this example, that it is dangerous to sell the bear which is yet not hunted, to promise to the publick what they have not written.

KING LEAR

The Tragedy of Lear is deservedly celebrated among the dramas of Shakespeare. There is perhaps no play which keeps the attention so strongly fixed; which so much agitates our passions and interests our curiosity. The artful involutions of distinct interests, the striking opposition of contrary characters, the sudden changes of fortune, and the quick succession of events, fill the mind with a perpetual tumult of indignation, pity, and hope. There is no scene which does not contribute to the aggravation of the distress or conduct of the action, and scarce a line which does not conduce to the progress of the scene. So powerful is the current of the poet's imagination, that the mind, which once ventures within it, is hurried irresistibly along.

On the seeming improbability of Lear's conduct it may be observed, that he is represented according to histories at that time vulgarly received as true. And perhaps if we turn our thoughts upon the barbarity and ignorance of the age to which this story is referred, it will appear not so unlikely as while we estimate Lear's manners by our own. Such preference of one daughter to another, or resignation of dominion on such conditions, would be yet credible, if told of a petty prince of Guinea or Madagascar. Shakespeare, indeed, by the mention of his Earls and Dukes, has given us the idea of times more civilised, and of life regulated by softer manners; and the truth that though he so nicely discriminates, and so minutely describes the characters of men, he commonly neglects and confounds the characters of ages, by mingling customs ancient and modern, English and foreign.

My learned friend Mr. Warton, who has in the Adventurer very minutely criticised this play, remarks, that the instances of cruelty are too savage and shocking, and that the intervention of Edmund destroys the simplicity of the story. These objections may, I think, be answered, by repeating, that the cruelty of the daughters is an historical fact, to which the poet has added little, having only drawn it into a series by dialogue and action. But I am not able to apologise with equal plausibility for the extrusion of Gloucester's eyes, which seems an act too horrid to be endured in dramatick exhibition, and such as must always compel the mind to relieve its distress by incredulity. Yet let it be remembered that our authour well knew what would please the audience for which he wrote.

The injury done by Edmund to the simplicity of the action is abundantly recompensed by the addition of variety, by the art with which he is made to co-operate with the chief design and the opportunity which he gives the poet of combining perfidy with perfidy, and connecting the wicked son with the wicked daughters, to impress this important moral, that villany is never at a stop, that crimes lead to crimes, and at last terminate in ruin.

But though this moral be incidentally enforced, Shakespeare has suffered the virtue of Cordelia to perish in a just cause contrary to the natural ideas of justice, to the hope of the reader, and, what is yet more strange, to the faith of chronicles. Yet this conduct is justified by the Spectator, who blames Tate for giving Cordelia success and happiness in his alteration, and declares, that, in his opinion, the tragedy has lost half its beauty. Dennis has remarked, whether justly or not, that, to secure the favourable reception of Cato, "the town was poisoned with much false and abominable criticism," and that endeavours had been used to discredit and decry poetical justice. A play in which the wicked prosper, and the virtuous miscarry, may doubtless be good, because it is a just representation of the common events of human life: but since all reasonable beings naturally love justice, I cannot easily be persuaded, that the observation of justice makes a play worse; or, that if other excellencies are equal, the audience will not always rise better pleased from the final triumph of persecuted virtue.

In the present case the publick has decided. Cordelia, from the time of Tate, has always retired with victory and felicity. And, if my sensations could add any thing to the general suffrage, I might relate, that I was many years ago so shocked by Cordelia's death, that I know not whether I ever endured to read again the last scenes of the play till I undertook to revise them as an editor.

ROMEO AND JULIET

ACT I. SCENE ii. (I. i. 181 foll.)

Why then, O brawling love! O loving hate! &c.

Of these lines neither the sense nor occasion is very evident. He is not yet in love with an enemy, and to love one and hate another is no such uncommon state, as can deserve all this toil of antithesis.

ACT I. SCENE iii. (I. ii. 25.)

Earth-treading stars that make dark HEAVEN's light.

This nonsense should be reformed thus,

Earth-treading stars that make dark EVEN light.
—Warburton.

But why nonsense? Is anything more commonly said, than that beauties eclipse the sun? Has not Pope the thought and the word?

Sol through white curtains shot a tim'rous ray,
And ope'd those eyes that must eclipse the day.

Both the old and the new reading are philosophical nonsense, but they are both, and both equally poetical sense.

ACT I. SCENE iii. (I. ii. 26-8.)

Such comfort as do lusty young men feel,
When well-apparel'd April on the heel
Of limping winter treads.

To say, and to say in pompous words, that a "young man shall feel" as much in an assembly of beauties, "as young men feel in the month of April," is surely to waste sound upon a very poor sentiment. I read, Such comfort as do lusty YEOMEN feel. You shall feel from the sight and conversation of these ladies such hopes of happiness and such pleasure, as the farmer receives from the spring, when the plenty of the year begins, and the prospect of the harvest fills him with delight.

ACT I. SCENE iv. (l. iii. 92.)

That in gold clasps locks in the golden story.

The "golden story" is perhaps the "golden legend", a book in the darker ages of popery much read, and doubtless often exquisitely embellished, but of which Canus, one of the popish doctors, proclaims the author to have been homo ferrei oris, plumbei cordis.

ACT I. SCENE vi. (1. v. 34.)

Good cousin Capulet.

This cousin Capulet is "unkle" in the paper of invitation, but as Capulet is described as old, "cousin" is probably the right word in both places. I know not how Capulet and his lady might agree, their ages were very disproportionate; he has been past masking for thirty years, and her age, as she tells Juliet is but eight and twenty.

ACT I. CHORUS. (II. PROLOGUE.)

The use of this chorus is not easily discovered, it conduces nothing to the progress of the play, but relates what is already known or what the next scenes will shew; and relates it without adding the improvement of any moral sentiment.

ACT II. SCENE vi. (ii. vi. 15.)

Too swift arrives as tardy as too slow.

He that travels too fast is as long before he comes to the end of his journey, as he that travels slow.

Precipitation produces mishap.

ACT III. SCENE i. (III. i. 2.)

The day is hot.

It is observed that in Italy almost all assassinations are committed during the heat of summer.

ACT III. SCENE iii. (III. i. 183.)

Affection makes him false.

The charge of falshood on Bentivolio, though produced at hazard, is very just. The authour, who seems to intend the character of Bentiolio as good, meant perhaps to shew, how the best minds, in a state of faction and discord, are detorted to criminal partiality.

ACT III. SCENE viii. (III. v. 84.)

And, yet, no Man like he doth grieve my heart.

Juliet's equivocations are rather too artful for a mind disturbed by the loss of a new lover.

ACT IV. SCENE iii. (IV. iii. 2-3.)

Leave me to myself to-night;
For I have need of many orisons.

Juliet plays most of her pranks under the appearance of religion: perhaps Shakespeare meant to punish her hypocrisy.

ACT V. SCENE i. (V. i. 3.)

My bosom's Lord sits lightly on this throne, &c.

These three lines are very gay and pleasing. But why does Shakespeare give Romeo this involuntary cheerfulness just before the extremity of unhappiness? Perhaps to shew the vanity of trusting to those uncertain and casual exaltations or depressions, which many consider as certain foretokens of good and evil.

ACT V. SCENE v. (v. iii. 229.)

FRIAR. I will be brief.

It is much to be lamented that the Poet did not conclude the dialogue with the action, and avoid a narrative of events which the audience already knew. This play is one of the most pleasing of our Author's performances. The scenes are busy and various, the incidents numerous and important, the catastrophe irresistably affecting and the process of the action carried on with such probability at least with such congruity to popular opinions, as tragedy requires.

Here is one of the few attempts of Shakespeare to exhibit the conversation of gentlemen, to represent the airy sprightliness of juvenile elegance. Mr. Dryden mentions a tradition which might easily reach his time, of a declaration made by Shakespeare, that he was obliged to kill Mercutio in the third act, lest he should have been killed by him. Yet he thinks him no such formidable person, but that he might have lived through the play, and died in his bed, without danger to a poet. Dryden well knew, had he been in quest of truth, that, in a pointed sentence, more regard is commonly had to the word than the thought, and that it is very seldom to be rigorously understood. Mercutio's wit, gaiety and courage, will always procure him friends that wish him a longer life; but his death is not precipitated, he has lived out the time allotted him in the construction of the play; nor do I doubt the ability of Shakespeare to have continued his existence, though some of his sallies are perhaps out of the reach of Dryden; whose genius was not very fertile of merriment, nor ductile to humour, but acute, argumentative, comprehensive, and sublime.

The Nurse is one of the characters in which the Authour delighted: he has, with great subtility of distinction, drawn her at once loquacious and secret, obsequious and insolent, trusty and dishonest.

His comick scenes are happily wrought, but his pathetick strains are always polluted with some unexpected depravations. His persons, however distressed, HAVE A CONCEIT LEFT THEM IN THEIR MISERY, A MISERABLE CONCEIT.

HAMLET

ACT II. SCENE ii. (II. i. 114-17.)

It is as proper to our age
  To cast beyond ourselves in our opinions,
  As it is common for the younger sort

To lack discretion. This is not the remark of a weak man. The vice of age is too much suspicion. Men long accustomed to the wiles of life "cast" commonly "beyond themselves", let their cunning go further than reason can attend it. This is always the fault of a little mind, made artful by long commerce with the world.

ACT II. SCENE iv. (II. ii.)

Polonius is a man bred in courts, exercised in business, stored with observation, confident of his knowledge, proud of his eloquence, and declining into dotage. His mode of oratory is truly represented as designed to ridicule the practice of those times, of prefaces that made no introduction, and of method that embarrassed rather than explained. This part of his character is accidental, the rest is natural. Such a man is positive and confident, because he knows that his mind was once strong, and knows not that it is become weak. Such a man excels in general principles, but fails in the particular application. He is knowing in retrospect, and ignorant in foresight. While he depends upon his memory, and can draw from his repositories of knowledge, he utters weighty sentences, and gives useful counsel; but as the mind in its enfeebled state cannot be kept long busy and intent, the old man is subject to sudden dereliction of his faculties, he loses the order of his ideas, and entangles himself in his own thoughts, till he recovers the leading principle, and falls again into his former train. This idea of dotage encroaching upon wisdom, will solve all the phenomena of the character of Polonius.

If the dramas of Shakespeare were to be characterised, each by the particular excellence which distinguishes it from the rest, we must allow to the tragedy of HAMLET the praise of variety. The incidents are so numerous, that the argument of the play would make a long tale. The scenes are interchangeably diversified with merriment and solemnity; with merriment that includes judicious and instructive observations, and solemnity, not strained by poetical violence above the natural sentiments of man. New characters appear from time to time in continual succession, exhibiting various forms of life and particular modes of conversation. The pretended madness of HAMLET causes much mirth, the mournful distraction of OPHELIA fills the heart with tenderness, and every personage produces the effect intended, from the apparition that in the first act chills the blood with horror, to the fop in the last that exposes affectation to just contempt.

The conduct is perhaps not wholly secure against objections. The action is indeed for the most part in continual progression, but there are some scenes which neither forward nor retard it. Of the feigned madness of Hamlet there appears no adequate cause, for he does nothing which he might not have done with the reputation of sanity. He plays the madman most, when he treats Ophelia with so much rudeness, which seems to be useless and wanton cruelty.

Hamlet is, through the whole play, rather an instrument than an agent. After he has, by the stratagem of the play, convicted the King, he makes no attempt to punish him, and his death is at last effected by an incident which Hamlet has no part in producing.

The catastrophe is not very happily produced; the exchange of weapons is rather an expedient of necessity, than a stroke of art. A scheme might easily have been formed, to kill Hamlet with the dagger, and Laertes with the bowl.

The poet is accused of having shewn little regard to poetical justice, and may be charged with equal neglect of poetical probability. The apparition left the regions of the dead to little purpose; the revenge which he demands is not obtained but by the death of him that was required to take it; and the gratification which would arise from the destruction of an usurper and a murderer, is abated by the untimely death of Ophelia, the young, the beautiful, the harmless, and the pious.

OTHELLO

ACT V. SCENE vi. (v. ii. 63-5.)

Oh perjur'd woman! Thou dost stone my heart,
 And mak'st me call, what I intent to do,
 A murder, which I thought a sacrifice.

This line is difficult. Thou hast harden'd my heart, and makest me kill thee with the rage of a MURDERER, when I thought to have sacraficed thee to justice with the calmness of a priest striking a victim.

It must not be omitted, that one of the elder quarto's reads, "Thou dost stone THY heart:" which I suspect to be genuine. The meaning then will be, thou forcest me to dismiss thee from the world in the state of the murdered without preparation for death, when I intended that thy punishment should have been "a sacrifice" atoning for thy crime.

I am glad that I have ended my revisal of this dreadful scene. It is not to be endured.

The beauties of this play impress themselves so strongly upon the attention of the reader, that they can draw no aid from critical illustration. The fiery openness of Othello, magnanimous, artless, and credulous, boundless in his confidence, ardent in his affection, inflexible in his resolution, and obdurate in his revenge; the cool malignity of Iago, silent in his resentment, subtle in his designs, and studious at once of his interest and his vengeance; the soft simplicity of Desdemona, confident of merit, and conscious of innocence, her artless perseverance in her suit, and her slowness to suspect that she can be suspected, are such proofs of Shakespeare's skill in human nature, as, I suppose, it is vain to seek in any modern writer. The gradual progress which Iago makes in the Moor's conviction, and the circumstances which he employs to inflame him, are so artfully natural, that, though it will perhaps not be said of him as he says of himself, that he is "a man not esily jealous," yet we cannot but pity him when at last we find him "perplexed in the extreme."

There is always danger lest wickedness conjoined with abilities should steal upon esteem, though it misses of approbation but the character if Iago is so conducted, that he is from the first scene to the last hated and despised.

Event he inferiour characters of this play would be very conspicuous in any other piece, not only for their justness but their strength. Cassio is brave, benevolent, and honest, ruined only by his want of stubbornness to resist an insidious invitation of Rodegigo's suspicious credulity, and impatient submission of the cheats which he sees practised upon him, and which by persuasion he suffers to be repeated, exhibit a strong picture of a weak mind betrayed by unlawful desires, to a false friend and the virtue of AEmilia is such as we often find, worn loosely but not cast off, easy to commit small crimes, but quickend and alarmed at atrocious villanies.

The Scenes from the beginning to the end are busy, varied but happy interchanges, and regularly promoting the progression of the story; and the narrative in the end, though it tells but what is known already, yet is necessary to produce the death of Othello.

Had the scene opened in Cyprus, and the preceding incidents been occasionally related, there had been little wanting of a drama of the most exact and scrupulous regularity.

NOTES TO COMEDIES by Samuel Johnson

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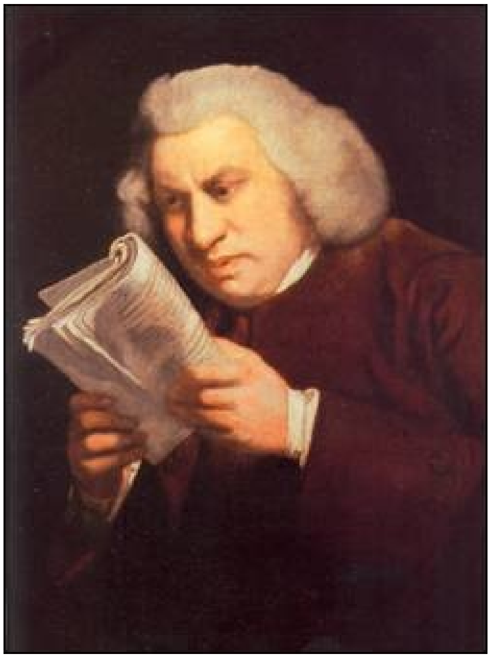

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Dr. Johnson's Preface to Shakespeare is one of the most famous critical essays of the eighteenth century, and yet too many students have forgotten that it is, precisely, a preface to the plays of Shakespeare, edited by Dr. Johnson himself. That is to say, the edition itself has been obscured or overshadowed by its preface, and the sustained effort of that essay has virtually monopolized scholarly attention—much of which should be directed to the commentary. Johnson's love for Shakespeare's plays is well known; nowhere is this more manifest than in his notes on them. And it is on the notes that his claim to remembrance as a critic of Shakespeare must rest, for the famous Preface is, after all, only rarely an original and personal statement.

The idea of editing Shakespeare's plays had attracted Johnson early, and in 1745 he issued proposals for an edition. Forced to give up the project because of copyright difficulties, he returned to it again in 1756 with another, much fuller set of proposals. Between 1745 and 1756 he had completed the great Dictionary and could advance his lexicographical labors as an invaluable aid in the explication of Shakespeare. Although he had promised speedy publication, "on or before Christmas 1757," Johnson's public had to wait until Oct. 10, 1765 for the Shakespeare edition to appear. The first edition, largely subscribed for, was soon exhausted, and a second edition was ready the very next month. A third edition was published in 1768, but there were no revisions in the notes in either of these editions. At some time after February 1, 1766, the date of George Steevens' own proposals for an edition of Shakespeare, and before March 21, 1770 when Johnson wrote to Richard Farmer for some assistance in the edition (Life, II, 114), Johnson decided to join forces with Steevens. The result was, of course, the so-called 1773 Johnson-Steevens variorum from which the notes in this reprint are taken. A second Johnson-Steevens variorum appeared in 1778, but Johnson's part in this was negligible, and I have been able to find only fifty-one revisions (one, a definition, is a new note) which I feel reasonably certain are his. The third variorum, edited by Isaac Reed in 1785, contains one revision in Johnson's notes.

"Dr. Johnson has displayed, in this revisal, such ingenuity, and accuracy of just conception, as render the present annotations a valuable addition to his former remarks on the subject." The writer is a reviewer for the Critical Review (Dee., 1773, p. 416); the work in question is the 1773 Johnson-Steevens edition of Shakespeare's plays. The remark quoted is from the last paragraph of a long review beginning in November and seems almost an afterthought, for the same reviewer had said that the edition "deserves to be considered as almost entirely the production of Mr. Steevens" (p. 346). In a sense this is true, but the basis for the commentary in the 1773 edition was still the approximately 5600 notes, both his own and those of previous editors and critics, that had appeared in Dr. Johnson's 1765 edition. The actual text of the plays is another matter; a combination of collation and judicious borrowing, it was provided by George Steevens. Steevens' contributions to the text and annotation of Shakespeare's plays concern students of the dramatist; That Johnson had to say about the plays concerns Johnsonians as veil as Shakespeareans. And it is unfortunately true that too little attention has been paid to what is after all Johnson's final and reconsidered judgment on a number of passages in the plays.

The decision to reprint the commentary in the 1773 edition may be questioned. Should not the 1765 text of the notes be reprinted, since it, after all, is nearest to the author's manuscript? Will not errors from the second and third editions have been perpetuated and new ones committed in 1773, an inevitable result of reprinting any large body of material? Ideally, the 1765 edition should be the copy-text. But Johnson made about 500 revisions in his commentary, adding eighty-four new notes and omitting thirty-four of his original notes in the first edition. Obviously, Johnson cannot, or should not, be condemned for a note in the 1765 edition which he omitted in 1773. Yet in selections from Johnson's notes to Shakespeare that appear in anthologies some of these offending notes have been reprinted without any indication that the editors knew of their later retraction. In seventy-three notes Johnson adds comments to his original note; in eighty-eight, to the notes of other editors and critics. He revises seventy-five of his original notes and he omits ten comments on the notes of others. And there are many other changes. Some of the revisions come from the Appendix to the 1765 edition. I have collated the notes in the 1765 and 1773 editions for evidence of revision; changes in punctuation were passed over, and I must admit that I do not think them important. In the light of my collation and because of the greater clumsiness of an apparatus to indicate revisions in the 1765 notes I have elected to use the 1773 text of Johnson's commentary, trusting that I have not overlooked any significant changes. The reader has, then, for the first time, outside the covers of the ten volumes of the 1773 edition, an almost complete text of Johnson's notes on Shakespeare. The only omission in this reprint is of those notes which merely list variant readings, either from one of the folios or quartos or from a previous editor. Johnson's reputation as an editor of Shakespeare rests, after all, on his commentary, not on his textual labors. Up to now Johnson's notes have been available only in such books as Walter Raleigh's Johnson on Shakespeare and Mona Wilson's Johnson; Prose and Poetry, and here one gets merely a selection. For example: Miss Wilson reprints only two notes from The Tempest, one from Julius Caesar, three from Antony and Cleopatra, and one from Titus Andronicus. One rarely gets the chance to read the more than 2000 notes in the edition given over to definitions or paraphrases and explanations. Yet it must be remembered that Johnson has been most often praised for these notes by scholars whose primary interest was Shakespeare's meaning, not Johnson's personality. And, what bears constant repetition, the anthologies draw their notes from the 1765 edition, neglecting altogether Johnson's revisions. It is only very recently that these revisions have been studied at all—and then but partially.

The present division of the commentary into three parts—the notes on the comedies, those on the tragedies, and those on the history plays—is arbitrary and mostly a matter of convenience. Some division was necessary, and it seemed advantageous to present introductions which could use Johnson's reaction to comedy, tragedy, and history plays—and Shakespeare's comedies, tragedies, and histories—as a point of departure. Were the notes reprinted in the order of appearance of the plays one would find Macbeth, coming after The Winter's Tale (the last of the comedies), introducing the history plays. Since Johnson had written Miscellaneous Observations on the Tragedy of Macbeth in 1745 and had included the play among the tragedies in the 1765 edition it seems reasonable to assume that he regarded it as a tragedy and possibly bowed to Steevens' wishes in allowing it to appear where it does in 1773. Hence, the notes on Macbeth occur with those on the other tragedies in this reprint.

One of the reasons for a full reprinting of Johnson's commentary has already been discussed: a complete and accurate knowledge of his thoughts on each of the plays of the then accepted canon is thus gained. (I might add here that some notes by other editors, inadvertently unattributed in the 1765 edition—some of them still unattributed in 1773—have been erroneously reprinted as Johnson's by both Walter Raleigh and Mona Wilson.) Another reason is, of course, the relative difficulty of getting at the volumes of the 1773 edition. Although not a particularly scarce item, the edition can usually be consulted only in Rare Book rooms (there are exceptions), where the working scholar is hampered by the inaccessibility of many other books, not "rare," which he needs at his elbow. Then again, the present reprint gives only Johnson's notes, except for necessary explanations of, or quotations from, the notes of previous editors and critics. But far transcending these reasons, although deriving from them, is the enormous value to the student of Johnson the man and the critic of a now easily accessible body of literary criticism and personal comment that is second in importance only to the Lives of the Poets.

Johnson's notes to the plays of Shakespeare are an invaluable source of information of many kinds. I can only suggest here, and give a few examples of, the wealth of material that awaits further, detailed examination by other scholars. One demonstration, however, of the use to which the notes can be put is provided by Professor E. L. McAdam's Dr. Johnson and the English Law (1951) in which are recorded notes showing Johnson's familiarity with various legal terms. Further insight into Johnson's knowledge of books of esoterica, histories, ballads, etc., can be gleaned from the comments on Shakespeare. A subject in which I must confess an interest possibly out of proportion to its worth is that of Johnson's reading. Some day we will have a list, probably never complete, of the books we can be sure Johnson knew. Not only will the notes to Shakespeare supply the names of works that Johnson knew, quoted from, or alluded to only in these notes, but they will also help to establish more firmly certain fields or subjects that fascinated him. Thus, one note is evidence for Johnson's knowledge of Guevara's Dial of Princes; another for his familiarity with Ficino's De Vita Libri Tres; and nowhere else in Johnson's works, letters, or conversation are these works so much as alluded, to. Other notes show us that Johnson remembered now a poem, now an essay, from the Gentleman's Magazine. In still other notes one encounters or is able to identify the names of John Caius, John Trevisa, Dr. William Alabaster, Paul Scarron, Abraham Ortelius, Meric Casaubon, and many others. Plays, sermons, travel books, ballads, romances, proverbs, poems, histories, biographies, essays, letters, documents—all have their place in the notes to Shakespeare.

No discussion of Johnson's knowledge of books can ignore the importance of his reading for the Dictionary. Nor can this same preparatory reading be overlooked in a consideration of the Shakespeare edition. Between one-fifth and one-fourth of the notes to Shakespeare can be traced back to the Dictionary. What is more, the revision of the 1765 Shakespeare was undertaken at the same time that Johnson was revising his Dictionary; both revisions appeared in the same year. And so one is not surprised to find that these two labors are of reciprocal assistance. One illustration will have to do duty for several: in a note Johnson observes of the verb "to roam" that it is "supposed to be derived from the cant of vagabonds, who often pretended a pilgrimage to Rome;" this etymology is absent from the 1755 Dictionary; in the revised Dictionary the verb "is imagined to come from the pretenses of vagrants, who always said they were going to Rome." A number of the new notes and comments in the 1773 Shakespeare are clearly derived, directly or indirectly, from the Dictionary.

I have already mentioned the Lives of the Poets as the only critical work by Johnson which takes precedence over the commentary (and Preface, also) to the plays of Shakespeare. And yet this statement needs modification. In one important respect the notes to Shakespeare are of greater significance than the much more famous Lives for an investigation of Johnson the critic at work. Why, for example, is the Life of Cowley one of the most valuable of the Lives? For two reasons: Johnson is discussing a school of poetry which has provoked much comment, and that particular Life abounds in quotations upon which

Johnson exercises his critical abilities. But there are not many of the Lives which reveal Johnson at work on particular passages, where the passage in question is quoted and critical comment is made on a particular line or a particular image, rhyme, word, *etc.* In short, as so often in Johnson, we are confronted with the large general statement in so much of the criticism in the Lives. The "diction" of Lycidas is "harsh." "Some philosophical notions [in Paradise Lost], especially when the philosophy is false, might have been better omitted." The plays of Nicholas Rowe are marked by "elegance of diction." Dryden is not often "pathetick." Some of Swift's poetry is "gross" and some is "trifling." The diction of Shenstone's Elegies is "often harsh, improper, and affected."

Johnson has not made his meaning entirely clear in these statements because he has not illustrated his remarks with quotations from the works or authors under examination. The famous—or notorious— condemnation of Lycidas as "harsh" in diction continues to give scholars pause. Most often Johnson has been accused of a poor—or no— ear for poetry, since the only definition of "harsh" in his Dictionary which is applicable here is "rough to the ear." As no specific lines from the poem are labelled "harsh," one is forced to conclude that the whole poem is unmusical to Johnson's ears—if "harsh" means only "rough to the ear." But the notes to Shakespeare make it perfectly clear that "harsh" often means something other than that. Sometimes a line is stigmatised as "harsh" because it contains what Johnson in Rambler No. 88 called the "collision of consonants." An image offends his sense of propriety and is therefore "harsh." Some words are "harsh" because they are "appropriated to particular arts" (the phrase comes from his Life of Dryden). Thus, in Measure for Measure, a "leaven'd choice" is "one of Shakespeare's harsh metaphors" because it conjures up images of a baker at his trade. Johnson also uses "harsh" to describe a word used in a sense not familiar to him. And "harsh" is sometimes used synonymously with "forced and far-fetched." "Is't not a kind of incest, to take life From thine own sister's shame?" asks Isabella of her brother in Measure for Measure, provoking from Johnson the remark that in her "declamation there is something harsh, and something forced and far-fetched." Only now, with the varying uses of "harsh" as exemplified in the notes to Shakespeare as guides, can one hope better to understand the bare statement that the diction of Lycidas is "harsh." Similar investigation of other important words in Johnson's critical vocabulary is possible through a close study of his commentary on Shakespeare's plays. Words such as "elegant," "inartificial," "just," "low," "pathetic," "proper," "vicious," and others used in criticism of specific lines and passages help one to pin down Johnson's meaning when he uses the same words in general contexts elsewhere.

Johnson stands clearly revealed as a critic in his notes to Shakespeare; if there is any doubt of this, it can only center about the comparative importance we may wish to attach to the commentary in relation to the rest of Johnson's criticism. But there is another aspect of Johnson of which one gets but half-glimpses in the notes; and here I may be accused or romanticizing or of reading too much significance into remarks whose purpose was to illuminate Shakespeare's art and not, decidedly, to reveal the editor's character. To put it baldly, I believe that in some notes Johnson has given us clues to his own feelings under circumstances similar to those in which Shakespeare's characters find themselves. Let me illustrate. In the concluding line of Act II of 2 Henry VI, Eleanor, wife to the Duke of Gloucester, is on her way to prison. She says, "Go, lead the way. I long to see my prison." Johnson comments: "This impatience of a high spirit is very natural. It is not so dreadful to be imprisoned, as it is desirable in a state of disgrace to be sheltered from the scorn of gazers." This note may be innocuous enough, but it is worth recalling that Johnson was arrested for debt in February, 1758, when he was engaged in the edition of Shakespeare. And two years earlier, in March of 1756, he had also been arrested for debt. Friends came to his rescue both times. Curiously, there is no mention of the arrests in Boswell's Life. Did Boswell know and deliberately omit these facts, or did Johnson prefer to keep silent about them? Anecdote after anecdote shows Johnson to have been an extremely proud man, one who would feel keenly a public disgrace. Was he exposed to "the scorn of gazers" on one or both of these occasions? It is tempting, and admittedly dangerous, to read autobiographical significance in the note on Eleanor's words. But another question intrudes itself in this connection: Is there a link between the two arrests and Idler No. 22, "Imprisonment of Debtors," which Johnson substituted for the original essay when the periodical was republished in 1761? I am not prepared to answer these questions; I can only raise them.

I cannot forbear another excursion into the region of Johnsonian autobiography (or pseudo-autobiography) even at the increased risk of committing a scholarly sin against which I have myself protested. In my own defense I can say that I know the highly conjectural nature of what I am doing. Johnson's pride may have suffered when he was arrested for debt in the presence of unsympathetic onlookers. This is sheer hypothesizing. But when, in Henry IV, Worcester speaks the following words:

For, bear ourselves as even as we can, The King will always think him in our debt; And think, we deem ourselves unsatisfy'd, Till he hath found a time to pay us home. (I.iii.285-8) and Johnson comments: "This is a natural description of the state of mind between those who have conferred, and those that have received, obligations too great to be satisfied," we may protest that such a reaction is by no means universal. The suspicion that Johnson is speaking for himself is strengthened by an observation made by Sir Joshua Reynolds and recorded by his biographer, Junes Northcote. Reynolds remarks "that if any drew [Johnson] into a state of obligation without his own consent, that man was the first he would affront, by way of clearing off the account" (see Boswell's Life, III, 345, n.l). Johnson's note may nov be looked upon as a possible personal confession. Other conjectures are justified, I believe, by still other notes, but it may be preferable to list, without comment, some of the topics upon which Johnson has his say in the notes to Shakespeare. He comments on melancholy, falsehood, the lightness with which vows are made, cruelty to animals, "the pain of deformity," the horrors of solitude, kindness to dependents, friendship, slavery, guilt, the "unsocial mind," the "mean" and the "great"—and a host of others. It is not difficult, therefore, to understand why the editor of The Beauties of Johnson quoted so often from the notes to Shakespeare.

The University of Illinois copy of the 1773 Shakespeare has been used. It is unique, I believe, in that the last volume contains a list of "Cancels In Shakespeare. This List not to be bound up with the Book, being only to direct the Binder," one of the earliest of these forgotten directions to the binder to be recorded. There is another point of bibliographical interest in the edition. L. F. Powell states that there are three Appendices in the last volume of the edition (Life. II, 490), as does T. J. Monaghan (RES, 1953, p. 238). Yet the Illinois copy has only two appendices, and a check of copies in some six large American libraries reveals the same number. The copy with the three Appendices would seem quite rare.

One or two symbols and abbreviations have been used for the sake of economy. A new note or comment by Johnson, one added in 1773, is indicated by (1773) at the end of the note. "W" is Warburton; "T" is Theobald. The notation "W: winter" points to an easily recognizable emendation by Warburton in a line quoted before the note in question. Easily identifiable references to revisions of notes in the 1765 edition, or to revisions later made in the 1778 edition, are placed in parentheses at the end of the notes. Scholars interested in these revisions must check them for themselves. Act, scene, and line references to Shakespeare are from Kittredge's edition of the works (Boston, 1936). The numbers in parentheses after the reference in Kittredge are to page and note number (the volume being given only once) in the 1773 edition. The page reference is to the page upon which the note, Johnson's or another editor's, starts; sometimes the notes extend to three or more pages. The text of Shakespeare quoted is that of the 1773 edition; this is the text that Johnson's contemporaries saw, and it would be a distortion to reprint Johnson's notes after a modern text.

The following list is of notes Johnson omitted in 1773; the references are, of course, to the 1765 edition: I, 64, 0; 94,0 106 ; 113, 0; 133,0; 151,0 ; 153,0 ; 233, 8; 469, 1; II, 217, 2; 295, 8; 326, 8; 396, 8; 464, 6; III, 193, 3; IV, 149, 2; 201, 5; 347, 4; 372, 5; 398, 7; 404, 3; V, 61, 5; 107, 9; VI, 17, 3; 80, 5; ; 415, 9; 440, 9; VII, 316, 3; VIII, 121, 9; 198, 2; 272, 6; 281, 9; 362, 7. Fourteen notes in the 1765 edition, there inadvertently unattributed, are taken verbatim from other editors and critics; five of these are correctly attributed in 1773 (see 1765, V, 182, 1; VI, 24, 3 and 177, 3; and Appendix, notes on V, 253 and VII, 444). Four notes are entirely omitted: 1773, II, 50, 4; 138, 5; V, 297, 6; and VII, 317, 6. In four others (1773, I, 249, 5; II, 466, 7; VI, 72, 4; and X, 417, 8) the part of the note that is not Johnson's is set off by brackets and properly attributed. Finally, the note on II, 452 in the 1765 Appendix, taken partly from "Mr. Smith," appears in 1773 (I, 195, 5) as part of Steevens' comment. Introduction on Comedies.

If I were to select the one passage in Dr. Johnson's Preface to Shakespeare which occasioned the greatest immediate protest and which has continued to be held up to critical scorn, I should have to pitch upon this: "In tragedy he is always struggling after some occasion to be comick; but in comedy he seems to repose, or to luxuriate, as in a mode of thinking congenial to his nature. In his tragick scenes there is always something wanting, but his comedy often surpasses expectation or desire. His comedy pleases by the thoughts and the language, and his tragedy for the greater part by incident and action. His tragedy seems to be skill, his comedy to be instinct." As a theatre-goer, Johnson could also say in the Preface that "familiar comedy is often more powerful on the theatre, than in the page; imperial tragedy is always less." One might logically assume, then, that

Johnson's greater enjoyment of Shakespeare's comedies would be easily remarked in his commentary—and even, possibly, that they would be singled out for more annotation and comment than the tragedies or the histories. The most heavily annotated plays are, however, the tragedies, and it is curious to observe that the sombre "problem comedy," Measure for Measure, commands more notes than any other comedy. Further, Johnson's moral and religious sensibilities were offended by profanity and obscenity in the drama, and Shakespeare's comedies, far more than his tragedies and histories, transgress in this direction. One recollects, finally, that the dramatic genre favored most by Johnson was the "she-tragedy." Was Johnson lauding Shakespeare's comedies because the tragedies had been excessively praised? I do not know.

I an most grateful to the Research Board of the University of Illinois for a grant which greatly expedited my work.

COMEDIES

THE TEMPEST

I.i (4,2) [Enter a Ship-master and a Boatswain] In this naval dialogue, perhaps the first example of sailor's language exhibited on the stage, there are, as I have been told by a skilful narrator, some inaccuracies and contradictory orders.

I.i.8 (4,4) [blow, till thou burst thy wind, if room enough] Perhaps it might be read,—blow till thou burst, wind, if room enough.

I.i.30 (5,5) It may be observed of Gonzalo, that, being the only good man that appears with the king, he is the only man that preserves his cheerfulness in the wreck, and his hope on the island.

I.i.52 (6,7) [set her two courses; off to sea again] The courses are the main-sail and fore-sail. This term is used by Raleigh, in his Discourse on Shipping.

I.i.63 (6,9)

[He'll be hang'd yet;
Though every drop of water swear against it,
And gape at wid'st to glut him.]

Shakespeare probably wrote, t'englut him, to swallow him; for which I know not that glut is ever used by him. In this signification englut, from engloutir, French, occurs frequently, as in Henry VI.

"—Thou art so near the gulf
  Thou needs must be englutted."

And again in Timon and Othello. Yet Milton writes glutted offal for swallowed, and therefore perhaps the present text may stand.

I.i.65 (7,1) [Farewell, brother!] All these lines have been hitherto given to Gonzalo, who has no brother in the ship. It is probable that the lines succeeding the confused noise within should be considered as spoken by no determinate characters, but should be printed thus.

1 Sailor. Mercy on us! We split, we split!

2 Sailor. Farewell, my, &c.

3 Sailor. Brother, farewell, &c. (see 1765, I,6,6)

I.ii.15 (8,3) [Mira. O, woe the day! Pro. No harm, I have done nothing but in care of thee] I know not whether Shakespeare did not make Miranda speak thus:

O, woe the day! no harm?

To which Prospero properly answers:

I have done nothing but in care of thee. Miranda, when he speaks the words, O, woe the day! supposes, not that the crew had escaped, but that her father thought differently from her, and counted their destruction no harm.

I.ii.27 (8,4) [virtue of compassion] Virtue; the most efficacious part, the energetic quality; in a like sense we say, The virtue of a plant is in the extract.

I.ii.29 (8,5)

[I have with such provision in mine art
  So safely order'd, that there is no soul—
  No, not so much perdition as an hair,
  Betid to any creature in the vessel]

Thus the old editions read, but this is apparently defective. Mr. Rowe, and after him Dr. Warburton, read that there is no soul lost, without any notice of the variation. Mr. Theobald substitutes no foil, and Mr. Pope follows him. To come so near the right, and yet to miss it, is unlucky: the author probably wrote no soil, no stain, no spot: for so Ariel tells,

Not a hair perish'd; On their sustaining garments not a blemish, But fresher than before.

And Gonzalo, The rarity of it is, that our garments being drench'd in the sea, keep notwithstanding their freshness and glosses. Of this emendation I find that the author of notes on The Tempest had a glimpse, but could not keep it.

I.ii.58 (10,7) [and thy father Was duke of Milan, thou his only heir] Perhaps—and thou his only heir.

I.ii.83 (11,1)

[having both the key Of officer and office, set all hearts i' the state To what tune pleas'd his ear]

Key in this place seems to signify the key of a musical instrument, by which he set Hearts to tune.

I.ii.93 (11,2) [and my trust,Like a good parent, did beget of him A falshood] Alluding to the observation, that a father above the common rate of men has commonly a son below it. Heroum filii noxae.

I.ii.155 (14,6) [deck'd the sea] To deck the sea, if explained, to honour, adorn, or dignify, is indeed ridiculous, but the original import of the verb deck is, to cover; so in some parts they yet say deck the table. This sense nay be borne, but perhaps the poet wrote fleck'd, which I think is still used in rustic language of drops falling upon water. Dr. Warburton reads mock'd, the Oxford edition brack'd. (see 1765, I,13,5)

I.ii.185 (15,8) [Thou art inclin'd to sleep: 'tis a good dulness] Dr. Warburton rightly observes, that this sleepiness, which Prospero by his art had brought upon Miranda, and of which he knew not how soon the effect would begin, makes him question her so often whether she is attentive to his story.

I.ii.196 (16,1) [I boarded the king's ship: now on the beak] The beak was a strong pointed body at the head of the ancient gallies; it is used here for the forecastle, or the bolt-sprit.

I.ii.197 (16,2) [Now in the waste] The part between the quarter-deck and the forecastle.

I.ii.209 (16,3) [Not a soul But felt a fever of the mad] In all the later editions this is changed to a fever of the mind, without reason or authority, nor is any notice given of an alteration.

I.ii.218 (17,4) [On their sustaining garments not a blemish Thomas Edwards' MSS: sea-stained] This note of Mr. Edwards, with which I suppose no reader is satisfied, shews with how much greater ease critical emendations are destroyed than made, and how willingly every man would be changing the text, if his imagination would furnish alterations. (1773)

I.ii.239 (19,7) [What is the time o' the day?] This passage needs not be disturbed, it being common to ask a question, which the next moment enables us to answer; he that thinks it faulty may easily adjust it thus:

Pro. What is the time o' the day? Past the mid season.
  Ari. At least two glasses.
  Pro. The time 'twixt six and now—

I.ii.250 (19,8) [Pro. Dost thou forget From what a torment I did free thee?] That the character and conduct of Prospero may be understood, something must be known of the system of enchantment, which supplied all the marvellous found in the romances of the middle ages. This system seems to be founded on the opinion that the fallen spirits, having different degrees of guilt, had different habitations allotted them at their expulsion, some being confined in hell, some (as Hooker, who delivers the opinion of our poet's age, expresses it) dispersed in air, some on earth, some in water, others in caves, dens, or minerals under the earth. Of these, some were more malignant and mischievous than others. The earthy spirits seem to have been thought the most depraved, and the aerial the least vitiated. Thus Prospero observes of Ariel:

—Thou wast a spirit too delicate To act her earthy and abhorr'd commands.

Over these spirits a power might be obtained by certain rites performed or charms learned. This power was called The Black Art, or Knowledge of Enchantment. The enchanter being (as king James observes in his Demonology) one who commands the devil, whereas the witch serves him. Those who thought best of this art, the existence of which was, I am afraid, believed very seriously, held, that certain sounds and characters had a physical power over spirits, and compelled their agency; others who condemned the practice, which in reality was surely never practised, were of opinion, with more reason, that the power of charms arose only from compact, and was no more than the spirits voluntary allowed them for the seduction of man. The art was held by all, though not equally criminal, yet unlawful, and therefore Causabon, speaking of one who had commerce with spirits, blames him, though he imagines him one of the best kind who dealt with them by way of command. Thus Prospero repents of his art in the last scene. The spirits were always considered as in some measure enslaved to the enchanter, at least for a time, and as serving with unwillingness, therefore Ariel so often begs for liberty; and Caliban observes, that the spirits serve Prospero with no good will, but hate him rootedly.—Of these trifles enough.

I.ii.306 (22,1) [Mira. The strangeness of your story put Heaviness in me.] Why should a wonderful story produce sleep? I believe experience will prove, that any violent agitation of the mind easily subsides in slumber, especially when, as in Prospero's relation, the last images are pleasing.

I.ii.321 (23,2)

[As wicked dew, as e'er my mother brush'd
  With raven's feather from unwholsome fen,
  Drop on you both!]

[Some critics, Bentley among them, had spoken of Caliban's new language.] Whence these critics derived the notion of a new language appropriated to Caliban, I cannot find: they certainly mistook brutality of sentiment for uncouthness of words. Caliban had learned to speak of Prospero and his daughter, he had no names for the sun and moon before their arrival, and could not have invented a language of his own without more understanding than Shakespeare has thought it proper to bestow upon him. His diction is indeed somewhat clouded by the gloominess of his temper, and the malignity of his purposes; but let any other being entertain the same thoughts, and he will find them easily issue in the same expressions.

[As wicked dew,]—Wicked; having baneful qualities. So Spenser says, wicked weed; so, in opposition, we say herbs or medicines have virtues. Bacon mentions virtuous Bezoar, and Dryden virtuous herbs.

I.ii.351 (25,4) [Abhorred slave] This speech, which the old copy gives to Miranda, is very judiciously bestowed by Mr. Theobald on Prospero.

I.ii.364 (27,7) [the red plague] I suppose from the redness of the body universally inflamed.

I.ii.396 (28,9) [Full fathom five thy father lies] [Charles Gildon had criticized the song as trifling, and Warburton had defended its dramatic propriety.] I know not whether Dr. Warburton has very successfully defended these songs from Gildon's accusation. Ariel's lays, however seasonable and efficacious, must be allowed to be of no supernatural dignity or elegance, they express nothing great, nor reveal any thing above mortal discovery.

The reason for which Ariel is introduced thus trifling is, that he and his companions are evidently of the fairy kind, an order of beings to which tradition has always ascribed a sort of diminutive agency, powerful but ludicrous, a humorous and frolick controlment of nature, well expressed by the songs of Ariel.

I.ii.425 (31,3)

[Fer. my prime request,
    Which I do last pronounce, is, O you wonder!
    If you be maid, or no?
  Mira. No wonder, Sir;
    But, certainly, a maid.]

[Nothing could be more prettily imagined to illustrate the singularity of her character, than this pleasant mistake. W.] Dr. Warburton has here found a beauty, which I think the author never intended. Ferdinand asks her not whether she was a created being, a question which, if he meant it, he has ill expressed, but whether she was unmarried; for after the dialogue which Prospero's interruption produces, he goes on pursuing his former question.

O, if a virgin, I'll make you queen of Naples.

I.ii.439 (32,5) [controul thee] Confute thee, unanswerably contradict thee.

I.ii.471 (33,7) [come from thy ward] Desist from any hope of awing me by that posture of defence.

II.i.3 (36,1) [our hint of woe] Hint is that which recals to the memory. The cause that fills our minds with grief is common. Dr. Warburton reads stint of woe.

II.i.11 (36,3) [Ant. The visitor will not give him o'er so] Why Dr. Warburton should change visitor to 'vizer for adviser, I cannot discover. Gonzalo gives not only advice, but comfort, and is therefore properly called The Visitor, like others who visit the sick or distressed to give them consolation. In some of the Protestant churches there is a kind of officers termed consolators for the sick.

II.i.78 (38,6) [Widow Dido!] The name of a widow brings to their minds their own shipwreck, which they consider as having made many widows in Naples.

II.i.132 (39,7)

[Milan and Naples have
More widows in them of this business' making,
Than we bring men to comfort them]

It does not clearly appear whether the king and these lords thought the ship lost. This passage seems to imply, that they were themselves confident of returning, but imagined part of the fleet destroyed. Why, indeed, should Sebastian plot against his brother in the following scene, unless he knew how to find the kingdom which be was to inherit?

II.i.232 (43,1) [this lord of weak remembrance] This lord, who, being now in his dotage, has outlived his faculty of remembering; and who, once laid in the ground, shall be as little remembered himself, as he can now remember other things.

II.i.235 (43,2)

[For he's a spirit of persuasion, only
Professes to persuade the king his son's alive]

Of this entangled sentence I can draw no sense from the present reading, and therefore imagine that the author gave it thus:

For he, a spirit of persuasion, only
  Professes to persuade.

Of which the meaning may be either, that he alone, who is a spirit of persuasion, professes to persuade the king; or that, He only professes to persuade, that is, without being so persuaded himself, he makes a show of persuading the king.

II.i.242 (44,3) [Ambition cannot pierce a wink beyond] That this is the utmost extent of the prospect of ambition, the point where the eye can pass no further, and where objects lose their distinctness, so that what is there discovered, is faint, obscure, and doubtful. (rev. 1778, I,50,4)

II.i.251 (44,5)

   [though some cast again;
  And, by that destiny, to perform an act,
  Whereof what's past is prologue; what to come,
  In yours, and my discharge.]

These lines stand in the old edition thus:

  —though some cast again;
  And, by that destiny, to perform an act,
  Whereof what's past, is prologue; what to come,
  In your and my discharge.

The reading in the later editions is without authority. The old text may very well stand, except that in the last line in should be is. and perhaps we might better say —and that by destiny. It being a common plea of wickedness to call temptation destiny.

II.i.259 (45,6) [Keep in Tunis] There is in this passage a propriety lost, which a slight alteration will restore:

  —Sleep in Tunis,

  And let Sebastian wake!

II.i.278 (45,7) [Twenty consciences, That stand 'twixt me and Milan, candy'd be they, Or melt e'er they molest] I had rather read,

Would melt e'er they molest.

i.e. Twenty consciences, such as stand between me and my hopes, though they were congealed, would melt before they could molest one, or prevent the execution of my purposes. (see 1765, I,40,7)

II.i.286 (46,8) [This ancient morsel] For morsel Dr. Warburton reads ancient moral, very elegantly and judiciously, yet I know not whether the author might not write morsel, as we say a piece of a man.

II.i.288 (46,9) [take suggestion] *i.e.* Receive any hint of villainy, (1773)

II.i.297 (46,1)

[Ari. My master through his art foresees the danger, That you, his friend, are in; and sends me forth (For else his project dies) to keep them living]

[i.e. Alonzo and Antonio; for it was on their lives that his project depended. Yet the Oxford Editor alters them to you, because in the verse before, it is said—you his friend; as if, because Ariel was sent forth to save his friend, he could not have another purpose in sending him, *viz.* to save his project too. W.]

I think Dr. Warburton and the Oxford Editor both mistaken. The sense of the passage, as it now stands, is this: He sees your danger, and will therefore save them. Dr. Warburton has mistaken Antonio for Gonzalo. Ariel would certainly not tell Gonzalo, that his master saved him only for his project. He speaks to himself as he approaches,

My master through his art foresees the danger
  That these his friends are in.

These written with a y, according to the old practice, did not much differ from you.

II.i.308 (47,2) [Why are you drawn?] Having your swords drawn. So in Romeo and Juliet:

"What art thou drawn among these heartless hinds?"

II.ii.12 (48,3) [sometime am I All wound with adders] Enwrapped by adders wound or twisted about me.

II.ii.32 (49,5) [make a man] That is, make a man's fortune. So in Midsummer Night's Dream—"we are all made men."

II.ii.176 (54,5) [I'll get thee Young scamels from the rock] This word has puzzled the commentators: Dr. Warburton reads shamois. Mr. Theobald would read any thing rather than scamels. Mr. Holt, who wrote notes upon this play, observes, that limpets are in some places called scams, therefore I have suffered scamels to stand.

III.i.48 (58,8) [Of every creature's best] Alluding to the picture of Venus by Apelles.

III.ii.71 (62,5) [What a py'd ninny's this?] This line should certainly be given to Stephano. Py'd ninny alludes to the striped coat worn by fools, of which Caliban could have no knowledge. Trinculo had before been reprimanded and threatened by Stephano for giving Caliban the lie, he is now supposed to repeat his offence. Upon which Stephano cries out,

What a py'd ninny's this? Thou scurvy patch!—

Caliban, now seeing his master in the mood that he wished, instigates him to vengeance:

I do beseech thy greatness, give him blows.

III.iii.48 (67,2) [Each putter out on five for one] This passage alluding to a forgotten custom is very obscure: the putter out must be a traveller, else how could he give this account? the five for one is money to be received by him at his return, Mr. Theobald has well illustrated this passage by a quotation from Jonson.

III.iii.82 (69,3) [clear life] Pure, blameless, innocent.

III.iii.86 (69,4)

[so with good life, And observation strange, my meaner ministers Their several kinds have done]

This seems a corruption. I know not in what sense life can here be used, unless for alacrity, liveliness, vigour, and in this sense the expression is harsh. Perhaps we may read,—with good lift, with good will, with sincere zeal for my service. I should have proposed,—with good lief, in the same sense, but that I cannot find lief to be a substantive. With good life may however mean, with exact presentation of their several characters, with observation strange of their particular and distinct parts. So we say, he acted to the life. (see 1765, I,60,4)

III.iii.99 (70,5) [bass my trespass] The deep pipe told it me in a rough bass sound.

IV.i.2 (71,7) [for I Have given you here a third of mine own life] [Theobald had argued that Miranda was at least half of Prospero's life and had emended.] In consequence of this ratiocination Mr. Theobald printed the text, a thread of my own life. I have restored the ancient reading. Prospero, in his reason subjoined why he calls her the third of his life, seems to allude to some logical distinction of causes, making her the final cause.

IV.i.7 (71,8) [strangely stood the test] Strangely is used by way of commendation, merveilleusement, to a wonder; the sense is the same in the foregoing scene, with observation strange.

IV.i.37 (72,1) [the rabble] The crew of meaner spirits.

IV.i.59 (73,4) [No tongue] Those who are present at incantations are obliged to be strictly silent, "else," as we are afterwards told, "the spell is marred."

IV.i.166 (80,4) [We must prepare to meet with Caliban] To meet with is to counteract; to play stratagem against stratagem.—The parson knows the temper of every one in his house, and accordingly either meets with their vices, or advances their virtues.

HERBERT's Country Parson.

IV.i.178 (80,5)

    [so I charm'd their ears,
  That, calf-like, they my loving follow'd through
  Tooth'd briars, sharp furzes, pricking goss, and thorns,
  Which enter'd their frail shins]

Thus Drayton, in his Court of Fairie of Hobgoblin caught in a Spell:

"But once the circle got within,
  "The charms to work do straight begin,
  "And he was caught as in a gin:
    "For as be thus was busy,
  "A pain he in his head-piece feels,
  "Against a stubbed tree he reels,
  "And up went poor Hobgoblin's heels:
    "Alas, his brain was dizzy.
  "At length upon his feet he gets,
  "Hobgoblin fumes, Hobgoblin frets;
  "And as again he forward sets,
    "And through the bushes scrambles,
  "A stump doth hit him in his pace,
  "Down comes poor Hob upon his face,
  "And lamentably tore his case
    "Among the briers and brambles."

IV.i.196 (81,7) [your fairy … has done little better than play'd the Jack with us] Has led us about like an iguis fatuus, by which travellers are decoyed into the mire.

IV.i.246 (83,3) [put some lime] That is, birdlime.

V.i.102 (90,7) [Ari. I drink the air before me] Is an expression of swiftness of the same kind as to devour the way in Henry IV.

V.i.144 (92,1)

[Alon. You the like loss? Pro. As great to me, as late;]

My loss is as great as yours, and has as lately happened to me.

V.i.174 (93,2) [Yes, for a score of kingdoms] I take the sense to be only this: Ferdinand would not, he says, play her false for the world; yes, answers she, I would allow you to do it for something less than the world, for twenty kingdoms, and I wish you well enough to allow you, after a little wrangle, that your play was fair. So likewise Dr. Gray.

V.i.213 (94,3) [When no man was his own] For when perhaps should be read where.

V.i.247 (96,4)

  [at pick'd leisure
 (Which shall be shortly) single I'll resolve you,
 (Which to you shall seem probable) of every
 These happen'd accidents]

These words seem, at the first view, to have no use; some lines are perhaps lost with which they were connected. Or we may explain them thus: I will resolve you, by yourself, which method, when you hear the story [of Anthonio's and Sebastian's plot] shall seem probable, that is, shall deserve your approbation.

V.i.267 (97,5)

[Mark but the badges of these men, my lords,
 Then say, if they be true]

That is, honest. A true man is, in the language of that time, opposed to a thief. The sense is, Mark what these men wear, and say if they are honest.

Epilogue.10 (100,7) With the help of your good hands] By your applause, by clapping hands. (1773)

General Observation (100) It is observed of The Tempest, that its plan is regular; this the author of The Revisal thinks, what I think too, an accidental effect of the story, not intended or regarded by our author. But whatever might be Shakespeare's intention in forming or adopting the plot, he has made it instrumental to the production of many characters, diversified with boundless invention, and preserved with profound skill in nature, extensive knowledge of opinions, and accurate observation of life. In a single drama are here exhibited princes, courtiers, and sailors, all speaking in their real characters. There is the agency of airy spirits, and of an earthly goblin. The operation of magick, the tumults of a storm, the adventures of a desert island, the native effusion of untaught affection, the punishment of guilt, and the final happiness of the pair for whom our passions and reason are equally interested. (1773)

THE TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA

It is observable (I know not for what cause) that the stile of this comedy is less figurative, and more natural and unaffected than the greater part of this author's, though supposed to be one of the first he wrote. [Pope.] To this observation of Mr. Pope, which is very just, Mr. Theobald has added, that this is one of Shakespeare's worst plays, and is less corrupted than any other. Mr. Upton peremptorily determines, that if any proof can be drawn from manner and stile, this play must be sent packing, and seek for its parent elsewhere. How otherwise, says he, do painters distinguish copies from originals, and have not authors their peculiar stile and manner from which a true critic can form as unerring judgment as a painter? I am afraid this illustration of a critic's science will not prove what is desired. A painter knows a copy from an original by rules somewhat resembling these by which critics know a translation, which if it be literal, and literal it must be to resemble the copy of a picture, will be easily distinguished. Copies are known from originals, even when the painter copies his own picture; so if an author should literally translate his work, he would lose the manner of an original.

Mr. Upton confounds the copy of a picture with the imitation of a painter's manner. Copies are easily known, but good imitations are not detected with equal certainty, and are, by the best judges, often mistaken. Nor is it true that the writer has always peculiarities equally distinguishable with those of the painter. The peculiar manner of each arises from the desire, natural to every performer, of facilitating his subsequent works by recurrence to his former ideas; this recurrence produces that repetition which is called habit. The painter, whose work is partly intellectual and partly manual, has habits of the mind, the eye and the hand, the writer has only habits of the mind. Yet, some painters have differed as much from themselves as from any other; and I have been told, that there is little resemblance between the first works of Raphael and the last. The same variation may be expected in writers; and if it be true, as it seems, that they are less subject to habit, the difference between their works may be yet greater.

But by the internal marks of a composition we may discover the author with probability, though seldom with certainty. When I read this play, I cannot but think that I find, both in the serious and ludicrous scenes, the language and sentiments of Shakespeare. It is not indeed one of his most powerful effusions, it has neither many diversities of character, nor striking delineations of life, but it abounds in [Greek: gnomahi] beyond most of his plays, and few have more lines or passages, which, singly considered, are eminently beautiful. I am yet inclined to believe that it was not very successful, and suspect that it has escaped corruption, only because being seldom played, it was less exposed to the hazards of transcription.

I.i.34 (108,6)

[However, but a folly bought with wit;
  Or else a wit by folly vanquished]

This love will end in a foolish action, to produce which you are long to spend your wit, or it will end in the loss of your wit, which will be overpowered by the folly of love.

I.i.69 (109,7) [Made wit with musing weak] For made read make. Thou, Julia, hast made me war with good counsel, and make wit weak with muting.

I.i.70 (109,8) [Enter Speed] [Pope found this scene low and full of "trifling conceits" and suggested it was possibly an interpolation by the actors.] That this, like many other scenes, is mean and vulgar, will be universally allowed; but that it was interpolated by the players seems advanced without any proof, only to give a greater licence to criticism.

I.i.153 (112,4) [you have testern'd me] You have gratified me with a tester, testern, or testen, that is, with a sixpence.

I.ii.41 (114,5) [a goodly broker!] A broker was used for matchmaker, sometimes for a procuress.

I.ii.68 (115,6) [stomach on your meat] Stomach was used for passion or obstinacy.

I.ii.137 (117,8) [I see you have a month's mind to them] [A month's mind was an anniversary in times of popery. Gray.] A month's mind, in the ritual sense, signifies not desire or inclination, but remonstrance; yet I suppose this is the true original of the expression. (1773) I.iii.1 (118,9) [what sad talk] Sad is the same as grave or serious.

I.iii.26 (119,2) [Valentine, Attends the emperor in his royal court] [Theobald had tried to straighten out an historical error.] Mr. Theobald discovers not any great skill in history. Vienna is not the court of the emperor as emperor, nor has Milan been always without its princes since the days of Charlemaigne; but the note has its use.

I.iii.44 (120,3) [in good time] In good time was the old expression when something happened which suited the thing in hand, as the French say, a propos.

I.iii.84 (121,4) [Oh, how this spring of love resembleth] At the end of this verse there is wanting a syllable, for the speech apparently ends in a quatrain. I find nothing that will rhyme to sun, and therefore shall leave it to some happier critic. But I suspect that the author might write thus:

Oh, how this spring of love resembleth right,
  The uncertain glory of an April day;
 Which now shews all the glory of the light,
  And, by and by, a cloud takes all away.

Light was either by negligence or affectation changed to sun, which, considered without the rhyme, is indeed better. The next transcriber, finding that the word right did not rhyme to sun, supposed it erroneously written, and left it out.

II.i.27 (123,1) [Hallowmas] That is, about the feast of All-Saints, when winter begins, and the life of a vagrant becomes less comfortable.

II.i.39 (123,2) [without you were so simple, none else would] None else would be so simple.

II.i.148 (127,5) [reasoning with yourself?] That is, discoursing, talking. An Italianism.

II.iii.22 (129,2) [I am the dog] This passage is much confused, and of confusion the present reading makes no end. Sir T. Hammer reads, I am the dog, no, the dog is himself and I am me, the dog is the dog, and I am myself. This certainly is more reasonable, but I know not how much reason the author intended to bestow on Launce's soliloquy.

II.iv.57 (133,1) [not without desert] And not dignified with so much reputation without proportionate merit.

II.iv.115 (134,2) [No: that you are worthless] I have inserted the particle no to fill up the measure.

II.iv.129 (135,4)

[I have done penance for contemning love;
  Whose high imperious thoughts have punish'd me
  With bitter fasts, with penitential groans]

For whose I read those. I have contemned love and am punished. Those high thoughts by which I exalted myself above human passions or frailties have brought upon me fasts and groans.

II.iv.138 (136,5) [no woe to his correction] No misery that can be compared to the punishment inflicted by love. Herbert called for the prayers of the liturgy a little before his death, saying, None to them, none to them.

II.iv.152 (136,6) [a principality] The first or principal of women.
So the old writers use state. She is a lady, a great state.
Latymer. This look is called in states warlie, in others
otherwise. Sir T. More.

II.iv.167 (137,8) [She is alone] She stands by herself. There is none to be compared to her.

II.iv.207 (138,1) [with more advice] With more prudence, with more discretion.

II.iv.209 (138,2) ['Tis but her picture I have yet beheld] This is evidently a slip of attention, for he had seen her in the last scene, and in high terms offered her his service.

II.v.28 (139,4) [My staff understands me] This equivocation, miserable as it is, has been admitted by Milton in his great poem. B. VI.

"——The terms we sent were terms of weight,
  "Such as we may perceive, amaz'd them all,
  "And stagger'd many who receives them right,

"Had need from head to foot well understand,
"Not understood, this gift they have besides,
"To shew us when our foes stand not upright."

II.vi (141,5) [Enter Protheus] It is to be observed, that in the first folio edition, the only edition of authority, there are no directions concerning the scenes; they have been added by the later editors, and may therefore be changed by any reader that can give more consistency or regularity to the drama by such alterations. I make this remark in this place, because I know not whether the following soliloquy of Protheus is so proper in the street.

II.vi.7 (141,6) [O sweet-suggesting love] To suggest is to tempt in our author's language. So again:

"Knowing that tender youth is soon suggested."

The sense is, O tempting love, if thou hast influenced me to sin, teach me to excuse it. Dr. Warburton reads, if I have sinn'd; but, I think, not only without necessity, but with less elegance.

II.vi.35 (142,7) [Myself in counsel, his competitor] Myself, who am his competitor or rival, being admitted to his counsel.

II.vi.37 (142,8) [pretended flight] We may read intended flight.

II.vi.43 (142,9) [Love, lend me wings to make my purpose swift, As thou hast lent me wit to plot this drift!] I suspect that the author concluded the act with this couplet, and that the next scene should begin the third act; but the change, as it will add nothing to the probability of the action, is of no great importance.

III.i.45 (146,1) [be not aimed at] Be not guessed.

III.i.47 (147,2) [of this pretence] Of this claim made to your daughter.

III.i.86 (148,4) [the fashion of the time] The modes of courtship, the acts by which men recommended themselves to ladies.

III.i.148 (150,5) [for they are sent by me] For is the same as for that, since.

III.i.153 (150,6) [why, Phaeton (for thou art Merops' son)] Thou art Phaeton in thy rashness, but without his pretensions; thou art not the son of a divinity, but a terrae filius, a low born wretch; Merops is thy true father, with whom Phaeton was falsely reproached.

III.i.185 (151,7) [I fly not death, to fly his deadly doom] To fly his doom, used for by flying, or in flying, is a gallicism. The sense is, By avoiding the execution of his sentence I shall not escape death. If I stay here, I suffer myself to be destroyed; if I go away, I destroy myself.

III.i.261 (153,8) [Laun. I am but a fool, look you; and yet I have the wit to think my master is a kind of a knave: but that's all one, if he be but one knave] [W: but one kind] This alteration is acute and specious, yet I know not whether, in Shakespeare's language, one knave may not signify a knave on only one occasion, a single knave. We still use a double villain for a villain beyond the common rate of guilt.

III.i.265 (154,9) [a team of horse shall not pluck] I see how Valentine suffers for telling his love-secrets, therefore I will keep mine close.

III.i.330 (156,4) [Speed. Item, she hath a. sweet mouth] This I take to be the same with what is now vulgarly called a sweet tooth, a luxurious desire of dainties and sweetmeats.

III.i.351 (157,5) [Speed. Item, she will often praise her liquor]
That is, shew how well she likes it by drinking often.

III.i.355 (157,6) [Speed. Item, she is too liberal] Liberal, is licentious and gross in language. So in Othello, "Is he not a profane and very liberal counsellor."

III.ii.7 (158,8) [Trenched in ice] Cut, carved in ice. Trencher, to cut, French.

III.ii.36 (159,9) [with circumstance] With the addition of such incidental particulars as may induce belief.

III.ii.51 (160,1)

[Therefore as you unwind her love from him,
  Lest it should ravel, and be good to none,
  You must provide to bottom it on me]

As you wind off her love from him, make me the bottom on which you wind it. The housewife's term for a ball of thread wound upon a central body, is a bottom of thread.

III.ii.68 (160,2) [lime] That is, birdlime.

III.ii.98 (161,4) [Duke. Even now about it. I will pardon you]
I will excuse you from waiting.

IV.i.36 (163,2) [By the bare scalp of Robin Hood's fat friar] Robin Hood was captain of a band of robbers, and was much inclined to rob churchmen.

IV.i.46 (163,3) [awful men] Reverend, worshipful, such as magistrates, and other principal members of civil communities.

IV.ii.12 (165,1) [sudden quips] That is, hasty passionate reproaches and scoffs. So Macbeth is in a kindred sense said to be sudden; that is, irascible and impetuous.

IV.ii.45 (166,2) [For beauty lives with kindness] Beauty without kindness dies unenjoyed, and undelighting.

IV.ii.93 (168,4) [You have your wish; my will is even this] The word will is here ambiguous. He wishes to gain her will; she tells him, if he wants her will he has it.

IV.ii.130 (169,5) [But, since your falsehood shall become you well]
This is hardly sense. We may read, with very little alteration,
But since you're false, it shall become you well.

IV.iii.37 (171,2) [Madam, I pity much your grievances] Sorrows, sorrowful affections.

IV.iv.13 (172,1) [I would have, as one should say, one that takes upon him to be a dog indeed, to be, as it were, a dog at all things] I believe we should read, I would have. &c. one that takes upon him to be a dog, to be a dog indeed, to be, &c.

IV.iv.79 (174,3) [It seems, you lov'd not her, to leave her token] Protheus does not properly leave his lady's token, he gives it away. The old edition has it,

It seems you lov'd her not, not leave her token.

I should correct it thus,

It seems you lov'd her not, nor love her token.

IV.iv.106 (175,4) [To carry that which I would have refus'd] The sense is, To go and present that which I wish to be not accepted, to praise him whom I wish to be dispraised.

IV.iv.159 (176,5)

[The air hath starv'd the roses in her cheeks,
  And pinch'd the lily-tincture of her face.
  That now she is become as black as I]

[W: And pitch'd] This is no emendation; none ever heard of a face being pitched by the weather. The colour of a part pinched, is livid, as it is commonly termed, black and blue. The weather may therefore be justly said to pinch when it produces the same visible effect. I believe this is the reason why the cold is said to pinch.

IV.iv.198 (179,2) [her forehead's low] A high forehead was in our author's time accounted a feature eminently beautiful. So in The History of Guy of Warwick, Felice his lady is said to have the same high forehead as Venus.

IV.iv.206 (179,3) [My substance should be statue in thy stead] [W: statued] Statued is, I am afraid, a new word, and that it should be received, is not quite evident.

V.i.12 (180,4) [sure enough] Sure is safe, out of danger.

V.iv.71 (185,1) [The private wound is deepest. Oh time, most curst!]
I have a little mended the measure. The old edition, and all but
Sir T. Hammer, read,

The private wound is deepest, oh time most accurst.

V.iv.106 (187,4) [if shame live In a disguise of love] That is, if it be any shame to wear a disguise for the purposes of love.

V.iv.126 (187,5) [Come not within the measure of my wrath] The length of my sword, the reach of my anger.

General Observation (189,8) In this play there is a strange mixture of knowledge and ignorance, of care and negligence. The versification is often excellent, the allusions are learned and just; but the author conveys his heroes by sea from one inland town to another in the same country; he places the emperor at Milan, and sends his young men to attend him, but never mentions him more; he makes

Protheus, after an interview with Silvia, say he has only seen her picture; and, if we may credit the old copies, he has, by mistaking places, left his scenery inextricable. The reason of all this confusion seems to be, that he took his story from a novel, which he sometimes followed, and sometimes forsook, sometimes remembered, and sometimes forgot.

That this play is rightly attributed to Shakespeare, I have little doubt. If it be taken from him, to whom shall it be given? This question may be asked of all the disputed plays, except Titus Andronicus; and it will be found more credible, that Shakespeare might sometimes sink below his highest flights, than that any other should rise up to his lowest. (see 1765, I,259,5)

THE MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR

I.i.7 (194,4) [Custalorum] This it, I suppose, intended for a corruption of Custos Rotulorum. The mistake was hardly designed by the author, who, though he gives Shallow folly enough, makes him rather pedantic than illiterate. If we read:

Shal. Ay, cousin Slender, and Custos Rotulorum.

It follows naturally:

Slen. Ay, and Ratalorum too.

I.i.22 (194,5) [The luce is the fresh fish; the salt fish is an old coat] I see no consequence in this answer. Perhaps we may read, the salt fish is not an old coat. That is, the fresh fish is the coat of an ancient family, and the salt fish is the coat of a merchant grown rich by trading over the sea.

I.i.115 (198,1) [and broke open my lodge] This probably alludes to some real incident, at that time well known.

I.i.121 (198,2) ['Twere better for you, if 'twere not known in council; you'll be laugh'd at] The old copies read, 'Twere better for you, if 'twere known in council. Perhaps it is an abrupt speech, and must be read thus: 'Twere better for you—if 'twere known in council, you'll be laugh'd at. 'Twere better for you, is, I believe, a menace.(1773)

I.i.127 (199,3) [coney-catching rascals] A coney-catcher was, in the time of Elizabeth, a common name for a cheat or sharper. Green, one of the first among us who made a trade of writing pamphlets, published A Detection of the Frauds and Tricks of Coney-catchers and Couzeners.

I.i.159 (200,6) [Edward shovel-boards] By this term, I believe, are meant brass castors, such as are shoveled on a board, with king Edward's face stamped upon them.

I.i.166 (201,8) [Word of denial in thy Labra's here] I suppose it should rather be read,

Word of denial in my Labra's hear;

that is, hear the word of denial in my lips. Thou ly'st.

I.i.170 (201,9) [marry trap] When a man was caught in his own stratagem, I suppose the exclamation of insult was marry, trap!

I.i.184 (202,3) [and so conclusions pass'd the careires] I believe this strange word is nothing but the French cariere; and the expression means, that the common bounds of good behaviour were overpassed.

I.i.211 (203,4) [upon Allhallowmas last, a fortnight afore Michaelmas?] [Theobald suspected that Shakespeare had written "Martlemas."] This correction, thus seriously and wisely enforced, is received by Sir Tho. Hammer;

but probably Shakespeare intended a blunder.

I.iii.56 (210,7) [The anchor is deep: will that humour pass?] I see not what relation the anchor has to translation. Perhaps we may read, the author is deep; or perhaps the line is out of its place, and should be inserted lower after Falstaff has said,

Sail like my pinnace to those golden shores.

It may be observed, that in the tracts of that time anchor and author could hardly be distinguished. (see 1765, II,464,7)

I.iii.110 (213,6) [I will possess him with yellowness] Yellowness is jealousy. (1773)

I.iii.III (213,7) [for the revolt of mine is dangerous] I suppose we may read, the revolt of men. Sir T. Hammer reads, this revolt of mine. Either may serve, for of the present text I can find no meaning.

I.iv.9 (213,8) [at the latter end of a sea-coal fire] That is, when my master is in bed.

II.i.5 (219,1) [though love use reason for his precisian, he admits him not for his counsellor] Of this word I do not see any meaning that is very apposite to the present intention. Perhaps Falstaff said, Though love use reason as his physician, he admits him not for his counsellor. This will be plain sense. Ask not the reason of my love; the business of reason is not to assist love, but to cure it. There may however be this meaning in the present reading. Though love, when he would submit to regulation, may use reason as his precisian, or director in nice cases, yet when he is only eager to attain his end, he takes not reason for his counsellor. (1773)

II.i.27 (220,2) [I was then frugal of my mirth] By breaking this speech into exclamations, the text may stand; but I once thought it must be read, If I was not then frugal of my mirth.

II.i.29 (220,3) [Why, I'll exhibit a bill in the parliament for the putting down of men] [T: of fat men] [W: of mum] I do not see that any alteration is necessary; if it were, either of the foregoing conjectures might serve the turn. But surely Mrs. Ford may naturally enough, in the first heat of her anger, rail at the sex for the fault of one.

II.i.52 (222,4) [These knights will hack, and so thou shouldst not alter the article of thy gentry] [W: lack] Upon this passage the learned editor has tried his strength, in my opinion, with more spirit than success.

I read thus—These knights we'll hack, and so thou shouldest not alter the article of thy gentry. The punishment of a recreant or undeserving knight, was to hack off his spurs: the meaning therefore is; it is not worth the while of a gentlewoman to be made a knight, for we'll degrade all these knights in a little time, by the usual form of hacking off their spurs, and thou, if thou art knighted, shalt be hacked with the rest.

II.i.79 (223,5) [for he cares not what he puts into the press] Press is used ambiguously, for a press to print, and a press to squeeze.

II.i.114 (224,7) [curtail-dog] That is, a dog that misses hie game. The tail is counted necessary to the agility of a greyhound; and one method of disqualifying a dog, according to the forest laws, is to cut his tail, or make him a curtail. (see 1765, II,477,+)

II.i.128 (225,9) [Away, Sir corporal Nym.—Believe it, Page, he speaks sense] Nym, I believe, is out of place, and we should read thus:

Away, Sir corporal.
Nym. Believe it. Page, he speaks sense.

II.i.135 (225,1) [I have a sword, and it shall bite upon my necessity.—He loves your wife] [V: bite—upon my necessity, he] I do not see the difficulty of this passage: no phrase is more common than—you may, upon a need, thus. Nym, to gain credit, says, that he is above the mean office of carrying love-letters; he has nobler means of living; he has a sword, and upon his necessity, that is, when his need drives him to unlawful expedients, his sword shall bite.

II.i.148 (226,3) [I will not believe such a Cataian] [Theobald and Warburton had both explained "Cataian" as a liar.] Mr. Theobald and Dr. Warburton have both told their stories with confidence, I am afraid, very disproportionate to any evidence that can be produced. That Cataian was a word of hatred or contempt is plain, but that it signified a boaster or a liar has not been proved. Sir Toby, in Twelfth Night, says of the Lady Olivia to her maid, "thy Lady's a Cataian;" but there is no reason to think he means to call her liar. Besides, Page intends to give Ford a reason why Pistol should not be credited. He therefore does not say, I would not believe such a liar: for that he is a liar is yet to be made probable: but he says, I would not believe such a Cataian on any testimony of his veracity. That is, "This fellow has such an odd appearance; is so unlike a man civilized, and taught the duties of life, that I cannot credit him." To be a foreigner was always in England, and I suppose everywhere else, a reason of dislike. So Pistol calls Slender in the first act, a mountain foreigner; that is, a fellow uneducated, and of gross behaviour; and again in his anger calls Bardolph, Hungarian wight.

II.i.182 (228,4) [very rogues] A rogue is a wanderer or vagabond, and, in its consequential signification, a cheat.

II.i.236 (230,7) [my long sword] Not long before the introduction of rapiers, the swords in use were of an enormous length, and sometimes raised with both hands. Shallow, with an old man's vanity, censures the innovation by which lighter weapons were introduced, tells what he could once have done with his long sword, and ridicules the terms and rules of the rapier.

II.ii.28 (234,6) [red lattice phrases] Your ale-house conversation.

II.ii.28 (234,7) [your bold-beating oaths] [W: bold-bearing] A beating oath is, I think, right; so we now say, in low language, a thwacking or swinging thing.

II.ii.61 (235,8) [canaries] This is the name of a brisk light dance, and is therefore properly enough used in low language for any hurry or perturbation.

II.ii.94 (236,1) [frampold] This word I have never seen elsewhere, except in Dr. Hacket's Life of Archbishop Williams, where a frampul man signifies a peevish troublesome fellow.

II.ii.142 (238,3) [Clap on more sails; pursue; up with your fights] [Warburton had quoted a passage from Dryden'a Amboyna for "fights," explaining them as "small arms."] The quotation from Dryden might at least have raised a suspicion that fights were neither small arms, nor cannon. Fights and nettings are properly joined. Fights, I find, are cloaths hung round the ship to conceal the men from the enemy, and close-fights are bulkheads, or any other shelter that the fabrick of a ship affords.

II.ii.170 (240,5) [not to charge you] That is, not with a purpose of putting you to expence, or being burthensome.

II.ii.256 (242,6) [instance and argument] Instance is example.

II.ii.324 (244,8) [Eleven o'clock] Ford should rather have said ten o'clock: the time was between ten and eleven; and his impatient suspicion was not likely to stay beyond the time.

II.iii.60 (246,2) [mock-water] The host means, I believe, to reflect on the inspection of urine, which made a considerable part of practical physick in that time; yet I do not well see the meaning of mock-water.

III.i.17 (249,5) [By shallow rivers, to whose falls] [Warburton had introduced The Passionate Shepherd to his Love and _The Nymph's Reply at this point in his text, attributing both to Shakespeare.] These two poems, which Dr. Warburton gives to Shakespeare, are, by writers nearer that time, disposed of, one to Marlow, the other to Raleigh. These poems are read in different copies with great variations.

III.i.123 (253,6) [scald, scurvy] Scall was an old word of reproach, as scab was afterwards.

Chaucer imprecates on his scrivener;

"Under thy longe lockes mayest thou have the scalle."

III.ii.58 (255,7) [We have linger'd about a match between Anne Page and my cousin Slender, and this day we shall have our answer] They have not linger'd very long. The match was proposed by Sir Hugh but the day before.

III.ii.73 (256,1) [The gentleman is of no having] Having is the same as estate or fortune.

III.ii.90 (257,2) [I think, I shall drink in pipe-wine first with him] [Tyrwhitt: horn-pipe wine] Pipe is known to be a vessel of wine, now containing two hogsheads. Pipe wine is therefore wine, not from the bottle, but the pipe; and the text consists in the ambiguity of the word, which signifies both a cask of wine, and a musical instrument. Horn-pipe wine has no meaning. (1773)

III.iii.60 (260,4) [that becomes the ship-tire, the tire-valiant, or any tire of Venetian admittance] [Warburton had explained the two tents as head-dresses, and "of Venetian admittance" as "which will admit to be adorned."] This note is plausible, except in the explanation of Venetian admittance: but I am afraid this whole system of dress is unsupported by evidence.

III.iv.13 (267,7) [father's wealth] Some light may be given to those who shall endear one to calculate the increase of English wealth, by observing, that Latymer, in the time of Edward VI. mentions it as proof of his father's prosperity, That though but a yeoman. he gave his daughters five pounds each for her portion. At the latter end of Elizabeth, seven hundred pounds were such a temptation to courtship, as made all other motives suspected. Congreve makes twelve thousand pounds more than a counterbalance to the affectation of Belinda. Ho poet would now fly his favourite character at less than fifty thousand.

III.iv.100 (270,1) [will you cast away your child on a fool and a physician?] I should read fool or a physician, meaning Slender and Caius.

III.v.113 (274,4) [bilbo] A bilbo is a Spanish blade, of which the excellence is flexibleness and elasticity.

III.v.117 (274,5) [kidney] Kidney in this phrase now signifies kind or qualities, but Falstaff means a man whose kidnies are as fat as mine.

III.v.155 (275,6) [I'll be horn-mad] There is no image which our author appears so fond of, as that of cuckold's horns. Scarcely a light character is introduced that does not endearor to produce merriment by some allusion to horned husbands. As he wrote his plays for the stage rather than the press, he perhaps reviewed them seldom, and did not observe this repetition, or finding the jest, however, frequent, still successful, did not think correction necessary.

IV.i (276,7) [Page's house. Enter Mrs. Page. Mrs. Quickly, and William] This is a very trifling scene, of no use to the plot, and I should think of no great delight to the audience; but Shakespeare best knew what would please.

IV.ii.22 (879,8) [he so takes on] To take on, which is now used for to, grieve, seems to be used by our author for to, rage. Perhaps it was applied to any passion.

IV.ii.26 (279,9) [buffets himself on the forehead, crying, peer-out, peer-out!] That is, appear horns. Shakespeare is at his old lunes. (see 1765, II, 526,+)

IV.ii.161 (283,1) [this wrongs you] This is below your character, unworthy of your understanding, injurious to your honour. So in The Taming of the Shrew, Bianca, being ill treated by her rugged sister, says: "You wrong me much, indeed you wrong yourself."

IV.ii.195 (284,2) [ronyon!] Ronyon, applied to a woman, means, as far as can be traced, much the same with scall or scab spoken of a man.

IV.ii.204 (284,3) [I spy a great peard under his muffler] As the second stratagem, by which Falstaff escapes, is much the grosser of the two, I wish it had been practiced first. It is very unlikely that Ford, baring been so deceived before, and knowing that he had been deceived, would suffer him to escape in so slight a disguise.

IV.ii.208 (284,4) [cry out upon no trail] The expression is taken from the hunters. Trail is the scent left by the passage of the game. To cry out, is to open or bark.

IV.iii.13 (285,5) [they must come off] To come off, signifies in our author, sometimes to be uttered with spirit and volubility. In this place it seems to mean what is in our time expressed by to come down, to pay liberally and readily. These accidental and colloquial senses are the disgrace of language, and the plague of commentators.

IV.iv.32 (287,7) [And there he blasts the tree, and takes the cattle] To take, in Shakespeare, signifies to seize or strike with a disease, to blast. So in Hamlet;

"No planet takes."

So in Lear;

"——-Strike her young bones,
  "Ye taking airs, with lameness." (rev. 1778,I,341,4)

IV.v.7 (290,3) [standing-bed, and truckle-bed] The usual furniture of chambers in that time was a standing-bed, under which was a trochle, truckle, or running bed. In the standing-bed lay the master, and in the truckle-bed the servant. So in Hall's Account of a Servile Tutor:

"He lieth in the truckle-bed.
  "While his young master lieth o'er his head."

IV.v.21 (291,4) [Bohemian-Tartar] The French call a Bohemian what we call a Gypsey; but I believe the Host means nothing more than, by a wild appellation, to insinuate that Simple makes a strange appearance.

IV. v. 29 (291, 5) [mussel-shell] He calls poor Simple mussel-shell, because he stands with his mouth open.

IV. v. 104 (293, 6) [Primero] A game at cards.

IV. v. 122 (294, 7) [counterfeiting the action of an old woman] [T: a wood woman] This emendation is received by Sir Thomas Hammer, but rejected by Dr. Warburton. To me it appears reasonable enough.

IV. v. 130 (294, 8) [sure, one of you does not serve heaven well, that you are so cross'd] The great fault of this play, is the frequency of expressions so profane, that no necessity of preserving character can justify them. There are laws of higher authority than those of criticism.

V. v. 28 (300, 3) [my shoulders for the fellow of this walk] Who the fellow is, or why he keeps his shoulders for bin, I do not understand.

V. v. 77 (304, 9) [Fairies use flowers for their charactery] For the matter with which they make letters.

V. v. 84 (304, 1) [I smell a man of middle earth] Spirits are supposed to inhabit the ethereal regions, and fairies to dwell under ground, men therefore are in a middle station.

V. v. 99 (305, 4) [Lust is but a bloody fire] So the old copies. I once thought it should be read,

Lust is but a cloudy fire,

but Sir T. Hammer reads with less violence,

Lust is but i' the blood a fire.

V. v. 172 (308, 8) [ignorance itself is a plummet o'er me] Though this be perhaps not unintelligible, yet it is an odd way of confessing his dejection. I should wish to read:

—ignorance itself has a plume o' me;

That is, I am so depressed, that ignorance itself plucks me, and decks itself with the spoils of my weakness. Of the present reading, which is probably right, the meaning may be, I am so enfeebled, that ignorance itself weighs me down and oppresses me. (see 1765, II, 554, 1)

V. v. 181 (309, 1) [laugh at my wife] The two plots are excellently connected, and the transition very artfully made in this speech.

V. v. 249 (311, 2) [Page. Tell, what remedy?] In the first sketch of this play, which, as Mr. Pope observes, is much inferior to the latter performance, the only sentiment of which I regret the omission, occurs at this critical time, when Fenton brings in his wife, there is this dialogue.

> Mrs. Ford. Come, mistress Page. I must be bold with you.
> 'Tis pity to part love that is so true.

Mrs. Page. [Aside] Although that I have miss'd in my intent,
Yet I am glad my husband's match is cross'd.
—Here Fenton. take her.—

Eva. Come, master Page, you must needs agree.

Ford. I' faith, Sir, come, you see your wife is pleas'd.

Page. I cannot tell, and yet my heart is eas'd;
And yet it doth me good the Doctor miss'd.
Come hither, Fenton, and come hither, daughter. (1773)

General Observation. Of this play there is a tradition preserved by Mr. Rowe, that it was written at the command of queen Elizabeth, who was so delighted with the character of Falstaff, that she wished it to be diffused through more plays; but suspecting that it might pall by continued uniformity, directed the poet to diversify his manner, by shewing him in love. No task is harder than that of writing to the ideas of another. Shakespeare knew what the queen, if the story be true, seems not to have known, that by any real passion of tenderness, the selfish craft, the careless jollity, and the lazy luxury of Falstaff must have suffered so much abatement, that little of his former cast would have remained. Falstaff could not love, but by ceasing to be Falstaff. He could only counterfeit love, and his professions could be prompted, not by the hope of pleasure, but of money. Thus the poet approached as near as he could to the work enjoined him; yet having perhaps in the former plays completed his own idea, seems not to have been able to give Falstaff all his former power of entertainment.

This comedy is remarkable for the variety and number of the personages, who exhibit more characters appropriated and discriminated, than perhaps can be found in any other play.

Whether Shakespeare was the first that produced upon the English stage the effect of language distorted and depraved by provincial or foreign pronunciations, I cannot certainly decide. This mode of forming ridiculous characters can confer praise only on him, who originally discovered it, for it requires not much of either wit or judgment: its success must be derived almost wholly from the player, but its power in a skilful month, even he that despises it, is unable to resist.

The conduct of this drama is deficient; the action begins and ends often before the conclusion, and the different parts might change places without inconvenience; but its general power, that power by which all works of genius shall finally be tried, is such, that perhaps it never yet had reader or spectator, who did not think it too soon at an end.

Vol. II

MEASURE FOR MEASURE

Persons Represented: Varrius might be omitted, for he is only once spoken to, and says nothing.

There it perhaps not one of Shakespeare's plays more darkened than this by the peculiarities of its authour, and the unskilfulness of its editors, by distortions of phrase, or negligence of transcription.

I.i.6 (4,4) [lists] Bounds, limits.

I.i.7 (4,5) [Then no more remains,
But that your sufficiency, as your worth is able,
And let them work]

This is a passage which has exercised the sagacity of the editors, and is now to employ mine. [Johnson adds T's and W's notes] Sir Tho. Hammer, having caught from Mr. Theobald a hint that a line was lost, endeavours to supply it thus.

—Then no more remains,
But that to your sufficiency you join
A will to serve us, as your worth is able.

He has by this bold conjecture undoubtedly obtained a meaning, but, perhaps not, even in his own opinion, the meaning of Shakespeare.

That the passage is more or less corrupt, I believe every reader will agree with the editors. I am not convinced that a line is lost, as Mr. Theobald conjectures, nor that the change of but to put, which Dr. Warburton has admitted after some other editor, will amend the fault. There was probably some original obscurity in the expression, which gave occasion to mistake in repetition or transcription. I therefore suspect that the authour wrote thus,

—Then no more remains. But that to your sufficiencies your worth is abled,
_And let them work.

Then nothing remains more than to tell you, that your virtue is now invested with power equal to your knowledge and wisdom. Let therefore your knowledge and your virtue now work together._ It may easily be conceived how sufficiencies was, by an inarticulate speaker, or inattentive hearer, confounded with sufficiency as, and how abled, a word very unusual, was changed into able. For abled, however, an authority is not wanting. Lear uses it in the same sense, or nearly the same, with the Duke. As for sufficiencies, D. Hamilton, in his dying speech, prays that Charles II. may exceed both the virtues and sufficiencies of his father.

I.i.11 (6,6) [the terms For common justice, you are as pregnant in]
The later editions all give it, without authority,

—the terms
  Of justice,—

and Dr. Warburton makes terms signify bounds or limits. I rather think the Duke meant to say, that Escalus was pregnant, that is, ready and knowing in all the forms of law, and, among other things, in the terms or times set apart for its administration.

I.i.18 (7,7) [we have with special soul Elected him our absence to supply] [W: roll] This editor is, I think, right in supposing a corruption, but less happy in his emendation. I read,

—we have with special seal Elected him our absence to supply.

A special seal is a very natural metonymy for a special commission.

I.i.28 (8,8)

[There is a kind of character in thy life,
  That to the observer doth thy history

Fully unfold]

Either this introduction has more solemnity than meaning, or it has a meaning which I cannot discover. What is there peculiar in this, that a man's life informs the observer of his history? Might it be supposed that Shakespeare wrote this?

There is a kind of character in thy look.

History may be taken in a more diffuse and licentious meaning, for future occurrences, or the part of life yet to come. If this sense be received, the passage is clear and proper.

I.i.37 (8,1) [to fine issues] To great consequences. For high purposes.

I.i.41 (9,2) [But I do bend my speech To one that can my part in him advertise] I know not whether we may not better read,

One that can my part to him advertise,

One that can inform himself of that which it would be otherwise my part to tell him.

I.i.43 (9,3) [Hold therefore, Angelo] That is, continue to be Angelo; hold as thou art.

I.i.47 (9,4) [first in question] That is, first called for; first appointed.

I.i.52 (9,5) [We have with a leaven'd and prepared choice Proceeded to you] [W: a levell'd] No emendation is necessary. Leaven'd choice is one of Shakespeare's harsh metaphors. His train of ideas seems to be this. I have proceeded to you with choice mature, concocted, fermented, leavened. When bread is leavened it is left to ferment: a leavened choice is therefore a choice not hasty, but considerate, not declared as soon as it fell into the imagination, but suffered to work long in the mind. Thus explained, it suits better with prepared than levelled.

I.i.65 (10,6) [your scope is as mine own] That is, Your amplitude of power.

I.ii.22 (12,7) [in metre?] In the primers, there are metrical graces, such as, I suppose, were used in Shakespeare's time.

I.ii.25 (12,9) [Grace is grace, despight of all controversy] [Warbarton had suspected an allusion to ecclesiastical disputes.] I am in doubt whether Shakespeare's thoughts reached so far into ecclesiastical disputes. Every commentator is warped a little by the tract of his own profession. The question is, whether the second gentleman has ever heard grace. The first gentleman limits the question to grace in metre. Lucio enlarges it to grace in any form or language. The first gentleman, to go beyond him, says, or in any religion, which Lucio allows, because the nature of things is unalterable; grace is as immutably grace, as his merry antagonist is a wicked villain. Difference in religion cannot make a grace not to be grace, a prayer not to be holy; as nothing can make a villain not to be a villain. This seems to be the meaning, such as it is.

I.ii.28 (12,1) [there went but a pair of sheers between us] We are both of the same piece.

I.ii.35 (13,2) [be pil'd, as thou art pil'd, for a French velvet?] The jest about the pile of a French velvet alludes to the loss of hair in the French disease, a very frequent topick of our authour's jocularity. Lucio finding that the gentleman understands the distemper so well, and mentions it so feelingly, promises to remember to drink his health, but to forget to drink after him. It was the opinion of Shakespeare's time, that the cup of an infected person was contagious.

I.ii.50 (13,3) [To three thousand dollars a year] [A quibble intended between dollars and dolours. Hammer.] The same jest occured before in the Tempest.

I.ii.83 (15,5) [what with the sweat] This nay allude to the sweating sickness, of which the memory was very fresh in the time of Shakespeare: but more probably to the method of cure then used for the diseases contracted in brothels.

I.ii.124 (16,6)

[Thus can the demi-god, Authority,
Make us pay down, for our offence, by weight.—
The words of heaven;—on whom it will, it will;
On whom it will not, so; yet still 'tis just]

[Warburton had emended the punctuation of the second line] I suspect that a line is lost.

I.ii.162 (18,8) [the fault, and glimpse, of newness] Fault and glimpse have so little relation to each other, that both can scarcely be right: we may read flash for fault or, perhaps we may read,

Whether it be the fault or glimpse—

That is, whether it be the seeming enormity of the action, or the glare of new authority. Yet the sane sense follows in the next lines, (see 1765, I, 275, 4)

I.ii.188 (19,2) [There is a prone and speechless dialect] I can scarcely tell what signification to give to the word prone. Its primitive and translated senses are well known. The authour may, by a prone dialect, mean a dialect which men are prone to regard, or a dialect natural and unforced, as those actions seem to which we are prone. Either of these interpretations are sufficiently strained; but such distortion of words is not uncommon in our authour. For the sake of an easier sense, we may read,

—In her youth There is a pow'r, and speechless dialect, Such as moves men.

Or thus,

There is a prompt and speechless dialect.

I.ii.194 (20,3) [under grievous imposition] I once thought it should be inquisition, but the present reading is probably right. The crime would be under grievous penalties imposed.

I.iii.2 (20,4) [Believe not, that the dribbling dart of love Can pierce a compleat bosom] Think not that a breast compleatly armed can be pierced by the dart of love that comes fluttering without force.

I.iii.12 (21,5) [(A man of stricture and firm abstinence)] [W: strict ure] Stricture may easily be used for strictness; ure is indeed an old word, but, I think, always applied to things, never to persons.

I.iii.43 (22,9) [To do it slander] The text stood,

So do in slander.—

Sir Thomas Hammer has very well corrected it thus,

To do it slander.—

Yet perhaps less alteration might have produced the true reading,

And yet my nature never, in the fight,
So *do*ing *slander*ed.—

And yet my nature never suffer slander by doing any open acts of severity. (see 1765, I,279,3)

I.iii.51 (23,2) [Stands at a guard] Stands on terms of defiance.

I.iv.30 (24,3) [make me not your story] Do not, by deceiving me, make me a subject for a tale.

I.iv.41 (26,5)

[as blossoming time
That from the seedness the bare fallow brings
To teeming foyson, so her plenteous womb
Expresseth his full tilth and husbandry]

As the sentence now stands, it is apparently ungrammatical. I read,

At blossoming time, &c.

That is, As they that feed grow full, so her womb now at blossoming time, at that time through which the feed time proceeds to the harvest, her womb shows what has been doing. Lucio ludicrously calls pregnancy blossoming time, the time when fruit is promised, though not yet ripe.

I.iv.51 (26,6) [Bore many gentlemen, myself being one, In hand, and hope of action] To bear in hand is a common phrase for to keep in expectation and dependance, but we should read,

—with hope of action.

I.iv.56 (26,7) [with full line] With full extent, with the whole length.

I.iv.62 (27,8) [give fear to use] To intimidate use, that is, practices long countenanced by custom.

I.iv.69 (27,9) [Unless you have the grace] That is, the acceptableness, the power of gaining favour. So when she makes her suit, the provost says,

Heaven give thee moving graces. (1765, I,282,1)

I.iv.70 (27,1) [pith Of business] The inmost part, the main of my message.

I.iv.86 (28,4) [the mother] The abbess, or prioress.

II.i.8 (29,7) [Let but your honour know] To know is here to examine, to take cognisance. So in Midsummer-Night's Dream,

Therefore, fair Hermia, question your desires;
Know of your truth, examine well your blood.

II.i.23 (29,8)

['Tis very pregnant,
The jewel that we find, we stoop and take it,
Because we see it; but what we do not see,
We tread upon, and never think of it]

'Tis plain that we must act with bad as with good; we punish the faults, as we take the advantages, that lie in our way, and what we do not see we cannot note.

II.i.28 (30,8) [For I have had such faults] That is, because, by reason that I have had faults.

II.i.57 (31,9) [This comes off well] This is nimbly spoken; this is volubly uttered.

II.i.63 (32,1) [a tapster, sir; parcel-bawd] This we should now express by saying, he is half-tapster, half-bawd. (1773)

II.i.66 (32,2) [she professes a hot-house] A hot-house is an English name for a bagnio.

Where lately harbour'd many a famous whore,
A purging-bill now fix'd upon the door,
Tells you it it a hot-house, so it may.
And still be a whore-house. Ben. Jonson.

II.i.85 (32,3) [Ay, sir, by mistress Over-done's means] Here seems to have been some mention made of Froth, who was to be accused, and some words therefore may have been lost, unless the irregularity of the narrative may be better imputed to the ignorance of the constable.

II.i.180 (35,4) [Justice or Iniquity?] These were, I suppose, two personages well known to the audience by their frequent appearance in the old moralities. The words, therefore, at that time, produced a combination of ideas, which they have now lost.

II.i.183 (35,5) [Hannibal] Mistaken by the constable for Cannibal.

II.i.215 (36,6) [they will draw you] Draw has here a cluster of senses. As it refers to the tapster, it signifies to drain, to empty; as it is related to hang, it means to be conveyed to execution on a hurdle. In Froth's answer, it is the same as to bring along by some motive or power.

II.i.254 (37,7) [I'll rent the fairest house in it, after three pence a bay] A bay of building is, in many parts of England, a common term, of which the best conception that I could ever attain, is, that it is the space between the main beams of the roof; so that a barn crossed twice with beams is a barn of three bays.

II.ii.26 (40,8) [Stay yet a while] It is not clear why the provost is bidden to stay, nor when he goes out.

II.ii.32 (40,9) [For which I must not plead but that I am at war, 'twixt will, and will not] This is obscure; perhaps it may be mended by reading,

For which I must now plead; but yet I am At war, 'twixt will, and will not.

Yet and yt are almost indistinguishable in a manuscript. Yet no alteration is necessary, since the speech is not unintelligible as it now stands, (see 1765, 9I,294,5)

II.ii.78 (42,2) [And mercy then will breathe within your lips, Like man new made] I rather think the meaning is, You would then change the severity of your present character. In familiar speech, You would be quite another man. (see 1765, 1,296,7)

II.ii.99 (43,6)

[Isab. Yet shew some pity. Ang. I shew it most of all, when I shew justice; For then I pity those I do not know]

This was one of Bale's memorials. When I find myself swayed to mercy, let me remember, that there is a mercy likewise due to the country.

II.ii.126 (45,2) [We cannot weigh our brother with ourself] [W: yourself] The old reading is right. We mortals proud and foolish cannot prevail on our passions to weigh or compare our brother, a being of like nature and frailty, with ourself. We have different names and different judgments for the same faults committed by persons of different condition. (1773)

II.ii.141 (46,3) [She speaks, and 'tis Such sense, that my sense breeds with it] Thus all the folios. Some later editor has changed breeds to bleeds, and Dr. Warburton blames poor Mr. Theobald for recalling the old word, which yet is certainly right. My sense breeds with her sense, that is, new thoughts are stirring in my mind, new conceptions are hatched in my imagination.

So we say to brood over thought.

II.ii.149 (46,4) [tested gold] Rather cupelled, brought to the test, refined, (see 1765,I,299,6)

II.ii.157 (47,6) [For I am that way going to temptation, Where prayers cross] Which way Angelo is going to temptation, we begin to perceive; but how prayers cross that way, or cross each other, at that way, more than any other, I do not understand.

Isabella prays that his honour may be safe, meaning only to give him his title: his imagination is caught by the word honour; he feels that his honour is in danger, and therefore, I believe, answers thus:

I am that way going to temptation, Which your prayers cross.

That is, I am tempted to lose that honour of which thou implorest the preservation. The temptation under which I labour is that which thou hast unknowingly thwarted with thy prayer. He uses the same mode language a few lines lower. Isabella, parting, says, Save your honour! Angelo catches the word —Save it! From what? From thee; even from thy virtue!—(rev. 1778,II,52,3)

II.ii.165 (47,7)

    [But it is I,
That lying, by the violet, in the sun,
Do, as the carrion does, not as the flower,
Corrupt with virtuous season.]

I am not corrupted by her, but by my own heart, which excites foul desires under the same benign influences that exalt her purity, as the carrion grows putrid by those beams which encrease the fragrance of the violet.

II.ii.186 (48,8) [Ever, till now, When men were fond, I smil'd, and wonder'd how] As a day must now intervene between this conference of Isabella with Angelo, and the next, the act might more properly end here; and here, in my opinion, it was ended by the poet.

II.iii.11 (49,1) [Who falling in the flaws of her own youth, Hath blister'd her report] Who doth not see that the integrity of the metaphor requires we should read, —flames of her own youth? Warburton.]

Who does not see that, upon such principles, there is no end of correction?

II.iii.36 (50,3) [There rest] Keep yourself in this temper.

II.iii.40 (50,4) [Oh, injurious love] Her execution was respited on account of her pregnancy, the effects of her love: therefore she calls it injurious; not that it brought her to shame, but that it hindered her freeing herself from it. Is not this all very natural? yet the Oxford editor changes it to injurious law.

II.iv.9 (51,6) [Grown fear'd and tedious] [W: sear'd] I think fear'd

may stand. What we go to with reluctance may be said to be fear'd.

II.iv.13 (51,7) [case] For outside; garb; external shew.

II.iv.14 (51,8) [Wrench awe from fools, and tie the wiser souls To thy false seeming?] Here Shakespeare judiciously distinguishes the different operations of high place upon different minds. Fools are frighted, and wise men are allured. Those who cannot judge but by the eye, are easily awed by splendour; those who consider men as well as conditions, are easily persuaded to love the appearance of virtue dignified with power.

II.iv.16 (51,9) [Let's write good angel on the devil's horn; 'Tis not the devil's crest] [Hammer: Is't not the devil's crest] I am still inclined to the opinion of the Oxford editor. Angelo, reflecting on the difference between his seeming character, and his real disposition, observes, that he could change his gravity for a plume. He then digresses into an apostrophe, O dignity, how dost thou impose upon the world! then returning to himself, Blood, says he, thou art but blood, however concealed with appearances and decorations. Title and character do not alter nature, which is still corrupt, however dignified.

Let's write good angel on the devil's horn; Is't not?—or rather—'Tis yet the devil's crest.

It may however be understood, according to Dr. Warburton's explanation. O place, how dost thou impose upon the world by false appearances! so much, that if we write good angel on the devil's horn, 'tis not taken any longer to be the devil's crest. In this sense,

Blood, thou art but blood.!

is an interjected exclamation. (1773)

II.iv.27 (53,1) [The gen'ral subjects to a well-wish'd king] So the later editions: but the old copies read,

The general subject to a well-wish'd king.

The general subject seems a harsh expression, but general subjects has no sense at all; and general was, in our authour's time, a word for people, so that the general is the people, or multitude, subject to a king. So in Hamlet: The play pleased not the million; 'twas caviare to the general.

II.iv.47 (54,3) [Falsely to take away a life true made] Falsely is the same with dishonestly, illegally: so false, in the next lines, is illegal, illegitimate.

II.iv.48 (54,4) [As to put metal in restrained means] In forbidden moulds. I suspect means not to be the right word, but I cannot find another.

II.iv.50 (55,5) ['Tis set down so in heaven, but not in earth] I would have it considered, whether the train of the discourse does not rather require Isabel to say,

'Tis so set down in earth, but not in heaven.

When she has said this, Then, says Angelo, I shall poze you quickly. Would you, who, for the present purpose, declare your brother's crime to be less in the sight of heaven, than the law has made it; would you commit that crime, light as it is, to save your brother's life? To this she answers, not very plainly in either reading, but more appositely to that which I propose:

I had rather give my body, than my soul. (1773)

II.iv.67 (56,6)

[Pleas'd you to do't at peril of your soul,
Were equal poize of sin and charity]

The reasoning is thus: Angelo asks, whether there might not be a charity in sin to save this brother. Isabella answers, that if Angelo will save him, she will stake her soul that it were charity, not sin. Angelo replies, that if Isabella would save him at the hazard of her soul, it would be not indeed no sin, but a sin to which the charity would be equivalent.

II.iv.73 (56,7) [And nothing of your answer] I think it should be read,

And nothing of yours answer.

You, and whatever is yours, be exempt from penalty.

II.iv.86 (56,9) [Accountant to the law upon that pain] Pain is here for penalty, punishment.

II.iv.90 (57,2) [But in the loss of question,] The loss of question I do not well understand, and should rather read,

But in the toss of question.

In the agitation, in the discussion of the question. To toss an argument is a common phrase.

II.iv.106 (57,4) [a brother dy'd at once] Perhaps we should read,

Better it were, a brother died for once, Than that a sister, by redeeming him. Should die for ever.

II.iv.123 (58,6) [Owe, and succeed by weakness] To owe is, in this place, to own, to hold, to have possession.

II.iv.125 (59,7) [the glasses where they view themselves; Which are as easily broke, as they make forms] Would it not be better to read, ——take forms.

II.iv.128 (59,8) [In profiting by them] In imitating them, in taking them for examples.

II.iv.139 (59,1)

[I have no tongue but one. Gentle my lord,
  Let me intreat you, speak the former language]

Isabella answers to his circumlocutory courtship, that she has but one tongue, she does not understand this new phrase, and desires him to talk his former language, that is, to talk as he talked before.

II.iv.150 (60,3) [Seeming, seeming!] Hypocrisy, hypocrisy; counterfeit virtue.

II.iv.156 (60,4) [My Touch against you] [The calling his denial of her charge his vouch, has something fine. Vouch is the testimony one man bears for another. So that, by this, he insinuates his authority was so great, that his denial would have the same credit that a vouch or testimony has in ordinary cases. Warburton.] I believe this beauty is merely imaginary, and that vouch against means no more than denial.

II.iv.165 (60,5) [die the death] This seems to be a solemn phrase for death inflicted by law. So in Midsummer Night's Dream.

Prepare to die the death.

II.iv.178 (61,6) [prompture] Suggestion, temptation, instigation.

III.i.5 (62,8) [Be absolute for death] Be determined to die, without any hope of life. Horace,—

—The hour, which exceeds expectation will be welcome.

III.i.7 (62,9) [I do lose a thing, That none but fools would keep] [W: would reck] The meaning seems plainly this, that none but fools would wish to keep life; or, none but fools would keep it, if choice were allowed. A sense, which whether true or not, is certainly innocent.

III.i.14 (63,3) [For all the accommodations, that thou bear'st Are nurs'd by baseness] Dr. Warburton is undoubtedly mistaken in supposing that by baseness is meant self-love here assigned as the motive of all human actions. Shakespeare only meant to observe, that a minute analysis of life at once destroys that splendour which dazzles the imagination. Whatever grandeur can display, or luxury enjoy, is procured by baseness, by offices of which the mind shrinks from the contemplation. All the delicacies of the table may be traced back to the shambles and the dunghill, all magnificence of building was hewn from the quarry, and all the pomp of ornaments dug from among the damps and darkness of the mine.

III.i.16 (64,4) [the soft and tender fork Of a poor worm] Worm is put for any creeping thing or serpent. Shakespeare supposes falsely, but according to the vulgar notion, that a serpent wounds with his tongue, and that his tongue is forked. He confounds reality and fiction, a serpent's tongue is soft but not forked nor hurtful. If it could hurt, it could not be soft. In Midsummer Night's Dream he has the same notion.

—With doubler tongue Than thine, O serpent, never adder stung.

III.i.17 (64,5)

  [Thy best of rest is sleep,
And that thou oft provok'st; yet grosly fear'st
Thy death which is no more]

Here Dr. Warburton might have found a sentiment worthy of his

animadversion. I cannot without indignation find Shakespeare saying, that death is only sleep, lengthening out his exhortation by a sentence which in the friar is impious, in the reasoner is foolish, and in the poet trite and vulgar.

III.i.19 (64,6)

  [Thou art not thyself,
For thou exist'st on many thousand grains,
That issue out of dust]

Thou art perpetually repaired and renovated by external assistance, thou subsistest upon foreign matter, and hast no power of producing or continuing thy own being.

III.i.24 (64,7) [strange effects] For effects read affects; that is, affections, passions of mind, or disorders of body variously affected. So in Othello, The young affects.

III.i.32 (65,9)

  [Thou hast nor youth, nor age;

But, as it were, an after-dinner's sleep,
Dreaming on both]

This is exquisitely imagined. When we are young, we busy ourselves in forming schemes for succeeding time, and miss the gratifications that are before us; when we are old, we amuse the languor of age with the recollection of youthful pleasures or performances; so that our life, of which no part is filled with the business of the present time, resembles our dreams after dinner, when the events of the morning are mingled with the designs of the evening.

III.i.34 (65,1)

[for all thy blessed youth Becomes as aged, and doth beg the alms Of palsied eld]

[W: for pall'd, thy blazed youth Becomes assuaged] Here again I think Dr. Warburton totally mistaken. Shakespeare declares that man has neither youth nor age; for in youth, which is the happiest time, or which might be the happiest, he commonly wants means to obtain what he could enjoy; he is dependent on palsied eld; must beg alms from the coffers of hoary avarice: and being very niggardly supplied, becomes as aged, looks, like an old man, on happiness which is beyond his reach. And when he is old and rich, when he has wealth enough for the purchase of all that formerly excited his desires, he has no longer the powers of enjoyment,

—_has neither heat, affection, limb, nor beauty, To make _his riches pleasant.—

I have explained this passage according to the present reading, which may stand without much inconvenience; yet I am willing to persuade my reader, because I have almost persuaded myself, that our authour wrote,

—for all thy blasted youth Becomes as aged—

III.i.37 (66,2) [Thou has neither heat, affection, limb, nor beauty To make thy riches pleasant] [W: nor bounty] I am inclined to believe, that neither man nor woman will have much difficulty to tell how beauty makes riches pleasant. Surely this emendation, though it it elegant and ingenious, is not such as that an opportunity of inserting it should be purchased by declaring ignorance of what every one knows, by confessing insensibility to what every one feels.

III.i.40 (66,3) [more thousand deaths] For this sir T. Hammer reads, —— a thousand deaths:—— The meaning is not only a thousand deaths, but a thousand deaths besides what have been mentioned.

III.i.55 (67,5) [Why, as all comforts are; most good in Deed] If this reading be right, Isabella must mean that she brings something better than words of comfort, she brings an assurance of deeds. This is harsh and constrained, but I know not what better to offer. Sir Thomas Hammer reads,—in speed.

III.i.59 (68,6) [an everlasting leiger. Therefore your best appointment] Leiger is the same with resident. Appointment; preparation; act of fitting, or state of being fitted for any thing. So in old books, we have a knight well appointed; that is, well armed and mounted or fitted at all points.

III.i.68 (68,8)

[Tho' all the world's vastidity you had,
  To a determin'd scope]

A confinement of your mind to one painful idea; to ignominy, of which the remembrance can neither be suppressed nor escaped.

III.i.79 (69,9)

[And the poor beetle, that we tread upon,
  In corporal sufferance finds a pang as great,
  As when a giant dies]

The reasoning is, that death is no more than every being must suffer, though the dread of it is peculiar to man; or perhaps, that_ we are inconsistent with ourselves, when we so much dread that which we carelessly inflict on other creatures, that feel the pain as acutely as we.

III.i.91 (69,1) [follies doth emmew] Forces follies to lie in cover without daring to show themselves.

III.1.93 (69,3) [His filth within being cast] To cast a pond is to empty it of mud.

Mr. Upton reads,
  His pond within being cast, he would appear
  A filth as deep as hell.

III.1.94 (70,4)
    [Claud. The princely Angelo?
    Isab. Oh, 'tis the cunning livery of hell,
      The damned'st body to invest and cover
      In princely guards!]

[W: priestly guards] The first folio has, in both places, prenzie,

from which the other folios made princely, and every editor may make what he can.

III.i.113 (71,7)

[If it were damnable, he being so wise,
  Why would he for the momentary trick
  Be perdurably fin'd?]

Shakespeare shows his knowledge of human nature in the conduct of Claudio. When Isabella first tells him of Angelo's proposal, he answers, with honest indignation, agreeably to his settled principles,

Thou shalt not do't.

But the love of life being permitted to operate, soon furnishes him with sophistical arguments, he believes it cannot be very dangerous to the soul, since Angelo, who is so wise, will venture it.

III.i.121 (71,8) [delighted spirit] This reading may perhaps stand, but many attempts have been made to correct it. The most plausible is that which substitutes,

—the benighted spirit,

alluding to the darkness always supposed in the place of future punishment.

Perhaps we may read,

—the delinquent spirit,

a word easily changed to delighted by a bad copier, or unskilful reader. Delinquent is proposed by Thirlby in his manuscript.(1773)

III.i.127 (72,9) [lawless and incertain thoughts] Conjecture sent out to wander without any certain direction, and ranging through all possibilities of pain.

III.i.139 (73,2) [Is't not a kind of incest, to take life From thine own sister's shame?] In Isabella's declamation there is something harsh, and something forced and far-fetched. But her indignation cannot be thought violent, when we consider her not only as a virgin, but as a nun.

III.i.149 (74,4) [but a trade] A custom; a practice, an established habit. So we say of a man much addicted to any thing, he makes a trade of it.

III.i.176 (75,6) [Hold you there] Continue in that resolution.

III.i.255 (77,l) [only refer yourself to this advantage] This is scarcely to be reconciled to any established mode of speech. We may read, only reserve yourself to, or only reserve to yourself this advantage.

III.i.266 (77,2) [the corrupt deputy scaled] To scale the deputy may be, to reach him, notwithstanding the elevation of his place; or it may be, to strip him and discover his nakedness, though armed and concealed by the investments of authority.

III.ii.6 (78,4) [since, of two usuries] Sir Thomas Hammer corrected this with less pomp [than Warburton], then since of two usurers the merriest was put down, and the worser allowed, by order of law, a furr'd gown, &c. His punctuation is right, but the alteration, small as it is, appears more than was wanted. Usury may be need by an easy licence for the professors of usury.

III.ii.14 (79,5) [father] This word should be expunged.

III.ii.40 (80,7) [That we were all, as some would seem to be,
Free from all faults, as faults from seeming free!]

Sir T. Hammer reads,

Free from all faults, as from faults seeming free.

In the interpretation of Dr. Warburton, the sense is trifling, and the expression harsh. To wish that men were as free from faults, as faults are free from comeliness [instead of void of comeliness] is a very poor conceit. I once thought it should be read,

O that all were, as all would seem to be. Free from all faults, or from false seeming free.

So in this play,

O place, 0 power—how dost thou Wrench awe from fools, and tie the wiser souls To thy false seeming.

But now I believe that a less alteration will serve the turn.

Free from all faults, or _faults from seeming free;

that men were really good, or that their faults were known_, that men were free from faults, or faults from hypocrisy. So Isabella calls Angelo's hypocrisy, seeming, seeming.

III.ii.42 (81,8) [His neck will come to your waist] That is, his neck will be tied, like your waist, with a rope. The friars of the Franciscan order, perhaps of all others, wear a hempen cord for a girdle. Thus Buchanan,

Fac gemant suis, Variata terga funibus.

III.ii.51 (81,1) [what say'st thou to this tune, matter and method? Is't not drown'd i' the last rain?] [W: It's not down i' the last reign] Dr. Warburton's emendation is ingenious, but I know not whether the sense may not be restored with less change. Let us consider it. Lucio, a prating fop, meets his old friend going to prison, and pours out upon him his impertinent interrogatories, to which, when the poor fellow makes no answer, he adds, What reply? ha? what say'st thou to this? tune, matter, and method,—is't not? drown'd i' th' last rain? ha? what say'st thou, trot? &c. It is a common phrase used in low raillery of a man crest-fallen and dejected, that he looks like a drown'd puppy, Lucio, therefore, asks him, whether he was drowned in the last rain, and therefore cannot speak.

III.ii.52 (82,2) [what say'st thou, trot?] Trot, or as it is now often pronounced, honest trout, is a familiar address to a man among the provincial vulgar. (1773)

III.ii.54 (82,3) [Which is the way?] What is the mode now?

III.ii.59 (82,4) [in the tub] The method of cure for veneral complaints is grosly celled the powdering tub.

III.ii.89 (83,6) [Go—to kennel, Pompey—go] It should be remembered, that Pompey is the common name of a dog, to which allusion is made in the mention of a kennel. (1773)

III.ii.135 (85,9) [clack-dish] The beggars, two or three centuries ago, used to proclaim their wont by a wooden dish with a moveable cover, which they clacked to shew that their vessel was empty. This appears in a passage quoted on another occasion by Dr. Gray, (see 1765, I,331,9 and the note in the 1765 Appendix)

III.ii.144 (86,1) [The greater file of the subject] The larger list, the greater number.

III.ii.193 (87,5) [He's now past it] Sir Thomas Hammer, He is not past it yet. This emendation was received in the former edition, but seems not necessary. It were to be wished, that we all explained more, and amended less. (see 1765, I,333,5)

III.ii.277 (90,9)

[Pattern in himself to know,
Grace to stand, and virtue go]

These lines I cannot understand, but believe that they should be read thus:

Patterning himself to know,
  In grace to stand, in virtue go;

To pattern is to work after a pattern, and, perhaps, in Shakespeare's licentious diction, simply to work. The sense is, he that bears the sword of heaven should be holy as well as severe; one that after good examples labours to know himself, to live with innocence, and to act with virtue.

III.ii.294 (91,5)

[So disguise shall, by the disguis'd
  Pay with falshood false exacting]

So disguise shall by means of a person disguised, return an injurious demand with a counterfeit person.

IY.i.13 (93,4) [My mirth it much displeas'd, but pleas'd my woe] Though the musick soothed my sorrows, it had no tendency to produce light merriment.

IV.i.21 (93,5) [constantly] Certainly; without fluctuation of mind.

IV.i.28 (93,6) [circummur'd with brick] Circummured, walled round. He caused the doors to be mured and cased up.

Painter's Palace of Pleasure.

IV.i.40 (94,7) [In action all of precept] I rather think we should read,

In precept all of action,—

that is, in direction given not by words, but by mute signs.

IV.i.44 (94,8) [I have possess'd him] I have made him clearly and strongly comprehend.

IV.i.60 (95,9) [O place and greatness] [It plainly appears, that this fine speech belongs to that which concludes the preceding scene, between the Duke and Lucio…. But that some time might be given to the two women to confer together, the players, I suppose, took part of the speech, beginning at No might nor greatness, &c. and put it here, without troubling themselves about its pertinency. Warburton.] I cannot agree that these lines are placed here by the players. The sentiments are common, and such as a prince, given to reflection, must have often present. There was a necessity to fill up the time in which the ladies converse apart, and they must have quick tongues and ready apprehensions, if they understood each other while this speech was uttered.

IV.i.60 (95,1) [false eyes] That is, Eyes insidious and traiterous.

IV.i.62 (95,2) [contrarious quests] Different reports, running counter to each other.

IV.i.76 (96,4) [for yet our tithe's to sow] [W: tilth] The reader is here attacked with a pretty sophism. We should read tilth, *i.e.* our tillage is to make. But in the text it is to sow; and who has ever said that his tillage was to sow? I believe tythe is right, and that the expression is proverbial, in which tithe is taken, by an easy metonymy, for harvest.

IV.ii.69 (100,7) [As fast lock'd up in sleep, as guiltless labour
  When it lies starkly in the traveller's bones]
Stiffly. These two lines afford a very pleasing image.

IV.ii.83 (101,1) [Even with the stroke] Stroke is here put for the stroke of a pen or a line.

IV.ii.86 (101,2) [To qualify] To temper, to moderate, as we say wine is qualified with water.

IV.ii.86 (101,3) [Were he meal'd] Were he sprinkled; were he defiled, A figure of the same kind our authour uses in Macbeth, The blood-bolter'd Banquo.

IV.ii.91 (101,4) [that spirit's possess'd with haste, That wounds the unresisting postern with these strokes] The line is irregular, and the unresisting postern so strange an expression, that want of measure, and want of sense, might justly raise suspicion of an errour, yet none of the later editors seem to have supposed the place faulty, except sir Tho. Hammer, who reads,

the unresting postern.

The three folio's have it,

unsisting postern,

out of which Mr. Rowe made unresisting, and the rest followed him. Sir Thomas Hammer seems to have supposed unresisting the word in the copies, from which he plausibly enough extracted unresting, but be grounded his emendation on the very syllable that wants authority. What can be made of unsisting I know not; the best that occurs to me is unfeeling.

IV.ii.103 (103,6) [Duke. This is his lordship's man. Prov. And here comes Claudio's pardon]

[Tyrwhitt suggested that the names of the speakers were misplaced] When, immediately after the Duke had hinted his expectation of a pardon, the Provost sees the Messenger, he supposes the Duke to to have known something, and changes his mind. Either reading may serve equally well. (1773)

IV.ii.153 (104,7) [desperately mortal] This expression is obscure. Sir Thomas Hammer reads, mortally desperate. Mortally is in low conversation used in this sense, but I know not whether it was ever written. I am inclined to believe, that desperately mortal means desperately mischievous. Or desperately mortal may mean a man likely to die in a desperate state, without reflection or repentance. (see 1765, I,348,7)

IV.ii.187 (106,8) [and tie the beard] A beard tied would give a very new air to that face, which had never been seen but with the beard loose, long, and squalid. (1773)

IV.iii.4 (107,2) [First, here's young master Rash] This enumeration of the inhabitants of the prison affords a very striking view of the practices predominant in Shakespeare's age. Besides those whose follies are common to all times, we have four fighting men and a traveller. It is not unlikely that the originals of the pictures were then known.

IV.iii.17 (108,4) [master Forthlight] Should not Forthlight be Forthright, alluding to the line in which the thrust is made? (1773)

IV.iii.21 (108,6) [in for the Lord's sake] [i.e. to beg for the rest of their lives. Warburton.] I rather think this expression intended to ridicule the puritans, whose turbulence and indecency often brought them to prison, and who considered themselves as suffering for religion.

It is not unlikely that men imprisoned for other crimes, might represent themselves to casual enquirers, as suffering for puritanism, and that this might be the common cant of the prisons. In Donne's time, every prisoner was brought to jail by suretiship.

IV.iii.68 (110,7) [After him, fellows] Here was a line given to the Duke, which belongs to the Provost. The Provost, while the Duke is lamenting the obduracy of the prisoner, cries out,

After him, fellows, &c.

and, when they are gone out, turns again to the Duke.

IV.iii.72 (110,8) [to transport him] To remove him from one world to another. The French trepas affords a kindred sense.

IV.iii.115 (112,1)
[I will keep her ignorant of her good,
To make her heavenly comforts of despair,
When least it is expected.]

A better reason might have been given. It was necessary to keep Isabella in ignorance, that she might with more keenness accuse the deputy.

IV.iii.139 (113,2) [your bosom] Your wish; your heart's desire.

IV.iii.149 (113,3) [I am combined by a sacred vow] I once thought this should be confined, but Shakespeare uses combine for to bind by a pact or agreement, so he calls Angelo the combinate husband of Mariana.

IV.iii.163 (113,4) [if the old fantastical duke] Sir Thomas Hammer reads, the odd fantastical duke, but old is a common word of aggravation in ludicrous language, as, there was old revelling.

IV.iii.170 (114,5) [woodman] That is, huntsman, here taken for a hunter of girls.

IV.iv.19 (115,6) [sort and suit] Figure and rank.

IV.iv.27 (115,7) [Yet reason dares her No] Mr. Theobald reads,

—Yet reason dares her note.

Sir Thomas Hammer,

—Yet reason dares her: No.

Mr. Upton,

—Yet reason dares her—No,

which he explains thus: Yet, says Angelo, reason will give her courage—No, that is, it will not. I am afraid dare has no such signification. I have nothing to offer worth insertion.

IV.iv.28 (116,8)

[For my authority bears a credent bulk;
That no particular scandal once can touch]

Credent is creditable, inforcing credit, not questionable. The old English writers often confound the active and passive adjectives. So Shakespeare, and Milton after him, use inexpressive from inexpressible.

Particular is private, a French sense. No scandal from any private mouth can reach a man in my authority.

IV.iv.36 (116,9) [Nothing goes right; we would, and we would not] Here undoubtedly the act should end, and was ended by the poet; for here is properly a cessation of action, and a night intervenes, and the place is changed, between the passages of this scene, and those of the next. The next act beginning with the following scene, proceeds without any interruption of time or change of place.

IV.v.1 (117,1) [Duke. These letters at fit time deliver me] Peter never delivers the letters, but tells his story without any credentials. The poet forgot the plot which he had formed.

IV.vi.4 (118,2) [He says, to vail full purpose] [T: t'availful] [Warburton had explained "full" as "beneficial."] To vail full purpose, may, with very little force on the words, mean, to hide the whole extent of our design, and therefore the reading may stand; yet I cannot but think Mr. Theobald's alteration either lucky or ingenious. To interpret words with such laxity, as to make full the sane with beneficial, is to put an end, at once, to all necessity of emendation, for any word may then stand in the place of another.

IV.vi.9 (118,3) [Enter Peter] This play has two Friars, either of whom might singly have served. I should therefore imagine, that Friar Thomas, in the first act, might be changed, without any harm, to Friar Peter; for why should the Duke unnecessarily trust two in an affair which required only one. The none of Friar Thomas is never mentioned in the dialogue, and therefore seems arbitrarily placed at the head of the scene.

IV.vi.14 (119,4) [Have bent the gates] Have taken possession of the gates, (rev. 1778, II,134,4)

V.i.20 (120,5) [vail your regard] That is, withdraw your thoughts from higher things, let your notice descend upon a wronged woman. To vail, is to lower.

V.i.45 (121,6) [truth is truth To the end of reckoning] That is, truth has no gradations; nothing which admits of encrease can be so much what it is, as truth is truth. There may be a strange thing, and a thing more strange, but if a proposition be true, there can be none more true.

V.i.54 (121,7) [as shy, as grave, as just, as absolute] As shy; as reserved, as abstracted: as just; as nice, as exact: as absolute; as complete in all the round of duty.

V.i.56 (121,8) [In all his dressings] In all his semblance of virtue, in all his habiliments of office.

V.i.64 (122,1) [do not banish reason For inequality] Let not the high quality of my adversary prejudice you against me.

V.i.104 (124,4) [Oh, that it were as like, as it is true!] [Warburton had explained "like" as "seemly."] Like I have never found for seemly.

V.i.107 (124,8) [In hateful practice] Practice was used by the old writers for any unlawful or insidious stratagem. So again,

This must needs be practice:

and again,

Let me have way to find this practice out.

V.i.145 (125,6) [nor a temporary medler] It is hard to know what is meant by a temporary medler. In its usual sense, as opposed to perpetual, it cannot be used here. It may stand for temporal: the sense will then be, I know him for a holy man, one that meddles not with secular affairs. It may mean temporising: I know him to be a holy man, one who would not_ temporise, or take the opportunity of your absence to defame you. Or we may read, Not scurvy, nor a tamperer and medler:

not one who would bare tampered with this woman to make her a false evidence against your deputy.

V.i.160 (126,8) [So vulgarly and personally accus'd] Meaning either so grosly, with such indecency of invective, or by so mean and inadequate witnesses.

V.i.205 (128,2) [This is a strange abuse] Abuse stands in this place for deception, or puzzle. So in Macbeth,

This strange and self abuse,

means, this strange deception of himself.

V.i.219 (129,3) [her promised proportions Came short of composition] Her fortune, which was promised proportionate to mine, fell short of the composition, that is, contract or bargain.

V.i.236 (129,4) [These poor informal women] I once believed informal had no other or deeper signification than informing, accusing. The scope of justice, is the full extent; but think, upon farther enquiry, that informal signifies incompetent, not qualified to give testimony. Of this use there are precedents to be found, though I cannot now recover them.

V.i.245 (130,5) [That's seal'd in approbation?] Then any thing subject to counterfeits is tried by the proper officers and approved, a stamp or seal is put upon it, as among us on plate, weights, and measures. So the Duke says, that Angela's faith has been tried, approved, and seal'd in testimony of that approbation, and, like other things so sealed, is no more to be called in question.

V.i.255 (131,6) [to hear this matter forth] To hear it to the end; to search it to the bottom.

V.i.303 (132,4) [to retort your manifest appeal] To refer back to Angelo and the cause in which you appealed from Angelo to the Duke.

V.i.317 (133,5) [his subject I am not, Nor here provincial] Nor here accountable. The meaning seems to be, I am not one of his natural subjects, nor of any dependent province.

V.i.323 (133,6) [the forfeits in a barber's shop] [Warburton had explained that a list of forfeitures were posted in barber shops to warn patrons to keep their hands off the barber's surgical instruments.] This explanation may serve till a better is discovered. But whoever has seen the instruments of a chirurgeon, knows that they may be very easily kept out of improper hands in a very small box, or in his pocket.

V.i.336 (134,7) [And was the duke a fleshmonger, a fool, and a coward, as you then reported him to be?] So again afterwards,

You, sirrah, that know me for a fool, a coward, One of all luxury—

But Lucio had not, in the former conversation, mentioned cowardice among the faults of the duke.—Such failures of memory are incident to writers more diligent than this poet.

V.i.359 (135,8) [show your sheep-biting face, and be hang'd an hour' Will't not off?] This is intended to be the common language of vulgar indignation. Our phrase on such occasions is simply; show your sheep-biting face, and be hanged. The words an hour have no particular use here, nor are authorised by custom. I suppose it was written thus, show your sheep-biting face, and be hanged—an' how? wilt not off? In the midland counties, upon any unexpected obstruction or resistance, it is common to exclaim an' how?

V.i.388 (136,9) [Advertising, and holy] Attentive and faithful.

V.i.393 (136,l) [be you as free to us] Be as generous to us, pardon us as we have pardoned you.

V.i.401 (136,2) [That brain'd my purpose] We now use in conversation a like phrase. This it was that knocked my design on the head. Dr. Warburton reads,

—baned my purpose.

V.i.413 (137,3) [even from his proper tongue] Even from Angelo's own tongue. So above.

In the witness of his proper ear
  To call him villain.

V.i.438 (138,5) [Against all sense you do importune her] The meaning required is, against all reason and natural affection; Shakespeare, therefore, judiciously uses a single word that implies both; sense signifying both reason and affection.

V.i.452 (139,6) ['Till he did look on me] The duke has justly observed that Isabel is importuned against all sense to solicit for Angelo, yet here against all sense she solicits for him. Her argument is extraordinary.

A due sincerity govern'd his deeds, 'Till he did look on me; since it is so. Let him not die.

That Angelo had committed all the crimes charged against him, as far as he could commit them, is evident. The only intent which his act did not overtake, was the defilement of Isabel. Of this Angelo was only intentionally guilty.

Angela's crimes were such, as must sufficiently justify punishment, whether its end be to secure the innocent from wrong, or to deter guilt by example; and I believe every reader feels some indignation when he finds him spared. From what extenuation of his crime, can Isabel, who yet supposes her brother dead, form any plea in his favour. Since he was good 'till he looked on me, let him not die. I am afraid our varlet poet intended to inculcate, that women think ill of nothing that raises the credit of their beauty, and are ready, however virtuous, to pardon any act which they think incited by their own charms.

V.i.488 (140,7) [But, for those earthly faults, I quit them all] Thy faults, so far as they are punishable on earth, so far as they are cognisable by temporal power, I forgive.

V.i.499 (141,8) [By this, lord Angelo perceives he's safe] It is somewhat strange, that Isabel is not made to express either gratitude, wonder or joy at the sight of her brother.

V.i.501 (141,9) [your evil quits you well] Quits you, recompenses, requites you.

V.i.502 (141,1) [Look, that you love your wife; her worth, worth yours] Sir T. Hammer reads,

Her worth works yours.

This reading is adopted by Dr. Warburton, but for what reason? How does her worth work Angelo's worth? it has only contributed to work his pardon. The words are, as they are too frequently, an affected gingle, but the sense is plain. Her worth, worth yours; that is, her value is equal to your value, the match is not unworthy of you.

V.i.504 (141,2) [And yet here's one in place I cannot pardon] After the pardon of two murderers, Lucio might be treated by the good duke with less harshness; but perhaps the poet intended to show, what is too often seen, that men easily forgive wrongs which are not committed against themselves.

V.i.509 (142,3) [according to the trick] To my custom, my habitual practice.

V.i.526 (142,4) [thy other forfeits] Thy other punishments.

V.i.534 (142,5) [Thanks, good friend Escalus, for thy much goodness] I have always thought that there is great confusion in this concluding speech. If my criticism would not be censured as too licentious, I should regulate it thus,

_Thanks, good friend Escalus, for thy much goodness.
Thanks. Provost, for thy care and secrecy;
We shall employ thee in a worthier place.
Forgive him, Angelo, that brought you home
The head of Ragozine for Claudio's.
Ang. Th' offence pardons itself.
Duke, There's more behind
That is more gratulate. Dear Isabel,
I have a motion,&c,

V.i.545 (143,6) General Observation The novel of Cynthio Giraldi, from which Shakespeare is supposed to have borrowed this fable, may be read in Shakespeare illustrated, elegantly translated, with remarks which will assist the enquirer to discover how much absurdity Shakespeare has admitted or avoided. I cannot but suspect that some other had new-modelled the novel of Cynthio, or written a story which in some particulars resembled it, and that Cynthio was not the authour whom Shakespeare immediately followed. The emperour in Cynthio is named Maximine; the duke, in Shakespeare's enumeration of the persons of the drama, is called Vincentio. This appears a very slight remark; but since the duke has no name in the play, nor is ever mentioned but by his title, why should he be called Vincentio among the persons, but because the name was copied from the story, and placed superfluously at the head of the list by the mere habit of transcription? It is therefore likely that there was then a story of Vincentio duke of Vienna, different from that of Maximine emperour of the Romans.

Of this play the light or comick part is very natural and pleasing, but the grave scenes, if a few passages be excepted, have more labour than elegance. The plot is rather intricate than artful. The time of the action is indefinite; some time, we know not how much, must have elapsed between the recess of the duke and the imprisonment of Claudio; for he must have learned the story of Mariana in his disguise, or he delegated his power to a man already known to be corrupted. The unities of action and place are sufficiently preserved.

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

I.ii.96 (155,3) [o'er-raught] That is, over-reached.

I.ii.98 (156,5)

  [As, nimble jugglers, that deceive the eye,
Dark-working sorcerers, that change the mind,
Soul-killing witches, that deform the body]

[W: Drug-working] The learned commentator has endeavoured with much earnestness to recommend his alteration; but, if I may judge of other apprehensions by my own, without great success. This interpretation of soul-killing is forced and harsh. Sir T. Hammer reads soul-selling, agreeable enough to the common opinion, but without such improvement as may justify the change. Perhaps the epithets have only been misplaced, and the lines should be read thus,

Soul-killing sorcerers, that change the mind;
  Dark-working witches that deform the body.

This change seems to remove all difficulties.

By soul-killing I understand destroying the rational faculties by such means as make men fancy themselves beasts.

I.ii.102 (157,6) [liberties of sin] Sir T. Hammer reads, libertines, which, as the author has been enumerating not acts but persons, seems right.

II.i.30 (158,8) [How if your husband start some other where?] I cannot but think, that our authour wrote,

—start some other hare?

So in Much ado about Nothing, Cupid is said to be a good hare-finder. II.i.32 (159,9) [tho' she pause] To pause is to rest, to be in quiet.

II.i.41 (159,1) [fool-begg'd] She seems to mean, by fool-begg'd patience, that patience which is so near to idiotical simplicity, that your next relation would take advantage from it to represent you as a fool, and beg the guardianship of your fortune.

II.i.82 (161,3) [Am I so round with you, as you with me] He plays upon the word round, which signified spherical applied to himself, and unrestrained, or free in speech or action, spoken of his mistress. So the king, in Hamlet, bids the queen be round with her son.

II.i.100 (161,5) [too unruly deer] The ambiguity of deer and dear is borrowed, poor as it is, by Waller, in his poem on the Ladies Girdle.

"This was my heav'n's extremest sphere,
  "This pale that held my lovely deer."

II.i.101 (161,6) [poor I am but his stale] The word stale, in our authour, used as a substantive, means, not something offered to allure or attract, but something vitiated with use, something of which the best part has been enjoyed and consumed.

II.ii.86 (166,4) [Not a man of those, but he hath the wit to lose his hair] That is, Those who have more hair than wit, are easily entrapped by loose women, and suffer the consequences of lewdness, one of which, in the first appearance of the disease in Europe, was the loss of hair.

II.ii.173 (169,6) [Be it my wrong, you are from me exempt] Exempt, separated, parted. The sense is, If I am doomed to suffer the wrong of separation, yet injure not with contempt me who am already injured.

II.ii.210 (171,1) [And shrive you] That is, I will call you to confession, and make you tell your tricks.

III.i.4 (172,2) [carkanet] seems to have been a necklace or rather chain, perhaps hanging down double from the neck. So Lovelace in his poem,

The empress spreads her carcanets.

III.i.15 (173,3) [Marry, so it doth appear By the wrongs I suffer, and the blows I bear] [T: don't appear] I do not think this emendation necessary. He first says, that his wrongs and blows prove him an ass; but immediately, with a correction of his former sentiment, such as may be hourly observed in conversation, he observes that, if he had been an ass, he should, when he was kicked, have kicked again.

III.i.101 (177,7) [supposed by the common rout] For suppose I once thought it might be more commodious to substitute supported; but there is no need of change: supposed is founded on supposition, made by conjecture.

III.i.105 (178,8) [For slander lives upon succession] The line apparently wants two syllables: what they were, cannot now be known. The line may be filled up according to the reader's fancy, as thus:

For lasting slander lives upon succession.

III.ii.27 (180,3) ['Tis holy sport to be a little vain] is light of tongue, not veracious.

III.ii.64 (181,2) [My sole earth's heaven, and my heaven's claim] When be calls the girl his only heaven on the earth, he utters the common cant of lovers. When he calls her his heaven's claim, I cannot understand him. Perhaps he means that which he asks of heaven.

III.ii.125 (184,5)

[S. Ant. Where France? S. Dro. In her forehead; arm'd and reverted, making war against her hair]

[T, from the first Folio: heir] With this correction and explication Dr. Warburton concurs, and sir T. Hammer thinks an equivocation intended, though he retains hair in the text. Yet surely they have all lost the sense by looking beyond it. Our authour, in my opinion, only sports with an allusion, in which he takes too much delight, and means that his mistress had the French disease. The ideas are rather too offensive to be dilated. By a forehead armed, he means covered with incrusted eruptions: by reverted, he means having the hair turning backwards. An equivocal word must have senses applicable to both the subjects to which it is applied. Both forehead and France might in some sort make war against their hair, but how did the forehead make war against its heir? The sense which I have given immediately occurred to me, and will, I believe, arise to every reader who is contented with the meaning that lies before him, without sending out conjecture in search of refinements.

IV.ii.19 (192,9) [sere] that is, dry, withered.

IV.ii.22 (192,1) [Stigmatical in making] This is, marked or stigmatized by nature with deformity, as a token of his vicious disposition.

IV.ii.35 (193,3) [A fiend, a fairy, pitiless and rough] [T: A fiend, a fury] There were fairies like hobgoblins, pitiless and rough, and described as malevolent and mischievous, (see 1765, III,143,3)

IV.ii.39 (193,5) [A hound that runs counter, and yet draws dry-foot well] To run counter is to run backward, by mistaking the course of the animal pursued; to draw dry-foot is, I believe, to pursue by the track or prick of the foot; to run counter and draw dry-foot well are, therefore, inconsistent. The jest consists in the ambiguity of the word counter, which means the wrong way in* the chase. and a prison in London. The officer that arrested him was a serjeant of the counter. For the congruity of this jest with the scene of action, let our authour answer.

IV.iii.13 (196,9) [what, have you got the picture of old Adam new apparel'd] [T: got rid of the picture] The explanation is very good, but the text does not require to be amended.

IV.iii.27 (`is rest to do more exploits with his mace than a morris pike] [W: a Maurice-pike] This conjecture is very ingenious, yet the commentator talks unnecessarily of the rest of a musket. by which he makes the hero of the speech set up the rest of a musket, to do exploits with a pike. The rest of a pike was a common term, and signified, I believe, the manner in which it was fixed to receive the rush of the enemy. A morris-pike was a pike used in a morris or a military dance, and with which great exploits were done, that is, great feats of dexterity were shewn. There is no need of change.

IV.iv.78 (202,3) [kitchen-vestal] Her charge being like that of the vestal virgins, to keep the fire burning.

V.1.137 (210,6) [important letters]Important seems to be for importunate. (1773)

V.i.298 (216,2) [time's deformed hand Have written strange defeatures in my face] Defeature is the privative of feature. The meaning is, time hath cancelled my features.

V.i.406 (220,7) [After so long grief such nativity!] We should surely read. After so long grief, such festivity.

Nativity lying so near, and the termination being the same of both words, the mistake was easy.

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

I.i.27 (226,3) [no faces truer] That is, none honester, none more sincere.

I.i.40 (227,7) [challenged Cupid at the flight] The disuse of the bow makes this passage obscure. Benedick is represented as challenging Cupid at archery. To challenge at the flight is, I believe, to wager who shall shoot the arrow furthest without any particular mark. To challenge at the bird-bolt, seems to mean the same as to challenge at children's archery, with snail arrows such as are discharged at birds. In Twelfth Night Lady Olivia opposes a bird-bolt to a cannon-bullet, the lightest to the heaviest of missive weapons.

I.i.66 (228,9) [four of his five wits] In our author's time wit was the general term for intellectual powers. So Davies on the Soul.

Wit, seeking truth from cause to cause ascends.
  And never rests till it the first attain;
Will, seeking good, finds many middle ends,
  But never stays till it the last do gain.

And in another part,

But if a phrenzy do possess the brain,
It so disturbs and blots the form of things,
  As fantasy proves altogether vain,
And to the wit, no true relation brings.
  Then doth the wit, admitting all for true,
Build fond conclusions on those idle grounds;—

The wits seem to have reckoned five, by analogy to the five senses, or the five inlets of ideas.

I.i.79 (229,4) [the gentleman is not in your books] This is a phrase used, I believe, by more than understand it. To be in one's books is to be in one's codicils or will, to be among friends set down for legacies.

I.i.82 (230,5) [young squarer] A squarer I take to be a cholerick, quarrelsome fellow, for in this sense Shakespeare uses the word to square. So in Midsummer

Night's Dream it is said of Oberon and Titalia, that they never meet but they square. So the sense may be, Is there no hot-blooded youth that will keep him company through all his mad pranks?

I.i.103 (231,6) [You embrace your charge] That is your burthen, your incumbrunce.

I.i.185 (233,7) [to tell us Cupid is a good hare-finder] I know not whether I conceive the jest here intended. Claudio hints his love of Hero. Benedick asks whether he is serious, or whether he only means to jest, and tell them that Cupid is a good hare-finder, and Vulcan a rare carpenter. A man praising a pretty lady in jest, may shew the quick sight of Cupid, but what has it to do with the carpentry of Vulcan? Perhaps the thought lies no deeper than this, Do you mean to tell us as new what we all know already?

I.i.200 (234,8) [wear his cap with suspicion?] That is, subject his head to the disquiet of jealousy.

I.i.217 (235,1) [Claud. If this were so, so were it uttered] This and the three next speeches I do not well understand; there seems something omitted relating to Hero's consent, or to Claudio's marriage, else I know not what Claudio can wish not to be otherwise. The copies all read alike. Perhaps it may be better thus,

Claud. If this were so, so were it.
Bene. Uttered like the old tale, &c.

Claudio gives a sullen answer, if it is so, so it is. Still there seems something omitted which Claudio and Pedro concur in wishing.

I.i.243 (236,3) [but that I will have a recheate winded in my forehead] That is, I will wear a horn on my forehead which the huntsman may blow. A recheate is the sound by which dogs are called back. Shakespeare had no mercy upon the poor cuckold, his horn is an inexhaustible subject of merriment.

1.1.258 (236,4) [notable argument] An eminent subject for satire.

1.1.259 (237,5) [Adam] Adam Bell was a companion of Robin Hood, as may be seen in Robin Hood's Garland; in which, if I do not mistake, are these lines,

For he brought Adam Bell, Clim of the Clough,
    And William of Cloudeslea,
  To shoot with this forester for forty marks,
    And the forester beat them all three.

(see 1765, III,182,2)

I.i.290 (238,4) [ere you flout old ends any further, examine your conscience] Before you endeavour to distinguish yourself any more by antiquated allusions, examine whether you can fairly claim them for your own. This, I think is the meaning; or it may be understood in another sense, examine, if your sarcasms do not touch yourself.

I.iii.14 (241,6) [I cannot hide what I am] This is one of our authour's natural touches. An envious and unsocial mind, too proud to give pleasure, and too sullen to receive it, always endeavours to hide its malignity from the world and from itself, under the plainness of simple honesty, or the dignity of haughty independence.

I.iii.19 (241,7) [claw no man in his humour] To claw is to flatter.
So the pope's claw-backs, in bishop Jewel, are the pope's flatterers.
The sense is the same in the proverb, Mulus mulum scabit.

I.iii.28 (242,8) [I had rather be a canker in a hedge, than a rose in his grace] A canker is the canker rose, dog-rose, cynosbatus, or hip. The sense is, I would rather live in obscurity the wild life of nature, than owe dignity or estimation to my brother. He still continues his wish of gloomy independence. But what is the meaning of the expression, a rose in his grace? if he was a rose of himself, his brother's grace or favour could not degrade him. I once read thus, I had rather be a canker in a hedge, than a rose in his garden; that is, I had rather be what nature makes me, however mean, than owe any exaltation or improvement to my brother's kindness or cultivation. But a less change will be sufficient: I think it should be read, I had rather be a canker in a hedge, than a rose by his grace.

II.i.3 (244,1) [I never can see him, but I am heart-burn'd an hour after] The pain commonly called the heart-burn, proceeds from an acid humour in the stomach, and is therefore properly enough imputed to tart looks.

II.i.53 (245,3) [Well then, go you into hell] Of the two next speeches Mr. Warburton says, All this impious nonsense thrown to the bottom is the players, and foisted in without rhyme or reason. He therefore puts them in the margin. They do not deserve indeed so honourable a place, yet I am afraid they are too much in the manner of our authour, who is sometimes trying to purchase merriment at too dear a rate. (see 1765, III,190,9)

II.i.73 (246,4) [if the prince be too important] Important here, and in many other places, is importunate.

II.i.99 (247,6) [My visor is Philemon's roof; within the house is Jove] [T: house is love] This amendation, thus impressed with all the power of his eloquence and reason, Theobald found in the quarto edition of 1600, which he professes to have seen; and in the first folio, the l and the I are so much alike, that the printers, perhaps, used the same type for either letter. (1773)

II.i.143 (249,2) [his gift is in devising impossible slanders] [W: impassible] Impossible slanders are, I suppose, such slanders as, from their absurdity and impossibility, bring their own confutation with them.

II.i.195 (251,4) [usurer's chain] I know not whether the chain was, in our authour's time, the common ornament of wealthy citizens, or whether he satirically uses usurer and alderman as synonymous terms.

II.i.214 (252,5) [It is the base, the bitter disposition of Beatrice, that puts the world into her person] That is, It is the disposition of Beatrice, who takes upon her to personate the world, and therefore represents the world as saying what she only says herself.

Base, tho bitter. I do not understand how base and bitter are inconsistent, or why what is bitter should not be base. I believe, we may safely read, It is the base, the bitter disposition.

II.i.253 (253,8) [such impossible conveyance] [W: impassible] I know not what to propose. Impossible seems to have no meaning here, and for impassible I have not found any authority. Spenser uses the word importable in a sense very congruous to this passage, for insupportable, or not to be sustained.

Both him charge on either side,
With hideous strokes and importable power,
Which forced him his ground to traverse wide.

It may be easily imagined, that the transcribers would change a word so unusual, into that word most like it, which they could readily find. It must be however confessed, that importable appears harsh to our ears, and I wish a happier critick may find a better word.

Sir Tho. Hammer reads impetuous, which will serve the purpose well enough, but is not likely to have been changed to impossible.

Importable was a word not peculiar to Spenser, but used by the last translators of the Apocrypha, and therefore such a word as Shakespeare may be supposed to have written. (1773) II.i.330 (256,2) [Thus goes every one to the world but I, and I am sun-burn'd] What is it, to go the world? perhaps, to enter by marriage into a settled state: but why is the unmarry'd lady sun-burnt? I believe we should read, Thus goes every one to the wood but I, and I am sun-burnt_. Thus does every one but I find a shelter, and I am left exposed to wind and sun. The nearest way to the wood, is a phrase for the readiest means to any end. It is said of a woman, who accepts a worse match than those which she had refused, that she has passed through the wood, and at last taken a crooked stick. But conjectural criticism has always something to abate its confidence. Shakespeare, in All's well that Ends well, uses the phrase, to go to the world, for marriage. So that my emendation depends only on the opposition of wood to sun-burnt.

II.i.380 (258,4) [to bring signior Benedick, and the lady Beatrice into a mountain of affection, the one with another] A mountain of affection with one another is a strange expression, yet I know not well how to change it. Perhaps it was originally written, to bring Benedick into a mooting of affection; to bring them not to any more mootings of contention, but to a mooting or conversation of love. This reading is confirmed by the preposition with; a mountain with each other, or affection with each other, cannot be used, but a mooting with each other is proper and regular.

II.iii.104 (265,7) [but, that she loves him, with an enraged affection, it is past the infinite of thought] [W: the definite of] Here are difficulties raised only to shew how easily they can be removed. The plain sense is, I know not what to think otherwise, but that she loves him with an enraged affection: It (this affection) [is past the infinite of thought. Here are no abrupt stops, or imperfect sentences. Infinite may well enough stand; it is used by more careful writers for indefinite; and the speaker only means, that thought, though in itself unbounded, cannot reach or estimate the degree of her passion.

II.iii.146 (267,8) [O, she tore the letter into a thousand half-pence] [i.e. into a thousand pieces of the same bigness.] This is farther explained by a passage in As you Like it.

—_There were none principal; they were all like one

another as_ half-pence are. [Theobald.] How the quotation explains the passage, to which it is applied, I cannot discover.

II.iii.188 (268,9) [contemptible spirit] That is, a temper inclined to scorn and contempt. It has been before remarked, that our authour uses his verbal adjectives with great licence. There is therefore no need of changing the word with sir T. Hammer to contemptuous.

III.i.52 (273,3) [Misprising] Despising, contemning.

III.i.96 (275,8) [argument] This word seems here to signify discourse, or, the powers of reasoning. III.i.104 (275,7) [She's lim'd] She is ensnared and entangled as a sparrow with birdlime.

III.i.107 (275,9) [Taming my wild heart to thy loving hand] This image is taken from falconry. She had been charged with being as wild as haggards of the rock; she therefore says, that wild as her heart is, she will tame it to the hand.

III.ii.31 (277,2) [There is no appearance of fancy in him, unless it be a fancy that he hath to strange disguises] Here is a play upon the word fancy, which Shakespeare uses for love as well as for humour, caprice, or affectation.

III.ii.71 (278,3) [She shall be buried with her face upwards] [T: heels upwards] This emendation, which appears to me very specious, is rejected by Dr. Warburton. The meaning seems to be, that she who acted upon principles contrary to others, should be buried with the same contrariety.

III.iii.43 (282,5) [only have a care that your bills be not stolen] A bill is still carried by the watchmen at Litchfield. It was the old weapon of the English infantry, which, says Temple, gave the most ghastly and deplorable wounds. It may be called securis falcata.

III.iv.44 (289,3) [Light o' love] A tune so called, which has been already mentioned by our authour.

III.iv.49 (290,4) [you'll look he shall lack no burns] A quibble between barns, repositories of corn, and bairns, the old word for children.

III.iv.56 (290,5) [For the letter that begins them all, H] This is a poor jest, somewhat obscured, and not worth the trouble of elucidation.

Margaret asks Beatrice for what she cries, hey ho; Beatrice answers, for an H, that is, for an ache or pain.

III.iv.57 (290,6) [turn'd Turk] [i.e. taken captive by love, and turned a renegade to his religion. Warburton.] This interpretation is somewhat far-fetched, yet, perhaps, it is right.

III.iv.78 (291,7) [some morel] That is, some secret meaning, like the moral of a fable.

III.iv.89 (291,8) [he eats his meat without grudging] I do not see how this is a proof of Benedick's change of mind. It would afford more proof of amourosness to say, he eats not his meat without grudging; but it is impossible to fix the meaning of proverbial expressions: perhaps, to eat meat without grudging, was the same as, to do as others do, and the meaning is, he is content to live by eating like other mortals and will be content, notwithstanding his boasts, like other mortals, to have a wife.

III.v.15 (293,9) [I am as honest as any man living, that is an old man, and no honester than I] [There is much humour, and extreme good sense under the covering of this blundering expression. It is a sly insinuation that length of years, and the being much hacknied in the ways of men, as Shakespeare expresses it, take off the gloss of virtue, and bring much defilement on the manners. Warburton.] Much of this is true, but I believe Shakespeare did not intend to bestow all this reflection on the speaker.

III.v.40 (294,1) [an two men ride of a horse, one must ride behind] This is not out of place, or without meaning. Dogberry, in his vanity of superiour parts, apologizing for his neighbour, observes, that of two men on an horse, one must ride behind. The first place of rank or understanding can belong but to one, and that happy one ought not to despise his inferiour.

IV.i.22 (296,2) [Interjections? Why, then some be of laughing] This is a quotation from the Accidence.

IV.i.42 (296,3) [luxurious bed] That is, lascivious. Luxury is the confessor's term for unlawful pleasures of the sex.

IV.i.53 (297,5) [word too large] So he uses large jests in this play, for licentious, not restrained within due bounds.

IV.i.57 (297,6) [I will write against it] [W: rate against] As to subscribe to any thing is to allow it, so to write against is to disallow or deny.

IV.i.59 (297,7) [chaste as is the bud] Before the air has tasted its sweetness.

IV.i.75 (298,8) [kindly power] That is, natural power. Kind is nature.

IV.i.93 (298,9) [liberal villain] Liberal here, as in many places of these plays, means, frank beyond honesty or decency. Free of tongue. Dr. Warburton unnecessarily reads, illiberal.

IV.i. 101 (299,1) [O Hero! What a Hero hadst thou been] I am afraid here is intended a poor conceit upon the word Hero.

IV.i.123 (300,2) [The story that is printed in her blood?] That is, the story which her blushes discover to be true.

IV.i.128 (300,3) [Griev'd I, I had but one? Chid I for that at frugal nature's frame?] [W: nature's 'fraine] Though frame be not the word which appears to a reader of the present time most proper to exhibit the poet's sentiment, yet it may as well be used to shew that he had one child, and no more, as that he had a girl, not a boy, and as it may easily signify the system of things, or universal scheme, the whole order of beings is comprehended, there arises no difficulty from it which requires to be removed by so violent an effort as the introduction of a new word offensively mutilated.

IV.i.137 (301,4) [But mine, and mine I lov'd, and mine I prais'd, And mine that I was proud on] [W: "as mine" in three places] Even of this small alteration there is no need. The speaker utters his emotion abruptly, But mine, and mine that I loved, &c. by an ellipsis frequent, perhaps too frequent, both in verse and prose.

IV.i.187 (303,6) [bent of honour] Bent is used by our authour for the utmost degree of any passion, or mental quality. In this play before Benedick says of Beatrice, her affection has its full bent. The expression is derived from archery; the bow has its bent, when it is drawn as far as it can be.

IV.i.206 (304,8) [ostentation] Show; appearance.

IV.i.251 (305,1) [The smallest twine nay lead me] This is one of our author's observations upon life. Men overpowered with distress, eagerly listen to the first offers of relief, close with every scheme, and believe every promise. He that has no longer any confidence in himself, is glad to repose his trust in any other that will undertake to guide him.

IV.ii.70 (311,6) [Sexton. Let them be in hand] There is nothing in the old quarto different in this scene from the common copies, except that the names of two actors, Kempe and Cowley, are placed at the beginning of the speeches, instead of the proper words, (see 1765, III,249,7)

V.i.15 (313,7)

[If such a one will smile and stroke his beard;
And, sorrow wag! cry; hem, when he should groan]

Sir Thomas Hammer, and after him Dr. Warburton, for wag read
waive, which is, I suppose, the same as, put aside or shift off.
None of these conjectures satisfy me, nor perhaps any other reader.
I cannot but think the true meaning nearer than it is imagined.
I point thus,

If such an one will smile, and stroke his beard,
And, sorrow wag! cry; hem, when he should groan;

That is, If he will smile, and cry sorrow be gone, and hem instead of groaning. The order in which and and cry are placed is harsh, and this harshness made the sense mistaken. Range the words in the common order, and my reading will be free from all difficulty.

If such an one will smile, and stroke his beard, Cry, sorrow, wag! and hem when he should groan.

V.i.32 (314,8) [My griefs cry louder than advertisement] That is, than admonition, than moral instruction.

V.i.102 (318,4) [we will not wake your patience] [W: wrack] This emendation is very specious, and perhaps is right; yet the present reading may admit a congruous meaning with less difficulty than many other of Shakespeare's expressions.

The old men have been both very angry and outrageous; the prince tells them that he and Claudio will not wake their patience; will not any longer force them to endure the presence of those whom, though they look on them as enemies, they cannot resist.

V.i.138 (319,6) [to turn his girdle] We have a proverbial speech, If he be angry, let him turn the buckle of his girdle. But I do not know its original or meaning.

V.i.166 (320,7) [a wise gentleman] This jest depending on the colloquial use of words is now obscure; perhaps we should read, a wise gentle man, or a man wise enough to be a coward. Perhaps wise gentleman was in that age used ironically, and always stood for silly fellow.

V.i.231 (322,9) [one meaning well suited] That is, one meaning is put into many different dresses; the prince having asked the same question in four modes of speech.

V.ii.9 (326,3) [To have no man come over me? why, shall I always keep below stairs?] [T: above] I suppose every reader will find the meaning of the old copies.

V.ii.l7 (327,4) [I give thee the bucklers] I suppose that to give the bucklers is, to yield, or to lay by all thoughts of defence, so clipeum abjicere. The rest deserves no comment.

V.iii.13 (330,7) [Those that slew thy virgin knight] Knight, in its original signification, means follower or pupil, and in this sense may be feminine. Helena, in All's well that Ends well, uses knight in the same signification.

LOVE'S LABOUR'S LOST

I.i.31 (342,2)

[To love, to wealth, to pomp, I pine and die;
With all these, living in philosophy]

The stile of the rhyming scenes in this play is often entangled and obscure. I know not certainly to what all these is to be referred; I suppose he means, that he finds love, pomp, and wealth in philosophy.

I.i.75 (344,4) [while truth the while Doth falsly blind] Falsly is here, and in many other places, the same as dishonestly or treacherously. The whole sense of this gingling declamation is only this, that a man by too close study may read himself blind, which might have been told with less obscurity in fewer words.

I.i.82 (344,5)

[Who dazzling so, that eye shall be his heed,
And give him light, that it was blinded by]

This is another passage unnecessarily obscure: the meaning is, that when he dazzles, that is, has his eye made weak, by fixing his eye upon a fairer eye, that fairer eye shall be his heed, his direction or lode-star,(See Midsummer-Night's Dream) [and give him light that was blinded by it.

I.i.92 (345,6)

[Too much to know, is, to know nought but fame;
And every godfather can give a name]

[W: "shame" or "feign"] That there are two ways of setting a passage right gives reason to suspect that there may be a third way better than either. The first of these emendations makes a fine sense, but will not unite with the next line; the other makes a sense less fine, and yet will not rhyme to the correspondent word. I cannot see why the passage may not stand without disturbance. The consequence, says Biron, of too much knowledge, is not any real solution of doubts, but mere empty reputation. That is, too much knowledge gives only fame, a name which every godfather can give likewise. (1773)

I.i.95 (345,7) [Proceeded well to stop all good proceeding] To proceed is an academical term, meaning, to take a degree, as he proceeded bachelor in physick. The sense is, he has taken his degrees on the art of hindering the degrees of others.

I.i.153 (348,1) [Not by might master'd, but by especial grace] Biron, amidst his extravagancies, speaks with great justness against the folly of vows. They are made without sufficient regard to the variations of life, and are therefore broken by some unforeseen necessity. They proceed commonly from a presumptuous confidence, and a false estimate of human power.

I.i.159 (349,2) [Suggestions] Temptations.

I.i.162 (349,3) [quick recreation] Lively sport, spritely diversion.

I.i.169 (349,4)

[A man of complements, whom right and wrong
Have chose as umpire of their mutiny]

This passage, I believe, means no more than that Don Armado was a man nicely versed in ceremonial distinctions, one who could distinguish in the most delicate questions of honour the exact boundaries of right and wrong. Compliment, in Shakespeare's time, did not signify, at least did not only signify verbal civility, or phrases of courtesy, but according to its original meaning, the trapping, or ornamental appendages of a character, in the same manner, and on the same principles of speech with accomplishment. Compliment is, as Arwado well expresses it, the varnish of a complete man.

I.i.174 (350,6) [in the world's debate] The world seems to be used in a monastick sense by the king, now devoted for a time to a monastic life. In the world, in seculo, in the bustle of human affairs, from which we are now happily sequestred, in the world, to which the votaries of solitude have no relation.

I.i.252 (353,1) [base minow of thy mirth] A minnow is a little fish which cannot be intended here. We may read, the base minion of thy mirth.

I.ii.5 (355,2) [dear imp] Imp was anciently a term of dignity. Lord Cromwell in his last letter to Henry VIII. prays for the imp his son. It is now used only in contempt or abhorrence; perhaps in our authour's time it was ambiguous, in which state it suits well with this dialogue.

I.ii.36 (356,3) [crosses love not him] By crosses he means money. So in As you like it, the Clown says to Celia, if I should bear you, I should bear no cross.

I.ii.150 (360,7) [Jaq. Fair weather after you! Dull. Come, Jaquenetta, away]

[Theobald had reassigned two speeches] Mr. Theobald has endeavoured here to dignify his own industry by a very slight performance. The folios all read as he reads, except that instead of naming the persons they give their characters, enter Clown, Constable, and Wench.

I.ii.168 (361,8) [It is not for prisoners to be silent in their words] I suppose we should read, it is not for prisoners to be silent in their wards, that is, in custody, in the holds.

I.ii.183 (361,9) [The first and second cause will not serve my turn]
See the last act of As you like it, with the notes.

II.i.15 (362,1)

[Beauty is bought by judgment of the eye,
Not utter'd by base sale of chapmen's tongues]

Chapman here seems to signify the seller, not, as now commonly, the buyer. Cheap or cheping was anciently the market, chapman therefore is marketman. The meaning is, that that the estimation of beauty depends not on the uttering or proclamation of the seller, but on the eye of the buyer.

II.i.45 (363,2) [Well fitted] is well qualified.

II.i.49 (363,3) [match'd with] is combined or joined with.

II.i.105 (365,4) ['Tis deadly sin to keep that oath, my lord; And sin to break it] Sir T. Hammer reads,

Not sin to break it.

I believe erroneously. The Princess shews an inconvenience very frequently attending rash oaths, which, whether kept or broken, produce guilt.

II.i.203 (369,6) [God's blessing on your beard!] That is, mayst thou have sense and seriousness more proportionate to thy beard, the length of which suits ill with such idle catches of wit.

II.i.223 (370,7) [My lips are no common, though several they be] Several, is an inclosed field of a private proprietor, so Maria says, her lips are private property. Of a lord that was newly married one observed that he grew fat; Yes, said sir Walter Raleigh, any beast will grow fat, if you take him from the common and graze him in the several.

II.i.238 (370,8) [His tongue, all impatient to speak and not see] That is, his tongue being impatiently desirous to see as well as speak.

II. i. 241 (370,9) [To feel only looking] Perhaps we may better read, To feed only by looking.

II. i. 262 (371,1) [Boyet. You are too hard for me] [Theobald did not end Act II here] Mr. Theobald has reason enough to propose this alteration, but he should not have made it in his book without better authority or more need. I have therefore preserved his observation, but continued the former division.

III.i (372,2) [Enter Armado, and Moth.] In the folios the direction is, enter Braggart and Moth, and at the beginning of every speech of Armado stands Brag, both in this and the foregoing scene between him and his boy. The other personages of this play are likewise noted by their characters as often as by their names. All this confusion has been well regulated by the later editors.

III.i.3 (372,3) [Concolinel] Here is apparently a song lost.

III. i. 22 (373,5) [These are complements] Dr. Warburton has here changed complements to 'complishments, for accomplishments, but unnecessarily.

III. i. 32 (374,8) [but a colt] Colt is a hot, mad-brained, unbroken young fellow; or sometimes an old fellow with youthful desires.

III. i. 62 (375,9) [You are too swift, Sir, to say so] How is he too swift for saying that lead is slow? I fancy we should read, as well to supply the rhyme as the sense,

You are too swift, sir, to say so, so soon Is that lead slow, sir, which is fir'd from a gun?

III. i. 68 (375,1) [By thy favour, sweet welkin] Welkin is the sky, to which Armado, with the false dignity of a Spaniard, makes an apology for sighing in its face.

III. i. 73 (376,3) [no salve in the male, Sir] The old folio reads, no salve in thee male, sir, which, in another folio, is, no salve, in the male, sir. What it can mean is not easily discovered: if mail for a packet or bag was a word then in use, no salve in the mail may mean, no salve in the mountebank's budget. Or shall we read, no enigma, no riddle, no l'envoy—in the vale, sir—O, sir. plantain. The matter is not great, but one would wish for some meaning or other.

III. i.112 (377,5) [how was there a Costard broken in a shin?] Costard is the name of a species of apple.

III. i.136 (378,7) [my in-cony Jew] [W. jewel] I know not whether it be fit, however specious, to change Jew to jewel. Jew, in our author's time, was, for whatever reason, apparently a word of endearment. So in Midsummer-Night's Dream,

Most tender Juvenile, and eke most lovely Jew. (see 1765, II,144,9)

III.i.182 (381,2) [This signior Junto's giant-dwarf. Don Cupid] Mr. Upton has made a very ingenious conjecture on this passage. He reads,

This signior Julio's giant-dwarf—

Shakespeare, says he, intended to compliment Julio Romano, who drew Cupid in the character of a giant-dwarf. Dr. Warburton thinks, that by Junio is meant youth in general.

III.i.188 (382,3) [Of trotting paritors] An apparitor, or paritor. is an officer of the bishop's court who carries out citations; as citations are most frequently issued for fornication, the paritor is put under Cupid's government.

III.i.189 (382,4)

[And I to be a corporal of his field,
And wear his colours! like a tumbler's hoop!]

The conceit seems to be very forced and remote, however it be understood. The notion is not that the hoop wears colours, but that the colours are worn as a tumbler carries his hoop, hanging on one shoulder and falling under the opposite arm.

III.i.207 (383,5) [Some men must love my lady, and some Joan] To this line Mr. Theobald extends his second act, not injudiciously, but, as was before observed, without sufficient authority.

IV.i.19 (384,6) [Here,—good my glass] To understand how the princess has her glass so ready at hand in a casual conversation, it must be remembered that in those days it was the fashion among the French ladies to wear a looking-glass,' as Mr. Bayle coarsely represents it, on their bellies; that is, to have a small mirrour set in gold hanging at the girdle, by which they occasionally viewed their faces or adjusted their hair.

IV.i.35 (385,8) [that my heart means no ill] [W: tho'] That my heart means no ill, is the same with to whom my heart means no ill; the common phrase suppresses the particle, as I mean him [not to him] no harm.

IV.i.41 (386,9) [a member of the commonwealth] Here, I believe, is a kind of jest intended; a member of the commonwealth is put for one of the common people, one of the meanest.

IV.i.49 (386,1)

[An' your waist, mistress, were as slender as my wit,
One o' these maids girdles for your waist should be fit]

[W: my waste … your wit … my waste] This conjecture is ingenious enough, but not well considered. It is plain that the ladies girdles would not fit the princess. For when she has referred the clown to the thickest and the tallest, he turns immediately to her with the blunt apology, truth is truth; and again tells her, you are the thickest here. If any alteration is to be made, I should propose,

An' your waist, mistress, were as slender as your wit.

This would point the reply; but perhaps he mentions the slenderness of his own wit to excuse his bluntness.

IV.i.59 (387,3) [Break the neck of the wax] Still alluding to the capon.

IV.i.65 (388,5) [king Cophetua] This story is again alluded to in
Henry IV.

Let king Cophetua know the truth thereof.

But of this king and beggar, the story, then doubtless well known, is, I am afraid, lost. Zenelophon has not appearance of a female name, but since I know not the true none, it is idle to guess.

IV.i.99 (389,7) [ere while] Just now; a little while ago. So
Raleigh,

Here lies Hobbinol our shepherd, while e'er.

IV.i.108 (390,9) [Come, lords, away] Perhaps the Princess said rather,

—Come, ladies, away.

The rest of the scene deserves no care.

IV.ii (392,2) [Enter Dull, Holofernes, and Sir Nathaniel] I am not of the learned commentator's [Wurburton] opinion, that the satire of Shakespeare is so seldom personal. It is of the nature of personal invectives to be soon unintelligible; and the authour that gratifies private malice, aniuam in vulnere ponit, destroys the future efficacy of his own writings, and sacrifices the esteem of succeeding times to the laughter of a day. It is no wonder, therefore, that the sarcasms, which, perhaps, in the authour's time, set the playhouse in a roar, are now lost among general reflections. Yet whether the character of Holofernes was pointed at any particular man, I am, notwithstanding the plausibility of Dr. Warburton's conjecture, inclined to doubt. Every man adheres as long as he can to his own pre-conceptions. Before I read this note I considered the character of Holofernes as borrowed from the Rhombus of sir Philip Sidney, who, in a kind of pastoral entertainment, exhibited to queen Elizabeth, has introduced a schoolmaster so called, speaking a leash of languages at once, and puzzling himself and his auditors with a jargon like that of Holofernes in the present play. Sidney himself might bring the character from Italy; for, as Peacham observes, the schoolmaster has long been one of the ridiculous personages in the farces of that country.

IV.ii.29 (395,4)

[And such barren plants are set before us, that we
  thankful should be,
Which we taste and feeling are for those parts that do fructify
  in us, more than he]

Sir T. Hammer reads thus,

And such barren plants are set before us, that we
  thankful should be,
For those parts which we taste and feel do fructify
  in us more than he.

And Mr. Edwards, in his animadversions on Dr. Warburton's notes, applauds the emendation. I think both the editors mistaken, except that sir T. Hammer found the metre, though he missed the sense. I read, with a slight change,

And such barren plants are set before us, that we
    thankful should be,
  When we taste and feeling are for those parts that
    do fructify in us more than he.

That is, such barren plants are exhibited in the creation, to make us thankful when we have more taste and feeling than he, of those parts or qualities which produce fruit in us, and preserve as from being likewise barren plants. Such is the sense, just in itself and pious, but a little clouded by the diction of sir Nathaniel. The length of these lines was no novelty on the English stage. The moralities afford scenes of the like measure. (1773)

IV.ii.32 (396,5)

[For as it would ill become me to be vain, indiscreet,
  or a fool;
 So were there a patch set on learning, to see
  him in a school]

The meaning is, to be in a school would as ill become a patch, or low fellow, as folly would become me.

IV.ii.99 (399,2) [Vinegia. Vinegia, Chi non te vedi, ei non te pregia] [This reading is an emendation by Theobald] The proverb, as I am informed, is this; He that sees Venice little, values it much; he that sees it much, values it little. But I suppose Mr. Theobald is right, for the true proverb would hot serve the speaker's purpose.

IV.ii.156 (403,6) [colourable colours] That is specious, or fair seeming appearances.

IV.iii.3 (403,7) [I am toiling in a pitch] Alluding to lady Rosaline's complexion, who is through the whole play represented as a black beauty.

IV.iii.29 (404,8) [The night of dew, that on my cheeks down flows] I cannot think the night of dew the true reading, but know not what to offer.

IV.iii.47 (405,9) [he comes in like a perjure, wearing papers] The punishment of perjury is to wear on the breast a paper expressing the crime.

IV.iii.74 (406,2) [the liver-vein] The liver was anciently supposed to be the seat of love.

IV.iii.110 (408,5) [Air, would I might triumph so!] Perhaps we may better read,

Ah! would I might triumph so!

IV.iii.117 (409,7) [ay true love's fasting pain] [W: festring] There is no need of any alteration. Fasting is longing, hungry, wanting.

IV.iii.148 (410,8) [How will he triumph, leap, and laugh at it?]
[W: geap] To leap is to exult, to skip for joy. It must stand.

IV.iii.166 (410,9) [To see a king transformed to a knot!] Knot has no sense that can suit this place. We may read sot. The rhimes in this play are such, as that sat and sot may be well enough admitted.

IV.iii.180 (412,2) [With men like men] [W: vane-like] This is well imagined, but perhaps the poet may mean, with men like common men.

IV.iii.231 (414,3) [She (an attending star)] Something like this is a stanza of sir Henry Wotton, of which the poetical reader will forgive the insertion.

—Ye stars, the train of night,
  That poorly satisfy our eyes
 More by your number than your light:
  Ye common people of the skies,
 What are ye when the sun shall rise.

IV.iii.256 (415,6) [And beauty's crest becomes the heavens well] [W: crete] This emendation cannot be received till its authour can prove that crete is an English word. Besides, crest is here properly opposed to badge. Black, says the King, is the badge of hell, but that which graces the heaven is the crest of beauty. Black darkens hell, and is therefore hateful; white adorns heaven, and is therefore lovely.

IV.iii.290 (417,8) [affection's men at arms] A man at arms, is a soldier armed at all points both offensively and defensively. It is no more than, Ye soldiers of affection.

IV.iii.313 (418,2) [Teaches such beauty as a woman's eye] *i.e.* a lady's eyes gives a fuller notion of beauty than any authour.

IV.iii.321 (418.3) [In leaden contemplation have found out Such fiery numbers] Numbers are, in this passage, nothing more than poetical measures. Could you, says Biron, by solitary contemplation, have attained such poetical fire, such spritely numbers, as have been prompted by the eyes of beauty? The astronomer, by looking too much aloft, falls into a ditch.

IV.iii.358 (422,9)

[Or for love's sake, a word, that loves all men;
  Or for men's sake, the author of these women;
  Or women's sake, by whom we men are men]

Perhaps we might read thus, transposing the lines,

Or for love's sake, a word that loves all men;
  For women's sake, by whom we men are men;
  Or for men's sake, the authours of these women.

The antithesis of a word that all men love, and a word which loves all men, though in itself worth little, has much of the spirit of this play.

IV.iii.386 (423,2) [If so, our copper buys no better treasure] Here Mr. Theobald ends the third act.

V.i.3 (423,3) [your reasons at dinner have been sharp and sententious] I know not well what degree of respect Shakespeare intends to obtain for this vicar, but he has here put into his mouth a finished representation of colloquial excellence. It is very difficult to add any thing to this character of the schoolmaster's table-talk, and perhaps all the precepts of Castiglione will scarcely be found to comprehend a rule for conversation so justly delineated, so widely dilated, and so nicely limited.

It may be proper just to note, that reason here, and in many other places, signifies discourse; and that audacious is used in a good sense for spirited, animated, confident. Opinion is the same with obstinacy or opinionated.

V.i.14 (424,4) [He is too picked] To have the beard piqued or shorn so as to end in a point, was, in our authour's time, a mark of a traveller affecting foreign fashions: so says the Bastard in K. John, —_I catechise My piqued man of countries.

V.i.29 (425,6) [(Ne intelligis, Domine.) to make frantick, lunatick?] There seems yet something wanting to the integrity of this passage, which Mr. Theobald has in the most corrupt and difficult places very happily restored. For ne intelligis domine, to make frantick, lunatick, I read, (nonne intelligis, domine?) to be mad, frantick, lunatick.

V.i.44 (427,6) [honorificabilitudinitatibus] This word, whencesoever it comes, is often mentioned as the longest word known. (1773)

V.i.110 (429,6) [dally with my excrement] The authour has before called the beard valour's excrement in the Merchant of Venice.

V.ii.43 (432,5) ['Ware pencils!] The former editions read,

Were pencils——

Sir T. Hammer here rightly restored,

'Ware pencils——-

Rosaline, a black beauty, reproaches the fair Catherine for painting.

V.ii.69 (434,9) [None are so surely caught when they are catch'd, As wit turn'd fool] These are observation worthy of a man who has surveyed human nature with the closest attention.

V.ii.87 (434,1) [Saint Dennis to St. Cupid!] The Princess of France invokes, with too much levity, the patron of her country, to oppose his power to that of Cupid.

V.ii.117 (435,2) [spleen ridiculous] is, a ridiculous fit.

V.ii.205 (439,5) [Vouchsafe, bright moon, and these thy stars] When queen Elizabeth asked an ambassadour how he liked her ladies, It is hard, said he, to judge of stars in the presence of the sun.

V.ii.235 (440,6) [Since you can cog] To cog signifies to falsify the dice, and to falsify a narrative, or to lye.

V.ii.281 (442,7) [better wits have worn plain statute-caps] This line is not universally understood, because every reader does not know that a statute cap is part of the academical habit. Lady Rosaline declares that her expectation was disappointed by these courtly students, and that better wits might be found in the common places of education. [Gray had offered a different explanation] I think my own interpretation of this passage right. (see 1765, II,197,3)

V.ii.295 (443,8)

[Fair ladies, mask'd, are roses in their bud;
  Dismask'd, their damask sweet commixture shewn,
  Are angels vailing clouds, or roses blown]

[Hammer: angels vailing clouds] [Warburton exercised his sarcasm on this] I know not why Sir T. Hanmer's explanation should be treated with so much contempt, or why vailing clouds should be capping the sun. Ladies unmask'd, says Boyet, are like angels vailing clouds, or letting those clouds which obscured their brightness, sink from before them. What is there in this absurd or contemptible?

V.ii.309 (444,1) [Exeunt ladies] Mr. Theobald ends the fourth act here.

V.ii.337 (447,4) [—behaviour, what wert thou, 'Till this mad man shew'd thee? and what art thou now?] [These are two wonderfully fine lines, intimating that what courts call manners, and value themselves so much upon teaching, as a thing no where else to be learnt, is a modest silent accomplishment under the direction of nature and common sense, which does its office in promoting social life without being taken notice of. But that when it degerates into shew and parade, it becomes an unmanly contemptible quality. Warburton.] What is told in this note is undoubtedly true, but is not comprised in the quotation.

V.ii.348 (448,5) [The virtue of your eye must break my oath] I believe the author means that the virtue, in which word goodness and power are both comprised, must dissolve the obligation of the oath. The Princess, in her answer, takes the most invidious part of the ambiguity.

V.ii.374 (449,6)

[when we greet
With eyes best seeing, heaven's fiery eye,
By light we lose light: your capacity
Is of that nature, as to your huge store
Wise things seem foolish, and rich things but poor]

This is a very lofty and elegant compliment.

V.ii.419 (450,7) [Write, Lord have mercy on us, on those three] This was the inscription put upon the door of the houses infected with the plague, to which Biron compares the love of himself and his companions; and pursuing the metaphor finds the tokens likewise on the ladies. The tokens of the plague are the first spots or discolorations, by which the infection is known to be received.

V.ii.426 (451,8) [how can this be true, That you stand forfeit, being those that sue?] That is, how can those be liable to forfeiture that begin the process. The jest lies in the ambiguity of sue, which signifies to prosecute by law, or to offer a petition.

V.ii.440 (451,9) [you force not to forswear] You force not is the same with you make no difficulty. This is a very just observation. The crime which has been once committed, is committed again with less reluctance.

V.ii.471 (452,2) [in will and error. Much upon this it is:—And might not you] I, believe this passage should be read thus,

—in will and error. Boyet. Much upon this it is. Biron. And might not you, &c.

V.ii.490 (453,5) [You cannot beg us] That is, we are not fools, our next relations cannot beg the wardship of our persons and fortunes. One of the legal tests of a natural is to try whether he can number.

V.ii.517 (454,6)

[That sport best pleases, that doth least know how.
Where zeal strives to content, and the contents
Dies in the zeal of that which it presents]

The third line may be read better thus,

—the contents Die in the zeal of him which them presents.

This sentiment of the Princess is very natural, but less generous than that of the Amazonian Queen, who says, on a like occasion, in Midsummer-Night's Dream,

I love not to see wretchedness o'ercharg'd, Nor duty in his service perishing.

V.ii.547 (455,8) [A bare throw at novum] This passage I do not understand. I fancy that novum should be novem, and that some allusion is intended between the play of nine pins and the play of the nine worthies, but it lies too deep for my investigation.

V.ii.581 (457,2) [A-jax] There is a conceit of Ajax and a jakes.

V.ii.694 (461,4) [more Ates] That is, more instigation. Ate was the mischievous goddess that incited bloodshed.

V.ii.702 (461,5) [my arms] The weapons and armour which he wore in the character of Pompey.

V.ii.744 (463,8) [In the converse of breath] Perhaps converse may, in this line, mean interchange.

V.ii.755 (464,2) [which fain it would convince] We must read,

—which fain would it convince;

that is, the entreaties of love which would fain overpower grief. So Lady Macbeth declares, That she will convince the chamberlain with wine.

V.ii.762 (464,3) [Honest plain words best pierce the ear of grief] As it seems not very proper for Biron to court the princess for the king in the king's presence, at this critical moment, I believe the speech is given to a wrong person. I read thus,

Prin. I understand you not, my griefs are double:
Honest plain words best pierce the ear of grief.
King. And by these badges, &c.

V.ii.779 (465,4) [Suggested us] That is, tempted us.

V.ii.790 (465,5) [As bombast, and as lining to the time] This line is obscure. Bombast was a kind of loose texture not unlike what is now called wadding, used to give the dresses of that time bulk and protruberance, without much increase of weight; whence the same name is given a tumour of words unsupported by solid sentiment. The Princess, therefore, says, that they considered this courtship as but bombast, as something to fill out life, which not being closely united with it, might be thrown away at pleasure.

V.ii.795 (466,7) [We did not quote them so] [We should read, quote, esteem, reckon. Warburton] though our old writers spelling by the ear, probably wrote cote, as it was pronounced. (see 1765, II,218,5)

V.ii.823 (467,8) [To flatter up these powers of mine with rest] Dr. Warburton would read fetter, but flatter or sooth is, in my opinion, more apposite to the king's purpose than fetter. Perhaps we may read,

To flatter on these hours of time with rest;

That is, I would not deny to live in the hermitage, to make the year of delay pass in quiet.

V.ii.873 (469,2) [dear groans] Dear should here, as in many other places, be dere, sad, odious.

V.ii.904 (470,3) [When daisies pied, and violets blue] The first lines of this song that were transposed, have been replaced by Mr. Theobald.

V.ii.907 (470,5) [Do paint the meadows with delight] [W: much bedight] Much less elegant than the present reading.

(472,7) General Observation. In this play, which all the editors have concurred to censure, and some have rejected as unworthy of him.

Vol. III

A MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

I.i.6 (4,2) [Long withering out a young man's revenue] [W: wintering] That the common reading is not good English, I cannot perceive, and therefore find in myself no temptation to change it.

I.i.47 (5,6) [To leave the figure, or disfigure it] [W: 'leve] I know not why so harsh a word should be admitted with so little need, a word that, spoken, could not be understood, and of which no example can be shown. The sense is plain, you owe to your father a being which he may at pleasure continue or destroy.

I.i.68 (6,8) [Know of your youth] Bring your youth to the question.
Consider your youth. (1773)

I.i.76 (7,9) [But earthlier happy is the rose distill'd] Thus all the copies, yet earthlier is so harsh a word, and earthlier happy for happier earthly, a mode of speech so unusual, that I wonder none of the editors have proposed earlier happy.

I.i.110 (8,2) [spotted] As spotless is innocent, so spotted is wicked. (1773)

I.i.131 (9,3) [Beteem them] give them, bestow upon then. The word is used by Spenser.

I.i.157 (10,8) [I have a widow aunt, a dowager] These lines perhaps might more properly be regulated thus:

I have a widow aunt, a dowager
Of great revenue, and she hath no child,
And she respects me as her only son;
Her house from Athens is remov'd seven leagues,
There, gentle Hermia, may I marry thee,
And to that place—

I.i.169-178 (11,1) [Warburton had reassigned speeches here] This emendation is judicious, but not necessary. I have therefore given the note without altering the text. The censure of men, as oftner perjured than women, seems to make that line more proper for the lady.

I.i.183 (12,3) [Your eyes are lode-stars] This was a complement not unfrequent among the old poets. The lode star is the leading or guiding star, that is, the pole-star. The magnet is, for the same reason, called the lode-stone, either became it leads iron, or because it guides the sailor. Milton has the same thought in L'Allegro:

Tow'rs and battlements he sees
Bosom'd high in tufted trees,
Where perhaps some beauty lies,
The Cynosure of neighb'ring eyes.

Davies calls Elizabeth, lode-stone to hearts, and lode-stone to all eyes, (see 1765, 1,97,9)

I.i.204 (13,6)

[Before the time I did Lysander see,
Seem'd Athens like a paradise to me]

Perhaps every reader may not discover the propriety of these lines. Hermia is willing to comfort Helena, and to avoid all appearance of triumph over her. She therefore bids her not to consider the power of pleasing, as an advantage to be much envied or much desired, since Hermia, whom she considers as possessing it in the supreme degree, has found no other effect of it than the loss of happiness.

I.i.232 (15,8) [Things base and vile, holding no quantity] quality seems a word more suitable to the sense than quantity, but either may serve. (1773)

I.i.240 (15,9) [in game] Game here signifies not contentious play, but sport, jest. So Spenser,

'Twixt earnest and 'twixt game.

I.ii (16,2) [Enter Quince the carpenter, Snug the joiner. Bottom the weaver. Flute the bellows-mender. Snout the tinker, and Starveling the taylor] In this scene Shakespeare takes advantage of his knowledge of the theatre, to ridicule the prejudices and competitions of the players. Bottom, who is generally acknowledged the principal actor, declares his inclination to be for a tyrant, for a part of fury, tumult, and noise, such as every young man pants to perform when he first steps upon the stage. The same Bottom, who seems bred in a tiring-room, has another histrionical passion. He is for engrossing every part, and would exclude his inferiors from all possibility of distinction. He is therefore desirous to play Pyramus, Thisbe, and the Lyon at the same time.

I.ii.10 (17,4) [grow on to a point] Dr. Warburton read go on; but grow is used, in allusion to his name, Quince. (see 1765, I,100,8)

I.ii.52 (18,6)

[Flu. Nay, faith, let me not play a woman; I have a beard coming. Quin. That's all one, you shall play it in a masque; and you may speak as small as you will]

This passage shews how the want of women on the old stage was supplied. If they had not a young man who could perform the part with a face that might pass for feminine, the character was acted in a mask, which was at that time part of a lady's dress so much in use that it did not give any unusual appearance to the scene: and he that could modulate his voice in a female tone might play the women very successfully. It is observed in Downes's Memoirs of the Playhouse, that one of these counterfeit heroines moved the passions more strongly than the women that have since been brought upon the stage. Some of the catastrophes of the old comedies, which make lovers marry the wrong women, are, by recollection of the common use of masks, brought nearer to probability.

I.ii.98 (20,8) [Bot. I will discharge it in either your straw-coloured beard, your orange tawny beard, your purple-in grain beard, or your French crown-coloured beard; your perfect yellow] Here Bottom again discovers a true genius for the stage by his solicitude for propriety of dress, and his deliberation which beard to chuse among many beards, all unnatural.

II.i.2 (21,3) [Over hill, over dale] So Drayton in his Court of Fairy,

Thorough brake, thorough brier. Thorough muck, thorough mire. Thorough water, thorough fire.

II.i.9 (22,4) [To dew her orbs upon the green] For orbs Dr. Gray is inclined to substitute herbs. The orbs here mentioned are the circles supposed to be made by the Fairies on the ground, whose verdure proceeds from the fairy's care to water them.

They in their courses make that round, In meadows and in marshes found, Of then so called the fairy ground. Drayton.

II.i.10 (22,5) [The cowslips tall her pensioners be] The cowslip was a favourite among the fairies. There is a hint in Drayton of their attention to May morning.

—for the queen a fitting tow'r, Quoth he, is that fair cowslip flow'r.— In all your train there's not a fay That ever went to gather May, But she hath made it in her way, The tallest there that groweth.

II.i.16 (22,7) [lob of spirits] Lob, lubber, looby, lobcock, all denote both inactivity of body and dulness of mind.

II.i.23 (23,8) [changeling] Changeling is commonly used for the child supposed to be left by the fairies, but here for the child taken away.

II.i.29 (23,9) [sheen] Shining, bright, gay.

II.i.30 (23,1) [But they do square] [To square here is to quarrel. And now you are such fools to square for this? Gray.]

The French word contrecarrer has the same import.

II.i.36 (24,4)

[Skim milk; and sometimes labour in the quern,
  And bootless make the breathless huswife churn]

The sense of these lines is confused. Are not you he, says the fairy, that fright the country girls. that skim milk, work in the hand-mill, and make the tired dairy-woman churn without effect? The mention of the mill seem out of place, for she is not now telling the good but the evil that he does. I would regulate the lines thus:

And sometimes make the breathless housewife churn Skim milk, and bootless labour in the quern.

Or by a simple transposition of the lines;

And bootless, make the breathless housewife churn Skim milk, and sometimes labour in the quern.

Yet there is no necessity of alteration. (see 1765, I,106,1)

II.i.40 (24,6) [Those that Hobgoblin call you, and sweet Puck, You do their work] To those traditionary opinions Milton has reference in L'Allegro,

Then to the spicy nut-brown ale,
  With stories told of many a feat.
  How Fairy Mab the junkets eat;
  She was pinch'd and pull'd she said.
  And he by Frier's lapthorp led;
  Tells how the drudging goblin sweat
  To earn his cream-bowl duly set,
  When in one night ere glimpse of morn
  His shadowy flail had thresh'd the corn
  Which ten day-labourers could not end.
  Then lies him down the lubber fiend.

A like account of Puck is given by Drayton,

He meeteth Puck, which most men call
  Hobgoblin, and on him doth fall.—
  This Puck seems but a dreaming dolt,
  Still walking like a ragged colt,
  And oft out of a bed doth bolt,
    Of purpose to deceive us;
  And leading us makes us to stray.
  Long winter's nights out of the way.
  And when we stick in mire and clay.
    He doth with laughter leave us.

It will be apparent to him that shall compare Drayton's poem with this play, that either one of the poets copied the other, or, as I rather believe, that there was then some system of the fairy empire generally received, which they both represented as accurately as they could. Whether Drayton or Shakespeare wrote first, I cannot discover.

II.i.42 (25,7) [Puck. Thou speak'st aright] I have filled up the verse which I suppose the author left complete,

It seems that in the Fairy mythology Puck, or Hobgoblin, was the trusty servant of Oberon, and always employed to watch or detect the intrigues of Queen Mab, called by Shakespeare Titania. For in Drayton's Nynphidia, the same fairies are engaged in the sane business. Mab has an amour with Pigwiggen; Oberon being jealous, sends Hobgoblin to catch them, and one of Mab's nymphs opposes him by a spell.

II.i.54 (26,8) [And tailor cries] The custom of crying tailor at a sudden fall backwards, I think I remember to have observed. He

that slips beside his chair falls as a taylor squats upon his board. The Oxford editor and Dr. Warburton after him, read and rails or cries, plausibly, but I believe not rightly. Besides, the trick of the fairy is represented as producing rather merriment than anger.

II.i.56 (26,9) [And waxen] And encrease, as the moon waxes.

II.i.58 (26,1) [But room, Faery] All the old copies read—But room Fairy. The word Fairy or Faery, was sometimes of three syllables, as often in Spenser.

II.i.84 (28,5) [paved fountain] A fountain laid round the edge with stone.

II.i.88 (28,6) [the winds, piping] So Milton,

While rocking winds are piping loud.

II.i.91 (28,7) [pelting river] Thus the quarto's: the folio reads petty.

Shakespeare has in Lear the same word, low pelting farms. The meaning is plainly, despicable, mean, sorry, wretched; but as it is a word without any reasonable etymology, I should be glad to dismiss it for petty, yet it is undoubtedly right. We have petty pelting officer in Measure for Measure.

II.i.92 (28,8) [over-born their continents] Born down the banks that contained then. So in Lear,

Close pent guilts
Rive their concealing continents.

II.i.98 (29,1) [The nine-men's morris] This was some kind of rural game played in a marked ground. But what it was more I have not found.

II.i.100 (29,2) [The human mortals want their winter here] After all the endeavours of the editors, this passage still remains to me unintelligible. I cannot see why winter is, in the general confusion of the year now described, more wanted than any other season. Dr. Warburton observes that he alludes to our practice of singing carols in December; but though Shakespeare is no great chronologer in his dramas, I think he has never so mingled true and false religion, as to give us reason for believing that he would make the moon incensed for the omission of our carols. I therefore imagine him to have meant heathen rites of adoration. This is not all the difficulty. Titania's account of this calamity is not sufficiently consequential. Men find no winter, therefore they sing no hymns; the moon provoked by this omission, alters the seasons: that is, the alteration of the seasons produces the alteration of the seasons. I am far from supposing that Shakespeare might not sometimes think confusedly, and therefore am not sure that the passage is corrupted. If we should read,

And human mortals want their wonted year,

yet will not this licence of alteration much mend the narrative;

the cause and the effect are still confounded. Let us carry critical temerity a little further. Scaliger transposed the lines of Virgil's Gallus. Why may not the same experiment be ventured upon Shakespeare.

The human mortals want their wonted year,
The seasons alter; hoary-headed frosts
Fall in the fresh lap of the crimson rose;
And on old Hyems' chin, and icy crown,
An od'rous chaplet of sweet summer buds
Is, as in mock'ry set. The spring, the summer,
The chiding autumn, angry winter, change
Their wonted liveries; and the 'mazed world,
By their increase, now knows not which is which.
No night is now with hymn or carol blest;

Therefore the moon, the governess of floods,
Pale in her anger, washes all the air;
And thorough this distemperature, we see
That rheumatick diseases do abound.
And this same progeny of evil comes
From our debate, from our dissension.

I know not what credit the reader will give to this emendation, which I do not much credit myself.

II.i.114 (31,4) [By their increase] That is, By their produce.

II.i.130 (32,6) [Which she, with pretty and with swimming gate, Following] [cf: follying] The foregoing note is very ingenious, but since follying is a word of which I know not any example, and the Fairy's favourite might, without much licentiousness of language, be said to follow a ship that sailed in the direction of the coast; I think there is no sufficient reason for adopting it. The coinage of new words is a violent remedy, not to be used but in the last necessity.

II.i.157 (35,8) [Cupid all-arm'd] All-armed, does not signify dressed in panoply, but only enforces the word armed, as we might say all-booted. I am afraid that the general sense of alarmed, by which it is used for put into fear or care by whatever cause, is later than our authour.

II.i.220 (38,4) [For that It is not night when I do see your face]
This passage is paraphrased from two lines of an ancient poet,

—Tu nocte vel atra
Lumen, et in solis tu mihi turba locis.

(see 1765, I,118,6)

II.i.251 (39,5) [over-canopy'd with the luscious woodbine] All the old editions have,

Quite over-canopied with luscious woodbine.

On the margin of one of my folio's an unknown hand has written lush woodbine, which, I think, is right.

This hand I have since discovered to be Theobald's, (see 1765,
I,119,4)

II.ii. (41,9) [quaint spirits] For this Dr. Warburton reads against all authority,

——quaint sports.——

But Prospero, in The Tempest, applies quaint to Ariel.

II.ii.30 (42.2) [Be it ounce]
The ounce is a snail tiger, or tiger-cat. (1773)

II.ii.45 (43,3)

[O take the sense, sweet, of my innocence;
  Love takes the meaning in love's conference]

[Warburton wished to transpose "innocence" and "conference"] I am by no means convinced of the necessity of this alteration. Lysander in the language of love professes, that as they have one heart, they shall have one bed; this Hernia thinks rather too much, and intreats him to lye further off. Lysander answers,

O take the sense, sweet, of my innocence.

understand the meaning of my innocence, or my innocent meaning. Let no suspicion of ill enter thy mind.

Love takes the meaning, in love's conference.

In the conversation of those who are assured of each other's kindness, not suspicion, but love takes the meaning. No malevolent interpretation is to be made, but all is to be received in the sense which love can find, and which love can dictate.

II.ii.89 (45,6) [my grace] My acceptableness, the favour that I can gain. (1773)

II.ii.120 (46,7) [Reason becomes the marshal to my will] That is,
My will now follows reason.

III.i (48,3) In the time of Shakespeare, there were many companies of players, sometimes five at the same time, contending for the favour of the publick. Of these some were undoubtedly very unskilful and very poor, and it is probable that the design of this scene was to ridicule their ignorance, and the odd expedients to which they might be driven by the want of proper decorations. Bottom was perhaps the head of a rival house, and is therefore honoured with an ass's head.

III.i.110 (52,8) [Through bog, through bush, through brake, through bryer] Here are two syllables wanting. Perhaps, it was written,

Through bog, through mire,———-

III.i.116 (52,9) [to make me afeard]

Afeard is from to fear, by the old form of the language, as an hungred, from to hunger. So adry, for thirsty. (1773)

III.i.117 (52,1) [O Bottom! thou art chang'd! what do I see on thee?] It is plain by Bottom's answer, that Snout mentioned an ass's head. Therefore we should read,

Snout. O Bottom, thou art changed! what do I see on thee? An ass's head?

III.i.141 (53,3) [Mine ear is much enamour'd of thy note,]

So is mine eye enthralled to thy shape;
  And thy fair virtue's force

(perforce) [doth move me, On the first view to say, to swear I love thee]

These lines are in one quarto of 1600, the first folio of 1623, the second of 1632, and the third of 1664, &c. ranged in the following order:

Mine ear is much enamour'd of thy note.

On the first view to say, to swear, I love thee;
So is mine eye enthralled to thy shape,
And thy fair virtue's force (perforce) [doth move me.

This reading I have inserted, not that it can suggest any thing better than the order to which the lines have been restored by Mr. Theobald from another quarto, but to shew that some liberty of conjecture must be allowed in the revisal of works so inaccurately printed, and so long neglected.

III.i.173 (55,6) [the fiery glow-worm's eyes] I know not how Shakespeare,who commonly derived his knowledge of nature from his own observation, happened to place the glow-worm's light in his eyes, which is only in his tail.

III.ii.9 (56,l) [patches] Patch was in old language used as a term of opprobry; perhaps with much the some import as we use raggamuffin, or tatterdemalion.

III.ii.17 (56,2) [nowl] A head. Saxon.

III.ii.19 (57,4) [minnock] This is the reading of the old quarto, and I believe right, Minnekin, now minx, is a nice trifling girl. Minnock is apparently a word of contempt.

III.ii.21 (57,5) [sort] Company. So above,

—that barren sort;

and in Waller,

A sort of lusty shepherds strive.

III.ii.25 (57,6) [And, at our stamp] This seems to be a vicious reading. Fairies are never represented stamping, or of a size that should give force to a stamp, nor could they have distinguished the stamps of Puck from those of their own companions. I read,

And at a stump here o'er and o'er one falls.

So Drayton,

A pain he in his head-piece feels,
  Against a stubbed tree he reels,
  And up went poor hobgoblin's heels;
    Alas, his brain was dizzy.——
  At length upon his feet he gets,
  Hobgoblin fumes, Hobgoblin frets,
  And as again he forward sets,
    And through the bushes scrambles,
  A stump doth trip him in his pace,
  Down fell poor Hob upon his face,
    Among the briers and brambles.

III.ii.30 (58,7) [Some, sleeves; some, hats] There is the like image in Drayton of queen Mab and her fairies flying from Hobgoblin.

Some tore a ruff, and some a gown,
    'Gainat one another jostling;
  They flew about like chaff i' th' wind,
  For haste some left their masks behind,
  Some could not stay their gloves to find,
    There never was such bustling.

III.ii.48 (58,l) [Being o'er shoes in blood] An allusion to the proverb, Over shoes, over boots.

III.ii.70 (59,3) [O brave touch!] Touch in Shakespeare's time was the same with our exploit, or rather stroke. A brave touch, a noble stroke, un grand coup. Mason was very merry, pleasantly playing both with the shrewd touches of many curst boys, and the small discretion of many lewd schoolmasters. Ascham.

III.ii.74 (60,4) [mispris'd] Mistaken; so below misprision is mistake.

III.ii.141 (62,5) [Taurus' snow] Taurus is the name of a range of mountains in Asia.

III.ii.144 (62,7) [seal of bliss!] Be has elsewhere the same image,

But my kisses bring again Seals of love, but seal'd in vain, (rev. 1778, III,74,4)

III.ii.150 (62,8) [join in souls] This is surely wrong. We may read, Join in scorns, or join in scoffs. [Tyrwhitt: join, ill souls] This is a very reasonable conjecture, though I think it is hardly right. (1773)

III.ii.160 (63,9) [extort A poor soul's patience] Harrass, torment.

III.ii.171 (63,1) [My heart with her] We should read,

My heart with her but as guest-wise sojourn'd.

So Prior,

No matter what beauties I saw in my way,
  They were but my visits, but then not my home. (rev. 1778, III,76,9)

III.ii.188 (64,2) [all yon fiery O's] I would willingly believe that the poet wrote fiery orbs.

III.ii.194 (64,3) [in spight to me] I read, in spite to me.

III.ii.242 (66,2) [such an argument] Such a subject of light merriment.

III.ii.352 (71,1) [so sort] So happen in the issue.

III.ii.367 (71,2) [virtuous property] Salutiferous. So be calls, in the Tempest, poisonous dew, wicked dew.

III.ii.426 (74,5) [buy this dear] *i.e.* thou shalt dearly pay for this. Though this is sense, and may well enough stand, yet the poet perhaps wrote thou shalt 'by it dear. So in another place, thou shalt aby it. So Milton, How dearly I abide that boust so vain.

IV.i (75,6) I see no reason why the fourth act should begin here, when there seems no interruption of the action. In the old quartos of 1600, there is no division of acts, which seems to have been afterwards arbitrarily made in the first folio, and may therefore be altered at pleasure, (see 1765, I,149,5)

IV.i.2 (75,7) [do coy] To coy is to sooth. Skinner, (rev. 1778, III, 89,6)

IV.i.45 (77,2) [So doth the woodbine, the sweet honeysuckle, Gently entwist] Mr. Upton reads,

So doth the woodrine the sweet honeysuckle,

for bark of the wood. Shakespeare perhaps only meant so, the leaves involve the flower, using woodbine for the plant and honeysuckle for the flower; or perhaps Shakespeare made a blunder, (rev. 1778, III,91,2)

IV.i.107 (81,9) [our observation is perform'd] The honours due to the morning of May. I know not why Shakespear calls this play a Midsummer-Night's Dream, when he so carefully informs us that it happened on the night preceding May day.

IV.i.123 (81,4) [so sanded] So marked with small spots.

IV.i.166 (83,6) [Fair Helena in fancy following me] Fancy is here taken for love or affection, and is opposed to fury, as before.

Sighs and tears poor Fancy's followers.

Some now call that which a man takes particular delight in his Fancy. Flower-fancier, for a florist, and bird-fancier, for a lover and feeder of birds, are colloquial words.

IV.i.194 (84,6) [And I have found Demetrius like a jewel] [W: gewell]
This emendation is ingenious enough to deserve to be true.

IV.i.213 (85,8) [patch'd fool] That is, a fool in a particolour'd coat.

IV.ii.14 (86,2) [a thing of nought] which Mr. Theobald changes with great pomp to a thing of naught, is, a good for nothing thing.

IV.ii.18 (86,3) [made men] In the same sense us in the Tempest, any monster in England makes a man.

V.i.2-22 (88,4)

[More strange than true. I never may believe
These antique fables, nor these fairy toys]

These beautiful lines are in all the old editions thrown out of metre. They are very well restored by the later editors.

V.i.26 (89,5) [constancy] Consistency; stability; certainty.

V.i.79 (92,4) [Unless you can find sport in their intents] Thus all the copies. But as I know not what it is to stretch and con an intent, I suspect a line to be lost.

V.i.91 (92,5)

[And what poor duty cannot do,
Noble respect takes it in might, not merit.]

The sense of this passage, as it now stands, if it has any sense, is this: What the inability of duty cannot perform, regardful generosity receives as an act of ability, though not of merit. The contrary is rather true: What dutifulness tries to perform without ability, regardful generosity receives as having the merit, though not the power, of complete performance.

We should therefore read,

And what poor duty cannot do, Noble respect takes not in might, but merit.

V.i.147 (95,4) [Whereat, with blade, with bloody blameful blade] Mr. Upton rightly observes, that Shakespeare in this line ridicules the affectation of beginning many words with the same letter. He night have remarked the same of

The raging rocks and shivering shocks.

Gascoigne, contemporary with our poet, remarks and blames the same affectation.

V.i.199 (97,6) [And like Limander am I trusty still] Limander and
Helen, are spoken by the blundering player, for Leander and Hero.
Shafalus and Procrus, for Cephalus and Procris.

V.i.254 (99,1) [in snuff] An equivocation. Snuff signifies both the cinder of a caudle, and hasty anger.

V.i.379 (104,2) [And the wolf beholds the moon] [W: behowls] The alteration is better than the original reading; but perhaps the author meant only to say, that the wolf gazes at the moon, (see 1765, I,173,2)

V.i.396 (105,4)

[I am sent, with broom, before,
To sweep the dust behind the door]

Cleanliness is always necessary to invite the residence and the favour of Fairies.

These make our girls their slutt'ry rue,
By pinching them both black and blue.
And put a penny in their shoe
The house for cleanly sweeping. Drayton.

V.i.398 (105,5) [Through this house give glimmering light] Milton perhaps had this picture in his thought:

Glowing cabers through the room Teach light to counterfeit a gloom. Il Penseroso.

So Drayton:

Hence shadows seeming idle shapes
Of little frisking elves and apes,
To earth do make their wanton 'scapes
As hope of pastime hastes them.

I think it should be read,

Through this house in glimmering light.

V.i.408 (106,6) [Now, until the break of day] This speech, which both the old quartos give to Oberon, is in the edition of 1623, and in all the following, printed as the song. I have restored it to Oberon, as it apparently contains not the blessing which he intends to bestow on the bed, but his declaration that he will bless it, and his orders to the fairies how to perform the necessary rites. But where then is the song?—I am afraid it is gone after many other things of greater value. The truth is that two songs are lost. The series of the scene is this; after the speech of Puck, Oberon enters, and calls his fairies to a song, which song is apparently wanting in all the copies. Next Titania leads another song, which is indeed lost like the former, tho' the editors have endeavoured to find it. Then Oberon dismisses his fairies to the dispatch of the ceremonies.

The songs, I suppose, were lost, because they were not inserted in the players parts, from which the drama was printed.

V.i.440 (107,8) [Now to 'scape the serpent's tongue] That is, If we be dismiss'd without hisses.

V.i.444 (107,9) [Give me your hands] That is, Clap your hands. Give us your applause.

(107,8) General Observation. Of this play there are two editions in quarto; one printed for Thomas Fisher, the other for James Roberts, both in 1600. I have used the copy of Roberts, very carefully collated, as it seems, with that of Fisher. Neither of the editions approach to exactness. Fisher is sometimes preferable, but Roberts was followed, though not without some variations, by Hemings and Condel, and they by all the folios that succeeded them.

Wild and fantastical as this play is, all the parts in their various modes are well written, and give the kind of pleasure which the author designed. Fairies in his time were much in fashion; common tradition had made them familiar, and Spenser's poem had made them great.

THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

I.i.9 (112,2) [Argosies] [a ship from Argo. Pope.] Whether it be derived from Argo I am in doubt. It was a name given in our author's time to ships of great burthen, probably galleons, such as the Spaniards now use in their East India trade. [An Argosie meant originally a ship from Ragusa, a city and territory on the gulph of Venice, tributary to the Porte. Steevens.]

I.i.18 (112,3) [Plucking the grass, to know where sits the wind] By holding up the grass, or any light body that will bend by a gentle blast, the direction of the wind is found.

This way I used in shooting. Betwixt the markes was an open place, there I take a fethere, or a lytle grasse, and so learned

how the wind stood. Ascham.

I.i.27 (113,5) [And see my wealthy Andrew dock'd in sand] The name of the ship.

I.i.113 (116,3) [Is that any thing now?] All the old copies read, is that any thing now? I suppose we should read, is that any thing new?

I.i.146 (117,4) [like a wilful youth] [W: witless] Dr. Warburton confounds the time past and present. He has formerly lost his money like a wilful youth, he now borrows more in pure innocence, without disguising his former fault, or his present designs.

I.ii.44 (120,6) [Ay, that's a colt, indeed] Colt is used for a witless, heady, gay youngster, whence the phrase used of an old man too juvenile, that he still retains his colt's tooth. See Hen. VIII.

I.ii.49 (120,7) [there is the Count Palatine] I am always inclined to believe, that Shakespeare has more allusions to particular facts and persons than his readers commonly suppose. The count here mentioned was, perhaps, Albertus a Lasco, a Polish Palatine, who visited England in our author's time, was eagerly caressed, and splendidly entertained; but running in debt, at last stole away, and endeavoured to repair his fortune by enchantment.

I.ii.90 (122,3) [How like you the young German] In Shakespeare's time the duke of Bavaria visited London, and was made knight of the garter.

Perhaps in this enumeration of Portia's suitors, there may be some covert allusion to those of Queen Elizabeth.

I.iii.47 (125,4) [catch him once upon the hip] A phrase taken from the practice of wrestlers.

I.iii.63 (126,5) [the ripe wants of my friend] Ripe wants are wants come to the height, wants that can have no longer delay. Perhaps we might read, rife wants, wants that come thick upon him.

I.iii.100 (127,6)

[An evil soul, producing holy witness,
  Is like a villain with a smiling cheek;
  A goodly apple rotten at the heart.
  O, what a goodly outside falshood hath?]

I wish any copy would give the authority to range and read the lines thus:

O, what a godly outside falshood hath!
  An evil soul producing holy witness,
  Is like a villain with a sailing cheek;

Or goodly apply rotten at the heart.

Yet there is no difficulty in the present reading. Falsehood, which as truth means honesty, is taken here for treachery and knavery, does not stand for falshood in general, but for the dishonesty now operating. (1773)

I.iii.156 (129,8) [dwell in my necessity] To dwell seems in this place to mean the same as to continue. To abide has both the senses of habitation and continuance.

I.iii.176 (130,9) [left in the fearful guard] [W: fearless] Dr. Warburton has forgotten that fearful is not only that which fears, but that which is feared or causes fear. Fearful guard, is a guard that is not to be trusted, but gives cause of fear. To fear was anciently to give as well as feel terrours. (see 1765, I,402,4)

I.iii.180 (130,1) [I like not fair terms] Kind words, good language.

II.i.7 (131,2) [To prove whose blood is reddest, his or mine] To understand how the tawney prince, whose savage dignity is very well supported, means to recommend himself by this challenge, it must be remembered that red blood is a traditionary sign of courage: Thus Macbeth calls one of his frighted soldiers, a lilly liver'd Lown; again in this play, Cowards are said to have livers as white as milk; and an effeminate and timorous man is termed a milksop.

II.i.18 (132,4) [And hedg'd me by his will] I suppose we may safely read, and hedg'd me by his will. Confined me by his will.

II.i.25 (132,5) [That slew the Sophy] Shakespeare seldom escapes well when he is entangled with geography. The prince of Morocco must have travelled far to kill the Sophy of Persia.

II.i.42 (133,7) [Therefore be advis'd] Therefore be not precipitant; consider well what we are to do. Advis'd is the word opposite to rash.

II.ii.38 (134,8) [try conclusions]—So the old quarto. The first folio, by a mere blunder, reads, try confusions, which, because it makes a kind of paltry jest, has been copied by all the editors.

II.ii.91 (136,1) [your child that shall be] The distinction between boy and son is obvious, but child seems to have some meaning, which is now lost.

II.ii.166 (138,3) [Well, if any man in Italy have a fairer table, which doth suffer to swear upon a book] Mr. Theobald's note is as obscure as the passage. It may be read more than once before the complication of ignorance can be completely disentangled. Table is the palm expanded. What Mr. Theobald conceives it to be cannot easily be discovered, but he thinks it somewhat that promises a full belly.

Dr. Warburton understood the word, but puzzles himself with no great success in the pursuit of the meaning. The whole matter is this: Launcelot congratulates himself upon his dexterity and good fortune, and, in the height of his rapture, inspects his hand, and congratulates himself upon the felicities in his table. The act of expounding his hand puts him in mind of the action in which the palm is shewn, by raising it to lay it on the book, in judicial attestations. Well, says he, if any man in Italy have a fairer table, that doth offer to swear upon a book—— Here he stops with an abruptness very common, and proceeds to particulars.

II.ii.194 (140,5) [Something too liberal] Liberal I have already shewn to be mean, gross, coarse, licentious.

II.ii.205 (141,9) [sad ostent] Grave appearance; shew of staid and serious behaviour.

II.vi.5 (146,1) [O, ten times faster Venus' pigeons fly] [W: widgeons] I believe the poet wrote as the editors have printed. How it is so very high humour to call lovers widgeons rather than pigeons. I cannot find. Lovers have in poetry been alway called Turtles, or Doves, which in lower language may be pigeons.

II.vi.51 (148,3) [a Gentile, and no Jew] A jest rising from the ambiguity of Gentile, which signifies both a Heathen, and one well born.

II.vii.8 (149,4) [This third, dull lead, with warning all as blunt]
That is, as gross as the dull metal.

II.vii.69 (151,5) [Gilded tombs do worms infold] In all the old editions this line is written thus:

Gilded timber do worms infold.

From which Mr. Rowe and all the following editors have made

Gilded wood may worms infold.

A line not bad in itself, but not so applicable to the occasion as that which, I believe, Shakespeare wrote,

Gilded tombs do worms infold.

A tomb is the proper repository of a death's-head.

II.vii.72 (151,6) [Your answer had not been inscrol'd] Since there is an answer inscrol'd or written in every casket, I believe for your we should read this. When the words were written y'r and y's, the mistake was easy.

II.vii.79 (151,7) [chuse ce so] The old quarto edition of 1600 has no distribution of acts, but proceeds from the beginning to the end in an unbroken tenour. This play therefore having been probably divided without authority by the publishers of the first folio, lies open to a new regulation, if any more commodious division can be proposed. The story is itself so wildly incredible, and the changes of the scene so frequent and capricious, that the probability of action does not deserve much care; yet it may be proper to observe, that, by concluding the second act here, time is given for Bassanio's passage to Belmont.

II.viii.42 (153,8) [Let it not enter in your mind of love] So all the copies, but I suspect some corruption.

II.viii.52 (153,9) [embraced heaviness] [W: enraced] Of Dr. Warburton's correction it is only necessary to observe, that it has produced a new word, which cannot be received without necessity.

When I thought the passage corrupted, it seemed to me not improbable that Shakespeare had written entranced heaviness, musing, abstracted, moping melancholy. But I know not why any great efforts should be made to change a word which has no uncommodious or unusual sense. We say of a man now, that he hugs his sorrows, and why might not Anthonio embrace heaviness.

II.ix.46 (155,2) [How much low peasantry would then be gleaned From the true seed of honour?] The meaning is, How much meanness would be found among the great, and how much greatness among the mean. But since men are always said to glean corn though they may pick chaff, the sentence had been more agreeable to the common manner of speech if it had been written thus,

_How much low peasantry would then be pick'd
  From the true seed of_honour? how much honour
  Glean'd from the chaff?_

II.ix.70 (157,4) [Take what wife you will to-bed] Perhaps the poet had forgotten that he who missed Portia was never to marry any woman.

III.i.47 (160,7) [a bankrupt, a prodigal] There is no need of alteration. There could be, in Shylock's opinion, no prodigality more culpable than such liberality as that by which a man exposes himself to ruin for his friend.

III.ii.21 (163,9) [And so though yours, not yours.—Prove it so] It may be more grammatically read,

And so though yours I'm not yours.

III.ii.54 (165,2) [With no less presence] With the same dignity of mien.

III.ii.73 (166,5) [So may the outward shows] He begins abruptly, the first part of the argument has passed in his mind.

III.ii.76 (166,6) [gracious voice] Pleasing; winning favour.

III.ii.112 (167,9) [In measure rain thy joy] The first quarto edition reads,

In measure range thy joy.

The folio and one of the quartos,

In measure raine thy joy.

I once believ'd Shakespeare meant,

In measure rein thy joy.

The words rain and rein were not in these times distinguished by regular orthography. There is no difficulty in the present reading, only where the copies vary some suspicion of error is always raised, (see 1765, I,437,1)

III.ii.125 (168,1) [Methinks, it should have power to steal both his, And leave itself unfurnish'd] I know not how unfinish'd has intruded without notice into the later editions, as the quartos and folio have unfurnished, which Sir Tho. Banner has received. Perhaps it

might be

And leave himself unfurnish'd.

III.ii.191 (170,4) [you can wish none from me] That is, none away from me; none that I shall lose, if you gain it.

III.v.70 (182,5) [how his words are suited!] I believe the meaning is: What a series or suite of words he has independent of meaning; how one word draws on another without relation to the matter.

IV,i.21 (184,6) [apparent] That is, seeming; not real.

IV.i.22 (184,7) [where] for whereas.

IV.i.29 (184,8) [Enough to press a royal merchant down] This epithet was in our poet's time more striking and better understood, because Gresham was then commonly dignified with the title of the royal merchant.

IV.i.42 (185,1) [I'll not answer that; But, say, it is my humour] [Cf: By saying] Dr. Warburton has mistaken the sense. The Jew being asked a question which the law does not require him to answer, stands upon his right, and refuses; but afterwards gratifies his own malignity by such answers as he knows will aggravate the pain of the enquirer. I will not answer, says he, as to a legal or serious question, but since you want an answer, will this serve you?

IV.i.56 (187,4)
[For affection,
Masters of passion, sway it to the mood
Of what it likes, or loaths]

As for affection, those that know how to operate upon the passions of men, rule it by making it operate in obedience to the notes which please or disgust it. (1773)

[Woollen bag pipe] As all the editors agree with complete uniformity in this reading, I can hardly forbear to imagine that they understood it. But I never saw a woollen bag-pipe, nor can well conceive it. I suppose the authour wrote wooden bag-pipe, meaning that the bag was of leather, and the pipe of wood.

IV.i.90 (189,5) [many a purchas'd slave] This argument considered as used to the particular persons, seems conclusive. I see not how Venetians or Englishmen, while they practise the purchase and sale of slaves, can much enforce or demand the law of doing to others as we would that they should do to us.

IV.i.105 (189,6) [Bellario, a learned doctor, Whom I have sent for] The doctor and the court are here somewhat unskilfully brought together. That the duke would, on such an occasion, consult a doctor of great reputation, is not unlikely, but how should this be forknown by Portia?

IV.i.214 (193,8) [malice bears down truth] Malice oppresses honesty, a true man in old language is an honest man. We now call the

jury good men and true.

IV.i.382 (198,8) [I am content] The terms proposed have been misunderstood. Antonio declares, that as the duke quits one half of the forfeiture, he is likewise content to abate his claim, and desires not the property but the use or produce only of the half, and that only for the Jew's life, unless we read, as perhaps is right, upon my death.

V.i.63 (204,3) [Such harmony is in immortal souls] [W: sounds] This passage is obscure. Immortal sounds is a harsh combination of words, yet Milton uses a parallel expression:

Spiritus & rapidos qui circinat igneus orbes,
 Nunc quoque sidereis intercinit ipse choreia
 Immortale melos, & inenarrabile curmen.

It is proper to exhibit the lines as they stand in the copies of the first, second, third, and fourth editions, without any variation, for a change has been silently made, by Rowe, and adopted by all the succeeding editors.

Such harmony is in immortal souls, But while this muddy vesture of decay Doth grosly close in it, we cannot hear it.

That the third is corrupt must be allowed, but it gives reason to suspect that the original was,

Doth grosly close it in.

Yet I know not whether from this any thing better can be produced than the received reading. Perhaps harmony is the power of perceiving harmony, as afterwards, Musick in the soul is the quality of being moved with concord of sweet sounds. This will somewhat explain the old copies, but the sentence is still imperfect; which might be completed by reading,

Such harmony is in th' immortal soul, But while this muddy vesture of decay Doth grosly close it in, we cannot hear it. (1773)

V.i.66 (205,4) [wake Diana with a hymn] Diana is the moon, who is in the next scene represented as sleeping.

V.i.99 (207,6) [Nothing is good, I see, without respect] Not absolutely good, but relatively, good as it is modified by circumstances.

V.i.129 (208,7) [Let me give light] There is scarcely any word with which Shakespeare delights to trifle as with light, in its various significations.

V.i.203 (210,2)

> [What man is there so much unreasonable,
> If you had pleas'd to have defended it
> With any terms of zeal, wanted the modesty
> To urge the thing held as a ceremony?]

This is a very licentious expression. The sense is, What man could have so little modesty or wanted modesty so much, as to urge the demand of a thing kept on an account in some sort religious. (see 1785, 1,476,7)

V.i.249 (212,4) [I once did lend my body for his wealth] For his advantage; to obtain his happiness. Wealth was, at that time, the term opposite to adversity, or calamity.

V.i.294 (213,5) [Lor. Fair ladies, you drop manna in the way Of starved people] [Shakespeare is not more exact in any thing, than in adapting his images with propriety to his speakers; of which he has here given an instance in making the young Jewess call good fortune, manna. Warburton.] The commentator should have remarked, that this speech is not, even in his own edition, the speech of the Jewess.

V.i.307 (214,6) [Exeunt omnes] It has been lately discovered, that this fable is taken from a story in the Pecorope of Ser Giovauni Fiorentino, a novellist, who wrote in 1378. The story has been published in English, and I have epitomised the translation. The translator is of opinion, that the choice of the caskets is borrowed from a tale of Boccace, which I have likewise abridged, though I believe that Shakespeare must have had some other novel in view.

(223) General Observation. Of The MERCHANT of VENICE the stile is even and easy, with few peculiarities of diction, or anomalies of construction. The comick part raises laughter, and the serious fixes expectation. The probability of either one or the other story cannot be maintained. The union of two actions in one event is in this drama eminently happy. Dryden was much pleased with his own address in connecting the two plots of his Spanish Friar, which yet, I believe, the critick will find excelled by this play.

AS YOU LIKE IT

I.i.3 (229,2) [As I remember, Adam, it was upon this fashion bequeathed me. By will, but a poor thousand crowns] There is, in my opinion, nothing but a point misplaced, and an omission of a word which every hearer can supply, and which therefore an abrupt and eager dialogue naturally excludes.

I read thus: As I remember, Adam, it was on this fashion bequeathed me. By will but a poor thousand crowns; and, as thou sayest, charged my brother on his blessing to breed me well. What is there in this difficult or obscure? The nominative my father is certainly left out, but so left out that the auditor inserts it, in spite of himself.

I.i.9 (230,3) [stays me here at home, unkept] [W: Stys] Sties is better than stays, and more likely to be Shakespeare's.

I.i.19 (230,4) [his countenance seems to take from me] [W: discountenance] There is no need of change, a countenance is either good or bad.

I.i.33 (231,5) [be better employ'd, and be nought a while] Warburton explained ["be nought a while" as "a mischief on you"] If be nought a while has the signification here given it, the reading may certainly stand; but till I learned its meaning from this note, I read,

Be better employed, and be naught a while.

In the same sense as we say, it is better to do mischief, than to do nothing.

I.i.59 (233,7) [I am no villain] The word villain is used by the elder brother, in its present meaning, for a worthless, wicked, or bloody man; by Orlando in its original signification, for a fellow of base extraction.

I.ii.34 (237,9) [mock the good housewife Fortune from her wheel] The wheel of Fortune is not the wheel of a housewife. Shakespeare has confounded Fortune, whose wheel only figures uncertainty and vicissitude, with the Destiny that spins the thread of life, though indeed not with a wheel.

I.ii.87 (239,1)

[Clo. One, that old Frederick your father loves. Cel. My father's love is enough to honour him]

[T. invoking the Dramatis Personae: Celia] Mr. Theobald seems not to know that the Dramatis Personae were first enumerated by Rowe.

I.ii.95 (239,2) [since the little wit that fools have, was silenc'd] Shakespeare probably alludes to the use of fools or jesters, who for some ages had been allowed in all courts an unbridled liberty of censure and mockery, and about this time began to be less tolerated.

I.ii.112 (240,3) [laid on with a trowel] I suppose the meaning is, that there is too heavy a mass of big words laid upon a slight subject.

I.ii.115 (240,4) [You amaze me, ladies] To amaze, here, is not to astonish or strike with wonder, but to perplex; to confuse; as, to put out of the intended narrative.

I.ii.131 (241,5) [With bills on their necks: Be it known unto all men by these presents] This conjecture is ingenious. Where meaning is so very thin, as in this vein of jocularity, it is hard to catch, and therefore I know not well what to determine; but I cannot see why Rosalind should suppose, that the competitors in a wrestling match carried bills on their shoulders, and I believe the whole conceit is in the poor resemblance of presence and presents.

I.ii.149 (241,6) [is there any else longs to see this broken musick in his sides?] [W: set] If any change were necessary, I should write, feel this broken musick, for see. But see is the colloquial term for perception or experiment. So we say every day, see if the water be hot; I will see which is the best time; she has tried, and sees that she cannot lift it. In this sense see may be here used. The sufferer can, with no propriety, be said to set the musick; neither is the allusion to the act of tuning an instrument, or pricking a tune, one of which must be meant by setting musick. Rosalind hints at a whimsical similitude between the series of ribs gradually shortening, and some musical instruments, and therefore calls broken ribs, broken musick.

I.ii.185 (243,8) [If you saw yourself with your eyes, or knew yourself with your judgment] [W: our eyes, and our judgment] I cannot find the absurdity of the present reading. If you were not blinded and intoxicated, says the princess, with the spirit of enterprise, if you could use your own eyes to see, or your own judgment to know yourself, the fear of your adventure would counsel you.

I.ii.195 (243,9) [I beseech you, punish me not with your hard thoughts, wherein I confess me much guilty] I should wish to read, I beseech you, punish me not with your hard thoughts. Therein I confess myself much guilty to deny so fair and excellent ladies any thing.

I.ii.257 (246,1) [one out of suits with Fortune] This seems an allusion to cards, where he that has no more cards to play of any particular sort is out of suit.

I.ii.275 (247,3) [the Duke's condition] The word condition means character, temper, disposition. So Anthonio the merchant of Venice, is called by his friend the best conditioned man.

I.iii.33 (249,5) [you should love his son dearly? By this kind of chase, I should hate him, for my father hated his father dearly] That is, by this way of following the argument. Dear is used by Shakespeare in a double sense, for beloved, and for hurtful, hated, baleful. Both senses are authorised, and both drawn from etymology, but properly beloved is dear, and hateful is dere. Rosalind uses dearly in the good, and Celia in the bad sense.

I.iii.83 (251,6) [And thou wilt show more bright, and seem more virtuous] [W: shine] The plain meaning of the old and true reading is, that when she was seen alone, she would be more noted.

I.iii.98 (251,7) [Rosalind lacks then the love Which teacheth thee that thou and I am one][W: which teacheth me] Either reading may stand. The sense of the established text is not remote or obscure. Where would be the absurdity of saying, You know not the law which teaches you to do right.

I.iii.119 (252,9) [curtle-ax]—curtle-axe. or cutlace. a broad sword.

II.i.13 (254,3)

[Which, like the toad, ugly and venomous
  Wears yet a precious jewel in his head]

It was the current opinion in Shakespeare's time, that in the head of an old toad was to be found a stone, or pearl, to which great virtues were ascribed. This stone has been often sought, but nothing has been found more than accidental or perhaps morbid indurations of the skull.

II.i.18 (254,4) [I would not change it] Mr. Upton, not without probability, gives these words to the Duke, and makes Amiens begin, Happy is your grace.

II.i.67 (256,6) [to cope him] To encounter him; to engage with him.

II.iii.8 (257,8) [The bony priser] So Milton, Giants of mighty bone.

II.iii.37 (258,9) [diverted blood] Blood turned out of the course of nature.

II.iii.60 (259,1)

[promotion; And, having that, do choak their service up Even with the having]

Even with the promotion gained by service is service extinguished.

II.iv.33 (261,4) [If thou remember'st not the slightest folly] I am inclined to believe that from this passage Suckling took the hint of his song.

Honest lover, whosoever,
  If in all thy love there ever
Were one wav'ring thought, thy flame
Were not even, still the same.
  Know this
  Thou lov'st amiss,
  And to love true
Thou must begin again and love anew, &c. (rev. 1778, III,297,4)

II.iv.48 (262,5) [batlet] The instrument with which washers beat their coarse cloaths.

II.iv.51 (262,6) [two cods] For cods it would be more like sense to read peas, which having the shape of pearls, resembled the common presents of lovers.

II.iv.55 (262,7) [so is all nature in love, mortal in folly] This expression I do not well understand. In the middle counties, mortal, from mort, a great quantity, is used as a particle of amplification; as mortal tall, mortal little. Of this sense I believe Shakespeare takes advantage to produce one of his darling equivocations. Thus the meaning will be, so is all nature in love abounding in folly.

II.iv.87 (263,8) [And in my voice most welcome shall ye be] In my voice, as far as I have a voice or vote, as far as I have power to bid you welcome.

II.v.56 (265,2) [Duc ad me] For ducdame sir T. Hammer, very acutely and judiciously, reads duc ad me. That is, bring him to me.

II.v.63 (266,3) [the first-born of Egypt] A proverbial expression for high-born persons. (1773)

II.vii.13 (267,4) [A motley fool!—a miserable world.'] [W: miserable varlet] I see no need of changing fool to varlet, nor, if a change were necessary, can I guess how it should certainly be known that varlet is the true word. A miserable world is a parenthetical exclamation, frequent among melancholy men, and natural to Jaques at the sight of a fool, or at the hearing of reflections on the fragility of life.

II.vii.44 (268,5) [only suit] Suit means petition. I believe, not dress.

II.vii.55 (269,7)

[If not,
The wise man's folly is anatomiz'd
Even by the squandring glances of the fool]

Unless men have the prudence not to appear touched with the sarcasm of a jester, they subject themselves to his power, and the wise man will have his folly anatomised, that is dissected and laid open by the squandring glances or random shots of a fool.

II.vii.66 (269,8) [As sensual as the brutish sting] Though the brutish sting is capable of a sense not inconvenient in this passage, yet as it is a harsh and unusual mode of speech, I should read the brutish sty.

II.vii.04 (270,9)

[The thorny point
Of bare distress hath ta'en from me the shew
Of smooth civility]

We might read torn with more elegance, but elegance alone will not justify alteration.

II.vii.125 (271,1) [And take upon command what help we have] It seems necessary to read, then take upon demand what help, &c. that is, ask for what we can supply, and have it.

II.vii.156 (272,3) [Full of wise saws and modern instances] I am in doubt whether modern is in this place used for absurd; the meaning seems to be, that the justice is full of old sayings and late examples.

II.vii.167 (273,5) [Set down your venerable burden] Is it not likely that Shakespeare had in his mind this line of the Metamorphoses?

—Patremque
Fert humeris, venerabile onus Cythereius heros.

II.vii.177 (274,5)

[Thy tooth is not so keen,
Because thou art not seen]

[W: art not sheen] I am afraid that no reader is satisfied with Dr. Warburton's emendation, however vigorously enforced; and it is indeed enforced with more art than truth. Sheen, *i.e.* smiling, shining. That sheen signifies shining, is easily proved, but when or where did it signify smiling? yet smiling gives the sense necessary in this place. Sir T. Banner's change is less uncouth, but too remote from the present text. For my part, I question whether the original line is not lost, and this substituted merely to fill up the measures and the rhyme. Yet even out of this line, by strong agitation may sense be elicited, and sense not unsuitable to the occasion. Thou winter wind, says the Duke, thy rudeness gives the less pain, as thou art not seen, as thou art an enemy that dost not brave us with thy presence, and whose unkindness is therefore not aggravated by insult.

II.vii.187 (275,6) [Tho' thou the waters warp] To warp was probably, in Shakespeare's time, a colloquial word, which conveyed no distant allusion to any thing else, physical or medicinal. To warp is to turn, and to turn is to change; when milk is changed by curdling, we now say, it is turned; when water is changed or turned by frost, Shakespeare says, it is curdled. To be warp'd is only to be changed from its natural state. (1773)

III.i.3 (276,7) [an absent argument] An argument is used for the contents of a book, thence Shakespeare considered it as meaning the subject, and then used it for subject in yet another sense.

III.i.18 (277,8) [Do this expediently] That is, expeditiously.

III.ii.2 (277,9) [thrice-crowned queen of night] Alluding to the triple character of Proserpine, Cynthia, and Diana, given by some mythologists to the same Goddess, and comprised in these memorial lines:

Terret, lustrat, agit, Proserpina, Luna, Diana, Ima, superna, feras, sceptro, fuljore, sagittis.

III.ii.10 (277,1) [unexpressive] for inexpressible.

III.ii.31 (278,2) [complain of good breeding] I am in doubt whether the custom of the language in Shakespeare's time did not authorise this mode of speech, and make complain of good breeding the same with complain of the want of good breeding. In the last line of the Merchant of Venice we find that to fear the keeping is to fear the not keeping.

III.ii.39 (279,5) [Truly, then art damn'd, like an ill-roasted egg, all on one side] Of this jest I do not fully comprehend the meaning.

III.ii.85 (281,1) [bawd to a bell-wether] Wether and ram had anciently the same meaning.

III.ii.135 (282,1)

[Tongues I'll hang on every tree,
That shall civil sayings show]

Civil is here used in the same sense as when we say civil wisdom or civil life, in opposition to a solitary state, or to the state of nature. This desert shall not appear unpeopled, for every tree shall teach the maxims or incidents of social life.

III.ii.149 (283,2) [Therefore heaven nature charg'd] From the picture of Apelles, or the accomplishments of Pandora.

[Greek: Aeanertu, oti pautei dlumpia
Dorou xdorau.—————-]

So before,
———————————-But thou
So perfect, and no peerless art created
Of ev'ry creature's beat. Tempest.

Perhaps from this passage Swift had his hint of Biddy Floyd.

III.ii.155 (283,3) [Atalanta's better part] I know not well what could be the better part of Atalanta here ascribed to Rosalind. Of the Atalanta most celebrated, and who therefore must be intended here where she has no epithet of discrimination, the better part seems to have been her heels, and the worse part was so bad that Rosalind would not thank her lover for the comparison. There is a more obscure Atalanta, a huntress and a heroine, but of her nothing bad is recorded, and therefore I know not which was the better part. Shakespeare was no despicable mythologist, yet he seems here to have mistaken some other character for that of Atalanta.

III.ii.156 (283,4) [Sad] is grave, sober, not light.

III.ii.160 (284,5) [the touches] The features; les traits.

III.ii.186 (284,6) [I was never so be-rhimed since Pythagoras's time, that I was an Irish rat] Rosalind is a very learned lady. She alludes to the Pythagorean doctrine, which teaches that souls transmigrate from one animal to another, and relates that in his time she was an Irish rat, and by some metrical charm was rhymed to death. The power of killing rats with rhymes Donne mentions in his Satires, and Temple in his Treatises. Dr. Gray has produced a similar passage from Randolph.

—My poets
Shall with a saytire steeped in vinegar
Rhyme then to death as they do rats in Ireland.

III.ii.206 (285,8) [One inch of delay more is a South-sea of discovery] This sentence is rightly noted by the commentator [W] as nonsense, but not so happily restored to sense. I read thus:

One inch of delay more is a South-sea. Discover, I pr'ythee; tell me who is it quickly;—When the transcriber had once made discovery from discover, I, he easily put an article after South-sea.

But it may be read with still less change, and with equal probability. Every inch of delay more is a South-sea discovery: Every delay, however short, is to me tedious and irksome as the longest voyage, as a voyage of discovery on the South-sea. How such voyages to the South-sea, on which the English had then first ventured, engaged the conversation of that time, may be easily imagined.

III.ii.238 (287,9) [Garagantna's mouth] Rosalind requires nine questions to be answered in one word. Celia tells her that a word of such magnitude is too big for any mouth but that of Garagantua the giant of Rabelais.

III.ii.290 (288,2) [but I answer you right painted cloth] Sir T. Hammer reads, I answer you right, in the stile of the _painted cloth. Something seems wanting, and I know not what can be proposed better. I answer you right painted cloth, may mean, I give you a true painted cloth answer; as we say, she talks right Billingsgate; that is, exactly such language as is used at Billingsgate. (1773)

III.ii.363 (291,3) [in-land man] Is used in this play for one civilised, in opposition to the rustick of the priest. So Orlando before—Yet am I in-land bred, and know some nurture.

III.ii.393 (291,4) [an unquestionable spirit] That is, a spirit not inquisitive, a mind indifferent to common objects, and negligent of common occurrences. Here Shakespeare has used a passive for an active mode of speech; so in a former scene, The Duke is too disputable for me, that is, too disputatious.

III.ii.439 (293,5) [to a living humour of madness] If this be the true reading we must by living understand lasting, or permanent, but I cannot forbear to think that some antithesis was intended which is now lost; perhaps the passage stood thus, I drove my suitor from a dying humour of love to a living humour of madness. Or rather thus, from a mad humour of love to a loving humour of madness, that is, from a madness that was love, to a love that was madness. This seems somewhat harsh and strained, but such modes of speech are not unusual in our poet; and this harshness was probably the cause of the corruption.

III.iii.21 (294,7) [and what they swear in poetry, may be said, as lovers, they do feign] This sentence seems perplexed and inconsequent, perhaps it were better read thus, What they swear as lovers they may be said to feign as poets.

III.iii.32 (295,8) [A material fool!] A fool with matter in bin; a fool stocked with notions.

III.iii.51 (295,1) [what tho?] What then.

III.iii.65 (296,2) [Sir Oliver] He that has taken his first degree at the university, is in the academical style called Dominus, and in common language was heretofore termed Sir. This was not always a word of contempt; the graduates assumed it in their own writings; so Trevisa the historian writes himself Syr John de Trevisa.

III.iii.101 (297,4) [Not, O sweet Oliver] Of this speech, as it now appears, I can make nothing, and think nothing can be made. In the same breath he calls his mistress to be married, and sends away the man that should marry them. Dr. Warburton has very happily observed, that O sweet Oliver is a quotation from an old song; I believe there are two quotations put in opposition to each other. For wind I read wend, the old word for go. Perhaps the whole passage may be regulated thus,

Clo. I am not in the mind. but it were better for me to be married of him than of another, for he is not like to marry me well, and not being well married, it will be a good excuse for me hereafter to leave my wife—Come, sweet Audrey, we must be married, or we must live in bawdry.

Jaq. Go then with me, and let me counsel thee. [they whisper.]

Clo. _Farewel, good sir Oliver, not _O sweet Oliver, O brave
Oliver, leave Be not behind thee,—but

Wend away
  Begone, I say,
  I will not to wedding with thee to-day.

Of this conjecture the reader may take as much as shall appear necessary to the sense, or conducive to the humour. I have received all but the additional words. The song seems to be complete without them. (1773)

III.iv.11 (298, 5) [I' faith, his hair is of a good colour] There is much of nature in this petty perverseness of Rosalind; she finds faults in her lover, in hope to be contradicted, and when Celia in sportive malice too readily seconds her accusations, she contradicts herself rather than suffer her favourite to want a vindication.

III.v.5 (301, 1) [Will you sterner be Than he that dies and lives by bloody drops?] [W: deals and lives] [Hammer: lives and thrives] Either Dr. Warburton's emendation, except that the word deals, wants its proper construction, or that of sir T. Hammer may serve the purpose; but I believe they have fixed corruption upon the wrong word, and should rather read,

Than he that dies his lips by bloody drops?

Will you speak with more sternness than the executioner, whose lips are used to be sprinkled with blood? The mention of drops implies some part that must be sprinkled rather than dipped.

III. v. 23 (303, 2) [The cicatrice and capable impressure] Cicatrice is here not very properly used; it is the scar of a wound. Capable impressure arrows mark.

III. v. 29 (303, 3) [power of fancy] Fancy is here used for love, as before in Midsummer Night's Dream.

III. v. 35 (304, 4) [Who might be your mother] It is common for the poets to express cruelty by saying, of those who commit it, that they were born of rocks, or suckled by tigresses.

III. v. 48 (305, 8) [That can entame ay spirits to your worship]
[W: entraine] The common reading seems unexceptionable.

III. v. 62 (305, 9) [Foal is most foul, being foul to be a scoffer] [W: being found] The sense of the received reading is not fairly represented; it is, The ugly seem most ugly, when, though ugly, they are scoffers.

III.v.78 (306,2) [Though all the world could see, None could be so abus'd in sight, as he] Though all mankind could look on you, none could be so deceived as to think you beautiful but he.

IV.i.37 (309,3) [swam in a gondola] That is, been at Venice, the sweat at that tine of all licentiousness, where the young English gentlemen waited their fortunes, debased their morals, and sometimes lost their religion.

The fashion of travelling, which prevailed very much in our author's time, was considered by the wiser men as one of the principal causes of corrupt manners. It was therefore gravely censored by Aschaa in his Schoolmaster, and by bishop Hall in his Quo Vadis; and is here, and in other passages, ridiculed by Shakespeare.

IV.i.157 (312,6) [and that when you are inclin'd to sleep] [W: to weep] I know not why we should read to weep. I believe most men would be more angry to have their sleep hindered than their grief interrupted.

IV.i.168 (313,8) [Wit, whither wilt?] This must be some allusion to a story well known at that time, though not perhaps irretrievable.

IV.i.177 (313,9) [make her fault her husband's occasion] That is, represent her fault as occasioned by her husband. Sir T. Banner reads, her husband's accusation.

IV.i.195 (314,1) [I will think you the most pathetical break-promise] [W: atheistical] I do not see but that pathetical may stand, which seems to afford as much sense and as much humour as atheistical.

IV.ii.14 (315,2) [Take thou no scorn] [T: In former editions: Then sing him home, the rest shall bear his burden. This is an admirable instance of the sagacity of our preceding editors, to say nothing worse. One should expect, when they were poets, they would at least have taken care of the rhimes, and not foisted in what has nothing to answer it. Now, where is the rhime to, the rest shall bear this burden? Or, to ask another question, where is the sense of it? Does the poet mean, that He, that kill'd the deer, shall be sung home, and the rest shall bear the deer on their backs? This is laying a burden on the poet, that we mist help him to throw off. In short, the mystery of the whole is, that a marginal note is wisely thrust into the text: the song being design'd to be sung by a single voice, and the stanzas to close with a burden to be sung by the whole company.] This note I have given as a specimen of Mr. Theobald's jocularity, and the eloquence with which he recommends his emendations.

IV.iii (316,4) [Enter Rosalind and Celia] The foregoing noisy scene was introduced only to fill up an interval, which is to represent two hours. This contraction of the time we might impute to poor Rosalind's impatience, but that a few minutes after we find Orlando sending his excuse. I do not see that by any probable division of the acts this absurdity can be obviated.

IV.iii.48 (318,3) [That could do no vengeance to me] Vengeance is used for mischief.

IV.iii.59 (318,4) [youth and kind] Kind is the old word for nature.

IV.iii.101 (319,5) [Within an hour] We must read, within two hours.

IV.iii.160 (321,6) [cousin—Ganymed!] Celia in her first fright forgets Rosalind's character and disguise, and calls out cousin, then recollects herself, and says Ganymed.

V.ii.21 (325,9) [And you, fair sister] I know not why Oliver should call Rosalind sister. He takes her yet to be a man. I suppose we should read, and you, and your fair sister.

V.ii.45 (326,1) [Clubs cannot part them] Alluding to the way of parting dogs in wrath.

V.ii.74 (327,2) [human as she is] That is, not a phantom, but the real Rosalind, without any of the danger generally conceived to attend the rites of incantation.

V.iii.17 (329,3) [It was a lover and his lass] The stanzas of this song are in all the editions evidently transposed: as I have regulated them, that which in the former copies was the second stanza is now the last.

The same transposition of these stanzas is made by Dr. Thirlby, in a copy containing some notes on the margin, which I have perused by the favour of Sir Edward Walpole. (see 1765, II,97,3)

V.iii.36 (330,4) [the note was very untuneable] [T: untimeable] This emendation is received. I think very undeservedly, by Dr. Warburton.

V.iv.4 (331,5) [As those that fear, they hope, and know they fear] [W: their hap, and know their] The deprivation of this line is evident, but I do not think the learned commentator's emendation very happy. I read thus,

As those that fear with hope, and hope with fear.

Or thus, with less alteration,

As those that fear, they hope, and now they fear.

V.iv.36 (332,6) [Here comes a pair of very strange beasts] [W: unclean beasts] Strange beasts are only what we call odd animals. There is no need of any alteration.

V.iv.51 (333,7) [found the quarrel was upon the seventh cause] So all the copies; but it is apparent from the sequel that we must read, the quarrel was not upon the seventh cause.

V.iv.56 (333,8) [I desire you of the like] [W: of you] I have not admitted the alteration, because there are other examples of this mode of expression. (1773)

V.iv.59 (333,9) [according as marraige binds, and blood breaks] I cannot discover what has here puzzled the commentator [W]: to swear according as marriage binds, ii to take the oath enjoin'd in the ceremonial of marriage.

V.iv.68 (334,1) [dulcet diseases] This I do not understand. For diseases it is easy to read discourses: but, perhaps the fault may lie deeper.

V.iv.114 (336,4) [Enter Hymen] Rosalind is imagined by the rest of the company to be brought by enchantment, and is therefore introduced by a supposed aerial being in the character of Hymen.

V.iv.125 (336,5) [If there be truth in sight] The answer of Phebe makes it probable that Orlando says, if there be truth in shape: that is, if a form may be trusted; if one cannot usurp the form of another.

V.iv.136 (337,6) [If truth holds true contents] That is, if there be truth in truth, unless truth fails of veracity.

V.iv.147 (337,7) [Wedding is great Juno's crown] Catullus, addressing himself to Hymen, has this stanza:

Quae tuis careat sacris,
Non queat dare praesides
Terra finibus: at queat
Te volente. Quis huic deo
Compararier ausit? (1773)

Epilogue.7 (340,5) [What a case am I in then] Here seems to be a chasm, or some other depravation, which destroys the sentiment here intended. The reasoning probably stood thus, Good wine needs no bush, good plays need no epilogue, but bad wine requires a good bush, and a bad play a good epilogue. What case am I in then? To restore the words is impossible; all that can be done without copies is, to note the fault.

Epilogue.10 (340,1) [furnish'd like a beggar] That is dressed: so before, he was furnished like a huntsman.

Epilogue.13 (340,2) [I charge you, O women, for the love you bear to men, to like as much of this Play as pleases them: and I charge you, O men, for the love you bear to women——that between you and the women] [W: pleases them… pleases them] The words you and of written as was the custom in that time, were in manuscript scarcely distinguishable. The emendation is very judicious and probable.

(341,4) General Observation. Of this play the fable is wild and pleasing. I know not how the ladies will approve the facility with which both Rosalind and Celia give away their hearts. To Celia much may be forgiven for the heroism of her friendship. The character of Jaqaes is natural and well preferred. The comick dialogue is very sprightly, with less mixture of low buffoonery than in some other plays; and the graver part is elegant and harmonious. By hastening to the end of his work, Shakespeare suppressed the dialogue between the usurper and the hermit, and lost an opportunity of exhibiting a moral lesson in which he might have found matter worthy of his highest powers.

THE TAMING OF THE SHREW

Induction.i.l (346,1) [I'll pheeze you] To pheeze or fease. is to separate a twist into single threads. In the figurative sense it may well enough be taken, like teaze or toze, for to harrass. to plague. Perhaps I'll pheeze you, may be equivalent to I'll comb your head, a phrase vulgarly used by persons of Sly's character on like occasions. The following explanation of the word is given by Sir Tho. Sayth in his book de Sermone Anglico, printed by Robert Stephens, 4vo. To feize. means in fila diducere. (see 1765, III,[3],1)

Induction.i.3 (347,2) [no rogues] That is vagrants, no mean fellows, but gentlemen.

Induction.i.17 (348,7) [Brach Merriman, the poor cur is imboat] Sir T. Banner reads, Leech Merriman. that is, apply some remedies to Merriman, the poor cur has his joints swelled. Perhaps we might read, bathe Merriman, which is I believe the common practice of huntsmen, but the present reading may stand:

—tender well my hounds: Brach—Merriman—the poor cur is imboat.

Induction.i.64 (351,8) [And when he says he is,—say that he dreams] [steevens:he's poor,—say] If any thing should be inserted, it may be done thus,

"And when he says he's Sly, say that he dreams."

The likeness in writing of Sly and say produced the omission.(1773)

Induction.i.67 (352,9)

[It will be pastime excellent,
If it be husbanded with modesty]

By modesty is meant moderation, without suffering our merriment to break into an excess.

Induction.i.82 (352,1) [to accept our duty] It was in those times the custom of players to travel in companies, and offer their service at great houses.

Induction.i.101 (353,4) [property] in the language of a playhouse, is every implement necessary to the exhibition.

Induction.i.125 (355,7) [To rain a shower of commanded toars,
An onion will do well for such a shift]

It is not unlikely that the onion was an expedient used by the actors of interludes.

Induction.ii.89 (359,8) [Leet] As the Court leet. or courts of the manor.

I.i.9 (362,2) [ingenious studies] I rather think it was written ingenuous studies, but of this and a thousand such observations there is little certainty.

I.i.18 (363,4) [Virtue, and that part of philosophy Will I apply] Sir Thomas Hammer, and after him Dr. Warburton, read to virtues but formerly ply and apply were indifferently used, as to ply or apply his studies.

I.i.78 (365,7) [A pretty peat!] Peat or pet is a word of endearment from petit, little, as if it meant pretty little thing.

I.i.85 (365,8) [will you be so strange?] That is, so odd, so different from others in your conduct.

I.i.97 (366,9) [cunning men] Cunning had not yet lost its original signification of knowing, learned, as nay be observed in the translations of the Bible.

I.i.167 (368,2) [Redime te captum quasi queas minimi] Our author had this line from Lilly, which I mention, that it may not be brought as an argument of his learning.

I.i.208 (369,3) [port] Pert, is figure, show, appearance.

I.ii.52 (372,5) [Where small experience grows. But, in a few] Why this should seem nonsense, I cannot perceive. In few words it means the same as in short.

I.ii.68 (373,6) [As wealth is burthen of my wooing dance] The burthen of a dance is an expression which I have never heard; the burthen of his wooing song had been more proper.

I.ii.72 (373,8) [Affection's edge in me] Surely the sense of the present reading is too obvious to be missed or mistaken. Petruchio says, that, if a girl has money enough, no bad qualities of mind or body will remove affection's edge; *i.e.* hinder him from liking her.

I.ii.112 (375,1) [an' he begin once, he'll rail—In his rope-tricks] This is obscure. Sir Thomas Hammer reads, he'll rail in his rhetorick; I'll tell you, &c. Rhetorick agrees very well with figure in the succeeding part of the speech, yet I am inclined to believe that rope-tricks is the true word.

I.ii.115 (375,2) [that she shall have no more eyes to see withal than a cat] It may mean, that he shall swell up her eyes with blows, till she shall seem to peep with a contracted pupil like a cat in the light. (1773)

I.ii.276 (381,9) [Please ye, we may contrive this afternoon] The word is used in the same sense of spending or wearing out in the Palace of Pleasure.

II.1.17 (382,2) [You will have Gremio, to keep you fair] I wish to read, To keep you fine. But either word may serve.

II.i.26 (388,3) [hilding] The word hildlng or hinderling—a low wretch; it is applied to Catharine for the coarseness of her behaviour.

II.i.209 (389,7) [Ay, for a turtle; as he takes a buzzard] Perhaps we may read better, Ay, for a turtle, and he take a buzzard. That is, he may take me for a turtle, and he shall find me a hawk.

II.i.310 (393,9) [kill on kiss She vy's so fast] I know not that the word vie has any construction that will suit this place; we may easily read,

—kiss on kiss She ply'd so fast.

II.i.340 (394,1)

[Tra. Grey-beard! thy love doth freeze.
Ore. But thine doth fry]

Old Gremio's notions are confirmed by Shadwell:

The fire of love in youthful blood.
Like what is kindled in brush-wood.
But for a moment burns—
But when crept into aged reins,
It slowly burns, and long remains,
It glows, and with a sullen heat.
Like fire in logs, it burns, and warms us long;
And though the flame be not so great,
Yet is the heat as strong.

II.1.407 (397,4) [Yet have I fac'd it with a card of ten] [W. quoted Jonson for "a hart of ten"] If the word hart be right, I do not see any use of the latter quotation.

II.1.413 (398,5)[Here the former editors add, Sly. Sim, when will the fool come again? Steevens.] The character of the fool has not been introduced in this drama, therefore I believe that the word again should be omitted, and that Sly asks, When will the fool come? the fool being the favourite of the vulgar, or, as we now phrase it, of the upper gallery, was naturally expected in every interlude.

III.1.37 (400,6) [pantaloon] the old cully in Italian farces.

III.ii.10 (403,1) [full of spleen] That is, full of humour, caprice; and inconstancy.

III.ii.45 (404,3) [a pair of boots that have been candle—eases; one buckled, another lac'd; an old rusty sword ta'en out of the town armory, with a broken hilt, and chapeless, with two broken points] Bow a sword should have two broken points, I cannot tell. There is, I think, a transposition caused by the seeming relation of point to sword. I read, a pair of boots, one buckled, another

laced with two broken points; an old rusty sword—with a broken hilt, and chapeless.

III.ii.109 (406,7) [to digress] to deviate from any promise.

IV.i.3 (412,9) [was ever man so ray'd?] That is, was ever man so mark'd with lashes.

IV.i.93 (416,7) [garters of an indifferent knit] What is the sense of this I know not, unless it means, that their garters should be fellows; indifferent, or not different, one from the other.

IV.i.139 (417,8) [no link, to colour Peter's hat] Link, I believe, is the name with what we now call lamp-black.

IV.i.145 (418,9) [Soud, soud] That is, sweet, sweet. Soot, and sometimes sooth, is sweet. So in Milton, to sing soothly, is, to sing sweetly.

IV.i.196 (420,3) [to man my haggard] A haggard is a wild hawk; to man a hawk is to tame her.

IV.iii.43 (428,8) [And all my pains is sorted to no proof] And all my labour has ended in nothing, or proved nothing. We tried an experiment, but it sorted not. Bacon.

IV.iii.56 (428,9) [With silken coats, and caps, and golden rings, With ruffs, and cuffs, and fardingals, and things] Though things is a poor word, yet I have no better, and perhaps the authour had not another that would rhyme. I once thought to transpose the words rings and things, but it would make little improvement.

IV.iii.91 (430,2) [censer] in barber's shops, are now disused, but they may easily be imagined to have been vessels which, for the emission of the smoke, were cut with great number and varieties of interstices.

IV.iii.107 (430,3) [thou thimble] The taylor's trade having an appearance of effeminacy, has always been, among the rugged English, liable to sarcasms and contempt.

IV.iii.140 (431,3) [a small compass'd cape] A compass'd cape is a round cape. To compass is to come round. (1773)

IV.iv (434,5) I cannot but think that the direction about the Tinker, who is always introduced at the end of the acts, together with the change of the scone, and the proportion of each act to the rest, make it probable that the fifth act begins here.

IV.iv.48 (436,7) [Where then do you know best, Be we affied] This seems to be wrong. We may read more commodiously, ——Where then you do know best Be we affied;——-

Or thus, which I think is right, Where then do you trow best, We be affied; ———

V.i.70 (443,2) [a copatain hat!] is, I believe, a hat with a conical crown, such as was anciently worn by well-dressed men.

V.ii.54 (448,5) [A good swift simile] besides the original sense of speedy in motion, signified witty, quick-witted. So in As You Like It, the Duke says of the Clown, He is very swift and sententious. Quick is now used in almost the same sense as nimble was in the age after that of our author. Heylin says of Hales, that he had known Laud for a nimble, disputant.

V.ii.186 (453,7) [tho' you hit the white] To hit the white is a phrase borrowed from archery: the mark was commonly white. Here it alludes to the name Bianca, or white.

(454) General Observation. From this play the Tatler formed a story, [Johnson here copies out the Tatler story.] It cannot but seen strange that Shakespeare should be so little known to the author of the Tatler, that he should suffer this story to be obtruded upon him; or so little known to the publick, that he could hope to make it pass upon his readers as a real narrative of a transaction in

Lincolnshire; yet it is apparent, that he was deceived, or intended to deceive, that he knew not himself whence the story was taken, or hoped that he might rob so obscure a writer without detection.

Of this play the two plots are so well united, that they can hardly be called two without injury to the art with which they are interwoven. The attention is entertained with all the variety of a double plot, yet is not distracted by unconnected incidents.

The part between Catharine and Petruchio is eminently spritely and diverting. At the marriage of Bianca the arrival of the real father, perhaps, produces more perplexity than pleasure. The whole play is very popular and diverting, (see 1765, III,97,5)

Vol. IV

ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

I.i.1 (3,2) [In delivering my son from me] [W: dissevering] Of this change I see no need: the present reading is clear, and, perhaps, as proper as that which the great commentator would substitute; for the king dissevers her son from her, she only delivers him.

I.i.5 (4,3) [to whom I am now in ward] Under his particular care, as my guardian, till I come to age. It is now almost forgotten in England that the heirs of great fortunes were the king's wards. Whether the same practice prevailed in France, it is of no great use to enquire, for Shakespeare gives to all nations the manners of England.

I. i.19 (4,5) [This young gentlewoman had a father, (O, that had! how sad a passage 'tis!)] [W: presage 'tis] This emendation is ingenious, perhaps preferable to the present reading, yet since passage may be fairly enough explained, I have left it in the text. Passage is anything that passes, so we now say, a passage of an authour. and we said about a century ago, the passages of a reign. When the countess mentions Helena's loss of a father, she recollects her own loss of a husband, and stops to observe how heavily that word had passes through her mind.

I.i.48 (6,6) [for where an unclean mind carries virtuous qualities, there commendations go with pity, they are virtues and traitors too; in her they are the better for their simpleness; she derives her honesty, and atchieves her goodness] [W: her simpleness] This is likewise a plausible but unnecessary alteration. Her virtues are the better for their simpleness, that is, her excellencies are the better because they are artless and open, without fraud, without design. The learned commentator has well explained virtues. but has not, I think, reached the force of the word traitors, and therefore has not shown the full extent of Shakespeare's masterly observation. Virtues in an unclean mind are virtues and traitors too. Estimable and useful qualities, joined with evil disposition, give that evil disposition power over others, who, by admiring the virtue, are betrayed to the malevolence. The Tatler mentioning the sharpers of his time, observes, that some of them are men of such elegance and knowledge, that a young man who falls into their way is betrayed as much by his judgment as his passions.

I.i.86 (7,8) [If the living be enemy to the grief, the excess makes it soon mortal] [W: be not enemy] This emendation I had once admitted into the text, but restored the old reading, because I think it capable of an easy explication. Lafeu says, excessive grief is the enemy of the living: the countess replies, If the living be an enemy to grief, the excess soon makes it mortal: that is, if the living do not indulge grief, grief destroys itself by its own excess. By the word mortal I understand that which dies, and Dr. Warburton, that which destroys. I think that my interpretation gives a sentence more acute and more refined. Let the reader judge.

I.i.78 (8,9) [That thee may furnish] That may help thee with more and better qualifications.

I.i.84 (8,1) [The best wishes that can beforg'd in your thoughts, be servants to you!] That is, may you be mistress of your wishes, and have power to bring then to effect.

I.i.91 (8,2) [And these great tears grace his remembrance more] The tears which the king and countess shed for him.

I.i.99 (8,3) [In his bright radiance and collateral light Must I be comforted, not in his sphere] I cannot be united with him and move in the same sphere, but must be comforted at a distance by the radiance that shoots on all sides from him.

I.i.107 (9,4) [Of every line and trick of his sweet favour!] So in King John; he hath a trick of Coeur de Lion's face. Trick seen to be some peculiarity of look or feature.

I.i.122 (9,6) [you have some stain of soldier in you] [W: "Stain for colour."] Stain rather for what we now say tincture, some qualities, at least superficial, of a soldier. (1773)

I.i.150 (10,8) [He, that hangs himself, is a virgin] [W: As he…so is] I believe most readers Will spare both the emendations, which I do not think much worth a claim or a contest. The old reading is more spritely and equally just.

I.i.165 (11,1) [Marry, ill, to like him that ne'er it likes] Parolles, in answer to the question, how one shall lose virginity to her own liking? plays upon the word liking, and says, she must do ill, for virginity, to be so lost, must like him that likes not virginity.

I.i.178-191 (12,5) [Not my virginity yet] This whole speech is abrupt, unconnected, and obscure. Dr. Warburton thinks much of it suppofititious. I would be glad to think so of the whole, for a commentator naturally wishes to reject what he cannot understand. Something, which should connect Helena's words with those of Parolles, seems to be wanting. Hammer has made a fair attempt by reading,

Not my virginity yet—You're for the court, There shall your master, &c.

Some such clause has, I think, dropped out, but still the first words want connection. Perhaps Parolles, going away after his harangue, said, will you any thing with me? to which Helen may reply—I know not what to do with the passage.

I.i.184 (13,7) [a traitress] It seems that traitress was in that age a term of endearment, for when Lafeu introduces Helena to the king, he says, You like a traytor, but such traytors his majesty does not much fear.

I.i.199 (14,8) [And shew what we alone must think] And shew by realities what we now must only think.

I.i.218 (14,9) [is a virtue of a good wing, and I like the wear well] [W: good ming] This conjecture I could wish to see better proved. This common word ming I have never found. The first edition of this play exhibits wing without a capital: yet, I confess, that a virtue of good wing is an expression that I cannot understand, unless by a metaphor taken from falconry, it may mean, a virtue that will fly high, and in the stile of Hotspur, Pluck honour from the moon.

I.i.235 (15,1) [What power is it, which mounts my love so high;
That makes me see, and cannot feed mine eye?]

She means, by what influence is my love directed to a person so much above me. [why am I made to discern excellence, sad left to long after it, without the food of hope.]

I.i.237 (15,2)

[The mightiest space in fortune, nature brings
To join like likes, and kiss, like native things.
Impossible be strange attempts, to those
That weigh their pain in sense; and do suppose,
What hath been]

All these four lines are obscure, and, I believe, corrupt. I shall propose an emendation, which those who can explain the present reading, are at liberty to reject.

Through mightiest space in fortune nature brings
Likes to join likes, and kiss, like native things.

That is, nature brings like qualities and dispositions to meet through any distance that fortune may have set between them; she joins them and makes them kiss like things born together.

The next lines I read with Hammer.

Impossible be strange attempts to those That weigh their pains in sense, and do suppose What ha'n't been, cannot be.

New attempts seen impossible to those who estimate their labour or enterprises by sense, and believe that nothing can be but what they see before them.

I.ii.32 (17,3)

[He had the wit, which I can well observe
To-day in our young lords, but they may jest,
Till their own scorn return to them; unnoted,
Ere they can hide their levity in honour]

I believe honour is not dignity of birth or rank, but acquired reputation: Your father, says the king, had the same airy flights of satirical wit-with the young lords of the present time, but they do not what he did, hide their unnoted levity in honour, cover petty faults with great merit.

This is an excellent observation. Jocose follies, and slight offences, are only allowed by mankind in him that overpowers them by great qualities.

I.ii.36 (18,4)

[So like a courtier, contempt nor bitterness
Were in his pride or sharpness; if they were,
His equal had awak'd them]

[W: no contempt or] The original edition reads the first line thus,

So like a courtier, contempt nor bitterness.

The sense is the same. Nor was used without reduplication. So in Measure for Measure,

More nor less to others paying, Than by self-offences weighing.

The old text needs to be explained. He was so like a courtier, that there was in his dignity of manner nothing contemptuous, and

I.ii.41 (19, 5) [His tongue obey'd his hand] We should read,

His tongue obeyed the hand.

That is, the hand of his honour's clock, shewing the true minute when exceptions bad him speak.

I.ii.44 (19, 7) [Making then proud of his humility, In their poor praise he humbled] [W: proud; and his] Every man has seen the mean too often proud of the humility of the great, and perhaps the great may sometimes be humbled in the praises of the mean, of those who commend them without conviction or discernment: this, however is not so common; the mean are found more frequently than the great.

I.ii.50 (19, 8)

[So in approof lives not his epitaph,
As in your royal speech]

[W: Epitaph for character.] I should wish to read,

Approof so lives not in his epitaph, As in your royal speech.

Approof is approbation. If I should allow Dr. Warburton's interpretation of Epitaph, which is more than can be reasonably expected, I can yet find no sense in the present reading.

I.ii.61 (20, 9) [whose judgments are meer fathers of their garments] Who have no other use of their faculties, than to invent new modes of dress.

I.iii (21, 1) [Enter Countess, Steward, and Clown] A Clown in Shakespeare is commonly taken for a licensed jester, or domestick fool. We are not to wonder that we find this character often in his plays, since fools were, at that time, maintained in all great families, to keep up merriment in the house. In the picture of Sir Thomas More's family, by Hans Holbein, the only servant represented is Patison the fool. This is a proof of the familiarity to which they were admitted, not by the great only, but the wise.

In some plays, a servant, or a rustic, of remarkable petulance and freedom of speech, is likewise called a clown.

I.iii.3 (21, 2) [to even your content] To act up to your desires.

I.iii.45 (23, 4) [You are shallow, madam, in great friends; for the knaves come to do that for me, which I am a weary of] [Tyrwhitt: my great] The meaning seems to be, you are not deeply skilled in the character of offices of great friends. (1773)

I.iii.96 (26, 1) [Clo. That man should be at woman's command, and yet no hurt done!—Tho' honesty be no puritan, yet it will do no hurt; it will wear the surplice of humility over the black gown of a big heart] The clown's answer is obscure. His lady bids him do as he is commanded. He answers with the licentious petulance of his character, that if a man does as a woman commands, it is likely he will do amiss; that he does not amiss, being at the command of a woman, he makes the effect, not of his lady's goodness, but of his own honesty, which, though not very nice or puritanical, will do no hurt; and will not only do no hurt, but, unlike the puritans, will comply with the injunctions of superiors, and wear the surplice of humility over the black gown of a big heart; will obey commands, though not much pleased with a state of subjection.

Here is an allusion, violently enough forced in, to satirize the obstinacy with which the puritans refused the use of the ecclesiastical habits, which was, at that time, one principal cause of the breach of union, and, perhaps, to insinuate, that the modest purity of the surplice was sometimes a cover for pride.

I.iii.140 (28,3) [By our remembrances] That is, according to our recollection. So we say, he is old by my reckoning.

I.iii.169 (29,5)

[—or, were you both our mothers I care no more for, than I do for heaven. So I were not his sister]

[W: I can no more fear, than I do fear heav'n.] I do not much yield to this emendation; yet I have not been able to please myself with any thing to which even my own partiality can give the preference.

Sir Thomas Banner reads,

Or were you both our mothers. I cannot ask for more than that of heaven. So I were not his sister; can be no other Way I your daughter, but he must be my brother?

I.iii.171 (30,6) [can't no other, But, I your daughter, he must be my brother?] The meaning is obscur'd by the elliptical diction. Can it be no other way, but if I be your daughter he must be my brother?

I.iii.178 (30,8) [Your salt tears' head] The force, the fountain of your tears, the cause of your grief.

I.iii.208 (31,9) [captious and intenible sieve] The word captious I never found in this sense; yet I cannot tell what to substitute, unless carious, for rotten, which yet is a word more likely to have been mistaken by the copyers than used by the author.

I.iii.232 (32,2)

[As notes, whose faculties inclusive were
Receipts in which greater virtues were _inclosed]

Do not throw from you; you, my lord,, farewell; Share the advice betwixt you; if both gain all, The gift doth stretch itself as 'tis receiv'd, And is enough for both.

The first edition, from which the passage is restored, was sufficiently clear; yet it is plain, that the latter editors preferred a reading which they did not understand.

II.i.12 (35,8)

[let higher Italy
(Those 'hated, that inherit but the fall
Of the last monarchy) [see, that you come
Not to woo honour, but to wed it]

[Hammer: Those bastards that inherit] Dr. Warburton's observation is learned, but rather too subtle; Sir Tho. Hanmer's alteration is merely arbitrary. The passage is confessedly obscure, and therefore I may offer another explanation. I am of opinion that the epithet higher is to be understood of situation rather than of dignity. The sense may then be this,Let upper Italy, where you are to exercise your valour, see that you come to gain honour, to the abatement, that is, to the disgrace and depression of those that have now lost their ancient military fame, and inherit but the fall of the last monarchy. To abate is used by Shakespeare in the original sense of abatre, to depress, to sink, to deject, to subdue. So in Coriolanus,

—'till ignorance deliver you.
As moat abated captives to some nation
That won you without blows.
And bated is used in a kindred sense in the Jew of Venice.

—_in a bondman's key With bated breath and whisp'ring humbleness_.

The word has still the same meaning in the language of the law.

II.i.21 (37,9) [Beware of being captives, Before you serve] The word serve is equivocal; the sense is, Be not captives before you serve in the war. Be not captives before you are soldiers.

II.i.36 (37,1) [I grow to you, and our parting is a tortur'd body] I read thus, Our parting is the parting of a tortured body. Our parting is as the disruption of limbs torn from each other. Repetition of a word is often the cause of mistakes, the eye glances on the wrong word, and the intermediate part of the sentence is omitted.

II.i.54 (38,3) [they wear themselves in the cap of the time, there, do muster true gait] [W: to muster] I think this amendation cannot be said to give much light to the obscurity of the passage. Perhaps it might be read thus, They do muster with the true gaite. that is, they have the true military step. Every man has observed something peculiar in the strut of a soldier, (rev. 1778, IV,35,8)

II.i.70 (39,4) [across] This word, as has been already observed, is used when any pass of wit miscarries.

II.i.74 (39,5) [Yes, but you will, my noble grapes, as if] These words,my noble grapes, seem to Dr. Warburton and Sir T. Hammer, to stand so much in the way, that they have silently omitted them. They may be indeed rejected without great loss, but I believe they are Shakespeare's words. You will eat, says Lafen, no grapes. Yes, but you will eat such noble grapes as I bring you, if you could reach them.

II.i. 100 (41,8) [I am Cressid's uncle] I am like Pandarus. See Troilus and Cressida. (see 1765, III,310,2)

II.i.114 (41,9) [wherein the honour Of my dear father's gift stands chief in power] Perhaps we may better read,— wherein the power Of my dear father's gift stands chief in honour,

II.i.144 (42,1) [When miracles have by the greatest been deny'd] I do not see the import or connection of this line. As the next line stands without a correspondent rhyme, I suspect that something has been lost.

II.i.159 (43,2) [Myself against the level of mine aim] I rather think that she means to say, I am not an impostor that proclaim one thing and design another, that proclaim a cure and aim at a fraud: I think what I speak.

II.i.174 (43,3)

[a divulged shame
Traduc'd by odious ballds; my maiden's name
Sear'd otherwise; no worse of worst extended,
With vilest torture let my life be ended]

This passage is apparently corrupt, and how shall it be rectified? I have no great hope of success, but something must be tried. I read the whole thus,

King. What darest thou venture?
Hal. Tax of impudence.
A strumpet's boldness; a divulged shame,
Traduc'd by odious ballads my maiden name;
Sear'd otherwise, to worst of worst extended;
With vilest torture let my life be ended.

When this alteration first came into my mind, I supposed Helen to mean thus, First, I venture what is dearest to me, my maiden reputation; but if your distrust extends my character to the worst of the _worst, and supposes me seared against the sense of infamy, I will add to the stake of reputation, the stake of life. This certainly is sense, and the language as grammatical as many other passages of Shakespeare. Yet we may try another experiment.

Fear otherwise to worst of worst extended;
With vilest torture let my life be ended.
That is, let me act under the greatest terrors possible.

But once again we will try to find the right way by the glimmer of Hanmer's amendation, who reads thus,

—my maiden name
Sear'd; otherwise the worst of worst extended. *etc.*

Perhaps it were better thus,

— my maiden name Sear'd; otherwise the worst to worst extended;

With vilest torture let my life be ended.

II.i.182 (45,5) [Thy life is dear; for all, that life can rate Worth name of life, in thee hath estimate] May be counted among the gifts enjoyed by them.

II.i.185 (45,7) [prime] Youth; the spring or morning of life.

II.ii.40 (48,1) [To be young again] The lady censures her own levity in trifling with her jester, as a ridiculous attempt to return back to youth.

Il.iii.6 (49,3) [unknown fear] Fear is here the object of fear.

II.iii.11 (50,4)

[Par. So I say, both of Galen and Paracelsus. Laf. Of all the learned and authentic fellows]

As the whole merriment of this scene consists in the pretensions of Parollei to knowledge and sentiments which he has not, I believe here are two passages in which the words and sense are bestowed upon him by the copies, which the author gave to Lafen. I read this passage thus,

Laf. To be relinquished of the artists——
Par. So I. say.
Laf. Both of Galen and Paracelsus, of all the
learned and authentick fellows——
Par. _Right, so I say.__

II.iii.41 (51,7)

[which should, indeed, give us a farther use to be made, than alone the recovery of the King; as to be— Laf. Generally thankful]

I cannot see that there is any hiatus, or other irregularity of language than such as is very common in these plays. I believe Parolles has again usurped words and sense to which he has no right; and I read this passage thus, Laf. In a most weak and debile minister, great power, great transcendence; which should, indeed, give us a farther use to be made than the mere recovery of the king. Par. As to be. Laf. Generally thankful.

II.iii.66 (52,9) [My mouth no more were broken than these boys']
A broken mouth is a mouth which has lost part of its teeth.

II.iii.77 (53,1) [Let the white death sit on thy cheek for ever]
[W: dearth] The white death is the chlorosis.

II.iii.80 (53,2) [And to imperial Love] [W. The old editions read IMPARTIAL, which is right.] There is no edition of this play older than that of 1623, the next is that of 1632, of which both read imperials the second reads imperial Jove.

II.iii.92 (53,3) [Laf. Do they all deny her?] None of them have yet denied her, or deny her afterwards but Bertram. The scene must be so regulated that Lafeu and Parolles talk at a distance, where they nay see what passes between Helena and the lords, but not hear it, so that they know not by whom the refusal is made.

II.iii.105 (54,4) [There's one grape yet,—I am sure, they father drunk wine.—But if thou be'st not an ass, I am a youth of fourteen. I have known thee already] This speech the three last editors have perplexed themselves by dividing between Lafeu and Parolles, without any authority of copies, or any improvement of sense. I have restored the old reading, and should have thought no explanation necessary, but that Mr. Theobald apparently misunderstood it.

Old Lafeu having, upon the supposition that the lady was refused, reproached the young lords as boys of ice, throwing his eyes on Bertram who remained, cries out, "There is one yet into whom his father put good blood,——but I have known thee long enough to know thee for an ass."

II.iii.135 (55,6) [good alone Is good, without a name, vileness is so] [W: good; and with a name,] The present reading is certainly wrong, and, to confess the truth, I do not think Dr. Warburton's emendation right; yet I have nothing that I can propose with much confidence. Of all the conjectures that I can make, that which least displeases me is this:

—good alone. Is good without a name; Helen is so;

The rest follows easily by this change.

II.iii.138 (56,7)

[—She is young, wise, fair;
In these, to nature she's immediate heir;
And these breed honour]

Here is a long note [W's] which I wish had been shorter. Good is better than young, as it refers to honour. But she is more the immediate heir of nature with respect to youth than goodness. To be immediate heir is to inherit without any intervening transmitter: thus she inherits beauty immediately from nature, but honour is transmitted by ancestors; youth is received immediately from nature. but goodness may be conceived in part the gift of parents, or the effect of education. The alteration therefore loses on one side what it gains on the other.

II.iii.170 (58,9) [Into the staggers] One species of the staggers, or the horses apoplexy, is a raging impatience which makes the animal dash himself with destructive violence against posts or walls. To this the allusion, I suppose, is made.

II.iii.185 (59,1)

[whose ceremony Shall seem expedient on the now-born brief, And be perform'd to-night]

This, if it be at all intelligible, is at least obscure and inaccurate.
Perhaps it was written thus,

—what ceremony Shall seem expedient on the now-born brief Shall be perform'd to-night; the solemn feast Shall more attend—

The brief is the contract of espousal, or the licence of the church. The King means, What ceremony is necessary to make this contract a marriage, shall be immediately performed; the rest may be delayed.

II.iii.211 (60,2) [I did think thee, for two ordinaries, to be a pretty wise fellow] While I sat twice with thee at table.

II.iii.217 (60,3) [yet art then good for nothing but taking up] To take up, is to contradict, to call to account, as well as to pick off the ground.

II.iii.242 (60,4) [in the default] That is, at a need.

II.iii.246 (61,5) [for doing, I am past; as I will by thee, in what motion age will give me leave] [Warburton suspected a line lost after "past"] This suspicion of chasm is groundless. The conceit which is so thin that it might well escape a hasty reader, is in the word past, I am past, as I will be past by thee.

II.iii.309 (63,9) [To the dark house] The dark house is a house made gloomy by discontent. Milton says of death and the king of hell preparing to combat,

So frown'd the mighty combatants, that hell Grew darker at their frown.

II.iv.45 (65,1) [Whose want, and whose delay, is strew'd with sweets] The sweets with which this want are strewed, I suppose, are compliments and professions of kindness.

II.iv.52 (65,2) [probable need] A specious appearance of necessity.

III.i.10 (70,5) [The reasons of our state I cannot yield] I cannot inform you of the reasons.

III.i.11 (70,6) [an outward man] [W: *i.e.* one not in the secret of affairs] So inward is familiar, admitted to secrets. I was an inward of his. Measure for Measure.

III.ii.59 (73,1) [When thou canst get the ring upon my finger] [W: When thou canst get the ring, which is on my finger, into thy possession] I think Dr. Warburton's explanation sufficient, but I once read it thus, When thou canst get the ring upon thy finger, which newer shall come off mine.

III.ii.100 (74,3) [Not so, but as we change our courtesies] The gentlemen declare that they are servants to the Countess, she replies, No otherwise than as she returns the same offices of civility.

III.iv.4 (77,4) [St. Jaques' pilgrim] I do not remember any place famous for pilgrimages consecrated in Italy to St. James, but it is common to visit St. James of Compostella, in Spain. Another saint might easily have been found, Florence being somewhat out of the road from Bonsillon to Compostella.

III.iv.13 (77,6) [Juno] Alluding to tho story of Hercules.

III.iv.19 (77,6) [Rinaldo, you did never lack advice so much] Advice, is discretion or thought.

III.v.21 (79,7) [are not the things they go under] [W: Mr. Theobald explains these words by, They are not really so true and sincere as in appearance they seem to be.] I think Theobald's interpretation right; to go under the name of any thing is a known expression. The meaning is, they are not the things for which their names would make them pass.

III.v.66 (81,8) [examin'd] That is, question'd, doubted.

III.v.74 (81,9) [brokes] Deals as a broker.

III.vi.107 (86,6) [we have almost imboss'd him] To imboss a deer is to inclose him in a wood. Milton uses the same word:

Like that self-begotten bird In th' Arabian woods embost. Which no second knows or third.

III.vi.III (87,7) [ere we case him] This is, before we strip him naked. (1773)

III.vii.9 (88,2) [to your sworn council] To your private knowledge, after having required from you an oath of secrecy.

III.vii.21 (88,9) [Now his important blood will nought deny] Important here, and elsewhere, is importunate.

IV.i.16 (90,2) [some band of strangers i' the adversary's entertainment]
That is, foreign troops in the enemy's pay.

Iv.i.44 (91,3) [the instance] The proof.

IV.ii.13 (94,5)

[No more of that!
  I pr'ythee, do not strive against my vows:
  I was compell'd to her]

I know not well what Bertram can mean by entreating Diana not to strive against his vows. Diana has just mentioned his wife, so that the vows seem to relate to his marriage. In this sense not Diana, but himself, strives against his vows. His vows indeed may mean vows made to Diana; but, in that case, to strive against is not properly used for to reject, nor does this sense cohere well with his first exclamation of impatience at the mention of his wife. No more of that! Perhaps we might read,

I Pr'ythee do not drive _against my vows.

Do not_ run upon that topick; talk of any thing else that I can bear to hear.

I have another conceit upon this passage, which I would be thought to offer without much confidence:

No more of that! I pr'ythee do not strive—against my voice I was compell'd to her.

Diana tells him unexpectedly of his wife. He answers with perturbation, No more of that! I pr'ythee do not play the confessor —against my own consent I was compelled to her.

When a young profligate finds his courtship so gravely repressed by an admonition of his duty, he very naturally desires the girl not to take upon her the office of a confessor.

IV.ii.23 (95,6) [What is not holy, that we swear not 'bides] [W: not 'bides] This is an acute and excellent conjecture, and I have done it the due honour of exalting it to the text; yet, methinks, there is something yet wanting. The following words, but take the High'st to witness, even though it be understood as an anticipation or assumption in this sense,—but now suppose that you take the Highest to witness,—has not sufficient relation to the antecedent sentence. I will propose a reading nearer to the surface, and let it take its chance.

Ber. How have I sworn!

Diana. 'Tis not the many oaths, that make the truth,
But the plain single vow, that is vow'd true.

Ber. What is not holy, that we swear not by.
But take the High'st to witness.

Diana. Then, pray tell me.
If I should swear, &c.

Bertram means to enforce his suit, by telling her, that he has bound himself to her, not by the pretty protestations usual among lovers, but by vows of greater solemnity. She then makes a proper and rational reply.

IV.ii.25 (96,7) [If I should swear by Jove's great attributes] In the print of the old folio, it is doubtful whether it be Jove's or Love's, the characters being not distinguishable. If it is read Love's, perhaps it may be something less difficult. I am still at a loss.

It may be read thus,

—"this has no holding, "To swear by him whom I attest to love, "That I will work against him."

There is no consistence in expressing reverence for Jupiter by calling him to attest my love, and shewing at the same time, by working against him by a wicked passion, that I have no respect to the name which I invoke. (1773)

IV.ii.28 (96,8) [To swear by him whom I protest to love, That I will work against him] This passage likewise appears to me corrupt. She swears not by him whom she loves, but by Jupiter. I believe we may read, to swear to him. There is, says she, no holding, no consistency, in swearing to one that I love him, when I swear it only to injure him.

IV.ii.73 (98,9) [Since Frenchmen are so braid, Marry that will, I'll live and die a maid] [W: Marry 'em] The passage is very unimportant, and the old reading reasonable enough. Nothing is more common than for girls, on such occasions, to say in a pet what they do not think, or to think for a time what they do not finally resolve.

IV.iii.7 (98,1) [I Lord] The later editors have with great liberality bestowed lordship upon these interlocutors, who, in the original edition, are called, with more propriety, capt. E. and capt. G. It is true that captain E. is in a former scene called lord E. but the subordination in which they seem to act, and the timorous manner in which they converse, determines them to be only captains. Yet as the later readers of Shakespeare have been used to find them lords, I have not thought it worth while to degrade them in the margin.

IV.iii.29 (99,2) [he, that in this action contrives against his own nobility, in his proper stream o'erflows himself] That is, betrays his own secrets in his own talk. The reply shows that this is the meaning.

IV.iii.38 (100,3) [he might take a measure of his own judgment] This is a very just and moral reason. Bertram, by finding how erroneously he has judged, will be less confident, and more easily moved by admonition.

IV.iii.113 (102,4) [bring forth this counterfeit module] [W: medal] Module being the pattern of any thing, may be here used in that sense. Bring forth this fellow, who, by counterfeit virtue pretended to make himself a pattern.

IV.iii.237 (106,8) [Dian. the Count's a fool, and full of gold] After this line there is apparently a line lost, there being no rhime that corresponds to gold.

IV.iii.254 (106,9) [Half won, is match well made; match, and well make it] This line has no meaning that I can find. I read, with a very slight alteration, Half won is match well made; watch, and well make it. That is, a match well made is half won; watch, and make it well.

This is, in my opinion, not all the error. The lines are misplaced, and should be read thus:

Half won is match well made; watch, and well make it;
  when he swears oaths, bid him drop gold, and take it.
  After he scores, he never pays the score:
  He never pays after-debts, take it before.
  And say——

That is, take his money and leave him to himself. When the players had lost the second line, they tried to make a connection out of the rest. Part is apparently in couplets, and the note was probably uniform.

IV.iii.280 (107,1) [He will steal, sir, an egg out of a cloister] I know not that cloister, though it may etymologically signify any thing shut is used by our author, otherwise than for a monastery, and therefore I cannot guess whence this hyperbole could take its original: perhaps it means only this: He will steal any thing, however trifling, from any place, however holy.

IV.iii.307 (108,2) [he's a cat still] That is, throw him how you will, he lights upon his legs. [Steevens offered another explanation] I an still of my former opinion. The same speech was applied by king James to Coke, with respect to his subtilties of law, that throw him which way we would, he could still like a cat light upon his legs. (see 1765, III,372,1)

IV.iii.317 (109,3) [Why does he ask him of me?] This is nature. Every man is on such occasions more willing to hear his neighbour's character than his own.

IV.iii.332 (109,4) [Only to seem to deserve well, and to beguile the supposition of that lascivious young boy the Count, have I run into this danger] That is, to deceive the opinion, to make the count think me a man that deserves well.

IV.iv.23 (III,6) [When saucy trusting of the cozen'd thoughts Defiles the pitchy night!] [W: When Fancy,] This conjecture is truly ingenious, but, I believe, the author of it will himself think it unnecessary, when he recollects that saucy may very properly signify luxurious, and by consequence lascivious.

IV.iv.31 (112,7)

[But with the word, the time will bring on summer,
  When briars shall have leaves as well as thorns,
  And be as sweet as sharp]

The meaning of this observation is, that as briars have sweetness with their prickles, so shall these troubles be recompensed with joy.

IV.iv.34 (112,8) [Our waggon is prepar'd, and time revives us] [W: revyes] The present reading is corrupt, and I am afraid the emendation none of the soundest. I never remember to have seen the word revye. One may as well leave blunders as make them. Why may we not read for a shift, without much effort, the time invites us?

IV.v.8 (114,1) [I would, I had not known him!] This dialogue serves to connect the incidents of Parolles with the main plan of the play.

IV.v.66 (116,4) [Laf. A shrewd knave, and an unhappy] That is, mischievously waggish; unlucky. (see 1765, III,379,3)

IV.v.70 (116,5) [he has no pace, but runs where he will] [Tyrrwhit: place] A pace is a certain or prescribed walk, so we say of a man meanly obsequious, that he has learned his paces. (1773) [(rev. 1778, IV,126,3]

V.i.35 (120,8)

[I will come after you, with what good speed
Our means will make us means]

Shakespeare delights much in this kind of reduplication, sometimes so as to obscure his meaning. Helena says, they will follow with such speed as the means which they have will give them ability to exert.

V.ii.57 (123,3) [tho' you are a fool and a knave, you shall eat] Parolles has many of the lineaments of Falstaff, and seems to be the character which Shakespeare delighted to draw, a fellow that had more wit than virtue. Though justice required that he should be detected and exposed, yet his vices sit so fit in him that he is not at last suffered to starve.

V.iii.1 (123,4) [We lost a jewel of her, and our esteem Was made much poorer by it] Dr. Warburton, in Theobald's edition, altered this word to estate, in his own he lets it stand and explains it by worth or estate. But esteem is here reckoning or estimate. Since the loss of Helen with her virtues and qualifications, our account is sunk; what we have to reckon ourselves king of, is much poorer than before.

V.iii.4 (123,5) [home] That is, completely, in its full extent.

V.iii.6 (123,6) [done i' the blade of youth] In the spring of early life, when the man is yet green, oil and fire suit but ill with blade, and therefore Dr. Warburton reads, blaze of youth.

V.iii.21 (124,7) [the first view shall kill All repetition] The first interview shall put an end to all recollection of the past. Shakespeare is now hastening to the end of the play, finds his matter sufficient to fill up his remaining scenes, and therefore, as on other such occasions, contracts his dialogue and precipitates his action. Decency required that Bertram's double crime of cruelty and disobedience, joined likewise with some hypocrisy, should raise more resentment; and that though his mother might easily forgive him, his king should more pertinaciously vindicate his own authority and Helen's merit: of all this Shakespeare could not be ignorant, but Shakespeare wanted to conclude his play.

V.iii.50 (125,9) [My high repented blames] [A long note by Warburton] It was but just to insert this note, long as it is, because the commentator seems to think it of importance. Let the reader judge.

V.iii.65 (127,1)

[Our own love, waking, cries to see what's done,
  While shameful hate sleeps out the afternoon]

These two lines I should be glad to call an interpolation of a player. They are ill connected with the former, and not very clear or proper in themselves. I believe the author made two couplets to the same purpose, wrote them both down that he might take his choice, and so they happened to be both preserved.

For sleep I think we should read slept. Love cries to see what was done while hatred slept, and suffered mischief to be done. Or the meaning may be, that hatred still continues to sleep at ease, while love is weeping; and so the present reading may stand.

V.iii.93 (128,3) [In Florence was it from a casement thrown me]
Bertram still continues to have too little virtue to deserve Helen.
He did not know indeed that it was Helen's ring, but he knew that
he had it not from a window.

V.iii.95 (128,4) [Noble she was, and thought I stood engag'd] [T: I don't understand this reading; if we are to understand, that she thought Bertram engag'd to her in affection, insnared by her charms, this meaning is too obscurely express'd.] The context rather makes me believe, that the poet wrote,

noble she was, and thought I stood ungag'd;——-

i.e. unengag'd: neither my heart, nor person, dispos'd of.—The plain meaning is, when she saw me receive the ring, she thought me engaged to her.

V.iii.101 (129,5) [King Plutus himself , That knows the tinct and multiplying medicine] Plutus the grand alchemist, who knows the tincture which confers the properties of gold upon base metals, and the matter by which gold is multiplied, by which a small quantity of gold is made to communicate its qualities to a large mass of metal.

In the reign of Henry the fourth a law was made to forbid all men thenceforth to multiply gold, or use any craft of multiplication. Of which law Mr. Boyle, when he was warm with the hope of transmutation, procured a repeal.

V.iii.105 (129,6) [Then if you know, That you are well acquainted with yourself] The true meaning of this strange [Warburton's word] expression is, If you know that your faculties are so found, as that you have the proper consciousness of your own actions, and are able to recollect and relate what you have done, tell me. &c.

V.iii.121 (130,7)

[My fore-past proofs, howe'er the matter fall,
Shall tax my fears of little vanity,
Having vainly fear'd too little]

The proofs which I have already had, are sufficient to show that my fears were not vain and irrational. I have rather been hither-to more easy than I ought, and have unreasonably had too little fear.

V.iii.131 (130,8) [Who hath, some four or five removes, come short] Removes are journies or post-stages.

V.iii.191 (133,1) [O, behold this ring. Whose high respect and rich validity] _Validity is a very bad word for value, which yet I think is its meaning, unless it be considered as making a contract valid.

V.iii.214 (133,2)

[As all impediments in fancy's course,
Are motives of more fancy: and in fine,
Her insult coming with her modern grace,
Subdu'd me to her rate: she got the ring]

Every thing that obstructs love is an occasion by which love is heightened. And, to conclude, her solicitation concurring with her fashionable appearance, she got the ring.

I an not certain that I have attained the true meaning of the word modern, which, perhaps, signifies rather meanly pretty.

V.iii.296-305 (137,3) This dialogue is too long, since the audience already knew the whole transaction; nor is there any reason for puzzling the king and playing with his passions; but it was much easier than to make a pathetical interview between Helen and her husband, her mother, and the king.

V.iii.305 (137,4) [exorcist] This word is used not very properly for enchanter.

V.iii.339 (139,2) [Ours be your patience then, and yours our parts] The meaning is: Grant us then your patience; hear us without interruption. And take our parts; that is, support and defend us. (see 1765, III,399)

(139) General Observation. This play has many delightful scenes, though not sufficiently probable, and some happy characters, though not new, nor produced by any deep knowledge of human nature. Parolles is a boaster and a coward, such as has always been the sport of the stage, but perhaps never raised more laughter or contempt than in the hands of Shakespeare.

I cannot reconcile my heart to Bertram; a man noble without generosity, and young without truth; who marries Helen as a coward, and leaves her as a profligate: when she is dead by his unkindness, sneaks home to a second marriage, is accused by a woman whom he has wronged, defends himself by falsehood, and is dismissed to happiness.

The story of Bertram and Diana hod been told before of Mariana and Angelo, and, to confess the truth, scarcely merited to be heard a second time.

TWELFTH-NIGHT

(142) The persons of the drama were first enumerated, with all the cant of the modern stage, by Mr. Rowe.

I.i.2 (143,2) [that, surfeiting, The appetite may sicken, and so die] [W: app'tite, Love] It is true, we do not talk of the death of appetite, because we do not ordinarily speak in the figurative language of poetry; but that appetite sickens by a surfeit is true, and therefore proper.

I.i.21 (145,6) [That instant was I turn'd into a hart] This image evidently alludes to the story of Acteon, by which Shakespeare seems to think men cautioned against too great familiarity with forbidden beauty. Acteon, who saw Diana naked, and was torn in pieces by his hounds, represents a man, who indulging his eyes, or his imagination, with the view of a woman that he cannot gain, has his heart torn with incessant longing. An interpretation far more elegant and natural than that of Sir Francis Bacon, who, in his Wisdom of the Antients, supposes this story to warn us against enquiring into the secrets of princes, by shewing, that those who knew that which for reasons of state is to be concealed, will be detected and destroyed by their own servants.

I.ii.25 (147,9) [A noble Duke in nature, as in name] I know not whether the nobility of the name is comprised in Duke, or in Orsino, which is, I think, the name of a great Italian family.

I.ii.42 (148,1)

[Vio. O, that I serv'd that lady;
And might not be deliver'd to the world,
'Till I had made mine own occasion mellow
What my estate is!]

I wish I might not be made public to the world, with regard to the state of my birth and fortune, till I have gained a ripe opportunity for my design.

Viola seems to have formed a very deep design with very little premeditation: she is thrown by shipwreck on an unknown coast, hears that the prince is a batchelor, and resolves to supplant the lady whom he courts.

I.ii.55 (149,2) [I'll serve this Duke] Viola is an excellent schemer, never at a loss; if she cannot serve the lady, she will serve the Duke.

I.iii.77 (152,5) [It's dry, sir] What is the jest of dry hand, I know not any better than Sir Andrew. It may possibly mean, a hand with no money in it; or, according to the rules of physiognomy, she may intend to insinuate, that it is not a lover's hand, a moist hand being vulgarly accounted a sign of an amorous constitution.

I.iii.148 (154,9) [Taurus? that's sides and heart] Alluding to the medical astrology still preserved in almanacks, which refers the affections or particular parts of the body, to the predominance of particular constellations.

I.iv.34 (155,1) [And all is semblative—a woman's part] That is, thy proper part in a play would be a woman's. Women were then personated by boys.

I.v.9 (156,2) [lenten answer] A lean, or as we now call it, a dry answer.

I.v.39 (157,4) [Better be a witty fool, than a foolish wit] Hall, in his Chronicle, speaking of the death of Sir Thomas More, says, that he knows not whether to call him a foolish wise man, or a wise foolish man.

I.v.105 (159,5) [Now Mercury indue thee with leasing, for thou speak'st well of fools!] [W: pleasing] I think the present reading more humourous. May Mercury teach thee to lie, since thou liest in favour of fools.

I.v.213 (164,1) [to make one in so skipping a dialogue] Wild, frolick, mad.

I.v.218 (164,2) [Some mollification for your giant] Ladies, in romance, are guarded by giants, who repel all improper or troublesome advances. Viola seeing the waiting-maid so eager to oppose her message, intreats Olivia to pacify her giant.

I.v.328 (168,8)

[Oli. I do, I know not what; and fear to find Mine eye too great a flatterer for my mind]

I believe the meaning is; I am not mistress of my own actions, I am afraid that my eyes betray me, and flatter the youth without my consent, with discoveries of love.

II.i.15 (169,9) [to express myself] That is, to reveal myself.

II.i.28 (169,1) [with such estimable wonder] These words Dr. Warburton calls an interpolation of the players, but what did the players gain by it? they may be sometimes guilty of a joke without the concurrence of the poet, but they never lengthen a speech only to make it longer. Shakespeare often confounds the active and passive adjectives. Estimable wonder is esteeming wonder, or wonder and esteem. The meaning is, that he could not venture to think so highly as others of his sister.

II.ii.21 (171,2) [her eyes had lost her tongue] [W: crost] That the fascination of the eyes was called crossing ought to have been proved. But however that be, the present reading has not only sense but beauty. We say a man loses his company when they go one way and he goes another. So Olivia's tongue lost her eyes; her tongue was talking of the Duke and her eyes gazing on his messenger.

II.ii.29 (171,3) [the pregnant enemy] is, I believe, the dexterous fiend, or enemy of mankind. (1773)

II.ii.30 (171,4)

[How easy is it, for the proper false
In women's waxen hearts to set their forms]

This is obscure. The meaning is, how easy is disguise to women; how easily does their own falsehood, contained in their _waxen changeable hearts, enable them to assume deceitful appearances. The two next lines are perhaps transposed, and should be read thus,

For such as we are made, if such we be, Alas, our frailty is the cause, not we.

II.iii.27 (175,9) [I did impeticoat thy gratility] This, Sir T. Hammer tells us, is the same with impocket thy gratuity. He is undoubtedly right; but we must read, I did impeticoat thy gratuity. The fools were kept in long coats, to which the allusion is made. There is yet much in this dialogue which I do not understand.

II.iii.51 (176,1) [In delay there lies no plenty] [W: decay] I believe delay is right.

II.iii.52 (176,2) [Then come kiss me, sweet, and twenty] This line is obscure; we might read,

Come, a kiss then, sweet, and twenty.

Yet I know not whether the present reading be not right, for in some counties sweet and twenty, whatever be the meaning, is a phrase of endearment.

II.iii.59 (176,3) [make the welkin dance] That is, drink till the sky seems to turn round.

II.iii.75 (177,5) [They sing a catch] This catch is lost.

II.iii.81 (177,6) [Peg-a-Ramsey] Peg-a-Ramsey I do not understand. Tilly vally was an interjection of contempt, which Sir Thomas More a lady is recorded to have had very often in her mouth.

II.iii.97 (178,7) [ye squeak out your coziers catches] A Cozier is a taylor, from coudre to sew, part, consu, French, (see 1765, 11,383,2)

II.iii.128 (180,l) [rub your chain with crums] I suppose it should be read, rub your chin with crums, alluding to what had been said before that. Malvolio was only a steward, and consequently dined after his lady.

II.iii.131 (180,2) [you would not give means for this uncivil rule] Rule is, method of life, so misrule is tumult and riot.

II.iii.149 (181,3) [Possess us] That is, inform us, tell us, make us masters of the matter.

II.iv.5 (183,5) [light airs, and recollected terms] I rather think that recollected signifies, more nearly to its primitive sense, recalled, repeated, and alludes to the practice of composers, who often prolong the song by repetitions.

II.iv.26 (184,6) [favour] The word favour ambiguously used.

II.iv.35 (184,7) [lost and worn] Though lost and worn may means lost and worn out, yet lost and won being, I think, better, these two words coming usually and naturally together, and the alteration being very slight, I would so read in this place with Sir Tho. Hammer.

II.iv.46 (185,8) [free] is, perhaps, vacant, unengaged, easy in mind.

II.iv.47 (185,9) [silly sooth] It is plain, simple truth.

II.iv.49 (185,2) [old age] The old age is the ages past, the times of simplicity.

II.iv.58 (185,3) [My part of death no one so true Did share it] Though death is a part in which every one acts his share, yet of all these actors no one is so true as I.

II.iv.87 (187,6)

[But 'tis that miracle, and queen of gems,
That nature pranks her in]

[W: pranks, her mind] The miracle and queen of gems is her beauty, which the commentator might have found without so emphatical an enquiry. As to her mind, he that should be captious would say, that though it may be formed by nature it must be pranked by education.

Shakespeare does not say that nature pranks her in a miracle, but in the miracle of gems, that is, in a gem miraculously beautiful.

II.v.43 (191,2) [the lady of the Strachy] [W: We should read Trachy. *i.e.* Thrace; for so the old English writers called it] What we should read is hard to say. Here it an allusion to some old story which I have not yet discovered.

II.v.51 (191,3) [stone-bow] That is, a cross-bow, a bow which shoots stones.

II.v.66 (192,4) [wind up my watch] In our author's time watches were very uncommon. When Guy Faux was taken, it was urged as a circumstance of suspicion that a watch was found upon him.

II.v.70 (192,5) [Tho' our silence be drawn from us with carts] I believe the true reading is, Though our silence be drawn from us with carts, yet peace. In the The Two Gentlemen of Verona, one of the Clowns says, I have a mistress, but who that is, a team of horses shall not draw from me. So in this play, Oxen and wainropes will not bring them together.

II.v.97 (193,7) [her great P's] [Steevens: In the direction of the letter which Malvolio reads, there is neither a C, nor a P, to be found] There may, however, be words in the direction which he does not read. To formal directions of two ages ago were often added these words, Humbly Present. (1773)

II.v.144 (195,2) [And O shall end, I hope] By O is here meant what we now call a hempen collar.

II.v.207 (197,6) [tray-trip] The word tray-trip I do not understand.

II.v.215 (198,7) [aqua vitae] Is the old name of strong waters.

III.i.57 (200,9) [lord Pandarus] See our author's play of Troilus and Cressida.

III.i.71 (200,1) [And, like the haggard, check at every feather] The meaning may be, that he must catch every opportunity, as the wild hawk strikes every bird. But perhaps it might be read more properly,

Not like the haggard.

He must chuse persons and times, and observe tempers, he must fly at proper game, like the trained hawk, and not fly at large like the haggard, to seize all that comes in his way. (1773)

III.i.75 (201,2) [But wise-men's folly fall'n] Sir Thomas Hammer reads, folly shewn. [The sense is, But wise men's folly, when it is once fallen into extravagance, overpowers their discretion. Revisal.] I explain it thus. The folly which he shows with proper adaptation to persons and times, is fit, has its propriety, and therefore produces no censure; but the folly of wise men when it falls or happens, taints their wit, destroys the reputation of their judgment. (see 1765, II,402,2)

III.i.86 (202,4) [she is the list of my voyage] Is the bound, limit, farthest point.

III.i.100 (202,5) [most pregnant and vouchsafed ear] Pregnant is a word in this writer of very lax signification. It may here mean liberal. (1773)

III.i.123 (203,6) [After the last enchantment (you did hear)] [W: enchantment you did here] The present reading is no more nonsense than the emendation.

III.i.132 (203,8) [a Cyprus] Is a transparent stuff.

III.i.135 (204,9) [a grice] Is a step, sometimes written greese from degres, French.

III.i.170 (205,1) [I have one heart, one bosom, and one truth, And that no woman has] And that heart and boson I have never yielded to any woman.

III.ii.45 (207,5) [Go, write it in a martial hand; be curst and brief] Martial hand, seems to be a careless scrawl, such as shewed the writer to neglect ceremony. Curst, is petulant, crabbed—a curst cur, is a dog that with little provocation snarls and bites. (1773)

III.iv.61 (213,1) [midsummer madness] Hot weather often turns the brain, which is, I suppose, alluded to here.

III.iv.82 (214,3) [I have lim'd her] I have entangled or caught her, as a bird is caught with birdlime.

III.iv.85 (214,4) [Fellow:] This word which originally signified companion, was not yet totally degraded to its present meaning; and Malvolio takes it in the favourable sense.

III.iv.130 (215,6) [Hang him, foul collier] The devil is called Collier for his blackness, Like will to like, says the Devil to the Collier. (1773)

III.iv.154 (216,7) [a finder of madmen] This is, I think, an allusion to the witch-finders, who were very busy.

III.iv.184 (217,8) [God have mercy upon one of our souls! He may have mercy upon mine, but my hope is better] We may read, He may have mercy upon thine, but my hope is better. Yet the passage may well enough stand without alteration.

It were much to be wished, that Shakespeare in this and some other passages, had not ventured so near profaneness.

III.iv.228 (218,9) [wear this jewel for me] Jewel does not properly signify a single gem, but any precious ornament or superfluity.

III.iv.257 (219,2) [Be is knight, dubb'd with unhack'd rapier, and on carpet consideration] That is, he is no soldier by profession, not a Knight Banneret, dubbed in the field of battle, but, on carpet consideration, at a festivity, or on sone peaceable occasion, when knights receive their dignity kneeling not on the ground, as in war, but on a carpet. This is, I believe, the original of the contemptuous term a carpet knight, who was naturally held in scorn by the men of war.

III.iv.301 (222,4) [I have not seen such a virago] Virago cannot be properly used here, unless we suppose Sir Toby to mean, I never saw one that had so much the look of woman with the prowess of man.

III.iv.408 (225,7) [Methinks, his words do from such passion fly,
That he believes himself;—so do not I]

This I believe, means, I do not yet believe myself, when, from this accident, I gather hope of my brother's life.

IV.i.14 (227,8) [I am afraid this great lubber the world will prove a cockney] That is, affectation and foppery will overspread the world.

IV.i.57 (228,2) [In this uncivil and unjust extent] Extent is, in law, a writ of execution, whereby goods are seized for the king. It is therefore taken here for violence in general.

IV.i.60 (228,3) [This ruffian hath botch'd up] I fancy it is only a coarse expression for made up, as a bad taylor is called a botcher. and to botch is to make clumsily.

IV.i.63 (229,4) [He started one poor heart of mine in thee] I know not whether here be not an ambiguity intended between heart and hart. The sense however is easy enough. He that offends thee attacks one of my hearts; or, as the antients expressed it, half my heart.

IV.i.64 (229,5) [What relish is this?] How does it taste? What judgment am I to make of it?

IV.ii.53 (231,9) [constant question] A settled, a determinate, a regular question.

IV.ii.68 (232,1) [Nay, I am for all waters] I rather think this expression borrowed from sportsmen, and relating to the qualifications of a complete spaniel.

IV.ii.99 (233,2) [They have here property'd me] They have taken possession of me as of a man unable to look to himself.

IV.ii.107 (233,3) [Maintain no words with him] Here the Clown in the dark acts two persons, and counterfeits, by variation of voice, a dialogue between himself and Sir Topas.—I Will, sir, I Will. is spoken after a pause, as if, in the mean time, Sir Topas had whispered.

IV.ii.121 (234,4) [tell me true, are you not mad, indeed, or do you but counterfeit?] If he was not mad, what did be counterfeit by declaring that he was not mad? The fool, who meant to insult him, I think, asks, are you mad, or do you but counterfeit? That is, you look like a madman, you talk like a madman: Is your madness real, or have you any secret design in it? This, to a man in poor Malvolio's state, was a severe taunt.

IV.ii.134 (234,5) [like to the old vice] Vice was the fool of the old moralities. Some traces of this character are still preserved in puppet-shows, and by country mummers.

IV.ii.141 (235.6)'Adieu, goodman devil] This last line has neither rhime nor meaning. I cannot but suspect that the fool translates Malvolio's name, and says,

Adieu, goodman mean-evil. (1773)

IV.iii.12 (236,8) [all instance, all discourse] Instance is example. (see 1765, II,433,9)

IV.iii.15 (236,9) [To any other trust] To any other belief, or confidence, to any other fixed opinion.

IV.iii.29 (236,1) [Whiles] Is until. This word is still so used in the northern counties. It is, I think, used in this sense in the preface to the Accidence.

IV.iii.33 (237,2) [And, having sworn truth, ever will be true] Truth is fidelity.

V.i.23 (238,3) [so that, conclusions to be as kisses, if your four negatives make your two affirmatives, why, then the worse for my friends, and the better for my foes] Though I do not discover much ratiocination in the Clown's discourse, yet, methinks, I can find some glimpse of a meaning in his observation, that the conclusion is as kisses. For, says he, if four negatives make two affirmatives, the conclusion is as kisses; that is, the conclusion follows by the conjunction of two negatives, which, by kissing and embracing, coalesce into one, and make an affirmative. What the four negatives are I do not know. I read, So that conclusions be as kisses.

V.i.42 (239,4) [bells of St. Bennet] When in this play he mentioned the bed of Ware, he recollected that the scene was in Illyria, and added in England; but his sense of the same impropriety could not restrain him from the bells of St. Bennet.

V.i.67 (240,5) [desperate of shame, and state] Unattentive to his character or his condition, like a desperate man.

V.i.112 (241,5) [as fat and fulsome] [W: flat] Fat means dull; so we say a fatheaded fellow; fat likewise means gross, and is sometimes used for obscene; and fat is more congruent to fulsome than flat.

V.i.168 (244,7) [case] Case is a word used contemptuously for skin.
We yet talk of a fox case, meaning the stuffed skin of a fox.

V.i.204 (246,9) [A natural perspective] A perspective seems to be taken for shows exhibited through a glass with such lights as make the pictures appear really protruberant. The Duke therefore says, that nature has here exhibited such a show, where shadows seem realities; where that which is not appears like that which is.

V.i.306 (249,3) [but to read his right wits, is to read thus] Perhaps so,—but to read his wits right is to read thus. To represent his present state of mind, is to read a madman's letter, as I now do, like a madman. (1773)

V.i.326 (249,4) [One day shall crown the alliance on't, so please you] [Revisal: an't so] This is well conjectured; but on't may relate to the double character of sister and wife. (1773)

V.i.347 (250,5) [to frown Upon sir Toby, and the lighter people] People of less dignity or importance.

V.i.351 (250,6) [geck] A fool.

(253) General Observation. This play is in the graver part elegant and easy, and in some of the lighter scenes exquisitely humorous. Ague—cheek is drawn with great propriety, but his character is, in a great measure, that of natural fatuity, and is therefore not the proper prey of a satirist. The soliloquy of Malvolio is truly comic; he is betrayed to ridicule merely by his pride. The marriage of Olivia, and the succeeding perplexity, though well enough contrived to divert on the stage, wants credibility, and fails to produce the proper instruction required

in the drama, as it exhibits no just picture of life.

THE WINTER'S TALE

(257,1) The story of this play is taken from the Pleasaunt History of Dorastus and Fawnia, written by Robert Greene. (1773)

I.i.9 (258,2) [Wherein our entertainment shall shame us, we will be justified in our loves] Though we cannot give you equal entertainment, yet the consciousness of our good-will shall justify us.

I.i.30 (258,3) [royally attornied] Nobly supplied by substitution of embassies, &c.

l.i.43 (259,4) [physicks the subject] Affords a cordial to the state; has the power of assuaging the sense of misery.

I.ii.13 (259,5) [that may blow No sneaping rinds] That may blow is a Gallicism, for may there blow. (1773)

I.ii.31 (261,6) [All in Bohemia's well: this satisfaction The bygone day proclaim'd] We had satisfactory accounts yesterday of the state of Bohemia. (1773)

I.ii.123 (266,6) [We must be neat] Leontes, seeing his son's nose smutched, cries, We must be neat, then recollecting that neat is the term for horned cattle, he says, not neat, but cleanly.

I.ii.125 (266,7) [Still virginalling] Still playing with her fingers, as a girl playing on the virginals.

I.ii.132 (266,8) [As o'er-dy'd blacks] Sir T. Hammer understands, blacks died too much, and therefore rotten.

I.ii.136 (267,9) [welkin-eye] Blue eye; an eye of the same colour with the welkin, or sky.

I.ii.139 (267,2) [Thou dost make possible things not so held] *i.e.* thou dost make those things possible, which are conceived to be impossible. (1773)

I.ii.161,3 (268,3) [will you take eggs for mony?] This seems to be a proverbial expression, used when a man sees himself wronged and makes no resistance. Its original, or precise meaning, I cannot find, but I believe it means, will you be a cuckold for hire. The cuckow is reported to lay her eggs in another bird's nest; he therefore that has eggs laid in his nest, is said to be cocullatus, cuckow'd, or cuckold.

I.ii.163 (268,4) [happy man be his dole!] May his dole or share in life be to be a happy man.

I.ii.176 (269,5) [he's Appareat to my heart] That is, heir apparent.or the next claimant.

I.ii.186 (269,6) [a fork'd one] That is, a horned one; a cuckold.

I.ii.217 (270,9) [whispering, rounding] To round in the ear, is to whisper, or to tell secretly. The expression is very copiously explained by H. Casaubon, in his book de Ling. Sax.

I.ii.227 (271,1) [lower messes] Mess is a contraction of Master, as Mess John. Master John; an appellation used by the Scots, to those who have taken their academical degree. Lower Messes, therefore are graduates of a lower form.

The speaker is now mentioning gradations of understanding, and not of rank, (see 1765, II,244,9)

I.ii.260 (372,2) [Whereof the execution did cry out Against the nonperformance] This is one of the expressions by which Shakespeare too frequently clouds his meaning. This sounding phrase means, I think, no more than a thing necessary to be done. [Revisal; the now-performance] I do not see that this attempt does any thing more, than produce a harsher word without on easier sense, (see 1765, II,245,1)

I.ii.320 (275,5) [But with a ling'ring dram, that should not work, Maliciously, like poison] [Hammer: Like a malicious poison] Rash is hasty, as in another place, rash gunpowder. Maliciously is malignantly, with effects openly hurtful. Shakespeare had no thought of betraying the user. The Oxford emendation is harmless and useless.

1.ii.321 (275,6)

[But I cannot Believe this crack to be in my dread mistress, So sovereignly being honourable. Leo. I have lov'd thee—Make that thy question, and go rot!]

[Theobald had emended the text to give the words "I have lov'd thee" to Leontes] I have admitted this alteration, as Dr. Warburton has done, but am not convinced that it is necessary. Camillo, desirous to defend the queen, and willing to secure credit to his apology, begins, by telling the king that he has loved him, is about to give instances of his love, and to infer from them his present zeal, when he is interrupted.

I.ii.394 (278,7) [In whose success we are gentle] I know not whether success here does not mean succession.

I.ii.424 (279,1) [Cam. Swear this thought over By each particular star in heaven] [T: this though] Swear his thought over

May however perhaps mean, overswear his present persuasion, that is, endeavour to overcome his opinion, by swearing oaths numerous as the stars. (1773)

I.ii.458 (281,3) [Good expedition be my friend, and comfort The gracious queen] [W: queen's] Dr. Warburton's conjecture is, I think, just; but what shall be done with the following words, of which I can make nothing? Perhaps the line which connected them to the rest, is lost.

—and comfort
The gracious queen, part of his theme, but nothing
Of his ill-ta'en suspicion!

Jealousy is a passion compounded of love and suspicion, this passion is the theme or subject of the king's thoughts.—Polixenes, perhaps, wishes the queen, for her comfort, so much of that theme or subject as is good, but deprecates that which causes misery. May part of the king's present sentiments comfort the queen, but away with his suspicion. This is such meaning as can be picked out. (1773)

II.i.38 (283,4) [Alack, for lesser knowledge!] That is, O that my knowledge were less.

II.i.50 (284,5) [He hath discover'd my design, and I Remain a pinch'd thing] [Revisal: The sense, I think, is, He hath now discovered my design, and I am treated as a mere child's baby, a thing pinched out of clouts, a puppet for them to move and actuate as they please.] This sense is possible, but many other meanings might serve as well. (1773)

II.i.100 (286,7)

[No, if I mistake
In these foundations which I build upon,
The center is not big enough to bear
A school-boy's top]

That is, if the proofs which I can offer will not support the opinion
I have formed, no foundation can be trusted.

II.i.104 (286,8) [He, who shall speak for her, is far off guilty, But that he speaks] [T: far of] It is strange that Mr. Theobald could not find out that far off guilty, signifies, guilty in a remote degree.

II.i.121 (287,9) [this action] The word action is here taken in the lawyer's sense, for indictment, charge, or accusation.

II.i.143 (288,2) [land-damn him] Sir T. Hammer interprets, stop his urine. Land or lant being the old word for urine.

Land-damn is probably one of those words which caprice brought into fashion, and which, after a short time, reason and grammar drove irrecoverably away. It perhaps meant no more than I will rid the country of him; condemn him to quit the land, (see 1765, II,259,2)

II.i.177 (290,5) [nought for approbation, But only seeing] Approbation, in this place, is put for proof.

II.i.185 (290,6) [stuff'd sufficiency] That is, of abilities more than enough.

II.i.195 (291,7) [Left that the treachery of the two, fled hence, Be left her to perform] He has before declared, that there is a plot against his life and crown, and that Hermione is federary with Polixenes and Camillo.

II.iii.5 (294,9) [out of the blank And level of my brain] Beyond the aim of any attempt that I can make against him. Blank and level are terms of archery.

II.iii.60 (296,1) [And would by combat make her good, so were I A man, the worst about you] The worst means only the lowest. Were I the meanest of your servants, I would yet claim the combat against any accuser.

II.iii.67 (297,2) [A mankind witch:] A mankind woman, is yet used in the midland counties, for a woman violent, ferocious, and mischievous. It has the same sense in this passage. Witches are supposed to be mankind, to put off the softness and delicacy of women, therefore Sir Hugh, in the Merry Wives of Windsor, says, of a woman inspected to be a witch, that he does not like when a woman has a beard. Of this meaning Mr. Theobald has given examples.

II.iii.77 (298, 5)

[Unvenerable be thy hands, if thou
Tak'st up the princess, by that forced baseness]

Leontes had ordered Antigonus to take up the bastard, Paulina forbids him to touch the princess under that appellation. Forced is false, uttered with violence to truth.

II.iii.106 (299, 6) [No yellow in't] Yellow is the colour of jealousy.

II.iii.181 (301, 8) [commend it strangely to some place] Commit to some place, as a stranger, without more provision.

III.i.2 (302, 9) [Fertile the isle] [Warburton objected to "isle" as impossible geographically and offered "soil"] Shakespeare is little careful of geography. There is no need of this emendation in a play of which the whole plot depends upon a geographical error, by which Bohemia is supposed to be a maritime country.

III.i.3 (303, 1) [I shall report, For most it caught me] [W: It shames report, Foremost] Of this emendation I see no reason; the utmost that can be necessary is, to change, it caught me, to they caught me; but even this may well enough be omitted. It may relate to the whole spectacle.

III.i.14 (304, 2) [The time is worth the use on't] [W: The use is worth the time on't] Either reading may serve, but neither is very elegant. The time is worth the use on't, means, the time which we have spent in visiting Delos, has recompensed us for the trouble of so spending it.

III.ii.18 (305, 4) [pretence] Is, in this place, taken for a scheme laid, a design formed; to pretend means to design, in the Gent. of Verona.

III.ii.27 (305, 5) [mine integrity, Being counted falsehood, shall, as I express it, Be so receiv'd] That is, my virtue being accounted wickedness, my assertion of it will pass but for a lie. Falsehood means both treachery and lie.

III.ii.43 (306, 6) [For life I prize it As I weigh grief which I would spare] Life is to me now only grief, and as such only is considered by me, I would therefore willingly dismiss it.

III.ii.44 (306, 5) [I would spare] To spare any thing is to let it go. to quit the possession of it. (1773)

III.ii.49 (306, 7)

[Since he came,
With what encounter so uncurrent I
Have strain'd, to appear thus?]

These lines I do not understand; with the license of all editors, what I cannot understand I suppose unintelligible, and therefore propose that they may be altered thus,

————Since he came, With what encounter so uncurrent have I Been stain'd to appear thus.

At least I think it might be read,

With what encounter so uncurrent have I Strain'd to appear thus? If one Jet beyond. (see 1765, II,276,5)

III.ii.55 (307,8)

[I ne'er heard yet,
That any of those bolder vices wanted
Less impudence to gain—say what they did,
Than to perform it first]

It is apparent that according to the proper, at least according to the present, use of words, less should be more, or wanted should be had. But Shakespeare is very uncertain in his use of negatives. It nay be necessary once to observe, that in our language two negatives did not originally affirm, but strengthen the negation. This mode of speech was in time changed, but as the change was made in opposition to long custom, it proceeded gradually, and uniformity was not obtained but through an intermediate confusion.

III.ii.82 (308,9) [My life stands in the level of your dreams] To be in the level is by a metaphor from archery to be within the reach.

III.ii.85 (308,1) [As you were past all shame, (Those of your fact are so) [so past all truth] I do not remember that fact is used any where absolutely for guilt, which must be its sense in this place. Perhaps we may read,

Those of your pack are so.

Pack is a low coarse word well suited to the rest of this royal invective.

III.ii.107 (309,3) [I have got strength of limit] I know not well how strength of limit can mean strength to pass the limits of the childbed chamber, which yet it must mean in this place, unless we read in a more easy phrase, strength of limb. And now, &c.

III.ii.123 (310,4) [The flatness of my misery] That is, how low, how flat I am laid by my calamity.

III.ii.146 (310,5) [Of the queen's speed] Of the event of the queen's trial: so we still say, he sped well or ill.

III.ii.173 (311,6) [Does my deeds make the blacker!] This vehement retraction of Leontes, accompanied with the confession of more crimes than he was suspected of, is agreeable to our daily experience of the vicissitudes of violent tempers, and the eruptions of minds oppressed with guilt.

III.ii.187 (312,7)

[That thou betray'dst Polixenes, 'twas nothing
That did but shew thee, of a fool, inconstant,
And damnable ungrateful]

[T: of a soul] [W: shew thee off, a fool] Poor Mr. Theobald's courtly remark cannot be thought to deserve much notice. Or. Warburton too might have spared his sagacity if he had remembered, that the present reading, by a mode of speech anciently much used, means only, It shew'd thee first a fool, then inconstant and ungrateful.

III.ii.219 (314,9) [I am sorry for't] This it another instance of the sudden changes incident to vehement and ungovernable minds.

III.iii.1 (315,1) [Thou art perfect then] Perfect is often used by Shakespeare for certain, well assured, or well informed.

III.iii.56 (317,2) [A savage clamour!—Well may I get aboard—This is the chace] This clamour was the cry of the dogs and hunters; then seeing the bear, he cries, this is the chace. or, the animal pursued.

IV.i.6 (321,9) [and leave the growth untry'd Of that wide gap] [W: gulf untry'd] This emendation is plausible, but the common reading is consistent enough with our author's manner, who attends more to his ideas than to his words. The growth of the wide gap, is somewhat irregular; but he means, the growth, or progression of the time which filled up the gap of the story between Perdita's birth and her sixteenth year. To leave this growth untried, is to leave the passages of the intermediate years unnoted and unexamined. Untried is not, perhaps, the word which he would have chosen, but which his rhyme required.

IV.i.7 (321,1)

  [since it is in my power
To o'erthrow law, and in one self-born hour
To plant and o'erwhelm custom. Let me pass
The same I am, ere ancient'st order was,
Or what is now receiv'd]

The reasoning of Time is not very clear! he seems to mean, that he who has broke so many laws may now break another; that he who introduced every thing, may introduce Perdita on her sixteenth year; and he intreats that he may pass as of old, before any order or succession of objects, ancient or modern, distinguished his periods.

IV.i.19 (322,2)

[Imagine me,
Gentle spectators, that I now may be
In fair Bohemia]

Time is every where alike. I know not whether both sense and grammar may not dictate,

—imagine we,
Gentle spectators, that_ you now may be, &c.
Let us imagine that you, who behold these scenes, are now in
Bohemia?

IV.i.29 (322,3) [Is the argument of time] Argument is the same with subject.

IV.i.32 (322,4) [He wishes earnestly you newer may] I believe this speech of time rather begins the fourth act than concludes the third.

IV.ii.21 (323,6) [and my profit therein, the heaping friendships] [W. reaping] I see not that the present reading is nonsense; the sense of heaping friendships is, though like many other of our author's, unusual, at least unusual to modern ears, is not very obscure. To be more thankful shall be my study; and my profit therein the heaping friendships. That is, I will for the future be more liberal of recompence, from which I shall receive this advantage, that as I heap benefits I shall heap friendships, as I confer favours on thee I shall increase the friendship between us.

IV.ii.35 (324,7) [but I have, missingly, noted] [W. missing him]
[Hammer; musingly noted] I see not how the sense is mended by Sir
T. Hammer's alteration, nor how is it at all changed by Dr. Warburton's.

IV.iii.3 (325,9)

[Why, then comes in the sweet o' the year; For the red blood reigns in the winter pale]

Dr. Thirlby reads, perhaps rightly, certainly with much more probability, and easiness of construction;

For the red blood runs in the winter pale. That is, for the red blood runs pale in the winter. Sir T. Banner reads,

For the red blood reigns o'er the winter's pale.

IV.iii.7 (326,1) [pugging tooth] Sir T. Hammer, and after his, Dr. Warburton, read, progging tooth. It is certain that pugging is not now understood. But Dr. Thirlby observes, that this is the cant of gypsies.

IV.iii.28 (327,7) [Gallows, and knock, are too powerful on the highway; beating and hanging are terrors to me] The resistance which a highwayman encounters in the fact, and the punishment which he suffers on detection, withold me from daring robbery, and determine me to the silly cheat and petty theft. (1773)

IV.iii.99 (330,4) [abide] To abide, here, must signify, to sojourn, to live for a time without a settled habitation.

IV.iv.6 (331,7) [To chide at your extremes, it not becomes me] That is, your excesses, the extravagance of your praises.

IV.iv.8 (331,8) [The gracious mark o' the land] The object of all men's notice and expectation.

IV.iv.13 (332,9) [sworn, 1 think, To shew myself a glass] [Banner: swoon] Dr. Thirlby inclines rather to Sir T. Hanmer's emendation, which certainly makes an easy sense, and is, in my opinion, preferable to the present reading. But concerning this passage I know not what to decide.

IV.ii.21 (333,1) [How would he look, to see his work, so noble, Vilely bound up!] It is impossible for any man to rid his mind of his profession. The authorship of Shakespeare has supplied him with a metaphor, which rather than he would lose it, he has put with no great propriety into the month of a country maid. Thinking of his own works, his mind passed naturally to the binder. I am glad that he has no hint at an editor.

IV.ii.76 (335,2) [Grace and remembrance] Rue was called herb of grace. Rosemary was the emblem of remembrance; I know not why, unless because it was carried at funerals. (see 1765, II,300,5)

IV.iv.143 (338,6)

[Each your doing,
So singular in each particular,
Crowns what you're doing in the present deeds]
That is, your manner in each act crowns the act.

IV.iv.155 (338,8) [Per. I'll swear for 'em] I fancy this half line is placed to a wrong person. And that the king begins his speech aside

Pol. I'll swear for 'em
This is the prettiest. &c.

IV.iv.164 (339,1) [we stand upon our manners] That is, we are now on our behaviour.

IV.iv.169 (339,2) [a worthy feeding] I conceive feeding to be a pasture, and a worthy feeding to be a tract of pasturage not inconsiderable, not unworthy of my daughter's fortune.

IV.iv.204 (340,3) [unbraided wares?] Surely we must read braided, for such are all the wares mentioned in the answer.

IV.iv.212 (341,5) [sleeve-band] Is put very properly by Sir T. Hammer, it was before sleeve—hand.

IV.iv.316 (346,9) [sad] For serious. (1773)

IV.iv.330 (346,1) [That doth utter all mens' wear-a] To utter. To bring out, or produce. (1773)

IV.iv.333 (347,3) [all men of hair] [W: *i.e.* nimble, that leap as if they rebounded] This is a strange interpretation. Errors, says Dryden, flow upon the surface, but there are men who will fetch them from the bottom. Men of hair, are hairy men, or satyrs. A dance of satyrs was no unusual entertainment in the middle ages. At a great festival celebrated in France, the king and some of the nobles personated satyrs dressed in close habits, tufted or shagged all over, to imitate hair. They began a wild dance, and in the tumult of their merriment one of them went too near a candle and set fire to his satyr's garb, the flame ran instantly over the loose tufts, and spread itself to the dress of those that were next him; a great number of the dancers were cruelly scorched, being neither able to throw off their coats nor extinguish them. The king had set himself in the lap of the dutchess of Burgundy, who threw her robe over him and saved him.

IV.iv.338 (347,4) [bowling] Bowling, I believe, is here a term for a dance of smooth motion with great exertion of agility.

IV.iv.411 (350,6) [dispute his own estate?] Perhaps for dispute we might read compute; but dispute his estate may be the same with talk over his affairs.

IV.iv.441 (351,7) [Not hold thee of our blood, no, not our kin, Far than Deucalion off] I think for far than we should read far as. We will not hold thee of our kin even so far off as Deucalion the common ancestor of all.

IV.iv.493 (354,2) [and by my fancy] It must be remembered that fancy in this author very often, as in this place, means love.

IV.iv.551 (356,3) [Ourselves to be the slaves of chance, and flies] As chance has driven me to these extremities, so I commit myself to chance to be conducted through them.

IV.iv.613 (359,6) [as if my trinkets had been hallowed] This alludes to beads often sold by the Romanists, as made particularly efficacious by the touch of some relick.

IV.iv.651 (360,7) [boot] that is, something over and above, or, as we now say, something to boot.

IV.iv.734 (362,9) [pedler's excrement] Is pedler's beard, (see 1765, II,323,2)

IV.iv.748 (363,1) [therefore they do not give us the lye] [W: do give] The meaning is, they are paid for lying, therefore they do not give us the lye, they sell it us. (1773)

IV.iv.768 (363,2) [Advocate's the court-word for a pheasant] This satire, or this pleasantry, I confess myself not well to understand.

IV.iv.779 (364,3) [A great man, I'll warrant; I know, by the picking on's teeth] It seems, that to pick the teeth was, at this time, a mark of some pretension to greatness or elegance. So the Bastard in King John, speaking of the traveller, says,

He and his pick-tooth at my worship's mess.

IV.iv.816 (365,4) [the hottest day prognostication proclaims] That is, the hottest day foretold in the almanack.

V.i.14 (368,7) [Or, from the All that are, took something good] This is a favourite thought; it was bestowed on Miranda and Rosalind before.

V.i,19 (368,8) [What were more holy, Than to rejoice, the former queen is well] [W: rejoice the…queen? This will.] This emendation is one of those of which many may be made; It is such as we may wish the authour had chosen, but which we cannot prove that he did chuse; the reasons for it are plausible, but not cogent.

V.i.58 (370,9) [on this stage, (Where we offend her now)] [The offenders now appear] The Revisal reads,

Were we offenders now——

very reasonably. (1773)

V.i.74 (371,1) [Affront his eye] To affront, is to meet.

V.i.98 (372,2) [Sir, you yourself Have said, and writ so] The reader must observe, that so relates not to what precedes, but to what follows that, she had not been'——equall'd.

V.i.159 (374, 3) [whose daughter His tears proclaim'd his, parting with her] This is very ungrammatical and obscure. We aay better read,

——whose daughter His tears proclaim'd her parting with her.

The prince first tells that the lady came from Lybia. the king interrupting him, says, from Smalus; from him, says the prince, whose tears, at parting, shewed her to be his daughter.

V.i.214 (376, 4) [Your choice is not so rich in worth as beauty] [W. in birth] Worth is as proper as birth. Worth signifies any kind of worthiness, and among others that of high descent. The King means that he is sorry the prince's choice is not in other respects as worthy of him as in beauty.

V.ii.105 (380, 5) [that rare Italian meter, Jolio Romano] [Theobald praised the passage but called it an anachronism] Poor Theobald's eucomium of this passage is not very happily conceired or expressed, nor is the passage of any eminent excellence; yet a little candour will clear Shakespeare from part of the impropriety imputed to him. By eternity he means only i_mmortality_, or that part of eternity which is to come; so we talk of eternal renown and eternal infamy. Immortality may subsist without divinity, and therefore the meaning only is, that if Julio could always continue his labours, he would mimick nature.

V.ii.107 (381, 6) [would beguile nature of her custom] That is, of her trade,—would draw her customers from her.

V.ii.118 (381, 7) [Who would be thence, that has the benefit of access?] It was, I suppose, only to spare his own labour that the poet put this whole scene into narrative, for though part of the transaction was already known to the audience, and therefore could not properly be shewn again, yet the two kings might have met upon the stage, and after the examination of the old shepherd, the young lady might have been recognised in sight of the spectators.

V.ii.173 (383, 8) [franklins say it] Franklin is a freeholder, or yeoman, a man above a Villain, but not a gentleman.

V.ii.179 (383 ,9) [tall fellow] Tall, in that time, was the word used for stout.

V.iii.17 (384,1) [therefore I keep it Lonely, apart] [Hammer: lovely] I am yet inclined to lonely, which in the old angular writing cannot be distinguished from lovely. To say, that I keep it alone, separate from the rest, is a pleonasm which scarcely any nicety declines.

V.iii.46 (385,2) [Oh, patience] That is, Stay a while, be not go eager.

V.iii.56 (386,3)

[Indeed, my lord,
If I had thought, the sight of my poor image
Would thus have wrought you, (for the stone is mine)
I'd not have shew'd it]

[Tyrwhitt: for the stone i' th' mine] To change an accurate expression for an expression confessedly not accurate, has somewhat of retrogradation. (1773)

V.iii.131 (389,6) [You precious winners all] You who by this discovery have gained what you desired may join in festivity, in which I, who have lost what never can be recovered, can have no part.

(300) General Observation, Of this play no edition is known published before the folio of 1623.

This play, as Dr. Warburton justly observes, is, with all its absurdities, very entertaining. The character of Antolycus is very naturally conceived, and strongly represented, (see 1765, II, 349)

NOTES TO TRAGEDIES by Samuel Johnson

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Introduction on Tragedies

Dr. Johnson's reaction to Shakespeare's tragedies is a curious one, compounded as it is of deep emotional involvement in a few scenes in some plays and a strange dispassionateness toward most of the others. I suspect that his emotional involvement took root when he read Shakespeare as a boy—one remembers the terror he experienced in reading of the Ghost in *Hamlet* , and it was probably also as a boy that he suffered that shock of horrified outrage and grief at the death of Cordelia that prevented him from rereading the scene until be came to edit the play. Johnson's deepest feelings and convictions, Professor Clifford has recently reminded us, can be traced back to his childhood and adolescence. But it is surprising to learn, as one does from his commentary, that other scenes in these very plays (*Hamlet* and *King Lear* , and in *Macbeth* , too) leave him unmoved, if one can so interpret the absence of any but an explanatory note on, say, Lear's speech beginning "Pray, do not mock me;/I am a very foolish fond old man." Besides this negative evidence there is also the positive evidence of many notes which display the dispassionate editorial mind at work where one might expect from Johnson an outburst of personal feeling. There are enough of these outbursts to warrant our expecting others, but we are too frequently disappointed. Perhaps Johnson thought of most of Shakespeare's tragedies as "imperial tragedies" and that is why he could maintain a stance of aloofness; conversely, "the play of *Timon* is a domestick Tragedy, and therefore strongly fastens on the attention of the reader." But the "tragedy" of Timon does not capture the attention of the modern reader, and perhaps all attempts to fix Johnson's likes and dislikes, and the reasons for them, in the canon of Shakespeare's plays must circle endlessly without ever getting to their destination.

TRAGEDIES

MACBETH

(392) Most of the notes which the present editor has subjoined to this play were published by him in a small pamphlet in 1745.

I.i (393,*) *Enter three Witches*] In order to make a true estimate of the abilities and merit of a writer, it it always necessary to examine the genius of his age, and the opinions of his contemporaries. A poet who should now make the whole action of his tragedy depend upon enchantment, and produce the chief events by the assistance of supernatural agents, would be censured as transgressing the bounds of probability, be banished from the theatre to the nursery, and condemned to write fairy tales instead of tragedies; but a survey of the notions that prevailed at the time when this play was written, will prove that Shakespeare was in no danger of such censures, since he only turned the system that was then universally admitted, to his advantage, and was far from overburthening the credulity of his audience.

The reality of witchcraft or enchantment, which, though not strictly the same, are confounded in this play, has in all ages and countries been credited by the common people, and in most, by the learned themselves. These phantoms have indeed appeared more frequently, in proportion as the darkness of ignorance has been more gross; but it cannot be shown, that the brightest gleams of knowledge have at any time been sufficient to drive them out of the world. The time in which this kind of credulity was at its height, seems to have been that of the holy war, in which the Christians imputed all their defeats to enchantments or diabolical opposition, as they ascribed their success to the assistance of their military saints; and the learned Dr. Warburton appears to believe (*Suppl. to the Introduction to Don Quixote*) that the first accounts of enchantments were brought into this part of the world by those *who* returned from their eastern expeditions. But there is always some distance between the birth and maturity of folly as of wickedness: this opinion had long existed, though perhaps the application of it had in no foregoing age been so frequent, nor the reception so general. Olympiodorus, in Photius's extracts, tells us of one Libanius, who practised this kind of military magic, and having promised [Greek: choris opliton kata barbaron energein] to perform great things against the Barbarians without soldiers, was, at the instances of the empress Placidia, put to death, when he was about to have given proofs of his abilities. The empress shewed some kindness in her anger by cutting him off at a time so convenient for his reputation.

But a more remarkable proof of the antiquity of this notion may be found in St. Chrysostom's book *de Sacerdotia* , which exhibits a scene of enchantments not exceeded by any romance of the middle age: he supposes a spectator overlooking a field of battle attended by one that points out all the various objects of horror, the engines of destruction, and the arts of slaughter. [Greek: Deichnuto de eti para tois enantiois kai petomenous hippous dia tinos magganeias, kai oplitas di' aeros pheromenous, kai pasaen goaeteias dunomin kai idean.] *Let him then proceed to shew him in the opposite armies horses flying by enchantment, armed men transported through the air, and every power and form of magic.* Whether St. Chrysostom believed that such performances were really to be seen in a day of battle, or only endeavoured to enliven his description, by adopting the notions of the vulgar, it is equally certain, that such nations were in his time received, and that therefore they were not imported from the Saracens in a later age; the wars with the Saracens however gave occasion to their propagation, not only as bigotry naturally discovers prodigies, but as the scene of action was removed to a great distance.

The Reformation did not immediately arrive at its meridian, and though day was gradually encreasing upon us, the goblins of witchcraft still continued to hover in the twilight. In the time of queen Elizabeth was the remarkable trial of the witches of Warbois, whose conviction is still commemorated in an annual sermon at Huntingdon. But in the reign of king James, in which this tragedy was written, many circumstances concurred to propagate and confirm this opinion. The king, who was much celebrated for his knowledge, had, before his arrival in England, not only examined in person a woman accused of witchcraft, but had given a very formal account of the practices and illusions of evil spirits, the compacts of witches, the ceremonies used by them, the manner of detecting them, and the justice of punishing them, in his dialogues of *Daemonologie* , written in the Scottish dialect, and published at Edinburgh. This book was, soon after his accession, reprinted at London, and as the ready way to gain king James's favour was to flatter his speculations, the system of *Daemonologie* was immediately adopted by all who desired either to gain preferment or not to lose it. Thus the doctrine of witchcraft was very powerfully inculcated; and as the greatest part of mankind have no other reason for their opinions than that they are in fashion, it cannot be doubted but this persuasion made a rapid progress, since vanity and credulity co-operated in its favour. The infection soon reached the parliament, who, in the first year of king James, made a law, by which it was enacted, chap. xii. "That if any person shall use any invocation or conjuration of any evil or wicked spirit; 2. or shall consult, covenant with, entertain, employ, feed or reward any evil or cursed spirit to or for any intent or purpose; 3. or take up any dead man, woman or child out of the grave,—or the skin, bone, or any part of the dead person, to be employed or used in any manner of witchcraft, sorcery, charm, or enchantment; 4. or shall use, practise or exercise any sort of witchcraft, sorcery, charm, or enchantment; 5. whereby any person shall be destroyed, killed, wasted, consumed, pined, or lamed in any part of the body; 6. That every such person being convicted shall suffer death." This law was repealed in our own time.

Thus, in the time of Shakespeare, was the doctrine of witchcraft at once established by law and by the fashion, and it became not only unpolite, but criminal, to doubt it; and as prodigies are always seen in proportion as they are expected, witches were every day discovered, and multiplied as fast in some places, that bishop Hall mentions a village in Lancashire, where their number was greater than that of the houses. The jesuits and sectaries took advantage of this universal error, and endeavoured to promote the interest of their parties by pretended cures of persons afflicted by evil spirits; but they were detected and exposed by the clergy of the established church.

Upon this general infatuation Shakespeare might be easily allowed to found a play, especially since he has followed with great exactness such histories as were then thought true; nor can it be doubted that the scenes of enchantment, however they may now be ridiculed, were both by himself and his audience thought awful and affecting.

I.i.10 (396,5) Fair is foul, and foul is fair] I believe the meaning is, that *to us* , perverse and malignant as we are, *fair is foul, and foul is fair* .

I.ii.14 (398,9) And Fortune, on his damned quarry smiling] Thus the old copy; but I am inclined to read *quarrel* . *Quarrel* was formerly used for *cause* , or for *the occasion of a quarrel* , and is to be found in that sense in Hollingshed's account of the story of Macbeth, who, upon the creation of the prince of

Cumberland, thought, says the historian, that he had *a just quarrel* , to endeavour after the crown. The sense therefore is, *Fortune smiling on his excrable cause* , &c. This is followed by Dr. Warburten. (see 1765, VI, 373, 4).

I.ii.28 (400,4) Discomfort swells] *Discomfort* the natural opposite to *comfort* . *Well'd* , for *flawed* , was an emendation. The common copies have, *discomfort swells* .

I.ii.37 (400,5) As cannons overcharg'd with double cracks,

So they

Doubly redoubled strokes upon the foe]

Mr. Theobald has endeavoured to improve the sense of this passage by altering the punctuation thus:

—*they were*

As cannons overcharg'd, with double cracks

So they redoubled strokes —

He declares, with some degree of exultation, that he has no idea of a *cannon charged with double cracks* ; but surely the great author will not gain much by an alteration which makes him say of a hero, that he *redoubles strokes with double cracks* , an expression not more loudly to be applauded, or more easily pardoned than that which is rejected in its favour. That a cannon is charged *with thunder* , or *with double thunders* , may be written, not only without nonsense, but with elegance, and nothing else is here meant by *cracks* , which in the time of this writer was a word of such emphasis and dignity, that in this play he terms the general dissolution of nature the *crack of doom* .

The old copy reads,

They doubly redoubled strokes .

I.ii.46 (401,8) So should he look, that seems to speak things strange] The meaning of this passage, as it now stands, is, *so should he look, that looks as if he told things strange* . But Rosse neither yet told strange things, nor could look as if he told them; Lenox only conjectured from his air that he had strange things to tell, and therefore undoubtedly said,

What haste looks thro' his eyes?

So should he look, that teems *to speak thinks strange* .

He looks like one that *is big with* something of importance; a metaphor so natural that it is every day used in common discourse.

I.ii.55 (402,1) Confronted him with self-comparisons] [Theobald interpreted "him" as Cawdor; Johnson, in 1745, accused Shakespeare of forgetfulness on the basis of Theobald's error; and Warburton here speaks of "blunder upon blunder."] The second blunderer was the present editor.

I.iii.6 (403,5) *Aroint thee, witch* !] In one of the folio editions the reading is *Anoint thee* , in a sense very consistent with the common accounts of witches, who are related to perform many supernatural acts by the means of unguents, and particularly to fly through the air to the places where they meet at their hellish festivals. In this sense, *anoint thee, Witch* , will mean, *Away, Witch, to your infernal assembly* . This reading I was inclined to favour, because I had met with the word *aroint* in no other authour till looking into Hearne's Collections I found it in a very old drawing, that he has published, in which St. Patrick is represented visiting hell, and putting the devils into great confusion by his presence, of whom one that is driving the damned before him with a prong, has a label issuing out of his mouth with these words, OUT OUT ARONGT, of which the last is evidently the same with *aroint* , and used in the same sense as in this passage.

I.iii.15 (405,8) And the very points they blew] As the word *very* is here of no other use than to fill up the verse, it is likely that Shakespeare wrote *various* , which might be easily mistaken for *very* , being either negligently read, hastily pronounced, or imperfectly heard.

I.iii.21 (405,9) He shall live a man forbid] Mr. Theobald has very justly explained *forbid* by *accursed* , but without giving any reason of his interpretation.

As to *forbid* therefore implies to *prohibit* , in opposition to the word *bid* in its present sense, it signifies by the same kind of opposition to *curse* , when it is derived from the same word in its primitive meaning.

I.iii.42 (409,3) are you aught/That man may question?] Are ye any beings with which man is permitted to hold converse, or of which it is lawful *to ask questions* ?

I.iii.53 (410,5) Are ye fantastical] By *fantastical* , he means creatures of fantasy or imagination; the question is, Are these real beings before us, or are we deceived by illusions of fancy?

I.iii.97 (412,8) As thick as tale] [As thick as hail] Was Mr. Pope's correction. The old copy has,

—*As thick* as tale

Can post *with* post;—

which perhaps is not amiss, meaning that the news came as *thick* as a *tale* can *travel* with the *post* . Or we may read, perhaps yet better,

—*As thick as tale*

Came *post with post* ;—

That is, posts arrived as fast as they could be counted.

I.iii.130 (414,4) This supernatural solliciting] *Solliciting* is rather, in my opinion, *incitement* than *information* .

I.iii.134 (414,5) why do I yield] To *yield* is, simply, to *give way to* .

I.iii.137 (414,6) Present fears/Are less than horrible imaginings] [W: feats] *Present fears* are *fears of things present* , which Macbeth declares, and every man has found, to be less than the *imagination* presents them while the objects are yet distant. *Fears* is right.

I.iii.140 (415,7) single state of man] The *single state of man* seems to be used by Shakespeare for an *individual* , in opposition to a *commonwealth* , or *conjunct body* .

I.iii.40 (415,8) function/Is smother'd in surmise; and nothing is,/ But what is not] All powers of action are oppressed and crushed by one overwhelming image in the mind, and nothing is present to me, but that which is really future. Of things now about me I have no perception, being intent wholly on that which has yet no existence.

I.iii.147 (415,9) Time and the hour runs through the roughest day] I suppose every reader is disgusted at the tautology in this passage, *Time and the hour* , and will therefore willingly believe that Shakespeare wrote it thus,

Come what come may ,

Time! on!—*the hour runs thro' the roughest day* .

Macbeth is deliberating upon the events which are to befall him, but finding no satisfaction from his own thoughts, he grows impatient of reflection, and resolves to wait the close without harrassing hinaelf with conjectures.

Come what come may .

But to shorten the pain of suspense, he calls upon Time In the usual stile of ardent desire, to quicken his motion,

Time! on! —

He then comforts himself with the reflection that all his perplexity must have an end,

—*the hour runs thro' the roughest day.*

This conjecture is supported by the passage in the letter to his lady, in which he says, *they referred me to the* coming on of time, *with Hail, King that shalt be* .

I.iii.149 (416,1) My dull brain was wrought] My head was *worked* , *agitated* , put into commotion.

I.iv.9 (417,3) studied in his death] Instructed in the art of dying. It was usual to say *studied* , for *learned* in science.

I.iv.12 (417,4) To find the mind's construction in the face] The *construction of* *the mind* is, I believe, a phrase peculiar to Shakespeare; it implies the *frame* or *disposition* of the mind, by which it is determined to good or ill.

I.iv.26 (418,5) Which do but what they should, by doing everything, Safe toward your love and honour] Of the last line of this speech, which is certainly, as it is now read, unintelligible, an emendation has been attempted, which Dr. Warburton and Dr. Theobald once admitted as the true reading:

—*our duties*

Are to your throne and state, children and servants,

Which do but what they should, in doing every thing

Fiefs *to your love and honour.*

My esteem for these critics inclines me to believe that they cannot be much pleased with these expressions *fiefs to love* , or *fiefs to honour* , and that they have proposed this alteration rather because no other occured to them, than because they approved of it. I shall therefore propose a bolder change, perhaps with no better success, but *sua cuique placent* . I read thus,

—*our duties*

Are to your throne and state, children and servants

Which do but what they should, in doing nothing,

Save *toward* your love and honour.

We do but perform our duty when we contract all our views to your service, when we act with *no other* principle than regard to *your love and honour* .

It is probable that this passage was first corrupted by writing *safe* for *save* , and the lines then stood thus:

—*doing nothing*

Safe toward your love and honour.

which the next transcriber observing to be wrong, and yet not being able to discover the real fault, altered to the present reading.

Dr. Warburton has since changed *fiefs* to *fief'd* , and Hanmer has altered *safe* to *shap'd* . I am afraid none of us have hit the right word.

I.v.2 (420, 6) *by the perfected report*] By the best intelligence. Dr. Warburton would read, *perfected* , and explains *report* by *prediction* . Little regard can be paid to an emendation that instead of clearing the sense, makes it more difficult.

I.v.23 (420, 7) thoud'st have, great Glamis,/That which cries, *Thus thou must do, if thou have it*] As the object of Macbeth's desire is here introduced speaking of itself, it is necessary to read,

—*thoud'st have, great Glamis,*

That which cries , thus thou must do, if thou have *me* .

I.v.39 (422, 8) The raven himself is hoarse] Dr. Warburton reads,

—*The raven himself's* not *hoarse* .

Yet I think the present words may stand. The messenger, says the servant, had hardly breath *to make up his message* ; to which the lady answers mentally, that he may well want breath, such a message would add hoarseness to the raven. That even the bird, whose harsh voice is accustomed to predict calamities, could not *croak the entrance of* Duncan but in a note of unwonted harshness.

I.v.42 (422, 2) mortal thoughts] This expression signifies not *the thoughts of mortals* , but *murtherous, deadly* , or *destructive designs* . So in act 5,

Hold fast the mortal *sword* .

And in another place,

With twenty mortal *murthers* .

I.v.47 (422, 3) nor keep peace between/The effect, and it!] The intent of lady Macbeth evidently is to wish that no womanish tenderness, or conscientious remorse, may hinder her purpose from proceeding to effect; but neither this, nor indeed any other sense, is expressed by the present reading, and therefore it cannot be doubted that Shakespeare wrote differently, perhaps thus,

That no compunctious visitings of nature

Shake my fell purpose, nor keep pace *between*

Th' effect, and it .—

To *keep* pace *between* may signify *to pass between* , to *intervene* . *Pace* is on many occasions a favourite of Shakespeare's. This phrase is indeed not usual in this sease, but was it not its novelty that gave occasion to the present corruption? [The sense is, *that no compunctious visitings of nature* may prevail upon her, to give place in her mind to *peaceful* thoughts, or to rest one moment in quiet, from the hour of her purpose to its full completion in the effect. REVISAL.] This writer thought himself perhaps very sagacious that be found a meaning which nobody missed, the difficulty still remains how such a meaning is made by the words. (see 1765, VI, 394, 6)

I.v.49 (423, 5) take my milk for gall] *Take* away *my milk* , and put *gall* into the place.

I.v.51 (423, 6) You wait on nature's mischief!] *Nature's mischief* is mischief done to nature, violation of nature's order committed by wickedness.

I.v.55 (423,8) To cry, *hold, hold*!] On this passage there is a long criticism in the *Rambler* .

I.v.58 (424,1) This ignorant present time] *Ignorant* has here the signification of *unknowing* ; that it, I feel by anticipation these future hours, of which, according to the process of nature, the present time would be *ignorant* .

I.vi.3 (425,3) our gentle senses] *Senses* are nothing more *than each man's sense* . *Gentle senses* is very elegant, as it means *placid* , *calm* , *composed* , and intimates the peaceable delight of a fine day. (see 1765, VI,396,2)

I.vi.7 (426,5) coigne of 'vantage] Convenient corner.

I.vi.13 (426,7) How you should bid god-yield as for your pains] I believe *yield* , or, as it is in the folio of 1623, *eyld* , is a corrupted contraction of *shield* . The wish implores not *reward* but *protection* .

I.vii.1 (428,1) If it were *done*] A man of learning recommends another punctuation:

If it were done, when 'tis done, then 'twere well.

It were done quickly, if, &c.

I.vii.2 (428,2) If the assassination/Could tramel up the consequence] Of this soliloquy the meaning is not very clear; I have never found the readers of Shakespeare agreeing about it. I understand it thus,

"If that which I am about to do, when it is once *done* and executed, were *done* and ended without any following effects, it would then be best *to do it quickly* ; if the murder could terminate in itself, and restrain the regular course of consequences, if *its success* could secure *its surcease* , if being once done *successfully* , without detection, it could *fix a period* to all vengeance and enquiry, so that *this blow* might be all that I have to do, and this anxiety all that I have to suffer; if this could be my condition, even *here* in *this world* , in this contracted period of temporal existence, on this narrow *bank* in the ocean of eternity, *I would jump the life to come* , I would venture upon the deed without care of any future state. But this is one of *these cases* in which judgment is pronounced and vengeance inflicted upon as *here* in our present life. We teach others to do as we have done, and are punished by our own example." (1773)

I.vii.4 (428,3) With his surcease, success] I think the reasoning requires that we should read,

With its success surcease.

I.vii.6 (429,4) shoal of time] This is Theobald's emendation, undoubtedly right. The old edition has *school* , and Dr. Warburton *shelve* .

I.vii.22 (429,7) or heavens cherubin, hors'd/Upon the sightless couriers of the air] [W: couriers] *Courier* is only *runner* . *Couriers of air* are *winds* , air in motion. *Sightless* is *invisible* .

I.vii.25 (430,8) That tears shall drown the wind] Alluding to the remission of the wind in a shower.

I.vii.28 (430,9) *Enter Lady*] The arguments by which lady Macbeth persuades her husband to commit the murder, afford a proof of Shakespeare's knowledge of human nature. She urges the excellence and dignity of courage, a glittering idea which has dazzled mankind from age to age, and animated sometimes the house-breaker, and sometimes the conqueror; but this sophism Macbeth has for ever destroyed, by distinguishing true from false fortitude, in a line and a half; of which it may almost be said, that they ought to bestow immortality on the author, though all his other productions had been lost:

I dare do all that become a man,

Who dares do more, is none .

This topic, which has been always employed with too much success, is used in this scene with peculiar propriety, to a soldier by a woman. Courage is the distinguishing virtue of a soldier, and the reproach of cowardice cannot be borne by any man from a woman, without great impatience.

She then urges the oaths by which he had bound himself to murder Duncan, another art of sophistry by which men have sometimes deluded their consciences, and persuaded themselves that what would be criminal in others is virtuous in them; this argument Shakespeare, whose plan obliged him to make Macbeth yield, has not confuted, though he might easily have shewn that a former obligation could not be vacated by a latter: that obligations laid on us by a higher power, could not be over-ruled by obligations which we lay upon ourselves.

I.vii.41 (431,1)

—Whouldst thou have that,

Which then esteem'st the ornament of life,

And live a coward in thine own esteem?]

In this there seems to be no reasoning. I should read,

Or *live a coward in thine own esteem* ?

Unless we choose rather,

—*Wouldst thou* leave *that* .

I.vii.45 (431,2) Like the poor cat i' the adage?] The adage alluded to is, *The cat loves fish, but dares not wet her feet, Catus amat pisces, sed men vult tingere plantas* .

I.vii.64 (432,5) Will I with wine and wassel so convince] To *convince* is in Shakespeare to *overpower* or *subdue* , as in this play,

—*Their malady* convinces

The great assay of art .

I.vii.67 (433,6) A limbeck only] That is, shall be only a vessel to emit *fumes* or *vapours* .

I.vii.71 (433,7) our great quell] *Quell* is *murder* . *manquellers* being in the old language the term for which *murderers* is now used.

II.i (434,8) *Enter Banquo, and Fleance with a torch before him*] The place is not mark'd in the old edition, nor is it easy to say where this encounter can be. It is not in the *hall* , as the editors have all supposed it, for Banquo sees the sky; it is not far from the bedchamber, as the conversation shews: it must be in the inner court of the castle, which Banquo might properly cross in his way to bed.

II.i.25 (435,2) If you shall cleave to my consent, Then 'tis,/It shall make honour for you] Macbeth expressed his thought with affected obscurity; he does not mention the royalty, though he apparently has it in his mind, *If you shall cleave to my consent* , if you shall concur with me when I determine to accept the crown, *when 'tis* , when that happens which the prediction promises, *it shall make honour for you* .

II.i.49 (437,6) Now o'er the one half world/Nature seems dead] That is, *over our hemisphere all action and motion seem to have ceased* . This image, which is perhaps the most striking that poetry can produce, has been adopted by Dryden in his *Conquest of Mexico* :

All things are hush'd as Nature's self lay dead, *The mountains seem to nod their drowsy head;*

The little birds in dreams their song repeat,

And sleeping flow'rs beneath the night dews sweat.

Even lust and envy sleep!

These lines, though so well known, I have transcribed, that the contrast between them and this passage of Shakespeare may be more accurately observed.

Night is described by two great poets, but one describes a night of quiet, the other of perturbation. In the night of Dryden, all the disturbers of the world are laid asleep; in that of Shakespeare, nothing but sorcery, lust, and murder, is awake. He that reads Dryden, finds himself lull'd with serenity, and disposed to solitude and contemplation. He that peruses Shakspeare looks round alarmed, and starts to find himself alone. One is the night of a lover, the other, of a murderer.

II.i.52 (438,8)

—wither'd Murther,

—thus with hia stealthy pace,

With Tarquin's ravishing strides, tow'rds his design

moves like a ghost.—]

This was the reading of this passage [ravishing sides] in all the editions before that of Mr. Pope, who for *sides* , inserted in the text *strides* , which Mr. Theobald has tacitly copied from him, though a more proper alteration might perhaps have been made. A *ravishing stride* is an action of violence, impetuosity, and tumult, like that of a savage rushing at his prey; whereas the poet is here attempting to exhibit an image of secrecy and caution, of anxious circumspection and guilty timidity, the *stealthy pace* of a *ravisher* creeping into the chamber of a virgin, and of an assassin approaching the bed of him whom he proposes to murder, without awaking him; these he describes as *moving like ghosts* , whose progression is so different from *strides* , that it has been in all ages represented te be, as Milton expresses it,

Smooth sliding without step .

This hemiatic will afford the true reading of this place, which is, I think, to be corrected thus:

—*and wither'd Murder* .

—*thus with his* stealthy *pace* .

With Tarquin ravishing , slides *tow'rds his design* ,

Moves like a ghost .—

Tarquin is in this place the general name of a ravisher, and the sense is, Now is the time in which every one is a-sleep, but those who are employed in wickedness; the witch who is sacrificing to Hecate, and the ravisher, and the murderer, who, like me, are stealing upon their prey.

When the reading is thus adjusted, he wishes with great propriety, in the following lines, that the *earth* may not *hear his steps* .

II.i.59 (439,3) And take the present horrour from the time,/Which now suits with it] Of this passage an alteration was once proposed by me, of which I have now a less favourable opinion, yet will insert it, as it may perhaps give some hint to other critics:

And take the present horrour from the time,

Which now suits with it .—

I believe every one that has attentively read this dreadful soliloquy is disappointed at the conclusion, which, if not wholly unintelligible, is, at least, obscure, nor can be explained into any sense worthy of the authour. I shall therefore propose a slight alteration:

—*Thou sound and firm-set earth,*

Hear not my steps, which way they walk, for fear

Thy very stones prate of my where-about,

And talk—the present horrour of the time!

That now suits with it .—

Macbeth has, in the foregoing lines, disturbed his imagination by enumerating all the terrors of the night; at length he is wrought up to a degree of frenzy, that makes him afraid of some supernatural discovery of his design, and calls out to the stones not to betray him, not to declare where he walks, nor *to talk* .—As he is going to say of what, he discovers the absurdity of his suspicion, and pauses, but is again overwhelmed by his guilt, and concludes, that such are the horrors of the present night, that the stones may be expected to cry out against him:

That *now suits with it* .—

He observes in a subsequent passage, that on such occasions *stones have been known to move* . It is now a very just and strong picture of a man about to commit a deliberate murder under the strongest conviction of the wickedness of his design. Of this alteration, however, I do not now see much use, and certainly see no necessity.

Whether to *take horrour from the time* means not rather to *catch it* as communicated, than to *deprive the time of horrour* , deserves te be considered.

II.ii.37 (443,6) sleave of care] A skein of silk is called a *sleave* of silk, as I learned from Mr. Seward, the ingenious editor of Beaumont and Fletcher.

II.ii.56 (444,8) gild the faces of the grooms withal,/For it must seem their guilt] Could Shakespeare possibly mean to play upon the similitude of *gild* and *guilt* .

II.iii.45 (447,5) I made a shift to cast him] To *cast him up* , to ease my stomach of him. The equivocation is between *cast* or *throw* , as a term of wrestling, and *cast* or *cast up* .

II.iii.61 (448,7)

—strange screams of death;

And prophesying, with accents terrible

Of dire combustions, and confus'd events,

New hatch'd to the woeful time: The obscure bird

Clamour'd the live-long night: some say the earth

Was feverous, and did shake]

Those lines I think should be rather regulated thus:

—*prophecying with accents terrible,*

Of dire combustions and cosfus'd events.

New-hatch'd to th' woful time, the obscure bird

Clamour'd the live-long night. Some say the earth

Was fev'rous and did shake.

A *prophecy* of an *event new hatch'd* , seems to be a *prophecy* of an *event past* . And *a prophecy new hatch'd* is a wry expression. The term *new hatch'd* is properly applicable to a *bird* , and that birds of ill omen should be *new-hatch'd to the woful time* , that is, should appear in uncommon numbers, is very consistent with the rest of the prodigies here mentioned, and with the universal disorder into which nature is described as thrown, by the perpetration of this horrid murder. (see 1765, VI, 413, 7)

II.iii.117 (452,3) Here, lay Duncan,/His silver skin lac'd with his golden blood] Mr. Pope has endeavoured to improve one of these lines by substituting *goary blood* for *golden blood* ; but it may easily be admitted that he who could on such an occasion talk of *lacing the silyer skin* , would *lace it* with *golden blood* . No amendment can be made to this line, of which every word is equally faulty, but by a general blot.

It is not improbable, that Shakespeare put these forced and unnatural metaphors into the mouth of Macbeth as a mark of artifice and dissimulation, to shew the difference between the studied language of hypocrisy, and the natural outcries of sudden passion. This whole speech so considered, is a remarkable instance of judgment, as it consists entirely of antithesis and metaphor.

II.iii.122 (432,5) Unmannerly breech'd with gore] An *unmannerly dagger* , and a *dagger breech'd* , or as in some editions *breech'd with* , gore, are expressions not easily to be understood. There are undoubtedly two faults in this passage, which I have endeavored to take away by reading,

—*daggers*

Unmanly drench'd *with gore* :—

I saw drench'd *with the King's blood the fatal daggers, not only instruments of murder but evidence of cowardice* .

Each of these words might easily be confounded with that which I have substituted for it, by a hand not exact, a casual blot, or a negligent inspection, [W: Unmanly reech'd] Dr. Warburton has, perhaps, rightly put *reach'd* for *breech'd* .

II.iii.138 (454,8)

In the great hand of God I stand; and thence,

Against the undivulg'd pretence I fight

Of treasonous malice]

Pretence is not act, but *simulation* , a *pretence* of the traitor, whoever he might be, to suspect some other of the murder. I here fly to the protector of innocence from any charge which, yet *undivulg'd* , the traitor may pretend to fix upon me.

II.iii.147 (454,7) This murtherous shaft that's shot,/Hath not yet lighted] The design to fix the murder opon some innocent person, has not yet taken effect.

II.iv.15 (456,9) minions of their race] Theobald reads,

—*minions of* the *race* ,

very probably, and very poetically.

II.iv.24 (456,1) What good could they pretend?] To *pretend* is here to *propose to themselves* , to *set before themselves* as a motive of action.

III.i.7 (457,2) As upon thee, Macbeth, their speeches shine] *Shine* , for appear with all the *lustre* of *conspicuous* truth.

III.i.56 (459,4) as, it is said,/Mark Anthony's was by Caesar] Though I would not often assume the critic's privilege of being confident where certainty cannot be obtained, nor indulge myself too far in departing from the established reading; yet I cannot but propose the rejection of this passage, which I believe was an insertion of some player, that having so much learning as to discover to what Shakespeare alluded, was not willing that his audience should be less knowing than himself, and has therefore weakened the authour's sense by the intrusion of a remote and useless image into a speech bursting from a man wholly possess'd with his own present condition, and therefore not at leisure to explain his own allusions to himself. If these words are taken away, by which not only the thought but the numbers are injured, the lines of Shakespeare close together without any traces of a breach.

My genius is rebuk'd. He chid the sisters.

This note was written before I was fully acquainted with Shakespeare's manner, and I do not now think it of much weight; for though the words, which I was once willing to eject, seem interpolated, I believe they may still be genuine, and added by the authour in his revision. The authour of the *Revisal* cannot admit the measure to be faulty. There is only one foot, he says, put for another. This is one of the effects of literature in minds not naturally perspicacious. Every boy or girl finds the metre imperfect, but the pedant comes to its defence with a tribrachys or an anapaest, and sets it right at once by applying to one language the rules of another. If we may be allowed to change feet, like the old comic writers, it will not be easy to write a line not metrical. To hint this once, is sufficient. (see 1765, VI, 424, 2)

III.i.65 (460,5) For Banquo's issue have I fil'd my mind] [W: 'filed] This mark of contraction is not necessary. To *file* is in the bishop's *Bible* .

III.i.69 (460,6) the common enemy of man] It is always an entertainment to an inquisitive reader, to trace a sentiment to its original source; and therefore, though the term *enemy of man* , applied to the devil, is in itself natural and obvious, yet some may be pleased with being informed, that Shakespeare probably borrowed it from the first lines of the Destruction of Troy, a book which he is known to have read. This expression, however, he might have had in many other places. The word *fiend* signifies enemy.

III.i.71 (461,7) come, Fate, into the list,/And champion me to the utterance!] This passage will be best explained by translating it into the language from whence the only word of difficulty in it is borrowed, "*Que la destinée se rende en lice, et qu'elle me donne un defi a l'outrance* ." A challenge or a combat *a l'outrance* , *to extremity* , was a fix'd term in the law of arms, used when the combatants engaged with an *odium internecinum, an intention to destroy each other* , in opposition to trials of skill at festivals, or on other occasions, where the contest was only for reputation or a prize. The sense therefore is, *Let Fate, that has foredoom'd the exaltation of the sons of Banquo, enter the lists against me, with the utmost animosity, in defence of its own decrees, which I will endeavour to invalidate, whatever be the danger* . [Johnson quotes Warburton's note] After the former explication, Dr. Warburton was desirous to seem to do something; and he has therefore made *Fate* the *marshal* , whom I had made the *champion* , and has left Macbeth to enter the lists without an opponent.

III.i.88 (462,9) Are you so gospell'd] Are you of that degree of precise virtue? *Gospeller* was a name of contempt given by the Papists to the Lollards, the puritans of early times, and the precursors of *protestantism* .

III.i.94 (463,1) Showghes] *Showghes* are probably what we now call *shocks* , demi-wolves, *lyciscae* ; dogs bred between wolves and dogs. (1773)

III.i.95 (463,2) the valued file] In this speech the word *file* occurs twice, and seems in both places to have a meaning different from its present use. The expression, *valued file* , evidently means, a list or catalogue of value. A station in the *file* , and not in the worst rank, may mean, a place in the list of manhood, and not in the lowest place. But *file* seems rather to mean in this place, a post of honour; the first rank, in opposition to the last; a meaning which I have not observed in any other place. (1773)

III.i.112 (465,2) So weary with disasters, tug'd with fortune] *Tug'd with fortune* may be, *tug'd* or *worried* by fortune.

III.i.130 (465,4) Acquaint you with the perfect spy o' the time] What is meant by *the spy of the time* , it will be found difficult to explain; and therefore sense will be cheaply gained by a slight alteration.—Macbeth is assuring the assassins that they shall not want directions to find Banquo, and therefore says,

I will —

Acquaint you with a perfect spy *o' the time* .

Accordingly a third murderer joins them afterwards at the place of action.

Perfect is *well instructed* , or *well informed* , as in this play,

Though in your state of honour I am perfect.

though I am *well acquainted* with your quality and rank. [Warburton explained this as "the critical juncture"] How the *critical juncture* is the *spy o' the time* I know not, but I think my own conjecture right.

III.ii.38 (467,1) nature's copy's not eternal] The *copy* , the *lease* , by which they hold their lives from nature, has its time of termination limited.

III.iii.1 (469,6) But who did bid thee join with us?] The meaning of this abrupt dialogue is this. The *perfect spy* , mentioned by Macbeth in the foregoing scene, has, before they enter upon the stage, given them the directions which were promised at the time of their agreement; yet one of the murderers suborned suspects him of intending to betray them; the other observes, that, by his exact knowledge of *what they were to do* , he appears to be employed by Macbeth, and needs not be mistrusted.

III.iv.1 (470,9) You know your own degrees, sit down: at first,/And last the hearty welcome] As this passage stands [sit down:/At first and last], not only the numbers are very imperfect, but the sense, if any can be found, weak and contemptible. The numbers will be improved by reading,

—*sit down at first,*

And last a hearty welcome .

But for *last* should then be written *next* . I believe the true reading is, *You know your own degrees, sit down .—To first*

And last the hearty welcome .

All of whatever degree, from the highest to the lowest, may be assured that their visit is well received.

III.iv.14 (471,1) 'Tis better thee without, than he within] The sense requires that this passage should be read thus:

'Tis better thee *without, than* him *within .*

That is, *I am better pleased that the blood of Banquo should be on thy face than in his body .*

The authour might mean, *It is better that Banquo's blood were on thy face, than* he *in this room* . Expressions thus imperfect are common in his works.

III.iv.33 (472,2) the feast is sold] The meaning is,—That which ia not *given cheerfully* , cannot be called a *gift* , it is something that must be paid for. (1773)

III.iv.57 (473,3) extend his passion] Prolong his suffering; make his fit longer.

III.iv.60 (473,4) O proper stuff!] This speech is rather too long for the circumstances in which it is spoken. It had begun better at, *Shame itself* !

III.iv.63 (473,5)

Oh, these flaws, and starts,

(Impostors to true fear,) would well become

A woman's story at a winter's fire,

Authoriz'd by her grandam]

Flaws , are *sudden gusts* . The authour perhaps wrote,

—Those flaws and starts ,

Impostures true to fear *would well become* ;

A woman's story ,—

These symptoms of terrour and amazement might better become *impostures true* only *to fear, might become a coward at the recital of such falsehoods as no man could credit, whose understanding was not weaken'd by his terrours; tales told by a woman over a fire on the authority of her grandam* .

III.iv.76 (474,6) Ere human statute purg'd the gentle weal] The *gentle weal* , is, the *peaceable community* , the state made quiet and safe by *human statutes* .

Mollia securae peragebant otia gentes .

III.iv.92 (475,7) And all to all] I once thought it should be *hail* to all, but I now think that the present reading is right.

III.iv.105 (475,8) If trembling I inhabit] This is the original reading, which Mr. Pope changed to *inhibit* , which *inhibit* Dr. Warburton interprets *refuse* . The old reading may stand, at least as well as the emendation. Suppose we read,

If trembling I evade *it* .

III.iv.110 (476,9) Can such things be,/And overcome us, like a summer's cloud,/Without our special wonder?] [W: Can't] The alteration is introduced by a misinterpretation. The meaning is not that *these things are like a summer-cloud* , but can such wonders as these pass over us without wonder, as a casual summer cloud passes over us.

III.iv.112 (477,1) You make me strange/Even to the disposition that I owe] You produce in me an *alienation of mind* , which is probably the expression which our author intended to paraphrase.

III.iv.124 (477,2) Augurs, and understood relations] By the word *relation* is understood the *connection* of effects with causes; to *understand relations* as *an angur* , is to know how these things *relate* to each other, which have no visible combination or dependence.

III.iv.141 (479,5) You lack the season of all natures, sleep] I take the meaning to be, *you want sleep* , which *seasons* , or gives the relish to *all nature* . *Indiget* *somni vitae condimenti* .

III.v.24 (480,8) vaporous drop, profound] That is, a drop that has *profound* , *deep* , or *hidden* qualities.

III.v.26 (480,9) slights] Arts; subtle practices.

III.vi (481,1) *Enter Lenox, and another Lord*] As this tragedy, like the rest of Shakespeare's, is perhaps overstocked with personages, it is not easy to assign a reason why a nameless character should be introduced here, since nothing is said that might not with equal propriety have been put into the mouth of any other disaffected man. I believe therefore that in the original copy it was written with a very common form of contraction Lenox and An. for which the transcriber, instead of Lenox and Angus, set down Lenox and *another Lord* . The author had indeed been more indebted to the transcriber's fidelity and diligence had he committed no errors of greater importance.

III.vi.36 (482,3) and receive free honours] [*Free* for grateful. WARBURTON.] How can *free* be *grateful* ? It may be either honours *freely bestowed* , not purchased by crimes; or honours *without slavery* , without dread of a tyrant.

IV.i (484,5) As this is the chief scene of enchantment in the play, it is proper in this place to observe, with how much judgment Shakespeare has selected all the circumstances of his infernal ceremonies, and how exactly he has conformed to common opinions and traditions:

Thrice the brinded cat hath mew'd .

The usual form in which familiar spirits are reported to converse with witches, is that of a cat. A witch, who was tried about half a century before the time of Shakespeare, had a cat named Rutterkin, as the spirit of one of these witches was Grimalkin; and when any mischief was to be done she used to bid Rutterkin *go and fly* , but once when she would have sent Rutterkin to torment a daughter of the countess of Rutland, instead of *going* or *flying* , he only cried *mew* , from whence she discovered that the lady was out of his power, the power of witches being not universal, but limited, as Shakespeare has taken care to inculcate:

Though his bark cannot be lost,

Yet it shall be tempest-tost.

The common afflictions which the malice of witches produced were melancholy, fits, and loss of flesh, which are threatened by one of Shakespeare's witches:

Weary sev'n nights, nine times nine,

Shall he dwindle, peak, and pine.

It was likewise their practice to destroy the cattle of their neighbours, and the farmers have to this day many ceremonies to secure their cows and other cattle from witchcraft; but they seem to have been most suspected of malice against swine. Shakespeare has accordingly made one of his witches declare that she has been *killing swine* , and Dr. Harsenet observes, that about that time, *a sow could not be ill of the measles, nor a girl of the sullens, but some old woman was charged with witchcraft* .

Toad, that under the cold stone,

Days and night has, thirty-one,

Swelter'd venom sleeping got;

Boil thou first i'the charm'd pot .

Toads have likewise long lain under the reproach of being by some means accessory to witchcraft, for which reason Shakespeare, in the first scene of this play, calls one of the spirits Padocke or Toad, and now takes care to put a toad first into the pot. When Vaninus was seized at Theleuse, there was found at his lodgings *ingens Bufo Vitro inclusus, a great toad shut in a vial* , upon which those that prosecuted him, *Veneficium exprebrabent, charged him* , I suppose, *with witchcraft* .

Fillet of fenny snake,

In the cauldron boil and bakae:

Eye of newt, and toe of frog;—

For a charm, &c .

The propriety of these ingredients may be known by consulting the books *de*

Viribus Animalium and *de Mirabilibus Mundi* , ascribed to Albertus Magnus, in which the reader, who has time and credulity, may discover very wonderful secrets.

Finger of birth-strangled babe,

Ditch deliver'd by a drab ;—

It has been already mentioned in the law against witches, that they are supposed to take up dead bodies to use in enchantments, which was confessed by the woman whom king James examined, and who had of a dead body that was divided in one of their assemblies, two fingers for her share. It is observable that Shakespeare, on this great occasion, which involves the fate of a king, multiplies all the circumstanaces of horror. The babe, whose finger is used, must be strangled in its birth; the grease must not only be human, but must have dropped from a gibbet, the gibbet of a murderer; and even the sow, whose blood is used, must have offended nature by devouring her own farrow. These are touches of judgment and genius.

And now about the cauldron sing—

Black spirits and white,

Blue spirits and grey,

Mingle, mingle, mingle,

You that mingle say .

And in a former part,

—*weyward sisters, hand in hand,—*

Thus do go about, about.

Thrice to thine, and thrice to mine.

And thrice again to make up nine!

These two passages I have brought together, because they both seem subject to the objection of too much levity for the solemnity of enchantment, and may both be shewn, by one quotation from Camden's account of Ireland, to be founded upon a practice really observed by the uncivilised natives of that country: "When any one gets a fall, *says the informer of Camden* , he starts up, and, *turning three times to the right* , digs a hole in the earth; for they imagine that there is a spirit in the ground, and if he falls sick in two or three days, they send one of their women that is skilled in that way to the place, where she says, I call thee from the east, west, north, and south, from the groves, the woods, the rivers, and the fens, from the fairies *red, black, white* ." There was likewise a book written before the time of Shakespeare, describing, amongst other properties, the *colours* of spirits.

Many other circumstances might be particularised, in which Shakespeare has shown his judgment and his knowledge.

IV.i.53 (489,6) yesty waves] That is, *foaming* or *frothy waves* .

IV.i.88 (491,1) the round/And top of sovereignty?] This *round* is that part of the crown that encircles the head. The *top* is the ornament that rises above it.

IV.i.95 (492,3) Who can impress the forest] *i.e.* who can command the forest to serve him like a soldier impress'd. (1773)

IV.i.97 (492,4) Rebellious head, rise never] Mr. Theobald, who first proposed this change ["head" for "dead"] rightly observes, that *head* means *host* , or power.

—*Douglas and the rebels met,*

A mighty and a fearful head *they are* .

And again,

His divisions—are in three heads .

IV.i.113 (493,6) Thy crown does sear mine eye-balls] The expression of Macbeth, that the *crown* sears *his* eye-balls, is taken from the method formerly practised of destroying the sight of captives or competitors, by holding a burning bason before the eye, which dried up its humidity. Whence the Italian, *abacinare*

, to *blind* .

IV.i.113 (493,7) And thy air,/Thou other gold-bound brow, is like the first:—/A third is like the former] In former editions,

—*and thy* hair,

Thou other gold-bound brow, is like the first :—

A third is like the former :—

As Macbeth expected to see a train of kings, and was only enquiring from what race they would proceed, he could not be surprised that the *hair* of the second was *bound with gold* like that of the first; he was offended only that the second resembled the first, as the first resembled Banquo, and therefore said,

—*and thy* air,

Thou other gold-bound brow, is like the first .

This Dr. Warburton has followed.

IV.i.144 (495,2) Time, thou anticipat'st my dread exploits] To *anticipate* is here to *prevent* , by taking away the opportunity.

IV.ii.9 (496,3) He wants the natural touch] Natural sensibility. He is not touched with natural affection.

IV.ii.71 (498,7) To do worse to you, were fell cruelty] To do *worse* is, to let her and her children be destroyed without warning.

IV.iii.2 (500,9) Let us rather/Hold fast the mortal sword; and, like good men,/ Bestride our downfaln birthdom] In former editions,

Let us rather

Hold fast the mortal sword; and, like good men,

Bestride our downfal birthdoom.—]

He who can discover what is meant by him that earnestly exhorts him to *bestride* his *downfal birthdoom* , is at liberty to adhere to the present text; but it is probable that Shakespeare wrote,

—*like good men,*

Bestride our downfaln birthdom—

The allusion is to a man from whom something valuable is about to be taken by violence, and who, that he may defend it without incombrance, lays it on the ground, and stands over it with his weapon in his hand. Our birthdom, or birthright, says he, lies on the ground, let us, like men who are to fight for what is dearest to them, not abandon it, but stand over it and defend it. This is a strong picture of obstinate resolution. So Falstaff says to Hal.

When I am down, if thou wilt bestride me, *so* .

Birthdom for *birthright* is formed by the same analogy with *masterdom* in this play, signifying the *privileges* or *rights* of a *master* .

Perhaps it might be *birth-dame* for *mother* ; let us stand over our *mother* that lies bleeding on the ground.

IV.iii.19 (501,4) A good and virtuous nature may recoil/In an imperial charge] A good mind may *recede* from goodness in the execution of a *royal commission* .

IV.iii.23 (501,5) Though all things foul would wear the brows of grace,/Yet grace must look still so] This is not very clear. The meaning perhaps is this: —*My suspicions cannot injure you, if you be virtuous, by supposing that a traitor may put on your virtuous appearance. I do not say that your virtuous appearance proves you a traitor; for virtue must wear its proper form, though that form be often counterfeited by villany* .

IV.iii.26 (502,6) Why in that rawness left you wife and children] Without previous provision, without due preparation, without *maturity* of counsel.

IV.iii.33 (502,7) Wear thou thy wrongs] That is, *Poor country, wear thou thy wrongs* .

IV.iii.69 (503,1) Sudden, malicious] [*Sudden* , for capricious. WARBUR.] Rather violent, passionate, hasty.

IV.iii.85 (504,2) Than summer seeming lust] When I was younger and bolder I corrected it thus,

Than fume, or seething lust .

that is, Than angry passion, or boiling lust. (1773)

IV.iii.135 (506,4) All ready at a point] [W: at appoint] There is no need of change.

IV.iii.136 (506,5) and the chance of goodness/Be like our warranted quarrel!] The *chance of goodness* , as it is commonly read, conveys no sense. If there be not some more important errour in the passage, it should at least be pointed thus:

—*and the chance, of goodness,*

Be like our warranted quarrel !—

That is, may the event be, of the goodness of heaven, [*pro justitia divina*] answerable to the cause.

The author of the *Revisal* conceives the sense of the passage to be rather this: *And may the success of that goodness, which is about to exert itself in my behalf, be such as may be equal to the justice of my quarrel* .

But I am inclined to believe that Shakespeare wrote,

—and the chance, O goodness,

Be like our warranted quarrel!—

This some of his transcribers wrote with a small *o* , which another imagined to mean *of* . If we adopt this reading, the sense will be, *and O thou sovereign Goodness, to whom we now appeal, may our fortune answer to our cause* . (see 1765, VI, 462, 7)

IV.iii.170 (508,9) A modern ecstacy] I believe *modern* is only *foolish* or *trifling* .

IV.iii.196 (509,2), fee-grief] A peculiar sorrow; a grief that hath a single owner. The expression is, at least to our ears, very harsh.

IV.iii.216 (511,4) He has no children] It has been observed by an anonymous critic, that this is not said of Macbeth, who had children, but of Malcolm, who having none, supposes a father.

V.i.86 (515,8) My mind she has mated] [Conquer'd or subdued. POPE.] Rather astonished, confounded.

V.ii.24 (516,1) When all that is within him does condemn/Itself, for being there?] That is, when all the faculties of the mind are employed in self-condemnation.

V.iii.1 (516,2) Bring me no more reports] *Tell me not any more of desertions—Let all ny subjects leave me—I am safe till,* &c.

V.iii.8 (517,3) English Epicures] The reproach of Epicurism, on which Mr. Theobald has bestowed a note, is nothing more than a natural invective uttered by an inhabitant of a barren country, against, those who have more opportunities of luxury.

V.iii.22 (518,6) my way of life/Is fall'n into the sear] As there is no relation between the *way of life* , and *fallen into the sear* , I am inclined to think that the W is only an M inverted, and that it was originally written,

—*my* May *of life* .

I am now passed from the spring to the autumn of my days, but I am without those comforts that should succeed the spriteliness of bloom, and support me in this melancholy season.

The authour has *May* in the same sense elsewhere.

V.iv.8 (521,1) the confident tyrant/Keeps still in Dunsinane, and will endure/Our setting down before't] He was *confident* of success; so *confident* that he would not fly, but endure their *setting down* before his castle.

V.iv.11 (521,2) For where there is advantage to be given,/ Both more and less have given him the revolt] The impropriety of the expression, *advantage to be given* , and the disagreeable repetition of the word *given* in the next line, incline me to read,

—*where there is* a 'vantage *to be* gone,

Both more and less have given him the revolt.

Advantage or 'vantage , in the time of Shakespeare, signified *opportunity* . *He shut up himself and his soldiers* , (says Malcolm) *in the castle, because when there is an opportunity to be gone they all desert him* .

More and less is the same with *greater and less* . So in the interpolated *Mandeville* , a book of that age, there is a chapter of *India the More and the Less* .

V.iv.20 (522,4) arbitrate]—*arbitrate* is *determine* .

V.v.11 (523,3) fell of hair] My hairy part, my *capillitium* . *Fell* is *skin* .

V.v.17 (523,7) She should have dy'd hereafter;/ There would have been a time for such a word] This passage has very justly been suspected of being corrupt. It is not apparent for what *word* there would have been a *time* , and that there would or would not be a *time* for any *word* seems not a consideration of importance sufficient to transport Macbeth into the following exclamation. I read therefore,

She should have dy'd hereafter.

There would have been a time for—such a world!—

Tomorrow , &c.

It is a broken speech in which only part of the thought is expressed, and may be paraphrased thus: *The queen is dead* . Macbeth. *Her death should have been deferred to some more peaceful hour; had she liv'd longer* , there would at length have been a time for the *honours due to her as a queen, and that respect which I owe her for her fidelity and love. Such is the* world—such is the condition of human life, that we always think to-morrow *will be happier than to-day, but to-morrow and to-morrow steals over us unenjoyed and unregarded,* *and we still linger in the same expectation to the moment appointed for our end. All these days, which have thus passed away, have sent multitudes of fools to the grave, who were engrossed by the same dream of future felicity, and, when life was departing from them, were, like me, reckoning on to-morrow* .

Such was once my conjecture, but I am now less confident. Macbeth might mean, that there would have been a more convenient *time* for such a *word* , for such *intelligence* , and so fall into the following reflection. We say we send *word* when we give intelligence.

V.v.21 (524,8) To the last syllable of recorded time] *Recorded time* seems to signify the time fixed in the decrees of Heaven for the period of life. The *record* of *futurity* is indeed no accurate expression, but as we only know transactions past or present, the language of men affords no term for the volumes of prescience, in which future events may be supposed to be written.

V.v.23 (524,9) The way to dusty death] *Dusty* is a very natural epithet. The second folio has,

The way to study *death* .—

which Mr. Upton prefers, but it is only an errour by an accidental transposition of the types.

V.v.42 (525,2) I pull in resolution, and begin/To doubt the equivocation of the fiend,/ That lies like truth] Though this is the reading of all the editions, yet, as it is a phrase without either example, elegance or propriety, it is surely better to read,

I pall *in resolution,—*

I languish in my constancy, my confidence begins to forsake as .

It is scarcely necessary to observe how easily *pall* might be changed into *pull* by a negligent writer, or mistaken for it by an unskilful printer. With this emendation Dr. Warburton and Mr. Heath concur. (see 1765, VI,478,8)

V.viii.9 (529,3) the intrenchant air] That is, air which cannot be cut.

V.viii.20 (529,5) That palter with us in a double sense] That *shuffle* with ambiguous expressions.

V.viii.48 (531,7) Had I as many sons as I have hairs, I would not wish them to a fairer death]

This incident is thus related from Henry of Huntingdon by Camden in his *Remains* , from which our authour probably copied it.

When Seyward, the martial earl of Northumberland, understood that his son, whom he had sent in service against the Scotchmen, was slain, he demanded whether his wounds were in the fore part or hinder part of his body. When it was answered, in the fore part, he replied, "I am right glad; neither wish I any other death to me or mine."

General Observation. This play is deservedly celebrated for the propriety of its fictions, and solemnity, grandeur, and variety of its action; but it has no nice discriminations of character, the events are too great to admit the influence of particular dispositions, and the course of the action necessarily determines the conduct of the agents.

The danger of ambition is well described; and I know not whether it may not be said in defence of some parts which now seem improbable, that, in Shakespeare's time, it was necessary to warn credulity against vain and illusive predictions.

The passions are directed to their true end. Lady Macbeth is merely detested; and though the courage of Macbeth preserves some esteem, yet every reader rejoices at his fall.

CORIOLANUS

1.i.19 (292,1) but they think, we are too dear] They think that the charge of maintaining us is more than we are worth.

I.i.23 (292,3) ere we become rakes] It is plain that, in our authour's time, we had the proverb, *as lean as a rake* . Of this proverb the original is obscure. *Rake* now signifies a *dissolute man* , a man worn out with disease and debauchery. But the signification is, I think, much more modern than the proverb. *Raekel* , in Islandick, is said to mean a *cur-dog* , and this was probably the first use among us of the word *rake* ; *as lean as a rake* is, therefore, as lean as it dog too worthless to be fed.

1.i.94 (294,4) I will venture/To scale't a little more] [Warburton had taken Theobald to task for emending to "stale't", offering two quotations to prove that "scale" meant "apply."] Neither of Dr. Warburton's examples afford a sense congruous to the present occasion. In the passage quoted, to *scale* may be to *weigh* and *compare* , but where do we find that *scale* is to *apply* ? If we *scale* the two criticks, I think Theobald has the advantage.

I.i.97 (295,5) fob off our disgraces with a tale] *Disgraces* are *hardships, injuries* .

I.i.104 (295,6) where the other instruments] *Where* for *whereas* .

I.i.112 (296,7) Which ne'er came from the lungs] with a smile not indicating pleasure, but contempt.

I.i.120 (296,9) The counsellor heart] The heart was anciently esteemed the seat of prudence. *Homo cordatum* is a *prudent man* .

I.i.163 (297,1) Thou rascal, that art worst in blood, to ruin,/ Lead'st first, to win some 'vantage] I think, we may better read, by an easy change, *Thou rascal that art worst, in blood, to* ruin [to run] *Lead'st first, to win* , &c.

Thou that art the meanest by birth, art the foremost to lead thy fellows *to ruin* , in hope of some advantage. The meaning, however, is perhaps only this, Thou that art a hound, or running dog of the lowest breed, lead'st the pack, when any thing is to be gotten. (see 1765, VI, 493, 1)

I.i.172 (298,4) What would you have, ye curs,/ That like not peace, nor war? The one affrights you,/ The other makes you proud] [W: likes] That *to like* is *to please* , every one knows, but in that sense it is as hard to say why peace should not *like* the people, as, in the other sense, why the people should not *like* peace. The truth is, that Coriolanus does not use the two sentences consequentially, but reproaches them with unsteadiness, then with their other occasional vices.

I.i.202 (300,6) I'd make a quarry/With thousands] Why a quarry? I suppose, not because he would pile them square, but because he would give them for carrion to the birds of prey.

I.i.215 (300,7) To break the heart of generosity] To give the final blow to the *nobles* . *Generosity* is *high birth* .

I.i.231 (301,8) 'tis true, that yon have lately told us./The Volscians are in arms] Coriolanus had been but just told himself that *the Volscians were in arms* . The meaning is, *The intelligence which you gave us some little time ago of the designs of the Volscians is now verified; they are in arms.*

I.i.255 (302,8) Your valour puts well forth] That is, You have in this mutiny shewn fair blossoms of valour.

I.i.260 (303,9) to gird. To *sneer* , to *gibe* . So Falstaff uses the noun, when he says, *every man has a* gird *at me* .

I.i.281 (304,3) in what fashion,/More than his singularity he goes/ Upon this present action] We will learn what he is to do, besides *going himself* ; what are his powers, and what is his appointment.

I.ii.28 (305,4) for the remove/Bring up your army] [W:'fore they] I do not see the nonsense or impropriety of the old reading. Says the senator to Aufidius, *Go to your troops, we will garrison Corioli* . If the Romans besiege us, bring up your army *to remove them* . If any change should be made, I would read,

—*for* their *remove* .

I.iii.16 (307,5) brows bound with oak] The crown given by the Romans to him that saved the life of a citizen, which was accounted more honourable than any other.

I.iv.14 (311,9) nor a man that fears you less than he,/That's lesser than a little] The sense requires it to be read,

nor a man that fears you more *than he* ,

Or more probably,

nor a man but *fears you less than he,*

That's lesser than a little .

I.v.5 (314,4) prize their hours] In the first edition it is, *prize their* hours. I know not who corrected it [to *prize their honours*]. A modern editor, who had made such an improvement, would have spent half a page in ostentation of his sagacity.

I.vi.36 (317,6) Ransoming him, or pitying] *i.e. remitting his ransom* .

I.vi.61 (318,8) swords advanc'd] That is, swords lifted high.

I.vi.83 (319,9) Please you to march,/And four shall quickly draw out my command,/Which men are best inclin'd] I cannot but suspect this passage of corruption. Why should they *march* , that *four* might select those that were *best inclin'd* ? How would their inclinations be known? Who were the *four* that should select them? Perhaps, we may read,

—*Please you to march,*

And fear *shall quickly draw out* of *my command,*

Which men are least *inclin'd* .

It is easy to conceive that, by a little negligence, *fear* might be changed to *four* , and *least* to *best* . Let us march, and that fear which incites desertion will free my army from cowards. (see 1765, VI, 512, 1)

I.viii.11 (320,1) Wert thou the Hector,/That was the whip of your bragg'd progeny] The Romans boasted themselves descended from the Trojans, how then was Hector the *whip of their progeny* ? It must mean the whip with which the Trojans scourged the Greeks, which cannot be but by a very unusual construction, or the authour must have forgotten the original of the Romans; unless *whip* has some meaning which includes *advantage* or *superiority* , as we say, *he has the* whip-hand, for *he has the* advantage.

I.viii.14 (321,2) you have sham'd me/In your condemned seconds] For *condemned* , we may read *contemned* . You have, to my shane, sent me help *which I despise* .

I.ix.12 (321,4) Here is the steed, we the caparisons!] This is an odd encomium. The meaning is, *this man performed the action, and we only filled up the show* .

I.ii.14 (322,5) a charter to extol] A privilege to praise her own son.

I.ix.29 (322,6) Should they not] That is, *not be remembered* .

I.ix.72 (325,9) To the fairness of any power] [*Fairness* , for *utmost* . WARE.] I know not how *fairness* can mean *utmost* . When two engage on *equal* terms, we say it is *fair* ; *fairness* may therefore be *equality; in proportion equal to my power* .

I.ix.76 (325,1) The best] The *chief* men of Corioli.

I.x.5 (326,3) Being a Volsce, be that I am] It may be just observed, that Shakespeare calls the *Volsci, Volsces* , which the modern editors have changed to the modern termination [Volscian]. I mention it here, because here the change has spoiled the measure. *Being a* Volsce, *be that I am. Condition* . [Steevans restored *Volsce* in the text.]

I.x.17 (326,2) My valour's poison'd,/With only suffering stain by him, for him/ Shall flie out of itself] To mischief him, my valour should *deviate from* its own native generosity.

I.x.25 (327,4) At home, upon my brother's guard] In my own house, with my brother posted to protect him.

II.i.8 (328,5) Pray you, who does the wolf love?] When the tribune, in reply to Menenius's remark, on the people's hate of Coriolanus, had observed that even *beasts know their friends* , Menenius asks, *whom does the wolf love* ? implying that there are beasts which love nobody, and that among those beasts are the people.

II.i.43 (329,6) towards the napes of your necks] With allusion to the fable, which says, that every man has a bag hanging before him, in which he puts his neighbour's faults, and another behind him, in which he stows his own.

II.i.56 (330,7) one that converses more with the buttock of the night, than with the forehead of the morning] Rather a late lier down than an early riser.

II.i.84 (330,1) set up the bloody flag against all patience] That is, declare war against patience. There is not wit enough in this satire to recompense its grossness.

II.i.105 (331,2) herdsmen of beastly Plebeians] As kings are called [Greek: poimenes laon].

II.i.115 (331,3) Take my cap, Jupiter, and I thank thee] [W: cup] Shakespeare so often mentions throwing up caps in this play, that Menenius may be well enough supposed to throw up his cap in thanks to Jupiter.

II.i.146 (333,4) possest of this?] *Possest* , in our authour's language, is fully informed.

II.i.178 (334,6) Which being advanc'd, declines] Volumnia, in her boasting strain, says, that her son to kill his enemy, has nothing to do but to lift his hand up and let it fall.

II.i.232 (337,3) Commit the war of white and damask, in/Their nicely gawded cheeks] [W: wars] Has the commentator never heard of roses *contending* with lilies for the empire of a lady's cheek? The *opposition* of colours, though not the *commixture* , may be called a war.

II.i.235 (338,1) As if that whatsoever God] That is, *as if that God who leads him, whatsoever* God he be.

II.i.241 (338,2) From where he should begin, and end] Perhaps it should be read,

From where he should begin t'an *end* .—

II.i.247 (338,3) As he is proud to do't] [I should rather think the author wrote *prone* : because the common reading is scarce sense or English. WARBURTON.] *Proud to do* , is the same as, *proud of doing* , very plain sense, and very common English.

II.i.285 (340,4) carry with us ears and eyes] That is, let us observe what passes, but keep our hearts fixed on our design of crushing Coriolanus.

II.ii.19 (340,5) he wav'd indifferently] That is, *he would wave indifferently* .

II.ii.29 (341,6) supple and courteous to the people; bonnetted] The sense, I think, requires that we should read, *unbonnetted* . Who have risen only by *pulling off their hats* to the people. *Bonnetted* may relate to *people* , but not without harshness.

II.ii.57 (342,7) Your loving motion toward the common body] Your kind interposition with the common people.

II.ii.64 (342,9) That's off, that's off] That is, that is nothing to the purpose.

II.ii.82 (343,1) how can he flatter] The reasoning of Menenius is this: How can he be expected to practice flattery to others, who abhors it so much, that he cannot bear it even when offered to himself.

II.ii.92 (343,2) When Tarquin made a head for Rome] When Tarquin, who had been expelled, *raised a power* to recover Rome.

II.ii.113 (344,6) every motion/Was tim'd with dying cries] The cries of the slaughter'd regularly followed his motions, as musick and a dancer accompany each ether.

II.ii.115 (345,7) The mortal gate] The gate that was made the scene of death.

II.ii.127 (345,8) He cannot but with measure fit the honours] That is, no honour will be too great far him; he will show a mind equal to any elevation.

II.ii.131 (345,1)

rewards

His deeds with doing them; and is content

To spend his time, to end it]

I know not whether my conceit will be approved, but I cannot forbear to think that our author wrote thus.

—he *rewards*

His deeds with doing them, and is content

To spend his time, to spend it.

To do great acts, for the sake of doing them; to spend his life, for the sake of spending it.

II.iii.4 (348,2) We have power in ourselves to do it, but it is a power that we have no power to do] [Warburton saw this as "a ridicule on the Augustine manner of defining *free-will* ."] A ridicule may be intended, but the sense is clear enough. *Power* first signifies *natural power* or *force* , and then *moral power* or *right* . Davies has used the same word with great variety of meaning.

Use all thy powers *that heavenly* power *to praise,*

That gave thee power *to do* .—

II.iii.18 (348,3) many-headed multitude] Hanmer reads, *many-headed* monster, but without necessity. To be *many-headed* includes *monstrousness* .

II.iii.115 (352,7) I will not seal your knowledge] I will not strengthen or compleat your knowledge. The seal is that which gives authenticity to a writing.

II.iii.122 (352,8)

Why in this woolvish tongue should I stand here

To beg of Bob and Dick, that do appear,

Their needless vouches?]

Why stand I here in this ragged apparel to beg of Bob and Dick, and such others as *make their appearance* here, their *unnecessary votes* . I rather think we should read [instead of *voucher*], *Their needless* vouches. But *voucher* may serve, as it may perhaps signify either the act or the agent.

II.iii.122 (352) this woolvish gown] Signifies this *rough hirsute* gown.

II.iii.182 (355,1) ignorant to see't?] [W: "ignorant" means "impotent"] That *ignorant* at any time has, otherwise than consequentially, the same meaning with *impotent* , I do not know. It has no such meaning in this place. *Were you* ignorant *to see it* , is, did you want knowledge to discern it.

II.iii.208 (356,2) free contempt] That is, with contempt open and unrestrained.

II.iii.227 (357,4) Enforce his pride] Object his pride, and enforce the objection.

II.iii.258 (358,7) Scaling his present bearing with his past] That is, *weighing* his past and present behaviour.

II.iii.267 (359,8) observe and answer/The vantage of his anger] Mark, catch, and improve the opportunity, which his hasty anger will afford us.

III.i.23 (360,9) prank them in authority] *Plume, deck, dignify* themselves.

III.i.58 (362,3) This paltring/Becomes not Rome] That is, this trick of dissimulation, this shuffling.

Let these be no more believ'd

That palter *with us in a double sense* . Macbeth.

III.i.60 (362,4) laid falsly] *Falsly* for *treacherously* .

III.i.66 (362,5) Let them regard me, as I do not flatter, and/ Therein behold themselves] Let them look in the mirror which I hold up to them, a mirror which does not flatter, and see themselves.

III.i.89 (363,6) minnows] a *minnow* is one of the smallest river fish, called in some counties a *pink* .

III.i.90 (364,6) 'Twas from the canon] Was contrary to the established role; it was a form of speech to which he has no right.

III.i.98 (364,9) Then vail your ignorance] [W: "ignorance" means "impotence."] Hanmer's transposition deserves notice

—*If they have power,*

Let them have cushions by you; if none, awake

Your dang'rous lenity; if you are learned,

Be not as commmon fools; if you are not,

Then vail your ignorance. You are Plebeians , &c.

I neither think the transposition of one editor right, nor the interpretation of the other. The sense is plain enough without supposing *ignorance* to have any remote or consequential sense. *If this man has power, let the* ignorance *that gave it him* vail *or bow down before him.*

III.i.101 (365,1) You are Plebeians,

If they be Senators: and they are no less,

When, both your voices blended, the greatest taste

Most palates theirs]

These lines may, I think, be made more intelligible by a very slight correction.

—*they no less [than senators]*

When, both your voices blended, the great'st taste

Must palate *theirs.*

When the *taste* of the *great* , the patricians, must *palate* , must *please* [or must *try*] that of the plebeians.

III.i.124 (366,3) They would not thread the gates] That is, *pass* them. We yet say, to *thread* an alley.

III.i.129 (366,4) could never be the native] [*Native* for natural birth.

WARBURTON.] *Native* is here not natural birth, but *natural parent* , or *cause of birth* . But I would read *motive* , which, without any distortion of its meaning, suits the speaker's purpose.

III.i.151 (367,7) That love the fundamental part of state/More than you doubt the change of't] To *doubt* is to *fear* . The meaning is, You whose zeal predominates over your terrours; you who do not so much fear the danger of violent measures, as wish the good to which they are necessary, the preservation of the original constitution of our government.

III.i.158 (368,2) Mangles true judgment] *Judgment* is *judgment* in its common sense, or the faculty by which right is distinguished from wrong.

III.i.159 (368,3) that integrity which should become it] *Integrity* is in this place *soundness* , uniformity, consistency, in the same sense as Dr. Warburton often uses it, when he mentions the *integrity* of a metaphor. To *become* , is to *suit* , to *befit* .

III.i.221 (370,5) are very poisonous] I read, *are very* poisons.

III.i.242 (371,7) One time will owe another] I know not whether to *owe* in this place means to *possess by right* , or to *be indebted* . Either sense may be admitted. *One time* , in which the people are seditious, will *give us power* in some other time; or, *this time* of the people's predominance will *run them in debt* ; that is, will lay them open to the law, and expose them hereafter to more servile subjection.

III.i.248 (372,8) Before the tag return] The lowest and most despicable of the populace are still denominated by those a little above them, *Tag, rag, and bobtail* . (1773)

III.ii.7 (376,4) I muse] That is, *I wonder. I am at a loss* .

III.ii.12 (376,5) my ordinance] My *rank* .

III.ii.51 (378,8) Why force you] Why *urge* you.

III.ii.56 (378,9) bastards, and syllables/Of no allowance, to your bosom's truth] I read, *Of no* alliance,—

therefore *bastards* . Yet *allowance* may well enough stand, as meaning *legal right, established rank* , or *settled authority* . (see 1765, VI, 566, 7)

III.ii.64 (379,1) I am in this/Your wife, your son] I rather think the meaning is, *I am in their* condition, I am *at stake* , together with *your wife, your son* .

III.ii.66 (379,2) our general lowts] Our *common clowns* .

III.ii.69 (379,3) that want] The *want* of their loves.

III.ii.71 (379,4) Not what] In this place *not* seems to signify *not only* .

III.ii.77 (379,5) Waving thy head,/With often, thus, correcting thy stout heart] [W: thy hand,/Which soften thus] The correction is ingenious, yet I think it not right. *Head* or *hand* is indifferent. The *hand* is *waved* to gain attention; the *head* is shaken in token of sorrow. The word *wave* suits better to the hand, but in considering the authour's language, too much stress must not be laid on propriety against the copies. I would read thus,

—*waving thy head* ,

With *often, thus, correcting thy stout heart* .

That is, *shaking thy head* , and *striking* thy breast. The alteration is slight, and the gesture recommended not improper.

III.ii.99 (381,6) my unbarb'd sconce?] The suppliants of the people used to present themselves to them in sordid and neglected dresses.

III.ii.113 (381,8) Which quired with my drum] Which played in concert with my drum.

III.ii.116 (382,1) Tent in my cheeks] To *tent* is *to take up residence* .

III.ii.121 (382,2) honour mine own truth] [Greek: Panton de malis aischuneui sauton]. Pythagoras.

III.ii.125 (382,3) let/Thy mother rather feel thy pride, than fear/ Thy dangerous stoutness] This is obscure. Perhaps, she means, Go, *do thy worst; let me rather feel the* utmost *extremity that thy pride can bring upon us, than live thus in fear of thy dangerous obstinacy* .

III.iii.17 (384,3)

Insisting on the old prerogative

And power in' the truth o' the cause]

This is not very easily understood. We might read,

—o'er *the truth o' the cause* .

III.iii.26 (384,4) and to have his word/Of contradiction] *To have his word of contradiction* is no more than, *he is used to contradict* ; and *to have his word* , that is, *not to be opposed* . We still say of an obstinate disputant, *he will have the last word* .

III.iii.29 (384,5) which looks/With us to break his neck] To *look* is to *wait* or *expect* . The sense I believe is, *What he has in his heart* is waiting there *to help us to break his neck* .

III.iii.57 (386,8) Rather than envy you] *Envy* is here taken at large for *malignity* or ill intention.

III.iii.64 (386,9) season'd office] All *office established* and *settled* by time, and made familiar to the people by long use.

III.iii.96 (387,1) has now at last] Read rather,

—has *now at last* [instead of *as now at last*].

III.iii.97 (387,2) not in the presence] *Not* stands again for *not only* .

III.iii.114 (388,3) My dear wife's estimate] I love my country beyond the rate at which I *value my dear wife* .

III.iii.127 (389,4)

Have the power still

To banish your defenders'; till, at length,

Your ignorance, (which finds not, till it feels)]

Still retain the power of banishing your defenders, till your undiscerning folly, which can foresee no consequences, leave none in the city but yourselves, who are always labouring your own destruction.

It is remarkable, that, among the political maxims of the speculative Harrington, there is one which he might have borrowed from this speech. *The people* , says he, *cannot see, but they can feel* . It is not much to the honour of the people, that they have the same character of stupidity from their enemy and their friend. Such was the power of our authour's mind, that he looked through life in all its relations private and civil.

IV.i.7 (390,1) Fortune's blows,/When most struck home, being gentle wounded, craves/A noble cunning] This it the ancient and authentick reading. The modern editors have, for *gentle wounded* , silently substituted *gently warded* , and Dr. Warburton has explained *gently* by *nobly* . It is good to be sure of our authour's words before we go about to explain their meaning.

The sense is, When Fortune strikes her hardest blows, to be wounded, and yet continue calm, requires a generous policy. He calls this calmness *cunning* , because it is the effect of reflection and philosophy. Perhaps the first emotions of nature are nearly uniform, and one man differs from another in the power of endurance, as he is better regulated by precept and instruction.

They bore as heroes, but they felt as men .

(see 1765, VI, 577, 9)

IV.i.33 (391,3) cautelous baits and practice] By artful and false tricks, and treason.

IV.ii.15 (393,6)

Sic. Are you mankind?

Vol. Ay, fool; Is that a shame? Note but this fool.

Was not a man my father?]

The word *mankind* is used maliciously by the first speaker, and taken perversely by the second. A *mankind* woman is a woman with the roughness of a man, and, in an aggravated sense, a woman ferocious, violent, and eager to shed blood. In this sense Sicinius asks Volumnia, if she be *mankind* . She takes *mankind* for a *human creature* , and accordingly cries out,

—*Note but this, fool.*

Was not a man my father?

IV.ii.18 (394,7) Hadst thou foxship] Hadst thou, fool as thou art, mean cunning enough to banish Coriolanus?

IV.iii.9 (395,7) but your favour is well appear'd by your tongue] [W: well appeal'd] I should read,

—*is well* affear'd,

That is, *strengthened, attested,* a word used by our authour.

My title is affear'd. Macbeth.

To *repeal* may be *to bring to remembrance* , but *appeal* has another meaning.

IV.iii.48 (397,8) already in the entertainment] That is, tho' not actually encamped, yet already in *pay* . To *entertain* an army is to take them into pay.

IV.iv.22 (398,1)

So, with me:—

My birth-place hate I, and my love's upon

This enemy's town:—I'll enter: if he slay me]

He who reads this [My country have I and my lovers left;/This enemy's town I'll enter] would think that he was reading the lines of Shakespeare: except that

Coriolanus, being already in the town, says, he *will enter it* . Yet the old edition exhibits it thus

—So with me.

My birth-place have I; and my loves upon

This enemic towne; I'll enter if he slay me , &c.

The intermediate line seems to be lost, in which, conformably to his former observation, he says, that *he has* lost *his birth-place, and his loves upon* a petty dispute, and is trying his chance in *this enemy town* , he then cries, turning to the house of Anfidius, *I'll enter if he slay me* .

I have preferred the common reading, because it is, though faulty, yet intelligible, and the original passage, for want of copies, cannot be restored.

IV.v.76 (403,3) a good memory] The Oxford editor, not knowing that *memory* was used at that time for *memorial* , alters it to *memorial* .

IV.v.90 (403,4) A heart of wreak in thee] A heart of resentment.

IV.v.91 (403,5) maims/Of shame] That is, disgraceful diminutions of territory.

IV.v.207 (406,5) sanctifies himself with's hands] Alluding, improperly, to the act of *crossing* upon any strange event.

IV.v.212 (407,6) He will go, he says, and sowle the porter of Rome gates by the ears] That is, I suppose, drag him down by the ears into the dirt. *Souiller* , Fr.

IV.v.214 (407,7) his passage poll'd] That is, *bared, cleared* .

IV.v.238 (408,8) full of vent] Full of *rumour* , full of materials for *discourse* .

IV.vi.2 (408,1) His remedies are tame i' the present peace] The old reading is,

His remedies are tame, the present peace .

I do not understand either line, but fancy it should be read thus,

—neither need we fear him;

His remedies are ta'en, the present peace,

And quietness o' the people ,—

The meaning, somewhat harshly expressed, according to our authour's custom, is this: *We need not fear him* , the proper *remedies* against him *are taken* , by restoring *peace and quietness* .

IV.vi.32 (410,2) affecting one sole throne,/Without assistance] That is, without *assessors* ; without any other suffrage.

IV.vi.51 (411,3) reason with the fellow] That is, have some *talk* with him. In this sense Shakespeare often uses the word.

IV.vi.72 (412,4) can no more atone] To *atone* , in the active sense, is to *reconcile* , and is so used by our authour. To *atone* here, is, in the neutral sense, to *come to reconciliation* . To *atone* is to *unite* .

IV.vi.85 (412,5) burned in their cement] [W: "cement" for "cincture or inclosure"] *Cement* has here its common signification.

IV.vi.98 (413,5) The breath of garlick-eaters!] To smell of garlick was once such a brand of vulgarity, that garlick was a food forbidden to an ancient order of Spanish knights, mentioned by Guevara.

IV.vi.112 (414,7)

they charge him even

As those should do that had deserv'd his hate,

And therein shew'd like enemies]

Their *charge* or injunction would shew them insensible of his wrongs, and make them *shew like enemies* . I read *shew* , not *shewed, like enemies* .

IV.vi.124 (414,8) They'll roar him in again] As they *hooted* at his departure, they will *roar* at his return; as he went out with scoffs, he will come back with lamentations.

IV.vii.37 (417,1)

whether pride,

Which out of daily fortune ever taints

The happy man; whether]

Ausidius assigns three probable reasons of the miscarriage of Coriolanus; pride, which easily follows an uninterrupted train of success; unskilfulness to regulate the consequences of his own victories; a stubborn uniformity of nature, which could not make the proper transition from the *casque* or *helmet* to the *cushion* or *chair of civil authority* ; but acted with the same despotism in peace as in war.

IV.vii.48 (418,2) he has a merit,/To choak it in the utterance] He has a merit, for no other purpose than to destroy it by boasting it.

IV.vii.55 (418,4) Right's by right fouler] [W: fouled] I believe *rights* , like *strengths* , is a plural noon. I read,

Rights by rights founder, *strengths by strengths do fail* .

That is, by the exertion of one right another right is lamed.

V.i.20 (420,2) It was a bare petition] [*Bare* , for mean, beggarly. WARBURTON.] I believe rather, a petition unsupported, unaided by names that might give it influence.

V.i.63 (422,4) I tell you, he does sit in gold] He is inthroned in all the pomp and pride of imperial splendour.

[Greek: Chruzothronos Aerae]—Hom.

V.i.69 (422,5) Bound with an oath to yield to his conditions] This if apparently wrong. Sir T. Hanmer, and Dr. Warburton after him, read,

Bound with an oath not to *yield to* new *conditions* .

They might have read more smoothly,

—*to yield no new conditions* .

But the whole speech is in confusion, and I suspect something left out. I should read,

—*What he would do,*

He sent in writing after; what he would not,

Bound with an oath. To yield to his conditions .

Here is, I think, a chasm. The speaker's purpose seems to be this: *To yield to his conditions* is ruin, and better cannot be obtained, *so that all hope is vain* .

V.ii.10 (424,7) it is lots to blanks] A *lot* here is a *prize* .

V.ii.17 (424,8)

For I have ever verify'd my friends,

(Of whom he's chief) with all the size that verity

Would without lapsing suffer]

[W: narrified] [Hanmer: magnified] If the commentator had given any example of the word *narrify* , the correction would have been not only received, but applauded. Now, since the new word stands without authority, we must try what sense the old one will afford. To *verify* is *to establish by testimony* . One may say with propriety, he brought false witnesses to verify his title. Shakespeare considered the word with his usual laxity, as importing rather *testimony* than *truth* , and only meant to say, *I* bore witness *to my friends with all the size that verity would suffer* .

V.ii.45 (426,1) the virginal palms of your daughters] [W: *pasmes* or *pames* , French for "swooning fits." Warburton also quotes *Tarquin and Lucrece* , "To dry the old oak's sap, and cherish springs" and emends to "tarnish," from the French, meaning "to dry up," used of springs and rivers.] I have inserted this note, because it contains an apology for many others. It is not denied that many

French words were mingled in the time of Elizabeth with our language, which have since been ejected, and that any which are known to have been then in use may be properly recalled when they will help the sense. But when a word is to be admitted, the first question should be, by whom was it ever received? in what book can it be shown? If it cannot be proved to have been in use, the reasons which can justify its reception must be stronger than any critick will often have to bring. Even in this certain emendation, the new word is very liable to contest. I should read,

—*and* perish *springs* .

The verb *perish* is commonly neutral, but in conversation is often used actively, and why not in the works of a writer negligent beyond all others of grammatical niceties?

V.ii.60 (427,2) Back, I say, go; lest I let forth your half pint of blood;—back, that's the utmost of your having:—Back] [Warburton emended the punctuation] I believe the meaning never was mistaken, and therefore do not change the reading.

V.ii.69 (428,3) guess by my entertainment with him] I read, *Guess* by *my entertainment with him, if thou standest not i' the state of hanging* [in place of *guess* but *my entertainment*].

V.ii.80 (428,4) Though I owe/My revenge properly] Though I have a *peculiar right* in revenge, in the power of forgiveness the Volacians are conjoined.

V.ii.104 (429,5) how we are shent] *Shent* is *brought to destruction* .

V.iii.3 (430,6) how plainly/I have born this business] That is, *how openly, how* remotely from artifice or concealment.

V.iii.39 (431,7) The sorrow, that delivers us thus chang'd,/Makes you think so] Virgilia makes a voluntary misinterpretation of her husband's words. He says, *These eyes are not the same* , meaning, that he saw things with *other eyes* , or other *dispositions* . She lays hold on the word *eyes* , to turn his attention on their present appearance.

V.iii.46 (431,8) Now by the jealous queen of heaven] That is, *by Juno* , the guardian of marriage, and consequently the avenger of connubial perfidy.

V.iii.64 (432,1) The noble sister of Poplicola] Valeria, methinks, should not have been brought only to fill up the procession without speaking.

V.iii.68 (432,2) epitome of yours] I read,

—*epitome of you* .

An epitome of you which, *enlarged by the commentaries of time* , may equal you in magnitude.

V.iii.74 (433,4) every flaw] That is, every *gust* , every *storm* .

V.iii.100 (435,2) Constrains them weep, and shake] That is, *constrain* the eye to *weep* , *and* the heart to *shake* .

V.iii.149 (436,3) the fine strains] The niceties, the refinements.

V.iii.159 (436,5) he lets me prate,/Like one i' the stocks] Keep me in a state of ignominy talking to no purpose.

V.iii.176 (437,6) Does reason our petition] Does *argue for* us and our petition.

V.iii.201 (438,7) I'll work/Myself a former fortune] I will take advantage of this concession to restore myself to my former credit and power.

V.iii.206 (438,8) Come, enter with us,—Ladies, you deserve] [Warburton proposed to give the speech beginning "Ladies, you deserve" to Aufidius] The speech suits Aufidius justly enough, if it had been written for him; but it may, without impropriety, be spoken by Coriolanus: and since the copies give it to him, why should we dispossess him?

V.iv.22 (439,1) He sits in state as a thing made for Alexander] In a foregoing note he was said to *sit in gold* . The phrase, *as a thing made for Alexander* , means, *as one made to resemble Alexander* .

V.vi.39 (443,2) He wag'd me with his countenance] This is obscure. The meaning, I think, is, he *prescribed* to me vith an air of authority, and gave me *his countenance* for *my wages* ; thought me sufficiently rewarded with good looks.

V.vi.44 (443,3) For which my sinews shall be stretch'd upon him] This is the point on which I will attack him with my utmost abilities.

V.vi.66 (444,4) answering us/With our own charge] That is, *rewarding us with our own expences* ; making the cost of the war its recompence.

V.vi.125 (446,5) his fame folds in/This orbe o' th' earth] His fame overspreads the world.

(447) General Observation. The tragedy of Coriolanus is one of the most amusing of our author's performances. The old man's merriment in Menenius; the lofty lady's dignity in Volumnia; the bridal modesty in Virgilia; the patrician and military haughtiness in Coriolanus; the plebeian malignity and tribunitian insolence in Brutus and Sicinius, make a very pleasing and interesting variety: and the various revolutions of the hero's fortune fill the mind with anxious curiosity. There is, perhaps, too much bustle in the first act, and too little in the last.

JULIUS CAESAR

I.i.20 (4,2) *Mar.* What meanest thou by that?] [Theobald gave this speech to Flavius] I have replaced *Marullus* , who might properly enough reply to a saucy sentence directed to his colleague, and to whom the speech was probably given, that he might not stand too long unemployed upon the stage.

I.ii.25 (7,5) [*Sennet. Exeunt Caesar and Train*] I have here inserted the word *Sennet* , from the original edition, that I may have an opportunity of retracting a hasty conjecture in one of the marginal directions in *Henry* VIII. *Sennet* appears to be a particular tune or mode of martial musick.

I.ii.35 (8,6) You bear too stubborn and too strange a hand] *Strange* , is alien, unfamiliar, such as might become a stranger.

I.ii.39 (8,7) Vexed I am,/Of late, with passions of some difference] With a fluctation of discordant opinions and desires.

I.ii.73 (9,9) To stale with ordinary oaths my love/To every new protester] To invite *every new protestor* to my affection by the *stale* or allurement of *customary* oaths.

I.ii.87 (10,1) And I will look on both indifferently] Dr. Warburton has a long note on this occasion, which is very trifling. When *Brutus* first names *honour* and *death* , he calmly declares them indifferent; but as the image kindles in his mind, he sets *honour* above *life* . Is not this natural?

I.ii.160 (12,6) eternal devil] I should think that our author wrote rather, *infernal devil* .

I.ii.171 (13,7) chew upon this] Consider this at leisure; *ruminate* on this.

I.ii.186 (13,8) Looks with such ferret, and such fiery eyes] A ferret has red eyes.

I.ii.268 (16,2) a man of any occupation] Had I been a mechanick, one of the Plebeians to whom he offered his threat.

I.ii.313 (17,3) Thy honourable metal may be wrought/From what it is dispos'd] The best *metal* or *temper* may be worked into qualities contrary to its original constitution.

I.ii.318 (17,4) If I were Brutus now, and he were Cassius,/He should not humour me] The meaning, I think, is this, *Caesar loves Brutus, but if Brutus and I were to change places, his love should not humour me* , should not take hold of my affection, so as to make me forget my principles.

I.iii.1 (18,5) brought you Caesar home?] Did you attend Caesar home?

I.iii.3 (18,6) sway of earth] The whole weight or *momentum* of this globe.

I.iii.21 (19,7) Who glar'd upon me] The first edition reads,

Who glaz'd *upon me* ,—

Perhaps, *Who* gaz'd *upon me* .

I.iii.64 (20,8) Why birds, and beasts, from quality and kind] That is, Why they *deviate* from quality and nature. This line might perhaps be more properly placed after the next line.

Why birds, and beasts, from quality and kind;

Why all these things change from their ordinance.

I.iii.65 (20,9) and children calculate] [Shakespeare, with his usual liberty, employs the *species* [calculate] for the *genus* foretel]. WARB.] Shakespeare found the liberty established. *To calculate a nativity* , is the technical term.

I.iii.l14 (22,2) My answer must be made] I shall be called to account, and must *answer* as for seditious words.

I.iii.117 (22,3) Hold my hand] Is the same as, *Here's my hand* .

I.iii.118 (22,4) Be factious for redress] *Factious* seems here to mean *active* .

I.iii.129 (23,5) It favours, like the work] The old edition reads,

It favours, *like the work* —

I think we should read,

In favour's, *like the work we have in hand,*

Most bloody, fiery, and most terrible.

Favour is *look, countenance, appearance* . (rev. 1778, VIII, 25, 7)

II.i.19 (25,6) Remorse from power] [*Remorse* , for mercy. WARB.] *Remorse* (says the Author of the *Ravisal*) signifies the conscious uneasiness arising from a sense of having done wrong; to extinguish which feeling, nothing hath so great a tendency as absolute uncontrouled power.

I think Warbuton right. (1773)

II.i.21 (25,7) common proof] Common experiment.

II.i.26 (25,8) base degrees] Low steps.

II.i.33 (26,9) as his kind] According to his nature.

II.i.63 (27,3)

Between the acting of a dreadful thing,

And the first motion, all the interim is

Like a phantasma, or a hideous dream:

The genius, and the mortal instruments

Are then in council; and the state of man,

Like to a little kingdom, suffers then

The nature of an insurrection]

The [Greek: deinon] of the Greek critics does not, I think, mean sentiments which *raise fear* , more than *wonder* , or any other of the tumultuous passions; [Greek: to deinon] is that which *strikes* , which *astonishes* , with the idea either of some great subject, or of the author's abilities.

Dr. Warburton'a pompous criticism might well have been shortened. The *genius* is not the *genius* of a *kingdom* , nor are the *instruments, conspirators* . Shakespeare is describing what passes in a single bosom, the *insurrection* which a conspirator feels agitating the *little kingdom* of his own mind; when the *Genius* , or power that watches for his protection, and the *mortal instruments* , the passions, which excite him to a deed of honour and danger, are in council and debate; when the desire of action and the care of safety, keep the mind in continual fluctuation and disturbance.

II.i.76 (29,5) any mark of favour] Any distinction of countenance.

II.i.83 (30,6) For if thou path thy native semblance on] If thou *walk* in thy true form.

II.i.114 (31,7) No, not an oath. If not the face of men] Dr. Warburten would read *fate of men* ; but his elaborate emendation is, I think, erroneous. *The* face *of men* is the *countenance* , the *regard* , the *esteem* of the publick; in other terms, *honour* and *reputation* ; or *the face of men* may mean the dejected look of the people.

He reads, with the other modern editions,

—*If* that *the face of men* ,

but the old reading is,

—*if* not *the face* , &c.

II.i.129 (32,1) Swear priests, and cowards, and men cautelous] This is imitated by Utway,

When you would bind me, is there need of oaths? &c.

Venice preserved.

II.i.187 (34,2) take thought] That is, *turn* melancholy.

II.i.196 (34,3) Quite from the main opinion he held once] *Main opinion* , is nothing more than *leading, fixed, predominant opinion* .

II.i.225 (36,6) Let not our looks put on our purposes] Let not our faces *put on* , that is, *wear* or *show* our designs.

II.ii.36 (42,3) death, a necessary end,/Will come, when it will come] This is a sentence derived from the Stoical doctrine of predestination, and is therefore improper in the mouth of Caesar.

II.ii.41 (42,4) The Gods do this in shame of cowardice:/Caesar should be a beast without a heart] The ancients did not place courage but wisdom in the heart.

II.ii.88 (44,7) and that great men shall press/For tinctures, stains, relicks, and cognisance] [Warburton conjectured some lines lost] I am not of opinion that any thing is lost, and have therefore marked no omission. This speech, which is intentionally pompous, is somewhat confused. There are two allusions; one to coats armorial, to which princes make additions, or give new *tinctures* , and new marks of *cognisance* ; the other to martyrs, whose reliques are preserved with veneration. The Romans, says Brutus, all come to you as to a saint, for reliques, as to a prince, for honours.

II.ii.104 (45,8) And reason to my love is liable] And reason, or propriety of conduct and language, is subordinate to my love.

II.iii.16 (47,9) the fates with traitors do contrive] The fates join with traitors in contriving thy destruction.

III.i.38 (51,2) And turn pre-ordinance and first decree/Into the lane of children] I do not veil understand what is meant by the *lane* of children. I should read, the *law* of children. It was, *change pre-ordinance and decree into the law of children* ; into such slight determinations as every start of will would alter. *Lane* and *laws* in some manuscripts are not easily distinguished.

III.i.67 (52,4) apprehensive] Susceptible of fear, or other passions.

III.i.68 (52,5) but one] One, and only one.

III.i.69 (52,6) holds on his rank] Perhaps, *holds on his* race; continues his course. We commonly say, To *hold a rank* , and To *hold on* a *course* or *way* .

III.i.75 (52,7) Doth not Brutus bootless kneel?] I would read, Do *not Brutus bootless kneel* !

III.i.152 (55,9) Who else must be let blood, who else is rank] Who else may be supposed to have *overtopped* his equals, and *grown too high* for the public safety.

III.i.257 (59,3) in the tide of times] That is, in the course of times.

III.i.262 (60,4) A curse shall light upon the limbs of men] Hanmer reads,

—kind *of men* .

I rather think it should be,

—*the* lives *of men* .

unless we read,

—these lymms *of men* ;

That is, *these bloodhounds* of men. The uncommonness of the word *lymm* easily made the change.

III.i.273 (60,5) Cry *Havock*] A learned correspondent has informed me, that, in the military operations of old times, *havock* was the word by which declaration was made, that no quarter should be given.

In a tract intitled, *The Office of the Conestable & Mareschall in the Tyme of Werre* , contained in the Black Book of the Admiralty, there is the following chapter:

"The peyne of hym that crieth *havock* and of them that followeth hym. etit. v."

"Item Si quis inventus fuerit qui clamorem inceperit qui vecatur *Havok* ."

"Also that no man be so hardy to crye *Havok* upon peyne that he that is begynner shal be deede therefore: & the remanent that doo the same or folow shall lose their horse & harneis: and the persones of such as foloweth & escrien shal be under arrest of the Conestable & Mareschall warde unto tyme that they have made fyn; & founde suretie no morr to offende; & his body in prison at the Kyng wylle.—"

III.ii.116 (66,8) Caesar has had great wrong] [Pope has a rather ridiculous note on this] I have inserted this note, because it is Pope's, for it is otherwise of no value. It is strange that he should so much forget the date of the copy before him, as to think it not printed in Jonson's time. (see 1765, VII, 81, 1)

III.ii.126 (68,9) And none so poor] The meanest man is now too high to do reverence to Caesar.

III.ii.192 (68,2)

And, in his mantle muffling up his face,

Even at the base of Pompey's statue,

Which all the while ran blood, great Caesar fell.

O, what a fall was there, my countrymen!]

[Warburton suggested transposing the second and third of these lines] The image seems to be, that the blood of Caesar flew upon the statue, and trickled down it. And the exclamation,

O what a fall was there—

follows better after

-*great Caesar fell,*

than with a line interposed, (see 1765, VII, 64, 3)

III.ii.226 (70,4) For I have neither writ] The old copy reads instead of *wit* ,

For I have neither writ, *nor words,*—

which may mean, I have no *penned* and premeditated oration.

IV.ii.4 (77,1

Your master, Pindarus,

In his own change, or by ill officers,

Hath given me some worthy cause to wish

Things done, undone]

[W: own charge] The arguments for the change proposed are insufficient. Brutus could not but know whether the wrongs committed were done by those who were immediately under the command of Cassius, or those under his officers.

The answer of Brutus to the servant is only an act of artful civility; his question to Lucilius proves, that his suspicion still continued. Yet I cannot but suspect a corruption, and would read,

In his own change, or by ill offices.

That is, either *changing* his inclination *of himself* , or *by* the *ill offices* and bad influences of others. (see 1765, VII, 71, 8)

IV.iii.30 (80,4) To hedge me in] That is, to limit my authority by your direction or censure.

IV.iii.32 (80,5) To make conditions] That is, to know on what terms it is fit to confer the offices which are at my disposal.

IV.iii.86 (82,7)

A friend should bear a friend's infirmities,

But Brutus makes mine greater than they are.

Bru. I do not, till you practise them on me]

The meaning is this; I do not look for your faults, I only see them, and mention them with vehemence, when you force them into my notice, *by practising them on me.* (see 1765, VII, 77, 6)

IV.iii.100 (53,8)

There is my dagger,

And here my naked breast; within, a heart

Dearer than Plutus' mine, richer than gold:

If that thou be'st a Roman, take it forth]

[W: thou needst a Roman's,] I am not satisfied with the change proposed, yet cannot deny, that the words, as they now stand, require some interpretation. I think he means only, that he is so far from Avarice, when the cause of his country requires liberality, that if any man should wish for his heart, he would not need enforce his desire any otherwise, than by showing that he was a Roman.

V.i.5 (92,5) They mean to warn as at Philippi here] To warn, seems to mean here the same as to alarm. Hanmer reads,

They mean to wage *us* .

V.i.43 (93,6) While damned Casca, like a cur behind,/Struck Caesar on the neck] Casca struck Caesar on the neck, coming *like* a degenerate *cur behind him.*

V.i.100 (96,2)

Even by the rule of that philosophy,

By which I did blame Cato for the death

Which he did give himself; (I know not how,

But I do find it cowardly and vile,

For fear of what might fall, so to prevent

The time of life:) arming myself with patience]

Dr. Warburton thinks, that in this speech something is lost, but there needed only a parenthesis to clear it. The construction is this; I an determined to act according to that philosophy which directed me to blame the suicide of Cato, arming myself with patience.

V.iv.12 (102,6) *Luc.* Only I yield to die:/There is so much, that then wilt kill me straight] Dr. Warburton has been much inclined to find *lacunae* , or passages broken by omission, throughout this play. I think he has been always mistaken. The soldier here says, *Yield, or thou diest* . Lucilius replies, I yield only on this condition, that I may die; here is so much gold as thou seest in my hand, which I offer thee as a reward for speedy death. What now is there wanting?

(106) General Observation. Of this tragedy many particular passages deserve regard, and the contention and reconcilement of Brutus and Cassius is

universally celebrated; but I have never been strongly agitated in perusing it, and think it somewhat cold and unaffecting, compared with some other of Shakespeare's plays; his adherence to the real story, and to Roman manners, seems to have impeded the natural vigour of his genius.

ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

I.i.9 (110,2) And is become the bellows, and the fan,/To cool a gypsy's lust] In this passage something seems to be wanting. The bellows and fan being commonly used for contrary purposes, were probably opposed by the author, who might perhaps have written,

—*is become the bellows, and the fan* ,

To kindle and *to cool a gypsy's lust* .

I.i.10 (110,3) gypsy's lust] Gypsy is here used both in the original meaning for an *Egyptian* , and in its accidental sense for a *bad woman* .

1.i.17 (110,6) Then must thou needs find out new heaven] Thou must set the boundary of my love at a greater distance than the present visible universe affords.

1.i.18 (110,7) The sum] Be brief, *sum* thy business in a few words.

I.i.33 (111,8) and the wide arch/Of the rang'd empire fall!] [Taken from the Roman custom of raising triumphal arches to perpetuate their victories. Extremely noble. WARBURTON.] I am in doubt whether Shakespeare had any idea but of a fabrick standing on pillars. The later editions have all printed the *raised* empire, for the *ranged* empire, as it was first given, (see 1765, VII, 107, 8)

I.i.42 (112,1)

Antony

Will be himself.

Ant. But stirr'd by Cleopatra]

But , in this passage, seems to have the old Saxon signification of *without, unless, except. Antony* , says the queen, *will recollect his thoughts* . Unless *kept* , he replies, *in commotion by Cleopatra* . (see 1765, VII, 108,1)

I.ii.5 (113,2) change his horns with garlands] [W: charge] Sir Thomas Hanmer reads, not improbably, *change* for *horns* his *garlands* . I am in doubt, whether to *change* is not merely to *dress* , or *to dress with changes of* garlands.

I.ii.23 (114,3) I had rather heat my liver] To know why the lady is so averse from *heating* her *liver* , it must be remembered, that a

heated liver is supposed to make a pimpled face.

I.ii.35 (114,5) Then, belike, my children shall have no names] If I have already had the best of my fortune, then I suppose *I shall never name children* , that is, I am never to be married. However, tell me the truth, tell me, *how many boys and wenches* ?

1.ii.38 (114,6) If every of your wishes had a womb, and foretel every wish, a million] [W: fertil ev'ry] For *foretel* , in ancient editions, the latter copies have *foretold* . *Foretel* favours the emendation, which is made with great acuteness; yet the original reading may, I think, stand. *If you had as many wombs as you will have wishes; and* I should *foretel all those wishes, I should foretel a million of children.* It is an ellipsis very frequent in conversation; *I should shame you, and tell all* ; that is, *and if I should* tell all. *And* is for *and if* , which was anciently, and is still provincially, used for *if* .

I.ii.105 (117,8) extended Asia] To *extend* , is a term used for to *seize* ; I know not whether that be not the sense here.

I.ii.113 (118,9) Oh, when we bring forth weeds,/When our quick winds lie still] The sense is, that man, not agitated by censure, like soil not ventilated by *quick winds* , produces more evil than good.

I.ii.128 (118,1)

the present pleasure,

By revolution lowring, does become

The opposite of itself]

[The allusion is to the sun's diurnal course; which rising in the *east* , and *by revolution lowering* , or setting in the *west* , becomes *the opposite of itself* .

WARB.] This is an obscure passage. The explanation which Dr. Warburton has offered is such, that I can add nothing to it; yet perhaps Shakespeare, who was less learned than his commentator, meant only, that our pleasures, as they are *revolved* in the mind, turn to pain.

I.ii.146 (119,3) upon far poorer moment] For less reason; upon meaner motives.

I.ii.169 (120,4) It shews to man the tailors of the earth; comforting therein] I have printed this after the original, which, though harsh and obscure, I know not how to amend. Sir Tho. Hanmer reads, They shew *to man the tailors of the earth comforting* him therein. I think the passage, with somewhat less alteration, for alteration is always dangerous, may stand thus; *It shews to* men *the tailors of the earth, comforting* them, &c.

I.ii.187 (121,6) more urgent touches] Things that touch me more sensibly, more pressing motives.

I.ii.190 (121,7) Petition us at home] Wish us at home; call for us to reside at home.

I.ii.201 (121,9)

Say, our pleasure

To such whose places under us, requires

Our quick remove from hence]

This is hardly sense. I believe we should read,

Their *quick remove from hence* .

Tell our design of going away to those, who being by their places obliged to attend us, must remove in haste.

I.iii.3 (122,1) I did not send you] You must go as if you came without my order or knowledge.

I.iii.37 (123,2) a race of heaven] [i.e. had a smack or flavour of heaven. WARB.] This word is well explained by Dr. Warburton; the *race* of wine is the taste of the woil. Sir T. Hanmer, not understanding the word, reads, *ray* .

I.iii.44 (124,3) Remains in use] The poet seems to allude to the legal distinction between the *use* and *absolute possession* .

I.iii.54 (124,4) should safe my going] [T: salve] Mr. Upton reads, I think rightly,

—*safe* my going.

I.iii.62 (125,5)

O most false love!

Where be the sacred vials thou shouldst fill

With sorrowful water?]

Alluding to the lachrymatory vials, or bottles of tears, which the Romans sometimes put into the urn of a friend.

I.iii.77 (125,6) the tears/Belong to Egypt] To me, the queen of Egypt.

I.iii.90 (126,7) Oh, ny oblivion is a very Antony,/And I am all forgotten] [The plain meaning is, *My forgetfulness makes me forget myself* . WARBURTON.] [Hanmer explained "all forgotten" as "apt to forget everything"] I cannot understand the learned critic's explanation. It appears to me, that she should rather have said,

O my remembrance *is a very* Antony,

And I am all forgotten.

It was her memory, not her oblivion, that, like Antony, vas forgetting and deserting her. I think a slight change will restore the passage. The queen, having something to say, which she is not able, or would not seem able to recollect, cries out,

O my oblivion !—'Tis *a very Antony* .

The thought of which I was in quest is a very Antony, is treacherous and fugitive, and has irrevocably left me,

And I am all forgotten.

If this reading stand, I think the explanation of Hanmer must be received, (see 1765, VII, 122, 6)

I.iv.3 (127,9) One great competitor] Perhaps, *Our* great competitor.

I.iv.12 (128,1) as the spots of heaven,/More fiery by night's blackness] If by spots are meant stars, as night has no other fiery spots, the comparison is forced and harsh, stars having been always supposed to beautify the night; nor do I comprehend what there is in the counter-part of this simile, which answers to night's blackness. Hanmer reads,

—*spots* on ermine

Or fires, *by night's blackness* .

I.iv.14 (128,2) purchas'd] Procured by his own fault or endeavour.

I.iv.21 (128,3) say, this becomes him, (As his composure must be rare, indeed, Whom these things cannot blemish] This seems inconsequent. I read

And his composure , &c.

Grant that this becomes him , and *if it can become him, he must*

have in him something very uncommon ; yet, *&c.*

I.iv.25 (128,4) So great weight in his lightness] The word *light* it one of Shakespeare's favourite play-things. The sense is, His trifling levity throws so much burden upon us.

I.iv.25 (129,5)

If he fill'd

His vacancy with his voluptuousness,

Full surfeits, and the dryness of his bones,

Call on him for't]

Call on him , is, *visit him* . Says Caesar, *If Antony followed his debaucheries at a time of leisure, I should leave him to be punished by their natural consequences, by* surfeits *and* dry bones.

I.iv.31 (129,6) boys; who being mature in knowledge] For this Hanmer, who thought the *maturity* of a *boy* an inconsistent idea, has put,

—*who* , immature *in knowledge* ,

but the words *experience* and *judgment* require that we read *mature* ; though Dr. Warburton has received the emendation. By *boys mature in knowledge* , are meant, *boys old enough to know their duty* .

I.iv.38 (129,7) he is belov'd of these/That only have fear'd Caesar] Those whom not *love* but *fear* made adherents to Caesar, now shew their affection for Pompey.

I.iv.49 (130,2) which they ear] To *ear* , is to *plow* ; a common metaphor.

I.iv.52 (130,3) Lack blood to think on't] Turn pale at the thought of it.

I.v.4 (132,5) mandragora] A plant of which the infusion was supposed to procure sleep. Shakespeare mentions it in *Othello* :

Not poppy, nor mandragora,

Can ever med'cine thee to that sweet sleep .

I.v.38 (133,8) that great medicine hath/With his tinct gilded thee] Alluding to the philosopher's stone, which, by its touch, converts base metal into gold. The alchemists call the matter, whatever it be, by which they perform transmutation, a *medicine* .

I.v.48 (134,9) arm-gaunt steed] [i.e. his steed worn lean and thin by much service in war. So Fairfax, *His* stall-worn *steed the champion stout bestrode* . WARB.] On this note Mr. Edwards has been very lavish of his pleasantry, and indeed has justly censured the misquotation of *stall-worn* , for *stall-worth* , which means *strong* , but makes no attempt to explain the word in the play. Mr. Seyward, in his preface to Beaumont, has very elaborately endeavoured to prove, that an *arm-gaunt* steed is a steed with *lean shoulders* . *Arm* is the Teutonick word for *want* , or *poverty* . *Arm-gaunt* may be therefore an old word, signifying, *lean* for *want* , ill fed. Edwards's observation, that a worn-out horse is not proper for Atlas to mount in battle, is impertinent; the horse here mentioned seems to be a post horse, rather than a war horse. Yet as *arm-gaunt* seems not intended to imply any defect, it perhaps means, a horse so slender that a man might clasp him, and therefore formed for expedition. Hanmer reads,

—*arm-girt steed* .

I.v.50 (134,1) Was beastly dumb by him] Mr. Theobald reads *dumb'd* , put to silence. *Alexas means* , (says he) *the horse made such a neighing, that if he had spoke he could not have been heard* .

I.v.76 (136,3) Get me ink and paper: he shall have every day/ A several greeting, or I'll unpeople Aegypt] By sending out messengers.

II.i (136,4) *Enter Pompey* , *Menecrates* , *and Menas*] The persons are so named in the first edition; but I know not why Menecrates appears; Menas can do all without him.

II.i.4 (136,5) While we are suitors to their throne, decays/The thing we sue for] [W: delays] It is not always prudent to be too hasty in exclamation; the reading which Dr. Warburton rejects as *nonsense* , is in my opinion right; if *delay* be what they sue for, they have it, and the consolation offered becomes superfluous. The meaning is, *While we are praying* , *the thing for which we pray* is losing its value.

II.i.38 (138,8) The ne'er-lust-wearied Antony] [Theobald emended "near lust-wearied" to "ne'er-lust-wearied"] Could it be imagined, after this swelling exultation, that the first edition stands literally thus,

The neere *lust wearied Antony* .

II.i.45 (139,9) square] That is, quarrel.

II.i.51 (139,1) Our lives upon] This play is not divided into acts by the authour or first editors, and therefore the present division may be altered at pleasure. I think the first act may be commodiously continued to this place, and the second act opened with the interview of the chief persons, and a change of the state of action. Yet it must be confessed, that it is of small importance, where these unconnected and desultory scenes are interrupted.

II.ii.7 (140,2) Were I the wearer of Antonius' beard,/I would not shav't to-day] I believe he means, *I would meet him undressed* , *without shew of respect* .

II.ii.25 (141,3) Nor curstness grow to the matter] Let not *ill-humour* be added to the real *subject* of our difference.

II.ii.28 (141,4) *Caes* . Sit./*Ant* . Sit, sir!] [Antony appears to be jealous of a circumstance which seemed to indicate a consciousness of superiority in his too successful partner in power; and accordingly resents the invitation of Caesar to be seated: Caesar answers, *Nay then* —i.e. *if you are so ready to resent what I meant an act of civility, there can be no reason to suppose you have temper enough for the business on which at present we are met* . STEEVENS.] The following circumstance may serve to strengthen Mr. Steevens's opinion: When the fictitious Sebastian made his appearance in Europe, he came to a conference with the Conde de Lemos; to whom, after the firat exchange of civilities, he said, *Conde de Lemos, be covered* . And being asked by that nobleman, by what pretences he laid claim to the superiority expressed by such permission, he replied, I do it by right of my birth; I am Sebastian. (1773)

II.ii.43 (142,5) their contestation/Was theam for you, you were the word of war] [W: theam'd] I am neither satisfied with the reading nor the emendation; *theam'd* is, I think, a word unauthorised, and very harsh. Perhaps we may read,

—*their contestation*

Had *theme* from *you* , *you were the word o' th' war* . *The dispute derived its subject from you* . It may be corrected by mere transposition,

—*their contestation*

You were theme for, *you were the word* .

II.ii.51 (143,8) Having alike your cause?] The meaning seems to be, *having the same cause as you to be offended with me* . But why, because he was offended with Antony, should he make war upon Caesar? May it not be read thus,

—Did he not rather

Discredit my authority with yours,

And make the wars alike against my stomach ,

Hating *alike* our *cause* ?

II.ii.53 (143,9) As matter whole you have not to make it with] The original copy reads,

As matter whole you have *to make it with* .

Without doubt erroneously; I therefore only observe it, that the reader may more readily admit the liberties which the editors of this authour's works have necessarily taken.

II.ii.61 (144,1) fronted] *i.e. opposed* .

II.ii.85 (145,4) The honour's sacred which he talks on now,/Supposing that I lack'd it] [*Sacred* , for unbroken, unviolated. WARB.] Dr. Warburton seems to understand this passage thus; *The honour which he* talks *of me as* lacking, *is* unviolated, *I never lacked it* . This may perhaps be the true meaning, but before I read the note, I understood it thus: Lepidus interrupts Caesar, on the supposition that what he is about to say will be too harsh to be endured by Antony; to which Antony replies, *No, Lepidus, let him speak, the security of* honour on which he now speaks, *on which this conference is held now* , is sacred, *even* supposing that I lacked *honour* before.

II.ii.112 (146,5) your considerate stone] This line is passed by all the editors, as if they understood it, and believed it universally, intelligible. I cannot find in it any very obvious, and hardly any possible meaning. I would therefore read,

Go to then , you *considerate* ones.

You, who dislike my frankness and temerity of speech, and are so *considerate* and discreet, *go to* , do your on business.

II.ii.113 (146,6) I do not much dislike the matter, but/The manner of his speech] I do not, says Caesar, think the man wrong, but too free of him interposition; *for't cannot be, we shall remain in friendship: yet if it were possible, I would endeavour it* .

II.ii.123 (147,7) your reproof/Were well deserv'd] In the old edition,

—*your* proof

Were well deserv'd —

Which Mr. Theobald, with his usual triumph, changes to *approof* , which he explains, *allowance* . Dr. Warburton inserted *reproof* very properly into Hanmer's edition, but forgot it in his own.

II.ii.159 (148,8) Lest my remembrance suffer ill report] Lest I be thought too willing to forget benefits, I must barely return him thanks, and then I will defy him.

II.ii.210 (150,1) And what they undid, did] It might be read less harshly,

And what they did , undid.

II.ii.212 (150,2) tended her i' the eyes] Perhaps *tended her* by th' *eyes* , discovered her will by her eyes.

II.iii.21 (153,6) thy angel/Becomes a Fear] Mr.Uptan reads,

Becomes afear'd,—

The common reading is more poetical.

II.iii.37 (154,7) his quails ever/Beat mine] The ancients used to match quails as we match cocks.

II.iii.38 (154,8) inhoop'd, at odds] Thus the old copy. *Inhoop'd* is *inclosed,* *confined* , that they may fight. The modern editions read,

Beat mine , in whoop'd-*at odds* .—

II.v.1 (155,9) musick, moody food] [The *mood* is the *mind* , or *mental disposition* . Van Haaren's panegyrick on the English begins, *Groot-moedig Volk, great-minded nation* .] Perhaps here is a poor jest intended between *mood* the *mind* and *moods* of musick.

II.v.41 (l57,4) Not like a formal man] [*Formal* , for ordinary. WARB.] Rather decent, regular.

II.v.103 (161,8) Thou art not what thou'rt sure of!] For this, which is not easily understood, Sir Thomas Hanmer has given,

That say'st but *what thou'rt sure of!*

I am not satisfied with the change, which, though it affords sense, exhibits little spirit. I fancy the line consists only of abrupt starts.

Oh that his fault should make a knave of thee ,

That art—not what?—Thou'rt sure on't.—Get thee

hence.

That his fault should make a knave of thee that art —but what *shall I say thou art not* ? Thou art then sure of *this marriage.* —Get thee hence.

Dr. Warburton has received Sir T. Hanmer's emendation.

II.v.115 (161,9) Let him for ever go] She is now talking in broken sentences, not of the messenger, but Antony.

II.vi.24 (163,2) Thou canst not fear us] Thou canst not affright us with thy numerous navy.

II.vi.28 (163,3) But since the cuckow builds not for himself] Since, like the cuckow, that seizes the nests of other birds, you have invaded a house which you could not build, keep it while you can.

II.vii.1 (167,6) some o' their plants] *Plants* , besides its common meaning, is here used for the *foot* , from the Latin.

II.vii.14 (167,9) a partizan] A pike.

II.vii.16 (167,1) To be call'd into a huge sphere, and not to be seen to move in't, are the holes where eyes should be, which pitifully disaster the cheeks] This speech seems to be mutilated; to supply the deficiencies is impossible, but perhaps the sense was originally approaching to this.

To be called into a huge sphere, and not to be seen to move in it , is a very ignominious state; great offices *are the holes where eyes should be, which* , if eyes be wanting, *pitifully disaster the cheeks* .

II.vii.88 (170,2) thy pall'd fortunes] *Palled* , is vapid, past its time of excellence; *palled* wine, is wine that has lost its original spriteliness.

II.vii.102 (171,3) Strike the vessels] Try whether the casks sound as empty.

II.vii.116 (171,4) The holding every man shall bear] Every man shall accompany the chorus by drumming on his sides, in token of concurrence and applause. [Theobald had emended "beat" to "bear"] (1773)

III.i.1 (173,6) Now, darting Parthia, art thou struck] *Struck* alludes to darting. Thou whose darts have so often struck others, art struck now thyself. (1773)

III.ii.12 (175,8) Arabian bird!] The phoenix.

III.ii.16 (176,9)

Ho! hearts, tongues, figure, scribes, bards, poets, cannot

Think, speak, cast, write, sing, number, ho!]

Not only the tautology of *bards* and *poets* , but the want of a correspondent action for the *poet* , whose business in the next line is only to *number* , makes me suspect some fault in this passage, which I know not how to mend.

III.ii.26 (176,1) as my furthest bond] As I will venture the greatest pledge of security, on the trial of thy conduct.

III.ii.40 (177,1) The elements be kind to thee, and make/Thy spirits all of comfort!] This is obscure. It seems to mean, *May the different* elements *of the body, or principles of life, maintain such proportion and harmony as may keep you cheerful* .

III.iv.26 (182,7) I'll raise the preparation of a war/Shall stain your brother] [T: strain] I do not see but *stain* may be allowed to remain unaltered, meaning no more than *shame* or *disgrace* .

III.iv.30 (182,8) Wars 'twixt you 'twain would be/As if the world should cleave] The sense is, that war between Caesar and Antony would engage the world between them, and that the slaughter would be great in so extensive a commotion.

III.v.8 (183,9) rivality] Equal rank.

III.v.11 (183,1) Upon his own appeal] To *appeal* , in Shakespeare, is to *accuse* ; Caesar seized Lepidus without any other proof than Caesar's accusation.

III.v.21 (184,3) More, Domitius] I have something *more* to tell you, which I might have told at first, and delayed my news. Antony requires your presence.

III.vi.9 (184,4) made her/Of Lower Syria, Cyprus, Lydia./Absolute queen] For *Lydia* , Mr. Upton, from Plutarch, has restored *Lybia* .

III.vi.68-75 (187,6) Mr. Upton remarks, that there are some errours in this enumeration of the auxiliary kings; but it is probable that the authour did not much wish to be accurate.

III.vi.95 (188,7) And gives his potent regiment to a trull] *Regiment* , is *government, authority* ; he puts his *power* and his empire into the hands of a false woman.

It may be observed, that *trull* was not, in our author's time, a term of mere infamy, but a word of slight contempt, as *wench* is now.

III.vii.3 (188,8) forespoke my being] To *forespeak* , is to *contradict* , to *speak against* , as *forbid* is to order negatively.

III.vii.68 (191,1)

By Hercules, I think, I am i' the right.

Can. Soldier, thou art: but his whole action grows

Not in the power on't]

That is, his whole conduct becomes, ungoverned by the right, or by reason.

III.vii.77 (191,2) distractions] Detachments; separate bodies.

III.x.6 (193,4) The greater cantle] [A piece or lump. POPE.] *Cantle* is rather a *corner* . Caesar in this play mentions the *three-nook'd world* . Of this triangular world every triumvir had a corner. (see 1765, VII, 185, 6)

III.x.9 (193,5) token'd pestilence] Spotted.

III.x.10 (193,6) Yon' ribauld nag of Aegypt] The word is in the old edition *ribaudred* , which I do not understand, but mention it, in hopes others may raise some happy conjecture. [Tyrwhitt: hag] The brieze, or oestrum, the fly that stings cattle, proves that *nag* is the right word. (1773)

III.x.11 (193,7) Whom leprosy o'ertake!] *Leprosy* , an epidemical distemper of the Aegyptians; to which Horace probably alludes in the controverted line.

Contaminato cum grege turpium

Morbo virorum.

III.x.36 (195,1) The wounded chance of Antony] I know not whether the author, who loves to draw his images from the sports of the field, might not have written,

The wounded chase *of Antony* ,—

The allusion is to a deer wounded and chased, whom all other deer avoid. *I will* , says Enobarbus, *follow Antony* , though *chased* and *wounded* .

The common reading, however, may very well stand.

III.xi.3 (195,2) so lated in the world] Alluding to a benighted traveller.

III.xi.23 (196,3) I have lost command] I am not master of my own emotions.

III.xi.35 (196,4) He at Philippi kept/His sword e'en like a dancer] In the Moriaco, and perhaps anciently in the Pyrrhick dance, the dancers held swords in their hands with the points upward.

III.xi.39 (196,6) he alone/Dealt on lieutenantry] I know not whether the meaning is, that Caesar acted only as lieutenant at Philippi, or that he made his attempts only on lieutenants, and left the generals to Antony.

III.xi.47 (197,7) death will seize her; but/Your comfort] *But* has here, as once before in this play, the force of *except* , or *unless* .

III.ii.52 (197,8) How I convey my shame] How, by looking another way, I withdraw my ignominy from your sight.

III.ii.57 (197,9) ty'd by the strings] That is by the *heart string* .

III.xii.18 (199,1) The circle of the Ptolemies] The diadem; the ensign of royalty.

III.xii.34 (199,2) how Antony becomes his flaw] That is, how Antony conforms himself to this breach of his fortune.

III.xiii.1 (200,3) Think, and die] [Hanmer: Drink] This reading, offered by sir T. Hanmer, is received by Dr. Warburton and Mr. Upton, but I have not advanced it into the page, not being convinced that it is necessary. *Think, and die* ; that is, *Reflect on your folly, and leave the world* , is a natural answer.

III.xiii.9 (201,4) he being/The meered question] The *meered* question is a term I do not understand. I know not what to offer, except,

The mooted *question* .—

That is, the *disputed* point, the subject of debate. *Mere* is indeed a *boundary* , and the *meered question* , if it can mean any thing, may, with some violence of language, mean, the *disputed boundary* .

III.xiii.25 (202, 5)

I dare him therefore

To lay his gay comparisons apart

And answer me declin'd]

I require of Caesar not to depend on that superiority which the *comparison* of our different fortunes may exhibit to him, but to answer me man to man, in this decline of my age or power.

III.xiii.42 (202,6) The loyalty, well held to fools, does make/Our faith meer folly] [T: Though loyalty, well held] I have preserved the old reading: Enobarbus is deliberating upon desertion, and finding it is more prudent to forsake a fool, and more reputable to be faithful to him, makes no positive conclusion. Sir T. Hanmer follows Theobald; Dr. Warburton retains the old reading.

III.xiii.77 (204,9) Tell him, from his all-obeying breath I hear/The doom of Aegypt] *Doom* is declared rather by an *all-commanding* , than an *all-obeying breath* . I suppose we ought to read,

—*all* -obeyed breath.

III.xiii.81 (205,1) Give me grace] Grant me the favour.

III.xiii.109 (206,3) By one that looks on feeders?] One that waits at the table while others are eating.

III.xiii.128 (207,4) The horned herd] It is not without pity and indignation that the reader of this great poet meets so often with this low jest, which is too much a favourite to be left out of either mirth or fury.

III.xiii.151 (208,5) to quit me] To repay me this insult; to *requite* me.

III.xiii.180 (209,9) Were nice and lucky] [*Nice* , for delicate, courtly, flowing in peace. WARBURTON.] *Nice* rather seems to be, *just fit for my purpose, agreeable to my wish* . So we vulgarly say of any thing that is done better than was expected, it is *nice* .

IV.i.5 (210,1) I have many other ways to die] [Upton: He hath.../I laugh] I think this emendation deserves to be received. It had, before Mr. Upton's book appeared, been made by sir T. Hanmer.

IV.i.9 (211,2) Make boot of] Take advantage of.

IV.ii.8 (212,3) *take all*] Let the survivor take all. No composition, victory or death.

IV.ii.14 (212,4) one of those odd tricks] I know not what obscurity the editors find in this passage. *Trick* is here used in the sense in which it is uttered every day by every mouth, elegant and vulgar: yet sir T. Hanmer changes it to *freaks* , and Dr. Warburton, in his rage of Gallicism, to *traits* .

IV.ii.26 (213,5) Haply, you shall not see me more; or if,/A mangled shadow] *Or if* you see me more, you will see me *a mangled shadow* , only the external form of what I was.

IV.ii.35 (213,6) onion-ey'd] I have my eyes as full of tears as if they had been fretted by onions.

IV.iv.3 (215,8) Come, good fellow, put thine iron on] I think it should be rather,

—mine *iron* —

IV.iv.5 (215,9) Nay, I'll help too] These three little speeches, which in the other editions are only one, and given to Cleopatra, were happily disentangled by sir T. Hanmer.

IV.iv.10 (215,1) Briefly, sir] That is, *quickly* , sir.

IV.v.17 (218,3) Dispatch. Enobarbus!] Thus [*Dispatch, my Eros*] the modern editors. The old edition reads,

—*Dispatch Enobarbus* .

Perhaps, it should be,

—*Dispatch! To Enobarbus!* (see 1765, VII, 208, 3)

IV.vi.12 (219,6) persuade] The old copy has *dissuade* , perhaps rightly.

IV.vi.34 (219,7) This blows my heart] All the latter editions have,

—*This* bows *my heart* ;

I have given the original word again the place from which I think it unjustly excluded. *This generosity* , (says Enobarbus) swells *my heart* , so that it will quickly break, *if thought break it not, a swifter mean* .

IV.vii.2 (220,8) and our oppression] Sir T. Hanmer has received *opposition* . Perhaps rightly.

IV.viii.1 (221,9) run one before,/And let the queen know of our guests] [W: gests] This passage needs neither correction nor explanation. Antony after his success intends to bring his officers to sup with Cleopatra, and orders notice to be given her of their *guests* .

IV.viii.12 (222,1) To this great fairy] Mr. Upton has well observed, that *fairy* ; which Dr. Warburton and sir T. Hanmer explain by *Inchantress* , comprises the idea of power and beauty.

IV.viii.22 (222,2) get goal for goal of youth] At all plays of barriers, the boundary is called a *goal* ; to *win a goal* , is to be superiour in a contest of activity.

IV.viii.31 (223,4) Bear our hack'd targets like the men that owe them] *i.e.* hack'd as much as the men are to whom they belong. WARB.] Why not rather, *Bear our hack'd targets* with spirit and exaltation, such as becomes the brave warriors *that own them* ?

IV.ix.15 (224,5)

Throw my heart

Against the flint and hardness of my fault;

Which, being dried with grief, will break to powder,

And finish all foul thoughts]

The pathetick of Shakespeare too often ends in the ridiculous. It is painful to find the gloomy dignity of this noble scene destroyed by the intrusion of a conceit so far-fetched and unaffecting.

IV.xii.13 (226,1) Triple turn'd whore!] She was first for Antony, then was supposed by him to have *turned* to Caesar, when he found his messenger kissing her hand, then she *turned* again to Antony, and now has *turned* to Caesar. Shall I mention what has dropped into my imagination, that our author might perhaps have written *triple-tongued* ? *Double-tongued* is a common term of reproach, which rage might improve to *triple-tongued* . But the present reading may stand.

IV.xii.21 (227,2) That pannell'd me at heels] All the editions read,

That pannell'd *me at heels* ,—

Sir T. Hanmer substituted *spaniel'd* by an emendation, with which it was reasonable to expect that even rival commentators would be satisfied; yet Dr. Warburton proposes *pantler'd* , in a note, of which he is not injur'd by the suppression; and Mr. Upton having in his first edition proposed plausibly enough,

That paged *me at heels* ,—

in the second edition retracts his alteration, and maintains *pannell'd* to be the right reading, being a metaphor taken, he says, from a *pannel* of wainscot.

IV.xii.25 (227,3) this grave charm] I know not by what authority, nor for what reason, *this* grave *charm* , which the first, the only original copy exhibits, has been through all the modern editors changed to *this* gay *charm* . By *this* grave *charm* , is meant, *this sublime, this majestic beauty* .

IV.xii.29 (227,4) to the very heart of loss] To the utmost loss possible.

IV.xii.45 (228,7) Let me lodge, Lichas] Sir T. Hanmer reads thus,

—thy *rage*

Led thee *lodge Lichas* —and—

Subdue thy *worthiest self* .—

This reading, harsh as it is, Dr. Warburton has received, after having rejected many better. The meaning is, Let me do something in my rage, becoming the successor of Hercules,

IV.xiv.19 (230,2) Pack'd cards with Caesar, and false play'd my glory/Unto an enemy's triumph] [Warburton had explained and praised Shakespeare's "metaphor"] This explanation is very just, the thought did not deserve so good an annotation.

IV.xiv.39 (231,3) The battery from my heart] I would read,

This *battery from my heart* .—

IV.xiv.49 (232,4) Seal then, and all is done] I believe the reading is,

—seel *then, and all is done* —

To *seel hawks* , is to close their eyes. The meaning will be,

—*since the torch is out,*

Lie down, and stray no further. How all labour

Marrs what it does .—Seel *then, and all is done* .

Close thine eyes *for ever, and be quiet* .

IV.xiv.73 (233,5) pleach'd arms] Arms folded in each other.

IV.xiv.77 (233,6) His baseness that ensued?] The poor conquered wretch that followed.

IV.xiv.86 (233,7) the worship of the whole world] The *worship* , is the *dignity* , the *authority* .

IV.xv.9 (237,9)

O sun,

Burn the great sphere thou mov'st in!—darkling stand

The varying shore o' the world]

She desires the sun, to *burn* his own *orb* , the vehicle of light, and then the earth will be dark.

IV.xv.19-23 (237,1) I here importune death] [Theobald had regularized the versification and had added two words] Mr. Theobald's emendation is received by the succeeding editors; but it seems not necessary that a dialogue so distressful should be nicely regular. I have therefore preserved the original reading in the text, and the emendation below.

IV.xv.28 (238,2) still conclusion] Sedate determination; silent coolness of resolution.

IV.xv.32 (236,3) Here's sport, indeed!] I suppose the meaning of these strange words is, *here's* trifling, *you* do not work *in earnest* .

IV.xv.39 (239,4) Quicken with kissing] That is, *Revive by my kiss* .

IV.xv.44 (239,6) That the false huswife Fortune break her wheel] This despicable line has occurred before.

IV.xv.65 (240,8) The soldier's pole] He at whom the soldiers pointed, as at a pageant held high for observation.

IV.xv.72 (240,9)

Char . Peace, peace, Iras.

Cleo . No more—but e'en a woman]

[W: peace, Isis] Of this note it may be truly said, that it at least deserves to be right, nor can he, that shall question the justness of the emendation, refuse his esteem to the ingenuity and learning with which it is proposed.

Hanmer had proposed another emendation, not injudiciously. He reads thus,

Iras. *Royal Aegypt! empress!*

Cleo. *Peace, peace, Iras.*

No more but a mere woman , &c.

That is, *no more an empress, but a mere woman* .

It is somewhat unfortunate that the words, *mere woman* , which so much strengthen the opposition to either *empress* or *Isis* , are not in the original edition, which stands thus,

No more but in a *woman* .

Mere woman was probably the arbitrary reading of Rowe. I suppose, however, that we muy justly change the ancient copy thus,

No more, but e'en a *woman* .

which will enough accommodate either of the editors.

I am inclined to think that she speaks abruptly, not answering her woman, but discoursing with her own thoughts,

No more—but e'en a *woman* .

I have no more *of my wonted greatness* , but am even a woman, *on the level with other women; were I what I once was* .

—It were for me

To throw my scepter, *&c* .

If this simple explanation be admitted, how much labour has been thrown away. *Peace, peace, Iras* , is said by Charmian, when she sees the queen recovering, and thinks speech troublesome.

V.i.15 (244,4) The round world/Should have shook lions into civil streets] I think here is a line lost, after which it is in vain to go in quest. The sense seems to have been this: *The round world should have shook* , and this great alteration of the system of things should send *lions into streets, and citizens into dens* . There is sense still, but it is harsh and violent.

V.i.27 (244,5) but it is tidings/To wash the eyes of kings!] That is, May *the Gods rebuke me* , if this be not *tidings to make kings weep* .

But , again, for *if not* .

V.i.46 (245,7) that our stars,/Unreconciliable, should divide/Our equalness to this] That is, *should have made us* , in our equality of fortune, disagree *to* a pitch like this, that one of us must die.

V.i.52 (246,8) A poor Aegyptian yet; the queen my mistress] If this punctuation be right, the man means to say, that he is *yet an Aegyptian* , that is, *yet a servant of the queen of Aegypt* , though soon to become, a subject of Rome.

V.i.65 (246,9) her life in Rome/Would be eternal in our triumph] Hanmer reads judiciously enough, but without necessity,

Would be eternalling *our triumph* .

The sense is, *If she dies here, she will be forgotten, but if I send her* in triumph at Rome, *her memory and my glory* will be eternal.

V.ii.3 (247,1) fortune's knave] The *servant* of fortune.

V.ii.4 (247,2)

it is great

To do that thing, that ends all other deeds;

Which shackles accidents, and bolts up change;

Which sleeps, and never palates more the dung,

The beggar's nurse, and Caesar's]

[Warburton added a whole line and emended "dung" to "dugg"] I cannot perceive the loss of a line, or the need of an emendation. The commentator seems to have entangled his own ideas; his supposition that *suicide* is called *the beggar's nurse and Caesar's* , and his concession that the position is *intelligible* , show, I think, a mind not intent upon the business before it. The difficulty of the passage, if any difficulty there be, arises only from this, that the act of suicide, and the state which is the effect of suicide are confounded. Voluntary death, says she, is an act *which bolts up change* ; it produces a state,

Which sleeps, and never palates more the dung,

The beggar's nurse, and Caesar's .

Which has no longer need of the gross and terrene sustenance, in the use of which Caesar and the beggar are on a level.

The speech is abrupt, but perturbation in such a state is surely natural.

V.ii.29 (249,4) I am his fortune's vassal, and I send him/The greatness he has got] I allow him to be my conqueror; I own his superiority with complete submission.

V.ii.34 (249,5) You see how easily she may be surpriz'd] This line in the first edition is given not to Charuian, but to Proculeius; and to him it certainly belongs, though perhaps misplaced. I would put it at the end of his foregoing speech,

Where he for grace is kneel'd to.

[Aside to Gallus.] *You see, how easily she may be surpriz'd.*

Then while Cleopatra makes a formal answer, Gallus, upon the hint given, seizes her, and Proculeius, interrupting the civility of his answer,

—your plight is pity'd

Of him that caus'd it.

Cries out,

Guard her till, Caesar come.

V.ii.40 (250,6) who are in this/Reliev'd, but not betray'd] [W: Bereav'd, but] I do not think the emendation necessary, since the sense is not made better by it, and the abruptness in Cleopatra's answer is more forcible in the old reading.

V.ii.42 (250,7) rids our dogs of languish] For *languish* , I think we may read, *anguish* .

V.ii.48 (251,8) Worth many babes and beggars] Why, death, wilt thou not rather seize a queen, than employ thy force upon *babes* and *beggars* . (see 1765, VII, 238, 9)

V.ii.50 (251,9) If idle talk will once be necessary] [This nonsense should be reformed thus,

If idle TIME *whill once be necessary.*

i.e. if *repose* be necessary to cherish life, I will not sleep. WARBURTON.] I do not see that the nonsense is made sense by the change. Sir T. Hanmer reads, *If idle talk will once be* accessary;

Neither is this better. I know not what to offer better than an easy explanation. That is, *I will not eat* , and *if it will be necessary now for once* to waste a moment in *idle talk* of my purpose, *I will not sleep neither* . In common conversation we often use *will be* , with as little relation to futurity. As, Now I am going, it *will be* fit for me to dine first.

V.ii.98 (254,2)

yet to imagine

An Antony, were Nature's piece 'gainst Fancy,

Condemning shadows quite]

[W: Nature's prize] In this passage I cannot discover any temptation to critical experiments. The word *piece* , is a term appropriated to works of art. Here Nature and Fancy produce each their *piece* , and the *piece* done by Nature had the preference. Antony was in reality *past the size of dreaming* ; he was more by *Nature* than *Fancy* could present in sleep.

V.ii.121 (255,3) I cannot project mine own cause so well] [W: procter] Sir T. Hanmer reads,

I cannot parget *my own cause*—-

meaning, I cannot *whitewash, varnish* , or *gloss* my cause. I believe the present reading to be right. To *project a cause* is to *represent* a cause; to *project* it *well* , is to *plan* or *contrive* a scheme of defense.

V.ii.139 (256,4) "tis exactly valued, /Not petty things admitted] [T: omitted] Notwithstanding the wrath of Mr. Theobald, I have restored the old reading. She is angry afterwards, that she is accused of having reserved more than petty things. Dr. Warburton and sir T. Hanmer follow Theobald.

V.ii.146 (257,5) seel my lips] Sew up my mouth.

V.ii.163 (258,7) Parcel the sum of my disgraces by] *To parcel her disgraces* , might be expressed in vulgar language, *to bundle up her calamaties* . (see 1765, VII, 244, 8)

V.ii.176 (259,8)

Cleo. Be't known, that we, the greatest, are misthought

for things that others do; and, when we fall,

We answer others merits in our names;

Are therefore to be pitied]

I do not think that either of the criticks [Warburton and Hanmer] have reached the sense of the author, which may be very commodiously explained thus;

We suffer at our highest state of elevation in the *thoughts of mankind for that which others do, and when we fall* , those that contented themselves only to think ill before, call us to *answer in our own names for the merits of others. We are therefore to be pitied. Merits* is in this place taken in an ill sense, for actions *meriting* censure.

If any alteration be necessary, I should only propose, *Be 't known, that we* at *greatest* , &c.

V.ii.185 (259,1) Make not your thoughts your prisons] I once wished to read,

make not your thoughts your poison:—

Do not destroy yourself by musing on your misfortune. Yet I would change nothing, as the old reading presents a very proper sense. *Be not a prisoner in imagination, when in reality you are free.*

V.ii.215 (261,2) scald rhimers] Sir T. Hanmer reads,

—stall 'd *rhimers.*

Scald was a word of contempt, implying poverty, disease, and filth.

V.ii.216 (261,3) quick comedians] The gay inventive players.

V.ii.226 (261,5) Their most absurd intents] [T: assured] I have preserved the old reading. The design certainly appeared *absurd* enough to Cleopatra, both as she thought it unreasonable in itself, and as she knew it would fail.

V.ii.243 (263,7) the pretty worm of Nilus] *Worm* is the Teutonick word for *serpent* ; we have the *blind-worm* and *slow-worm* still in our language, and the Norwegians call an enormous monster, seen sometimes in the northern ocean, the *sea-worm* .

V.ii.264 (263,9) the worm will do him kind] The serpent will act according to his nature.

V.ii.305 (205,2) He'll make demand of her, and spend that kiss,/ Which is my heaven to have] He will enquire of her concerning me, and kiss her for giving him intelligence.

V.ii.352 (267,5) something blown] The flesh is somewhat *puffed* or *swoln* .

(268) General Observation. This play keeps curiosity always busy, and the passions always interested. The continual hurry of the action, the variety of incidents, and the quick succession of one personage to another, call the mind forward without intermission from the first act to the last. But the power of delighting is derived principally from the frequent changes of the scene; for, except the feminine arts, some of which are too low, which distinguish Cleopatra, no character is very strongly discriminated. Upton, who did not easily miss what he desired to find, has discovered that the language of Antony is, with great skill and learning, made pompous and superb, according to his real practice. But I think his diction not distinguishable from that of others: the most tumid speech in the play is that which Caesar makes to Octavia.

The events, of which the principal are described according to history, are produced without any art of connexion or care of disposition.

TIMON OF ATHENS

I.i.3 (271,3)

Poet . Ay, that's well known:

But what particular rarity! what strange,

Which manifold record not matches? See,

Magick of bounty!]

The learned commentator's [Warburton's] note must shift for itself. I cannot but think that this passage is at present in confusion. The poet asks a question, and stays not for an answer, nor has his question any apparent drift or consequence. I would range the passage thus:

Poet. *Ay, that's well known.*

Bat what particular rarity? what so strange,

That manifold record not matches?

Pain. *See!*

Poet. *Magick of—bounty, &c.*

It may not be improperly observed here, that as there is only one copy of this play, no help can be had from collation, and more liberty must be allowed to conjecture.

I.i.10 (272,4) breath'd as it were/To an untirable and continuate goodness] *Breathed* is *inured by constant practice* ; so trained as not to be wearied. To *breathe* a horse, is to exercise him for the course.

I.i.20 (273,8) *Poet* .

A thing slipt idly from me.

Our poesy is as a gum, which oozes

From whence 'tis nourished. The fire i' the flint

Shews not, 'till it be struck: our gentle flame

Provokes itself, and, like the current flies

Each bound it chafes. What have you there!]

This speech of the poet is very obscure. He seems to boast the copiousness and facility of his vein, by declaring that verses drop from a poet as gums from odoriferous trees, and that his flame kindles itself without the violence necessary to elicit sparkles from the flint. What follows next? that it, *like a current, flies each bound it chafes* . This may mean, that it expands itself notwithstanding all obstructions: but the images in the comparison are so ill-sorted, and the effect so obscurely expressed, that I cannot but think something omitted that connected the last sentence with the former. It is well knovn that the players often shorten speeches to quicken the representation; and it may be suspected, that they sometimes performed their amputations with more haste than judgment, (see 1765, VI, 169, 6)

I.i.27 (274,9) *Poet* . Upon the heels of my presentment, sir.] As soon as my book has been presented to lord Timon.

I.i.29 (274,1) This comes off weil and excellent] [By this we are to understand what the painters call the *goings off* of a picture, which requires the nicest execution. WARBURTON.] The note I understand less than the text. The meaning is, This figure rises weil from the canvas. *C'est bien relevè.*

I.i.37 (275,3) artificial strife] *Strife* is either the contest or act with nature.

Hic ille est Raphael, *timuit, quo aospite vinci*

Rerum magna parens, & moriente, mori .

Or it is the contrast of forms or opposition of colours.

I.i.43 (275,4) this confluence, this great flood of visitors] *Mane salutantúm totis vomit aedibus undam* .

I.1.46 (275,5) Halts not particularly] My design does not stop at any single characters.

I.1.47 (276,7)

no levell'd malice

Infects one comma in the course I hold;

But flies an eagle-flight, bold, and forth on,

Leaving no tract behind]

To *level* is to *aim* , to point the shot at a mark. Shakespeare's meaning is, my poem is not a satire written with any particular view, or *levelled* at any single person; I fly like an eagle into the general expanse of life, and leave not, by any private mischief, the trace of my passage.

I.i.51 (276,8) I'll unbolt] I'll open, I'll explain.

I.i.53 (276,9) glib and slippery creatures] Hanmer, and Warburton after him, read, *natures* . *Slippery* is *smooth* , unresisting.

I.i.58 (276,1) glass-fac'd flatterer] That shows in his own look, as by reflection, the looks of his patron.

I.i.65 (277,3) rank'd with all deserts] *Cover'd with ranks* of all kinds of men.

I.i.67 (277,4) To propagate their states] To advance or improve their various conditions of life.

I.i.72 (277,5) conceiv'd to scope] Properly imagined, appositely, to the purpose.

I.i.82 (278,8) through him/Drink the free air] That is, catch his breath in affected fondness.

I.i.90 (278,9) A thousand moral paintings I can shew] Shakespeare seems to intend in this dialogue to express some competition between the two great arts of imitation. Whatever the poet declares himself to have shewn, the painter thinks he could have shewn better. (1773)

I.i.107 (279,1) 'Tis not enough to help the feeble up,/But to support him after] This thought is better expressed by Dr. Madden in his elegy on archbishop Boulter.

—He thought it mean

Only to help the poor to beg again.

I.i.129 (280,2) Therefore he will be, Timon] I rather think an emendation necessary, and read,

Therefore well be him, *Timon.*

His honesty rewards him in itself.

That is, *If he in honest* , bene fit illi, *I wish him the proper happiness of an honest man, but his honesty gives him no claim to my daughter* .

The first transcriber probably wrote *will be him* , which the next, not understanding, changed to, *he will be* . (1773)

I.i.149 (281,3)

never may

That state, or fortune, fall into my keeping,

Which is not ow'd to you!]

The meaning is, let me never henceforth consider any thing that I possess, but as *owed* or *due* to you; held for your service, and at your disposal.

I.i.159 (281,4) pencil'd figures are/Even such as they give out] Pictures have no hypocrisy; they are what they profess to be.

I.i.165 (282,5) unclew me quite] To *unclew* , is to *unwind* a ball of thread. To *unclew* a man, is to draw out the whole mass of his fortunes.

I.i.171 (282,5) Are prized by their masters] Are rated according to the, esteem in which their possessor is held.

I.i.178 (282,8)

Tim. Good-morrow to thee, gentle Apemantua!

Apam. 'Till I be gentle, stay for thy good-morrow.

When thou art Timon's dog, and these knaves honest,—]

[Warburton conjectured a line lost and added one of his own making] I think my punctuation may clear the passage without any greater effort.

I.i.180 (283,9) Then thou art Timon's dog] When thou hast gotten a better character, and instead of being Timon, as thou art, shalt be changed to Timon's dog, and become more worth; of kindness and salutation. (1773)

I.i.241 (284,9) That I had no angry wit to be a lord] [W: so hungry a wit] The meaning may be, I should hate myself for *patiently enduring to be a lord* . This is ill enough expressed. Perhaps some happy change may set it right. I have tried, and can do nothing, yet I cannot heartily concur with Dr. Warburton.

I.i.259 (286,2) The strain of man's bred out/Into baboon and monkey] Man is exhausted and degenerated; his *strain* or lineage is worn down into monkey.

I.ii.12 (288,5)

If our betters play at that game, we must not dare

To imitate them. Faults that are rich, are fair]

[Warburton gave the second line to Apemantus] I cannot see that these lines are more proper in any other mouth than Timon's, to whose character of generosity and condescension they are very suitable. To suppose that by *our betters* are meant the Gods, is very harsh, because to imitate the Gods has been hitherto reckoned the highest pitch of human virtue. The whole is a trite and obvious thought, uttered by Timon with a kind of affected modesty. If I would make any alteration, it should be only to reform the numbers thus:

Our betters play that game; we must not dare

T' imitate then; faults that are rich are fair.

I.ii.34 (289,6) thou art an Athenian,/Therefore welcome: I myself would have no power] If this be the true reading, the sense is, *all Athenians are welcome to share my fortune* ; I would myself have no *exclusive right or power in this house* . Perhaps we might read, *I myself would have no* poor. I would have every Athenian consider himself as joint possessor of my fortune.

I.ii.38 (289,7) I scorn thy meat, 'twould choke me, for I should/ Ne'er flatter thee] [W: 'fore/I should e'er] Of this emendation there is little need. The meaning is, I could not swallow thy meat, for I could not pay for it with flattery; and what was given me with an ill will would stick in my throat.

I.ii.41 (290,8) so many dip their meat/In one man's blood] The allusion is to a pack of hounds trained to pursuit by being gratified with the blood of the animal which they kill, and the wonder is that the animal on which they are feeding *cheers them* to the chase.

I.ii.52 (290,9) windpipe's dangerous notes] The notes of the windpipe seem to be the only indications which shew where the windpipe is. (see 1765, VI, 184, 4)

I.ii.54 (290,1) My lord, in heart] That is, *my lord's health with sincerity* . An emendation hat been proposed thus:

My love *in heart* ;—

but it is not necessary.

I.ii.89 (292,2) we should think ourselves for ever perfect] That is, arrived at the perfection of happiness.

I.ii.94 (292,4) did not you chiefly belong to my heart?] I think it should be inverted thus: *did I not chiefly belong to* your hearts. Lacius wishes that Timon would give him and the rest an opportunity *of expressing some part of their zeals* . Timon answers that, *doubtless the Gods have provided that I should have help from you; how else are you my friends* ? why are you stiled my friends, if—what? *if I do not love you* . Such is the present reading; but the consequence is not very clear; the proper close must be, *if you do not love me* , and to this my alteration restores it. But, perhaps, the old reading may stand. [The *Revisal* 's note on this line is quoted.] The meaning is probably this. Why are you distinguished from thousands by that title of endearment, was there not a particular connection and intercourse of tenderness between you and me. (see 1765, VI, 185, 8)

I.ii.97 (293,5) I confirm you] I fix your characters firmly in my own mind.

I.ii.99 (293,7) O joy, e'en made away, ere it can be born!] For this Hanmer writes, *O joy, e'en made a joy ere't can be born* ; and is followed by Dr. Warburton. I am always inclinable to think well of that which is approved by so much learning and sagacity, yet cannot receive this alteration. Tears being the effect both of joy and grief, supplied our author with an opportunity of conceit, which he seldom fails to indulge. Timon, weeping with a kind of tender pleasure, cries out, *O joy, e'en made away* , destroyed, turned to tears, before *it can be born* , before it can be fully possessed.

I.ii.110 (293,8) Mine eyes cannot hold water, methinks: to forget their faults, I drink to you] In the original edition the words stand thus: *mine eyes cannot hold out water, methinks. To forget their faults, I drink to you* . Perhaps the true reading is this, *Mine eyes cannot hold out* ; they *water. Methinks, to forget their faults, I will drink to you* . Or it may be explained without any change. *Mine eyes cannot hold out water* , that is, cannot keep water from breaking in upon them, (see 1765, VI, 186, 2)

I.ii.113 (294,9) *Apem* . Thou weep'st to make them drink] Hanmer reads,

—*to make then drink* thee,

and is again followed by Dr. Warburton, I think without sufficient reason. The covert sense of Apemantus is, *what thou losest, they get* .

I.ii.118 (294,1) like a babe] That is a *weeping babe* .

I.ii.138 (295,3)

They dance! They are mad women.

Like madness is the glory of this life,

As this pomp shews to a little oil and root]

[Warburton conjectured some lines lost after the second verse] When I read this passage, I was at first of the same opinion with this learned man; but, upon longer consideration, I grew less confident, because I think the present reading susceptible of explanation, with no more violence to language than is frequently found in our author. *The glory of this life is very near to madness* , as may be made appear from *this pomp* , exhibited in a place where a philosopher is feeding on *oil and roots* . When we see by example how few are the necessaries of life, we learn what madness there is in so much superfluity.

I.ii.146 (296,5) who dies, that bears/Not one spurn to their graves, of their friends gift?] That is, given them by their friends.(1773)

I.ii.155 (297,6) mine own device] The mask appears to have been design'd by Timon to surprise his guests.

I.ii.157 (297,7) *L Lady* . My lord, you take us even at the best] This answer seems rather to belong to one of the ladies. It was probably only mark'd *L* in the copy.

I.ii.169 (298,1) 'Tis pity, bounty has not eyes behind] To see the miseries that are following her.

I.ii.170 (298,2) That man might ne'er be wretched for his mind] For nobleness of soul.

I.ii.176 (298,3) to/Advance this jewel] To prefer it; to raise it to honour by wearing it.

I.ii.230 (300,6)

all the lands thou hast

Lie in a pitch'd field.

Alc. I' defiled land, my lord]

This is the old reading, which apparently depends on a very low quibble. Alcibiades is told, that *his estate lies in a* pitch'd *field* . Now *pitch* , as Falstaff says, *doth defile* . Alcibiades therefore replies, that his estate lies *in defiled land* . This, as it happened, was not understood, and all the editors published,

I defy land ,—

I.ii.237 (301,8) Serving of becks] [W: serring] The commentator conceives *beck* to mean the *mouth* or the *head* , after the French, *bec* , whereas it means a salutation made with the head. So Milton,

"Nods and *becks* , and wreathed smiles."

To *serve a beck* , is to offer a salutation.

I.ii.238 (301,9) I doubt, whether their legs] He plays upon the word *leg* , as it signifies a *limb* and a *bow* or *act of obeisance* .

I.ii.247 (302,1) I fear me, thou/Wilt give away thyself in paper shortly] [W: in proper] Hanmer reads very plausibly,

—*thou*

Wilt give away thyself in perpetuum.

I.ii.235 (302,2) I'll lock/Thy heaven from thee] The pleasure of being flattered.

II.i.10 (304,5) No porter at his gate;/But rather one that smiles, and still invites] I imagine that a line is lost here, in which the behaviour of a surly porter was described.

II.i.12 (304,6) no reason/Can found his state in safety] The supposed meaning of this [Can sound his state] must be, *No reason* , by *sounding* , fathoming, or trying, *his state* , can find it *safe* . But as the words stand, they imply, that *no reason can* safely *sound his state* . I read thus,

—*no reason*

Can found *his state in safety* .—

Reason cannot find his fortune to have any *safe* or solid *foundation* .

The types of the first printer of this play were so worn and defaced, that *f* and *s* are not always to be distinguished.

II.ii.5 (305,9) Never mind/Was to be so unwise, to be so kind] Of this mode of expression conversation affords many examples: "I was always to be blamed, whatever happened." "I am in the lottery, but I was always to draw blanks." (1773)

II.ii.9 (306,1) Good even, Varro] It is observable, that this *good evening* is before dinner; for Timon tells Alcibiades, that they will *go forth again as soon as dinner's done* , which may prove that by *dinner* our author meant not the *coena* of ancient times, but the mid-day's repast. I do not suppose the passage corrupt: such inadvertencies neither author nor editor can escape.

There is another remark to be made. Varro and Isidore sink a few lines afterwards into the servants of Varro and Isidore. Whether servants, in our author's time, took the names of their masters, I know not. Perhaps it is a slip of negligence.

II.ii.47 (308,4) *Enter Apemantus and a Fool*] I suspect some scene to be lost, in which the entrance of the fool, and the page that follows him, was prepared by some introductory dialogue, in which the audience was informed that they were the fool and page of Phrynia, Timandra, or some other courtesan, upon the knowledge of which depends the greater part of the ensuing jocularity.

II.ii.60-66 (309,4) Poor rogues] This is said so abruptly, that I am inclined to think it misplaced, and would regulate the passage thus:

Caph. *Where's the fool now?*

Apem. *He last ask'd the question.*

All. *What are we, Apemantus?*

Apem. *Asses.*

All. *Why?*

Apem. *That you ask me what you are, and do not know yourselves. Poor rogues', and usurers' men! bawds between* *gold and want! Speak* , &c.

Thus every word will have its proper place. It is likely that the passage transposed was forgot in the copy, and inserted in the margin, perhaps a little beside the proper place, which the transcriber wanting either skill or care to observe, wrote it where it now stands.

II.ii.71 (309,5) She's e'en setting on water to scald] The old name for the disease got at Corinth was the *brenning* , and a sense of *scalding* is one of its first symptoms.

II.ii.117 (311,7) with two stones more than's artificial one] Meaning the celebrated philosopher's stone, which was in those times much talked of. Sir Thomas Smith was one of those who lost considerable sums in seeking of it.

II.ii.152 (312,9) Though you hear now, yet now's too late a time] [Warburton objected to this, an emendation by Hanmer] I think Hanmer right, and have received his emendation.

Il.ii.155 (313,1) and at length/How goes our reckoning?] [W: Hold good our] It is common enough, and the commentator knows it is common to propose interrogatively, that of which neither the speaker nor the hearer has any doubt. The present reading may therefore stand.

II.ii.171 (314,2) a wasteful cock] [i.e. a *cockloft* , a garret. And a *wasteful cock* , signifies a garret lying in waste, neglected, put to no use. HANMER.] Hanmer's explanation is received by Dr. Warburton, yet I think them both apparently mistaken. A *wasteful cock* is a *cock* or pipe with a turning stopple *running* to *waste* . In this sense, both the terms have their usual meaning; but I know not that *cock* is ever used for *cockloft* , or *wasteful* for *lying in waste* , or that lying in waste is at all a phrase.

Il.ii.187 (314,4) And try the arguments] [*Arguments* for natures. *WARB* .] How *arguments* should stand for natures I do not see. But the licentiousness of our author forces us often upon far fetched expositions. *Arguments* may mean *contents* , as the *arguments* of a book; or for *evidences* and *proofs* .

II.ii.209 (315,5) I knew it the most general way] *General* is not speedy, but *compendious* , the way to try many at a time.

II.ii.219 (316,6) And so, intending other serious matters] *Intending* is *regarding, turning their notice* to other things.

II.ii.220 (316,7) these hard fractions] [Warburton saw an allusion to fractions in mathematics] This is, I think, no conceit in the head of Flavius, who, by *fractions* , means *broken* hints, *interrupted* sentences, *abrupt* remarks.

II.ii.221 (316,8) half-caps] A *half cap* is a *cap* slightly moved, not put off.

II.ii.241 (317,3) I would, I could not] The original edition has, *I would, I could not think it, that thought* , &c. It has been changed ['Would], to mend the numbers, without authority.

II.ii.242 (317,4)

That thought is bounty's foe;

Being free itself, it thinks all other so]

Free , is *liberal* , not parsimonious.

III.i.57 (319,6) Has friendship such a faint and milky heart, It turns in less than two nights?] Alluding to the *turning* or acescence of milk.

III.ii.3 (320,3) We know him for no less] That is, *we know him* by report to be *no less* than you represent him, though we are strangers to his person.

III.ii.24 (321,5) yet had he mistook him, and sent him to me] [W: mislook'd] I rather read, *yet had he* not *mistook him, and sent to me* .

III.ii.45 (322,7) If his occasion were not virtuous] [*Virtuous* , for strong, forcible, pressing. *WARBURTON* .] The meaning may more naturally be;—If he did not want it for a good use. (1773)

III.ii.51 (322,9) that I should purchase the day before for a little part, and undo a great deal of honour?] [T: a little dirt] This emendation is received, like all others, by sir T. Hanmer, but neglected by Dr. Warburton. I think Theobald right in suspecting a corruption; nor is his emendation injudicious, though perhaps we may better read, *purchase the day before for a little park* .

III.ii.71 (323,1) And just of the same piece is every flatterer's soul] This is Dr. Warburton's emendation. The other editions read,

Why this is the world's soul;

Of the same piece is every flatterer's sport.

Mr. Upton has not unluckily transposed the two final words, thus,

Why, this is the world's sport:

Of the same piece is ev'ry flatterer's soul.

The passage is not so obscure as to provoke so much enquiry. *This* , says he, *is the soul* or spirit *of the world: every flatterer* plays the same game, makes *sport* with the confidence of his friend. (see 1765, VI, 211, 4)

III.ii.81 (324,2) He does deny him, in respect of his, What charitable men afford to beggars] That is, *in respect of his* fortune, what Lucius denies to Timon is in proportion to what Lucius possesses, less than the ususal alms given by good men to beggars.

III.ii.90 (324,3) I would have put my wealth into donation, And the best half should ha' return'd to him] Hanmer reads,

I would have put my wealth into partition,

And the best half should have attorn'd *to him* .

Dr. Warbarton receives *attorn'd* . The only difficulty is in the word *return'd* , which, since he had received nothing from him, cannot be used but in a very low and licentious meaning, (see 1765, VI, 212, 6)

III.iii.5 (325,4) They have all been touch'd] That is, *tried* , alluding to the *touchstone* .

III.iii.11 (325,5) His friends, like physicians,/Thrive, give him over?] The original reading is,

—his friends, (*like physicians*)

Thrive, give him over?

which Theobald has misrepresented. Hanmer reads, *try'd* , plausibly enough. Instead of *three* proposed by Mr. Pope, I should read *thrice* . But perhaps the old reading is the true.

III.iii.24 (326,6) I had such a courage] Such an ardour, such an eager desire.

III.iii.28 (326,8) The devil knew not what he did] I cannot but think that, the negative *not* has intruded into this passage, and the reader will think so too, when he reads Dr. Warburton's explanation of the next words.

III.iii.28 (326,9) The devil knew not what he did, when he made men politick; he cross'd himself by't: and I cannot think, but in the end the villainies of man will set him clear] [*Set him clear* does not mean acquit him before heaven; for then *the devil* must be supposed *to know what* he did: but it signifies puzzle him, outdo him at his own weapons. WARBURTON.] How the devil, or any other being, should be *set clear* by being *puzzled* and *outdone* , the commentator has not explained. When in a crowd we would have an opening made, we say, *Stand clear* , that is, *out of the way of danger* . With some affinity to this use, though not without great harshness, to *set clear* , may be to *set aside* . But I believe the original corruption is the insertion of the negative, which was obtruded by some transcriber, who supposed *crossed* to mean *thwarted* , when it meant, *exempted from evil* . The use of *crossing* , by way of protection or purification, was probably not worn out in Shakespeare's time. The sense of *set clear* is now easy; he has no longer the guilt of tempting man. To cross himself may mean, in a very familiar sense, *to clear his score, to get out of debt, to quit his reckoning* . He knew not *what he did* , may mean, he knew not how much good he was doing himself. There is then no need of emendation. (1773)

III.iii.42 (327,2) keep his house] *i.e.* keep within doors for fear of duns.

III.iv (328,3) *Enter Varro, Titus, Hortense, Lucius*] Lucius is here again for the servant of Lucius.

III.iv.12 (328,4) a prodigal's course/Is like the sun's] That is, like him in blaze and splendour.

Soles occidere et redire possunt. Catul.

III.iv.25 (329,5) I am weary of this charge] That is, of this *commission* , of this *employment* .

III.iv.32 (329,6) Else, surely, his had equall'd] Should it not be, *else, surely, mine had equall'd* .

III.iv.67 (330,7) *Enter Servilius*] It may be observed that Shakespeare has unskilfully filled his Greek story with Roman names.

III.v.14 (333,6)

He is a man, setting his fate aside,

Of comely virtues:

Nor did he soil the fact with cowardise;

(An honour in him which buys out his fault)]

I have printed these lines after the original copy, except that, for *an honour* , it is there, *and honour* . All the latter editions deviate unwarrantably from the original, and give the lines thus:

He is a man, setting his fault aside,

Of virtuous honour, which buys out his fault;

Nor did he soil , &c.

III.v.22 (333,3)

He did behave, his anger ere 'twas spent,

As if he had but prov'd an argument]

The original copy reads not *behave* but *behoove* . I do not well understand the passage in either reading. Shall we try a daring conjecture?

—*with such sober and unnoted passion*

He did behold his adversary shent,

As if he had but prov'd an argument .

He looked with such calmness on his slain adversary. I do not suppose that this is right, but put it down for want of better. (1773)

III.v.24 (334,4) You undergo too strict a paradox] You undertake a paradox too *hard* .

III.v.32 (334,5) and make his wrongs His outsides: to wear them like an argument, carelessly. We outside wear; hang like his] The present reading is better.

III.v.46 (335,6) What make we/Abroad?] *What do we* , or *what have we to do in the field* .

III.v.46 (335,7)

what make we

Abroad? why then, women are more valiant,

That stay at home, if bearing carry it;

The ass, more than the lion; and the fellow,

Loaden with irons, wiser than the judge,

If wisdom be in suffering]

Here is another arbitrary regulation, the original reads thus,

what make we

Abroad, why then women are more valiant

That stay at home, if bearing carry it:

And the ass more captain than the lion, *The fellow, loaden with irons, wiser than the judge,*

If wisdom , &c.

I think it may be better adjusted thus:

what make we

Abroad, why then the women are more valiant

That stay at home;

If bearing carry it, than is the ass

More captain than the lion, and the felon

Loaden with irons, wiser than the judge,

If wisdom , &c.

III.v.54 (336,8) sin's extreamest gust] *Gust* is here in its common sense; the utmost degree of *appetite* for sin.

III.v.55 (336,9) by mercy, 'tis most just] [By *mercy* is meant *equity* . WARBURTON] *Mercy* is not put for equity. If such explanation be allowed, what can be difficult? The meaning is, *I call* mercy *herself* to witness, that defensive violence is just.

III.v.68 (338,2) a sworn rioter] A *sworn rioter* is a man who practises riot, as if he had by an oath made it his duty.

III.v.80 (337,3) your reverend ages love/Security] He charges them obliquely with being usurers.

III.v.96 (337,5) Do you dare our anger?/'Tis in few words, but spacious in effect] This reading may pass, but perhaps the author wrote,

our anger ?

'Tis few in words, but spacious in effect.

III.v.114 (338,7)

I'll cheer up

My discontented troops, and play for hearts.

'Tis honour with most hands to be at odds]

[Warburton had substituted "hands" for "lands"] I think *hands* is very properly substituted for *lands* . In the foregoing line, for, *lay for hearts* , I would read, *play* for *hearts* .

III.vi.4 (339,7) Upon that were my thoughts tiring] A hawk, I think, is said to *tire* , when she amuses herself with pecking a pheasant's wing, or any thing that puts her in mind of prey. To *tire* upon a thing, is therefore, to be *idly employed upon it* .

III.vi.100 (342,9) Is your perfection] Your *perfection* , is *the highest of your excellence* .

III.vi.101 (342,1) and spangled you with flatteries] [W: with your] The present reading is right.

III.vi.106 (342,2) time-flies] Flies of a season.

III.vi. 107 (342,5) minute-jacks!] Hanmer thinks it means *Jack-a-lantern* , which shines and disappears in an instant. What it was I know not; but it was something of quick motion, mentioned in Richard III.

III.vi.108 (342,4) the infinite malady] Every kind of disease incident to man and beast.

IV.i.19 (344,6)

Degrees, observances, customs and laws,

Decline to your confounding contraries,

And yet confusion live!]

Hanmer reads, *let* confusion; but the meaning may be, *though by such confusion all things seem to hasten to dissolution* , yet *let not dissolution come, but the miseries of* confusion *continue.*

IV.ii (345,1) Enter Flavius] Nothing contributes more to the exaltation of Timon's character than the zeal and fidelity of his servants. Nothing but real virtue can be honoured by domesticks; nothing but impartial kindness can gain affection from dependants.

IV.ii.10 (345,2) So his familiars from his buried fortunes/Slink all away] The old copies have *to* instead of *from* . The correction is Hanmer's; but the old reading might stand (see 1765, VI, 231, 2)

IV.ii.38 (346,4) strange unusual blood] Of this passage, I suppose, every reader would wish for a correction; but the word, harsh as it is, stands fortified by the rhyme, to which, perhaps, it owes its introduction. I know not what to propose. Perhaps,

—*strange unusual* mood,

may, by some, be thought better, and by others worse.

IV.iii.1 (347,5) O blessed, breeding sun] [W: blessing breeding] I do not see that this emendation much strengthens the sense.

IV.iii.2 (347,6) thy sister's orb] That is, the moon's, this *sublunary* world.

IV.iii.6 (348,7) Not nature,/To whom all sores lay siege] I have preserved this note rather for the sake of the commentator [Warburton] than of the author. How *nature, to whom all sores lay siege* , can so emphatically express *nature in its greatest perfection* , I shall not endeavour to explain. The meaning I take to be this: *Brother, when his fortune is inlarged, will scorn brother* ; for this is the general depravity of human nature, which, *besieged as it is by misery* , admonished as it is of want and imperfection, when *elevated by fortune, will despise* beings of *nature like its own* .

IV.iii.12 (349,9) It is the pastor lards the brother's sides,/The want that makes him leave] [W: weather's sides] This passage is very obscure, nor do I discover any clear sense, even though we should admit the emendation. Let us inspect the text as I have given it from the original edition,

It is the pastour *lards the* brother's *sides,*

The want that makes him leave.

Dr. Warburton found the passage already changed thus,

It is the pasture *lards the* beggar's *sides,*

The want that makes him lean.

And upon this reading of no authority, raised another equally uncertain.

Alterations are never to be made without necessity. Let us see what sense the genuine reading will afford. Poverty, says the poet, *bears contempt hereditary* , and *wealth native honour* . To illustrate this position, having already mentioned the case of a poor and rich brother, he remarks, that this preference is given to wealth by those whom it least becomes; *it is the* pastour *that greases or* flatters *the rich* brother, and will grease him on till *want makes him leave* . The poet then goes on to ask, *Who dares to say this man* , this pastour, *is a flatterer* ; the crime is universal; through all the world *the learned pate* , with allusion to the pastour, *ducks to the golden fool* . If it be objected, as it may justly be, that the mention of pastour is unsuitable, we must remember the mention of *grace* and *cherubims* in this play, and many such anachronisms in many others. I would therefore read thus:

It is the pastour lards the brother's sides ,

'Tis *want that makes him leave* .

The obscurity is still great. Perhaps a line is lost. I have at least given the original reading.

IV.iii.27 (350,2) no idle votarist] No insincere or inconstant supplicant. *Gold* will not serve me instead of *roots* .

IV.iii.38 (351,5) That makes the wappen'd widow wed again] Of *wappened* I have found no example, nor know any meaning. To *awhape* is used by Spenser in his *Hubberd's Tale* , but I think not in either of the senses mentioned. I would read *wained* , for *decayed by time* . So our author in *Richard the Third* , *A beauty* -waining *and distressed widow* .

IV.iii.41 (352,6) To the April day again] That is, *to the wedding day* , called by the poet, satirically, *April day* , or *fool's day* .

IV.iii.44 (352,7) Do thy right nature] Lie in the earth where nature laid thee.

IV.iii.44 (352,8) Thou'rt quick] Thou hast life and motion in thee.

IV.iii.64 (353,9) I will not kiss thee] This alludes to an opinion in former times, generally prevalent, that the venereal infection transmitted to another, left the infecter free. I will not, says Timon, take the rot from thy lips by kissing thee.

IV.iii.72 (353,1)

Tim. Promise me friendship, but perform none. If

Thou wilt not promise, the Gods plague thee, for

Thou art a man; if thou dost perform, confound thee,

For thou art a man!]

That is, however thou may'st act, since thou art man, hated man, I wish thee evil.

IV.iii.82 (354,2)

Be a whore still! They love thee not that use thee;

Give them diseases, leaving with thee their lust:

Make use of thy salt hours]

There is here a slight transposition. I would read,

—*They love thee not that use thee,*

Leaving with thee their lust; give them diseases;

Make use of thy salt hours; season the slaves

For tubs and baths ;—

IV.iii.115 (356,6) milk-paps,/That through the window-bars bore at mens' eyes] [W: window-lawn] The reading is more probably,

—*window-bar* ,—

The virgin that shews her bosom through the lattice of her chamber.

IV.iii.119 (356,8) exhaust their mercy] For *exhaust* , sir T. Hanmer, and after him Dr. Warburton, read *extort* ; but *exhaust* here signifies literally to *draw forth* .

IV.iii.120 (356,7)

Think it a bastard, whom the oracle

Hath doubtfully prunounc'd thy throat shall cut]

An allusion to the tale of OEdipus.

IV.iii.134 (357,8) And to make whores a bawd] [W: make whole] The old edition reads,

And to make whores a bawd.

That is, *enough to make a whore leave whoring, and a bawd leave making whores* .

IV.iii.139 (357,9) I'll trust to your conditions] You need not swear to continue whores, I will trust to your inclinations.

IV.iii.140 (358,1) Yet may your pains, six months,/Be quite contrary] The explanation [Warburton's] is ingenious, but I think it very remote, and would willingly bring the author and his readers to meet on easier terms. We may read,

—*Yet may your pains six months*

Be quite contraried.—

Timon is wishing ill to mankind, but is afraid lest the whores should imagine that he wishes well to them; to obviate which he lets them know, that he imprecates upon them influence enough to plague others, and disappointments enough to plague themselves. He wishes that they may do all possible mischief, and yet take *pains six months* of the year in vain.

In this sense there is a connection of this line with the next. Finding *your pains contraried* , try new expedients, *thatch your thin roofs* , and *paint* .

To *contrary* is on old verb. Latymer relates, that when he went to court, he was advised not to *contrary* the king.

IV.iii.153 (359,3) mens' spurring] Hanmer reads *sparring* , properly enough, if there be any ancient example of the word.

IV.iii.158 (359,5)

take the bridge quite away

Of him, that his particular to foresee

Smells from the general weal]

[W: to forefend] The metaphor is apparently incongruous, but the sense is good. To *foresee his particular* , is *to provide for his private advantage* , for which *he leaves the right scent of publick good* . In hunting, when hares have cross'd one another, it is common for some of the hounds *to smell from the general weal, and foresee their own particular* . Shakespeare, who seems to have been a skilful sportsman, and has alluded often to falconry, perhaps, alludes here to hunting.

To the commentator's emendation it may be objected, that he used *forefend* in the wrong meaning. To *forefend* , is, I think, never to *provide for* , but to *provide against* . The verbs compounded with *for* or *fore* have commonly either an evil or negative sense.

IV.iii.182 (361,8) eyeless venom'd worm] The serpent, which we, from the smallness of his eyes, call the *blind worm* , and the Latins, *caecilia* .

IV.iii.183 (361,9) below crisp heaven] [W: cript] Mr. Upton declares for *crisp* , curled, bent, hollow.

IV.iii.188 (361,1) Let it no more bring out ingrateful man!] [W: out to ungrateful] It is plain that *bring out* is *bring forth* , with which the following lines correspond so plainly, that the commentator might be suspected of writing his note without reading the whole passage.

IV.iii.193 (362,2) Dry up thy marrows, vines, and plough torn leas] I cannot concur to censure Theobald [as Warburton did] as a *critic* very *unhappy* . He was weak, but he was cautious: finding but little power in his mind, he rarely ventured far under its conduct. This timidity hindered him from daring conjectures, and sometimes hindered him happily.

This passage, among many others, may pass without change. The genuine reading is not *marrows, veins* , but *marrows* , vines: the sense is this; *O nature! cease* to *produce men, ensear thy womb* ; but if thou wilt continue to produce them, at least cease to pamper them; *dry up thy marrows* , on which they fatten with *unctuous morsels* , thy *vines* , which give them *liquorish draughts* , and thy *plow-torn leas* . Here are effects corresponding with causes, *liquorish draughts* with *vines* , and *unctuous morsels* with *marrows* , and the old reading literally preserved.

IV.iii.209 (363,3) the cunning of a carper] *Cunning* here seems to signify *counterfeit appearance* .

IV.ii.223 (364,4) moist trees] Hanmer reads very elegantly,

—moss'd *trees* .

IV.iii.37 (364,5)

Tim. Always a villain's office, or a fool's.

Dost please thyself in't?

Apem. Ay.

Tim. What! a knave too?]

Such was Dr. Warburton's first conjecture ["and know't too"], but afterwards he adopted Sir T. Hanmer's conjecture,

What a knave thou!

but there is no need of alteration. Timon had just called Apemantus *fool* , in consequence of what he had known of him by former acquaintance; but when Apemantus tells him, that he comes *to vex him* , Timon determines that to *vex* is either *the office of a villain or a fool* ; that *to vex by design* is *villainy, to vex without design* is *folly* . He then properly asks Apemantus whether he takes delight in *vexing* , and when he answers, *yes* , Timon replies, *What! and knave too?* I before only knew thee to be a *fool* , but I now find thee likewise a *knave* . This seems to be so clear as not to stand in need of a comment.

IV.iii.242 (365,6) Willing misery/Outlives incertain pomp; is crown'd before] Arrives sooner at *high wish* ; that is, at the *completion of its wishes* .

IV.iii.247 (365,7) Worse than the worst, content] Best states contentless have a wretched being, a being worse than that of the worst states that are content. This one would think too plain to have been mistaken. (1773)

IV.iii.249 (365,8) by his breath] It means, I believe, by his *counsel* , by his *direction* .

IV. iii. 252 (366,l) Hadst thou, like us] There is in this speech a sullen haughtiness, and malignant dignity, suitable at once to the lord and the man-hater. The impatience with which he bears to have his luxury reproached by one that never had luxury within his reach, is natural and graceful.

There is in a letter, written by the earl of Essex, just before his execution, to another nobleman, a passage somewhat resembling this, with which, I believe every reader will be pleased, though it is so serious and solemn that it can scarcely be inserted without irreverence.

"God grant your lordship may quickly feel the comfort I now enjoy in my unfettered conversion, but that you may never feel the torments I have suffered for my long delaying it. *I had none but deceivers to call upon me, to whom I said, if my ambition could have entered into their narrow breasts, they would not* *have been so precise. But your lordship hath one to call upon you, that knoweth what it is you now enjoy; and what the greatest fruit and end is of all contentment that this world can afford.* Think, therefore, dear earl, that I have staked and buoyed all the ways of pleasure unto you, and left them as sea-marks for you to keep the channel of religious virtue. For shut your eyes never so long, they must be open at the last, and then you must say with me, *there is no peace to the ungodly* ."

IV.iii.252 (366,2) from our first swath] From infancy. *Swath* is the dress of a new-born child.

IV.iii.258 (366,3) precepts of respect] Of obedience to laws.

IV.iii.259 (366,4) But myself] The connection here requires some attention. *But* is here used to denote opposition; but what immediately precedes is not opposed to that which follows. The adversative particle refers to the two first lines.

Thou art a slave, whom fortune's tender arm

With favour never claspt; but bred a dog.

—But myself,

Who had the world as my confectionary, &c.

The intermediate lines are to be considered as a parenthesis of passion.

IV.iii.271 (367,5) If thou wilt curse, thy father, that poor rag,/ Must be thy subject] If we read *poor rogue* , it will correspond rather better to what follows.

IV.iii.276 (367,6) Thou hadst been knave and flatterer] Dryden has quoted two verses of Virgil to shew how well he could have written satires. Shakespeare has here given a specimen of the same power by a line bitter beyond all bitterness, in which Timon tells Apemantus, that he had not virtue enough for the vices which he condemns.

Dr. Warburton explains *worst* by *lowest* , which somewhat weakens the sense, and yet leaves it sufficiently vigorous.

I have heard Mr. Bourke commend the subtilty of discrimination with which

Shakespeare distinguishes the present character of Timon from that of Apemantus, whom to vulgar eyes he would now resemble. (see 1763, VI, 249, 6) (rev. 1778, VIII, 424, 4)

IV.iii.308 (369,8) Ay, though it look like thee] Timon here supposes that an objection against hatred, which through the whole tenor of the conversation appears an argument for it. One would have expected him to have answered,

Yes, *for it looks like thee* .

The old edition, which always gives the pronoun instead of the affirmative particle, has it,

I, though it look like thee .

Perhaps we should read,

I thought *it* look'd *like thee* .

IV,iii.363 (371,2) Thou art the cap] *i.e.* the property, the bubble. WARBURTON.] I rather think, the *top* , the *principal* .

The remaining dialogue has more malignity than wit.

IV.iii.383 (372,4) 'Twixt natural, son and sire!']

[Greek: dia touton ouk adelphoi

dia touton ou toxaeas. ANAC.]

IV.iii.398 (373,6) More things like men?] This line, in the old edition, is given to Aremantus, but it apparently belongs to Timon. Hanmer has transposed the foregoing dialogue according to his own mind, not unskilfully, but with unwarrantable licence.

IV.iii.419 (373,7) you want much of meat] [T: of meet] Such is Mr. Theobald's emendation, in which he is followed by Dr. Warburton. Sir T. Hanmer reads,

—*you want much of* men.

They have been all busy without necessity. Observe the series of the conversation. The thieves tell him, that they are *men that much do want* . Here is an ambiguity between *much want* and *want* of *much* . Timon takes it on the wrong side, and tells them that their *greatest want is* , that, like other men, *they want much of meat* ; then telling them where meat may be had, he asks, *Want? why want?* (see 1765, VI, 254, 5)

IV.iii.420 (374,8) the earth hath roots;/Within this mile break forth an hundred springs]

Vile plus, et duris haerentia mora rubetis

Pugnantis stomachi composuere famen:

Flumine vicino stultus sitit.

I do not suppose these to be imitations, but only to be similar thoughts on similar occasions.

IV.iii.442 (375,2) The sea's a thief, whose liquid surge resolves/The moon into salt tears] [W: The mounds] I am not willing to receive *mounds* , which would not be understood but by him that suggested it. The *moon* is supposed to be humid, and perhaps a source of humidity, but cannot be *resolved* by the *surges* of the sea. Yet I think *moon* is the true reading. Here is a circulation of thievary described: The sun, moon, and sea all rob, and are robbed.

IV.iii.456 (376,3) 'Tis in the malice of mankind, that he thus advises us; not to have us thrive in our mystery] [Hanmer: his malice to] Hanmer's emendation, though not necessary, is very probable, and very unjustly charged with nonsense [by Warburton]. The reason of his advice, says the thief, is *malice to mankind* , not any kindness to us, or desire *to have us thrive in our mystery* .

IV.iii.468 (378,5) What an alteration of honour has/Desperate want made!] [W: of humour] The original copy has,

What an alteration of honour has desperate want made!

The present reading is certainly better, but it has no authority. To change *honour* to *humour* is not necessary. *An alteration of honour* , is an *alteration* of an *honourable state* to a state of disgrace.

IV.iii.474 (378,8)

Grant, I may ever love, and rather woe

Those that would mischief me, than those that do!]

[W: rather too/...that woo] In defiance of this criticism, I have ventured to replace the former reading, as more suitable to the general spirit of these scenes, and as free from the absurdities charged upon it. It is plain, that in this whole speech *friends* and *enemies* are taken only for those who *profess friendship* and *profess enmity* ; for the *friend* is supposed not to be more kind, but more dangerous than the *enemy* . In the amendation, *those that would mischief* are placed in opposition to *those that woo* , but in the speaker's intention *those that woo* are *those that mischief* most. The sense is, *Let me rather woo or caress those that* would *mischief, that* profess to mean me mischief, *than those* that really *do* me *mischief under false professions of kindness* . The Spaniards, I think, have this proverb; *Defend me from my friends, and from my enemies I will defend myself* . This proverb is a sufficient comment on the passage.

IV.iii.484 (379,9) all/I kept were knaves, to serve in meat to villains] *Knave* is here in the compounded sense of a *servant* and a *rascal* .

IV.iii.492 (379,1) Pity's sleeping] I do not know that any correction is necessary, but I think we might read,

—*eyes do never give*

But thorough lust and laughter, pity sleeping .

Eyes never flow (to *give* is to dissolve as saline bodies in moist weather) *but by lust* or *laughter* , undisturbed *by* emotions of *pity* .

IV.iii.499 (380,2) It almost turns my dangerous nature wild] [W: mild] This emendation is specious, but even this may be controverted. To *turn wild* is *to distract* . An appearance so unexpected, says Timon, *almost turns my savageness* to distraction. Accordingly he examines with nicety lest his phrenzy, should deceive him, *Let me behold thy face. Surely this man*

Was born of woman .

And to this suspected disorder of mind he alludes,

Perpetual, sober, Gods !—

Ye powers whose intellects are out of the reach of perturbation.

IV.iii.533 (381,3) thou shalt build from men] Away from human habitations.

V.i (382,5) *Enter Poet and Painter*] The poet and the painter were within view when Apemantus parted from Timon, and might then have seen Timon, since Apemantus, standing by him could not see them: But the scenes of the thieves and steward have passed before their arrival, and yet passed, as the drama is now conducted within their view. It might be suspected that some scenes are transposed, for all these difficulties would be removed by introducing the poet and painter first, and the thieves in this place. Yet I am afraid the scenes must keep their present order; for the painter alludes to the thieves when he says, *he likewise enriched poor straggling soldiers with great quantity* . This impropriety is now heightened by placing the thieves in one act, and the poet and painter in another: but it must be remembered, that in the original edition this play is not divided into separate acts, so that the present distribution is arbitrary, and may be changed if any convenience can be gained, or impropriety obviated by alteration.

V.i.47 (384,6) While the day serves, before black-corner'd night] [W: black-cornette] *Black-corner'd night* is probably corrupt, but *black-cornette* can hardly be right, for it should be *black-cornetted night* . I cannot propose any thing, but must leave the place in its present state. (1773)

V.i.101 (386,8) a made-up villain] That is a villain that adopts qualities and characters not properly belonging to him; a hypocrite.

V.i.105 (386,9) drown them in a draught] That is, *in the* jakes.

V.i.109 (388,1)

But two in company—

Each man apart, all single and alone,

Yet an arch villain keeps him company]

This passage is obscure. I think the meaning is this: *but two in company* , that is, stand apart, *let only two be together* ; for even when each stands single there are two, he himself and a villain.

V.i.151 (388,3) Of its own fall] [The Oxford editor alters *fall* to *fault* , not knowing that Shakespeare uses *fall* to signify dishonour, not destruction. So in *Hamlet* ,

What a falling *off was there* ! WARBURTON.]

The truth is, that neither *fall* means *disgrace* , nor is *fault* a necessary emendation. *Falling off* in the quotation is not *disgrace* but *defection* . The Athenians *had sense* , that is, felt the danger *of their own fall* , by the arms of Alcibiades.

V.i.151 (388,4) restraining aid to Timon] I think it should be *refraining aid* , that is, with-holding aid that should have been given *to* Timon.

V.i.154 (389,5) Than their offence can weigh down by the dram] This which was in the former editions can scarcely be right, and yet I know not whether my reading will be thought to rectify it. I take the meaning to be, We will give thee a recompence that our offences cannot outweigh, *heaps of wealth down by the dram* , or delivered according to the exactest measure. A little disorder may perhaps have happened in transcribing, which may be reformed by reading,

—*Ay, ev'n such heaps*

And sums of love and wealth, down by the dram,

As shall to thee —

V.i.165 (389,6) Allow'd with absolute power] *Allowed* is *licensed* , *privileged* , *uncontrolled* . So of a buffoon, in *Love's Labour lost* , it is said, that he is *allowed* , that is, at liberty to say what he will, a privileged scoffer.

V.i.139 (390,7) My long sickness/Of health and living now begins to mend] The disease of life begins to promise me a period.

V.i.211 (391,8) in the sequence of degree] Methodically, from highest to lowest.

V.iii.4 (393,2) Some beast read this; here does not live a man] [W: rear'd] Notwithstanding this remark, I believe the old reading to be the right. *The soldier had only seen the rude heap of earth.* He had evidently seen something that told him *Timon was dead* ; and what could tell that but his tomb? The tomb he sees, and the inscription upon it, which not being able to read, and finding none to read it for him, he exclaims peevishly, *some beast read this* , for it must be read, and in this place it cannot be read by man.

There is something elaborately unskilful in the contrivance of sending a soldier, who cannot read, to take the epitaph in wax, only that it may close the play by being read with more solemnity in the last scene.

V.iv.7 (394, 3) traverst arms] Arms across.

V.iv.8 (394,4) the time is flush] A bird is *flush* when his feathers are grown, and he can leave the nest. *Flush* is *mature* .

V.iv.18 (395,7)

So did we woo

Transformed Timon to our city's love,

By humble message, and by promis'd means]

[T: promis'd mends] Dr. Warburton agrees with Mr. Theobald, but the old reading may well stand.

V.iv.28 (395,8) Shame, that they wanted cunning, in excess/Hath broke their hearts] [Theobald had emended the punctuation] I have no wish to disturb the means of Theobald, yet think some emendation nay be offered that will make the construction less harsh, and the sentence more serious. I read,

Shape that they wanted, coming in excess,

Hath broke their hearts.

Shame which they had so long *wanted at last* coming in *its utmost* excess.

V.iv.36 (396,8) not square] Not regular, not equitable.

V.iv.35 (397,9) uncharged ports] That is, *unguarded gates* .

V.iv.59 (397,1) not a man/Shall pass his quarter] Not a soldier shall quit his station, or be let loose upon you; and, if any commits violence, he shall answer it regularly to the law.

V.iv.76 (308.,3) our brain's flow; Hanmer and Dr. Warburton read,

—brine's flow,—

Our brain's flow is our tears; but we any read our brine's flow, our salt tears. Either will serve. (see 1765, VI, 276, 6)

(399) General Observation. The play of *Timon* is a domestic tragedy, and therefore strongly fastens on the attention of the reader. In the plan there is not much art, but the incidents are natural, and the characters various and exact. The catastrophe affords a very powerful warning against that ostentations liberality, which scatters bounty, but confers no benefits, and buys flattery, but not friendship.

In this tragedy are many passages perplexed, obscure, and probably corrupt, which I have endeavoured to rectify, or explain, with due diligence; but having only one copy, cannot promise myself that my endeavours shall be much applauded.

TITUS ANDRONICUS

(403,1) It is observable, that this play is printed in the quarto of 1611, with exactness equal to that of the other books of those times. The first edition was probably corrected by the author, so that here is very little room for conjecture or emendation; and accordingly none of the editors have much molested this piece with officious criticism.

I.i.70 (406,2) Hail, Rome, victorious in thy mourning weeds!] [W: my] *Thy* is as well as *my* . We may suppose the Romans in a grateful ceremony, meeting the dead sons of Andronicus with mourning habits.

I.i.77 (407,3) Thou great defender of this Capitol] Jupiter, to whom the Capitol was sacred.

I.i.168 (410,5) And fame's eternal date for virtue's praise!] [W: In] To *live in fame's date* is, if an allowable, yet a harsh expression. To *outlive* an *eternal date* , is, though not philosophical, yet poetical sense. He wishes that her life may be longer than his, and her praise longer than fame.

I.i.309 (414,6) changing piece] Spoken of Lavinia. *Piece* was then, as it is now, used personally as a word of contempt.

II.i (421,8) In the quarto, the direction is, *Manet Aaron* , and he is before made to enter with Tamora, though he says nothing. This scene ought to continue the first act.

II.i.9 (421,9) So Tamora—/Upon her wit doth earthly honour wait] [W: her will] I think *wit* , for which she is eminent in the drama, is right.

II.i.116 (425,2) by kind] That is, by *nature* , which is the old signification of *kind* .

II.ii (425,3) *Changes to a Forest*] The division of this play into acts, which was first made by the editors in 1623, is improper. There is here an interval of action, and here the second act ought to have begun.

II.iii.8 (427,6)

And so repose, sweet gold, for their unrest,

That have their alms out of the empress' chest]

This is obscure. It seems to mean only, that they who are to come at this gold of the empress are to suffer by it.

II.iii.72 (430,9) swarth Cimmerian] *Swarth* is *black* . The Moor is called Cimmerien, from the affinity of blackness to darkness.

II.iii.85 (430,1)

Bas. The king, my brother, shall have note of this.

Lav. Ay, for these slips have made him noted long]

He had yet been married but one night.

II.iii.104 (431,2) Should straight fall mad, or else die suddenly] This is said in fabulous physiology, of those that hear the groan of the mandrake torn up.

II.iii.126 (432,3) And with that painted hope she braves your mightiness] [W: cope] *Painted hope* is only *specious* hope, or ground of confidence more plausible than solid.

II.iii.227 (435,4) A precious ring, that lightens all the hole] There is supposed to be a gem called a carbuncle, which emits not reflected but native light. Mr. Boyle believes the reality of its existence.

II.iv.13 (438,5) If I do dream, 'would all my wealth would wake me'] If this be a dream, I would give all my possessions to be delivered from it by waking.

III.i.91 (443,8) It was my deer] The play upon *deer* and *dear* has been used by Waller, who calls a lady's girdle, *The pale that held my lovely* deer.

III.i.216 (447,1) And do not break into these deep extremes] [We should read, instead of this nonsense,

—woe-*extremes* .

i.e. extremes caused by excessive sorrow. But Mr. Theobald, on his own authority, alters it to *deep* , without notice given. WARB.] It is *deep* in the old quarto of 1611, (rev. 1778, VIII, 510, 8)

III.ii (450,2) *An apartment in Titus's house*] This scene, which does not contribute any thing to the action, yet seems to have the same author with the rest, is omitted in the quarto of 1611, but found in the folio of 1623.

III.ii.45 (452,3) by still practice] By *constant* or *continual* practice.

IV.i.129 (458,6) Revenge the heavens] It should be,

Revenge , ye *Heavens* !—

Ye was by the transcriber taken for *y'e* , the.

IV.ii.85 (461,7) I'll broach the tadpole] A *broach* is a *spit* . I'll *spit* the tadpole.

IV.ii.99 (462,8) Coal-black is better than another hue,/ In that it seems to bear another hue] We may better read, *In that it* scorns *to bear another hue* .

IV.iii.88 (466,1) Yet wrung with wrongs] To *wring* a horse is to press or strain his back.

IV.iv.90 (472,4) With words more sweet, and yet more dangerous,/ Than baits to fish, or honey-stalks to sheep] *Honey-stalks* are clover-flowers, which contain a sweet juice. It is common for cattle to over-charge themselves with clover, and die.

V.i.102 (476,7) As true a dog, as ever fought at head] An allusion to bull-dogs, whose generosity and courage are always shown by meeting the bull in front, and seizing his nose.

V.ii.189 (484,1) And of the paste a coffin will I rear] A *coffin* is the term of art for the cavity of a raised pye.

V.iii.19 (486,2) break the parley] That is, *begin* the parley. We yet say, he *breaks* his mind.

(492) General Observation. All the editors and critics agree with Mr. Theobald in supposing this play spurious. I see no reason for differing from them; for the

colour of the stile is wholly different from that of the other plays, and there is an attempt at regular versification, and artificial closes, not always inelegant, yet seldom pleasing. The barbarity of the spectacles, and the general massacre, which are here exhibited, can scarcely be conceived tolerable to any audience; yet we are told by Jonson, that they were not only borne, but praised. That Shakespeare wrote any part, though Theobald declares it *incontestible* , I see no reason for believing.

The testimony produced at the beginning of this play, by which it is ascribed to Shakespeare, is by no means equal to the argument against its authenticity, arising from the total difference of conduct, language, and sentiments, by which it stands apart from all the rest. Meeres had probably no other evidence than that of a title-page, which, though in our time it be sufficient, was then of no great authority; for all the plays which were rejected by the first collectors of Shakespeare's works, and admitted in later editions, and again rejected by the critical editors, had Shakespeare's name on the title, as we must suppose, by the fraudulence of the printers, who, while there were yet no gazettes, nor advertisements, nor any means of circulating literary intelligence, could usurp at pleasure any celebrated name. Nor had Shakespeare any interest in detecting the imposture, as none of his fame or profit was produced by the press.

The chronology of this play does not prove it not to be Shakespeare's. If it had been written twenty-five years, in 1614, it might have been written when Shakespeare was twenty-five years old. When he left Warwickshire I know not, but at the age of twenty-five it was rather too late to fly for deer-stealing.

Ravenscroft, who in the reign of Charles II, revised this play, and restored it to the stage, tells us, in his preface, from a theatrical tradition, I suppose, which in his time might be of sufficient authority, that this play was touched in different parts by Shakespeare, but written by some other poet. I do not find Shakespeare's touches very discernible, (see 1765, VI, 364) (rev. 1778, VIII, 559)

TROILUS AND CRESSIDA

Prologue. (4,2)

And hither am I come

A prologue arm'd; but not in confidence

Of author's pen, or actor's voice; but suited

In like conditions as our argument]

I come here to speak the prologue, and come in armour; not defying the audience, in confidence of either the author's or actor's abilities, but merely in a character suited to the subject, in a dress of war, before a warlike play.

I.i.12 (8,3) And skill-less as unpractis'd infancy] Mr. Dryden, in his alteration of this play, has taken this speech as it stands, except that he has changed *skill-less* to *artless* , not for the better, because *skill-less* refers to *skill* and *skilful* .

I.i.58 (10,4) The cignet's down is harsh, and spirit of sense/Hard as the palm of ploughman!] *In comparison with* Cressid's *hand* , says he, *the spirit of sense* , the utmost degree, the most exquisite power of sensibility, which implies a soft hand, since the sense of touching, as Scaliger says in his *Exercitations* , resides chiefly in the fingers, is hard as the callous and insensible palm of the ploughman. WARBURTON reads,

—SPITE *of sense* :

HANMER,

—to th' *spirit of sense* .

It is not proper to make a lover profess to praise his mistress in *spite of sense* ; for though he often does it in *spite of the sense* of others, his own senses are subdued to his desires.

I.i.66 (10,5) if she be fair, 'tis the better for her; an she be not, she has the mends in her own hands] She may mend her complexion by the assistance of cosmeticks.

I.ii.4 (12,1) Hector, whose patience/Is, as a virtue, fix'd] [W: Is as the] I think the present text may stand. Hector's patience was as a virtue, not variable and accidental, but fixed and constant. If I would alter it, it should be thus:

—Hector, whose patience

Is ALL a virtue fix'd,—

All , in old English, is the *intensive* or enforcing particle.

I.ii.8 (13,2) Before the sun rose, he was harness'd light] [Warburton stated that "harnessed light" meant Hector was to fight on foot] How does it appear that Hector was to fight on foot rather to-day than on any other day? It is to be remembered, that the ancient heroes never fought on horseback; nor does their manner of fighting in chariots seem to require less activity than on foot.

I.ii.23 (14,4) his valour is crushed into folly] To be *crushed into folly* , is to be *confused* and mingled with *folly* , so as that they make one mass together.

I.ii.46 (15,6) Ilium] Was the palace of Troy.

I.ii.120 (17,7) compass-window] The *compass-window* is the same as the *bow-window* . (1773)

I.ii.212 (20,2)

Cre. Will he give you the nod?

Pan. You shall see.

Cre. If he do, the rich shall have more]

[W: rich] I wonder why the commentator should think any emendation necessary, since his own sense is fully expressed by the present reading. Hanmer appears not to have understood the passage. That to *give the nod* signifies to *set* *a mark of folly* , I do not know; the allusion is to the word *noddy* , which, as now, did, in our author's time, and long before, signify, *a silly fellow* , and may, by its etymology, signify likewise *full of nods* . Cressid means, that *a* noddy *shall have more* nods. Of such remarks as these is a comment to consist?

I.ii.260 (22,3) money to boot] So the folio. The old quarto, with more force, Give *an eye* to boot. (rev. 1778, IX, 25, 1)

I.ii.285 (22,4) upon my wit to defend my wiles] So read both the copies) yet perhaps the author wrote,

Upon my wit to defend my will.

The terms *wit* and *will* were, in the language of that time, put often in opposition.

I.ii.300 (23,5) At your own house; there he unarms him] [These necessary words added from the quarto edition. POPE.] The words added are only, *there he unarms him* .

I.ii.313 (23,6) joy's soul lies in the doing] So read both the old editions, for which the later editions have poorly given,

—the *soul's joy* lies in doing.

I.ii.316 (23,7) That she] Means, that woman.

I.iii.31 (25,2) With due observance of thy godlike seat] [T: godlike seat] This emendation [for goodly seat] Theobald might have found in the quarto, which has,

—the *godlike* seat.

I.iii.32 (25,3) Nestor shall apply/Thy latest words] Nestor *applies* the words to another instance.

I.iii.54 (26,7) Returns to chiding fortune] For *returns* , Hanmer reads *replies* , unnecessarily, the sense being the same. The folio and quarto have *retires* , corruptly.

I.iii.62 (27,8)

both your speeches; which are such,

As Agamemnon and the hand of Greece

Should hold up high in brass; and such again,

As venerable Nestor, hatch'd in silver,

Should with a bond of air (strong as the axle-tree

On which heaven rides) knit all the Greekish ears

To his experienc'd tongue]

Ulysses begins his oration with praising those who had spoken before him, and marks the characteristick excellencies of their different eloquence, strength, and sweetness, which he expresses by the different metals on which he recommends them to be engraven for the instruction of posterity. The speech of Agamemnon is such that it ought to be engraven in brass, and the tablet held up by him on the one side, and Greece on the other, to shew the union of their opinion. And Nestor ought to be exhibited in silver, uniting all his audience in one mind by his soft and gentle elocution. Brass is the common emblem of strength, and silver of gentleness. We call a soft voice a *silver* voice, and a persuasive tongue a *silver* tongue.—I once read for *hand* , the *band* of Greece, but I think the text right.—To *hatch* is a term of art for a particular method of *engraving* . *Hatcher* , to cut, Fr.

I.iii.78 (28,1) The specialty of rule] The particular rights of supreme authority.

I.iii.81 (29,2) When that the general is not like the hive] The meaning is, *When the general is not* to the army *like the hive* to the bees, the repository of the stock of every individual, that to which each particular resorts with whatever be has collected for the good of the whole, *what honey is expected* ? what hope of advantage? The sense is clear, the expression is confused.

I.iii.101 (30,5) Oh, when degree is shak'd] I would read,

—So when degree is shak'd. (see 1765, VII, 431, 5)

I.iii.103 (30,6) The enterprize] Perhaps we should read, *Then* enterprize is sick!—

I.iii.104 (30,7) brotherhoods in cities] Corporations, companies, *confraternities* .

I.iii.128 (31,8) That by a pace goes backward] That goes backward *step by step* .

I.iii.128 (31,9) with a purpose/It hath to climb] With a design in each man to aggrandize himself, by slighting his immediate superior.

I.iii.134 (31,1) bloodless emulation] An emulation not vigorous and active, but malignant and sluggish.

I.iii.152 (31,2) Thy topless deputation] *Topless* is that has nothing *topping* or *overtopping* it; supreme; sovereign.

I.iii.167 (32,3) as near as the extremest ends/Of parallels] The parallels to which the allusion seems to be made are the parallels on a map. As like as East to West.

I.iii.179 (32,4)

All our abilities, gifts, natures, shapes,

Severals and generals of grace exact,

Atchievements, plots]

The meaning is this, All our good *grace exact* , means of *excellence irreprehensible* .

I.iii.184 (32,5) to make paradoxes] *Paradoxes* may have a meaning, but it is not clear and distinct. I wish the copies had given,

—to make *parodies* .

I.iii.188 (33,6) bears his head/In such a rein] That is, holds up his head as haughtily. We still say of a girl, *she bridles* .

I.iii.196 (33,7) How rank soever rounded in with danger] A *rank weed* is a *high weed* . The modern editions silently read,

How *hard* soever—

I.iii.202 (33,8) and know by measure/Of their observant toil the enemies' weight] I think it were better to read,

—and know *the* measure,

By their observant toil, *of* th' enemies' weight.

I.iii.220 (34,1) Achilles' arm] So the copies. Perhaps the author wrote,

—*Alcides'* arm.

I.iii.262 (35,4) long continu'd truce] Of this long *truce* there has been no notice taken; in this very act it is said, that *Ajax coped Hector yesterday in the battle* .

I.iii.270 (36,7) (With truant vows to her own lips he loves)] That is, *confession made with idle vows to the lips of her whom he loves* .

I.iii.319 (37,1) nursery] Alluding to a plantation called a nursery.

I.iii.341 (38,4) scantling] That is, a *measure* , *proportion* . The carpenter cuts his wood to a certain *scantling* .

I.iii.343 (38,5) small pricks] Small *points compared* with the volumes.

II.i (40,1) *The Grecian camp. Enter Ajax and Thorsites*] ACT II.] This play is not divided into acts in any of the original editions.

II.i.13 (41,2) The plague of Greece] Alluding perhaps to the plague sent by Apollo on the Grecian army.

II.i.15 (41,3) Speak then, thou unsalted leaven, speak] [T: unwinnow'dst] [W: windyest] Hanmer preserves *whinid'st* , the reading of the folio; but does not explain it, nor do I understand it. If the folio be followed, I read, *vinew'd* , that is *mouldy leven* . Thou composition of *mustiness* and *sourness* .—Theobald's assertion, however confident, is false. *Unsalted* leaven is in the old quarto. It means *sour* without *salt* , malignity without wit. Shakespeare wrote first *unsalted* ; but recollecting that want of *salt* was no fault in leaven, changed it to *vinew'd* .

II.i.38 (42,5) aye that thou bark'st at him] I read, *O* that thou *bark'dst* at him.

II.i.42 (42,6) pun thee into shivers] *Pun* is in the midland counties the vulgar and colloquial word for *pound* . (1773)

II.i.125 (45,1) when Achilles' brach bids me] The folio and quarto read, *Achilles'* brooch. *Brooch* is an appendant ornament. The meaning may be, equivalent to one of *Achilles' hangers on* .

II.ii.29 (47,2) The past-proportion of his infinite?] Thus read both the copies. The meaning is, *that greatness, to which no measure bears any proportion* . The modern editors silently give,

The *vast* proportion—

II.ii.58 (48,4) And the will dotes that is inclinable] [Old edition, not so well, has it, *attributive* . POPE.] By the old edition Mr. Pope means the old quarto. The folio has, as it stands, *inclinable* .—I think the first reading better; *the will dotes that attributes* or gives *the qualities which it affects* ; that first causes excellence, and then admires it.

II.ii.60 (48,5) Without some image of the affected merit] The present reading is right. The will *affects* an object for some supposed *merit* , which Hector says, is uncensurable, unless the *merit* so *affected* be really there.

II.ii.71 (48,7) unrespective sieve] That is, into a *common voider* . *Sieve* is in the quarto. The folio reads,

—unrespective *fame* ;

for which the modern editions have silently printed,

—unrespective *place* .

II.ii.88 (49,9)

why do you now

The issue of your proper wisdoms rate;

And do a deed that fortune never did,

Beggar that estimation which you priz'd

Richer than sea and land?]

If I understand this passage, the meaning is, "Why do you, by censuring the determination of your own wisdoms, degrade Helen, whom fortune has not yet deprived of her value, or against whom, as the wife of Paris, fortune has not in this war so declared, as to make us value her less?" This is very harsh, and much strained.

II.ii.122 (50,2) her brain-sick raptures/Cannot distaste the goodness of a quarrel] Corrupt; change to a worse state.

II.ii.179 (52,3) benummed wills] That is, inflexible, inmoveable, no longer obedient to superior direction.

II.ii.180 (52,4) There is a law in each well-ordered nation] What the law does in every nation between individuals, justice ought to do between nations.

II.ii.188 (52,5) Hector's opinion/Is this in way of truth] Though considering *truth* and *justice* in this question, this is my opinion; yet as a question of honour, I think on it as you.

II.ii.196 (53,6) the performance of our heaving spleens] The execution of spite and resentment.

II.ii.212 (53,7) emulation] That is, envy, factious contention.

II.iii.18 (54,8) without drawing the massy iron and cutting the web] That is, *without drawing their swords to cut the web* . They use no means but those of violence.

II.iii.55 (55,1) decline the whole question] Deduce the question from the first case to the last.

II.iii.108 (57,6) but it was a strong composure, a fool could disunite] So reads the quarto very properly; but the folio, which the moderns have followed, has, *it was a strong* COUNSEL.

II.iii.118 (57,7) noble state] Person of high dignity; spoken of Agamemnon.

II.iii.137 (58,8) under-write] To *subscribe* , in Shakespeare, is to *obey* .

II.iii.215 (60,2) pheese his pride] To *pheese* is to *comb* or *curry* .

II.iii.217 (60,3) Not for the worth that hangs upon our quarrel] Not for the value of all for which we are fighting.

II.iii.267 (62,6)

Ajax. Shall I call you father?

Nest. Ay, my good son]

In the folio and in the nodern editions Ajax desires to give the title of *father* to Ulysses; in the quarto, more naturally, to Nestor.

III.i.35 (64,1) love's invisible soul] *love's* visible *soul* .] So HANMER. The other editions have *invisible* , which perhaps may be right, and may mean the *soul of love* invisible every where else.

III.i.83 (65,3) And, my lord, he desires you] Here I think the speech of Pandarus should begin, and the rest of it should be added to that of Helen, but I have followed the copies.

III.i.96 (65,4) with my disposer Cressida] [W: dispouser] I do not understand the word *disposer* , nor know what to substitute in its place. There is no variation in the copies.

III.i.132 (67,6) *Yet that which seems the wound to kill*] *To kill the wound* is no very intelligible expression, nor is the measure preserved. We might read, *These lovers cry,*

Oh! oh! they die!

But *that which seems to kill,*

Doth turn , &c.

So dying love lives still .

Yet as *the wound to kill* may mean *the wound that seems mortal* , I alter nothing.

III.ii.25 (69,1) tun'd too sharp in sweetness]—and *too sharp in sweetness* ,] So the folio and all modern editions; but the quarto more accurately,

—*tun'd* too sharp in sweetness.

III.ii.99 (71,4) our head shall go bare, 'till merit crown it] I cannot forbear to observe, that the quarto reads thus: *Our head shall go bare, 'till merit* lower part no affection, *in reversion* , &c. Had there been no other copy, hov could this have been corrected? The true reading is in the folio.

III.ii.102 (72,5) his addition shall be humble] We will give him no high or pompous titles.

III.ii.162 (74,6)

but you are wise,

Or else you love not; to be wise and love,

Exceeds man's might]

I read,

—but *we're not* wise,

Or else *we* love not; to be wise and love,

Exceeds man's might;—

Cressida, in return to the praise given by Troilus to her wisdom, replies, "That lovers are never wise; that it is beyond the power of man to bring love and wisdom to an union."

III.ii.173 (74,8) Might be affronted with the match] I wish "my integrity might be met and matched with such equality and force of pure unmingled love."

III.ii.184 (75,2) As true as steel, as plantage to the moon] *Plantage* is not, I believe, a general term, but the herb which we now call *plantain* , in Latin, *plantago* , which was, I suppose, imagined to be under the peculiar influence of the moon.

III.ii.187 (76,3)

Yet after all comparisons of truth,

As truth's authentic author to be cited

As true as Troilus , shall crown up the verse]

Troilus shall *crown the verse* , as a man *to be cited as the authentic author of truth* ; as one whose protestations were true to a proverb.

III.iii.1-16 (77,5) Now, princes, for the service I have done you] I am afraid, that after all the learned commentator's [Warburton's] efforts to clear the argument of Calchas, it will still appear liable to objection; nor do I discover more to be urged in his defence, than that though his skill in divination determined him to leave Troy, jet that he joined himself to Agamemnon and his army by unconstrained good-will; and though he came as a fugitive escaping from destruction, yet his services after his reception, being voluntary and important, deserved reward. This argument is not regularly and distinctly deduced, but this is, I think, the best explication that it will yet admit.

III.iii.4 (78,6) through the sight I bear in things, to Jove] This passage in all the modern editions is silently depraved, and printed thus:

—through the sight I bear in things to come.

The word is so printed that nothing but the sense can determine whether it be *love* or *Jove* . I believe that the editors read it as *love* , and therefore made the alteration to obtain some meaning.

III.iii.28 (79,7)

he shall buy my daughter; and her presence

Shall quite strike off all service I have done,

In most accepted pain]

Sir T. HANMER, and Dr. WARBURTON after him, read,

In most accepted *pay* .

They do not seem to understand the construction of the passage. *Her presence* , says Calchas, shall strike off, or recompence *the service I have done* , even in these *labours* which were *most accepted* .

III.iii.44 (80,8) derision med'cinable] All the modern editions have *decision* . The old copies are apparently right. The folio in this place agrees with the quarto, so that the corruption was at first merely accidental.

III.iii.96 (82,9) how dearly ever parted] I do not think that in the word *parted* is included any idea of *division* ; it means, *however excellently endowed* , with however *dear* or precious *parts* enriched or adorned.

III.iii.113 (82,2) but the author's drift:/Who, in his circumstance] In the detail or circumduction of his argument.

III.iii.125 (83,3) The unknovn Ajax] Ajax, who has abilities which were never brought into view or use.

III.iii.134 (83,4)

How some men creep in skittish Fortune's hall,

While others play the idiots in her eyes!]

To *creep* is to *keep out of sight* from whatever motive. Some men *keep out of notice in the hall of Fortune* , while others, though they but *play the idiot* , are always *in her eye* , in the way of distinction.

III.iii.137 (83,5) feasting] Folio. The quarto has *fasting* . Either word may bear a good sense.

III.iii.145 (84,6) Time hath, my lord, a wallet at his back] This speech is printed in all the modern editions with such deviations from the old copy, as exceed the lawful power of an editor.

III.iii.171 (85,2) for beauty, wit,/High birth, vigour of bone, desert in service] The modern editors read,

For beauty, wit, high birth, desert in service, &c.

I do not deny but the changes produce a more easy lapse of numbers, but they do not exhibit the work of Shakespeare, (see 1765, VII, 435, 2)

III.iii.178 (85,3)

And shew to dust, that is a little gilt,

More laud than gilt o'er-dusted]

[T: give to ... laud than they will give to gold] This emendation has been received by the succeeding editors, but recedes too far from the copy. There is no other corruption than such as Shakespeare's incorrectness often resembles. He has omitted the article *to* in the second line: he should have written,

More laud than to *gilt o'er-dusted* . (1773) (rev. 1778, IX, 93, 7)

III.iii.189 (86,4) Made emulous missions] The meaning of *mission* seems to be *dispatches* of the gods *from heaven* about mortal business, such as often happened at the siege of Troy.

III.iii.197 (86,5) Knows almost every grain of Pluto's gold] For this elegant line the quarto has only,

Knows almost every *thing* .

III.iii.201 (86,7) (with which relation/Durst never meddle)] There is a secret administration of affairs, which no *history* was ever able to discover.

III.iii.230 (87,9)

Omission to do what is necessary

Seals a commission to a blank of danger]

By *neglecting* our duty we *commission* or enable that *danger* of dishonour, which could not reach us before, to lay hold upon us.

III.iii.254 (88,1) with a politic regard] With a *sly look* .

IV.i.11 (91,1) During all question of the gentle truce] I once thought to read,

During all *quiet* of the gentle truce.

But I think *question* means intercourse, interchange of conversation.

IV.i.36 (92,4) His purpose meets you] I bring you his meaning and his orders.

IV.i.65 (93,6)

Both merits pois'd, each weighs no less nor more,

But he as he, the heavier for a whore]

I read,

But he as he, *each* heavier for a whore.

Heavy is taken both for *weighty* , and for *sad* or *miserable* . The quarto reads,

But he as he, *the* heavier for a whore.

I know not whether the thought is not that of a wager. It must then be read thus:

But he as he. Which heavier for a whore?

That is, *for a whore* staked down, *which is the heavier* .

IV.i.78 (94,7) We'll not commend what we intend to sell] I believe the meaning is only this: though you practise the buyer's art, we will not practise the seller's. We intend to sell Helen dear, yet will not commend her.

IV.ii.62 (96,4) My matter is so rash] My business is so *hasty* and so abrupt.

IV.ii.74 (97,6) the secrets of neighbour Pandar] [Pope had emended the Folio's "secrets of nature" to the present reading] Mr. Pope's reading is in the old quarto. So great is the necessity of collation.

IV.iv.3 (99,1) The grief] The folio reads,

The grief is fine, full perfect, that I taste,

And no less in a sense as strong

As that which causeth it.—

The quarto otherwise,

The grief is fine, full, perfect, that I taste,

And *violenteth* in a sense as strong

As that which causeth it.—

Violenteth is a word with which I am not acquainted, yet perhaps it may be right. The reading of the text is without authority.

IV.iv.65 (101,3) For I will throw my glove to death] That is, I will *challenge* death himself in defence of thy fidelity.

IV.iv.105 (103,5)

While others fish, with craft, for great opinion,

I, with great truth, catch mere simplicity.]

The meaning, I think, is, *while others* , by their art, gain high estimation, I, by honesty, obtain a plain simple approbation.

IV.iv.109 (103,6) the moral of my wit/Is, *plain and true*] That is, the *governing principle of my understanding* ; but I rather think we should read,

—the *motto* of my wit

Is, plain and true,—

IV.iv.114 (103,7) possess thee what she is] I will *make thee fully understand* . This sense of the word *possess* is frequent in our author.

IV.iv.134 (104,9) I'll answer to my list] This, I think, is right, though both the old copies read *lust* .

IV.v.8 (105,1) bias cheek] Swelling out like the bias of a bowl.

IV.v.37 (106,3) I'll make my match to live./The kiss you take is better than you give] I will make such *bargains* as I may live by, *such as may bring me profit* , therefore will not take a worse kiss than I give.

IV.v.48 (107,4) Why, beg then] For the sake of rhime we should read,

Why beg *two* .

If you think kisses worth begging, beg more than one.

IV.v.52 (107,5) Never's my day, and then a kiss of you] I once gave both these lines to Cressida. She bids Ulysses beg a kiss; he asks that he may have it,

When Helen is a maid again—

She tells him that then he shall have it:

When Helen is a maid again—

Cre. I am your debtor, claim it when 'tis due;

Never's my day, and then a kiss *for* you.

But I rather think that Ulysses means to slight her, and that the present reading is right.

IV.v.57 (107,6) motive of her body] *Motive* for *part that contributes to motion* .

IV.v.59 (107,7) a coasting] An amorous address; courtship.

IV.v.62 (107,8) sluttish spoils of opportunity] Corrupt wenches, of whose chastity every opportunity may make a prey.

IV.v.73 (108,9) *Aga.* 'Tis done like Hector, but securely done] [Theobald gave the speech to Achilles] As the old copies agree, I have made no change.

IV.v.79 (108,1) Valour and pride excel themselves in Hector] Shakespeare's thought is not exactly deduced. Nicety of expression is not his character. The cleaning is plain, "Valour (says AEneas) is in Hector greater than valour in other men, and pride in Hector is less than pride in other men. So that Hector is distinguished by the excellence of having pride less than other pride, and valour more than other valour."

IV.v.103 (109,2) an impair thought] A thought suitable to the dignity of his character. This word I should have changed to *impure* , were I not over-powered by the unanimity of the editors, and concurrence of the old copies, (rev. 1778, IX, 120, 8)

IV.v.105 (109,3) Hector in his blaze of wrath subscribes/To tender objects] That is, *yields, gives* way.

IV.v.112 (110,4) thus translate him to me] Thus *explain his character* .

IV.v.142 (111,5) *Hect.* Not Neoptolemus so mirable] [W: Neoptolemus's sire irascible] After all this contention it is difficult to imagine that the critic believes *mirable* to have been changed to *irascible* . I should sooner read,

Not Neoptolemus th' admirable;

as I know not whether *mirable* can be found in any other place. The correction which the learned commentator gave to Hanmer, Not Neoptolemus' *sire* so mirable,

as it was modester than this, was preferable to it. But nothing is more remote from justness of sentiment, than for Hector to characterise Achilles as the father of Neoptolemus, a youth that had not yet appeared in arms, and whose name was therefore much less knovn than his father's. My opinion is, that by Neoptolemus the author meant Achilles himself; and remembering that the son was Pyrrhus Neoptolemus, considered Neoptolemus as the nomen gentilitium, and thought the father was likewise Achilles Neoptolemus.

IV.v.147 (112,6) We'll answer it] That is, answer the *expectance* .

IV.v.275 (117,5) Beat loud the tabourines] For this the quarto and the latter editions have,

To taste your bounties.—

The reading which I have given from the folio seems chosen at the revision, to avoid the repetition of the word *bounties* .

V.i.5 (118,1) Thou crusty batch of nature] *Batch* is changed by Theobald to *botch* , and the change is justified by a pompous note, which discovers that he did not know the word *batch* . What is more strange, Hanmer has followed him. *Batch* is any thing *baked* .

V.i.19 (119,3) Male-varlet] HANMER reads *male-harlot* , plausibly enough, except that it seems too plain to require the explanation which Patroclus demands.

V.i.23 (119,4) cold palsies] This catalogue of loathsome maladies ends in the folio at *cold palsies* . This passage, as it stands, is in the quarto: the retrenchment was in my opinion judicious. It may be remarked, though it proves nothing, that, of the few alterations made by Milton in the second edition of his wonderful poem, one was, an enlargement of the enumeration of diseases.

V.i.32 (119,5) you ruinous butt; you whoreson indistinguishable cur] Patroclos reproaches Thersites with deformity, with having one part crowded into another.

V.i.35 (119,6) thou idle immaterial skeyn of sley'd silk] All the terms used by Thersites of Patroclus, are emblematically expressive of flexibility, compliance, and mean officiousness.

V.i.40 (119,7) Out, gall!] HANMER reads *nut-gall* , which answers well enough to *finch-egg* ; it has already appeared, that our author thought the *nut-gall* the bitter gall. He is called *nut* , from the conglobation of his form; but both the copies read, *Out, gall* !

V.i.41 (120,8) Finch egg!] Of this reproach I do not know the exact meaning. I suppose he means to call him *singing bird* , as implying an useless favourite, and yet more, something more worthless, a singing bird in the egg, or generally, a slight thing easily crushed.

V.i.64 (121,2) forced with wit] Stuffed with wit. A term of cookery.—In this speech I do not well understand what is meant by *loving quails* .

V.i.73 (121,3) spirits and fires!] This Thersites speaks upon the first sight of the distant lights.

V.ii.11 (124,1) And any man may sing her, if he can take her cliff] That is, her *key* . *Clef* , French.

V.ii.41 (125,2) You flow to great distraction] So the moderns. The folio has,

You *flow* to great *distraction* .—

The quarto,

You *flow* to great *destruction* .—

I read,

You *show too* great distraction.—

V.ii.108 (128,7) But with my heart the other eye doth see] I think it should be read thus,

But *my heart with* the other eye doth see.

V.ii.113 (128,8) A proof of strength she could not publish more] She could not publish a stronger proof.

V.ii.125 (129,1) I cannot conjure, Trojan] That is, I cannot raise spirits in the form of Cressida.

V.ii.141 (129,2) If there be rule in unity itself] I do not well understand what is meant by *rule in unity* . By *rule* our author, in this place as in others, intends *virtuous restraint, regularity of manners, command of passions and appetites* . In Macbeth,

He cannot buckle his distemper'd cause

Within the belt of rule.—

But I know not how to apply the word in this sense to *unity* . I read,

If there be rule in *purity* itself,

Or, If there be rule in *verity* itself.

Such alterations would not offend the reader, who saw the state of the old editions, in which, for instance, a few lines lower, *the almighty sun* is called *the almighty fenne* .—Yet the words may at last mean, If there be *certainty* in *unity* , if it be a *rule* that *one is one* .

V.ii.144 (130,3) Bi-fold authority!] This is the reading of the quarto. The folio gives us,

By foul authority!—

There is *madness* in that disquisition in which a man reasons at once *for* and *against himself upon authority* which he knows *not to be valid* . The quarto is right.

V.ii.144 (130,4)

where reason can revolt

Without perdition, and loss assume all reason

Without revolt]

The words *loss* and *perdition* are used in their common sense, but they mean the *loss* or *perdition* of *reason* .

V.ii.157 (131,6) And with another knot five-finger-tied] A knot tied by giving her hand to Diomed.

V.ii.160 (131,7) o'er-eaten faith] Vows which she has already swallowed *once over* . We still say of a faithless man, that he has *eaten his words* .

V.ii.161 (131,8)

Ulyss. May worthy Troilus be half attach'd

With that which here his passion doth express!]

Can Troilus really feel on this occasion half of what he utters? A question suitable to the calm Ulysses.

V.iii.21 (133,2)

For us to count we give what's gain'd by thefts,

And rob in the behalf of charity]

This is so oddly confused in the folio, that I transcribe it as a specimen of incorrectness:

—do not count it holy,

To hurt by being just; it were as lawful

For we would count give much to as violent thefts ,

And rob in the behalf of charity.

V.iii.23 (133,3)

Cas. It is the purpose that makes strong the vow;

But vows to every purpose must not hold]

The mad prophetess speaks here with all the coolness and judgment of a skilful casuist. "The essence of a lawful vow, is a lawful purpose, and the vow of which the end is wrong must not be regarded as cogent."

V.iii.27 (134,4)

Life every man holds dear; but the dear man

Holds honour far more precious dear than life]

Valuable man. The modern editions read,

—*brave* man.

The repetition of the word is in our author's manner.

V.iii.37 (134,5)

Brother, you have a vice of mercy in you,

Which better fits a lion, than a man]

The traditions and stories of the darker ages abounded with examples of the lion's generosity. Upon the supposition that these acts of clemency were true, Troilus reasons not improperly, that to spare against reason, by mere instinct of pity, became rather a generous beast than a wise man.

V.x.33 (137,9) Hence, broker lacquey!] For *brothel* , the folio reads *brother* , erroneously for *broker* , as it stands at the end of the play where the lines are repeated. Of *brother* the following editors made *brothel* .

V.iv.18 (138,2) the Grecians begin to proclaim barbarism, and policy grows into an ill opinion] To set up the authority of ignorance to declare that they will be governed by policy no longer.

V.vi.11 (142,1) you cogging Greeks] This epithet has no particular propriety in this place, but the author had heard of *Graecia Mendax* .

V.vi.29 (144,3) I'll frush it] The word *frush* I never found elsewhere, nor understand it. HANMER explains it, to *break* or *bruise* .

V.viii.7 (146,1) Even with the vail and darkening of the sun] The *vail* is, I think, the *sinking* of the sun; not *veil* or *cover* .

(149) General Observation. This play is more correctly written than most of Shakespeare's compositions, but it is not one of those in which either the extent of his views or elevation of his fancy is fully displayed. As the story abounded with materials, he has exerted little invention; but he has diversified his characters with great variety, and preserved them with great exactness. His vicious characters sometimes disgust, but cannot corrupt, for both Cressida and Pandarus are detested and contemned. The comic characters seem to have been the favourites of the writer; they are of the superficial kind, and exhibit more of manners than nature; but they are copiously filled and powerfully impressed. Shakespeare has in his story followed, for the greater part, the old book of Caxton, which was then very popular; but the character of Thersites, of which it makes no mention, is a proof that this play was written after Chapman had published his version of *Homer* .

CYMBELINE

I.i.1 (153,2)

You do not meet a man, but frowns: our bloods

No more obey the heavens, than our courtiers'

Still seen, as does the king's]

[W: brows/No more] This passage is so difficult, that commentators may differ concerning it without animosity or shame. Of the two emendations proposed, Hanmer's is the more licentious; but he makes the sense clear, and leaves the reader an easy passage. Dr. Warburton has corrected with more caution, but less improvement: his reasoning upon his own reading is so obscure and perplexed, that I suspect some injury of the press.—I am now to tell my opinion, which is, that the lines stand as they were originally written, and that a paraphrase, such as the licentious and abrupt expressions of our author too frequently require, will make emendation unnecessary. *We do not meet a man but frowns; our bloods* —our countenances, which, in popular speech, are said to be regulated by the temper of the blood,—*no more obey* the laws of *heaven* ,—which direct us to appear what we really are,—*than our courtiers* ;—that is, than the *bloods of our courtiers* ; but our bloods, like theirs,—*still seem, as doth the king's* .

I.i.25 (155,3) I do extend him, Sir, within himself] I extend him within himself: my praise, however *extensive* , is *within* his merit.

I.i.46 (156,4) liv'd in court,/(Which rare it is to do) most prais'd, most lov'd] This encomium is high and artful. To be at once in any great degree *loved* and *praised* is truly *rare* .

I.i.49 (156,5) A glass that feated them] *A glass that featur'd them*] Such is the reading in all the modern editions, I know not by whom first substituted, for

A glass that *feared* them;—

I have displaced *featur'd* , though it can plead long prescription, because I am inclined to think that *feared* has the better title. *Mirrour* was a favourite word in that age for an *example* , or a *pattern* , by noting which the manners were to be formed, as dress is regulated by looking in a glass. When Don Bellianis is stiled *The Mirrour of Knighthood* , the idea given is not that of a glass in which every knight may behold his own resemblance, but an example to be viewed by knights as often as a glass is looked upon by girls, to be viewed, that they may know, not what they are, but what they ought to be. Such a glass may *fear the more mature* , as displaying excellencies which they have arrived at maturity without attaining. To *fear* is here, as in other places, to *fright* . [I believe Dr. Johnson is mistaken as to the reading of the folio, which is *feated* . The page of the copy which he consulted is very faintly printed; but I have seen another since, which plainly gives this reading. STEEVENS.] If *feated* be the right word, it must, I think, be explained thus; *a glass that* formed *them* ; a model, by the contemplation and inspection of which they formed their manners. (see 1765, VII, 260, 4)

I.i.86 (158,1)

I something fear my father's wrath; but nothing

(Always reserv'd my holy duty) what

His rage can do on me]

I say I do not fear my father, so far as I may say it without breach of duty.

I.i.101 (158,2) Though ink be made of gall] Shakespeare, even in this poor conceit, has confounded the vegetable *galls* used in ink, with the animal *gall* , supposed to be bitter.

I.i.132 (160,4) then heapest/A year's age on me] Dr. WARBURTON reads,

A *yare* age on me.

It seems to me, even from SKINNER, whom he cites, that *yare* is used only as a personal quality. Nor is the authority of Skinner sufficient, without some example, to justify the alteration. HANMER's reading is better, but rather too far from the original copy:

—thou heapest *many*

A year's age on me.

I read,

—thou heap'st

Years, *ages* on me.

I.i.135 (160,5) a touch more rare/Subdues all pangs, all fears] *Rare* is used often for *eminently good* ; but I do not remember any passage in which it stands for *eminently bad* . May we read,

—a touch more *near* .

Cura deam propior luctusque domesticus angit. *Ovid* .

Shall we try again,

—a touch more *rear* .

Crudum vulnus. But of this I know not any example. There is yet another interpretation, which perhaps will remove the difficulty. *A touch more rare* , may mean *a nobler passion* .

I.i.140 (161,6) a puttock] A *kite* .

I.ii.31 (163,1) her beauty and her brain go not together] I believe the lord means to speak a sentence, "Sir, as I told you always, beauty and brain go not together."

I.ii.32 (164,2) She's a good sign] [W: shine] There is acuteness enough in this note, yet I believe the poet meant nothing by *sign* , but *fair outward* shew.

I.iii.8 (165,2)

for so long

As he could make me with this eye, or ear,

Distinguish him from others]

[W: this eye] Sir T. HANMER alters it thus:

—for so long

As he could *mark* me with his eye, or *I*

Distinguish—

The reason of Hanmer's reading was, that Pisanio describes no address made to the *ear* .

I.iii.18 (165,3) till the diminution/Of space had pointed him sharp as my needle] *The diminution of space* , is *the diminution* of which *space* is the cause. Trees are killed by a blast of lightning, that is, by *blasting* , not *blasted* lightning.

I.iii.24 (166,4) next vantage] Next *opportunity* .

I.iii.37 (166,6) Shakes all our buds from growing] A bud, without any distinct idea, whether of flower or fruit, is a natural representation of any thing incipient or immature; and the buds of flowers, if flowers are meant, *grow* to flowers, as the buds of fruits *grow* to fruits.

I.iv.9 (167,1) makes him] In the sense in which we say, This will *make* or *mar* you.

I.iv.16 (167,2) words him, I doubt not, a great deal from the matter] Makes the description of him very distant from the truth.

I.iv.20 (167,3) under her colours] Under her banner; by her influence.

I.iv.47 (168,6) I was then a young traveller; rather shunn'd to go even with what I heard, than in my every action to be guided by others' experiences] This is expressed with a kind of fantastical perplexity. He means, I was then willing to take for my direction the experience of others, more than such intelligence as I had gathered myself.

I.iv,58 (169,7) 'Twas a contention in publick, which may, without contradiction, suffer the report] Which, undoubtedly, may be publickly told.

I.iv.73 (169,8) tho' I profess myself her adorer, not her friend] Though I have not the common obligations of a lover to his mistress, and regard her not with the fondness of a friend, but the reverence of an adorer.

I.iv.77 (169,9) If she went before others I have seen, as that diamond of yours out-lustres many I have beheld, I could not believe she excelled many] [W: could believe] I should explain the sentence thus: "Though your lady excelled, as much as your diamond, *I could not believe she excelled many* ; that is, I too *could* yet *believe that there are* many *whom* she did not excel." But I yet think Dr. Warburton right. (1773)

I.iv.104 (171,l) to convince the honour of my mistress] [*Convince* , for overcome. WARBURTON.] So in *Macbeth* ,

—their malady *convinces*

"The great essay of art."

I.iv.124 (171,2) abus'd] *Deceiv'd.*

I.iv.134 (172,3) approbation] Proof.

I.iv.148 (172,4) You are a friend, and therein the wiser. If you buy ladies' flesh at a million a dram, you cannot preserve it from tainting. But, I see, you have some religion in you, that you fear] *You are a friend* to the lady, *and therein the wiser* , as you will not expose her to hazard; and that you *fear* , is a proof of your *religious* fidelity. (see 1765, VII, 276, 1)

I.iv.l60 (173,5) *Iach.* If I bring you no sufficient testimony that I have enjoy'd the dearest bodily part of your mistress, my ten thousand ducats are yours, so is my diamond too: if I come off, and leave her in such honour as you have trust in, she your jewel, this your jewel, and my gold are yours—

Post. I embrace these conditions]

[W: bring you sufficient] I once thought this emendation right, but am now of opinion, that Shakespeare intended that Iachimo, having gained his purpose, should designedly drop the invidious and offensive part of the wager, and to flatter Posthumus, dwell long upon the more pleasing part of the representation. One condition of a wager implies the other, and there is no need to mention both.

I.v.18 (176,1) Other conclusions] Other *experiments* . *I commend* , says WALTON, *an angler that tries* conclusions, and improves his art.

I.v.23 (175,2) Your highness/Shall from this practice but make hard your heart] Thare is in this passage nothing that much requires a note, yet I cannot forbear to push it forward into observation. The thought would probably have been more amplified, had our author lived to be shocked with such experiments as have been published in later times, by a race of men that have practised tortures without pity, and related then without shame, and are yet suffered to erect their heads among human beings.

"Cape saxa manu, cape robora, pastor."

I.v.33-44 (175,3) I do not like her] This soliloquy is very inartificial. The speaker is under no strong pressure of thought; he is neither resolving, repenting, suspecting, nor deliberating, and yet makes a long speech to tell himself what himself knows.

I.v.54 (176,4) to shift his being] To change his abode.

I.v.58 (118,5) What shalt thou expect,/To be depender on a thing that leans?] That *inclines* towards its fall.

I.v.80 (177,7) Of leigers for her sweet] A *leiger* ambassador, is one that resides at a foreign court to promote his master's interest.

I.vi.7 (178,9)

Bless'd be those,

How mean soe'er, that have their honest wills,

Which seasons comfort]

I am willing to comply with any meaning that can be extorted from the present text, rather than change it, yet will propose, but with great diffidence, a slight alteration:

—Bless'd be those,

How mean soe'er, that have their honest wills,

With reason's comfort.—

Who gratify their innocent wishes with reasonable enjoyments.

I.vi.35 (180,2) and the twinn'd stones/Upon the number'd beach?] I know not well how to regulate this passage. *Number'd* is perhaps *numerous* . *Twinn'd stones* I do not understand. *Twinn'd shells* , or *pairs of shells* , are very common. For *twinn'd* , we might read *twin'd* ; that is, *twisted, convolved* ; but this sense is more applicable to shells than to stones.

I.vi.44 (181,3)

Sluttery, to such neat excellence oppos'd,

Should make desire vomit emptiness,

Not so allur'd to feed]

[i.e. that appetite, which is not allured to feed on such excellence, can have no stomach at all; but, though empty, must nauseate every thing. WARB.] I explain this passage in a sense almost contrary. Iachimo, in this counterfeited rapture, has shewn how the *eyes* and the *judgment* would determine in favour of Imogen, comparing her with the present mistress of Posthumus, and proceeds to say, that appetite too would give the same suffrage. *Desire* , says he, when it approached *sluttery* , and considered it in comparison with *such neat excellence* , would not only be *not so allured to feed* , but, seized with a fit of loathing, *would vomit emptiness* , would feel the convulsions of disgust, though, being unfed, it had nothing to eject. [Tyrwhitt: vomit, emptiness ... allure] This is not ill conceived; but I think my own explanation right. *To vomit emptiness* is, in the language of poetry, to feel the convulsions of eructation without plenitude. (1773)

I.vi.54 (182,4) He's strange, and peevish] He is a foreigner, easily fretted.

I.vi.97 (184,5) timely knowing] Rather timely *known* .

I.vi.99 (184,6) What both you spur and stop] What it is that at once incites you to speak, and restrains you from it. [I think Imogen means to enquire what is that news, that intelligence, or information, you profess to bring, and yet with-hold: at least, I think Dr. JOHNSON's explanation a mistaken one, for Imogen's request supposes Iachimo an agent, not a patient. HAWKINS.] I think my explanation true. (see 1765, VII, 286, 7)

I.vi.106 (184,7)

join gripes with hands

Made hard with hourly falshood (falshood as

With labour) then lye peeping in an eye]

The old edition reads,

—join gripes with hands

Made hard with hourly falshood (*falshood* as

With labour) then by peeping in an eye, &c.

I read,

—then *lye* peeping—

The author of the present regulation of the text I do not know, but have suffered it to stand, though not right. *Hard with falshood* is, hard by being often griped with frequent change of hands.

I.vi.122 (185,8) With tomboys, hir'd with that self-exhibition/Which your own coffers yield!] *Gross strumpets* , hired with the *very pension* which you allow your husband.

I.vi.152 (186,9) As in a Romish stew] The stews of Rome are deservedly censured by the reformed. This is one of many instances in which Shakespeare has mingled in the manners of distant ages in this play.

II.i.2 (188,1) kiss'd the jack upon an up-cast] He is describing his fate at bowls. The *jack* is the small bowl at which the others are aimed. He who is nearest to it wins. *To kiss the jack* is a state of great advantage. (1773)

II.i.15 (189,2) 2 *Lord* . No, my lord; nor crop the ears of them. [*Aside* .] This, I believe, should stand thus:

1 *Lord* . No, my lord.

2 *Lord* . Nor crop the ears of them, [*Aside* .

II.i.26 (189,3) you crow, cock, with your comb on] The allusion is to a fool's cap, which hath a *comb* like a cock's.

II.i.29 (189,4) every companion] The use of *companion* was the same as of *fellow* now. It was a word of contempt.

II.ii.12 (191,1) our Tarquin] The speaker is an Italian.

II.ii.13 (191,2) Did softly press the rushes] It was the custom in the time of our author to strew chambers with rushes, as we now cover them with carpets. The practice is mentioned in *Caius de Ephemera Britannica* .

II.iii.24 (194,2) *His steeds to water at those springs On chalic'd flowers that lies*

]

Hanmer reads,

Each *chalic'd* flower supplies;

to escape a false concord: but correctness must not be obtained by such licentious alterations. It may be noted, that the *cup* of a flower is called *calix* , whence *chalice* .

II.iii.28 (195,3) *With, every thing that pretty bin*] is very properly restored by Hanmer, for *pretty is* ; but he too grammatically reads,

With *all the things* that pretty *bin* .

II.iii.102 (197,5) one of your great knowing/Should learn, being taught, forbearance] *i.e.* A man *who is taught forbearance should learn it* .

II.iii.111 (198,7) so verbal] Is, so *verbose* , so full of talk.

II.iii.118-129 (199,8) The contract you pretend with that base wretch] Here Shakespeare has not preserved, with his common nicety, the uniformity of character. The speech of Cloten is rough and harsh, but certainly not the talk of one,

Who can't take two from twenty, for his heart,

And leave eighteen.—

His argument is just and well enforced, and its prevalence is allowed throughout all civil nations: as for rudeness, he seems not to be mach undermatched.

II.iii.124 (199,9) in self-figur'd knot] [This is nonsense. We should read,

—SELF-FINGER'D *knot* ;

WARBURTON.] But why nonsense? A *self-figured knot* is a knot formed by yourself. (see 1765, VII, 301, 8)

II.iv.71 (204,4) And Cydnus swell'd above the banks, or for/The press of boats, or pride] [This is an agreeable ridicule on poetical exaggeration, which gives human passions to inanimate things: and particularly, upon what he himself writes in the foregoing play on this very subject:

"—And made

The water, which they beat, to follow faster,

As amorous of their strokes."

WARBURTON.] It is easy to sit down and give our author meanings which he never had. Shakespeare has no great right to censure poetical exaggeration, of which no poet is more frequently guilty. That he intended to ridicule his own lines is very uncertain, when there are no means of knowing which of the two plays was written first. The commentator has contented himself to suppose, that the foregoing play in his book was the play of earlier composition. Nor is the reasoning better than the assertion. If the language of Iachimo be such as shews him to be mocking the credibility of his hearer, his language is very improper, when his business was to deceive. But the truth is, that his language is such as a skilful villain would naturally use, a mixture of airy triumph and serious deposition. His gaiety shews his seriousness to be without anxiety, and his seriousness proves his gaiety to be without art.

II.iv.83 (205,5) never saw I figures/So likely to report themselves] So near to speech. The Italians call a portrait, when the likeness is remarkable, a *speaking picture* .

II.iv.84 (205,6) the cutter/Was as another nature, dumb, outwent her;/Motion and breath left out] [W: done; outwent her.] This emendation I think needless. The meaning is this, The *sculptor* was as *nature* , but as *nature dumb* ; he gave every thing that nature gives, but *breath* and *motion* . In *breath* is included *speech* .

II.iv.91 (205,7) *Post.* This is her honour!] [T: What's this t'her honour?] This emendation has been followed by both the succeeding editors, but I think it must be rejected. The expression is ironical. Iachimo relates many particulars, to which Posthumus answers with impatience, This is her honour! That is, And the attainment of this knowledge is to pass for the corruption of her honour.

II.iv.95 (206,8) if you can/Be pale] If you can forbear to flush your cheek with rage.

II.iv.110 (207,9)

The vows of women

Of no more bondage be, to where they are made,

Than they are to their virtues]

The love vowed by women no more abides with him to whom it is vowed, than women adhere to their virtue.

II.iv.127 (207,2) The cognizance] The badge; the token; the visible proof.

III.i.26 (211,2) and his shipping,/(Poor ignorant baubles!) on our terrible seas] [*Ignorant* , for *of no use* . WARB.] Rather, *unacquainted* with the nature of our boisterous seas.

III.i.51 (212,3) against all colour] Without any pretence of right.

III.i.73 (213,5) keep at utterance] [i.e. At extreme distance. WARB.] More properly, in a state of hostile defiance, and deadly opposition.

III.i.73 (213,6) I am perfect] I am well informed. So, in Macbeth, "—in your state of honour *I am perfect* ." (see 1765, VII, 314,7)

III.ii.4 (214,2) What false Italian (As poisonous tongu'd as handed)] About Shakespeare's time the practice of poisoning was very common in Italy, and the suspicion of Italian poisons yet more common.

III.ii.9 (214,3) take in some virtue] To *take in* a town, is to *conquer* it.

III.ii.34 (215,6) For it doth physic love] That is, grief for absence, keeps love in health and vigour.

III.ii.47 (215,8) *loyal to his vow, and your increasing in love*] I read, Loyal to his vow and *you* , increasing in love.

III.ii.79 (216,1) A franklin's housewife] A *franklin* is literally a *freeholder* , with a small estate, neither *villain* nor *vassal* .

III.ii.80 (217,2)

I see before me, man, nor here, nor here,

Nor what ensues; but have a fog in them,

That I cannot look thro']

This passage may, in my opinion, be very easily understood, without any emendation. The lady says, "I can see neither one way nor other, before me nor behind me, but all the ways are covered with an impenetrable fog." There are objections insuperable to all that I can propose, and since reason can give me no counsel, I will resolve at once to follow my inclination.

III.iii.5 (218,2) giants may jet through/And keep their impious turbans on] The idea of a *giant* was, among the readers of romances, who were almost all the readers of those times, always confounded with that of a Saracen.

III.iii.16 (218,3) This service it not service, so being done,/But being so allow'd] In war it is not sufficient to do duty well; the advantage rises not from the act, but the acceptance of the act.

III.iii.23 (219,5) Richer, than doing nothing for a babe] I have always suspected that the right reading of this passage is what I had not in my former edition the confidence to propose: Richer, than doing nothing for a *brabe* .

Brabium is a badge of honour, or the ensign of an honour, or any thing worn as a mask of dignity. The word was strange to the editors as it will be to the reader: they therefore changed it to *babe* ; and I am forced to propose it without the support of any authority. *Brabium* is a word found in Holyoak's Dictionary, who terms it a *reward* . Cooper, in his *Thesaurus* , defines it to be a *prize, or reward for any game* . (1773) (rev. 1778, IX, 248, 8)

III.iii.35 (219,6) To stride a limit] To overpass his bound.

III.iii.35 (220,7) What should we speak of,/When we are as old as you?] This dread of an old age, unsupplied with matter for discourse and meditation, is a sentiment natural and noble. No state can be more destitute than that of him who, when the delights of sense forsake him, has no pleasures of the mind.

III.iii.82 (221,9)

tho' trained up thus meanly

I' the cave, wherein they bow, their thoughts do hit

The roof of palaces]

[W: wherein they bow] HANMER reads,

I' the cave, *here in this brow* .—

I think the reading is this:

I' the cave, wherein the BOW, &c.

That is, they are trained up in the *cave, where their thoughts* in hitting the *bow* , or arch of their habitation, *hit the roofs of palaces* . In other words, though their condition is low, their thoughts are high. The sentence is at last, as THEOBALD remarks, abrupt, but perhaps no less suitable to Shakespeare. I know not whether Dr. WARBURTON's conjecture be not better than mine.

III.iii.101 (223,2) I stole these babes] Shakespeare seems to intend Belarius for a good character, yet he makes him forget the injury which he has done to the young princes, whom he has robbed of a kingdom only to rob their father of heirs.—The latter part of this soliloquy is very inartificial, there being no particular reason why Belarius should now tell to himself what he could not know better by telling it.

III.iv.15 (224,2) drug-damn'd Italy] This is another allusion to Italian poisons.

III.iv.39 (225,4) Kings, queens, and states] Persons of highest rank.

III.iv.52 (225,6) Some jay of Italy,/Whose mother was her painting] *Some jay of Italy* , made by art the creature, not of nature, but of painting. In this sense *painting* may be not improperly termed her *mother* . (see 1765, VII, 325, 9)

III.iv.63 (226,7) So thou, Posthumus,/Wilt lay the leaven on all proper men] HANMER reads,

—lay the *level* —

without any necessity.

III.iv.97 (228,1) That now thou tir'st on] A hawk is said to *tire* upon that which he pecks; from *tirer* , French.

III.iv.104 (228,2)

I'll wake mine eye-balls blind first.

Imo. Wherefore then]

This is the old reading. The modern editions for *wake* read *break* , and supply the deficient syllable by *ah* , wherefore. I read, I'll wake mine eye-balls *out* first, or, *blind* , first.

III.iv.111 (228,3) To be unbent] To have thy bow unbent, alluding to a hunter.

III.iv.146 (229,4)

Now, if you could wear a mind

Dark as your fortune is, and but disguise

That, which, to appear itself, must not yet be,

But by self-danger]

To wear a dark mind, is to carry a mind impenetrable to the search of others. *Darkness* applied to the *mind* is *secrecy* , applied to the *fortune* is *obscurity* . The next lines are obscure. *You must* , says Pisanio, *disguise that* greatness, *which, to appear* hereafter *in its proper form* , cannot yet appear without great *danger to itself* . (see 1765, VII, 329, 6)

III.iv.149 (230,5) full of view] With opportunities of examining your affairs with your own eyes.

III.iv.155 (230,6) Though peril to my modesty, not death on't,/I would adventure] I read,

Through peril—

I would for such means adventure through *peril of my modesty* ; I would risque every thing but real dishonour.

III.iv.162 (230,7)

nay, you must

Forget that rarest treasure of your cheek;

Exposing it (but, oh, the harder heart!

Alack, no remedy)]

I think it very natural to reflect in this distress on the cruelty of Posthumus. Dr. WARBURTON proposes to read,

—the harder *hap* !—

III.iv.177 (231,8) which you'll make him know] This is HANMER's reading. The common books have it,

—which *will* make him know.

Mr. THEOBALD, in one of bit long notes, endeavours to prove, that it should be,

—which will make him *so* .

He is followed by Dr. WARBURTON.

III.iv.184 (231,9) we'll even/All that good time will give us] We'll make our work *even* with our *time* ; we'll do what time will allow.

III.v.71 (235,2)

And that she hath all courtly parts more exquisite

Than lady, ladies, woman; from every one

The best she hath]

[The second line is intolerable nonsense. It should be read and pointed thus,

Than lady ladies; *winning* from each one.

WARBURTON.]

I cannot perceive the second line to be intolerable, or to be nonsense. The speaker only rises in his ideas. *She has all courtly parts* , says he*, more exquisite than* any *lady* , than all *ladies* , than all *womankind* . Is this nonsense?

III.v.101 (236,3) *Pia*. Or this, or perish] These words, I think, belong to Cloten, who, requiring the paper, says,

Let's see't: I will pursue her

Even to Augustus' throne. Or this, or perish.

Then Pisanio giving the paper, says to himself,

She's far enough, &c.

III.vi.12 (239,1) To lapse in fullness/Is sorer, than to lye for need] Is a *greater* , or *heavier* crime.

III.vi.23 (239,3) If any thing that's civil, speak; if savage,/Take, or lend] [W: Take 'or 't end.] I suppose the emendation proposed will not easily be received; it is strained and obscure, and the objection against Hanmer's reading is likewise very strong. I question whether, after the words, *if savage* , a line be not lost. I can offer nothing better than to read,

—Ho! who's here?

If any thing that's civil, *take or lend* ,

If savage, *speak* .

If you are *civilised* and *peaceable, take* a price for what I want, or *lend* it for a future recompence; if you are *rough inhospitable* inhabitants of the mountain, *speak* , that I may know my state.

III.vi.77 (242,4) then had my prize/Been less; and so more equal ballasting] HANMER reads plausibly, but without necessity, *price* , for *prize* , and *balancing* , for *ballasting* . He is followed by Dr. WARBURTON. The meaning is, Had I been a less prize, I should not have been too heavy for Posthumus.

III.vi.86 (243,5) That nothing-gift of differing multitudes] [T: deferring] He is followed by Sir T. HANMER and Dr. WARBURTON; but I do not see why *differing* may not be a general epithet, and the expression equivalent to the *many-headed* rabble.

III.vii.8 (244,2)

and to you, the tribunes,

For this immediate levy, he commands

His absolute commission]

The plain meaning is, he *commands* the commission to be given to you. So we say, I *ordered* the materials to the workmen.

IV.ii.10 (245,1) Stick to your journal course: the breach of custom/ Is breach of all] Keep your *daily* course uninterrupted; if the stated plan of life is once broken, nothing follows but confusion.

IV.ii.17 (246,2) How much the quantity] I read, *As* much the quantity.—

IV.ii.38 (247,3) I could not stir him] Not *move* him to tell his story.

IV.ii.39 (247,4) gentle, but unfortunate] *Gentle* , is *well born* , of birth above the vulgar.

IV.ii.59 (248,6) And let the stinking elder, Grief, untwine/ His perishing root, with the encreasing vine!] Shakespeare had only seen *English vines* which grow against walls, and therefore may be sometimes entangled with the *elder* . Perhaps we should read *untwine from the vine* .

IV.ii.105 (251,9) the snatches in his vice,/And burst of speaking] This is one of our author's strokes of observation. An abrupt and tumultuous utterance very frequently accompanies a confused and cloudy understanding.

IV.ii.111 (251,1) for the effect of judgment/Is oft the cause of fear] HANMER reads, with equal justness of sentiment,

—for defect of judgment

Is oft the *cure* of fear.—

But, I think, the play of *effect* and *cause* more resembling the manner of our author.

IV.ii.118 (252,2) I am perfect, what] I am *well informed* , what. So in this play,

I'm *perfect* , the Pannonians are in arms.

IV.ii.121 (252,3) take us in] To *take in* , was the phrase in use for to *apprehend* an out-law, or to make him amenable to public justice.

IV.ii.148 (253,5) the boy Fidele's sickness/Did make my way long forth] Fidele's sickness made my *walk forth* from the cave *tedious* .

IV.ii.159 (254,6) revenges/That possible strength might meet] Such pursuit of vengeance as fell within any possibility of opposition.

IV.ii.168 (254,7) I'd let a parish of such Clotens blood] [W: marish] The learned commentator has dealt the raproach of nonsense very liberally through this play. Why this is nonsense, I cannot discover. I would, says the young prince, to recover Fidele, kill as many Clotens as would fill a *parish* .

IV.ii.246 (258,1) He was paid for that] HANMER reads,

He *has* paid for that:—

rather plausibly than rightly. *Paid* is for *punished* . So JONSON,

"Twenty things more, my friend, which you know due,

For which, or pay me quickly, or I'll *pay* you."

(see 1765, VII, 356, 3)

IV.ii.247 (258,2) reverence,/(That angel of the world)] *Reverence* , or due regard to subordination, is the power that keeps peace and order in the world.

IV.ii.268 (259,4) *The scepter, learning, physic, must/ All follow this, and come to dust*] The poet's sentiment seems to have been this. All human excellence is equally the subject to the stroke of death: neither the power of kings, nor the science of scholars, nor the art of those whose immediate study is the prolongation of life, can protect then from the final destiny of man. (1773)

IV.ii.272 (260,5) *Fear not slander, censure rash*] Perhaps, Fear not *slander's* censure rash.

IV.ii.275 (260,6) Consign to thee] Perhaps, Consign to *this* . And in the former stanza, for *all follow this* , we might read, *all follow* thee.

IV.ii.280 (260,7) Both. *Quiet consummation have;/ And renowned be thy grave!*] For the obsequies of Fidele, a song was written by my unhappy friend, Mr. William Collins of Chichester, a man of uncommon learning and abilities. I shall give it a place at the end in honour of his memory.

IV.ii.315 (262,1) Conspired with] The old copy reads thus,

—thou

Conspir'd with that irregulous divel, Cloten.

I suppose it should be,

Conspir'd with *th' irreligious* devil, Cloten.

IV.ii.346 (263,2) Last night the very gods shew'd me a vision] [W: warey] Of this meaning I know not any example, nor do I see any need of alteration. It was no common dream, but sent from *the very gods* , or the gods themselves.

IV.ii.363 (264,3)

who was he,

That, otherwise than noble nature did,

Hath alter'd that good figure?]

Here are many words upon a very slight debate. The sense is not much cleared by either critic [Theobald and Warburton]. The question is asked, not about a *body* , but a *picture* , which is not very apt to grow shorter or longer. To *do* a picture, and a picture is well *done* , are standing phrases; the question therefore is, Who has altered this picture, so as to make it otherwise than nature *did* it.

IV.ii.389 (266,5) these poor pickaxes] Meaning her fingers.

IV.iii (266,1) *Cymbeline's palace*] This scene is omitted against all authority by Sir T. HANMER. It is indeed of no great use in the progress of the fable, yet it makes a regular preparation for the next act.

IV.iii.22 (267,3) our jealousy/Does yet depend] My suspicion is yet undetermined; if I do not condemn you, I likewise have not acquitted you. We now say, the *cause* is *depending* .

IV.iii.29 (267,4) Your preparation can affront no less/Than what you hear of] Your forces are able to *face* such an army as we hear the enemy will bring against us.

IV.iii.44 (268,6) to the note o' the king] I will so distinguish myself, the king shall remark my valour.

IV.iv.11 (269,1) a render/Where we have liv'd] An account of our place of abode. This dialogue is a just representation of the superfluous caution of an old man.

IV.iv.13 (269,2) That which we have done, whose answer would be death] The *retaliation* of the death of Cloten would be *death* , &c.

IV.iv.18 (269,3) their quarter'd fires] Their fires regularly disposed.

V.i (271,1) *Enter Posthumus, with a bloody handkerchief*] The bloody token of Imogen's death, which Pisanio in the foregoing act determined to send.

V.i.1-33 (271,2) Yea, bloody cloth, I'll keep thee] This is a soliloquy of nature, uttered when the effervescence of a mind agitated and perturbed spontaneously and inadvertently discharges itself in words. The speech, throughout all its tenor, if the last conceit be excepted, seems to issue warm from the heart. He first condemns his own violence; then tries to disburden himself, by imputing part of the crime to Pisanio; he next sooths his mind to an artificial and momentary tranquility, by trying to think that he has been only an instrument of the gods for the happiness of Imogen. He is now grown reasonable enough to determine, that having done so much evil he will do no more; that he will not fight against the country which he has already injured; but as life is not longer supportable, he will die in a just cause, and die with the obscurity of a man who does not think himself worthy to be remembered.

V.i.9 (271,3) to put on] Is to *incite* , to *instigate* .

V.i.14 (272,4) To second ills with ills, each elder worse] For this reading all the later editors have contentedly taken,

—each worse than other,

without enquiries whence they have received it. Yet they know, or might know, that it has no authority. The original copy reads,

—each elder worse,

The last deed is certainly not the oldest, but Shakespeare calls the *deed* of an *elder* man an *elder deed* .

V.i.15 (272,5) And make them dread it, to the doers' thrift] [T: dreaded, to] This emendation ia followed by HANMER. Dr. WARBURTON reads, I know not whether by the printer's negligence,

And make them *dread* , to the doers' thrift.

There seems to be no very satisfactory sense yet offered. I read, but with hesitation,

And make them *deeded* , to the doers' thrift.

The word *deeded* I know not indeed where to find; but Shakespeare has, in another sense *undeeded* , in *Macbeth* :

"—my sword

"I sheath again *undeeded* ."—

I will try again, and read thus,

—others you permit

To second ills with ills, each other worse,

And make them *trade it* , to the doers' thrift.

Trade and *thrift* correspond. Our author plays with *trade* , as it signifies a lucrative vocation, or a frequent practice. So Isabella says,

"Thy sins, not accidental, but a *trade* ."

V.i.16 (273,9) Do your best wills,/And make me blest to obey!] So the copies. It was more in the manner of our author to have written,

—Do your blest wills,

And make me blest t' obey.—

V.iii.41 (276,3) A rout, confusion thick] [W: confusion-thick] I do not see what great addition is made to *fine diction* by this compound. Is it not as natural to enforce the principal event in a story by repetition, as to enlarge the principal figure in a figure?

V.iii.51 (276,4) bugs] Terrors.

V.iii.53 (277,5) Nay, do not wonder at it] [T: do but] There is no need of alteration. Posthumus first bids him not wonder, then tells him in another mode of reproach, that wonder is all that he was made for.

V.iii.79 (278,8) great the answer be] *Answer* , as once in this play before, is *retaliation* .

V.iii.87 (278,9) That gave the affront with them] That is, that turned their faces to the enemy.

V.iv.1 (279,1) You shall not now be stolen, you have locks upon you;/So, graze, as you find pasture] This wit of the gaoler alludes to the custom of putting a lock on a horse's leg, when he is turned to pasture.

V.iv.27 (280,3) If you will take this audit, take this life,/And cancel those cold bonds] This equivocal use of *bonds* is another instance of our author's infelicity in pathetic speeches.

V.iv.45 (281,5) That from me my Posthumus ript] The old copy reads,

That from me *was* Posthumus ript.

Perhaps we should read,

That from *my womb* Posthumus ript,

Came crying 'mongst his foes.

V.iv.146 (284,7)

'Tis still a dream; or else such stuff, as madmen

Tongue, and brain not: either both or nothing:

Or senseless speaking, or a speaking such

As sense cannot untie. Be what it is,

The action of my life is like it]

The meaning, which is too thin to be easily caught, I take to be this: *This is a dream or madness, or both—or nothing—but whether it be a speech without consciousness* , as in a dream, *or a speech unintelligible* , as in madness, be it as it is, *it is like my course of life* . We might perhaps read,

Whether *both, or nothing* —

V.iv,164 (285,8) sorry that you have paid too much, and sorry that you are paid too much] *Tavern bills* , says the gaoler, *are the sadness of parting, as the procuring of mirth—you depart reeling with too much drink; sorry that you have paid too much, and* —what? *sorry that you are paid too much* . Where is the opposition? I read, *And* merry *that you are paid* so *much* . I take the second *paid* to be *paid* , for *appaid, filled, satiated* .

V.iv.171 (286,9) debtor and creditor] For an *accounting book* .

V.iv.188 (286,1) jump the after-enquiry] That is, *venture* at it without thought. So *Macbeth* ,

"We'd *jump* the life to come." (see 1765, VII, 382, 7)

V.v.9 (288,1) one that promis'd nought/But beggary and poor looks] To promise *nothing but* poor *looks* , may be, to give no promise of courageous behaviour.

V.v.88 (291,2) So feat] So ready; so dextrous in waiting.

V.v.93 (291,3) His favour is familiar to me] I am acquainted with his countenance.

V.v.120 (292,4) One sand another/Not more resembles. That sweet rosy lad] [W: resembles, than be th' sweet] There was no great difficulty in the line, which, when properly pointed, needs no alteration.

V.v.203 (296,8) averring notes/Of chamber-hanging, pictures] Such marks of the chamber and pictures, as *averred* or confirmed my report.

V.v.220 (297,9) the temple/Of virtue was she; yea, and she herself] That is, She was not only *the temple of virtue* , but *virtue herself* .

V.v.233 (297,1) these staggers] This wild and delirious perturbation. *Staggers* is the horse's apoplexy.

V.v.262 (298,2) Think, that you are upon a rock; and now/Throw me again] In this speech, or in the answer, there is little meaning. I suppose, she would say, Consider such another act as equally fatal to me with precipitation from a rock, and now let me see whether you will repeat it.

V.v.308 (300,3) By tasting of our wrath] [W: hasting] There is no need of change; the consequence is taken for the whole action; *by tasting* is *by forcing us to make thee taste* .

V.v.334 (301,5) Your pleasure was my near offence, my punishment,/ Itself, and all my treason] I think this passage may better be read thus,

Your pleasure was my *dear* offence, my punishment

Itself *was* all my treason; that I suffer'd,

Was all the harm I did.—

The offence which cost me so *dear* was only your caprice. My sufferings have been all my crime.

V.v.352 (302,6)

Thou weep'st, and speak'st.

The service that you three have done is more

Unlike than this thou tell'st]

"Thy tears give testimony to the sincerity of thy relation; and I have the less reason to be incredulous, because the actions which you have done within my knowledge are more incredible than the story which you relate." The king reasons very justly.

V.v.378 (303,7) When ye were so, indeed] The folio gives,

When *we* were so, indeed.

If this be right, we must read,

Imo. I, you brothers.

Arv. When we were so, indeed.

V.v.382 (303,8) fierce abridgment] *Fierce* , is *vehement, rapid* .

V.v.459 (306,1) My peace we will begin] I think it better to read,

By peace we will begin.—

(307) General Observation. This play has many just sentiments, some natural dialogues, and some pleasing scenes, but they are obtained at the expence of much incongruity. To remark the folly of the fiction, the absurdity of the conduct, the confusion of the names, and manners of different times, and the impossibility of the events in any system of life, were to waste criticism upon unresisting imbecility, upon faults too evident for detection, and too gross for aggravation.

KING LEAR

I.i.4 (311,2) in the division of the kingdom] There is something of obscurity or inaccuracy in this preparatory scene. The king has already divided his kingdom, and yet when he enters he examines his daughters, to discover in what proportions he should divide it. Perhaps Kent and Gloucester only were privy to his design, which he still kept in his own hands, to be changed or performed as subsequent reasons should determine him.

I.i.37 (313,7) express our darker purpose] [*Darker* , for more secret; not for indirect, oblique. WARBURTON.] This word may admit a further explication. *We shall express our darker purpose* : that is, we have already made known in some measure our design of parting the kingdom; we will now discover what has not been told before, the reasons by which we shall regulate the partition. This interpretation will justify or palliate the exordial dialogue.

I.i.39 (313,8) and 'tis our fast intent] [This is an interpolation of Mr. Lewis Theobald, for want of knowing the meaning of the old reading in the quarto of 1608, and first folio of 1623; where we find it,

—and 'tis our *first* intent.

WARBURTON.]

Fast is the reading of the first folio, and, I think, the true reading.

I.i.44 (314,9) We have this hour a constant will] *constant will* seems a confirmation of *fast* intent.

I.i.62 (314,2) Beyond all manner of so much I love you] Beyond all assignable quantity. I love you beyond limits, and cannot say it is *so much* , for how much soever I should name, it would yet be more.

I.i.73 (315,4)

I find, she names my very deed of love,

Only she comes too short; that I profess]

That seems to stand without relation, but is referred to *find* , the first conjunction being inaccurately suppressed. I find *that* she names my deed, I find that I profess, &c.

I.i.76 (315,5) Which the most precious square of sense possesses] [Warburton explained "square" as the "four nobler senses"] This is acute; but perhaps *square* means only *compass*, *comprehension* .

I.i.80 (315,6) More pond'rous than my tongue] [W: their tongue] I think the present reading right.

I.i.84 (316,8) Now our joy] Here the true reading is picked out of two copies. Butter's quarto reads,

—*But* now our joy,

Although the last, not least in our dear love,

What can you say to win a third, &c.

The folio,

—Now our joy,

Although our last, *and* least; to whose young love

The vines of France, and milk of Burgundy,

Strive to be int'ress'd. *What can you say?*

I.i.138 (318,5) The sway, revenue, execution of the rest] [W: of th' hest] I do not see any great difficulty in the words, *execution of the rest* , which are in both the old copies. The *execution of the rest* is, I suppose, *all the other business* . Dr. Warburton's own explanation of his amendment confutes it; if *hest* be a *regal comnand* , they were, by the grant of Lear, to have rather the *hest* than the execution.

1.1.149 (319,6)

Think'st thou, that duty shall have dread to speak, When power to flattery bows? To plainness honour's bound,

When majesty stoops to folly. Reverse thy doom,

And in thy best consideration check

This hideous rashness: answer my life my judgment,

Thy youngest daughter does not love thee least]

I have given this passage according to the old folio, from which the modern editions have silently departed, for the sake of better numbers, with a degree of insincerity, which, if not sometimes detected and censured, must impair the credit of ancient books. One of the editors, and perhaps only one, knew how much mischief may be done by such clandestine alterations. The quarto agrees with the folio, except that for *reserve thy state* , it gives, *reverse thy doom* , and has *stoops* instead of *falls to folly* . The meaning of *answer my life my judgment* , is*, Let my life be answerable for my judgment* , or, *I will stake my life on my opinion* .—The reading which, without any right, has possessed all the modern copies is this;

—to plainness honour

Is bound, when majesty to folly falls.

Reserve thy state; with better judgment check

This hideous rashness; with my life I answer,

Thy youngest daughter, &c.

I am inclined to think that *reverse thy doom* was Shakespeare's first reading, as more apposite to the present occasion, and that he changed it afterwards to *reserve thy state* , which conduces more to the progress of the action.

I.i.161 (320,9) The true blank of thine eye] The *blank* is the *white* or exact mark at which the arrow is shot. *See better* , says Kent, *and keep me always in your view* .

I.i.172 (320,1) strain'd pride] The oldest copy reads *strayed pride* ; that is, *pride* *exorbitant* ; pride passing due bounds.

I.i.174 (320,3) Which nor our nature, nor our place, can bear;/ Our potency made good] [T: (Which ... bear) ... made good] [Warburton defended "make"] Theobald only inserted the parenthesis; he found *made good* in the best copy of 1623. Dr. Warburton has very acutely explained and defended the reading that he has chosen, but I am not certain that he has chosen right. If we take the reading of the folio, *our potency* made *good* , the sense will be less profound indeed, but less intricate, and equally commodious. *As thou hast come with unreasonable pride between the* sentence *which I had passed, and the* power *by which I shall execute it* , take thy reward *in another sentence which shall* make good, *shall establish, shall maintain* , that power. If Dr. Warburton's explanation be chosen, and every reader will wish to choose it, we may better read,

Which nor our nature, nor our state can bear,

Or potency make good.—

Mr. Davies thinks, that *our potency made good* relates only to *our place* .—Which our nature cannot bear, nor our *place* , without departure from the *potency* of that place. This is easy and clear.—Lear, who is characterized as hot, heady, and violent, is, with very just observation of life, made to entangle himself with vows, upon any sudden provocation to vow revenge, and then to plead the obligation of a vow in defence of implacability.

I.i.181 (322,4) By Jupiter] Shakespeare makes his Lear too much a mythologist: he had Hecate and Apollo before.

I.i.190 (322,6) He'll shape his old course] He will follow his old maxims; he will continue to act upon the same principles.

I.i.201 (323,7) If aught within that little, seeming, substance] *Seeming* is *beautiful* .

I.i.209 (323,9) Election makes not up on such conditions] To *make up* signifies to complete, to conclude; as, *they made up the bargain* ; but in this sense it has, I think, always the subject noun after it. To *make up* , in familiar language, is, neutrally, *to come forward* , to *make advances* , which, I think, is meant here.

I.i.221 (324,2)

Sure her offence

Must be of such unnatural degree,

That monsters it: or your fore-vouch'd affection

Fall into taint]

The common books read,

—or your fore-vouch'd affection

Fall'n into taint:—

This line has no clear or strong sense, nor is this reading authorized by any copy, though it has crept into all the late editions. The early quarto reads,

—or you for vouch'd affections

Fall'n into taint.—

The folio,

—or your fore-vouch'd affection

Fall into taint.—

Taint is used for *corruption* and for *disgrace* . If therefore we take the oldest reading it may be reformed thus:

—sure her offence

Must be of such unnatural degree,

That monsters it; or you for vouch'd affection

Fall into taint.

Her offence must be prodigious, or *you* must *fal1 into reproach* for having *vouched affection* which you did not feel. If the reading of the folio be preferred, we may with a very slight change produce the same sense:

—sure her offence

Must be of such unnatural degree,

That monsters it, or your fore-vouch'd affection

Falls into taint.—

That is, *falls into reproach* or *censure* . But there is another possible sense. *Or* signifies *before* , and *or ever* is *before ever* ; the meaning in the folio may therefore be, *Sure her crime must be monstrous* before *your affection can be affected with hatred* . Let the reader determine.—As I am not much a friend to conjectural emendation, I should prefer the latter sense, which requires no change of reading.

I.i.243 (325,3) from the intire point] *Intire* , for right, true. WARB.] Rather, single, unmixed with other considerations.

I.i.264 (326,5) Thou losest here, better where to find] *Here* and *where* have the power of nouns. Thou losest this residence to find a better residence in another place.

I.i.282 (326,6) And well are worth the want that you have wanted] [This I take to be the poet's meaning, stript of the jingle which makes it dark: "You well deserve to meet with that *want* of love from your husband, which you have professed to *want* for our father." THEOBALD.] [W: have vaunted] I think the common reading very suitable to the manner of our author, and well enough explained by Theobald.

I.i.283 (327,7) plaited cunning] *i.e. complicated, involved* cunning. (1773)

I.ii.3 (328,2) Stand in the plague of custom] The word *plague* is in all the copies; I can scarcely think it right, nor can I yet reconcile myself to the emendation proposed, though I have nothing better to offer [Warburton had proposed *plage*].

I.ii.21 (330,7) Shall be the legitimate] [Hanmer: toe th'] Hanmer's emendation will appear very plausible to him that shall consult the original reading. Butter's quarto reads,

—Edmund the base

Shall *tooth'* legitimate.—

The folio,

—Edmund the base

Shall *to th'* legitimate.—

Hanmer, therefore, could hardly be charged with coining a word, though his explanation may be doubted. To *toe* him, is perhaps to *kick* him *out* , a phrase yet in vulgar use; or, to *toe* , may be literally to *supplant* . The word *be* has no authority.

I.ii.24 (331,1) subscrib'd his power!] To subscribe, is, to transfer by signing or *subscribing* a writing of testimony. We now use the term, He *subscribed* forty pounds to the new building.

I.ii.25 (331,2) Confin'd to exhibition!] Is *allowance* . The term is yet used in the universities.

I.ii.25 (331,3) All this done/Upon the gad!] So the old copies; the later editions read,

—All *is gone*

Upon the gad!—

which, besides that it is unauthorized, is less proper. *To* do upon the *gad* , is, to act by the sudden stimulation of caprice, as cattle run madding when they are stung by the gad fly.

I.ii.47 (332,4) taste of my virtue] Though *taste* may stand in this place, yet I believe we should read, *assay* or *test* of my virtue: they are both metallurgical terms, and properly joined. So in Hamlet, Bring me to the *test* .

I.ii.51 (323,6) idle and fond] Weak and foolish.

I.ii.95 (333,7) pretence] *Pretence* is design, purpose. So afterwards in this play,

Pretence and purpose of unkindness.

I.ii.106 (333,8) wind me into him] I once thought it should be read, *you* into him; but, perhaps, it is a familiar phrase, like *do me this* .

I.ii.107 (333,9) I would unstate myself to be in a due resolution] [i.e. I will throw aside all consideration of my relation to him, that I may act as justice requires. WARBURTON.] Such is this learned man's explanation. I take the meaning to be rather this, *Do you frame the business* , who can act with less emotion; *I would unstate myself* ; it would in me be a departure from the paternal character, *to be in a due resolution* , to be settled and composed on such an occasion. The words *would* and *should* are in old language often confounded.

I.ii.l09 (334,1) convey the business] [*Convey* , for introduce. WARB.] To *convey* is rather to *carry through* than to introduce; in this place it is to *manage artfully* : we say of a juggler, that he has a clean *conveyance* .

I.ii.112 (334,2) These late eclipses in the sun and moon portend no good to us: tho' the wisdom of nature can reason it thus and thus, yet nature finds itself scourg'd by the frequent effects] That is, though natural philosophy can give account of eclipses, yet we feel their consequences.

I.ii.156 (338,8) I promise you, the effects he writes of, succeed unhappily] The folio edition commonly differs from the first quarto, by augmentations or insertions, but in this place it varies by omission, and by the omission of something which naturally introduces the following dialogue. It is easy to remark, that in this speech, which ought, I think, to be inserted as it now is in the text, Edmund, with the common craft of fortune-tellers, mingles the past and future, and tells of the future only what he already foreknows by confederacy, or can attain by probable conjecture. (see 1765, VI, 27, 6)

I.ii.178 (339,1) that with the mischief of your person it would scarcely allay] This reading is in both copies; yet I believe the author gave it, *that* but *with the mischief* of your person it would scarce allay.

I.iii.19 (341,2) Old fools are babes again; and must be us'd/ With checks, as flatteries when they are seen abus'd] These lines hardly deserve a note, though Mr. Theobald thinks them *very fine* . Whether *fools* or *folks* should be read is not worth enquiry. The controverted line is yet in the old quarto, not as the editors represent it, but thus:

With checks as flatteries when they are seen abus'd.

I am in doubt whether there is any error of transcription. The sense seems to be this: *Old men must be treated with checks* , when as *they are seen to be deceived with flatteries* : or, *when they are weak enough to be* seen abused by flatteries, they are then weak enough to be *used with checks* . There is a play of the words *used* and *abused* . To *abuse* is, in our author, very frequently the same as to *deceive* . This construction is harsh and ungrammatical; Shakespeare perhaps thought it vicious, and chose to throw away the lines rather than correct them, nor would now thank the officiousness of his editors, who restore what they do not understand.

I.iv.118 (347,5) Would I had two coxcombs, and two daughters] Two fools caps, intended, as it seems, to mark double folly in the man that gives all to his daughters.

I.iv.133 (347,7) Lend less than thou owest] That is, *do not lend all that thou hast* . To *owe* , in old English, is *to possess* . If *owe* be taken for *to be in debt* , the more prudent precept would be, Lend *more* than thou owest.

I.iv.153-170 (348,9) This dialogue, from *No, lad; teach me* , down to, *Give me an egg* , was restored from the first edition by Mr. Theobald. It is omitted in the folio, perhaps for political reasons, as it seemed to censure monopolies.

I.iv.181 (349,2) Fools ne'er had less grace in a year] There never was a time when fools were less in favour; and the reason is, that they were never so little wanted, for wise men now supply their place. Such I think is the meaning. The old edition has *wit* for *grace* .

I.iv.219 (350,5) That's a sheal'd peascod] *i.e.* Now a mere husk, which contains nothing. The outside of a king remains, but all the intrinsic parts of royalty are gone: he has nothing to give. (1773)

I.iv.245 (351,3) Whoop, Jug] There are in the fool's speeches several passages which seem to be proverbial allusions, perhaps not now to be understood.

I.iv.256 (352,1) *Fool* . Which they will make an obedient father] [This line I have restored from the quarto. STEEVENS] This note [Tyrwhitt's, quoted by Steevens] is written with confidence disproportionate to the conviction which it can bring. Lear might as well know by the marks and tokens arising from sovereignty, knowledge, and reason, that he had or had not daughters, as he could know by any thing else. But, says he, if I judge by these tokens, I find the persuasion false by which I long thought myself the father of daughters. (1773)

I.iv.302 (355,7) from her derogate body] [*Derogate* for *unnatural* . WARB.] Rather, I think, *degraded; blasted* .

I.iv.320 (356,9)

That these hot tears, which break from me perforce,

Should make thee worth them.—Blasts and fogs upon thee!

The untented woundings of a father's curse

Pierce every sense about thee!—Old fond eyes,

Beweep this cause again]

I will transcribe this passage from the first edition, that it may appear to those who are unacquainted with old books, what is the difficulty of revision, and what indulgence is due to those that endeavour to restore corrupted passages.—*That these hot tears, that breake from me perforce, should make the worst blasts and fogs upon the untender woundings of a father's curse, peruse every sense about the old fond eyes, beweep this cause again, &c.*

I.iv.362 (358,3) compact it more] Unite one circumstance with another, so as to make a consistent account.

I.iv.366 (358,4) You are much more at task for want of wisdom] It is a common phrase now with parents and governesses. *I'll take you to task , i.e. I will reprehend and correct you. To be at task* , therefore, is to be liable to *reprehension and correction* . (1773)

I.v.5 (358,1) I shall be there afore you] He seems to intend to go to his daughter, but it appears afterwards that he is going to the house of Glo'ster.

I.v.25 (359,2) I did her wrong] He is musing on Cordelia.

I.v.42 (359,3) To take it again perforce!] He is meditating on the resumption of his royalty.

II.i.9 (360,1) ear-kissing arguments] Subjects of discourse; topics.

II.i.19 (361,2) queazy question] Something of a *suspicious, questionable, and uncertain nature* . This is, I think, the meaning.

II.i.27 (361,4) have you nothing said/Upon his party 'gainst the duke of Albany?] I cannot but think the line corrupted, and would read,

Against his party, *for* the duke of Albany?

II.i.57 (363,7) gasted] Frighted.

II.i.59 (363,8) Not in this land shall he remain uncaught;/And found—Dispatch] [Not in this land shall he remain uncaught; And found dispatch—the noble duke, &c.]

[W: found, dispatch'd.] I do not see how this change mends the sense: I think it may be better regulated as in the page above. The sense is interrupted. He shall be caught—and found, *he shall be punished* . Dispatch.

II.i.67 (363,2) And found him pight to do it, with curst speech] *Pight* is *pitched* , fixed, settled. *Curst* is severe, harsh, vehemently angry.

II.i.122 (366,7) Occasions, noble Glo'ster, of some prize] [W: poize] *Prize* , or *price* , for value. (1773)

II.i.126 (366,8) from our home] Not at home, but at some other place.

II.ii.9 (367,1) Lipsbury pinfold] The allusion which seems to be contained in this line I do not understand. In the violent eruption of reproaches which bursts from Kent in this dialogue, there are some epithets which the commentators have left unexpounded, and which I am not very able to make clear. Of a *three-suited knave* I know not the meaning, unless it be that he has different dresses for different occupations. *Lilly-liver'd* is *cowardly* ; *white-blooded* and *white-liver'd* are still in vulgar use. An *one-trunk-inheriting slave* , I take to be a wearer of old cast-off cloaths, an inheritor of torn breeches.

II.ii.36 (368,4) barber-monger] Of this word I do not clearly see the force.

II.ii.39 (368,5) Vanity the puppet's] Alluding to the mysteries or allegorical shews, in which vanity, iniquity, and other vices, were personified.

II.ii.45 (369,6) neat slave] You mere slave, you very slave.

II.ii.69 (369,8) Thou whoreson zed; thou unnecessary letter!] I do not well understand how a man is reproached by being called *zed* , nor how Z is an *unnecessary letter* . Scarron compares his deformity to the shape of Z, and it may be a proper word of insult to a crook-backed man; but why should Gonerill's steward be crooked, unless the allusion be to his bending or cringing posture in the presence of his superiors. Perhaps it was written, *thou whoreson* C (for cuckold) *thou unnecessary letter* . C is a letter unnecessary in our alphabet, one of its two sounds being represented by S, and one by K. But all the copies concur in the common reading.

II.ii.87 (371,3) epileptic visage!] The frighted countenance of a man ready to fall in a fit.

II.ii.103 (372,5) constrains the garb/Quite from his nature] Forces his *outside* or his *appearance* to something totally *different from* his natural disposition.

II.ii.109 (372,8) Than twenty silly ducking observants] [W: silky] The alteration is more ingenious than the arguments by which it is supported.

II.ii.119 (373,8) though I should win your displeasure to intreat me to't] Though I should win you, displeased as you now are, to like me so well as to intreat me to be a knave.

II.ii.167 (375,3)

Good king, that must approve the common saw!

Thou out of heaven's benediction com'at

To the warm sun!]

That art now to exemplify the common proverb, *That out of* , &c. That changest better for worse. Hanmer observes, that it is a proverbial saying, applied to those who are turned out of house and home to the open weather. It was perhaps first used of men dismissed from an hospital, or house of charity, such as was erected formerly in many places for travellers. Those houses had names properly enough alluded to by *heaven's benediction* .

II.ii.173 (376,4)

I know 'tis from Cordelia;

Who hath most fortunately been inform'd

Of my obscur'd coarse, and shall find time

From this enormous state, seeking to give

Losses their remedies]

This passage, which some of the editors have degraded, as spurious, to the margin, and others have silently altered, I have faithfully printed according to the quarto, from which the folio differs only in punctuation. The passage is very obscure, if not corrupt. Perhaps it may be read thus:

—Cordelia—has been—informed.

Of my obscur'd course, and shall find time

From this enormous state-seeking, to give

Losses their remedies.—

Cordelia is informed of our affairs, and when the *enormous* care of *seeking her fortune* will allow her time, she will employ it in remedying losses. This is harsh; perhaps something better may be found. I have at least supplied the genuine reading of the old copies. *Enormous* is unwonted, out of rule, out of the ordinary course of things.

II.iii.18 (377,2) Poor pelting villages] *Pelting* is, I believe, only an accidental depravation of *petty* . Shakespeare uses it in the *Midsummer-Night's Dream* of *small brooks* .

II.iii.20 (378,3) Poor Turlygood! poor Tom!] [W: Turlupin] Hanmer reads, *poor* Turlurd. It is probable the word *Turlygood* was the common corrupt pronunciation.

II.iii.21 (378,4) Edgar I nothing am] As Edgar I am out-lawed, dead in law; I have no longer any political existence.

II.iv (378,1) *Changes again to the earl of Glo'ster's castle*] It is not very clearly discovered why Lear comes hither. In the foregoing part he sent a letter to Glo'ster; but no hint is given of its contents. He seems to have gone to visit Glo'ster while Cornwall and Regan might prepare to entertain him.

II.iv.24 (380,4) To do upon respect such violent outrage] To violate the public and venerable character of a messenger from the king.

II.iv.46 (380,7) Winter's not gone yet, if the wild geese fly that way] If this be their behaviour, the king's troubles are not yet at an end.

II.iv.70 (381,9) All that follow their noses are led by their eyes, but blind men; and there's not a nose among twenty, but can smell him that's stinking] There is in this sentence no clear series of thought. If he that follows his nose is led or guided by his eyes, he wants no information from his nose. I persuade myself, but know not whether I can persuade others, that our author wrote thus:—"All men are led by their eyes, but blind men, and they follow their noses; and there's not a nose among twenty but can smell him that's stinking."—Here is a succession of reasoning. You ask, why the king has no more in his train? why, because men who are led by their eyes see that he is ruined; and if there were any blind among them, who, for want of eyes, followed their noses, they might by their noses discover that it was no longer fit to follow the king.

II.iv.83 (382,2)

But I will tarry; the fool will stay,

And let the wise man fly;

The knave turns fool, that runs away;

The fool no knave, perdy]

I think this passage erroneous, though both the copies concur. The sense mill be mended if we read,

But I will tarry; the fool will stay,

And let the wise man fly;

The fool turns knave, that runs away;

The knave no fool,—

That I stay with the king is a proof that I am a fool, the wise men are deserting him. There is knavery in this desertion, but there is no folly.

II.iv.116 (383,3) Is practice only] *Practice* is in Shakespeare, and other old writers, used commonly in an ill sense for *unlawful artifice* .

II.iv.122 (384,4) Cry to it, nuncle, as the cockney did to the eels, when she put them i' the paste alive] Hinting that the eel and Lear are in the same danger.

II.iv.142 (384,7) Than she to scant her duty] The word *scant* is directly contrary to the sense intended. The quarto reads,

—*slack* her duty,

which is no better. May we not change it thus:

You less know bow to value her desert,

Than she to *scan* her duty.

To *scan* may be to *measure* or *proportion* . Yet our author uses his negatives with such licentiousness, that it is hardly safe to make any alteration.—*Scant* may mean to *adapt* , to *fit* , to *proportion* ; which sense seems still to be retained in the mechanical term scantling. (see 1765, VI, 67, 4)

II.iv.155 (385,1) Do you but mark how this becomes the house?] [T: the use?] [Warburton called "becomes the house" "a most expressive phrase"] with this *most expressive phrase* I believe no reader is satisfied. I suspect that it has been written originally,

Ask her forgiveness?

Do you but mark how this becometh—thus.

Dear daughter, I confess, &c.

Becomes the house , and *becometh thus* , might be easily confounded by readers so unskilful as the original printers.

II.iv.157 (386,2) *Age is unnecessary*] *i.e.* Old age has few wants.

II.iv.162 (386,3) Look'd black upon me] To *look black* , may easily be explained to *look cloudy* or *gloomy* . See Milton:

"So frown'd the mighty combatants, that hell

Grew darker at their frown."—

II.iv.170 (386,4) To fall, and blast her pride!] Thus the quarto: the folio reads not so well, *to fall and blister* . I think there is still a fault, which may be easily mended by changing a letter:

—Infect her beauty,

Ye fen-suck'd fogs, drawn by the powerful sun, *Do* , fall, and blast her pride!

II.iv.174 (387.6) Thy tender-hested nature shall not give/Thee o'er to harshness] This word, though its general meaning be plain, I do not critically understand.

II.iv.178 (387,7) to scant my sizes] To contract my allowances or proportions settled.

II.iv.203 (388,9) much less advancement] The word *advancement* is ironically used here for *conspicuousness* of punishment; as we now say, *a man is advanced to the pillory* . We should read,

—but his own disorders

Deserv'd much *more* advancement.

II.iv.204 (388,1) I pray you, father, being weak, seem so] [W: deem't so] The meaning is, since *you are weak* , be content to think yourself weak. No change is needed.

II.iv.218 (389,3) base life] *i.e.* In a *servile* state.

II.iv.227 (390,5) embossed carbuncle] *Embossed* is *swelling, protuberant* .

II.iv.259 (391,6) Those wicked creatures yet do look well-favour'd:/ When others are more wicked] Dr. Warburton would exchange the repeated epithet *wicked* into *wrinkled* in both places. The commentator's only objection to the lines as they now stand, is the discrepancy of the metaphor, the want of opposition between *wicked* and *well-favoured* . But he might have remembered what he says in his own preface concerning *mixed modes* . Shakespeare, whose mind was more intent upon notions than words, had in his thoughts the pulchritude of virtue, and the deformity of wickedness; and though he had mentioned *wickedness* , made the correlative answer to *deformity* .

III.i.7 (394,1) That things might change, or cease: tears his white hair] The first folio ends the speech at *change, or cease* , and begins again with Kent's question, *But who is with him?* The whole speech is forcible, but too long for the occasion, and properly retrenched.

III.i.18 (395,3) my note] My observation of your character.

III.i.29 (395,6) *are but furnishings*] *Furnishings* are what we now call *colours, external pretences* . (1773)

III.i.19 (395,8)

There is division,

Although as yet the face of it is cover'd

with mutual cunning, 'twixt Albany and Cornwall;

Who have (as who have not, whom their great stars

Throne and set high?) servants, who seem no less;

Which are to France the spies and speculations

Intelligent of our state. What hath been seen,

Either in snuffs and packings of the dukes;

Or the hard rein, which both of them have borne

Against the old kind king; or something deeper,

Whereof, perchance, these are but furnishings.

[But, true it is, from France there comes a power

Into this scatter'd kingdom; who already,

Wise in our negligence, have secret fee

In some of our best ports, and are at point

To shew their open banner.—Now to you:]]

The true state of this speech cannot from all these notes be discovered. As it now stands it is collected from two editions: the lines which I have distinguished by

Italics are found in the folio, not in the quarto; the following lines inclosed in crotchets are in the quarto, not in the folio. So that if the speech be read with omissions of the Italics, it will stand according to the first edition; and if the Italics are read, and the lines that follow them omitted, it will then stand according to the second. The speech is now tedious, because it is formed by a coalition of both. The second edition is generally best, and was probably nearest to Shakespeare's last copy, but in this passage the first is preferable; for in the folio, the messenger is sent, he knows not why, he knows not whither. I suppose Shakespeare thought his plot opened rather too early, and made the alteration to veil the event from the audience; but trusting too much to himself, and full of a single purpose, he did not accommodate his new lines to the rest of the scene.—The learned critic's [Warburton] emendations are now to be examined. *Scattered* he has changed to *scathed* ; for *scattered* , he says, gives *the idea of an anarchy, which was not the case* . It may be replied that *scathed* gives the idea of ruin, waste, and desolation, *which was not the case* . It is unworthy a lover of truth, in questions of great or little moment, to exaggerate or extenuate for mere convenience, or for vanity yet less than convenience. *Scattered* naturally means *divided, unsettled, disunited* .—Next is offered with great pomp a change of *sea* to *seize* ; but in the first edition the word is *fee* , for *hire* , in the sense of having any one in *fee* , that is, at *devotion for money* . *Fee* is in the second quarto changed to *see* , from which one made *sea* and another *seize* .

III.ii.4 (398,1) thought-executing] Doing execution with rapidity equal to thought.

III.ii.19 (399,4) Here I stand, your slave] [W: brave] The meaning is plain enough, he was not their *slave* by right or compact, but by necessity and compulsion. Why should a passage be darkened for the sake of changing it? Besides, of *brave* in that sense I remember no example.

III.ii.24 (399,5) 'tis foul] Shameful; dishonourable.

III.ii.30 (399,6) So beggars marry many] *i.e.* A beggar marries a wife and lice.

III.ii.46 (400,1) Man's nature cannot carry/The affliction, nor the fear] So the folio: the later editions read, with the quarto, *force* for *fear* , less elegantly.

III.ii.56 (401,3) That under covert and convenient seeming] *Convenient* needs not be understood in any other than its usual and proper sense; *accommodate* to the present purpose; *suitable* to a design. *Convenient seeming* is *appearance* such as may promote his purpose to destroy.

III.ii.53 (401,4) concealing continents] *Continent* stands for that which *contains* or *incloses* .

III.ii.72 (401,(5) Poor fool and knave, I have one part in my heart,/ That's sorry yet for thee] Some editions read,

—*thing* in my heart;

from which Hanmer, and Dr. Warburton after him, have made *string* , very unnecessarily; both the copies have *part* .

III.ii.74 (402,7)

He that has a little tiny wit,—

With heigh ho, the wind and the rain;

Must make content with his fortunes fit,

Though the rain it raineth every day]

I fancy that the second line of this stanza had once a termination that rhymed with the fourth; but I can only fancy it; for both the copies agree. It was once perhaps written,

With heigh ho, the wind and the rain *in his way* .

The meaning seems likewise to require this insertion. "He that has wit, however small, and finds wind and rain in his way, must content himself by thinking, that somewhere or other *it raineth every day* , and others are therefore suffering like himself." Yet I am afraid that all this is chimerical, for the burthen appears again in the song at the end of *Twelfth Night* , and seems to have been an arbitrary supplement, without any reference to the sense of the song. (see 1765, VI, 84, 6)

III.ii.80 (402,8) I'll speak a prophecy ere I go] [W: or two ere] The sagacity and acuteness of Dr. Warburton are very conspicuous in this note. He has disentangled the confusion of the passage, and I have inserted his emendation in the text. *Or e'er* is proved by Mr. Upton to be good English, but the controversy was not necessary, for *or* is not in the old copies. [Steevens retained "ere"]

III.ii.84 (403,1) No heretics burnt, but wenches' suitors] The disease to which *wenches' suitors* are particularly exposed, was called in Shakespeare's time the *brenning* or *burning* .

III.iv.26 (406,1)

In, boy; go first. [*To the Fool.*] You houseless poverty—

Nay, get thee in. I'll pray, and then I'll sleep]

These two lines were added in the author's revision, and are only in the folio. They are very judiciously intended to represent that humility, or tenderness, or neglect of forms, which affliction forces on the mind.

III.iv.52 (407,3) led through fire and through flame] Alluding to the *ignis fatuus* , supposed to be lights kindled by mischievous beings to lead travellers into destruction.

III.iv.54 (407,4) laid knives under his pillow] He recounts the temptations by which he was prompted to suicide; the opportunities of destroying himself, which often occurred to him in his melancholy moods.

III.iv.60 (407,5) Bless thee from whirlwinds, star-blasting, and taking!] To *take* is to blast, or strike with malignant influence:

—strike her young limbs,

Ye taking airs, with lameness.

III.iv.77 (408,6) pelican daughters] The young pelican is fabled to suck the mother's blood.

III.iv.95 (408,8) light of ear] [i.e. Credulous. WARBURTON.] Not merely *credulous* , but *credulous of evil* , ready to receive malicious reports. (1773)

III.iv.103 (409,1) says suum, mun, ha no nonny, dolphin my boy, boy, Sessy: let him trot by] Of this passage I can make nothing. I believe it corrupt: for wildness, not nonsense, is the effect of a disordered imagination. The quarto reads, *hay no on ny, dolphins, my boy, cease, let him trot by* . Of interpreting this there is not much hope or much need. But any thing may be tried. The madman, now counterfeiting a proud fit, supposes himself met on the road by some one that disputes the way, and cries *Hey!—No* —but altering his mind, condescends to let him pass, and calls to his boy *Dolphin* (Rodolph) not to contend with him. *On—Dolphin, my boy, cease. Let him trot by* .

III.iv.122 (410,3) web and the pin] Diseases of the eye.

III.iv.125 (411,4)

Saint Withold footed thrice the void;

He met the night-mare, and her nine-fold;

Bid her alight, and her troth plight,

And aroynt thee, witch, aroynt thee!]

In the old quarto the corruption is such as may deserve to be noted. "Swithold footed thrice the old another night moore and her nine fold bid her, O light, and her troth plight, and arint thee, with arint thee."

III.iv.144 (412,6) *small deer*] Sir Thomas Hanmer reads *geer* , and is followed by Dr. Warburton. But *deer* in old language is a general word for wild animals.

III.iv.187 (414,8) *Child Rowland*] This word is in some of our ballads. There is a song of *Child Walter, and a Lady* .

III.v.21 (415,2) If I find him comforting the king] He uses the word in the juridical sense for *supporting, helping* , according to its derivation; *salvia* comfortat *ne vos* .—*Schol. Sal.* (rev. 1778, IX, 477, 3)

III.vi.20 (416,2) a horse's health] [W: heels] Shakespeare is here speaking not of things maliciously treacherous, but of things uncertain and not durable, A horse is above all other animals subject to diseases.

III.vi.26 (416,3) Wantest thou eyes at trial, madam?] It may be observed that

Edgar, being supposed to be found by chance, and therefore to have no knowledge of the rest, connects not his ideas with those of Lear, but pursues his own train of delirious or fantastic thought. To these words, *At trial, madam?* I think therefore that the name of Lear should be put. The process of the dialogue will support this conjecture. (1773)

III.vi.27 (417,4) *Come oe'er the broom, Bessy, to me*] As there is no relation between *broom* and a *boat* , we may better read,

Come o'er the *brook* , Bessy, to me.

III.vi.43 (417,6)

Sleepest, or wakest thou, jolly shepherd?

Thy sheep be in the corn;

And for one blast of thy minikin mouth,

Thy sheep shall take no harm.]

This seems to be a stanza of some pastoral song. A shepherd is desired to pipe, and the request is enforced by a promise, that though his sheep be in the corn, *i.e.* committing a trespass by his negligence, implied in the question, *Sleepest thou or wakest?* Yet a single tune upon his pipe shall secure them from the pound. (1773)

III.vi.77 (419,8) Sessy, come] Here is *sessey* again, which I take to be the French word *cessez* pronounced *cessey* , which was, I suppose, like some others in common use among us. It is an interjection enforcing cessation of any action, like, *be quiet, have done* . It seems to have been gradually corrupted into, *so, so* .

III.vi.78 (419,9) thy horn is dry] Men that begged under pretence of lunacy used formerly to carry a horn, and blow it through the streets.

III.vi.103-121 (420,2) [*Kent.* Oppress nature sleeps] The lines inserted from the quarto are in crotchets. The omission of them in the folio is certainly faulty: yet I believe the folio is printed from Shakespeare'a last revision, carelessly and hastily performed, with more thought of shortening the scenes, than of continuing the action.

III.vi.111 (421,4) free things] States clear from distress.

III.vi. 117 (421,5)

Mark the high noises! and thyself bewray,

When false opinion, whose wrong thought defiles thee,

In thy just proof, repeals, and reconciles thee]

Attend to the great events that are approaching, and make thyself known. Then that *false opinion* now prevailing against thee shall, in consequence of *just proof* of thy integrity, revoke its erroneous sentence, and recall thee to honour and reconciliation.

III.vii.13 (421,6) ray lord of Glo'ster] Meaning Edmund, newly invested with his father's titles. The steward, speaking immediately after, mentions the old duke by the same title.

III.vii.24 (422,3)

Though well we may not pass upon his life

Without the form of justice; yet our power

Shall do a courtesy to our wrath]

To do a courtesy is to gratify, to comply with. *To pass* , is to pass a judicial sentence. (1773)

III.vii.29 (422,4) corky arms] Dry, wither'd, husky arms.

III.vii.54 (424,9) I am ty'd to the stake, and I must stand the course] The running of the dogs upon me.

III.vii.65 (425,2) All cruels else subscrib'd] Yielded, submitted to the necessity of the occasion.

III.vii.99-107 (426,3) I'll never care what wickedness I do] [This short dialogue I have inserted from the old quarto, because I think it full of nature. Servants could hardly see such a barbarity committed on their master, without pity; and the vengeance that they presume canst overtake the actors of it is a sentiment and doctrine well worthy of the stage. THEOBALD.] It is not necessary to suppose them the servants of Glo'ster; for Cornwall was opposed to extremity by his own servant.

IV.i.1 (427,1) Yet better thus, and known to be contemn'd] The meaning is, *'Tis better* to be *thus contemned, and* known *to yourself* to be contemned. Or perhaps there is an error, which may be rectified thus:

Yet better thus unknown to be contemn'd.

When a man divests himself of his real character he feels no pain from contempt, because he supposes it incurred only by a voluntary disguise which he can throw off at pleasure. I do not think any correction necessary.

IV.i.20 (429,3) Our mean secures us] [i.e. Moderate, mediocre condition. WARBURTON.] Banner writes, by an easy change, *meanness* secures us. The two original editions have,

Our *meanes* secures us.—

I do not remember that *mean* is ever used aa a substantive for low fortune, which is the sense here required, nor for mediocrity, except in the phrase, the *golden mean* . I suspect the passage of corruption, and would either read,

Our means *seduce* us:—

Our powers of body or fortune draw us into evils. Or,

Our *maims* secure us.—

That hurt or deprivation which makes us defenceless, proves our safeguard. This is very proper in Glo'ster, newly maimed by the evulsion of his eyes.

IV.i.59-64 (431,8) [Five fiends have been in poor Tom at once; of lust, as

Obidicut ; *Hobbididance* , prince of dumbness; *Mahu* , of stealing; *Modo* , of murder; and *Flibbertigibbet* , of mopping and mowing; who since possesses chamber-maids and waiting-women. So bless thee, master!]] The passage in crotchets is omitted in the folio, because I suppose as the story was forgotten, the jest was lost.

IV.i.68 (432,1) Let the superfluous and lust-dieted man] Lear has before uttered the same sentiment, which indeed cannot be too strongly impressed, tho' it may be too often repeated.

IV.i.69 (432,2) That slaves your ordinance] [W: braves] The emendation is plausible, yet I doubt whether it be right. The language of Shakespeare is very licentious, and his words have often meanings remote from the proper and original use. To *slave* or *beslave* another is to *treat* him *with terms of indignity* ; in a kindred sense, to *slave the ordinance* , may be, to *slight* or *ridicule* it.

IV.ii.1 (433,1) our mild husband] It must be remembered that Albany, the husband of Gonerill, disliked, in the end of the first act, the scheme of oppression and ingratitude.

IV.ii.29 (434,5) I have been worth the whistle] This expression is a reproach to Albany for having neglected her; *though you disregard me thus* , I have been worth the whistle, *I have found one that thinks me worth calling* . (1773)

IV.ii.35 (435,9) From her maternal sap] [W: material] I suppose no reader doubts but the word should be *maternal* . Dr. Warburton has taken great pains without much success, and indeed without much exactness of attention, to prove that *material* has a more proper sense than *maternal* , and yet seemed glad at last to infer from an apparent error of another press that *material* and *maternal* meant the same.

IV.ii.45 (436,2) A man, a prince by him so benefited?] [After this line I suspect a line or two to be wanting, which upbraids her for her sister's cruelty to Glo'ster. WARBURTON.] Here is a pompous note to support a conjecture apparently erroneous, and confuted by the next scene, in which the account is given for the first time to Albany of Glo'ster's sufferings.

IV.ii.50 (436,3) Like monsters of the deep] Fishes are the only animals that are known to prey upon their own species.

IV.ii.62 (437,5) Thou changed, and self-cover'd thing] Of these lines there is but one copy, and the editors are forced open conjecture. They have published this line thus;

Thou chang'd, and *self-converted* thing;

but I cannot but think that by *self-cover'd* the author meant, thou that hast *disguised* nature by wickedness; thou that hast *hid* the woman under the fiend.

IV.ii.83 (438,6) One way, I like this well] Gonerill is well pleased that Cornwall is destroyed, who was preparing war against her and her husband, but is afraid of losing Edmund to the widow.

IV.iii (439,1) *The French camp, near Dover. Enter Kent, and a Gentleman*] This scene seems to have been left out only to shorten the play, and is necessary to continue the action. It is extant only in the quarto, being omitted in the first folio. I have therefore put it between crotchets.

IV.iii (439,2) *a Gentleman*] The gentleman whom he sent in the foregoing act with letters to Cordelia.

IV.iii.26 (440,4) Made she no verbal question?] I do not see the impropriety of *verbal question* ; such pleonasms are common. So we say, *my ears have heard, my eyes have beheld* . Besides, where is the word *quest* [Warburton's emendation] to be found?

IV.iii.33 (440,6) And clamour-moisten'd] *Clamour moisten'd her* ; that is, *her out-cries were accompanied with tears* .

IV.iii.36 (441,7) one self-mate and mate] The same husband and the same wife.

IV.iii.51 (441,9) 'Tis so they are a-foot] Dr. Warburton thinks it necessary to read, *'tis said* ; but the sense is plain, *So it is* that *they are on foot* .

IV.iv.4 (442,1) With burdocks, hemlock] I do not remember any such plant as a *hardock* , but one of the most common weeds is a *burdock* , which I believe should be read here; and so Hanmer reads.

IV.iv.20 (443,2) the means to lead it] The reason which should guide it.

IV.iv.26 (443,3) My mourning and important tears hath pitied] In other places of this author for *importunate* .

IV.iv.27 (443,4) No blown embition] No inflated, no swelling pride. Beza on the Spanish Armada:

"Quem bene te ambitio mersit vanissima, ventus,

Et tumidos tumidae voa superastis aquae."

IV.v.4 (444,1) *Reg.* Lord Edmund spake not with your lady at home?] The folio reads, *your lord* ; but lady is the first and better reading.

IV.v.22 (444,3) Let me unseal the letter./*Stew.* Madam, I had rather] I know not well why Shakespeare gives the steward, who is a mere factor of wickedness, so much fidelity. He now refuses the letter; and afterwards, when he is dying, thinks only how it may be safely delivered.

IV.v.29 (445,5) I do advise you, take this note] *Note* means in this place not a *letter* but a *remark* . Therefore *observe* what I am saying.

IV.v.32 (446,6) You may gather more] You may infer more than I have directly told you.

IV.vi (446,1) *The country near Dover. Enter Glo'ster, and Edgar as a peasant*] This scene, and the stratagem by which Glo'ster is cured of his desperation, are wholly borrowed from Sidney's *Arcadia* .

IV.vi.7 (447,2) thy voice is alter'd] Edgar alters his voice in order to pass afterwards for a malignant spirit.

IV.vi.11 (447,5) How fearful/And dizzy 'tis, to cast one's eyes so low!] This description has been much admired since the time of Addison, who has remarked, with a poor attempt at pleasantry, that "he who can read it without being giddy, has a very good head, or a very bad one." The description is certainly not mean, but I am far from thinking it wrought to the utmost excellence of poetry. He that looks from a precipice finds himself assailed by one great and dreadful image of irresistible destruction. But this overwhelming idea is dissipated and enfeebled from the instant that the mind can restore itself to the observation of particulars, and diffuse its attention to distinct objects. The enumeration of the choughs and crows, the samphire-man, and the fishers, counteracts the great effect of the prospect, as it peoples the desert of intermediate vacuity, and stops the mind in the rapidity of its descent through emptiness and horror.

IV.vi.19 (447,4) her cock] Her cock-boat.

IV.vi.43 (448,6) when life itself/Yields to the theft] When life is willing to be destroyed.

IV.vi.47 (449,7) Thus might he pass, indeed] Thus he might *die* in reality. We still use the word *passing* bell.

IV.vi.53 (449,9) Ten masts at each make not the altitude] [Pope: attacht] Mr. Pope's conjecture may stand if the word which he uses were known in our author's time, but I think it is of later introduction. He may say,

Ten masts *on end* —

IV.vi.57 (449,1) chalky bourn] *Bourn* seems here to signify a *hill* . Its common signification is a *brook* . Milton in *Comus* uses *bosky bourn* in the same sense perhaps with Shakespeare. But in both authors it may mean only a *boundary* .

IV.vi.73 (450,2) the clearest gods] The purest; the most free from evil.

IV.vi.80 (450,3) Bear free and patient thoughts] To be melancholy is to have the mind *chained down* to one painful idea; there is therefore great propriety in exhorting Glo'ster to *free thoughts* , to an emancipation of his soul from grief and despair.

IV.vi.81 (450,4) The safer sense will ne'er accommodate/His master thus] [W: sober sense] I read rather,

The *saner* sense will ne'er accoomodate

His master thus.

"Here is Lear, but he must be mad: his sound or *sane* senses would never suffer him to be thus disguised."

IV.vi.87 (451,5) That fellow handles his bow like a crow-keeper] This *crow-keeper* was so common in the author's time, that it is one of the few peculiarities mentioned by Ortelius in his account of our island.

IV.vi.93 (451,8) Give the word] Lear supposes himself in a garrison, and before he lets Edgar pass, requires the watch-word.

IV.vi.97 (452,7) Ha! Gonerill!—with a white beard!] So reads the folio, properly; the quarto, whom the later editors have followed, has, *Ha! Gonerill, ha! Regan! they flattered me* , &c. which is not so forcible.

IV.vi.98 (452,8) They flattered me like a dog] They played the spaniel to me.

IV.vi.121 (453,2) Whose face between her forks] I believe that the *forks* were two prominences of the ruff rising on each side of the face.

IV.vi.124 (453,4) nor the soyled horse] *Soiled* horse is probably the same as *pampered* horse, *un cheval soûlé* .

IV.vi.169 (454.5) Robes and furr'd gowns hide all] From *hide all* to *accuser's lips* , the whole passage is wanting in the first edition, being added, I suppose, at his revisal.

IV.vi.187 (455,8) This a good block!] I do not see how this *block* corresponds either with his foregoing or following train of thoughts. Madmen think not wholly at random. I would read thus, *a good flock* . *Flocks* are wool moulded together. The sentence then follows properly:

It were a delicate stratagem to shoe

A troop of horse with felt;—

i.e. with *flocks* kneaded to a mass, a practice I believe sometimes used in former ages, for it is mentioned in *Ariosto* :

"—Fece nel cader strepito quanto

Avesse avuto sotto i piedi il *feltro* ."

It is very common for madmen to catch an accidental hint, and strain it to the purpose predominant in their minds. Lear picks up a *flock* , and immediately thinks to surprize his enemies by a troop of horse shod with *flocks* or *felt* . Yet *block* may stand, if we suppose that the sight of a block put him in mind of mounting his horse.

IV.vi.199 (457,1) Why, this would make a man, a man of salt] Would make a man melt away like salt in wet weather.

IV.vi.206 (457,2) Then there's life in't] The case is not yet desperate.

IV.vi.217 (457,3) the main descry/Stands on the hourly thought] The *main* body is *expected* to be *descry'd* every hour. The expression is harsh.

IV.vi.246 (459,7) che vor'ye] *I warn you* . Edgar counterfeits the western dialect.

IV.vi.281 (460,3) Thee I'll rake up] I'll *cover* thee. In Staffordshire, to *rake* the fire, is to cover it with fuel for the night.

IV.vi.234 (460,4) the death-practis'd duke] The duke of Albany, whose death is machinated by *practice* or treason.

IV.vii.3 (461,1) every measure fail me] All good which I shall allot thee, or *measure out* to thee, will be scanty.

IV.vii.9 (461,4) shortens my made intent] [W: laid] An intent *made* , is an intent *formed* . So we say in common language, to *make a design* , and to *make a resolution* .

IV.vii.41 (464,2) 'Tis wonder, that thy life and wits, at once,/Had not concluded all] [W: concluded.—Ah!] The plain construction is this: *It is wonder that the wits and life had not all ended* .

IV.vii.85-97 (466,9)

[*Gent* . Holds it true, Sir,

That the duke of Cornwall was so slain?]

What is printed in crotchets is not in the folio. It is at least proper, if not necessary; and was omitted by the author, I suppose, for no other reason than to shorten the representation.

V.i.4 (467,2) his constant pleasure] His settled resolution.

V.i.54 (470,7) We will greet the time] We will be ready to meet the occasion.

V.i.61 (470,8) carry out my side] Bring my purpose to a successful issue, to completion. *Side* seems here to have the sense of the French word *partie* , in *prendre partie, to take his resolution* .

V.i.68 (471,9) for my state/Stands on me to defend, not to debate] I do not think that *for* stands in this place as a word of inference or causality. The meaning is rather: *Such is my determination concerning Lear* ; *as* for my state *it requires now, not* deliberation, *but* defence *and support* .

V.iii.16 (472,1) And take upon us the mystery of things,/As if we were God's spies] As if we were angels commissioned to survey and report the lives of men, and were consequently endowed with the power of prying into the original motives of action and the mysteries of conduct.

V.iii.18 (472,2) packs and sects] Packs is used for *combinations* or *collection* , as is a *pack of cards* . For *sects* I think *sets* might be more commodiously read. So we say, *affairs are now managed by a new* set. *Sect* , however, may well stand.

V.iii.24 (473,6) flesh and fell] Flesh and skin.

V.iii.54 (475,1)

[At this time

We sweat and bleed: the friend hath lost his friend;

And the best quarrels, in the heat, are curs'd

By those that feel their sharpness:—

The question of Cordelia, and her father,

Requires a fitter place.]]

This passage, well worthy of restoration, is omitted in the folio.

V.iii.65 (475,4) The which immediacy] [*Immediacy* , for representation. WARBURTON.] *Immediacy* is rather *supremacy* in opposition to *subordination* , which has *quiddam medium* between itself and power.

V.iii.79 (476,7) The lett alone lies not in your good will] Whether he shall not or shall depends not on your choice.

V.iii.89 (476,8) An interlude!] This short exclamation of Gonerill is added in the folio edition, I suppose, only to break the speech of Albany, that the exhibition on the stage might be more distinct and intelligible.

V.iii.129 (478,1) Behold, it is the privilege of mine honours,/My oath, and my profession] The *privilege* of this *oath* means the privilege gained by taking the oath administered in the regular initiation of a knight professed.

V.iii.151 (479,3)

Alb. Save him, save him!

Gon. This is mere practice, Glo'ster]

He desired that Edmund's life might be spared at present, only to obtain his confession, and to convict him openly by his own letter.

V.iii.166 (480,6) Let us exchange charity] Our author by negligence gives his heathens the sentiments and practices of Christianity. In *Hamlet* there is the same solemn act of final reconciliation, but with exact propriety, for the personages are Christians.

V.iii. 204-221 (481,2) [Edg;.—This would have seem'd a period] The lines between crotchets are not in the folio.

V.iii.229 (433,4) Here comes Kent, Sir] The manner in which Edgar here mentions Kent, seems to require the lines which are inserted from the first edition in the foregoing scene.

V.iii.264 (485,7)

Edg. Or image of that horror?

Alb. Fall, and cease!]

These two exclamations are given to Edgar and Albany in the folio, to animate the dialogue, and employ all the persons on the stage; but they are very obscure.

V.iii.301 (487,4) With boot] With advantage, with increase.

(488) General Observation. The tragedy of Lear is deservedly celebrated among the dramas of Shakespeare. There is perhaps no play which keeps the attention so strongly fixed; which so much agitates our passions and interests our curiosity. The artful involutions of distinct interests, the striking opposition of contrary characters, the sudden changes of fortune, and the quick succession of events, fill the mind with a perpetual tumult of indignation, pity, and hope. There is no scene which does not contribute to the aggravation of the distress or conduct of the action, and scarce a line which does not conduce to the progress of the scene. So powerful is the current of the poet's imagination, that the mind, which once ventures within it, is hurried irresistibly along.

On the seeming improbability of Lear's conduct it may be observed, that he is represented according to histories at that time vulgarly received as true. And, perhaps, if we turn our thoughts upon the barbarity and ignorance of the age to which this story is referred, it will appear not so unlikely as while we estimate Lear's manners by our own. Such preference of one daughter to another, or resignation of dominion on such conditions, would be yet credible, if told of a petty prince of Guinea or Madagascar. Shakespeare, indeed, by the mention of his earls and dukes, has given us the idea of times more civilized, and of life regulated by softer manners; and the truth is, that though he so nicely discriminates, and so minutely describes the characters of men, he commonly neglects and confounds the characters of ages, by mingling customs ancient and modern, English and foreign.

My learned friend Mr. Warton, who has in the *Adventurer* very minutely criticised this play, remarks, that the instances of cruelty are too savage and shocking, and that the intervention of Edmund destroys the simplicity of the story. These objections may, I think, be answered, by repeating, that the cruelty of the daughters is an historical fact, to which the poet has added little, having only drawn it into a series by dialogue and action. But I am not able to apologize with equal plausibility for the extrusion of Glo'ster's eyes, which seems an act too horrid to be endured in dramatic exhibition, and such as must always compel the mind to relieve its distress by incredulity. Yet let it be remembered that our author well knew what would please the audience for which he wrote.

The injury done by Edmund to the simplicity of the action is abundantly recompensed by the addition of variety, by the art with which he is made to co-operate with the chief design, and the opportunity which he gives the poet of combining perfidy with perfidy, and connecting the wicked son with the wicked daughters, to impress this important moral, that villainy is never at a stop, that crimes lead to crimes, and at last terminate in ruin.

But though this moral be incidentally enforced, Shakespeare has suffered the virtue of Cordelia to perish in a just cause, contrary to the natural ideas of justice, to the hope of the reader, and, what is yet more strange, to the faith of chronicles. Yet this conduct is justified by *The Spectator* , who blames Tate for giving Cordelia success and happiness in his alteration, and declares, that, in his opinion, *the tragedy has lost half its beauty* . Dennis has remarked, whether justly or not, that, to secure the favourable reception of *Cato, the town was poisoned with much false and abominable criticism* , and that endeavours had been used to discredit and decry poetical justice. A play in which the wicked prosper, and the virtuous miscarry, may doubtless be good, because it is a just representation of the common events of human life: but since all reasonable beings naturally love justice, I cannot easily be persuaded, that the observation of justice makes a play worse; or, that if other excellencies are equal, the audience will not always rise better pleased from the final triumph of persecuted virtue.

In the present case the public has decided. Cordelia, from the time of Tate, has always retired with victory and felicity. And, if my sensations could add any thing to the general suffrage, I night relate, I was many years ago so shocked by Cordelia's death, that I know not whether I ever endured to read again the last scenes of the play till I undertook to revise them as an editor.

There is another controversy among the critics concerning this play. It is disputed whether the predominant image in Lear's disordered mind be the loss of his kingdom or the cruelty of his daughters. Mr. Murphy, a very judicious critic, has evinced by induction of particular passages, that the cruelty of his daughters is the primary source of his distress, and that the loss of royalty affects him only as a secondary and subordinate evil. He observes with great justness, that Lear would move our compassion but little, did we not rather consider the injured father than the degraded king.

The story of this play, except the episode of Edmund, which is derived, I think, from Sidney, is taken originally from Geoffry of Monmouth, whom Hollinshed generally copied; but perhaps immediately from an old historical ballad. My reason for believing that the play was posterior to the ballad, rather than the ballad to the play, is, that the ballad has nothing of Shakespeare's nocturnal tempest, which is too striking to have been omitted, and that it follows the chronicle; it has the rudiments of the play, but none of its amplifications: it first hinted Lear's madness, but did not array it in circumstances. The writer of the ballad added something to the history, which is a proof that he would have added more, if more had occurred to his mind, and more must have occurred if he had seen Shakespeare. [Johnson appends "A lamentable SONG of the Death of King Leir and his Three Daughters"]

ROMEO AND JULIET

I.i.82 (9,7) Give me my long sword] The *long sword* was the sword used in war, which was sometimes wielded with both hands.

I.i.158 (11,2)

As is the bud bit with an envious worm,

Ere he can spread his sweet leaves to the air,

Or dedicate his beauty to the same]

I cannot but suspect that some lines are lost, which connected this simile more closely with the foregoing speech; these lines, if such there were, lamented the danger that Romeo will die of his melancholy, before his virtues or abilities were known to the world.

I.i.176 (12,3)

Alas, that love, whose view is muffled still,

Should, without eyes, see path-ways to his will.]

Sir T. Hanmer, and after him Dr. Warburton, read, to his *ill* . The present reading has some obscurity; the meaning may be, that *love* finds out means to pursue his *desire* . That the *blind* should *find paths to ill* is no great wonder.

I.i.183 (13,4) O brawling love! O loving hate!] Of these lines neither the sense nor occasion is very evident. He is not yet in love with an eneny, and to love one and hate another is no such uncommon state, as can deserve all this toil of antithesis.

I.i.192 (14,5) Why, such is love's transgression] Such is the consequence of unskilful and mistaken kindness. (see 1765, VIII, 12, 2)

1.1.198 (14,6) Being purg'd, a fire sparkling in lovers' eyes] The author may mean *being purged of smoke* , but it is perhaps a meaning never given to the word in any other place. I would rather read, *Being* urged, *a fire sparkling* . Being excited and inforced. To *urge* the fire is the technical term.

I.i.199 (14,7) Being vex'd, a sea nourish'd with lovers' tears] As this line stands single, it is likely that the foregoing or following line that rhym'd to it, is lost.

I.i.206 (14,8) Tell me in sadness] That is, tell me *gravely* , tell me in *seriousness*

.

I.i.217 (15,1) in strong proof] In chastity *of proof* , as we say in armour *of proof* .

I.i.222 (15,2)

O, she is rich in beauty; only poor

That when she dies, with beauty dies her store]

Mr. Theobald reads, "*With* her dies beauties *store* ;" and is followed by the two succeeding editors. I have replaced the old reading, because I think it at least as plausible as the correction. *She is rich* , says he, *in beauty* , and *only poor* in being subject to the lot of humanity, that *her store* , or riches, *can be destroyed by death* , who shall, by the same blow, put an end to beauty.

I.ii.15 (17,2) She is the hopeful lady of my earth] *The lady of his earth* is an expression not very intelligible, unless he means that she is heir to his estate, and I suppose no man ever called his lands his earth. I will venture to propose a bold change:

She is the hope *and stay* of my *full years* .

I.ii.25 (18,3) Earth-treading stars that make dark heaven light] [W: dark even] But why nonsense [Warburton's comment]? Is any thing mere commonly said, than that beauties eclipse the sun? Has not Pope the thought and the word?

"Sol through white curtains shot a tim'rous ray,

"And spe'd those eyes that must *eclipse the day* ."

Both the old and the new reading are philosophical nonsense, but they are both, and both equally poetical sense.

I.ii.26 (18,4) Such comfort as do lusty young men feel] To say, and to say in pompous words, that a *young man shall feel* as much in an assembly of beauties, *as young men feel in the month of April* , is surely to waste sound upon a very poor sentiment. I read,

Such comfort as do lusty *yeomen* feel.

You shall feel from the sight and conversation of these ladies, such hopes of happiness and such pleasure, as the farmer receives from the spring, when the plenty of the year begins, and the prospect of the harvest fills him with delight.

I.ii.32 (18,5)

Such, amongst view of many, mine, being one.

May stand in number, the' in reckoning none]

The first of these lines I do not understand. The old folio gives no help; the passage is there, *Which* one *more view* . I can offer nothing better than this:

Within your view of many, mine being one,

May stand in number, &c.

I.iii.13 (22,1) to my teen] To my sorrow.

I.iii.66 (24,4) It is an honour] The modern editors all read, *it is an honour* . I have restored the genuine word ["hour"], which is more seemly from a girl to her mother. *Your, fire* , and such words as are vulgarly uttered in two syllables, are used as dissyllables by Shakespeare. [The first quarto reads *honour* ; the folio *hour* . I have chosen the reading of the quarto. STEEVENS.] (rev. 1778, X, 28, 2)

I.iii.92 (25,9) That in gold clasps locks in the golden story] The *golden story* is perhaps the *golden legend* , a book in the darker ages of popery much read, and doubtless often exquisitely embellished, but of which Canus, one of the popish doctors, proclaims the author to have been *homo ferrei oris, plumbei cordis* .

I.iv.6 (27,2) like a crow-keeper] The word *crow-keeper* is explained in Lear.

I.iv.37 (28,8) for I am proverb'd with a grandsire phrase] The grandsire phrase is —*The black ox has trod upon my foot* .

I.iv.42 (30,1) Or (save your reverence) love] The word *or* obscures the sentence; we ahould read *O* ! for *or love* . Mercutio having called the affection vith which

Romeo was entangled by so disrespectful a word as *mire* , cries out,

O! save your reverence, love.

I.iv.84 (34,7) Spanish blades] A sword is called a toledo, from the excellence of the Toletan steel. So Gratius,

"—Ensis Toletanus

"Unda Tagi non est alie celebranda metallo,

Utilis in cives est ibi lamna sues."

I.iv.113 (35,9) Direct my sail:] [I have restored this reading from the elder quarto, as being more congruous to the metaphor in the preceding line. *Suit* is the reading of the folio. STEEVENS.]

Direct my suit ! Guide the *sequel* of the adventure.

I.v.27 (37,4)

You are welcome, gentlemen. Come musicians, play.

A ball! a ball! Give room. And foot it, girls]

These two lines, omitted by the modern editors, I have replaced from the folio.

I.v.32 (37, 6) good cousin Capulet] This *cousin* Capulet is *unkle* in the paper of invitation; but as Capulet is described as old, *cousin* is probably the right word in both places. I know not how Capulet and his lady might agree, their ages were very disproportionate; he has been past masking for thirty years, and her age, as she tells Juliet, is but eight-and-twenty.

II.Prologue (42,3) *Enter CHORUS*] The use of this chorus is not easily discovered; it conduces nothing to the progress of the play, but relates what is already known, or what the next scenes will shew; and relates it without adding the improvement of any moral sentiment.

II.ii.1 (45,1) He jests at scars] That is, Mercutio jests, whom he overheard.

II.ii.7 (45,2) Be not her maid] Be not a votary to the moon, to Diana.

II.ii.10 (45,3)

It is my lady; O! it is my love;

O, that she knew we were!]

This line and half I have replaced.

II.ii.39 (47,7) Thou art thyself, though not a Montague] I think the true reading is,

Thou art thyself, *then* not a Montague.

Thou art a being of peculiar excellence, and hast none of the malignity of the family, from which thou hast thy name.—Hanmer reads,

Thour't not *thyself* so, *though* a Montague.

II.iii.15 (53,6) the powerful grace, that lies/In plants] Efficacious virtue.

II.iii.27 (53,7) Two such opposed foes encamp them still] [W: opposed kin] *Foes* may be the right reading, or *kings* , but I think *kin* can hardly be admitted. Two *kings* are two opposite *powers* , two contending *potentates* , in both the natural and moral world. The word *encamp* is proper to *commanders* . (see 1765, VIII, 46, 2)

II.iv.20 (57,3) courageous captain of compliments] A complete master of all the laws of ceremony, the principal man in the doctrine of punctilio.

"A man of compliments, whom right and wrong

"Have chose as umpire;"

says our author of Don *Armado* , the Spaniard, in *Love's Labour Lost* .

II.iv.27 (57,6) the hay!] All the terms of the modern fencing-school were originally Italian; the rapier, or small thrusting sword, being first used in Italy. The *hay* is the word *hai* , you *have* it, used when a thrust reaches the antagonist, from which our fencers, on the same occasion, without knowing, I suppose, any reason for it, cry out, *ha* !

II.iv.35 (58,9) these pardonnez-moy's] *Pardonnez-moi* became the language of doubt or hesitation among men of the sword, when the point of honour was grown so delicate, that no other mode of contradiction would be endured.

II.iv.64 (59,3) then is my pump wall flower'd] Here is a vein of wit too thin to be easily found. The fundamental idea is, that Romeo wore *pinked* pumps, that is, pumps punched with holes in figures.

II.iv.87 (60,7) a wit of cheverel] *Cheverel* is soft-leather for gloves.

II.iv.138 (62,8) No hare, Sir] Mercutio having roared out, *So ho* ! the cry of the sportsmen when they start a hare; Romeo asks *what he has found* . And Mercutio answers, *No hare* , &c. The rest is a series of quibbles unworthy of explanation, which he who does not understand, needs not lament his ignorance.

II.iv.162 (63,1) none of his skains-mates] The word *skains-mate* , I do not understand, but suppose that *skains* was some low play, and *skains-mate* , a companion at such play.

II.iv.200 (64,2) like a tackled stair] Like stairs of rope in the tackle of a ship.

II.iv.222 (65,4) Ah, mocker! that's the dog's name. R is for the nonce; I know it begins with another letter] This passage is thus in the old folio. *A mocker, that's the dog's name. R is for the* no, *I know it begins with some other letter.* In this copy the error is but small. I read, *Ah, mocker. that's the dog's name. R is for the* nonce, *I know it begins with another letter.* For the *nonce* , is for some *design, for a sly trick* .

II.vi.15 (70,2) Too swift arrives as tardy as too slow] He that travels too fast is as long before he comes to the end of his journey, as he that travels slow. Precipitation produces mishap.

III.i.2 (71,1) The day is hot] It is observed, that in Italy almost all assassinations are committed during the heat of summer.

III.i.124 (75,6) This day's black fate on more days does depend] This day's unhappy destiny *hangs over* the days yet to come. There will yet be more mischief.

III.i.141 (78,7) Oh! I am fortune's fool] I am always running in the way of evil fortune, *like* the fool in the play. *Thou art death's fool* , in *Measure for Measure* . See Dr. Warburton's note.

III.i.153 (77,8) as thou art true] As thou art *just* and *upright* .

III.i.159 (77,9) How nice the quarrel] How *slight* , how *unimportant* , how *petty* . So in the last act,

The letter was not *nice* , but full of charge

Of dear import.

III.i.182 (78,2) Affection makes him false] The charge of falshood on Bonvolio, though produced at hazard, is very just. The author, who seems to intend the character of Bonvolio as good, meant perhaps to shew, how the best minds, in a state of faction and discord, are detorted to criminal partiality.

III.i.193 (78,3) I have an interest in your hate's proceeding: Sir Thomas Hanmer saw that this line gave no sense, and therefore put, by a very easy change,

I have an interest in your *heat's* proceeding!

which is undoubtedly better than the old reading which Dr. Warburton has followed; but the sense yet seems to be weak, and perhaps a more licentious correction is necessary. I read therefore,

I *had no* interest in your *heat's preceding* .

This, says the prince, is no quarrel of mine, *I had no interest in your former discord* ; I suffer merely by your private animosity.

III.ii.5 (79,3) Spread thy close curtain, love-performing night,/That run-away's eyes may wink] [Warburton explained the "run-away" as the "sun"] I am not satisfied with this explanation, yet have nothing better to propose.

III.ii.10 (80,4) Come, civil night] *Civil* is *grave*, *decently solemn* .

III.ii.14 (80,5) unmann'd blood] Blood yet unacquainted with man.

III.ii.25 (81,6) the garish sun] Milton had this speech in his thoughts when he wrote *Il Penseroso* .

"—Civil night,

"Thou sober-suited matron."—*Shakespeare* .

"Till civil-suited morn appear."—*Milton* .

"Pay no worship to the gairish sun."—*Shakespeare* .

"Hide me from day's gairish eye."—*Milton* .

III.ii.46 (82,7) the death-darting eye of cockatrice] [The strange lines that follow here in the common books are not in the old edition. POPE.] The strange lines are these:

I am not I, if there be such an I,

Or these eyes shot, that makes thee answer I;

If he be slain, say I; or if not, no;

Brief sounds determine of my weal or woe.

These lines hardly deserve emendatien; yet it may be proper to observe, that their meanness has not placed them below the malice of fortune, the two first of them being evidently transposed; we should read,

—That one vowel *I* shall poison more,

Than the death-darting eye of cockatrice,

Or these eyes shot, that make thee answer, I.

I am not I, &c.

III.ii.114 (85,9) Hath slain ten thousand Tybalts] Hath put Tybalt out of my mind, as if out of being.

III.ii.120 (85,1) Which modern lamentation might have mov'd] This line is left out of the later editions, I suppose because the editors did not remember that Shakespeare uses *modern* for *common* , or *slight* : I believe it was in his time confounded in colloquial language with *moderate* .

III.iii.112 (89,4)

Unseemly woman in a seeming man!

And ill-beseeming beast in seeming both!]

[W: seeming groth] The old reading is probable. *Thou art a beast of ill qualities, under the appearance both of a woman and a man* .

III.iii.135 (90,5) And thou dismember'd with thine own defence] And thou torn to pieces with thy own weapons.

III.iii.166-168 (91,6) Go hence. Good night] These three lines are omitted in all the modern editions.

III.iii.166 (91,7) here stands all your state] The whole of your fortune depends on this.

III.iv.12 (92,9) Sir Paris, I will make a desperate tender/Of my child's love] *Desperate* means only *bold, advent'rous* , as if he had said in the vulgar phrase, *I will speak a* bold *word* , and venture *to promise you my daughter* .

III.v.20 (94,1) 'Tis but the pale reflex of Cynthia's brow] The appearance of a cloud opposed to the moon.

III.v.23 (94,2) I have more care to stay, than will to go] Would it be better thus, *I have more will to stay, than care to go* ?

III.v.31 (94,3) Some say, the lark and loathed toad chang'd eyes] This tradition of the toad and lark I hare heard expressed in a rustick rhyme,

—*to heav'n I'd fly,*

But the toad beguil'd me of my eye.

III.v.33 (95,4)

Since arm from arm that voice doth us affray,

Hunting thee hence with huntaup to the day]

These two lines are omitted in the modern editions, and do not deserve to be replaced, but as they may shew the danger of critical temerity. Dr. Warburton's change of *I would* to *I wot* was specious enough, yet it it is evidently erroneous. The sense is this, *The lark, they say, has lost her eyes to the toad, and now* I would *the toad had her voice too, since she uses it to the disturbance of lovers* .

III.v.86 (97,3)

Jul. Ay, Madam, from the reach of these my hands:

'Would, none but I might venge my cousin's death.!]

Juliet's equivocations are rather too artful for a mind disturbed by the loss of a new lover.

III.v.91 (98,4) That shall bestow on hin so sure a draught] [Thus the elder quarto, which I have followed in preference to the quarto 1609, and the folio 1623, which read, less intelligibly,

"Shall give him such an unaccustom'd dram." STEEVENS.]

—*unaccustomed dram* .] In vulgar language, Shall give him a *dram* which he is *not used* to. Though I have, if I mistake not, observed, that in old books *unaccustomed* signifies *wonderful, powerful, efficacious* .

III.v.112 (98,6) in happy time] *A la bonne heure* . This phrase was interjected, when the hearer was not quite so well pleased as the speaker.

III.v.227 (103,3) As living here] Sir T. HANMER reads, *as living* hence; that is, at a dsitance, in banishment; but *here* may signify, *in this world* .

IV.i.3 (104,1) And I am nothing alow to slack his haste] *His haste shall not be abated by my slowness* . It might be read,

And I an nothing slow to *back* his haste:

that is, I am diligent to *abet* and *enforce* his haste.

IV.i.l8 (104,2)

Par. Happily met, my lady and my wife!

Jul. That may be, Sir, when I may be a wife]

As these four first lines seem intended to rhyme, perhaps the author wrote thus:

—my lady and my *life* !

IV.i.62 (106,3) this bloody knife/Shall play the umpire] That is, this knife shall decide the struggle between me and my distress.

IV.i.64 (106,4) commission of thy years and art] *Commission* is for *authority* or *power* .

IV.i.79 (106,5)

Or chain me to some sleepy mountain's top,

Where rearing bears and savage lions roam;

Or shut me nightly in a charnel house]

[Or walk in thievish ways, or bid me lurk

Where serpents are; chain me with rearing bears,

Or hide me nightly, &c.

It is thus the editions vary. POPE.] my edition has the words which Mr. Pope has omitted; but the old copy seems in this place preferable; only perhaps we might better read,

Where *savage* bears and *rearing* lions roam.

IV.i.119 (108,8) If no unconstant toy] If no *fickle freak* , no *light caprice* , no *change of fancy* , hinder the performance.

IV.ii.38 (110,2) We shall be short] That is, we shall be *defective* .

IV.iii.3 (110,3) For I have need of many orisons] Juliet plays most of her pranks under the appearance of religion: perhaps Shakespeare meant to punish her hypocrisy.

IV.iii.46 (112,6) Alas, alas! it is not like that I] This speech is confused, and inconsequential, according to the disorder of Juliet's mind.

IV.iv.4 (113,1) The curfeu bell] I knew not that the morning-bell is called the *curfeu* in any other place.

IV.iv.107 (119,9) O, play me some merry dump] This is not in the folio, but the answer plainly requires it.

V.i (121,1) ACT V. SCENE I. MANTUA] The acts are here properly enough divided, nor did any better distribution than the editors have already made, occur to me in the perusal of this play; yet it may not be improper to remark, that in the first folio, and I suppose the foregoing editions are in the same state, there is no division of the acts, and therefore some future editor may try, whether any improvement can be made, by reducing them to a length more equal, or interrupting the action at more proper intervals.

V.i.1 (121,2) If I may trust the flattering truth of sleep] The sense is, *If I may only trust the* honesty *of sleep* , which I know however not to be so nice as not often to practise *flattery* .

V.i.3 (121,3)

My bosom's lord sits lightly on his throne;

And all this day an unaccustom'd spirit

Lifts me above the ground with chearful thoughts]

These three lines are very gay and pleasing. But why does Shakespeare give Romeo this involuntary cheerfulness just before the extremity of unhappiness? Perhaps to shew the vanity of trusting to these uncertain and casual exaltations or depressions, which many consider as certain foretokens of good and evil.

V.i.45 (123,6) A beggarly account of empty boxes] Dr. Warburton would read, a *braggartly* account; but *beggarly* is probably right: if the *boxes* were *empty* , the *account* was more *beggarly* , as it was more pompous.

V.iii.31 (127,1) a ring that I must use/In dear employment] That is, *action of importance* . Gems were supposed to have great powers and virtues.

V.iii.86 (129,4) her beauty makes/This vault a feasting presence full of light] A *presence* is a *public room* .

V.iii.90 (129,5) O, how may I/Call this a lightning?] I think we should read,

—*O* , now *may I*

Call this a lightning !—

V.iii.178 (135,1)

Raise up the Montagues.—Some others; search:—

We see the ground whereon these woes do lie;

But the true ground of all these piteous woes

We cannot without circumstance descry]

Here seems to be a rhyme intended, which may be easily restored;

"Raise up the Montagues. Some others, go.

"We see the ground whereon these woes do lie,

"But the true ground of all *this* piteous *woe*

"We cannot without circumstance descry."

V.iii.194 (136,2) What fear is this, which startles in our ears?] [Originally *your ears*] Read,

"What fear is this, which startles in *our* ears?

V.iii.229 (138,6) *Fri.* I will be brief] It is much to be lamented, that the poet did not conclude the dialogue with the action, and avoid a narrative of events which the audience already knew.

(141) General Observation. This play is one of the most pleasing of our author's performances. The scenes are busy and various, the incidents numerous and important, the catastrophe irresistibly affecting, and the process of the action carried on with such probability, at least with such congruity to popular opinions, as tragedy requires.

Here is one of the few attempts of Shakespeare to exhibit the conversation of gentlemen, to represent the airy sprightliness of juvenile elegance. Mr. Dryden mentions a tradition, which might easily reach his time, of a declaration made by Shakespeare, that *he was obliged to kill Mercutio in the third act, lest he should have been killed by him* . Yet he thinks him *no such formidable person, but that he might have lived through the play, and died in his bed* , without danger to a poet. Dryden well knew, had he been in quest of truth, that, in a pointed sentence, more regard is commonly had to the words than the thought, and that it is very seldom to be rigorously understood. Mercutio's wit, gaiety, and courage, will always procure him friends that wish him a longer life; but his death is not precipitated, he has lived out the time allotted him in the construction of the play; nor do I doubt the ability of Shakespeare to have continued his existence, though some of his sallies are perhaps out of the reach of Dryden; whose genius was not very fertile of merriment, nor ductile to humour, but acute, argumentative, comprehensive, and sublime.

The Nurse is one of the characters in which the author delighted: he has, with great subtilty of distinction, drawn her at once loquacious and secret, obsequious and insolent, trusty and dishonest.

His comic scenes are happily wrought, but his pathetic strains are always polluted with some unexpected depravations. His persons, however distressed, *have a conceit left them in their misery, a miserable conceit* .

HAMLET

(145,2) This play is printed both in the folio of 1623, and in the quarto of 1637, more correctly, than almost any other of the works of Shakespeare.

I.i.29 (147,7) approve our eyes] Add a new testimony to that of our eyes.

I.i.33 (147,8) What we two nights have seen] This line is by Hanmer given to Marcellus, but without necessity.

I.i.63 (149,9) He smote the sledded Polack on the ice] Polack was, in that age, the term for an inhabitant of Poland: Polaque, French. As in a translation of Passeratius's epitaph on Henry III. of France, published by Camden:

"Whether thy chance or choice thee hither brings,

"Stay, passenger, and wail the best of kings.

"this little stone a great king's heart doth hold,

"Who rul'd the fickle French and Polacks bold:

"So frail are even the highest earthly things,

"Go, passenger, and wail the hap of kings." (rev. 1776, I, 174,3)

I.i.65 (149,2) and just at this dead hour] The old reading is*, jump at this same hour; same* is a kind of correlative to *jump; just* is in the oldest folio. The correction was probably made by the author.

I.i.68 (149,4) gross and scope] General thoughts, and tendency at large. (1773)

I.i.93 (151,7) And carriage of the articles design'd] *Carriage* , is *import; design'd* , is *formed, drawn up between them* .

I.i.96 (151,8) Of unimproved mettle hot and full] *Full of unimproved mettle* , is full of spirit not regulated or guided by knowledge or experience.

I.i.100 (151,1) That hath a stomach in't] *Stomach* , in the time of our author, was used for *constancy, resolution* .

I.i.107 (152,3) romage] Tumultous hurry. (1773)

I.i.108-125 (152,3) These, and all other lines confin'd within crotchets throughout this play, are omitted in the folio edition of 1623. The omissions leave the play sometimes better and sometimes worse, and seen made only for the sake of abbreviation.

I.i.109 (152,4) Well may it sort] The cause and the effect are proportionate and suitable. (1773)

I.i.121 (152,7) Was even the like precurse of fierce events] Not only such prodigies have been seen in Rome, but the elements have shewn our countrymen like forerunners and foretokens of violent events. (1773)

I.i.128 (153,1) If thou hast any sound] The speech of Horatio to the spectre is very elegant and noble, and congruous to the common traditions of the causes of apparitions.

I.i.153 (154,2)

Whether in sea or fire, in earth or air,

The extravagant and erring spirit hies

To his confine]

According to the pneumatology of that tine, every element was inhabited by its peculiar order of spirits, who had dispositions different, according to their various places of abode. The meaning therefore is, that all *spirits extravagant* , wandering out of their element, whether aerial spirits visiting earth, or earthly spirits ranging the air, return to their station, to their proper limits in which they are *confined* . We might read,

"—And at his warning

"Th' extravagant and erring spirit hies

"To his confine, whether in sea or air,

"Or earth, or fire. And of, &c.

But this change, tho' it would smooth the construction, is not necessary, and being unnecessary, should not be made against authority.

I.i.163 (154,5) No fairy takes] No fairy *strikes* , with lameness or diseases. This sense of *take* is frequent in this author.

I.ii.37 (156,8) more than the scope/Of these dilated articles allows] More than is comprised in the general design of these articles, which you may explain in a more diffuse and dilated stile. (1773)

I.ii.47 (157,9)

The head is not more native to the heart,

The hand more instrumental to the mouth,

Than to the throne of Denmark is thy father]

[W: The blood ... Than to the throne] Part of this emendation I have received, but cannot discern why the *head* is not as much *native to the heart* , as the *blood* , that is, *natural* and *congenial* to it, *born with it* , and co-operating with it. The relation is likewise by this reading better preserved, the *counsellor* being to the *king* as the *head* to the *heart* .

I.ii.62 (158,1)

Take thy fair hour, Laertes; time be thine,

And thy best graces spend it at thy will]

I rather think this line is in want of emendation. I read,

—*Time is thine* ,

And my best *graces; spend it at thy will* .

I.ii.65 (158,2) A little more than kin, and less than kind] *Kind* is the Teutonick word for *child* . Hamlet therefore answers with propriety, to the titles of *cousin* and *son* , which the king had given him, that he was somewhat more than *cousin* , and less than *son* .

I.ii.67 (159,3) too much i' the sun] He perhaps alludes to the proverb, *Out of heaven's blessing into the warm sun* .

I.ii.70 (159,4) veiled lids] With lowering eyes, cast down eyes. (1773)

I.ii.89 (160,5) your father lost a father;/That father lost, lost his] I do not admire the repetition of the word, but it has so much of our author's manner, that I find no temptation to recede from the old copies.

I.ii.92 (160,6) obsequious sorrow] *Obsequious* is here from *obsequies* , or *funeral ceremonies* .

I.ii.103 (161,9) To reason most absurd] Reason is here used in its common sense, for the *faculty* by which we form conclusions from arguments.

I.ii.110 (161,1) And with no less nobility of love] [*Nobility* , for *magnitude* . WARBURTON.] *Nobility* is rather *generosity* .

I.ii.112 (161,2) Do I impart toward you] I believe *impart* is, *impart myself* , *communicate* whatever I can bestow.

I.ii.125 (162,4) No jocund health] The king's intemperance is very strongly impressed; every thing that happens to him gives him occasion to drink.

I.ii.163 (164,9) I'll change that name] I'll be your servant, you shall be my friend. (1773)

I.ii.164 (164,1) what make you] A familiar phrase for *what are you doing* .

I.ii.167 (164,2) good Even, Sir] So the copies. Sir Th. Hanmer and Dr. Warburton put it, *good morning* . The alteration is of no importance, but all licence is dangerous. There is no need of any change. Between the first and eighth scene of this act it is apparent, that a natural day must pass, and how much of it is already over, there is nothing that can determine. The king has held a council. It may now as well be *evening* as *morning* .

I.ii.182 (165,3) 'Would I had met my dearest foe in heaven] *Dearest* , for *direst* , most dreadful, most dangerous.

I.ii.192 (165,5) Season your admiration] That is, *temper* it.

I.ii.204 (166,6) they, distill'd/Almost to jelly with the act of fear,/Stand dumb] [W: th' effect of] Here is an affectation of subtilty without accuracy. *Fear* is every day considered as an *agent* . *Fear laid hold on him; fear drove him away* . If it were proper to be rigorous in examining trifles, it might be replied, that Shakespeare would write more erroneously, if he wrote by the direction of this critick; they were not *distilled* , whatever the word may mean, *by the effect of fear* ; for that *distillation* was itself the *effect* ; *fear* was the cause, the active cause, that *distilled* them by that force of operation which we strictly call *act* involuntary, and *power* in involuntary agents, but popularly call *act* in both. But of this too much.

I.iii.15 (169,9) The virtue of his will] *Virtue* seems here to comprise both *excellence* and *power* , and may be explained the *pure effect* .

I.iii.21 (169,1) The sanity and health of the whole state] [W: safety] HANMER reads very rightly, *sanity* . *Sanctity* is elsewhere printed for *sanity* , in the old edition of this play.

I.iii.32 (170,2) unmaster'd] *i.e. licentious* . (1773)

I.iii.34 (170,3) keep you in the rear of your affection] That is, do not advance so far as your affection would lead you.

I.iii.49 (170,4) Whilst, like a puft and reckless libertine] [W: Whilest he] The emendation is not amiss, but the reason for it is very inconclusive; we use the same mode of speaking on many occasions. When I say of one, *he squanders like a spendthrift* , of another, *he robbed me like a thief* , the phrase produces no ambiguity; it is understood that the one is a *spendthrift* , and the other a *thief* .

I.iii.64 (172,7) But do not dull thy palm with entertainment/Of each new-hatch'd, unfledg'd comrade] The literal sense is, *Do not make thy palm callous by shaking every man by the hand* . The figurative meaning may be, *Do not by promiscuous conversation make thy mind insensible to the difference of characters* .

I.iii.81 (173,1) my blessing season this in thee!] [*Season* , for *infuse* .

WARBURTON.] It is more than to *infuse* , it is to infix it in such a manner as that it never may wear out.

I.iii.83 (173,3) your servants tend] *i.e.* your servants are waiting for you. (1773)

I.iii.86 (173,4) 'Tis in my memory lock'd,/And you yourself shall keep the key of it] That is, By thinking on you, I shall think on your lessons.

I.iii.107 (174,6)

Tender yourself mere dearly;

Or (not to crack the wind of the poor phrase)

Wronging it thus, you'll tender me a fool]

I believe the word *wronging* has reference, not to the phrase, but to Ophelia; if you go on *wronging it thus* , that is, *if you continue to go on thus wrong* . This is a mode of speaking perhaps not very grammatical, but very common, nor have the best writers refused it.

To sinner it or saint it ,

is in Pope. And Rowe,

—*Thus to* coy it,

To one who knows you too.

The folio has it,

—*roaming it thus* ,—

That is, *letting yourself loose to such improper liberty* . But *wronging* seems to be more proper.

I.iii.112 (175,7) fashion you may call it] She uses *fashion* for *manner* , and he for a *transient practice* .

I.iii.122 (175,8) Set your intreatments] *Intreatments* here means *company, conversation* , from the French *entrétien* .

I.iii.125 (175,9) larger tether] *Tether* is that string by which an animal, set to graze in grounds uninclosed, is confined within the proper limits. (1773)

I.iii.132 (176,2) I would not, in plain terms, from this time forth,/ Have you so slander any moment's leisure] [The humour of this is fine. WARBURTON.] Here is another *fine* passage, of which I take the beauty to be only imaginary. Polonius says, *in plain terms* , that is, not in language less elevated or embellished than before, but *in terms that cannot be misunderstood* : *I would not have you so disgrace your most idle moments, as not to find better employment for them than lord Hamlet's conversation* .

I.iv.9 (177,3) the swaggering up-spring] The blustering upstart.

I.iv.17 (177,4) This heavy-headed revel, east and west] I should not have suspected this passage of ambiguity or obscurity, had I not found my opinion of it differing from that of the learned critic [Warburton]. I construe it thus, *This heavy-headed revel makes us traduced east and west, and taxed of other nations* .

I.iv.22 (178,5) The pith and marrow of our attribute] The best and most valuable part of the praise that would be otherwise attributed to us.

I.iv.32 (178,7) fortune's scar] In the old quarto of 1637, it is

—*fortune's* star:

But I think *scar* is proper.

I.iv.34 (178,8) As infinite as man may undergo] As large as can be accumulated upon man.

I.iv.39-57 (179,2) Angels and ministers of grace defend us!] Hamlet's speech to the apparition of his father seems to me to consist of three parts. When first he sees the spectre, he fortifies himself with an invocation.

Angel and ministers of grace defend us!

As the spectre approaches, he deliberates with himself, and determines, that whatever it be he will venture to address it.

Be thou a spirit of health, or goblin damn'd,

Bring with thee airs from heaven, or blasts from hell,

Be thy intents wicked or charitable,

Thou com'st in such a questionable shape,

That I will speak to thee. I'll call thee , &c.

This he says while his father is advancing; he then, as he had determined, *speaks to him* , and *calls him—Hamlet, King, Father, Royal Dane: oh! answer me* . (1773)

I.iv.43 (180,4) questionable shape] [By *questionable* is meant provoking question. HANMER.] So in *Macbeth* ,

Live you, or are you aught

That man may question?

I.iv.46 (180,5) tell,/Why thy canoniz'd bones, hearsed in death,/ Have burst their cearments?] [W: in earth] It were too long to examine this note period by period, though almost every period seems to me to contain something reprehensible. The critic, in his zeal for change, writes with so little consideration, as to say, that Hamlet cannot call his father *canonized* , because *we are told he was murdered with all his sins fresh upon him* . He was not then told it, and had so little the power of knowing it, that he was to be told it by an apparition. The long succession of reasons upon reasons prove nothing, but what every reader discovers, that the king had been buried, which is implied by so many adjuncts of burial, that the direct mention of *earth* is not necessary. Hamlet, amazed at an apparition, which, though in all ages credited, has in all ages been considered as the most wonderful and most dreadful operation of supernatural agency, enquires of the spectre, in the most emphatic terms, why he breaks the order of nature, by returning from the dead; this he asks in a very confused circumlocution, confounding in his fright the soul and body. Why, says he, have *thy bones* , which with due ceremonies have been intombed *in death* , in the common state of departed mortals, *burst* the folds in which they were embalmed? Why has the tomb, in which we saw thee quietly laid, opened his mouth, that mouth which, by its weight and stability, seemed closed for ever? The whole sentence is this: *Why dost thou appear, whom we know to be dead?*

Had the change of the word removed any obscurity, or added any beauty, it might have been worth a struggle; but either reading leaves the sense the same.

If there be any asperity in this controversial note, it must be imputed to the contagion of peevishneas, or some resentment of the incivility shewn to the Oxford editor, who is represented as supposing the ground *canonized* by a funeral, when he only meant to say, that the *body* has deposited in *holy ground* , in ground consecrated according to the *canon* .

I.iv.65 (183,9) I do not set my life at a pin's fee] The value of a pin. (1773)

I.iv.73 (183,1) deprive your sovereignty] I believe *deprive* in this place signifies simply to *take away* .

I.iv.77 (184,4) confin'd to fast in fires] I am rather inclined to read, *confin'd to* lasting *fires* , to fires *unremitted* and *unconsumed* . The change is slight.

I.v.30 (186,7) As meditation or the thoughts of love] The comment [Warburton's] on the word *meditation* is so ingenious, that I hope it is just.

I.v.77 (188,6) Unhonsel'd, disappointed, unaneal'd] This is a very difficult line. I think Theobald's objection to the sense of *unaneal'd* , for *notified by the bell* , must be owned to be very strong. I have not yet by my enquiry satisfied myself. Hanmer's explication of *unaneal'd* by *unprepar'd* , because to *anneal* metals, is to *prepare* them in manufacture, is too general and vague; there is no resemblance between any funeral ceremony and the practice of *annealing* metals.

Disappointed is the same as *unappointed* , and may be properly explained *unprepared* ; a man well furnished with things necessary for any enterprize, was said to be well *appointed* .

I.v.80 (190,7) Oh, horrible! oh, horrible! most horrible!] It was ingeniously hinted to me by a very learned lady, that this line seems to belong to Hamlet, in whose mouth it is a proper and natural exclamation; and who, according to the practice of the stage, may be supposed to interrupt so long a speech. (1773)

I.v.154 (193,5) Swear by my sword] [Here the poet has preserved the manners of the ancient Danes, with whom it was *religion* to swear upon their swords. WARBURTON.] I was once inclinable to this opinion, which is likewise well defended by Mr. Upton; but Mr. Garrick produced me a passage, I think, in *Brantoms* , from which it appeared, that it was common to swear upon the sword, that is, upon the cross which the old swords always had upon the hilt.

II.i.25 (197,8) drinking, fencing, swearing] I suppose, by *fencing* is meant a too diligent frequentation of the fencing-school, a resort of violent and lawless young men.

II.i.46 (197,4) *Good Sir* , or so, or *friend* , or *gentleman*] [W: sire] I know not that *sire* was ever a general word of compliment, as distinct from *sir* ; nor do I conceive why any alteration should be made. It is a common mode of colloquial language to use, *or so* , as a slight intimation of more of the same, or a like kind, that might be mentioned. We might read, but we need not,

Good sir , forsooth, *or friend, or gentleman* .

Forsooth , a term of which I do not well know the original meaning, was used to men as well as to women.

II.i.71 (198,5) Observe his inclination in yourself] HANMER reads, *e'en* yourself, and is followed by Dr. Warburton; but perhaps *in* yourself means, *in your own person* , not by spies.

II.i.112 (200,7) I had not quoted him] To *quote* is, I believe, to *reckon* , to take an account of, to take the *quotient* or result of a computation.

II.i.114 (201,8)

it as proper to our age

To cast beyond ourselves in our opinions,

As it is common for the younger sort

To lack discretion]

This is not the remark of a weak man. The vice of age is too much suspicion. Men long accustomed to the wiles of life *cast* commonly *beyond themselves* , let their cunning go further than reason can attend it. This is always the fault of a little mind, made artful by long commerce with the world.

II.ii.24 (202,2)

For the supply and profit of our hope,

Your visitation shall receive such thanks]

That the hope which your arrival has raised may be completed by the desired effect.

II.ii.47 (203,4) the trail of policy] The *trail* is the *course of an animal pursued by the scent* .

Il.ii.52 (203,5) My news shall be the fruit of that great feast] The *desert* after the meat.

II.ii.84 (204,7) at night we'll feast] The king's intemperance is never suffered to be forgotten.

II.ii.86-167 (205,8) My liege, and Madam, to expostulate] This account of the character of Polonius, though it sufficiently reconciles the seeming inconsistency of so much wisdom with so much folly, does not perhaps correspond exactly to the ideas of our author. The commentator Warburton makes the character of Polonius, a character only of manners, discriminated by properties superficial, accidental, and acquired. The poet intended a nobler delineation of a mixed character of manners and of nature. Polonius is a man bred in courts, exercised in business, stored with observations, confident of his knowledge, proud of his eloquence, and declining into dotage. His mode of oratory is truly represented as designed to ridicule the practice of those times, of prefaces that made no introduction, and of method that embarrassed rather than explained. This part of his character is accidental, the rest is natural. Such a man is positive and confident, because he knows that his mind was once strong, and knows not that it is become weak. Such a man excels in general principles, but fails in the particular application. He is knowing in retrospect, and ignorant in foresight.

While he depends upon his memory, and can draw from his repositories of knowledge, he utters weighty sentences, and gives useful counsel; but as the mind in its enfeebled state cannot be kept long busy and intent, the old man is subject to sudden dereliction of his faculties, he loses the order of his ideas, and entangles himself in his own thoughts, till he recovers the leading principle, and falls again into his former train. This idea of dotage encroaching upon wisdom, will solve all the phaenomena of the character of Polonius.

II.ii.109 (207,1) *To the celestial, and my soul's idol, the most beautified Ophelia*] [T: beatified] Both Sir Thomas Hanmer and Dr. Warburton have followed Theobald, but I am in doubt whether *beautified* , though, as Polonius calls it, a *vile phrase* , be not the proper word. *Beautified* seems to be a *vile phrase* , for the ambiguity of its meaning, (rev. 1778, X, 241, 3)

II.ii.126 (208,2) more above] is, *moreover, besides* .

II.ii.145 (209,6) she took the fruits of my advice] She took the *fruits* of advice when she obeyed advice, the advice was then made *fruitful* .

II.ii.181 (211,9) For if the sun breed maggots in a dead dog,/Being a god, kissing carrion] [This is Warburton's emendation for "a good kissing"] This is a noble emendation, which almost sets the critic on a level with the author.

II.ii.265 (214,2) the shadow of a dream] Shakespeare has accidentally inverted an expression of Pindar, that the state of humanity is the *dream* of a *shadow* .

II.ii.269 (215,3) Then are our beggars, bodies] Shakespeare seems here to design a ridicule of these declamations against wealth and greatness, that seem to make happiness consist in poverty.

II.ii.336 (217,7) shall end his part in peace] [After these words the folio adds, *the clown shall make those laugh whose lungs are tickled o' th' sere* . WARBURTON.] This passage I have omitted, for the same reason, I suppose, as the other editors: I do not understand it.

II.ii.338 (217,8) the lady shall say her mind freely, or the blank verse shall halt for't] *The lady shall have no obstruction*, *unless from the lameness of the verse.*

II.ii.346 (217,9) I think, their inhibition comes by the means of the late innovation] I fancy this is transposed: Hamlet enquires not about an *inhibition* , but an *innovation* ; the answer therefore probably was, *I think, their* innovation, *that is* , their new practice of strolling, *comes by the means of the late* inhibition.

II.ii.352-379 (218,1) *Ham.* How comes it? do they grow rusty?] The lines marked with commas are in the folio of 1623, but not in the quarto of 1637, nor, I suppose, in any of the quartos.

II.ii.355 (218,2) cry out on the top of question] The meaning seems to be, they ask a common question in the highest notes of the voice.

II.ii.362 (218,3) escoted] Paid.

II.ii.362 (218,4) Will they pursue quality no longer than they can *sing* ?] Will they follow the *profession* of players no longer than they keep the voices of boys? So afterwards he says to the player, *Come, give us a taste of your* quality; come, *a passionate speech* .

II.ii.370 (219,6) to tarre them on to controversy] To provoke any animal to rage, is *to tarre him* . The word is said to come from the Greek. (1773)

II.ii.380 (219,8) It is not very strange, for mine uncle is king of Denmark] I do not wonder that the new players have so suddenly risen to reputation, my uncle supplies another example of the facility with which honour is conferred upon new claimants.

II.ii.412 (220,2) Buz, buz!] Mere idle talk, the *buz* of the vulgar.

II.ii.414 (220,3) *Then came each actor on his ass*] This seems to be a line of a ballad.

II.ii.420 (221,6) For the law of writ, and the liberty, these are the only men] All the modern editions have, *the law of* wit, *and the liberty* ; but both my old copies have, *the law of* writ, I believe rightly. *Writ* , for *writing, composition* . *Wit* was not, in our author's time, taken either for *imagination* , or *acuteness* , or *both together* , but for *understanding* , for the faculty by which we *apprehend* and *judge* . Those who wrote of the human mind distinguished its primary powers into *wit* and *will* . Ascham distinguishes *boys* of tardy and of active faculties into *quick wits* and *slow wits* .

II.ii.438 (221,8) the first row of the pious chanson] [It is *pons chansons* in the first folio edition. POPE.] It is *pons chansons* in the quarto too. I know not whence the *rubric* has been brought, yet it has not the appearance of an arbitrary addition. The titles of old ballads were never printed red; but perhaps *rubric* may stand for *marginal explanation* .

II.ii.439 (222,9) For, look, where my abridgment comes] He calls the players afterwards, *the brief chronicles of the time* ; but I think he now means only *those who will shorten my talk* .

II.ii.448 (223,2) be not crack'd within the ring] That is, *crack'd too much for use* . This is said to a young player who acted the parts of women.

II.ii.450 (223,3) like French faulconers] HANMER, who has much illustrated the allusions to falconry, reads, *like* French *falconers. [French falconers* is not a correction by Hanmer, but the reading of the first folio. STEEVENS.] (see 1765, VIII, 198, 1)

II.ii.459 (223,5) (as I received it, and others whose judgment in such matters cried in the top of mine)] [i.e. whose judgment I had the highest opinion of. WARBURTON.] I think it means only that *were higher than mine* .

II.ii.466 (224,8) but called it, an honest method] Hamlet is telling how much his judgment differed from that of others. *One said, there was no salt in the lines* , &c. *but call'd it an honest method* . The author probably gave it, *But I called it an honest method* , &c.

II.ii.525 (226,9) *the mobled queen*] Mobled signifies *huddled, grossly covered* .

II.ii.587 (228,5) the cue for passion] The *hint* , the *direction* .

II.ii.589 (228,6) the general ear] The ears of all mankind. So before, *Caviare to the* general, that is, to the *multitude* .

II.ii.595 (229,7) unpregnant of my cause] [*Unpregnant* , for *having no due sense of* . WARBURTON.] Rather, *not quickened with a new desire of vengeance; not teeming with revenge* .

II.ii.598 (229,8) A damn'd defeat was made] [*Defeat* , for *destruction* . WARBURTON.] Rather, *dispossession* .

II.ii.608 (229,1) kindless] *Unnatural* .

II.ii.616 (229,3) About, my brain!] *Wits, to your work* . *Brain* , go *about* the present business.

II.ii.625 (230,5) tent him] Search his wounds.

II.ii.632 (230,7) More relative than this] [*Relative* , for *convictive* . WARB.] *Convictive* is only the consequential sense. *Relative* is, *nearly related, closely connected* .

III.i.17 (231,2) o'er-raught on the way] *Over-raught* is *over-reached* , that is, *over-took* .

III.i.31 (232,4) Affront Ophelia.] To *affront* , is only *to meet directly* .

III.i.47 (233,5) 'Tis too much prov'd] It is found by too frequent experience.

III.i.52 (233,6) more ugly to the thing that helps it] That is, *compared with* the thing that helps it.

III.i.56-88 (233,7) To be, or not to be?] Of this celebrated soliloquy, which bursting from a man distracted with contrariety of desires, and overwhelmed with the magnitude of his own purposes, is connected rather in the speaker's mind, than on his tongue, I shall endeavour to discover the train, and to shew how one sentiment produces another. Hamlet, knowing himself injured in the most enormous and atrocious degree, and seeing no means of redress, but such as must expose him to the extremity of hazard, meditates on his situation in this manner: *Before I can form any rational scheme of action under this pressure of distress* , it is necessary to decide, whether, *after our present state, we are* to be or not to be. That is the question, which, as it shall be answered, will determine, *whether 'tis nobler* , and more suitable to the dignity of reason, *to suffer the outrages of fortune* patiently, or to take arms against *them* , and by opposing end them, *though perhaps* with the loss of life. If *to die* , were *to sleep* , no more, *and by a sleep to end* the miseries of our nature, such a sleep were *devoutly to be wished* ; but if *to sleep* in death, be *to dream* , to retain our powers of sensibility, we must *pause* to consider, *in that sleep of death what dreams may come* . This consideration *makes calamity* so long endured; for *who would bear* the vexations of life, which might be ended *by a bare bodkin* , but that he is afraid of something in unknown futurity? This fear it is that gives efficacy to conscience, which, by turning the mind upon *this regard* , chills the ardour of *resolution* , checks the vigour of *enterprize* , and makes the *current* of desire stagnate in inactivity. We may suppose that he would have applied these general observations to his own case, but that he discovered Ophelia.

III.i.59 (234,8) Or to take arms against a sea of troubles] [W: against assail] Mr. Pope proposed *siege* . I know not why there should be so much solicitude about this metaphor. Shakespeare breaks his metaphors often, and in this desultory speech there was less need of preserving them.

III.i.70 (235,2) the whips and scorns of time] [W: of th' time] I doubt whether the corruption of this passage is not more than the editor has suspected. *Whips* and *scorns* have no great connexion with one another, or with *time: whips* and *scorns* are evils of very different magnitude, and though at all *times scorn* may be endured, yet the *times* that put men ordinarily in danger of *whips* , are rery rare. Falstaff has said, that the *courtiers would* whip *him with their quick wits* ; but I know not that *whip* can be used for a *scoff* or *insult* , unless its meaning be fixed by the whole expression.

I am afraid lest I should venture too far in correcting this passage. If *whips* be retained, we may read,

For who would bear the whips and scorns of tyrant.

But I think that *quip* , a *sneer* , a *sarcasm* , a *contemptuous* jest, is the proper word, as suiting very exactly with *scorn* . What then must be done with *time* ? it suits no better with the new reading than with the old, and *tyrant* is an image too bulky and serious. I read, but not confidently,

For who would bear the quips *and scorns of* title.

It say be remarked, that Hamlet, in his enumeration of miseries, forgets, whether properly or not, that he is a prince, and mentions many evils to which inferior stations only are exposed.

III.i.77 (236,4) To groan and sweat] All the old copies have, *to* grunt *and sweat* . It is undoubtedly the true reading, but can scarcely be borne by modern ears.

III.i.89 (237,5) Nymph, in thy orisons] This is a touch of nature. Hamlet, at the sight of Ophelia, does not immediately recollect, that he is to personate madness, but makes her an address grave and solemn, such as the foregoing meditation excited in his thoughts.

III.i.107 (237,6) That if you be honest and fair, you should admit no discourse to your beauty] This is the reading of all the modern editions, and is copied from the quarto. The folio reads, your honesty *should admit no discourse to your beauty* . The true reading seems to be this, *If you be honest and fair, you should admit* your honesty *to no discourse with your beauty* . This is the sense evidently required by the process of the conversation.

III.i.127 (238,7) I have thoughts to put them in] *To put a thing into thought* , is *to think on it* .

III.i.148 (239,8) I have heard of your paintings too, well enough] This is according to the quarto; the folio, for *painting* , has *prattlings* , and for *face* , has *pace* , which agrees with what follows, *you jig, you amble* . Probably the author wrote both. I think the common reading best.

III.i.152 (239,9) make your wantonness your ignorance] You mistake by *wanton* affectation, and pretend to mistake by *ignorance* .

III.i.161 (239,2) the mould of form] The model by whom all endeavoured to form themselves.

III.ii.12 (241,3) the groundlings] The meaner people then seem to have sat below, as they now sit in the upper gallery, who, not well understanding poetical language, were sometimes gratified by a mimical and mute representation of the drama, previous to the dialogue.

III.ii.14 (242,4) inexplicable dumb shews] I believe the meaning is, *shews, without words to explain them* .

III.ii.26 (242,6) the very age and body of the time, his form and pressure] The *age* of the *time* can hardly pass. May we not read, the *face* and *body* , or did the author write, the *page* ? The *page* suits well with *form* and *pressure* , but ill with *body* .

III.ii.28 (242,7) pressure] Resemblance, as in a *print* .

III.ii.34 (242,8) (not to speak it profanely)] *Profanely* seems to relate, not to the praise which he has mentioned, but to the censure which he is about to utter. Any gross or indelicate language was called *profane* .

III.ii.66 (243,9) the pregnant hinges of the knee] I believe the sense of *pregnant* in this place is, *quick, ready, prompt* .

III.ii.68 (244,1) my dear soul] Perhaps, my *clear* soul.

III.ii.74 (244,2) Whose blood and judgment] According to the doctrine of the four humours, *desire* and *confidence* were seated in the blood, and *judgment* in the phlegm, and the due mixture of the humours made a perfect character.

III.ii.89 (244,3) Vulcan's stithy] *Stithy* is a smith's *anvil* .

III.ii.103 (245,4) nor mine now] A man's words, says the proverb, are his own no longer than he keep them unspoken.

III.ii.112 (245,5) they stay upon your patience] May it not be read more intelligibly, *They stay upon your* pleasure. In *Macbeth* it is, "Noble Macbeth, we stay upon your *leisure* ."

III.ii.123 (245,6) Do you think I meant country matters?] I think we must read, *Do you think I meant country* manners? Do you imagine that I meant to sit in your lap, with such rough gallantry as clowns use to their lasses?

III.ii.137 (246,7) Nay, then, let the devil wear black, for I'll have a suit of sables] I know not why our editors should, with such implacable anger, persecute our predecessors. The dead, it is true, can make no resistance, they may be attacked with great security; but since they can neither feel nor mend, the safety of mauling them seems greater than the pleasure; nor perhaps would it much misbeseem us to remember, amidst our triumphs over the *nonsensical* and the *senseless* , that we likewise are men; that *debemur morti* , and, as Swift observed to Burnet, shall soon be among the dead ourselves.

I cannot find how the common reading is nonsense, nor why Hamlet, when he laid aside his dress of mourning, in a country where it was *bitter cold* , and the air was *nipping and eager* , should not have a *suit of sables* . I suppose it is well enough known, that the fur of sables is not black.

III.ii.147 (249,1) Marry, this is miching maliche; it means mischief] [W: malhechor] I think Hanmer's exposition most likely to be right. Dr. Warburton, to justify his interpretation, must write, *miching* for *malechor* , and even then it will be harsh.

III.ii.167 (250,3) sheen] Splendor, lustre.

III.ii.177 (250,4) For women fear too much, even as they love] Here seems to be a line lost, which should have rhymed to *love* .

III.ii.192 (251,6) The instances, that second marriage move] The *motives* .

III.ii.202 (252,7)

Most necessary 'tis, that we forget

To pay ourselves what to ourselves is debt]

The performance of a resolution, in which only the *resolver* is interested, is a debt only to himself, which he may therefore remit at pleasure.

III.ii.206 (252,8)

The violence of either grief or joy,

Their own enactures with themselves destroy]

What grief or joy *enact* or determine in their violence, is revealed in their abatement. *Enactures* is the word in the quarto; all the modern editions have *enactors* .

III.ii.229 (252,9) An anchor's cheer in prison be my scope] May my whole liberty and enjoyment be to live on hermit's fare in a prison. *Anchor* is for *anchoret* .

III.ii.250 (253,1) Baptista] *Baptista* is, I think, in Italian, the name always of a man.

III.ii.262 (254,4) So you must take your husbands] Read, *So you* must take *your husbands* [in place of "mistake"]; that is, *for better, for worse* .

III.ii.288 (255,5) with two provencial roses on my rayed shoes] When shoe-strings were worn, they were covered, where they met in the middle, by a ribband, gathered into the form of a rose. So in an old song,

Gil-de-Roy *was a bonny boy* ,

Had roses *tull his* shoen.

Rayed shoes, are shoes *braided* in lines.

III.ii.304 (256,1) For if the king like not the comedy/Why, then, belike] Hamlet was going on to draw the consequence when the courtiers entered.

III.ii.314 (256,2) With drink, Sir?] Hamlet takes particular care that his uncle's love of drink shall not be forgotten.

III.ii.346 (257,3) further trade] Further business; further dealing.

III.ii.348 (257,4) by these pickers] By these hands.

III.ii.373 (258,6) ventages] The holes of a flute.

III.ii.401 (259,9) they fool me to the top of my bent] They compel me to play the fool, till I can endure to do it no longer.

III.iii.7 (261,4) Out of his lunes] [The old quartos read,

Out of his brows.

This was from the ignorance of the first editors; as is this unnecessary Alexandrine, which we owe to the players. The poet, I am persuaded, wrote,

—*us doth hourly grow*

out of his lunes.

i.e. his *madness, frenzy* . THEOBALD.]

Lunacies is the reading of the folio.

I take *brows* to be, properly read, *frows* , which, I think, is a provincial word for *perverse humours* ; which being, I suppose, not understood, was changed to *lunacies* . But of this I an not confident. [Steevens adopted Theobald's emendation]

III.iii.33 (262,7) of vantage] By some opportunity of secret observation.

III.iii.56 (263,9) May one be pardon'd, and retain the offence?] He that does not amend what can be amended, *retains* his *offence* . The king kept the crown from the right heir.

III.iii.66 (263,1) Yet what can it, when one cannot repent?] What can repentance *do for a man that cannot be penitent* , for a man who has only part of penitence, distress of conscience, without the other part, resolution of amendment.

III.iii.77 (264,1) I, his sole son, do this same villain send] The folio reads foule son, a reading apparently corrupted from the quarto. The meaning is plain. *I, his* only *son* , who am bound to punish his murderer.

III.iii.88 (264,2) Up, sword, and know thou a more horrid hent] [T: bent] This reading is followed by Sir T. HANMER and Dr. WARBURTON; but *hent* is probably the right vord. To *hent* is used by Shakespeare for, to *seize* , to *catch* , to *lay hold on* . *Hent* is, therefore, *hold* , or *seizure* . *Lay hold* on him, sword, at a more horrid time.

III.iii.94 (265,3) his soul may be as damn'd and black/As hell, whereto it goes] This speech, in which Hamlet, represented as a virtuous character, is not content vith taking blood for blood, but contrives damnation for the man that he would punish, is too horrible to be read or to be uttered.

III.iv.4 (266,4) I'll silence me e'en here:/Pray you, be round vith him] Sir T. HANMER, who is folloved by Dr. WARBURTON, reads,

—*I'll* sconce *me here* .

Retire to a place of *security* . They forget that the contrivance of Polonius to overhear the conference, was no more told to the queen than to Hamlet.—*I'll silence me even here* , is, *I'll use no more words* .

III.iv.48 (268,8)

Heaven's face doth glow;

Yea, this solidity and compound mass,

With tristful visage, as against the doom,

It thought-sick at the act]

[W: O'er this ... visage, and, as 'gainst] The word *heated* [from the "old quarto"], though it agrees well enough with *glow* , is, I think, not so striking as *tristful* , which was, I suppose, chosen at the revisal. I believe the whole passage now stands as the author gave it. Dr. WARBURTON's reading restores two improprieties, which Shakespeare, by his alteration, had removed. In the first, and in the new reading: *Heaven's* face *glows with tristful* visage; and, *Heaven's face is* thought-sick. To the common reading there is no just objection.

III.iv.52 (268,9) what act,/That roars so loud, and thunders in the index?] The meaning is, *What is* this act, of which the *discovery* , or *mention* , cannot be made, but with this violence of clamour?

III.iv.82 (270,5) Rebellious hell,/If thou canst mutiny in a matron's bones] I think the present reading right, but cannot admit that HANMER's emendation ["Rebellious heat"] produces nonsense. May not what is said of *heat* , be said of *hell* , that it will mutiny wherever it is quartered? Though the emendation be elegant, it is not necessary. (1773)

III.iv.88 (271,6) reason panders will] So the folio, I think rightly; but the reading of the quarto is defensible;

—*reason* pardons *will* .

III.iv.90 (271,7) grained] Dyed in grain.

III.iv.92 (271,8) incestuous bed] The folio has *enseamed* , that is, *greasy* bed.

III.iv.98 (271,9) vice of kings!] a low mimick of kings. The vice is the fool of a farce; from whom the modern *punch* is descended.

III.iv.102 (272,2) A king of shreds and patches] This is said, pursuing the idea of the *vice of kings* . The *vice* was dressed as a fool, in a coat of party-coloured patches.

III.iv.107 (272,3) lap's in time and passion] That, having suffered *time* to *slip* , and *passion* to *cool, lets go* , &c.

III.iv.151 (274,6) And do not spread the compost on the weeds/To make them ranker] Do not, by any new indulgence, heighten your former offences.

III.iv.155 (274,7) curb] That is, *bend* and *truckle* . Fr. *courber* .

III.iv.161 (274,8) That monster custom, who all sense doth eat/ Of habits evil, is angel yet in this] [Thirlby: habits evil] I think THIRLBY's conjecture wrong, though the succeeding editors have followed it; *angel* and *devil* are evidently opposed. [Steevens accepted "evil"]

III.iv.203 (277,5) adders fang'd] That is, adders with their *fangs* , or *poisonous teeth* , undrawn. It has been the practice of mountebanks to boast the efficacy of their antidotes by playing with vipers, but they first disabled their fangs.

IV.i (278,l) *A royal apartment. Enter King, Queen, Rosencrantz, and Guildenstern*] This play is printed in the old editions without any separation of the acts. The division is modern and arbitrary; and is here not very happy, for the pause is made at a time when there is more continuity of action than in almost any other of the scenes.

IV.i.18 (278,2) out of haunt] I would rather read, *out of* harm.

IV.i.25 (279,3)

his very madness, like some ore

among a mineral of metals base,

Shews itself pure]

Shakespeare seems to think *ore* to be *or* , that is, gold. Base metals have *ore* no less than precious.

IV.ii.19 (281,5) he keeps them, like an ape, in the corner of his jaw] The quarto has *apple* , which is generally followed. The folio has *ape* , which HANMER has received, and illustrated with the following note.

"It is the way of monkeys in eating, to throw that part of their food, which they take up first, into a pouch they are provided with on the side of their jaw, and then they keep it, till they have done with the rest."

IV.ii.28 (281,6) The body is with the king] This answer I do not comprehend. Perhaps it should be, *The body is* not *with the king* , for *the king is not with the body* .

IV.ii.32 (282,7) Of nothing] Should it not be read, *Or* nothing? When the courtiers remark, that Hamlet has contemptuously called the *king a thing* , Hamlet defends himself by observing, that the king must be a *thing* , or *nothing* .

IV.ii.46 (283,9) the wind at help] I suppose it should be read, *The bark is ready, and the wind at* helm.

IV.ii.68 (284,3) And thou must cure me: till I know 'tis done,/ Howe'er my haps, my joys will ne'er begin] This being the termination of a scene, should, according to our author's custom, be rhymed. Perhaps he wrote,

Howe'er my hopes, *my joys* are not begun.

If *haps* be retained, the meaning will be, *'till I know 'tis done, I shall be miserable* , whatever befall me (see 1785, VIII, 257, 3)

IV.iv.33 (286,4)

What is a man,

If his chief good and market of his time

Be but to sleep and feed?]

If his highest good, and *that for which he sells his time* , be to sleep and feed.

IV.iv.36 (286,5) large discourse] Such latitude of comprehension, such power of reviewing the past, and anticipating the future.

IV.iv.53 (286,6) Rightly to be great,/Is not to stir without great argument] This passage I have printed according to the copy. Mr. THEOBALD had regulated it thus:

—*'Tis not to be great,*

Never to stir without great argument;

But greatly , &c.

The sentiment of Shakespeare is partly just, and partly romantic.

—*Rightly to be great,*

Is not to stir without great argument ;

is exactly philosophical.

But greatly to find quarrel in a straw,

When honour is at stake ,

is the idea of a modern hero. *But then* , says he *honour is an argument, or subject of debate* , sufficiently great, *and* when honour is at stake, we must *find cause of quarrel in a straw* .

IV.iv.56 (287,7) Excitements of my reason and my blood] Provocations which excite both my reason and my passions to vengeance.

IV.v.37 (289,4) *Larded all with sweet flowers*] The expression is taken from cookery. (1773)

IV.v.53 (290,6) *And dupt the chamber-door*] To *dup* , is to *do up* ; to lift the latch. It were easy to write,

And op'd—

IV.v.58 (290,7) *By Gis*] I rather imagine it should be read,

By Cis,—

That is, by St. Cecily.

IV.v.83 (291,8) but greenly] But *unskilfully* ; with *greenness* ; that is, without *maturity* of judgment.

IV.v.84 (291,9) In hugger-mugger to inter him] All the modern editions that I have consulted give it,

In private *to inter him* ;—

That the words now replaced are better, I do not undertake to prove; it is sufficient that they are Shakespeare's: if phraseology is to be changed as words grow uncouth by disuse, or gross by vulgarity, the history of every language will be lost; we shall no longer have the words of any author; and, as these alterations will be often unskilfully made, we shall in time have very little of his meaning.

IV.v.89 (292,1) Feeds on his wonder] The folio reads,

Keeps *on his wonder* ,—

The quarto,

Feeds *on* this *wonder* .—

Thus the true reading is picked out from between them. HANMER reads unnecessarily,

Feeds *on his* anger.—

IV.v.92 (292,2) Wherein necessity, of matter beggar'd,/ Will nothing stick our persons to arraign] HANMER reads,

Whence animosity, *of matter beggar'd* .

He seems not to have understood the connection. *Wherein* , that is*, in which pestilent speeches, necessity* , or, *the obligation of an accuser to support his charge, will nothing stick* , &c.

IV.v.99 (293,4) The ocean, over-peering of his list] The lists are the barriers which the spectators of a tournament must not pass.

IV.v.105 (293,5) The ratifiers and props of every ward] [W: ward] With this emendation, which was in Theobald's edition, Hanmer was not satisfied. It is indeed harsh. HANMER transposes the lines, and reads,

They cry , "Chuse we Laertes for our king;"

The ratifiers and props of every word,

Caps, hands, and tongues, applaud it to the clouds .

I think the fault may be mended at less expence, by reading,

Antiquity forgot, custom not known,

The ratifiers and props of every weal.

That is, of every *government* .

IV.v.110 (294,6) Oh, this is counter, you false Danish dogs] Hounds run *counter* when they trace the trail backwards.

IV.v.161 (296,9)

Nature is fine in loves and, where 'tis fine,

It sends some precious instance of itself

After the thing it loves]

These lines are not in the quarto, and might hare been omitted in the folio without great loss, for they are obscure and affected; but, I think, they require no emendation. *Love* (says Laertes) is the passion by which *nature is most* exalted and *refined* ; and as substances *refined* and subtilised, easily obey any impulse, or follow any attraction, some part of nature, so purified and *refined* , flies off after the attracting object, after the thing it loves.

As into air the purer spirits f1ow,

And separate from their kindred dregs below,

So flew her soul .—

IV.v.171 (297,1) O how the wheel becomes it!] [W: weal] I do not see why *weal* is better than *wheel* . The story alluded to I do not know; but perhaps the lady stolen by the steward was reduced to *spin* .

IV.v.175 (297,2) There's rosemary, that'll far rememberance. Pray you, love, remember. And there's pansies, that's for thoughts] There is probably some mythology in the choice of these herbs, but I cannot explain it. *Pansies* is for *thoughts* , because of its name, *Pensées* ; but *rosemary* indicates *remembrance* , except that it is an ever-green, and carried at funerals, I have not discovered.

IV.v.214 (300,7) No trophy, sword, nor batchment] It was the custom, in the times of our author, to hang a sword over the grave of a knight.

IV.v.218 (300,8) And where the offence is, let the great axe fall] [W: tax] *Fall* corresponds better to *axe* .

IV.vi.26 (301,9) *for the bore of the matter*] The *bore* is the calibier of a gun, or the capacity of the barrel. *The matter* (says Hamlet) *would carry the heavier words* .

IV.vii.18 (302,1) the general gender] The *common race* of the people.

IV.vii.19 (302,2)

dipping all his faults in their affection,

Would, like the spring that turneth wood to stone,

Convert his gyves to graces]

This simile is neither very seasonable in the deep interest of this conversation, nor very accurately applied. If the *spring* had changed base metals to gold, the thought had been more proper.

IV.vii.27 (302,3) if praises may go back again] If I may praise what has been, but is now to be found no more.

IV.vii.77 (304,5) Of the unworthiest siege] Of the lowest rank. *Siege* , for *seat, place* .

IV.vii.82 (304,6) Importing health and graveness] [W: wealth] *Importing* here may be, not *inferring* by logical consequence, but *producing* by physical effect. A young man regards show in his dress, an old man, *health* .

IV.vii.90 (305,7) I, in forgery of shapes and tricks/Come short of what he did] I could not contrive so many proofs of dexterity as he could perform.

IV.vii.98 (305,8) in your defence] That is, *in the science of* defence.

IV.vii.101 (305,9) The scrimers] The *fencers* .

IV.vii.112 (305,1) love is begun by time] This is obscure. The meaning may be, *love* is not innate in us, and co-essential to our nature, but begins at a certain time from some external cause, and being always subject to the operations of time, suffers change and diminution. (1773)

IV.vii.113 (300,2) in passages of proof] In transactions of daily experience.

IV.vii.123 (306,4) And then this *should* is like a spendthrift sigh/ That hurts by easing] [W: sign] This conjecture is so ingenious, that it can hardly be opposed, but with the same reluctance as the bow is drawn against a hero, whose virtues the archer holds in veneration. Here may be applied what Voltaire writes to the empress:

Le genereux Francois—

Te combat & t'admire.

Yet this emendation, however specious, is mistaken. The original reading is, not a *spendthrift's* sigh, but a *spendthrift* sigh; a *sigh* that makes an unnecessary waste of the vital flame. It is a notion very prevalent, that *sighs* impair the strength, and wear out the animal powers.

IV.vii.135 (307,5) He being remiss] He being not vigilant or cautious.

IV.vii.139 (307,7) a pass of practice] Practice is often by Shakespeare, and other writers, taken for an *insidious stratagem* , or *privy* treason, a sense not incongruous to this passage, where yet I rather believe, that nothing more is meant than a *thrust for exercise* .

IV.vii.151 (308,8) May fit us to our shape] May *enable* us to *assume proper characters* , and to act our part.

IV.vii.155 (308,9) blast in proof] This, I believe, is a metaphor taken from a mine, which, in the proof or execution, sometimes breaks out with an ineffectual *blast* .

V.i.3 (310,1) make her grave straight] Make her grave from east to west in a direct line parallel to the church; not from north to south, athwart the regular line. This, I think, is meant.

V.i.87 (313,1) which this ass now o'er-reaches] In the quarto, for *over-offices* is, *over-reaches* , which agrees better with the sentence: it is a strong exaggeration to remark that an *ass* can *over-reach* him who would once have tried to *circumvent* .—I believe both the words were Shakespeare's. An author in revising his work, when his original ideas have faded from his mind, and new observations have produced new sentiments, easily introduces images which have been more newly impressed upon him, without observing their want of congruity to the general texture of his original design.

V.i.96 (314,2) and now my lady Worm's] The scull that was *my lord Such a one's* , is now my *lady Worm's* .

V.i.100 (314,3) to play at loggats with 'em?] A play, in which pins are set up to be beaten down with a bowl.

V.i.149 (316,5) by the card] The *card* is the paper on which the different points of the compass were described. *To do any thing by the card* , is, *to do it with nice observation* .

V.i.151 (316,6) the age is grown so picked] So *smart* , so *sharp* , says HANMER, very properly; but there was, I think, about that time, a *picked* shoe, that is, *a shoe with a long pointed toe* , in fashion, to which the allusion seems likewise to be made. *Every man now is smart; and every man now is a man of fashion* .

V.i.239 (319,7) winter's flaw!] Winter's *blast* .

V.i.242 (319,8) maimed rites!] Imperfect obsequies.

V.i.244 (319,9) some estate] Some person of high rank.

V.i.255 (319,2) Yet here she is allow'd her virgin crants] I have been informed by an anonymous correspondent, that *crants* is the German word for *garlands* , and I suppose it was retained by us from the Saxons. To carry *garlands* before the bier of a maiden, and to hang them over her grave, is still the practice in rural parishes.

Crants therefore was the original word, which the author, discovering it to be provincial, and perhaps not understood, changed to a term more intelligible, but less proper. *Maiden rites* give no certain or definite image. He might have put *maiden wreaths* , or *maiden garlands* , but he perhaps bestowed no thought upon it, and neither genius nor practice will always supply a hasty writer with the most proper diction.

V.i.310 (323,6) When that her golden couplets] [W: E'er that] Perhaps it should be,

Ere yet —

Yet and *that* are easily confounded.

V.ii.6 (324,7) mutinies in the bilboes] *Mutinies* , the French word for seditious or disobedient fellows in the army or fleet. *Bilboes* , the *ship's prison* .

V.ii.6 (324,8) Rashly,/And prais'd be rashness for it—Let us know] Both my copies read,

—Rashly,

And prais'd be rashness for it , let *us know* .

Hamlet, delivering an account of his escape, begins with saying, that he *rashly* —and then is carried into a reflection upon the weakness of human wisdom. I rashly—praised be rashness for it—*Let us* not think these events casual, but *let us know* , that is, *take notice and remember* , that we sometimes succeed by *indiscretion* , when we *fail* by *deep plots* , and infer the perpetual superintendance and *agency* of the *Divinity* . The observation is just, and will be allowed by every human being who shall reflect on the course of his own life.

V.ii.22 (325,9) With, ho! such bugs and goblins in my life] With *such causes of terror* , arising from my character and designs.

V.ii.29 (325,2) Being thus benetted round with villainies,/ Ere I could make a prologue to my brains] [W: mark the prologue ... bane] In my opinion no alteration is necessary. Hamlet is telling how luckily every thing fell out; he groped out their commission in the dark without waking them; he found himself doomed to immediate destruction. Something was to be done for his preservation. An expedient occurred, not produced by the comparison of one method with another, or by a regular deduction of consequences, but before he *could make a prologue to his brains, they had begun the play* . Before he could summon his faculties, and propose to himself what should be done, a complete scheme of action presented itself to him. His mind operated before he had excited it. This appears to me to be the meaning.

V.ii.41 (326,5) As peace should still her wheaten garland wear,/ And stand a comma 'tween their amities] HANMER reads,

And stand a cement—

I am again inclined to vindicate the old reading.

The expression of our author is, like many of his phrases, sufficiently constrained and affected, but it is not incapable of explanation. The *comma* is the note of *connection* and continuity of sentences; the *period* is the note of *abruption* and disjunction. Shakespeare had it perhaps in his mind to write, That unless England complied with the mandate, *war should put a* period *to their amity* ; he altered his mode of diction, and thought that, in an opposite sense, he might put, that *Peace should stand a* comma between their amities. This is not an easy stile; but is it not the stile of Shakespeare?

V.ii.43 (327,6) as's of great charge] *Asses* heavily *loaded* . A quibble is intended between *as* the conditional particle, and *ass* the beast of burthen. That *charg'd* anciently signified *leaded* , may be proved from the following passage in *The Widow's Tears* , by Chapman, 1612.

"Thou must be the *ass charg'd with crowns* to make way." (see 1765, VIII, 294, 2)

V.ii.53 (327,7) The changeling never known] A *changeling* is a *child* which the fairies are supposed to leave in the room of that which they steal.

V.ii.68 (328,1) To quit him] To requite him; to pay him his due.

V.ii.84 (329,2) Dost know this water-fly] A *water-fly* , skips up and down upon the surface of the water, without any apparent purpose or reason, and is thence the proper emblem of a busy trifler.

V.ii.89 (329,3) It is a chough] A kind of jackdaw.

V.ii.112 (330,5) full of most excellent differences] Full of *distinguishing* excellencies.

V.ii.114 (330,6) the card or calendar of gentry] The general preceptor of elegance; the *card* by which a gentleman is to direct his course; the *calendar* by which he is to choose his time, that what he does may be both excellent and seasonable.

V.ii.115 (330,7) for you shall find in him the continent of what part a gentleman would see] *You shall find him containing* and comprising every *quality* which a *gentleman* would desire to *contemplate* for imitation. I know not but it should be read, *You shall find him the continent*

V.ii.119 (330,9) and yet but raw neither in respect of his quick sail] [W: but slow] I believe *raw* to be the right word; it is a word of great latitude; *raw* signifies *unripe, immature* , thence *unformed, imperfect, unskilful* . The best account of him would be *imperfect* , in respect of his quick sail. The phrase *quick sail* was, I suppose, a proverbial term for *activity of mind* .

V.ii.122 (330,1) a soul of great article] This is obscure. I once thought it might have been, *a soul of great altitude* ; but, I suppose, *a soul of great article* , means *a soul of* large comprehension, of many contents; the particulars of an inventory are called *articles* .

V.ii.122 (331,2) his infusion of such dearth and rareness] *Dearth* is *dearness* , value, price. And his internal qualities of such value and rarity.

V.ii.131 (331,3) Is't not possible to understand in another tongue? you will do't, Sir, really] Of this interrogatory remark the sense ie very obscure. The question may mean, *Might not all this be understood in plainer language* . But then, *you will do it, Sir, really* , seems to have no use, for who could doubt but plain language would be intelligible? I would therefore read, *Is't possible* not to be understood in a mother *tongue* . You will do it, Sir, really.

V.ii.140 (331,4) if you did, it would not much approve me] If you knew I was not ignorant, your esteem would not nuch advance my reputation. To *approve* , is to *recommend to approbation* .

V.ii.145 (331,5) I dare not confess that, lest I should compare with him in excellence] I dare not pretend to know him, lest I should pretend to an equality: no man can completely know another, but by knowing himself, which is the utmost extent of human wisdom.

V.ii.149 (332,6) in his meed] In his excellence.

V.ii.156 (332,7) impon'd] Perhaps it should be, *depon'd* . So Hudibras,

"I would upon this cause *depone* ,

"As much as any I have known."

But perhaps *imponed* is pledged, *impawned* , so spelt to ridicule the affectation of uttering English words with French pronunciation.

V.ii.165 (332,9) more germane.] More*a-kin* .

V.ii.172 (333,1) The king, Sir, hath laid, that in a dozen passes between yourself and him, he shall not exceed you three hits; he hath laid on twelve for nine] This wager I do not understand. In a dozen passes one must exceed the other more or less than three hits. Nor can I comprehend, how, in a dozen, there can be twelve to nine. The passage is of no importance; it is sufficient that there was a wager. The quarto has the passage as it stands. The folio, *He hath one twelve for mine* .

V.ii.193 (333,2) This lapwing runs away with the shell on his head] I see no particular propriety in the image of the lapwing. Osrick did not run till he had done his business. We may read, *This lapwing* ran *away* —That is, *this fellow was full of unimportant bustle from his birth* .

V.ii.199 (334,4) a kind of yesty collection, which carries them through and through the most fond and winnowed opinions] [W: most fann'd] This is a very happy emendation; but I know not why the critic should suppose that *fond* was printed for *fann'd* in consequence of any reason or reflection. Such errors, to which there is no temptation but idleness, and of which there was no cause but ignorance, are in every page of the old editions. This passage in the quarto stands thus: "They have got out of the habit of encounter, a kind of misty collection, which carries them through and through the most profane and renowned opinions." If this printer preserved any traces of the original, our author wrote, "the most fane and renowned opinions," which is better than fann'd and winnow'd.

The meaning is, "these men have got the cant of the day, a superficial readiness of slight and cursory conversation, a kind of frothy collection of fashionable prattle, which yet carried them through the most select and approved judgment. This airy facility of talk sometimes imposes upon wise men."

Who has not seen this observation verified?

V.ii.201 (335,6) and do but blow them to their trials, the bubbles are out] These men of show, without solidity, are like bubbles raised from soap and water, which dance, and glitter, and please the eye, but if you extend them, by blowing hard, separate into a mist; so if you oblige these specious talkers to extend their compass of conversation, they at once discover the tenuity of their intellects.

V.ii.216 (335,7) gentle entertainment] Mild and temperate conversation.

V.ii.234 (336,1) Since no man knows aught of what he leaves, what is't to leave betimes?] The reading of the quarto was right, but in some other copy the harshness of the transposition was softened, and the passage stood thus: *Since no man knows aught of what he leaves* . For *knows* was printed in the later copies *has* , by a slight blunder in such typographers.

I do not think Dr. Warburton's interpretation of the passage the best that it will admit. The meaning may be this, Since *no man knows aught of* the state of life which *he leaves* , since he cannot judge what others years may produce, why should he be afraid of *leaving* life betimes? Why should he dread an early death, of which he cannot tell whether it is an exclusion of happiness, or an interception of calamity. I despise the superstition of augury and omens, which has no ground in reason or piety; my comfort is, that I cannot fall but by the direction of Providence.

Hanmer has, *Since no man* owes *aught* , a conjecture not very reprehensible. Since *no man can call any possession certain* , what is it to leave?

V.ii.237 (337,2) Give me your pardon, Sir] I wish Hamlet had made some other defence; it is unsuitable to the character of a good or a brave man, to shelter himself in falsehood.

V.ii.272 (338,5) Your grace hath laid upon the weaker side] Thus Hanmer. All the others read,

Your grace hath laid the odds o' the weaker side.

When the odds were on the side of Laertes, who was to hit Hamlet twelve times to nine, it was perhaps the author's slip.

V.ii.310 (340,7) you make a wanton of me] A *wanton* was, a man feeble and effeminate. In *Cymbeline* , Imogen says,

"I am not so citizen a *wanton* ,

To die, ere I be sick."

V.ii.346 (342,8) That are but mutes or audience to this act] That are either mere *auditors* of this *catastrophe* , or at most only *mute performers* , that fill the stage without any part in the action.

V.ii.375 (344,2) This quarry cries, on havock!] Hanmer reads,

—*cries* out, *havock!*

To *cry on* , was to *exclaim against* . I suppose, when unfair sportsmen destroyed more *quarry* or *game* than was reasonable, the censure was to cry, *Havock* .

(346) General Observation. If the dramas of Shakespeare were to be characterised, each by the particular excellence which distinguishes it from the rest, we must allow to the tragedy of Hamlet the praise of variety. The incidents are so numerous, that the argument of the play would make a long tale. The scenes are interchangeably diversified with merriment and solemnity; with merriment that includes judicious and instructive observations, and solemnity, not strained by poetical violence above the natural sentiments of man. New characters appear from time to time in continual succession, exhibiting various forms of life and particular modes of conversation. The pretended madness of Hamlet causes much mirth, the mournful distraction of Ophelia fills the heart with tenderness, and every personage produces the effect intended, from the apparition that in the first act chills the blood with horror, to the fop in the last, that exposes affectation to just contempt. The conduct is perhaps not wholly secure against objections. The action is indeed for the most part in continual progression, but there are some scenes which neither forward nor retard it. Of the feigned madness of Hamlet there appears no adequate cause, for he does nothing which he might not have done with the reputation of sanity. He plays the madman most, when he treats Ophelia with so much rudeness, which seems to be useless and wanton cruelty.

Hamlet is, through the whole play, rather an instrument than an agent. After he has, by the stratagem of the play, convicted the king, he makes no attempt to punish him, and his death is at last effected by an incident which Hamlet had no part in producing.

The catastrophe is not very happily produced; the exchange of weapons is rather an expedient of necessity, than a stroke of art. A scheme might easily have been formed to kill Hamlet with the dagger, and Laertes with the bowl.

The poet is accused of having shewn little regard to poetical justice, and may be charged with equal neglect of poetical probability. The apparition left the regions of the dead to little purpose; the revenge which he demands is not obtained, but by the death of him that was required to take it; and the gratification which would arise from the destruction of an usurper and a murderer, is abated by the untimely death of Ophelia, the young, the beautiful, the harmless, and the pious.

OTHELLO

I.i.20 (358,4)

One Michael Cassio, a Florentine,

A fellow almost damn'd in a fair wife]

This is one of the passages which must for the present be resigned to corruption and obscurity. I have nothing that I can, with any approach to confidence, propose. I cannot think it very plain from Act 3. Scene 1. that Cassio was or was not a Florentine.

I.i.30 (361,6) must be belee'd and calm'd] [—*must be* LED *and calm'd* . So the old quarto. The first folio reads *belee'd* : but that spoils the measure. I read LET, hindered. WARBURTON.] *Belee'd* suits to *calm'd* , and the measure is not less perfect than in many other places.

I.i.36 (361,7) Preferment goes by letter] By *recommendation* from powerful friends.

I.i.37 (361,8) And not by old gradation] [W: Not (as of old)] *Old gradation* , is *gradation* established by*ancient* practice. Where is the difficulty?

I.i.39 (361,9) If I in any just term am affin'd] *Affine* is the reading of the third quarto and the first folio. The second quarto and all the modern editions have *assign'd* . The meaning is, *Do I stand* within *any such* terms *of propinquit* or *relation to the Moor, as that it is my duty to love him* ?

I.i.49 (362,1) honest knaves] *Knave* is here for *servant* , but with a mixture of sly contempt.

I.i.63 (362,2) In compliment extern] In that which I do only for an outward shew of civility.

I.i.76 (363,3) As when, by night and negligence, the fire/Is spied in populous cities] [Warburton, objecting to "by": Is spred] The particle is used equivocally; the same liberty is taken by writers more correct.

The wonderful creature! a woman of reason!

Never grave out of *pride, never gay* out of *season* .

I.i.115 (364,4) What profane wretch art thou?] That is, *what wretch of gross and licentious language?* In that sense Shakespeare often uses the word *profane* .

I.i.124 (365,6) this odd even] The *even* of *night* is *midnight* , the time when night is divided into *even* parts.

I.i.149 (366,7) some check] Some rebuke.

I.i.150 (366,8) cast him] That is, *dismiss* him; *reject* him. We still say, a *cast* coat, and a *cast* serving-man.

I.i.162 (366,9) And what's to come of my despised time] [W: despited] *Despised time* , is *time of no value* ; time in which

"There's nothing serious in mortality,

The wine of life is drawn, and the mere dregs

Are left, this vault to brag of." *Macbeth* .

I.i.173 (367,2) By which the property of youth and maidhood/May be abus'd?] By which the faculties of a young virgin may be infatuated, and made subject to illusions and to false imagination.

"Wicked dreams *abuse*

The curtain'd sleep." *Macbeth.*

I.ii.2 (368,3) stuff o' the conscience] This expression to common readers appears harsh. *Stuff* of the *conscience* is, *substance* , or *essence* of the conscience. *Stuff* is a word of great force in the Teutonic languages. The elements are called in

Dutch, *Hoefd stoffen* , or *head stuffs* .

I.ii.13 (368,4) And hath, in his effect, a voice potential/As double as the duke's] [Warburton had given a source in Dioscorides and Theocritus for "double"] This note has been much censured by Mr. Upton, who denies, that the quotation is in Dioscorides, and disputes, not without reason, the interpretation of Theocritus.

All this learning, if it had even been what it endeavours to be thought, is, in this place, superfluous. There is no ground of supposing, that our author copied or knew the Greek phrase; nor does it follow, that, because a word has two senses in one language, the word which in another answers to one sense, should answer to both. *Manus* , in Latin, signifies both a *hand* and *troop of soldiers* , but we cannot say, that *the captain marched at the* head *of his* hand; or, that *he laid his* troop *upon his sword* . It is not always in books that the meaning is to be sought of this writer, who was much more acquainted with naked reason and with living manners.

Double has here its natural sense. The president of every deliberative assembly has a *double voice* . In our courts, the chief justice and one of the inferior judges prevail over the other two, because the chief justice has a *double* voice.

Brabantio had, *in his effect* , though not by law, yet by *weight* and *influence* , a voice not *actual* and formal, but *potential* and operative, as *double* , that is, a voice that when a question was suspended, would turn the balance as effectually *as the duke's* . *Potential* is used in the sense of science; a *caustic* is called *potential* fire.

I.ii.23 (370,7) speak, unbonnetted] [Pope: unbonnetting] I do not see the propriety of Mr. Pope's emendation, though adopted by Dr. Warburton. *Unbonnetting* may as well be, *not putting on* , as *not putting off* , the bonnet. Hamner reads *e'en* bonnetted.

I.ii.26 (370,8) unhoused] Free from *domestic* cares. A thought natural to an adventurer.

I.ii.28 (370,9) For the sea's worth] I would not marry her, though she were as rich as the Adriatic, which the Doge annually marries.

I.ii.30 (371,2) a land-carrack] A *carrack* is a ship of great bulk, and commonly of great value; perhaps what we now call a *galleon* .

I.ii.55 (372,3) be advis'd] That is, be *cool* ; be *cautious* ; be *discreet* .

I.ii.68 (372,4) The wealthy curled darlings of our nation] *Curled* is *elegantly and ostentatiously dressed* . He had not the hair particularly in his thoughts.

I.ii.74 (373,6) Abused her delicate youth with drugs, or minerals,/ That weaken notion] [T: notion] Hanmer reads with equal probability, *That* waken motion. [Originally *motion*].

I.iii.6 (375,9) As in these cases where they aim reports] [W: the aim] The folio has,

—*the* aim reports.

But, *they aim reports* , has a sense sufficiently easy and commodious. There men *report* not by certain knowledge, but by *aim* and conjecture.

I.ii.18 (375,1) By no assay of reason] Bring it to the *test* , examine it by reason as we examine metals by the *assay* , it will be found counterfeit by all trials.

I.iii.23 (376,2) facile question] *Question* is for the *act of seeking* . With more *easy endeavour* .

I.iii.24 (376,4) warlike brace] State of defence. To arm was called to *brace on* the armour.

I.iii.42 (376,5) And prays you to believe him] The late learned and ingenious Mr. Thomas Clark, of Lincoln's Inn, read the passage thus:

And prays you to relieve *him* .

But the present reading may stand. *He intreats you not to doubt the truth of this intelligence* .

I.iii.54 (377,6) Hath rais'd me from my bed; nor doth the general care] The word *care* , which encumbers the verse, was probably added by the players. Shakespeare uses *the general* as a substantive, though, I think, not in this sense.

I.iii.69 (373,8) though our proper son/Stood in your action] Were the man exposed to your *charge* or *accusation* .

I.iii.80 (378,9) The very head and front of my offending] The *main* , the *whole* , unextenuated.

I.iii.85 (379,2) Their dearest action] That is *dear* , for which much is paid, whether money or labour; *dear action* , is action performed at great expence, either of ease or safety.

I.iii.107 (380,4) overt test] Open proofs, external evidence.

I.iii.108 (380,5) thin habits and poor likelihoods/Of modern seeming] Weak shew of slight appearance.

I.iii.139 (381,6) And portance in my travel's history] [I have restored,

And with it all my travel's history :

From the old edition. It is in the rest,

And portance in my travel's history .

Rymer, in his criticism on this play, has changed it to *portents* , instead of *portance* . POPE.] Mr. Pope has restored a line, to which there is little objection, but which has no force. I believe *portance* was the author's word in some revised copy. I read thus,

Of being——sold

To slavery, of my redemption, thence,

And portance in't; my travel's history.

My redemption from slavery, and behaviour in it.

I.iii.140-170 (381,7) Wherein of antres vast, and desarts idle] Whoever ridicules this account of the progress of love, shows his ignorance, not only of history, but of nature and manners. It is no wonder that, in any age, or in any nation, a lady, recluse, timorous, and delicate, should desire to hear of events and scenes which she could never see, and should admire the man who had endured dangers and performed actions, which, however great, were yet magnified by her timidity. [Pope: deserts wild] Every mind is liable to absence and inadvertency, else Pope could never have rejected a word so poetically beautiful. Idle is an epithet used to express the infertility of the chaotic state, in the Saxon translation of the Pentateuch. (1773)

I.iii.140 (382,8) antres] [French grottos. POPE.] Rather *caves* and *dens* .

I.iii.142 (382,9) It was my hint to speak] [W: hent] *Hent* is not used in Shakespeare, nor, I believe, in any other author; *hint* , or *cue* , is comnonly used for occasion of speech, which is explained by, *such was the process* , that is, the course of the tale required it. If *hent* be restored, it may be explained by *handle* . I had a *handle* , or *opportunity* , to speak of cannibals.

I.iii.144 (382,1) men whose heads/Do grow beneath their shoulders] Of these men there is an account in the interpolated travels of Mondeville, a book of that time.

I.iii.199 (384,4) Let me speak like yourself;] [W: our self] Hanmer reads,

Let me now speak *more* like your self.

Dr. Warburton's emendation is specious; but I do not see how Hanmer's makes any alteration. The duke seems to mean, when he says he will speak like Brabantio, that he will speak sententiously.

I.iii.213 (385,6) But the free comfort which from thence he hears] But the moral precepts of consolation, which are liberally bestowed on occasion of the sentence.

I.iii.232 (386,8) thrice-driven bed of down] A *driven* bed, is a bed for which the feathers are selected, by *driving* with a fan, which separates the light from the heavy.

I.iii.237 (337,9)

I crave fit disposition for my wife;

Due reverence of place, and exhibition]

I desire, that a proper *disposition* be made for my wife, that she may have *precedency* , and *revenue* , accommodation, and *company* , suitable to her rank.

For *reference* of place, the old quartos have *reverence* , which Hanmer has received. I should read,

Due preference *of place* .—

I.iii.246 (387,1) And let me find a charter in your voice] Let your favour *privilege* me.

I.iii.250 (387,2) My down-right violence and storm of fortunes] [W: to forms, my fortunes] There is no need of this emendation. *Violence* is not *violence suffered* , but *violence acted* . Breach of common rules and obligations. The old quarto has, *scorn* of fortune, which is perhaps the true reading.

I.iii.253 (388,3) I saw Othello's visage in his mind] It must raise no wonder, that I loved a man of an appearance so little engaging; I saw his face only in his mind; the greatness of his character reconciled me to his form.

I.iii.264 (386,4)

Nor to comply with heat (the young affects,

In me defunct) and proper satisfaction]

[T: me distinct, *i.e.* with that heat and new affections which the indulgence of my appetite has raised and created. This is the meaning of *defunct* , which has made all the difficulty of the passage. WARBURTON.] I do not think that Mr. Theobald's emendation clears the text from embarrassment, though it is with a little imaginary improvement received by Hanmer, who reads thus:

Nor to comply with heat , affects the young

In my distinct *and proper satisfaction* .

Dr. Warburton's explanation is not more satisfactory: what made the difficulty, will continue to make it. I read,

—I beg it not,

To please the palate of my appetite,

Nor to comply with heat (the young affects

In me defunct) and proper satisfaction;

But to be free and bounteous to her mind.

Affects stands here, not for *love* , but for *passions* , for that by which any thing is affected. *I ask it not* , says he, *to please appetite, or satisfy loose desires* , the passions of youth which I have now outlived, or *for any particular gratification of myself, but merely that I may indulge the wishes of my wife* .

Mr. Upton had, before me, changed *my* to *me* ; but he has printed young *effects* , not seeming to know that *affects* could be a noun. (1773)

I.iii.290 (391,6) If virtue no delighted beauty lack] [W: belighted] Hanmer reads, more plausibly, *delighting* . I do not know that *belighted* has any authority. I should rather read,

If virtue no delight or *beauty lack* .

Delight , for *delectation* , or *power of pleasing* , as it is frequently used.

I.iii.299 (391,8) best advantage] Fairest opportunity.

I.iii.317 (392,9) a Guinea-hen] A showy bird with fine feathers.

I.iii.346 (392,1) defeat thy favour with an usurped beard] [W: disseat] It is more English, to *defeat* , than *disseat* . To *defeat* , is to *undo* , to *change* .

I.iii.350 (393,2) It was a violent commencement in her, and thou shalt see an answerable sequestration] There seems to be an opposition of terms here intended, which has been lost in transcription. We may read, *It was a violent* conjunction, *and thou shalt see an answerable sequestration* ; or, what seems to me preferable, *It was a violent commencement, and thou shalt see an answerable* *sequel* .

I.iii.363 (393,4) betwixt an erring Barbarian] [W: errant] Hanmer reads, *errant* . *Erring* is as well as either.

II.i.15 (396,1) And quench the guards of the ever-fixed pole] Alluding to the star *Arctophylax* .

II.i.48 (397,3)

His bark is stoutly timber'd, and his pilot

Of very expert and approv'd allowance;

Therefore my hopes, not surfeited to death,

Stand in bold cure]

I do not understand these lines. I know not how *hope* can be *surfeited to death* , that is*, can be encreased, till it is destroyed* ; nor what it is *to stand in bold cure* ; or why *hope* should be considered as a disease. In the copies there is no variation. Shall we read

Therefore my fears, not surfeited to death,

Stand in bold cure?

This is better, but it is not well. Shall we strike a bolder stroke, and read thus?

Therefore my hopes, not forfeited *to death* ,

Stand bold, not sure.

II.i.49 (398,4) Of very expert and approv'd allowance] I read, *Very expert, and of approv'd allowance* .

II.i.64 (308,5) And in the essential vesture of creation/Does bear all excellency; We in terrestrial] I do not think the present reading inexplicable. The author seems to use *essential* , for *existent, real* . She excels the praises of invention, says he, and in *real qualities* , with which *creation* has *invested* her*, bears all excellency* .

Does bear all excellency ——] Such is the reading of the quartos, for which the folio has this,

And in the essential vesture of creation

Do's tyre the ingeniuer.

Which I explain thus,

Does tire the ingenious verse.

This is the best reading, and that which the author substituted in his revisal.

II.i.112 (401,9) Saints in your injuries] When you have a mind to do injuries, you put on an air of sanctity.

II.i.120 (402,1) I am nothing, if not critical] That is, *censorious* .

II.i.137 (402,2) *She never yet was foolish*] We may read,

She ne'er was yet so foolish that was fair,

But even her folly help'd her to an heir.

Yet I believe the common reading to be right; the lay makes the power of cohabitation a proof that a man is not a *natural* ; therefore, since the foolishest woman, if *pretty* , may have a child, no *pretty woman* is ever foolish.

II.i.146 (403,3) put on the vouch of very malice itself] *To put on the vouch of malice* , is to assume a character vouched by the testimony of malice itself.

II.i.165 (404,5) profane] Gross of language, of expression broad and brutal. So Brabantio, in the first act, calls Iago *profane* wretch.

II.i.165 (404,6) liberal counsellor.] *Counsellor* seems to mean, not so much a man that *gives counsel* , us one that discourses fearlessly and volubly. A talker.

II.i.177 (405,8) well kiss'd! an excellent courtesy!] [—*well kissed* , and *excellent courtesy* ;—] This I think should be printed, *well kiss'd* ! an *excellent courtesy* !

Spoken when Cassio kisses his hand, and Desdemona courtesies. [The old quarto confirms Dr. Johnson's emendation. STEEVENS.]

II.i.208 (406,1) I prattle out of fashion] Out of method, without any settled order of discourse.

II.i.211 (406,2) the master] The pilot of the ship.

II.i.223 (406,3) Lay thy finger thus] On thy mouth, to stop it while thou art listening to a wiser man.

II.i.252 (407,5) green minds] Minds unripe, minds not yet fully formed.

II.i.254 (408,6) she is full of most bless'd condition] Qualities, disposition of mind.

II.i.274 (408,7) tainting his discipline] Throwing a slur upon hie discipline.

II.i.279 (408,8) sudden in choler] *Sudden* , is precipitately violent.

II.i.283 (408,9) whose qualification shall come into no true taste again] Whose resentment shall not be so *qualified* or *tempered* , as to be *well tasted* , as not to retain *some bitterness* . The phrase is harsh, at least to our ears.

II.i.306 (409,1) like a poisonous mineral] This is philosophical. Mineral poisons kill by corrosion.

II.i.314 (411,4) I'll have our Michael Cassio on the hip] A phrase from the art of wrestling.

II.i.321 (411,6) Knavery's plain face is never seen] An honest man acts upon a plan, and forecasts his designs; but a knave depends upon temporary and local opportunities, and never knows his own purpose, but at the time of execution.

II.iii.14 (413,8) Our general cast us] That is, *appointed us to our stations* . To *cast the play* , is, in the stile of the theatres, to assign to every actor his proper part.

II.iii.26 (413,9) And when she speaks, is it not an alarum to love?] The voice may *sound* an *alarm* more properly than the *eye* can *sound* a *parley* .

II.iii.46 (413,1) I have drunk but one cap to-night, and that was carefully qualified too] Slily mixed with water.

II.iii.59 (414,2) The very elements; As quarrelsome as the as the *discordia semina rerum* ; as quick in opposition as fire and water.

II.iii.64 (414,3) If consequence do but approve my dream] [T: my deer] This reading is followed by the succeeding editions. I rather read,

If consequence do but approve my scheme .

But why should *dream* be rejected? Every scheme subsisting only in the imagination may be termed a *dream* .

II.iii.93-99 (416,6) *King Stephen was a worthy peer*] These stanzas are taken from an old song, which the reader will find recovered and preserved in a curious work lately printed, intitled, *Relicks of Ancient Poetry* , consisting of old heroic ballands, songs, &c. 3 vols. 12.

II.iii.95 (416,7) *lown*] Sorry fellow, paltry wretch.

II.iii.135 (417,8) He'll watch the horologe a double set] If he have no drink, he'll keep awake while the clock strikes two rounds, or four and twenty hours.

Chaucer uses the ward *horologe* in more places than one.

"Well skirer was his crowing in his loge

"Than is a clock or abbey *horologe* ."]

The bracketed part of Johnson's note is taken verbatim from Zacbary Gray, *Critical ... Notes on Shakespeare* , 1754, II, 316.] (see 1765, VIII, 374, 6) (rev. 1778, I, 503, 9)

II.iii.145 (418,9) ingraft infirmity; An infirmity *rooted, settled* in his constitution.

II.iii.175 (419,3) it frights the isle/From her propriety] From her regular and *proper state* .

II.iii.180 (419,4) In quarter] In their quarters; at their lodging.

II.iii.194 (420,5) you unlace your reputation thus] Slacken, or *loosen* . Put in danger of dropping; or perhaps strip of its ornaments.

II.iii.195 (420,6) spend your rich opinion] Throw away and squander a reputation as valuable as yours.

II.iii.202 (420,7) self-charity] Care of one's self.

II.iii.211 (421,9) he that is approv'd in this offence] He that is convicted by proof, of having been engaged in this offence.

II.iii.274 (423,1) cast in his mood] Ejected in his anger.

II.iii.343 (425,4) this advice is free] This counsel has an appearance of honest openness, of frank good-will.

II.iii.348 (425,5) free elements] Liberal, bountiful, as the elements, out of which all things are produced.

II.iii.355 (425,6) to this parallel course] *i.e.* a course level, and even with his design.

II.iii.363 (425,8) That she repeals him] That is, recalls him.

II.iii.382 (426,1)

Though ether things grew fair against the sun,

Yet fruits, that blossom first, will first be ripe]

Of many different things, all planned with the same art, and promoted with the same diligence, some must succeed sooner than others, by the order of nature. Every thing cannot be done at once; we must proceed by the necessary gradation. We are not to *despair* of slow events any *more* than of tardy fruits, while the causes are in regular progress, and the fruits *grow fair against the sun* . Hanmer has not, I think, rightly conceived the sentiment; for he reads,

Those fruits which blossom first , are not first *ripe* .

I have therefore drawn it out at length, for there are few to whom that will be easy which was difficult to Hanmer.

III.i.3 (427,2) Why, masters, have your instruments been in Naples, that they speak i' the nose thus?] The venereal disease first appeared at the siege of Naples.

III.iii.14 (430,6)

That policy may either last so long,

Or feed upon such nice and waterish diet,

Or breed itself so out of circumstance,

That I, being absent, and my place supplied,

My general will forget my love and service]

He may either of himself think it politic to keep me out of office so long, or he may be satisfied with such slight reasons, or so many accidents may make him think my re-admission at that time improper, that I may be quite forgotten.

III.iii.23 (431,7) I'll watch him tame] It is said, that the ferocity of beasts, insuperable and irreclaimable by any other means, is subdued by keeping them from sleep.

III.iii.47 (431,8) His present reconciliation take] [W: make] To *take his reconciliation* , may be to accept the submission which he makes in order to be reconciled.

III.iii.65 (432,1) the wars must make examples/Out of their best] The severity of military discipline must not spare the *best men* of the army, when their punishment nay afford a wholesome *example* .

III.iii.90 (433,2) Excellent wretch!—Perdition catch my soul,/But I do love thee!] The meaning of the word *wretch* , is not generally understood. It is now, in some parts of England, a term of the softest and fondest tenderness. It expresses the utmost degree of amiableness, joined with an idea, which perhaps all tenderness includes, of feebleness, softness, and want of protection. Othello, considering Desdemona as excelling in beauty and virtue, soft and timorous by her sex, and by her situation absolutely in his power, calls her *Excellent wretch!* It may be expressed,

Dear, harmless, helpless Excellence.

III.iii.91 (433,3) when I love thee not,/Chaos is come again] When my love is for a moment suspended by suspicion, I have nothing in my mind but discord, tumult, perturbation, and confusion.

III.iii.123 (435,4) They are close delations working from the heart,/ That passion cannot rule] *They are* cold dilations *working from the heart,/That passion cannot rule* .] I know not why the modern editors are satisfied with this reading, which no explanation can clear. They might easily have found, that it is introduced without authority. The old copies uniformly give, *close dilations* , except that the earlier quarto has *close denotements* ; which was the author's first expression, afterwards changed by him, not to *cold dilations* , for *cold* is read in no ancient copy; nor, I believe, to *close dilations* , but to *close delations* ; to *occult* and *secret accusations, working* involuntarily *from the heart* , which, though resolved to conceal the fault, cannot rule its *passion* of resentment.

III.iii.127 (435,5) Or, those that be not, 'would they might seem none!] [W: seem knaves] I believe the meaning is, *would they might no longer seem* , or bear the shape of *men* .

III.iii.140 (436,6) Keep leets and law-days] [i.e. govern. WARBURTON.] Rather *visit* than *govern* , but visit with authoritative intrusion.

III.iii.149 (437,8) From one that so improbably conceits]—imperfectly *conceits* ,] In the old quarto it is,

—improbably *conceits* ,

Which I think preferable.

III.iii.166 (437,9) the green-ey'd monster, which doth make/The meat it feeds on] *which doth* mock *The meat it feeds on* .] I have received Hanmer's emendation ["make"]; because *to mock* , does not signify *to loath* ; and because, when Iago bids Othello *beware of jealousy, the green-eyed monster* , it is natural to tell why he should beware, and for caution he gives him two reasons, that jealousy *often* creates its own cause, and that, when the causes are real, jealousy is misery.

III.iii.173 (438,1) But riches, fineless] Unbounded, endless, unnumbered treasures.

III.iii.180 (438,3)

Exchange me for a goat,

When I shall turn the business of my soul

To such exsuffolate and blown surmises,

Matching thy inference]

This odd and far-fetched word was made yet more uncouth in all the editions before Hanmer's, by being printed, *exsufflicate* . The allusion is to a bubble. Do not think, says the Moor, that I shall change the noble designs that now employ my thoughts, to suspicions which, like bubbles *blown* into a wide extent, have only an empty shew without solidity, or that in consequence of such empty fears, I will close with thy inference against the virtue of my wife.

III.iii.188 (439,4) Where virtue is, those are most virtuous] An action in itself indifferent grows virtuous by its end and application.

III.iii.201 (439,6)

I know our country disposition well;

In Venice they do let heaven see the pranks]

Here Iago seems to be a Venetian.

III.iii.207 (440,7) And, when she seem'd to shake, and fear your looks,/She lov'd them most] This and the following argument of Iago ought to be deeply impressed on every reader. Deceit and falsehood, whatever conveniencies they may for a time promise or produce, are, in the sum of life, obstacles to happiness. Those, who profit by the cheat, distruat the deceiver, and the act, by which kindness was sought, puts an end to confidence.

The same objection may be made with a lower degree of strength against the imprudent generosity of disproportionate marriages. When the first heat of passion is over, it is easily succeeded by suspicion, that the same violence of inclination, which caused one irregularity, may stimulate to another; and those who have shown, that their passions are too powerful for their prudence, will, with very alight appearances againat them, be censured, as not very likely to restrain them by their virtue. (see 1765, VIII, 397, 1)

III.iii.210 (440,8) To seel her father's eyes up, close as oak] There is little relation between *eyes* and *oak* . I would read,

She seel'd her father's eyes up close as owl's.

As blind as an owl , is a proverb.

III.iii.222 (441,1) My speech would fall into such vile success] [*Success* , far succession, *i.e.* conclusion; not prosperous issue. WARB.] I rather think there is a depravation, and would read,

My speech would fall into such vile excess.

If *success* be the right word, it seems to mean *consequence* or *event* , as *successo* is used in Italian.

III.iii.232 (441,2) will most rank] *Will* , is for wilfulness. It is so used by Ascham. A *rank will* , is *self-will* overgrown and exuberant.

III.iii.249 (442,3) You shall by that perceive him, and his means] You shall discover whether he thinks his best *means* , his most powerful *interest* , is by the solicitation of your lady.

III.iii.250 (442,4) strain his entertainnent] Press hard his re-admission to his pay and office. *Entertainment* was the military term for admission of soldiers.

III.iii.256 (442,5) Fear not my government] Do not distrust ay ability to contain my passion.

III.iii.259 (442,6) knows all qualities, with a learned spirit,/Of human dealings] The construction is, He knows with a learned spirit all qualities of human dealings.

III.iii.260 (442,7) If I do prore her haggard] A *haggard* hark, is a *wild* hawk, a *hawk unreclaimed* , or *irreclaimable* .

III.iii.262 (443,8) I'd whistle her off, and let her down the wind,/ To prey at fortune] The falconers always let fly the hawk against the wind; if she flies with the wind behind her, she seldom returns. If therefore a hawk was for any reason to be dismissed, she was *let down the wind* , and from that time shifted far herself, and *preyed at fortune* . This was told me by the late Mr. Clark.

III.iii.276 (443,9) forked plague] In allusion to a *barbed* or *forked* arrow, which, once infixed, cannot be extracted.

III.iii.312 (445,2) And, to the advantage, I, being here, took it up] I being *opportunely* here, took it up.

III.iii.319 (445,3) Be not you known on't] Should it not rather be read,

Be not you known in't?

The folio reads,

Be not unknown *on't* .

The sense is plain, but of the expression I cannot produce any example.

III.iii.332 (446,5) that sweet sleep,/Which thou owedst yesterday] To *owe* is, in our author, oftener to *possess* , than *to be indebted* , and such was its meaning here; but as that sense was growing less usual, it was changed unnecessarily by the editors to *hadst* ; to the sane meaning, more intelligibly expressed.

III.iii.351 (447,6)

Farewell the neighing steed, and the shrill trump,

The spirit-stirring drum, the ear-piercing fife]

Dr. Warburton has offered *fear-spersing* , for *fear-dispersing* . But *ear-piercing* is an epithet so eminently adapted to the *fife* , and so distinct from the shrillness of the trumpet, that it certainly ought not to be changed. Dr. Warburton has been censured for this proposed emendation with more noise than honesty, for he did not himself put it in the text.

III.iii.369 (449,8) abandon all remorse] [*Remorse* , for repentance. WARBURTON.] I rather think it is, Let go all scruples, throw aside all restraints.

III.iii.429 (451,4) *Oth.* 'tis a shrewd doubt] [The old quarto gives this line, with the two following, to Iago; and rightly. WARB.] I think it more naturally spoken by Othello, who, by dwelling so long upon the proof, encouraged Iago to enforce it.

III.iii.448 (452,8) hearted throne] [W: parted] *Hearted* throne, is the heart on which thou wast *enthroned* . *Parted* throne has no meaning.

III.iii.467 (453,3)

Let him command,

And to obey, shall be in me remorse,

What bloody business ever]

[Pope: Not to obey] [T: Nor, to obey.] [W: me. Remord] Of these two emendations, I believe, Theobald's will have the greater number of suffrages; it has at least mine. The objection against the propriety of the declaration in Iago is a cavil; he does not say that he has no principle of remorse, but that it shall not operate against Othello's commands. *To obey shall be in me* , for *I will obey you* , is a mode of expression not worth the pains here taken to introduce it; and the word *remords* has not in the quotation the meaning of *withhold* , or *make reluctant* , but of *reprove* , or *censure* ; nor do I know that it is used by any of the contemporaries of Shakespeare.

I will offer an interpretation, which, if it be received, will make alteration unnecessary, but it is very harsh and violent. Iago devotes himself to wronged Othello, and says, *Let him command whatever bloody business* , and in me it shall be an act, not of cruelty, but *of tenderness, to obey him* ; not of malice to other, but of *tenderness* for him. If this sense be thought too violent, I see nothing better than to follow Pope's reading, as it is improved by Theobald.

III.iv.26 (457,5) cruzadoes] [A Portugueze coin, in value three shillings sterling. Dr. GREY.] So called from the cross stamped upon it.

III.iv.46 (458,6) The hearts, of old, gave hands] [Warburton explains this is an allusion to James the First's practice of creating baronets for money and emends to "The hands of old gave hearts"] The historical observation is very judicious and acute, but of the emendation there is no need. She says, that her hand gave away *her heart* . He goes on with his suspicion, and the hand which he had before called *frank* , he now terms *liberal* ; then proceeds to remark, that *the hand was formerly given by the heart* ; but now it neither gives it, nor is given by it.

III.iv.51 (459,7) salt and sullen rheum]—*salt and* sorry rheum] The old quarto has,

—*salt and* sullen *rheum* —-

That is, a *rheum obstinately troublesome* . I think this better.

III.iv.70 (459,8)

A Sybil, that had numbred in the world

The sun to course two hundred compasses]

The expression is not very infrequent; we say, *I counted the clock to strike four* ; so she *number'd* the sun *to course* , to run *two hundred compasses* , two hundred annual circuits.

III.iv.79 (460,1) Why do you speak so startingly, and rash?] Is *vehement, violent* .

III.iv.103 (461,2) 'Tis not a year, or two, shews us a man] From this line it may be conjectured, that the author intended the action of the play to be considered as longer than is marked by any note of time. Since their arrival at Cyprus, to which they were hurried on their wedding-night, the fable seems to have been in one continual progress, nor can I see any vacuity into which a *year or two* , or even a month or two, could be put. On the night of Othello's arrival, a feast was proclaimed; at that feast Cassio was degraded, and immediately applies to Desdemona to get him restored. Iago indeed advises Othello to hold him off a while, but there is no reason to think, that he has been held off long. A little longer interval would increase the probability of the story, though it might violate the rules of the drama. See Act. 5. Sc. 2. (see 1765, VIII, 416, 1)

III.iv.113 (461,3) the duty of my heart] —the office *of my heart* .] The elder quarto reads,

—*the* duty *of my heart* .

The author used the more proper word, and then changed it, I suppose, for fashionable diction; but, as fashion is a very weak protectress, the old word is now ready to resume its place.

III.iv.119 (462,4)

But to know so, must be my benefit]

"Si nequeo placidas affari Caesaris aures,

"Saltem aliquis veniat, qui mihi dicat, abi."

III.iv.125 (462,7) in favour] In *look* , in *countenance* .

III.iv.128 (462,8) within the blank of his displeasure] Within the *shot* of his anger.

III.iv.141 (463,9) some unhatch'd practice] Some treason that has not taken effect.

III.iv.146 (463,1)

for let our finger ach,

And it endues our other healthful members

Even to that sense of pain]

Endue with a sense of pain , is an expression, which, though it might be endured, if it were genuine, cannot deserve to be introduced by artifice. The copies, both quarto and folio, read, *Endue our other healthful members even to a sense of pain* . I believe it should be rather, SUBDUE *our other healthful members to a sense of pain* .

III.iv.151 (463,2) (unhandsome warrior as I am)] [W: wrangler] *Unhandsome warrior* , is evidently *unfair assailant* .

III.iv.178 (464,3) a more continuate time]—*more* convenient *time*] The folio has,

—*more* continuate *time* ;

Time *less interrupted* , time which I can call more my own. It gives a more distinct image than *convenient* .

III.iv.180 (464,4) Take me this work out] The meaning is not, "Pick out the work, and leave the ground plain;" but, "Copy this work in another handkerchief."

IV.i.5 (466,6)

Naked in bed, Iago, and not mean harm?

It is hypocrisy against the devil]

Hypocrisy against the devil , means hypocrisy to cheat the devil. As common hypocrites cheat men, by seeming good, and yet living wickedly, these men would cheat the devil, by giving him flattering hopes, and at last avoiding the crime which he thinks them ready to commit.

IV.i.22 (467,8) Boding to all] Thus all the old copies. The moderns, less grammatically,

Boding to ill—

IV.i.42 (468,2) without sone instruction] [W: induction] This is a noble conjecture, and whether right or wrong does honour to its author. Yet I am in doubt whether there is any necessity of emendation. There has always prevailed in the world an opinion, that when any great calamity happens at a distance, notice is given of it to the sufferer by some dejection or perturbation of mind, of which he discovers no external cause. This is ascribed to that general communication of one part of the universe with another, which is called sympathy and antipathy; or to the secret monition, *instruction* , and influence of a superior Being, which superintends the order of nature and of life. Othello says, *Nature could not invest herself in such shadowing passion without* instruction. *It is not words that shake me thus.* This passion, which spreads its clouds over me, is the effect of some agency more than the operation of words; it is one of those notices which men have of unseen calamities.

IV.i.76 (471,4) Confine yourself but in a patient list] For attention; act of listening.

IV.i.82 (471,5) encave yourself] Hide yourself in a private place.

IV.i.89 (471,6) Or I shall say, you are all in all in spleen,/And nothing of a man] I read,

Or shall I say, you're all in all a spleen .

I think our author uses this expression elsewhere.

IV.i.121 (472,8) Do you triumph, Roman? do you triumph?] Othello calls him *Roman* ironically. *Triumph* , which was a Roman ceremony, brought Roman into his thoughts. *What* (says he) *you are now* triumphing *as great as a Roman* ?

IV.i.123 (472,9) a customer!] A common woman, one that invites custom.

IV.i.130 (473,1) Have you scar'd me? Have you made my reckoning? have you settled the term of my life? The old quarto reads, *stored* me. Have you disposed of me? have you laid me up?

IV.i.150 (473,2) 'Tis such another fitchew! marry, a perfum'd one] Shakespeare has in another place mentioned the lust of this animal. He tells Iago, that she is as lewd as the *polecat* , but of better scent, the polecat being a very stinking animal.

IV.i.244 (476,4) atone them] Make them *one* ; reconcile them.

IV.i.256 (477,5)

If that the earth could teem with woman's tears,

Each drop she falls would prove a crocodile]

If womens tears could impregnate the earth. By the doctrine of equivocal generation, new animals were supposed producible by new combinations of matter. See Bacon.

IV.i.277 (478,7)

whose solid virtue

The shot of accident, nor dart of chance,

Could neither graze nor pierce]

[T: of change] To *graze* is not merely to touch superficially, but to strike not directly, not so as to bury the body of the thing striking in the matter struck.

Theobald trifles, as is usual. *Accident* and *chance* may admit a subtle distinction; *accident* may be considered as the *act* , and *chance* as the *power* or *agency* of fortune; as, *It was* by chance *that this* accident *befel me* . At least, if we suppose all corrupt that is inaccurate, there will be no end of emendation.

IV.ii.57 (482,1) garner'd up my heart] That is, *treasured* up; the *garner* and the *fountain* are improperly conjoined.

IV.ii.62 (482,2)

Turn thy complexion there!

Patience, thou young and rose-lipp'd cherubim;

Ay, there, look grim as hell]

At such an object do thou, *patience* , thyself *change colour* ; at this do thou, even thou, *rosy cherub* as thou art, *look grim as hell* . The old editions and the new have it,

I here look grim as hell.

I was written for *ay* , and not since corrected.

IV.ii.109 (484,4) The small'st opinion on my great'st abuse] The old quarto reads [for "least misuse"],

The small'st opinion on my great'st abuse.

Which I think is better.

IV.ii.140 (486,6) Some base notorious knave] For *gross* , not in its proper meaning for *known* .

IV.ii.144 (486,7) Speak within door] Do not clamour so as to be heard beyond the house.

IV.ii.146 (486,8) the seamy side without] That is, *inside out* .

IV.iii.27 (490,2) and he, she lov'd, prov'd mad,/And did forsake her] I believe that *mad* only signifies *wild, frantick, uncertain* .

IV.iii.31 (490,3) I have much to do,/But to go hang my head] I *have much* ado to do any thing *but hang my head* . We might read,

Not *to go hang my head* .

This is perhaps the only insertion made in the latter editions which has improved the play. The rest seem to have been added for the sake of amplification, or of ornament. When the imagination had subsided, and the mind was no longer agitated by the horror of the action, it became at leisure to look round for specious additians. This addition is natural. Desdemona can at first hardly forbear to sing the song; she endeavours to change her train of thoughts, but her imagination at last prevails, and she sings it.

IV.iii.41 (491,4)

Des. "The poor soul sat singing by a sycamore-tree,

"Sing all a green willow]

This song, in two parts, is printed in a late collection of old ballads; the lines preserved here differ somewhat from the copy discovered by the ingenious collector.

IV.iii.55 (491,5)

Des. "I call'd my love false love; but what said

"he then?

"Sing willow, &c.]

This couplet is not in the ballad, which is the complaint, not of a woman forsaken, but of a man rejected. These lines were probably added when it was accommodated to a woman.

IV.iii.94 (493,6) our former having] Our former allowance of experience.

IV.iii.107 (493,7) heaven me such usage send] —*heaven me such* uses *send* ,] Such is the reading of the folio, and of the subsequent editions; but the old quarto has,

—*such* usage *send* .—

Usage is an old word for *custom* , and, I think, better than *uses* .

V.i.11 (494,1) I have rubb'd this young quat *almost to the sense*] In some editions,

I've rubb'd this young gnat *almost to the sense,*

And he grows angry .]

This is a passage much controverted among the editors. Sir T. Hanner reads *quab* , a *gudgeon* ; not that a gudgeon can be *rubbed* to much *sense* , but that a man grossly deceived is often called a *gudgeon* . Mr. Upton reads *quail* , which he proves, by much learning, to be a very choleric bird. Dr. Warburton retains *gnat* , which is found in the early quarto. Theobald would introduce *knot* , a small bird of that name. I have followed the text of the folio, and third and fourth quartos.

A *quat* in the midland counties is a *pimple* , which by rubbing is made to smart, or is *rubbed to sense* . Roderigo is called a *quat* by the same mode of speech, as a low fellow is now termed in lay language a *scab. To rub to the sense* , is *to rub to the quick* .

V.i.37 (496,2) No passage?] No passengers? No body going by?

V.i.42 (499,4) a heary night] A *thick cloudy* night, in which an ambush may be commodiously laid.

V.ii.1 (499,4) It is the cause, it is the cause, my soul;—/Let me not name it] The abruptness of this soliloquy makes it obscure. The meaning, I think, is this: "I am here (says Othello in his mind) overwhelmed with horror. What is the reason of this perturbation? Is it want of resolution to do justice? Is it the dread of shedding blood? No; it is not the action that shocks me, but *it is the cause, it is the cause, my soul; let me not name it to you, ye chaste stars; it is the cause* ."

V.ii.20 (500,7)

I must weep,

But they are cruel tears: this sorrel's heavenly;

It strikes, where it doth love.—She wakes—]

This tenderness, with which I lament the punishment which justice compels me to inflict, is a holy passion.

I wish these two lines could be honestly ejected. It is the fate of Shakespeare to counteract his own pathos.

V.ii.65 (502,8) A murder, which I thought a sacrifice] This line is difficult. *Thou hast hardened my heart, and makest me* kill thee with the rage of a *murderer* , when *I thought to have sacrificed* thee to justice with the calmness of a priest striking a victim.

It must not be omitted, that one of the elder quartos reads, *thou dost stone* thy *heart* ; which I suspect to be genuine. The meaning then will be, *thou forcest me* to dismiss thee from the world in the state of the *murdered* without preparation for death, *when I intended* that thy punishment should have been a *sacrifice* atoning for thy crime.

I am glad that I have ended my revisal of this dreadful scene. It is not to be endured.

V.ii.134 (505,3) false as water] As water that will support no weight, nor keep any impression.

V.ii.151 (506,4) villainy has made mocks with love] *Villainy* has taken advantage to *play upon* the weakness of a violent passion.

V.ii.162 (506,5) Thou hast not half that power to do me harm, /As I have to be hurt] [Hamner: to bear hurt] The Oxford Editor saw well the meaning of his author, but weakened his expression. She means to say, *I have in this cause power to endure more than thou hast power to inflict* .

V.ii.183 (507, 6) charm your tongue] I know not whether I have read, or whether my own thoughts hare suggested, an alteration of this passage. It seems to me not improbable, that Shakespeare wrote *clam* your tongue; to *clam* a bell, is to cover the clapper with felt, which drowns the blow, and hinders the sound.

V.ii.211 (509,7) she with Cassio had the act of shame/A thousand times committed] This is another passage which seems to suppose a longer space comprised in the action of this play than the scenes include.

V.ii.253 (512,2) It was a sword of Spain, the ice-brook's temper] [In the first edition it is, *Isebroke's temper* . Thence corrupted to *Ice-brook's* .—*Ebro's temper* ; the waters of that river of Spain are particularly famous for tempering of steel. POPE.] I believe the old reading changed to *ice-brook* is right. Steel is hardened by being put red hot into very cold water.

V.ii.286 (513,3)

I look down towards his feet; but that's a fable.

If that thou be'st a devil, I cannot kill thee]

To see if, according to the common opinion, his feet be cloven.

V.ii.292 (513,4) Fall'n in the practice of a cursed slave] In the *snare* , by the *stratagem* .

V.ii.317 (514,5) in the interim] The first copy has, *in the* nick. It was, I suppose, thought upon revisal, that *nick* was too familiar.

V.ii.342 (515,6) Speak of me as I am] The early copies read, *Speak of them as they are* . The present reading has more force. (rev. 1778, X, 622, 6)

(520,2) General Observation. The beauties of this play impress themselves so strongly upon the attention of the reader, that they can draw no aid from critical illustration. The fiery openness of Othello, magnanimous, artless, and credulous, boundless in his confidence, ardent in his affection, inflexible in his resolution, and obdurate in his revenge; the cool malignity of Iago, silent in his resentment, subtle in his designs, and studious at once of his interest and his vengeance; the soft simplicity of Desdemona, confident of merit, and conscious of innocence, her artless perseverance in her suit, and her slowness to suspect that she can be suspected, are such proofs of Shakespeare's skill in human nature, as, I suppose, it is vain to seek in any modern writer. The gradual progress which Iago makes in the Moor's conviction, and the circumstances which he employs to inflame him, are so artfully natural, that, though it will perhaps not be said of him as he says of himself, that he is *a man not easily jealous* , yet we cannot but pity him, when at last we find him *perplexed in the extreme* .

There is always danger, lest wickedness, conjoined with abilities, should steal upon esteem, though it misses of approbation; but the character of Iago is so conducted, that he is from the first scene to the last hated and despised.

Even the inferior characters of this play would be very conspicuous in any other piece, not only for their justness, but their strength. Cassio is brave, benevolent, and honest, ruined only by his want of stubbornness to resist an insidious invitation. Roderigo's suspicious credulity, and impatient submission to the cheats which he sees practised upon him, and which by persuasion he suffers to be repeated, exhibit a strong picture of a weak mind betrayed by unlawful desires to a false friend; and the virtue of Aemilia is such as we often find, worn loosely, but not cast off, easy to commit small crimes, but quickened and alarmed at atrocious villainies.

The scenes from the beginning to the end are busy, varied by happy interchanges, and regularly promoting the progression of the story; and the narrative in the end, though it tells but what is known already, yet is necessary to produce the death of Othello.

Had the scene opened in Cyprus, and the preceding incidents been occasionally related, there had been little wanting to a drama of the most exact and scrupulous regularity.

(LI 2) Appendix. Some apology perhaps is necessary for the inconvenience of an Appendix, which, however, we can justify by the strongest of all pleas, the plea of necessity. The Notes which it contains, whether communicated by correspondents, or collected from published volumes, were not within our reach when the plays were printed, to which they relate. Of that which chance has supplied, we could have no previous knowledge; and he that waited till the river should run dry, did not act with less reason than the Editor would do, who should suspend his publication for possibilities of intelligence, or promises of improvement. Had we foreseen the *Oxford* edition, the assistance we expected from it might have persuaded us to pause; but our volumes were completely finished before its publication. [There are no notes by Johnson in this Appendix; several are by Steevens.]

EIGHTEENTH CENTURY ESSAYS ON SHAKESPEARE Edited by D. Nichol Smith

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Preface.

The purpose of this book is to give an account of Shakespeare's reputation during the eighteenth century, and to suggest that there are grounds for reconsidering the common opinion that the century did not give him his due. The nine Essays or Prefaces here reprinted may claim to represent the chief phases of Shakespearian study from the days of Dryden to those of Coleridge. It is one of the evils following in the train of the romantic revival that the judgments of the older school have been discredited or forgotten. The present volume shows that the eighteenth century knew many things which the nineteenth has rediscovered for itself.

It is at least eighty years since most of these essays were reprinted. Rowe's *Account of Shakespeare* is given in its original and complete form for the first time, it is believed, since 1714; what was printed in the early Variorum editions, and previously in almost every edition since 1725, was Pope's version of Rowe's *Account* . Dennis's Essay has not appeared since the author republished it in 1721. In all cases the texts have been collated with the originals; and the more important changes in the editions published in the lifetime of the author are indicated in the Introduction or Notes.

The Introduction has been planned to show the main lines in the development of Shakespeare's reputation, and to prove that the new criticism, which is said to begin with Coleridge, takes its rise as early as the third quarter of the eighteenth century. On the question of Theobald's qualifications as an editor, it would appear that we must subscribe to the deliberate verdict of Johnson. We require strong evidence before we may disregard contemporary opinion, and in

Theobald's case there is abundant evidence to confirm Johnson's view. Johnson's own edition, on the other hand, has not received justice during the last century.

It is a pleasure to the Editor to record his obligations to Professor Raleigh, Mr. Gregory Smith, and Mr. J. H. Lobban.

Edinburgh , *October* , 1903.

Introduction. Shakespearian Criticism in the Eighteenth Century.

The early nineteenth century was too readily convinced by Coleridge and Hazlitt that they were the first to recognise and to explain the greatness of Shakespeare. If amends have recently been made to the literary ideals of Pope and Johnson, the reaction has not yet extended to Shakespearian criticism. Are we not still inclined to hold the verdicts of Hume and Chesterfield as representative of eighteenth-century opinion, and to find proof of a lack of appreciation in the editorial travesties of the playhouse? To this century, as much as to the nineteenth, Shakespeare was the glory of English letters. So Pope and Johnson had stated in unequivocal language, which should not have been forgotten. “He is not so much an imitator as an instrument of Nature,” said Pope, “and 'tis not so just to say that he speaks from her as that she speaks through him”; and Johnson declared that “the stream of time, which is continually washing the dissoluble fabrics of other poets, passes without injury by the adamant of Shakespeare.” But Pope and Johnson had ventured to point out, in the honesty of their criticism, that Shakespeare was not free from faults; and it was this which the nineteenth century chose to remark. Johnson's Preface in particular was remembered only to be despised. It is not rash to say that at the present time the majority of those who chance to speak of it pronounce it a discreditable performance.

This false attitude to the eighteenth century had its nemesis in the belief that we were awakened by foreigners to the greatness of Shakespeare. Even one so eminently sane as Hazlitt lent support to this opinion. “We will confess,” says the Preface to the *Characters of Shakespeare's Plays* , “that some little jealousy of the character of the national understanding was not without its share in producing the following undertaking, for we were piqued that it should be reserved for a foreign critic to give reasons for the faith which we English have in Shakespeare"; and the whole Preface resolves itself, however reluctantly, into praise of Schlegel and censure of Johnson. When a thorough Englishman writes thus, it is not surprising that Germany should have claimed to be the first to give Shakespeare his true place. The heresy has been exposed; but even the slightest investigation of eighteenth-century opinion, or the mere recollection of what Dryden had said, should have prevented its rise. Though Hazlitt took upon himself the defence of the national intelligence, he incorporated in his Preface a long passage from Schlegel, because, in his opinion, no English critic had shown like enthusiasm or philosophical acuteness. We cannot regret the delusion if we owe to it the *Characters of Shakespeare's Plays* , but his patriotic task would have been easier, and might even have appeared unnecessary, had he known that many of Schlegel's acute and enthusiastic observations had been anticipated at home.

Even those who are willing to give the eighteenth century its due have not recognised how it appreciated Shakespeare. At no time in this century was he not popular. The author of *Esmond* tells us that Shakespeare was quite out of fashion until Steele brought him back into the mode. Theatrical records would alone be sufficient to show that the ascription of this honour to Steele is an injustice to his contemporaries. In the year that the *Tatler* was begun, Rowe brought out his edition of the "best of our poets"; and a reissue was called for five years later. It is said by Johnson that Pope's edition drew the public attention to Shakespeare's works, which, though often mentioned, had been little read. Henceforward there was certainly an increase in the number of critical investigations, but if Shakespeare had been little read, how are we to explain the coffee-house discussions of which we seem to catch echoes in the periodical literature? The allusions in the *Spectator* , or the essays in the *Censor* , must have been addressed to a public which knew him. Dennis, who "read him over and over and still remained unsatiated," tells how he was accused, by blind admirers of the poet, of lack of veneration, because he had ventured to criticise, and how he had appealed from a private discussion to the judgment of the public. "Above all I am pleased," says the *Guardian* , "in observing that the Tragedies of Shakespeare, which in my youthful days have so frequently filled my eyes with tears, hold their rank still, and are the great support of our theatre." Theobald could say that "this author is grown so universal a book that there are very few studies or collections of books, though small, amongst which it does not hold a place”; and he could add that “there is scarce a poet that our English tongue boasts of who is more the subject of the Ladies' reading.” It would be difficult to explain away these statements. The critical interest in Shakespeare occasioned by Pope's edition may have increased the knowledge of him, but he had been regularly cited, long before Pope's day, as England's representative genius. To argue that he had ever been out of favour we must rely on later statements, and they are presumably less trustworthy than those which are contemporary. Lyttelton remarked that a veneration for Shakespeare seems to be a part of the national religion, and the only part in which even men of sense are fanatics; and Gibbon spoke of the “idolatry for the gigantic genius of Shakespeare, which is inculcated from our infancy as the first duty of an Englishman.” The present volume will show how the eighteenth century could almost lose itself in panegyric of Shakespeare. The evidence is so overwhelming that it is hard to understand how the century's respect for Shakespeare was ever doubted. When Tom Jones took Partridge to the gallery of Drury Lane, the play was *Hamlet* . The fashionable topics on which Mr. Thornhill's friends from town would talk, to the embarrassment of the Primroses and the Flamboroughs, were “pictures, taste, Shakespeare, and the musical glasses.” The greatest poet of the century played a leading part in erecting the statue in the Poets' Corner. And it was an eighteenth-century actor who instituted the Stratford celebrations.

During the entire century Shakespeare dominated the stage. He was more to the actor then, and more familiar to the theatre-goer, than he is now. It is true that from Betterton's days to Garrick's, and later, his plays were commonly acted from mangled versions. But these versions were of two distinct types. The one respected the rules of the classical drama, the other indulged the license of pantomime. The one was the labour of the pedant theorist, the other was rather the improvisation of the theatre manager. And if the former were truly representative of the taste of the century, as has sometimes been implied, it has to be explained how they were not so popular as the latter. “Our taste has gone back a whole century,” says the strolling player in the *Vicar of Wakefield* , “Fletcher, Ben Jonson, and all the plays of Shakespeare are the only things that go down.” The whole passage is a satire on Garrick and a gibe at Drury Lane: “The public go only to be amused, and find themselves happy when they can enjoy a pantomime under the sanction of Jonson's or Shakespeare's name.” But, whatever was done with Shakespeare's plays, they were the very life of the theatre. When we remember also the number of editions which were published, and the controversies to which they gave rise, as well as the fact that the two literary dictators were among his editors, we are prompted to ask, What century has felt the influence of Shakespeare more than the eighteenth?

The century's interest in Shakespeare shows itself in four main phases. The first deals with his neglect of the so-called rules of the drama; the second determines what was the extent of his learning; the third considers the treatment of his text; and the fourth, more purely aesthetic, shows his value as a delineator of character. The following remarks take these questions in order; and a concluding section gives an account of the individual essays here reprinted. Though the phases are closely connected and overlap to some extent, the order in which they are here treated accords in the main with their chronological sequence.

I.

Dryden is the father of Shakespearian criticism. Though he disguised his veneration at times, he expressed his true faith when he wrote, deliberately, the fervent estimate in the *Essay of Dramatic Poesy* . Johnson saw that Pope had expanded it, and his own experience made him say that the editors and admirers of Shakespeare, in all their emulation of reverence, had not done much more than diffuse and paraphrase this “epitome of excellence.” But concurrently on to Johnson's time we can trace the influence of Thomas Rymer, who, in his *Short View of Tragedy* , had championed the classical drama, and had gone as far in abuse as his greater contemporary had gone in praise. The authority which each exerted is well illustrated by Rowe's *Account of Shakespeare* . Rowe is of the party of Dryden, but he cannot refrain from replying to Rymer, though he has resolved to enter into no critical controversy. He says he will not inquire into the justness of Rymer's remarks, and yet he replies to him in two passages. That these were silently omitted by Pope when he included the *Account of Shakespeare* in his own edition in 1725 does not mean that Rymer was already being forgotten. We know from other sources that Pope rated his abilities very highly. But the condensed form in which the *Account* was regularly reprinted does not convey so plainly as the original the influence of the rival schools at the beginning of the eighteenth century. In addition to the passages on Rymer, Pope omitted several valuable allusions to Dryden. The influence of Dryden, however, is plain enough. He seems to have been ever present to Rowe, suggesting ideas to be accepted or refuted. Rowe must have been indebted to the conversation of

Dryden as well as to the researches of Betterton.

Rowe's own dramatic work is an interesting comment on the critical portions of his *Account of Shakespeare* . When he professes to have taken Shakespeare as his model, which shows that his editorial work had taught him the trick of an occasional line contrary to the normal rules of blank verse. Notwithstanding a brave prologue, he was not able to shake himself free from the rules, which tightened their grip on English tragedy till they choked it. His regard for Shakespeare did not give him courage for the addition of a comic element or an underplot. He must obey the “hampering critics,” though his avowed model had ignored them. Accordingly, in his more deliberate prose criticism we find, amid his veneration of Shakespeare, his regard for the rules of the classical drama. The faults of Shakespeare, we read, were not so much his own as those of his time, for “tragi-comedy was the common mistake of that age,” and there was as yet no definite knowledge of how a play should be constructed.

The burden of Rowe's criticism is that “strength and nature made amends for art.” The line might serve as the text of many of the early appreciations of Shakespeare. Though the critics all resented Rymer's treatment of the poet, some of them stood by his doctrines. They might appease this resentment by protesting against his manners or refuting his plea for a dramatic chorus; but on the whole they recognised the claims of the classical models. The more the dramatic fervour failed, the more the professed critics counselled observance of the rules. In 1702 Farquhar had pleaded for the freedom of the English stage in his *Discourse upon Comedy* , but his arguments were unavailing. The duller men found it easier to support the rigid doctrines, which had been fully expounded by the French critics. The seventh or supplementary volume of Rowe's edition of Shakespeare was introduced by Charles Gildon's *Essay on the Art, Rise, and Progress of the Stage in Greece, Rome, and England* , which, as the title shows, was a laboured exposition of the classical doctrines. Gildon had begun as an enemy of Rymer. In 1694 he had published *Some Reflections on Mr. Rymer's Short View of Tragedy and an Attempt at a Vindication of Shakespeare* . Therein he had spoken of “noble irregularity,” and censured the “graver pedants” of the age. By 1710 he is a grave pedant himself. In 1694 he had said that Rymer had scarce produced one criticism that was not borrowed from the French writers; in 1710 the remark is now applicable to its author. Gildon's further descent as a critic is evident eight years later in his *Complete Art of Poetry* . He is now a slave to the French doctrine of the rules. He confesses himself the less ready to pardon the “monstrous absurdities” of Shakespeare, as one or two plays, such as the *Tempest* , are “very near a regularity.” Yet he acknowledges that Shakespeare abounds in beauties, and he makes some reparation by including a long list of his finer passages. Gildon was a man whose ideas took their colour from his surroundings. In the days of his acquaintanceship with Dryden he appreciated Shakespeare more heartily than when he was left to the friendship of Dennis or the favours of the Duke of Buckinghamshire. His *Art of Poetry* is a dishonest compilation, which owes what value it has to the sprinkling of contemporary allusions. It even incorporates, without any acknowledgment, long passages from Sidney's *Apologie* . We should be tempted to believe that Gildon merely put his name to a hack-work collection, were it not that there is a gradual deterioration in his criticism.

John Dennis also replied to Rymer's *Short View* , and was classed afterwards as one of Rymer's disciples. In his *Impartial Critick* (1693) he endeavoured to show that the methods of the ancient Greek tragedy were not all suitable to the modern English theatre. To introduce a chorus, as Rymer had recommended, or to expel love from the stage, would, he argued, only ruin the English drama. But his belief in the classical rules made him turn the *Merry Wives* into the *Comical Gallant* . As he found in the original three actions, each independent of the other, he had set himself to make the whole “depend on one common centre.” In the Dedication to the letters *On the Genius and Writings of Shakespeare* we read that Aristotle, “who may be call'd the Legislator of Parnassus, wrote the laws of tragedy so exactly and so truly in reason and nature that succeeding criticks have writ justly and reasonably upon that art no farther than they have adhered to their great master's notions.” But at the very beginning of the letters themselves he says that “Shakespeare was one of the greatest geniuses that the world e'er saw.” Notwithstanding his pronounced classical taste, his sense of the greatness of Shakespeare is as strong as Rowe's, and much stronger than Gildon's. His writings prove him a man of competent scholarship, who had thought out his literary doctrines for himself, and could admire beauty in other than classical garb. The result is that at many points his opinions are at marked variance with those of Rymer, for whom, however, he had much respect. Rymer, for instance, had said that Shakespeare's genius lay in comedy, but the main contention of Dennis's letters is that he had an unequalled gift for tragedy. As a critic Dennis is greatly superior to Rymer and his disciples. The ancients guided his taste without blinding him to modern excellence.

Even Lewis Theobald, whom some would consider Shakespeare's greatest friend in this century, believed in the rules. He complied with the taste of the town when he wrote pantomimes, but he was a sterner man when he posed as a critic. He would then speak of the “general absurdities of Shakespeare,” and the “errors” in the structure of his plays. He passed this criticism both in his edition of Shakespeare and in the early articles in the *Censor* on *King Lear* , which are also of considerable historical interest as being the first essays devoted exclusively to an examination of a single Shakespearian [pg xviii] play. His complacent belief in the rules prompted him to correct *Richard II.* “The many scattered beauties which I have long admired,” he says naïvely in the Preface, “induced me to think they would have stronger charms if they were interwoven in a regular Fable.” No less confident is a note on *Love's Labours Lost* : “Besides the exact regularity of the rules of art, which the author has happened to preserve in some few of his pieces, this is demonstration, I think, that though he has more frequently transgressed the unity of Time by cramming years into the compass of a play, yet he knew the absurdity of so doing, and was not unacquainted with the rule to the contrary.” Theobald was a critic of the same type as Gildon. Each had profound respect for what he took to be the accredited doctrines. If on certain points Theobald's ideas were liable to change, the explanation is that he was amenable to the opinions of others. We do not find in Theobald's criticism the courage of originality.

There is little about the rules in Pope's Preface. That Pope respected them cannot be doubted, else he would not have spoken so well of Rymer, and in the critical notes added to his Homer we should not hear so much of Le Bossu's treatise on the Epic. But Pope was a discreet man, who knew when to be silent. He regarded it as a misfortune that Shakespeare was not so circumstanced as to be able to write on the model of the ancients, but, unlike the pedant theorists, he refused to judge Shakespeare by the rules of a foreign drama. Much the same is to be said of Addison. His belief in the rules appears in his *Cato* . His over-rated criticism of *Paradise Lost* is little more than a laboured application of the system of Le Bossu. But in the *Spectator* he too urges that Shakespeare is not to be judged according to the rules. “Our critics do not seem sensible,” he writes, “that there is more beauty in the works of a great genius who is ignorant of the rules of art than in those of a little genius who knows and observes them. Our inimitable Shakespeare is a stumbling-block to the whole tribe of these rigid critics. Who would not rather read one of his plays where there is not a single rule of the stage observed, than any production of a modern critic where there is not one of them violated?” The rigid critics continued to find fault with the structure of Shakespeare's plays. In the articles in the *Adventurer* on the *Tempest* and *King Lear* , Joseph Warton repeats the standard objection to tragi-comedy and underplots. In the *Biographia Britannica* we still find it stated that Shakespeare set himself to please the populace, and that the people "had no notion of the rules of writing, or the model of the Ancients." But one whose tastes were classical, both by nature and by training, had been thinking out the matter for himself. It was only after long reflection, and with much hesitation, that Johnson had disavowed what had almost come to be considered the very substance of the classical faith. In his *Irene* he had bowed to the rules; he had, however, begun to suspect them by the time he wrote the *Rambler* , and in the Preface to his edition of Shakespeare suspicion has become conviction. His sturdy common sense and independence of judgment led him to anticipate much of what has been supposed to be the discovery of the romantic school. His Preface has received scant justice. There is no more convincing criticism of the neo-classical doctrines.

Henceforward we hear less about the rules. Johnson had performed a great service for that class of critics whose deference to learned opinion kept them from saying fully what they felt. The lesser men had not been at their ease when they referred to Shakespeare. We see their difficulty in the Latin lectures of Joseph Trapp, the first Professor of Poetry at Oxford, as well as in the Grub Street *Essay upon English Tragedy* (1747) by William Guthrie. They admire his genius, but they persist in regretting that his plays are not properly constructed. Little importance attaches to Mrs. Montagu's *Essay on the Writings and Genius of Shakespeare* (1769). It was only a well-meaning but shallow reply to Voltaire, and a reply was unnecessary. Johnson had already vindicated the national pride in Shakespeare. That his views soon became the commonplaces of those critics who strike the average of current opinion, is shown by such a work as William Cooke's *Elements of Dramatic Criticism* (1775). But traces of the school of Rymer are still to be found, and nowhere more strongly than in the anonymous *Cursory Remarks on Tragedy* (1774). In this little volume of essays the dramatic rules are defended against the criticism of Johnson by a lame repetition of the arguments which Johnson had overthrown. Even Pope is said to have let his partiality get the better of his usual justice and candour when he claimed that Shakespeare was not to be judged by what were called the rules of Aristotle. There are laws, this belated critic urges, which bind each individual as a citizen of the world; and once again we read that the rules of the classical drama are in accordance with human reason. This book is the last direct descendant of Rymer's *Short View* . The ancestral trait appears in the question whether Shakespeare was in general even a good tragic writer. But it is a degenerate descendant. If it has learned good manners, it is unoriginal and dull; and it is so negligible that it has apparently not been thought worth while to settle the question of its authorship.

II.

The discussion on Shakespeare's attitude to the dramatic rules was closely connected with the long controversy on the extent of his learning. The question naturally suggested itself how far his dramatic method was due to his ignorance of the classics. Did he know the rules and ignore them, or did he write with no knowledge of the Greek and Roman models? Whichever view the critics adopted, one and all felt they were arguing for the honour of Shakespeare. If some would prove for his greater glory that parallel passages were due to direct borrowing, others held it was more to his credit to have known nothing of the classics and to have equalled or surpassed them by the mere force of unassisted genius.

The controversy proper begins with Rowe's *Account of Shakespeare* . On this subject, as on others, Rowe expresses the tradition of the seventeenth century. His view is the same as Dryden's, and Dryden had accepted Jonson's statement that Shakespeare had “small Latin and less Greek.” Rowe believes that his acquaintance with Latin authors was such as he might have gained at school: he could remember tags of Horace or Mantuan, but was unable to read Plautus in the original. The plea that comparative ignorance of the classics may not have been a disadvantage, as it perhaps prevented the sacrifice of fancy to correctness, prompted a reply by Gildon in his *Essay on the Stage* , where the argument is based partly on the belief that Shakespeare had read Ovid and Plautus and had thereby neither spoiled his fancy nor confined his genius. The question was probably at this time a common topic of discussion. Dennis's abler remarks were suggested, as he tells us, by conversation in which he found himself opposed to the prevalent opinion. He is more pronounced in his views than Rowe had been. His main argument is that as Shakespeare is deficient in the “poetical art” he could not but have been ignorant of the classics, for, had he known them, he could not have failed to profit by them. Dennis is stirred even to treat the question as one affecting the national honour. “He who allows,” he says, “that Shakespeare had learning and a familiar acquaintance with the Ancients, ought to be looked upon as a detractor from [pg xxiii] his extraordinary merit and from the glory of Great Britain.”

The prominence of the controversy forced Pope to refer to it in his Preface, but he had apparently little interest in it. Every statement he makes is carefully guarded: there are translations from Ovid, he says, among the poems which *pass for* Shakespeare's; he will not pretend to say in what language Shakespeare read the Greek authors; Shakespeare *appears* to have been conversant in Plautus. He is glad of the opportunity to reply to Dennis's criticism of *Coriolanus* and *Julius Caesar* , but though he praises the truthful representation of the Roman spirit and manners, he discreetly refuses to say how Shakespeare came to know of them. As he had not thought out the matter for himself, he feared to tread where the lesser men rushed in. But though he records the evidence brought forward by those who believed in Shakespeare's knowledge of the Ancients, he does not fail to convey the impression that he belongs to the other party. And, indeed, in another passage of the Preface he says with definiteness, inconsistent with his other statements, that Shakespeare was “without assistance or advice from the learned, as without the advantage of education or acquaintance among them, without that knowledge of the best models, the Ancients, to inspire him with an emulation of them.”

During the fifty years between Pope's Preface and Johnson's, the controversy continued intermittently without either party gaining ground. In the Preface to the supplementary volume to Pope's edition—which is a reprint of Gildon's supplementary volume to Rowe's—Sewell declared he found evident marks through all Shakespeare's writings of knowledge of the Latin tongue. Theobald, who was bound to go astray when he ventured beyond the collation of texts, was ready to believe that similarity of idea in Shakespeare and the classics was due to direct borrowing. He had, however, the friendly advice of Warburton to make him beware of the secret satisfaction of pointing out a classical original. In its earlier form his very unequal Preface had contained the acute observation that the texture of Shakespeare's phrases indicated better than his vocabulary the extent of his knowledge of Latin. The style was submitted as “the truest criterion to determine this long agitated question,” and the conclusion was implied that Shakespeare could not have been familiar with the classics. But this interesting passage was omitted in the second edition, perhaps because it was inconsistent with a less decided utterance elsewhere in the Preface, but more probably because it had been supplied by Warburton. In his earlier days, before he had met Warburton, he had been emphatic. In the Preface to his version of *Richard II.* he had tried to do Shakespeare “some justice upon the points of his learning and acquaintance with the Ancients.” He had said that *Timon of Athens* and *Troilus and Cressida* left it without dispute or exception that Shakespeare was no inconsiderable master of the Greek story; he dared be positive that the latter play was founded directly upon Homer; he held that Shakespeare must have known Aeschylus, Lucian, and Plutarch in the Greek; and he claimed that he could, “with the greatest ease imaginable,” produce above five hundred passages from the three Roman plays to prove Shakespeare's intimacy with the Latin classics. When he came under the influence of Warburton he lost his assurance. He was then “very cautious of declaring too positively” on either side of the question; but he was loath to give up his belief that Shakespeare knew the classics at first hand. Warburton himself did not figure creditably in the controversy. He might ridicule the discoveries of other critics, but his vanity often allured him to displays of learning as absurd as theirs. No indecision troubled Upton or Zachary Grey. They saw in Shakespeare a man of profound reading, one who might well have worn out his eyes in poring over classic tomes. They clutched at anything to show his deliberate imitation of the Ancients. There could be no better instance of the ingenious folly of this type of criticism than the passage in the *Notes on Shakespeare* , where Grey argues from Gloucester's words in *Richard III.* , “Go you before and I will follow you,” that Shakespeare knew, and was indebted to, Terence's *Andria* . About the same time Peter Whalley, the editor of Ben Jonson, brought out his *Enquiry into the Learning of Shakespeare* (1748), the first formal treatise devoted directly to the subject of controversy. Therein it is claimed that Shakespeare knew Latin well enough to have acquired in it a taste and elegance of judgment, and was more indebted to the Ancients than was commonly imagined. On the whole, however, Whalley's attitude was more reasonable than that of Upton or Grey, for he admitted that his list of parallel passages might not settle the point at issue.

After such a display of misapplied learning it is refreshing to meet with the common sense of one who was a greater scholar than any of these pedants. Johnson has less difficulty in giving his opinion on the extent of Shakespeare's learning than in discovering the reasons of the controversy. The evidence of Shakespeare's contemporary, he says, ought to decide the question unless some testimony of equal force can be opposed, and such testimony he refuses to find in the collections of the Uptons and Greys. It is especially remarkable that Johnson, who is not considered to have been strong in research, should be the first to state that Shakespeare used North's translation of Plutarch. He is the first also to point out that there was an English translation of the play on which the *Comedy of Errors* was founded, and the first to show that it was not necessary to go back to the *Tale of Gamelyn* for the story of *As you like it* . There is no evidence how he came by this knowledge. The casual and allusive manner in which he advances his information would seem to show that it was not of his own getting. He may have been indebted for it to the scholar who two years later put an end to the controversy. The edition of Shakespeare did not appear till October, 1765, and early in that year Johnson had spent his “joyous evening” at Cambridge with Richard Farmer.

The *Essay on the Learning of Shakespeare* is not an independent treatise like Whalley's *Enquiry* , but rather a detailed reply to the arguments of Upton and his fellows. Farmer had once been idle enough, he tells us himself, to collect parallel passages, but he had been saved by his remarkable bibliographical knowledge. He found out that the literature of the age of Elizabeth was a better hunting ground than the classics for Shakespearian commentators. Again and again he shows that passages which had been urged as convincing proof of knowledge of Latin or Greek are either borrowed from contemporary translations or illustrated by contemporary usage. In so far as the *Essay* aims at showing the futility of the arguments advanced to prove Shakespeare's learning, it is convincing. The only criticism that can reasonably be passed on it is that Farmer is apt to think he has proved his own case when he has merely destroyed the evidence of his opponents. His conclusion regarding Shakespeare's knowledge of French and Italian may be too extreme to be generally accepted now, and indeed it may not be logically deducible from his examination of the arguments of other critics; but on the whole the book is a remarkably able study. Though Farmer speaks expressly of acquitting “our great poet of all piratical depredations on the Ancients,” his purpose has often been misunderstood, or at least misrepresented. He aimed at giving Shakespeare the greater commendation, but certain critics of the earlier half of the nineteenth century would have it that he had tried to prove, for his own glory, that Shakespeare was a very ignorant fellow. William Maginn in particular proclaimed the *Essay* a “piece of pedantic impertinence not paralleled in literature.” The early [pg xxvii] Variorum editions had acknowledged its value by reprinting it in its entirety, besides quoting from it liberally in the notes to the separate plays, and Maginn determined to do his best to rid them in future of this “superfluous swelling.” So he indulged in a critical Donnybrook; but after hitting out and about at the *Essay* for three months he left it much as he found it. He could not get to close quarters with Farmer's scholarship. His bluster compares ill with Farmer's gentler manner, and in some passages the quiet humour has proved too subtle for his animosity. There was more impartiality in the judgment of Johnson: “Dr. Farmer, you have done that which was never done before; that is, you have completely finished a controversy beyond all further doubt.”

III.

After the publication of Farmer's *Essay* there was a change in the character of the editions of Shakespeare. Farmer is the forerunner of Steevens and Malone. He had a just idea of the importance of his work when he spoke of himself as the pioneer of the commentators. It did not matter whether his main contention were accepted; he had at least shown the wealth of illustration which was awaiting the scholar who cared to search in the literature of Shakespeare's age, and Steevens and Malone were not slow to follow. They had the advantage of being early in the field; but it is doubtful if any later editor has contributed as much as either of them did to the elucidation [pg xxviii] of Shakespeare's text. They have been oftener borrowed from than has been admitted, and many a learned note of later date may be found in germ in their editions. But with the advance of detailed scholarship the Prefaces deteriorate in literary merit. They concern themselves more and more with textual and bibliographical points, and hence, if they are of greater interest to the student, they are of less value as indications of the century's regard for Shakespeare. The change is already noticeable in Capell's Preface, on the literary shortcomings of which Johnson expressed himself so forcibly. Johnson is the last editor whose Preface is a piece of general criticism. It is an essay which can stand by itself.

By the time of Johnson and Capell the editor of Shakespeare has come to a clear idea of his “true duty.” Rowe had no suspicion of the textual problems awaiting his successors. A dramatist himself, he wished merely to publish Shakespeare's plays as he would publish his own. Accordingly he modernised the spelling, divided the scenes, and added lists of dramatis personae; and the folio gave place to six octavo volumes. He was content to found his text on the fourth Folio, the last and worst; he had no idea of the superior claims of the first, though he professed to have compared the several editions. He corrected many errors and occasionally hit upon a happy emendation; but on the whole his interest in Shakespeare was that of the dramatist. Pope's interest was that of the poet. There is some truth in the criticism that he gave Shakespeare not as he was, but as he ought to be, though Pope might well have retorted that in his opinion the two conditions were identical. Whatever did not conform to his opinion of Shakespeare's style he treated as an interpolation. His collation of the texts, by convincing him of their corruption, only prompted him to a more liberal exercise of his own judgment. In the supplementary volume of Pope's edition, it had been suggested by Sewell that our great writers should be treated in the same way as the classics were, and the idea was put into practice by Theobald, who could say that his method of editing was “the first assay of the kind on any modern author whatsoever.” By his careful collation of the Quartos and Folios, he pointed the way to the modern editor. But he was followed by Hanmer, who, as his chief interest was to rival Pope, was content with Pope's methods. It is easy to underestimate the value of Hanmer's edition; his happy conjectures have been prejudiced by his neglect of the older copies and his unfortunate attempt to regularise the metre; but what alone concerns us here is that he reverts to the methods which Theobald had discarded. Warburton, confident in his intellectual gifts, was satisfied with Theobald's examination of the early copies, and trusted to his own insight “to settle the genuine text.” The critical ingenuity of editors and commentators, before the authority of the Folios was established, betrayed them into inevitable error. The amusing variety of conjectural readings was met by the exquisite satire of Fielding, as well as by the heavy censure of Grub Street. “It is to be wished,” says a catchpenny publication, “that the original text of Shakespeare were left unaltered for every English reader to understand. The numerous fry of commentators will at last explain his original meaning away.” This criticism was out of date by the time of Johnson and Capell. As it has long been the fashion to decry Johnson's edition, it is well to recall two statements in his Preface, which show that he had already discovered what later editors have found out for themselves:

“I collated all the folios at the beginning, but afterwards used only the first.”

“It has been my settled principle that the reading of the ancient books is probably true.... As I practised conjecture more, I learned to trust it less.”

Johnson's collation may not have been thorough; but no modern editor can say that he proceeded on a wrong method.

Johnson has included in his Preface an account of the work of earlier editors, and it is the first attempt of the kind which is impartial. He shows that Rowe has been blamed for not performing what he did not undertake; he is severe on Pope for the allusion to the “dull duty of an editor,” as well as for the performance of it, though he also finds much to praise; he does more justice to Sir Thomas

Hammer than has commonly been done since; and he is not silent on the weaknesses of Warburton. The only thing in this unprejudiced account which is liable to criticism is his treatment of Theobald. But the censure is as just as the praise which it is now the fashion to heap on him. Though Theobald was the first to pay due respect to the original editions, we cannot, in estimating his capacity, ignore the evidence of his correspondence with Warburton. In the more detailed account of his work given below, it is shown that there was a large measure of justice in the common verdict of the eighteenth century, but it was only prejudiced critics like Pope or Warburton who would say that his Shakespearian labours were futile. Johnson is careful to state that "what little he did was commonly right."

It would appear that Macaulay's estimate of Johnson's own edition has been generally accepted, even by those who in other matters remark on the historian's habit of exaggeration. "The Preface," we read, "though it contains some good passages, is not in his best manner. The most valuable notes are those in which he had an opportunity of showing how attentively he had, during many years, observed human life and human nature. The best specimen is the note on the character of Polonius. Nothing so good is to be found even in Wilhelm Meister's admirable examination of *Hamlet* . But here praise must end. It would be difficult to name a more slovenly, a more worthless edition of any great classic. The reader may turn over play after play without finding one happy conjectural emendation, or one ingenious and satisfactory explanation of a passage which had baffled preceding commentators." And we still find it repeated that his edition was a failure. Johnson distrusted conjecture; but that there is not one happy conjectural emendation is only less glaringly untrue than the other assertion that there is not one new ingenious and satisfactory explanation. Even though we make allowance for Macaulay's mannerism, it is difficult to believe that he had honestly consulted the edition. Those who have worked with it know the force of Johnson's claim that not a single passage in the whole work had appeared to him corrupt which he had not attempted to restore, or obscure which he had not endeavoured to illustrate. We may neglect the earlier eighteenth-century editions of Shakespeare, but if we neglect Johnson's we run a serious risk. We may now abandon his text; we must rely on later scholarship for the explanation of many allusions; but, wherever a difficulty can be solved by common sense, we shall never find his notes antiquated. Other editions are distinguished by accuracy, ingenuity, or learning; the supreme distinction of his is sagacity. He cleared a way through a mass of misleading conjectures. In disputed passages he has an almost unerring instinct for the explanation which alone can be right; and when the reading is corrupt beyond emendation, he gives the most helpful statement of the probable meaning. Not only was Johnson's edition the best which had yet appeared; it is still one of the few editions which are indispensable.

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IV.

The third quarter of the eighteenth century, and not the first quarter of the nineteenth, is the true period of transition in Shakespearian criticism. The dramatic rules had been finally deposed. The corrected plays were falling into disfavour, and though Shakespeare's dramas were not yet acted as they were written, more respect was being paid to the originals. The sixty years' controversy on the extent of his learning had ended by proving that the best commentary on him is the literature of his own age. At the same time there is a far-reaching change in the literary appreciations of Shakespeare, which announces the school of Coleridge and Hazlitt: his *characters* now become the main topics of criticism.

In the five essays on the *Tempest* and *King Lear* contributed by Joseph Warton to the *Adventurer* in 1753-54, we can recognise the coming change in critical methods. He began them by giving in a sentence a summary of the common verdicts: “As Shakespeare is sometimes blamable for the conduct of his fables, which have no unity; and sometimes for his diction, which is obscure and turgid; so his characteristical excellences may possibly be reduced to these three general heads—his lively creative imagination, his strokes of nature and passion, and his preservation of the consistency of his characters.” Warton himself believed in the dramatic conventions. He objected to the Edmund story in *King Lear* on the ground that it destroyed the unity of the fable. But he had the wisdom to recognise that irregularities in structure may be excused by the representation of the persons of the drama. Accordingly, in his examination of the *Tempest* and *King Lear* , he pays most attention to the characters, and relegates to a short closing paragraph his criticism of the development of the action. Though his method has nominally much in [pg xxxiii] common with that of Maurice Morgann and the romantic critics, in practice it is very different. He treats the characters from without: he lacks the intuitive sympathy which is the secret of later criticism. To him the play is a representation of life, not a transcript from life. The characters, who are more real to us than actual persons of history, and more intimate than many an acquaintance, appear to him to be creatures of the imagination who live in a different world from his own. Warton describes the picture: he criticises the portraits of the characters rather than the characters themselves.

The gradual change in the critical attitude is illustrated also by Lord Kames, whom Heath had reason to describe, before the appearance of Johnson's Preface, as “the truest judge and most intelligent admirer of Shakespeare.” The scheme of his *Elements of Criticism* (1762) allowed him to deal with Shakespeare only incidentally, as in the digression where he distinguishes between the presentation and the description of passion, but he gives more decisive expression to Warton's view that observance of the rules is of subordinate importance to the truthful exhibition of character. The mechanical part, he observes, in which alone Shakespeare is defective, is less the work of genius than of experience, and it is knowledge of human nature which gives him his supremacy. The same views are repeated in the periodical essays. The *Mirror* regards it as “preposterous” to endeavour to regularise his plays, and finds the source of his superiority in his almost supernatural powers of invention, his absolute command over the passions, and his wonderful knowledge of nature; and the *Lounger* says that he presents the abstract of life in all its modes and in every time. The rules are forgotten,—we cease to hear even that they are useless. But the *Elements of Criticism* gave Kames no opportunity to show that his attitude to the characters themselves was other than Warton's.

No critic had questioned Shakespeare's truth to nature. The flower of Pope's Preface is the section on his knowledge of the world and his power over the passions. Lyttleton showed his intimacy with Pope's opinion when in his *Dialogues of the Dead* he made him say: “No author had ever so copious, so bold, so *creative* an imagination, with so perfect a knowledge of the passions, the humours and sentiments of mankind. He painted all characters, from kings down to peasants, with equal truth and equal force. If human nature were destroyed, and no monument were left of it except his works, other beings might know what man was from those writings.” The same eulogy is repeated in other words by Johnson. And in Gray's *Progress of Poesy* Shakespeare is “Nature's

Darling.” It was his diction which gave most scope to the censure of the better critics. An age whose literary watchwords were simplicity and precision was bound to remark on his obscurities and plays on words, and even, as Dryden had done, on his bombast. What Shaftesbury or Atterbury had said at the beginning of the century is repeated, as we should expect, by the rhetoricians, such as Blair. But it was shown by Kames that the merit of Shakespeare's language lay in the absence of those abstract and general terms which were the blemish of the century's own diction. “Shakespeare's style in that respect,” says Kames, “is excellent: every article in his descriptions is particular, as in nature.” And herein Kames gave independent expression to the views of the poet who is said to have lived in the wrong century. “In truth,” said Gray, “Shakespeare's language is one of his principal beauties; and he has no less advantage over your Addisons and Rowes in this than in those other great excellences you mention. Every word in him is a picture.”

The first book devoted directly to the examination of Shakespeare's characters was by William Richardson, Professor of Humanity in the University of Glasgow. His *Philosophical Analysis and Illustration of some of Shakespeare's remarkable Characters* , which dealt with Macbeth, Hamlet, Jaques, and Imogen, appeared in 1774; ten years later he added a second series on Richard III., King Lear, and Timon of Athens; and in 1789 he concluded his character studies with his essay on Falstaff. As the titles show, Richardson's work has a moral purpose. His intention, as he tells us, was to make poetry subservient to philosophy, and to employ it in tracing the principles of human conduct. Accordingly, he has prejudiced his claims as a literary critic. He is not interested in Shakespeare's art for its own sake; but that he should use Shakespeare's characters as the subjects of moral disquisitions is eloquent testimony to their truth to nature. His classical bias, excusable in a Professor of Latin, is best seen in his essay “On the Faults of Shakespeare,” of which the title was alone sufficient to win him the contempt of later critics. His essays are the dull effusions of a clever man. Though they are not inspiriting, they are not without interest. He recognised that the source of Shakespeare's greatness is that he became for the time the person whom he represented.

Before the appearance of Richardson's *Philosophical Analysis* , Thomas Whately had written his *Remarks on Some of the Characters of Shakespeare* ; but it was not published till 1785. The author, who died in 1772, had abandoned it in order to complete, in 1770, his *Observations on Modern Gardening* . The book contains only a short introduction and a comparison of Macbeth and Richard III. The fragment is sufficient, however, to indicate more clearly than the work of Richardson the coming change. The author has himself remarked on the novelty of his method. The passage must be quoted, as it is the first definite statement that the examination of Shakespeare's characters should be the main object of Shakespearian criticism:

“The writers upon dramatic composition have, for the most part, confined their observations to the fable; and the maxims received amongst them, for the conduct of it, are therefore emphatically called, *The Rules of the Drama* . It has been found easy to give and to apply them; they are obvious, they are certain, they are general: and poets without genius have, by observing them, pretended to fame; while critics without discernment have assumed importance from knowing them. But the regularity thereby established, though highly proper, is by no means the first requisite in a dramatic composition. Even waiving all consideration of those finer feelings which a poet's imagination or sensibility imparts, there is, within the colder provinces of judgment and of knowledge, a subject for criticism more worthy of attention than the common topics of discussion: I mean the distinction and preservation of *character* .”

The earlier critics who remarked on Shakespeare's depiction of character had not suspected that the examination of it was to oust the older methods.

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A greater writer, who has met with unaccountable neglect, was to express the same views independently. Maurice Morgann had apparently written his *Essay on the Dramatic Character of Sir John Falstaff* about 1774, in an interval of political employment, but he was not prevailed upon to publish it till 1777. The better we know it, the more we shall regret that it is the only critical work which he allowed to survive. He too refers to his book as a “novelty.” He believes the task of considering Shakespeare in detail to have been “hitherto unattempted.” But his main object, unlike Whately's or Richardson's, is a “critique on the genius, the arts, and the conduct of Shakespeare.” He concentrates his attention on a single character, only to advance to more general criticism. “Falstaff is the word only, Shakespeare is the theme.”

Morgann's book did not meet with the attention which it deserved, nor to this day has its importance been fully recognised. Despite his warnings, his contemporaries regarded it simply as a defence of Falstaff's courage. One spoke of him as a paradoxical critic, and others doubted if he meant what he said. All were unaccountably indifferent to his main purpose. The book was unknown even to Hazlitt, who in the preface to his *Characters of Shakespeare's Plays* alludes only to Whately and Richardson as his English predecessors. Yet it is the true forerunner of the romantic criticism of Shakespeare. Morgann's attitude to the characters is the same as Coleridge's and Hazlitt's; his criticism, neglecting all formal matters, resolves itself into a study of human nature. It was he who first said that Shakespeare's creations should be treated as historic rather [pg xxxviii] than as dramatic beings. And the keynote of his criticism is that “the impression is the fact.” He states what he *feels* , and he explains the reason in language which is barely on this side idolatry.

The Essays.

Nicholas Rowe.

Nicholas Rowe's *Account of the Life, etc., of Mr. William Shakespear* forms the introduction to his edition of Shakespeare's plays (1709, 6 vols., 8vo).

Rowe has the double honour of being the first editor of the plays of Shakespeare and the first to attempt an authoritative account of his life. The value of the biography can best be judged by comparing it with the accounts given in such books as Fuller's *Worthies of England* (1662), Phillips's *Theatrum Poetarum* (1675), Winstanley's *English Poets* (1687), Langbaine's *English Dramatick Poets* (1691), Pope Blount's *Remarks upon Poetry* (1694), or Jeremy Collier's *Historical and Poetical Dictionary* (1701). Though some of the traditions—for which he has acknowledged his debt to Betterton—are of doubtful accuracy, it is safe to say that but for Rowe they would have perished.

The *Account of Shakespeare* was the standard biography during the eighteenth century. It was reprinted by Pope, Hanmer, Warburton, Johnson, Steevens, Malone, and Reed; but they did not give it in the form in which Rowe had left it. Pope took the liberty of condensing and rearranging it, and as he did not acknowledge what he had done, his silence led other editors astray. Those who did note the alterations presumed that they had been made by Rowe himself in the second edition in 1714. Steevens, for instance, states that he publishes the life [pg xxxix] from “Rowe's second edition, in which it had been abridged and altered by himself after its appearance in 1709.” But what Steevens reprints is Rowe's *Account of Shakespeare* as edited by Pope. In this volume the *Account* is given in its original form for the first time since 1714.

Pope omitted passages dealing only indirectly with Shakespeare, or expressing opinions with which he disagreed. He also placed the details of Shakespeare's later years (pp.) immediately after the account of his relationship with Ben Jonson (p.), so that the biography might form a complete portion by itself. With the exception of an occasional word, nothing occurs in the emended edition which is not to be found somewhere in the first.

A seventh and supplementary volume containing the Poems was added in 1710. It included Charles Gildon's *Remarks* on the Plays and Poems and his *Essay on the Art, Rise, and Progress of the Stage in Greece, Rome, and England* .

John Dennis.

John Dennis's three letters “on the genius and writings of Shakespear” (February 1710-11) were published together in 1712 under the title *An Essay on the Genius and Writings of Shakespear* . The volume contained also two letters on the 40th and 47th numbers of the *Spectator* . All were reprinted in Dennis's *Original Letters, Familiar, Moral and Critical* , 2 vols., 1721. The Dedication is to George Granville, then Secretary at War. “To whom,” says Dennis, “can an Essay upon the Genius and Writings of Shakespear be so properly address'd, as to him who best understands Shakespear, and who has most improv'd him? I would not give this just encomium to the *Jew of Venice* , if I were not convinc'd, from a long experience of the penetration and force of your judgment, that no exaltation can make you asham'd of your former noble art.”

In 1693 Dennis had published the *Impartial Critick* , a reply to Rymer's *Short View of Tragedy* ; but there is little about Shakespeare in its five dialogues, their main purpose being to show the absurdity of Rymer's plea for adopting the Greek methods in the English drama. Dennis had, however, great respect for

Rymer's ability. In the first letter to the *Spectator* he says that Rymer “will always pass with impartial posterity for a most learned, a most judicious, and a most useful critick”; and in the *Characters and Conduct of Sir John Edgar* he says that “there was a great deal of good and just criticism” in the *Short View* .

In 1702 he brought out a “corrected” version of the *Merry Wives* with the title of the *Comical Gallant or the Amours of Sir John Falstaffe* . The adaptation of *Coriolanus* , which was the occasion of the *Letters* given in this volume, appeared as the *Invader of his country, or the Fatal Resentment* . It was produced at Drury Lane in November, 1719, but ran for only three nights. It was published in 1720. An account of it will be found in Genest's *English Stage* , iii. 2-5. It is the subject of Dennis's letter to Steele of 26th March, 1719 (see Steele's *Theatre* , ed. Nichols, 1791, ii. pp. 542, etc.).

Alexander Pope.

Pope's edition of Shakespeare was published by Tonson in six quarto volumes. The first appeared in 1725, as the title-page shows; all the others are dated “1723.”

In the note to the line in the *Dunciad* in which he laments his “ten years to comment and translate,” Pope gives us to understand that he prepared his edition of Shakespeare after he had completed the translation of the *Iliad* and before he set to work on the *Odyssey* . His own correspondence, however, shows that he was engaged on Shakespeare and the *Odyssey* at the same time. There is some uncertainty as to when his edition was begun. The inference to be drawn from a letter to Pope from Atterbury is that it had been undertaken by August, 1721. We have more definite information as to the date of its completion. In a letter to Broome of 31st October, 1724, Pope writes: “Shakespear is finished. I have just written the Preface, and in less than three weeks it will be public” (Ed. Elwin and Courthope, viii. 88). But it did not appear till March. Pope himself was partly to blame for the delay. In December we find Tonson “impatient” for the return of the Preface (*id.* ix. 547). In the revision of the text Pope was assisted by Fenton and Gay (see Reed's Variorum edition, 1803, ii. p. 149).

A seventh volume containing the poems was added in 1725, but Pope had no share in it. It is a reprint of the supplementary volume of Rowe's edition, “the whole revised and corrected, with a Preface, by Dr. Sewell.” The most prominent share in this volume of “Pope's Shakespeare” thus fell to Charles Gildon, who had attacked Pope in his *Art of Poetry* and elsewhere, and was to appear later in the *Dunciad* . Sewell's preface is dated Nov. 24, 1724.

Pope made few changes in his Preface in the second edition (1728, 8 vols., 12mo). The chief difference is the inclusion of the *Double Falsehood* , which Theobald had produced in 1727 as Shakespeare's, in the list of the spurious plays.

The references in the Preface to the old actors were criticised by John Roberts in 1729 in a pamphlet entitled *An Answer to Mr. Pope's Preface to Shakespear. In a Letter to a Friend. Being a Vindication of the Old Actors who were the Publishers and Performers of that Author's Plays.... By a Stroling Player.*

Lewis Theobald.

Theobald's edition of Shakespeare (7 vols. 8vo) appeared in 1733. The Preface was condensed in the second edition in 1740. It is here given in its later form.

Theobald had long been interested in Shakespeare. In 1715 he had written the *Cave of Poverty* , a poem “in imitation of Shakespeare,” and in 1720 he had brought out an adaptation of *Richard II* . But it was not till 1726—though the Dedication bears the date of March 18, 1725—that he produced his first direct contribution to Shakespearian scholarship,—*Shakespeare restored: or, a Specimen of the Many Errors, as well Committed, as Unamended, by Mr. Pope in his Late Edition of this Poet. Designed Not only to correct the said Edition, but to restore the True Reading of Shakespeare in all the Editions ever yet publish'd.*

We learn from a letter by Theobald dated 15th April, 1729, that he had been in correspondence with Pope fully two years before the publication of this volume. (See Nichols, *Illustrations of the Literary History of the Eighteenth Century* , ii., p. 221). Pope, however, had not encouraged his advances. In the same letter Theobald states that he had no design of commenting on Shakespeare till he saw “how incorrect an edition Mr. Pope had given the publick.” This remark was prompted by a note in the *Dunciad* of 1729, where it was stated that “during the space of two years, while Mr. Pope was preparing his Edition of Shakespear, and published advertisements, requesting all lovers of the author to contribute to a more perfect one, this Restorer (who had then some correspondence with him, and was solliciting favours by letters) did wholly conceal his design, 'till after its publication.” But if Theobald had not thought of issuing comments on Shakespeare's plays till Pope's edition appeared, he must have known them well already, for *Shakespeare Restored* is not a hasty piece of work.

Despite the aggressiveness of the title, Theobald protests his regard for Pope in such passages as these:

“It was no small Satisfaction therefore to me, when I first heard Mr. *Pope* had taken upon him the Publication of *Shakespeare* . I very reasonably expected, from his known Talents and Abilities, from his uncommon Sagacity and Discernment, and from his unwearied Diligence and Care [pg xliii] of informing himself by an happy and extensive Conversation, we should have had our Author come out as perfect, as the want of *Manuscripts* and *original Copies* could give us a Possibility of hoping. I may dare to say, a great Number of *Shakespeare* 's Admirers, and of Mr. *Pope* 's too, (both which I sincerely declare myself,) concurred in this Expectation: For there is a certain *curiosa felicitas* , as was said of an eminent *Roman* Poet, in that Gentleman's Way of working, which, we presum'd, would have laid itself out largely in such a Province; and that he would not have sate down contented with performing, as he calls it himself, the *dull Duty* of an *Editor* only.”

“I have so great an Esteem for Mr. *Pope* , and so high an Opinion of his Genius and Excellencies, that I beg to be excused from the least Intention of derogating from his Merits, in this Attempt to restore the true Reading of *Shakespeare* . Tho' I confess a Veneration, almost rising to Idolatry, for the writings of this inimitable Poet, I would be very loth even to do *him* Justice at the Expence of *that other* Gentleman's Character.”

Whether or not these declarations were sincere, they would hardly have stayed the resentment of a less sensitive man than Pope when passage after passage was pointed out where errors were “as well committed as unamended.” Theobald even hazarded the roguish suggestion that the bookseller had played his editor false by not sending him all the sheets to revise; and he certainly showed that the readings of Rowe's edition had occasionally been adopted without the professed collation of the older copies. The volume could raise no doubt of Theobald's own diligence. The chief part of it is devoted to an examination of the text of *Hamlet* , but there is a long appendix dealing with readings in other plays, and in it occurs the famous emendation of the line in *Henry V.* describing Falstaff's death,—“for his nose was as sharp as a pen, and *a' babled of green fields* .” It should be noted that the credit of this reading is not entirely Theobald's. He admits that in an edition “with some marginal conjectures of a Gentleman sometime deceased” he found the emendation “and *a' talked* of green fields.” Theobald's share thus amounts to the doubtful improvement of substituting *babbled* for *talked* .

Though this volume has undoubted merits, it is not difficult to understand why the name of Theobald came to convey to the eighteenth century the idea of painful pedantry, and why one so eminently just as Johnson should have dubbed him “a man of heavy diligence, with very slender powers.” While his knowledge is indisputable, he has little or no delicacy of taste; his style is dull and lumbering; and the mere fact that he dedicated his *Shakespeare Restored* to John Rich, the Covent Garden manager who specialised in pantomime and played the part of harlequin, may at least cast some doubt on his discretion. But he successfully attacked Pope where he was weakest and where as an editor he should have been strongest. “From this time,” in the words of Johnson, “Pope became an enemy to editors, collators, commentators, and verbal critics; and hoped to persuade the world that he had miscarried in this undertaking only by having a mind too great for such minute employment.”

Not content with the errors pointed out in *Shakespeare Restored* —a quarto volume of two hundred pages—Theobald continued his criticisms of Pope's edition in *Mist's Journal* and the *Daily Journal* , until he was ripe for the *Dunciad* . Pope enthroned him as the hero of the poem, and so he remained till he was replaced by Colley Cibber in 1741, when the alteration necessitated several omissions. In the earlier editions Theobald soliloquised thus:

Here studious I unlucky Moderns save,

Nor sleeps one error in its father's grave,

Old puns restore, lost blunders nicely seek,

And crucify poor Shakespear once a week.

For thee I dim these eyes, and stuff this head,

With all such reading as was never read;

For the supplying, in the worst of days,

Notes to dull books, and prologues to dull plays;

For thee explain a thing 'till all men doubt it,

And write about it, Goddess, and about it.

Theobald is introduced also in the *Art of Sinking in Poetry* among the classes of authors described as swallows and eels: the former “are eternally skimming and fluttering up and down, but all their agility is employed to catch flies,” the latter “wrap themselves up in their own mud, but are mighty nimble and pert.” About the same time, however, Pope brought out the second edition (1728) of his Shakespeare, and in it he incorporated some of Theobald's conjectures, though his recognition of their merit was grudging and even dishonestly inadequate. (See the preface to the various readings at the end of the eighth volume, 1728.) Yet one's sympathies with Theobald are prejudiced by his ascription to Shakespeare of the *Double Falsehood, or the Distrest Lovers* , a play which was acted in 1727 and printed in the following year. Theobald professed to have revised it and adapted it to the stage. The question of authorship has not been settled, but if Theobald is relieved from the imputation of forgery, he must at least stand convicted of ignorance of the Shakespearian manner. Pope at once recognised that the play was not Shakespeare's, and added a contemptuous reference to it in the second edition of his Preface. It was the opinion of Farmer that the groundwork of the play was by Shirley (see the *Essay on the Learning of Shakespeare* , p. 181).

Theobald now sought to revenge himself on Pope, and, in his own words, he “purposed to reply only in Shakespeare” (Nichols, *id.* ii., p. 248). His first plan was to publish a volume of *Remarks on Shakespeare* . On 15th April, 1729, he says the volume “will now shortly appear in the world” (id., p. 222), but on 6th November he writes to Warburton, “I know you will not be displeased, if I should tell you in your ear, perhaps I may venture to join the *Text* to my *Remarks* ” (*id.* , p. 254). By the following March he had definitely determined upon giving an edition of Shakespeare, as appears from another letter to Warburton: “As it is necessary I should now inform the publick that I mean to attempt to give them an edition of that Poet's [*i.e.* Shakespeare's] text, together with my corrections, I have concluded to give this notice, not only by advertisements, but by an occasional pamphlet, which, in order to retaliate some of our Editor's kindnesses to me, I mean to call, *An Essay upon Mr. Pope's Judgment, extracted from his own Works; and humbly addressed to him* " (*id.* ii., p. 551). Of this he forwards Warburton an extract. The pamphlet does not appear to have been published. The *Miscellany on Taste* which he brought out anonymously in 1732 contains a section entitled "Of Mr. Pope's Taste of Shakespeare," but this is merely a reprint of the letter of 15th (or 16th) April, which had already been printed in the *Daily Journal* . A considerable time elapsed before arrangements for publication were completed, the interval being marked by a temporary estrangement from Warburton and an unsuccessful candidature for the laureateship. Articles with Tonson were signed in November, 1731 (*id.* ii., pp. 13, 618), and at the same time the correspondence with Warburton was renewed. The edition did not appear till 1733. The Preface had been begun about the end of 1731.

From March, 1729, with the short break in 1730, Theobald had been in steady correspondence with Warburton, and most of his letters, with a few of those of Warburton, have been preserved by Nichols (see *id.* ii., pp. 189, 607). But it would have been more fortunate for Theobald's reputation had they perished. The cruel contempt and bitterness of Warburton's references to him after their final estrangement may be offensive, but the correspondence shows that they were not without some justification. Theobald submits his conjectures anxiously to the judgment of Warburton, and again and again Warburton saves him from himself. In one of the letters Theobald rightly condemns Pope's proposed insertion of "Francis Drake" in the incomplete line at the end of the first scene of *Henry VI., Part 1.* ; but not content with this flawless piece of destructive criticism he argues for inserting the words "and Cassiopeia." The probability is that if Warburton had not condemned the [pg xlvii] proposal it would have appeared in Theobald's edition. "With a just deference to your most convincing reasons," says Theobald, "I shall with great cheerfulness banish it as a bad and unsupported conjecture" (*id.* ii., p. 477); and this remark is typical of the whole correspondence. A considerable share of the merit of Theobald's edition—though the share is mostly negative—belongs to Warburton, for Theobald had not taste enough to keep him right when he stepped beyond collation of the older editions or explanation by parallel passages. Indeed, the letters to Warburton, besides helping to explain his reputation in the eighteenth century, would in themselves be sufficient to justify his place in the *Dunciad* .

Warburton had undoubtedly given Theobald ungrudging assistance and was plainly interested in the success of the edition. But as he had gauged Theobald's ability, he had some fears for the Preface. So at least we gather from a letter which Theobald wrote to him on 18th November, 1731:

“I am extremely obliged for the tender concern you have for my reputation in what I am *to prefix to my Edition* : and this part, as it will come last in play, I shall certainly be so kind to myself to communicate in due time to your perusal. The whole affair of *Prolegomena* I have determined to soften into *Preface* . I am so very cool as to my sentiments of my Adversary's usage, that I think the publick should not be too largely troubled with them. *Blockheadry* is the chief hinge of his satire upon me; and if my Edition do not wipe out that, I ought to be content to let the charge be fixed; if it do, the reputation gained will be a greater triumph than resentment. But, dear Sir, will you, at your leisure hours, think over for me upon the contents, topics, orders, etc., of this branch of my labour? You have a comprehensive memory, and a happiness of digesting the matter joined to it, which my head is often too much embarrassed to perform; let that be the excuse for my inability. But how unreasonable is it to expect this labour, when it is the only part in which I shall not be able to be just to my friends: for, to confess assistance in a *Preface* will, I am afraid, make me appear too naked. Rymer's extravagant rancour against our Author, under the umbrage of criticism, may, I presume, find a place here” (*id.* ii., pp. 621, 622).

This confession of weakness is valuable in the light of Warburton's Preface to his own edition of 1747. His [pg xlviii] statement of the assistance he rendered Theobald is rude and cruel, but it is easier to impugn his taste than his truthfulness. Theobald did not merely ask for assistance in the Preface; he received it too. Warburton expressed himself on this matter, with his customary force and with a pleasing attention to detail, in a letter to the Rev. Thomas Birch on 24th November, 1737. “You will see in Theobald's heap of disjointed stuff,” he says, “which he calls a Preface to Shakespeare, an observation upon those poems [*i.e. L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*] which I made to him, and which he did not understand, and so has made it a good deal obscure by contracting my note; for you must understand that almost all that Preface (except what relates to Shakespeare's Life, and the foolish Greek conjectures at the end) was made up of notes I sent him on particular passages, and which he has there stitched together without head or tail” (Nichols, ii., p. 81). The Preface is indeed a poor piece of patch-work. Examination of the footnotes throughout the edition corroborates Warburton's concluding statement. Some of the annotations which have his name attached to them are repeated almost verbatim (*e.g.* the note in *Love's Labour's Lost* on the use of music), while the comparison of Addison and Shakespeare is taken from a letter written by Warburton to Concanen in 1726-7 (*id.* ii., pp. 195, etc.). The inequality of the essay—the fitful succession of limp and acute observations—can be explained only by ill-matched collaboration.

Warburton has himself indicated the extent of Theobald's debt to him. In his own copy of Theobald's Shakespeare he marked the passages which he had contributed to the Preface, as well as the notes "which Theobald deprived him of and made his own," and the volume is now in the Capell collection in Trinity College, Cambridge. Mr. Churton Collins, in his attempt to prove Theobald the greatest of Shakespearean editors, has said that "if in this copy, which we have not had the opportunity of inspecting, Warburton has laid claim to more than Theobald has assigned to him, we believe him to be guilty of dishonesty even more detestable than that of which the proofs are, as we have shown, indisputable." An inspection of the Cambridge volume is not necessary to show that a passage in the Preface has been conveyed from one of Warburton's letters published by Nichols and by Malone. Any defence of Theobald by an absolute refusal to believe Warburton's word can be of no value unless some proof be adduced that Warburton was here untruthful, and it is peculiarly inept when Theobald's own page proclaims the theft. We know that Theobald asked Warburton for assistance in the Preface, and gave warning that such assistance would not be acknowledged. Warburton could have had no evil motive in marking those passages in his *private* copy; and there is surely a strong presumption in favour of a man who deliberately goes over seven volumes, carefully indicating the material which he considered his own. It happens that one of the passages contains an unfriendly allusion to Pope. If Warburton meant to be "dishonest"—and there could be no purpose in being dishonest before he was Theobald's enemy—why did he not disclaim this allusion some years later? The simple explanation is that he marked the passages for his own amusement while he was still on friendly terms with Theobald. They are thirteen in number, and they vary in length from a few lines to two pages. Four of them are undoubtedly his, and there is nothing to disprove that the other nine are his also.

Theobald quotes also from his own correspondence. On 17th March, 1729-30, he had written to Warburton a long letter dealing with Shakespeare's knowledge of languages and including a specimen of his proposed pamphlet against Pope.

“Your most necessary caution against inconsistency, with regard to my opinion of Shakespeare's knowledge in languages,” he there says characteristically, “shall not fail to have all its weight with me. And therefore the passages that I occasionally quote from the Classics shall not be brought as proofs that he imitated those originals, but to shew how happily he has expressed themselves upon the same topics” (Nichols, ii., pp. 564, etc.). This part of the letter is included verbatim three years afterwards in the Preface. So also is the other passage in the same letter replying to Pope on the subject of Shakespeare's anachronisms. Theobald borrows even from his own published writings. Certain passages are reproduced from the Introduction to *Shakespeare Restored* .

If Theobald could hardly acknowledge, as he said, the assistance he received in writing the Preface, he at least admitted his editorial debt to Warburton and others punctiliously and handsomely. After referring to Dr. Thirlby of Jesus College, Cambridge, and Hawley Bishop, he thus writes of his chief helper:

“To these, I must add the indefatigable Zeal and Industry of my most ingenious and ever-respected Friend, the Reverend Mr. *William Warburton* of *Newark* upon *Trent* . This Gentleman, from the Motives of his frank and communicative Disposition, voluntarily took a considerable Part of my Trouble off my Hands; not only read over the whole Author for me, with the exactest Care; but enter'd into a long and laborious Epistolary Correspondence; to which I owe no small Part of my best Criticisms upon my Author.

“The Number of Passages amended, and admirably Explained, which I have taken care to distinguish with his Name, will shew a Fineness of Spirit and Extent of Reading, beyond all the Commendations I can give them: Nor, indeed, would I any farther be thought to commend a Friend, than, in so doing, to give a Testimony of my own Gratitude.”

So the preface read in 1733. But by the end of 1734 Warburton had quarrelled with Theobald, and by 1740, after a passing friendship with Sir Thomas Hanmer, had become definitely attached to the party of Pope. This is probably the reason why, in the Preface to the second edition, Theobald does not repeat the detailed statement of the assistance he had received. He wisely omits also the long and irrelevant passage of Greek conjectures, given with no other apparent reason than to parade his learning. And several passages either claimed by Warburton (*e.g.* that referring to Milton's poems) or known to be his (*e.g.* the comparison of Addison and Shakespeare) are also cancelled.

The merits of the text of Theobald's edition are undeniable; but the text is not to be taken as the sole measure of his ability. By his diligence in collation he restored many of the original readings. His knowledge of Elizabethan literature was turned to good account in the explanation and illustration of the text. He claims to have read above eight hundred old English plays “to ascertain the obsolete and uncommon phrases.” But when we have spoken of his diligence, we have spoken of all for which, as an editor, he was remarkable. Pope had good reason to say of him, though he gave the criticism a wider application, that

Pains, reading, study are their just pretence,

And all they want is spirit, taste, and sense.

The inner history of his Preface would prove of itself that Theobald well deserved the notoriety which he enjoyed in the eighteenth century.

Sir Thomas Hanmer.

Sir Thomas Hanmer's edition of Shakespeare, in six handsome quarto volumes, was printed at the Clarendon Press in 1743-44. As it appeared anonymously it was commonly called the “Oxford edition.” It was well known, however, that Hanmer was the editor. Vols. ii., iii., and iv. bear the date 1743; the others, 1744.

Hanmer had been Speaker of the House of Commons from 1713 to 1715, and had played an important part in securing the Protestant succession on the death of Queen Anne. He retired from public life on the accession of George II., and thereafter lived in “lettered ease” at his seat of Mildenhall near Newmarket till his death in 1746. It is not known when he undertook his edition of Shakespeare, but the idea of it was probably suggested to him by the publication of Theobald's edition in 1733. His relative and biographer, Sir Henry Bunbury, writing in 1838, refers to a copy of this edition with corrections and notes on the text of every play in Hanmer's handwriting. There can be no doubt, however, of the accuracy of Warburton's statement that his edition was printed from Pope's, though the hastiest examination will prove the falsity of Warburton's other remark that Hanmer neglected to compare Pope's edition with Theobald's. He relied on Pope's judgment as to the authenticity of passages and on Theobald's accuracy in collation. Thus while he omits lines which Pope had omitted, or degrades them to the foot of the page, he often adopts Theobald's reading of a word or phrase.

He had certainly made considerable progress with the edition by May, 1738, when he was visited by Warburton (see Nichols, *Illustrations* , ii. 44, 69). It was still incomplete in March, 1742, but it was sent to the printer at the end of that year, as we learn from a letter of 30th December to Zachary Grey, the editor of *Hudibras* : “I must now acquaint you that the books are gone out of my hands, and lodged with the University of Oxford, which hath been willing to accept of them as a present from me. They intend to print them forthwith, in a fair impression adorned with sculptures; but it will be so ordered that it will be the cheapest book that ever was exposed to sale.... None are to go into the hands of booksellers” (Nichols, *Literary Anecdotes* , v., p. 589). Earlier in the year, in the important letter concerning his quarrel with Warburton, which will be referred to later, he had spoken of his edition in the following terms: “As to my own particular, I have no aim to pursue in this affair; I propose neither honour, reward, or thanks, and should be very well pleased to have the books continue upon their shelf, in my own private closet. If it is thought they may be of use or pleasure to the publick, I am willing to part with them out of my hands, and to add, for the honour of Shakespear, some decorations and embellishments at my own expense” (*id.* v., p. 589). The printing of the edition was not supervised by Hanmer himself, but by Joseph Smith, Provost of Queen's College, and Robert Shippen, Principal of Brasenose. We find them receiving instructions that there must be care in the correction of the press, that the type must be as large as in Pope's edition, but that the paper must be better.

These facts are of interest in connection with Hanmer's inclusion in the fourth book of the *Dunciad* . In a note by Pope and Warburton he is referred to as “an eminent person, who was about to publish a very pompous edition of a great author, *at his own expense* ”; and in the poem the satire is maladroitly aimed at the handsomeness of the volumes. Warburton afterwards implied that he was responsible for the inclusion of this passage (*id.* , p. 590), and though the claim is disputed by Hanmer's biographer, the ineffectiveness of the attack would prove that it was not spontaneous. Pope, however, would yield to Warburton's desire the more readily if, as Sir Henry Bunbury had reason to believe, the anonymous *Remarks on the Tragedy of Hamlet* , published in 1736, was the work of Hanmer, for there Pope's edition was compared unfavourably, though courteously, with that of Theobald. (See the *Correspondence of Sir Thomas Hanmer* , 1838, pp. 80, etc.)

William Warburton.

“The Works of Shakespear in Eight Volumes. The Genuine Text (collated with all the former Editions, and then corrected and emended) is here settled: Being restored from the *Blunders* of the first Editors, and the *Interpolations* of the two Last; with a Comment and Notes, Critical and Explanatory. By Mr. Pope and Mr. Warburton. 1747.”

So runs the title of what is generally known as Warburton's edition. It is professedly a revised issue of Pope's. In point of fact it is founded, not on Pope's text, but on the text of Theobald. Warburton does not follow even Pope's arrangement of the plays. With one insignificant transposition, he gives them in the identical order in which they appear in Theobald's edition. And though he has his gibe at Hanmer in the title page, he incorporates Hanmer's glossary word for word, and almost letter for letter. But his animosity betrays him in his Preface. He complains of the trouble which he has been put to by the last two editors, for he has had “not only their interpolations to throw out, but the genuine text to replace and establish in its stead.” He would not have had this trouble had he used Pope's edition. He may have believed that what he took from Hanmer and Theobald was very much less than what they had received from him. According to his own statements he supplied each with a large number of important emendations which had been used without acknowledgment. Yet this does not excuse the suggestion that his edition was founded on Pope's.

The explanation is Warburton's just pride in Pope's friendship,—a pride which he took every opportunity of gratifying and parading. But in his earlier days he had been, all unknown to Pope, an enemy. He escaped the *Dunciad* by reason of his obscurity. He was the friend of Concanen and Theobald, and in a letter to the former, containing his earliest extant attempt at Shakespearian criticism, he observes that “Dryden borrows for want of leisure, and Pope for want of genius.” The letter is dated 2nd January, 1726-27, but luckily for Warburton it was not publicly known till, in 1766, Akenside used it as a means of paying off old scores (see Nichols, *Illustrations* , ii., pp. 195-198, and Malone's Shakespeare, 1821, vol. xii., pp. 157, etc.). It is of interest also from the fact that Theobald transcribed from it almost verbatim the comparison of Shakespeare and Addison in the Preface of 1733.

Theobald's deference and even humility must have confirmed Warburton's confidence in his own critical powers, but it was not till Theobald's Shakespeare was published that Warburton first hinted at an edition by himself. From 1729 to 1733 he had given Theobald loyally of his best. On the appearance of the edition he betrayed some annoyance that all his suggestions had not been accepted. “I have transcribed about fifty emendations and remarks,” he writes on 17th May, 1734, “which I have at several times sent you, omitted in the Edition of Shakespeare, which, I am sure, are better than any of mine published there. These I shall convey to you soon, and desire you to publish them (as omitted by being mislaid) in your Edition of the ‘Poems,’ which I hope you will soon make ready for the press” (Nichols, *Illustrations* , ii., p. 634). These he duly forwarded, along with a flattering criticism of the edition. He gives no hint that he may himself turn them to account, till the October of the same year, when he writes, “I have a great number of notes, etc., on Shakespeare, *for some future Edition* ” (*id.* , p. 654). Here the correspondence ceases. Up to this time Warburton had aided Theobald's schemes of retaliating on Pope. We have his own authority for attributing to him the remark in Theobald's Preface that “it seems a moot point whether Mr. Pope has done most injury to Shakespeare as his Editor and Encomiast, or Mr. Rymer done him service as his Rival and Censurer.” It is probable even that he had a hand in Theobald's and Concanen's *Art of a Poet's sinking in Reputation, or a Supplement to the Art of sinking in Poetry* .

Warburton then gave his services to Sir Thomas Hanmer. They had become acquainted by 1736, and they corresponded frequently till Warburton's visit to Mildenhall in May, 1737. It is needless to enter into their quarrel, for the interest of it is purely personal. Hanmer told his version of it to Joseph Smith, the Provost of Queen's College, Oxford, in his letter of 28th October, 1742, and Warburton gave his very different account nineteen years later, on 29th January, 1761, when he discovered that Hanmer's letter was about to be published in the *Biographia Britannica* . In the absence of further evidence it is impossible to decide with whom the truth rests. The dignity of Hanmer's letter wins favour by contrast with the violence of Warburton's. Yet there must be some truth in Warburton's circumstantial details, though his feelings may have prevented his seeing them in proper perspective. He says that Hanmer used his notes without his knowledge. The statement is probably accurate. But when Hanmer says that Warburton's notes were “sometimes just but mostly wild and out of the way,” we are satisfied, from what we know of Warburton's other work, that the criticism was merited. Hanmer apparently found that Warburton did not give him much help, and Warburton may have been annoyed at failing to find Hanmer as docile as Theobald. They had quarrelled by September, 1739, when Warburton records that he has got all his letters and papers out of Sir Thomas Hanmer's hands (Nichols, *Illustrations* , ii. 110. See also Nichols, *Literary Anecdotes* , v. 588-590; *Biographia Britannica* , vol vi. (1763), pp. 3743-4, and appendix, p. 223; Philip Nichols, *The Castrated Letter of Sir Thomas Hanmer* , 1763; and Bunbury, *Correspondence of Hanmer* , pp. 85-90).

During his friendship with Hanmer, Warburton had not lost sight of his own edition. The quarrel was precipitated by Hanmer's discovery of Warburton's intention; but there is no evidence that Warburton had tried to conceal it. Everything goes to show that each editor was so immersed in his own scheme that he regarded the other as his collaborator. Hanmer did not know at first that Warburton was planning an edition as a means of making some money; and Warburton had not suspected that Hanmer would publish an edition at all. This is the only reasonable inference to be drawn from a letter written by him to the Rev. Thomas Birch in October, 1737. “You are pleased to enquire about Shakespeare,” he writes. “I believe (to tell it as a secret) I shall, after I have got the whole of this work out of my hands which I am now engaged in, give an Edition of it to the world. Sir Thomas Hanmer has a true critical genius, and has done great things in this Author; so you may expect to see a very extraordinary edition of its kind. I intend to draw up and prefix to it a just and complete critique on Shakespeare and his Works.” This letter reads curiously in the light of after events; but it proves, if it proves anything, that Warburton did not suspect Hanmer's scheme, and believed that Hanmer was helping him in his edition. It is equally plain that Hanmer believed he was being helped by Warburton.

Announcements of Warburton's forthcoming edition were made in Birch's article on Shakespeare in the *General Dictionary, Historical and Critical* , vol. ix., January, 1739-40, and in the *History of the Works of the Learned* for 1740

(Nichols, *Illustrations* , ii., pp. 72-4, [pg lviii] and *Lit. Anecdotes* , v., p. 559). But there were no signs of its appearance, and Hanmer had good reason to say in October, 1742, in his letter to Joseph Smith, “I am satisfied there is no edition coming or likely to come from Warburton; but it is a report raised to support some little purpose or other, of which I see there are many on foot.” Up to this time Warburton had merely suggested emendations and puzzled out explanations: he had not set to work seriously on the complete text. Since 1740, when he published the *Vindication of the Essay on Man* , his critical and polemical talents had been devoted to the service of Pope. To judge from what he says in his Preface, his project of an edition of Shakespeare might have been abandoned had not Pope persuaded him to proceed with it by the offer of making it appear their joint work. Pope had nothing to do with it, for it was not begun till after his death. But it was a cruel fate that what professed to be a new edition of his “Shakespeare” should really be founded on Theobald's. The knowledge of Theobald's use of the Quartos and Folios led Warburton to commit a detestable quibble on his title-page. There is said to be no evidence that Warburton himself had consulted them. Yet the statement that his text is “collated with all the former editions” is not absolutely without the bounds of truth: Theobald had consulted them, and Warburton does not say that he had consulted them himself. What Warburton did was to give full play to his talent for emendation, and to indulge what Johnson called his rage for saying something when there is nothing to be said. Yet we are too prone to depreciate Warburton. He has prejudiced his reputation by his arrogance and his contemptuous malignity; but we do him an injustice if we endeavour to gauge his merit only by comparing his edition with those of his immediate predecessors. No early editor of Shakespeare has gained more than Theobald and suffered more than Warburton by the custom of attributing the whole merit of an edition to him whose name is on the title page. When we read their correspondence and see their editions in the making, it is not difficult to realise what Johnson meant when he said that Warburton as a critic would make “two and fifty Theobalds, cut into slices.”

Samuel Johnson.

Johnson's Preface is here reprinted from the edition of 1777, the last to appear in his lifetime. The more important of the few alterations made on the original Preface of 1765 are pointed out in the notes.

In 1745 Johnson had published his *Miscellaneous Observations on the Tragedy of Macbeth: with Remarks on Sir Thomas Hanmer's Edition of Shakespeare. To which is affixed Proposals for a new Edition of Shakespeare, with a Specimen.* As Warburton's edition was expected, this anonymous scheme met with no encouragement, and Johnson laid it aside till 1756, when he issued new Proposals. In the interval he had written of Shakespeare in the admirable Prologue which inaugurated Garrick's rule at Drury Lane, and had shadowed in the *Rambler* and in the Dedication to Mrs. Lennox's *Shakespear Illustrated* (1753) much of what was to appear in perfect form in the Preface of 1765. It was one of the conditions in the Proposals that the edition was to be published on or before Christmas, 1757. As in the case of the *Dictionary* Johnson underestimated the labour which such a work involved. In December, 1757, we find him saying that he will publish about March, and in March he says it will be published before summer. He must have made considerable progress at this time, as, according to his own statement, “many of the plays” were then printed. But its preparation was interrupted by the *Idler* (April, 1758, to April, 1760). Thereafter Johnson would appear to have done little to it till he was awakened to activity by the attack on him in Churchill's *Ghost* (1763). The edition at length appeared in October, 1765. “In 1764 and 1765,” says Boswell, “it should seem that Dr. Johnson was so busily employed with his edition of *Shakespeare* as to have had little leisure for any other literary exertion, or indeed even for private correspondence.” The Preface was also published by itself in 1765 with the title —*Mr. Johnson's Preface to his Edition of Shakespear's Plays* .

The work immediately attracted great attention. Kenrick lost no time in issuing *A Review of Doctor Johnson's New Edition of Shakespeare: in which the Ignorance or Inattention of that Editor is exposed, and the Poet defended from the Persecution of his Commentators* , 1765. Johnson was “above answering for himself,” but James Barclay, an Oxford student, replied for him, to his annoyance, in *An Examination of Mr. Kenrick's Review* , 1766, and Kenrick himself rejoined in *A Defence of Mr. Kenrick's Review ... By a Friend* , 1766. The most important criticism of the edition was Tyrwhitt's *Observations and Conjectures upon some Passages of Shakespeare* , issued anonymously by the Clarendon Press in 1766. Though we read that “the author has not entered into the merits of Mr. Johnson's performance, but has set down some observations and conjectures,” the book is in effect an examination of Johnson's edition. Notices appeared also in the *Monthly* and *Critical Reviews* , the *London Magazine* , the *Gentleman's Magazine* , and the *Annual Register* . The *Monthly Review* devotes its two articles (October and November, 1765) chiefly to the

Preface. It examines at considerable length Johnson's arguments against the “unities,” and concludes that “there is hardly one of them which does not seem false or foreign to the subject.” The *Critical Review* , on the other hand, pronounces them “worthy of Mr. Johnson's pen”; and the *London Magazine* admits their force, though it wishes that Johnson had “rather retained the character of a reasoner than assumed that of a pleader.”

Richard Farmer.

Farmer's *Essay on the Learning of Shakespeare* was published at Cambridge early in January, 1767. In the Preface to the second and enlarged edition, which appeared in the same year, Farmer says that “the few who have been pleased to controvert any part of his doctrine have favoured him with better manners than arguments.” This remark, like most of the Preface, appears to be directed chiefly at the prejudiced notice which appeared in the *Critical Review* for January, 1767. The writer of it was well versed in the controversy, for he had expressed his opinion unhesitatingly in an earlier number, and he lost no time in advancing new evidence in opposition to Farmer's doctrine; but he only provided Farmer with new proofs, which were at once incorporated in the text of the Essay. The third edition, which was called for in 1789, differs from the second only by the inclusion of a short “advertisement” and a final note explaining that Farmer had abandoned his intention of publishing the *Antiquities of Leicester* . In the “Advertisement” he admits that “a few corrections might probably be made, and many additional proofs of the argument have necessarily occurred in more than twenty years”; but he did not think it necessary to make any changes. He was content to leave the book in the hands of the printers, and accordingly he is still described on the title-page as “Fellow of Emmanuel College, Cambridge,” though he had succeeded to the mastership of his college in 1775.

Farmer had, however, already supplemented his Essay by a letter to Steevens, who printed it as an appendix to his edition of Johnson's Shakespeare in 1773. “The track of reading,” says Farmer, “which I sometime ago endeavoured to prove more immediately necessary to a commentator on Shakespeare, you have very successfully followed, and have consequently superseded some remarks which I might otherwise have troubled you with. Those I now send you are such as I marked on the margin of the copy you were so kind to communicate to me, and bear a very small proportion to the miscellaneous collections of this sort which I may probably put together some time or other.” Farmer did not carry out this intention, and the *Essay on the Learning of Shakespeare* remains his only independent publication.

Maurice Morgann.

Morgann has himself told us in his Preface all that we know about the composition of his *Essay on the Dramatic Character of Sir John Falstaff* . The result of a challenge arising out of a friendly conversation, it was written “in a very short time” in 1774, and then laid aside and almost forgotten. But for the advice of friends it would probably have remained in manuscript, and been destroyed, like his other critical works, at his death. On their suggestion he revised and enlarged it, as hastily as he had written it; and it appeared anonymously in the spring of 1777. The original purpose of the Essay is indicated by the motto on the title-page: “I am not John of Gaunt your grandfather, but yet no Coward, Hal”; but as Morgann wrote he passed from Falstaff to the greater theme of Falstaff's creator. He was persuaded to publish his Essay because, though it dealt nominally with one character, its main subject was the art of Shakespeare. For the same reason it finds a place in this volume.

In 1744 Corbyn Morris had briefly analysed the character of Falstaff in his *Essay towards fixing the true standards of Wit, Humour, Raillery, Satire, and Ridicule* ; Mrs. Montagu had expressed the common opinion of his cowardice in her *Essay on the Writings and Genius of Shakespeare* ; the *Biographia Britannica* had declared him to be Shakespeare's masterpiece; while his popularity had [pg lxiii] led Kenrick to produce in 1766 *Falstaff's Wedding* as a sequel to the second part of *Henry IV.* ; but Morgann's Essay is the first detailed examination of his character. He was afterwards the subject of papers by Cumberland in the *Observer* (1785, No. 73), and by Henry Mackenzie in the *Lounger* (1786, Nos. 68, 69), and in 1789 he was described by Richardson in an essay which reproduced Morgann's title. None of these later works have the interest attaching to James White's *Falstaff's Letters* (1796).

The *Essay on Falstaff* was republished, with a short biographical preface, in 1820, and a third and last edition came out in 1825. What is apparently the first detailed criticism of it occurs in the *London Review* for February, 1820.

Nicholas Rowe: Some Account of the Life &c. of Mr. William Shakespear. 1709.

It seems to be a kind of respect due to the memory of excellent men, especially of those whom their wit and learning have made famous, to deliver some account of themselves, as well as their works, to Posterity. For this reason, how fond do we see some people of discovering any little personal story of the great men of Antiquity, their families, the common accidents of their lives, and even their shape, make, and features have been the subject of critical enquiries. How trifling soever this Curiosity may seem to be, it is certainly very natural; and we are hardly satisfy'd with an account of any remarkable person, 'till we have heard him describ'd even to the very cloaths he wears. As for what relates to men of letters, the knowledge of an Author may sometimes conduce to the better understanding his book: And tho' the Works of Mr. *Shakespear* may seem to many not to want a comment, yet I fancy some little account of the man himself may not be thought improper to go along with them.

He was the son of Mr. *John Shakespear* , and was born at *Stratford* upon *Avon* , in *Warwickshire* , in *April* 1564. His family, as appears by the Register and publick Writings relating to that Town, were of good figure and fashion there, and are mention'd as gentlemen. His father, who was a considerable dealer in wool, had so large a family, ten children in all, that tho' he was his eldest son, he could give him no better education than his own employment. He had bred him, 'tis true, for some time at a Free-school, where 'tis probable he acquir'd that little *Latin* he was master of: But the narrowness of his circumstances, and the want of his assistance at home, forc'd his father to withdraw him from thence, and unhappily prevented his further proficiency in that language. It is without controversie, that he had no knowledge of the writings of the antient poets, not only from this reason, but from his works themselves, where we find no traces of any thing that looks like an imitation of 'em; the delicacy of his taste, and the natural bent of his own great *Genius* , equal, if not superior to some of the best of theirs, would certainly have led him to read and study 'em with so much pleasure, that some of their fine images would naturally have insinuated themselves into, and been mix'd with his own writings; so that his not copying at least something from them, may be an argument of his never having read 'em. Whether his ignorance of the Antients were a disadvantage to him or no, may admit of a dispute: For tho' the knowledge of 'em might have made him more correct, yet it is not improbable but that the regularity and deference for them, which would have attended that correctness, might have restrain'd some of that fire, impetuosity, and even beautiful extravagance which we admire in *Shakespear* : And I believe we are better pleas'd with those thoughts, altogether new and uncommon, which his own imagination supply'd him so abundantly with, than if he had given us the most beautiful passages out of the *Greek* and *Latin* poets, and that in the most agreeable manner that it was possible for a master of the *English* language to deliver 'em. Some *Latin* without question he did know, and one may see up and down in his Plays how far his reading that way went: In *Love's Labour lost* , the Pedant comes out with a verse of *Mantuan* ; and in *Titus Andronicus* , one of the *Gothick* princes, upon reading

Integer vitæ scelerisque purus

Non eget Mauri jaculis nec arcu—

says, “*Tis a verse in* Horace, *but he remembers it out of his* Grammar”: which, I suppose, was the Author's case. Whatever *Latin* he had, 'tis certain he understood *French* , as may be observ'd from many words and sentences scatter'd up and down his Plays in that language; and especially from one scene in *Henry* the Fifth written wholly in it. Upon his leaving school, he seems to have given intirely into that way of living which his father propos'd to him; and in order to settle in the world after a family manner, he thought fit to marry while he was yet very young. His wife was the daughter of one *Hathaway* , said to have been a substantial yeoman in the neighbourhood of *Stratford* . In this kind of settlement he continu'd for some time, 'till an extravagance that he was guilty of forc'd him both out of his country and that way of living which he had taken up; and tho' it seem'd at first to be a blemish upon his good manners, and a misfortune to him, yet it afterwards happily prov'd the occasion of exerting one of the greatest *Genius* 's that ever was known in dramatick Poetry. He had, by a misfortune common enough to young fellows, fallen into ill company; and amongst them, some that made a frequent practice of Deer-stealing, engag'd him with them more than once in robbing a Park that belong'd to Sir *Thomas Lucy* of *Cherlecot* near *Stratford* . For this he was prosecuted by that gentleman, as he thought, somewhat too severely; and in order to revenge that ill usage, he made a ballad upon him. And tho' this, probably the first essay of his Poetry, be lost, yet it is said to have been so very bitter, that it redoubled the prosecution against him to that degree, that he was oblig'd to leave his business and family in *Warwickshire* , for some time, and shelter himself in *London* .

It is at this time, and upon this accident, that he is said to have made his first acquaintance in the Play-house. He was receiv'd into the Company then in being, at first in a very mean rank; but his admirable wit, and the natural turn of it to the stage, soon distinguish'd him, if not as an extraordinary Actor, yet as an excellent Writer. His name is printed, as the custom was in those times, amongst those of the other Players, before some old Plays, but without any particular account of what sort of parts he us'd to play; and tho' I have inquir'd, I could never meet with any further account of him this way, than that the top of his Performance was the Ghost in his own *Hamlet* . I should have been much more pleas'd to have learn'd from some certain authority, which was the first Play he wrote; it would be without doubt a pleasure to any man, curious in things of this kind, to see and know what was the first essay of a fancy like *Shakespear* 's. Perhaps we are not to look for his beginnings, like those of other authors, among their least perfect writings; art had so little, and nature so large a share in what he did, that, for ought I know, the performances of his youth, as they were the most vigorous, and had the most fire and strength of imagination in 'em, were the best. I would not be thought by this to mean, that his fancy was so loose and extravagant, as to be independent on the rule and government of judgment; but that what he thought, was commonly so great, so justly and rightly conceiv'd in it self, that it wanted little or no correction, and was immediately approv'd by an impartial judgment at the first sight. Mr. *Dryden* seems to think that *Pericles* is one of his first Plays; but there is no judgment to be form'd on that, since there is good reason to believe that the greatest part of that Play was not written by him; tho' it is own'd, some part of it certainly was, particularly the last Act. But tho' the order of time in which the several pieces were written be generally uncertain, yet there are passages in some few of them which seem to fix their dates. So the *Chorus* in the beginning of the fifth Act of *Henry* V. by a compliment very handsomly turn'd to the Earl of *Essex* , shews the Play to have been written when that Lord was General for the Queen in *Ireland* : And his Elogy upon Q. *Elizabeth* , and her successor K. *James* , in the latter end of his *Henry* VIII. is a proof of that Play's being written after the accession of the latter of those two Princes to the crown of *England* . Whatever the particular times of his writing were, the people of his age, who began to grow wonderfully fond of diversions of this kind, could not but be highly pleas'd to see a *Genius* arise amongst 'em of so pleasurable, so rich a vein, and so plentifully capable of furnishing their favourite entertainments. Besides the advantages of his wit, he was in himself a good-natur'd man, of great sweetness in his manners, and a most agreeable companion; so that it is no wonder if with so many good qualities he made himself acquainted with the best conversations of those times. Queen *Elizabeth* had several of his Plays acted before her, and without doubt gave him many gracious marks of her favour: It is that maiden Princess plainly, whom he intends by

——A fair Vestal, Throned by the West.

Midsummer Night's Dream.

And that whole passage is a compliment very properly brought in, and very handsomely apply'd to her. She was so well pleas'd with that admirable character of *Falstaff* , in the two parts of *Henry* the Fourth, that she commanded him to continue it for one Play more, and to shew him in love. This is said to be the occasion of his writing *The Merry Wives of* Windsor. How well she was obey'd, the play it self is an admirable proof. Upon this occasion it may not be improper to observe, that this part of *Falstaff* is said to have been written originally under the name of *Oldcastle* ; some of that family being then remaining, the Queen was pleas'd to command him to alter it; upon which he made use of *Falstaff* . The present offence was indeed avoided; but I don't know whether the Author may not have been somewhat to blame in his second choice, since it is certain that Sir *John Falstaff* , who was a Knight of the Garter, and a Lieutenant-general, was a name of distinguish'd merit in the wars in *France* in *Henry* the Fifth's and *Henry* the Sixth's times. What grace soever the Queen conferr'd upon him, it was not to her only he ow'd the fortune which the reputation of his wit made. He had the honour to meet with many great and uncommon marks of favour and friendship from the Earl of *Southampton* , famous in the histories of that time for his friendship to the unfortunate Earl of *Essex* . It was to that noble Lord that he dedicated his Poem of *Venus* and *Adonis* , the only piece of his Poetry which he ever publish'd himself, tho' many of his Plays were surrepticiously and lamely printed in his lifetime. There is one instance so singular in the magnificence of this Patron of *Shakespear* 's, that if I had not been assur'd that the story was handed down by Sir *William D'Avenant* , who was probably very well acquainted with his affairs, I should not have ventur'd to have inserted, that my Lord *Southampton* at one time gave him a thousand pounds, to enable him to go through with a purchase which he heard he had a mind to: A bounty very great, and very rare at any time, and almost equal to that profuse generosity the present age has shewn to *French* Dancers and *Italian* Eunuchs.

What particular habitude or friendships he contracted with private men, I have not been able to learn, more than that every one who had a true taste of merit, and could distinguish men, had generally a just value and esteem for him. His exceeding candor and good nature must certainly have inclin'd all the gentler part of the world to love him, as the power of his wit oblig'd the men of the most delicate knowledge and polite learning to admire him. Amongst these was the incomparable Mr. *Edmond Spencer* , who speaks of him in his *Tears of the Muses* , not only with the praises due to a good Poet, but even lamenting his absence with the tenderness of a friend. The passage is in *Thalia's* Complaint for the Decay of Dramatick Poetry, and the Contempt the Stage then lay under, amongst his Miscellaneous Works, *p.* 147.

And he the Man whom Nature's self had made

To mock her self, and Truth to imitate

With friendly Counter under mimick Shade,

Our pleasant *Willy* , ah! is dead of late:

With whom all Joy and jolly Merriment

Is also deaded, and in Dolour drent.

Instead thereof, scoffing Scurrility

And scorning Folly with Contempt is crept,

Rolling in Rhimes of shameless Ribaudry, Without Regard or due *Decorum* kept;

Each idle Wit at will presumes to make,

And doth the Learned's Task upon him take.

But that same gentle Spirit, from whose Pen

Large Streams of Honey and sweet *Nectar* flow,

Scorning the Boldness of such base-born Men,

Which dare their Follies forth so rashly throw;

Doth rather choose to sit in idle Cell,

Than so himself to Mockery to sell.

I know some people have been of opinion, that *Shakespear* is not meant by *Willy* in the first *stanza* of these verses, because *Spencer* 's death happen'd twenty years before *Shakespear* 's. But, besides that the character is not applicable to any man of that time but himself, it is plain by the last *stanza* that Mr. *Spencer* does not mean that he was then really dead, but only that he had withdrawn himself from the publick, or at least with-held his hand from writing, out of a disgust he had taken at the then ill taste of the Town, and the mean condition of the Stage. Mr. *Dryden* was always of opinion these verses were meant of *Shakespear* ; and 'tis highly probable they were so, since he was three and thirty years old at *Spencer* 's death; and his reputation in Poetry must have been great enough before that time to have deserv'd what is here said of him. His acquaintance with *Ben Johnson* began with a remarkable piece of humanity and good nature; Mr. *Johnson* , who was at that time altogether unknown to the world, had offer'd one of his Plays to the Players, in order to have it acted; and the persons into whose hands it was put, after having turn'd it carelessly and superciliously over, were just upon returning it to him with an ill-natur'd answer, that it would be of no service to their Company, when *Shakespear* luckily cast his eye upon it, and found something so well in it as to engage him first to read it through, and afterwards to recommend Mr. *Johnson* and his writings to the publick. After this they were profess'd friends; tho' I don't know whether the other ever made him an equal return of gentleness and sincerity. *Ben* was naturally proud and insolent, and in the days of his reputation did so far take upon him the supremacy in wit, that he could not but look with an evil eye upon any one that seem'd to stand in competition with him. And if at times he has affected to commend him, it has always been with some reserve, insinuating his uncorrectness, a careless manner of writing, and want of judgment; the praise of seldom altering or blotting out what he writ, which was given him by the Players who were the first Publishers of his Works after his death, was what *Johnson* could not bear; he thought it impossible, perhaps, for another man to strike out the greatest thoughts in the finest expression, and to reach those excellencies of Poetry with the ease of a first imagination, which himself with infinite labour and study could but hardly attain to. *Johnson* was certainly a very good scholar, and in that had the advantage of *Shakespear* ; tho' at the same time I believe it must be allow'd, that what Nature gave the latter, was more than a ballance for what Books had given the former; and the judgment of a great man upon this occasion was, I think, very just and proper. In a conversation between Sir *John Suckling* , Sir *William D'Avenant* , *Endymion Porter* , Mr. *Hales* of *Eaton* , and *Ben Johnson* ; Sir *John Suckling* , who was a profess'd admirer of *Shakespear* , had undertaken his defence against *Ben Johnson* with some warmth; Mr. *Hales* , who had sat still for some time, hearing *Ben* frequently reproaching him with the want of learning, and ignorance of the Antients, told him at last, *That if Mr.* Shakespear *had not read the Antients, he had likewise not stollen any thing from 'em* (a fault the other made no conscience of); *and that if he would produce any one Topick finely treated by any one of them, he would undertake to shew something upon the same subject at least as well written by* Shakespear. *Johnson* did indeed take a large liberty, even to the transcribing and translating of whole scenes together; and sometimes, with all deference to so great a name as his, not altogether for the advantage of the authors of whom he borrow'd. And if *Augustus* and *Virgil* were really what he has made 'em in a scene of his *Poetaster* , they are as odd an Emperor and a Poet as ever met. *Shakespear* , on the other hand, was beholding to no body farther than the foundation of the tale, the incidents were often his own, and the writing intirely so. There is one Play of his, indeed, *The Comedy of Errors* , in a great measure taken from the *Menæchmi* of *Plautus* . How that happen'd, I cannot easily divine, since, as I hinted before, I do not take him to have been master of *Latin* enough to read it in the original, and I know of no translation of *Plautus* so old as his time.

As I have not propos'd to my self to enter into a large and compleat criticism upon *Shakespear* 's Works, so I suppose it will neither be expected that I should take notice of the severe remarks that have been formerly made upon him by Mr. *Rhymer* . I must confess, I can't very well see what could be the reason of his animadverting with so much sharpness, upon the faults of a man excellent on most occasions, and whom all the world ever was and will be inclin'd to have an esteem and veneration for. If it was to shew his own knowledge in the Art of Poetry, besides that there is a vanity in making that only his design, I question if there be not many imperfections as well in those schemes and precepts he has given for the direction of others, as well as in that sample of Tragedy which he has written to shew the excellency of his own *Genius* . If he had a pique against the man, and wrote on purpose to ruin a reputation so well establish'd, he has had the mortification to fail altogether in his attempt, and to see the world at least as fond of *Shakespear* as of his Critique. But I won't believe a gentleman, and a good-natur'd man, capable of the last intention. Whatever may have been his meaning, finding fault is certainly the easiest task of knowledge, and commonly those men of good judgment, who are likewise of good and gentle dispositions, abandon this ungrateful province to the tyranny of pedants. If one would enter into the beauties of *Shakespear* , there is a much larger, as well as a more delightful field; but as I won't prescribe to the tastes of other people, so I will only take the liberty, with all due submission to the judgments of others, to observe some of those things I have been pleas'd with in looking him over.

His Plays are properly to be distinguish'd only into Comedies and Tragedies. Those which are called Histories, and even some of his Comedies, are really Tragedies, with a run or mixture of Comedy amongst 'em. That way of Trage-comedy was the common mistake of that age, and is indeed become so agreeable to the *English* taste, that tho' the severer Critiques among us cannot bear it, yet the generality of our audiences seem to be better pleas'd with it than with an exact Tragedy. *The Merry Wives of* Windsor, *The Comedy of Errors* , and *The Taming of the Shrew* , are all pure Comedy; the rest, however they are call'd, have something of both kinds. 'Tis not very easy to determine which way of writing he was most excellent in. There is certainly a great deal of entertainment in his comical humours; and tho' they did not then strike at all ranks of people, as the Satyr of the present age has taken the liberty to do, yet there is a pleasing and a well-distinguish'd variety in those characters which he thought fit to meddle with. *Falstaff* is allow'd by every body to be a masterpiece; the Character is always well-sustain'd, tho' drawn out into the length of three Plays; and even the account of his death, given by his old landlady Mrs. *Quickly* , in the first act of *Henry* V., tho' it be extremely natural, is yet as diverting as any part of his life. If there be any fault in the draught he has made of this lewd old fellow, it is, that tho' he has made him a thief, lying, cowardly, vain-glorious, and in short every way vicious, yet he has given him so much wit as to make him almost too agreeable; and I don't know whether some people have not, in remembrance of the diversion he had formerly afforded 'em, been sorry to see his friend *Hal* use him so scurvily, when he comes to the crown in the end of the second part of *Henry* the Fourth. Amongst other extravagances, in *The Merry Wives of* Windsor, he has made him a Deer-stealer, that he might at the same time remember his *Warwickshire* prosecutor, under the name of Justice *Shallow* ; he has given him very near the same coat of arms which *Dugdale* , in his Antiquities of that county, describes for a family there, and makes the *Welsh* parson descant very pleasantly upon 'em. That whole play is admirable; the humours are various and well oppos'd; the main design, which is to cure *Ford* of his unreasonable jealousie, is extremely well conducted. *Falstaff's Billet-Doux* , and Master *Slender* 's

Ah! Sweet *Ann Page* !

are very good expressions of love in their way. In *Twelfth-Night* there is something singularly ridiculous and pleasant in the fantastical steward *Malvolio* . The parasite and the vain-glorious in *Parolles* , in *All's Well that ends Well* , is as good as any thing of that kind in *Plautus* or *Terence* . *Petruchio* , in *The Taming of the Shrew* , is an uncommon piece of humour. The conversation of *Benedick* and *Beatrice* , in *Much Ado about Nothing* , and of *Rosalind* in *As you like it* , have much wit and sprightliness all along. His clowns, without which character there was hardly any play writ in that time, are all very entertaining: And, I believe, *Thersites* in *Troilus* and *Cressida* , and *Apemantus* in *Timon* , will be allow'd to be masterpieces of ill nature and satyrical snarling. To these I might add that incomparable character of *Shylock* the *Jew* in *The Merchant of* Venice; but tho' we have seen that play receiv'd and acted as a Comedy, and the part of the *Jew* perform'd by an excellent Comedian, yet I cannot but think it was design'd tragically by the Author. There appears in it such a deadly spirit of revenge, such a savage fierceness and fellness, and such a bloody designation of cruelty and mischief, as cannot agree either with the stile or characters of Comedy. The Play it self, take it all together, seems to me to be one of the most finish'd of any of *Shakespear* 's. The tale indeed, in that part relating to the caskets, and the extravagant and unusual kind of bond given by *Antonio* , is a little too much remov'd from the rules of probability: But taking the fact for granted, we must allow it to be very beautifully written. There is something in the friendship of *Antonio* to *Bassanio* very great, generous, and tender. The whole fourth act, supposing, as I said, the fact to be probable, is extremely fine. But there are two passages that deserve a particular notice. The first is, what

Portia says in praise of mercy, and the other on the power of musick. The melancholy of *Jaques* , in *As you like it* , is as singular and odd as it is diverting. And if what *Horace* says,

Difficile est proprie communia dicere,

'twill be a hard task for any one to go beyond him in the description of the several degrees and ages of man's life, tho' the thought be old, and common enough.

——All the World's a Stage,

And all the men and women meerly Players;

They have their Exits and their Entrances,

And one man in his time plays many Parts,

His Acts being seven Ages. At first the Infant

Mewling and puking in the nurse's arms:

And then, the whining School-boy with his satchel,

And shining morning-face, creeping like snail

Unwillingly to school. And then the Lover

Sighing like furnace, with a woful ballad

Made to his Mistress' eye-brow. Then a Soldier

Full of strange oaths, and bearded like the Pard,

Jealous in honour, sudden and quick in quarrel,

Seeking the bubble Reputation

Ev'n in the cannon's mouth. And then the Justice

In fair round belly, with good capon lin'd,

With eyes severe, and beard of formal cut,

Full of wise saws and modern instances;

And so he plays his part. The sixth Age shifts

Into the lean and slipper'd Pantaloon,

With spectacles on nose, and pouch on side;

His youthful hose, well sav'd, a world too wide

For his shrunk shank; and his big manly voice

Turning again tow'rd childish treble, pipes

And whistles in his sound: Last Scene of all,

That ends this strange eventful History,

Is second childishness and meer oblivion,

Sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans ev'ry thing.

His Images are indeed ev'ry where so lively, that the thing he would represent stands full before you, and you possess ev'ry part of it. I will venture to point out one more, which is, I think, as strong and as uncommon as any thing I ever saw; 'tis an image of Patience. Speaking of a maid in love, he says,

——She never told her love,

But let concealment, like a worm i'th' bud,

Feed on her damask cheek: She pin'd in thought,

And sate like *Patience* on a monument,

Smiling at *Grief* .

What an Image is here given! and what a task would it have been for the greatest masters of *Greece* and *Rome* to have express'd the passions design'd by this sketch of Statuary! The stile of his Comedy is, in general, natural to the characters, and easie in it self; and the wit most commonly sprightly and pleasing, except in those places where he runs into dogrel rhymes, as in *The Comedy of Errors* , and a passage or two in some other plays. As for his jingling sometimes, and playing upon words, it was the common vice of the age he liv'd in: And if we find it in the Pulpit, made use of as an ornament to the Sermons of some of the gravest Divines of those times; perhaps it may not be thought too light for the Stage.

But certainly the greatness of this Author's genius do's no where so much appear, as where he gives his imagination an entire loose, and raises his fancy to a flight above mankind and the limits of the visible world. Such are his attempts in *The Tempest* , *Midsummer Nights Dream* , *Macbeth* , and *Hamlet* . Of these, *The Tempest* , however it comes to be plac'd the first by the former publishers of his works, can never have been the first written by him: It seems to me as perfect in its kind, as almost any thing we have of his. One may observe, that the Unities are kept here, with an exactness uncommon to the liberties of his writing; tho' that was what, I suppose, he valu'd himself least upon, since his excellencies were all of another kind. I am very sensible that he do's, in this play, depart too much from that likeness to truth which ought to be observ'd in these sort of writings; yet he do's it so very finely, that one is easily drawn in to have more faith for his sake, than reason does well allow of. His Magick has something in it very solemn and very poetical: And that extravagant character of *Caliban* is mighty well sustain'd, shews a wonderful invention in the Author, who could strike out such a particular wild image, and is certainly one of the finest and most uncommon Grotesques that was ever seen. The observation, which I have been inform'd three very great men concurr'd in making upon this part, was extremely just: *That* Shakespear *had not only found out a new Character in his* Caliban, *but had also devis'd and adapted a new manner of Language for that Character* . Among the particular beauties of this piece, I think one may be allow'd to point out the tale of *Prospero* in the first Act; his speech to *Ferdinand* in the fourth, upon the breaking up the masque of *Juno* and *Ceres* ; and that in the fifth, when he dissolves his charms, and resolves to break his magick rod. This Play has been alter'd by Sir *William D'Avenant* and Mr. *Dryden* ; and tho' I won't arraign the judgment of those two great men, yet I think I may be allow'd to say, that there are some things left out by them, that might, and even ought to have been kept in. Mr. *Dryden* was an admirer of our Author, and, indeed, he owed him a great deal, as those who have read them both may very easily observe. And, I think, in justice to 'em both, I should not on this occasion omit what Mr. *Dryden* has said of him.

Shakespear , who, taught by none, did first impart

To *Fletcher* Wit, to lab'ring *Johnson* Art:

He, monarch-like, gave those his subjects Law,

And is that Nature which they paint and draw.

Fletcher reach'd that which on his heights did grow,

Whilst *Johnson* crept and gather'd all below:

This did his Love, and this his Mirth digest,

One imitates him most, the other best.

If they have since out-writ all other men,

'Tis with the drops which fell from *Shakespear* 's pen.

The Storm which vanish'd on the neighb'ring shoar,

Was taught by *Shakespear* 's Tempest first to roar.

That innocence and beauty which did smile

In *Fletcher* , grew on this *Enchanted Isle* .

But *Shakespear* 's Magick could not copied be,

Within that Circle none durst walk but he.

I must confess 'twas bold, nor would you now

That liberty to vulgar Wits allow,

Which works by Magick supernatural things:

But *Shakespear* 's Pow'r is Sacred as a King's.

Prologue to *The Tempest* , as it is alter'd by Mr. *Dryden* .

It is the same magick that raises the Fairies in *Midsummer Night's Dream* , the Witches in *Macbeth* , and the Ghost in *Hamlet* , with thoughts and language so proper to the parts they sustain, and so peculiar to the talent of this Writer. But of the two last of these Plays I shall have occasion to take notice, among the Tragedies of Mr. *Shakespear* . If one undertook to examine the greatest part of these by those rules which are establish'd by *Aristotle* , and taken from the model of the *Grecian* stage, it would be no very hard task to find a great many faults: But as *Shakespear* liv'd under a kind of mere light of nature, and had never been made acquainted with the regularity of those written precepts, so it would be hard to judge him by a law he knew nothing of. We are to consider him as a man that liv'd in a state of almost universal licence and ignorance: There was no establish'd judge, but every one took the liberty to write according to the dictates of his own fancy. When one considers that there is not one play before him of a reputation good enough to entitle it to an appearance on the present Stage, it cannot but be a matter of great wonder that he should advance dramatick Poetry so far as he did. The Fable is what is generally plac'd the first, among those that are reckon'd the constituent parts of a Tragick or Heroick Poem; not, perhaps, as it is the most difficult or beautiful, but as it is the first properly to be thought of in the contrivance and course of the whole; and with the Fable ought to be consider'd the fit Disposition, Order, and Conduct of its several parts. As it is not in this province of the *Drama* that the strength and mastery of *Shakespear* lay, so I shall not undertake the tedious and ill-natur'd trouble to point out the several faults he was guilty of in it. His Tales were seldom invented, but rather taken either from true History, or Novels and Romances: And he commonly made use of 'em in that order, with those incidents, and that extent of time in which he found 'em in the Authors from whence he borrow'd them. So *The Winter's Tale* , which is taken from an old book, call'd *The Delectable History of* Dorastus *and* Faunia, contains the space of sixteen or seventeen years, and the Scene is sometimes laid in *Bohemia* , and sometimes in *Sicily* , according to the original order of the Story. Almost all his historical Plays comprehend a great length of time, and very different and distinct places: And in his *Antony* and *Cleopatra* , the Scene travels over the greatest part of the *Roman* empire. But in recompence for his carelessness in this point, when he comes to another part of the *Drama, The Manners of his Characters, in acting or speaking what is proper for them, and fit to be shown by the Poet* , he may be generally justify'd, and in very many places greatly commended. For those Plays which he has taken from the *English* or *Roman* history, let any man compare 'em, and he will find the character as exact in the Poet as the Historian. He seems indeed so far from proposing to himself any one action for a Subject, that the Title very often tells you, 'tis *The Life of King* John, *King* Richard, *&c.* What can be more agreeable to the idea our historians give of *Henry* the Sixth, than the picture *Shakespear* has drawn of him! His Manners are every where exactly the same with the story; one finds him still describ'd with simplicity, passive sanctity, want of courage, weakness of mind, and easie submission to the governance of an imperious Wife, or prevailing Faction: Tho' at the same time the Poet do's justice to his good qualities, and moves the pity of his audience for him, by showing him pious, disinterested, a contemner of the things of this world, and wholly resign'd to the severest dispensations of God's providence. There is a short Scene in the second part of *Henry* VI., which I cannot but think admirable in its kind. Cardinal *Beaufort* , who had murder'd the Duke of *Gloucester* , is shewn in the last agonies on his death-bed, with the good King praying over him. There is so much terror in one, so much tenderness and moving piety in the other, as must touch any one who is capable either of fear or pity. In his *Henry* VIII. that Prince is drawn with that greatness of mind, and all those good qualities which are attributed to him in any account of his reign. If his faults are not shewn in an equal degree, and the shades in this picture do not bear a just proportion to the lights, it is not that the Artist wanted either colours or skill in the disposition of 'em; but the truth, I believe, might be, that he forbore doing it out of regard to Queen *Elizabeth* , since it could have been no very great respect to the memory of his Mistress, to have expos'd some certain parts of her father's life upon the stage. He has dealt much more freely with the Minister of that great King, and certainly nothing was ever more justly written, than the character of Cardinal *Wolsey* . He has shewn him tyrannical, cruel, and insolent in his prosperity; and yet, by a wonderful address, he makes his fall and ruin the subject of general compassion. The whole man, with his vices and virtues, is finely and exactly describ'd in the second Scene of the fourth Act. The distresses likewise of Queen *Katherine* , in this Play, are very movingly touch'd; and tho' the art of the Poet has skreen'd King *Henry* from any gross imputation of injustice, yet one is inclin'd to wish, the Queen had met with a fortune more worthy of her birth and virtue. Nor are the Manners, proper to the persons represented, less justly observ'd in those characters taken from the *Roman* History; and of this, the fierceness and impatience of *Coriolanus* , his courage and disdain of the common people, the virtue and philosophical temper of *Brutus* , and the irregular greatness of mind in *M. Antony* , are beautiful proofs. For the two last especially, you find 'em exactly as they are describ'd by *Plutarch* , from whom certainly *Shakespear* copy'd 'em. He has indeed follow'd his original pretty close, and taken in several little incidents that might have been spar'd in a Play. But, as I hinted before, his design seems most commonly rather to describe those great men in the several fortunes and accidents of their lives, than to take any single great action, and form his work simply upon that. However, there are some of his pieces, where the Fable is founded upon one action only. Such are more especially, *Romeo* and *Juliet* , *Hamlet* , and *Othello* . The design in *Romeo* and *Juliet* is plainly the punishment of their two families, for the unreasonable feuds and animosities that had been so long kept up between 'em, and occasion'd the effusion of so much blood. In the management of this story, he has shewn something wonderfully tender and passionate in the love-part, and very pitiful in the distress. *Hamlet* is founded on much the same Tale with the *Electra* of *Sophocles* . In each of 'em a young Prince is engag'd to revenge the death of his father, their mothers are equally guilty, are both concern'd in the murder of their husbands, and are afterwards married to the murderers. There is in the first part of the *Greek* Tragedy, something very moving in the grief of *Electra* ; but as Mr. *D'Acier* has observ'd, there is something very unnatural and shocking in the Manners he has given that Princess and *Orestes* in the latter part. *Orestes* embrues his hands in the blood of his own mother; and that barbarous action is perform'd, tho' not immediately upon the stage, yet so near, that the audience hear *Clytemnestra* crying out to *Ægysthus* for help, and to her son for mercy: While *Electra* , her daughter, and a Princess, both of them characters that ought to have appear'd with more decency, stands upon the stage and encourages her brother in the parricide. What horror does this not raise! *Clytemnestra* was a wicked woman, and had deserv'd to die; nay, in the truth of the story, she was kill'd by her own son; but to represent an action of this kind on the stage, is certainly an offence against those rules of manners proper to the persons, that ought to be observ'd there. On the contrary, let us only look a little on the conduct of *Shakespear* . *Hamlet* is represented with the same piety towards his father, and resolution to revenge his death, as *Orestes* ; he has the same abhorrence for his mother's guilt, which, to provoke him the more, is heighten'd by incest: But 'tis with wonderful art and justness of judgment, that the Poet restrains him from doing violence to his mother. To prevent any thing of that kind, he makes his father's Ghost forbid that part of his vengeance.

But howsoever thou pursu'st this Act,

Taint not thy mind; nor let thy soul contrive

Against thy mother ought; leave her to Heav'n,

And to those thorns that in her bosom lodge,

To prick and sting her.

This is to distinguish rightly between *Horror* and *Terror* . The latter is a proper passion of Tragedy, but the former ought always to be carefully avoided. And certainly no dramatick Writer ever succeeded better in raising *Terror* in the minds of an audience than *Shakespear* has done. The whole Tragedy of *Macbeth* , but more especially the scene where the King is murder'd, in the second Act, as well as this Play, is a noble proof of that manly spirit with which he writ; and both shew how powerful he was, in giving the strongest motions to our souls that they are capable of. I cannot leave *Hamlet* without taking notice of the advantage with which we have seen this Masterpiece of *Shakespear* distinguish it self upon the stage, by Mr. *Betterton* 's fine performance of that part: A man who, tho' he had no other good qualities, as he has a great many, must have made his way into the esteem of all men of letters, by this only excellency. No man is better acquainted with *Shakespear* 's manner of expression, and indeed he has study'd him so well, and is so much a master of him, that whatever part of his he performs, he does it as if it had been written on purpose for him, and that the Author had exactly conceiv'd it as he plays it. I must own a particular obligation to him, for the most considerable part of the passages relating to this life, which I have here transmitted to the publick; his veneration for the memory of *Shakespear* having engaged him to make a journey into *Warwickshire* , on purpose to gather up what remains he could of a name for which he had so great a value. Since I had at first resolv'd not to enter into any critical controversie, I won't pretend to enquire into the justness of Mr. *Rhymer* 's Remarks on *Othello* ; he has certainly pointed out some faults very judiciously; and indeed they are such as most people will agree, with him, to be faults: But I wish he would likewise have observ'd some of the beauties too; as I think it became an exact and equal Critique to do. It seems strange that he should allow nothing good in the whole: If the Fable and Incidents are not to his taste, yet the Thoughts are almost every where very noble, and the Diction manly and proper. These last, indeed, are parts of *Shakespear* 's praise, which it would be very hard to dispute with him. His Sentiments and Images of things are great and natural; and his Expression (tho' perhaps in some instances a little irregular) just, and rais'd in proportion to his subject and occasion. It would be even endless to mention the particular instances that might be given of this kind: But his Book is in the possession of the publick, and 'twill be hard to dip into any part of it, without finding what I have said of him made good.

The latter part of his life was spent, as all men of good sense will wish theirs may be, in ease, retirement, and the conversation of his friends. He had the good fortune to gather an estate equal to his occasion, and, in that, to his wish; and is said to have spent some years before his death at his native *Stratford* . His pleasurable wit, and good nature, engag'd him in the acquaintance, and entitled him to the friendship of the gentlemen of the neighbourhood. Amongst them, it is a story almost still remember'd in that country, that he had a particular intimacy with Mr. *Combe* , an old gentleman noted thereabouts for his wealth and usury: It happen'd, that in a pleasant conversation amongst their common friends, Mr. *Combe* told *Shakespear* in a laughing manner, that he fancy'd he intended to write his Epitaph, if he happen'd to out-live him; and since he could not know what might be said of him when he was dead, he desir'd it might be done immediately: Upon which *Shakespear* gave him these four verses.

Ten in the hundred lies here ingrav'd,

'Tis a hundred to ten his soul is not sav'd:

If any man ask, Who lies in this tomb?

Oh! ho! quoth the devil, 'tis my *John-a-Combe* .

But the sharpness of the Satyr is said to have stung the man so severely, that he never forgave it.

He dy'd in the 53d year of his age, and was bury'd on the north side of the chancel, in the great church at *Stratford* , where a monument, as engrav'd in the plate, is plac'd in the wall. On his Grave-stone underneath is,

Good friend, for Jesus sake, forbear

To dig the dust inclosed here.

Blest be the man that spares these stones,

And curst be he that moves my bones.

He had three daughters, of which two liv'd to be marry'd; *Judith* , the elder, to one Mr. *Thomas Quiney* , by whom she had three Sons, who all dy'd without children; and *Susannah* , who was his favourite, to Dr. *John Hall* , a physician of good reputation in that country. She left one child only, a daughter, who was marry'd first to *Thomas Nash* , Esq; and afterwards to Sir *John Bernard* of *Abington* , but dy'd likewise without issue.

This is what I could learn of any note, either relating to himself or family: The character of the man is best seen in his writings. But since *Ben Johnson* has made a sort of an essay towards it in his *Discoveries* , tho', as I have before hinted, he was not very cordial in his friendship, I will venture to give it in his words.

“I remember the Players have often mention'd it as an honour to *Shakespear* , that in writing (whatsoever he penn'd) he never blotted out a line. My answer hath been, *Would he had blotted a thousand* , which they thought a malevolent speech. I had not told posterity this, but for their ignorance, who chose that circumstance to commend their friend by, wherein he most faulted: And to justifie mine own candor (for I lov'd the man, and do honour his memory, on this side idolatry, as much as any). He was, indeed, honest, and of an open and free nature, had an excellent fancy, brave notions, and gentle expressions; wherein he flow'd with that facility, that sometimes it was necessary he should be stopp'd: *Sufflaminandus erat* , as *Augustus* said of *Haterius* . His wit was in his own power, would the rule of it had been so too. Many times he fell into those things could not escape laughter; as when he said in the person of *Cæsar* , one speaking to him,

Cæsar thou dost me wrong.

He reply'd:

Cæsar did never wrong, but with just cause.

and such like, which were ridiculous. But he redeem'd his vices with his virtues: There was ever more in him to be prais'd than to be pardon'd.”

As for the passage which he mentions out of *Shakespear* , there is somewhat like it in *Julius Cæsar* , but without the absurdity; nor did I ever meet with it in any edition that I have seen, as quoted by Mr. *Johnson* . Besides his plays in this edition, there are two or three ascrib'd to him by Mr. *Langbain* , which I have never seen, and know nothing of. He writ likewise, *Venus* and *Adonis* , and *Tarquin* and *Lucrece* , in stanza's, which have been printed in a late collection of Poems. As to the character given of him by *Ben Johnson* , there is a good deal true in it: But I believe it may be as well express'd by what *Horace* says of the first *Romans* , who wrote Tragedy upon the *Greek* models (or indeed translated 'em), in his epistle to *Augustus* .

—— Natura sublimis & Acer,

Nam spirat Tragicum satis & feliciter Audet,

Sed turpem putat in Chartis metuitque Lituram.

There is a Book of Poems, publish'd in 1640, under the name of Mr. *William Shakespear* , but as I have but very lately seen it, without an opportunity of making any judgment upon it, I won't pretend to determine, whether it be his or no.

John Dennis: On the Genius and Writings of Shakespeare. 1711.

Letter I.

Sir , Feb. 1. 1710/11.

I here send you the Tragedy of *Coriolanus* , which I have alter'd from the Original of *Shakespear* , and with it a short Account of the Genius and Writings of that Author, both which you desired me to send to you the last time I had the good Fortune to see you. But I send them both upon this condition, that you will with your usual Sincerity tell me your Sentiments both of the Poem and of the Criticism.

Shakespear was one of the greatest Genius's that the World e'er saw for the Tragick Stage. Tho' he lay under greater Disadvantages than any of his Successors, yet had he greater and more genuine Beauties than the best and greatest of them. And what makes the brightest Glory of his Character, those Beauties were entirely his own, and owing to the Force of his own Nature; whereas his Faults were owing to his Education, and to the Age that he liv'd in. One may say of him as they did of *Homer* , that he had none to imitate, and is himself inimitable. His Imaginations were often as just, as they were bold and strong. He had a natural Discretion which never cou'd have been taught him, and his Judgment was strong and penetrating. He seems to have wanted nothing but Time and Leisure for Thought, to have found out those Rules of which he appears so ignorant. His Characters are always drawn justly, exactly, graphically, except where he fail'd by not knowing History or the Poetical Art. He has for the most part more fairly distinguish'd them than any of his Successors have done, who have falsified them, or confounded them, by making Love the predominant Quality in all. He had so fine a Talent for touching the Passions, and they are so lively in him, and so truly in Nature, that they often touch us more without their due Preparations, than those of other Tragick Poets, who have all the Beauty of Design and all the Advantage of Incidents. His Master-Passion was Terror, which he has often mov'd so powerfully and so wonderfully, that we may justly conclude, that if he had had the Advantage of Art and Learning, he wou'd have surpass'd the very best and strongest of the Ancients. His Paintings are often so beautiful and so lively, so graceful and so powerful, especially where he uses them in order to move Terror, that there is nothing perhaps more accomplish'd in our *English* Poetry. His Sentiments for the most part in his best Tragedies, are noble, generous, easie, and natural, and adapted to the Persons who use them. His Expression is in many Places good and pure after a hundred Years; simple tho' elevated, graceful tho' bold, and easie tho' strong. He seems to have been the very Original of our *English* Tragical Harmony; that is the Harmony of Blank Verse, diversifyed often by Dissyllable and Trissyllable Terminations. For that Diversity distinguishes it from Heroick Harmony, and, bringing it nearer to common Use, makes it more proper to gain Attention, and more fit for Action and Dialogue. Such Verse we make when we are writing Prose; we make such Verse in common Conversation.

If *Shakespear* had these great Qualities by Nature, what would he not have been, if he had join'd to so happy a Genius Learning and the Poetical Art? For want of the latter, our Author has sometimes made gross Mistakes in the Characters which he has drawn from History, against the Equality and Conveniency of Manners of his Dramatical Persons. Witness *Menenius* in the following Tragedy, whom he has made an errant Buffoon, which is a great Absurdity. For he might as well have imagin'd a grave majestick *Jack-Pudding* , as a Buffoon in a *Roman* Senator. *Aufidius* the General of the *Volscians* is shewn a base and a profligate Villain. He has offended against the Equality of the Manners even in his Hero himself. For *Coriolanus* who in the first part of the Tragedy is shewn so open, so frank, so violent, and so magnanimous, is represented in the latter part by *Aufidius* , which is contradicted by no one, a flattering, fawning, cringing, insinuating Traytor.

For want of this Poetical Art, *Shakespear* has introduced things into his Tragedies, which are against the Dignity of that noble Poem, as the Rabble in *Julius Cæsar* , and that in *Coriolanus* ; tho' that in *Coriolanus* offends not only against the Dignity of Tragedy, but against the Truth of History likewise, and the Customs of Ancient *Rome* , and the Majesty of the *Roman* People, as we shall have occasion to shew anon.

For want of this Art, he has made his Incidents less moving, less surprizing, and less wonderful. He has been so far from seeking those fine Occasions to move with which an Action furnish'd according to Art would have furnish'd him, that he seems rather to have industriously avoided them. He makes *Coriolanus* , upon his Sentence of Banishment, take his leave of his Wife and his Mother out of sight of the Audience, and so has purposely as it were avoided a great occasion to move.

If we are willing to allow that *Shakespear* , by sticking to the bare Events of History, has mov'd more than any of his Successors, yet his just Admirers must confess, that if he had had the Poetical Art, he would have mov'd ten times more. For 'tis impossible that by a bare Historical Play he could move so much as he would have done by a Fable.

We find that a Romance entertains the generality of Mankind with more Satisfaction than History, if they read only to be entertain'd; but if they read History thro' Pride or Ambition, they bring their Passions along with them, and that alters the case. Nothing is more plain than that even in an Historical

Relation some Parts of it, and some Events, please more than others. And therefore a Man of Judgment, who sees why they do so, may in forming a Fable, and disposing an Action, please more than an Historian can do. For the just Fiction of a Fable moves us more than an Historical Relation can do, for the two following Reasons: First, by reason of the Communication and mutual Dependence of its Parts. For if Passion springs from Motion, then the Obstruction of that Motion or a counter Motion must obstruct and check the Passion: And therefore an Historian and a Writer of Historical Plays, passing from Events of one nature to Events of another nature without a due Preparation, must of necessity stifle and confound one Passion by another. The second Reason why the Fiction of a Fable pleases us more than an Historical Relation can do, is, because in an Historical Relation we seldom are acquainted with the true Causes of Events, whereas in a feign'd Action which is duly constituted, that is, which has a just beginning, those Causes always appear. For 'tis observable, that, both in a Poetical Fiction and an Historical Relation, those Events are the most entertaining, the most surprizing, and the most wonderful, in which Providence most plainly appears. And 'tis for this Reason that the Author of a just Fable must please more than the Writer of an Historical Relation. The Good must never fail to prosper, and the Bad must be always punish'd: Otherwise the Incidents, and particularly the Catastrophe which is the grand Incident, are liable to be imputed rather to Chance, than to Almighty Conduct and to Sovereign Justice. The want of this impartial Distribution of Justice makes the *Coriolanus* of *Shakespear* to be without Moral. 'Tis true indeed *Coriolanus* is kill'd by those Foreign Enemies with whom he had openly sided against his Country, which seems to be an Event worthy of Providence, and would look as if it were contriv'd by infinite Wisdom, and executed by supreme Justice, to make *Coriolanus* a dreadful Example to all who lead on Foreign Enemies to the Invasion of their native Country; if there were not something in the Fate of the other Characters, which gives occasion to doubt of it, and which suggests to the Sceptical Reader that this might happen by accident. For *Aufidius* the principal Murderer of *Coriolanus* , who in cold Blood gets him assassinated by Ruffians, instead of leaving him to the Law of the Country, and the Justice of the *Volscian* Senate, and who commits so black a Crime, not by any erroneous Zeal, or a mistaken publick Spirit, but thro' Jealousy, Envy, and inveterate Malice; this Assassinator not only survives, and survives unpunish'd, but seems to be rewarded for so detestable an Action, by engrossing all those Honours to himself which *Coriolanus* before had shar'd with him. But not only *Aufidius* , but the *Roman* Tribunes, *Sicinius* and *Brutus* , appear to me to cry aloud for Poetick Vengeance. For they are guilty of two Faults, neither of which ought to go unpunish'd: The first in procuring the Banishment of *Coriolanus* . If they were really jealous that *Coriolanus* had a Design on their Liberties, when he stood for the Consulship, it was but just that they should give him a Repulse; but to get the Champion and Defender of their Country banish'd upon a pretended Jealousy was a great deal too much, and could proceed from nothing but that Hatred and Malice which they had conceiv'd against him, for opposing their Institution. Their second Fault lay in procuring this Sentence by indirect Methods, by exasperating and inflaming the People by Artifices and Insinuations, by taking a base Advantage of the Open-heartedness and Violence of *Coriolanus* , and by oppressing him with a Sophistical Argument, that he aim'd at Sovereignty, because he had not delivered into the Publick Treasury the Spoils which he had taken from the *Antiates* . As if a Design of Sovereignty could be reasonably concluded from any one Act; or any one could think of bringing to pass such a Design, by eternally favouring the Patricians, and disobliging the Populace. For we need make no doubt but that it was among the young Patricians that *Coriolanus* distributed the Spoils which were taken from the *Antiates* ; whereas nothing but caressing the Populace could enslave the *Roman* People, as *Cæsar* afterwards very well saw and experienc'd. So that this Injustice of the Tribunes was the original Cause of the Calamity which afterwards befel their Country, by the Invasion of the *Volscians* , under the Conduct of *Coriolanus* . And yet these Tribunes at the end of the Play, like *Aufidius* , remain unpunish'd. But indeed *Shakespear* has been wanting in the exact Distribution of Poetical Justice not only in his *Coriolanus* , but in most of his best Tragedies, in which the Guilty and the Innocent perish promiscuously; as *Duncan* and *Banquo* in *Mackbeth* , as likewise Lady *Macduffe* and her Children; *Desdemona* in *Othello* ; *Cordelia* , *Kent* , and King *Lear* , in the Tragedy that bears his Name; *Brutus* and *Porcia* in *Julius Cæsar* ; and young *Hamlet* in the Tragedy of *Hamlet* . For tho' it may be said in Defence of the last, that *Hamlet* had a Design to kill his Uncle who then reign'd; yet this is justify'd by no less than a Call from Heaven, and raising up one from the Dead to urge him to it. The Good and the Bad then perishing promiscuously in the best of *Shakespear* 's Tragedies, there can be either none or very weak Instruction in them: For such promiscuous Events call the Government of Providence into Question, and by Scepticks and Libertines are resolv'd into Chance. I humbly conceive therefore that this want of Dramatical Justice in the Tragedy of *Coriolanus* gave occasion for a just Alteration, and that I was oblig'd to sacrifice to that Justice *Aufidius* and the Tribunes, as well as *Coriolanus* .

Thus have we endeavour'd to shew that, for want of the Poetical Art, *Shakespear* lay under very great Disadvantages. At the same time we must own to his Honour, that he has often perform'd Wonders without it, in spight of the Judgment of so great a Man as *Horace* .

Natura fieret laudabile carmen, an arte,

Quæsitum est: ego nec studium sine divite vena,

Nec rude quid prosit video ingenium; alterius sic

Altera poscit opem res, & conjurat amice.

But from this very Judgment of *Horace* we may justly conclude that *Shakespear* would have wonderfully surpass'd himself, if Art had been join'd to Nature. There never was a greater Genius in the World than *Virgil* : He was one who seems to have been born for this glorious End, that the *Roman* Muse might exert in him the utmost Force of her Poetry: And his admirable and divine Beauties are manifestly owing to the happy Confederacy of Art and Nature. It was Art that contriv'd that incomparable Design of the *Æneis* , and it was Nature that executed it. Could the greatest Genius that ever was infus'd into Earthly Mold by Heaven, if it had been unguided and unassisted by Art, have taught him to make that noble and wonderful Use of the *Pythagorean* Transmigration, which he makes in the Sixth Book of his Poem? Had *Virgil* been a circular Poet, and closely adher'd to History, how could the *Romans* have been transported with that inimitable Episode of *Dido* , which brought a-fresh into their Minds the *Carthaginian* War, and the dreadful *Hannibal* ? When 'tis evident that that admirable Episode is so little owing to a faithful observance of History, and the exact order of Time, that 'tis deriv'd from a very bold but judicious Violation of these; it being undeniable that *Dido* liv'd almost 300 Years after *Æneas* . Yet is it that charming Episode that makes the chief Beauties of a third Part of the Poem. For the Destruction of *Troy* it self, which is so divinely related, is still more admirable by the Effect it produces, which is the Passion of *Dido* .

I should now proceed to shew under what Disadvantages *Shakespear* lay for want of being conversant with the Ancients. But I have already writ a long Letter, and am desirous to know how you relish what has been already said before I go any farther: For I am unwilling to take more Pains before I am sure of giving you some Pleasure. I am,

Sir ,

Your most humble, faithful Servant .

Letter II.

Sir , Feb. 6. 1710/11.

Upon the Encouragement I have receiv'd from you, I shall proceed to shew under what Disadvantages *Shakespear* lay for want of being conversant with the Ancients. But because I have lately been in some Conversation, where they would not allow but that he was acquainted with the Ancients, I shall endeavour to make it appear that he was not; and the shewing that in the Method in which I pretend to convince the Reader of it, will sufficiently prove what Inconveniencies he lay under, and what Errors he committed for want of being conversant with them. But here we must distinguish between the several kinds of Acquaintance: A Man may be said to be acquainted with another who never was but twice in his Company; but that is at the best a superficial Acquaintance, from which neither very great Pleasure nor Profit can be deriv'd. Our Business is here to shew that *Shakespear* had no familiar Acquaintance with the *Græcian* and *Roman* Authors. For if he was familiarly conversant with them, how comes it to pass that he wants Art? Is it that he studied to know them in other things, and neglected that only in them, which chiefly tends to the Advancement of the Art of the Stage? Or is it that he wanted Discernment to see the Justness, and the Greatness, and the Harmony of their Designs, and the Reasonableness of those Rules upon which those Designs are founded? Or how come his Successors to have that Discernment which he wanted, when they fall so much below him in other things? How comes he to have been guilty of the grossest Faults in Chronology, and how come we to find out those Faults? In his Tragedy of *Troylus* and *Cressida* , he introduces *Hector* speaking of *Aristotle* , who was born a thousand Years after the Death of *Hector* . In the same Play mention is made of *Milo* , which is another very great Fault in Chronology. *Alexander* is mention'd in *Coriolanus* , tho' that Conqueror of the Orient liv'd about two hundred Years after him. In this last Tragedy he has mistaken the very Names of his Dramatick Persons, if we give Credit to *Livy* . For the Mother of *Coriolanus* in the *Roman* Historian is *Vetturia* , and the Wife is *Volumnia* . Whereas in *Shakespear* the Wife is *Virgilia* , and the Mother *Volumnia* . And the *Volscian* General in *Shakespear* is *Tullus Aufidius* , and *Tullus Attius* in *Livy* . How comes it that he takes *Plutarch* 's Word, who was by Birth a *Græcian* , for the Affairs of *Rome* , rather than that of the *Roman* Historian, if so be that he had read the latter? Or what Reason can be given for his not reading him, when he wrote upon a *Roman* Story, but that in *Shakespear* 's time there was a Translation of *Plutarch* , and there was none of *Livy* ? If *Shakespear* was familiarly conversant with the *Roman* Authors, how came he to introduce a Rabble into *Coriolanus* , in which he offended not only against the Dignity of Tragedy, but the Truth of Fact, the Authority of all the *Roman* Writers, the Customs of Ancient *Rome* , and the Majesty of the *Roman* People? By introducing a Rabble into *Julius Cæsar* , he only offended against the Dignity of Tragedy. For that part of the People who ran about the Streets upon great Festivals, or publick Calamities, or publick Rejoicings, or Revolutions in Government, are certainly the Scum of the Populace. But the Persons who in the Time of *Coriolanus* rose in Vindication of their just Rights, and extorted from the Patricians the Institution of the Tribunes of the People, and the Persons by whom afterwards *Coriolanus* was tried, were the whole Body of the *Roman* People to the Reserve of the Patricians, which Body included the *Roman* Knights, and the wealthy substantial Citizens, who were as different from the Rabble as the Patricians themselves, as qualify'd as the latter to form a right Judgment of Things, and to contemn the vain Opinions of the Rabble. So at least *Horace* esteems them, who very well knew his Countrymen.

Offenduntur enim, quibus est equus, aut pater, aut res,

Nec, siquid fricti ciceris probat aut nucis emptor,

Æquis accipiunt animis donantve Corona.

Where we see the Knights and the substantial Citizens are rank'd in an equal Degree of Capacity with the *Roman* Senators, and are equally distinguish'd from the Rabble.

If *Shakespear* was so conversant with the Ancients, how comes he to have introduc'd some Characters into his Plays so unlike what they are to be found in History? In the Character of *Menenius* in the following Tragedy, he has doubly offended against that Historical Resemblance. For first whereas *Menenius* was an eloquent Person, *Shakespear* has made him a downright Buffoon. And how is it possible for any Man to conceive a *Ciceronian Jack-pudding* ? Never was any Buffoon eloquent, or wise, or witty, or virtuous. All the good and ill Qualities of a Buffoon are summ'd up in one Word, and that is a Buffoon. And secondly, whereas *Shakespear* has made him a Hater and Contemner and Villifier of the People, we are assur'd by the *Roman* Historian that *Menenius* was extremely popular. He was so very far from opposing the Institution of the Tribunes, as he is represented in *Shakespear* , that he was chiefly instrumental in it. After the People had deserted the City, and sat down upon the sacred Mountain, he was the chief of the Delegates whom the Senate deputed to them, as being look'd upon to be the Person who would be most agreeable to them. In short, this very *Menenius* both liv'd and dy'd so very much their Favourite, that dying poor he had pompous Funerals at the Expence of the *Roman* People.

Had *Shakespear* read either *Sallust* or *Cicero* , how could he have made so very little of the first and greatest of Men, as that *Cæsar* should be but a Fourth-rate Actor in his own Tragedy? How could it have been that, seeing *Cæsar* , we should ask for *Cæsar* ? That we should ask, where is his unequall'd Greatness of Mind, his unbounded Thirst of Glory, and that victorious Eloquence, with which he triumph'd over the Souls of both Friends and Enemies, and with which he rivall'd *Cicero* in Genius as he did *Pompey* in Power? How fair an Occasion was there to open the Character of *Cæsar* in the first Scene between *Brutus* and *Cassius* ? For when *Cassius* tells *Brutus* that *Cæsar* was but a Man like them, and had the same natural Imperfections which they had, how natural had it been for *Brutus* to reply, that *Cæsar* indeed had their Imperfections of Nature, but neither he nor *Cassius* had by any means the great Qualities of *Cæsar* : neither his Military Virtue, nor Science, nor his matchless Renown, nor his unparallell'd Victories, his unwearied Bounty to his Friends, nor his Godlike Clemency to his Foes, his Beneficence, his Munificence, his Easiness of Access to the meanest *Roman* , his indefatigable Labours, his incredible Celerity, the Plausibleness if not Justness of his Ambition, that knowing himself to be the greatest of Men, he only sought occasion to make the World confess him such. In short, if *Brutus* , after enumerating all the wonderful Qualities of *Cæsar* , had resolv'd in spight of them all to sacrifice him to publick Liberty, how had such a Proceeding heighten'd the Virtue and the Character of *Brutus* ? But then indeed it would have been requisite that *Cæsar* upon his Appearance should have made all this good. And as we know no Principle of human Action but human Sentiment only, *Cæsar* , who did greater Things, and had greater Designs than the rest of the *Romans* , ought certainly to have outshin'd by many Degrees all the other Characters of his Tragedy. *Cæsar* ought particularly to have justified his Actions, and to have heighten'd his Character, by shewing that what he had done, he had done by Necessity; that the *Romans* had lost their *Agrarian* , lost their

Rotation of Magistracy, and that consequently nothing but an empty Shadow of publick Liberty remain'd; that the *Gracchi* had made the last noble but unsuccessful Efforts for the restoring the Commonwealth, that they had fail'd for want of arbitrary irresistible Power, the Restoration of the *Agrarian* requiring too vast a Retrospect to be done without it; that the Government, when *Cæsar* came to publick Affairs, was got into the Hands of a few, and that those few were factious, and were contending among themselves, and, if you will pardon so mean an Expression, scrambling as it were for Power; that *Cæsar* was reduc'd to the Necessity of ruling, or himself obeying a Master; and that apprehending that another would exercise the supreme Command without that Clemency and Moderation which he did, he had rather chosen to rule than to obey. So that *Cæsar* was faulty not so much in seizing upon the Sovereignty, which was become in a manner necessary, as in not re-establishing the Commonwealth, by restoring the *Agrarian* and the Rotation of Magistracies, after he had got absolute and uncontroulable Power. And if *Cæsar* had seiz'd upon the Sovereignty only with a View of re-establishing Liberty, he had surpass'd all Mortals in Godlike Goodness as much as he did in the rest of his astonishing Qualities. I must confess, I do not remember that we have any Authority from the *Roman* Historians which may induce us to believe that *Cæsar* had any such Design. Nor if he had had any such View, could he, who was the most secret, the most prudent, and the most discerning of Men, have discover'd it before his *Parthian* Expedition was over, for fear of utterly disobliging his Veterans. And *Cæsar* believ'd that Expedition necessary for the Honour and Interest of the State, and for his own Glory.

But of this we may be sure, that two of the most discerning of all the *Romans* , and who had the deepest Insight into the Soul of *Cæsar* , *Sallust* and *Cicero* , were not without Hopes that *Cæsar* would really re-establish Liberty, or else they would not have attack'd him upon it; the one in his Oration for *Marcus Marcellus* , the other in the Second Part of that little Treatise *De Republica ordinanda* , which is address'd to *Cæsar* . *Hæc igitur tibi reliqua pars, says Cicero, Hic restat Actus, in hoc elaborandum est, ut Rempublicam constituas, eaque tu in primis composita, summa Tranquillitate & otio perfruare. Cicero* therefore was not without Hope that *Cæsar* would re-establish the Commonwealth; and any one who attentively peruses that Oration of *Cicero* , will find that that Hope was reasonably grounded upon his knowledge of the great Qualities of *Cæsar* , his Clemency, his Beneficence, his admirable Discernment; and that avoidless Ruine in which the whole Empire would be soon involv'd, if *Cæsar* did not effect this. *Sallust* urges it still more home to him and with greater vehemence; he has recourse to every Motive that may be thought to be powerful over so great a Soul. He exhorts him by the Memory of his matchless Conquests, not to suffer the invincible Empire of the *Roman* People to be devour'd by Time, or to be torn in pieces by Discord; one of which would soon and infallibly happen, if Liberty was not restor'd.

He introduces his Country and his Progenitors urging him in a noble Prosopopeia, by all the mighty Benefits which they had conferr'd upon him, with so little Pains of his own, not to deny them that just and easy Request of the Restoration of Liberty. He adjures him by those Furies which will eternally haunt his Soul upon his impious Refusal: He implores him by the foresight of those dismal Calamities, that horrible Slaughter, those endless Wars, and that unbounded Devastation, which will certainly fall upon Mankind, if the Restoration of Liberty is prevented by his Death, or his incurable Sickness: And lastly, he entreats him by his Thirst of immortal Glory, that Glory in which he now has Rivals, if he has not Equals; but which, if he re-establishes Liberty, will be acknowledg'd by consenting Nations to have neither Equal nor Second.

I am apt to believe that if *Shakespear* had been acquainted with all this, we had had from him quite another Character of *Cæsar* than that which we now find in him. He might then have given us a Scene something like that which *Corneille* has so happily us'd in his Cinna; something like that which really happen'd between *Augustus* , *Mecænas* , and *Agrippa* . He might then have introduc'd *Cæsar* consulting *Cicero* on the one side, and on the other *Anthony* , whether he should retain that absolute Sovereignty which he had acquir'd by his Victory, or whether he should re-establish and immortalize Liberty. That would have been a Scene which might have employ'd the finest Art and the utmost force of a Writer. That had been a Scene in which all the great Qualities of *Cæsar* might have been display'd. I will not pretend to determine here how that Scene might have been turn'd; and what I have already said on this Subject, has been spoke with the utmost Caution and Diffidence. But this I will venture to say, that if that Scene had been manag'd so, as, by the powerful Motives employ'd in it, to have shaken the Soul of *Cæsar* , and to have left room for the least Hope, for the least Doubt, that *Cæsar* would have re-establish'd Liberty, after his *Parthian* Expedition; and if this Conversation had been kept secret till the Death of *Cæsar* , and then had been discover'd by *Anthony* ; then had *Cæsar* fall'n, so belov'd and lamented by the *Roman* People, so pitied and so bewail'd even by the Conspirators themselves, as never Man fell. Then there would have been a Catastrophe the most dreadful and the most deplorable that ever was beheld upon the Tragick Stage. Then had we seen the noblest of the Conspirators cursing their temerarious Act, and the most apprehensive of them in dreadful expectation of those horrible Calamities which fell upon the *Romans* after the Death of *Cæsar* . But, Sir, when I write this to you, I write it with the utmost Deference to the extraordinary Judgment of that great Man who some Years ago, I hear, alter'd the *Julius Cæsar* . And I make no doubt but that his fine Discernment and the rest of his great Qualities have amply supply'd the Defects which are found in the Character of *Shakespear* 's *Cæsar* .

I should here answer an Argument, by which some People pretend to prove, and especially those with whom I lately convers'd, that *Shakespear* was conversant with the Ancients. But besides that the Post is about to be gone, I am heartily tir'd with what I have already writ, and so doubtless are you; I shall therefore defer the rest to the next opportunity, and remain

Your, *&c* .

Letter III.

Sir , Feb. 8.

I come now to the main Argument, which some People urge to prove that *Shakespear* was conversant with the Ancients. For there is, say they, among *Shakespear* 's Plays, one call'd *The Comedy of Errors* , which is undeniably an Imitation of the *Menechmi* of *Plautus* . Now *Shakespear* , say they, being conversant with *Plautus* , it undeniably follows that he was acquainted with the Ancients; because no *Roman* Author could be hard to him who had conquer'd *Plautus* . To which I answer, that the Errors which we have mention'd above are to be accounted for no other way but by the want of knowing the Ancients, or by downright want of Capacity. But nothing can be more absurd or more unjust than to impute it to want of Capacity. For the very Sentiments of *Shakespear* alone are sufficient to shew that he had a great Understanding: And therefore we must account some other way for his Imitation of the *Menechmi* . I remember to have seen, among the Translations of *Ovid* 's Epistles printed by Mr. *Tonson* , an Imitation of that from *Œnone* to *Paris* , which Mr. *Dryden* tells us in his Preface to those Epistles was imitated by one of the Fair Sex who understood no *Latin* , but that she had done enough to make those blush who understood it the best.

There are at this day several Translators, who, as *Hudibrass* has it,

Translate from Languages of which

They understand no part of Speech.

I will not affirm that of *Shakespear* ; I believe he was able to do what Pedants call construe, but that he was able to read *Plautus* without Pain and Difficulty I can never believe. Now I appeal to you, Sir, what time he had between his Writing and his Acting, to read any thing that could not be read with Ease and Pleasure. We see that our Adversaries themselves acknowledge, that if *Shakespear* was able to read *Plautus* with Ease, nothing in Latinity could be hard to him. How comes it to pass then, that he has given us no Proofs of his familiar Acquaintance with the Ancients, but this Imitation of the *Menechmi* , and a Version of two Epistles of *Ovid* ? How comes it that he had never read *Horace* , of a superiour Merit to either, and particularly his Epistle to the *Piso's* , which so much concern'd his Art? Or if he had read that Epistle, how comes it that in his *Troylus* and *Cressida* [we must observe by the way, that when *Shakespear* wrote that Play, *Ben Johnson* had not as yet translated that Epistle] he runs counter to the Instructions which *Horace* has given for the forming the Character of *Achilles* ?

Scriptor: Honoratum si forte reponis Achillem,

Impiger, Iracundus, Inexorabilis, Acer,

Jura neget sibi nata.

Where is the *Impiger* , the *Iracundus* , or the *Acer* , in the Character of *Shakespear* 's *Achilles* ? who is nothing but a drolling, lazy, conceited, overlooking Coxcomb; so far from being the honoured *Achilles* , the Epithet that *Homer* and *Horace* after him give him, that he is deservedly the Scorn and the Jest of the rest of the Characters, even to that Buffoon *Thersites* .

Tho' *Shakespear* succeeded very well in Comedy, yet his principal Talent and his chief Delight was Tragedy. If then *Shakespear* was qualify'd to read *Plautus* with Ease, he could read with a great deal more Ease the Translations of *Sophocles* and *Euripides* . And tho' by these Translations he would not have been able to have seen the charming colouring of those great Masters, yet would he have seen all the Harmony and the Beauty of their great and their just

Designs. He would have seen enough to have stirr'd up a noble Emulation in so exalted a Soul as his. How comes it then that we hear nothing from him of the *Œdipus* , the *Electra* , the *Antigone* of *Sophocles* , of the *Iphigenia* 's, the *Orestes* , the *Medea* , the *Hecuba* of *Euripides* ? How comes it that we see nothing in the Conduct of his Pieces, that shews us that he had the least Acquaintance with any of these great Masterpieces? Did *Shakespear* appear to be so nearly touch'd with the Affliction of *Hecuba* for the Death of *Priam* , which was but daub'd and bungled by one of his Countrymen, that he could not forbear introducing it as it were by Violence into his own *Hamlet* , and would he make no Imitation, no Commendation, not the least Mention of the unparallell'd and inimitable Grief of the *Hecuba* of *Euripides* ? How comes it that we find no Imitation of any ancient Play in Him but the *Menechmi* of *Plautus* ? How came he to chuse a Comick preferably to the Tragick Poets? Or how comes he to chuse *Plautus* preferably to *Terence* , who is so much more just, more graceful, more regular, and more natural? Or how comes he to chuse the *Menechmi* of *Plautus* , which is by no means his Masterpiece, before all his other Comedies? I vehemently suspect that this Imitation of the *Menechmi* was either from a printed Translation of that Comedy which is lost, or some Version in Manuscript brought him by a Friend, or sent him perhaps by a Stranger, or from the original Play it self recommended to him, and read to him by some learned Friend. In short, I had rather account for this by what is not absurd than by what is, or by a less Absurdity than by a greater. For nothing can be more wrong than to conclude from this that *Shakespear* was conversant with the Ancients; which contradicts the Testimony of his Contemporary and his familiar Acquaintance *Ben Johnson* , and of his Successor *Milton* ;

Lo *Shakespear* , Fancy's sweetest Child,

Warbles his native Wood-notes wild;

and of Mr. *Dryden* after them both; and which destroys the most glorious Part of *Shakespear* 's Merit immediately. For how can he be esteem'd equal by Nature or superior to the Ancients, when he falls so far short of them in Art, tho' he had the Advantage of knowing all that they did before him? Nay it debases him below those of common Capacity, by reason of the Errors which we mention'd above. Therefore he who allows that *Shakespear* had Learning and a familiar Acquaintance with the Ancients, ought to be look'd upon as a Detractor from his extraordinary Merit, and from the Glory of *Great Britain* . For whether is it more honourable for this Island to have produc'd a Man who, without having any

Acquaintance with the Ancients, or any but a slender and a superficial one, appears to be their Equal or their Superiour by the Force of Genius and Nature, or to have bred one who, knowing the Ancients, falls infinitely short of them in Art, and consequently in Nature it self? *Great Britain* has but little Reason to boast of its Natives Education, since the same that they had here, they might have had in another place. But it may justly claim a very great share in their Nature and Genius, since these depend in a great measure on the Climate; and therefore *Horace* , in the Instruction which he gives for the forming the Characters, advises the noble *Romans* for whose Instruction he chiefly writes to consider whether the Dramatick Person whom they introduce is

“ Colchus an Assyrius, Thebis nutritus an Argis. ”

Thus, Sir, I have endeavour'd to shew under what great Disadvantages *Shakespear* lay, for want of the Poetical Art, and for want of being conversant with the Ancients.

But besides this, he lay under other very great Inconveniencies. For he was neither Master of Time enough to consider, correct, and polish what he wrote, to alter it, to add to it, and to retrench from it, nor had he Friends to consult upon whose Capacity and Integrity he could depend. And tho' a Person of very good Judgment may succeed very well without consulting his Friends, if he takes time enough to correct what he writes; yet even the greatest Man that Nature and Art can conspire to accomplish, can never attain to Perfection, without either employing a great deal of time, or taking the Advice of judicious Friends. Nay, 'tis the Opinion of *Horace* that he ought to do both.

Siquid tamen olim

Scripseris, in Metii descendat Judicis aures,

Et Patris, & nostras; nonumque prematur in Annum.

Now we know very well that *Shakespear* was an Actor, at a time when there were seven or eight Companies of Players in the Town together, who each of them did their utmost Endeavours to get the Audiences from the rest, and consequently that our Author was perpetually call'd upon, by those who had the Direction and Management of the Company to which he belong'd, for new Pieces which might be able to support them, and give them some Advantage over the rest. And 'tis easie to judge what Time he was Master of, between his laborious Employment of Acting and his continual Hurry of Writing. As for Friends, they whom in all likelihood *Shakespear* consulted most were two or three of his Fellow-Actors, because they had the Care of publishing his Works committed to them. Now they, as we are told by *Ben Johnson* in his *Discoveries* , were extremely pleas'd with their Friend for scarce ever making a Blot; and were very angry with *Ben* for saying he wish'd that he had made a thousand. The Misfortune of it is that *Horace* was perfectly of *Ben* 's, mind.

——Vos, O

Pompilius sanguis, carmen reprehendite, quod non

Multa dies & multa litura coercuit, atque

Præsectum decies non castigavit ad unguem.

And so was my Lord *Roscommon* .

Poets lose half the Praise they should have got,

Could it be known what they discreetly blot.

These Friends then of *Shakespear* were not qualify'd to advise him. As for *Ben Johnson* , besides that *Shakespear* began to know him late, and that *Ben* was not the most communicative Person in the World of the Secrets of his Art, he seems to me to have had no right Notion of Tragedy. Nay, so far from it, that he who was indeed a very great Man, and who has writ Comedies, by which he has born away the Prize of Comedy both from Ancients and Moderns, and been an Honour to *Great Britain* ; and who has done this without any Rules to guide him, except what his own incomparable Talent dictated to him; This extraordinary Man has err'd so grossly in Tragedy, of which there were not only stated Rules, but Rules which he himself had often read, and had even translated, that he has chosen two Subjects, which, according to those very Rules, were utterly incapable of exciting either Compassion or Terror for the principal Characters, which yet are the chief Passions that a Tragick Poet ought to endeavour to excite. So that *Shakespear* having neither had Time to correct, nor Friends to consult, must necessarily have frequently left such faults in his Writings, for the Correction of which either a great deal of Time or a judicious and a well-natur'd Friend is indispensably necessary.

Vir bonus & prudens versus reprehendet inertes,

Culpabit duros, incomptis allinet atrum

Transverso calamo signum, ambitiosa recidet

Ornamenta, parum claris lucem dare coget,

Arguet ambigue dictum, mutanda notabit.

There is more than one Example of every kind of these Faults in the Tragedies of *Shakespear* , and even in the *Coriolanus* . There are Lines that are utterly void of that celestial Fire of which *Shakespear* is sometimes Master in so great a Degree. And consequently there are Lines that are stiff and forc'd, and harsh and unmusical, tho' *Shakespear* had naturally an admirable Ear for the Numbers. But no Man ever was very musical who did not write with Fire, and no Man can always write with Fire, unless he is so far Master of his Time, as to expect those Hours when his Spirits are warm and volatile. *Shakespear* must therefore sometimes have Lines which are neither strong nor graceful: For who ever had Force or Grace that had not Spirit? There are in his *Coriolanus* , among a great many natural and admirable Beauties, three or four of those Ornaments which *Horace* would term ambitious; and which we in *English* are apt to call Fustian or Bombast. There are Lines in some Places which are very obscure, and whole Scenes which ought to be alter'd.

I have, Sir, employ'd some Time and Pains, and that little Judgment which I have acquir'd in these Matters by a long and a faithful reading both of Ancients and Moderns, in adding, retrenching, and altering several Things in the *Coriolanus* of *Shakespear* , but with what Success I must leave to be determin'd by you. I know very well that you will be surpriz'd to find, that after all that I have said in the former Part of this Letter against *Shakespear* 's introducing the Rabble into *Coriolanus* , I have not only retain'd in the second Act of the following Tragedy the Rabble which is in the Original, but deviated more from the *Roman* Customs than *Shakespear* had done before me. I desire you to look upon it as a voluntary Fault and a Trespass against Conviction: 'Tis one of those Things which are *ad Populum Phaleræ* , and by no means inserted to please such Men as you.

Thus, Sir, have I laid before you a short but impartial Account of the Beauties and Defects of *Shakespear* , with an Intention to make these Letters publick if they are approv'd by you; to teach some People to distinguish between his

Beauties and his Defects, that while they imitate the one, they may with Caution avoid the other [there being nothing of more dangerous Contagion to Writers, and especially to young ones, than the Faults of great Masters], and while with *Milton* they applaud the great Qualities which *Shakespear* had by Nature, they may follow his wise Example, and form themselves as he assures us that he himself did, upon the Rules and Writings of the Ancients.

Sir, if so candid and able a Judge as your self shall happen to approve of this Essay in the main, and to excuse and correct my Errors, that Indulgence and that Correction will not only encourage me to make these Letters publick, but will enable me to bear the Reproach of those who would fix a Brand even upon the justest Criticism, as the Effect of Envy and Ill-nature; as if there could possibly be any Ill-nature in the doing Justice, or in the endeavouring to advance a very noble and a very useful Art, and consequently to prove beneficent to Mankind. As for those who may accuse me of the want of a due Veneration for the Merit of an Author of so establish'd a Reputation as *Shakespear* , I shall beg leave to tell them, that they chuse the wrongest time that they could possibly take for such an Accusation as that. For I appeal to you, Sir, who shews most Veneration for the Memory of *Shakespear* , he who loves and admires his Charms and makes them one of his chief Delights, who sees him and reads him over and over and still remains unsatiated, and who mentions his Faults for no other Reason but to make his Excellency the more conspicuous, or he who, pretending to be his blind Admirer, shews in Effect the utmost Contempt for him, preferring empty effeminate Sound to his solid Beauties and manly Graces, and deserting him every Night for an execrable *Italian* Ballad, so vile that a Boy who should write such lamentable Dogrel would be turn'd out of *Westminster* -School for a desperate Blockhead, too stupid to be corrected and amended by the harshest Discipline of the Place?

I am ,
Sir ,
Yours, &c.

Alexander Pope: Preface to Edition of Shakespeare. 1725.

It is not my design to enter into a Criticism upon this Author; tho' to do it effectually and not superficially would be the best occasion that any just Writer could take, to form the judgment and taste of our nation. For of all *English* Poets *Shakespear* must be confessed to be the fairest and fullest subject for Criticism, and to afford the most numerous as well as most conspicuous instances, both of Beauties and Faults of all sorts. But this far exceeds the bounds of a Preface, the business of which is only to give an account of the fate of his Works, and the disadvantages under which they have been transmitted to us. We shall hereby extenuate many faults which are his, and clear him from the imputation of many which are not: A design, which, tho' it can be no guide to future Criticks to do him justice in one way, will at least be sufficient to prevent their doing him an injustice in the other.

I cannot however but mention some of his principal and characteristic Excellencies, for which (notwithstanding his defects) he is justly and universally elevated above all other Dramatic Writers. Not that this is the proper place of praising him, but because I would not omit any occasion of doing it.

If ever any Author deserved the name of an *Original* , it was *Shakespear* . *Homer* himself drew not his art so immediately from the fountains of Nature; it proceeded thro' *Ægyptian* strainers and channels, and came to him not without some tincture of the learning, or some cast of the models, of those before him. The Poetry of *Shakespear* was Inspiration indeed: he is not so much an Imitator, as an Instrument, of Nature; and 'tis not so just to say that he speaks from her, as that she speaks thro' him.

His *Characters* are so much Nature her self, that 'tis a sort of injury to call them by so distant a name as Copies of her. Those of other Poets have a constant resemblance, which shews that they receiv'd them from one another, and were but multiplyers of the same image: each picture, like a mock-rainbow, is but the reflexion of a reflexion. But every single character in *Shakespear* is as much an Individual as those in Life itself; it is as impossible to find any two alike; and such as from their relation or affinity in any respect appear most to be Twins, will upon comparison be found remarkably distinct. To this life and variety of Character, we must add the wonderful Preservation of it; which is such throughout his plays, that had all the Speeches been printed without the very names of the Persons, I believe one might have apply'd them with certainty to every speaker.

The *Power* over our *Passions* was never possess'd in a more eminent degree, or display'd in so different instances. Yet all along, there is seen no labour, no pains to raise them; no preparation to guide our guess to the effect, or be perceiv'd to lead toward it: But the heart swells, and the tears burst out, just at the proper places: We are surpriz'd, the moment we weep; and yet upon reflection find the passion so just, that we shou'd be surpriz'd if we had not wept, and wept at that very moment.

How astonishing is it again, that the passions directly opposite to these, Laughter and Spleen, are no less at his command! that he is not more a master of the *Great* , than of the *Ridiculous* in human nature; of our noblest tendernesses, than of our vainest foibles; of our strongest emotions, than of our idlest sensations!

Nor does he only excel in the Passions: In the coolness of Reflection and Reasoning he is full as admirable. His *Sentiments* are not only in general the most pertinent and judicious upon every subject; but by a talent very peculiar, something between Penetration and Felicity, he hits upon that particular point on which the bent of each argument turns, or the force of each motive depends. This is perfectly amazing, from a man of no education or experience in those great and publick scenes of life which are usually the subject of his thoughts: So that he seems to have known the world by Intuition, to have look'd thro' humane nature at one glance, and to be the only Author that gives ground for a very new opinion, That the Philosopher, and even the Man of the world, may be *Born* , as well as the Poet.

It must be own'd that with all these great excellencies he has almost as great defects; and that as he has certainly written better, so he has perhaps written worse, than any other. But I think I can in some measure account for these defects, from several causes and accidents; without which it is hard to imagine that so large and so enlighten'd a mind could ever have been susceptible of them. That all these Contingencies should unite to his disadvantage seems to me almost as singularly unlucky, as that so many various (nay contrary) Talents should meet in one man, was happy and extraordinary.

It must be allowed that Stage-Poetry of all other is more particularly levell'd to please the *Populace* , and its success more immediately depending upon the *Common Suffrage* . One cannot therefore wonder, if *Shakespear* , having at his first appearance no other aim in his writings than to procure a subsistance, directed his endeavours solely to hit the taste and humour that then prevailed. The Audience was generally composed of the meaner sort of people; and therefore the Images of Life were to be drawn from those of their own rank: accordingly we find that not our Author's only but almost all the old Comedies have their Scene among *Tradesmen* and *Mechanicks* : And even their Historical Plays strictly follow the common *Old Stories* or *Vulgar Traditions* of that kind of people. In Tragedy, nothing was so sure to *Surprize* and cause *Admiration* , as the most strange, unexpected, and consequently most unnatural, Events and Incidents; the most exaggerated Thoughts; the most verbose and bombast Expression; the most pompous Rhymes, and thundering Versification. In Comedy, nothing was so sure to *please* , as mean buffoonry, vile ribaldry, and unmannerly jests of fools and clowns. Yet even in these our Author's Wit buoys up, and is born above his subject: his Genius in those low parts is like some Prince of a Romance in the disguise of a Shepherd or Peasant; a certain Greatness and Spirit now and then break out, which manifest his higher extraction and qualities.

It may be added, that not only the common Audience had no notion of the rules of writing, but few even of the better sort piqu'd themselves upon any great degree of knowledge or nicety that way, till *Ben Johnson* getting possession of the Stage brought critical learning into vogue: And that this was not done without difficulty, may appear from those frequent lessons (and indeed almost Declamations) which he was forced to prefix to his first plays, and put into the mouth of his Actors, the *Grex* , *Chorus* , &c. to remove the prejudices, and inform the judgment of his hearers. Till then, our Authors had no thoughts of writing on the model of the Ancients: their Tragedies were only Histories in Dialogue; and their Comedies follow'd the thread of any Novel as they found it, no less implicitly than if it had been true History.

To judge therefore of *Shakespear* by *Aristotle* 's rules, is like trying a man by the Laws of one Country, who acted under those of another. He writ to the *People* ; and writ at first without patronage from the better sort, and therefore without aims of pleasing them: without assistance or advice from the Learned, as without the advantage of education or acquaintance among them: without that knowledge of the best models, the Ancients, to inspire him with an emulation of them; in a word, without any views of Reputation, and of what Poets are pleas'd to call Immortality: Some or all of which have encourag'd the vanity, or animated the ambition, of other writers.

Yet it must be observ'd, that when his performances had merited the protection of his Prince, and when the encouragement of the Court had succeeded to that of the Town, the works of his riper years are manifestly raised above those of his former. The Dates of his plays sufficiently evidence that his productions improved, in proportion to the respect he had for his auditors. And I make no doubt this observation will be found true in every instance, were but Editions extant from which we might learn the exact time when every piece was composed, and whether writ for the Town or the Court.

Another Cause (and no less strong than the former) may be deduced from our Author's being a *Player* , and forming himself first upon the judgments of that body of men whereof he was a member. They have ever had a Standard to themselves, upon other principles than those of *Aristotle* . As they live by the Majority, they know no rule but that of pleasing the present humour, and complying with the wit in fashion; a consideration which brings all their judgment to a short point. Players are just such judges of what is *right* , as Taylors are of what is *graceful* . And in this view it will be but fair to allow, that most of our Author's faults are less to be ascribed to his wrong judgment as a Poet, than to his right judgment as a Player.

By these men it was thought a praise to *Shakespear* , that he scarce ever *blotted a line* . This they industriously propagated, as appears from what we are told by *Ben Johnson* in his *Discoveries* , and from the preface of *Heminges* and *Condell* to the first folio Edition. But in reality (however it has prevailed) there never was a more groundless report, or to the contrary of which there are more undeniable evidences: As, the Comedy of the *Merry Wives* of *Windsor* , which he entirely new writ; the *History of* Henry *the 6th* , which was first published under the Title of the *Contention of* York *and* Lancaster; and that of Henry *the 5th* , extreamly improved; that of *Hamlet* enlarged to almost as much again as at first, and many others. I believe the common opinion of his want of Learning proceeded from no better ground. This too might be thought a Praise by some; and to this his Errors have as injudiciously been ascribed by others. For 'tis certain, were it true, it would concern but a small part of them; the most are such as are not properly

Defects, but Superfœtations: and arise not from want of learning or reading, but from want of thinking or judging: or rather (to be more just to our Author) from a compliance to those wants in others. As to a wrong choice of the subject, a wrong conduct of the incidents, false thoughts, forc'd expressions, &c. if these are not to be ascrib'd to the foresaid accidental reasons, they must be charg'd upon the Poet himself, and there is no help for it. But I think the two Disadvantages which I have mentioned (to be obliged to please the lowest of the people, and to keep the worst of company), if the consideration be extended as far as it reasonably may, will appear sufficient to mis-lead and depress the greatest Genius upon earth. Nay the more modesty with which such a one is endued, the more he is in danger of submitting and conforming to others, against his own better judgment.

But as to his *Want of Learning* , it may be necessary to say something more: There is certainly a vast difference between *Learning* and *Languages* . How far he was ignorant of the latter, I cannot determine; but 'tis plain he had much Reading at least, if they will not call it Learning. Nor is it any great matter, if a man has Knowledge, whether he has it from one language or from another. Nothing is more evident than that he had a taste of natural Philosophy, Mechanicks, ancient and modern History, Poetical learning, and Mythology: We find him very knowing in the customs, rites, and manners of Antiquity. In *Coriolanus* and *Julius Cæsar* , not only the Spirit, but Manners, of the *Romans* are exactly drawn; and still a nicer distinction is shewn, between the manners of the *Romans* in the time of the former and of the latter. His reading in the ancient Historians is no less conspicuous, in many references to particular passages: and the speeches copy'd from *Plutarch* in *Coriolanus* may, I think, as well be made an instance of his learning, as those copy'd from *Cicero* in *Catiline* , of *Ben Johnson* 's. The manners of other nations in general, the *Egyptians* , *Venetians* , *French* , &c., are drawn with equal propriety. Whatever object of nature, or branch of science, he either speaks of or describes, it is always with competent, if not extensive knowledge: his descriptions are still exact; all his metaphors appropriated, and remarkably drawn from the true nature and inherent qualities of each subject. When he treats of Ethic or Politic, we may constantly observe a wonderful justness of distinction, as well as extent of comprehension. No one is more a master of the Poetical story, or has more frequent allusions to the various parts of it: Mr. *Waller* (who has been celebrated for this last particular) has not shown more learning this way than *Shakespear* . We have Translations from *Ovid* published in his name, among those Poems which pass for his, and for some of which we have undoubted authority (being published by himself, and dedicated to his noble Patron the Earl of *Southampton*). He appears also to have been conversant in *Plautus* , from whom he has taken the plot of one of his plays: he follows the *Greek* Authors, and particularly *Dares Phrygius* , in another (altho' I will not pretend to say in what language he read them). The modern *Italian* writers of Novels he was manifestly acquainted with; and we may conclude him to be no less conversant with the Ancients of his own country, from the use he has made of *Chaucer* in *Troilus* and *Cressida* , and in the *Two Noble Kinsmen* , if that Play be his, as there goes a Tradition it was (and indeed it has little resemblance of *Fletcher* , and more of our Author than some of those which have been received as genuine).

I am inclined to think, this opinion proceeded originally from the zeal of the Partizans of our Author and *Ben Johnson* ; as they endeavoured to exalt the one at the expence of the other. It is ever the nature of Parties to be in extremes; and nothing is so probable, as that because *Ben Johnson* had much the more learning, it was said on the one hand that *Shakespear* had none at all; and because *Shakespear* had much the most wit and fancy, it was retorted on the other, that *Johnson* wanted both. Because *Shakespear* borrowed nothing, it was said that *Ben Johnson* borrowed every thing. Because *Johnson* did not write extempore, he was reproached with being a year about every piece; and because *Shakespear* wrote with ease and rapidity, they cryed, he never once made a blot. Nay the spirit of opposition ran so high, that whatever those of the one side objected to the other, was taken at the rebound, and turned into Praises; as injudiciously as their antagonists before had made them Objections.

Poets are always afraid of Envy; but sure they have as much reason to be afraid of Admiration. They are the *Scylla* and *Charybdis* of Authors; those who escape one, often fall by the other. *Pessimum genus inimicorum Laudantes* , says *Tacitus* : and *Virgil* desires to wear a charm against those who praise a Poet without rule or reason.

——Si ultra placitum laudarit, baccare frontem

Cingito, ne Vati noceat——.

But however this contention might be carried on by the Partizans on either side, I cannot help thinking these two great Poets were good friends, and lived on amicable terms and in offices of society with each other. It is an acknowledged fact, that *Ben Johnson* was introduced upon the Stage, and his first works encouraged, by *Shakespear* . And after his death, that Author writes *To the memory of his beloved Mr.* William Shakespear, which shows as if the friendship had continued thro' life. I cannot for my own part find any thing *Invidious* or *Sparing* in those verses, but wonder Mr. *Dryden* was of that opinion. He exalts him not only above all his Contemporaries, but above *Chaucer* and *Spenser* , whom he will not allow to be great enough to be rank'd with him; and challenges the names of *Sophocles* , *Euripides* , and *Æschylus* , nay all *Greece* and *Rome* at once, to equal him: And (which is very particular) expressly vindicates him from the imputation of wanting *Art* , not enduring that all his excellencies shou'd be attributed to *Nature* . It is remarkable too, that the praise he gives him in his *Discoveries* seems to proceed from a *personal kindness* ; he tells us that he lov'd the man, as well as honoured his memory; celebrates the honesty, openness, and frankness of his temper; and only distinguishes, as he reasonably ought, between the real merit of the Author, and the silly and derogatory applauses of the Players. *Ben Johnson* might indeed be sparing in his Commendations (tho' certainly he is not so in this instance) partly from his own nature, and partly from judgment. For men of judgment think they do any man more service in praising him justly, than lavishly. I say, I would fain believe they were Friends, tho' the violence and ill-breeding of their Followers and Flatterers were enough to give rise to the contrary report. I would hope that it may be with *Parties* , both in Wit and State, as with those Monsters described by the Poets; and that their *Heads* at least may have something humane, tho' their *Bodies* and *Tails* are wild beasts and serpents.

As I believe that what I have mentioned gave rise to the opinion of *Shakespear* 's want of learning; so what has continued it down to us may have been the many blunders and illiteracies of the first Publishers of his works. In these Editions their ignorance shines almost in every page; nothing is more common than *Actus tertia* , *Exit Omnes* , *Enter three Witches solus* . Their French is as bad as their *Latin* , both in construction and spelling: Their very *Welsh* is false. Nothing is more likely than that those palpable blunders of *Hector* 's quoting *Aristotle* , with others of that gross kind, sprung from the same root: It not being at all credible that these could be the errors of any man who had the least tincture of a School, or the least conversation with such as had. *Ben Johnson* (whom they will not think partial to him) allows him at least to have had *some Latin* ; which is utterly inconsistent with mistakes like these. Nay the constant blunders in proper names of persons and places, are such as must have proceeded from a man who had not so much as read any history, in any language: so could not be *Shakespear* 's.

I shall now lay before the reader some of those almost innumerable Errors which have risen from one source, the ignorance of the Players, both as his actors, and as his editors. When the nature and kinds of these are enumerated and considered, I dare to say that not *Shakespear* only, but *Aristotle* or *Cicero* , had their works undergone the same fate, might have appear'd to want sense as well as learning.

It is not certain that any one of his Plays was published by himself. During the time of his employment in the Theatre, several of his pieces were printed separately in Quarto. What makes me think that most of these were not publish'd by him, is the excessive carelessness of the press: every page is so scandalously false spelled, and almost all the learned and unusual words so intolerably mangled, that it's plain there either was no Correcter to the press at all, or one totally illiterate. If any were supervised by himself, I should fancy the two parts of *Henry the 4th* and *Midsummer-Night's Dream* might have been so: because I find no other printed with any exactness; and (contrary to the rest) there is very little variation in all the subsequent editions of them. There are extant two Prefaces, to the first quarto edition of *Troilus* and *Cressida* in 1609, and to that of *Othello* ; by which it appears, that the first was publish'd without his knowledge or consent, and even before it was acted, so late as seven or eight years before he died: and that the latter was not printed till after his death. The whole number of genuine plays which we have been able to find printed in his lifetime, amounts but to eleven. And of some of these, we meet with two or more editions by different printers, each of which has whole heaps of trash different from the other: which I should fancy was occasion'd by their being taken from different copies, belonging to different Playhouses.

The folio edition (in which all the plays we now receive as his were first collected) was published by two Players, *Heming* and *Condell* , in 1623, seven years after his decease. They declare that all the other editions were stolen and surreptitious, and affirm theirs to be purged from the errors of the former. This is true as to the literal errors, and no other; for in all respects else it is far worse than the Quarto's:

First, because the additions of trifling and bombast passages are in this edition far more numerous. For whatever had been added, since those Quarto's, by the actors, or had stolen from their mouths into the written parts, were from thence conveyed into the printed text, and all stand charged upon the Author. He himself complained of this usage in *Hamlet* , where he wishes that *those who* *play the Clowns wou'd speak no more than is set down for them* (Act 3. Sc. 4.). But as a proof that he could not escape it, in the old editions of *Romeo* and *Juliet* there is no hint of a great number of the mean conceits and ribaldries now to be found there. In others, the low scenes of Mobs, Plebeians, and Clowns, are vastly shorter than at present: And I have seen one in particular (which seems to have belonged to the Playhouse, by having the parts divided with lines, and the Actors names in the margin) where several of those very passages were added in a written hand, which are since to be found in the folio.

In the next place, a number of beautiful passages which are extant in the first single editions, are omitted in this: as it seems, without any other reason than their willingness to shorten some scenes: These men (as it was said of *Procrustes*) either lopping or stretching an Author, to make him just fit for their Stage.

This edition is said to be printed from the *Original Copies* ; I believe they meant those which had lain ever since the Author's days in the playhouse, and had from time to time been cut, or added to, arbitrarily. It appears that this edition, as well as the Quarto's, was printed (at least partly) from no better copies than the *Prompter's Book* or *Piece-meal Parts* written out for the use of the actors: For in some places their very names are thro' carelessness set down instead of the *Personæ Dramatis* : And in others the notes of direction to the *Property-men* for their *Moveables* , and to the *Players* for their *Entries* , are inserted into the Text, thro' the ignorance of the Transcribers.

The Plays not having been before so much as distinguish'd by *Acts* and *Scenes* , they are in this edition divided according as they play'd them; often when there is no pause in the action, or where they thought fit to make a breach in it, for the sake of Musick, Masques, or Monsters.

Sometimes the scenes are transposed and shuffled backward and forward; a thing which could no otherwise happen, but by their being taken from separate and piece-meal-written parts.

Many verses are omitted intirely, and others transposed; from whence invincible obscurities have arisen, past the guess of any Commentator to clear up, but just where the accidental glympse of an old edition enlightens us.

Some Characters were confounded and mix'd, or two put into one, for want of a competent number of actors. Thus in the Quarto edition of *Midsummer-Night's Dream* , Act 5, *Shakespear* introduces a kind of Master of the Revels called *Philostratus* : all whose part is given to another character (that of *Ægeus*) in the subsequent editions: So also in *Hamlet* and *King Lear* . This too makes it probable that the Prompter's Books were what they call'd the Original Copies.

From liberties of this kind, many speeches also were put into the mouths of wrong persons, where the Author now seems chargeable with making them speak out of character: Or sometimes perhaps for no better reason than that a governing Player, to have the mouthing of some favourite speech himself, would snatch it from the unworthy lips of an Underling.

Prose from verse they did not know, and they accordingly printed one for the other throughout the volume.

Having been forced to say so much of the Players, I think I ought in justice to remark, that the Judgment, as well as Condition, of that class of people was then far inferior to what it is in our days. As then the best Playhouses were Inns and Taverns (the *Globe* , the *Hope* , the *Red Bull* , the *Fortune* , &c.), so the top of the profession were then meer Players, not Gentlemen of the stage: They were led into the Buttery by the Steward, not plac'd at the Lord's table, or Lady's toilette: and consequently were intirely depriv'd of those advantages they now enjoy, in the familiar conversation of our Nobility, and an intimacy (not to say dearness) with people of the first condition.

From what has been said, there can be no question but had *Shakespear* published his works himself (especially in his latter time, and after his retreat from the stage) we should not only be certain which are genuine; but should find in those that are, the errors lessened by some thousands. If I may judge from all the distinguishing marks of his style, and his manner of thinking and writing, I make no doubt to declare that those wretched plays, *Pericles* , *Locrine* , *Sir John Oldcastle* , *Yorkshire Tragedy* , *Lord Cromwell* , *The Puritan* , and *London Prodigal* , cannot be admitted as his. And I should conjecture of some of the others (particularly *Love's Labour's Lost* , *The Winter's Tale* , and *Titus Andronicus*), that only some characters, single scenes, or perhaps a few particular passages, were of his hand. It is very probable what occasion'd some

Plays to be supposed *Shakespear* 's was only this; that they were pieces produced by unknown authors, or fitted up for the Theatre while it was under his administration: and no owner claiming them, they were adjudged to him, as they give Strays to the Lord of the Manor: A mistake which (one may also observe) it was not for the interest of the House to remove. Yet the Players themselves, *Hemings* and *Condell* , afterwards did *Shakespear* the justice to reject those eight plays in their edition; tho' they were then printed in his name, in every body's hands, and acted with some applause (as we learn from what *Ben Johnson* says of *Pericles* in his Ode on the *New Inn*). That *Titus Andronicus* is one of this class I am the rather induced to believe, by finding the same Author openly express his contempt of it in the *Induction* to *Bartholomew-Fair* , in the year 1614, when *Shakespear* was yet living. And there is no better authority for these latter sort, than for the former, which were equally published in his lifetime.

If we give into this opinion, how many low and vicious parts and passages might no longer reflect upon this great Genius, but appear unworthily charged upon him? And even in those which are really his, how many faults may have been unjustly laid to his account from arbitrary Additions, Expunctions, Transpositions of scenes and lines, confusion of Characters and Persons, wrong application of Speeches, corruptions of innumerable Passages by the Ignorance, and wrong Corrections of 'em again by the Impertinence, of his first Editors? From one or other of these considerations, I am verily perswaded, that the greatest and the grossest part of what are thought his errors would vanish, and leave his character in a light very different from that disadvantageous one, in which it now appears to us.

This is the state in which *Shakespear* 's, writings lye at present; for since the above-mentioned Folio Edition, all the rest have implicitly followed it, without having recourse to any of the former, or ever making the comparison between them. It is impossible to repair the Injuries already done him; too much time has elaps'd, and the materials are too few. In what I have done I have rather given a proof of my willingness and desire, than of my ability, to do him justice. I have discharg'd the dull duty of an Editor to my best judgment, with more labour than I expect thanks, with a religious abhorrence of all Innovation, and without any indulgence to my private sense or conjecture. The method taken in this Edition will show it self. The various Readings are fairly put in the margin, so that every one may compare 'em; and those I have prefer'd into the Text are constantly *ex* *fide Codicum* , upon authority. The Alterations or Additions which *Shakespear* himself made, are taken notice of as they occur. Some suspected passages which are excessively bad (and which seem Interpolations by being so inserted that one can intirely omit them without any chasm or deficience in the context) are degraded to the bottom of the page; with an Asterisk referring to the places of their insertion. The Scenes are mark'd so distinctly that every removal of place is specify'd; which is more necessary in this Author than any other, since he shifts them more frequently: and sometimes, without attending to this particular, the reader would have met with obscurities. The more obsolete or unusual words are explained. Some of the most shining passages are distinguish'd by comma's in the margin; and where the beauty lay not in particulars but in the whole, a star is prefix'd to the scene. This seems to me a shorter and less ostentatious method of performing the better half of Criticism (namely the pointing out an Author's excellencies) than to fill a whole paper with citations of fine passages, with *general Applauses* , or *empty Exclamations* at the tail of them. There is also subjoin'd a Catalogue of those first Editions by which the greater part of the various readings and of the corrected passages are authorised (most of which are such as carry their own evidence along with them). These Editions now hold the place of Originals, and are the only materials left to repair the deficiences or restore the corrupted sense of the Author: I can only wish that a greater number of them (if a greater were ever published) may yet be found, by a search more successful than mine, for the better accomplishment of this end.

I will conclude by saying of *Shakespear* , that with all his faults, and with all the irregularity of his *Drama* , one may look upon his works, in comparison of those that are more finish'd and regular, as upon an ancient majestick piece of *Gothick* Architecture, compar'd with a neat Modern building: The latter is more elegant and glaring, but the former is more strong and more solemn. It must be allow'd that in one of these there are materials enough to make many of the other. It has much the greater variety, and much the nobler apartments; tho' we are often conducted to them by dark, odd, and uncouth passages. Nor does the Whole fail to strike us with greater reverence, tho' many of the Parts are childish, ill-plac'd, and unequal to its grandeur.

Lewis Theobald: Preface to Edition of Shakespeare. 1733.

The Attempt to write upon Shakespeare is like going into a large, a spacious, and a splendid Dome thro' the Conveyance of a narrow and obscure Entry. A Glare of Light suddenly breaks upon you beyond what the Avenue at first promis'd: and a thousand Beauties of Genius and Character, like so many gaudy Apartments pouring at once upon the Eye, diffuse and throw themselves out to the Mind. The Prospect is too wide to come within the Compass of a single View: 'tis a gay Confusion of pleasing Objects, too various to be enjoyed but in a general Admiration; and they must be separated, and ey'd distinctly, in order to give the proper Entertainment.

And as in great Piles of Building, some Parts are often finish'd up to hit the Taste of the *Connoisseur* ; others more negligently put together, to strike the Fancy of a common and unlearned Beholder: Some Parts are made stupendously magnificent and grand, to surprize with the vast Design and Execution of the Architect; others are contracted, to amuse you with his Neatness and Elegance in little. So, in *Shakespeare* , we may find *Traits* that will stand the Test of the severest Judgment; and Strokes as carelessly hit off, to the Level of the more ordinary Capacities: Some Descriptions rais'd to that Pitch of Grandeur, as to astonish you with the Compass and Elevation of his Thought; and others copying Nature within so narrow, so confined a Circle, as if the Author's Talent lay only at drawing in Miniature.

In how many points of Light must we be obliged to gaze at this great Poet! In how many Branches of Excellence to consider and admire him! Whether we view him on the Side of Art or Nature, he ought equally to engage our Attention: Whether we respect the Force and Greatness of his Genius, the Extent of his Knowledge and Reading, the Power and Address with which he throws out and applies either Nature or Learning, there is ample scope both for our Wonder and Pleasure. If his Diction and the cloathing of his Thoughts attract us, how much more must we be charm'd with the Richness and Variety of his Images and Ideas! If his Images and Ideas steal into our Souls, and strike upon our Fancy, how much are they improv'd in Price, when we come to reflect with what Propriety and Justness they are apply'd to Character! If we look into his Characters, and how they are furnish'd and proportion'd to the Employment he cuts out for them, how are we taken up with the Mastery of his Portraits! What

Draughts of Nature! What Variety of Originals, and how differing each from the other! How are they dress'd from the Stores of his own luxurious Imagination; without being the Apes of Mode, or borrowing from any foreign Wardrobe! Each of them are the standards of Fashion for themselves: like Gentlemen that are above the Direction of their Tailors, and can adorn themselves without the aid of Imitation. If other Poets draw more than one Fool or Coxcomb, there is the same Resemblance in them as in that Painter's Draughts, who was happy only at forming a Rose: you find them all younger Brothers of the same Family, and all of them have a Pretence to give the same Crest: But *Shakespeare* 's Clowns and Fops come all of a different House; they are no farther allied to one another than as Man to Man, Members of the same Species: but as different in Features and Lineaments of Character, as we are from one another in Face or Complexion. But I am unawares lanching into his Character as a Writer, before I have said what I intended of him as a private Member of the Republick.

Mr. *Rowe* has very justly observ'd, that People are fond of discovering any little personal Story of the Great Men of Antiquity; and that the common Accidents of their Lives naturally become the Subject of our critical Enquiries: That however trifling such a Curiosity at the first View may appear, yet, as for what relates to Men of Letters, the Knowledge of an Author may, perhaps, sometimes conduce to the better understanding his Works: And, indeed, this Author's Works, from the bad Treatment he has met with from Copyists and Editors, have so long wanted a Comment, that one would zealously embrace every Method of Information that could contribute to recover them from the injuries with which they have so long lain o'erwhelm'd.

'Tis certain that if we have first admir'd the Man in his Writings, his Case is so circumstanc'd that we must naturally admire the Writings in the Man: That if we go back to take a View of his Education, and the Employment in Life which Fortune had cut out for him, we shall retain the stronger Ideas of his extensive Genius.

His Father, we are told, was a considerable Dealer in Wool; but having no fewer than ten Children, of whom our *Shakespeare* was the eldest, the best education he could afford him was no better than to qualify him for his own Business and Employment. I cannot affirm with any Certainty how long his Father liv'd; but I take him to be the same Mr. *John Shakespeare* who was living in the Year 1599, and who then, in Honour of his Son, took out an Extract of his Family Arms from the Herald's Office; by which it appears, that he had been Officer and

Bailiff of *Stratford* upon *Avon* in *Warwickshire* ; and that he enjoy'd some hereditary Lands and Tenements, the Reward of his Great Grandfather's faithful and approved Service to King *Henry* VII.

Be this as it will, our *Shakespeare* , it seems, was bred for some Time at a Free-School; the very Free-School, I presume, founded at *Stratford* : where, we are told, he acquired what *Latin* he was master of: but that his Father being oblig'd, thro' Narrowness of Circumstance, to withdraw him too soon from thence, he was thereby unhappily prevented from making any Proficiency in the Dead Languages: A Point that will deserve some little Discussion in the Sequel of this Dissertation.

How long he continued in his Father's Way of Business, either as an Assistant to him, or on his own proper Account, no Notices are left to inform us: nor have I been able to learn precisely at what Period of Life he quitted his native *Stratford* , and began his Acquaintance with *London* and the *Stage* .

In order to settle in the World after a Family-manner, he thought fit, Mr. *Rowe* acquaints us, to marry while he was yet very young. It is certain he did so: for by the Monument in *Stratford* Church, erected to the Memory of his Daughter *Susanna* , the Wife of *John Hall* , Gentleman, it appears that she died on the 2d Day of *July* , in the Year 1649, aged 66. So that she was born in 1583, when her Father could not be full 19 Years old; who was himself born in the Year 1564. Nor was she his eldest Child, for he had another Daughter, *Judith* , who was born before her, and who was married to one Mr. *Thomas Quiney* . So that *Shakespeare* must have entred into Wedlock by that Time he was turn'd of seventeen Years.

Whether the Force of Inclination merely, or some concurring Circumstances of Convenience in the Match, prompted him to marry so early, is not easy to be determin'd at this Distance: but 'tis probable, a View of Interest might partly sway his Conduct on this Point: for he married the Daughter of one *Hathaway* , a substantial Yeoman in his Neighbourhood, and she had the Start of him in Age no less than eight Years. She surviv'd him, notwithstanding, seven Seasons, and dy'd that very Year in which the *Players* publish'd the first Edition of his Works in *Folio* , Anno Dom. 1623, at the Age of 67 Years, as we likewise learn from her Monument in *Stratford* Church.

How long he continued in this kind of Settlement, upon his own Native Spot, is not more easily to be determin'd. But if the Tradition be true of that Extravagance which forc'd him both to quit his Country and Way of Living; to wit, his being engag'd, with a Knot of young Deer-stealers, to rob the Park of Sir *Thomas Lucy* of *Cherlecot* near *Stratford* : the Enterprize favours so much of Youth and Levity, we may reasonably suppose it was before he could write full Man. Besides, considering he has left us six and thirty Plays, at least, avow'd to be genuine; and considering too, that he had retir'd from the Stage, to spend the latter Part of his Days at his own Native *Stratford* ; the Interval of Time, necessarily required for the finishing so many Dramatic Pieces, obliges us to suppose he threw himself very early upon the Playhouse. And as he could, probably, contract no Acquaintance with the Drama, while he was driving on the Affair of Wool at home; some Time must be lost, even after he had commenc'd Player, before he could attain Knowledge enough in the Science to qualify himself for turning Author.

It has been observ'd by Mr. *Rowe* , that amongst other Extravagancies which our Author has given to his Sir *John Falstaffe* , in the *Merry Wives* of *Windsor* , he has made him a Deer-stealer; and that he might at the same Time remember his *Warwickshire* Prosecutor, under the Name of *Justice Shallow* , he has given him very near the same Coat of Arms, which *Dugdale* , in his Antiquities of that County, describes for a Family there. There are two Coats, I observe, in *Dugdale* , where three Silver Fishes are borne in the Name of *Lucy* ; and another Coat, to the Monument of *Thomas Lucy* , Son of Sir *William Lucy* , in which are quarter'd in four several Divisions twelve little Fishes, three in each Division, probably *Luces* . This very Coat, indeed, seems alluded to in *Shallow's* giving the *dozen* White *Luces* , and in *Slender* saying *he may quarter* . When I consider the exceeding Candour and Good-nature of our Author (which inclin'd all the gentler Part of the World to love him; as the Power of his Wit obliged the Men of the most delicate Knowledge and polite Learning to admire him); and that he should throw this humorous Piece of Satire at his Prosecutor, at least twenty Years after the Provocation given; I am confidently persuaded it must be owing to an unforgiving Rancour on the Prosecutor's Side: and if This was the Case, it were Pity but the Disgrace of such an Inveteracy should remain as a lasting Reproach, and *Shallow* stand as a Mark of Ridicule to stigmatize his Malice.

It is said, our Author spent some Years before his Death, in Ease, Retirement, and the Conversation of his Friends, at his Native *Stratford* . I could never pick up any certain Intelligence, when he relinquish'd the Stage. I know, it has been mistakenly thought by some, that *Spenser* 's *Thalia* , in his *Tears of the Muses* , where she laments the Loss of her *Willy* in the Comic Scene, has been apply'd to our Author's quitting the Stage. But *Spenser* himself, 'tis well known, quitted the Stage of Life in the Year 1598; and, five Years after this, we find *Shakespeare* 's Name among the Actors in *Ben Jonson* 's *Sejanus* , which first made its Appearance in the Year 1603. Nor, surely, could he then have any Thoughts of retiring, since, that very Year, a Licence under the Privy-Seal was granted by K. *James* I. to him and *Fletcher* , *Burbage* , *Phillippes* , *Hemings* , *Condel* , &c. authorizing them to exercise the Art of playing Comedies, Tragedies, &c. as well at their usual House call'd the *Globe* on the other Side of the Water, as in any other Parts of the Kingdom, during his Majesty's Pleasure (A Copy of which Licence is preserv'd in *Rymer's Fœdera*). Again, 'tis certain that *Shakespeare* did not exhibit his *Macbeth* till after the Union was brought about, and till after King *James* I. had begun to touch for the *Evil* : for 'tis plain, he has inserted Compliments, on both those Accounts, upon his Royal Master in that Tragedy. Nor, indeed, could the Number of the Dramatic Pieces he produced admit of his retiring near so early as that Period. So that what *Spenser* there says, if it relate at all to *Shakespeare* , must hint at some occasional Recess he made for a time upon a Disgust taken: or the *Willy* , there mention'd, must relate to some other favourite Poet. I believe, we may safely determine that he had not quitted in the Year 1610. For in his *Tempest* , our Author makes mention of the *Bermuda* Islands, which were unknown to the *English* , till, in 1609, Sir *John Summers* made a Voyage to *North-America* , and discover'd them: and afterwards invited some of his Countrymen to settle a Plantation there. That he became the private Gentleman, at least three Years before his Decease, is pretty obvious from another Circumstance: I mean, from that remarkable and well-known Story, which Mr. *Rowe* has given us of our Author's Intimacy with Mr. *John Combe* , an old Gentleman noted thereabouts for his Wealth and Usury: and upon whom *Shakespeare* made the following facetious Epitaph:

Ten in the hundred lies here ingrav'd,

'Tis a hundred to ten his Soul is not sav'd;

If any Man ask who lies in this Tomb,

Oh! oh! quoth the Devil, 'tis my *John-a-Combe* .

This sarcastical Piece of Wit was, at the Gentleman's own Request, thrown out extemporally in his Company. And this Mr. *John Combe* I take to be the same, who, by *Dugdale* in his Antiquities of *Warwickshire* , is said to have dy'd in the Year 1614, and for whom, at the upper end of the Quire of the Guild of the Holy Cross at *Stratford* , a fair Monument is erected, having a Statue thereon cut in Alabaster, and in a Gown, with this Epitaph. “Here lyeth interr'd the Body of *John Combe* , Esq; who dy'd the 10th of *July* , 1614, who bequeathed several Annual Charities to the Parish of *Stratford* , and 100*l.* to be lent to fifteen poor Tradesmen from three years to three years, changing the Parties every third Year, at the Rate of fifty Shillings *per Annum* , the Increase to be distributed to the Almes-poor there.”—The Donation has all the Air of a rich and sagacious Usurer.

Shakespeare himself did not survive Mr. *Combe* long, for he dy'd in the Year 1616, the 53d of his Age. He lies buried on the North Side of the Chancel in the great Church at *Stratford* ; where a Monument, decent enough for the Time, is erected to him, and plac'd against the Wall. He is represented under an Arch in a sitting posture, a Cushion spread before him, with a Pen in his Right Hand, and his Left rested on a Scrowl of Paper. The *Latin* Distich, which is placed under the Cushion, has been given us by Mr. *Pope* , or his Graver, in this Manner.

INGENIO *Pylium* , Genio *Socratem* , Arte *Maronem* ,

Terra tegit, Populus mœret, Olympus habet.

I confess, I don't conceive the Difference betwixt *Ingenio* and *Genio* in the first Verse. They seem to me intirely synonymous Terms; nor was the *Pylian* sage *Nestor* celebrated for his Ingenuity, but for an Experience and Judgment owing to his long Age. *Dugdale* , in his Antiquities of *Warwickshire* , has copied this Distich with a Distinction which Mr. *Rowe* has follow'd, and which certainly restores us the true Meaning of this Epitaph.

JUDICIO Pylium, *Genio* Socratem, &c.

In 1614, the greater Part of the Town of *Stratford* was consumed by Fire; but our *Shakespeare* 's House, among some others, escap'd the Flames. This House was first built by Sir *Hugh Clopton* , a younger Brother of an ancient Family in that Neighbourhood, who took their Name from the Manor of *Clopton* . Sir *Hugh* was Sheriff of *London* in the Reign of *Richard* III. and Lord Mayor in the Reign of King *Henry* VII. To this Gentleman the Town of *Stratford* is indebted for the fine Stonebridge, consisting of fourteen Arches, which at an extraordinary

Expence he built over the *Avon* , together with a Cause-way running at the West-end thereof; as also for rebuilding the Chapel adjoining to his House, and the Cross-Isle in the Church there. It is remarkable of him, that, tho' he liv'd and dy'd a Bachelor, among the other extensive Charities which he left both to the City of *London* and Town of *Stratford* , he bequeath'd considerable Legacies for the Marriage of poor Maidens of good Name and Fame both in *London* and at *Stratford* . Notwithstanding which large Donations in his Life, and Bequests at his Death, as he had purchased the Manor of *Clopton* , and all the Estate of the Family, so he left the same again to his elder Brother's Son with a very great Addition (a Proof how well Beneficence and Œconomy may walk hand in hand in wise Families): Good Part of which Estate is yet in the Possession of *Edward Clopton* , Esq. and Sir *Hugh Clopton* , Knt. lineally descended from the elder Brother of the first Sir *Hugh* : Who particularly bequeathed to his Nephew, by his Will, his House, by the Name of his *Great-House* in *Stratford* .

The Estate had now been sold out of the *Clopton* Family for above a Century, at the time when *Shakespeare* became the Purchaser: who, having repair'd and modell'd it to his own Mind, chang'd the Name to *New-place* ; which the Mansion-house, since erected upon the same Spot, at this day retains. The House and Lands, which attended it, continued in *Shakespeare* 's Descendants to the Time of the *Restoration* : when they were repurchased by the *Clopton* Family, and the Mansion now belongs to Sir *Hugh Clopton* , Knt. To the Favour of this worthy Gentleman I owe the Knowledge of one Particular, in Honour of our Poet's once Dwelling-house, of which, I presume, Mr. Rowe never was appriz'd. When the Civil War raged in *England* , and K. *Charles* the *First* 's Queen was driven by the Necessity of Affairs to make a Recess in *Warwickshire* , she kept her Court for three Weeks in *New-place* . We may reasonably suppose it then the best private House in the Town; and her Majesty preferr'd it to the *College* , which was in the Possession of the *Combe* Family, who did not so strongly favour the King's Party.

How much our Author employ'd himself in Poetry, after his Retirement from the Stage, does not so evidently appear: Very few posthumous Sketches of his Pen have been recover'd to ascertain that Point. We have been told, indeed, in Print, but not till very lately, That two large Chests full of this Great Man's loose Papers and Manuscripts, in the Hands of an ignorant Baker of *Warwick* (who married one of the Descendants from our *Shakespeare*), were carelessly scatter'd and thrown about, as Garret-Lumber and Litter, to the particular Knowledge of the late Sir *William Bishop* , till they were all consumed in the general Fire and

Destruction of that Town. I cannot help being a little apt to distrust the Authority of this Tradition; because as his Wife survived him seven Years, and as his Favourite Daughter *Susanna* surviv'd her twenty-six Years, 'tis very improbable they should suffer such a Treasure to be remov'd, and translated into a remoter Branch of the Family, without a Scrutiny first made into the Value of it. This, I say, inclines me to distrust the Authority of the Relation: but, notwithstanding such an apparent Improbability, if we really lost such a Treasure, by whatever Fatality or Caprice of Fortune they came into such ignorant and neglectful Hands, I agree with the *Relater* , the Misfortune is wholly irreparable.

To these Particulars, which regard his Person and private Life, some few more are to be glean'd from Mr. Rowe's Account of his *Life* and *Writings* : Let us now take a short View of him in his publick Capacity, as a *Writer* : and, from thence, the Transition will be easy to the *State* in which his *Writings* have been handed down to us.

No Age, perhaps, can produce an Author more various from himself than *Shakespeare* has been universally acknowledged to be. The Diversity in Stile, and other Parts of Composition, so obvious in him, is as variously to be accounted for. His Education, we find, was at best but begun: and he started early into a Science from the Force of Genius, unequally assisted by acquir'd Improvements. His Fire, Spirit, and Exuberance of Imagination gave an impetuosity to his Pen: His Ideas flow'd from him in a Stream rapid, but not turbulent; copious, but not ever over-bearing its Shores. The Ease and Sweetness of his Temper might not a little contribute to his Facility in Writing: as his Employment, as a *Player* , gave him an Advantage and Habit of fancying himself the very Character he meant to delineate. He used the Helps of his Function in forming himself to create and express that *Sublime* which other Actors can only copy, and throw out, in Action and graceful Attitude. But *Nullum sine Venia placuit Ingenium* , says *Seneca* . The Genius that gives us the greatest Pleasure, sometimes stands in Need of our Indulgence. Whenever this happens with regard to *Shakespeare* I would willingly impute it to a Vice of *his Times* . We see Complaisance enough, in our Days, paid to a *bad Taste* . So that his *Clinches* , *false Wit* , and descending beneath himself, may have proceeded from a Deference paid to the then *reigning Barbarism* .

I have not thought it out of my Province, whenever Occasion offer'd, to take notice of some of our Poet's grand Touches of Nature: Some that do not appear superficially such; but in which he seems the most deeply instructed; and to which, no doubt, he has so much ow'd that happy Preservation of his *Characters* , for which he is justly celebrated. Great Genius's, like his, naturally unambitious, are satisfy'd to conceal their Art in these Points. 'Tis the Foible of your worser Poets to make a Parade and Ostentation of that little Science they have; and to throw it out in the most ambitious Colours. And whenever a Writer of this Class shall attempt to copy these artful Concealments of our Author, and shall either think them easy, or practised by a Writer for his Ease, he will soon be convinced of his Mistake by the Difficulty of reaching the Imitation of them.

Speret idem, sudet multum, frustraque laboret,

Ausus idem:——

Indeed, to point out, and exclaim upon, all the Beauties of *Shakespeare* , as they come singly in Review, would be as insipid, as endless; as tedious, as unnecessary: But the Explanation of those Beauties that are less obvious to common Readers, and whose Illustration depends on the Rules of just Criticism, and an exact knowledge of human Life, should deservedly have a Share in a general Critic upon the Author. But, to pass over at once to another Subject:——

It has been allow'd on all hands, how far our Author was indebted to *Nature* ; it is not so well agreed, how much he ow'd to *Languages* and acquired *Learning* . The Decisions on this Subject were certainly set on Foot by the Hint from *Ben Jonson* , that he had small *Latin* and less *Greek* : And from this Tradition, as it were, Mr. *Rowe* has thought fit peremptorily to declare, that, “It is without Controversy, he had no Knowledge of the Writings of the ancient Poets, for that in his Works we find no Traces of any thing which looks like an imitation of the Ancients. For the Delicacy of his Taste (*continues He*) and the natural Bent of his own great Genius (equal, if not superior, to some of the Best of theirs), would certainly have led him to read and study them with so much Pleasure, that some of their fine Images would naturally have insinuated themselves into, and been mix'd with his own Writings: and so his not copying at least something from them, may be an Argument of his never having read them.” I shall leave it to the Determination of my Learned Readers, from the numerous Passages, which I have occasionally quoted in my Notes, in which our Poet seems closely to have imitated the Classics, whether Mr. *Rowe* 's Assertion be so absolutely to be depended on. The Result of the Controversy must certainly, either way, terminate to our Author's Honour: how happily he could imitate them, if that Point be allowed; or how gloriously he could think like them, without owing any thing to Imitation.

Tho' I should be very unwilling to allow *Shakespeare* so poor a Scholar as Many have labour'd to represent him, yet I shall be very cautious of declaring too positively on the other side of the Question: that is, with regard to my Opinion of his Knowledge in the dead languages. And therefore the Passages, that I occasionally quote from the *Classics* , shall not be urged as Proofs that he knowingly imitated those Originals; but brought to shew how happily he has express'd himself upon the same Topicks. A very learned Critick of our own Nation has declar'd, that a Sameness of Thought and Sameness of Expression too, in Two Writers of a different Age, can hardly happen, without a violent Suspicion of the latter copying from his Predecessor. I shall not therefore run any great Risque of a Censure, tho' I should venture to hint, that the Resemblances in Thought and Expression of our Author and an Ancient (which we should allow to be Imitation in the One whose learning was not question'd) may sometimes take its Rise from Strength of Memory, and those Impressions which he owed to the School. And if we may allow a Possibility of This, considering that, when he quitted the School he gave into his Father's Profession and way of Living, and had, 'tis likely, but a slender Library of Classical Learning; and considering what a Number of Translations, Romances, and Legends, started about his Time, and a little before (most of which, 'tis very evident, he read); I think, it may easily be reconciled why he rather schemed his *Plots* and *Characters* from these more latter Informations, than went back to those Fountains, for which he might entertain a sincere Veneration, but to which he could not have so ready a Recourse.

In touching on another Part of his Learning, as it related to the Knowledge of *History* and *Books* , I shall advance something that, at first sight, will very much wear the Appearance of a Paradox. For I shall find it no hard Matter to prove, that, from the grossest Blunders in History, we are not to infer his real Ignorance of it: Nor from a greater Use of *Latin* Words, than ever any other *English* Author used, must we infer his intimate Acquaintance with that Language.

A Reader of Taste may easily observe, that tho' *Shakespeare* , almost in every Scene of his historical Plays, commits the grossest Offences against Chronology, History, and Ancient Politicks; yet This was not thro' Ignorance, as is generally supposed, but thro' the too powerful Blaze of his Imagination; which, when once raised, made all acquired Knowledge vanish and disappear before it. But this Licence in him, as I have said, must not be imputed to Ignorance: since as often we may find him, when Occasion serves, reasoning up to the Truth of History; and throwing out Sentiments as justly adapted to the Circumstances of his Subject, as to the Dignity of his Characters, or Dictates of Nature in general.

Then to come to his Knowledge of the *Latin* Tongue, 'tis certain there is a surprising Effusion of *Latin* Words made *English* , far more than in any one *English* Author I have seen; but we must be cautious to imagine this was of his own doing. For the *English* Tongue, in this Age, began extremely to suffer by an inundation of *Latin* : And this, to be sure, was occasion'd by the Pedantry of those two Monarchs, *Elizabeth* and *James* , Both great *Latinists* . For it is not to be wonder'd at, if both the Court and Schools, equal Flatterers of Power, should adapt themselves to the Royal Taste.

But now I am touching on the Question (which has been so frequently agitated, yet so entirely undecided) of his Learning and Acquaintance with the Languages; an additional Word or two naturally falls in here upon the Genius of our Author, as compared with that of *Jonson* his Contemporary. They are confessedly the greatest Writers our Nation could ever boast of in the *Drama* . The first, we say, owed all to his prodigious natural Genius; and the other a great deal to his Art and Learning. This, if attended to, will explain a very remarkable Appearance in their Writings. Besides those wonderful Masterpieces of Art and Genius, which each has given us, They are the Authors of other Works very unworthy of them: But with this Difference, that in *Jonson* 's bad Pieces we don't discover one single Trace of the Author of the *Fox* and *Alchemist* : but in the wild extravagant Notes of *Shakespeare* , you every now and then encounter Strains that recognize the divine Composer. This Difference may be thus accounted for. *Jonson* , as we said before, owing all his Excellence to his Art, by which he sometimes strain'd himself to an uncommon Pitch, when at other times he unbent and play'd with his Subject, having nothing then to support him, it is no wonder he wrote so far beneath himself. But *Shakespeare* , indebted more largely to Nature than the Other to acquired Talents, in his most negligent Hours could never so totally divest himself of his Genius, but that it would frequently break out with astonishing Force and Splendor.

As I have never propos'd to dilate farther on the Character of my Author than was necessary to explain the Nature and Use of this Edition, I shall proceed to consider him as a Genius in Possession of an everlasting Name. And how great that Merit must be, which could gain it against all the Disadvantages of the horrid Condition in which he had hitherto appear'd! Had *Homer* , or any other admir'd Author, first started into Publick so maim'd and deform'd, we cannot determine whether they had not sunk for ever under the Ignominy of such an ill Appearance. The mangled Condition of *Shakespeare* has been acknowledg'd by Mr. *Rowe* , who published him indeed, but neither corrected his Text, nor collated the old Copies. This Gentleman had Abilities, and a sufficient Knowledge of his Author, had but his Industry been equal to his Talents. The same mangled Condition has been acknowledg'd too by Mr. *Pope* , who publish'd him likewise, pretended to have collated the old Copies, and yet seldom has corrected the Text but to its Injury. I congratulate with the *Manes* of our Poet, that this Gentleman has been sparing in *indulging his private Sense* , as he phrases it; for He who tampers with an Author whom he does not understand, must do it at the Expence of his Subject. I have made it evident throughout my Remarks, that he has frequently inflicted a Wound where he intended a Cure. He has acted with regard to our Author, as an Editor, whom Lipsius mentions, did with regard to Martial; *Inventus est nescio quis* Popa, *qui non* vitia *ejus* , *sed* ipsum *excidit* . He has attack'd him like an unhandy *Slaughterman* ; and not lopp'd off the *Errors* , but the *Poet* .

When this is found to be Fact, how absurd must appear the Praises of such an Editor! It seems a moot Point, whether Mr. *Pope* has done most Injury to *Shakespeare* as his Editor and Encomiast, or Mr. *Rymer* done him Service as his Rival and Censurer. They have Both shewn themselves in an equal *Impuissance* of suspecting, or amending, the corrupted Passages: and tho' it be neither Prudence to censure, or commend, what one does not understand; yet if a man must do one when he plays the Critick, the latter is the more ridiculous Office: And by that *Shakespeare* suffers most. For the natural Veneration which we have for him, makes us apt to swallow whatever is given us as *his* , and set off with Encomiums; and hence we quit all suspicions of Depravity: On the contrary, the Censure of so divine an Author sets us upon his Defence; and this produces an exact Scrutiny and Examination, which ends in finding out and discriminating the true from the spurious.

It is not with any secret Pleasure that I so frequently animadvert on Mr. *Pope* as a Critick; but there are Provocations which a Man can never quite forget. His Libels have been thrown out with so much Inveteracy, that, not to dispute whether they *should* come from a *Christian* , they leave it a Question whether they *could* come from a *Man* . I should be loth to doubt, as *Quintus Serenus* did in a like Case, Sive homo, seu similis turpissima bestia nobis,

Vulnera dente dedit.

The Indignation, perhaps, for being represented a *Block-head* , may be as strong in us as it is in the Ladies for a Reflexion on their *Beauties* . It is certain, I am indebted to Him for some *flagrant Civilities* ; and I shall willingly devote a Part of my Life to the honest Endeavour of quitting Scores: with this Exception however, that I will not return those Civilities in his *peculiar* Strain, but confine myself, at least, to the Limits of *common Decency* . I shall ever think it better to want *Wit* , than to want *Humanity* : and impartial Posterity may, perhaps, be of my Opinion.

But, to return to my Subject; which now calls upon me to inquire into those Causes, to which the Depravations of my Author originally may be assign'd. We are to consider him as a Writer, of whom no authentic Manuscript was left extant; as a Writer, whose Pieces were dispersedly perform'd on the several *Stages* then in Being. And it was the Custom of those Days for the Poets to take a Price of the *Players* for the Pieces They from time to time furnish'd; and thereupon it was suppos'd, they had no farther Right to print them without the Consent of the *Players* . As it was the Interest of the *Companies* to keep their Plays unpublish'd, when any one succeeded, there was a Contest betwixt the Curiosity of the Town, who demanded to see it in Print, and the Policy of the *Stagers* , who wish'd to secrete it within their own Walls. Hence, many Pieces were taken down in Short-hand, and imperfectly copied by Ear, from a *Representation* : Others were printed from piece-meal Parts surreptitiously obtain'd from the Theatres, uncorrect, and without the Poet's Knowledge. To some of these Causes we owe the Train of Blemishes that deform those Pieces which stole singly into the World in our Author's Lifetime.

There are still other Reasons which may be suppos'd to have affected the whole Set. When the *Players* took upon them to publish his Works intire, every Theatre was ransack'd to supply the Copy; and *Parts* collected, which had gone thro' as many Changes as Performers, either from Mutilations or Additions made to them. Hence we derive many Chasms and Incoherences in the Sense and Matter. Scenes were frequently transposed, and shuffled out of their true Place, to humour the Caprice, or suppos'd Convenience, of some particular Actor. Hence much Confusion and Impropriety has attended and embarrass'd the Business and Fable. To these obvious Causes of Corruption it must be added, That our Author has lain under the Disadvantage of having his Errors propagated and multiplied by Time: because, for near a Century, his Works were publish'd from the faulty Copies, without the Assistance of any intelligent Editor: which has been the Case likewise of many a *Classic* Writer.

The Nature of any Distemper once found has generally been the immediate Step to a Cure. *Shakespeare* 's Case has in a great Measure resembled That of a corrupt *Classic* ; and, consequently, the Method of Cure was likewise to bear a Resemblance. By what Means, and with what Success, this Cure has been effected on ancient Writers, is too well known, and needs no formal Illustration. The Reputation, consequent on Tasks of that Nature, invited me to attempt the Method here; with this view, the Hopes of restoring to the Publick their greatest Poet in his original Purity: after having so long lain in a Condition that was a Disgrace to common Sense. To this end I have ventur'd on a Labour, that is the first Assay of the kind on any modern Author whatsoever.

For the late Edition of *Milton* by the Learned Dr. *Bentley* is, in the main, a Performance of another Species. It is plain, it was the Intention of that Great Man rather to correct and pare off the Excrescencies of the *Paradise Lost* , in the Manner that *Tucca* and *Varius* were employ'd to criticize the *Æneis* of *Virgil* , than to restore corrupted Passages. Hence, therefore, may be seen either the Iniquity or Ignorance of his Censurers, who, from some Expressions, would make us believe, the *Doctor* every where gives us his Corrections as the original Text of the Author; whereas the chief Turn of his Criticism is plainly to shew the World, that if *Milton* did not write as He would have him, he ought to have wrote so.

I thought proper to premise this Observation to the Readers, as it will shew that the Critic on *Shakespeare* is of a quite different Kind. His genuine Text is for the most part religiously adhered to, and the numerous Faults and Blemishes, purely his own, are left as they were found. Nothing is alter'd, but what by the clearest Reasoning can be proved a Corruption of the true Text; and the Alteration, a real Restoration of the genuine Reading. Nay, so strictly have I strove to give the true Reading, tho' sometimes not to the Advantage of my Author, that I have been ridiculously ridicul'd for it by Those, who either were iniquitously for turning every thing to my Disadvantage, or else were totally ignorant of the true Duty of an Editor.

The Science of Criticism, as far as it effects an Editor, seems to be reduced to these three Classes; the Emendation of corrupt Passages; the Explanation of obscure and difficult ones; and an Inquiry into the Beauties and Defects of Composition. This Work is principally confin'd to the two former Parts: tho' there are some Specimens interspers'd of the latter Kind, as several of the Emendations were best supported, and several of the Difficulties best explain'd, by taking notice of the Beauties and Defects of the Composition peculiar to this Immortal Poet. But this was but occasional, and for the sake only of perfecting the two other Parts, which were the proper Objects of the Editor's Labour. The third lies open for every willing Undertaker: and I shall be pleas'd to see it the Employment of a masterly Pen.

It must necessarily happen, as I have formerly observ'd, that where the Assistance of Manuscripts is wanting to set an Author's Meaning right, and rescue him from those Errors which have been transmitted down thro' a series of incorrect Editions, and a long Intervention of Time, many Passages must be desperate, and past a Cure; and their true Sense irretrievable either to Care or the Sagacity of Conjecture. But is there any Reason therefore to say, That because All cannot be retriev'd, All ought to be left desperate? We should shew very little Honesty, or Wisdom, to play the Tyrants with an Author's Text; to raze, alter, innovate, and overturn, at all Adventures, and to the utter Detriment of his Sense and Meaning: But to be so very reserved and cautious, as to interpose no Relief or Conjecture, where it manifestly labours and cries out for Assistance, seems, on the other hand, an indolent Absurdity.

As there are very few pages in *Shakespeare* , upon which some Suspicions of Depravity do not reasonably arise; I have thought it my Duty, in the first place, by a diligent and laborious Collation to take in the Assistances of all the older Copies.

In his *Historical Plays* , whenever our *English* Chronicles, and in his Tragedies when *Greek* or *Roman* Story, could give any Light; no Pains have been omitted to set Passages right by comparing my Author with his Originals; for as I have frequently observed, he was a close and accurate Copier where-ever his *Fable* was founded on *History* .

Where-ever the Author's Sense is clear and discoverable (tho', perchance, low and trivial), I have not by any Innovation tamper'd with his Text, out of an Ostentation of endeavouring to make him speak better than the old Copies have done.

Where, thro' all the former Editions, a Passage has labour'd under flat Nonsense and invincible Darkness, if, by the Addition or Alteration of a Letter or two, or a Transposition in the Pointing, I have restored to Him both Sense and Sentiment; such Corrections, I am persuaded, will need no Indulgence.

And whenever I have taken a greater Latitude and Liberty in amending, I have constantly endeavour'd to support my Corrections and Conjectures by parallel Passages and Authorities from himself, the surest Means of expounding any Author whatsoever. *Cette voïe d'interpreter un Autheur par lui-même est plus sure que tous les Commentaires* , says a very learned *French* Critick.

As to my *Notes* (from which the common and learned Readers of our Author, I hope, will derive some Satisfaction), I have endeavour'd to give them a Variety in some Proportion to their Number. Where-ever I have ventur'd at an Emendation, a *Note* is constantly subjoin'd to justify and assert the Reason of it. Where I only offer a Conjecture, and do not disturb the Text, I fairly set forth my Grounds for such Conjecture, and submit it to Judgment. Some Remarks are spent in explaining Passages, where the Wit or Satire depends on an obscure Point of History: Others, where Allusions are to Divinity, Philosophy, or other Branches of Science. Some are added to shew where there is a Suspicion of our Author having borrow'd from the Ancients: Others, to shew where he is rallying his Contemporaries; or where He himself is rallied by them. And some are necessarily thrown in, to explain an obscure and obsolete *Term* , *Phrase* , or *Idea* . I once intended to have added a complete and copious *Glossary* ; but as I have been importun'd, and am prepar'd, to give a correct Edition of our Author's Poems (in which many Terms occur that are not to be met with in his *Plays*), I thought a *Glossary* to all *Shakespeare* 's Works more proper to attend that Volume.

In reforming an infinite Number of Passages in the *Pointing* , where the Sense was before quite lost, I have frequently subjoin'd Notes to shew the *deprav'd* , and to prove the *reform'd* , Pointing: a Part of Labour in this Work which I could very willingly have spar'd myself. May it not be objected, why then have you burden'd us with these Notes? The Answer is obvious, and, if I mistake not, very material. Without such Notes, these Passages in subsequent Editions would be liable, thro' the Ignorance of Printers and Correctors, to fall into the old Confusion: Whereas, a Note on every one hinders all possible Return to Depravity, and for ever secures them in a State of Purity and Integrity not to be lost or forfeited.

Again, as some Notes have been necessary to point out the Detection of the corrupted Text, and establish the Restoration of the genuine Readings; some others have been as necessary for the Explanation of Passages obscure and difficult. To understand the Necessity and Use of this Part of my Task, some Particulars of my Author's Character are previously to be explain'd. There are *Obscurities* in him, which are common to him with all Poets of the same Species; there are Others, the Issue of the Times he liv'd in; and there are others, again, peculiar to himself. The Nature of Comic Poetry being entirely satirical, it busies itself more in exposing what we call Caprice and Humour, than Vices cognizable to the Laws. The *English* , from the Happiness of a free Constitution, and a Turn of Mind peculiarly speculative and inquisitive, are observ'd to produce more *Humourists* and a greater Variety of original *Characters* , than any other People whatsoever: And These owing their immediate Birth to the peculiar Genius of each Age, an infinite Number of Things alluded to, glanced at, and expos'd, must needs become obscure, as the *Characters* themselves are antiquated and disused. An Editor therefore should be well vers'd in the History and Manners of his Author's Age, if he aims at doing him a Service in this Respect.

Besides, *Wit* lying mostly in the Assemblage of *Ideas* , and in the putting Those together with Quickness and Variety, wherein can be found any Resemblance, or Congruity, to make up pleasant Pictures, and agreeable Visions in the Fancy; the Writer, who aims at Wit, must of course range far and wide for Materials. Now, the Age in which *Shakespeare* liv'd, having, above all others, a wonderful Affection to appear Learned, They declined vulgar Images, such as are immediately fetch'd from Nature, and rang'd thro' the Circle of the Sciences to fetch their Ideas from thence. But as the Resemblances of such Ideas to the Subject must necessarily lie very much out of the common Way, and every Piece of Wit appear a Riddle to the Vulgar; This, that should have taught them the forced, quaint, unnatural Tract they were in (and induce them to follow a more natural One), was the very Thing that kept them attach'd to it. The ostentatious Affectation of abstruse Learning, peculiar to that Time, the Love that Men naturally have to every Thing that looks like Mystery, fixed them down to this Habit of Obscurity. Thus became the Poetry of Donne (tho' the wittiest Man of that Age) nothing but a continued Heap of Riddles. And our *Shakespeare* , with all his easy Nature about him, for want of the Knowledge of the true Rules of Art, falls frequently into this vicious Manner.

The third Species of *Obscurities* which deform our Author, as the Effects of his own Genius and Character, are Those that proceed from his peculiar Manner of *Thinking* , and as peculiar a Manner of *cloathing* those *Thoughts* . With regard to his *Thinking* , it is certain that he had a general Knowledge of all the Sciences: But his Acquaintance was rather That of a Traveller, than a Native. Nothing in Philosophy was unknown to him; but every Thing in it had the Grace and Force of Novelty. And as Novelty is one main Source of Admiration, we are not to wonder that He has perpetual Allusions to the most recondite Parts of the Sciences: and This was done not so much out of Affectation, as the Effect of Admiration begot by Novelty. Then, as to his *Style* and *Diction* , we may much more justly apply to Shakespeare what a celebrated Writer has said of Milton; *Our Language sunk under him, and was unequal to that Greatness of Soul which furnish'd him with such glorious Conceptions.* He therefore frequently uses old Words, to give his Diction an Air of Solemnity; as he coins others, to express the Novelty and Variety of his Ideas.

Upon every distinct Species of these *Obscurities* I have thought it my Province to employ a Note, for the Service of my Author, and the Entertainment of my Readers. A few transient Remarks too I have not scrupled to intermix, upon the Poet's *Negligences* and *Omissions* in point of Art; but I have done it always in such a Manner as will testify my Deference and Veneration for the immortal Author. Some Censurers of *Shakespeare* , and particularly Mr. *Rymer* , have taught me to distinguish betwixt the *Railer* and *Critick* . The Outrage of his Quotations is so remarkably violent, so push'd beyond all bounds of Decency and Sober Reasoning, that it quite carries over the Mark at which it was levell'd. Extravagant Abuse throws off the Edge of the intended Disparagement, and turns the Madman's Weapon into his own Bosom. In short, as to *Rymer* , This is my Opinion of him from his *Criticisms* on the *Tragedies* of the Last Age. He writes with great Vivacity, and appears to have been a Scholar: but, as for his Knowledge of the Art of Poetry, I can't perceive it was any deeper than his Acquaintance with *Bossu* and *Dacier* , from whom he has transcrib'd many of his best Reflexions. The late Mr. *Gildon* was one attached to *Rymer* by a similar way of Thinking and Studies. They were both of that Species of Criticks, who are desirous of displaying their Powers rather in finding Faults, than in consulting the Improvement of the World: the *hypercritical* Part of the Science of *Criticism* .

I had not mentioned the modest Liberty I have here and there taken of animadverting on my Author, but that I was willing to obviate in time the splenetick Exaggerations of my Adversaries on this Head. From past Experiments I have reason to be conscious in what Light this Attempt may be placed: and that what I call a *modest Liberty* , will, by a little of their Dexterity, be inverted into downright *Impudence* . From a hundred mean and dishonest Artifices employ'd to discredit this Edition, and to cry down its Editor, I have all the Grounds in nature to beware of Attacks. But tho' the Malice of Wit, join'd to the Smoothness of Versification, may furnish some Ridicule; Fact, I hope, will be able to stand its Ground against Banter and Gaiety.

It has been my Fate, it seems, as I thought it my Duty, to discover some *Anachronisms* in our Author; which might have slept in Obscurity but for *this Restorer* , as Mr. *Pope* is pleas'd affectionately to stile me: as, for Instance, where *Aristotle* is mentioned by *Hector* in *Troilus* and *Cressida* : and *Galen* , *Cato* , and *Alexander* the Great, in *Coriolanus* . These, in Mr. *Pope* 's Opinion, are Blunders, which the Illiteracy of the first Publishers of his Works has father'd upon the Poet's Memory: *it not being at all credible, that These could be the Errors of any Man who had the least Tincture of a School, or the least Conversation with Such as had.* But I have sufficiently proved, in the course of my *Notes* , that such *Anachronisms* were the Effect of Poetic Licence, rather than of Ignorance in our Poet. And if I may be permitted to ask a modest Question by the way, Why may not I restore an *Anachronism* really made by our Author, as well as Mr. *Pope* take the Privilege to fix others upon him, which he never had it in his Head to make; as I may venture to affirm he had not, in the Instance of Sir *Francis Drake* , to which I have spoke in the proper Place?

But who shall dare make any Words about this Freedom of Mr. *Pope* 's towards *Shakespeare* , if it can be prov'd, that, in his Fits of Criticism, he makes no more Ceremony with good *Homer* himself? To try, then, a Criticism of his own advancing; In the 8th Book of the *Odyssey* , where *Demodocus* sings the Episode of the Loves of *Mars* and *Venus* ; and that, upon their being taken in the Net by *Vulcan* ,

——The God of Arms

Must pay the Penalty for lawless Charms;

Mr. *Pope* is so kind gravely to inform us, “That *Homer* in This, as in many other Places, seems to allude to the Laws of *Athens* , where Death was the Punishment of Adultery.” But how is this significant Observation made out? Why, who can possibly object any Thing to the contrary?—*Does not Pausanias relate that Draco the Lawgiver to the Athenians granted Impunity to any Person that took Revenge upon an Adulterer? And was it not also the Institution of Solon, that if Any One took an Adulterer in the Fact, he might use him as he pleas'd?* These Things are very true: and to see what a good Memory, and sound Judgment in Conjunction can atchieve! Tho' *Homer* 's Date is not determin'd down to a single Year, yet 'tis pretty generally agreed that he liv'd above 300 Years before *Draco* and *Solon* : And That, it seems, has made him *seem* to allude to the very Laws which these Two Legislators propounded about 300 Years after. If this Inference be not something like an *Anachronism* or *Prolepsis* , I'll look once more into my Lexicons for the true Meaning of the Words. It appears to me that somebody besides *Mars* and *Venus* has been caught in a Net by this Episode: and I could call in other Instances to confirm what treacherous Tackle this Net-work is, if not cautiously handled.

How just, notwithstanding, I have been in detecting the *Anachronisms* of my Author, and in defending him for the Use of them, our late Editor seems to think, they should rather have slept in Obscurity: and the having discovered them is sneer'd at, as a sort of wrong-headed Sagacity.

The numerous Corrections which I have made of the Poet's Text in my *Shakespeare Restor'd* , and which the Publick have been so kind to think well of, are, in the Appendix of Mr. *Pope* 's last Edition, slightingly call'd *Various Readings, Guesses* , &c. He confesses to have inserted as many of them as he judg'd of any the least Advantage to the Poet; but says, that the whole amounted to about 25 Words: and pretends to have annexed a compleat List of the rest, which were not worth his embracing. Whoever has read my Book, will at one Glance see, how in both these Points Veracity is strain'd, so an Injury might but be done. *Malus, etsi obesse non potest, tamen cogitat.*

Another Expedient, to make my Work appear of a trifling Nature, has been an Attempt to depreciate *Literal Criticism* . To this end, and to pay a servile Compliment to Mr. *Pope* , an *Anonymous* Writer has, like a *Scotch* Pedlar in Wit, unbraced his Pack on the Subject. But, that his Virulence might not seem to be levelled singly at me, he has done me the Honour to join Dr. *Bentley* in the Libel. I was in hopes, we should have been both abused with Smartness of Satire at least, tho' not with Solidity of Argument; that it might have been worth some Reply in Defence of the Science attacked. But I may fairly say of this Author, as *Falstaffe* does of *Poins* ;—*Hang him, Baboon! his Wit is as thick as Tewksbury Mustard; there is no more Conceit in him, than is in a Mallet.* If it be not Prophanation to set the Opinion of the divine *Longinus* against such a Scribler, he tells us expressly, “That to make a Judgment upon *Words* (and *Writings*) is the most consummate Fruit of much Experience.” ! ³pÁ Äö½ »y³É½ ºÁwÃ¹Â À¿»»ÆÂ ÃÄ¹ ÀµwÁ±Â Äµ»µÅÄ±Ö¿½ À¹³s½½·¼±. Whenever Words are depraved, the Sense of course must be corrupted; and thence the Reader's betray'd into a false Meaning.

If the *Latin* and *Greek* Languages have receiv'd the greatest Advantages imaginable from the Labours of the Editors and Criticks of the two last Ages; by whose Aid and Assistance the Grammarians have been enabled to write infinitely better in that Art than even the preceding Grammarians, who wrote when those Tongues flourish'd as living Languages: I should account it a peculiar Happiness, that, by the faint Assay I have made in this Work, a Path might be chalk'd out, for abler Hands, by which to derive the same Advantages to our own Tongue: a Tongue, which, tho' it wants none of the fundamental Qualities of an universal Language, yet, as a *noble Writer* says, lisps and stammers as in its Cradle; and has produced little more towards its polishing than Complaints of its Barbarity.

Having now run thro' all those Points which I intended should make any Part of this Dissertation, and having in my *former* Edition made publick Acknowledgments of the Assistances lent me, I shall conclude with a brief Account of the Methods taken in *This* .

It was thought proper, in order to reduce the Bulk and Price of the Impression, that the Notes, where-ever they would admit of it, might be abridg'd: for which Reason I have curtail'd a great Quantity of Such, in which Explanations were too prolix, or Authorities in Support of an Emendation too numerous: and Many I have entirely expung'd, which were judg'd rather Verbose and Declamatory (and, so, Notes merely of Ostentation), than necessary or instructive.

The few literal Errors which had escap'd Notice, for want of Revisals, in the former Edition, are here reform'd: and the Pointing of innumerable Passages is regulated, with all the Accuracy I am capable of.

I shall decline making any farther Declaration of the Pains I have taken upon my Author, because it was my Duty, as his Editor, to publish him with my best Care and Judgment: and because I am sensible, all such Declarations are construed to be laying a sort of a Debt on the Publick. As the former Edition has been received with much Indulgence, I ought to make my Acknowledgments to the Town for their favourable Opinion of it: and I shall always be proud to think That Encouragement the best Payment I can hope to receive from my poor Studies.

Sir Thomas Hanmer: Preface to Edition of Shakespeare. 1744.

What the Publick is here to expect is a true and correct Edition of *Shakespear* 's works cleared from the corruptions with which they have hitherto abounded. One of the great Admirers of this incomparable Author hath made it the amusement of his leisure hours for many years past to look over his writings with a careful eye, to note the obscurities and absurdities introduced into the text, and according to the best of his judgment to restore the genuine sense and purity of it. In this he proposed nothing to himself but his private satisfaction in making his own copy as perfect as he could: but as the emendations multiplied upon his hands, other Gentlemen equally fond of the Author desired to see them, and some were so kind as to give their assistance by communicating their observations and conjectures upon difficult passages which had occurred to them. Thus by degrees the work growing more considerable than was at first expected, they who had the opportunity of looking into it, too partial perhaps in their judgment, thought it worth being made publick; and he, who hath with difficulty yielded to their perswasions, is far from desiring to reflect upon the late Editors for the omissions and defects which they left to be supplied by others who should follow them in the same province. On the contrary, he thinks the world much obliged to them for the progress they made in weeding out so great a number of blunders and mistakes as they have done, and probably he who hath carried on the work might never have thought of such an undertaking if he had not found a considerable part so done to his hands.

From what causes it proceeded that the works of this Author in the first publication of them were more injured and abused than perhaps any that ever pass'd the Press, hath been sufficiently explained in the Preface to Mr. *Pope* 's Edition which is here subjoined, and there needs no more to be said upon that subject. This only the Reader is desired to bear in mind, that as the corruptions are more numerous and of a grosser kind than can well be conceived but by those who have looked nearly into them; so in the correcting them this rule hath been most strictly observed, not to give a loose to fancy, or indulge a licentious spirit of criticism, as if it were fit for any one to presume to judge what *Shakespear* ought to have written, instead of endeavouring to discover truly and retrieve what he did write: and so great caution hath been used in this respect, that no alterations have been made but what the sense necessarily required, what the measure of the verse often helped to point out, and what the similitude of words in the false reading and in the true, generally speaking, appeared very well to justify.

Most of those passages are here thrown to the bottom of the page and rejected as spurious, which were stigmatized as such in Mr. *Pope* 's Edition; and it were to be wished that more had then undergone the same sentence. The promoter of the present Edition hath ventured to discard but few more upon his own judgment, the most considerable of which is that wretched piece of ribaldry in King *Henry V.* put into the mouths of the *French* Princess and an old Gentlewoman, improper enough as it is all in *French* and not intelligible to an *English* audience, and yet that perhaps is the best thing that can be said of it. There can be no doubt but a great deal more of that low stuff which disgraces the works of this great Author, was foisted in by the Players after his death, to please the vulgar audiences by which they subsisted: and though some of the poor witticisms and conceits must be supposed to have fallen from his pen, yet as he hath put them generally into the mouths of low and ignorant people, so it is to be remember'd that he wrote for the Stage, rude and unpolished as it then was; and the vicious taste of the age must stand condemned for them, since he hath left upon record a signal proof how much he despised them. In his Play of *The Merchant of Venice* a Clown is introduced quibbling in a miserable manner, upon which one who bears the character of a man of sense makes the following reflection: *How every fool can play upon a word! I think the best grace of wit will shortly turn into silence, and discourse grow commendable in none but parrots.* He could hardly have found stronger words to express his indignation at those false pretences to wit then in vogue; and therefore though such trash is frequently interspersed in his writings, it would be unjust to cast it as an imputation upon his taste and judgment and character as a Writer.

There being many words in *Shakespear* which are grown out of use and obsolete, and many borrowed from other languages which are not enough naturalized or known among us, a Glossary is added at the end of the work, for the explanation of all those terms which have hitherto been so many stumbling-blocks to the generality of Readers; and where there is any obscurity in the text not arising from the words but from a reference to some antiquated customs now forgotten, or other causes of that kind, a note is put at the bottom of the page to clear up the difficulty.

With these several helps if that rich vein of sense which runs through the works of this Author can be retrieved in every part and brought to appear in its true light, and if it may be hoped without presumption that this is here effected; they who love and admire him will receive a new pleasure, and all probably will be more ready to join in doing him justice, who does great honour to his country as a rare and perhaps a singular Genius: one who hath attained an high degree of perfection in those two great branches of Poetry, Tragedy and Comedy, different as they are in their natures from each other; and who may be said without partiality to have equalled, if not excelled, in both kinds, the best writers of any age or country who have thought it glory enough to distinguish themselves in either.

Since therefore other nations have taken care to dignify the works of their most celebrated Poets with the fairest impressions beautified with the ornaments of sculpture, well may our *Shakespear* be thought to deserve no less consideration: and as a fresh acknowledgment hath lately been paid to his merit, and a high regard to his name and memory, by erecting his Statue at a publick expence; so it is desired that this new Edition of his works, which hath cost some attention and care, may be looked upon as another small monument designed and dedicated to his honour.

William Warburton: Preface to Edition of Shakespeare. 1747.

It hath been no unusual thing for Writers, when dissatisfied with the Patronage or Judgment of their own Times, to appeal to Posterity for a fair Hearing. Some have even thought fit to apply to it in the first Instance; and to decline Acquaintance with the Public till Envy and Prejudice had quite subsided. But, of all the Trusters to Futurity, commend me to the Author of the following Poems, who not only left it to Time to do him Justice as it would, but to find him out as it could. For, what between too great Attention to his Profit as a Player, and too little to his Reputation as a Poet, his Works, left to the Care of Door-keepers and Prompters, hardly escaped the common Fate of those Writings, how good soever, which are abandon'd to their own Fortune, and unprotected by Party or Cabal. At length, indeed, they struggled into Light; but so disguised and travested, that no classic Author, after having run ten secular Stages thro' the blind Cloisters of Monks and Canons, ever came out in half so maimed and mangled a Condition. But for a full Account of his Disorders, I refer the Reader to the excellent Discourse which follows, and turn myself to consider the Remedies that have been applied to them.

Shakespear 's Works, when they escaped the Players, did not fall into much better Hands when they came amongst Printers and Booksellers: who, to say the Truth, had, at first, but small Encouragement for putting him into a better Condition. The stubborn Nonsense, with which he was incrusted, occasioned his lying long neglected amongst the common Lumber of the Stage. And when that resistless Splendor, which now shoots all around him, had, by degrees, broke thro' the Shell of those Impurities, his dazzled Admirers became as suddenly insensible to the extraneous Scurf that still stuck upon him, as they had been before to the native Beauties that lay under it. So that, as then he was thought not to deserve a Cure, he was now supposed not to need any.

His growing Eminence, however, required that he should be used with Ceremony: And he soon had his Appointment of an *Editor* in form. But the Bookseller, whose dealing was with Wits, having learnt of them, I know not what silly Maxim, that *none but a Poet should presume to meddle with a Poet* , engaged the ingenious Mr. *Rowe* to undertake this Employment. A Wit indeed he was; but so utterly unacquainted with the whole Business of Criticism, that he did not even collate or consult the first Editions of the Work he undertook to publish; but contented himself with giving us a meagre Account of the Author's Life, interlarded with some common-place Scraps from his Writings. The Truth is, *Shakespear* 's Condition was yet but ill understood. The Nonsense, now, by consent, received for his own, was held in a kind of Reverence for its Age and Author: and thus it continued, till another great *Poet* broke the Charm; by shewing us, that the higher we went, the less of it was still to be found.

For the Proprietors, not discouraged by their first unsuccessful Effort, in due time made a second; and, tho' they still stuck to their Poets, with infinitely more Success in their Choice of Mr. Pope. Who, by the mere force of an uncommon Genius, without any particular Study or Profession of this Art, discharged the great Parts of it so well as to make his Edition the best Foundation for all further Improvements. He separated the genuine from the spurious Plays: And, with equal Judgment, tho' not always with the same Success, attempted to clear the genuine Plays from the interpolated Scenes: He then consulted the old Editions; and, by a careful Collation of them, rectified the faulty, and supplied the imperfect Reading, in a great number of places: And lastly, in an admirable Preface, hath drawn a general, but very lively, Sketch of *Shakespear* 's poetic Character; and, in the corrected Text, marked out those peculiar Strokes of Genius which were most proper to support and illustrate that Character. Thus far Mr. Pope. And altho' much more was to be done before *Shakespear* could be restored to himself (such as amending the corrupted Text where the printed Books afford no Assistance; explaining his licentious Phraseology and obscure Allusions; and illustrating the Beauties of his Poetry); yet, with great Modesty and Prudence, our illustrious Editor left this to the Critic by Profession.

But nothing will give the common Reader a better idea of the Value of Mr. *Pope* 's Edition, than the two Attempts which have been since made, by Mr. *Theobald* and Sir *Thomas Hanmer* , in Opposition to it. Who, altho' they concerned themselves only in the *first* of these three Parts of Criticism, the *restoring the Text* (without any Conception of the *second* , or venturing even to touch upon the *third*), yet succeeded so very ill in it, that they left their Author in ten times a worse Condition than they found him. But, as it was my ill Fortune to have some accidental Connexions with these two *Gentlemen* , it will be incumbent on me to be a little more particular concerning them.

The One was recommended to me as a poor Man; the Other as a poor Critic: and to each of them, at different times, I communicated a great number of Observations, which they managed, as they saw fit, to the Relief of their several

Distresses. As to Mr. *Theobald* , who wanted Money, I allowed him to print what I gave him for his own Advantage: and he allowed himself in the Liberty of taking one Part for his own, and sequestering another for the Benefit, as I supposed, of some future Edition. But, as to the *Oxford Editor* , who wanted nothing but what he might very well be without, the Reputation of a Critic, I could not so easily forgive him for trafficking with my Papers without my Knowledge; and, when that Project fail'd, for employing a number of my Conjectures in his Edition against my express Desire not to have that Honour done unto me.

Mr. *Theobald* was naturally turned to Industry and Labour. What he read he could transcribe: but, as what he thought, if ever he did think, he could but ill express, so he read on; and by that means got a Character of Learning, without risquing, to every Observer, the Imputation of wanting a better Talent. By a punctilious Collation of the old Books, he corrected what was manifestly wrong in the *latter* Editions, by what was manifestly right in the *earlier* . And this is his real merit; and the whole of it. For where the Phrase was very obsolete or licentious in the *common* Books, or only slightly corrupted in the *other* , he wanted sufficient Knowledge of the Progress and various Stages of the *English* Tongue, as well as Acquaintance with the Peculiarity of *Shakespear* 's Language, to understand what was right; nor had he either common Judgment to see, or critical Sagacity to amend, what was manifestly faulty. Hence he generally exerts his conjectural Talent in the wrong Place: He tampers with what is found in the *common* Books; and, in the *old* ones, omits all Notice of *Variations* the Sense of which he did not understand.

How the *Oxford Editor* came to think himself qualified for this Office, from which his whole Course of Life had been so remote, is still more difficult to conceive. For whatever Parts he might have either of Genius or Erudition, he was absolutely ignorant of the Art of Criticism, as well as the Poetry of that Time, and the Language of his Author: And so far from a Thought of examining the *first* Editions, that he even neglected to compare Mr. *Pope* 's, from which he printed his own, with Mr. *Theobald* 's; whereby he lost the Advantage of many fine Lines which the other had recovered from the old Quartos. Where he trusts to his own Sagacity, in what affects the Sense, his Conjectures are generally absurd and extravagant, and violating every Rule of Criticism. Tho', in this Rage of Correcting, he was not absolutely destitute of all *Art* . For, having a Number of my Conjectures before him, he took as many of them as he saw fit, to work upon; and by changing them to something, he thought, synonymous or similar, he made them his own; and so became a Critic at a cheap Expence. But how well he hath succeeded in this, as likewise in his Conjectures which are properly his own, will be seen in the course of my Remarks: Tho', as he hath declined to give the Reasons for his Interpolations, he hath not afforded me so fair a hold of him as Mr. *Theobald* hath done, who was less cautious. But his principal Object was to reform his Author's Numbers; and this, which he hath done, on every Occasion, by the Insertion or Omission of a set of harmless unconcerning Expletives, makes up the gross Body of his innocent Corrections. And so, in spite of that extreme Negligence in Numbers which distinguishes the first Dramatic Writers, he hath tricked up the old Bard, from Head to Foot, in all the finical Exactness of a modern Measurer of Syllables.

For the rest, all the Corrections which these two Editors have made on any *reasonable* Foundation, are here admitted into the Text, and carefully assigned to their respective Authors: A piece of Justice which the *Oxford Editor* never did; and which the *Other* was not always scrupulous in observing towards me. To conclude with them in a word, They separately possessed those two Qualities which, more than any other, have contributed to bring the Art of Criticism into disrepute, *Dulness of Apprehension* , and *Extravagance of Conjecture* .

I am now to give some Account of the present Undertaking. For as to all those Things which have been published under the titles of *Essays* , *Remarks* , *Observations* , &c. on *Shakespear* , (if you except some critical Notes on *Macbeth* , given as a Specimen of a projected Edition, and written, as appears, by a Man of Parts and Genius) the rest are absolutely below a serious Notice.

The whole a Critic can do for an Author who deserves his Service, is to correct the faulty Text; to remark the Peculiarities of Language; to illustrate the obscure Allusions; and to explain the Beauties and Defects of Sentiment or Composition. And surely, if ever Author had a Claim to this Service, it was our *Shakespear* : Who, widely excelling in the Knowledge of Human Nature, hath given to his infinitely varied Pictures of it, such Truth of Design, such Force of Drawing, such Beauty of Colouring, as was hardly ever equalled by any Writer, whether his Aim was the Use, or only the Entertainment of Mankind. The Notes in this Edition, therefore, take in the whole Compass of Criticism.

I. The first sort is employed in restoring the Poet's genuine Text; but in those Places only where it labours with inextricable Nonsense. In which, how much soever I may have given Scope to critical Conjecture, where the old Copies failed me, I have indulged nothing to Fancy or Imagination; but have religiously observed the severe Canons of literal Criticism; as may be seen from the Reasons accompanying every Alteration of the common Text. Nor would a different Conduct have become a Critic whose greatest Attention, in this part, was to vindicate the established Reading from Interpolations occasioned by the fanciful Extravagancies of others. I once intended to have given the Reader a *body of Canons* , for literal Criticism, drawn out in form; as well such as concern the Art in general, as those that arise from the Nature and Circumstances of our Author's Works in particular. And this for two Reasons. First, To give the *unlearned Reader* a just Idea, and consequently a better Opinion of the Art of Criticism, now sunk very low in the popular Esteem, by the Attempts of some who would needs exercise it without either natural or acquired Talents; and by the ill Success of others, who seemed to have lost both, when they came to try them upon *English* Authors. Secondly, To deter the *unlearned Writer* from wantonly trifling with an Art he is a Stranger to, at the Expence of his own Reputation, and the Integrity of the Text of established Authors. But these Uses may be well supplied by what is occasionally said upon the Subject, in the Course of the following Remarks.

II. The second sort of Notes consists in an Explanation of the Author's Meaning, when, by one or more of these Causes, it becomes obscure; either from a *licentious Use of Terms* ; or a *hard or ungrammatical Construction* ; or lastly, from *far-fetch'd or quaint Allusions* .

1. This licentious Use of Words is almost peculiar to the Language of *Shakespear* . To common Terms he hath affixed Meanings of his own, unauthorised by Use, and not to be justified by Analogy. And this Liberty he hath taken with the noblest Parts of Speech, such as *Mixed-modes* ; which, as they are most susceptible of Abuse, so their Abuse most hurts the Clearness of the Discourse. The Critics (to whom *Shakespear* 's Licence was still as much a Secret as his Meaning, which that Licence had obscured) fell into two contrary Mistakes; but equally injurious to his Reputation and his Writings. For some of them, observing a Darkness that pervaded his whole Expression, have censured him for Confusion of Ideas and Inaccuracy of reasoning. *In the Neighing of a Horse (says Rymer), or in the Growling of a Mastiff, there is a Meaning, there is a lively Expression, and, may I say, more Humanity than many times in the tragical Flights of Shakespear.* The Ignorance of which Censure is of a Piece with its Brutality. The Truth is, no one thought clearer, or argued more closely than this immortal Bard. But his Superiority of Genius less needing the

Intervention of Words in the Act of Thinking, when he came to draw out his Contemplations into Discourse, he took up (as he was hurried on by the Torrent of his Matter) with the first Words that lay in his Way; and if, amongst these, there were two *Mixed-modes* that had but a principal Idea in common, it was enough for him; he regarded them as synonymous, and would use the one for the other without Fear or Scruple.—Again, there have been others, such as the two last Editors, who have fallen into a contrary Extreme, and regarded *Shakespear* 's Anomalies (as we may call them) amongst the Corruptions of his Text; which, therefore, they have cashiered in great Numbers, to make room for a Jargon of their own. This hath put me to additional Trouble; for I had not only their Interpolations to throw out again, but the genuine Text to replace, and establish in its stead; which, in many Cases, could not be done without shewing the peculiar Sense of the Terms, and explaining the Causes which led the Poet to so perverse a use of them. I had it once, indeed, in my Design, to give a general alphabetic *Glossary* of these Terms; but as each of them is explained in its proper Place, there seemed the less Occasion for such an Index.

2. The Poet's hard and unnatural Construction had a different Original. This was the Effect of mistaken Art and Design. The Public Taste was in its Infancy; and delighted (as it always does during that State) in the high and turgid; which leads the Writer to disguise a vulgar expression with hard and forced construction, whereby the Sentence frequently becomes cloudy and dark. Here, his Critics shew their modesty, and leave him to himself. For the arbitrary change of a Word doth little towards dispelling an obscurity that ariseth, not from the licentious use of a single Term, but from the unnatural arrangement of a whole Sentence. And they risqued nothing by their silence. For *Shakespear* was too clear in Fame to be suspected of a want of Meaning; and too high in Fashion for any one to own he needed a Critic to find it out. Not but, in his best works, we must allow, he is often so natural and flowing, so pure and correct, that he is even a model for stile and language.

3. As to his far-fetched and quaint Allusions, these are often a cover to common thoughts; just as his hard construction is to common expression. When they are not so, the Explanation of them has this further advantage, that, in clearing the Obscurity, you frequently discover some latent conceit not unworthy of his Genius.

III. The third and last sort of Notes is concerned in a critical explanation of the Author's Beauties and Defects; but chiefly of his Beauties, whether in Stile, Thought, Sentiment, Character, or Composition. An odd humour of finding fault hath long prevailed amongst the Critics; as if nothing were worth *remarking* that did not, at the same time, deserve to be reproved. Whereas the public Judgment hath less need to be assisted in what it shall reject, than in what it ought to prize; Men being generally more ready at spying Faults than in discovering Beauties. Nor is the value they set upon a Work, a certain proof that they understand it. For 'tis ever seen, that half a dozen Voices of credit give the lead: And if the Publick chance to be in good humour, or the Author much in their favour, the People are sure to follow. Hence it is that the true Critic hath so frequently attached himself to Works of established reputation; not to teach the World to *admire* , which, in those circumstances, to say the truth, they are apt enough to do of themselves; but to teach them how *with reason to admire* : No easy matter, I will assure you, on the subject in question: For tho' it be very true, as Mr. *Pope* hath observed, that *Shakespear is the fairest and fullest subject for criticism* , yet it is not such a sort of criticism as may be raised mechanically on the Rules which *Dacier* , *Rapin* , and *Bossu* have collected from Antiquity; and of which such kind of Writers as *Rymer* , *Gildon* , *Dennis* , and *Oldmixon* , have only gathered and chewed the Husks: nor on the other hand is it to be formed on the plan of those crude and superficial Judgments, on books and things, with which a certain celebrated Paper so much abounds; too good indeed to be named with the Writers last mentioned, but being unluckily mistaken for a *Model* , because it was an *Original* , it hath given rise to a deluge of the worst sort of critical Jargon; I mean that which looks most like sense. But the kind of criticism here required is such as judgeth our Author by those only Laws and Principles on which he wrote, Nature, and Common-sense.

Our Observations, therefore, being thus extensive, will, I presume, enable the Reader to form a right judgment of this favourite Poet, without drawing out his Character, as was once intended, in a continued discourse.

These, such as they are, were amongst my younger amusements, when, many years ago, I used to turn over these sort of Writers to unbend myself from more serious applications: And what, certainly, the Public, at this time of day, had never been troubled with, but for the conduct of the two last Editors, and the persuasions of dear Mr. Pope; whose memory and name,

——semper acerbum,

Semper honoratum (sic Di voluistis) habebo.

He was desirous I should give a new Edition of this Poet, as he thought it might contribute to put a stop to a prevailing folly of altering the Text of celebrated Authors without Talents or Judgment. And he was willing that *his* Edition should be melted down into *mine* , as it would, he said, afford him (so great is the modesty of an ingenuous temper) a fit opportunity of confessing his Mistakes. In memory of our Friendship, I have, therefore, made it our joint Edition. His admirable Preface is here added; all his Notes are given, with his name annexed; the Scenes are divided according to his regulation; and the most beautiful passages distinguished, as in his book, with inverted commas. In imitation of him, I have done the same by as many others as I thought most deserving of the Reader's attention, and have marked them with *double* commas.

If, from all this, *Shakespear* or good Letters have received any advantage, and the Public any benefit or entertainment, the thanks are due to the *Proprietors* , who have been at the expence of procuring this Edition. And I should be unjust to several deserving Men of a reputable and useful Profession, if I did not, on this occasion, acknowledge the fair dealing I have always found amongst them; and profess my sense of the unjust Prejudice which lies against them; whereby they have been, hitherto, unable to procure that security for their Property, which they see the rest of their Fellow-Citizens enjoy: A prejudice in part arising from the frequent *Piracies* (as they are called) committed by Members of their own Body. But such kind of Members no Body is without. And it would be hard that this should be turned to the discredit of the honest part of the Profession, who suffer more from such Injuries than any other men. It hath, in part too, arisen from the clamours of profligate Scriblers, ever ready, for a piece of Money, to prostitute their bad sense for or against any Cause prophane or sacred; or in any Scandal public or private: These meeting with little encouragement from Men of account in the Trade (who even in this enlightened Age are not the very worst Judges or Rewarders of merit), apply themselves to People of Condition; and support their importunities by false complaints against *Booksellers* .

But I should now, perhaps, rather think of my own Apology, than busy myself in the defence of others. I shall have some *Tartuffe* ready, on the first appearance of this Edition, to call out again, and tell me, that *I suffer myself to be wholly diverted from my purpose by these matters less suitable to my clerical Profession* . “Well, but,” says a friend, “why not take so candid an intimation in good part? Withdraw yourself, again, as you are bid, into the clerical Pale; examine the

Records of sacred and profane Antiquity; and, on them, erect a Work to the confusion of Infidelity.” Why, I have done all this, and more: And hear now what the same Men have said to it. They tell me, *I have wrote to the wrong and injury of Religion, and furnished out more handles for Unbelievers* . “Oh now the secret's out; and you may have your pardon, I find, upon easier terms. 'Tis only, to write no more.”—Good Gentlemen! and shall I not oblige them? They would gladly *obstruct* my way to those things which every Man, who *endeavours well* in his Profession, must needs think he has some claim to, when he sees them given to those who never did *endeavour* ; at the same time that they would *deter* me from taking those advantages which Letters enable me to procure for myself. If then I am to write no more (tho' as much out of my Profession as they may please to represent this Work, I suspect their modesty would not insist on a scrutiny of our several applications of this profane profit and their purer gains); if, I say, I am to write no more, let me at least give the Public, who have a better pretence to demand it of me, some reason for my presenting them with these amusements. Which, if I am not much mistaken, may be excused by the best and fairest *Examples* ; and, what is more, may be justified on the surer *reason of things* .

The great Saint Chrysostom, a name consecrated to immortality by his Virtue and Eloquence, is known to have been so fond of *Aristophanes* as to wake with him at his studies, and to sleep with him under his pillow: and I never heard that this was objected either to his Piety or his Preaching, not even in those times of pure Zeal and primitive Religion. Yet, in respect of *Shakespear* 's great sense, *Aristophanes* 's best wit is but buffoonry; and, in comparison of *Aristophanes* 's Freedoms, *Shakespear* writes with the purity of a Vestal. But they will say, St. *Chrysostom* contracted a fondness for the comic Poet *for the sake of his Greek* . To this, indeed, I have nothing to reply. Far be it from me to insinuate so unscholarlike a thing, as if We had the same Use for good *English* that a *Greek* had for his *Attic* elegance. Critic *Kuster* , in a taste and language peculiar to Grammarians of a certain order, hath decreed, that *the History and Chronology of Greek Words is the most SOLID entertainment of a Man of Letters* .

I fly, then, to a higher Example, much nearer home, and still more in point, The famous University of Oxford. This illustrious Body, which hath long so justly held, and, with such equity, dispensed, the chief honours of the learned World, thought good Letters so much interested in correct Editions of the best *English*

Writers, that they, very lately, in their publick Capacity, undertook *one* , of this very Author, by subscription. And if the Editor hath not discharged his Task with suitable abilities for one so much honoured by them, this was not their fault but his, who thrust himself into the employment. After such an Example, it would be weakening any defence to seek further for Authorities. All that can be now decently urged is the *reason of the thing* ; and this I shall do, more for the sake of that truly venerable Body than my own.

Of all the literary exercitations of speculative Men, whether designed for the use or entertainment of the World, there are none of so much importance, or what are more our immediate concern, than those which let us into the knowledge of our Nature. Others may exercise the Reason, or amuse the Imagination; but these only can improve the Heart, and form the human Mind to Wisdom. Now, in this Science, our *Shakespear* is confessed to occupy the foremost place; whether we consider the amazing sagacity with which he investigates every hidden spring and wheel of human Action; or his happy manner of communicating this knowledge, in the just and living paintings which he has given us of all our Passions, Appetites, and Pursuits. These afford a lesson which can never be too often repeated, or too constantly inculcated; And, to engage the Reader's due attention to it, hath been one of the principal objects of this Edition.

As this Science (whatever profound Philosophers may think) is, to the rest, *in Things* ; so, *in Words* (whatever supercilious Pedants may talk), every one's mother tongue is to all other Languages. This hath still been the Sentiment of Nature and true Wisdom. Hence, the greatest men of Antiquity never thought themselves better employed than in cultivating their own country idiom. So *Lycurgus* did honour to *Sparta* , in giving the first compleat Edition of *Homer* ; and *Cicero* , to *Rome* , in correcting the Works of *Lucretius* . Nor do we want Examples of the same good sense in modern Times, even amidst the cruel inrodes that Art and Fashion have made upon Nature and the simplicity of Wisdom. *Ménage* , the greatest name in *France* for all kind of philologic Learning, prided himself in writing critical Notes on their best lyric Poet, *Malherbe* : And our greater *Selden* , when he thought it might reflect credit on his Country, did not disdain even to comment a very ordinary Poet, one *Michael Drayton* . But the *English* tongue, at this Juncture, deserves and demands our particular regard. It hath, by means of the many excellent Works of different kinds composed in it, engaged the notice, and become the study, of almost every curious and learned Foreigner, so as to be thought even a part of literary accomplishment. This must needs make it deserving of a critical attention: And its being yet destitute of a Test or Standard to apply to, in cases of doubt or difficulty, shews how much it wants that attention. For we have neither Grammar nor Dictionary, neither Chart nor Compass, to guide us through this wide sea of Words. And indeed how should we? since both are to be composed and finished on the Authority of our best established Writers. But their Authority can be of little use till the Text hath been correctly settled, and the Phraseology critically examined. As, then, by these aids, a *Grammar* and *Dictionary* , planned upon the best rules of Logic and Philosophy (and none but such will deserve the name), are to be procured; the forwarding of this will be a general concern: For, as *Quintilian* observes, “Verborum *proprietas* ac *differentia* omnibus, qui sermonem curæ habent, debet esse communis.” By this way, the *Italians* have brought their tongue to a degree of Purity and Stability which no living Language ever attained unto before. It is with pleasure I observe, that these things now begin to be understood amongst ourselves; and that I can acquaint the Public, we may soon expect very elegant Editions of *Fletcher* and *Milton* 's *Paradise Lost* from Gentlemen of distinguished Abilities and Learning. But this interval of good sense, as it may be short, is indeed but new. For I remember to have heard of a very learned Man, who, not long since, formed a design of giving a more correct Edition of *Spenser* ; and, without doubt, would have performed it well; but he was dissuaded from his purpose by his Friends, as beneath the dignity of a Professor of the occult Sciences. Yet these very Friends, I suppose, would have thought it had added lustre to his high Station, to have new-furbished out some dull northern Chronicle, or dark Sibylline Ænigma. But let it not be thought that what is here said insinuates any thing to the discredit of *Greek* and *Latin* criticism. If the follies of particular Men were sufficient to bring any branch of Learning into disrepute, I don't know any that would stand in a worse situation than that for which I now apologize. For I hardly think there ever appeared, in any *learned* Language, so execrable a heap of nonsense, under the name of Commentaries, as hath been lately given us on a certain satyric Poet, of the last Age, by his Editor and Coadjutor.

I am sensible how unjustly the very best *classical* Critics have been treated. It is said that our great Philosopher spoke with much contempt of the two finest Scholars of this Age, Dr. *Bentley* and Bishop *Hare* , for squabbling, as he expressed it, about an old Play-book; meaning, I suppose, *Terence* 's Comedies. But this Story is unworthy of him; tho' well enough suiting the fanatic turn of the wild Writer that relates it; such censures are amongst the follies of men immoderately given over to one Science, and ignorantly undervaluing all the rest. Those learned Critics might, and perhaps did, laugh in their turn (tho' still, sure, with the same indecency and indiscretion) at that incomparable Man, for wearing out a long Life in poring through a Telescope. Indeed, the weaknesses of Such are to be mentioned with reverence. But who can bear, without indignation, the fashionable cant of every trifling Writer, whose insipidity passes, with himself, for politeness, for pretending to be shocked, forsooth, with the rude and savage air of *vulgar* Critics; meaning such as *Muretus* , *Scaliger* , *Casaubon* , *Salmasius* , *Spanheim* , *Bentley* . When, had it not been for the deathless labours of such as these, the western World, at the revival of Letters, had soon fallen back again into a state of ignorance and barbarity as deplorable as that from which Providence had just redeemed it.

To conclude with an observation of a fine Writer and great Philosopher of our own; which I would gladly bind, tho' with all honour, as a Phylactery, on the Brow of every awful Grammarian, to teach him at once the *Use* and *Limits* of his art: Words are the money of fools, and the counters of wise men.

Samuel Johnson: Preface to Edition of Shakespeare. 1765.

That praises are without reason lavished on the dead, and that the honours due only to excellence are paid to antiquity, is a complaint likely to be always continued by those, who, being able to add nothing to truth, hope for eminence from the heresies of paradox; or those, who, being forced by disappointment upon consolatory expedients, are willing to hope from posterity what the present age refuses, and flatter themselves that the regard which is yet denied by envy, will be at last bestowed by time.

Antiquity, like every other quality that attracts the notice of mankind, has undoubtedly votaries that reverence it, not from reason, but from prejudice. Some seem to admire indiscriminately whatever has been long preserved, without considering that time has sometimes co-operated with chance; all perhaps are more willing to honour past than present excellence; and the mind contemplates genius through the shades of age, as the eye surveys the sun through artificial opacity. The great contention of criticism is to find the faults of the moderns, and the beauties of the ancients. While an author is yet living, we estimate his powers by his worst performance; and when he is dead, we rate them by his best.

To works, however, of which the excellence is not absolute and definite, but gradual and comparative; to works not raised upon principles demonstrative and scientifick, but appealing wholly to observation and experience, no other test can be applied than length of duration and continuance of esteem. What mankind have long possessed they have often examined and compared, and if they persist to value the possession, it is because frequent comparisons have confirmed opinion in its favour. As among the works of nature no man can properly call a river deep, or a mountain high, without the knowledge of many mountains, and many rivers; so in the production of genius, nothing can be stiled excellent till it has been compared with other works of the same kind. Demonstration immediately displays its power, and has nothing to hope or fear from the flux of years; but works tentative and experimental must be estimated by their proportion to the general and collective ability of man, as it is discovered in a long succession of endeavours. Of the first building that was raised, it might be with certainty determined that it was round or square; but whether it was spacious or lofty must have been referred to time. The Pythagorean scale of numbers was at once discovered to be perfect; but the poems of Homer we yet know not to transcend the common limits of human intelligence, but by remarking that nation after nation, and century after century, has been able to do little more than transpose his incidents, new name his characters, and paraphrase his sentiments.

The reverence due to writings that have long subsisted arises therefore not from any credulous confidence in the superior wisdom of past ages, or gloomy persuasion of the degeneracy of mankind, but is the consequence of acknowledged and indubitable positions, that what has been longest known has been most considered, and what is most considered is best understood.

The poet, of whose works I have undertaken the revision, may now begin to assume the dignity of an ancient, and claim the privilege of an established fame and prescriptive veneration. He has long outlived his century, the term commonly fixed as the test of literary merit. Whatever advantages he might once derive from personal allusions, local customs, or temporary opinions, have for many years been lost; and every topick of merriment or motive of sorrow, which the modes of artificial life afforded him, now only obscure the scenes which they once illuminated. The effects of favour and competition are at an end; the tradition of his friendships and his enmities has perished; his works support no opinion with arguments, nor supply any faction with invectives; they can neither indulge vanity, nor gratify malignity; but are read without any other reason than the desire of pleasure, and are therefore praised only as pleasure is obtained; yet, thus unassisted by interest or passion, they have past through variations of taste and changes of manners, and, as they devolved from one generation to another, have received new honours at every transmission.

But because human judgment, though it be gradually gaining upon certainty, never becomes infallible; and approbation, though long continued, may yet be only the approbation of prejudice or fashion; it is proper to inquire, by what peculiarities of excellence Shakespeare has gained and kept the favour of his countrymen.

Nothing can please many, and please long, but just representations of general nature. Particular manners can be known to few, and therefore few only can judge how nearly they are copied. The irregular combinations of fanciful invention may delight awhile, by that novelty of which the common satiety of life sends us all in quest; but the pleasures of sudden wonder are soon exhausted, and the mind can only repose on the stability of truth.

Shakespeare is above all writers, at least above all modern writers, the poet of nature; the poet that holds up to his readers a faithful mirror of manners and of life. His characters are not modified by the customs of particular places, unpractised by the rest of the world; by the peculiarities of studies or professions, which can operate but upon small numbers; or by the accidents of transient fashions or temporary opinions: they are the genuine progeny of common humanity, such as the world will always supply, and observation will always find. His persons act and speak by the influence of those general passions and principles by which all minds are agitated, and the whole system of life is continued in motion. In the writings of other poets a character is too often an individual; in those of Shakespeare it is commonly a species.

It is from this wide extension of design that so much instruction is derived. It is this which fills the plays of Shakespeare with practical axioms and domestick wisdom. It was said of Euripides, that every verse was a precept; and it may be said of Shakespeare, that from his works may be collected a system of civil and œconomical prudence. Yet his real power is not shewn in the splendor of particular passages, but by the progress of his fable, and the tenor of his dialogue; and he that tries to recommend him by select quotations, will succeed like the pedant in Heirocles, who, when he offered his house to sale, carried a brick in his pocket as a specimen.

It will not easily be imagined how much Shakespeare excels in accommodating his sentiments to real life, but by comparing him with other authors. It was observed of the ancient schools of declamation, that the more diligently they were frequented, the more was the student disqualified for the world, because he found nothing there which he should ever meet in any other place. The same remark may be applied to every stage but that of Shakespeare. The theatre, when it is under any other direction, is peopled by such characters as were never seen, conversing in a language which was never heard, upon topicks which will never arise in the commerce of mankind. But the dialogue of this author is often so evidently determined by the incident which produces it, and is pursued with so much ease and simplicity, that it seems scarcely to claim the merit of fiction, but to have been gleaned by diligent selection out of common conversation, and common occurrences.

Upon every other stage the universal agent is love, by whose power all good and evil is distributed, and every action quickened or retarded. To bring a lover, a lady, and a rival into the fable; to entangle them in contradictory obligations, perplex them with oppositions of interest, and harrass them with violence of desires inconsistent with each other; to make them meet in rapture, and part in agony; to fill their mouths with hyperbolical joy and outrageous sorrow; to distress them as nothing human ever was distressed; to deliver them as nothing human ever was delivered, is the business of a modern dramatist. For this, probability is violated, life is misrepresented, and language is depraved. But love is only one of many passions, and as it has no great influence upon the sum of life, it has little operation in the dramas of a poet who caught his ideas from the living world, and exhibited only what he saw before him. He knew that any other passion, as it was regular or exorbitant, was a cause of happiness or calamity.

Characters thus ample and general were not easily discriminated and preserved, yet perhaps no poet ever kept his personages more distinct from each other. I will not say with Pope, that every speech may be assigned to the proper speaker, because many speeches there are which have nothing characteristical; but, perhaps, though some may be equally adapted to every person, it will be difficult to find any that can be properly transferred from the present possessor to another claimant. The choice is right, when there is reason for choice.

Other dramatists can only gain attention by hyperbolical or aggravated characters, by fabulous and unexampled excellence or depravity, as the writers of barbarous romances invigorated the reader by a giant and a dwarf; and he that should form his expectation of human affairs from the play, or from the tale, would be equally deceived. Shakespeare has no heroes; his scenes are occupied only by men, who act and speak as the reader thinks that he should himself have spoken or acted on the same occasion: even where the agency is super-natural, the dialogue is level with life. Other writers disguise the most natural passions and most frequent incidents; so that he who contemplates them in the book will not know them in the world: Shakespeare approximates the remote, and familiarizes the wonderful; the event which he represents will not happen, but if it were possible, its effects would probably be such as he has assigned; and it may be said that he has not only shewn human nature as it acts in real exigences, but as it would be found in trials to which it cannot be exposed.

This therefore is the praise of Shakespeare, that his drama is the mirror of life; that he who has mazed his imagination, in following the phantoms which other writers raise up before him, may here be cured of his delirious ecstasies, by reading human sentiments in human language; by scenes from which a hermit may estimate the transactions of the world, and a confessor predict the progress of the passions.

His adherence to general nature has exposed him to the censure of criticks, who form their judgments upon narrower principles. Dennis and Rhymer think his Romans not sufficiently Roman; and Voltaire censures his kings as not completely royal. Dennis is offended that Menenius, a senator of Rome, should play the buffoon; and Voltaire perhaps thinks decency violated when the Danish usurper is represented as a drunkard. But Shakespeare always makes nature predominate over accident; and if he preserves the essential character, is not very careful of distinctions superinduced and adventitious. His story requires Romans or kings, but he thinks only on men. He knew that Rome, like every other city, had men of all dispositions; and wanting a buffoon, he went into the senate-house for that which the senate-house would certainly have afforded him. He was inclined to shew an usurper and a murderer not only odious, but despicable; he therefore added drunkenness to his other qualities, knowing that kings love wine like other men, and that wine exerts its natural power upon kings. These are the petty cavils of petty minds; a poet overlooks the casual distinction of country and condition, as a painter, satisfied with the figure, neglects the drapery.

The censure which he has incurred by mixing comick and tragick scenes, as it extends to all his works, deserves more consideration. Let the fact be first stated, and then examined.

Shakespeare's plays are not in the rigorous and critical sense either tragedies or comedies, but compositions of a distinct kind; exhibiting the real state of sublunary nature, which partakes of good and evil, joy and sorrow, mingled with endless variety of proportion and innumerable modes of combination; and expressing the course of the world, in which the loss of one is the gain of another; in which, at the same time, the reveller is hasting to his wine, and the mourner burying his friend; in which the malignity of one is sometimes defeated by the frolick of another; and many mischiefs and many benefits are done and hindered without design.

Out of this chaos of mingled purposes and casualties, the ancient poets, according to the laws which custom had prescribed, selected some the crimes of men, and some their absurdities; some the momentous vicissitudes of life, and some the lighter occurrences; some the terrors of distress, and some the gaieties of prosperity. Thus rose the two modes of imitation, known by the names of *tragedy* and *comedy* , compositions intended to promote different ends by contrary means, and considered as so little allied, that I do not recollect among the Greeks or Romans a single writer who attempted both.

Shakespeare has united the powers of exciting laughter and sorrow not only in one mind, but in one composition. Almost all his plays are divided between serious and ludicrous characters, and, in the successive evolutions of the design, sometimes produce seriousness and sorrow, and sometimes levity and laughter.

That this is a practice contrary to the rules of criticism will be readily allowed; but there is always an appeal open from criticism to nature. The end of writing is to instruct; the end of poetry is to instruct by pleasing. That the mingled drama may convey all the instruction of tragedy or comedy cannot be denied, because it includes both in its alternations of exhibition, and approaches nearer than either to the appearance of life, by shewing how great machinations and slender designs may promote or obviate one another, and the high and the low co-operate in the general system by unavoidable concatenation.

It is objected that by this change of scenes the passions are interrupted in their progression, and that the principal event, being not advanced by a due gradation of preparatory incidents, wants at last the power to move, which constitutes the perfection of dramatick poetry. This reasoning is so specious, that it is received as true even by those who in daily experience feel it to be false. The interchanges of mingled scenes seldom fail to produce the intended vicissitudes of passion. Fiction cannot move so much, but that the attention may be easily transferred; and though it must be allowed that pleasing melancholy be sometimes interrupted by unwelcome levity, yet let it be considered likewise, that melancholy is often not pleasing, and that the disturbance of one man may be the relief of another; that different auditors have different habitudes; and that, upon the whole, all pleasure consists in variety.

The players, who in their edition divided our author's works into comedies, histories, and tragedies, seem not to have distinguished the three kinds, by any very exact or definite ideas.

An action which ended happily to the principal persons, however serious or distressful through its intermediate incidents, in their opinion constituted a comedy. This idea of a comedy continued long amongst us, and plays were written, which, by changing the catastrophe, were tragedies to-day, and comedies to-morrow.

Tragedy was not in those times a poem of more general dignity or elevation than comedy; it required only a calamitous conclusion, with which the common criticism of that age was satisfied, whatever lighter pleasure it afforded in its progress.

History was a series of actions, with no other than chronological succession, independent on each other, and without any tendency to introduce and regulate the conclusion. It is not always very nicely distinguished from tragedy. There is not much nearer approach to unity of action in the tragedy of *Antony and Cleopatra* , than in the history of *Richard the Second* . But a history might be continued through many plays; as it had no plan, it had no limits.

Through all these denominations of the drama, Shakespeare's mode of composition is the same; an interchange of seriousness and merriment, by which the mind is softened at one time, and exhilarated at another. But whatever be his purpose, whether to gladden or depress, or to conduct the story, without vehemence or emotion, through tracts of easy and familiar dialogue, he never fails to attain his purpose; as he commands us, we laugh or mourn, or sit silent with quiet expectation, in tranquillity without indifference.

When Shakespeare's plan is understood, most of the criticisms of Rhymer and Voltaire vanish away. The play of *Hamlet* is opened, without impropriety, by two centinels; Iago bellows at Brabantio's window, without injury to the scheme of the play, though in terms which a modern audience would not easily endure; the character of Polonius is seasonable and useful, and the Grave-diggers themselves may be heard with applause.

Shakespeare engaged in dramatick poetry with the world open before him; the rules of the ancients were yet known to few; the publick judgment was unformed; he had no example of such fame as might force him upon imitation, nor criticks of such authority as might restrain his extravagance: he therefore indulged his natural disposition, and his disposition, as Rhymer has remarked, led him to comedy. In tragedy he often writes with great appearance of toil and study, what is written at last with little felicity; but in his comick scenes, he seems to produce without labour, what no labour can improve. In tragedy he is always struggling after some occasion to be comick, but in comedy he seems to repose, or to luxuriate, as in a mode of thinking congenial to his nature. In his tragick scenes there is always something wanting, but his comedy often surpasses expectation or desire. His comedy pleases by the thoughts and the language, and his tragedy for the greater part by incident and action. His tragedy seems to be skill, his comedy to be instinct.

The force of his comick scenes has suffered little diminution from the changes made by a century and a half, in manners or in words. As his personages act upon principles arising from genuine passion, very little modified by particular forms, their pleasures and vexations are communicable to all times and to all places; they are natural, and therefore durable; the adventitious peculiarities of personal habits are only superficial dies, bright and pleasing for a little while, yet soon fading to a dim tinct, without any remains of former lustre; but the discriminations of true passion are the colours of nature; they pervade the whole mass, and can only perish with the body that exhibits them. The accidental compositions of heterogeneous modes are dissolved by the chance which combined them; but the uniform simplicity of primitive qualities neither admits increase, nor suffers decay. The sand heaped by one flood is scattered by another, but the rock always continues in its place. The stream of time, which is continually washing the dissoluble fabricks of other poets, passes without injury by the adamant of Shakespeare.

If there be, what I believe there is, in every nation, a stile which never becomes obsolete, a certain mode of phraseology so consonant and congenial to the analogy and principles of its respective language, as to remain settled and unaltered; this stile is probably to be sought in the common intercourse of life, among those who speak only to be understood, without ambition of elegance. The polite are always catching modish innovations, and the learned depart from established forms of speech, in hope of finding or making better; those who wish for distinction forsake the vulgar, when the vulgar is right; but there is a conversation above grossness and below refinement, where propriety resides, and where this poet seems to have gathered his comick dialogue. He is therefore more agreeable to the ears of the present age than any other author equally remote, and among his other excellencies deserves to be studied as one of the original masters of our language.

These observations are to be considered not as unexceptionably constant, but as containing general and predominant truth. Shakespeare's familiar dialogue is affirmed to be smooth and clear, yet not wholly without ruggedness or difficulty; as a country may be eminently fruitful, though it has spots unfit for cultivation: his characters are praised as natural, though their sentiments are sometimes forced, and their actions improbable; as the earth upon the whole is spherical, though its surface is varied with protuberances and cavities.

Shakespeare with his excellencies has likewise faults, and faults sufficient to obscure and overwhelm any other merit. I shall shew them in the proportion in which they appear to me, without envious malignity or superstitious veneration. No question can be more innocently discussed than a dead poet's pretensions to renown; and little regard is due to that bigotry which sets candour higher than truth.

His first defect is that to which may be imputed most of the evil in books or in men. He sacrifices virtue to convenience, and is so much more careful to please than to instruct, that he seems to write without any moral purpose. From his writings indeed a system of social duty may be selected, for he that thinks reasonably must think morally; but his precepts and axioms drop casually from him; he makes no just distribution of good or evil, nor is always careful to shew in the virtuous a disapprobation of the wicked; he carries his persons indifferently through right and wrong, and at the close dismisses them without further care, and leaves their examples to operate by chance. This fault the barbarity of his age cannot extenuate; for it is always a writer's duty to make the world better, and justice is a virtue independent on time or place.

The plots are often so loosely formed, that a very slight consideration may improve them, and so carelessly pursued, that he seems not always fully to comprehend his own design. He omits opportunities of instructing or delighting, which the train of his story seems to force upon him, and apparently rejects those exhibitions which would be more affecting, for the sake of those which are more easy.

It may be observed that in many of his plays the latter part is evidently neglected. When he found himself near the end of his work, and in view of his reward, he shortened the labour to snatch the profit. He therefore remits his efforts where he should most vigorously exert them, and his catastrophe is improbably produced or imperfectly represented.

He had no regard to distinction of time or place, but gives to one age or nation, without scruple, the customs, institutions, and opinions of another, at the expence not only of likelihood, but of possibility. These faults Pope has endeavoured, with more zeal than judgment, to transfer to his imagined interpolators. We need not wonder to find Hector quoting Aristotle, when we see the loves of Theseus and Hippolyta combined with the Gothick mythology of fairies. Shakespeare, indeed, was not the only violator of chronology, for in the same age Sidney, who wanted not the advantages of learning, has, in his *Arcadia* , confounded the pastoral with the feudal times, the days of innocence, quiet, and security, with those of turbulence, violence, and adventure.

In his comick scenes he is seldom very successful, when he engages his characters in reciprocations of smartness and contests of sarcasm; their jests are commonly gross, and their pleasantry licentious; neither his gentlemen nor his ladies have much delicacy, nor are sufficiently distinguished from his clowns by any appearance of refined manners. Whether he represented the real conversation of his time is not easy to determine; the reign of Elizabeth is commonly supposed to have been a time of stateliness, formality, and reserve, yet perhaps the relaxations of that severity were not very elegant. There must, however, have been always some modes of gaiety preferable to others, and a writer ought to chuse the best.

In tragedy his performance seems constantly to be worse, as his labour is more. The effusions of passion, which exigence forces out, are for the most part striking and energetick; but whenever he solicits his invention, or strains his faculties, the offspring of his throes is tumour, meanness, tediousness, and obscurity.

In narration he affects a disproportionate pomp of diction and a wearisome train of circumlocution, and tells the incident imperfectly in many words, which might have been more plainly delivered in few. Narration in dramatick poetry is naturally tedious, as it is unanimated and inactive, and obstructs the progress of the action; it should therefore always be rapid, and enlivened by frequent interruption. Shakespeare found it an encumbrance, and instead of lightening it by brevity, endeavoured to recommend it by dignity and splendor.

His declamations or set speeches are commonly cold and weak, for his power was the power of nature; when he endeavoured, like other tragick writers, to catch opportunities of amplification, and instead of inquiring what the occasion demanded, to shew how much his stores of knowledge could supply, he seldom escapes without the pity or resentment of his reader.

It is incident to him to be now and then entangled with an unwieldy sentiment, which he cannot well express, and will not reject; he struggles with it a while, and if it continues stubborn, comprises it in words such as occur, and leaves it to be disentangled and evolved by those who have more leisure to bestow upon it.

Not that always where the language is intricate the thought is subtle, or the image always great where the line is bulky; the equality of words to things is very often neglected, and trivial sentiments and vulgar ideas disappoint the attention, to which they are recommended by sonorous epithets and swelling figures.

But the admirers of this great poet have most reason to complain when he approaches nearest to his highest excellence, and seems fully resolved to sink them in dejection, and mollify them with tender emotions by the fall of greatness, the danger of innocence, or the crosses of love. What he does best, he soon ceases to do. He is not long soft and pathetick without some idle conceit, or contemptible equivocation. He no sooner begins to move, than he counteracts himself; and terror and pity, as they are rising in the mind, are checked and blasted by sudden frigidity.

A quibble is to Shakespeare what luminous vapours are to the traveller: he follows it at all adventures; it is sure to lead him out of his way, and sure to engulf him in the mire. It has some malignant power over his mind, and its fascinations are irresistible. Whatever be the dignity or profundity of his disquisition, whether he be enlarging knowledge or exalting affection, whether he be amusing attention with incidents, or enchaining it in suspense, let but a quibble spring up before him, and he leaves his work unfinished. A quibble is the golden apple for which he will always turn aside from his career, or stoop from his elevation. A quibble, poor and barren as it is, gave him such delight, that he was content to purchase it by the sacrifice of reason, propriety, and truth. A quibble was to him the fatal Cleopatra for which he lost the world, and was content to lose it.

It will be thought strange, that, in enumerating the defects of this writer, I have not yet mentioned his neglect of the unities; his violation of those laws which have been instituted and established by the joint authority of poets and of criticks.

For his other deviations from the art of writing, I resign him to critical justice, without making any other demand in his favour, than that which must be indulged to all human excellence; that his virtues be rated with his failings: but, from the censure which this irregularity may bring upon him, I shall, with due reverence to that learning which I must oppose, adventure to try how I can defend him.

His histories, being neither tragedies nor comedies, are not subject to any of their laws; nothing more is necessary to all the praise which they expect, than that the changes of action be so prepared as to be understood, that the incidents be various and affecting, and the characters consistent, natural, and distinct. No other unity is intended, and therefore none is to be sought.

In his other works he has well enough preserved the unity of action. He has not, indeed, an intrigue regularly perplexed and regularly unravelled; he does not endeavour to hide his design only to discover it, for this is seldom the order of real events, and Shakespeare is the poet of nature: but his plan has commonly what Aristotle requires, a beginning, a middle, and an end; one event is concatenated with another, and the conclusion follows by easy consequence. There are perhaps some incidents that might be spared, as in other poets there is much talk that only fills up time upon the stage; but the general system makes gradual advances, and the end of the play is the end of expectation.

To the unities of time and place he has shewn no regard; and perhaps a nearer view of the principles on which they stand will diminish their value, and withdraw from them the veneration which, from the time of Corneille, they have very generally received, by discovering that they have given more trouble to the poet, than pleasure to the auditor.

The necessity of observing the unities of time and place arises from the supposed necessity of making the drama credible. The criticks hold it impossible that an action of months or years can be possibly believed to pass in three hours; or that the spectator can suppose himself to sit in the theatre, while ambassadors go and return between distant kings, while armies are levied and towns besieged, while an exile wanders and returns, or till he whom they saw courting his mistress, shall lament the untimely fall of his son. The mind revolts from evident falsehood, and fiction loses its force when it departs from the resemblance of reality.

From the narrow limitation of time necessarily arises the contraction of place. The spectator, who knows that he saw the first act at Alexandria, cannot suppose that he sees the next at Rome, at a distance to which not the dragons of Medea could, in so short a time, have transported him; he knows with certainty that he has not changed his place; and he knows that place cannot change itself; that what was a house cannot become a plain; that what was Thebes can never be Persepolis.

Such is the triumphant language with which a critick exults over the misery of an irregular poet, and exults commonly without resistance or reply. It is time therefore to tell him, by the authority of Shakespeare, that he assumes, as an unquestionable principle, a position, which, while his breath is forming it into words, his understanding pronounces to be false. It is false that any representation is mistaken for reality; that any dramatick fable in its materiality was ever credible, or, for a single moment, was ever credited.

The objection arising from the impossibility of passing the first hour at Alexandria, and the next at Rome, supposes that when the play opens the spectator really imagines himself at Alexandria, and believes that his walk to the theatre has been a voyage to Egypt, and that he lives in the days of Antony and Cleopatra. Surely he that imagines this may imagine more. He that can take the stage at one time for the palace of the Ptolemies, may take it in half an hour for the promontory of Actium. Delusion, if delusion be admitted, has no certain limitation; if the spectator can be once persuaded that his old acquaintance are Alexander and Cæsar, that a room illuminated with candles is the plain of Pharsalia, or the bank of Granicus, he is in a state of elevation above the reach of reason, or of truth, and from the heights of empyrean poetry may despise the circumscriptions of terrestrial nature. There is no reason why a mind thus wandering in ecstasy should count the clock, or why an hour should not be a century in that calenture of the brains that can make the stage a field.

The truth is that the spectators are always in their senses, and know, from the first act to the last, that the stage is only a stage, and that the players are only players. They come to hear a certain number of lines recited with just gesture and elegant modulation. The lines relate to some action, and an action must be in some place; but the different actions that complete a story may be in places very remote from each other; and where is the absurdity of allowing that space to represent first Athens, and then Sicily, which was always known to be neither Sicily nor Athens, but a modern theatre.

By supposition, as place is introduced, time may be extended; the time required by the fable elapses for the most part between the acts; for, of so much of the action as is represented, the real and poetical duration is the same. If, in the first act, preparations for war against Mithridates are represented to be made in Rome, the event of the war may, without absurdity, be represented, in the catastrophe, as happening in Pontus; we know that there is neither war, nor preparation for war; we know that we are neither in Rome nor Pontus; that neither Mithridates nor Lucullus are before us. The drama exhibits successive imitations of successive actions, and why may not the second imitation represent an action that happened years after the first; if it be so connected with it, that nothing but time can be supposed to intervene. Time is, of all modes of existence, most obsequious to the imagination; a lapse of years is as easily conceived as a passage of hours. In contemplation we easily contract the time of real actions, and therefore willingly permit it to be contracted when we only see their imitation.

It will be asked how the drama moves, if it is not credited. It is credited with all the credit due to a drama. It is credited, whenever it moves, as a just picture of a real original; as representing to the auditor what he would himself feel, if he were to do or suffer what is there feigned to be suffered or to be done. The reflection that strikes the heart is not that the evils before us are real evils, but that they are evils to which we ourselves may be exposed. If there be any fallacy, it is not that we fancy the players, but that we fancy ourselves unhappy for a moment; but we rather lament the possibility than suppose the presence of misery, as a mother weeps over her babe, when she remembers that death may take it from her. The delight of tragedy proceeds from our consciousness of fiction; if we thought murders and treasons real, they would please no more.

Imitations produce pain or pleasure, not because they are mistaken for realities, but because they bring realities to mind. When the imagination is recreated by a painted landscape, the trees are not supposed capable to give us shade, or the fountains coolness; but we consider how we should be pleased with such fountains playing beside us, and such woods waving over us. We are agitated in reading the history of *Henry the Fifth* , yet no man takes his book for the field of Agincourt. A dramatick exhibition is a book recited with concomitants that increase or diminish its effect. Familiar comedy is often more powerful in the theatre, than on the page; imperial tragedy is always less. The humour of Petruchio may be heightened by grimace; but what voice or what gesture can hope to add dignity or force to the soliloquy of Cato?

A play read affects the mind like a play acted. It is therefore evident that the action is not supposed to be real; and it follows that between the acts a longer or shorter time may be allowed to pass, and that no more account of space or duration is to be taken by the auditor of a drama, than by the reader of a narrative, before whom may pass in an hour the life of a hero, or the revolutions of an empire.

Whether Shakespeare knew the unities, and rejected them by design, or deviated from them by happy ignorance, it is, I think, impossible to decide, and useless to enquire. We may reasonably suppose that, when he rose to notice, he did not want the counsels and admonitions of scholars and criticks, and that he at last deliberately persisted in a practice, which he might have begun by chance. As nothing is essential to the fable but unity of action, and as the unities of time and place arise evidently from false assumptions, and, by circumscribing the extent of the drama, lessen its variety, I cannot think it much to be lamented that they were not known by him, or not observed: nor, if such another poet could arise, should I very vehemently reproach him, that his first act passed at Venice, and his next in Cyprus. Such violations of rules merely positive become the comprehensive genius of Shakespeare, and such censures are suitable to the minute and slender criticism of Voltaire:

Non usque adeo permiscuit imis

Longus summa dies, ut non, si voce Metelli

Serventur leges, malint a Cæsare tolli.

Yet when I speak thus slightly of dramatick rules, I cannot but recollect how much wit and learning may be produced against me; before such authorities I am afraid to stand, not that I think the present question one of those that are to be decided by mere authority, but because it is to be suspected that these precepts have not been so easily received but for better reasons than I have yet been able to find. The result of my enquiries, in which it would be ludicrous to boast of impartiality, is that the unities of time and place are not essential to a just drama, that though they may sometimes conduce to pleasure, they are always to be sacrificed to the nobler beauties of variety and instruction; and that a play, written with nice observation of critical rules, is to be contemplated as an elaborate curiosity, as the product of superfluous and ostentatious art, by which is shewn, rather what is possible, than what is necessary.

He that, without diminution of any other excellence, shall preserve all the unities unbroken, deserves the like applause with the architect who shall display all the orders of architecture in a citadel, without any deduction from its strength; but the principal beauty of a citadel is to exclude the enemy; and the greatest graces of a play are to copy nature, and instruct life.

Perhaps what I have here not dogmatically but deliberately written, may recall the principles of the drama to a new examination. I am almost frighted at my own temerity; and when I estimate the fame and the strength of those that maintain the contrary opinion, am ready to sink down in reverential silence; as Æneas withdrew from the defence of Troy, when he saw Neptune shaking the wall, and Juno heading the besiegers.

Those whom my arguments cannot persuade to give their approbation to the judgment of Shakespeare, will easily, if they consider the condition of his life, make some allowance for his ignorance.

Every man's performances, to be rightly estimated, must be compared with the state of the age in which he lived, and with his own particular opportunities; and though to a reader a book be not worse or better for the circumstances of the author, yet as there is always a silent reference of human works to human abilities, and as the enquiry, how far man may extend his designs, or how high he may rate his native force, is of far greater dignity than in what rank we shall place any particular performance, curiosity is always busy to discover the instruments, as well as to survey the workmanship, to know how much is to be ascribed to original powers, and how much to casual and adventitious help. The palaces of Peru or Mexico were certainly mean and incommodious habitations, if compared to the houses of European monarchs; yet who could forbear to view them with astonishment, who remembered that they were built without the use of iron?

The English nation, in the time of Shakespeare, was yet struggling to emerge from barbarity. The philology of Italy had been transplanted hither in the reign of Henry the Eighth; and the learned languages had been successfully cultivated by Lilly, Linacre, and More; by Pole, Cheke, and Gardiner; and afterwards by Smith, Clerk, Haddon, and Ascham. Greek was now taught to boys in the principal schools; and those who united elegance with learning, read, with great diligence, the Italian and Spanish poets. But literature was yet confined to professed scholars, or to men and women of high rank. The publick was gross and dark; and to be able to read and write, was an accomplishment still valued for its rarity.

Nations, like individuals, have their infancy. A people newly awakened to literary curiosity, being yet unacquainted with the true state of things, knows not how to judge of that which is proposed as its resemblance. Whatever is remote from common appearances is always welcome to vulgar, as to childish credulity; and of a country unenlightened by learning, the whole people is the vulgar. The study of those who then aspired to plebeian learning was then laid out upon adventures, giants, dragons, and enchantments. *The Death of Arthur* was the favourite volume.

The mind which has feasted on the luxurious wonders of fiction, has no taste of the insipidity of truth. A play which imitated only the common occurrences of the world, would, upon the admirers of *Palmerin* and *Guy of Warwick* , have made little impression; he that wrote for such an audience was under the necessity of looking round for strange events and fabulous transactions, and that incredibility, by which maturer knowledge is offended, was the chief recommendation of writings, to unskilful curiosity.

Our author's plots are generally borrowed from novels; and it is reasonable to suppose that he chose the most popular, such as were read by many, and related by more; for his audience could not have followed him through the intricacies of the drama, had they not held the thread of the story in their hands.

The stories which we now find only in remoter authors, were in his time accessible and familiar. The fable of *As you like it* , which is supposed to be copied from Chaucer's *Gamelyn* , was a little pamphlet of those times; and old Mr. Cibber remembered the tale of *Hamlet* in plain English prose, which the criticks have now to seek in *Saxo Grammaticus* .

His English histories he took from English chronicles and English ballads; and as the ancient writers were made known to his countrymen by versions, they supplied him with new subjects; he dilated some of Plutarch's lives into plays, when they had been translated by North.

His plots, whether historical or fabulous, are always crouded with incidents, by which the attention of a rude people was more easily caught than by sentiment or argumentation; and such is the power of the marvellous, even over those who despise it, that every man finds his mind more strongly seized by the tragedies of Shakespeare than of any other writer; others please us by particular speeches, but he always makes us anxious for the event, and has perhaps excelled all but Homer in securing the first purpose of a writer, by exciting restless and unquenchable curiosity, and compelling him that reads his work to read it through.

The shows and bustle with which his plays abound have the same original. As knowledge advances, pleasure passes from the eye to the ear, but returns, as it declines, from the ear to the eye. Those to whom our author's labours were exhibited had more skill in pomps or processions than in poetical language, and perhaps wanted some visible and discriminated events, as comments on the dialogue. He knew how he should most please; and whether his practice is more agreeable to nature, or whether his example has prejudiced the nation, we still find that on our stage something must be done as well as said, and inactive declamation is very coldly heard, however musical or elegant, passionate or sublime.

Voltaire expresses his wonder, that our author's extravagancies are endured by a nation which has seen the tragedy of *Cato* . Let him be answered, that Addison speaks the language of poets, and Shakespeare, of men. We find in *Cato* innumerable beauties which enamour us of its author, but we see nothing that acquaints us with human sentiments or human actions; we place it with the fairest and the noblest progeny which judgment propagates by conjunction with learning; but *Othello* is the vigorous and vivacious offspring of observation impregnated by genius. *Cato* affords a splendid exhibition of artificial and fictitious manners, and delivers just and noble sentiments, in diction easy, elevated, and harmonious, but its hopes and fears communicate no vibration to the heart; the composition refers us only to the writer; we pronounce the name of *Cato* , but we think on *Addison* .

The work of a correct and regular writer is a garden accurately formed and diligently planted, varied with shades, and scented with flowers; the composition of Shakespeare is a forest, in which oaks extend their branches, and pines tower in the air, interspersed sometimes with weeds and brambles, and sometimes giving shelter to myrtles and to roses; filling the eye with awful pomp, and gratifying the mind with endless diversity. Other poets display cabinets of precious rarities, minutely finished, wrought into shape, and polished into brightness. Shakespeare opens a mine which contains gold and diamonds in unexhaustible plenty, though clouded by incrustations, debased by impurities, and mingled with a mass of meaner minerals.

It has been much disputed, whether Shakespeare owed his excellence to his own native force, or whether he had the common helps of scholastick education, the precepts of critical science, and the examples of ancient authors.

There has always prevailed a tradition, that Shakespeare wanted learning, that he had no regular education, nor much skill in the dead languages. Jonson, his friend, affirms that *he had small Latin, and less Greek* ; who, besides that he had no imaginable temptation to falsehood, wrote at a time when the character and acquisitions of Shakespeare were known to multitudes. His evidence ought therefore to decide the controversy, unless some testimony of equal force could be opposed.

Some have imagined that they have discovered deep learning in many imitations of old writers; but the examples which I have known urged, were drawn from books translated in his time; or were such easy coincidences of thought, as will happen to all who consider the same subjects; or such remarks on life or axioms of morality as float in conversation, and are transmitted through the world in proverbial sentences.

I have found it remarked that, in this important sentence, *Go before, I'll follow* , we read a translation of, *I prae, sequar* . I have been told that when Caliban, after a pleasing dream, says, *I cry'd to sleep again* , the author imitates Anacreon, who had, like every other man, the same wish on the same occasion.

There are a few passages which may pass for imitations, but so few, that the exception only confirms the rule; he obtained them from accidental quotations, or by oral communication, and as he used what he had, would have used more if he had obtained it.

The *Comedy of Errors* is confessedly taken from the *Menæchmi* of Plautus; from the only play of Plautus which was then in English. What can be more probable, than that he who copied that, would have copied more, but that those which were not translated were inaccessible?

Whether he knew the modern languages is uncertain. That his plays have some French scenes proves but little; he might easily procure them to be written, and probably, even though he had known the language in the common degree, he could not have written it without assistance. In the story of *Romeo and Juliet* he is observed to have followed the English translation, where it deviates from the Italian; but this on the other part proves nothing against his knowledge of the original. He was to copy, not what he knew himself, but what was known to his audience.

It is most likely that he had learned Latin sufficiently to make him acquainted with construction, but that he never advanced to an easy perusal of the Roman authors. Concerning his skill in modern languages, I can find no sufficient ground of determination; but as no imitations of French or Italian authors have been discovered, though the Italian poetry was then in high esteem, I am inclined to believe that he read little more than English, and chose for his fables only such tales as he found translated.

That much knowledge is scattered over his works is very justly observed by Pope, but it is often such knowledge as books did not supply. He that will understand Shakespeare, must not be content to study him in the closet, he must look for his meaning sometimes among the sports of the field, and sometimes among the manufactures of the shop.

There is however proof enough that he was a very diligent reader, nor was our language then so indigent of books, but that he might very liberally indulge his curiosity without excursion into foreign literature. Many of the Roman authors were translated, and some of the Greek; the Reformation had filled the kingdom with theological learning; most of the topicks of human disquisition had found English writers; and poetry had been cultivated, not only with diligence, but success. This was a stock of knowledge sufficient for a mind so capable of appropriating and improving it.

But the greater part of his excellence was the product of his own genius. He found the English stage in a state of the utmost rudeness; no essays either in tragedy or comedy had appeared, from which it could be discovered to what degree of delight either one or other might be carried. Neither character nor dialogue were yet understood. Shakespeare may be truly said to have introduced them both amongst us, and in some of his happier scenes to have carried them both to the utmost height.

By what gradations of improvement he proceeded, is not easily known; for the chronology of his works is yet unsettled. Rowe is of opinion that *perhaps we are not to look for his beginning, like those of other writers, in his least perfect works; art had so little, and nature so large a share in what he did, that for ought I know, says he, the performances of his youth, as they were the most vigorous, were the best.* But the power of nature is only the power of using to any certain purpose the materials which diligence procures, or opportunity supplies. Nature gives no man knowledge, and when images are collected by study and experience, can only assist in combining or applying them. Shakespeare, however favoured by nature, could impart only what he had learned; and as he must increase his ideas, like other mortals, by gradual acquisition, he, like them, grew wiser as he grew older, could display life better, as he knew it more, and instruct with more efficacy, as he was himself more amply instructed.

There is a vigilance of observation and accuracy of distinction which books and precepts cannot confer; from this almost all original and native excellence proceeds. Shakespeare must have looked upon mankind with perspicacity, in the highest degree curious and attentive. Other writers borrow their characters from preceding writers, and diversify them only by the accidental appendages of present manners; the dress is a little varied, but the body is the same. Our author had both matter and form to provide; for, except the characters of Chaucer, to whom I think he is not much indebted, there were no writers in English, and perhaps not many in other modern languages, which shewed life in its native colours.

The contest about the original benevolence or malignity of man had not yet commenced. Speculation had not yet attempted to analyse the mind, to trace the passions to their sources, to unfold the seminal principles of vice and virtue, or sound the depths of the heart for the motives of action. All those enquiries, which from that time that human nature became the fashionable study have been made sometimes with nice discernment, but often with idle subtilty, were yet unattempted. The tales with which the infancy of learning was satisfied, exhibited only the superficial appearances of action, related the events, but omitted the causes, and were formed for such as delighted in wonders rather than in truth. Mankind was not then to be studied in the closet; he that would know the world, was under the necessity of gleaning his own remarks, by mingling as he could in its business and amusements.

Boyle congratulated himself upon his high birth, because it favoured his curiosity, by facilitating his access. Shakespeare had no such advantage; he came to London a needy adventurer, and lived for a time by very mean employments. Many works of genius and learning have been performed in states of life that appear very little favourable to thought or to enquiry; so many, that he who considers them is inclined to think that he sees enterprize and perseverance predominating over all external agency, and bidding help and hindrance vanish before them. The genius of Shakespeare was not to be depressed by the weight of poverty, nor limited by the narrow conversation to which men in want are inevitably condemned; the incumbrances of his fortune were shaken from his mind, *as dew-drops from a lion's mane* .

Though he had so many difficulties to encounter, and so little assistance to surmount them, he has been able to obtain an exact knowledge of many modes of life, and many casts of native dispositions; to vary them with great multiplicity; to mark them by nice distinctions; and to shew them in full view by proper combinations. In this part of his performances he had none to imitate, but has himself been imitated by all succeeding writers; and it may be doubted, whether from all his successors more maxims of theoretical knowledge, or more rules of practical prudence, can be collected, than he alone has given to his country.

Nor was his attention confined to the actions of men; he was an exact surveyor of the inanimate world; his descriptions have always some peculiarities, gathered by contemplating things as they really exist. It may be observed that the oldest poets of many nations preserve their reputation, and that the following generations of wit, after a short celebrity, sink into oblivion. The first, whoever they be, must take their sentiments and descriptions immediately from knowledge; the resemblance is therefore just, their descriptions are verified by every eye, and their sentiments acknowledged by every breast. Those whom their fame invites to the same studies, copy partly them, and partly nature, till the books of one age gain such authority, as to stand in the place of nature to another, and imitation, always deviating a little, becomes at last capricious and casual. Shakespeare, whether life or nature be his subject, shews plainly that he has seen with his own eyes; he gives the image which he receives, not weakened or distorted by the intervention of any other mind; the ignorant feel his representations to be just, and the learned see that they are complete.

Perhaps it would not be easy to find any author, except Homer, who invented so much as Shakespeare, who so much advanced the studies which he cultivated, or effused so much novelty upon his age or country. The form, the characters, the language, and the shows of the English drama are his. *He seems, says Dennis, to have been the very original of our English tragical harmony, that is, the harmony of blank verse, diversified often by dissyllable and trissyllable terminations. For the diversity distinguishes it from heroick harmony, and by bringing it nearer to common use makes it more proper to gain attention, and more fit for action and dialogue. Such verse we make when we are writing prose; we make such verse in common conversation.*

I know not whether this praise is rigorously just. The dissyllable termination, which the critick rightly appropriates to the drama, is to be found, though, I think, not in *Gorboduc* , which is confessedly before our author, yet in *Hieronymo* , of which the date is not certain, but which there is reason to believe at least as old as his earliest plays. This however is certain, that he is the first who taught either tragedy or comedy to please, there being no theatrical piece of any older writer, of which the name is known, except to antiquaries and collectors of books, which are sought because they are scarce, and would not have been scarce, had they been much esteemed.

To him we must ascribe the praise, unless Spenser may divide it with him, of having first discovered to how much smoothness and harmony the English language could be softened. He has speeches, perhaps sometimes scenes, which have all the delicacy of Rowe, without his effeminacy. He endeavours indeed commonly to strike by the force and vigour of his dialogue, but he never executes his purpose better, than when he tries to sooth by softness.

Yet it must be at last confessed that as we owe every thing to him, he owes something to us; that, if much of his praise is paid by perception and judgment, much is likewise given by custom and veneration. We fix our eyes upon his graces, and turn them from his deformities, and endure in him what we should in another loath or despise. If we endured without praising, respect for the father of our drama might excuse us; but I have seen, in the book of some modern critick, a collection of anomalies which shew that he has corrupted language by every mode of depravation, but which his admirer has accumulated as a monument of honour.

He has scenes of undoubted and perpetual excellence, but perhaps not one play, which, if it were now exhibited as the work of a contemporary writer, would be heard to the conclusion. I am indeed far from thinking that his works were wrought to his own ideas of perfection; when they were such as would satisfy the audience, they satisfied the writer. It is seldom that authors, though more studious of fame than Shakespeare, rise much above the standard of their own age; to add a little to what is best will always be sufficient for present praise, and those who find themselves exalted into fame, are willing to credit their encomiasts, and to spare the labour of contending with themselves.

It does not appear that Shakespeare thought his works worthy of posterity, that he levied any ideal tribute upon future times, or had any further prospect than of present popularity and present profit. When his plays had been acted, his hope was at an end; he solicited no addition of honour from the reader. He therefore made no scruple to repeat the same jests in many dialogues, or to entangle different plots by the same knot of perplexity, which may be at least forgiven him, by those who recollect, that of Congreve's four comedies two are concluded by a marriage in a mask, by a deception which perhaps never happened, and which, whether likely or not, he did not invent.

So careless was this great poet of future fame, that, though he retired to ease and plenty, while he was yet little *declined into the vale of years* , before he could be disgusted with fatigue, or disabled by infirmity, he made no collection of his works, nor desired to rescue those that had been already published from the depravations that obscured them, or secure to the rest a better destiny, by giving them to the world in their genuine state.

Of the plays which bear the name of Shakespeare in the late editions, the greater part were not published till about seven years after his death, and the few which appeared in his life are apparently thrust into the world without the care of the author, and therefore probably without his knowledge.

Of all the publishers, clandestine or professed, their negligence and unskilfulness has by the late revisers been sufficiently shewn. The faults of all are indeed numerous and gross, and have not only corrupted many passages perhaps beyond recovery, but have brought others into suspicion, which are only obscured by obsolete phraseology, or by the writer's unskilfulness and affectation. To alter is more easy than to explain, and temerity is a more common quality than diligence. Those who saw that they must employ conjecture to a certain degree, were willing to indulge it a little further. Had the author published his own works, we should have sat quietly down to disentangle his intricacies, and clear his obscurities; but now we tear what we cannot loose, and eject what we happen not to understand.

The faults are more than could have happened without the concurrence of many causes. The stile of Shakespeare was in itself ungrammatical, perplexed, and obscure; his works were transcribed for the players by those who may be supposed to have seldom understood them; they were transmitted by copiers equally unskilful, who still multiplied errors; they were perhaps sometimes mutilated by the actors, for the sake of shortening the speeches; and were at last printed without correction of the press.

In this state they remained, not, as Dr. Warburton supposes, because they were unregarded, but because the editor's art was not yet applied to modern languages, and our ancestors were accustomed to so much negligence of English printers, that they could very patiently endure it. At last an edition was undertaken by Rowe; not because a poet was to be published by a poet, for Rowe seems to have thought very little on correction or explanation, but that our author's works might appear like those of his fraternity, with the appendages of a life and recommendatory preface. Rowe has been clamorously blamed for not performing what he did not undertake, and it is time that justice be done him, by confessing that though he seems to have had no thought of corruption beyond the printer's errors, yet he has made many emendations, if they were not made before, which his successors have received without acknowledgment, and which, if they had produced them, would have filled pages and pages with censures of the stupidity by which the faults were committed, with displays of the absurdities which they involved, with ostentatious expositions of the new reading, and self-congratulations on the happiness of discovering it.

As of the other editors I have preserved the prefaces, I have likewise borrowed the author's life from Rowe, though not written with much elegance or spirit; it relates however what is now to be known, and therefore deserves to pass through all succeeding publications.

The nation had been for many years content enough with Mr. Rowe's performance, when Mr. Pope made them acquainted with the true state of Shakespeare's text, shewed that it was extremely corrupt, and gave reason to hope that there were means of reforming it. He collated the old copies, which none had thought to examine before, and restored many lines to their integrity; but, by a very compendious criticism, he rejected whatever he disliked, and thought more of amputation than of cure.

I know not why he is commended by Dr. Warburton for distinguishing the genuine from the spurious plays. In this choice he exerted no judgment of his own; the plays which he received were given by Hemings and Condel, the first editors; and those which he rejected, though, according to the licentiousness of the press in those times, they were printed during Shakespeare's life, with his name, had been omitted by his friends, and were never added to his works before the edition of 1664, from which they were copied by the later printers.

This was a work which Pope seems to have thought unworthy of his abilities, being not able to suppress his contempt of *the dull duty of an editor* . He understood but half his undertaking. The duty of a collator is indeed dull, yet, like other tedious tasks, is very necessary; but an emendatory critick would ill discharge his duty, without qualities very different from dulness. In perusing a corrupted piece, he must have before him all possibilities of meaning, with all possibilities of expression. Such must be his comprehension of thought, and such his copiousness of language. Out of many readings possible, he must be able to select that which best suits with the state, opinions, and modes of language prevailing in every age, and with his author's particular cast of thought, and turn of expression. Such must be his knowledge, and such his taste. Conjectural criticism demands more than humanity possesses, and he that exercises it with most praise, has very frequent need of indulgence. Let us now be told no more of the dull duty of an editor.

Confidence is the common consequence of success. They whose excellence of any kind has been loudly celebrated, are ready to conclude that their powers are universal. Pope's edition fell below his own expectations, and he was so much offended, when he was found to have left any thing for others to do, that he passed the latter part of his life in a state of hostility with verbal criticism.

I have retained all his notes, that no fragment of so great a writer may be lost; his preface, valuable alike for elegance of composition and justness of remark, and containing a general criticism on his author, so extensive that little can be added, and so exact, that little can be disputed, every editor has an interest to suppress, but that every reader would demand its insertion.

Pope was succeeded by Theobald, a man of narrow comprehension and small acquisitions, with no native and intrinsick splendor of genius, with little of the artificial light of learning, but zealous for minute accuracy, and not negligent in pursuing it. He collated the ancient copies, and rectified many errors. A man so anxiously scrupulous might have been expected to do more, but what little he did was commonly right.

In his reports of copies and editions he is not to be trusted without examination. He speaks sometimes indefinitely of copies, when he has only one. In his enumeration of editions, he mentions the two first folios as of high, and the third folio as of middle authority; but the truth is that the first is equivalent to all others, and that the rest only deviate from it by the printer's negligence. Whoever has any of the folios has all, excepting those diversities which mere reiteration of editions will produce. I collated them all at the beginning, but afterwards used only the first.

Of his notes I have generally retained those which he retained himself in his second edition, except when they were confuted by subsequent annotators, or were too minute to merit preservation. I have sometimes adopted his restoration of a comma, without inserting the panegyrick in which he celebrated himself for his achievement. The exuberant excrescence of his diction I have often lopped, his triumphant exultations over Pope and Rowe I have sometimes suppressed, and his contemptible ostentation I have frequently concealed; but I have in some places shewn him as he would have shewn himself, for the reader's diversion, that the inflated emptiness of some notes may justify or excuse the contraction of the rest.

Theobald, thus weak and ignorant, thus mean and faithless, thus petulant and ostentatious, by the good luck of having Pope for his enemy, has escaped, and escaped alone, with reputation, from this undertaking. So willingly does the world support those who solicit favour, against those who command reverence; and so easily is he praised, whom no man can envy.

Our author fell then into the hands of Sir Thomas Hanmer, the Oxford editor, a man, in my opinion, eminently qualified by nature for such studies. He had, what is the first requisite to emendatory criticism, that intuition by which the poet's intention is immediately discovered, and that dexterity of intellect which dispatches its work by the easiest means. He had undoubtedly read much; his acquaintance with customs, opinions, and traditions, seems to have been large; and he is often learned without shew. He seldom passes what he does not understand, without an attempt to find or to make a meaning, and sometimes hastily makes what a little more attention would have found. He is solicitous to reduce to grammar what he could not be sure that his author intended to be grammatical. Shakespeare regarded more the series of ideas, than of words; and his language, not being designed for the reader's desk, was all that he desired it to be, if it conveyed his meaning to the audience.

Hanmer's care of the metre has been too violently censured. He found the measure reformed in so many passages, by the silent labours of some editors, with the silent acquiescence of the rest, that he thought himself allowed to extend a little further the licence which had already been carried so far without reprehension; and of his corrections in general, it must be confessed that they are often just, and made commonly with the least possible violation of the text.

But, by inserting his emendations, whether invented or borrowed, into the page, without any notice of varying copies, he has appropriated the labour of his predecessors, and made his own edition of little authority. His confidence indeed, both in himself and others, was too great; he supposes all to be right that was done by Pope and Theobald; he seems not to suspect a critick of fallibility, and it was but reasonable that he should claim what he so liberally granted.

As he never writes without careful enquiry and diligent consideration, I have received all his notes, and believe that every reader will wish for more.

Of the last editor it is more difficult to speak. Respect is due to high place, tenderness to living reputation, and veneration to genius and learning; but he cannot be justly offended at that liberty of which he has himself so frequently given an example, nor very solicitous what is thought of notes, which he ought never to have considered as part of his serious employments, and which, I suppose, since the ardour of composition is remitted, he no longer numbers among his happy effusions.

The original and predominant error of his commentary is acquiescence in his first thoughts; that precipitation which is produced by consciousness of quick discernment; and that confidence which presumes to do, by surveying the surface, what labour only can perform, by penetrating the bottom. His notes exhibit sometimes perverse interpretations, and sometimes improbable conjectures; he at one time gives the author more profundity of meaning than the sentence admits, and at another discovers absurdities, where the sense is plain to every other reader. But his emendations are likewise often happy and just; and his interpretation of obscure passages learned and sagacious.

Of his notes, I have commonly rejected those against which the general voice of the publick has exclaimed, or which their own incongruity immediately condemns, and which, I suppose, the author himself would desire to be forgotten. Of the rest, to part I have given the highest approbation, by inserting the offered reading in the text; part I have left to the judgment of the reader, as doubtful, though specious; and part I have censured without reserve, but I am sure without bitterness of malice, and, I hope, without wantonness of insult.

It is no pleasure to me, in revising my volumes, to observe how much paper is wasted in confutation. Whoever considers the revolutions of learning, and the various questions of greater or less importance, upon which wit and reason have exercised their powers, must lament the unsuccessfulness of enquiry, and the slow advances of truth, when he reflects, that great part of the labour of every writer is only the destruction of those that went before him. The first care of the builder of a new system, is to demolish the fabricks which are standing. The chief desire of him that comments an author, is to shew how much other commentators have corrupted and obscured him. The opinions prevalent in one age, as truths above the reach of controversy, are confuted and rejected in another, and rise again to reception in remoter times. Thus the human mind is kept in motion without progress. Thus sometimes truth and error, and sometimes contrarieties of error, take each other's place by reciprocal invasion. The tide of seeming knowledge which is poured over one generation, retires and leaves another naked and barren; the sudden meteors of intelligence, which for a while appear to shoot their beams into the regions of obscurity, on a sudden withdraw their lustre, and leave mortals again to grope their way.

These elevations and depressions of renown, and the contradictions to which all improvers of knowledge must for ever be exposed, since they are not escaped by the highest and brightest of mankind, may surely be endured with patience by criticks and annotators, who can rank themselves but as the satellites of their authors. How canst thou beg for life, says Homer's hero to his captive, when thou knowest that thou art now to suffer only what must another day be suffered by Achilles?

Dr. Warburton had a name sufficient to confer celebrity on those who could exalt themselves into antagonists, and his notes have raised a clamour too loud to be distinct. His chief assailants are the authors of *The canons of criticism* , and of *The revisal of Shakespeare's text* ; of whom one ridicules his errors with airy petulance, suitable enough to the levity of the controversy; the other attacks them with gloomy malignity, as if he were dragging to justice an assassin or incendiary. The one stings like a fly, sucks a little blood, takes a gay flutter, and returns for more; the other bites like a viper, and would be glad to leave inflammations and gangrene behind him. When I think on one, with his confederates, I remember the danger of Coriolanus, who was afraid that *girls with spits, and boys with stones, should slay him in puny battle* ; when the other crosses my imagination, I remember the prodigy in *Macbeth* :

A falcon tow'ring in his pride of place,

Was by a mousing owl hawk'd at and kill'd.

Let me however do them justice. One is a wit, and one a scholar. They have both shewn acuteness sufficient in the discovery of faults, and have both advanced some probable interpretations of obscure passages; but when they aspire to conjecture and emendation, it appears how falsely we all estimate our own abilities, and the little which they have been able to perform might have taught them more candour to the endeavours of others.

Before Dr. Warburton's edition, *Critical observations on Shakespeare* had been published by Mr. Upton, a man skilled in languages, and acquainted with books, but who seems to have had no great vigour of genius or nicety of taste. Many of his explanations are curious and useful, but he likewise, though he professed to oppose the licentious confidence of editors, and adhere to the old copies, is unable to restrain the rage of emendation, though his ardour is ill seconded by his skill. Every cold empirick, when his heart is expanded by a successful experiment, swells into a theorist, and the laborious collator at some unlucky moment frolicks in conjecture.

Critical, historical, and explanatory notes have been likewise published upon Shakespeare by Dr. Grey, whose diligent perusal of the old English writers has enabled him to make some useful observations. What he undertook he has well enough performed, but as he neither attempts judicial nor emendatory criticism, he employs rather his memory than his sagacity. It were to be wished that all would endeavour to imitate his modesty, who have not been able to surpass his knowledge.

I can say with great sincerity of all my predecessors, what I hope will hereafter be said of me, that not one has left Shakespeare without improvement, nor is there one to whom I have not been indebted for assistance and information. Whatever I have taken from them, it was my intention to refer to its original author, and it is certain, that what I have not given to another, I believed when I wrote it to be my own. In some perhaps I have been anticipated; but if I am ever found to encroach upon the remarks of any other commentator, I am willing that the honour, be it more or less, should be transferred to the first claimant, for his right, and his alone, stands above dispute; the second can prove his pretensions only to himself, nor can himself always distinguish invention, with sufficient certainty, from recollection.

They have all been treated by me with candour, which they have not been careful of observing to one another. It is not easy to discover from what cause the acrimony of a scholiast can naturally proceed. The subjects to be discussed by him are of very small importance; they involve neither property nor liberty;

nor favour the interest of sect or party. The various readings of copies, and different interpretations of a passage, seem to be questions that might exercise the wit, without engaging the passions. But whether it be that *small things make mean men proud* , and vanity catches small occasions; or that all contrariety of opinion, even in those that can defend it no longer, makes proud men angry; there is often found in commentaries a spontaneous strain of invective and contempt, more eager and venomous than is vented by the most furious controvertist in politicks against those whom he is hired to defame.

Perhaps the lightness of the matter may conduce to the vehemence of the agency; when the truth to be investigated is so near to inexistence, as to escape attention, its bulk is to be enlarged by rage and exclamation: that to which all would be indifferent in its original state, may attract notice when the fate of a name is appended to it. A commentator has indeed great temptations to supply by turbulence what he wants of dignity, to beat his little gold to a spacious surface, to work that to foam which no art or diligence can exalt to spirit.

The notes which I have borrowed or written are either illustrative, by which difficulties are explained; or judicial, by which faults and beauties are remarked; or emendatory, by which depravations are corrected.

The explanations transcribed from others, if I do not subjoin any other interpretation, I suppose commonly to be right, at least I intend by acquiescence to confess that I have nothing better to propose.

After the labours of all the editors, I found many passages which appeared to me likely to obstruct the greater number of readers, and thought it my duty to facilitate their passage. It is impossible for an expositor not to write too little for some, and too much for others. He can only judge what is necessary by his own experience; and how long soever he may deliberate, will at last explain many lines which the learned will think impossible to be mistaken, and omit many for which the ignorant will want his help. These are censures merely relative, and must be quietly endured. I have endeavoured to be neither superfluously copious, nor scrupulously reserved, and hope that I have made my author's meaning accessible to many who before were frighted from perusing him, and contributed something to the publick, by diffusing innocent and rational pleasure.

The complete explanation of an author not systematick and consequential, but desultory and vagrant, abounding in casual allusions and light hints, is not to be expected from any single scholiast. All personal reflections, when names are suppressed, must be in a few years irrecoverably obliterated; and customs, too minute to attract the notice of law, such as modes of dress, formalities of conversation, rules of visits, disposition of furniture, and practices of ceremony, which naturally find places in familiar dialogue, are so fugitive and unsubstantial, that they are not easily retained or recovered. What can be known will be collected by chance, from the recesses of obscure and obsolete papers, perused commonly with some other view. Of this knowledge every man has some, and none has much; but when an author has engaged the publick attention, those who can add any thing to his illustration, communicate their discoveries, and time produces what had eluded diligence.

To time I have been obliged to resign many passages, which, though I did not understand them, will perhaps hereafter be explained, having, I hope, illustrated some, which others have neglected or mistaken, sometimes by short remarks, or marginal directions, such as every editor has added at his will, and often by comments more laborious than the matter will seem to deserve; but that which is most difficult is not always most important, and to an editor nothing is a trifle by which his author is obscured.

The poetical beauties or defects I have not been very diligent to observe. Some plays have more, and some fewer judicial observations, not in proportion to their difference of merit, but because I gave this part of my design to chance and to caprice. The reader, I believe, is seldom pleased to find his opinion anticipated; it is natural to delight more in what we find or make, than in what we receive. Judgment, like other faculties, is improved by practice, and its advancement is hindered by submission to dictatorial decisions, as the memory grows torpid by the use of a table-book. Some initiation is however necessary; of all skill, part is infused by precept, and part is obtained by habit; I have therefore shewn so much as may enable the candidate of criticism to discover the rest.

To the end of most plays I have added short strictures, containing a general censure of faults, or praise of excellence; in which I know not how much I have concurred with the current opinion; but I have not, by any affectation of singularity, deviated from it. Nothing is minutely and particularly examined, and therefore it is to be supposed that in the plays which are condemned there is much to be praised, and in these which are praised much to be condemned.

The part of criticism in which the whole succession of editors has laboured with the greatest diligence, which has occasioned the most arrogant ostentation, and excited the keenest acrimony, is the emendation of corrupted passages, to which the publick attention having been first drawn by the violence of the contention between Pope and Theobald, has been continued by the persecution, which, with a kind of conspiracy, has been since raised against all the publishers of Shakespeare.

That many passages have passed in a state of depravation through all the editions is indubitably certain; of these the restoration is only to be attempted by collation of copies, or sagacity of conjecture. The collator's province is safe and easy, the conjecturer's perilous and difficult. Yet as the greater part of the plays are extant only in one copy, the peril must not be avoided, nor the difficulty refused.

Of the readings which this emulation of amendment has hitherto produced, some from the labours of every publisher I have advanced into the text; those are to be considered as in my opinion sufficiently supported; some I have rejected without mention, as evidently erroneous; some I have left in the notes without censure or approbation, as resting in equipoise between objection and defence; and some, which seemed specious but not right, I have inserted with a subsequent animadversion.

Having classed the observations of others, I was at last to try what I could substitute for their mistakes, and how I could supply their omissions. I collated such copies as I could procure, and wished for more, but have not found the collectors of these rarities very communicative. Of the editions which chance or kindness put into my hands I have given an enumeration, that I may not be blamed for neglecting what I had not the power to do.

By examining the old copies, I soon found that the later publishers, with all their boasts of diligence, suffered many passages to stand unauthorized, and contented themselves with Rowe's regulation of the text, even where they knew it to be arbitrary, and with a little consideration might have found it to be wrong. Some of these alterations are only the ejection of a word for one that appeared to him more elegant or more intelligible. These corruptions I have often silently rectified; for the history of our language, and the true force of our words, can only be preserved, by keeping the text of authors free from adulteration. Others, and those very frequent, smoothed the cadence, or regulated the measure; on these I have not exercised the same rigour; if only a word was transposed, or a particle inserted or omitted, I have sometimes suffered the line to stand; for the inconstancy of the copies is such, as that some liberties may be easily permitted. But this practice I have not suffered to proceed far, having restored the primitive diction wherever it could for any reason be preferred.

The emendations which comparison of copies supplied, I have inserted in the text; sometimes, where the improvement was slight, without notice, and sometimes with an account of the reasons of the change.

Conjecture, though it be sometimes unavoidable, I have not wantonly nor licentiously indulged. It has been my settled principle, that the reading of the ancient books is probably true, and therefore is not to be disturbed for the sake of elegance, perspicuity, or mere improvement of the sense. For though much credit is not due to the fidelity, nor any to the judgment of the first publishers, yet they who had the copy before their eyes were more likely to read it right, than we who read it only by imagination. But it is evident that they have often made strange mistakes by ignorance or negligence, and that therefore something may be properly attempted by criticism, keeping the middle way between presumption and timidity.

Such criticism I have attempted to practise, and, where any passage appeared inextricably perplexed, have endeavoured to discover how it may be recalled to sense, with least violence. But my first labour is, always to turn the old text on every side, and try if there be any interstice, through which light can find its way; nor would Huetius himself condemn me, as refusing the trouble of research, for the ambition of alteration. In this modest industry I have not been unsuccessful. I have rescued many lines from the violations of temerity, and secured many scenes from the inroads of correction. I have adopted the Roman sentiment, that it is more honourable to save a citizen, than to kill an enemy, and have been more careful to protect than to attack.

I have preserved the common distribution of the plays into acts, though I believe it to be in almost all the plays void of authority. Some of those which are divided in the later editions have no division in the first folio, and some that are divided in the folio have no division in the preceding copies. The settled mode of the theatre requires four intervals in the play, but few, if any, of our author's compositions can be properly distributed in that manner. An act is so much of the drama as passes without intervention of time, or change of place. A pause makes a new act. In every real, and therefore in every imitative action, the intervals may be more or fewer, the restriction of five acts being accidental and arbitrary. This Shakespeare knew, and this he practised; his plays were written, and at first printed in one unbroken continuity, and ought now to be exhibited with short pauses, interposed as often as the scene is changed, or any considerable time is required to pass. This method would at once quell a thousand absurdities.

In restoring the author's works to their integrity, I have considered the punctuation as wholly in my power; for what could be their care of colons and commas, who corrupted words and sentences. Whatever could be done by adjusting points is therefore silently performed, in some plays with much diligence, in others with less; it is hard to keep a busy eye steadily fixed upon evanescent atoms, or a discursive mind upon evanescent truth.

The same liberty has been taken with a few particles, or other words of slight effect. I have sometimes inserted or omitted them without notice. I have done that sometimes which the other editors have done always, and which indeed the state of the text may sufficiently justify.

The greater part of readers, instead of blaming us for passing trifles, will wonder that on mere trifles so much labour is expended, with such importance of debate, and such solemnity of diction. To these I answer with confidence, that they are judging of an art which they do not understand; yet cannot much reproach them with their ignorance, nor promise that they would become in general, by learning criticism, more useful, happier, or wiser.

As I practised conjecture more, I learned to trust it less; and after I had printed a few plays, resolved to insert none of my own readings in the text. Upon this caution I now congratulate myself, for every day encreases my doubt of my emendations.

Since I have confined my imagination to the margin, it must not be considered as very reprehensible, if I have suffered it to play some freaks in its own dominion. There is no danger in conjecture, if it be proposed as conjecture; and while the text remains uninjured, those changes may be safely offered, which are not considered even by him that offers them as necessary or safe.

If my readings are of little value, they have not been ostentatiously displayed or importunately obtruded. I could have written longer notes, for the art of writing notes is not of difficult attainment. The work is performed, first by railing at the stupidity, negligence, ignorance, and asinine tastelessness of the former editors, and shewing, from all that goes before and all that follows, the inelegance and absurdity of the old reading; then by proposing something, which to superficial readers would seem specious, but which the editor rejects with indignation; then by producing the true reading, with a long paraphrase, and concluding with loud acclamations on the discovery, and a sober wish for the advancement and prosperity of genuine criticism.

All this may be done, and perhaps done sometimes without impropriety. But I have always suspected that the reading is right, which requires many words to prove it wrong; and the emendation wrong, that cannot without so much labour appear to be right. The justness of a happy restoration strikes at once, and the moral precept may be well applied to criticism, *quod dubitas ne feceris* .

To dread the shore which he sees spread with wrecks, is natural to the sailor. I had before my eye so many critical adventures ended in miscarriage, that caution was forced upon me. I encountered in every page wit struggling with its own sophistry, and learning confused by the multiplicity of its views. I was forced to censure those whom I admired, and could not but reflect, while I was dispossessing their emendations, how soon the same fate might happen to my own, and how many of the readings which I have corrected may be by some other editor defended and established.

Criticks I saw, that other's names efface,

And fix their own, with labour, in the place;

Their own, like others, soon their place resign'd,

Or disappear'd, and left the first behind.—Pope.

That a conjectural critick should often be mistaken, cannot be wonderful, either to others or himself, if it be considered, that in his art there is no system, no principal and axiomatical truth that regulates subordinate positions. His chance of error is renewed at every attempt; an oblique view of the passage, a slight misapprehension of a phrase, a casual inattention to the parts connected, is sufficient to make him not only fail, but fail ridiculously; and when he succeeds best, he produces perhaps but one reading of many probable, and he that suggests another will always be able to dispute his claims.

It is an unhappy state in which danger is hid under pleasure. The allurements of emendation are scarcely resistible. Conjecture has all the joy and all the pride of invention, and he that has once started a happy change, is too much delighted to consider what objections may rise against it.

Yet conjectural criticism has been of great use in the learned world; nor is it my intention to depreciate a study that has exercised so many mighty minds, from the revival of learning to our own age, from the bishop of Aleria to English Bentley. The criticks on ancient authors have, in the exercise of their sagacity, many assistances, which the editor of Shakespeare is condemned to want. They are employed upon grammatical and settled languages, whose construction contributes so much to perspicuity, that Homer has fewer passages unintelligible than Chaucer. The words have not only a known regimen, but invariable quantities, which direct and confine the choice. There are commonly more manuscripts than one; and they do not often conspire in the same mistakes. Yet Scaliger could confess to Salmasius how little satisfaction his emendations gave him. *Illudunt nobis conjecturæ nostræ, quarum nos pudet, posteaquam in meliores codices incidimus.* And Lipsius could complain that criticks were making faults by trying to remove them, *Ut olim vitiis, ita nunc remediis laboratur.* And indeed, when mere conjecture is to be used, the emendations of Scaliger and Lipsius, notwithstanding their wonderful sagacity and erudition, are often vague and disputable, like mine or Theobald's.

Perhaps I may not be more censured for doing wrong, than for doing little; for raising in the publick expectations, which at last I have not answered. The expectation of ignorance is indefinite, and that of knowledge is often tyrannical. It is hard to satisfy those who know not what to demand, or those who demand by design what they think impossible to be done. I have indeed disappointed no opinion more than my own; yet I have endeavoured to perform my task with no slight solicitude. Not a single passage in the whole work has appeared to me corrupt, which I have not attempted to restore; or obscure, which I have not endeavoured to illustrate. In many I have failed like others; and from many, after all my efforts, I have retreated, and confessed the repulse. I have not passed over, with affected superiority, what is equally difficult to the reader and to myself, but where I could not instruct him, have owned my ignorance. I might easily have accumulated a mass of seeming learning upon easy scenes; but it ought not to be imputed to negligence, that, where nothing was necessary, nothing has been done, or that, where others have said enough, I have said no more.

Notes are often necessary, but they are necessary evils. Let him that is yet unacquainted with the powers of Shakespeare, and who desires to feel the highest pleasure that the drama can give, read every play, from the first scene to the last, with utter negligence of all his commentators. When his fancy is once on the wing, let it not stoop at correction or explanation. When his attention is strongly engaged, let it disdain alike to turn aside to the name of Theobald and of Pope. Let him read on through brightness and obscurity, through integrity and corruption; let him preserve his comprehension of the dialogue and his interest in the fable. And when the pleasures of novelty have ceased, let him attempt exactness, and read the commentators.

Particular passages are cleared by notes, but the general effect of the work is weakened. The mind is refrigerated by interruption; the thoughts are diverted from the principal subject; the reader is weary, he suspects not why; and at last throws away the book which he has too diligently studied.

Parts are not to be examined till the whole has been surveyed; there is a kind of intellectual remoteness necessary for the comprehension of any great work in its full design and in its true proportions; a close approach shews the smaller niceties, but the beauty of the whole is discerned no longer.

It is not very grateful to consider how little the succession of editors has added to this author's power of pleasing. He was read, admired, studied, and imitated, while he was yet deformed with all the improprieties which ignorance and neglect could accumulate upon him; while the reading was yet not rectified, nor his allusions understood; yet then did Dryden pronounce, “that Shakespeare was the man, who, of all modern and perhaps ancient poets, had the largest and most comprehensive soul.” All the images of nature were still present to him, and he drew them not laboriously, but luckily: when he describes any thing, you more than see it, you feel it too. Those who accuse him to have wanted learning, give him the greater commendation: he was naturally learned: he needed not the spectacles of books to read nature; he looked inwards, and found her there. I cannot say he is every where alike; were he so, I should do him injury to compare him with the greatest of mankind. He is many times flat and insipid; his comick wit degenerating into clenches, his serious swelling into bombast. But he is always great, when some great occasion is presented to him: no man can say, he ever had a fit subject for his wit, and did not then raise himself as high above the rest of poets,

Quantum lenta solent inter viburna cupressi.

It is to be lamented that such a writer should want a commentary; that his language should become obsolete, or his sentiments obscure. But it is vain to carry wishes beyond the condition of human things; that which must happen to all, has happened to Shakespeare, by accident and time: and more than has been suffered by any other writer since the use of types, has been suffered by him through his own negligence of fame, or perhaps by that superiority of mind, which despised its own performances, when it compared them with its powers, and judged those works unworthy to be preserved, which the criticks of following ages were to contend for the fame of restoring and explaining.

Among these candidates of inferior fame, I am now to stand the judgment of the publick; and wish that I could confidently produce my commentary as equal to the encouragement which I have had the honour of receiving. Every work of this kind is by its nature deficient, and I should feel little solicitude about the sentence, were it to be pronounced only by the skilful and the learned.

Richard Farmer: An Essay on the Learning of Shakespeare: Addressed to Joseph Cradock, Esq. 1767.

Preface to the Second Edition, 1767.

The Author of the following Essay was solicitous only for the honour of Shakespeare: he hath however, in *his own* capacity, little reason to complain of *occasional* Criticks, or Criticks *by profession* . The very *Few* , who have been pleased to controvert any part of his Doctrine, have favoured him with better manners than arguments; and claim his thanks for a further opportunity of demonstrating the futility of *Theoretick* reasoning against *Matter of Fact* . It is indeed strange that any *real* Friends of our immortal Poet should be still willing to force him into a situation which is not tenable: treat him as a *learned* Man, and what shall excuse the most gross violations of History, Chronology, and Geography?

ŸP ÀµwÃµ¹Â ¿P´½ $½ ÀµwÃÃÂ is the Motto of every *Polemick* : like his Brethren at the *Amphitheatre* , he holds it a merit to *die hard* ; and will not say, *Enough* , though the Battle be decided. “Were it shewn,” says some one, “that the old Bard borrowed *all* his allusions from *English* books then published, our *Essayist* might have possibly established his System.”—In good time!—This had scarcely been attempted by Peter Burman himself, with the Library of Shakespeare before him.—“Truly,” as Mr. Dogberry says, “for *mine own* part, if I were as tedious as a King, I could find in my heart to bestow it all on this Subject”: but where should I meet with a Reader?—When the main Pillars are taken away, the whole Building falls in course: Nothing hath been, or can be, pointed out, which is not easily removed; or rather, which was not *virtually* removed before: a very little *Analogy* will do the business. I shall therefore have no occasion to trouble myself any further; and may venture to call my Pamphlet, in the words of a pleasant Declaimer against *Sermons on the thirtieth of January* , “an Answer to every thing that shall hereafter be written on the Subject.”

But “this method of reasoning will prove any one ignorant of the Languages, who hath written when Translations were extant.”—Shade of Burgersdicius!—does it follow, because Shakespeare's early life was incompatible with a course of Education—whose Contemporaries, Friends and Foes, nay, and himself likewise, agree in his want of what is usually called *Literature* —whose mistakes from equivocal Translations, and even typographical Errors, cannot possibly be accounted for otherwise,—that Locke, to whom not one of these circumstances is applicable, understood no Greek?—I suspect, Rollin's Opinion of our Philosopher was not founded on this argument.

Shakespeare wanted not the Stilts of Languages to raise him above all other men. The quotation from Lilly in the *Taming of the Shrew* , if indeed it be his, strongly proves the extent of his reading: had he known Terence, he would not have quoted erroneously from his *Grammar* . Every one hath met with men in common life, who, according to the language of the *Water-poet* , “got only from *Possum* to *Posset* ,” and yet will throw out a line occasionally from their *Accidence* or their *Cato de Moribus* with tolerable propriety.—If, however, the old Editions be trusted in this passage, our Author's memory somewhat failed him in point of *Concord* .

The rage of *Parallelisms* is almost over, and in truth nothing can be more absurd. “This was stolen from *one* Classick,—That from *another* ”;—and had I not stept in to his rescue, poor Shakespeare had been stript as naked of ornament, as when he first *held Horses* at the door of the Playhouse.

The late ingenious and modest Mr. Dodsley declared himself

Untutor'd in the lore of Greece or Rome:

Yet let us take a passage at a venture from any of his performances, and a thousand to one, it is stolen. Suppose it be his celebrated Compliment to the *Ladies* , in one of his earliest pieces, *The Toy-shop* : “A good Wife makes the cares of the World sit easy, and adds a sweetness to its pleasures; she is a Man's best Companion in Prosperity, and his only Friend in Adversity; the carefullest preserver of his Health, and the kindest Attendant in his Sickness; a faithful Adviser in Distress, a Comforter in Affliction, and a prudent Manager in all his domestic Affairs.”—*Plainly* , from a fragment of Euripides preserved by Stobæus.

“Å½t ³pÁ ½ º±º¿ÖÃ¹ º±v ½yÃ¿¹Â ÀyÃµ¹

-´¹ÃÄy½ ÃÄ¹, ´}¼±Ä½ $½ ¿0ºÇ º±»öÂ,

HÁ³u½ Äµ ÀÁ±{½¿ÅÃ±, º±v ´ÅÃ¸Å¼w±Â

¨ÅÇt½ ¼µ¸¹ÃÄ¶Ã½!—*Par.* 4to. 1623.

Malvolio in the *Twelfth-Night* of Shakespeare hath some expressions very similar to Alnaschar in the *Arabian Tales* : which perhaps may be sufficient for *some* Criticks to prove his acquaintance with Arabic!

It seems however, at last, that “*Taste* should determine the matter.” This, as Bardolph expresses it, is a *word of exceeding good command* : but I am willing that the Standard itself be somewhat better ascertained before it be opposed to demonstrative Evidence.—Upon the whole, I may consider myself as the *Pioneer* of the *Commentators* :

I have removed a deal of *learned Rubbish* , and pointed out to them Shakespeare's track in the ever-pleasing *Paths of Nature* . This was necessarily a previous Inquiry; and I hope I may assume with some confidence, what one of the first Criticks of the Age was pleased to declare on reading the former Edition, that “The Question is *now* for ever decided.”

An Essay On The Learning Of Shakespeare: Addressed To Joseph Cradock, Esq.

“Shakespeare,” says a Brother of the *Craft* , “is a vast garden of criticism”: and certainly no one can be favoured with more weeders *gratis* .

But how often, my dear Sir, are weeds and flowers torn up indiscriminately?—the ravaged spot is re-planted in a moment, and a profusion of critical thorns thrown over it for security.

“A prudent man, therefore, would not venture his fingers amongst them.”

Be, however, in little pain for your friend, who regards himself sufficiently to be cautious:—yet he asserts with confidence, that no improvement can be expected, whilst the natural soil is mistaken for a hot-bed, and the Natives of the banks of *Avon* are scientifically choked with the culture of exoticks.

Thus much for metaphor; it is contrary to the *Statute* to fly out so early: but who can tell, whether it may not be demonstrated by some critick or other, that a deviation from rule is peculiarly happy in an Essay on Shakespeare!

You have long known my opinion concerning the literary acquisitions of our immortal Dramatist; and remember how I congratulated myself on my coincidence with the last and best of his Editors. I told you, however, that his *small Latin and less Greek* would still be litigated, and you see very assuredly that I was not mistaken. The trumpet hath been sounded against “the darling project of representing Shakespeare as one of the illiterate vulgar”; and indeed to so good purpose, that I would by all means recommend the performer to the army of the *braying Faction* , recorded by Cervantes. The testimony of his contemporaries is again disputed; constant tradition is opposed by flimsy arguments; and nothing is heard but confusion and nonsense. One could scarcely imagine this a topick very likely to inflame the passions: it is asserted by Dryden, that “those who accuse him to have wanted learning, give him the greatest commendation”; yet an attack upon an article of faith hath been usually received with more temper and complacence, than the unfortunate opinion which

I am about to defend.

But let us previously lament, with every lover of Shakespeare, that the Question was not fully discussed by Mr. Johnson himself: what he sees intuitively, others must arrive at by a series of proofs; and I have not time to *teach* with precision: be contented therefore with a few cursory observations, as they may happen to arise from the Chaos of Papers you have so often laughed at, “a stock sufficient to set up an *Editor in form* .” I am convinced of the strength of my cause, and superior to any little advantage from sophistical arrangements.

General positions without proofs will probably have no great weight on either side, yet it may not seem fair to suppress them: take them therefore as their authors occur to me, and we will afterward proceed to particulars.

The testimony of Ben stands foremost; and some have held it sufficient to decide the controversy: in the warmest Panegyrick that ever was written, he apologizes for what *he* supposed the only defect in his “beloved friend,—

——Soul of the age!

Th' applause! delight! the wonder of our stage!—

whose memory he honoured almost to idolatry”: and conscious of the worth of ancient literature, like any other man on the same occasion, he rather carries his acquirements *above* than *below* the truth. “Jealousy!” cries Mr. Upton; “People will allow others any qualities, but those upon which they highly value *themselves* .” Yes, where there *is* a competition, and the competitor formidable: but, I think, this Critick himself hath scarcely set in opposition the learning of Shakespeare and Jonson. When a superiority is universally granted, it by no means appears a man's literary interest to depress the reputation of his Antagonist.

In truth the received opinion of the pride and malignity of Jonson, at least in the earlier part of life, is absolutely groundless: at this time scarce a play or a poem appeared without Ben's encomium, from the original Shakespeare to the translator of Du Bartas.

But Jonson is by no means our only authority. Drayton, the countryman and acquaintance of Shakespeare, determines his excellence to the *naturall Braine* only. Digges, a wit of the town before our Poet left the stage, is very strong to the purpose,

——Nature only helpt him, for looke thorow

This whole book, thou shalt find he doth not borow

One phrase from Greekes, nor Latines imitate,

Nor once from vulgar languages translate.

Suckling opposes his *easier strain* to the *sweat of learned Jonson* . Denham assures us that all he had was from *old Mother-wit* . *His native wood-notes wild* , every one remembers to be celebrated by Milton. Dryden observes prettily enough, that “he wanted not the spectacles of books to read Nature.” He came out of her hand, as some one else expresses it, like Pallas out of Jove's head, at full growth and mature.

The ever memorable Hales of Eton (who, notwithstanding his Epithet, is, I fear, almost forgotten) had too great a knowledge both of Shakespeare and the Ancients to allow much acquaintance between them: and urged very justly on the part of Genius in opposition to Pedantry, That “if he had not *read* the Classicks, he had likewise not *stolen* from them; and if any Topick was produced from a Poet of antiquity, he would undertake to shew somewhat on the same subject, at least as well written by Shakespeare.”

Fuller, a diligent and equal searcher after truth and quibbles, declares positively that “his learning was very little,—*Nature* was all the *Art* used upon him, as *he himself* , if alive, would confess.” And may we not say he did confess it, when he apologized for his *untutored lines* to his noble patron the Earl of Southampton?—this list of witnesses might be easily enlarged; but I flatter myself, I shall stand in no need of such evidence.

One of the first and most vehement assertors of the learning of Shakespeare was the Editor of his Poems, the well-known Mr. Gildon; and his steps were most punctually taken by a subsequent labourer in the same department, Dr. Sewel.

Mr. Pope supposed “little ground for the common opinion of his want of learning”: once indeed he made a proper distinction between *learning* and *languages* , as I would be understood to do in my Title-page; but unfortunately he forgot it in the course of his disquisition, and endeavoured to persuade himself that Shakespeare's acquaintance with the Ancients might be actually proved by the same medium as Jonson's.

Mr. Theobald is “very unwilling to allow him so poor a scholar as many have laboured to represent him”; and yet is “cautious of declaring too positively on the other side of the question.”

Dr. Warburton hath exposed the weakness of some arguments from *suspected* imitations; and yet offers others, which, I doubt not, he could as easily have refuted.

Mr. Upton wonders “with what kind of reasoning any one could be so far imposed upon, as to imagine that Shakespeare had no learning”; and lashes with much zeal and satisfaction “the pride and pertness of dunces, who, under such a name, would gladly shelter their own idleness and ignorance.”

He, like the learned Knight, at every anomaly in grammar or metre,

Hath hard words ready to shew why,

And tell what *Rule* he did it by.

How would the old Bard have been astonished to have found that he had very skilfully given the *trochaic dimeter brachycatalectic* , commonly called the *ithyphallic* measure, to the Witches in *Macbeth* ! and that now and then a halting Verse afforded a most beautiful instance of the *Pes proceleusmaticus* !

“But,” continues Mr. Upton, “it was a learned age; Roger Ascham assures us that Queen Elizabeth read more Greek every day, than some *Dignitaries* of the Church did Latin in a whole week.” This appears very probable; and a pleasant proof it is of the general learning of the times, and of Shakespeare in particular. I wonder he did not corroborate it with an extract from her injunctions to her Clergy, that “such as were but *mean Readers* should peruse over before, once or twice, the Chapters and Homilies, to the intent they might read to the better understanding of the people.”

Dr. Grey declares that Shakespeare's knowledge in the Greek and Latin tongues cannot *reasonably* be called in question. Dr. Dodd supposes it *proved* , that he was not such a novice in learning and antiquity as *some people* would pretend. And to close the whole, for I suspect you to be tired of quotation, Mr. Whalley, the ingenious Editor of Jonson, hath written a piece expressly on this side the question: perhaps from a very excusable partiality, he was willing to draw Shakespeare from the field of Nature to classick ground, where alone, he knew, his Author could possibly cope with him.

These criticks, and many others their coadjutors, have supposed themselves able to trace Shakespeare in the writings of the Ancients; and have sometimes persuaded us of their own learning, whatever became of their Author's. Plagiarisms have been discovered in every natural description and every moral sentiment. Indeed by the kind assistance of the various *Excerpta* , *Sententiæ* , and *Flores* , this business may be effected with very little expense of time or sagacity; as Addison hath demonstrated in his Comment on *Chevy-chase* , and Wagstaff on *Tom Thumb* ; and I myself will engage to give you quotations from the elder *English* writers (for, to own the truth, I was once idle enough to collect such) which shall carry with them at least an equal degree of similarity. But there can be no occasion of wasting any future time in this department: the world is now in possession of the *Marks of Imitation* .

“Shakespeare, however, hath frequent allusions to the *facts* and *fables* of antiquity.” Granted:—and, as Mat. Prior says, to save the effusion of more Christian ink, I will endeavour to shew how they came to his acquaintance.

It is notorious that much of his *matter of fact* knowledge is deduced from Plutarch: but in what language he read him, hath yet been the question. Mr. Upton is pretty confident of his skill in the Original, and corrects accordingly the *Errors of his Copyists* by the Greek standard. Take a few instances, which will elucidate this matter sufficiently.

In the third act of *Anthony and Cleopatra* , Octavius represents to his Courtiers the imperial pomp of those illustrious lovers, and the arrangement of their dominion,

——Unto her

He gave the 'stablishment of Egypt, made her

Of lower Syria, Cyprus, *Lydia* ,

Absolute Queen.

Read *Libya* , says the critick *authoritatively* , as is plain from Plutarch, Á}Ä·½ ¼r½ ÀsÆ·½µ š»µ¿ÀqÄÁ±½ ²±Ãw»¹ÃÃ±½ '0³{ÀÄ¿Å º±v š{ÀÁ¿Å º±v ›™'¥—£, º±v º¿w»·Â £ÅÁw±Â.

This is very true: Mr. Heath accedes to the correction, and Mr. Johnson admits it into the Text: but turn to the translation, from the French of Amyot, by Thomas North, in *Folio* , 1579; and you will at once see the origin of the mistake.

"First of all he did establish Cleopatra Queene of Ægypt, of Cyprus, of *Lydia* , and the lower Syria."

Again in the Fourth Act,

——My messenger

He hath whipt with rods, dares me to personal combat,

Cæsar to Anthony. Let th' old Ruffian know

I have many other ways to die; mean time

Laugh at his challenge.——

"What a reply is this?" cries Mr. Upton, "'tis acknowledging he should fall under the unequal combat. But if we read,

——Let the old Ruffian know

He hath many other ways to die; mean time

I laugh at his challenge——

we have the poignancy and the very repartee of Cæsar in Plutarch."

This correction was first made by Sir Thomas Hanmer, and Mr. Johnson hath received it. Most indisputably it is the sense of Plutarch, and given so in the modern translations: but Shakespeare was misled by the ambiguity of the old one, “Antonius sent again to challenge Cæsar to fight him: Cæsar answered, That *he* had many other ways to die than so.”

In the Third Act of *Julius Cæsar* , Anthony in his well-known harangue to the people, repeats a part of the Emperor's will,

——To every Roman citizen he gives,

To every sev'ral man, seventy-five drachmas——

Moreover he hath left you all his walks,

His private arbours, and new-planted orchards,

On *this* side Tyber.——

“Our Author certainly wrote,” says Mr. Theobald, “On *that* side Tyber—

Trans Tiberim—prope Cæsaris hortos.

And Plutarch, whom Shakespeare very diligently *studied* , expressly declares that he left the publick his gardens and walks, ÀsÁ±½ Ä¿æ ¿Ä±¼¿æ, *beyond* the *Tyber* .”

This emendation likewise hath been adopted by the subsequent Editors; but hear again the old Translation, where Shakespeare's *study* lay: “He bequeathed unto every citizen of Rome seventy-five drachmas a man, and he left his gardens and arbours unto the people, which he had on *this* side of the river of Tyber.” I could furnish you with many more instances, but these are as good as a thousand.

Hence had our author his characteristick knowledge of Brutus and Anthony, upon which much argumentation for his learning hath been founded: and hence *literatim* the Epitaph on Timon, which, it was once presumed, he had corrected from the blunders of the Latin version, by his own superior knowledge of the Original.

I cannot, however, omit a passage of Mr. Pope. “The *speeches* copy'd from Plutarch in *Coriolanus* may, I think, be as well made an instance of the learning of Shakespeare, as those copy'd from Cicero in *Catiline* , of Ben. Jonson's.” Let us inquire into this matter, and transcribe a *speech* for a specimen. Take the famous one of Volumnia:

Should we be silent and not speak, our raiment

And state of bodies would bewray what life

We've led since thy Exile. Think with thyself,

How more unfortunate than all living women

Are we come hither; since thy sight, which should

Make our eyes flow with joy, hearts dance with comforts,

Constrains them weep, and shake with fear and sorrow;

Making the mother, wife, and child to see

The son, the husband, and the father tearing

His Country's bowels out: and to poor we

Thy enmity's most capital; thou barr'st us

Our prayers to the Gods, which is a comfort

That all but we enjoy. For how can we,

Alas! how can we, for our Country pray,

Whereto we're bound, together with thy Victory,

Whereto we're bound? Alack! or we must lose

The Country, our dear nurse; or else thy Person, Our comfort in the Country. We must find

An eminent calamity, though we had

Our wish, which side shou'd win. For either thou

Must, as a foreign Recreant, be led

With manacles thorough our streets; or else

Triumphantly tread on thy Country's ruin,

And bear the palm, for having bravely shed

Thy wife and children's blood. For myself, son,

I purpose not to wait on Fortune, 'till

These wars determine: if I can't persuade thee

Rather to shew a noble grace to both parts,

Than seek the end of one; thou shalt no sooner

March to assault thy Country, than to tread

(Trust to't, thou shalt not) on thy mother's womb,

That brought thee to this world.

I will now give you the old Translation, which shall effectually confute Mr. Pope: for our Author hath done little more than throw the very words of North into blank verse.

“If we helde our peace (my sonne) and determined not to speake, the state of our poore bodies, and present sight of our rayment, would easely bewray to thee what life we haue led at home, since thy exile and abode abroad. But thinke now with thy selfe, howe much more unfortunately then all the women liuinge we are come hether, considering that the sight which should be most pleasaunt to all other to beholde, spitefull fortune hath made most fearfull to us: making my selfe to see my sonne, and my daughter here, her husband, besieging the walles of his natiue countrie. So as that which is the only comfort to all other in their adversitie and miserie, to pray unto the goddes, and to call to them for aide, is the onely thinge which plongeth us into most deepe perplexitie. For we cannot (alas) together pray, both for victorie, for our countrie, and for safety of thy life also: but a worlde of grievous curses, yea more than any mortall enemie can heappe uppon us, are forcibly wrapt up in our prayers. For the bitter soppe of most harde choyce is offered thy wife and children, to foregoe the one of the two: either to lose the persone of thy selfe, or the nurse of their natiue contrie. For my selfe (my sonne) I am determined not to tarrie, till fortune in my life time doe make an ende of this warre. For if I cannot persuade thee, rather to doe good unto both parties, then to ouerthrowe and destroye the one, preferring loue and nature before the malice and calamitie of warres: thou shalt see, my sonne, and trust unto it, thou shalt no soner marche forward to assault thy countrie, but thy foote shall tread upon thy mother's wombe, that brought thee first into this world.”

The length of this quotation will be excused for its curiosity; and it happily wants not the assistance of a Comment. But matters may not always be so easily managed:—a plagiarism from Anacreon hath been detected:

The Sun's a thief, and with his great attraction

Robs the vast Sea. The Moon's an arrant thief,

And her pale fire she snatches from the Sun.

The Sea's a thief, whose liquid surge resolves

The Moon into salt tears. The Earth's a thief,

That feeds and breeds by a composture stol'n

From gen'ral excrements: each thing's a thief.

“This,” says Dr. Dodd, “is a good deal in the manner of the celebrated *drinking Ode* , too well known to be inserted.” Yet it may be alleged by those who imagine Shakespeare to have been generally able to think for himself, that the topicks are obvious, and their application is different.—But for argument's sake, let the Parody be granted; and "our Author," says some one, "may be puzzled to prove that there was a Latin translation of Anacreon at the time Shakespeare wrote his *Timon of Athens* ." This challenge is peculiarly unhappy: for I do not at present recollect any *other Classick* (if indeed, with great deference to Mynheer De Pauw, Anacreon may be numbered amongst them) that was *originally* published with *two* Latin translations.

But this is not all. Puttenham in his *Arte of English Poesie* , 1589, quotes some one of a "reasonable good facilitie in translation, who finding *certaine* of Anacreon's Odes very well translated by Ronsard the French poet—comes our Minion, and translates the same out of French into English": and his strictures upon him evince the publication. Now this identical Ode is to be met with in Ronsard! and as his works are in few hands, I will take the liberty of transcribing it:

La terre les eaux va boivant,

L'arbre la boit par sa racine,

La mer salee boit le vent,

Et le Soleil boit la marine.

Le Soleil est beu de la Lune,

Tout boit soit en haut ou en bas:

Suivant ceste reigle commune,

Pourquoy donc ne boirons-nous pas?—Edit. Fol. p. 507.

I know not whether an observation or two relative to our Author's acquaintance with Homer be worth our investigation. The ingenious Mrs. Lenox observes on a passage of *Troilus and Cressida* , where Achilles is roused to battle by the death of Patroclus, that Shakespeare must *here* have had the *Iliad* in view, as "the old Story, which in many places he hath faithfully copied, is absolutely silent with respect to this circumstance."

And Mr. Upton is positive that the *sweet oblivious Antidote* , inquired after by Macbeth, could be nothing but the *Nepenthe* described in the *Odyssey* ,

·Àµ½¸sÂ Ä½ Ç¿»y½ Äµ, º±ºö½ Àw»·¸¿½ Àq½ÄÉ½.

I will not insist upon the Translations by Chapman; as the first Editions are without date, and it may be difficult to ascertain the exact time of their publication. But the *former* circumstance might have been learned from Alexander Barclay; and the *latter* more fully from Spenser than from Homer himself.

“But Shakespeare,” persists Mr. Upton, “hath some *Greek Expressions* .” Indeed!—“We have one in *Coriolanus* ,

——It is held

That valour is the chiefest Virtue, and

Most dignifies the *Haver* ;——

and another in *Macbeth* , where Banquo addresses the *Weïrd-Sisters* ,

——My noble Partner

You greet with present grace, and great prediction

Of noble *Having* .——

Gr. Çµ¹±,—and ÀÁxÂ Äx½ Ç¿½Ä±, to the *Haver* .

This was the common language of Shakespeare's time. “Lye in a water-bearer's house!” says Master Mathew of Bobadil, “a Gentleman of his *Havings* !”

Thus likewise John Davies in his *Pleasant Descant upon English Proverbs* , printed with his *Scourge of Folly* , about 1612:

Do well and have well! —neyther so still:

For some are good *Doers* , whose *Havings* are ill;

and Daniel the Historian uses it frequently. *Having* seems to be synonymous with *Behaviour* in Gawin Douglas and the elder Scotch writers.

Haver , in the sense of *Possessor* , is every where met with: tho' unfortunately the ÀÁxÂ Äx½ Ç¿½Ä± of Sophocles, produced as an authority for it, is suspected by Kuster, as good a critick in these matters, to have absolutely a different meaning.

But what shall we say to the learning of the Clown in *Hamlet* , “Ay, tell me that, and *unyoke* ”? alluding to the ’¿Å»ÅÄxÂ of the Greeks: and Homer and his Scholiast are quoted accordingly!

If it be not sufficient to say, with Dr. Warburton, that the phrase might be taken from Husbandry, without much depth of reading; we may produce it from a *Dittie* of the workmen of Dover, preserved in the additions to Holingshed, p. 1546.

My bow is broke, I would *unyoke* ,

My foot is sore, I can worke no more.

An expression of my Dame Quickly is next fastened upon, which you may look for in vain in the modern text; she calls some of the pretended Fairies in the *Merry Wives of Windsor* ,

——*Orphan* Heirs of fixed Destiny;

“and how elegant is this!” quoth Mr. Upton, supposing the word to be used, as a Grecian would have used it, “@ÁÆ±½xÂ ab @ÁÆ½xÂ—acting in darkness and obscurity.”

Mr. Heath assures us that the bare mention of such an interpretation is a sufficient refutation of it: and his critical word will be rather taken in Greek than in English: in the same hands therefore I will venture to leave all our author's knowledge of the *Old Comedy* , and his etymological learning in the word, *Desdemona* .

Surely poor Mr. Upton was very little acquainted with *Fairies* , notwithstanding his laborious study of Spenser. The last authentick account of them is from our countryman William Lilly; and it by no means agrees with the *learned* interpretation: for the *angelical Creatures* appeared in his *Hurst* wood in a *most* *illustrious Glory* ,—“and indeed,” says the Sage, “it is not given to very many persons to endure their *glorious aspects* .”

The only use of transcribing these things is to shew what absurdities men for ever run into, when they lay down an Hypothesis, and afterward seek for arguments in the support of it. What else could induce this man, by no means a bad scholar, to doubt whether *Truepenny* might not be derived from ¤Á{À±½¿½; and quote upon us with much parade an old Scholiast on Aristophanes?—I will not stop to confute him: nor take any notice of two or three more Expressions, in which he was pleased to suppose some learned meaning or other; all which he might have found in every Writer of the time, or still more easily in the vulgar Translation of the Bible, by consulting the Concordance of Alexander Cruden.

But whence have we the Plot of *Timon* , except from the Greek of Lucian?—The Editors and Criticks have been never at a greater loss than in their inquiries of this sort; and the source of a Tale hath been often in vain sought abroad, which might easily have been found at home: My good friend, the very ingenious Editor of the *Reliques of ancient English Poetry* , hath shewn our Author to have been sometimes contented with a legendary *Ballad* .

The Story of the *Misanthrope* is told in almost every Collection of the time; and particularly in two books, with which Shakespeare was intimately acquainted; the *Palace of Pleasure* , and the *English Plutarch* . Indeed from a passage in an old Play, called *Jack Drum's Entertainment* , I conjecture that he had before made his appearance on the Stage.

Were this a proper place for such a disquisition, I could give you many cases of this kind. We are sent for instance to Cinthio for the Plot of *Measure for Measure* , and Shakespeare's judgement hath been attacked for some deviations from him in the conduct of it: when probably all he knew of the matter was from Madam Isabella in the *Heptameron* of Whetstone. Ariosto is continually quoted for the Fable of *Much ado about Nothing* ; but I suspect our Poet to have been satisfied with the *Geneura* of Turberville. *As you like it* was *certainly borrowed* , if we believe Dr. Grey, and Mr. Upton, from the *Coke's Tale of Gamelyn* ; which by the way was not *printed* 'till a century afterward: when in truth the old Bard, who was no hunter of MSS., contented himself solely with Lodge's *Rosalynd* or Euphues' *Golden Legacye* . 4to. 1590. The Story of *All's well that ends well* , or, as I suppose it to have been sometimes called, *Love's labour wonne* , is originally indeed the property of Boccace, but it came immediately to Shakespeare from Painter's *Giletta of Narbon* . Mr. Langbaine could not conceive whence the Story of *Pericles* could be taken, “not meeting in History with any such *Prince of Tyre* ”; yet his legend may be found at large in old Gower, under the name of *Appolynus* .

Pericles is one of the Plays omitted in the later Editions, as well as the early Folios, and not improperly; tho' it was published many years before the death of Shakespeare, with his name in the Title-page. Aulus Gellius informs us that some Plays are ascribed absolutely to Plautus, which he only *re-touched* and *polished* ; and this is undoubtedly the case with our Author likewise. The revival of this performance, which Ben Jonson calls *stale* and *mouldy* , was probably his earliest attempt in the Drama. I know that another of these discarded pieces, the *Yorkshire Tragedy* , had been frequently called so; but most certainly it was not written by our Poet at all: nor indeed was it printed in his life-time. The Fact on which it is built was perpetrated no sooner than 1604: much too late for so mean a performance from the hand of Shakespeare.

Sometimes a very little matter detects a forgery. You may remember a Play called the *Double Falsehood* , which Mr. Theobald was desirous of palming upon the world for a posthumous one of Shakespeare: and I see it is classed as such in the last Edition of the Bodleian Catalogue. Mr. Pope himself, after all the strictures of Scriblerus, in a Letter to Aaron Hill, supposes it of that age; but a mistaken accent determines it to have been written since the middle of the last century:

——This late example

Of base Henriquez, bleeding in me now,

From each good *Aspect* takes away my trust.

And in another place,

You have an *Aspect* , Sir, of wondrous wisdom.

The word *Aspect* , you perceive, is here accented on the *first* Syllable, which, I am confident, in *any* sense of it, was never the case in the time of Shakespeare; though it may sometimes appear to be so, when we do not observe a preceding *Elision* .

Some of the professed Imitators of our old Poets have not attended to this and many other *Minutiæ* : I could point out to you several performances in the respective Styles of Chaucer, Spenser, and Shakespeare, which the *imitated* Bard could not possibly have either read or construed.

This very accent hath troubled the Annotators on Milton. Dr. Bentley observes it to be "a *tone* different from the present use." Mr. Manwaring, in his *Treatise of Harmony and Numbers* , very solemnly informs us that "this Verse is defective both in Accent and Quantity, B. 3. V. 266.

His words here ended, but his meek *Aspéct*

Silent yet spake.——

Here," says he, "a syllable is *acuted* and *long* , whereas it should be *short* and *graved* "!

And a still more extraordinary Gentleman, one Green, who published a Specimen of a *new Version* of the *Paradise Lost* , into Blank verse, "by which that amazing Work is brought somewhat nearer the Summit of Perfection," begins with correcting a blunder in the fourth book, V. 540:

——The setting Sun

Slowly descended, and with right *Aspéct* —

Levell'd his evening rays.——

Not so in the *New Version* :

Meanwhile the setting Sun descending slow—

Level'd with *áspect* right his ev'ning rays.

Enough of such Commentators.—The celebrated Dr. Dee had a *Spirit* , who would sometimes condescend to correct him, when peccant in *Quantity* : and it had been kind of him to have a little assisted the *Wights* above-mentioned.—Milton affected the *Antique* ; but it may seem more extraordinary that the old Accent should be adopted in *Hudibras* .

After all, the *Double Falsehood* is superior to Theobald. One passage, and one only in the whole Play, he pretended to have written:

——Strike up, my Masters;

But touch the Strings with a religious softness:

Teach sound to languish thro' the Night's dull Ear,

Till Melancholy start from her lazy Couch,

And Carelessness grow Convert to Attention.

These lines were particularly admired; and his vanity could not resist the opportunity of claiming them: but his claim had been more easily allowed to *any other* part of the performance.

To whom then shall we ascribe it?—Somebody hath told us, who should seem to be a *Nostrum-monger* by his argument, that, let *Accents* be how they will, it is called *an original Play of William Shakespeare* in the *Kings Patent* , prefixed to Mr. Theobald's Edition, 1728, and consequently there *could* be no fraud in the matter. Whilst, on the contrary, the *Irish* Laureat, Mr. Victor, remarks (and were it true, it would be certainly decisive) that the Plot is borrowed from a Novel of Cervantes, not published 'till the year after Shakespeare's death. But unluckily the same Novel appears in a part of *Don Quixote* , which was printed in Spanish, 1605, and in English by Shelton, 1612.—The same reasoning, however, which exculpated our Author from the *Yorkshire Tragedy* , may be applied on the present occasion.

But you want *my* opinion:—and from every mark of Style and Manner, I make no doubt of ascribing it to Shirley. Mr. Langbaine informs us that he left some Plays in MS.—These were written about the time of the *Restoration* , when the *Accent* in question was more generally altered.

Perhaps the mistake arose from an *abbreviation* of the name. Mr. Dodsley knew not that the Tragedy of *Andromana* was Shirley's, from the very same cause. Thus a whole stream of Biographers tell us that Marston's Plays were printed at London, 1633, “by the care of *William Shakespeare* , the famous Comedian.”—Here again I suppose, in some Transcript, the real Publisher's name, *William Sheares* , was *abbreviated* . No one hath protracted the life of Shakespeare beyond 1616, except Mr. Hume; who is pleased to add a year to it, in contradiction to all manner of evidence.

Shirley is spoken of with contempt in *Mac Flecknoe* ; but his Imagination is sometimes fine to an extraordinary degree. I recollect a passage in the fourth book of the *Paradise Lost* , which hath been suspected of *Imitation* , as a *prettiness* below the Genius of Milton: I mean, where *Uriel* glides *backward and forward* to Heaven on a *Sunbeam* . Dr. Newton informs us that this might possibly be hinted by a Picture of Annibal Caracci in the King of France's Cabinet: but I am apt to believe that Milton had been struck with a Portrait in Shirley. Fernando, in the Comedy of the *Brothers* , 1652, describes Jacinta at *Vespers* :

Her eye did seem to labour with a tear,

Which suddenly took birth, but overweigh'd

With it's own swelling, drop'd upon her bosome;

Which, by reflexion of her light, appear'd

As nature meant her sorrow for an ornament:

After, her looks grew chearfull, and I saw

A smile shoot gracefull upward from her eyes,

As if they had gain'd a victory o'er grief,

And with it many *beams* twisted themselves,

Upon whose *golden threads* the *Angels* walk

To and again from Heaven .——

You must not think me infected with the spirit of Lauder, if I give you another of Milton's Imitations:

——The Swan *with arched neck*

Between her white wings mantling proudly, rows

Her state with oary feet.—B. 7. V. 438, &c.

“The ancient Poets,” says Mr. Richardson, “have not hit upon this beauty; so lavish as they have been in their descriptions of the *Swan* . Homer calls the Swan *long-necked* , ´¿Å»¹Ç¿´µwÁ¿½; but how much more *pittoresque* , if he had *arched* this length of neck?”

For *this beauty* , however, Milton was beholden to Donne; whose name, I believe, at present is better known than his writings:

——Like a Ship in her full trim,

A *Swan* , so white that you may unto him

Compare all whitenesse, but himselfe to none,

Glided along, and as he glided watch'd,

And with his *arched neck* this poore fish catch'd.—*Progresse of the Soul* , St. 24.

Those highly finished Landscapes, the *Seasons* , are indeed copied from Nature: but Thomson sometimes recollected the hand of his Master:

——The stately-sailing Swan

Gives out his snowy plumage to the gale;

And, arching proud his neck, with oary feet

Bears forward fierce, and guards his osier Isle,

Protective of his young.——

But *to return* , as we say on other occasions—Perhaps the Advocates for Shakespeare's knowledge of the Latin language may be more successful. Mr. Gildon takes the Van. “It is plain that He was acquainted with the Fables of antiquity very well: that some of the Arrows of Cupid are pointed with Lead, and others with Gold, he found in Ovid; and what he speaks of Dido, in Virgil: nor do I know any translation of these Poets so ancient as Shakespeare's time.” The passages on which these sagacious remarks are made occur in the *Midsummer*

Night's Dream ; and exhibit, we see, a clear proof of acquaintance with the Latin Classicks. But we are not answerable for Mr. Gildon's ignorance; he might have been told of Caxton and Douglas, of Surrey and Stanyhurst, of Phaer and Twyne, of Fleming and Golding, of Turberville and Churchyard! but these Fables were easily known without the help of either the originals or the translations. The Fate of Dido had been sung very early by Gower, Chaucer, and Lydgate; Marloe had even already introduced her to the Stage: and Cupid's arrows appear with their characteristick differences in Surrey, in Sidney, in Spenser, and every Sonnetteer of the time. Nay, their very names were exhibited long before in the *Romaunt of the Rose* : a work you may venture to look into, notwithstanding Master Prynne hath so positively assured us, on the word of John Gerson, that the Author is most certainly damned, if he did not care for a serious repentance.

Mr. Whalley argues in the same manner, and with the same success. He thinks a passage in the *Tempest* ,

—— High Queen of State,

Great Juno comes; I know her by her *Gait* ,

a remarkable instance of Shakespeare's knowledge of ancient Poetick story; and that the hint was furnished by the *Divum incedo Regina* of Virgil.

You know, honest John Taylor, the *Water-poet* , declares that *he never learned his Accidence* , and that *Latin and French* were to him *Heathen-Greek* ; yet, by the help of Mr. Whalley's argument, I will prove him a *learned* Man, in spite of every thing he may say to the contrary: for thus he makes a *Gallant* address his *Lady* ,

“Most inestimable Magazine of Beauty—in whom *the Port and Majesty of Juno* , the Wisdom of Jove's braine-bred Girle, and the Feature of Cytherea, have their domestical habitation.”

In the *Merchant of Venice* , we have an oath “By *two-headed Janus* ”; and here, says Dr. Warburton, Shakespeare shews his knowledge in the Antique: and so again does the *Water-poet* , who describes Fortune,

Like a *Janus* with a *double-face* .

But Shakespeare hath somewhere a *Latin Motto* , quoth Dr. Sewel; and so hath John Taylor, and a whole Poem upon it into the bargain.

You perceive, my dear Sir, how vague and indeterminate such arguments must be: for in fact this *sweet Swan of Thames* , as Mr. Pope calls him, hath more scraps of Latin, and allusions to antiquity, than are any where to be met with in the writings of Shakespeare. I am sorry to trouble you with trifles, yet what must be done, when grave men insist upon them?

It should seem to be the opinion of some modern criticks, that the personages of classick land began only to be known in England in the time of Shakespeare; or rather, that he particularly had the honour of introducing them to the notice of his countrymen.

For instance,—*Rumour painted full of tongues* gives us a Prologue to one of the parts of *Henry the fourth* ; and, says Dr. Dodd, Shakespeare had doubtless a view to either Virgil or Ovid in their description of Fame.

But why so? Stephen Hawes, in his *Pastime of Pleasure* , had long before exhibited her in the same manner,

A goodly Lady envyroned about

With *tongues* of fyre;——

and so had Sir Thomas More in one of his *Pageants* ,

Fame I am called, mervayle you nothing

Though with *tonges* I am compassed all rounde;

not to mention her elaborate Portrait by Chaucer, in the *Boke of Fame* ; and by John Higgins, one of the Assistants in the *Mirour for Magistrates* , in his Legend of King Albanacte.

A very liberal Writer on the *Beauties of Poetry* , who hath been more conversant in the ancient Literature of other Countries than his own, “cannot but wonder that a Poet, whose classical Images are composed of the finest parts, and breath the very spirit of ancient Mythology, should pass for being illiterate:

See, what a grace was seated on his brow!

Hyperion's curls: the front of Jove himself:

An eye like Mars to threaten and command:

A station like the herald Mercury,

New lighted on a heaven-kissing hill.—*Hamlet.* ”

Illiterate is an ambiguous term: the question is, whether Poetick History could be only known by an Adept in *Languages* . It is no reflection on this ingenious Gentleman, when I say that I use on this occasion the words of a *better* Critick, who yet was not willing to carry the *illiteracy* of our Poet *too far* :—“They who are in such astonishment at the *learning* of Shakespeare, forget that the Pagan Imagery was familiar to all the Poets of his time; and that abundance of this sort of learning was to be picked up from almost every English book that he could take into his hands.” For not to insist upon Stephen Bateman's *Golden booke of the leaden Goddes* , 1577, and several other laborious compilations on the subject, all this and much more Mythology might as perfectly have been learned from the *Testament of Creseide* , and the *Fairy Queen* , as from a regular Pantheon, or Polymetis himself.

Mr. Upton, not contented with *Heathen* learning, when he finds it in the text, must necessarily superadd it, when it appears to be wanting; because Shakespeare most certainly hath lost it by accident!

In *Much ado about Nothing* , Don Pedro says of the insensible Benedict, “He hath twice or thrice cut Cupid's bow-string, and the little *Hangman* dare not shoot at him.”

This mythology is not recollected in the Ancients, and therefore the critick hath no doubt but his Author wrote “*Henchman,—a Page, Pusio* : and *this* word seeming too hard for the Printer, he translated the little Urchin into a *Hangman* , a character no way belonging to him.”

But this character was not borrowed from the Ancients;—it came from the *Arcadia* of Sir Philip Sidney:

Millions of yeares this old drivell Cupid lives;

While still more wretch, more wicked he doth prove:

Till now at length that Jove an office gives,

(At Juno's suite who much did Argus love)

In this our world a *Hangman* for to be

Of all those fooles that will have all they see.—B. 2. Ch. 14.

I know it may be objected on the authority of such Biographers as Theophilus Cibber, and the Writer of the Life of Sir Philip, prefixed to the modern Editions, that the *Arcadia* was not published before 1613, and consequently too late for this imitation: but I have a Copy in my own possession, printed for W. Ponsonbie, 1590, 4to. which hath escaped the notice of the industrious Ames, and the rest of our typographical Antiquaries.

Thus likewise every word of antiquity is to be cut down to the classical standard.

In a Note on the Prologue to *Troilus and Cressida* (which, by the way, is not met with in the *Quarto*), Mr. Theobald informs us that the very *names* of the gates of Troy have been barbarously demolished by the Editors: and a deal of learned dust he makes in setting them right again; much however to Mr. Heath's satisfaction. Indeed the learning is modestly withdrawn from the later Editions, and we are quietly instructed to read,

Dardan, and Thymbria, Ilia, Scæa, Troian,

And Antenorides.

But had he looked into the *Troy boke* of Lydgate, instead of puzzling himself with Dares Phrygius, he would have found the horrid demolition to have been neither the work of Shakespeare nor his Editors.

Therto his cyte | compassed enuyrowne

Hadde gates VI to entre into the towne:

The firste of all | and strengest eke with all,

Largest also | and moste pryncypall,

Of myghty byldyng | alone pereless,

Was by the kynge called | Dardanydes;

And in storye | lyke as it is founde,

Tymbria | was named the seconde;

And the thyrde | called Helyas,

The fourthe gate | hyghte also Cetheas;

The fyfthe Trojana, | the syxth Anthonydes,

Stronge and myghty | both in werre and pes.—Lond. empr. by R. Pynson, 1513. Fol. B. 2. Ch. 11.

Our excellent friend Mr. Hurd hath born a noble testimony on our side of the question. “Shakespeare,” says this true Critick, “owed the felicity of freedom from the bondage of classical superstition to the *want* of what is called the *advantage* of a learned Education.—This, as well as a vast superiority of Genius, hath contributed to lift this astonishing man to the glory of being esteemed the most original *thinker* and *speaker* , since the times of Homer.” And hence indisputably the amazing Variety of Style and Manner, unknown to all other Writers: an argument of *itself* sufficient to emancipate Shakespeare from the supposition of a *Classical training* . Yet, to be honest, *one* Imitation is *fastened* on our Poet: which hath been insisted upon likewise by Mr. Upton and Mr. Whalley. You remember it in the famous Speech of Claudio in *Measure for Measure* :

Ay, but to die and go we know not where! &c.

Most certainly the Ideas of a “Spirit bathing in fiery floods,” of residing “in thrilling regions of thick-ribbed ice,” or of being “imprisoned in the viewless winds," are not *original* in our Author; but I am not sure that they came from the *Platonick Hell* of Virgil. The Monks also had their hot and their cold Hell, "The fyrste is fyre that ever brenneth, and never gyveth lighte," says an old Homily:—"The seconde is passyng colde, that yf a grete hylle of fyre were casten therin, it sholde torne to yce." One of their Legends, well remembered in the time of Shakespeare, gives us a Dialogue between a Bishop and a Soul tormented in a piece of ice, which was brought to cure *a grete brenning heate* in his foot: take care you do not interpret this the *Gout* , for I remember M. Menage quotes a *Canon* upon us,

Si quis dixerit Episcopum podagra laborare, Anathema sit.

Another tells us of the Soul of a Monk fastened to a Rock, which the winds were to blow about for a twelve-month, and purge of it's Enormities. Indeed this doctrine was before now introduced into poetick fiction, as you may see in a Poem, "where the Lover declareth his pains to exceed far the pains of Hell," among the many miscellaneous ones subjoined to the Works of Surrey. Nay, a very learned and inquisitive Brother-Antiquary, our Greek Professor, hath observed to me on the authority of Blefkenius, that this was the ancient opinion of the inhabitants of Iceland; who were certainly very little read either in the *Poet* or the *Philosopher* .

After all, Shakespeare's curiosity might lead him to *Translations* . Gawin Douglas really changes the *Platonick Hell* into the "punytion of Saulis in Purgatory": and it is observable that when the Ghost informs Hamlet of his Doom there,

Till the foul crimes done in his days of nature

Are *burnt and purg'd away* ,——

the Expression is very similar to the Bishop's: I will give you his Version as concisely as I can; "It is a nedeful thyng to suffer panis and torment—Sum in the wyndis, Sum under the watter, and in the fire uthir Sum:—thus the mony Vices—

Contrakkit in the corpis be *done away*

And purgit .——*Sixte Booke of Eneados.* Fol. p. 191.

It seems, however, “that Shakespeare *himself* in the *Tempest* hath translated some expressions of *Virgil* : witness the *O Dea certe* .” I presume we are here directed to the passage where Ferdinand says of Miranda, after hearing the Songs of Ariel,

——Most sure, the Goddess

On whom these airs attend;

and so *very small Latin* is sufficient for this formidable translation, that if it be thought any honour to our Poet, I am loth to deprive him of it; but his honour is not built on such a sandy foundation. Let us turn to a *real Translator* , and examine whether the Idea might not be fully comprehended by an English reader; *supposing* it necessarily borrowed from Virgil. Hexameters in our own language are almost forgotten; we will quote therefore this time from Stanyhurst:

O to thee, fayre Virgin, what terme may rightly be fitted?

Thy tongue, thy visage no mortal frayltie resembleth.

——*No doubt, a Godesse* !—Edit. 1583.

Gabriel Harvey desired only to be “*Epitaph'd* , the Inventor of the *English Hexameter* ,” and for a while every one would be *halting on Roman feet* ; but the ridicule of our Fellow-Collegian Hall, in one of his *Satires* , and the reasoning of Daniel, in his *Defence of Rhyme* against Campion, presently reduced us to our original Gothic.

But to come nearer the purpose, what will you say if I can shew you that Shakespeare, when, in the favourite phrase, he had a Latin Poet *in his Eye* , most assuredly made use of a Translation?

Prospero in the *Tempest* begins the Address to his attendant *Spirits* ,

Ye Elves of Hills, of standing Lakes, and Groves.

This speech Dr. Warburton rightly observes to be borrowed from Medea in Ovid: and “it proves,” says Mr. Holt, “beyond contradiction, that Shakespeare was perfectly acquainted with the Sentiments of the Ancients on the Subject of Inchantments.” The original lines are these,

Auræque, & venti, montesque, amnesque, lacusque,

Diique omnes nemorum, diique omnes noctis adeste.

It happens, however, that the translation by Arthur Golding is by no means literal, and Shakespeare hath closely followed it;

Ye Ayres and Winds; *Ye Elves of Hills* , of Brookes, of Woods alone,

Of standing Lakes , and of the Night, approche ye everych one.

I think it is unnecessary to pursue this any further; especially as more powerful arguments await us.

In the *Merchant of Venice* , the Jew, as an apology for his cruelty to Anthonio, rehearses many *Sympathies* and *Antipathies* for which *no reason can be rendered* ,

Some love not a gaping Pig——

And others when a *Bagpipe* sings i' th' nose

Cannot contain their urine for *affection* .

This incident Dr. Warburton supposes to be taken from a passage in Scaliger's *Exercitations against Cardan* , “Narrabo tibi jocosam Sympathiam Reguli Vasconis Equitis: Is dum viveret, audito *Phormingis* sono, urinam illico facere cogebatur.” “And,” proceeds the Doctor, “to make this jocular story still more ridiculous, Shakespeare, I suppose, translated *Phorminx* by *Bagpipes* .”

Here we seem fairly caught;—for Scaliger's work was never, as the term goes, *done into English* . But luckily in an old translation from the French of Peter le Loier, entitled, *A treatise of Specters, or straunge Sights, Visions and Apparitions appearing sensibly unto men* , we have this identical Story from Scaliger: and what is still more, a marginal Note gives us in all probability the very fact alluded to, as well as the word of Shakespeare, “Another Gentleman of this quality liued of late in Deuon neere Excester, who could not endure the playing on a *Bagpipe* .”

We may just add, as some observation hath been made upon it, that *Affection* in the sense of *Sympathy* was formerly *technical* ; and so used by Lord Bacon, Sir Kenelm Digby, and many other Writers.

A single word in Queen Catherine's Character of Wolsey, in *Henry the eighth* , is brought by the Doctor as another argument for the learning of Shakespeare:

——He was a man

Of an unbounded Stomach, ever ranking

Himself with Princes; one that by *Suggestion*

Ty'd all the kingdom. Simony was fair play.

His own opinion was his law, i' th' presence

He would say untruths, and be ever double

Both in his words and meaning. He was never,

But where he meant to ruin, pitiful.

His promises were, as he then was, mighty;

But his performance, as he now is, nothing.

Of his own body he was ill, and gave

The Clergy ill example.

“The word *Suggestion* ,” says the Critick, “is here used with great propriety, and *seeming* knowledge of the Latin tongue”: and he proceeds to settle the sense of it from *the late Roman writers and their glossers* . But Shakespeare's knowledge was from Holingshed, whom he follows *verbatim* :

“This Cardinal was of a great stomach, for he compted himself equal with princes, and by craftie *Suggestion* got into his hands innumerable treasure: he forced little on simonie, and was not pitifull, and stood affectionate in his own opinion: in open presence he would lie and saie untruth, and was double both in speech and meaning: he would promise much and performe little: he was vicious of his bodie, and gaue the clergie euil example.” Edit. 1587. p. 922.

Perhaps after this quotation you may not think that Sir Thomas Hanmer, who reads *Tyth'd* instead of *Ty'd all the kingdom* , deserves quite so much of Dr. Warburton's severity.—Indisputably the passage, like every other in the Speech, is intended to express the meaning of the parallel one in the Chronicle: it cannot therefore be credited that any man, when the *Original* was produced, should still chuse to defend a *cant* acceptation; and inform us, perhaps, *seriously* , that in *gaming* language, from I know not what practice, to *tye* is to *equal* ! A sense of the word, as far as I have yet found, *unknown* to our old Writers; and, if *known* , would not surely have been used in *this* place by our Author.

But let us turn from conjecture to Shakespeare's authorities. Hall, from whom the above description is copied by Holingshed, is very explicit in the demands of the Cardinal: who, having insolently told the Lord Mayor and Aldermen, “For sothe I thinke that *halfe* your substaunce were to litle,” assures them by way of comfort at the end of his harangue, that *upon an average* the *tythe* should be sufficient; “Sers, speake not to breake that thyng that is concluded, for *some* shal not paie the *tenth* parte, and *some* more.”—And again; “Thei saied, the Cardinall by Visitacions, makyng of Abbottes, probates of testamentes, graunting of faculties, licences, and other pollyngs in his Courtes legantines, had made his *threasore egall with the kynges* .” Edit. 1548. p. 138. and 143.

Skelton, in his *Why come ye not to Court* , gives us, after his rambling manner, a curious character of Wolsey:

——By and by

He will drynke us so dry

And sucke us so nye

That men shall scantly

Haue penny or halpennye

God saue hys noble grace

And graunt him a place

Endlesse to dwel

With the deuill of hel

For and he were there

We nead neuer feare

Of the feendes blacke

For I undertake

He wold so brag and crake

That he wold than make

The deuils to quake

To shudder and to shake

Lyke a fier drake

And with a cole rake

Bruse them on a brake

And binde them to a stake

And set hel on fyre

At his own desire

He is such a grym syre!—Edit. 1568.

Mr. Upton and some other Criticks have thought it very *scholar-like* in Hamlet to swear the Centinels on a *Sword* : but this is for ever met with. For instance, in the *Passus primus* of *Pierce Plowman* , Dauid in his daies dubbed knightes,

And did hem *swere on her sword* to serue truth euer.

And in *Hieronymo* , the common Butt of our Author, and the Wits of the time, says Lorenzo to Pedringano,

Swear on this cross, that what thou sayst is true—

But if I prove thee perjured and unjust,

This very *sword* , whereon thou took'st thine oath,

Shall be the worker of thy Tragedy!

We have therefore no occasion to go with Mr. Garrick as far as the French of Brantôme to illustrate this ceremony: a *Gentleman* who will be always allowed the *first Commentator* on Shakespeare, when he does not carry us beyond *himself* .

Mr. Upton, however, in the next place, produces a passage from *Henry the sixth* , whence he argues it to be very plain that our Author had not only *read* Cicero's *Offices* , but even more *critically* than many of the Editors:

——This Villain here,

Being Captain of a *Pinnace* , threatens more

Than Bargulus, the strong Illyrian Pirate.

So the *Wight* , he observes with great exultation, is named by Cicero in the Editions of Shakespeare's time, “Bargulus Illyrius latro”; tho' the modern Editors have chosen to call him Bardylis:—“and *thus* I found it in *two* MSS.”—And *thus* he might have found it in *two* Translations, before Shakespeare was born. Robert Whytinton, 1533, calls him, “Bargulus a Pirate upon the see of Illiry”; and Nicholas Grimald, about twenty years afterward, “Bargulus the Illyrian Robber.”

But it had been easy to have checked Mr. Upton's exultation, by observing that Bargulus does not appear in the *Quarto* .—Which also is the case with some fragments of Latin verses, in the different *Parts* of this *doubtful* performance.

It is scarcely worth mentioning that two or three more Latin passages, which are met with in our Author, are immediately transcribed from the Story or Chronicle before him. Thus in *Henry the fifth* , whose right to the kingdom of France is copiously demonstrated by the Archbishop:

——There is no bar

To make against your Highness' claim to France,

But this which they produce from Pharamond:

In terram Salicam mulieres ne succedant;

No Woman shall succeed in Salike land:

Which Salike land the French unjustly gloze

To be the realm of France, and Pharamond

The founder of this law and female bar.

Yet their own authors faithfully affirm

That the land Salike lies in Germany,

Between the floods of Sala and of Elve, &c.

Archbishop Chichelie, says Holingshed, “did much inueie against the surmised and false fained law Salike, which the Frenchmen alledge euer against the kings of England in barre of their just title to the crowne of France. The very words of that supposed law are these, In terram Salicam mulieres ne succedant, that is to saie, Into the Salike land let not women succeed; which the French glossers expound to be the realm of France, and that this law was made by King Pharamond: whereas yet their owne authors affirme that the land Salike is in Germanie, between the rivers of Elbe and Sala,” &c. p. 545.

It hath lately been repeated from Mr. Guthrie's *Essay upon English Tragedy* , that the *Portrait* of Macbeth's *Wife* is copied from Buchanan, “whose spirit, as well as words, is translated into the Play of Shakespeare: and it had signified nothing to have pored only on Holingshed for *Facts* .”—“Animus etiam, per se ferox, prope quotidianis conviciis uxoris (quæ omnium consiliorum ei erat conscia) stimulabatur.”—This is the whole that Buchanan says of the *Lady* ; and truly I see no more *spirit* in the Scotch than in the English Chronicler. “The wordes of the three weird Sisters also greatly encouraged him [to the Murder of Duncan], but specially his wife lay sore upon him to attempt the thing, as she that was very ambitious, brenning in unquenchable desire to beare the name of a Queene.” Edit. 1577. p. 244.

This part of Holingshed is an Abridgment of Johne Bellenden's translation of the *noble clerk* , Hector Boece, imprinted at Edinburgh, in Fol. 1541. I will give the passage as it is found there. “His wyfe impacient of lang tary (*as all wemen are*) specially quhare they ar desirus of ony purpos, gaif hym gret artation to pursew the thrid weird, that sche micht be ane quene, calland hym oft tymis febyl cowart and nocht desyrus of honouris, sen he durst not assailze the thing with manheid and curage, quhilk is offerit to hym be beniuolence of fortoun. Howbeit sindry otheris hes assailzeit sic thinges afore with maist terribyl jeopardyis, quhen they had not sic sickernes to succeid in the end of thair laubouris as he had.” p. 173.

But we can *demonstrate* that Shakespeare had not the Story from Buchanan. According to *him* , the Weïrd-Sisters salute Macbeth, “Una Angusiæ Thamum, altera Moraviæ, tertia *Regem* .”—Thane of Angus, and of Murray, &c., but according to Holingshed, immediately from Bellenden, as it stands in Shakespeare: “The first of them spake and sayde, All hayle Makbeth, Thane of Glammis,—the second of them said, Hayle Makbeth, Thane of Cawder; but the third sayde, All hayle Makbeth, that hereafter shall be *king of Scotland* .” p. 243.

1 Witch . All hail, Macbeth! Hail to thee, Thane of Glamis!

2 Witch . All hail, Macbeth! Hail to thee, Thane of Cawdor!

3 Witch . All hail, Macbeth! that shalt be King hereafter!

Here too our Poet found the equivocal Predictions, on which his Hero so fatally depended. “He had learned of certain wysards, how that he ought to take heede of Macduffe;—and surely hereupon had he put Macduffe to death, but a certaine witch, whom he had in great trust, had tolde that he should neuer be slain with *man borne of any woman* , nor vanquished till the Wood of Bernane came to the

Castell of Dunsinane." p. 244. And the Scene between Malcolm and Macduff in the fourth act is almost literally taken from the Chronicle.

Macbeth was certainly one of Shakespeare's latest Productions, and it might possibly have been suggested to him by a little performance on the same subject at Oxford, before King James, 1605. I will transcribe my notice of it from Wake's *Rex Platonicus* : "Fabulæ ansam dedit antiqua de Regia prosapia historiola apud Scoto-Britannos celebrata, quæ narrat tres olim Sibyllas occurrisse duobus Scotiæ proceribus, Macbetho & Banchoni, & illum prædixisse Regem futurum, sed Regem nullum geniturum; hunc Regem non futurum, sed Reges geniturum multos. Vaticinii veritatem rerum eventus comprobavit. Banchonis enim e stirpe Potentissimus Jacobus oriundus." p. 29.

A stronger argument hath been brought from the Plot of *Hamlet* . Dr. Grey and Mr. Whalley assure us that for *this* Shakespeare *must* have read *Saxo Grammaticus* in Latin, for no translation hath been made into any modern Language. But the truth is, he did not take it from *Saxo* at all; a Novel called the *Hystorie of Hamblet* was his original: a fragment of which, in *black Letter* , I have been favoured with by a very curious and intelligent Gentleman, to whom the lovers of Shakespeare will some time or other owe great obligations.

It hath indeed been said that, "if *such an history exists* , it is almost impossible that any poet unacquainted with the Latin language (supposing his perceptive faculties to have been ever so acute) could have caught the characteristical madness of Hamlet, described by *Saxo Grammaticus* , so happily as it is delineated by Shakespeare."

Very luckily, our Fragment gives us a part of Hamlet's Speech to his *Mother* , which sufficiently replies to this observation:—"It was not without cause, and juste occasion, that my gestures, countenances, and words seeme to proceed from a madman, and that I desire to haue all men esteeme mee wholy depriued of sence and, reasonable understanding, bycause I am well assured that he that hath made no conscience to kill his owne brother (accustomed to murthers, and allured with desire of gouernement without controll in his treasons) will not spare to saue himselfe with the like crueltie, in the blood and flesh of the loyns of his brother, by him massacred: and therefore it is better for me to fayne madnesse then to use my right sences as nature hath bestowed them upon me. The bright shining clearnes therof I am forced to hide vnder this shadow of dissimulation, as the sun doth hir beams vnder some great cloud, when the wether in summer time ouercasteth: the face of a mad man serueth to couer my gallant countenance, and the gestures of a fool are fit for me, to the end that, guiding my self wisely therin, I may preserue my life for the Danes and the memory of my late deceased father, for that the desire of reuenging his death is so ingrauen in my heart, that if I dye not shortly, I hope to take such and so great vengeance, that these Countryes shall for euer speake thereof. Neuerthelesse I must stay the time, meanes, and occasion, lest by making ouer great hast I be now the cause of mine owne sodaine ruine and ouerthrow, and by that meanes end, before I beginne to effect my hearts desire: hee that hath to doe with a wicked, disloyall, cruell, and discourteous man, must vse craft, and politike inuentions, such as a fine witte can best imagine, not to discouer his interprise: for seeing that by force I cannot effect my desire, reason alloweth me by dissimulation, subtiltie, and secret practises to proceed therein."

But to put the matter out of all question, my communicative Friend above-mentioned, Mr. Capell (for why should I not give myself the credit of his name?), hath been fortunate enough to procure from the Collection of the Duke of Newcastle a *complete* Copy of the *Hystorie of Hamblet* , which proves to be a translation from the French of Belleforest; and he tells me that "all the chief incidents of the Play, and all the capital Characters, are there in *embryo* , after a rude and barbarous manner: sentiments indeed there are none that Shakespeare could borrow; nor any expression but *one* , which is, where Hamlet kills Polonius behind the arras: in doing which he is made to cry out, as in the Play, '*a rat, a rat!* ' "—So much for *Saxo Grammaticus* !

It is scarcely conceivable how industriously the puritanical Zeal of the last age exerted itself in destroying, amongst better things, the innocent amusements of the former. Numberless *Tales* and *Poems* are alluded to in old Books, which are now perhaps no where to be found. Mr. Capell informs me (and he is in these matters the most able of all men to give information) that our Author appears to have been beholden to some Novels which he hath yet only seen in French or Italian: but he adds, "to say they are not in some English dress, prosaic or metrical, and perhaps with circumstances nearer to his stories, is what I will not take upon me to do: nor indeed is it what I believe; but rather the contrary, and that time and accident will bring some of them to light, if not all."——

W. Painter, at the conclusion of the second *Tome* of his *Palace of Pleasure* , 1567, *advertises* the Reader, "bicause sodaynly (contrary to expectation) this Volume is risen to greater heape of leaues, I doe omit for this present time *sundry Nouels* of mery deuise, reseruing the same to be joyned with the rest of an other part, wherein shall succeede the remnant of Bandello, specially sutch (suffrable) as the learned French man François de Belleforrest hath selected, and the choysest done in the Italian. Some also out of Erizzo, Ser Giouanni Florentino, Parabosco, Cynthio, Straparole, Sansouino, and the best liked out of the Queene of Nauarre, and other Authors. Take these in good part, with those that haue and shall come forth."—But I am not able to find that a *third Tome* was ever published: and it is very probable that the Interest of his Booksellers, and more especially the prevailing Mode of the time, might lead him afterward to print his *sundry Novels* separately. If this were the case, it is no wonder that such *fugitive Pieces* are recovered with difficulty; when the *two Tomes* , which Tom. Rawlinson would have called *justa Volumina* , are almost annihilated. Mr. Ames, who searched after books of this sort with the utmost avidity, most certainly had not seen them when he published his *Typographical Antiquities* ; as appears from his blunders about them: and possibly I myself might have remained in the same predicament, had I not been favoured with a Copy by my generous Friend, Mr. Lort.

Mr. Colman, in the Preface to his elegant Translation of Terence, hath offered some arguments for the Learning of Shakespeare, which have been retailed with much confidence, since the appearance of Mr. Johnson's Edition.

"Besides the resemblance of particular passages scattered up and down in different plays, it is well known that the *Comedy of Errors* is in great measure founded on the *Menæchmi* of Plautus; but I do not recollect ever to have seen it observed that the disguise of the *Pedant* in the *Taming of the Shrew* , and his assuming the name and character of *Vincentio* , seem to be evidently taken from the disguise of the *Sycophanta* in the *Trinummus* of the said Author; and there is a quotation from the *Eunuch* of Terence also, so familiarly introduced into the Dialogue of the *Taming of the Shrew* , that I think it puts the question of Shakespeare's having read the Roman Comick Poets in the *original* language out of all doubt,

Redime te captum, quam queas, minimo."

With respect to *resemblances* , I shall not trouble you any further.—That the *Comedy of Errors* is founded on the *Menæchmi* , it is notorious: nor is it less so, that a Translation of it by W. W., perhaps William Warner, the Author of *Albion's England* , was extant in the time of Shakespeare; tho' Mr. Upton, and some other advocates for his learning, have cautiously dropt the mention of it. Besides this (if indeed it were different), in the *Gesta Grayorum* , the Christmas Revels of the Gray's-Inn Gentlemen, 1594, “a *Comedy of Errors* like to Plautus his *Menechmus* was played by the Players.” And the same hath been suspected to be the Subject of the *goodlie Comedie of Plautus* acted at Greenwich before the King and Queen in 1520; as we learn from Hall and Holingshed:—Riccoboni highly compliments the English on opening their stage so well; but unfortunately Cavendish, in his *Life of Wolsey* , calls it an *excellent Interlude in Latine* . About the same time it was exhibited in German at Nuremburgh, by the celebrated *Hanssach* , the *Shoemaker* .

“But a character in the *Taming of the Shrew* is borrowed from the *Trinummus* , and no translation of *that* was extant.”

Mr. Colman indeed hath been better employ'd: but if he had met with an old Comedy, called *Supposes* , translated from Ariosto by George Gascoigne, he certainly would not have appealed to Plautus. Thence Shakespeare borrowed this part of the Plot (as well as some of the phraseology), though Theobald pronounces it his own invention: there likewise he found the quaint name of *Petruchio* . My young Master and his Man exchange habits and characters, and persuade a Scenæse, as he is called, to personate the Father, exactly as in the *Taming of the Shrew* , by the pretended danger of his coming from Sienna to Ferrara, contrary to the order of the government.

Still, Shakespeare quotes a line from the *Eunuch* of Terence: by memory too, and, what is more, “purposely alters it, in order to bring the sense within the compass of one line.”—This remark was previous to Mr. Johnson's; or indisputably it would not have been made at all.—“Our Authour had this line from Lilly; which I mention that it may not be brought as an argument of his learning.”

But how, cries an unprovoked Antagonist, can you take upon you to say that he had it from Lilly, and not from Terence? I will answer for Mr. Johnson, who is above answering for himself.—Because it is quoted as it appears in the *Grammarian* , and not as it appears in the *Poet* .—And thus we have done with the *purposed* alteration. Udall likewise in his *Floures for Latine speakyng, gathered oute of Terence* , 1560, reduces the passage to a single line, and subjoins a Translation.

We have hitherto supposed Shakespeare the Author of the *Taming of the Shrew* , but his property in it is extremely disputable. I will give you my opinion, and the reasons on which it is founded. I suppose then the present Play not *originally* the work of Shakespeare, but restored by him to the Stage, with the whole Induction of the Tinker, and some other occasional improvements; especially in the Character of Petruchio. It is very obvious that the *Induction* and the *Play* were either the works of different hands, or written at a great interval of time: the former is in our Author's *best* manner, and the greater part of the *latter* in his *worst* , or even below it. Dr. Warburton declares it to be *certainly* spurious: and without doubt, *supposing* it to have been written by Shakespeare, it must have been one of his *earliest* productions; yet it is not mentioned in the List of his Works by Meres in 1598.

I have met with a facetious piece of Sir John Harrington, printed in 1596 (and possibly there may be an earlier Edition), called, *The Metamorphosis of Ajax* , where I suspect an allusion to the old Play: “Read the *booke* of *Taming a Shrew* , which hath made a number of us so perfect, that *now* every one can rule a Shrew in our Countrey, save he that hath hir.”—I am aware, a *modern* Linguist may object that the word *Book* does not at present seem *dramatick* , but it was once almost *technically* so: Gosson in his *Schoole of Abuse, contayning a pleasaunt inuective against Poets, Pipers, Players, Jesters, and such like Caterpillars of a Common-wealth* , 1579, mentions “twoo prose *Bookes* plaied at the Belsauage”; and Hearne tells us, in a Note at the end of *William of Worcester* , that he had seen “a MS. in the nature of a *Play* or *Interlude* , intitled, the *Booke* of Sir *Thomas Moore* .”

And in fact there is such an old *anonymous* Play in Mr. Pope's List: “A pleasant conceited History, called, *The Taming of a Shrew* —sundry times acted by the Earl of Pembroke his Servants.” Which seems to have been republished by the Remains of that Company in 1607, when Shakespeare's copy appeared at the Black-Friars or the Globe.—Nor let this seem derogatory from the character of our Poet. There is no reason to believe that he wanted to claim the Play as his own; it was not even printed 'till some years after his death: but he merely revived it on his Stage as a *Manager* .—Ravenscroft assures us that this was really the case with *Titus Andronicus* ; which, it may be observed, hath not Shakespeare's name on the Title-page of the only Edition published in his life-time. Indeed, from every internal mark, I have not the least doubt but this *horrible* Piece was originally written by the Author of the *Lines* thrown into the mouth of the *Player* in *Hamlet* , and of the Tragedy of *Locrine* : which likewise, from some assistance perhaps given to his Friend, hath been unjustly and ignorantly charged upon Shakespeare.

But the *sheet-anchor* holds fast: Shakespeare himself hath left some Translations from Ovid. The Epistles, says One, of Paris and Helen give a sufficient proof of his acquaintance with *that* poet; and it may be concluded, says Another, that he was a competent judge of *other* Authors who wrote in the same language.

This hath been the universal cry, from Mr. Pope himself to the Criticks of yesterday. Possibly, however, the Gentlemen will hesitate a moment, if we tell them that Shakespeare was *not* the Author of these Translations. Let them turn to a forgotten book, by Thomas Heywood, called *Britaines Troy* , printed by W. Jaggard in 1609, Fol. and they will find these identical Epistles, “which being so pertinent to our Historie,” says Heywood, “*I* thought necessarie to translate.”—How then came they ascribed to Shakespeare? We will tell them that likewise. The same voluminous Writer published an *Apology for Actors* , 4to. 1612, and in an Appendix directed to his new Printer, Nic. Okes, he accuses his old One, Jaggard, of “taking the two Epistles of *Paris to Helen* and *Helen to Paris* , and printing them in a less volume and under the name of *Another* :—but *he* was much offended with Master Jaggard, that, altogether unknowne to him, he had presumed to make so bold with his Name.” In the same work of Heywood are all the other Translations which have been printed in the modern Editions of the Poems of Shakespeare.

You now hope for land: We have seen through little matters, but what must be done with a whole book?—In 1751 was reprinted “A compendious or briefe examination of certayne ordinary complaints of diuers of our Countrymen in these our days: which although they are in some parte unjust and friuolous, yet are they all by way of Dialogue throughly debated and discussed by William Shakespeare, Gentleman.” 8vo.

This extraordinary piece was originally published in 4to. 1581, and dedicated by the Author, “To the most vertuous and learned Lady, his most deare and soveraigne Princesse, Elizabeth; being inforced by her Majesties late and singular clemency in pardoning certayne his unduetifull misdemeanour.” And by the modern Editors, to the late King; as “a Treatise composed by the most extensive and fertile Genius that ever any age or nation produced.”

Here we join issue with the Writers of that excellent tho' very unequal work, the

Biographia Britannica : “If,” say they, “this piece could be written by our Poet, it would be absolutely decisive in the dispute about his learning; for many quotations appear in it from the Greek and Latin Classicks.”

The concurring circumstances of the *Name* and the *Misdemeanor* , which is supposed to be the old Story of *Deer-stealing* , seem fairly to challenge our Poet for the Author: but they hesitate.—His claim may appear to be confuted by the date 1581, when Shakespeare was only *Seventeen* , and the *long* experience which the Writer talks of.—But I will not keep you in suspense: the book was *not* written by Shakespeare.

Strype, in his *Annals* , calls the Author some *learned Man* , and this gave me the first suspicion. I knew very well that honest John (to use the language of Sir Thomas Bodley) did not waste his time with such *baggage books* as *Plays* and *Poems* ; yet I must suppose that he had heard of the name of Shakespeare. After a while I met with the original Edition. Here in the Title-page, and at the end of the Dedication, appear only the Initials, W. S. Gent., and presently I was informed by Anthony Wood, that the book in question was written, not by William Shakespeare, but by William Stafford, Gentleman: which at once accounted for the *Misdemeanour* in the Dedication. For Stafford had been concerned at that time, and was indeed afterward, as Camden and the other Annalists inform us, with some of the conspirators against Elizabeth; which he properly calls his *unduetifull* behaviour.

I hope by this time that any One open to conviction may be nearly satisfied; and I will promise to give you on this head very little more trouble.

The justly celebrated Mr. Warton hath favoured us, in his *Life of Dr. Bathurst* , with some *hearsay* particulars concerning Shakespeare from the papers of Aubrey, which had been in the hands of Wood; and I ought not to suppress them, as the *last* seems to make against my doctrine. They came originally, I find, on consulting the MS., from one Mr. Beeston: and I am sure Mr. Warton, whom I have the honour to call my Friend, and an Associate in the question, will be in no pain about their credit.

“William Shakespeare's Father was a Butcher,—while he was a Boy he exercised his Father's trade, but when he killed a Calf, he would do it in a high stile, and make a speech. This William being inclined *naturally* to Poetry and Acting, came to London, I guess, about *eighteen* , and was an Actor in one of the

Playhouses, and did act *exceedingly well* . He began *early* to make Essays in dramatique Poetry.—The humour of the Constable in the *Midsummer Night's Dream* he happened to take at Crendon in Bucks.—I think I have been told that he left near three hundred pounds to a *Sister* .—*He understood Latin pretty well, for he had been in his younger yeares a Schoolmaster in the Country.* ”

I will be short in my animadversions; and take them in their order.

The account of the *Trade* of the Family is not only contrary to all other Tradition, but, as it may seem, to the instrument from the Herald's office, so frequently reprinted.—Shakespeare most certainly went to London, and commenced Actor thro' necessity, not natural inclination.—Nor have we any reason to suppose that he did act *exceedingly well* . Rowe tells us from the information of Betterton, who was inquisitive into this point, and had very early opportunities of Inquiry from Sir W. Davenant, that he was no *extraordinary Actor* ; and that the top of his performance was the Ghost in his own *Hamlet* . Yet this *Chef d'Oeuvre* did not please: I will give you an original stroke at it. Dr. Lodge, who was for ever pestering the town with Pamphlets, published in the year 1596 *Wits miserie, and the Worlds madnesse, discovering the Devils incarnat of this Age.* 4to. One of these Devils is *Hate-virtue* , or *Sorrow for another mans good successe* , who, says the Doctor, is “*a foule lubber* , and looks as pale as the Visard of the Ghost, which cried so miserably at the Theatre, like an Oister-wife, *Hamlet revenge* .” Thus you see Mr. Holt's supposed *proof* , in the Appendix to the late Edition, that *Hamlet* was written after 1597, or perhaps 1602, will by no means hold good; whatever might be the case of the particular passage on which it is founded.

Nor does it appear that Shakespeare did begin *early* to make *Essays in Dramatique Poetry* : the *Arraignment of Paris* , 1584, which hath so often been ascribed to him on the credit of Kirkman and Winstanley, was written by George Peele; and Shakespeare is not met with, even as an Assistant, 'till at least seven years afterward.—Nash, in his Epistle to the Gentlemen Students of both Universities, prefixed to Greene's *Arcadia* , 4to. *black Letter* , recommends his Friend, Peele, “as the chiefe supporter of pleasance now living, the Atlas of Poetrie, and *primus Verborum Artifex* : whose first increase, the *Arraignment of Paris* , might plead to their opinions his pregnant dexteritie of wit, and manifold varietie of inuention.”

In the next place, unfortunately, there is neither such a Character as a Constable in the *Midsummer Night's Dream* : nor was the *three hundred pounds* Legacy to a Sister, but a Daughter.

And to close the whole, it is not possible, according to Aubrey himself, that Shakespeare could have been some *years a Schoolmaster in the Country* : on which circumstance only the supposition of his learning is professedly founded. He was not surely *very* young, when he was employed to *kill Calves* , and he commenced Player about *Eighteen* !—The truth is that he left his Father, for a Wife, a year sooner; and had at least two Children born at Stratford before he retired from thence to London. It is therefore sufficiently clear that poor Anthony had too much reason for his character of Aubrey: You will find it in his own Account of his Life, published by Hearne, which I would earnestly recommend to any Hypochondriack;

“A pretender to Antiquities, roving, magotie-headed, and sometimes little better than crased: and being exceedingly credulous, would stuff his many Letters sent to A.W. with *folliries* and misinformations.” p. 577.

Thus much for the Learning of Shakespeare with respect to the ancient languages: indulge me with an observation or two on his supposed knowledge of the modern ones, and I will promise to release you.

“It is *evident* ” we have been told, “that he was not unacquainted with the Italian”: but let us inquire into the *Evidence* .

Certainly some Italian words and phrases appear in the Works of Shakespeare; yet if we had nothing else to observe, their Orthography might lead us to suspect them to be not of the Writer's importation. But we can go further, and prove this.

When Pistol “cheers up himself with ends of verse,” he is only a copy of Hanniball Gonsaga, who ranted on yielding himself a Prisoner to an English Captain in the Low Countries, as you may read in an old Collection of Tales, called *Wits, Fits, and Fancies* ,

Si Fortuna me tormenta,

Il speranza me contenta.

And Sir Richard Hawkins, in his Voyage to the South-Sea, 1593, throws out the same jingling Distich on the loss of his Pinnace.

“Master Page, sit; good Master Page, sit; *Proface.* What you want in meat, we'll have in drink,” says Justice Shallow's *Fac totum* , Davy, in the 2d Part of *Henry the fourth* .

Proface , Sir Thomas Hanmer observes to be Italian, from *profaccia, much good may it do you* . Mr. Johnson rather thinks it a mistake for *perforce* . Sir Thomas however is right; yet it is no argument for his Author's Italian knowledge.

Old Heywood, the Epigrammatist, addressed his Readers long before,

Readers, reade this thus: for Preface, *Proface* ,

Much good do it you, the poore repast here, &c.—*Woorkes.* Lond. 4to. 1562.

And Dekker in his Play, *If it be not good, the Diuel is in it* (which is certainly true, for it is full of Devils), makes Shackle-soule, in the character of Friar Rush, tempt his Brethren with “choice of dishes,”

To which *proface* ; with blythe lookes sit yee.

Nor hath it escaped the quibbling manner of the *Water-poet* , in the title of a Poem prefixed to his *Praise of Hempseed* : “A Preamble, Preatrot, Preagallop, Preapace, or Preface; and *Proface* , my Masters, if your Stomacks serve.”

But the Editors are not contented without coining Italian. “*Rivo, says the Drunkard* ,” is an Expression of the *madcap* Prince of Wales; which Sir Thomas Hanmer corrects to *Ribi, Drink away* , or *again* , as it should rather be translated. Dr. Warburton accedes to this; and Mr. Johnson hath admitted it into his Text; but with an observation, that *Rivo* might possibly be the cant of English Taverns. And so indeed it was: it occurs frequently in Marston. Take a quotation from his Comedy of *What you will* , 1607:

Musicke, Tobacco, Sacke, and Sleepe,

The Tide of Sorrow backward keep:

If thou art sad at others fate,

Rivo drink deep, give care the mate.

In *Love's Labour Lost* , Boyet calls Don Armado,

——A Spaniard that keeps here in Court,

A Phantasme, a *Monarcho* .——

Here too Sir Thomas is willing to palm Italian upon us. We should read, it seems, *Mammuccio* , a Mammet, or Puppet: Ital. *Mammuccia* . But the allusion is to a fantastical *Character* of the time.—“Popular applause,” says Meres, “dooth nourish some, neither do they gape after any other thing, but vaine praise and glorie,—as in our age Peter Shakerlye of Paules, and Monarcho that liued about the Court.” p. 178.

I fancy you will be satisfied with one more instance.

“*Baccare* , You are marvellous forward,” quoth Gremio to Petruchio in the *Taming of the Shrew* .

“But not so *forward* ,” says Mr. Theobald, “as our Editors are *indolent* . This is a stupid corruption of the press, that none of them have dived into. We must read *Baccalare* , as Mr. Warburton acutely observed to me, by which the Italians mean, Thou ignorant, presumptuous Man.”—“Properly indeed,” adds Mr. Heath, “a *graduated* Scholar, but ironically and sarcastically a *pretender* to Scholarship.”

This is admitted by the Editors and Criticks of every Denomination. Yet the word is neither wrong, nor Italian: it was an old proverbial one, used frequently by John Heywood; who hath made, what he pleases to call, *Epigrams* upon it.

Take two of them, such as they are,

Backare , quoth Mortimer to his Sow:

Went that Sow *backe* at that biddyng trowe you?

Backare , quoth Mortimer to his sow: se

Mortimers sow speakth as good *latin* as he.

Howel takes this from Heywood, in his *Old Sawes and Adages* : and Philpot introduces it into the Proverbs collected by Camden.

We have but few observations concerning Shakespeare's knowledge of the Spanish tongue. Dr. Grey indeed is willing to suppose that the plot of *Romeo and Juliet* may be borrowed from a Comedy of Lopes de Vega. But the Spaniard, who was certainly acquainted with Bandello, hath not only changed the Catastrophe, but the names of the Characters. Neither Romeo nor Juliet, neither Montague nor Capulet, appears in this performance: and how came they to the knowledge of Shakespeare?—Nothing is more certain than that he chiefly followed the Translation by Painter from the French of Boisteau, and hence arise the Deviations from Bandello's original Italian. It seems, however, from a passage in Ames's *Typographical Antiquities* , that Painter was not the only Translator of this popular Story: and it is possible, therefore, that Shakespeare might have other assistance.

In the Induction to the *Taming of the Shrew* , the Tinker attempts to talk Spanish: and *consequently* the Author himself was acquainted with it.

Paucas pallabris , let the World slide, *Sessa* .

But this is a burlesque on *Hieronymo* ; the piece of Bombast that I have mentioned to you before:

What new device have they devised, trow?

Pocas pallabras , &c.——

Mr. Whalley tells us, “the Author of this piece hath the happiness to be at this time unknown, the remembrance of him having perished with himself”: Philips and others ascribe it to one William Smith: but I take this opportunity of informing him that it was written by Thomas Kyd; if he will accept the authority of his Contemporary, Heywood.

More hath been said concerning Shakespeare's acquaintance with the French language. In the Play of *Henry the fifth* , we have a whole Scene in it, and in other places it occurs familiarly in the Dialogue.

We may observe in general, that the early Editions have not half the quantity; and every sentence, or rather every word, most ridiculously blundered. These, for several reasons, could not possibly be published by the Author; and it is extremely probable that the French ribaldry was at first inserted by a different hand, as the many additions most certainly were after he had left the Stage.—Indeed, every friend to his memory will not easily believe that he was acquainted with the Scene between Catharine and the old Gentlewoman; or surely he would not have admitted such obscenity and nonsense.

Mr. Hawkins, in the Appendix to Mr. Johnson's Edition, hath an ingenious observation to prove that Shakespeare, supposing the French to be his, had very little knowledge of the language.

“Est-il impossible d'eschapper la force de ton *Bras* ?” says a Frenchman. —“*Brass* , cur?” replies Pistol.

“Almost any one knows that the French word *Bras* is pronounced *Brau* ; and what resemblance of sound does this bear to *Brass* ?”

Mr. Johnson makes a doubt whether the pronunciation of the French language may not be changed since Shakespeare's time; “if not,” says he, “it may be suspected that some other man wrote the French scenes”: but this does not appear to be the case, at least in this termination, from the rules of the Grammarians, or the practice of the Poets. I am certain of the former from the *French Alphabet* of De la Mothe, and the *Orthoepia Gallica* of John Eliot; and of the latter from the Rhymes of Marot, Ronsard, and Du Bartas.—Connections of this kind were very common. Shakespeare himself assisted Ben. Jonson in his *Sejanus* , as it was originally written; and Fletcher in his *Two noble Kinsmen* .

But what if the French scene were occasionally introduced into every Play on this Subject? and perhaps there were more than one before our Poet's.—In *Pierce Penilesse his Supplication to the Diuell* , 4to. 1592 (which, it seems, from the Epistle to the Printer, was not the first Edition), the Author, Nash, exclaims, “What a glorious thing it is to have *Henry the fifth* represented on the Stage leading the French King prisoner, and forcing both him and the Dolphin to sweare fealty!”—And it appears from the Jests of the famous Comedian, Tarlton, 4to. 1611, that he had been particularly celebrated in the Part of the

Clown in *Henry the fifth* ; but no such Character exists in the Play of Shakespeare.—*Henry the sixth* hath ever been doubted; and a passage in the above-quoted piece of Nash may give us reason to believe it was previous to our Author. “How would it have joyed braue Talbot (the terror of the French) to thinke that after he had lyen two hundred yeare in his Toomb, he should triumph again on the Stage; and haue his bones new embalmed with the teares of ten thousand spectators at least (at severall times) who, in the Tragedian that represents his person, imagine they behold him fresh bleeding.”—I have no doubt but *Henry the sixth* had the same Author with *Edward the third* , which hath been recovered to the world in Mr. Capell's *Prolusions* .

It hath been observed that the Giant of Rabelais is sometimes alluded to by Shakespeare: and in *his* time no translation was extant.—But the Story was in every one's hand.

In a Letter by one Laneham, or Langham, for the name is written differently, concerning the Entertainment at Killingwoorth Castle, printed 1575, we have a list of the vulgar Romances of the age, “King Arthurz book, Huon of Burdeaus, Friar Rous, Howleglass, and Gargantua.” Meres mentions him as equally hurtful to young minds with the *Four Sons of Aymon* , and the *Seven Champions* . And John Taylor hath him likewise in his catalogue of *Authors* , prefixed to Sir *Gregory Nonsence* .

But to come to a conclusion, I will give you an irrefragable argument that Shakespeare did *not* understand *two* very common words in the French and Latin languages.

According to the Articles of agreement between the Conqueror Henry and the King of France, the latter was to stile the former (in the corrected French of the modern Editions) “Nostre *tres cher* filz Henry Roy d'Angleterre; and in Latin, *Præclarissimus* Filius, &c.” “What,” says Dr. Warburton, “is *tres cher* in French *præclarissimus* in Latin! we should read *præcarissimus* .”—This appears to be exceedingly true; but how came the blunder? It is a typographical one in Holingshed, which Shakespeare copied; but must indisputably have corrected, had he been acquainted with the languages.—“Our said Father, during his life, shall name, call, and write us in French in this maner: Nostre *tres chier* filz, Henry Roy d'Engleterre—and in Latine in this maner: *Præclarissimus* filius noster.” Edit. 1587, p. 574.

To corroborate this instance, let me observe to you, though it be nothing further to the purpose, that another error of the same kind hath been the source of a mistake in an historical passage of our Author; which hath ridiculously troubled the Criticks.

Richard the third harangues his army before the Battle of Bosworth:

Remember whom ye are to cope withal,

A sort of vagabonds, of rascals, runaways—

And who doth lead them but a paltry fellow,

Long kept in *Britaine* at *our Mother's* cost,

A milksop, &c.—

“*Our* Mother,” Mr. Theobald perceives to be wrong, and Henry was somewhere secreted on the *Continent* : he reads therefore, and all the Editors after him,

Long kept in *Bretagne* at *his* mother's cost.

But give me leave to transcribe a few more lines from Holingshed, and you will find at once that Shakespeare had been there before me:—“Ye see further, how a companie of traitors, theeves, outlaws, and runnagates be aiders and partakers of his feat and enterprise.—And to begin with the erle of Richmond, captaine of this rebellion, he is a Welsh milksop—brought up by *my Moother's* meanes and mine, like a captive in a close cage, in the court of Francis duke of *Britaine* .” p. 756.

Holingshed copies this *verbatim* from his brother chronicler Hall, Edit. 1548, fol. 54; but his Printer hath given us by accident the word *Moother* instead of *Brother* ; as it is in the Original, and ought to be in Shakespeare.

I hope, my good Friend, you have by this time acquitted our great Poet of all piratical depredations on the Ancients, and are ready to receive my *Conclusion* . —He remembered perhaps enough of his *school-boy* learning to put the *Hig* , *hag* , *hog* , into the mouth of Sir Hugh Evans; and might pick up in the Writers of the time, or the course of his conversation, a familiar phrase or two of French or Italian: but his *Studies* were most demonstratively confined to *Nature* and *his own Language* .

In the course of this disquisition, you have often smiled at “all such reading as was never read”: and possibly I may have indulged it too far: but it is the reading necessary for a Comment on Shakespeare. Those who apply solely to the Ancients for this purpose, may with equal wisdom study the Talmud for an Exposition of Tristram Shandy. Nothing but an intimate acquaintance with the Writers of the time, who are frequently of no other value, can point out his allusions, and ascertain his Phraseology. The Reformers of his Text are for ever equally positive, and equally wrong. The Cant of the Age, a provincial Expression, an obscure Proverb, an obsolete Custom, a Hint at a Person or a Fact no longer remembered, hath continually defeated the best of our *Guessers* : You must not suppose me to speak at random, when I assure you that, from some forgotten book or other, I can demonstrate this to you in many hundred Places; and I almost wish that I had not been persuaded into a different Employment.

Tho' I have as much of the *Natale Solum* about me as any man whatsoever; yet, I own, the *Primrose Path* is still more pleasing than the *Fosse* or the *Watling Street* :

Age cannot wither it, nor custom stale

It's infinite variety.——

And when I am fairly rid of the Dust of topographical Antiquity, which hath continued much longer about me than I expected, you may very probably be troubled again with the ever fruitful Subject of Shakespeare and his Commentators.

<<span id="filepos0037182720"> a>Maurice Morgann: An Essay on the Dramatic Character of Sir John Falstaff. 1777.

<<span id="filepos0037183062"> a>Preface.

The following sheets were written in consequence of a friendly conversation, turning by some chance upon the Character of Falstaff, wherein the Writer, maintaining, contrary to the general Opinion, that this Character was not intended to be shewn as a Coward, he was challenged to deliver and support that Opinion from the Press, with an engagement, now he fears forgotten, for it was three years ago, that he should be answered thro' the same channel: Thus stimulated, these papers were almost wholly written in a very short time, but not without those attentions, whether successful or not, which seemed necessary to carry them beyond the Press into the hands of the Public. From the influence of the foregoing circumstances it is, that the Writer has generally assumed rather the character and tone of an Advocate than of an Inquirer;—though if he had not first *inquired* and been *convinced* , he should never have attempted to have amused either himself or others with the subject.—The impulse of the occasion, however, being passed, the papers were thrown by, and almost forgotten: But having been looked into of late by some friends, who, observing that the Writer had not enlarged so far for the sake of Falstaff alone, but that the Argument was made subservient to Critical amusement, persuaded him to revise and convey it to the Press. This has been accordingly done, though he fears something too hastily, as he found it proper to add, while the papers were in the course of printing, some considerations on the *Whole* Character of Falstaff; which ought to have been accompanied by a slight reform of a few preceding passages, which may seem, in consequence of this addition, to contain too favourable a representation of his Morals.

The vindication of Falstaff's Courage is truly no otherwise the object than some old fantastic Oak, or grotesque Rock, may be the object of a morning's ride; yet being proposed as such, may serve to limit the distance, and shape the course: The real object is Exercise, and the Delight which a rich, beautiful, picturesque, and perhaps unknown Country, may excite from every side. Such an Exercise may admit of some little excursion, keeping however the Road in view; but seems to exclude every appearance of labour and of toil.—Under the impression of such Feelings, the Writer has endeavoured to preserve to his Text a certain lightness of air, and chearfulness of tone; but is sensible, however, that the manner of discussion does not *every where* , particularly near the commencement, sufficiently correspond with his design.—If the Book shall be fortunate enough to obtain another Impression, a separation may be made; and such of the heavier parts as cannot be wholly dispensed with, sink to their more proper station,—a Note.

He is fearful likewise that he may have erred in the other extreme; and that having thought himself intitled, even in argument, to a certain degree of playful discussion, may have pushed it, in a few places, even to levity. This error might be yet more easily reformed than the other.—The Book is perhaps, as it stands, too bulky for the subject; but if the Reader knew how many pressing considerations, as it grew into size, the Author resisted, which yet seemed intitled to be heard, he would the more readily excuse him.

The whole is a mere Experiment, and the Writer considers it as such: It may have the advantages, but it is likewise attended with all the difficulties and dangers, of *Novelty* .

<<span id="filepos0037187365"> a>On The Dramatic Character Of Sir John Falstaff.

The ideas which I have formed concerning the Courage and Military Character of the Dramatic Sir *John Falstaff* are so different from those which I find generally to prevail in the world, that I shall take the liberty of stating my sentiments on the subject; in hope that some person, as unengaged as myself, will either correct and reform my error in this respect; or, joining himself to my opinion, redeem me from, what I may call, the reproach of singularity.

I am to avow, then, that I do not clearly discern that Sir *John Falstaff* deserves to bear the character so generally given him of an absolute Coward; or, in other words, that I do not conceive *Shakespeare* ever meant to make Cowardice an essential part of his constitution.

I know how universally the contrary opinion prevails; and I know what respect and deference are due to the public voice. But if to the avowal of this singularity I add all the reasons that have led me to it, and acknowledge myself to be wholly in the judgment of the public, I shall hope to avoid the censure of too much forwardness or indecorum.

It must, in the first place, be admitted that the appearances in this case are singularly strong and striking; and so they had need be, to become the ground of so general a censure. We see this extraordinary Character, almost in the first moment of our acquaintance with him, involved in circumstances of apparent dishonour; and we hear him familiarly called *Coward* by his most intimate companions. We see him, on occasion of the robbery at *Gads-Hill* , in the very act of running away from the Prince and *Poins* ; and we behold him, on another of more honourable obligation, in open day light, in battle, and acting in his profession as a Soldier, escaping from *Douglas* even out of the world as it were; counterfeiting death, and deserting his very existence; and we find him, on the former occasion, betrayed into those *lies* and *braggadocioes* which are the usual concomitants of Cowardice in Military men, and pretenders to valour. These are not only in themselves strong circumstances, but they are moreover thrust forward, prest upon our notice as the subject of our mirth, as the great business of the scene: No wonder, therefore, that the word should go forth that *Falstaff* exhibited as a character of Cowardice and dishonour.

What there is to the contrary of this, it is my business to discover. Much, I think, will presently appear; but it lies so dispersed, is so latent, and so purposely obscured, that the reader must have some patience whilst I collect it into one body, and make it the object of a steady and regular contemplation.

But what have we to do, may my readers exclaim, with principles *so latent* , *so obscured* ? In Dramatic composition the *Impression* is the *Fact* ; and the Writer, who, meaning to impress one thing, has impressed another, is unworthy of observation.

It is a very unpleasant thing to have, in the first setting out, so many and so strong prejudices to contend with. All that one can do in such case, is, to pray the reader to have a little patience in the commencement; and to reserve his censure, if it must pass, for the conclusion. Under his gracious allowance, therefore, I presume to declare it as my opinion, that Cowardice *is not* the *Impression* which the *whole* character of *Falstaff* is calculated to make on the minds of an unprejudiced audience; tho' there be, I confess, a great deal of something in the *composition* likely enough to puzzle, and consequently to mislead the Understanding.—The reader will perceive that I distinguish between *mental Impressions* and the *Understanding* .—I wish to avoid every thing that looks like subtlety and refinement; but this is a distinction which we all comprehend.—There are none of us unconscious of certain feelings or sensations of mind which do not seem to have passed thro' the Understanding; the effects, I suppose, of some secret influences from without, acting upon a certain mental sense, and producing feelings and passions in just correspondence to the force and variety of those influences on the one hand, and to the quickness of our sensibility on the other. Be the cause, however, what it may, the fact is undoubtedly so; which is all I am concerned in. And it is equally a fact, which every man's experience may avouch, that the Understanding and those feelings are frequently at variance. The latter often arise from the most minute circumstances, and frequently from such as the Understanding cannot estimate, or even recognize; whereas the Understanding delights in abstraction, and in general propositions; which, however true considered as such, are very seldom, I had like to have said *never* , perfectly applicable to any particular case. And hence, among other causes, it is, that we often condemn or applaud characters and actions on the credit of some logical process, while our hearts revolt, and would fain lead us to a very different conclusion.

The Understanding seems for the most part to take cognizance of *actions* only, and from these to infer *motives* and *character* ; but the sense we have been speaking of proceeds in a contrary course; and determines of *actions* from certain *first principles of character* , which seem wholly out of the reach of the Understanding. We cannot indeed do otherwise than admit that there must be distinct principles of character in every distinct individual: The manifest variety even in the minds of infants will oblige us to this. But what *are* these first principles of character? Not the objects, I am persuaded, of the Understanding; and yet we take as strong Impressions of them as if we could compare and assort them in a syllogism. We often love or hate at first sight; and indeed, in general, dislike or approve by some secret reference to these *principles* ; and we judge even of conduct, not from any idea of abstract good or evil in the nature of actions, but by referring those actions to a supposed original character in the man himself. I do not mean that we *talk* thus; we could not indeed, if we would, explain ourselves in detail on this head; we can neither account for Impressions and passions, nor communicate them to others by *words* : Tones and looks will sometimes convey the *passion* strangely, but the *Impression* is incommunicable. The same causes may produce it indeed at the same time in many, but it is the separate possession of each, and not in its nature transferable: It is an imperfect sort of instinct, and proportionably dumb.—We might indeed, if we chose it, candidly confess to one another that we are greatly swayed by these feelings, and are by no means so *rational* in all points as we could wish; but this would be a betraying of the interests of that high faculty, the Understanding, which we so value ourselves upon, and which we more peculiarly call our own. This, we think, must not be; and so we huddle up the matter, concealing it as much as possible, both from ourselves and others. In Books indeed, wherein character, motive, and action, are all alike subjected to the Understanding, it is generally a very clear case; and we make decisions compounded of them all: And thus we are willing to approve of *Candide* , tho' he kills my Lord the Inquisitor, and runs thro' the body the Baron of *Thunder-ten-tronckh* , the son of his patron, and the brother of his beloved *Cunégonde* : But in real life, I believe, *my Lords the Judges* would be apt to inform the *Gentlemen of the Jury* that my *Lord the Inquisitor* was *ill killed* ; as *Candide* did not proceed on the urgency of the moment, but on the speculation only of future evil. And indeed this clear perception, in Novels and Plays, of the union of character and action not seen in nature, is the principal defect of such compositions, and what renders them but ill pictures of human life, and wretched guides of conduct.

But if there was *one man* in the world who could make a more perfect draught of real nature, and steal such Impressions on his audience, without their special notice, as should keep their hold in spite of any error of their Understanding, and should thereupon venture to introduce an apparent incongruity of character and action, for ends which I shall presently endeavour to explain; such an imitation would be worth our nicest curiosity and attention. But in such a case as this, the reader might expect that he should find us all talking the language of the Understanding only; that is, censuring the action with very little conscientious investigation even of *that* ; and transferring the censure, in every odious colour, to the actor himself; how much soever our hearts and affections might secretly revolt: For as to the *Impression* , we have already observed that it has no tongue; nor is its operation and influence likely to be made the subject of conference and communication.

It is not to the *Courage* only of *Falstaff* that we think these observations will apply: No part whatever of his character seems to be fully settled in our minds; at least there is something strangely incongruous in our discourse and affections concerning him. We all like *Old Jack* ; yet, by some strange perverse fate, we all abuse him, and deny him the possession of any one single good or respectable quality. There is something extraordinary in this: It must be a strange art in *Shakespeare* which can draw our liking and good will towards so offensive an object. He has wit, it will be said; chearfulness and humour of the most characteristic and captivating sort. And is this enough? Is the humour and gaiety of vice so very captivating? Is the wit, characteristic of baseness and every ill quality, capable of attaching the heart and winning the affections? Or does not the apparency of such humour, and the flashes of such wit, by more strongly disclosing the deformity of character, but the more effectually excite our hatred and contempt of the man? And yet this is not our *feeling* of *Falstaff* 's character. When he has ceased to amuse us, we find no emotions of disgust; we can scarcely forgive the ingratitude of the Prince in the new-born virtue of the King, and we curse the severity of that poetic justice which consigns our old good-natured companion to the custody of the *warden* , and the dishonours of the *Fleet* .

I am willing, however, to admit that if a Dramatic writer will but preserve to any character the qualities of a strong mind, particularly Courage and ability, that it will be afterwards no very difficult task (as I may have occasion to explain) to discharge that *disgust* which arises from vicious manners; and even to attach us (if such character should contain any quality productive of chearfulness and laughter) to the cause and subject of our mirth with some degree of affection.

But the question which I am to consider is of a very different nature: It is a question of fact, and concerning a quality which forms the basis of every respectable character; a quality which is the very essence of a Military man; and which is held up to us, in almost every Comic incident of the Play, as the subject of our observation. It is strange then that it should now be a question, whether *Falstaff* is or is not a man of Courage; and whether we do in fact contemn him for the want, or respect him for the possession of that quality: And yet I believe the reader will find that he has by no means decided this question, even for himself.—If then it should turn out that this difficulty has arisen out of the Art of *Shakespeare* , who has contrived to make secret Impressions upon us of Courage, and to preserve those Impressions in favour of a character which was to be held up for sport and laughter on account of actions of apparent Cowardice and dishonour, we shall have less occasion to wonder, as *Shakespeare* is a Name which contains All of Dramatic artifice and genius.

If in this place the reader shall peevishly and prematurely object that the observations and distinctions I have laboured to establish are wholly unapplicable; he being himself unconscious of ever having received any such Impression; what can be done in so nice a case, but to refer him to the following pages; by the number of which he may judge how very much I respect his objection, and by the variety of those proofs which I shall employ to induce him to part with it; and to recognize in its stead certain feelings, concealed and covered over perhaps, but not erazed, by time, reasoning, and authority?

In the mean while, it may not perhaps be easy for him to resolve how it comes about, that, whilst we look upon *Falstaff* as a character of the like nature with that of *Parolles* or of *Bobadil* , we should preserve for him a great degree of respect and good-will, and yet feel the highest disdain and contempt of the others, tho' they are all involved in similar situations. The reader, I believe, would wonder extremely to find either *Parolles* or *Bobadil* possess himself in danger: What then can be the cause that we are not at all surprized at the gaiety and ease of *Falstaff* under the most trying circumstances; and that we never think of charging *Shakespeare* with departing, on this account, from the truth and coherence of character? Perhaps, after all, the *real* character of *Falstaff* may be different from his *apparent* one; and possibly this difference between reality and appearance, whilst it accounts at once for our liking and our censure, may be the true point of humour in the character, and the source of all our laughter and delight. We may chance to find, if we will but examine a little into the nature of those circumstances which have accidentally involved him, that he was intended to be drawn as a character of much Natural courage and resolution; and be obliged thereupon to repeal those decisions which may have been made upon the credit of some general tho' unapplicable propositions; the common source of error in other and higher matters. A little reflection may perhaps bring us round again to the point of our departure, and unite our Understandings to our instinct.—Let us then for a moment *suspend* at least our decisions, and candidly and coolly inquire if Sir *John Falstaff* be, indeed, what he has so often been called by critic and commentator, male and female,—a *Constitutional Coward* .

It will scarcely be possible to consider the Courage of *Falstaff* as wholly detached from his other qualities: But I write not professedly of any part of his character, but what is included under the term, *Courage* ; however, I may incidentally throw some lights on the whole.—The reader will not need to be told that this Inquiry will resolve itself of course into a Critique on the genius, the arts, and the conduct of *Shakespeare* : For what is *Falstaff* , what *Lear* , what *Hamlet* , or *Othello* , but different modifications of *Shakespeare* 's thought? It is true that this Inquiry is narrowed almost to a single point: But general criticism is as uninstructive as it is easy: *Shakespeare* deserves to be considered in detail;—a task hitherto unattempted.

It may be proper, in the first place, to take a short view of all the parts of *Falstaff* 's Character, and then proceed to discover, if we can, what *Impressions* , as to Courage or Cowardice, he had made on the persons of the Drama: After which we will examine, in course, such evidence, either of *persons* or *facts* , as are relative to the matter; and account as we may for those appearances which seem to have led to the opinion of his Constitutional Cowardice.

The scene of the robbery, and the disgraces attending it, which stand first in the Play, and introduce us to the knowledge of *Falstaff* , I shall beg leave (as I think this scene to have been the source of much unreasonable prejudice) to *reserve* till we are more fully acquainted with the whole character of *Falstaff* ; and I shall therefore hope that the reader will not for a time advert to it, or to the jests of the Prince or of *Poins* in consequence of that unlucky adventure.

In drawing out the parts of *Falstaff* 's character, with which I shall begin this Inquiry, I shall take the liberty of putting Constitutional bravery into his composition; but the reader will be pleased to consider what I shall say in that respect as spoken hypothetically for the present, to be retained, or discharged out of it, as he shall finally determine.

To me then it appears that the leading quality in *Falstaff* 's character, and that from which all the rest take their colour, is a high degree of wit and humour, accompanied with great natural vigour and alacrity of mind. This quality, so accompanied, led him probably very early into life, and made him highly acceptable to society; so acceptable, as to make it seem unnecessary for him to acquire any other virtue. Hence, perhaps, his continued debaucheries and dissipations of every kind.—He seems, by nature, to have had a mind free of malice or any evil principle; but he never took the trouble of acquiring any good one. He found himself esteemed and beloved with all his faults; nay *for* his faults, which were all connected with humour, and for the most part grew out of it. As he had, possibly, no vices but such as he thought might be openly professed, so he appeared more dissolute thro' ostentation. To the character of wit and humour, to which all his other qualities seem to have conformed themselves, he appears to have added a very necessary support, *that* of the profession of a *Soldier* . He had from nature, as I presume to say, a spirit of boldness and enterprise; which in a Military age, tho' employment was only occasional, kept him always above contempt, secured him an honourable reception among the Great, and suited best both his particular mode of humour and of vice. Thus living continually in society, nay even in Taverns, and indulging himself, and being indulged by others, in every debauchery; drinking, whoring, gluttony, and ease; assuming a liberty of fiction, necessary perhaps to his wit, and often falling into falsity and lies, he seems to have set, by degrees, all sober reputation at defiance; and finding eternal resources in his wit, he borrows, shifts, defrauds, and even robs, without dishonour.—Laughter and approbation attend his greatest excesses; and being governed visibly by no settled bad principle or ill design, fun and humour account for and cover all. By degrees, however, and thro' indulgence, he acquires bad habits, becomes an humourist, grows enormously corpulent, and falls into the infirmities of age; yet never quits, all the time, one single levity or vice of youth, or loses any of that chearfulness of mind which had enabled him to pass thro' this course with ease to himself and delight to others; and thus, at last, mixing youth and age, enterprize and corpulency, wit and folly, poverty and expence, title and buffoonery, innocence as to purpose, and wickedness as to practice; neither incurring hatred by bad principle, or contempt by Cowardice, yet involved in circumstances productive of imputation in both; a butt and a wit, a humourist and a man of humour, a touchstone and a laughing stock, a jester and a jest, has Sir *John Falstaff* , taken at that period of his life in which we see him, become the most perfect Comic character that perhaps ever was exhibited.

It may not possibly be wholly amiss to remark in this place, that if Sir *John Falstaff* had possessed any of that Cardinal quality, Prudence, alike the guardian of virtue and the protector of vice; that quality, from the possession or the absence of which, the character and fate of men in this life take, I think, their colour, and not from real vice or virtue; if he had considered his wit not as *principal* but *accessary* only; as the instrument of power, and not as power itself; if he had had much baseness to hide, if he had had less of what may be called mellowness or good humour, or less of health and spirit; if he had spurred and rode the world with his wit, instead of suffering the world, boys and all, to ride him;—he might, without any other essential change, have been the admiration and not the jest of mankind:—Or if he had lived in our day, and instead of attaching himself to one Prince, had renounced *all* friendship and *all* attachment, and had let himself out as the ready instrument and Zany of every successive Minister, he might possibly have acquired the high honour of marking his shroud or decorating his coffin with the living rays of an Irish at least, if not a British Coronet: Instead of which, tho' enforcing laughter from every disposition, he appears, now, as such a character which every wise man will pity and avoid, every knave will censure, and every fool will fear: And accordingly *Shakespeare* , ever true to nature, has made *Harry* desert, and *Lancaster* censure him:—He dies where he lived, in a Tavern, broken-hearted, without a friend; and his final exit is given up to the derision of fools. Nor has his misfortunes ended here; the scandal arising from the misapplication of his wit and talents seems immortal. He has met with as little justice or mercy from his final judges the critics, as from his companions of the Drama. With our cheeks still red with laughter, we ungratefully as unjustly censure him as a coward by nature, and a rascal upon principle: Tho', if this were so, it might be hoped, for our own credit, that we should behold him rather with disgust and disapprobation than with pleasure and delight.

But to remember our question—*Is Falstaff a constitutional coward?*

With respect to every infirmity, except that of Cowardice, we must take him as at the period in which he is represented to us. If we see him dissipated, fat,—it is enough;—we have nothing to do with his youth, when he might perhaps have been modest, chaste, “*and not an Eagle's talon in the waist* .” But *Constitutional Courage* extends to a man's whole life, makes a part of his nature, and is not to be taken up or deserted like a mere Moral quality. It is true, there is a Courage founded upon *principle* , or rather a principle independent of Courage, which will sometimes operate in spite of nature; a principle which prefers death to shame, but which always refers itself, in conformity to its own nature, to the prevailing modes of honour, and the fashions of the age.—But Natural courage is another thing: It is independent of opinion; It adapts itself to occasions, preserves itself under every shape, and can avail itself of flight as well as of action.—In the last war, some Indians of America perceiving a line of Highlanders to keep their station under every disadvantage, and under a fire which they could not effectually return, were so miserably mistaken in our points of honour as to conjecture, from observation on the habit and stability of those troops, that they were indeed the women of England, who wanted courage to run away.—That Courage which is founded in nature and constitution, *Falstaff* , as I presume to say, possessed;—but I am ready to allow that the principle already mentioned, so far as it refers to reputation only, began with every other Moral quality to lose its hold on him in his old age; that is, at the time of life in which he is represented to us; a period, as it should seem, approaching to *seventy* .—The truth is that he had drollery enough to support himself in credit without the point of honour, and had address enough to make even the preservation of his life a point of drollery. The reader knows I allude, tho' something prematurely, to his fictitious death in the battle of Shrewsbury. This incident is generally construed to the disadvantage of *Falstaff* : It is a transaction which bears the external marks of Cowardice: It is also aggravated to the spectators by the idle tricks of the Player, who practises on this occasion all the attitudes and wild apprehensions of fear; more ambitious, as it should seem, of representing a *Caliban* than a *Falstaff* ; or indeed rather a poor unwieldy miserable Tortoise than either.—The painful Comedian lies spread out on his belly, and not only covers himself all over with his robe as with a shell, but forms a kind of round Tortoise-back by I know not what stuffing or contrivance; in addition to which, he alternately lifts up, and depresses, and dodges his head, and looks to the one side and to the other, so much with the piteous aspect of that animal, that one would not be sorry to see the ambitious imitator calipashed in his robe, and served up for the entertainment of the gallery.—There is no hint for this mummery in the Play: Whatever there may be of dishonour in *Falstaff* 's conduct, he neither does or says any thing on this occasion which indicates terror or disorder of mind: On the contrary, this very act is a proof of his having all his wits about him, and is a stratagem, such as it is, not improper for a buffoon, whose fate would be singularly hard, if he should not be allowed to avail himself of his Character when it might serve him in most stead. We must remember, in extenuation, that the executive, the destroying hand of *Douglas* was over him: "*It was time to counterfeit, or that hot termagant Scot had paid him scot and lot too.* " He had but one choice; he was obliged to pass thro' the ceremony of dying either in jest or in earnest; and we shall not be surprized at the event, when we remember his propensities to the former.—Life (and especially the life of *Falstaff*) might be a jest; but he could see no joke whatever in dying: To be chopfallen was, with him, to lose both life and character together: He saw the point of honour, as well as every thing else, in ridiculous lights, and began to renounce its tyranny.

But I am too much in advance, and must retreat for more advantage. I should not forget how much opinion is against me, and that I am to make my way by the mere force and weight of evidence; without which I must not hope to possess myself of the reader: No address, no insinuation will avail. To this evidence, then, I now resort. The Courage of *Falstaff* is my Theme: And no passage will I spare from which any thing can be inferred as relative to this point. It would be as vain as injudicious to attempt concealment: How could I escape detection? The Play is in every one's memory, and a single passage remembered in detection would tell, in the mind of the partial observer, for fifty times its real weight. Indeed this argument would be void of all excuse if it declined any difficulty; if it did not meet, if it did not challenge opposition. Every passage then shall be produced from which, in my opinion, any inference, favourable or unfavourable, has or can be drawn;—but not methodically, not formally, as texts for comment, but as chance or convenience shall lead the way; but in what shape soever, they shall be always distinguishingly marked for notice. And so with that attention to truth and candour which ought to accompany even our lightest amusements I proceed to offer such proof as the case will admit, that *Courage* is a part of *Falstaff* 's *Character* , that it belonged to his constitution, and was manifest in the conduct and practice of his whole life.

Let us then examine, as a source of very authentic information, what Impressions *Sir John Falstaff* had made on the characters of the Drama; and in what estimation he is supposed to stand with mankind in general as to the point of Personal Courage. But the quotations we make for this or other purposes, must, it is confessed, be lightly touched, and no particular passage strongly relied on, either in his favour or against him. Every thing which he himself says, or is said of him, is so phantastically discoloured by humour, or folly, or jest, that we must for the most part look to the spirit rather than the letter of what is uttered, and rely at last only on a combination of the whole.

We will begin then, if the reader pleases, by inquiring what Impression the very Vulgar had taken of *Falstaff* . If it is not that of Cowardice, be it what else it may, that of a man of violence, or *a Ruffian in years* , as *Harry* calls him, or any thing else, it answers my purpose; how insignificant soever the characters or incidents to be first produced may otherwise appear;—for these Impressions must have been taken either from personal knowledge and observation; or, what will do better for my purpose, from common fame. Altho' I must admit some part of this evidence will appear so weak and trifling that it certainly ought not to be produced but in proof Impression only.

The *Hostess Quickly* employs two officers to arrest *Falstaff* : On the mention of his name, one of them immediately observes, “*that it may chance to cost some of them their lives, for that he will stab.* ”—“*Alas a day,* ” says the hostess, “*take heed of him, he cares not what mischief he doth; if his weapon be out, he will foin like any devil; He will spare neither man, woman, or child.* ” Accordingly, we find that when they lay hold on him he resists to the utmost of his power, and calls upon *Bardolph* , whose arms are at liberty, to draw. “*Away, varlets, draw Bardolph, cut me off the villain's head, throw the quean in the kennel.* ” The officers cry, *a rescue, a rescue!* But the Chief Justice comes in and the scuffle ceases. In another scene, his wench *Doll Tearsheet* asks him “*when he will leave fighting ... and patch up his old body for heaven.* ” This is occasioned by his drawing his rapier, on great provocation, and driving *Pistol* , who is drawn likewise, down stairs, and hurting him in the shoulder. To drive *Pistol* was no great feat; nor do I mention it as such; but upon this occasion it was necessary. “*A Rascal bragging slave,* ” says he, “*the rogue fled from me like quicksilver* ”: Expressions which, as they remember the cowardice of *Pistol* , seem to prove that *Falstaff* did not value himself on the adventure. Even something may be drawn from *Davy, Shallow* 's serving man, who calls *Falstaff* , in ignorant admiration, the *man of war* . I must observe here, and I beg the reader will notice it, that there is not a single expression dropt by these people, or either of *Falstaff* 's followers, from which may be inferred the least suspicion of Cowardice in his character; and this is I think such an *implied negation* as deserves considerable weight.

But to go a little higher, if, indeed, to consider *Shallow* 's opinion be to go *higher* : It is from him, however, that we get the earliest account of *Falstaff* . He *remembers him a Page to Thomas Mowbray, Duke of Norfolk* : “*He broke,* ” says he, “*Schoggan's head at the Court-Gate when he was but a crack thus high.* ” *Shallow* , throughout, considers him as a great Leader and Soldier, and relates this fact as an early indication only of his future Prowess. *Shallow* , it is true, is a very ridiculous character; but he picked up these Impressions somewhere; and he picked up none of a contrary tendency.—I want at present only to prove that *Falstaff* stood well in the report of common fame as to this point; and he was now near seventy years of age, and had passed in a Military line thro' the active part of his life. At this period common fame may be well considered as the *seal* of his character; a seal which ought not perhaps to be broke open on the evidence of any future transaction.

But to proceed. *Lord Bardolph* was a man of the world, and of sense and observation. He informs *Northumberland* , erroneously indeed, that *Percy* had beaten the King at Shrewsbury. “*The King,* ” according to him, “*was wounded; the Prince of Wales and the two Blunts slain, certain Nobles* , whom he names, *had escaped by flight, and the Brawn Sir John Falstaff was taken prisoner.* ” But how came *Falstaff* into this list? Common fame had put him there. He is singularly obliged to Common fame.—But if he had not been a Soldier of repute, if he had not been brave as well as fat, if he had been *mere brawn* , it would have been more germane to the matter if this lord had put him down among the baggage or the provender. The fact seems to be that there is a real consequence about Sir *John Falstaff* which is not brought forward: We see him only in his familiar hours; we enter the tavern with *Hal* and *Poins* ; we join in the laugh and *take a pride to gird at him* : But there may be a great deal of truth in what he himself writes to the Prince, that tho' he be “*Jack Falstaff with his Familiars, he is Sir John with the rest of Europe.* ” It has been remarked, and very truly I believe, that no man is a hero in the eye of his valet-de-chambre; and *thus* it is, we are witnesses only of *Falstaff* 's weakness and buffoonery; our acquaintance is with *Jack Falstaff* , *Plump Jack* , and *Sir John Paunch* ; but if we would look for *Sir John Falstaff* , we must put on, as *Bunyan* would have expressed it, the spectacles of observation. With respect, for instance, to his Military command at Shrewsbury, nothing appears on the surface but the Prince's familiarly saying, in the tone usually assumed when speaking of *Falstaff* , “*I will procure this fat rogue a Charge of foot* ”; and in another place, “*I will procure thee Jack a Charge of foot; meet me tomorrow in the Temple Hall.* ” Indeed we might venture to infer from this, that a Prince of so great ability, whose wildness was only external and assumed, would not have procured, in so nice and critical a conjuncture, a Charge of foot for a known Coward. But there was more it seems in the case: We now find from this report, to which *Lord Bardolph* had given full credit, that the world had its eye upon *Falstaff* as an officer of merit, whom it expected to find in the field, and whose fate in the battle was an object of Public concern: His life was, it seems, very material indeed; a thread of so much dependence, that *fiction* , weaving the fates of

Princes, did not think it unworthy, how coarse soever, of being made a part of the tissue.

We shall next produce the evidence of the Chief Justice of England. He inquires of his attendant, "*if the man who was then passing him was Falstaff; he who was in question for the robbery.* " The attendant answers affirmatively, but reminds his lord "*that he had since done good service at Shrewsbury* "; and the Chief Justice, on this occasion, rating him for his debaucheries, tells him "*that his day's service at Shrewsbury had gilded over his night's exploit at Gads Hill.* " This is surely more than Common fame: *The Chief Justice* must have known his whole character taken together, and must have received the most authentic information, and in the truest colours, of his behaviour in that action.

But, perhaps, after all, the Military men may be esteemed the best judges in points of this nature. Let us hear then *Coleville* of the dale, *a Soldier, in degree a Knight, a famous rebel, and "whose betters, had they been ruled by him, would have sold themselves dearer* ": A man who is of consequence enough to be guarded by *Blunt* and *led to present execution* . This man yields himself up even to the very Name and Reputation of *Falstaff* . "*I think* ," says he, "*you are Sir John Falstaff, and in that thought yield me.* " But this is but one only among the men of the sword; and they shall be produced then by *dozens* , if that will satisfy. Upon the return of the King and Prince Henry from Wales, the Prince seeks out and finds *Falstaff* debauching in a tavern; where *Peto* presently brings an account of ill news from the North; and adds, "*that as he came along he met or overtook a dozen Captains, bare-headed, sweating, knocking at the taverns, and asking every one for Sir John Falstaff.* " He is followed by *Bardolph* , who informs *Falstaff* that "*He must away to the Court immediately; a dozen Captains stay at door for him.* " Here is Military evidence in abundance, and *Court evidence* too; for what are we to infer from *Falstaff* 's being sent for to Court on this ill news, but that his opinion was to be asked, as a Military man of skill and experience, concerning the defences necessary to be taken. Nor is *Shakespeare* content, here, with leaving us to gather up *Falstaff* 's *better character* from inference and deduction: He comments on the fact by making *Falstaff* observe that "*Men of merit are sought after: The undeserver may sleep when the man of action is called on.* " I do not wish to draw *Falstaff* 's character out of his own mouth; but this observation refers to the fact, and is founded in reason. Nor ought we to reject what in another place he says to the Chief Justice, as it is in the nature of an appeal to his knowledge. "*There is not a dangerous action* ," says he, "*can peep out his head but I am thrust upon it.* " The Chief Justice seems by his answer to admit the fact. “*Well, be honest, be honest, and heaven bless your expedition.* ” But the whole passage may deserve transcribing.

Ch. Just. “*Well, the King has served you and Prince Henry. I hear you are going with Lord John of Lancaster against the Archbishop and the Earl of Northumberland.* ”

Fals. “*Yes, I thank your pretty sweet wit for it; but look you pray, all you that kiss my lady peace at home, that our armies join not in a hot day; for I take but two shirts out with me, and I mean not to sweat extraordinarily: If it be a hot day, if I brandish any thing but a bottle, would I might never spit white again. There is not a dangerous action can peep out his head but I am thrust upon it. Well I cannot last for ever.—But it was always the trick of our English nation, if they have a good thing to make it too common. If you will needs say I am an old man you should give me rest: I would to God my name were not so terrible to the enemy as it is. I were better to be eaten to death with a rust than to be scour'd to nothing with perpetual motion.* ”

Ch. Just. “*Well be honest, be honest, and heaven bless your expedition.* ”

Falstaff indulges himself here in humourous exaggeration;—these passages are not meant to be taken, nor are we to suppose that they were taken, literally;—but if there was not a ground of truth, if *Falstaff* had not had such a degree of Military reputation as was capable of being thus humourously amplified and exaggerated, the whole dialogue would have been highly preposterous and absurd, and the acquiescing answer of the *Lord Chief Justice* singularly improper.—But upon the supposition of *Falstaff* 's being considered, upon the whole, as a good and gallant Officer, the answer is just, and corresponds with the acknowledgment which had a little before been made, “*that his days service at Shrewsbury had gilded over his night's exploit at Gads Hill.—You may thank the unquiet time,* ” says the Chief Justice, “*for your quiet o'erposting of that action* ”; agreeing with what *Falstaff* says in another place;—“*Well, God be thanked for these Rebels, they offend none but the virtuous; I laud them, I praise them.* ”—Whether this be said in the true spirit of a Soldier or not, I do not determine; it is surely not in that of a mere Coward and Poltroon.

It will be needless to shew, which might be done from a variety of particulars, that *Falstaff* was known and had consideration at Court. *Shallow* cultivates him in the idea that *a friend at Court is better than a penny in purse* : *Westmorland* speaks to him in the tone of an equal: Upon *Falstaff* 's telling him that he thought his lordship had been already at Shrewsbury, *Westmorland* replies,—“*Faith Sir John, 'tis more than time that I were there, and you too; the King I can tell you looks for us all; we must away all to night.* ”—“*Tut,* ” says Falstaff, “*never fear me, I am as vigilant as a cat to steal cream.* ”—He desires, in another place, of my lord John of Lancaster, “*that when he goes to Court, he may stand in his good report.* ” His intercourse and correspondence with both these lords seem easy and familiar. “*Go,* ” says he to the page, “*bear this to my Lord of Lancaster, this to the Prince, this to the Earl of Westmorland, and this* (for he extended himself on all sides) *to old Mrs. Ursula* ,” whom, it seems, the rogue ought to have married many years before.—But these intimations are needless: We see him ourselves in the *Royal Presence* ; where, certainly, his buffooneries never brought him; never was the Prince of a character to commit so high an indecorum, as to thrust, upon a solemn occasion, a mere Tavern companion into his father's Presence, especially in a moment when he himself deserts his looser character, and takes up that of *a Prince indeed* .—In a very important scene, where *Worcester* is expected with proposals from *Percy* , and wherein he is received, is treated with, and carries back offers of accommodation from the King, the King's attendants upon the occasion are *the Prince of Wales, Lord John of Lancaster, the Earl of Westmorland, Sir Walter Blunt, and Sir John Falstaff* .—What shall be said to this? *Falstaff* is not surely introduced here in vicious indulgence to a mob audience;—he utters but one word, a buffoon one indeed, but aside, and to the Prince only. Nothing, it should seem, is wanting, if decorum would here have permitted, but that he should have spoken one sober sentence in the Presence (which yet we are to suppose him ready and able to do if occasion should have required; or his wit was given him to little purpose) and Sir *John Falstaff* might be allowed to pass for an established Courtier and counsellor of state. “*If I do grow great,* ” says he, “*I'll grow less, purge and leave sack, and live as a nobleman should do.* ” Nobility did not then appear to him at an unmeasurable distance; it was, it seems, in his idea, the very next link in the chain.

But to return. I would now demand what could bring *Falstaff* into the Royal Presence upon such an occasion, or justify the Prince's so public acknowledgment of him, but an established fame and reputation of Military merit? In short, just the like merit as brought Sir *Walter Blunt* into the same circumstances of honour.

But it may be objected that his introduction into this scene is a piece of indecorum in the author. But upon what ground are we to suppose this? Upon the ground of his being a notorious Coward? Why, this is the very point in question, and cannot be granted: Even the direct contrary I have affirmed, and am endeavouring to support. But if it be supposed upon any other ground, it does not concern me; I have nothing to do with *Shakespeare* 's indecorums in general. That there are indecorums in the Play I have no doubt: The indecent treatment of *Percy* 's dead body is the greatest;—the familiarity of the significant, rude, and even ill disposed *Poins* with the Prince, is another;—but the admission of *Falstaff* into the Royal Presence (supposing, which I have a right to suppose, that his Military character was unimpeached) does not seem to be in any respect among the number. In camps there is but one virtue and one vice; Military merit swallows up or covers all. But, after all, what have we to do with indecorums? Indecorums respect the propriety or impropriety of exhibiting certain actions;—not their *truth* or *falshood* when exhibited. *Shakespeare* stands to us in the place of *truth* and *nature* : If we desert this principle, we cut the turf from under us; I may then object to the robbery and other passages as indecorums, and as contrary to the truth of character. In short we may rend and tear the Play to pieces, and every man carry off what sentences he likes best.—But why this inveterate malice against poor *Falstaff* ? He has faults enough in conscience without loading him with the infamy of Cowardice; a charge, which, if true, would, if I am not greatly mistaken, spoil all our mirth.—But of that hereafter.

It seems to me that, in our hasty judgment of some particular transactions, we forget the circumstances and condition of his whole life and character, which yet deserve our very particular attention. The author, it is true, has thrown the most advantageous of these circumstances into the *back ground* , as it were, and has brought nothing *out of the canvass* but his follies and buffoonery. We discover, however, that in a very early period of his life he was familiar with *John* of *Gaunt* ; which could hardly be, unless he had possessed much personal gallantry and accomplishment, and had derived his birth from a distinguished at least, if not from a Noble family.

It may seem very extravagant to insist upon *Falstaff* 's birth as a ground from which, by any inference, Personal courage may be derived, especially after having acknowledged that he seemed to have deserted those points of honour which are more peculiarly the accompanyments of rank. But it may be observed that in the Feudal ages rank and wealth were not only connected with the point of honour, but with personal strength and natural courage. It is observable that Courage is a quality which is at least as transmissible to one's posterity as features and complexion. In these periods men acquired and maintained their rank and possessions by personal prowess and gallantry; and their marriage alliances were made, of course, in families of the same character: And from hence, and from the exercises of their youth, we must account for the distinguished force and bravery of our antient Barons. It is not therefore beside my purpose to inquire what hints of the origin and birth of *Falstaff* , *Shakespeare* may have dropped in different parts of the Play; for tho' we may be disposed to allow that *Falstaff* in his old age might, under particular influences, desert the point of honour, we cannot give up that unalienable possession of Courage, which might have been derived to him from a noble or distinguished stock.

But it may be said that *Falstaff* was in truth the child of invention only, and that a reference to the Feudal accidents of birth serves only to confound fiction with reality: Not altogether so. If the ideas of courage and *birth* were strongly associated in the days of *Shakespeare* , then would the assignment of high birth to *Falstaff* carry, and be intended to carry along with it, to the minds of the audience the associated idea of Courage, if nothing should be specially interposed to dissolve the connection;—and the question is as concerning this intention, and this effect.

I shall proceed yet farther to make a few very minute observations of the same nature: But if *Shakespeare* meant sometimes rather to *impress* than explain, no circumstances calculated to this end, either directly or by association, are too minute for notice. But however this may be, a more conciliating reason still remains: The argument itself, like the tales of our Novelists, is a *vehicle* only; *theirs* , as they profess, of moral instruction; and *mine* of critical amusement. The vindication of *Falstaff* 's Courage deserves not for its own sake the least sober discussion; *Falstaff* is the word only, *Shakespeare* is the *Theme* : And if thro' this channel I can furnish no irrational amusement, the reader will not, perhaps, every where expect from me the strict severity of logical investigation.

Falstaff , then, it may be observed, was introduced into the world,—(at least we are told so) by the name of *Oldcastle* . This was assigning him an origin of nobility; but the family of that name disclaiming any kindred with his vices, he was thereupon, as it is said, ingrafted into another stock scarcely less distinguished, tho' fallen into indelible disgraces; and by this means he has been made, if the conjectures of certain critics are well founded, the Dramatic successor, tho', having respect to chronology, the natural *proavus* of another Sir *John* , who was no less than a Knight of the most noble order of the Garter, but a name for ever dishonoured by a frequent exposure in that Drum-and-trumpet Thing called *The first part of Henry* VI., written doubtless, or rather exhibited, long before *Shakespeare* was born, tho' afterwards repaired, I think, and furbished up by him with here and there a little sentiment and diction. This family, if any branch of it remained in *Shakespeare* 's time, might have been proud of their Dramatic ally, if indeed they could have any fair pretence to claim as such *him* whom *Shakespeare* , perhaps in contempt of Cowardice, wrote *Falstaff* , not *Fastolfe* , the true Historic name of the Gartered Craven.

In the age of Henry IV. a Family crest and arms were authentic proofs of gentility; and this proof, among others, *Shakespeare* has furnished us with: *Falstaff* always carried about him, it seems, *a Seal ring of his Grandfather's, worth* , as he says, *forty marks* : The Prince indeed affirms, but not seriously I think, that this ring was *copper* . As to the existence of the *bonds* , which were I suppose the negotiable securities or paper-money of the time, and which he pretended to have lost, I have nothing to say; but the ring, I believe, was really gold; tho' probably a little too much alloyed with baser metal. But this is not the point: The *arms* were doubtless genuine; they were borne by his Grandfather, and are proofs of an antient gentility; a gentility doubtless, in former periods, connected with wealth and possessions, tho' the gold of the family might have been transmuting by degrees, and perhaps, in the hands of *Falstaff* , converted into little better than copper. This observation is made on the supposition of *Falstaff* 's being considered as the head of the family, which I think however he ought not to be. It appears rather as if he ought to be taken in the light of a cadet or younger brother; which the familiar appellation of *John* , “the only one (as he says) given him by his brothers and sisters,” seems to indicate. Be this as it may, we find he is able, in spite of dissipation, to keep up a certain *state* and *dignity* of appearance; retaining no less than four, if not five, followers or men servants in his train. He appears also to have had apartments in town, and, by his invitations of *Master Gower* to dinner and to supper, a regular table: And one may infer farther from the Prince's question, on his return from Wales, to *Bardolph* , “*Is your master* here *in London* ,” that he had likewise a house in the country. Slight proofs it must be confessed, yet the inferences are so probable, so buoyant, in their own nature, that they may well rest on them. That he did not lodge at the Tavern is clear from the circumstances of the arrest. These various occasions of expence,—servants, taverns, houses, and whores,—necessarily imply that *Falstaff* must have had some funds which are not brought immediately under our notice. That these funds were not however adequate to his style of living is plain: Perhaps his train may be considered only as incumbrances, which the pride of family and the habit of former opulence might have brought upon his present poverty: I do not mean absolute poverty, but call it so as relative to his expence. To have "*but seven groats and two-pence in his purse* " and a page to bear it, is truly ridiculous; and it is for that reason we become so familiar with its contents, "*He can find* ," he says, "*no remedy for this consumption of the purse, borrowing does but linger and linger it out; but the disease is incurable* ." It might well be deemed so in his course of dissipation: But I shall presently suggest one source at least of his supply much more constant and honourable than that of borrowing. But the condition of *Falstaff* as to opulence or poverty is not very material to my purpose: It is enough if his birth was distinguished, and his youth noted for gallantry and accomplishments. To the first I have spoken, and as for the latter we shall not be at a loss when we remember that "*he was in his youth a page to Thomas Mowbray, Duke of Norfolk* "; a situation at that time sought for by young men of the best families and first fortune. The house of every great noble was at that period a kind of Military school; and it is probable that *Falstaff* was singularly adroit at his exercises: "*He broke Schoggan's head* ," (some boisterous fencer I suppose) "*when he was but a crack thus high* ." *Shallow* remembers him *as notedly skilful at backsword* ; and he was at that period, according to his own humourous account, "*scarcely an eagle's talon in the waist, and could have crept thro' an alderman's thumb ring* ." Even at the age at which he is exhibited to us, we find him *foundering* , as he calls it, *nine score and odd miles* , with wonderful expedition, to join the army of Prince *John* of *Lancaster* ; and declaring, after the surrender of *Coleville* , that "*had he but a belly of any indifferency, he were simply the most active fellow in Europe* ." Nor ought we here to pass over his Knighthood without notice. It was, I grant, intended by the author as a dignity which, like his Courage and his wit, was to be debased; his knighthood by low situations, his Courage by circumstances and imputations of cowardice, and his wit by buffoonery. But how are we to suppose this honour was acquired? By that very Courage, it should seem, which we so obstinately deny him. It was not certainly given him, like a modern City Knighthood, for his wealth or gravity: It was in these days a Military honour, and an authentic badge of Military merit.

But *Falstaff* was not only a Military Knight, he possess'd an honourable *pension* into the bargain; the reward as well as retainer of service, and which seems (besides the favours perhaps of Mrs. *Ursula*) to be the principal and only solid support of his present expences. But let us refer to the passage. "*A pox of this gout, or a gout of this pox; for one or the other plays the rogue with my great toe: It is no matter if I do halt, I have the wars for my colour, and my pension* *shall seem the more reasonable.* " The mention *Falstaff* here makes of a pension, has I believe been generally construed to refer rather to *hope* than *possession* , yet I know not why: For the possessive my, *my pension* , (not *a* pension) requires a different construction. Is it that we cannot enjoy a wit till we have stript him of every worldly advantage, and reduced him below the level of our envy? It may be perhaps for this reason among others that *Shakespeare* has so obscured the better parts of *Falstaff* and stolen them secretly out of our feelings, instead of opening them fairly to the notice of our understandings. How carelessly, and thro' what bye-paths, as it were, of casual inference, is this fact of a pension introduced! And how has he associated it with misfortune and infirmity! Yet I question, however, if, in this one place, the *Impression* which was intended be well and effectually made. It must be left to the reader to determine if, in that mass of things out of which *Falstaff* is compounded, he ever considered a pension as any part of the composition: A pension however he appears to have had, one that halting could only seem to make more reasonable, not more honourable. The inference arising from the fact, I shall leave to the reader. It is surely a circumstance highly advantageous to *Falstaff* (I speak of the pensions of former days), whether he be considered in the light of a soldier or a gentleman.

I cannot foresee the temper of the reader, nor whether he be content to go along with me in these kind of observations. Some of the incidents which I have drawn out of the Play may appear too minute, whilst yet they refer to principles which may seem too general. Many points require explanation; something should be said of the nature of *Shakespeare* 's Dramatic characters; by what arts they were formed, and wherein they differ from those of other writers; something likewise more professedly of *Shakespeare* himself, and of the peculiar character of his genius. After such a review we may not perhaps think any consideration arising out of the Play, or out of general nature, either as too minute or too extensive.

Shakespeare is, in truth, an author whose mimic creation agrees in general so perfectly with that of nature, that it is not only wonderful in the great, but opens another scene of amazement to the discoveries of the microscope. We have been charged indeed by a Foreign writer with an overmuch admiring of this *Barbarian* : Whether we have admired with knowledge, or have blindly followed those feelings of affection which we could not resist, I cannot tell; but certain it is, that to the labours of his Editors he has not been overmuch obliged. They are however for the most part of the first rank in literary fame; but some of them had possessions of their own in Parnassus, of an extent too great and important to allow of a very diligent attention to the interests of others; and among those

Critics more professionally so, the ablest and the best has unfortunately looked more to the praise of ingenious than of just conjecture. The character of his emendations are not so much that of *right* or *wrong* , as that, being in the extreme, they are always *Warburtonian* . Another has since undertaken the custody of our author, whom he seems to consider as a sort of wild Proteus or madman, and accordingly knocks him down with the butt-end of his critical staff, as often as he exceeds that line of sober discretion, which this learned Editor appears to have chalked out for him: Yet is this Editor notwithstanding "a man, take him for all in all," very highly respectable for his genius and his learning. What however may be chiefly complained of in these gentlemen is, that having erected themselves into the condition, as it were, of guardians and trustees of *Shakespeare* , they have never undertaken to discharge the disgraceful incumbrances of some wretched productions which have long hung heavy on his fame. Besides the evidence of taste, which indeed is not communicable, there are yet other and more general proofs that these incumbrances were not incurred by *Shakespeare* : The *Latin* sentences dispersed thro' the imputed trash is, I think, of itself a decisive one. *Love's Labour lost* contains a very conclusive one of another kind; tho' the very last Editor has, I believe, in his critical sagacity, suppressed the evidence, and withdrawn the record.

Yet whatever may be the neglect of some, or the censure of others, there are those who firmly believe that this wild, this uncultivated Barbarian has not yet obtained one half of his fame; and who trust that some new Stagyrite will arise, who instead of pecking at the surface of things will enter into the inward soul of his compositions, and expel, by the force of congenial feelings, those foreign impurities which have stained and disgraced his page. And as to those *spots* which will still remain, they may perhaps become invisible to those who shall seek them thro' the medium of his beauties, instead of looking for those beauties, as is too frequently done, thro' the smoke of some real or imputed obscurity. When the hand of time shall have brushed off his present Editors and Commentators, and when the very name of *Voltaire* , and even the memory of the language in which he has written, shall be no more, the *Apalachian* mountains, the banks of the *Ohio* , and the plains of *Sciota* shall resound with the accents of this Barbarian: In his native tongue he shall roll the genuine passions of nature; nor shall the griefs of *Lear* be alleviated, or the charms and wit of *Rosalind* be abated by time. There is indeed nothing perishable about him, except that very learning which he is said so much to want. He had not, it is true, enough for the demands of the age in which he lived, but he had perhaps too much for the reach of his genius, and the interest of his fame. *Milton* and he will carry the decayed remnants and fripperies of antient mythology into more distant ages than they are by their own force intitled to extend; and the *Metamorphoses* of *Ovid* , upheld by them, lay in a new claim to unmerited immortality.

Shakespeare is a name so interesting, that it is excusable to stop a moment, nay it would be indecent to pass him without the tribute of some admiration. He differs essentially from all other writers: Him we may profess rather to feel than to understand; and it is safer to say, on many occasions, that we are possessed by him, than that we possess him. And no wonder;—He scatters the seeds of things, the principles of character and action, with so cunning a hand, yet with so careless an air, and, master of our feelings, submits himself so little to our judgment, that every thing seems superior. We discern not his course, we see no connection of cause and effect, we are rapt in ignorant admiration, and claim no kindred with his abilities. All the incidents, all the parts, look like chance, whilst we feel and are sensible that the whole is design. His Characters not only act and speak in strict conformity to nature, but in strict relation to us; just so much is shewn as is requisite, just so much is impressed; he commands every passage to our heads and to our hearts, and moulds us as he pleases, and that with so much ease, that he never betrays his own exertions. We see these Characters act from the mingled motives of passion, reason, interest, habit, and complection, in all their proportions, when they are supposed to know it not themselves; and we are made to acknowledge that their actions and sentiments are, from those motives, the necessary result. He at once blends and distinguishes every thing;—every thing is complicated, every thing is plain. I restrain the further expressions of my admiration lest they should not seem applicable to man; but it is really astonishing that a mere human being, a part of humanity only, should so perfectly comprehend the whole; and that he should possess such exquisite art, that whilst every woman and every child shall feel the whole effect, his learned Editors and Commentators should yet so very frequently mistake or seem ignorant of the cause. A sceptre or a straw are in his hands of equal efficacy; he needs no selection; he converts every thing into excellence; nothing is too great, nothing is too base. Is a character efficient like *Richard* , it is every thing we can wish: Is it otherwise, like *Hamlet* , it is productive of equal admiration: Action produces one mode of excellence, and inaction another: The Chronicle, the Novel, or the Ballad; the king, or the beggar, the hero, the madman, the sot, or the fool; it is all one;—nothing is worse, nothing is better: The same genius pervades and is equally admirable in all. Or, is a character to be shewn in progressive change, and the events of years comprized within the hour;—with what a Magic hand does he prepare and scatter his spells! The Understanding must, in the first place, be subdued; and lo! how the rooted prejudices of the child spring up to confound the man! The Weird sisters rise, and order is extinguished. The laws of nature give way, and leave nothing in our minds but wildness and horror. No pause is allowed us for reflection: Horrid sentiment, furious guilt and compunction, air-drawn daggers, murders, ghosts, and inchantment, shake and *possess us wholly* . In the mean time the *process* is completed. *Macbeth* changes under our eye, *the milk of human kindness is converted to gall; he has supped full of horrors* , and his *May of life is fallen into the sear, the yellow leaf* ; whilst we, the fools of amazement, are insensible to the shifting of place and the lapse of time, and, till the curtain drops, never once wake to the truth of things, or recognize the laws of existence.—On such an occasion, a fellow, like *Rymer* , waking from his trance, shall lift up his Constable's staff, and charge this great Magician, this daring *practicer of arts inhibited* , in the name of *Aristotle* , to surrender; whilst *Aristotle* himself, disowning his wretched Officer, would fall prostrate at his feet and acknowledge his supremacy.—O supreme of Dramatic excellence! (*might he say*) not to me be imputed the insolence of fools. The bards of *Greece* were confined within the narrow circle of the Chorus, and hence they found themselves constrained to practice, for the most part, the precision, and copy the details of nature. I followed them, and knew not that a larger circle might be drawn, and the Drama extended to the whole reach of human genius. Convinced, I see that a more compendious *nature* may be obtained; a nature of *effects* only, to which neither the relations of place, or continuity of time, are always essential. Nature, condescending to the faculties and apprehensions of man, has drawn through human life a regular chain of visible causes and effects: But Poetry delights in surprise, conceals her steps, seizes at once upon the heart, and obtains the Sublime of things without betraying the rounds of her ascent: True Poesy is *magic* , not *nature* ; an effect from causes hidden or unknown. To the Magician I prescribed no laws; his law and his power are one; his power is his law. Him, who neither imitates, nor is within the reach of imitation, no precedent can or ought to bind, no limits to contain. If his end is obtained, who shall question his course? Means, whether apparent or hidden, are justified in Poesy by success; but then most perfect and most admirable when most concealed. But whither am I going! This copious and delightful topic has drawn me far beyond my design; I hasten back to my subject, and am guarded, for a time at least, against any further temptation to digress.

I was considering the dignity of *Falstaff* so far as it might seem connected with or productive of military merit, and I have assigned him *reputation* at least, if not *fame* , noble connection, birth, attendants, title, and an honourable pension; every one of them presumptive proofs of Military merit, and motives of action. What deduction is to be made on these articles, and why they are so much obscured may, perhaps, hereafter appear.

I have now gone through the examination of all the Persons of the Drama from whose mouths any thing can be drawn relative to the Courage of *Falstaff* , excepting the Prince and *Poins* , whose evidence I have begged leave to *reserve* , and excepting a very severe censure passed on him by Lord *John* of *Lancaster* , which I shall presently consider: But I must first observe that, setting aside the jests of the Prince and *Poins* , and this censure of *Lancaster* , there is not one expression uttered by any character in the Drama that can be construed into any impeachment of *Falstaff* 's Courage;—an observation made before as respecting some of the Witnesses;—it is now extended to all: And though this silence be a negative proof only, it cannot, in my opinion, under the circumstances of the case, and whilst uncontradicted by facts, be too much relied on. If *Falstaff* had been intended for the character of a *Miles Gloriosus* , his behaviour ought and therefore would have been commented upon by others. *Shakespeare* seldom trusts to the apprehensions of his audience; his characters interpret for one another continually, and when we least suspect such artful and secret management: The conduct of *Shakespeare* in this respect is admirable, and I could point out a thousand passages which might put to shame the advocates of a formal Chorus, and prove that there is as little of necessity as grace in so mechanic a contrivance. But I confine my censure of the Chorus to its supposed use of comment and interpretation only.

Falstaff is, indeed, so far from appearing to my eye in the light of a *Miles Gloriosus* , that, in the best of my taste and judgment, he does not discover, except in consequence of the robbery, the least *trait* of such a character. All his boasting speeches are humour, mere humour, and carefully spoken to persons who cannot misapprehend them, who cannot be imposed on: They contain indeed, for the most part, an unreasonable and imprudent ridicule of himself, the usual subject of his good humoured merriment; but in the company of ignorant people, such as the Justices, or his own followers, he is remarkably reserved, and does not hazard any thing, even in the way of humour, that may be subject to mistake: Indeed he no where seems to suspect that his character is open to censure on this side, or that he needs the arts of imposition.—“*Turk Gregory never did such deeds in arms as I have done this day* ” is spoken, whilst he breathes from action, to the Prince in a tone of jolly humour, and contains nothing but a light ridicule of his own inactivity: This is as far from real boasting as his saying before the battle, “*Wou'd it were bed-time, Hal, and all were well* ,” is from meanness or depression. This articulated wish is not the fearful outcry of a *Coward* , but the frank and honest breathing of a *generous fellow* , who does not expect to be seriously reproached with the character. Instead, indeed, of deserving the name of a vain glorious *Coward* , his modesty perhaps on his head, and whimsical ridicule of himself, have been a principal source of the imputation.

But to come to the very serious reproach thrown upon him by that *cold blooded* boy, as he calls him, *Lancaster* .—*Lancaster* makes a solemn treaty of peace with the *Archbishop of York, Mowbray* , &c. upon the faith of which they disperse their troops; which is no sooner done than *Lancaster* arrests the Principals, and pursues the *scattered stray* : A transaction, by the bye, so singularly perfidious, that I wish *Shakespeare* , for his own credit, had not suffered it to pass under his pen without marking it with the blackest strokes of Infamy.—During this transaction, *Falstaff* arrives, joins in the pursuit, and takes Sir *John Coleville* prisoner. Upon being seen by *Lancaster* he is thus addressed:—

“Now, Falstaff, where have you been all this while?

When every thing is over, then you come:

These tardy tricks of yours will, on my life,

One time or other break some gallows' back.”

This may appear to many a very formidable passage. It is spoken, as we may say, in the hearing of the army, and by one intitled as it were by his station to decide on military conduct; and if no punishment immediately follows, the forbearance may be imputed to a regard for the Prince of Wales, whose favour the delinquent was known so unworthily to possess. But this reasoning will by no means apply to the real circumstances of the case. The effect of this passage will depend on the credit we shall be inclined to give to *Lancaster* for integrity and candour, and still more upon the facts which are the ground of this censure, and which are fairly offered by *Shakespeare* to our notice.

We will examine the evidence arising from both; and to this end we must in the first place a little unfold the character of this young Commander in chief;—from a review of which we may more clearly discern the general impulses and secret motives of his conduct: And this is a proceeding which I think the peculiar character of *Shakespeare* 's Drama will very well justify.

We are already well prepared what to think of this young man:—We have just seen a very pretty manœuvre of his in a matter of the highest moment, and have therefore the less reason to be surprized if we find him practising a more petty fraud with suitable skill and address. He appears in truth to have been what *Falstaff* calls him, *a cold, reserved, sober-blooded boy* ; a politician, as it should seem, by nature; bred up moreover in the school of *Bolingbroke* his father, and tutored to betray: With sufficient courage and ability perhaps, but with too much of the knave in his composition, and too little of enthusiasm, ever to be a great and superior character. That such a youth as this should, even from the propensities of character alone, take any plausible occasion to injure a frank unguarded man of wit and pleasure, will not appear unnatural. But he had other inducements. *Falstaff* had given very general scandal by his distinguished wit and noted poverty, insomuch that a little cruelty and injustice towards him was likely to pass, in the eye of the grave and prudent part of mankind, as a very creditable piece of fraud, and to be accounted to *Lancaster* for virtue and good service. But *Lancaster* had motives yet more prevailing; *Falstaff* was a Favourite, without the power which belongs to that character; and the tone of the Court was strongly against him, as the misleader and corrupter of the Prince; who was now at too great a distance to afford him immediate countenance and protection. A scratch then, between jest and earnest as it were, something that would not too much offend the prince, yet would leave behind a disgraceful scar upon *Falstaff* , was very suitable to the temper and situation of parties and affairs. With these observations in our thought, let us return to the passage: It is plainly intended for disgrace, but how artful, how cautious, how insidious is the manner! It may pass for sheer pleasantry and humour: *Lancaster* assumes the familiar phrase and *girding* tone of *Harry* ; and the gallows, as he words it, appears to be in the most danger from an encounter with *Falstaff* .—With respect to the matter, 'tis a kind of *miching malicho* ; it means mischief indeed, but there is not precision enough in it to intitle it to the appellation of a formal charge, or to give to *Falstaff* any certain and determined ground of defence. *Tardy tricks* may mean not Cowardice but neglect only, though the *manner* may seem to carry the imputation to both.—The reply of *Falstaff* is exactly suited to the qualities of the speech;—for *Falstaff* never wants ability, but conduct only. He answers the general effect of this speech by a feeling and serious complaint of injustice; he then goes on to apply his defence to the vindication both of his diligence and courage; but he deserts by degrees his serious tone, and taking the handle of pleasantry which *Lancaster* had held forth to him, he is prudently content, as being sensible of *Lancaster* 's high rank and station, to let the whole pass off in buffoonery and humour. But the question is, however, not concerning the adroitness and management of either party: Our business is, after putting the credit of *Lancaster* out of the question, to discover what there may be of truth and of fact either in the charge of the one, or the defence of the other. From this only, we shall be able to draw our inferences with fairness and with candour. The charge against *Falstaff* is already in the possession of the reader: The defence follows.—

Fals. "*I would be sorry, my lord, but it should be thus: I never knew yet but that rebuke and check were the reward of valour. Do you think me a swallow, an arrow, or a bullet? Have I in my poor and old motion the expedition of thought? I speeded hither within the very extremest inch of possibility. I have foundered ninescore and odd posts* (deserting by degrees his serious tone, for *one* of more address and advantage), *and here, travel-tainted as I am, have I in my pure and immaculate valour taken Sir John Coleville of the dale, a most furious Knight and valorous enemy.* "

Falstaff 's answer then is that he used all possible expedition to join the army; the not doing of which, with an implication of Cowardice as the cause, is the utmost extent of the charge against him; and to take off this implication he refers to the evidence of a fact present and manifest,—the surrender of *Coleville* ; in whose hearing he speaks, and to whom therefore he is supposed to appeal. Nothing then remains but that we should inquire if *Falstaff* 's answer was really founded in truth; "*I speeded hither* " says he, "*within the extremest inch of possibility* ": If it be so, he is justified: But I am afraid, for we must not conceal any thing, that *Falstaff* was really detained too long by his debaucheries in London; at least, if we take the Chief Justice's words very strictly.

"Ch. Just. *How now, Sir John? What are you brawling here? Doth this become your Place, your Time, your Business? You should have been well on your way to York.* "

Here then seems to be a delay worthy perhaps of rebuke; and if we could suppose *Lancaster* to mean nothing more by *tardy tricks* than idleness and debauch, I should not possibly think myself much concerned to vindicate *Falstaff* from the charge; but the words imply, to my apprehension, a designed and deliberate avoidance of danger. Yet to the contrary of this we are furnished with very full and complete evidence. *Falstaff* , the moment he quits London, discovers the utmost eagerness and impatience to join the army; he gives up his gluttony, his mirth, and his ease. We see him take up in his passage some recruits at *Shallow* 's house; and tho' he has pecuniary views upon *Shallow* , no inducement stops him; he takes no refreshment, he cannot *tarry dinner* , he hurries off; “*I will not* ,” says he to the Justices, “*use many words with you. Fare ye well, Gentlemen both; I thank ye, I must a dozen miles to night.* ”—He misuses, it is true, at this time the *King's Press damnably* ; but that does not concern me, at least not for the present; it belongs to other parts of his character. —It appears then manifestly that *Shakespeare* meant to shew *Falstaff* as really using the utmost speed in his power; he arrives almost literally *within the extremest inch of possibility* ; and if *Lancaster* had not accelerated the event by a stroke of perfidy much more subject to the imputation of Cowardice than the *Debauch* of *Falstaff* , he would have been time enough to have shared in the danger of a fair and honest decision. But great men have, it seems, a privilege; “*that in the General's but a choleric word, which in the Soldier were flat blasphemy.* ” Yet after all, *Falstaff* did really come time enough, as it appears, to join in the villainous triumphs of the day, to take prisoner *Coleville of the dale, a most furious Knight and valorous enemy* .—Let us look to the fact. If this incident should be found to contain any striking proof of *Falstaff* 's Courage and Military fame, his defence against *Lancaster* will be stronger than the reader has even a right to demand. *Falstaff* encounters *Coleville* in the field, and, having demanded his name, is ready to assail him; but *Coleville* asks him if he is not Sir *John Falstaff* ; thereby implying a purpose of surrender. *Falstaff* will not so much as furnish him with a pretence, and answers only, that *he is as good a man* . “*Do you yield Sir, or shall I sweat for you?* ” “*I think* ,” says Coleville, “*you are Sir John Falstaff, and in that thought yield me.* ” This fact, and the incidents with which it is accompanied, speak loudly; it seems to have been contrived by the author on purpose to take off a rebuke so authoritatively made by *Lancaster* . The fact is set before our eyes to confute the censure: *Lancaster* himself seems to give up his charge, tho' not his ill will; for upon *Falstaff* 's asking leave to pass through Gloucestershire, and artfully desiring that, upon *Lancaster* 's return to Court, *he might stand well in his report, Lancaster* seems in his answer to mingle malice and acquittal. “*Fare ye well, Falstaff, I in my condition shall better speak of you than you deserve.* ” “*I would* ,” says *Falstaff* , who is left behind in the scene, “*You had but the wit; 'twere better than your Dukedom.* ”

He continues on the stage some time chewing the cud of dishonour, which, with all his facility, he cannot well swallow. “*Good faith* ” says he, accounting to himself as well as he could for the injurious conduct of *Lancaster* , “*this sober-blooded boy does not love me.* ” This he might well believe. “*A man* ,” says he, “*cannot make him laugh; there's none of these demure boys come to any proof; but that's no marvel, they drink no sack.* ”—*Falstaff* then it seems knew no drinker of sack who was a Coward; at least the instance was not home and familiar to him.—“*They all* ,” says he, “*fall into a kind of Male green sickness, and are generally fools and Cowards.* ” Anger has a privilege, and I think *Falstaff* has a right to turn the tables upon *Lancaster* if he can; but *Lancaster* was certainly no fool, and I think upon the whole no Coward; yet the Male green sickness which *Falstaff* talks of seems to have infected his manners and aspect, and taken from him all external indication of gallantry and courage. He behaves in the battle of Shrewsbury beyond the promise of his complexion and deportment: “*By heaven thou hast deceived me Lancaster* ,” says Harry, “*I did not think thee Lord of such a spirit!* ” Nor was his father less surprized “*at his holding Lord Percy at the point with lustier maintenance than he did look for from such an unripe warrior.* ” But how well and unexpectedly soever he might have behaved upon that occasion, he does not seem to have been of a temper to trust fortune too much or too often with his safety; therefore it is that, in order to keep the event in his own hands, he loads the Die, in the present case, with villainy and deceit: The event however he piously ascribes, like a wise and prudent youth as he is, without paying that worship to himself which he so justly merits, to the special favour and interposition of Heaven.

“Strike up your drums, pursue the scattered stray.

Heaven, and not we, have safely fought to-day.”

But the profane *Falstaff* , on the contrary, less informed and less studious of supernatural things, imputes the whole of this conduct to thin potations, and the not drinking largely of good and excellent *sherris* ; and so little doubt does he seem to entertain of the Cowardice and ill disposition of this youth, that he stands devising causes, and casting about for an hypothesis on which the whole may be physically explained and accounted for;—but I shall leave him and Doctor *Cadogan* to settle that point as they may.

The only serious charge against *Falstaff* 's Courage, we have now at large examined; it came from great authority, from the Commander in chief, and was meant as chastisement and rebuke; but it appears to have been founded in ill-will, in the particular character of *Lancaster* , and in the wantonness and insolence of power; and the author has placed near, and under our notice, full and ample proofs of its injustice.—And thus the deeper we look unto *Falstaff* 's character, the stronger is our conviction that he was not intended to be shewn as a Constitutional coward: Censure cannot lay sufficient hold on him,—and even malice turns away, and more than half pronounces his acquittal.

But as yet we have dealt principally in parole and circumstantial evidence, and have referred to *Fact* only incidentally. But *Facts* have a much more operative influence: They may be produced, not as arguments only, but Records; not to dispute alone, but to decide.—It is time then to behold *Falstaff* in actual service as a soldier, in danger, and in battle. We have already displayed one fact in his defence against the censure of *Lancaster* ; a fact extremely unequivocal and decisive. But the reader knows I have others, and doubtless goes before me to the action at *Shrewsbury* . In the midst and in the heat of battle we see him come forwards;—what are his words? "*I have led my Rag-o-muffians where they are peppered; there's not three of my hundred and fifty left alive.* " But to *whom* does he say this? To himself only; he speaks *in soliloquy* . There is no questioning the fact, *he had* led *them* ; *they were peppered* ; *there were not three left alive.* He was in luck, being in bulk equal to any two of them, to escape unhurt. Let the author answer for that, I have nothing to do with it: He was the Poetic maker of the whole *Corps* , and he might dispose of them as he pleased. Well might the Chief justice, as we now find, acknowledge *Falstaff* 's services in this day's battle; an acknowledgment which amply confirms the fact. A Modern officer, who had performed a feat of this kind, would expect, not only the praise of having done his duty, but the appellation of a hero. But poor *Falstaff* has too much wit to thrive: In spite of probability, in spite of inference, in spite of fact, he must be a Coward still. He happens unfortunately to have more Wit than Courage, and therefore we are maliciously determined that he shall have no Courage at all. But let us suppose that his modes of expression, even *in soliloquy* , will admit of some abatement;—how much shall we abate? Say that he brought off *fifty* instead of *three* ; yet a Modern captain would be apt to look big after an action with two thirds of his men, as it were, in his belly. Surely *Shakespeare* never meant to exhibit this man as a Constitutional coward; if he did, his means were sadly destructive of his end. We see him, after he had expended his Rag-o-muffians, with sword and target in the midst of battle, in perfect possession of himself, and replete with humour and jocularity. He was, I presume, in some immediate personal danger, in danger also of a general defeat; too corpulent for flight; and to be led a prisoner was probably to be led to execution; yet we see him laughing and easy, offering a bottle of sack to the Prince instead of a pistol, punning, and telling him, “*there was that which would sack a city.* ”—“*What, is it a time* ,” says the Prince “*to jest and dally now?* ” No, a sober character would not jest on such an occasion, but a Coward could not; he would neither have the inclination, or the power. And what could support *Falstaff* in such a situation? Not principle; he is not suspected of the Point of honour; he seems indeed fairly to renounce it. “*Honour cannot set a leg or an arm; it has no skill in surgery:—What is it? a word only; meer air. It is insensible to the dead; and detraction will not let it live with the living.* ” What then but a strong natural constitutional Courage, which nothing could extinguish or dismay?—In the following passages the true character of *Falstaff* as to Courage and Principle is finely touched, and the different colours at once nicely blended and distinguished. “*If Percy be alive, I'll pierce him. If he do come in my way, so:—If he do not, if I come in his willingly, let him make a Carbonado of me. I like not such grinning honour as Sir Walter hath; give me life; which if I can save, so; if not, honour comes unlook'd for, and there's an end.* ” One cannot say which prevails most here, profligacy or courage; they are both tinged alike by the same humour, and mingled in one common mass; yet when we consider the superior force of *Percy* , as we must presently also that of *Douglas* , we shall be apt, I believe, in our secret heart, to forgive him. These passages are spoken in soliloquy and in battle: If every soliloquy made under similar circumstances were as audible as *Falstaff* 's, the imputation might perhaps be found too general for censure. These are among the passages that have impressed on the world an idea of Cowardice in *Falstaff* ;—yet why? He is resolute to take his fate: If *Percy* do come in his way, *so* ;—if not, he will not seek inevitable destruction; he is willing to save his life, but if that cannot be, why,—“honour comes unlook'd for, and there's an end.” This surely is not the language of Cowardice: It contains neither the Bounce or Whine of the character; he derides, it is true, and seems to renounce that grinning idol of Military zealots, *Honour* . But *Falstaff* has a kind of Military free-thinker, and has accordingly incurred the obloquy of his condition. He stands upon the ground of natural Courage only and common sense, and has, it seems, too much wit for a hero.—But let me be well understood;—I do not justify *Falstaff* for renouncing the point of honour; it proceeded doubtless from a general relaxation of mind, and profligacy of temper. Honour is calculated to aid and strengthen natural courage, and lift it up to heroism; but natural courage, which can act as such without honour, is natural courage still; the very quality I wish to maintain to *Falstaff* . And if, without the aid of honour, he can act with firmness, his portion is only the more eminent and distinguished. In such a character, it is to his actions, not his sentiments, that we are to look for conviction. But it may be still further urged in behalf of *Falstaff* , that there may be false honour as well as false religion. It is true; yet even in that case candour obliges me to confess that the best men are most disposed to conform, and most likely to become the dupes of their own virtue. But it may however be more reasonably urged that there are particular tenets both in honour and religion, which it is the grossness of folly not to question. To seek out, to court assured destruction, without leaving a single benefit behind, may be well reckoned in the number: And this is precisely the very folly which *Falstaff* seems to abjure;—nor are we, perhaps, intitled to say more, in the way of censure, than that he had not virtue enough to become the dupe of honour, nor prudence enough to hold his tongue. I am willing however, if the reader pleases, to compound this matter, and acknowledge, on my part, that *Falstaff* was in all respects the *old soldier* ; that he had put himself under the sober discipline of discretion, and renounced, in a great degree at least, what he might call the Vanities and Superstitions of honour; if the reader will, on his part, admit that this might well be, without his renouncing, at the same time, the natural firmness and resolution he was born to.

But there is a formidable objection behind. *Falstaff* counterfeits basely on being attacked by *Douglas* ; he assumes, in a cowardly spirit, the appearance of death to avoid the reality. But there was no equality of force; not the least chance for victory, or life. And is it the duty then, *think we still* , of true Courage, to meet, without benefit to society, *certain death* ? Or is it only the phantasy of honour?—But such a fiction is highly disgraceful;—true, and a man of nice honour might perhaps have *grinned* for it. But we must remember that *Falstaff* had a double character; he was a *wit* as well as a *soldier* ; and his Courage, however eminent, was but the *accessary* ; his wit was the *principal* ; and the part, which, if they should come in competition, he had the greatest interest in maintaining. Vain indeed were the licentiousness of his principles, if he should seek death like a bigot, yet without the meed of honour; when he might live by wit, and encrease the reputation of that wit by living. But why do I labour this point? It has been already anticipated, and our improved acquaintance with *Falstaff* will now require no more than a short narrative of the fact.

Whilst in the battle of *Shrewsbury* he is exhorting and encouraging the Prince who is engaged with the *Spirit Percy* —“*Well said Hal, to him Hal* ,”—he is himself attacked by the *Fiend Douglas* . There was no match; nothing remained but death or stratagem; grinning honour, or laughing life. But an expedient offers, a mirthful one,—Take your choice *Falstaff* , a point of honour, or a point of drollery.—It could not be a question;—*Falstaff* falls, *Douglas* is cheated, and the world laughs. But does he fall like a Coward? No, like a buffoon only; the superior principle prevails, and *Falstaff* lives by a stratagem growing out of his character, to prove himself *no counterfeit* , to jest, to be employed, and to fight again. That *Falstaff* valued himself, and expected to be valued by others, upon this piece of saving wit, is plain. It was a stratagem, it is true; it argued presence of mind; but it was moreover, what he most liked, a very laughable joke; and as such he considers it; for he continues to counterfeit after the danger is over, that he may also deceive the Prince, and improve the event into more laughter. He might, for ought that appears, have concealed the transaction; the Prince was too earnestly engaged for observation; he might have formed a thousand excuses for his fall; but he lies still and listens to the pronouncing of his epitaph by the Prince with all the waggish glee and levity of his character. The circumstance of his wounding *Percy* in the thigh, and carrying the dead body on his back like luggage, is *indecent* but not cowardly. The declaring, though in jest, that he killed *Percy* , seems to me *idle* , but it is not meant or calculated for *imposition* ; it is spoken to the *Prince himself* , the man in the world who could not be, or be supposed to be, imposed on. But we must hear, whether to the purpose or not, what it is that *Harry* has to say over the remains of his old friend.

P. Hen. What, old acquaintance! could not all this flesh

Keep in a little life? Poor *Jack* , farewell!

I could have better spared a better man.

Oh! I shou'd have a heavy miss of thee,

If I were much in love with vanity.

Death hath not struck so fat a *deer* to-day,

Tho' many a *dearer* in this bloody fray;

Imbowelled will I see thee by and by;

Till then, in blood by noble *Percy* lye.

This is wonderfully proper for the occasion; it is affectionate, it is pathetic, yet it remembers his vanities, and, with a faint gleam of recollected mirth, even his plumpness and corpulency; but it is a pleasantry softned and rendered even vapid by tenderness, and it goes off in the sickly effort of a miserable pun. —But to our immediate purpose,—why is not his Cowardice remembered too? what, no surprize that *Falstaff* should lye by the side of the noble *Percy* in the bed of honour! No reflection that flight, though unfettered by disease, could not avail; that fear could not find a subterfuge from death? Shall his corpulency and his vanities be recorded, and his more characteristic quality of Cowardice, even in the moment that it particularly demanded notice and reflection, be forgotten? If by sparing a better man be here meant a *better soldier* , there is no doubt but there were better Soldiers in the army, more active, more young, more principled, more knowing; but none, it seems, taken for all in all, more acceptable. The comparative *better* used here leaves to *Falstaff* the praise at least of *good* ; and to be a good soldier, is to be a great way from Coward. But *Falstaff* 's goodness, in this sort, appears to have been not only enough to redeem him from disgrace, but to mark him with reputation; if I was to add with *eminence* and *distinction* , the funeral honours which are intended his obsequies, and his being bid, till then, *to lye in blood by the noble Percy* , would fairly bear me out.

Upon the whole of the passages yet before us, why may I not reasonably hope that the good natured reader (and I write to no other), not offended at the levity of this exercise, may join with me in thinking that the character of *Falstaff* , as to valour, may be fairly and honestly summed up in the very words which he himself uses to *Harry* ; and which seem, as to this point, to be intended by *Shakespeare* as a *Compendium* of his character. “*What* ,” says the Prince, “*a Coward, Sir John Paunch!* ” *Falstaff* replies, “*Indeed I am not John of Gaunt your grandfather, but yet no Coward, Hal.* ”

The robbery at *Gads-Hill* comes now to be considered. But *here* , after such long argumentation, we may be allowed to breath a little.

I know not what Impression has been made on the reader; a good deal of evidence has been produced, and much more remains to be offered. But how many sorts of men are there whom no evidence can persuade! How many, who, ignorant of *Shakespeare* , or forgetful of the text, may as well read heathen Greek, or the laws of the land, as this unfortunate Commentary? How many, who, proud and pedantic, hate all novelty, and damn it without mercy under one compendious word, Paradox? How many more, who, not deriving their opinions immediately from the sovereignty of reason, hold at the will of some superior lord, to whom accident or inclination has attached them, and who, true to their vassalage, are resolute not to surrender, without express permission, their base and ill-gotten possessions. These, however habited, are the mob of mankind, who hoot and holla, hiss or huzza, just as their various leaders may direct. I *challenge* the whole Pannel as not holding by free tenure, and therefore not competent to the purpose either of condemnation or acquittal. But to the men of very nice honour what shall be said? I speak not of your men of good service, but such as Mr. —— "*Souls made of fire* , and *children of the sun* ." These gentlemen, I am sadly afraid, cannot in honour or prudence admit of any composition in the very nice article of Courage; *suspicion* is *disgrace* , and they cannot stay to parley with dishonour. The misfortune in cases of this kind is that it is not easy to obtain a fair and impartial Jury: When we censure others with an eye to our own applause, we are as seldom sparing of reproach, as inquisitive into circumstance; and bold is the man who, tenacious of justice, shall venture to weigh circumstances, or draw lines of distinction between Cowardice and any apparently similar or neighbour quality: As well may a lady, virgin or matron, of immaculate honour, presume to pity or palliate the soft failing of some unguarded friend, and thereby confess, as it were, those sympathetic feelings which it behoves her to conceal under the most contemptuous disdain; a disdain, always proportioned, I believe, to a certain consciousness which we must not explain. I am afraid that poor *Falstaff* has suffered not a little, and may yet suffer by this fastidiousness of temper. But though we may find these classes of men rather unfavourable to our wishes, the Ladies, one may hope, whose smiles are most worth our ambition, may be found more propitious; yet they too, through a generous conformity to the *brave* , are apt to take up the high tone of honour. Heroism is an idea perfectly conformable to the natural delicacy and elevation of their minds. Should we be fortunate enough therefore to redeem *Falstaff* from the imputations of Cowardice, yet plain Courage, I am afraid, will not serve the turn: Even their heroes, I think, must be for the most part in the bloom of youth, or *just where youth ends, in manhood's freshest prime* ; but to be "*Old, cold, and of intolerable entrails; to be fat and greasy; as poor as Job, and as slanderous as Satan* ";—Take him away, he merits not a fair trial; he is too offensive to be turned, too odious to be touched. I grant, indeed, that the subject of our lecture is not without his infirmity; "*He cuts three inches on the ribs, he was short-winded* ," and his breath possibly not of the sweetest. "*He had the gout* ," or something worse, "*which played the rogue with his great toe.* "—But these considerations are not to the point; we shall conceal, as much as may be, these offences; our business is with his *heart* only, which, as we shall endeavour to demonstrate, lies in the right place, and is firm and sound, notwithstanding a few indications to the contrary.—As for you, *Mrs.* Montague, I am grieved to find that *you* have been involved in a popular error; so much you must allow me to say;—for the rest, I bow to your genius and your virtues: You have given to the world a very elegant composition; and I am told your manners and your mind are yet more pure, more elegant than your book. *Falstaff* was too gross, too infirm, for your inspection; but if you durst have looked nearer, you would not have found Cowardice in the number of his infirmities.—We will try if we cannot redeem him from this universal censure.—Let the venal corporation of authors duck *to the golden fool* , let them shape their sordid quills to the mercenary ends of unmerited praise, or of baser detraction;—*old Jack* , though deserted by princes, though censured by an ungrateful world, and persecuted from age to age by Critic and Commentator, and though never rich enough to hire one literary prostitute, shall find a Voluntary defender; and that too at a time when the whole body of the *Nabobry* demands and requires defence; whilst their ill-gotten and almost untold gold feels loose in their unassured grasp, and whilst they are ready to shake off portions of the enormous heap, that they may the more securely clasp the remainder.—But not to digress without end,—to the candid, to the chearful, to the elegant reader we appeal; our exercise is much too light for the sour eye of strict severity; it professes amusement only, but we hope of a kind more rational than the History of Miss *Betsy* , eked out with the Story of Miss *Lucy* , and the Tale of Mr. *Twankum* : And so, in a leisure hour, and with the good natured reader, it may be hoped, to friend, we return, with an air as busy and important as if we were engaged in the grave office of measuring the *Pyramids* , or settling the antiquity of *Stonehenge* , to converse with this jovial, this fat, this roguish, this frail, but, I think, *not cowardly* companion.

Though the robbery at *Gads-Hill* , and the supposed Cowardice of *Falstaff* on that occasion, are next to be considered, yet I must previously declare, that I think the discussion of this matter to be *now* unessential to the reestablishment of *Falstaff* 's reputation as a man of Courage. For suppose we should grant, in form, that *Falstaff* was surprized with fear in this single instance, that he was off his guard, and even acted like a Coward; what will follow, but that *Falstaff* , like greater heroes, had his weak moment, and was not exempted from panic and surprize? If a single exception can destroy a general character, *Hector* was a *Coward* , and *Anthony* a *Poltroon* . But for these seeming contradictions of Character we shall seldom be at a loss to account, if we carefully refer to circumstance and situation.—In the present instance, *Falstaff* had done an illegal act; the exertion was over; and he had unbent his mind in security. The spirit of enterprize, and the animating principle of hope, were withdrawn:—In this situation, he is unexpectedly attacked; he has no time to recall his thoughts, or bend his mind to action. He is not now acting in the Profession and in the Habits of a Soldier; he is associated with known Cowards; his assailants are vigorous, sudden, and bold; he is conscious of guilt; he has dangers to dread of every form, present and future; prisons and gibbets, as well as sword and fire; he is surrounded with darkness, and the Sheriff, the Hangman, and the whole *Posse Commitatus* may be at his heels:—Without a moment for reflection, is it wonderful that, under these circumstances, “*he should run and roar, and carry his guts away with as much dexterity as possible* ”?

But though I might well rest the question on this ground, yet as there remains many good topics of vindication, and as I think a more minute inquiry into this matter will only bring out more evidence in support of *Falstaff* 's constitutional Courage, I will not decline the discussion. I beg permission therefore to state fully, as well as fairly, the whole of this obnoxious transaction, this unfortunate robbery at *Gads-Hill* .

In the scene wherein we become first acquainted with *Falstaff* , his character is opened in a manner worthy of *Shakespeare* : We see him in a green old age, mellow, frank, gay, easy, corpulent, loose, unprincipled, and luxurious; a *Robber* , as he says, *by his vocation* ; yet not altogether so:—There was much, it seems, of mirth and *recreation* in the case: “*The poor abuses of the times* ,” he wantonly and humourously tells the Prince, “*want countenance; and he hates to see resolution fobbed off, as it is, by the rusty curb of old father antic, the law* .”—When he quits the scene, we are acquainted that he is only passing to the Tavern: “*Farewell,* ” says he, with an air of careless jollity and gay content, “*You will find me in East-Cheap.* ” “*Farewell,* ” says the Prince, “*thou latter spring; farewell, all-hallown summer.* ” But though all this is excellent for *Shakespeare* 's purposes, we find, as yet at least, no hint of *Falstaff* 's Cowardice, no appearance of Braggadocio, or any preparation whatever for laughter under this head.—The instant *Falstaff* is withdrawn, *Poins* opens to the Prince his meditated scheme of a double robbery; and here then we may reasonably expect to be let into these parts of *Falstaff* 's character.—We shall see.

Poins. “*Now my good sweet lord, ride with us tomorrow; I have a jest to execute that I cannot manage alone. Falstaff, Bardolph, Peto, and Gadshill shall rob those men that we have already waylaid; yourself and I will not be there; and when they have the booty, if you and I do not rob them, cut this head from off my shoulders.* ”

This is giving strong surety for his words; perhaps he thought the case required it: “*But how* ,” says the Prince, “*shall we part with them in setting forth?* ” *Poins* is ready with his answer; he had matured the thought, and could solve every difficulty:—“*They could set out before, or after; their horses might be tied in the wood; they could change their visors; and he had already procured cases of buckram to inmask their outward garments.* ” This was going far; it was doing business in good earnest. But if we look into the Play we shall be better able to account for this activity; we shall find that there was at least as much malice as jest in *Poins* 's intention. The rival situations of *Poins* and *Falstaff* had produced on both sides much jealousy and ill will, which occasionally appears, in *Shakespeare* 's manner, by side lights, without confounding the main action; and by the little we see of this *Poins* , he appears to be an unamiable, if not a very brutish and bad, character.—But to pass this;—the Prince next says, with a deliberate and wholesome caution, “*I doubt they will be too hard for us.* ” *Poins* 's reply is remarkable; “*Well, for two of them, I know them to be as true bred Cowards as ever turned back; and for the third, if he fights longer than he sees cause, I will forswear arms.* ” There is in this reply a great deal of management: There were *four* persons in all, as *Poins* well knew, and he had himself, but a little before, named them,—*Falstaff* , *Bardolph* , *Peto* , and *Gadshill* ; but now he omits one of the number, which must be either *Falstaff* , as not subject to any imputation in point of Courage; and in that case *Peto* will be the *third* ;—or, as I rather think, in order to diminish the force of the Prince's objection, he artfully drops *Gadshill* , who was then out of town, and might therefore be supposed to be less in the Prince's notice; and upon this supposition *Falstaff* will be the *third, who will not fight longer than he sees reason* . But on either supposition, what evidence is there of a pre-supposed Cowardice in *Falstaff* ? On the contrary, what stronger evidence can we require that the Courage of *Falstaff* had to this hour, through various trials, stood wholly unimpeached, than that *Poins* , the ill-disposed *Poins* , who ventures, for his own purposes, to steal, as it were, *one* of the *four* from the notice and memory of the Prince, and who shews himself, from worse motives, as skilfull in *diminishing* as *Falstaff* appears afterwards to be in *increasing* of numbers, than that this very *Poins* should not venture to put down *Falstaff* in the list of Cowards; though the occasion so strongly required that he should be degraded. What *Poins* dares do however in this sort, he *does* . “*As to the third* ,” for so he describes *Falstaff* (as if the name of this Veteran would have excited too strongly the ideas of Courage and resistance), “*if he fights longer than he sees reason, I will forswear arms.* ” This is the old trick of cautious and artful malice: The turn of expression, or the tone of voice does all; for as to the words themselves, simply considered, they might be now truly spoken of almost any man who ever lived, except the iron-headed hero of *Sweden* .—But *Poins* however adds something, which may appear more decisive; “*The virtue of this jest will be the incomprehensible lyes which this fat rogue will tell when we meet at supper; how thirty at least he fought with; and what wards, what blows, what extremities, he endured: And in the reproof of this lies the jest* ”:—Yes, and the *malice* too.—This prediction was unfortunately fulfilled, even beyond the letter of it; a completion more incident, perhaps, to the predictions of malice than of affection. But we shall presently see how far either the prediction, or the event, will go to the impeachment of *Falstaff* 's Courage.—The Prince, who is never duped, comprehends the whole of *Poins* 's views. But let that pass.

In the next scene we behold all the parties at *Gads-Hill* in preparation for the robbery. Let us carefully examine if it contains any intimation of Cowardice in *Falstaff* . He is shewn under a very ridiculous vexation about his horse, which is hid from him; but this is nothing to the purpose, or only proves that *Falstaff* knew no terror equal to that of walking *eight yards of uneven ground* . But on occasion of *Gadshill* 's being asked concerning the number of the travellers, and having reported that they were eight or ten, *Falstaff* exclaims, “*Zounds! will they not rob us!* ” If he had said more seriously, “*I doubt they will be too hard for us* ,”—he would then have only used the Prince's own words upon a less alarming occasion. This cannot need defence. But the Prince, in his usual stile of mirth, replies, “*What a Coward, Sir John Paunch!* ” To this one would naturally expect from *Falstaff* some light answer; but we are surprized with a very serious one; —“*I am not indeed John of Gaunt your grandfather, but yet no Coward, Hal.* ” This is singular: It contains, I think, the true character of *Falstaff* ; and it seems to be thrown out *here* , at a very critical conjuncture, as a caution to the audience not to take too sadly what was intended only (to use the Prince's words) “*as argument for a week, laughter for a month, and a good jest for ever after* .” The whole of *Falstaff* 's past life could not, it should seem, furnish the Prince with a reply, and he is, therefore, obliged to draw upon the coming hope. “*Well* ,” says he, *mysteriously* , “*let the event try* ”; meaning the event of the concerted attack on *Falstaff* ; an event so probable, that he might indeed venture to rely on it.—But the travellers approach: The Prince hastily proposes a division of strength; that he with *Poins* should take a station separate from the rest, so that if the travellers should escape one party, they might light on the other: *Falstaff* does not object, though he supposes the travellers to be eight or ten in number. We next see *Falstaff* attack these travellers with alacrity, using the accustomed words of threat and terror;—they make no resistance, and he binds and robs them.

Hitherto I think there has not appeared the least *trait* either of boast or fear in *Falstaff* . But now comes on the concerted transaction, which has been the source of so much dishonour. *As they are sharing the booty* (says the stage direction) *the Prince and Poins set upon them, they all run away; and Falstaff after a blow or two runs away too, leaving the booty behind them.* —"*Got with much ease,* " says the Prince, as an event beyond expectation, "*Now merrily to horse.* "—Poins adds, as they are going off, "*How the rogue roared!* " This observation is afterwards remembered by the Prince, who, urging the jest to *Falstaff* , says, doubtless with all the licence of exaggeration,—"*And you, Falstaff, carried your guts away as nimbly, with as quick dexterity, and roared for mercy, and still ran and roared, as I ever heard bull-calf.* " If he did roar for mercy, it must have been a very inarticulate sort of roaring; for there is not a single word set down for *Falstaff* from which this roaring may be inferred, or any stage direction to the actor for that purpose: But, in the spirit of mirth and derision, the lightest exclamation might be easily converted into the roar of a bull-calf.

We have now gone through this transaction considered simply on its own circumstances, and without reference to any future boast or imputation. It is upon these circumstances the case must be tried, and every colour subsequently thrown upon it, either by wit or folly, ought to be discharged. Take it, then, as it stands hitherto, with reference only to its own preceding and concomitant circumstances, and to the unbounded ability of *Shakespeare* to obtain his own ends, and we must, I think, be compelled to confess that this transaction was never intended by *Shakespeare* to detect and expose the false pretences of a real Coward; but, on the contrary, to involve a man of allowed Courage, though in other respects of a very peculiar character, in such circumstances and suspicions of Cowardice as might, by the operation of those peculiarities, produce afterwards much temporary mirth among his familiar and intimate companions: Of this we cannot require a stronger proof than the great attention which is paid to the decorum and truth of character in the stage direction already quoted: It appears, from thence, that it was not thought *decent* that *Falstaff* should run at all, until he had been deserted by his companions, and had even afterwards exchanged blows with his assailants;—and thus, a just distinction is kept up between the natural Cowardice of the three associates and the accidental Terror of *Falstaff* .

Hitherto, then, I think it is very clear that no laughter either is, or is intended to be, raised upon the score of *Falstaff* 's Cowardice. For after all, it is not singularly ridiculous that an old inactive man of no boast, as far as appears, or extraordinary pretensions to valour, should endeavour to save himself by flight from the assault of two bold and vigorous assailants. The very Players, who are, I think, the very worst judges of *Shakespeare* , have been made sensible, I suppose from long experience, that there is nothing in this transaction to excite any extraordinary laughter; but this they take to be a defect in the management of their author, and therefore I imagine it is, that they hold themselves obliged to supply the vacancy, and fill it up with some low buffoonery of their own. Instead of the dispatch necessary on this occasion, they bring *Falstaff* , *stuffing and all* , to the very front of the stage; where, with much mummery and grimace, he seats himself down, with a canvas money-bag in his hand, to divide the spoil. In this situation he is attacked by the Prince and *Poins* , whose tin swords hang idly in the air and delay to strike till the *Player Falstaff* , who seems more troubled with flatulence than fear, is able to rise: which is not till after some ineffectual efforts, and with the assistance (to the best of my memory) of one of the thieves, who lingers behind, in spite of terror, for this friendly purpose; after which, without any resistance on his part, he is goaded off the stage like a fat ox for slaughter by these *stony-hearted* drivers in *buckram* . I think he does not *roar* ; —perhaps the player had never perfected himself in the tones of a bull-calf. This whole transaction should be shewn between the interstices of a back scene: The less we see in such cases, the better we conceive. Something of resistance and afterwards of celerity in flight we should be made witnesses of; the *roar* we should take on the credit of *Poins* . Nor is there any occasion for all that bolstering with which they fill up the figure of *Falstaff* ; they do not distinguish betwixt humourous exaggeration and necessary truth. The Prince is called *starveling* , *dried neat's tongue* , *stock-fish* , and other names of the same nature. They might with almost as good reason search the glass-houses for some exhausted stoker to furnish out a Prince of *Wales* of sufficient correspondence to this picture.

We next come to the scene of *Falstaff* 's braggadocioes. I have already wandered too much into details; yet I must, however, bring *Falstaff* forward to this last scene of trial in all his proper colouring and proportions. The progressive discovery of *Falstaff* 's character is excellently managed.—In the first scene we become acquainted with his figure, which we must in some degree consider as a part of his character; we hear of his gluttony and his debaucheries, and become witnesses of that indistinguishable mixture of humour and licentiousness which runs through his whole character; but what we are principally struck with, is the ease of his manners and deportment, and the unaffected freedom and wonderful pregnancy of his wit and humour. We see him, in the next scene, agitated with vexation: His horse is concealed from him, and he gives on this occasion so striking a description of his distress, and his words so labour and are so loaded with heat and vapour, that, but for laughing, we should pity him; laugh, however, we must at the extreme incongruity of a man, at once corpulent and old, associating with youth in an enterprize demanding the utmost extravagance of spirit, and all the wildness of activity: And this it is which make his complaints so truly ridiculous. "*Give me my horse!* " says he, in another spirit than that of *Richard* ; "*Eight yards of uneven ground* ," adds this *Forrester of Diana* , this *enterprising gentleman of the shade* , "*is threescore and ten miles a-foot with me.* "—In the heat and agitation of the robbery, out comes more and more extravagant instances of incongruity. Though he is most probably older and much fatter than either of the travellers, yet he calls them, *Bacons, Bacon-fed, and gorbellied knaves* : "*Hang them* ," says he, "*fat chuffs, they hate us youth: What! young men, must live:—You are grand Jurors, are ye? We'll jure ye, i' faith.* " But, as yet, we do not see the whole length and breadth of him: This is reserved for the braggadocio scene. We expect entertainment, but we don't well know of what kind. *Poins* , by his prediction, has given us a hint: But we do not see or feel *Falstaff* to be a Coward, much less a boaster; without which even Cowardice is not sufficiently ridiculous; and therefore it is, that on the stage we find them always connected. In this uncertainty on our part, he is, with much artful preparation, produced.—His entrance is delayed to stimulate our expectation; and, at last, to take off the dullness of anticipation, and to add surprize to pleasure, he is called in, as if for another purpose of mirth than what we are furnished with: We now behold him, fluctuating with fiction, and labouring with dissembled passion and chagrin: Too full for utterance, *Poins* provokes him by a few simple words, containing a fine contrast of affected ease, —"*Welcome, Jack, where hast thou been?* " But when we hear him burst forth, "*A plague on all Cowards! Give me a cup of sack. Is there no virtue extant!* "—We are at once in possession of the whole man, and are ready to hug him, guts, lyes and all, as an inexhaustible fund of pleasantry and humour. *Cowardice* , I apprehend, is out of our thought; it does not, I think, mingle in our mirth. As to this point, I have presumed to say already, and I repeat it, that we are, in my opinion, the dupes of our own wisdom, of systematic reasoning, of second thought, and after reflection. The first spectators, I believe, thought of nothing but the laughable scrape which so singular a character was falling into, and were delighted to see a humourous and unprincipled wit so happily taken in his own inventions, precluded from all rational defence, and driven to the necessity of crying out, after a few ludicrous evasions, *“No more of that, Hal, if thou lov'st me.”*

I do not conceive myself obliged to enter into a consideration of *Falstaff*'s lyes concerning the transaction at *Gad's-Hill*. I have considered his conduct as independent of those lyes; I have examined the whole of it apart, and found it free of Cowardice or fear, except in one instance, which I have endeavoured to account for and excuse. I have therefore a right to infer that those lyes are to be derived, not from Cowardice, but from some other part of his character, which it does not concern me to examine: But I have not contented myself hitherto with this sort of negative defence; and the reader I believe is aware that I am resolute (though I confess not untired) to carry this fat rogue out of the reach of every imputation which affects, or may seem to affect, his natural Courage.

The first observation then which strikes us, as to his braggadocioes, is, that they are braggadocioes *after the fact*. In other cases we see the Coward of the Play bluster and boast for a time, talk of distant wars, and private duels, out of the reach of knowledge and of evidence; of storms and stratagems, and of falling in upon the enemy pell-mell and putting thousands to the sword; till, at length, on the proof of some present and apparent fact, he is brought to open and *lasting* shame; to shame I mean as a *Coward*; for as to what there is of *lyar* in the case, it is considered only as accessory, and scarcely reckoned into the account of dishonour.—But in the instance before us, every thing is reversed: The Play opens with the *Fact*; a Fact, from its circumstances as well as from the age and inactivity of the man, very excusable and capable of much apology, if not of defence. This Fact is preceded by no bluster or pretence whatever;—the lyes and braggadocioes follow; but they are not *general*; they are confined and have reference to this one Fact only; the detection is *immediate*; and after some accompanying mirth and laughter, the shame of that detection ends; it has no *duration*, as in other cases; and, for the rest of the Play, the character stands just where it did before, *without any punishment or degradation whatever*.

To account for all this, let us only suppose that *Falstaff* was a man of natural Courage, though in all respects unprincipled; but that he was surprized in one single instance into an act of real terror; which, instead of excusing upon circumstances, he endeavours to cover by lyes and braggadocio; and that these lyes become thereupon the subject, in this place, of detection. Upon these suppositions the whole difficulty will vanish at once, and every thing be natural, common, and plain. The *Fact* itself will be of course *excusable* ; that is, it will arise out of a combination of such circumstances as, being applicable to one case only, will not destroy the general character: It will not be *preceded* by any braggadocio, containing any fair indication of Cowardice; as real Cowardice is not supposed to exist in the character. But the first act of real or apparent Cowardice would naturally throw a vain unprincipled man into the use of lyes and braggadocio; but these would have reference only to the *Fact in question* , and not apply to other cases or infect his general character, which is not supposed to stand in need of imposition. Again,—the detection of Cowardice, as such, is more diverting after a long and various course of Pretence, where the lye of character is preserved, as it were, whole, and brought into sufficient magnitude for a burst of discovery; yet, mere occasional lyes, such as *Falstaff* is hereby supposed to utter, are, for the purpose of sport, best detected in the telling; because, indeed, they cannot be preserved for a future time; the exigence and the humour will be past: But the *shame* arising to *Falstaff* from the detection of *mere lyes* would be *temporary only* ; his character as to this point, being already known, and *tolerated for the humour* . Nothing, therefore, could follow but mirth and laughter, and the temporary triumph of baffling a wit at his own weapons, and reducing him to an absolute surrender: After which, we ought not to be surprized if we see him rise again, like a boy from play, and run another race with as little dishonour as before.

What then can we say, but that it is clearly the lyes only, not the *Cowardice* , of *Falstaff* which are here detected: *Lyes* , to which what there may be of Cowardice is incidental only, improving indeed the Jest, but by no means the real Business of the scene.—And now also we may more clearly discern the true force and meaning of *Poin* 's prediction. “*The Jest will be* ,” says he, “*the incomprehensible Lyes that this fat rogue will tell us: How thirty at least he fought with:—and in the reproof of this lyes the jest* ”; That is, in the detection of these lyes *simply* ; for as to *Courage* , he had never ventured to insinuate more than that *Falstaff* would not fight longer than he saw cause: *Poins* was in expectation indeed that *Falstaff* would fall into some dishonour on this occasion; an event highly probable: But this was not, it seems, to be the principal ground of their mirth, but the detection of those *incomprehensible lyes* , which he boldly predicts, upon his knowledge of *Falstaff* 's character, this *fat rogue* , not *Coward* , would tell them. This prediction therefore, and the completion of it, go only to the impeachment of *Falstaff's veracity* , and not of his *Courage* . “*These lyes* ,” says the Prince, “*are like the father of them, gross as a mountain, open, palpable.—Why, thou clay-brained gutts, thou knotty-pated fool; how couldst* *thou know these men in Kendal Green, when it was so dark thou couldst not see thy hand? Come, tell us your reason.* ”

“Poins. *Come, your reason, Jack, your reason.* ”

Again, says the Prince, *“Hear how a plain Tale shall put you down—What trick, what device, what starting hole canst thou now find out to hide thee from this open and apparent shame?* ”

“Poins. *Come, let's hear, Jack, what trick hast thou now?* ”

All this clearly refers to *Falstaff* 's lyes only *as such* ; and the objection seems to be, that he had not told them well, and with sufficient skill and probability. Indeed nothing seems to have been required of *Falstaff* at any period of time but a good evasion. The truth is, that there is so much mirth, and so little of malice or imposition in his fictions, that they may for the most part be considered as mere strains of humour and exercises of wit, impeachable only for defect, when that happens, of the quality from which they are principally derived. Upon this occasion *Falstaff* 's evasions fail him; he is at the end of his invention; and it seems fair that, in defect of wit, the law should pass upon him, and that he should undergo the temporary censure of that Cowardice which he could not pass off by any evasion whatever. The best he could think of, was *instinct* : He was indeed a *Coward upon instinct* ; in that respect *like a valiant lion, who would not touch the true Prince* . It would have been a vain attempt, the reader will easily perceive, in *Falstaff* , to have gone upon other ground, and to have aimed at justifying his Courage by a serious vindication: This would have been to have mistaken the true point of argument: It was his *lyes* , not his *Courage* , which was really in question. There was besides no getting out of the toils in which he had entangled himself: If he was not, he ought at least, by his own shewing, to have *been at half-sword with a dozen of them two hours together* ; whereas, it unfortunately appears, and that too evidently to be evaded, that he had run with singular celerity from *two* , after the exchange of *a few blows* only. This precluded *Falstaff* from all rational defence in his own person;—but it has not precluded me, who am not the advocate of his *lyes* , but of his *Courage* .

But there are other singularities in *Falstaff* 's lyes, which go more directly to his vindication.—That they are confined to one scene and one occasion only, we are not *now* at a loss to account for;—but what shall we say to their extravagance? The lyes of *Parolles* and *Bobadill* are brought into some shape; but the fictions of *Falstaff* are so preposterous and *incomprehensible* , that one may fairly doubt if they ever were intended for credit; and therefore, if they ought to be called *lyes* , and not rather *humour* ; or, to compound the matter, *humourous rhodomontades* . Certain it is, that they destroy their own purpose, and are clearly not the effect, in this respect, of a regulated practice, and a habit of imposition. The real truth seems to be, that had *Falstaff* , loose and unprincipled as he is, been born a Coward and bred a Soldier, he must, naturally, have been a great *Braggadocio* , a true *miles gloriosus* . But in such case he should have been exhibited active and young; for it is plain that age and corpulency are an excuse for Cowardice, which ought not to be afforded him. In the present case, wherein he was not only involved in suspicious circumstances, but wherein he seems to have felt some conscious touch of infirmity, and having no candid construction to expect from his laughing companions, he bursts at once, and with all his might, into the most unweighed and preposterous fictions, determined to put to proof on this occasion his boasted talent of *swearing truth out of England* . He tried it here, to its utmost extent, and was unfortunately routed on his own ground; which indeed, with such a mine beneath his feet, could not be otherwise. But without this, he had mingled in his deceits so much whimsical humour and fantastic exaggeration that he must have been detected; and herein appears the admirable address of *Shakespeare* , who can shew us *Falstaff* in the various light, not only of what he is, but what he would have been under one single variation of character,—the want of natural Courage; whilst with an art not enough understood, he most effectually preserves the real character of *Falstaff* even in the moment he seems to depart from it, by making his lyes too extravagant for practised imposition; by grounding them more upon humour than deceit; and turning them, as we shall next see, into a fair and honest proof of general Courage, by appropriating them to the concealment only of a single exception. And hence it is, that we see him draw so deeply and so confidently upon his former credit for Courage and atchievment: “*I never dealt better in my life,—thou know'st my old ward, Hal* ,” are expressions which clearly refer to some known feats and defences of his former life. His exclamations against Cowardice, his reference to his own manhood, “*Die when thou wilt, old Jack, if manhood, good manhood, be not forgot upon the face of the earth, then am I a shotten herring* ”: These, and various expressions such as these, would be absurdities not impositions, Farce not Comedy, if not calculated to conceal some defect supposed unknown to the hearers; and these hearers were, in the present case, his constant companions, and the daily witnesses of his conduct. If before this period he had been a known and detected Coward, and was conscious that he had no credit to lose, I see no reason why he should fly so violently from a familiar ignominy which had often before attacked him; or why falshoods, seemingly in such a case neither calculated for or expecting credit, should be censured, or detected, as lyes or imposition.

That the whole transaction was considered as a mere jest, and as carrying with it no serious imputation on the Courage of *Falstaff* , is manifest, not only from his being allowed, when the laugh was past, to call himself, without contradiction in the personated character of *Hal* himself, “valiant *Jack Falstaff, and the more valiant being, as he is* , old Jack Falstaff,” but from various other particulars, and, above all, from the declaration, which the Prince makes on that very night, of his intention of procuring this *fat rogue a Charge of foot* ;—a circumstance, doubtless, contrived by *Shakespeare* to wipe off the seeming dishonour of the day: And from this time forward we hear of no imputation arising from this transaction; it is born and dies in a convivial hour; it leaves no trace behind, nor do we see any longer in the character of *Falstaff* the boasting or braggadocio of a Coward.

Tho' I have considered *Falstaff* 's character as relative only to one single quality, yet so much has been said, that it cannot escape the reader's notice that he is a character made up by *Shakespeare* wholly of incongruities;—a man at once young and old, enterprizing and fat, a dupe and a wit, harmless and wicked, weak in principle and resolute by constitution, cowardly in appearance and brave in reality; a knave without malice, a lyar without deceit; and a knight, a gentleman, and a soldier, without either dignity, decency, or honour: This is a character, which, though it may be de-compounded, could not, I believe, have been formed, nor the ingredients of it duly mingled, upon any receipt whatever: It required the hand of *Shakespeare* himself to give to every particular part a relish of the whole, and of the whole to every particular part;—alike the same incongruous, identical *Falstaff* , whether to the grave Chief Justice he vainly talks of his youth, and offers to *caper for a thousand* ; or cries to Mrs. *Doll* , “*I am old, I am old* ,” though she is seated on his lap, and he is courting her for busses. How *Shakespeare* could furnish out sentiment of so extraordinary a composition, and supply it with such appropriated and characteristic language, humour and wit, I cannot tell; but I may, however, venture to infer, and that confidently, that he who so well understood the uses of incongruity, and that laughter was to be raised by the opposition of qualities in the same man, and not by their agreement or conformity, would never have attempted to raise mirth by shewing us Cowardice in a Coward unattended by Pretence, and softened by every excuse of age, corpulence, and infirmity: And of this we cannot have a more striking proof than his furnishing this very character, on one instance of real terror, however excusable, with boast, braggadocio, and pretence, exceeding that of all other stage Cowards the whole length of his superior wit, humour, and invention.

What then upon the whole shall be said but that *Shakespeare* has made certain Impressions, or produced certain effects, of which he has thought fit to conceal or obscure the cause? How he has done this, and for what special ends, we shall now presume to guess.—Before the period in which *Shakespeare* wrote, the fools and Zanys of the stage were drawn out of the coarsest and cheapest materials: Some essential folly, with a dash of knave and coxcomb, did the feat. But *Shakespeare* , who delighted in difficulties, was resolved to furnish a richer repast, and to give to one eminent buffoon the high relish of wit, humour, birth, dignity, and Courage. But this was a process which required the nicest hand, and the utmost management and address: These enumerated qualities are, in their own nature, productive of *respect* ; an Impression the most opposite to laughter that can be. This Impression then, it was, at all adventures, necessary to withhold; which could not perhaps well be without dressing up these qualities in fantastic forms, and colours not their own; and thereby cheating the eye with shews of baseness and of folly, whilst he stole as it were upon the palate a richer and a fuller *goût* . To this end, what arts, what contrivances, has he not practised! How has he steeped this singular character in bad habits for fifty years together, and brought him forth saturated with every folly and with every vice not destructive of his essential character, or incompatible with his own primary design! For this end, he has deprived *Falstaff* of every good principle; and for another, which will be presently mentioned, he has concealed every bad one. He has given him also every infirmity of body that is not likely to awaken our compassion, and which is most proper to render both his better qualities and his vices ridiculous: he has associated levity and debauch with *age* , corpulence and inactivity with *courage* , and has roguishly coupled the gout with *Military honours* , and a *pension* with the *pox* . He has likewise involved this character in situations, out of which neither wit nor Courage can extricate him with honour. The surprize at *Gads-Hill* might have betrayed a hero into flight, and the encounter with *Douglas* left him no choice but death or stratagem. If he plays an after-game, and endeavours to redeem his ill fortune by lies and braggadocio, his ground fails him; no wit, no evasion will avail: Or is he likely to appear respectable in his person, rank, and demeanor, how is that respect abated or discharged! *Shakespeare* has given him a kind of state indeed; but of what is it composed? Of that fustian cowardly rascal *Pistol* , and his yoke-fellow of few words, the equally deed-less *Nym* ; of his cup-bearer the fiery *Trigon* , whose zeal burns in his nose, *Bardolph* ; and of the boy, who bears the purse with *seven groats and two-pence* ;—a boy who was given him on purpose to set him off, and whom he walks *before* , according to his own description, “*like a sow that had overwhelmed all her litter but one* .”

But it was not enough to render *Falstaff* ridiculous in his figure, situations, and equipage; *still* his respectable qualities would have come forth, at least occasionally, to spoil our mirth; or they might have burst the intervention of such slight impediments, and have every where shone through: It was necessary then to go farther, and throw on him that substantial ridicule, which only the incongruities of real vice can furnish; of vice, which was to be so mixed and blended with his frame as to give a durable character and colour to the whole.

But it may here be necessary to detain the reader a moment in order to apprize him of my further intention; without which, I might hazard that good understanding, which I hope has hitherto been preserved between us.

I have 'till now looked only to the Courage of *Falstaff* , a quality which, having been denied, in terms, to belong to his constitution, I have endeavoured to vindicate to the Understandings of my readers; the Impression on their Feelings (in which all Dramatic truth consists) being already, as I have supposed, in favour of the character. In the pursuit of this subject I have taken the general Impression of the whole character pretty much, I suppose, like other men; and, when occasion has required, have so transmitted it to the reader; joining in the common Feeling of *Falstaff* 's pleasantry, his apparent freedom from ill principle, and his companionable wit and good humour: With a stage character, in the article of exhibition, we have nothing more to do; for in fact what is it but an Impression; an appearance, which we are to consider as a reality, and which we may venture to applaud or condemn as such, without further inquiry or investigation? But if we would account for our Impressions, or for certain sentiments or actions in a character, not derived from its apparent principles, yet appearing, we know not why, natural, we are then compelled to look farther, and examine if there be not something more in the character than is *shewn* ; something inferred, which is not brought under our special notice: In short, we must look to the art of the writer, and to the principles of human nature, to discover the hidden causes of such effects.—Now this is a very different matter.—The former considerations respected the Impression only, without regard to the Understanding; but this question relates to the Understanding alone. It is true that there are but few Dramatic characters which will bear this kind of investigation, as not being drawn in exact conformity to those principles of general nature to which we must refer. But this is not the case with regard to the characters of *Shakespeare* ; they are struck out *whole* , by some happy art which I cannot clearly comprehend, out of the general mass of things, from the block as it were of nature: And it is, I think, an easier thing to give a just draught of man from these Theatric forms, which I cannot help considering as originals, than by drawing from real life, amidst so much intricacy, obliquity, and disguise. If therefore, for further proofs of *Falstaff* 's Courage, or for the sake of curious speculation, or for both, I change my position, and look to causes instead of effects, the reader must not be surprized if he finds the former *Falstaff* vanish like a dream, and another, of more disgustful form, presented to his view; one whose final punishment we shall be so far from regretting, that we ourselves shall be ready to consign him to a severer doom.

The reader will very easily apprehend that a character, which we might wholly disapprove of, considered as existing in human life, may yet be thrown on the stage into certain peculiar situations, and be compressed by external influences into such temporary appearances, as may render such character for a time highly acceptable and entertaining, and even more distinguished for qualities, which on this supposition would be accidents only, than another character really possessing those qualities, but which, under the pressure of the same situation and influences, would be distorted into a different form, or totally left in timidity and weakness. If therefore the character before us will admit of this kind of investigation, our Inquiry will not be without some dignity, considered as extending to the principles of human nature, and to the genius and arts of Him, who has best caught every various form of the human mind, and transmitted them with the greatest happiness and fidelity.

To return then to the vices of *Falstaff* .—We have frequently referred to them under the name of ill habits;—but perhaps the reader is not fully aware how very vicious he indeed is;—he is a robber, a glutton, a cheat, a drunkard, and a lyar; lascivious, vain, insolent, profligate, and profane:—A fine infusion this, and such as without very excellent cookery must have thrown into the dish a great deal too much of the *fumet* . It was a nice operation;—these vices were not only to be of a particular sort, but it was also necessary to guard them at both ends; on the *one* , from all appearance of malicious motive, and indeed from the manifestation of any ill principle whatever, which must have produced *disgust* , —a sensation no less opposite to laughter than is *respect* ;—and, on the *other* , from the notice, or even apprehension, in the spectators, of *pernicious effect* ; which produces *grief* and *terror* , and is the proper province of Tragedy alone.

Actions cannot with strict propriety be said to be either virtuous or vicious. These qualities, or attributes, belong to *agents* only; and are derived, even in respect to *them* , from intention alone. The abstracting of qualities, and considering them as independent of any *subject* , and the applying of them afterwards to actions independent of the agent, is a double operation which I do not pretend, thro' any part of it, to understand. All actions may most properly, in their own nature, I think, be called *neutral* ; tho' in common discourse, and in writing where perfection is not requisite, we often term them *vicious* , transferring on these occasions the attributive from the *agent* to the *action* ; and sometimes we call them *evil* , or of pernicious effect, by transferring, in like manner, the injuries incidentally arising from certain actions to the life, happiness, or interest of human beings, to the natural operation, whether moral or physical, of the *actions* themselves: *One* is a colour thrown on them by the *intention* , in which I think consists all moral turpitude, and the *other* by effect: If therefore a Dramatic writer will use certain managements to keep vicious intention as much as possible from our notice, and make us sensible that no evil effect follows, he may pass off actions of very vicious motive, without much ill impression, as mere *incongruities* , and the effect of *humour* only;—*words these* , which, as applied to human conduct, are employed, I believe, to cover a great deal of what may deserve much harder appellation.

The *difference* between suffering an evil effect to take place, and of preventing such effect, from actions precisely of the same nature, is so great, that it is often *all the difference* between Tragedy and Comedy. The Fine gentleman of the Comic scene, who so promptly draws his sword, and wounds, without killing, some other gentleman   of the same sort; and *He* of Tragedy, whose stabs are mortal, differ very frequently in no other point whatever. If our *Falstaff* had really *peppered* (as he calls it) *two rogues in buckram suits* , we must have looked for a very different conclusion, and have expected to have found *Falstaff* 's Essential prose converted into blank verse, and to have seen him move off, in slow and measured paces, like the City Prentice to the tolling of a Passing bell;—“*he would have become a cart as well as another, or a plague on his bringing up.* ”

Every incongruity in a rational being is a source of laughter, whether it respects manners, sentiments, conduct, or even dress, or situation;—but the greatest of all possible incongruity is vice, whether in the intention itself, or as transferred to, and becoming more manifest in action;—it is inconsistent with moral agency, nay, with rationality itself, and all the ends and purposes of our being.—Our author describes the natural ridicule of vice in his Measure *for* Measure in the strongest terms, where, after having made the angels weep over the vices of men, he adds, that *with* our spleens *they might laugh themselves quite mortal* . Indeed if we had a perfect discernment of the ends of this life only, and could preserve ourselves from sympathy, disgust, and terror, the vices of mankind would be a source of perpetual entertainment. The great difference between *Heraclitus* and *Democritus* lay, it seems, in their spleen only;—for a wise and good man must either laugh or cry without ceasing. Nor indeed is it easy to conceive (to instance in one case only) a more laughable, or a more melancholy object, than a human being, his nature and duration considered, earnestly and anxiously exchanging peace of mind and conscious integrity for gold; and for gold too, which he has often no occasion for, or dares not employ:—But *Voltaire* has by one Publication rendered all *arguments* superfluous: He has told us, in his *Candide* , the merriest and most diverting tale of frauds, murders, massacres, rapes, rapine, desolation, and destruction, that I think it possible on any other plan to invent; and he has given us *motive* and *effect* , with every possible aggravation, to improve the sport. One would think it difficult to preserve the point of ridicule, in such a case, unabated by contrary emotions; but now that the feat is performed it appears of easy imitation, and I am amazed that our race of imitators have made no efforts in this sort: It would answer I should think in the way of profit, not to mention the moral uses to which it might be applied. The managements of *Voltaire* consists in this, that he assumes a gay, easy, and light tone himself; that he never excites the reflections of his readers by making any of his own; that he hurries us on with such a rapidity of narration as prevents our emotions from resting on any particular point; and to gain this end, he has interwoven the conclusion of one fact so into the commencement of another, that we find ourselves engaged in new matter before we are sensible that we had finished the old; he has likewise made his crimes so enormous, that we do not sadden on any sympathy, or find ourselves partakers in the guilt.—But what is truly singular as to this book, is, that it does not appear to have been written for any moral purpose, but for That only (if I do not err) of satyrising Providence itself; a design so enormously profane, that it may well pass for the most ridiculous part of the whole composition.

But if vice, divested of disgust and terror, is thus in its own nature ridiculous, we ought not to be surprized if the very same vices which spread horror and desolation thro' the Tragic scene should yet furnish the Comic with its highest laughter and delight, and that tears, and mirth, and even humour and wit itself, should grow from the same root of incongruity: For what is humour in the humourist, but incongruity, whether of sentiment, conduct, or manners? What in the man of humour, but a quick discernment and keen sensibility of these incongruities? And what is wit itself, without presuming however to give a complete definition where so many have failed, but a talent, for the most part, of marking with force and vivacity unexpected points of likeness in things supposed incongruous, and points of incongruity in things supposed alike: And hence it is that wit and humour, tho' always distinguished, are so often coupled together; it being very possible, I suppose, to be a man of humour without wit; but I think not a man of wit without humour.

But I have here raised so much new matter, that the reader may be out of hope of seeing this argument, any more than the tale of *Tristram* , brought to a conclusion: He may suppose me now prepared to turn my pen to a moral, or to a dramatic Essay, or ready to draw the line between vice and virtue, or Comedy and Tragedy, as fancy shall lead the way;—But he is happily mistaken; I am pressing earnestly, and not without some impatience, to a conclusion. The principles I have now opened are necessary to be considered for the purpose of estimating the character of *Falstaff* , considered as relatively to human nature: I shall then reduce him with all possible dispatch to his Theatric condition, and restore him, I hope, without injury, to the stage.

There is indeed a vein or two of argument running through the matter that now surrounds me, which I might open for my own more peculiar purposes; but which, having resisted much greater temptations, I shall wholly desert. It ought not, however, to be forgotten, that if *Shakespeare* has used arts to abate our respect of *Falstaff* , it should follow by just inference, that, without such arts, his character would have grown into a *respect* inconsistent with laughter; and that yet, without Courage, he could not have been respectable at all;—that it required nothing less than the union of ability and Courage to support his other more accidental qualities with any tolerable coherence. Courage and Ability are first principles of Character, and not to be destroyed whilst the united frame of body and mind continues whole and unimpaired; they are the pillars on which he stands firm in spight of all his vices and disgraces;—but if we should take Courage away, and reckon Cowardice among his other defects, all the intelligence and wit in the world could not support him through a single Play.

The effect of taking away the influence of this quality upon the manners of a character, tho' the quality and the influence be assumed only, is evident in the cases of *Parolles* and *Bobadil* . *Parolles* , at least, did not seem to want wit; but both these characters are reduced almost to non-entity, and, after their disgraces, walk only thro' a scene or two, the mere mockery of their former existence. *Parolles* was so changed, that neither the *fool* , nor the old lord *Le-feu* , could readily recollect his person; and his wit seemed to be annihilated with his Courage.

Let it not be here objected that *Falstaff* is universally considered as a Coward;—we do indeed call him so; but that is nothing, if the character itself does not act from any consciousness of this kind, and if our Feelings take his part, and revolt against our understanding.

As to the arts by which *Shakespeare* has contrived to obscure the vices of *Falstaff* , they are such as, being subservient only to the mirth of the Play, I do not feel myself obliged to detail.

But it may be well worth our curiosity to inquire into the composition of *Falstaff* 's character.—Every man we may observe has two characters; that is, every man may be seen externally, and from without;—or a section may be made of him, and he may be illuminated from within.

Of the external character of *Falstaff* , we can scarcely be said to have any steady view. *Jack Falstaff* we are familiar with, but *Sir John* was better known, it seems, *to the rest of Europe* , than to his intimate companions; yet we have so many glimpses of him, and he is opened to us occasionally in such various points of view, that we cannot be mistaken in describing him as a man of birth and fashion, bred up in all the learning and accomplishments of the times;—of ability and Courage equal to any situation, and capable by nature of the highest affairs; trained to arms, and possessing the tone, the deportment, and the manners of a gentleman;—but yet these accomplishments and advantages seem to hang loose on him, and to be worn with a slovenly carelessness and inattention: A too great indulgence of the qualities of humour and wit seems to draw him too much one way, and to destroy the grace and orderly arrangement of his other accomplishments;—and hence he becomes strongly marked for one advantage, to the injury, and almost forgetfulness in the beholder, of all the rest. Some of his vices likewise strike through, and stain his Exterior;—his modes of speech betray a certain licentiousness of mind; and that high Aristocratic tone which belonged to his situation was pushed on, and aggravated into unfeeling insolence and oppression. “*It is not a confirmed brow* ,” says the Chief Justice, “*nor the throng of words that come with such more than impudent sauciness from you, can thrust me from a level consideration* ”: “*My lord* ,” answers *Falstaff* , “*you call honourable boldness impudent sauciness. If a man will court'sie and say nothing, he is virtuous: No, my lord, my humble duty remembered, I will not be your suitor. I say to you I desire deliverance from these officers, being upon hasty employment in the King's affairs.* ” “*You speak* ,” replies the Chief Justice, “*as having power to do wrong.* ”—His whole behaviour to the Chief Justice, whom he despairs of winning by flattery, is singularly insolent; and the reader will remember many instances of his insolence to others: Nor are his manners always free from the taint of vulgar society;—“*This is the right fencing grace, my lord* ,” says he to the Chief Justice, with great impropriety of manners, “*tap for tap, and so part fair* ”: “*Now the lord lighten thee,* ” is the reflection of the Chief Justice, “*thou art a very great fool.* ”—Such a character as I have here described, strengthened with that vigour, force, and alacrity of mind, of which he is possessed, must have spread terror and dismay thro' the ignorant, the timid, the modest, and the weak: Yet is he however, when occasion requires, capable of much accommodation and flattery;—and in order to obtain the protection and patronage of the great, so convenient to his vices and his poverty, he was put under the daily necessity of practising and improving these arts; a baseness which he compensates to himself, like other unprincipled men, by an increase of insolence towards his inferiors.—There is also a natural activity about *Falstaff* which, for want of proper employment, shews itself in a kind of swell or bustle, which seems to correspond with his bulk, as if his mind had inflated his body, and demanded a habitation of no less circumference: Thus conditioned he rolls (in the language of *Ossian*) like a *Whale of Ocean* , scattering the smaller fry; but affording, in his turn, noble contention to *Hal* and *Poins* ; who, to keep up the allusion, I may be allowed on this occasion to compare to the Thresher and the Sword-fish.

To this part of *Falstaff* 's character, many things which he does and says, and which appear unaccountably natural, are to be referred.

We are next to see him *from within* : And here we shall behold him most villainously unprincipled and debauched; possessing indeed the same Courage and ability, yet stained with numerous vices, unsuited not only to his primary qualities, but to his age, corpulency, rank, and profession;—reduced by these vices to a state of dependence, yet resolutely bent to indulge them at any price.

These vices have been already enumerated; they are many, and become still more intolerable by an excess of unfeeling insolence on one hand, and of base accommodation on the other.

But what then, after all, is become of *old Jack* ? Is this the jovial delightful companion—*Falstaff* , the favourite and the boast of the Stage?—by no means. But it is, I think however, the *Falstaff* of Nature; the very stuff out of which the *Stage Falstaff* is composed; nor was it possible, I believe, out of any other materials he could have been formed. From this disagreeable draught we shall be able, I trust, by a proper disposition of light and shade, and from the influence of compression of external things, to produce *plump Jack* , the life of humour, the spirit of pleasantry, and the soul of mirth.

To this end, *Falstaff* must no longer be considered as a single independent character, but grouped, as we find him shewn to us in the Play;—his ability must be disgraced by buffoonery, and his Courage by circumstances of imputation; and those qualities be thereupon reduced into subjects of mirth and laughter:—His vices must be concealed at each end from vicious design and evil effect, and must thereupon be turned into incongruities, and assume the name of humour only;—his insolence must be repressed by the superior tone of *Hal* and *Poins* , and take the softer name of spirit only, or alacrity of mind;—his state of dependence, his temper of accommodation, and his activity, must fall in precisely with the indulgence of his humours; that is, he must thrive best and flatter most, by being extravagantly incongruous; and his own tendency, impelled by so much activity, will carry him with perfect ease and freedom to all the necessary excesses. But why, it may be asked, should incongruities recommend *Falstaff* to the favour of the Prince?—Because the Prince is supposed to possess a high relish of humour and to have a temper and a force about him, which, whatever was his pursuit, delighted in excess. This, *Falstaff* is supposed perfectly to comprehend; and thereupon not only to indulge himself in all kinds of incongruity, but to lend out his own superior wit and humour against himself, and to heighten the ridicule by all the tricks and arts of buffoonery for which his corpulence, his age, and situation, furnish such excellent materials. This compleats the Dramatic character of *Falstaff* , and gives him that appearance of perfect good-nature, pleasantry, mellowness, and hilarity of mind, for which we admire and almost love him, tho' we feel certain reserves which forbid our going that length; the true reason of which is, that there will be always found a difference between mere appearances and reality: Nor are we, nor can we be, insensible that whenever the action of external influence upon him is in whole or in part relaxed, the character restores itself proportionably to its more unpleasing condition.

A character really possessing the qualities which are on the stage imputed to *Falstaff* , would be best shewn by its own natural energy; the least compression would disorder it, and make us feel for it all the pain of sympathy: It is the artificial condition of *Falstaff* which is the source of our delight; we enjoy his distresses, we *gird at him* ourselves, and urge the sport without the least alloy of compassion; and we give him, when the laugh is over, undeserved credit for the pleasure we enjoyed. If any one thinks that these observations are the effect of too much refinement, and that there was in truth more of chance in the case than of management or design, let him try his own luck;—perhaps he may draw out of the wheel of fortune a *Macbeth* , an *Othello* , a *Benedict* , or a *Falstaff* .

Such, I think, is the true character of this extraordinary buffoon; and from hence we may discern for what special purposes *Shakespeare* has given him talents and qualities, which were to be afterwards obscured, and perverted to ends opposite to their nature; it was clearly to furnish out a Stage buffoon of a peculiar sort; a kind of Game-bull which would stand the baiting thro' a hundred Plays, and produce equal sport, whether he is pinned down occasionally by *Hal* or *Poins* , or tosses such mongrils as *Bardolph* , or the Justices, sprawling in the air. There is in truth no such thing as totally demolishing *Falstaff* ; he has so much of the invulnerable in his frame that no ridicule can destroy him; he is safe even in defeat, and seems to rise, like another *Antæus* , with recruited vigour from every fall; in this, as in every other respect, unlike *Parolles* or *Bobadil* : They fall by the first shaft of ridicule, but *Falstaff* is a butt on which we may empty the whole quiver, whilst the substance of his character remains unimpaired. His ill habits, and the accidents of age and corpulence, are no part of his essential constitution; they come forward indeed on our eye, and solicit our notice, but they are second natures, not *first* ; mere shadows, we pursue them in vain; *Falstaff* himself has a distinct and separate subsistence; he laughs at the chace, and when the sport is over, gathers them with unruffled feather under his wing: And hence it is that he is made to undergo not one detection only, but a series of detections; that he is not formed for one Play only, but was intended originally at least for two; and the author, we are told, was doubtful if he should not extend him yet farther, and engage him in the wars with *France* . This he might well have done, for there is nothing perishable in the nature of *Falstaff* : He might have involved him, by the vicious part of his character, in new difficulties and unlucky situations, and have enabled him, by the better part, to have scrambled through, abiding and retorting the jests and laughter of every beholder.

But whatever we may be told concerning the intention of *Shakespeare* to extend this character farther, there is a manifest preparation near the end of the second part of Henry IV. for his disgrace: The disguise is taken off, and he begins openly to pander to the excesses of the Prince, intitling himself to the character afterwards given him of being *the tutor and the feeder of his riots* . "*I will fetch off* ," says he, "*these Justices.—I will devise matter enough out of this Shallow to keep the Prince in continual laughter the wearing out of six fashions.—If the young dace be a bait for the old pike,* " (speaking with reference to his own designs upon *Shallow*) "*I see no reason in the law of nature but I may snap at him.* "—This is shewing himself abominably dissolute: The laborious arts of fraud, which he practises on *Shallow* to induce the loan of a thousand pound, create *disgust* ; and the more, as we are sensible this money was never likely to be *paid back* , as we are told that *was* , of which the travellers had been robbed. It is true we feel no pain for *Shallow* , he being a very bad character, as would fully appear, if he were unfolded; but *Falstaff* 's deliberation in fraud is not on that account more excusable.—The event of the old King's death draws him out almost into detestation.—"*Master Robert Shallow, chuse what office thou wilt in the land,—'tis thine.—I am fortune's steward.—Let us take any man's horses.—The laws of England are at my commandment.—Happy are they who have been my friends;—and woe to my Lord Chief Justice.* "—After this we ought not to complain if we see Poetic justice duly executed upon him, and that he is finally given up to shame and dishonour.

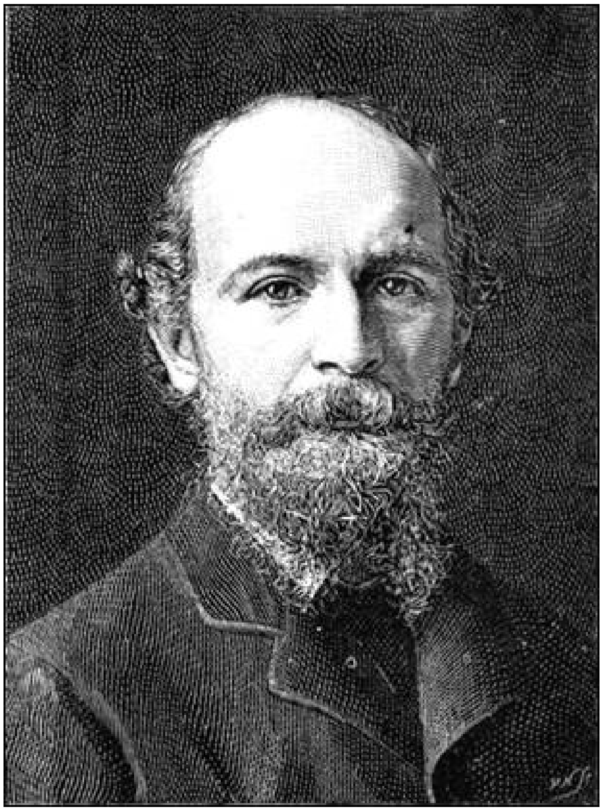
But it is remarkable that, during this process, we are not acquainted with the success of *Falstaff* 's designs upon *Shallow* 'till the moment of his disgrace. "*If I had had time* ," says he to *Shallow* , as the King is approaching, "*to have made new liveries, I would have bestowed the thousand pounds I borrowed of you* ";—and the first word he utters after this period is, "*Master Shallow, I owe you a thousand pounds* ": We may from hence very reasonably presume, that *Shakespeare* meant to connect this fraud with the punishment of *Falstaff* , as a more avowed ground of censure and dishonour: Nor ought the consideration that this passage contains the most exquisite comic humour and propriety in another view, to diminish the truth of this observation.

But however just it might be to demolish *Falstaff* in this way, by opening to us his bad principles, it was by no means *convenient* . If we had been to have seen a single representation of him only, it might have been proper enough; but as he was to be shewn from night to night, and from age to age, the disgust arising from the *close* would by degrees have spread itself over the whole character; reference would be had throughout to his bad principles, and he would have become less acceptable as he was more known: And yet it was necessary to bring him, like all other stage characters, to some conclusion. Every play must be wound up by some event, which may shut in the characters and the action. If some *hero* obtains a crown, or a mistress, involving therein the fortune of others, we are satisfied;—we do not desire to be afterwards admitted of his council, or his bed-chamber: Or if through jealousy, causeless or well founded, *another* kills a beloved wife, and himself after,—there is no more to be said;—they are dead, and there an end; Or if in the scenes of Comedy, parties are engaged, and plots formed, for the furthering or preventing the completion of that great article Cuckoldom, we expect to be satisfied in the point as far as the nature of so nice a case will permit, or at least to see such a manifest *disposition* as will leave us in no doubt of the event. By the bye, I cannot but think that the Comic writers of the last age treated this matter as of more importance, and made more bustle about it, than the temper of the present times will well bear; and it is therefore to be hoped that the Dramatic authors of the present day, some of whom, to the best of my judgment, are deserving of great praise, will consider and treat this business, rather as a common and natural incident arising out of modern manners, than as worthy to be held forth as the great object and sole end of the Play.

But whatever be the question, or whatever the character, the curtain must not only be dropt before the eyes, but over the minds of the spectators, and nothing left for further examination and curiosity.—But how was this to be done in regard to *Falstaff* ? He was not involved in the fortune of the Play; he was engaged in no action which, as to him, was to be compleated; he had reference to no system, he was attracted to no center; he passes thro' the Play as a lawless meteor, and we wish to know what course he is afterwards likely to take: He is detected and disgraced, it is true; but he lives by detection, and thrives on disgrace; and we are desirous to see him detected and disgraced again. The *Fleet* might be no bad scene of further amusement;—he carries *all* within him, *and what matter* where, *if he be still the same* , possessing the same force of mind, the same wit, and the same incongruity. This, *Shakespeare* was fully sensible of, and knew that this character could not be compleatly dismissed but by death. —“Our author,” says the Epilogue to the Second Part of Henry IV., “will continue the story with Sir *John* in it, and make you merry with fair *Catherine* of *France* ; where, for any thing I know, *Falstaff* shall dye of a sweat, unless already he be killed with your hard opinions.” If it had been prudent in *Shakespeare* to have killed *Falstaff* with *hard opinion* , he had the means in his hand to effect it;—but dye, it seems, he must, in one form or another, and a *sweat* would have been no unsuitable catastrophe. However we have reason to be satisfied as it is;—his death was worthy of his birth and of his life: “*He was born* ,” he says, “*about three o'clock in the afternoon, with a white head, and something a round belly.* ” But if he came into the world in the evening with these marks of age, he departs out of it in the morning in all the follies and vanities of youth;—“*He was shaked* ” (we are told) “*of a burning quotidian tertian;—the young King had run bad humours on the knight;—his heart was fracted and corroborate; and a' parted just between twelve and one, even at the turning of the tide, yielding the crow a pudding, and passing directly into Arthur's bosom, if ever man went into the bosom of Arthur.* ”—So ended this singular buffoon; and with him ends an Essay, on which the reader is left to bestow what character he pleases: An Essay professing to treat of the Courage of *Falstaff* , but extending itself to his Whole character; to the arts and genius of his Poetic-Maker, Shakespeare; and thro' him sometimes, with ambitious aim, even to the principles of human nature itself.

<<span id="filepos0037382475"> a>A STUDY OF SHAKESPEARE by Algernon Charles Swinburne

Algernon Charles Swinburne (1837-1909) was an English poet, playwright, novelist, and critic, who was nominated for the Nobel Prize in Literature almost every year from 1903 to 1909. Over his prolific literary life, he edited and published many books on the works of Shakespeare, of which this is the most respected edition of criticism.



Swinburne aged 52

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<<span id="filepos0037386655"> a>PREFACE

Begun in the winter of 1874, a first instalment of “A Study of Shakespeare” appeared in the *Fortnightly Review* for May 1875, and a second in the number for June 1876, but the completed work was not issued in book form until June 1880. In a letter to me (January 31, 1875), Swinburne said:

“I am now at work on my long-designed essay or study on the metrical progress or development of Shakespeare, as traceable by ear and *not* by finger, and the general changes of tone and stages of mind expressed or involved in this change or progress of style.”

The book was produced at the moment when controversy with regard to the internal evidence of composition in the writings attributed to Shakespeare was raging high, and the amusing appendices were added at the last moment that they might infuriate the pedants of the New Shakespeare Society. They amply fulfilled that amiable purpose.

EDMUND GOSSE

September 1918

A STUDY OF SHAKESPEARE.

<<span id="filepos0037388715"> a>I.

The greatest poet of our age has drawn a parallel of elaborate eloquence between Shakespeare and the sea; and the likeness holds good in many points of less significance than those which have been set down by the master-hand. For two hundred years at least have students of every kind put forth in every sort of boat on a longer or a shorter voyage of research across the waters of that unsounded sea. From the paltriest fishing-craft to such majestic galleys as were steered by Coleridge and by Goethe, each division of the fleet has done or has essayed its turn of work; some busied in dredging alongshore, some taking surveys of this or that gulf or headland, some putting forth through shine and shadow into the darkness of the great deep. Nor does it seem as if there would sooner be an end to men's labour on this than on the other sea. But here a difference is perceptible. The material ocean has been so far mastered by the wisdom and the heroism of man that we may look for a time to come when the mystery shall be manifest of its furthest north and south, and men resolve the secret of the uttermost parts of the sea: the poles also may find their Columbus. But the limits of that other ocean, the laws of its tides, the motive of its forces, the mystery of its unity and the secret of its change, no seafarer of us all may ever think thoroughly to know. No wind-gauge will help us to the science of its storms, no lead-line sound for us the depth of its divine and terrible serenity.

As, however, each generation for some two centuries now or more has witnessed fresh attempts at pilotage and fresh expeditions of discovery undertaken in the seas of Shakespeare, it may be well to study a little the laws of navigation in such waters as these, and look well to compass and rudder before we accept the guidance of a strange helmsman or make proffer for trial of our own. There are shoals and quicksands on which many a seafarer has run his craft aground in time past, and others of more special peril to adventurers of the present day. The chances of shipwreck vary in a certain degree with each new change of vessel and each fresh muster of hands. At one time a main rock of offence on which the stoutest ships of discovery were wont to split was the narrow and slippery reef of verbal emendation; and upon this our native pilots were too many of them prone to steer. Others fell becalmed offshore in a German fog of philosophic theories, and would not be persuaded that the house of words they had built in honour of Shakespeare was "dark as hell," seeing "it had bay-windows transparent as barricadoes, and the clear-stories towards the south-north were as lustrous as ebony." These are not the most besetting dangers of more modern steersmen: what we have to guard against now is neither a repetition of the pedantries of Steevens nor a recrudescence of the moralities of Ulrici. Fresh follies spring up in new paths of criticism, and fresh labourers in a fruitless field are at hand to gather them and to garner. A discovery of some importance has recently been proclaimed as with blare of vociferous trumpets and flutter of triumphal flags; no less a discovery than this—that a singer must be tested by his song. Well, it is something that criticism should at length be awake to that wholly indisputable fact; that learned and laborious men who can hear only with their fingers should open their eyes to admit such a novelty, their minds to accept such a paradox, as that a painter should be studied in his pictures and a poet in his verse. To the common herd of students and lovers of either art this may perhaps appear no great discovery; but that it should at length have dawned even upon the race of commentators is a sign which in itself might be taken as a presage of new light to come in an epoch of miracle yet to be. Unhappily it is as yet but a partial revelation that has been vouchsafed to them. To the recognition of the apocalyptic fact that a workman can only be known by his work, and that without examination of his method and material that work can hardly be studied to much purpose, they have yet to add the knowledge of a further truth no less recondite and abstruse than this; that as the technical work of a painter appeals to the eye, so the technical work of a poet appeals to the ear. It follows that men who have none are as likely to arrive at any profitable end by the application of metrical tests to the work of Shakespeare as a blind man by the application of his theory of colours to the work of Titian.

It is certainly no news to other than professional critics that no means of study can be more precious or more necessary to a student of Shakespeare than this of tracing the course of his work by the growth and development, through various modes and changes, of his metre. But the faculty of using such means of study is not to be had for the asking; it is not to be earned by the most assiduous toil, it is not to be secured by the learning of years, it is not to be attained by the devotion of a life. No proficiency in grammar and arithmetic, no science of numeration and no scheme of prosody, will be here of the least avail. Though the pedagogue were Briareus himself who would thus bring Shakespeare under the rule of his rod or Shelley within the limit of his line, he would lack fingers on which to count the syllables that make up their music, the infinite varieties of measure that complete the changes and the chimes of perfect verse. It is but lost labour that they rise up so early, and so late take rest; not a Scaliger or Salmasius of them all will sooner solve the riddle of the simplest than of the subtlest melody. Least of all will the method of a scholiast be likely to serve him as a clue to the hidden things of Shakespeare. For all the counting up of numbers and casting up of figures that a whole university—nay, a whole universe of pedants could accomplish, no teacher and no learner will ever be a whit the nearer to the haven where they would be. In spite of all tabulated statements and regulated summaries of research, the music which will not be dissected or defined, the "spirit of sense" which is one and indivisible from the body or the raiment of speech that clothes it, keeps safe the secret of its sound. Yet it is no less a task than this that the scholiasts have girt themselves to achieve: they will pluck out the heart not of Hamlet's but of Shakespeare's mystery by the means of a metrical test; and this test is to be applied by a purely arithmetical process. It is useless to pretend or to protest that they work by any rule but the rule of thumb and finger: that they have no ear to work by, whatever outward show they may make of unmistakable ears, the very nature of their project gives full and damning proof. Properly understood, this that they call the metrical test is doubtless, as they say, the surest or the sole sure key to one side of the secret of Shakespeare; but they will never understand it properly who propose to secure it by the ingenious device of numbering the syllables and tabulating the results of a computation which shall attest in exact sequence the quantity, order, and proportion of single and double endings, of rhyme and blank verse, of regular lines and irregular, to be traced in each play by the horny eye and the callous finger of a pedant. "I am ill at these numbers"; those in which I have sought to become an expert are numbers of another sort; but having, from wellnigh the first years I can remember, made of the study of Shakespeare the chief intellectual business and found in it the chief spiritual delight of my whole life, I can hardly think myself less qualified than another to offer an opinion on the metrical points at issue.

The progress and expansion of style and harmony in the successive works of Shakespeare must in some indefinite degree be perceptible to the youngest as to the oldest, to the dullest as to the keenest of Shakespearean students. But to trace and verify the various shades and gradations of this progress, the ebb and flow of alternate influences, the delicate and infinite subtleties of change and growth discernible in the spirit and the speech of the greatest among poets, is a task not less beyond the reach of a scholiast than beyond the faculties of a child. He who would attempt it with any chance of profit must above all things remember at starting that the inner and the outer qualities of a poet's work are of their very nature indivisible; that any criticism is of necessity worthless which looks to one side only, whether it be to the outer or to the inner quality of the work; that the fatuity of pedantic ignorance never devised a grosser absurdity than the attempt to separate æsthetic from scientific criticism by a strict line of demarcation, and to bring all critical work under one or the other head of this exhaustive division. Criticism without accurate science of the thing criticised can indeed have no other value than may belong to the genuine record of a spontaneous impression; but it is not less certain that criticism which busies itself only with the outer husk or technical shell of a great artist's work, taking no account of the spirit or the thought which informs it, cannot have even so much value as this. Without study of his forms of metre or his scheme of colours we shall certainly fail to appreciate or even to apprehend the gist or the worth of a painter's or a poet's design; but to note down the number of special words and cast up the sum of superfluous syllables used once or twice or twenty times in the structure of a single poem will help us exactly as much as a naked catalogue of the colours employed in a particular picture. A tabulated statement or summary of the precise number of blue or green, red or white draperies to be found in a precise number of paintings by the same hand will not of itself afford much enlightenment to any but the youngest of possible students; nor will a mere list of double or single, masculine or feminine terminations discoverable in a given amount of verse from the same quarter prove of much use or benefit to an adult reader of common intelligence. What such an one requires is the guidance which can be given by no metremonger or colour-grinder: the suggestion which may help him to discern at once the cause and the effect of every choice or change of metre and of colour; which may show him at one glance the reason and the result of every shade and of every tone which tends to compose and to complete the gradual scale of their final harmonies. This method of study is generally accepted as the only one applicable to the work of a great painter by any criticism worthy of the name: it should also be recognised as the sole method by which the work of a great poet can be studied to any serious purpose. For the student it can be no less useful, for the expert it should be no less easy, to trace through its several stages of expansion and transfiguration the genius of Chaucer or of Shakespeare, of Milton or of Shelley, than the genius of

Titian or of Raffaelle, of Turner or of Rossetti. Some great artists there are of either kind in whom no such process of growth or transformation is perceptible: of these are Coleridge and Blake; from the sunrise to the sunset of their working day we can trace no demonstrable increase and no visible diminution of the divine capacities or the inborn defects of either man's genius; but not of such, as a rule, are the greatest among artists of any sort.

Another rock on which modern steersmen of a more skilful hand than these are yet liable to run through too much confidence is the love of their own conjectures as to the actual date or the secret history of a particular play or passage. To err on this side requires more thought, more learning, and more ingenuity than we need think to find in a whole tribe of finger-counters and figure-casters; but the outcome of these good gifts, if strained or perverted to capricious use, may prove no less barren of profit than the labours of a pedant on the letter of the text. It is a tempting exercise of intelligence for a dexterous and keen-witted scholar to apply his solid learning and his vivid fancy to the detection or the interpretation of some new or obscure point in a great man's life or work; but none the less is it a perilous pastime to give the reins to a learned fancy, and let loose conjecture on the trail of any dubious crotchet or the scent of any supposed allusion that may spring up in the way of its confident and eager quest. To start a new solution of some crucial problem, to track some new undercurrent of concealed significance in a passage hitherto neglected or misconstrued, is to a critic of this higher class a delight as keen as that of scientific discovery to students of another sort: the pity is that he can bring no such certain or immediate test to verify the value of his discovery as lies ready to the hand of the man of science. Whether he have lit upon a windfall or a mare's nest can be decided by no direct proof, but only by time and the general acceptance of competent judges; and this cannot often be reasonably expected for theories which can appeal for support or confirmation to no positive evidence, but at best to a cloudy and shifting probability. What personal or political allusions may lurk under the text of Shakespeare we can never know, and should consequently forbear to hang upon a hypothesis of this floating and nebulous kind any serious opinion which might gravely affect our estimate of his work or his position in regard to other men, with whom some public or private interest may possibly have brought him into contact or collision.

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The aim of the present study is simply to set down what the writer believes to be certain demonstrable truths as to the progress and development of style, the outer and the inner changes of manner as of matter, of method as of design, which may be discerned in the work of Shakespeare. The principle here adopted and the views here put forward have not been suddenly discovered or lightly taken up out of any desire to make a show of theoretical ingenuity. For years past I have held and maintained, in private discussion with friends and fellow-students, the opinions which I now submit to more public judgment. How far they may coincide with those advanced by others I cannot say, and have not been careful to inquire. The mere fact of coincidence or of dissent on such a question is of less importance than the principle accepted by either student as the groundwork of his theory, the mainstay of his opinion. It is no part of my project or my hope to establish the actual date of any among the various plays, or to determine point by point the lineal order of their succession. I have examined no table or catalogue of recent or of earlier date, from the time of Malone onwards, with a view to confute by my reasoning the conclusions of another, or by the assistance of his theories to corroborate my own. It is impossible to fix or decide by inner or outer evidence the precise order of production, much less of composition, which critics of the present or the past may have set their wits to verify in vain; but it is quite possible to show that the work of Shakespeare is naturally divisible into classes which may serve us to distinguish and determine as by landmarks the several stages or periods of his mind and art.

Of these the three chief periods or stages are so unmistakably indicated by the mere text itself, and so easily recognisable by the veriest tiro in the school of Shakespeare, that even were I as certain of being the first to point them out as I am conscious of having long since discovered and verified them without assistance or suggestion from any but Shakespeare himself, I should be disposed to claim but little credit for a discovery which must in all likelihood have been forestalled by the common insight of some hundred or more students in time past. The difficulty begins with the really debatable question of subdivisions. There are certain plays which may be said to hang on the borderland between one period and the next, with one foot lingering and one advanced; and these must be classed according to the dominant note of their style, the greater or lesser proportion of qualities proper to the earlier or the later stage of thought and writing. At one time I was inclined to think the whole catalogue more accurately divisible into four classes; but the line of demarcation between the third and fourth would have been so much fainter than those which mark off the first period from the second, and the second from the third, that it seemed on the whole a more correct and adequate arrangement to assume that the last period might be subdivided if necessary into a first and second stage. This somewhat precise and pedantic scheme of study I have adopted from no love of rigid or formal system, but simply to make the method of my critical process as clear as the design. That design is to examine by internal evidence alone the growth and the expression of spirit and of speech, the ebb and flow of thought and style, discernible in the successive periods of Shakespeare’s work; to study the phases of mind, the changes of tone, the passage or progress from an old manner to a new, the reversion or relapse from a later to an earlier habit, which may assuredly be traced in the modulations of his varying verse, but can only be traced by ear and not by finger. I have busied myself with no baseless speculations as to the possible or probable date of the first appearance of this play or of that on the stage; and it is not unlikely that the order of succession here adopted or suggested may not always coincide with the chronological order of production; nor will the principle or theory by which I have undertaken to class the successive plays of each period be affected or impaired though it should chance that a play ranked by me as belonging to a later stage of work should actually have been produced earlier than others which in my lists are assigned to a subsequent date. It is not, so to speak, the literal but the spiritual order which I have studied to observe and to indicate: the periods which I seek to define belong not to chronology but to art. No student need be reminded how common a thing it is to recognise in the later work of a great artist some partial reappearance of his early tone or manner, some passing return to his early lines of work and to habits of style since modified or abandoned. Such work, in part at least, may properly be said to belong rather to the earlier stage whose manner it resumes than to the later stage at which it was actually produced, and in which it stands out as a marked exception among the works of the same period. A famous and a most singularly beautiful example of this reflorescence as in a Saint Martin’s summer of undecaying genius is the exquisite and crowning love-scene in the opera or “ballet-tragedy” of *Psyche* , written in his sixty-fifth year by the august Roman hand of Pierre Corneille; a lyric symphony of spirit and of song fulfilled with all the colour and all the music that autumn could steal from spring if October had leave to go a Maying in some Olympian masquerade of melody and sunlight. And it is not easier, easy as it is, to discern and to define the three main stages of Shakespeare’s work and progress, than to classify under their several heads the representative plays belonging to each period by the law of their nature, if not by the accident of their date. There are certain dominant qualities which do on the whole distinguish not only the later from the earlier plays, but the second period from the first, the third period from the second; and it is with these qualities alone that the higher criticism, be it æsthetic or scientific, has properly anything to do.

A new method of solution has been applied to various difficulties which have been discovered or invented in the text by the care or the perversity of recent commentators, whose principle of explanation is easier to abuse than to use with any likelihood of profit. It is at least simple enough for the simplest of critics to apply or misapply: whenever they see or suspect an inequality or an incongruity which may be wholly imperceptible to eyes uninured to the use of their spectacles, they assume at once the presence of another workman, the intrusion of a stranger's hand. This supposition of a double authorship is naturally as impossible to refute as to establish by other than internal evidence and appeal to the private judgment or perception of the reader. But it is no better than the last resource of an empiric, the last refuge of a sciolist; a refuge which the soundest of scholars will be slowest to seek, a resource which the most competent of critics will be least ready to adopt. Once admitted as a principle of general application, there are no lengths to which it may not carry, there are none to which it has not carried, the audacious fatuity and the arrogant incompetence of tamperers with the authentic text. Recent editors who have taken on themselves the high office of guiding English youth in its first study of Shakespeare have proposed to excise or to obelise whole passages which the delight and wonder of youth and age alike, of the rawest as of the ripest among students, have agreed to consecrate as examples of his genius at its highest. In the last trumpet-notes of Macbeth's defiance and despair, in the last rallying cry of the hero reawakened in the tyrant at his utmost hour of need, there have been men and scholars, Englishmen and editors, who have detected the alien voice of a pretender, the false ring of a foreign blast that was not blown by Shakespeare; words that for centuries past have touched with fire the hearts of thousands in each age since they were first inspired—words with the whole sound in them of battle or a breaking sea, with the whole soul of pity and terror mingled and melted into each other in the fierce last speech of a spirit grown "aweary of the sun," have been calmly transferred from the account of Shakespeare to the score of Middleton. And this, forsooth, the student of the future is to accept on the authority of men who bring to the support of their decision the unanswerable plea of years spent in the collation and examination of texts never hitherto explored and compared with such energy of learned labour. If this be the issue of learning and of industry, the most indolent and ignorant of readers who retains his natural capacity to be moved and mastered by the natural delight of contact with heavenly things is better off by far than the most studious and strenuous of all scholiasts who ever claimed acquiescence or challenged dissent on the strength of his lifelong labours and hard-earned knowledge of the letter of the text. Such an one is indeed "in a parlous state"; and any boy whose heart first begins to burn within him, who feels his blood kindle and his spirit dilate, his pulse leap and his eyes lighten, over a first study of Shakespeare, may say to such a teacher with better reason than Touchstone said to Corin, "Truly, thou art damned; like an ill-roasted egg, all on one side." Nor could charity itself hope much profit for him from the moving appeal and the pious prayer which temper that severity of sentence—"Wilt thou rest damned? God help thee, shallow man! God make incision in thee! Thou art raw." And raw he is like to remain for all his learning, and for all incisions that can be made in the horny hide of a self-conceit to be pierced by the puncture of no man's pen. It was bad enough while theorists of this breed confined themselves to the suggestion of a possible partnership with Fletcher, a possible interpolation by Jonson; but in the descent from these to the alleged adulteration of the text by Middleton and Rowley we have surely sounded the very lowest depth of folly attainable by the utmost alacrity in sinking which may yet be possible to the bastard brood of Scriblerus. For my part, I shall not be surprised though the next discoverer should assure us that half at least of *Hamlet* is evidently due to the collaboration of Heywood, while the greater part of *Othello* is as clearly assignable to the hand of Shirley.

Akin to this form of folly, but less pernicious though not more profitable, is the fancy of inventing some share for Shakespeare in the composition of plays which the veriest insanity of conjecture or caprice could not venture to lay wholly to his charge. This fancy, comparatively harmless as it is, requires no ground of proof to go upon, no prop of likelihood to support it; without so much help as may be borrowed from the faintest and most fitful of traditions, it spins its own evidence spider-like out of its own inner conscience or conceit, and proffers it with confident complacency for men's acceptance. Here again I cannot but see a mere waste of fruitless learning and bootless ingenuity. That Shakespeare began by retouching and recasting the work of elder and lesser men we all know; that he may afterwards have set his hand to the task of adding or altering a line or a passage here and there in some few of the plays brought out under his direction as manager or proprietor of a theatre is of course possible, but can neither be affirmed nor denied with any profit in default of the least fragment of historic or traditional evidence. Any attempt to verify the imaginary touch of his hand in plays of whose history we know no more than that they were acted on the boards of his theatre can be but a diversion for the restless leisure of ingenious and ambitious scholars; it will give no clue by which the student who simply seeks to know what can be known with certainty of the poet and his work may hope to be guided towards any safe issue or trustworthy result. Less pardonable and more presumptuous than this is the pretension of minor critics to dissect an authentic play of Shakespeare scene by scene, and assign different parts of the same poem to different dates by the same pedagogic rules of numeration and mensuration which they would apply to the general question of the order and succession of his collective works. This vivisection of a single poem is not defensible as a freak of scholarship, an excursion beyond the bounds of bare proof, from which the wanderer may chance to bring back, if not such treasure as he went out to seek, yet some stray godsend or rare literary windfall which may serve to excuse his indulgence in the seemingly profitless pastime of a truant disposition. It is a pure impertinence to affirm with oracular assurance what might perhaps be admissible as a suggestion offered with the due diffidence of modest and genuine scholarship; to assert on the strength of a private pedant's personal intuition that such must be the history or such the composition of a great work whose history he alone could tell, whose composition he alone could explain, who gave it to us as his genius had given it to him.

From these several rocks and quicksands I trust at least to keep my humbler course at a safe distance, and steer clear of all sandy shallows of theory or sunken shoals of hypothesis on which no pilot can be certain of safe anchorage; avoiding all assumption, though never so plausible, for which no ground but that of fancy can be shown, all suggestion though never so ingenious for which no proof but that of conjecture can be advanced. For instance, I shall neither assume nor accept the theory of a double authorship or of a double date by which the supposed inequalities may be accounted for, the supposed difficulties may be swept away, which for certain readers disturb the study of certain plays of Shakespeare. Only where universal tradition and the general concurrence of all reasonable critics past and present combine to indicate an unmistakable difference of touch or an unmistakable diversity of date between this and that portion of the same play, or where the internal evidence of interpolation perceptible to the most careless and undeniable by the most perverse of readers is supported by the public judgment of men qualified to express and competent to defend an opinion, have I thought it allowable to adopt this facile method of explanation. No scholar, for example, believes in the single authorship of *Pericles* or *Andronicus* ; none, I suppose, would now question the part taken by some hireling or journeyman in the arrangement or completion for the stage of *Timon of Athens* ; and few probably would refuse to admit a doubt of the total authenticity or uniform workmanship of the *Taming of the Shrew* . As few, I hope, are prepared to follow the fantastic and confident suggestions of every unquiet and arrogant innovator who may seek to append his name to the long scroll of Shakespearean parasites by the display of a brand-new hypothesis as to the uncertain date or authorship of some passage or some play which has never before been subjected to the scientific scrutiny of such a pertinacious analyst. The more modest design of the present study has in part been already indicated, and will explain as it proceeds if there be anything in it worth explanation. It is no part of my ambition to loose the Gordian knots which others who found them indissoluble have sought in vain to cut in sunder with blunter swords than the Macedonian; but after so many adventures and attempts there may perhaps yet be room for an attempt yet unessayed; for a study by the ear alone of Shakespeare's metrical progress, and a study by light of the knowledge thus obtained of the corresponsive progress within, which found expression and embodiment in these outward and visible changes. The one study will be then seen to be the natural complement and the inevitable consequence of the other; and the patient pursuit of the simpler and more apprehensible object of research will appear as the only sure method by which a reasonable and faithful student may think to attain so much as the porch or entrance to that higher knowledge which no faithful and reasonable study of Shakespeare can ever for a moment fail to keep in sight as the haven of its final hope, the goal of its ultimate labour.

When Christopher Marlowe came up to London from Cambridge, a boy in years, a man in genius, and a god in ambition, he found the stage which he was born to transfigure and re-create by the might and masterdom of his genius encumbered with a litter of rude rhyming farces and tragedies which the first wave of his imperial hand swept so utterly out of sight and hearing that hardly by piecing together such fragments of that buried rubbish as it is now possible to unearth can we rebuild in imagination so much of the rough and crumbling walls that fell before the trumpet-blast of *Tamburlaine* as may give us some conception of the rabble dynasty of rhymers whom he overthrew—of the citadel of dramatic barbarism which was stormed and sacked at the first charge of the young conqueror who came to lead English audiences and to deliver English poetry

From jigging veins of rhyming mother-wits,
And such conceits as clownage keeps in pay.

When we speak of the drama that existed before the coming of Marlowe, and that vanished at his advent, we think usually of the rhyming plays written wholly or mainly in ballad verse of fourteen syllables—of the *Kings Darius* and

Cambyses , the *Promos and Cassandra* of Whetstone, or the *Sir Clyomon and Sir Clamydes* of George Peele. If we turn from these abortions of tragedy to the metrical farces which may fairly be said to contain the germ or embryo of English comedy (a form of dramatic art which certainly owes nothing to the father of our tragic stage), we find far more of hope and promise in the broad free stretches of the flagellant head-master of Eton and the bibulous Bishop of Bath and Wells; and must admit that hands used to wield the crosier or the birch proved themselves more skilful at the lighter labours of the stage, more successful even in the secular and bloodless business of a field neither clerical nor scholastic, than any tragic rival of the opposite party to that so jovially headed by Orbilius Udall and Silenus Still. These twin pillars of church and school and stage were strong enough to support on the shoulders of their authority the first crude fabric or formless model of our comic theatre, while the tragic boards were still creaking and cracking under the jingling canter of *Cambyses* or the tuneless tramp of *Gorboduc* . This one play which the charity of Sidney excepts from his general anathema on the nascent stage of England has hitherto been erroneously described as written in blank verse; an error which I can only attribute to the prevalence of a groundless assumption that whatever is neither prose nor rhyme must of necessity be definable as blank verse. But the measure, I must repeat, which was adopted by the authors of *Gorboduc* is by no means so definable. Blank it certainly is; but verse it assuredly is not. There can be no verse where there is no modulation, no rhythm where there is no music. Blank verse came into life in England at the birth of the shoemaker's son who had but to open his yet beardless lips, and the high-born poem which had Sackville to father and Sidney to sponsor was silenced and eclipsed for ever among the poor plebeian crowd of rhyming shadows that waited in death on the noble nothingness of its patrician shade.

These, I suppose, are the first or the only plays whose names recur to the memory of the general reader when he thinks of the English stage before Marlowe; but there was, I suspect, a whole class of plays then current, and more or less supported by popular favour, of which hardly a sample is now extant, and which cannot be classed with such as these. The poets or rhymesters who supplied them had already seen good to clip the cumbrous and bedraggled skirts of those dreary verses, run all to seed and weed, which jingled their thin bells at the tedious end of fourteen weary syllables; and for this curtailment of the shambling and sprawling lines which had hitherto done duty as tragic metre some credit may be due to these obscure purveyors of forgotten ware for the second epoch of our stage: if indeed, as I presume, we may suppose that this reform, such as it was, had begun before the time of Marlowe; otherwise, no doubt, little credit would be due to men who with so high an example before them were content simply to snip away the tags and fringes, to patch the seams and tatters, of the ragged coat of rhyme which they might have exchanged for that royal robe of heroic verse wherewith he had clothed the ungrown limbs of limping and lisping tragedy. But if these also may be reckoned among his precursors, the dismissal from stage service of the dolorous and drudging metre employed by the earliest school of theatrical rhymesters must be taken to mark a real step in advance; and in that case we possess at least a single example of the rhyming tragedies which had their hour between the last plays written wholly or partially in ballad metre and the first plays written in blank verse. The tragedy of *Selimus, Emperor of the Turks* , published in 1594, may then serve to indicate this brief and obscure period of transition. Whole scenes of this singular play are written in rhyming iambics, some in the measure of *Don Juan* , some in the measure of *Venus and Adonis* . The couplets and quatrains so much affected and so reluctantly abandoned by Shakespeare after the first stage of his dramatic progress are in no other play that I know of diversified by this alternate variation of *sesta* with *ottava rima* . This may have been an exceptional experiment due merely to the caprice of one eccentric rhymester; but in any case we may assume it to mark the extreme limit, the ultimate development of rhyming tragedy after the ballad metre had been happily exploded. The play is on other grounds worth attention as a sign of the times, though on poetical grounds it is assuredly worth none. Part of it is written in blank verse, or at least in rhymeless lines; so that after all it probably followed in the wake of *Tamburlaine* , half adopting and half rejecting the innovations of that fiery reformer, who wrought on the old English stage no less a miracle than *Hernani* on the French stage in the days of our fathers. That *Selimus* was published four years later than *Tamburlaine* , in the year following the death of Marlowe, proves of course nothing as to the date of its production; and even if it was written and acted in the year of its publication, it undoubtedly in the main represents the work of a prior era to the reformation of the stage by Marlowe. The level regularity of its unrhymed scenes is just like that of the weaker portions of *Titus Andronicus* and the *First Part of King Henry the Sixth* —the opening scene, for example, of either play. With *Andronicus* it has also in common the quality of exceptional monstrosity, a delight in the parade of mutilation as well as of massacre. It seems to me possible that the same hand may have been at work on all three plays; for that Marlowe’s is traceable in those parts of the two retouched by Shakespeare which bear no traces of his touch is a theory to the full as absurd as that which would impute to Shakespeare the charge of their entire composition.

The revolution effected by Marlowe naturally raised the same cry against its author as the revolution effected by Hugo. That Shakespeare should not at once have enlisted under his banner is less inexplicable than it may seem. He was naturally addicted to rhyme, though if we put aside the Sonnets we must admit that in rhyme he never did anything worth Marlowe's *Hero and Leander* : he did not, like Marlowe, see at once that it must be reserved for less active forms of poetry than the tragic drama; and he was personally, it seems, in opposition to Marlowe and his school of academic playwrights—the band of bards in which Oxford and Cambridge were respectively and so respectably represented by Peele and Greene. But in his very first plays, comic or tragic or historic, we can see the collision and conflict of the two influences; his evil angel, rhyme, yielding step by step and note by note to the strong advance of that better genius who came to lead him into the loftier path of Marlowe. There is not a single passage in *Titus Andronicus* more Shakespearean than the magnificent quatrain of Tamora upon the eagle and the little birds; but the rest of the scene in which we come upon it, and the whole scene preceding, are in blank verse of more variety and vigour than we find in the baser parts of the play; and these if any scenes we may surely attribute to Shakespeare. Again, the last battle of Talbot seems to me as undeniably the master's work as the scene in the Temple Gardens or the courtship of Margaret by Suffolk; this latter indeed, full as it is of natural and vivid grace, may perhaps not be beyond the highest reach of one or two among the rivals of his earliest years of work; while as we are certain that he cannot have written the opening scene, that he was at any stage of his career incapable of it, so may we believe as well as hope that he is guiltless of any complicity in that detestable part of the play which attempts to defile the memory of the virgin saviour of her country. In style it is not, I think, above the range of George Peele at his best: and to have written even the last of those scenes can add but little discredit to the memory of a man already disgraced as the defamer of Eleanor of Castile; while it would be a relief to feel assured that there was but one English poet of any genius who could be capable of either villainy.

In this play, then, more decisively than in *Titus Andronicus* , we find Shakespeare at work (so to speak) with both hands—with his left hand of rhyme, and his right hand of blank verse. The left is loth to forego the practice of its peculiar music; yet, as the action of the right grows freer and its touch grows stronger, it becomes more and more certain that the other must cease playing, under pain of producing mere discord and disturbance in the scheme of tragic harmony. We imagine that the writer must himself have felt the scene of the roses to be pitched in a truer key than the noble scene of parting between the old hero and his son on the verge of desperate battle and certain death. This is the last and loftiest farewell note of rhyming tragedy; still, in *King Richard II* , and in *Romeo and Juliet* , it struggles for awhile to keep its footing, but now more visibly in vain. The rhymed scenes in these plays are too plainly the survivals of a ruder and feebler stage of work; they cannot hold their own in the new order with even such discordant effect of incongruous excellence and inharmonious beauty as belongs to the death-scene of the Talbots when matched against the quarrelling scene of Somerset and York. Yet the briefest glance over the plays of the first epoch in the work of Shakespeare will suffice to show how protracted was the struggle and how gradual the defeat of rhyme. Setting aside the retouched plays, we find on the list one tragedy, two histories, and four if not five comedies, which the least critical reader would attribute to this first epoch of work. In three of these comedies rhyme can hardly be said to be beaten; that is, the rhyming scenes are on the whole equal to the unrhymed in power and beauty. In the single tragedy, and in one of the two histories, we may say that rhyme fights hard for life, but is undeniably worsted; that is, they contain as to quantity a large proportion of rhymed verse, but as to quality the rhymed part bears no proportion whatever to the unrhymed. In two scenes we may say that the whole heart or spirit of *Romeo and Juliet* is summed up and distilled into perfect and pure expression; and these two are written in blank verse of equable and blameless melody. Outside the garden scene in the second act and the balcony scene in the third, there is much that is fanciful and graceful, much of elegiac pathos and fervid if fantastic passion; much also of superfluous rhetoric and (as it were) of wordy melody, which flows and foams hither and thither into something of extravagance and excess; but in these two there is no flaw, no outbreak, no superflux, and no failure. Throughout certain scenes of the third and fourth acts I think it may be reasonably and reverently allowed that the river of verse has broken its banks, not as yet through the force and weight of its gathering stream, but merely through the weakness of the barriers or boundaries found insufficient to confine it. And here we may with deference venture on a guess why Shakespeare was so long so loth to forego the restraint of rhyme. When he wrote, and even when he rewrote or at least retouched, his youngest tragedy he had not yet strength to walk straight in the steps of the mighty master, but two months older than himself by birth, whose foot never from the first faltered in the arduous path of severer tragic verse. The loveliest of love-plays is after all a child of “his salad days, when he was green in judgment,” though assuredly not “cold in blood”—a physical condition as difficult to conceive of Shakespeare at any age as of Cleopatra. It is in the scenes of vehement passion, of ardour and of agony, that we feel the comparative weakness of a yet ungrown hand, the tentative uncertain grasp of a stripling giant. The two utterly beautiful scenes are not of this kind; they deal with simple joy and with simple sorrow, with the gladness of meeting and the sadness of parting love; but between and behind them come scenes of more fierce emotion, full of surprise, of violence, of unrest; and with these the poet is not yet (if I dare say so) quite strong enough to deal. Apollo has not yet put on the sinews of Hercules. At a later date we may fancy or may find that when the Herculean muscle is full-grown the voice in him which was as the voice of Apollo is for a passing moment impaired. In *Measure for Measure* , where the adult and gigantic god has grappled with the greatest and most terrible of energies and of passions, we miss the music of a younger note that rang through *Romeo and Juliet* ; but before the end this too revives, as pure, as sweet, as fresh, but richer now and deeper than its first clear notes of the morning, in the heavenly harmony of *Cymbeline* and *The Tempest* .

The same effusion or effervescence of words is perceptible in *King Richard II* . as in the greater (and the less good) part of *Romeo and Juliet* ; and not less perceptible is the perpetual inclination of the poet to revert for help to rhyme, to hark back in search of support towards the half-forsaken habits of his poetic nonage. Feeling his foothold insecure on the hard and high ascent of the steeps of rhymeless verse, he stops and slips back ever and anon towards the smooth and marshy meadow whence he has hardly begun to climb. Any student who should wish to examine the conditions of the struggle at its height may be content to analyse the first act of this the first historical play of Shakespeare. As the tragedy moves onward, and the style gathers strength while the action gathers speed,—as (to borrow the phrase so admirably applied by Coleridge to Dryden) the poet’s chariot-wheels get hot by driving fast,—the temptation of rhyme grows weaker, and the hand grows firmer which before lacked strength to wave it off. The one thing wholly or greatly admirable in this play is the exposition of the somewhat pitiful but not unpitiable character of King Richard. Among the scenes devoted to this exposition I of course include the whole of the death-scene of Gaunt, as well the part which precedes as the part which follows the actual appearance of his nephew on the stage; and into these scenes the intrusion of rhyme is rare and brief. They are written almost wholly in pure and fluent rather than vigorous or various blank verse; though I cannot discern in any of them an equality in power and passion to the magnificent scene of abdication in Marlowe’s *Edward II* . This play, I think, must undoubtedly be regarded as the immediate model of Shakespeare’s; and the comparison is one of inexhaustible interest to all students of dramatic poetry. To the highest height of the earlier master I do not think that the mightier poet who was as yet in great measure his pupil has ever risen in this the first (as I take it) of his historic plays. Of composition and proportion he has perhaps already a somewhat better idea. But in grasp of character, always excepting the one central figure of the piece, we find his hand as yet the unsteadier of the two. Even after a lifelong study of this as of all other plays of Shakespeare, it is for me at least impossible to determine what I doubt if the poet could himself have clearly defined—the main principle, the motive and the meaning of such characters as York, Norfolk, and Aumerle. The Gaveston and the Mortimer of Marlowe are far more solid and definite figures than these; yet none after that of Richard is more important to the scheme of Shakespeare. They are fitful, shifting, vaporous: their outlines change, withdraw, dissolve, and "leave not a rack behind." They, not Antony, are like the clouds of evening described in the most glorious of so many glorious passages put long afterwards by Shakespeare into the mouth of his latest Roman hero. They "cannot hold this visible shape" in which the poet at first presents them even long enough to leave a distinct image, a decisive impression for better or for worse, upon the mind's eye of the most simple and open-hearted reader. They are ghosts, not men; *simulacra modis pallentia miris* . You cannot descry so much as the original intention of the artist's hand which began to draw and relaxed its hold of the brush before the first lines were fairly traced. And in the last, the worst and weakest scene of all, in which York pleads with Bolingbroke for the death of the son whose mother pleads against her husband for his life, there is a final relapse into rhyme and rhyming epigram, into the "jigging vein" dried up (we might have hoped) long since by the very glance of Marlowe's Apollonian scorn. It would be easy, agreeable, and irrational to ascribe without further evidence than its badness this misconceived and misshapen scene to some other hand than Shakespeare's. It is below the weakest, the rudest, the hastiest scene attributable to Marlowe; it is false, wrong, artificial beyond the worst of his bad and boyish work; but it has a certain likeness for the worse to the crudest work of Shakespeare. It is difficult to say to what depths of bad taste the writer of certain passages in *Venus and Adonis* could not fall before his genius or his judgment was full-grown. To invent an earlier play on the subject and imagine this scene a surviving fragment, a floating waif of that imaginary wreck, would in my opinion be an uncritical mode of evading the question at issue. It must be regarded as the last hysterical struggle of rhyme to maintain its place in tragedy; and the explanation, I would fain say the excuse, of its reappearance may perhaps be simply this; that the poet was not yet dramatist enough to feel for each of his characters an equal or proportionate regard; to divide and disperse his interest among the various crowd of figures which claim each in its place, and each after its kind, fair and adequate share of their creator’s attention and sympathy. His present interest was here wholly concentrated on the single figure of Richard; and when that for the time was absent, the subordinate figures became to him but heavy and vexatious encumbrances, to be shifted on and off the stage with as much of haste and as little of labour as might be possible to an impatient and uncertain hand. Now all tragic poets, I presume, from Æschylus the godlike father of them all to the last aspirant who may struggle after the traces of his steps, have been poets before they were tragedians; their lips have had power to sing before their feet had strength to tread the stage, before their hands had skill to paint or carve figures from the life. With Shakespeare it was so as certainly as with Shelley, as evidently as with Hugo. It is in the great comic poets, in Molière and in Congreve, our own lesser Molière, so far inferior in breadth and depth, in tenderness and strength, to the greatest writer of the “great age,” yet so near him in science and in skill, so like him in brilliance and in force;—it is in these that we find theatrical instinct twin-born with imaginative impulse, dramatic power with inventive perception.

In the second historic play which can be wholly ascribed to Shakespeare we still find the poetic or rhetorical duality for the most part in excess of the dramatic; but in *King Richard III* . the bonds of rhyme at least are fairly broken. This only of all Shakespeare’s plays belongs absolutely to the school of Marlowe. The influence of the elder master, and that influence alone, is perceptible from end to end. Here at last we can see that Shakespeare has decidedly chosen his side. It is as fiery in passion, as single in purpose, as rhetorical often though never so inflated in expression, as *Tamburlaine* itself. It is doubtless a better piece of work than Marlowe ever did; I dare not say, than Marlowe ever could have done. It is not for any man to measure, above all is it not for any workman in the field of tragic poetry lightly to take on himself the responsibility or the authority to pronounce, what it is that Christopher Marlowe could not have done; but, dying as he did and when he did, it is certain that he has not left us a work so generally and so variously admirable as *King Richard III* . As certain is it that but for him this play could never have been written. At a later date the subject would have been handled otherwise, had the poet chosen to handle it at all; and in his youth he could not have treated it as he has without the guidance and example of Marlowe. Not only are its highest qualities of energy, of exuberance, of pure and lofty style, of sonorous and successive harmonies, the very qualities that never fail to distinguish those first dramatic models which were fashioned by his ardent hand; the strenuous and single-handed grasp of character, the motion and action of combining and contending powers, which here for the first time we find sustained with equal and unfaltering vigour throughout the length of a whole play, we perceive, though imperfectly, in the work of Marlowe before we can trace them even as latent or infant forces in the work of Shakespeare.

In the exquisite and delightful comedies of his earliest period we can hardly discern any sign, any promise of them at all. One only of these, the *Comedy of Errors* , has in it anything of dramatic composition and movement; and what it has of these, I need hardly remind the most cursory of students, is due by no means to Shakespeare. What is due to him, and to him alone, is the honour of having embroidered on the naked old canvas of comic action those flowers of elegiac beauty which vivify and diversify the scene of Plautus as reproduced by the art of Shakespeare. In the next generation so noble a poet as Rotrou, whom perhaps it might not be inaccurate to call the French Marlowe, and who had (what Marlowe had not) the gift of comic as well as of tragic excellence, found nothing of this kind and little of any kind to add to the old poet's admirable but arid sketch of farcical incident or accident. But in this light and lovely work of the youth of Shakespeare we find for the first time that strange and sweet admixture of farce with fancy, of lyric charm with comic effect, which recurs so often in his later work, from the date of *As You Like It* to the date of the *Winter's Tale* , and which no later poet had ventured to recombine in the same play till our own time had given us, in the author of *Tragaldabas* , one who could alternate without confusing the woodland courtship of Eliseo and Caprina with the tavern braggardism of Grif and Minotoro. The sweetness and simplicity of lyric or elegiac loveliness which fill and inform the scenes where Adriana, her sister, and the Syracusan Antipholus exchange the expression of their errors and their loves, belong to Shakespeare alone; and may help us to understand how the young poet who at the outset of his divine career had struck into this fresh untrodden path of poetic comedy should have been, as we have seen that he was, loth to learn from another and an alien teacher the hard and necessary lesson that this flowery path would never lead him towards the loftier land of tragic poetry. For as yet, even in the nominally or intentionally tragic and historic work of the first period, we descry always and everywhere and still preponderant the lyric element, the fantastic element, or even the elegiac element. All these queens and heroines of history and tragedy have rather an Ovidian than a Sophoclean grace of bearing and of speech.

The example afforded by the *Comedy of Errors* would suffice to show that rhyme, however inadequate for tragic use, is by no means a bad instrument for romantic comedy. In another of Shakespeare's earliest works, which might almost be described as a lyrical farce, rhyme plays also a great part; but the finest passage, the real crown and flower of *Love's Labour's Lost* , is the praise or apology of love spoken by Biron in blank verse. This is worthy of Marlowe for dignity and sweetness, but has also the grace of a light and radiant fancy enamoured of itself, begotten between thought and mirth, a child-god with grave lips and laughing eyes, whose inspiration is nothing akin to Marlowe's. In this as in the overture of the play and in its closing scene, but especially in the noble passage which winds up for a year the courtship of Biron and Rosaline, the spirit which informs the speech of the poet is finer of touch and deeper of tone than in the sweetest of the serious interludes of the *Comedy of Errors* . The play is in the main a yet lighter thing, and more wayward and capricious in build, more formless and fantastic in plot, more incomposite altogether than that first heir of Shakespeare's comic invention, which on its own ground is perfect in its consistency, blameless in composition and coherence; while in *Love's Labour's Lost* the fancy for the most part runs wild as the wind, and the structure of the story is as that of a house of clouds which the wind builds and unbuilds at pleasure. Here we find a very riot of rhymes, wild and wanton in their half-grown grace as a troop of "young satyrs, tender-hoofed and ruddy-horned"; during certain scenes we seem almost to stand again by the cradle of new-born comedy, and hear the first lisping and laughing accents run over from her baby lips in bubbling rhyme; but when the note changes we recognise the speech of gods. For the first time in our literature the higher key of poetic or romantic comedy is finely touched to a fine issue. The divine instrument fashioned by Marlowe for tragic purposes alone has found at once its new sweet use in the hands of Shakespeare. The way is prepared for *As You Like It* and the *Tempest* ; the language is discovered which will befit the lips of Rosalind and Miranda.

What was highest as poetry in the *Comedy of Errors* was mainly in rhyme; all indeed, we might say, between the prelude spoken by Ægeon and the appearance in the last scene of his wife: in *Love's Labour's Lost* what was highest was couched wholly in blank verse; in the *Two Gentlemen of Verona* rhyme has fallen seemingly into abeyance, and there are no passages of such elegiac beauty as in the former, of such exalted eloquence as in the latter of these plays; there is an even sweetness, a simple equality of grace in thought and language which keeps the whole poem in tune, written as it is in a subdued key of unambitious harmony. In perfect unity and keeping the composition of this beautiful sketch may perhaps be said to mark a stage of advance, a new point of work attained, a faint but sensible change of manner, signalised by increased firmness of hand and clearness of outline. Slight and swift in execution as it is, few and simple as are the chords here struck of character and emotion, every shade of drawing and every note of sound is at one with the whole scheme of form and music. Here too is the first dawn of that higher and more tender humour which was never given in such perfection to any man as ultimately to Shakespeare; one touch of the by-play of Launce and his immortal dog is worth all the bright fantastic interludes of Boyet and Adriano, Costard and Holofernes; worth even half the sallies of Mercutio, and half the dancing doggrel or broad-witted prose of either Dromio. But in the final poem which concludes and crowns the first epoch of Shakespeare’s work, the special graces and peculiar glories of each that went before are gathered together as in one garland “of every hue and every scent.” The young genius of the master of all our poets finds its consummation in the *Midsummer Night’s Dream* . The blank verse is as full, sweet, and strong as the best of Biron’s or Romeo’s; the rhymed verse as clear, pure, and true as the simplest and truest melody of *Venus and Adonis* or the *Comedy of Errors* . But here each kind of excellence is equal throughout; there are here no purple patches on a gown of serge, but one seamless and imperial robe of a single dye. Of the lyric or the prosaic part, the counterchange of loves and laughters, of fancy fine as air and imagination high as heaven, what need can there be for any one to shame himself by the helpless attempt to say some word not utterly unworthy? Let it suffice us to accept this poem as the landmark of our first stage, and pause to look back from it on what lies behind us of partial or of perfect work.

The highest point attained in this first period lies in the domain of comedy or romance, and belongs as much to lyric as to dramatic poetry; its sovereign quality is that of sweetness and springtide of fairy fancy crossed with light laughter and light trouble that end in perfect music. In history as in tragedy the master’s hand has not yet come to its full strength and skill; its touch is not yet wholly assured, its work not yet wholly blameless. Besides the plays undoubtedly and entirely due to the still growing genius of Shakespeare, we have taken note but of two among those which bear the partial imprint of his hand. The long-vexed question as to the authorship of the latter parts of *King Henry VI* ., in their earlier or later form, has not been touched upon; nor do I design to reopen that perpetual source of debate unstanchable and inexhaustible dispute by any length of scrutiny or inquisition of detail. Two points must of course be taken for granted: that Marlowe was more or less concerned in the production, and Shakespeare in the revision of these plays; whether before or after his additions to the original *First Part of King Henry VI* . we cannot determine, though the absence of rhyme might seem to indicate a later date for the recast of the *Contention* . But it is noticeable that the style of Marlowe appears more vividly and distinctly in passages of the reformed than of the unreformed plays. Those famous lines, for example, which open the fourth act of the *Second Part of King Henry VI* . are not to be found in the corresponding scene of the first part of the *Contention* ; yet, whether they belong to the original sketch of the play, or were inserted as an afterthought into the revised and expanded copy, the authorship of these verses is surely unmistakable:—

The gaudy, blabbing, and remorseful day
Is crept into the bosom of the sea;
And now loud howling wolves arouse the jades
That drag the tragic melancholy night—

Aut Christophorus Marlowe, aut diabolus ; it is inconceivable that any imitator but one should have had the power so to catch the very trick of his hand, the very note of his voice, and incredible that the one who might would have set himself to do so: for if this be not indeed the voice and this the hand of Marlowe, then what we find in these verses is not the fidelity of a follower, but the servility of a copyist. No parasitic rhymester of past or present days who feeds his starveling talent on the shreds and orts, “the fragments, scraps, the bits and greasy relics” of another man’s board, ever uttered a more parrot-like note of plagiary. The very exactitude of the repetition is a strong argument against the theory which attributes it to Shakespeare. That he had much at starting to learn of Marlowe, and that he did learn much—that in his earliest plays, and above all in his earliest historic plays, the influence of the elder poet, the echo of his style, the iteration of his manner, may perpetually be traced—I have already shown that I should be the last to question; but so exact an echo, so servile an iteration as this, I believe we shall nowhere find in them. The sonorous accumulation of emphatic epithets—as in the magnificent first verse of this passage—is indeed at least as much a note of the young Shakespeare’s style as of his master’s; but even were this one verse less in the manner of the elder than the younger poet—and this we can hardly say that it is—no single verse detached from its context can weigh a feather against the full and flawless evidence of the whole speech. And of all this there is nothing in the *Contention* ; the scene there opens in bald and flat nakedness of prose, striking at once into the immediate matter of stage business without the decoration of a passing epithet or a single trope.

From this sample it might seem that the main difficulty must be to detect anywhere the sign-manual of Shakespeare, even in the best passages of the revised play. On the other hand, it has not unreasonably been maintained that even in the next scene of this same act in its original form, and in all those following which treat of Cade's insurrection, there is evidence of such qualities as can hardly be ascribed to any hand then known but Shakespeare's. The forcible realism, the simple vigour and lifelike humour of these scenes, cannot, it is urged, be due to any other so early at work in the field of comedy. A critic desirous to press this point might further insist on the likeness or identity of tone between these and all later scenes in which Shakespeare has taken on him to paint the action and passion of an insurgent populace. With him, it might too plausibly be argued, the people once risen in revolt for any just or unjust cause is always the mob, the unwashed rabble, the swinish multitude; full as he is of wise and gracious tenderness for individual character, of swift and ardent pity for personal suffering, he has no deeper or finer feeling than scorn for "the beast with many heads" that fawn and butt at bidding as they are swayed by the vain and violent breath of any worthless herdsman. For the drovers who guide and misguide at will the turbulent flocks of their mutinous cattle his store of bitter words is inexhaustible; it is a treasure-house of obloquy which can never be drained dry. All this, or nearly all this, we must admit; but it brings us no nearer to any but a floating and conjectural kind of solution. In the earliest form known to us of this play it should seem that we have traces of Shakespeare's handiwork, in the latest that we find evidence of Marlowe's. But it would be something too extravagant for the veriest wind-sucker among commentators to start a theory that a revision was made of his original work by Marlowe after additions had been made to it by Shakespeare; yet we have seen that the most unmistakable signs of Marlowe's handiwork, the passages which show most plainly the personal and present seal of his genius, belong to the play only in its revised form; while there is no part of the whole composition which can so confidently be assigned to Shakespeare as to the one man then capable of such work, as can an entire and important episode of the play in its unrevised state. Now the proposition that Shakespeare was the sole author of both plays in their earliest extant shape is refuted at once and equally from without and from within, by evidence of tradition and by evidence of style. There is therefore proof irresistible and unmistakable of at least a double authorship; and the one reasonable conclusion left to us would seem to be this; that the first edition we possess of these plays is a partial transcript of the text as it stood after the first additions had been made by Shakespeare to the original work of Marlowe and others; for that this original was the work of more hands than one, and hands of notably unequal power, we have again the united witness of traditional and internal evidence to warrant our belief: and that among the omissions of this imperfect text were certain passages of the original work, which were ultimately restored in the final revision of the entire poem as it now stands among the collected works of Shakespeare.

No competent critic who has given due study to the genius of Marlowe will admit that there is a single passage of tragic or poetic interest in either form of the text, which is beyond the reach of the father of English tragedy: or, if there be one seeming exception in the expanded and transfigured version of Clifford's monologue over his father's corpse, which is certainly more in Shakespeare's tragic manner than in Marlowe's, and in the style of a later period than that in which he was on the whole apparently content to reproduce or to emulate the tragic manner of Marlowe, there is at least but this one exception to the general and absolute truth of the rule; and even this great tragic passage is rather out of the range of Marlowe's style than beyond the scope of his genius. In the later as in the earlier version of these plays, the one manifest excellence of which we have no reason to suppose him capable is manifest in the comic or prosaic scenes alone. The first great rapid sketch of the dying cardinal, afterwards so nobly enlarged and perfected on revision by the same or by a second artist, is as clearly within the capacity of Marlowe as of Shakespeare; and in either edition of the latter play, successively known as *The True Tragedy of Richard Duke of York* , as the *Second Part of the Contention* , and as the *Third Part of King Henry VI* ., the dominant figure which darkens all the close of the poem with presage of a direr day is drawn by the same strong hand in the same tragic outline. From the first to the last stage of the work there is no mark of change or progress here; the whole play indeed has undergone less revision, as it certainly needed less, than the preceding part of the *Contention* . Those great verses which resume the whole spirit of Shakespeare's Richard—finer perhaps in themselves than any passage of the play which bears his name—are wellnigh identical in either form of the poem; but the reviser, with admirable judgment, has struck out, whether from his own text or that of another, the line which precedes them in the original sketch, where the passage runs thus:—

I had no father, I am like no father;
I have no brothers, I am like no brother;

(this reiteration is exactly in the first manner of our tragic drama;)

And this word love, which greybeards term divine, *etc.*

It would be an impertinence to transcribe the rest of a passage which rings in the ear of every reader's memory; but it may be noted that the erasure by which its effect is so singularly heightened with the inborn skill of so divine an instinct is just such an alteration as would be equally likely to occur to the original writer on glancing over his printed text or to a poet of kindred power, who, while busied in retouching and filling out the sketch of his predecessor, might be struck by the opening for so great an improvement at so small a cost of suppression. My own conjecture would incline to the belief that we have here a perfect example of the manner in which Shakespeare may be presumed, when such a task was set before him, to have dealt with the text of Marlowe. That at the outset of his career he was so employed, as well as on the texts of lesser poets, we have on all hands as good evidence of every kind as can be desired; proof on one side from the text of the revised plays, which are as certainly in part the work of his hand as they are in part the work of another; and proof on the opposite side from the open and clamorous charge of his rivals, whose imputations can be made to bear no reasonable meaning but this by the most violent ingenuity of perversion, and who presumably were not persons of such frank imbecility, such innocent and infantine malevolence, as to forge against their most dangerous enemy the pointless and edgeless weapon of a charge which, if ungrounded, must have been easier to refute than to devise. Assuming then that in common with other young poets of his day he was thus engaged during the first years of his connection with the stage, we should naturally have expected to find him handling the text of Marlowe with more of reverence and less of freedom than that of meaner men: ready, as in the *Contention* , to clear away with no timid hand their weaker and more inefficient work, to cancel and supplant it by worthier matter of his own; but when occupied in recasting the verse of Marlowe, not less ready to confine his labour to such slight and skilful strokes of art as that which has led us into this byway of speculation; to the correction of a false note, the addition of a finer touch, the perfection of a meaning half expressed or a tone of half-uttered music; to the invigoration of sense and metre by substitution of the right word for the wrong, of a fuller phrase for one feebler; to the excision of such archaic and superfluous repetitions as are signs of a cruder stage of workmanship, relics of a ruder period of style, survivals of the earliest form or habit of dramatic poetry. Such work as this, however humble in our present eyes, which look before and after, would assuredly have been worthy of the workman and his task; an office no less fruitful of profit, and no more unbeseeming the pupil hand of the future master, than the subordinate handiwork of the young Raffaelle or Leonardo on the canvas of Verrocchio or Perugino.

Of the doubtful or spurious plays which have been with more or less show of reason ascribed to this first period of Shakespeare’s art, I have here no more to say than that I purpose in the proper place to take account of the only two among them which bear the slightest trace of any possible touch of his hand. For these two there is not, as it happens, the least witness of tradition or outward likelihood which might warrant us in assigning them a place apart from the rest, and nearer the chance of reception into the rank that has been claimed for them; while those plays in whose favour there is some apparent evidence from without, such as the fact of early or even original attribution to the master’s hand, are, with one possible exception, utterly beyond the pale of human consideration as at any stage whatever the conceivable work of Shakespeare.

Considering that his two attempts at narrative or rather semi-narrative and semi-reflective poetry belong obviously to an early stage of his earliest period, we may rather here than elsewhere take notice that there are some curious points of coincidence for evil as for good between the fortunes of Shakespeare’s plays and the fortunes of his poems. In either case we find that some part at least of his earlier and inferior work has fared better at the blind hands of chance and the brutish hands of printers than some part at least of his riper and more precious products. His two early poems would seem to have had the good hap of his personal supervision in their passage through the press. Upon them, at least since the time of Coleridge, who as usual has said on this subject the first and the last word that need be said, it seems to me that fully sufficient notice and fully adequate examination have been expended; and that nothing at once new and true can now be profitably said in praise or in dispraise of them. Of *A Lover’s Complaint* , marked as it is throughout with every possible sign suggestive of a far later date and a far different inspiration, I have only space or need to remark that it contains two of the most exquisitely Shakespearean verses ever vouchsafed to us by Shakespeare, and two of the most execrably euphuistic or dysphuistic lines ever inflicted on us by man. Upon the Sonnets such a preposterous pyramid of presumptuous commentary has long since been reared by the Cimmerian speculation and Bœotian “brain-sweat” of sciolists and scholiasts, that no modest man will hope and no wise man will desire to add to the structure or subtract from it one single brick of proof or disproof, theorem or theory. As yet the one contemporary book which has ever been supposed to throw any direct or indirect light on the mystic matter remains as inaccessible and unhelpful to students as though it had never been published fifteen years earlier than the date of their publication and four years before the book in which Meres notices the circulation of Shakespeare’s “sugared sonnets among his private friends." It would be a most noble and thankworthy addition to a list of labours beyond praise and benefits beyond price, if my honoured friend Dr. Grosart could find the means to put a crown upon the achievements of his learning and a seal upon the obligations of our gratitude by the one inestimable boon long hoped for against hoping, and as yet but "a vision in a dream" to the most learned and most loving of true Shakespearean students; by the issue or reissue in its full and perfect likeness, collated at last and complete, of *Willobie his Avisa* .

It was long since more than time that the worthless and impudent imposture called *The Passionate Pilgrim* should be exposed and expelled from its station at the far end of Shakespeare's poems. What Coleridge said of Ben Jonson's epithet for "turtle-footed peace," we may say of the label affixed to this rag-picker's bag of stolen goods: *The Passionate Pilgrim* is a pretty title, a very pretty title; pray what may it mean? In all the larcenous little bundle of verse there is neither a poem which bears that name nor a poem by which that name would be bearable. The publisher of the booklet was like "one Ragozine, a most notorious pirate"; and the method no less than the motive of his rascality in the present instance is palpable and simple enough. Fired by the immediate and instantly proverbial popularity of Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis* , he hired, we may suppose, some ready hack of unclean hand to supply him with three doggrel sonnets on the same subject, noticeable only for their porcine quality of prurience: he procured by some means a rough copy or an incorrect transcript of two genuine and unpublished sonnets by Shakespeare, which with the acute instinct of a felonious tradesman he laid atop of his worthless wares by way of gilding to their base metal: he stole from the two years published text of *Love's Labour's Lost* , and reproduced with more or less mutilation or corruption, the sonnet of Longavile, the "canzonet" of Biron, and the far lovelier love-song of Dumaine. The rest of the ragman's gatherings, with three most notable exceptions, is little better for the most part than dry rubbish or disgusting refuse; unless a plea may haply be put in for the pretty commonplaces of the lines on a "sweet rose, fair flower," and so forth; for the couple of thin and pallid if tender and tolerable copies of verse on "Beauty" and "Good Night," or the passably light and lively stray of song on "crabbed age and youth." I need not say that those three exceptions are the stolen and garbled work of Marlowe and of Barnfield, our elder Shelley and our first-born Keats; the singer of Cynthia in verse well worthy of Endymion, who would seem to have died as a poet in the same fatal year of his age that Keats died as a man; the first adequate English laureate of the nightingale, to be supplanted or equalled by none until the advent of his mightier brother.

<<span id="filepos0037473973"> a>II.

The second period is that of perfection in comic and historic style. The final heights and depths of tragedy, with all its reach of thought and all its pulse of passion, are yet to be scaled and sounded; but to this stage belongs the special quality of faultless, joyous, facile command upon each faculty required of the presiding genius for service or for sport. It is in the middle period of his work that the language of Shakespeare is most limpid in its fullness, the style most pure, the thought most transparent through the close and luminous raiment of perfect expression. The conceits and crudities of the first stage are outgrown and cast aside; the harshness and obscurity which at times may strike us as among the notes of his third manner have as yet no place in the flawless work of this second stage. That which has to be said is not yet too great for perfection of utterance; passion has not yet grappled with thought in so close and fierce an embrace as to strain and rend the garment of words, though stronger and subtler than ever was woven of human speech. Neither in his first nor in his last stage would the style of Shakespeare, even were it possible by study to reproduce it, be of itself a perfect and blameless model; but his middle style, that in which the typical plays of his second period are written, would be, if it were possible to imitate, the most absolute pattern that could be set before man. I do not speak of mere copyist’s work, the parasitic knack of retailing cast phrases, tricks and turns of accent, cadences and catchwords proper only to the natural manner of the man who first came by instinct upon them, and by instinct put them to use; I speak of that faithful and fruitful discipleship of love with which the highest among poets and the most original among workmen have naturally been always the first to study and the most earnest to follow the footsteps of their greatest precursors in that kind. And this only high and profitable form of study and discipleship can set before itself, even in the work of Shakespeare, no pattern so perfect, no model so absolute, as is afforded by the style or manner of his second period.

To this stage belong by spiritual right if not by material, by rule of poetic order if not by date of actual succession, the greatest of his English histories and four of his greatest and most perfect comedies; the four greatest we might properly call them, reserving for another class the last divine triad of romantic plays which it is alike inaccurate to number among tragedies or comedies proper: the *Winter's Tale* , *Cymbeline* , and the *Tempest* , which belong of course wholly to his last manner, or, if accuracy must be strained even to pedantry, to the second manner of his third or final stage. A single masterpiece which may be classed either among histories or tragedies belongs to the middle period; and to this also we must refer, if not the ultimate form, yet assuredly the first sketch at least of that which is commonly regarded as the typical and supreme work of Shakespeare. Three lesser comedies, one of them in great part the recast or rather the transfiguration of an earlier poet's work, complete the list of plays assignable to the second epoch of his genius.

The ripest fruit of historic or national drama, the consummation and the crown of Shakespeare's labours in that line, must of course be recognised and saluted by all students in the supreme and sovereign trilogy of King Henry IV. and King Henry V. On a lower degree only than this final and imperial work we find the two chronicle histories which remain to be classed. In style as in structure they bear witness of a power less perfect, a less impeccable hand. They have less of perceptible instinct, less of vivid and vigorous utterance; the breath of their inspiration is less continuous and less direct, the fashion of their eloquence is more deliberate and more prepense; there is more of study and structure apparent in their speech, and less in their general scheme of action. Of all Shakespeare's plays they are the most rhetorical; there is more talk than song in them, less poetry than oratory; more finish than form, less movement than incident. Scene is laid upon scene, and event succeeds event, as stone might be laid on stone and story might succeed story in a building reared by mere might of human handiwork; not as in a city or temple whose walls had risen of themselves to the lyric breath and stroke of a greater than Amphion; moulded out of music by no rule or line of mortal measure, with no sound of axe or anvil, but only of smitten strings: built by harp and not by hand.

The lordly structure of these poems is the work of a royal workman, full of masterdom and might, sublime in the state and strength of its many mansions, but less perfect in proportion and less aërial in build than the very highest fabrics fashioned after their own great will by the supreme architects of song. Of these plays, and of these alone among the maturer works of Shakespeare, it may be said that the best parts are discernible from the rest, divisible by analysis and separable by memory from the scenes which precede them or follow and the characters which surround them or succeed. Constance and Katherine rise up into remembrance apart from their environment and above it, stand clear in our minds of the crowded company with which the poet has begirt their central figures. In all other of his great tragic works,—even in *Hamlet* , if we have grace and sense to read it aright and not awry,—it is not of any single person or separate passage that we think when we speak of it; it is to the whole masterpiece that the mind turns at mention of its name. The one entire and perfect chrysolite of *Othello* is neither Othello nor Desdemona nor Iago, but each and all; the play of *Hamlet* is more than Hamlet himself, the poem even here is too great to be resumed in the person. But Constance is the jewel of *King John* , and Katherine is the crowning blossom of *King Henry VIII* .—a funeral flower as of "marigolds on death-beds blowing," an opal of as pure water as "tears of perfect moan," with fitful fire at its heart, ominous of evil and sorrow, set in a mourning band of jet on the forefront of the poem, that the brow so circled may, "like to a title-leaf, foretell the nature of a tragic volume." Not indeed that without these the ground would in either case be barren; but that in either field our eye rests rather on these and other separate ears of wheat that overtop the ranks, than on the waving width of the whole harvest at once. In the one play our memory turns next to the figures of Arthur and the Bastard, in the other to those of Wolsey and his king: the residue in either case is made up of outlines more lightly and slightly drawn. In two scenes the figure of King John rises indeed to the highest height even of Shakespearean tragedy; for the rest of the play the lines of his character are cut no deeper, the features of his personality stand out in no sharper relief, than those of Eleanor or the French king; but the scene in which he tempts Hubert to the edge of the pit of hell sounds a deeper note and touches a subtler string in the tragic nature of man than had been struck by any poet save Dante alone, since the reign of the Greek tragedians. The cunning and profound simplicity of the few last weighty words which drop like flakes of poison that blister where they fall from the deadly lips of the king is a new quality in our tragic verse; there was no foretaste of such a thing in the passionate imagination which clothed itself in the mighty music of Marlowe's burning song. The elder master might indeed have written the magnificent speech which ushers in with gradual rhetoric and splendid reticence the black suggestion of a deed without a name; his hand might have woven with no less imperial skill the elaborate raiment of words and images which wraps up in fold upon fold, as with swaddling-bands of purple and golden embroidery, the shapeless and miscreated birth of a murderous purpose that labours into light even while it loathes the light and itself; but only Shakespeare could give us the first sample of that more secret and terrible knowledge which reveals itself in the brief heavy whispers that seal the commission and sign the warrant of the king.

Webster alone of all our tragic poets has had strength to emulate in this darkest line of art the handiwork of his master. We find nowhere such an echo or reflection of the spirit of this scene as in the last tremendous dialogue of Bosola with Ferdinand in the house of murder and madness, while their spotted souls yet flutter between conscience and distraction, hovering for an hour as with broken wings on the confines of either province of hell. One pupil at least could put to this awful profit the study of so great a model; but with the single and sublime exception of that other design from the same great hand, which bares before us the mortal anguish of Bracciano, no copy or imitation of the scene in which John dies by poison has ever come near enough to evade the sentence it provokes. The shrill tremulous agony of Fletcher's Valentinian is to the sullen and slow death-pangs of Shakespeare's tyrant as the babble of a suckling to the accents of a man. As far beyond the reach of any but his maker's hand is the pattern of a perfect English warrior, set once for all before the eyes of all ages in the figure of the noble Bastard. The national side of Shakespeare's genius, the heroic vein of patriotism that runs like a thread of living fire through the world-wide range of his omnipresent spirit, has never, to my thinking, found vent or expression to such glorious purpose as here. Not even in Hotspur or Prince Hal has he mixed with more godlike sleight of hand all the lighter and graver good qualities of the national character, or compounded of them all so lovable a nature as this. In those others we admire and enjoy the same bright fiery temper of soul, the same buoyant and fearless mastery of fate or fortune, the same gladness and glory of life made lovely with all the labour and laughter of its full fresh days; but no quality of theirs binds our hearts to them as they are bound to Philip—not by his loyal valour, his keen young wit, his kindliness, constancy, readiness of service as swift and sure in the day of his master's bitterest shame and shamefullest trouble as in the blithest hour of battle and that first good fight which won back his father's spoils from his father's slayer; but more than all these, for that lightning of divine rage and pity, of tenderness that speaks in thunder and indignation that makes fire of its tears, in the horror of great compassion which falls on him, the tempest and storm of a beautiful and godlike anger which shakes his strength of spirit and bows his high heart down at sight of Arthur dead. Being thus, as he is, the English masterwork of Shakespeare's hand, we may well accept him as the best man known to us that England ever made; the hero that Nelson must have been had he never come too near Naples.

I am not minded to say much of Shakespeare's Arthur; there are one or two figures in the world of his work of which there are no words that would be fit or good to say. Another of these is Cordelia. The place they have in our lives and thoughts is not one for talk; the niche set apart for them to inhabit in our secret hearts is not penetrable by the lights and noises of common day. There are chapels in the cathedral of man's highest art as in that of his inmost life, not made to be set open to the eyes and feet of the world. Love and death and memory keep charge for us in silence of some beloved names. It is the crowning glory of genius, the final miracle and transcendent gift of poetry, that it can add to the number of these, and engrave on the very heart of our remembrance fresh names and memories of its own creation.

There is one younger child in this heavenly family of Shakespeare's who sits side by side with Arthur in the secret places of our thought; there are but two or three that I remember among the children of other poets who may be named in the same year with them: as Fletcher's Hengo, Webster's Giovanni, and Landor's Cæsarion. Of this princely trinity of boys the "bud of Britain" is as yet the most famous flower; yet even in the broken words of childish heroism that falter on his dying lips there is nothing of more poignant pathos, more "dearly sweet and bitter," than Giovanni's talk of his dead mother and all her sleepless nights now ended for ever in a sleep beyond tears or dreams. Perhaps the most nearly faultless in finish and proportion of perfect nature among all the noble three is Landor's portrait of the imperial and right Roman child of Cæsar and Cleopatra. I know not but this may be found in the judgment of men to come wellnigh the most pathetic and heroic figure bequeathed us after more than eighty years of a glorious life by the indomitable genius of our own last Roman and republican poet.

We have come now to that point at the opening of the second stage in his work where the supreme genius of all time begins first to meddle with the mysteries and varieties of human character, to handle its finer and more subtle qualities, to harmonise its more untuned and jarring discords; giving here and thus the first proof of a power never shared in like measure by the mightiest among the sons of men, a sovereign and serene capacity to fathom the else unfathomable depths of spiritual nature, to solve its else insoluble riddles, to reconcile its else irreconcilable discrepancies. In his first stage Shakespeare had dropped his plummet no deeper into the sea of the spirit of man than Marlowe had sounded before him; and in the channel of simple emotion no poet could cast surer line with steadier hand than he. Further down in the dark and fiery depths of human pain and mortal passion no soul could search than his who first rendered into speech the aspirations and the agonies of a ruined and revolted spirit. And until Shakespeare found in himself the strength of eyesight to read and the cunning of handiwork to render those wider diversities of emotion and those further complexities of character which lay outside the range of Marlowe, he certainly cannot be said to have outrun the winged feet, outstripped the fiery flight of his forerunner. In the heaven of our tragic song the first-born star on the forehead of its herald god was not outshone till the full midsummer meridian of that greater godhead before whom he was sent to prepare a pathway for the sun. Through all the forenoon of our triumphant day, till the utter consummation and ultimate ascension of dramatic poetry incarnate and transfigured in the master-singer of the world, the quality of his tragedy was as that of Marlowe's, broad, single, and intense; large of hand, voluble of tongue, direct of purpose. With the dawn of its latter epoch a new power comes upon it, to find clothing and expression in new forms of speech and after a new style. The language has put off its foreign decorations of lyric and elegiac ornament; it has found already its infinite gain in the loss of those sweet superfluous graces which encumbered the march and enchained the utterance of its childhood. The figures which it invests are now no more the types of a single passion, the incarnations of a single thought. They now demand a scrutiny which tests the power of a mind and tries the value of a judgment; they appeal to something more than the instant apprehension which sufficed to respond to the immediate claim of those that went before them. Romeo and Juliet were simply lovers, and their names bring back to us no further thought than of their love and the lovely sorrow of its end; Antony and Cleopatra shall be before all things lovers, but the thought of their love and its triumphant tragedy shall recall other things beyond number—all the forces and all the fortunes of mankind, all the chance and all the consequence that waited on their imperial passion, all the infinite variety of qualities and powers wrought together and welded into the frame and composition of that love which shook from end to end all nations and kingdoms of the earth.

The same truth holds good in lighter matters; Biron and Rosaline in comedy are as simply lovers and no more as were their counterparts and coevals in tragedy: there is more in Benedick and Beatrice than this simple quality of love that clothes itself in the strife of wits; the injury done her cousin, which by the repercussion of its shock and refraction of its effect serves to transfigure with such adorable indignation and ardour of furious love and pity the whole bright light nature of Beatrice, serves likewise by a fresh reflection and counterchange of its consequence to exalt and enlarge the stature of her lover’s spirit after a fashion beyond the reach of Shakespeare in his first stage. Mercutio again, like Philip, is a good friend and gallant swordsman, quick-witted and hot-blooded, of a fiery and faithful temper, loyal and light and swift alike of speech and swordstroke; and this is all. But the character of the Bastard, clear and simple as broad sunlight though it be, has in it other features than this single and beautiful likeness of frank young manhood; his love of country and loathing of the Church that would bring it into subjection are two sides of the same national quality that has made and will always make every Englishman of his type such another as he was in belief and in unbelief, patriot and priest-hater; and no part of the design bears such witness to the full-grown perfection of his creator’s power and skill as the touch that combines and fuses into absolute unity of concord the high and various elements of faith in England, loyalty to the wretched lord who has made him knight and acknowledged him kinsman, contempt for his abjection at the foul feet of the Church, abhorrence of his crime and constancy to his cause for something better worth the proof of war than his miserable sake who hardly can be roused, even by such exhortation as might put life and spirit into the dust of dead men’s bones, to bid his betters stand and strike in defence of the country dishonoured by his reign.

It is this new element of variety in unity, this study of the complex and diverse shades in a single nature, which requires from any criticism worth attention some inquisition of character as complement to the investigation of style. Analysis of any sort would be inapplicable to the actors who bear their parts in the comic, the tragic or historic plays of the first period. There is nothing in them to analyse; they are, as we have seen, like all the characters represented by Marlowe, the embodiments or the exponents of single qualities and simple forces. The question of style also is therefore so far a simple question; but with the change and advance in thought and all matter of spiritual study and speculation this question also becomes complex, and inseparable, if we would pursue it to any good end, from the analysis of character and subject. In the debate on which we are now to enter, the question of style and the question of character, or as we might say the questions of matter and of spirit, are more than ever indivisible from each other, more inextricably inwoven than elsewhere into the one most difficult question of authorship which has ever been disputed in the dense and noisy school or fought out in the wide and windy field of Shakespearean controversy.

There can be few serious students of Shakespeare who have not sometimes felt that possibly the hardest problem involved in their study is that which requires for its solution some reasonable and acceptable theory as to the play of *King Henry VIII* . None such has ever yet been offered; and I certainly cannot pretend to supply one. Perhaps however it may be possible to do some service by an attempt to disprove what is untenable, even though it should not be possible to produce in its stead any positive proof of what we may receive as matter of absolute faith.

The veriest tiro in criticism who knows anything of the subject in hand must perceive, what is certainly not beyond a schoolboy's range of vision, that the metre and the language of this play are in great part so like the language and the metre of Fletcher that the first and easiest inference would be to assume the partnership of that poet in the work. In former days it was Jonson whom the critics and commentators of their time saw good to select as the colleague or the editor of Shakespeare; but a later school of criticism has resigned the notion that the fifth act was retouched and adjusted by the author of *Volpone* to the taste of his patron James. The later theory is more plausible than this; the primary objection to it is that it is too facile and superficial. It is waste of time to point out with any intelligent and imaginative child with a tolerable ear for metre who had read a little of the one and the other poet could see for himself—that much of the play is externally as like the usual style of Fletcher as it is unlike the usual style of Shakespeare. The question is whether we can find one scene, one speech, one passage, which in spirit, in scope, in purpose, bears the same or any comparable resemblance to the work of Fletcher. I doubt if any man more warmly admires a poet whom few can have studied more thoroughly than I; and to whom, in spite of all sins of omission and commission,—and many and grievous they are, beyond the plenary absolution of even the most indulgent among critical confessors—I constantly return with a fresh sense of attraction, which is constantly rewarded by a fresh sense of gratitude and delight. It is assuredly from no wish to pluck a leaf from his laurel, which has no need of foreign grafts or stolen garlands from the loftier growth of Shakespeare's, that I venture to question his capacity for the work assigned to him by recent criticism. The speech of Buckingham, for example, on his way to execution, is of course at first sight very like the finest speeches of the kind in Fletcher; here is the same smooth and fluent declamation, the same prolonged and persistent melody, which if not monotonous is certainly not various; the same pure, lucid, perspicuous flow of simple rather than strong and elegant rather than exquisite English; and yet, if we set it against the best examples of the kind which may be selected from such tragedies as *Bonduca* or *The False One* , against the rebuke addressed by Caratach to his cousin or by Cæsar to the murderers of Pompey—and no finer instances of tragic declamation can be chosen from the work of this great master of rhetorical dignity and pathos—I cannot but think we shall perceive in it a comparative severity and elevation which will be missed when we turn back from it to the text of Fletcher. There is an aptness of phrase, an abstinence from excess, a "plentiful lack" of mere flowery and superfluous beauties, which we may rather wish than hope to find in the most famous of Shakespeare's successors. But if not his work, we may be sure it was his model; a model which he often approached, which he often studied, but which he never attained. It is never for absolute truth and fitness of expression, it is always for eloquence and sweetness, for fluency and fancy, that we find the tragic scenes of Fletcher most praiseworthy; and the motive or mainspring of interest is usually anything but natural or simple. Now the motive here is as simple, the emotion as natural as possible; the author is content to dispense with all the violent or far-fetched or fantastic excitement from which Fletcher could hardly ever bring himself completely to abstain. I am not speaking here of those tragedies in which the hand of Beaumont is traceable; to these, I need hardly say, the charge is comparatively inapplicable which may fairly be brought against the unassisted works of his elder colleague; but in any of the typical tragedies of Fletcher, in *Thierry and Theodoret* , in *Valentinian* , in *The Double Marriage* , the scenes which for power and beauty of style may reasonably be compared with this of the execution of Buckingham will be found more forced in situation, more fanciful in language than this. Many will be found more beautiful, many more exciting; the famous interview of Thierry with the veiled Ordella, and the scene answering to this in the fifth act where Brunhalt is confronted with her dying son, will be at once remembered by all dramatic students; and the parts of Lucina and Juliana may each be described as a continuous arrangement of passionate and pathetic effects. But in which of these parts and in which of these plays shall we find a scene so simple, an effect so modest, a situation so unforced as here? where may we look for the same temperance of tone, the same control of excitement, the same steadiness of purpose? If indeed Fletcher could have written this scene, or the farewell of Wolsey to his greatness, or his parting scene with Cromwell, he was perhaps not a greater poet, but he certainly was a tragic writer capable of loftier self-control and severer self-command, than he has ever shown himself elsewhere.

And yet, if this were all, we might be content to believe that the dignity of the subject and the high example of his present associate had for once lifted the natural genius of Fletcher above itself. But the fine and subtle criticism of Mr.

Spedding has in the main, I think, successfully and clearly indicated the lines of demarcation undeniably discernible in this play between the severer style of certain scenes or speeches and the laxer and more fluid style of others; between the graver, solider, more condensed parts of the apparently composite work, and those which are clearer, thinner, more diffused and diluted in expression. If under the latter head we had to class such passages only as the dying speech of Buckingham and the christening speech of Cranmer, it might after all be almost impossible to resist the internal evidence of Fletcher's handiwork. Certainly we hear the same soft continuous note of easy eloquence, level and limpid as a stream of crystalline transparence, in the plaintive adieu of the condemned statesman and the panegyrical prophecy of the favoured prelate. If this, I say, were all, we might admit that there is nothing—I have already admitted it—in either passage beyond the poetic reach of Fletcher. But on the hypothesis so ably maintained by the editor of Bacon there hangs no less a consequence than this: that we must assign to the same hand the crowning glory of the whole poem, the death-scene of Katherine. Now if Fletcher could have written that scene—a scene on which the only criticism ever passed, the only commendation ever bestowed, by the verdict of successive centuries, has been that of tears and silence—if Fletcher could have written a scene so far beyond our applause, so far above our acclamation, then the memory of no great poet has ever been so grossly wronged, so shamefully defrauded of its highest claim to honour. But, with all reverence for that memory, I must confess that I cannot bring myself to believe it. Any explanation appears to me more probable than this. Considering with what care every relic of his work was once and again collected by his posthumous editors—even to the attribution, not merely of plays in which he can have taken only the slightest part, but of plays in which we know that he had no share at all—I cannot believe that his friends would have let by far the brightest jewel in his crown rest unreclaimed in the then less popular treasure-house of Shakespeare. Belief or disbelief of this kind is however but a sandy soil for conjecture to build upon. Whether or not his friends would have reclaimed for him the credit of this scene, had they known it (as they must have known it) to be his due, I must repeat that such a miraculous example of a man's genius for once transcending itself and for ever eclipsing all its other achievements appears to me beyond all critical, beyond all theological credulity. Pathos and concentration are surely not among the dominant notes of Fletcher's style or the salient qualities of his intellect. Except perhaps in the beautiful and famous passage where Hengo dies in his uncle's arms, I doubt whether in any of the variously and highly coloured scenes played out upon the wide and shifting stage of his fancy the genius of Fletcher has ever unlocked the source of tears.

Bellario and Aspatia were the children of his younger colleague; at least, after the death of Beaumont we meet no such figures on the stage of Fletcher. In effect, though Beaumont had a gift of grave sardonic humour which found especial vent in burlesques of the heroic style and in the systematic extravagance of such characters as Bessus, yet he was above all things a tragic poet; and though Fletcher had great power of tragic eloquence and passionate effusion, yet his comic genius was of a rarer and more precious quality; one *Spanish Curate* is worth many a *Valentinian* ; as, on the other hand, one *Philaster* is worth many a *Scornful Lady* . Now there is no question here of Beaumont; and there is no question that the passage here debated has been taken to the heart of the whole world and baptized in the tears of generations as no work of Fletcher's has ever been. That Beaumont could have written it I do not believe; but I am wellnigh assured that Fletcher could not. I can scarcely imagine that the most fluid sympathy, the "hysteric passion" most easily distilled from the eyes of reader or spectator, can ever have watered with its tears the scene or the page which sets forth, however eloquently and effectively, the sorrows and heroisms of Ordella, Juliana, or Lucina. Every success but this I can well believe them, as they assuredly deserve, to have attained.

To this point then we have come, as to the crucial point at issue; and looking back upon those passages of the play which first suggest the handiwork of Fletcher, and which certainly do now and then seem almost identical in style with his, I think we shall hardly find the difference between these and other parts of the same play so wide and so distinct as the difference between the undoubted work of Fletcher and the undoubted work of Shakespeare. What that difference is we are fortunately able to determine with exceptional certitude, and with no supplementary help from conjecture of probabilities. In the play which is undoubtedly a joint work of these poets the points of contact and the points of disunion are unmistakable by the youngest eye. In the very last scene of *The Two Noble Kinsmen* , we can tell with absolute certainty what speeches were appended or interpolated by Fletcher; we can pronounce with positive conviction what passages were completed and what parts were left unfinished by Shakespeare. Even on Mr. Spedding's theory it can hardly be possible to do as much for *King Henry VIII* . The lines of demarcation, however visible or plausible, are fainter by far than these. It is certainly not much less strange to come upon such passages in the work of Shakespeare as the speeches of Buckingham and Cranmer than it would be to encounter in the work of Sophocles a sample of the later and laxer style of Euripides; to meet for instance in the *Antigone* with a passage which might pass muster as an extract from the

Iphigenia in Aulis . In metrical effects the style of the lesser English poet is an exact counterpart of the style of the lesser Greek; there is the same comparative tenuity and fluidity of verse, the same excess of short unemphatic syllables, the same solution of the graver iambic into soft overflow of lighter and longer feet which relaxes and dilutes the solid harmony of tragic metre with notes of a more facile and feminine strain. But in *King Henry VIII* . it should be remarked that though we not unfrequently find the same preponderance as in Fletcher's work of verses with a double ending—which in English verse at least are not in themselves feminine, and need not be taken to constitute, as in Fletcher's case they do, a note of comparative effeminacy or relaxation in tragic style—we do not find the perpetual predominance of those triple terminations so peculiarly and notably dear to that poet; so that even by the test of the metremongers who would reduce the whole question at issue to a point which might at once be solved by the simple process of numeration the argument in favour of Fletcher can hardly be proved tenable; for the metre which evidently has one leading quality in common with his is as evidently wanting in another at least as marked and as necessary to establish—if established it can be by any such test taken singly and, apart from all other points of evidence—the collaboration of Fletcher with Shakespeare in this instance. And if the proof by mere metrical similitude is thus imperfect, there is here assuredly no other kind of test which may help to fortify the argument by any suggestion of weight even comparable to this. In those passages which would seem most plausibly to indicate the probable partnership of Fletcher, the unity and sustained force of the style keep it generally above the average level of his; there is less admixture or intrusion of lyric or elegiac quality; there is more of temperance and proportion alike in declamation and in debate. And throughout the whole play, and under all the diversity of composite subject and conflicting interest which disturbs the unity of action, there is a singleness of spirit, a general unity or concord of inner tone, in marked contrast to the utter discord and discrepancy of the several sections of *The Two Noble Kinsmen* . We admit, then, that this play offers us in some not unimportant passages the single instance of a style not elsewhere precisely or altogether traceable in Shakespeare; that no exact parallel to it can be found among his other plays; and that if not the partial work it may certainly be taken as the general model of Fletcher in his tragic poetry. On the other hand, we contend that its exceptional quality might perhaps be explicable as a tentative essay in a new line by one who tried so many styles before settling into his latest; and that, without far stronger, clearer, and completer proof than has yet been or can ever be advanced, the question is not solved but merely evaded by the assumption of a double authorship.

By far the ablest argument based upon a wider ground of reason or of likelihood than this of mere metre that has yet been advanced in support of the theory which would attribute a part of this play to some weaker hand than Shakespeare's is due to the study of a critic whose name—already by right of inheritance the most illustrious name of his age and ours—is now for ever attached to that of Shakespeare himself by right of the highest service ever done and the noblest duty ever paid to his memory. The untimely death which removed beyond reach of our thanks for all he had done and our hopes for all he might do, the man who first had given to France the first among foreign poets—son of the greatest Frenchman and translator of the greatest Englishman—was only in this not untimely, that it forbore him till the great and wonderful work was done which has bound two deathless names together by a closer than the common link that connects the names of all sovereign poets. Among all classic translations of the classic works of the world, I know of none that for absolute mastery and perfect triumph over all accumulation of obstacles, for supreme dominion over supreme difficulty, can be matched with the translation of Shakespeare by François-Victor Hugo; unless a claim of companionship may perchance be put in for Urquhart's unfinished version of Rabelais. For such success in the impossible as finally disproves the right of "that fool of a word" to existence—at least in the world of letters—the two miracles of study and of sympathy which have given Shakespeare to the French and Rabelais to the English, and each in his habit as he lived, may take rank together in glorious rivalry beyond eyeshot of all past or future competition.

Among the essays appended to the version of Shakespeare which they complete and illustrate, that which deals with the play now in question gives as ample proof as any other of the sound and subtle insight brought to bear by the translator upon the object of his labour and his love. His keen and studious intuition is here as always not less notable and admirable than his large and solid knowledge, his full and lucid comprehension at once of the text and of the history of Shakespeare's plays; and if his research into the inner details of that history may seem ever to have erred from the straight path of firm and simple certainty into some dubious byway of theory or conjecture, we may be sure at least that no lack of learning or devotion, of ardour or intelligence, but more probably some noble thought that was fathered by a noble wish to do honour to Shakespeare, has led him to attribute to his original some quality foreign to the text, or to question the authenticity of what for love of his author he might not wish to find in it. Thus he would reject the main part of the fifth act as the work of a mere court laureate, an official hack or hireling employed to anoint the memory of an archbishop and lubricate the steps of a throne with the common oil of dramatic adulation; and finding it in either case a task alike unworthy of Shakespeare to glorify the name of Cranmer or to deify the names of the queen then dead and the king yet living, it is but natural that he should be induced by an unconscious bias or prepossession of the will to depreciate the worth of the verse sent on work fitter for ushers and embalmers and the general valetry or varletry of Church and State. That this fifth act is unequal in point of interest to the better part of the preceding acts with which it is connected by so light and loose a tie of convenience is as indisputable as that the style of the last scene savours now and then, and for some space together, more strongly than ever of Fletcher's most especial and distinctive qualities, or that the whole structure of the play if judged by any strict rule of pure art is incomposite and incongruous, wanting in unity, consistency, and coherence of interest. The fact is that here even more than in *King John* the poet's hands were hampered by a difficulty inherent in the subject. To an English and Protestant audience, fresh from the passions and perils of reformation and reaction, he had to present an English king at war with the papacy, in whom the assertion of national independence was incarnate; and to the sympathies of such an audience it was a matter of mere necessity for him to commend the representative champion of their cause by all means which he could compel into the service of his aim. Yet this object was in both instances all but incompatible with the natural and necessary interest of the plot. It was inevitable that this interest should in the main be concentrated upon the victims of the personal or national policy of either king; upon Constance and Arthur, upon Katherine and Wolsey. Where these are not, either apparent in person on the stage, or felt in their influence upon the speech and action of the characters present, the pulse of the poem beats fainter and its forces begin to flag. In *King John* this difficulty was met and mastered, these double claims of the subject of the poem and the object of the poet were satisfied and harmonised, by the effacement of John and the substitution of Faulconbridge as the champion of the national cause and the protagonist of the dramatic action. Considering this play in its double aspect of tragedy and history, we might say that the English hero becomes the central figure of the poem as seen from its historic side, while John remains the central figure of the poem as seen from its tragic side; the personal interest that depends on personal crime and retribution is concentrated on the agony of the king; the national interest which he, though the eponymous hero of the poem, was alike inadequate as a craven and improper as a villain to sustain and represent in the eyes of the spectators was happily and easily transferred to the one person of the play who could properly express within the compass of its closing act at once the protest against papal pretension, the defiance of foreign invasion, and the prophetic assurance of self-dependent life and self-sufficing strength inherent in the nation then fresh from a fiercer trial of its quality, which an audience of the days of Queen Elizabeth would justly expect from the poet who undertook to set before them in action the history of the days of King John. That history had lately been brought upon the stage under the hottest and most glaring light that could be thrown on it by the fire of fanatical partisanship; *The Troublesome Reign of King John* , weakest and most wooden of all wearisome chronicles that ever cumbered the boards, had in it for sole principle of life its power of congenial appeal to the same blatant and vulgar spirit of Protestantism which inspired it. In all the flat interminable morass of its tedious and tuneless verse I can find no blade or leaf of living poetic growth, no touch but one of nature or of pathos, where Arthur dying would fain send a last thought in search of his mother. From this play Shakespeare can have got neither hint nor help towards the execution of his own; the crude rough sketch of the Bastard as he brawls and swaggers through the long length of its scenes is hardly so much as the cast husk or chrysalid of the noble creature which was to arise and take shape for ever at the transfiguring touch of Shakespeare. In the case of *King Henry VIII* . he had not even such a blockish model as this to work from. The one preceding play known to me which deals professedly with the same subject treats of quite other matters than are handled by Shakespeare, and most notably with the scholastic adventures or misadventures of Edward Prince of Wales and his whipping-boy Ned Browne. A fresh and wellnigh a plausible argument might be raised by the critics who deny the unity of authorship in King Henry VIII., on the ground that if Shakespeare had completed the work himself he would surely not have let slip the occasion to introduce one of the most famous and popular of all court fools in the person of Will Summers, who might have given life and relief to the action of many scenes now unvaried and unbroken in their gravity of emotion and event. Shakespeare, one would say, might naturally have been expected to take up and remodel the well-known figure of which his humble precursor could give but a rough thin outline, yet sufficient it should seem to attract the tastes to which it appealed; for this or some other quality of seasonable attraction served to float the now forgotten play of Samuel Rowley through several editions. The central figure of the huge hot-headed king, with his gusts of stormy good humour and peals of burly oaths which might have suited “Garagantua’s mouth” and satisfied the requirements of Hotspur, appeals in a ruder fashion to the survival of the same sympathies on which Shakespeare with a finer instinct as evidently relied; the popular estimate of the bluff and brawny tyrant “who broke the bonds of Rome” was not yet that of later historians, though doubtless neither was it that of the writer or writers who would champion him to the utterance. Perhaps the opposite verdicts given by the instinct of the people on “bluff King Hal” and “Bloody Mary” may be understood by reference to a famous verse of Juvenal. The wretched queen was sparing of noble blood and lavish of poor men’s lives—*cerdonibus timenda* ; and the curses under which her memory was buried were spared by the people to her father, *Lamiarum cæde madenti* . In any case, the humblest not less than the highest of the poets who wrote under the reign of his daughter found it safe to present him in a popular light before an audience of whose general prepossession in his favour William Shakespeare was no slower to take advantage than Samuel Rowley.

The two plays we have just discussed have one quality of style in common which has already been noted; that in them rhetoric is in excess of action or passion, and far in excess of poetry. They are not as yet perfect examples of his second manner, though far ahead of his first stage in performance as in promise. Compared with the full and living figure of Katherine or of Constance, the study of Margaret of Anjou is the mere sketch of a poet still in his pupilage: John and Henry, Faulconbridge and Wolsey, are designs beyond reach of the hand which drew the second and third Richard without much background or dramatic perspective. But the difficulties inherent in either subject are not surmounted throughout with absolute equality of success; the very point of appeal to the sympathy and excitement of the time may have been something of a disturbing force in the composition of the work—a loadstone rock indeed, of tempting attraction to the patriot as well as to the playwright, but possibly capable of proving in some measure a rock of offence to the poet whose ship was piloted towards it. His perfect triumph in the field of patriotic drama, coincident with the perfect maturity of his comic genius and his general style, has now to show itself.

The great national trilogy which is at once the flower of Shakespeare’s second period and the crown of his achievements in historic drama—unless indeed we so far depart from the established order and arrangement of his works as to include his three Roman plays in the same class with these English histories—offers perhaps the most singular example known to us of the variety in fortune which befell his works on their first appearance in print. None of these had better luck in that line at starting than *King Henry IV* .; none had worse than *King Henry V* . With *Romeo and Juliet* , the *Merry Wives of Windsor* , and *Hamlet* , it shares the remarkable and undesirable honour of having been seized and boarded by pirates even before it had left the dockyard. The masterbuilder’s hands had not yet put the craft into seaworthy condition when she was overhauled by these Kidds and Blackbeards of the press. Of those four plays, the two tragedies at least were thoroughly recast, and rewritten from end to end: the pirated editions giving us a transcript, more or less perfect or imperfect, accurate or corrupt, of the text as it first came from the poet's hand; a text to be afterwards indefinitely modified and incalculably improved. Not quite so much can be said of the comedy, which certainly stood in less need of revision, and probably would not have borne it so well; nevertheless every little passing touch of the reviser's hand is here also a noticeable mark of invigoration and improvement. But *King Henry V* ., we may fairly say, is hardly less than transformed. Not that it has been recast after the fashion of *Hamlet* , or even rewritten after the fashion of *Romeo and Juliet* ; but the corruptions and imperfections of the pirated text are here more flagrant than in any other instance; while the general revision of style by which it is at once purified and fortified extends to every nook and corner of the restored and renovated building. Even had we, however, a perfect and trustworthy transcript of Shakespeare's original sketch for this play, there can be little doubt that the rough draught would still prove almost as different from the final masterpiece as is the soiled and ragged canvas now before us, on which we trace the outline of figures so strangely disfigured, made subject to such rude extremities of defacement and defeature. There is indeed less difference between the two editions in the comic than in the historic scenes; the pirates were probably more careful to furnish their market with a fair sample of the lighter than of the graver ware supplied by their plunder of the poet; Fluellen and Pistol lose less through their misusage than the king; and the king himself is less maltreated when he talks plain prose with his soldiers than when he chops blank verse with his enemies or his lords. His rough and ready courtship of the French princess is a good deal expanded as to length, but (if I dare say so) less improved and heightened in tone than we might well have wished and it might well have borne; in either text the Hero's addresses savour rather of a ploughman than a prince, and his finest courtesies are clownish though not churlish. We may probably see in this rather a concession to the appetite of the groundlings than an evasion of the difficulties inherent in the subject-matter of the scene; too heavy as these might have been for another, we can conceive of none too hard for the magnetic tact and intuitive delicacy of Shakespeare's judgment and instinct. But it must fairly and honestly be admitted that in this scene we find as little of the charm and humour inseparable from the prince as of the courtesy and dignity to be expected from the king.

It should on the other hand be noted that the finest touch in the comic scenes, if not the finest in the whole portrait of Falstaff, is apparently an afterthought, a touch added on revision of the original design. In the first scene of the second act Mrs. Quickly's remark that "he'll yield the crow a pudding one of these days" is common to both versions of the play; but the six words following are only to be found in the revised edition; and these six words the very pirates could hardly have passed over or struck out. They are not such as can drop from the text of a poet unperceived by the very dullest and horniest of human eyes. "The king has killed his heart." Here is the point in Falstaff's nature so strangely overlooked by the man of all men who we should have said must be the first to seize and to appreciate it. It is as grievous as it is inexplicable that the Shakespeare of France—the most infinite in compassion, in "conscience and tender heart," of all great poets in all ages and all nations of the world—should have missed the deep tenderness of this supreme and subtlest touch in the work of the greatest among his fellows. Again, with anything but "damnable" iteration, does Shakespeare revert to it before the close of this very scene. Even Pistol and Nym can see that what now ails their old master is no such ailment as in his prosperous days was but too liable to "play the rogue with his great toe." "The king hath run bad humours on the knight": "his heart is fracted, and corroborate." And it is not thus merely through the eclipse of that brief mirage, that fair prospect "of Africa, and golden joys," in view of which he was ready to "take any man's horses." This it is that distinguishes Falstaff from Panurge; that lifts him at least to the moral level of Sancho Panza. I cannot but be reluctant to set the verdict of my own judgment against that of Victor Hugo's; I need none to remind me what and who he is whose judgment I for once oppose, and what and who am I that I should oppose it; that he is he, and I am but myself; yet against his classification of Falstaff, against his definition of Shakespeare's unapproached and unapproachable masterpiece in the school of comic art and humouristic nature, I must and do with all my soul and strength protest. The admirable phrase of "swine-centaur" (*centaure du porc*) is as inapplicable to Falstaff as it is appropriate to Panurge. Not the third person but the first in date of that divine and human trinity of humourists whose names make radiant for ever the Century of their new-born glory—not Shakespeare but Rabelais is responsible for the creation or the discovery of such a type as this. "*Suum cuique* is our Roman justice"; the gradation from Panurge to Falstaff is not downward but upward; though it be Victor Hugo's very self who asserts the contrary. Singular as may seem the collocation of the epithet "moral" with the name "Falstaff," I venture to maintain my thesis; that in point of feeling, and therefore of possible moral elevation, Falstaff is as undeniably the superior of

Sancho as Sancho is unquestionably the superior of Panurge. The natural affection of Panurge is bounded by the self-same limits as the natural theology of Polyphemus; the love of the one, like the faith of the other, begins and ends alike at one point;

Myself,
And this great belly, first of deities;

(in which line, by the way, we may hear as it were a first faint prelude of the great proclamation to come—the hymn of praise and thanksgiving for the coronation day of King Gaster; whose laureate, we know, was as lovingly familiar with the Polyphemus of Euripides as Shakespeare with his own Pantagruel.) In Sancho we come upon a creature capable of love—but not of such love as kills or helps to kill, such love as may end or even as may seem to end in anything like heartbreak. “And now abideth Rabelais, Cervantes, Shakespeare, these three; but the greatest of these is Shakespeare.”

I would fain score yet another point in the fat knight’s favour; “I have much to say in the behalf of that Falstaff.” Rabelais, evangelist and prophet of the Resurrection of the Flesh (so long entombed, ignored, repudiated, misconstrued, vilified, by so many generations and ages of Galilean preachers and Pharisaic schoolmen)—Rabelais was content to paint the flesh merely, in its honest human reality—human at least, if also bestial; in its frank and rude reaction against the half brainless and wholly bloodless teachers whose doctrine he himself on the one hand, and Luther on the other, arose together to smite severally—to smite them hip and thigh, even till the going down of the sun; the mock sun or marshy meteor that served only to deepen the darkness encompassing on every side the doubly dark ages—the ages of monarchy and theocracy, the ages of death and of faith. To Panurge, therefore, it was unnecessary and it might have seemed inconsequent to attribute other gifts or functions than are proper to such intelligence as may accompany the appetites of an animal. That most irreverend father in God, Friar John, belongs to a higher class in the moral order of being; and he much rather than his fellow-voyager and penitent is properly comparable with Falstaff. It is impossible to connect the notion of rebuke with the sins of Panurge. The actual lust and gluttony, the imaginary cowardice of Falstaff, have been gravely and sharply rebuked by critical morality; we have just noted a too recent and too eminent example of this; but what mortal ever dreamed of casting these qualities in the teeth of his supposed counterpart? The difference is as vast between Falstaff on the field of battle and Panurge on the storm-tossed deck as between Falstaff and Hotspur, Panurge and Friar John. No man could show cooler and steadier nerve than is displayed in either case—by the lay as well as the clerical namesake of the fourth evangelist. If ever fruitless but endless care was shown to prevent misunderstanding, it was shown in the pains taken by Shakespeare to obviate the misconstruction which would impute to Falstaff the quality of a Parolles or a Bobadil, a Bessus or a Moron. The delightful encounter between the jester and the bear in the crowning interlude of *La Princesse d'Élide* shows once more, I may remark, that Molière had sat at the feet of Rabelais as delightedly as Shakespeare before him. Such rapturous inebriety or Olympian incontinence of humour only fires the blood of the graver and less exuberant humourist when his lips are still warm and wet from the well-spring of the *Dive Bouteille* .

It is needless to do over again the work which was done, and well done, a hundred years since, by the writer whose able essay in vindication and exposition of the genuine character of Falstaff elicited from Dr. Johnson as good a jest and as bad a criticism as might have been expected. His argument is too thoroughly carried out at all points and fortified on all hands to require or even to admit of corroboration; and the attempt to appropriate any share of the lasting credit which is his due would be nothing less than a disingenuous impertinence. I may here however notice that in the very first scene of this trilogy which introduces us to the ever dear and honoured presence of Sir John, his creator has put into the mouth of a witness no friendlier or more candid than Ned Poins the distinction between two as true-bred cowards as ever turned back and one who will fight no longer than he sees reason. In this nutshell lies the whole kernel of the matter; the sweet, sound, ripe, toothsome, wholesome kernel of Falstaff's character and humour. He will fight as well as his princely patron, and, like the prince, as long as he sees reason; but neither Hal nor Jack has ever felt any touch of desire to pluck that "mere scutcheon" honour "from the pale-faced moon." Harry Percy is as it were the true Sir Bedivere, the last of all Arthurian knights; Henry V. is the first as certainly as he is the noblest of those equally daring and calculating statesmen-warriors whose two most terrible, most perfect, and most famous types are Louis XI. and Cæsar Borgia. Gain, "commodity," the principle of self-interest which never but in word and in jest could become the principle of action with Faulconbridge,—himself already far more "a man of this world" than a Launcelot or a Hotspur,—is as evidently the mainspring of Henry's enterprise and life as of the contract between King Philip and King John. The supple and shameless egotism of the churchmen on whose political sophistries he relies for external support is needed rather to varnish his project than to reassure his conscience. Like Frederic the Great before his first Silesian war, the future conqueror of Agincourt has practically made up his mind before he seeks to find as good reason or as plausible excuse as were likewise to suffice the future conqueror of Rosbach. In a word, Henry is doubtless not the man, as old Auchindrane expresses it in the noble and strangely neglected tragedy which bears solitary but sufficient witness to the actual dramatic faculty of Sir Walter Scott's genius, to do the devil's work without his wages; but neither is he, on the like unprofitable terms, by any manner of means the man to do God's. No completer incarnation could be shown us of the militant Englishman—*Anglais pur sang* ; but it is not only, as some have seemed to think, with the highest, the purest, the noblest quality of English character that his just and far-seeing creator has endowed him. The godlike equity of Shakespeare's judgment, his implacable and impeccable righteousness of instinct and of insight, was too deeply ingrained in the very core of his genius to be perverted by any provincial or pseudo-patriotic prepossessions; his patriotism was too national to be provincial. Assuredly no poet ever had more than he: not even the king of men and poets who fought at Marathon and sang of Salamis: much less had any or has any one of our own, from Milton on to Campbell and from Campbell even to Tennyson. In the mightiest chorus of *King Henry V* . we hear the pealing ring of the same great English trumpet that was yet to sound over the battle of the Baltic, and again in our later day over a sea-fight of Shakespeare's own, more splendid and heart-cheering in its calamity than that other and all others in their triumph; a war-song and a sea-song divine and deep as death or as the sea, making thrice more glorious at once the glorious three names of England, of Grenville, and of Tennyson for ever. From the affectation of cosmopolitan indifference not Æschylus, not Pindar, not Dante's very self was more alien or more free than Shakespeare; but there was nothing of the dry Tyrtæan twang, the dull mechanic resonance as of wooden echoes from a platform, in the great historic chord of his lyre. "He is very English, too English, even," says the Master on whom his enemies alone—assuredly not his most loving, most reverent, and most thankful disciples—might possibly and plausibly retort that he was "very French, too French, even"; but he certainly was not "too English" to see and cleave to the main fact, the radical and central truth, of personal or national character, of typical history or tradition, without seeking to embellish, to degrade, in either or in any way to falsify it. From king to king, from cardinal to cardinal, from the earliest in date of subject to the latest of his histories, we find the same thread running, the same link of honourable and righteous judgment, of equitable and careful equanimity, connecting and combining play with play in an unbroken and infrangible chain of evidence to the singleness of the poet's eye, the identity of the workman's hand, which could do justice and would do no more than justice, alike to Henry and to Wolsey, to Pandulph and to John. His typical English hero or historic protagonist is a man of their type who founded and built up the empire of England in India; a hero after the future pattern of Hastings and of Clive; not less daringly sagacious and not more delicately scrupulous, not less indomitable or more impeccable than they. A type by no means immaculate, a creature not at all too bright and good for English nature's daily food in times of mercantile or military enterprise; no whit more if no whit less excellent and radiant than reality. *Amica Britannia, sed magis amica veritas* . The master poet of England—all Englishmen may reasonably and honourably be proud of it—has not two weights and two measures for friend and foe. This palpable and patent fact, as his only and worthy French translator has well remarked, would of itself suffice to exonerate his memory from the imputation of having perpetrated in its evil entirety *The First Part of King Henry VI* .

There is, in my opinion, somewhat more of internal evidence than I have ever seen adduced in support of the tradition current from an early date as to the origin of the *Merry Wives of Windsor* ; a tradition which assigns to Queen Elizabeth the same office of midwife with regard to this comedy as was discharged by Elwood with reference to *Paradise Regained* . Nothing could so naturally or satisfactorily explain its existence as the expression of a desire to see "Falstaff in love," which must have been nothing less than the equivalent of a command to produce him under the disguise of such a transfiguration on the boards. The task of presenting him so shorn of his beams, so much less than archangel (of comedy) ruined, and the excess of (humorous) glory obscured, would hardly, we cannot but think and feel, have spontaneously suggested itself to Shakespeare as a natural or eligible aim for the fresh exercise of his comic genius. To exhibit Falstaff as throughout the whole course of five acts a credulous and baffled dupe, one "easier to be played on than a pipe," was not really to reproduce him at all. The genuine Falstaff could no more have played such a part than the genuine Petruchio could have filled such an one as was assigned him by Fletcher in the luckless hour when that misguided poet undertook to continue the subject and to correct the moral of the next comedy in our catalogue of Shakespeare's. *The Tamer Tamed* is hardly less consistent or acceptable as a sequel to the *Taming of the Shrew* than the *Merry Wives of Windsor* as a supplement to *King Henry IV* .: and no conceivable comparison could more forcibly convey, how broad and deep is the gulf of incongruity which divides them.

The plea for once suggested by the author in the way of excuse or extenuation for this incompatibility of Falstaff with Falstaff—for the violation of character goes far beyond mere inconsistency or the natural ebb and flow of even the brightest wits and most vigorous intellects—will commend itself more readily to the moralist than to the humanist; in other words, to the preacher rather than to the thinker, the sophist rather than the artist. Here only does Shakespeare show that he feels the necessity of condescending to such evasion or such apology as is implied in the explanation of Falstaff's incredible credulity by a reference to "the guiltiness of his mind" and the admission, so gratifying to all minds more moral than his own, that "wit may be made a Jack-a-Lent, when 'tis upon ill employment." It is the best excuse that can be made; but can we imagine the genuine, the pristine Falstaff reduced to the proffer of such an excuse in serious good earnest?

In the original version of this comedy there was not a note of poetry from end to end; as it then appeared, it might be said to hold the same place on the roll of Shakespeare's plays as is occupied by *Bartholomew Fair* on the roll of Ben Jonson's. From this point of view it is curious to contrast the purely farcical masterpieces of the town-bred schoolboy and the country lad. There is a certain faint air of the fields, the river, and the park, even in the rough sketch of Shakespeare's farce—wholly prosaic as it is, and in no point suggestive of any unlikelihood in the report which represents it as the composition or rather as the improvisation of a fortnight. We know at once that he must have stroked the fallow greyhound that was outrun on "Cotsall"; that he must—and perhaps once or twice at least too often—have played truant (some readers, boys past or present, might wish for association's sake it could actually have been Datchet-wards) from under the shadow of good Sir Hugh's probably not over formidable though "threatening twigs of birch," at all risks of being "preeches" on his return, in fulfilment of the direful menace held out to that young namesake of his over whose innocence Mrs. Quickly was so creditably vigilant. On the other hand, no student of Jonson will need to be reminded how closely and precociously familiar the big stalwart Westminster boy, Camden's favoured and grateful pupil, must have made himself with the rankest haunts and most unsavoury recesses of that ribald waterside and Smithfield life which he lived to reproduce on the stage with a sometimes insufferable fidelity to details from which Hogarth might have shrunk. Even his unrivalled proficiency in classic learning can hardly have been the fruit of greater or more willing diligence in school hours than he must have lavished on other than scholastic studies in the streets. The humour of his huge photographic group of divers "humours" is undeniably and incomparably richer, broader, fuller of invention and variety, than any that Shakespeare's lighter work can show; all the five acts of the latter comedy can hardly serve as counterpoise, in weight and wealth of comic effect, to the single scene in which Zeal-of-the-Land defines the moral and theological boundaries of action and intention which distinguish the innocent if not laudable desire to eat pig from the venial though not mortal sin of longing to eat pig in the thick of the profane Fair, which may rather be termed a foul than a fair. Taken from that point of view which looks only to force and freedom and range of humorous effect, Jonson's play is to his friend's as London is to Windsor; but in more senses than one it is to Shakespeare's as the Thames at London Bridge is to the Thames at Eton: the atmosphere of Smithfield is not more different from the atmosphere of the playing-fields; and some, too delicate of nose or squeamish of stomach, may prefer Cuckoo Weir to Shoreditch. But undoubtedly the phantoms of Shallow and Mrs. Quickly which put in (so to speak) a nominal reappearance in the *Merry Wives of Windsor* are comparatively as poor and thin if set over against the full rich outlines of Rabbi Busy and Dame Purecraft as these again are at all points alike inferior to the real Shallow and the genuine Quickly of *King Henry IV* . It is true that Jonson's humour has sometimes less in common with Shakespeare's than with the humour of Swift, Smollett, and Carlyle. For all his admiration and even imitation of Rabelais, Shakespeare has hardly once or twice burnt but so much as a stray pinch of fugitive incense on the altar of Cloacina; the only Venus acknowledged and adored by those three latter humourists. If not always constant with the constancy of Milton to the service of Urania, he never turns into a dirtier byway or back alley than the beaten path trodden occasionally by most of his kind which leads them on a passing errand of no unnatural devotion to the shrine of Venus Pandemos.

When, however, we turn from the raw rough sketch to the enriched and ennobled version of the present play we find it in this its better shape more properly comparable with another and a nobler work of Jonson's—with that magnificent comedy, the first avowed and included among his collection by its author, which according to all tradition first owed its appearance and success to the critical good sense and generous good offices of Shakespeare. Neither my duly unqualified love for the greater poet nor my duly qualified regard for the less can alter my sense that their mutual relations are in this one case inverted; that *Every Man in his Humour* is altogether a better comedy and a work of higher art than the *Merry Wives of Windsor* . Kitely is to Ford almost what Arnolphe is to Sganarelle. (As according to the learned Métaphraste "Filio non potest præferri nisi filius," even so can no one but Molière be preferred or likened to Molière.)

Without actually touching like Arnolphe on the hidden springs of tragedy, the jealous husband in Jonson’s play is only kept from trenching on the higher and forbidden grounds of passion by the potent will and the consummate self-command of the great master who called him up in perfect likeness to the life. Another or a deeper tone, another or a stronger touch, in the last two admirable scenes with his cashier and his wife, when his hot smouldering suspicion at length catches fire and breaks out in agony of anger, would have removed him altogether beyond the legitimate pale of comedy. As it is, the self-control of the artist is as thorough as his grasp and mastery of his subject are triumphant and complete.

It would seem as though on revision of the *Merry Wives of Windsor* Shakespeare had found himself unwilling or rather perhaps unable to leave a single work of his hand without one touch or breath on it of beauty or of poetry. The sole fitting element of harmonious relief or variety in such a case could of course be found only in an interlude of pure fancy; any touch of graver or deeper emotion would simply have untuned and deranged the whole scheme of composition. A lesser poet might have been powerless to resist the temptation or suggestion of sentiment that he should give to the little loves of Anne Page and Fenton a touch of pathetic or emotional interest; but “opulent as Shakespeare was, and of his opulence prodigal” (to borrow a phrase from Coleridge), he knew better than to patch with purple or embroider with seed-pearl the hem of this homespun little piece of comic drugget. The match between cloth of gold and cloth of frieze could hardly have borne any good issue in this instance. Instead therefore of following the lead of Terence’s or the hint of Jonson’s example, and exalting the accent of his comedy to the full-mouthed pitch of a Chremes or a Kitely, he strikes out some forty and odd lines of rather coarse and commonplace doggrel about brokers, proctors, lousy fox-eyed serjeants, blue and red noses, and so forth, to make room for the bright light interlude of fairyland child’s-play which might not unfittingly have found place even within the moon-charmed circle of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* . Even in that all heavenly poem there are hardly to be found lines of more sweet and radiant simplicity than here.

The refined instinct, artistic judgment, and consummate taste of Shakespeare were perhaps never so wonderfully shown as in his recast of another man’s work—a man of real if rough genius for comedy—which we get in the *Taming of the Shrew* . Only the collation of scene with scene, then of speech with speech, then of line with line, will show how much may be borrowed from a stranger’s material and how much may be added to it by the same stroke of a single hand.

All the force and humour alike of character and situation belong to Shakespeare's eclipsed and forlorn precursor; he has added nothing; he has tempered and enriched everything. That the luckless author of the first sketch is like to remain a man as nameless as the deed of the witches in *Macbeth* , unless some chance or caprice of accident should suddenly flash favouring light on his now impersonal and indiscoverable individuality, seems clear enough when we take into account the double and final disproof of his imaginary identity with Marlowe, which Mr. Dyce has put forward with such unanswerable certitude. He is a clumsy and coarse-fingered plagiarist from that poet, and his stolen jewels of expression look so grossly out of place in the homely setting of his usual style that they seem transmuted from real to sham. On the other hand, he is of all the Pre-Shakespeareans known to us incomparably the truest, the richest, the most powerful and original humourist; one indeed without a second on that ground, for "the rest are nowhere." Now Marlowe, it need scarcely be once again reiterated, was as certainly one of the least and worst among jesters as he was one of the best and greatest among poets. There can therefore be no serious question of his partnership in a play wherein the comic achievement is excellent and the poetic attempts are execrable throughout.

The recast of it in which a greater than Berni has deigned to play the part of that poet towards a lesser than Bojardo shows tact and delicacy perhaps without a parallel in literature. No chance of improvement is missed, while nothing of value is dropped or thrown away. There is just now and then a momentary return perceptible to the skipping metre and fantastic manner of the first period, which may have been unconsciously suggested by the nature of the task in hand—a task of itself implying or suggesting some new study of old models; but the main style of the play in all its weightier parts is as distinctly proper to the second period, as clear an evidence of inner and spiritual affinity (with actual tabulation of dates, were such a thing as feasible as it is impossible, I must repeat that the argument would here be—what it is now—in no wise concerned), as is the handling of character throughout; but most especially the subtle force, the impeccable and careful instinct, the masculine delicacy of touch, by which the somewhat ruffianly temperament of the original Ferando is at once refined and invigorated through its transmutation into the hearty and humorous manliness of Petruchio's.

It is observable that those few and faint traces which we have noticed in this play of a faded archaic style trying as it were to resume a mockery of revirescence are not wholly even if mainly confined to the underplot which a suggestion or surmise of Mr. Collier's long since assigned to Haughton, author of *Englishmen for my Money, or A Woman will have her Will* : a spirited, vigorous, and remarkably regular comedy of intrigue, full of rough and ready incident, bright boisterous humour, honest lively provinciality and gay high-handed Philistinism. To take no account of this attribution would be to show myself as shamelessly as shamefully deficient in that respect and gratitude which all genuine and thankful students will always be as ready to offer as all thankless and insolent sciolists can ever be to disclaim, to the venerable scholar who since I was first engaged on these notes has added yet another obligation to the many under which he had already laid all younger and lesser labourers in the same field of study, by the issue in a form fitly ennobled and enriched of his great historical work on our early stage. It might seem something of an unintended impertinence to add that such recognition of his theory no more implies a blind acceptance of it—whatever such acceptance on my part might be worth—than the expression of such gratitude and respect could reasonably be supposed to imply an equally blind confidence in the authority or the value of that version of Shakespeare's text which has been the means of exposing a name so long and so justly honoured, not merely to the natural and rational inquisition of rival students, but to the rancorous and ribald obloquy of thankless and frontless pretenders.

Here perhaps as well as anywhere else I may find a proper place to intercalate the little word I have to say in partial redemption of my pledge to take in due time some notice at more or less length, of the only two among the plays doubtfully ascribed to Shakespeare which in my eyes seem to bear any credible or conceivable traces of his touch. Of these two I must give the lesser amount of space and attention to that one which in itself is incomparably the more worthy of discussion, admiration, and regard. The reason of this lies in the very excellence which has attracted to it the notice of such competent judges and the suffrage of such eminent names as would make the task of elaborate commentary and analytic examination something more than superfluous on my part; whereas the other has never been and will never be assigned to Shakespeare by any critical student whose verdict is worth a minute's consideration or the marketable value of a straw. Nevertheless it is on other grounds worth notice; and such notice, to be itself of any value, must of necessity be elaborate and minute. The critical analysis of *King Edward III* . I have therefore relegated to its proper place in an appendix; while I reserve a corner of my text, at once out of admiration for the play itself and out of reverence for the names and authority of some who have given their verdict in its behalf, for a rough and rapid word or two on *Arden of Feversham* .

It is with equally inexpressible surprise that I find Mr. Collier accepting as Shakespeare's any part of *A Warning for Fair Women* , and rejecting without compromise or hesitation the belief or theory which would assign to the youth of Shakespeare the incomparably nobler tragic poem in question. His first ascription to Shakespeare of *A Warning for Fair Women* is couched in terms far more dubious and diffident than such as he afterwards adopts. It "might," he says, "be given to Shakespeare on grounds far more plausible" (on what, except possibly those of date, I cannot imagine) "than those applicable to *Arden of Feversham* ." He then proceeds to cite some detached lines and passages of undeniable beauty and vigour, containing equally undeniable coincidences of language, illustration, and expression with "passages in Shakespeare's undisputed plays." From these he passes on to indicate a "resemblance" which "is not merely verbal," and to extract whole speeches which "are Shakespearean in a much better sense"; adding in a surely too trenchant fashion, "Here we say, *aut Shakespeare aut diabolus* ." I must confess, with all esteem for the critic and all admiration for the brief scene cited, that I cannot say, Shakespeare.

There are spirits of another sort from whom we naturally expect such assumptions and inferences as start from the vantage ground of a few separate or separable passages, and clear at a flying leap the empty space intervening which divides them from the goal of evidence as to authorship. Such a spirit was that of the late Mr. Simpson, to whose wealth of misused learning and fertility of misapplied conjecture I have already paid all due tribute; but who must have had beyond all other sane men—most assuredly, beyond all other fairly competent critics—the gift bestowed on him by a malignant fairy of mistaking assumption for argument and possibility for proof. He was the very Columbus of mare's nests; to the discovery of them, though they lay far beyond the pillars of Hercules, he would apply all shifts and all resources possible to an ultra-Baconian process of unphilosophical induction. On the devoted head of Shakespeare—who is also called Shakspere and Chaxpur—he would have piled a load of rubbish, among which the crude and vigorous old tragedy under discussion shines out like a veritable diamond of the desert. His "School of Shakspere," though not an academy to be often of necessity perambulated by the most peripatetic student of Shakespeare, will remain as a monument of critical or uncritical industry, a storehouse of curious if not of precious relics, and a warning for other than fair women—or fair scholars—to remember where "it is written that the shoemaker should meddle with his yard and the tailor with his last, the fisher with his pencil and the painter with his nets."

To me the difference appears immeasurable between the reasons for admitting the possibility of Shakespeare's authorship in the case of *Arden of Feversham* , and the pretexts for imagining the probability of his partnership in *A Warning for Fair Women* . There is a practically infinite distinction between the evidence suggested by verbal or even more than verbal resemblance of detached line to line or selected passage to passage, and the proof supplied by the general harmony and spiritual similarity of a whole poem, on comparison of it as a whole with the known works of the hypothetical author. This proof, at all events, we surely do not get from consideration in this light of the plea put forward in behalf of *A Warning for Fair Women* . This proof, I cannot but think, we are very much nearer getting from contemplation under the same light of the claim producible for *Arden of Feversham* .

A Warning for Fair Women is unquestionably in its way a noticeable and valuable "piece of work," as Sly might have defined it. It is perhaps the best example anywhere extant of a merely realistic tragedy—of realism pure and simple applied to the service of the highest of the arts. Very rarely does it rise for a very brief interval to the height of tragic or poetic style, however simple and homely. The epilogue affixed to *Arden of Feversham* asks pardon of the "gentlemen" composing its audience for "this naked tragedy," on the plea that "simple truth is gracious enough" without needless ornament or bedizenment of "glozing stuff." Far more appropriate would such an apology have been as in this case was at least superfluous, if appended by way of epilogue to *A Warning for Fair Women* . That is indeed a naked tragedy; nine-tenths of it are in no wise beyond the reach of an able, industrious, and practised reporter, commissioned by the proprietors of the journal on whose staff he might be engaged to throw into the force of scenic dialogue his transcript of the evidence in a popular and exciting case of adultery and murder. The one figure on the stage of this author which stands out sharply defined in our recollection against a background of undistinguished shadows is the figure of the adulterer and murderer. This most discreditable of Browns has a distinct and brawny outline of his own, a gait and accent as of a genuine and recognisable man, who might have put to some better profit his shifty spirit of enterprise, his genuine capacity of affection, his burly ingenuity and hardihood. His minor confidants and accomplices, Mrs. Drury and her Trusty Roger, are mere commonplace profiles of malefactors: but it is in the contrast between the portraits of their two criminal heroines that the vast gulf of difference between the capacities of the two poets yawns patent to the sense of all readers. Anne Sanders and Alice Arden stand as far beyond comparison apart as might a portrait by any average academician and a portrait by Watts or Millais. Once only, in the simple and noble scene cited by the over-generous partiality of Mr. Collier, does the widow and murderess of Sanders rise to the tragic height of the situation and the dramatic level of the part so unfalteringly sustained from first to last by the wife and the murderess of Arden.

There is the self-same relative difference between the two subordinate groups of innocent or guilty characters. That is an excellent and effective touch of realism, where Brown comes across his victim's little boy playing truant in the street with a small schoolfellow; but in *Arden of Feversham* the number of touches as telling and as striking as this one is practically numberless. They also show a far stronger and keener faculty of poetic if not of dramatic imagination. The casual encounter of little Sanders with the yet red-handed murderer of his father is not comparable for depth and subtlety of effect with the scene in which Arden's friend Franklin, riding with him to Raynham Down, breaks off his "pretty tale" of a perjured wife, overpowered by a "fighting at his heart," at the moment when they come close upon the ambushed assassins in Alice Arden's pay. But the internal evidence in this case, as I have already intimated, does not hinge upon the proof or the suggestion offered by any single passage or by any number of single passages. The first and last evidence of real and demonstrable weight is the evidence of character. A good deal might be said on the score of style in favour of its attribution to a poet of the first order, writing at a time when there were but two such poets writing for the stage; but even this is here a point of merely secondary importance. It need only be noted in passing that if the problem be reduced to a question between the authorship of Shakespeare and the authorship of Marlowe there is no need and no room for further argument. The whole style of treatment from end to end is about as like the method of Marlowe as the method of Balzac is like the method of Dumas. There could be no alternative in that case; so that the actual alternative before us is simple enough: Either this play is the young Shakespeare's first tragic masterpiece, or there was a writer unknown to us then alive and at work for the stage who excelled him as a tragic dramatist not less—to say the very least—than he was excelled by Marlowe as a narrative and tragic poet.

If we accept, as I have been told that Goethe accepted (a point which I regret my inability to verify), the former of these alternatives—or if at least we assume it for argument's sake in passing—we may easily strengthen our position by adducing as further evidence in its favour the author's thoroughly Shakespearean fidelity to the details of the prose narrative on which his tragedy is founded. But, it may be objected, we find the same fidelity to a similar text in the case of *A Warning for Fair Women* . And here again starts up the primal and radical difference between the two works: it starts up and will not be overlooked. Equal fidelity to the narrative text we do undoubtedly find in either case; the same fidelity we assuredly do not find. The one is a typical example of prosaic realism, the other of poetic reality. Light from darkness or truth from falsehood is not more infallibly discernible. The fidelity in the one case is exactly, as I have already indicated, the fidelity of a reporter to his notes. The fidelity in the other case is exactly the fidelity of Shakespeare in his Roman plays to the text of Plutarch. It is a fidelity which admits—I had almost written, which requires—the fullest play of the highest imagination. No more than the most realistic of reporters will it omit or falsify any necessary or even admissible detail; but the indefinable quality which it adds to the lowest as to the highest of these is (as Lamb says of passion) “the all in all in poetry.” Turning again for illustration to one of the highest names in imaginative literature—a name sometimes most improperly and absurdly inscribed on the register of the realistic school, we may say that the difference on this point is not the difference between Balzac and Dumas, but the distinction between Balzac and M. Zola. Let us take by way of example the character next in importance to that of the heroine—the character of her paramour. A viler figure was never sketched by Balzac; a viler figure was seldom drawn by Thackeray. But as with Balzac, so with the author of this play, the masterful will combining with the masterly art of the creator who fashions out of the worst kind of human clay the breathing likeness of a creature so hatefully pitiful and so pitifully hateful overcomes, absorbs, annihilates all sense of such abhorrence and repulsion as would prove the work which excited them no high or even true work of art. Even the wonderful touch of dastardly brutality and pitiful self-pity with which Mosbie at once receives and repels the condolence of his mistress on his wound—

Alice .—Sweet Mosbie, hide thine arm, it kills my heart.

Mosbie .—Ay, Mistress Arden, this is your favour .—

even this does not make unendurable the scenic representation of what in actual life would be unendurable for any man to witness. Such an exhibition of currish cowardice and sullen bullying spite increases rather our wondering pity for its victim than our wondering sense of her degradation. And this is a kind of triumph which only such an artist as Shakespeare in poetry or as Balzac in prose can achieve.

Alice Arden, if she be indeed a daughter of Shakespeare’s, is the eldest born of that group to which Lady Macbeth and Dionyza belong by right of weird sisterhood. The wives of the thane of Glamis and the governor of Tharsus, it need hardly be said, are both of them creations of a much later date—if not of the very latest discernible or definable stage in the art of Shakespeare. Deeply dyed as she is in bloodguiltiness, the wife of Arden is much less of a born criminal than these. To her, at once the agent and the patient of her crime, the victim and the instrument of sacrifice and blood-offering to Venus Libitina, goddess of love and death,—to her, even in the deepest pit of her deliberate wickedness, remorse is natural and redemption conceivable. Like the Phædra of Racine, and herein so nobly unlike the Phædra of Euripides, she is capable of the deepest and bitterest penitence,—incapable of dying with a hideous and homicidal falsehood on her long polluted lips. Her latest breath is not a lie but a prayer.

Considering, then, in conclusion, the various and marvellous gifts displayed for the first time on our stage by the great poet, the great dramatist, the strong and subtle searcher of hearts, the just and merciful judge and painter of human passions, who gave this tragedy to the new-born literature of our drama; taking into account the really wonderful skill, the absoluteness of intuition and inspiration, with which every stroke is put in that touches off character or tones down effect, even in the sketching and grouping of such minor figures as the ruffianly hireling Black Will, the passionate artist without pity or conscience, and above all the “unimitated, inimitable” study of Michael, in whom even physical fear becomes tragic, and cowardice itself no ludicrous infirmity but rather a terrible passion; I cannot but finally take heart to say, even in the absence of all external or traditional testimony, that it seems to me not pardonable merely nor permissible, but simply logical and reasonable, to set down this poem, a young man’s work on the face of it, as the possible work of no man’s youthful hand but Shakespeare’s.

No similar question is raised, no parallel problem stated, in the case of any one other among the plays now or ever ascribed on grounds more or less dubious to that same indubitable hand. This hand I do not recognise even in the *Yorkshire Tragedy* , full as it is to overflowing of fierce animal power, and hot as with the furious breath of some caged wild beast. Heywood, who as the most realistic and in some sense prosaic dramatist of his time has been credited (though but in a modestly tentative and suggestive fashion) with its authorship, was as incapable of writing it as Chapman of writing the Shakespearean parts of *The Two Noble Kinsmen* or Fletcher of writing the scenes of Wolsey's fall and Katherine's death in *King Henry VIII* . To the only editor of Shakespeare responsible for the two earlier of the three suggestions here set aside, they may be forgiven on the score of insufficient scholarship and want of critical training; but on what ground the third suggestion can be excused in the case of men who should have a better right than most others to speak with some show of authority on a point of higher criticism, I must confess myself utterly at a loss to imagine. In the *Yorkshire Tragedy* the submissive devotion of its miserable heroine to her maddened husband is merely doglike,—though not even, in the exquisitely true and tender phrase of our sovereign poetess, "most passionately patient." There is no likeness in this poor trampled figure to "one of Shakespeare's women": Griselda was no ideal of his. To find its parallel in the dramatic literature of the great age, we must look to lesser great men than Shakespeare. Ben Jonson, a too exclusively masculine poet, will give us a couple of companion figures for her—or one such figure at least; for the wife of Fitzdottrel, submissive as she is even to the verge of undignified if not indecorous absurdity, is less of a human spaniel than the wife of Corvino. Another such is Robert Davenport's Abstemia, so warmly admired by Washington Irving; another is the heroine of that singularly powerful and humorous tragi-comedy, labelled to *How to Choose a Good Wife from a Bad* , which in its central situation anticipates that of Leigh Hunt's beautiful *Legend of Florence* ; while Decker has revived, in one of our sweetest and most graceful examples of dramatic romance, the original incarnation of that somewhat pitiful ideal which even in a ruder and more Russian century of painful European progress out of night and winter could only be made credible, acceptable, or endurable, by the yet unequalled genius of Chaucer and Boccaccio.

For concentrated might and overwhelming weight of realism, this lurid little play beats *A Warning for Fair Women* fairly out of the field. It is and must always be (I had nearly said, thank heaven) unsurpassable for pure potency of horror; and the breathless heat of the action, its raging rate of speed, leaves actually no breathing-time for disgust; it consumes our very sense of repulsion as with fire. But such power as this, though a rare and a great gift, is not the right quality for a dramatist; it is not the fit property of a poet. Ford and Webster, even Tourneur and Marston, who have all been more or less wrongfully though more or less plausibly attacked on the score of excess in horror, have none of them left us anything so nakedly terrible, so terribly naked as this. Passion is here not merely stripped to the skin but stripped to the bones. I cannot tell who could and I cannot guess who would have written it. "'Tis a very excellent piece of work"; may we never exactly look upon its like again!

I thought it at one time far from impossible, if not very nearly probable, that the author of *Arden of Feversham* might be one with the author of the famous additional scenes to *The Spanish Tragedy* , and that either both of these "pieces of work" or neither must be Shakespeare's. I still adhere to Coleridge's verdict, which indeed must be that of all judges capable of passing any sentence worthier of record than are

Fancies too weak for boys, too green and idle
For girls of nine:

to the effect that those magnificent passages, wellnigh overcharged at every point with passion and subtlety, sincerity and instinct of pathetic truth, are no less like Shakespeare's work than unlike Jonson's: though hardly perhaps more unlike the typical manner of his adult and matured style than is the general tone of *The Case is Altered* , his one surviving comedy of that earlier period in which we know from Henslowe that the stout-hearted and long struggling young playwright went through so much theatrical hackwork and piecework in the same rough harness with other now more or less notable workmen then drudging under the manager's dull narrow sidelong eye for bare bread and bare shelter. But this unlikeness, great as it is and serious and singular, between his former and his latter style in high comedy, gives no warrant for us to believe him capable of so immeasurable a transformation in tragic style and so indescribable a decadence in tragic power as would be implied in a descent from the "fine madness" of "old Jeronymo" to the flat sanity and smoke-dried sobriety of *Catiline* and *Sejanus* .—I cannot but think, too, that Lamb's first hypothetical ascription of these wonderful scenes to Webster, so much the most Shakespearean in gait and port and accent of all Shakespeare's liege men-at-arms, was due to a far happier and more trustworthy instinct than led him in later years to liken them rather to "the overflowing griefs and talking distraction of Titus Andronicus."

We have wandered it may be somewhat out of the right time into a far other province of poetry than the golden land of Shakespeare's ripest harvest-fields of humour. And now, before we may enter the “flowery square” made by the summer growth of his four greatest works in pure and perfect comedy “beneath a broad and equal-blowing wind” of all happiest and most fragrant imagination, we have but one field to cross, one brook to ford, that hardly can be thought to keep us out of Paradise. In the garden-plot on whose wicket is inscribed *All’s Well that Ends Well* , we are hardly distant from Eden itself

About a young dove’s flutter from a wood.

The ninth story of the third day of the Decameron is one of the few subjects chosen by Shakespeare—as so many were taken by Fletcher—which are less fit, we may venture to think, for dramatic than for narrative treatment. He has here again shown all possible delicacy of instinct in handling a matter which unluckily it was not possible to handle on the stage with absolute and positive delicacy of feeling or expression. Dr. Johnson—in my humble opinion, with some justice; though his verdict has been disputed on the score of undeserved austerity—“could not reconcile his heart to Bertram”; and I, unworthy as I may be to second or support on the score of morality the finding of so great a moralist, cannot reconcile my instincts to Helena. Parolles is even better than Bobadil, as Bobadil is even better than Bessus; and Lafeu is one of the very best old men in all the range of comic art. But the whole charm and beauty of the play, the quality which raises it to the rank of its fellows by making it loveable as well as admirable, we find only in the “sweet, serene, skylike” sanctity and attraction of adorable old age, made more than ever near and dear to us in the incomparable figure of the old Countess of Roussillon. At the close of the play, Fletcher would inevitably have married her to Lafeu—or rather possibly, to the King.

At the entrance of the heavenly quadrilateral, or under the rising dawn of the four fixed stars which compose our Northern Cross among the constellations of dramatic romance hung high in the highest air of poetry, we may well pause for very dread of our own delight, lest unawares we break into mere babble of childish rapture and infantile thanksgiving for such light vouchsafed even to our “settentrional vedovo sito” that even at their first dawn out of the depths

Goder pareva il ciel di lor fiammelle.

Beyond these again we see a second group arising, the supreme starry trinity of the *Winter's Tale* , the *Tempest* , and *Cymbeline* : and beyond these the divine darkness of everlasting and all-maternal night. These seven lamps of the romantic drama have in them—if I may strain the similitude a little further yet—more of lyric light than could fitly be lent to feed the fire or the sunshine of the worlds of pure tragedy or comedy. There is more play, more vibration as it were, in the splendours of their spheres. Only in the heaven of Shakespeare's making can we pass and repass at pleasure from the sunny to the stormy lights, from the glory of *Cymbeline* to the glory of *Othello* .

In this first group of four—wholly differing on that point from the later constellation of three—there is but very seldom, not more than once or twice at most, a shooting or passing gleam of anything more lurid or less lovely than "a light of laughing flowers." There is but just enough of evil or even of passion admitted into their sweet spheres of life to proclaim them living: and all that does find entrance is so tempered by the radiance of the rest that we retain but softened and lightened recollections even of Shylock and Don John when we think of the *Merchant of Venice* and *Much Ado about Nothing* ; we hardly feel in *As You Like It* the presence or the existence of Oliver and Duke Frederick; and in *Twelfth Night* , for all its name of the midwinter, we find nothing to remember that might jar with the loveliness of love and the summer light of life.

No astronomer can ever tell which if any one among these four may be to the others as a sun; for in this special tract of heaven "one star differeth" not "from another star in glory." From each and all of them, even "while this muddy vesture of decay doth grossly close [us] in," we cannot *but* hear the harmony of a single immortal soul

Still quiring to the young-eyed cherubins.

The coincidence of the divine passage in which I have for once permitted myself the freedom of altering for quotation's sake one little word, with a noble excerpt given by Hallam from the Latin prose writings of Campanella, may recall to us with a doubly appropriate sense of harmonious fitness the subtly beautiful image of Lord Tennyson;—

Star to star vibrates light: may soul to soul
Strike thro' a finer element of her own?

Surely, if ever she may, such a clash might we fancy to have passed from the spirit of the most glorious martyr and poet to the spirit of the most glorious poet and artist upon the face of the earth together. Even to Shakespeare any association of his name with Campanella's, as even to Campanella any association of his name with Shakespeare's, cannot but be an additional ray of honour: and how high is the claim of the divine philosopher to share with the godlike dramatist their common and crowning name of poet, all Englishmen at least may now perceive by study of Campanella's sonnets in the noble and exquisite version of Mr. Symonds; to whom among other kindred debts we owe no higher obligation than is due to him as the giver of these poems to the inmost heart of all among his countrymen whose hearts are worthy to hold and to hoard up such treasure.

Where nothing at once new and true can be said, it is always best to say nothing; as it is in this case to refrain from all reiteration of rhapsody which must have been somewhat "mouldy ere" any living man's "grandsires had nails on their toes," if not at that yet remoter date "when King Pepin of France was a little boy" and "Queen Guinever of Britain was a little wench." In the *Merchant of Venice* , at all events, there is hardly a single character from Portia to old Gobbo, a single incident from the exaction of Shylock's bond to the computation of hairs in Launcelot's beard and Dobbin's tail, which has not been more plentifully beprosed than ever Rosalind was berhymed. Much wordy wind has also been wasted on comparison of Shakespeare's Jew with Marlowe's; that is, of a living subject for terror and pity with a mere mouthpiece for the utterance of poetry as magnificent as any but the best of Shakespeare's.

Nor can it well be worth any man's while to say or to hear for the thousandth time that *As You Like It* would be one of those works which prove, as Landor said long since, the falsehood of the stale axiom that no work of man's can be perfect, were it not for that one unlucky slip of the brush which has left so ugly a little smear in one corner of the canvas as the betrothal of Oliver to Celia; though, with all reverence for a great name and a noble memory, I can hardly think that matters were much mended in George Sand's adaptation of the play by the transference of her hand to Jaques. Once elsewhere, or twice only at the most, is any such other sacrifice of moral beauty or spiritual harmony to the necessities and traditions of the stage discernible in all the world-wide work of Shakespeare. In the one case it is unhappily undeniable; no mans conscience, no conceivable sense of right and wrong, but must more or less feel as did Coleridge's the double violence done it in the upshot of *Measure for Measure* .

Even in the much more nearly spotless work which we have next to glance at, some readers have perhaps not unreasonably found a similar objection to the final good fortune of such a pitiful fellow as Count Claudio. It will be observed that in each case the sacrifice is made to comedy. The actual or hypothetical necessity of pairing off all the couples after such a fashion as to secure a nominally happy and undeniably matrimonial ending is the theatrical idol whose tyranny exacts this holocaust of higher and better feelings than the mere liquorish desire to leave the board of fancy with a palatable morsel of cheap sugar on the tongue.

If it is proverbially impossible to determine by selection the greatest work of Shakespeare, it is easy enough to decide on the date and the name of his most perfect comic masterpiece. For absolute power of composition, for faultless balance and blameless rectitude of design, there is unquestionably no creation of his hand that will bear comparison with *Much Ado About Nothing* . The ultimate marriage of Hero and Claudio, on which I have already remarked as in itself a doubtfully desirable consummation, makes no flaw in the dramatic perfection of a piece which could not otherwise have been wound up at all. This was its one inevitable conclusion, if the action were not to come to a tragic end; and a tragic end would here have been as painfully and as grossly out of place as is any but a tragic end to the action of *Measure for Measure* . As for Beatrice, she is as perfect a lady, though of a far different age and breeding, as Célimène or Millamant; and a decidedly more perfect woman than could properly or permissibly have trod the stage of Congreve or Molière. She would have disarranged all the dramatic proprieties and harmonies of the one great school of pure comedy. The good fierce outbreak of her high true heart in two swift words —“Kill Claudio” —would have fluttered the dovecotes of fashionable drama to some purpose. But Alceste would have taken her to his own.

No quainter and apter example was ever given of many men’s absolute inability to see the plainest aims, to learn the simplest rudiments, to appreciate the most practical requisites of art, whether applied to theatrical action or to any other as evident as exalted aim, than the instance afforded by that criticism of time past which sagaciously remarked that “any less amusingly absurd” constables than Dogberry and Verges would have filled their parts in the action of the play equally well. Our own day has doubtless brought forth critics and students of else unparalleled capacity for the task of laying wind-eggs in mare’s nests, and wasting all the warmth of their brains and tongues in the hopeful endeavour to hatch them: but so fine a specimen was never dropped yet as this of the plumed or plumeless biped who discovered that if Dogberry had not been Dogberry and Verges had not been Verges they would have been equally unsuccessful in their honest attempt to warn Leonato betimes of the plot against his daughter's honour. The only explanation of the mistake is this; and it is one of which the force will be intelligible only to those who are acquainted with the very singular physiology of that remarkably prolific animal known to critical science as the Shakespearean scholiast: that if Dogberry had been other than Dogberry, or if Verges had been other than Verges, the action and catastrophe of the whole play could never have taken place at all.

All true Pantagruelians will always, or at least as long as may be permitted by the Society for the Suppression of Vice, cherish with an especial regard the comedy in which Shakespeare also has shown himself as surely the loving as he would surely have been the beloved disciple of that insuppressible divine, the immortal and most reverend vicar of Meudon. Two only among the mighty men who lived and wrote and died within the century which gave birth to Shakespeare were found worthy of so great an honour at his hands as the double homage of citation and imitation: and these two, naturally and properly enough, were François Rabelais and Christopher Marlowe. We cannot but recognise on what far travels in what good company "Feste the jester" had but lately been, on that night of "very gracious fooling" when he was pleased to enlighten the unforgetful mind of Sir Andrew as to the history of Pigrogromitus, and of the Vapians passing the equinoctial of Queubus. At what precise degree of latitude and longitude between the blessed islands of Medamothy and Papimania this equinoctial may intersect the Sporades of the outer ocean, is a problem on the solution of which the energy of those many modern sons of Aguecheek who have undertaken the task of writing about and about the text and the history of Shakespeare might be expended with an unusually reasonable hope and expectation of arriving at an exceptionally profitable end.

Even apart from their sunny identity of spirit and bright sweet brotherhood of style, the two comedies of *Twelfth Night* and *As You Like It* would stand forth confessed as the common offspring of the same spiritual period by force and by right of the trace or badge they proudly and professedly bear in common, as of a recent touch from the ripe and rich and radiant influence of Rabelais. No better and no fuller vindication of his happy memory could be afforded than by the evident fact that the two comedies which bear the imprint of his sign-manual are among all Shakespeare's works as signally remarkable for the cleanliness as for the richness of their humour. Here is the right royal seal of Pantagruel, clean-cut and clearly stamped, and unincrusted with any flake of dirt from the dubious finger of Panurge. In the comic parts of those plays in which the humour is rank and flagrant that exhales from the lips of Lucio, of Boult, or of Thersites, there is no trace or glimpse of Rabelais. From him Shakespeare has learnt nothing and borrowed nothing that was not wise and good and sweet and clean and pure. All the more honour, undoubtedly, to Shakespeare, that he would borrow nothing else: but assuredly, also, all the more honour to Rabelais, that he had enough of this to lend.

It is less creditable to England than honourable to France that a Frenchman should have been the first of Shakespearean students to discover and to prove that the great triad of his Roman plays is not a consecutive work of the same epoch. Until the appearance of François-Victor Hugo's incomparable translation, with its elaborate and admirable commentary, it seems to have been the universal and certainly a most natural habit of English criticism to take the three as they usually appear together, in the order of historical chronology, and by tacit implication to assume that they were composed in such order. I should take some shame to myself but that I feel more of grateful pride than of natural shame in the avowal that I at all events owe the first revelation of the truth now so clear and apparent in this matter, to the son of the common lord and master of all poets born in his age—be they liege subjects as loyal as myself or as contumacious as I grieve to find one at least of my elders and betters, whenever I perceive—as too often I cannot choose but perceive—that the voice is the voice of Arnold, but the hand is the hand of Sainte-Beuve.

To the honoured and lamented son of our beloved and glorious Master, whom neither I nor any better man can ever praise and thank and glorify enough, belongs all the credit of discerning for himself and discovering for us all the truth that *Julius Cæsar* is at all points equally like the greatest works of Shakespeare's middle period and unlike the works of his last. It is in the main a play belonging to the same order as *King Henry IV* .; but it differs from our English Henriade—as remarkably unlike Voltaire's as *Zaïre* is unlike *Othello* —not more by the absence of Falstaff than by the presence of Brutus. Here at least Shakespeare has made full amends, if not to all modern democrats, yet assuredly to all historical republicans, for any possible or apparent preference of royal to popular traditions. Whatever manner of man may have been the actual Roman, our Shakespearean Brutus is undoubtedly the very noblest figure of a typical and ideal republican in all the literature of the world. “A democracy such as yours in America is my abhorrence,” wrote Landor once to an impudent and foul-mouthed Yankee pseudosopher, who had intruded himself on that great man’s privacy in order to have the privilege of afterwards informing the readers of a pitiful pamphlet on England that Landor had “pestered him with Southey”; an impertinence, I may add, which Mr. Landor at once rebuked with the sharpest contempt and chastised with the haughtiest courtesy. But, the old friend and lifelong champion of Kossuth went on to say, his feelings were far different towards a republic; and if on the one point, then not less certainly on the other, we may be assured that his convictions and his prepossessions would have been shared by the author of *Coriolanus* and *Julius Cæsar* .

Having now come perforce to the inevitable verge of *Hamlet* , I hasten to declare that I can advance no pretension to compete with the claim of that “literary man” who became immortal by dint of one dinner with a bishop, and in right of that last glass poured out for him in sign of amity by “Sylvester Blougram, styled *in partibus Episcopus* , *necnon* the deuce knows what.” I do not propose to prove my perception of any point in the character of Hamlet “unseized by the Germans yet.” I can only determine, as the Church Catechism was long since wont to bid me, “to keep my hands from picking and stealing, and my tongue” not only “from evil-speaking, lying, and slandering”—though this itself is a form of abstinence not universally or even commonly practised among the rampant rout of rival commentators—but also, now as ever throughout this study, from all conscious repetition of what others have said before me.

In *Hamlet* , as it seems to me, we set foot as it were on the bridge between the middle and the final period of Shakespeare. That priceless waif of piratical salvage which we owe to the happy rapacity of a hungry publisher is of course more accurately definable as the first play of *Hamlet* than as the first edition of the play. And this first *Hamlet* , on the whole, belongs altogether to the middle period. The deeper complexities of the subject are merely indicated. Simple and trenchant outlines of character are yet to be supplanted by features of subtler suggestion and infinite interfusion. Hamlet himself is almost more of a satirist than a philosopher: Asper and Macilente, Felice and Malevole, the grim studies after Hamlet unconsciously or consciously taken by Jonson and Marston, may pass as wellnigh passable imitations, with an inevitable streak of caricature in them, of the first Hamlet; they would have been at once puerile and ghastly travesties of the second. The Queen, whose finished figure is now something of a riddle, stands out simply enough in the first sketch as confidant of Horatio if not as accomplice of Hamlet. There is not more difference between the sweet quiet flow of those plain verses which open the original play within the play and the stiff sonorous tramp of their substitutes, full-charged with heavy classic artillery of Phœbus and Neptune and Tellus and Hymen, than there is between the straightforward agents of their own destiny whom we meet in the first *Hamlet* and the obliquely moving patients who veer sideways to their doom in the second.

This minor transformation of style in the inner play, made solely with the evident view of marking the distinction between its duly artificial forms of speech and the duly natural forms of speech passing between the spectators, is but one among innumerable indications which only a purblind perversity of prepossession can overlook of the especial store set by Shakespeare himself on this favourite work, and the exceptional pains taken by him to preserve it for aftertime in such fullness of finished form as might make it worthiest of profound and perpetual study by the light of far other lamps than illuminate the stage. Of all vulgar errors the most wanton, the most wilful, and the most resolutely tenacious of life, is that belief bequeathed from the days of Pope, in which it was pardonable, to the days of Mr. Carlyle, in which it is not excusable, to the effect that Shakespeare threw off *Hamlet* as an eagle may moult a feather or a fool may break a jest; that he dropped his work as a bird may drop an egg or a sophist a fallacy; that he wrote "for gain, not glory," or that having written *Hamlet* he thought it nothing very wonderful to have written. For himself to have written, he possibly, nay probably, did not think it anything miraculous; but that he was in the fullest degree conscious of its wonderful positive worth to all men for all time, we have the best evidence possible—his own; and that not by mere word of mouth but by actual stroke of hand. Ben Jonson might shout aloud over his own work on a public stage, "By God 'tis good," and so for all its real goodness and his real greatness make sure that both the workman and his work should be less unnaturally than unreasonably laughed at; Shakespeare knew a better way of showing confidence in himself, but he showed not a whit less confidence. Scene by scene, line for line, stroke upon stroke and touch after touch, he went over all the old laboured ground again; and not to ensure success in his own day and fill his pockets with contemporary pence, but merely and wholly with a purpose to make it worthy of himself and his future students. Pence and praise enough it had evidently brought him in from the first. No more palpable proof of this can be desired than the instantaneous attacks on it, the jeers, howls, hoots and hisses of which a careful ear may catch some far faint echo even yet; the fearful and furtive yelp from beneath of the masked and writhing poeticule, the shrill reverberation all around it of plagiarism and parody. Not one single alteration in the whole play can possibly have been made with a view to stage effect or to present popularity and profit; or we must suppose that Shakespeare, however great as a man, was naturally even greater as a fool. There is a class of mortals to whom this inference is always grateful—to whom the fond belief that every great man must needs be a great fool would seem always to afford real comfort and support: happy, in Prior's phrase, could their inverted rule prove every great fool to be a great man. Every change in the text of *Hamlet* has impaired its fitness for the stage and increased its value for the closet in exact and perfect proportion. Now, this is not a matter of opinion—of Mr. Pope's opinion or Mr. Carlyle's; it is a matter of fact and evidence. Even in Shakespeare's time the actors threw out his additions; they throw out these very same additions in our own. The one especial speech, if any one such especial speech there be, in which the personal genius of Shakespeare soars up to the very highest of its height and strikes down to the very deepest of its depth, is passed over by modern actors; it was cut away by Hemings and Condell. We may almost assume it as certain that no boards have ever echoed—at least, more than once or twice—to the supreme soliloquy of Hamlet. Those words which combine the noblest pleading ever proffered for the rights of human reason with the loftiest vindication ever uttered of those rights, no mortal ear within our knowledge has ever heard spoken on the stage. A convocation even of all priests could not have been more unhesitatingly unanimous in its rejection than seems to have been the hereditary verdict of all actors. It could hardly have been found worthier of theological than it has been found of theatrical condemnation. Yet, beyond all question, magnificent as is that monologue on suicide and doubt which has passed from a proverb into a byword, it is actually eclipsed and distanced at once on philosophic and on poetical grounds by the later soliloquy on reason and resolution.

That Shakespeare was in the genuine sense—that is, in the best and highest and widest meaning of the term—a free thinker, this otherwise practically and avowedly superfluous effusion of all inmost thought appears to me to supply full and sufficient evidence for the conviction of every candid and rational man. To that loftiest and most righteous title which any just and reasoning soul can ever deserve to claim, the greatest save one of all poetic thinkers has thus made good his right for ever.

I trust it will be taken as no breach of my past pledge to abstain from all intrusion on the sacred ground of Gigadibs and the Germans, if I venture to indicate a touch inserted by Shakespeare for no other perceptible or conceivable purpose than to obviate by anticipation the indomitable and ineradicable fallacy of criticism which would find the keynote of Hamlet's character in the quality of irresolution. I may observe at once that the misconception involved in such a reading of the riddle ought to have been evident even without this episodical stroke of illustration. In any case it should be plain to any reader that the signal characteristic of Hamlet's inmost nature is by no means irresolution or hesitation or any form of weakness, but rather the strong conflux of contending forces. That during four whole acts Hamlet cannot or does not make up his mind to any direct and deliberate action against his uncle is true enough; true, also, we may say, that Hamlet had somewhat more of mind than another man to make up, and might properly want somewhat more time than might another man to do it in; but not, I venture to say in spite of Goethe, through innate inadequacy to his task and unconquerable weakness of the will; not, I venture to think in spite of Hugo, through immedicable scepticism of the spirit and irremediable propensity to nebulous intellectual refinement. One practical point in the action of the play precludes us from accepting so ready a solution of the riddle as is suggested either by the simple theory of half-heartedness or by the simple hypothesis of doubt. There is absolutely no other reason, we might say there was no other excuse, for the introduction or intrusion of an else superfluous episode into a play which was already, and which remains even after all possible excisions, one of the longest plays on record. The compulsory expedition of Hamlet to England, his discovery by the way of the plot laid against his life, his interception of the King's letter and his forgery of a substitute for it against the lives of the King's agents, the ensuing adventure of the sea-fight, with Hamlet's daring act of hot-headed personal intrepidity, his capture and subsequent release on terms giving no less patent proof of his cool-headed and ready-witted courage and resource than the attack had afforded of his physically impulsive and even impetuous hardihood—all this serves no purpose whatever but that of exhibiting the instant and almost unscrupulous resolution of Hamlet's character in time of practical need. But for all that he or Hamlet has got by it, Shakespeare might too evidently have spared his pains; and for all this voice as of one crying in a wilderness, Hamlet will too surely remain to the majority of students, not less than to all actors and all editors and all critics, the standing type and embodied emblem of irresolution, half-heartedness, and doubt.

That Hamlet should seem at times to accept for himself, and even to enforce by reiteration of argument upon his conscience and his reason, some such conviction or suspicion as to his own character, tells much rather in disfavour than in favour of its truth. A man whose natural temptation was to swerve, whose inborn inclination was to shrink and skulk aside from duty and from action, would hardly be the first and last person to suspect his own weakness, the one only unbiassed judge and witness of sufficiently sharp-sighted candour and accuracy to estimate aright his poverty of nature and the malformation of his mind. But the high-hearted and tender-conscienced Hamlet, with his native bias towards introspection intensified and inflamed and directed and dilated at once by one imperative pressure and oppression of unavoidable and unalterable circumstance, was assuredly and exactly the one only man to be troubled by any momentary fear that such might indeed be the solution of his riddle, and to feel or to fancy for the moment some kind of ease and relief in the sense of that very trouble. A born doubter would have doubted even of Horatio; hardly can all positive and almost palpable evidence of underhand instigation and inspired good intentions induce Hamlet for some time to doubt even of Ophelia.

<<span id="filepos0037613381"> a>III.

The entrance to the third period of Shakespeare is like the entrance to that lost and lesser Paradise of old,

With dreadful faces thronged, and fiery arms.

Lear, Othello, Macbeth, Coriolanus, Antony, Timon, these are names indeed of something more than tragic purport. Only in the sunnier distance beyond, where the sunset of Shakespeare's imagination seems to melt or flow back into the sunrise, do we discern Prospero beside Miranda, Florizel by Perdita, Palamon with Arcite, the same knightly and kindly Duke Theseus as of old; and above them all, and all others of his divine and human children, the crowning and final and ineffable figure of Imogen.

Of all Shakespeare's plays, *King Lear* is unquestionably that in which he has come nearest to the height and to the likeness of the one tragic poet on any side greater than himself whom the world in all its ages has ever seen born of time. It is by far the most Æschylean of his works; the most elemental and primæval, the most oceanic and Titanic in conception. He deals here with no subtleties as in *Hamlet* , with no conventions as in *Othello* : there is no question of "a divided duty" or a problem half insoluble, a matter of country and connection, of family or of race; we look upward and downward, and in vain, into the deepest things of nature, into the highest things of providence; to the roots of life, and to the stars; from the roots that no God waters to the stars which give no man light; over a world full of death and life without resting-place or guidance.

But in one main point it differs radically from the work and the spirit of Æschylus. Its fatalism is of a darker and harder nature. To Prometheus the fetters of the lord and enemy of mankind were bitter; upon Orestes the hand of heaven was laid too heavily to bear; yet in the not utterly infinite or everlasting distance we see beyond them the promise of the morning on which mystery and justice shall be made one; when righteousness and omnipotence at last shall kiss each other. But on the horizon of Shakespeare's tragic fatalism we see no such twilight of atonement, such pledge of reconciliation as this. Requital, redemption, amends, equity, explanation, pity and mercy, are words without a meaning here.

As flies to wanton boys are we to the gods;
They kill us for their sport.

Here is no need of the Eumenides, children of Night everlasting; for here is very Night herself.

The words just cited are not casual or episodical; they strike the keynote of the whole poem, lay the keystone of the whole arch of thought. There is no contest of conflicting forces, no judgment so much as by casting of lots: far less is there any light of heavenly harmony or of heavenly wisdom, of Apollo or Athene from above. We have heard much and often from theologians of the light of revelation: and some such thing indeed we find in Æschylus: but the darkness of revelation is here.

For in this the most terrible work of human genius it is with the very springs and sources of nature that her student has set himself to deal. The veil of the temple of our humanity is rent in twain. Nature herself, we might say, is revealed—and revealed as unnatural. In face of such a world as this a man might be forgiven who should pray that chaos might come again. Nowhere else in Shakespeare's work or in the universe of jarring lives are the lines of character and event so broadly drawn or so sharply cut. Only the supreme self-command of this one poet could so mould and handle such types as to restrain and prevent their passing from the abnormal into the monstrous: yet even as much as this, at least in all cases but one, it surely has accomplished. In Regan alone would it be, I think, impossible to find a touch or trace of anything less vile than it was devilish. Even Goneril has her one splendid hour, her fire-flaught of hellish glory; when she treads under foot the half-hearted goodness, the wordy and windy though sincere abhorrence, which is all that the mild and impotent revolt of Albany can bring to bear against her imperious and dauntless devilhood; when she flaunts before the eyes of her "milk-livered" and "moral fool" the coming banners of France about the "plumed helm" of his slayer.

On the other side, Kent is the exception which answers to Regan on this. Cordelia, the brotherless Antigone of our stage, has one passing touch of intolerance for what her sister was afterwards to brand as indiscretion and dotage in their father, which redeems her from the charge of perfection. Like Imogen, she is not too inhumanly divine for the sense of divine irritation. Godlike though they be, their very godhead is human and feminine; and only therefore credible, and only therefore adorable. Cloten and Regan, Goneril and Iachimo, have power to stir and embitter the sweetness of their blood. But for the contrast and even the contact of antagonists as abominable as these, the gold of their spirit would be too refined, the lily of their holiness too radiant, the violet of their virtue too sweet. As it is, Shakespeare has gone down perforce among the blackest and the basest things of nature to find anything so equally exceptional in evil as properly to counterbalance and make bearable the excellence and extremity of their goodness. No otherwise could either angel have escaped the blame implied in the very attribute and epithet of blameless. But where the possible depth of human hell is so foul and unfathomable as it appears in the spirits which serve as foils to these, we may endure that in them the inner height of heaven should be no less immaculate and immeasurable.

It should be a truism wellnigh as musty as Hamlet’s half cited proverb, to enlarge upon the evidence given in *King Lear* of a sympathy with the mass of social misery more wide and deep and direct and bitter and tender than Shakespeare has shown elsewhere. But as even to this day and even in respectable quarters the murmur is not quite duly extinct which would charge on Shakespeare a certain share of divine indifference to suffering, of godlike satisfaction and a less than compassionate content, it is not yet perhaps utterly superfluous to insist on the utter fallacy and falsity of their creed who whether in praise or in blame would rank him to his credit or discredit among such poets as on this side at least may be classed rather with Goethe than with Shelley and with Gautier than with Hugo. A poet of revolution he is not, as none of his country in that generation could have been: but as surely as the author of *Julius Cæsar* has approved himself in the best and highest sense of the word at least potentially a republican, so surely has the author of *King Lear* avowed himself in the only good and rational sense of the words a spiritual if not a political democrat and socialist.

It is only, I think, in this most tragic of tragedies that the sovereign lord and incarnate god of pity and terror can be said to have struck with all his strength a chord of which the resonance could excite such angry agony and heartbreak of wrath as that of the brother kings when they smote their staffs against the ground in fierce imperious anguish of agonised and rebellious compassion, at the oracular cry of Calchas for the innocent blood of Iphigenia. The doom even of

Desdemona seems as much less morally intolerable as it is more logically inevitable than the doom of Cordelia. But doubtless the fatalism of *Othello* is as much darker and harder than that of any third among the plays of Shakespeare, as it is less dark and hard than the fatalism of *King Lear* . For upon the head of the very noblest man whom even omnipotence or Shakespeare could ever call to life he has laid a burden in one sense yet heavier than the burden of Lear, insomuch as the sufferer can with somewhat less confidence of universal appeal proclaim himself a man more sinned against than sinning.

And yet, if ever man after Lear might lift up his voice in that protest, it would assuredly be none other than Othello. He is in all the prosperous days of his labour and his triumph so utterly and wholly nobler than the self-centred and wayward king, that the capture of his soul and body in the unimaginable snare of Iago seems a yet blinder and more unrighteous blow

Struck by the envious wrath of man or God

than ever fell on the old white head of that child-changed father. But at least he is destroyed by the stroke of a mightier hand than theirs who struck down Lear. As surely as Othello is the noblest man of man's making, Iago is the most perfect evildoer, the most potent demi-devil. It is of course the merest commonplace to say as much, and would be no less a waste of speech to add the half comfortable reflection that it is in any case no shame to fall by such a hand. But this subtlest and strangest work of Shakespeare's admits and requires some closer than common scrutiny. Coleridge has admirably described the first great soliloquy which opens to us the pit of hell within as "the motive-hunting of a motiveless malignity." But subtle and profound and just as is this definitive appreciation, there is more in the matter yet than even this. It is not only that Iago, so to speak, half tries to make himself half believe that Othello has wronged him, and that the thought of it gnaws him inly like a poisonous mineral: though this also be true, it is not half the truth—nor half that half again. Malignant as he is, the very subtlest and strongest component of his complex nature is not even malignity. It is the instinct of what Mr. Carlyle would call an inarticulate poet. In his immortal study on the affair of the diamond necklace, the most profound and potent humourist of his country in his century has unwittingly touched on the mainspring of Iago's character—"the very pulse of the machine." He describes his Circe de la Mothe-Valois as a practical dramatic poet or playwright at least in lieu of play-writer: while indicating how and wherefore, with all her constructive skill and rhythmic art in action, such genius as hers so differs from the genius of Shakespeare that she undeniably could not have written a *Hamlet* . Neither could Iago have written an *Othello* . (From this theorem, by the way, a reasoner or a casuist benighted enough to prefer articulate poets to inarticulate, Shakespeare to Cromwell, a fair Vittoria Colonna to a "foul Circe-Megæra," and even such a strategist as Homer to such a strategist as Frederic-William, would not illogically draw such conclusions or infer such corollaries as might result in opinions hardly consonant with the Teutonic-Titanic evangel of the preacher who supplied him with his thesis.) "But what he can do, that he will": and if it be better to make a tragedy than to write one, to act a poem than to sing it, we must allow to Iago a station in the hierarchy of poets very far in advance of his creator's. None of the great inarticulate may more justly claim place and precedence. With all his poetic gift, he has no poetic weakness. Almost any creator but his would have given him some grain of spite or some spark of lust after Desdemona. To Shakespeare's Iago she is no more than is a rhyme to another and articulate poet.

His stanza must at any rate and at all costs be polished: to borrow the metaphor used by Mr. Carlyle in apologetic illustration of a royal hero's peculiar system of levying recruits for his colossal brigade. He has within him a sense or conscience of power incomparable: and this power shall not be left, in Hamlet's phrase, "to fust in him unused." A genuine and thorough capacity for human lust or hate would diminish and degrade the supremacy of his evil. He is almost as far above or beyond vice as he is beneath or beyond virtue. And this it is that makes him impregnable and invulnerable. When once he has said it, we know as well as he that thenceforth he never will speak word. We could smile almost as we can see him to have smiled at Gratiano's most ignorant and empty threat, being well assured that torments will in no wise ope his lips: that as surely and as truthfully as ever did the tortured philosopher before him, he might have told his tormentors that they did but bruise the coating, batter the crust, or break the shell of Iago. Could we imagine a far other lost spirit than Farinata degli Uberti's endowed with Farinata's might of will, and transferred from the sepulchres of fire to the dykes of Malebolge, we might conceive something of Iago's attitude in hell—of his unalterable and indomitable posture for all eternity. As though it were possible and necessary that in some one point the extremities of all conceivable good and of all imaginable evil should meet and mix together in a new "marriage of heaven and hell," the action in passion of the most devilish among all the human damned could hardly be other than that of the most godlike among all divine saviours—the figure of Iago than a reflection by hell-fire of the figure of Prometheus.

Between Iago and Othello the position of Desdemona is precisely that defined with such quaint sublimity of fancy in the old English byword—“between the devil and the deep sea.” Deep and pure and strong and adorable always and terrible and pitiless on occasion as the sea is the great soul of the glorious hero to whom she has given herself; and what likeness of man’s enemy from Satan down to Mephistopheles could be matched for danger and for dread against the good bluff soldierly trustworthy figure of honest Iago? The rough license of his tongue at once takes warrant from his good soldiership and again gives warrant for his honesty: so that in a double sense it does him yeoman’s service, and that twice told. It is pitifully ludicrous to see him staged to the show like a member—and a very inefficient member—of the secret police. But it would seem impossible for actors to understand that he is not a would-be detective, an aspirant for the honours of a Vidocq, a candidate for the laurels of a Vautrin: that he is no less than Lepidus, or than Antony’s horse, “a tried and valiant soldier.” It is perhaps natural that the two deepest and subtlest of all Shakespeare’s intellectual studies in good and evil should be the two most painfully misused and misunderstood alike by his commentators and his fellows of the stage: it is certainly undeniable that no third figure of his creation has ever been on both sides as persistently misconceived and misrepresented with such desperate pertinacity as Hamlet and Iago.

And it is only when Iago is justly appreciated that we can justly appreciate either Othello or Desdemona. This again should surely be no more than the truism that it sounds; but practically it would seem to be no less than an adventurous and audacious paradox. Remove or deform or diminish or modify the dominant features of the destroyer, and we have but the eternal and vulgar figures of jealousy and innocence, newly vamped and veneered and padded and patched up for the stalest purposes of puppetry. As it is, when Coleridge asks “which do we pity the most” at the fall of the curtain, we can surely answer, Othello. Noble as are the “most blessed conditions” of “the gentle Desdemona,” he is yet the nobler of the two; and has suffered more in one single pang than she could suffer in life or in death.

But if *Othello* be the most pathetic, *King Lear* the most terrible, *Hamlet* the subtlest and deepest work of Shakespeare, the highest in abrupt and steep simplicity of epic tragedy is *Macbeth* . There needs no ghost come from the grave, any reader may too probably remark, to tell us this. But in the present generation such novelties have been unearthed regarding Shakespeare that the reassertion of an old truth may seem to have upon it some glittering reflection from the brazen brightness of a brand-new lie. Have not certain wise men of the east of England—Cantabrigian Magi, led by the star of their goddess Mathesis ("mad Mathesis," as a daring poet was once ill-advised enough to dub her doubtful deity in defiance of scansion rather than of truth)—have they not detected in the very heart of this tragedy the "paddling palms and pinching fingers" of Thomas Middleton?

To the simpler eyes of less learned Thebans than these—Thebes, by the way, was Dryden's irreverent name for Cambridge, the nursing mother of "his green unknowing youth," when that "renegade" was recreant enough to compliment Oxford at her expense as the chosen Athens of "his riper age"—the likelihood is only too evident that the sole text we possess of *Macbeth* has not been interpolated but mutilated. In their version of *Othello* , remarkably enough, the "player-editors," contrary to their wont, have added to the treasure-house of their text one of the most precious jewels that ever the prodigal afterthought of a great poet bestowed upon the rapture of his readers. Some of these, by way of thanksgiving, have complained with a touch of petulance that it was out of place and superfluous in the setting: nay, that it was incongruous with all the circumstances—out of tone and out of harmony and out of keeping with character and tune and time. In other lips indeed than Othello's, at the crowning minute of culminant agony, the rush of imaginative reminiscence which brings back upon his eyes and ears the lightning foam and tideless thunder of the Pontic sea might seem a thing less natural than sublime. But Othello has the passion of a poet closed in as it were and shut up behind the passion of a hero. For all his practical readiness of martial eye and ruling hand in action, he is also in his season "of imagination all compact." Therefore it is that in the face and teeth of all devils akin to Iago that hell could send forth to hiss at her election, we feel and recognise the spotless exaltation, the sublime and sun-bright purity, of Desdemona's inevitable and invulnerable love. When once we likewise have seen Othello's visage in his mind, we see too how much more of greatness is in this mind than in another hero's. For such an one, even a boy may well think how thankfully and joyfully he would lay down his life. Other friends we have of Shakespeare's giving whom we love deeply and well, if hardly with such love as could weep for him all the tears of the body and all the blood of the heart: but there is none we love like Othello.

I must part from his presence again for a season, and return to my topic in the text of *Macbeth* . That it is piteously rent and ragged and clipped and garbled in some of its earlier scenes, the rough construction and the poltfoot metre, lame sense and limping verse, each maimed and mangled subject of players' and printers' most treasonable tyranny, contending as it were to seem harsher than the other, combine in this contention to bear indisputable and intolerable witness. Only where the witches are, and one more potent and more terrible than all witches and all devils at their beck, can we be sure that such traitors have not robbed us of one touch from Shakespeare's hand. The second scene of the play at least bears marks of such handling as the brutal Shakespearean Hector's of the "mangled Myrmidons"; it is too visibly "noseless, handless, hacked and chipped" as it comes to us, crying on Hemings and Condell. And it is in this unlucky scene that unkindly criticism has not unsuccessfully sought for the gravest faults of language and manner to be found in Shakespeare. For certainly it cannot be cleared from the charge of a style stiffened and swollen with clumsy braid and crabbed bombast. But against the weird sisters, and her who sits above them and apart, more awful than Hecate's very self, no mangling hand has been stretched forth; no blight of mistranslation by perversion has fallen upon the words which interpret and expound the hidden things of their evil will.

To one tragedy as to one comedy of Shakespeare's, the casual or the natural union of especial popularity with especial simplicity in selection and in treatment of character makes it as superfluous as it would be difficult to attempt any application of analytical criticism. There is nothing in them of a nature so compound or so complex as to call for solution or resolution into its primal elements. Here there is some genuine ground for the generally baseless and delusive opinion of self-complacent sciolism that he who runs may read Shakespeare. These two plays it is hardly worth while to point out by name: all probable readers will know them at once for *Macbeth* and *As You Like It* . There can hardly be a single point of incident or of character on which the youngest reader will not find himself at one with the oldest, the dullest with the brightest among the scholars of Shakespeare. It would be an equal waste of working hours or of playtime if any of these should devote any part of either a whole-schoolday or a holiday to remark or to rhapsody on the character of Macbeth or of Orlando, of Rosalind or of Lady Macbeth. He that runs, let him read: and he that has ears, let him hear.

I cannot but think that enough at least of time has been spent if not wasted by able and even by eminent men on examination of *Coriolanus* with regard to its political aspect or bearing upon social questions. It is from first to last, for all its turmoil of battle and clamour of contentious factions, rather a private and domestic than a public or historical tragedy. As in *Julius Cæsar* the family had been so wholly subordinated to the state, and all personal interests so utterly dominated by the preponderance of national duties, that even the sweet and sublime figure of Portia passing in her “awful loveliness” was but as a profile half caught in the background of an episode, so here on the contrary the whole force of the final impression is not that of a conflict between patrician and plebeian, but solely that of a match of passions played out for life and death between a mother and a son. The partisans of oligarchic or democratic systems may wrangle at their will over the supposed evidences of Shakespeare’s prejudice against this creed and prepossession in favour of that: a third bystander may rejoice in the proof thus established of his impartial indifference towards either: it is all nothing to the real point in hand. The subject of the whole play is not the exile’s revolt, the rebel’s repentance, or the traitor’s reward, but above all it is the son’s tragedy. The inscription on the plinth of this tragic statue is simply to Volumnia Victrix.

A loftier or a more perfect piece of man’s work was never done in all the world than this tragedy of *Coriolanus* : the one fit and crowning epithet for its companion or successor is that bestowed by Coleridge—“the most wonderful.” It would seem a sign or birthmark of only the greatest among poets that they should be sure to rise instantly for awhile above the very highest of their native height at the touch of a thought of Cleopatra. So was it, as we all know, with William Shakespeare: so is it, as we all see, with Victor Hugo. As we feel in the marvellous and matchless verses of *Zim-Zizimi* all the splendour and fragrance and miracle of her mere bodily presence, so from her first imperial dawn on the stage of Shakespeare to the setting of that eastern star behind a pall of undissolving cloud we feel the charm and the terror and the mystery of her absolute and royal soul. Byron wrote once to Moore, with how much truth or sincerity those may guess who would care to know, that his friend’s first “confounded book” of thin prurient jingle (“we call it a mellisonant tingle-tangle,” as Randolph’s mock Oberon says of a stolen sheep-bell) had been the first cause of all his erratic or erotic frailties: it is not impossible that spirits of another sort may remember that to their own innocent infantine perceptions the first obscure electric revelation of what Blake calls “the Eternal Female” was given through a blind wondering thrill of childish rapture by a lightning on the baby dawn of their senses and their soul from the sunrise of Shakespeare’s Cleopatra.

Never has he given such proof of his incomparable instinct for abstinence from the wrong thing as well as achievement of the right. He has utterly rejected and disdained all occasion of setting her off by means of any lesser foil than all the glory of the world with all its empires. And we need not Antony's example to show us that these are less than straws in the balance.

Entre elle et l'univers qui s'offraient à la fois
Il hésita, lâchant le monde dans son choix.

Even as that Roman grasp relaxed and let fall the world, so has Shakespeare's self let go for awhile his greater world of imagination, with all its all but infinite variety of life and thought and action, for love of that more infinite variety which custom could not stale. Himself a second and a yet more fortunate Antony, he has once more laid a world, and a world more wonderful than ever, at her feet. He has put aside for her sake all other forms and figures of womanhood; he, father or creator of Rosalind, of Cordelia, of Desdemona, and of Imogen, he too, like the sun-god and sender of all song, has anchored his eyes on her whom "Phœbus' amorous pinches" could not leave "black," nor "wrinkled deep in time"; on that incarnate and imperishable "spirit of sense," to whom at the very last

The stroke of death is as a lover's pinch,
That hurts, and is desired.

To him, as to the dying husband of Octavia, this creature of his own hand might have boasted herself that the loveliest and purest among all her sisters of his begetting,

        with her modest eyes
And still conclusion, shall acquire no honour,
Demurring upon me.

To sum up, Shakespeare has elsewhere given us in ideal incarnation the perfect mother, the perfect wife, the perfect daughter, the perfect mistress, or the perfect maiden: here only once for all he has given us the perfect and the everlasting woman.

And what a world of great men and great things, "high actions and high passions," is this that he has spread under her for a footcloth or hung behind her for a curtain! The descendant of that other his ancestral Alcides, late offshoot of the god whom he loved and who so long was loth to leave him, is here as in history the visible one man revealed who could grapple for a second with very Rome and seem to throw it, more lightly than he could cope with Cleopatra. And not the Roman Landor himself could see or make us see more clearly than has his fellow provincial of Warwickshire that first imperial nephew of her great first paramour, who was to his actual uncle even such a foil and counterfeit and perverse and prosperous parody as the son of Hortense Beauharnais of Saint-Leu to the son of Letizia Buonaparte of Ajaccio. For Shakespeare too, like Landor, had watched his “sweet Octavius” smilingly and frowningly “draw under nose the knuckle of forefinger” as he looked out upon the trail of innocent blood after the bright receding figure of his brave young kinsman. The fair-faced false “present God” of his poetic parasites, the smooth triumphant patron and preserver with the heart of ice and iron, smiles before us to the very life. It is of no account now to remember that

  he at Philippi kept
His sword even like a dancer:

for the sword of Antony that struck for him is in the renegade hand of Dercetas.

I have said nothing of Enobarbus or of Eros, the fugitive once ruined by his flight and again redeemed by the death-agony of his dark and doomed repentance, or the freedman transfigured by a death more fair than freedom through the glory of the greatness of his faith: for who can speak of all things or of half that are in Shakespeare? And who can speak worthily of any?

I am come now to that strange part of a task too high for me, where I must needs speak not only (as may indeed well be) unworthily, but also (as may well seem) unlovingly, of some certain portions in the mature and authentic work of Shakespeare. “Though it be honest, it is never good” to do so: yet here I cannot choose but speak plainly after my own poor conscience, and risk all chances of chastisement as fearful as any once threatened for her too faithful messenger by the heart-stricken wrath of Cleopatra.

In the greater part of this third period, taking a swift and general view of it for contrast or comparison of qualities with the second, we constantly find beauty and melody, transfigured into harmony and sublimity; an exchange unquestionably for the better: but in certain stages, or only perhaps in a single stage of it, we frequently find humour and reality supplanted by realism and obscenity; an exchange undeniably for the worse. The note of his earliest comic style was often a boyish or a birdlike wantonness, very capable of such liberties and levities as those of Lesbia's sparrow with the lip or bosom of his mistress; as notably in the parts of Boyet and Mercutio: and indeed there is a bright vein of mere wordy wilfulness running throughout the golden youth of the two plays which connects *Love's Labour's Lost* with *Romeo and Juliet* as by a thread of floss silk not always "most excellently ravelled," nor often unspotted or unentangled. In the second period this gaiety was replaced by the utmost frankness and fullness of humour, as a boy's merry madness by the witty wisdom of a man: but now for a time it would seem as if the good comic qualities of either period were displaced and ousted by mere coarseness and crudity like that of a hard harsh photograph. This ultra-Circean transformation of spirit and brutification of speech we do not find in the lighter interludes of great and perfect tragedy: for the porter in *Macbeth* makes hardly an exception worth naming. It is when we come upon the singular little group of two or three plays not accurately definable at all but roughly describable as tragi-comedies, or more properly in two cases at least as tragedies docked of their natural end, curtailed of the due catastrophe—it is then that we find for the swift sad bright lightnings of laughter from the lips of the sweet and bitter fool whose timeless disappearance from the stage of *King Lear* seems for once a sure sign of inexplicable weariness or forgetfulness on Shakespeare's part, so nauseous and so sorry a substitute as the fetid fun and rancid ribaldry of Pandarus and Thersites. I must have leave to say that the coincidence of these two in the scheme of a single play is a thing hardly bearable by men who object to too strong a savour of those too truly "Eternal Cesspools" over which the first of living humourists holds as it were for ever an everlasting nose—or rather, in one sense, does not hold but expand it for the fuller inhalation of their too congenial fumes with an apparent relish which will always seem the most deplorable to those who the most gratefully and reasonably admire that high heroic genius, for love of which the wiser sort of men must finally forgive all the noisy aberrations of his misanthropy and philobulgary, anti-Gallican and Russolatrous insanities of perverse and morbid eloquence.

The three detached or misclassified plays of Shakespeare in which alone a reverent and reasonable critic might perhaps find something rationally and really exceptionable have also this far other quality in common, that in them as in his topmost tragedies of the same period either the exaltation of his eloquence touches the very highest point of expressible poetry, or his power of speculation alternately sounds the gulfs and scales the summits of all imaginable thought. In all three of them the power of passionate and imaginative eloquence is not only equal in spirit or essence but identical in figure or in form: in those two of them which deal almost as much with speculative intelligence as with poetic action and passion, the tones and methods, types and objects of thought, are also not equal only but identical. An all but absolute brotherhood in thought and style and tone and feeling unites the quasi-tragedy of *Troilus and Cressida* with what in the lamentable default of as apt a phrase in English I must call by its proper designation in French the *tragédie manquée* of *Measure for Measure* . In the simply romantic fragment of the Shakespearean *Pericles* , where there was no call and no place for the poetry of speculative or philosophic intelligence, there is the same positive and unmistakable identity of imaginative and passionate style.

I cannot but conjecture that the habitual students of Shakespeare's printed plays must have felt startled as by something of a shock when the same year exposed for the expenditure of their sixpences two reasonably correct editions of a play unknown to the boards in the likeness of *Troilus and Cressida* , side by side or cheek by jowl with a most unreasonably and unconscionably incorrect issue of a much older stage favourite, now newly beautified and fortified, in *Pericles Prince of Tyre* . Hitherto, ever since the appearance of his first poem, and its instant acceptance by all classes from courtiers to courtesans under a somewhat dubious and two-headed form of popular success,—'vrai succès de scandale s'il en fut'—even the potent influence and unequivocal example of Rabelais had never once even in passing or in seeming affected or infected the progressive and triumphal genius of Shakespeare with a taint or touch of anything offensive to healthier and cleanlier organs of perception than such as may belong to a genuine or a pretending Puritan. But on taking in his hand that one of these two new dramatic pamphlets which might first attract him either by its double novelty as a never acted play or by a title of yet more poetic and romantic associations than its fellow's, such a purchaser as I have supposed, with his mind full of the sweet rich fresh humour which he would feel a right to expect from Shakespeare, could hardly have undergone less than a qualm or a pang of strong disrelish and distaste on finding one of the two leading comic figures of the play break in upon it at his entrance not even with "a fool-born jest," but with full-mouthed and foul-mouthed effusion of such rank and rancorous personalities as might properly pollute the lips even of some emulous descendant or antiquarian reincarnation of Thersites, on application or even apprehension of a whip cracked in passing over the assembled heads of a pseudocritical and mock-historic society. In either case we moderns at least might haply desire the intervention of a beadle's hand as heavy and a sceptral cudgel as knotty as ever the son of Laertes applied to the shoulders of the first of the type or the tribe of Thersites. For this brutal and brutish buffoon—I am speaking of Shakespeare's Thersites—has no touch of humour in all his currish composition: Shakespeare had none as nature has none to spare for such dirty dogs as those of his kind or generation. There is not even what Coleridge with such exquisite happiness defined as being the quintessential property of Swift—"*anima Rabelæsii habitans in sicco* —the soul of Rabelais dwelling in a dry place." It is the fallen soul of Swift himself at its lowest, dwelling in a place yet drier: the familiar spirit or less than Socratic dæmon of the Dean informing the genius of Shakespeare. And thus for awhile infected and possessed, the divine genius had not power to re-inform and re-create the dæmonic spirit by virtue of its own clear essence. This wonderful play, one of the most admirable among all the works of Shakespeare's immeasurable and unfathomable intelligence, as it must always hold its natural high place among the most admired, will always in all probability be also, and as naturally, the least beloved of all. It would be as easy and as profitable a problem to solve the Rabelaisian riddle of the bombinating chimæra with its potential or hypothetical faculty of deriving sustenance from a course of diet on second intentions, as to read the riddle of Shakespeare's design in the procreation of this yet more mysterious and magnificent monster of a play. That on its production in print it was formally announced as "a new play never staled with the stage, never clapper-clawed with the palms of the vulgar," we know; must we infer or may we suppose that therefore it was not originally written for the stage? Not all plays were which even at that date appeared in print: yet it would seem something more than strange that one such play, written simply for the study, should have been the extra-professional work of Shakespeare: and yet again it would seem stranger that he should have designed this prodigious nondescript or portent of supreme genius for the public stage: and strangest of all, if so, that he should have so designed it in vain. Perhaps after all a better than any German or Germanising commentary on the subject would be the simple and summary ejaculation of Celia—"O wonderful, wonderful, and most wonderful wonderful, and yet again wonderful, and after that out of all whooping!" The perplexities of the whole matter seem literally to crowd and thicken upon us at every step. What ailed the man or any man to write such a manner of dramatic poem at all? and having written, to keep it beside him or let it out of his hands into stranger and more slippery keeping, unacted and unprinted? A German will rush in with an answer where an

Englishman (*non angelus sed Anglus*) will naturally fear to tread.

Alike in its most palpable perplexities and in its most patent splendours, this political and philosophic and poetic problem, this hybrid and hundred-faced and hydra-headed prodigy, at once defies and derides all definitive comment. This however we may surely and confidently say of it, that of all Shakespeare's offspring it is the one whose best things lose least by extraction and separation from their context. That some cynic had lately bitten him by the brain—and possibly a cynic himself in a nearly rabid stage of anthropophobia—we might conclude as reasonably from consideration of the whole as from examination of the parts more especially and virulently affected: yet how much is here also of hyper-Platonic subtlety and sublimity, of golden and Hyblæan eloquence above the reach and beyond the snap of any cynic's tooth! Shakespeare, as under the guidance at once for good and for evil of his alternately Socratic and Swiftian familiar, has set himself as if prepensely and on purpose to brutalise the type of Achilles and spiritualise the type of Ulysses. The former is an enterprise never to be utterly forgiven by any one who ever loved from the very birth of his boyhood the very name of the son of the sea-goddess in the glorious words of Mr. Browning's young first-born poem,

Who stood beside the naked Swift-footed,
And bound [his] forehead with Proserpine's hair.

It is true, if that be any little compensation, that Hector and Andromache fare here hardly better than he: while of the momentary presentation of Helen on the dirtier boards of a stage more miry than the tub of Diogenes I would not if I could and I must not though I would say so much as one single proper word. The hysterics of the eponymous hero and the harlotries of the eponymous heroine remove both alike beyond the outer pale of all rational and manly sympathy; though Shakespeare's self may never have exceeded or equalled for subtle and accurate and bitter fidelity the study here given of an utterly light woman, shallow and loose and dissolute in the most literal sense, rather than perverse or unkindly or unclean; and though Keats alone in his most perfect mood of lyric passion and burning vision as full of fragrance as of flame could have matched and all but overmatched those passages in which the rapture of Troilus makes pale and humble by comparison the keenest raptures of Romeo.

The relative disfavour in which the play of *Measure for Measure* has doubtless been at all times generally held is not in my opinion simply explicable on the theory which of late years has been so powerfully and plausibly advanced and advocated on the highest poetic or judicial authority in France or in the world, that in the land of many-coloured cant and many-coated hypocrisy the type of Angelo is something too much a prototype or an autotype of the huge national vice of England. This comment is in itself as surely just and true as it is incisive and direct: but it will not cover by any manner of means the whole question. The strong and radical objection distinctly brought forward against this play, and strenuously supported by the wisest and the warmest devotee among all the worshippers of Shakespeare, is not exactly this, that the Puritan Angelo is exposed: it is that the Puritan Angelo is unpunished. In the very words of Coleridge, it is that by his pardon and his marriage “the strong indignant claim of justice” is “baffled.” The expression is absolutely correct and apt: justice is not merely evaded or ignored or even defied: she is both in the older and the newer sense of the word directly and deliberately baffled; buffeted, outraged, insulted, struck in the face. We are left hungry and thirsty after having been made to thirst and hunger for some wholesome single grain at least of righteous and too long retarded retribution: we are tricked out of our dole, defeated of our due, lured and led on to look for some equitable and satisfying upshot, defrauded and derided and sent empty away.

That this play is in its very inmost essence a tragedy, and that no sleight of hand or force of hand could give it even a tolerable show of coherence or consistency when clipped and docked of its proper and rightful end, the mere tone of style prevalent throughout all its better parts to the absolute exclusion of any other would of itself most amply suffice to show. Almost all that is here worthy of Shakespeare at any time is worthy of Shakespeare at his highest: and of this every touch, every line, every incident, every syllable, belongs to pure and simple tragedy. The evasion of a tragic end by the invention and intromission of Mariana has deserved and received high praise for its ingenuity but ingenious evasion of a natural and proper end is usually the distinctive quality which denotes a workman of a very much lower school than the school of Shakespeare. In short and in fact, the whole elaborate machinery by which the complete and completely unsatisfactory result of the whole plot is attained is so thoroughly worthy of such a contriver as “the old fantastical duke of dark corners” as to be in a moral sense, if I dare say what I think, very far from thoroughly worthy of the wisest and mightiest mind that ever was informed with the spirit or genius of creative poetry.

I have one more note to add in passing which touches simply on a musical point in lyric verse; and from which I would therefore give any biped who believes that ears "should be long to measure Shakespeare" all timely warning to avert the length of his own. A very singular question, and one to me unaccountable except by a supposition which on charitable grounds I should be loth to entertain for a moment—namely, that such ears are commoner than I would fain believe on heads externally or ostensibly human,—has been raised with regard to the first immortal song of Mariana in the moated grange. This question is whether the second verse appended by Fletcher to that divine Shakespearean fragment may not haply have been written by the author of the first. The visible and audible evidence that it cannot is of a kind which must at once leap into sight of all human eyes and conviction of all human ears. The metre of Shakespeare's verse, as written by Shakespeare, is not the metre of Fletcher's. It can only seem the same to those who hear by finger and not by ear: a class now at all events but too evidently numerous enough to refute Sir Hugh's antiquated objection to the once apparently tautologous phrase of Pistol.

It is of course inexplicable, but it is equally of course undeniable, that the mention of Shakespeare's *Pericles* would seem immediately and invariably to recall to a virtuous critical public of nice and nasty mind the prose portions of the fourth act, the whole of the prose portions of the fourth act, and nothing but the prose portions of the fourth act. To readers and writers of books who readily admit their ineligibility as members of a Society for the Suppression of Shakespeare or Rabelais, of Homer or the Bible, it will seem that the third and fifth acts of this ill-fated and ill-famed play, and with them the poetical parts of the fourth act, are composed of metal incomparably more attractive. But the virtuous critic, after the alleged nature of the vulturine kind, would appear to have eyes and ears and nose for nothing else. It is true that somewhat more of humour, touched once and again with subtler hints of deeper truth, is woven into the too realistic weft of these too lifelike scenes than into any of the corresponding parts in *Measure for Measure* or in *Troilus and Cressida* ; true also that in the hands of imitators, in hands so much weaker than Shakespeare's as were Heywood's or Davenport's (who transplanted this unlovely episode from *Pericles* into a play of his own), these very scenes or such as they reappear unredeemed by any such relief in all the rank and rampant ugliness of their raw repulsive realism: true, again, that Fletcher has once equalled them in audacity, while stripping off the nakedness of his subject the last ragged and rude pretence at a moral purpose, and investing it instead with his very brightest robe of gay particoloured humour: but after all it remains equally true that to senses less susceptible of attraction by carrion than belong to the vultures of critical and professional virtue they must always remain as they have always been, something very considerably more than unattractive. I at least for one must confess myself insufficiently virtuous to have ever at any time for any moment felt towards them the very slightest touch of any feeling more attractive than repulsion. And herewith I hasten to wash my hands of the only unattractive matter in the only three of Shakespeare's plays which offer any such matter to the perceptions of any healthy-minded and reasonable human creature.

But what now shall I say that may not be too pitifully unworthy of the glories and the beauties, the unsurpassable pathos and sublimity inwoven with the imperial texture of this very play? the blood-red Tyrian purple of tragic maternal jealousy which might seem to array it in a worthy attire of its Tyrian name; the flower-soft loveliness of maiden lamentation over the flower-strewn seaside grave of Marina's old sea-tossed nurse, where I am unvirtuous enough (as virtue goes among moralists) to feel more at home and better at ease than in the atmosphere of her later lodging in Mitylene? What, above all, shall be said of that storm above all storms ever raised in poetry, which ushered into a world of such wonders and strange chances the daughter of the wave-worn and world-wandering prince of Tyre? Nothing but this perhaps, that it stands—or rather let me say that it blows and sounds and shines and rings and thunders and lightens as far ahead of all others as the burlesque sea-storm of Rabelais beyond all possible storms of comedy. The recent compiler of a most admirably skilful and most delicately invaluable compendium of Pantagruel or manual by way of guidebook to Rabelais has but too justly taken note of the irrefragable evidence there given that the one prose humourist who is to Aristophanes as the human twin-star Castor to Pollux the divine can never have practically weathered an actual gale; but if I may speak from a single experience of one which a witness long inured to Indian storm as well as Indian battle had never seen matched out of the tropics if ever overmatched within them, I should venture to say, were the poet in question any other mortal man than Shakespeare, to whom all things were better known by instinct than ever they can be to others by experience, that the painter of the storm in *Pericles* must have shared the adventure and relished the rapture of such an hour. None other most assuredly than himself alone could have mingled with the material passion of the elements such human passion of pathos as thrills in such tenderly sublime undertone of an agony so nobly subdued through the lament of Pericles over Thaisa. As in his opening speech of this scene we heard all the clangour and resonance of warring wind and sea, so now we hear a sound of sacred and spiritual music as solemn as the central monochord of the inner main itself.

That the three last acts of *Pericles* , with the possible if not over probable exception of the so-called Chorus,   are wholly the work of Shakespeare in the ripest fullness of his latter genius, is a position which needs exactly as much proof as does his single-handed authorship of *Hamlet, Lear, Macbeth* , and *Othello* . In the fifth act is a remarkable instance of a thing remarkably rare with him; the recast or repetition in an improved and reinvigorated form of a beautiful image or passage occurring in a previous play. The now only too famous metaphor of "patience on a monument smiling at grief"—too famous we might call it for its own fame—is transfigured as from human beauty to divine, in its transformation to the comparison of Marina's look with that of "Patience gazing on kings' graves, and smiling Extremity out of act." A precisely similar parallel is one to which I have referred elsewhere; that between the two passages respectively setting forth the reciprocal love of Helena and Hermia, of Emilia and Flavina. The change of style and spirit in either case of reiteration is the change from a simpler to a sublimer form of beauty.

In the two first acts of *Pericles* there are faint and rare but evident and positive traces of a passing touch from the hasty hand of Shakespeare: even here too we may say after Dido:—

Nec tam aversus equos Tyriâ sol jungit ab urbe.

It has been said that those most unmistakable verses on "the blind mole" are not such as any man could insert into another man's work, or slip in between the lines of an inferior poet: and that they occur naturally enough in a speech of no particular excellence. I take leave decisively to question the former assertion, and flatly to contradict the latter. The pathetic and magnificent lines in dispute do not occur naturally enough, or at all naturally, among the very poor, flat, creeping verses between which they have been thrust with such over freehanded recklessness. No purple patch was ever more pitifully out of place. There is indeed no second example of such wanton and wayward liberality; but the generally lean and barren style of these opening acts does not crawl throughout on exactly the same low level.

The last of the only three plays with which I venture to find any fault on the score of moral taste is the first on my list of the only three plays belonging to this last period on which, as they now stand, I trace the indisputable track of another touch than Shakespeare’s. But in the two cases remaining our general task of distinction should on the whole be simple and easy enough for the veriest babes and sucklings in the lower school of Shakespeare.

That the two great posthumous fragments we possess of Shakespeare’s uncompleted work are incomplete simply because the labour spent on either was cut short by his timeless death is the first natural assumption of any student with an eye quick enough to catch the point where the traces of his hand break off; but I should now be inclined to guess rather that on reconsideration of the subjects chosen he had rejected or dismissed them for a time at least as unfit for dramatic handling. It could have needed no great expenditure of reasoning or reflection to convince a man of lesser mind and less experience than Shakespeare’s that no subject could possibly be more unmanageable, more indomitably improper for such a purpose, than he had selected in *Timon of Athens* . How he came ever to fall across such a subject, to hit upon such a choice, we can spend no profitable time or pains in trying to conjecture. It is clear, however, that at all events there was a season when the inexplicable attraction of it was too strong for him to resist the singular temptation to embody in palpable form, to array in dramatic raiment, to invest with imaginative magnificence, the godless ascetic passion of misanthropy, the martyrdom of an atheistic Stylites. Timon is doubtless a man of far nobler type than any monomaniac of the tribe of Macarius: but his immeasurable superiority in spiritual rank to the hermit fathers of the desert serves merely to make him a thought madder and a grain more miserable than the whole Thebaid of Christomaniacs rolled into one. Foolish and fruitless as it has ever been to hunt through Shakespeare’s plays and sonnets on the false scent of a fantastic trail, to put thaumaturgic trust in a dark dream of tracking his untraceable personality through labyrinthine byways of life and visionary crossroads of character, it is yet surely no blind assumption to accept the plain evidence in both so patent before us, that he too like other men had his dark seasons of outer or of inner life, and like other poets found them or made them fruitful as well as bitter, though it might be but of bitter fruit. And of such there is here enough to glut the gorge of all the monks in monkery, or strengthen for a forty days’ fast any brutallest unwashed theomaniac of the Thebaid. The most unconscionably unclean of all foul-minded fanatics might have been satisfied with the application to all women from his mother upwards of the monstrous and magnificent obloquy found by Timon as insufficient to overwhelm as his gold was inadequate to satisfy one insatiable and indomitable “brace of harlots.” In *Troilus and Cressida* we found too much that Swift might have written when half inspired by the genius of Shakespeare; in the great and terrible fourth act of *Timon* we find such tragedy as Juvenal might have written when half deified by the spirit of Æschylus.

There is a noticeable difference between the case of *Timon* and the two other cases (diverse enough between themselves) of late or mature work but partially assignable to the hand of Shakespeare. In *Pericles* we may know exactly how much was added by Shakespeare to the work of we know not whom; in *The Two Noble Kinsmen* we can tell sometimes to a hair's breadth in a hemistich by whom how much was added to the posthumous text of Shakespeare; in *Timon* we cannot assert with the same confidence in the same accuracy that just so many scenes and no more, just so many speeches and none other, were the work of Shakespeare's or of some other hand. Throughout the first act his presence lightens on us by flashes, as his voice peals out by fits, from behind or above the too meanly decorated altar of tragic or satiric song: in the second it is more sensibly continuous; in the third it is all but utterly eclipsed; in the fourth it is but very rarely intercepted for a very brief interval in the dark divine service of a darker Commination Day: in the fifth it predominates generally over the sullen and brooding atmosphere with the fierce imperious glare of a "bloody sun" like that which the wasting shipmen watched at noon "in a hot and copper sky." There is here no more to say of a poem inspired at once by the triune Furies of Ezekiel, of Juvenal, and of Dante.

I can imagine no reason but that already suggested why Shakespeare should in a double sense have taken Chaucer for his model or example in leaving half told a story which he had borrowed from the father and master of our narrative poetry. Among all competent scholars and all rational students of Shakespeare there can have been, except possibly with regard to three of the shorter scenes, no room for doubt or perplexity on any detail of the subject since the perfect summary and the masterly decision of Mr. Dyce. These three scenes, as no such reader will need to be told or reminded, are the two first soliloquies of the Gaoler's Daughter after the release of Palamon, and the scene of the portraits, as we may in a double sense call it, in which Emilia, after weighing against each other in solitude the likenesses of the cousins, receives from her own kinsfolk a full and laboured description of their leading champions on either side. Even setting apart for once and for a moment the sovereign evidence of mere style, we must recognise in this last instance a beautiful and significant example of that loyal and loving fidelity to the minor passing suggestions of Chaucer's text which on all possible occasions of such comparison so markedly and vividly distinguishes the work of Shakespeare's from the work of Fletcher's hand. Of the pestilent abuse and perversion to which Fletcher has put the perhaps already superfluous hints or sketches by Shakespeare for an episodical underplot, in his transmutation of Palamon's love-stricken and luckless deliverer into the disgusting burlesque of a mock Ophelia, I have happily no need as I should certainly have no patience to speak.

After the always immitigable gloom of *Timon* and the sometimes malodorous exhalations of the three preceding plays, it is nothing less than "very heaven" to find and feel ourselves again in the midmost Paradise, the central Eden, of Shakespeare's divine discovery—of his last sweet living invention. Here again is air as pure blowing over fields as fragrant as where Dante saw Matilda or Milton saw Proserpine gathering each as deathless flowers. We still have here to disentwine or disentangle his own from the weeds of glorious and of other than glorious feature with which Fletcher has thought fit to interweave them; even in the close of the last scene of all we can say to a line, to a letter, where Shakespeare ends and Fletcher begins. That scene is opened by Shakespeare in his most majestic vein of meditative or moral verse, pointed and coloured as usual with him alone by direct and absolute aptitude to the immediate sentiment and situation of the speaker and of no man else: then either Fletcher strikes in for a moment with a touch of somewhat more Shakespearean tone than usual, or possibly we have a survival of some lines' length, not unretouched by Fletcher, from Shakespeare's first sketch for a conclusion of the somewhat calamitous and cumbrous underplot, which in any case was ultimately left for Fletcher to expand into such a shape and bring by such means to such an end as we may safely swear that Shakespeare would never have admitted: then with the entrance and ensuing narrative of Pirithous we have none but Shakespeare before us again, though it be Shakespeare undoubtedly in the rough, and not as he might have chosen to present himself after due revision, with rejection (we may well suppose) of this point and readjustment of that: then upon the arrival of the dying Arcite with his escort there follows a grievous little gap, a flaw but pitifully patched by Fletcher, whom we recognise at wellnigh his worst and weakest in Palamon's appeal to his kinsman for a last word, "if his heart, *his worthy, manly heart* " (an exact and typical example of Fletcher's tragically prosaic and prosaically tragic dash of incurable commonplace), "be yet unbroken," and in the flaccid and futile answer which fails so signally to supply the place of the most famous and pathetic passage in all the masterpiece of Chaucer; a passage to which even Shakespeare could have added but some depth and grandeur of his own giving, since neither he nor Dante's very self nor any other among the divinest of men could have done more or better than match it for tender and pure simplicity of words more “dearly sweet and bitter” than the bitterest or the sweetest of men’s tears. Then, after the duly and properly conventional engagement on the parts of Palamon and Emilia respectively to devote the anniversary “to tears” and “to honour,” the deeper note returns for one grand last time, grave at once and sudden and sweet as the full choral opening of an anthem: the note which none could ever catch of Shakespeare’s very voice gives out the peculiar cadence that it alone can give in the modulated instinct of a solemn change or shifting of the metrical emphasis or *ictus* from one to the other of two repeated words:—

That nought could buy
Dear love; but loss of dear love!

That is a touch beyond the ear or the hand of Fletcher: a chord sounded from Apollo’s own harp after a somewhat hoarse and reedy wheeze from the scrannel-pipe of a lesser player than Pan. Last of all, in words worthy to be the latest left of Shakespeare’s, his great and gentle Theseus winds up the heavenly harmonies of his last beloved great poem.

And now, coming at length within the very circle of Shakespeare’s culminant and crowning constellation, bathing my whole soul and spirit for the last and (if I live long enough) as surely for the first of many thousand times in the splendours of the planet whose glory is the light of his very love itself, standing even as Dante

in the clear
Amorous silence of the Swooning-sphere,

what shall I say of thanksgiving before the final feast of Shakespeare?

The grace must surely be short enough if it would at all be gracious. Even were Shakespeare’s self alive again, or he now but fifteen years since gone home to Shakespeare, of whom Charles Lamb said well that none could have written his book about Shakespeare but either himself alone or else he of whom the book was written, yet could we not hope that either would have any new thing to tell us of the *Tempest*, the *Winter’s Tale*, and *Cymbeline*. And for ourselves, what else could we do but only ring changes on the word beautiful as Celia on the word wonderful in her laughing litany of love? or what better or what more can we do than in the deepest and most heartfelt sense of an old conventional phrase, thank God and Shakespeare? for how to praise either for such a gift of gifts we know not, knowing only and surely that none will know for ever.

True or false, and it would now seem something less than likely to be true, the fancy which assumed the last lines spoken by Prospero to be likewise the last words of the last completed work of Shakespeare was equally in either case at once natural and graceful. There is but one figure sweeter than Miranda's and sublimer than Prospero's in all the range of heaven on which the passion of our eyes could rest at parting. And from one point of view there is even a more heavenly quality perceptible in the light of this than of its two twin stars. In no nook or corner of the island as we leave it is any savour left or any memory lingering of any inexpiable evil. Alonzo is absolved; even Antonio and Sebastian have made no such ineffaceable mark on it by the presence of their pardoned crimes as is made by those which cost the life of Mamillius and the labours of Imogen. Poor Caliban is left in such comfort as may be allowed him by divine grace in the favourable aspect of Setebos; and his comrades go by us "reeling ripe" and "gilded" not by "grand liquor" only but also by the summer lightning of men's laughter: blown softly out of our sight, with a sound and a gust of music, by the breath of the song of Ariel.

The wild wind of the *Winter's Tale* at its opening would seem to blow us back into a wintrier world indeed. And to the very end I must confess that I have in me so much of the spirit of Rachel weeping in Ramah as will not be comforted because Mamillius is not. It is well for those whose hearts are light enough, to take perfect comfort even in the substitution of his sister Perdita for the boy who died of "thoughts high for one so tender." Even the beautiful suggestion that Shakespeare as he wrote had in mind his own dead little son still fresh and living at his heart can hardly add more than a touch of additional tenderness to our perfect and piteous delight in him. And even in her daughter's embrace it seems hard if his mother should have utterly forgotten the little voice that had only time to tell her just eight words of that ghost story which neither she nor we were ever to hear ended. Any one but Shakespeare would have sought to make pathetic profit out of the child by the easy means of showing him if but once again as changed and stricken to the death for want of his mother and fear for her and hunger and thirst at his little high heart for the sight and touch of her: Shakespeare only could find a better way, a subtler and a deeper chord to strike, by giving us our last glimpse of him as he laughed and chattered with her "past enduring," to the shameful neglect of those ladies in the natural blueness of whose eyebrows as well as their noses he so stoutly declined to believe. And at the very end (as aforesaid) it may be that we remember him all the better because the father whose jealousy killed him and the mother for love of whom he died would seem to have forgotten the little brave sweet spirit with all its truth of love and tender sense of shame as perfectly and unpardonably as Shakespeare himself at the close of *King Lear* would seem to have forgotten one who never had forgotten Cordelia.

But yet—and here for once the phrase abhorred by Cleopatra does not "allay the good" but only the bad "precedence"—if ever amends could be made for such unnatural show of seeming forgetfulness ("out on the seeming! I will write against it"—or would, had I not written enough already), the poet most assuredly has made such amends here. At the sunrise of Perdita beside Florizel it seems as if the snows of sixteen winters had melted all together into the splendour of one unutterable spring. They "smell April and May" in a sweeter sense than it could be said of "young Master Fenton": "nay, which is more," as his friend and champion Mistress Quickly might have added to mine host's commendatory remark, they speak all April and May; because April is in him as naturally as May in her, by just so many years' difference before the Mayday of her birth as went to make up her dead brother's little lot of living breath, which in Beaumont's most lovely and Shakespeare-worthy phrase "was not a life; was but a piece of childhood thrown away." Nor can I be content to find no word of old affection for Autolycus, who lived, as we may not doubt, though but a hint or promise be vouchsafed us for all assurance that he lived by favour of his "good masters" once more to serve Prince Florizel and wear three-pile for as much of his time as it might please him to put on "robes" like theirs that were "gentlemen born," and had "been so any time these four hours." And yet another and a graver word must be given with all reverence to the "grave and good Paulina," whose glorious fire of godlike indignation was as warmth and cordial to the innermost heart while yet bruised and wrung for the yet fresh loss of Mamillius.

The time is wellnigh come now for me to consecrate in this book my good will if not good work to the threefold and thrice happy memory of the three who have written of Shakespeare as never man wrote, nor ever man may write again; to the everlasting praise and honour and glory of Charles Lamb, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and Walter Savage Landor; "wishing," I hardly dare to say, "what I write may be read by their light." The play of plays, which is *Cymbeline* , remains alone to receive the last salute of all my love.

I think, as far as I can tell, I may say I have always loved this one beyond all other children of Shakespeare. The too literal egoism of this profession will not be attributed by any candid or even commonly honest reader to the violence of vanity so much more than comical as to make me suppose that such a record or assurance could in itself be matter of interest to any man: but simply to the real and simple reason, that I wish to show cause for my choice of this work to wind up with, beyond the mere chance of its position at the close of the chaotically inconsequent catalogue of contents affixed to the first edition. In this casualty—for no good thing can reasonably be ascribed to design on the part of the first editors—there would seem to be something more than usual of what we may call, if it so please us, a happy providence. It is certain that no studious arrangement could possibly have brought the book to a happier end. Here is depth enough with height enough of tragic beauty and passion, terror and love and pity, to approve the presence of the most tragic Master's hand; subtlety enough of sweet and bitter truth to attest the passage of the mightiest and wisest scholar or teacher in the school of the human spirit; beauty with delight enough and glory of life and grace of nature to proclaim the advent of the one omnipotent Maker among all who bear that name. Here above all is the most heavenly triad of human figures that ever even Shakespeare brought together; a diviner three, as it were a living god-garland of the noblest earth-born brothers and loveworthiest heaven-born sister, than the very givers of all grace and happiness to their Grecian worshippers of old time over long before. The passion of Posthumus is noble, and potent the poison of Iachimo; Cymbeline has enough for Shakespeare's present purpose of "the king-becoming graces"; but we think first and last of her who was "truest speaker" and those who "called her brother, when she was but their sister; she them brothers, when they were so indeed." The very crown and flower of all her father's daughters,—I do not speak here of her human father, but her divine—the woman above all Shakespeare's women is Imogen. As in Cleopatra we found the incarnate sex, the woman everlasting, so in Imogen we find half glorified already the immortal godhead of womanhood. I would fain have some honey in my words at parting—with Shakespeare never, but for ever with these notes on Shakespeare; and I am therefore something more than fain to close my book upon the name of the woman best beloved in all the world of song and all the tide of time; upon the name of Shakespeare's Imogen.

<<span id="filepos0037693957"> a>APPENDIX.

<<span id="filepos0037694179"> a>NOTE ON THE HISTORICAL PLAY OF KING EDWARD III.

1879.

The epitaph of German criticism on Shakespeare was long since written by the unconscious hand which penned the following sentence; an inscription worthy of perpetual record on the registers of Gotham or in the daybook of the yet unstranded Ship of Fools.

“*Thomas Lord Cromwell:—Sir John Oldcastle:—A Yorkshire Tragedy* .—The three last pieces are not only unquestionably Shakespeare’s, but in my opinion they deserve to be classed among his best and maturest works.”

This memorable opinion is the verdict of the modest and judicious Herr von Schlegel: who had likewise in his day the condescension to inform our ignorance of the melancholy fact so strangely overlooked by the contemporaries of Christopher Marlowe, that “his verses are flowing, but without energy.” Strange, but true; too strange, we may reasonably infer, not to be true. Only to German eyes has the treasure-house of English poetry ever disclosed a secret of this kind: to German ears alone has such discord or default been ever perceptible in its harmonies.

Now the facts with regard to this triad of plays are briefly these. *Thomas Lord Cromwell* is a piece of such utterly shapeless, spiritless, bodiless, soulless, senseless, helpless, worthless rubbish, that there is no known writer of Shakespeare’s age to whom it could be ascribed without the infliction of an unwarrantable insult on that writer’s memory. *Sir John Oldcastle* is the compound piecework of four minor playwrights, one of them afterwards and otherwise eminent as a poet—Munday, Drayton, Wilson, and Hathaway: a thin sample of poetic patchery cobbled up and stitched together so as to serve its hour for a season without falling to pieces at the first touch. The *Yorkshire Tragedy* is a coarse, crude, and vigorous impromptu, in which we possibly might almost think it possible that Shakespeare had a hand (or at least a finger), if we had any reason to suppose that during the last ten or twelve years of his life he was likely to have taken part in any such dramatic improvisation.

The example and the exposure of Schlegel’s misadventures in this line have not sufficed to warn off minor blunderers from treading with emulous confidence “through forthrights and meanders” in the very muddiest of their precursor’s traces. We may notice, for one example, the revival—or at least the discussion as of something worth serious notice—of a wellnigh still-born theory, first dropped in a modest corner of the critical world exactly a hundred and seventeen years ago. Its parent, notwithstanding this perhaps venial indiscretion, was apparently an honest and modest gentleman; and the play itself, which this ingenuous theorist was fain, with all diffidence, to try whether haply he might be permitted to foist on the apocryphal fatherhood of Shakespeare, is not without such minor merits as may excuse us for wasting a few minutes on examination of the theory which seeks to confer on it the factitious and artificial attraction of a spurious and adventitious interest.

“The Raigne of King Edward the third: As it hath bin sundrie times plaied about the Citie of London,” was published in 1596, and ran through two or three anonymous editions before the date of the generation was out which first produced it. Having thus run to the end of its natural tether, it fell as naturally into the oblivion which has devoured, and has not again disgorged, so many a more precious production of its period. In 1760 it was reprinted in the “Prolusions” of Edward Capell, whose text is now before me. This editor was the first mortal to suggest that his newly unearthed treasure might possibly be a windfall from the topless tree of Shakespeare. Being, as I have said, a duly modest and an evidently honest man, he admits “with candour” that there is no jot or tittle of “external evidence” whatsoever to be alleged in support of this gratuitous attribution: but he submits, with some fair show of reason, that there is a certain “resemblance between the style of” Shakespeare’s “earlier performances and of the work in question”; and without the slightest show of any reason whatever he appends to this humble and plausible plea the unspeakably unhappy assertion that at the time of its appearance “there was no known writer equal to such a play”; whereas at a moderate computation there were, I should say, on the authority of Henslowe’s Diary, at least a dozen—and not improbably a score. In any case there was one then newly dead, too long before his time, whose memory stands even higher above the possible ascription of such a work than that of the adolescent Shakespeare’s very self.

Of one point we may be sure, even where so much is unsure as we find it here: in the curt atheological phrase of the Persian Lucretius, “one thing is certain, and the rest is lies.” The author of *King Edward III* . was a devout student and a humble follower of Christopher Marlowe, not yet wholly disengaged by that august and beneficent influence from all attraction towards the “jigging veins of rhyming mother-wits”; and fitter on the whole to follow this easier and earlier vein of writing, half lyrical in manner and half elegiac, than to brace upon his punier limbs the young giant’s newly fashioned buskin of blank verse. The signs of this growing struggle, the traces of this incomplete emancipation, are perceptible throughout in the alternate prevalence of two conflicting and irreconcilable styles; which yet affords no evidence or suggestion of a double authorship. For the intelligence which moulds and informs the whole work, the spirit which pervades and imbues the general design, is of a piece, so to speak, throughout; a point imperceptible to the eye, a touchstone intangible by the finger, alike of a scholiast and a dunce.

Another test, no less unmistakable by the student and no less indiscernible to the sciolist, is this: that whatever may be the demerits of this play, they are due to no voluntary or involuntary carelessness or haste. Here is not the swift impatient journeywork of a rough and ready hand; here is no sign of such compulsory hurry in the discharge of a task something less than welcome, if not of an imposition something less than tolerable, as we may rationally believe ourselves able to trace in great part of Marlowe’s work: in the latter half of *The Jew of Malta* , in the burlesque interludes of *Doctor Faustus* , and wellnigh throughout the whole scheme and course of *The Massacre at Paris* . Whatever in *King Edward III* . is mediocre or worse is evidently such as it is through no passionate or slovenly precipitation of handiwork, but through pure incompetence to do better. The blame of the failure, the shame of the shortcoming, cannot be laid to the account of any momentary excess or default in emotion, of passing exhaustion or excitement, of intermittent impulse and reaction; it is an indication of lifelong and irremediable impotence. And it is further to be noted that by far the least unsuccessful parts of the play are also by far the most unimportant. The capacity of the author seems to shrink and swell alternately, to erect its plumes and deject them, to contract and to dilate the range and orbit of its flight in a steadily inverse degree to the proportionate interest of the subject or worth of the topic in hand. There could be no surer proof that it is neither the early nor the hasty work of a great or even a remarkable poet. It is the best that could be done at any time by a conscientious and studious workman of technically insufficient culture and of naturally limited means.

I would not, however, be supposed to undervalue the genuine and graceful ability of execution displayed by the author at his best. He could write at times very much after the earliest fashion of the adolescent Shakespeare; in other words, after the fashion of the day or hour, to which in some degree the greatest writer of that hour or that day cannot choose but conform at starting, and the smallest writer must needs conform for ever. By the rule which would attribute to Shakespeare every line written in his first manner which appeared during the first years of his poetic progress, it is hard to say what amount of bad verse or better, current during the rise and the reign of their several influences,—for this kind of echo or of copywork, consciously or unconsciously repercussive and reflective, begins with the very first audible sound of a man's voice in song, with the very first noticeable stroke of his hand in painting—it is hard to say what amount of tolerable or intolerable work might not or may not be assignable by scholiasts of the future to Byron or to Shelley, to Mr. Tennyson or to Mr. Browning. A time by this rule might come—but I am fain to think better of the Fates—when by comparison of detached words and collation of dismembered phrases the memory of Mr. Tennyson would be weighted and degraded by the ascription of whole volumes of pilfered and diluted verse now current—if not yet submerged—under the name or the pseudonym of the present Viceroy—or Vice-empress is it?—of India. But the obvious truth is this: the voice of Shakespeare's adolescence had as usual an echo in it of other men's notes: I can remember the name of but one poet whose voice from the beginning had none; who started with a style of his own, though he may have chosen to annex —"annex the wise it call"; *convey* is obsolete—to annex whole phrases or whole verses at need, for the use or the ease of an idle minute; and this name of course is Marlowe's. So starting, Shakespeare had yet (like all other and lesser poets born) some perceptible notes in his yet half boyish voice that were not borrowed; and these were at once caught up and re-echoed by such fellow-pupils with Shakespeare of the young Master of them all—such humbler and feebler disciples, or simpler sheep (shall we call them?) of the great "dead shepherd"—as the now indistinguishable author of *King Edward III* .

In the first scene of the first act the impotent imitation of Marlowe is pitifully patent. Possibly there may also be an imitation of the still imitative style of Shakespeare, and the style may be more accurately definable as a copy of a copy —a study after the manner of Marlowe, not at second hand, but at third. In any case, being obviously too flat and feeble to show a touch of either godlike hand, this scene may be set aside at once to make way for the second.

The second scene is more animated, but low in style till we come to the outbreak of rhyme. In other words, the energetic or active part is at best passable—fluent and decent commonplace: but where the style turns undramatic and runs into mere elegiacs, a likeness becomes perceptible to the first elegiac style of Shakespeare. Witness these lines spoken by the King in contemplation of the Countess of Salisbury's beauty, while yet struggling against the nascent motions of a base love:—

Now in the sun alone it doth not lie
With light to take light from a mortal eye:
For here two day-stars that mine eyes would see
More than the sun steal mine own light from me.
Contemplative desire! desire to be
In contemplation that may master thee!

Decipit exemplar vitiis imitabile : if Shakespeare ever saw or heard these pretty lines, he should have felt the unconscious rebuke implied in such close and facile imitation of his own early elegiacs. As a serious mimicry of his first manner, a critical parody summing up in little space the sweet faults of his poetic nonage, with its barren overgrowth of unprofitable flowers,—bright point, soft metaphor, and sweet elaborate antithesis—this is as good of its kind as anything between Aristophanes and Horace Smith. Indeed, it may remind us of that parody on the soft, superfluous, flowery and frothy style of Agathon, which at the opening of the *Thesmophoriazusæ* cannot but make the youngest and most ignorant reader laugh, though the oldest and most learned has never set eyes on a line of the original verses which supplied the incarnate god of comic song with matter for such exquisite burlesque.

To the speech above cited the reply of the Countess is even gracefuller, and closer to the same general model of fanciful elegiac dialogue:—

Let not thy presence, like the April sun,
Flatter our earth, and suddenly be done:
More happy do not make our outward wall
Than thou wilt grace our inward house withal.
Our house, my liege, is like a country swain,
Whose habit rude, and manners blunt and plain.
Presageth naught; yet inly beautified
With bounty's riches, and fair hidden pride;

For where the golden ore doth buried lie,
The ground, undecked with nature's tapestry,
Seems barren, sere, unfertile, fruitless, dry;
And where the upper turf of earth doth boast
His pride, perfumes, and particoloured cost,
Delve there, and find this issue and their pride
To spring from ordure and corruption's side.
But, to make up my all too long compare,
These ragged walls no testimony are
What is within; but, like a cloak, doth hide
From weather's waste the under garnished pride.
More gracious than my terms can let thee be,
Entreat thyself to stay awhile with me.

Not only the exquisite grace of this charming last couplet, but the smooth sound strength, the fluency and clarity of the whole passage, may serve to show that the original suggestion of Capell, if (as I think) untenable, was not (we must admit) unpardonable. The very oversight perceptible to any eye and painful to any ear not sealed up by stepdame nature from all perception of pleasure or of pain derivable from good verse or bad—the reckless reiteration of the same rhyme with but one poor couplet intervening—suggests rather the oversight of an unfledged poet than the obtuseness of a full-grown poeticule or poetaster.

But of how many among the servile or semi-servile throng of imitators in every generation may not as much as this be said by tolerant or kindly judges! Among the herd of such diminutives as swarm after the heel or fawn upon the hand of Mr. Tennyson, more than one, more than two or three, have come as close as his poor little viceregal or vice-imperial parasite to the very touch and action of the master's hand which feeds them unawares from his platter as they fawn; as close as this nameless and short-winded satellite to the gesture and the stroke of Shakespeare's. For this also must be noted; that the resemblance here is but of stray words, of single lines, of separable passages. The whole tone of the text, the whole build of the play, the whole scheme of the poem, is far enough from any such resemblance. The structure, the composition, is feeble, incongruous, inadequate, effete. Any student will remark at a first glance what a short-breathed runner, what a broken-winded athlete in the lists of tragic verse, is the indiscoverable author of this play.

There is another point which the Neo-Shakespearean synagogue will by no man be expected to appreciate; for to apprehend it requires some knowledge and some understanding of the poetry of the Shakespearean age—so surely we now should call it, rather than Elizabethan or Jacobean, for the sake of verbal convenience, if not for the sake of literary decency; and such knowledge or understanding no sane man will expect to find in any such quarter. Even in the broad coarse comedy of the period we find here and there the same sweet and simple echoes of the very cradle-song (so to call it) of our drama: so like Shakespeare, they might say who knew nothing of Shakespeare's fellows, that we cannot choose but recognise his hand. Here as always first in the field—the genuine and golden harvest-field of Shakespearean criticism, Charles Lamb has cited a passage from *Green's Tu Quoque* —a comedy miserably misreprinted in Dodsley's Old Plays—on which he observes that "this is so like Shakespeare, that we seem to remember it," being as it is a girl's gentle lamentation over the selfish, exacting, suspicious and trustless love of man, as contrasted with the swift simple surrender of a woman's love at the first heartfelt appeal to her pity —"we seem to remember it," says Lamb, as a speech of Desdemona uttered on a first perception or suspicion of jealousy or alienation in Othello. This lovely passage, if I dare say so in contravention to the authority of Lamb, is indeed as like the manner of Shakespeare as it can be—to eyes ignorant of what his fellows can do; but it is not like the manner of the Shakespeare who wrote *Othello* . This, however, is beside the question. It is very like the Shakespeare who wrote the *Comedy of Errors—Love's Labour's Lost—Romeo and Juliet* . It is so like that had we fallen upon it in any of these plays it would long since have been a household word in all men's mouths for sweetness, truth, simplicity, perfect and instinctive accuracy of touch. It is very much liker the first manner of Shakespeare than any passage in *King Edward III* . And no Sham Shakespearean critic that I know of has yet assigned to the hapless object of his howling homage the authorship of *Green's Tu Quoque* .

Returning to our text, we find in the short speech of the King with which the first act is wound up yet another couplet which has the very ring in it of Shakespeare's early notes—the catch at words rather than play on words which his tripping tongue in youth could never resist:

Countess, albeit my business urgeth me,
It shall attend while I attend on thee.

And with this pretty little instance of courtly and courteous euphuism we pass from the first to the second and most important act in the play.

Any reader well versed in the text of Shakespeare, and ill versed in the work of his early rivals and his later pupils, might surely be forgiven if on a first reading of the speech with which this act opens he should cry out with Capell that here at least was the unformed hand of the Master perceptible and verifiable indeed. The writer, he might say, has the very glance of his eye, the very trick of his gait, the very note of his accent. But on getting a little more knowledge, such a reader will find the use of it in the perception to which he will have attained that in his early plays, as in his two early poems, the style of Shakespeare was not for the most part distinctively his own. It was that of a crew, a knot of young writers, among whom he found at once both leaders and followers to be guided and to guide. A mere glance into the rich lyric literature of the period will suffice to show the dullest eye and teach the densest ear how nearly innumerable were the Englishmen of Elizabeth's time who could sing in the courtly or pastoral key of the season, each man of them a few notes of his own, simple or fantastic, but all sweet, clear, genuine of their kind:—

   Facies non omnibus una,
Nec diversa tamen:

and yet so close is the generic likeness between flower and flower of the same lyrical garden that the first half of the quotation seems but half applicable here. In Bird's, Morley's, Dowland's collections of music with the words appended—in such jewelled volumes as *England's Helicon* and *Davison's Poetical Rhapsody* —their name is Legion, their numbers are numberless. You cannot call them imitators, this man of that, or all of any; they were all of one school, but it was a school without a master or a head. And even so it was with the earliest sect or gathering of dramatic writers in England. Marlowe alone stood apart and above them all—the young Shakespeare among the rest; but among these we cannot count, we cannot guess, how many were wellnigh as competent as he to continue the fluent rhyme, to prolong the facile echo, of Greene and Peele, their first and most famous leaders.

No more docile or capable pupil could have been desired by any master in any art than the author of *David and Bethsabe* has found in the writer of this second act. He has indeed surpassed his model, if not in grace and sweetness, yet in taste or tact of expression, in continuity and equality of style. Vigour is not the principal note of his manner, but compared with the soft effusive ebullience of his master's we may fairly call it vigorous and condensed. But all this merit or demerit is matter of mere language only. The poet—a very pretty poet in his way, and doubtless capable of gracious work enough in the idyllic or elegiac line of business—shows about as much capacity to grasp and handle the fine intimacies of character and the large issues of circumstance to any tragic or dramatic purpose, as might be expected from an idyllic or elegiac poet who should suddenly assume the buskin of tragedy. Let us suppose that Moschus, for example, on the strength of having written a sweeter elegy than ever before was chanted over the untimely grave of a friend and fellow-singer, had said within himself, "Go to, I will be Sophocles"; can we imagine that the tragic result would have been other than tragical indeed for the credit of his gentle name, and comical indeed for all who might have envied the mild and modest excellence which fashion or hypocrisy might for years have induced them to besprinkle with the froth and slaver of their promiscuous and pointless adulation?

As the play is not more generally known than it deserves to be,—or perhaps we may say it is somewhat less known, though its claim to general notice is faint indeed compared with that of many a poem of its age familiar only to special students in our own—I will transcribe a few passages to show how far the writer could reach at his best; leaving for others to indicate how far short of that not inaccessible point he is too generally content to fall and to remain.

The opening speech is spoken by one Lodowick, a parasite of the King's; who would appear, like François Villon under the roof of his Fat Madge, to have succeeded in reconciling the professional duties—may I not say, the generally discordant and discrepant offices?—of a poet and a pimp.

I might perceive his eye in her eye lost,
His ear to drink her sweet tongue's utterance;
And changing passion, like inconstant clouds,
That, rackt upon the carriage of the winds,
Increase, and die, in his disturbèd cheeks.
Lo, when she blushed, even then did he look pale;
As if her cheeks by some enchanted power
Attracted had the cherry blood from his: {245a}
Anon, with reverent fear when she grew pale,
His cheeks put on their scarlet ornaments;

But no more like her oriental red
Than brick to coral, or live things to dead. {245b}
Why did he then thus counterfeit her looks?
If she did blush, ’twas tender modest shame,
Being in the sacred presence of a king;
If he did blush, ’twas red immodest shame
To vail his eyes amiss, being a king;
If she looked pale, ’twas silly woman’s fear
To bear herself in presence of a king;
If he looked pale, it was with guilty fear
To dote amiss, being a mighty king.

This is better than the insufferable style of *Locrine* , which is in great part made up of such rhymeless couplets, each tagged with an empty verbal antithesis; but taken as a sample of dramatic writing, it is but just better than what is utterly intolerable. Dogberry has defined it exactly; it is most tolerable—and not to be endured.

The following speech of King Edward is in that better style of which the author’s two chief models were not at their best incapable for awhile under the influence and guidance (we may suppose) of their friend Marlowe.

She is grown more fairer far since I came hither;
Her voice more silver every word than other,
Her wit more fluent. What a strange discourse
Unfolded she of David and his Scots!
Even thus , quoth she, *he spake* —and then spake broad,
With epithets and accents of the Scot;
But somewhat better than the Scot could speak:
And thus , quoth she—and answered then herself;
For who could speak like her? but she herself
Breathes from the wall an angel’s note from heaven
Of sweet defiance to her barbarous foes.
When she would talk of peace, methinks her tongue
Commanded war to prison;   when of war,
It wakened Cæsar from his Roman grave
To hear war beautified by her discourse.
Wisdom is foolishness, but in her tongue;
Beauty a slander, but in her fair face;

There is no summer but in her cheerful looks,
Nor frosty winter but in her disdain.
I cannot blame the Scots that did besiege her,
For she is all the treasure of our land;
But call them cowards that they ran away,
Having so rich and fair a cause to stay.

But if for a moment we may fancy that here and there we have caught such an echo of Marlowe as may have fallen from the lips of Shakespeare in his salad days, in his period of poetic pupilage, we have but a very little way to go forward before we come upon indisputable proof that the pupil was one of feebler hand and fainter voice than Shakespeare. Let us take the passage on poetry, beginning—

Now, Lodowick, invocate some golden Muse
To bring thee hither an enchanted pen;

and so forth. No scholar in English poetry but will recognise at once the flat and futile imitation of Marlowe; not of his great general style alone, but of one special and transcendant passage which can never be too often quoted.

If all the pens that ever poets held
Had fed the feeling of their masters' thoughts,
And every sweetness that inspired their hearts,
Their minds, and muses on admirèd themes;
If all the heavenly quintessence they still
From their immortal flowers of poesy,
Wherein, as in a mirror, we perceive
The highest reaches of a human wit;
If these had made one poem's period,
And all combined in beauty's worthiness,
Yet should there hover in their restless heads
One thought, one grace, one wonder, at the least,
Which into words no virtue can digest.

Infinite as is the distance between the long roll of these mighty lines and the thin tinkle of their feeble imitator's, yet we cannot choose but catch the ineffectual note of a would-be echo in the speech of the King to his parasite—

For so much moving hath a poet's pen, etc., *etc.*

It is really not worth while to transcribe the poor meagre versicles at length: but a glance at the text will show how much fitter was their author to continue the tradition of Peele than to emulate the innovations of Marlowe. In the speeches that follow there is much pretty verbiage after the general manner of Elizabethan sonnetteers, touched here and there with something of a higher tone; but the whole scene drags, flags, halts onward at such a languid rate, that to pick out all the prettiest lines by way of sample would give a favourable impression but too likely to be reversed on further and fuller acquaintance.

Forget not to set down, how passionate,
How heart-sick, and how full of languishment,
Her beauty makes me. . . . . .
Write on, while I peruse her in my thoughts.
Her voice to music, or the nightingale:
To music every summer-leaping swain
Compares his sunburnt lover when she speaks;
And why should I speak of the nightingale?
The nightingale sings of adulterate wrong;
And that, compared, is too satirical:
For sin, though sin, would not be so esteemed;
But rather virtue sin, sin virtue deemed.
Her hair, far softer than the silkworm's twist,
Like as a flattering glass, doth make more fair
The yellow amber:—*Like a flattering glass*
Comes in too soon; for, writing of her eyes,
I'll say that like a glass they catch the sun,
And thence the hot reflection doth rebound
Against my breast, and burns the heart within.
Ah, what a world of descant makes my soul
Upon this voluntary ground of love!

"Pretty enough, very pretty! but" exactly as like and as near the style of Shakespeare's early plays as is the style of Constable's sonnets to that of Shakespeare's. Unless we are to assign to the Master every unaccredited song, sonnet, elegy, tragedy, comedy, and farce of his period, which bears the same marks of the same date—a date, like our own, of too prolific and imitative production—as we find inscribed on the greater part of his own early work;

unless we are to carry even as far as this the audacity and arrogance of our sciolism, we must somewhere make a halt—and it must be on the near side of such an attribution as that of *King Edward III* . to the hand of Shakespeare.

With the disappearance of the poetic pimp and the entrance of the unsuspecting Countess, the style rises yet again—and really, this time, much to the author's credit. It would need a very fine touch from a very powerful hand to improve on the delicacy and dexterity of the prelude or overture to the King's avowal of adulterous love. But when all is said, though very delicate and very dexterous, it is not forcible work: I do not mean by forcible the same as violent, spasmodic, emphatic beyond the modesty of nature; a poet is of course only to be commended, and that heartily, for keeping within this bound; but he is not to be commended for coming short of it. This whole scene is full of mild and temperate beauty, of fanciful yet earnest simplicity; but the note of it, the expression, the dominant key of the style, is less appropriate to the utterance of a deep and deadly passion than—at the utmost—of what modern tongues might call a strong and rather dangerous flirtation. Passion, so to speak, is quite out of this writer's call; the depths and heights of manly as of womanly emotion are alike beyond his reach.

Thought and affliction, passion, hell itself,
He turns to favour and to prettiness.

"To favour and to prettiness"; the definition of his utmost merit and demerit, his final achievement and shortcoming, is here complete and exact. Witness the sweet quiet example of idyllic work which I extract from a scene beginning in the regular amœbæan style of ancient pastoral.

Edward . Thou hear'st me say that I do dote on thee.

Countess . If on my beauty, take it if thou canst;
Though little, I do prize it ten times less:
If on my virtue, take it if thou canst;
For virtue's store by giving doth augment:
Be it on what it will that I can give
And thou canst take away, inherit it.

Edward . It is thy beauty that I would enjoy.

Countess . O, were it painted, I would wipe it off,

And dispossess myself to give it thee:
But, sovereign, it is soldered to my life;
Take one and both; for like an humble shadow
It haunts the sunshine of my summer's life.

Edward . But thou mayst lend it me to sport withal.

Countess . As easy may my intellectual soul
Be lent away, and yet my body live,
As lend my body, palace to my soul,
Away from her, and yet retain my soul.
My body is her bower, her court, her abbey,
And she an angel, pure, divine, unspotted;
If I should lend her house, my lord, to thee,
I kill my poor soul, and my poor soul me.

Once more, this last couplet is very much in the style of Shakespeare's sonnets; nor is it wholly unlike even the dramatic style of Shakespeare in his youth—and some dozen other poets or poeticules of the time. But throughout this part of the play the recurrence of a faint and intermittent resemblance to Shakespeare is more frequently noticeable than elsewhere. A student of imperfect memory but not of defective intuition might pardonably assign such couplets, on hearing them cited, to the master-hand itself; but such a student would be likelier to refer them to the sonnetteer than to the dramatist. And a casual likeness to the style of Shakespeare's sonnets is not exactly sufficient evidence to warrant such an otherwise unwarrantable addition of appendage to the list of Shakespeare's plays.

A little further on we come upon the first and last passage which does actually recall by its wording a famous instance of the full and ripened style of Shakespeare.

He that doth clip or counterfeit your stamp
Shall die, my lord: and will your sacred self
Commit high treason 'gainst the King of heaven,
To stamp his image in forbidden metal,
Forgetting your allegiance and your oath?
In violating marriage' sacred law
You break a greater honour than yourself;

To be a king is of a younger house
Than to be married: your progenitor,
Sole reigning Adam on the universe,
By God was honoured for a married man,
But not by him anointed for a king.

Every possible reader, I suppose, will at once bethink himself of the famous passage in *Measure for Measure* which here may seem to be faintly prefigured:

  It were as good
To pardon him that hath from nature stolen
A man already made, as to remit
Their saucy sweetness, that do coin heaven's image
In stamps that are forbid:

and the very difference of style is not wider than the gulf which gapes between the first style of Shakespeare and the last. But men of Shakespeare's stamp, I venture to think, do not thus repeat themselves. The echo of the passage in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* , describing the girlish friendship of Hermia and Helena, which we find in the first act of *The Two Noble Kinsmen* , describing the like girlish friendship of Emilia and Flavina, is an echo of another sort. Both, I need hardly say, are unquestionably Shakespeare's; but the fashion in which the matured poet retouches and completes the sketch of his earlier years—composes an oil painting, as it were, from the hints and suggestions of a water-colour sketch long since designed and long since half forgotten—is essentially different from the mere verbal and literal trick of repetition which sciolists might think to detect in the present instance. Again we must needs fall back on the inevitable and indefinable test of style; a test which could be of no avail if we were foolish enough to appeal to scholiasts and their attendant dunces, but which should be of some avail if we appeal to experts and their attentive scholars; and by this test we can but remark that neither the passage in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* nor the corresponsive passage in *The Two Noble Kinsmen* could have been written by any hand known to us but Shakespeare's; whereas the passage in *King Edward III* . might as certainly have been written by any one out of a dozen poets then living as the answering passage in *Measure for Measure* could assuredly have been written by Shakespeare alone.

As on a first reading of the *Hippolytus* of Euripides we feel that, for all the grace and freshness and lyric charm of its opening scenes, the claim of the poem to our ultimate approval or disapproval must needs depend on the success or failure of the first interview between Theseus and his calumniated son; and as on finding that scene to be feeble and futile and prosaic and verbose we feel that the poet who had a woman's spite against women has here effectually and finally shown himself powerless to handle the simplest elements of masculine passion, of manly character and instinct; so in this less important case we feel that the writer, having ventured on such a subject as the compulsory temptation of a daughter by a father, who has been entrapped into so shameful an undertaking through the treacherous exaction of an equivocal promise unwarily confirmed by an inconsiderate oath, must be judged by the result of his own enterprise; must fail or stand as a poet by its failure or success. And his failure is only not complete; he is but just redeemed from utter discomfiture by the fluency and simplicity of his equable but inadequate style. Here as before we find plentiful examples of the gracefully conventional tone current among the lesser writers of the hour.

Warwick . How shall I enter on this graceless errand?
I must not call her child; for where's the father
That will in such a suit seduce his child?
Then, *Wife of Salisbury* ;—shall I so begin?
No, he's my friend; and where is found the friend
That will do friendship such endamagement?—
Neither my daughter, nor my dear friend's wife,
I am not Warwick, as thou think'st I am,
But an attorney from the court of hell;
That thus have housed my spirit in his form
To do a message to thee from the king.

This beginning is fair enough, if not specially fruitful in promise; but the verses following are of the flattest order of commonplace. Hay and grass and the spear of Achilles—of which tradition

the moral is,
What mighty men misdo, they can amend—

these are the fresh and original types on which our little poet is compelled to fall back for support and illustration to a scene so full of terrible suggestion and pathetic possibility.

The king will in his glory hide thy shame;
And those that gaze on him to find out thee
Will lose their eyesight, looking on the sun.
What can one drop of poison harm the sea,
Whose hugy vastures can digest the ill
And make it lose its operation?

And so forth, and so forth; *ad libitum* if not *ad nauseam* . Let us take but one or two more instances of the better sort.

Countess . Unnatural besiege! Woe me unhappy,
To have escaped the danger of my foes,
And to be ten times worse invir’d by friends!

(Here we come upon two more words unknown to Shakespeare; *besiege* , as a noun substantive, and *invired* for *environed* .)

Hath he no means to stain my honest blood
But to corrupt the author of my blood
To be his scandalous and vile soliciter?
No marvel though the branches be infected,
When poison hath encompassèd the roots;
No marvel though the leprous infant die,
When the stern dam envenometh the dug.
Why then, give sin a passport to offend,
And youth the dangerous rein of liberty;
Blot out the strict forbidding of the law;
And cancel every canon that prescribes
A shame for shame or penance for offence.
No, let me die, if his too boisterous will
Will have it so, before I will consent
To be an actor in his graceless lust.

Warwick . Why, now thou speak’st as I would have thee speak;
And mark how I unsay my words again.
An honourable grave is more esteemed
Than the polluted closet of a king;
The greater man, the greater is the thing,
Be it good or bad, that he shall undertake;

An unreputed mote, flying in the sun,
Presents a greater substance than it is;
The freshest summer's day doth soonest taint
The loathèd carrion that it seems to kiss;
Deep are the blows made with a mighty axe;
That sin doth ten times aggravate itself
That is committed in a holy place;
An evil deed, done by authority,
Is sin, and subornation: Deck an ape
In tissue, and the beauty of the robe
Adds but the greater scorn unto the beast.

(Here are four passably good lines, which vaguely remind the reader of something better read elsewhere; a common case enough with the more tolerable work of small imitative poets.)

A spacious field of reasons could I urge
Between his glory, daughter, and thy shame:
That poison shows worst in a golden cup;
Dark night seems darker by the lightning flash;
Lilies that fester smell far worse than weeds ;
And every glory that inclines to sin,
The shame is treble by the opposite.
So leave I, with my blessing in thy bosom;
Which then convert to a most heavy curse,
When thou convert'st from honour's golden name
To the black faction of bed-blotting shame! [*Exit* .

Countess . I'll follow thee:—And when my mind turns so,
My body sink my soul in endless woe! [*Exit* .

So much for the central and crowning scene, the test, the climax, the hinge on which the first part of this play turns; and seems to me, in turning, to emit but a feeble and rusty squeak. No probable reader will need to be reminded that the line which I have perhaps unnecessarily italicised appears also as the last verse in the ninety-fourth of those "sugared sonnets" which we know were in circulation about the time of this play's first appearance among Shakespeare's "private friends"; in other words, which enjoyed such a kind of public privacy or private publicity as one or two among the most eminent English poets of our own day have occasionally chosen for some part of their work, to screen it for awhile as under the shelter and the shade of crepuscular laurels, till ripe for the sunshine or the storm of public judgment. In the present case, this debatable verse looks to me more like a loan or maybe a theft from Shakespeare's private store of undramatic poetry than a misapplication by its own author to dramatic purposes of a line too apt and exquisite to endure without injury the transference from its original setting.

The scene ensuing winds up the first part of this composite (or rather, in one sense of the word, incomposite) poem. It may, on the whole, be classed as something more than passably good: it is elegant, lively, even spirited in style; showing at all events a marked advance upon the scene which I have already stigmatised as a failure—that which attempts to render the interview between Warwick and the King. It is hardly, however, I should say, above the highest reach of Greene or Peele at the smoothest and straightest of his flight. At its opening, indeed, we come upon a line which inevitably recalls one of the finest touches in a much later and deservedly more popular historical drama. On being informed by Derby that

The king is in his closet, malcontent,
For what I know not, but he gave in charge,
Till after dinner, none should interrupt him;
The Countess Salisbury, and her father Warwick.
Artois, and all, look underneath the brows;

on receiving, I say, this ominous intimation, the prompt and statesmanlike sagacity of Audley leads him at once as by intuition to the inference thus eloquently expressed in a strain of thrilling and exalted poetry;

Undoubtedly, then something is amiss.

Who can read this without a reminiscence of Sir Christopher Hatton's characteristically cautious conclusion at sight of the military preparations arrayed against the immediate advent of the Armada?

I cannot but surmise—forgive, my friend,
If the conjecture's rash—I cannot but
Surmise the state some danger apprehends!

With the entrance of the King the tone of this scene naturally rises—"in good time," as most readers will say. His brief interview with the two nobles has at least the merit of ease and animation.

Derby . Befall my sovereign all my sovereign's wish!

Edward . Ah, that thou wert a witch, to make it so!

Derby . The emperor greeteth you.

Edward . Would it were the countess!

Derby . And hath accorded to your highness' suit.

Edward . Thou liest, she hath not: But I would she had!

Audley . All love and duty to my lord the king!

Edward. *Well, all but one is none* :—What news with you?

Audley . I have, my liege, levied those horse and foot,
According to your charge, and brought them hither.

Edward . Then let those foot trudge hence upon those horse
According to their discharge, and begone.—

Derby . I'll look upon the countess' mind
Anon.

Derby . The countess' mind, my liege?

Edward . I mean, the emperor:—Leave me alone.

Audley . What's in his mind?

Derby . Let's leave him to his humour.

[*Exeunt* DERBY and AUDLEY

Edward . Thus from the heart's abundance speaks the tongue
Countess for emperor: And indeed, why not?
She is as *imperator* over me;

And I to her
Am as a kneeling vassal, that observes
The pleasure or displeasure of her eye.

In this little scene there is perhaps on the whole more general likeness to Shakespeare’s earliest manner than we can trace in any other passage of the play. But how much of Shakespeare’s earliest manner may be accounted the special and exclusive property of Shakespeare?

After this dismissal of the two nobles, the pimping poeticule, Villon manqué or (whom shall we call him?) réussi, reappears with a message to Cæsar (as the King is pleased to style himself) from “the more than Cleopatra’s match” (as he designates the Countess), to intimate that “ere night she will resolve his majesty.” Hereupon an unseasonable “drum within” provokes Edward to the following remonstrance:

What drum is this, that thunders forth this march,
To start the tender Cupid in my bosom?
Poor sheepskin, how it brawls with him that beateth it!
Go, break the thundering parchment bottom out,
And I will teach it to conduct sweet lines

(“That’s bad; *conduct sweet lines* is bad.”)

Unto the bosom of a heavenly nymph:
For I will use it as my writing paper;
And so reduce him, from a scolding drum,
To be the herald, and dear counsel-bearer,
Betwixt a goddess and a mighty king.
Go, bid the drummer learn to touch the lute,
Or hang him in the braces of his drum;
For now we think it an uncivil thing
To trouble heaven with such harsh resounds.
Away! [*Exit* Lodowick.
The quarrel that I have requires no arms
But these of mine; and these shall meet my foe
In a deep march of penetrable groans;

My eyes shall be my arrows; and my sighs
Shall serve me as the vantage of the wind
To whirl away my sweet'st artillery:
Ah, but, alas, she wins the sun of me,
For that is she herself; and thence it comes
That poets term the wanton warrior blind;
But love hath eyes as judgment to his steps,
Till too much lovèd glory dazzles them.

Hereupon Lodowick introduces the Black Prince (that is to be), and “retires to the door.” The following scene opens well, with a tone of frank and direct simplicity.

Edward . I see the boy. O, how his mother’s face,
Moulded in his, corrects my strayed desire,
And rates my heart, and chides my thievish eye;
Who, being rich enough in seeing her,
Yet seeks elsewhere: and basest theft is that
Which cannot check itself on poverty.—
Now, boy, what news?

Prince . I have assembled, my dear lord and father,
The choicest buds of all our English blood,
For our affairs in France; and here we come
To take direction from your majesty.

Edward . Still do I see in him delineate
His mother’s visage; those his eyes are hers,
Who, looking wistly {262a} on me, made me blush;
For faults against themselves give evidence:
Lust is a fire; and men, like lanterns, show
Light lust within themselves even through themselves.
Away, loose silks of wavering vanity!
Shall the large limit of fair Brittany {262b}
By me be overthrown? and shall I not
Master this little mansion of myself?
Give me an armour of eternal steel;
I go to conquer kings. And shall I then
Subdue myself, and be my enemy’s friend?

It must not be.—Come, boy, forward, advance!
Let's with our colours sweep the air of France.

Here Lodowick announces the approach of the Countess "with a smiling cheer."

Edward . Why, there it goes! that very smile of hers
Hath ransomed captive France; and set the king,
The dauphin, and the peers, at liberty.—
Go, leave me, Ned, and revel with thy friends. [*Exit* PRINCE.
Thy mother is but black; and thou, like her,
Dost put into my mind how foul she is.
Go, fetch the countess hither in thy hand,
And let her chase away these winter clouds;
For she gives beauty both to heaven and earth. [*Exit* LODOWICK.
The sin is more, to hack and hew poor men,
Than to embrace in an unlawful bed
The register of all rarieties {263a}
Since leathern Adam till this youngest hour.

Re-enter LODOWICK *with the* COUNTESS.

Go, Lodowick, put thy hand into my purse,
Play, spend, give, riot, waste; do what thou wilt,
So thou wilt hence awhile, and leave me here. [*Exit* LODOWICK.

Having already, out of a desire and determination to do no possible injustice to the actual merits of this play in the eyes of any reader who might never have gone over the text on which I had to comment, exceeded in no small degree the limits I had intended to impose upon my task in the way of citation, I shall not give so full a transcript from the next and last scene between the Countess and the King.

Edward . Now, my soul's playfellow! art thou come
To speak the more than heavenly word of yea
To my objection in thy beauteous love?

(Again, this singular use of the word *objection* in the sense of offer or proposal has no parallel in the plays of Shakespeare.)

Countess . My father on his blessing hath commanded—

Edward . That thou shalt yield to me.

Countess . Ay, dear my liege, your due.

Edward . And that, my dearest love, can be no less
Than right for right, and render {263b} love for love.

Countess . Than wrong for wrong, and endless hate for hate.
But, sith I see your majesty so bent,
That my unwillingness, my husband's love,
Your high estate, nor no respect respected,
Can be my help, but that your mightiness
Will overbear and awe these dear regards,
I bind my discontent to my content,
And what I would not I'll compel I will;
Provided that yourself remove those lets
That stand between your highness' love and mine.

Edward . Name them, fair countess, and by heaven I will.

Countess . It is their lives that stand between our love
That I would have choked up, my sovereign.

Edward . Whose lives, my lady?

Countess . My thrice loving liege,
Your queen, and Salisbury my wedded husband;
Who living have that title in our love
That we can not bestow but by their death.

Edward . Thy opposition {264a} is beyond our law.

Countess . So is your desire: If the law {264b}
Can hinder you to execute the one,
Let it forbid you to attempt the other:
I cannot think you love me as you say
Unless you do make good what you have sworn.

Edward . No more: thy husband and the queen shall die.
Fairer thou art by far than Hero was;

Beardless Leander not so strong as I:
He swom an easy current for his love;
But I will, through a helly spout of blood, {264c}
Arrive that Sestos where my Hero lies.

Countess . Nay, you'll do more; you'll make the river too
With their heartbloods that keep our love asunder;
Of which my husband and your wife are twain.

Edward . Thy beauty makes them guilty of their death
And gives in evidence that they shall die;
Upon which verdict I their judge condemn them.

Countess . O perjured beauty! more corrupted judge!
When, to the great star-chamber o'er our heads,
The universal sessions calls to count
This packing evil, we both shall tremble for it.

Edward . What says my fair love? is she resolute?

Countess . Resolute to be dissolved: and, therefore, this:
Keep but thy word, great king, and I am thine.
Stand where thou dost; I'll part a little from thee;
And see how I will yield me to thy hands.
Here by my side do hang my wedding knives;
Take thou the one, and with it kill thy queen,
And learn by me to find her where she lies;
And with the other I'll despatch my love,
Which now lies fast asleep within my heart:
When they are gone, then I'll consent to love.

Such genuinely good wine as this needs no bush. But from this point onwards I can find nothing especially commendable in the remainder of the scene except its brevity. The King of course abjures his purpose, and of course compares the Countess with Lucretia to the disadvantage of the Roman matron; summons his son, Warwick, and the attendant lords; appoints each man his post by sea or land; and starts for Flanders in a duly moral and military state of mind.

Here ends the first part of the play; and with it all possible indication, though never so shadowy, of the possible shadowy presence of Shakespeare. At the opening of the third act we are thrown among a wholly new set of characters and events, all utterly out of all harmony and keeping with all that has gone before. Edward alone survives as nominal protagonist; but this survival—assuredly not of the fittest—is merely the survival of the shadow of a name. Anything more pitifully crude and feeble, more helplessly inartistic and incomposite, than this process or pretence of juncture where there is no juncture, this infantine shifting and shuffling of the scenes and figures, it is impossible to find among the rudest and weakest attempts of the dawning or declining drama in its first or second childhood.

It is the less necessary to analyse at any length the three remaining acts of this play, that the work has already been done to my hand, and well done, by Charles Knight; who, though no professed critic or esoteric expert in Shakespearean letters, approved himself by dint of sheer honesty and conscience not unworthy of a considerate hearing. To his edition of Shakespeare I therefore refer all readers desirous of further excerpts than I care to give.

The first scene of the third act is a storehouse of contemporary commonplace. Nothing fresher than such stale pot-pourri as the following is to be gathered up in thin sprinklings from off the dry flat soil. A messenger informs the French king that he has descried off shore

The proud armado (*sic*) of King Edward's ships;
Which at the first, far off when I did ken,
Seemed as it were a grove of withered pines;
But, drawing on, their glorious bright aspect,
Their streaming ensigns wrought of coloured silk,
Like to a meadow full of sundry flowers,
Adorns the naked bosom of the earth;

and so on after the exactest and therefore feeblest fashion of the Pre-Marlowites; with equal regard, as may be seen, for grammar and for sense in the construction of his periods. The narrative of a sea-fight ensuing on this is pitiable beyond pity and contemptibly beneath contempt.

In the next scene we have a flying view of peasants in flight, with a description of five cities on fire not undeserving of its place in the play, immediately after the preceding sea-piece: but relieved by such wealth of pleasantry as marks the following jest, in which the most purblind eye will be the quickest to discover a touch of the genuine Shakespearean humour.

1st Frenchman . What, is it quarter-day, that you remove,
And carry bag and baggage too?

2nd Frenchman . Quarter-day? ay, and quartering-day, I fear.
Euge !

The scene of debate before Cressy is equally flat and futile, vulgar and verbose; yet in this Sham Shakespearean scene of our present poeticule's I have noted one genuine Shakespearean word, "solely singular for its singleness."

So may thy temples with Bellona's hand
Be still adorned with laurel victory!

In this notably inelegant expression of goodwill we find the same use of the word "laurel" as an adjective and epithet of victory which thus confronts us in the penultimate speech of the third scene in the first act of *Antony and Cleopatra* .

Upon your sword
Sit laurel victory, and smooth success
Be strewed before your feet!

There is something more (as less there could not be) of spirit and movement in the battle-scene where Edward refuses to send relief to his son, wishing the prince to win his spurs unaided, and earn the first-fruits of his fame single-handed against the heaviest odds; but the forcible feebleness of a minor poet's fancy shows itself amusingly in the mock stoicism and braggart philosophy of the King's reassuring reflection, "We have more sons than one."

In the first and third scenes of the fourth act we may concede some slight merit to the picture of a chivalrous emulation in magnanimity between the Duke of Burgundy and his former fellow-student, whose refusal to break his parole as a prisoner extorts from his friend the concession refused to his importunity as an envoy: but the execution is by no means worthy of the subject.

The limp loquacity of long-winded rhetoric, so natural to men and soldiers in an hour of emergency, which distinguishes the dialogue between the Black Prince and Audley on the verge of battle, is relieved by this one last touch of quasi-Shakespearean thought or style discoverable in the play of which I must presently take a short—and a long—farewell.

Death’s name is much more mighty than his deeds:
Thy parcelling this power hath made it more.
As many sands as these my hands can hold
Are but my handful of so many sands;
Then all the world—and call it but a power—
Easily ta’en up, and quickly thrown away;
But if I stand to count them sand by sand
The number would confound my memory
And make a thousand millions of a task
Which briefly is no more indeed than one.
These quartered squadrons and these regiments
Before, behind us, and on either hand,
Are but a power: When we name a man,
His hand, his foot, his head, have several strengths;
And being all but one self instant strength,
Why, all this many, Audley, is but one,
And we can call it all but one man’s strength.
He that hath far to go tells it by miles;
If he should tell the steps, it kills his heart:
The drops are infinite that make a flood,
And yet, thou know’st, we call it but a rain.
There is but one France, one king of France,
That France hath no more kings; and that same king
Hath but the puissant legion of one king;
And we have one: Then apprehend no odds;
For one to one is fair equality.

Bien coupé, mal cousu ; such is the most favourable verdict I can pass on this voluminous effusion of a spirit smacking rather of the schools than of the field. The first six lines or so might pass muster as the early handiwork of Shakespeare; the rest has as little of his manner as his matter, his metre as his style.

The poet can hardly be said to rise again after this calamitous collapse. We find in the rest of this scene nothing better worth remark than such poor catches at a word as this;

And let those milkwhite messengers of time
Show thy time's learning in this dangerous time;

a villainous trick of verbiage which went nigh now and then to affect the adolescent style of Shakespeare, and which happens to find itself as admirably as unconsciously burlesqued in two lines of this very scene:

I will not give a penny for a life,
Nor half a halfpenny to shun grim death.

The verses intervening are smooth, simple, and passably well worded; indeed the force of elegant commonplace cannot well go further than in such lines as these.

Thyself art bruised and bent with many broils,
And stratagems forepast with iron pens
Are texèd in thine honourable face;
Thou art a married man in this distress,
But danger woos me as a blushing maid;
Teach me an answer to this perilous time.

Audley . To die is all as common as to live;
The one in choice, the other holds in chase;
For from the instant we begin to live
We do pursue and hunt the time to die:
First bud we, then we blow, and after seed;
Then presently we fall; and as a shade
Follows the body, so we follow death.
If then we hunt for death, why do we fear it?
If we fear it, why do we follow it?

(Let me intimate a doubt in passing, whether Shakespeare would ever have put by the mouth of any but a farcical mask a query so provocative of response from an Irish echo—"Because we can't help.")

If we do fear, with fear we do but aid
The thing we fear to seize on us the sooner;

If we fear not, then no resolvèd proffer
Can overthrow the limit of our fate:

and so forth. Again the hastiest reader will have been reminded of a passage in the transcendant central scenes of *Measure for Measure* :

        Merely, thou art death's fool;
For him thou labour'st by thy flight to shun,
And yet runn'st toward him still;

and hence also some may infer that this pitiful penny-whistle was blown by the same breath which in time gained power to fill that archangelic trumpet. Credat Zoilus Shakespearomastix, non ego.

The next scene is something better than passable, but demands no special analysis and affords no necessary extract. We may just observe as examples of style the play on words between the flight of hovering ravens and the flight of routed soldiers, and the description of the sudden fog

Which now hath hid the airy floor of heaven,
And made at noon a night unnatural
Upon the quaking and dismayèd world.

The interest rises again with the reappearance and release of Salisbury, and lifts the style for a moment to its own level. *À tout seigneur tout honneur* ; the author deserves some dole of moderate approbation for his tribute to the national chivalry of a Frenchman as here exemplified in the person of Prince Charles.

Of the two next scenes, in which the battle of Poitiers is so inadequately "staged to the show," I can only say that if any reader believes them to be the possible work of the same hand which set before all men's eyes for all time the field of Agincourt, he will doubtless die in that belief, and go to his own place in the limbo of commentators.

But a yet more flagrant effect of contrast is thrust upon our notice at the opening of the fifth act. If in all the historical groundwork of this play there is one point of attraction which we might have thought certain to stimulate the utmost enterprise and evoke the utmost capacities of an aspiring dramatist, it must surely be sought in the crowning scene of the story; in the scene of Queen Philippa's intercession for the burgesses of Calais. We know how Shakespeare on the like occasion was wont to transmute into golden verse the silver speech supplied to him by North's version of Amyot's Plutarch.   With the text of Lord Berners before him, the author of *King Edward III* . has given us for the gold of Froissart not even adulterated copper, but unadulterated lead. Incredible as it may seem to readers of the historian, the poeticule has actually contrived so far to transfigure by dint of disfiguring him that this most noble and pathetic scene in all the annals of chivalry, when passed through the alembic of his incompetence, appears in a garb of transforming verse under a guise at once weak and wordy, coarse and unchivalrous. The whole scene is at all points alike in its unlikeness to the workmanship of Shakespeare.

Here then I think we may finally draw bridle: for the rest of the course is not worth running; there is nothing in the residue of this last act which deserves analysis or calls for commentary. We have now examined the whole main body of the work with somewhat more than necessary care; and our conclusion is simply this: that if any man of common reading, common modesty, common judgment, and common sense, can be found to maintain the theory of Shakespeare's possible partnership in the composition of this play, such a man will assuredly admit that the only discernible or imaginable touches of his hand are very slight, very few, and very early. For myself, I am and have always been perfectly satisfied with one single and simple piece of evidence that Shakespeare had not a finger in the concoction of *King Edward III* . He was the author of *King Henry V* .

<<span id="filepos0037780646"> a>NOTE.

I was not surprised to hear that my essay on the historical play of King Edward III. had on its first appearance met in various quarters with assailants of various kinds. There are some forms of attack to which no answer is possible for a man of any human self-respect but the lifelong silence of contemptuous disgust. To such as these I will never condescend to advert or to allude further than by the remark now as it were forced from me, that never once in my life have I had or will I have recourse in self-defence either to the blackguard's loaded bludgeon of personalities or to the dastard's sheathed dagger of disguise. I have reviled no man's person: I have outraged no man's privacy. When I have found myself misled either by imperfection of knowledge or of memory, or by too much confidence in a generally trustworthy guide, I have silently corrected the misquotation or readily repaired the error. To the successive and representative heroes of the undying Dunciad I have left and will always leave the foul use of their own foul weapons. I have spoken freely and fearlessly, and so shall on all occasions continue to speak, of what I find to be worthy of praise or dispraise, contempt or honour, in the public works and actions of men. Here ends and here has always ended in literary matters the proper province of a gentleman; beyond it, though sometimes intruded on in time past by trespassers of a nobler race, begins the proper province of a blackguard.

<<span id="filepos0037782481"> a>REPORT ON THE PROCEEDINGS ON THE FIRST ANNIVERSARY SESSION OF THE NEWEST SHAKESPEARE SOCIETY.

A paper was read by Mr. A. on the disputed authorship of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* . He was decidedly of opinion that this play was to be ascribed to George Chapman. He based this opinion principally on the ground of style. From its similarity of subject he had at first been disposed to assign it to Cyril Tourneur, author of *The Revenger's Tragedy* ; and he had drawn up in support of this theory a series of parallel passages extracted from the speeches of Vindice in that drama and of Oberon in the present play. He pointed out however that the character of Puck could hardly have been the work of any English poet but the author of *Bussy d'Ambois* . There was here likewise that gravity and condensation of thought conveyed through the medium of the "full and heightened style" commended by Webster, and that preponderance of philosophic or political discourse over poetic interest and dramatic action for which the author in question had been justly censured.

Some of the audience appearing slightly startled by this remark (indeed it afterwards appeared that the Chairman had been on the point of asking the learned member whether he was not thinking rather of *Love's Labour's Lost* ?), Mr. A. cited the well-known scene in which Oberon discourses with Puck on matters concerning Mary Stuart and Queen Elizabeth, instead of despatching him at once on his immediate errand. This was universally accepted as proof positive, and the reading concluded amid signs of unanimous assent, when

Mr. B. had nothing to urge against the argument they had just heard, but he must remind them that there was a more weighty kind of evidence than that adduced by Mr. A.; and to this he doubted not they would all defer. He could prove by a tabulated statement that the words “to” and “from” occurred on an average from seven to nine times in every play of Chapman; whereas in the play under consideration the word “to” occurred exactly twelve times and the word “from” precisely ten. He was therefore of opinion that the authorship should in all probability be assigned to Anthony Munday.

As nobody present could dispute this conclusion, Mr. C. proceeded to read the argument by which he proposed to establish the fact, hitherto unaccountably overlooked by all preceding commentators, that the character of Romeo was obviously designed as a satire on Lord Burghley. The first and perhaps the strongest evidence in favour of this proposition was the extreme difficulty, he might almost say the utter impossibility, of discovering a single point of likeness between the two characters. This would naturally be the first precaution taken by a poor player who designed to attack an all-powerful Minister. But more direct light was thrown upon the subject by a passage in which “that kind of fruit that maids call medlars when they laugh alone” is mentioned in connection with a wish of Romeo’s regarding his mistress. This must evidently be taken to refer to some recent occasion on which the policy of Lord Burghley (possibly in the matter of the Anjou marriage) had been rebuked in private by the Maiden Queen, “his mistress,” as meddling, laughable, and fruitless.

This discovery seemed to produce a great impression till the Chairman reminded the Society that the play in question was now generally ascribed to George Peele, who was notoriously the solicitor of Lord Burghley’s patronage and the recipient of his bounty. That this poet was the author of *Romeo and Juliet* could no longer be a matter of doubt, as he was confident they would all agree with him on hearing that a living poet of note had positively assured him of the fact; adding that he had always thought so when at school. The plaudits excited by this announcement had scarcely subsided, when the Chairman clenched the matter by observing that he rather thought the same opinion had ultimately been entertained by his own grandmother.

Mr. D. then read a paper on the authorship and the hidden meaning of two contemporary plays which, he must regretfully remark, were too obviously calculated to cast a most unfavourable and even sinister light on the moral character of the new Shakespeare; whose possibly suspicious readiness to attack the vices of others with a view to diverting attention from his own was signally exemplified in the well-known fact that, even while putting on a feint of respect and tenderness for his memory, he had exposed the profligate haunts and habits of Christopher Marlowe under the transparent pseudonym of Christopher Sly. To the first of these plays attention had long since been drawn by a person of whom it was only necessary to say that he had devoted a long life to the study and illustration of Shakespeare and his age, and had actually presumed to publish a well-known edition of the poet at a date previous to the establishment of the present Society. He (Mr. D.) was confident that not another syllable could be necessary to expose that person to the contempt of all present. He proceeded, however, with the kind encouragement of the Chairman, to indulge at that editor's expense in sundry personalities both "loose and humorous," which being totally unfit for publication here are reserved for a private issue of "Loose and Humorous Papers" to be edited, with a running marginal commentary or illustrative and explanatory version of the utmost possible fullness, by the Founder and another member of the Society. To these it might possibly be undesirable for them to attract the notice of the outside world. Reverting therefore to his first subject from various references to the presumed private character, habits, gait, appearance, and bearing of the gentleman in question, Mr. D. observed that the ascription of a share in the *Taming of the Shrew* to William Haughton (hitherto supposed the author of a comedy called *Englishmen for my Money*) implied a doubly discreditable blunder. The real fact, as he would immediately prove, was not that Haughton was joint author with Shakespeare of the *Taming of the Shrew* , but that Shakespeare was joint author with Haughton of *Englishmen for my Money* . He would not enlarge on the obvious fact that Shakespeare, so notorious a plunderer of others, had actually been reduced to steal from his own poor store an image transplanted from the last scene of the third act of *Romeo and Juliet* into the last scene of the third act of *Englishmen for my Money* ; where the well-known and pitiful phrase—"Night's candles are burnt out"—reappears in all its paltry vulgarity as follows;—"Night's candles burn obscure." Ample as was the proof here supplied, he would prefer to rely exclusively upon such further evidence as might be said to lie at once on the surface and in a nutshell.

The second title of this play, by which the first title was in a few years totally superseded, ran thus: *A Woman will have her Will* . Now even in an age of punning titles such as that of a well-known and delightful treatise by Sir John

Harrington, the peculiar fondness of Shakespeare for puns was notorious; but especially for puns on names, as in the proverbial case of Sir Thomas Lucy; and above all for puns on his own Christian name, as in his 135th, 136th, and 143rd sonnets. It must now be but too evident to the meanest intelligence—to the meanest intelligence, he repeated; for to such only did he or would he then and there or ever or anywhere address himself—(loud applause) that the graceless author, more utterly lost to all sense of shame than any Don Juan or other typical libertine of fiction, had come forward to placard by way of self-advertisement on his own stage, and before the very eyes of a Maiden Queen, the scandalous confidence in his own powers of fascination and seduction so cynically expressed in the too easily intelligible vaunt—A Woman will have her Will [Shakespeare]. In the penultimate line of the hundred and forty-third sonnet the very phrase might be said to occur:

So will I pray that thou mayst have thy Will.

Having thus established his case in the first instance to the satisfaction, as he trusted, not only of the present Society, but of any asylum for incurables in any part of the country, the learned member now passed on to the consideration of the allusions at once to Shakespeare and to a celebrated fellow-countryman, fellow-poet, and personal friend of his—Michael Drayton—contained in a play which had been doubtfully attributed to Shakespeare himself by such absurd idiots as looked rather to the poetical and dramatic quality of a poem or a play than to such tests as those to which alone any member of that Society would ever dream of appealing. What these were he need not specify; it was enough to say in recommendation of them that they had rather less to do with any question of dramatic or other poetry than with the differential calculus or the squaring of the circle. It followed that only the most perversely ignorant and æsthetically presumptuous of readers could imagine the possibility of Shakespeare’s concern or partnership in a play which had no more Shakespearean quality about it than mere poetry, mere passion, mere pathos, mere beauty and vigour of thought and language, mere command of dramatic effect, mere depth and subtlety of power to read, interpret, and reproduce the secrets of the heart and spirit. Could any further evidence be required of the unfitness and unworthiness to hold or to utter any opinion on the matter in hand which had consistently been displayed by the poor creatures to whom he had just referred, it would be found, as he felt sure the Founder and all worthy members of their Society would be the first to admit, in the despicable diffidence, the pitiful modesty, the contemptible deficiency in common assurance, with which the suggestion of Shakespeare’s partnership in this play had generally been put forward and backed up. The tragedy of *Arden of Feversham* was indeed connected with Shakespeare—and that, as he should proceed to show, only too intimately; but Shakespeare was not connected with it—that is, in the capacity of its author. In what capacity would be but too evident when he mentioned the names of the two leading ruffians concerned in the murder of the principal character—Black Will and Shakebag. The single original of these two characters he need scarcely pause to point out. It would be observed that a double precaution had been taken against any charge of libel or personal attack which might be brought against the author and supported by the all-powerful court influence of Shakespeare's two principal patrons, the Earls of Essex and Southampton. Two figures were substituted for one, and the unmistakable name of Will Shakebag was cut in half and divided between them. Care had moreover been taken to disguise the person by altering the complexion of the individual aimed at. That the actual Shakespeare was a fair man they had the evidence of the coloured bust at Stratford. Could any capable and fair-minded man—he would appeal to their justly honoured Founder—require further evidence as to the original of Black Will Shakebag? Another important character in the play was Black Will's accomplice and Arden's servant—Michael, after whom the play had also at one time been called *Murderous Michael* . The single fact that Shakespeare and Drayton were both of them Warwickshire men would suffice, he could not doubt, to carry conviction with it to the mind of every member present, with regard to the original of this personage. It now only remained for him to produce the name of the real author of this play. He would do so at once—Ben Jonson. About the time of its production Jonson was notoriously engaged in writing those additions to the *Spanish Tragedy* of which a preposterous attempt had been made to deprive him on the paltry ground that the style (forsooth) of these additional scenes was very like the style of Shakespeare and utterly unlike the style of Jonson. To dispose for ever of this pitiful argument it would be sufficient to mention the names of its two first and principal supporters—Charles Lamb and Samuel Taylor Coleridge (hisses and laughter). Now, in these "adycions to Jeronymo" a painter was introduced complaining of the murder of his son. In the play before them a painter was introduced as an accomplice in the murder of Arden. It was unnecessary to dwell upon so trivial a point of difference as that between the stage employment or the moral character of the one artist and the other. In either case they were as closely as possible connected with a murder. There was a painter in the *Spanish Tragedy* , and there was also a painter in *Arden of Feversham* . He need not—he would not add another word in confirmation of the now established fact, that Ben Jonson had in this play held up to perpetual infamy—whether deserved or undeserved he would not pretend to say—the names of two poets who afterwards became his friends, but whom he had previously gibbeted or at least pilloried in public as Black Will Shakespeare and Murderous Michael Drayton.

Mr. E. then brought forward a subject of singular interest and importance—“The lameness of Shakespeare—was it moral or physical?” He would not insult their intelligence by dwelling on the absurd and exploded hypothesis that this expression was allegorical, but would at once assume that the infirmity in question was physical. Then arose the question—In which leg? He was prepared, on the evidence of an early play, to prove to demonstration that the injured and interesting limb was the left. “This shoe is my father,” says Launce in the *Two Gentlemen of Verona* ; “no, this left shoe is my father; no, no, this left shoe is my mother; nay, that cannot be so neither; yes, it is so, it is so; *it hath the worser sole* .” This passage was not necessary either to the progress of the play or to the development of the character; he believed he was justified in asserting that it was not borrowed from the original novel on which the play was founded; the inference was obvious, that without some personal allusion it must have been as unintelligib1e to the audience as it had hitherto been to the commentators. His conjecture was confirmed, and the whole subject illustrated with a new light, by the well-known line in one of the Sonnets, in which the poet describes himself as “made lame by Fortune’s dearest spite”: a line of which the inner meaning and personal application had also by a remarkable chance been reserved for him (Mr. E.) to discover. There could be no doubt that we had here a clue to the origin of the physical infirmity referred to; an accident which must have befallen Shakespeare in early life while acting at the Fortune theatre, and consequently before his connection with a rival company; a fact of grave importance till now unverified. The epithet “dearest,” like so much else in the Sonnets, was evidently susceptible of a double interpretation. The first and most natural explanation of the term would at once suggest itself; the playhouse would of necessity be dearest to the actor dependent on it for subsistence, as the means of getting his bread; but he thought it not unreasonable to infer from this unmistakable allusion that the entrance fee charged at the Fortune may probably have been higher than the price of seats in any other house. Whether or not this fact, taken in conjunction with the accident already mentioned, should be assumed as the immediate cause of Shakespeare’s subsequent change of service, he was not prepared to pronounce with such positive confidence as they might naturally expect from a member of the Society; but he would take upon himself to affirm that his main thesis was now and for ever established on the most irrefragable evidence, and that no assailant could by any possibility dislodge by so much as a hair’s breadth the least fragment of a single brick in the impregnable structure of proof raised by the argument to which they had just listened.

This demonstration being thus satisfactorily concluded, Mr. F. proceeded to read his paper on the date of *Othello* , and on the various parts of that play respectively assignable to Samuel Rowley, to George Wilkins, and to Robert Daborne. It was evident that the story of Othello and Desdemona was originally quite distinct from that part of the play in which Iago was a leading figure. This he was prepared to show at some length by means of the weak-ending test, the light-ending test, the double-ending test, the triple-ending test, the heavy-monosyllabic-eleventh-syllable-of-the-double-ending test, the run-on-line test, and the central-pause test. Of the partnership of other poets in the play he was able to adduce a simpler but not less cogent proof. A member of their Committee said to an objector lately: “To me, there are the handwritings of four different men, the thoughts and powers of four different men, in the play. If you can’t see them now, you must wait till, by study, you can. I can’t give you eyes.” To this argument he (Mr. F.) felt that it would be an insult to their understandings if he should attempt to add another word. Still, for those who were willing to try and learn, and educate their ears and eyes, he had prepared six tabulated statements—

(At this important point of a most interesting paper, our reporter unhappily became unconscious, and remained for some considerable period in a state of deathlike stupor. On recovering from this total and unaccountable suspension of all his faculties, he found the speaker drawing gradually near the end of his figures, and so far succeeded in shaking off the sense of coma as to be able to resume his notes.)

That the first and fourth scenes of the third act were not by the same hand as the third scene he should have no difficulty in proving to the satisfaction of all capable and fair-minded men. In the first and fourth scenes the word “virtuous” was used as a dissyllable; in the third it was used as a trisyllable.

“Is, that she will to virtuous Desdemona.” iii. 1.

“Where virtue is, these are more virtuous.” iii. 3.

“That by your virtuous means I may again.” iii. 4.

In the third scene he would also point out the great number of triple endings which had originally led the able editor of Euclid’s Elements of Geometry to attribute the authorship of this scene to Shirley: *Cassio* (twice), *patience* , *Cassio* (again), *discretion* , *Cassio* (again), honesty, *Cassio* (again), *jealousy, jealous* (used as a trisyllable in the verse of Shakespeare’s time), company (two consecutive lines with the triple ending), *Cassio* (again), *conscience, petition, ability, importunity, conversation, marriage, dungeon, mandragora, passion, monstrous, conclusion, bounteous* . He could not imagine any man in his senses questioning the weight of this evidence. Now, let them take the rhymed speeches of the Duke and Brabantio in Act i. Sc. 3, and compare them with the speech of Othello in Act iv. Sc. 2,

Had it pleased heaven
To try me with affliction.

He appealed to any expert whether this was not in Shakespeare’s easy fourth budding manner, with, too, various other points already touched on. On the other hand, take the opening of Brabantio’s speech—

So let the Turk of Cyprus us beguile;
We lose it not so long as we can smile.

That, he said, was in Shakespeare’s difficult second flowering manner—the style of the later part of the earlier stage of Shakespeare’s rhetorical first period but one. It was no more possible to move the one passage up to the date of the other than to invert the order of the alphabet. Here, then, putting aside for the moment the part of the play supplied by Shakespeare’s assistants in the last three acts—miserably weak some of it was—they were able to disentangle the early love-play from the latter work in which Iago was principally concerned. There was at least fifteen years’ growth between them, the steps of which could he traced in the poet’s intermediate plays by any one who chose to work carefully enough at them. Set any of the speeches addressed in the Shakespeare part of the last act by Othello to Desdemona beside the consolatory address of the Duke to Brabantio, and see the difference of the rhetoric and style in the two. If they turned to characters, Othello and Desdemona were even more clearly the companion pair to Biron and Rosaline of *Love’s Labour’s Lost* than were Falstaff and Doll Tearsheet the match-pair (*sic*) of Romeo and Juliet. In *Love’s Labour’s Lost* the question of complexion was identical, though the parts were reversed. He would cite but a few parallel passages in evidence of this relationship between the subjects of the two plays.

Love’s Labour’s Lost , iv. 3.	*Othello* .
1. “By heaven, thy love is black as ebony.”	1. “An old black ram.” i. 1.
2. “No face is *fair* that is not full so black.”	2. “Your son-in-law is far more *fair* than black.” i. 3.
3. “O paradox! Black is the badge of hell.”	3. “How if she be black and witty?” ii. 1.
4. “O, *if* in black my lady’s brows be decked.”	4. “*If* she be black, and thereto have a wit.” id.
5. “And therefore is she born to make black fair.”	5. “A measure to the health of black Othello.” ii. 3.
6. “Paints itself black to imitate her brow.”	6. “For I am black.” iii, 3.
7. “To look like her are *chimney-sweepers* black.”	7. “*Begrimed* and black.” id.

Now, with these parallel passages before them, what man, woman, or child could bring himself or herself to believe that the connection of these plays was casual or the date of the first Othello removable from the date of the early contemporary late-first-period-but-one play *Love’s Labour’s Lost* , or that anybody’s opinion that they were so was worth one straw? When therefore by the introduction of the Iago episode Shakespeare in his later days had with the assistance of three fellow-poets completed the unfinished work of his youth, the junction thus effected of the Brabantio part of the play with this Iago underplot supplied them with an evidence wholly distinct from that of the metrical test which yet confirmed in every point the conclusion independently arrived at and supported by the irresistible coincidence of all the tests. He defied anybody to accept his principle of study or adopt his method of work, and arrive at a different conclusion from himself.

The reading of Mr. G.'s paper on the authorship of the soliloquies in *Hamlet* was unavoidably postponed till the next meeting, the learned member having only time on this occasion to give a brief summary of the points he was prepared to establish and the grounds on which he was prepared to establish them. A year or two since, when he first thought of starting the present Society, he had never read a line of the play in question, having always understood it to be admittedly spurious: but on being assured of the contrary by one of the two foremost poets of the English-speaking world, who was good enough to read out to him in proof of this assertion all that part of the play which could reasonably be assigned to Shakespeare, he had of course at once surrendered his own former opinion, well grounded as it had hitherto seemed to be on the most solid of all possible foundations. At their next meeting he would show cause for attributing to Ben Jonson not only the soliloquies usually but inconsiderately quoted as Shakespeare's, but the entire original conception of the character of the Prince of Denmark. The resemblance of this character to that of Volpone in *The Fox* and to that of Face in *The Alchemist* could not possibly escape the notice of the most cursory reader. The principle of disguise was the same in each case, whether the end in view were simply personal profit, or (as in the case of Hamlet) personal profit combined with revenge; and whether the disguise assumed was that of madness, of sickness, or of a foreign personality, the assumption of character was in all three cases identical. As to style, he was only too anxious to meet (and, he doubted not, to beat) on his own ground any antagonist whose ear had begotten the crude and untenable theory that the Hamlet soliloquies were not distinctly within the range of the man who could produce those of Crites and of Macilente in *Cynthia's Revels* and *Every Man out of his Humour* . The author of those soliloquies could, and did, in the parallel passages of *Hamlet* , rise near the height of the master he honoured and loved.

The further discussion of this subject was reserved for the next meeting of the Society, as was also the reading of Mr. H.'s paper on the subsequent quarrel between the two joint authors of Hamlet, which led to Jonson’s caricature of Shakespeare (then retired from London society to a country life of solitude) under the name of Morose, and to Shakespeare’s retort on Jonson, who was no less evidently attacked under the designation of Ariel. The allusions to the subject of Shakespeare’s sonnets in the courtship and marriage of Epicœne by Morose were as obvious as the allusions in the part of Ariel to the repeated incarceration of Jonson, first on a criminal and secondly on a political charge, and to his probable release in the former case (during the reign of Elizabeth=Sycorax) at the intercession of Shakespeare, who was allowed on all hands to have represented himself in the character of Prospero (“it was mine art that let thee out”). Mr. I. would afterwards read a paper on the evidence for Shakespeare’s whole or part authorship of a dozen or so of the least known plays of his time, which, besides having various words and phrases in common with his acknowledged works, were obviously too bad to be attributed to any other known writer of the period. Eminent among these was the tragedy of *Andromana, or the Merchant’s Wife* , long since rejected from the list of Shirley’s works as unworthy of that poet’s hand. Unquestionably it was so; not less unworthy than *A Larum for London* of Marlowe’s. The consequent inference that it must needs be the work of the new Shakespeare’s was surely no less cogent in this than in the former case. The allusion occurring in it to a play bearing date just twenty-six years after the death of Shakespeare, and written by a poet then unborn, was a strong point in favour of his theory. (This argument was received with general marks of adhesion.) What, he would ask, could be more natural than that Shirley when engaged on the revision and arrangement for the stage of this posthumous work of the new Shakespeare’s (a fact which could require no further proof than he had already adduced), should have inserted this reference in order to disguise the name of its real author, and protect it from the disfavour of an audience with whom that name was notoriously out of fashion? This reasoning, conclusive in itself, became even more irresistible—or would become so, if that were anything less than an absolute impossibility—on comparison of parallel passages,

Though kings still hug suspicion in their bosoms,
They hate the causer. (*Andromana* , Act i. Sc. 3.)

Compare this with the avowal put by Shakespeare into the mouth of a king.

Though I did wish him dead
I hate the murderer. (*King Richard II* ., Act v. Sc. 6.)

Again in the same scene:

For then her husband comes home from the Rialto.

Compare this with various passages (too familiar to quote) in the *Merchant of Venice* . The transference of the Rialto to Iberia was of a piece with the discovery of a sea-coast in Bohemia. In the same scene Andromana says to her lover, finding him reluctant to take his leave, almost in the very words of Romeo to Juliet,

Then let us stand and outface danger,
Since you will have it so.

It was obvious that only the author of the one passage could have thought it necessary to disguise his plagiarism in the other by an inversion of sexes between the two speakers. In the same scene were three other indisputable instances of repetition.

Mariners might with far greater ease
Hear whole shoals of sirens singing.

Compare *Comedy of Errors* , Act iii. Scene 2.

Sing, siren, for thyself.

In this case identity of sex was as palpable an evidence for identity of authorship as diversity of sex had afforded in the preceding instance.

Again:

Have oaths no *more validity* with princes?

In *Romeo and Juliet* , Act iii. Scene 3, the very same words were coupled in the very same order:

More validity ,

More honourable state, more courtship lies
In carrion flies than Romeo.

Again:

It would have killed a salamander.

Compare the *First Part of King Henry IV* , Act iii. Scene 3.

I have maintained that salamander of yours with fire any time this two and thirty years.

In Act ii. Scene 2 the hero, on being informed how heavy are the odds against him in the field, answers,

I am glad on't; the honour is the greater.

To which his confidant rejoins:

The danger is the greater.

And in the sixth scene of the same act the messenger observes:

I only heard the prince wish
. . . .
He had fewer by a thousand men.

Could any member doubt that we had here the same hand which gave us the like debate between King Henry and Westmoreland on the eve of Agincourt? or could any member suppose that in the subsequent remark of the same military confidant, "I smell a rat, sir," there was merely a fortuitous coincidence with Hamlet's reflection as he "whips out his rapier"—in itself a martial proceeding—under similar circumstances to the same effect?

In the very next scene a captain observes of his own troops

Methinks such tattered rogues should never conquer:

a touch that could only be due to the pencil which had drawn Falstaff's ragged regiment. In both cases, moreover, it was to be noted that the tattered rogues proved ultimately victorious. But he had—they might hardly believe it, but so it was—even yet stronger and more convincing evidence to offer. It would be remembered that a play called *The Double Falsehood* , formerly attributed to Shakespeare on the authority of Theobald, was now generally supposed to have been in its original form the work of Shirley. What, then, he would ask, could be more natural or more probable than that a play formerly ascribed to Shirley should prove to be the genuine work of Shakespeare? Common sense, common reason, common logic, all alike and all equally combined to enforce upon every candid judgment this inevitable conclusion. This, however, was nothing in comparison to the final proof which he had yet to lay before them. He need not remind them that in the opinion of their illustrious German teachers, the first men to discover and reveal to his unworthy countrymen the very existence of the new Shakespeare, the authenticity of any play ascribed to the possibly too prolific pen of that poet was invariably to be determined in the last resort by consideration of its demerits. No English critic, therefore, who felt himself worthy to have been born a German, would venture to question the postulate on which all sound principles of criticism with regard to this subject must infallibly be founded: that, given any play of unknown or doubtful authorship, the worse it was, the likelier was it to be Shakespeare's. (This proposition was received with every sign of unanimous assent.) Now, on this ground he was prepared to maintain that the claims of *Andromana* to their most respectful, their most cordial, their most unhesitating acceptance were absolutely beyond all possibility of parallel. Not *Mucedorus* or *Fair Em* , not *The Birth of Merlin* or *Thomas Lord Cromwell* , could reasonably or fairly be regarded as on the same level of worthlessness with this incomparable production. No mortal man who had survived its perusal could for a moment hesitate to agree that it was the most incredibly, ineffably, inconceivably, unmitigatedly, irredeemably, inexpressibly damnable piece of bad work ever perpetrated by human hand. No mortal critic of the genuine Anglo-German school could therefore hesitate for a moment to agree that in common consistency he was bound to accept it as the possible work of no human hand but the hand of the New Shakespeare.

The Chairman then proceeded to recapitulate the work done and the benefits conferred by the Society during the twelve months which had elapsed since its foundation on that day (April 1st) last year. They had ample reason to congratulate themselves and him on the result. They had established an entirely new kind of criticism, working by entirely new means towards an entirely new end, in honour of an entirely new kind of Shakespeare. They had proved to demonstration and overwhelmed with obloquy the incompetence, the imbecility, the untrustworthiness, the blunders, the forgeries, the inaccuracies, the obliquities, the utter moral and literary worthlessness, of previous students and societies. They had revealed to the world at large the generally prevalent ignorance of Shakespeare and his works which so discreditably distinguished his countrymen. This they had been enabled to do by the simple process of putting forward various theories, and still more various facts, but all of equally incontrovertible value and relevance, of which no Englishman—he might say, no mortal—outside the Society had ever heard or dreamed till now. They had discovered the one trustworthy and indisputable method, so easy and so simple that it must now seem wonderful it should never have been discovered before, by which to pluck out the heart of the poet's mystery and detect the secret of his touch; the study of Shakespeare by rule of thumb. Every man, woman, and child born with five fingers on each hand was henceforward better qualified as a critic than any poet or scholar of time past. But it was not, whatever outsiders might pretend to think, exclusively on the verse-test, as it had facetiously been called on account of its total incompatibility with any conceivable scheme of metre or principle of rhythm—it was not exclusively on this precious and unanswerable test that they relied. Within the Society as well as without, the pretensions of those who would acknowledge no other means of deciding on debated questions had been refuted and repelled. What were the other means of investigation and verification in which not less than in the metrical test they were accustomed to put their faith, and by which they doubted not to attain in the future even more remarkable results than their researches had as yet achieved, the debate just concluded, in common with every other for which they ever had met or ever were likely to meet, would amply suffice to show. By such processes as had been applied on this as on all occasions to the text of Shakespeare's works and the traditions of his life, they trusted in a very few years to subvert all theories which had hitherto been held and extirpate all ideas which had hitherto been cherished on the subject: and having thus cleared the ground for his advent, to discover for the admiration of the world, as the name of their Society implied, a New Shakespeare. The first step towards this end must of course be the demolition of the old one; and he would venture to say they had already made a good beginning in that direction. They had disproved or they would disprove the claim of Shakespeare to the sole authorship of *Macbeth, Julius Cæsar, King Lear, Hamlet* , and *Othello* ; they had established or they would establish the fact of his partnership in *Locrine, Mucedorus, The Birth of Merlin, Dr. Dodipoll* , and *Sir Giles Goosecap* . They had with them the incomparable critics of Germany; men whose knowledge and judgment on all questions of English literature were as far beyond the reach of their English followers as the freedom and enlightenment enjoyed by the subjects of a military empire were beyond the reach of the citizens of a democratic republic. They had established and affiliated to their own primitive body or church various branch societies or sects, in England and elsewhere, devoted to the pursuit of the same end by the same means and method of study as had just been exemplified in the transactions of the present meeting. Still there remained much to be done; in witness of which he proposed to lay before them at their next meeting, by way of inauguration under a happy omen of their new year's work, the complete body of evidence by means of which he was prepared to demonstrate that some considerable portion, if not the greater part, of the remaining plays hitherto assigned to Shakespeare was due to the collaboration of a contemporary actor and playwright, well known by name, but hitherto insufficiently appreciated; Robert Armin, the author of *A Nest of Ninnies* .

<<span id="filepos0037829855"> a>ADDITIONS AND CORRECTIONS.

The humble but hard-working journeyman of letters who was charged with the honourable duty of reporting the transactions at the last meeting of the Newest Shakespeare Society on the auspicious occasion of its first anniversary, April 1st, has received sundry more or less voluminous communications from various gentlemen whose papers were then read or announced, pointing out with more or less acrimonious commentary the matters on which it seems to them severally that they have cause to complain of imperfection or inaccuracy in his conscientious and painstaking report. Anxious above all things to secure for himself such credit as may be due to the modest merit of scrupulous fidelity, he desires to lay before the public so much of the corrections conveyed in their respective letters of reclamation as may be necessary to complete or to rectify the first draught of their propositions as conveyed in his former summary. On the present occasion, however, he must confine himself to forwarding the rectifications supplied by two of the members who took a leading part in the debate of April 1st.

The necessarily condensed report of Mr. A.’s paper on *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* may make the reasoning put forward by that gentleman liable to the misconception of a hasty reader. The omission of various qualifying phrases has left his argument without such explanation, his statements without such reservation, as he had been careful to supply. He did not say in so many words that he had been disposed to assign this drama to the author of *The Revenger’s Tragedy* simply on the score of the affinity discernible between the subjects of the two plays. He is not prone to self-confidence or to indulgence in paradox. What he did say was undeniable by any but those who trusted only to their ear, and refused to correct the conclusions thus arrived at by the help of other organs which God had given them—their fingers, for example, and their toes; by means of which a critic of trained and competent scholarship might with the utmost confidence count up as far as twenty, to the great profit of all students who were willing to accept his guidance and be bound by his decision on matters of art and poetry. Only the most purblind could fail to observe, what only the most perverse could hesitate to admit, that there was at first sight an obvious connection between the poison-flower—“purple from love’s wound”—squeezed by Oberon into the eyes of the sleeping Titania and the poison rubbed by Vindice upon the skull of the murdered Gloriana. No student of Ulrici’s invaluable work would think this a far-fetched reference. That eminent critic had verified the meaning and detected the allusion underlying many a passage of Shakespeare in which the connection of moral idea was more difficult to establish than this. In the fifth act of either play there was a masque or dramatic show of a sanguinary kind; in the one case the bloodshed was turned to merry-making, in the other the merry-making was turned to bloodshed. Oberon’s phrase, “till I torment thee for this injury,” might easily be mistaken for a quotation from the part of Vindice. This explanation, he trusted, would suffice to exonerate his original view from any charge of haste or rashness; especially as he had now completely given it up, and adopted one (if possible) more impregnably based on internal and external evidence.

Mr. C. was not unnaturally surprised and indignant to find his position as to Romeo and Lord Burghley barely indicated, and the notice given of the arguments by which it was supported so docked and curtailed as to convey a most inadequate conception of their force. Among the chief points of his argument were these: that the forsaken Rosaline was evidently intended for the late Queen Mary, during whose reign Cecil had notoriously conformed to the observances of her creed, though ready on the accession of Elizabeth to throw it overboard at a day’s notice; (it was not to be overlooked that the friar on first hearing the announcement of this change of faith is made earnestly to remonstrate, prefacing his reproaches with an invocation of two sacred names—an invocation peculiar to Catholics;) that the resemblance between old Capulet and Henry VIII. is obvious to the most careless reader; his oath of “God’s bread!” immediately followed by the avowal “it makes me mad” is an unmistakable allusion to the passions excited by the eucharistic controversy; his violence towards Juliet at the end of the third act at once suggests the alienation of her father’s heart from the daughter of Anne Boleyn; the self-congratulation on her own “stainless” condition as a virgin expressed by Juliet in soliloquy (Act iii. Sc. 2) while in the act of awaiting her bridegroom conveys a furtive stroke of satire at the similar vaunt of Elizabeth when likewise meditating marriage and preparing to receive a suitor from the hostile house of Valois. It must be unnecessary to point out the resemblance or rather the identity between the character and fortune of Paris and the character and fortune of Essex, whose fate had been foreseen and whose end prefigured by the poet with almost prophetic sagacity. To the far-reaching eye of Shakespeare it must have seemed natural and inevitable that Paris (Essex) should fall by the hand of Romeo (Burghley) immediately before the monument of the Capulets where their common mistress was interred alive—immediately, that is, before the termination of the Tudor dynasty in the person of Elizabeth, who towards the close of her reign may fitly have been regarded as one already buried with her fathers, though yet living in a state of suspended animation under the influence of a deadly narcotic potion administered by the friends of Romeo—by the partisans, that is, of the Cecilian policy. The Nurse was not less evidently designed to represent the Established Church. Allusions to the marriage of the clergy are profusely scattered through her speeches. Her deceased husband was probably meant for Sir Thomas More—“a merry man” to the last moment of his existence—who might well be supposed by a slight poetic license to have foreseen in the infancy of Elizabeth her future backsliding and fall from the straight path “when she came to age.” The passing expression of tenderness with which the Nurse refers to his memory—“God be with his soul!”—implies at once the respect in which the name of the martyr Chancellor was still generally held, and the lingering remains of Catholic tradition which still made a prayer for the dead rise naturally to Anglican lips. On the other hand, the strife between Anglicans and Puritans, the struggle of episcopalian with Calvinistic reformers, was quite as plainly typified in the quarrel between the Nurse and Mercutio, in which the Martin Marprelate controversy was first unmistakably represented on the stage. The “saucy merchant, that was so full of his ropery,” with his ridicule of the “stale” practice of Lenten fasting and abstinence, his contempt for “a Lenten pie,” and his preference for a flesh diet as “very good meat in Lent,” is clearly a disciple of Calvin; and the impotence of the Nurse, however scandalised at the nakedness of his ribald profanity, to protect herself against it by appeal to reason or tradition, is dwelt upon with an emphasis sufficient to indicate the secret tendency of the poet’s own sympathies and convictions. In Romeo’s attempt at conciliation, and his poor excuse for Mercutio (which yet the Nurse, an emblem of the temporising and accommodating pliancy of episcopalian Protestantism, shows herself only too ready to accept as valid) as “one that God hath made, for himself to mar,”—the allusion here is evidently to the democratic and revolutionary tendencies of the doctrine of Knox and Calvin, with its ultimate developments of individualism and private judgment—we recognise the note of Burghley’s lifelong policy and its endeavour to fuse the Protestant or Puritan party with the state Church of the Tudors as by law established. The distaste of Elizabeth’s bishops for such advances, their flutter of apprehension at the daring and their burst of indignation at the insolence of the Calvinists, are significantly expressed in terms which seem to hint at a possible return for help and protection to the shelter of the older faith and the support of its partisans. “An ’a speak anything against me, I’ll take him down an ’a were lustier than he is, and twenty such Jacks;” (the allusion here is again obvious, to the baptismal name of John Calvin and John Knox, if not also to the popular byword of Jack Presbyter;) “and if I cannot,” (here the sense of insecurity and dependence on foreign help or secular power becomes transparent) “I’ll find those that shall.” She disclaims communion with the Protestant Churches of the continent, with Amsterdam or Geneva: “I am none of his flirt-gills; I am none of his skains-mates.” Peter, who carries her fan (“to hide her face: for her fan’s the fairer face”; we may take this to be a symbol of the form of episcopal consecration still retained in the Anglican Church as a cover for its separation from Catholicism), is undoubtedly meant for Whitgift, Archbishop of Canterbury; the name Peter, as applied to a menial who will stand by and suffer every knave to use the Church at his pleasure, but is ready to draw as soon as another man if only he may be sure of having the secular arm of the law on his side, implies a bitter sarcasm on the intruding official of state then established by law as occupant of a see divorced from its connection with that of the apostle. The sense of instability natural to an institution which is compelled to rely for support on ministers who are themselves dependent on the state whose pay they draw for power to strike a blow in self-defence could hardly be better expressed than by the solemn and piteous, almost agonised asseveration; “Now, afore God, I am so vexed, that every part about me quivers.” To Shakespeare, it cannot be doubted, the impending dissolution or dislocation of the Anglican system in “every part” by civil war and religious discord must even then have been but too ominously evident.

If further confirmation could be needed of the underlying significance of allusion traceable throughout this play, it might amply be supplied by fresh reference to the first scene in which the Nurse makes her appearance on the stage, and is checked by Lady Capulet in the full tide of affectionate regret for her lost husband. We can well imagine Anne Boleyn cutting short the regrets of some indiscreet courtier for Sir Thomas More in the very words of the text;

Enough of this; I pray thee, hold thy peace.

The “parlous knock” which left so big a lump upon the brow of the infant Juliet is evidently an allusion to the declaration of Elizabeth’s illegitimacy while yet in her cradle. The seal of bastardy set upon the baby brow of

Anne Boleyn’s daughter may well be said to have “broken” it.

The counsel of the Nurse to Juliet in Act iii. Scene 5 to forsake Romeo for Paris indicates the bias of the hierarchy in favour of Essex—“a lovely gentleman”—rather than of the ultra-Protestant policy of Burghley, who doubtless in the eyes of courtiers and churchmen was “a dish-clout to him.”

These were a few of the points, set down at random, which he had been enabled to verify within the limits of a single play. They would suffice to give an idea of the process by which, when applied in detail to every one of Shakespeare’s plays, he trusted to establish the secret history and import of each, not less than the general sequence and significance of all. Further instalments of this work would probably be issued in the forthcoming or future Transactions of the Newest Shakespeare Society; and it was confidently expected that the final monument of his research when thoroughly completed and illustrated by copious appendices, would prove as worthy as any work of mere English scholarship could hope to be of a place beside the inestimable commentaries of Gervinus, Ulrici, and the Polypseudocriticopantodapomorosophisticometricoglossematographicomaniacal Company for the Confusion of Shakespeare and Diffusion of Verbiage (Unlimited).

CHIMÆRA BOMBINANS IN VACUO.

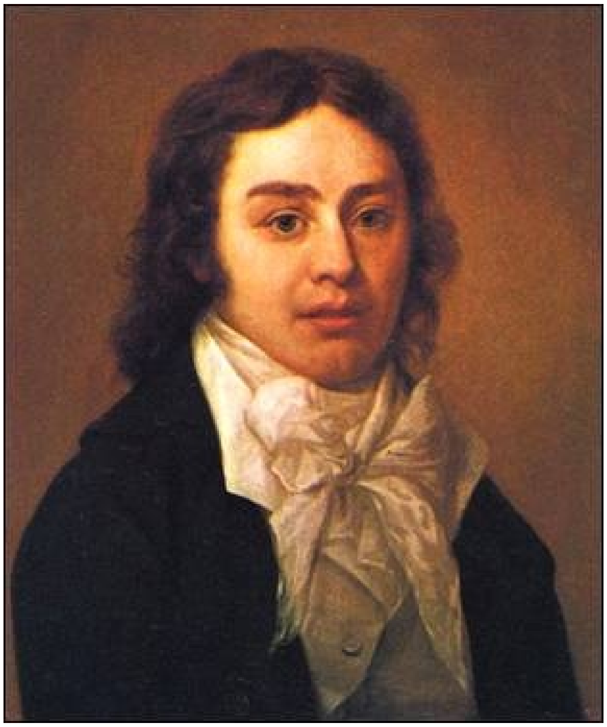
NOTE.

Mindful of the good old apologue regarding “the squeak of the real pig,” I think it here worth while to certify the reader of little faith, that the more incredibly impudent absurdities above cited are not so much or so often the freaks of parody or the fancies of burlesque as select excerpts and transcripts of printed and published utterances from the “pink soft litter” of a living brood—from the reports of an actual Society, issued in an abridged and doubtless an emasculated form through the columns of a weekly newspaper. One final and unapproachable instance, one transcendant and pyramidal example of classical taste and of critical scholarship, I did not venture to impair by transference from those columns and transplantation into these pages among humbler specimens of minor monstrosity. Let it stand here once more on record as “a good jest for ever”—or rather as the best and therefore as the worst, as the worst and therefore as the best, of all possible bad jests ever to be cracked between this and the crack of doom. Sophocles, said a learned member, was the proper parallel to Shakespeare among the ancient tragedians: Æschylus—hear, O heaven, and give ear, O earth!—*Æschylus was only a Marlowe* .

The hand which here transcribes this most transcendant utterance has written before now many lines in verse and in prose to the honour and glory of Christopher Marlowe: it has never—be the humble avowal thus blushingly recorded—it has never set down as the writer’s opinion that he was only an Æschylus. In other words, it has never registered as my deliberate and judicial verdict the finding that he was only the equal of the greatest among all tragic and all prophetic poets; of the man who combined all the light of the Greeks with all the fire of the Hebrews; who varied at his will the revelation of the single gift of Isaiah with the display of the mightiest among the manifold gifts of Shakespeare.

<<span id="filepos0037846572"> a>SHAKESPEARE by Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834) was an English poet, literary critic and philosopher, who founded the Romantic Movement in England with his friend William Wordsworth. He is best known for his poems *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* and *Kubla Khan* , as well as his critical work. His essays on Shakespeare were highly influential and well-researched, opening new areas to explore in literary criticism.



Coleridge, 1795.

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SHAKESPEARE, WITH INTRODUCTORY MATTER ON POETRY, THE DRAMA, AND THE STAGE.

<<span id="filepos0037859796"> a>Definition Of Poetry.

Poetry is not the proper antithesis to prose, but to science. Poetry is opposed to science, and prose to metre. The proper and immediate object of science is the acquirement, or communication, of truth; the proper and immediate object of poetry is the communication of immediate pleasure. This definition is useful; but as it would include novels and other works of fiction, which yet we do not call poems, there must be some additional character by which poetry is not only divided from opposites, but likewise distinguished from disparate, though similar, modes of composition. Now how is this to be effected? In animated prose, the beauties of nature, and the passions and accidents of human nature, are often expressed in that natural language which the contemplation of them would suggest to a pure and benevolent mind; yet still neither we nor the writers call such a work a poem, though no work could deserve that name which did not include all this, together with something else. What is this? It is that pleasurable emotion, that peculiar state and degree of excitement, which arises in the poet himself in the act of composition;—and in order to understand this, we must combine a more than ordinary sympathy with the objects, emotions, or incidents contemplated by the poet, consequent on a more than common sensibility, with a more than ordinary activity of the mind in respect of the fancy and the imagination. Hence is produced a more vivid reflection of the truths of nature and of the human heart, united with a constant activity modifying and correcting these truths by that sort of pleasurable emotion, which the exertion of all our faculties gives in a certain degree; but which can only be felt in perfection under the full play of those powers of mind, which are spontaneous rather than voluntary, and in which the effort required bears no proportion to the activity enjoyed. This is the state which permits the production of a highly pleasurable whole, of which each part shall also communicate for itself a distinct and conscious pleasure; and hence arises the definition, which I trust is now intelligible, that poetry, or rather a poem, is a species of composition, opposed to science, as having intellectual pleasure for its object, and as attaining its end by the use of language natural to us in a state of excitement,—but distinguished from other species of composition, not excluded by the former criterion, by permitting a pleasure from the whole consistent with a consciousness of pleasure from the component parts;—and the perfection of which is, to communicate from each part the greatest immediate pleasure compatible with the largest sum of pleasure on the whole. This, of course, will vary with the different modes of poetry;—and that splendour of particular lines, which would be worthy of admiration in an impassioned elegy, or a short indignant satire, would be a blemish and proof of vile taste in a tragedy or an epic poem.

It is remarkable, by the way, that Milton in three incidental words has implied all which for the purposes of more distinct apprehension, which at first must be slow-paced in order to be distinct, I have endeavoured to develope in a precise and strictly adequate definition. Speaking of poetry, he says, as in a parenthesis, “which is simple, sensuous, passionate.” How awful is the power of words!—fearful often in their consequences when merely felt, not understood; but most awful when both felt and understood!—Had these three words only been properly understood by, and present in the minds of, general readers, not only almost a library of false poetry would have been either precluded or still-born, but, what is of more consequence, works truly excellent and capable of enlarging the understanding, warming and purifying the heart, and placing in the centre of the whole being the germs of noble and manlike actions, would have been the common diet of the intellect instead. For the first condition, simplicity,—while, on the one hand, it distinguishes poetry from the arduous processes of science, labouring towards an end not yet arrived at, and supposes a smooth and finished road, on which the reader is to walk onward easily, with streams murmuring by his side, and trees and flowers and human dwellings to make his journey as delightful as the object of it is desirable, instead of having to toil with the pioneers and painfully make the road on which others are to travel,—precludes, on the other hand, every affectation and morbid peculiarity;—the second condition, sensuousness, insures that framework of objectivity, that definiteness and articulation of imagery, and that modification of the images themselves, without which poetry becomes flattened into mere didactics of practice, or evaporated into a hazy, unthoughtful, day-dreaming; and the third condition, passion, provides that neither thought nor imagery shall be simply objective, but that the *passio vera* of humanity shall warm and animate both.

To return, however, to the previous definition, this most general and distinctive character of a poem originates in the poetic genius itself; and though it comprises whatever can with any propriety be called a poem (unless that word be a mere lazy synonym for a composition in metre), it yet becomes a just, and not merely discriminative, but full and adequate, definition of poetry in its highest and most peculiar sense, only so far as the distinction still results from the poetic genius, which sustains and modifies the emotions, thoughts, and vivid representations of the poem by the energy without effort of the poet's own mind,—by the spontaneous activity of his imagination and fancy, and by whatever else with these reveals itself in the balancing and reconciling of opposite or discordant qualities, sameness with difference, a sense of novelty and freshness with old or customary objects, a more than usual state of emotion with more than usual order, self-possession and judgment with enthusiasm and vehement feeling,—and which, while it blends and harmonizes the natural and the artificial, still subordinates art to nature, the manner to the matter, and our admiration of the poet to our sympathy with the images, passions, characters, and incidents of the poem:—

“Doubtless, this could not be, but that she turns

Bodies to *spirit* by sublimation strange,

As fire converts to fire the things it burns—

As we our food into our nature change!

“From their gross matter she abstracts *their* forms,

And draws a kind of quintessence from things,

Which to her proper nature she transforms

To bear them light on her celestial wings!

“*Thus* doth she, when from *individual states*

She doth abstract the universal kinds,

Which then reclothed in divers names and fates

Steal access thro' our senses to our minds .”

<<span id="filepos0037868785"> a> Greek Drama.

It is truly singular that Plato,—whose philosophy and religion were but exotic at home, and a mere opposition to the finite in all things, genuine prophet and anticipator as he was of the Protestant Christian æra,—should have given in his Dialogue of the Banquet, a justification of our Shakespeare. For he relates that, when all the other guests had either dispersed or fallen asleep, Socrates only, together with Aristophanes and Agathon, remained awake, and that, while he continued to drink with them out of a large goblet, he compelled them, though most reluctantly, to admit that it was the business of one and the same genius to excel in tragic and comic poetry, or that the tragic poet ought, at the same time, to contain within himself the powers of comedy. Now, as this was directly repugnant to the entire theory of the ancient critics, and contrary to all their experience, it is evident that Plato must have fixed the eye of his contemplation on the innermost essentials of the drama, abstracted from the forms of age or country. In another passage he even adds the reason, namely, that opposites illustrate each other's nature, and in their struggle draw forth the strength of the combatants, and display the conqueror as sovereign even on the territories of the rival power.

Nothing can more forcibly exemplify the separative spirit of the Greek arts than their comedy as opposed to their tragedy. But as the immediate struggle of contraries supposes an arena common to both, so both were alike ideal; that is, the comedy of Aristophanes rose to as great a distance above the ludicrous of real life, as the tragedy of Sophocles above its tragic events and passions,—and it is in this one point, of absolute ideality, that the comedy of Shakespeare and the old comedy of Athens coincide. In this also alone did the Greek tragedy and comedy unite; in every thing else they were exactly opposed to each other. Tragedy is poetry in its deepest earnest; comedy is poetry in unlimited jest.

Earnestness consists in the direction and convergence of all the powers of the soul to one aim, and in the voluntary restraint of its activity in consequence; the opposite, therefore, lies in the apparent abandonment of all definite aim or end, and in the removal of all bounds in the exercise of the mind,—attaining its real end, as an entire contrast, most perfectly, the greater the display is of intellectual wealth squandered in the wantonness of sport without an object, and the more abundant the life and vivacity in the creations of the arbitrary will.

The later comedy, even where it was really comic, was doubtless likewise more comic, the more free it appeared from any fixed aim. Misunderstandings of intention, fruitless struggles of absurd passion, contradictions of temper, and laughable situations there were; but still the form of the representation itself was serious; it proceeded as much according to settled laws, and used as much the same means of art, though to a different purpose, as the regular tragedy itself. But in the old comedy the very form itself is whimsical; the whole work is one great jest, comprehending a world of jests within it, among which each maintains its own place without seeming to concern itself as to the relation in which it may stand to its fellows. In short, in Sophocles, the constitution of tragedy is monarchical, but such as it existed in elder Greece, limited by laws, and therefore the more venerable,—all the parts adapting and submitting themselves to the majesty of the heroic sceptre:—in Aristophanes, comedy, on the contrary, is poetry in its most democratic form, and it is a fundamental principle with it, rather to risk all the confusion of anarchy, than to destroy the independence and privileges of its individual constituents,—place, verse, characters, even single thoughts, conceits, and allusions, each turning on the pivot of its own free will.

The tragic poet idealizes his characters by giving to the spiritual part of our nature a more decided preponderance over the animal cravings and impulses, than is met with in real life: the comic poet idealizes his characters by making the animal the governing power, and the intellectual the mere instrument. But as tragedy is not a collection of virtues and perfections, but takes care only that the vices and imperfections shall spring from the passions, errors, and prejudices which arise out of the soul;—so neither is comedy a mere crowd of vices and follies, but whatever qualities it represents, even though they are in a certain sense amiable, it still displays them as having their origin in some dependence on our lower nature, accompanied with a defect in true freedom of spirit and self-subsistence, and subject to that unconnection by contradictions of the inward being, to which all folly is owing.

The ideal of earnest poetry consists in the union and harmonious melting down, and fusion of the sensual into the spiritual,—of man as an animal into man as a power of reason and self-government. And this we have represented to us most clearly in the plastic art, or statuary; where the perfection of outward form is a symbol of the perfection of an inward idea; where the body is wholly penetrated by the soul, and spiritualized even to a state of glory, and like a transparent substance, the matter, in its own nature darkness, becomes altogether a vehicle and fixture of light, a means of developing its beauties, and unfolding its wealth of various colours without disturbing its unity, or causing a division of the parts. The sportive ideal, on the contrary, consists in the perfect harmony and concord of the higher nature with the animal, as with its ruling principle and its acknowledged regent. The understanding and practical reason are represented as the willing slaves of the senses and appetites, and of the passions arising out of them. Hence we may admit the appropriateness to the old comedy, as a work of defined art, of allusions and descriptions, which morality can never justify, and, only with reference to the author himself, and only as being the effect or rather the cause of the circumstances in which he wrote, can consent even to palliate.

The old comedy rose to its perfection in Aristophanes, and in him also it died with the freedom of Greece. Then arose a species of drama, more fitly called dramatic entertainment than comedy, but of which, nevertheless, our modern comedy (Shakespeare's altogether excepted) is the genuine descendant. Euripides had already brought tragedy lower down and by many steps nearer to the real world than his predecessors had ever done, and the passionate admiration which Menander and Philemon expressed for him, and their open avowals that he was their great master, entitle us to consider their dramas as of a middle species, between tragedy and comedy,—not the tragi-comedy, or thing of heterogeneous parts, but a complete whole, founded on principles of its own. Throughout we find the drama of Menander distinguishing itself from tragedy, but not as the genuine old comedy, contrasting with, and opposing it. Tragedy, indeed, carried the thoughts into the mythologic world, in order to raise the emotions, the fears, and the hopes, which convince the inmost heart that their final cause is not to be discovered in the limits of mere mortal life, and force us into a presentiment, however dim, of a state in which those struggles of inward free will with outward necessity, which form the true subject of the tragedian, shall be reconciled and solved;—the entertainment or new comedy, on the other hand, remained within the circle of experience. Instead of the tragic destiny, it introduced the power of chance; even in the few fragments of Menander and Philemon now remaining to us, we find many exclamations and reflections concerning chance and fortune, as in the tragic poets concerning destiny. In tragedy, the moral law, either as obeyed or violated, above all consequences—its own maintenance or violation constituting the most important of all consequences—forms the ground; the new comedy, and our modern comedy in general (Shakespeare excepted as before) lies in prudence or imprudence, enlightened or misled self-love. The whole moral system of the entertainment exactly like that of fable, consists in rules of prudence, with an exquisite conciseness, and at the same time an exhaustive fulness of sense. An old critic said that tragedy was the flight or elevation of life, comedy (that of Menander) its arrangement or ordonnance.

Add to these features a portrait-like truth of character,—not so far indeed as that a *bona fide* individual should be described or imagined, but yet so that the features which give interest and permanence to the class should be individualized. The old tragedy moved in an ideal world,—the old comedy in a fantastic world. As the entertainment, or new comedy, restrained the creative activity both of the fancy and the imagination, it indemnified the understanding in appealing to the judgment for the probability of the scenes represented. The ancients themselves acknowledged the new comedy as an exact copy of real life. The grammarian, Aristophanes, somewhat affectedly exclaimed:—“O Life and Menander! which of you two imitated the other?” In short the form of this species of drama was poetry, the stuff or matter was prose. It was prose rendered delightful by the blandishments and measured motions of the muse. Yet even this was not universal. The mimes of Sophron, so passionately admired by Plato, were written in prose, and were scenes out of real life conducted in dialogue. The exquisite feast of Adonis (£ÅÁ±º¿{Ã¹±¹ Æ ´É½¹q¶¿ÅÃ±¹) in Theocritus, we are told, with some others of his eclogues, were close imitations of certain mimes of Sophron—free translations of the prose into hexameters.

It will not be improper, in this place, to make a few remarks on the remarkable character and functions of the chorus in the Greek tragic drama.

The chorus entered from below, close by the orchestra, and there, pacing to and fro during the choral odes, performed their solemn measured dance. In the centre of the *orchestra* , directly over against the middle of the *scene* , there stood an elevation with steps in the shape of a large altar, as high as the boards of the *logeion* or moveable stage. This elevation was named the *thymele* (¸Å¼s»·), and served to recall the origin and original purpose of the chorus, as an altar-song in honour of the presiding deity. Here, and on these steps the persons of the chorus sate collectively, when they were not singing; attending to the dialogue as spectators, and acting as (what in truth they were) the ideal representatives of the real audience, and of the poet himself in his own character, assuming the supposed impressions made by the drama, in order to direct and rule them. But when the chorus itself formed part of the dialogue, then the leader of the band, the foreman, or *coryphæus* , ascended, as some think, the level summit of the *thymele* in order to command the stage, or, perhaps, the whole chorus advanced to the front of the orchestra, and thus put themselves in ideal connection, as it were, with the *dramatis personæ* there acting. This *thymele* was in the centre of the whole edifice, all the measurements were calculated, and the semi-circle of the amphitheatre was drawn from this point. It had a double use, a twofold purpose; it constantly reminded the spectators of the origin of tragedy as a religious service, and declared itself as the ideal representative of the audience by having its place exactly in the point, to which all the radii from the different seats or benches converged.

In this double character, as constituent parts, and yet at the same time as spectators, of the drama, the chorus could not but tend to enforce the unity of place;—not on the score of any supposed improbability, which the understanding or common sense might detect in a change of place;—but because the senses themselves put it out of the power of any imagination to conceive a place coming to, and going away from the persons, instead of the persons changing their place. Yet there are instances, in which, during the silence of the chorus, the poets have hazarded this by a change in that part of the scenery which represented the more distant objects to the eye of the spectator—a demonstrative proof, that this alternately extolled and ridiculed unity (as ignorantly ridiculed as extolled) was grounded on no essential principle of reason, but arose out of circumstances which the poet could not remove, and therefore took up into the form of the drama, and co-organised it with all the other parts into a living whole.

The Greek tragedy may rather be compared to our serious opera than to the tragedies of Shakespeare; nevertheless, the difference is far greater than the likeness. In the opera all is subordinated to the music, the dresses, and the scenery;—the poetry is a mere vehicle for articulation, and as little pleasure is lost by ignorance of the Italian language, so is little gained by the knowledge of it. But in the Greek drama all was but as instruments and accessaries to the poetry; and hence we should form a better notion of the choral music from the solemn hymns and psalms of austere church music than from any species of theatrical singing. A single flute or pipe was the ordinary accompaniment; and it is not to be supposed, that any display of musical power was allowed to obscure the distinct hearing of the words. On the contrary, the evident purpose was to render the words more audible, and to secure by the elevations and pauses greater facility of understanding the poetry. For the choral songs are, and ever must have been, the most difficult part of the tragedy; there occur in them the most involved verbal compounds, the newest expressions, the boldest images, the most recondite allusions. Is it credible that the poets would, one and all, have been thus prodigal of the stores of art and genius, if they had known that in the representation the whole must have been lost to the audience,—at a time too, when the means of after publication were so difficult and expensive, and the copies of their works so slowly and narrowly circulated?

The masks also must be considered—their vast variety and admirable workmanship. Of this we retain proof by the marble masks which represented them; but to this in the real mask we must add the thinness of the substance and the exquisite fitting on to the head of the actor; so that not only were the very eyes painted with a single opening left for the pupil of the actor's eye, but in some instances, even the iris itself was painted, when the colour was a known characteristic of the divine or heroic personage represented.

Finally, I will note down those fundamental characteristics which contradistinguish the ancient literature from the modern generally, but which more especially appear in prominence in the tragic drama. The ancient was allied to statuary, the modern refers to painting. In the first there is a predominance of rhythm and melody, in the second of harmony and counterpoint. The Greeks idolized the finite, and therefore were the masters of all grace, elegance, proportion, fancy, dignity, majesty—of whatever, in short, is capable of being definitely conveyed by defined forms or thoughts: the moderns revere the infinite, and affect the indefinite as a vehicle of the infinite;—hence their passions, their obscure hopes and fears, their wandering through the unknown, their grander moral feelings, their more august conception of man as man, their future rather than their past—in a word, their sublimity.

<<span id="filepos0037886770"> a> Progress Of The Drama.

Let two persons join in the same scheme to ridicule a third, and either take advantage of, or invent, some story for that purpose, and mimicry will have already produced a sort of rude comedy. It becomes an inviting treat to the populace, and gains an additional zest and burlesque by following the already established plan of tragedy; and the first man of genius who seizes the idea, and reduces it into form,—into a work of art,—by metre and music, is the Aristophanes of the country.

How just this account is will appear from the fact that in the first or old comedy of the Athenians, most of the *dramatis personæ* were living characters introduced under their own names; and no doubt, their ordinary dress, manner, person and voice were closely mimicked. In less favourable states of society, as that of England in the middle ages, the beginnings of comedy would be constantly taking place from the mimics and satirical minstrels; but from want of fixed abode, popular government, and the successive attendance of the same auditors, it would still remain in embryo. I shall, perhaps, have occasion to observe that this remark is not without importance in explaining the essential differences of the modern and ancient theatres.

Phenomena, similar to those which accompanied the origin of tragedy and comedy among the Greeks, would take place among the Romans much more slowly, and the drama would, in any case, have much longer remained in its first irregular form from the character of the people, their continual engagements in wars of conquest, the nature of their government, and their rapidly increasing empire. But, however this might have been, the conquest of Greece precluded both the process and the necessity of it; and the Roman stage at once presented imitations or translations of the Greek drama. This continued till the perfect establishment of Christianity. Some attempts, indeed, were made to adapt the persons of Scriptural or ecclesiastical history to the drama; and sacred plays, it is probable, were not unknown in Constantinople under the emperors of the East. The first of the kind is, I believe, the only one preserved,—namely, the §Á¹ÃÄxÂ qÃÇÉ½, or, “Christ in his sufferings,” by Gregory Nazianzen,—possibly written in consequence of the prohibition of profane literature to the Christians by the apostate Julian. In the West, however, the enslaved and debauched Roman world became too barbarous for any theatrical exhibitions more refined than those of pageants and chariot-races; while the spirit of Christianity, which in its most corrupt form still breathed general humanity, whenever controversies of faith were not concerned, had done away the cruel combats of the gladiators, and the loss of the distant provinces prevented the possibility of exhibiting the engagements of wild beasts.

I pass, therefore, at once to the feudal ages which soon succeeded, confining my observation to this country; though, indeed, the same remark with very few alterations will apply to all the other states, into which the great empire was broken. Ages of darkness succeeded;—not, indeed, the darkness of Russia or of the barbarous lands unconquered by Rome; for from the time of Honorius to the destruction of Constantinople and the consequent introduction of ancient literature into Europe, there was a continued succession of individual intellects;—the golden chain was never wholly broken, though the connecting links were often of baser metal. A dark cloud, like another sky, covered the entire cope of heaven,—but in this place it thinned away, and white stains of light showed a half eclipsed star behind it,—in that place it was rent asunder, and a star passed across the opening in all its brightness, and then vanished. Such stars exhibited themselves only; surrounding objects did not partake of their light. There were deep wells of knowledge, but no fertilizing rills and rivulets. For the drama, society was altogether a state of chaos, out of which it was, for a while at least, to proceed anew, as if there had been none before it. And yet it is not undelightful to contemplate the education of good from evil. The ignorance of the great mass of our countrymen was the efficient cause of the reproduction of the drama; and the preceding darkness and the returning light were alike necessary in order to the creation of a Shakespeare.

The drama re-commenced in England, as it first began in Greece, in religion. The people were not able to read,—the priesthood were unwilling that they should read; and yet their own interest compelled them not to leave the people wholly ignorant of the great events of sacred history. They did that, therefore, by scenic representations, which in after ages it has been attempted to do in Roman Catholic countries by pictures. They presented Mysteries, and often at great expense; and reliques of this system still remain in the south of Europe, and indeed throughout Italy, where at Christmas the convents and the great nobles rival each other in the scenic representation of the birth of Christ and its circumstances. I heard two instances mentioned to me at different times, one in Sicily and the other in Rome, of noble devotees, the ruin of whose fortunes was said to have commenced in the extravagant expense which had been incurred in presenting the *præsepe* or manger. But these Mysteries, in order to answer their design, must not only be instructive, but entertaining; and as, when they became so, the people began to take pleasure in acting them themselves—in interloping—(against which the priests seem to have fought hard and yet in vain) the most ludicrous images were mixed with the most awful personations; and whatever the subject might be, however sublime, however pathetic, yet the Vice and the Devil, who are the genuine antecessors of Harlequin and the Clown, were necessary component parts. I have myself a piece of this kind, which I transcribed a few years ago at Helmstadt, in Germany, on the education of Eve's children, in which after the fall and repentance of Adam, the offended Maker, as in proof of his reconciliation, condescends to visit them, and to catechise the children,—who with a noble contempt of chronology are all brought together from Abel to Noah. The good children say the ten Commandments, the Belief, and the Lord's Prayer; but Cain and his rout, after he had received a box on the ear for not taking off his hat, and afterwards offering his left hand, is prompted by the devil so to blunder in the Lord's Prayer as to reverse the petitions and say it backward!

Unaffectedly I declare I feel pain at repetitions like these, however innocent. As historical documents they are valuable; but I am sensible that what I can read with my eye with perfect innocence, I cannot without inward fear and misgivings pronounce with my tongue.

Let me, however, be acquitted of presumption if I say that I cannot agree with Mr. Malone, that our ancestors did not perceive the ludicrous in these things, or that they paid no separate attention to the serious and comic parts. Indeed his own statement contradicts it. For what purpose should the Vice leap upon the Devil's back and belabour him, but to produce this separate attention? The people laughed heartily, no doubt. Nor can I conceive any meaning attached to the words “separate attention,” that is not fully answered by one part of an exhibition exciting seriousness or pity, and the other raising mirth and loud laughter. That they felt no impiety in the affair is most true. For it is the very essence of that system of Christian polytheism, which in all its essentials is now fully as gross in Spain, in Sicily, and the South of Italy, as it ever was in England in the days of Henry VI. (nay, more so, for a Wicliffe had not then appeared only, but scattered the good seed widely),—it is an essential part, I say, of that system to draw the mind wholly from its own inward whispers and quiet discriminations, and to habituate the conscience to pronounce sentence in every case according to the established verdicts of the church and the casuists. I have looked through volume after volume of the most approved casuists,—and still I find disquisitions whether this or that act is right, and under what circumstances, to a minuteness that makes reasoning ridiculous, and of a callous and unnatural immodesty, to which none but a monk could harden himself, who has been stripped of all the tender charities of life, yet is goaded on to make war against them by the unsubdued hauntings of our meaner nature, even as dogs are said to get the *hydrophobia* from excessive thirst. I fully believe that our ancestors laughed as heartily, as their posterity do at Grimaldi;—and not having been told that they would be punished for laughing, they thought it very innocent;—and if their priests had left out murder in the catalogue of their prohibitions (as indeed they did under certain circumstances of heresy), the greater part of them,—the moral instincts common to all men having been smothered and kept from development,—would have thought as little of murder.

However this may be, the necessity of at once instructing and gratifying the people produced the great distinction between the Greek and the English theatres;—for to this we must attribute the origin of tragi-comedy, or a representation of human events more lively, nearer the truth, and permitting a larger field of moral instruction, a more ample exhibition of the recesses of the human heart, under all the trials and circumstances that most concern us, than was known or guessed at by Æschylus, Sophocles, or Euripides;—and at the same time we learn to account for, and—relatively to the author—perceive the necessity of, the Fool or Clown or both, as the substitutes of the Vice and the Devil, which our ancestors had been so accustomed to see in every exhibition of the stage, that they could not feel any performance perfect without them. Even to this day in Italy, every opera—(even Metastasio obeyed the claim throughout)—must have six characters, generally two pairs of cross lovers, a tyrant and a confidant, or a father and two confidants, themselves lovers;—and when a new opera appears, it is the universal fashion to ask—which is the tyrant, which the lover? &c.

It is the especial honour of Christianity, that in its worst and most corrupted form it cannot wholly separate itself from morality;—whereas the other religions in their best form (I do not include Mohammedanism, which is only an anomalous corruption of Christianity, like Swedenborgianism) have no connection with it. The very impersonation of moral evil under the name of Vice, facilitated all other impersonations; and hence we see that the Mysteries were succeeded by Moralities, or dialogues and plots of allegorical personages. Again, some character in real history had become so famous, so proverbial, as Nero for instance, that they were introduced instead of the moral quality, for which they were so noted;—and in this manner the stage was moving on to the absolute production of heroic and comic real characters, when the restoration of literature, followed by the ever-blessed Reformation, let in upon the kingdom not only new knowledge, but new motive. A useful rivalry commenced between the metropolis on the one hand,—the residence, independently of the court and nobles, of the most active and stirring spirits who had not been regularly educated, or who, from mischance or otherwise, had forsaken the beaten track of preferment,—and the universities on the other. The latter prided themselves on their closer approximation to the ancient rules and ancient regularity—taking the theatre of Greece, or rather its dim reflection, the rhetorical tragedies of the poet Seneca, as a perfect ideal, without any critical collation of the times, origin, or circumstances;—whilst, in the mean time, the popular writers, who could not and would not abandon what they had found to delight their countrymen sincerely, and not merely from inquiries first put to the recollection of rules, and answered in the affirmative, as if it had been an arithmetical sum, did yet borrow from the scholars whatever they advantageously could, consistently with their own peculiar means of pleasing.

And here let me pause for a moment's contemplation of this interesting subject.

We call, for we see and feel, the swan and the dove both transcendantly beautiful. As absurd as it would be to institute a comparison between their separate claims to beauty from any abstract rule common to both, without reference to the life and being of the animals themselves,—or as if, having first seen the dove, we abstracted its outlines, gave them a false generalization, called them the principles or ideal of bird-beauty, and then proceeded to criticise the swan or the eagle;—not less absurd is it to pass judgment on the works of a poet on the mere ground that they have been called by the same class-name with the works of other poets in other times and circumstances, or on any ground, indeed, save that of their inappropriateness to their own end and being, their want of significance, as symbols or physiognomy.

O! few have there been among critics, who have followed with the eye of the imagination the imperishable yet ever wandering spirit of poetry through its various metempsychoses, and consequent metamorphoses;—or who have rejoiced in the light of clear perception at beholding with each new birth, with each rare *avatar* , the human race frame to itself a new body, by assimilating materials of nourishment out of its new circumstances, and work for itself new organs of power appropriate to the new sphere of its motion and activity!

I have before spoken of the Romance, or the language formed out of the decayed Roman and the Northern tongues; and comparing it with the Latin, we find it less perfect in simplicity and relation—the privileges of a language formed by the mere attraction of homogeneous parts;—but yet more rich, more expressive and various, as one formed by more obscure affinities out of a chaos of apparently heterogeneous atoms. As more than a metaphor,—as an analogy of this, I have named the true genuine modern poetry the romantic; and the works of Shakespeare are romantic poetry, revealing itself in the drama. If the tragedies of Sophocles are in the strict sense of the word tragedies, and the comedies of Aristophanes comedies, we must emancipate ourselves from a false association arising from misapplied names, and find a new word for the plays of Shakespeare. For they are, in the ancient sense, neither tragedies nor comedies, nor both in one,—but a different *genus* , diverse in kind, and not merely different in degree. They may be called romantic dramas, or dramatic romances.

A deviation from the simple forms and unities of the ancient stage is an essential principle, and, of course, an appropriate excellence, of the romantic drama. For these unities were to a great extent the natural form of that which in its elements was homogeneous, and the representation of which was addressed pre-eminently to the outward senses;—and though the fable, the language, and the characters appealed to the reason rather than to the mere understanding, inasmuch as they supposed an ideal state rather than referred to an existing reality,—yet it was a reason which was obliged to accommodate itself to the senses, and so far became a sort of more elevated understanding. On the other hand, the romantic poetry—the Shakespearian drama—appealed to the imagination rather than to the senses, and to the reason as contemplating our inward nature, and the workings of the passions in their most retired recesses. But the reason, as reason, is independent of time and space; it has nothing to do with them: and hence the certainties of reason have been called eternal truths. As for example—the endless properties of the circle:—what connection have they with this or that age, with this or that country?—The reason is aloof from time and space; the imagination is an arbitrary controller over both;—and if only the poet have such power of exciting our internal emotions as to make us present to the scene in imagination chiefly, he acquires the right and privilege of using time and space as they exist in imagination, and obedient only to the laws by which the imagination itself acts. These laws it will be my object and aim to point out as the examples occur, which illustrate them. But here let me remark what can never be too often reflected on by all who would intelligently study the works either of the Athenian dramatists, or of Shakespeare, that the very essence of the former consists in the sternest separation of the diverse in kind and the disparate in the degree, whilst the latter delights in interlacing, by a rainbow-like transfusion of hues, the one with the other.

And here it will be necessary to say a few words on the stage and on stage-illusion.

A theatre, in the widest sense of the word, is the general term for all places of amusement through the ear or eye, in which men assemble in order to be amused by some entertainment presented to all at the same time and in common. Thus an old Puritan divine says:—“Those who attend public worship and sermons only to amuse themselves, make a theatre of the church, and turn God's house into the devil's. *Theatra ædes diabololatricæ.* ” The most important and dignified species of this *genus* is, doubtless, the stage (*res theatralis histrionica*), which, in addition to the generic definition above given, may be characterized in its idea, or according to what it does, or ought to, aim at, as a combination of several or of all the fine arts in an harmonious whole, having a distinct end of its own, to which the peculiar end of each of the component arts, taken separately, is made subordinate and subservient,—that, namely, of imitating reality—whether external things, actions, or passions—-under a semblance of reality. Thus, Claude imitates a landscape at sunset, but only as a picture; while a forest-scene is not presented to the spectators as a picture, but as a forest; and though, in the full sense of the word, we are no more deceived by the one than by the other, yet are our feelings very differently affected; and the pleasure derived from the one is not composed of the same elements as that afforded by the other, even on the supposition that the *quantum* of both were equal. In the former, a picture, it is a condition of all genuine delight that we should not be deceived; in the latter, stage-scenery (inasmuch as its principle end is not in or for itself, as is the case in a picture, but to be an assistance and means to an end out of itself), its very purpose is to produce as much illusion as its nature permits. These, and all other stage presentations, are to produce a sort of temporary half-faith, which the spectator encourages in himself and supports by a voluntary contribution on his own part, because he knows that it is at all times in his power to see the thing as it really is. I have often observed that little children are actually deceived by stage-scenery, never by pictures; though even these produce an effect on their impressible minds, which they do not on the minds of adults. The child, if strongly impressed, does not indeed positively think the picture to be the reality; but yet he does not think the contrary. As Sir George Beaumont was shewing me a very fine engraving from Rubens, representing a storm at sea without any vessel or boat introduced, my little boy, then about five years old, came dancing and singing into the room, and all at once (if I may so say) *tumbled in* upon the print. He instantly started, stood silent and motionless, with the strongest expression, first of wonder and then of grief in his eyes and countenance, and at length said “And where is the ship? But that is sunk, and the men are all drowned!” still keeping his eyes fixed on the print. Now what pictures are to little children, stage illusion is to men, provided they retain any part of the child's sensibility; except, that in the latter instance, the suspension of the act of comparison, which permits this sort of negative belief, is somewhat more assisted by the will, than in that of a child respecting a picture.

The true stage-illusion in this and in all other things consists—not in the mind's judging it to be a forest, but, in its remission of the judgment that it is not a forest. And this subject of stage-illusion is so important, and so many practical errors and false criticisms may arise, and indeed have arisen, either from reasoning on it as actual delusion (the strange notion, on which the French critics built up their theory, and on which the French poets justify the construction of their tragedies), or from denying it altogether (which seems the end of Dr. Johnson's reasoning, and which, as extremes meet, would lead to the very same consequences, by excluding whatever would not be judged probable by us in our coolest state of feeling, with all our faculties in even balance), that these few remarks will, I hope, be pardoned, if they should serve either to explain or to illustrate the point. For not only are we never absolutely deluded—or any thing like it, but the attempt to cause the highest delusion possible to beings in their senses sitting in a theatre, is a gross fault, incident only to low minds, which, feeling that they cannot affect the heart or head permanently, endeavour to call forth the momentary affections. There ought never to be more pain than is compatible with coexisting pleasure, and to be amply repaid by thought.

Shakespeare found the infant stage demanding an intermixture of ludicrous character as imperiously as that of Greece did the chorus, and high language accordant. And there are many advantages in this;—a greater assimilation to nature, a greater scope of power, more truths, and more feelings;—the effects of contrast, as in Lear and the Fool; and especially this, that the true language of passion becomes sufficiently elevated by your having previously heard, in the same piece, the lighter conversation of men under no strong emotion. The very nakedness of the stage, too, was advantageous,—for the drama thence became something between recitation and a representation; and the absence or paucity of scenes allowed a freedom from the laws of unity of place and unity of time, the observance of which must either confine the drama to as few subjects as may be counted on the fingers, or involve gross improbabilities, far more striking than the violation would have caused. Thence, also, was precluded the danger of a false ideal,—of aiming at more than what is possible on the whole. What play of the ancients, with reference to their ideal, does not hold out more glaring absurdities than any in Shakespeare? On the Greek plan a man could more easily be a poet than a dramatist; upon our plan more easily a dramatist than a poet.

<<span id="filepos0037913103"> a> The Drama Generally, And Public Taste.

Unaccustomed to address such an audience, and having lost by a long interval of confinement the advantages of my former short schooling, I had miscalculated in my last Lecture the proportion of my matter to my time, and by bad economy and unskilful management, the several heads of my discourse failed in making the entire performance correspond with the promise publicly circulated in the weekly annunciation of the subjects to be treated. It would indeed have been wiser in me, and perhaps better on the whole, if I had caused my Lectures to be announced only as continuations of the main subject. But if I be, as perforce I must be, gratified by the recollection of whatever has appeared to give you pleasure, I am conscious of something better, though less flattering, a sense of unfeigned gratitude for your forbearance with my defects. Like affectionate guardians, you see without disgust the awkwardness, and witness with sympathy the growing pains, of a youthful endeavour, and look forward with a hope, which is its own reward, to the contingent results of practice—to its intellectual maturity.

In my last address I defined poetry to be the art, or whatever better term our language may afford, of representing external nature and human thoughts, both relatively to human affections, so as to cause the production of as great immediate pleasure in each part, as is compatible with the largest possible sum of pleasure on the whole. Now this definition applies equally to painting and music as to poetry; and in truth the term poetry is alike applicable to all three. The vehicle alone constitutes the difference; and the term "poetry" is rightly applied by eminence to measured words, only because the sphere of their action is far wider, the power of giving permanence to them much more certain, and incomparably greater the facility, by which men, not defective by nature or disease, may be enabled to derive habitual pleasure and instruction from them. On my mentioning these considerations to a painter of great genius, who had been, from a most honourable enthusiasm, extolling his own art, he was so struck with their truth, that he exclaimed, "I want no other arguments;—poetry, that is, verbal poetry, must be the greatest; all that proves final causes in the world, proves this; it would be shocking to think otherwise!"—And in truth, deeply, O! far more than words can express, as I venerate the Last Judgment and the Prophets of Michel Angelo Buonarotti,—yet the very pain which I repeatedly felt as I lost myself in gazing upon them, the painful consideration that their having been painted in *fresco* was the sole cause that they had not been abandoned to all the accidents of a dangerous transportation to a distant capital, and that the same caprice, which made the Neapolitan soldiery destroy all the exquisite masterpieces on the walls of the church of *Trinitado Monte* , after the retreat of their antagonist barbarians, might as easily have made vanish the rooms and open gallery of Raffael, and the yet more unapproachable wonders of the sublime Florentine in the Sixtine Chapel, forced upon my mind the reflection: How grateful the human race ought to be that the works of Euclid, Newton, Plato, Milton, Shakespeare, are not subjected to similar contingencies,—that they and their fellows, and the great, though inferior, peerage of undying intellect, are secured;—secured even from a second irruption of Goths and Vandals, in addition to many other safeguards, by the vast empire of English language, laws, and religion founded in America, through the overflow of the power and the virtue of my country;—and that now the great and certain works of genuine fame can only cease to act for mankind, when men themselves cease to be men, or when the planet on which they exist, shall have altered its relations, or have ceased to be. Lord Bacon, in the language of the gods, if I may use an Homeric phrase, has expressed a similar thought:—

"Lastly, leaving the vulgar arguments, that by learning man excelleth man in that wherein man excelleth beasts; that by learning man ascendeth to the heavens and their motions, where in body he cannot come, and the like; let us conclude with the dignity and excellency of knowledge and learning in that whereunto man's nature doth most aspire, which is immortality or continuance: for to this tendeth generation, and raising of houses and families; to this tend buildings, foundations, and monuments; to this tendeth the desire of memory, fame, and celebration, and in effect the strength of all other human desires. We see then how far the monuments of wit and learning are more durable than the monuments of power, or of the hands. For have not the verses of Homer continued twenty-five hundred years, or more, without the loss of a syllable or letter; during which time, infinite palaces, temples, castles, cities, have been decayed and demolished? It is not possible to have the true pictures or statues of Cyrus, Alexander, Cæsar; no, nor of the kings or great personages of much later years; for the originals cannot last, and the copies cannot but lose of the life and truth. But the images of men's wits and knowledges remain in books, exempted from the wrong of time, and capable of perpetual renovation. Neither are they fitly to be called images, because they generate still, and cast their seeds in the minds of others, provoking and causing infinite actions and opinions in succeeding ages: so that, if the invention of the ship was thought so noble, which carrieth riches and commodities from place to place, and consociateth the most remote regions in participation of their fruits; how much more are letters to be magnified, which, as ships, pass through the vast seas of time, and make ages so distant to participate of the wisdom, illuminations, and inventions, the one of the other?”

But let us now consider what the drama should be. And first, it is not a copy, but an imitation, of nature. This is the universal principle of the fine arts. In all well laid out grounds what delight do we feel from that balance and antithesis of feelings and thoughts! How natural! we say;—but the very wonder that caused the exclamation, implies that we perceived art at the same moment. We catch the hint from nature itself. Whenever in mountains or cataracts we discover a likeness to any thing artificial which yet we know is not artificial—what pleasure! And so it is in appearances known to be artificial, which appear to be natural. This applies in due degrees, regulated by steady good sense, from a clump of trees to the *Paradise Lost* or *Othello* . It would be easy to apply it to painting and even, though with greater abstraction of thought, and by more subtle yet equally just analogies—to music. But this belongs to others; suffice it that one great principle is common to all the fine arts, a principle which probably is the condition of all consciousness, without which we should feel and imagine only by discontinuous moments, and be plants or brute animals instead of men;—I mean that ever-varying balance, or balancing, of images, notions, or feelings, conceived as in opposition to each other;—in short, the perception of identity and contrariety; the least degree of which constitutes likeness, the greatest absolute difference; but the infinite gradations between these two form all the play and all the interest of our intellectual and moral being, till it leads us to a feeling and an object more awful than it seems to me compatible with even the present subject to utter aloud, though I am most desirous to suggest it. For there alone are all things at once different and the same; there alone, as the principle of all things, does distinction exist unaided by division; there are will and reason, succession of time and unmoving eternity, infinite change and ineffable rest!—

“Return Alpheus! the dread voice is past

Which shrunk thy streams!”

——“Thou honour'd flood,

Smooth-*flowing* Avon, crown'd with vocal reeds,

That strain I heard, was of a higher mood!—

But now my *voice* proceeds.”

We may divide a dramatic poet's characteristics before we enter into the component merits of any one work, and with reference only to those things which are to be the materials of all, into language, passion, and character; always bearing in mind that these must act and react on each other,—the language inspired by the passion, and the language and the passion modified and differenced by the character. To the production of the highest excellencies in these three, there are requisite in the mind of the author;—good sense, talent, sensibility, imagination;—and to the perfection of a work we should add two faculties of lesser importance, yet necessary for the ornaments and foliage of the column and the roof—fancy and a quick sense of beauty.

As to language;—it cannot be supposed that the poet should make his characters say all that they would, or that, his whole drama considered, each scene, or paragraph should be such as, on cool examination, we can conceive it likely that men in such situations would say, in that order, or with that perfection. And yet, according to my feelings, it is a very inferior kind of poetry, in which, as in the French tragedies, men are made to talk in a style which few indeed even of the wittiest can be supposed to converse in, and which both is, and on a moment's reflection appears to be, the natural produce of the hot-bed of vanity, namely, the closet of an author, who is actuated originally by a desire to excite surprise and wonderment at his own superiority to other men,—instead of having felt so deeply on certain subjects, or in consequence of certain imaginations, as to make it almost a necessity of his nature to seek for sympathy,—no doubt, with that honourable desire of permanent action, which distinguishes genius.—Where then is the difference?—In this that each part should be proportionate, though the whole may be perhaps, impossible. At all events, it should be compatible with sound sense and logic in the mind of the poet himself.

It is to be lamented that we judge of books by books, instead of referring what we read to our own experience. One great use of books is to make their contents a motive for observation. The German tragedies have in some respects been justly ridiculed. In them the dramatist often becomes a novelist in his directions to the actors, and thus degrades tragedy into pantomime. Yet still the consciousness of the poet's mind must be diffused over that of the reader or spectator; but he himself, according to his genius, elevates us, and by being always in keeping, prevents us from perceiving any strangeness, though we feel great exultation. Many different kinds of style may be admirable, both in different men, and in different parts of the same poem.

See the different language which strong feelings may justify in Shylock, and learn from Shakespeare's conduct of that character the terrible force of every plain and calm diction, when known to proceed from a resolved and impassioned man.

It is especially with reference to the drama, and its characteristics in any given nation, or at any particular period, that the dependence of genius on the public taste becomes a matter of the deepest importance. I do not mean that taste which springs merely from caprice or fashionable imitation, and which, in fact, genius can, and by degrees will, create for itself; but that which arises out of wide-grasping and heart-enrooted causes, which is epidemic, and in the very air that all breathe. This it is which kills, or withers, or corrupts. Socrates, indeed, might walk arm in arm with Hygeia, whilst pestilence, with a thousand furies running to and fro, and clashing against each other in a complexity and agglomeration of horrors, was shooting her darts of fire and venom all around him. Even such was Milton; yea, and such, in spite of all that has been babbled by his critics in pretended excuse for his damning, because for them too profound excellencies,

—such was Shakespeare. But alas! the exceptions prove the rule. For who will dare to force his way out of the crowd,—not of the mere vulgar,—but of the vain and banded aristocracy of intellect, and presume to join the almost supernatural beings that stand by themselves aloof?

Of this diseased epidemic influence there are two forms especially preclusive of tragic worth. The first is the necessary growth of a sense and love of the ludicrous, and a morbid sensibility of the assimilative power,—an inflammation produced by cold and weakness,—which in the boldest bursts of passion will lie in wait for a jeer at any phrase, that may have an accidental coincidence in the mere words with something base or trivial. For instance,—to express woods, not on a plain, but clothing a hill, which overlooks a valley, or dell, or river, or the sea,—the trees rising one above another, as the spectators in an ancient theatre,—I know no other word in our language (bookish and pedantic terms out of the question), but *hanging* woods, the *sylvæ superimpendentes* of Catullus; yet let some wit call out in a slang tone,—"the gallows!" and a peal of laughter would damn the play. Hence it is that so many dull pieces have had a decent run, only because nothing unusual above, or absurd below, mediocrity furnished an occasion,—a spark for the explosive materials collected behind the orchestra. But it would take a volume of no ordinary size, however laconically the sense were expressed, if it were meant to instance the effects, and unfold all the causes, of this disposition upon the moral, intellectual, and even physical character of a people, with its influences on domestic life and individual deportment. A good document upon this subject would be the history of Paris society and of French, that is, Parisian, literature from the commencement of the latter half of the reign of Louis XIV. to that of Buonaparte, compared with the preceding philosophy and poetry even of Frenchmen themselves.

The second form, or more properly, perhaps, another distinct cause, of this diseased disposition is matter of exultation to the philanthropist and philosopher, and of regret to the poet, the painter, and the statuary alone, and to them only as poets, painters, and statuaries;—namely, the security, the comparative equability, and ever increasing sameness of human life. Men are now so seldom thrown into wild circumstances, and violences of excitement, that the language of such states, the laws of association of feeling with thought, the starts and strange far-flights of the assimilative power on the slightest and least obvious likeness presented by thoughts, words, or objects,—these are all judged of by authority, not by actual experience,—by what men have been accustomed to regard as symbols of these states, and not the natural symbols, or self-manifestations of them.

Even so it is in the language of man, and in that of nature. The sound *sun* , or the figures *s* , *u* , *n* , are purely arbitrary modes of recalling the object, and for visual mere objects they are not only sufficient, but have infinite advantages from their very nothingness *per se* . But the language of nature is a subordinate *Logos* , that was in the beginning, and was with the thing it represented, and was the thing it represented.

Now the language of Shakespeare, in his *Lear* for instance, is a something intermediate between these two; or rather it is the former blended with the latter, —the arbitrary, not merely recalling the cold notion of the thing, but expressing the reality of it, and, as arbitrary language is an heir-loom of the human race, being itself a part of that which it manifests. What shall I deduce from the preceding positions? Even this,—the appropriate, the never to be too much valued advantage of the theatre, if only the actors were what we know they have been,—a delightful, yet most effectual remedy for this dead palsy of the public mind. What would appear mad or ludicrous in a book, when presented to the senses under the form of reality, and with the truth of nature, supplies a species of actual experience. This is indeed the special privilege of a great actor over a great poet. No part was ever played in perfection, but nature justified herself in the hearts of all her children, in what state soever they were, short of absolute moral exhaustion, or downright stupidity. There is no time given to ask questions, or to pass judgments; we are taken by storm, and, though in the histrionic art many a clumsy counterfeit, by caricature of one or two features, may gain applause as a fine likeness, yet never was the very thing rejected as a counterfeit. O! when I think of the inexhaustible mine of virgin treasure in our Shakespeare, that I have been almost daily reading him since I was ten years old, —that the thirty intervening years have been unintermittingly and not fruitlessly employed in the study of the Greek, Latin, English, Italian, Spanish, and German *belle lettrists* , and the last fifteen years in addition, far more intensely in the analysis of the laws of life and reason as they exist in man,—and that upon every step I have made forward in taste, in acquisition of facts from history or my own observation, and in knowledge of the different laws of being and their apparent exceptions, from accidental collision of disturbing forces,—that at every new accession of information, after every successful exercise of meditation, and every fresh presentation of experience, I have unfailingly discovered a proportionate increase of wisdom and intuition in Shakespeare;—when I know this, and know too, that by a conceivable and possible, though hardly to be expected, arrangement of the British theatres, not all, indeed, but a large, a very large, proportion of this indefinite all—(round which no comprehension has yet drawn the line of circumscription, so as to say to itself, “I have seen the whole”)—might be sent into the heads and hearts—into the very souls of the mass of mankind, to whom, except by this living comment and interpretation, it must remain for ever a sealed volume, a deep well without a wheel or a windlass;—it seems to me a pardonable enthusiasm to steal away from sober likelihood, and share in so rich a feast in the faery world of possibility! Yet even in the grave cheerfulness of a circumspect hope, much, very much, might be done; enough, assuredly, to furnish a kind and strenuous nature with ample motives for the attempt to effect what may be effected.

<<span id="filepos0037934733"> a> Shakespeare, A Poet Generally.

Clothed in radiant armour, and authorized by titles sure and manifold, as a poet, Shakespeare came forward to demand the throne of fame, as the dramatic poet of England. His excellences compelled even his contemporaries to seat him on that throne, although there were giants in those days contending for the same honour. Hereafter I would fain endeavour to make out the title of the English drama as created by, and existing in, Shakespeare, and its right to the supremacy of dramatic excellence in general. But he had shown himself a poet, previously to his appearance as a dramatic poet; and had no *Lear* , no *Othello* , no *Henry IV.* , no *Twelfth Night* ever appeared, we must have admitted that Shakespeare possessed the chief, if not every, requisite of a poet,—deep feeling and exquisite sense of beauty, both as exhibited to the eye in the combinations of form, and to the ear in sweet and appropriate melody; that these feelings were under the command of his own will; that in his very first productions he projected his mind out of his own particular being, and felt, and made others feel, on subjects no way connected with himself, except by force of contemplation and that sublime faculty by which a great mind becomes that on which it meditates. To this must be added that affectionate love of nature and natural objects, without which no man could have observed so steadily, or painted so truly and passionately, the very minutest beauties of the external world:—

“And when thou hast on foot the purblind hare,

Mark the poor wretch; to overshoot his troubles,

How he outruns the wind, and with what care,

He cranks and crosses with a thousand doubles;

The many musits through the which he goes

Are like a labyrinth to amaze his foes.

“Sometimes he runs among the flock of sheep,

To make the cunning hounds mistake their smell;

And sometime where earth-delving conies keep,

To stop the loud pursuers in their yell;

And sometime sorteth with the herd of deer:

Danger deviseth shifts, wit waits on fear.

“For there his smell with others' being mingled,

The hot scent-snuffing hounds are driven to doubt,

Ceasing their clamorous cry, till they have singled

With much ado, the cold fault cleanly out,

Then do they spend their mouths; echo replies,

As if another chase were in the skies.

“By this poor Wat far off, upon a hill,

Stands on his hinder legs with listening ear,

To harken if his foes pursue him still:

Anon their loud alarums he doth hear,

And now his grief may be compared well

To one sore-sick, that hears the passing bell.

“Then shalt thou see the dew-bedabbled wretch

Turn, and return, indenting with the way:

Each envious briar his weary legs doth scratch,

Each shadow makes him stop, each murmur stay.

For misery is trodden on by many,

And being low, never relieved by any.”

Venus and Adonis.

And the preceding description:—

“But lo! from forth a copse that neighbours by,

A breeding jennet, lusty, young and proud,” &c.

is much more admirable, but in parts less fitted for quotation.

Moreover Shakespeare had shown that he possessed fancy, considered as the faculty of bringing together images dissimilar in the main by some one point or more of likeness, as in such a passage as this:—

“Full gently now she takes him by the hand, A lily prisoned in a jail of snow,

Or ivory in an alabaster band:

So white a friend ingirts so white a foe!"—*Ib.*

And still mounting the intellectual ladder, he had as unequivocally proved the indwelling in his mind of imagination, or the power by which one image or feeling is made to modify many others, and by a sort of fusion to force many into one;—that which afterwards showed itself in such might and energy in Lear, where the deep anguish of a father spreads the feeling of ingratitude and cruelty over the very elements of heaven;—and which, combining many circumstances into one moment of consciousness, tends to produce that ultimate end of all human thought and human feeling, unity, and thereby the reduction of the spirit to its principle and fountain, who is alone truly one. Various are the workings of this the greatest faculty of the human mind, both passionate and tranquil. In its tranquil and purely pleasurable operation, it acts chiefly by creating out of many things, as they would have appeared in the description of an ordinary mind, detailed in unimpassioned succession, a oneness, even as nature, the greatest of poets, acts upon us, when we open our eyes upon an extended prospect. Thus the flight of Adonis in the dusk of the evening:—

"Look! how a bright star shooteth from the sky;

So glides he in the night from Venus' eye!"

How many images and feelings are here brought together without effort and without discord, in the beauty of Adonis, the rapidity of his flight, the yearning, yet hopelessness, of the enamoured gazer, while a shadowy ideal character is thrown over the whole! Or this power acts by impressing the stamp of humanity, and of human feelings, on inanimate or mere natural objects:—

"Lo! here the gentle lark, weary of rest,

From his moist cabinet mounts up on high,

And wakes the morning, from whose silver breast

The sun ariseth in his majesty,

Who doth the world so gloriously behold,

The cedar-tops and hills seem burnish'd gold.”

Or again, it acts by so carrying on the eye of the reader as to make him almost lose the consciousness of words,—to make him see every thing flashed, as Wordsworth has grandly and appropriately said:—

“*Flashed* upon the inward eye

Which is the bliss of solitude;”—

and this without exciting any painful or laborious attention, without any anatomy of description (a fault not uncommon in descriptive poetry),—but with the sweetness and easy movement of nature. This energy is an absolute essential of poetry, and of itself would constitute a poet, though not one of the highest class;—it is, however, a most hopeful symptom, and the *Venus and Adonis* is one continued specimen of it.

In this beautiful poem there is an endless activity of thought in all the possible associations of thought with thought, thought with feeling, or with words, of feelings with feelings, and of words with words.

“Even as the sun, with purple-colour'd face,

Had ta'en his last leave of the weeping morn,

Rose-cheek'd Adonis hied him to the chase:

Hunting he loved, but love he laughed to scorn.

Sick-thoughted Venus makes amain unto him,

And like a bold-faced suitor 'gins to woo him.”

Remark the humanizing imagery and circumstances of the first two lines, and the activity of thought in the play of words in the fourth line. The whole stanza presents at once the time, the appearance of the morning, and the two persons distinctly characterised, and in six simple lines puts the reader in possession of the whole argument of the poem.

“Over one arm the lusty courser's rein,

Under the other was the tender boy,

Who blush'd and pouted in a dull disdain,

With leaden appetite, unapt to toy,

She red and hot, as coals of glowing fire,

He red for shame, but frosty to desire:”—

This stanza and the two following afford good instances of that poetic power, which I mentioned above, of making every thing present to the imagination—both the forms, and the passions which modify those forms, either actually, as in the representations of love or anger, or other human affections; or imaginatively, by the different manner in which inanimate objects, or objects unimpassioned themselves, are caused to be seen by the mind in moments of strong excitement, and according to the kind of the excitement,—whether of jealousy, or rage, or love, in the only appropriate sense of the word, or of the lower impulses of our nature, or finally of the poetic feeling itself. It is, perhaps, chiefly in the power of producing and reproducing the latter that the poet stands distinct.

The subject of the *Venus and Adonis* is unpleasing; but the poem itself is for that very reason the more illustrative of Shakespeare. There are men who can write passages of deepest pathos and even sublimity on circumstances personal to themselves and stimulative of their own passions; but they are not, therefore, on this account poets. Read that magnificent burst of woman's patriotism and exultation, *Deborah's Song of Victory* ; it is glorious, but nature is the poet there. It is quite another matter to become all things and yet remain the same,—to make the changeful god be felt in the river, the lion, and the flame;—this it is, that is the true imagination. Shakespeare writes in this poem, as if he were of another planet, charming you to gaze on the movements of Venus and Adonis, as you would on the twinkling dances of two vernal butterflies.

Finally, in this poem and the *Rape of Lucrece* , Shakespeare gave ample proof of his possession of a most profound, energetic, and philosophical mind, without which he might have pleased, but could not have been a great dramatic poet. Chance and the necessity of his genius combined to lead him to the drama his proper province: in his conquest of which we should consider both the difficulties which opposed him, and the advantages by which he was assisted.

<<span id="filepos0037951788"> a> Shakespeare's Judgment equal to his Genius.

Thus then Shakespeare appears, from his *Venus and Adonis* and *Rape of Lucrece* alone, apart from all his great works, to have possessed all the conditions of the true poet. Let me now proceed to destroy, as far as may be in my power, the popular notion that he was a great dramatist by mere instinct, that he grew immortal in his own despite, and sank below men of second or third rate power, when he attempted aught beside the drama—even as bees construct their cells and manufacture their honey to admirable perfection; but would in vain attempt to build a nest. Now this mode of reconciling a compelled sense of inferiority with a feeling of pride, began in a few pedants, who having read that Sophocles was the great model of tragedy, and Aristotle the infallible dictator of its rules, and finding that the *Lear* , *Hamlet* , *Othello* and other masterpieces were neither in imitation of Sophocles, nor in obedience to Aristotle,—and not having (with one or two exceptions) the courage to affirm, that the delight which their country received from generation to generation, in defiance of the alterations of circumstances and habits, was wholly groundless,—took upon them, as a happy medium and refuge, to talk of Shakespeare as a sort of beautiful *lusus naturæ* , a delightful monster,—wild, indeed, and without taste or judgment, but like the inspired idiots so much venerated in the East, uttering, amid the strangest follies, the sublimest truths. In nine places out of ten in which I find his awful name mentioned, it is with some epithet of “wild,” “irregular,” “pure child of nature,” &c. If all this be true, we must submit to it; though to a thinking mind it cannot but be painful to find any excellence, merely human, thrown out of all human analogy, and thereby leaving us neither rules for imitation, nor motives to imitate;—but if false, it is a dangerous falsehood;—for it affords a refuge to secret self-conceit,—enables a vain man at once to escape his reader's indignation by general swoln panegyrics, and merely by his *ipse dixit* to treat, as contemptible, what he has not intellect enough to comprehend, or soul to feel, without assigning any reason, or referring his opinion to any demonstrative principle;—thus leaving Shakespeare as a sort of grand Lama, adored indeed, and his very excrements prized as relics, but with no authority or real influence. I grieve that every late voluminous edition of his works would enable me to substantiate the present charge with a variety of facts, one-tenth of which would of themselves exhaust the time allotted to me. Every critic, who has or has not made a collection of black letter books—in itself a useful and respectable amusement,—puts on the seven-league boots of self-opinion, and strides at once from an illustrator into a supreme judge, and blind and deaf, fills his three-ounce phial at the waters of Niagara; and determines positively the greatness of the cataract to be neither more nor less than his three-ounce phial has been able to receive.

I think this a very serious subject. It is my earnest desire—my passionate endeavour—to enforce at various times and by various arguments and instances the close and reciprocal connection of just taste with pure morality. Without that acquaintance with the heart of man, or that docility and childlike gladness to be made acquainted with it, which those only can have, who dare look at their own hearts—and that with a steadiness which religion only has the power of reconciling with sincere humility;—without this, and the modesty produced by it, I am deeply convinced that no man, however wide his erudition, however patient his antiquarian researches, can possibly understand, or be worthy of understanding, the writings of Shakespeare.

Assuredly that criticism of Shakespeare will alone be genial which is reverential. The Englishman who, without reverence—a proud and affectionate reverence—can utter the name of William Shakespeare, stands disqualified for the office of critic. He wants one at least of the very senses, the language of which he is to employ, and will discourse at best but as a blind man, while the whole harmonious creation of light and shade with all its subtle interchange of deepening and dissolving colours rises in silence to the silent *fiat* of the uprising Apollo. However inferior in ability I may be to some who have followed me, I own I am proud that I was the first in time who publicly demonstrated to the full extent of the position, that the supposed irregularity and extravagances of Shakespeare were the mere dreams of a pedantry that arraigned the eagle because it had not the dimensions of the swan. In all the successive courses of lectures delivered by me, since my first attempt at the Royal Institution, it has been, and it still remains, my object, to prove that in all points from the most important to the most minute, the judgment of Shakespeare is commensurate with his genius,—nay, that his genius reveals itself in his judgment, as in its most exalted form. And the more gladly do I recur to this subject from the clear conviction, that to judge aright, and with distinct consciousness of the grounds of our judgment, concerning the works of Shakespeare, implies the power and the means of judging rightly of all other works of intellect, those of abstract science alone excepted.

It is a painful truth, that not only individuals, but even whole nations, are ofttimes so enslaved to the habits of their education and immediate circumstances, as not to judge disinterestedly even on those subjects, the very pleasure arising from which consists in its disinterestedness, namely, on subjects of taste and polite literature. Instead of deciding concerning their own modes and customs by any rule of reason, nothing appears rational, becoming, or beautiful to them, but what coincides with the peculiarities of their education. In this narrow circle, individuals may attain to exquisite discrimination, as the French critics have done in their own literature; but a true critic can no more be such without placing himself on some central point, from which he may command the whole,—that is, some general rule, which, founded in reason, or the faculties common to all men, must therefore apply to each,—than an astronomer can explain the movements of the solar system without taking his stand in the sun. And let me remark, that this will not tend to produce despotism, but, on the contrary, true tolerance, in the critic. He will, indeed, require, as the spirit and substance of a work, something true in human nature itself, and independent of all circumstances; but in the mode of applying it, he will estimate genius and judgment according to the felicity with which the imperishable soul of intellect shall have adapted itself to the age, the place, and the existing manners. The error he will expose, lies in reversing this, and holding up the mere circumstances as perpetual to the utter neglect of the power which can alone animate them. For art cannot exist without, or apart from nature; and what has man of his own to give to his fellow man, but his own thoughts and feelings, and his observations, so far as they are modified by his own thoughts or feelings?

Let me, then, once more submit this question to minds emancipated alike from national, or party, or sectarian prejudice:—Are the plays of Shakespeare works of rude uncultivated genius, in which the splendour of the parts compensates, if aught can compensate, for the barbarous shapelessness and irregularity of the whole?—Or is the form equally admirable with the matter, and the judgment of the great poet not less deserving our wonder than his genius?—Or, again, to repeat the question in other words:—is Shakespeare a great dramatic poet on account only of those beauties and excellences which he possesses in common with the ancients, but with diminished claims to our love and honour to the full extent of his differences from them?—Or are these very differences additional proofs of poetic wisdom, at once results and symbols of living power as contrasted with lifeless mechanism—of free and rival originality as contradistinguished from servile imitation, or, more accurately, a blind copying of effects, instead of a true imitation of the essential principles?—Imagine not that I am about to oppose genius to rules. No! the comparative value of these rules is the very cause to be tried. The spirit of poetry, like all other living powers, must of necessity circumscribe itself by rules, were it only to unite power with beauty. It must embody in order to reveal itself; but a living body is of necessity an organized one; and what is organization but the connection of parts in and for a whole, so that each part is at once end and means?—This is no discovery of criticism;—it is a necessity of the human mind; and all nations have felt and obeyed it, in the invention of metre, and measured sounds, as the vehicle and *involucrum* of poetry—itself a fellow-growth from the same life,—even as the bark is to the tree!

No work of true genius dares want its appropriate form, neither indeed is there any danger of this. As it must not, so genius cannot, be lawless; for it is even this that constitutes it genius—the power of acting creatively under laws of its own origination. How then comes it that not only single *Zoili* , but whole nations have combined in unhesitating condemnation of our great dramatist, as a sort of African nature, rich in beautiful monsters—as a wild heath where islands of fertility look the greener from the surrounding waste, where the loveliest plants now shine out among unsightly weeds, and now are choked by their parasitic growth, so intertwined that we cannot disentangle the weed without snapping the flower?—In this statement I have had no reference to the vulgar abuse of Voltaire, save as far as his charges are coincident with the decisions of Shakespeare's own commentators and (so they would tell you) almost idolatrous admirers. The true ground of the mistake lies in the confounding mechanical regularity with organic form. The form is mechanic, when on any given material we impress a pre-determined form, not necessarily arising out of the properties of the material;—as when to a mass of wet clay we give whatever shape we wish it to retain when hardened. The organic form, on the other hand is innate; it shapes, as it developes, itself from within, and the fulness of its development is one and the same with the perfection of its outward form. Such as the life is, such is the form. Nature, the prime genial artist, inexhaustible in diverse powers, is equally inexhaustible in forms;—each exterior is the physiognomy of the being within,—its true image reflected and thrown out from the concave mirror;—and even such is the appropriate excellence of her chosen poet, of our own Shakespeare,—himself a nature humanized, a genial understanding directing self-consciously a power and an implicit wisdom deeper even than our consciousness.

I greatly dislike beauties and selections in general; but as proof positive of his unrivalled excellence, I should like to try Shakespeare by this criterion. Make out your amplest catalogue of all the human faculties, as reason or the moral law, the will, the feeling of the coincidence of the two (a feeling *sui generis et demonstratio demonstrationum*) called the conscience, the understanding or prudence, wit, fancy, imagination, judgment,—and then of the objects on which these are to be employed, as the beauties, the terrors, and the seeming caprices of nature, the realities and the capabilities, that is, the actual and the ideal, of the human mind, conceived as an individual or as a social being, as in innocence or in guilt, in a play-paradise, or in a war-field of temptation;—and then compare with Shakespeare under each of these heads all or any of the writers in prose and verse that have ever lived! Who, that is competent to judge, doubts the result?—And ask your own hearts—ask your own common-sense—to conceive the possibility of this man being—I say not, the drunken savage of that wretched sciolist, whom Frenchmen, to their shame, have honoured before their elder and better worthies,—but the anomalous, the wild, the irregular, genius of our daily criticism! What! are we to have miracles in sport?—Or, I speak reverently, does God choose idiots by whom to convey divine truths to man?

<<span id="filepos0037965888"> a> Recapitulation, And

Summary Of the Characteristics of Shakespeare's Dramas.

In lectures, of which amusement forms a large part of the object, there are some peculiar difficulties. The architect places his foundation out of sight, and the musician tunes his instrument before he makes his appearance; but the lecturer has to try his chords in the presence of the assembly; an operation not likely, indeed, to produce much pleasure, but yet indispensably necessary to a right understanding of the subject to be developed.

Poetry in essence is as familiar to barbarous as to civilized nations. The Laplander and the savage Indian are cheered by it as well as the inhabitants of London and Paris;—its spirit takes up and incorporates surrounding materials, as a plant clothes itself with soil and climate, whilst it exhibits the working of a vital principle within independent of all accidental circumstances. And to judge with fairness of an author's works, we ought to distinguish what is inward and essential from what is outward and circumstantial. It is essential to poetry that it be simple, and appeal to the elements and primary laws of our nature; that it be sensuous, and by its imagery elicit truth at a flash; that it be impassioned, and be able to move our feelings and awaken our affections. In comparing different poets with each other, we should inquire which have brought into the fullest play our imagination and our reason, or have created the greatest excitement and produced the completest harmony. If we consider great exquisiteness of language and sweetness of metre alone, it is impossible to deny to Pope the character of a delightful writer; but whether he be a poet, must depend upon our definition of the word; and, doubtless, if everything that pleases be poetry, Pope's satires and epistles must be poetry. This, I must say, that poetry, as distinguished from other modes of composition, does not rest in metre, and that it is not poetry, if it make no appeal to our passions or our imagination. One character belongs to all true poets, that they write from a principle within, not originating in any thing without; and that the true poet's work in its form, its shapings, and its modifications, is distinguished from all other works that assume to belong to the class of poetry, as a natural from an artificial flower, or as the mimic garden of a child from an enamelled meadow. In the former the flowers are broken from their stems and stuck into the ground; they are beautiful to the eye and fragrant to the sense, but their colours soon fade, and their odour is transient as the smile of the planter;—while the meadow may be visited again and again with renewed delight; its beauty is innate in the soil, and its bloom is of the freshness of nature.

The next ground of critical judgment, and point of comparison, will be as to how far a given poet has been influenced by accidental circumstances. As a living poet must surely write, not for the ages past, but for that in which he lives, and those which are to follow, it is on the one hand natural that he should not violate, and on the other necessary that he should not depend on, the mere manners and modes of his day. See how little does Shakespeare leave us to regret that he was born in his particular age! The great æra in modern times was what is called the Restoration of Letters;—the ages preceding it are called the dark ages; but it would be more wise, perhaps, to call them the ages in which we were in the dark. It is usually overlooked that the supposed dark period was not universal, but partial and successive, or alternate; that the dark age of England was not the dark age of Italy, but that one country was in its light and vigour, whilst another was in its gloom and bondage. But no sooner had the Reformation sounded through Europe like the blast of an archangel's trumpet, than from king to peasant there arose an enthusiasm for knowledge; the discovery of a manuscript became the subject of an embassy; Erasmus read by moonlight, because he could not afford a torch, and begged a penny, not for the love of charity, but for the love of learning. The three great points of attention were religion, morals, and taste; men of genius, as well as men of learning, who in this age need to be so widely distinguished, then alike became copyists of the ancients; and this, indeed, was the only way by which the taste of mankind could be improved, or their understandings informed. Whilst Dante imagined himself a humble follower of Virgil, and Ariosto of Homer, they were both unconscious of that greater power working within them, which in many points carried them beyond their supposed originals. All great discoveries bear the stamp of the age in which they are made;—hence we perceive the effects of the purer religion of the moderns visible for the most part in their lives; and in reading their works we should not content ourselves with the mere narratives of events long since passed, but should learn to apply their maxims and conduct to ourselves.

Having intimated that times and manners lend their form and pressure to genius, let me once more draw a slight parallel between the ancient and modern stage,—the stages of Greece and of England. The Greeks were polytheists; their religion was local; almost the only object of all their knowledge, art, and taste, was their gods; and, accordingly, their productions were, if the expression may be allowed, statuesque, whilst those of the moderns are picturesque. The Greeks reared a structure, which, in its parts, and as a whole, filled the mind with the calm and elevated impression of perfect beauty, and symmetrical proportion. The moderns also produced a whole—a more striking whole; but it was by blending materials, and fusing the parts together. And as the Pantheon is to York Minster or Westminster Abbey, so is Sophocles compared with Shakespeare; in the one a completeness, a satisfaction, an excellence, on which the mind rests with complacency; in the other a multitude of interlaced materials, great and little, magnificent and mean, accompanied, indeed, with the sense of a falling short of perfection, and yet, at the same time, so promising of our social and individual progression, that we would not, if we could, exchange it for that repose of the mind which dwells on the forms of symmetry in the acquiescent admiration of grace. This general characteristic of the ancient and modern drama might be illustrated by a parallel of the ancient and modern music;—the one consisting of melody arising from a succession only of pleasing sounds,—the modern embracing harmony also, the result of combination, and the effect of a whole.

I have said, and I say it again, that great as was the genius of Shakespeare, his judgment was at least equal to it. Of this any one will be convinced, who attentively considers those points in which the dramas of Greece and England differ, from the dissimilitude of circumstances by which each was modified and influenced. The Greek stage had its origin in the ceremonies of a sacrifice, such as of the goat to Bacchus, whom we most erroneously regard as merely the jolly god of wine;—for among the ancients he was venerable, as the symbol of that power which acts without our consciousness in the vital energies of nature—the *vinum mundi* —as Apollo was that of the conscious agency of our intellectual being. The heroes of old, under the influences of this Bacchic enthusiasm, performed more than human actions; hence tales of the favourite champions soon passed into dialogue. On the Greek stage the chorus was always before the audience; the curtain was never dropped, as we should say; and change of place being therefore, in general, impossible, the absurd notion of condemning it merely as improbable in itself was never entertained by any one. If we can believe ourselves at Thebes in one act, we may believe ourselves at Athens in the next.

If a story lasts twenty-four hours or twenty-four years, it is equally improbable. There seems to be no just boundary but what the feelings prescribe. But on the Greek stage, where the same persons were perpetually before the audience, great judgment was necessary in venturing on any such change. The poets never, therefore, attempted to impose on the senses by bringing places to men, but they did bring men to places, as in the well-known instance in the *Eumenides* , where, during an evident retirement of the chorus from the orchestra, the scene is changed to Athens, and Orestes is first introduced in the temple of Minerva, and the chorus of Furies come in afterwards in pursuit of him.

In the Greek drama there were no formal divisions into scenes and acts; there were no means, therefore, of allowing for the necessary lapse of time between one part of the dialogue and another, and unity of time in a strict sense was, of course, impossible. To overcome that difficulty of accounting for time, which is effected on the modern stage by dropping a curtain, the judgment and great genius of the ancients supplied music and measured motion, and with the lyric ode filled up the vacuity. In the story of the *Agamemnon* of Æschylus, the capture of Troy is supposed to be announced by a fire lighted on the Asiatic shore, and the transmission of the signal by successive beacons to Mycenæ. The signal is first seen at the 21st line, and the herald from Troy itself enters at the 486th, and Agamemnon himself at the 783rd line. But the practical absurdity of this was not felt by the audience, who, in imagination stretched minutes into hours, while they listened to the lofty narrative odes of the chorus which almost entirely filled up the interspace. Another fact deserves attention here, namely, that regularly on the Greek stage a drama, or acted story, consisted in reality of three dramas, called together a trilogy, and performed consecutively in the course of one day. Now you may conceive a tragedy of Shakespeare's as a trilogy connected in one single representation. Divide *Lear* into three parts, and each would be a play with the ancients; or take the three Æschylean dramas of *Agamemnon* , and divide them into, or call them, as many acts, and they together would be one play. The first act would comprise the usurpation of Ægisthus, and the murder of Agamemnon; the second, the revenge of Orestes, and the murder of his mother; and the third, the penance and absolution of Orestes;—occupying a period of twenty-two years.

The stage in Shakespeare's time was a naked room with a blanket for a curtain; but he made it a field for monarchs. That law of unity, which has its foundations, not in the factitious necessity of custom, but in nature itself, the unity of feeling, is everywhere and at all times observed by Shakespeare in his plays. Read *Romeo and Juliet* ;—all is youth and spring;—youth with its follies, its virtues, its precipitancies;—spring with its odours, its flowers, and its transiency; it is one and the same feeling that commences, goes through, and ends the play. The old men, the Capulets and Montagues, are not common old men; they have an eagerness, a heartiness, a vehemence, the effect of spring; with Romeo, his change of passion, his sudden marriage, and his rash death, are all the effects of youth;—whilst in Juliet love has all that is tender and melancholy in the nightingale, all that is voluptuous in the rose, with whatever is sweet in the freshness of spring; but it ends with a long deep sigh like the last breeze of the Italian evening. This unity of feeling and character pervades every drama of Shakespeare.

It seems to me that his plays are distinguished from those of all other dramatic poets by the following characteristics:—

1. Expectation in preference to surprise. It is like the true reading of the passage—“God said, Let there be light, and there was *light* ;”—not, there *was* light. As the feeling with which we startle at a shooting star compared with that of watching the sunrise at the pre-established moment, such and so low is surprise compared with expectation.

2. Signal adherence to the great law of nature, that all opposites tend to attract and temper each other. Passion in Shakespeare generally displays libertinism, but involves morality; and if there are exceptions to this, they are, independently of their intrinsic value, all of them indicative of individual character, and, like the farewell admonitions of a parent, have an end beyond the parental relation. Thus the Countess's beautiful precepts to Bertram, by elevating her character, raise that of Helena her favourite, and soften down the point in her which Shakespeare does not mean us not to see, but to see and to forgive, and at length to justify. And so it is in Polonius, who is the personified memory of wisdom no longer actually possessed. This admirable character is always misrepresented on the stage. Shakespeare never intended to exhibit him as a buffoon; for although it was natural that Hamlet—a young man of fire and genius, detesting formality, and disliking Polonius on political grounds, as imagining that he had assisted his uncle in his usurpation—should express himself satirically, yet this must not be taken as exactly the poet's conception of him. In Polonius a certain induration of character had arisen from long habits of business; but take his advice to Laertes, and Ophelia's reverence for his memory, and we shall see that he was meant to be represented as a statesman somewhat past his faculties,—his recollections of life all full of wisdom, and showing a knowledge of human nature, whilst what immediately takes place before him, and escapes from him, is indicative of weakness.

But as in Homer all the deities are in armour, even Venus; so in Shakespeare all the characters are strong. Hence real folly and dulness are made by him the vehicles of wisdom. There is no difficulty for one being a fool to imitate a fool; but to be, remain, and speak like a wise man and a great wit, and yet so as to give a vivid representation of a veritable fool,—*hic labor, hoc opus est* . A drunken constable is not uncommon, nor hard to draw; but see and examine what goes to make up a Dogberry.

3. Keeping at all times in the high road of life. Shakespeare has no innocent adulteries, no interesting incests, no virtuous vice;—he never renders that amiable which religion and reason alike teach us to detest, or clothes impurity in the garb of virtue, like Beaumont and Fletcher, the Kotzebues of the day. Shakespeare's fathers are roused by ingratitude, his husbands stung by unfaithfulness; in him, in short, the affections are wounded in those points in which all may, nay, must, feel. Let the morality of Shakespeare be contrasted with that of the writers of his own, or the succeeding age, or of those of the present day, who boast their superiority in this respect. No one can dispute that the result of such a comparison is altogether in favour of Shakespeare;—even the letters of women of high rank in his age were often coarser than his writings. If he occasionally disgusts a keen sense of delicacy, he never injures the mind; he neither excites, nor flatters, passion, in order to degrade the subject of it; he does not use the faulty thing for a faulty purpose, nor carries on warfare against virtue, by causing wickedness to appear as no wickedness, through the medium of a morbid sympathy with the unfortunate. In Shakespeare vice never walks as in twilight; nothing is purposely out of its place;—he inverts not the order of nature and propriety,—does not make every magistrate a drunkard or glutton, nor every poor man meek, humane, and temperate; he has no benevolent butchers, nor any sentimental rat-catchers.

4. Independence of the dramatic interest on the plot. The interest in the plot is always in fact on account of the characters, not *vice versa* , as in almost all other writers; the plot is a mere canvass and no more. Hence arises the true justification of the same stratagem being used in regard to Benedict and Beatrice,—the vanity in each being alike. Take away from the *Much Ado about Nothing* all that which is not indispensable to the plot, either as having little to do with it, or, at best, like Dogberry and his comrades, forced into the service, when any other less ingeniously absurd watchmen and night-constables would have answered the mere necessities of the action;—take away Benedict, Beatrice, Dogberry, and the reaction of the former on the character of Hero,—and what will remain? In other writers the main agent of the plot is always the

prominent character; in Shakespeare it is so, or is not so, as the character is in itself calculated, or not calculated, to form the plot. Don John is the main-spring of the plot of this play; but he is merely shown and then withdrawn.

5. Independence of the interest on the story as the groundwork of the plot. Hence Shakespeare never took the trouble of inventing stories. It was enough for him to select from those that had been already invented or recorded such as had one or other, or both, of two recommendations, namely, suitableness to his particular purpose, and their being parts of popular tradition,—names of which we had often heard, and of their fortunes, and as to which all we wanted was, to see the man himself. So it is just the man himself—the Lear, the Shylock, the Richard—that Shakespeare makes us for the first time acquainted with. Omit the first scene in *Lear* , and yet everything will remain; so the first and second scenes in the *Merchant of Venice* . Indeed it is universally true.

6. Interfusion of the lyrical—that which in its very essence is poetical—not only with the dramatic, as in the plays of Metastasio, where at the end of the scene comes the *aria* as the *exit* speech of the character,—but also in and through the dramatic. Songs in Shakespeare are introduced as songs only, just as songs are in real life, beautifully as some of them are characteristic of the person who has sung or called for them, as Desdemona's “Willow,” and Ophelia's wild snatches, and the sweet carollings in *As You Like It* . But the whole of the *Midsummer Night's Dream* is one continued specimen of the dramatised lyrical. And observe how exquisitely the dramatic of Hotspur;—

“Marry, and I'm glad on't with all my heart;

I'd rather be a kitten and cry—mew.” &c.

melts away into the lyric of Mortimer;—

“I understand thy looks: that pretty Welsh

Which thou pourest down from these swelling heavens,

I am too perfect in,” &c.

Henry IV. part i. act iii, sc. 1.

7. The characters of the *dramatis personæ* , like those in real life, are to be

inferred by the reader;—they are not told to him. And it is well worth remarking that Shakespeare's characters, like those in real life, are very commonly misunderstood, and almost always understood by different persons in different ways. The causes are the same in either case. If you take only what the friends of the character say, you may be deceived, and still more so, if that which his enemies say; nay, even the character himself sees himself through the medium of his character, and not exactly as he is. Take all together, not omitting a shrewd hint from the clown or the fool, and perhaps your impression will be right; and you may know whether you have in fact discovered the poet's own idea, by all the speeches receiving light from it, and attesting its reality by reflecting it.

Lastly, in Shakespeare the heterogeneous is united, as it is in nature. You must not suppose a pressure or passion always acting on or in the character!—passion in Shakespeare is that by which the individual is distinguished from others, not that which makes a different kind of him. Shakespeare followed the main march of the human affections. He entered into no analysis of the passions or faiths of men, but assured himself that such and such passions and faiths were grounded in our common nature, and not in the mere accidents of ignorance or disease. This is an important consideration, and constitutes our Shakespeare the morning star, the guide and the pioneer, of true philosophy.

<<span id="filepos0037990450"> a> Outline Of An Introductory Lecture Upon Shakespeare.

Of that species of writing termed tragi-comedy, much has been produced and doomed to the shelf. Shakespeare's comic are continually reacting upon his tragic characters. Lear, wandering amidst the tempest, has all his feelings of distress increased by the overflowings of the wild wit of the Fool, as vinegar poured upon wounds exacerbates their pain. Thus, even his comic humour tends to the development of tragic passion.

The next characteristic of Shakespeare is his keeping at all times in the high road of life, &c. Another evidence of his exquisite judgment is, that he seizes hold of popular tales; *Lear* and the *Merchant of Venice* were popular tales, but are so excellently managed, that both are the representations of men in all countries and of all times.

His dramas do not arise absolutely out of some one extraordinary circumstance, the scenes may stand independently of any such one connecting incident, as faithful representations of men and manners. In his mode of drawing characters there are no pompous descriptions of a man by himself; his character is to be drawn, as in real life, from the whole course of the play, or out of the mouths of his enemies or friends. This may be exemplified in Polonius, whose character has been often misrepresented. Shakespeare never intended him for a buffoon, &c.

Another excellence of Shakespeare, in which no writer equals him, is in the language of nature. So correct is it, that we can see ourselves in every page. The style and manner have also that felicity, that not a sentence can be read, without its being discovered if it is Shakespearian. In observation of living characters—of landlords and postilions—Fielding has great excellence; but in drawing from his own heart, and depicting that species of character, which no observation could teach, he failed in comparison with Richardson, who perpetually places himself, as it were, in a day-dream. Shakespeare excels in both. Witness the accuracy of character in Juliet's name; while for the great characters of Iago, Othello, Hamlet, Richard III., to which he could never have seen anything similar, he seems invariably to have asked himself—How should I act or speak in such circumstances? His comic characters are also peculiar. A drunken constable was not uncommon; but he makes folly a vehicle for wit, as in Dogberry: everything is a *sub-stratum* on which his genius can erect the mightiest superstructure.

To distinguish that which is legitimate in Shakespeare from what does not belong to him, we must observe his varied images symbolical of novel truth, thrusting by, and seeming to trip up each other, from an impetuosity of thought, producing a flowing metre, and seldom closing with the line. In *Pericles* , a play written fifty years before, but altered by Shakespeare, his additions may be recognised to half a line, from the metre, which has the same perfection in the flowing continuity of interchangeable metrical pauses in his earliest plays, as in *Love's Labour's Lost* .

Lastly, contrast his *morality* with the writers of his own or of the succeeding age, &c. If a man speak injuriously of our friend, our vindication of him is naturally warm. Shakespeare has been accused of profaneness. I for my part have acquired from perusal of him, a habit of looking into my own heart, and am confident that Shakespeare is an author of all others the most calculated to make his readers better as well as wiser.

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Shakespeare, possessed of wit, humour, fancy, and imagination, built up an outward world from the stores within his mind, as the bee finds a hive from a thousand sweets gathered from a thousand flowers. He was not only a great poet but a great philosopher. Richard III., Iago, and Falstaff are men who reverse the order of things, who place intellect at the head, whereas it ought to follow, like Geometry, to prove and to confirm. No man, either hero or saint, ever acted from an unmixed motive; for let him do what he will rightly, still Conscience whispers "it is your duty." Richard, laughing at conscience and sneering at religion, felt a confidence in his intellect, which urged him to commit the most horrid crimes, because he felt himself, although inferior in form and shape, superior to those around him; he felt he possessed a power which they had not. Iago, on the same principle, conscious of superior intellect, gave scope to his envy, and hesitated not to ruin a gallant, open, and generous friend in the moment of felicity, because he was not promoted as he expected. Othello was superior in place, but Iago felt him to be inferior in intellect, and, unrestrained by conscience, trampled upon him. Falstaff, not a degraded man of genius, like Burns, but a man of degraded genius, with the same consciousness of superiority to his companions, fastened himself on a young Prince, to prove how much his influence on an heir-apparent would exceed that of a statesman. With this view he hesitated not to adopt the most contemptible of all characters, that of an open and professed liar: even his sensuality was subservient to his intellect: for he appeared to drink sack, that he might have occasion to show off his wit. One thing, however, worthy of observation, is the perpetual contrast of labour in Falstaff to produce wit, with the ease with which Prince Henry parries his shafts; and the final contempt which such a character deserves and receives from the young king, when Falstaff exhibits the struggle of inward determination with an outward show of humility.

<<span id="filepos0037997412"> a> Order Of Shakespeare's Plays.

Various attempts have been made to arrange the plays of Shakespeare, each according to its priority in time, by proofs derived from external documents. How unsuccessful these attempts have been might easily be shewn, not only from the widely different results arrived at by men, all deeply versed in the black-letter books, old plays, pamphlets, manuscript records, and catalogues of that age, but also from the fallacious and unsatisfactory nature of the facts and assumptions on which the evidence rests. In that age, when the press was chiefly occupied with controversial or practical divinity,—when the law, the Church, and the State engrossed all honour and respectability,—when a degree of disgrace, *levior quædam infamiæ macula* , was attached to the publication of poetry, and even to have sported with the Muse, as a private relaxation, was supposed to be—a venial fault, indeed, yet—something beneath the gravity of a wise man,—when the professed poets were so poor, that the very expenses of the press demanded the liberality of some wealthy individual, so that two-thirds of Spenser's poetic works, and those most highly praised by his learned admirers and friends, remained for many years in manuscript, and in manuscript perished,—when the amateurs of the stage were comparatively few, and therefore for the greater part more or less known to each other,—when we know that the plays of Shakespeare, both during and after his life, were the property of the stage, and published by the players, doubtless according to their notions of acceptability with the visitants of the theatre,—in such an age, and under such circumstances, can an allusion or reference to any drama or poem in the publication of a contemporary be received as conclusive evidence, that such drama or poem had at that time been published? Or, further, can the priority of publication itself prove anything in favour of actually prior composition?

We are tolerably certain, indeed, that the *Venus and Adonis* , and the *Rape of Lucrece* , were his two earliest poems, and though not printed until 1593, in the twenty-ninth year of his age, yet there can be little doubt that they had remained by him in manuscript many years. For Mr. Malone has made it highly probable that he had commenced as a writer for the stage in 1591, when he was twenty-seven years old, and Shakespeare himself assures us that the *Venus and Adonis* was the first heir of his invention.

Baffled, then, in the attempt to derive any satisfaction from outward documents, we may easily stand excused if we turn our researches towards the internal evidences furnished by the writings themselves, with no other positive *data* than the known facts that the *Venus and Adonis* was printed in 1593, the *Rape of Lucrece* in 1594, and that the *Romeo and Juliet* had appeared in 1595,—and with no other presumptions than that the poems, his very first productions, were written many years earlier—(for who can believe that Shakespeare could have remained to his twenty-ninth or thirtieth year without attempting poetic composition of any kind?),—and that between these and *Romeo and Juliet* there had intervened one or two other dramas, or the chief materials, at least of them, although they may very possibly have appeared after the success of the *Romeo and Juliet* , and some other circumstances, had given the poet an authority with the proprietors, and created a prepossession in his favour with the theatrical audiences.

CLASSIFICATION ATTEMPTED, 1802.

FIRST EPOCH.

The London Prodigal.

Cromwell.

Henry VI., three parts, first edition.

The old King John.

Edward III.

The old Taming of the Shrew.

Pericles.

All these are transition works, *Uebergangswerke* ; not his, yet of him.

SECOND EPOCH.

All's Well that Ends Well;—but afterwards worked up afresh (*umgearbeitet*), especially Parolles.

The Two Gentlemen of Verona; a sketch.

Romeo and Juliet; first draft of it.

THIRD EPOCH

rises into the full, although youthful, Shakespeare; it was the negative period of his perfection.

Love's Labour's Lost.

Twelfth Night.

As You Like It.

Midsummer Night's Dream.

Richard II.

Henry IV. and V.

Henry VIII.; *Gelegenheitsgedicht* .

Romeo and Juliet, as at present.

Merchant of Venice.

FOURTH EPOCH.

Much Ado about Nothing.

Merry Wives of Windsor; first edition.

Henry VI.; *rifacimento* .

FIFTH EPOCH.

The period of beauty was now past; and that of ´µ¹½yÄ·Â and grandeur succeeds.

Lear.

Macbeth.

Hamlet.

Timon of Athens; an after vibration of Hamlet.

Troilus and Cressida; *Uebergang in die Ironie* .

The Roman Plays.

King John, as at present.

Merry Wives of Windsor

Taming of the Shrew *umgearbeitet.*

Measure for Measure.

Othello.

Tempest.

Winter's Tale.

Cymbeline.

CLASSIFICATION ATTEMPTED, 1810.

Shakespeare's earliest dramas I take to be—

Love's Labour's Lost.

All's Well that Ends Well.

Comedy of Errors.

Romeo and Juliet.

In the second class I reckon—

Midsummer Night's Dream.

As You Like It.

Tempest.

Twelfth Night.

In the third, as indicating a greater energy—not merely of poetry, but of all the world of thought, yet still with some of the growing pains, and the awkwardness of growth—I place—

Troilus and Cressida.

Cymbeline.

Merchant of Venice.

Much Ado about Nothing.

Taming of the Shrew.

In the fourth, I place the plays containing the greatest characters—

Macbeth.

Lear.

Hamlet.

Othello.

And lastly, the historic dramas, in order to be able to show my reasons for rejecting some whole plays, and very many scenes in others.

CLASSIFICATION ATTEMPTED, 1819.

I think Shakespeare's earliest dramatic attempt—perhaps even prior in conception to the *Venus and Adonis* , and planned before he left Stratford—was *Love's Labour's Lost* . Shortly afterwards I suppose *Pericles* and certain scenes in *Jeronymo* to have been produced; and in the same epoch, I place the *Winter's Tale* and *Cymbeline* , differing from the *Pericles* by the entire *rifacimento* of it, when Shakespeare's celebrity as poet, and his interest, no less than his influence, as manager, enabled him to bring forward the laid-by labours of his youth. The example of *Titus Andronicus* , which, as well as *Jeronymo* , was most popular in Shakespeare's first epoch, had led the young dramatist to the lawless mixture of dates and manners. In this same epoch I should place the *Comedy of Errors* , remarkable as being the only specimen of poetical farce in our language, that is, intentionally such; so that all the distinct kinds of drama, which might be educed *a priori* , have their representatives in Shakespeare's works. I say intentionally such; for many of Beaumont and Fletcher's plays, and the greater part of Ben Jonson's comedies, are farce plots. I add *All's Well that Ends Well* , originally intended as the counterpart of *Love's Labour's Lost* , *Taming of the Shrew* , *Midsummer Night's Dream* , *Much Ado about Nothing* , and *Romeo and Juliet* .

SECOND EPOCH.

Richard II.

King John.

Henry VI.,—*rifacimento* only.

Richard III.

THIRD EPOCH.

Henry IV.

Henry V.

Merry Wives of Windsor.

Henry VIII.,—a sort of historical masque, or show play.

FOURTH EPOCH

gives all the graces and facilities of a genius in full possession and habitual exercise of power, and peculiarly of the feminine, the *lady's* character.

Tempest.

As You Like It

Merchant of Venice.

Twelfth Night.

And, finally, at its very point of culmination—

Lear.

Hamlet.

Macbeth.

Othello.

LAST EPOCH.

when the energies of intellect in the cycle of genius were, though in a rich and more potentiated form, becoming predominant over passion and creative self-manifestation—

Measure for Measure,

Timon of Athens.

Coriolanus.

Julius Cæsar.

Antony and Cleopatra.

Troilus and Cressida.

Merciful, wonder-making Heaven! what a man was this Shakespeare! Myriad-minded, indeed, he was.

<<span id="filepos0038029236"> a> Notes On The "Tempest."

There is a sort of improbability with which we are shocked in dramatic representation, not less than in a narrative of real life. Consequently, there must be rules respecting it; and as rules are nothing but means to an end previously ascertained—(inattention to which simple truth has been the occasion of all the pedantry of the French school),—we must first determine what the immediate end or object of the drama is. And here, as I have previously remarked, I find two extremes of critical decision;—the French, which evidently presupposes that a perfect delusion is to be aimed at,—an opinion which needs no fresh confutation; and the exact opposite to it, brought forward by Dr. Johnson, who supposes the auditors throughout in the full reflective knowledge of the contrary. In evincing the impossibility of delusion, he makes no sufficient allowance for an intermediate state, which I have before distinguished by the term illusion, and have attempted to illustrate its quality and character by reference to our mental state when dreaming. In both cases we simply do not judge the imagery to be unreal; there is a negative reality, and no more. Whatever, therefore, tends to prevent the mind from placing itself, or being placed, gradually in that state in which the images have such negative reality for the auditor, destroys this illusion, and is dramatically improbable.

Now, the production of this effect—a sense of improbability—will depend on the degree of excitement in which the mind is supposed to be. Many things would be intolerable in the first scene of a play, that would not at all interrupt our enjoyment in the height of the interest, when the narrow cockpit may be made to hold

“The vasty field of France, or we may cram

Within its wooden O, the very casques,

That did affright the air at Agincourt.”

Again, on the other hand, many obvious improbabilities will be endured, as belonging to the groundwork of the story rather than to the drama itself, in the first scenes, which would disturb or disentrance us from all illusion in the acme of our excitement; as for instance, Lear's division of his kingdom, and the banishment of Cordelia.

But, although the other excellences of the drama besides this dramatic probability, as unity of interest, with distinctness and subordination of the characters, and appropriateness of style, are all, so far as they tend to increase the inward excitement, means towards accomplishing the chief end, that of producing and supporting this willing illusion,—yet they do not on that account cease to be ends themselves; and we must remember that, as such, they carry their own justification with them, as long as they do not contravene or interrupt the total illusion. It is not even always, or of necessity, an objection to them, that they prevent the illusion from rising to as great a height as it might otherwise have attained;—it is enough that they are simply compatible with as high a degree of it as is requisite for the purpose. Nay, upon particular occasions, a palpable improbability may be hazarded by a great genius for the express purpose of keeping down the interest of a merely instrumental scene, which would otherwise make too great an impression for the harmony of the entire illusion. Had the panorama been invented in the time of Pope Leo X., Raffael would still, I doubt not, have smiled in contempt at the regret, that the broom twigs and scrubby bushes at the back of some of his grand pictures were not as probable trees as those in the exhibition.

The *Tempest* is a specimen of the purely romantic drama, in which the interest is not historical, or dependent upon fidelity of portraiture, or the natural connection of events, but is a birth of the imagination, and rests only upon the coaptation and union of the elements granted to, or assumed by, the poet. It is a species of drama which owes no allegiance to time or space, and in which, therefore, errors of chronology and geography—no mortal sins in any species—are venial faults, and count for nothing. It addresses itself entirely to the imaginative faculty; and although the illusion may be assisted by the effect on the senses of the complicated scenery and decorations of modern times, yet this sort of assistance is dangerous. For the principal and only genuine excitement ought to come from within—from the moved and sympathetic imagination; whereas, where so much is addressed to the mere external senses of seeing and bearing, the spiritual vision is apt to languish, and the attraction from without will withdraw the mind from the proper and only legitimate interest which is intended to spring from within.

The romance opens with a busy scene admirably appropriate to the kind of drama, and giving, as it were, the key-note to the whole harmony. It prepares and initiates the excitement required for the entire piece, and yet does not demand anything from the spectators, which their previous habits had not fitted them to understand. It is the bustle of a tempest, from which the real horrors are abstracted;—therefore it is poetical, though not in strictness natural—(the distinction to which I have so often alluded)—and is purposely restrained from concentering the interest on itself, but used merely as an induction or tuning for what is to follow.

In the second scene, Prospero's speeches, till the entrance of Ariel, contain the finest example I remember of retrospective narration for the purpose of exciting immediate interest, and putting the audience in possession of all the information necessary for the understanding of the plot. Observe, too, the perfect probability of the moment chosen by Prospero (the very Shakespeare himself, as it were, of the tempest) to open out the truth to his daughter, his own romantic bearing, and how completely anything that might have been disagreeable to us in the magician, is reconciled and shaded in the humanity and natural feelings of the father. In the very first speech of Miranda, the simplicity and tenderness of her character are at once laid open;—it would have been lost in direct contact with the agitation of the first scene. The opinion once prevailed, but happily is now abandoned, that Fletcher alone wrote for women;—the truth is, that with very few, and those partial exceptions, the female characters in the plays of Beaumont and Fletcher are, when of the light kind, not decent; when heroic, complete viragos. But in Shakespeare all the elements of womanhood are holy, and there is the sweet yet dignified feeling of all that *continuates* society, as sense of ancestry and of sex, with a purity unassailable by sophistry, because it rests not in the analytic processes, but in that sane equipoise of the faculties, during which the feelings are representative of all past experience,—not of the individual only, but of all those by whom she has been educated, and their predecessors, even up to the first mother that lived. Shakespeare saw that the want of prominence, which Pope notices for sarcasm, was the blessed beauty of the woman's character, and knew that it arose not from any deficiency, but from the more exquisite harmony of all the parts of the moral being constituing one living total of head and heart. He has drawn it, indeed, in all its distinctive energies of faith, patience, constancy, fortitude,—shown in all of them as following the heart, which gives its results by a nice tact and happy intuition, without the intervention of the discursive faculty, sees all things in and by the light of the affections, and errs, if it ever err, in the exaggerations of love alone. In all the Shakespearian women there is essentially the same foundation and principle; the distinct individuality and variety are merely the result of modification of circumstances, whether in Miranda the maiden, in Imogen the wife, or in Katherine the queen.

But to return. The appearance and characters of the super or ultra natural servants are finely contrasted. Ariel has in everything the airy tint which gives the name; and it is worthy of remark that Miranda is never directly brought into comparison with Ariel, lest the natural and human of the one and the supernatural of the other should tend to neutralise each other; Caliban, on the other hand, is all earth, all condensed and gross in feelings and images; he has the dawnings of understanding without reason or the moral sense, and in him, as in some brute animals, this advance to the intellectual faculties, without the moral sense, is marked by the appearance of vice. For it is in the primacy of the moral being only that man is truly human; in his intellectual powers he is certainly approached by the brutes, and, man's whole system duly considered, those powers cannot be considered other than means to an end—that is, to morality.

In this scene, as it proceeds, is displayed the impression made by Ferdinand and Miranda on each other; it is love at first sight;—

... “At the first sight

They have chang'd eyes;”—

and it appears to me, that in all cases of real love, it is at one moment that it takes place. That moment may have been prepared by previous esteem, admiration, or even affection,—yet love seems to require a momentary act of volition, by which a tacit bond of devotion is imposed,—a bond not to be thereafter broken without violating what should be sacred in our nature. How finely is the true Shakespearian scene contrasted with Dryden's vulgar alteration of it, in which a mere ludicrous psychological experiment, as it were, is tried—displaying nothing but indelicacy without passion.

Prospero's interruption of the courtship has often seemed to me to have had no sufficient motive; still, his alleged reason—

... “Lest too light winning

Make the prize light”—

is enough for the ethereal connections of the romantic imagination, although it would not be so for the historical. The whole courting scene, indeed, in the beginning of the third act, between the lovers, is a masterpiece; and the first dawn of disobedience in the mind of Miranda to the command of her father is very finely drawn, so as to seem the working of the Scriptural command—“Thou shalt leave father and mother,” &c. Oh! with what exquisite purity this scene is conceived and executed! Shakespeare may sometimes be gross, but I boldly say that he is always moral and modest. Alas! in this our day, decency of manners is preserved at the expense of morality of heart, and delicacies for vice are allowed, whilst grossness against it is hypocritically, or at least morbidly, condemned.

In this play are admirably sketched the vices generally accompanying a low degree of civilisation; and in the first scene of the second act Shakespeare has, as in many other places, shown the tendency in bad men to indulge in scorn and contemptuous expressions as a mode of getting rid of their own uneasy feelings of inferiority to the good, and also, by making the good ridiculous, of rendering the transition of others to wickedness easy. Shakespeare never puts habitual scorn into the mouths of other than bad men, as here in the instances of Antonio and Sebastian. The scene of the intended assassination of Alonzo and Gonzalo is an exact counterpart of the scene between Macbeth and his lady, only pitched in a lower key throughout, as designed to be frustrated and concealed, and exhibiting the same profound management in the manner of familiarising a mind, not immediately recipient, to the suggestion of guilt, by associating the proposed crime with something ludicrous or out of place,—something not habitually matter of reverence. By this kind of sophistry the imagination and fancy are first bribed to contemplate the suggested act, and at length to become acquainted with it. Observe how the effect of this scene is heightened by contrast with another counterpart of it in low life,—that between the conspirators Stephano, Caliban, and Trinculo in the second scene of the third act, in which there are the same essential characteristics.

In this play, and in this scene of it, are also shown the springs of the vulgar in politics,—of that kind of politics which is inwoven with human nature. In his treatment of this subject, wherever it occurs, Shakespeare is quite peculiar. In other writers we find the particular opinions of the individual; in Massinger it is rank republicanism; in Beaumont and Fletcher even *jure divino* principles are carried to excess;—but Shakespeare never promulgates any party tenets. He is always the philosopher and the moralist, but at the same time with a profound veneration for all the established institutions of society, and for those classes which form the permanent elements of the State,—especially never introducing a professional character, as such, otherwise than as respectable. If he must have any name, he should be styled a philosophical aristocrat, delighting in those hereditary institutions which have a tendency to bind one age to another, and in that distinction of ranks, of which, although few may be in possession, all enjoy the advantages. Hence, again, you will observe the good nature with which he seems always to make sport with the passions and follies of a mob, as with an irrational animal. He is never angry with it, but hugely content with holding up its absurdities to its face; and sometimes you may trace a tone of almost affectionate superiority, something like that in which a father speaks of the rogueries of a child. See the good-humoured way in which he describes

Stephano passing from the most licentious freedom to absolute despotism over Trinculo and Caliban. The truth is, Shakespeare's characters are all *genera* intensely individualised; the results of meditation, of which observation supplied the drapery and the colours necessary to combine them with each other. He had virtually surveyed all the great component powers and impulses of human nature,—had seen that their different combinations and subordinations were in fact the individualisers of men, and showed how their harmony was produced by reciprocal disproportions of excess or deficiency. The language in which these truths are expressed was not drawn from any set fashion, but from the profoundest depths of his moral being, and is therefore for all ages.

<<span id="filepos0038046749"> a> “ Love's Labour's Lost.”

The characters in this play are either impersonated out of Shakespeare's own multiformity by imaginative self-position, or out of such as a country town and schoolboy's observation might supply,—the curate, the schoolmaster, the Armado (who even in my time was not extinct in the cheaper inns of North Wales), and so on. The satire is chiefly on follies of words. Biron and Rosaline are evidently the pre-existent state of Benedict and Beatrice, and so, perhaps, is Boyet of Lafeu, and Costard of the tapster in *Measure for Measure* ; and the frequency of the rhymes, the sweetness as well as the smoothness of the metre, and the number of acute and fancifully illustrated aphorisms, are all as they ought to be in a poet's youth. True genius begins by generalising and condensing; it ends in realising and expanding. It first collects the seeds.

Yet, if this juvenile drama had been the only one extant of our Shakespeare, and we possessed the tradition only of his riper works, or accounts of them in writers who had not even mentioned this play,—how many of Shakespeare's characteristic features might we not still have discovered in *Love's Labour's Lost* , though as in a portrait taken of him in his boyhood.

I can never sufficiently admire the wonderful activity of thought throughout the whole of the first scene of the play, rendered natural, as it is, by the choice of the characters, and the whimsical determination on which the drama is founded. A whimsical determination certainly;—yet not altogether so very improbable to those who are conversant in the history of the middle ages, with their Courts of Love, and all that lighter drapery of chivalry, which engaged even mighty kings with a sort of serio-comic interest, and may well be supposed to have occupied more completely the smaller princes, at a time when the noble's or prince's court contained the only theatre of the domain or principality. This sort of story, too, was admirably suited to Shakespeare's times, when the English court was still the foster-mother of the state and the muses; and when, in consequence, the courtiers, and men of rank and fashion, affected a display of wit, point, and sententious observation, that would be deemed intolerable at present,—but in which a hundred years of controversy, involving every great political, and every dear domestic, interest, had trained all but the lowest classes to participate. Add to this the very style of the sermons of the time, and the eagerness of the Protestants to distinguish themselves by long and frequent preaching, and it will be found that, from the reign of Henry VIII. to the abdication of James II. no country ever received such a national education as England.

Hence the comic matter chosen in the first instance is a ridiculous imitation or apery of this constant striving after logical precision and subtle opposition of thoughts, together with a making the most of every conception or image, by expressing it under the least expected property belonging to it, and this, again, rendered specially absurd by being applied to the most current subjects and occurrences. The phrases and modes of combination in argument were caught by the most ignorant from the custom of the age, and their ridiculous misapplication of them is most amusingly exhibited in Costard; whilst examples suited only to the gravest propositions and impersonations, or apostrophes to abstract thoughts impersonated, which are in fact the natural language only of the most vehement agitations of the mind, are adopted by the coxcombry of Armado as mere artifices of ornament.

The same kind of intellectual action is exhibited in a more serious and elevated strain in many other parts of this play. Biron's speech at the end of the Fourth Act is an excellent specimen of it. It is logic clothed in rhetoric;—but observe how Shakespeare, in his twofold being of poet and philosopher, avails himself of it to convey profound truths in the most lively images,—the whole remaining faithful to the character supposed to utter the lines, and the expressions themselves constituting a further development of that character:—

“Other slow arts entirely keep the brain:
And therefore finding barren practisers,
Scarce show a harvest of their heavy toil:
But love, first learned in a lady's eyes,
Lives not alone immured in the brain;
But, with the motion of all elements,
Courses as swift as thought in every power;
And gives to every power a double power,
Above their functions and their offices.
It adds a precious seeing to the eye,
A lover's eyes will gaze an eagle blind;
A lover's ear will hear the lowest sound,
When the suspicious head of theft is stopp'd:
Love's feeling is more soft and sensible,
Than are the tender horns of cockled snails;

Love's tongue proves dainty Bacchus gross in taste;
For valour, is not love a Hercules,
Still climbing trees in the Hesperides?
Subtle as Sphinx; as sweet and musical,
As bright Apollo's lute, strung with his hair;

And when love speaks, the voice of all the gods
Makes heaven drowsy with the harmony.
Never durst poet touch a pen to write,
Until his ink were tempered with love's sighs;
Oh, then his lines would ravish savage ears,
And plant in tyrants mild humility.
From women's eyes this doctrine I derive:
They sparkle still the right Promethean fire;
They are the books, the arts, the academes,
That show, contain, and nourish all the world;
Else, none at all in aught proves excellent;
Then fools you were these women to forswear;
Or, keeping what is sworn, you will prove fools.
For wisdom's sake, a word that all men love;
Or for love's sake, a word that loves all men;
Or for men's sake, the authors of these women;
Or women's sake, by whom we men are men;
Let us once lose our oaths, to find ourselves,
Or else we lose ourselves to keep our oaths:

It is religion to be thus forsworn:

For charity itself fulfils the law:

And who can sever love from charity?”—

This is quite a study;—sometimes you see this youthful god of poetry connecting disparate thoughts purely by means of resemblances in the words expressing them,—a thing in character in lighter comedy, especially of that kind in which Shakespeare delights, namely, the purposed display of wit, though sometimes too, disfiguring his graver scenes;—but more often you may see him doubling the natural connection or order of logical consequence in the thoughts by the introduction of an artificial and sought for resemblance in the words, as, for instance, in the third line of the play,—

“And then grace us in the disgrace of death;”—

this being a figure often having its force and propriety, as justified by the law of passion, which, inducing in the mind an unusual activity, seeks for means to waste its superfluity,—when in the highest degree—in lyric repetitions and sublime tautology—“At her feet he bowed, he fell, he lay down; at her feet he bowed, he fell; where he bowed, there he fell down dead,”—and, in lower degrees, in making the words themselves the subjects and materials of that surplus action, and for the same cause that agitates our limbs, and forces our very gestures into a tempest in states of high excitement.

The mere style of narration in *Love's Labour's Lost* , like that of Ægeon in the first scene of the *Comedy of Errors* , and of the Captain in the second scene of *Macbeth* , seems imitated with its defects and its beauties from Sir Philip Sidney; whose *Arcadia* , though not then published, was already well known in manuscript copies, and could hardly have escaped the notice and admiration of Shakespeare as the friend and client of the Earl of Southampton. The chief defect consists in the parentheses and parenthetic thoughts and descriptions, suited neither to the passion of the speaker, nor the purpose of the person to whom the information is to be given, but manifestly betraying the author himself,—not by way of continuous undersong, but—palpably, and so as to show themselves addressed to the general reader. However, it is not unimportant to notice how strong a presumption the diction and allusions of this play afford, that, though Shakespeare's acquirements in the dead languages might not be such as we suppose in a learned education, his habits had, nevertheless, been scholastic, and those of a student. For a young author's first work almost always bespeaks his recent pursuits, and his first observations of life are either drawn from the immediate employments of his youth, and from the characters and images most deeply impressed on his mind in the situations in which those employments had placed him;—or else they are fixed on such objects and occurrences in the world, as are easily connected with, and seem to bear upon, his studies and the hitherto exclusive subjects of his meditation. Just as Ben Jonson, who applied himself to the drama after having served in Flanders, fills his earliest plays with true or pretended soldiers, the wrongs and neglects of the former, and the absurd boasts and knavery of their counterfeits. So Lessing's first comedies are placed in the universities, and consist of events and characters conceivable in an academic life.

I will only further remark the sweet and tempered gravity, with which Shakespeare in the end draws the only fitting moral which such a drama afforded. Here Rosaline rises up to the full height of Beatrice:—

“*Ros.* Oft have I heard of you, my lord Biron,

Before I saw you: and the world's large tongue

Proclaims you for a man replete with mocks;

Full of comparisons, and wounding flouts,

Which you on all estates will execute

That lie within the mercy of your wit:

To weed this wormwood from your fruitful brain,

And therewithal, to win me, if you please

(Without the which I am not to be won),

You shall this twelvemonth term from day to day

Visit the speechless sick, and still converse

With groaning wretches; and your talk shall be,

With all the fierce endeavour of your wit,
To enforce the pained impotent to smile.
Biron. To move wild laughter in the throat of death?
It cannot be; it is impossible;
Mirth cannot move a soul in agony.
Ros. Why, that's the way to choke a gibing spirit,

Whose influence is begot of that loose grace,
Which shallow laughing hearers give to fools;
A jest's prosperity lies in the ear
Of him that hears it, never in the tongue
Of him that makes it: then, if sickly ears,
Deaf'd with the clamours of their own dear groans,
Will hear your idle scorns, continue then,
And I will have you, and that fault withal:
But, if they will not, throw away that spirit,
And I shall find you empty of that fault,
Right joyful of your reformation.”

Act v. sc. 2. In Biron's speech to the Princess:

“And, therefore, like the eye,
Full of *straying* shapes, of habits, and of forms”—

either read *stray* , which I prefer; or throw *full* back to the preceding lines,—

“Like the eye, full

Of straying shapes,” &c,

In the same scene:—

“*Biron.* And what to me, my love? and what to me?

Ros. You must be purged too, your sins are rank;

You are attaint with fault and perjury:

Therefore, if you my favour mean to get,

A twelvemonth shall you spend, and never rest,

But seek the weary beds of people sick.”

There can be no doubt, indeed, about the propriety of expunging this speech of Rosaline's; it soils the very page that retains it. But I do not agree with Warburton and others in striking out the preceding line also. It is quite in Biron's character; and Rosaline, not answering it immediately, Dumain takes up the question for him, and, after he and Longaville are answered, Biron, with evident propriety, says:—

“*Studies* my mistress?” &c.

<<span id="filepos0038068716"> a> “ Midsummer Night's Dream.”

Act i. sc. 1.—

“*Her*. O cross! too high to be enthrall'd to low—

Lys . Or else misgrafted in respect of years;

Her. O spite! too old to be engaged to young—

Lys . Or else it stood upon the choice of friends;

Her. O hell! to chuse love by another's eye!”

There is no authority for any alteration;—but I never can help feeling how great an improvement it would be, if the two former of Hermia's exclamations were omitted;—the third and only appropriate one would then become a beauty, and most natural.

Ib. Helena's speech:—

“I will go tell him of fair Hermia's flight,” &c.

I am convinced that Shakespeare availed himself of the title of this play in his own mind, and worked upon it as a dream throughout, but especially, and perhaps unpleasingly, in this broad determination of ungrateful treachery in Helena, so undisguisedly avowed to herself, and this, too, after the witty cool philosophising that precedes. The act itself is natural, and the resolve so to act is, I fear, likewise too true a picture of the lax hold which principles have on a woman's heart, when opposed to, or even separated from, passion and inclination. For women are less hypocrites to their own minds than men are, because in general they feel less proportionate abhorrence of moral evil in and for itself, and more of its outward consequences, as detection and loss of character, than men,—their natures being almost wholly extroitive. Still, however just in itself, the representation of this is not poetical; we shrink from it, and cannot harmonise it with the ideal.

Act ii. sc. 1. Theobald's edition—

“*Through* bush, *through* briar—

Through flood, *through fire* —”

What a noble pair of ears this worthy Theobald must have had! The eight amphimacers or cretics,—

“Ovr h+ll, Mvr dle,

ThMrO' bksh, thMrO' br+ar,

Ovr prk, Mvr ple,

ThrMrO' flMMd, thMrO' f+re”—

have a delightful effect on the ear in their sweet transition to the trochaic,—

“I dO wndr v'ry whr

Sw+ftr thn th mMMns sphr,” &c.

The last words, as sustaining the rhyme, must be considered, as in fact they are, trochees in time.

It may be worth while to give some correct examples in English of the principle metrical feet:—

Pyrrhic or Dibrach, u u = *bOdy* , *sp-r-t* .

Tribrach, u u u = *nObOdy* , hastily pronounced.

Iambus, u - = *dl+ght* .

Trochee, - u = *l+ghtl3* .

Spondee, - - = *GMd spke* .

The paucity of spondees in single words in English, and indeed in the modern languages in general, makes perhaps the greatest distinction, metrically considered, between them and the Greek and Latin.

Dactyl, - u u = *mrr-l3* .

Anapæst, u u - = *prOpMs* , or the first three syllables of *crmMny* .

Amphibrachys, u - u = *dl+ghtfml* .

Amphimacer, - u - = *Mvr h+ll* .

Antibacchius, u - = *th LMrd GMd* .

Bacchius, - - u = *Hlvll3n* .

Molossus, - - - = *JMhn Jmes JMnes* .

These simple feet may suffice for understanding the metres of Shakespeare, for the greater part at least;—but Milton cannot be made harmoniously intelligible without the composite feet, the Ionics, Pæons, and Epitrites.

Ib. sc. 2. Titania's speech (Theobald, adopting Warburton's reading):—

“Which she, with pretty and with swimming gate

Follying (her womb then rich with my young squire)

Would imitate,” &c.

Oh! oh! Heaven have mercy on poor Shakespeare, and also on Mr. Warburton's mind's eye!

Act v. sc. 1. Theseus' speech (Theobald):—

“And what poor [*willing*] duty cannot do,

Noble respect takes it in might, not merit.”

To my ears it would read far more Shakespearian thus:—

“And what poor duty cannot do, *yet would* ,

Noble respect,” &c.

Ib. sc. 2.—

“*Puck.* Now the hungry lion roars,

And the wolf behowls the moon;

Whilst the heavy ploughman snores

All with weary task foredone,” &c.

Very Anacreon in perfectness, proportion, grace, and spontaneity! So far it is Greek;—but then add, O! what wealth, what wild ranging, and yet what compression and condensation of, English fancy! In truth, there is nothing in Anacreon more perfect than these thirty lines, or half so rich and imaginative. They form a speckless diamond.

<<span id="filepos0038079515"> a> “ Comedy Of Errors.”

The myriad-minded man, our, and all men's Shakespeare, has in this piece presented us with a legitimate farce in exactest consonance with the philosophical principles and character of farce, as distinguished from comedy and from entertainments. A proper farce is mainly distinguished from comedy by the licence allowed, and even required, in the fable, in order to produce strange and laughable situations. The story need not be probable, it is enough that it is possible. A comedy would scarcely allow even the two Antipholuses; because, although there have been instances of almost indistinguishable likeness in two persons, yet these are mere individual accidents, *casus ludentis naturæ* , and the *verum* will not excuse the *inverisimile* . But farce dares add the two Dromios, and is justified in so doing by the laws of its end and constitution. In a word, farces commence in a postulate, which must be granted.

<<span id="filepos0038081088"> a> “ As You Like It.”

Act i. sc. 1.

“*Oli.* What, boy!

Orla. Come, come, elder brother, you are too young in this.

Oli. Wilt thou lay hands on me, villain?”

There is a beauty here. The word “boy” naturally provokes and awakens in Orlando the sense of his manly powers; and with the retort of “elder brother,” he grasps him with firm hands, and makes him feel he is no boy.

Ib. —

“*Oli.* Farewell, good Charles. Now will I stir this gamester: I hope, I shall see an end of him; for my soul, yet I know not why, hates nothing more than him. Yet he's gentle; never school'd, and yet learn'd; full of noble device; of all sorts enchantingly beloved! and, indeed, so much in the heart of the world, and especially of my own people, who best know him, that I am altogether misprised: but it shall not be so long; this wrestler shall clear all.”

This has always appeared to me one of the most un-Shakespearian speeches in all the genuine works of our poet; yet I should be nothing surprised, and greatly pleased, to find it hereafter a fresh beauty, as has so often happened to me with other supposed defects of great men.—1810.

It is too venturous to charge a passage in Shakespeare with want of truth to nature; and yet at first sight this speech of Oliver's expresses truths, which it seems almost impossible that any mind should so distinctly, so livelily, and so voluntarily, have presented to itself, in connection with feelings and intentions so malignant, and so contrary to those which the qualities expressed would naturally have called forth. But I dare not say that this seeming unnaturalness is not in the nature of an abused wilfulness, when united with a strong intellect. In such characters there is sometimes a gloomy self-gratification in making the absoluteness of the will (*sit pro ratione voluntas!*) evident to themselves by setting the reason and the conscience in full array against it.—1818.

Ib. sc. 2.—

“*Celia.* If your saw yourself with *your* eyes, or knew yourself with *your* judgment, the fear of your adventure would counsel you to a more equal enterprise.”

Surely it should be “*our* eyes” and “*our* judgment.”

Ib. sc 3.—

“*Cel.* But is all this for your father?

Ros. No; some of it is for *my child's father* .”

Theobald restores this as the reading of the older editions. It may be so: but who can doubt that it is a mistake for “my father's child,” meaning herself? According to Theobald's note, a most indelicate anticipation is put into the mouth of Rosalind without reason;—and besides, what a strange thought, and how out of place and unintelligible!

Act iv. sc. 2.—

“Take thou no scorn

To wear the horn, the lusty horn;

It was a crest ere thou wast born.”

I question whether there exists a parallel instance of a phrase, that like this of “horns” is universal in all languages, and yet for which no one has discovered even a plausible origin.

<<span id="filepos0038086749"> a> “ Twelfth Night.”

Act i. sc. 1. Duke's speech:—

... “So full of shapes is fancy,

That it alone is high fantastical.”

Warburton's alteration of *is* into *in* is needless. “Fancy” may very well be interpreted “exclusive affection,” or “passionate preference.” Thus, bird-fanciers; gentlemen of the fancy, that is, amateurs of boxing, &c. The play of assimilation,—the meaning one sense chiefly, and yet keeping both senses in view, is perfectly Shakespearian.

Act ii. sc. 3. Sir Andrew's speech:—

An explanatory note on *Pigrogromitus* would have been more acceptable than Theobald's grand discovery that “lemon” ought to be “leman.”

Ib. Sir Toby's speech (Warburton's note on the Peripatetic philosophy):—

“Shall we rouse the night-owl in a catch, that will draw three

“souls out of one weaver?”

O genuine, and inimitable (at least I hope so) Warburton! This note of thine, if but one in five millions, would be half a one too much.

Ib. sc. 4.—

“*Duke.* My life upon't, young though thou art, thine eye

Hath stay'd upon some favour that it loves;

Hath it not, boy?

Vio. A little, by your favour.

Duke. What kind of woman is't?”

And yet Viola was to have been presented to Orsino as a eunuch!—Act i. sc. 2. Viola's speech. Either she forgot this, or else she had altered her plan.

Ib. —

“*Vio.* A blank, my lord: she never told her love!—

But let concealment,” &c.

After the first line (of which the last five words should be spoken with, and drop down in, a deep sigh), the actress ought to make a pause; and then start afresh, from the activity of thought, born of suppressed feelings, and which thought had accumulated during the brief interval, as vital heat under the skin during a dip in cold water.

Ib. sc. 5.—

“*Fabian.* Though our silence be drawn from us by *cars* , yet

peace.”

Perhaps, “cables.”

Act iii. sc. 1.—

“*Clown.* A sentence is but a *cheveril* glove to a good wit.”

(Theobald's note.)

Theobald's etymology of “cheveril” is, of course, quite right;—but he is mistaken in supposing that there were no such things as gloves of chicken-skin. They were at one time a main article in chirocosmetics.

Act v. sc. 1. Clown's speech:—

“So that, *conclusions to be as kisses* , if your four negatives make your two affirmatives, why, then, the worse for my friends, and the

better for my foes.”

(Warburton reads “conclusion to be asked, is.”)

Surely Warburton could never have wooed by kisses and won, or he would not have flounder-flatted so just and humorous, nor less pleasing than humorous, an image into so profound a nihility. In the name of love and wonder, do not four kisses make a double affirmative? The humour lies in the whispered “No!” and the inviting “Don't!” with which the maiden's kisses are accompanied, and thence compared to negatives, which by repetition constitute an affirmative.

<<span id="filepos0038093772"> a> “ All's Well That Ends Well.”

Act i. sc. 1.—

“*Count.* If the living be enemy to the grief, the excess makes

it soon mortal.

Bert. Madam, I desire your holy wishes.

Laf. How understand we that? ”

Bertram and Lafeu, I imagine, both speak together,—Lafeu referring to the Countess's rather obscure remark.

Act ii. sc. 1. (Warburton's note.)

“*King.* ... let *higher* Italy

(Those *'bated* , that inherit but the fall

Of the last monarchy) see, that you come

Not to woo honour, but to wed it.”

It would be, I own, an audacious and unjustifiable change of the text; but yet, as a mere conjecture, I venture to suggest “bastards,” for “'bated.” As it stands, in spite of Warburton's note, I can make little or nothing of it. Why should the king except the then most illustrious states, which, as being republics, were the more truly inheritors of the Roman grandeur?—With my conjecture, the sense would be;—“let higher, or the more northern part of Italy—(unless ‘higher’ be a corruption for ‘hir'd,’—the metre seeming to demand a monosyllable) (those bastards that inherit the infamy only of their fathers) see,” &c. The following “woo” and “wed” are so far confirmative as they indicate Shakespeare's manner of connection by unmarked influences of association from some preceding metaphor. This it is which makes his style so peculiarly vital and organic.

Likewise “those girls of Italy” strengthen the guess. The absurdity of Warburton's gloss, which represents the king calling Italy superior, and then excepting the only part the lords were going to visit, must strike every one.

Ib. sc. 3.—

“*Laf.* They say, miracles are past; and we have our philosophical

persons to make modern and familiar, things supernatural

and *causeless* .”

Shakespeare, inspired, as it might seem, with all knowledge, here uses the word “causeless” in its strict philosophical sense;—cause being truly predicable only of *phenomena* , that is, things natural, and not of *noumena* , or things supernatural.

Act iii. sc. 5.—

“*Dia.* The Count Rousillon:—know you such a one?

Hel. But by the ear that hears most nobly of him;

His face I know not.”

Shall we say here, that Shakespeare has unnecessarily made his loveliest character utter a lie?—Or shall we dare think that, where to deceive was necessary, he thought a pretended verbal verity a double crime, equally with the other a lie to the hearer, and at the same time an attempt to lie to one's own conscience?

<<span id="filepos0038099289"> a> “ Merry Wives Of Windsor.”

Act i. sc. 1.—

“*Shal.* The luce is the fresh fish, the salt fish is an old coat.”

I cannot understand this. Perhaps there is a corruption both of words and speakers. Shallow no sooner corrects one mistake of Sir Hugh's, namely, “louse” for “luce,” a pike, but the honest Welchman falls into another, namely, “cod” (*baccalà*). *Cambrice* —“cot” for coat.

“*Shal.* The luce is the fresh fish—

Evans. The salt fish is an old cot.”

“Luce is a fresh fish, and not a louse;” says Shallow. “Aye, aye,” quoth Sir Hugh; “the *fresh* fish is the luce; it is an old cod that is the salt fish.” At all events, as the text stands, there is no sense at all in the words.

Ib. sc. 3—

“*Fal.* Now, the report goes, she has all the rule of her husband's

purse; He hath a legion of angels.

Pist. As many devils entertain; and *To her, boy* , say I.”

Perhaps it is—

“As many devils enter (or enter'd) swine; and *to her, boy* ,

say I:”—

a somewhat profane, but not un-Shakespearian, allusion to the “legion” in St. Luke's “gospel.”

<<span id="filepos0038102388"> a> “ Measure For Measure.”

This play, which is Shakespeare's throughout, is to me the most painful—say rather, the only painful—part of his genuine works. The comic and tragic parts equally border on the ¼¹Ã·Äx½,—the one being disgusting, the other horrible; and the pardon and marriage of Angelo not merely baffles the strong indignant claim of justice—(for cruelty, with lust and damnable baseness, cannot be forgiven, because we cannot conceive them as being morally repented of); but it is likewise degrading to the character of woman. Beaumont and Fletcher, who can follow Shakespeare in his errors only, have presented a still worse, because more loathsome and contradictory, instance of the same kind in the *Night-Walker* , in the marriage of Alathe to Algripe. Of the counterbalancing beauties of *Measure for Measure* , I need say nothing; for I have already remarked that the play is Shakespeare's throughout.

Act iii. sc. 1.—

“Ay, but to die, and go we know not where,” &c.

“This natural fear of Claudio, from the antipathy we have to death, seems very little varied from that infamous wish of Mæcenas, recorded in the 101st epistle of Seneca:—

“*Debilem facito manu,*

Debilem pede, coxa ” &c.—Warburton's note.

I cannot but think this rather a heroic resolve, than an infamous wish. It appears to me to be the grandest symptom of an immortal spirit, when even that bedimmed and overwhelmed spirit recked not of its own immortality, still to seek to be,—to be a mind, a will.

As fame is to reputation, so heaven is to an estate, or immediate advantage. The difference is, that the self-love of the former cannot exist but by a complete suppression and habitual supplantation of immediate selfishness. In one point of view, the miser is more estimable than the spendthrift;—only that the miser's present feelings are as much of the present as the spendthrift's. But *cæteris paribus* , that is, upon the supposition that whatever is good or lovely in the one coexists equally in the other, then, doubtless, the master of the present is less a selfish being, an animal, than he who lives for the moment with no inheritance in the future. Whatever can degrade man, is supposed in the latter case; whatever can elevate him, in the former. And as to self;—strange and generous self! that can only be such a self by a complete divestment of all that men call self,—of all that can make it either practically to others, or consciously to the individual himself, different from the human race in its ideal. Such self is but a perpetual religion, an inalienable acknowledgment of God, the sole basis and ground of being. In this sense, how can I love God, and not love myself, as far as it is of God?

Ib. sc. 2.—

“Pattern in himself to know,

Grace to stand, and virtue go.”

Worse metre, indeed, but better English would be,—

“Grace to stand, virtue to go.”

<<span id="filepos0038107134"> a> “ Cymbeline.”

Act i. sc. 1.—

“You do not meet a man, but frowns: our bloods

No more obey the heavens, than our courtiers'

Still seem, as does the king's.”

There can be little doubt of Mr. Tyrwhitt's emendations of “courtiers” and “king,” as to the sense;—only it is not impossible that Shakespeare's dramatic language may allow of the word “brows” or “faces” being understood after the word “courtiers',” which might then remain in the genitive case plural. But the nominative plural makes excellent sense, and is sufficiently elegant, and sounds to my ear Shakespearian. What, however, is meant by “our bloods no more obey the heavens?”—Dr. Johnson's assertion that “bloods” signify “countenances,” is, I think, mistaken both in the thought conveyed—(for it was never a popular belief that the stars governed men's countenances)—and in the usage, which requires an antithesis of the blood,—or the temperament of the four humours, choler, melancholy, phlegm, and the red globules, or the sanguine portion, which was supposed not to be in our own power, but to be dependent on the influences of the heavenly bodies,—and the countenances which are in our power really, though from flattery we bring them into a no less apparent dependence on the sovereign, than the former are in actual dependence on the constellations.

I have sometimes thought that the word “courtiers” was a misprint for “countenances,” arising from an anticipation, by foreglance of the compositor's eye, of the word “courtier” a few lines below. The written *r* is easily and often confounded with, the written *n* . The compositor read the first syllable *court* , and—his eye at the same time catching the word “courtier” lower down—he completed the word without reconsulting the copy. It is not unlikely that Shakespeare intended first to express, generally, the same thought, which a little afterwards he repeats with a particular application to the persons meant;—a common usage of the pronominal “our,” where the speaker does not really mean to include himself; and the word “you” is an additional confirmation of the “our,” being used in this place for “men” generally and indefinitely,—just as “you do not meet” is the same as “one does not meet.”

Act i. sc. 1 Imogen's speech:—

... “My dearest husband,

I something fear my father's wrath; but nothing

(Always reserved my holy duty) what

His rage can do on me;”

Place the emphasis on “me”; for “rage” is a mere repetition of “wrath.”

“*Cym.* O disloyal thing;

That should'st repair my youth; thou heapest

A year's age on me!”

How is it that the commentators take no notice of the un-Shakespearian defect in the metre of the second line, and what in Shakespeare is the same, in the harmony with the sense and feeling? Some word or words must have slipped out after “youth,”—possibly “and see”:—

“That should'st repair my youth!—and see, thou heap'st,” &c.

Ib. sc. 3. Pisanio's speech:—

... “For so long

As he could make me with *this* eye or ear

Distinguish him from others,” &c.

But “*this* eye,” in spite of the supposition of its being used ´µ¹ºÄ¹ºöÂ, is very awkward. I should think that either “or” or “the” was Shakespeare's word;—

“As he could make me or with eye or ear.”

Ib. sc. 6. Iachimo's speech:—

... “Hath nature given them eyes

To see this vaulted arch, and the rich crop

Of sea and land, which can distinguish 'twixt

The fiery orbs above, and the twinn'd stones

Upon the number'd beach.”

I would suggest “cope” for “crop.” As to “twinn'd stones”—may it not be a bold *catachresis* for muscles, cockles, and other empty shells with hinges, which are truly twinned? I would take Dr. Farmer's “umber'd,” which I had proposed before I ever heard of its having been already offered by him: but I do not adopt his interpretation of the word, which I think is not derived from *umbra* , a shade, but from *umber* , a dingy yellow-brown soil, which most commonly forms the mass of the sludge on the sea-shore, and on the banks of tide-rivers at low water. One other possible interpretation of this sentence has occurred to me, just barely worth mentioning;—that the “twinn'd stones” are the *augrim* stones upon the number'd beech,—that is, the astronomical tables of beech-wood.

Act v. sc. 5.—

“*Sooth.* When, as a lion's whelp,” &c.

It is not easy to conjecture why Shakespeare should have introduced this ludicrous scroll, which answers no one purpose, either propulsive, or explicatory, unless as a joke on etymology.

<<span id="filepos0038115644"> a> “ Titus Andronicus.”

Act i. sc. 1. Theobald's note:—

“I never heard it so much as intimated, that he (Shakespeare) had turned his genius to stage-writing, before he associated with the players, and became one of their body.”

That Shakespeare never “turned his genius to stage-writing,” as Theobald most *Theobaldice* phrases it, before he became an actor, is an assertion of about as much authority as the precious story that he left Stratford for deer-stealing, and that he lived by holding gentlemen's horses at the doors of the theatre, and other trash of that arch-gossip, old Aubrey. The metre is an argument against *Titus Andronicus* being Shakespeare's, worth a score such chronological surmises. Yet I incline to think that both in this play and in *Jeronymo* , Shakespeare wrote some passages, and that they are the earliest of his compositions.

Act v. sc. 2. I think it not improbable that the lines from—

“I am not mad; I know thee well enough;

to

So thou destroy Rapine, and Murder there”—

were written by Shakespeare in his earliest period. But instead of the text—

“Revenge, *which makes the foul offenders quake.*

Tit. Art thou Revenge? and art thou sent to me?”—

the words in italics ought to be omitted.

<<span id="filepos0038118502"> a> “ Troilus And Cressida.”

“Mr. Pope (after Dryden) informs us that the story of *Troilus and Cressida* was originally the work of one Lollius, a Lombard: but Dryden goes yet further; he declares it to have been written in Latin verse, and that Chaucer translated it. *Lollius was a historiographer of Urbino in Italy.* ”—Note in Stockdale's edition, 1807.

“Lollius was a historiographer of Urbino in Italy.” So affirms the notary to whom the Sieur Stockdale committed the *disfaciménto* of Ayscough's excellent edition of Shakespeare. Pity that the researchful notary has not either told us in what century, and of what history, he was a writer, or been simply content to depose, that Lollius, if a writer of that name existed at all, was a somewhat somewhere. The notary speaks of the *Troy Boke* of Lydgate, printed in 1513. I have never seen it; but I deeply regret that Chalmers did not substitute the whole of Lydgate's works from the MSS. extant, for the almost worthless Gower.

The *Troilus and Cressida* of Shakespeare can scarcely be classed with his dramas of Greek and Roman history; but it forms an intermediate link between the fictitious Greek and Roman histories, which we may call legendary dramas, and the proper ancient histories,—that is, between the *Pericles* or *Titus Andronicus* , and the *Coriolanus* or *Julius Cæsar* . *Cymbeline* is a *congener* with *Pericles* , and distinguished from *Lear* by not having any declared prominent object. But where shall we class the *Timon of Athens* ? Perhaps immediately below *Lear* . It is a *Lear* of the satirical drama; a *Lear* of domestic or ordinary life;—a local eddy of passion on the high road of society, while all around is the week-day goings on of wind and weather; a *Lear* , therefore, without its soul-searching flashes, its ear-cleaving thunder-claps, its meteoric splendours,—without the contagion and the fearful sympathies of nature, the fates, the furies, the frenzied elements, dancing in and out, now breaking through and scattering,—now hand in hand with,—the fierce or fantastic group of human passions, crimes, and anguishes, reeling on the unsteady ground, in a wild harmony to the shock and the swell of an earthquake. But my present subject was *Troilus and Cressida* ; and I suppose that, scarcely knowing what to say of it, I by a cunning of instinct ran off to subjects on which I should find it difficult not to say too much, though certain after all that I should still leave the better part unsaid, and the gleaning for others richer than my own harvest.

Indeed, there is no one of Shakespeare's plays harder to characterise. The name and the remembrances connected with it, prepare us for the representation of attachment no less faithful than fervent on the side of the youth, and of sudden and shameless inconstancy on the part of the lady. And this is, indeed, as the gold thread on which the scenes are strung, though often kept out of sight and out of mind by gems of greater value than itself. But as Shakespeare calls forth nothing from the mausoleum of history, or the catacombs of tradition, without giving, or eliciting, some permanent and general interest, and brings forward no subject which he does not moralise or intellectualise,—so here he has drawn in Cressida the portrait of a vehement passion, that, having its true origin and proper cause in warmth of temperament, fastens on, rather than fixes to, some one object by liking and temporary preference.

“There's language in her eye, her cheek, her lip,

Nay, her foot speaks; her wanton spirit looks out

At every joint and motive of her body.”

This Shakespeare has contrasted with the profound affection represented in

Troilus, and alone worthy the name of love;—affection, passionate indeed,—swoln with the confluence of youthful instincts and youthful fancy, and growing in the radiance of hope newly risen, in short, enlarged by the collective sympathies of nature;—but still having a depth of calmer element in a will stronger than desire, more entire than choice, and which gives permanence to its own act by converting it into faith and duty. Hence, with excellent judgment, and with an excellence higher than mere judgment can give, at the close of the play, when Cressida has sunk into infamy below retrieval and beneath hope, the same will, which had been the substance and the basis of his love, while the restless pleasures and passionate longings, like sea-waves, had tossed but on its surface,—this same moral energy is represented as snatching him aloof from all neighbourhood with her dishonour, from all lingering fondness and languishing regrets, whilst it rushes with him into other and nobler duties, and deepens the channel, which his heroic brother's death had left empty for its collected flood. Yet another secondary and subordinate purpose Shakespeare has inwoven with his delineation of these two characters,—that of opposing the inferior civilisation, but purer morals, of the Trojans to the refinements, deep policy, but duplicity and sensual corruptions of the Greeks.

To all this, however, so little comparative projection is given,—nay, the masterly group of Agamemnon, Nestor, and Ulysses, and, still more in advance, that of Achilles, Ajax, and Thersites, so manifestly occupying the fore-ground, that the subservience and vassalage of strength and animal courage to intellect and policy seems to be the lesson most often in our poet's view, and which he has taken little pains to connect with the former more interesting moral impersonated in the titular hero and heroine of the drama. But I am half inclined to believe, that Shakespeare's main object, or shall I rather say his ruling impulse, was to translate the poetic heroes of paganism into the not less rude, but more intellectually vigorous, and more *featurely* , warriors of Christian chivalry,—and to substantiate the distinct and graceful profiles or outlines of the Homeric epic into the flesh and blood of the romantic drama;—in short, to give a grand history-piece in the robust style of Albert Durer.

The character of Thersites, in particular, well deserves a more careful examination, as the Caliban of demagogic life;—the admirable portrait of intellectual power deserted by all grace, all moral principle, all not momentary impulse;—just wise enough to detect the weak head, and fool enough to provoke the armed fist of his betters;—one whom malcontent Achilles can inveigle from malcontent Ajax, under the one condition, that he shall be called on to do nothing but abuse and slander, and that he shall be allowed to abuse as much and as purulently as he likes, that is, as he can;—in short, a mule,—quarrelsome by the original discord of his nature;—a slave by tenure of his own baseness,—made to bray and be brayed at, to despise and be despicable. “Aye, Sir, but say what you will, he is a very clever fellow, though the best friends will fall out. There was a time when Ajax thought he deserved to have a statue of gold erected to him and handsome Achilles, at the head of the Myrmidons, gave no little credit to his *friend Thersites* !”

Act iv. sc. 5. Speech of Ulysses:—

“O, these encounterers, so glib of tongue,

That give a *coasting* welcome ere it comes”—

Should it be “accosting?” “Accost her, knight, accost!” in the *Twelfth Night* . Yet there sounds a something so Shakespearian in the phrase—“give a coasting welcome” (“coasting” being taken as the epithet and adjective of “welcome”), that had the following words been, “ere *they land* ,” instead of “ere it comes,” I should have preferred the interpretation. The sense now is, “that give welcome to a salute ere it comes.”

<<span id="filepos0038128573"> a> “ Coriolanus.”

This play illustrates the wonderfully philosophic impartiality of Shakespeare's politics. His own country's history furnished him with no matter but what was too recent to be devoted to patriotism. Besides, he knew that the instruction of ancient history would seem more dispassionate. In *Coriolanus* and *Julius Cæsar* , you see Shakespeare's good-natured laugh at mobs. Compare this with Sir Thomas Brown's aristocracy of spirit.

Act i. sc. 1. Marcius' speech:—

... “He that depends

Upon your favours, swims with fins of lead,

And hews down oaks with rushes. Hang ye! Trust ye?”

I suspect that Shakespeare wrote it transposed!

“Trust ye? Hang ye!”

Ib. sc. 10. Speech of Aufidius:—

... “Mine emulation

Hath not that honour in't, it had; for where

I thought to crush him in an equal force,

True sword to sword; I'll potch at him some way

Or wrath, or craft may get him.—

... My valour (poison'd

With only suffering stain by him) for him

Shall fly out of itself: nor sleep, nor sanctuary,

Being naked, sick, nor fane, nor capitol,

The prayers of priests, nor times of sacrifices,

Embankments all of fury, shall lift up

Their rotten privilege and custom 'gainst

My hate to Marcius.”

I have such deep faith in Shakespeare's heart-lore, that I take for granted that this is in nature, and not as a mere anomaly; although I cannot in myself discover any germ of possible feeling, which could wax and unfold itself into such sentiment as this. However, I perceive that in this speech is meant to be contained a prevention of shock at the after-change in Aufidius's character.

Act ii. sc. 1. Speech of Menenius:—

“The most sovereign prescription in *Galen* ,” &c.

Was it without, or in contempt of, historical information that Shakespeare made the contemporaries of Coriolanus quote Cato and Galen? I cannot decide to my own satisfaction.

Ib. sc. 3. Speech of Coriolanus:—

“Why in this wolvish toge should I stand hero”

That the gown of the candidate was of whitened wool, we know. Does “wolvish” or “woolvish” mean “made of wool?” If it means “wolfish,” what is the sense?

Act iv. sc. 7. Speech of Aufidius:—

“All places yield to him ere he sits down,” &c.

I have always thought this, in itself so beautiful speech, the least explicable from the mood and full intention of the speaker of any in the whole works of Shakespeare. I cherish the hope that I am mistaken, and that, becoming wiser, I shall discover some profound excellence in that, in which I now appear to detect an imperfection.

<<span id="filepos0038134693"> a> “ Julius Cæsar.”

Act i. sc. 1.—

“*Mar.* What meanest *thou* by that? Mend me, thou saucy fellow!”

The speeches of Flavius and Marullus are in blank verse. Wherever regular metre can be rendered truly imitative of character, passion, or personal rank, Shakespeare seldom, if ever, neglects it. Hence this line should be read:—

“What mean'st by that? mend me, thou saucy fellow!”

I say regular metre: for even the prose has in the highest and lowest dramatic personage, a Cobbler or a Hamlet, a rhythm so felicitous and so severally appropriate, as to be a virtual metre.

Ib. sc. 2.—

“*Bru.* A soothsayer bids you beware the Ides of March.”

If my ear does not deceive me, the metre of this line was meant to express that sort of mild philosophic contempt, characterising Brutus even in his first casual speech. The line is a trimeter,—each *dipodia* containing two accented and two unaccented syllables, but variously arranged, as thus:—

u - - u | - u u - | u - u -

A soothsayer | bids you beware | the Ides of March.

Ib. Speech of Brutus:—

“Set honour in one eye, and death i' the other,

And I will look on *both* indifferently.”

Warburton would read “death” for “both;” but I prefer the old text. There are here three things, the public good, the individual Brutus' honour, and his death. The latter two so balanced each other, that he could decide for the first by equipoise; nay—the thought growing—that honour had more weight than death. That Cassius understood it as Warburton, is the beauty of Cassius as contrasted with Brutus.

Ib. Cæsar's speech:—

... “He loves no plays

As thou dost, Antony; he hears no music,” &c.

“This is not a trivial observation, nor does our poet mean barely by it, that Cassius was not a merry, sprightly man; but that he had not a due temperament of harmony in his disposition.”—Theobald's note.

O Theobald! what a commentator wast thou, when thou would'st affect to understand Shakespeare, instead of contenting thyself with collating the text! The meaning here is too deep for a line ten-fold the length of thine to fathom.

Ib. sc. 3. Cæsar's speech:—

“Be *factious* for redress of all these griefs;

And I will set this foot of mine as far,

As who goes farthest.”

I understand it thus: “You have spoken as a conspirator; be so in *fact* , and I will join you. Act on your principles, and realize them in a fact.”

Act ii. sc. 1. Speech of Brutus:—

“It must be by his death; and, for my part,

I know no personal cause to spurn at him,

But for the general. He would be crown'd:

How that might change his nature, there's the question.

... And, to speak truth of Cæsar,

I have not known when his affections sway'd

More than his reason.

... So Cæsar may;

Then, lest he may, prevent.”

This speech is singular;—at least, I do not at present see into Shakespeare's motive, his *rationale* , or in what point of view he meant Brutus' character to appear. For surely—(this, I mean, is what I say to myself, with my present *quantum* of insight, only modified by my experience in how many instances I have ripened into a perception of beauties, where I had before descried faults;) surely, nothing can seem more discordant with our historical preconceptions of Brutus, or more lowering to the intellect of the Stoico-Platonic tyrannicide, than the tenets here attributed to him—to him, the stern Roman republican; namely, —that he would have no objection to a king, or to Cæsar, a monarch in Rome, would Cæsar but be as good a monarch as he now seems disposed to be! How, too, could Brutus say that he found no personal cause—none in Cæsar's past conduct as a man? Had he not passed the Rubicon? Had he not entered Rome as a conqueror? Had he not placed his Gauls in the Senate?—Shakespeare, it may be said, has not brought these things forward—True;—and this is just the ground of my perplexity. What character did Shakespeare mean his Brutus to be?

Ib. Speech of Brutus:—

“For if thou *path* , thy native semblance on.”

Surely, there need be no scruple in treating this “path” as a mere misprint or mis-script for “put.” In what place does Shakespeare—where does any other writer of the same age—use “path” as a verb for “walk?”

Ib. sc. 2. Cæsar's speech:—

“She dreamt to-night, she saw my *statue* .”

No doubt, it should be *statua* , as in the same age, they more often pronounced “heroes” as a trisyllable than dissyllable. A modern tragic poet would have written,—

“Last night she dreamt that she my statue saw.”

But Shakespeare never avails himself of the supposed license of transposition, merely for the metre. There is always some logic either of thought or passion to justify it.

Act iii. sc. 1. Antony's speech:—

“Pardon me, Julius—here wast thou bay'd, brave hart:

Here didst thou fall; and here thy hunters stand

Sign'd in thy spoil, and crimson'd in thy lethe.

O world! thou wast the forest to this hart,

And this, indeed, O world! the heart of thee. ”

I doubt the genuineness of the last two lines;—not because they are vile; but first, on account of the rhythm, which is not Shakespearian, but just the very tune of some old play, from which the actor might have interpolated them;—and secondly, because they interrupt, not only the sense and connection, but likewise the flow both of the passion, and (what is with me still more decisive) of the Shakespearian link of association. As with many another parenthesis or gloss slipt into the text, we have only to read the passage without it, to see that it never was in it. I venture to say there is no instance in Shakespeare fairly like this. Conceits he has; but they not only rise out of some word in the lines before, but also lead to the thought in the lines following. Here the conceit is a mere alien: Antony forgets an image, when he is even touching it, and then recollects it, when the thought last in his mind must have led him away from it.

Act iv. sc. 3. Speech of Brutus:—

... “What, shall one of us,

That struck the foremost man of all this world,

But for *supporting robbers* .”

This seemingly strange assertion of Brutus is unhappily verified in the present day. What is an immense army, in which the lust of plunder has quenched all the duties of the citizen, other than a horde of robbers, or differenced only as fiends are from ordinarily reprobate men? Cæsar supported, and was supported by, such as these;—and even so Buonaparte in our days.

I know no part of Shakespeare that more impresses on me the belief of his genius being superhuman, than this scene between Brutus and Cassius. In the Gnostic heresy it might have been credited with less absurdity than most of their dogmas, that the Supreme had employed him to create, previously to his function of representing, characters.

<<span id="filepos0038148118"> a> “ Antony And Cleopatra.”

Shakespeare can be complimented only by comparison with himself: all other eulogies are either heterogeneous, as when they are in reference to Spenser or Milton; or they are flat truisms, as when he is gravely preferred to Corneille, Racine, or even his own immediate successors, Beaumont and Fletcher, Massinger and the rest. The highest praise, or rather form of praise, of this play, which I can offer in my own mind, is the doubt which the perusal always occasions in me, whether the *Antony and Cleopatra* is not, in all exhibitions of a giant power in its strength and vigour of maturity, a formidable rival of *Macbeth* , *Lear* , *Hamlet* , and *Othello* . *Feliciter audax* is the motto for its style comparatively with that of Shakespeare's other works, even as it is the general motto of all his works compared with those of other poets. Be it remembered, too, that this happy valiancy of style is but the representative and result of all the material excellencies so expressed.

This play should be perused in mental contrast with *Romeo and Juliet* ;—as the love of passion and appetite opposed to the love of affection and instinct. But the art displayed in the character of Cleopatra is profound; in this, especially, that the sense of criminality in her passion is lessened by our insight into its depth and energy, at the very moment that we cannot but perceive that the passion itself springs out of the habitual craving of a licentious nature, and that it is supported and reinforced by voluntary stimulus and sought-for associations, instead of blossoming out of spontaneous emotion.

Of all Shakespeare's historical plays, *Antony and Cleopatra* is by far the most wonderful. There is not one in which he has followed history so minutely, and yet there are few in which he impresses the notion of angelic strength so much;—perhaps none in which he impresses it more strongly. This is greatly owing to the manner in which the fiery force is sustained throughout, and to the numerous momentary flashes of nature counteracting the historic abstraction. As a wonderful specimen of the way in which Shakespeare lives up to the very end of this play, read the last part of the concluding scene. And if you would feel the judgment as well as the genius of Shakespeare in your heart's core, compare this astonishing drama with Dryden's *All For Love* .

Act i. sc. 1. Philo's speech:—

... “His captain's heart

Which in the scuffles of great fights hath burst

The buckles on his breast, *reneges* all temper.”

It should be “reneagues,” or “reniegues,” as “fatigues,” &c.

Ib. —

“Take but good note, and you shall see in him

The triple pillar of the world transform'd

Into a strumpet's *fool* .”

Warburton's conjecture of “stool” is ingenious, and would be a probable reading, if the scene opening had discovered Antony with Cleopatra on his lap. But, represented as he is walking and jesting with her, “fool” must be the word. Warburton's objection is shallow, and implies that he confounded the dramatic with the epic style. The “pillar” of a state is so common a metaphor as to have lost the image in the thing meant to be imaged.

Ib. sc. 2.—

... “Much is breeding;

Which, like the courser's hair, hath yet but life,

And not a serpent's poison.”

This is so far true to appearance, that a horse-hair, “laid,” as Hollinshed says, “in a pail of water,” will become the supporter of seemingly one worm, though probably of an immense number of small slimy water-lice. The hair will twirl round a finger, and sensibly compress it. It is a common experiment with school boys in Cumberland and Westmoreland.

Act ii. sc. 2. Speech of Enobarbus:—

“Her gentlewomen, like the Nereides,

So many *mermaids* , tended her i' th' eyes,

And made their bends adornings. At the helm

A seeming mermaid steers.”

I have the greatest difficulty in believing that Shakespeare wrote the first “mermaids.” He never, I think, would have so weakened by useless anticipation the fine image immediately following. The epithet “seeming” becomes so extremely improper after the whole number had been positively called “so many mermaids.”

<<span id="filepos0038155497"> a> “ Timon Of Athens.”

Act i. sc. 1.—

“*Tim.* The man is honest.

Old Ath. Therefore he will be , Timon.

His honesty rewards him in itself.”

Warburton's comment—“If the man be honest, for that reason he will be so in this, and not endeavour at the injustice of gaining my daughter without my consent”—is, like almost all his comments, ingenious in blunder; he can never see any other writer's thoughts for the mist-working swarm of his own. The meaning of the first line the poet himself explains, or rather unfolds, in the second. “The man is honest!”—“True;—and for that very cause, and with no additional or extrinsic motive, he will be so. No man can be justly called honest, who is not so for honesty's sake, itself including its own reward.” Note, that “honesty” in Shakespeare's age retained much of its old dignity, and that contradistinction of the *honestum* from the *utile* , in which its very essence and definition consist. If it be *honestum* , it cannot depend on the *utile* .

Ib. Speech of Apemantus, printed as prose in Theobald's edition:—

“So, so! aches contract, and starve your supple joints!”

I may remark here the fineness of Shakespeare's sense of musical period, which would almost by itself have suggested (if the hundred positive proofs had not been extant) that the word “aches” was then *ad libitum* , a dissyllable—*aitches* . For read it “aches,” in this sentence, and I would challenge you to find any period in Shakespeare's writings with the same musical or, rather dissonant, notation. Try the one, and then the other, by your ear, reading the sentence aloud, first with the word as a dissyllable and then as a monosyllable, and you will feel what I mean.

Ib. sc. 2. Cupid's speech: Warburton's correction of—

“There taste, touch, all pleas'd from thy table rise”—

into

“Th' ear, taste, touch, smell,” &c.

This is indeed an excellent emendation.

Act ii. sc. 1. Senator's speech:—

... “Nor then silenc'd with

“Commend me to your master”—*and the cap*

Plays in the right hand, thus .”

Either, methinks, “plays” should be “play'd,” or “and” should be changed to “while.” I can certainly understand it as a parenthesis, an interadditive of scorn; but it does not sound to my ear as in Shakespeare's manner.

Ib. sc. 2. Timon's speech (Theobald):—

“And that unaptness made *you* minister,

Thus to excuse yourself.”

Read *your* ;—at least I cannot otherwise understand the line. You made my chance indisposition and occasional inaptness your minister—that is, the ground on which you now excuse yourself. Or, perhaps, no correction is necessary, if we construe “made you” as “did you make;” “and that unaptness did you make help you thus to excuse yourself.” But the former seems more in Shakespeare's manner, and is less liable to be misunderstood.

Act iii. sc. 3. Servant's speech:—

“How fairly this lord strives to appear foul!—takes virtuous copies to be wicked; *like those that under hot, ardent zeal would set whole realms on fire. Of such a nature is his politic love* .”

This latter clause I grievously suspect to have been an addition of the players, which had hit, and, being constantly applauded, procured a settled occupation in the prompter's copy. Not that Shakespeare does not elsewhere sneer at the Puritans; but here it is introduced so *nolenter volenter* (excuse the phrase) by the head and shoulders!—and is besides so much more likely to have been conceived in the age of Charles I.

Act iv. sc. 3. Timon's speech:—

“Raise me this beggar, and *deny't* that lord.”

Warburton reads “denude.”

I cannot see the necessity of this alteration. The editors and commentators are, all of them, ready enough to cry out against Shakespeare's laxities and licenses of style, forgetting that he is not merely a poet, but a dramatic poet; that, when the head and the heart are swelling with fulness, a man does not ask himself whether he has grammatically arranged, but only whether (the context taken in) he has conveyed his meaning. “Deny” is here clearly equal to “withhold;” and the “it,” quite in the genius of vehement conversation, which a syntaxist explains by ellipses and *subauditurs* in a Greek or Latin classic, yet triumphs over as ignorances in a contemporary, refers to accidental and artificial rank or elevation, implied in the verb “raise.” Besides, does the word “denude” occur in any writer before, or of, Shakespeare's age?

<<span id="filepos0038163560"> a> “ Romeo And Juliet.”

I have previously had occasion to speak at large on the subject of the three unities of time, place, and action, as applied to the drama in the abstract, and to the particular stage for which Shakespeare wrote, as far as he can be said to have written for any stage but that of the universal mind. I hope I have in some measure succeeded in demonstrating that the former two, instead of being rules, were mere inconveniences attached to the local peculiarities of the Athenian drama; that the last alone deserved the name of a principle, and that in the preservation of this unity Shakespeare stood pre-eminent. Yet, instead of unity of action, I should greatly prefer the more appropriate, though scholastic and uncouth, words homogeneity, proportionateness, and totality of interest,—expressions, which involve the distinction, or rather the essential difference, betwixt the shaping skill of mechanical talent, and the creative, productive, life-power of inspired genius. In the former each part is separately conceived, and then by a succeeding act put together;—not as watches are made for wholesale—(for there each part supposes a preconception of the whole in some mind),—but more like pictures on a motley screen. Whence arises the harmony that strikes us in the wildest natural landscapes,—in the relative shapes of rocks, the harmony of colours in the heaths, ferns, and lichens, the leaves of the beech and the oak, the stems and rich brown branches of the birch and other mountain trees, varying from verging autumn to returning spring,—compared with the visual effect from the greater number of artificial plantations?—From this, that the natural landscape is effected, as it were, by a single energy modified *ab intra* in each component part. And as this is the particular excellence of the Shakespearian drama generally, so is it especially characteristic of the *Romeo and Juliet* .

The groundwork of the tale is altogether in family life, and the events of the play have their first origin in family feuds. Filmy as are the eyes of party-spirit, at once dim and truculent, still there is commonly some real or supposed object in view, or principle to be maintained; and though but the twisted wires on the plate of rosin in the preparation for electrical pictures, it is still a guide in some degree, an assimilation to an outline. But in family quarrels, which have proved scarcely less injurious to states, wilfulness, and precipitancy, and passion from mere habit and custom can alone be expected. With his accustomed judgment, Shakespeare has begun by placing before us a lively picture of all the impulses of the play; and, as nature ever presents two sides, one for Heraclitus, and one for Democritus, he has, by way of prelude, shown the laughable absurdity of the evil by the contagion of it reaching the servants who have so little to do with it, but who are under the necessity of letting the superfluity of sensoreal power fly off through the escape-valve of wit-combats, and of quarrelling with weapons of sharper edge, all in humble imitation of their masters. Yet there is a sort of unhired fidelity, an *ourishness* about all this that makes it rest pleasant on one's feelings. All the first scene, down to the conclusion of the Prince's speech, is a motley dance of all ranks and ages to one tune, as if the horn of Huon had been playing behind the scenes.

Benvolio's speech:—

“Madam, an hour before the worshipp'd sun

Peer'd forth the golden window of the east”—

and, far more strikingly, the following speech of old Montague:—

“Many a morning hath he there been seen

With tears augmenting the fresh morning dew"—

prove that Shakespeare meant the *Romeo and Juliet* to approach to a poem, which, and indeed its early date, may be also inferred from the multitude of rhyming couplets throughout. And if we are right, from the internal evidence, in pronouncing this one of Shakespeare's early dramas, it affords a strong instance of the fineness of his insight into the nature of the passions, that Romeo is introduced already love-bewildered. The necessity of loving creates an object for itself in man and woman; and yet there is a difference in this respect between the sexes, though only to be known by a perception of it. It would have displeased us if Juliet had been represented as already in love, or as fancying herself so;—but no one, I believe, ever experiences any shock at Romeo's forgetting his Rosaline, who had been a mere name for the yearning of his youthful imagination, and rushing into his passion for Juliet. Rosaline was a mere creation of his fancy; and we should remark the boastful positiveness of Romeo in a love of his own making, which is never shown where love is really near the heart.

"When the devout religion of mine eye

Maintains such falsehood, then turn tears to fires!

One fairer than my love! the all-seeing sun

Ne'er saw her match, since first the world begun."

The character of the Nurse is the nearest of any thing in Shakespeare to a direct borrowing from mere observation; and the reason is, that as in infancy and childhood the individual in nature is a representative of a class,—just as in describing one larch tree, you generalise a grove of them,—so it is nearly as much so in old age. The generalisation is done to the poet's hand. Here you have the garrulity of age strengthened by the feelings of a long-trusted servant, whose sympathy with the mother's affections gives her privileges and rank in the household; and observe the mode of connection by accidents of time and place, and the childlike fondness of repetition in a second childhood, and also that happy humble, ducking under, yet constant resurgence against, the check of her superiors!—

"Yes, madam!—Yet I cannot choose but laugh," &c.

In the fourth scene we have Mercutio introduced to us. O! how shall I describe that exquisite ebullience and overflow of youthful life, wafted on over the laughing waves of pleasure and prosperity, as a wanton beauty that distorts the face on which she knows her lover is gazing enraptured, and wrinkles her forehead in the triumph of its smoothness! Wit ever wakeful, fancy busy and procreative as an insect, courage, an easy mind that, without cares of its own, is at once disposed to laugh away those of others, and yet to be interested in them,—these and all congenial qualities, melting into the common *copula* of them all, the man of rank and the gentleman, with all its excellencies and all its weaknesses, constitute the character of Mercutio!

Act i. sc. 5.—

“*Tyb.* It fits when such a villain is a guest;

I'll not endure him.

Cap. He shall be endur'd.

What, goodman boy!—I say, he shall:—Go to;—

Am I the master here, or you?—Go to.

You'll not endure him!—God shall mend my soul—

You'll make a mutiny among my guests!

You will set cock-a-hoop! you'll be the man!

Tyb. Why, uncle, 'tis a shame.

Cap. Go to, go to,

You are a saucy boy!” &c.

How admirable is the old man's impetuosity at once contrasting, yet harmonised, with young Tybalt's quarrelsome violence! But it would be endless to repeat observations of this sort. Every leaf is different on an oak tree; but still we can only say—our tongues defrauding our eyes— “This is another oak-leaf!”

Act ii. sc. 2. The garden scene.

Take notice in this enchanting scene of the contrast of Romeo's love with his former fancy; and weigh the skill shown in justifying him from his inconstancy by making us feel the difference of his passion. Yet this, too, is a love in, although not merely of, the imagination.

Ib. —

“*Jul.* Well, do not swear; although I joy in thee,

I have no joy in this contract to-night:

It is too rash, too unadvised, too sudden,” &c.

With love, pure love, there is always an anxiety for the safety of the object, a disinterestedness, by which it is distinguished from the counterfeits of its name. Compare this scene with Act iii. sc. 1 of the *Tempest* . I do not know a more wonderful instance of Shakespeare's mastery in playing a distinctly rememberable variety on the same remembered air, than in the transporting love confessions of Romeo and Juliet and Ferdinand and Miranda. There seems more passion in the one, and more dignity in the other; yet you feel that the sweet girlish lingering and busy movement of Juliet, and the calmer and more maidenly fondness of Miranda, might easily pass into each other.

Ib. sc. 3. The Friar's speech.

The reverend character of the Friar, like all Shakespeare's representations of the great professions, is very delightful and tranquillising, yet it is no digression, but immediately necessary to the carrying on of the plot.

Ib. sc. 4.—

“*Rom.* Good morrow to you both. What counterfeit did I give you?” &c.

Compare again Romeo's half-exerted, and half real, ease of mind with his first manner when in love with Rosaline! His will had come to the clenching point.

Ib. sc. 6.—

“*Rom.* Do thou but close our hands with holy words,

Then love-devouring death do what he dare,

It is enough I may but call her mine.”

The precipitancy, which is the character of the play, is well marked in this short scene of waiting for Juliet's arrival.

Act iii. sc. 1.—

“*Mer.* No, 'tis not so deep as a well, nor so wide as a church door; but 'tis enough: 'twill serve: ask for me to-morrow, and you shall find me a grave man,” &c.

How fine an effect the wit and raillery habitual to Mercutio, even struggling with his pain, give to Romeo's following speech, and at the same time so completely justifying his passionate revenge on Tybalt!

Ib. Benvolio's speech:—

... “But that he tilts

With piercing steel at bold Mercutio's breast.”

This small portion of untruth in Benvolio's narrative is finely conceived.

Ib. sc. 2. Juliet's speech:—

“For thou wilt lie upon the wings of night

Whiter than new snow on a raven's back.”

Indeed the whole of this speech is imagination strained to the highest; and observe the blessed effect on the purity of the mind. What would Dryden have made of it?

Ib. —

“*Nurse.* Shame come to Romeo.

Jul. Blister'd be thy tongue

For such a wish!”

Note the Nurse's mistake of the mind's audible struggles with itself for its decision *in toto* .

Ib. sc. 3. Romeo's speech:—

“'Tis torture, and not mercy: heaven's here,

Where Juliet lives,” &c.

All deep passions are a sort of atheists, that believe no future.

Ib. sc. 5.—

“*Cap.* Soft! take me with you, take me with you, wife—How!

will she none?” &c.

A noble scene! Don't I see it with my own eyes?—Yes! but not with Juliet's. And observe in Capulet's last speech in this scene his mistake, as if love's causes were capable of being generalised.

Act iv. sc. 3. Juliet's speech.:—

“O, look! methinks I see my cousin's ghost

Seeking out Romeo, that did spit his body

Upon a rapier's point:—Stay, Tybalt, stay!—

Romeo, I come! this do I drink to thee.”

Shakespeare provides for the finest decencies. It would have been too bold a thing for a girl of fifteen;—but she swallows the draught in a fit of fright.

Ib. sc. 5.—

As the audience know that Juliet is not dead, this scene is, perhaps, excusable. But it is a strong warning to minor dramatists not to introduce at one time many separate characters agitated by one and the same circumstance. It is difficult to understand what effect, whether that of pity or of laughter, Shakespeare meant to produce;—the occasion and the characteristic speeches are so little in harmony! For example, what the Nurse says is excellently suited to the Nurse's character, but grotesquely unsuited to the occasion.

Act v. sc. 1. Romeo's speech:—

... “O mischief! thou art swift

To enter in the thoughts of desperate men!

I do remember an apothecary,” &c.

This famous passage is so beautiful as to be self-justified; yet, in addition, what a fine preparation it is for the tomb scene!

Ib. sc. 3. Romeo's speech:—

“Good gentle youth, tempt not a desperate man,

Fly hence and leave me.”

The gentleness of Romeo was shown before, as softened by love; and now it is doubled by love and sorrow and awe of the place where he is.

Ib. Romeo's speech:—--

“How oft when men are at the point of death

Have they been merry! which their keepers call

A lightning before death. O, how may I

Call this a lightning?—--O, my love, my wife!” &c.

Here, here, is the master example how beauty can at once increase and modify passion!

Ib. Last scene.

How beautiful is the close! The spring and the winter meet;—winter assumes the character of spring, and spring the sadness of winter.

<<span id="filepos0038186565"> a> Shakespeare's English Historical Plays.

The first form of poetry is the epic, the essence of which may be stated as the successive in events and characters. This must be distinguished from narration, in which there must always be a narrator, from whom the objects represented receive a colouring and a manner;—whereas in the epic, as in the so-called poems of Homer, the whole is completely objective, and the representation is a pure reflection. The next form into which poetry passed was the dramatic;—both forms having a common basis with a certain difference, and that difference not consisting in the dialogue alone. Both are founded on the relation of providence to the human will; and this relation is the universal element, expressed under different points of view according to the difference of religion, and the moral and intellectual cultivation of different nations. In the epic poem fate is represented as overruling the will, and making it instrumental to the accomplishment of its designs:—

... ”¹xÂ Äµ»µwµÄ¿ ²¿½»u

In the drama, the will is exhibited as struggling with fate, a great and beautiful instance and illustration of which is the *Prometheus* of Æschylus; and the deepest effect is produced when the fate is represented as a higher and intelligent will, and the opposition of the individual as springing from a defect.

In order that a drama may be properly historical, it is necessary that it should be the history of the people to whom it is addressed. In the composition, care must be taken that there appear no dramatic improbability, as the reality is taken for granted. It must, likewise, be poetical;—that only, I mean, must be taken which is the permanent in our nature, which is common, and therefore deeply interesting to all ages. The events themselves are immaterial, otherwise than as the clothing and manifestation of the spirit that is working within. In this mode, the unity resulting from succession is destroyed, but is supplied by a unity of a higher order, which connects the events by reference to the workers, gives a reason for them in the motives, and presents men in their causative character. It takes, therefore, that part of real history which is the least known, and infuses a principle of life and organisation into the naked facts, and makes them all the framework of an animated whole.

In my happier days, while I had yet hope and onward-looking thoughts, I planned an historical drama of King Stephen, in the manner of Shakespeare. Indeed, it would be desirable that some man of dramatic genius should dramatise all those omitted by Shakespeare, as far down as Henry VII. Perkin Warbeck would make a most interesting drama. A few scenes of Marlow's *Edward II.* might be preserved. After Henry VIII., the events are too well and distinctly known, to be, without plump inverisimilitude, crowded together in one night's exhibition. Whereas, the history of our ancient kings—the events of the reigns, I mean—are like stars in the sky;—whatever the real interspaces may be, and however great, they seem close to each other. The stars—the events—strike us and remain in our eye, little modified by the difference of dates. An historic drama is, therefore, a collection of events borrowed from history, but connected together in respect of cause and time, poetically and by dramatic fiction. It would be a fine national custom to act such a series of dramatic histories in orderly succession, in the yearly Christmas holidays, and could not but tend to counteract that mock cosmopolitism, which under a positive term really implies nothing but a negation of, or indifference to, the particular love of our country. By its nationality must every nation retain its independence;—I mean a nationality *quoad* the nation. Better thus;—nationality in each individual, *quoad* his country, is equal to the sense of individuality *quoad* himself; but himself as sub-sensuous and central. Patriotism is equal to the sense of individuality reflected from every other individual. There may come a higher virtue in both—just cosmopolitism. But this latter is not possible but by antecedence of the former.

Shakespeare has included the most important part of nine reigns in his historical dramas;—namely—King John, Richard II.—Henry IV. (two)—Henry V.—Henry VI. (three) including Edward V. and Henry VIII., in all ten plays. There remain, therefore, to be done, with the exception of a single scene or two that should be adopted from Marlow—eleven reigns—of which the first two appear the only unpromising subjects;—and those two dramas must be formed wholly or mainly of invented private stories, which, however, could not have happened except in consequence of the events and measures of these reigns, and which should furnish opportunity both of exhibiting the manners and oppressions of the times, and of narrating dramatically the great events;—if possible, the death of the two sovereigns, at least of the latter, should be made to have some influence on the finale of the story. All the rest are glorious subjects; especially Henry I. (being the struggle between the men of arms and of letters, in the persons of Henry and Becket), Stephen, Richard I., Edward II., and Henry VII.

<<span id="filepos0038193013"> a> “ King John.”

Act i. sc. 1.—

“*Bast.* James Gurney, wilt thou give us leave awhile?

Gur. Good leave, good Philip.

Bast. Philip? *sparrow!* James,” &c.

Theobald adopts Warburton's conjecture of “*spare me* .”

O true Warburton! and the *sancta simplicitas* of honest dull Theobald's faith in him! Nothing can be more lively or characteristic than “Philip? Sparrow!” Had Warburton read old Skelton's *Philip Sparrow* , an exquisite and original poem, and, no doubt, popular in Shakespeare's time, even Warburton would scarcely have made so deep a plunge into the *bathetic* as to have deathified “*sparrow* ” into “*spare me* !”

Act iii. sc. 2. Speech of Faulconbridge:—

“Now, by my life, this day grows wondrous hot;

Some *airy* devil hovers in the sky,” &c.

Theobald adopts Warburton's conjecture of “fiery.”

I prefer the old text: the word “devil” implies “fiery.” You need only read the line, laying a full and strong emphasis on “devil,” to perceive the uselessness and tastelessness of Warburton's alteration.

<<span id="filepos0038195716"> a> “ Richard II.”

I have stated that the transitional link between the epic poem and the drama is the historic drama; that in the epic poem a pre-announced fate gradually adjusts and employs the will and the events as its instruments, whilst the drama, on the other hand, places fate and will in opposition to each other, and is then most perfect, when the victory of fate is obtained in consequence of imperfections in the opposing will, so as to leave a final impression that the fate itself is but a higher and a more intelligent will.

From the length of the speeches, and the circumstance that, with one exception, the events are all historical, and presented in their results, not produced by acts seen by, or taking place before, the audience, this tragedy is ill suited to our present large theatres. But in itself, and for the closet, I feel no hesitation in placing it as the first and most admirable of all Shakespeare's purely historical plays. For the two parts of *Henry IV.* form a species of themselves, which may be named the mixed drama. The distinction does not depend on the mere quantity of historical events in the play compared with the fictions; for there is as much history in *Macbeth* as in *Richard* , but in the relation of the history to the plot. In the purely historical plays, the history forms the plot; in the mixed, it directs it; in the rest, as *Macbeth* , *Hamlet* , *Cymbeline* , *Lear* , it subserves it. But, however unsuited to the stage this drama may be, God forbid that even there it should fall dead on the hearts of jacobinised Englishmen! Then, indeed, we might say—*præteriit gloria mundi!* For the spirit of patriotic reminiscence is the all-permeating soul of this noble work. It is, perhaps, the most purely historical of Shakespeare's dramas. There are not in it, as in the others, characters introduced merely for the purpose of giving a greater individuality and realness, as in the comic parts of *Henry IV.* , by presenting as it were our very selves. Shakespeare avails himself of every opportunity to effect the great object of the historic drama,—that, namely, of familiarising the people to the great names of their country, and thereby of exciting a steady patriotism, a love of just liberty, and a respect for all those fundamental institutions of social life, which bind men together:—

“This royal throne of kings, this sceptred isle,

This earth of majesty, this seat of Mars,

This other Eden, demi-paradise;

This fortress, built by nature for herself,

Against infection, and the hand of war;

This happy breed of men, this little world;

This precious stone set in the silver sea,

Which serves it in the office of a wall,

Or as a moat defensive to a home,

Against the envy of less happier lands;

This blessed plot, this earth, this realm, this England, This nurse, this teeming womb of royal kings,

Fear'd by their breed, and famous by their birth,” &c.

Add the famous passage in *King John* :—

“This England never did nor ever shall,

Lie at the proud foot of a conqueror,

But when it first did help to wound itself.

Now these her princes are come home again,

Come the three corners of the world in arms,

And we shall shock them: nought shall make us rue,

If England to itself do rest but true.”

And it certainly seems that Shakespeare's historic dramas produced a very deep effect on the minds of the English people, and in earlier times they were familiar even to the least informed of all ranks, according to the relation of Bishop Corbett. Marlborough, we know, was not ashamed to confess that his principal acquaintance with English history was derived from them; and I believe that a large part of the information as to our old names and achievements even now abroad is due, directly or indirectly, to Shakespeare.

Admirable is the judgment with which Shakespeare always in the first scenes prepares, yet how naturally, and with what concealment of art, for the catastrophe. Observe how he here presents the germ of all the after events in Richard's insincerity, partiality, arbitrariness, and favouritism, and in the proud, tempestuous, temperament of his barons. In the very beginning, also, is displayed that feature in Richard's character, which is never forgotten throughout the play—his attention to decorum, and high feeling of the kingly dignity. These anticipations show with what judgment Shakespeare wrote, and illustrate his care to connect the past and the future, and unify them with the present by forecast and reminiscence.

It is interesting to a critical ear to compare the six opening lines of the play—

“Old John of Gaunt, time-honour'd Lancaster,

Hast thou, according to thy oath and band,” &c.

each closing at the tenth syllable, with the rhythmless metre of the verse in *Henry VI.* and *Titus Andronicus* , in order that the difference, indeed, the heterogeneity, of the two may be felt *etiam in simillimis prima superficie* . Here the weight of the single words supplies all the relief afforded by intercurrent verse, while the whole represents the mood. And compare the apparently defective metre of Bolingbroke's first line—

“Many years of happy days befal”—

with Prospero's—

“Twelve years since, Miranda! twelve years since.”

The actor should supply the time by emphasis, and pause on the first syllable of each of these verses.

Act i. sc. 1. Bolingbroke's speech:—

“First (heaven be the record to my speech!),

In the devotion of a subject's love,” &c.

I remember in the Sophoclean drama no more striking example of the Äx ÀÁsÀ¿½ º±v Ãµ¼½x½ than this speech; and the rhymes in the last six lines well express the preconcertedness of Bolingbroke's scheme so beautifully contrasted with the vehemence and sincere irritation of Mowbray.

Ib. Bolingbroke's speech:—

“Which blood, like sacrificing Abel's, cries, Even from the tongueless caverns of the earth,

To *me* , for justice and rough chastisement.”

Note the ´µ¹½x½ of this “to me,” which is evidently felt by Richard:—

“How high a pitch his resolution soars!”

and the affected depreciation afterwards;—

“As he is but my father's brother's son.”

Ib. Mowbray's speech:—

“In haste whereof, most heartily I pray

Your highness to assign our trial day.”

The occasional interspersion of rhymes, and the more frequent winding up of a speech therewith—what purpose was this designed to answer? In the earnest drama, I mean. Deliberateness? An attempt, as in Mowbray, to collect himself and be cool at the close?—I can see that in the following speeches the rhyme answers the end of the Greek chorus, and distinguishes the general truths from the passions of the dialogue; but this does not exactly justify the practice, which is unfrequent in proportion to the excellence of Shakespeare's plays. One thing, however, is to be observed,—that the speakers are historical, known, and so far formal characters, and their reality is already a fact. This should be borne in mind. The whole of this scene of the quarrel between Mowbray and Bolingbroke seems introduced for the purpose of showing by anticipation the characters of Richard and Bolingbroke. In the latter there is observable a decorous and courtly checking of his anger in subservience to a predetermined plan, especially in his calm speech after receiving sentence of banishment compared with Mowbray's unaffected lamentation. In the one, all is ambitious hope of something yet to come; in the other it is desolation and a looking backward of the heart,

Ib. sc. 2.—

“*Gaunt.* God's is the quarrel; for God's substitute, His deputy anointed in his right,

Hath caus'd his death: the which, if wrongfully,

Let heaven revenge; for I may never lift

An angry arm against his minister.”

Without the hollow extravagance of Beaumont and Fletcher's ultra-royalism, how carefully does Shakespeare acknowledge and reverence the eternal distinction between the mere individual, and the symbolic or representative, on which all genial law, no less than patriotism, depends. The whole of this second scene commences, and is anticipative of, the tone and character of the play at large.

Ib. sc. 3. In none of Shakespeare's fictitious dramas, or in those founded on a history as unknown to his auditors generally as fiction, is this violent rupture of the succession of time found:—a proof, I think, that the pure historic drama, like *Richard II.* and *King John* , had its own laws.

Ib. Mowbray's speech:—

“A dearer *merit*

Have I deserved at your highness' hand.”

O, the instinctive propriety of Shakespeare in the choice of words!

Ib. Richard's speech:—

“Nor never by advised purpose meet,

To plot, contrive, or complot any ill,

'Gainst us, our state, our subjects, or our land.”

Already the selfish weakness of Richard's character opens. Nothing will such minds so readily embrace, as indirect ways softened down to their *quasi* -consciences by policy, expedience, &c.

Ib. Mowbray's speech:—

... “All the world's my way.”

“The world was all before him.”—*Milt.*

Ib. —

“*Boling.* How long a time lies in one little word!

Four lagging winters, and four wanton springs,

End in a word: such is the breath of kings.”

Admirable anticipation!

Ib. sc. 4. This is a striking conclusion of a first act,—letting the reader into the secret;—having before impressed us with the dignified and kingly manners of Richard, yet by well managed anticipations leading us on to the full gratification of pleasure in our own penetration. In this scene a new light is thrown on Richard's character. Until now he has appeared in all the beauty of royalty; but here, as soon as he is left to himself, the inherent weakness of his character is immediately shown. It is a weakness, however, of a peculiar kind, not arising from want of personal courage, or any specific defect of faculty, but rather an intellectual feminineness, which feels a necessity of ever leaning on the breasts of others, and of reclining on those who are all the while known to be inferiors. To this must be attributed as its consequences all Richard's vices, his tendency to concealment, and his cunning, the whole operation of which is directed to the getting rid of present difficulties. Richard is not meant to be a debauchee; but we see in him that sophistry which is common to man, by which we can deceive our own hearts, and at one and the same time apologize for, and yet commit, the error. Shakespeare has represented this character in a very peculiar manner. He has not made him amiable with counterbalancing faults; but has openly and broadly drawn those faults without reserve, relying on Richard's disproportionate sufferings and gradually emergent good qualities for our sympathy; and this was possible, because his faults are not positive vices, but spring entirely from defect of character.

Act ii. sc. 1.—

“*K. Rich.* Can sick men play so nicely with their names?”

Yes! on a death-bed there is a feeling which may make all things appear but as puns and equivocations. And a passion there is that carries off its own excess by plays on words as naturally, and, therefore, as appropriately to drama, as by gesticulations, looks, or tones. This belongs to human nature as such, independently of associations and habits from any particular rank of life or mode of employment; and in this consists Shakespeare's vulgarisms, as in Macbeth's—

“The devil damn thee black, thou cream-fac'd loon!” &c.

This is (to equivocate on Dante's words) in truth the *nobile volgare eloquenza* . Indeed it is profoundly true that there is a natural, an almost irresistible, tendency in the mind, when immersed in one strong feeling, to connect that feeling with every sight and object around it; especially if there be opposition, and the words addressed to it are in any way repugnant to the feeling itself, as here in the instance of Richard's unkind language:—

“Misery makes sport to mock itself.”

No doubt, something of Shakespeare's punning must be attributed to his age, in which direct and formal combats of wit were a favourite pastime of the courtly and accomplished. It was an age more favourable, upon the whole, to vigour of intellect than the present, in which a dread of being thought pedantic dispirits and flattens the energies of original minds. But independently of this, I have no hesitation in saying that a pun, if it be congruous with the feeling of the scene, is not only allowable in the dramatic dialogue, but oftentimes one of the most effectual intensives of passion.

Ib. —

“*K. Rich.* Right; you say true, as Hereford's love, so his;

As theirs, so mine; and all be as it is.”

The depth of this compared with the first scene:—

“How high a pitch,” &c.

There is scarcely anything in Shakespeare in its degree, more admirably drawn than York's character; his religious loyalty struggling with a deep grief and indignation at the king's follies; his adherence to his word and faith, once given in spite of all, even the most natural, feelings. You see in him the weakness of old age, and the overwhelmingness of circumstances, for a time surmounting his sense of duty,—the junction of both exhibited in his boldness in words and feebleness in immediate act; and then again his effort to retrieve himself in abstract loyalty, even at the heavy price of the loss of his son. This species of accidental and adventitious weakness is brought into parallel with Richard's continually increasing energy of thought, and as constantly diminishing power of acting;—and thus it is Richard that breathes a harmony and a relation into all the characters of the play.

Ib. sc. 2.—

“*Queen.* To please the king I did; to please myself

I cannot do it; yet I know no cause

Why I should welcome such a guest as grief,

Save bidding farewell to so sweet a guest

As my sweet Richard: yet again, methinks,

Some unborn sorrow, ripe in sorrow's womb,

Is coming toward me; and my inward soul

With nothing trembles: at something it grieves,

More than with parting from my lord the king.”

It is clear that Shakespeare never meant to represent Richard as a vulgar debauchee, but a man with a wantonness of spirit in external show, a feminine *friendism* , an intensity of woman-like love of those immediately about him, and a mistaking of the delight of being loved by him for a love of him. And mark in this scene Shakespeare's gentleness in touching the tender superstitions, the *terræ incognitæ* of presentiments, in the human mind; and how sharp a line of distinction he commonly draws between these obscure forecastings of general experience in each individual, and the vulgar errors of mere tradition. Indeed, it may be taken once for all as the truth, that Shakespeare, in the absolute universality of his genius, always reverences whatever arises out of our moral nature; he never profanes his muse with a contemptuous reasoning away of the genuine and general, however unaccountable, feelings of mankind.

The amiable part of Richard's character is brought full upon us by his queen's few words—

... “So sweet a guest

As my sweet Richard:”—

and Shakespeare has carefully shown in him an intense love of his country, well-knowing how that feeling would, in a pure historic drama, redeem him in the hearts of the audience. Yet even in this love there is something feminine and personal:—

“Dear earth, I do salute thee with my hand,—

As a long parted mother with her child

Plays fondly with her tears, and smiles in meeting;

So weeping, smiling, greet I thee, my earth,

And do thee favour with my royal hands.”

With this is combined a constant overflow of emotions from a total incapability of controlling them, and thence a waste of that energy, which should have been reserved for actions, in the passion and effort of mere resolves and menaces. The consequence is moral exhaustion, and rapid alternations of unmanly despair and ungrounded hope,—every feeling being abandoned for its direct opposite upon the pressure of external accident. And yet when Richard's inward weakness appears to seek refuge in his despair, and his exhaustion counterfeits repose, the old habit of kingliness, the effect of flatterers from his infancy, is ever and anon producing in him a sort of wordy courage which only serves to betray more clearly his internal impotence. The second and third scenes of the third act combine and illustrate all this:—

“*Aumerle.* He means, my lord, that we are too remiss;

Whilst Bolingbroke, through our security,

Grows strong and great, in substance, and in friends.

K. Rich. Discomfortable cousin! know'st thou not,

That when the searching eye of heaven is hid

Behind the globe, that lights the lower world,

Then thieves and robbers range abroad unseen,

In murders and in outrage, bloody here;

But when, from under this terrestrial ball,

He fires the proud tops of the eastern pines,

And darts his light through every guilty hole,

Then murders, treasons, and detested sins,

The cloke of night being pluckt from off their backs,

Stand bare and naked, trembling at themselves?

So when this thief, this traitor, Bolingbroke, &c.

Aumerle. Where is the Duke my father with his power?

K. Rich. No matter where; of comfort no man speak:

Let's talk of graves, of worms, and epitaphs,

Make dust our paper, and with rainy eyes

Write sorrow on the bosom of the earth, &c.

Aumerle. My father hath a power, enquire of him;

And learn to make a body of a limb.

K. Rich. Thou chid'st me well: proud Bolingbroke, I come

To change blows with thee for our day of doom.

This ague-fit of fear is over-blown;

An easy task it is to win our own.

Scroop. Your uncle York hath join'd with Bolingbroke.—

K. Rich. Thou hast said enough,

Beshrew thee, cousin, which didst lead me forth

Of that sweet way I was in to despair!

What say you now? what comfort have we now?

By heaven, I'll hate him everlastingly,

That bids me be of comfort any more.”

Act iii. sc. 3. Bolingbroke's speech:—

“Noble lord,

Go to the rude ribs of that ancient castle,” &c.

Observe the fine struggle of a haughty sense of power and ambition in Bolingbroke with the necessity for dissimulation.

Ib. sc. 4. See here the skill and judgment of our poet in giving reality and individual life, by the introduction of accidents in his historic plays, and thereby making them dramas, and not histories. How beautiful an islet of repose—a melancholy repose, indeed—is this scene with the Gardener and his Servant. And how truly affecting and realising is the incident of the very horse Barbary, in the scene with the Groom in the last act!—

“*Groom.* I was a poor groom of thy stable, King, When thou wert King; who, travelling towards York,

With much ado, at length have gotten leave

To look upon my sometimes master's face.

O, how it yearn'd my heart, when I beheld,

In London streets, that coronation day,

When Bolingbroke rode on roan Barbary!

That horse, that thou so often hast bestrid;

That horse, that I so carefully have dress'd!

K. Rich. Rode he on Barbary?”

Bolingbroke's character, in general, is an instance how Shakespeare makes one play introductory to another; for it is evidently a preparation for Henry IV., as Gloucester in the third part of *Henry VI.* is for Richard III.

I would once more remark upon the exalted idea of the only true loyalty developed in this noble and impressive play. We have neither the rants of Beaumont and Fletcher, nor the sneers of Massinger;—the vast importance of the personal character of the sovereign is distinctly enounced, whilst, at the same time, the genuine sanctity which surrounds him is attributed to, and grounded on, the position in which he stands as the convergence and exponent of the life and power of the state.

The great end of the body politic appears to be to humanise, and assist in the progressiveness of, the animal man;—but the problem is so complicated with contingencies as to render it nearly impossible to lay down rules for the formation of a state. And should we be able to form a system of government, which should so balance its different powers as to form a check upon each, and so continually remedy and correct itself, it would, nevertheless, defeat its own aim;—for man is destined to be guided by higher principles, by universal views, which can never be fulfilled in this state of existence,—by a spirit of progressiveness which can never be accomplished, for then it would cease to be. Plato's Republic is like Bunyan's Town of Man-Soul,—a description of an individual, all of whose faculties are in their proper subordination and inter-dependence; and this it is assumed may be the prototype of the state as one great individual. But there is this sophism in it, that it is forgotten that the human faculties, indeed, are parts and not separate things; but that you could never get chiefs who were wholly reason, ministers who were wholly understanding, soldiers all wrath, labourers all concupiscence, and so on through the rest. Each of these partakes of, and interferes with, all the others.

<<span id="filepos0038234665"> a> “ Henry IV.—Part I.”

Act i. sc. 1. King Henry's speech:—

“No more the thirsty entrance of this soil

Shall daub her lips with her own children's blood.”

A most obscure passage: but I think Theobald's interpretation right, namely, that “thirsty entrance” means the dry penetrability, or bibulous drought, of the soil. The obscurity of this passage is of the Shakespearian sort.

Ib. sc. 2. In this, the first introduction of Falstaff, observe the consciousness and the intentionality of his wit, so that when it does not flow of its own accord, its absence is felt, and an effort visibly made to recall it. Note also throughout how Falstaff's pride is gratified in the power of influencing a prince of the blood, the heir apparent, by means of it. Hence his dislike to Prince John of Lancaster, and his mortification when he finds his wit fail on him:—

“*P. John.* Fare you well, Falstaff: I, in my condition,

Shall better speak of you than you deserve.

Fal. I would you had but the wit; 'twere better than your

dukedom.—Good faith, this same young sober-blooded boy doth

not love me;—nor a man cannot make him laugh.”

Act ii. sc. 1. Second Carrier's speech:—

... “breeds fleas like a *loach* .”

Perhaps it is a misprint, or a provincial pronunciation, for “leach,” that is, blood-suckers. Had it been gnats, instead of fleas, there might have been some sense, though small probability, in Warburton's suggestion of the Scottish “loch.” Possibly “loach,” or “lutch,” may be some lost word for dovecote, or poultry-lodge, notorious for breeding fleas. In Stevens's or my reading, it should properly be “loaches,” or “leeches,” in the plural; except that I think I have heard anglers speak of trouts like *a* salmon.

Act iii. sc. 1.—

“*Glend. Nay* , if you melt, then will she run mad.”

This “nay” so to be dwelt on in speaking, as to be equivalent to a dissyllable - u, is characteristic of the solemn Glendower; but the imperfect line

“*She bids you*

Upon the wanton rushes lay you down,” &c.,

is one of those fine hair-strokes of exquisite judgment peculiar to Shakespeare;—thus detaching the Lady's speech, and giving it the individuality and entireness of a little poem, while he draws attention to it.

<<span id="filepos0038239423"> a> “ Henry IV.—Part II.”

Act ii. sc. 2—

“*P. Hen.* Sup any women with him?

Page. None, my lord, but old mistress Quickly, and mistress

Doll Tear-sheet.

P. Hen. This Doll Tear-sheet should be some road.”

I am sometimes disposed to think that this respectable young lady's name is a very old corruption for Tear-street—street-walker, *terere stratam* (*viam*). Does not the Prince's question rather show this?—

“This Doll Tear-street should be some road?”

Act iii. sc. 1. King Henry's speech:—

... “Then, *happy low, lie down* ;

Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown.”

I know no argument by which to persuade any one to be of my opinion, or rather of my feeling; but yet I cannot help feeling that “Happy low-lie-down!” is either a proverbial expression, or the burthen of some old song, and means, “Happy the man, who lays himself down on his straw bed or chaff pallet on the ground or floor!”

Ib. sc. 2. Shallow's speech:—

“*Rah, tah, tah* , would 'a say; *bounce* , would 'a say,” &c.

That Beaumont and Fletcher have more than once been guilty of sneering at their great master, cannot, I fear, be denied; but the passage quoted by Theobald from the *Knight of the Burning Pestle* is an imitation. If it be chargeable with any fault, it is with plagiarism, not with sarcasm.

<<span id="filepos0038242662"> a> “ Henry V.”

Act i. sc. 2. Westmoreland's speech:—

“They know your *grace* hath cause, and means, and might;

So hath your *highness* ; never King of England

Had nobles richer,” &c.

Does “grace” mean the king's own peculiar domains and legal revenue, and “highness” his feudal rights in the military service of his nobles?—I have sometimes thought it possible that the words “grace” and “cause” may have been transposed in the copying or printing;—

“They know your cause hath grace,” &c.

What Theobald meant, I cannot guess. To me his pointing makes the passage still more obscure. Perhaps the lines ought to be recited dramatically thus:—

“They know your Grace hath cause, and means, and might:—

So *hath* your Highness—never King of England

Had nobles richer,” &c.

He breaks off from the grammar and natural order from earnestness, and in order to give the meaning more passionately.

Ib. Exeter's speech:—

“Yet that is but a *crush'd* necessity.”

Perhaps it may be “crash” for “crass” from *crassus* , clumsy; or it may be “curt,” defective, imperfect: anything would be better than Warburton's “'scus'd,” which honest Theobald, of course, adopts. By the by, it seems clear to me that this speech of Exeter's properly belongs to Canterbury, and was altered by the actors for convenience.

Act iv. sc. 3. King Henry's speech:—

“We would not *die* in that man's company

That fears his fellowship to die with us.”

Should it not be “live” in the first line?

Ib. sc. 5.—

“*Const. O diable!*

Orl. O seigneur! le jour est perdu, tout est perdu!

Dan. Mort de ma vie! all is confounded, all!

Reproach and everlasting shame

Sit mocking in our plumes!—*O meschante fortune!*

Do not run away!”

Ludicrous as these introductory scraps of French appear, so instantly followed by good, nervous mother-English, yet they are judicious, and produce the impression which Shakespeare intended,—a sudden feeling struck at once on the ears, as well as the eyes, of the audience, that “here come the French, the baffled French braggards!”—And this will appear still more judicious, when we reflect on the scanty apparatus of distinguishing dresses in Shakespeare's tyring-room.

<<span id="filepos0038248301"> a> “ Henry VI.—Part I.”

Act i. sc. 1. Bedford's speech:—

“Hung be the heavens with black, yield day to night!

Comets, importing change of times and states,

Brandish your crystal tresses in the sky;

And with them scourge the bad revolting stars

That have consented unto Henry's death!

Henry the fifth, too famous to live long!

England ne'er lost a king of so much worth.”

Read aloud any two or three passages in blank verse even from Shakespeare's earliest dramas, as *Love's Labour's Lost* , or *Romeo and Juliet* ; and then read in the same way this speech, with especial attention to the metre; and if you do not feel the impossibility of the latter having been written by Shakespeare, all I dare suggest is, that you may have ears,—for so has another animal,—but an ear you cannot have, *me judice* .

<<span id="filepos0038250661"> a> “ Richard III.”

This play should be contrasted with *Richard II.* Pride of intellect is the characteristic of Richard, carried to the extent of even boasting to his own mind of his villany, whilst others are present to feed his pride of superiority; as in his first speech, act ii. sc. 1. Shakespeare here, as in all his great parts, developes in a tone of sublime morality the dreadful consequences of placing the moral, in subordination to the mere intellectual, being. In Richard there is a predominance of irony, accompanied with apparently blunt manners to those immediately about him, but formalised into a more set hypocrisy towards the people as represented by their magistrates.

<<span id="filepos0038251972"> a> “ Lear.”

Of all Shakespeare's plays *Macbeth* is the most rapid, *Hamlet* the slowest, in movement. *Lear* combines length with rapidity,—like the hurricane and the whirlpool, absorbing while it advances. It begins as a stormy day in summer, with brightness; but that brightness is lurid, and anticipates the tempest.

It was not without forethought, nor is it without its due significance, that the division of Lear's kingdom is in the first six lines of the play stated as a thing already determined in all its particulars, previously to the trial of professions, as the relative rewards of which the daughters were to be made to consider their several portions. The strange, yet by no means unnatural, mixture of selfishness, sensibility, and habit of feeling derived from, and fostered by, the particular rank and usages of the individual;—the intense desire of being intensely beloved,—selfish, and yet characteristic of the selfishness of a loving and kindly nature alone;—the self-supportless leaning for all pleasure on another's breast;—the craving after sympathy with a prodigal disinterestedness, frustrated by its own ostentation, and the mode and nature of its claims;—the anxiety, the distrust, the jealousy, which more or less accompany all selfish affections, and are amongst the surest contradistinctions of mere fondness from true love, and which originate Lear's eager wish to enjoy his daughter's violent professions, whilst the inveterate habits of sovereignty convert the wish into claim and positive right, and an incompliance with it into crime and treason;—these facts, these passions, these moral verities, on which the whole tragedy is founded, are all prepared for, and will to the retrospect be found implied, in these first four or five lines of the play. They let us know that the trial is but a trick; and that the grossness of the old king's rage is in part the natural result of a silly trick suddenly and most unexpectedly baffled and disappointed.

It may here be worthy of notice, that *Lear* is the only serious performance of Shakespeare, the interest and situations of which are derived from the assumption of a gross improbability; whereas Beaumont and Fletcher's tragedies are, almost all of them, founded on some out of the way accident or exception to the general experience of mankind. But observe the matchless judgment of our

Shakespeare. First, improbable as the conduct of Lear is in the first scene, yet it was an old story rooted in the popular faith,—a thing taken for granted already, and consequently without any of the effects of improbability. Secondly, it is merely the canvass for the characters and passions,—a mere occasion for,—and not, in the manner of Beaumont and Fletcher, perpetually recurring as the cause, and *sine qua non* of,—the incidents and emotions. Let the first scene of this play have been lost, and let it only be understood that a fond father had been duped by hypocritical professions of love and duty on the part of two daughters to disinherit the third, previously, and deservedly, more dear to him;—and all the rest of the tragedy would retain its interest undiminished, and be perfectly intelligible.

The accidental is nowhere the groundwork of the passions, but that which is catholic, which in all ages has been, and ever will be, close and native to the heart of man,—parental anguish from filial ingratitude, the genuineness of worth, though coffined in bluntness, and the execrable vileness of a smooth iniquity. Perhaps I ought to have added the *Merchant of Venice* ; but here too the same remarks apply. It was an old tale; and substitute any other danger than that of the pound of flesh (the circumstance in which the improbability lies), yet all the situations and the emotions appertaining to them remain equally excellent and appropriate. Whereas take away from the *Mad Lover* of Beaumont and Fletcher the fantastic hypothesis of his engagement to cut out his own heart, and have it presented to his mistress, and all the main scenes must go with it.

Kotzebue is the German Beaumont and Fletcher, without their poetic powers, and without their *vis comica* . But, like them, he always deduces his situations and passions from marvellous accidents, and the trick of bringing one part of our moral nature to counteract another; as our pity for misfortune and admiration of generosity and courage to combat our condemnation of guilt as in adultery, robbery, and other heinous crimes;—and, like them too, he excels in his mode of telling a story clearly and interestingly, in a series of dramatic dialogues. Only the trick of making tragedy-heroes and heroines out of shopkeepers and barmaids was too low for the age, and too unpoetic for the genius, of Beaumont and Fletcher, inferior in every respect as they are to their great predecessor and contemporary. How inferior would they have appeared, had not Shakespeare existed for them to imitate;—which in every play, more or less, they do, and in their tragedies most glaringly:—and yet—(O shame! shame!)—they miss no opportunity of sneering at the divine man, and sub-detracting from his merits!

To return to *Lear* . Having thus in the fewest words, and in a natural reply to as natural a question,—which yet answers the secondary purpose of attracting our attention to the difference or diversity between the characters of Cornwall and Albany,—provided the *prémisses* and *data* , as it were, for our after insight into the mind and mood of the person, whose character, passions, and sufferings are the main subject-matter of the play;—from Lear, the *persona patiens* of his drama, Shakespeare passes without delay to the second in importance, the chief agent and prime mover, and introduces Edmund to our acquaintance, preparing us with the same felicity of judgment, and in the same easy and natural way, for his character in the seemingly casual communication of its origin and occasion. From the first drawing up of the curtain Edmund has stood before us in the united strength and beauty of earliest manhood. Our eyes have been questioning him. Gifted as he is with high advantages of person, and further endowed by nature with a powerful intellect and a strong energetic will, even without any concurrence of circumstances and accident, pride will necessarily be the sin that most easily besets him. But Edmund is also the known and acknowledged son of the princely Gloucester: he, therefore, has both the germ of pride, and the conditions best fitted to evolve and ripen it into a predominant feeling. Yet hitherto no reason appears why it should be other than the not unusual pride of person, talent, and birth,—a pride auxiliary, if not akin, to many virtues, and the natural ally of honourable impulses. But alas! in his own presence his own father takes shame to himself for the frank avowal that he is his father,—he has “blushed so often to acknowledge him that he is now brazed to it!” Edmund hears the circumstances of his birth spoken of with a most degrading and licentious levity,—his mother described as a wanton by her own paramour, and the remembrance of the animal sting, the low criminal gratifications connected with her wantonness and prostituted beauty, assigned as the reason why “the whoreson must be acknowledged!” This, and the consciousness of its notoriety; the gnawing conviction that every show of respect is an effort of courtesy, which recalls, while it represses, a contrary feeling;—this is the ever trickling flow of wormwood and gall into the wounds of pride,—the corrosive *virus* which inoculates pride with a venom not its own, with envy, hatred, and a lust for that power which in its blaze of radiance would hide the dark spots on his disc,—with pangs of shame personally undeserved, and therefore felt as wrongs, and with a blind ferment of vindictive working towards the occasions and causes, especially towards a brother, whose stainless birth and lawful honours were the constant remembrancers of his own debasement, and were ever in the way to prevent all chance of its being unknown, or overlooked and forgotten. Add to this, that with excellent judgment, and provident for the claims of the moral sense,—for that which, relatively to the drama, is called poetic justice, and as the fittest means for reconciling the feelings of the spectators to the horrors of Gloucester's after sufferings,—at least, of rendering them somewhat less unendurable—(for I will not disguise my conviction, that in this one point the tragic in this play has been urged beyond the outermost mark and *ne plus ultra* of the dramatic);—Shakespeare has precluded all excuse and palliation of the guilt incurred by both the parents of the base-born Edmund, by Gloucester's confession that he was at the time a married man, and already blest with a lawful heir of his fortunes. The mournful alienation of brotherly love, occasioned by the law of primogeniture in noble families, or rather by the unnecessary distinctions engrafted thereon, and this in children of the same stock, is still almost proverbial on the continent,—especially, as I know from my own observation, in the south of Europe,—and appears to have been scarcely less common in our own island before the Revolution of 1688, if we may judge from the characters and sentiments so frequent in our elder comedies. There is the younger brother, for instance, in Beaumont and Fletcher's play of the *Scornful Lady* , on the one side, and Oliver in Shakespeare's *As You Like It* , on the other. Need it be said how heavy an aggravation, in such a case, the stain of bastardy must have been, were it only that the younger brother was liable to hear his own dishonour and his mother's infamy related by his father with an excusing shrug of the shoulders, and in a tone betwixt waggery and shame!

By the circumstances here enumerated as so many predisposing causes, Edmund's character might well be deemed already sufficiently explained; and our minds prepared for it. But in this tragedy the story or fable constrained Shakespeare to introduce wickedness in an outrageous form in the persons of Regan and Goneril. He had read nature too heedfully not to know that courage, intellect, and strength of character are the most impressive forms of power, and that to power in itself, without reference to any moral end, an inevitable admiration and complacency appertains, whether it be displayed in the conquests of a Buonaparte or Tamerlane, or in the foam and the thunder of a cataract. But in the exhibition of such a character it was of the highest importance to prevent the guilt from passing into utter monstrosity,—which again depends on the presence or absence of causes and temptations sufficient to account for the wickedness, without the necessity of recurring to a thorough fiendishness of nature for its origination. For such are the appointed relations of intellectual power to truth, and of truth to goodness, that it becomes both morally and poetically unsafe to present what is admirable—what our nature compels us to admire—in the mind, and what is most detestable in the heart, as coexisting in the same individual without any apparent connection, or any modification of the one by the other. That Shakespeare has in one instance, that of Iago, approached to this, and that he has done it successfully, is perhaps the most astonishing proof of his genius, and the opulence of its resources. But in the present tragedy, in which he was compelled to present a Goneril and a Regan, it was most carefully to be avoided;—and therefore the only one conceivable addition to the inauspicious influences on the preformation of Edmund's character is given, in the information that all the kindly counteractions to the mischievous feelings of shame, which might have been derived from co-domestication with Edgar and their common father, had been cut off by his absence from home, and foreign education from boyhood to the present time, and a prospect of its continuance, as if to preclude all risk of his interference with the father's views for the elder and legitimate son:—

“He hath been out nine years, and away he shall again.”

Act i. sc. 1.—

“*Cor.* Nothing my lord.

Lear. Nothing?

Cor. Nothing.

Lear. Nothing can come of nothing: speak again.

Cor. Unhappy that I am, I cannot heave

My heart into my mouth: I love your majesty

According to my bond; nor more, nor less.”

There is something of disgust at the ruthless hypocrisy of her sisters, and some little faulty admixture of pride and sullenness in Cordelia's “Nothing;” and her tone is well contrived, indeed, to lessen the glaring absurdity of Lear's conduct, but answers the yet more important purpose of forcing away the attention from the nursery-tale, the moment it has served its end, that of supplying the canvas for the picture. This is also materially furthered by Kent's opposition, which displays Lear's moral incapability of resigning the sovereign power in the very act of disposing of it. Kent is, perhaps, the nearest to perfect goodness in all Shakespeare's characters, and yet the most individualised. There is an extraordinary charm, in his bluntness, which is that only of a nobleman, arising from a contempt of overstrained courtesy, and combined with easy placability where goodness of heart is apparent. His passionate affection for, and fidelity to, Lear act on our feelings in Lear's own favour: virtue itself seems to be in company with him.

Ib. sc. 2. Edmund's speech:—

“Who, in the lusty stealth of nature, take

More composition and fierce quality

Than doth,” &c.

Warburton's note upon a quotation from Vanini.

Poor Vanini!—Any one but Warburton would have thought this precious passage more characteristic of Mr. Shandy than of atheism. If the fact really were so (which it is not, but almost the contrary) I do not see why the most confirmed theist might not very naturally utter the same wish. But it is proverbial that the youngest son in a large family is commonly the man of the greatest talents in it; and as good an authority as Vanini has said—“incalescere in venerem ardentius, spei sobolis injuriosum esse.”

In this speech of Edmund you see, as soon as a man cannot reconcile himself to reason, how his conscience flies off by way of appeal to nature, who is sure upon such occasions never to find fault, and also how shame sharpens a predisposition in the heart to evil. For it is a profound moral, that shame will naturally generate guilt; the oppressed will be vindictive, like Shylock, and in the anguish of undeserved ignominy the delusion secretly springs up of getting over the moral quality of an action by fixing the mind on the mere physical act alone.

Ib. Edmund's speech:—

“This is the excellent foppery of the world! that, when we are sick in fortune (often the surfeit of our own behaviour), we make guilty of our disasters, the sun, the moon, and the stars,” &c.

Thus scorn and misanthropy are often the anticipations and mouth-pieces of wisdom in the detection of superstitions. Both individuals and nations may be free from such prejudices by being below them, as well as by rising above them.

Ib. sc. 3. The Steward should be placed in exact antithesis to Kent, as the only character of utter irredeemable baseness in Shakespeare. Even in this the judgment and invention of the poet are very observable;—for what else could the willing tool of a Goneril be? Not a vice but this of baseness was left open to him.

Ib. sc. 4. In Lear old age is itself a character,—its natural imperfections being increased by life-long habits of receiving a prompt obedience. Any addition of individuality would have been unnecessary and painful; for the relations of others to him, of wondrous fidelity and of frightful ingratitude, alone sufficiently distinguish him. Thus Lear becomes the open and ample play-room of nature's passions.

Ib. —

“*Knight.* Since my young lady's going into France, Sir; the

fool hath much pined away.”

The Fool is no comic buffoon to make the groundlings laugh,—no forced condescension of Shakespeare's genius to the taste of his audience. Accordingly the poet prepares for his introduction, which he never does with any of his common clowns and fools, by bringing him into living connection with the pathos of the play. He is as wonderful a creation as Caliban;—his wild babblings, and inspired idiocy, articulate and gauge the horrors of the scene.

The monster Goneril prepares what is necessary, while the character of Albany renders a still more maddening grievance possible—namely, Regan and Cornwall in perfect sympathy of monstrosity. Not a sentiment, not an image, which can give pleasure on its own account is admitted; whenever these creatures are introduced, and they are brought forward as little as possible, pure horror reigns throughout. In this scene and in all the early speeches of Lear, the one general sentiment of filial ingratitude prevails as the main-spring of the feelings;—in this early stage the outward object causing the pressure on the mind, which is not yet sufficiently familiarised with the anguish for the imagination to work upon it.

Ib. —

"*Gon.* Do you mark that, my lord?

Alb. I cannot be so partial, Goneril,

To the great love I bear you.

Gon. Pray you content," &c.

Observe the baffled endeavour of Goneril to act on the fears of Albany, and yet his passiveness, his *inertia* ; he is not convinced, and yet he is afraid of looking into the thing. Such characters always yield to those who will take the trouble of governing them, or for them. Perhaps the influence of a princess, whose choice of him had royalised his state, may be some little excuse for Albany's weakness.

Ib. sc. 5.—

"*Lear.* O let me not be mad, not mad, sweet heaven!

Keep me in temper! I would not be mad!"

The mind's own anticipation of madness! The deepest tragic notes are often struck by a half sense of an impending blow. The Fool's conclusion of this act by a grotesque prattling seems to indicate the dislocation of feeling that has begun and is to be continued.

Act ii. sc. 1. Edmund's speech:—

... "He replied,

Thou unpossessing bastard!" &c.

Thus the secret poison in Edmund's own heart steals forth; and then observe poor Gloucester's—

“Loyal and *natural* boy!”—

as if praising the crime of Edmund's birth!

Ib. Compare Regan's—

“What, did *my father's* godson seek your life?

He whom *my father* named?”—

with the unfeminine violence of her—

“All vengeance comes too short,” &c.—

and yet no reference to the guilt, but only to the accident, which she uses as an occasion for sneering at her father. Regan is not, in fact, a greater monster than Goneril, but she has the power of casting more venom.

Ib. sc. 2. Cornwall's speech:—-

... “This is some fellow,

Who, having been praised for bluntness, doth affect

A saucy roughness,” &c.

In thus placing these profound general truths in the mouths of such men as Cornwall, Edmund, Iago, &c., Shakespeare at once gives them utterance, and yet shows how indefinite their application is.

Ib. sc. 3. Edgar's assumed madness serves the great purpose of taking off part of the shock which would otherwise be caused by the true madness of Lear, and further displays the profound difference between the two. In every attempt at representing madness throughout the whole range of dramatic literature, with the single exception of Lear, it is mere lightheadedness, as especially in Otway. In Edgar's ravings Shakespeare all the while lets you see a fixed purpose, a practical end in view;—in Lear's, there is only the brooding of the one anguish, an eddy without progression.

Ib. sc. 4. Lear's speech:—

“The king would speak with Cornwall; the dear father

Would with his daughter speak, &c.

No, but not yet: may be he is not well,” &c.

The strong interest now felt by Lear to try to find excuses for his daughter is most pathetic.

Ib. Lear's speech:—

... “Beloved Regan,

Thy sister's naught;—O Regan, she hath tied

Sharp-tooth'd unkindness, like a vulture, here.

I can scarce speak to thee;—thou'lt not believe

Of how deprav'd a quality—O Regan!

Reg. I pray you, Sir, take patience; I have hope,

You less know how to value her desert,

Than she to scant her duty.

Lear. Say, how is that?”

Nothing is so heart-cutting as a cold unexpected defence or palliation of a cruelty passionately complained of, or so expressive of thorough hard-heartedness. And feel the excessive horror of Regan's “O, Sir, you are old!”—and then her drawing from that universal object of reverence and indulgence the very reason for her frightful conclusion—

“Say, you have wrong'd her!”

All Lear's faults increase our pity for him. We refuse to know them otherwise than as means of his sufferings, and aggravations of his daughters' ingratitude.

Ib. Lear's speech:—

“O, reason not the need: our basest beggars

Are in the poorest thing superfluous,” &c.

Observe that the tranquillity which follows the first stunning of the blow permits Lear to reason.

Act iii. sc. 4. O, what a world's convention of agonies is here! All external nature in a storm, all moral nature convulsed,—the real madness of Lear, the feigned madness of Edgar, the babbling of the Fool, the desperate fidelity of Kent—surely such a scene was never conceived before or since! Take it but as a picture for the eye only, it is more terrific than any which a Michael Angelo, inspired by a Dante, could have conceived, and which none but a Michael Angelo could have executed. Or let it have been uttered to the blind, the howlings of nature would seem converted into the voice of conscious humanity. This scene ends with the first symptoms of positive derangement; and the intervention of the fifth scene is particularly judicious,—the interruption allowing an interval for Lear to appear in full madness in the sixth scene.

Ib. sc. 7. Gloucester's blinding.

What can I say of this scene?—There is my reluctance to think Shakespeare wrong, and yet—

Act iv. sc. 6. Lear's speech:—

“Ha! Goneril!—with a white beard!—They flattered me like a dog; and told me, I had white hairs in my beard, ere the black ones were there. To say *Ay* and *No* to every thing I said!—Ay and No too was no good divinity. When the rain came to wet me once,” &c.

The thunder recurs, but still at a greater distance from our feelings.

Ib. sc. 7. Lear's speech:—

“Where have I been? Where am I?—Fair daylight?—

I am mightily abused.—I should even die with pity

To see another thus,” &c.

How beautifully the affecting return of Lear to reason, and the mild pathos of these speeches prepare the mind for the last sad, yet sweet, consolation of the aged sufferer's death!

<<span id="filepos0038286245"> a> “ Hamlet.”

Hamlet was the play, or rather Hamlet himself was the character, in the intuition and exposition of which I first made my turn for philosophical criticism, and especially for insight into the genius of Shakespeare, noticed. This happened first amongst my acquaintances, as Sir George Beaumont will bear witness; and subsequently, long before Schlegel had delivered at Vienna the lectures on Shakespeare, which he afterwards published, I had given on the same subject eighteen lectures substantially the same, proceeding from the very same point of view, and deducing the same conclusions, so far as I either then agreed, or now agree, with him. I gave these lectures at the Royal Institution, before six or seven hundred auditors of rank and eminence, in the spring of the same year, in which Sir Humphrey Davy, a fellow-lecturer, made his great revolutionary discoveries in chemistry. Even in detail the coincidence of Schlegel with my lectures was so extraordinary, that all who at a later period heard the same words, taken by me from my notes of the lectures at the Royal Institution, concluded a borrowing on my part from Schlegel. Mr. Hazlitt, whose hatred of me is in such an inverse ratio to my zealous kindness towards him, as to be defended by his warmest admirer, Charles Lamb—(who, God bless him! besides his characteristic obstinacy of adherence to old friends, as long at least as they are at all down in the world, is linked as by a charm to Hazlitt's conversation)—only as “frantic;”—Mr. Hazlitt, I say, himself replied to an assertion of my plagiarism from Schlegel in these words;—“That is a lie; for I myself heard the very same character of Hamlet from Coleridge before he went to Germany, and when he had neither read nor could read a page of German!” Now Hazlitt was on a visit to me at my cottage at Nether Stowey, Somerset, in the summer of the year 1798, in the September of which year I first was out of sight of the shores of Great Britain.—Recorded by me, S. T. Coleridge, 7th January, 1819.

The seeming inconsistencies in the conduct and character of Hamlet have long exercised the conjectural ingenuity of critics; and, as we are always loth to suppose that the cause of defective apprehension is in ourselves, the mystery has been too commonly explained by the very easy process of setting it down as in fact inexplicable, and by resolving the phenomenon into a misgrowth or *lusus* of the capricious and irregular genius of Shakespeare. The shallow and stupid arrogance of these vulgar and indolent decisions I would fain do my best to expose. I believe the character of Hamlet may be traced to Shakespeare's deep and accurate science in mental philosophy. Indeed, that this character must have some connection with the common fundamental laws of our nature may be assumed from the fact, that Hamlet has been the darling of every country in which the literature of England has been fostered. In order to understand him, it is essential that we should reflect on the constitution of our own minds. Man is distinguished from the brute animals in proportion as thought prevails over sense: but in the healthy processes of the mind, a balance is constantly maintained between the impressions from outward objects and the inward operations of the intellect;—for if there be an overbalance in the contemplative faculty, man thereby becomes the creature of mere meditation, and loses his natural power of action. Now one of Shakespeare's modes of creating characters is, to conceive any one intellectual or moral faculty in morbid excess, and then to place himself, Shakespeare, thus mutilated or diseased, under given circumstances. In Hamlet he seems to have wished to exemplify the moral necessity of a due balance between our attention to the objects of our senses, and our meditation on the workings of our minds,—an *equilibrium* between the real and the imaginary worlds. In Hamlet this balance is disturbed: his thoughts, and the images of his fancy, are far more vivid than his actual perceptions, and his very perceptions, instantly passing through the *medium* of his contemplations, acquire, as they pass, a form and a colour not naturally their own. Hence we see a great, an almost enormous, intellectual activity, and a proportionate aversion to real action, consequent upon it, with all its symptoms and accompanying qualities. This character Shakespeare places in circumstances, under which it is obliged to act on the spur of the moment:—Hamlet is brave and careless of death; but he vacillates from sensibility, and procrastinates from thought, and loses the power of action in the energy of resolve. Thus it is that this tragedy presents a direct contrast to that of *Macbeth* ; the one proceeds with the utmost slowness, the other with a crowded and breathless rapidity.

The effect of this overbalance of the imaginative power is beautifully illustrated in the everlasting broodings and superfluous activities of Hamlet's mind, which, unseated from its healthy relation, is constantly occupied with the world within, and abstracted from the world without,—giving substance to shadows, and throwing a mist over all commonplace actualities. It is the nature of thought to be indefinite;—definiteness belongs to external imagery alone. Hence it is that the sense of sublimity arises, not from the sight of an outward object, but from the beholder's reflection upon it;—not from the sensuous impression, but from the imaginative reflex. Few have seen a celebrated waterfall without feeling something akin to disappointment: it is only subsequently that the image comes back full into the mind, and brings with it a train of grand or beautiful associations. Hamlet feels this; his senses are in a state of trance, and he looks upon external things as hieroglyphics. His soliloquy—

“O! that this too too solid flesh would melt,” &c.—

springs from that craving after the indefinite—for that which is not—which most easily besets men of genius; and the self-delusion common to this temper of mind is finely exemplified in the character which Hamlet gives of himself;—

... “It cannot be

But I am pigeon-liver'd, and lack gall

To make oppression bitter.”

He mistakes the seeing his chains for the breaking them, delays action till action is of no use, and dies the victim of mere circumstance and accident.

There is a great significancy in the names of Shakespeare's plays. In the *Twelfth Night* , *Midsummer Night's Dream* , *As You Like It* , and *Winter's Tale* , the total effect is produced by a co-ordination of the characters as in a wreath of flowers. But in *Coriolanus* , *Lear* , *Romeo and Juliet* , *Hamlet* , *Othello* , &c., the effect arises from the subordination of all to one, either as the prominent person, or the principal object. *Cymbeline* is the only exception; and even that has its advantages in preparing the audience for the chaos of time, place, and costume, by throwing the date back into a fabulous king's reign.

But as of more importance, so more striking, is the judgment displayed by our truly dramatic poet, as well as poet of the drama, in the management of his first scenes. With the single exception of *Cymbeline* , they either place before us at one glance both the past and the future in some effect, which implies the continuance and full agency of its cause, as in the feuds and party-spirit of the servants of the two houses in the first scene of *Romeo and Juliet* ; or in the degrading passion for shows and public spectacles, and the overwhelming attachment for the newest successful war-chief in the Roman people, already become a populace, contrasted with the jealousy of the nobles in *Julius Cæsar* ;—or they at once commence the action so as to excite a curiosity for the explanation in the following scenes, as in the storm of wind and waves, and the boatswain in the *Tempest* , instead of anticipating our curiosity, as in most other first scenes, and in too many other first acts;—or they act, by contrast of diction suited to the characters, at once to heighten the effect, and yet to give a naturalness to the language and rhythm of the principal personages, either as that of Prospero and Miranda by the appropriate lowness of the style, or as in *King John* , by the equally appropriate stateliness of official harangues or narratives, so that the after blank verse seems to belong to the rank and quality of the speakers, and not to the poet;—or they strike at once the key-note, and give the predominant spirit of the play, as in the *Twelfth Night* and in *Macbeth* ;—or finally, the first scene comprises all these advantages at once, as in *Hamlet* .

Compare the easy language of common life, in which this drama commences, with the direful music and wild wayward rhythm and abrupt lyrics of the opening of *Macbeth* . The tone is quite familiar;—there is no poetic description of night, no elaborate information conveyed by one speaker to another of what both had immediately before their senses—(such as the first distich in Addison's *Cato* , which is a translation into poetry of “Past four o'clock and a dark morning!”);—and yet nothing bordering on the comic on the one hand, nor any striving of the intellect on the other. It is precisely the language of sensation among men who feared no charge of effeminacy for feeling what they had no want of resolution to bear. Yet the armour, the dead silence, the watchfulness that first interrupts it, the welcome relief of the guard, the cold, the broken expressions of compelled attention to bodily feelings still under control—all excellently accord with, and prepare for, the after gradual rise into tragedy;—but, above all, into a tragedy, the interest of which is as eminently *ad et apud intra* , as that of *Macbeth* is directly *ad extra* .

In all the best attested stories of ghosts and visions, as in that of Brutus, of Archbishop Cranmer, that of Benvenuto Cellini recorded by himself, and the vision of Galileo communicated by him to his favourite pupil Torricelli, the ghost-seers were in a state of cold or chilling damp from without, and of anxiety inwardly. It has been with all of them as with Francisco on his guard,—alone, in the depth and silence of the night; “'twas bitter cold, and they were sick at heart, and *not a mouse stirring* .” The attention to minute sounds,—naturally associated with the recollection of minute objects, and the more familiar and trifling, the more impressive from the unusualness of their producing any impression at all—gives a philosophic pertinency to this last image; but it has likewise its dramatic use and purpose. For its commonness in ordinary conversation tends to produce the sense of reality, and at once hides the poet, and yet approximates the reader or spectator to that state in which the highest poetry will appear, and in its component parts, though not in the whole composition, really is, the language of nature. If I should not speak it, I feel that I should be thinking it;—the voice only is the poet's,—the words are my own. That Shakespeare meant to put an effect in the actor's power in the very first words—“Who's there?”—is evident from the impatience expressed by the startled Francisco in the words that follow—“Nay, answer me: stand and unfold yourself.” A brave man is never so peremptory, as when he fears that he is afraid. Observe the gradual transition from the silence and the still recent habit of listening in Francisco's—“I think I hear them”—to the more cheerful call out, which a good actor would observe, in the—“Stand ho! Who is there?” Bernardo's inquiry after Horatio, and the repetition of his name and in his own presence indicate a respect or an eagerness that implies him as one of the persons who are in the foreground; and the scepticism attributed to him,—

“Horatio says, 'tis but our fantasy;

And will not let belief take hold of him,”—

prepares us for Hamlet's after eulogy on him as one whose blood and judgment were happily commingled. The actor should also be careful to distinguish the expectation and gladness of Bernardo's “Welcome, Horatio!” from the mere courtesy of his “Welcome, good Marcellus!”

Now observe the admirable indefiniteness of the first opening out of the occasion of all this anxiety. The preparation informative of the audience is just as much as was precisely necessary, and no more;—it begins with the uncertainty appertaining to a question:—

“*Mar.* What, has *this thing* appear'd again to-night?”—

Even the word “again” has its *credibilising* effect. Then Horatio, the representative of the ignorance of the audience, not himself, but by Marcellus to Bernardo, anticipates the common solution—“'tis but our fantasy!” upon which Marcellus rises into—

“This dreaded sight, twice seen of us”—

which immediately afterwards becomes “this apparition,” and that, too, an intelligent spirit—that is, to be spoken to! Then comes the confirmation of Horatio's disbelief;—

“Tush! tush! 'twill not appear!”—

and the silence, with which the scene opened, is again restored in the shivering feeling of Horatio sitting down, at such a time, and with the two eye-witnesses, to hear a story of a ghost, and that, too, of a ghost which had appeared twice before at the very same hour. In the deep feeling which Bernardo has of the solemn nature of what he is about to relate, he makes an effort to master his own imaginative terrors by an elevation of style,—itself a continuation of the effort,—and by turning off from the apparition, as from something which would force him too deeply into himself, to the outward objects, the realities of nature, which had accompanied it:—

“*Ber.* Last night of all,

When yon same star, that's westward from the pole

Had made his course to illume that part of heaven

Where now it burns, Marcellus and myself,

The bell then beating one.”

This passage seems to contradict the critical law that what is told, makes a faint impression compared with what is beholden; for it does indeed convey to the mind more than the eye can see; whilst the interruption of the narrative at the very moment when we are most intensely listening for the sequel, and have our thoughts diverted from the dreaded sight in expectation of the desired, yet almost dreaded, tale—this gives all the suddenness and surprise of the original appearance:—

“*Mar.* Peace, break thee off; look, where it comes again!”

Note the judgment displayed in having the two persons present, who, as having seen the Ghost before, are naturally eager in confirming their former opinions,—whilst the sceptic is silent, and after having been twice addressed by his friends, answers with two hasty syllables—“Most like,”—and a confession of horror:—

“It harrows me with fear and wonder.”

O heaven! words are wasted on those who feel, and to those who do not feel the exquisite judgment of Shakespeare in this scene, what can be said? Hume himself could not but have had faith in this Ghost dramatically, let his anti-ghostism have been as strong as Sampson against other ghosts less powerfully raised.

Act i. sc. 1.—

“*Mar.* Good now, sit down, and tell me, he that knows,

Why this same strict and most observant watch,” &c.

How delightfully natural is the transition, to the retrospective narrative! And observe, upon the Ghost's reappearance, how much Horatio's courage is increased by having translated the late individual spectator into general thought and past experience,—and the sympathy of Marcellus and Bernardo with his patriotic surmises in daring to strike at the Ghost; whilst in a moment, upon its vanishing, the former solemn awe-stricken feeling returns upon them:—

“We do it wrong, being so majestical,

To offer it the show of violence.”

Ib. Horatio's speech:—

... “I have heard,

The cock, that is the trumpet to the morn,

Doth with his lofty and shrill-sounding throat

Awake the god of day,” &c.

No Addison could be more careful to be poetical in diction than Shakespeare in providing the grounds and sources of its propriety. But how to elevate a thing almost mean by its familiarity, young poets may learn in this treatment of the cock-crow.

Ib. Horatio's speech:—

... “And, by my advice,

Let us impart what we have seen to-night

Unto young Hamlet; for, upon my life,

The spirit, dumb to us, will speak to him.”

Note the inobtrusive and yet fully adequate mode of introducing the main character, “young Hamlet,” upon whom it transferred all the interest excited for the acts and concerns of the king his father.

Ib. sc. 2. The audience are now relieved by a change of scene to the royal court, in order that Hamlet may not have to take up the leavings of exhaustion. In the king's speech, observe the set and pedantically antithetic form of the sentences when touching that which galled the heels of conscience,—the strain of undignified rhetoric,—and yet in what follows concerning the public weal, a certain appropriate majesty. Indeed was he not a royal brother?—

Ib. King's speech:—

“And now, Laertes, what's the news with you?” &c.

Thus with great art Shakespeare introduces a most important, but still subordinate character first, Laertes, who is yet thus graciously treated in consequence of the assistance given to the election of the late king's brother instead of his son by Polonius.

Ib. —

“*Ham.* A little more than kin, and less than kind.

King. How is it that the clouds still hang on you?

Ham. Not so, my lord, I am too much i' the sun.”

Hamlet opens his mouth with a playing on words, the complete absence of which throughout characterises Macbeth. This playing on words may be attributed to many causes or motives, as either to an exuberant activity of mind, as in the higher comedy of Shakespeare generally;—or to an imitation of it as a mere fashion, as if it were said—“Is not this better than groaning?”—or to a contemptuous exultation in minds vulgarised and overset by their success, as in the poetic instance of Milton's Devils in the battle;—or it is the language of resentment, as is familiar to every one who has witnessed the quarrels of the lower orders, where there is invariably a profusion of punning invective, whence, perhaps, nicknames have in a considerable degree sprung up;—or it is the language of suppressed passion, and especially of a hardly smothered personal dislike. The first and last of these combine in Hamlet's case; and I have little doubt that Farmer is right in supposing the equivocation carried on in the expression “too much i' the sun,” or son.

Ib. —

“*Ham.* Ay, madam, it is common.”

Here observe Hamlet's delicacy to his mother, and how the suppression prepares him for the overflow in the next speech, in which his character is more developed by bringing forward his aversion to externals, and which betrays his habit of brooding over the world within him, coupled with a prodigality of beautiful words, which are the half embodyings of thought, and are more than thought, and have an outness, a reality *sui generis* , and yet retain their correspondence and shadowy affinity to the images and movements within. Note also Hamlet's silence to the long speech of the king which follows, and his respectful, but general, answer to his mother.

Ib. Hamlet's first soliloquy:—

“O, that this too too solid flesh would melt,

Thaw, and resolve itself into a dew!” &c.

This *tædium vitæ* is a common oppression on minds cast in the Hamlet mould, and is caused by disproportionate mental exertion, which necessitates exhaustion of bodily feeling. Where there is a just coincidence of external and internal action, pleasure is always the result; but where the former is deficient, and the mind's appetency of the ideal is unchecked, realities will seem cold and unmoving. In such cases, passion combines itself with the indefinite alone. In this mood of his mind the relation of the appearance of his father's spirit in arms is made all at once to Hamlet:—it is—Horatio's speech in particular—a perfect model of the true style of dramatic narrative;—the purest poetry, and yet in the most natural language, equally remote from the ink-horn and the plough.

Ib. sc. 3. This scene must be regarded as one of Shakespeare's lyric movements in the play, and the skill with which it is interwoven with the dramatic parts is peculiarly an excellence of our poet. You experience the sensation of a pause without the sense of a stop. You will observe in Ophelia's short and general answer to the long speech of Laertes the natural carelessness of innocence, which cannot think such a code of cautions and prudences necessary to its own preservation.

Ib. Speech of Polonius (in Stockdale's edition):—

“Or (not to crack the wind of the poor phrase),

Wronging it thus, you'll tender me a fool.”

I suspect this “wronging” is here used much in the same sense as “wringing” or “wrenching,” and that the parenthesis should be extended to “thus.”

Ib. Speech of Polonius:—

... “How prodigal the soul

Lends the tongue vows:—these blazes, daughter,” &c.

A spondee has, I doubt not, dropped out of the text. Either insert “Go to” after “vows”;—

“Lends the tongue vows: Go to, these blazes, daughter”—

or read—

“Lends the tongue vows:—These blazes, daughter, mark you”—

Shakespeare never introduces a catalectic line without intending an equivalent to the foot omitted in the pauses, or the dwelling emphasis, or the diffused retardation. I do not, however, deny that a good actor might, by employing the last mentioned means—namely, the retardation, or solemn knowing drawl—supply the missing spondee with good effect. But I do not believe that in this or any other of the foregoing speeches of Polonius, Shakespeare meant to bring out the senility or weakness of that personage's mind. In the great ever-recurring dangers and duties of life, where to distinguish the fit objects for the application of the maxims collected by the experience of a long life, requires no fineness of tact, as in the admonitions to his son and daughter, Polonius is uniformly made respectable. But if an actor were even capable of catching these shades in the character, the pit and the gallery would be malcontent at their exhibition. It is to Hamlet that Polonius is, and is meant to be, contemptible, because in inwardness and uncontrollable activity of movement, Hamlet's mind is the logical contrary to that of Polonius; and besides, as I have observed before, Hamlet dislikes the man as false to his true allegiance in the matter of the succession to the crown.

Ib. sc. 4. The unimportant conversation with which this scene opens is a proof of Shakespeare's minute knowledge of human nature. It is a well established fact, that on the brink of any serious enterprise, or event of moment, men almost invariably endeavour to elude the pressure of their own thoughts by turning aside to trivial objects and familiar circumstances: thus this dialogue on the platform begins with remarks on the coldness of the air, and inquiries, obliquely connected, indeed, with the expected hour of the visitation, but thrown out in a seeming vacuity of topics, as to the striking of the clock and so forth. The same desire to escape from the impending thought is carried on in Hamlet's account of, and moralizing on, the Danish custom of wassailing: he runs off from the particular to the universal, and, in his repugnance to personal and individual concerns, escapes, as it were, from himself in generalisations, and smothers the impatience and uneasy feelings of the moment in abstract reasoning. Besides this, another purpose is answered;—for by thus entangling the attention of the audience in the nice distinctions and parenthetical sentences of this speech of Hamlet's, Shakespeare takes them completely by surprise on the appearance of the Ghost, which comes upon them in all the suddenness of its visionary character. Indeed, no modern writer would have dared, like Shakespeare, to have preceded this last visitation by two distinct appearances,—or could have contrived that the third should rise upon the former two in impressiveness and solemnity of interest.

But in addition to all the other excellences of Hamlet's speech concerning the wassail-music—so finely revealing the predominant idealism, the ratiocinative meditativeness, of his character—it has the advantage of giving nature and probability to the impassioned continuity of the speech instantly directed to the Ghost. The *momentum* had been given to his mental activity; the full current of the thoughts and words had set in, and the very forgetfulness, in the fervour of his argumentation, of the purpose for which he was there, aided in preventing the appearance from benumbing the mind. Consequently, it acted as a new impulse,—a sudden stroke which increased the velocity of the body already in motion, whilst it altered the direction. The co-presence of Horatio, Marcellus, and Bernardo is most judiciously contrived; for it renders the courage of Hamlet, and his impetuous eloquence, perfectly intelligible. The knowledge,—the unthought of consciousness,—the sensation of human auditors—of flesh and blood sympathists—acts as a support and a stimulation *a tergo* , while the front of the mind, the whole consciousness of the speaker, is filled, yea, absorbed, by the apparition. Add too, that the apparition itself has, by its previous appearances, been brought nearer to a thing of this world. This accrescence of objectivity in a Ghost that yet retains all its ghostly attributes and fearful subjectivity, is truly wonderful.

Ib. sc. 5. Hamlet's speech:—

“O all you host of heaven! O earth! What else?

And shall I couple hell?”

I remember nothing equal to this burst, unless it be the first speech of Prometheus in the Greek drama, after the exit of Vulcan and the two Afrites. But Shakespeare alone could have produced the vow of Hamlet to make his memory a blank of all maxims and generalised truths, that “observation had copied there,”—followed immediately by the speaker noting down the generalised fact,—

“That one may smile, and smile, and be a villain!”

Ib. —

“*Mar.* Hillo, ho, ho, my lord!

Ham. Hillo, ho, ho, boy! come bird, come,” &c.

This part of the scene, after Hamlet's interview with the Ghost, has been charged with an improbable eccentricity. But the truth is, that after the mind has been stretched beyond its usual pitch and tone, it must either sink into exhaustion and inanity, or seek relief by change. It is thus well known, that persons conversant in deeds of cruelty contrive to escape from conscience by connecting something of the ludicrous with them, and by inventing grotesque terms, and a certain technical phraseology, to disguise the horror of their practices. Indeed, paradoxical as it may appear, the terrible by a law of the human mind always touches on the verge of the ludicrous. Both arise from the perception of something out of the common order of things—something, in fact, out of its place; and if from this we can abstract danger, the uncommonness will alone remain, and the sense of the ridiculous be excited. The close alliance of these opposites—they are not contraries—appears from the circumstance, that laughter is equally the expression of extreme anguish and horror as of joy: as there are tears of sorrow and tears of joy, so is there a laugh of terror and a laugh of merriment. These complex causes will naturally have produced in Hamlet the disposition to escape from his own feelings of the overwhelming and supernatural by a wild transition to the ludicrous,—a sort of cunning bravado, bordering on the flights of delirium. For you may, perhaps, observe that Hamlet's wildness is but half false; he plays that subtle trick of pretending to act only when he is very near really being what he acts.

The subterraneous speeches of the Ghost are hardly defensible;—but I would call your attention to the characteristic difference between this Ghost, as a superstition connected with the most mysterious truths of revealed religion,—and Shakespeare's consequent reverence in his treatment of it,—and the foul earthly witcheries and wild language in *Macbeth* .

Act ii. sc. 1. Polonius and Reynaldo.

In all things dependent on, or rather made up of, fine address, the manner is no more or otherwise rememberable than the light notions, steps, and gestures of youth and health. But this is almost everything:—no wonder, therefore, if that which can be put down by rule in the memory should appear to us as mere poring, maudlin, cunning,—slyness blinking through the watery eye of superannuation. So in this admirable scene, Polonius, who is throughout the skeleton of his own former skill and statecraft, hunts the trail of policy at a dead scent, supplied by the weak fever-smell in his own nostrils.

Ib. sc. 2. Speech of Polonius:—

“My liege, and madam, to expostulate,” &c.

Warburton's note.

“Then as to the jingles, and play on words, let us but look into the sermons of Dr. Donne (the wittiest man of that age), and we shall find them full of this vein.”

I have, and that most carefully, read Dr. Donne's sermons, and find none of these jingles. The great art of an orator—to make whatever he talks of appear of importance—this, indeed, Donne has effected with consummate skill.

Ib. —

“*Ham.* Excellent well;

You are a fishmonger.”

That is, you are sent to fish out this secret. This is Hamlet's own meaning.

Ib. —

“*Ham.* For if the sun breed maggots in a dead dog,

Being a god, kissing carrion.”

These purposely obscure lines, I rather think, refer to some thought in Hamlet's mind, contrasting the lovely daughter with such a tedious old fool, her father, as he, Hamlet, represents Polonius to himself:—“Why, fool as he is, he is some degrees in rank above a dead dog's carcase; and if the sun, being a god that kisses carrion, can raise life out of a dead dog,—why may not good fortune, that favours fools, have raised a lovely girl out of this dead-alive old fool?” Warburton is often led astray, in his interpretations, by his attention to general positions without the due Shakespearian reference to what is probably passing in the mind of his speaker, characteristic, and expository of his particular character and present mood. The subsequent passage,—

“O Jephthah, judge of Israel! what a treasure hadst thou!”

is confirmatory of my view of these lines.

Ib. —

“*Ham.* You cannot, Sir, take from me any thing that I will

more willingly part withal; except my life, except my life, except

my life.”

This repetition strikes me as most admirable.

Ib. —

“*Ham.* Then are our beggars, bodies; and our monarchs, and

out-stretched heroes, the beggars' shadows?”

I do not understand this; and Shakespeare seems to have intended the meaning not to be more than snatched at:—“By my fay, I cannot reason!”

Ib. —

“The rugged Pyrrhus—he whose sable arms,” &c.

This admirable substitution of the epic for the dramatic, giving such a reality to the impassioned dramatic diction of Shakespeare's own dialogue, and authorised too, by the actual style of the tragedies before his time (*Porrex and Ferrex* , *Titus Andronicus* , &c.)—is well worthy of notice. The fancy, that a burlesque was intended, sinks below criticism: the lines, as epic narrative, are superb.

In the thoughts, and even in the separate parts of the diction, this description is highly poetical: in truth, taken by itself, that is its fault that it is too poetical!—the language of lyric vehemence and epic pomp, and not of the drama. But if

Shakespeare had made the diction truly dramatic, where would have been the contrast between Hamlet and the play in *Hamlet* ?

Ib. —

... “Had seen the *mobled* queen,” &c.

A mob-cap is still a word in common use for a morning cap, which conceals the whole head of hair, and passes under the chin. It is nearly the same as the night-cap, that is, it is an imitation of it, so as to answer the purpose (“I am not drest for company”), and yet reconciling it with neatness and perfect purity.

Ib. Hamlet's soliloquy:—

“O, what a rogue and peasant slave am I!” &c.

This is Shakespeare's own attestation to the truth of the idea of Hamlet which I have before put forth.

Ib. —

“The spirit that I have seen,

May be a devil: and the devil hath power

To assume a pleasing shape; yea, and, perhaps

Out of my weakness, and my melancholy

(As he is very potent with such spirits),

Abuses me to damn me.”

See Sir Thomas Brown:—

“I believe ... that those apparitions and ghosts of departed persons are not the wandering souls of men, but the unquiet walks of devils, prompting and suggesting us unto mischief, blood, and villany, instilling and stealing into our hearts, that the blessed spirits are not at rest in their graves, but wander solicitous of the affairs of the world."—*Relig. Med.* part. i. sect. 37.

Act iii. sc. 1. Hamlet's soliloquy:—

"To be, or not to be, that is the question," &c.

This speech is of absolutely universal interest,—and yet to which of all Shakespeare's characters could it have been appropriately given but to Hamlet? For Jaques it would have been too deep, and for Iago too habitual a communion with the heart; which in every man belongs, or ought to belong, to all mankind.

Ib. —

"The undiscover'd country, from whose bourn

No traveller returns."

Theobald's note in defence of the supposed contradiction of this in the apparition of the Ghost.

O miserable defender! If it be necessary to remove the apparent contradiction,—if it be not rather a great beauty,—surely, it were easy to say, that no traveller returns to this world, as to his home, or abiding-place.

Ib. —

"*Ham.* Ha, ha! are you honest?

Oph. My lord?

Ham. Are you fair?"

Here it is evident that the penetrating Hamlet perceives, from the strange and forced manner of Ophelia, that the sweet girl was not acting a part of her own, but was a decoy; and his after speeches are not so much directed to her as to the listeners and spies. Such a discovery in a mood so anxious and irritable accounts for a certain harshness in him;—and yet a wild up-working of love, sporting with opposites in a wilful self-tormenting strain of irony, is perceptible throughout. “I did love you once:”—“I lov'd you not:”—and particularly in his enumeration of the faults of the sex from which Ophelia is so free, that the mere freedom therefrom constitutes her character. Note Shakespeare's charm of composing the female character by the absence of characters, that is, marks and out-juttings.

Ib. Hamlet's speech:—

“I say, we will have no more marriages: those that are married already, all but one, shall live: the rest shall keep as they are.”

Observe this dallying with the inward purpose, characteristic of one who had not brought his mind to the steady acting point. He would fain sting the uncle's mind;—but to stab his body!—The soliloquy of Ophelia, which follows, is the perfection of love—so exquisitely unselfish!

Ib. sc. 2. This dialogue of Hamlet with the players is one of the happiest instances of Shakespeare's power of diversifying the scene while he is carrying on the plot.

Ib. —

“*Ham.* My lord, you played once i' the university, you say?”

(*To Polonius.*)

To have kept Hamlet's love for Ophelia before the audience in any direct form, would have made a breach in the unity of the interest;—but yet to the thoughtful reader it is suggested by his spite to poor Polonius, whom he cannot let rest.

Ib. The style of the interlude here is distinguished from the real dialogue by rhyme, as in the first interview with the players by epic verse.

Ib. —

“*Ros.* My lord, you once did love me.

Ham. So I do still, by these pickers and stealers.”

I never heard an actor give this word "so" its proper emphasis. Shakespeare's meaning is—"lov'd you? Hum!—*so* I do still," &c. There has been no change in my opinion:—I think as ill of you as I did. Else Hamlet tells an ignoble falsehood, and a useless one, as the last speech to Guildenstern—"Why look you now," &c.—proves.

Ib. Hamlet's soliloquy:—

"Now could I drink hot blood,

And do such business as the bitter day

Would quake to look on."

The utmost at which Hamlet arrives, is a disposition, a mood, to do something:—but what to do, is still left undecided, while every word he utters tends to betray his disguise. Yet observe how perfectly equal to any call of the moment is Hamlet, let it only not be for the future.

Ib. sc. 3. Speech of Polonius. Polonius's volunteer obtrusion of himself into this business, while it is appropriate to his character, still itching after former importance, removes all likelihood that Hamlet should suspect his presence, and prevents us from making his death injure Hamlet in our opinion.

Ib. The king's speech:—

"O, my offence is rank, it smells to heaven," &c.

This speech well marks the difference between crime and guilt of habit. The conscience here is still admitted to audience. Nay, even as an audible soliloquy, it is far less improbable than is supposed by such as have watched men only in the beaten road of their feelings. But the final—"all may be well!" is remarkable;—the degree of merit attributed by the self-flattering soul to its own struggle, though baffled, and to the indefinite half-promise, half-command, to persevere in religious duties. The solution is in the divine *medium* of the Christian doctrine of expiation:—not what you have done, but what you are, must determine.

Ib. Hamlet's speech:—

“Now might I do it, pat, now he is praying:

And now I'll do't:—And so he goes to heaven:

And so am I revenged? That would be scann'd,” &c.

Dr. Johnson's mistaking of the marks of reluctance and procrastination for impetuous, horror-striking, fiendishness!—Of such importance is it to understand the germ of a character. But the interval taken by Hamlet's speech is truly awful! And then—

“My words fly up, my thoughts remain below:

Words, without thoughts, never to heaven go.”

O what a lesson concerning the essential difference between wishing and willing, and the folly of all motive-mongering, while the individual self remains!

Ib. sc. 4.—

“*Ham.* A bloody deed;—almost as bad, good mother,

As kill a king, and marry with his brother.

Queen. As kill a king?”

I confess that Shakespeare has left the character of the Queen in an unpleasant perplexity. Was she, or was she not, conscious of the fratricide?

Act iv. sc. 2.—

“*Ros.* Take you me for a spunge, my lord?

Ham. Ay, Sir; that soaks up the King's countenance, his

rewards, his authorities,” &c.

Hamlet's madness is made to consist in the free utterance of all the thoughts that had passed through his mind before;—in fact, in telling home-truths.

Act iv. sc. 5. Ophelia's singing. O, note the conjunction here of these two thoughts that had never subsisted in disjunction, the love for Hamlet, and her filial love, with the guileless floating on the surface of her pure imagination of the cautions so lately expressed, and the fears not too delicately avowed, by her father and brother, concerning the dangers to which her honour lay exposed. Thought, affliction, passion, murder itself—she turns to favour and prettiness. This play of association is instanced in the close:—

“My brother shall know of it, and I thank you for your good counsel.”

Ib. Gentleman's speech:—

“And as the world were now but to begin

Antiquity forgot, custom not known,

The ratifiers and props of every word—

They cry,” &c.

Fearful and self-suspicious as I always feel, when I seem to see an error of judgment in Shakespeare, yet I cannot reconcile the cool, and, as Warburton calls it, “rational and consequential,” reflection in these lines with the anonymousness, or the alarm, of this Gentleman or Messenger, as he is called in other editions.

Ib. King's speech:—

“There's such divinity doth hedge a king,

That treason can but peep to what it would,

Acts little of his will.”

Proof, as indeed all else is, that Shakespeare never intended us to see the King with Hamlet's eyes; though, I suspect, the managers have long done so.

Ib. Speech of Laertes:—

“To hell, allegiance! vows, to the blackest devil!”

“Laertes is a *good* character, but,” &c.—Warburton.

Mercy on Warburton's notion of goodness! Please to refer to the seventh scene of this act;—

“I will do't;

And for that purpose I'll anoint my sword,” &c.—

uttered by Laertes after the King's description of Hamlet;—

... “He being remiss,

Most generous, and free from all contriving,

Will not peruse the foils.”

Yet I acknowledge that Shakespeare evidently wishes, as much as possible, to spare the character of Laertes,—to break the extreme turpitude of his consent to become an agent and accomplice of the King's treachery;—and to this end he re-introduces Ophelia at the close of this scene to afford a probable stimulus of passion in her brother.

Ib. sc. 6. Hamlet's capture by the pirates. This is almost the only play of Shakespeare, in which mere accidents, independent of all will, form an essential part of the plot;—but here how judiciously in keeping with the character of the over-meditative Hamlet, ever at last determined by accident or by a fit of passion!

Ib. sc. 7. Note how the King first awakens Laertes's vanity by praising the reporter, and then gratifies it by the report itself, and finally points it by—

... “Sir, this report of his

Did Hamlet so envenom with his envy!”

Ib. King's speech:—

“For goodness, growing to a *pleurisy* ,

Dies in his own too much.”

Theobald's note from Warburton, who conjectures “plethory.”

I rather think that Shakespeare meant “pleurisy,” but involved in it the thought of *plethora* , as supposing pleurisy to arise from too much blood; otherwise I cannot explain the following line—

“And then this *should* is like a spendthrift sigh,

That hurts by easing.”

In a stitch in the side every one must have heaved a sigh that “hurt by easing.”

Since writing the above I feel confirmed that “pleurisy” is the right word; for I find that in the old medical dictionaries the pleurisy is often called the “plethory.”

Ib. —

“*Queen.* Your sister's drown'd, Laertes.

Laer. Drown'd! O, where?”

That Laertes might be excused in some degree for not cooling, the Act concludes with the affecting death of Ophelia,—who in the beginning lay like a little projection of land into a lake or stream, covered with spray-flowers, quietly reflected in the quiet waters, but at length is undermined or loosened, and becomes a faery isle, and after a brief vagrancy sinks almost without an eddy!

Act v. sc. 1. O, the rich contrast between the Clowns and Hamlet, as two extremes! You see in the former the mockery of logic, and a traditional wit valued, like truth, for its antiquity, and treasured up, like a tune, for use.

Ib. sc. 1 and 2. Shakespeare seems to mean all Hamlet's character to be brought together before his final disappearance from the scene;—his meditative excess in the grave-digging, his yielding to passion with Laertes, his love for Ophelia blazing out, his tendency to generalise on all occasions in the dialogue with Horatio, his fine gentlemanly manners with Osrick, and his and Shakespeare's own fondness for presentment:—

“But thou wouldst not think, how ill all's here about my heart: but it is no matter.”

<<span id="filepos0038355751"> a> “ Macbeth.”

“Macbeth” stands in contrast throughout with *Hamlet* ; in the manner of opening more especially. In the latter, there is a gradual ascent from the simplest forms of conversation to the language of impassioned intellect,—yet the intellect still remaining the seat of passion: in the former, the invocation is at once made to the imagination and the emotions connected therewith. Hence the movement throughout is the most rapid of all Shakespeare's plays; and hence also, with the exception of the disgusting passage of the Porter (Act ii. sc. 3), which I dare pledge myself to demonstrate to be an interpolation of the actors, there is not, to the best of my remembrance, a single pun or play on words in the whole drama. I have previously given an answer to the thousand times repeated charge against Shakespeare upon the subject of his punning, and I here merely mention the fact of the absence of any puns in *Macbeth* , as justifying a candid doubt, at least, whether even in these figures of speech and fanciful modifications of language, Shakespeare may not have followed rules and principles that merit and would stand the test of philosophic examination. And hence, also, there is an entire absence of comedy, nay, even of irony and philosophic contemplation in *Macbeth* ,—the play being wholly and purely tragic. For the same cause, there are no reasonings of equivocal morality, which would have required a more leisurely state and a consequently greater activity of mind;—no sophistry of self-delusion,—except only that previously to the dreadful act, Macbeth mistranslates the recoilings and ominous whispers of conscience into prudential and selfish reasonings; and, after the deed done, the terrors of remorse into fear from external dangers,—like delirious men who run away from the phantoms of their own brains, or, raised by terror to rage, stab the real object that is within their reach:—whilst Lady Macbeth merely endeavours to reconcile his and her own sinkings of heart by anticipations of the worst, and an affected bravado in confronting them. In all the rest, Macbeth's language is the grave utterance of the very heart, conscience-sick, even to the last faintings of moral death. It is the same in all the other characters. The variety arises from rage, caused ever and anon by disruption of anxious thought, and the quick transition of fear into it.

In *Hamlet* and *Macbeth* the scene opens with superstition; but, in each it is not merely different, but opposite. In the first it is connected with the best and holiest feelings; in the second with the shadowy, turbulent, and unsanctified cravings of the individual will. Nor is the purpose the same; in the one the object is to excite, whilst in the other it is to mark a mind already excited. Superstition, of one sort or another, is natural to victorious generals; the instances are too notorious to need mentioning. There is so much of chance in warfare, and such vast events are connected with the acts of a single individual,—the representative, in truth, of the efforts of myriads, and yet to the public, and doubtless to his own feelings, the aggregate of all,—that the proper temperament for generating or receiving superstitious impressions is naturally produced. Hope, the master element of a commanding genius, meeting with an active and combining intellect, and an imagination of just that degree of vividness which disquiets and impels the soul to try to realise its images, greatly increases the creative power of the mind; and hence the images become a satisfying world of themselves, as is the case in every poet and original philosopher:—but hope fully gratified, and yet the elementary basis of the passion remaining, becomes fear; and, indeed, the general, who must often feel, even though he may hide it from his own consciousness, how large a share chance had in his successes, may very naturally be irresolute in a new scene, where he knows that all will depend on his own act and election.

The Weird Sisters are as true a creation of Shakespeare's, as his Ariel and Caliban,—fates, furies, and materialising witches being the elements. They are wholly different from any representation of witches in the contemporary writers, and yet presented a sufficient external resemblance to the creatures of vulgar prejudice to act immediately on the audience. Their character consists in the imaginative disconnected from the good; they are the shadowy obscure and fearfully anomalous of physical nature, the lawless of human nature,—elemental avengers without sex or kin:—

“Fair is foul, and foul is fair;

Hover through the fog and filthy air.”

How much it were to be wished in playing *Macbeth* , that an attempt should be made to introduce the flexile character-mask of the ancient pantomime;—that Flaxman would contribute his genius to the embodying and making sensuously perceptible that of Shakespeare!

The style and rhythm of the Captain's speeches in the second scene should be illustrated by reference to the interlude in *Hamlet* , in which the epic is substituted for the tragic, in order to make the latter be felt as the real-life diction. In *Macbeth* the poet's object was to raise the mind at once to the high tragic tone, that the audience might be ready for the precipitate consummation of guilt in the early part of the play. The true reason for the first appearance of the Witches is to strike the key-note of the character of the whole drama, as is proved by their reappearance in the third scene, after such an order of the king's as establishes their supernatural power of information. I say information,—for so it only is as to Glamis and Cawdor; the “king hereafter” was still contingent,—still in Macbeth's moral will; although, if he should yield to the temptation, and thus forfeit his free agency, the link of cause and effect *more physico* would then commence. I need not say, that the general idea is all that can be required from the poet,—not a scholastic logical consistency in all the parts so as to meet metaphysical objectors. But O! how truly Shakespearian is the opening of Macbeth's character given in the *unpossessedness* of Banquo's mind, wholly present to the present object,—an unsullied, unscarified mirror! And how strictly true to nature it is that Banquo, and not Macbeth himself, directs our notice to the effect produced on Macbeth's mind, rendered temptible by previous dalliance of the fancy with ambitious thoughts:—

“Good Sir, why do you start; and seem to fear

Things that do sound so fair?”

And then, again, still unintroitive, addresses the Witches:—

... “I' the name of truth,

Are ye fantastical, or that indeed

Which outwardly ye show?”

Banquo's questions are those of natural curiosity,—such as a girl would put after hearing a gipsy tell her schoolfellow's fortune;—all perfectly general, or rather, planless. But Macbeth, lost in thought, raises himself to speech only by the Witches being about to depart:—

“Stay, you imperfect speakers, tell me more:”—

and all that follows is reasoning on a problem already discussed in his mind,—on a hope which he welcomes, and the doubts concerning the attainment of which he wishes to have cleared up. Compare his eagerness,—the keen eye with which he has pursued the Witches' evanishing—

“Speak, I charge you!”

with the easily satisfied mind of the self-uninterested Banquo:—

“The air hath bubbles, as the water has,

And these are of them:—Whither are they vanish'd?”

and then Macbeth's earnest reply,—

“Into the air; and what seem'd corporal, melted

As breath into the wind.—*Would they had stay'd!* ”

Is it too minute to notice the appropriateness of the simile “as breath,” &c., in a cold climate?

Still again Banquo goes on wondering like any common spectator,—

“Were such things here as we do speak about?”

whilst Macbeth persists in recurring to the self-concerning:—

“Your children shall be kings.

Ban. You shall be king.

Macb. And thane of Cawdor too: went it not so?”

So surely is the guilt in its germ anterior to the supposed cause, and immediate temptation! Before he can cool, the confirmation of the tempting half of the prophecy arrives, and the concatenating tendency of the imagination is fostered by the sudden coincidence:—

“Glamis, and thane of Cawdor:

The greatest is behind.”

Oppose this to Banquo's simple surprise:—

“What, can the devil speak true?”

Ib. Banquo's speech:—

“That, trusted home,

Might yet enkindle you unto the crown,

Besides the thane of Cawdor.”

I doubt whether “enkindle” has not another sense than that of “stimulating;” I mean of “kind” and “kin,” as when rabbits are said to “kindle.” However, Macbeth no longer hears anything *ab extra* :—

“Two truths are told,

As happy prologues to the swelling act

Of the imperial theme.”

Then in the necessity of recollecting himself,—

“I thank you, gentlemen.”

Then he relapses into himself again, and every word of his soliloquy shows the early birth-date of his guilt. He is all-powerful without strength; he wishes the end, but is irresolute as to the means; conscience distinctly warns him, and he lulls it imperfectly:—

“If chance will have me king, why, chance may crown me

Without my stir.”

Lost in the prospective of his guilt, he turns round alarmed lest others may suspect what is passing in his own mind, and instantly vents the lie of ambition:—

“My dull brain was wrought

With things *forgotten* ;”—

and immediately after pours forth the promising courtesies of a usurper in intention:—

... “Kind gentlemen, your pains

Are register'd where every day I turn

The leaf to read them.”

Ib. Macbeth's speech:—

... “Present *fears*

Are less than horrible imaginings.”

Warburton's note, and substitution of “feats” for “fears.”

Mercy on this most wilful ingenuity of blundering, which, nevertheless, was the very Warburton of Warburton—his inmost being! “Fears,” here, are present fear-striking objects, *terribilia adstantia* .

Ib. sc. 4. O! the affecting beauty of the death of Cawdor, and the presentimental speech of the king:—

“There's no art

To find the mind's construction in the face:

He was a gentleman on whom I built

An absolute trust.”

Interrupted by—

“O worthiest cousin!”

on the entrance of the deeper traitor for whom Cawdor had made way! And here in contrast with Duncan's “plenteous joys,” Macbeth has nothing but the commonplaces of loyalty, in which he hides himself with “our duties.” Note the exceeding effort of Macbeth's addresses to the king, his reasoning on his allegiance, and then especially when a new difficulty, the designation of a successor, suggests a new crime. This, however, seems the first distinct notion, as to the plan of realising his wishes; and here, therefore, with great propriety, Macbeth's cowardice of his own conscience discloses itself. I always think there is something especially Shakespearian in Duncan's speeches throughout this scene, such pourings forth, such abandonments, compared with the language of vulgar dramatists, whose characters seem to have made their speeches as the actors learn them.

Ib: Duncan's speech:—

... “Sons, kinsmen, thanes,

And you whose places are the nearest, know,

We will establish our estate upon

Our eldest Malcolm, whom we name hereafter

The Prince of Cumberland: which honour must

Not unaccompanied, invest him only;

But signs of nobleness, like stars, shall shine

On all deservers.”

It is a fancy;—but I can never read this and the following speeches of Macbeth, without involuntarily thinking of the Miltonic Messiah and Satan.

Ib. sc. 5. Macbeth is described by Lady Macbeth so as at the same time to reveal her own character. Could he have every thing he wanted, he would rather have it innocently;—ignorant, as alas! how many of us are, that he who wishes a temporal end for itself, does in truth will the means; and hence the danger of indulging fancies.

Lady Macbeth, like all in Shakespeare, is a class individualised:—of high rank, left much alone, and feeding herself with day-dreams of ambition, she mistakes the courage of fantasy for the power of bearing the consequences of the realities of guilt. His is the mock fortitude of a mind deluded by ambition; she shames her husband with a superhuman audacity of fancy which she cannot support, but sinks in the season of remorse, and dies in suicidal agony. Her speech:—

... “Come, you spirits

That tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here,” &c.—

is that of one who had habitually familiarised her imagination to dreadful conceptions, and was trying to do so still more. Her invocations and requisitions are all the false efforts of a mind accustomed only hitherto to the shadows of the imagination, vivid enough to throw the every-day substances of life into shadow, but never as yet brought into direct contact with their own correspondent realities. She evinces no womanly life, no wifely joy, at the return of her husband, no pleased terror at the thought of his past dangers, whilst Macbeth bursts forth naturally—

“My dearest love”—

and shrinks from the boldness with which she presents his own thoughts to him.

With consummate art she at first uses as incentives the very circumstances, Duncan's coming to their house, &c., which Macbeth's conscience would most probably have adduced to her as motives of abhorrence or repulsion. Yet Macbeth is not prepared:—

“We will speak further.”

Ib. sc. 6. The lyrical movement with which this scene opens, and the free and unengaged mind of Banquo, loving nature, and rewarded in the love itself, form a highly dramatic contrast with the laboured rhythm and hypocritical over-much of Lady Macbeth's welcome, in which you cannot detect a ray of personal feeling, but all is thrown upon the “dignities,” the general duty.

Ib. sc. 7. Macbeth's speech:—

“We will proceed no further in this business:

He hath honour'd me of late; and I have bought

Golden opinions from all sorts of people,

Which would be worn now in their newest gloss,

Not cast aside so soon.”

Note the inward pangs and warnings of conscience interpreted into prudential reasonings.

Act ii. sc. 1. Banquo's speech:—

“A heavy summons lies like lead upon me,

And yet I would not sleep. Merciful powers!

Restrain in me the cursed thoughts, that nature

Gives way to in repose.”

The disturbance of an innocent soul by painful suspicions of another's guilty intentions and wishes, and fear of the cursed thoughts of sensual nature.

Ib. sc. 2. Now that the deed is done or doing—now that the first reality commences, Lady Macbeth shrinks. The most simple sound strikes terror, the most natural consequences are horrible, whilst previously every thing, however awful, appeared a mere trifle; conscience, which before had been hidden to Macbeth in selfish and prudential fears, now rushes in upon him in her own veritable person:—

“Methought I heard a voice cry—Sleep no more!

I could not say Amen,

When they did say, God bless us!”

And see the novelty given to the most familiar images by a new state of feeling.

Ib. sc. 3. This low soliloquy of the Porter and his few speeches afterwards, I believe to have been written for the mob by some other hand, perhaps with Shakespeare's consent; and that finding it take, he with the remaining ink of a pen otherwise employed, just interpolated the words—

“I'll devil-porter it no further: I had thought to have let in some of all professions, that go the primrose way to the everlasting bonfire.”

Of the rest not one syllable has the ever-present being of Shakespeare.

Act iii. sc. 1. Compare Macbeth's mode of working on the murderers in this place with Schiller's mistaken scene between Butler, Devereux, and Macdonald in *Wallenstein* .—(Part II. act iv. sc. 2.) The comic was wholly out of season. Shakespeare never introduces it, but when it may react on the tragedy by harmonious contrast.

Ib. sc. 2. Macbeth's speech:—

“But let the frame of things disjoint, both the worlds suffer,

Ere we will eat our meal in fear, and sleep

In the affliction of these terrible dreams

That shake us nightly.”

Ever and ever mistaking the anguish of conscience for fears of selfishness, and thus as a punishment of that selfishness, plunging still deeper in guilt and ruin.

Ib. Macbeth's speech:—

“Be innocent of the knowledge, dearest chuck,

Till thou applaud the deed.”

This is Macbeth's sympathy with his own feelings, and his mistaking his wife's opposite state.

Ib. sc. 4.—

“*Macb.* It will have blood; they say, blood will have blood:

Stones have been known to move, and trees to speak;

Augurs, and understood relations, have

By magot-pies, and choughs, and rooks, brought forth

The secret'st man of blood.”

The deed is done; but Macbeth receives no comfort, no additional security. He has by guilt torn himself live-asunder from nature, and is, therefore, himself in a preternatural state: no wonder, then, that he is inclined to superstition, and faith in the unknown of signs and tokens, and superhuman agencies.

Act iv. sc. 1.—

“*Len.* 'Tis two or three, my lord, that bring you word

Macduff is fled to England.

Macb. Fled to England!”

The acme of the avenging conscience.

Ib. sc. 2. This scene, dreadful as it is, is still a relief, because a variety, because domestic, and therefore soothing, as associated with the only real pleasures of life. The conversation between Lady Macduff and her child heightens the pathos, and is preparatory for the deep tragedy of their assassination. Shakespeare's fondness for children is everywhere shown;—in Prince Arthur, in *King John* ; in the sweet scene in the *Winter's Tale* between Hermione and her son; nay, even in honest Evans's examination of Mrs. Page's schoolboy. To the objection that Shakespeare wounds the moral sense by the unsubdued, undisguised description of the most hateful atrocity—that he tears the feelings without mercy, and even outrages the eye itself with scenes of insupportable horror—I, omitting *Titus Andronicus* , as not genuine, and excepting the scene of Gloucester's blinding in *Lear* , answer boldly in the name of Shakespeare, not guilty.

Ib. sc. 3. Malcolm's speech:—

... “Better Macbeth,

Than such an one to reign.”

The moral is—the dreadful effects even on the best minds of the soul-sickening sense of insecurity.

Ib. How admirably Macduff's grief is in harmony with the whole play! It rends, not dissolves, the heart. “The tune of it goes manly.” Thus is Shakespeare always master of himself and of his subject,—a genuine Proteus:—we see all things in him, as images in a calm lake, most distinct, most accurate,—only more splendid, more glorified. This is correctness in the only philosophical sense. But he requires your sympathy and your submission; you must have that recipiency of moral impression without which the purposes and ends of the drama would be frustrated, and the absence of which demonstrates an utter want of all imagination, a deadness to that necessary pleasure of being innocently—shall I say, deluded?—or rather, drawn away from ourselves to the music of noblest thought in harmonious sounds. Happy he, who not only in the public theatre, but in the labours of a profession, and round the light of his own hearth, still carries a heart so pleasure-fraught!

Alas for Macbeth! now all is inward with him; he has no more prudential prospective reasonings. His wife, the only being who could have had any seat in his affections, dies; he puts on despondency, the final heart-armour of the wretched, and would fain think every thing shadowy and unsubstantial, as indeed all things are to those who cannot regard them as symbols of goodness:—

“Out, out, brief candle!

Life's but a walking shadow; a poor player,

That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,

And then is heard no more; it is a tale

Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,

Signifying nothing.”

<<span id="filepos0038391829"> a> “ Winter's Tale.”

Although, on the whole, this play is exquisitely respondent to its title, and even in the fault I am about to mention, still a winter's tale; yet it seems a mere indolence of the great bard not to have provided in the oracular response (Act ii. sc. 2.) some ground for Hermione's seeming death and fifteen years' voluntary concealment. This might have been easily effected by some obscure sentence of the oracle, as for example:—

“ ‘Nor shall he ever recover an heir, if he have a wife before that recovery.’ ”

The idea of this delightful drama is a genuine jealousy of disposition, and it should be immediately followed by the perusal of *Othello* , which is the direct contrast of it in every particular. For jealousy is a vice of the mind, a culpable tendency of the temper, having certain well-known and well-defined effects and concomitants, all of which are visible in Leontes, and, I boldly say, not one of which marks its presence in Othello;—such as, first, an excitability by the most inadequate causes, and an eagerness to snatch at proofs; secondly, a grossness of conception, and a disposition to degrade the object of the passion by sensual fancies and images; thirdly, a sense of shame of his own feelings exhibited in a solitary moodiness of humour, and yet from the violence of the passion forced to utter itself, and therefore catching occasions to ease the mind by ambiguities, equivoques, by talking to those who cannot, and who are known not to be able to, understand what is said to them,—in short, by soliloquy in the form of dialogue, and hence a confused, broken, and fragmentary, manner; fourthly, a dread of vulgar ridicule, as distinct from a high sense of honour, or a mistaken sense of duty; and lastly, and immediately, consequent on this, a spirit of selfish vindictiveness.

Act i. sc. 1, 2.—

Observe the easy style of chitchat between Camillo and Archidamus as contrasted with the elevated diction on the introduction of the kings and Hermione in the second scene: and how admirably Polixenes' obstinate refusal to Leontes to stay,—

“There is no tongue that moves; none, none i' the world

So soon as yours, could win me;”—

prepares for the effect produced by his afterwards yielding to Hermione;—which is, nevertheless, perfectly natural from mere courtesy of sex, and the exhaustion of the will by former efforts of denial, and well calculated to set in nascent action the jealousy of Leontes. This, when once excited, is unconsciously increased by Hermione,—

... “Yet, good deed, Leontes,

I love thee not a jar o' the clock behind

What lady she her lord;”—

accompanied, as a good actress ought to represent it, by an expression and recoil of apprehension that she had gone too far.

"At my request, he would not:"—

The first working of the jealous fit;—

"Too hot, too hot:"—

The morbid tendency of Leontes to lay hold of the merest trifles, and his grossness immediately afterwards,—

"Paddling palms and pinching fingers;"—

followed by his strange loss of self-control in his dialogue with the little boy.

Act iii. sc. 2. Paulina's speech:—

"That thou betray'dst Polixenes, 'twas nothing;

That did but show thee, of a *fool* , inconstant,

And damnable ingrateful."

Theobald reads "soul."

I think the original word is Shakespeare's. 1. My ear feels it to be Shakespearian; 2. The involved grammar is Shakespearian—"show thee, being a fool naturally, to have improved thy folly by inconstancy;" 3. The alteration is most flat, and un-Shakespearian. As to the grossness of the abuse—she calls him "gross and foolish" a few lines below.

Act iv. sc. 3. Speech of Autolycus:—

"For the life to come, I sleep out the thought of it."

Fine as this is, and delicately characteristic of one who had lived and been reared in the best society, and had been precipitated from it by dice and drabbing; yet still it strikes against my feelings as a note out of tune, and as not coalescing with that pastoral tint which gives such a charm to this act. It is too Macbeth-like in the "snapper up of unconsidered trifles."

Ib. sc. 4. Perdita's speech:—

“From Dis's waggon! daffodils.”

An epithet is wanted here, not merely or chiefly for the metre, but for the balance, for the æsthetic logic. Perhaps “golden” was the word which would set off the “violets dim.”

Ib. —

... “Pale primroses

That die unmarried.”

Milton's—

“And the rathe primrose that forsaken dies.”

Ib. Perdita's speech:—

“Even here undone:

I was not much afraid; for once or twice

I was about to speak, and tell him plainly,

The self-same sun, that shines upon his court,

Hides not his visage from our cottage, but

Looks on alike. Will't please you, Sir, be gone!

(*To Florizel.*)

I told you, what would come of this. Beseech you,

Of your own state take care: this dream of mine,

Being now awake, I'll queen it no inch farther,

But milk my ewes, and weep.”

O how more than exquisite is this whole speech! And that profound nature of noble pride and grief venting themselves in a momentary peevishness of resentment toward Florizel:—

... “Will't please you, Sir, be gone!”

Ib. Speech of Autolycus:—

“Let me have no lying; it becomes none but tradesmen, and they often give us soldiers the lie; but we pay them for it with stamped coin, not stabbing steel;—therefore they do not *give* us the lie.”

As we *pay* them, they, therefore, do not *give* it us.

<<span id="filepos0038403134"> a> “ Othello.”

Act i. sc. 1.—

Admirable is the preparation, so truly and peculiarly Shakespearian, in the introduction of Roderigo, as the dupe on whom Iago shall first exercise his art, and in so doing display his own character. Roderigo, without any fixed principle, but not without the moral notions and sympathies with honour, which his rank and connections had hung upon him, is already well fitted and predisposed for the purpose; for very want of character and strength of passion, like wind loudest in an empty house, constitute his character. The first three lines happily state the nature and foundation of the friendship between him and Iago,—the purse,—as also the contrast of Roderigo's intemperance of mind with Iago's coolness,—the coolness of a preconceiving experimenter. The mere language of protestation,—

“If ever I did dream of such a matter, abhor me,”—

which, falling in with the associative link, determines Roderigo's continuation of complaint,—

“Thou told'st me, thou didst hold him in thy hate,”—

elicits at length a true feeling of Iago's mind, the dread of contempt habitual to those who encourage in themselves, and have their keenest pleasure in, the expression of contempt for others. Observe Iago's high self-opinion, and the moral, that a wicked man will employ real feelings, as well as assume those most alien from his own, as instruments of his purposes:—

“And, by the faith of man,

I know my price, I am worth no worse a place.”

I think Tyrwhitt's reading of “life” for “wife”—

“A fellow almost damn'd in a fair *wife* ”—

the true one, as fitting to Iago's contempt for whatever did not display power, and that intellectual power. In what follows, let the reader feel how by and through the glass of two passions, disappointed vanity and envy, the very vices of which he is complaining, are made to act upon him as if they were so many excellences, and the more appropriately, because cunning is always admired and wished for by minds conscious of inward weakness;—but they act only by half, like music on an inattentive auditor, swelling the thoughts which prevent him from listening to it.

Ib. —

“*Rod.* What a full fortune does the *thick-lips* owe,

If he can carry 't thus.”

Roderigo turns off to Othello; and here comes one, if not the only, seeming justification of our blackamoor or negro Othello. Even if we supposed this an uninterrupted tradition of the theatre, and that Shakespeare himself, from want of scenes, and the experience that nothing could be made too marked for the senses of his audience, had practically sanctioned it,—would this prove aught concerning his own intention as a poet for all ages? Can we imagine him so utterly ignorant as to make a barbarous negro plead royal birth,—at a time, too, when negroes were not known except as slaves? As for Iago's language to Brabantio, it implies merely that Othello was a Moor,—that is, black. Though I think the rivalry of Roderigo sufficient to account for his wilful confusion of Moor and Negro,—yet, even if compelled to give this up, I should think it only adapted for the acting of the day, and should complain of an enormity built on a single word, in direct contradiction to Iago's “Barbary horse.” Besides, if we could in good earnest believe Shakespeare ignorant of the distinction, still why should we adopt one disagreeable possibility instead of a ten times greater and more pleasing probability? It is a common error to mistake the epithets applied by the *dramatis personæ* to each other, as truly descriptive of what the audience ought to see or know. No doubt Desdemona saw Othello's visage in his mind; yet, as we are constituted, and most surely as an English audience was disposed in the beginning of the seventeenth century, it would be something monstrous to conceive this beautiful Venetian girl falling in love with a veritable negro. It would argue a disproportionateness, a want of balance, in Desdemona, which Shakespeare does not appear to have in the least contemplated.

Ib. Brabantio's speech:—

“This accident is not unlike my dream.”

The old careful senator, being caught careless, transfers his caution to his dreaming power at least.

Ib. Iago's speech:—

... “For their souls,

Another of his fathom they have not,

To lead their business.”

The forced praise of Othello, followed by the bitter hatred of him in this speech! And observe how Brabantio's dream prepares for his recurrence to the notion of philtres, and how both prepare for carrying on the plot of the arraignment of Othello on this ground.

Ib. sc. 2.—

“*Oth.* 'Tis better as it is.”

How well these few words impress at the outset the truth of Othello's own character of himself at the end—“that he was not easily wrought!” His self-government contradistinguishes him throughout from Leontes.

Ib. Othello's speech:—

... “And my demerits

May speak, *unbonneted* .”

The argument in Theobald's note, where “and bonneted” is suggested, goes on the assumption that Shakespeare could not use the same word differently in different places; whereas I should conclude, that as in the passage in *Lear* the word is employed in its direct meaning, so here it is used metaphorically; and this is confirmed by what has escaped the editors, that it is not “I,” but “my demerits” that may speak unbonneted,—without the symbol of a petitioning inferior.

Ib. sc. 3. Othello's speech:—

“So please your grace, my ancient;

A man he is of honesty and trust:

To his conveyance I assign my wife.”

Compare this with the behaviour of Leontes to his true friend Camillo.

Ib. —

“*Bra.* Look to her, Moor; if thou hast eyes to see;

She has deceived her father, and may thee.

Oth. My life upon her faith.”

In real life, how do we look back to little speeches as presentimental of, or contrasted with, an affecting event! Even so, Shakespeare, as secure of being read over and over, of becoming a family friend, provides this passage for his readers, and leaves it to them.

Ib. Iago's speech:—

“Virtue? a fig! 'tis in ourselves, that we are thus, or thus,” &c.

This speech comprises the passionless character of Iago. It is all will in intellect; and therefore he is here a bold partizan of a truth, but yet of a truth converted into a falsehood by the absence of all the necessary modifications caused by the frail nature of man. And then comes the last sentiment:—

“Our raging motions, our carnal stings, our unbitted lusts, whereof I take this, that you call—love, to be a sect or scion!”

Here is the true Iagoism of, alas! how many! Note Iago's pride of mastery in the repetition of “Go, make money!” to his anticipated dupe, even stronger than his love of lucre: and when Roderigo is completely won,—

“I am chang'd. I'll go sell all my land,”—

when the effect has been fully produced, the repetition of triumph:—

“Go to; farewell; put money enough in your purse!”

The remainder—Iago's soliloquy—the motive-hunting of a motiveless malignity—how awful it is! Yea, whilst he is still allowed to bear the divine image, it is too fiendish for his own steady view,—for the lonely gaze of a being next to devil, and only not quite devil,—and yet a character which Shakespeare has attempted and executed, without disgust and without scandal!

Dr. Johnson has remarked that little or nothing is wanting to render the *Othello* a regular tragedy, but to have opened the play with the arrival of Othello in Cyprus, and to have thrown the preceding act into the form of narration. Here then is the place to determine whether such a change would or would not be an improvement;—nay (to throw down the glove with a full challenge), whether the tragedy would or not by such an arrangement become more regular,—that is, more consonant with the rules dictated by universal reason, on the true common-sense of mankind, in its application to the particular case. For in all acts of judgment, it can never be too often recollected, and scarcely too often repeated, that rules are means to ends, and, consequently, that the end must be determined and understood before it can be known what the rules are or ought to be. Now, from a certain species of drama, proposing to itself the accomplishment of certain ends,—these partly arising from the idea of the species itself, but in part, likewise, forced upon the dramatist by accidental circumstances beyond his power to remove or control,—three rules have been abstracted;—in other words, the means most conducive to the attainment of the proposed ends have been generalised, and prescribed under the names of the three unities,—the unity of time, the unity of place, and the unity of action—which last would, perhaps, have been as appropriately, as well as more intelligibly, entitled the unity of interest. With this last the present question has no immediate concern: in fact, its conjunction with the former two is a mere delusion of words. It is not properly a rule, but in itself the great end not only of the drama, but of the epic poem, the lyric ode, of all poetry, down to the candle-flame cone of an epigram,—nay, of poesy in general, as the proper generic term inclusive of all the fine arts as its species. But of the unities of time and place, which alone are entitled to the name of rules, the history of their origin will be their best criterion. You might take the Greek chorus to a place, but you could not bring a place to them without as palpable an equivoque as bringing Birnam wood to Macbeth at Dunsinane. It was the same, though in a less degree, with regard to the unity of time:—the positive fact, not for a moment removed from the senses, the presence, I mean, of the same identical chorus, was a continued measure of time;—and although the imagination may supersede perception, yet it must be granted to be an imperfection—however easily tolerated—to place the two in broad contradiction to each other. In truth, it is a mere accident of terms; for the Trilogy of the Greek theatre was a drama in three acts, and notwithstanding this, what strange contrivances as to place there are in the Aristophanic Frogs. Besides, if the law of mere actual perception is once violated—as it repeatedly is, even in the Greek tragedies—why is it more difficult to imagine three hours to be three years than to be a whole day and night?

Act ii. sc. 1.—

Observe in how many ways Othello is made, first, our acquaintance, then our friend, then the object of our anxiety, before the deeper interest is to be approached!

Ib. —

“*Mont.* But, good lieutenant, is your general wived?

Cas. Most fortunately: he hath achieved a maid

That paragons description, and wild fame;

One that excels the quirks of blazoning pens,

And, in the essential vesture of creation,

Does tire the ingener.”

Here is Cassio's warm-hearted, yet perfectly disengaged, praise of Desdemona, and sympathy with the “most fortunately” wived Othello;—and yet Cassio is an enthusiastic admirer, almost a worshipper, of Desdemona. Oh, that detestable code that excellence cannot be loved in any form that is female, but it must needs be selfish! Observe Othello's “honest” and Cassio's “bold” Iago, and Cassio's full guileless-hearted wishes for the safety and love-raptures of Othello and “the divine Desdemona.” And also note the exquisite circumstance of Cassio's kissing Iago's wife, as if it ought to be impossible that the dullest auditor should not feel Cassio's religious love of Desdemona's purity. Iago's answers are the sneers which a proud bad intellect feels towards women, and expresses to a wife. Surely it ought to be considered a very exalted compliment to women, that all the sarcasms on them in Shakespeare are put in the mouths of villains.

Ib. —

“*Des.* I am not merry; but I do beguile,” &c.

The struggle of courtesy in Desdemona to abstract her attention.

Ib. —

“(*Iago aside*). He takes her by the palm: Ay, well said, whisper; with as little a web as this, will I ensnare as great a fly as Cassio. Ay, smile upon her, do,” &c.

The importance given to trifles, and made fertile by the villany of the observer.

Ib. Iago's dialogue with Roderigo.

This is the rehearsal on the dupe of the traitor's intentions on Othello.

Ib. Iago's soliloquy:—

“But partly led to diet my revenge,

For that I do suspect the lusty Moor

Hath leap'd into my seat.”

This thought, originally by Iago's own confession a mere suspicion, is now ripening, and gnaws his base nature as his own “poisonous mineral” is about to gnaw the noble heart of his general.

Ib. sc. 3. Othello's speech:—

“I know, Iago,

Thy honesty and love doth mince this matter,

Making it light to Cassio.”

Honesty and love! Ay, and who but the reader of the play could think otherwise?

Ib. Iago's soliloquy:—

“And what's he then that says—I play the villain?

When this advice is free I give, and honest,

Provable to thinking, and, indeed, the course

To win the Moor again.”

He is not, you see, an absolute fiend; or, at least, he wishes to think himself not so.

Act iii. sc. 3.—

“*Des.* Before Æmilia here,

I give thee warrant of thy place.”

The over-zeal of innocence in Desdemona.

Ib. —

“*Enter Desdemona and Æmilia.*

Oth. If she be false, O, then, heaven mocks itself!

I'll not believe't.”

Divine! The effect of innocence and the better genius!

Act iv. sc. 3.—

“*Æmil.* Why, the wrong is but a wrong i' the world; and

having the world for your labour, 'tis a wrong in your own world,

and you might quickly make it right.”

Warburton's note.

What any other man, who had learning enough, might have quoted as a playful and witty illustration of his remarks against the Calvinistic *thesis* , Warburton gravely attributes to Shakespeare as intentional; and this, too, in the mouth of a lady's woman!

Act v. last scene. Othello's speech:—

... “Of one, whose hand,

Like the base *Indian* , threw a pearl away

Richer than all his tribe," &c.

Theobald's note from Warburton.

Thus it is for no-poets to comment on the greatest of poets! To make Othello say that he, who had killed his wife, was like Herod who killed Mariamne!—O, how many beauties, in this one line, were impenetrable to the ever thought-swarming, but idealess, Warburton! Othello wishes to excuse himself on the score of ignorance, and yet not to excuse himself,—to excuse himself by accusing. This struggle of feeling is finely conveyed in the word "base," which is applied to the rude Indian, not in his own character, but as the momentary representative of Othello's. "Indian"—for I retain the old reading—means American, a savage *in genere* .

Finally, let me repeat that Othello does not kill Desdemona in jealousy, but in a conviction forced upon him by the almost superhuman art of Iago, such a conviction as any man would and must have entertained who had believed Iago's honesty as Othello did. We, the audience, know that Iago is a villain, from the beginning; but in considering the essence of the Shakespearian Othello, we must perseveringly place ourselves in his situation, and under his circumstances. Then we shall immediately feel the fundamental difference between the solemn agony of the noble Moor, and the wretched fishing jealousies of Leontes, and the morbid suspiciousness of Leonatus, who is, in other respects, a fine character. Othello had no life but in Desdemona:—the belief that she, his angel, had fallen from the heaven of her native innocence, wrought a civil war in his heart. She is his counterpart; and, like him, is almost sanctified in our eyes by her absolute unsuspiciousness, and holy entireness of love. As the curtain drops, which do we pity the most?

Extremum hunc ——. There are three powers:—Wit, which discovers partial likeness hidden in general diversity; subtlety, which discovers the diversity concealed in general apparent sameness;—and profundity, which discovers an essential unity under all the semblances of difference.

Give to a subtle man fancy, and he is a wit; to a deep man imagination, and he is a philosopher. Add, again, pleasurable sensibility in the threefold form of sympathy with the interesting in morals, the impressive in form, and the harmonious in sound,—and you have the poet.

But combine all,—wit, subtlety, and fancy, with profundity, imagination, and moral and physical susceptibility of the pleasurable,—and let the object of action be man universal; and we shall have—O, rash prophecy! say, rather, we have—a Shakespeare!

<<span id="filepos0038431999"> a>CHARACTERS OF SHAKESPEARE'S PLAYS by William Hazlitt

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<<span id="filepos0038442444"> a>INTRODUCTION

The book here included among The World's Classics made its first appearance as an octavo volume of xxiv + 352 pages, with the title-page:

Characters of Shakespeare's Plays, By William Hazlitt. London:
Printed by C. H. Reynell, 21 Piccadilly, 1817.

William Hazlitt (1778-1830) came of an Irish Protestant stock, and of a branch of it transplanted in the reign of George I from the county of Antrim to Tipperary. His father migrated, at nineteen, to the University of Glasgow (where he was contemporary with Adam Smith), graduated in 1761 or thereabouts, embraced the principles of the Unitarians, joined their ministry, and crossed over to England; being successively pastor at Wisbech in Cambridgeshire, at Marshfield in Gloucestershire, and at Maidstone. At Wisbech he married Grace Loftus, the daughter of a neighbouring farmer. Of the many children granted to them but three survived infancy. William, the youngest of these, was born in Mitre Lane, Maidstone, on April 10, 1778. From Maidstone the family moved in 1780 to Bandon, Co. Cork; and from Bandon in 1783 to America, where Mr. Hazlitt preached before the new Assembly of the States-General of New Jersey, lectured at Philadelphia on the Evidences of Christianity, founded the First

Unitarian Church at Boston, and declined a proffered diploma of D.D. In 1786-7 he returned to England and took up his abode at Wem, in Shropshire. His elder son, John, was now old enough to choose a vocation, and chose that of a miniature-painter. The second child, Peggy, had begun to paint also, amateurishly in oils. William, aged eight—a child out of whose recollection all memories of Bandon and of America (save the taste of barberries) soon faded—took his education at home and at a local school. His father designed him for the Unitarian ministry.

The above dry recital contains a number of facts not to be overlooked as predisposing causes in young Hazlitt's later career; as that he was Irish by blood, intellectual by geniture, born into dissent, and a minority of dissent, taught at home to value the things of the mind, in early childhood a nomad, in later childhood 'privately educated'—a process which (whatever its merits) is apt to develop the freak as against the citizen, the eccentric and lop-sided as against what is proportionate and disciplined. Young Hazlitt's cleverness and his passion for individual liberty were alike precocious. In 1791, at the age of thirteen, he composed and published in The Shrewsbury Chronicle a letter of protest against the calumniators of Dr. Priestley: a performance which, for the gravity of its thought as for the balance of its expression, would do credit to ninety-nine grown men in a hundred. At fifteen, his father designing that he should enter the ministry, he proceeded to the Unitarian College, Hackney; where his master, a Mr. Corrie, found him 'rather backward in many of the ordinary points of learning and, in general, of a dry, intractable understanding', the truth being that the lad had set his heart against the ministry, aspiring rather to be a philosopher—in particular a political philosopher. At fourteen he had conceived ('in consequence of a dispute one day, after coming out of Meeting, between my father and an old lady of the congregation, respecting the repeal of the Corporation and Test Acts and the limits of religious toleration') the germ of his Project for a New Theory of Civil and Criminal Legislation, published in his maturer years (1828), but drafted and scribbled upon constantly in these days, to the neglect of his theological studies. His father, hearing of the project, forbade him to pursue it.

Thus four or five years at the Unitarian College were wasted, or, at least, had been spent without apparent profit; and in 1798 young Hazlitt, aged close upon twenty, unsettled in his plans as in his prospects, was at home again and (as the saying is) at a loose end; when of a sudden his life found its spiritual apocalypse. It came with the descent of Samuel Taylor Coleridge upon Shrewsbury, to take over the charge of a Unitarian Congregation there.

He did not come till late on the Saturday afternoon before he was to preach; and Mr. Rowe [the abdicating minister], who himself went down to the coach in a state of anxiety and expectation to look for the arrival of his successor, could find no one at all answering the description, but a round-faced man, in a short black coat (like a shooting-jacket) which hardly seemed to have been made for him, but who seemed to be talking at a great rate to his fellow-passengers. Mr. Rowe had scarce returned to give an account of his disappointment when the round-faced man in black entered, and dissipated all doubts on the subject by beginning to talk. He did not cease while he stayed; nor has he since.

Of his meeting with Coleridge, and of the soul's awakening that followed, Hazlitt has left an account (My First Acquaintance with Poets) that will fascinate so long as English prose is read. 'Somehow that period [the time just after the French Revolution] was not a time when NOTHING WAS GIVEN FOR NOTHING. The mind opened, and a softness might be perceived coming over the heart of individuals beneath "the scales that fence" our self-interest.' As Wordsworth wrote:

Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive,
  But to be young was very Heaven.

It was in January, 1798, that I was one morning before daylight, to walk ten miles in the mud, to hear this celebrated person preach. Never, the longest day I have to live, shall I have such another walk as this cold, raw, comfortless one in the winter of 1798. Il-y-a des impressions que ni le tems ni les circonstances peuvent effacer. Dusse-je vivre des siecles entiers, le doux tems de ma jeunesse ne peut renaitre pour moi, ni s'effacer jamais dans ma memoire. When I got there the organ was playing the 100th Psalm, and when it was done Mr. Coleridge rose and gave out his text, 'And he went up into the mountain to pray, HIMSELF, ALONE.' As he gave out this text, his voice 'rose like a stream of distilled perfumes', and when he came to the two last words, which he pronounced loud, deep, and distinct, it seemed to me, who was then young, as if the sounds had echoed from the bottom of the human heart, and as if that prayer might have floated in solemn silence through the universe…. The preacher then launched into his subject, like an eagle dallying with the wind.

Coleridge visited Wem, walked and talked with young Hazlitt, and wound up by inviting the disciple to visit him at Nether Stowey in the Quantocks. Hazlitt went, made acquaintance with William and Dorothy Wordsworth, and was drawn more deeply under the spell. In later years as the younger man grew cantankerous and the elder declined, through opium, into a 'battered seraph', there was an estrangement. But Hazlitt never forgot his obligation.

My soul has indeed remained in its original bondage, dark, obscure, with longings infinite and unsatisfed; my heart, shut up in the prison-house of this rude clay, has never found, nor will it ever find, a heart to speak to; but that my understanding also did not remain dumb and brutish, or at length found a language that expresses itself, I owe to Coleridge.

Coleridge, sympathizing with the young man's taste for philosophy and abetting it, encouraged him to work upon a treatise which saw the light in 1805, An Essay on the Principles of Human Action: Being an Argument in favour of the Natural Disinterestedness of the Human Mind. Meantime, however,—the ministry having been renounced—the question of a vocation became more and more urgent, and after long indecision Hazlitt packed his portmanteau for London, resolved to learn painting under his brother John, who had begun to do prosperously. John taught him some rudiments, and packed him off to Paris, where he studied for some four months in the Louvre and learned to idolize Bonaparte. This sojourn in Paris—writes his grandson and biographer—'was one long beau jour to him'. His allusions to it are constant. He returned to England in 1803, with formed tastes and predilections, very few of which he afterwards modified, much less forsook.

We next find him making a tour as a portrait-painter through the north of England, where (as was to be expected) he attempted a portrait of Wordsworth, among others. 'At his desire', says Wordsworth, 'I sat to him, but as he did not satisfy himself or my friends, the unfinished work was destroyed.' He was more successful with Charles Lamb, whom he painted (for a whim) in the dress of a

Venetian Senator. As a friend of Coleridge and Wordsworth he had inevitably made acquaintance with the Lambs. He first met Lamb at one of the Godwins' strange evening parties and the two became intimate friends and fellow theatre-goers.

Hazlitt's touchy and difficult temper suspended this inintimacy in later years, though to the last Lamb regarded him as 'one of the finest and wisest spirits breathing'; but for a while it was unclouded. At the Lambs', moreover, Hazlitt made acquaintance with a Dr. Stoddart, owner of some property at Winterslow near Salisbury, and his sister Sarah, a lady wearing past her first youth but yet addicted to keeping a number of beaux to her string. Hazlitt, attracted to her from the first,—he made a gloomy lover and his subsequent performances in that part were unedifying—for some years played walking gentleman behind the leading suitors with whom Miss Stoddart from time to time diversified her comedy. But Mary Lamb was on his side; the rivals on one excuse or another went their ways or were dismissed; and on May 1, 1808, the marriage took place at St. Andrew's Church, Holborn. Lamb attended, foreboding little happiness to the couple from his knowledge of their temperaments. Seven years after (August 9, 1815), he wrote to Southey. 'I was at Hazlitt's marriage, and had like to have been turned out several times during the ceremony. Anything awful makes me laugh.' The marriage was not a happy one.

Portrait-painting had been abandoned long before this. The Essay on the Principles of Human Action (1805) had fallen, as the saying is, stillborn from the press: Free Thoughts on Public Affairs (1806) had earned for the author many enemies but few readers: and a treatise attacking Malthus's theory of population (1807) had allured the public as little. A piece of hack-work, The Eloquence of the British Senate, also belongs to 1807: A New and Improved Grammar of the English Tongue for the use of Schools to 1810. The nutriment to be derived from these works, again, was not of the sort that replenishes the family table, and in 1812 Hazlitt left Winterslow (where he had been quarrelling with his brother-in-law), settled in London in 19 York Street, Westminster—once the home of John Milton—and applied himself strenuously to lecturing and journalism. His lectures, on the English Philosophers, were delivered at the Russell Institution: his most notable journalistic work, on politics and the drama, was done for The Morning Chronicle, then edited by Mr. Perry. From an obituary notice of Hazlitt contributed many years later (October 1830) to an old magazine I cull the following:

He obtained an introduction, about 1809 or 1810, to the late Mr. Perry, of The Morning Chronicle, by whom he was engaged to report Parliamentary debates, write original articles, *etc.* He also furnished a number of theatrical articles on the acting of Kean. As a political writer he was apt to be too violent; though in general he was not a man of violent temper. He was also apt to conceive strong and rooted prejudices against individuals on very slight grounds. But he was a good-hearted man…. Private circumstances, it is said, contributed to sour his temper and to produce a peculiar excitement which too frequently held its sway over him. Mr. Hazlitt and Mr. Perry did not agree. Upon one occasion, to the great annoyance of some of his colleagues, he preferred his wine with a few friends to taking his share in reporting an important discussion in the House of Commons. Added to this, he either did not understand the art of reporting, or would not take the trouble to master it…. His original articles required to be carefully looked after, to weed them of strong expressions.

Hazlitt's reputation grew, notwithstanding. In 1814 Jeffrey enlisted him to write for The Edinburgh Review, and in 1815 he began to contribute to Leigh Hunt's paper The Examiner. In February 1816 he reviewed Schlegel's 'Lectures on Dramatic Literature' for the Edinburgh, and this would seem to have started him on his Characters of Shakespeare's Plays. Throughout 1816 he wrote at it sedulously.

The MS., when completed, was accepted by Mr. C. H. Reynell, of 21, Piccadilly, the head of a printing establishment of old and high standing; and it was agreed that 100 pounds should be paid to the author for the entire copyright…. The volume was published by Mr. Hunter of St. Paul's Churchyard; and the author was gratified by the prompt insertion of a complimentary notice in the Edinburgh Review. The whole edition went off in six weeks; and yet it was a half-guinea book.' [Footnote: Memoirs of William Hazlitt, by W. Carew Hazlitt, 1887. Vol. i, p. 228.]

The reader, who comes to it through this Introduction, will note two points to qualify his appreciation of the book as a specimen of Hazlitt's critical writing, and a third that helps to account for its fortune in 1817. It was the work of a man in his thirty-eighth year, and to that extent has maturity. But it was also his first serious essay, after many false starts, in an art and in a style which, later on, he brilliantly mastered. The subject is most pleasantly handled, and with an infectious enthusiasm: the reader feels all the while that his sympathy with Shakespeare is being stimulated and his understanding promoted: but it scarcely yields either the light or the music which Hazlitt communicates in his later and more famous essays.

For the third point, Hazlitt had made enemies nor had ever been cautious of making them: and these enemies were now the 'upper dog'. Indeed, they always had been: but the fall of Napoleon, which almost broke his heart, had set them in full cry, and they were not clement in their triumph. It is not easy, even on the evidence before us, to realize that a number of the finest spirits in this country, nursed in the hopes of the French Revolution, kept their admiration of Napoleon, the hammer of old bad monarchies, down to the end and beyond it: that Napier, for example, historian of the war in the Peninsula and as gallant a soldier as ever fought under Wellington, when—late in life, as he lay on his sofa tortured by an old wound—news was brought him of Napoleon's death, burst into a storm of weeping that would not be controlled. On Hazlitt, bound up heart and soul in what he regarded as the cause of French and European liberty and enlightenment, Waterloo, the fall of the Emperor, the restoration of the Bourbons, fell as blows almost stupefying, and his indignant temper charged Heaven with them as wrongs not only public but personal to himself.

In the writing of the Characters he had found a partial drug for despair. But his enemies, as soon as might be, took hold of the anodyne. Like the Bourbons, they had learnt nothing and forgotten nothing.

The Quarterly Review moved—for a quarterly—with something like agility. A second edition of the book had been prepared, and was selling briskly, when this Review launched one of its diatribes against the work and its author.

Taylor and Hessey [the booksellers] told him subsequently that they had sold nearly two editions in about three months, but after the Quarterly review of them came out they never sold another copy. 'My book,' he said, 'sold well—the first edition had gone off in six weeks—till that review came out. I had just prepared a second edition—such was called for—but then the Quarterly told the public that I was a fool and a dunce, and more, that I was an evil disposed person: and the public, supposing Gifford to know best, confessed that it had been a great ass to be pleased where it ought not to be, and the sale completely stopped.

The review, when examined, is seen to be a smart essay in detraction with its arguments ad invidiam very deftly inserted. But as a piece of criticism it misses even such points as might fairly have been made against the book; as, for example, that it harps too monotonously upon the tense string of enthusiasm. Hazlitt could not have applied to this work the motto—'For I am nothing if not critical'—which he chose for his View of the English Stage in 1818; the Characters being anything but 'critical' in the sense there connoted. Jeffrey noted this in the forefront of a sympathetic article in the Edinburgh.

It is, in truth, rather an encomium on Shakespeare than a commentary or a critique on him—and it is written more to show extraordinary love than extraordinary knowledge of his productions…. The author is not merely an admirer of our great dramatist, but an Idolater of him; and openly professes his idolatry. We have ourselves too great a leaning to the same superstition to blame him very much for his error: and though we think, of course, that our own admiration is, on the whole, more discriminating and judicious, there are not many points on which, especially after reading his eloquent exposition of them, we should be much inclined to disagree with him.

The book, as we have already intimated, is written less to tell the reader what Mr. H. KNOWS about Shakespeare or his writings than what he FEELS about them—and WHY he feels so—and thinks that all who profess to love poetry should feel so likewise…. He seems pretty generally, indeed, in a state of happy intoxication—and has borrowed from his great original, not indeed the force or brilliancy of his fancy, but something of its playfulness, and a large share of his apparent joyousness and self-indulgence in its exercise. It is evidently a great pleasure to him to be fully possessed with the beauties of his author, and to follow the impulse of his unrestrained eagerness to impress them upon his readers.

Upon this, Hazlitt, no doubt, would have commented, 'Well, and why not? I choose to understand drama through my FEELINGS.' To surrender to great art was, for him, and defnitely, a part of the critic's function—' A genuine criticism should, as I take it, repeat the colours, the light and shade, the soul and body of a work.' This contention, for which Hazlitt fought all his life and fought brilliantly, is familiar to us by this time as the gage flung to didactic criticism by the 'impressionist', and in our day, in the generation just closed or closing, with a Walter Pater or a Jules Lemaitre for challenger, the betting has run on the impressionist. But in 1817 Hazlitt had all the odds against him when he stood up and accused the great Dr. Johnson of having made criticism 'a kind of Procrustes' bed of genius, where he might cut down imagination to matter-of-fact, regulate the passions according to reason, and translate the whole into logical diagrams and rhetorical declamation'.

Thus he says of Shakespeare's characters, in contradiction to what Pope had observed, and to what every one else feels, that each character is a species, instead of being an individual. He in fact found the general species or DIDACTIC form in Shakespeare's characters, which was all he sought or cared for; he did not find the individual traits, or the DRAMATIC distinctions which Shakespeare has engrafted on this general nature, because he felt no interest in them.

Nothing is easier to prove than that in this world nobody ever invented anything. So it may be proved that, Johnson having written 'Great thoughts are always general', Blake had countered him by affirming (long before Hazlitt) that 'To generalize is to be an idiot. To particularize is the great distinction of merit': even as it may be demonstrable that Charles Lamb, in his charming personal chat about the Elizabethan dramatists and his predilections among them, was already putting into practice what he did not trouble to theorize. But when it comes to setting out the theory, grasping the worth of the principle, stating it and fighting for it, I think Hazlitt may fairly claim first share in the credit.

He did not, when he wrote the following pages, know very much, even about his subject. As his biographer says:

My grandfather came to town with very little book-knowledge…. He had a fair stock of ideas…. But of the volumes which form the furniture of a gentleman's library he was egregiously ignorant … Mr. Hazlitt's resources were emphatically internal; from his own mind he drew sufficient for himself.

Now while it may be argued with plausibility, and even with truth, that the first qualification of a critic—at any rate of a critic of poetry—is, as Jeffrey puts the antithesis, to FEEL rather than to KNOW; while to be delicately sensitive and sympathetic counts more than to be well-informed; nevertheless learning remains respectable. He who can assimilate it without pedantry (which is another word for intellectual indigestion) actually improves and refines his feelings while enlarging their scope and at the same time enlarging his resources of comparison and illustration. Hazlitt, who had something like a genius for felicitous, apposite quotation, and steadily bettered it as he grew older, would certainly have said 'Yes' to this. At all events learning impresses; it carries weight: and therefore it has always seemed to me that he showed small tact, if some modesty, by heaping whole pages of Schlegel into his own preface.

For Schlegel [Footnote: Whose work, by the way, cries aloud for a new and better English translation.] was not only a learned critic but a great one: and this mass of him—cast with seeming carelessness, just here, into the scales—does give the reader, as with a jerk, the sensation that Hazlitt has, of his rashness, invited that which suddenly throws him up in the air to kick the beam: that he has provoked a comparison which exhibits his own performance as clever but flimsy.

Nor is this impression removed by his admirer the late Mr. Ireland, who claims for the Characters that, 'although it professes to be dramatic criticism, it is in reality a discourse on the philosophy of life and human nature, more suggestive than many approved treatises expressly devoted to that subject'. Well, for the second half of this pronouncement—constat. 'You see, my friend,' writes Goldsmith's Citizen of the World, 'there is nothing so ridiculous that it has not at some time been said by some philosopher.' But for the first part, while a priori Mr. Ireland ought to be right—since Hazlitt, as we have seen, came to literary criticism by the road of philosophical writing—I confess to finding very little philosophy in this book.

Over and above the gusto of the writing, which is infectious enough, and the music of certain passages in which we foretaste the masterly prose of Hazlitt's later Essays, I find in the book three merits which, as I study it, more and more efface that first impression of flimsiness.

(1) To begin with, Hazlitt had hold of the right end of the stick. He really understood that Shakespeare was a dramatic craftsman, studied him as such, worshipped him for his incomparable skill in doing what he tried, all his life and all the time, to do. In these days much merit must be allowed to a Shakespearian critic who takes his author steadily as a dramatist and not as a philosopher, or a propagandist, or a lawyer's clerk, or a disappointed lover, or for his acquaintance with botany, politics, cyphers, Christian Science, any of the thousand and one things that with their rival degrees of intrinsic importance agree in being, for Shakespeare, nihil ad rem.

(2) Secondly, Hazlitt always treats Shakespeare as, in my opinion, he deserves to be treated; that is, absolutely and as 'patrone and not compare' among the Elizabethans. I harbour an ungracious doubt that he may have done so in 1816-17 for the simple and sufficient reason that he had less than a bowing acquaintance with the other Elizabethan dramatists. But he made their acquaintance in due course, and discussed them, yet never (so far as I recall) committed the error of ranking them alongside Shakespeare. With all love for the memory of Lamb, and with all respect for the memory of Swinburne, I hold that these two in their generations, both soaked in enjoyment of the Elizabethan style—an enjoyment derivative from Shakespeare—did some disservice to criticism by classing them with him in the light they borrow; whenas truly he differs from them in kind and beyond any reach of degrees. One can no more estimate Shakespeare's genius in comparison with this, that, or the other man's of the sixteenth century, than Milton's in comparison with any one's of the seventeenth. Some few men are absolute and can only be judged absolutely.

(3) For the third merit—if the Characters be considered historically—what seems flimsy in them is often a promise of what has since been substantiated; what seems light and almost juvenile in the composition of this man, aged thirty-nine, gives the scent on which nowadays the main pack of students is pursuing.

No one not a fool can read Johnson's notes on Shakespeare without respect or fail to turn to them again with an increased trust in his common-sense, as no one not a fool can read Hazlitt without an equal sense that he has the root of the matter, or of the spirit which is the matter.

ARTHUR QUILLER-COUCH 1916

TO CHARLES LAMB, ESQ.

<<span id="filepos0038473501"> a>PREFACE

It is observed by Mr. Pope, that 'If ever any author deserved the name of an ORIGINAL, it was Shakespeare. Homer himself drew not his art so immediately from the fountains of nature; it proceeded through AEgyptian strainers and channels, and came to him not without some tincture of the learning, or some cast of the models, of those before him. The poetry of Shakespeare was inspiration: indeed, he is not so much an imitator, as an instrument of nature; and it is not so just to say that he speaks from her, as that she speaks through him.

His CHARACTERS are so much nature herself, that it is a sort of injury to call them by so distant a name as copies of her. Those of other poets have a constant resemblance, which shows that they received them from one another, and were but multipliers of the same image: each picture, like a mock-rainbow, is but the reflection of a reflection. But every single character in Shakespeare, is as much an individual, as those in life itself; it is as impossible to find any two alike; and such, as from their relation or affinity in any respect appear most to be twins, will, upon comparison, be found remarkably distinct. To this life and variety of character, we must add the wonderful preservation of it; which is such throughout his plays, that had all the speeches been printed without the very names of the persons, I believe one might have applied them with certainty to every speaker.'

The object of the volume here offered to the public, is to illustrate these remarks in a more particular manner by a reference to each play. A gentleman of the name of Mason, [Footnote: Hazlitt is here mistaken. The work to which he alludes, 'Remarks on some of the Characters of Shakespeare, by the Author of Observations on Modern Gardening', was by Thomas Whately, Under-Secretary of State under Lord North. Whately died in 1772, and the Essay was published posthumously in 1785 [2nd edition, 1808; 3rd edition, with a preface by Archbishop Whately, the author's nephew, 1839]. Hazlitt confused T. Whately's Observations on Modern Gardening with George Mason's Essay on Design in Gardening, and the one error led to the other.] the author of a Treatise on Ornamental Gardening (not Mason the poet), began a work of a similar kind about forty years ago, but he only lived to finish a parallel between the characters of Macbeth and Richard III which is an exceedingly ingenious piece of analytical criticism. Richardson's Essays include but a few of Shakespeare's principal characters. The only work which seemed to supersede the necessity of an attempt like the present was Schlegel's very admirable Lectures on the Drama, which give by far the best account of the plays of Shakespeare that has hitherto appeared. The only circumstances in which it was thought not impossible to improve on the manner in which the German critic has executed this part of his design, were in avoiding an appearance of mysticism in his style, not very attractive to the English reader, and in bringing illustrations from particular passages of the plays themselves, of which Schlegel's work, from the extensiveness of his plan, did not admit. We will at the same time confess, that some little jealousy of the character of the national understanding was not without its share in producing the following undertaking, for 'we were piqued' that it should be reserved for a foreign critic to give 'reasons for the faith which we English have in Shakespeare'. Certainly, no writer among ourselves has shown either the same enthusiastic admiration of his genius, or the same philosophical acuteness in pointing out his characteristic excellences. As we have pretty well exhausted all we had to say upon this subject in the body of the work, we shall here transcribe Schlegel's general account of Shakespeare, which is in the following words:

'Never, perhaps, was there so comprehensive a talent for the delineation of character as Shakespeare's. It not only grasps the diversities of rank, sex, and age, down to the dawnings of infancy; not only do the king and the beggar, the hero and the pickpocket, the sage and the idiot, speak and act with equal truth; not only does he transport himself to distant ages and foreign nations, and pourtray in the most accurate manner, with only a few apparent violations of costume, the spirit of the ancient Romans, of the French in their wars with the English, of the English themselves during a great part of their history, of the Southern Europeans (in the serious part of many comedies) the cultivated society of that time, and the former rude and barbarous state of the North; his human characters have not only such depth and precision that they cannot be arranged under classes, and are inexhaustible, even in conception:—no—this Prometheus not merely forms men, he opens the gates of the magical world of spirits; calls up the midnight ghost; exhibits before us his witches amidst their unhallowed mysteries; peoples the air with sportive fairies and sylphs:—and these beings, existing only in imagination, possess such truth and consistency, that even when deformed monsters like Caliban, he extorts the conviction, that if there should be such beings, they would so conduct themselves. In a word, as he carries with him the most fruitful and daring fancy into the kingdom of nature,—on the other hand, he carries nature into the regions of fancy, lying beyond the confines of reality. We are lost in astonishment at seeing the extraordinary, the wonderful, and the unheard of, in such intimate nearness.

'If Shakespeare deserves our admiration for his characters, he is equally deserving of it for his exhibition of passion, taking this word in its widest signification, as including every mental condition, every tone from indifference or familiar mirth to the wildest rage and despair. He gives us the history of minds; he lays open to us, in a single word, a whole series of preceding conditions. His passions do not at first stand displayed to us in all their height, as is the case with so many tragic poets, who, in the language of Lessing, are thorough masters of the legal style of love. He paints, in a most inimitable manner, the gradual progress from the first origin. "He gives", as Lessing says, "a living picture of all the most minute and secret artifices by which a feeling steals into our souls; of all the imperceptible advantages which it there gains; of all the stratagems by which every other passion is made subservient to it, till it becomes the sole tyrant of our desires and our aversions." Of all poets, perhaps, he alone has pourtrayed the mental diseases,—melancholy, delirium, lunacy,—with such inexpressible, and, in every respect, definite truth, that the physician may enrich his observations from them in the same manner as from real cases.

'And yet Johnson has objected to Shakespeare, that his pathos is not always natural and free from affectation. There are, it is true, passages, though, comparatively speaking, very few, where his poetry exceeds the bounds of true dialogue, where a too soaring imagination, a too luxuriant wit, rendered the complete dramatic forgetfulness of himself impossible. With this exception, the censure originates only in a fanciless way of thinking, to which everything appears unnatural that does not suit its own tame insipidity. Hence, an idea has been formed of simple and natural pathos, which consists in exclamations destitute of imagery, and nowise elevated above every-day life. But energetical passions electrify the whole of the mental powers, and will, consequently, in highly favoured natures, express themselves in an ingenious and figurative manner. It has been often remarked, that indignation gives wit; and, as despair occasionally breaks out into laughter, it may sometimes also give vent to itself in antithetical comparisons.

'Besides, the rights of the poetical form have not been duly weighed. Shakespeare, who was always sure of his object, to move in a sufficiently powerful manner when he wished to do so, has occasionally, by indulging in a freer play, purposely moderated the impressions when too painful, and immediately introduced a musical alleviation of our sympathy. He had not those rude ideas of his art which many moderns seem to have, as if the poet, like the clown in the proverb, must strike twice on the same place. An ancient rhetorician delivered a caution against dwelling too long on the excitation of pity; for nothing, he said, dries so soon as tears; and Shakespeare acted conformably to this ingenious maxim, without knowing it.

'The objection, that Shakespeare wounds our feelings by the open display of the most disgusting moral odiousness, harrows up the mind unmercifully, and tortures even our senses by the exhibition of the most insupportable and hateful spectacles, is one of much greater importance. He has never, in fact, varnished over wild and blood-thirsty passions with a pleasing exterior,—never clothed crime and want of principle with a false show of greatness of soul; and in that respect he is every way deserving of praise. Twice he has pourtrayed downright villains; and the masterly way in which he has contrived to elude impressions of too painful a nature, may be seen in Iago and Richard the Third. The constant reference to a petty and puny race must cripple the boldness of the poet. Fortunately for his art, Shakespeare lived in an age extremely susceptible of noble and tender impressions, but which had still enough of the firmness inherited from a vigorous olden time not to shrink back with dismay from every strong and violent picture. We have lived to see tragedies of which the catastrophe consists in the swoon of an enamoured princess. If Shakespeare falls occasionally into the opposite extreme, it is a noble error, originating in the fulness of a gigantic strength: and yet this tragical Titan, who storms the heavens, and threatens to tear the world from off its hinges; who, more terrible than AEschylus, makes our hair stand on end, and congeals our blood with horror, possessed, at the same time, the insinuating loveliness of the sweetest poetry. He plays with love like a child; and his songs are breathed out like melting sighs. He unites in his genius the utmost elevation and the utmost depth; and the most foreign, and even apparently irreconcilable properties subsist in him peaceably together. The world of spirits and nature have laid all their treasures at his feet. In strength a demi-god, in profundity of view a prophet, in all-seeing wisdom a protecting spirit of a higher order, he lowers himself to mortals, as if unconscious of his superiority: and is as open and unassuming as a child.

'Shakespeare's comic talent is equally wonderful with that which he has shown in the pathetic and tragic: it stands on an equal elevation, and possesses equal extent and profundity. All that I before wished was, not to admit that the former preponderated. He is highly inventive in comic situations and motives. It will be hardly possible to show whence he has taken any of them; whereas, in the serious part of his drama, he has generally laid hold of something already known. His comic characters are equally true, various, and profound, with his serious. So little is he disposed to caricature, that we may rather say many of his traits are almost too nice and delicate for the stage, that they can only be properly seized by a great actor, and fully understood by a very acute audience. Not only has he delineated many kinds of folly; he has also contrived to exhibit mere stupidity in a most diverting and entertaining manner.' Vol. ii, p. 145.

We have the rather availed ourselves of this testimony of a foreign critic in behalf of Shakespeare, because our own countryman, Dr. Johnson, has not been so favourable to him. It may be said of Shakespeare, that 'those who are not for him are against him': for indifference is here the height of injustice. We may sometimes, in order 'to do a great right, do a little wrong'. An over-strained enthusiasm is more pardonable with respect to Shakespeare than the want of it; for our admiration cannot easily surpass his genius. We have a high respect for Dr. Johnson's character and understanding, mixed with something like personal attachment: but he was neither a poet nor a judge of poetry. He might in one sense be a judge of poetry as it falls within the limits and rules of prose, but not as it is poetry. Least of all was he qualified to be a judge of Shakespeare, who 'alone is high fantastical'. Let those who have a prejudice against Johnson read Boswell's Life of him: as those whom he has prejudiced against Shakespeare should read his Irene. We do not say that a man to be a critic must necessarily be a poet: but to be a good critic, he ought not to be a bad poet. Such poetry as a man deliberately writes, such, and such only will he like. Dr. Johnson's Preface to his edition of Shakespeare looks like a laborious attempt to bury the characteristic merits of his author under a load of cumbrous phraseology, and to weigh his excellences and defects in equal scales, stuffed full of 'swelling figures and sonorous epithets'. Nor could it well be otherwise; Dr. Johnson's general powers of reasoning overlaid his critical susceptibility. All his ideas were cast in a given mould, in a set form: they were made out by rule and system, by climax, inference, and antithesis:—Shakespeare's were the reverse. Johnson's understanding dealt only in round numbers: the fractions were lost upon him. He reduced everything to the common standard of conventional propriety; and the most exquisite refinement or sublimity produced an effect on his mind, only as they could be translated into the language of measured prose. To him an excess of beauty was a fault; for it appeared to him like an excrescence; and his imagination was dazzled by the blaze of light. His writings neither shone with the beams of native genius, nor reflected them. The shifting shapes of fancy, the rainbow hues of things, made no impression on him: he seized only on the permanent and tangible. He had no idea of natural objects but 'such as he could measure with a two-fool rule, or tell upon ten fingers': he judged of human nature in the same way, by mood and figure: he saw only the definite, the positive, and the practical, the average forms of things, not their striking differences—their classes, not their degrees. He was a man of strong common sense and practical wisdom, rather than of genius or feeling. He retained the regular, habitual impressions of actual objects, but he could not follow the rapid flights of fancy, or the strong movements of passion. That is, he was to the poet what the painter of still life is to the painter of history. Common sense sympathizes with the impressions of things on ordinary minds in ordinary circumstances: genius catches the glancing combinations presented to the eye of fancy, under the influence of passion. It is the province of the didactic reasoner to take cognizance of those results of human nature which are constantly repeated and always the same, which follow one another in regular succession, which are acted upon by large classes of men, and embodied in received customs, laws, language, and institutions; and it was in arranging, comparing, and arguing on these kind of general results, that Johnson's excellence lay. But he could not quit his hold of the commonplace and mechanical, and apply the general rule to the particular exception, or show how the nature of man was modified by the workings of passion, or the infinite fluctuations of thought and accident. Hence he could judge neither of the heights nor depths of poetry. Nor is this all; for being conscious of great powers in himself, and those powers of an adverse tendency to those of his author, he would be for setting up a foreign jurisdiction over poetry, and making criticism a kind of Procrustes' bed of genius, where he might cut down imagination to matter-of-fact, regulate the passions according to reason, and translate the whole into logical diagrams and rhetorical declamation. Thus he says of Shakespeare's characters, in contradiction to what Pope had observed, and to what every one else feels, that each character is a species, instead of being an individual. He in fact found the general species or DIDACTIC form in Shakespeare's characters, which was all he sought or cared for; he did not find the individual traits, or the DRAMATIC distinctions which Shakespeare has engrafted on this general nature, because he felt no interest in them. Shakespeare's bold and happy flights of imagination were equally thrown away upon our author. He was not only without any particular fineness of organic sensibility, alive to all the 'mighty world of ear and eye', which is necessary to the painter or musician, but without that intenseness of passion, which, seeking to exaggerate whatever excites the feelings of pleasure or power in the mind, and moulding the impressions of natural objects according to the impulses of imagination, produces a genius and a taste for poetry. According to Dr. Johnson, a mountain is sublime, or a rose is beautiful; for that their name and definition imply. But he would no more be able to give the description of Dover cliff in Lear, or the description of flowers in The Winter's Tale, than to describe the objects of a sixth sense; nor do we think he would have any very profound feeling of the beauty of the passages here referred to. A stately commonplace, such as Congreve's description of a ruin in The Mourning Bride, would have answered Johnson's purpose just as well, or better than the first; and an indiscriminate profusion of scents and hues would have interfered less with the ordinary routine of his imagination than Perdita's lines, which seem enamoured of their own sweetness—

> Daffodils
> That come before the swallow dares, and take
> The winds of March with beauty; violets dim,
> But sweeter than the lids of Juno's eyes,
> Or Cytherea's breath.—

No one who does not feel the passion which these objects inspire can go along with the imagination which seeks to express that passion and the uneasy sense of delight accompanying it by something still more beautiful, and no one can feel this passionate love of nature without quick natural sensibility. To a mere literal and formal apprehension, the inimitably characteristic epithet, 'violets DIM', must seem to imply a defect, rather than a beauty; and to any one, not feeling the full force of that epithet, which suggests an image like 'the sleepy eye of love', the allusion to 'the lids of Juno's eyes' must appear extravagant and unmeaning. Shakespeare's fancy lent words and images to the most refined sensibility to nature, struggling for expression: his descriptions are identical with the things themselves, seen through the fine medium of passion: strip them of that connexion, and try them by ordinary conceptions and ordinary rules, and they are as grotesque and barbarous as you please!—By thus lowering Shakespeare's genius to the standard of commonplace invention, it was easy to show that his faults were as great as his beauties; for the excellence, which consists merely in a conformity to rules, is counterbalanced by the technical violation of them. Another circumstance which led to Dr. Johnson's indiscriminate praise or censure of Shakespeare, is the very structure of his style. Johnson wrote a kind of rhyming prose, in which he was as much compelled to finish the different clauses of his sentences, and to balance one period against another, as the writer of heroic verse is to keep to lines of ten syllables with similar terminations. He no sooner acknowledges the merits of his author in one line than the periodical revolution in his style carries the weight of his opinion completely over to the side of objection, thus keeping up a perpetual alternation of perfections and absurdities.

We do not otherwise know how to account for such assertions as the following: 'In his tragic scenes, there is always something wanting, but his comedy often surpasses expectation or desire. His comedy pleases by the thoughts and the language, and his tragedy, for the greater part, by incident and action. His tragedy seems to be skill, his comedy to be instinct.' Yet after saying that 'his tragedy was skill', he affirms in the next page, 'His declamations or set speeches are commonly cold and weak, for his power was the power of nature: when he endeavoured, like other tragic writers, to catch opportunities of amplification, and instead of inquiring what the occasion demanded, to show how much his stores of knowledge could supply, he seldom escapes without the pity or resentment of his reader.' Poor Shakespeare! Between the charges here brought against him, of want of nature in the first instance, and of want of skill in the second, he could hardly escape being condemned. And again, 'But the admirers of this great poet have most reason to complain when he approaches nearest to his highest excellence, and seems fully resolved to sink them in dejection, or mollify them with tender emotions by the fall of greatness, the danger of innocence, or the crosses of love. What he does best, he soon ceases to do. He no sooner begins to move than he counteracts himself; and terror and pity, as they are rising in the mind, are checked and blasted by sudden frigidity.' In all this, our critic seems more bent on maintaining the equilibrium of his style than the consistency or truth of his opinions.—If Dr. Johnson's opinion was right, the following observations on Shakespeare's plays must be greatly exaggerated, if not ridiculous. If he was wrong, what has been said may perhaps account for his being so, without detracting from his ability and judgement in other things.

It is proper to add, that the account of the MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM has appeared in another work.

April 15, 1817

<<span id="filepos0038497404"> a>CYMBELINE

CYMBELINE is one of the most delightful of Shakespeare's historical plays. It may be considered as a dramatic romance, in which the most striking parts of the story are thrown into the form of a dialogue, and the intermediate circumstances are explained by the different speakers, as occasion renders it necessary. The action is less concentrated in consequence; but the interest becomes more aerial and refined from the principle of perspective introduced into the subject by the imaginary changes of scene as well as by the length of time it occupies. The reading of this play is like going [on?] a journey with some uncertain object at the end of it, and in which the suspense is kept up and heightened by the long intervals between each action. Though the events are scattered over such an extent of surface, and relate to such a variety of characters, yet the links which bind the different interests of the story together are never entirely broken. The most straggling and seemingly casual incidents are contrived in such a manner as to lead at last to the most complete development of the catastrophe. The ease and conscious unconcern with which this is effected only makes the skill more wonderful. The business of the plot evidently thickens in the last act; the story moves forward with increasing rapidity at every step; its various ramifications are drawn from the most distant points to the same centre; the principal characters are brought together, and placed in very critical situations; and the fate of almost every person in the drama is made to depend on the solution of a single circumstance—the answer of Iachimo to the question of Imogen respecting the obtaining of the ring from Posthumus. Dr. Johnson is of opinion that Shakespeare was generally inattentive to the winding up of his plots. We think the contrary is true; and we might cite in proof of this remark not only the present play, but the conclusion of LEAR, of ROMEO AND JULIET, of MACBETH, of OTHELLO, even of HAMLET, and of other plays of less moment, in which the last act is crowded with decisive events brought about by natural and striking means.

The pathos in CYMBELINE is not violent or tragical, but of the most pleasing and amiable kind. A certain tender gloom o'erspreads the whole. Posthumus is the ostensible hero of the piece, but its greatest charm is the character of Imogen. Posthumus is only interesting from the interest she takes in him, and she is only interesting herself from her tenderness and constancy to her husband. It is the peculiar characteristic of Shakespeare's heroines, that they seem to exist only in their attachment to others. They are pure abstractions of the affections. We think as little of their persons as they do themselves, because we are let into the secrets of their hearts, which are more important. We are too much interested in their affairs to stop to look at their faces, except by stealth and at intervals. No one ever hit the true perfection of the female character, the sense of weakness leaning on the strength of its affections for support, so well as Shakespeare—no one ever so well painted natural tenderness free from affectation and disguise—no one else ever so well showed how delicacy and timidity, when driven to extremity, grow romantic and extravagant; for the romance of his heroines (in which they abound) is only an excess of the habitual prejudices of their sex, scrupulous of being false to their vows, truant to their affections, and taught by the force of feeling when to forgo the forms of propriety for the essence of it. His women were in this respect exquisite logicians; for there is nothing so logical as passion. They knew their own minds exactly; and only followed up a favourite idea, which they had sworn to with their tongues, and which was engraven on their hearts, into its untoward consequences. They were the prettiest little set of martyrs and confessors on record. Cibber, in speaking of the early English stage, accounts for the want of prominence and theatrical display in

Shakespeare's female characters from the circumstance, that women in those days were not allowed to play the parts of women, which made it necessary to keep them a good deal in the background. Does not this state of manners itself, which prevented their exhibiting themselves in public, and confined them to the relations and charities of domestic life, afford a truer explanation of the matter? His women are certainly very unlike stage-heroines; the reverse of tragedy-queens.

We have almost as great an affection for Imogen as she had for Posthumus; and she deserves it better. Of all Shakespeare's women she is perhaps the most tender and the most artless. Her incredulity in the opening scene with Iachimo, as to her husband's infidelity, is much the same as Desdemona's backwardness to believe Othello's jealousy. Her answer to the most distressing part of the picture is only, 'My lord, I fear, has forgot Britain.' Her readiness to pardon Iachimo's false imputations and his designs against herself, is a good lesson to prudes; and may show that where there is a real attachment to virtue, it has no need to bolster itself up with an outrageous or affected antipathy to vice. The scene in which Pisanio gives Imogen his master's letter, accusing her of incontinency on the treacherous suggestions of Iachimo, is as touching as it is possible for any thing to be:

Pisanio. What cheer, Madam?

Imogen. False to his bed! What is it to be false?
To lie in watch there, and to think on him?
To weep 'twixt clock and clock? If sleep charge nature,
To break it with a fearful dream of him,
And cry myself awake?
That's false to's bed, is it?

Pisanio. Alas, good lady!

Imogen. I false? thy conscience witness, Iachimo,
Thou didst accuse him of incontinency,
Thou then look'dst like a villain: now methinks,
Thy favour's good enough. Some jay of Italy,
Whose mother was her painting, hath betrayed him:

Poor I am stale, a garment out of fashion,
And for I am richer than to hang by th' walls,
I must be ript; to pieces with me. Oh,
Men's vows are women's traitors. All good seeming,
By thy revolt, oh husband, shall be thought
Put on for villany: not born where't grows,
But worn a bait for ladies.

Pisanio. Good madam, hear me—

Imogen. Talk thy tongue weary, speak:
I have heard I am a strumpet, and mine ear,
Therein false struck, can take no greater wound,
Nor tent to bottom that.—

When Pisanio, who had been charged to kill his mistress, puts her in a way to live, she says:

Why, good fellow,
What shall I do the while? Where bide? How live?
Or in my life what comfort, when I am
Dead to my husband?

Yet when he advises her to disguise herself in boy's clothes, and suggests 'a course pretty and full in view', by which she may 'happily be near the residence of Posthumus', she exclaims:

Oh, for such means,
Though peril to my modesty, not death on't,
I would adventure.

And when Pisanio, enlarging on the consequences, tells her she must change

—Fear and niceness,
The handmaids of all women, or more truly,
Woman its pretty self, into a waggish courage,
Ready in gibes, quick answer'd, saucy, and
As quarrellous as the weasel—

she interrupts him hastily;

Nay, be brief;
I see into thy end, and am almost
A man already.

In her journey thus disguised to Milford Haven, she loses her guide and her way; and unbosoming her complaints, says beautifully:

—My dear Lord,
Thou art one of the false ones; now I think on thee,
My hunger's gone; but even before, I was
At point to sink for food.

She afterwards finds, as she thinks, the dead body of Posthumus, and engages herself as a foot-boy to serve a Roman officer, when she has done all due obsequies to him whom she calls her former master:

—And when
With wild wood-leaves and weeds I ha' strew'd his grave,
And on it said a century of pray'rs,
Such as I can, twice o'er, I'll weep and sigh,
And leaving so his service, follow you,
So please you entertain me.

Now this is the very religion of love. She all along relies little on her personal charms, which she fears may have been eclipsed by some painted jay of Italy; she relies on her merit, and her merit is in the depth of her love, her truth and constancy. Our admiration of her beauty is excited with as little consciousness as possible on her part. There are two delicious descriptions given of her, one when she is asleep, and one when she is supposed dead. Arviragus thus addresses her:

—With fairest flowers,
While summer lasts, and I live here, Fidele,
I'll sweeten thy sad grave; thou shalt not lack
The flow'r that's like thy face, pale primrose, nor
The azur'd hare-bell, like thy veins, no, nor
The leaf of eglantine, which not to slander,
Out-sweeten'd not thy breath.

The yellow Iachimo gives another thus, when he steals into her bed-chamber:

—Cytherea,
How bravely thou becom'st thy bed! Fresh lily,
And whiter than the sheets I That I might touch—
But kiss, one kiss—Tis her breathing that
Perfumes the chamber thus: the flame o' th' taper
Bows toward her, and would under-peep her lids,
To see th' enclosed lights now canopied
Under the windows, white and azure, laced
With blue of Heav'ns own tinct—on her left breast
A mole cinque-spotted, like the crimson drops
I' the bottom of a cowslip.

There is a moral sense in the proud beauty of this last image, a rich surfeit of the fancy,—as that well—known passage beginning, 'Me of my lawful pleasure she restrained, and prayed me oft forbearance,' sets a keener edge upon it by the inimitable picture of modesty and self-denial.

The character of Cloten, the conceited, booby lord, and rejected lover of Imogen, though not very agreeable in itself, and at present obsolete, is drawn with great humour and knowledge of character. The description which Imogen gives of his unwelcome addresses to her—'Whose love-suit hath been to me as fearful as a siege'—is enough to cure the most ridiculous lover of his folly. It is remarkable that though Cloten makes so poor a figure in love, he is described as assuming an air of consequence as the Queen's son in a council of state, and with all the absurdity of his person and manners, is not without shrewdness in his observations. So true is it that folly is as often owing to a want of proper sentiments as to a want of understanding! The exclamation of the ancient critic, 'O Menander and Nature, which of you copied from the other?' would not be misapplied to Shakespeare.

The other characters in this play are represented with great truth and accuracy, and as it happens in most of the author's works, there is not only the utmost keeping in each separate character; but in the casting of the different parts, and their relation to one another, there is an affinity and harmony, like what we may observe in the gradations of colour in a picture. The striking and powerful contrasts in which Shakespeare abounds could not escape observation; but the use he makes of the principle of analogy to reconcile the greatest diversities of character and to maintain a continuity of feeling throughout, has not been sufficiently attended to. In Cymbeline, for instance, the principal interest arises out of the unalterable fidelity of Imogen to her husband under the most trying circumstances. Now the other parts of the picture are filled up with subordinate examples of the same feeling, variously modified by different situations, and applied to the purposes of virtue or vice. The plot is aided by the amorous importunities of Cloten, by the tragical determination of Iachimo to conceal the defeat of his project by a daring imposture: the faithful attachment of Pisanio to his mistress is an affecting accompaniment to the whole; the obstinate adherence to his purpose in Bellarius, who keeps the fate of the young princes so long a secret in resentment for the ungrateful return to his former services, the incorrigible wickedness of the Queen, and even the blind uxorious confidence of Cymbeline, are all so many lines of the same story, tending to the same point. The effect of this coincidence is rather felt than observed; and as the impression exists unconsciously in the mind of the reader, so it probably arose in the same manner in the mind of the author, not from design, but from the force of natural association, a particular train of feeling suggesting different inflections of the same predominant principle, melting into, and strengthening one another, like chords in music.

The characters of Bellarius, Guiderius, and Arviragus, and the romantic scenes in which they appear, are a fine relief to the intrigues and artificial refinements of the court from which they are banished. Nothing can surpass the wildness and simplicity of the descriptions of the mountain life they lead. They follow the business of huntsmen, not of shepherds; and this is in keeping with the spirit of adventure and uncertainty in the rest of the story, and with the scenes in which they are afterwards called on to act. How admirably the youthful fire and impatience to emerge from their obscurity in the young princes is opposed to the cooler calculations and prudent resignation of their more experienced counsellor! How well the disadvantages of knowledge and of ignorance, of solitude and society, are placed against each other!

Guiderius. Out of your proof you speak: we poor unfledg'd
Have never wing'd from view o' th' nest; nor know not
What air's from home. Haply this life is best,
If quiet life is best; sweeter to you
That have a sharper known; well corresponding

With your stiff age: but unto us it is
A cell of ignorance; travelling a-bed,
A prison for a debtor, that not dares
To stride a limit.

Arviragus. What should we speak of
When we are old as you? When we shall hear
The rain and wind beat dark December! How,
In this our pinching cave, shall we discourse
The freezing hours away? We have seen nothing.
We are beastly; subtle as the fox for prey,
Like warlike as the wolf for what we eat:
Our valour is to chase what flies; our cage
We make a quire, as doth the prison'd bird,
And sing our bondage freely.

The answer of Bellarius to this expostulation is hardly satisfactory; for nothing can be an answer to hope, or the passion of the mind for unknown good, but experience.—The forest of Arden in As You Like It can alone compare with the mountain scenes in Cymbeline: yet how different the contemplative quiet of the one from the enterprising boldness and precarious mode of subsistence in the other! Shakespeare not only lets us into the minds of his characters, but gives a tone and colour to the scenes he describes from the feelings of their imaginary inhabitants. He at the same time preserves the utmost propriety of action and passion, and gives all their local accompaniments. If he was equal to the greatest things, he was not above an attention to the smallest. Thus the gallant sportsmen in Cymbeline have to encounter the abrupt declivities of hill and valley: Touchstone and Audrey jog along a level path. The deer in Cymbeline are only regarded as objects of prey, 'The game's a-foot', &c.—with Jaques they are fine subjects to moralize upon at leisure, 'under the shade of melancholy boughs'.

We cannot take leave of this play, which is a favourite with us, without noticing some occasional touches of natural piety and morality. We may allude here to the opening of the scene in which Bellarius instructs the young princes to pay their orisons to heaven:

—See, Boys! this gate

Instructs you how t' adore the Heav'ns; and bows you
To morning's holy office.

Guiderius. Hail, Heav'n!

Arviragus. Hail, Heav'n!

Bellarius. Now for our mountain-sport, up to yon hill.

What a grace and unaffected spirit of piety breathes in this passage! In like manner, one of the brothers says to the other, when about to perform the funeral rites to Fidele:

Nay, Cadwall, we must lay his head to the east;
My Father hath a reason for't.

Shakespeare's morality is introduced in the same simple, unobtrusive manner. Imogen will not let her companions stay away from the chase to attend her when sick, and gives her reason for it:

Stick to your journal course; THE BREACH OF CUSTOM
IS BREACH OF ALL!

When the Queen attempts to disguise her motives for procuring the poison from Cornelius, by saying she means to try its effects on 'creatures not worth the hanging', his answer conveys at once a tacit reproof of her hypocrisy, and a useful lesson of humanity:

—Your Highness
Shall from this practice but make hard your heart.

<<span id="filepos0038521030"> a>MACBETH

The poet's eye in a fine frenzy rolling
Doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven;
And as imagination bodies forth
The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen
Turns them to shape, and gives to airy nothing
A local habitation and a name.

MACBETH and Lear, Othello and Hamlet, are usually reckoned Shakespeare's four principal tragedies. Lear stands first for the profound intensity of the passion; Macbeth for the wildness of the imagination and the rapidity of the action; Othello for the progressive interest and powerful alternations of feeling; Hamlet for the refined development of thought and sentiment. If the force of genius shown in each of these works is astonishing, their variety is not less so. They are like different creations of the same mind, not one of which has the slightest reference to the rest. This distinctness and originality is indeed the necessary consequence of truth and nature. Shakespeare's genius alone appeared to possess the resources of nature. He is 'your only tragedy-maker'. His plays have the force of things upon the mind. What he represents is brought home to the bosom as a part of our experience, implanted in the memory as if we had known the places, persons, and things of which he treats. Macbeth is like a record of a preternatural and tragical event. It has the rugged severity of an old chronicle with all that the imagination of the poet can engraft upon traditional belief. The castle of Macbeth, round which 'the air smells wooingly', and where 'the temple-haunting martlet builds', has a real subsistence in the mind; the Weird Sisters meet us in person on 'the blasted heath'; the 'air-drawn dagger' moves slowly before our eyes; the 'gracious Duncan', the 'blood-boltered Banquo' stand before us; all that passed through the mind of Macbeth passes, without the loss of a tittle, through ours. All that could actually take place, and all that is only possible to be conceived, what was said and what was done, the workings of passion, the spells of magic, are brought before us with the same absolute truth and vividness.—Shakespeare excelled in the openings of his plays: that of Macbeth is the most striking of any. The wildness of the scenery, the sudden shifting of the situations and characters, the bustle, the expectations excited, are equally extraordinary. From the first entrance of the Witches and the description of them when they meet Macbeth:

—What are these
So wither'd and so wild in their attire,
That look not like the inhabitants of th' earth
And yet are on't?

the mind is prepared for all that follows.

This tragedy is alike distinguished for the lofty imagination it displays, and for the tumultuous vehemence of the action; and the one is made the moving principle of the other. The overwhelming pressure of preternatural agency urges on the tide of human passion with redoubled force. Macbeth himself appears driven along by the violence of his fate like a vessel drifting before a storm: he reels to and fro like a drunken man; he staggers under the weight of his own purposes and the suggestions of others; he stands at bay with his situation; and from the superstitious awe and breathless suspense into which the communications of the Weird Sisters throw him, is hurried on with daring impatience to verify their predictions, and with impious and bloody hand to tear aside the veil which hides the uncertainty of the future. He is not equal to the struggle with fate and conscience. He now 'bends up each corporal instrument to the terrible feat'; at other times his heart misgives him, and he is cowed and abashed by his success. 'The deed, no less than the attempt, confounds him.' His mind is assailed by the stings of remorse, and full of 'preternatural solicitings'. His speeches and soliloquies are dark riddles on human life, baffling solution, and entangling him in their labyrinths. In thought he is absent and perplexed, sudden and desperate in act, from a distrust of his own resolution. His energy springs from the anxiety and agitation of his mind. His blindly rushing forward on the objects of his ambition and revenge, or his recoiling from them, equally betrays the harassed state of his feelings.—This part of his character is admirably set off by being brought in connexion with that of Lady Macbeth, whose obdurate strength of will and masculine firmness give her the ascendancy over her husband's faltering virtue. She at once seizes on the opportunity that offers for the accomplishment of all their wished-for greatness, and never flinches from her object till all is over. The magnitude of her resolution almost covers the magnitude of her guilt. She is a great bad woman, whom we hate, but whom we fear more than we hate. She does not excite our loathing and abhorrence like Regan and Goneril. She is only wicked to gain a great end; and is perhaps more distinguished by her commanding presence of mind and inexorable self-will, which do not suffer her to be diverted from a bad purpose, when once formed, by weak and womanly regrets, than by the hardness of her heart or want of natural affections. The impression which her lofty determination of character makes on the mind of Macbeth is well described where he exclaims:

> —Bring forth men children only;
> For thy undaunted mettle should compose
> Nothing but males!

Nor do the pains she is at to 'screw his courage to the sticking-place', the reproach to him, not to be 'lost so poorly in himself', the assurance that 'a little water clears them of this deed', show anything but her greater consistency in depravity. Her strong-nerved ambition furnishes ribs of steel to 'the sides of his intent'; and she is herself wound up to the execution of her baneful project with the same unshrinking fortitude in crime, that in other circumstances she would probably have shown patience in suffering. The deliberate sacrifice of all other considerations to the gaining 'for their future days and nights sole sovereign sway and masterdom', by the murder of Duncan, is gorgeously expressed in her invocation on hearing of 'his fatal entrance under her battlements':

> —Come all you spirits
> That tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here:
> And fill me, from the crown to th' toe, top-full
> Of direst cruelty; make thick my blood,
> Stop up the access and passage of remorse,
> That no compunctious visitings of nature
> Shake my fell purpose, nor keep peace between
> The effect and it. Come to my woman's breasts,
> And take my milk for gall, you murthering ministers,
> Wherever in your sightless substances
> You wait on nature's mischief. Come, thick night!
> And pall thee in the dunnest smoke of hell,
> That my keen knife see not the wound it makes,
> Nor heav'n peep through the blanket of the dark,
> To cry, hold, hold!—

When she first hears that 'Duncan comes there to sleep' she is so overcome by the news, which is beyond her utmost expectations, that she answers the messenger, 'Thou'rt mad to say it': and on receiving her husband's account of the predictions of the Witches, conscious of his instability of purpose, and that her presence is necessary to goad him on to the consummation of his promised greatness, she exclaims:

—Hie thee hither,
That I may pour my spirits in thine ear,
And chastise with me valour of my tongue
All that impedes thee from the golden round,
Which fate and metaphysical aid doth seem
To have thee crowned withal.

This swelling exultation and keen spirit of triumph, this uncontrollable eagerness of anticipation, which seems to dilate her form and take possession of all her faculties, this solid, substantial flesh-and-blood display of passion, exhibit a striking contrast to the cold, abstracted, gratuitous, servile malignity of the Witches, who are equally instrumental in urging Macbeth to his fate for the mere love of mischief, and from a disinterested delight in deformity and cruelty. They are hags of mischief, obscene panders to iniquity, malicious from their impotence of enjoyment, enamoured of destruction, because they are themselves unreal, abortive, half-existences, and who become sublime from their exemption from all human sympathies and contempt for all human affairs, as Lady Macbeth does by the force of passion! Her fault seems to have been an excess of that strong principle of self-interest and family aggrandizement, not amenable to the common feelings of compassion and justice, which is so marked a feature in barbarous nations and times. A passing reflection of this kind, on the resemblance of the sleeping king to her father, alone prevents her from slaying Duncan with her own hand.

In speaking of the character of Lady Macbeth, we ought not to pass over Mrs. Siddons's manner of acting that part. We can conceive of nothing grander. It was something above nature. It seemed almost as if a being of a superior order had dropped from a higher sphere to awe the world with the majesty of her appearance. Power was seated on her brow, passion emanated from her breast as from a shrine; she was tragedy personified. In coming on in the sleeping-scene, her eyes were open, but their sense was shut. She was like a person bewildered and unconscious of what she did. Her lips moved involuntarily—all her gestures were involuntary and mechanical. She glided on and off the stage like an apparition. To have seen her in that character was an event in every one's life, not to be forgotten.

The dramatic beauty of the character of Duncan, which excites the respect and pity even of his murderers, has been often pointed out. It forms a picture of itself. An instance of the author's power of giving a striking effect to a common reflection, by the manner of introducing it, occurs in a speech of Duncan, complaining of his having been deceived in his opinion of the Thane of Cawdor, at the very moment that he is expressing the most unbounded confidence in the loyalty and services of Macbeth.

There is no art
To find the mind's construction in the face:
He was a gentleman, on whom I built
An absolute trust.
O worthiest cousin, [addressing himself to Macbeth]
The sin of my ingratitude e'en now
Was great upon me, &c.

Another passage to show that Shakespeare lost sight of nothing that could in anyway give relief or heightening to his subject, is the conversation which takes place between Banquo and Fleance immediately before the murder-scene of Duncan.

Banquo. How goes the night, boy?

Fleance. The moon is down: I have not heard the clock.

Banquo. And she goes down at twelve.

Fleance. I take't, tis later, Sir.

Banquo. Hold, take my sword. There's husbandry in heav'n,
Their candles are all out.—
A heavy summons lies like lead upon me,
And yet I would not sleep: Merciful Powers,

Restrain in me the cursed thoughts that nature
Gives way to in repose.

In like manner, a fine idea is given of the gloomy coming on of evening, just as Banquo is going to be assassinated.

Light thickens and the crow
Makes wing to the rooky wood.
. . . . .
Now spurs the lated traveller apace
To gain the timely inn.

Macbeth (generally speaking) is done upon a stronger and more systematic principle of contrast than any other of Shakespeare's plays. It moves upon the verge of an abyss, and is a constant struggle between life and death. The action is desperate and the reaction is dreadful. It is a huddling together of fierce extremes, a war of opposite natures which of them shall destroy the other. There is nothing but what has a violent end or violent beginnings. The lights and shades are laid on with a determined hand; the transitions from triumph to despair, from the height of terror to the repose of death, are sudden and startling; every passion brings in its fellow-contrary, and the thoughts pitch and jostle against each other as in the dark. The whole play is an unruly chaos of strange and forbidden things, where the ground rocks under our feet. Shakespeare's genius here took its full swing, and trod upon the furthest bounds of nature and passion. This circumstance will account for the abruptness and violent antitheses of the style, the throes and labour which run through the expression, and from defects will turn them into beauties. 'So fair and foul a day I have not seen,' &c. 'Such welcome and unwelcome news together.' 'Men's lives are like the flowers in their caps, dying or ere they sicken.' 'Look like the innocent flower, but be the serpent under it.' The scene before the castle-gate follows the appearance of the Witches on the heath, and is followed by a midnight murder. Duncan is cut off betimes by treason leagued with witchcraft, and Macduff is ripped untimely from his mother's womb to avenge his death. Macbeth, after the death of Banquo, wishes for his presence in extravagant terms, 'To him and all we thirst,' and when his ghost appears, cries out, 'Avaunt and quit my sight,' and being gone, he is 'himself again'. Macbeth resolves to get rid of Macduff, that 'he may sleep in spite of thunder'; and cheers his wife on the doubtful intelligence of Banquo's taking-off with the encouragement—'Then be thou jocund: ere the bat has flown his cloistered flight; ere to black Hecate's summons the shard-born beetle has rung night's yawning peal, there shall be done—a deed of dreadful note.' In Lady Macbeth's speech, 'Had he not resembled my father as he slept, I had done't,' there is murder and filial piety together, and in urging him to fulfil his vengeance against the defenceless king, her thoughts spare the blood neither of infants nor old age. The description of the Witches is full of the same contradictory principle; they 'rejoice when good kings bleed'; they are neither of the earth nor the air, but both; 'they should be women, but their beards forbid it'; they take all the pains possible to lead Macbeth on to the height of his ambition, only to betray him in deeper consequence, and after showing him all the pomp of their art, discover their malignant delight in his disappointed hopes, by that bitter taunt, 'Why stands Macbeth thus amazedly?' We might multiply such instances everywhere.

The leading features in the character of Macbeth are striking enough, and they form what may be thought at first only a bold, rude, Gothic outline. By comparing it with other characters of the same author we shall perceive the absolute truth and identity which is observed in the midst of the giddy whirl and rapid career of events. Macbeth in Shakespeare no more loses his identity of character in the fluctuations of fortune or the storm of passion, than Macbeth in himself would have lost the identity of his person. Thus he is as distinct a being from Richard III as it is possible to imagine, though these two characters in common hands, and indeed in the hands of any other poet, would have been a repetition of the same general idea, more or less exaggerated. For both are tyrants, usurpers, murderers, both aspiring and ambitious, both courageous, cruel, treacherous. But Richard is cruel from nature and constitution. Macbeth becomes so from accidental circumstances. Richard is from his birth deformed in body and mind, and naturally incapable of good. Macbeth is full of 'the milk of human kindness, is frank, sociable, generous. He is tempted to the commission of guilt by golden opportunities, by the instigations of his wife, and by prophetic warnings. Fate and metaphysical aid conspire against his virtue and his loyalty. Richard, on the contrary, needs no prompter, but wades through a series of crimes to the height of his ambition from the ungovernable violence of his temper and a reckless love of mischief. He is never gay but in the prospect or in the success of his villanies; Macbeth is full of horror at the thoughts of the murder of Duncan, which he is with difficulty prevailed on to commit, and of remorse after its perpetration. Richard has no mixture of common humanity in his composition, no regard to kindred or posterity, he owns no fellowship with others, he is 'himself alone'. Macbeth is not destitute of feelings of sympathy, is accessible to pity, is even made in some measure the dupe of his uxoriousness, ranks the loss of friends, of the cordial love of his followers, and of his good name, among the causes which have made him weary of life, and regrets that he has ever seized the crown by unjust means, since he cannot transmit it to his own posterity:

For Banquo's issue have I 'fil'd my mind—
  For them the gracious Duncan have I murther'd,
  To make them kings, the seed of Banquo kings.

In the agitation of his thoughts, he envies those whom he has sent to peace. 'Duncan is in his grave; after life's fitful fever he sleeps well.' It is true, he becomes more callous as he plunges deeper in guilt, 'direness is thus rendered familiar to his slaughterous thoughts', and he in the end anticipates his wife in the boldness and bloodiness of his enterprises, while she, for want of the same stimulus of action, is 'troubled with thick-coming fancies that rob her of her rest', goes mad and dies.

Macbeth endeavours to escape from reflection on his crimes by repelling their consequences, and banishes remorse for the past by the meditation of future mischief. This is not the principle of Richard's cruelty, which resembles the wanton malice of a fiend as much as the frailty of human passion. Macbeth is goaded on to acts of violence and retaliation by necessity; to Richard, blood is a pastime.—There are other decisive differences inherent in the two characters. Richard may be regarded as a man of the world, a plotting, hardened knave, wholly regardless of everything but his own ends, and the means to secure them.—Not so Macbeth. The superstitions of the age, the rude state of society, the local scenery and customs, all give a wildness and imaginary grandeur to his character. From the strangeness of the events that surround him, he is full of amazement and fear; and stands in doubt between the world of reality and the world of fancy. He sees sights not shown to mortal eye, and hears unearthly music. All is tumult and disorder within and without his mind; his purposes recoil upon himself, are broken and disjointed; he is the double thrall of his passions and his evil destiny. Richard is not a character either of imagination or pathos, but of pure self-will. There is no conflict of opposite feelings in his breast. The apparitions which he sees only haunt him in his sleep; nor does he live like Macbeth in a waking dream. Macbeth has considerable energy and manliness of character; but then he is 'subject to all the skyey influences'. He is sure of nothing but the present moment. Richard in the busy turbulence of his projects never loses his self-possession, and makes use of every circumstance that happens as an instrument of his long-reaching designs. In his last extremity we can only regard him as a wild beast taken in the toils: we never entirely lose our concern for Macbeth; and he calls back all our sympathy by that fine close of thoughtful melancholy:

My way of life is fallen into the sear,
The yellow leaf; and that which should accompany old age,
As honour, troops of friends, I must not look to have;
But in their stead, curses not loud but deep,
Mouth-honour, breath, which the poor heart
Would fain deny and dare not.

We can conceive a common actor to play Richard tolerably well; we can conceive no one to play Macbeth properly, or to look like a man that had encountered the Weird Sisters. All the actors that we have ever seen, appear as if they had encountered them on the boards of Covent Garden or Drury Lane, but not on the heath at Fores, and as if they did not believe what they had seen. The Witches of Macbeth indeed are ridiculous on the modern stage, and we doubt if the furies of Aeschylus would be more respected. The progress of manners and knowledge has an influence on the stage, and will in time perhaps destroy both tragedy and comedy. Filch's picking pockets, in the Beggars' Opera, is not so good a jest as it used to be: by the force of the police and of philosophy, Lillo's murders and the ghosts in Shakespeare will become obsolete. At last there will be nothing left, good nor bad, to be desired or dreaded, on the theatre or in real life. A question has been started with respect to the originality of Shakespeare's Witches, which has been well answered by Mr. Lamb in his notes to the Specimens of Early Dramatic Poetry:

"Though some resemblance may be traced between the charms in Macbeth and the incantations in this play (the Witch of Middleton), which is supposed to have preceded it, this coincidence will not detract much from the originality of Shakespeare. His Witches are distinguished from the Witches of Middleton by essential differences. These are creatures to whom man or woman plotting some dire mischief might resort for occasional consultation. Those originate deeds of blood, and begin bad impulses to men. From the moment that their eyes first meet with Macbeth's, he is spellbound. That meeting sways his destiny. He can never break the fascination. These Witches can hurt the body; those have power over the soul.—Hecate in Middleton has a son, a low buffoon: the hags of Shakespeare have neither child of their own, nor seem to be descended from any parent. They are foul anomalies, of whom we know not whence they are sprung, nor whether they have beginning or ending. As they are without human passions, so they seem to be without human relations. They come with thunder and lightning, and vanish to airy music. This is all we know of them.—Except Hecate, they have no names, which heightens their mysteriousness. The names, and some of the properties which Middleton has given to his hags, excite smiles. The Weird Sisters are serious things. Their presence cannot co-exist with mirth. But, in a lesser degree, the Witches of Middleton are fine creations. Their power too is, in some measure, over the mind. They raise jars, jealousies, strifes, 'LIKE A THICK SCURF O'ER LIFE.'"

<<span id="filepos0038548161"> a>JULIUS CASESAR

JULIUS CAESAR was one of three principal plays by different authors, pitched upon by the celebrated Earl of Halifax to be brought out in a splendid manner by subscription, in the year 1707. The other two were the King and No King of Fletcher, and Dryden's Maiden Queen. There perhaps might be political reasons for this selection, as far as regards our author. Otherwise, Shakespeare's Julius Caesar is not equal, as a whole, to either of his other plays taken from the Roman history. It is inferior in interest to Coriolanus, and both in interest and power to Antony and Cleopatra. It, however, abounds in admirable and affecting passages, and is remarkable for the profound knowledge of character, in which Shakespeare could scarcely fail. If there is any exception to this remark, it is in the hero of the piece himself. We do not much admire the representation here given of Julius Caesar, nor do we think it answers to the portrait given of him in his Commentaries. He makes several vapouring and rather pedantic speeches, and does nothing. Indeed, he has nothing to do. So far, the fault of the character might be the fault of the plot.

The spirit with which the poet has entered at once into the manners of the common people, and the jealousies and heartburnings of the different factions, is shown in the first scene, when Flavius and Marullus, tribunes of the people, and some citizens of Rome, appear upon the stage.

Flavius. Thou art a cobbler, art thou?

Cobbler. Truly, Sir, ALL that I live by, is the AWL: I meddle with no tradesman's matters, nor woman's matters, but with-al, I am indeed, Sir, a surgeon to old shoes; when they are in great danger, I recover them.

Flavius. But wherefore art not in thy shop to-day? Why dost thou lead these men about the streets?

Cobbler. Truly, Sir, to wear out their shoes, to get myself
into more work. But indeed. Sir, we make holiday to see
Caesar, and rejoice in his triumph.

To this specimen of quaint low humour immediately follows that unexpected and animated burst of indignant eloquence, put into the mouth of one of the angry tribunes.

Marullus. Wherefore rejoice!—What conquest brings he home?
What tributaries follow him to Rome,
To grace in captive-bonds his chariot-wheels?
Oh you hard hearts, you cruel men of Rome!
Knew you not Pompey? Many a time and oft
Have you climb'd up to walls and battlements,
To towers and windows, yea, to chimney-tops,
Your infants in your arms, and there have sat
The live-long day with patient expectation,
To see great Pompey pass the streets of Rome:
And when you saw his chariot but appear,
Have you not made an universal shout,
That Tiber trembled underneath his banks
To hear the replication of your sounds,
Made in his concave shores?
And do you now put on your best attire?
And do you now cull out an holiday?

And do you now strew flowers in his way
That comes in triumph over Pompey's blood?
Begone—
Run to your houses, fall upon your knees,
Pray to the Gods to intermit the plague,
That needs must light on this ingratitude.

The well-known dialogue between Brutus and Cassius, in which the latter breaks the design of the conspiracy to the former, and partly gains him over to it, is a noble piece of high-minded declamation. Cassius's insisting on the pretended effeminacy of Caesar's character, and his description of their swimming across the Tiber together, 'once upon a raw and gusty day', are among the finest strokes in it. But perhaps the whole is not equal to the short scene which follows when Caesar enters with his train.

Brutus. The games are done, and Caesar is returning.

Cassius. As they pass by, pluck Casca by the sleeve,
And he will, after his sour fashion, tell you
What has proceeded worthy note to-day.

Brutus. I will do so; but look you, Cassius—
The angry spot doth glow on Caesar's brow,
And all the rest look like a chidden train.
Calphurnia's cheek is pale; and Cicero
Looks with such ferret and such fiery eyes,
As we have seen him in the Capitol,
Being crost in conference by some senators.

Cassius. Casca will tell us what the matter is.

Caesar. Antonius—

Antony. Caesar?

Caesar. Let me have men about me that are fat,
Sleek-headed men, and such as sleep a-nights:
Yond Cassius has a lean and hungry look,

He thinks too much; such men are dangerous.

Antony. Fear him not, Caesar, he's not dangerous;
He is a noble Roman, and well given.

Caesar. Would he were fatter; but I fear him not:
Yet if my name were liable to fear,
I do not know the man I should avoid
So soon as that spare Cassius. He reads much;
He is a great observer; and he looks
Quite through the deeds of men. He loves no plays,
As thou dost, Antony; he hears no music;
Seldom he smiles, and smiles in such a sort,
As if he mock'd himself, and scorn'd his spirit,
That could be mov'd to smile at any thing.
Such men as he be never at heart's ease,
Whilst they behold a greater than themselves;
And therefore are they very dangerous.
I rather tell thee what is to be fear'd
Than what I fear; for always I am Caesar.
Come on my right hand, for this ear is deaf,
And tell me truly what thou think'st of him.

We know hardly any passage more expressive of the genius of Shakespeare than this. It is as if he had been actually present, had known the different characters and what they thought of one another, and had taken down what he heard and saw, their looks, words, and gestures, just as they happened.

The character of Mark Antony is further speculated upon where the conspirators deliberate whether he shall fall with Caesar. Brutus is against it:

And for Mark Antony, think not of him:
For "he can do no more than Caesar's arm,
When Caesar's head is off."

Cassius. Yet do I fear him:
For in th' ingrafted love he bears to Caesar—

Brutus. Alas, good Cassius, do not think of him:
If he love Caesar, all that he can do
Is to himself, take thought, and die for Caesar:
And that were much, he should; for he is giv'n
To sports, to wildness, and much company.

Trebonius. There is no fear in him; let him not die.
For he will live, and laugh at this hereafter.

They were in the wrong; and Cassius was right.

The honest manliness of Brutus is, however, sufficient to find out the unfitness of Cicero to be included in their enterprise, from his affected egotism and literary vanity.

O, name him not: let us not break with him;
For he will never follow any thing,
That other men begin.

His scepticism as to prodigies and his moralizing on the weather—"This disturbed sky is not to walk in"—are in the same spirit of refined imbecility.

Shakespeare has in this play and elsewhere shown the same penetration into political character and the springs of public events as into those of everyday life. For instance, the whole design to liberate their country fails from the generous temper and overweening confidence of Brutus in the goodness of their cause and the assistance of others. Thus it has always been. Those who mean well themselves think well of others, and fall a prey to their security. That humanity and sincerity which dispose men to resist injustice and tyranny render them unfit to cope with the cunning and power of those who are opposed to them. The friends of liberty trust to the professions of others because they are themselves sincere, and endeavour to secure the public good with the least possible hurt to its enemies, who have no regard to anything but their own unprincipled ends, and stick at nothing to accomplish them. Cassius was better cut out for a conspirator. His heart prompted his head. His habitual jealousy made him fear the worst that might happen, and his irritability of temper added to his inveteracy of purpose, and sharpened his patriotism. The mixed nature of his motives made him fitter to contend with bad men. The vices are never so well employed as in combating one another. Tyranny and servility are to be dealt with after their own fashion: otherwise, they will triumph over those who spare them, and finally pronounce their funeral panegyric, as Antony did that of Brutus. All the conspirators, save only he,

Did that they did in envy of great Caesar:
He only in a general honest thought
And common good to all, made one of them.

The quarrel between Brutus and Cassius is managed in a masterly way. The dramatic fluctuation of passion, the calmness of Brutus, the heat of Cassius, are admirably described; and the exclamation of Cassius on hearing of the death of Portia, which he does not learn till after the reconciliation, 'How 'scap'd I killing when I crost you so?' gives double force to all that has gone before. The scene between Brutus and Portia, where she endeavours to extort the secret of the conspiracy from him, is conceived in the most heroical spirit, and the burst of tenderness in Brutus:

You are my true and honourable wife;
As dear to me as are the ruddy drops
That visit my sad heart—

is justified by her whole behaviour. Portia's breathless impatience to learn the event of the conspiracy, in the dialogue with Lucius, is full of passion. The interest which Portia takes in Brutus and that which Calphurnia takes in the fate of Caesar are discriminated with the nicest precision. Mark Antony's speech over the dead body of Caesar has been justly admired for the mixture of pathos and artifice in it: that of Brutus certainly is not so good.

The entrance of the conspirators to the house of Brutus at midnight is rendered very impressive. In the midst of this scene we meet with one of those careless and natural digressions which occur so frequently and beautifully in Shakespeare. After Cassius has introduced his friends one by one, Brutus says:

They are all welcome.
What watchful cares do interpose themselves
Betwixt your eyes and night?

Cassius. Shall I entreat a word? [They whisper.]

Decius. Here lies the east: doth not the day break here?

Casca. No.

Cinna. O pardon, Sir, it doth; and yon grey lines,
That fret the clouds, are messengers of day.

Casca. You shall confess, that you are both deceiv'd:
Here, as I point my sword, the sun arises,
Which is a great way growing on the south,
Weighing the youthful, season of the year.
Some two months hence, up higher toward the north
He first presents his fire, and the high east
Stands as the Capitol, directly here.

We cannot help thinking this graceful familiarity better than all the formality in the world. The truth of history in Julius Caesar is very ably worked up with dramatic effect. The councils of generals, the doubtful turns of battles, are represented to the life. The death of Brutus is worthy of him—it has the dignity of the Roman senator with the firmness of the Stoic philosopher. But what is perhaps better than either, is the little incident of his boy, Lucius, falling asleep over his instrument, as he is playing to his master in his tent, the night before the battle. Nature had played him the same forgetful trick once before on the night of the conspiracy. The humanity of Brutus is the same on both occasions.

—It is no matter;
Enjoy the honey-heavy dew of slumber.
Thou hast no figures nor no fantasies,
Which busy care draws in the brains of men.
Therefore thou sleep'st so sound.

<<span id="filepos0038566531"> a>OTHELLO

It has been said that tragedy purifies the affections by terror and pity. That is, it substitutes imaginary sympathy for mere selfishness. It gives us a high and permanent interest, beyond ourselves, in humanity as such. It raises the great, the remote, and the possible to an equality with the real, the little and the near. It makes man a partaker with his kind. It subdues and softens the stubbornness of his will. It teaches him that there are and have been others like himself, by showing him as in a glass what they have felt, thought, and done. It opens the chambers of the human heart. It leaves nothing indifferent to us that can affect our common nature. It excites our sensibility by exhibiting the passions wound up to the utmost pitch by the power of imagination or the temptation of circumstances; and corrects their fatal excesses in ourselves by pointing to the greater extent of sufferings and of crimes to which they have led others. Tragedy creates a balance of the affections. It makes us thoughtful spectators in the lists of life. It is the refiner of the species; a discipline of humanity. The habitual study of poetry and works of imagination is one chief part of a well-grounded education. A taste for liberal art is necessary to complete the character of a gentleman, Science alone is hard and mechanical. It exercises the understanding upon things out of ourselves, while it leaves the affections unemployed, or engrossed with our own immediate, narrow interests.—OTHELLO furnishes an illustration of these remarks. It excites our sympathy in an extraordinary degree. The moral it conveys has a closer application to the concerns of human life than that of any other of Shakespeare's plays. 'It comes directly home to the bosoms and business of men.' The pathos in LEAR is indeed more dreadful and overpowering: but it is less natural, and less of every day's occurrence. We have not the same degree of sympathy with the passions described in MACBETH. The interest in HAMLET is more remote and reflex. That of OTHELLO is at once equally profound and affecting.

The picturesque contrasts of character in this play are almost as remarkable as the depth of the passion. The Moor Othello, the gentle Desdemona, the villain Iago, the good-natured Cassio, the fool Roderigo, present a range and variety of character as striking and palpable as that produced by the opposition of costume in a picture. Their distinguishing qualities stand out to the mind's eye, so that even when we are not thinking of their actions or sentiments, the idea of their persons is still as present to us as ever. These characters and the images they stamp upon the mind are the farthest asunder possible, the distance between them is immense: yet the compass of knowledge and invention which the poet has shown in embodying these extreme creations of his genius is only greater than the truth and felicity with which he has identified each character with itself, or blended their different qualities together in the same story. What a contrast the character of Othello forms to that of Iago: at the same time, the force of conception with which these two figures are opposed to each other is rendered still more intense by the complete consistency with which the traits of each character are brought out in a state of the highest finishing. The making one black and the other white, the one unprincipled, the other unfortunate in the extreme, would have answered the common purposes of effect, and satisfied the ambition of an ordinary painter of character. Shakespeare has laboured the finer shades of difference in both with as much care and skill as if he had had to depend on the execution alone for the success of his design. On the other hand, Desdemona and Aemilia are not meant to be opposed with anything like strong contrast to each other. Both are, to outward appearance, characters of common life, not more distinguished than women usually are, by difference of rank and situation. The difference of their thoughts and sentiments is, however, laid as open, their minds are separated from each other by signs as plain and as little to be mistaken as the complexions of their husbands.

The movement of the passion in OTHELLO is exceedingly different from that of MACBETH. In MACBETH there is a violent struggle between opposite feelings, between ambition and the stings of conscience, almost from first to last: in Othello, the doubtful conflict between contrary passions, though dreadful, continues only for a short time, and the chief interest is excited by the alternate ascendancy of different passions, the entire and unforeseen change from the fondest love and most unbounded confidence to the tortures of jealousy and the madness of hatred. The revenge of Othello, after it has once taken thorough possession of his mind, never quits it, but grows stronger and stronger at every moment of its delay. The nature of the Moor is noble, confiding, tender, and generous; but his blood is of the most inflammable kind; and being once roused by a sense of his wrongs, he is stopped by no considerations of remorse or pity till he has given a loose to all the dictates of his rage and his despair. It is in working his noble nature up to this extremity through rapid but gradual transitions, in raising passion to its height from the smallest beginnings and in spite of all obstacles, in painting the expiring conflict between love and hatred, tenderness and resentment, jealousy and remorse, in unfolding the strength and the weaknesses of our nature, in uniting sublimity of thought with the anguish of the keenest woe, in putting in motion the various impulses that agitate this our mortal being, and at last blending them in that noble tide of deep and sustained passion, impetuous but majestic, that 'flows on to the Propontic, and knows no ebb', that Shakespeare has shown the mastery of his genius and of his power over the human heart. The third act of Othello is his masterpiece, not of knowledge or passion separately, but of the two combined, of the knowledge of character with the expression of passion, of consummate art in the keeping up of appearances with the profound workings of nature, and the convulsive movements of uncontrollable agony, of the power of inflicting torture and of suffering it. Not only is the tumult of passion heaved up from the very bottom of the soul, but every the slightest undulation of feeling is seen on the surface, as it arises from the impulses of imagination or the different probabilities maliciously suggested by Iago. The progressive preparation for the catastrophe is wonderfully managed from the Moor's first gallant recital of the story of his love, of 'the spells and witchcraft he had used', from his unlooked-for and romantic success, the fond satisfaction with which he dotes on his own happiness, the unreserved tenderness of Desdemona and her innocent importunities in favour of Cassio, irritating the suspicions instilled into her husband's mind by the perfidy of lago, and rankling there to poison, till he loses all command of himself, and his rage can only be appeased by blood. She is introduced, just before lago begins to put his scheme in practice, pleading for Cassio with all the thoughtless gaiety of friendship and winning confidence in the love of Othello.

What! Michael Cassio?
That came a wooing with you, and so many a time,
When I have spoke of you dispraisingly,
Hath ta'en your part, to have so much to do
To bring him in?—Why this is not a boon:
'Tis as I should entreat you wear your gloves,
Or feed on nourishing meats, or keep you warm;
Or sue to you to do a peculiar profit
To your person. Nay, when I have a suit,
Wherein I mean to touch your love indeed,
It shall be full of poise, and fearful to be granted.

Othello's confidence, at first only staggered by broken hints and insinuations, recovers itself at sight of Desdemona; and he exclaims

If she be false, O then Heav'n mocks itself:
I'll not believe it.

But presently after, on brooding over his suspicions by himself, and yielding to his apprehensions of the worst, his smothered jealousy breaks out into open fury, and he returns to demand satisfaction of Iago like a wild beast stung with the envenomed shaft of the hunters. 'Look where he comes', &c. In this state of exasperation and violence, after the first paroxysms of his grief and tenderness have had their vent in that passionate apostrophe, 'I felt not Cassio's kisses on her lips,' Iago by false aspersions, and by presenting the most revolting images to his mind, [Footnote: See the passage beginning, 'It is impossible you should see this, Were they as prime as goats,' &c.] easily turns the storm of Passion from himself against Desdemona, and works him up into a trembling agony of doubt and fear, in which he abandons all his love and hopes in a breath.

Now do I see'tis true. Look here, Iago,
  All my fond love thus do I blow to Heav'n. Tis gone.
  Arise, black vengeance, from the hollow hell;
  Yield up, O love, thy crown and hearted throne
  To tyrannous hate! Swell, bosom, with thy fraught;
  For'tis of aspicks' tongues.

From this time, his raging thoughts 'never look back, ne'er ebb to humble love' till his revenge is sure of its object, the painful regrets and involuntary recollections of past circumstances which cross his mind amidst the dim trances of passion, aggravating the sense of his wrongs, but not shaking his purpose. Once indeed, where Iago shows him Cassio with the handkerchief in his hand, and making sport (as he thinks) of his misfortunes, the intolerable bitterness of his feelings, the extreme sense of shame, makes him fall to praising her accomplishments and relapse into a momentary fit of weakness, 'Yet, oh, the pity of it, Iago, the pity of it!' This returning fondness, however, only serves, as it is managed by Iago, to whet his revenge, and set his heart more against her. In his conversations with Desdemona, the persuasion of her guilt and the immediate proofs of her duplicity seem to irritate his resentment and aversion to her; but in the scene immediately preceding her death, the recollection of his love returns upon him in all its tenderness and force; and after her death, he all at once forgets his wrongs in the sudden and irreparable sense of his loss:

My wife! My wife! What wife? I have no wife.
  Oh insupportable! Oh heavy hour!

This happens before he is assured of her innocence; but afterwards his remorse is as dreadful as his revenge has been, and yields only to fixed and death like despair. His farewell speech, before he kills himself, in which he conveys his reasons to the senate for the murder of his wife, is equal to the first speech in which he gave them an account of his courtship of her, and 'his whole course of love'. Such an ending was alone worthy of such a commencement.

If anything could add to the force of our sympathy with Othello, or compassion for his fate, it would be the frankness and generosity of his nature, which so little deserve it. When Iago first begins to practise upon his unsuspecting friendship, he answers:

—Tis not to make me jealous,
To say my wife is fair, feeds well, loves company,
Is free of speech, sings, plays, and dances well;
Where virtue is, these are most virtuous.
Nor from my own weak merits will I draw
The smallest fear or doubt of her revolt,
For she had eyes and chose me.

This character is beautifully (and with affecting simplicity) confirmed by what Desdemona herself says of him to Aemilia after she has lost the handkerchief, the first pledge of his love to her:

Believe me, I had rather have lost my purse
Full of cruzadoes. And but my noble Moor
Is true of mind, and made of no such baseness,
As jealous creatures are, it were enough
To put him to ill thinking.

Aemilia. Is he not jealous?

Desdemona. Who he? I think the sun where he was born drew all such humours from him.

In a short speech of Aemilia's there occurs one of those side-intimations of the fluctuations of passion which we seldom meet with but in Shakespeare. After Othello has resolved upon the death of his wife, and bids her dismiss her attendant for the night, she answers:

I will, my Lord.

Aemilia. How goes it now? HE LOOKS GENTLER THAN HE DID.

Shakespeare has here put into half a line what some authors would have spun out into ten set speeches.

The character of Desdemona herself is inimitable both in itself, and as it contrasts with Othello's groundless jealousy, and with the foul conspiracy of which she is the innocent victim. Her beauty and external graces are only indirectly glanced at; we see 'her visage in her mind'; her character everywhere predominates over her person:

A maiden never bold:
  Of spirit so still and quiet, that her motion
  Blushed at itself.

There is one fine compliment paid to her by Cassio, who exclaims triumphantly when she comes ashore at Cyprus after the storm:

Tempests themselves, high seas, and howling winds,
  As having sense of beauty, do omit
  Their mortal natures, letting safe go by
  The divine Desdemona.

In general, as is the case with most of Shakespeare's females, we lose sight of her personal charms in her attachment and devotedness to her husband. 'She is subdued even to the very quality of her lord'; and to Othello's 'honours and his valiant parts her soul and fortunes consecrates'. The lady protests so much herself, and she is as good as her word. The truth of conception, with which timidity and boldness are united in the same character, is marvellous. The extravagance of her resolutions, the pertinacity of her affections, may be said to arise out of the gentleness of her nature. They imply an unreserved reliance on the purity of her own intentions, an entire surrender of her fears to her love, a knitting of herself (heart and soul) to the fate of another. Bating the commencement of her passion, which is a little fantastical and headstrong (though even that may perhaps be consistently accounted for from her inability to resist a rising inclination [Footnote: Iago. Ay, too gentle. Othello. Nay, that's certain.]) her whole character consists in having no will of her own, no prompter but her obedience. Her romantic turn is only a consequence of the domestic and practical part of her disposition; and instead of following Othello to the wars, she would gladly have 'remained at home a moth of peace', if her husband could have stayed with her. Her resignation and angelic sweetness of temper do not desert her at the last. The scenes in which she laments and tries to account for Othello's estrangement from her are exquisitely beautiful. After he has struck her, and called her names, she says:

—Alas, Iago,
What shall I do to win my lord again?
Good friend, go to him; for by this light of heaven,
I know not how I lost him. Here I kneel;
If e'er my will did trespass 'gainst his love,
Either in discourse, or thought, or actual deed,
Or that mine eyes, mine ears, or any sense
Delighted them on any other form-
Or that I do not, and ever did
And ever will, though he do shake me off
To beggarly divorcement, love him dearly,
Comfort forswear me. Unkindness may do much,
And his unkindness may defeat my life,
But never taint my love.

Iago. I pray you be content:'tis but his humour.
The business of the state does him offence.

Desdemona. If'twere no other!—

The scene which follows with Aemilia and the song of the Willow are equally beautiful, and show the author's extreme power of varying the expression of passion, in all its moods and in all circumstances;

Aemilia. Would you had never seen him.

Desdemona. So would not I: my love doth so approve him,
That even his stubbornness, his checks, his frowns,
Have grace and favour in them, &c.

Not the unjust suspicions of Othello, not Iago's treachery, place Desdemona in a more amiable or interesting light than the casual conversation (half earnest, half jest) between her and Aemilia on the common behaviour of women to their husbands. This dialogue takes place just before the last fatal scene. If Othello had overheard it, it would have prevented the whole catastrophe; but then it would have spoiled the play.

The character of Iago is one of the supererogations of Shakespeare's genius. Some persons, more nice than wise, have thought this whole character unnatural, because his villainy is WITHOUT A SUFFICIENT MOTIVE. Shakespeare, who was as good a philosopher as he was a poet, thought otherwise. He knew that the love of power, which is another name for the love of mischief, is natural to man. He would know this as well or better than if it had been demonstrated to him by a logical diagram, merely from seeing children paddle in the dirt or kill flies for sport. Iago in fact belongs to a class of characters common to Shakespeare and at the same time peculiar to him; whose heads are as acute and active as their hearts are hard and callous. Iago is, to be sure, an extreme instance of the kind; that is to say, of diseased intellectual activity, with an almost perfect indifference to moral good or evil, or rather with a decided preference of the latter, because it falls more readily in with his favourite propensity, gives greater zest to his thoughts and scope to his actions. He is quite or nearly as indifferent to his own fate as to that of others; he runs all risks for a trifling and doubtful advantage; and is himself the dupe and victim of his ruling passion—an insatiable craving after action of the most difficult and dangerous kind. 'Our ancient' is a philosopher, who fancies that a lie that kills has more point in it than an alliteration or an antithesis; who thinks a fatal experiment on the peace of a family a better thing than watching the palpitations in the heart of a flea in a microscope; who plots the ruin of his friends as an exercise for his ingenuity, and stabs men in the dark to prevent ennui. His gaiety, such as it is, arises from the success of his treachery; his ease from the torture he has inflicted on others. He is an amateur of tragedy in real life; and instead of employing his invention on imaginary characters, or long-forgotten incidents, he takes the bolder and more desperate course of getting up his plot at home, casts the principal parts among his nearest friends and connexions, and rehearses it in downright earnest, with steady nerves and unabated resolution. We will just give an illustration or two.

One of his most characteristic speeches is that immediately after the marriage of Othello.

Roderigo. What a full fortune does the thick lips owe,
If he can carry her thus!

Iago. Call up her father:
Rouse him [Othello], make after him, poison his delight,
Proclaim him in the streets, incense her kinsmen,
And tho' he in a fertile climate dwell,
Plague him with flies: Tho' that his joy be joy,
Yet throw such changes of vexation on it,
As it may lose some colour.

In the next passage, his imagination runs riot in the mischief he is plotting, and breaks out into the wildness and impetuosity of real enthusiasm.

Roderigo. Here is her father's house: I'll call aloud.

Iago. Do, with like timorous accent and dire yell,
As when, by night and negligence, the fire
Is spied in populous cities.

One of his most favourite topics, on which he is rich indeed, and in descanting on which his spleen serves him for a Muse, is the disproportionate match between Desdemona and the Moor. This is a clue to the character of the lady which he is by no means ready to part with. It is brought forward in the first scene, and he recurs to it, when in answer to his insinuations against Desdemona, Roderigo says:

I cannot believe that in her—she's full of most blest conditions.

Iago. Bless'd fig's end. The wine she drinks is made of grapes. If she had been blest, she would never have married the Moor.

And again with still more spirit and fatal effect afterwards, when he turns this very suggestion arising in Othello's own breast to her prejudice.

Othello. And yet how nature erring from itself—

Iago. Aye, there's the point;—as to be bold with you,
Not to affect many proposed matches
Of her own clime, complexion, and degree, &c.

This is probing to the quick. Iago here turns the character of poor Desdemona, as it were, inside out. It is certain that nothing but the genius of Shakespeare could have preserved the entire interest and delicacy of the part, and have even drawn an additional elegance and dignity from the peculiar circumstances in which she is placed. The habitual licentiousness of Iago's conversation is not to be traced to the pleasure he takes in gross or lascivious images, but to his desire of finding out the worst side of everything, and of proving himself an over-match for appearances. He has none of 'the milk of human kindness' in his composition. His imagination rejects everything that has not a strong infusion of the most unpalatable ingredients; his mind digests only poisons. Virtue or goodness or whatever has the least 'relish of salvation in it' is, to his depraved appetite, sickly and insipid: and he even resents the good opinion entertained of his own integrity, as if it were an affront cast on the masculine sense and spirit of his character. Thus at the meeting between Othello and Desdemona, he exclaims, 'Oh, you are well tuned now: but I'll set down the pegs that make this music, AS HONEST AS I AM—his character of bonhommie not sitting at all easily upon him. In the scenes where he tries to work Othello to his purpose, he is proportionably guarded, insidious, dark, and deliberate. We believe nothing ever came up to the profound dissimulation and dexterous artifice of the well-known dialogue in the third act, where he first enters upon the execution of his design.

Iago. My noble lord.

Othello. What dost thou say, Iago?

Iago. Did Michael Cassio,
When you woo'd my lady, know of your love?

Othello. He did from first to last.
Why dost thou ask?

Iago. But for a satisfaction of my thought,
No further harm.

Othello. Why of thy thought, Iago?

Iago. I did not think he had been acquainted with it.

Othello. O yes, and went between us very oft—

Iago. Indeed!

Othello. Indeed? Ay, indeed. Discern'st thou aught of that?
Is he not honest?

Iago. Honest, my lord?

Othello. Honest? Ay, honest.

Iago. My lord, for aught I know.

Othello. What do'st thou think?

Iago. Think, my lord!

Othello. Think, my lord! Alas, thou echo'st me,
As if there was some monster in thy thought
Too hideous to be shown.

The stops and breaks, the deep workings of treachery under the mask of love and honesty, the anxious watchfulness, the cool earnestness, and if we may so say, the PASSION of hypocrisy marked in every line, receive their last finishing in that inconceivable burst of pretended indignation at Othello's doubts of his sincerity.

O grace! O Heaven forgive me!
Are you a man? Have you a soul or sense?
God be wi' you; take mine office. O wretched fool,
That lov'st to make thine honesty a vice!
Oh monstrous world! take note, take note, O world!
To be direct and honest, is not safe.
I thank you for this profit, and from hence
I'll love no friend, since love breeds such offence.

If Iago is detestable enough when he has business on his hands and all his engines at work, he is still worse when he has nothing to do, and we only see into the hollowness of his heart. His indifference when Othello falls into a swoon, is perfectly diabolical.

Iago. How is it. General? Have you not hurt your head?

Othello. Dost thou mock me?

Iago. I mock you not, by Heaven, &c.

The part indeed would hardly be tolerated, even as a foil to the virtue and generosity of the other characters in the play, but for its indefatigable industry and inexhaustible resources, which divert the attention of the spectator (as well as his own) from the end he has in view to the means by which it must be accomplished.—Edmund the Bastard in LEAR is something of the same character, placed in less prominent circumstances. Zanga is a vulgar caricature of it.

<<span id="filepos0038600264"> a>TIMON OF ATHENS

TIMON OF ATHENS always appeared to us to be written with as intense a feeling of his subject as any one play of Shakespeare. It is one of the few in which he seems to be in earnest throughout, never to trifle nor go out of his way. He does not relax in his efforts, nor lose sight of the unity of his design. It is the only play of our author in which spleen is the predominant feeling of the mind. It is as much a satire as a play: and contains some of the finest pieces of invective possible to be conceived, both in the snarling, captious answers of the cynic Apemantus, and in the impassioned and more terrible imprecations of Timon. The latter remind the classical reader of the force and swelling impetuosity of the moral declamations in Juvenal, while the former have all the keenness and caustic severity of the old Stoic philosophers. The soul of Diogenes appears to have been seated on the lips of Apemantus. The churlish profession of misanthropy in the cynic is contrasted with the profound feeling of it in Timon, and also with the soldierlike and determined resentment of Alcibiades against his countrymen, who have banished him, though this forms only an incidental episode in the tragedy.

The fable consists of a single event—of the transition from the highest pomp and profusion of artificial refinement to the most abject state of savage life, and privation of all social intercourse. The change is as rapid as it is complete; nor is the description of the rich and generous Timon, banqueting in gilded palaces, pampered by every luxury, prodigal of his hospitality, courted by crowds of flatterers, poets, painters, lords, ladies, who:

Follow his strides, his lobbies fill with tendance,
  Rain sacrificial whisperings in his ear;
  And through him drink the free air—

more striking than that of the sudden falling off of his friends and fortune, and his naked exposure in a wild forest digging roots from the earth for his sustenance, with a lofty spirit of self-denial, and bitter scorn of the world, which raise him higher in our esteem than the dazzling gloss of prosperity could do. He grudges himself the means of life, and is only busy in preparing his grave. How forcibly is the difference between what he was and what he is described in Apemantus's taunting questions, when he comes to reproach him with the change in his way of life!

—What, think'st thou,
That the bleak air, thy boisterous chamberlain,
Will put thy shirt on warm? will these moist trees
That have out-liv'd the eagle, page thy heels,
And skip when thou point'st out? will the cold brook,
Candied with ice, caudle thy morning taste
To cure thy o'er-night's surfeit? Call the creatures,
Whose naked natures live in all the spight
Of wreakful heav'n, whose bare unhoused trunks,
To the conflicting elements expos'd,
Answer mere nature, bid them flatter thee.

The manners are everywhere preserved with distinct truth. The poet and painter are very skilfully played off against one another, both affecting great attention to the other, and each taken up with his own vanity, and the superiority of his own art. Shakespeare has put into the mouth of the former a very lively description of the genius of poetry and of his own in particular.

—A thing slipt idly from me.
Our poesy is as a gum, which issues
From whence 'tis nourish'd. The fire i' th' flint
Shows not till it be struck: our gentle flame
Provokes itself—and like the current flies
Each bound it chafes.

The hollow friendship and shuffling evasions of the Athenian lords, their smooth professions and pitiful ingratitude, are very satisfactorily exposed, as well as the different disguises to which the meanness of self-love resorts in such cases to hide a want of generosity and good faith. The lurking selfishness of Apemantus does not pass undetected amidst the grossness of his sarcasms and his contempt for the pretensions of others. Even the two courtezans who accompany Alcibiades to the cave of Timon are very characteristically sketched; and the thieves who come to visit him are also 'true men' in their way.—An exception to this general picture of selfish depravity is found in the old and honest steward, Flavius, to whom Timon pays a full tribute of tenderness. Shakespeare was unwilling to draw a picture 'all over ugly with hypocrisy'. He owed this character to the good-natured solicitations of his Muse. His mind was well said by Ben

Jonson to be the 'sphere of humanity'.

The moral sententiousness of this play equals that of Lord Bacon's Treatise on the Wisdom of the Ancients, and is indeed seasoned with greater variety. Every topic of contempt or indignation is here exhausted; but while the sordid licentiousness of Apemantus, which turns everything to gall and bitterness, shows only the natural virulence of his temper and antipathy to good or evil alike, Timon does not utter an imprecation without betraying the extravagant workings of disappointed passion, of love altered to hate. Apemantus sees nothing good in any object, and exaggerates whatever is disgusting: Timon is tormented with the perpetual contrast between things and appearances, between the fresh, tempting outside and the rottenness within, and invokes mischiefs on the heads of mankind proportioned to the sense of his wrongs and of their treacheries. He impatiently cries out, when he finds the gold,

This yellow slave
  Will knit and break religions; bless the accurs'd;
  Make the hoar leprosy ador'd; place thieves,
  And give them title, knee, and approbation,
  With senators on the bench; this is it,
  That makes the wappen'd widow wed again;
  She, whom the spital-house
  Would cast the gorge at, THIS EMBALMS AND SPICES
  TO TH' APRIL DAY AGAIN.

One of his most dreadful imprecations is that which occurs immediately on his leaving Athens.

Let me look back upon thee, O thou wall,
  That girdlest in those wolves! Dive in the earth,
  And fence not Athens! Matrons, turn incontinent;
  Obedience fail in children; slaves and fools
  Pluck the grave wrinkled senate from the bench,
  And minister in their steads. To general filths
  Convert o' th' instant green virginity!
  Do't in your parents' eyes. Bankrupts, hold fast;
  Rather than render back, out with your knives,
  And cut your trusters' throats! Bound servants, steal:
  Large-handed robbers your grave masters are,

And pill by law. Maid, to thy master's bed:
Thy mistress is o' th' brothel. Son of sixteen,
Pluck the lin'd crutch from thy old limping sire,
And with it beat his brains out! Fear and piety,
Religion to the Gods, peace, justice, truth,
Domestic awe, night-rest, and neighbourhood,
Instructions, manners, mysteries and trades,
Degrees, observances, customs and laws,
Decline to your confounding contraries;
And let confusion live!—Plagues, incident to men,
Your potent and infectious fevers heap
On Athens, ripe for stroke! Thou cold sciatica,
Cripple our senators, that their limbs may halt
As lamely as their manners! Lust and liberty
Creep in the minds and manners of our youth,
That 'gainst the stream of virtue they may strive,
And drown themselves in riot! Itches, blains,
Sow all th' Athenian bosoms; and their crop
Be general leprosy: breath infect breath,
That their society (as their friendship) may
Be merely poison!

Timon is here just as ideal in his passion for ill as he had before been in his belief of good. Apemantus was satisfied with the mischief existing in the world, and with his own ill-nature. One of the most decisive intimations of Timon's morbid jealousy of appearances is in his answer to Apemantus, who asks him:

What things in the world can'st thou nearest compare with thy flatterers?

Timon. Women nearest: but men, men are the things themselves.

Apemantus, it is said, 'loved few things better than to abhor himself'. This is not the case with Timon, who neither loves to abhor himself nor others. All his vehement misanthropy is forced, up-hill work. From the slippery turns of fortune, from the turmoils of passion and adversity, he wishes to sink into the quiet of the grave. On that subject his thoughts are intent, on that he finds time and place to grow romantic. He digs his own grave by the sea-shore; contrives his funeral ceremonies amidst the pomp of desolation, and builds his mausoleum of the elements.

Come not to me again; but say to Athens,
Timon hath made his everlasting mansion
Upon the beached verge of the salt flood;
Which once a-day with his embossed froth
The turbulent surge shall cover.—Thither come,
And let my grave-stone be your oracle.

And again, Alcibiades, after reading his epitaph, says of him:

These well express in thee thy latter spirits:
Though thou abhorred'st in us our human griefs,
Scorn'd'st our brain's flow, and those our droplets, which
From niggard nature fall; yet rich conceit
Taught thee to make vast Neptune weep for aye
On thy low grave—

thus making the winds his funeral dirge, his mourner the murmuring ocean; and seeking in the everlasting solemnities of nature oblivion of the transitory splendour of his lifetime.

<<span id="filepos0038613873"> a>CORIOLANUS

Shakespeare has in this play shown himself well versed in history and state affairs. CORIOLANUS is a storehouse of political commonplaces. Any one who studies it may save himself the trouble of reading Burke's Reflections, or Paine's Rights of Man, or the Debates in both Houses of Parliament since the French Revolution or our own. The arguments for and against aristocracy or democracy, on the privileges of the few and the claims of the many, on liberty and slavery, power and the abuse of it, peace and war, are here very ably handled, with the spirit of a poet and the acuteness of a philosopher. Shakespeare himself seems to have had a leaning to the arbitrary side of the question, perhaps from some feeling of contempt for his own origin; and to have spared no occasion of baiting the rabble. What he says of them is very true: what he says of their betters is also very true, though he dwells less upon it.—The cause of the people is indeed but little calculated as a subject for poetry: it admits of rhetoric, which goes into argument and explanation, but it presents no immediate or distinct images to the mind, 'no jutting frieze, buttress, or coigne of vantage' for poetry 'to make its pendant bed and procreant cradle in'. The language of poetry naturally falls in with the language of power. The imagination is an exaggerating and exclusive faculty: it takes from one thing to add to another: it accumulates circumstances together to give the greatest possible effect to a favourite object. The understanding is a dividing and measuring faculty: it judges of things, not according to their immediate impression on the mind, but according to their relations to one another. The one is a monopolizing faculty, which seeks the greatest quantity of present excitement by inequality and disproportion; the other is a distributive faculty, which seeks the greatest quantity of ultimate good, by justice and proportion. The one is an aristocratical, the other a republican faculty. The principle of poetry is a very anti-levelling principle. It aims at effect, it exists by contrast. It admits of no medium. It is everything by excess. It rises above the ordinary standard of sufferings and crimes. It presents a dazzling appearance. It shows its head turretted, crowned, and crested. Its front is gilt and blood-stained. Before it 'it carries noise, and behind it tears'. It has its altars and its victims, sacrifices, human sacrifices. Kings, priests, nobles, are its train-bearers, tyrants and slaves its executioners.—'Carnage is its daughter.' Poetry is right-royal. It puts the individual for the species, the one above the infinite many, might before right. A lion hunting a flock of sheep or a herd of wild asses is a more poetical object than they; and we even take part with the lordly beast, because our vanity or some other feeling makes us disposed to place ourselves in the situation of the strongest party. So we feel some concern for the poor citizens of Rome when they meet together to compare their wants and grievances, till Coriolanus comes in and with blows and big words drives this set of 'poor rats', this rascal scum, to their homes and beggary before him. There is nothing heroical in a multitude of miserable rogues not wishing to be starved, or complaining that they are like to be so: but when a single man comes forward to brave their cries and to make them submit to the last indignities, from mere pride and self-will, our admiration of his prowess is immediately converted into contempt for their pusillanimity. The insolence of power is stronger than the plea of necessity. The tame submission to usurped authority or even the natural resistance to it has nothing to excite or flatter the imagination: it is the assumption of a right to insult or oppress others that carries an imposing air of superiority with it. We had rather be the oppressor than the oppressed. The love of power in ourselves and the admiration of it in others are both natural to man: the one makes him a tyrant, the other a slave. Wrong dressed out in pride, pomp, and circumstance has more attraction than abstract right.—Coriolanus complains of the fickleness of the people: yet the instant he cannot gratify his pride and obstinacy at their expense, he turns his arms against his country. If his country was not worth defending, why did he build his pride on its defence? He is a conqueror and a hero; he conquers other countries, and makes this a plea for enslaving his own; and when he is prevented from doing so, he leagues with its enemies to destroy his country. He rates the people 'as if he were a God to punish, and not a man of their infirmity'. He scoffs at one of their tribunes for maintaining their rights and franchises: 'Mark you his absolute SHALL?' not marking his own absolute WILL to take everything from them, his impatience of the slightest opposition to his own pretensions being in proportion to their arrogance and absurdity. If the great and powerful had the beneficence and wisdom of Gods, then all this would have been well: if with a greater knowledge of what is good for the people, they had as great a care for their interest as they have themselves, if they were seated above the world, sympathizing with the welfare, but not feeling the passions of men, receiving neither good nor hurt from them, but bestowing their benefits as free gifts on them, they might then rule over them like another Providence. But this is not the case. Coriolanus is unwilling that the senate should show their 'cares' for the people, lest their 'cares' should be construed into 'fears', to the subversion of all due authority; and he is no sooner disappointed in his schemes to deprive the people not only of the cares of the state, but of all power to redress themselves, than Volumnia is made madly to exclaim:

Now the red pestilence strike all trades in Rome,
  And occupations perish.

This is but natural: it is but natural for a mother to have more regard for her son than for a whole city; but then the city should be left to take some care of itself. The care of the state cannot, we here see, be safely entrusted to maternal affection, or to the domestic charities of high life. The great have private feelings of their own, to which the interests of humanity and justice must curtsy. Their interests are so far from being the same as those of the community, that they are in direct and necessary opposition to them; their power is at the expense of OUR weakness; their riches of OUR poverty; their pride of OUR degradation; their splendour of OUR wretchedness; their tyranny of OUR servitude. If they had the superior knowledge ascribed to them (which they have not) it would only render them so much more formidable; and from Gods would convert them into Devils. The whole dramatic moral of Coriolanus is that those who have little shall have less, and that those who have much shall take all that others have left. The people are poor; therefore they ought to be starved. They are slaves; therefore they ought to be beaten. They work hard; therefore they ought to be treated like beasts of burden. They are ignorant; therefore they ought not to be allowed to feel that they want food, or clothing, or rest, that they are enslaved, oppressed, and miserable. This is the logic of the imagination and the passions; which seek to aggrandize what excites admiration and to heap contempt on misery, to raise power into tyranny, and to make tyranny absolute; to thrust down that which is low still lower, and to make wretches desperate: to exalt magistrates into kings, kings into gods; to degrade subjects to the rank of slaves, and slaves to the condition of brutes. The history of mankind is a romance, a mask, a tragedy, constructed upon the principles of POETICAL JUSTICE; it is a noble or royal hunt, in which what is sport to the few is death to the many, and in which the spectators halloo and encourage the strong to set upon the weak, and cry havoc in the chase, though they do not share in the spoil. We may depend upon it that what men delight to read in books, they will put in practice in reality.

One of the most natural traits in this play is the difference of the interest taken in the success of Coriolanus by his wife and mother. The one is only anxious for his honour; the other is fearful for his life.

Volumnia. Methinks I hither hear your husband's drum:
I see him pluck Aufidius down by th' hair:
Methinks I see him stamp thus—and call thus—
Come on, ye cowards; ye were got in fear
Though you were born in Rome; his bloody brow
With his mail'd hand then wiping, forth he goes
Like to a harvest man, that's task'd to mow
Or all, or lose his hire.

Virgila. His bloody brow! Oh Jupiter, no blood.

Volumnia. Away, you fool; it more becomes a man
Than gilt his trophy. The breast of Hecuba,
When she did suckle Hector, look'd not lovelier

Than Hector's forehead, when it spit forth blood
At Grecian swords contending.

When she hears the trumpets that proclaim her son's return, she says in the true spirit of a Roman matron:

These are the ushers of Martius: before him
He carries noise, and behind him he leaves tears.
Death, that dark spirit, in's nervy arm doth lie,
Which being advanc'd, declines, and then men die.

Coriolanus himself is a complete character: his love of reputation, his contempt of popular opinion, his pride and modesty, are consequences of each other. His pride consists in the inflexible sternness of his will; his love of glory is a determined desire to bear down all opposition, and to extort the admiration both of friends and foes. His contempt for popular favour, his unwillingness to hear his own praises, spring from the same source. He cannot contradict the praises that are bestowed upon him; therefore he is impatient at hearing them. He would enforce the good opinion of others by his actions, but does not want their acknowledgements in words.

Pray now, no more: my mother,
Who has a charter to extol her blood,
When she does praise me, grieves me.

His magnanimity is of the same kind. He admires in an enemy that courage which he honours in himself: he places himself on the hearth of Aufidius with the same confidence that he would have met him in the field, and feels that by putting himself in his power, he takes from him all temptation for using it against him.

In the title-page of Coriolanus it is said at the bottom of the Dramatis Personae, 'The whole history exactly followed, and many of the principal speeches copied, from the life of Coriolanus in Plutarch.' It will be interesting to our readers to see how far this is the case. Two of the principal scenes, those between Coriolanus and Aufidius and between Coriolanus and his mother, are thus given in Sir Thomas North's translation of Plutarch, dedicated to Queen Elizabeth, 1579. The first is as follows:

It was even twilight when he entered the city of Antium, and many people met him in the streets, but no man knew him. So he went directly to Tullus Aufidius' house, and when he came thither, he got him up straight to the chimney-hearth, and sat him down, and spake not a word to any man, his face all muffled over. They of the house spying him, wondered what he should be, and yet they durst not bid him rise. For ill-favouredly muffled and disguised as he was, yet there appeared a certain majesty in his countenance and in his silence: whereupon they went to Tullus, who was at supper, to tell him of the strange disguising of this man. Tullus rose presently from the board, and coming towards him, asked him what he was, and wherefore he came. Then Martius unmuffled himself, and after he had paused awhile, making no answer, he said unto himself, If thou knowest me not yet, Tullus, and seeing me, dost not perhaps believe me to be the man I am indeed, I must of necessity discover myself to be that I am. 'I am Caius Martius, who hath done to thyself particularly, and to all the Volsces generally, great hurt and mischief, which I cannot deny for my surname of Coriolanus that I bear. For I never had other benefit nor recompence of the true and painful service I have done, and the extreme dangers I have been in, but this only surname; a good memory and witness of the malice and displeasure thou shouldest bear me. Indeed the name only remaineth with me; for the rest, the envy and cruelty of the people of Rome have taken from me, by the sufferance of the dastardly nobility and magistrates, who have forsaken me, and let me be banished by the people. This extremity hath now driven me to come as a poor suitor, to take thy chimney-hearth, not of any hope I have to save my life thereby. For if I had feared death, I would not have come hither to put myself in hazard; but pricked forward with desire to be revenged of them that thus have banished me, which now I do begin, in putting my person into the hands of their enemies. Wherefore if thou hast any heart to be wrecked of the injuries thy enemies have done thee, speed thee now, and let my misery serve thy turn, and so use it as my service may be a benefit to the Volsces: promising thee, that I will fight with better good will for all you, than I did when I was against you. Knowing that they fight more valiantly who know the force of the enemy, than such as have never proved it. And if it be so that thou dare not, and that thou art weary to prove fortune any more, then am I also weary to live any longer. And it were no wisdom in thee to save the life of him who hath been heretofore thy mortal enemy, and whose service now can nothing help, nor pleasure thee.' Tullus hearing what he said, was a marvellous glad man, and taking him by the hand, he said unto him: 'Stand up, O Martius, and be of good cheer, for in proffering thyself unto us, thou doest us great honour: and by this means thou mayest hope also of greater things at all the Volsces' hands.' So he feasted him for that time, and entertained him in the honourablest manner he could, talking with him of no other matter at that present: but within few days after, they fell to consultation together in what sort they should begin their wars.

The meeting between Coriolanus and his mother is also nearly the same as in the play.

Now was Martius set then in the chair of state, with all the honours of a general, and when he had spied the women coming afar off, he marvelled what the matter meant: but afterwards knowing his wife which came foremost, he determined at the first to persist in his obstinate and inflexible rancour. But overcome in the end with natural affection, and being altogether altered to see them, his heart would not serve him to tarry their comming to his chair, but coming down in haste, he went to meet them, and first he kissed his mother, and embraced her a pretty while, then his wife and little children. And nature so wrought with him, that the tears fell from his eyes, and he could not keep himself from making much of them, but yielded to the affection of his blood, as if he had been violently carried with the fury of a most swift-running stream. After he had thus lovingly received them, and perceiving that his mother Volumnia would begin to speak to him, he called the chiefest of the council of the Volsces to hear what she would say. Then she spake in this sort: 'If we held our peace, my son, and determined not to speak, the state of our poor bodies, and present sight of our raiment, would easily betray to thee what life we have led at home, since thy exile and abode abroad; but think now with thyself, how much more unfortunate than all the women living, we are come hither, considering that the sight which should be most pleasant to all others to behold, spiteful fortune had made most fearful to us: making myself to see my son, and my daughter here her husband, besieging the walls of his native country: so as that which is the only comfort to all others in their adversity and misery, to pray unto the Gods, and to call to them for aid, is the only thing which plungeth us into most deep perplexity. For we cannot, alas, together pray, both for victory to our country, and for safety of thy life also: but a world of grievous curses, yea more than any mortal enemy can heap upon us, are forcibly wrapped up in our prayers. For the bitter sop of most hard choice is offered thy wife and children, to forgo one of the two; either to lose the person of thyself, or the nurse of their native country. For myself, my son, I am determined not to tarry till fortune in my lifetime do make an end of this war. For if I cannot persuade the rather to do good unto both parties, than to overthrow and destroy the one, preferring love and nature before the malice and calamity of wars, thou shalt see, my son, and trust unto it, thou shalt no sooner march forward to assault thy country, but thy foot shall tread upon thy mother's womb, that brought thee first into this world. And I may not defer to see the day, either that my son be led prisoner in triumph by his natural countrymen, or that he himself do triumph of them, and of his natural country. For if it were so, that my request tended to save thy country, in destroying the Volsces, I must confess, thou wouldest hardly and doubtfully resolve on that. For as to destroy thy natural country, it is altogether unmeet and unlawful, so were it not just and less honourable to betray those that put their trust in thee. But my only demand consisteth, to make a gaol delivery of all evils, which delivereth equal benefit and safety, both to the one and the other, but most honourable for the Volsces. For it shall appear, that having victory in their hands, they have of special favour granted us singular graces, peace and amity, albeit themselves have no less part of both than we. Of which good, if so it came to pass, thyself is the only author, and so hast thou the only honour. But if it fail, and fall out contrary, thyself alone deservedly shalt carry the shameful reproach and burthen of either party. So, though the end of war be uncertain, yet this notwithstanding is most certain, that if it be thy chance to conquer, this benefit shalt thou reap of thy goodly conquest, to be chronicled the plague and destroyer of thy country. And if fortune overthrow thee, then the world will say, that through desire to, revenge thy private injuries, thou hast for ever undone thy good friends, who did most lovingly and courteously receive thee.' Martius gave good ear unto his mother's words, without interrupting her speech at all, and after she had said what she would, he held his peace a pretty while, and answered not a word. Hereupon she began again to speak unto him, and said; 'My son, why dost thou not answer me? Dost thou think it good altogether to give place unto thy choler and desire of revenge, and thinkest thou it not honesty for thee to grant thy mother's request in so weighty a cause? Dost thou take it honourable for a nobleman, to remember the wrongs and injuries done him, and dost not in like case think it an honest nobleman's part to be thankful for the goodness that parents do show to their children, acknowledging the duty and reverence they ought to bear unto them? No man living is more bound to show himself thankful in all parts and respects than thyself; who so universally showest all ingratitude. Moreover, my son, thou hast sorely taken of thy country, exacting grievous payments upon them, in revenge of the injuries offered thee; besides, thou hast not hitherto showed thy poor mother any courtesy. And therefore it is not only honest, but due unto me, that without compulsion I should obtain my so just and reasonable request of thee. But since by reason I cannot persuade thee to it, to what purpose do I defer my last hope?' And with these words herself, his wife and children, fell down upon their knees before him: Martius seeing that, could refrain no longer, but went straight and lifted her up, crying out, 'Oh mother, what have you done to me?' And holding her hard by the right hand, 'Oh mother,' said he, 'you have won a happy victory for your country, but mortal and unhappy for your son: for I see myself vanquished by you alone.' These words being spoken openly, he spake a little apart with his mother and wife, and then let them return again to Rome, for so they did request him; and so remaining in the camp that night, the next morning he dis-lodged, and marched homeward unto the Volsces' country again.

Shakespeare has, in giving a dramatic form to this passage, adhered very closely and properly to the text. He did not think it necessary to improve upon the truth of nature. Several of the scenes in JULIUS CAESAR, particularly Portia's appeal to the confidence of her husband by showing him the wound she had given herself, and the appearance of the ghost of Caesar to Brutus, are, in like manner, taken from the history.

<<span id="filepos0038637273"> a>TROILUS AND CRESSIDA

This is one of the most loose and desultory of our author's plays: it rambles on just as it happens, but it overtakes, together with some indifferent matter, a prodigious number of fine things in its way. Troilus himself is no character: he is merely a common lover; but Cressida and her uncle Pandarus are hit off with proverbial truth. By the speeches given to the leaders of the Grecian host, Nestor, Ulysses, Agamemnon, Achilles, Shakespeare seems to have known them as well as if he had been a spy sent by the Trojans into the enemy's camp—to say nothing of their being very lofty examples of didactic eloquence. The following is a very stately and spirited declamation:

Ulysses. Troy, yet upon her basis, had been down,
  And the great Hector's sword had lack'd a master,
  But for these instances.
  The specialty of rule hath been neglected.

. . . . .

The heavens themselves, the planets, and this centre,
Observe degree, priority, and place,
Insisture, course, proportion, season, form,
Office, and custom, in all line of order:
And therefore is the glorious planet, Sol,
In noble eminence, enthron'd and spher'd
Amidst the other, whose med'cinable eye
Corrects the ill aspects of planets evil,
And posts, like the commandment of a king,
Sans check, to good and bad. But, when the planets,
In evil mixture to disorder wander,
What plagues and what portents? what mutinies?
What raging of the sea? shaking of earth?
Commotion in the winds? frights, changes, horrors,
Divert and crack, rend and deracinate
The unity and married calm of states
Quite from their fixture! O, when degree is shaken,
(Which is the ladder to all high designs)
The enterprise is sick! How could communities,
Degrees in schools, and brotherhoods in cities,
Peaceful commerce from dividable shores,
The primogenitive and due of birth,
Prerogative of age, crowns, sceptres, laurels,
(But by degree) stand in authentic place?
Take but degree away, untune that string,
And hark what discord follows! each thing meets
In mere oppugnancy. The bounded waters
Would lift their bosoms higher than the shores,
And make a sop of all this solid globe:
Strength would be lord of imbecility,
And the rude son would strike his father dead:
Force would be right; or rather, right and wrong
(Between whose endless jar Justice resides)
Would lose their names, and so would Justice too.
Then everything includes itself in power,
Power into will, will into appetite;
And appetite (an universal wolf,

So doubly seconded with will and power)
Must make perforce an universal prey,
And last, eat up himself. Great Agamemnon,
This chaos, when degree is suffocate,
Follows the choking:
And this neglection of degree it is,
That by a pace goes backward, in a purpose
It hath to climb. The general's disdained
By him one step below; he, by the next;
That next, by him beneath: so every step,
Exampled by the first pace that is sick
Of his superior, grows to an envious fever
Of pale and bloodless emulation;
And'tis this fever that keeps Troy on foot,
Not her own sinews. To end a tale of length,
Troy in our weakness lives, not in her strength.

It cannot be said of Shakespeare, as was said of some one, that he was 'without o'erflowing full'. He was full, even to o'erflowing. He gave heaped measure, running over. This was his greatest fault. He was only in danger 'of losing distinction in his thoughts' (to borrow his own expression)

As doth a battle when they charge on heaps
The enemy flying.

There is another passage, the speech of Ulysses to Achilles, showing him the thankless nature of popularity, which has a still greater depth of moral observation and richness of illustration than the former. It is long, but worth the quoting. The sometimes giving an entire extract from the unacted plays of our author may with one class of readers have almost the use of restoring a lost passage; and may serve to convince another class of critics, that the poet's genius was not confined to the production of stage effect by preternatural means.—

Ulysses. Time hath, my lord, a wallet at his back,
Wherein he puts alms for Oblivion;
A great-siz'd monster of ingratitudes:
Those scraps are good deeds past,
Which are devour'd as fast as they are made,
Forgot as soon as done: Persev'rance, dear my lord,

Keeps Honour bright: to have done, is to hang
Quite out of fashion, like a rusty mail
In monumental mockery. Take the instant way;
For Honour travels in a strait so narrow,
Where one but goes abreast; keep then the path,
For Emulation hath a thousand sons,
That one by one pursue; if you give way,
Or hedge aside from the direct forth-right,
Like to an entered tide, they all rush by,
And leave you hindmost;—
Or, like a gallant horse fall'n in first rank,
O'er-run and trampled on: then what they do in present,
Tho' less than yours in past, must o'ertop yours:
For Time is like a fashionable host,
That slightly shakes his parting guest by th' hand,
And with his arms out-stretch'd, as he would fly,
Grasps in the comer: the Welcome ever smiles,
And Farewell goes out sighing. O, let not virtue seek
Remuneration for the thing it was; for beauty, wit,
High birth, vigour of bone, desert in service,
Love, friendship, charity, are subjects all
To envious and calumniating time:
One touch of nature makes the whole world kin,
That all, with one consent, praise new-born gauds,
Tho' they are made and moulded of things past.
The present eye praises the present object.
Then marvel not, thou great and complete man,
That all the Greeks begin to worship Ajax;
Since things in motion sooner catch the eye,
Than what not stirs. The cry went out on thee,
And still it might, and yet it may again,
If thou would'st not entomb thyself alive,
And case thy reputation in thy tent.—

The throng of images in the above lines is prodigious; and though they sometimes jostle against one another, they everywhere raise and carry on the feeling, which is metaphysically true and profound. The debates beween the Trojan chiefs on the restoring of Helen are full of knowledge of human motives and character. Troilus enters well into the philosophy of war, when he says in answer to something that falls from Hector:

Why there you touch'd the life of our design:
Were it not glory that we more affected,
Than the performance of our heaving spleens,
I would not wish a drop of Trojan blood
Spent more in her defence. But, worthy Hector,
She is a theme of honour and renown,
A spur to valiant and magnanimous deeds.

The character of Hector, in the few slight indications which appear of it, is made very amiable. His death is sublime, and shows in a striking light the mixture of barbarity and heroism of the age. The threats of Achilles are fatal; they carry their own means of execution with them.

Come here about me, you my Myrmidons,
Mark what I say.—Attend me where I wheel:
Strike not a stroke, but keep yourselves in breath;
And when I have the bloody Hector found,
Empale him with your weapons round about:
In fellest manner execute your arms.
Follow me, sirs, and my proceeding eye.

He then finds Hector and slays him, as if he had been hunting down a wild beast. There is something revolting as well as terrific in the ferocious coolness with which he singles out his prey: nor does the splendour of the achievement reconcile us to the cruelty of the means.

The characters of Cressida and Pandarus are very amusing and instructive. The disinterested willingness of Pandarus to serve his friend in an affair which lies next his heart is immediately brought forward. 'Go thy way, Troilus, go thy way; had I a sister were a grace, or a daughter were a goddess, he should take his choice. O admirable man! Paris, Paris is dirt to him, and I warrant Helen, to change, would give money to boot.' This is the language he addresses to his niece; nor is she much behindhand in coming into the plot. Her head is as light and fluttering as her heart. It is the prettiest villain, she fetches her breath so short as a new-ta'en sparrow.' Both characters are originals, and quite different from what they are in Chaucer. In Chaucer, Cressida is represented as a grave, sober, considerate personage (a widow—he cannot tell her age, nor whether she has children or no) who has an alternate eye to her character, her interest, and her pleasure: Shakespeare's Cressida is a giddy girl, an unpractised jilt, who falls in love with Troilus, as she afterwards deserts him, from mere levity and thoughtlessness of temper. She may be wooed and won to anything and from anything, at a moment's warning: the other knows very well what she would be at, and sticks to it, and is more governed by substantial reasons than by caprice or vanity. Pandarus again, in Chaucer's story, is a friendly sort of go-between, tolerably busy, officious, and forward in bringing matters to bear: but in Shakespeare he has 'a stamp exclusive and professional': he wears the badge of his trade; he is a regular knight of the game. The difference of the manner in which the subject is treated arises perhaps less from intention, than from the different genius of the two poets. There is no double entendre in the characters of Chaucer: they are either quite serious or quite comic. In Shakespeare the ludicrous and ironical are constantly blended with the stately and the impassioned. We see Chaucer's characters as they saw themselves, not as they appeared to others or might have appeared to the poet. He is as deeply implicated in the affairs of his personages as they could be themselves. He had to go a long journey with each of them, and became a kind of necessary confidant. There is little relief, or light and shade in his pictures. The conscious smile is not seen lurking under the brow of grief or impatience. Everything with him is intense and continuous—a working out of what went before.—Shakespeare never committed himself to his characters. He trifled, laughed, or wept with them as he chose. He has no prejudices for or against them; and it seems a matter of perfect indifference whether he shall be in jest or earnest. According to him, 'the web of our lives is of a mingled yam, good and ill together'. His genius was dramatic, as Chaucer's was historical. He saw both sides of a question, the different views taken of it according to the different interests of the parties concerned, and he was at once an actor and spectator in the scene. If anything, he is too various and flexible; too full of transitions, of glancing lights, of salient points. If Chaucer followed up his subject too doggedly, perhaps Shakespeare was too volatile and heedless. The Muse's wing too often lifted him off his feet. He made infinite excursions to the right and the left.

—He hath done
Mad and fantastic execution,
Engaging and redeeming of himself

With such a careless force and forceless care,
As if that luck in very spite of cunning
Bade him win all.

Chaucer attended chiefly to the real and natural, that is, to the involuntary and inevitable impressions on the mind in given circumstances: Shakespeare exhibited also the possible and the fantastical,—not only what things are in themselves, but whatever they might seem to be, their different reflections, their endless combinations. He lent his fancy, wit, invention, to others, and borrowed their feelings in return. Chaucer excelled in the force of habitual sentiment; Shakespeare added to it every variety of passion, every suggestion of thought or accident. Chaucer described external objects with the eye of a painter, or he might be said to have embodied them with the hand of a sculptor, every part is so thoroughly made out, and tangible: Shakespeare's imagination threw over them a lustre

—Prouder than when blue Iris bends.

Everything in Chaucer has a downright reality. A simile or a sentiment is as if it were given in upon evidence. In Shakespeare the commonest matter-of-fact has a romantic grace about it; or seems to float with the breath of imagination in a freer element. No one could have more depth of feeling or observation than Chaucer, but he wanted resources of invention to lay open the stores of nature or the human heart with the same radiant light that Shakespeare has done. However fine or profound the thought, we know what was coming, whereas the effect of reading Shakespeare is 'like the eye of vassalage encountering majesty'. Chaucer's mind was consecutive, rather than discursive. He arrived at truth through a certain process; Shakespeare saw everything by intuition, Chaucer had great variety of power, but he could do only one thing at once. He set himself to work on a particular subject. His ideas were kept separate, labelled, ticketed and parcelled out in a set form, in pews and compartments by themselves. They did not play into one another's hands. They did not re-act upon one another, as the blower's breath moulds the yielding glass. There is something hard and dry in them. What is the most wonderful thing in Shakespeare's faculties is their excessive sociability, and how they gossiped and compared notes together.

We must conclude this criticism; and we will do it with a quotation or two. One of the most beautiful passages in Chaucer's tale is the description of Cresseide's first avowal of her love:

And as the new abashed nightingale,
That stinteth first when she beginneth sing,
When that she heareth any herde's tale,
Or in the hedges any wight stirring,
And, after, sicker doth her voice outring;
Right so Cresseide, when that her dread stent,
Opened her heart, and told him her intent.

See also the two next stanzas, and particularly that divine one beginning

Her armes small, her back both straight and soft, &c.

Compare this with the following speech of Troilus to Cressida in the play.

O, that I thought it could be in a woman;
And if it can, I will presume in you,
To feed for aye her lamp and flame of love,
To keep her constancy in plight and youth,
Out-living beauties outward, with a mind
That doth renew swifter than blood decays.
Or, that persuasion could but thus convince me,
That my integrity and truth to you
Might be affronted with the match and weight
Of such a winnow'd purity in love;
How were I then uplifted! But alas,
I am as true as Truth's simplicity,
And simpler than the infancy of Truth.

These passages may not seem very characteristic at first sight, though we think they are so. We will give two, that cannot be mistaken. Patroclus says to Achilles;

—Rouse yourself; and the weak wanton Cupid
Shall from your neck unloose his amorous fold,
And like a dew-drop from the lion's mane,
Be shook to air.

Troilus, addressing the God of Day on the approach of the morning that parts him from Cressida, says with much scorn:

What! proffer'st thou thy light here for to sell?
  Go, sell it them that smalle seles grave.

If nobody but Shakespeare could have written the former, nobody but Chaucer would have thought of the latter.—Chaucer was the most literal of poets, as Richardson was of prose-writers.

<<span id="filepos0038659969"> a>ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

This is a very noble play. Though not in the first class of Shakespeare's productions, it stands next to them, and is, we think, the finest of his historical plays, that is, of those in which he made poetry the organ of history, and assumed a certain tone of character and sentiment, in conformity to known facts, instead of trusting to his observations of general nature or to the unlimited indulgence of his own fancy. What he has added to the history, is upon a par with it. His genius was, as it were, a match for history as well as nature, and could grapple at will with either. This play is full of that pervading comprehensive power by which the poet could always make himself master of time and circumstances. It presents a fine picture of Roman pride and Eastern magnificence: and in the struggle between the two, the empire of the world seems suspended, 'like the swan's down-feather:

That stands upon the swell at full of tide,
  And neither way inclines.'

The characters breathe, move, and live. Shakespeare does not stand reasoning on what his characters would do or say, but at once BECOMES them, and speaks and acts for them. He does not present us with groups of stage-puppets or poetical machines making set speeches on human life, and acting from a calculation of ostensible motives, but he brings living men and women on the scene, who speak and act from real feelings, according to the ebbs and flows of passion, without the least tincture of the pedantry of logic or rhetoric. Nothing is made out by inference and analogy, by climax and antithesis, but everything takes place just as it would have done in reality, according to the occasion.—The character of Cleopatra is a masterpiece. What an extreme contrast it affords to Imogen! One would think it almost impossible for the same person to have drawn both. She is voluptuous, ostentatious, conscious, boastful of her charms, haughty, tyrannical, fickle. The luxurious pomp and gorgeous extravagance of the Egyptian queen are displayed in all their force and lustre, as well as the irregular grandeur of the soul of Mark Antony. Take only the first four lines that they speak as an example of the regal style of love-making.

Cleopatra. If it be love, indeed, tell me how much?

Antony. There's beggary in the love that can be reckon'd.

Cleopatra. I'll set a bourn how far to be belov'd.

Antony. Then must thou needs find out new heav'n, new earth.

The rich and poetical description of her person, beginning:

The barge she sat in, like a burnish'd throne,
  Burnt on the water; the poop was beaten gold,
  Purple the sails, and so perfumed, that
  The winds were love-sick—

seems to prepare the way for, and almost to justify the subsequent infatuation of Antony when in the sea-fight at Actium, he leaves the battle, and 'like a doting mallard' follows her flying sails.

Few things in Shakespeare (and we know of nothing in any other author like them) have more of that local truth of imagination and character than the passage in which Cleopatra is represented conjecturing what were the employments of Antony in his absence. 'He's speaking now, or murmuring—WHERE'S MY

SERPENT OF OLD NILE?' Or again, when she says to Antony, after the defeat at Actium, and his summoning up resolution to risk another fight—'It is my birthday; I had thought to have held it poor; but since my lord is Antony again, I will be Cleopatra.' Perhaps the finest burst of all is Antony's rage after his final defeat when he comes in, and surprises the messenger of Caesar kissing her hand:

To let a fellow that will take rewards,
  And say, God quit you, be familiar with
  My play-fellow, your hand; this kingly seal,
  And plighter of high hearts.

It is no wonder that he orders him to be whipped; but his low condition is not the true reason: there is another feeling which lies deeper, though Antony's pride would not let him show it, except by his rage; he suspects the fellow to be Caesar's proxy.

Cleopatra's whole character is the triumph of the voluptuous, of the love of pleasure and the power of giving it, over every other consideration. Octavia is a dull foil to her, and Fulvia a shrew and shrill-tongued. What a picture do those lines give of her:

Age cannot wither her, nor custom stale
  Her infinite variety. Other women cloy
  The appetites they feed, but she makes hungry
  Where most she satisfies.

What a spirit and fire in her conversation with Antony's messenger who brings her the unwelcome news of his marriage with Octavia! How all the pride of beauty and of high rank breaks out in her promised reward to him:

—There's gold, and here
  My bluest veins to kiss!

She had great and unpardonable faults, but the beauty of her death almost redeems them. She learns from the depth of despair the strength of her affections. She keeps her queen-like state in the last disgrace, and her sense of the pleasurable in the last moments of her life. She tastes a luxury in death. After applying the asp, she says with fondness:

Dost thou not see my baby at my breast,
That sucks the nurse asleep?
As sweet as balm, as soft as air, as gentle.
Oh Antony!

It is worth while to observe that Shakespeare has contrasted the extreme magnificence of the descriptions in this play with pictures of extreme suffering and physical horror, not less striking—partly perhaps to excuse the effeminacy of Mark Antony to whom they are related as having happened, but more to preserve a certain balance of feeling in the mind. Caesar says, hearing of his conduct at the court of Cleopatra:

—Antony,
Leave thy lascivious wassails. When thou once
Wert beaten from Mutina, where thou slew'st
Hirtius and Pansa, consuls, at thy heel
Did famine follow, whom thou fought'st against,
Though daintily brought up, with patience more
Than savages could suffer. Thou did'st drink
The stale of horses, and the gilded puddle
Which beast would cough at. Thy palate then did deign
The roughest berry on the rudest hedge,
Yea, like the stag, when snow the pasture sheets,
The barks of trees thou browsed'st. On the Alps,
It is reported, thou did'st eat strange flesh,
Which some did die to look on: and all this,
It wounds thine honour, that I speak it now,
Was borne so like a soldier, that thy cheek
So much as lank'd not.

The passage after Antony's defeat by Augustus where he is made to say:

Yes, yes; he at Philippi kept
His sword e'en like a dancer; while I struck
The lean and wrinkled Cassius, and 'twas I
That the mad Brutus ended,

is one of those fine retrospections which show us the winding and eventful march of human life. The jealous attention which has been paid to the unities both of time and place has taken away the principle of perspective in the drama, and all the interest which objects derive from distance, from contrast, from privation, from change of fortune, from long-cherished passion; and contracts our view of life from a strange and romantic dream, long, obscure, and infinite, into a smartly contested, three hours' inaugural disputation on its merits by the different candidates for theatrical applause.

The latter scenes of ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA are full of the changes of accident and passion. Success and defeat follow one another with startling rapidity. Fortune sits upon her wheel more blind and giddy than usual. This precarious state and the approaching dissolution of his greatness are strikingly displayed in the dialogue between Antony and Eros:

Antony. Eros, thou yet behold'st me?

Eros. Ay, noble lord.

Antony. Sometime we see a cloud that's dragonish,
A vapour sometime, like a bear or lion,
A towered citadel, a pendant rock,
A forked mountain, or blue promontory
With trees upon't, that nod unto the world
And mock our eyes with air. Thou hast seen these signs,
They are black vesper's pageants.

Eros. Ay, my lord.

Antony. That which is now a horse, even with a thought
The rack dislimns, and makes it indistinct
As water is in water.

Eros. It does, my lord.

Antony. My good knave, Eros, now thy captain is

Even such a body, &c.

This is, without doubt, one of the finest pieces of poetry in Shakespeare. The splendour of the imagery, the semblance of reality, the lofty range of picturesque objects hanging over the world, their evanescent nature, the total uncertainty of what is left behind, are just like the mouldering schemes of human greatness. It is finer than Cleopatra's passionate lamentation over his fallen grandeur, because it is more dim, unstable, unsubstantial. Antony's headstrong presumption and infatuated determination to yield to Cleopatra's wishes to fight by sea instead of land, meet a merited punishment; and the extravagance of his resolutions, increasing with the desperateness of his circumstances, is well commented upon by Enobarbus:

—I see men's judgements are
A parcel of their fortunes, and things outward
Do draw the inward quality after them
To suffer all alike.

The repentance of Enobarbus after his treachery to his master is the most affecting part of the play. He cannot recover from the blow which Antony's generosity gives him, and he dies broken-hearted 'a master-leaver and a fugitive'.

Shakespeare's genius has spread over the whole play a richness like the overflowing of the Nile.

<<span id="filepos0038674590"> a>HAMLET

This is that Hamlet the Dane, whom we read of in our youth, and whom we seem almost to remember in our after-years; he who made that famous soliloquy on life, who gave the advice to the players, who thought 'this goodly frame, the earth, a sterile promontory, and this brave o'er-hanging firmament, the air, this majestical roof fretted with golden fire, a foul and pestilent congregation of vapours'; whom 'man delighted not, nor woman neither'; he who talked with the grave-diggers, and moralized on Yorick's skull; the schoolfellow of Rosencraus and Guildenstern at Wittenberg; the friend of Horatio; the lover of Ophelia; he that was mad and sent to England; the slow avenger of his father's death; who lived at the court of Horwendillus five hundred years before we were born, but all whose thoughts we seem to know as well as we do our own, because we have read them in Shakespeare.

Hamlet is a name: his speeches and sayings but the idle coinage of the poet's brain. What then, are they not real? They are as real as our own thoughts. Their reality is in the reader's mind. It is WE who are Hamlet. This play has a prophetic truth, which is above that of history. Whoever has become thoughtful and melancholy through his own mishaps or those of others; whoever has borne about with him the clouded brow of reflection, and thought himself 'too much i' th' sun'; whoever has seen the golden lamp of day dimmed by envious mists rising in his own breast, and could find in the world before him only a dull blank with nothing left remarkable in it; whoever has known "the pangs of despised love, the insolence of office, or the spurns which patient merit of the unworthy takes"; he who has felt his mind sink within him, and sadness cling to his heart like a malady, who has had his hopes blighted and his youth staggered by the apparitions of strange things; who cannot be well at ease, while he sees evil hovering near him like a spectre; whose powers of action have been eaten up by thought, he to whom the universe seems infinite, and himself nothing; whose bitterness of soul makes him careless of consequences, and who goes to a play as his best resource to shove off, to a second remove, the evils of life by a mock-presentation of them—this is the true Hamlet.

We have been so used to this tragedy that we hardly know how to criticize it any more than we should know how to describe our own faces. But we must make such observations as we can. It is the one of Shakespeare's plays that we think of oftenest, because it abounds most in striking reflections on human life, and because the distresses of Hamlet are transferred, by the turn of his mind, to the general account of humanity. Whatever happens to him, we apply to ourselves, because he applies it so himself as a means of general reasoning. He is a great moralizer; and what makes him worth attending to is, that he moralizes on his own feelings and experience. He is not a commonplace pedant. If Lear shows the greatest depth of passion, Hamlet is the most remarkable for the ingenuity, originality, and unstudied development of character. Shakespeare had more magnanimity than any other poet, and he has shown more of it in this play than in any other. There is no attempt to force an interest: everything is left for time and circumstances to unfold. The attention is excited without effort, the incidents succeed each other as matters of course, the characters think and speak and act just as they might do, if left entirely to themselves. There is no set purpose, no straining at a point. The observations are suggested by the passing scene—the gusts of passion come and go like sounds of music borne on the wind. The whole play is an exact transcript of what might be supposed to have taken place at the court of Denmark, at the remote period of time fixed upon, before the modern refinements in morals and manners were heard of. It would have been interesting enough to have been admitted as a bystander in such a scene, at such a time, to have heard and seen something of what was going on. But here we are more than spectators. We have not only 'the outward pageants and the signs of grief; but 'we have that within which passes show'. We read the thoughts of the heart, we catch the passions living as they rise. Other dramatic writers give us very fine versions and paraphrases of nature: but Shakespeare, together with his own comments, gives us the original text, that we may judge for ourselves. This is a very great advantage.

The character of Hamlet is itself a pure effusion of genius. It is not a character marked by strength of will or even of passion, but by refinement of thought and sentiment. Hamlet is as little of the hero as a man can well be: but he is a young and princely novice, full of high enthusiasm and quick sensibility—the sport of circumstances, questioning with fortune and refining on his own feelings, and forced from the natural bias of his disposition by the strangeness of his situation. He seems incapable of deliberate action, and is only hurried into extremities on the spur of the occasion, when he has no time to reflect, as in the scene where he kills Polonius, and again, where he alters the letters which Rosencraus and Guildenstern are taking with them to England, purporting his death. At other times, when he is most bound to act, he remains puzzled, undecided, and sceptical, dallies with his purposes, till the occasion is lost, and always finds some pretence to relapse into indolence and thoughtfulness again. For this reason he refuses to kill the King when he is at his prayers, and by a refinement in malice, which is in truth only an excuse for his own want of resolution, defers his revenge to some more fatal opportunity, when he shall be engaged in some act 'that has no relish of salvation in it':

He kneels and prays,
  And now I'll do't, and so he goes to heaven,

And so am I reveng'd; THAT WOULD BE SCANN'D.
He kill'd my father, and for that,
I, his sole son, send him to heaven.
Why this is reward, not revenge.
Up sword and know thou a more horrid time,
When he is drunk, asleep, or in a rage.

He is the prince of philosophical speculators, and because he cannot have his revenge perfect, according to the most refined idea his wish can form, he misses it altogether. So he scruples to trust the suggestions of the Ghost, contrives the scene of the play to have surer proof of his uncle's guilt, and then rests satisfied with this confirmation of his suspicions, and the success of his experiment, instead of acting upon it. Yet he is sensible of his own weakness, taxes himself with it, and tries to reason himself out of it:

How all occasions do inform against me,
And spur my dull revenge! What is a man,
If his chief good and market of his time
Be but to sleep and feed? A beast; no more.
Sure he that made us with such large discourse,
Looking before and after, gave us not
That capability and god-like reason
To rust in us unus'd: now whether it be
Bestial oblivion, or some craven scruple
Of thinking too precisely on th' event,—
A thought which quarter'd, hath but one part wisdom,
And ever three parts coward;—I do not know
Why yet I live to say, this thing's to do;
Sith I have cause, and will, and strength, and means
To do it. Examples gross as earth excite me:
Witness this army of such mass and charge,
Led by a delicate and tender prince,
Whose spirit with divine ambition puff'd,
Makes mouths at the invisible event,
Exposing what is mortal and unsure
To all that fortune, death, and danger dare,
Even for an egg-shell. 'Tis not to be great,
Never to stir without great argument;
But greatly to find quarrel in a straw,

When honour's at the stake. How stand I then,
That have a father kill'd, a mother stain'd,
Excitements of my reason and my blood,
And let all sleep, while to my shame I see
The imminent death of twenty thousand men,
That for a fantasy and trick of fame,
Go to their graves like beds, fight for a plot
Whereon the numbers cannot try the cause,
Which is not tomb enough and continent
To hide the slain?—O, from this time forth,
My thoughts be bloody or be nothing worth.

Still he does nothing; and this very speculation on his own infirmity only affords him another occasion for indulging it. It is not for any want of attachment to his father or abhorrence of his murder that Hamlet is thus dilatory, but it is more to his taste to indulge his imagination in reflecting upon the enormity of the crime and refining on his schemes of vengeance, than to put them into immediate practice. His ruling passion is to think, not to act: and any vague pretence that flatters this propensity instantly diverts him from his previous purposes.

The moral perfection of this character has been called in question, we think, by those who did not understand it. It is more interesting than according to rules: amiable, though not faultless. The ethical delineations of 'that noble and liberal casuist' (as Shakespeare has been well called) do not exhibit the drab-coloured quakerism of morality. His plays are not copied either from The Whole Duty of Man, or from The Academy of Compliments! We confess, we are a little shocked at the want of refinement in those who are shocked at the want of refinement in Hamlet. The want of punctilious exactness in his behaviour either partakes of the 'license of the time', or else belongs to the very excess of intellectual refinement in the character, which makes the common rules of life, as well as his own purposes, sit loose upon him. He may be said to be amenable only to the tribunal of his own thoughts, and is too much taken up with the airy world of contemplation to lay as much stress as he ought on the practical consequences of things. His habitual principles of action are unhinged and out of joint with the time. His conduct to Ophelia is quite natural in his circumstances. It is that of assumed severity only. It is the effect of disappointed hope, of bitter regrets, of affection suspended, not obliterated, by the distractions of the scene around him! Amidst the natural and preternatural horrors of his situation, he might be excused in delicacy from carrying on a regular courtship. When 'his father's spirit was in arms', it was not a time for the son to make love in. He could neither marry Ophelia, nor wound her mind by explaining the cause of his alienation, which he durst hardly trust himself to think of. It would have taken him years to have come to a direct explanation on the point. In the harassed state of his mind, he could not have done otherwise than he did. His conduct does not contradict what he says when he sees her funeral:

I loved Ophelia: forty thousand brothers
  Could not with all their quantity of love
  Make up my sum.

Nothing can be more affecting or beautiful than the Queen's apostrophe to Ophelia on throwing flowers into the grave:

—Sweets to the sweet, farewell.
  I hop'd thou should'st have been my Hamlet's wife:
  I thought thy bride-bed to have deck'd, sweet maid,
  And not have strew'd thy grave.

Shakespeare was thoroughly a master of the mixed motives of human character, and he here shows us the Queen, who was so criminal in some respects, not without sensibility and affection in other relations of life.—Ophelia is a character almost too exquisitely touching to be dwelt upon. Oh rose of May, oh flower too soon faded! Her love, her madness, her death, are described with the truest touches of tenderness and pathos. It is a character which nobody but Shakespeare could have drawn in the way that he has done, and to the conception of which there is not even the smallest approach, except in some of the old romantic ballads. Her brother, Laertes, is a character we do not like so well; he is too hot and choleric, and somewhat rodomontade. Polonius is a perfect character in its kind; nor is there any foundation for the objections which have been made to the consistency of this part. It is said that he acts very foolishly and talks very sensibly. There is no inconsistency in that. Again, that he talks wisely at one time and foolishly at another; that his advice to Laertes is very sensible, and his advice to the King and Queen on the subject of Hamlet's madness very ridiculous. But he gives the one as a father, and is sincere in it; he gives the other as a mere courtier, a busy-body, and is accordingly officious, garrulous, and impertinent. In short, Shakespeare has been accused of inconsistency in this and other characters, only because he has kept up the distinction which there is in nature, between the understandings and the moral habits of men, between the absurdity of their ideas and the absurdity of their motives. Polonius is not a fool, but he makes himself so. His folly, whether in his actions or speeches, comes under the head of impropriety of intention.

We do not like to see our author's plays acted, and least of all, Hamlet. There is no play that suffers so much in being transferred to the stage. Hamlet himself seems hardly capable of being acted. Mr. Kemble unavoidably fails in this character from a want of ease and variety. The character of Hamlet is made up of undulating lines; it has the yielding flexibility of 'a wave o' th' sea'. Mr. Kemble plays it like a man in armour, with a determined inveteracy of purpose, in one undeviating straight line, which is as remote from the natural grace and refined susceptibility of the character as the sharp angles and abrupt starts which Mr. Kean introduces into the part. Mr. Kean's Hamlet is as much too splenetic and rash as Mr. Kemble's is too deliberate and formal. His manner is too strong and pointed. He throws a severity, approaching to virulence into the common observations and answers. There is nothing of this in Hamlet. He is, as it were, wrapped up in his reflections, and only THINKS ALOUD. There should therefore be no attempt to impress what he says upon others by a studied exaggeration of emphasis or manner; no TALKING AT his hearers. There should be as much of the gentleman and scholar as possible infused into the part, and as little of the actor, A pensive air of sadness should sit reluctantly upon his brow, but no appearance of fixed and sullen gloom. He is full of weakness and melancholy, but there is no harshness in his nature. He is the most amiable of misanthropes.

<<span id="filepos0038692168"> a>THE TEMPEST.

There can be little doubt that Shakespeare was the most universal genius that ever lived. 'Either for tragedy, comedy, history, pastoral, pastoral-comical, historical-pastoral, scene individable or poem unlimited, he is the only man. Seneca cannot be too heavy, nor Plautus too light for him.' He has not only the same absolute command over our laughter and our tears, all the resources of passion, of wit, of thought, of observation, but he has the most unbounded range of fanciful invention, whether terrible or playful, the same insight into the world of imagination that he has into the world of reality; and over all there presides the same truth of character and nature, and the same spirit of humanity. His ideal beings are as true and natural as his real characters; that is, as consistent with themselves, or if we suppose such beings to exist at all, they could not act, speak, or feel otherwise than as he makes them. He has invented for them a language, manners, and sentiments of their own, from the tremendous imprecations of the Witches in MACBETH, when they do 'a deed without a name', to the sylph-like expressions 'of Ariel, who 'does his spiriting gently'; the mischievous tricks and gossiping of Robin Goodfellow, or the uncouth gabbling and emphatic gesticulations of Caliban in this play.

THE TEMPEST is one of the most original and perfect of Shakespeare's productions, and he has shown in it all the variety of his powers. It is full of grace and grandeur. The human and imaginary characters, the dramatic and the grotesque, are blended together with the greatest art, and without any appearance of it. Though he has here given 'to airy nothing a local habitation and a name', yet that part which is only the fantastic creation of his mind, has the same palpable texture, and coheres 'semblably' with the rest. As the preternatural part has the air of reality, and almost haunts the imagination with a sense of truth, the real characters and events partake of the wildness of a dream. The stately magician, Prospero, driven from his dukedom, but around whom (so potent is his art) airy spirits throng numberless to do his bidding; his daughter Miranda ('worthy of that name') to whom all the power of his art points, and who seems the goddess of the isle; the princely Ferdinand, cast by fate upon the haven of his happiness in this idol of his love; the delicate Ariel; the savage Caliban, half brute, half demon; the drunken ship's crew—are all connected parts of the story, and can hardly be spared from the place they fill. Even the local scenery is of a piece and character with the subject. Prospero's enchanted island seems to have risen up out of the sea; the airy music, the tempest-tossed vessel, the turbulent waves, all have the effect of the landscape background of some fine picture. Shakespeare's pencil is (to use an allusion of his own) 'like the dyer's hand, subdued to what it works in'. Everything in him, though it partakes of 'the liberty of wit', is also subjected to 'the law' of the understanding. For instance, even the drunken sailors, who are made reeling-ripe, share, in the disorder of their minds and bodies, in the tumult of the elements, and seem on shore to be as much at the mercy of chance as they were before at the mercy of the winds and waves. These fellows with their sea-wit are the least to our taste of any part of the play: but they are as like drunken sailors as they can be, and are an indirect foil to Caliban, whose figure acquires a classical dignity in the comparison.

The character of Caliban is generally thought (and justly so) to be one of the author's masterpieces. It is not indeed pleasant to see this character on the stage any more than it is to see the God Pan personated there. But in itself it is one of the wildest and most abstracted of all Shakespeare's characters, whose deformity whether of body or mind is redeemed by the power and truth of the imagination displayed in it. It is the essence of grossness, but there is not a particle of vulgarity in it. Shakespeare has described the brutal mind of Caliban in contact with the pure and original forms of nature; the character grows out of the soil where it is rooted uncontrolled, uncouth and wild, uncramped by any of the meannesses of custom. It is 'of the earth, earthy'. It seems almost to have been dug out of the ground, with a soul instinctively superadded to it answering to its wants and origin. Vulgarity is not natural coarseness, but conventional coarseness, learnt from others, contrary to, or without an entire conformity of natural power and disposition; as fashion is the commonplace affectation of what is elegant and refined without any feeling of the essence of it. Schlegel, the admirable German critic on Shakespeare observes that Caliban is a poetical character, and 'always speaks in blank verse'. He first comes in thus:

Caliban. As wicked dew as e'er my mother brush'd
    With raven's feather from unwholesome fen,
    Drop on you both: a south-west blow on ye,
    And blister you all o'er!

Prospero. For this, be sure, to-night thou shalt have cramps,
    Side-stitches that shall pen thy breath up; urchins
    Shall for that vast of night that they may work,
    All exercise on thee: thou shalt be pinch'd
    As thick as honey-combs, each pinch more stinging
    Than bees that made 'em.

Caliban. I must eat my dinner.
    This island's mine by Sycorax my mother,
    Which thou tak'st from me. When thou camest first,
    Thou strok'dst me, and mad'st much of me; would'st give me

Water with berries in 't; and teach me how
To name the bigger light and how the less
That burn by day and night; and then I lov'd thee,
And show'd thee all the qualities o' th' isle,
The fresh springs, brine-pits, barren place and fertile:
Curs'd be I that I did so! All the charms
Of Sycorax, toads, beetles, bats, light on you!
For I am all the subjects that you have,
Who first was mine own king; and here you sty me
In this hard rock, whiles you do keep from me
The rest o' th' island.

And again, he promises Trinculo his services thus, if he will free him from his drudgery.

I'll show thee the best springs; I'll pluck thee berries,
I'll fish for thee, and get thee wood enough.
I pr'ythee let me bring thee where crabs grow,
And I with my long nails will dig thee pig-nuts:
Show thee a jay's nest, and instruct thee how
To snare the nimble marmozet: I'll bring thee
To clust'ring filberds; and sometimes I'll get thee
Young scamels from the rock.

In conducting Stephano and Trinculo to Prospero's cell, Caliban shows the superiority of natural capacity over greater knowledge and greater folly; and in a former scene, when Ariel frightens them with his music, Caliban to encourage them accounts for it in the eloquent poetry of the senses:

Be not afraid, the isle is full of noises,
Sounds, and sweet airs, that give delight and hurt not.
Sometimes a thousand twanging instruments
Will hum about mine ears, and sometimes voices,
That if I then had waked after long sleep,
Would make me sleep again; and then in dreaming,
The clouds methought would open, and show riches
Ready to drop upon me: when I wak'd
I cried to dream again.

This is not more beautiful than it is true. The poet here shows us the savage with the simplicity of a child, and makes the strange monster amiable. Shakespeare had to paint the human animal rude and without choice in its pleasures, but not without the sense of pleasure or some germ of the affections. Master Barnardine in Measure for Measure, the savage of civilized life, is an admirable philosophical counterpart to Caliban.

Shakespeare has, as it were by design, drawn off from Caliban the elements of whatever is ethereal and refined, to compound them in the unearthly mould of Ariel. Nothing was ever more finely conceived than this contrast between the material and the spiritual, the gross and delicate. Ariel is imaginary power, the swiftness of thought personified. When told to make good speed by Prospero, he says, 'I drink the air before me.' This is something like Puck's boast on a similar occasion, 'I'll put a girdle round about the earth in forty minutes.' But Ariel differs from Puck in having a fellow-feeling in the interests of those he is employed about. How exquisite is the following dialogue between him and Prospero!

Ariel. Your charm so strongly works 'em,
    That if you now beheld them, your affections
    Would become tender.

Prospero. Dost thou think so, spirit?

Ariel. Mine would, sir, were I human.

Prospero. And mine shall.
    Hast thou, which art but air, a touch, a feeling
    Of their afflictions, and shall not myself,
    One of their kind, that relish all as sharply,
    Passion'd as they, be kindlier moved than thou art?

It has been observed that there is a peculiar charm in the songs introduced in Shakespeare, which, without conveying any distinct images, seem to recall all the feelings connected with them, like snatches of half-forgotten music heard indistinctly and at intervals. There is this effect produced by Ariel's songs, which (as we are told) seem to sound in the air, and as if the person playing them were invisible. We shall give one instance out of many of this general power.

Enter Ferdinend; and Ariel invisible, playing and singing.

Ariel's Song

Come unto these yellow sands,
And then take hands;
Curt'sied when you have, and kiss'd,
(The wild waves whist;)
Foot it featly here and there;
And sweet sprites the burden bear.
[Burden dispersedly.]
Hark, hark! bowgh-wowgh: the watch-dogs bark,
Bowgh-wowgh.

Ariel. Hark, hark! I hear
The strain of strutting chanticleer
Cry cock-a-doodle-doo.

Ferdinand. Where should this music be? in air or earth?
It sounds no more: and sure it waits upon
Some god o' th' island. Sitting on a bank
Weeping against the king my father's wreck,
This music crept by me upon the waters,
Allaying both their fury and my passion
With its sweet air; thence I have follow'd it,
Or it hath drawn me rather:—but 'tis gone.—
No, it begins again.

Ariel's Song

Full fathom Eve thy father lies,
Of his bones are coral made:
Those are pearls that were his eyes,
Nothing of him that doth fade,
But doth suffer a sea change,

Into something rich and strange.
Sea-nymphs hourly ring his knell—
Hark! I now I hear them, ding-dong bell.
[Burden ding-dong.]

Ferdinand. The ditty does remember my drown'd father.
This is no mortal business, nor no sound
That the earth owns: I hear it now above me.

The courtship between Ferdinand and Miranda is one of the chief beauties of this play. It is the very purity of love. The pretended interference of Prospero with it heightens its interest, and is in character with the magician, whose sense of preternatural power makes him arbitrary, tetchy, and impatient of opposition.

The Tempest is a finer play than the Midsummer Night's Dream, which has sometimes been compared with it; but it is not so fine a poem. There are a greater number of beautiful passages in the latter. Two of the most striking in The Tempest are spoken by Prospero. The one is that admirable one when the vision which he has conjured up disappears, beginning, 'The cloud-capp'd towers, the gorgeous palaces,' &c., which has so often been quoted that every schoolboy knows it by heart; the other is that which Prospero makes in abjuring his art:

Ye elves of hills, brooks, standing lakes, and groves,
And ye that on the sands with printless foot
Do chase the ebbing Neptune, and do fly him
When he comes back; you demi-puppets, that
By moonshine do the green sour ringlets make,
Whereof the ewe not bites; and you whose pastime
Is to make midnight mushrooms, that rejoice
To hear the solemn curfew, by whose aid
(Weak masters tho' ye be) I have be-dimm'd
The noon-tide sun, call'd forth the mutinous winds,
And 'twixt the green sea and the azur'd vault
Set roaring war; to the dread rattling thunder
Have I giv'n fire, and rifted Jove's stout oak
With his own bolt; the strong-bas'd promontory

Have I made shake, and by the spurs pluck'd up
The pine and cedar: graves at my command
Have wak'd their sleepers; op'd, and let 'em forth
By my so potent art. But this rough magic
I here abjure; and when I have requir'd
Some heav'nly music, which ev'n now I do,
(To work mine end upon their senses that
This airy charm is for) I'll break my staff,
Bury it certain fadoms in the earth,
And deeper than did ever plummet sound,
I'll drown my book.

We must not forget to mention among other things in this play, that Shakespeare has anticipated nearly all the arguments on the Utopian schemes of modern philosophy:

Gonzalo. Had I the plantation of this isle, my lord—

Antonio. He'd sow't with nettle-seed.

Sebastian. Or docks or mallows.

Gonzalo. And ere the king on't, what would I do?

Sebastian. 'Scape being drunk, or want of wine.

Gonzalo. I' th' commonwealth I would by contraries
Execute all things: for no kind of traffic
Would I admit; no name of agistrate;
Letters should not be known; wealth, poverty,
And use of ervice, none; contract, succession,
Bourn, bound of land, tilth, vineyard, none;
No use of metal, corn, or wine, or oil;
No occupation, all men idle, all,
And women too; but innocent and pure:
No sov'reignty.

Sebastian. And yet he would be king on't.

Antonio. The latter end of his commonwealth forgets the beginning.

Gonzalo. All things in common nature should produce
Without sweat or endeavour. Treason, felony,
Sword, pike, knife, gun, or need of any engine
Would I not have; but nature should bring forth,
Of its own kind, all foison, all abundance
To feed my innocent people!

Sebastian. No marrying 'mong his subjects?

Antonio. None, man; all idle; whores and knaves.

Gonzalo. I would with such perfection govern, sir,
T' excel the golden age.

Sebastian. Save his majesty!

<<span id="filepos0038714228"> a>THE MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

Bottom the Weaver is a character that has not had justice done him. He is the most romantic of mechanics. And what a list of companions he has—Quince the Carpenter, Snug the Joiner, Flute the Bellows-mender, Snout the Tinker, Starveling the Tailor; and then again, what a group of fairy attendants, Puck, Peaseblossom, Cobweb, Moth, and Mustard-seed! It has been observed that Shakespeare's characters are constructed upon deep physiological principles; and there is something in this play which looks very like it. Bottom the Weaver, who takes the lead of

This crew of patches, rude mechanicals,

That work for bread upon Athenian stalls,

follows a sedentary trade, and he is accordingly represented as conceited, serious, and fantastical. He is ready to undertake anything and everything, as if it was as much a matter of course as the motion of his loom and shuttle. He is for playing the tyrant, the lover, the lady, the lion. 'He will roar that it shall do any man's heart good to hear him'; and this being objected to as improper, he still has a resource in his good opinion of himself, and 'will roar you an 'twere any nightingale'. Snug the Joiner is the moral man of the piece, who proceeds by measurement and discretion in all things. You see him with his rule and compasses in his hand. 'Have you the lion's part written? Pray you, if it be, give it me, for I am slow of study.'—'You may do it extempore,' says Quince, 'for it is nothing but roaring.' Starveling the Tailor keeps the peace, and objects to the lion and the drawn sword. 'I believe we must leave the killing out when all's done.' Starveling, however, does not start the objections himself, but seconds them when made by others, as if he had not spirit to express his fears without encouragement. It is too much to suppose all this intentional; but it very luckily falls out so. Nature includes all that is implied in the most subtle analytical distinctions; and the same distinctions will be found in Shakespeare. Bottom, who is not only chief actor, but stage-manager for the occasion, has a device to obviate the danger of frightening the ladies: 'Write me a prologue, and let the prologue seem to say, we will do no harm with our swords, and that Pyramus is not killed indeed; and for better assurance, tell them that I, Pyramus, am not Pyramus, but Bottom the Weaver; this will put them out of fear.' Bottom seems to have understood the subject of dramatic illusion at least as well as any modern essayist. If our holiday mechanic rules the roast among his fellows, he is no less at home in his new character of an ass, 'with amiable cheeks, and fair large ears'. He instinctively acquires a most learned taste, and grows fastidious in the choice of dried peas and bottled hay. He is quite familiar with his new attendants, and assigns them their parts with all due gravity. 'Monsieur Cobweb, good Monsieur, get your weapon in your hand, and kill me a red-hipt humble-bee on the top of a thistle, and, good Monsieur, bring me the honey-bag.' What an exact knowledge is here shown of natural history!

Puck, or Robin Goodfellow, is the leader of the fairy band. He is the Ariel of the MIDSUMMER'S NIGHT DREAM; and yet as unlike as can be to the Ariel in THE TEMPEST. No other poet could have made two such different characters out of the same fanciful materials and situations. Ariel is a minister of retribution, who is touched with a sense of pity at the woes he inflicts. Puck is a mad-cap sprite, full of wantonness and mischief, who laughs at those whom he misleads—'Lord, what fools these mortals be!' Ariel cleaves the air, and executes his mission with the zeal of a winged messenger; Puck is borne along on his fairy errand like the light and glittering gossamer before the breeze. He is, indeed, a most Epicurean little gentleman, dealing in quaint devices and faring in dainty delights. Prospero and his world of spirits are a set of moralists; but with Oberon and his fairies we are launched at once into the empire of the butterflies. How beautifully is this race of beings contrasted with the men and women actors in the scene, by a single epithet which Titania gives to the latter, 'the human mortals'! It is astonishing that Shakespeare should be considered, not only by foreigners, but by many of our own critics, as a gloomy and heavy writer, who painted nothing but 'gorgons and hydras, and chimeras dire'. His subtlety exceeds that of all other dramatic writers, insomuch that a celebrated person of the present day said that he regarded him rather as a metaphysician than a poet. His delicacy and sportive gaiety are infinite. In the MIDSUMMER'S NIGHT DREAM alone, we should imagine, there is more sweetness and beauty of description than in the whole range of French poetry put together. What we mean is this, that we will produce out of that single play ten passages, to which we do not think any ten passages in the works of the French poets can be opposed, displaying equal fancy and imagery. Shall we mention the remonstrance of Helena to Hermia, or Titania's description of her fairy train, or her disputes with Oberon about the Indian boy, or Puck's account of himself and his employments, or the Fairy Queen's exhortation to the elves to pay due attendance upon her favourite, Bottom; or Hippolita's description of a chace, or Theseus's answer? The two last are as heroical and spirited as the others are full of luscious tenderness. The reading of this play is like wandering in a grove by moonlight: the descriptions breathe a sweetness like odours thrown from beds of flowers.

Titania's exhortation to the fairies to wait upon Bottom, which is remarkable for a certain cloying sweetness in the repetition of the rhymes, is as follows:

Be kind and courteous to this gentleman.
  Hop in his walks, and gambol in his eyes,
  Feed him with apricocks and dewberries,
  With purple grapes, green figs and mulberries;
  The honey-bags steal from the humble bees,

And for night tapers crop their waxen thighs,
And light them at the fiery glow-worm's eyes,
To have my love to bed, and to arise:
And pluck the wings from painted butterflies,
To fan the moon-beams from his sleeping eyes;
Nod to him, elves, and do him courtesies.

The sounds of the lute and of the trumpet are not more distinct than the poetry of the foregoing passage, and of the conversation between Theseus and Hippolita:

Theseus. Go, one of you, find out the forester,
For now our observation is perform'd;
And since we have the vaward of the day,
My love shall hear the music of my hounds.
Uncouple in the western valley, go,
Dispatch, I say, and find the forester.
We will, fair Queen, up to the mountain's top,
And mark the musical confusion
Of hounds and echo in conjunction.

Hippolita. I was with Hercules and Cadmus once,
When in a wood of Crete they bay'd the bear
With hounds of Sparta; never did I hear
Such gallant chiding. For besides the groves,
The skies, the fountains, every region near
Seena'd all one mutual cry. I never heard
So musical a discord, such sweet thunder.

Theseus. My hounds are bred out of the Spartan kind,
So flew'd, so sanded, and their heads are hung
With ears that sweep away the morning dew;
Crook-knee'd and dew-lap'd, like Thessalian bulls,
Slow in pursuit, but matched in mouth like bells,
Each under each. A cry more tuneable
Was never halloo'd to, nor cheer'd with hom,
In Crete, in Sparta, nor in Thessaly: Judge when you hear.

Even Titian never made a hunting-piece of a gusto so fresh and lusty, and so near the first ages of the world as this.

It had been suggested to us, that the MIDSUMMER'S NIGHT DREAM would do admirably to get up as a Christmas after-piece; and our prompter proposed that Mr. Kean should play the part of Bottom, as worthy of his great talents. He might, in the discharge of his duty, offer to play the lady like any of our actresses that he pleased, the lover or the tyrant like any of our actors that he pleased, and the lion like 'the most fearful wild-fowl living'. The carpenter, the tailor, and joiner, it was thought, would hit the galleries. The young ladies in love would interest the side-boxes; and Robin Goodfellow and his companions excite a lively fellow-feeling in the children from school. There would be two courts, an empire within an empire, the Athenian and the Fairy King and Queen, with their attendants, and with all their finery. What an opportunity for processions, for the sound of trumpets and glittering of spears! What a fluttering of urchins' painted wings; what a delightful profusion of gauze clouds and airy spirits floating on them!

Alas, the experiment has been tried, and has failed; not through the fault of Mr. Kean, who did not play the part of Bottom, nor of Mr. Liston, who did, and who played it well, but from the nature of things. The Midsummer Night's Dream, when acted, is converted from a delightful fiction into a dull pantomime. All that is finest in the play is lost in the representation. The spectacle was grand; but the spirit was evaporated, the genius was fled.—Poetry and the stage do not agree well together. The attempt to reconcile them in this instance fails not only of effect, but of decorum. The IDEAL can have no place upon the stage, which is a picture without perspective; everything there is in the foreground. That which was merely an airy shape, a dream, a passing thought, immediately becomes an unmanageable reality. Where all is left to the imagination (as is the case in reading) every circumstance, near or remote, has an equal chance of being kept in mind, and tells according to the mixed impression of all that has been suggested. But the imagination cannot sufficiently qualify the actual impressions of the senses. Any offence given to the eye is not to be got rid of by explanation. Thus Bottom's head in the play is a fantastic illusion, produced by magic spells: on the stage, it is an ass's head, and nothing more; certainly a very strange costume for a gentleman to appear in. Fancy cannot be embodied any more than a simile can be painted; and it is as idle to attempt it as to personate Wall or Moonshine. Fairies are not incredible, but fairies six feet high are so. Monsters are not shocking, if they are seen at a proper distance. When ghosts appear at midday, when apparitions stalk along Cheapside, then may the MIDSUMMER'S

NIGHT DREAM be represented without injury at Covent Garden or at Drury Lane. The boards of a theatre and the regions of fancy are not the same thing.

<<span id="filepos0038727373"> a>ROMEO AND JULIET

ROMEO AND JULIET is the only tragedy which Shakespeare has written entirely on a love-story. It is supposed to have been his first play, and it deserves to stand in that proud rank. There is the buoyant spirit of youth in every line, in the rapturous intoxication of hope, and in the bitterness of despair. It has been said of ROMEO AND JULIET by a great critic, that 'whatever is most intoxicating in the odour of a southern spring, languishing in the song of the nightingale, or voluptuous in the first opening of the rose, is to be found in this poem'. The description is true; and yet it does not answer to our idea of the play. For if it has the sweetness of the rose, it has its freshness too; if it has the languor of the nightingale's song, it has also its giddy transport; if it has the softness of a southern spring, it is as glowing and as bright. There is nothing of a sickly and sentimental cast. Romeo and Juliet are in love, but they are not love-sick. Everything speaks the very soul of pleasure, the high and healthy pulse of the passions: the heart beats, the blood circulates and mantles throughout. Their courtship is not an insipid interchange of sentiments lip-deep, learnt at second-hand from poems and plays,—made up of beauties of the most shadowy kind, of 'fancies wan that hang the pensive head', of evanescent smiles and sighs that breathe not, of delicacy that shrinks from the touch and feebleness that scarce supports itself, an elaborate vacuity of thought, and an artificial dearth of sense, spirit, truth, and nature!—It is the reverse of all this. It is Shakespeare all over, and Shakespeare when he was young.

We have heard it objected to ROMEO AND JULIET that it is founded on an idle passion between a boy and a girl, who have scarcely seen and can have but little sympathy or rational esteem for one another, who have had no experience of the good or ills of life, and whose raptures or despair must be therefore equally groundless and fantastical. Whoever objects to the youth of the parties in this play as 'too unripe and crude' to pluck the sweets of love, and wishes to see a first-love carried on into a good old age, and the passions taken at the rebound, when their force is spent, may find all this done in the Stranger and in other German plays, where they do things by contraries, and transpose nature to inspire sentiment and create philosophy. Shakespeare proceeded in a more straightforward and, we think, effectual way. He did not endeavour to extract beauty from wrinkles, or the wild throb of passion from the last expiring sigh of indifference. He did not 'gather grapes of thorns nor figs of thistles'. It was not his way. But he has given a picture of human life, such as it is in the order of nature. He has founded the passion of the two lovers not on the pleasures they had experienced, but on all the pleasures they had NOT experienced. All that was to come of life was theirs. At that untried source of promised happiness they slaked their thirst, and the first eager draught made them drunk with love and joy. They were in full possession of their senses and their affections. Their hopes were of air, their desires of fire. Youth is the season of love, because the heart is then first melted in tenderness from the touch of novelty, and kindled to rapture, for it knows no end of its enjoyments or its wishes. Desire has no limit but itself. Passion, the love and expectation of pleasure, is infinite, extravagant, inexhaustible, till experience comes to check and kill it. Juliet exclaims on her first interview with Romeo:

My bounty is as boundless as the sea,
  My love as deep.

And why should it not? What was to hinder the thrilling tide of pleasure, which had just gushed from her heart, from flowing on without stint or measure, but experience which she was yet without? What was to abate the transport of the first sweet sense of pleasure, which her heart and her senses had just tasted, but indifference which she was yet a stranger to? What was there to check the ardour of hope, of faith, of constancy, just rising in her breast, but disappointment which she had not yet felt? As are the desires and the hopes of youthful passion, such is the keenness of its disappointments, and their baleful effect. Such is the transition in this play from the highest bliss to the lowest despair, from the nuptial couch to an untimely grave. The only evil that even in apprehension befalls the two lovers is the loss of the greatest possible felicity; yet this loss is fatal to both, for they had rather part with life than bear the thought of surviving all that had made life dear to them. In all this, Shakespeare has but followed nature, which existed in his time, as well as now. The modern philosophy, which reduces the whole theory of the mind to habitual impressions, and leaves the natural impulses of passion and imagination out of the account, had not then been discovered; or if it had, would have been little calculated for the uses of poetry.

It is the inadequacy of the same false system of philosophy to account for the strength of our earliest attachments, which has led Mr. Wordsworth to indulge in the mystical visions of Platonism in his Ode on the Progress of Life. He has very admirably described the vividness of our impressions in youth and childhood, and how 'they fade by degrees into the light of common day', and he ascribes the change to the supposition of a pre-existent state, as if our early thoughts were nearer heaven, reflections of former trails of glory, shadows of our past being. This is idle. It is not from the knowledge of the past that the first impressions of things derive their gloss and splendour, but from our ignorance of the future, which fills the void to come with the warmth of our desires, with our gayest hopes, and brightest fancies. It is the obscurity spread before it that colours the prospect of life with hope, as it is the cloud which reflects the rainbow. There is no occasion to resort to any mystical union and transmission of feeling through different states of being to account for the romantic enthusiasm of youth; nor to plant the root of hope in the grave, nor to derive it from the skies. Its root is in the heart of man: it lifts its head above the stars. Desire and imagination are inmates of the human breast. The heaven 'that lies about us in our infancy' is only a new world, of which we know nothing but what we wish it to be, and believe all that we wish. In youth and boyhood, the world we live in is the world of desire, and of fancy: it is experience that brings us down to the world of reality. What is it that in youth sheds a dewy light round the evening star? That makes the daisy look so bright? That perfumes the hyacinth? That embalms the first kiss of love? It is the delight of novelty, and the seeing no end to the pleasure that we fondly believe is still in store for us. The heart revels in the luxury of its own thoughts, and is unable to sustain the weight of hope and love that presses upon it.—The effects of the passion of love alone might have dissipated Mr. Wordsworth's theory, if he means anything more by it than an ingenious and poetical allegory. THAT at least is not a link in the chain let down from other worlds; 'the purple light of love' is not a dim reflection of the smiles of celestial bliss. It does not appear till the middle of life, and then seems like 'another morn risen on midday'. In this respect the soul comes into the world 'in utter nakedness'. Love waits for the ripening of the youthful blood. The sense of pleasure precedes the love of pleasure, but with the sense of pleasure, as soon as it is felt, come thronging infinite desires and hopes of pleasure, and love is mature as soon as born. It withers and it dies almost as soon!

This play presents a beautiful coup d'oeil of the progress of human life. In thought it occupies years, and embraces the circle of the affections from childhood to old age. Juliet has become a great girl, a young woman since we first remember her a little thing in the idle prattle of the nurse. Lady Capulet was about her age when she became a mother, and old Capulet somewhat impatiently tells his younger visitors:

—I've seen the day,
That I have worn a visor, and could tell
A whispering tale in a fair lady's ear,
Such as would please: 'tis gone, 'tis gone, 'tis gone.

Thus one period of life makes way for the following, and one generation pushes another off the stage. One of the most striking passages to show the intense feeling of youth in this play is Capulet's invitation to Paris to visit his entertainment.

At my poor house, look to behold this night
Earth-treading stars that make dark heav'n light;
Such comfort as do lusty young men feel
When well-apparel'd April on the heel
Of limping winter treads, even such delight
Among fresh female-buds shall you this night
Inherit at my house.

The feelings of youth and of the spring are here blended together like the breath of opening flowers. Images of vernal beauty appear to have floated before the author's mind, in writing this poem, in profusion. Here is another of exquisite beauty, brought in more by accident than by necessity. Montague declares of his son smit with a hopeless passion, which he will not reveal:

But he, his own affection's counsellor,
Is to himself so secret and so close,
So far from sounding and discovery,
As is the bud bit with an envious worm,
Ere he can spread his sweet leaves to the air,
Or dedicate his beauty to the sun.

This casual description is as full of passionate beauty as when Romeo dwells in frantic fondness on 'the white wonder of his Juliet's hand'. The reader may, if he pleases, contrast the exquisite pastoral simplicity of the above lines with the gorgeous description of Juliet when Romeo first sees her at her father's house, surrounded by company and artificial splendour.

What lady's that which doth enrich the hand
  Of yonder knight?
  O she doth teach the torches to burn bright;
  Her beauty hangs upon the cheek of night,
  Like a rich jewel in an Aethiop's ear.

It would be hard to say which of the two garden scenes is the finest, that where he first converses with his love, or takes leave of her the morning after their marriage. Both are like a heaven upon earth: the blissful bowers of Paradise let down upon this lower world. We will give only one passage of these well-known scenes to show the perfect refinement and delicacy of Shakespeare's conception of the female character. It is wonderful how Collins, who was a critic and a poet of great sensibility, should have encouraged the common error on this subject by saying—'But stronger Shakespeare felt for man alone'.

The passage we mean is Juliet's apology for her maiden boldness.

Thou know'st the mask of night is on my face;
  Else would a maiden blush bepaint my cheek
  For that which thou hast heard me speak to-night.
  Fain would I dwell on form, fain, fain deny
  What I have spoke—but farewell compliment:
  Dost thou love me? I know thou wilt say, aye,
  And I will take thee at thy word—Yet if thou swear'st,
  Thou may'st prove false; at lovers' perjuries
  They say Jove laughs. Oh gentle Romeo,
  If thou dost love, pronounce it faithfully;
  Or if thou think I am too quickly won,
  I'll frown and be perverse, and say thee nay,
  So thou wilt woo: but else not for the world.
  In truth, fair Montague, I am too fond;
  And therefore thou may'st think my 'haviour light;

But trust me, gentleman, I'll prove more true
Than those that have more cunning to be strange.
I should have been more strange, I must confess,
But that thou overheard'st, ere I was ware,
My true love's passion; therefore pardon me,
And not impute this yielding to light love,
Which the dark night hath so discovered.

In this and all the rest her heart, fluttering between pleasure, hope, and fear, seems to have dictated to her tongue, and 'calls true love spoken simple modesty'. Of the same sort, but bolder in virgin innocence, is her soliloquy after her marriage with Romeo.

Gallop apace, you fiery-footed steeds,
Towards Phoebus' mansion; such a wagoner
As Phaeton would whip you to the west,
And bring in cloudy night immediately.
Spread thy close curtain, love-performing night;
That run-aways' eyes may wink; and Romeo
Leap to these arms, untalked of, and unseen!—-
Lovers can see to do their amorous rites
By their own beauties: or if love be blind,
It best agrees with night.—Come, civil night,
Thou sober-suited matron, all in black,
And learn me how to lose a winning match,
Play'd for a pair of stainless maidenhoods:
Hood my unmann'd blood bating in my cheeks,
With thy black mantle; till strange love, grown bold,
Thinks true love acted, simple modesty.
Come night!—Come, Romeo! come, thou day in night;
For thou wilt lie upon the wings of night
Whiter than new snow on a raven's back.—-
Come, gentle night; come, loving, black-brow'd night,
Give me my Romeo; and when he shall die,
Take him and cut him out in little stars,
And he will make the face of heaven so fine,
That all the world shall be in love with night,
And pay no worship to the garish sun.—-
O, I have bought the mansion of a love,

But not possess'd it; and though I am sold,
Not yet enjoy'd: so tedious is this day,
As is the night before some festival
To an impatient child, that hath new robes,
And may not wear them.

We the rather insert this passage here, inasmuch as we have no doubt it has been expunged from the Family Shakespeare. Such critics do not perceive that the feelings of the heart sanctify, without disguising, the impulses of nature. Without refinement themselves, they confound modesty with hypocrisy. Not so the German critic, Schlegel. Speaking of Romeo and Juliet, he says, 'It was reserved for Shakespeare to unite purity of heart and the glow of imagination, sweetness and dignity of manners and passionate violence, in one ideal picture.' The character is indeed one of perfect truth and sweetness. It has nothing forward, nothing coy, nothing affected or coquettish about it;—it is a pure effusion of nature. It is as frank as it is modest, for it has no thought that it wishes to conceal. It reposes in conscious innocence on the strength of its affections. Its delicacy does not consist in coldness and reserve, but in combining warmth of imagination and tenderness of heart with the most voluptuous sensibility. Love is a gentle flame that rarefies and expands her whole being. What an idea of trembling haste and airy grace, borne upon the thoughts of love, does the Friar's exclamation give of her, as she approaches his cell to be married:

Here comes the lady. Oh, so light of foot
Will ne'er wear out the everlasting flint:
A lover may bestride the gossamer,
That idles in the wanton summer air,
And yet not fall, so light is vanity.

The tragic part of this character is of a piece with the rest. It is the heroic founded on tenderness and delicacy. Of this kind are her resolution to follow the Friar's advice, and the conflict in her bosom between apprehension and love when she comes to take the sleeping poison. Shakespeare is blamed for the mixture of low characters. If this is a deformity, it is the source of a thousand beauties. One instance is the contrast between the guileless simplicity of Juliet's attachment to her first love, and the convenient policy of the nurse in advising her to marry Paris, which excites such indignation in her mistress. 'Ancient damnation! oh most wicked fiend', &c.

Romeo is Hamlet in love. There is the same rich exuberance of passion and sentiment in the one, that there is of thought and sentiment in the other. Both are absent and self-involved, both live out of themselves in a world of imagination. Hamlet is abstracted from everything; Romeo is abstracted from everything but his love, and lost in it. His 'frail thoughts dally with faint surmise', and are fashioned out of the suggestions of hope, 'the flatteries of sleep'. He is himself only in his Juliet; she is his only reality, his heart's true home and idol. The rest of the world is to him a passing dream. How finely is this character portrayed where he recollects himself on seeing Paris slain at the tomb of Juliet!

What said my man, when my betossed soul
Did not attend him as we rode? I think
He told me Paris should have married Juliet.

And again, just before he hears the sudden tidings of her death:

If I may trust the flattery of sleep,
My dreams presage some joyful news at hand;
My bosom's lord sits lightly on his throne,
And all this day an unaccustom'd spirit
Lifts me above the ground with cheerful thoughts.
I dreamt my lady came and found me dead,
(Strange dream! that gives a dead man leave to think)
And breath'd such life with kisses on my lips,
That I reviv'd and was an emperor.
Ah me! how sweet is love itself possessed,
When but love's shadows are so rich in joy!

Romeo's passion for Juliet is not a first love: it succeeds and drives out his passion for another mistress, Rosaline, as the sun hides the stars. This is perhaps an artifice (not absolutely necessary) to give us a higher opinion of the lady, while the first absolute surrender of her heart to him enhances the richness of the prize. The commencement, progress, and ending of his second passion are however complete in themselves, not injured, if they are not bettered by the first. The outline of the play is taken from an Italian novel; but the dramatic arrangement of the different scenes between the lovers, the more than dramatic interest in the progress of the story, the development of the characters with time and circumstances, just according to the degree and kind of interest excited, are not inferior to the expression of passion and nature. It has been ingeniously remarked among other proofs of skill in the contrivance of the fable, that the improbability of the main incident in the piece, the administering of the sleeping-potion, is softened and obviated from the beginning by the introduction of the Friar on his first appearance culling simples and descanting on their virtues. Of the passionate scenes in this tragedy, that between the Friar and Romeo when he is told of his sentence of banishment, that between Juliet and the Nurse when she hears of it, and of the death of her cousin Tybalt (which bear no proportion in her mind, when passion after the first shock of surprise throws its weight into the scale of her affections), and the last scene at the tomb, are among the most natural and overpowering. In all of these it is not merely the force of any one passion that is given, but the slightest and most unlooked-for transitions from one to another, the mingling currents of every different feeling rising up and prevailing in turn, swayed by the master-mind of the poet, as the waves undulate beneath the gliding storm. Thus when Juliet has by her complaints encouraged the Nurse to say, 'Shame come to Romeo', she instantly repels the wish, which she had herself occasioned, by answering:

Blister'd be thy tongue
For such a wish, he was not born to shame.
Upon his brow shame is ashamed to sit,
For 'tis a throne where honour may be crown'd
Sole monarch of the universal earth!
O, what a beast was I to chide him so!

Nurse. Will you speak well of him that kill'd your cousin?

Juliet. Shall I speak ill of him that is my husband?
Ah my poor lord, what tongue shall smooth thy name,
When I, thy three-hours' wife, have mangled it?

And then follows on the neck of her remorse and returning fondness, that wish treading almost on the brink of impiety, but still held back by the strength of her devotion to her lord, that 'father, mother, nay, or both were dead', rather than Romeo banished. If she requires any other excuse, it is in the manner in which Romeo echoes her frantic grief and disappointment in the next scene at being banished from her.—Perhaps one of the finest pieces of acting that ever was witnessed on the stage, is Mr. Kean's manner of doing this scene and his repetition of the word, BANISHED. He treads close indeed upon the genius of his author.

A passage which this celebrated actor and able commentator on Shakespeare (actors are the best commentators on the poets) did not give with equal truth or force of feeling was the one which Romeo makes at the tomb of Juliet, before he drinks the poison.

—Let me peruse this face—
Mercutio's kinsman! noble county Paris!
What said my man, when my betossed soul
Did not attend him as we rode! I think,
He told me, Paris should have married Juliet!
Said he not so? or did I dream it so?
Or am I mad, hearing him talk of Juliet,
To think it was so?—O, give me thy hand,
One writ with me in sour misfortune's book!
I'll bury thee in a triumphant grave—
For here lies Juliet.

. . . . . .

—O, my love! my wife!
Death that hath suck'd the honey of thy breath,
Hath had no power yet upon thy beauty:
Thou art not conquer'd; beauty's ensign yet
Is crimson in thy lips, and in thy cheeks,
And Death's pale flag is not advanced there.—
Tybalt, ly'st thou there in thy bloody sheet?
O, what more favour can I do to thee,
Than with that hand that cut thy youth in twain,
To sunder his that was thine enemy?
Forgive me, cousin! Ah, dear Juliet,
Why art thou yet so fair! I will believe
That unsubstantial death is amorous;
And that the lean abhorred monster keeps
Thee here in dark to be his paramour.

For fear of that, I will stay still with thee;
And never from this palace of dim night
Depart again: here, here will I remain
With worms that are thy chamber-maids; O, here
Will I set up my everlasting rest;
And shake the yoke of inauspicious stars
From this world-wearied flesh.—Eyes, look your last!
Arms, take your last embrace! and lips, O you
The doors of breath, seal with a righteous kiss
A dateless bargain to engrossing death!—
Come, bitter conduct, come unsavoury guide!
Thou desperate pilot, now at once run on
The dashing rocks my sea-sick weary bark!
Here's to my love!—[Drinks.] O, true apothecary!
Thy drugs are quick.—Thus with a kiss I die.

The lines in this speech describing the loveliness of Juliet, who is supposed to be dead, have been compared to those in which it is said of Cleopatra after her death, that she looked 'as she would take another Antony in her strong toil of grace;' and a question has been started which is the finest, that we do not pretend to decide. We can more easily decide between Shakespeare and any other author, than between him and himself.—Shall we quote any more passages to show his genius or the beauty of ROMEO AND JULIET? At that rate, we might quote the whole. The late Mr. Sheridan, on being shown a volume of the Beauties of Shakespeare, very properly asked—'But where are the other eleven?' The character of Mercutio in this play is one of the most mercurial and spirited of the productions of Shakespeare's comic muse.

<<span id="filepos0038758594"> a>LEAR

We wish that we could pass this play over, and say nothing about it. All that we can say must fall far short of the subject; or even of what we ourselves conceive of it. To attempt to give a description of the play itself or of its effect upon the mind, is mere impertinence: yet we must say something.—It is then the best of all Shakespeare's plays, for it is the one in which he was the most in earnest. He was here fairly caught in the web of his own imagination. The passion which he has taken as his subject is that which strikes its root deepest into the human heart; of which the bond is the hardest to be unloosed; and the cancelling and tearing to pieces of which gives the greatest revulsion to the frame. This depth of nature, this force of passion, this tug and war of the elements of our being, this firm faith in filial piety, and the giddy anarchy and whirling tumult of the thoughts at finding this prop failing it, the contrast between the fixed, immoveable basis of natural affection, and the rapid, irregular starts of imagination, suddenly wrenched from all its accustomed holds and resting-places in the soul, this is what Shakespeare has given, and what nobody else but he could give. So we believe.—The mind of Lear staggering between the weight of attachment and the hurried movements of passion is like a tall ship driven about by the winds, buffeted by the furious waves, but that still rides above the storm, having its anchor fixed in the bottom of the sea; or it is like the sharp rock circled by the eddying whirlpool that foams and beats against it, or like the solid promontory pushed from its basis by the force of an earthquake.

The character of Lear itself is very finely conceived for the purpose. It is the only ground on which such a story could be built with the greatest truth and effect. It is his rash haste, his violent impetuosity, his blindness to everything but the dictates of his passions or affections, that produces all his misfortunes, that aggravates his impatience of them, that enforces our pity for him. The part which Cordelia bears in the scene is extremely beautiful: the story is almost told in the first words she utters. We see at once the precipice on which the poor old king stands from his own extravagant and credulous importunity, the indiscreet simplicity of her love (which, to be sure, has a little of her father's obstinacy in it) and the hollowness of her sisters' pretensions. Almost the first burst of that noble tide of passion, which runs through the play, is in the remonstrance of

Kent to his royal master on the injustice of his sentence against his youngest daughter—'Be Kent unmannerly, when Lear is mad!' This manly plainness which draws down on him the displeasure of the unadvised king is worthy of the fidelity with which he adheres to his fallen fortunes. The true character of the two eldest daughters, Regan and Gonerill (they are so thoroughly hateful that we do not even like to repeat their names) breaks out in their answer to Cordelia who desires them to treat their father well—'Prescribe not us our duties'—their hatred of advice being in proportion to their determination to do wrong, and to their hypocritical pretensions to do right. Their deliberate hypocrisy adds the last finishing to the odiousness of their characters. It is the absence of this detestable quality that is the only relief in the character of Edmund the Bastard, and that at times reconciles us to him. We are not tempted to exaggerate the guilt of his conduct, when he himself gives it up as a bad business, and writes himself down 'plain villain'. Nothing more can be said about it. His religious honesty in this respect is admirable. One speech of his is worth a million. His father, Gloucester, whom he has just deluded with a forged story of his brother Edgar's designs against his life, accounts for his unnatural behaviour and the strange depravity of the times from the late eclipses in the sun and moon. Edmund, who is in the secret, says when he is gone: 'This is the excellent foppery of the world, that when we are sick in fortune (often the surfeits of our own behaviour) we make guilty of our disasters the sun, the moon, and stars: as if we were villains on necessity; fools by heavenly compulsion; knaves, thieves, and treacherous by spherical predominance; drunkards, liars, and adulterers by an enforced obedience of planetary influence; and all that we are evil in, by a divine thrusting on. An admirable evasion of whoremaster man, to lay his goatish disposition on the charge of a star! My father compounded with my mother under the Dragon's tale, and my nativity was under Ursa Major: so that it follows, I am rough and lecherous. I should have been what I am, had the maidenliest star in the firmament twinkled on my bastardizing.'—The whole character, its careless, light-hearted villany, contrasted with the sullen, rancorous malignity of Regan and Gonerill, its connexion with the conduct of the under-plot, in which Gloucester's persecution of one of his sons and the ingratitude of another, form a counterpart to the mistakes and misfortunes of Lear—his double amour with the two sisters, and the share which he has in bringing about the fatal catastrophe, are all managed with an uncommon degree of skill and power.

It has been said, and we think justly, that the third act of OTHELLO, and the three first acts of LEAR, are Shakespeare's great masterpieces in the logic of passion: that they contain the highest examples not only of the force of individual passion, but of its dramatic vicissitudes and striking effects arising from the different circumstances and characters of the persons speaking. We see the ebb and flow of the feeling, its pauses and feverish starts, its impatience of opposition, its accumulating force when it has time to recollect itself, the manner in which it avails itself of every passing word or gesture, its haste to repel insinuation, the alternate contraction and dilatation of the soul, and all 'the dazzling fence of controversy' in this mortal combat with poisoned weapons, aimed at the heart, where each wound is fatal. We have seen in OTHELLO, how the unsuspecting frankness and impetuous passions of the Moor are played upon and exasperated by the artful dexterity of Iago. In the present play, that which aggravates the sense of sympathy in the reader, and of uncontrollable anguish in the swollen heart of Lear, is the petrifying indifference, the cold, calculating, obdurate selfishness of his daughters. His keen passions seem whetted on their stony hearts. The contrast would be too painful, the shock too great, but for the intervention of the Fool, whose well-timed levity comes in to break the continuity of feeling when it can no longer be borne, and to bring into play again the fibres of the heart just as they are growing rigid from over-strained excitement. The imagination is glad to take refuge in the half-comic, half-serious comments of the Fool, just as the mind under the extreme anguish of a surgical operation vents itself in sallies of wit. The character was also a grotesque ornament of the barbarous times, in which alone the tragic ground-work of the story could be laid. In another point of view it is indispensable, inasmuch as while it is a diversion to the too great intensity of our disgust, it carries the pathos to the highest pitch of which it is capable, by showing the pitiable weakness of the old king's conduct and its irretrievable consequences in the most familiar point of view. Lear may well 'beat at the gate which let his folly in', after, as the Fool says, 'he has made his daughters his mothers'. The character is dropped in the third act to make room for the entrance of Edgar as Mad Tom, which well accords with the increasing bustle and wildness of the incidents; and nothing can be more complete than the distinction between Lear's real and Edgar's assumed madness, while the resemblance in the cause of their distresses, from the severing of the nearest ties of natural affection, keeps up a unity of interest. Shakespeare's mastery over his subject, if it was not art, was owing to a knowledge of the connecting links of the passions, and their effect upon the mind, still more wonderful than any systematic adherence to rules, and that anticipated and outdid all the efforts of the most refined art, not inspired and rendered instinctive by genius.

One of the most perfect displays of dramatic power is the first interview between Lear and his daughter, after the designed affronts upon him, which till one of his knights reminds him of them, his sanguine temperament had led him to overlook. He returns with his train from hunting, and his usual impatience breaks out in his first words, 'Let me not stay a jot for dinner; go, get it ready.' He then encounters the faithful Kent in disguise, and retains him in his service; and the first trial of his honest duty is to trip up the heels of the officious Steward who makes so prominent and despicable a figure through the piece. On the entrance of Gonerill the following dialogue takes place:

Lear. How now, daughter? what makes that frontlet on?
Methinks, you are too much of late i' the frown.

Fool. Thou wast a pretty fellow, when thou had'st no
need to care for her frowning; now thou art an O without
a figure: I am better than thou art now; I am a fool, thou
art nothing.—Yes, forsooth, I will hold my tongue; [To
Gonerill.] so your face bids me, though you say nothing.
Mum, mum.

He that keeps nor crust nor crum,
Weary of all, shall want some—
That's a sheal'd peascod! [Pointing to Lear.]

Gonerill. Not only, sir, this your all-licens'd fool,
But other of your insolent retinue
Do hourly carp and quarrel; breaking forth
In rank and not-to-be-endured riots.
I had thought, by making this well known unto you,
To have found a safe redress; but now grow fearful,
By what yourself too late have spoke and done,
That you protect this course, and put it on
By your allowance; which if you should, the fault
Would not 'scape censure, nor the redresses sleep,
Which in the tender of a wholesome weal,
Might in their working do you that offence,
(Which else were shame) that then necessity
Would call discreet proceeding.

Fool. For you trow, nuncle,
The hedge sparrow fed the cuckoo so long,
That it had its head bit off by its young.
So out went the candle, and we were left darkling.

Lear. Are you our daughter?

Gonerill. Come, sir,
I would, you would make use of that good wisdom
Whereof I know you are fraught; and put away
These dispositions, which of late transform you
From what you rightly are.

Fool. May not an ass know when the cart draws the
horse?—Whoop, Jug, I love thee.

Lear. Does any here know me?—Why, this is not
Lear:
Does Lear walk thus? speak thus?—Where are his eyes?
Either his notion weakens, or his discernings
Are lethargy'd—Ha! waking?—'Tis not so.—
Who is it that can tell me who I am?—Lear's shadow?
I would learn that: for by the marks
Of sov'reignty, of knowledge, and of reason,
I should be false persuaded I had daughters.—
Your name, fair gentlewoman?

Gonerill. Come, sir:
This admiration is much o' the favour
Of other your new pranks. I do beseech you
To understand my purposes aright:
As you are old and reverend, you should be wise:
Here do you keep a hundred knights and squires;
Men so disorder'd, so debauch'd, and bold,
That this our court, infected with their manners,
Shows like a riotous inn: epicurism and lust
Make it more like a tavern, or a brothel,
Than a grac'd palace. The shame itself doth speak
For instant remedy: be then desir'd

By her, that else will take the thing she begs,
A little to disquantity your train;
And the remainder, that shall still depend,
To be such men as may besort your age,
And know themselves and you.

Lear. Darkness and devils!
Saddle my horses; call my train together.—
Degenerate Bastard! I'll not trouble thee;
Yet have I left a daughter.

Gonerill. You strike my people, and your disorder'd rabble
Make servants of their betters.

Enter Albany

Lear. Woe, that too late repents—O, sir, are you come?
Is it your will? speak, sir.—Prepare my horses.—
[To Albany.]
Ingratitude! thou marble-hearted fiend,
More hideous, when thou show'st thee in a child,
Than the sea-monster!

Albany. Pray, sir, be patient.

Lear. Detested kite! thou liest. [To Gonerill.]
My train are men of choice and rarest parts,
That all particulars of duty know;
And in the most exact regard support
The worships of their name.—O most small fault,
How ugly didst thou in Cordelia show!
Which, like an engine, wrench'd my frame of nature
From the fixt place; drew from my heart all love,
And added to the gall. O Lear, Lear, Lear!
Beat at the gate, that let thy folly in,
[Striking his head.]
And thy dear judgement out!—Go, go, my people!

Albany. My lord, I am guiltless, as I am ignorant
Of what hath mov'd you.

Lear. It may be so, my lord—
Hear, nature, hear: dear goddess, hear!
Suspend thy purpose, if thou didst intend
To make this creature fruitful!
Into her womb convey sterility;
Dry up in her the organs of increase;
And from her derogate body never spring
A babe to honour her! If she must teem,
Create her child of spleen: that it may live,
To be a thwart disnatur'd torment to her!
Let it stamp wrinkles in her brow of youth;
With cadent tears fret channels in her cheeks;
Turn all her mother's pains, and benefits,
To laughter and contempt; that she may feel
How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is
To have a thankless child!—Away, away!
[Exit.]

Albany. Now, gods, that we adore, whereof comes this?

Gonerill. Never afflict yourself to know the cause;
But let his disposition have that scope
That dotage gives it.

Re-enter Lear

Lear. What, fifty of my followers at a clap!
Within a fortnight!

Albany. What's the matter, sir?

Lear. I'll tell thee; life and death! I am asham'd
That thou hast power to shake my manhood thus:
[To Gonerill.]
That these hot tears, which break from me perforce,
Should make thee worth them.—Blasts and fogs upon thee!
The untented woundings of a father's curse

Pierce every sense about thee!—Old fond eyes,
Beweep this cause again, I'll pluck you out;
And cast you, with the waters that you lose,
To temper clay.—Ha! is it come to this?
Let it be so:—Yet have I left a daughter,
Who, I am sure, is kind and comfortable;
When she shall hear this of thee, with her nails
She'll flay thy wolfish visage. Thou shalt find
That I'll resume the shape, which thou dost think
I have cast off forever.

[Exeunt Lear, Kent, and Attendants.]

This is certainly fine: no wonder that Lear says after it, 'O let me not be mad, not mad, sweet heavens,' feeling its effects by anticipation: but fine as is this burst of rage and indignation at the first blow aimed at his hopes and expectations, it is nothing near so fine as what follows from his double disappointment, and his lingering efforts to see which of them he shall lean upon for support and find comfort in, when both his daughters turn against his age and weakness. It is with some difficulty that Lear gets to speak with his daughter Regan, and her husband, at Gloucester's castle. In concert with Gonerill they have left their own home on purpose to avoid him. His apprehensions are fast alarmed by this circumstance, and when Gloucester, whose guests they are, urges the fiery temper of the Duke of Cornwall as an excuse for not importuning him a second time, Lear breaks out:

Vengeance! Plague! Death! Confusion!
Fiery? What fiery quality? Why, Gloucester,
I'd speak with the Duke of Cornwall and his wife.

Afterwards, feeling perhaps not well himself, he is inclined to admit their excuse from illness, but then recollecting that they have set his messenger (Kent) in the stocks, all his suspicions are roused again, and he insists on seeing them.

Enter Cornwall, Regan, Gloucester, and Servants.

Lear. Good-morrow to you both.

Cornwall. Hail to your grace!

[Kent is set at liberty.]

Regan. I am glad to see your highness.

Lear. Regan, I think you are; I know what reason
I have to think so; if thou should'st not be glad,
I would divorce me from thy mother's tomb,
Sepulch'ring an adultress.—O, are you free?
[To Kent.]
Some other time for that.—Beloved Regan,
Thy sister's naught: O Regan, she hath tied
Sharp-tooth'd unkindness, like a vulture, here—
[Points to his heart.]
I can scarce speak to thee; thou'lt not believe,
Of how deprav'd a quality—o Regan!

Regan. I pray you, sir, take patience; I have hope
You less know how to value her desert,
Than she to scant her duty.

Lear. Say, how is that?

Regan. I cannot think my sister in the least
Would fail her obligation; if, sir, perchance,
She have restrain'd the riots of your followers,
'Tis on such ground, and to such wholesome end,
As clears her from all blame.

Lear. My curses on her!

Regan. O, sir, you are old;
Nature in you stands on the very verge
Of her confine: you should be rul'd, and led
By some discretion, that discerns your state
Better than you yourself: therefore, I pray you,
That to our sister you do make return;

Say, you have wrong'd her, sir.

Lear. Ask her forgiveness?
Do you but mark how this becomes the use?
Dear daughter, I confess that I am old;
Age is unnecessary; on my knees I beg,
That you'll vouchsafe me raiment, bed, and food.

Regan. Good sir, no more; these are unsightly tricks:
Return you to my sister.

Lear. Never, Regan:
She hath abated me of half my train;
Look'd blank upon me; struck me with her tongue,
Most serpent-like, upon the very heart:—
All the stor'd vengeances of heaven fall
On her ungrateful top! Strike her young bones,
You taking airs, with lameness!

Cornwall. Fie, sir, fie!

Lear: You nimble lightnings, dart your blinding flames
Into her scornful eyes! Infect her beauty,
You fen-suck'd fogs, drawn by the powerful sun,
To fall, and blast her pride!

Regan. O the blest gods!
So will you wish on me, when the rash mood is on.

Lear. No, Regan, thou shalt never have my curse;
Thy tender-hefted nature shall not give
Thee o'er to harshness; her eyes are fierce, but thine
Do comfort, and not burn: 'Tis not in thee
To grudge my pleasures, to cut off my train,
To bandy hasty words, to scant my sizes,
And, in conclusion, to oppose the bolt
Against my coming in: thou better know'st
The offices of nature, bond of childhood,
Effects of courtesy, dues of gratitude;
Thy half o' the kingdom thou hast not forgot,

Wherein I thee endow'd.

Regan. Good sir, to the purpose. [Trumpets within]

Lear. Who put my man i' the stocks?

Cornwall. What trumpet's that?

Enter Steward

Regan. I know't, my sister's; this approves her letter,
That she would soon be here.—Is your lady come?

Lear. This is a slave, whose easy-borrow'd pride
Dwells in the fickle grace of her he follows:—
Out, varlet, from my sight!

Cornwall. What means your grace?

Lear. Who stock'd my servant? Regan, I have good hope
Thou did'st not know on't.—Who comes here? O heavens,

Enter Gonerill

If you do love old men, if your sweet sway
Allow obedience, if yourselves are old,
Make it your cause; send down, and take my part!—
Art not asham'd to look upon this beard?—
[To Gonerill.]
O, Regan, wilt thou take her by the hand?

Gonerill. Why not by the hand, sir? How have I
offended?
All's not offence, that indiscretion finds,
And dotage terms so.

Lear. O, sides, you are too tough!
Will you yet hold?—How came my man i' the stocks?

Cornwall. I set him there, sir: but his own disorders
Deserv'd much less advancement.

Lear. You! did you?

Regan. I pray you, father, being weak, seem so.
If, till the expiration of your month,
You will return and sojourn with my sister,
Dismissing half your train, come then to me;
I am now from home, and out of that provision
Which shall be needful for your entertainment.

Lear. Return to her, and fifty men dismiss'd?
No, rather I abjure all roofs, and choose
To be a comrade with the wolf and owl—
To wage against the enmity o' the air,
Necessity's sharp pinch!—Return with her!
Why, the hot-blooded France, that dowerless took
Our youngest born, I could as well be brought
To knee his throne, and squire-like pension beg
To keep base life afoot.—Return with her!
Persuade me rather to be slave and sumpter
To this detested groom. [Looking on the Steward.]

Gonerill. At your choice, sir.

Lear. Now, I pr'ythee, daughter, do not make me mad;
I will not trouble thee, my child; farewell:
We'll no more meet, no more see one another:—
But yet thou art my flesh, my blood, my daughter;
Or, rather, a disease that's in my flesh,
Which I must needs call mine: thou art a bile,
A plague-sore, an embossed carbuncle,
In my corrupted blood. But I'll not chide thee:
Let shame come when it will, I do not call it:
I did not bid the thunder-bearer shoot,

Nor tell tales of thee to high-judging Jove:
Mend when thou canst; be better, at thy leisure:
I can be patient; I can stay with Regan,
I, and my hundred knights.

Regan. Not altogether so, sir;
I look'd not for you yet, nor am provided
For your fit welcome: Give ear, sir, to my sister;
For those that mingle reason with your passion
Must be content to think you old, and so—
But she knows what she does.

Lear. Is this well spoken now?

Regan. I dare avouch it, sir: What, fifty followers?
Is it not well? What should you need of more?
Yea, or so many? Sith that both charge and danger
Speak 'gainst so great a number? How, in one house,
Should many people, under two commands,
Hold amity? Tis hard; almost impossible.

Gonerill. Why might you not, my lord, receive attendance
From those that she calls servants, or from mine?

Regan. Why not, my lord? If then they chanc'd to slack you,
We would control them: if you will come to me
(For now I spy a danger) I entreat you
To bring but five-and-twenty; to no more
Will I give place, or notice.

Lear. I gave you all—

Regan. And in good time you gave it.

Lear. Made you my guardians, my depositaries;
But kept a reservation to be follow'd
With such a number: what, must I come to you
With five-and-twenty, Regan! said you so?

Regan. And speak it again, my lord; no more with me.

Lear. Those wicked creatures yet do look well-favour'd,
When others are more wicked; not being the worst,
Stands in some rank of praise:—I'll go with thee;
[To Gonerill.]
Thy fifty yet doth double five-and-twenty,
And thou art twice her love.

Gonerill. Hear me, my lord;
What need you five-and-twenty, ten, or five,
To follow in a house, where twice so many
Have a command to tend you?

Regan. What need one?

Lear. O, reason not the need: our basest beggars
Are in the poorest thing superfluous:
Allow not nature more than nature needs,
Man's life is cheap as beast's: thou art a lady;
If only to go warm were gorgeous,
Why, nature needs not what thou gorgeous wear'st;
Which scarcely keeps thee warm.—But, for true need—
You heavens, give me that patience which I need!
You see me here, you gods; a poor old man,
As full of grief as age; wretched in both!
If it be you that stir these daughters' hearts
Against their father, fool me not so much
To bear it tamely; touch me with noble anger!
O, let no woman's weapons, water-drops,
Stain my man's cheeks!—No, you unnatural hags,
I will have such revenges on you both,
That all the world shall—I will do such things—
What they are, yet I know not; but they shall be
The terrors of the earth. You think, I'll weep:
No, I'll not weep:—
I have full cause of weeping; but this heart
Shall break into a hundred thousand flaws,
Or e'er I'll weep:—O, fool, I shall go mad!
[Exeunt Lear, Gloucester, Kent, and Fool.]

If there is anything in any author like this yearning of the heart, these throes of tenderness, this profound expression of all that can be thought and felt in the most heart-rending situations, we are glad of it; but it is in some author that we have not read.

The scene in the storm, where he is exposed to all the fury of the elements, though grand and terrible, is not so fine, but the moralizing scenes with Mad Tom, Kent, and Gloucester, are upon a par with the former. His exclamation in the supposed trial-scene of his daughters, 'See the little dogs and all, Tray, Blanch, and Sweetheart, see they bark at me,' his issuing his orders, 'Let them anatomize Regan, see what breeds about her heart,' and his reflection when he sees the misery of Edgar, 'Nothing but his unkind daughters could have brought him to this,' are in a style of pathos, where the extremest resources of the imagination are called in to lay open the deepest movements of the heart, which was peculiar to Shakespeare. In the same style and spirit is his interrupting the Fool who asks, 'whether a madman be a gentleman or a yeoman', by answering 'A king, a king!'

The indirect part that Gloucester takes in these scenes where his generosity leads him to relieve Lear and resent the cruelty of his daughters, at the very time that he is himself instigated to seek the life of his son, and suffering under the sting of his supposed ingratitude, is a striking accompaniment to the situation of Lear. Indeed, the manner in which the threads of the story are woven together is almost as wonderful in the way of art as the carrying on the tide of passion, still varying and unimpaired, is on the score of nature. Among the remarkable instances of this kind are Edgar's meeting with his old blind father; the deception he practises upon him when he pretends to lead him to the top of Dover-cliff—'Come on, sir, here's the place,' to prevent his ending his life and miseries together; his encounter with the perfidious Steward whom he kills, and his finding the letter from Gonerill to his brother upon him which leads to the final catastrophe, and brings the wheel of Justice 'full circle home' to the guilty parties. The bustle and rapid succession of events in the last scenes is surprising. But the meeting between Lear and Cordelia is by far the most affecting part of them. It has all the wildness of poetry, and all the heartfelt truth of nature. The previous account of her reception of the news of his unkind treatment, her involuntary reproaches to her sisters, 'Shame, ladies, shame,' Lear's backwardness to see his daughter, the picture of the desolate state to which he is reduced, 'Alack, 'tis he; why he was met even now, as mad as the vex'd sea, singing aloud,' only prepare the way for and heighten our expectation of what follows, and assuredly this expectation is not disappointed when through the tender care of Cordelia he revives and recollects her.

Cordelia. How does my royal lord? How fares your majesty!

Lear. You do me wrong, to take me out o' the grave:
Thou art a soul in bliss; but I am bound
Upon a wheel of fire, that mine own tears
Do scald like molten lead.

Cordelia. Sir, do you know me?

Lear. You are a spirit I know: when did you die?

Cordelia. Still, still, far wide!

Physician. He's scarce awake; let him alone awhile.

Lear. Where have I been? Where am I?—Fair daylight?—
I am mightily abus'd.—I should even die with pity,
To see another thus.—I know not what to say.—
I will not swear these are my hands:—let's see;
I feel this pin prick. 'Would I were assur'd
Of my condition.

Cordelia. O, look upon me, sir,
And hold your hands in benediction o'er me:—
No, sir, you must not kneel.

Lear. Pray, do not mock me:
I am a very foolish fond old man,
Fourscore and upward;

Not an hour more, nor less: and, to deal plainly,
I fear, I am not in my perfect mind.
Methinks, I shou'd know you, and know this man;
Yet I am doubtful: for I am mainly ignorant
What place this is; and all the skill I have
Remembers not these garments; nor I know not
Where I did lodge last night: do not laugh at me;
For, as I am a man, I think this lady
To be my child Cordelia.

Cordelia. And so I am, I am!

Almost equal to this in awful beauty is their consolation of each other when, after the triumph of their enemies, they are led to prison.

Cordelia. We are not the first,
Who, with best meaning, have incurr'd the worst.
For thee, oppressed king, am I cast down;
Myself could else out-frown false fortune's frown.—
Shall we not see these daughters, and these sisters?

Lear. No, no, no, no! Come, let's away to prison:
We two alone will sing like birds i' the cage:
When thou dost ask me blessing, I'll kneel down,
And ask of thee forgiveness: so we'll live,
And pray, and sing, and tell old tales, and laugh
At gilded butterflies, and hear poor rogues
Talk of court news; and we'll talk with them too—
Who loses, and who wins; who's in, who's out;—
And take upon us the mystery of things,
As if we were God's spies: and we'll wear out,
In a wall'd prison, packs and sects of great ones,
That ebb and flow by the moon.

Edmund. Take them away.

Lear. Upon such sacrifices, my Cordelia,
The gods themselves throw incense.

The concluding events are sad, painfully sad; but their pathos is extreme. The oppression of the feelings is relieved by the very interest we take in the misfortunes of others, and by the reflections to which they give birth. Cordelia is hanged in prison by the orders of the bastard Edmund, which are known too late to be countermanded, and Lear dies broken-hearted, lamenting over her.

Lear. And my poor fool is hang'd! No, no, no life:
Why should a dog, a horse, a rat, have life.
And thou no breath at all? O, thou wilt come no more,
Never, never, never, never, never!—
Pray you, undo this button: thank you, sir.—-

He dies, and indeed we feel the truth of what Kent says on the occasion—

Vex not his ghost: O, let him pass! he hates him,
That would upon the rack of the rough world
Stretch him out longer.

Yet a happy ending has been contrived for this play, which is approved of by Dr. Johnson and condemned by Schlegel. A better authority than either, on any subject in which poetry and feeling are concerned, has given it in favour of Shakespeare, in some remarks on the acting of Lear, with which we shall conclude this account.

The Lear of Shakespeare cannot be acted. The contemptible machinery with which they mimic the storm which he goes out in, is not more inadequate to represent the horrors of the real elements than any actor can be to represent Lear. The greatness of Lear is not in corporal dimension, but in intellectual; the explosions of his passions are terrible as a volcano: they are storms turning up and disclosing to the bottom that rich sea, his mind, with all its vast riches. It is his mind which is laid bare. This case of flesh and blood seems too insignificant to be thought on; even as he himself neglects it. On the stage we see nothing but corporal infirmities and weakness, the impotence of rage; while we read it, we see not Lear, but we are Lear;—we are in his mind, we are sustained by a grandeur, which baffles the malice of daughters and storms; in the aberrations of his reason, we discover a mighty irregular power of reasoning, immethodized from the ordinary purposes of life, but exerting its powers, as the wind blows where it listeth, at will on the corruptions and abuses of mankind. What have looks or tones to do with that sublime identification of his age with that of THE

HEAVENS THEMSELVES, when in his reproaches to them for conniving at the injustice of his children, he reminds them that "they themselves are old!" What gesture shall we appropriate to this? What has the voice or the eye to do with such things? But the play is beyond all art, as the tamperings with it show: it is too hard and stony; it must have love-scenes, and a happy ending. It is not enough that Cordelia is a daughter, she must shine as a lover too. Tate has put his hook in the nostrils of this Leviathan, for Garrick and his followers, the showmen of the scene, to draw it about more easily. A happy ending!—as if the living martyrdom that Lear had gone through,—the flaying of his feelings alive, did not make a fair dismissal from the stage of life the only decorous thing for him. If he is to live and be happy after, if he could sustain this world's burden after, why all this pudder and preparation—why torment us with all this unnecessary sympathy? As if the childish pleasure of getting his gilt robes and sceptre again could tempt him to act over again his misused station—as if at his years and with his experience anything was left but to die.' [Footnote: See an article, called 'Theatralia', in the second volume of the Reflector, by Charles Lamb.]

Four things have struck us in reading LEAR:

1. That poetry is an interesting study, for this reason, that it relates to whatever is most interesting in human life. Whoever therefore has a contempt for poetry, has a contempt for himself and humanity.

2. That the language of poetry is superior to the language of painting; because the strongest of our recollections relate to feelings, not to faces.

3. That the greatest strength of genius is shown in describing the strongest passions: for the power of the imagination, in works of invention, must be in proportion to the force of the natural impressions, which are the subject of them.

4. That the circumstance which balances the pleasure against the pain in tragedy is, that in proportion to the greatness of the evil, is our sense and desire of the opposite good excited; and that our sympathy with actual suffering is lost in the strong impulse given to our natural affections, and carried away with the swelling tide of passion, that gushes from and relieves the heart.

<<span id="filepos0038814196"> a>RICHARD II

RICHARD II is a play little known compared with RICHARD III, which last is a play that every unfledged candidate for theatrical fame chooses to strut and fret his hour upon the stage in; yet we confess that we prefer the nature and feeling of the one to the noise and bustle of the other; at least, as we are so often forced to see it acted. In RICHARD II the weakness of the king leaves us leisure to take a greater interest in the misfortunes of the man. 'After the first act, in which the arbitrariness of his behaviour only proves his want of resolution, we see him staggering under the unlooked-for blows of fortune, bewailing his loss of kingly power; not preventing it, sinking under the aspiring genius of Bolingbroke, his authority trampled on, his hopes failing him, and his pride crushed and broken down under insults and injuries, which his own misconduct had provoked, but which he has not courage or manliness to resent. The change of tone and behaviour in the two competitors for the throne according to their change of fortune, from the capricious sentence of banishment passed by Richard upon Bolingbroke, the suppliant offers and modest pretensions of the latter on his return, to the high and haughty tone with which he accepts Richard's resignation of the crown after the loss of all his power, the use which he makes of the deposed king to grace his triumphal progress through the streets of London, and the final intimation of his wish for his death, which immediately finds a servile executioner, is marked throughout with complete effect and without the slightest appearance of effort. The steps by which Bolingbroke mounts the throne are those by which Richard sinks into the grave. We feel neither respect nor love for the deposed monarch; for he is as wanting in energy as in principle: but we pity him, for he pities himself. His heart is by no means hardened against himself, but bleeds afresh at every new stroke of mischance, and his sensibility, absorbed in his own person, and unused to misfortune, is not only tenderly alive to its own sufferings, but without the fortitude to bear them. He is, however, human in his distresses; for to feel pain, and sorrow, weakness, disappointment, remorse and anguish, is the lot of humanity, and we sympathize with him accordingly. The sufferings of the man make us forget that he ever was a king.

The right assumed by sovereign power to trifle at its will with the happiness of others as a matter of course, or to remit its exercise as a matter of favour, is strikingly shown in the sentence of banishment so unjustly pronounced on Bolingbroke and Mowbray, and in what Bolingbroke says when four years of his banishment are taken off, with as little reason:

How long a time lies in one little word!
Four lagging winters and four wanton springs
End in a word: such is the breath of kings.

A more affecting image of the loneliness of a state of exile can hardly be given than by what Bolingbroke afterwards observes of his having 'sighed his English breath in foreign clouds'; or than that conveyed in Mowbray's complaint at being banished for life.

The language I have learned these forty years,
My native English, now I must forego;
And now my tongue's use is to me no more
Than an unstringed viol or a harp,
Or like a cunning instrument cas'd up,
Or being open, put into his hands
That knows no touch to tune the harmony.
I am too old to fawn upon a nurse,
Too far in years to be a pupil now.—

How very beautiful is all this, and at the same time how very ENGLISH too!

RICHARD II may be considered as the first of that series of English historical plays, in which 'is hung armour of the invincible knights of old', in which their hearts seem to strike against their coats of mail, where their blood tingles for the fight, and words are but the harbingers of blows. Of this state of accomplished barbarism the appeal of Bolingbroke and Mowbray is an admirable specimen. Another of these 'keen encounters of their wits', which serve to whet the talkers' swords, is where Aumerle answers in the presence of Bolingbroke to the charge which Bagot brings against him of being an accessory in Gloucester's death.

Fitzwater. If that thy valour stand on sympathies,
There is my gage, Aumerle, in gage to thine;
By that fair sun that shows me where thou stand'st

I heard thee say, and vauntingly thou spak'st it,
That thou wert cause of noble Gloucester's death.
If thou deny'st it twenty times thou liest,
And I will turn thy falsehood to thy heart
Where it was forged, with my rapier's point.

Aumerle. Thou dar'st not, coward, live to see the day,

Fitzwater. Now, by my soul, I would it were this hour.

Aumerle. Fitzwater, thou art damn'd to hell for this.

Percy. Aumerle, thou liest; his honour is as true,
In this appeal, as thou art all unjust;
And that thou art so, there I throw my gage
To prove it on thee, to th' extremest point
Of mortal breathing. Seize it, if thou dar'st.

Aumerle. And if I do not, may my hands rot off,
And never brandish more revengeful steel
Over the glittering helmet of my foe.
Who sets me else? By heav'n, I'll throw at all.
I have a thousand spirits in my breast,
To answer twenty thousand such as you.

Surrey. My lord Fitzwater, I remember well
The very time Aumerle and you did talk.

Fitzwater. My lord, 'tis true: you were in presence then;
And you can witness with me, this is true.

Surrey. As false, by heav'n, as heav'n itself is true.

Fitzwater, Surrey, thou liest.

Surrey. Dishonourable boy,
That lie shall lie so heavy on my sword,
That it shall render vengeance and revenge,

Till thou the lie-giver and that lie rest
In earth as quiet as thy father's skull.
In proof whereof, there is mine honour's pawn:
Engage it to the trial, if thou dar'st.

Fitzwater. How fondly dost thou spur a forward horse:
If I dare eat or drink or breathe or live,
I dare meet Surrey in a wilderness,
And spit upon him, whilst I say he lies,
And lies, and lies: there is my bond of faith,
To tie thee to thy strong correction.
As I do hope to thrive in this new world,
Aumerle is guilty of my true appeal.

The truth is, that there is neither truth nor honour in all these noble persons: they answer words with words, as they do blows with blows, in mere self-defence: nor have they any principle whatever but that of courage in maintaining any wrong they dare commit, or any falsehood which they find it useful to assert. How different were these noble knights and 'barons bold' from their more refined descendants in the present day, who instead of deciding questions of right by brute force, refer everything to convenience, fashion, and good breeding! In point of any abstract love of truth or justice, they are just the same now that they were then.

The characters of old John of Gaunt and of his brother York, uncles to the King, the one stern and foreboding, the other honest, good-natured, doing all for the best, and therefore doing nothing, are well kept up. The speech of the former, in praise of England, is one of the most eloquent that ever was penned. We should perhaps hardly be disposed to feed the pampered egotism of our countrymen by quoting this description, were it not that the conclusion of it (which looks prophetic) may qualify any improper degree of exultation.

This royal throne of kings, this sceptered isle,
This earth of Majesty, this seat of Mars,
This other Eden, demi-Paradise,
This fortress built by nature for herself
Against infection and the hand of war;

This happy breed of men, this little world,
This precious stone set in the silver sea,
Which serves it in the office of a wall
(Or as a moat defensive to a house)
Against the envy of less happy lands:
This nurse, this teeming womb of royal kings,
Fear'd for their breed and famous for their birth,
Renown'd for their deeds, as far from home,
For Christian service and true chivalry,
As is the sepulchre in stubborn Jewry
Of the world's ransom, blessed Mary's son;
This land of such dear souls, this dear dear land,
Dear for her reputation through the world,
Is now leas'd out (I die pronouncing it)
Like to a tenement or pelting farm.
England bound in with the triumphant sea,
Whose rocky shore beats back the envious surge
Of wat'ry Neptune, is bound in with shame,
With inky-blots and rotten parchment bonds.
That England, that was wont to conquer others,
Hath made a shameful conquest of itself.

The character of Bolingbroke, afterwards Henry IV, is drawn with a masterly hand:—patient for occasion, and then steadily availing himself of it, seeing his advantage afar off, but only seizing on it when he has it within his reach, humble, crafty, bold, and aspiring, encroaching by regular but slow degrees, building power on opinion, and cementing opinion by power. His disposition is first unfolded by Richard himself, who however is too self-willed and secure to make a proper use of his knowledge.

Ourself and Bushy, Bagot here and Green,
Observed his courtship of the common people;
How he did seem to dive into their hearts,
With humble and familiar courtesy,
What reverence he did throw away on slaves;
Wooing poor craftsmen with the craft of smiles,
And patient under-bearing of his fortune,
As 'twere to banish their affections with him.
Off goes his bonnet to an oyster-wench;

A brace of draymen bid God speed him well,
And had the tribute of his supple knee,
With thanks my countrymen, my loving friends;
As were our England in reversion his,
And he our subjects' next degree in hope.

Afterwards, he gives his own character to Percy, in these words:

I thank thee, gentle Percy, and be sure
I count myself in nothing else so happy,
As in a soul rememb'ring my good friends;
And as my fortune ripens with thy love,
It shall be still thy true love's recompense.

We know how he afterwards kept his promise. His bold assertion of his own rights, his pretended submission to the king, and the ascendancy which he tacitly assumes over him without openly claiming it, as soon as he has him in his power, are characteristic traits of this ambitious and politic usurper. But the part of Richard himself gives the chief interest to the play. His folly, his vices, his misfortunes, his reluctance to part with the crown, his fear to keep it, his weak and womanish regrets, his starting tears, his fits of hectic passion, his smothered majesty, pass in succession before us, and make a picture as natural as it is affecting. Among the most striking touches of pathos are his wish, 'O that I were a mockery king of snow to melt away before the sun of Bolingbroke', and the incident of the poor groom who comes to visit him in prison, and tells him how 'it yearned his heart that Bolingbroke upon his coronation day rode on Roan Barbary. We shall have occasion to return hereafter to the character of Richard II in speaking of Henry VI. There is only one passage more, the description of his entrance into London with Bolingbroke, which we should like to quote here, if it had not been so used and worn out, so thumbed and got by rote, so praised and painted; but its beauty surmounts all these considerations.

Duchess. My lord, you told me you would tell the rest,
When weeping made you break the story off
Of our two cousins coming into London.

York. Where did I leave?

Duchess. At that sad stop, my lord,

Where rude misgovern'd hands, from window tops,
Threw dust and rubbish on king Richard's head.

York. Then, as I said, the duke, great Bolingbroke,
Mounted upon a hot and fiery steed,
Which his aspiring rider seem'd to know,
With slow, but stately pace, kept on his course,
While all tongues cried—God save thee, Bolingbroke!
You would have thought the very windows spake,
So many greedy looks of young and old
Through casements darted their desiring eyes
Upon his visage; and that all the walls,
With painted imag'ry, had said at once—
Jesu preserve thee! welcome, Bolingbroke!
Whilst he, from one side to the other turning,
Bare-headed, lower than his proud steed's neck,
Bespake them thus—I thank you, countrymen:
And thus still doing thus he pass'd along.

Duchess. Alas, poor Richard! where rides he the while?

York. As in a theatre, the eyes of men,
After a well-grac'd actor leaves the stage,
Are idly bent on him that enters next,
Thinking his prattle to be tedious:
Even so, or with much more contempt, men's eyes
Did scowl on Richard; no man cried God save him!
No joyful tongue gave him his welcome home:
But dust was thrown upon his sacred head!
Which with such gentle sorrow he shook off—
His face still combating with tears and smiles,
The badges of his grief and patience—
That had not God, for some strong purpose, steel'd
The hearts of men, they must perforce have melted.
And barbarism itself have pitied him.

<<span id="filepos0038834288"> a>HENRY IV

<<span id="filepos0038834522"> a>IN TWO PARTS

If Shakespeare's fondness for the ludicrous sometimes led to faults in his tragedies (which was not often the case), he has made us amends by the character of Falstaff. This is perhaps the most substantial comic character that ever was invented. Sir John carries a most portly presence in the mind's eye; and in him, not to speak it profanely, 'we behold the fullness of the spirit of wit and humour bodily'. We are as well acquainted with his person as his mind, and his jokes come upon us with double force and relish from the quantity of flesh through which they make their way, as he shakes his fat sides with laughter, or 'lards the lean earth as he walks along'. Other comic characters seem, if we approach and handle them, to resolve themselves into air, 'into thin air'; but this is embodied and palpable to the grossest apprehension: it lies 'three fingers deep upon the ribs', it plays about the lungs and the diaphragm with all the force of animal enjoyment. His body is like a good estate to his mind, from which he receives rents and revenues of profit and pleasure in kind, according to its extent, and the richness of the soil. Wit is often a meagre substitute for pleasurable sensation; an effusion of spleen and petty spite at the comforts of others, from feeling none in itself. Falstaff's wit is an emanation of a fine constitution; an exuberance of good-humour and good-nature; an overflowing of his love of laughter, and good-fellowship; a giving vent to his heart's ease and over-contentment with himself and others. He would not be in character, if he were not so fat as he is; for there is the greatest keeping in the boundless luxury of his imagination and the pampered self-indulgence of his physical appetites. He manures and nourishes his mind with jests, as he does his body with sack and sugar. He carves out his jokes, as he would a capon, or a haunch of venison, where there is cut and come again; and pours out upon them the oil of gladness. His tongue drops fatness, and in the chambers of his brain 'it snows of meat and drink'. He keeps up perpetual holiday and open house, and we live with him in a round of invitations to a rump and dozen.—Yet we are not to suppose that he was a mere sensualist. All this is as much in imagination as in reality. His sensuality does not engross and stupify his other faculties, but 'ascends me into the brain, clears away all the dull, crude vapours that environ it, and makes it full of nimble, fiery, and delectable shapes'. His imagination keeps up the ball after his senses have done with it. He seems to have even a greater enjoyment of the freedom from restraint, of good cheer, of his ease, of his vanity, in the ideal exaggerated descriptions which he gives of them, than in fact. He never fails to enrich his discourse with allusions to eating and drinking, but we never see him at table. He carries his own larder about with him, and he is himself 'a tun of man'. His pulling out the bottle in the field of battle is a joke to show his contempt for glory accompanied with danger, his systematic adherence to his Epicurean philosophy in the most trying circumstances. Again, such is his deliberate exaggeration of his own vices, that it does not seem quite certain whether the account of his hostess's bill, found in his pocket, with such an out-of-the-way charge for capons and sack with only one halfpenny-worth of bread, was not put there by himself as a trick to humour the jest upon his favourite propensities, and as a conscious caricature of himself. He is represented as a liar, a braggart, a coward, a glutton, &c., and yet we are not offended but delighted with him; for he is all these as much to amuse others as to gratify himself. He openly assumes all these characters to show the humorous part of them. The unrestrained indulgence of his own ease, appetites, and convenience, has neither malice nor hypocrisy in it. In a word, he is an actor in himself almost as much as upon the stage, and we no more object to the character of Falstaff in a moral point of view than we should think of bringing an excellent comedian, who should represent him to the life, before one of the police offices. We only consider the number of pleasant lights in which he puts certain foibles (the more pleasant as they are opposed to the received rules and necessary restraints of society) and do not trouble ourselves about the consequences resulting from them, for no mischievous consequences do result. Sir John is old as well as fat, which gives a melancholy retrospective tinge to the character; and by the disparity between his inclinations and his capacity for enjoyment, makes it still more ludicrous and fantastical.

The secret of Falstaff's wit is for the most part a masterly presence of mind, an absolute self-possession, which nothing can disturb. His repartees are involuntary suggestions of his self-love; instinctive evasions of everything that threatens to interrupt the career of his triumphant jollity and self-complacency. His very size floats him out of all his difficulties in a sea of rich conceits; and he turns round on the pivot of his convenience, with every occasion and at a moment's warning. His natural repugnance to every unpleasant thought or circumstance of itself makes light of objections, and provokes the most extravagant and licentious answers in his own justification. His indifference to truth puts no check upon his invention, and the more improbable and unexpected his contrivances are, the more happily does he seem to be delivered of them, the anticipation of their effect acting as a stimulus to the gaiety of his fancy. The success of one adventurous sally gives him spirits to undertake another: he deals always in round numbers, and his exaggerations and excuses are 'open, palpable, monstrous as the father that begets them'. His dissolute carelessness of what he says discovers itself in the first dialogue with the Prince.

Falstaff. By the lord, thou say'st true, lad; and is not mine hostess of the tavern a most sweet wench?

P. Henry. As the honey of Hibla, my old lad of the castle; and is not a buff-jerkin a most sweet robe of durance?

Falstaff. How now, how now, mad wag, what in thy quips and thy quiddities? what a plague have I to do with a buff-jerkin?

P. Henry. Why, what a pox have I to do with mine hostess of the tavern?

In the same scene he afterwards affects melancholy, from pure satisfaction of heart, and professes reform, because it is the farthest thing in the world from his thoughts. He has no qualms of conscience, and therefore would as soon talk of them as of anything else when the humour takes him.

Falstaff. But Hal, I pr'ythee trouble me no more with vanity. I would to God thou and I knew where a commodity of good names were to be bought: an old lord of council rated me the other day in the street about you, sir; but I mark'd him not, and yet he talked very wisely, and in the street too.

P. Henry. Thou didst well, for wisdom cries out in the street, and no man regards it.

Falstaff. O, thou hast damnable iteration, and art indeed able to corrupt a saint. Thou hast done much harm unto me, Hal; God forgive thee for it. Before I knew thee, Hal, I knew nothing, and now I am, if a man should speak truly, little better than one of the wicked. I must give over this life, and I will give it over, by the lord; an I do not, I am a villain. I'll be damn'd for never a king's son in Christendom.

P. Henry. Where shall we take a purse to-morrow. Jack?

Falstaff. Where thou wilt, lad, I'll make one; an I do not, call me villain, and baffle me.

P. Henry. I see good amendment of life in thee, from praying to purse-taking.

Falstaff. Why, Hal, 'tis my vocation, Hal. 'Tis no sin for a man to labour in his vocation.

Of the other prominent passages, his account of his pretended resistance to the robbers, 'who grew from four men in buckram into eleven' as the imagination of his own valour increased with his relating it, his getting off when the truth is discovered by pretending he knew the Prince, the scene in which in the person of the old king he lectures the prince and gives himself a good character, the soliloquy on honour, and description of his new-raised recruits, his meeting with the chief justice, his abuse of the Prince and Poins, who overhear him, to Doll Tearsheet, his reconciliation with Mrs. Quickly who has arrested him for an old debt and whom he persuades to pawn her plate to lend him ten pounds more, and the scenes with Shallow and Silence, are all inimitable. Of all of them, the scene in which Falstaff plays the part, first, of the King, and then of Prince Henry, is the one that has been the most often quoted. We must quote it once more in illustration of our remarks.

Falstaff. Harry, I do not only marvel where thou spendeth thy time, but also how thou art accompanied: for though the camomile, the more it is trodden on, the faster it grows, yet youth, the more it is wasted, the sooner it wears. That thou art my son, I have partly thy mother's word, partly my own opinion; but chiefly, a villainous trick of thine eye, and a foolish hanging of thy nether lip, that doth warrant me. If then thou be son to me, here lies the point;—Why, being son to me, art thou so pointed at? Shaft the blessed sun of heaven prove a micher, and eat blackberries? A question not to be ask'd. Shall the son of England prove a thief, and take purses? a question not to be ask'd. There is a thing, Harry, which thou hast often heard of, and it is known to many in our land by the name of pitch: this pitch, as ancient writers do report, doth defile; so doth the company thou keepest: for, Harry, now I do not speak to thee in drink, but in tears; not in pleasure, but in passion; not in words only, but in woes also:—and yet there is a virtuous man, whom I have often noted in thy company, but I know not his name.

P. Henry. What manner of man, an it like your majesty?

Falstaff. A goodly portly man, i'faith, and a corpulent; of a cheerful look, a pleasing eye, and a most noble carriage; and, as I think, his age some fifty, or, by'r-lady, inclining to threescore; and now I do remember me, his name is Falstaff: if that man should be lewdly given, he deceiveth me; for, Harry, I see virtue in his looks. If then the fruit may be known by the tree, as the tree by the fruit, then peremptorily I speak it, there is virtue in that Falstaff: him keep with, the rest banish. And tell me now, thou naughty varlet, tell me, where hast thou been this month?

P. Henry. Dost thou speak like a king? Do thou stand for me, and
I'll play my father.

Falstaff. Depose me? if thou dost it half so gravely, so majestically, both in word and matter, hang me up by the heels for a rabbit-sucker, or a poulterer's hare.

P. Henry. Well, here I am set.

Falstaff. And here I stand:—judge, my masters.

P. Henry. Now, Harry, whence come you?

Falstaff. My noble lord, from Eastcheap.

P. Henry. The complaints I hear of thee are grievous.

Falstaff. S'blood, my lord, they are false:—nay, I'll tickle ye for a young prince, i'faith.

P. Henry. Swearest thou, ungracious boy? henceforth ne'er look on me. Thou art violently carried away from grace: there is a devil haunts thee, in the likeness of a fat old man; a tun of man is thy companion. Why dost thou converse with that trunk of humours, that bolting-hutch of beastliness, that swoln parcel of dropsies, that huge bombard of sack, that stuft cloak-bag of guts, that roasted Manning-tree ox with the pudding in his belly, that reverend vice, that grey iniquity, that father ruffian, that vanity in years? wherein is he good, but to taste sack and drink it? wherein neat and cleanly, but to carve a capon and eat it? wherein cunning, but in craft? wherein crafty, but in villainy? wherein villainous, but in all things? wherein worthy, but in nothing?

Falstaff. I would, your grace would take me with you: whom means your grace?

P. Henry. That villainous, abominable mis-leader of youth, Falstaff, that old white-bearded Satan.

Falstaff. My lord, the man I know.

P. Henry. I know thou dost.

Falstaff. But to say, I know more harm in him than in myself, were to say more than I know. That he is old (the more the pity) his white hairs do witness it: but that he is (saving your reverence) a whoremaster, that I utterly deny. If sack and sugar be a fault, God help the wicked! if to be old and merry be a sin, then many an old host that I know is damned: if to be fat be to be hated, then Pharaoh's lean kine are to be loved. No, my good lord; banish Peto, banish Bardolph, banish Poins; but for sweet Jack Falstaff, kind Jack Falstaff, true Jack Falstaff, valiant Jack Falstaff, and therefore more valiant, being as he is, old Jack Falstaff, banish not him thy Harry's company; banish plump Jack, and banish all the world.

P. Henry. I do, I will.

[Knocking; and Hostess and Bardolph go out.]

Re-enter Bardolph, running.

Bardolph. O, my lord, my lord; the sheriff, with a most monstrous watch, is at the door.

Falstaff. Out, you rogue! play out the play: I have much to say in the behalf of that Falstaff.

One of the most characteristic descriptions of Sir John is that which Mrs. Quickly gives of him when he asks her, 'What is the gross sum that I owe thee?'

Hostess. Marry, if thou wert an honest man, thyself, and the money too. Thou didst swear to me upon a parcel-gilt goblet, sitting in my Dolphin-chamber, at the round table, by a sea-coal fire on Wednesday in Whitsunweek, when the prince broke thy head for likening his father to a singing man of Windsor; thou didst swear to me then, as I was washing thy wound, to marry me, and make me my lady thy wife. Canst thou deny it? Did not goodwife Keech, the butcher's wife, come in then, and call me gossip Quickly? coming in to borrow a mess of vinegar; telling us, she had a good dish of prawns; whereby thou didst desire to eat some; whereby I told thee, they were ill for a green wound? And didst thou not, when she was gone down stairs, desire me to be no more so familiarity with such poor people; saying, that ere long they should call me madam? And didst thou not kiss me, and bid me fetch thee thirty shillings? I put thee now to thy book-oath; deny it, if thou canst.

This scene is to us the most convincing proof of Falstaff's power of gaining over the goodwill of those he was familiar with, except indeed Bardolph's somewhat profane exclamation on hearing the account of his death, 'Would I were with him, wheresoe'er he is, whether in heaven or hell.'

One of the topics of exulting superiority over others most common in Sir John's mouth is his corpulence and the exterior marks of good living which he carries about him, thus 'turning his vices into commodity'. He accounts for the friendship between the Prince and Poins, from 'their legs being both of a bigness'; and compares Justice Shallow to 'a man made after supper of a cheese-paring'. There cannot be a more striking gradation of character than that between Falstaff and Shallow, and Shallow and Silence. It seems difficult at first to fall lower than the squire; but this fool, great as he is, finds an admirer and humble foil in his cousin Silence. Vain of his acquaintance with Sir John, who makes a butt of him, he exclaims, 'Would, cousin Silence, that thou had'st seen that which this knight and I have seen!'—'Aye, Master Shallow, we have heard the chimes at midnight,' says Sir John. To Falstaff's observation, 'I did not think Master Silence had been a man of this mettle', Silence answers, 'Who, I? I have been merry twice and once ere now.' What an idea is here conveyed of a prodigality of living? What good husbandry and economical self-denial in his pleasures? What a stock of lively recollections? It is curious that Shakespeare has ridiculed in Justice Shallow, who was 'in some authority under the king', that disposition to unmeaning tautology which is the regal infirmity of later times, and which, it may be supposed, he acquired from talking to his cousin Silence, and receiving no answers.

Falstaff. You have here a goodly dwelling, and a rich.

Shallow. Barren, barren, barren; beggars all, beggars all, Sir John: marry, good air. Spread Davy, spread Davy. Well said, Davy.

Falstaff. This Davy serves you for good uses.

Shallow. A good varlet, a good varlet, a very good varlet. By the mass, I have drank too much sack at supper. A good varlet. Now sit down, now sit down. Come, cousin.

The true spirit of humanity, the thorough knowledge of the stuff we are made of, the practical wisdom with the seeming fooleries in the whole of the garden-scene at Shallow's country-seat, and just before in the exquisite dialogue between him and Silence on the death of old Double, have no parallel anywhere else. In one point of view, they are laughable in the extreme; in another they are equally affecting, if it is affecting to show what a little thing is human life, what a poor forked creature man is!

The heroic and serious part of these two plays founded on the story of Henry IV is not inferior to the comic and farcical. The characters of Hotspur and Prince Henry are two of the most beautiful and dramatic, both in themselves and from contrast, that ever were drawn. They are the essence of chivalry. We like Hotspur the best upon the whole, perhaps because he was unfortunate.—The characters of their fathers, Henry IV and old Northumberland, are kept up equally well. Henry naturally succeeds by his prudence and caution in keeping what he has got; Northumberland fails in his enterprise from an excess of the same quality, and is caught in the web of his own cold, dilatory policy. Owen Glendower is a masterly character. It is as bold and original as it is intelligible and thoroughly natural. The disputes between him and Hotspur are managed with infinite address and insight into nature. We cannot help pointing out here some very beautiful lines, where Hotspur describes the fight between Glendower and Mortimer.

—When on the gentle Severn's sedgy bank,
In single opposition hand to hand,
He did confound the best part of an hour
In changing hardiment with great Glendower:
Three times they breath'd, and three times did they drink,
Upon agreement, of swift Severn's flood;
Who then affrighted with their bloody looks,
Ran fearfully among the trembling reeds,
And hid his crisp head in the hollow bank,
Blood-stained with these valiant combatants.

The peculiarity and the excellence of Shakespeare's poetry is, that it seems as if he made his imagination the hand-maid of nature, and nature the plaything of his imagination. He appears to have been all the characters, and in all the situations he describes. It is as if either he had had all their feelings, or had lent them all his genius to express themselves. There cannot be stronger instances of this than Hotspur's rage when Henry IV forbids him to speak of Mortimer, his insensibility to all that his father and uncle urge to calm him, and his fine abstracted apostrophe to honour, 'By heaven methinks it were an easy leap to pluck bright honour from the moon,' &c. After all, notwithstanding the gallantry, generosity, good temper, and idle freaks of the mad-cap Prince of Wales, we should not have been sorry if Northumberland's force had come up in time to decide the fate of the battle at Shrewsbury; at least, we always heartily sympathize with Lady Percy's grief when she exclaims:

Had my sweet Harry had but half their numbers,
  To-day might I (hanging on Hotspur's neck)
  Have talked of Monmouth's grave.

The truth is, that we never could forgive the Prince's treatment of Falstaff; though perhaps Shakespeare knew what was best, according to the history, the nature of the times, and of the man. We speak only as dramatic critics. Whatever terror the French in those days might have of Henry V, yet to the readers of poetry at present, Falstaff is the better man of the two. We think of him and quote him oftener.

<<span id="filepos0038860031"> a>HENRY V

Henry V is a very favourite monarch with the English nation, and he appears to have been also a favourite with Shakespeare, who labours hard to apologize for the actions of the king, by showing us the character of the man, as 'the king of good fellows'. He scarcely deserves this honour. He was fond of war and low company:—we know little else of him. He was careless, dissolute, and ambitious—idle, or doing mischief. In private, he seemed to have no idea of the common decencies of life, which he subjected to a kind of regal license; in public affairs, he seemed to have no idea of any rule of right or wrong, but brute force, glossed over with a little religious hypocrisy and archiepiscopal advice. His principles did not change with his situation and professions. His adventure on Gadshill was a prelude to the affair of Agincourt, only a bloodless one; Falstaff was a puny prompter of violence and outrage, compared with the pious and politic Archbishop of Canterbury, who gave the king carte blanche, in a genealogical tree of his family, to rob and murder in circles of latitude and longitude abroad—to save the possessions of the Church at home. This appears in the speeches in Shakespeare, where the hidden motives that actuate princes and their advisers in war and policy are better laid open than in speeches from the throne or woolsack. Henry, because he did not know how to govern his own kingdom, determined to make war upon his neighbours. Because his own title to the crown was doubtful, he laid claim to that of France. Because he did not know how to exercise the enormous power, which had just dropped into his hands, to any one good purpose, he immediately undertook (a cheap and obvious resource of sovereignty) to do all the mischief he could. Even if absolute monarchs had the wit to find out objects of laudable ambition, they could only 'plume up their wills' in adhering to the more sacred formula of the royal prerogative, 'the right divine of kings to govern wrong', because will is only then triumphant when it is opposed to the will of others, because the pride of power is only then shown, not when it consults the rights and interests of others, but when it insults and tramples on all justice and all humanity. Henry declares his resolution 'when France is his, to bend it to his awe, or break it all to pieces'—a resolution worthy of a conqueror, to destroy all that he cannot enslave; and what adds to the joke, he lays all the blame of the consequences of his ambition on those who will not submit tamely to his tyranny. Such is the history of kingly power, from the beginning to the end of the world—with this difference, that the object of war formerly, when the people adhered to their allegiance, was to depose kings; the object latterly, since the people swerved from their allegiance, has been to restore kings, and to make common cause against mankind. The object of our late invasion and conquest of France was to restore the legitimate monarch, the descendant of Hugh Capet, to the throne: Henry V in his time made war on and deposed the descendant of this very Hugh Capet, on the plea that he was a usurper and illegitimate. What would the great modern catspaw of legitimacy and restorer of divine right have said to the claim of Henry and the title of the descendants of Hugh Capet? Henry V, it is true, was a hero, a king of England, and the conqueror of the king of France. Yet we feel little love or admiration for him. He was a hero, that is, he was ready to sacrifice his own life for the pleasure of destroying thousands of other lives: he was a king of England, but not a constitutional one, and we only like kings according to the law; lastly, he was a conqueror of the French king, and for this we dislike him less than if he had conquered the French people. How then do we like him? We like him in the play. There he is a very amiable monster, a very splendid pageant. As we like to gaze at a panther or a young lion in their cages in the Tower, and catch a pleasing horror from their glistening eyes, their velvet paws, and dreadless roar, so we take a very romantic, heroic, patriotic, and poetical delight in the boasts and feats of our younger Harry, as they appear on the stage and are confined to lines of ten syllables; where no blood follows the stroke that wounds our ears, where no harvest bends beneath horses' hoofs, no city flames, no little child is butchered, no dead men's bodies are found piled on heaps and festering the next morning—in the orchestra!

So much for the politics of this play; now for the poetry. Perhaps one of the most striking images in all Shakespeare is that given of war in the first lines of the Prologue.

O for a muse of fire, that would ascend
The brightest heaven of invention,
A kingdom for a stage, princes to act,
And monarchs to behold the swelling scene!
Then should the warlike Harry, like himself,
Assume the port of Mars, and AT HIS HEELS
LEASH'D IN LIKE HOUNDS, SHOULD FAMINE, SWORD, AND FIRE
CROUCH FOR EMPLOYMENT.

Rubens, if he had painted it, would not have improved upon this simile. The conversation between the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of Ely relating to the sudden change in the manners of Henry V is among the well-known BEAUTIES of Shakespeare. It is indeed admirable both for strength and grace. It has sometimes occurred to us that Shakespeare, in describing 'the reformation' of the Prince, might have had an eye to himself—

Which is a wonder how his grace should glean it,
Since his addiction was to courses vain,
His companies unletter'd, rude and shallow,
His hours fill'd up with riots, banquets, sports;
And never noted in him any study,
Any retirement, any sequestration

From open haunts and popularity.

Ely. The strawberry grows underneath the nettle,
And wholesome berries thrive and ripen best
Neighbour'd by fruit of baser quality:
And so the prince obscur'd his contemplation
Under the veil of wildness, which no doubt
Grew like the summer-grass, fastest by night,
Unseen, yet crescive in his faculty.

This at least is as probable an account of the progress of the poet's mind as we have met with in any of the Essays on the Learning of Shakespeare.

Nothing can be better managed than the caution which the king gives the meddling Archbishop, not to advise him rashly to engage in the war with France, his scrupulous dread of the consequences of that advice, and his eager desire to hear and follow it.

And God forbid, my dear and faithful lord,
That you should fashion, wrest, or bow your reading,
Or nicely charge your understanding soul
With opening titles miscreate, whose right
Suits not in native colours with the truth.
For God doth know how many now in health
Shall drop their blood, in approbation
Of what your reverence shall incite us to.

Therefore take heed how you impawn your person,
How you awake our sleeping sword of war;
We charge you in the name of God, take heed.
For never two such kingdoms did contend
Without much fall of blood, whose guiltless drops
Are every one a woe, a sore complaint
'Gainst him, whose wrong gives edge unto the swords
That make such waste in brief mortality.
Under this conjuration, speak, my lord;
For we will hear, note, and believe in heart,

That what you speak, is in your conscience wash'd,
As pure as sin with baptism.

Another characteristic instance of the blindness of human nature to everything but its own interests is the complaint made by the king of 'the ill neighbourhood' of the Scot in attacking England when she was attacking France.

For once the eagle England being in prey,
To her unguarded nest the weazel Scot
Comes sneaking, and so sucks her princely eggs.

It is worth observing that in all these plays, which give an admirable picture of the spirit of the good old times, the moral inference does not at all depend upon the nature of the actions, but on the dignity or meanness of the persons committing them. 'The eagle England' has a right 'to be in prey', but 'the weazel Scot' has none 'to come sneaking to her nest', which she has left to pounce upon others. Might was right, without equivocation or disguise, in that heroic and chivalrous age. The substitution of right for might, even in theory, is among the refinements and abuses of modern philosophy.

A more beautiful rhetorical delineation of the effects of subordination in a commonwealth can hardly be conceived than the following:

For government, though high and low and lower,
Put into parts, doth keep in one consent,
Congruing in a full and natural close,
Like music.
—Therefore heaven doth divide
The state of man in divers functions,
Setting endeavour in continual motion;
To which is fixed, as an aim or butt,
Obedience; for so work the honey bees;
Creatures that by a rule in nature, teach
The art of order to a peopled kingdom.
They have a king, and officers of sorts:
Where some, like magistrates, correct at home;
Others, like merchants, venture trade abroad;

Others, like soldiers, armed in their stings,
Make boot upon the summer's velvet buds;
Which pillage they with merry march bring home
To the tent-royal of their emperor;
Who, busied in his majesty, surveys
The singing mason building roofs of gold;
The civil citizens kneading up the honey;
The poor mechanic porters crowding in
Their heavy burthens at his narrow gate;
The sad-eyed justice, with his surly hum,
Delivering o'er to executors pale
The lazy yawning drone. I this infer,—
That many things, having full reference
To one consent, may work contrariously:
As many arrows, loosed several ways,
Fly to one mark;
As many several ways meet in one town;
As many fresh streams meet in one salt sea;
As many lines close in the dial's centre;
So may a thousand actions, once a-foot,
End in one purpose, and be all well borne
Without defeat.

HENRY V is but one of Shakespeare's second-rate plays. Yet by quoting passages, like this, from his second-rate plays alone, we might make a volume 'rich with his praise',

As is the oozy bottom of the sea
With sunken wrack and sumless treasuries.

Of this sort are the king's remonstrance to Scroop, Grey, and Cambridge, on the detection of their treason, his address to the soldiers at the siege of Harfleur, and the still finer one before the battle of Agincourt, the description of the night before the battle, and the reflections on ceremony put into the mouth of the king.

O hard condition; twin-born with greatness,
Subjected to the breath of every fool,
Whose sense no more can feel but his own wringing!
What infinite heart's ease must kings neglect,

That private men enjoy? and what have kings,
That privates have not too, save ceremony?
Save general ceremony?
And what art thou, thou idol ceremony?
What kind of god art thou, that suffer'st more
Of mortal griefs, than do thy worshippers?
What are thy rents? what are thy comings-in?
O ceremony, show me but thy worth!
What is thy soul, O adoration?
Art thou aught else but place, degree, and form,
Creating awe and fear in other men?
Wherein thou art less happy, being feared,
Than they in fearing.
What drink'st thou oft, instead of homage sweet,
But poison'd flattery? O, be sick, great greatness,
And bid thy ceremony give thee cure!
Think'st thou, the fiery fever will go out
With titles blown from adulation?
Will it give place to flexure and low bending?
Can'st thou, when thou command'st the beggar's knee,
Command the health of it? No, thou proud dream,
That play'st so subtly with a king's repose,
I am a king, that find thee: and I know,
'Tis not the balm, the sceptre, and the ball,
The sword, the mace, the crown imperial,
The enter-tissu'd robe of gold and pearl,
The farsed title running 'fore the king,
The throne he sits on, nor the tide of pomp
That beats upon the high shore of this world,
No, not all these, thrice-gorgeous ceremony,
Not all these, laid in bed majestical,
Can sleep so soundly as the wretched slave;
Who, with a body fili'd, and vacant mind,
Gets him to rest, cramm'd with distressful bread,
Never sees horrid night, the child of hell:
But, like a lacquey, from the rise to set,
Sweats in the eye of Phoebus, and all night
Sleeps in Elysium; next day, after dawn,
Doth rise, and help Hyperion to his horse;

And follows so the ever-running year
With profitable labour, to his grave:
And, but for ceremony, such a wretch,
Winding up days with toil, and nights with sleep,
Has the forehand and vantage of a king.
The slave, a member of the country's peace,
Enjoys it; but in gross brain little wots,
What watch the king keeps to maintain the peace,
Whose hours the peasant best advantages.

Most of these passages are well known: there is one, which we do not remember to have seen noticed, and yet it is no whit inferior to the rest in heroic beauty. It is the account of the deaths of York and Suffolk.

Exeter. The duke of York commends him to your majesty.

K. Henry. Lives he, good uncle? thrice within this hour,
I saw him down; thrice up again, and fighting;
From helmet to the spur all blood he was.

Exeter. In which array (brave soldier) doth he lie,
Larding the plain; and by his bloody side
(Yoke-fellow to his honour-owing wounds)
The noble earl of Suffolk also lies.
Suffolk first died: and York, all haggled o'er,
Comes to him, where in gore he lay insteep'd,
And takes him by the beard; kisses the gashes,
That bloodily did yawn upon his face;
And cries aloud—Tarry, dear cousin Suffolk!
My soul shall thine keep company to heaven:
Tarry, sweet soul, for mine, then fly a-breast;
As, in this glorious and well-foughten field,
We kept together in our chivalry!
Upon these words I came, and cheer'd him up:
He smil'd me in the face, raught me his hand,
And, with a feeble gripe, says—Dear my lord,
Commend my service to my sovereign.

So did he turn, and over Suffolk's neck
He threw his wounded arm, and kiss'd his lips;
And so, espous'd to death, with blood he seal'd
A testament of noble-ending love.

But we must have done with splendid quotations. The behaviour of the king, in the difficult and doubtful circumstances in which he is placed, is as patient and modest as it is spirited and lofty in his prosperous fortune. The character of the French nobles is also very admirably depicted; and the Dauphin's praise of his horse shows the vanity of that class of persons in a very striking point of view. Shakespeare always accompanies a foolish prince with a satirical courtier, as we see in this instance. The comic parts of HENRY V are very inferior to those of HENRY IV. Falstaff is dead, and without him. Pistol, Nym, and Bardolph are satellites without a sun. Fluellen the Welshman is the most entertaining character in the piece. He is good-natured, brave, choleric, and pedantic. His parallel between Alexander and Harry of Monmouth, and his desire to have 'some disputations' with Captain Macmorris on the discipline of the Roman wars, in the heat of the battle, are never to be forgotten. His treatment of Pistol is as good as Pistol's treatment of his French prisoner. There are two other remarkable prose passages in this play: the conversation of Henry in disguise with the three sentinels on the duties of a soldier, and his courtship of Katherine in broken French. We like them both exceedingly, though the first savours perhaps too much of the king, and the last too little of the lover.

<<span id="filepos0038883084"> a>HENRY VI

<<span id="filepos0038883318"> a>IN THREE PARTS

During the time of the civil wars of York and Lancaster, England was a perfect bear-garden, and Shakespeare has given us a very lively picture of the scene. The three parts of HENRY VI convey a picture of very little else; and are inferior to the other historical plays. They have brilliant passages; but the general ground-work is comparatively poor and meagre, the style 'flat and unraised'. There are few lines like the following:

Glory is like a circle in the water;
Which never ceaseth to enlarge itself,
Till by broad spreading it disperse to naught.

The first part relates to the wars in France after the death of Henry V and the story of the Maid of Orleans. She is here almost as scurvily treated as in Voltaire's Pucelle. Talbot is a very magnificent sketch: there is something as formidable in this portrait of him, as there would be in a monumental figure of him or in the sight of the armour which he wore. The scene in which he visits the Countess of Auvergne, who seeks to entrap him, is a very spirited one, and his description of his own treatment while a prisoner to the French not less remarkable.

Salisbury. Yet tell'st thou not how thou wert entertain'd.

Talbot. With scoffs and scorns, and contumelious taunts,
In open market-place produced they me,
To be a public spectacle to all.
Here, said they, is the terror of the French,
The scarecrow that affrights our children so.
Then broke I from the officers that led me,
And with my nails digg'd stones out of the ground,
To hurl at the beholders of my shame.
My grisly countenance made others fly,
None durst come near for fear of sudden death.
In iron walls they deem'd me not secure:
So great a fear my name amongst them spread,
That they suppos'd I could rend bars of steel,
And spurn in pieces posts of adamant.
Wherefore a guard of chosen shot I had:
They walk'd about me every minute-while;
And if I did but stir out of my bed,
Ready they were to shoot me to the heart.

The second part relates chiefly to the contests between the nobles during the minority of Henry and the death of Gloucester, the good Duke Humphrey. The character of Cardinal Beaufort is the most prominent in the group: the account of his death is one of our author's masterpieces. So is the speech of Gloucester to the nobles on the loss of the provinces of France by the king's marriage with Margaret of Anjou. The pretensions and growing ambition of the Duke of York, the father of Richard III, are also very ably developed. Among the episodes, the tragi-comedy of Jack Cade, and the detection of the impostor Simcox are truly edifying.

The third part describes Henry's loss of his crown: his death takes place in the last act, which is usually thrust into the common acting play of RICHARD III. The character of Gloucester, afterwards King Richard, is here very powerfully commenced, and his dangerous designs and long-reaching ambition are fully described in his soliloquy in the third act, beginning, 'Aye, Edward will use women honourably.' Henry VI is drawn as distinctly as his high-spirited Queen, and notwithstanding the very mean figure which Henry makes as a king, we still feel more respect for him than for his wife.

We have already observed that Shakespeare was scarcely more remarkable for the force and marked contrasts of his characters than for the truth and subtlety with which he has distinguished those which approached the nearest to each other. For instance, the soul of Othello is hardly more distinct from that of Iago than that of Desdemona is shown to be from Aemilia's; the ambition of Macbeth is as distinct from the ambition of Richard III as it is from the meekness of Duncan; the real madness of Lear is as different from the feigned madness of Edgar [Footnote: There is another instance of the name distinction in Hamlet and Ophelia. Hamlet's pretended madness would make a very good real madness in any other author.] as from the babbling of the fool; the contrast between wit and folly in Falstaff and Shallow is not more characteristic though more obvious than the gradations of folly, loquacious or reserved, in Shallow and Silence; and again, the gallantry of Prince Henry is as little confounded with that of Hotspur as with the cowardice of Falstaff, or as the sensual and philosophic cowardice of the Knight is with the pitiful and cringing cowardice of Parolles. All these several personages were as different in Shakespeare as they would have been in themselves: his imagination borrowed from the life, and every circumstance, object, motive, passion, operated there as it would in reality, and produced a world of men and women as distinct, as true and as various as those that exist in nature. The peculiar property of Shakespeare's imagination was this truth, accompanied with the unconsciousness of nature: indeed, imagination to be perfect must be unconscious, at least in production; for nature is so. We shall attempt one example more in the characters of Richard II and Henry VI.

The characters and situations of both these persons were so nearly alike, that they would have been completely confounded by a commonplace poet. Yet they are kept quite distinct in Shakespeare. Both were kings, and both unfortunate. Both lost their crowns owing to their mismanagement and imbecility; the one from a thoughtless, wilful abuse of power, the other from an indifference to it. The manner in which they bear their misfortunes corresponds exactly to the causes which led to them. The one is always lamenting the loss of his power which he has not the spirit to regain; the other seems only to regret that he had ever been king, and is glad to be rid of the power, with the trouble; the effeminacy of the one is that of a voluptuary, proud, revengeful, impatient of contradiction, and inconsolable in his misfortunes; the effeminacy of the other is that of an indolent, good-natured mind, naturally averse to the turmoils of ambition and the cares of greatness, and who wishes to pass his time in monkish indolence and contemplation.—Richard bewails the loss of the kingly power only as it was the means of gratifying his pride and luxury; Henry regards it only as a means of doing right, and is less desirous of the advantages to be derived from possessing it than afraid of exercising it wrong. In knighting a young soldier, he gives him ghostly advice—

Edward Plantagenet, arise a knight,
  And learn this lesson, draw thy sword in right.

Richard II in the first speeches of the play betrays his real character. In the first alarm of his pride, on hearing of Bolingbroke's rebellion, before his presumption has met with any check, he exclaims:

Mock not my senseless conjuration, lords:
  This earth shall have a feeling, and these stones
  Prove armed soldiers, ere her native king
  Shall falter under proud rebellious arms.
  . . . . .
  Not all the water in the rough rude sea
  Can wash the balm from an anointed king;
  The breath of worldly man cannot depose
  The Deputy elected by the Lord.
  For every man that Bolingbroke hath prest,

To lift sharp steel against our golden crown,
Heaven for his Richard hath in heavenly pay
A glorious angel; then if angels fight,
Weak men must fall; for Heaven still guards the right.

Yet, notwithstanding this royal confession of faith, on the very first news of actual disaster, all his conceit of himself as the peculiar favourite of Providence vanishes into air.

But now the blood of twenty thousand men
Did triumph in my face, and they are fled.
All souls that will be safe fly from my side;
For time hath set a blot upon my pride.

Immediately after, however, recollecting that 'cheap defence' of the divinity of kings which is to be found in opinion, he is for arming his name against his enemies.

Awake, thou coward Majesty, thou sleep'st;
Is not the King's name forty thousand names?
Arm, arm, my name: a puny subject strikes
At thy great glory.

King Henry does not make any such vapouring resistance to the loss of his crown, but lets it slip from off his head as a weight which he is neither able nor willing to bear; stands quietly by to see the issue of the contest for his kingdom, as if it were a game at push-pin, and is pleased when the odds prove against him.

When Richard first hears of the death of his favourites, Bushy, Bagot, and the rest, he indignantly rejects all idea of any further efforts, and only indulges in the extravagant impatience of his grief and his despair, in that fine speech which has been so often quoted:

Aumerle. Where is the duke my father, with his power?

K. Richard. No matter where: of comfort no man speak:
Let's talk of graves, of worms, and epitaphs,
Make dust our paper, and with rainy eyes

Write sorrow in the bosom of the earth!
Let's choose executors, and talk of wills:
And yet not so—for what can we bequeath,
Save our deposed bodies to the ground?
Our lands, our lives, and all are Bolingbroke's,
And nothing can we call our own but death,
And that small model of the barren earth,
Which serves as paste and cover to our bones.
For heaven's sake let us sit upon the ground,
And tell sad stories of the death of Kings:
How some have been depos'd, some slain in war;
Some haunted by the ghosts they dispossess'd;
Some poison'd by their wives, some sleeping kili'd;
All murder'd:—for within the hollow crown,
That rounds the mortal temples of a king,
Keeps death his court: and there the antic sits,
Scoffing his state, and grinning at his pomp!
Allowing him a breath, a little scene
To monarchize, be fear'd, and kill with looks;
Infusing him with self and vain conceit—
As if this flesh, which walls about our life,
Were brass impregnable; and, humour'd thus,
Comes at the last, and, with a little pin,
Bores through his castle wall, and—farewell king!
Cover your heads, and mock not flesh and blood
With solemn reverence; throw away respect,
Tradition, form, and ceremonious duty,
For you have but mistook me all this while:
I live on bread like you, feel want, taste grief,
Need friends, like you; subjected thus,
How can you say to me I am a king?

There is as little sincerity afterwards in his affected resignation to his fate, as there is fortitude in this exaggerated picture of his misfortunes before they have happened.

When Northumberland comes back with the message from Bolingbroke, he exclaims, anticipating the result,—

What must the king do now? Must he submit?
The king shall do it: must he be depos'd?
The king shall be contented: must he lose
The name of king? O' God's name let it go.
I'll give my jewels for a set of beads,
My gorgeous palace for a hermitage,
My gay apparel for an almsman's gown,
My figur'd goblets for a dish of wood,
My sceptre for a palmer's walking staff,
My subjects for a pair of carved saints,
And my large kingdom for a little grave—
A little, little grave, an obscure grave.

How differently is all this expressed in King Henry's soliloquy, during the battle with Edward's party:

This battle fares like to the morning's war,
When dying clouds contend with growing light,
What time the shepherd blowing of his nails,
Can neither call it perfect day or night.
Here on this mole-hill will I sit me down;
To whom God will, there be the victory!
For Margaret my Queen, and Clifford too,
Have chid me from the battle; swearing both
They prosper best of all when I am thence.
Would I were dead, if God's good will were so.
For what is in this world but grief and woe?
O God! methinks it were a happy life
To be no better than a homely swain,
To sit upon a hill as I do now,
To carve out dials quaintly, point by point,
Thereby to see the minutes how they run:
How many make the hour full complete,
How many hours bring about the day,
How many days will finish up the year,
How many years a mortal man may live.
When this is known, then to divide the times:
So many hours must I tend my flock,
So many hours must I take my rest,

So many hours must I contemplate,
So many hours must I sport myself;
So many days my ewes have been with young,
So many weeks ere the poor fools will yean,
So many months ere I shall shear the fleece:
So many minutes, hours, weeks, months, and years
Past over, to the end they were created,
Would bring white hairs unto a quiet grave.
Ah! what a life were this! how sweet, how lovely!
Gives not the hawthorn bush a sweeter shade
To shepherds looking on their silly sheep,
Than doth a rich embroidered canopy
To kings that fear their subjects' treachery?
O yes it doth, a thousand-fold it doth.
And to conclude, the shepherds' homely curds,
His cold thin drink out of his leather bottle,
His wonted sleep under a fresh tree's shade,
All which secure and sweetly he enjoys,
Is far beyond a prince's delicates,
His viands sparkling in a golden cup,
His body couched in a curious bed,
When care, mistrust, and treasons wait on him.

This is a true and beautiful description of a naturally quiet and contented disposition, and not, like the former, the splenetic effusion of disappointed ambition.

In the last scene of RICHARD II his despair lends him courage: he beats the keeper, slays two of his assassins, and dies with imprecations in his mouth against Sir Pierce Exton, who 'had staggered his royal person'. Henry, when he is seized by the deer-stealers, only reads them a moral lecture on the duty of allegiance and the sanctity of an oath; and when stabbed by Gloucester in the Tower, reproaches him with his crimes, but pardons him his own death.

<<span id="filepos0038904012"> a>RICHARD III

RICHARD III may be considered as properly a stageplay: it belongs to the theatre, rather than to the closet. We shall therefore criticize it chiefly with a reference to the manner in which we have seen it performed. It is the character in which Garrick came out: it was the second character in which Mr. Kean appeared, and in which he acquired his fame. Shakespeare we have always with us: actors we have only for a few seasons; and therefore some account of them may be acceptable, if not to our cotemporaries, to those who come after us, if 'that rich and idle personage, Posterity', should deign to look into our writings.

It is possible to form a higher conception of the character of Richard than that given by Mr. Kean: but we cannot imagine any character represented with greater distinctness and precision, more perfectly ARTICULATED in every part. Perhaps indeed there is too much of what is technically called execution. When we first saw this celebrated actor in the part, we thought he sometimes failed from an exuberance of manner, and dissipated the impression of the general character by the variety of his resources. To be complete, his delineation of it should have more solidity, depth, sustained and impassioned feeling, with somewhat less brilliancy, with fewer glancing lights, pointed transitions, and pantomimic evolutions.

The Richard of Shakespeare is towering and lofty; equally impetuous and commanding; haughty, violent, and subtle; bold and treacherous; confident in his strength as well as in his cunning; raised high by his birth, and higher by his talents and his crimes; a royal usurper, a princely hypocrite, a tyrant and a murderer of the house of Plantagenet.

But I was born so high:
  Our aery buildeth in the cedar's top,
  And dallies with the wind, and scorns the sun.

The idea conveyed in these lines (which are indeed omitted in the miserable medley acted for Richard III) is never lost sight of by Shakespeare, and should not be out of the actor's mind for a moment. The restless and sanguinary Richard is not a man striving to be great, but to be greater than he is; conscious of his strength of will, his power of intellect, his daring courage, his elevated station;

and making use of these advantages to commit unheard-of crimes, and to shield himself from remorse and infamy.

If Mr. Kean does not entirely succeed in concentrating all the lines of the character, as drawn by Shakespeare, he gives an animation, vigour, and relief to the part which we have not seen equalled. He is more refined than Cooke; more bold, varied, and original than Kemble in the same character. In some parts he is deficient in dignity, and particularly in the scenes of state business, he has by no means an air of artificial authority. There is at times an aspiring elevation, an enthusiastic rapture in his expectations of attaining the crown, and at others a gloating expression of sullen delight, as if he already clenched the bauble, and held it in his grasp. The courtship scene with Lady Anne is an admirable exhibition of smooth and smiling villainy. The progress of wily adulation, of encroaching humility, is finely marked by his action, voice and eye. He seems, like the first Tempter, to approach his prey, secure of the event, and as if success had smoothed his way before him. The late Mr. Cooke's manner of representing this scene was more vehement, hurried, and full of anxious uncertainty. This, though more natural in general, was less in character in this particular instance. Richard should woo less as a lover than as an actor—to show his mental superiority, and power of making others the playthings of his purposes. Mr. Kean's attitude in leaning against the side of the stage before he comes forward to address Lady Anne, is one of the most graceful and striking ever witnessed on the stage. It would do for Titian to paint. The frequent and rapid transition of his voice from the expression of the fiercest passion to the most familiar tones of conversation was that which gave a peculiar grace of novelty to his acting on his first appearance. This has been since imitated and caricatured by others, and he himself uses the artifice more sparingly than he did. His by-play is excellent. His manner of bidding his friends 'Good night', after pausing with the point of his sword drawn slowly backward and forward on the ground, as if considering the plan of the battle next day, is a particularly happy and natural thought. He gives to the two last acts of the play the greatest animation and effect. He fills every part of the stage; and makes up for the deficiency of his person by what has been sometimes objected to as an excess of action. The concluding scene in which he is killed by Richmond is the most brilliant of the whole. He fights at last like one drunk with wounds; and the attitude in which he stands with his hands stretched out, after his sword is wrested from him, has a preternatural and terrific grandeur, as if his will could not be disarmed, and the very phantoms of his despair had power to kill.—Mr. Kean has since in a great measure effaced the impression of his Richard III by the superior efforts of his genius in Othello (his masterpiece), in the murder-scene in MACBETH, in RICHARD II, in SIR GILES OVERREACH, and lastly in OROONOKO; but we still like to look back to his first performance of this part, both because it first assured his admirers of his future success, and because we bore our feeble but, at that time, not useless testimony to the merits of this very original actor, on which the town was considerably divided for no other reason than because they WERE original.

The manner in which Shakespeare's plays have been generally altered or rather mangled by modern mechanists, is a disgrace to the English stage. The patch-work Richard III which is acted under the sanction of his name, and which was manufactured by Cibber, is a striking example of this remark.

The play itself is undoubtedly a very powerful effusion of Shakespeare's genius. The ground-work of the character of Richard, that mixture of intellectual vigour with moral depravity, in which Shakespeare delighted to show his strength—gave full scope as well as temptation to the exercise of his imagination. The character of his hero is almost everywhere predominant, and marks its lurid track throughout. The original play is, however, too long for representation, and there are some few scenes which might be better spared than preserved, and by omitting which it would remain a complete whole. The only rule, indeed, for altering Shakespeare is to retrench certain passages which may be considered either as superfluous or obsolete, but not to add or transpose anything. The arrangement and development of the story, and the mutual contrast and combination of the dramatis personae, are in general as finely managed as the development of the characters or the expression of the passions.

This rule has not been adhered to in the present instance. Some of the most important and striking passages in the principal character have been omitted, to make room for idle and misplaced extracts from other plays; the only intention of which seems to have been to make the character of Richard as odious and disgusting as possible. It is apparently for no other purpose than to make Gloucester stab King Henry on the stage, that the fine abrupt introduction of the character in the opening of the play is lost in the tedious whining morality of the uxorious king (taken from another play);—we say TEDIOUS, because it interrupts the business of the scene, and loses its beauty and effect by having no intelligible connexion with the previous character of the mild, well-meaning monarch. The passages which the unfortunate Henry has to recite are beautiful and pathetic in themselves, but they have nothing to do with the world that Richard has to 'bustle in'. In the same spirit of vulgar caricature is the scene between Richard and Lady Anne (when his wife) interpolated without any authority, merely to gratify this favourite propensity to disgust and loathing. With the same perverse consistency, Richard, after his last fatal struggle, is raised up by some galvanic process, to utter the imprecation, without any motive but pure malignity, which Shakespeare has so properly put into the mouth of Northumberland on hearing of Percy's death. To make room for these worse than needless additions, many of the most striking passages in the real play have been omitted by the foppery and ignorance of the prompt-book critics. We do not mean to insist merely on passages which are fine as poetry and to the reader, such as Clarence's dream, &c., but on those which are important to the understanding of the character, and peculiarly adapted for stage-effect. We will give the following as instances among several others. The first is the scene where Richard enters abruptly to the queen and her friends to defend himself:

Gloucester. They do me wrong, and I will not endure it.
Who are they that complain unto the king,
That I forsooth am stern, and love them not?
By holy Paul, they love his grace but lightly,
That fill his ears with such dissentious rumours:
Because I cannot flatter and look fair,
Smile in men's faces, smooth, deceive, and cog,
Duck with French nods, and apish courtesy,
I must be held a rancorous enemy.
Cannot a plain man live, and think no harm,
But thus his simple truth must be abus'd
With silken, sly, insinuating Jacks?

Gray. To whom in all this presence speaks your grace?

Gloucester. To thee, that hast nor honesty nor grace;
When have I injur'd thee, when done thee wrong?
Or thee? or thee? or any of your faction?
A plague upon you all!

Nothing can be more characteristic than the turbulent pretensions to meekness and simplicity in this address. Again, the versatility and adroitness of Richard is admirably described in the following ironical conversation with Brakenbury:

Brakenbury. I beseech your graces both to pardon me.
His majesty hath straitly given in charge,
That no man shall have private conference,
Of what degree soever, with your brother.

Gloucester. E'en so, and please your worship, Brakenbury,
You may partake of anything we say:
We speak no treason, man—we say the king
Is wise and virtuous, and his noble queen
Well strook in years, fair, and not jealous.
We say that Shore's wife hath a pretty foot,
A cherry lip,
A bonny eye, a passing pleasing tongue;
That the queen's kindred are made gentlefolks.
How say you, sir? Can you deny all this?

Brakenbury. With this, my lord, myself have nought to do.

Gloucester. What, fellow, naught to do with mistress Shore?
I tell you, sir, he that doth naught with her,
Excepting one, were best to do it secretly alone.

Brakenbury. What one, my lord?

Gloucester. Her husband, knave—would'st thou betray me?

The feigned reconciliation of Gloucester with the queen's kinsmen is also a masterpiece. One of the finest strokes in the play, and which serves to show as much as anything the deep, plausible manners of Richard, is the unsuspecting security of Hastings, at the very time when the former is plotting his death, and when that very appearance of cordiality and good-humour on which Hastings builds his confidence arises from Richard's consciousness of having betrayed him to his ruin. This, with the whole character of Hastings, is omitted.

Perhaps the two most beautiful passages in the original play are the farewell apostrophe of the queen to the Tower, where the children are shut up from her, and Tyrrel's description of their death. We will finish our quotations with them.

Queen. Stay, yet look back with me unto the Tower;
Pity, you ancient stones, those tender babes,
Whom envy hath immured within your walls;
Rough cradle for such little pretty ones,
Rude, rugged nurse, old sullen play-fellow,
For tender princes! The other passage is the account of their
death by Tyrrel:

Dighton and Forrest, whom I did suborn
To do this piece of ruthless butchery,
Albeit they were flesh'd villains, bloody dogs,—
Wept like to children in their death's sad story:
O thus! quoth Dighton, lay the gentle babes;
Thus, thus, quoth Forrest, girdling one another
Within their innocent alabaster arms;
Their lips were four red roses on a stalk,
And in that summer beauty kissed each other;
A book of prayers on their pillow lay,
Which once, quoth Forrest, almost changed my mind:
But oh the devil!—there the villain stopped;
When Dighton thus told on—we smothered
The most replenished sweet work of nature,
That from the prime creation ere she framed.

These are some of those wonderful bursts of feeling, done to the life, to the very height of fancy and nature, which our Shakespeare alone could give. We do not insist on the repetition of these last passages as proper for the stage: we should indeed be loath to trust them in the mouth of almost any actor: but we should wish them to be retained in preference at least to the fantoccini exhibition of the young princes, Edward and York, bandying childish wit with their uncle.

<<span id="filepos0038921403"> a>HENRY VIII

This play contains little action or violence of passion, yet it has considerable interest of a more mild and thoughtful cast, and some of the most striking passages in the author's works. The character of Queen Katherine is the most perfect delineation of matronly dignity, sweetness, and resignation, that can be conceived. Her appeals to the protection of the king, her remonstrances to the cardinals, her conversations with her women, show a noble and generous spirit accompanied with the utmost gentleness of nature. What can be more affecting than her answer to Campeius and Wolsey, who come to visit her as pretended friends.

—'Nay, forsooth, my friends,
  They that must weigh out my afflictions,
  They that my trust must grow to, live not here;
  They are, as all my comforts are, far hence,
  In mine own country, lords.'

Dr. Johnson observes of this play, that 'the meek sorrows and virtuous distress of Katherine have furnished some scenes, which may be justly numbered among the greatest efforts of tragedy. But the genius of Shakespeare comes in and goes out with Katherine. Every other part may be easily conceived and easily written.' This is easily said; but with all due deference to so great a reputed authority as that of Johnson, it is not true. For instance, the scene of Buckingham led to execution is one of the most affecting and natural in Shakespeare, and one to which there is hardly an approach in any other author. Again, the character of Wolsey, the description of his pride and of his fall, are inimitable, and have, besides their gorgeousness of effect, a pathos, which only the genius of Shakespeare could lend to the distresses of a proud, bad man, like Wolsey. There is a sort of child-like simplicity in the very helplessness of his situation, arising from the recollection of his past overbearing ambition. After the cutting sarcasms of his enemies on his disgrace, against which he bears up with a spirit conscious of his own superiority, he breaks out into that fine apostrophe:

Farewell, a long farewell, to all my greatness!
  This is the state of man; to-day he puts forth
  The tender leaves of hope, to-morrow blossoms,
  And bears his blushing honours thick upon him;
  The third day, comes a frost, a killing frost;
  And—when he thinks, good easy man, full surely
  His greatness is a ripening—nips his root,

And then he falls, as I do. I have ventur'd,
Like little wanton boys that swim on bladders,
These many summers in a sea of glory;
But far beyond my depth: my high-blown pride
At length broke under me; and now has left me,
Weary and old with service, to the mercy
Of a rude stream, that must for ever hide me.
Vain pomp and glory of the world, I hate ye!
I feel my heart new open'd; O how wretched
Is that poor man, that hangs on princes' favours!
There is betwixt that smile we would aspire to,
That sweet aspect of princes, and our ruin,
More pangs and fears than war and women have;
And when he falls, he falls like Lucifer,
Never to hope again!—

There is in this passage, as well as in the well-known dialogue with Cromwell which follows, something which stretches beyond commonplace; nor is the account which Griffiths gives of Wolsey's death less Shakespearian; and the candour with which Queen Katherine listens to the praise of 'him whom of all men while living she hated most' adds the last graceful finishing to her character.

Among other images of great individual beauty might be mentioned the description of the effect of Ann Boleyn's presenting herself to the crowd at her coronation.

—While her grace sat down
To rest awhile, some half an hour or so,
In a rich chair of state, opposing freely
The beauty of her person to the people.
Believe me, sir, she is the goodliest woman
That ever lay by man. Which when the people
Had the full view of, 'such a noise arose
As the shrouds make at sea in a stiff tempest,
As loud and to as many tunes'.

The character of Henry VIII is drawn with great truth and spirit. It is like a very disagreeable portrait, sketched by the hand of a master. His gross appearance, his blustering demeanour, his vulgarity, his arrogance, his sensuality, his cruelty, his hypocrisy, his want of common decency and common humanity, are marked in strong lines. His traditional peculiarities of expression complete the reality of the picture. The authoritative expletive, 'Ha!' with which ne intimates his indignation or surprise, has an effect like the first startling sound that breaks from a thunder-cloud. He is of all the monarchs in our history the most disgusting: for he unites in himself all the vices of barbarism and refinement, without their virtues. Other kings before him (such as Richard III) were tyrants and murderers out of ambition or necessity: they gained or established unjust power by violent means: they destroyed their or made its tenure insecure. But Henry VIII's power is most fatal to those whom he loves: he is cruel and remorseless to pamper his luxurious appetites: bloody and voluptuous; an amorous murderer; an uxorious debauchee. His hardened insensibility to the feelings of others is strengthened by the most profligate self-indulgence. The religious hypocrisy, under which he masks his cruelty and his lust, is admirably displayed in the speech in which he describes the first misgivings of his conscience and its increasing throes and terrors, which have induced him to divorce his queen. The only thing in his favour in this play is his treatment of Cranmer: there is also another circumstance in his favour, which is his patronage of Hans Holbein.—It has been said of Shakespeare, 'No maid could live near such a man.' It might with as good reason be said, 'No king could live near such a man.' His eye would have penetrated through the pomp of circumstance and the veil of opinion. As it is, he has represented such persons to the life—his plays are in this respect the glass of history—he has done them the same justice as if he had been a privy counsellor all his life, and in each successive reign. Kings ought never to be seen upon the stage. In the abstract, they are very disagreeable characters: it is only while living that they are 'the best of kings'. It is their power, their splendour, it is the apprehension of the personal consequences of their favour or their hatred that dazzles the imagination and suspends the judgement of their favourites or their vassals; but death cancels the bond of allegiance and of interest; and seen AS THEY WERE, their power and their pretensions look monstrous and ridiculous. The charge brought against modern philosophy as inimical to loyalty is unjust because it might as well be brought lover of kings. We have often wondered that Henry VIII as he is drawn by Shakespeare, and as we have seen him represented in all the bloated deformity of mind and person, is not hooted from the English stage.

<<span id="filepos0038930454"> a>KING JOHN

KING JOHN is the last of the historical plays we shall have to speak of; and we are not sorry that it is. If we are to indulge our imaginations, we had rather do it upon an imaginary theme; if we are to find subjects for the exercise of our pity and terror, we prefer seeking them in fictitious danger and fictitious distress. It gives a SORENESS to our feelings of indignation or sympathy, when we know that in tracing the progress of sufferings and crimes we are treading upon real ground, and recollect that the poet's 'dream' DENOTED A FOREGONE CONCLUSION—irrevocable ills, not conjured up by fancy, but placed beyond the reach of poetical justice. That the treachery of King John, the death of Arthur, the grief of Constance, had a real truth in history, sharpens the sense of pain, while it hangs a leaden weight on the heart and the imagination. Something whispers us that we have no right to make a mock of calamities like these, or to turn the truth of things into the puppet and plaything of our fancies. 'To consider thus' may be 'to consider too curiously'; but still we think that the actual truth of the particular events, in proportion as we are conscious of it, is a drawback on the pleasure as well as the dignity of tragedy.

KING JOHN has all the beauties of language and all the richness of the imagination to relieve the painfulness of the subject. The character of King John himself is kept pretty much in the background; it is only marked in by comparatively slight indications. The crimes he is tempted to commit are such as are thrust upon him rather by circumstances and opportunity than of his own seeking: he is here represented as more cowardly than cruel, and as more contemptible than odious. The play embraces only a part of his history. There are however few characters on the stage that excite more disgust and loathing. He has no intellectual grandeur or strength of character to shield him from the indignation which his immediate conduct provokes: he stands naked and defenceless, in that respect, to the worst we can think of him: and besides, we are impelled to put the very worst construction on his meanness and cruelty by the tender picture of the beauty and helplessness of the object of it, as well as by the frantic and heart-rending pleadings of maternal despair. We do not forgive him the death of Arthur because he had too late revoked his doom and tried to prevent it, and perhaps because he has himself repented of his black design, our MORAL SENSE gains courage to hate him the more for it. We take him at his word, and think his purposes must be odious indeed, when he himself shrinks back from them. The scene in which King John suggests to Hubert the design of murdering his nephew is a masterpiece of dramatic skill, but it is still inferior, very inferior to the scene between Hubert and Arthur, when the latter learns the orders to put out his eyes. If anything ever was penned, heart-piercing, mixing the extremes of terror and pity, of that which shocks and that which soothes the mind, it is this scene. We will give it entire, though perhaps it is tasking the reader's sympathy too much.

Enter Hubert and Executioner

Hubert. Heat me these irons hot, and look you stand
Within the arras; when I strike my foot
Upon the bosom of the ground, rush forth
And bind the boy, which you shall find with me,
Fast to the chair: be heedful: hence, and watch.

Executioner. I hope your warrant will bear out the deed.

Hubert. Uncleanly scruples! fear not you; look to't.—
Young lad, come forth; I have to say with you.

Enter Arthur

Arthur. Good morrow, Hubert.

Hubert. Morrow, little Prince.

Arthur. As little prince (having so great a title
To be more prince) as may be. You are sad.

Hubert. Indeed I have been merrier.

Arthur. Mercy on me!
Methinks no body should be sad but I;

Yet I remember when I was in France,
Young gentlemen would be as sad as night,
Only for wantonness. By my Christendom,
So were I out of prison, and kept sheep,
I should be merry as the day is long.
And so I would be here, but that I doubt
My uncle practises more harm to me.
He is afraid of me, and I of him.
Is it my fault that I was Geoffery's son?
Indeed it is not, and I would to heav'n
I were your son, so you would love me, Hubert.

Hubert. If I talk to him, with his innocent prate
He will awake my mercy, which lies dead;
Therefore I will be sudden, and dispatch. [Aside.]

Arthur. Are you sick, Hubert? you look pale to-day?
In sooth, I would you were a little sick,
That I might sit all night and watch with you.
Alas, I love you more than you do me.

Hubert. His words do take possession of my bosom.
Read here, young Arthur—[Showing a paper.]
How now, foolish rheum, [Aside.]
Turning dis-piteous torture out of door!
I must be brief, lest resolution drop
Out at mine eyes in tender womanish tears.—
Can you not read it? Is it not fair writ?

Arthur. Too fairly, Hubert, for so foul effect.
Must you with irons burn out both mine eyes?

Hubert. Young boy, I must.

Arthur. And will you?

Hubert. And I will.

Arthur. Have you the heart? When your head did but ache,
I knit my handkerchief about your brows,
(The best I had, a princess wrought it me)
And I did never ask it you again;
And with my hand at midnight held your head;
And, like the watchful minutes to the hour,
Still and anon cheer'd up the heavy time,
Saying, what lack you? and where lies your grief?
Or, what good love may I perform for you?
Many a poor man's son would have lain still,
And ne'er have spoke a loving word to you;
But you at your sick service had a prince.
Nay, you may think my love was crafty love,
And call it cunning. Do, and if you will:
If heav'n be pleas'd that you must use me ill,
Why then you must.—Will you put out mine eyes?
These eyes, that never did, and never shall,
So much as frown on you?

Hubert. I've sworn to do it;
And with hot irons must I burn them out.

Arthur. Oh if an angel should have come to me,
And told me Hubert should put out mine eyes,
I would not have believ'd a tongue but Hubert's.

Hubert, Come forth; do as I bid you. [Stamps, and the men enter.]

Arthur. O save me, Hubert, save me! my eyes are out
Ev'n with the fierce looks of these bloody men.

Hubert. Give me the iron, I say, and bind him here.

Arthur. Alas, what need you be so boist'rous rough?
I will not struggle, I will stand stone-still.
For heav'n's sake, Hubert, let me not be bound!
Nay, hear me, Hubert, drive these men away,
And I will sit as quiet as a lamb:
I will not stir, nor wince, nor speak a word,

Nor look upon the iron angrily:
Thrust but these men away, and I'll forgive you,
Whatever torment you do put me to.

Hubert. Go, stand within; let me alone with him.

Executioner. I am best pleas'd to be from such a deed. [Exit.]

Arthur. Alas, I then have chid away my friend.
He hath a stern look, but a gentle heart;
Let him come back, that his compassion may
Give life to yours.

Hubert. Come, boy, prepare yourself.

Arthur. Is there no remedy?

Hubert. None, but to lose your eyes.

Arthur. O heav'n! that there were but a mote in yours,
A grain, a dust, a gnat, a wand'ring hair,
Any annoyance in that precious sense!
Then, feeling what small things are boist'rous there,
Your vile intent must needs seem horrible.

Hubert. Is this your promise? go to, hold your tongue.

Arthur. Let me not hold my tongue; let me not, Hubert;
Or, Hubert, if you will, cut out my tongue,
So I may keep mine eyes. O spare mine eyes!
Though to no use, but still to look on you.
Lo, by my troth, the instrument is cold,
And would not harm me.

Hubert. I can heat it, boy.

Arthur. No, in good sooth, the fire is dead with grief.
Being create for comfort, to be us'd

In undeserv'd extremes; see else yourself,
There is no malice in this burning coal;
The breath of heav'n hath blown its spirit out,
And strew'd repentant ashes on its head.

Hubert. But with my breath I can revive it, boy.

Arthur. All things that you shall use to do me wrong,
Deny their office, only you do lack
That mercy which fierce fire and iron extend,
Creatures of note for mercy-lacking uses.

Hubert. Well, see to live; I will not touch thine eyes
For all the treasure that thine uncle owns:
Yet I am sworn, and I did purpose, boy,
With this same very iron to bum them out.

Arthur. O, now you look like Hubert. All this while
You were disguised.

Hubert. Peace! no more. Adieu,
Your uncle must not know but you are dead.
I'll fill these dogged spies with false reports:
And, pretty child, sleep doubtless and secure,
That Hubert, for the wealth of all the world,
Will not offend thee.

Arthur. O heav'n! I thank you, Hubert.

Hubert. Silence, no more; go closely in with me;
Much danger do I undergo for thee. [Exeunt.]

His death afterwards, when he throws himself from his prison-walls, excites the utmost pity for his innocence and friendless situation, and well justifies the exaggerated denunciations of Falconbridge to Hubert whom he suspects wrongfully of the deed.

There is not yet so ugly a fiend of hell
As thou shalt be, if thou did'st kill this child.
—If thou did'st but consent

To this most cruel act, do but despair:
And if thou want'st a cord, the smallest thread
That ever spider twisted from her womb
Will strangle thee; a rush will be a beam
To hang thee on: or would'st thou drown thyself,
Put but a little water in a spoon,
And it shall be as all the ocean,
Enough to stifle such a villain up.

The excess of maternal tenderness, rendered desparate by the fickleness of friends and the injustice of fortune, and made stronger in will, in proportion to the want of all other power, was never more finely expressed than in Constance, The dignity of her answer to King Philip, when she refuses to accompany his messenger, 'To me and to the state of my great grief, let kings assemble,' her indignant reproach to Austria for deserting her cause, her invocation to death, 'that love of misery', however fine and spirited, all yield to the beauty of the passage, where, her passion subsiding into tenderness, she addresses the Cardinal in these words:

Oh father Cardinal, I have heard you say
That we shall see and know our friends in heav'n:
If that be, I shall see my boy again,
For since the birth of Cain, the first male child,
To him that did but yesterday suspire,
There was not such a gracious creature born.
But now will canker-sorrow eat my bud,
And chase the native beauty from his cheek,
And he will look as hollow as a ghost,
As dim and meagre as an ague's fit,
And so he'll die; and rising so again,
When I shall meet him in the court of heav'n,
I shall not know him; therefore never, never
Must I behold my pretty Arthur more.

K. Philip. You are as fond of grief as of your child.

Constance. Grief fills the room up of my absent child:
Lies in his bed, walks up and down with me;
Puts on his pretty looks, repeats his words,

Remembers me of all his gracious parts,
Stuffs out his vacant garments with his form.
Then have I reason to be fond of grief.

The contrast between the mild resignation of Queen Katherine to her own wrongs, and the wild, uncontrollable affliction of Constance for the wrongs which she sustains as a mother, is no less naturally conceived than it is ably sustained throughout these two wonderful characters.

The accompaniment of the comic character of the Bastard was well chosen to relieve the poignant agony of suffering, and the cold, cowardly policy of behaviour in the principal characters of this play. Its spirit, invention, volubility of tongue, and forwardness in action, are unbounded. Aliquando sufflaminandus erat, says Ben Jonson of Shakespeare. But we should be sorry it Ben Jonson had been his licenser. We prefer the heedless magnanimity of his wit infinitely to all Jonson's laborious caution. The character of the Bastard's comic humour is the same in essence as that of other comic characters in Shakespeare; they always run on with good things and are never exhausted; they are always daring and successful. They have words at will and a flow of wit, like a flow of animal spirits. The difference between Falconbridge and the others is that he is a soldier, and brings his wit to bear upon action, is courageous with his sword as well as tongue, and stimulates his gallantry by his jokes, his enemies feeling the sharpness of his blows and the sting of his sarcasms at the same time. Among his happiest sallies are his descanting on the composition of his own person, his invective against 'commodity, tickling commodity', and his expression of contempt for the Archduke of Austria, who had killed his father, which begins in jest but ends in serious earnest. His conduct at the siege of Angiers shows that his resources were not confined to verbal retorts.—The same exposure of the policy of courts and camps, of kings, nobles, priests, and cardinals, takes place here as in the other plays we have gone through, and we shall not go into a disgusting repetition.

This, like the other plays taken from English history, is written in a remarkably smooth and flowing style, very different from some of the tragedies, MACBETH, for instance. The passages consist of a series of single lines, not running into one another. This peculiarity in the versification, which is most common in the three parts of HENRY VI, has been assigned as a reason why those plays were not written by Shakespeare. But the same structure of verse occurs in his other undoubted plays, as in RICHARD II and in KING JOHN. The following are instances:

That daughter there of Spain, the Lady Blanch,
Is near to England; look upon the years
Of Lewis the Dauphin, and that lovely maid.
If lusty love should go in quest of beauty,
Where should he find it fairer than in Blanch?
If zealous love should go in search of virtue,
Where should he find it purer than in Blanch?
If love ambitious sought a match of birth,
Whose veins bound richer blood than Lady Blanch?
Such as she is, in beauty, virtue, birth,
Is the young Dauphin every way complete:
If not complete of, say he is not she;
And she again wants nothing, to name want,
If want it be not, that she is not he.
He is the half part of a blessed man,
Left to be finished by such as she;
And she a fair divided excellence,
Whose fulness of perfection lies in him.
O, two such silver currents, when they join,
Do glorify the banks that bound them in;
And two such shores to two such streams made one,
Two such controlling bounds, shall you be, kings,
To these two princes, if you marry them.

Another instance, which is certainly very happy as an example of the simple enumeration of a number of particulars, is Salisbury's remonstrance against the second crowning of the king.

Therefore to be possessed with double pomp,
To guard a title that was rich before;
To gild refined gold, to paint the lily,
To throw a perfume on the violet,
To smooth the ice, to add another hue
Unto the rainbow, or with taper light
To seek the beauteous eye of heav'n to garnish:

Is wasteful and ridiculous excess.

<<span id="filepos0038956367"> a>TWELFTH NIGHT; OR, WHAT YOU WILL

This is justly considered as one of the most delightful of Shakespeare's comedies. It is full of sweetness and pleasantry. It is perhaps too good-natured for comedy. It has little satire, and no spleen. It aims at the ludicrous rather than the ridiculous. It makes us laugh at the follies of mankind, not despise them, and still less bear any ill-will towards them. Shakespeare's comic genius resembles the bee rather in its power of extracting sweets from weeds or poisons, than in leaving a sting behind it. He gives die most amusing exaggeration of the prevailing foibles of his characters, but in a way that they themselves, instead of being offended at, would almost join in to humour; he rather contrives opportunities for them to show themselves off in the happiest lights, than renders them contemptible in the perverse construction of the wit or malice of others.—There is a certain stage of society in which people become conscious of their peculiarities and absurdities, affect to disguise what they are, and set up pretensions to what they are not. This gives rise to a corresponding style of comedy, the object of which is to detect the disguises of self-love, and to make reprisals on these preposterous assumptions of vanity, by marking the contrast between the real and the affected character as severely as possible, and denying to those who would impose on us for what they are not, even the merit which they have. This is the comedy of artificial life, of wit and satire, such as we see it in Congreve, Wycherley, Vanbrugh, &c. To this succeeds a state of society from which the same sort of affectation and pretence are banished by a greater knowledge of the world or by their successful exposure on the stage; and which by neutralizing the materials of comic character, both natural and artificial, leaves no comedy at all—but the sentimental. Such is our modern comedy. There is a period in the progress of manners anterior to both these, in which the foibles and follies of individuals are of nature's planting, not the growth of art or study; in which they are therefore unconscious of them themselves, or care not who knows them, if they can but have their whim out; and in which, as there is no attempt at imposition, the spectators rather receive pleasure from humouring the inclinations of the persons they laugh at, than wish to give them pain by exposing their absurdity. This may be called the comedy of nature, and it is the comedy which we generally find in Shakespeare.—Whether the analysis here given be just or not, the spirit of his comedies is evidently quite distinct from that of the authors above mentioned, as it is in its essence the same with that of Cervantes, and also very frequently of Moliere, though he was more systematic in his extravagance than Shakespeare. Shakespeare's comedy is of a pastoral and poetical cast. Folly is indigenous to the soil, and shoots out with native, happy, unchecked luxuriance. Absurdity has every encouragement afforded it; and nonsense has room to flourish in. Nothing is stunted by the churlish, icy hand of indifference or severity. The poet runs riot in a conceit, and idolizes a quibble. His whole object is to turn the meanest or rudest objects to a pleasurable account. The relish which he has of a pun, or of the quaint humour of a low character, does not interfere with the delight with which he describes a beautiful image, or the most refined love. The clown's forced jests do not spoil the sweetness of the character of Viola; the same house is big enough to hold Malvolio, the Countess, Maria, Sir Toby, and Sir Andrew Aguecheek. For instance, nothing can fall much lower than this last character in intellect or morals: yet how are his weaknesses nursed and dandled by Sir Toby into something 'high fantastical', when on Sir Andrew's commendation of himself for dancing and fencing, Sir Toby answers: 'Wherefore are these things hid? Wherefore have these gifts a curtain before them? Are they like to take dust like Mistress Moll's picture? Why dost thou not go to church in a galliard, and come home in a coranto? My very walk should be a jig! I would not so much as make water but in a cinque-pace. What dost thou mean? Is this a world to hide virtues in? I did think by the excellent constitution of thy leg, it was framed under the star of a galliard!'—How Sir Toby, Sir Andrew, and the Clown afterwards chirp over their cups, how they 'rouse the night-owl in a catch, able to draw three souls out of one weaver'!—What can be better than Sir Toby's unanswerable answer to Malvolio, 'Dost thou think, because thou art virtuous, there shall be no more cakes and ale?' In a word, the best turn is given to everything, instead of the worst. There is a constant infusion of the romantic and enthusiastic, in proportion as the characters are natural and sincere: whereas, in the more artificial style of comedy, everything gives way to ridicule and indifference, there being nothing left but affectation on one side, and incredulity on the other. —Much as we like Shakespeare's comedies, we cannot agree with Dr. Johnson that they are better than his tragedies; nor do we like them half so well. If his inclination to comedy sometimes led him to trifle with the seriousness of tragedy, the poetical and impassioned passages are the best parts of his comedies. The great and secret charm of TWELFTH NIGHT is the character of Viola. Much as we like catches and cakes and ale, there is something that we like better. We have a friendship for Sir Toby; we patronize Sir Andrew; we have an understanding with the Clown, a sneaking kindness for Maria and her rogueries; we feel a regard for Malvolio, and sympathize with his gravity, his smiles, his cross-garters, his yellow stockings, and imprisonment in the stocks. But there is something that excites in us a stronger feeling than all this—it is Viola's confession of her love.

Duke. What's her history?

Viola. A blank, my lord, she never told her love:
She let concealment, like a worm i' th' bud,
Feed on her damask cheek, she pin'd in thought,
And with a green and yellow melancholy,
She sat like Patience on a monument,
Smiling at grief. Was not this love indeed?
We men may say more, swear more, but indeed,
Our shows are more than will; for still we prove
Much in our vows, but little in our love.

Duke. But died thy sister of her love, my boy?

Viola. I am all the daughters of my father's house,
And all the brothers too; and yet I know not.

Shakespeare alone could describe the effect of his own poetry.

Oh, it came o'er the ear like the sweet south
That breathes upon a bank of violets,
Stealing and giving odour.

What we so much admire here is not the image of Patience on a monument, which has been generally quoted, but the lines before and after it. 'They give a very echo to the seat where love is throned.' How long ago it is since we first learnt to repeat them; and still, still they vibrate on the heart, like the sounds which the passing wind draws from the trembling strings of a harp left on some desert shore! There are other passages of not less impassioned sweetness. Such is Olivia's address to Sebastian whom she supposes to have already deceived her in a promise of marriage.

Blame not this haste of mine: if you mean well,
Now go with me and with this holy man
Into the chantry by: there before him,
And underneath that consecrated roof,
Plight me the full assurance of your faith,
THAT MY MOST JEALOUS AND TOO DOUBTFUL SOUL
MAY LIVE AT PEACE.

We have already said something of Shakespeare's songs. One of the most beautiful of them occurs in this play, with a preface of his own to it.

Duke. O fellow, come, the song we had last night.
Mark it, Cesario, it is old and plain;
The spinsters and the knitters in the sun,
And the free maids that weave their thread with bones,
Do use to chaunt it; it is silly sooth,
And dallies with the innocence of love,
Like the old age.

Song

Come away, come away, death,
And in sad cypress let me be laid;
Fly away, fly away, breath;
I am slain by a fair cruel maid.
My shroud of white, stuck all with yew,
O prepare it;
My part of death no one so true
Did share it.

Not a flower, not a flower sweet,
On my black coffin let there be strown;
Not a friend, not a friend greet
My poor corpse, where my bones shall be thrown;
A thousand thousand sighs to save,
Lay me, O! where
Sad true-love never find my grave,
To weep there.

Who after this will say that Shakespeare's genius was only fitted for comedy? Yet after reading other parts of this play, and particularly the garden-scene where Malvolio picks up the letter, if we were to say that his genius for comedy was less than his genius for tragedy, it would perhaps only prove that our own taste in such matters is more saturnine than mercurial.

Enter Maria

Sir Toby. Here comes the little villain:—How now, my
Nettle of India?

Maria. Get ye all three into the box-tree: Malvolio's coming down this walk: he has been yonder i' the sun, practising behaviour to his own shadow this half hour; observe him, for the love of mockery; for I know this letter will make a contemplative idiot of him. Close, in the name of jesting! Lie thou there; for here comes the trout that must be caught with tickling.

[They hide themselves. Maria throws down a letter, and exit.]

Enter Malvolio

Malvolio. 'Tis but fortune; all is fortune. Maria once told me, she did affect me; and I have heard herself come thus near, that, should she fancy, it should be one of my complexion. Besides, she uses me with a more exalted respect than any one else that follows her. What should I think on't?

Sir Toby. Here's an over-weening rogue!

Fabian. O, peace! Contemplation makes a rare turkey-cock of him; how he jets under his advanced plumes!

Sir Andrew. 'Slight, I could so beat the rogue:—

Sir Toby. Peace, I say.

Malvolio. To be Count Malvolio;—

Sir Toby. Ah, rogue!

Sir Andrew. Pistol him, pistol him.

Sir Toby. Peace, peace!

Malvolio. There is example for't; the lady of the Strachy married the yeoman of the wardrobe.

Sir Andrew. Fire on him, Jezebel!

Fabian. O, peace! now he's deeply in; look, how
imagination blows him.

Malvolio. Having been three months married to her,
sitting in my chair of state,—

Sir Toby. O for a stone bow, to hit him in the eye!

Malvolio. Calling my officers about me, in my branch'd velvet gown; having come from a day-bed, where I have left Olivia sleeping.

Sir Toby. Fire and brimstone!

Fabian. O peace, peace!

Malvolio. And then to have the humour of state: and after a demure travel of regard,—telling them, I know my place, as I would they should do theirs,—to ask for my kinsman Toby.—

Sir Toby. Bolts and shackles!

Fabian. O, peace, peace, peace! now, now.

Malvolio. Seven of my people, with an obedient start, make out for him; I frown the while; and, perchance, wind up my watch, or play with some rich jewel. Toby approaches; curtsies there to me.

Sir Toby. Shall this fellow live?

Fabian. Though our silence be drawn from us with cares, yet peace.

Malvolio. I extend my hand to him thus, quenching my familiar smile with an austere regard to control.

Sir Toby. And does not Toby take you a blow o' the lips then?

Malvolio. Saying—Cousin Toby, my fortunes having cast me on your niece, give me this prerogative of speech;—

Sir Toby. What, what?

Malvolio. You must amend your drunkenness.

Fabian. Nay, patience, or we break the sinews of our plot.

Malvolio. Besides, you waste the treasure of your time with a foolish knight—

Sir Andrew. That's me, I warrant you.

Malvolio. One Sir Andrew—

Sir Andrew. I knew, 'twas I; for many do call me fool.

Malvolio. What employment have we here? [Taking up the letter.]

The letter and his comments on it are equally good. If poor Malvolio's treatment afterwards is a little hard, poetical justice is done in the uneasiness which Olivia suffers on account of her mistaken attachment to Cesario, as her insensibility to the violence of the Duke's passion is atoned for by the discovery of Viola's concealed love of him.

<<span id="filepos0038975714"> a>THE TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA

This is little more than the first outlines of a comedy loosely sketched in. It is the story of a novel dramatized with very little labour or pretension; yet there are passages of high poetical spirit, and of inimitable quaintness of humour, which are undoubtedly Shakespeare's, and there is throughout the conduct of the fable a careless grace and felicity which marks it for his. One of the editors (we believe, Mr. Pope) remarks in a marginal note to the TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA: 'It is observable (I know not for what cause) that the style of this comedy is less figurative, and more natural and unaffected than the greater part of this author's, though supposed to be one of the first he wrote.' Yet so little does the editor appear to have made up his mind upon this subject, that we find the following note to the very next (the second) scene. 'This whole scene, like many others in these plays (some of which I believe were written by Shakespeare, and others interpolated by the players) is composed of the lowest and most trifling conceits, to be accounted for only by the gross taste of the age he lived in: Populo ut placerent. I wish I had authority to leave them out, but I have done all I could, set a mark of reprobation upon them, throughout this edition.' It is strange that our fastidious critic should fall so soon from praising to reprobating. The style of the familiar parts of this comedy is indeed made up of conceits—low they may be for what we know, but then they are not poor, but rich ones. The scene of Launce with his dog (not that in the second, but that in the fourth act) is a perfect treat in the way of farcical drollery and invention; nor do we think Speed's manner of proving his master to be in love deficient in wit or sense, though the style may be criticized as not simple enough for the modern taste.

Valentine. Why, how know you that I am in love?

Speed. Marry, by these special marks; first, you have learned, like Sir Protheus, to wreathe your arms like a malcontent, to relish a love-song like a robin-red-breast, to walk alone like one that had the pestilence, to sigh like a schoolboy that had lost his A B C, to weep like a young wench that had buried her grandam, to fast like one that takes diet, to watch like one that fears robbing, to speak puling like a beggar at Hallowmas. You were wont, when you laughed, to crow like a cock; when you walked, to walk; like one of the lions; when you fasted, it was presently after dinner; when you looked sadly, it was for want of money; and now you are metamorphosed with a mistress, that when I look on you, I can hardly think you my master.

The tender scenes in this play, though not so highly wrought as in some others, have often much sweetness of sentiment and expression. There is something pretty and playful in the conversation of Julia with her maid, when she shows such a disposition to coquetry about receiving the letter from Proteus; and her behaviour afterwards and her disappointment, when she finds him faithless to his vows, remind us at a distance of Imogen's tender constancy. Her answer to Lucetta, who advises her against following her lover in disguise, is a beautiful piece of poetry.

Lucetta. I do not seek to quench your love's hot fire,
  But qualify the fire's extremes! rage,
  Lest it should burn above the bounds of reason.

Julia. The more thou damm'st it up, the more it burns;
  The current that with gentle murmur glides,
  Thou know'st, being stopp'd, impatiently doth rage;
  But when his fair course is not hindered,
  He makes sweet music with th' enamell'd stones,
  Giving a gentle kiss to every sedge
  He overtaketh in his pilgrimage:
  And so by many winding nooks he strays,
  With willing sport, to the wild ocean.

[Footnote: 'The river wanders at its own sweet will.' Wordsworth.]

Then let me go, and hinder not my course;
I'll be as patient as a gentle stream,
And make a pastime of each weary step,
Till the last step have brought me to my love;
And there I'll rest, as after much turmoil,
A blessed soul doth in Elysium.

If Shakespeare indeed had written only this and other passages in the TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA, he would ALMOST have deserved Milton's praise of him—

And sweetest Shakespeare, Fancy's child,
Warbles his native wood-notes wild.

But as it is, he deserves rather more praise than this.

<<span id="filepos0038981846"> a>THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

This is a play that in spite of the change of manners and of prejudices still holds undisputed possession of the stage. Shakespeare's malignant has outlived Mr. Cumberland's benevolent Jew. In proportion as Shylock has ceased to be a popular bugbear, 'baited with the rabble's curse', he becomes a half favourite with the philosophical part of the audience, who are disposed to think that Jewish revenge is at least as good as Christian injuries. Shylock is A GOOD HATER; 'a man no less sinned against than sinning'. If he carries his revenge too far, yet he has strong grounds for 'the lodged hate he bears Anthonio', which he explains with equal force of eloquence and reason. He seems the depositary of the vengeance of his race; and though the long habit of brooding over daily insults and injuries has crusted over his temper with inveterate misanthropy, and hardened him against the contempt of mankind, this adds but little to the triumphant pretensions of his enemies. There is a strong, quick, and deep sense of justice mixed up with the gall and bitterness of his resentment. The constant apprehension of being burnt alive, plundered, banished, reviled, and trampled on, might be supposed to sour the most forbearing nature, and to take something from that 'milk of human kindness', with which his persecutors contemplated his indignities. The desire of revenge is almost inseparable from the sense of wrong;

and we can hardly help sympathizing with the proud spirit, hid beneath his 'Jewish gaberdine', stung to madness by repeated undeserved provocations, and labouring to throw off the load of obloquy and oppression heaped upon him and all his tribe by one desperate act of 'lawful' revenge, till the ferociousness of the means by which he is to execute his purpose, and the pertinacity with which he adheres to it, turn us against him; but even at last, when disappointed of the sanguinary revenge with which he had glutted his hopes, and exposed to beggary and contempt by the letter of the law on which he had insisted with so little remorse, we pity him, and think him hardly dealt with by his judges. In all his answers and retorts upon his adversaries, he has the best not only of the argument but of the question, reasoning on their own principles and practice. They are so far from allowing of any measure of equal dealing, of common justice or humanity between themselves and the Jew, that even when they come to ask a favour of him, and Shylock reminds them that 'on such a day they spit upon him, another spurned him, another called him dog, and for these courtesies request hell lend them so much monies'—Anthonio, his old enemy, instead of any acknowledgement of the shrewdness and justice of his remonstrance, which would have been preposterous in a respectable Catholic merchant in those times, threatens him with a repetition of the same treatment—

I am as like to call thee so again,
  To spit on thee again, to spurn thee too.

After this, the appeal to the Jew's mercy, as if there were any common principle of right and wrong between them, is the rankest hypocrisy, or the blindest prejudice; and the Jew's answer to one of Anthonio's friends, who asks him what his pound of forfeit flesh is good for, is irresistible:

To bait fish withal; if it will feed nothing else, it will feed my revenge. He hath disgrac'd me, and hinder'd me of half a million, laughed at my losses, mock'd at my gains, scorn'd my nation, thwarted my bargains, cool'd my friends, heated mine enemies; and what's his reason? I am a Jew. Hath not a Jew eyes; hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions; fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer that a Christian is? If you prick us, do we not bleed? If you tickle us, do we not laugh? If you poison us, do we not die? And if you wrong us, shall we not revenge? If we are like you in the rest, we will resemble you in that. If a Jew wrong a Christian, what is his humility? revenge. If a Christian wrong a Jew, what should his sufferance be by Christian example? why revenge. The villany you teach me I will execute, and it shall go hard but I will better the instruction.

The whole of the trial scene, both before and after the entrance of Portia, is a masterpiece of dramatic skill. The legal acuteness, the passionate declamations, the sound maxims of jurisprudence, the wit and irony interspersed in it, the fluctuations of hope and fear in the different persons, and the completeness and suddenness of the catastrophe, cannot be surpassed. Shylock, who is his own counsel, defends himself well, and is triumphant on all the general topics that are urged against him, and only Tails through a legal flaw. Take the following as an instance:

Shylock. What judgment shall I dread, doing no wrong?
You have among you many a purchas'd slave,
Which, like your asses, and your dogs, and mules,
You use in abject and in slavish part,
Because you bought them:—shall I say to you,
Let them be free, marry them to your heirs?
Why sweat they under burdens? let their beds
Be made as soft as yours, and let their palates
Be season'd with such viands? you will answer,
The slaves are ours:—so do I answer you:
The pound of flesh, which I demand of him,
Is dearly bought, is mine, and I will have it;
If you deny me, fie upon your law!
There is no force in the decrees of Venice:
I stand for judgment: answer; shall I have it?

The keenness of his revenge awakes all his faculties; and he beats back all opposition to his purpose, whether grave or gay, whether of wit or argument, with an equal degree of eamestness and self-possession. His character is displayed as distinctly in other less prominent parts of the play, and we may collect from a few sentences the history of his life—his descent and origin, his thrift and domestic economy, his affection for his daughter, whom he loves next to his wealth, his courtship and his first present to Leah, his wife! 'I would not have parted with it' (the ring which he first gave her) 'for a wilderness of monkeys!' What a fine Hebraism is implied in this expression!

Portia is not a very great favourite with us, neither are we in love with her maid, Nerissa. Portia has a certain degree of affectation and pedantry about her, which is very unusual in Shakespeare's women, but which perhaps was a proper qualification for the office of a 'civil doctor', which she undertakes and executes so successfully. The speech about mercy is very well; but there are a thousand finer ones in Shakespeare. We do not admire the scene of the caskets; and object entirely to the Black Prince, Morocchius. We should like Jessica better if she had not deceived and robbed her father, and Lorenzo, if he had not married a Jewess, though he thinks he has a right to wrong a Jew. The dialogue between this newly married couple by moonlight, beginning 'On such a night', &c., is a collection of classical elegancies. Launcelot, the Jew's man, is an honest fellow. The dilemma in which he describes himself placed between his 'conscience and the fiend', the one of which advises him to run away from his master's service and the other to stay in it, is exquisitely humorous.

Gratiano is a very admirable subordinate character. He is the jester of the piece: yet one speech of his, in his own defence, contains a whole volume of wisdom.

Anthonio. I hold the world but as the world, Gratiano,
A stage, where every one must play his part;
And mine a sad one.

Gratiano. Let me play the fool:
With mirth and laughter let old wrinkles come;
And let my liver rather heat with wine,
Than my heart cool with mortifying groans.
Why should a man, whose blood is warm within,
Sit like his grandsire cut in alabaster?
Sleep when he wakes? and creep into the jaundice
By being peevish? I tell thee what, Anthonio—
I love thee, and it is my love that speaks;—
There are a sort of men, whose visages
Do cream and mantle like a standing pond:
And do a wilful stillness entertain,
With purpose to be drest in an opinion
Of wisdom, gravity, profound conceit;
As who should say, 'I am Sir Oracle,

And when I ope my lips, let no dog bark'!
O, my Anthonio, I do know of these,
That therefore only are reputed wise,
For saying nothing; who, I am very sure,
If they should speak, would almost damn those ears,
Which hearing them, would call their brothers fools.
I'll tell thee more of this another time;
But fish not, with this melancholy bait,
For this fool's gudgeon, this opinion.

Gratiano's speech on the philosophy of love, and the effect of habit in taking off the force of passion, is as full of spirit and good sense. The graceful winding up of this play in the fifth act, after the tragic business is dispatched, is one of the happiest instances of Shakespeare's knowledge of the principles of the drama. We do not mean the pretended quarrel between Portia and Nerissa and their husbands about the rings, which is amusing enough, but the conversation just before and after the return of Portia to her own house, begining 'How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank', and ending 'Peace! how the moon sleeps with Endymion, and would not be awaked'. There is a number of beautiful thoughts crowded into that short space, and linked together by the most natural transitions.

When we first went to see Mr. Kean in Shylock we expected to see, what we had been used to see, a decrepid old man, bent with age and ugly with mental deformity, grinning with deadly malice, with the venom of his heart congealed in the expression of his countenance, sullen, morose, gloomy, inflexible, brooding over one idea, that of his hatred, and fixed on one unalterable purpose, that of his revenge. We were disappointed, because we had taken our idea from other actors, not from the play. There is no proof there that Shylock is old, but a single line, 'Bassanic and old Shylock, both stand forth,'—which does not imply that he is infirm with age—and the circumstance that he has a daughter marriageable, which does not imply that he is old at all. It would be too much to say that his body should be made crooked and deformed to answer to his mind, which is bowed down and warped with prejudices and passion. That he has but one idea, is not true; he has more ideas than any other person in the piece: and if he is intense and inveterate in the pursuit of his purpose, he shows the utmost elasticity, vigour, and presence of mind, in the means of attaining it. But so rooted was our habitual impression of the part from seeing it caricatured in the representation, that it was only from a careful perusal of the play itself that we saw our error. The stage is not in general the best place to study our author's characters in. It is too often filled with traditional commonplace conceptions of the part, handed down from sire to son, and suited to the taste of THE GREAT VULGAR AND THE SMALL.—"Tis an unweeded garden: things rank and gross do merely gender in it!' If a man of genius comes once in an age to clear away the rubbish, to make it fruitful and wholesome, they cry, "Tis a bad school: it may be like nature, it may be like Shakespeare, but it is not like us." Admirable critics!

<<span id="filepos0038995824"> a>THE WINTER'S TALE

We wonder that Mr. Pope should have entertained doubts of the genuineness of this play. He was, we suppose, shocked (as a certain critic suggests) at the Chorus, Time, leaping over sixteen years with his crutch between the third and fourth act, and at Antigonus's landing with the infant Perdita on the seacoast of Bohemia. These slips or blemishes, however, do not prove it not to be Shakespeare's; for he was as likely to fall into them as anybody; but we do not know anybody but himself who could produce the beauties. The STUFF of which the tragic passion is composed, the romantic sweetness, the comic humour, are evidently his. Even the crabbed and tortuous style of the speeches of Leontes, reasoning on his own jealousy, beset with doubts and fears, and entangled more and more in the thorny labyrinth, bears every mark of Shakespeare's peculiar manner of conveying the painful struggle of different thoughts and feelings, labouring for utterance, and almost strangled in me birth. For instance:

Ha' not you seen, Camillo?
  (But that's past doubt; you have, or your eye-glass
  Is thicker than a cuckold's horn) or heard,
  (For to a vision so apparent, rumour
  Cannot be mute) or thought (for cogitation
  Resides not within man that does not think)
  My wife is slippery? If thou wilt, confess,
  Or else be impudently negative,
  To have nor eyes, nor ears, nor thought.—

Here Leontes is confounded with his passion, and does not know which way to turn himself, to give words to the anguish, rage, and apprehension which tug at his breast. It is only as he is worked up into a clearer conviction of his wrongs by insisting on the grounds of his unjust suspicions to Camillo, who irritates him by his opposition, that he bursts out into the following vehement strain of bitter indignation: yet even here his passion staggers, and is as it were oppressed with its own intensity.

Is whispering nothing?
Is leaning cheek to cheek? is meeting noses?
Kissing with inside lip? stopping the career
Of laughter with a sigh? (a note infallible
Of breaking honesty!) horsing foot on foot?
Skulking in corners? wishing clocks more swift?
Hours, minutes? the noon, midnight? and all eyes
Blind with the pin and web, but theirs; theirs only,
That would, unseen, be wicked? is this nothing?
Why then the world, and all that's in't, is nothing,
The covering sky is nothing, Bohemia's nothing,
My wife is nothing!

The character of Hermione is as much distinguished by its saint-like resignation and patient forbearance, as that of Paulina is by her zealous and spirited remonstrances against the injustice done to the queen, and by her devoted attachment to her misfortunes. Hermione's restoration to her husband and her child, after her long separation from them, is as affecting in itself as it is striking in the representation. Camillo, and the old shepherd and his son, are subordinate but not uninteresting instruments in the development of the plot, and though last, not least, comes Autolycus, a very pleasant, thriving rogue; and (what is the best feather in the cap of all knavery) he escapes with impunity in the end.

THE WINTER'S TALE is one of the best-acting of our author's plays. We remember seeing it with great pleasure many years ago. It was on the night that King took leave of the stage, when he and Mrs. Jordan played together in the after-piece of The Wedding-day. Nothing could go off with more eclat, with more spirit, and grandeur of effect. Mrs. Siddons played Hermione, and in the last scene acted the painted statue to the life—with true monumental dignity and noble passion; Mr. Kemble, in Leontes, worked himself up into a very fine classical frenzy; and Bannister, as Autolycus, roared as loud for pity as a sturdy beggar could do who felt none of the pain he counterfeited, and was sound of wind and limb. We shall never see these parts so acted again; or if we did, it would be in vain. Actors grow old, or no longer surprise us by their novelty. But true poetry, like nature, is always young; and we still read the courtship of Florizel and Perdita, as we welcome the return of spring, with the' same feelings as ever.

Florizel. Thou dearest Perdita,
With these forc'd thoughts, I prithee, darken not
The mirth o' the feast: or, I'll be thine, my fair,
Or not my father's: for I cannot be
Mine own, nor anything to any, if
I be not thine. To this I am most constant,
Tho' destiny say. No. Be merry, gentle;
Strangle such thoughts as these, with anything
That you behold the while. Your guests are coming:
Lift up your countenance; as it were the day
Of celebration of that nuptial which
We two have sworn shall come.

Perdita. O lady Fortune, Stand you auspicious!

Enter Shepherd, Clown, Mopsa, Dobcas, Servants;
with Polixenes, and Camillo, disguised.

Florizel. See, your guests approach.
Address yourself to entertain them sprightly,
And let's be red with mirth.

Shepherd. Fie, daughter! when my old wife liv'd, upon
This day, she was both pantler, butler, cook;
Both dame and servant: welcom'd all, serv'd all:
Would sing her song, and dance her turn: now here
At upper end o' the table, now i' the middle:
On his shoulder, and his: her face o' fire
With labour; and the thing she took to quench it
She would to each one sip. You are retir d,
As if you were a feasted one, and not
The hostess of the meeting. Pray you, bid
These unknown friends to us welcome; for it is
A way to make us better friends, more known.
Come, quench your blushes; and present yourself
That which you are, mistress o' the feast. Come on,
And bid us welcome to your sheep-shearing,
As your good flock shall prosper.

Perdita. Sir, welcome! [To Polixenes and Camillo.]
It is my father's will I should take on me
The hostess-ship o' the day: you're welcome, sir!
Give me those flowers there, Dorcas.—Reverend sirs,
For you there's rosemary and rue; these keep
Seeming, and savour, all the winter long:
Grace and remembrance be unto you both
And welcome to our shearing!

Polixenes. Shepherdess,
(A fair one are you) well you fit our ages
With flowers of winter.

Perdita. Sir, the year growing ancient,
Not yet on summer's death, nor on the birth
Of trembling winter, the fairest flowers o' the season
Are our carnations, and streak'd gilly-flowers,
Which some call nature's bastards: of that kind
Our rustic garden's barren; and I care not
To get slips of them.

Polixenes. Wherefore, gentle maiden,
Do you neglect them?

Perdita. For I have heard it said
There is an art which in their piedness shares
With great creating nature.

Polixenes. Say, there be: Yet nature is made better by no mean,
But nature makes that mean: so, o'er that art
Which, you say, adds to nature, is an art
That nature makes. You see, sweet maid, we marry
A gentler scion to the wildest stock;
And make conceive a bark of baser kind
By bud of nobler race. This is an art
Which does mend nature, change it rather: but
The art itself is nature.

Perdita. So it is.

[Footnote: The lady, we here see, gives up the
argument, but keeps her mind.]

Polixenes. Then make your garden rich in gilly-flowers,
And do not call them bastards.

Perdita. I'll not put
The dibble in earth, to set one slip of them;
[Footnote: The lady, we here see, gives up the argument, but
keeps her mind.]
No more than, were I painted, I would wish
This youth should say, 'twere well; and only therefore
Desire to breed by me.—Here's flowers for you;
Hot lavender, mints, savory, marjoram;
The marigold, that goes to bed with the sun,
And with him rises, weeping: these are flowers
Of middle summer, and, I think, they are given
To men of middle age. You are very welcome.

Camillo. I should leave grazing, were I of your flock,
And only live by gazing.

Perdita. Out, alas!
You'd be so lean, that blasts of January
Would blow you through and through. Now my fairest friends.
I would I had some flowers o' the spring that might
Become your time of day; and yours, and yours,
That wear upon your virgin branches yet
Your maidenheads growing: O Proserpina!
For the flowers now that frighted thou let'st fall
From Dis's waggon! daffodils,
That come before the swallow dares and take
The winds of March with beauty: violets dim,
But sweeter than the lids of Juno's eyes,
Or Cytherea's breath; pale primroses,
That die unmarried, ere they can behold
Bright Phoebus in his strength (a malady
Most incident to maids); bold oxlips, and
The crown-imperial; lilies of all kinds,

The fleur-de-lis being one! O, these I lack
To make you garlands of; and my sweet friend
To strow him o'er and o'er.

Florizel. What, like a corse?

Perdita. No, like a bank, for love to lie and play on;
Not like a corse; or if—not to be buried,
But quick, and in mine arms. Come, take your flowers;
Methinks, I play as I have seen them do
In Whitsun pastorals: sure this robe of mine
Does change my disposition.

Florizel. What you do,
Still betters what is done. When you speak, sweet,
I'd have you do it ever: when you sing,
I'd have you buy and sell so; so give alms;
Pray so; and for the ordering your affairs,
To sing them too. When you do dance, I wish you
A wave o' the sea, that you might ever do
Nothing but that; move still, still so,
And own no other function. Each your doing,
So singular in each particular,
Crowns what you're doing in the present deeds,
That all your acts are queens.

Perdita. O Doricles,
Your praises are too large; but that your youth
And the true blood, which peeps forth fairly through it,
Do plainly give you out an unstained shepherd;
With wisdom I might fear, my Doricles,
You woo'd me the false way.

Florizel. I think you have
As little skill to fear, as I have purpose
To put you to't. But come, our dance, I pray.
Your hand, my Perdita: so turtles pair,
That never mean to part.

Perdita. I'll swear for 'em.

Polixenes. This is the prettiest low-bom lass that ever
Ran on the green-sward; nothing she does, or seems,
But smacks of something greater than herself,
Too noble for this place.

Camillo. He tells her something
That makes her blood look out: good sooth she is
The queen of curds and cream.

This delicious scene is interrupted by the father of the prince discovering himself to Florizel, and haughtily breaking off the intended match between his son and Perdita. When Polixenes goes out, Perdita says,

Even here undone!
I was not much afraid; for once or twice
I was about to speak; and tell him plainly
The self-same sun that shines upon his court,
Hides not his visage from our cottage, but
Looks on't alike. Wilt please you, sir, be gone?
[To Florizel.]
I told you what would come of this. Beseech you,
Of your own state take care; this dream of mine,
Being now awake, I'll queen it no inch further,
But milk my ewes and weep.

As Perdita, the supposed shepherdess, turns out to be the daughter of Hermione, and a princess in disguise, both feelings of the pride of birth and the claims of nature are satisfied by the fortunate event of the story, and the fine romance of poetry is reconciled to the strictest court-etiquette.

<<span id="filepos0039015418"> a>ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL is one of the most pleasing of our author's comedies. The interest is, however, more of a serious than of a comic nature.

The character of Helen is one of great sweetness and delicacy. She is placed in circumstances of the most critical kind, and has to court her husband both as a virgin and a wife: yet the most scrupulous nicety of female modesty is not once violated. There is not one thought or action that ought to bring a blush into her cheeks, or that for a moment lessens her in our esteem. Perhaps the romantic attachment of a beautiful and virtuous girl to one placed above her hopes by the circumstances of birth and fortune, was never so exquisitely expressed as in the reflections which she utters when young Roussillon leaves his mother's house, under whose protection she has been brought up with him, to repair to the French king's court.

Helena. Oh, were that all—I think not on my father,
And these great tears grace his remembrance more
Than those I shed for him. What was he like?
I have forgot him. My imagination
Carries no favour in it, but Bertram's.
I am undone, there is no living, none,
If Bertram be away. It were all one
That I should love a bright particular star,
And think to wed it; he is so above me:
In his bright radiance and collateral light
Must I be comforted, not in his sphere.
Th' ambition in my love thus plagues itself;
The hind that would be mated by the lion,
Must die for love. 'Twas pretty, tho' a plague,
To see him every hour, to sit and draw
His arched brows, his hawking eye, his curls
In our heart's table: heart too capable
Of every line and trick of his sweet favour.
But now he's gone, and my idolatrous fancy
Must sanctify his relics.

The interest excited by this beautiful picture of a kind and innocent heart is kept up afterwards by her resolution to follow him to France, the success of her experiment in restoring the king's health, her demanding Bertram in marriage as a recompense, his leaving her in disdain, her interview with him afterwards disguised as Diana, a young lady whom he importunes with his secret addresses, and their final reconciliation when the consequences of her stratagem and the proofs of her love are fully made known. The persevering gratitude of the French king to his benefactress, who cures him of a languishing distemper by a prescription hereditary in her family, the indulgent kindness of the Countess, whose pride of birth yields, almost without struggle, to her affection for Helen, the honesty and uprightness of the good old lord Lafeu, make very interesting parts of the picture. The wilful stubbornness and youthful petulance of Bertram are also very admirably described. The comic part of the play turns on the folly, boasting, and cowardice of Parolles, a parasite and hanger-on of Bertram's, the detection of whose false pretensions to bravery and honour forms a very amusing episode. He is first found out by the old lord Lafeu, who says, 'The soul of this man is in his clothes'; and it is proved afterwards that his heart is in his tongue, and that both are false and hollow. The adventure of'the bringing off of his drum' has become proverbial as a satire on all ridiculous and blustering undertakings which the person never means to perform: nor can anything be more severe than what one of the bystanders remarks upon what Parolles says of himself, 'Is it possible he should know what he is, and be that he is?' Yet Parolles himself gives the best solution of the difficulty afterwards when he is thankful to escape with his life and the loss of character; for, so that he can live on, he is by no means squeamish about the loss of pretensions, to which he had sense enough to know he had no real claims, and which he had assumed only as a means to live.

Parolles. Yet I am thankful; if my heart were great,
'Twould burst at this. Captain I'll be no more,
But I will eat and drink, and sleep as soft
As captain shall. Simply the thing I am
Shall make me live; who knows himself a braggart,
Let him fear this; for it shall come to pass,
That every braggart shall be found an ass.
Rust sword, cool blushes, and Parolles live
Safest in shame; being fooi'd, by fool'ry thrive;
There's place and means for every man alive.
I'll after them.

The story of ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL, and of several others of Shakespeare's plays, is taken from Boccaccio. The poet has dramatized the original novel with great skill and comic spirit, and has preserved all the beauty of character and sentiment without improving upon it, which was impossible. There is indeed in Boccaccio's serious pieces a truth, a pathos, and an exquisite refinement of sentiment, which is hardly to be met with in any other prose writer whatever. Justice has not been done him by the world. He has in general passed for a mere narrator of lascivious tales or idle jests. This character probably originated in his obnoxious attacks on the monks, and has been kept up by the grossness of mankind, who revenged their own want of refinement on Boccaccio, and only saw in his writings what suited the coarseness of their own tastes. But the truth is, that he has carried sentiment of every kind to its very highest purity and perfection. By sentiment we would here understand the habitual workings of some one powerful feeling, where the heart reposes almost entirely upon itself, without the violent excitement of opposing duties or, untoward circumstances. In this way, nothing ever came up to the story of Frederigo Alberigi and his Falcon. The perseverance in attachment, the spirit of gallantry and generosity displayed in it, has no parallel in the history of heroical sacrifices. The feeling is so unconscious too, and involuntary, is brought out in such small, unlooked-for, and unostentatious circumstances, as to show it to have been woven into the very nature and soul of the author. The story of Isabella is scarcely less fine and is more affecting in the circumstances and in the catastrophe. Dryden has done justice to the impassioned eloquence of the Tancred and Sigismunda; but has not given an adequate idea of the wild preternatural interest of the story of Honoria. Cimon and Iphigene is by no means one of the best, notwithstanding the popularity of the subject. The proof of unalterable affection given in the story of Jeronymo, and the simple touches of nature and picturesque beauty in the story of the two holiday lovers, who were poisoned by tasting of a leaf in the garden at Florence, are perfect masterpieces. The epithet of Divine was well bestowed on this great painter of the human heart. The invention implied in his different tales is immense: but we are not to infer that it is all his own. He probably availed himself of all the common traditions which were floating in his time, and which he was the first to appropriate. Homer appears the most original of all authors—probably for no other reason than that we can trace the plagiarism no further. Boccaccio has furnished subjects to numberless writers since his time, both dramatic and narrative. The story of Griselda is borrowed from his DECAMERON by Chaucer; as is the KNIGHT'S TALE (Palamon and Arcite) from his poem of the THESEID.

<<span id="filepos0039024366"> a>LOVE'S LABOUR'S LOST

If we were to part with any of the author's comedies, it should be this. Yet we should be loth to part with Don Adriano de Armado, that mighty potentate of nonsense, or his page, that handful of wit; with Nathaniel the curate, or Holofernes the schoolmaster, and their dispute after dinner on 'the golden cadences of poesy'; with Costard the clown, or Dull the constable. Biron is too accomplished a character to be lost to the world, and yet he could not appear without his fellow courtiers and the king: and if we were to leave out the ladies, the gentlemen would have no mistresses. So that we believe we may let the whole play stand as it is, and we shall hardly venture to 'set a mark of reprobation on it'. Still we have some objections to the style, which we think savours more of the pedantic spirit of Shakespeare's time than of his own genius; more of controversial divinity, and the logic of Peter Lombard, than of the inspiration of the Muse. It transports us quite as much to the manners of the court, and the quirks of courts of law, as to the scenes of nature or the fairyland of his own imagination. Shakespeare has set himself to imitate the tone of polite conversation then prevailing among the fair, the witty, and the learned, and he has imitated it but too faithfully. It is as if the hand of Titian had been employed to give grace to the curls of a full-bottomed periwig, or Raphael had attempted to give expression to the tapestry figures in the House of Lords. Shakespeare has put an excellent description of this fashionable jargon into the mouth of the critical Holofernes 'as too picked, too spruce, too affected, too odd, as it were, too peregrinate, as I may call it'; and nothing can be more marked than the difference when he breaks loose from the trammels he had imposed on himself, 'as light as bird from brake', and speaks in his own person. We think, for instance, that in the following soliloquy the poet has fairly got the start of Queen Elizabeth and her maids of honour:—

Biron. O! and I forsooth in love,
I that have been love's whip;
A very beadle to an amorous sigh:
A critic; nay, a night-watch constable,
A domineering pedant o'er the boy,
Than whom no mortal more magnificent.
This whimpled, whining, purblind, wayward boy,
This signior Junio, giant dwarf, Dan Cupid,
Regent of love-rimes, lord of folded arms,
Th' anointed sovereign of sighs and groans:
Liege of all loiterers and malcontents,
Dread prince of plackets, king of codpieces,

Sole imperator, and great general
Of trotting parators (O my little heart!)
And I to be a corporal of his field,
And wear his colours like a tumbler's hoop?
What? I love! I sue! I seek a wife!
A woman, that is like a German clock,
Still a repairing; ever out of frame;
And never going aright, being a watch,
And being watch'd, that it may still go right?
Nay, to be perjur'd, which is worst of all:
And among three to love the worst of all,
A whitely wanton with a velvet brow,
With two pitch balls stuck in her face for eyes;
Ay, and by heav'n, one that will do the deed,
Though Argus were her eunuch and her guard;
And I to sigh for her! to watch for her!
To pray for her! Go to; it is a plague
That Cupid will impose for my neglect
Of his almighty dreadful little might.
Well, I will love, write, sigh, pray, sue, and groan:
Some men must love my lady, and some Joan.

The character of Biron drawn by Rosaline and that which Biron gives of Boyet are equally happy. The observations on the use and abuse of study, and on the power of beauty to quicken the understanding as well as the senses, are excellent. The scene which has the greatest dramatic effect is that in which Biron, the king, Longaville, and Dumain, successively detect each other and are detected in their breach of their vow and in their profession of attachment to their several mistresses, in which they suppose themselves to be overheard by no one. The reconciliation between these lovers and their sweethearts is also very good, and the penance which Rosaline imposes on Biron, before he can expect to gain her consent to marry him, full of propriety and beauty.

Rosaline. Oft have I heard of you, my lord Biron,
Before I saw you: and the world's large tongue
Proclaims you for a man replete with mocks;
Full of comparisons, and wounding flouts;
Which you on all estates will execute,
That lie within the mercy of your wit.

To weed this wormwood from your faithful brain;
And therewithal to win me, if you please,
(Without the which I am not to be won)
You shall this twelvemonth term from day to day
Visit the speechless sick, and still converse
With groaning wretches; and your task shall be,
With all the fierce endeavour of your wit,
T' enforce the pained impotent to smile.

Biron. To move wild laughter in the throat of death?
It cannot be: it is impossible:
Mirth cannot move a soul in agony.

Rosaline. Why, that's the way to choke a gibing spirit,
Whose influence is begot of that loose grace,
Which shallow laughing hearers give to fools;
A jest's prosperity lies in the ear
Of him that hears it; never in the tongue
Of him that makes it: then, if sickly ears,
Deaf'd with the clamours of their own dear groans,
Will hear your idle scorns, continue then,
And I will have you, and that fault withal;
But, if they will not, throw away that spirit,
And I shall find you empty of that fault,
Right joyful of your reformation.

Biron. A twelvemonth? Well, befall what will befall,
I'll jest a twelvemonth in an hospital.

The famous cuckoo-song closes the play; but we shall add no more criticisms: 'the words of Mercury are harsh after the songs of Apollo'.

<<span id="filepos0039032711"> a>MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

This admirable comedy used to be frequently acted till of late years. Mr. Garrick's Benedick was one of his most celebrated characters; and Mrs. Jordan, we have understood, played Beatrice very delightfully. The serious part is still the most prominent here, as in other instances that we have noticed. Hero is the principal figure in the piece, and leaves an indelible impression on the mind by her beauty, her tenderness, and the hard trial of her love. The passage in which Claudio first makes a confession of his affection towards her conveys as pleasing an image of the entrance of love into a youthful bosom as can well be imagined.

Oh, my lord,
When you went onward with this ended action,
I look'd upon her with a soldier's eye,
That lik'd, but had a rougher task in hand
Than to drive liking to the name of love;
But now I am return'd, and that war-thoughts
Have left their places vacant; in their rooms
Come thronging soft and delicate desires,
All prompting me how fair young Hero is,
Saying, I lik'd her ere I went to wars.

In the scene at the altar, when Claudio, urged on by the villain Don John, brings the charge of incontinence against her, and as it were divorces her in the very marriage-ceremony, her appeals to her own conscious innocence and honour are made with the most affecting simplicity.

Claudio. No, Leonato,
I never tempted her with word too large,
But, as a brother to his sister, show'd
Bashful sincerity, and comely love.

Hero. And seem'd I ever otherwise to you?

Claudio. Out on thy seeming, I will write against it:
You seem to me as Dian in her orb,
As chaste as is the bud ere it be blown;
But you are more intemperate in your blood
Than Veilus, or those pamper'd animals
That rage in savage sensuality.

Hero. Is my lord well, that he doth speak so wide?

Leonato. Are these things spoken, or do I but dream?

John. Sir, they are spoken, and these things are true.

Benedick. This looks not like a nuptial.

Hero. True! O God!

The justification of Hero in the end, and her restoration to the confidence and arms of her lover, is brought about by one of those temporary consignments to the grave of which Shakespeare seems to have been fond. He has perhaps explained the theory of this predilection in the following lines:

Friar. She dying, as it must be so maintain'd,
Upon the instant that she was accus'd,
Shall be lamented, pity'd, and excus'd,
Of every hearer: for it so falls out,
That what we have we prize not to the worth,
While we enjoy it; but being lack'd and lost,
Why then we rack the value; then we find
The virtue, that possession would not show us
Whilst it was ours.—So will it fare with Claudio;
When he shall hear she dy'd upon his words,
The idea of her love shall sweetly creep
Into his study of imagination;
And every lovely organ of her life
Shall come apparel'd in more precious habit,
More moving, delicate, and full of life,
Into the eye and prospect of his soul,
Than when she liv'd indeed.

The principal comic characters in MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING, Benedick and Beatrice, are both essences in their kind. His character as a woman-hater is admirably supported, and his conversion to matrimony is no less happily effected by the pretended story of Beatrice's love for him. It is hard to say which of the two scenes is the best, that of the trick which is thus practised on

Benedick, or that in which Beatrice is prevailed on to take pity on him by overhearing her cousin and her maid declare (which they do on purpose) that he is dying of love for her. There is something delightfully picturesque in the manner in which Beatrice is described as coming to hear the plot which is contrived against herself:

For look where Beatrice, like a lapwing, runs
Close by the ground, to hear our conference.

In consequence of what she hears (not a word of which s true) she exclaims when these good-natured informants are gone:

What fire is in mine ears? Can this be true?
Stand I condemn'd for pride and scorn so much?
Contempt, farewell! and maiden pride adieu!
No glory lives behind the back of such.
And, Benedick, love on, I will requite thee;
Taming my wild heart to thy loving hand;
If thou dost love, my kindness shall incite thee
To bind our loves up in an holy band:
For others say thou dost deserve; and I
Believe it better than reportingly.

And Benedick, on his part, is equally sincere in his repentance with equal reason, after he has heard the grey-beard, Leonato, and his friend, 'Monsieur Love', discourse of the desperate state of his supposed inamorata.

This can be no trick; the conference was sadly borne.—They have the truth of this from Hero. They seem to pity the lady; it seems her affections have the full bent. Love me! why, it must be requited. I hear how I am censur'd: they say, I will bear myself proudly, if I perceive the love come from her; they say too, that she will rather die than give any sign of affection.—I did never think to marry; I must not seem proud:—happy are they that hear their detractions, and can put them to mending. They say, the lady is fair; 'tis a truth, I can bear them witness: and virtuous;—'tis so, I cannot reprove it; and wise—but for loving me;—by my troth it is no addition to her wit;—nor no great argument of her folly, for I will be horribly in love with her.—I may chance to have some odd quirks and remnants of wit broken on me, because I have rail'd so long against marriage: but doth not the appetite alter? A man loves the meat in his youth, that he cannot endure in his age.—Shall quips, and sentences, and these paper bullets of the brain, awe a man from the career of his humour? No: the world must be peopled. When I said, I would die a bachelor, I did not think I should live till I were marry'd.—Here comes Beatrice; by this day, she's a fair lady: I do spy some marks of love in her.

The beauty of all this arises from the characters of the persons so entrapped. Benedick is a professed and staunch enemy to marriage, and gives very plausible reasons for the faith that is in him. And as to Beatrice, she persecutes him all day with her jests (so that he could hardly think of being troubled with them at night), she not only turns him but all other things into jest, and is proof against everything serious.

Hero. Disdain and scorn ride sparkling in her eyes,
Misprising what they look on; and her wit
Values itself so highly, that to her
All matter else seems weak: she cannot love,
Nor take no shape nor project of affection,
She is so self-endeared.

Ursula. Sure, I think so;
And therefore, certainly, it were not good
She knew his love, lest she make sport at it.

Hero. Why, you speak truth: I never yet saw man,
How wise, how noble, young, how rarely featur'd,
But she would spell him backward: if fair-fac'd,
She'd swear the gentleman should be her sister;
If black, why, nature, drawing of an antick,
Made a foul blot: if tall, a lance ill-headed;
If low, an agate very vilely cut:
If speaking, why, a vane blown with all winds;
If silent, why, a block moved with none.
So turns she every man the wrong side out;
And never gives to truth and virtue that
Which simpleness and merit purchaseth.

These were happy materials for Shakespeare to work on, and he has made a happy use of them. Perhaps that middle point of comedy was never more nicely hit in which the ludicrous blends with the tender, and our follies, turning round against themselves in support of our affections, retain nothing but their humanity.

Dogberry and Verges in this play are inimitable specimens of quaint blundering and misprisions of meaning; and are a standing record of that formal gravity of pretension and total want of common understanding, which Shakespeare no doubt copied from real life, and which in the course of two hundred years appear to have ascended from the lowest to the highest offices in the state.

<<span id="filepos0039045330"> a>AS YOU LIKE IT

Shakespeare has here converted the forest of Arden into another Arcadia, where they 'fleet the time carelessly, as they did in the golden world'. It is the most ideal of any of this author's plays. It is a pastoral drama in which the interest arises more out of the sentiments and characters than out of the actions or situations. It is not what is done, but what is said, that claims our attention. Nursed in solitude, 'under the shade of melancholy boughs', the imagination grows soft and delicate, and the wit runs riot in idleness, like a spoiled child that is never sent to school. Caprice is and fancy reign and revel here, and stern necessity is banished to the court. The mild sentiments of humanity are strengthened with thought and leisure; the echo of the cares and noise of the world strikes upon the ear of those 'who have felt them knowingly', softened by time and distance. 'They hear the tumult, and are still.' The very air of the place seems to breathe a spirit of philosophical poetry; to stir the thoughts, to touch the heart with pity, as the drowsy forest rustles to the sighing gale. Never was there such beautiful moralizing, equally free from pedantry or petulance.

And this their life, exempt from public haunts,
  Finds tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,
  Sermons in stones, and good in everything.

Jaques is the only purely contemplative character in Shakespeare. He thinks, and does nothing. His whole occupation is to amuse his mind, and he is totally regardless of his body and his fortunes. He is the prince of philosophical idlers; his only passion is thought; he sets no value upon anything but as it serves as food for reflection. He can 'suck melancholy out of a song, as a weasel sucks eggs'; the motley fool, 'who morals on the time', is the greatest prize he meets with in the forest. He resents Orlando's passion for Rosalind as some disparagement of his own passion for abstract truth; and leaves the Duke, as soon as he is restored to his sovereignty, to seek his brother out, who has quitted it, and turned hermit.

—Out of these convertites
 There is much matter to be heard and learnt.

Within the sequestered and romantic glades of the Forest of Arden, they find leisure to be good and wise, or to play the fool and fall in love. Rosalind's character is made up of sportive gaiety and natural tenderness: her tongue runs the faster to conceal the pressure at her heart. She talks herself out of breath, only to get deeper in love. The coquetry with which she plays with her lover in the double character which she has to support is managed with the nicest address. How Full of voluble, laughing grace is all her conversation with Orlando:

—In heedless mazes running
 With wanton haste and giddy cunning.

How full of real fondness and pretended cruelty is her answer to him when he promises to love her 'For ever and a day'!

Say a day without the ever: no, no, Orlando, men are April when they woo, December when they wed: maids are May when they are maids, but the sky changes when they are wives: I will be more jealous of thee than a Barbary cock-pigeon over his hen; more clamorous than a parrot against rain; more newfangled than an ape; more giddy in my desires than a monkey; I will weep for nothing, like Diana in the fountain, and I will do that when you are disposed to be merry; I will laugh like a hyen, and that when you are inclined to sleep.

Orlando. But will my Rosalind do so?

Rosalind. By my life she will do as I do.

The silent and retired character of Celia is a necessary relief to the provoking loquacity of Rosalind, nor can anything be better conceived or more beautifully described than the mutual affection between the two cousins:

—We still have slept together,
Rose at an instant, learn'd, play'd, eat together,
And wheresoe'er we went, like Juno's swans,
Still we went coupled and inseparable.

The unrequited love of Silvius for Phebe shows the perversity of this passion in the commonest scenes of life, and the rubs and stops which nature throws in its way, where fortune has placed none. Touchstone is not in love, but he will have a mistress as a subject for the exercise of his grotesque humour, and to show his contempt for the passion, by his indifference about the person. He is a rare fellow. He is a mixture of the ancient cynic philosopher with the modern buffoon, and turns folly into wit, and wit into folly, just as the fit takes him. His courtship of Audrey not only throws a degree of ridicule on the state of wedlock itself, but he is equally an enemy to the prejudices of opinion in other respects. The lofty tone of enthusiasm, which the Duke and his companions in exile spread over the stillness and solitude of a country life, receives a pleasant shock from Touchstone's sceptical determination of the question.

Corin. And how like you this shepherd's life, Mr. Touchstone?

Clown. Truly, shepherd, in respect of itself, it is a good life; but in respect that it is a shepherd's life, it is naught. In respect that it is solitary, I like it very well; but in respect that it is private, it is a very vile life. Now in respect it is in the fields, it pleaseth me well; but in respect it is not in the court, it is tedious. As it is a spare life, took you, it fits my humour; but as there is no more plenty in it, it goes much against my stomach.

Zimmennan's celebrated work on Solitude discovers only half the sense of this passage.

There is hardly any of Shakespeare's plays that contains a greater number of passages that have been quoted in books of extracts, or a greater number of phrases that have become in a manner proverbial. If we were to give all the striking passages, we should give half the play. We will only recall a few of the most delightful to the reader's recollection. Such are the meeting between Orlando and Adam, the exquisite appeal of Orlando to the humanity of the Duke and his company to supply him with food for the old man, and their answer, the Duke's description of a country life, and the account of Jaques moralizing on the wounded deer, his meeting with Touchstone in the forest, his apology for his own melancholy and his satirical vein, and the well-known speech on the stages of human life, the old song of 'Blow, blow, thou winter's wind', Rosalind's description of the marks of a lover and of the progress of time with different persons, the picture of the snake wreathed round Oliver's neck while the lioness watches her sleeping prey, and Touchstone's lecture to the shepherd, his defence of cuckolds, and panegyric on the virtues of 'an If.—All of these are familiar to the reader: there is one passage of equal delicacy and beauty which may have escaped him, and with it we shall close our account of As You Like it. It is Phebe's description of Ganimed at the end of the third act.

Think not I love him, tho' I ask for him;
Tis but a peevish boy, yet he talks well;—
But what care I for words! yet words do well,
When he that speaks them pleases those that hear;
It is a pretty youth; not very pretty;
But sure he's proud, and yet his pride becomes him;
He'll make a proper man; the best thing in him
Is his complexion; and faster than his tongue
Did make offence, his eye did heal it up:
He is not very tall, yet for his years he's tall;
His leg is but so so, and yet'tis well;
There was a pretty redness in his lip,
A little riper, and more lusty red
Than that mix'd in his cheek; 'twas just the difference
Betwixt the constant red and mingled damask.
There be some women, Silvius, had they mark'd him
In parcels as I did, would have gone near
To fall in love with him: but for my part

I love him not, nor hate him not; and yet
I have more cause to hate him than to love him;
For what had he to do to chide at me?

<<span id="filepos0039056075"> a>THE TAMING OF THE SHREW

THE TAMING OF THE SHREW is almost the only one of Shakespeare's comedies that has a regular plot, and downright moral. It is full of bustle, animation, and rapidity of action. It shows admirably how self-will is only to be got the better of by stronger will, and how one degree of ridiculous perversity is only to be driven out by another still greater. Petruchio is a madman in his senses; a very honest fellow, who hardly speaks a word of truth, and succeeds in all his tricks and impostures. He acts his assumed character to the life, with the most fantastical extravagance, with complete presence of mind, with untired animal spirits, and without a particle of ill humour from beginning to end.—The situation of poor Katherine, worn out by his incessant persecutions, becomes at last almost as pitiable as it is ludicrous, and it is difficult to say which to admire most, the unaccountableness of his actions, or the unalterableness of his resolutions. It is a character which most husbands ought to study, unless perhaps the very audacity of Petruchio's attempt might alarm them more than his success would encourage them. What a sound must the following speech carry to some married ears!

Think you a little din can daunt my ears?
Have I not in my time heard lions roar?
Have I not heard the sea, puff'd up with winds,
Rage like an angry boar, chafed with sweat?
Have I not heard great ordnance in the field?
And heav'n's artillery thunder in the skies?
Have I not in a pitched battle heard
Loud larums, neighing steeds, and trumpets clang?
And do you tell me of a woman's tongue,
That gives not half so great a blow to hear,
As will a chestnut in a farmer's fire?

Not all Petruchio's rhetoric would persuade more than 'some dozen followers' to be of this heretical way of thinking. He unfolds his scheme for the Taming of the Shrew, on a principle of contradiction, thus:

I'll woo her with some spirit when she comes.
Say that she rail, why then I'll tell her plain
She sings as sweetly as a nightingale;
Say that she frown, I'll say she looks as clear
As morning roses newly wash'd with dew;
Say she be mute, and will not speak a word,
Then I'll commend her volubility,
And say she uttereth piercing eloquence:
If she do bid me pack, I'll give her thanks,
As tho' she bid me stay by her a week;
If she deny to wed, I'll crave the day,
When I shall ask the banns, and when be married.

He accordingly gains her consent to the match, by telling her father that he has got it; disappoints her by not returning at the time he has promised to wed her, and when he returns, creates no small consternation by the oddity of his dress and equipage. This however is nothing to the astonishment excited by his madbrained behaviour at the marriage. Here is the account of it by an eye-witness:

Gremio. Tut, she's a lamb, a dove, a fool to him;
I'll tell you. Sir Lucentio; when the priest
Should ask if Katherine should be his wife?
Ay, by gogs woons, quoth he; and swore so loud,
That, all amaz'd, the priest let fall the book;
And as he stooped again to take it up,
This madbrain'd bridegroom took him such a cuff,
That down fell priest and book, and book and priest.
Now take them up, quoth he, if any list.

Tronio. What said the wench when he rose up again?

Gremio. Trembled and shook; for why, he stamp'd and swore,
As if the vicar meant to cozen him.
But after many ceremonies done,

He calls for wine; a health, quoth he; as if
He'd been aboard carousing with his mates
After a storm; quaft off the muscadel,
And threw the sops all in the sexton's face;
Having no other cause but that his beard
Grew thin and hungerly, and seem'd to ask
His sops as he was drinking. This done, he took
The bride about the neck, and kiss'd her lips
With such a clamorous smack, that at their parting
All the church echoed; and I seeing this,
Came thence for very shame; and after me,
I know, the rout is coming;—
Such a mad marriage never was before.

The most striking and at the same time laughable feature in the character of Petruchio throughout, is the studied approximation to the intractable character of real madness, his apparent insensibility to all external considerations, and utter indifference to everything but the wild and extravagant freaks of his own self-will. There is no contending with a person on whom nothing makes any impression but his own purposes, and who is bent on his own whims just in proportion as they seem to want common-sense. With him a thing's being plain and reasonable is a reason against it. The airs he gives himself are infinite, and his caprices as sudden as they are groundless. The whole of his treatment of his wife at home is in the same spirit of ironical attention and inverted gallantry. Everything flies before his will, like a conjurer's wand, and he only metamorphoses his wife's temper by metamorphosing her senses and all the objects she sees, at a word's speaking. Such are his insisting that it is the moon and not the sun which they see, &c. This extravagance reaches its most pleasant and poetical height in the scene where, on their return to her father's, they meet old Vincentio, whom Petruchio immediately addresses as a young lady:

Petruchio. Good morrow, gentle mistress, where away?
Tell me, sweet Kate, and tell me truly too,
Hast thou beheld a fresher gentlewoman?
Such war of white and red within her cheeks;
What stars do spangle heaven with such beauty,
As those two eyes become that heav'nly face?
Fair lovely maid, once more good day to thee:
Sweet Kate, embrace her for her beauty's sake.

Hortensio. He'll make the man mad to make a woman of him.

Katherine. Young budding virgin, fair and fresh and sweet,
Whither away, or where is thy abode?
Happy the parents of so fair a child;
Happier the man whom favourable stars
Allot thee for his lovely bed-fellow.

Petruchio. Why, how now, Kate, I hope thou art not mad:
This is a man, old, wrinkled, faded, wither'd,
And not a maiden, as thou say'st he is.

Katherine. Pardon, old father, my mistaken eyes
That have been so bedazed with the sun
That everything I look on seemeth green.
Now I perceive thou art a reverend father.

The whole is carried on with equal spirit, as if the poet's comic Muse had wings of fire. It is strange how one man could be so many things; but so it is. The concluding scene, in which trial is made of the obedience of the new-married wives (so triumphantly for Petruchio), is a very happy one.—In some parts of this play there is a little too much about music-masters and masters of philosophy. They were things of greater rarity in those days than they are now. Nothing, however, can be better than the advice which Tranio gives his master for the prosecution of his studies:

The mathematics, and the metaphysics,
Fall to them as you find your stomach serves you:
No profit grows, where is no pleasure ta'en:
In brief, sir, study what you most affect.

We have heard the Honey-Moon called 'an elegant Katherine and Petruchio'. We suspect we do not understand this word ELEGANT in the sense that many people do. But in our sense of the word, we should call Lucentio's description of his mistress elegant:

Tranio. I saw her coral lips to move,
And with her breath she did perfume the air:
Sacred and sweet was all I saw in her.

When Biondello tells the same Lucentio for his encouragement, 'I knew a wench married in an afternoon as she went to the garden for parsley to stuff a rabbit, and so may you, sir'—there is nothing elegant in this, and yet we hardly know which of the two passages is the best.

THE TAMING OF THE SHREW is a play within a play. It is supposed to be a play acted for the benefit of Sly the tinker, who is made to believe himself a lord, when he wakes after a drunken brawl. The character of Sly and the remarks with which he accompanies the play are as good as the play itself. His answer when he is asked how he likes it, 'Indifferent well; 'tis a good piece of work, would 'twere done,' is in good keeping, as if he were thinking of his Saturday night's job. Sly does not change his tastes with his new situation, but in the midst of splendour and luxury still calls out lustily and repeatedly 'for a pot o' the smallest ale'. He is very slow in giving up his personal identity in his sudden advancement. 'I am Christophero Sly, call not me honour nor lordship. I ne'er drank sack in my life: and if you give me any conserves, give me conserves of beef; ne'er ask me what raiment I'll wear, for I have no more doublets than backs, no more stockings than legs, nor no more shoes than feet, nay, sometimes more feet than shoes, or such shoes as my toes look through the over-leather.—What, would you make me mad? Am not I Christophero Sly, old Sly's son of Burtonheath, by birth a pedlar, by education a cardmaker, by transmutation a bear-herd, and now by present profession a tinker? Ask Marian Hacket, the fat alewife of Wincot, if she know me not; if she say I am not fourteen-pence on the score for sheer ale, score me up for the lying'st knave in Christendom.'

This is honest. 'The Slies are no rogues', as he says of himself. We have a great predilection for this representative of the family; and what makes us like him the better is, that we take him to be of kin (not many degrees removed) to Sancho Panza.

<<span id="filepos0039069941"> a>MEASURE FOR MEASURE

This is a play as full of genius as it is of wisdom. Yet there is an original sin in the nature of the subject, which prevents us from taking a cordial interest in it.

The height of moral argument' which the author has maintained in the intervals of passion or blended with the more powerful impulses of nature, is hardly surpassed in any of his plays. But there is in general a want of passion; the affections are at a stand; our sympathies are repulsed and defeated in all directions. The only passion which influences the story is that of Angelo; and yet he seems to have a much greater passion for hypocrisy than for his mistress. Neither are we greatly enamoured of Isabella's rigid chastity, though she could not act otherwise than she did. We do not feel the same confidence in the virtue that is sublimely good' at another's expense, as if it had been out to some less disinterested trial. As to the Duke, who makes a very imposing and mysterious stage-character, he is more absorbed in his own plots and gravity than anxious for the welfare of the state; more tenacious of his own character than attentive to the feelings and apprehensions of others. Claudio is the only person who feels naturally; and yet he is placed in circumstances of distress which almost preclude the wish for his deliverance. Mariana is also in love with Angelo, whom we hate. In this respect, there may be said to be a general system of cross-purposes between the feelings of the different characters and the sympathy of the reader or the audience. This principle of repugnance seems to have reached its height in the character of Master Barnardine, who not only sets at defiance the opinions of others, but has even thrown off all self-regard,—'one that apprehends death no more dreadfully but as a drunken sleep; careless, reckless, and fearless of what's past, present, and to come.' He is a fine antithesis to the morality and the hypocrisy of the other characters of the play. Barnardine is Caliban transported from Prospero's wizard island to the forests of Bohemia or the prisons of Vienna. He is the creature of bad habits as Caliban is of gross instincts. He has, however, a strong notion of the natural fitness of things, according to his own sensations—'He has been drinking hard all night, and he will not be hanged that day'—and Shakespeare has let him off at last. We do not understand why the philosophical German critic, Schlegel, should be so severe on those pleasant persons, Lucio, Pompey, and Master Froth, as to call them 'wretches'. They appear all mighty comfortable in their occupations, and determined to pursue them, 'as the flesh and fortune should serve'. A very good exposure of the want of self-knowledge and contempt for others, which is so common in the world, is put into the mouth of Abhorson, the jailer, when the Provost proposes to associate Pompey with him in his office—'A bawd, sir? Fie upon him, he will discredit our mystery.' And the same answer would serve in nine instances out of ten to the same kind of remark, 'Go to, sir, you weigh equally; a feather will turn the scale.' Shakespeare was in one sense the least moral of all writers; for morality (commonly so called) is made up of antipathies; and his talent consisted in sympathy with human nature, in all its shapes, degrees, depressions, and elevations. The object of the pedantic moralist is to find out the bad in everything: his was to show that 'there is some soul of goodness in things evil'. Even Master Barnardine is not left to the mercy of what others think of him; but when he comes in, speaks for himself, and pleads his own cause, as well as if counsel had been assigned him. In one sense, Shakespeare was no moralist at all: in another, he was the greatest of all moralists. He was a moralist in the same sense in which nature is one. He taught what he had learnt from her. He showed the greatest knowledge of humanity with the greatest fellow-feeling for it.

One of the most dramatic passages in the present play is the interview between Claudio and his sister, when she comes to inform him of the conditions on which Angelo will spare his life.

Claudio. Let me know the point.

Isabella.—O, I do fear thee, Claudio; and I quake,
Lest thou a feverous life should'st entertain,
And six or seven winters more respect
Than a perpetual honour. Dar'st thou die?
The sense of death is most in apprehension;
And the poor beetle, that we tread upon,
In corporal sufferance finds a pang as great
As when a giant dies.

Claudio. Why give you me this shame?
Think you I can a resolution fetch
From flowery tenderness; if I must die,
I will encounter darkness as a bride, And hug it in mine arms.

Isabella. There spake my brother! there my father's grave
Did utter forth a voice! Yes, thou must die:
Thou art too noble to conserve a life
In base appliances. This outward-sainted deputy—
Whose settled visage and deliberate word
Nips youth i' the head, and follies doth emmew

As faulcon doth the fowl—is yet a devil.

Claudio. The princely Angelo?

Isabella. Oh, 'tis the cunning livery of hell,
The damned'st body to invest and cover
In princely guards! Dost thou think, Claudio,
If I would yield him my virginity,
Thou might'st be freed?

Claudio. Oh, heavens! it cannot be.

Isabella. Yes, he would give it thee, for this rank offence,
So to offend him still: this night's the time
That I should do what I abhor to name,
Or else thou dy'st to-morrow.

Claudio. Thou shalt not do't.

Isabella. Oh, were it but my life,
I'd throw it down for your deliverance
As frankly as a pin.

Claudio. Thanks, dear Isabel.

Isabella. Be ready, Claudio, for your death to-morrow.

Claudio. Yes.—Has he affections in him,
That thus can make him bite the law by the nose?
When he would force it, sure it is no sin;
Or of the deadly seven it is the least.

Isabella. Which is the least?

Claudio. If it were damnable, he, being so wise,
Why would he for the momentary trick
Be perdurably fin'd? Oh, Isabel!

Isabella. What says my brother?

Claudio. Death is a fearful thing.

Isabella. And shamed life a hateful.

Claudio. Aye, but to die, and go we know not where;
To lie in cold obstruction, and to rot;
This sensible warm motion to become
A kneaded clod; and the delighted spirit
To bathe in fiery floods, or to reside
In thrilling regions of thick-ribbed ice:
To be imprison'd in the viewless winds,
And blown with restless violence round about
The pendant world; or to be worse than worst
Of those, that lawless and incertain thoughts
Imagine howling!—'tis too horrible!
The weariest and most loathed worldly life,
That age, ache, penury, and imprisonment
Can lay on nature, is a paradise
To what we fear of death.

Isabella. Alas! alas!

Claudio. Sweet sister, let me live:
What sin you do to save a brother's life,
Nature dispenses with the deed so far,
That it becomes a virtue.

What adds to the dramatic beauty of this scene and the effect of Claudio's passionate attachment to life is, that it immediately follows the Duke's lecture to him, on the character of the Friar, recommending an absolute indifference to it.

—Reason thus with life,—
If I do lose thee, I do lose a thing,
That none but fools would keep; a breath thou art,
Servile to all the skyey influences
That do this habitation, where thou keep'st,

Hourly afflict: merely, thou art death's fool;
For him thou labour'st by thy flight to shun,
And yet run'st toward him still: thou art not noble;
For all the accommodations, that thou bear'st,
Are nurs'd by baseness: thou art by no means valiant;
For thou dost fear the soft and tender fork
Of a poor worm: thy best of rest is sleep,
And that thou oft provok'st; yet grossly fear'st
Thy death, which is no more. Thou art not thyself;
For thou exist'st on many a thousand grains!;
That issue out of dust: happy thou art not;
For what thou hast not, still thou striv'st to get;
And what thou hast, forget'st; thou art not certain;
For thy complexion shifts to strange effects,
After the moon; if thou art rich, thou art poor;
For, like an ass, whose back with ingots bows,
Thou bear'st thy heavy riches but a journey,
And death unloads thee: friend thou hast none;
For thy own bowels, which do call thee sire,
The mere effusion of thy proper loins,
Do curse the gout, serpigo, and the rheum,
For ending thee no sooner: thou hast nor youth, nor age;
But, as it were, an after-dinner's sleep,
Dreaming on both: for all thy blessed youth
Becomes as aged, and doth beg the alms
Of palsied eld; and when thou art old, and rich,
Thou hast neither heat, affection, limb, nor beauty,
To make thy riches pleasant. What's yet in this,
That bears the name of life? Yet in this life
Lie hid more thousand deaths; yet death we fear,
That makes these odds all even.

<<span id="filepos0039084202"> a>MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR

The MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR is no doubt a very amusing play, with a great deal of humour, character, and nature in it: but we should have liked it much better, if any one else had been the hero of it, instead of Falstaff. We could have been contented if Shakespeare had not been 'commanded to show the knight in love'. Wits and philosophers, for the most part, do not shine in that character; and Sir John himself by no means comes off with flying colours. Many people complain of the degradation and insults to which Don Quixote is so frequently exposed in his various adventures. But what are the unconscious indignities which he suffers, compared with the sensible mortifications which Falstaff is made to bring upon himself? What are the blows and buffetings which the Don receives from the staves of the Yanguesian carriers or from Sancho Panza's more hard-hearted hands, compared with the contamination of the buck-basket, the disguise of the fat woman of Brentford, and the horns of Herne the hunter, which are discovered on Sir John's head? In reading the play, we indeed wish him well through all these discomfitures, but it would have been as well if he had not got into them. Falstaff in the MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR is not the man he was in the two parts of HENRY IV. His wit and eloquence have left him. Instead of making a butt of others, he is made a butt of by them. Neither is there a single particle of love in him to excuse his follies: he is merely a designing, bare-faced knave, and an unsuccessful one.

The scene with Ford as Master Brook, and that with Simple, Slender's man, who comes to ask after the Wise Woman, are almost the only ones in which his old intellectual ascendancy appears. He is like a person recalled to the stage to perform an unaccustomed and ungracious part; and in which we perceive only 'some faint sparks of those flashes of merriment, that were wont to set the hearers in a roar'. But the single scene with Doll Tearsheet, or Mrs. Quickly's account of his desiring 'to eat some of housewife Keach's prawns', and telling her 'to be no more so familiarity with such people', is worth the whole of the MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR put together. Ford's jealousy, which is the mainspring of the comic incidents, is certainly very well managed. Page, on the contrary, appears to be somewhat uxorious in his disposition; and we have pretty plain indications of the effect of the characters of the husbands on the different degrees of fidelity in their wives. Mrs. Quickly makes a very lively go-between, both between Falstaff and his Dulcineas, and Anne Page and her lovers, and seems in the latter case so intent on her own interest as totally to overlook the intentions of her employers. Her master, Doctor Caius, the Frenchman, and her fellow servant Jack Rugby, are very completely described. This last-mentioned person is rather quaintly commended by Mrs. Quickly as 'an honest, willing, kind fellow, as ever servant shall come in house withal, and I warrant you, no tell-tale, nor no breed-bate; his worst fault is, that he is given to prayer; he is something peevish that way; but nobody but has his fault.' The Welsh Parson, Sir Hugh Evans (a title which in those days was given to the clergy) is an excellent character in all respects. He is as respectable as he is laughable. He has 'very good discretions, and very odd humours'. The duel-scene with Caius gives him an opportunity to show his 'cholers and his tremblings of mind', his valour and his melancholy, in an irresistible manner. In the dialogue, which at his mother's request he holds with his pupil, William Page, to show his progress in learning, it is hard to say whether the simplicity of the master or the scholar is the greatest. Nym, Bardolph, and Pistol, are but the shadows of what they were; and Justice Shallow himself has little of his consequence left. But his cousin, Slender, makes up for the deficiency. He is a very potent piece of imbecility. In him the pretensions of the worthy Gloucestershire family are well kept up, and immortalized. He and his friend Sackerson and his book of songs and his love of Anne Page and his having nothing to say to her can never be forgotten. It is the only first-rate character in the play, but it is in that class. Shakespeare is the only writer who was as great in describing weakness as strength.

<<span id="filepos0039088996"> a>THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

This comedy is taken very much from the Menaechmi of Plautus, and is not an improvement on it. Shakespeare appears to have bestowed no great pains on it, and there are but a few passages which bear the decided stamp of his genius. He seems to have relied on his author, and on the interest arising out of the intricacy of the plot. The curiosity excited is certainly very considerable, though not of the most pleasing kind. We are teased as with a riddle, which notwithstanding we try to solve. In reading the play, from the sameness of the names of the two Antipholises and the two Dromios, as well from their being constantly taken for each other by those who see them, it is difficult, without a painful effort of attention, to keep the characters distinct in the mind. And again, on the stage, either the complete similarity of their persons and dress must produce the same perplexity whenever they first enter, or the identity of appearance which the story supposes will be destroyed. We still, however, having a clue to the difficulty, can tell which is which, merely from the practical contradictions which arise, as soon as the different parties begin to speak; and we are indemnified for the perplexity and blunders into which we are thrown by seeing others thrown into greater and almost inextricable ones.—This play (among other considerations) leads us not to feel much regret that Shakespeare was not what is called a classical scholar. We do not think his forte would ever have lain in imitating or improving on what others invented, so much as in inventing for himself, and perfecting what he invented,—not perhaps by the omission of faults, but by the addition of the highest excellences. His own genius was strong enough to bear him up, and he soared longest and best on unborrowed plumes.—The only passage of a very Shakespearian cast in this comedy is the one in which the Abbess, with admirable characteristic artifice, makes Adriana confess her own misconduct in driving her husband mad.

Abbess. How long hath this possession held the man?

Adriana. This week he hath been heavy, sour, sad,
And much, much different from the man he was;
But, till this afternoon, his passion
Ne'er brake into extremity of rage.

Abbess. Hath he not lost much wealth by wreck at sea?
Bury'd some dear friend? Hath not else his eye
Stray'd his affection in unlawful love?
A sin prevailing much in youthful men,
Who give their eyes the liberty of gazing.
Which of these sorrows is he subject to?

Adriana. To none of these, except it be the last:
Namely, some love, that drew him oft from home.

Abbess. You should for that have reprehended him.

Adriana. Why, so I did.

Abbess. But not rough enough.

Adriana. As roughly as my modesty would let me.

Abbess. Haply, in private.

Adriana. And in assemblies too.

Abbess. Aye, but not enough.

Adriana. It was the copy of our conference:
In bed, he slept not for my urging it;
At board, he fed not for my urging it;
Alone it was the subject of my theme;
In company, I often glanc'd at it;
Still did I tell him it was vile and bad.

Abbess. And therefore came it that the man was mad:
The venom'd clamours of a jealous woman
Poison more deadly than a mad dog's tooth.
It seems, his sleeps were hinder'd by thy railing:
And therefore comes it that his head is light.
Thou say'st his meat was sauc'd with thy upbraidings:
Unquiet meals make ill digestions,
Therefore the raging fire of fever bred;
And what's a fever but a fit of madness?
Thou say'st his sports were hinder'd by thy brawls;
Sweet recreation barr'd, what doth ensue,
But moody and dull melancholy,
Kinsman to grim and comfortless despair;
And, at her heels, a huge infectious troop
Of pale distemperatures, and foes to life?
In food, in sport, and life-preserving rest
To be disturb'd, would mad or man or beast;
The consequence is then, thy jealous fits
Have scar'd thy husband from the use of wits.

Luciana. She never reprehended him but mildly,

When he demeaned himself rough, rude, and wildly.—
Why bear you these rebukes, and answer not?

Adriana. She did betray me to my own reproof.

Pinch the conjurer is also an excrescence not to be found in Plautus. He is indeed a very formidable anachronism.

They brought one Pinch, a hungry lean-fac'd villain,
A meer anatomy, a mountebank,
A thread-bare juggler and a fortune-teller,
A needy, hollow-ey'd, sharp-looking wretch,
A living dead man.

This is exactly like some of the Puritanical portraits to be met with in Hogarth.

<<span id="filepos0039096900"> a>DOUBTFUL PLAYS OF SHAKESPEARE

We shall give for the satisfaction of the reader what the celebrated German critic, Schlegel, says on this subject, and then add a very few remarks of our own.

'All the editors, with the exception of Capell, are unanimous in rejecting TITUS ANDRONICUS as unworthy of Shakespeare, though they always allow it to be printed with the other pieces, as the scapegoat, as it were, of their abusive criticism. The correct method in such an investigation is first to examine into the external grounds, evidences, &c., and to weigh their worth; and then to adduce the internal reasons derived from the quality of the work. The critics of Shakespeare follow a course directly the reverse of this; they set out with a preconceived opinion against a piece, and seek, in justification of this opinion, to render the historical grounds suspicious, and to set them aside. TITUS ANDRONICUS is to be found in the first folio edition of Shakespeare's works, which it was known was conducted by Heminge and Condell, for many years his friends and fellow-managers of the same theatre. Is it possible to persuade ourselves that they would not have known if a piece in their repertory did or did not actually belong to Shakespeare? And are we to lay to the charge of these honourable men a designed fraud in this single case, when we know that they did not show themselves so very desirous of scraping everything together which went by the name of Shakespeare, but, as it appears, merely gave those plays of which they had manuscripts in hand? Yet the following circumstance is still stronger: George Meres, a contemporary and admirer of Shakespeare, mentions TITUS ANDRONICUS in an enumeration of his works, in the year 1598. Meres was personally acquainted with the poet, and so very intimately, that the latter read over to him his Sonnets before they were printed. I cannot conceive that all the critical scepticism in the world would be sufficient to get over such a testimony.

This tragedy, it is true, is framed according to a false idea of the tragic, which by an accumulation of cruelties and enormities degenerates into the horrible, and yet leaves no deep impression behind: the story of Tereus and Philomela is heightened and overcharged under other names, and mixed up with the repast of Atreus and Thyestes, and many other incidents. In detail there is no want of beautiful lines, bold images, nay, even features which betray the peculiar conception of Shakespeare. Among these we may reckon the joy of the treacherous Moor at the blackness and ugliness of his child begot in adultery; and in the compassion of Titus Andronicus, grown childish through grief, for a fly which had been struck dead, and his rage afterwards when he imagines he discovers in it his black enemy; we recognize the future poet of LEAR. Are the critics afraid that Shakespeare's fame would be injured, were it established that in his early youth he ushered into the world a feeble and immature work? Was Rome the less the conqueror of the world because Remus could leap over its first walls? Let any one place himself in Shakespeare's situation at the commencement of his career. He found only a few indifferent models, and yet these met with the most favourable reception, because men are never difficult to please in the novelty of an art before their taste has become fastidious from choice and abundance. Must not this situation have had its influence on him before he learned to make higher demands on himself, and by digging deeper in his own mind, discovered the richest veins of a noble metal? It is even highly probable that he must have made several failures before getting into the right path. Genius is in a certain sense infallible, and has nothing to learn; but art is to be learned, and must be acquired by practice and experience. In Shakespeare's acknowledged works we find hardly any traces of his apprenticeship, and yet an apprenticeship he certainly had. This every artist must have, and especially in a period where he has not before him the example of a school already formed. I consider it as extremely probable, that Shakespeare began to write for the theatre at a much earlier period than the one which is generally stated, namely, not till after the year 1590. It appears that, as early as the year 1584, when only twenty years of age, he had left his paternal home and repaired to London. Can we imagine that such an active head would remain idle for six whole years without making any attempt to emerge by his talents from an uncongenial situation? That in the dedication of the poem of Venus and Adonis he calls it "the first heir of his invention", proves nothing against the supposition. It was the first which he printed; he might have composed it at an earlier period; perhaps, also, he did not include theatrical labours, as they then possessed but little literary dignity. The earlier Shakespeare began to compose for the theatre, the less are we enabled to consider the immaturity and imperfection of a work as a proof of its spuriousness in opposition to historical evidence, if we only find in it prominent features of his mind. Several of the works rejected as spurious may still have been produced in the period betwixt TITUS ANDRONICUS and the earliest of the acknowledged pieces.

'At last, Steevens published seven pieces ascribed to Shakespeare in two supplementary volumes. It is to be remarked, that they all appeared in print in Shakespeare's lifetime, with his name prefixed at full length. They are the following:

'1. LOCRINE. The proofs of the genuineness of this piece are not altogether unambiguous; the grounds for doubt, on the other hand, are entitled to attention. However, this question is immediately connected with that respecting TITUS ANDRONICUS, and must be at the same time resolved in the affirmative or negative.

'2. PERICLES, PRINCE OF TYRE. This piece was acknowledged by Dryden, but as a youthful work of Shakespeare. It is most undoubtedly his, and it has been admitted into several of the late editions. The supposed imperfections originate in the circumstance, that Shakespeare here handled a childish and extravagant romance of the old poet Gower, and was unwilling to drag the subject out of its proper sphere. Hence he even introduces Gower himself, and makes him deliver a prologue entirely in his antiquated language and versification. This power of assuming so foreign a manner is at least no proof of helplessness.

'3. THE LONDON PRODIGAL. If we are not mistaken, Lessing pronounced this piece to be Shakespeare's, and wished to bring it on the German stage.

'4. THE PURITAN; OR, THE WIDOW OF WATLING STREET. One of my literary friends, intimately acquainted with Shakespeare, was of opinion that the poet must have wished to write a play for once in the style of Ben Jonson, and that in this way we must account for the difference between the present piece and his usual manner. To follow out this idea, however, would lead to a very nice critical investigation.

'5. THOMAS, LORD CROMWELL.

'6. SIR JOHN OLDCASTLE—FIRST PART.

'7. A YORKSHIRE TRAGEDY.

'The three last pieces are not only unquestionably Shakespeare's, but in my opinion they deserve to be classed among his best and maturest works. Steevens admits at last, in some degree, that they are Shakespeare's, as well as the others, excepting LOCRINE, but he speaks of all of them with great contempt, as quite worthless productions. This condemnatory sentence is not, however, in the slightest degree convincing, nor is it supported by critical acumen. I should like to see how such a critic would, of his own natural suggestion, have decided on Shakespeare's acknowledged masterpieces, and what he would have thought of praising in them, had the public opinion imposed on him the duty of admiration. THOMAS, LORD CROMWELL, and SIR JOHN OLDCASTLE, are biographical dramas, and models in this species: the first is linked, from its subject, to HENRY THE EIGHTH, and the second to HENRY THE FIFTH. The second part of OLDCASTLE is wanting; I know not whether a copy of the old edition has been discovered in England, or whether it is lost. THE YORKSHIRE

TRAGEDY is a tragedy in one act, a dramatized tale of murder: the tragical effect is overpowering, and it is extremely important to see how poetically Shakespeare could handle such a subject.

'There have been still farther ascribed to him: 1st. THE MERRY DEVIL OF EDMONTON, a comedy in one act, printed in Dodsley's old plays. This has certainly some appearances in its favour. It contains a merry landlord, who bears a great similarity to the one in the MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR. However, at all events, though an ingenious, it is but a hasty sketch. 2nd. THE ACCUSATION OF PARIS. 3rd. THE BIRTH OF MERLIN. 4th. EDWARD THE THIRD. 5th. THE FAIR EMMA. 6th. MUCEDORUS. 7th. ARDEN OF FEVERSHAM. I have never seen any of these, and cannot therefore say anything respecting them. From the passages cited, I am led to conjecture that the subject of MUCEDORUS is the popular story of Valentine and Orson; a beautiful subject which Lope de Vega has also taken for a play. ARDEN OF FEVERSHAM is said to be a tragedy on the story of a man, from whom the poet was descended by the mother's side. If the quality of the piece is not too directly at variance with this claim, the circumstance would afford an additional probability in its favour. For such motives were not foreign to Shakespeare: he treated Henry the Seventh, who bestowed lands on his forefathers for services performed by them, with a visible partiality.

'Whoever takes from Shakespeare a play early ascribed to him, and confessedly belonging to his time, is unquestionably bound to answer, with some degree of probability, this question: who has then written it? Shakespeare's competitors in the dramatic walk are pretty well known, and if those of them who have even acquired a considerable name, a Lilly, a Marlow, a Heywood, are still so very far below him, we can hardly imagine that the author of a work, which rises so high beyond theirs, would have remained unknown'—LECTURES ON DRAMATIC LITERATURE, vol. ii, page 252.

We agree to the truth of this last observation, but not to the justice of its application to some of the plays here mentioned. It is true that Shakespeare's best works are very superior to those of Marlow, or Heywood, but it is not true that the best of the doubtful plays above enumerated are superior or even equal to the best of theirs. THE YORKSHIRE TRAGEDY, which Schlegel speaks of as an undoubted production of our author's, is much more in the manner of Heywood than of Shakespeare. The effect is indeed overpowering, but the mode of producing it is by no means poetical. The praise which Schlegel gives to THOMAS, LORD CROMWELL, and to SIR JOHN OLDCASTLE, is altogether exaggerated. They are very indifferent compositions, which have not the slightest pretensions to rank with HENRY V or HENRY VIII. We suspect that the German critic was not very well acquainted with the dramatic contemporaries of Shakespeare, or aware of their general merits; and that he accordingly mistakes a resemblance in style and manner for an equal degree of excellence. Shakespeare differed from the other writers of his age not in the mode of treating his subjects, but in the grace and power which he displayed in them. The reason assigned by a literary friend of Schlegel's for supposing THE PURITAN; OR, THE WIDOW OF WATLING STREET, to be Shakespeare's, *viz.* that it is in the style of Ben Jonson, that is to say, in a style just the reverse of his own, is not very satisfactory to a plain English understanding. LOCRINE, and THE LONDON PRODIGAL, if they were Shakespeare's at all, must have been among the sins of his youth. ARDEN OF FEVERSHAM contains several striking passages, but the passion which they express is rather that of a sanguine temperament than of a lofty imagination; and in this respect they approximate more nearly to the style of other writers of the time than to Shakespeare's. TITUS ANDRONICUS is certainly as unlike Shakespeare's usual style as it is possible. It is an accumulation of vulgar physical horrors, in which the power exercised by the poet bears no proportion to the repugnance excited by the subject. The character of Aaron the Moor is the only thing which shows any originality of conception; and the scene in which he expresses his joy 'at the blackness and ugliness of his child begot in adultery', the only one worthy of Shakespeare. Even this is worthy of him only in the display of power, for it gives no pleasure. Shakespeare managed these things differently. Nor do we think it a sufficient answer to say that this was an embryo or crude production of the author. In its kind it is full grown, and its features decided and overcharged. It is not like a first imperfect essay, but shows a confirmed habit, a systematic preference of violent effect to everything else. There are occasional detached images of great beauty and delicacy, but these were not beyond the powers of other writers then living. The circumstance which inclines us to reject the external evidence in favour of this play being Shakespeare's is, that the grammatical construction is constantly false and mixed up with vulgar abbreviations, a fault that never occurs in any of his genuine plays. A similar defect, and the halting measure of the verse are the chief objections to PERICLES OF TYRE, if we except the far-fetched and complicated absurdity of the story. The movement of the thoughts and passions has something in it not unlike Shakespeare, and several of the descriptions are either the original hints of passages which Shakespeare has engrafted on his other plays, or are imitations of them by some contemporary poet. The most memorable idea in it is in Marina's speech, where she compares the world to 'a lasting storm, hurrying her from her friends'.

<<span id="filepos0039112590"> a>POEMS AND SONNETS

Our idolatry of Shakespeare (not to say our admiration) ceases with his plays. In his other productions he was a mere author, though not a common author. It was only by representing others, that he became himself. He could go out of himself, and express the soul of Cleopatra; but in his own person, he appeared to be always waiting for the prompter's cue. In expressing the thoughts of others, he seemed inspired; in expressing his own, he was a mechanic. The licence of an assumed character was necessary to restore his genius to the privileges of nature, and to give him courage to break through the tyranny of fashion, the trammels of custom. In his plays, he was 'as broad and casing as the general air'; in his poems, on the contrary, he appears to be 'cooped, and cabined in' by all the technicalities of art, by all the petty intricacies of thought and language, which poetry had learned from the controversial jargon of the schools, where words had been made a substitute for things. There was, if we mistake not, something of modesty, and a painful sense of personal propriety at the bottom of this. Shakespeare's imagination, by identifying itself with the strongest characters in the most trying circumstances, grappled at once with nature, and trampled the littleness of art under his feet: the rapid changes of situation, the wide range of the universe, gave him life and spirit, and afforded full scope to his genius; but returned into his closet again, and having assumed the badge of his profession, he could only labour in his vocation, and conform himself to existing models. The thoughts, the passions, the words which the poet's pen, 'glancing from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven', lent to others, shook off the fetters of pedantry and affectation; while his own thoughts and feelings, standing by themselves, were seized upon as lawful prey, and tortured to death according to the established rules and practice of the day. In a word, we do not like Shakespeare's poems, because we like his plays: the one, in all their excellences, are just the reverse of the other. It has been the fashion of late to cry up our author's poems, as equal to his plays: this is the desperate cant of modern criticism. We would ask, was there the slightest comparison between Shakespeare, and either Chaucer or Spenser, as mere poets? Not any.—The two poems of VENUS AND ADONIS and of TARQUIN AND LUCRECE appear to us like a couple of ice-houses. They are about as hard, as glittering, and as cold. The author seems all the time to be thinking of his verses, and not of his subject, —not of what his characters would feel, but of what he shall say; and as it must happen in all such cases, he always puts into their mouths those things which they would be the last to think of, and which it shows the greatest ingenuity in him to find out. The whole is laboured, up-hill work. The poet is perpetually singling out the difficulties of the art to make an exhibition of his strength and skill in wrestling with them. He is making perpetual trials of them as if his mastery over them were doubted. The images, which are often striking, are generally applied to things which they are the least like: so that they do not blend with the poem, but seem stuck upon it, like splendid patchwork, or remain quite distinct from it, like detached substances, painted and varnished over. A beautiful thought is sure to be lost in an endless commentary upon it. The speakers are like persons who have both leisure and inclination to make riddles on their own situation, and to twist and turn every object or incident into acrostics and anagrams. Everything is spun out into allegory; and a digression is always preferred to the main story. Sentiment is built up upon plays of words; the hero or heroine feels, not from the impulse of passion, but from the force of dialectics. There is besides, a strange attempt to substitute the language of painting for that of poetry, to make us SEE their feelings in the faces of the persons; and again, consistently with this, in the description of the picture in TARQUIN AND LUCRECE, those circumstances are chiefly insisted on, which it would be impossible to convey except by words. The invocation to Opportunity in the TARQUIN AND LUCRECE is full of thoughts and images, but at the same time it is overloaded by them. The concluding stanza expresses all our objections to this kind of poetry:

Oh! idle words, servants to shallow fools;
  Unprofitable sounds, weak arbitrators;
  Busy yourselves in skill-contending schools;
  Debate when leisure serves with dull debaters;
  To trembling clients be their mediators:
  For me I force not argument a straw,
  Since that my case is past all help of law.

The description of the horse in VENUS AND ADONIS has been particularly admired, and not without reason:

Round-hoof'd, short-jointed, fetlocks shag and long,
Broad breast, full eyes, small head, and nostril wide,
High crest, short ears, straight legs, and passing strong,
Thin mane, thick tail, broad buttock, tender hide:
Look, what a horse should have he did not lack,
Save a proud rider on so proud a back.

Now this inventory of perfections shows great knowledge of the horse; and is good matter-of-fact poetry. Let the reader but compare it with a speech in the MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM where Theseus describes his hounds—

And their heads are hung
With ears that sweep away the morning dew—

and he will perceive at once what we mean by the difference between Shakespeare's own poetry, and that of his plays. We prefer the PASSIONATE PILGRIM very much to the LOVER'S COMPLAINT. It has been doubted whether the latter poem is Shakespeare's.

Of the Sonnets we do not well know what to say. The subject of them seems to be somewhat equivocal; but many of them are highly beautiful in themselves, and interesting as they relate to the state of the personal feelings of the author. The following are some of the most striking:

CONSTANCY

Let those who are in favour with their stars
Of public honour and proud titles boast,
Whilst I, whom fortune of such triumph bars,
Unlook'd for joy in that I honour most.
Great princes' favourites their fair leaves spread,
But as the marigold in the sun's eye;
And in themselves their pride lies buried,
For at a frown they in their glory die.
The painful warrior famous'd for fight,
After a thousand victories once foil'd,

Is from the book of honour razed quite,
And all the rest forgot for which he toil'd:
Then happy I, that love and am belov'd,
Where I may not remove, nor be removed.

LOVE'S CONSOLATION

When in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes,
I all alone beweep my outcast state,
And trouble deaf heaven with my bootless cries,
And look upon myself, and curse my fate,
Wishing me like to one more rich in hope,
Featur'd like him, like him with friends possess'd,
Desiring this man's art, and that man's scope,
With what I most enjoy contented least;
Yet in these thoughts myself almost despising,
Haply I think on thee,—and then my state
(Like to the lark at break of day arising
From sullen earth) sings hymns at heaven's gate;
For thy sweet love remember'd, such wealth brings
That then I scorn to change my state with kings.

NOVELTY

My love is strengthen'd, though more weak in seeming;
I love not less, though less the show appear:
That love is merchandiz'd, whose rich esteeming
The owner's tongue doth publish every where.
Our love was new, and then but in the spring,
When I was wont to greet it with my lays;
As Philomel in summer's front doth sing,
And stops his pipe in growth of riper days:
Not that the summer is less pleasant now
Than when her mournful hymns did hush the night,
But that wild music burthens every bough,
And sweets grown common lose their dear delight.
Therefore, like her, I sometime hold my tongue,
Because I would not dull you with my song.

LIFE'S DECAY

That time of year thou mayst in me behold
When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang
Upon those boughs which shake against the cold,
Bare ruin'd choirs, where late the sweet birds sang.
In me thou see'st the twilight of such day
As after sunset fadeth in the west;
Which by and by black night doth take away,
Death's second self, that seals up all in rest.
In me thou see'st the glowing of such fire,
That on the ashes of his youth doth lie,
As the death-bed whereon it must expire
Consum'd with that which it was nourish'd by.
This thou perceiv'st, which makes thy love more strong,
To love that well which thou must leave ere long.

In all these, as well as in many others, there is a mild tone of sentiment, deep, mellow, and sustained, very different from the crudeness of his earlier poems.

<<span id="filepos0039125470"> a>TESTIMONY OF THE SONNETS AS TO THE AUTHORSHIP OF THE SHAKESPEAREAN PLAYS AND POEMS by Jesse Johnson

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<<span id="filepos0039128111"> a>INTRODUCTORY

The Shakespearean Sonnets are not a single or connected work like an ordinary play or poem. Their composition apparently extended over a considerable time, which may be fairly estimated as not less than four years. Read literally they seem to portray thoughts, modes or experiences fairly assignable to such a period. Though variable and sometimes light and airy in their movement, the greater portion appear to reveal deep and intense emotion, the welling and tumultous floods of the inner life of their great author. And their difficulty or mystery is, that they indicate circumstances, surroundings, experiences and regrets that we almost instinctively apprehend could not have been those of William Shakespeare at the time they were written, when he must have been in the strength of early manhood, in the warmth and glow of recent and extraordinary advancement and success.

It is this difficulty that apparently has caused many to believe that their literal meaning cannot be accepted, and that we must give to them, or to many of them, a secondary meaning, founded on affectations or conceits relating to different topics or persons, or that at least we should not allow that in them the poet is speaking of himself. Others, like Grant White, simply allow and state the difficulty and leave it without any suggestion of solution.

Before conceding, however, that the splendid poetry contained in the Sonnets must be sundered or broken, or the apparent reality of its message doubted or denied, or that its message is mysterious or inexplicable—we should carefully inquire whether there is not some view or theory which will avoid the difficulties which have so baffled inquiry.

I believe that there is such a view or theory, and that view is—that the Sonnets were not written by Shakespeare, but were written to him as the patron or friend of the poet; that while Shakespeare may have been the author of some plays produced in his name at the theatre where he acted, or while he may have had a part in conceiving or framing the greater plays so produced, there was another, a great poet, whose dreamy and transforming genius wrought in and for them that which is imperishable, and so wrought although he was to have no part in their fame and perhaps but a small financial recompense; and that it is the loves, griefs, fears, forebodings and sorrows of the student and recluse, thus circumstanced and confined, that the Sonnets portray.

Considering that the Sonnets were so written, there is no need of any other than a literal and natural reading or interpretation. Commencing in expressions of gratulation and implied flattery, as they proceed, they appear to have been written as the incidents, fears and griefs which they indicate from time to time came; and it may well be that they were written not for publication, but as vents or expressions of a surcharged heart. With such a view of the situation of the poet and of his patron, we may not only understand much that otherwise is inexplicable, but we may understand why so much and such resplendent poetry is lavished on incidents so bare, meagre, and commonplace, and why they present both poet and patron with frailties and faults naked and repellant; and we can the better palliate and forgive the weakness and subjection which the Sonnets indicate on the part of their author. With such a reading the Sonnets become a chronicle of the modes and feelings of their author, resembling in this respect the *In Memoriam* of Tennyson; and their poetry becomes deeper and better, often equalling, if not surpassing in pathos and intensity anything in the greater Shakespearean plays.

Such is the result or conclusion to which the discussion which follows is intended to lead. I shall not, however, ask the reader to accept any such conclusion or result merely because it removes difficulties or because it makes or rather leaves the poetry better; but I shall present—that the Sonnets contain direct testimony, testimony not leading to surmise or conjecture, but testimony which would authorize a judgment in a court of law, that the Sonnets were not written by Shakespeare, and that they very strongly indicate that Shakespeare was the friend or patron to whom so many of them are addressed.

How such a conclusion from such testimony may be affected by arguments drawn from other sources I shall not discuss, contenting myself if into the main and larger controversy I have succeeded in introducing the effect and teaching of this, certainly, very valuable and important testimony.

TESTIMONY OF THE SONNETS AS TO THE AUTHORSHIP OF THE SHAKESPEAREAN PLAYS AND POEMS

<<span id="filepos0039134424"> a>CHAPTER I

OF THE CHARACTER OF THE SONNETS AND THEIR RELATION TO THE OTHER WORKS OF THE SAME AUTHOR

In these pages I propose an examination and study of the Shakespearean Sonnets, for the purpose of ascertaining what information may be derived from them as to the authorship of the Shakespearean plays and poems. I am aware that any question or discussion as to their authorship is regarded with objection or impatience by very many. But to those not friendly to any such inquiry I would say, let us at least proceed so far as to learn precisely what the author of these great dramas says of himself and of his work in the only production in which he in any manner refers to or speaks of himself. Certainly an inquiry confined to such limits is appropriate, at least is not disloyal. And if we study the characters of Hamlet, Juliet or Rosalind, do we not owe it to the poet whose embodiments or creations they are, that we should study his character in the only one of his works in which his own surroundings and attachments, loves and fears, griefs and forebodings, appear to be at all indicated?

From the Homeric poems, Mr. Gladstone undertook to gather what they indicate as to the religion, morals and customs of the time; of the birthplace of the poet, and of the ethnology and migrations of the Hellenic peoples. Those poems were not written for any such purpose; they were for a people who, in the main, on all those subjects knew or believed as did their author. And it is both curious and instructive to note how much information as to that distant period Mr. Gladstone was able to gather from the circumstances, incidents, and implications of the Homeric poetry. The value of such deductions no one can question. We may reject as myths the Trojan War or the wanderings or personality of Ulysses, but from these poems we certainly learn much of the method of warfare, navigation, agriculture, and of the social customs of those times.

So reading these Sonnets, we may perhaps not believe that the grief or love of the poet or the beauty of his friend was quite as great as the poetry indicates. But we may fairly take as correct what he says of his friend or of himself, as to their relations and companionship, the incidents and descriptions, which were but the framework on which he wove his poetic wreaths of affection, compliment, or regret.

But before entering on this inquiry, it is quite relevant to ascertain what relation these Sonnets bear to the Shakespearean plays and poems. The works of Shakespeare, as published, contain thirty-seven separate plays. Most of them are of the highest order, and rank with the most consummate products of poetic genius. But criticism seems to have established, and critics seem to agree, that in the works accredited to him are plays of a lower order, which certainly are not from the same author as the remainder, and especially the greater plays. In this widely different and lower class, criticism seems to be agreed in placing the greater portion of *Pericles* , *Titus Andronicus* , *Timon of Athens* , two parts of

Henry VI. , and *Henry VIII.* [ ] In addition to those, there are at least ten plays not now published as Shakespeare's, that are conceded to be of a lower order and by a different author, but which, apart from internal evidence, can be almost as certainly shown to be his work as many of the greater of the recognized Shakespearean plays. In the same high class of poetry as the greater of these dramas are the Sonnets; and they are unmistakably, and I think concededly, the work of the author of those greater plays.

It is of our poet, as the author of these greater dramas as well as of the Sonnets, that we would seek to learn in the study of the Sonnets. It is only in the Sonnets that the poet speaks in the first person, or allows us any suggestion of himself. His dramas reveal to us the characters he has imagined and desires to portray; but they reveal nothing of the author. His two great poems are dramatic in substance and equally fail to give us any hint of their creator; but in the Sonnets his own is the character whose thoughts and emotions are stated. There we come nearest to him; and there it would seem that we should be able to learn very much of him. Perhaps we shall find that they do not present him at his best; it may be that they were intended only for the eye of the friend or patron to whom they are addressed. Perhaps they reveal the raveled sleeve, the anxieties of a straitened life and of narrow means. Certainly, while they reveal the wonderful fertility, resource, and fancy of the poet, they do not indicate that in outward semblance, surroundings or history their author was either fortunate or happy; and as we read them, sometimes we may feel that we are entering the poet's heart-home unbidden and unannounced. But if we have come there when it is all unswept and ungarnished, may we not the more certainly rely on what it indicates?

Before entering on the study of the Sonnets we may inquire what, if anything, there is, distinctive of our great poet, the recognition of which may aid us in their interpretation.

Taine says that "the *creative* power is the poet's greatest gift, and communicates an extraordinary significance to his words"; and further, that "he had the prodigious faculty of seeing in a twinkling of an eye a complete character."[ ]

The poet does not bring those characters to us by description, but he causes them to speak in words so true and apposite to the character he conceives that we seem to know the individuals from what they say and not from what the poet wrote or said. But the poet goes much farther, and in all his works presents surroundings and accessories, impalpable but certain, which fit the characters and their moods and actions. The picture of morning in *Venus and Adonis* is apposite to the rich, sensuous and brilliant colorings of the queen of love; the reference in *Romeo and Juliet* to the song of the nightingale "on yond' pomegranate tree" is but an incident to the soft, warm and love-inviting night; Rosalind moves and talks to the quickstep of the forest; in *Macbeth* the incantation of the witches is but the outward expression of an overmastering fate, whose presence is felt throughout the play. Let us then, in studying the Sonnets, consider that they are from the same great master as the dramas. And we shall be thus prepared, where the meaning seems plain and obvious, to believe that the writer meant what he said, and to reject any interpretation which implies that when he came to speak of himself he said what he did not mean, or filled the picture with descriptions, situations or emotions, incongruous or inappropriate. And if in so reading they seem clear and connected, fanciful and far-drawn interpretations will not be adopted. We should not distort or modify their meaning in order to infer that they are imitations of Petrarch, or that the genius of the poet, cribbed and confined by the fashion of the time, forgot to soar, and limped and waddled in the footsteps of the inconspicuous sonneteers of the Elizabethan era.

I would illustrate my meaning. Sonnet CXXVI. is sometimes said to be an invocation to Cupid.[ ] That seems to me to destroy all its grace and beauty. The first two lines of the Sonnet,

O thou, my lovely boy, who in thy power
Dost hold Time's fickle glass, his sickle, hour—

are quite appropriate, if addressed to the god of love. But the lines succeeding are quite the reverse. In effect they say that you have not grown old because Nature, idealized as an active personality, has temporarily vanquished Time, but will soon obtain the full audit. If the Sonnet is addressed to the god of love it reduces him to the limitations of mortality; if it is addressed to his friend, it indicates that, though but for a little while, Nature has lifted him to an attribute of immortality. The latter interpretation makes the poet enlarge and glorify his subject; the former makes him belittle it, and bring the god of love to the audit of age and the ravage of wrinkles. This is the last sonnet of the first series; with the next begins the series relating to his mistress. Reading it literally, considering it as addressed to his friend, it is sparkling and poetic, a final word, loving, admonitory, in perfect line and keeping with the central thought of all that came before. From this Sonnet, interpreted as I indicate, I shall try to find assistance in this study. But if it is a mere poetical ascription to Cupid, it, of course, tells us nothing except that its author was a poet.

I should not, however, leave this subject without stating that the fanciful interpretation of these Sonnets does not seem to be favored by more recent authors. I find no indication of such an interpretation in Taine's *English Literature* , or in Grant White's edition of Shakespeare. Professor Edward Dowden, universally recognized as a fair and competent critic, says: "The natural sense, I am convinced, is the true one."[ ] Hallam says: "No one can doubt that they express not only real but intense emotions of the heart."[ ] Professor Tyler, in a work relating to the Sonnets, says: "The impress of reality is stamped on these Sonnets with unmistakable clearness."[ ] Mr. Lee, while regarding some of these as mere fancies, obviously finds that many of them treated of facts.[ ] Mr. Dowden, in a work devoted to the Sonnets, states very fully the views which have been expressed by different authors in relation to them. His quotations occupy sixty pages and, I think, clearly show that the weight of authority is decidedly in favor of allowing them their natural or primary meaning.

There are one hundred and fifty-four of these Sonnets. The last two are different in theme and effect from those which go before, and may perhaps not improperly be considered as mere exercises in poetizing. They have no connection with the others, and I would have no contention with those who regard them as suggested by Petrarch, or as complaisant imitations of the vogue or fashion of that time. Those two Sonnets I leave out of this discussion, and would have what may be here said, understood as applying only to the one hundred and fifty-two remaining.

These one hundred and fifty-two Sonnets I will now insist have a common theme. Most of them may be placed in groups which seem to be connected and somewhat interdependent. Those groups may perhaps, in some cases, be placed in different orders, without seriously affecting the whole. To that extent they are disconnected. But in whatever order those groups are placed, through them runs the same theme—the relations of the poet to his friend or patron, and to his mistress, the mistress of his carnal love, who is introduced only because the poet fears that she has transferred her affections or favors to his friend, wounding and wronging him in his love or desire for each.

It is easy to pick out many Sonnets which may be read as disconnected and independent poetry. But very many more verses could be selected from *In Memoriam* that can be read independently of the remainder of that poem. And there are none of the Sonnets, however they may read standing alone, that do not fit the mode and movement of those with which they stand connected. There is, I submit, no more reason for sundering Sonnets of that class from the others, than there is for taking the soliloquy of Hamlet from the play that bears his name.

This statement of the theme and the connected character of the Sonnets is not essential to the views I shall present. Nevertheless, if it is accepted, if we are able to agree that they all are relevant and apposite to a common theme, it strengthens the proposition that we should seek for them a literal meaning and should reject any construction which would make any of their description or movement incongruous to any other part. Of course we shall expect to find in them the enlargement or exaggeration of poetic license. But so doing we must recall the characteristics of their great author, who with all exaggeration preserves harmony and symmetry of parts, and harmony and correspondence in all settings and surroundings. With such views of what is fair and helpful in interpretation, I propose to proceed to a closer view of the first one hundred and fifty-two of what are known as the Sonnets of Shakespeare.

<<span id="filepos0039149997"> a>CHAPTER II

OF THE AGE OF THE WRITER OF THE SONNETS

Adopting the views which fix the later period as the date of the Sonnets, it seems practically certain that they were written as early as 1598,—though some of them may have been written as late as 1601,—and that a great portion were probably written as early as 1594.[ ] Shakespeare was born in 1564. Consequently they appear to have been written when he was about thirty or thirty-four, certainly not over thirty-seven years of age.

It will be the main purpose of this chapter to call attention to portions of the Sonnets which seem to indicate that they were written by a man well past middle age,—perhaps fifty or sixty years old, and certainly not under forty years of age.

But before proceeding to the inquiry as to the age of the writer, I invite attention to what they indicate as to the age of the patron or friend to whom the first one hundred and twenty-six seem to have been written. In poetry as in perspective, there is much that is relative, and in the Sonnets the age of the writer and that of his friend are so often contrasted, that if with reasonable certainty, and within reasonable limits, we are able to state the age of his friend, we shall be well advanced toward fixing the age of the writer.

The first seventeen of these Sonnets are important in this connection. They have a common theme: it is that his friend is so fair, so incomparable, that he owes it to the world, to the poet, whose words of praise otherwise will not be believed, that he shall marry and beget a son. The whole argument clearly implies that the writer deems such admonition necessary, because his friend has passed the age when marriage is most frequent, and is verging toward the period of life when marriage is less probable. His friend appears to the writer as making a famine where abundance lies; he tells him that he beguiles the world, unblesses some mother; that he is his mother's glass and calls back the April of her prime; asks him why he abuses the bounteous largess given him to give; calls him a profitless usurer; tells him that the hours that have made him fair will unfair him; that he should not let winter's rugged hand deface ere he has begotten a child, though it were a greater happiness should he beget ten. He asks if his failure to marry is because he might wet a widow's eye, and then in successive Sonnets cries shame on his friend for being so improvident. He tells him that when he shall wane, change toward age, he should have a child to perpetuate his youth; and the thought again brings to the poet the vision of winter, summer's green borne on winter's bier, and he urges him that he should prepare against his coming end, by transmitting his semblance to another; that he should not let so fair a house fall to decay, but should uphold it against the stormy blasts of winter by begetting a son; seeing in his friend so much of beauty, he prognosticates that his friend's end is beauty's doom and date. Noting that nothing in nature can hold its perfection long, he sees his friend, most rich in youth, but Time debating with decay, striving to change his day to night, and urges him to make war upon the tyrant Time by wedding a maiden who shall bear him living flowers more like him than any painted counterfeit. He tells him that could he adequately portray his beauty, the world would make him a liar, and then closes this theme by saying:

But were some child of yours alive that time,
You should live twice in it, and in my rhyme.

Any impression as to the age of the poet's friend which this brief synopsis of the first seventeen Sonnets conveys, I think will be increased by reading the Sonnets themselves. I have refrained from stating any portions of Sonnets II. and VII., desiring to present to the reader their exact words. Sonnet VII. reads as follows:

Lo! in the orient when the gracious light
Lifts up his burning head, each under eye
Doth homage to his new-appearing sight,
Serving with looks his sacred majesty;
And having *climb'd the steep-up heavenly hill,*
Resembling strong youth in his middle age ,
Yet mortal looks adore his beauty still,
Attending on his golden pilgrimage;
But when from highmost pitch, with weary car,
Like feeble age, he reeleth from the day,
The eyes, 'fore duteous, now converted are
From his low tract, and look another way:
So thou, thyself out-going in thy noon,
Unlook'd on diest, unless thou get a son.

The poet sees his friend, as is the sun after it has climbed the morning steep and is journeying on the level heaven toward the zenith. Certainly that must indicate that his friend was advanced toward the middle arch of life.

Sonnet II. reads as follows:

When *forty* winters shall besiege thy brow
And dig deep trenches in thy beauty's field,
Thy youth's proud livery, so gazed on now,
Will be a tatter'd weed, of small worth held:
Then, being ask'd where all thy beauty lies,
Where all the treasure of thy lusty days,
To say, within thine own deep-sunken eyes,
Were an all-eating shame, and thriftless praise.
. . . . .
This were to be new made when thou art old,
And see thy blood warm when thou feel'st it cold.

These lines indicate that his friend had not yet reached forty years. And equally do they indicate that in the mind of the poet the fortieth year was not in the ascending scale of life, but was at, or perhaps beyond, the "highmost pitch" toward which, in the seventh Sonnet, he described his friend as approaching.[ ]

Taking these seventeen Sonnets together, reading and re-reading them, can we suppose that they were composed by the great delineator, of or toward a person under or much below thirty? They imply that the person addressed was not so far below middle life that a statement of the decadence that would come after his fortieth year presented a remote or far-off picture. Besides, if his friend was below thirty years, while it might be well to urge him to marry, hardly would the poet have used language implying that his marrying days were waning. To put it roughly, there would not be so much of the now-or-never thought running through the ornate verse in which the poet voices his appeal.

As we read these seventeen Sonnets, we may perhaps suspect that the desire that his friend shall marry is so strongly stated and presented, because it is a theme around which the poet can appropriately weave so much of compliment and expressions of admiration and affection. But if that be so, must we not still believe that the great dramatist could not have addressed them to his friend, unless in substance and in all their more delicate shades of meaning and of coloring they were appropriate to him?

We may now pass from this first group to other Sonnets which convey similar and, I submit, unmistakable intimations as to the age of the poet's friend or patron.

Sonnet C., especially when read with the one preceding, clearly indicates that it was written as a greeting or salutation after absence, and on the poet's return to his friend. In it he says:

Rise, resty Muse, my love's sweet face survey,
If Time have any wrinkle graven there;
If any, be a satire to decay ,
And make *Time's spoils* despised everywhere.
Give my love fame faster *than Time wastes life* ;
So thou prevent'st his scythe and crooked knife.

Closely following, in Sonnet CIV., the poet says:

To me, fair friend, *you never can be old* ,
For as you were when first your eye I eyed,
Such seems your beauty still. Three winters cold,[ ]
. . . . .
In process of the seasons have I seen,
. . . . .
Since first I saw you fresh, which yet are green.
Ah! yet doth beauty, like a dial-hand,
Steal from his figure, and no pace perceived;
So your sweet hue, which methinks still doth stand,
Hath motion, and mine eye may be deceived[ ]:
For fear of which, hear this, thou age unbred;
Ere you were born was beauty's summer dead.

The thought is: your beauty may be passing; it may be that my eye that sees it not, is deceived. We should carefully note the words, "Three winters cold," "Since first I saw you fresh, which *yet* are green." Though they present no clear or sharp indication as to the age of his friend, yet I think that of them this may be fairly said: the word "green" is used as opposed to ripe or matured, and his friend's age is such that three years seem to the poet to have carried him a step toward maturity. And so reading these words, they harmonize with the expression of the poet's fear that his great love for his friend may have prevented him from seeing his beauty

like a dial hand,
Steal from his figure.

In Sonnet LXX. the poet says of his friend:

And thou present'st a pure unstained prime.
Thou hast pass'd by *the ambush of young days* ,
Either not assail'd, or victor being charged.

In Sonnet LXXVII. the poet says:

The wrinkles which thy glass will truly show
Of mouthed graves will give thee memory;
Thou by thy dial's shady stealth mayst know
Time's thievish progress to eternity.

Sonnet CXXVI. is as follows:

O thou, my lovely boy, who in thy power
Dost *hold Time's fickle glass, his sickle, hour* ;
Who hast by waning grown, and therein show'st
Thy *lovers withering as thy sweet self grow'st* ;
If Nature, sovereign mistress over wrack,
As thou goest onwards, *still* will pluck thee back,

She keeps thee to this purpose, that her skill
May *time disgrace* and wretched *minutes* kill.
Yet fear her, O thou minion of her pleasure!
She may *detain* , but not *still* keep, her treasure:
Her audit, though delay'd, answer'd must be,
And her quietus is to render thee.

This is the last Sonnet which the poet addresses to his friend. Except the last two, all that follow are of his mistress, and are of the same theme as Sonnets XL., XLI., and XLII., and, we may fairly infer, are of the same date. If so, Sonnet CXXVI. is practically the very latest of the entire series, and we may deem it a leave-taking, perhaps not of his friend, but of the labor that had so long moved him. Perhaps for that reason its words should be deemed more significant, and it should be read and considered more carefully.[ ] All its thoughts seem responsive to the central suggestion that his friend appears much younger than he is. To the poet he seems still a boy because he has so held the youth and freshness of boyhood that it is not inappropriate to say that he holds in his power the glass of Time; Nature has plucked him back to show her triumph over Time, but she cannot continue to do so, but will require of him full audit for all his years.

For what age do such expressions seem natural as words of compliment; and when first would it have pleased us to be told that we looked younger than we were, and to one that loved us, still seemed but as a boy? Hardly much before thirty; till then we took but little account of years and would have preferred to be told that we seemed manlier rather than younger than we were. But on this let us further consult our poet. He tells us that at ten begins the age of the whining school-boy; at twenty of the lover, sighing like a furnace, and that of the soldier, a vocation of manhood, at thirty.[ ] To me it seems very clear that the rich poetic fancy of this Sonnet would be greatly lessened by assuming it to be addressed to a person below twenty-five years of age, and if it came, as may hereafter appear, from a person of fifty years or over, its caressing compliments and admonition would seem quite appropriate for one who had reached the fourth age of life. The indication of the last four Sonnets, to which I have referred, I submit, is in entire accord with that of the first group of seventeen.

I would not, however, leave this branch of the discussion without indicating what I deem is the fair inference or result from it. I do not claim that the age of the poet's friend can be certainly stated from anything contained in the Sonnets. It seems to me, however, that it mars the poetry and makes its notes seem inappropriate and discordant, to suppose that the poet had in mind a person below twenty-five years of age. To do so would make some, at least, of his terms of description inapt, subtract from the sparkle and force of his compliments, and cause his words of loving admonition and advice to appear ill-timed and inappropriate. Certainly the Sonnets indicate that his friend was on the morning side of life and below forty; and perhaps ten or twelve years below would best fit the verse. It may be, probably it is the fact, that a number of years, from four to seven, elapsed between the earliest and the latest of these Sonnets; and that may explain why we are not able to find any more specific indications as to the age of his friend.

There are also Sonnets from which it has been inferred that the poet's friend was much younger than thirty, and possibly or probably below twenty years of age. A careful examination of these Sonnets will, however, I think very clearly indicate that no such inference can be fairly drawn.

In Sonnet LIV. the poet says:

And so of you, beauteous and lovely youth,
When that shall fade, my verse distills your truth.

In Sonnet XCVI. he says:

Some say, thy fault is youth, some wantonness;
Some say, thy grace is youth and gentle sport;

Similar expressions appear in Sonnets II., XV., XXXIII., and XLI.

In Sonnet CXIV. he says:

Such cherubins as your sweet self resemble.

Sonnet CXXVI., containing the appellation, "my lovely boy," has been already quoted.[ ]

In Sonnet CVIII. he says:

What's in the brain, that ink may character,
Which hath not figured to thee my true spirit?
What's new to speak, what new to register,
That may express my love, or thy dear merit?
Nothing, *sweet boy* ; but yet, like prayers divine,
I must each day say o'er the very same;
Counting no old thing old, thou mine, I thine,
Even as when first I hallowed thy fair name.
So that eternal love in love's fresh case
Weighs not the dust and injury of age,
Nor gives to necessary wrinkles place,
But makes antiquity for aye his page ;
Finding the *first* conceit of love there bred,
Where *time* and *outward form* would show it dead.

Hardly could any argument for extreme youth be made from any of these lines, except as based on the term "boy." The term "youth" obviously has a broader significance, and by no strained construction, especially if coming from a man of advanced years, may be applied to persons on the morning side of life without any precise or clear reference to, or indication of, their age. We should therefore turn to the lines containing the appellation "boy" for whatever of force there is in the claim for the extreme youth of the poet's friend. Doing so, the context in each case clearly indicates that no such inference can be fairly drawn. In the Sonnet last quoted (CVIII.), the poet, saying that there is nothing new to register of his love for his friend, and that he counts nothing old that is so used, then says that his eternal love

Weighs not the dust and injury of age,
Nor gives to necessary wrinkles place.

Hardly could he have said plainer that his loving appellation, "sweet boy," is made because he can allow neither his friend, nor his love for him, nor his own frequent recurring expressions of it, to grow old; the last two lines of the Sonnet, referring to the indications of time and outward form, seem to be a continuance and enlargement of the same thought.

So interpreting his verse it is fresh, sparkling, and complimentary; but deeming that the person addressed was sixteen or twenty years old, indeed a mere boy, at least half of the portion of the Sonnet following the term "sweet boy" is inappropriate and useless. This Sonnet, I think, might be cited as indicating that, except to the eye of love, that is in sober fact, the poet's friend was no longer a boy.

Sonnet CXXVI., is quoted at _, and discussed, and presented as clearly stating that his friend was termed a boy only because, as to him, Time had been hindered and delayed.

There is, however, a further consideration which I think should effectually dispose of any doubts that may remain on account of the use of the words "youth" or "boy." In the succeeding portions of this chapter I shall quote Sonnets indicating, indeed saying, that the poet was on the sunset side of life—probably fifty years of age or older, and so at least twenty years older than is indicated of his friend, except in the Sonnets now being considered. If the poet was fifty years of age or more, the terms here discussed are amply and fully satisfied without ascribing to them any definite indication as to the age of the person addressed. To a person of the age of fifty or sixty years, addressing a person young enough to be his son, especially if of a fair and youthful appearance, the expressions "boy" or "youth" come quite naturally and have no necessary significance beyond indicating the *relative* age of the person so addressed.[ ] And especially is this so when the words are used in expressions of affection and of familiar or caressing endearment.

With such aid as may be had from considering the age of his friend, we come to the more important inquiry: What was the age of the author of these Sonnets,—

what was the age of the poet of the Shakespearean plays? I shall present that which indicates that he was probably fifty, perhaps sixty, certainly more than forty years of age at the time he wrote the Sonnets.

But if our great poet was forty,—probably if he was thirty-five years of age, when these Sonnets were composed,—he was born before 1564, before the birth date of William Shakespeare.

The poet clearly indicates that he is older than his friend. In Sonnet XXII. he says:

My glass shall not persuade me I am old ,
So long as *youth and thou* are of one date;
But when in thee time's furrows I behold,
Then look I death my days should expiate.
For all that beauty that doth cover thee
Is but the seemly raiment of my heart,
Which in thy breast doth live, as thine in me:
How can I then be *elder* than thou art?

In Sonnet LXXIII. he speaks directly of his own age or period of life, as follows:

That *time of year* thou mayst in me behold
When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang
Upon those boughs which shake against the cold,
Bare ruin'd choirs, where late the sweet birds sang.
In *me* thou seest the *twilight* of such day
As *after sunset* fadeth in the west;
Which by and by black night doth take away,
Death's second self, that seals up all in rest.
In me *thou see'st the glowing of such fire,*
That on the ashes of his youth doth lie ,
As the death-bed whereon it must expire,

Consumed with that which it was nourish'd by.
This thou perceivest, which makes thy love more strong,
To *love that well which thou must leave ere long* .

The latter part of Sonnet LXII. and Sonnet LXIII. are as follows:

But when my glass shows me myself indeed,
Beated and chopp'd with tann'd antiquity ,
Mine own self-love quite contrary I read;
Self so self-loving were iniquity.
'T is thee, myself, that for myself I praise,
Painting *my age with* beauty of thy days.

Against my love shall be, *as I am now* ,
With Time's injurious hand crush'd and o'erworn;
When hours have drain'd his blood and fill'd his brow
With lines and wrinkles ; when his youthful morn
Hath travell'd on to *age's steepy night* ,
And all those beauties whereof now he's king
Are vanishing or vanish'd out of sight,
Stealing away the treasure of his spring;
For such a time do I now fortify
Against confounding age's cruel knife,
That he shall never cut from memory
My sweet love's beauty, though my lover's life:
His beauty shall in these black lines be seen,
And they shall live, and he in them still green.

It should be noted that the poet is picturing no morning cloud or storm or eclipse; but his grief is that he has had his morning and his noon and that he is now at "age's steepy night" *because his sun has travelled so far in his life's course* . The Sonnet seems to be the antithesis of Sonnet VII., quoted at _. The metaphor is the same, comparing life to the daily journey of the sun. In each, the poet views the *steep* of the journey, the earlier and the later hours of the day; and while he finds that his friend's age is represented by the sun passing from the "steep-up" hill to the zenith, with equal clearness and certainty he indicates that his age is represented by its last and declining course, that *he* has "travelled on to *age's steepy night* ." As clearly as words can say, the poet states that he is on the sunset side of life and indicates that he is well advanced toward its close.

Sonnet CXXXVIII. is as follows:

When my love swears that she is made of truth,
I do believe her, *though I know she lies* ,
That she might think me some untutor'd youth,
Unlearned in the world's false subtleties.
Thus *vainly* thinking that she thinks me young,
Although she knows my days are past the best ,
Simply I credit her false-speaking tongue:
On both sides thus is simple truth suppress'd.
But wherefore says she not she is unjust?
And wherefore say not I that I am old?
O, love's best habit is in seeming trust,
And *age in love loves not to have years told* :
Therefore I lie with her and she with me,
And in our faults by lies we flatter'd be.

The poet is here speaking of his mistress, the mistress of his carnal love, who had in act her bed-vow broke (Sonnet CLII.). Having stated that when she swears she is true he knows she lies, he adopts the conceit of asserting that he is not old, as an equivalent to her obvious falsehood in saying that she is not unjust. This is one of twenty-six Sonnets relating to his mistress and her desertion of him for his friend. In Sonnets XL., XLI., and XLII. he complains to his friend of the same wrong.

The fact that the poet found a subject for his verse in such an occurrence has been much commented on. Poetic fancy would hardly have chosen such a theme, and these Sonnets seem to be certainly based on an actual occurrence. And if so, certainly we may construe them very literally; and read literally they certainly appear to be an old man's lament at having been superseded by a younger though much loved rival.

William Shakespeare was a prosperous, a very successful man. In twenty years he accumulated property which made him a rich man,—yielding a yearly income of $5000, equivalent to $25,000 dollars at the present time. He was an actor publicly accredited as a man of amorous gallantries[ ]; he married at eighteen, apparently in haste, and less than six months before the birth of a child.[ ] We know from legal records that he and his father before him had frequent lawsuits.[ ] While a uniform tradition represents him as comely, pleasing and attractive, equally does it represent him as a man of ready, aggressive and caustic wit, and rebellious and bitter against opposition.[ ] The lines on the slab over his grave are less supplicatory than mandatory against the removal of his bones to the adjacent charnel-house.[ ] His name, often written with a hyphen, indicates that he came of English fighting stock. When the Sonnets were written he was in the full tide of success. It is not credible that such a man at thirty or thirty-five, of buoyant and abounding life, could have so bewailed the loss of a mistress.

Mr. Lee says that the Sonnets last quoted admit of no literal interpretation.[ ] In other words, as I understand, he concedes that a literal interpretation is destructive of what he assumes to be the fact as to the authorship of the Shakespearean plays. By what right or rule of construction does he refuse them their literal reading? They indicate no hidden or double meaning, but seem direct though poetic statements of conditions and resulting reflections and feelings. And more than that, though appearing in separate groups, their indications as to age all harmonize, and are not in conflict with any other part or indication of the Sonnets. Mr. Lee urges that these Sonnets were mere affectations, conceits common to the poets of that day. That view will not bear investigation. He cites passages from poets of that time ascribing to themselves in youth the ills, the miseries, the wrinkles, the white hairs of age. But such is not the effect of what has been here quoted. The poet says that it is *his age* that oppresses him, and brings him its ills and marks and ravages; and about as clearly as poetic description is capable of, indicates and says that he is on the sunset side of his day of life. I cannot at this instant quote, but I am impressed that in the plays of the great poet, the instances are frequent where sorrow or despair bring his youthful characters to picture their lot with the deprivations, the ills or forebodings of age. But in no such passages is language used which is at all equivalent to that here quoted. Nowhere does he present such a travesty as to allow Juliet to describe herself in good straight terms that would befit her grandmother; and there is nothing that the much-lamenting Hamlet says which would lead an actor to play the part with the accessories of age and feebleness with which they represent Polonius.

Having now called attention to these Sonnets which give direct indications as to the age of the poet, I ask the reader to consider again those which I have quoted in relation to the age of his friend, and particularly Sonnets II. and VII. (pp.   and). If those Sonnets came from a poet of the age and infirmities which a literal reading indicates, how forceful, strong, and poetic is their appeal. But if it is to be assumed that they were written by a man of thirty or thirty-five, strong, vigorous, aggressive, fortunate, and successful, the appeal seems out of harmony, and lacks that delicate adaptation of speech to surroundings which is characteristic of the author.

I would next call attention to portions of these Sonnets which I do not present as of themselves having any clearly determinate weight as to the age of the poet, but which do have great significance from their correspondence in tone and effect with what has been already quoted. The poet repeatedly falls into meditations or fancies which seem more natural to a person on the descending than on the ascending side of life.

In Sonnets XXX. and XXXI. he says:

When to the sessions of sweet silent thought
I summon up *remembrance of things past* ,
I sigh the lack of many a thing I sought,
And with old woes *new wail my dear time's waste:*
Then can I drown an eye, unused to flow,
For *precious friends hid in death's dateless night* ,
And weep afresh love's *long since* cancell'd woe,
And moan the expense of many a vanish'd sight:
Then can I grieve at grievances foregone,
And heavily from woe to woe tell o'er
The sad account of fore-bemoaned moan,
Which I new pay, as if not paid before.
. . . . .
Thy bosom is endeared with *all hearts* ,
Which I *by lacking have supposed dead* ;

And there reigns love, and all love's loving parts,
And all those *friends which I thought buried* .
How many *a holy and obsequious tear*
Hath dear, religious love stol'n from mine eye,
As *interest of the dead* , which now appear
But things removed that hidden in thee lie!
Thou art the grave *where buried love doth live* ,
Hung with the *trophies of my lovers gone* ,
Who all their parts of me to thee did give:
That due of many now is thine alone:

In Sonnet LXXI. he says:

No longer *mourn for me when I am dead*
Than you shall hear the surly sullen bell
Give warning to the world *that I am fled*
From this vile world, with vilest worms to dwell:
Nay, if you read this line, remember not
The hand that writ it; for I love you so,
That I in your sweet thoughts would be forgot,
If thinking on me then should make you woe.

In Sonnet CXXII. he says:

Thy gift, thy tables, are within my brain
. . . . .
Beyond all date, even to eternity:
Or, at the least, *so long as brain and heart*
Have faculty by nature to subsist;
Till each to razed oblivion yield his part.

In Sonnet CXLVI. he says:

Poor soul, the centre of my sinful earth,

. . . these rebel powers that thee array,
Why dost thou pine within and suffer dearth,
Painting thy outward walls so costly gay?
Why so large cost, having *so short* a lease,
Dost thou upon thy fading mansion spend?
Shall worms, inheritors of this excess,
Eat up thy charge? is this thy body's end?
Then, soul, live thou upon thy servant's loss,
And let that pine to aggravate thy store;
Buy terms divine in selling hours of dross;
Within be fed, without be rich no more:
So shalt thou feed on Death, that feeds on men,
And Death once dead, there's no more dying then.

In Sonnets LXVI. and LXXIV. appear further similar meditations. Such thoughts and meditations do not seem to be those of the successful and prosperous man of thirty or thirty-five.

The persuasive force of the Sonnets which have been quoted or referred to in this chapter is much increased by reading or considering them together. To illustrate: four Sonnets have been quoted containing direct statements by the poet that he was in the afternoon of life. It needs no argument to establish that this concurrence of statements made in different groups of Sonnets and doubtless at different times has much more than four times the persuasive force of one such statement. And in like ratio do the other Sonnets indicating the reflections and conditions of age, increase the weight of the statements in these four Sonnets. Taking them all together they seem to present the statements, conditions, and reflections of a man certainly past the noon of life,—past forty years of age, and so older than was Shakespeare at the time of their composition.

If this conclusion is correct, it does not aid, but about equally repels the claim that Bacon was the author of the Sonnets, or of the plays or poems produced by the same poet. Bacon was born in 1561, and was therefore but three years older than Shakespeare.

<<span id="filepos0039193963"> a>CHAPTER III

OF THE DIRECT TESTIMONY OF THE SONNETS AS TO WHO WAS NOT THEIR AUTHOR

Sonnets LV. and LXXXI. are as follows:

Not marble, nor the gilded monuments
Of princes, shall outlive this powerful rhyme;
But *you* shall shine more bright in these contents
Than unswept stone, besmear'd with sluttish time.
When wasteful war shall statues overturn,
And broils root out the work of masonry,
Nor Mars his sword nor war's quick fire shall burn
The living record of *your memory* .
'Gainst death and all-oblivious enmity
Shall *you* pace forth; your praise shall still find room
Even in the eyes of all posterity
That wear this world out to the ending doom.
So, till the judgment that yourself arise,
You live in this, and dwell in lovers' eyes.

Or I shall live your epitaph to make,
Or you survive when I in earth am rotten;
From hence *your* memory death cannot take,
Although in *me* each part will be forgotten.
Your name from hence immortal life shall have,
Though I, once gone, *to all the world must die* :
The earth can yield *me* but a common grave,
When *you* entombed in men's eyes shall lie.
Your monument shall be *my gentle verse* ,
Which eyes not yet created shall o'er-read;

And tongues to be *your* being shall rehearse,
When all the breathers of this world are dead;
You still shall live—such virtue hath *my* pen—
Where breath most breathes, even in the mouths of men.

In all the plays and poems of Shakespeare, including these Sonnets, there is no mention of any man or woman then living. The only mention of a person then living made by our poet, either in prose or verse, is in the dedication of the two poems to the Earl of Southampton. To Shakespeare, to Shakespeare alone, have the Shakespearean poems and plays been a monument; and for him have they done precisely that which the poet says his "gentle verse" was to do for his friend; and they have not done so in any degree for any other.

An anonymous writer in Chambers's *Edinburgh Journal* , in August, 1852, seems to have been one of the first to suggest the doubt as to the authorship of the Shakespearean plays. His suggestion was that their real author was "some pale, wasted student ... with eyes of genius gleaming through despair" who found in Shakespeare a purchaser, a publisher, a friend, and a patron. If that theory is correct, the man that penned those Sonnets sleeps, as he said he would, in an unrecorded grave, while his publisher, friend and patron, precisely as he also said, has a place in the Pantheon of the immortals.

Very many of these Sonnets seem to be evolved from, or kindred to, the thought so sharply presented in Sonnets LV. and LXXXI. I would refer the reader particularly to Sonnets XXXVIII., XLIX., LXXI., LXXII, and LXXXVIII. The last two lines of Sonnet LXXI. are as follows:

Lest the *wise* world should look into your moan,
And mock you with me after I am gone.

The first lines of Sonnet LXXII. are as follows:

O! lest the world should task you to recite
What merit lived in me, that you should love
After my death, dear love, forget me quite,
For you in me can nothing worthy prove;

Unless you would devise some virtuous lie,
To do more for me than mine own desert,
And hang more praise upon deceased I
Than *niggard* truth would *willingly* impart:

Many of these Sonnets, which otherwise seem entirely inexplicable, and which have for that reason been held to be imitations or strange and unnatural conceits, become true and genuine and much more poetic, if we conceive them to be written, not by the accredited author of the Shakespearean dramas, but by the unnamed and unknown student whose connection with them was carefully concealed. I suggest that the reader test this statement by carefully reading the four Sonnets last mentioned.

The claim for a literal reading of Sonnet LXXXI. is greatly strengthened by its context, by reading it with the group of Sonnets of which it forms a part. Sonnets LXXVII. to XC. all more or less relate to another poet, who, the author fears, has supplanted him in the affection, or it may be, in the patronage of his friend. That particularly appears in Sonnet LXXXVI.:

Was it the proud full sail of his great verse,
Bound for the prize of all too precious you,
That did my ripe thoughts in my brain inhearse,
Making their tomb the womb wherein they grew?
Was it *his* spirit, by spirits taught to write
Above a mortal pitch, that struck me dead?
No, neither he, nor his compeers by night
Giving him aid, my verse astonished.
He, nor that affable familiar ghost
Which nightly gulls him with intelligence,
As victors, of my silence cannot boast;
I was not sick of any fear from thence:
But when your countenance fill'd up his line,
Then lack'd I matter; that enfeebled mine.

That what is there stated as to another poet refers to an actual transaction, and is to be read literally, is recognized, I think, by all critics; and many have thought that the description contained in the Sonnet quoted indicates Chapman, who translated the *Iliad* about that time. It is in this group of Sonnets, referring to another poet, that we find Sonnet LXXXI. The thought of the entire group is complaint, perhaps jealousy, of a rival poet; and running through them all are allusions or statements which seem to have been intended to strengthen the ties between him and his friend,—to hold him if he meditated going, and to bring him back if he had already strayed. It was obviously for that purpose that Sonnet LXXXI., one of the central Sonnets of that group, was written; and, considered as written for that purpose, how apt and true its language appears! The poet, asserting that his verse is immortal, says to his friend, the immortality it confers is yours; "your name from hence immortal life shall have," but I shall have no share in that fame; "in me each part will be forgotten," and "earth can yield me but a common grave." Though the Sonnet is in the highest degree poetic, as a bare statement of fact it is perfectly apt and appropriate to that which was the obvious purpose of this group of Sonnets.

It is sometimes claimed that the author of the Shakespearean plays was a lawyer. Certainly he was a logician and a rhetorician. The clash of minds and of speech appearing in *Julius Cæsar* , in *Antony and Cleopatra* , in *Henry IV.* , and in many other plays, shows a most wonderful facility for stating a case, for presenting an argument. Let us then assume that the poet was simply stating his own case against a rival poet, presenting his own appeal,—and the verse at once has added dignity and passion, and we almost feel the poet's heart throb. Of course the final question—whether or not the two Sonnets printed at the head of this chapter were founded on the conditions and situations they state, and whether or not they express actual feelings and emotions—must be answered by each from a careful reading of the Sonnets themselves. To me, however, their message of sadness, loneliness, and implied appeal seems as clear and certain as the portrayal of agony in the marble of Laocoön.

That Sonnet LV., and perhaps in some degree Sonnet LXXXI., are moulded after verses of Ovid or Horace, is often mentioned. And it is mentioned as though that somehow detracted from their meaning or force. That fact seems to me rather to reinforce that meaning. The words of Ovid are translated as follows:

Now have I brought a work to an end which neither Jove's fierce wrath,
Nor sword nor fire nor fretting age with all the force it hath,
Are able to abolish quite.[ ]

The Ode of Horace has been translated as follows:

A monument on stable base,
More strong than Brass, my Name shall grace;
Than Regal Pyramids more high
Which Storms and Years unnumber'd shall defy.

My nobler Part shall swiftly rise
Above this Earth, and claim the Skies.[ ]

Agreeing that the poet had in mind the words of Ovid and of Horace and believed that his productions would outlast bronze or marble, we see that, so far following their thoughts, by a quick transition he says that not he, but his friend, is to have the immortality that his poetry will surely bring. While this comparison with the Latin poems may not much aid an interpretation that seemed clear and certain without it, at least its sudden rending from their thought does not weaken, but strengthens the effect of the statement that the writer was to have no part in the immortality of his own poetry.

It may be said that it is entirely improbable that the author of the greater of the Shakespearean plays should have allowed their guerdon of fame and immortality to pass to and remain with another. But if we accept the results of the later criticism, we must then agree,—that there were at least three poets who wrought in and for the Shakespearean plays, that two of the three consented that their work should go to the world as that of another, and that at least one of the two was a poet of distinctive excellence. At that time the publication and sale of books was very limited and the relative rights of publishers and authors were such that the author had but little or none of the pecuniary results. The theatre was the most promising and hence the most usual market for literary work, and it seems certain that poets and authors sold their literary productions to the managers of theatres, retaining no title or interest in them. However the poet of the Shakespearean plays may have anticipated the verdict of posterity, the plays bear most abundant evidence that they were written to be acted, to entertain and please, and to bring patrons and profit to the theatres which were in the London of three hundred years ago.

Boucicault was the publisher and accredited author of one hundred and thirty plays. But no one would deem it improbable that in them is the work of another, or of many other dramatists.

I submit that the argument from probabilities is without force against the clear and unambiguous statements of the Sonnets quoted in this chapter.

<<span id="filepos0039207862"> a>CHAPTER IV

OF THE CHARACTER OF SHAKESPEARE AS RELATED TO THE CHARACTER OF THE AUTHOR OF THE SONNETS

The Sonnets certainly reveal their author in an attitude of appeal, more or less open and direct, for the love or favor of his friend. No fervor of compliment or protestation of affection allows him to forget or conceal this purpose. When, as is indicated by Sonnets LXXVII. to XC., he feared that his friend was transferring his favor or patronage to another poet, his anxiety became acute, and in that group he compared not only his poetry, but his flattery and commendation with that of his rival. In Sonnets XXXII. to XXXVII., portraying his grief at his friend's unkindness, he hastens to forgive; and, as already stated, in Sonnets XL. to XLIII. and CXXVII. to CLII., chiding his friend for having accepted the love of his mistress, he crowns him with poetic garlands of compliment and adulation. Smitten on one cheek, not only does he turn the other, but he bestows kisses and caresses on the hand that gave the blow.

All we know of the character of Shakespeare indicates that he was neither meek and complacent, nor quick and eager in forgiving; but that his character in those aspects was quite the reverse of the character of the author of the Sonnets.

Mr. Lee states the effect or result of the various traditions as to Shakespeare's poaching experiences, and his resentment of the treatment he had received, as follows[ ]:

'And his [Shakespeare's] sporting experiences passed at times beyond orthodox limits. A poaching adventure, according to a *credible* [ ] tradition, was the immediate cause of his long severance from his native place. "He had," wrote Rowe in 1709, "by a misfortune common enough to young fellows, fallen into ill company, and among them, some, that made a frequent practice of deer-stealing, engaged him with them more than once in robbing a park that belonged to Sir Thomas Lucy of Charlecote near Stratford. For this he was prosecuted by that gentleman, *as he thought, somewhat too severely* ; and, *in order to revenge* that ill-usage, he made a ballad upon him, and though this, probably the first essay of his poetry, be lost, *yet it is said to have been so very bitter* that it redoubled the prosecution against him to that degree that he was obliged to leave his business and family in Warwickshire and shelter himself in London." The independent testimony of Archdeacon Davies, who was vicar of Saperton, Gloucestershire, late in the seventeenth century, is to the effect that Shakespeare "was much given to all unluckiness in stealing venison and rabbits, particularly from Sir Thomas Lucy, who had him oft whipt, and sometimes imprisoned, and at last made him fly his native county to his great advancement." The law of Shakespeare's day (5 Eliz., cap. 21) punished deer-stealers with three months' imprisonment and the payment of thrice the amount of the damage done.

The tradition has been challenged on the ground that the Charlecote deer-park was of later date than the sixteenth century. But Sir Thomas Lucy was an extensive game-preserver, and owned at Charlecote a warren in which a few harts or does doubtless found an occasional home. Samuel Ireland was informed in 1794 that Shakespeare stole the deer, not from Charlecote, but from Fulbroke Park, a few miles off, and Ireland supplied in his *Views on the Warwickshire Avon* , 1795, an engraving of an old farmhouse in the hamlet of Fulbroke, where he asserted that Shakespeare was temporarily imprisoned after his arrest. An adjoining hovel was locally known for some years as Shakespeare's "deer-barn," but no portion of Fulbroke Park, which included the site of these buildings (now removed), was Lucy's property in Elizabeth's reign, and the amended legend, which was solemnly confided to Sir Walter Scott in 1828 by the owner of Charlecote, seems pure invention.

The ballad which Shakespeare is reported to have fastened on the park gates of Charlecote, does not, as Rowe acknowledged, survive. No authenticity can be allowed the worthless lines beginning, "A parliament member, a justice of peace," which were represented to be Shakespeare's on the authority of an old man who lived near Stratford and died in 1703. But *such an incident as the* *tradition reveals has left a distinct impress on Shakespearean drama. Justice Shallow is beyond doubt a reminiscence of the owner of Charlecote.* [ ] According to Archdeacon Davies of Saperton, Shakespeare's "*revenge* was so great" that he caricatured Lucy as "Justice Clodpate," who was (Davies adds) represented on the stage as "a great man" and as bearing, in allusion to Lucy's name, "three louses rampant for his arms." Justice Shallow, Davies's "Justice Clodpate," came to birth in the Second Part of *Henry IV.* (1598), and he is represented in the opening scene of the *Merry Wives of Windsor* as having come from Gloucestershire to Windsor to make a Star-Chamber matter of a poaching raid on his estate. The "three luces hauriant argent" were the arms borne by the Charlecote Lucys, and the dramatist's prolonged reference in this scene to the "dozen white luces" on Justice Shallow's "old coat" fully establishes Shallow's identity with Lucy.

The poaching episode is best assigned to 1585, but it may be questioned whether Shakespeare, on fleeing from Lucy's persecution, at once sought an asylum in London.'

Halliwell gives the following traditions of Shakespeare's sharp encounters or exchanges of wit[ ]:

Mr. Ben Jonson and Mr. Wm. Shakespeare being merry at a tavern, Mr. Jonson having begun this for his epitaph,—

Here lies Ben Jonson, that was once one,

he gives it to Mr. Shakespeare to make up, who presently writes,

Who while he lived was a slow thing
And now being dead is nothing.

Another version is:

Here lies Jonson,

Who was one's son
He had a little hair on his chin,
His name was Benjamin!

an amusing allusion to his personal appearance, as any one may see who will turn to Ben's portrait.

Jonson. If but stage actors all the world displays
Where shall we find spectators of their plays?

Shakespeare. Little or much of what we see we do;
We are all both actors and spectators too.
Ten in the hundred lies here ingrav'd;
'Tis a hundred to ten his soul is not saved;
If any man ask, Who lies in this tomb?
Oh! oh! quoth the devil, 'tis my John-a-Combe.
Who lies in this tomb?
Hough, quoth the devil, 'tis my son, John-Combe.

The tradition is that the subject of the last six lines having died, Shakespeare then composed an epitaph as follows:

Howe'er he lived, judge not,
John Combe shall never be forgot,
While poor hath memory, for he did gather
To make the poor his issue; he their father,
As record of his tilth and seed,
Did crown him, in his latter need.

This is said to have been composed of a brother of John-a-Combe:

Thin in beard, and thick in purse,
Never man beloved worse,
He went to the grave with many a curse,
The devil and he had both one nurse.

A blacksmith is said to have accosted Shakespeare with,—

Now, Mr. Shakespeare, tell me, if you can,
The difference between a youth and a young man?

To which the poet immediately replied,—

Thou son of fire, with thy face like a maple,
The same difference as between a scalded and a coddled apple.

An old tradition reports that being awakened after a prolonged carouse, and asked to renew the contest, he refused, saying, I have drunk with

Piping Pebworth, Dancing Marston,
Haunted Hillborough, and Hungry Grafton
With Dadging Exhall, Papist Wixford
Beggarly Broom, and Drunken Bidford.

The lines inscribed on the slab above his grave, preventing the removal of his bones, according to the custom of that time, to the adjacent charnel-house, are as follows:

Good friend, for Jesus' sake forbeare
To dig the dust enclosed heare;
Bleste be the man that spare these stones,
And curst be he that moves my bones.[ ]

Mr. Lee gives a statement as to Shakespeare's propensity to litigation as follows[

]:

'As early as 1598 Abraham Sturley had suggested that Shakespeare should purchase the tithes of Stratford. Seven years later, on July 24, 1605, he bought for £440 of Ralph Huband an unexpired term of thirty-one years of a ninety-two years' lease of a moiety of the tithes of Stratford, Old Stratford, Bishopton, and Welcombe. The moiety was subject to a rent of £17 to the Corporation, who were the reversionary owners on the lease's expiration, and of £5 to John Barker, the heir of a former proprietor. The investment brought Shakespeare, under the most favorable circumstances, no more than an annuity of £38; and the refusal of persons who claimed an interest in the other moiety to acknowledge the full extent of their liability to the Corporation led that body to demand from the poet payments justly due from others. After 1609 he joined with two interested persons, Richard Lane of Awston, and Thomas Greene, the town clerk of Stratford, in a suit in Chancery to determine the exact responsibilities of all the tithe-owners, and in 1612 they presented a bill of complaint to Lord Chancellor Ellesmere, with what result is unknown. His acquisition of a part ownership in the tithes was fruitful in legal embarrassments.

Shakespeare inherited his father's love of litigation, and stood rigorously by his rights in all his business relations. In March, 1600, he recovered in London a debt of £7 from one John Clayton. In July, 1604, in the local court at Stratford, he sued one Philip Rogers, to whom he had supplied since the preceding March malt to the value of £1 19*s.* 10*d.* , and had on June 25th lent 2*s.* in cash. Rogers paid back 6*s.* , and Shakespeare sought the balance of the account, £1 15*s.* 10*d.* During 1608 and 1609 he was at law with another fellow-townsman, John Addenbroke. On February 15, 1609, Shakespeare, who was apparently represented by his solicitor and kinsman, Thomas Greene, obtained judgment from a jury against Addenbroke for the payment of £6 and £1 5*s.* costs, but Addenbroke left the town, and the triumph proved barren. Shakespeare avenged himself by proceeding against one Thomas Horneby, who had acted as the absconding debtor's bail.'

The same author gives the following statement as to his reputation for *sportive adventure* [ ]:

'Hamlet, Othello, and Lear were *rôles* in which he [Burbage] gained especial renown. But Burbage and Shakespeare were popularly credited with co-operation in less solemn enterprises. They were reputed to be companions in many *sportive* adventures. The sole anecdote of Shakespeare that is *positively known to have been recorded in his lifetime* relates that Burbage, when playing Richard III., agreed with a lady in the audience to visit her after the performance; Shakespeare, overhearing the conversation, anticipated the actor's visit and met Burbage on his arrival with the quip that "William the Conqueror was before Richard the Third."

Such gossip possibly deserves little more acceptance than the later story, in the same key, which credits Shakespeare with the paternity of Sir William D'Avenant. The latter was baptized at Oxford, on March 3, 1605, as the son of John D'Avenant, the landlord of the Crown Inn, where Shakespeare lodged in his journeys to and from Stratford. The story of Shakespeare's parental relation to D'Avenant was long current in Oxford, and was at times complacently accepted by the reputed son. Shakespeare is known to have been a welcome guest at John D'Avenant's house, and another son, Robert, boasted of the kindly notice which the poet took of him as a child. It is safer to adopt the less compromising version which makes Shakespeare the godfather of the boy William instead of his father. *But the antiquity and persistence of the scandal belie the assumption that Shakespeare was known to his contemporaries as a man of scrupulous virtue.* '

All the extracts I have here quoted are from writers who admit no question as to the authorship of the Shakespearean plays. And there is nothing which they or any biography or tradition bring to us which presents any act or characteristic at all at variance with the indications of these quotations. And it is very remarkable how strong is the concurrence of indications, from the slab above his grave, from old, musty, and otherwise forgotten records of court proceedings, and from traditions, whether from the hamlet of his birth or the city where he wrought and succeeded.

I have not quoted the lines which have been variously handed down as those which the young Shakespeare affixed to the gate of the wealthy and powerful Sir Thomas Lucy. Their authenticity is doubtful.[ ] But that the boy Shakespeare, weak and helpless for such a struggle, resented his treatment and answered back with the only weapon he had, risking and enduring being driven from his home and birthplace, and kept good the grudge in the days of his success, I think cannot be doubted. The records of court proceedings, the imprecation above his grave, both indicate a man of strong will and not unaccustomed to mastery. We may reject one or another of the retorts or sallies in verse, but we must, I think, agree, that the fact that they are brought to us by recorded and very old traditions, indicates a character or repute in accordance with their implication; and especially must this be so, when we find that they agree with the indications of other evidence not in any degree in question. These various indications support each other like the bundle of sticks which together could not be broken. From them I think we learn that Shakespeare, however pleasant or attractive at times, was not a man yielding or complacent to opposition or injury; but that he was a man of fighting blood or instincts, quick in wit and repartee, apt and inclined for aggressive sally, ready to slash and lay about him in all encounters,—in short, a very Mercutio in temperament, and in the lively and constant challenges of his life.

I submit that the records we have of the life of William Shakespeare concur in indicating a man who could not have written the Sonnets under the circumstances and with the motives which they reveal.

It should not be overlooked that at the time these Sonnets were written, certainly as early as 1597 or 1598, Shakespeare was above pecuniary want, and had begun to make investments, and apparently regarded himself and was regarded as a wealthy man.

<<span id="filepos0039230307"> a>CHAPTER V

OF THE GENERAL SCOPE AND EFFECT OF THE SONNETS AS INDICATING THEIR AUTHOR

As has been said before, the Sonnets obviously have a common theme. They celebrate his friend, his beauty, his winning and lovable qualities, leading the poet to forgive and to continue to love, even when his friend has supplanted him in the favors of his mistress. They are replete with compliment and adulation. Little side views or perspectives are introduced with a marvellous facility of invention; and yet in them all, even in the invocation to marry, in the jealousy of another poet, in the railing to or of his false mistress, is the face or thought of his friend, apparently his patron. No other poet, it seems to me, could have filled two thousand lines of poetry with thoughts to, of, or relating to one person of his own sex. Who that person was critics have not agreed. But that he was a person who was somehow connected with the life-work of the poet seems beyond dispute.

Mr. Lee, speaking of the purpose of the Sonnets, at pages 125 and 126, says:

'Twenty Sonnets, which may for purposes of exposition be entitled "dedicatory" Sonnets, are addressed to one who is declared without periphrasis and without disguise to be a patron of the poet's verse (Nos. XXIII., XXVI., XXXII., XXXVII., XXXVIII., LXIX., LXXVII.-LXXXVI., C., CI., CIII., CVI.). In one of these,—Sonnet LXXVIII.,—Shakespeare asserted:

So oft have I invoked thee for my Muse
And found such fair assistance in my verse
As every alien pen hath got my use
And *under thee their poesy disperse* .

Subsequently he regretfully pointed out how his patron's readiness to accept the homage of other poets seemed to be thrusting him from the enviable place of pre-eminence in his patron's esteem.

Shakespeare's biographer is under an obligation to attempt an identification of the persons whose relations with the poet are defined so explicitly. The problem presented by the patron is simple. Shakespeare states unequivocally that he has no patron but one.

Sing [sc. O Muse!] to the ear that doth thy lays esteem,
And gives thy pen both skill and argument (C. 7-8).
For to no other pass my verses tend
Than of your *graces and your gifts to tell* (CIII. 11-12).

The Earl of Southampton, the patron of his narrative poems, is the only patron of Shakespeare that is known to biographical research. No contemporary document or tradition gives the faintest suggestion that Shakespeare was the friend or dependent of any other man of rank.'

This quotation has been made because it is fair and accurate, because of the high authority of the book, but principally because it is the view of one who has no doubt that Shakespeare was the author of the Shakespearean plays. Research and ingenuity have been taxed to ascertain who was the unnamed and mysterious friend at whose feet are laid so many poetic wreaths, woven by such a master. All discussion has assumed that this friend was a patron, who somehow greatly aided the poet, and to whom the poet felt himself greatly indebted. And so it was at once suggested that his friend was one of the nobility or peers of that age.

The Earl of Southampton (to whom by name *Venus and Adonis* and *Lucrece* were dedicated) has been very generally assumed to be the person intended. Lord Pembroke [William Herbert] has also been presented as the unnamed friend.

I think the Sonnets contain internal evidence that they were not addressed to either of these peers , and were not addressed to any one of their class.

It is very remarkable how narrow is the range of these Sonnets,—how little they say, convey or indicate as to the person to whom they were addressed. From the first seventeen Sonnets we infer that the poet understood that his friend was unmarried; a line in Sonnet III. perhaps indicates a peculiar pride in his mother, and that it pleased him to be told that he resembled her; from a line in Sonnet XX., "A man in hue," etc., it has been inferred that his friend's beard or hair was auburn, and from Sonnets CXXXV. and CXXXVI. it has been inferred that his friend was familiarly called "Will," or at any rate that his name was William. Obviously he was in some way a patron or helper to our poet, and to another poet as well[ ]; he superseded the poet in the favors of his mistress; he was beautiful, attractive, genial, and sunny in disposition; that he was not infrequently responsive to lascivious love is indicated.[ ] We have already fully considered what the Sonnets indicate as to his age. And now I put the inquiry: Is there anything else as to the poet's friend that these two thousand lines of poetry state or indicate? With diligent search I can find in all those lines no other fact indicated or stated as to this mysterious friend or patron.

In Sonnet CXXIV. the poet says:

If *my dear love were but* the child of state,
It might for Fortune's bastard be unfather'd.

From that it has been argued that his friend was of the nobility, a "child of state."

Reading those two lines, or reading the entire Sonnet, it seems clear that if they contain any indication as to the station of his friend, the indication is rather against than in favor of his being of the nobility, "a child of state."

I do not think, however, that the lines allow any clear or certain deduction either way, but have called attention to them because they are often cited on this point.

In Sonnet XIII. occurs the line,

Who lets so fair a *house* fall to decay.

The word "house" as there used has been interpreted as though used in the sense of the House of York, and so made an implication that his friend was of a lordly line. Such a far-fetched and unusual interpretation should not be adopted unless clearly indicated. And the context clearly indicates that the phrase "so fair a house" is used as a metaphor for the poet's fair and beautiful body. If this inquiry were to be affected by far-drawn or even doubtful interpretations, I might quote from Sonnet LXXXVI. There the poet, referring to his rival, says:

But when your *countenance* fill'd up his line.

By merely limiting the word *countenance* to its primary meaning, we may have the inference that his rival's verse was spoken or *acted* by his friend, and so that his friend was an actor. I do not think, however, that either of the two lines last cited are entitled to any weight as argument, but they illustrate the distinction between lines or Sonnets which may be the basis of surmise or conjecture, and those elsewhere cited, to which two different effects cannot be given without rending their words from their natural meaning.

The Earl of Southampton was born in 1573. He bore an historic name; fields, forests, and castles were his and had come to him from his ancestors; all of England that was most beautiful or most attractive was in the circle in which he moved and to which his presence contributed. In 1595 he appeared in the lists at a tournament in honor of the Queen; in 1596 and 1597 he joined in dangerous and successful naval and military expeditions; in 1598 he was married.[ ] Is it conceivable that two thousand lines of adulatory poetry could have been written to and of him, and no hint appear of incidents like these? It is simply incredible. What is omitted rather than what is said clearly indicates that the life of the poet's friend presented no such incidents,—indeed no incidents which the poet chronicler of court and camp would interweave in his garlands of loving compliment.

Urging his friend to marry, the poet, comparing the harmony of music to a happy marriage, in Sonnet VIII. says:

Mark how one string, sweet husband to another,
Strikes each in each by mutual ordering;
Resembling sire and child and happy mother,

Who, all in one, one pleasing note do sing:
Whose speechless song, being many, seeming one,
Sings this to thee: "Thou single wilt prove none."

But is it not a little strange that the pen that drew Rosalind and Juliet should have gone no farther, when by a touch he could have filled it with suggestions of the fair, the stately and the titled maidens who were in the court life of that day, and whose names and faces and reputed characters must have been known to the poet, whatever his place or station in London? How would a tracing of a mother, nobly born, or of a lordly but deceased father, of some old castle, of some fair eminence, of some grand forest, or of ancestral oaks shading fair waters, have lightened the picture! And could the poet who gave us the magnificent pictures of English kings and queens, princes and lords—could that poet, writing to and of one of the fairest of the courtly circle of the reign of Elizabeth, so withhold his pen that it gives no hint that his friend was in or of that circle, or any suggestion of his most happy and fortunate surroundings? Surely, in painting so fully the beauties of his friend, the poet would have allowed to appear some hint of the beauty of light and color in which he moved.

I have before me in the book of Mr. Lee, a copy of the picture of the Earl of Southampton painted in Welbeck Abbey. The dress is of the court; and the sword, the armor, the plume and rich drapery all indicate a member of the nobility. Could our great poet in so many lines of extreme compliment and adulation have always omitted any reference to the insignia of rank which were almost a part of the young Earl; and would he always have escaped all reference to coronet or sword, to lands or halls, or to any of the employments or sports, privileges or honors, then much more than now, distinctive of a peer of the realm?

And all that is here said equally repels the inference that these Sonnets were addressed to any person connected with the nobility. The claim that they were addressed to Lord Pembroke [William Herbert] I think is exploded, if it ever had substance.[ ] Lord Pembroke did not come to London until 1598 and was then but eighteen years old. There is not a particle of evidence that he and Shakespeare had any relations or intimacy whatever.

While I regard the view that the Sonnets were addressed to Southampton as entirely untenable, it nevertheless has this basis,—two of the Shakespearean poems were dedicated to Southampton. At least we may say that, if they were addressed to any person of that class, there is a strong probability in his favor. And in order to consider that claim I would ask the reader to turn back to Sonnet II., _. That certainly is one of the very earliest of the Sonnets, almost certainly written when Shakespeare was not older than thirty and Southampton not over twenty-one years of age. With these facts in mind, the assumption that those lines were addressed to the Earl of Southampton becomes altogether improbable. Can we imagine a man of thirty, in the full glow of a vigorous and successful life, saying to a friend of twenty-one,—you should marry now, because when you are *forty years* old (about twice your present age and ten years above my own) your beauty will have faded and your blood be cold?

We should not so slander the author of the Shakespearean plays.

The language of the Sonnets implies a familiarity and equality of intercourse not consistent with the theory that they were addressed to a peer of England by a person in Shakespeare's position.[ ]

The dedication of *Lucrece* , which apparently was written in 1593, omits no reference to title, and envinces no disposition or privilege to ignore the rank or dignities of the Earl. I will quote no particular Sonnet on this point; but the impression which the entire series seems to me to convey, is that the poet was addressing a friend separated from him by no distinction of rank. Sonnets XCVI. and XCVII. are instances of such familiarity of address and communication.

On the other hand, there is not a single indication which the Sonnets contain as to the poet's friend which in any manner disagrees with what we know of Shakespeare. It may be said that being married the invocation to marry could not have been addressed to him. But the test is,—how did he pass, how was he known in London, as married or unmarried? He is supposed to have come to London in 1586, or when he was twenty-two years of age, and he was then married and had three children. He remained in London about twenty-five years, and there is no indication that any member of his family ever resided there or visited him, and the clear consensus of opinion seems to be that they did not.[ ] The indications that he had little love for his wife are regrettably clear.[ ] When the earlier Sonnets were written he must have been living there about nine years, and must have had an income sufficient easily to have maintained his family in the city.[ ] That he led a life notoriously free as to women cannot be questioned. Traditions elsewhere referred to so indicate[ ]; and whether the Sonnets were written by or to him they equally so testify. Under such circumstances his friends or acquaintances would not be led to presume that he was married, but would assume the contrary. They would have done or considered precisely as we do, classing our friends as married or unmarried, as their mode of life indicates. Hence the invocation to marry is entirely consistent with the theory that the Sonnets were addressed to Shakespeare. When Sonnet CIV. was written, the poet had known his friend but three years[ ]; the Sonnets referring to marriage are printed first, and very probably were written much earlier than Sonnet CIV., and perhaps when their acquaintance was first formed. The fact that the appeal ceases with the seventeenth Sonnet, and that after that there is not even a hint of marrying, or of female excellence and beauty, perhaps indicates that the first seventeen Sonnets had provoked a disclosure which restrained the poet from further reference to those subjects.

The starting point in this chapter is the fact stated by Mr. Lee, and I think conceded or assumed by all writers on these Sonnets,—that they were written to some one intimately connected with the Shakespearean plays, either as a patron or in some other manner. Many, perhaps all, of the plays were produced, and in that way published, at the theatre where Shakespeare acted. Those of the higher class or order as well as those of the lower class were published as his. Those most strenuous in supporting the claims of authorship for Shakespeare, have, I think, generally conceded that the plays, as we now have them, reveal in various parts the work of more than one author. And from that it has been suggested that Shakespeare must have had a fellow-worker,—a collaborator. Lee's *Shakespeare* , Brandes's *Critical Study of Shakespeare* , and the Temple edition of Shakespeare's works, are practically agreed on this fact in relation to *Henry VI.* , *Henry VIII.* , *Titus Andronicus* , and some other plays. There must have been a very considerable degree of intercourse between the two persons who worked together even on a single one of these plays. And there are Sonnets which at least suggest a degree and kind of intercourse and communication between the poet and his friend which such a relation would require.

Chiding his friend for absence in Sonnets LVII. and LVIII., the poet indicates such waiting and watching as would come to him had their relations been very intimate, and perhaps indicates that he and his friend lodged together.

Those Sonnets are as follows:

Being your slave, what should I do but tend
Upon the *hours* and times of your desire?
I have no precious time at all to spend,
Nor *services* to do, *till you require* .
Nor dare I chide the *world-without-end hour*
Whilst I, my sovereign, *watch the clock for you* ,
Nor think the bitterness of absence sour
When you have bid your servant once adieu;
Nor dare I question with my jealous thought
Where you may be , or your affairs suppose,
But, *like a sad slave, stay* and think of nought
Save, *where you are how happy* you make those.
So true a fool is love that in your will,
Though you do anything, he thinks no ill.

That God forbid that made me first your slave,
I should *in thought control your times of pleasure* ,
Or at your hand the account of *hours* to crave,
Being your vassal, *bound to stay your leisure* !
O, let me suffer, being at your beck,
The imprison'd absence of your liberty;
And patience, tame to sufferance, bide each check,
Without accusing you of injury.
Be where you list, your charter is so strong
That *you yourself may privilege your time*
To what you will ; to you it doth belong

Yourself to pardon of self-doing crime.
I am to *wait* , though waiting so be hell,
Not *blame your pleasure* , be it ill or well.

I am not unaware that there are other Sonnets which indicate that they lived apart, though it is of course quite possible that they lived apart at one time and together at another. But whether or not they at any time lodged together, these Sonnets indicate that their lives were brought together by some common purpose, and that hours and seasons of communication and perhaps of kindred labor were frequent to them. Our affections or friendships do not blossom in untilled fields; it is the comradeship of common effort, mutually helpful and beneficial, that more than often determines the impalpable garments and coverings of our lives. Certainly we may believe that the two characters that fill these two thousand lines of poetry did not live and move so far apart as were the busy actor at a theatre and the courted and adventurous peer of England.

If the friend to whom the Sonnets were addressed was Shakespeare, and if the author of the Sonnets and of the accredited Shakespearean plays was some "pale, wasted," and unknown student who sold his labors and his genius to another, we may perhaps see how they would have had frequent interviews and hours of labor, and how Shakespeare might have had all the relations to the poet, which the Sonnets imply of the poet's friend. But if Shakespeare, then well advanced both to fame and fortune, was the poet it is very difficult to imagine any one person who could have borne to him all the relations which the Sonnets indicate—patron or benefactor and familiar associate and companion; a rival and successor in the favors of his mistress, and a loved or at least cherished friend.

While I present the view that some unknown student wrote, and Shakespeare adopted and published, the Shakespearean plays, I do not deny to Shakespeare a part, perhaps a large part, in their production. As I have said, there are many plays attributed to Shakespeare, some or the greater portions of which are distinctively of a lower class than the greater plays or the Sonnets. The theory of collaboration affects at least six plays commonly classed as Shakespearean, and perhaps others classed as doubtful plays. Why is not the situation satisfied if we ascribe to Shakespeare a capacity equal to the composition of *Titus Andronicus* ? That is a play which seems to have been attractive from its plot and the character of its incidents. In it, however, there are but few lines that seem to be from the same author as the Sonnets and the greater of the recognized Shakespearean plays. The remainder of the play has no poetic merit which raises it far above the rustic poetry which is handed down by tradition as Shakespeare's. And if we give the unknown student all credit for authorship of the finer poetry of the greater dramas, may we not still assume that Shakespeare labored with him, assisting in moulding into form adapted to the stage the poetry that burst from his friend with volcanic force; or that he perhaps sometimes suggested the side lights and sudden transitions which appear so often,—for instance, in the grave scene in *Hamlet* or the nurse's part in *Romeo and Juliet* ?[ ] And if some great unknown was the sole author and Shakespeare was the publisher and was to take part in the representation of these plays, may we not still, however they lodged, find ample occasion for the waiting hours of the poet, which would be entirely unexplained if the person addressed was the Earl of Southampton or some other member of the nobility?

Such a view explains very much which is otherwise inexplicable. If into that series of publications came the genius of the unknown author of the Sonnets, touching some of the plays like stray sunbeams, and as the work progressed absorbing and filling all their framework,—it must yet be assumed that he did not labor without recompense. And so we may believe that Shakespeare from friend became patron, and that this employment, coming as the poet was passing to life's "steepy night," gave him the means and the leisure for those dreams of lovers, of captains and of kings, so visioned on his brain that he wrote of them as of persons real and living. So regarding the author of the Sonnets, we appreciate his jealousy, when (as perhaps in *Henry VIII.*) another and almost equal poet was employed, and may understand how he could blame his false mistress and yet forgive his friend. His poetry and the opportunity and leisure for its enjoyment was his real mistress, like the love of Andromache for Hector displacing and absorbing all other loves.

* * *

If the Sonnets were written by Shakespeare, who the friend and patron so intimately related to the poet and his work was, is a riddle still unsolved; but if they were written by some unknown poet, the obvious and reasonable inference is that they were addressed to Shakespeare.[ ]

It may be asked why I would leave anything as the work of Shakespeare, if I deny to him the authorship of the greater plays. My answer is this: I believe he did not write the Sonnets; and if the Sonnets are the work of another, I think it fairly follows that the great dramas, considered as mere poetry, are so clearly in the same class as the Sonnets, that we must ascribe the authorship of the greater Shakespearean dramas to the same great unknown.

When it is once agreed that any considerable portions of the plays credited to Shakespeare are from different authors, almost the entire force of the argument resting on report or tradition is destroyed; because report or tradition is about equally satisfied and equally antagonized by ascribing to him the authorship of either section into which the admission of dual authorship concedes that they are divided.

That Shakespeare must have had a genius for dramatic work,—though not necessarily for poetry,—his success as a reputed dramatist and as a manager, all his history and traditions, very clearly indicate. And conceding him that, why is not the situation fully satisfied by considering that he was the lesser, or one of the lesser, rather than the greater of the collaborators; and that his knowledge of the stage and his talent for conceiving proper dramatic effects or situations, made his labors valuable to the greater poet, aiding him to give to his works a dramatic form and movement which many other great poets have entirely failed to attain. So considering, the Shakespearean plays will in some degree still seem to us the work of the gentle Shakespeare, although in large part the product of the older and more mature mind, the dreaming and loving recluse and student, who could say,—

Your name from hence immortal life shall have,
Though *I* , once gone, to all the world must die:
The earth can yield *me* but a common grave,
When *you* entombed in men's eyes shall lie.

And so believing, may we not still go with reverent feet to that grave upon the Avon? For there, as I conceive, sleeps he whose sunny graces won the undying love of the greatest of lovers and of poets, and whose assistance and support made possible the dreaming hours and days in which were delivered from his loving friend's overburdened brain the marvellous and matchless creations of the Shakespearean anthology.

<<span id="filepos0039264015"> a>CHAPTER VI

OF THE CONCLUSIONS TO BE DRAWN FROM THE SONNETS

The result of the preceding discussion, as it appears to me, is as follows:

The Sonnets were not written by Shakespeare, but it is very probable that he was the friend or patron around whom their poetry moves and to whom most of them are addressed.

Reading the entire series with that theory in mind, very many difficulties of interpretation are entirely overcome. Without this theory so many of the Sonnets seem blind, or obviously false or inaccurate, that many have been led to the inference of conceits, affectations, imitations, or hidden meanings. Adopting the theory here presented, there is neither reason nor excuse for giving to their words any other than their natural or ordinary meaning.

I would not deny to Shakespeare great talent. His success in and with theatres certainly forbids us to do so. That he had a bent or a talent for rhyming or for poetry, an early and persistent tradition and the inscription over his grave indicate. And otherwise there could hardly have been attributed to him so many plays beside those written by the author of the Sonnets.

Assuming that the Sonnets were not written by him, it would then seem clear that to Shakespeare, working as an actor, adapter or perhaps author, came a very great poet, one who outclassed all the writers of that day, in some respects all other writers; and that it is the poetry of that great unknown which, flowing into Shakespeare's work, comprises all, or nearly all of it which the world treasures or cares to remember. I would not dispute any claim made for Shakespeare for dramatic as distinguished from poetic talent, for wit, or comely or captivating graces. The case is all with him there,—at least there is no evidence to the contrary. But I insist that the Sonnets reveal another poet, and reveal that those great dramas, or at least that those portions of them which are in the same class or grade of poetry as the Sonnets, were the work of that great unknown.

<<span id="filepos0039267243"> a>APPENDIX

The different versions of the verses which Shakespeare is alleged to have composed on Sir Thomas Lucy are as follows:

A parliamente member, a justice of peace,
At home a poore scare-crow, at London an asse;
If lowsie is Lucy, as some volke miscalle it,
Then Lucy is lowsie, whatever befalle it:
He thinkes himselfe greate,
Yet an asse in his state
We allowe by his eares but with asses to mate.
If Lucy is lowsie, as some volke miscalle it,
Sing lowsie Lucy, whatever befalle it.

Sir Thomas was too covetous
To covet so much deer,
When horns enough upon his head
Most plainly did appear.

Had not his worship one deer left?

What then? He had a wife
Took pains enough to find him horns
Should last him during life.

<<span id="filepos0039268550"> a>ON SHAKESPEARE by Leo Tolstoy

PART I

Mr. Crosby's article on Shakespeare's attitude toward the working classes suggested to me the idea of also expressing my own long-established opinion about the works of Shakespeare, in direct opposition, as it is, to that established in all the whole European world. Calling to mind all the struggle of doubt and self-deceit,—efforts to attune myself to Shakespeare—which I went through owing to my complete disagreement with this universal adulation, and, presuming that many have experienced and are experiencing the same, I think that it may not be unprofitable to express definitely and frankly this view of mine, opposed to that of the majority, and the more so as the conclusions to which I came, when examining the causes of my disagreement with the universally established opinion, are, it seems to me, not without interest and significance.

My disagreement with the established opinion about Shakespeare is not the result of an accidental frame of mind, nor of a light-minded attitude toward the matter, but is the outcome of many years' repeated and insistent endeavors to harmonize my own views of Shakespeare with those established amongst all civilized men of the Christian world.

I remember the astonishment I felt when I first read Shakespeare. I expected to receive a powerful esthetic pleasure, but having read, one after the other, works regarded as his best: "King Lear," "Romeo and Juliet," "Hamlet" and "Macbeth," not only did I feel no delight, but I felt an irresistible repulsion and tedium, and doubted as to whether I was senseless in feeling works regarded as the summit of perfection by the whole of the civilized world to be trivial and positively bad, or whether the significance which this civilized world attributes to the works of Shakespeare was itself senseless. My consternation was increased by the fact that I always keenly felt the beauties of poetry in every form; then why should artistic works recognized by the whole world as those of a genius,—the works of Shakespeare,—not only fail to please me, but be disagreeable to me? For a long time I could not believe in myself, and during fifty years, in order to test myself, I several times recommenced reading Shakespeare in every possible form, in Russian, in English, in German and in Schlegel's translation, as I was advised. Several times I read the dramas and the comedies and historical plays, and I invariably underwent the same feelings: repulsion, weariness, and bewilderment. At the present time, before writing this preface, being desirous once more to test myself, I have, as an old man of seventy-five, again read the whole of Shakespeare, including the historical plays, the "Henrys," "Troilus and Cressida," the "Tempest," "Cymbeline," and I have felt, with even greater force, the same feelings,—this time, however, not of bewilderment, but of firm, indubitable conviction that the unquestionable glory of a great genius which Shakespeare enjoys, and which compels writers of our time to imitate him and readers and spectators to discover in him non-existent merits,—thereby distorting their esthetic and ethical understanding,—is a great evil, as is every untruth.

Altho I know that the majority of people so firmly believe in the greatness of Shakespeare that in reading this judgment of mine they will not admit even the possibility of its justice, and will not give it the slightest attention, nevertheless I will endeavor, as well as I can, to show why I believe that Shakespeare can not be recognized either as a great genius, or even as an average author.

For illustration of my purpose I will take one of Shakespeare's most extolled dramas, "King Lear," in the enthusiastic praise of which, the majority of critics agree.

"The tragedy of Lear is deservedly celebrated among the dramas of Shakespeare," says Dr. Johnson. "There is perhaps no play which keeps the attention so strongly fixed, which so much agitates our passions, and interests our curiosity."

"We wish that we could pass this play over and say nothing about it," says Hazlitt, "all that we can say must fall far short of the subject, or even of what we ourselves conceive of it. To attempt to give a description of the play itself, or of its effects upon the mind, is mere impertinence; yet we must say something. It is, then, the best of Shakespeare's plays, for it is the one in which he was the most in earnest."

"If the originality of invention did not so much stamp almost every play of Shakespeare," says Hallam, "that to name one as the most original seems a disparagement to others, we might say that this great prerogative of genius, was exercised above all in 'Lear.' It diverges more from the model of regular tragedy than 'Macbeth,' or 'Othello,' and even more than 'Hamlet,' but the fable is better constructed than in the last of these and it displays full as much of the almost superhuman inspiration of the poet as the other two."

"'King Lear' may be recognized as the perfect model of the dramatic art of the whole world," says Shelley.

"I am not minded to say much of Shakespeare's Arthur," says Swinburne. "There are one or two figures in the world of his work of which there are no words that would be fit or good to say. Another of these is Cordelia. The place they have in our lives and thoughts is not one for talk. The niche set apart for them to inhabit in our secret hearts is not penetrable by the lights and noises of common day. There are chapels in the cathedrals of man's highest art, as in that of his inmost life, not made to be set open to the eyes and feet of the world. Love, and Death, and Memory, keep charge for us in silence of some beloved names. It is the crowning glory of genius, the final miracle and transcendent gift of poetry, that it can add to the number of these and engrave on the very heart of our remembrance fresh names and memories of its own creation."

"Lear is the occasion for Cordelia," says Victor Hugo. "Maternity of the daughter toward the father; profound subject; maternity venerable among all other maternities, so admirably rendered by the legend of that Roman girl, who, in the depths of a prison, nurses her old father. The young breast near the white beard! There is not a spectacle more holy. This filial breast is Cordelia. Once this figure dreamed of and found, Shakespeare created his drama.... Shakespeare, carrying Cordelia in his thoughts, created that tragedy like a god who, having an aurora to put forward, makes a world expressly for it."

"In 'King Lear,' Shakespeare's vision sounded the abyss of horror to its very depths, and his spirit showed neither fear, nor giddiness, nor faintness, at the sight," says Brandes. "On the threshold of this work, a feeling of awe comes over one, as on the threshold of the Sistine Chapel, with its ceiling of frescoes by Michael Angelo,—only that the suffering here is far more intense, the wail wilder, and the harmonies of beauty more definitely shattered by the discords of despair."

Such are the judgments of the critics about this drama, and therefore I believe I am not wrong in selecting it as a type of Shakespeare's best.

As impartially as possible, I will endeavor to describe the contents of the drama, and then to show why it is not that acme of perfection it is represented to be by critics, but is something quite different.

II

The drama of "Lear" begins with a scene giving the conversation between two courtiers, Kent and Gloucester. Kent, pointing to a young man present, asks Gloucester whether that is not his son. Gloucester says that he has often blushed to acknowledge the young man as his son, but has now ceased doing so. Kent says he "can not conceive him." Then Gloucester in the presence of this son of his says: "The fellow's mother could, and grew round-wombed, and had a son for her cradle ere she had a husband for her bed." "I have another, a legitimate son," continues Gloucester, "but altho this one came into the world before he was sent for, his mother was fair and there was good sport at his making, and therefore I acknowledge this one also."

Such is the introduction. Not to mention the coarseness of these words of Gloucester, they are, farther, out of place in the mouth of a person intended to represent a noble character. One can not agree with the opinion of some critics that these words are given to Gloucester in order to show the contempt for his illegitimacy from which Edmund suffers. Were this so, it would first have been unnecessary to make the father express the contempt felt by men in general, and, secondly, Edmund, in his monolog about the injustice of those who despise him for his birth, would have mentioned such words from his father. But this is not so, and therefore these words of Gloucester at the very beginning of the piece, were merely intended as a communication to the public—in a humorous form—of the fact that Gloucester has a legitimate son and an illegitimate one.

After this, trumpets are blown, and King Lear enters with his daughters and sons-in-law, and utters a speech to the effect that, owing to old age, he wishes to retire from the cares of business and divide his kingdom between his daughters. In order to know how much he should give to each daughter, he announces that to the one who says she loves him most he will give most. The eldest daughter, Goneril, says that words can not express the extent of her love, that she loves her father more than eyesight, space, and liberty, loves him so much that it "makes her breath poor." King Lear immediately allots his daughter on the map, her portion of fields, woods, rivers, and meadows, and asks the same question of the second daughter. The second daughter, Regan, says that her sister has correctly expressed her own feelings, only not strongly enough. She, Regan, loves her father so much that everything is abhorrent to her except his love. The king rewards this daughter, also, and then asks his youngest, the favorite, in whom, according to his expression, are "interess'd the vines of France and the milk of Burgundy," that is, whose hand is being claimed by the King of France and the Duke of Burgundy,—he asks Cordelia how she loves him. Cordelia, who personifies all the virtues, as the eldest two all the vices, says, quite out of place, as if on purpose to irritate her father, that altho she loves and honors him, and is grateful to him, yet if she marries, all her love will not belong to her father, but she will also love her husband.

Hearing these words, the King loses his temper, and curses this favorite daughter with the most dreadful and strange maledictions, saying, for instance, that he will henceforth love his daughter as little as he loves the man who devours his own children.

"The barbarous Scythian, Or he that makes his generation messes To gorge his appetite, shall to my bosom Be as well neighbour'd, pitied, and relieved. As thou, my sometime daughter."

The courtier, Kent, defends Cordelia, and desiring to appease the King, rebukes him for his injustice, and says reasonable things about the evil of flattery. Lear, unmoved by Kent, banishes him under pain of death, and calling to him Cordelia's two suitors, the Duke of Burgundy and the King of France, proposes to them in turn to take Cordelia without dowry. The Duke of Burgundy frankly says that without dowry he will not take Cordelia, but the King of France takes her without dowry and leads her away. After this, the elder sisters, there and then entering into conversation, prepare to injure their father who had endowed them. Thus ends the first scene.

Not to mention the pompous, characterless language of King Lear, the same in which all Shakespeare's Kings speak, the reader, or spectator, can not conceive that a King, however old and stupid he may be, could believe the words of the vicious daughters, with whom he had passed his whole life, and not believe his favorite daughter, but curse and banish her; and therefore the spectator, or reader, can not share the feelings of the persons participating in this unnatural scene.

The second scene opens with Edmund, Gloucester's illegitimate son, soliloquizing on the injustice of men, who concede rights and respect to the legitimate son, but deprive the illegitimate son of them, and he determines to ruin Edgar, and to usurp his place. For this purpose, he forges a letter to himself as from Edgar, in which the latter expresses a desire to murder his father. Awaiting his father's approach, Edmund, as if against his will, shows him this letter, and the father immediately believes that his son Edgar, whom he tenderly loves, desires to kill him. The father goes away, Edgar enters and Edmund persuades him that his father for some reason desires to kill him. Edgar immediately believes this and flees from his parent.

The relations between Gloucester and his two sons, and the feelings of these characters are as unnatural as Lear's relation to his daughters, or even more so, and therefore it is still more difficult for the spectator to transport himself into the mental condition of Gloucester and his sons and sympathize with them, than it is to do so into that of Lear and his daughters.

In the fourth scene, the banished Kent, so disguised that Lear does not recognize him, presents himself to Lear, who is already staying with Goneril. Lear asks who he is, to which Kent answers, one doesn't know why, in a tone quite inappropriate to his position: "A very honest-hearted fellow and as poor as the King."—"If thou be as poor for a subject as he is for a King, thou art poor enough—How old art thou?" asks the King. "Not so young, Sir, to love a woman, *etc.* , nor so old to dote on her." To this the King says, "If I like thee no worse after dinner, I will not part from thee yet."

These speeches follow neither from Lear's position, nor his relation to Kent, but are put into the mouths of Lear and Kent, evidently because the author regards them as witty and amusing.

Goneril's steward appears, and behaves rudely to Lear, for which Kent knocks him down. The King, still not recognizing Kent, gives him money for this and takes him into his service. After this appears the fool, and thereupon begins a prolonged conversation between the fool and the King, utterly unsuited to the position and serving no purpose. Thus, for instance, the fool says, "Give me an egg and I'll give thee two crowns." The King asks, "What crowns shall they be?"—"Why," says the fool, "after I have cut the egg i' the middle, and eat up the meat, the two crowns of the egg. When thou clovest thy crown i' the middle, and gavest away both parts, thou borest thine ass on thy back o'er the dirt: thou hadst little wit in thy bald crown when thou gavest thy golden one away. If I speak like myself in this, let him be whipp'd that first finds it so."

In this manner lengthy conversations go on calling forth in the spectator or reader that wearisome uneasiness which one experiences when listening to jokes which are not witty.

This conversation was interrupted by the approach of Goneril. She demands of her father that he should diminish his retinue; that he should be satisfied with fifty courtiers instead of a hundred. At this suggestion, Lear gets into a strange and unnatural rage, and asks:

"Doth any here know me? This is not Lear: Does Lear walk thus? speak thus? Where are his eyes? Either his notion weakens, his discernings Are lethargied. Ha! 'tis not so. Who is it that can tell me who I am?"

And so forth.

While this goes on the fool does not cease to interpolate his humorless jokes. Goneril's husband then enters and wishes to appease Lear, but Lear curses Goneril, invoking for her either sterility or the birth of such an infant-monster as would return laughter and contempt for her motherly cares, and would thus show her all the horror and pain caused by a child's ingratitude.

These words which express a genuine feeling, might have been touching had they stood alone. But they are lost among long and high-flown speeches, which Lear keeps incessantly uttering quite inappropriately. He either invokes "blasts and fogs" upon the head of his daughter, or desires his curse to "pierce every sense about her," or else appealing to his own eyes, says that should they weep, he will pluck them out and "cast them with the waters that they lose to temper clay." And so on.

After this, Lear sends Kent, whom he still fails to recognize, to his other daughter, and notwithstanding the despair he has just manifested, he talks with the fool, and elicits his jokes. The jokes continue to be mirthless and besides creating an unpleasant feeling, similar to shame, the usual effect of unsuccessful witticisms, they are also so drawn out as to be positively dull. Thus the fool asks the King whether he can tell why one's nose stands in the middle of one's face? Lear says he can not.—

"Why, to keep one's eyes of either side 's nose, that what a man can not smell out, he may spy out."

"Canst tell how an oyster makes his shell?"

"No."

"Nor I either; but I can tell why a snail has a house."

"Why?"

"Why, to put his head in; not to give it away to his daughters and leave his horns without a case."

"——Be my horses ready?"

"Thy asses are gone about 'em. The reason why the seven stars are no more than seven is a pretty reason."

"Because they are not eight?"

"Yes, indeed: thou would'st make a good fool."

And so on.

After this lengthy scene, a gentleman enters and announces that the horses are ready. The fool says:

"She that's a maid now, and laughs at my departure, Shall not be a maid long, unless things be cut shorter."

The second part of the first scene of the second act begins by the villain Edmund persuading his brother, when their father enters, to pretend that they are fighting with their swords. Edgar consents, altho it is utterly incomprehensible why he should do so. The father finds them fighting. Edgar flies and Edmund scratches his arm to draw blood and persuades his father that Edgar was working charms for the purpose of killing his father and had desired Edmund to help him, but that he, Edmund, had refused and that then Edgar flew at him and wounded his arm. Gloucester believes everything, curses Edgar and transfers all the rights of the elder and legitimate son to the illegitimate Edmund. The Duke, hearing of this, also rewards Edmund.

In the second scene, in front of Gloucester's palace, Lear's new servant, Kent, still unrecognized by Lear, without any reason, begins to abuse Oswald, Goneril's steward, calling him,—"A knave, a rascal, an eater of broken meats; a base, proud, shallow, beggarly, three-suited, hundred-pound, filthy, worsted-stocking knave;—the son and heir of a mongrel bitch." And so on. Then drawing his sword, he demands that Oswald should fight with him, saying that he will make a "sop o' the moonshine" of him,—words which no commentators can explain. When he is stopped, he continues to give vent to the strangest abuse, saying that a tailor made Oswald, as "a stone-cutter or a painter could not have made him so ill, tho they had been but two hours o' the trade!" He further says that, if only leave be given him, he will "tread this unbolted villain into mortar and daub the wall of a jakes with him."

Thus Kent, whom nobody recognizes, altho both the King and the Duke of Cornwall, as well as Gloucester who is present, ought to know him well, continues to brawl, in the character of Lear's new servant, until he is taken and put in the stocks.

The third scene takes place on a heath. Edgar, flying from the persecutions of his father, hides in a wood and tells the public what kind of lunatics exist there—beggars who go about naked, thrust wooden pricks and pins into their flesh, scream with wild voices and enforce charity, and says that he wishes to simulate such a lunatic in order to save himself from persecution. Having communicated this to the public, he retires.

The fourth scene is again before Gloucester's castle. Enter Lear and the fool. Lear sees Kent in the stocks, and, still not recognizing him, is inflamed with rage against those who dared so to insult his messenger, and calls for the Duke and Regan. The fool goes on with his jokes.

Lear with difficulty restrains his ire. Enter the Duke and Regan. Lear complains of Goneril but Regan justifies her sister. Lear curses Goneril, and, when Regan tells him he had better return to her sister, he is indignant and says: "Ask her forgiveness?" and falls down on his knees demonstrating how indecent it would be if he were abjectly to beg food and clothing as charity from his own daughter, and he curses Goneril with the strangest curses and asks who put his servant in the stocks. Before Regan can answer, Goneril arrives. Lear becomes yet more exasperated and again curses Goneril, but when he is told that it was the Duke himself who ordered the stocks, he does not say anything, because, at this moment, Regan tells him that she can not receive him now and that he had best return to Goneril, and that in a month's time she herself will receive him, with, however, not a hundred but fifty servants. Lear again curses Goneril and does not want to go to her, continuing to hope that Regan will accept him with the whole hundred servants. But Regan says she will receive him only with twenty-five and then Lear makes up his mind to go back to Goneril who admits fifty. But when Goneril says that even twenty-five are too many, Lear pours forth a long argument about the superfluous and the needful being relative and says that if man is not allowed more than he needs, he is not to be distinguished from a beast. Lear, or rather the actor who plays Lear's part, adds that there is no need for a lady's finery, which does not keep her warm. After this he flies into a mad fury and says that to take vengeance on his daughters he will do something dreadful but that he will not weep, and so he departs. A storm begins.

Such is the second act, full of unnatural events, and yet more unnatural speeches, not flowing from the position of the characters,—and finishing with a scene between Lear and his daughters which might have been powerful if it had not been permeated with the most absurdly foolish, unnatural speeches—which, moreover, have no relation to the subject,—put into the mouth of Lear. Lear's vacillations between pride, anger, and the hope of his daughters' giving in, would be exceedingly touching if it were not spoilt by the verbose absurdities to which he gives vent, about being ready to divorce himself from Regan's dead mother, should Regan not be glad to receive him,—or about his calling down "fen suck'd frogs" which he invokes, upon the head of his daughter, or about the heavens being obliged to patronize old people because they themselves are old.

The third act begins with thunder, lightning, a storm of some special kind such as, according to the words of the characters in the piece, had never before taken place. On the heath, a gentleman tells Kent that Lear, banished by his daughters from their homes, is running about the heath alone, tearing his hair and throwing it to the wind, and that none but the fool is with him. In return Kent tells the gentleman that the dukes have quarrelled, and that the French army has landed at Dover, and, having communicated this intelligence, he dispatches the gentleman to Dover to meet Cordelia.

The second scene of the third act also takes place on the heath, but in another part of it. Lear walks about the heath and says words which are meant to express his despair: he desires that the winds should blow so hard that they should crack their cheeks and that the rain should flood everything, that lightning should singe his white head, and the thunder flatten the world and destroy all germens "that make ungrateful man!" The fool keeps uttering still more senseless words. Enter Kent. Lear says that for some reason during this storm all criminals shall be found out and convicted. Kent, still unrecognized by Lear, endeavors to persuade him to take refuge in a hovel. At this point the fool pronounces a prophecy in no wise related to the situation and they all depart.

The third scene is again transferred to Gloucester's castle. Gloucester tells Edmund that the French King has already landed with his troops, and intends to help Lear. Learning this, Edmund decides to accuse his father of treason in order that he may get his heritage.

The fourth scene is again on the heath in front of the hovel. Kent invites Lear into the hovel, but Lear answers that he has no reason to shelter himself from the tempest, that he does not feel it, having a tempest in his mind, called forth by the ingratitude of his daughters, which extinguishes all else. This true feeling, expressed in simple words, might elicit sympathy, but amidst the incessant, pompous raving it escapes one and loses its significance.

The hovel into which Lear is led, turns out to be the same which Edgar has entered, disguised as a madman, *i.e.* , naked. Edgar comes out of the hovel, and, altho all have known him, no one recognizes him,—as no one recognizes Kent,—and Edgar, Lear, and the fool begin to say senseless things which continue with interruptions for many pages. In the middle of this scene, enter Gloucester, who also does not recognize either Kent or his son Edgar, and tells them how his son Edgar wanted to kill him.

This scene is again cut short by another in Gloucester's castle, during which Edmund betrays his father and the Duke promises to avenge himself on Gloucester. Then the scene shifts back to Lear. Kent, Edgar, Gloucester, Lear, and the fool are at a farm and talking. Edgar says: "Frateretto calls me, and tells me Nero is an angler in the lake of darkness...." The fool says: "Tell me whether a madman be a gentleman or a yeoman?" Lear, having lost his mind, says that the madman is a king. The fool says no, the madman is the yeoman who has allowed his son to become a gentleman. Lear screams: "To have a thousand with red burning spirits. Come hissing in upon 'em,"—while Edgar shrieks that the foul fiend bites his back. At this the fool remarks that one can not believe "in the tameness of a wolf, a horse's health, a boy's love, or a whore's oath." Then Lear imagines he is judging his daughters. "Sit thou here, most learned justicer," says he, addressing the naked Edgar; "Thou, sapient sir, sit here. Now, you she foxes." To this Edgar says: "Look where he stands and glares! Wantest thou eyes at trial, madam?" "Come o'er the bourn, Bessy, to me,——" while the fool sings:

"Her boat hath a leak And she must not speak Why she dares not come over to thee."

Edgar goes on in his own strain. Kent suggests that Lear should lie down, but Lear continues his imaginary trial: "Bring in their evidence," he cries. "Thou robed man of justice, take thy place," he says to Edgar, "and thou" (to the fool) "his yoke-fellow of equity, bench by his side. You are o' the commission, sit you too," addressing Kent.

"Purr, the cat is gray," shouts Edgar.

"Arraign her first, 'tis Goneril," cries Lear. "I here take my oath before this honorable assembly, she kicked the poor king, her father."

"Come hither, mistress. Is your name Goneril?" says the fool, addressing the seat.

"And here's another," cries Lear. "Stop her there! arms, arms, sword, fire! Corruption in the place! False justice, why hast thou let her 'scape?"

This raving terminates by Lear falling asleep and Gloucester persuading Kent, still without recognizing him, to carry Lear to Dover, and Kent and the fool carry off the King.

The scene is transferred to Gloucester's castle. Gloucester himself is about to be accused of treason. He is brought forward and bound. The Duke of Cornwall plucks out one of his eyes and sets his foot on it. Regan says, "One side will mock another; the other too." The Duke wishes to pluck the other out also, but some servant, for some reason, suddenly takes Gloucester's part and wounds the Duke. Regan kills the servant, who, dying, says to Gloucester that he has "one eye left to see some mischief on him." The Duke says, "Lest it see more, prevent it," and he tears out Gloucester's other eye and throws it on the ground. Here Regan says that it was Edmund who betrayed his father and then Gloucester immediately understands that he has been deceived and that Edgar did not wish to kill him.

Thus ends the third act.

The fourth act is again on the heath. Edgar, still attired as a lunatic, soliloquizes in stilted terms about the instability of fortune and the advantages of a humble lot. Then there comes to him somehow into the very place on the heath where he is, his father, the blinded Gloucester, led by an old man. In that characteristic Shakespearean language,—the chief peculiarity of which is that the thoughts are bred either by the consonance or the contrasts of words,—Gloucester also speaks about the instability of fortune. He tells the old man who leads him to leave him, but the old man points out to him that he can not *see* his way. Gloucester says he has no way and therefore does not require *eyes* . And he argues about his having stumbled when he *saw* , and about defects often proving commodities. "Ah! dear son Edgar," he adds, "might I but live to *see* thee in my touch, I'd say I had *eyes* again." Edgar naked, and in the character of a lunatic, hearing this, still does not disclose himself to his father. He takes the place of the aged guide and talks with his father, who does not recognize his voice, but regards him as a wandering madman. Gloucester avails himself of the opportunity to deliver himself of a witticism: "'Tis the times' plague when madmen lead the blind," and he insists on dismissing the old man, obviously not from motives which might be natural to Gloucester at that moment, but merely in order, when left alone with Edgar, to enact the later scene of the imaginary leaping from the cliff.

Notwithstanding Edgar has just seen his blinded father, and has learnt that his father repents of having banished him, he puts in utterly unnecessary interjections which Shakespeare might know, having read them in Haronet's book, but which Edgar had no means of becoming acquainted with, and above all, which it was quite unnatural for him to repeat in his present position. He says, "Five friends have been in poor Tom at once: of lust, as Obidient; Hobbididance, prince of dumbness; Mahu, of stealing; Modo, of murder; Flibbertigibbet, of mopping and mowing; who since possesses chambermaids and waiting women."

Hearing these words, Gloucester makes a present of his purse to Edgar, saying:

"That I am so wretched Makes thee the happier; heavens, deal so still, Let the superfluous and lust-dieted man, That slaves your ordinance, that will not see Because he doth not feel, feel your power quickly. So distribution should undo excess, And each man have enough."

Having pronounced these strange words, the blind Gloucester requests Edgar to lead him to a certain cliff overhanging the sea, and they depart.

The second scene of the fourth act takes place before the Duke of Albany's palace. Goneril is not only cruel, but also depraved. She despises her husband and discloses her love to the villain Edmund, who has inherited the title of his father Gloucester. Edmund leaves, and a conversation takes place between Goneril and her husband. The Duke of Albany, the only figure with human feelings, who had already previously been dissatisfied with his wife's treatment of her father, now resolutely takes Lear's side, but expresses his emotion in such words as to shake one's confidence in his feeling. He says that a bear would lick Lear's reverence, that if the heavens do not send their visible spirits to tame these vile offenses, humanity must prey on itself like monsters, *etc.*

Goneril does not listen to him, and then he begins to abuse her:

"See thyself, devil! Proper deformity seems not in the fiend So horrid as in woman."

"O vain fool," says Goneril. "Thou changed and self-cover'd thing, for shame," continues the Duke:

"Be-monster not thy feature. Were't my fitness To let these hands obey my blood, They are apt enough to dislocate and tear Thy flesh and bones; howe'er thou art a fiend, A woman's shape doth shield thee."

After this a messenger enters, and announces that the Duke of Cornwall, wounded by his servant whilst plucking out Gloucester's eyes, had died. Goneril is glad but already anticipates with fear that Regan, now a widow, will deprive her of Edmund. Here the second scene ends.

The third scene of the fourth act represents the French camp. From a conversation between Kent and a gentleman, the reader or spectator learns that the King of France is not in the camp and that Cordelia has received a letter from Kent and is greatly grieved by what she has learned about her father. The gentleman says that her face reminded one of sunshine and rain.

"Her smiles and tears Were like a better day; those happy smiles That play'd on her ripe lip seem'd not to know What guests were in her eyes; which parted thence, As pearls from diamonds dropp'd."

And so forth.

The gentleman says that Cordelia desires to see her father, but Kent says that Lear is ashamed of seeing this daughter whom he has treated so unkindly.

In the fourth scene, Cordelia, talking with a physician, tells him that Lear has been seen, that he is quite mad, wearing on his head a wreath of various weeds, that he is roaming about and that she has sent soldiers in search of him, adding that she desires all secret remedies to spring with her tears, and the like.

She is informed that the forces of the Dukes are approaching, but she is concerned only about her father and departs.

The fifth scene of the fourth act lies in Gloucester's castle. Regan is talking with Oswald, Goneril's steward, who is carrying a letter from Goneril to Edmund, and she announces to him that she also loves Edmund and that, being a widow, it is better for her to marry him than for Goneril to do so, and she begs him to persuade her sister of this. Further she tells him that it was very unreasonable to blind Gloucester and yet leave him alive, and therefore advises Oswald, should he meet Gloucester, to kill him, promising him a great reward if he does this.

In the sixth scene, Gloucester again appears with his still unrecognized son Edgar, who (now in the guise of a peasant) pretends to lead his father to the cliff. Gloucester is walking along on level land but Edgar persuades him that they are with difficulty ascending a steep hill. Gloucester believes this. Edgar tells his father that the noise of the sea is heard; Gloucester believes this also. Edgar stops on a level place and persuades his father that he has ascended the cliff and that in front of him lies a dreadful abyss, and leaves him alone. Gloucester, addressing the gods, says that he shakes off his affliction as he can bear it no longer, and that he does not condemn them—the gods. Having said this, he leaps on the level ground and falls, imagining that he has jumped off the cliff. On this occasion, Edgar, soliloquizing, gives vent to a yet more entangled utterance:

"I know not how conceit may rob The treasury of life when life itself Yields to the theft; had he been where he thought, By this had thought been past."

He approaches Gloucester, in the character of yet a different person, and expressing astonishment at the latter not being hurt by his fall from such a dreadful height. Gloucester believes that he has fallen and prepares to die, but he feels that he is alive and begins to doubt that he has fallen from such a height. Then Edgar persuades him that he has indeed jumped from the dreadful height and tells him that the individual who had been with him at the top was the devil, as he had eyes like two full moons and a thousand noses and wavy horns. Gloucester believes this, and is persuaded that his despair was the work of the devil, and therefore decides that he will henceforth despair no more, but will quietly await death. Hereupon enters Lear, for some reason covered with wild-flowers. He has lost his senses and says things wilder than before. He speaks about coining, about the moon, gives some one a yard—then he cries that he sees a mouse, which he wishes to entice by a piece of cheese. Then he suddenly demands the password from Edgar, and Edgar immediately answers him with the words "Sweet marjoram." Lear says, "Pass," and the blind Gloucester, who has not recognized either his son or Kent, recognizes the King's voice.

Then the King, after his disconnected utterances, suddenly begins to speak ironically about flatterers, who agreed to all he said, "Ay, and no, too, was no good divinity," but, when he got into a storm without shelter, he saw all this was not true; and then goes on to say that as all creation addicts itself to adultery, and Gloucester's bastard son had treated his father more kindly than his daughters had treated him (altho Lear, according to the development of the drama, could not know how Edmund had treated Gloucester), therefore, let dissoluteness prosper, the more so as, being a King, he needs soldiers. He here addresses an imaginary hypocritically virtuous lady who acts the prude, whereas

"The fitchew nor the soiled horse goes to't With a more riotous appetite. All women inherit the gods only to the girdle Beneath is all the fiend's"—

and, saying this, Lear screams and spits from horror. This monolog is evidently meant to be addressed by the actor to the audience, and probably produces an effect on the stage, but it is utterly uncalled for in the mouth of Lear, equally with his words: "It smells of mortality," uttered while wiping his hand, as Gloucester expresses a desire to kiss it. Then Gloucester's blindness is referred to, which gives occasion for a play of words on *eyes* , about blind Cupid, at which Lear says to Gloucester, "No *eyes* in your head, nor no money in your *purse* ? Your *eyes* are in a *heavy* case, your purse in a *light* ." Then Lear declaims a monolog on the unfairness of legal judgment, which is quite out of place in the mouth of the insane Lear. After this, enter a gentleman with attendants sent by Cordelia to fetch her father. Lear continues to act as a madman and runs away. The gentleman sent to fetch Lear, does not run after him, but lengthily describes to Edgar the position of the French and British armies. Oswald enters, and seeing Gloucester, and desiring to receive the reward promised by Regan, attacks him, but Edgar with his club kills Oswald, who, in dying, transmits to his murderer, Edgar, Goneril's letter to Edmund, the delivery of which would insure reward. In this letter Goneril promises to kill her husband and marry Edmund. Edgar drags out Oswald's body by the legs and then returns and leads his father away.

The seventh scene of the fourth act takes place in a tent in the French camp. Lear is asleep on a bed. Enter Cordelia and Kent, still in disguise. Lear is awakened by the music, and, seeing Cordelia, does not believe she is a living being, thinks she is an apparition, does not believe that he himself is alive. Cordelia assures him that she is his daughter, and begs him to bless her. He falls on his knees before her, begs her pardon, acknowledges that he is as old and foolish, says he is ready to take poison, which he thinks she has probably prepared for him, as he is persuaded she must hate him. ("For your sisters," he says, "have done me wrong: you have some cause, they have not.") Then he gradually comes to his senses and ceases to rave. His daughter suggests that he should take a walk. He consents and says: "You must bear with me. Pray you now forget and forgive: I am old and foolish." They depart. The gentleman and Kent, remaining on the scene, hold a conversation which explains to the spectator that Edmund is at the head of the troops and that a battle must soon begin between Lear's defenders and his enemies. So the fourth act closes.

In this fourth act, the scene between Lear and his daughter might have been touching if it had not been preceded in the course of the earlier acts by the tediously drawn out, monotonous ravings of Lear, and if, moreover, this expression of his feelings constituted the last scene. But the scene is not the last.

In the fifth act, the former coldly pompous, artificial ravings of Lear go on again, destroying the impression which the previous scene might have produced.

The first scene of the fifth act at first represents Edmund and Regan; the latter is jealous of her sister and makes an offer. Then come Goneril, her husband, and some soldiers. The Duke of Albany, altho pitying Lear, regards it as his duty to fight with the French who have invaded his country, and so he prepares for battle.

Then Edgar enters, still disguised, and hands to the Duke of Albany the letter he had received from Goneril's dying steward, and tells him if he gains the victory to sound the trumpet, saying that he can produce a champion who will confirm the contents of the letter.

In the second scene, Edgar enters leading his father Gloucester, seats him by a tree, and goes away himself. The noise of battle is heard, Edgar runs back and says that the battle is lost and Lear and Cordelia are prisoners. Gloucester again falls into despair. Edgar, still without disclosing himself to his father, counsels endurance, and Gloucester immediately agrees with him.

The third scene opens with a triumphal progress of the victor Edmund. Lear and Cordelia are prisoners. Lear, altho no longer insane, continues to utter the same senseless, inappropriate words, as, for example, that in prison he will sing with Cordelia, she will ask his blessing, and he will kneel down (this process of kneeling down is repeated three times) and will ask her forgiveness. And he further says that, while they are living in prison, they will wear out "packs and sects of great ones"; that he and Cordelia are sacrifices upon which the gods will throw incense, and that he that parts them "shall bring a brand from heaven and fire them like foxes; that he will not weep, and that the plague shall sooner devour his eyes, flesh and fell, than they shall make them weep."

Edmund orders Lear and his daughter to be led away to prison, and, having called the officer to do this, says he requires another duty and asks him whether he'll do it? The captain says he can not draw a cart nor eat dried oats, but if it be men's work he can do it. Enter the Duke of Albany, Goneril, and Regan. The Duke of Albany wishes to champion Lear, but Edmund does not allow it. The daughters take part in the dialog and begin to abuse each other, being jealous of Edmund. Here everything becomes so confused that it is difficult to follow the action. The Duke of Albany wishes to arrest Edmund, and tells Regan that Edmund has long ago entered into guilty relations with his wife, and that, therefore, Regan must give up her claims on Edmund, and if she wishes to marry, should marry him, the Duke of Albany.

Having said this, the Duke of Albany calls Edmund, orders the trumpet to be sounded, saying that, if no one appears, he will fight him himself.

Here Regan, whom Goneril has evidently poisoned, falls deadly sick. Trumpets are sounded and Edgar enters with a vizor concealing his face, and, without giving his name, challenges Edmund. Edgar abuses Edmund; Edmund throws all the abuses back on Edgar's head. They fight and Edmund falls. Goneril is in despair. The Duke of Albany shows Goneril her letter. Goneril departs.

The dying Edmund discovers that his opponent was his brother. Edgar raises his vizor and pronounces a moral lesson to the effect that, having begotten his illegitimate son Edmund, the father has paid for it with his eyesight. After this Edgar tells the Duke of Albany his adventures and how he has only just now, before entering on the recent combat, disclosed everything to his father, and the father could not bear it and died from emotion. Edmund is not yet dead, and wants to know all that has taken place.

Then Edgar relates that, while he was sitting over his father's body, a man came and closely embraced him, and, shouting as loudly as if he wished to burst heaven, threw himself on the body of Edgar's father, and told the most piteous tale about Lear and himself, and that while relating this the strings of life began to crack, but at this moment the trumpet sounded twice and Edgar left him "tranced"—and this was Kent.

Edgar has hardly finished this narrative when a gentleman rushes in with a bloody knife, shouting "Help!" In answer to the question, "Who is killed?" the gentleman says that Goneril has been killed, having poisoned her sister, she has confessed it.

Enters Kent, and at this moment the corpses of Goneril and Regan are brought in. Edmund here says that the sisters evidently loved him, as one has poisoned the other for his sake, and then slain herself. At the same time he confesses that he had given orders to kill Lear and to hang Cordelia in prison, and pretend that she had taken her own life; but now he wishes to prevent these deeds, and having said this he dies, and is carried away.

After this enters Lear with the dead Cordelia in his arms, altho he is more than eighty years old and ill. Again begins Lear's awful ravings, at which one feels ashamed as at unsuccessful jokes. Lear demands that all should howl, and, alternately, believes that Cordelia is dead and that she is alive.

"Had I your tongues and eyes," he says "I'd use them so that heaven's vault should crack."

Then he says that he killed the slave who hanged Cordelia. Next he says that his eyes see badly, but at the same time he recognizes Kent whom all along he had not recognized.

The Duke of Albany says that he will resign during the life of Lear and that he will reward Edgar and Kent and all who have been faithful to him. At this moment the news is brought that Edmund is dead, and Lear, continuing his ravings, begs that they will undo one of his buttons—the same request which he had made when roaming about the heath. He expresses his thanks for this, tells everyone to look at something, and thereupon dies.

In conclusion, the Duke of Albany, having survived the others, says:

"The weight of this sad time we must obey; Speak what we feel, not what we ought to say. The oldest hath borne most: we that are young Shall never see so much, nor live so long."

All depart to the music of a dead march. Thus ends the fifth act and the drama.

III

Such is this celebrated drama. However absurd it may appear in my rendering (which I have endeavored to make as impartial as possible), I may confidently say that in the original it is yet more absurd. For any man of our time—if he were not under the hypnotic suggestion that this drama is the height of perfection—it would be enough to read it to its end (were he to have sufficient patience for this) to be convinced that far from being the height of perfection, it is a very bad, carelessly composed production, which, if it could have been of interest to a certain public at a certain time, can not evoke among us anything but aversion and weariness. Every reader of our time, who is free from the influence of suggestion, will also receive exactly the same impression from all the other extolled dramas of Shakespeare, not to mention the senseless, dramatized tales, "Pericles," "Twelfth Night," "The Tempest," "Cymbeline," "Troilus and Cressida."

But such free-minded individuals, not inoculated with Shakespeare-worship, are no longer to be found in our Christian society. Every man of our society and time, from the first period of his conscious life, has been inoculated with the idea that Shakespeare is a genius, a poet, and a dramatist, and that all his writings are the height of perfection. Yet, however hopeless it may seem, I will endeavor to demonstrate in the selected drama—"King Lear"—all those faults equally characteristic also of all the other tragedies and comedies of Shakespeare, on account of which he not only is not representing a model of dramatic art, but does not satisfy the most elementary demands of art recognized by all.

Dramatic art, according to the laws established by those very critics who extol

Shakespeare, demands that the persons represented in the play should be, in consequence of actions proper to their characters, and owing to a natural course of events, placed in positions requiring them to struggle with the surrounding world to which they find themselves in opposition, and in this struggle should display their inherent qualities.

In "King Lear" the persons represented are indeed placed externally in opposition to the outward world, and they struggle with it. But their strife does not flow from the natural course of events nor from their own characters, but is quite arbitrarily established by the author, and therefore can not produce on the reader the illusion which represents the essential condition of art.

Lear has no necessity or motive for his abdication; also, having lived all his life with his daughters, has no reason to believe the words of the two elders and not the truthful statement of the youngest; yet upon this is built the whole tragedy of his position.

Similarly unnatural is the subordinate action: the relation of Gloucester to his sons. The positions of Gloucester and Edgar flow from the circumstance that Gloucester, just like Lear, immediately believes the coarsest untruth and does not even endeavor to inquire of his injured son whether what he is accused of be true, but at once curses and banishes him. The fact that Lear's relations with his daughters are the same as those of Gloucester to his sons makes one feel yet more strongly that in both cases the relations are quite arbitrary, and do not flow from the characters nor the natural course of events. Equally unnatural, and obviously invented, is the fact that all through the tragedy Lear does not recognize his old courtier, Kent, and therefore the relations between Lear and Kent fail to excite the sympathy of the reader or spectator. The same, in a yet greater degree, holds true of the position of Edgar, who, unrecognized by any one, leads his blind father and persuades him that he has leapt off a cliff, when in reality Gloucester jumps on level ground.

These positions, into which the characters are placed quite arbitrarily, are so unnatural that the reader or spectator is unable not only to sympathize with their sufferings but even to be interested in what he reads or sees. This in the first place.

Secondly, in this, as in the other dramas of Shakespeare, all the characters live, think, speak, and act quite unconformably with the given time and place. The action of "King Lear" takes place 800 years b.c., and yet the characters are placed in conditions possible only in the Middle Ages: participating in the drama are kings, dukes, armies, and illegitimate children, and gentlemen, courtiers, doctors, farmers, officers, soldiers, and knights with vizors, *etc.* It is possible that such anachronisms (with which Shakespeare's dramas abound) did not injure the possibility of illusion in the sixteenth century and the beginning of the seventeenth, but in our time it is no longer possible to follow with interest the development of events which one knows could not take place in the conditions which the author describes in detail. The artificiality of the positions, not flowing from the natural course of events, or from the nature of the characters, and their want of conformity with time and space, is further increased by those coarse embellishments which are continually added by Shakespeare and intended to appear particularly touching. The extraordinary storm during which King Lear roams about the heath, or the grass which for some reason he puts on his head—like Ophelia in "Hamlet"—or Edgar's attire, or the fool's speeches, or the appearance of the helmeted horseman, Edgar—all these effects not only fail to enhance the impression, but produce an opposite effect. "Man sieht die Absicht und man wird verstimmt," as Goethe says. It often happens that even during these obviously intentional efforts after effect, as, for instance, the dragging out by the legs of half a dozen corpses, with which all Shakespeare's tragedies terminate, instead of feeling fear and pity, one is tempted rather to laugh.

IV

But it is not enough that Shakespeare's characters are placed in tragic positions which are impossible, do not flow from the course of events, are inappropriate to time and space—these personages, besides this, act in a way which is out of keeping with their definite character, and is quite arbitrary. It is generally asserted that in Shakespeare's dramas the characters are specially well expressed, that, notwithstanding their vividness, they are many-sided, like those of living people; that, while exhibiting the characteristics of a given individual, they at the same time wear the features of man in general; it is usual to say that the delineation of character in Shakespeare is the height of perfection.

This is asserted with such confidence and repeated by all as indisputable truth; but however much I endeavored to find confirmation of this in Shakespeare's dramas, I always found the opposite. In reading any of Shakespeare's dramas whatever, I was, from the very first, instantly convinced that he was lacking in the most important, if not the only, means of portraying characters: individuality of language, *i.e.* , the style of speech of every person being natural to his character. This is absent from Shakespeare. All his characters speak, not their own, but always one and the same Shakespearian, pretentious, and unnatural language, in which not only they could not speak, but in which no living man ever has spoken or does speak.

No living men could or can say, as Lear says, that he would divorce his wife in the grave should Regan not receive him, or that the heavens would crack with shouting, or that the winds would burst, or that the wind wishes to blow the land into the sea, or that the curled waters wish to flood the shore, as the gentleman describes the storm, or that it is easier to bear one's grief and the soul leaps over many sufferings when grief finds fellowship, or that Lear has become childless while I am fatherless, as Edgar says, or use similar unnatural expressions with which the speeches of all the characters in all Shakespeare's dramas overflow.

Again, it is not enough that all the characters speak in a way in which no living men ever did or could speak—they all suffer from a common intemperance of language. Those who are in love, who are preparing for death, who are fighting, who are dying, all alike speak much and unexpectedly about subjects utterly inappropriate to the occasion, being evidently guided rather by consonances and play of words than by thoughts. They speak all alike. Lear raves exactly as does Edgar when feigning madness. Both Kent and the fool speak alike. The words of one of the personages might be placed in the mouth of another, and by the character of the speech it would be impossible to distinguish who speaks. If there is a difference in the speech of Shakespeare's various characters, it lies merely in the different dialogs which are pronounced for these characters—again by Shakespeare and not by themselves. Thus Shakespeare always speaks for kings in one and the same inflated, empty language. Also in one and the same Shakespearian, artificially sentimental language speak all the women who are intended to be poetic: Juliet, Desdemona, Cordelia, Imogen, Marina. In the same way, also, it is Shakespeare alone who speaks for his villains: Richard, Edmund, Iago, Macbeth, expressing for them those vicious feelings which villains never express. Yet more similar are the speeches of the madmen with their horrible words, and those of fools with their mirthless puns. So that in Shakespeare there is no language of living individuals—that language which in the drama is the chief means of setting forth character. If gesticulation be also a means of expressing character, as in ballets, this is only a secondary means. Moreover, if the characters speak at random and in a random way, and all in one and the same diction, as is the case in Shakespeare's work, then even the action of gesticulation is wasted. Therefore, whatever the blind panegyrists of Shakespeare may say, in Shakespeare there is no expression of character. Those personages who, in his dramas, stand out as characters, are characters borrowed by him from former works which have served as the foundation of his dramas, and they are mostly depicted, not by the dramatic method which consists in making each person speak with his own diction, but in the epic method of one person describing the features of another.

The perfection with which Shakespeare expresses character is asserted chiefly on the ground of the characters of Lear, Cordelia, Othello, Desdemona, Falstaff, and Hamlet. But all these characters, as well as all the others, instead of belonging to Shakespeare, are taken by him from dramas, chronicles, and romances anterior to him. All these characters not only are not rendered more powerful by him, but, in most cases, they are weakened and spoilt. This is very striking in this drama of "King Lear," which we are examining, taken by him from the drama "King Leir," by an unknown author. The characters of this drama, that of King Lear, and especially of Cordelia, not only were not created by Shakespeare, but have been strikingly weakened and deprived of force by him, as compared with their appearance in the older drama.

In the older drama, Leir abdicates because, having become a widower, he thinks only of saving his soul. He asks his daughters as to their love for him—that, by means of a certain device he has invented, he may retain his favorite daughter on his island. The elder daughters are betrothed, while the youngest does not wish to contract a loveless union with any of the neighboring suitors whom Leir proposes to her, and he is afraid that she may marry some distant potentate.

The device which he has invented, as he informs his courtier, Perillus (Shakespeare's Kent), is this, that when Cordelia tells him that she loves him more than any one or as much as her elder sisters do, he will tell her that she must, in proof of her love, marry the prince he will indicate on his island. All these motives for Lear's conduct are absent in Shakespeare's play. Then, when, according to the old drama, Leir asks his daughters about their love for him, Cordelia does not say, as Shakespeare has it, that she will not give her father all her love, but will love her husband, too, should she marry—which is quite unnatural—but simply says that she can not express her love in words, but hopes that her actions will prove it. Goneril and Regan remark that Cordelia's answer is not an answer, and that the father can not meekly accept such indifference, so that what is wanting in Shakespeare—*i.e.* , the explanation of Lear's anger which caused him to disinherit his youngest daughter,—exists in the old drama. Leir is annoyed by the failure of his scheme, and the poisonous words of his eldest daughters irritate him still more. After the division of the kingdom between the elder daughters, there follows in the older drama a scene between Cordelia and the King of Gaul, setting forth, instead of the colorless Cordelia of Shakespeare, a very definite and attractive character of the truthful, tender, and self-sacrificing youngest daughter. While Cordelia, without grieving that she has been deprived of a portion of the heritage, sits sorrowing at having lost her father's love, and looking forward to earn her bread by her labor, there comes the King of Gaul, who, in the disguise of a pilgrim, desires to choose a bride from among Leir's daughters. He asks Cordelia why she is sad. She tells him the cause of her grief. The King of Gaul, still in the guise of a pilgrim, falls in love with her, and offers to arrange a marriage for her with the King of Gaul, but she says she will marry only a man whom she loves. Then the pilgrim, still disguised, offers her his hand and heart and Cordelia confesses she loves the pilgrim and consents to marry him, notwithstanding the poverty that awaits her. Then the pilgrim discloses to her that he it is who is the King of Gaul, and Cordelia marries him. Instead of this scene, Lear, according to Shakespeare, offers Cordelia's two suitors to take her without dowry, and one cynically refuses, while the other, one does not know why, accepts her. After this, in the old drama, as in Shakespeare's, Leir undergoes the insults of Goneril, into whose house he has removed, but he bears these insults in a very different way from that represented by Shakespeare: he feels that by his conduct toward Cordelia, he has deserved this, and humbly submits. As in Shakespeare's drama, so also in the older drama, the courtiers, Perillus—Kent—who had interceded for Cordelia and was therefore banished—comes to Leir and assures him of his love, but under no disguise, but simply as a faithful old servant who does not abandon his king in a moment of need. Leir tells him what, according to Shakespeare, he tells Cordelia in the last scene, that, if the daughters whom he has benefited hate him, a retainer to whom he has done no good can not love him. But Perillus—Kent—assures the King of his love toward him, and Leir, pacified, goes on to Regan. In the older drama there are no tempests nor tearing out of gray hairs, but there is the weakened and humbled old man, Leir, overpowered with grief, and banished by his other daughter also, who even wishes to kill him. Turned out by his elder daughters, Leir, according to the older drama, as a last resource, goes with Perillus to Cordelia. Instead of the unnatural banishment of Lear during the tempest, and his roaming about the heath, Leir, with Perillus, in the older drama, during their journey to France, very naturally reach the last degree of destitution, sell their clothes in order to pay for their crossing over the sea, and, in the attire of fishermen, exhausted by cold and hunger, approach Cordelia's house. Here, again, instead of the unnatural combined ravings of the fool, Lear, and Edgar, as represented by Shakespeare, there follows in the older drama a natural scene of reunion between the daughter and the father. Cordelia—who, notwithstanding her happiness, has all the time been grieving about her father and praying to God to forgive her sisters who had done him so much wrong—meets her father in his extreme want, and wishes immediately to disclose herself to him, but her husband advises her not to do this, in order not to agitate her weak father. She accepts the counsel and takes Leir into her house without disclosing herself to him, and nurses him. Leir gradually revives, and then the daughter asks him who he is and how he lived formerly:

"If from the first," says Leir, "I should relate the cause, I would make a heart of adamant to weep. And thou, poor soul, kind-hearted as thou art, Dost weep already, ere I do begin."

Cordelia: "For God's love tell it, and when you have done I'll tell the reason why I weep so soon."

And Leir relates all he has suffered from his elder daughters, and says that now he wishes to find shelter with the child who would be in the right even were she to condemn him to death. "If, however," he says, "she will receive me with love, it will be God's and her work, but not my merit." To this Cordelia says: "Oh, I know for certain that thy daughter will lovingly receive thee."—"How canst thou know this without knowing her?" says Leir. "I know," says Cordelia, "because not far from here, I had a father who acted toward me as badly as thou hast acted toward her, yet, if I were only to see his white head, I would creep to meet him on my knees."—"No, this can not be," says Leir, "for there are no children in the world so cruel as mine."—"Do not condemn all for the sins of some," says Cordelia, and falls on her knees. "Look here, dear father," she says, "look on me: I am thy loving daughter." The father recognizes her and says: "It is not for thee, but for me, to beg thy pardon on my knees for all my sins toward thee."

Is there anything approaching this exquisite scene in Shakespeare's drama?

However strange this opinion may seem to worshipers of Shakespeare, yet the whole of this old drama is incomparably and in every respect superior to Shakespeare's adaptation. It is so, first, because it has not got the utterly superfluous characters of the villain Edmund and unlifelike Gloucester and Edgar, who only distract one's attention; secondly because it has not got the completely false "effects" of Lear running about the heath, his conversations with the fool, and all these impossible disguises, failures to recognize, and accumulated deaths; and, above all, because in this drama there is the simple, natural, and deeply touching character of Leir and the yet more touching and clearly defined character of Cordelia, both absent in Shakespeare. Therefore, there is in the older drama, instead of Shakespeare's long-drawn scene of Lear's interview with Cordelia and of Cordelia's unnecessary murder, the exquisite scene of the interview between Leir and Cordelia, unequaled by any in all Shakespeare's dramas.

The old drama also terminates more naturally and more in accordance with the moral demands of the spectator than does Shakespeare's, namely, by the King of the Gauls conquering the husbands of the elder sisters, and Cordelia, instead of being killed, restoring Leir to his former position.

Thus it is in the drama we are examining, which Shakespeare has borrowed from the drama "King Leir." So it is also with Othello, taken from an Italian romance, the same also with the famous Hamlet. The same with Antony, Brutus, Cleopatra, Shylock, Richard, and all Shakespeare's characters, all taken from some antecedent work. Shakespeare, while profiting by characters already given in preceding dramas, or romances, chronicles, or, Plutarch's "Lives," not only fails to render them more truthful and vivid, as his eulogists affirm, but, on the contrary, always weakens them and often completely destroys them, as with Lear, compelling his characters to commit actions unnatural to them, and, above all, to utter speeches natural neither to them nor to any one whatever. Thus, in "Othello," altho that is, perhaps, I will not say the best, but the least bad and the least encumbered by pompous volubility, the characters of Othello, Iago, Cassio, Emilia, according to Shakespeare, are much less natural and lifelike than in the Italian romance. Shakespeare's Othello suffers from epilepsy, of which he has an attack on the stage; moreover, in Shakespeare's version, Desdemona's murder is preceded by the strange vow of the kneeling Othello. Othello, according to Shakespeare, is a negro and not a Moor. All this is erratic, inflated, unnatural, and violates the unity of the character. All this is absent in the romance. In that romance the reasons for Othello's jealousy are represented more naturally than in Shakespeare. In the romance, Cassio, knowing whose the handkerchief is, goes to Desdemona to return it, but, approaching the back-door of Desdemona's house, sees Othello and flies from him. Othello perceives the escaping Cassio, and this, more than anything, confirms his suspicions. Shakespeare has not got this, and yet this casual incident explains Othello's jealousy more than anything else. With Shakespeare, this jealousy is founded entirely on Iago's persistent, successful machinations and treacherous words, which Othello blindly believes. Othello's monolog over the sleeping Desdemona, about his desiring her when killed to look as she is alive, about his going to love her even dead, and now wishing to smell her "balmy breath," etc., is utterly impossible. A man who is preparing for the murder of a beloved being, does not utter such phrases, still less after committing the murder would he speak about the necessity of an eclipse of sun and moon, and of the globe yawning; nor can he, negro tho he may be, address devils, inviting them to burn him in hot sulphur and so forth. Lastly, however effective may be the suicide, absent in the romance, it completely destroys the conception of his clearly defined character. If he indeed suffered from grief and remorse, he would not, intending to kill himself, pronounce phrases about his own services, about the pearl, and about his eyes dropping tears "*as fast as the Arabian trees their medicinal gum* "; and yet less about the Turk's beating an Italian and how he, Othello, smote him—*thus!* So that notwithstanding the powerful expression of emotion in Othello when, under the influence of Iago's hints, jealousy rises in him, and again in his scenes with Desdemona, one's conception of Othello's character is constantly infringed by his false pathos and the unnatural speeches he pronounces.

So it is with the chief character, Othello, but notwithstanding its alteration and the disadvantageous features which it is made thereby to present in comparison with the character from which it was taken in the romance, this character still remains a character, but all the other personages are completely spoiled by

Shakespeare.

Iago, according to Shakespeare, is an unmitigated villain, deceiver, and thief, a robber who robs Roderigo and always succeeds even in his most impossible designs, and therefore is a person quite apart from real life. In Shakespeare, the motive of his villainy is, first, that Othello did not give him the post he desired; secondly, that he suspects Othello of an intrigue with his wife and, thirdly, that, as he says, he feels a strange kind of love for Desdemona. There are many motives, but they are all vague. Whereas in the romance there is but one simple and clear motive, Iago's passionate love for Desdemona, transmitted into hatred toward her and Othello after she had preferred the Moor to him and resolutely repulsed him. Yet more unnatural is the utterly unnecessary Roderigo whom Iago deceives and robs, promising him Desdemona's love, and whom he forces to fulfil all he commands: to intoxicate Cassio, provoke and then kill Cassio. Emilia, who says anything it may occur to the author to put into her mouth, has not even the slightest semblance of a live character.

"But Falstaff, the wonderful Falstaff," Shakespeare's eulogists will say, "of him, at all events, one can not say that he is not a living character, or that, having been taken from the comedy of an unknown author, it has been weakened."

Falstaff, like all Shakespeare's characters, was taken from a drama or comedy by an unknown author, written on a really living person, Sir John Oldcastle, who had been the friend of some duke. This Oldcastle had once been convicted of heresy, but had been saved by his friend the duke. But afterward he was condemned and burned at the stake for his religious beliefs, which did not conform with Catholicism. It was on this same Oldcastle that an anonymous author, in order to please the Catholic public, wrote a comedy or drama, ridiculing this martyr for his faith and representing him as a good-for-nothing man, the boon companion of the duke, and it is from this comedy that Shakespeare borrowed, not only the character of Falstaff, but also his own ironical attitude toward it. In Shakespeare's first works, when this character appeared, it was frankly called "Oldcastle," but later, in Elizabeth's time, when Protestantism again triumphed, it was awkward to bring out with mockery a martyr in the strife with Catholicism, and, besides, Oldcastle's relatives had protested, and Shakespeare accordingly altered the name of Oldcastle to that of Falstaff, also a historical figure, known for having fled from the field of battle at

Agincourt.

Falstaff is, indeed, quite a natural and typical character; but then it is perhaps the only natural and typical character depicted by Shakespeare. And this character is natural and typical because, of all Shakespeare's characters, it alone speaks a language proper to itself. And it speaks thus because it speaks in that same Shakespearian language, full of mirthless jokes and unamusing puns which, being unnatural to all Shakespeare's other characters, is quite in harmony with the boastful, distorted, and depraved character of the drunken Falstaff. For this reason alone does this figure truly represent a definite character. Unfortunately, the artistic effect of this character is spoilt by the fact that it is so repulsive by its gluttony, drunkenness, debauchery, rascality, deceit, and cowardice, that it is difficult to share the feeling of gay humor with which the author treats it. Thus it is with Falstaff.

But in none of Shakespeare's figures is his, I will not say incapacity to give, but utter indifference to giving, his personages a typical character so strikingly manifest as in Hamlet; and in connection with none of Shakespeare's works do we see so strikingly displayed that blind worship of Shakespeare, that unreasoning state of hypnotism owing to which the mere thought even is not admitted that any of Shakespeare's productions can be wanting in genius, or that any of the principal personages in his dramas can fail to be the expression of a new and deeply conceived character.

Shakespeare takes an old story, not bad in its way, relating:

"Avec quelle ruse Amlette qui depuis fut Roy de Dannemarch, vengea la mort de son père Horwendille, occis par Fengon son frère, et autre occurrence de son histoire," or a drama which was written on this theme fifteen years before him. On this subject he writes his own drama, introducing quite inappropriately (as indeed he always does) into the mouth of the principal person all those thoughts of his own which appeared to him worthy of attention. And putting into the mouth of his hero these thoughts: about life (the grave-digger), about death (To be or not to be)—the same which are expressed in his sixty-sixth sonnet—about the theater, about women. He is utterly unconcerned as to the circumstances under which these words are said, and it naturally turns out that the person expressing all these thoughts is a mere phonograph of Shakespeare, without character, whose actions and words do not agree.

In the old legend, Hamlet's personality is quite comprehensible: he is indignant at his mother's and his uncle's deeds, and wishes to revenge himself upon them, but is afraid his uncle may kill him as he had killed his father. Therefore he simulates insanity, desiring to bide his time and observe all that goes on in the palace. Meanwhile, his uncle and mother, being afraid of him, wish to test whether he is feigning or is really mad, and send to him a girl whom he loves. He persists, then sees his mother in private, kills a courtier who was eavesdropping, and convicts his mother of her sin. Afterward he is sent to England, but intercepts letters and, returning from England, takes revenge of his enemies, burning them all.

All this is comprehensible and flows from Hamlet's character and position. But Shakespeare, putting into Hamlet's mouth speeches which he himself wishes to express, and making him commit actions which are necessary to the author in order to produce scenic effects, destroys all that constitutes the character of Hamlet and of the legend. During the whole of the drama, Hamlet is doing, not what he would really wish to do, but what is necessary for the author's plan. One moment he is awe-struck at his father's ghost, another moment he begins to chaff it, calling it "old mole"; one moment he loves Ophelia, another moment he teases her, and so forth. There is no possibility of finding any explanation whatever of Hamlet's actions or words, and therefore no possibility of attributing any character to him.

But as it is recognized that Shakespeare the genius can not write anything bad, therefore learned people use all the powers of their minds to find extraordinary beauties in what is an obvious and crying failure, demonstrated with especial vividness in "Hamlet," where the principal figure has no character whatever. And lo! profound critics declare that in this drama, in the person of Hamlet, is expressed singularly powerful, perfectly novel, and deep personality, existing in this person having no character; and that precisely in this absence of character consists the genius of creating a deeply conceived character. Having decided this, learned critics write volumes upon volumes, so that the praise and explanation of the greatness and importance of the representation of the character of a man who has no character form in volume a library. It is true that some of the critics timidly express the idea that there is something strange in this figure, that Hamlet is an unsolved riddle, but no one has the courage to say (as in Hans Andersen's story) that the King is naked—*i.e.* , that it is as clear as day that Shakespeare did not succeed and did not even wish to give any character to Hamlet, did not even understand that this was necessary. And learned critics continue to investigate and extol this puzzling production, which reminds one of the famous stone with an inscription which Pickwick found near a cottage doorstep, and which divided the scientific world into two hostile camps.

So that neither do the characters of Lear nor Othello nor Falstaff nor yet Hamlet in any way confirm the existing opinion that Shakespeare's power consists in the delineation of character.

If in Shakespeare's dramas one does meet figures having certain characteristic features, for the most part secondary figures, such as Polonius in "Hamlet" and Portia in "The Merchant of Venice," these few lifelike characters among five hundred or more other secondary figures, with the complete absence of character in the principal figures, do not at all prove that the merit of Shakespeare's dramas consists in the expression of character.

That a great talent for depicting character is attributed to Shakespeare arises from his actually possessing a peculiarity which, for superficial observers and in the play of good actors, may appear to be the capacity of depicting character. This peculiarity consists in the capacity of representative scenes expressing the play of emotion. However unnatural the positions may be in which he places his characters, however improper to them the language which he makes them speak, however featureless they are, the very play of emotion, its increase, and alteration, and the combination of many contrary feelings, as expressed correctly and powerfully in some of Shakespeare's scenes, and in the play of good actors, evokes even, if only for a time, sympathy with the persons represented. Shakespeare, himself an actor, and an intelligent man, knew how to express by the means not only of speech, but of exclamation, gesture, and the repetition of words, states of mind and developments or changes of feeling taking place in the persons represented. So that, in many instances, Shakespeare's characters, instead of speaking, merely make an exclamation, or weep, or in the middle of a monolog, by means of gestures, demonstrate the pain of their position (just as Lear asks some one to unbutton him), or, in moments of great agitation, repeat a question several times, or several times demand the repetition of a word which has particularly struck them, as do Othello, Macduff, Cleopatra, and others. Such clever methods of expressing the development of feeling, giving good actors the possibility of demonstrating their powers, were, and are, often mistaken by many critics for the expression of character. But however strongly the play of feeling may be expressed in one scene, a single scene can not give the character of a figure when this figure, after a correct exclamation or gesture, begins in a language not its own, at the author's arbitrary will, to volubly utter words which are neither necessary nor in harmony with its character.

V

"Well, but the profound utterances and sayings expressed by Shakespeare's characters," Shakespeare's panegyrists will retort. "See Lear's monolog on punishment, Kent's speech about vengeance, or Edgar's about his former life, Gloucester's reflections on the instability of fortune, and, in other dramas, the famous monologs of Hamlet, Antony, and others."

Thoughts and sayings may be appreciated, I will answer, in a prose work, in an essay, a collection of aphorisms, but not in an artistic dramatic production, the object of which is to elicit sympathy with that which is represented. Therefore the monologs and sayings of Shakespeare, even did they contain very many deep and new thoughts, which they do not, do not constitute the merits of an artistic, poetic production. On the contrary, these speeches, expressed in unnatural conditions, can only spoil artistic works.

An artistic, poetic work, particularly a drama, must first of all excite in the reader or spectator the illusion that whatever the person represented is living through, or experiencing, is lived through or experienced by himself. For this purpose it is as important for the dramatist to know precisely what he should make his characters both do and say as what he should not make them say and do, so as not to destroy the illusion of the reader or spectator. Speeches, however eloquent and profound they may be, when put into the mouth of dramatic characters, if they be superfluous or unnatural to the position and character, destroy the chief condition of dramatic art—the illusion, owing to which the reader or spectator lives in the feelings of the persons represented. Without putting an end to the illusion, one may leave much unsaid—the reader or spectator will himself fill this up, and sometimes, owing to this, his illusion is even increased, but to say what is superfluous is the same as to overthrow a statue composed of separate pieces and thereby scatter them, or to take away the lamp from a magic lantern: the attention of the reader or spectator is distracted, the reader sees the author, the spectator sees the actor, the illusion disappears, and to restore it is sometimes impossible; therefore without the feeling of measure there can not be an artist, and especially a dramatist.

Shakespeare is devoid of this feeling. His characters continually do and say what is not only unnatural to them, but utterly unnecessary. I do not cite examples of this, because I believe that he who does not himself see this striking deficiency in all Shakespeare's dramas will not be persuaded by any examples and proofs. It is sufficient to read "King Lear," alone, with its insanity, murders, plucking out of eyes, Gloucester's jump, its poisonings, and wranglings—not to mention "Pericles," "Cymbeline," "The Winter's Tale," "The Tempest"—to be convinced of this. Only a man devoid of the sense of measure and of taste could produce such types as "Titus Andronicus" or "Troilus and Cressida," or so mercilessly mutilate the old drama "King Leir."

Gervinus endeavors to prove that Shakespeare possessed the feeling of beauty, "Schönheit's sinn," but all Gervinus's proofs prove only that he himself, Gervinus, is completely destitute of it. In Shakespeare everything is exaggerated: the actions are exaggerated, so are their consequences, the speeches of the characters are exaggerated, and therefore at every step the possibility of artistic impression is interfered with. Whatever people may say, however they may be enraptured by Shakespeare's works, whatever merits they may attribute to them, it is perfectly certain that he was not an artist and that his works are not artistic productions. Without the sense of measure, there never was nor can be an artist, as without the feeling of rhythm there can not be a musician. Shakespeare might have been whatever you like, but he was not an artist.

"But one should not forget the time at which Shakespeare wrote," say his admirers. "It was a time of cruel and coarse habits, a time of the then fashionable euphemism, *i.e.* , artificial way of expressing oneself—a time of forms of life strange to us, and therefore, to judge about Shakespeare, one should have in view the time when he wrote. In Homer, as in Shakespeare, there is much which is strange to us, but this does not prevent us from appreciating the beauties of Homer," say these admirers. But in comparing Shakespeare with Homer, as does

Gervinus, that infinite distance which separates true poetry from its semblance manifests itself with especial force. However distant Homer is from us, we can, without the slightest effort, transport ourselves into the life he describes, and we can thus transport ourselves because, however alien to us may be the events Homer describes, he believes in what he says and speaks seriously, and therefore he never exaggerates, and the sense of measure never abandons him. This is the reason why, not to speak of the wonderfully distinct, lifelike, and beautiful characters of Achilles, Hector, Priam, Odysseus, and the eternally touching scenes of Hector's leave-taking, of Priam's embassy, of Odysseus's return, and others—the whole of the "Iliad" and still more the "Odyssey" are so humanly near to us that we feel as if we ourselves had lived, and are living, among its gods and heroes. Not so with Shakespeare. From his first words, exaggeration is seen: the exaggeration of events, the exaggeration of emotion, and the exaggeration of effects. One sees at once that he does not believe in what he says, that it is of no necessity to him, that he invents the events he describes, and is indifferent to his characters—that he has conceived them only for the stage and therefore makes them do and say only what may strike his public; and therefore we do not believe either in the events, or in the actions, or in the sufferings of the characters. Nothing demonstrates so clearly the complete absence of esthetic feeling in Shakespeare as comparison between him and Homer. The works which we call the works of Homer are artistic, poetic, original works, lived through by the author or authors; whereas the works of Shakespeare—borrowed as they are, and, externally, like mosaics, artificially fitted together piecemeal from bits invented for the occasion—have nothing whatever in common with art and poetry.

VI

But, perhaps, the height of Shakespeare's conception of life is such that, tho he does not satisfy the esthetic demands, he discloses to us a view of life so new and important for men that, in consideration of its importance, all his failures as an artist become imperceptible. So, indeed, say Shakespeare's admirers. Gervinus says distinctly that besides Shakespeare's significance in the sphere of dramatic poetry in which, according to his opinion, Shakespeare equals "Homer in the sphere of Epos, Shakespeare being the very greatest judge of the human soul, represents a teacher of most indisputable ethical authority and the most select leader in the world and in life."

In what, then, consists this indisputable authority of the most select leader in the world and in life? Gervinus devotes the concluding chapter of his second volume, about fifty pages, to an explanation of this.

The ethical authority of this supreme teacher of life consists in the following: The starting point of Shakespeare's conception of life, says Gervinus, is that man is gifted with powers of activity, and therefore, first of all, according to Gervinus, Shakespeare regarded it as good and necessary for man that he should act (as if it were possible for a man not to act):

"Die thatkräftigen Männer, Fortinbras, Bolingbroke, Alcibiades, Octavius spielen hier die gegensätzlichen Rollen gegen die verschiedenen thatlosen; nicht ihre Charaktere verdienen ihnen Allen ihr Glück und Gedeihen etwa durch eine grosse Ueberlegenheit ihrer Natur, sondern trotz ihrer geringeren Anlage stellt sich ihre Thatkraft an sich über die Unthätigkeit der Anderen hinaus, gleichviel aus wie schöner Quelle diese Passivität, aus wie schlechter jene Thätigkeit fliesse."

I.e. , active people, like Fortinbras, Bolingbroke, Alcibiades, Octavius, says Gervinus, are placed in contrast, by Shakespeare, with various characters who do not exhibit energetic activity. And happiness and success, according to Shakespeare, are attained by individuals possessing this active character, not at all owing to the superiority of their nature; on the contrary, notwithstanding their inferior gifts, the capacity of activity itself always gives them the advantage over inactivity, quite independent of any consideration whether the inactivity of some persons flows from excellent impulses and the activity of others from bad ones. "Activity is good, inactivity is evil. Activity transforms evil into good," says Shakespeare, according to Gervinus. Shakespeare prefers the principle of Alexander (of Macedonia) to that of Diogenes, says Gervinus. In other words, he prefers death and murder due to ambition, to abstinence and wisdom.

According to Gervinus, Shakespeare believes that humanity need not set up ideals, but that only healthy activity and the golden mean are necessary in everything. Indeed, Shakespeare is so penetrated by this conviction that, according to Gervinus's assertion, he allows himself to deny even Christian morality, which makes exaggerated demands on human nature. Shakespeare, as we read, did not approve of limits of duty exceeding the intentions of nature. He teaches the golden mean between heathen hatred to one's enemies and Christian love toward them (pp. 561, 562). How far Shakespeare was penetrated with this fundamental principle of *reasonable moderation* , says Gervinus, can be seen from the fact that he has the courage to express himself even against the Christian rules which prompt human nature to the excessive exertion of its powers. He did not admit that the limits of duties should exceed the biddings of Nature. Therefore he preached a reasonable mean natural to man, between Christian and heathen precepts, of love toward one's enemies on the one hand, and hatred toward them on the other.

That one may do too much good (exceed the reasonable limits of good) is convincingly proved by Shakespeare's words and examples. Thus excessive generosity ruins Timon, while Antonio's moderate generosity confers honor; normal ambition makes Henry V. great, whereas it ruins Percy, in whom it has risen too high; excessive virtue leads Angelo to destruction, and if, in those who surround him, excessive severity becomes harmful and can not prevent crime, on the other hand the divine element in man, even charity, if it be excessive, can create crime.

Shakespeare taught, says Gervinus, that one *may be too good* .

He teaches that morality, like politics, is a matter in which, owing to the complexity of circumstances and motives, one can not establish any principles (p. 563), and in this he agrees with Bacon and Aristotle—there are no positive religious and moral laws which may create principles for correct moral conduct suitable for all cases.

Gervinus most clearly expresses the whole of Shakespeare's moral theory by saying that Shakespeare does not write for those classes for whom definite religious principles and laws are suitable (*i.e.* , for nine hundred and ninety-nine one-thousandths of men) but for the educated:

"There are classes of men whose morality is best guarded by the positive precepts of religion and state law; to such persons Shakespeare's creations are inaccessible. They are comprehensible and accessible only to the educated, from whom one can expect that they should acquire the healthy tact of life and self-consciousness by means of which the innate guiding powers of conscience and reason, uniting with the will, lead us to the definite attainment of worthy aims in life. But even for such educated people, Shakespeare's teaching is not always without danger. The condition on which his teaching is quite harmless is that it should be accepted in all its completeness, in all its parts, without any omission. Then it is not only without danger, but is the most clear and faultless and therefore the most worthy of confidence of all moral teaching" (p. 564).

In order thus to accept all, one should understand that, according to his teaching, it is stupid and harmful for the individual to revolt against, or endeavor to overthrow, the limits of established religious and state forms. "Shakespeare," says Gervinus, "would abhor an independent and free individual who, with a powerful spirit, should struggle against all convention in politics and morality and overstep that union between religion and the State which has for thousands of years supported society. According to his views, the practical wisdom of men could not have a higher object than the introduction into society of the greatest spontaneity and freedom, but precisely because of this one should safeguard as sacred and irrefragable the natural laws of society—one should respect the existing order of things and, continually verifying it, inculcate its rational sides, not overlooking nature for the sake of culture, or *vice versa* " (p. 566). Property, the family, the state, are sacred; but aspiration toward the recognition of the equality of men is insanity. Its realization would bring humanity to the greatest calamities. No one struggled more than Shakespeare against the privileges of rank and position, but could this freethinking man resign himself to the privileges of the wealthy and educated being destroyed in order to give room to the poor and ignorant? How could a man who so eloquently attracts people toward honors, permit that the very aspiration toward that which was great be crushed together with rank and distinction for services, and, with the destruction of all degrees, "the motives for all high undertakings be stifled"? Even if the attraction of honors and false power treacherously obtained were to cease, could the poet admit of the most dreadful of all violence, that of the ignorant crowd? He saw that, thanks to this equality now preached, everything may pass into violence, and violence into arbitrary acts and thence into unchecked passion which will rend the world as the wolf does its prey, and in the end the world will swallow itself up. Even if this does not happen with mankind when it attains equality—if the love of nations and eternal peace prove not to be that impossible "nothing," as Alonso expressed it in "The Tempest"—but if, on the contrary, the actual attainment of aspirations toward equality is possible, then the poet would deem that the old age and extinction of the world had approached, and that, therefore, for active individuals, it is not worth while to live (pp. 571, 572).

Such is Shakespeare's view of life as demonstrated by his greatest exponent and admirer.

Another of the most modern admirers of Shakespeare, George Brandes, further sets forth:

"No one, of course, can conserve his life quite pure from evil, from deceit, and from the injury of others, but evil and deceit are not always vices, and even the evil caused to others, is not necessarily a vice: it is often merely a necessity, a legitimate weapon, a right. And indeed, Shakespeare always held that there are no unconditional prohibitions, nor unconditional duties. For instance, he did not doubt Hamlet's right to kill the King, nor even his right to stab Polonius to death, and yet he could not restrain himself from an overwhelming feeling of indignation and repulsion when, looking around, he saw everywhere how incessantly the most elementary moral laws were being infringed. Now, in his mind there was formed, as it were, a closely riveted ring of thoughts concerning which he had always vaguely felt: such unconditional commandments do not exist; the quality and significance of an act, not to speak of a character, do not depend upon their enactment or infringement; the whole substance lies in the contents with which the separate individual, at the moment of his decision and on his own responsibility, fills up the form of these laws."

In other words, Shakespeare at last clearly saw that the moral of the *aim* is the only true and possible one; so that, according to Brandes, Shakespeare's fundamental principle, for which he extols him, is that *the end justifies the means* —action at all costs, the absence of all ideals, moderation in everything, the conservation of the forms of life once established, and the end justifying the means. If you add to this a Chauvinist English patriotism, expressed in all the historical dramas, a patriotism according to which the English throne is something sacred, Englishmen always vanquishing the French, killing thousands and losing only scores, Joan of Arc regarded as a witch, and the belief that Hector and all the Trojans, from whom the English came, are heroes, while the Greeks are cowards and traitors, and so forth,—such is the view of life of the wisest teacher of life according to his greatest admirers. And he who will attentively read Shakespeare's works can not fail to recognize that the description of this Shakespearian view of life by his admirers is quite correct.

The merit of every poetic work depends on three things:

(1) The subject of the work: the deeper the subject, *i.e.* , the more important it is to the life of mankind, the higher is the work.

(2) The external beauty achieved by technical methods proper to the particular kind of art. Thus, in dramatic art, the technical method will be a true individuality of language, corresponding to the characters, a natural, and at the same time touching plot, a correct scenic rendering of the demonstration and development of emotion, and the feeling of measure in all that is represented.

(3) Sincerity, *i.e.* , that the author should himself keenly feel what he expresses. Without this condition there can be no work of art, as the essence of art consists in the contemplation of the work of art being infected with the author's feeling. If the author does not actually feel what he expresses, then the recipient can not become infected with the feeling of the author, does not experience any feeling, and the production can no longer be classified as a work of art.

The subject of Shakespeare's pieces, as is seen from the demonstrations of his greatest admirers, is the lowest, most vulgar view of life, which regards the external elevation of the lords of the world as a genuine distinction, despises the crowd, *i.e.* , the working classes—repudiates not only all religious, but also all humanitarian, strivings directed to the betterment of the existing order.

The second condition also, with the exception of the rendering of the scenes in which the movement of feelings is expressed, is quite absent in Shakespeare. He does not grasp the natural character of the positions of his personages, nor the language of the persons represented, nor the feeling of measure without which no work can be artistic.

The third and most important condition, sincerity, is completely absent in all Shakespeare's works. In all of them one sees intentional artifice; one sees that he is not *in earnest* , but that he is playing with words.

VII

Shakespeare's works do not satisfy the demands of all art, and, besides this, their tendency is of the lowest and most immoral. What then signifies the great fame these works have enjoyed for more than a hundred years?

Many times during my life I have had occasion to argue about Shakespeare with his admirers, not only with people little sensitive to poetry, but with those who keenly felt poetic beauty, such as Turgenef, Fet, and others, and every time I encountered one and the same attitude toward my objection to the praises of Shakespeare. I was not refuted when I pointed out Shakespeare's defects; they only condoled with me for my want of comprehension, and urged upon me the necessity of recognizing the extraordinary supernatural grandeur of Shakespeare, and they did not explain to me in what the beauties of Shakespeare consisted, but were merely vaguely and exaggeratedly enraptured with the whole of Shakespeare, extolling some favorite passages: the unbuttoning of Lear's button, Falstaff's lying, Lady Macbeth's ineffaceable spots, Hamlet's exhortation to his father's ghost, "forty thousand brothers," *etc.*

"Open Shakespeare," I used to say to these admirers, "wherever you like, or wherever it may chance, you will see that you will never find ten consecutive lines which are comprehensible, unartificial, natural to the character that says them, and which produce an artistic impression." (This experiment may be made by any one. And either at random, or according to their own choice.) Shakespeare's admirers opened pages in Shakespeare's dramas, and without paying any attention to my criticisms as to why the selected ten lines did not satisfy the most elementary demands of esthetic and common sense, they were enchanted with the very thing which to me appeared absurd, incomprehensible, and inartistic. So that, in general, when I endeavored to get from Shakespeare's worshipers an explanation of his greatness, I met in them exactly the same attitude which I have met, and which is usually met, in the defenders of any dogmas accepted not through reason, but through faith. It is this attitude of Shakespeare's admirers toward their object—an attitude which may be seen also in all the mistily indefinite essays and conversations about Shakespeare—which gave me the key to the understanding of the cause of Shakespeare's fame. There is but one explanation of this wonderful fame: it is one of those epidemic "suggestions" to which men constantly have been and are subject. Such "suggestion" always has existed and does exist in the most varied spheres of life. As glaring instances, considerable in scope and in deceitful influence, one may cite the medieval Crusades which afflicted, not only adults, but even children, and the individual "suggestions," startling in their senselessness, such as faith in witches, in the utility of torture for the discovery of the truth, the search for the elixir of life, the philosopher's stone, or the passion for tulips valued at several thousand guldens a bulb which took hold of Holland. Such irrational "suggestions" always have been existing, and still exist, in all spheres of human life—religious, philosophical, political, economical, scientific, artistic, and, in general, literary—and people clearly see the insanity of these suggestions only when they free themselves from them. But, as long as they are under their influence, the suggestions appear to them so certain, so true, that to argue about them is regarded as neither necessary nor possible. With the development of the printing press, these epidemics became especially striking.

With the development of the press, it has now come to pass that so soon as any event, owing to casual circumstances, receives an especially prominent significance, immediately the organs of the press announce this significance. As soon as the press has brought forward the significance of the event, the public devotes more and more attention to it. The attention of the public prompts the press to examine the event with greater attention and in greater detail. The interest of the public further increases, and the organs of the press, competing with one another, satisfy the public demand. The public is still more interested; the press attributes yet more significance to the event. So that the importance of the event, continually growing, like a lump of snow, receives an appreciation utterly inappropriate to its real significance, and this appreciation, often exaggerated to insanity, is retained so long as the conception of life of the leaders of the press and of the public remains the same. There are innumerable examples of such an inappropriate estimation which, in our time, owing to the mutual influence of press and public on one another, is attached to the most insignificant subjects. A striking example of such mutual influence of the public and the press was the excitement in the case of Dreyfus, which lately caught hold of the whole world.

The suspicion arose that some captain of the French staff was guilty of treason. Whether because this particular captain was a Jew, or because of some special internal party disagreements in French society, the press attached a somewhat prominent interest to this event, whose like is continually occurring without attracting any one's attention, and without being able to interest even the French military, still less the whole world. The public turned its attention to this incident, the organs of the press, mutually competing, began to describe, examine, discuss the event; the public was yet more interested; the press answered to the demand of the public, and the lump of snow began to grow and grow, till before our eyes it attained such a bulk that there was not a family where controversies did not rage about "l'affaire." The caricature by Caran d'Ache representing at first a peaceful family resolved to talk no more about Dreyfus, and then, like exasperated furies, members of the same family fighting with each other, quite correctly expressed the attitude of the whole of the reading world to the question about Dreyfus. People of foreign nationalities, who could not be interested in the question whether a French officer was a traitor or not—people, moreover, who could know nothing of the development of the case—all divided themselves for and against Dreyfus, and the moment they met they talked and argued about Dreyfus, some asserting his guilt with assurance, others denying it with equal assurance. Only after the lapse of some years did people begin to awake from the "suggestion" and to understand that they could not possibly know whether Dreyfus was guilty or not, and that each one had thousands of subjects much more near to him and interesting than the case of Dreyfus.

Such infatuations take place in all spheres, but they are especially noticeable in the sphere of literature, as the press naturally occupies itself the more keenly with the affairs of the press, and they are particularly powerful in our time when the press has received such an unnatural development. It continually happens that people suddenly begin to extol some most insignificant works, in exaggerated language, and then, if these works do not correspond to the prevailing view of life, they suddenly become utterly indifferent to them, and forget both the works themselves and their former attitude toward them.

So within my recollection, in the forties, there was in the sphere of art the laudation and glorification of Eugène Sue, and Georges Sand; and in the social sphere Fourier; in the philosophical sphere, Comte and Hegel; in the scientific sphere, Darwin.

Sue is quite forgotten, Georges Sand is being forgotten and replaced by the writings of Zola and the Decadents, Beaudelaire, Verlaine, Maeterlinck, and others. Fourier with his phalansteries is quite forgotten, his place being taken by Marx. Hegel, who justified the existing order, and Comte, who denied the necessity of religious activity in mankind, and Darwin with his law of struggle, still hold on, but are beginning to be forgotten, being replaced by the teaching of

Nietzsche, which, altho utterly extravagant, unconsidered, misty, and vicious in its bearing, yet corresponds better with existing tendencies. Thus sometimes artistic, philosophic, and, in general, literary crazes suddenly arise and are as quickly forgotten. But it also happens that such crazes, having arisen in consequence of special reasons accidentally favoring to their establishment, correspond in such a degree to the views of life spread in society, and especially in literary circles, that they are maintained for a long time. As far back as in the time of Rome, it was remarked that often books have their own very strange fates: consisting in failure notwithstanding their high merits, and in enormous undeserved success notwithstanding their triviality. The saying arose: "pro captu lectoris habent sua fata libelli"—*i.e.* , that the fate of books depends on the understanding of those who read them. There was harmony between Shakespeare's writings and the view of life of those amongst whom his fame arose. And this fame has been, and still is, maintained owing to Shakespeare's works continuing to correspond to the life concept of those who support this fame.

Until the end of the eighteenth century Shakespeare not only failed to gain any special fame in England, but was valued less than his contemporary dramatists: Ben Jonson, Fletcher, Beaumont, and others. His fame originated in Germany, and thence was transferred to England. This happened for the following reason:

Art, especially dramatic art, demanding for its realization great preparations, outlays, and labor, was always religious, *i.e.* , its object was to stimulate in men a clearer conception of that relation of man to God which had, at that time, been attained by the leading men of the circles interested in art.

So it was bound to be from its own nature, and so, as a matter of fact, has it always been among all nations—Egyptians, Hindus, Chinese, Greeks—commencing in some remote period of human life. And it has always happened that, with the coarsening of religious forms, art has more and more diverged from its original object (according to which it could be regarded as an important function—almost an act of worship), and, instead of serving religious objects, it strove for worldly aims, seeking to satisfy the demands of the crowd or of the powerful, *i.e.* , the aims of recreation and amusement. This deviation of art from its true and high vocation took place everywhere, and even in connection with Christianity.

The first manifestations of Christian art were services in churches: in the administration of the sacraments and the ordinary liturgy. When, in course of time, the forms of art as used in worship became insufficient, there appeared the Mysteries, describing those events which were regarded as the most important in the Christian religious view of life. When, in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the center of gravity of Christian teaching was more and more transferred, the worship of Christ as God, and the interpretation and following of His teaching, the form of Mysteries describing external Christian events became insufficient, and new forms were demanded. As the expression of the aspirations which gave rise to these changes, there appeared the Moralities, dramatic representations in which the characters were personifications of Christian virtues and their opposite vices.

But allegories, owing to the very fact of their being works of art of a lower order, could not replace the former religious dramas, and yet no new forms of dramatic art corresponding to the conception now entertained of Christianity, according to which it was regarded as a teaching of life, had yet been found. Hence, dramatic art, having no foundation, came in all Christian countries to swerve farther and farther from its proper use and object, and, instead of serving God, it took to serving the crowd (by crowd, I mean, not simply the masses of common people, but the majority of immoral or unmoral men, indifferent to the higher problems of human life). This deviation was, moreover, encouraged by the circumstance that, at this very time, the Greek thinkers, poets, and dramatists, hitherto unknown in the Christian world, were discovered and brought back into favor. From all this it followed that, not having yet had time to work out their own form of dramatic art corresponding to the new conception entertained of Christianity as being a teaching of life, and, at the same time, recognizing the previous form of Mysteries and Moralities as insufficient, the writers of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, in their search for a new form, began to imitate the newly discovered Greek models, attracted by their elegance and novelty.

Since those who could principally avail themselves of dramatic representations were the powerful of this world: kings, princes, courtiers, the least religious people, not only utterly indifferent to the questions of religion, but in most cases completely depraved—therefore, in satisfying the demands of its audience, the drama of the fifteenth and sixteenth and seventeenth centuries entirely gave up all religious aim. It came to pass that the drama, which formerly had such a lofty and religious significance, and which can, on this condition alone, occupy an important place in human life, became, as in the time of Rome, a spectacle, an amusement, a recreation—*only* with this difference, that in Rome the spectacles existed for the whole people, whereas in the Christian world of the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries they were principally meant for depraved kings and the higher classes. Such was the case with the Spanish, English, Italian, and French drama.

The dramas of that time, principally composed, in all these countries, according to ancient Greek models, or taken from poems, legends, or biographies, naturally reflected the characteristics of their respective nationalities: in Italy comedies were chiefly elaborated, with humorous positions and persons. In Spain there flourished the worldly drama, with complicated plots and historical heroes. The peculiarities of the English drama were the coarse incidents of murders, executions, and battles taking place on the stage, and popular, humorous interludes. Neither the Italian nor the Spanish nor the English drama had European fame, but they all enjoyed success in their own countries. General fame, owing to the elegance of its language and the talent of its writers, was possessed only by the French drama, distinguished by its strict adherence to the Greek models, and especially to the law of the three Unities.

So it continued till the end of the eighteenth century, at which time this happened: In Germany, which had not produced even passable dramatic writers (there was a weak and little known writer, Hans Sachs), all educated people, together with Frederick the Great, bowed down before the French pseudo-classical drama. Yet at this very time there appeared in Germany a group of educated and talented writers and poets, who, feeling the falsity and coldness of the French drama, endeavored to find a new and freer dramatic form. The members of this group, like all the upper classes of the Christian world at that time, were under the charm and influence of the Greek classics, and, being utterly indifferent to religious questions, they thought that if the Greek drama, describing the calamities and sufferings and strife of its heroes, represented the highest dramatic ideal, then such a description of the sufferings and the struggles of heroes would be a sufficient subject in the Christian world, too, if only the narrow demands of pseudo-classicalism were rejected. These men, not understanding that, for the Greeks, the strife and sufferings of their heroes had a religious significance, imagined that they needed only to reject the inconvenient law of the three Unities, without introducing into the drama any religious element corresponding to their time, in order that the drama should have sufficient scope in the representation of various moments in the lives of historical personages and, in general, of strong human passions. Exactly this kind of drama existed at that time among the kindred English people, and, becoming acquainted with it, the Germans decided that precisely such should be the drama of the new period.

Thereupon, because of the clever development of scenes which constituted Shakespeare's peculiarity, they chose Shakespeare's dramas in preference to all other English dramas, excluding those which were not in the least inferior, but were even superior, to Shakespeare. At the head of the group stood Goethe, who was then the dictator of public opinion in esthetic questions. He it was who, partly owing to a desire to destroy the fascination of the false French art, partly owing to his desire to give a greater scope to his own dramatic writing, but chiefly through the agreement of his view of life with Shakespeare's, declared Shakespeare a great poet. When this error was announced by an authority like Goethe, all those esthetic critics who did not understand art threw themselves on it like crows on carrion and began to discover in Shakespeare beauties which did not exist, and to extol them. These men, German esthetic critics, for the most part utterly devoid of esthetic feeling, without that simple, direct artistic sensibility which, for people with a feeling for art, clearly distinguishes esthetic impressions from all others, but believing the authority which had recognized Shakespeare as a great poet, began to praise the whole of Shakespeare indiscriminately, especially distinguishing such passages as struck them by their effects, or which expressed thoughts corresponding to their views of life, imagining that these effects and these thoughts constitute the essence of what is called art. These men acted as blind men would act who endeavored to find diamonds by touch among a heap of stones they were fingering. As the blind man would for a long time strenuously handle the stones and in the end would come to no other conclusion than that all stones are precious and especially so the smoothest, so also these esthetic critics, without artistic feeling, could not but come to similar results in relation to Shakespeare. To give the greater force to their praise of the whole of Shakespeare, they invented esthetic theories according to which it appeared that no definite religious view of life was necessary for works of art in general, and especially for the drama; that for the purpose of the drama the representation of human passions and characters was quite sufficient; that not only was an internal religious illumination of what was represented unnecessary, but art should be objective, *i.e.* , should represent events quite independently of any judgment of good and evil. As these theories were founded on Shakespeare's own views of life, it naturally turned out that the works of Shakespeare satisfied these theories and therefore were the height of perfection.

It is these people who are chiefly responsible for Shakespeare's fame. It was principally owing to their writings that the interaction took place between writers and public which expressed itself, and is still expressing itself, in an insane worship of Shakespeare which has no rational foundation. These esthetic critics have written profound treatises about Shakespeare. Eleven thousand volumes have been written about him, and a whole science of Shakespearology composed; while the public, on the one hand, took more and more interest, and the learned critics, on the other hand, gave further and further explanations, adding to the confusion.

So that the first cause of Shakespeare's fame was that the Germans wished to oppose to the cold French drama, of which they had grown weary, and which, no doubt, was tedious enough, a livelier and freer one. The second cause was that the young German writers required a model for writing their own dramas. The third and principal cause was the activity of the learned and zealous esthetic German critics without esthetic feeling, who invented the theory of objective art, deliberately rejecting the religious essence of the drama.

"But," I shall be asked, "what do you understand by the word's religious essence of the drama? May not what you are demanding for the drama, religious instruction, or didactics, be called 'tendency,' a thing incompatible with true art?" I reply that by the religious essence of art I understand not the direct inculcation of any religious truths in an artistic guise, and not an allegorical demonstration of these truths, but the exhibition of a definite view of life corresponding to the highest religious understanding of a given time, which, serving as the motive for the composition of the drama, penetrates, to the knowledge of the author, through all of his work. So it has always been with true art, and so it is with every true artist in general and especially the dramatist. Hence—as it was when the drama was a serious thing, and as it should be according to the essence of the matter—that man alone can write a drama who has something to say to men, and something which is of the greatest importance for them: about man's relation to God, to the Universe, to the All, the Eternal, the Infinite. But when, thanks to the German theories about objective art, the idea was established that, for the drama, this was quite unnecessary, then it is obvious how a writer like Shakespeare—who had not got developed in his mind the religious convictions proper to his time, who, in fact, had no convictions at all, but heaped up in his drama all possible events, horrors, fooleries, discussions, and effects—could appear to be a dramatic writer of the greatest genius.

But these are all external reasons. The fundamental inner cause of Shakespeare's fame was and is this: that his dramas were "pro captu lectoris," *i.e.* , they corresponded to the irreligious and immoral frame of mind of the upper classes of his time.

VIII

At the beginning of the last century, when Goethe was dictator of philosophic thought and esthetic laws, a series of casual circumstances made him praise Shakespeare. The esthetic critics caught up this praise and took to writing their lengthy, misty, learned articles, and the great European public began to be enchanted with Shakespeare. The critics, answering to the popular interest, and endeavoring to compete with one another, wrote new and ever new essays about Shakespeare; the readers and spectators on their side were increasingly confirmed in their admiration, and Shakespeare's fame, like a lump of snow, kept growing and growing, until in our time it has attained that insane worship which obviously has no other foundation than "suggestion."

Shakespeare finds no rival, not even approximately, either among the old or the new writers. Here are some of the tributes paid to him.

"Poetic truth is the brightest flower in the crown of Shakespeare's merits;" "Shakespeare is the greatest moralist of all times;" "Shakespeare exhibits such many-sidedness and such objectivism that they carry him beyond the limits of time and nationality;" "Shakespeare is the greatest genius that has hitherto existed;" "For the creation of tragedy, comedy, history, idyll, idyllistic comedy, esthetic idyll, for the profoundest presentation, or for any casually thrown off, passing piece of verse, he is the only man. He not only wields an unlimited power over our mirth and our tears, over all the workings of passion, humor, thought, and observation, but he possesses also an infinite region full of the phantasy of fiction, of a horrifying and an amusing character. He possesses penetration both in the world of fiction and of reality, and above this reigns one and the same truthfulness to character and to nature, and the same spirit of humanity;" "To Shakespeare the epithet of Great comes of itself; and if one adds that independently of his greatness he has, further, become the reformer of all literature, and, moreover, has in his works not only expressed the phenomenon of life as it was in his day, but also, by the genius of thought which floated in the air has prophetically forestalled the direction that the social spirit was going to take in the future (of which we see a striking example in Hamlet),—one may, without hesitation, say that Shakespeare was not only a great poet, but the greatest of all poets who ever existed, and that in the sphere of poetic creation his only worthy rival was that same life which in his works he expressed to such perfection."

The obvious exaggeration of this estimate proves more conclusively than anything that it is the consequence, not of common sense, but of suggestion. The more trivial, the lower, the emptier a phenomenon is, if only it has become the subject of suggestion, the more supernatural and exaggerated is the significance attributed to it. The Pope is not merely saintly, but most saintly, and so forth. So Shakespeare is not merely a good writer, but the greatest genius, the eternal teacher of man kind.

Suggestion is always a deceit, and every deceit is an evil. In truth, the suggestion that Shakespeare's works are great works of genius, presenting the height of both esthetic and ethical perfection, has caused, and is causing, great injury to men.

This injury is twofold: first, the fall of the drama, and the replacement of this important weapon of progress by an empty and immoral amusement; and secondly, the direct depravation of men by presenting to them false models for imitation.

Human life is perfected only through the development of the religious consciousness, the only element which permanently unites men. The development of the religious consciousness of men is accomplished through all the sides of man's spiritual activity. One direction of this activity is in art. One section of art, perhaps the most influential, is the drama.

Therefore the drama, in order to deserve the importance attributed to it, should serve the development of religious consciousness. Such has the drama always been, and such it was in the Christian world. But upon the appearance of Protestantism in its broader sense, *i.e.* , the appearance of a new understanding of Christianity as of a teaching of life, the dramatic art did not find a form corresponding to the new understanding of Christianity, and the men of the Renaissance were carried away by the imitation of classical art. This was most natural, but the tendency was bound to pass, and art had to discover, as indeed it is now beginning to do, its new form corresponding to the change in the understanding of Christianity.

But the discovery of this new form was arrested by the teaching arising among German writers at the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth centuries—as to so-called objective art, *i.e.* , art indifferent to good or evil—and therein the exaggerated praise of Shakespeare's dramas, which partly corresponded to the esthetic teaching of the Germans, and partly served as material for it. If there had not been exaggerated praise of Shakespeare's dramas, presenting them as the most perfect models, the men of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries would have had to understand that the drama, to have a right to exist and to be a serious thing, must serve, as it always has served and can not but do otherwise, the development of the religious consciousness. And having understood this, they would have searched for a new form of drama corresponding to their religious understanding.

But when it was decided that the height of perfection was Shakespeare's drama, and that we ought to write as he did, not only without any religious, but even without any moral, significance, then all writers of dramas in imitation of him began to compose such empty pieces as are those of Goethe, Schiller, Hugo, and, in Russia, of Pushkin, or the chronicles of Ostrovski, Alexis Tolstoy, and an innumerable number of other more or less celebrated dramatic productions which fill all the theaters, and can be prepared wholesale by any one who happens to have the idea or desire to write a play. It is only thanks to such a low, trivial understanding of the significance of the drama that there appears among us that infinite quantity of dramatic works describing men's actions, positions, characters, and frames of mind, not only void of any spiritual substance, but often of any human sense.

Let not the reader think that I exclude from this estimate of contemporary drama the theatrical pieces I have myself incidentally written. I recognize them, as well as all the rest, as not having that religious character which must form the foundation of the drama of the future.

The drama, then, the most important branch of art, has, in our time, become the trivial and immoral amusement of a trivial and immoral crowd. The worst of it is, moreover, that to dramatic art, fallen as low as it is possible to fall, is still attributed an elevated significance no longer appropriate to it. Dramatists, actors, theatrical managers, and the press—this last publishing in the most serious tone reports of theaters and operas—and the rest, are all perfectly certain that they are doing something very worthy and important.

The drama in our time is a great man fallen, who has reached the last degree of his degradation, and at the same time continues to pride himself on his past of which nothing now remains. The public of our time is like those who mercilessly amuse themselves over this man once so great and now in the lowest stage of his fall.

Such is one of the mischievous effects of the epidemic suggestion about the greatness of Shakespeare. Another deplorable result of this worship is the presentation to men of a false model for imitation. If people wrote of Shakespeare that for his time he was a good writer, that he had a fairly good turn for verse, was an intelligent actor and good stage manager—even were this appreciation incorrect and somewhat exaggerated—if only it were moderately true, people of the rising generation might remain free from Shakespeare's influence. But when every young man entering into life in our time has presented to him, as the model of moral perfection, not the religious and moral teachers of mankind, but first of all Shakespeare, concerning whom it has been decided and is handed down by learned men from generation to generation, as an incontestable truth, that he was the greatest poet, the greatest teacher of life, the young man can not remain free from this pernicious influence. When he is reading or listening to Shakespeare the question for him is no longer whether Shakespeare be good or bad, but only: In what consists that extraordinary beauty, both esthetic and ethical, of which he has been assured by learned men whom he respects, and which he himself neither sees nor feels? And constraining himself, and distorting his esthetic and ethical feeling, he tries to conform to the ruling opinion. He no longer believes in himself, but in what is said by the learned people whom he respects. I have experienced all this. Then reading critical examinations of the dramas and extracts from books with explanatory comments, he begins to imagine that he feels something of the nature of an artistic impression. The longer this continues, the more does his esthetical and ethical feeling become distorted. He ceases to distinguish directly and clearly what is artistic from an artificial imitation of art. But, above all, having assimilated the immoral view of life which penetrates all Shakespeare's writings, he loses the capacity of distinguishing good from evil. And the error of extolling an insignificant, inartistic writer—not only not moral, but directly immoral—executes its destructive work.

This is why I think that the sooner people free themselves from the false glorification of Shakespeare, the better it will be.

First, having freed themselves from this deceit, men will come to understand that the drama which has no religious element at its foundation is not only not an important and good thing, as it is now supposed to be, but the most trivial and despicable of things. Having understood this, they will have to search for, and work out, a new form of modern drama, a drama which will serve as the development and confirmation of the highest stage of religious consciousness in men.

Secondly, having freed themselves from this hypnotic state, men will understand that the trivial and immoral works of Shakespeare and his imitators, aiming merely at the recreation and amusement of the spectators, can not possibly represent the teaching of life, and that, while there is no true religious drama, the teaching of life should be sought for in other sources.

<<span id="filepos0039432845"> a> *Extracts from* WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE by Victor Hugo

In 1864 Hugo published a large non-fiction work titled *William Shakespeare* . When he had begun writing the book, he had intended for it to be an introduction for a collection of French translations written by his son, Francois Victor Hugo. However, the work grew to be approximately 300 pages in length and Hugo had to write a separate introduction to the plays.

William Shakespeare begins with an approximately twenty page biography, filled with many inaccuracies, and then becomes a work of literary criticism focusing on the literary geniuses of history, focusing on not only Shakespeare, but also Homer, Aeschylus, Lucretius, Juvenal, Tacitus, Dante and Cervantes, to name but a few. Deciding there was more of Hugo in the work than Shakespeare, some French critics cynically suggested he should have entitled the work *Myself* .

To provide readers with a sample of this unusual work, selections from Book V, *The Mind and the Masses* , are available in this collection.

Hugo in Jersey, 1855

THE MINDS AND THE MASSES

THE PEOPLE

For the last eighty years memorable things have been done. A wonderful heap of demolished materials covers the pavement.

What is done is but little by the side of what remains to be done.

To destroy is the task: to build is the work. Progress demolishes with the left hand; it is with the right hand that it builds.

The left hand of Progress is called Force; the right hand is called Mind.

There is at this hour a great deal of useful destruction accomplished; all the old cumbersome civilisation is, thanks to our fathers, cleared away. It is well, it is finished, it is thrown down, it is on the ground. Now, up with you all, intellects! to work, to labour, to fatigue, to duty; it is necessary to construct.

Here three questions: To construct what? To construct where? To construct how?

We reply: To construct the people. To construct the people according to the laws of progress. To construct the people according to the laws of light.

SOCIALISM

To work for the people,—that is the great and urgent necessity.

The human mind—an important thing to say at this minute—has a greater need of the ideal even than of the real.

It is by the real that we exist; it is by the ideal that we live. Now, do you wish to realize the difference? Animals exist, man lives.

To live, is to understand. To live, is to smile at the present, to look toward posterity over the wall. To live, is to have in one's self a balance, and to weigh in it the good and the evil. To live, is to have justice, truth, reason, devotion, probity, sincerity, commonsense, right, and duty nailed to the heart. To live, is to know what one is worth, what one can do and should do. Life is conscience. Cato would not rise before Ptolemy. Cato lived.

Literature is the secretion of civilisation, poetry of the ideal. That is why literature is one of the wants of societies. That is why poetry is a hunger of the soul. That is why poets are the first instructors of the people. That is why Shakespeare must be translated in France. That is why Molière must be translated in England. That is why comments must be made on them. That is why there must be a vast public literary domain. That is why all poets, all philosophers, all thinkers, all the producers of the greatness of the mind must be translated, commented on, published, printed, reprinted, stereotyped, distributed, explained, recited, spread abroad, given to all, given cheaply, given at cost price, given for nothing.

Poetry evolves heroism. M. Royer-Collard, that original and ironical friend of routine, was, taken all in all, a wise and noble spirit. Some one we know heard him say one day, "Spartacus is a poet."

That wonderful and consoling Ezekiel—the tragic revealer of progress—has all kinds of singular passages full of a profound meaning: "The voice said to me: Fill the palm of thy hand with red-hot coals, and spread them on the city." And elsewhere: "The spirit having gone into them, everywhere the spirit went, they went." And again: "A hand was stretched towards me. It held a roll which was a book. The voice said to me: Eat this roll. I opened the lips and ate the book. And it was sweet in my mouth as honey." To eat the book is a strange and striking image,—the whole formula of perfectibility, which above is knowledge, and below, teaching.

We have just said, "Literature is the secretion of civilisation." Do you doubt it? Open the first statistics you come across.

Here is one we find under our hand: Bagne de Toulon, 1862. Three thousand and ten prisoners. Of these three thousand and ten convicts, forty know a little more than to read and write, two hundred eighty seven know how to read and write, nine hundred and four read badly and write badly, seventeen hundred and seventy nine know neither how to read nor write. In this wretched crowd all the merely mechanical trades are represented by numbers decreasing according as they rise toward the enlightened pursuits, and you arrive at this final result: goldsmiths and jewellers, four; ecclesiastics, three; lawyers, two; comedians, one; artist musicians, one; men of letters, not one.

The transformation of the crowd into the people,—profound labour! It is to this labour that the men called socialists have devoted themselves during the last forty years. The author of this book, however insignificant he may be, is one of the oldest in this labour; "The Last Days of a Condemned Man" dates from 1828, and "Claude Gueux" from 1834. He claims his place among these philosophers because it is a place of persecution. A certain hatred of socialism, very blind, but very general, has been at work for fifteen or sixteen years, and is still at work most bitterly among the influential classes. (Classes, then, are still in existence?) Let it not be forgotten, socialism, true socialism, has for its end the elevation of the masses to the civic dignity, and therefore its principal care is for moral and intellectual cultivation. The first hunger is ignorance; socialism wishes then, above all, to instruct. That does not hinder socialism from being caluminated, and socialists from being denounced. To most of the infuriated, trembling cowards who have their say at the present moment, these reformers are public enemies. They are guilty of everything that has gone wrong. "O Romans!" said Tertullian, "we are just, kind, thinking, lettered, honest men. We meet to pray, and we love you because you are our brethren. We are gentle and peaceable like little children, and we wish for concord among men. Nevertheless, O Romans! if the Tiber overflows, or if the Nile does not, you cry, 'to the lions with the Christians!'"

LIBERTY

The democratic idea, the new bridge of civilisation, undergoes at this moment the formidable trial of overweight. Every other idea would certainly give way under the load that it is made to bear. Democracy proves its solidity by the absurdities that are heaped on, without shaking it. It must resist everything that people choose to place on it. At this moment they try to make it carry despotism.

The people have no need of liberty,—such was the password of a certain innocent and duped school, the had of which has been dead some years. That poor honest dreamer believed in good faith that men can keep progress with them when they turn out liberty. We have heard him put forth, probably without meaning it, this aphorism: Liberty is good for the rich. These kinds of maxims have the disadvantage of not being prejudicial to the establishment of empires.

No, no, no! Nothing out of liberty.

Servitude is the blind soul. Can you figure to yourself a man blind voluntarily? This terrible thing exists. There are willing slaves. A smile in irons! Can anything be more hideous? He who is not free is not a man; he who is not free has no sight, no knowledge, no discernment, no growth, no comprehension, no will, no faith, no love; he has no wife, he has no children: he has a female and young ones; he lives not,—*ab luce principium* . Liberty is the apple of the eye. Liberty is the visual organ of progress.

Because liberty has inconveniences, and even perils, to wish to create civilisation without it is just the same as to try cultivation without the sun; the sun is also a censurable heavenly body. One day, in the too beautiful sumer of 1829, a critic, now forgotten,—and wrongly, for he was not without some talent,—M.P., suffering from the heat, sharpened his pen, saying, "I am going to excoriate the sun!"

Certain social theories, very distinct from socialism such as we understand and want it, have gone astray. Let us discard all that resembles the convent, the barrack, the cell and the straightline system. Paraguay, minus the Jesuits, is Paraguay just the same. To give a new fashion to evil is not a useful task. To recommence the old slavery is idiotic. Let the nations of Europe beware of a despotism made anew from materials they have to some extent themselves supplied. Such a thing, cemented with a special philosophy, might well last. We have just mentioned the theorists, some of whom otherwise right and sincere, who, by dint of fearing the dispersion of activities and energies, and of what they call 'anarchy' have arrived at an almost Chinese acceptation of absolute social concentration. They turn their resignation into a doctrine. Provided man eats and drinks, all is right. The happiness of the beast is the solution. But this is a happiness which some other men would call by a different name.

We dream for nations something else besides a felicity solely made up of obedience. The bastinado procures that sort of felicity for the Turkish fellah, the knout for the Russian serf, and the cat-o-nine-tails for the English soldier. These socialists by the side of socialism come from Joseph de Maistre, and from Ancillon, without suspecting it p erhaps; for the ingenuousness of these theorists rallied to the *Fait accompli* has—or fancies it has—democratic intentions, and speaks energetically of the "principles of '89." Let these involuntary philosophers of a possible despotism think a moment. To teach the masses a doctrine against liberty; to cram intellects with appetites and fatalism, a certain situation being given; to saturate it with materialism; and to run the risk of the construction which might proceed from it,— that would be to understand progress in the fashion of a worthy man who applauded a new gibbet, and who exclaimed, "This is all right!" We have had til now but the old wooden gallows. Today the age advances; and here we are with a good stone gibbet, which will do for our children and grandchildren!"

LIGHT

To enjoy a full stomach, a satisfied intestine, a satiated belly, is doubtless something, for it is the enjoyment of the brute. However, one may place one's ambition higher.

Certainly a good salary is a fine thing. To tread on this firm ground, high wages, is pleasant. The wise man llikes to want nothing. To insure his own position is the characteristic of an intelligent man. An official chair, with ten thousand sesterces a year, is a graceful and convenient seat. Great emoluments give a fresh complexion and good health. One lives to an old age in pleasant, well-paid sincures. The high financial world, rich in plentiful profits, is a place agreeable to live in. To be well at Court settles a family well and brings a fortune. As for myself, I prefer to all these solid comforts the old leaky vessel in which Bishop Quodvultdeus embarks with a smile.

There is something beyond gorging one's self. The goal of man is not the goal of an animal.

A moral enhancement is necessary. The life of nations, like the life of individuals, has its minutes of depression; these minutes pass, certainly, but no trace of them ought to remain. Man, at this hour, tends to fall into the stomach. Man must be replaced in the heart; man must be replaced in the brain. The brain,—behold the sovereign that must be restored! The social question requires today, more than ever, to be examined on the side of human dignity.

To show man the human end, to ameliorate intelligence first, the animal afterward, to disdain the flesh as long as the thought is despised, and to give the example on their own flesh,—such is the actual, immediate urgent duty of writers.

It is what men of genius have done at all times.

You ask in what poets can be useful? In imbuing civilisation with light,—only that.

LITERATURE

Up to this day there has been a literature of *literati* . In France, particularly, as we have said, literature had a disposition to form a caste. To be a poet was something like being a mandarin. Words did not all belong by right to the language. The dictionary granted or did not grant the registration. The dictionary had a will of its own. Imagine a botanist declaring to a vegetable that it does not exist, and Nature timidly offering an insect to entomology, which refuses it as incorrect. Imagine astronomy cavilling at the stars. We recollect having heard an Academician, now dead, say in full academy that French had been spoken in France only in the seventeenth century, and then for only twelve years,—we do not remember which twelve. Let us give up, for it is time, this order of ideas; democracy requires it. The actual enlarging of thoughts needs something else. Let us leave the college, the conclave, the cell, the weak taste, weak art, the small chapel. Poetry is not a coterie. There is at this hour an effort made to galvanize dead things. Let us strive against this tendency. Let us insist on the truths which are urgent. The *chefs d'oeuvre* recommended by the manual of bachelorship, compliments in verse and in prose, tragedies soaring over the head of some king, inspiration in full official dress, the brilliant nonentities fixing laws on poetry, the *Arts Po&eactue;tiques* which forget La Fontaine, and for which Molière is doubtful, the Planats castrating the Corneilles, prudish tongues, the thoughts enclosed between four walls, and limited by Quintilian, Longinus, Boileau, and La Harpe,—all that, although official and public teaching is filled and saturated with it, all that belongs to the past. Some particular epoch, which is called the grand century, and for a certainty the fine century, is nothing else in reality but a literary monologue. Is it possible to realize such a strange thing,—a literature which is an aside? It seems as if one read on the frontal of art "No admittance." As for ourselves, we understand poetry only with the door wide open. The hour has struck for hoisting the "All for All." What is needed by civilisation, henceforth a grown-up woman, is a popular literature.

1830 has opened a debate, literary on the surface, at the bottom social and human. The moment is come to close the debate. We close it by asking a literature having in view this purpose: "The People."

The author of these pages wrote, thirty one years ago, in the preface to "Lucrèce Borgia," a few words often repeated since: "Le poëte a charge d'âmes." He would add here, if it were worth saying, that, allowing for possible error, the words, uttered by his conscience, have been his rule throughout life.

MACHIAVELLI

Machiavelli had a strange idea of the people. To heap the measure, to overflow the cup, to exaggerate horror in the case of the prince, to increase the crushing in order to stir up the oppressed to revolt, to cause idolatry to change into a curse, to push the masses to extremities,—such seems to be his policy. His "yes" signifies "no." He loads the despot with despotism in order to make him burst. The tyrant becomes in his hands a hideous projectile, which will break to pieces. Machiavelli conspires. For whom? Against whom? Guess. His apotheosis of kings is just the thing to make regicides. On the head of his prince he places a diadem of crimes, a tiara of vices, a halo of baseness; and he invites you to adore his monster, with the air of a man expecting an avenger. He glorifies evil with a squint toward the darkness,—the darkness wherein is Harmodius. Machiavelli, the getter-up of princely outrages, the valet of the Medici and of the Borgias, had in his youth been put to the rack for having admired Brutus and Cassius. He had perhaps plotted with the Soderini the deliverance of Florence. Does he recollect it? Does he continue? His advice is followed, like the lightning, by a low rumbling in the cloud,—alarming reverberation. What did he mean to say? On whom has he a design? Is this advice for or against him to whom he gives it? One day, at Florence, in the garden of Cosmo Ruccelaï&, there being present the Duke of Mantua and John de Medici, who afterward commanded the Black Bands of Tuscany, Varchi, the enemy of Machiavelli, heard him say to the two princes: "Let the people read no book,—not even mine." It is curious to compare with this remark the advice given by Voltaire to the Duke de Choiseul,—at the same time advice to the minister, and insinuation for the king: "Let the boobies read our nonsense. There is no danger in reading, my lord. What can a great king like the King of France fear? The people are but rabble, and the books are but trash." Let them read nothing, let them read everything: These two pieces of contrary advice coinicide more often than one would think. Voltaire, with hidden claws is purring at the feet of the king, Voltaire and Machiavelli are two formidable indirect revolutionists, dissimilar in everything, and yet identical in reality by their profound hatred, disguised in flattery, of the master. The one is malignant, the other is sinister. The princes of the sixteenth century had as theorist on their infamies, and as enigmatical courtier, Machiavelli, an enthusiast dark at heart. The flattery of a sphinx,—terrible thing! Better yet be flattered, like Louis XV, by a cat.

Conclusion: Make the people read Machiavelli, and make them read Voltaire.

Machiavelli will inspire them with horror of, and Voltaire with contempt for, crowned guilt.

But the hearts should turn, above all, twoard the grand pure poets, whether they be sweet like Virgil or bitter like Juvenal.

PROGRESS

The progress of man by the education of minds,—there is no safety but in that. Teach! Learn! All the revolutions of the future are enclosed and embedded in this phrase: Gratuitous and obligatory instruction.

It is by the unfoloding of works of the highest order that this vast intellectual teaching should be crowned. At the top the men of genius.

Wherever there is a gathering of men, there ought to be in a special place, a public expositor of the great thinkers.

By a great thinker we mean a benificent thinker.

The perpetual presence of the beautiful in their works maintains poets at the summit of teaching.

No one can foresee the quantity of light which will be brought forth by letting the people be in communication with men of genius. This combination of the hearts of the people with the heart of the poet will be the Voltaic pile of civilization.

Will the people understand this magnificent teaching? Certainly. We know of nothing too lofty for the people. The people are a great soul. Have you ever gone on a fête-day to a theatre open gratuitously to all? What do you think of the auditory? Do you know of any other more spontaneous and intelligent? Do you know, even in the forest, of a vibration more profound? The court of Versailles admires like a well-drilled regiment; the people throw themselves passionately into the beautiful. They pack together, crowd, amalgamate, combine, and knead themselves into the theatre,—a living paste that the poet is about to mould. The powerful thumb of Molière will presently make its mark on it; the nail of Corneille will scratch this ill-shaped heap. Whence does that heap come? Whence does it proceed? From the Courtille, from the Porcherons, from the Cunette; it is shoeless, it is bare-armed, it is ragged. Silence! This is the human block.

The house is crowded, the vast multitude looks, listens, loves; all consciences, deeply moved, throw off their inner fire; all eyes glisten; the huge beast with a thousand heads is there,—the Mob of Burke, the *Plebs* of Titus Livius, the *Fex urbis* of Cicero. It caresses the beautiful; smiling at it with the grace of a woman. It is literary in the most refined sense of the word; nothing equals the delicacy of this monster. The tumultuous crowd trembles, blushes, palpitates. Its modesty is surprising; the crowd is a virgin. No prudery however; this brute is not brutal. Not a sympathy escapes it; it has in itself the whole keyboard, from passion to irony, from sarcasm to sobbing. Its compassion is more than compassion; it is real mercy. God is felt in it. All at once the sublime passes, and the sombre electricity of the abyss heaves up suddenly all this pile of hearts and entrails; enthusiasm effects a transfiguration. And now, is the enemy at the gates, is the country in danger? Appeal to that populace, and it would enact the sublime drama of Thermopylæ. Who has called forth such a metamorphosis? Poetry.

The multitude (and in this lies their grandeur) are profoundly open to the ideal. When they come in contact with lofty art they are pleased, they shudder. Not a detail escapes them. The crowd is one liquid and living expanse capable of vibration. A mass is a sensitive plant. Contact with the beautiful agitates ecstatically the surface of multitudes,—sure sign that the depth is sounded. A rustling of leaves, a mysterious breath, passes, the crowd trembles under the sacred insufflation of the abyss.

And even where the man of the people is not in the crowd, he is yet a good hearer of great things. His ingenuousness is honest, his curiousity healthy. Ignorance is a longing. His near connection with Nature renders him subject to the holy emotion of the true. He has, toward poetry, secret natural desires which he does not suspect himself. All the teachings are due to the people. The more divine the light, the more it is made for this simple soul. We would have in the villages a pulpit from which Homer whould be explained to the peasants.

THE IDEAL

Too much matter is the evil of our day. Hence a certain dulness.

It is necessary to reestore some ideal in the human mind. Whence shall you take your ideal? Where is it? The poets, the philosophers, the thinkers are the urns. The ideal is in Æschylus, in Isaiah, in Juvenal, in Aligheri, in Shakespeare. Throw Æschylus, throw Isaiah, throw Juvenal, throw Dante, throw Shakespeare into the deep soul of the human race.

Pour Job, Solomon, Pindar, Ezekiel, Sophocles, Euripides, Herodotus, Theocritus, Plautus, Lucretius, Virgil, Ternce, Horace, Catullus, Tacitus, Saint Paul, Saint Augustine, Tertullian, Petrarch, Pascal, Milton, Descartes, Corneille, La Fontaine, Montesquieu, Diderot, Rousseau, Beaumarchais, Sedaine, André' Chénier, Kant, Byron, Schiller,—pour all these souls into man. And with them pour all the wits from Æsop up to Molière, all the intellects from Plato up to Newton, all the encyclopædists from Aristotle up to Voltaire.

By that means, while curing the illness for the moment, you will establish forever the health of the human mind.

You will cure the middle class and found the people.

As we have just said now, after the destruction which has delivered the sorld, you will construct the edifice which shall make it prosper.

What an aim,—to make the people! Principles combined with science; every possible quantity of the absolute introduced by degrees into the fact; Utopia treated successsively by every mode of realizationm—by political economym by philosophy, by physics, by chemistry, by dynamics, by logic, by art, union replacing little by little antagonism, and unity replacing union; for religion God, for priest the father, for prayer virtue, for field the whole earth, for language the verb, for law the right, for motive-power duty, for hygiene labor, for economy universal peace, for canvas the very life, for the goal progress, for authority liberty, for people the man, —such is the simplification.

And at the summit the ideal.

The ideal!—inflexible type of perpetual progress.

To whom belong men of genius if not to thee, people? They do belong to thee; they are thy sons and thy fathers. Thou givest birth to them, and they teach thee. They open in thy chaos vistas of light. Children, they have drunk thy sap. They have leaped in the universal matrix, humanity. Each of thy phases, people, is an avatar. The deep essence of life, it is in thee that it must be looked for. Thou art the great bosom. Geniuses are begotten from thee, mysterious crowd.

Let them therefore return to thee.

People, the author, God, dedicates them to thee.

FRATERNIZATION

The nineteenth century springs from itself only; it does not receive its impulse from any ancestor; it is the offspring of an idea. Doubtless, Isaiah, Homer, Aristotle, Dante, Shakespeare, have been or could be great starting points for important philosophical or poetical formations; but the nineteenth century has an august mother,—the French Revolution. It has that powerful blood in its veins. It honours men of genius. When denied it salutes them, when ignored it proclaims them, when persecuted it avenges them, when insulted it crowns them, when dethroned it replaces them upon their pedestal; it venerates them, but it does not proceed from them. The nineteenth century has for family itself, and itself alone. It is the characteristic of its revolutionary nature to dispense with ancestors.

Itself a genius, it fraternizes with men of genius. As for its source, it is where theirs is,—beyond man. The mysterious generations of progress succeed each other according to a providential law. The nineteenth century is born of civilization. It has a continent to bring into the world. France has borne this century; and this century bears Europe.

The Greek stock bore civilization, narrow and circumscribed at first by the mulberry leaf, confined to the Morea; then civilizaiton, gaining step by step, grew broader, and formed the Roman stock. It is today the French stock,—that is to say, all Europe,—with young shoots in America, Africa, and Asia.

The greatest of these young shoots is a democracy,—the United States, the sprouting of which was aided by France in the last century. Fance, sublime essayist in progress, has founded a republic in America before making one in Europe. *Et vidit quod esset bonum.* After having lent to Washington an auxiliary, Lafayette, France, upon returning home, gave to Voltaire, dismayed within his tomb, that formidable successor, Danton. In presence of the monstrous past, hurling every thunder, exhaling every miasma, breathing every darkness, protruding every talon, horrible and terrible, progress, constrained to use the same weapons, has had suddenly a hundred arms, a hundred heads, a hundred tongues of fire, a hundred roarings. The good has transformed itself into a hydra. It is this that is termed the Revolution.

Nothing can be more august.

The Revolution ended one century and began another.

An intellectual awakening prepares the way for an overthrow of facts,—and this is the eighteenth century. After which the political revolution, once accomplished, seeks expression, and the literary and social revolution completes it: this is the nineteenth century. With ill-will, but not unjustly, has it been said that romanticism and socialism are identical: hatred, in its desire to injure, very often establishes, and, so far as is in its power, consolidates.

A Parenthesis. This word, *romanticism,* has, like all war-cries, the advantage of readily summing up a group of ideas. It is brief,—which pleases in the contest; but it has, to our idea, through its militant signification, the objection or appearing to limit the movement that it represents to a warlike action. Now, this movement is a matter of intellect, a matter of civilization, a matter of soul; and this is why the writer of these lines has never used the words *romanticism* or *romantic.* They will not be found in any of the pages of criticism that he has had occasion to write. If to-day he derogates from his usual prudence in polemics, it is for the sake of greater rapidity and with all reservation. The same observation may be made on the subject of the word *socialism,* which admits of so many different interpretations.

The triple movement—literary, philosophical, and social—of the nineteenth century, which is one single movement, is nothing but the current of the revolution in ideas. This current, after having swept away the facts, is perpetuated in minds with all its immensity.

This term, *"literary '93,"* so often quoted in 1830 against contemporaneous literature, was not so much an insult as it was intended to be. It was certainly as unjust to employ it as characterizing the whole literary movement as it is iniquitous to employ it to describe all political revolutions; there is in these two phenomena something besides '93. But this term, *"literary '93,"* was relatively exact, insomuch as it indicated, confusedly but truthfully, the origin of the literary movement which belongs to our epoch, while endeavoring to dishonour that movement. Here again the clairvoyance of hatred was blind. Its daubings of mud upon the face of truth are gilding, light, and glory.

The Revolutioin, turning climacteric of humanity, is made up of several years. Each of these years expresses a period, represents an aspect, or realizes a phase of the phenomenon. Tragic '93 is one of those colossal years. Good news must sometimes have a mouth of bronze. Such a mouth is '93.

Listen to the immense proclamation proceeding from it. Give attention, remain speechless, and be impressed. God himself said the first time *Fiat lux* , the second time he has caused it to be said.

By whom?

By '93.

Therefore, we men of the nineteenth century hold in honour that reproach, "You are '93."

But do not stop there. We are '89 as well as '93. The Revolution, the whole Revolution,—such is the source of the literature of the nineteenth century.

On these grounds put it on its trial, this literature, or seek its triumph; hate it or love it. Accoding to the amount of the future that you have in you, outrage it or salute it; little do animosities and fury affect it. It is the logical deduction from the great chaotic and genesaical fact that our fathers have witnessed, and which has given a new starting-point in the world. He who is against the fact is against the literature; he who is for that fact is on its side. What the fact is worth the literature is worth. The reactionary writers are not mistaken; whenever there is revolution, patent or latent, the Catholic and royalist scent is unfailing. Those men of letters of the past award to contemporaneous literature an honorable amount of diatribe; their aversion is convulsive. One of their journalists, who is, I believe a bishop, pronounces the word *poet* with the same accent as the word *Septembrist;* another, less of a bishop, but quite as angry, writes, "I feel in all this literature Marat and Robespierre." This last writer is rather mistaken; there is in "this literature" Danton rather than Marat.

But the fact is true: democracy is in this literature.

The Revolution has forged the clarion; the nineteenth century sounds it.

Ah, this affirmation suits us, and, in truth, we do not recoil before it; we avow our glory,—we are revolutionists. The thinkers of the present time,—poets, writers, historians, orators, philosophers,— all are derived from the French Revolution. They come from it, and it alone. It was '89 that demolished the Bastille; it was '93 that took the crown from the Louvre. From '89 sprung deliverance, and from '93 Victory. From '89 and '93 the men of the 19th century proceed: these are their father and mother. Do not seek for them another affiliation, another inspiration, another insufflation, another origin. They are the democrats of the idea, successors to the democrats of action. They are the emancipators. Liberty bent over their cradles,—they all have sucked her vast breast; they all have her milk in their entrails, her marrow in their bones, her sap in their will, her spirit of revolt in their reason, her flame in their intellect.

Even those among them (there are some) who were born aristocrats, who came to the world banished in some degree among families of the past, who have fatally received one of those primary educations whose stupid effort is to contradict progress, and who have commenced the words that they had to say to our century with an indescribably royalist stuttering,—these, from that period, from their infancy (they will not contradict me), felt the sublime monster within them. They had the inner ebullition of the immense fact. They had in the depth of their conscience a whispering of mysterious ideas; the inward shock of false certainties troubled their mind; they felt their sombre surface of monarchism, catholicism, and aristocracy tremble, shudder, and by degrees split up. One day, suddenly and powerfully, the swelling of truth within them prevailed, the hatching was completed, the eruption took place; the light flamed in them, causing them to burst open,—not falling on them, but (more beautiful mystery!) lightening them, while it burned within them. They were craters unknown to themselves.

This phenomenon has been interpreted to their reproach as a treason. They passed over, in fact, from right divine to human right. They turned their back on false history, on false tradition, on false dogmas, on false philosophy, on false daylight, on false truth. The free spirit which soars up,—bird called by Aurora, —offends intellects saturated with ignorance and the foetus preserved in spirits of wine. He who sees offends the blind; he who hears makes the deaf indignant; he who walks offers an abominable insult to cripples. In the eyes of dwarfs, abortions, Aztecs, myrmidons, and pygmies, forever subject to rickets, growth is apostasy.

The writers and poets of the nineteenth century have the admirable good fortune of proceeding from a genesis, of arriving after an end of the world, of accompanying a reappearance of light, of being the organs of a new beginning. This imposes on them duties unknown to their predecessors—the duties of intentional reformers and direct civilizers. They continue nothing; they remake everything. For new times, new duties. The function of thinkers in our days is complex; to think is no longer sufficient, —they must love; to think and love is no longer sufficient,—they must act; to think, to love, and to act, no longer suffices,—they must suffer. Lay down the pen, and go where you hear the grapeshot. Here is a barricade; be one on it. Here is exile; accept it. Here is the scaffold; be it so. Let John Brown be in Montesquieu, if needful. The Lucretius required by this century in labour should contain Cato. AEschylus, who wrote the "Orestias," had for a brother Cynegyrus, who fastened with his teeth on the ships of the enemies: that was sufficient for Greece at the time of Salamis, but it no longer suffices for France after the Revolution. That AEschylus and Cynegyrus are brothers is not enough; they must be the same man. Such are the actual requirements of progress. Those who devote themselves to great and pressing things can never be too great. To set ideas in motion, to heap up evidence, to pile up principles, that is the redoubtable movement. To heap Pelion on Ossa is the labour of infants beside that work of giants, the placing of right

Upon truth. To scale that afterward, and to dethrone usurpations in the midst of thunders,— such is the work.

The future presses. To-morrow cannot wait. Humanity has not a minute to lose. Quick! quick! let us hasten; the wretched ones have their feet on red-hot iron. They hunger, they thirst, they suffer. Ah, terrible emaciation of the poor human body! Parasitism laughs, the ivy grows green and thrives, the mistletoe is flourishing, the tapeworm is happy. What a frightful object the prosperity of the tapeworm! To destroy that which devours,—in that is safety. Your life has within itself death, which is in good health. There is too much misery, too much desolation, too much immodesty, too much nakedness, too many brothels, too many prisons, too many rags, too many crimes, too much weakness, too much darkness, not enough schools, too many little innocents growing up for evil! The trucklebeds of poor girls are suddenly covered with silk and lace,—and in that is worse misery; by the side of misfortune there is vice, the one urging the other. Such a society requires prompt succour. Let us seek for the best. Go all of you in this search. Where are the promised lands? Civilization would go forward; let us try theories, systems, ameliorations, inventions, progress, until the shoe for that foot shall be found. The attempt costs nothing, or costs but little,—to attempt is not to adopt,—but before all, above all, let us be lavish of light. All sanitary purification begins in opening windows wide. Let us open wide all intellects. Let us supply souls with air.

Quick, quick, O thinkers! Let the human race breathe; give hope, give the ideal, do good. Let one step succeed another, horizon expand into horizon, conquest follow conquest. Because you have given what you promised do not think you have performed all that is required of you. To possess is to promise; the dawn of to-day imposes on the sun obligations for to-morrow.

Let nothing be lost. Let not one strength be isolated. Every one to work! there is vast urgency for it. No more idle art. Poetry the worker of civilization, what more admirable? The dreamer should be a pioneer; the strophe should mean something. The beautiful should be at the service of honesty. I am the valet of my conscience; it rings for me: I come. "Go!" I go. What do you require of me, O truth, sole majesty of this world? Let each one feel in haste to do well. A book is sometimes a source of hoped-for succour. An idea is a balm, a word may be a dressing for wounds; poetry is a physician. Let no one tarry. Suffering is losing its strength while you are idling. Let men leave this dreamy laziness. Leave the kief to the Turks. Let men labour for the safety of all, and let them rush into it and be out of breath. Do not be sparing of your strides. Nothing useless; no inertia. What do you call dread nature? Everything lives. The duty of all is to live; to walk, to run, to fly, to soar, is the universal law. What do you wait for? Who stops you? Ah, there are times one might wish to hear the stones murmur at the slowness of man!

Sometimes one goes into the woods. To whom does it not happen at times to be overwhelmed?—one sees so many sad things. The stage is a long one to go over, the consequences are long in coming, a generation is behindhand, the work of the age languishes. What! so many sufferings yet? One might think he has gone backward. There is everywhere increase of superstition, of cowardice, of deafness, of blindness, of imbecility. Penal laws weigh upon brutishness. This wretched problem has been set,—to augment comfort by putting off right; to sacrifice the superior side of man to the inferior side; to yield up principle to appetite. Caesar takes charge for the belly, I make over to him the brains,—it is the old sale of a birth-right for the dish of porridge. A little more, and this fatal anomaly would cause a wrong road to be taken toward civilization. The fattening pig would no longer be the king, but the people. Alas! this ugly expedient does not even succeed. No diminution whatever of the malady. In the last ten years—for the last twenty years—the low water-mark of prostitution, of mendicity, of crime, has been stationary, below which evil has not fallen one degree. Of true education, of gratuitous education, there is none. The infant nevertheless requires to know that he is man, and the father that he is citizen. Where are the promises? Where is the hope? Oh, poor wretched humanity! one is tempted to shout for help in the forest; one is tempted to claim support, assistance, and a strong arm from that grand mournful Nature. Can this mysterious ensemble of forces be indifferent to progress? We supplicate, appeal, raise our hands toward the shadow. We listen, wondering if the rustlings will become voices. The duty of the springs and streams should be to babble forth the word "Forward!" One could wish to hear nightingales sing new Marseillaises.

Notwithstanding all this, these times of halting are nothing beyond what is normal. Discouragement would be puerile. There are halts, repose, breathing spaces in the march of peoples, as there are winters in the progress of the seasons. The gigantic step, '89, is all the same a fact. To despair would be absurd, but to stimulate is necessary.

To stimulate, to press, to chide, to awaken, to suggest, to inspire,—it is this function, fulfilled everywhere by writers, which impresses on the literature of this century so high a character of power and originality. To remain faithful to all the laws of art, while combining them with the law of progress,— such is the problem, victoriously solved by so many noble and proud minds.

Thence this word deliverance, which appears above everything in the light, as if it were written on the very forehead of the ideal.

The Revolution is France sublimed. There was a day when France was in the furnace,—the furnace causes wings to grow on certain warlike martyrs, and from amid the flames this giant came forth archangel. At this day by all the world, France is called Revolution; and henceforth this word revolution will be the name of civilization, until it can be replaced by the word harmony. I repeat it: do not seek elsewhere the starting-point and the birth-place of the literature of the nineteenth century. Yes, as many as there be of us, great and small, powerful and unknown, illustrious and obscure, in all our works good or bad, whatever they may be,—poems, dramas, romances, history, philosophy,—at the tribune of assemblies as before the crowds of the theatre, as in the meditation of solitudes; yes, everywhere; yes, always; yes, to combat violence and imposture; yes, to rehabilitate those who are stoned and run down; yes, to sum up logically and to march straight onward; yes, to console, to succour, to relieve, to encourage, to teach; yes, to dress wounds in hope of curing them; yes, to transform charity into fraternity, alms into assistance, sluggishness into work, idleness into utility, centralization into a family, iniquity into justice, the bourgeois into the citizen, the populace into the people, the rabble into the nation, nations into humanity, war into love, prejudice into free examination, frontiers into solderings, limits into openings, ruts into rails, vestry-rooms into temples, the instinct of evil into the desire of good, life into right, kings into men; yes, to deprive religions of hell and societies of the galley; yes, to be brothers to the wretched, the serf, the fellah, the proletaire, the disinherited, the banished, the betrayed, the conquered, the sold, the enchained, the sacrificed, the prostitute, the convict, the ignorant, the savage, the slave, the negro, the condemned, and the damned, —yes, we are thy sons, Revolution!

Yes, men of genius; yes, poets, philosophers, historians; yes, giants of that great art of previous ages which is all the light of the past,—O men eternal, the minds of this day salute you, but do not follow you; in respect to you they hold to this law,—to admire everything, to imitate nothing. Their function is no longer yours. They have business with the virility of the human race. The hour which makes mankind of age has struck. We assist, under the full light of the ideal, at that majestic junction of the beautiful with the useful. No actual or possible genius can surpass you, ye men of genius of old; to equal you is all the ambition allowed: but, to equal you, one must conform to the necessities of our time, as you supplied the necessities of yours. Writers who are sons of the Revolution have a holy task.

O Homer, their epic poem must weep; O Herodotus, their history must protest; O Juvenal, their satire must dethrone; O Shakespeare, their "thou shalt be king," must be said to the people; O AEschylus, their Prometheus must strike Jupiter with thunderbolts; O Job, their dunghill must be fruitful; O Dante, their hell must be extinguished; O Isaiah, thy Babylon crumbles, theirs must blaze forth with light! They do what you have done; they contemplate creation directly, they observe humanity directly; they do not accept as a guiding light any refracted ray, not even yours. Like you, they have for their sole starting-point, outside them, universal being: in them, their soul. They have for the source of their work the one source whence flows Nature and whence flows art, the infinite. As the writer of these lines said forty years ago: "The poets and the writers of the nineteenth century have neither masters nor models." No; in all that vast and sublime art of all peoples, in all those grand creations of all epochs,—no, not even thee, AEschylus, not even thee, Dante, not even thee, Shakespeare,—no, they have neither models nor masters. And why have they neither masters nor models? It is because they have one model, Man, and because they have one master, God.

<<span id="filepos0039495408"> a>SHAKESPEARE'S ATTITUDE TOWARD THE WORKING CLASSES by Ernest Crosby

"Shakespeare was of us," cries Browning, in his "Lost Leader," while lamenting the defection of Wordsworth from the ranks of progress and liberalism—"Milton was for us, Burns, Shelley were with us—they watch from their graves!" There can, indeed, be no question of the fidelity to democracy of Milton, the republican pamphleteer, nor of Burns, the proud plowman, who proclaimed the fact that "a man's a man for a' that," nor of Shelley, the awakened aristocrat, who sang to such as Burns

"Men of England, wherefore plow For the lords who lay ye low?"

But Shakespeare?—Shakespeare?—where is there a line in Shakespeare to entitle him to a place in this brotherhood? Is there anything in his plays that is in the least inconsistent with all that is reactionary?

A glance at Shakespeare's lists of *dramatis personæ* is sufficient to show that he was unable to conceive of any situation rising to the dignity of tragedy in other than royal and ducal circles. It may be said in explanation of this partiality for high rank that he was only following the custom of the dramatists of his time, but this is a poor plea for a man of great genius, whose business it is precisely to lead and not to follow. Nor is the explanation altogether accurate. In his play, the "Pinner of Wakefield," first printed in 1599, Robert Greene makes a hero, and a very stalwart one, of a mere pound-keeper, who proudly refuses knighthood at the hands of the king. There were other and earlier plays in vogue in Shakespeare's day treating of the triumphs of men of the people, one, for instance, which commemorated the rise of Sir Thomas Gresham, the merchant's son, and another, entitled "The History of Richard Whittington, of his Low Birth, his Great Fortune"; but he carefully avoided such material in seeking plots for his dramas. Cardinal Wolsey, the butcher's son, is indeed the hero of "Henry VIII.," but his humble origin is only mentioned incidentally as something to be ashamed of. What greater opportunity for idealizing the common people ever presented itself to a dramatist than to Shakespeare when he undertook to draw the character of Joan of Arc in the second part of "Henry VI."? He knew how to create noble women—that is one of his special glories—but he not only refuses to see anything noble in the peasant girl who led France to victory, but he deliberately insults her memory with the coarsest and most cruel calumnies. Surely the lapse of more than a century and a half might have enabled a man of honor, if not of genius, to do justice to an enemy of the weaker sex, and if Joan had been a member of the French royal family we may be sure that she would have received better treatment.

The question of the aristocratic tendency of the drama was an active one in Shakespeare's time. There was a good deal of democratic feeling in the burghers of London-town, and they resented the courtly prejudices of their playwrights and their habit of holding up plain citizens to ridicule upon the stage, whenever they deigned to present them at all. The Prolog in Beaumont and Fletcher's "Knight of the Burning Pestle" gives sufficient evidence of this. The authors adopted the device of having a Citizen leap upon the stage and interrupt the Speaker of the Prolog by shouting

"Hold your peace, goodman boy!"

Speaker of Prolog: "What do you mean, sir?"

Citizen: "That you have no good meaning; this seven year there hath been plays at this house. I have observed it, you have still girds at citizens."

The Citizen goes on to inform the Speaker of the Prolog that he is a grocer, and to demand that he "present something notably in honor of the commons of the city." For a hero he will have "a grocer, and he shall do admirable things." But this proved to be a joke over too serious a matter, for at the first representation of the play in 1611 it was cried down by the citizens and apprentices, who did not appreciate its satire upon them, and it was not revived for many years thereafter. It will not answer, therefore, to say that the idea of celebrating the middle and lower classes never occurred to Shakespeare, for it was a subject of discussion among his contemporaries.

It is hardly possible to construct a play with no characters but monarchs and their suites, and at the same time preserve the verisimilitudes of life. Shakespeare was obliged to make some use of servants, citizens, and populace. How has he portrayed them? In one play alone has he given up the whole stage to them, and it is said that the "Merry Wives of Windsor" was only written at the request of Queen Elizabeth, who wished to see Sir John Falstaff in love. It is from beginning to end one prolonged "gird at citizens," and we can hardly wonder that they felt a grievance against the dramatic profession. In the other plays of Shakespeare the humbler classes appear for the main part only occasionally and incidentally. His opinion of them is indicated more or less picturesquely by the names which he selects for them. There are, for example, Bottom, the weaver; Flute, the bellows-maker; Snout and Sly, tinkers; Quince, the carpenter; Snug, the joiner; Starveling, the tailor; Smooth, the silkman; Shallow and Silence, country justices; Elbow and Hull, constables; Dogberry and Verges, Fang and Snare, sheriffs' officers; Mouldy, Shadow, Wart, and Bull-calf, recruits; Feebee, at once a recruit and a woman's tailor, Pilch and Patch-Breech, fishermen (though these last two appellations may be mere nicknames); Potpan, Peter Thump, Simple, Gobbo, and Susan Grindstone, servants; Speed, "a clownish servant"; Slender, Pistol, Nym, Sneak, Doll Tear-sheet, Jane Smile, Costard, Oatcake, Seacoal, and various anonymous "clowns" and "fools." Shakespeare rarely gives names of this character to any but the lowly in life, altho perhaps we should cite as exceptions Sir Toby Belch and Sir Andrew Ague-Cheek in "Twelfth Night"; the vicar, Sir Oliver Mar-Text, in "As You Like It"; Moth, the page, in "Love's Labor Lost," and Froth, "a foolish gentleman," in "Measure for Measure," but none of these personages quite deserves to rank as an aristocrat. Such a system of nomenclature as we have exposed is enough of itself to fasten the stigma of absurdity upon the characters subjected to it, and their occupations. Most of the trades are held up for ridicule in "Midsummer Night's Dream"; Holofernes, the schoolmaster, is made ridiculous in "Love's Labor Lost," and we are told of the middle-class Nym, Pistol, and Bardolph that "three such antics do not amount to a man" (Henry V., Act 3, Sc. 2). But it is not necessary to rehearse the various familiar scenes in which these fantastically named individuals raise a laugh at their own expense.

The language employed by nobility and royalty in addressing those of inferior station in Shakespeare's plays may be taken, perhaps, rather as an indication of the manners of the times than as an expression of his own feeling, but even so it must have been a little galling to the poorer of his auditors. "Whoreson dog," "whoreson peasant," "slave," "you cur," "rogue," "rascal," "dunghill," "crack-hemp," and "notorious villain"—these are a few of the epithets with which the plays abound. The Duke of York accosts Thomas Horner, an armorer, as "base dunghill villain and mechanical" (Henry VI., Part 2, Act 2, Sc. 3); Gloucester speaks of the warders of the Tower as "dunghill grooms" (Ib., Part 1, Act 1, Sc. 3), and Hamlet of the grave-digger as an "ass" and "rude knave." Valentine tells his servant, Speed, that he is born to be hanged (Two Gentlemen of Verona, Act 1, Sc. 1), and Gonzalo pays a like compliment to the boatswain who is doing his best to save the ship in the "Tempest" (Act 1, Sc. 1). This boatswain is not sufficiently impressed by the grandeur of his noble cargo, and for his pains is called a "brawling, blasphemous, uncharitable dog," a "cur," a "whoreson, insolent noise-maker," and a "wide-chapped rascal." Richard III.'s Queen says to a gardener, who is guilty of nothing but giving a true report of her lord's deposition and who shows himself a kind-hearted fellow, "Thou little better thing than earth," "thou wretch"! Henry VIII. talks of a "lousy footboy," and the Duke of Suffolk, when he is about to be killed by his pirate captor at Dover, calls him "obscure and lowly swain," "jaded groom," and "base slave," dubs his crew "paltry, servile, abject drudges," and declares that his own head would

"sooner dance upon bloody pole Than stand uncovered to a vulgar groom." (Henry VI., Part 2, Act 4, Sc. 1.)

Petruchio "wrings Grumio by the ear," and Katherine beats the same unlucky servant. His master indulges in such terms as "foolish knave," "peasant swain," and "whoreson malthorse drudge" in addressing him; cries out to his servants, "off with my boots, you rogues, you villains!" and strikes them. He pays his compliments to a tailor in the following lines:

"O monstrous arrogance! Thou liest, thou thread, thou thimble, Thou yard, three-quarters, half-yard, quarter, nail, Thou flea, thou nit, thou winter cricket thou; Braved in my own house by a skein of thread! Away, thou rag, thou quantity, thou remnant!" (Taming of the Shrew, Act 4, Sc. 3.)

Joan of Arc speaks of her "contemptible estate" as a shepherd's daughter, and afterward, denying her father, calls him "Decrepit miser! base, ignoble wretch!" (Henry VI., Part 1, Act 1, Sc. 2, and Act 5, Sc. 4.) It is hard to believe that Shakespeare would have so frequently allowed his characters to express their contempt for members of the lower orders of society if he had not had some sympathy with their opinions.

Shakespeare usually employs the common people whom he brings upon the stage merely to raise a laugh (as, for instance, the flea-bitten carriers in the inn-yard at Rochester, in Henry IV., Part 1, Act 2, Sc. 1), but occasionally they are scamps as well as fools. They amuse us when they become hopelessly entangled in their sentences (*vide* Romeo and Juliet, Act 1, Sc. 2), or when Juliet's nurse blunderingly makes her think that Romeo is slain instead of Tybalt; but when this same lady, after taking Romeo's money, espouses the cause of the County Paris—or when on the eve of Agincourt we are introduced to a group of cowardly English soldiers—or when Coriolanus points out the poltroonery of the

Roman troops, and says that all would have been lost "but for our gentlemen," we must feel detestation for them. Juliet's nurse is not the only disloyal servant. Shylock's servant, Launcelot Gobbo, helps Jessica to deceive her father, and Margaret, the Lady Hero's gentlewoman, brings about the disgrace of her mistress by fraud. Olivia's waiting-woman in "Twelfth Night" is honest enough, but she is none too modest in her language, but in this respect Dame Quickly in "Henry IV." can easily rival her. Peter Thump, when forced to a judicial combat with his master, displays his cowardice, altho in the end he is successful (Henry VI., Act 2, Part 2, Sc. 3), and Stephano, a drunken butler, adorns the stage in the "Tempest." We can not blame Shakespeare for making use of cutthroats and villains in developing his plots, but we might have been spared the jokes which the jailors of Posthumus perpetrate when they come to lead him to the scaffold, and the ludicrous English of the clown who supplies Cleopatra with an asp. The apothecary who is in such wretched plight that he sells poison to Romeo in spite of a Draconian law, gives us another unflattering picture of a tradesman; and when Falstaff declares, "I would I were a weaver; I could sing psalms or anything," we have a premature reflection on the Puritan, middle-class conscience and religion. In "As You Like It," Shakespeare came near drawing a pastoral sketch of shepherds and shepherdesses on conventional lines. If he failed to do so, it was as much from lack of respect for the keeping of sheep as for the unrealities of pastoral poetry. Rosalind does not scruple to call the fair Phebe "foul," and, as for her hands, she says:

"I saw her hand; she has a leathern hand, A freestone colored hand; I verily did think That her old gloves were on, but 'twas her hands; She has a housewife's hand."

No one with a high respect for housewifery could have written that line. When in the same play Jaques sees the pair of rural lovers, Touchstone and Audrey, approaching, he cries: "There is, sure, another flood, and these couples are coming to the ark! Here come a pair of very strange beasts, which in all tongues are called fools" (Act 5, Sc. 4). The clown, Touchstone, speaks of kissing the cow's dugs which his former sweetheart had milked, and then marries Audrey in a tempest of buffoonery. Howbeit, Touchstone remains one of the few rustic characters of Shakespeare who win our affections, and at the same time he is witty enough to deserve the title which Jaques bestows upon him of a "rare fellow."

Occasionally Shakespeare makes fun of persons who are somewhat above the lower classes in rank. I have mentioned those on whom he bestows comical names. He indulges in humor also at the expense of the two Scottish captains, Jamy and Macmorris, and the honest Welsh captain, Fluellen (Henry V., Act 3, Sc. 2 *et passim*), and shall we forget the inimitable Falstaff? But, while making every allowance for these diversions into somewhat nobler quarters (the former of which are explained by national prejudices), do they form serious exceptions to the rule, and can Falstaff be taken, for instance, as a representative of the real aristocracy? As Queen and courtiers watched his antics on the stage, we may be sure that it never entered their heads that the "girds" were directed at them or their kind.

The appearance on Shakespeare's stage of a man of humble birth who is virtuous without being ridiculous is so rare an event that it is worth while to enumerate the instances. Now and then a servant or other obscure character is made use of as a mere lay figure of which nothing good or evil can be predicated, but usually they are made more or less absurd. Only at long intervals do we see persons of this class at once serious and upright. As might have been expected, it is more often the servant than any other member of the lower classes to whom Shakespeare attributes good qualities, for the servant is a sort of attachment to the gentleman and shines with the reflection of his virtues. The noblest quality which Shakespeare can conceive of in a servant is loyalty, and in "Richard II." (Act 5, Sc. 3) he gives us a good example in the character of a groom who remains faithful to the king even when the latter is cast into prison. In "Cymbeline" we are treated to loyalty *ad nauseam* . The king orders Pisanio, a trusty servant, to be tortured without cause, and his reply is,

"Sir, my life is yours. I humbly set it at your will." (Act 4, Sc. 3.)

In "King Lear" a good servant protests against the cruelty of Regan and Cornwall toward Gloucester, and is killed for his courage. "Give me my sword," cries Regan. "A peasant stand up thus!" (Act 3, Sc. 7). And other servants also show sympathy for the unfortunate earl. We all remember the fool who, almost alone, was true to Lear, but, then, of course, he was a fool. In "Timon of Athens" we have an unusual array of good servants, but it is doubtful if Shakespeare wrote the play, and these characters make his authorship more doubtful. Flaminius, Timon's servant, rejects a bribe with scorn (Act 3, Sc. 1). Another of his servants expresses his contempt for his master's false friends (Act 3, Sc. 3), and when Timon finally loses his fortune and his friends forsake him, his servants stand by him. "Yet do our hearts wear Timon's livery" (Act 4, Sc. 2).

Adam, the good old servant in "As You Like It," who follows his young master Orlando into exile, is, like Lear's fool, a noteworthy example of the loyal servitor.

"Master, go on, and I will follow thee To the last gasp with truth and loyalty."
(Act 2, Sc. 3.)

But Shakespeare takes care to point out that such fidelity in servants is most uncommon and a relic of the good old times—

"O good old man, bow well in thee appears The constant service of the antique world, When service sweat for duty, nor for meed! Thou art not for the fashion of these times, When none will sweat but for promotion."

Outside the ranks of domestic servants we find a few cases of honorable poverty in Shakespeare. In the play just quoted, Corin, the old shepherd, says:

"Sir, I am a true laborer; I earn that I eat, get that I wear; owe no man hate, envy no man's happiness; glad of other men's good, content with my harm; and the greatest of my pride is to see my ewes graze and my lambs suck."
(As You Like It, Act 3, Sc. 2.)

in short, an ideal proletarian from the point of view of the aristocrat.

The "Winter's Tale" can boast of another good shepherd (Act 3, Sc. 3), but he savors a little of burlesque. "Macbeth" has several humble worthies. There is a good old man in the second act (Sc. 2), and a good messenger in the fourth (Sc. 2). King Duncan praises highly the sergeant who brings the news of Macbeth's victory, and uses language to him such as Shakespeare's yeomen are not accustomed to hear (Act 1, Sc. 2). And in "Antony and Cleopatra" we make the acquaintance of several exemplary common soldiers. Shakespeare puts flattering words into the mouth of Henry V. when he addresses the troops before Agincourt:

"For he to-day that sheds his blood with me Shall be my brother; be he ne'er so vile This day shall gentle his condition." (Act 4, Sc. 4.)

And at Harfleur he is even more complaisant:

"And you, good yeomen, Whose limbs were made in England, shew us here The metal of your pasture; let us swear That you are worth your breeding; which I doubt not, For there is none of you so mean and base That hath not noble luster in your eyes." (Act 3, Sc. 1.)

The rank and file always fare well before a battle.

"Oh, it's 'Tommy this' and 'Tommy that' an' 'Tommy, go away'; But it's 'Thank you, Mr. Atkins,' when the band begins to play."

I should like to add some instances from Shakespeare's works of serious and estimable behavior on the part of individuals representing the lower classes, or of considerate treatment of them on the part of their "betters," but I have been unable to find any, and the meager list must end here.

But to return to Tommy Atkins. He is no longer Mr. Atkins after the battle. Montjoy, the French herald, comes to the English king under a flag of truce and asks that they be permitted to bury their dead and

"Sort our nobles from our common men; For many of our princes (wo the while!) Lie drowned and soaked in mercenary blood; So do our vulgar drench their peasant limbs In blood of princes." (Henry V., Act 4, Sc. 7.)

With equal courtesy Richard III., on Bosworth field, speaks of his opponents to the gentlemen around him:

"Remember what you are to cope withal— A sort of vagabonds, rascals, and runaways, A scum of Bretagne and base lackey peasants." (Act 5, Sc. 3.)

But Shakespeare does not limit such epithets to armies. Having, as we have seen, a poor opinion of the lower classes, taken man by man, he thinks, if anything, still worse of them taken *en masse* , and at his hands a crowd of plain workingmen fares worst of all. "Hempen home-spuns," Puck calls them, and again

"A crew of patches, rude mechanicals, That work for bread upon Athenian stalls."

Bottom, their leader, is, according to Oberon, a "hateful fool," and according to Puck, the "shallowest thick-skin of that barren sort" (Midsummer Night's Dream, Act 3, Scs. 1 and 2, Act 4, Sc. 1). Bottom's advice to his players contains a small galaxy of compliments:

"In any case let Thisby have clean linen, and let not him that plays the lion pare his nails, for they shall hang out for the lion's claws. And, most dear actors, eat no onion or garlic, for we are to utter sweet breath, and I do not doubt to hear them say, it is a sweet comedy."
(Ib., Act 4, Sc. 2.)

The matter of the breath of the poor weighs upon Shakespeare and his characters. Cleopatra shudders at the thought that

"mechanic slaves, With greasy aprons, rules and hammers, shall Uplift us to the view; in their thick breaths Rank of gross diet, shall we be enclouded, And forced to drink their vapor." (Antony and Cleopatra, Act 5, Sc. 2.)

Coriolanus has his sense of smell especially developed. He talks of the "stinking breaths" of the people (Act 2, Sc. 1), and in another place says:

"You common cry of curs, whose breath I hate As reek of rotten fens, whose love I prize As the dead carcasses of unburied men That do corrupt the air, I banish you,"

and he goes on to taunt them with cowardice (Act 3, Sc. 3). They are the "mutable, rank-scented many" (Act 3, Sc. 1). His friend Menenius is equally complimentary to his fellow citizens. "You are they," says he,

"That make the air unwholesome, when you cast Your stinking, greasy caps, in hooting at Coriolanus's exile." (Act 4, Sc. 7.)

And he laughs at the "apron-men" of Cominius and their "breath of garlic-eaters" (Act 4, Sc. 7). When Coriolanus is asked to address the people, he replies by saying: "Bid them wash their faces, and keep their teeth clean" (Act 2, Sc. 3). According to Shakespeare, the Roman populace had made no advance in cleanliness in the centuries between Coriolanus and Cæsar. Casca gives a vivid picture of the offer of the crown to Julius, and his rejection of it: "And still as he refused it the rabblement shouted, and clapped their chapped hands, and threw up their sweaty night-caps, and uttered such a deal of stinking breath, because Cæsar refused the crown, that it had almost choked Cæsar, for he swooned and fell down at it. And for mine own part I durst not laugh, for fear of opening my lips and receiving the bad air." And he calls them the "tag-rag people" (Julius Cæsar, Act 1, Sc. 2). The play of "Coriolanus" is a mine of insults to the people and it becomes tiresome to quote them. The hero calls them the "beast with many heads" (Act 4, Sc. 3), and again he says to the crowd:

"What's the matter, you dissentious rogues, That rubbing the poor itch of your opinion Make yourself scabs?

First Citizen. We have ever your good word.

Coriolanus. He that will give good words to ye will flatter Beneath abhorring. What would you have, you curs, That like not peace nor war? The one affrights you, The other makes you proud. He that trusts to you, Where he would find you lions, finds you hares; Where foxes, geese; you are no surer, no, Than is the coal of fire upon the ice, Or hailstone in the sun. Your virtue is To make him worthy whose offense subdues him, And curse that justice did it. Who deserves greatness Deserves your hate; and your affections are A sick man's appetite, who desires most that Which would increase his evil. He that depends Upon your favors, swims with fins of lead, And hews down oaks with rushes. Hang ye! Trust ye? With every minute you do change a mind, And call him noble that was now your hate, Him vile that was your garland." (Act 1, Sc. 1.)

His mother, Volumnia, is of like mind. She calls the people "our general louts" (Act 3, Sc. 2). She says to Junius Brutus, the tribune of the people:

"'Twas you incensed the rabble, Cats, that can judge as fitly of his worth As I can of those mysteries which Heaven Will not leave Earth to know." (Act 4, Sc. 2).

In the same play Cominius talks of the "dull tribunes" and "fusty plebeians" (Act 1, Sc. 9). Menenius calls them "beastly plebeians" (Act 2, Sc. 1), refers to their "multiplying spawn" (Act 2, Sc. 2), and says to the crowd:

"Rome and her rats are at the point of battle."
(Act 1, Sc. 2).

The dramatist makes the mob cringe before Coriolanus. When he appears, the stage directions show that the "citizens steal away." (Act 1, Sc. 1.)

As the Roman crowd of the time of Coriolanus is fickle, so is that of Cæsar's. Brutus and Antony sway them for and against his assassins with ease:

"First Citizen. This Cæsar was a tyrant.

Second Citizen. Nay, that's certain. We are blessed that Rome is rid of him....

First Citizen. (After hearing a description of the murder.) O piteous spectacle!

2 Cit. O noble Cæsar!

3 Cit. O woful day!

4 Cit. O traitors, villains!

1 Cit. O most bloody sight!

2 Cit. We will be revenged; revenge! about—seek—burn, fire—kill—slay—let not a traitor live!" (Act 3, Sc. 2.)

The Tribune Marullus reproaches them with having forgotten Pompey, and calls them

"You blocks, you stones, you worse than senseless things."

He persuades them not to favor Cæsar, and when they leave him he asks his fellow tribune, Flavius,

"See, whe'r their basest metal be not moved?" (Act 1, Sc. 1.)

Flavius also treats them with scant courtesy:

"Hence, home, you idle creatures, get you home. Is this a holiday? What! you know not, Being mechanical, you ought not walk Upon a laboring day without the sign Of your profession?" (Ib.)

The populace of England is as changeable as that of Rome, if Shakespeare is to be believed. The Archbishop of York, who had espoused the cause of Richard II. against Henry IV., thus soliloquizes:

"The commonwealth is sick of their own choice; Their over greedy love hath surfeited; An habitation giddy and unsure Hath he that buildeth on the vulgar heart. O thou fond many! With what loud applause Didst thou beat Heaven with blessing Bolingbroke, Before he was what thou would'st have him be! And now being trimmed in thine own desires, Thou, beastly feeder, art so full of him, That thou provokest thyself to cast him up. So, so, thou common dog, didst thou disgorge Thy glutton bosom of the royal Richard, And now thou wouldst eat thy dead vomit up, And howlst to find it." (Henry IV., Part 2, Act 1, Sc. 3.)

Gloucester in "Henry VI." (Part 2, Act 2, Sc. 4) notes the fickleness of the masses. He says, addressing his absent wife:

"Sweet Nell, ill can thy noble mind abrook The abject people, gazing on thy face With envious looks, laughing at thy shame, That erst did follow thy proud chariot wheels When thou didst ride in triumph through the streets."

When she arrives upon the scene in disgrace, she says to him:

"Look how they gaze; See how the giddy multitude do point And nod their heads and throw their eyes on thee. Ah, Gloucester, hide thee from their hateful looks."

And she calls the crowd a "rabble" (Ib.), a term also used in "Hamlet" (Act 4, Sc. 5). Again, in part III. of "Henry VI.," Clifford, dying on the battlefield while fighting for King Henry, cries:

"The common people swarm like summer flies, And whither fly the gnats but to the sun? And who shines now but Henry's enemies?" (Act 2, Sc. 6.)

And Henry himself, conversing with the keepers who have imprisoned him in the name of Edward IV., says:

"Ah, simple men! you know not what you swear. Look, as I blow this feather from my face, And as the air blows it to me again, Obeying with my wind when I do blow, And yielding to another when it blows, Commanded always by the greater gust, Such is the lightness of you common men." (Ib., Act 3, Sc. 1.)

Suffolk, in the First Part of the same trilogy (Act 5, Sc. 5), talks of "worthless peasants," meaning, perhaps, "property-less peasants," and when Salisbury comes to present the demands of the people, he calls him

"the Lord Ambassador Sent from a sort of tinkers to the king," (Part 2, Act 3, Sc. 2.)

and says:

"'Tis like the Commons, rude unpolished hinds Could send such message to their sovereign."

Cardinal Beaufort mentions the "uncivil kernes of Ireland" (Ib., Part 2, Act 3, Sc. 1), and in the same play the crowd makes itself ridiculous by shouting, "A miracle," when the fraudulent beggar Simpcox, who had pretended to be lame and blind, jumps over a stool to escape a whipping (Act 2, Sc. 1). Queen Margaret receives petitioners with the words "Away, base cullions" (Ib., Act 1, Sc. 3), and among other flattering remarks applied here and there to the lower classes we may cite the epithets "ye rascals, ye rude slaves," addressed to a crowd by a porter in Henry VIII., and that of "lazy knaves" given by the Lord Chamberlain to the porters for having let in a "trim rabble" (Act 5, Sc. 3). Hubert, in King John, presents us with an unvarnished picture of the common people receiving the news of Prince Arthur's death:

"I saw a smith stand with his hammer, thus, The whilst his iron did on his anvil cool, With open mouth swallowing a tailor's news; Who, with his shears and measure in his hand, Standing on slippers (which his nimble haste Had falsely thrust upon contrary feet), Told of a many thousand warlike French That were embattailed and rank'd in Kent. Another lean, unwashed artificer, Cuts off his tale, and talks of Arthur's death." (Act 4, Sc. 2.)

Macbeth, while sounding the murderers whom he intends to employ, and who say to him, "We are men, my liege," answers:

"Ay, in the catalogue, ye go for men As hounds and greyhounds, mongrels, spaniels, curs, Shoughs, water-sugs, and demi-wolves, are cleped All by the name of dogs." (Act 3, Sc. 1.)

As Coriolanus is held up to our view as a pattern of noble bearing toward the people, so Richard II. condemns the courteous behavior of the future Henry IV. on his way into banishment. He says:

"Ourselves, and Bushy, Bagot here and Green Observed his courtship to the common people; How he did seem to dive into their hearts With humble and familiar courtesy; What reverence he did throw away on slaves; Wooing poor craftsmen with the craft of smiles And patient overbearing of his fortune, As 'twere to banish their effects with him. Off goes his bonnet to an oyster-wench; A brace of draymen did God speed him well And had the tribute of his supple knee, With 'Thanks, my countrymen, my loving friends.'" (Richard II., Act 1, Sc. 4.)

The King of France, in "All's Well that Ends Well," commends to Bertram the example of his late father in his relations with his inferiors:

"Who were below him He used as creatures of another place, And bowed his eminent top to their low ranks, Making them proud of his humility In their poor praise he humbled. Such a man Might be a copy to these younger times." (Act 1, Sc. 2.)

Shakespeare had no fondness for these "younger times," with their increasing suggestion of democracy. Despising the masses, he had no sympathy with the idea of improving their condition or increasing their power. He saw the signs of the times with foreboding, as did his hero, Hamlet:

"By the Lord, Horatio, these three years I have taken note of it; the age has grown so picked, that the toe of the peasant comes so near the heel of the courtier, he galls his kibe." There can easily be too much liberty, according to Shakespeare—"too much liberty, my Lucio, liberty" (Measure for Measure, Act 1, Sc. 3), but the idea of too much authority is foreign to him. Claudio, himself under arrest, sings its praises:

"Thus can the demi-god, Authority, Make us pay down for our offense by weight,— The words of Heaven;—on whom it will, it will; On whom it will not, so; yet still 'tis just." (Ib.)

Ulysses, in "Troilus and Cressida" (Act 1, Sc. 3), delivers a long panegyric upon authority, rank, and degree, which may be taken as Shakespeare's confession of faith:

"Degree being vizarded, Th' unworthiest shews as fairly in the mask. The heavens themselves, the planets, and this center, Observe degree, priority, and place, Insisture, course, proportion, season, form, Office and custom, in all line of order; And therefore is the glorious planet, Sol, In noble eminence enthroned and sphered Amidst the other; whose med'cinable eye Corrects the ill aspects of planets evil, And posts, like the commandments of a king, Sans check, to good and bad. But when the planets, In evil mixture, to disorder wander, What plagues and what portents! what mutiny! What raging of the sea, shaking of the earth, Commotion of the winds, frights, changes, horrors, Divert and crack, rend and deracinate The unity and married calm of states Quite from their fixture! Oh, when degree is shaked, Which is the ladder of all high designs, The enterprise is sick. How could communities, Degrees in schools, and brotherhoods in cities, Peaceful commerce from dividable shores, The primogenity and due of birth, Prerogative of age, crowns, scepters, laurels, But by degree stand in authentic place? Take but degree away, untune the string, And hark, what discord follows! each thing meets In mere oppugnancy; the bounded waters Should lift their bosoms higher than the shores, And make a sop of all this solid globe; Strength should be lord of imbecility, And the rude son should strike his father dead; Force should be right; or, rather, right and wrong, (Between whose endless jar justice resides) Should lose their names, and so should justice too. Then everything includes itself in power. Power into will, will into appetite; And appetite, a universal wolf, So doubly seconded with will and power, Must make perforce an universal prey, And last eat up himself. Great Agamemnon, This chaos, when degree is suffocate, Follows the choking; And this neglection of degree it is, That by a pace goes backward, in a purpose It hath to climb. The General's disdained By him one step below; he by the next; That next by him beneath; so every step, Exampled by the first pace that is sick Of his superiors, grows to an envious fever Of pale and bloodless emulation; And 'tis this fever that keeps Troy on foot, Not her own sinews. To end a tale of length, Troy in our weakness stands, not in her strength."

There is no hint in this eloquent apostrophe of the difficulty of determining among men who shall be the sun and who the satellite, nor of the fact that the actual arrangements, in Shakespeare's time, at any rate, depended altogether upon that very force which Ulysses deprecates. In another scene in the same play the wily Ithacan again gives way to his passion for authority and eulogizes somewhat extravagantly the paternal, prying, omnipresent State:

"The providence that's in a watchful state Knows almost every grain of Plutus' gold, Finds bottom in th' incomprehensive deeps, Keeps place with thought, and almost, like the gods, Does thoughts unveil in their dumb cradles. There is a mystery (with which relation Durst never meddle) in the soul of state, Which hath an operation more divine Than breath or pen can give expressure to." (Act 3, Sc. 3.)

The State to which Ulysses refers is of course a monarchical State, and the idea of democracy is abhorrent to Shakespeare. Coriolanus expresses his opinion of it when he says to the people:

"What's the matter, That in these several places of the city You cry against the noble Senate, who, Under the gods, keep you in awe, which else Would feed on one another?" (Act 2, Sc. 1.)

The people should have no voice in the government—

"This double worship,— Where one part does disdain with cause, the other Insult without all reason, where gentry, title, wisdom, Can not conclude, but by the yea and no Of general ignorance,—it must omit Real necessities, and give away the while To unstable slightness. Purpose so barred, it follows, Nothing is done to purpose; therefore, beseech you, You that will be less fearful than discreet, That love the fundamental part of state More than you doubt the change on't, that prefer A noble life before a long, and wish To jump a body with a dangerous physic That's sure of death without it, at once pluck out The multitudinous tongue; let them not lick The sweet which is their poison." (Ib. Act 3, Sc. 1.)

It is the nobility who should rule—

"It is a purposed thing and grows by plot To curb the will of the nobility; Suffer't and live with such as can not rule, Nor ever will be ruled." (Ib.)

Junius Brutus tries in vain to argue with him, but Coriolanus has no patience with him, a "triton of the minnows"; and the very fact that there should be tribunes appointed for the people disgusts him—

"Five tribunes to defend their vulgar wisdoms, Of their own choice; one's Junius Brutus, Sicinus Velutus, and I know not—'Sdeath! The rabble should have first unroofed the city, Ere so prevailed with me; it will in time Win upon power, and throw forth greater themes."

And again:

"The common file, a plague!—Tribunes for them!" (Act 1, Sc. 6.)

Shakespeare took his material for the drama of "Coriolanus" from Plutarch's "Lives," and it is significant that he selected from that list of worthies the most conspicuous adversary of the commonalty that Rome produced. He presents him to us as a hero, and, so far as he can, enlists our sympathy for him from beginning to end. When Menenius says of him:

"His nature is too noble for the world," (Act 3, Sc. 1.)

he is evidently but registering the verdict of the author. Plutarch's treatment of Coriolanus is far different. He exhibits his fine qualities, but he does not hesitate to speak of his "imperious temper and that savage manner which was too haughty for a republic." "Indeed," he adds, "there is no other advantage to be had from a liberal education equal to that of polishing and softening our nature by reason and discipline." He also tells us that Coriolanus indulged his "irascible passions on a supposition that they have something great and exalted in them," and that he wanted "a due mixture of gravity and mildness, which are the chief political virtues and the fruits of reason and education." "He never dreamed that such obstinacy is rather the effect of the weakness and effeminacy of a distempered mind, which breaks out in violent passions like so many tumors." Nor apparently did Shakespeare ever dream of it either, altho he had Plutarch's sage observations before him. It is a pity that the great dramatist did not select from Plutarch's works some hero who took the side of the people, some Agis or Cleomenes, or, better yet, one of the Gracchi. What a tragedy he might have based on the life of Tiberius, the friend of the people and the martyr in their cause! But the spirit which guided Schiller in the choice of William Tell for a hero was a stranger to Shakespeare's heart, and its promptings would have met with no response there.

Even more striking is the treatment which the author of "Coriolanus" metes out to English history. All but two of his English historical dramas are devoted to the

War of the Roses and the incidental struggle over the French crown. The motive of this prolonged strife—so attractive to Shakespeare—had much the same dignity which distinguishes the family intrigues of the Sublime Porte, and Shakespeare presents the history of his country as a mere pageant of warring royalties and their trains. When the people are permitted to appear, as they do in Cade's rebellion, to which Shakespeare has assigned the character of the rising under Wat Tyler, they are made the subject of burlesque. Two of the popular party speak as follows:

"John Holland. Well, I say, it was never merry world in England since gentlemen came up.

George Bevis. O miserable age! Virtue is not regarded in handicraftsmen.

John. The nobility think scorn to go in leather aprons."

When Jack Cade, alias Wat Tyler, comes on the scene, he shows himself to be a braggart and a fool. He says:

"Be brave then, for your captain is brave and vows reformation. There shall be in England seven half-penny loaves sold for a penny; the three-hooped pot shall have ten hoops, and I will make it a felony to drink small beer. All the realm shall be in common, and in Cheapside shall my palfrey go to grass. And when I am king asking I will be—

All. God save your majesty!

Cade. I thank you, good people—there shall be no money; all shall eat and drink on my score, and I will apparel them all in one livery, that they may agree like brothers and worship me their lord."

(Henry VI., Part 2, Act 4, Sc. 2.)

The crowd wishes to kill the clerk of Chatham because he can read, write, and cast accounts. (Cade. "O monstrous!") Sir Humphrey Stafford calls them

"Rebellious hinds, the filth and scum of Kent, Marked for the gallows." (Ib.)

Clifford succeeds without much difficulty in turning the enmity of the mob against France, and Cade ejaculates disconsolately, "Was ever a feather so lightly blown to and fro as this multitude?" (Ib., Act 4, Sc. 8.) In the stage directions of this scene, Shakespeare shows his own opinion of the mob by writing, "Enter Cade and his rabblement." One looks in vain here as in the Roman plays for a suggestion that poor people sometimes suffer wrongfully from hunger and want, that they occasionally have just grievances, and that their efforts to present them, so far from being ludicrous, are the most serious parts of history, beside which the struttings of kings and courtiers sink into insignificance.

One of the popular songs in Tyler's rebellion was the familiar couplet:

"When Adam delved and Eve span, Who was then the gentleman?"

Shakespeare refers to it in "Hamlet," where the grave-diggers speak as follows:

"First Clown. Come, my spade. There is no ancient gentleman but gardners, ditchers and grave-makers; they hold up Adam's profession.

Second Clown. Was he a gentleman?

First Clown. He was the first that ever bore arms.

Second Clown. Why, he had none.

First Clown. What, art a heathen? How dost thou understand the Scripture? The Scripture says, Adam digged; could he dig without arms?"

(Act 5, Sc. 1.)

That Shakespeare's caricature of Tyler's rebellion is a fair indication of his view of all popular risings appears from the remarks addressed by Westmoreland to the Archbishop of York in the Second Part of "Henry IV." (Act 4, Sc. 1). Says he:

"If that rebellion Came like itself, in base and abject routs, Led on by bloody youth, guarded with rags, And countenanced by boys and beggary; I say if damned commotion so appeared, In his true, native, and most proper shape, You, Reverend Father, and these noble lords Had not been here to dress the ugly form Of base and bloody insurrection With your fair honors."

The first and last of Shakespeare's English historical plays, "King John" and "Henry VIII.," lie beyond the limits of the civil wars, and each of them treats of a period momentous in the annals of English liberty, a fact which Shakespeare absolutely ignores. John as king had two great misfortunes—he suffered disgrace at the hands of his barons and of the pope. The first event, the wringing of Magna Charta from the king, Shakespeare passes over. A sense of national pride might have excused the omission of the latter humiliation, but no, it was a triumph of authority, and as such Shakespeare must record it for the edification of his hearers, and consequently we have the king presented on the stage as meekly receiving the crown from the papal legate (Act 5, Sc. 1). England was freed from the Roman yoke in the reign of Henry VIII., and in the drama of that name Shakespeare might have balanced the indignity forced upon King John, but now he is silent. Nothing must be said against authority, even against that of the pope, and the play culminates in the pomp and parade of the christening of the infant Elizabeth! Such is Shakespeare's conception of history! Who could guess from reading these English historical plays that throughout the period which they cover English freedom was growing, that justice and the rights of man were asserting themselves, while despotism was gradually curbed and limited? This is the one great glory of English history, exhibiting itself at Runnymede, reflected in Wyclif and John Ball and Wat Tyler, and shining dimly in the birth of a national church under the eighth Henry. As Shakespeare wrote, it was preparing for a new and conspicuous outburst. When he died, Oliver Cromwell was already seventeen years of age and John Hampden twenty-two. The spirit of Hampden was preeminently the English spirit—the spirit which has given distinction to the Anglo-Saxon race—and he and Shakespeare were contemporaries, and yet of this spirit not a vestige is to be found in the English historical plays and no opportunities lost to obliterate or distort its manifestations. Only in Brutus and his fellow-conspirators—of all Shakespearian characters—do we find the least consideration for liberty, and even then he makes the common, and perhaps in his time the unavoidable, mistake of overlooking the genuinely democratic leanings of Julius Cæsar and the anti-popular character of the successful plot against him.

It has in all ages been a pastime of noble minds to try to depict a perfect state of society. Forty years before Shakespeare's birth, Sir Thomas More published his "Utopia" to the world. Bacon intended to do the same thing in the "New Atlantis," but never completed the work, while Sir Philip Sidney gives us his dream in his "Arcadia." Montaigne makes a similar essay, and we quote from Florio's translation, published in 1603, the following passage (Montaigne's "Essays," Book I, Chapter 30):

"It is a nation, would I answer Plato, that hath no kind of traffic, no knowledge of letters, no intelligence of numbers, no name of magistrate nor of political superiority; no use of service, of riches, or of poverty; no contracts, no succession, no dividences; no occupation, but idle; no respect of kindred, but common; no apparel, but natural; no manuring of lands; no use of wine, corn, or metal. The very words that import lying, falsehood, treason, dissimulation, covetousness, envy, detraction, and pardon were never heard among them."

We may readily infer that Shakespeare found little to sympathize with in this somewhat extravagant outline of a happy nation, but he goes out of his way to travesty it. In "The Tempest" he makes Gonzalo, the noblest character in the play, hold the following language to the inevitable king (Shakespeare can not imagine even a desert island without a king!):

"Had I plantation of this isle, my lord, I' th' commonwealth I would by contraries Execute all things; for no kind of traffic Would I admit; no name of magistrate; Letters should not be known; riches, poverty, And use of service, none; contract, succession, Bourn, bound of land, tilth, vineyard, none; No use of metal, corn or wine or oil; No occupation; all men idle,—all, And women too, but innocent and pure; No sovereignty, ...

Sebastian. Yet he would be king on't.

Antonia. The latter end of his commonwealth forgets the beginning.

Gonzalo. All things in common. Nature should produce Without sweat or endeavor; treason, felony, Sword, pike, knife, gun, or need of any engine, Would I not have; but Nature should bring forth Of its own kind, all foison, all abundance, To feed my innocent people.

Seb. No marrying 'mong his subjects?

Ant. None, man; all idle, whores, and knaves.

Gon. I would with such perfection govern, sir, To 'xcel the golden age.

Seb. 'Save his Majesty!

Ant. Long live Gonzalo!

Gon. And do you mark me, sir?

King. Pr'ythee, no more; thou dost talk nothing to me.

Gon. I do well believe your Highness; and did it to minister occasion to these gentlemen, who are of such sensible and nimble lungs that they always use to laugh at nothing.

Ant. 'Twas you we laughed at.

Gon. Who, in this kind of merry fooling, am nothing to you; so you may continue and laugh at nothing still." (Tempest, Act 2, Sc. 1.)

That all things are not for the best in the best of all possible worlds would seem to result from the wise remarks made by the fishermen who enliven the scene in "Pericles, Prince of Tyre." They compare landlords to whales who swallow up everything, and suggest that the land be purged of "these drones that rob the bee of her honey"; and Pericles, so far from being shocked at such revolutionary and vulgar sentiments, is impressed by their weight, and speaks kindly of the humble philosophers, who in their turn are hospitable to the shipwrecked prince—all of which un-Shakespearian matter adds doubt to the authenticity of this drama (Act 2, Sc. 1).

However keen the insight of Shakespeare may have been into the hearts of his high-born characters, he had no conception of the unity of the human race. For him the prince and the peasant were not of the same blood.

"For princes are A model, which heaven makes like to itself,"

says King Simonides in "Pericles," and here at least we seem to see the hand of Shakespeare (Act 2, Sc. 2). The two princes, Guiderius and Arviragus, brought up secretly in a cave, show their royal origin (Cymbeline, Act 3, Sc. 3), and the servants who see Coriolanus in disguise are struck by his noble figure (Coriolanus, Act 4, Sc. 5). Bastards are villains as a matter of course, witness Edmund in "Lear" and John in "Much Ado about Nothing," and no degree of contempt is too high for a

"hedge-born swain That doth presume to boast of gentle blood." (Henry VI., Part 1, Act 4, Sc. 1.)

Courage is only to be expected in the noble-born. The Duke of York says:

"Let pale-faced fear keep with the mean-born man, And find no harbor in a royal heart." (Henry VI., Part 2, Act 3, Sc. 1.)

In so far as the lower classes had any relation to the upper classes, it was one, thought Shakespeare, of dependence and obligation. It was not the tiller of the soil who fed the lord of the manor, but rather the lord who supported the peasant. Does not the king have to lie awake and take thought for his subjects? Thus Henry V. complains that he can not sleep

"so soundly as the wretched slave, Who with a body filled and vacant mind, Gets him to rest, crammed with distressful bread, Never sees horrid night, the child of Hell, But like a lackey, from the rise to set, Sweats in the eye of Phœbus, and all night Sleeps in Elysium.... The slave, a member of the country's peace, Enjoys it, but in gross brain little wots What watch the king keeps to maintain the peace, Whose hours the peasant best advantages." (Henry V., Act 4, Sc. 1.)

And these lines occur at the end of a passage in which the king laments the "ceremony" that oppresses him and confesses that but for it he would be "but a man." He makes this admission, however, in a moment of danger and depression. Henry IV. also invokes sleep (Part 2, Act 2, Sc. 1):

"O thou dull god! why liest thou with the vile In loathsome beds?"

But plain people have to watch at times, and the French sentinel finds occasion to speak in the same strain:

"Thus are poor servitors (When others sleep upon their quiet beds) Constrained to watch in darkness, rain, and cold." (Henry VI., Part 1, Act 2, Sc. 1.)

Henry VI. is also attracted by the peasant's lot:

"O God, methinks it were a happy life, To be no better than a homely swain.... ... The shepherd's homely curds, His cold thin drink out of his leather bottle, His wonted sleep under a fresh tree's shade, All which secure and sweetly he enjoys, As far beyond a prince's delicates." (Henry VI., Part 3, Act 2, Sc. 5.)

All of which is natural enough, but savors of cant in the mouths of men who fought long and hard to maintain themselves upon their thrones.

We have already shown by references to the contemporary drama that the plea of custom is not sufficient to explain Shakespeare's attitude to the lower classes, but if we widen our survey to the entire field of English letters in his day, we shall see that he was running counter to all the best traditions of our literature. From the time of Piers Plowman down, the peasant had stood high with the great writers of poetry and prose alike. Chaucer's famous circle of story-tellers at the Tabard Inn in Southwark was eminently democratic. With the knight and the friar were gathered together

"An haberdasher and a carpenter, A webbe, a deyer and tapiser,"

and the tales of the cook and the miller take rank with those of the squire and lawyer. The English Bible, too, was in Shakespeare's hands, and he must have been familiar with shepherd kings and fishermen-apostles. In the very year in which "Hamlet" first appeared, a work was published in Spain which was at once translated into English, a work as well known to-day as Shakespeare's own writings. If the peasantry was anywhere to be neglected and despised, where should it be rather than in proud, aristocratic Spain, and yet, to place beside

Shakespeare's Bottoms and Slys, Cervantes has given us the admirable Sancho Panza, and has spread his loving humor in equal measure over servant and master. Are we to believe that the yeomen of England, who beat back the Armada, were inferior to the Spanish peasantry whom they overcame, or is it not rather true that the Spanish author had a deeper insight into his country's heart than was allotted to the English dramatist? Cervantes, the soldier and adventurer, rose above the prejudices of his class, while Shakespeare never lifted his eyes beyond the narrow horizon of the Court to which he catered. It was love that opened Cervantes's eye, and it is in all-embracing love that Shakespeare was deficient. As far as the common people were concerned, he never held the mirror up to nature.

But the book of all others which might have suggested to Shakespeare that there was more in the claims of the lower classes than was dreamt of in his philosophy was More's "Utopia," which in its English form was already a classic. More, the richest and most powerful man in England after the king, not only believed in the workingman, but knew that he suffered from unjust social conditions. He could never have represented the down-trodden followers of Cade-Tyler nor the hungry mob in "Coriolanus" with the utter lack of sympathy which Shakespeare manifests. "What justice is there in this," asks the great Lord Chancellor, whose character stood the test of death—"what justice is there in this, that a nobleman, a goldsmith, a banker, or any other man, that either does nothing at all or at best is employed in things that are of no use to the public, should live in great luxury and splendor upon what is so ill acquired; and a mean man, a carter, a smith, a plowman, that works harder even than the beasts themselves, and is employed on labors so necessary that no commonwealth could hold out a year without them, can only earn so poor a livelihood, and must lead so miserable a life, that the condition of the beasts is much better than theirs?"

How different from this is Shakespeare's conception of the place of the workingman in society! After a full and candid survey of his plays, Bottom, the weaver with the ass's head, remains his type of the artizan and the "mutable, rank-scented many," his type of the masses. Is it unfair to take the misshapen "servant-monster" Caliban as his last word on the subject?

"Prospero. We'll visit Caliban my slave who never Yields us kind answer.

Miranda. 'Tis a villain, sir, I do not love to look on.

Prospero. But as 'tis, We can not miss him! he does make our fire, Fetch in our wood, and serve in offices That profit us." (Tempest, Act 1, Sc. 2.)

To which I would fain reply in the words of Edward Carpenter:

"Who art thou ... With thy faint sneer for him who wins thee bread And him who clothes thee, and for him who toils Day-long and night-long dark in the earth for thee?"

<<span id="filepos0039572460"> a>A LETTER by George Bernard Shaw

As you know, I have striven hard to open English eyes to the emptiness of Shakespeare's philosophy, to the superficiality and second-handedness of his morality, to his weakness and incoherence as a thinker, to his snobbery, his vulgar prejudices, his ignorance, his disqualifications of all sorts for the philosophic eminence claimed for him.... The preface to my "Three Plays for Puritans" contains a section headed "Better than Shakespeare?" which is, I think, the only utterance of mine on the subject to be found in a book.... There is at present in the press a new preface to an old novel of mine called "The Irrational Knot." In that preface I define the first order in Literature as consisting of those works in which the author, instead of accepting the current morality and religion ready-made without any question as to their validity, writes from an original moral standpoint of his own, thereby making his book an original contribution to morals, religion, and sociology, as well as to *belles letters* . I place Shakespeare with Dickens, Scott, Dumas père, etc., in the second order, because, tho they are enormously entertaining, their morality is ready-made; and I point out that the one play, "Hamlet," in which Shakespeare made an attempt to give as a hero one who was dissatisfied with the ready-made morality, is the one which has given the highest impression of his genius, altho Hamlet's revolt is unskillfully and inconclusively suggested and not worked out with any philosophic competence.

May I suggest that you should be careful not to imply that Tolstoy's great Shakespearian heresy has no other support than mine. The preface of Nicholas Rowe to his edition of Shakespeare, and the various prefaces of Dr. Johnson contain, on Rowe's part, an apology for him as a writer with obvious and admitted shortcomings (very ridiculously ascribed by Rowe to his working by "a mere light of nature"), and, on Johnson's, a good deal of downright hard-hitting criticism. You should also look up the history of the Ireland forgeries, unless, as is very probable, Tolstoy has anticipated you in this. Among nineteenth-century poets Byron and William Morris saw clearly that Shakespeare was enormously overrated intellectually. A French book, which has been translated into English, has appeared within the last ten years, giving Napoleon's opinions of the drama. His insistence on the superiority of Corneille to Shakespeare on the ground of Corneille's power of grasping a political situation, and of seeing men in their relation to the state, is interesting.

Of course you know about Voltaire's criticisms, which are the more noteworthy because Voltaire began with an extravagant admiration for Shakespeare, and got more and more bitter against him as he grew older and less disposed to accept artistic merit as a cover for philosophic deficiencies.

Finally, I, for one, shall value Tolstoy's criticism all the more because it is criticism of a foreigner who can not possibly be enchanted by the mere word-music which makes Shakespeare so irresistible in England. In Tolstoy's estimation, Shakespeare must fall or stand as a thinker, in which capacity I do not think he will stand a moment's examination from so tremendously keen a critic and religious realist. Unfortunately, the English worship their great artists quite indiscriminately and abjectly; so that is quite impossible to make them understand that Shakespeare's extraordinary literary power, his fun, his mimicry, and the endearing qualities that earned him the title of "the gentle Shakespeare"—all of which, whatever Tolstoy may say, are quite unquestionable facts—do not stand or fall with his absurd reputation as a thinker. Tolstoy will certainly treat that side of his reputation with the severity it deserves; and you will find that the English press will instantly announce that Tolstoy considers his own works greater than Shakespeare's (which in some respects they most certainly are, by the way), and that he has attempted to stigmatize our greatest poet as a liar, a thief, a forger, a murderer, an incendiary, a drunkard, a libertine, a fool, a madman, a coward, a vagabond, and even a man of questionable gentility. You must not be surprised or indignant at this: it is what is called "dramatic criticism" in England and America. Only a few of the best of our journalist-critics will say anything worth reading on the subject.

Yours faithfully,
G. Bernard Shaw.

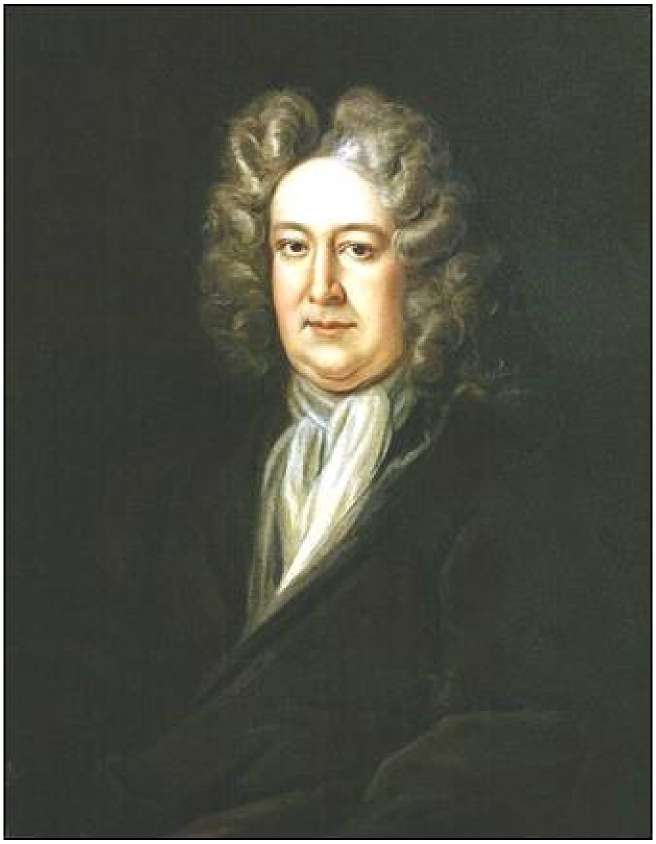
<<span id="filepos0039578856"> a> The Biographies

LONDON
THAMYS

Elizabethan London, with the playhouses on the south bank of the Thames in Southwark

<<span id="filepos0039580183"> a>SOME ACCOUNT OF THE LIFE OF MR. WILLIAM SHAKESPEAR by Nicholas Rowe

Nicholas Rowe (1674–1718) was an English dramatist, poet and critic, who won great distinction, being appointed Poet Laureate in 1715. Rowe was the first modern editor of Shakespeare, however, it is unfortunate that he based his text on the corrupt Fourth Folio, in which he was followed by later editors. Rowe's practical knowledge of the stage allowed him to suggest technical improvements: he divided the play into acts and scenes on a reasonable method, noted the entrances and exits of the players, and prefixed a list of the dramatis personae to each play. Additionally, Rowe also wrote this short biography of Shakespeare.



Nicholas Rowe – Shakespeare’s first true literary editor

SOME ACCOUNT OF THE LIFE OF MR. WILLIAM SHAKESPEAR

It seems to be a kind of Respect due to the Memory of Excellent Men, especially of those whom their Wit and Learning have made Famous, to deliver some Account of themselves, as well as their Works, to Posterity. For this Reason, how fond do we see some People of discovering any little Personal Story of the great Men of Antiquity, their Families, the common Accidents of their Lives, and even their Shape, Make and Features have been the Subject of critical Enquiries. How trifling soever this Curiosity may seem to be, it is certainly very Natural; and we are hardly satisfy'd with an Account of any remarkable Person, 'till we have heard him describ'd even to the very Cloaths he wears. As for what relates to Men of Letters, the knowledge of an Author may sometimes conduce to the better understanding his Book: And tho' the Works of Mr. *Shakespear* may seem to many not to want a Comment, yet I fancy some little Account of the Man himself may not be thought improper to go along with them.

He was the Son of Mr. *John Shakespear* , and was Born at *Stratford* upon *Avon* , in *Warwickshire* , in *April* 1564. His Family, as appears by the Register and Publick Writings relating to that Town, were of good Figure and Fashion there, and are mention'd as Gentlemen. His Father, who was a considerable Dealer in Wool, had so large a Family, ten Children in all, that tho' he was his eldest Son, he could give him no better Education than his own Employment. He had bred him, 'tis true, for some time at a Free-School, where 'tis probable he acquir'd that little *Latin* he was Master of: But the narrowness of his Circumstances, and the want of his assistance at Home, forc'd his Father to withdraw him from thence, and unhappily prevented his further Proficiency in that Language. It is without Controversie, that he had no knowledge of the Writings of the Antient Poets, not only from this Reason, but from his Works themselves, where we find no traces of any thing that looks like an Imitation of 'em; the Delicacy of his Taste, and the natural Bent of his own Great *Genius* , equal, if not superior to some of the best of theirs, would certainly have led him to Read and Study 'em with so much Pleasure, that some of their fine Images would naturally have insinuated themselves into, and been mix'd with his own Writings; so that his not copying at least something from them, may be an Argument of his never having read 'em. Whether his Ignorance of the Antients were a disadvantage to him or no, may admit of a Dispute: For tho' the knowledge of 'em might have made him more Correct, yet it is not improbable but that the Regularity and Deference for them, which would have attended that Correctness, might have restrain'd some of that Fire, Impetuosity, and even beautiful Extravagance which we admire in *Shakespear* : And I believe we are better pleas'd with those Thoughts, altogether New and Uncommon, which his own Imagination supply'd him so abundantly with, than if he had given us the most beautiful Passages out of the *Greek* and *Latin* Poets, and that in the most agreeable manner that it was possible for a Master of the *English* Language to deliver 'em. Some *Latin* without question he did know, and one may see up and down in his Plays how far his Reading that way went: In *Love's Labour lost* , the Pedant comes out with a Verse of *Mantuan* ; and in *Titus Andronicus* , one of the *Gothick* Princes, upon reading

Integer vitæ scelerisque purus Non eget Mauri jaculis nec arcu —

says, *'Tis a Verse in* Horace, *but he remembers it out of his* Grammar: Which, I suppose, was the Author's Case. Whatever *Latin* he had, 'tis certain he understood *French* , as may be observ'd from many Words and Sentences scatter'd up and down his Plays in that Language; and especially from one Scene in *Henry* the Fifth written wholly in it. Upon his leaving School, he seems to have given intirely into that way of Living which his Father propos'd to him; and in order to settle in the World after a Family manner, he thought fit to marry while he was yet very Young. His Wife was the Daughter of one *Hathaway* , said to have been a substantial Yeoman in the Neighbourhood of *Stratford* . In this kind of Settlement he continu'd for some time, 'till an Extravagance that he was guilty of, forc'd him both out of his Country and that way of Living which he had taken up; and tho' it seem'd at first to be a Blemish upon his good Manners, and a Misfortune to him, yet it afterwards happily prov'd the occasion of exerting one of the greatest *Genius's* that ever was known in Dramatick Poetry. He had, by a Misfortune common enough to young Fellows, fallen into ill Company; and amongst them, some that made a frequent practice of Deer-stealing, engag'd him with them more than once in robbing a Park that belong'd to Sir *Thomas Lucy* of *Cherlecot* , near *Stratford* . For this he was prosecuted by that Gentleman, as he thought somewhat too severely; and in order to revenge that ill Usage, he made a Ballad upon him. And tho' this, probably the first Essay of his Poetry, be lost, yet it is said to have been so very bitter, that it redoubled the Prosecution against him to that degree, that he was oblig'd to leave his Business and Family in *Warwickshire* , for some time, and shelter himself in *London* .

It is at this Time, and upon this Accident, that he is said to have made his first Acquaintance in the Playhouse. He was receiv'd into the Company then in being, at first in a very mean Rank; But his admirable Wit, and the natural Turn of it to the Stage, soon distinguish'd him, if not as an extraordinary Actor, yet as an excellent Writer. His Name is Printed, as the Custom was in those Times, amongst those of the other Players, before some old Plays, but without any particular Account of what sort of Parts he us'd to play; and tho' I have inquir'd, I could never meet with any further Account of him this way, than that the top of his Performance was the Ghost in his own *Hamlet* . I should have been much more pleas'd, to have learn'd from some certain Authority, which was the first Play he wrote; it would be without doubt a pleasure to any Man, curious in Things of this Kind, to see and know what was the first Essay of a Fancy like *Shakespear's* . Perhaps we are not to look for his Beginnings, like those of other Authors, among their least perfect Writings; Art had so little, and Nature so large a Share in what he did, that, for ought I know, the Performances of his Youth, as they were the most vigorous, and had the most fire and strength of Imagination in 'em, were the best. I would not be thought by this to mean, that his Fancy was so loose and extravagant, as to be Independent on the Rule and Government of Judgment; but that what he thought, was commonly so Great, so justly and rightly Conceiv'd in it self, that it wanted little or no Correction, and was immediately approv'd by an impartial Judgment at the first sight. Mr. *Dryden* seems to think that *Pericles* is one of his first Plays; but there is no judgment to be form'd on that, since there is good Reason to believe that the greatest part of that Play was not written by him; tho' it is own'd, some part of it certainly was, particularly the last Act. But tho' the order of Time in which the several Pieces were written be generally uncertain, yet there are Passages in some few of them which seem to fix their Dates. So the *Chorus* in the beginning of the fifth Act of *Henry* V. by a Compliment very handsomly turn'd to the Earl of *Essex* , shews the Play to have been written when that Lord was General for the Queen in *Ireland* : And his Elogy upon Q. *Elizabeth* , and her Successor K. *James* , in the latter end of his *Henry* VII, is a Proof of that Play's being written after the Accession of the latter of those two Princes to the Crown of *England* . Whatever the particular Times of his Writing were, the People of his Age, who began to grow wonderfully fond of Diversions of this kind, could not but be highly pleas'd to see a *Genius* arise amongst 'em of so pleasurable, so rich a Vein, and so plentifully capable of furnishing their favourite Entertainments. Besides the advantages of his Wit, he was in himself a good-natur'd Man, of great sweetness in his Manners, and a most agreeable Companion; so that it is no wonder if with so many good Qualities he made himself acquainted with the best Conversations of those Times. Queen *Elizabeth* had several of his Plays Acted before her, and without doubt gave him many gracious Marks of her Favour: It is that Maiden Princess plainly, whom he intends by

—A fair Vestal, Throned by the West.

Midsummer Night's Dream ,
Vol. 2. p. 480.

And that whole Passage is a Compliment very properly brought in, and very handsomly apply'd to her. She was so well pleas'd with that admirable Character of *Falstaff* , in the two Parts of *Henry* the Fourth, that she commanded him to continue it for one Play more, and to shew him in Love. This is said to be the Occasion of his Writing *The Merry Wives of* Windsor. How well she was obey'd, the Play it self is an admirable Proof. Upon this Occasion it may not be improper to observe, that this Part of *Falstaff* is said to have been written originally under the Name of *Oldcastle* ; some of that Family being then remaining, the Queen was pleas'd to command him to alter it; upon which he made use of *Falstaff* . The present Offence was indeed avoided; but I don't know whether the Author may not have been somewhat to blame in his second Choice, since it is certain that Sir *John Falstaff* , who was a Knight of the Garter, and a Lieutenant-General, was a Name of distinguish'd Merit in the Wars in *France* in *Henry* the Fifth's and *Henry* the Sixth's Times. What Grace soever the Queen confer'd upon him, it was not to her only he ow'd the Fortune which the Reputation of his Wit made. He had the Honour to meet with many great and uncommon Marks of Favour and Friendship from the Earl of *Southampton* , famous in the Histories of that Time for his Friendship to the unfortunate Earl of *Essex* . It was to that Noble Lord that he Dedicated his *Venus* and *Adonis* , the only Piece of his Poetry which he ever publish'd himself, tho' many of his Plays were surrepticiously and lamely Printed in his Lifetime. There is one Instance so singular in the Magnificence of this Patron of *Shakespear* 's, that if I had not been assur'd that the Story was handed down by Sir *William D'Avenant* , who was probably very well acquainted with his Affairs, I should not have ventur'd to have inserted, that my Lord *Southampton* , at one time, gave him a thousand Pounds, to enable him to go through with a Purchase which he heard he had a mind to. A Bounty very great, and very rare at any time, and almost equal to that profuse Generosity the present Age has shewn to *French* Dancers and *Italian* Eunuchs.

What particular Habitude or Friendships he contracted with private Men, I have not been able to learn, more than that every one who had a true Taste of Merit, and could distinguish Men, had generally a just Value and Esteem for him. His exceeding Candor and good Nature must certainly have inclin'd all the gentler Part of the World to love him, as the power of his Wit oblig'd the Men of the most delicate Knowledge and polite Learning to admire him. Amongst these was the incomparable Mr. *Edmond Spencer* , who speaks of him in his *Tears of the*

Muses , not only with the Praises due to a good Poet, but even lamenting his Absence with the tenderness of a Friend. The Passage is in *Thalia's* Complaint for the Decay of Dramatick Poetry, and the Contempt the Stage then lay under, amongst his Miscellaneous Works, *p.* 147.

And he the Man, whom Nature's self had made To mock her self, and Truth to imitate With kindly Counter under mimick Shade, Our pleasant Willy, *ah! is dead of late: With whom all Joy and jolly Merriment Is also deaded, and in Dolour drent.*

Instead thereof, scoffing Scurrility And scorning Folly with Contempt is crept, Rolling in Rhimes of shameless Ribaudry, Without Regard or due Decorum *kept; Each idle Wit at will presumes to make, And doth the Learned's Task upon him take.*

But that same gentle Spirit, from whose Pen Large Streams of Honey and sweet Nectar *flow, Scorning the Boldness such base-born Men, Which dare their Follies forth so rashly throw; Doth rather choose to sit in idle Cell, Than so himself to Mockery to sell.*

I know some People have been of Opinion, that *Shakespear* is not meant by *Willy* in the first *Stanza* of these Verses, because *Spencer's* Death happen'd twenty Years before *Shakespear's* . But, besides that the Character is not applicable to any Man of that time but himself, it is plain by the last *Stanza* that Mr. *Spencer* does not mean that he was then really Dead, but only that he had with-drawn himself from the Publick, or at least with-held his Hand from Writing, out of a disgust he had taken at the then ill taste of the Town, and the mean Condition of the Stage. Mr. *Dryden* was always of Opinion these Verses were meant of *Shakespear* ; and 'tis highly probable they were so, since he was three and thirty Years old at *Spencer's* Death; and his Reputation in Poetry must have been great enough before that Time to have deserv'd what is here said of him. His Acquaintance with *Ben Johnson* began with a remarkable piece of Humanity and good Nature; Mr. *Johnson* , who was at that Time altogether unknown to the World, had offer'd one of his Plays to the Players, in order to have it Acted; and the Persons into whose Hands it was put, after having turn'd it carelessly and superciliously over, were just upon returning it to him with an ill-natur'd Answer, that it would be of no service to their Company, when *Shakespear* luckily cast his Eye upon it, and found something so well in it as to engage him first to read it through, and afterwards to recommend Mr. *Johnson* and his Writings to the Publick. After this they were profess'd Friends; tho' I don't know whether the other ever made him an equal return of Gentleness and Sincerity. *Ben* was naturally Proud and Insolent, and in the Days of his Reputation did so far take upon him the Supremacy in Wit, that he could not but look with an evil Eye upon any one that seem'd to stand in Competition with him. And if at times he has affected to commend him, it has always been with some Reserve, insinuating his Uncorrectness, a careless manner of Writing, and want of Judgment; the Praise of seldom altering or blotting out what he writ, which was given him by the Players who were the first Publishers of his Works after his Death, was what *Johnson* could not bear; he thought it impossible, perhaps, for another Man to strike out the greatest Thoughts in the finest Expression, and to reach those Excellencies of Poetry with the Ease of a first Imagination, which himself with infinite Labour and Study could but hardly attain to. *Johnson* was certainly a very good Scholar, and in that had the advantage of *Shakespear* ; tho' at the same time I believe it must be allow'd, that what Nature gave the latter, was more than a Ballance for what Books had given the former; and the Judgment of a great Man upon this occasion was, I think, very just and proper. In a Conversation between Sir *John Suckling* , Sir *William D'Avenant* , *Endymion Porter* , Mr. *Hales* of *Eaton* , and *Ben Johnson* ; Sir *John Suckling* , who was a profess'd Admirer of *Shakespear* , had undertaken his Defence against *Ben Johnson* with some warmth; Mr. *Hales* , who had sat still for some time, hearing *Ben* frequently reproaching him with the want of Learning, and Ignorance of the Antients, told him at last, *That if Mr.* Shakespear *had not read the Antients, he had likewise not stollen any thing from 'em* ; (a Fault the other made no Confidence of) *and that if he would produce any one Topick finely treated by any of them, he would undertake to shew something upon the same Subject at least as well written by* Shakespear. *Johnson* did indeed take a large liberty, even to the transcribing and translating of whole Scenes together; and sometimes, with all Deference to so great a Name as his, not altogether for the advantage of the Authors of whom he borrow'd. And if *Augustus* and *Virgil* were really what he has made *'em* in a Scene of his *Poetaster* , they are as odd an Emperor and a Poet as ever met. *Shakespear* , on the other Hand, was beholding to no body farther than the Foundation of the Tale, the Incidents were often his own, and the Writing intirely so. There is one Play of his, indeed, *The Comedy of Errors* , in a great measure taken from the *Men[oe]chmi* of *Plautus* . How that happen'd, I cannot easily Divine, since, as I hinted before, I do not take him to have been Master of *Latin* enough to read it in the Original, and I know of no Translation of *Plautus* so Old as his Time.

As I have not propos'd to my self to enter into a Large and Compleat Criticism upon Mr. *Shakespear* 's Works, so I suppose it will neither be expected that I should take notice of the severe Remarks that have been formerly made upon him by Mr. *Rhymer* . I must confess, I can't very well see what could be the Reason of his animadverting with so much Sharpness, upon the Faults of a Man Excellent on most Occasions, and whom all the World ever was and will be inclin'd to have an Esteem and Veneration for. If it was to shew his own Knowledge in the Art of Poetry, besides that there is a Vanity in making that only his Design, I question if there be not many Imperfections as well in those Schemes and Precepts he has given for the Direction of others, as well as in that Sample of Tragedy which he has written to shew the Excellency of his own *Genius* . If he had a Pique against the Man, and wrote on purpose to ruin a Reputation so well establish'd, he has had the Mortification to fail altogether in his Attempt, and to see the World at least as fond of *Shakespear* as of his Critique. But I won't believe a Gentleman, and a good-natur'd Man, capable of the last Intention. Whatever may have been his Meaning, finding fault is certainly the easiest Task of Knowledge, and commonly those Men of good Judgment, who are likewise of good and gentle Dispositions, abandon this ungrateful Province to the Tyranny of Pedants. If one would enter into the Beauties of *Shakespear* , there is a much larger, as well as a more delightful Field; but as I won't prescribe to the Tastes of other People, so I will only take the liberty, with all due Submission to the Judgment of others, to observe some of those Things I have been pleas'd with in looking him over.

His Plays are properly to be distinguish'd only into Comedies and Tragedies. Those which are called Histories, and even some of his Comedies, are really Tragedies, with a run or mixture of Comedy amongst 'em. That way of Trage-Comedy was the common Mistake of that Age, and is indeed become so agreeable to the *English* Tast, that tho' the severer Critiques among us cannot bear it, yet the generality of our Audiences seem to be better pleas'd with it than with an exact Tragedy. *The Merry Wives of* Windsor, *The Comedy of Errors* , and *The Taming of the Shrew* , are all pure Comedy; the rest, however they are call'd, have something of both Kinds. 'Tis not very easie to determine which way of Writing he was most Excellent in. There is certainly a great deal of Entertainment in his Comical Humours; and tho' they did not then strike at all Ranks of People, as the Satyr of the present Age has taken the Liberty to do, yet there is a pleasing and a well-distinguish'd Variety in those Characters which he thought fit to meddle with. *Falstaff* is allow'd by every body to be a Master-piece; the Character is always well-sustain'd, tho' drawn out into the length of three Plays; and even the Account of his Death, given by his Old Landlady Mrs. *Quickly* , in the first Act of *Henry* V. tho' it be extremely Natural, is yet as diverting as any Part of his Life. If there be any Fault in the Draught he has made of this lewd old Fellow, it is, that tho' he has made him a Thief, Lying, Cowardly, Vain-glorious, and in short every way Vicious, yet he has given him so much Wit as to make him almost too agreeable; and I don't know whether some People have not, in remembrance of the Diversion he had formerly afforded 'em, been sorry to see his Friend *Hal* use him so scurvily, when he comes to the Crown in the End of the Second Part of *Henry* the Fourth. Amongst other Extravagances, in *The Merry Wives of* Windsor, he has made him a Dear-stealer, that he might at the same time remember his *Warwickshire* Prosecutor, under the Name of Justice *Shallow* ; he has given him very near the same Coat of Arms which *Dugdale* , in his Antiquities of that County, describes for a Family there, and makes the *Welsh* Parson descant very pleasantly upon 'em. That whole Play is admirable; the Humours are various and well oppos'd; the main Design, which is to cure *Ford* his unreasonable Jealousie, is extremely well conducted. *Falstaff's Billet-doux* , and Master *Slender* 's

Ah! Sweet Ann Page!

are very good Expressions of Love in their Way. In *Twelfth-Night* there is something singularly Ridiculous and Pleasant in the fantastical Steward *Malvolio* . The Parasite and the Vain-glorious in *Parolles* , in *All's Well that ends Well* is as good as any thing of that Kind in *Plautus* or *Terence* . *Petruchio* , in *The Taming of the Shrew* , is an uncommon Piece of Humour. The Conversation of *Benedick* and *Beatrice* in *Much ado about Nothing* , and of *Rosalind* in *As you like it* , have much Wit and Sprightliness all along. His Clowns, without which Character there was hardly any Play writ in that Time, are all very entertaining: And, I believe, *Thersites* in *Troilus* and *Cressida* , and *Apemantus* in *Timon* , will be allow'd to be Master-Pieces of ill Nature, and satyrical Snarling. To these I might add, that incomparable Character of *Shylock* the *Jew* , in *The Merchant of* Venice; but tho' we have seen that Play Receiv'd and Acted as a Comedy, and the Part of the *Jew* perform'd by an Excellent Comedian, yet I cannot but think it was design'd Tragically by the Author. There appears in it such a deadly Spirit of Revenge, such a savage Fierceness and Fellness, and such a bloody designation of Cruelty and Mischief, as cannot agree either with the Stile or Characters of Comedy. The Play it self, take it all together, seems to me to be one of the most finish'd of any of *Shakespear* 's. The Tale indeed, in that Part relating to the Caskets, and the extravagant and unusual kind of Bond given by *Antonio* , is a little too much remov'd from the Rules of Probability: But taking the Fact for granted, we must allow it to be very beautifully written. There is something in the Friendship of *Antonio* to *Bassanio* very Great, Generous and Tender. The whole fourth Act, supposing, as I said, the Fact to be probable, is extremely Fine. But there are two Passages that deserve a particular Notice. The first is, what *Portia* says in praise of Mercy, *pag. 577* ; and the other on the Power of Musick, *pag. 587* . The Melancholy of *Jacques* , in *As you like it* , is as singular and odd as it is diverting. And if what *Horace* says

Difficile est proprie communia Dicere,

'Twill be a hard Task for any one to go beyond him in the Description of the several Degrees and Ages of Man's Life, tho' the Thought be old, and common enough.

—All the World's a Stage, And all the Men and Women meerly Players; They have their Exits and their Entrances, And one Man in his time plays many Parts, His Acts being seven Ages. At first the Infant Mewling and puking in the Nurse's Arms: And then, the whining School-boy with his Satchel, And shining Morning-face, creeping like Snail Unwillingly to School. And then the Lover Sighing like Furnace, with a woful Ballad Made to his Mistress' Eye-brow. Then a Soldier Full of strange Oaths, and bearded like the Pard, Jealous in Honour, sudden and quick in Quarrel, Seeking the bubble Reputation Ev'n in the Cannon's Mouth. And then the Justice In fair round Belly, with good Capon lin'd, With Eyes severe, and Beard of formal Cut, Full of wise Saws and modern Instances; And so he plays his Part. The sixth Age shifts Into the lean and slipper'd Pantaloon, With Spectacles on Nose, and Pouch on Side; His youthful Hose, well sav'd, a world too wide For his shrunk Shank; and his big manly Voice Turning again tow'rd childish treble Pipes, And Whistles in his Sound. Last Scene of all, That ends this strange eventful History, Is second Childishness and meer Oblivion, Sans Teeth, sans Eyes, sans Tast, sans ev'rything.

p. 625.

His Images are indeed ev'ry where so lively, that the Thing he would represent stands full before you, and you possess ev'ry Part of it. I will venture to point out one more, which is, I think, as strong and as uncommon as any thing I ever saw; 'tis an Image of Patience. Speaking of a Maid in Love, he says,

—*She never told her Love, But let Concealment, like a Worm i' th' Bud Feed on her Damask Cheek: She pin'd in Thought, And sate like* Patience *on a Monument, Smiling at* Grief.

What an Image is here given! and what a Task would it have been for the greatest Masters of *Greece* and *Rome* to have express'd the Passions design'd by this Sketch of Statuary? The Stile of his Comedy is, in general, Natural to the Characters, and easie in it self; and the Wit most commonly sprightly and pleasing, except in those places where he runs into Dogrel Rhymes, as in *The Comedy of Errors* , and a Passage or two in some other Plays. As for his Jingling sometimes, and playing upon Words, it was the common Vice of the Age he liv'd in: And if we find it in the Pulpit, made use of as an Ornament to the Sermons of some of the Gravest Divines of those Times; perhaps it may not be thought too light for the Stage.

But certainly the greatness of this Author's Genius do's no where so much appear, as where he gives his Imagination an entire Loose, and raises his Fancy to a flight above Mankind and the Limits of the visible World. Such are his Attempts in *The Tempest* , *Midsummer-Night's Dream* , *Macbeth* and *Hamlet* . Of these, *The Tempest* , however it comes to be plac'd the first by the former Publishers of his Works, can never have been the first written by him: It seems to me as perfect in its Kind, as almost any thing we have of his. One may observe, that the Unities are kept here with an Exactness uncommon to the Liberties of his Writing: Tho' that was what, I suppose, he valu'd himself least upon, since his Excellencies were all of another Kind. I am very sensible that he do's, in this Play, depart too much from that likeness to Truth which ought to be observ'd in these sort of Writings; yet he do's it so very finely, that one is easily drawn in to have more Faith for his sake, than Reason does well allow of. His Magick has something in it very Solemn and very Poetical: And that extravagant Character of *Caliban* is mighty well sustain'd, shews a wonderful Invention in the Author, who could strike out such a particular wild Image, and is certainly one of the finest and most uncommon Grotesques that was ever seen. The Observation, which I have been inform'd three very great Men concurr'd in making upon this Part, was extremely just. *That* Shakespear *had not only found out a new Character in his* Caliban, *but had also devis'd and adapted a new manner of Language for that Character* . Among the particular Beauties of this Piece, I think one may be allow'd to point out the Tale of *Prospero* in the First Act; his Speech to *Ferdinand* in the Fourth, upon the breaking up the Masque of *Juno* and *Ceres* ; and that in the Fifth, where he dissolves his Charms, and resolves to break his Magick Rod. This Play has been alter'd by Sir *William D'Avenant* and Mr. *Dryden* ; and tho' I won't Arraign the Judgment of those two great Men, yet I think I may be allow'd to say, that there are some things left out by them, that might, and even ought to have been kept in. Mr. *Dryden* was an Admirer of our Author, and, indeed, he owed him a great deal, as those who have read them both may very easily observe. And, I think, in Justice to 'em both, I should not on this Occasion omit what Mr. *Dryden* has said of him.

Shakespear, *who, taught by none, did first impart To* Fletcher *Wit, to lab'ring* Johnson *Art. He, Monarch-like, gave those his Subjects Law, And is that Nature which they Paint and Draw.* Fletcher *reach'd that which on his heights did grow, Whilst* Johnson *crept and gather'd all below: This did his Love, and this his Mirth digest, One imitates him most, the other best. If they have since out-writ all other Men, 'Tis with the Drops which fell from* Shakespear*'s Pen. The Storm which vanish'd on the neighb'ring Shoar, Was taught by* Shakespear*'s Tempest to roar. That Innocence and Beauty which did smile In* Fletcher, *grew on this* Enchanted Isle. *But* Shakespear*'s Magick could not copied be, Within that Circle none durst walk but he. I must confess 'twas bold, nor would you now That Liberty to vulgar Wits allow, Which works by Magick supernatural things: But* Shakespear*'s Pow'r is Sacred as A King's.*

Prologue to *The Tempest* , as it
is alter'd by Mr. *Dryden* .

It is the same Magick that raises the Fairies in *Midsummer Night's Dream* , the Witches in *Macbeth* , and the Ghost in *Hamlet* , with Thoughts and Language so proper to the Parts they sustain, and so peculiar to the Talent of this Writer. But of the two last of these Plays I shall have occasion to take notice, among the Tragedies of Mr. *Shakespear* . If one undertook to examine the greatest part of these by those Rules which are establish'd by *Aristotle* , and taken from the Model of the *Grecian* Stage, it would be no very hard Task to find a great many Faults: But as *Shakespear* liv'd under a kind of mere Light of Nature, and had never been made acquainted with the Regularity of those written Precepts, so it would be hard to judge him by a Law he knew nothing of. We are to consider him as a Man that liv'd in a State of almost universal License and Ignorance: There was no establish'd Judge, but every one took the liberty to Write according to the Dictates of his own Fancy. When one considers, that there is not one Play before him of a Reputation good enough to entitle it to an Appearance on the present Stage, it cannot but be a Matter of great Wonder that he should advance

Dramatick Poetry so far as he did. The Fable is what is generally plac'd the first, among those that are reckon'd the constituent Parts of a Tragick or Heroick Poem; not, perhaps, as it is the most Difficult or Beautiful, but as it is the first properly to be thought of in the Contrivance and Course of the whole; and with the Fable ought to be consider'd, the fit Disposition, Order and Conduct of its several Parts. As it is not in this Province of the *Drama* that the Strength and Mastery of *Shakespear* lay, so I shall not undertake the tedious and ill-natur'd Trouble to point out the several Faults he was guilty of in it. His Tales were seldom invented, but rather taken either from true History, or Novels and Romances: And he commonly made use of 'em in that Order, with those Incidents, and that extent of Time in which he found 'em in the Authors from whence he borrow'd them. So *The Winter's Tale* , which is taken from an old Book, call'd, *The Delectable History of* Dorastus *and* Faunia, contains the space of sixteen or seventeen Years, and the Scene is sometimes laid in *Bohemia* , and sometimes in *Sicily* , according to the original Order of the Story. Almost all his Historical Plays comprehend a great length of Time, and very different and distinct Places: And in his *Antony* and *Cleopatra* , the Scene travels over the greatest Part of the *Roman* Empire. But in Recompence for his Carelessness in this Point, when he comes to another Part of the *Drama* , *The Manners of his Characters, in Acting or Speaking what is proper for them, and fit to be shown by the Poet* , he may be generally justify'd, and in very many places greatly commended. For those Plays which he has taken from the *English* or *Roman* History, let any Man compare 'em, and he will find the Character as exact in the Poet as the Historian. He seems indeed so far from proposing to himself any one Action for a Subject, that the Title very often tells you, 'tis *The Life of King* John, *King* Richard, *&c.* What can be more agreeable to the Idea our Historians give of *Henry* the Sixth, than the Picture *Shakespear* has drawn of him! His Manners are every where exactly the same with the Story; one finds him still describ'd with Simplicity, passive Sanctity, want of Courage, weakness of Mind, and easie Submission to the Governance of an imperious Wife, or prevailing Faction: Tho' at the same time the Poet do's Justice to his good Qualities, and moves the Pity of his Audience for him, by showing him Pious, Disinterested, a Contemner of the Things of this World, and wholly resign'd to the severest Dispensations of God's Providence. There is a short Scene in the Second Part of *Henry* VI. *Vol. III. pag.* 1504. which I cannot but think admirable in its Kind. Cardinal *Beaufort* , who had murder'd the Duke of *Gloucester* , is shewn in the last Agonies on his Death-Bed, with the good King praying over him. There is so much Terror in one, so much Tenderness and moving Piety in the other, as must touch any one who is capable either of Fear or Pity. In his *Henry* VIII. that Prince is drawn with that Greatness of Mind, and all those good Qualities which are attributed to him in any Account of his Reign. If his Faults are not shewn in an equal degree, and the Shades in this Picture do not bear a just Proportion to the Lights, it is not that the Artist wanted either Colours or Skill in the Disposition of 'em; but the truth, I believe, might be, that he forbore doing it out of regard to Queen *Elizabeth* , since it could have been no very great Respect to the Memory of his Mistress, to have expos'd some certain Parts of her Father's Life upon the Stage. He has dealt much more freely with the Minister of that Great King, and certainly nothing was ever more justly written, than the Character of Cardinal *Wolsey* . He has shewn him Tyrannical, Cruel, and Insolent in his Prosperity; and yet, by a wonderful Address, he makes his Fall and Ruin the Subject of general Compassion. The whole Man, with his Vices and Virtues, is finely and exactly describ'd in the second Scene of the fourth Act. The Distresses likewise of Queen *Katherine* , in this Play, are very movingly touch'd: and tho' the Art of the Poet has skreen'd King *Henry* from any gross Imputation of Injustice, yet one is inclin'd to wish, the Queen had met with a Fortune more worthy of her Birth and Virtue. Nor are the Manners, proper to the Persons represented, less justly observ'd, in those Characters taken from the *Roman* History; and of this, the Fierceness and Impatience of *Coriolanus* , his Courage and Disdain of the common People, the Virtue and Philosophical Temper of *Brutus* , and the irregular Greatness of Mind in *M. Antony* , are beautiful Proofs. For the two last especially, you find 'em exactly as they are describ'd by *Plutarch* , from whom certainly *Shakespear* copy'd 'em. He has indeed follow'd his Original pretty close, and taken in several little Incidents that might have been spar'd in a Play. But, as I hinted before, his Design seems most commonly rather to describe those great Men in the several Fortunes and Accidents of their Lives, than to take any single great Action, and form his Work simply upon that. However, there are some of his Pieces, where the Fable is founded upon one Action only. Such are more especially, *Romeo* and *Juliet* , *Hamlet* , and *Othello* . The Design in *Romeo* and *Juliet* , is plainly the Punishment of their two Families, for the unreasonable Feuds and Animosities that had been so long kept up between 'em, and occasion'd the Effusion of so much Blood. In the management of this Story, he has shewn something wonderfully Tender and Passionate in the Love-part, and vary Pitiful in the Distress. *Hamlet* is founded on much the same Tale with the *Electra* of *Sophocles* . In each of 'em a young Prince is engag'd to Revenge the Death of his Father, their Mothers are equally Guilty, are both concern'd in the Murder of their Husbands, and are afterwards married to the Murderers. There is in the first Part of the *Greek* Trajedy, something very moving in the Grief of *Electra* ; but as Mr. *D'Acier* has observ'd, there is something very unnatural and shocking in the Manners he has given that Princess and *Orestes* in the latter Part. *Orestes* embrues his Hands in the Blood of his own Mother; and that barbarous Action is perform'd, tho' not immediately upon the Stage, yet so near, that the Audience hear *Clytemnestra* crying out to *Æghystus* for Help, and to her Son for Mercy: While *Electra* , her Daughter, and a Princess, both of them Characters that ought to have appear'd with more Decency, stands upon the Stage and encourages her Brother in the Parricide. What Horror does this not raise! *Clytemnestra* was a wicked Woman, and had deserv'd to Die; nay, in the truth of the Story, she was kill'd by her own Son; but to represent an Action of this Kind on the Stage, is certainly an Offence against those Rules of Manners proper to the Persons that ought to be observ'd there. On the contrary, let us only look a little on the Conduct of *Shakespear* . *Hamlet* is represented with the same Piety towards his Father, and Resolution to Revenge his Death, as *Orestes* ; he has the same Abhorrence for his Mother's Guilt, which, to provoke him the more, is heighten'd by Incest: But 'tis with wonderful Art and Justness of Judgment, that the Poet restrains him from doing Violence to his Mother. To prevent any thing of that Kind, he makes his Father's Ghost forbid that part of his Vengeance.

But howsoever thou pursu'st this Act, Taint not thy Mind; nor let thy Soul contrive Against thy Mother ought; leave her to Heav'n, And to those Thorns that in her Bosom lodge, To prick and sting her. Vol. V. p. 2386.

This is to distinguish rightly between *Horror* and *Terror* . The latter is a proper Passion of Tragedy, but the former ought always to be carefully avoided. And certainly no Dramatick Writer ever succeeded better in raising *Terror* in the Minds of an Audience than *Shakespear* has done. The whole Tragedy of *Macbeth* , but more especially the Scene where the King is murder'd, in the second Act, as well as this Play, is a noble Proof of that manly Spirit with which he writ; and both shew how powerful he was, in giving the strongest Motions to our Souls that they are capable of. I cannot leave *Hamlet* , without taking notice of the Advantage with which we have seen this Master-piece of *Shakespear* distinguish it self upon the Stage, by Mr. *Betterton* 's fine Performance of that Part. A Man, who tho' he had no other good Qualities, as he has a great many, must have made his way into the Esteem of all Men of Letters, by this only Excellency. No Man is better acquainted with *Shakespear* 's manner of Expression, and indeed he has study'd him so well, and is so much a Master of him, that whatever Part of his he performs he does it as if it had been written on purpose for him, and that the Author had exactly conceiv'd it as he plays it. I must own a particular Obligation to him, for the most considerable part of the Passages relating to his Life, which I have here transmitted to the Publick; his Veneration for the Memory of *Shakespear* having engag'd him to make a Journey into *Warwickshire* , on purpose to gather up what Remains he could of a Name for which he had so great a Value. Since I had at first resolv'd not to enter into any Critical Controversie, I won't pretend to enquire into the Justness of Mr. *Rhymer* 's Remarks on *Othello* ; he has certainly pointed out some Faults very judiciously; and indeed they are such as most People will agree, with him, to be Faults: But I wish he would likewise have observ'd some of the Beauties too; as I think it became an Exact and Equal Critique to do. It seems strange that he should allow nothing Good in the whole: If the Fable and Incidents are not to his Taste, yet the Thoughts are almost every where very Noble, and the Diction manly and proper. These last, indeed, are Parts of *Shakespear* 's Praise, which it would be very hard to Dispute with him. His Sentiments and Images of Things are Great and Natural; and his Expression (tho' perhaps in some Instances a little Irregular) just, and rais'd in Proportion to his Subject and Occasion. It would be even endless to mention the particular Instances that might be given of this Kind: But his Book is in the Possession of the Publick, and 'twill be hard to dip into any Part of it, without finding what I have said of him made good.

The latter Part of his Life was spent, as all Men of good Sense will wish theirs may be, in Ease, Retirement, and the Conversation of his Friends. He had the good Fortune to gather an Estate equal to his Occasion, and, in that, to his Wish; and is said to have spent some Years before his Death at his native *Stratford* . His pleasurable Wit, and good Nature, engag'd him in the Acquaintance, and entitled him to the Friendship of the Gentlemen of the Neighbourhood. Amongst them, it is a Story almost still remember'd in that Country, that he had a particular Intimacy with Mr. *Combe* , an old Gentleman noted thereabouts for his Wealth and Usury: It happen'd, that in a pleasant Conversation amongst their common Friends, Mr. *Combe* told *Shakespear* in a laughing manner, that he fancy'd, he intended to write his Epitaph, if he happen'd to outlive him; and since he could not know what might be said of him when he was dead, he desir'd it might be done immediately: Upon which *Shakespear* gave him these four Verses.

Ten in the Hundred lies here ingrav'd, 'Tis a Hundred to Ten, his Soul is not sav'd: If any Man ask, Who lies in this Tomb? Oh! ho! quoth the Devil, 'tis my John-a-Combe.

But the Sharpness of the Satyr is said to have stung the Man so severely, that he never forgave it.

He Dy'd in the 53d Year of his Age, and was bury'd on the North side of the Chancel, in the Great Church at *Stratford* , where a Monument, as engrav'd in the Plate, is plac'd in the Wall. On his Grave-Stone underneath is,

Good Friend, for Jesus sake, forbear To dig the Dust inclosed here. Blest be the Man that spares these Stones, And Curst be he that moves my Bones.

He had three Daughters, of which two liv'd to be marry'd; *Judith* , the Elder, to one Mr. *Thomas Quiney* , by whom she had three Sons, who all dy'd without Children; and *Susannah* , who was his Favourite, to Dr. *John Hall* , a Physician of good Reputation in that Country. She left one Child only, a Daughter, who was marry'd first to *Thomas Nash* , Esq; and afterwards to Sir *John Bernard* of *Abbington* , but dy'd likewise without Issue.

This is what I could learn of any Note, either relating to himself or Family: The Character of the Man is best seen in his Writings. But since *Ben Johnson* has made a sort of an Essay towards it in his *Discoveries* , tho', as I have before hinted, he was not very Cordial in his Friendship, I will venture to give it in his Words.

"I remember the Players have often mention'd it as an Honour to *Shakespear* , that in Writing (whatsoever he penn'd) he never blotted out a Line. My Answer hath been, *Would he had blotted a thousand* , which they thought a malevolent Speech. I had not told Posterity this, but for their Ignorance, who chose that Circumstance to commend their Friend by, wherein he most faulted. And to justifie mine own Candor, (for I lov'd the Man, and do honour his Memory, on this side Idolatry, as much as any.) He was, indeed, Honest, and of an open and free Nature, had an Excellent Fancy, brave Notions, and gentle Expressions, wherein he flow'd with that Facility, that sometimes it was necessary he should be stopp'd: *Sufflaminandus erat* , as *Augustus* said of *Haterius* . His Wit was in his own Power, would the Rule of it had been so too. Many times he fell into those things could not escape Laughter; as when he said in the Person of *Cæsar* , one speaking to him,

"Cæsar *thou dost me Wrong* .

"He reply'd:

"Cæsar *did never Wrong, but with just Cause.*

and such like, which were ridiculous. But he redeem'd his Vices with his Virtues: There was ever more in him to be Prais'd than to be Pardon'd."

As for the Passage which he mentions out of *Shakespear* , there is somewhat like it *Julius Cæsar* , Vol. V. p. 2260. but without the Absurdity; nor did I ever meet with it in any Edition that I have seen, as quoted by Mr. *Johnson* . Besides his Plays in this Edition, there are two or three ascrib'd to him by Mr. *Langbain* , which I have never seen, and know nothing of. He writ likewise, *Venus* and *Adonis* , and *Tarquin* and *Lucrece* , in Stanza's, which have been printed in a late Collection of Poems. As to the Character given of him by *Ben Johnson* , there is a good deal true in it: But I believe it may be as well express'd by what *Horace* says of the first *Romans* , who wrote Tragedy upon the *Greek* Models, (or indeed translated 'em) in his Epistle to *Augustus* .

—Naturâ sublimis & Acer Nam spirat Tragicum satis & fœliciter Audet, Sed turpem putat in Chartis metuitq; Lituram.

There is a Book of Poems, publish'd in 1640, under the Name of Mr. *William Shakespear* , but as I have but very lately seen it, without an Opportunity of making any Judgment upon it, I won't pretend to determine, whether it be his or no.

<<span id="filepos0039636752"> a>SHAKESPEARE: HIS LIFE, ART, AND CHARACTERS by Henry Norman Hudson

An American critic, Henry N. Hudson was also known as a farmer, coach-maker, school teacher, a Boston churchman and literati, popular lecturer and friend of Emerson and editor of Shakespeare. His first edition of Shakespeare appeared in 11 volumes from 1851-1856, preceded by that of Verplanck. His *School Shakespeare* appeared in 1870, in 1872 *Shakespeare His Life, Art and*

Characters , finally in 1881 his Harvard Shakespeare appeared in 20 volumes (see links below).

After the Civil War, Hudson became the most popular editor of Shakespeare in America. Hudson's edition is noted for its conservatism. The Harvard Edition was to be "set forth on conservative principles but without dotage or bigotry". His editions achieved wide popularity, serving to bolster Shakespeare as a broad new American cultural centrepiece.

Henry N. Hudson editor of the "Harvard Shakespeare"

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<<span id="filepos0039646074"> a>LIFE OF SHAKESPEARE.

Shakespeare, by general suffrage, is the greatest name in literature. There can be no extravagance in saying, that to all who speak the English language his genius has made the world better worth living in, and life a nobler and diviner thing. And even among those who do not "speak the tongue that Shakespeare spake," large numbers are studying the English language mainly for the purpose of being at home with him. How he came to be what he was, and to do what he did, are questions that can never cease to be interesting, wherever his works are known, and men's powers of thought in any fair measure developed. But Providence has left a veil, or rather a cloud, about his history, so that these questions are not likely to be satisfactorily answered.

The first formal attempt at an account of Shakespeare's life was made by Nicholas Rowe, and the result thereof published in 1709, ninety-three years after the Poet's death. Rowe's account was avowedly made up, for the most part, from traditionary materials collected by Betterton the actor, who made a visit to Stratford expressly for that purpose. Betterton was born in 1635, nineteen years after the death of Shakespeare; became an actor before 1660, retired from the stage about 1700, and died in 1710. At what time he visited Stratford is not known. It is to be regretted that Rowe did not give Betterton's authorities for the particulars gathered by him. It is certain, however, that very good sources of information were accessible in his time: Judith Quiney, the Poet's second daughter, lived till 1662; Lady Barnard, his granddaughter, till 1670; and Sir William Davenant, who in his youth had known Shakespeare, was manager of the theatre in which Betterton acted.

After Rowe's account, scarce any thing was added till the time of Malone, who by a learned and most industrious searching of public and private records brought to light a considerable number of facts, some of them very important, touching the Poet and his family. And in our own day Mr. Collier has followed up the inquiry with very great diligence, and with no inconsiderable success;

though, unfortunately, much of the matter supplied by him has been discredited as unauthentic, by those from whom there is in such cases no appeal. Lastly, Mr. Halliwell has given his intelligent and indefatigable labours to the same task, and made some valuable additions to our stock.

The lineage of WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE, on the paternal side, has not been traced further back than his grandfather. The name, which in its composition smacks of brave old knighthood and chivalry, was frequent in Warwickshire from an early period.

The father of our Poet was JOHN SHAKESPEARE, who is found living at Stratford-on-Avon in 1552. He was most likely a native of Snitterfield, a village three miles from Stratford; as we find a Richard Shakespeare living there in 1550, and occupying a house and land owned by Robert Arden, the maternal grandfather of our Poet. This appears from a deed executed July 17, 1550, in which Robert Arden conveyed certain lands and tenements in Snitterfield, described as being "now in the tenure of one Richard Shakespeare," to be held in trust for three daughters "after the death of Robert and Agnes Arden."

An entry in a Court Roll, dated April, 1552, ascertains that John Shakespeare was living in Stratford at that time. And an entry in the Bailiff's Court, dated June, 1556, describes him as "John Shakespeare, of Stratford in the county of Warwick, *glover* ." In 1558, the same John Shakespeare, and four others, one of whom was Francis Burbadge, then at the head of the corporation, were fined four pence each "for not keeping their gutters clean."

There is ample proof that at this period his affairs were in a thriving condition. In October, 1556, he became the owner of two copyhold estates, one of them consisting of a house with a garden and a croft attached to it, the other of a house and garden. As these were estates of inheritance, the tenure was nearly equal to freehold; so that he must have been pretty well-to-do in the world at the time. For several years after, his circumstances continued to improve. Before 1558, he became the owner, by marriage, of a farm at Wilmecote, consisting of fifty-six acres, besides two houses and two gardens; moreover, he held, in right of his wife, a considerable share in a property at Snitterfield. Another addition to his property was made in 1575,—a freehold estate, bought for the sum of £40, and described as consisting of "two houses, two gardens, and two orchards, with their appurtenances."

Several other particulars have been discovered, which go to ascertain his wealth as compared with that of other Stratford citizens. In 1564, the year of the Poet's birth, a malignant fever, called the plague, invaded Stratford. Its hungriest period was from the last of June to the last of December, during which time it swept off two hundred and thirty-eight persons out of a population of about fourteen hundred. None of the Shakespeare family are found among its victims. Large draughts were made upon the charities of the town on account of this frightful visitation. In August, the citizens held a meeting in the open air, from fear of infection, and various sums were contributed for the relief of the poor. The High-Bailiff gave 3s. 4d., the head-alderman 2s. 8d.; John Shakespeare, being then only a burgess, gave 12d.; and in the list of burgesses there were but two who gave more. Other donations were made for the same cause, he bearing a proportionable share in them.

We have seen that in June, 1556, John Shakespeare was termed a glover. In November of the same year he is found bringing an action against one of his neighbours for unjustly detaining a quantity of barley; which naturally infers him to have been more or less engaged in agricultural pursuits. It appears that at a later period agriculture was his main pursuit, if not his only one; for the town records show that in 1564 he was paid three shillings for a piece of timber; and we find him described in 1575 as a "yeoman." Rowe gives a tradition of his having been "a considerable dealer in wool." It is nowise unlikely that such may have been the case. The modern divisions of labour and trade were then little known and less regarded; several kinds of business being often carried on together, which are now kept distinct; and we have special proof that gloves and wool were apt to be united as articles of trade.

I must next trace, briefly, the career of John Shakespeare as a public officer in the Stratford corporation. After holding several minor offices, he was in 1558, and again in 1559, chosen one of the four constables. In 1561, he was a second time made one of the four affeerors, whose duty it was to determine the fines for such offences as had no penalties prescribed by statute. The same year, 1561, he was chosen one of the chamberlains of the borough, a very responsible office, which he held two years. Advancing steadily in the public confidence, he became an alderman in 1565; and in 1568 was elected Bailiff, the highest honour the corporation could bestow. He held this office a year. The series of local honours conferred upon him ended with his being chosen head-alderman in

1571; which office also he held a year. The rule being "once an alderman always an alderman," unless positive action were taken to the contrary, he retained that office till 1586, when, for persevering non-attendance at the meetings, he was deprived of his gown.

After all these marks of public consequence, the reader may be surprised to learn that John Shakespeare, the father of the world's greatest thinker and greatest poet, could not write his name! Such was undoubtedly the fact; and I take pleasure in noting it, as showing, what is too apt to be forgotten in these bookish days, that men may know several things, and may have witty children, without being initiated in the mysteries of pen and ink. In the borough records for 1565 is an order signed by nineteen aldermen and burgesses, calling upon John Wheler to undertake the office of Bailiff. Of these signers thirteen are markmen, and among them are the names of George Whately, then Bailiff, Roger Sadler, head-alderman, and John Shakespeare. So that there was nothing remarkable in his not being able to wield a pen. As Bailiff of Stratford, he was *ex officio* a justice of the peace; and two warrants are extant, granted by him in December, 1568, for the arrest of John Ball and Richard Walcar on account of debts; both of them bearing witness that "he had a mark to himself, like an honest, plain-dealing man." Several other cases in point are met with at later periods; some of which show that his wife stood on the same footing with him in this respect. In October, 1579, John and Mary Shakespeare executed a deed and bond for the transfer of their interest in certain property; both of which are subscribed with their several marks, and sealed with their respective seals.

John Shakespeare's good fortune seems to have reached its height about the year 1575, after which time we meet with many clear tokens of his decline. It is not improbable that his affairs may have got embarrassed from his having too many irons in the fire. The registry of the Court of Record, from 1555 to 1595, has a large number of entries respecting him, which show him to have been engaged in a great variety of transactions, and to have had more litigation on his hands than would now be thought either creditable or safe. But, notwithstanding his decline of fortune, we have proofs as late as 1592 that he still retained the confidence and esteem of his fellow-citizens. From that time forward, his affairs were doubtless taken care of by one who, as we shall see hereafter, was much interested not to let them suffer, and also well able to keep them in good trim. He was buried September 8, 1601; so that, supposing him to have reached his majority when first heard of in 1552, he must have passed the age of threescore and ten.

On the maternal side, our Poet's lineage was of a higher rank, and may be traced further back. His mother was MARY ARDEN, a name redolent of old poetry and romance. The family of Arden was among the most ancient in Warwickshire. Their history, as given by Dugdale, spreads over six centuries. Sir John Arden was squire of the body to Henry the Seventh; and he had a nephew, the son of a younger brother, who was page of the bedchamber to the same monarch. These were at that time places of considerable service and responsibility; and both the uncle and the nephew were liberally rewarded by their royal master. By conveyances dated in December, 1519, it appears that Robert Arden then became the owner of houses and land in Snitterfield. Other purchases by him of lands and houses are recorded from time to time. The Poet's maternal grandfather, also named Robert, died in 1556. In his will, dated November 24th, and proved December 17th, of that year, he makes special bequests to his "youngest daughter Mary," and also appoints her and another daughter, named Alice, "full executors of this my last will and testament." On the whole, it is evident enough that he was a man of good landed estate. Both he and Richard Shakespeare appear to have been of that honest and substantial old English yeomanry, from whose better-than-royal stock and lineage the great Poet of Nature might most fitly fetch his life and being. Of the Poet's grandmother on either side we know nothing whatever.

Mary Arden was the youngest of seven children, all of them daughters. The exact time of her marriage is uncertain, no registry of it having been found. She was not married at the date of her father's will, November, 1556. Joan, the first-born of John and Mary Shakespeare, was baptized in the parish church of Stratford-on-Avon, September 15, 1558. We have seen that at this time John Shakespeare was well established and thriving in business, and was making good headway in the confidence of the Stratfordians, being one of the constables of the borough. On the 2d of December, 1562, while he was chamberlain, his second child was christened Margaret. On the 26th of April, 1564, was baptized "WILLIAM, son of John Shakespeare." The birth is commonly thought to have taken place on the 23d, it being then the usual custom to present infants at the Font the third day after their birth; but we have no certain information whether it was observed on this august occasion. We have seen that throughout the following Summer the destroyer was busy in Stratford, making fearful spoil of her sons and daughters; but it spared the babe on whose life hung the fate of English literature. Other children were added to the family, to the number of eight, several of them dying in the mean time. On the 28th of September, 1571, soon after the father became head-alderman, a fourth daughter was baptized Anne. Hitherto the parish register has known him only as John Shakespeare: in this case it designates him "*Master* Shakespeare." Whether *Master* was a token of honour not extended to any thing under an ex-bailiff, does not appear; but in all cases after this the name is written with that significant prefix.

Nothing further is heard of Mrs. Mary Shakespeare till her death in 1608. On the 9th of September, that year, the parish register notes the burial of "Mary Shakespeare, widow," her husband having died seven years before. That she had in a special degree the confidence and affection of her father, is apparent from the treatment she received in his will. It would be very gratifying, no doubt, perhaps very instructive also, to be let into the domestic life and character of the Poet's mother. That both her nature and her discipline entered largely into his composition, and had much to do in making him what he was, can hardly be questioned. Whatsoever of woman's beauty and sweetness and wisdom was expressed in her life and manners could not but be caught and repeated in his susceptive and fertile mind. He must have grown familiar with the noblest parts of womanhood somewhere; and I can scarce conceive how he should have learned them so well, but that the light and glory of them beamed upon him from his mother. At the time of her death, the Poet was in his forty-fifth year, and had already produced those mighty works which were to fill the world with his fame. For some years she must in all likelihood have been more or less under his care and protection; as her age, at the time of her death, could not well have been less than seventy.

And here I am minded to notice a point which, it seems to me, has been somewhat overworked within the last few years. Gervinus, the German critic, thinks—and our Mr. White agrees with him—that Shakespeare acquired all his best ideas of womanhood after he went to London, and conversed with the ladies of the city. And in support of this notion they cite the fact—for such it is—that the women of his later plays are much superior to those of his earlier ones. But are not the *men* of his later plays quite as much superior to the men of his first? Are not his later plays as much better *every way* , as in respect of the female characters? The truth seems to be, that Shakespeare saw more of great and good in both man and woman, as he became older and knew them better; for he was full of intellectual righteousness in this as in other things. And in this matter it may with something of special fitness be said that a man finds what he brings with him the faculty for finding. Shakespeare's mind did not stay on the surface of things. Probably there never was a man more alive to the presence of humble, modest worth. And to his keen yet kindly eye the plain-thoughted women of his native Stratford may well have been as pure, as sweet, as lovely, as rich in all the inward graces which he delighted to unfold in his female characters, as any thing he afterwards found among the fine ladies of the metropolis; albeit I mean no disparagement to these latter; for the Poet was by the best of all rights a gentleman, and the ladies who pleased him in London doubtless had sense and womanhood enough to recognize him as such. At all events, it is reasonable to suppose that the foundations of his mind were laid before he left Stratford, and that the gatherings of the boy's eye and heart were the germs of the man's thoughts.

We have seen our Poet springing from what may be justly termed the best vein of old English life. At the time of his birth, his parents, considering the purchases previously made by the father, and the portion inherited by the mother, must have been tolerably well off. Malone, reckoning only the bequests specified in her father's will, estimated Mary Shakespeare's fortune to be not less than £110. Later researches have brought to light considerable items of property that were unknown to Malone. Supposing her fortune to have been as good as £150 then, it would go nearly if not quite, as far as $5000 in our time. So that the Poet passed his boyhood in just about that medium state between poverty and riches which is accounted most favourable to health of body and mind.

At the time when his father became High-Bailiff the Poet was in his fifth year; old enough to understand something of what would be said and done in the home of an English magistrate, and to take more or less interest in the duties, the hospitalities, and perhaps the gayeties incident to the headship of the borough. It would seem that the Poet came honestly by his inclination to the Drama. During his term of office, John Shakespeare is found acting in his public capacity as a patron of the stage. The chamberlain's accounts show that twice in the course of that year money was paid to different companies of players; and these are the earliest notices we have of theatrical performances in that ancient town. The Bailiff and his son William were most likely present at those performances. From that time forward, all through the Poet's youth, probably no year passed without similar exhibitions at Stratford. In 1572, however, an act was passed for restraining itinerant players, whereby, unless they could show a patent under the great seal, they became liable to be proceeded against as vagabonds, for performing without a license from the local authorities. Nevertheless, the chamberlain's accounts show that between 1569 and 1587 no less than ten distinct companies performed at Stratford under the patronage of the corporation. In 1587, five of those companies are found performing there; and within the period just mentioned the Earl of Leicester's men are noted on three several occasions as receiving money from the town treasury. In May, 1574, the Earl of Leicester obtained a patent under the great seal, enabling his players, James Burbadge and four others, to exercise their art in any part of the kingdom except London. In 1587, this company became "The Lord Chamberlain's servants"; and we shall in due time find Shakespeare belonging to it. James Burbadge was the father of Richard Burbadge, the greatest actor of that age. The family was most likely from Warwickshire, and perhaps from Stratford, as we have already met with the name in that town. Such were the opportunities our embryo Poet had for catching the first rudiments of the art in which he afterwards displayed such learned mastery.

The forecited accounts have an entry, in 1564, of two shillings "paid for defacing image in the chapel." Even then the excesses generated out of the Reformation were invading such towns as Stratford, and waging a "crusade against the harmless monuments of the ancient belief; no exercise of taste being suffered to interfere with what was considered a religious duty." In these exhibitions of strolling players this spirit found matter, no doubt, more deserving of its hostility. While the Poet was yet a boy, a bitter war of books and pamphlets had begun against plays and players; and the Stratford records inform us of divers attempts to suppress them in that town; but the issue proves that the Stratfordians were not easily beaten from that sort of entertainment, in which they evidently took great delight.

We have seen that both John and Mary Shakespeare, instead of writing their name, were so far disciples of Jack Cade as to use the more primitive way of making their mark. It nowise follows from this that they could not read; neither have we any certain evidence that they could. Be this as it may, there was no good reason why their children should not be able to say, "I thank God, I have been so well brought up, that I can write my name." A Free-School had been founded at Stratford by Thomas Jolyffe in the reign of Edward the Fourth. In 1553, King Edward the Sixth granted a charter, giving it a legal being, with legal rights and duties, under the name of "The King's New School of Stratford-upon-

Avon." What particular course or method of instruction was used there, we have no certain knowledge; but it was probably much the same as that used in other like schools of that period; which included the elementary branches of English, and also the rudiments of classical learning.

Here it was, no doubt, that Shakespeare acquired the "small Latin and less Greek" which Ben Jonson accords to him. What was "small" learning in the eyes of such a scholar as Jonson, may yet have been something handsome in itself; and his remark may fairly imply that the Poet had at least the regular free-school education of the time. Honourably ambitious, as his father seems to have been, of being somebody, it is not unlikely that he may have prized learning the more for being himself without it. William was his oldest son; when his tide of fortune began to ebb, the Poet was in his fourteenth year, and, from his native qualities of mind, we cannot doubt that, up to that time at least, "all the learnings that his *town* could make him the receiver of he took, as we do air, fast as 'twas ministered, and in his Spring became a harvest."

The honest but credulous gossip Aubrey, who died about 1700, states, on the authority of one Beeston, that "Shakespeare understood Latin pretty well, for he had been in his younger years a schoolmaster in the country." The statement may fairly challenge some respect, inasmuch as persons of the name of Beeston were connected with the stage before Shakespeare's death and long afterwards. And it is not unlikely that the Poet may, at some time, have been an assistant teacher in the free-school at Stratford. Nor does this conflict with Rowe's account, which states that John Shakespeare kept William at the free-school for some time; but that straitness of circumstances and need of help forced him to withdraw his son from the school. Though writing from tradition, Rowe was evidently careful, and what he says agrees perfectly with what later researches have established respecting John Shakespeare's course of fortune. He also tells us that the Poet's father "could give him no better education than his own employment." John Shakespeare, as we have seen, was so far occupied with agriculture as to be legally styled a "yeoman." Nor am I sure but the ancient functions of an English yeoman's oldest son might be a better education for what the Poet afterwards accomplished than was to be had at any free-school or university in England. His large and apt use of legal terms and phrases has induced many good Shakespearians learned in the law to believe that he must have been for some time a student of that noble science. It is indeed difficult to understand how he could have spoken as he often does, without some study in the law; but, as he seems thoroughly at home in the specialties of many callings, it is possible his knowledge in the law may have grown from the large part his father had, either as magistrate or as litigant, in legal transactions. I am sure he either studied divinity or else had a strange gift of knowing it without studying it; and his ripeness in the knowledge of disease and of the healing art is a standing marvel to the medical faculty.

Knight has speculated rather copiously and romantically upon the idea of Shakespeare's having been a spectator of the more-than-royal pomp and pageantry with which the Queen was entertained by Leicester at Kenilworth in 1575. Stratford was fourteen miles from Kenilworth, and the Poet was then eleven years old. That his ears were assailed and his imagination excited by the fame of that magnificent display cannot be doubted, for all that part of the kingdom was laid under contribution to supply it, and was resounding with the noise of it; but his father was not of a rank to be summoned or invited thither, nor was he of an age to go thither without his father. Positive evidence either way on the point there is none; nor can I discover any thing in his plays that would fairly infer him to have drunk in the splendour of that occasion, however the fierce attractions thereof may have kindled a mind so brimful of poetry and life. The whole matter is an apt theme for speculation, and for nothing else.

The gleanings of tradition apart, the first knowledge that has reached us of the Poet, after his baptism, has reference to his marriage. Rowe tells us that "he thought fit to marry while he was very young," and that "his wife was the daughter of one Hathaway, said to have been a substantial yeoman in the neighbourhood of Stratford." These statements are borne out by later disclosures. The marriage took place in the Fall of 1582, when the Poet was in his nineteenth year. On the 28th of November, that year Fulk Sandels and John Richardson subscribed a bond whereby they became liable in the sum of £40, to be forfeited to the Bishop of Worcester in case there should be found any lawful impediment to the marriage of William Shakespeare and Anne Hathaway, of Stratford; the object being to procure such a dispensation from the Bishop as would authorize the ceremony after once publishing the banns. The original bond is preserved at Worcester, with the marks and seals of the two bondsmen affixed, and also bearing a seal with the initials R.H., as if to show that some legal representative of the bride's father, Richard Hathaway, was present and consenting to the act. There was nothing peculiar in the transaction; the bond is just the same as was usually given in such cases, and several others like it are to be seen at the office of the Worcester registry.

The parish books all about Stratford and Worcester have been ransacked, but no record of the marriage has been discovered. The probability is, that the ceremony took place in some one of the neighbouring parishes where the registers of that period have not been preserved.

Anne Hathaway was of Shottery, a pleasant village situate within an easy walk of Stratford, and belonging to the same parish. No record of her baptism has come to light, but the baptismal register of Stratford did not begin till 1558. She died on the 6th of August, 1623, and the inscription on her monument gives her age as sixty-seven years. Her birth, therefore, must have been in 1556, eight years before that of her husband.

From certain precepts, dated in 1566, and lately found among the papers of the Stratford Court of Record, it appears that the relations between John Shakespeare and Richard Hathaway were of a very friendly sort. Hathaway's will was made September 1, 1581, and proved July 19, 1582, which shows him to have died a few months before the marriage of his daughter Anne. The will makes good what Rowe says of his being "a substantial yeoman." He appoints Fulk Sandels one of the supervisors of his will; and among the witnesses to it is the name of William Gilbert, then curate of Stratford. One item of the will is: "I owe unto Thomas Whittington, my shepherd, £4 6s. 8d." Whittington died in 1601; and in his will he gives and bequeaths "unto the poor people of Stratford 40s. that is in the hand of Anne Shakespeare, wife unto Mr. William Shakespeare." The careful old shepherd had doubtless placed the money in Anne Shakespeare's hand for safe keeping, she being a person in whom he had confidence.

The Poet's match was evidently a love-match: whether the love was of that kind which forms the best pledge of wedded happiness, is another question. It is not unlikely that the marriage may have been preceded by the ancient ceremony of troth-plight, or *handfast* , as it was sometimes called; like that which almost takes place between Florizel and Perdita in *The Winter's Tale* , and quite takes place between Olivia and Sebastian in *Twelfth Night* . The custom of troth-plight was much used in that age, and for a long time after. In some places it had the force and effect of an actual marriage. Serious evils, however, sometimes grew out of it; and the Church of England did wisely, no doubt, in uniting the troth-plight and the marriage in one and the same ceremony. Whether such solemn betrothment had or had not taken place between William Shakespeare and Anne Hathaway, it is certain from the parish register that they had a daughter, Susanna, baptized on the 26th of May, 1583.

Some of the Poet's later biographers and critics have supposed he was not happy in his marriage. Certain passages of his plays, especially the charming dialogue between the Duke and the disguised Viola in Act ii., scene 4, of *Twelfth Night* , have been cited as involving some reference to the Poet's own case, or as having been suggested by what himself had experienced of the evils resulting from the wedlock of persons "misgraffed in respect of years." There was never any thing but sheer conjecture for this notion. Rowe mentions nothing of the kind; and we may be sure that his candour would not have spared the Poet, had tradition offered him any such matter. As for the passages in question, I know no reason for excepting them from the acknowledged purity and disinterestedness of the Poet's representations; where nothing is more remarkable, or more generally commended, than his singular aloofness of self; his perfect freedom from every thing bordering upon egotism.

Our Mr. White is especially hard upon the Poet's wife, worrying up the matter against her, and fairly tormenting the poor woman's memory. Now the facts about the marriage are just precisely as I have stated them. I confess they are not altogether such as I should wish them to have been; but I can see no good cause why prurient inference or speculation should busy itself in going behind them. If, however, conjecture must be at work on those facts, surely it had better run in the direction of charity, especially as regards the weaker vessel. I say weaker vessel, because in this case the man must in common fairness be supposed to have had the advantage at least as much in natural strength of understanding as the woman had in years. And as Shakespeare was, by all accounts, a very attractive person, it is not quite clear why she had not as good a right to lose her heart in his company as he had to lose his in hers. Probably she was as much smitten as he was; and we may well remember in her behalf, that love's "favourite seat is feeble woman's breast"; especially as there is not a particle of evidence that her life after marriage was ever otherwise than clear and honourable. And indeed it will do no hurt to remember in reference to them both, how

"'Tis affirmed By poets skilled in Nature's secret ways, That Love will not submit to be controlled By mastery."

In support of his view, Mr. White urges, among other things, that most foul and wicked fling which Leontes, in his mad rapture of jealousy, makes against his wife, in Act i. scene 2, of *The Winter's Tale* . He thinks the Poet could not have written that and other strains of like import, but that he was stung into doing so by his own bitter experience of "sorrow and shame"; and the argument is that, supposing him to have had such a root of bitterness in his life, he must have been thinking of that while writing those passages. The obvious answer is, To be sure, he must have been thinking of that; but then he must have known that others would think of it too; and a reasonable delicacy on his part would have counselled the withholding of any thing that he was conscious might be applied to his own domestic affairs. Sensible men do not write in their public pages such things as would be almost sure to breed or foster scandal about their own names or their own homes. The man that has a secret cancer on his person will naturally be the last to speak of cancers in reference to others. I can hardly think Shakespeare was so wanting in a sense of propriety as to have written the passages in question, but that he knew no man could say he was exposing the foulness of his own nest. So that my inferences in the matter are just the reverse of Mr. White's. As for the alleged need of personal experience in order to the writing of such things, why should not this hold just as well in regard, for instance, to Lady Macbeth's pangs of guilt? Shakespeare's prime characteristic was, that he knew the truth of Nature in all such things without the help of personal experience.

Mr. White presumes, moreover, that Anne Shakespeare was a coarse, low, vulgar creature, such as, the fascination of the honeymoon once worn off, the Poet could not choose but loath and detest; and that his betaking himself to London was partly to escape from her hated society. This, too, is all sheer conjecture, and rather lame at that. That Shakespeare was more or less separated from his wife for a number of years, cannot indeed be questioned; but that he ever found or ever sought relief or comfort in such separation, is what we have no warrant for believing. It was simply forced upon him by the necessities of his condition. The darling object of his London life evidently was, that he might return to his native town, with a handsome competence, and dwell in the bosom of his family; and the yearly visits, which tradition reports him to have made to Stratford, look like any thing but a wish to forget them or be forgotten by them. From what is known of his subsequent life, it is certain that he had, in large measure, that honourable ambition, so natural to an English gentleman, of being the founder of a family; and as soon as he had reached the hope of doing so, he retired to his old home, and there set up his rest, as if his best sunshine of life still waited on the presence of her from whose society he is alleged to have fled away in disappointment and disgust.

To Anne Hathaway, I have little doubt, were addressed, in his early morn of love, three sonnets playing on the author's name, which are hardly good enough to have been his work at any time; certainly none too good to have been the work of his boyhood. And I have met with no conjecture on the point that bears greater likelihoods of truth, than that another three, far different in merit, were addressed, much later in life, to the same object. The prevailing tone and imagery of them are such as he would hardly have used but with a woman in his thoughts; they are full-fraught with deep personal feeling, as distinguished from exercises of fancy; and they speak, with unsurpassable tenderness, of frequent absences, such as, before the Sonnets were printed, the Poet had experienced from his wife. I feel morally certain that she was the inspirer of them. I can quote but a part of them:

"How like a Winter hath my absence been From thee, the pleasure of the fleeting year! What freezings have I felt, what dark days seen, What old December's bareness everywhere! For Summer and his pleasures wait on thee, And, thou away, the very birds are mute.

"From you I have been absent in the Spring, When proud-pied April, dress'd in all his trim, Hath put a spirit of youth in every thing, That heavy Saturn laugh'd and leap'd with him: Yet nor the lays of birds, nor the sweet smell Of different flowers in odour and in hue, Could make me any Summer's story tell, Or from their proud lap pluck them where they grew: Nor did I wonder at the lily's white, Nor praise the deep vermilion in the rose; They were but sweet, but figures of delight, Drawn after you; you pattern of all those. Yet seem'd it Winter still, and, you away, As with your shadow I with these did play."

And I am scarcely less persuaded that a third cluster, of nine, had the same source. These, too, are clearly concerned with the deeper interests and regards of private life; they carry a homefelt energy and pathos, such as argue them to have had a far other origin than in trials of art; they speak of compelled absences from the object that inspired them, and are charged with regrets and confessions, such as could only have sprung from the Poet's own breast:

"Alas! 'tis true I have gone here and there, And made myself a motley to the view; Gor'd mine own thoughts, sold cheap what is most dear, Made old offences of affections new: Most true it is, that I have look'd on truth Askance and strangely.

"O, for my sake do you with Fortune chide, The guilty goddess of my harmful deeds, That did not better for my life provide, Than public means, which public manners breeds. Thence comes it that my name receives a brand, And almost thence my nature is subdu'd To what it works in, like the dyer's hand.

"Accuse me thus: That I have scanted all Wherein I should your great deserts repay; Forgot upon your dearest love to call, Whereto all bonds do tie me day by day; That I have frequent been with unknown minds, And given to time your own dear-purchas'd right."

It will take more than has yet appeared, to convince me, that when the Poet wrote these and other similar lines his thoughts were travelling anywhere but home to the bride of his youth and mother of his children.

I have run ahead of my theme; but it may as well be added, here, that Francis Meres, writing in 1598, speaks of the Poet's "sugared Sonnets among his private friends"; which indicates the purpose for which they were written. None of them had been printed when this was said of them. They were first collected and published in 1609; the collection being arranged, I think, in "most admirable disorder," so that it is scarce possible to make head or tail to them.

On the 2d of February, 1585, two more children, twins, were christened in the parish church as "Hamnet and Judith, son and daughter to William Shakespeare." We hear of no more children being added to the family. I must again so far anticipate as to observe, that the son Hamnet was buried in August, 1596, being then in his twelfth year. This is the first severe home-stroke known to have lighted on the Poet.

Tradition has been busy with the probable causes of Shakespeare's going upon the stage. Several causes have been assigned; such as, first, a natural inclination to poetry and acting; second, a deer-stealing frolic, which resulted in making Stratford too hot for him; third, the pecuniary embarrassments of his father. It is not unlikely that all these causes, and perhaps others, may have concurred in prompting the step.

For the first, we have the testimony of Aubrey, who was at Stratford probably about the year 1680. He was an arrant and inveterate hunter after anecdotes, and seems to have caught up, without sifting, whatever quaint or curious matter came in his way. So that no great reliance can attach to what he says, unless it is sustained by other authority. But in this case his words sound like truth, and are supported by all the likelihoods that can grow from what we should presume to have been the Poet's natural turn of mind. "This William," says he, "being inclined naturally to poetry and acting, came to London, I guess, about eighteen, and was an actor in one of the playhouses, and did act exceedingly well. He began early to make essays in dramatic poetry, which at that time was very low, and his plays took well. He was a handsome, well-shaped man, very good company, and of a very ready and pleasant smooth wit. Ben Jonson and he did gather humours of men daily wherever they came."

This natural inclination, fed by the frequent theatrical performances at Stratford, would go far, if not suffice of itself to account for the Poet's subsequent course of life. Before 1586, no doubt, he was well acquainted with some of the players, with whom we shall hereafter find him associated. In their exhibitions, rude as these were, he could not but have been a greedy spectator and an apt scholar. Thomas Greene, a fellow-townsman of his, was already one of their number. All this might not indeed be enough to draw him away from Stratford; but when other reasons came, if others there were, for leaving, these circumstances would hold out to him an easy and natural access and invitation to the stage. Nor is there any extravagance in supposing that, by 1586, he may have taken some part as actor or writer, perhaps both, in the performances of the company which he afterwards joined.

The deer-stealing matter as given by Rowe is as follows: That Shakespeare fell into the company of some wild fellows who were in the habit of stealing deer, and who drew him into robbing a park owned by Sir Thomas Lucy, of

Charlecote, near Stratford. That, being prosecuted for this, he lampooned Sir Thomas in some bitter verses; which made the Knight so sharp after him, that he had to steal himself off and take shelter in London.

Several have attempted to refute this story; but the main substance of it stands approved by too much strength of credible tradition to be easily overthrown. And it is certain from public records that the Lucys had great power at Stratford, and were not seldom engaged in disputes with the corporation. Mr. Halliwell met with an old record entitled "the names of them that made the riot upon Master Thomas Lucy, Esquire." Thirty-five inhabitants of Stratford, chiefly tradespeople, are named in the list, but no Shakespeares among them.

Knight, over-zealous in the Poet's behalf, will not allow any thing to be true that infers the least moral blemish in his life: he therefore utterly discredits the story in question, and hunts it down with arguments more ingenious than sound. In writing biography, special-pleading is not good; and I would fain avoid trying to make the Poet out any better than he was. Little as we know about him, it is evident enough that he had his frailties, and ran into divers faults, both as a poet and as a man. And when we hear him confessing, as in a passage already quoted, "Most true it is, that I have looked on truth askance and strangely"; we may be sure he was but too conscious of things that needed to be forgiven; and that he was as far as any one from wishing his faults to pass for virtues. Deer-stealing, however, was then a kind of fashionable sport, and whatever might be its legal character, it was not morally regarded as involving any criminality or disgrace. So that the whole thing may be justly treated as a mere youthful frolic, wherein there might indeed be some indiscretion, and a deal of vexation to the person robbed, but no stain on the party engaged in it.

The precise time of the Poet's leaving Stratford is not known; but we cannot well set it down as later than 1586. His children, Hamnet and Judith, were born, as I have said, in the early part of 1585; and for several years before that time his father's affairs were drooping. The prosecutions of Sir Thomas Lucy, added to his father's straitness of means, may well have made him desirous of quitting Stratford; while the meeting of inclination and opportunity in his acquaintance with the players may have determined him where to go, and what to do. The company were already in a course of thrift; the demand for their labours was growing; and he might well see, in their fellowship, a chance of retrieving, as he did retrieve, his father's fortune.

Of course there need be no question that Shakespeare held at first a subordinate rank in the theatre. Dowdal, writing in 1693, tells us "he was received into the playhouse as a servitor"; which probably means that he started as an apprentice to some actor of standing,—a thing not unusual at the time. It will readily be believed that he could not be in such a place long without recommending himself to a higher one. As for the well-known story of his being reduced to the extremity of "picking up a little money by taking care of the gentlemen's horses that came to the play," I cannot perceive the slightest likelihood of truth in it. The first we hear of it is in *The Lives of the Poets* , written by a Scotchman named Shiels, and published under the name of Cibber, in 1753. The story is there said to have passed through Rowe in coming to the writer. If so, then Rowe must have discredited it, else, surely, he would not have omitted so remarkable a passage. Be that as it may, the station which the Poet's family had long held at Stratford, and the fact of his having influential friends at hand from Warwickshire, are enough to stamp it as an arrant fiction.

We have seen that the company of Burbadge and his fellows held a patent under the great seal, and in 1587 took the title of "The Lord Chamberlain's Servants." Eleven years before this time, in 1576, they had started the Blackfriars theatre, so named from a monastery that had formerly stood on or near the same ground. Hitherto the several bands of players had made use of halls, or temporary erections in the streets or the inn-yards, stages being set up, and the spectators standing below, or occupying galleries about the open space. In 1577, two other playhouses were in operation; and still others sprang up from time to time. The Blackfriars and some others were without the limits of the corporation, in what were called "the Liberties." The Mayor and Aldermen of London were from the first decidedly hostile to all such establishments, and did their best to exclude them the City and Liberties; but the Court, many of the chief nobility, and, which was still more, the common people favoured them. The whole mind indeed of Puritanism was utterly down on stage-plays of all sorts and in every shape. But it did not go to work the right way: it should have stopped off the demand for them. This, however, it could not do; for the Drama was at that time, as it long had been, an intense national passion: the people would have plays, and could not be converted from the love of them.

From what we shall presently see, it would be unreasonable not to suppose, that by the year 1590 the Poet was well started in his dramatic career; and that the effect of his cunning labours was beginning even then to be felt by his senior fellows in that line. Allowing him to have entered the theatre in 1586, when he was twenty-two years of age, he must have made good use of his time, and worked onwards with surprising speed, during those four years; though whether he got ahead more by his acting or his writing, we have no certain knowledge. In tragic parts, none of the company could shine beside the younger Burbadge; while Greene, and still more Kempe, another of the band, left small chance of distinction in comic parts. Aubrey, as before quoted, tells us that Shakespeare "was a handsome, well-shaped man," which is no slight matter on the stage; and adds, "He did act exceedingly well." Rowe "could never meet with any further account of him this way, than that the top of his performance was the Ghost in his own *Hamlet* ." But this part, to be fairly dealt with, requires an actor of no mean powers; and as Burbadge is known to have played the Prince, we may presume that "the Majesty of buried Denmark" would not be cast upon very inferior hands. That the Poet was master of the theory of acting, and could tell, none better, how the thing ought to be done, is evident enough from Hamlet's instructions to the players. But it nowise follows that he could perform his own instructions.

Let us see now how matters stood some two years later. One of the most popular and most profligate playwriters of that time was Robert Greene, who, having been reduced to beggary, and forsaken by his companions, died miserably at the house of a poor shoemaker, in September, 1592. Shortly after he died, his *Gratsworth of Wit* was given to the public by Henry Chettle. Near the close of this tract, Greene makes an address "to those gentlemen his *quondam* acquaintance, who spend their wits in making plays," exhorting them to desist from such pursuits. One of those "gentlemen" was Christopher Marlowe, distinguished alike for poetry, profligacy, and profanity; the others were Thomas Lodge and George Peele. Greene here vents a deal of fury against the players, alleging that they have all been beholden to him, yet have now forsaken him; and from thence inferring that the three worthies whom he is exhorting will fare no better at their hands. After which he goes on thus: "Yes, trust them not; for there is an upstart crow beautified with our feathers, that, with his 'tiger's heart wrapt in a player's hide,' supposes he is as well able to bombast out a blank-verse as the best of you; and, being an absolute *Johannes Fac-totum* , is in his own conceit the only Shake-scene in a country."

Here the spiteful fling at Shakespeare is unmistakable, and nobody questions that he is the "Shake-scene" of the passage. The terms of the allusion yield conclusive evidence as to how the Poet stood in 1592. Though sneered at as a player, it is plain that he was already throwing the other playwriters into the shade, and making their labours cheap. Blank-verse was Marlowe's special forte, and some of his dramas show no little skill in the use of it, though the best part of that skill was doubtless caught from Shakespeare; but here was "an upstart" from the country who was able to rival him in his own line. Moreover, this Shake-scene was a Do-all, a *Johannes Fac-totum* , who could turn his hand to any thing; and his readiness to undertake what none others could do so well naturally drew upon him the imputation of conceit from those who envied his rising, and whose lustre was growing dim in his light.

It appears that both Shakespeare and Marlowe were offended at the liberties thus taken with them. For, before the end of that same year, Chettle published a tract entitled *Kind Heart's Dream* , wherein we have the following: "With neither of them that take offence was I acquainted; and with one of them [Marlowe] I care not if I never be: the other I did not so much spare as since I wish I had; because myself have seen his demeanour no less civil than he excellent in the quality he professes: besides, divers of worship have reported his uprightness of dealing, which argues his honesty, and his facetious grace in writing, that approves his art."

On the whole, we can readily pardon the malice of Greene's assault for the sake of this tribute, which it was the means of drawing forth, to Shakespeare's character as a man and his cunning as a poet. The words "excellent in the quality he professes," refer most likely to the Poet's acting; while the term *facetious* is used, apparently, not in the sense it now bears, but in that of *felicitous* or *happy* , as was common at that time. So it seems that Shakespeare already had friends in London, some of them "worshipful," too, who were strongly commending him as a poet, and who were prompt to remonstrate with Chettle against the mean slur cast upon him.

This naturally starts the inquiry, what dramas the Poet had then written, to earn such praise. Greene speaks of him as "beautified with our feathers." Probably there was at least some plausible colour of truth in this charge. The charge, I have no doubt, refers mainly to the Second and Third Parts of *King Henry the Sixth* . The two plays on which these were founded were published, respectively, in 1594 and 1595, their titles being, *The First Part of the Contention betwixt the* *two famous Houses of York and Lancaster* , and *The True Tragedy of Richard, Duke of York* . In the form there given, the plays have, as Mr. White has clearly shown, along with much of Shakespeare's work, many unquestionable marks of Greene's hand. All those marks, however, were disciplined out of them, as they have come down to us in Shakespeare's works. There can be no doubt, then, that Greene, and perhaps Marlowe also, had a part in them as they were printed in 1594 and 1595, though no author's name was then given. Now it was much the custom at that time for several playwrights to work together. Of this we have many well-authenticated instances. The most likely conclusion, therefore, is, that these two plays in their original form were the joint workmanship of Shakespeare, Greene, and Marlowe. Perhaps, however, there was a still older form of the plays, written entirely by Marlowe and Greene; which older form Shakespeare, some time before Greene's death, may have taken in hand, and recast, retaining more or less of their matter, and working it in with his own nobler stuff; for this was often done also. Or, again, it may be that, before the time in question, Shakespeare, not satisfied to be joint author with them, had rewritten the plays, and purged them of nearly all matter but what he might justly claim as his own; thus making them as we now have them.

As regards the occasion of Greene's assault, it matters little which of these views we take, as in either case his charge would have some apparent ground of truth. It is further probable that the same course of remark would apply more or less to *The Taming of the Shrew* , and perhaps also to *Titus Andronicus* , and the original form of *Pericles* . At all events, I have no doubt that these five plays, together with the First Part of *King Henry the Sixth, The Comedy of Errors, The Two Gentlemen of Verona, and Love's Labour's Lost* , in its first form, were all written before the time of Greene's death. Perhaps the first shape, also, of *Romeo and Juliet* should be added to this list.

My reasons for this opinion are too long to be stated here: I can but observe that in these plays, as might be expected from one who was modest and wished to learn, we have much of imitation as distinguished from character, though of imitation surpassing its models. And it seems to me that no fair view can be had of the Poet's mind, no justice done to his art, but by carefully discriminating in his work what grew from imitation, and what from character. For he evidently wrote very much like others of his time, before he learned to write like himself; that is, it was some time before he found, by practice and experience, his own strength; and meanwhile he relied more or less on the strength of custom and example. Nor was it till he had surpassed others in *their* way, that he hit upon that more excellent way in which none could walk but he.

It has been quite too common to speak of Shakespeare as a miracle of spontaneous genius, who did his best things by force of instinct, not of art; and that, consequently, he was nowise indebted to time and experience for the reach and power which his dramas display. This is an "old fond paradox" which seems to have originated with those who could not conceive how any man could acquire intellectual skill without scholastic advantages; forgetting, apparently, that several things, if not more, may be learned in the school of Nature, provided one have an eye to read her "open secrets" without "the spectacles of books." This notion has vitiated a good deal of Shakespearian criticism. Rowe had something of it. "Art," says he, "had so little, and Nature so large a share in what Shakespeare did, that, for aught I know, the performances of his youth were the best." I think decidedly otherwise; and have grounds for doing so which Rowe had not, in what has since been done towards ascertaining the chronology of the Poet's plays.

It would seem from Chettle's apology, that Shakespeare was already beginning to attract liberal notice from that circle of brave and accomplished gentlemen which adorned the state of Queen Elisabeth. Among the "divers of worship," first and foremost stood, no doubt, the high-souled, the generous Southampton, then in his twentieth year. Henry Wriothesley, the third Earl of Southampton, was but eight years old when his father died: the Southampton estates were large; during the young Earl's minority his interests were in good hands, and the revenues accumulated; so that on coming of age he had means answerable to his dispositions. Moreover, he was a young man of good parts, of studious habits, of cultivated tastes, and withal of a highly chivalrous and romantic spirit: to all which he added the honour of being the early and munificent patron of Shakespeare. In 1593, the Poet published his *Venus and Adonis* , with a modest and manly dedication to this nobleman, very different from the usual high-flown style of literary adulation then in vogue; telling him, "If your Honour seem but pleased, I account myself highly praised, and vow to take advantage of all idle hours, till I have honoured you with some graver labour." In the dedication, he calls the poem "the first heir of my invention." Whether he dated its birth from the writing or the publishing, does not appear: probably it had been written some time; possibly before he left Stratford. This was followed, the next year, by his *Lucrece* , dedicated to the same nobleman in a strain of more open and assured friendship: "The warrant I have of your honourable disposition, not the worth of my untutored lines, makes it assured of acceptance. What I have done is yours, what I have to do is yours."

It was probably about this time that the event took place which Rowe heard of through Sir William Davenant, that Southampton at one time gave the Poet a thousand pounds, to enable him to go through with a purchase which he knew him to be desirous of making. Rowe might well scruple, as he did, the story of so large a gift,—equal to nearly $30,000 in our time; but the fact of his scruples being overruled shows that he had strong grounds for the statement. The sum may indeed have been exaggerated; but all we know of the Earl assures us that he could not but wish to make a handsome return for the *Venus and Adonis* ; and that whatever of the kind he did was bound to be something rich and rare; while it was but of a piece with his approved nobleness of character, to feel more the honour he was receiving than that he was conferring by such an act of generosity. Might not this be what Shakespeare meant by "the *warrant* I have of your honourable disposition"? That the Earl was both able and disposed to the amount alleged, need not be scrupled: the only doubt has reference to the Poet's occasions. Let us see, then, what these may have been.

In December, 1593, Richard Burbadge, who, his father having died or retired, was then the leader of the Blackfriars company, signed a contract for the building of the Globe theatre, in which Shakespeare is known to have been a large owner. The Blackfriars was not accommodation enough for the company's uses, but was entirely covered-in, and furnished suitably for the Winter. The Globe, made larger, and designed for Summer use, was a round wooden building, open to the sky, with the stage protected by an overhanging roof. All things considered, then, it is not incredible that the munificent Earl may have bestowed even as large a sum as a thousand pounds, to enable the Poet to do what he wished towards the new enterprise.

The next authentic notice we have of Shakespeare is a public tribute of admiration from the highest source that could have yielded any thing of the sort at that time. In 1594, Edmund Spenser published his *Colin Clout's Come Home again* , which has these lines:

"And there, though last not least, is Ætion: A gentler Shepherd may nowhere be found; Whose Muse, full of high thought's invention, Doth, like himself, heroically sound."

This was Spenser's delicate way of suggesting the Poet's name. Ben Jonson has a like allusion in his lines,—"To the Memory of my beloved Mr. William Shakespeare":

"In each of which he seems to *shake a lance* As brandish'd at the eyes of ignorance."

There can be little doubt, though we have no certain knowledge on the point, that by this time the Poet's genius had sweetened itself into the good graces of Queen Elisabeth; as the irresistible compliment paid her in a *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* could hardly have been of a later date. It would be gratifying to know by what play he made his first conquest of the Queen. That he did captivate her, is told us in Ben Jonson's poem just quoted:

"Sweet swan of Avon, what a sight it were To see thee in our waters yet appear; And make those flights upon the banks of Thames That so did take Eliza and our James!"

King John, King Richard the Second, King Richard the Third, A Midsummer-Night's Dream , and the original form of *All's Well that Ends Well* , were, no doubt, all written before the Spring of 1596. So that these five plays, and perhaps one or two others, in addition to the ten mentioned before, may by that time have been performed in her Majesty's hearing, "as well for the recreation of our loving subjects as for our solace and pleasure."

Aubrey tells us that Shakespeare "was wont to go to his native country once a year." We now have better authority than Aubrey for believing that the Poet's heart was in "his native country" all the while. No sooner is he well established at London, and in receipt of funds to spare from the demands of business, than we find him making liberal investments amidst the scenes of his youth. Some years ago, Mr. Halliwell discovered in the Chapter-House, Westminster, a document which ascertains that in the Spring of 1597 Shakespeare bought of William Underbill, for the sum of £60, the establishment called "New Place," described as consisting of "one messuage, two barns, and two gardens, with their appurtenances." This was one of the best dwelling-houses in Stratford, and was situate in one of the best parts of the town. Early in the sixteenth century it was owned by the Cloptons, and called "the great house." It was in one of the gardens belonging to this house that the Poet was believed to have planted a mulberry-tree. New Place remained in the hands of Shakespeare and his heirs till the Restoration, when it was repurchased by the Clopton family. In the Spring of

1742, Garrick, Macklin, and Delane were entertained there by Sir Hugh Clopton, under the Poet's mulberry-tree. About 1752, the place was sold to the Rev. Francis Gastrell, who, falling out with the Stratford authorities in some matter of rates, demolished the house, and cut down the tree; for which his memory has been visited with exemplary retribution.

We have other tokens of the Poet's thrift about this time. One of these is a curious letter, dated January 24, 1598, and written by Abraham Sturley, an alderman of Stratford, to his brother-in-law, Richard Quiney, who was then in London on business for himself and others. Sturley, it seems, had learned that "our countryman, Mr. Shakespeare," had money to invest, and so was for having him urged to buy up certain tithes at Stratford, on the ground that such a purchase "would advance him indeed, and would do us much good"; the meaning of which is, that the Stratford people were in want of money, and were looking to Shakespeare for a supply.

Another token of like import is a letter written by the same Richard Quiney, whose son Thomas afterwards married the Poet's youngest daughter. The letter was dated, "From the Bell, in Carter-lane, the 25th October, 1598," and addressed, "To my loving good friend and countryman, Mr. Wm. Shakespeare.'" The purpose of the letter was to solicit a loan of £30 from the Poet on good security. No private letter written by Shakespeare has been found; and this is the only one written *to* him that has come to light. How the writer's request was answered we have no certain information; but we may fairly conclude the answer to have been satisfactory, because on the same day Quiney wrote to Sturley, and in Sturley's reply, dated November 4, 1598, which is also extant, the writer expresses himself much comforted at learning that "our countryman, Mr. Wm. Shak., would procure us money."

The earliest printed copies of Shakespeare's plays, known in our time, are *Romeo and Juliet, King Richard the Second* , and *King Richard the Third* , which were published separately in 1597. Three years later there was another edition of *Romeo and Juliet* , "newly corrected, augmented, and amended." In 1598, two more, the First Part of *King Henry the Fourth* and *Love's Labour's Lost* , came from the press. The author's name was not given in any of these issues except *Love's Labour's Lost* , which was said to be "newly corrected and augmented." *King Richard the Second* and *King Richard the Third* were issued again in 1598, and the First Part of *King Henry the Fourth* in 1599; and in all these cases the author's name was printed in the title-page. The Second Part of *King Henry the Fourth* was most likely written before 1598, but we hear of no edition of it till 1600.

Francis Meres has the honour of being the first critic of Shakespeare that appeared in print. In 1598, he put forth a book entitled *Palladis Tamia, Wit's Treasury* , which has the following: "As Plautus and Seneca are accounted the best for comedy and tragedy among the Latins; so Shakespeare among the English is the most excellent in both kinds for the stage." The writer then instances twelve of the Poet's dramas by title, in proof of his point. His list, however, contains none but what I have already mentioned, except *The Merchant of Venice* . Taking all our sources of information together, we find at least eighteen of the plays written before 1598, when the Poet was thirty-four years of age, and had probably been in the theatre about twelve years.

Shakespeare was now decidedly at the head of the English Drama; moreover, he had found it a low, foul, disreputable thing, chiefly in the hands of profligate adventurers, and he had lifted it out of the mire, breathed strength and sweetness into it, and made it clean, fair, and honourable, a structure all alive with beauty and honest delectation. Such being the case, his standing was naturally firm and secure; he had little cause to fear rivalry, he could well afford to be generous; and any play that had his approval would be likely to pass. Ben Jonson, whose name has a peculiar right to be coupled with his, was ten years younger than he, and was working with that learned and sinewy diligence which marked his character. We have it on the sound authority of Rowe, that Shakespeare lent a helping hand to honest Ben, and on an occasion that does credit to them both. "Mr. Jonson," says he, "who was at that time altogether unknown to the world, had offered one of his plays to the players, in order to have it acted; and the persons into whose hands it was put, after having turned it carelessly and superciliously over, were just upon returning it to him, with an ill-natured answer that it would be of no service to their company, when Shakespeare luckily cast his eye upon it, and found something in it so well, as to engage him first to read it through, and afterwards to recommend Mr. Jonson and his writings to the public."

Some attempts have been made to impugn this account, but the result of them all has been rather to confirm it. How nobly the Poet's gentle and judicious act of kindness was remembered, is shown by Jonson's superb verses, some of which I have quoted, prefixed to the folio of 1623; enough of themselves to confer an immortality both on the writer and on the subject of them.

In 1599, we find a coat of arms granted to John Shakespeare, by the Herald's College, in London. The grant was made, no doubt, at the instance of his son William. The matter is involved in a good deal of perplexity; the claims of the son being confounded with those of the father, in order, apparently, that out of the two together might be made a good, or at least a plausible, case. Our Poet, the son of a glover, or a yeoman, had evidently set his heart on being heralded into a gentleman; and, as his profession of actor stood in the way, the application was made in his father's name. The thing was started as early as 1596, but so much question was had, so many difficulties raised, concerning it, that the Poet was three years in working it through. To be sure, such heraldic gentry was of little worth in itself, and the Poet knew this well enough; but then it assured a certain very desirable social standing, and therefore, as an aspiring member of society, he was right in seeking it.

In the year 1600, five more of his plays were published in as many quarto pamphlets. These were, *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *Much Ado about Nothing* , the Second Part of *King Henry the Fourth* , and *King Henry the Fifth* . It appears, also, that *As You Like It* was then written; for it was entered at the Stationers' for publication, but was locked up from the press under a "stay." *The Merry Wives of Windsor* was probably then in being also, though not printed till 1602. And a recent discovery ascertains that *Twelfth Night* was played in February, 1602. The original form of *Hamlet* , too, is known to have been written before 1603. Adding, then, the six plays now heard of for the first time, to the eighteen mentioned before, we have twenty-four plays written before the Poet had finished his thirty-eighth year.

The great Queen died on the 24th of March, 1603. We have abundant proof that she was, both by her presence and her purse, a frequent and steady patron of the Drama, especially as its interests were represented by "the Lord Chamberlain's servants." Everybody, no doubt, has heard the tradition of her having been so taken with Falstaff in *King Henry the Fourth* , that she requested the Poet to continue the character through another play, and to represent him in love; whereupon he wrote *The Merry Wives of Windsor* . Whatever embellishments may have been added, there is nothing incredible in the substance of the tradition; while the approved taste and judgment of this female king, in matters of literature and art, give it strong likelihoods of truth.

Elizabeth knew how to unbend in such noble delectations without abating her dignity as a queen, or forgetting her duty as the mother of her people. If the patronage of King James fell below hers in wisdom, it was certainly not lacking in warmth. One of his first acts, after reaching London, was to order out a warrant from the Privy Seal for the issuing, of a patent under the Great Seal, whereby the Lord Chamberlain's players were taken into his immediate patronage under the title of "The King's Servants." The instrument names nine players, and Shakespeare stands second in the list. Nor did the King's patent prove a mere barren honour: many instances of the company's playing at the Court, and being well paid for it, are on record.

The Poet evidently was, as indeed from the nature of his position he could not but be, very desirous of withdrawing from the stage; and had long cherished, apparently, a design of doing so. In several passages of his Sonnets, two of which I have already quoted, he expresses, in very strong and even pathetic language, his intense dislike of the business, and his grief at being compelled to pursue it. At what time he carried into effect his purpose of retirement is not precisely known; nor can I stay to trace out the argument on that point. The probability is, that he ceased to be an actor in the Summer of 1604. The preceding year, 1603, Ben Jonson's *Sejanus* was brought out at the Blackfriars, and one of the parts was sustained by Shakespeare. After this we have no note of his appearance on the stage; and there are certain traditions inferring the contrary.

In 1603, an edition of *Hamlet* was published, though very different from the present form of the play. The next year, 1604, the finished *Hamlet* was published; the title-page containing the words, "enlarged to almost as much again as it was." Of *Measure for Measure* we have no well-authenticated notice during the Poet's life; though there is a record, which has been received as authentic, of its having been acted at Court on the 26th of December, 1604. That record, however, has lately been discredited. Of *Timon of Athens* and *Julius Cæsar* we have no express contemporary notice at all, authentic or otherwise. Nor have we any of *Troilus and Cressida* till 1609, in which year a stolen edition of it was published. Nevertheless, I have no doubt that these plays were all written, though perhaps not all in their present shape, before the close of 1604. Reckoning, then, the four last named, we have twenty-eight of the plays written when the Poet was forty years of age, and had probably been at the work about eighteen years. Time has indeed left few traces of the process; but what a magnificent treasure of results! If Shakespeare had done no more, he would have stood the greatest intellect of the world. How all alive must those eighteen years have been with intense and varied exertion! His quick discernment, his masterly tact, his grace of manners, his practical judgment, and his fertility of expedients, would needs make him the soul of the establishment; doubtless the light of his eye and the life of his hand were in all its movements and plans. Besides, the compass and accuracy of information displayed in his writings prove him to have been, for that age, a careful and voluminous student of books. Portions of classical and of continental literature were accessible to him in translations. Nor are we without strong reasons for believing that, in addition to his "small Latin and less Greek," he found or made time to form a tolerable reading acquaintance with Italian and French. Chaucer, too, "the day-star," and Spenser, "the sunrise," of English poetry, were pouring their beauty round his walks. From all these, and from the growing richness and abundance of contemporary literature, his all-gifted and all-grasping mind no doubt greedily took in and quickly digested whatever was adapted to please his taste, or enrich his intellect, or assist his art.

I have mentioned the Poet's purchase of New Place at Stratford in 1597. Thenceforward he kept making other investments from time to time, some of them pretty large, the records of which have lately come to light. It appears by a subsidy roll of 1598, that he was assessed on property valued at £5 13s. 4d, in the parish of St. Helen's, Bishopsgate, London. In May, 1602, was executed a deed of conveyance whereby he became the owner of a hundred and seven acres of arable land in the town of Old Stratford, bought of William and John Combe for the sum of £320. In September following, a copyhold house in Walker-street, near New Place, was surrendered to him by Walter Getley. This property was held under the manor of Rowington: the transfer took place at the court-baron of the manor; and it appears that the Poet was not present at the time; there being a proviso, that the property should remain in the hands of the Lady of the manor till the purchaser had done suit and service in the court. One Philip Rogers, it seems, had several times bought malt of Shakespeare to the amount of £1 15s. 10d.; and in 1604 the Poet, not being able to get payment, filed in the Stratford Court of Record a declaration of suit against him; which probably had the desired effect, as nothing more is heard of it. This item is interesting, as it shows the Poet engaged in other pursuits than those relating to the stage. We have seen how, in 1598, Alderman Sturly was for "moving him to deal in the matter of our tithes." This was a matter wherein much depended on good management; and, as the town had a yearly rent from the tithes, it was for the public interest to have them managed well; and the moving of Shakespeare to deal in the matter sprang most likely from confidence in his practical judgment and skill. The tithes of "corn, grain, blade, and hay," and also those of "wool, lamb, hemp, flax, and other small and privy tithes," in Stratford, Old Stratford, Welcombe, and Bishopton, had been leased in 1544 for the term of ninety-two years. In July, 1605, the unexpired term of the lease, thirty-one years, was bought in by Shakespeare for the sum of £440. In the indenture of conveyance, he is styled "William Shakespeare, of Stratford-upon-Avon, *Gentleman* ."

These notices enable us to form some tolerable conjecture as to how the Poet was getting on at the age of forty. Such details of business may not seem very appropriate in a *Life* of the greatest of poets; but we have clear evidence that he took a lively interest in them, and was a good hand at managing them. He had learned by experience, no doubt, that "money is a good soldier, and will on"; and that "if money go before, all ways do lie open." And the thing carries this benefit, if no other, that it tells us a man may be something of a poet without being either above or below the common affairs of life.

A pretty careful investigation of the matter has brought good judges to the conclusion, that in 1608 the Poet's income could not have been less than £400 a year. This, for all practical purposes, would be equivalent to some $12,000 in our time. The Rev. John Ward, who became vicar of Stratford in 1662, noted in his *Diary* , that Shakespeare, after his retirement, "had an allowance so large that he spent at the rate of £1,000 a year, as I have heard." The honest and cautious man did well to add, "as I have heard." That the Poet kept up a liberal establishment, and was fond of entertaining his neighbours, and still more his old associates, we can well believe; but that he had £1,000 a year to spend, or would have spent it if he had, is not credible.

Some question has been made whether Shakespeare was a member of the celebrated convivial club established by Sir Walter Raleigh, and which held its meetings at the Mermaid tavern. We have nothing that directly certifies his membership of that choice institution; but there are several things inferring it so strongly as to leave no reasonable doubt on the subject. His conversations certainly ran in that circle of wits some of whom are directly known to have belonged to it; and among them all there is not one whose then acknowledged merits gave him a better title to its privileges. It does not indeed necessarily follow from his facility and plenipotence of wit in writing, that he could shine at those extempore "flashes of merriment that were wont to set the table on a roar." But, besides the natural inference that way, we have the statement of honest old Aubrey, that "he was very good company, and of a very ready and pleasant smooth wit." Francis Beaumont, who was a prominent member of that jovial senate, and to whom Shirley applies the fine hyperbolism that "he talked a comedy," was born in 1586, and died in 1615. I cannot doubt that he had our Poet, among others, in his eye, when he wrote those celebrated lines to Ben Jonson:

"Methinks the little wit I had is lost Since I saw you; for wit is like a rest Held up at tennis, which men do the best With the best gamesters. What things have we seen Done at the Mermaid! heard words that have been So nimble, and so full of subtile flame, As if that every one from whence they came Had meant to put his whole wit in a jest, And had resolv'd to live a fool the rest Of his dull life."

In further token of Shakespeare's having belonged to this merry parliament of genius, I must quote from Dr. Thomas Fuller, who, though not born till 1608, was acquainted with some of the old Mermaid wits. In his *Worthies of Warwickshire* , he winds up his account of the Poet thus: "Many were the wit-combats betwixt him and Ben Jonson; which two I behold like a Spanish great galleon and an English man-of-war. Master Jonson, like the former, was built far higher in learning; solid, but slow, in his performances: Shakespeare, with the English man-of-war, lesser in bulk, but lighter in sailing, could turn with all tides, tack about, and take advantage of all winds, by the quickness of his wit and invention."

The Poet kept up his interest in the affairs of the company, and spent more or less of his time in London, after ceasing to be an actor. We have several subsequent notices of his being in the metropolis on business, one of which is a deed of conveyance, executed in March, 1613, and transferring to him and three others a house with a small piece of land for £140; £80 being paid down, and the rest left on bond and mortgage. The deed bears the Poet's signature, which shows him to have been in London at the time. The vicar, from whose *Diary* I have already quoted, notes further that Shakespeare "frequented the plays all his younger time, but in his elder days he lived at Stratford, and supplied the stage with two plays every year." That the writer's information was in all points literally correct, is not likely; but there is no doubt that the Poet continued to write for the stage after his retirement from it.

Of the nine plays still to be accounted for, *Macbeth* was played at the Globe in 1610, though probably written some time before; *King Lear* was acted at

Whitehall in December, 1606, and three editions of it were issued in 1608; *Antony and Cleopatra* was entered at the Stationers' in 1608; *Cymbeline* was performed some time in the Spring of 1611, and *The Winter's Tale* in May the same year; *King Henry the Eighth* is not heard of till the burning of the Globe theatre in 1613, when it is described as "a new play." Of *Coriolanus* we have no notice whatever till after the Poet's death; while of *Othello* and *The Tempest* we have no well-authenticated notices during his life; though there is a record, which has generally passed for authentic, noting them to have been acted at Court, the former on the 1st of November, 1604, and the latter on the 1st of November, 1611: but that record, as in the case of *Measure for Measure* , has lately been pronounced spurious by the highest authority.

It would seem that after the year 1609, or thereabouts, the Poet's reputation did not mount any higher during his life. A new generation of dramatists was then rising into favour, who, with some excellences derived from him, united gross vices of their own, which however were well adapted to captivate the popular mind. Moreover, King James himself, notwithstanding his liberality of patronage, was essentially a man of loose morals and low tastes; and his taking to Shakespeare at first probably grew more from the public voice, or perhaps from Southampton's influence, than from his own preference. Before the Poet's death, we may trace the beginnings of that corruption which, rather stimulated than discouraged by Puritan bigotry and fanaticism, reached its height some seventy years later; though its course was for a while retarded by King Charles the First, who, whatever else may be said of him, was unquestionably a man of as high and elegant tastes in literature and art as England could boast of in his time.

Shakespeare, however, was by no means so little appreciated in his time as later generations have mainly supposed. No man of that age was held in higher regard for his intellectual gifts; none drew forth more or stronger tributes of applause. Kings, princes, lords, gentlemen, and, what is probably still better, common people, all united in paying homage to his transcendent genius. The noble lines, already referred to, of Ben Jonson,—than whom few men, perhaps none, ever knew better how to judge and how to write on such a theme,—indicate how he struck the scholarship of the age. And from the scattered notices of his contemporaries we get, withal, a very complete and very exalted idea of his personal character as a man; although, to be sure, they yield us few facts in regard to his personal history or his actual course of life. How dearly he was held by those who knew him best, is well shown by a passage of Ben Jonson, written long after the Poet's death, and not published till 1640. Honest Ben had been charged with malevolence towards him, and he repelled the charge thus: "I lov'd the man, and do honour his memory, on this side idolatry, as much as any. He was indeed honest, and of an open and free nature; had an excellent phantasy, brave notions, and gentle expressions."

I cannot dwell much on the particulars of the Poet's latter years; a few, however, must be added touching his family.

On the 5th of June, 1607, his eldest daughter, Susanna, then in her twenty-fifth year, was married to Mr. John Hall, of Stratford, styled "gentleman" in the parish register, and afterwards a practising physician of good standing. The February following, Shakespeare became a grandfather; Elizabeth, the first and only child of John and Susanna Hall being baptized the 17th of that month. It is supposed, and apparently with good reason, that Dr. Hall and his wife lived in the same house with the Poet; she was evidently deep in her father's heart; she is said to have had something of his mind and temper; the house was large enough for them all; nor are there wanting signs of entire affection between Mrs. Hall and her mother. Add to all this the Poet's manifest fondness for children, and his gentle and affable disposition, and we have the elements of a happy family and a cheerful home, such as might well render a good-natured man impatient of the stage. Of the moral and religious tenour of domestic life at New Place we are not permitted to know: at a later period the Shakespeares seem to have been not a little distinguished for works of piety and charity.

On the 10th of February, 1616, the Poet saw his youngest daughter, Judith, married to Thomas Quiney, of Stratford, vintner and wine-merchant, whose father had been High-Bailiff of the town. From the way Shakespeare mentions this daughter's marriage portion in his will, which was made the 25th of March following, it is evident that he gave his sanction to the match. Which may be cited as argument that he had not himself experienced any such evils, as some have alleged, from the woman being older than the man; for his daughter had four years the start of her husband; she being at the time of her marriage thirty-one, and he twenty-seven.

Shakespeare was still in the meridian of life. There was no special cause, that we know of, why he might not live many years longer. It were vain to conjecture what he would have done, had more years been given him; possibly, instead of augmenting his legacy to us, he would have recalled and suppressed more or less of what he had written as our inheritance. For the last two or three years, at least he seems to have left his pen unused; as if, his own ends once achieved, he set no value on that mighty sceptre with which he since sways so large a portion of mankind. That the motives and ambitions of authorship had little to do in the generation of his works, is evident from the serene carelessness with which he left them to shift for themselves; tossing these wonderful treasures from him as if he thought them good for nothing but to serve the hour. Still, to us, in our ignorance, his life cannot but seem too short. For aught we know, Providence, in its wisdom, may have ruled not to allow the example of a man so gifted living to himself.

Be that as it may, WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE departed this life on the 23d of April, 1616. Two days after, his remains were buried beneath the chancel of Trinity Church, in Stratford. The burial took place on the day before the anniversary of his baptism; and it has been commonly believed that his death fell on the anniversary of his birth. If so, he had just entered his fifty-third year.

The Poet's will bears date March 25, 1616. I must notice one item of it: "I give unto my wife the second-best bed, with the furniture." As this is the only mention made of her, the circumstance was for a long time regarded as betraying a strange indifference, or something worse, on the testator's part, towards his wife. And on this has hung the main argument that the union was not a happy one. We owe to Mr. Knight an explanation of the matter; which is so simple and decisive, that we can but wonder it was not hit upon before. Shakespeare's property was mostly freehold; and in all this the widow had what is called the right of dower fully secured to her by the ordinary operation of English law. The Poet was lawyer enough to know this. As for "the second-best bed," this was doubtless the very thing which a loving and beloved wife would naturally prize above any other article of furniture in the establishment.

From the foregoing sketch it appears that the materials for a biography of Shakespeare are scanty indeed, and, withal, rather dry. Nevertheless, there is enough, I think, to show, that in all the common dealings of life he was eminently gentle, candid, upright, and judicious; open-hearted, genial, and sweet, in his social intercourses; among his companions and friends, full of playful wit and sprightly grace; kind to the faults of others, severe to his own; quick to discern and acknowledge merit in another, modest and slow of finding it in himself: while, in the smooth and happy marriage, which he seems to have realized, of the highest poetry and art with systematic and successful prudence in business affairs, we have an example of compact and well-rounded practical manhood, such as may justly engage our admiration and respect.

I have spoken somewhat as to the motive and purpose of his intellectual labour. It was in and for the theatre that his multitudinous genius was developed, and his works produced; there Fortune, or rather Providence, had cast his lot. Doubtless it was his nature, in whatever he undertook, to do his best. As an honest and true man, he would, if possible, make the temple of the Drama a noble, a beautiful, and glorious place; and it was while working quietly and unobtrusively in furtherance of this end,—building better than he knew,—that he approved himself the greatest, wisest, sweetest of men.

<<span id="filepos0039753962"> a>ORIGIN AND GROWTH OF THE DRAMA IN ENGLAND .

The English Drama, as we have it in Shakespeare, was the slow growth of several centuries. Nor is it clearly traceable to any foreign source: it was an original and independent growth, the native and free product of the soil. This position is very material in reference to the subject of structure and form; as inferring that the Drama in question is not amenable to any ancient or foreign jurisdiction; that it has a life and spirit of its own, is to be viewed as a thing by itself, and judged according to the peculiar laws under which it grew and took its shape; in brief, that it had just as good a right to differ from any other Drama as any other had from it.

The ancient Drama, that which grew to perfection, and, so far as is known, had its origin, in Greece, is universally styled the Classic Drama. By what term to distinguish the modern Drama of Europe, writers are not fully agreed. Within a somewhat recent period, it has received from high authorities the title of the Romantic Drama. A more appropriate title, as it seems to me, suggested by its Gothic original, and used by earlier authorities, is that of the Gothic Drama. Such, accordingly, is the term by which it will he distinguished in these pages. The fitness of the name, I think, will readily be seen from the fact that the thing was an indigenous and self-determined outgrowth from the Gothic mind under Christian culture. And the term naturally carries the idea, that the Drama in question stands on much the same ground relatively to the Classic Drama as is commonly recognized in the case of Gothic and Classic architecture; which may help us to realize how each Drama forms a distinct species, and lives free of the other so that any argument or criticism from the ancient against the modern is wholly irrelevant.

The Gothic Drama, as it fashioned itself in different nations of modern Europe, especially in England and Spain, where it grew up independently, has certain diversities. Upon the nature and reason of these I cannot enlarge. Suffice it to say that they do not reach beyond points of detail; their effect thus being to approve the strength of the common principles that underlie and support them. These principles cover the whole ground of difference from the Classic Drama. The several varieties, therefore, of the Gothic Drama may be justly regarded as bearing concurrent testimony to a common right of freedom from the jurisdiction of ancient rules.

Of the rise and progress of the Drama in England, my limits will permit only a brief sketch, not more than enough to give a general idea on the subject.

In England, as in the other Christian nations where it had any thing of originality, the Drama was of ecclesiastical origin, and for a long time was used only as a means of diffusing a knowledge of the leading facts and doctrines of Christianity as then understood and received. Of course, therefore, it was in substance and character religious, or was meant to be so, and had the Clergy for its authors and founders. But I cannot admit the justice of Coleridge's remark on the subject. "The Drama," says he, "recommenced in England, as it first began in

Greece, in religion. The people were unable to read; the Priesthood were unwilling that they should read; and yet their own interest compelled them not to leave the people wholly ignorant of the great events of sacred history."

Surely, it is of consequence to bear in mind that at that time "the people" had never been able to read; printing had not been heard of in Europe; books were multiplied with great difficulty, and could not be had but at great expense: so that it was impossible the people should be able to read; and while there was an impossibility in the way, it is not necessary to impute an unwillingness. Nor is there any good reason for supposing that the Priesthood, in their simplicity of faith, were then at all apprehensive or aware of any danger in the people being able to read. Probably they worked as honest men with the best means they could devise; endeavouring to clothe the most needful of all instruction in such forms, and mould it up with such arts of recreation and pleasure, as might render it interesting and attractive to the popular mind. In all which they seem to have merited any thing but an impeachment of their motives. However, the point best worth noting here is the large share those early dramatic representations had in shaping the culture of Old England, and in giving to the national mind its character and form. And perhaps later ages, and ourselves as the children of a later age, are more indebted to those rude labours of the Clergy in the cause of religion than we are aware, or might be willing to acknowledge.

<<span id="filepos0039760637"> a>MIRACLE-PLAYS

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In its course through several ages the Drama took different forms from time to time, as culture advanced. The earliest form was in what are called Plays of Miracles, or Miracle-Plays. These were mostly founded on events of Scripture, though the apocryphal gospels and legends of saints and martyrs were sometimes drawn upon for subjects or for embellishments. In these performances no regard was paid to the rules of natural probability; for, as the operation of supernatural power was assumed, this was held a sufficient ground or principle of credibility in itself. Hence, indeed, the name Marvels, Miracles, or Miracle-Plays, by which they were commonly known.

Our earliest instance of a Miracle-Play in England was near the beginning of the twelfth century. Matthew Paris, in his *Lives of the Abbots* , written as early as 1240, informs us that Geoffrey, Abbot of St. Albans, while yet a secular person brought out the Miracle-Play of *St. Catharine* at Dunstaple; and that for the needed decorations he obtained certain articles "from the Sacristy of St. Albans." Geoffrey, who was from the University of Paris, was then teaching a school at Dunstaple, and the play was performed by his scholars. Warton thinks this was about 1110: but we learn from Bulæus that Geoffrey became Abbot of St. Albans in 1119; and all that can with certainty be affirmed is, that the performance was before he assumed a religious habit. Bulæus also informs us that the thing was not then a novelty, but that it was customary for teachers and scholars to get up such exhibitions.

Our next information on the subject is from Fitzstephen's *Life of Thomas à Becket* , as quoted by Stowe. Becket died in 1170, and the *Life* was probably written about twelve years later. After referring to the public amusements of ancient Rome, Fitzstephen says: "In lieu of such theatrical shows and performances, London has plays of a more sacred kind, representing the miracles which saints have wrought, or the sufferings and constancy of martyrs."

It appears that about the middle of the next century itinerant actors were well known; for one of the regulations found in the *Burton Annals* has the following, under date 1258: "Actors may be entertained, not because they are actors, but because of their poverty; and let not their plays be seen nor heard, nor the performance of them allowed in the presence of the Abbot or the monks." The Clergy differed in opinion as to the lawfulness of such exhibitions; and in an Anglo-French poem written about this time they are sharply censured, and the using of them is restricted to certain places and persons. An English paraphrase of this poem was made by Robert Brunne in 1303; who specifies what pastimes are allowed to "a clerk of order," declaring it lawful for him to perform Miracle-Plays of the birth and resurrection of Christ in churches, but a sin to witness them "on the highways or greens." He also reproves the practice, then not uncommon, of aiding in such performances by lending horses or harness from the monasteries, and especially declares it sacrilege if a priest or clerk lend the hallowed vestments for that purpose.

The dogma of transubstantiation was particularly fruitful of such exhibitions. The festival of *Corpus Christi* , designed for the furthering of this dogma, was instituted by Pope Urban IV. in 1264. Within a few years from that date Miracle-Plays were annually performed at Chester during Whitsuntide: they were also introduced at Coventry, York, Durham, Lancaster, Bristol, Cambridge, and other towns; so that the thing became a sort of established usage throughout the kingdom. A considerable variety of subjects, especially such as relate to the Incarnation, the Passion, and the Resurrection, was embraced in the plan of these exhibitions; the purpose being to extend an orthodox belief in those fundamentals of the faith.

A very curious specimen of the plays that grew out of the *Corpus-Christi* festival was lately discovered in the library of Trinity College, Dublin, the manuscript being, it is said, as old as the reign of Edward IV., who died in 1483. It is called *The Play of the Blessed Sacrament* , and is founded on a miracle alleged to have been wrought in the forest of Arragon, in 1461. In form it closely resembles the Miracle-Plays founded on Scripture, the Saviour being one of the characters, the others being five Jews, a bishop, a priest, a merchant, and a physician and his servant. The merchant, having the key of the church, steals the Host, and sells it to the Jews, who promise to turn Christians in case they find its miraculous powers verified. They put the Host to various tests. Being stabbed with their daggers, it bleeds, and one of the Jews goes mad at the sight. They next attempt nailing it to a post, when one of them has his hand torn off; whereupon the physician and his man come in to dress the wound, but after a long comic scene are driven out as quacks. The Jews then proceed to boil the Host, but the water forthwith turns blood-red. Finally, they cast it into a heated oven, which presently bursts asunder, and an image of the Saviour rises and addresses the Jews, who make good their promise on the spot. The merchant confesses his theft, declares his penitence, and is forgiven, under a strict charge never again to buy or sell. The whole winds up with an epilogue from the bishop, enforcing the moral of the play, which turns on the dogma of transubstantiation.

There are three sets of Miracle-Plays extant, severally known as the Towneley, Coventry, and Chester Collections; the first including thirty plays, the second forty-two, and the third twenty-four. Some of the manuscripts are thought to be as old as the time of Henry VI., who died in 1471. The three sets have all been recently printed by the Shakespeare Society. The Towneley set most likely belonged to Widkirk Abbey: at what time they grew into use there and at Coventry is not certainly known. At Chester the plays were probably first acted in 1268; after which time they were repeated yearly, with some interruptions, till 1577. And we have conclusive evidence that such exhibitions formed a regular part of English life in the reign of Edward III., which began in 1327. For Chaucer alludes to "plays of miracles" as things of common occurrence; and in *The Miller's Tale* he makes it a prominent feature of the parish clerk, "that jolly was and gay," that he performed in them. And in 1378, which was the first year of Richard II., the choristers of St. Paul's, London, petitioned the King to prohibit some ignorant persons from acting plays founded on Scripture, as conflicting with the interest of the Clergy, who had incurred expense in getting up a set of plays on similar subjects. Stowe informs us, also, that in 1409 there was a great play in London, "which lasted eight days, and was of matter from the creation of the world."

As to the general character of the plays, this will best appear by brief analyses of some of them. The Towneley set being the most ancient, my first specimens will be from that.

The first play of the series includes the creation, the revolt of Lucifer and his adherents, and their expulsion from Heaven. It opens with a short address from the Deity, who then begins the creation, and, after a song by the cherubim, descends from the throne, and retires; Lucifer usurps it, and asks his fellows how he appears. The good and bad angels have different opinions about that; but the Deity soon returns, and ends the dispute by casting the rebels with their leader out of Heaven. Adam and Eve are then created, and Satan winds up the piece with a speech venting his envy of their happiness in Eden.

The second play relates to the killing of Abel, and is opened by Cain's ploughboy with a sort of prologue in which he warns the spectators to be silent. Cain then enters with a plough and team, and quarrels with the boy for refusing to drive the team. Presently Abel comes in, and wishes Cain good-speed, who meets his kind word with an unmentionable request. The murder then proceeds, and is followed by the cursing of Cain; after which he calls the boy, and gives him a beating. Cain owns the murder, and the boy counsels flight, lest the bailiffs catch him. Next we have a course of buffoonery: Cain makes a mock proclamation in the King's name, the boy repeats it blunderingly after him, and is then sent off with the team; and the piece closes with a speech by Cain to the spectators, bidding them farewell.

The third of the series is occupied with the Deluge. After a lamentation by Noah on the sinfulness of the world, God is introduced repenting that he made man, telling Noah how to build the Ark, and blessing him and his. Noah's wife is an arrant shrew, and they fall at odds in the outset, both of them swearing by the Virgin Mary. Noah begins and finishes the Ark on the spot; then tells his spouse what is coming, and invites her on board: she stoutly refuses to embark, which brings on another flare-up; he persuades her with a whip; she wishes herself a widow, and the same to all the wives in the audience; he exhorts all the husbands to break in their wives betimes: at length harmony is restored by the intervention of the sons; all go aboard, and pass three hundred and fifty days talking about the weather; a raven is sent out, then a dove, and they debark.

Two plays of the set are taken up with the adoration of the shepherds; and the twelfth is worthy of special notice as being a piece of broad comedy approaching to downright farce, with dashes of rude wit and humour. The three shepherds, after talking awhile about their shrewish wives, are on the point of striking up a song, when an old acquaintance of theirs named Mak, whose character is none of the best, comes among them. They suspect him of meditating some sly trick; so, on going to bed, they take care to have him lie between them, lest he play the wolf among their woolly subjects. While they are snoring, he steals out, helps himself to a fat sheep, and makes off. His wife, fearing he may be snatched up and hanged, suggests a scheme, which is presently agreed upon, that she shall make as if she had just been adding a member to the family, and that the sheep shall be snugly wrapped up in the cradle. This done, Mak hastens back, and resumes his sleeping-place. In the morning the shepherds wake much refreshed, but Mak feigns a crick in the neck; and, while they are walking to the fold, he whips away home. They soon miss the sheep, suspect Mak, and go to his cottage: he lets them in, tells them what his wife has been doing, and begs them not to disturb her; and, as the least noise seems to pain her, they are at first deceived. They ask to see the child; he tells them the child is asleep, and will cry badly if waked; still they insist; pull up the covering of the cradle, and know their sheep by the ear-mark; but the wife assures them it is a child, and that evil spirits have transformed it into what they see. They are not to be duped again; beat Mak till they are tired, then lie down to rest; the star in the East appears, and the angel sings the *Gloria in Excelsis* ; whereupon they proceed to Bethlehem, find the infant Saviour, and give him, the first "a bob of cherries," the second a bird, the third a tennis-ball.

The Chester and Coventry plays, for the most part, closely resemble the Towneley series, both in the subjects and the manner of treating them. A portion, however, of the Coventry set, from the eighth to the fifteenth, inclusive, deserve special notice, as they show the first beginnings or buddings of a higher dramatic growth, which afterwards resulted in what are called Moral-Plays. For instance, Contemplation, who serves as speaker of prologues, and moralizes the events, is evidently an allegorical personage, that is, an abstract idea personified, such as afterwards grew into general use, and gave character to stage performances. And we have other like personages, Verity, Justice, Mercy, and Peace.

The eighth play represents Joachim grieving that he has no child, and praying that the cause of his grief may be removed: Anna, his wife, heartily joins with him, taking all the blame of their childlessness to herself. In answer to their prayers, an angel announces to them the birth of a daughter who shall be called Mary. Then follows the presentation of Mary, and, after an interview between her and the bishop, Contemplation informs the audience that fourteen years will elapse before her next appearance, and promises that they shall soon see "the Parliament of Heaven." Next we have Mary's betrothment. The bishop summons the males of David's House to appear in the temple, each bringing a white rod; he being divinely assured that the man whose rod should bud and bloom was to be the husband of Mary. Joseph, after a deal of urging, offers up his rod, and the miracle is at once apparent. When asked if he will be married to the maiden, he deprecates such an event with all his might, and pleads his old age in bar of it; nevertheless the marriage proceeds. Some while after, Joseph informs the Virgin that he has hired "a pretty little house" for her to live in, and that he will "go labouring in far country" to maintain her. Then comes the Parliament of Heaven. The Virtues plead for pity and grace to man; Verity objects, urging that there can be no peace made between sin and the law; this calls forth an earnest prayer from Mercy in man's behalf; Justice takes up the argument on the other side; Peace answers in a strain that brings them all to accord. The Son then raises the question how the thing shall be done. Verity, Justice, Mercy, and Peace having tried their wit, and found it unequal to the cause, a council of the Trinity is held, when the Son offers to undertake the work by assuming the form of a man; the Father consents, and the Holy Ghost agrees to co-operate. Gabriel is then sent to salute Mary and make known to her the decree of the Incarnation.

Joseph is absent some months. On his return he is in great affliction, and reproaches Mary, but, an angel explaining the matter to him, he makes amends. The bishop holds a court, and his officer summons to it a large number of people, all having English names, and tells the audience to "ring well in their purse"; which shows that money was collected for the performance. Mary is brought before the court, to be tried for naughtiness, and Joseph also for tamely bearing it. His innocence is proved by his drinking without harm, a liquid which, were he guilty, would cause spots on his face. Mary also drinking of the same, unhurt, one of the accusers affirms that the bishop has changed the draught, but is cured of his unbelief by being forced to drink what is left. The fifteenth play relates to the nativity. Joseph, it seems, is not yet satisfied of Mary's innocence, and his doubts are all removed in this manner: Mary, seeing a tall tree full of ripe cherries, asks him to gather some for her; he replies that the father of her child may help her to them; and the tree forthwith bows down its top to her hand. This is soon followed by the Saviour's birth.

Besides the three sets of Miracle-Plays in question, there are other specimens, some of which seem to require notice. Among these are three, known as the Digby Miracle-Plays, on the Conversion of St. Paul. One of the persons is Belial, whose appearance and behaviour are indicated by the stage-direction, "Enter a Devil with thunder and fire." He makes a soliloquy in self-glorification, and then complains of the dearth of news: after which we have the stage-direction, "Enter another Devil called Mercury, coming in haste, crying and roaring." He tells Belial of St. Paul's conversion, and declares his belief that the Devil's reign is about to end; whereat Belial is in stark dismay. They then plot to stir up the "Jewish Bishops" in the cause, and soon after "vanish away with a fiery flame and a tempest."

A Miracle-Play relating to Mary Magdalen is remarkable as having required four scaffolds for the exhibition; Tiberius, Herod, Pilate, and the Devil having each their several stations; and one of the directions being, "Enter the Prince of Devils on a stage, and Hell underneath the stage." Mary lives in a castle inherited from her father, who figures in the opening of the play as King Cyrus. A ship owned by St. Peter is brought into the space between the scaffolds, and Mary and some others make a long voyage in it. Of course St. Peter's ship represents the Catholic Church. The heroine's castle is besieged by the Devil with the Seven Deadly Sins, and carried; Luxury takes her to a tavern where a gallant named Curiosity treats her to "sops and wine." The process of Mary's repentance and amendment is carried through in due order. Tiberius makes a long speech glorifying himself; a parasite named Serybil flatters him on his good looks, and he in return blesses

Serybil's face, which was probably carbuncled as richly as Corporal Bardolph's. Herod makes his boast in similar style, and afterwards goes to bed. The devils, headed by Satan, perform a mock pagan mass to Mahound, which is the old name for Mohammed. The three Kings of the World, the Flesh, and the Devil figure in the play, but not prominently. A Priest winds up the performance, requesting the spectators not to charge its faults on the poet.

Here, again, we have allegorical personages, as Lechery, Luxury, and Curiosity, introduced along with concrete particular characters of Scripture. This is carried still further in another play of a later date, called the *Life and Repentance of Mary Magdalen* , where we have divers personifications of abstract ideas, such as Law, Faith, Pride, Cupidity, and Infidelity; the latter being much the same as the Vice or Iniquity who figured so largely in Moral-Plays. Infidelity acts as the heroine's paramour, and assumes many disguises, to seduce her into all sorts of vice, wherein he is aided by Pride, Cupidity, and Carnal-concupiscence. When she has reached the climax of sin, he advises her "not to make two hells instead of one," but to live merrily in this world, since she is sure of perdition in the next; and his advice succeeds for a while. On the other hand, Law, Faith, Repentance, Justification, and Love strive to recover her, and the latter half of the play is taken up with this work of benevolence. At last, Christ expels the seven devils, who "roar terribly"; whereupon Infidelity and his companions give her up. The piece closes with a dialogue between Mary, Justification, and Love, the latter two rejoicing over the salvation of a sinner.

This play was printed in 1567, and is described in the title-page, as "not only godly, learned, and fruitful, but also well furnished with pleasant mirth and pastime, very delectable for those which shall hear or read the same: Made by the learned clerk, Lewis Wager." It bears clear internal evidence of having been written after the Reformation; and the prologue shows that it was acted by itinerant players, and had been performed "at the university."

Four Miracle-Plays have come down to us, which were written by Bishop Bale, and printed on the Continent in 1538. The most notable point concerning them is their being the first known attempt to use the stage in furtherance of the Reformation. One of them is entitled *Christ's Temptation* . It opens with Christ in the wilderness, faint through hunger; and His first speech is meant to refute the Romish doctrine of the efficacy of fasting. Satan joins Him in the disguise of a hermit, and the whole temptation proceeds according to Scripture. In one of his arguments, Satan vents his spite against "false priests and bishops," but plumes himself that "the Vicar of Rome" will worship and serve him. Bale wrote several plays in a different line, of one of which I have given some account in another place.

The Miracle-Play of *King Darius* is scarce worth notice, save that Iniquity with his wooden dagger has a leading part in the action. He, together with Importunity and Partiality, has several contests with Equity, Charity, and Constancy: for a while he has the better of them; but at last they catch him alone, each in turn threatens him with sore visitings, and then follows the direction, "Here somebody must cast fire to Iniquity"; who probably had some fireworks about his person, to explode for the amusement of the audience, as he went out.

Hitherto we have met with nothing that can be regarded as portraiture of individual character, unless somewhat of the sort be alleged in the case of Mak the sheep-stealing rogue. The truth is, character and action, in the proper sense of the terms, were hardly thought of in the making of Miracle-Plays; the work aiming at nothing higher than a literal or mechanical reflection of facts and events; sometimes relieved indeed with certain generalities of popular humour and satire, but without any contexture of individual traits. The piece next to be noticed deserves remark, as indicating how, under the pressure of general dramatic improvement, Miracle-Plays tried to rise above their proper sphere, and still retain their proper form.

The History of Jacob and Esau , probably written as early as 1557, and printed in 1568, is of very regular construction, having five Acts, which are duly subdivided into scenes. Besides the Scripture characters, are Ragau, Esau's servant; Mido, a boy who leads blind Isaac; Hanan and Zethar, two of his neighbours; Abra, a girl who assists Rebecca; and Debora, an old nurse. Esau and his servant Ragau set forth together on a hunt. While they are gone, Rebecca urges Jacob to secure his brother's birthright. Esau returns with a raging appetite, and Jacob demands his birthright as the condition of relieving him with a mess of rice pottage; he consents, and Ragau laughs at his stupidity, while Jacob, Rebecca, and Abra sing a psalm of thanksgiving. These things occupy the first two Acts; in the third, Esau and his man take another hunt. The blessing of Jacob takes place in the fourth Act; Rebecca tasking her cookery to the utmost in dressing a kid, and succeeding in her scheme. In the last Act, Esau comes back, and learns from his father what has occurred in his absence. The plot and incidents are managed with considerable propriety; the characters are discriminated with some art; the comic portions show some neatness of wit and humour.

In the Interlude of *Godly Queen Esther* , printed in 1561, we have a Miracle-Play going still further out of itself. One of the characters is named Hardy-dardy, who, with some qualities of the Vice, foreshadows the Jester, or professional Fool, of the later Drama; wearing motley, and feigning weakness or disorder of intellect, to the end that his wit may run more at large, and strike with the better effect. Hardy-dardy offers himself as a servant to Haman; and after Haman has urged him with sundry remarks in dispraise of fools, he sagely replies, that "some wise man must be fain sometime to do on a fool's coat." Besides the Scripture characters, the play has several allegorical personages, as Pride, Ambition, and Adulation, who make their wills, bequeathing all their bad qualities to Haman, and thereby ruin him.

Of all the persons who figured in the Miracle-Plays, Herod, the slayer of the Innocents, appears to have been the greatest popular favourite. We hear of him as early as the time of Chaucer, who says of the parish clerk, Absolon,

"Sometime, to show his lightness and maistrie, He plaieth Herode on a scaffold hie."

From that time onwards, and we know not how long before, he was a sort of staple character, no set of Miracle-Plays being regarded as complete without him. And he was always represented as an immense swearer and braggart and swaggerer, evermore ranting and raving up and down the stage, and cudgelling the spectators' ears with the most furious bombast and profanity. Thus, in one of the Chester series:

"For I am king of all mankind; I bid, I beat, I loose, I bind: I master the Moon: Take this in mind, That I am most of might. I am the greatest above degree, That is, that was, or ever shall be: The Sun it dare not shine on me, An I bid him go down."

Thus, too, in one of the Coventry series:

"Of beauty and of boldness I bear evermore the bell; Of main and of might I master every man; I ding with my doughtiness the Devil down to Hell; For both of Heaven and of Earth I am king certain."

Termagant, the supposed god of the Saracens, was another staple character in the

Miracle-Plays; who is described by John Florio as "a great boaster, quarreller, killer, tamer or ruler of the universe, the child of the earthquake and of the thunder, the brother of death." That Shakespeare himself had suffered under the monstrous din of these "strutting and bellowing" stage-thumpers is shown by Hamlet's remonstrance with the players: "O, it offends me to the soul, to hear a robustious periwig-pated fellow tear a passion to rags, to very tatters, to split the ears of the groundlings: I would have such a fellow whipped for o'erdoing Termagant; it out-herods Herod: pray you, avoid it."

Thus much must suffice by way of indicating, in a general sort, the character of those primitive sprouts and upshoots of the Gothic Drama in England. Their rudeness of construction, their ingrained coarseness of style, their puerility, their obscenity, and indecency, according to our standard, are indescribable. Their quality in these respects could only be shown by specimens, and these I have not room to produce, nor would it be right or decent to do so, if I had.

But what strikes us, perhaps, still more offensively in those old religious plays, is the irreverent and shocking familiarity everywhere used with the sacredest persons and things of the Christian Faith. The awfullest and most moving scenes and incidents of the Gospel history, such as the Last Supper and the Crucifixion, were treated with what cannot but seem to us the most shameless and most disgusting profanity: the poor invention of the time was racked to the uttermost, to harrow the audience with dramatic violence and stress; and it seems to us impossible but that all the solemnity of the matter must have been defeated by such coarseness of handling.

But, indeed, we can hardly do justice either to the authors or the audiences of those religious comedies; there being an almost impassable gulf fixed between their modes of thought and ours. The people were then just emerging from the thick darkness of Gothic barbarism into what may be termed the border-land of civilization. As such, their minds were so dominated by the senses, that they could scarce conceive of any beings much more than one grade above themselves. A sort of infantile unconsciousness, indeed, had possession of them; so that they were really quite innocent of the evils which we see and feel in what was so entertaining to them. Hence, as Michelet remarks, "the ancient Church did not scruple to connect whimsical dramatic rites with the most sacred doctrines and objects."

So that the state of mind from which and for which those old plays were produced goes far to explain and justify we are apt to regard as a shocking contradiction between the subject-matter and the treatment. The truth is, such religious farces, with all their coarse trumperies and comicalities and sensuous extravagances, were in perfect keeping with the genius of an age when, for instance, a transfer of land was not held binding without the delivery of a clod. And so, what Mr. John Stuart Mill describes as "the childlike character of the religious sentiment of a rude people, who know terror, but not awe, and are often on the most intimate terms of familiarity with the objects of their adoration," makes it conceivable how that which seems to us the most irreverent handling of sacred things, may notwithstanding have been, to the authors and audiences in question, but the natural issue of such religious thoughts and feelings as they had or were capable of having. At all events, those exhibitions, so revolting to modern taste and decorum, were no doubt in most cases full of religion and honest delectation to the simple minds who witnessed them. Moreover, rude and ignorant as the Miracle-Plays were in form, coarse and foul as they were in language and incident, they nevertheless contained the germ of that splendid dramatic growth with which the literature and life of England were afterwards enriched and adorned.

Before leaving this branch of the subject, perhaps I ought to add something further as to the part which was taken by the Clergy in those old stage exhibitions. The register of the Guild of *Corpus Christi* at York, which was a religious fraternity, mentions, in 1408, books of plays, various banners and flags, beards, vizards, crowns, diadems, and scaffolds, belonging to the society; which shows that its members were at that time concerned in the representation of Miracle-Plays. It appears that a few years afterwards these performances, because of certain abuses attending them, were discontinued: but in 1426 William Melton, a friar who is called "a professor of holy pageantry," preached several sermons in favour of them; and the result was, that they were then made annual, suitable measures being taken for preventing the former disorders. But the best evidence as to the share the Clergy had in the representations is furnished by the account-book of Thetford Priory from 1461 to 1540; which contains numerous entries of payments to players; and in divers cases expressly states that members of the convent assisted in the performances. These were commonly held twice or three times a year; in 1531 there were five repetitions of them; after which time there are but three entries of plays wherein the members participated with the common actors; the old custom being broken up most likely by the progress of the Reformation.

The practice in question, however, was by no means universal. We learn from Stowe that in 1391 and 1409, plays were acted in London by the parish clerks. In cities and large towns, these performances were generally in the hands of the trade fraternities or guilds. Our information touching the *Corpus Christi* plays at Coventry extends from 1416 to 1590; during which period there is no sign of the Clergy having any part in them. The records of Chester also show that the whole business was there managed by laymen. And in 1487 a Miracle-Play on the descent of Christ into Hell was acted before Henry the Seventh by the charity boys of Hyde Abbey and St. Swithin's Priory. Long before this date, acting was taken up as a distinct profession, and regular companies of actors were formed.

That churches and chapels of monasteries were at first, and for a long time after, used as theatres, is very certain. The Anglo-French poem already referred to informs us that Miracle-Plays were sometimes performed in churches and cemeteries, the Clergy getting them up and acting in them. And Burnet tells us that Bishop Bonner as late as 1542 issued an order to his clergy, forbidding "all manner of common plays, games, or interludes to be played, set forth, or declared within their churches and chapels." Nor was the custom wholly discontinued till some time after that; for in 1572 was printed a tract which has a passage inferring that churches were still sometimes used for such purposes.

When plays were performed in the open air, temporary scaffolds or stages were commonly erected for the purpose; though in some cases the scaffold was set on wheels, so as to be easily moved from one part of the town to another. It appears that the structure used at Chester had two stages, one above the other; the lower being closed in, to serve as a dressing-room for the actors, while the performance was on the upper stage where it could be seen by all the spectators. Sometimes the lower stage seems to have been used for Hell, the devils rising out of it, or sinking into it, as occasion required. In some plays, however, as we have seen in that of *Mary Magdalen* , more than one scaffold was used; and certain stage-directions in the Towneley and Coventry plays infer that two, three, and even four scaffolds were erected round a centre, the actors going from one to another across the intervening space, as the scene changed, or their several parts required.

<<span id="filepos0039800028"> a>MORAL-PLAYS.

The purpose of the Miracle-Plays was to inculcate, in a popular way, what may be termed the theological verities; at first they took their substance and form solely with a view to this end, the securing of an orthodox faith being then looked upon as the all-important concern. In course of time, the thirst for novelty and variety drew them beyond their original sphere of revealed religion into that of natural ethics. By degrees, allegorical personages came, as we have seen, to be more or less mixed up with Scripture characters and events; the aim being to illustrate and enforce the virtues that refer directly to the practical conduct of life. The new-comers kept encroaching more and more: invited in as auxiliaries, they remained as principals; and at last quite superseded and replaced the original tenants. Hence there grew into use a different style or order of workmanship, a distinct class of symbolical or allegorical dramas; that is, dramas made up entirely of abstract ideas personified. These, from their structure and purpose, are properly termed MORAL-PLAYS. We shall see hereafter that much the same process of transition was repeated in the gradual rising of genuine Comedy and Tragedy out of the allegorical dramas.

In Miracle-Plays the Devil of course made a legitimate part of the representation. He was endowed in large measure with a biting, caustic humour, and with a coarse, scoffing, profane wit; therewithal he had an exaggerated grotesqueness of look and manner, such as to awaken mixed emotions of fear, mirth, and disgust. In these qualities of mind and person, together with the essential malignity of which they are the proper surface and outside, we have the germs of both Comedy and Tragedy. For the horrible and the ridiculous easily pass into each other, they being indeed different phases of the same thing. Accordingly, the Devil, under one name or another, continued to propagate himself on the stage long after his original co-actors, had withdrawn.

On the other hand, a personage called Iniquity, Vice, or some such name, was among the first characters to take stand in Moral-Plays, as a personification of the evil tendencies in man. And the Vice thus originating from the moral view of things was a sort of natural counterpart to that more ancient impersonation of evil which took its origin from the theological sphere. The Devil, being the stronger principle, naturally had use for the Vice as his agent or factor. Hence we may discover in these two personages points of mutual sympathy and attraction; and, in fact, it was in and through them that the two species of drama met and coalesced.

In Moral-Plays the Devil and the Vice, or at least one of them, almost always bore a leading part, though not always under those names. Most commonly the two were retained together; there are cases however of each figuring apart from the other. And no pains were spared to give the Devil as hideous an aspect as possible: he was made an out-and-out monster in appearance, all hairy and shaggy, with a "bottle nose" and an "evil face," having horns, hoofs, and a long tail; so that the sight had been at once loathsome and ludicrous, but for the great strength and quickness of wit, and the fiendish, yet merry and waggish malignity, which usually marked his conversation. Sometimes, however, he was endowed with a most protean versatility of mind and person, so that he could walk abroad as "plain devil," scaring all he met, or steal into society as a prudent counsellor, a dashing gallant, or whatever else would best work out his ends.

As for the Vice, he commonly acted the part of a broad, rampant jester and buffoon, full of mad pranks and mischief-making, liberally dashed with a sort of tumultuous, swaggering fun. He was arrayed in fantastic garb, with something of drollery in its appearance, so as to aid the comic effect of his action, and armed with a dagger of lath, perhaps as symbolical that his use of weapons was but to the end of provoking his own defeat. Therewithal he was vastly given to cracking ribald and saucy jokes with and upon the Devil, and treating him in a style of coarse familiarity and mockery; and a part of his ordinary business was to bestride the Devil, and beat him till he roared, and the audience roared with him; the scene ending with his being carried off to Hell on the Devil's back. Much of the old custom in these two personages is amusingly set forth in Ben Jonson's *Staple of News* , where, at the end of each Act, we have some imaginary spectators commenting on the performance. At the end of the first Act, one of them expressing a fear that the play has no Fool in it, as the Vice was often called, Gossip Tattle delivers herself thus: "My husband, Timothy Tattle, God rest his poor soul! was wont to say there was no play without a Fool and a Devil in't; he was for the Devil still, God bless him! The Devil for his money, he would say; I would fain see the Devil." It being asked, "But was the Devil a proper man?" Gossip Mirth replies, "As fine a gentleman of his inches as ever I saw trusted to the stage or anywhere else; and loved the commonwealth as well as ever a patriot of them all: he would carry away the Vice on his back, quick, to

Hell, wherever he came, and reform abuses." Again, at the end of the second Act, the question being put, "How like you the Vice in the play?" Widow Tattle complains, "But here is never a fiend to carry him away. Besides, he has never a wooden dagger! I would not give a rush for a Vice that has not a wooden dagger, to snap at everybody he meets." Whereupon Mirth observes, "That was the old way, gossip, when Iniquity came in, like Hocus-Pocus, in a juggler's jerkin, with false skirts, like the knave of clubs."

The most ancient specimen of a Moral-Play known to have survived dates as far back as the reign of Henry VI., which closed in 1461. It is entitled *The Castle of Perseverance* , and is opened by Mundus, Belial, and Caro descanting on their several gifts: Humanum Genus, who represents mankind, then announces himself, just born, and naked; while he is speaking Good Angel and Bad Angel appear on his right and left, each claiming him as a follower. He prefers Bad Angel, who leads him straight to Mundus; the latter orders his friends Voluptas and Stultitia to take him in hand. Detractio, who calls himself Backbiter, is also made one of his train, and procures him the acquaintance of Avaritia, by whom he is introduced to the other Deadly Sins: not long after, he meets with Luxuria, and falls in love with her. At all this Bad Angel exults, but Good Angel mourns, and sends Confessio to Humanum Genus, who repels him at first, as having come too soon. However, Confessio at last reclaims him; he asks where he can live in safety, and is told, in the Castle of Perseverance: so, thither he goes, being at that time "forty Winters old." The Seven Cardinal Virtues there wait upon him with their respective counsels. Belial, after having beaten the Seven Deadly Sins for letting him escape, heads them in laying siege to the Castle; but he appeals to "the Duke that died on rood" to defend him, and the assailants retire discomfited, being beaten "black and blue" by the roses which Charity and Patience hurl against them. As he is now grown "hoary and cold," Avaritia worms in under the walls, and induces him to quit the Castle. No sooner has he got well skilled in the lore of Avaritia, than Garcio, who stands for the rising generation, demands all his wealth, alleging that Mundus has given it to him. Presently Mors comes in for *his* turn, and makes a speech extolling his own power; Anima also hastens to the spot, and invokes the aid of Misericordia: notwithstanding, Bad Angel shoulders the hero, and sets off with him for the infernal regions. Then follows a discussion in Heaven, Mercy and Peace pleading for the hero, Verity and Justice against him: God sends for his soul; Peace takes it from Bad Angel, who is driven off to Hell; Mercy presents it to Heaven; and "the Father sitting in judgment" pronounces sentence, which unfolds the moral of the performance.

This analysis shows that the piece partakes somewhat the character of a Miracle-Play. A list of the persons is given at the end; also a rude sketch of the scene, showing a castle in the centre, with five scaffolds for Deus, Belial, Mundus, Caro, and Avaritia. Bad Angel is the Devil of the performance: there is no personage answering to the Vice.

The next piece to be noticed bears the title of *Mind, Will, and Understanding* . It is opened by Wisdom, who represents the Second Person of the Trinity; Anima soon joins him, and they converse upon heavenly love, the seven sacraments, the five senses, and reason. Mind, Will, and Understanding then describe their several qualities; the Five Wits, attired as virgins, go out singing; Lucifer enters "in a Devil's array without, and within as proud as a gallant," that is, with a gallant's dress under his proper garb; relates the creation of Man, describing Mind, Will, and Understanding as the three properties of the soul, which he means to assail and corrupt. He then goes out, and presently returns, succeeds in the attempt, and makes an exulting speech, at the close of which "he taketh a shrewd boy with him, and goeth his way crying"; probably snatching up a boy from the audience,—an incident designed to "bring down the house." Lucifer having gone out, his three victims appear in gay apparel; they dismiss Conscience; Will dedicates himself to lust; all join in a song, and then proceed to have a dance. First, Mind calls in his followers, Indignation, Sturdiness, Malice, Hastiness, Wreck, and Discord. Next, Understanding summons his adherents, Wrong, Slight, Doubleness, Falseness, Ravin, and Deceit. Then come the servants of Will, named Recklessness, Idleness, Surfeit, Greediness, Spouse-breach, and Fornication. The minstrels striking up a hornpipe, they all dance together till a quarrel breaks out among them, when the eighteen servants are driven off, their masters remaining alone on the stage. Just as these are about to withdraw for a carouse, Wisdom enters: Anima also reappears, "in most horrible wise, fouler than a fiend," and presently gives birth to six of the Deadly Sins; whereupon she perceives what a transformation has befallen her, and Mind, Will, and Understanding learn that they are the cause of it. They having retired, Wisdom opens his mouth in a long speech; after which the three dupes of Lucifer return, renounce their evil ways, and Anima is made happy in their reformation.

These two pieces have come down to us only in manuscript. *A Goodly Interlude of Nature* is a Moral-Play written by Henry Medwall, chaplain to Archbishop Morton, which has descended to us in print. It is in two parts, and at the end of the first part we learn that it was played before Morton himself, who became

Primate in 1486, and died in 1500. Like the two foregoing specimens, it was meant to illustrate the strife of good and evil in man.

There are several other pieces in print dating from about the same period. One of them, printed in 1522, and entitled *The World and the Child* , represents man in the five stages of infancy,—boyhood, youth, maturity, and infirmity. Another of them, called *Hick Scorner* , deserves mention chiefly as being perhaps the earliest specimen of a Moral-Play in-which some attempt is made at individual character. The piece is somewhat remarkable, also, in having been such a popular favourite, that the phrase "Hick Scorner's jests" grew into use as a proverb, to signify the profane scurrility with which certain persons treated the Scriptures in the reign of Elizabeth.

"*The Necromancer* , written by Master Skelton, Laureate," came from the press in 1504, having been played before the King at Woodstock on Palm Sunday. The piece is now lost; but a copy was seen by Warton, who gave an account of it. As the matter is very curious, I must add a few of its points. The persons are a Conjurer, the Devil, a Notary Public, Simony, and Avarice. The plot is the trial of Simony and Avarice, the Devil being the judge, and the Notary serving as assessor. The Conjurer has little to do but open the subject, evoke the Devil, and summon the court. The prisoners are found guilty, and ordered off straight to Hell: the Devil kicks the Conjurer for waking him too early in the morning; and Simony tries to bribe the Devil, who rejects her offer with indignation. The last scene presents a view of Hell, and a dance between the Devil and the Conjurer; at the close of which the former trips up his partner's heels, and disappears in fire and smoke.

Another piece of Skelton's entitled *Magnificence* , and designed to expose the vanity of worldly grandeur, has survived in print. Magnificence, the hero, being eaten out of substance by his friends and retainers, falls into the hands of Poverty and Adversity: in this state he meets with Despair and Mischief, who furnish him with a knife and halter; he is about killing himself, when Good-hope steps in and stays his arm; Redress, Circumspection, and Perseverance then take him in hand, and wean him from his former passion. The most noteworthy feature of the thing is, that comic incident and dialogue are somewhat made use of, to diversify and enliven the serious parts; which shows the early disposition to weave tragedy and comedy together to one dramatic web.

The play of *Every-man* , printed some time before 1531 opens with a soliloquy by the Deity, lamenting that the people forsake Him for the Seven Deadly Sins. He then summons Death, and sends him after Every-man, who stands for the human race. Death finds him, delivers the message, and tells him to bring his account-book; but allows him to prove his friends. First, he tries Fellowship who, though ready to murder any one for his sake, declines going with him on his long journey. Next, he tries Kindred who excuses himself as having "the cramp in his toe." Then he applies to Riches, who also gives him the cold shoulder. At last he resorts to Good-deeds, whom he finds too weak to stand; but she points him to the blank in his book of works. However, she introduces him to Knowledge who takes him to Confession: there he meets with Strength, Discretion, Beauty, and Five Wits, who undertake to go with him. Arriving at the brink of the grave, he calls on his friends to enter it with him. First, Beauty refuses, then Strength, then Discretion, then Five Wits; even Knowledge deserts him; Good-deeds alone having the virtue to stick by him.

Considering the ecclesiastical origin of the English Drama, it had been something wonderful if, when controversies arose, different sides had not used it in furtherance of their views. In the reign of Henry the Eighth, Bishop Bale, as we have seen, wrote Miracle-Plays for the avowed purpose of advancing the Reformation; and his plays were printed on the Continent in 1538. This, no doubt, was because a royal proclamation had been set forth some years before, forbidding any plays to be performed, or any books printed, in the English tongue, touching matters then in controversy, unless the same had been first allowed by public authority. The King, however, was not at all averse to the stage being used against the Reformers; the purpose of that measure being, so far as regarded plays, to prevent any using of them on the other side.

This is most aptly shown in a notable event that happened in November, 1527. Catholic Europe had just been scandalized beyond measure by the course of Charles the Fifth, who had made war on the Pope, and had actually captured the city of Rome; and who, moreover, was then holding the children of Francis the First as prisoners in Spain. King Henry was mightily stirred up against the Emperor on this account, and was for going into a mortal buffeting with him in behalf of the Holy See. The arrival of a French Embassy at the English Court was the occasion of the event referred to. The Ambassadors were entertained with great splendour by the King at Greenwich; a part of the entertainment being a Moral-Play in Latin, performed by the boys of St. Paul's School. The principal characters were as follows: Religio, Ecclesia, and Veritas, like three widows, in garments of silk, and suits of lawn and cypress; Heresy and False Interpretation, like sisters of Bohemia, apparelled in silk of divers colours; the heretic Luther, like a party friar, in russet damask and black taffety; Luther's wife, like a frau of Spiers, in red silk; Peter, Paul, and James, in habits of white sarcenet, and three red mantles; a Cardinal in his apparel; the Dauphin and his brother, in coats of velvet embroidered with gold; three Germans, in apparel all cut and holed in silk; Lady Peace, in apparel white and rich; Lady Quietness and Dame Tranquillity. The subject of the play was the captivity of the Pope and the oppression of the Church. St. Peter put Cardinal Wolsey in authority to free the Pope and restore the Church; and by his intercession the Kings of England and France took part together, and got the Pope delivered. Then the French King's children complained to the Cardinal that the Emperor kept them as hostages, and desired him to work for their deliverance, and he effected this also.

This matter is so very curious in several respects, that I give it with more than usual fulness. Only three years later, King Henry himself was quarrelling with the same Pope, and the Emperor was acting as the Pope's champion.

In 1543, an Act of Parliament was passed for the restraining of dramatic performances. The preamble states that divers persons, intending to subvert the true and perfect doctrine of Scripture, have presumed to use in that behalf not only sermons and arguments, but printed books, plays, and songs; and the body of the statute enacts that no person shall play in interludes, sing, or rhyme any matter contrary to the Church of Rome; the penalty being a fine of £10 and three months' imprisonment for the first offence; for the second, forfeiture of all goods, and perpetual imprisonment.

When Edward the Sixth came to the throne, in 1547, legislation took a new turn, and the Act of 1543 was repealed. There arose, however, so great an excess on the part of printers and players, that in 1552 a strong proclamation was issued, forbidding them to print or play any thing without a special license under the sign manual, or under the hands of six of the Privy Council, the penalty being imprisonment without bail, and fine at the King's pleasure.

Soon after the accession of Mary, in 1553, was set forth a proclamation against "busy meddlers in matter of religion, and for redress of preachers, printers, and players"; the intent of which was to prevent the printing or playing of any thing adapted to further the Reformation. The thing seems to have been effectual for more than two years, after which further measures were found necessary. But all would not do; the restraints kept giving way. In 1557, "certain naughty plays" broke loose even in London; and the Lord Mayor was called upon by the Court to discover and arrest the players, and "to take order that no play be made henceforth within the city, except the same be first seen, and the players authorized." Nevertheless Mary was far from discouraging plays and players: on the contrary, she kept up the theatrical establishment of her father to the full. The old Miracle-Plays, being generally of the right Roman Catholic stamp, were revived under the patronage of the Court. In 1556, the play of *Christ's Passion* was presented at the Greyfriars in London, before the Lord Mayor, the Privy Council, and many of the nobility. The next year it was repeated at the same place; and also, on the feast of St. Olave, the miraculous life of that Saint was performed as a stage-play in the church dedicated to him.

Elizabeth succeeded to the crown, November 17, 1558; and in May following she issued a proclamation forbidding any plays or interludes to be performed in the kingdom without special license from the local magistrates; and also ordering that none should be so licensed, wherein either matters of religion or of State were handled. This was probably deemed necessary in consequence of the strong measures which had lately been used for putting down all plays that smacked of the Reformation.

The Moral-Play of *Lusty Juventus* , printed some time after 1551, is full of shots against what are called the superstitions of Rome. Its arguments and positions are exceedingly scriptural, chapter and verse being quoted or referred to with all the exactness of a theological treatise. And the tenets of the new "gospellers" are as openly maintained as those of Rome are impugned. Juventus, the hero, who is bent on going it while he is young, starts out in quest of his companions, to have a merry dance: Good Counsel meets him, warns him of the evil of his ways, and engages him on the spot in a prayer for grace to aid him in his purpose of amendment. Just at this moment Knowledge comes up, and prevails on him to spend his time chiefly in hearing sermons and reading the Scriptures. This puts the Devil in great alarm; he has a soliloquy on the subject, then calls in Hypocrisy, and sets him to work in the cause. While Juventus is on his way to "hear a preaching," Hypocrisy encounters him, argues with him against forsaking the traditions of his fathers, and diverts him from his purpose. Some while after, Good Counsel finds him in the lowest state of debauchery, and reclaims him; and God's Merciful Promises undertakes to procure his pardon.

The Longer Thou Livest the More Fool Thou Art is the title of a piece probably written early in Elizabeth's reign. Moros, the hero, is represented as an ignorant and vicious fool, thinking of nothing but ballads and songs, and constantly singing scraps of them. Discipline finds him venting this humour, and reproves him; Piety and Exercise add their efforts to reform him, but discover him to be as much knave as fool. The two latter hold him while Discipline lays on the whip, till he affects contrition; but he is soon wheedled into a relapse by Idleness, Incontinence, and Wrath, who, however, profess to hold him in contempt. Wrath gives him the Vice's sword and dagger, and they all promise him the society of Nell, Nan, Meg, and Bess. Fortune then endows him with wealth; he takes Impiety, Cruelty, and Ignorance into his service; Impiety stirs him up against "these new fellows," that is, the Protestants, and he vows to "hang, burn, and kill" them without remorse. When they are gone, People enters, complaining of the hero's cruelty and oppression, but runs off in a fright as soon as he returns. God's Judgment then comes and strikes him down; Confusion follows; they strip off his "goodly gear," and put on him a fool's coat. Being required by Confusion to go with him he replies,—

"If it please the Devil me to have, Let him carry me away on his back."

We are left to infer that Confusion, who is the Devil of the piece, takes him at his word.

The Marriage of Wit and Science is the earliest known instance of a Moral-Play regularly distributed into five Acts, and these again into scenes. The allegory is quite elaborate and wire-drawn; and the piece has something of humour in the matter, and of melody in the versification. *Like Will to Like, Quoth the Devil to the Collier* , printed in 1568, has some rude approaches to individual character; which is my reason for noticing it. Nichol Newfangle, though in fact the hero, enacts the Vice, and is armed with the wooden dagger; among his friends are Ralph Royster, Tom Tosspot, Philip Fleming, Pierce Pickpurse, and Cuthbert Cutpurse, who have some lines of individual peculiarity. To these are added several allegorical personages, as Good Fame, Severity, Virtuous Life, and Honour. Lucifer also figures in the piece; Newfangle claims him as godfather, and is at last carried off by him. *The Conflict of Conscience* is worthy of notice as being one of the earliest germinations of the Historical Drama. The hero, though called Philologus, is avowedly meant for Francis Speira, an Italian lawyer, who, it is said, "forsook the truth of God's Gospel, for fear of the loss of life and worldly goods." The characters of the piece are partly historical, partly allegorical.

If *The Conflict of Conscience* deserves mention as an approach to Tragedy, *Tom Tiler and his Wife* equally deserves it as an early sprout of Comedy. It contains a mixture of allegorical and individual persons, the latter, however, taking the chief part of the action. Tom Tiler has a spouse named Strife, who is not only a great scold, but hugely given to drinking with Sturdy and Tipple. Tiler meets his friend Tom Tailor, an artificer of shreds and patches, and relates his sufferings. Tailor changes clothes with him; in this disguise goes to Strife as her husband, and gives her such a drubbing that she submits. Tiler then resumes his own clothes, goes home, and pities his wife, who, ignorant of the trick, vows she will never love him again: to appease her, he unwarily owns up; whereupon she snatches a stick, and belabours him till he cries out for life; and she declares that Tailor had better eaten her than beaten her. Tiler flies to his friend Tailor, and tells him what has happened; Tailor then falls to beating him; and the lady, coming up just at the time, goes to playing her batteries on them both, until Patience arrives and restores harmony all round, charming the discontent out of Tiler, and the fury out of Strife.

Jack Juggler , "a new interlude for children to play," is somewhat remarkable, not only in that it carries still higher the effort at individual character, but as being one of the oldest pieces founded on a classic original; the author claiming, in his prologue, to have taken "Plautus' first comedy" as his model. Master Bongrace sends his lacquey Jenkin to Dame Coy, his lady-love; but Jenkin loiters to play at dice and steal apples. Jack Juggler, who enacts the Vice, watches him, gets on some clothes just like his, and undertakes to persuade him "that he is not himself, but another man." The task proves too much, till he brings fist-arguments to bear; when Jenkin gives up the point, and makes a comical address to the audience, alleging certain reasons for believing that he is not himself. The humour of the piece turns mainly on this doubt of his identity.

We have many other specimens in the class of Moral-Plays; but, as they are all cast in much the same mould, any further dwelling upon them would accomplish little towards illustrating the progress of the Drama.

<<span id="filepos0039831576"> a>COMEDY AND TRAGEDY.

We have seen how the old Miracle-Plays gradually gave way to Moral-Plays, first borrowing some of their materials, then thrown into the background, and finally quite displaced by them. Yet both these forms of the Drama were radically different from Comedy and Tragedy in the proper sense of these terms: there was very little of character or of human blood in them; and even that little was rather forced in by external causes than a free outgrowth from the genius of the thing. The first, in their proper idea and original plan, were but a mechanical collocation of the events of Scripture and old legend, carried on by a sort of personal representatives; the second, a mere procession of abstract ideas rudely and inartificially personified, with something of fantastical drapery thrown around them. So that both alike stood apart from the vitalities of nature and the abiding interests of thought, being indeed quite innocent of the knowledge of them.

Of course it was impossible that such things, themselves the offspring of darkness, should stand the light. None but children in mind could mistake them for truth, or keep up any real sympathy with such unvital motions. Precluded from the endless variety of individual nature and character, they could not but run into great monotony: in fact, the whole thing was at best little more than a repetition of one fundamental air under certain arbitrary variations. As the matter shown was always much the same, the interest had to depend chiefly on the manner of showing it; and this naturally generated a cumbrous and clumsy excess of manner; unless indeed the thing drew beyond itself; while in doing this it could scarce fail to create a taste that would sooner or later force it to withdraw from the scene.

Accordingly, Moral-Plays, as we have seen, began, early in their course, to deviate into veins foreign to their original design: points of native humour and wit, and lines of personal interest were taken in to diversify and relieve the allegorical sameness; and these grew more and more into the main texture of the workmanship. As the new elements gained strength, much of the old treasure proved to be mere refuge and dross; as such it was discarded; while so much of sterling wealth as had been accumulated was sucked in, retained, and carried up into the supervening growth.

The beginnings, then, of English Comedy and Tragedy were made long before these appeared in distinct formation. And the first known hand that drew off the elements of Comedy, and moulded them up by themselves, was John Heywood, who belonged to the theatrical and musical establishment of Henry the Eighth. His pieces, however, have not the form of regular comedies. He called them Interludes, a name in use many years before, and probably adopted by him as indicating the purpose to which he designed them, of filling the gaps or intervals of banquets and other entertainments. They are short, not taking much more time than a single act in an ordinary comedy. Yet they have the substance of comedy, in that they give pictures of real life and manners, containing much sprightliness of dialogue, and not a little of humour and character, and varied with amusing incident and allusion drawn fresh from the writer's observation, with the dews of nature upon them.

Heywood's earliest piece, printed in 1533, is entitled *A merry Play between the Pardoner and the Friar, the Curate and Neighbour Pratt* . A Pardoner and a Friar have each got leave of the Curate to use his church, the one to exhibit his relics, the other to preach a sermon. The Friar comes first, and is about to begin his preachment, when the other enters and disturbs him: each wants to be heard first; and, after a long trial which has the stronger lungs, they fall into a regular performance of mutual kicking and cuffing. The Curate, aroused to the spot by the noise, endeavours to part them; failing of this, he calls in Neighbour Pratt, and then seizes the Friar, leaving Pratt to manage the other, the purpose being to put them both in the stocks. But they get the worst of it altogether; so that they gladly come to terms, allowing the Pardoner and Friar quietly to depart. As a sample of the incidents, I may add that the Friar, while his whole sermon is against covetousness, harps much on the voluntary poverty of his order, and then gives notice of his intention to take up a collection. In a like satirical humour, the Pardoner is made to exhibit some laughable relics, such as "the great toe of the Holy Trinity," and the "blessed jaw-bone" of all the saints in the Calendar. Of course his purpose also is to bless money into his purse.

Another of Heywood's pieces, also printed in 1533, is called *A merry Play between John the Husband, Tib the Wife, and Sir John the Priest* . Here the comic vein runs out even more freely than in the former piece, and has quite as much relish of home-made observation. Still another of Heywood's pieces, also full of broad fun, and equally smacking of real life, is called *The Four Ps* ; while a fourth, called *The Play of the Weather* , has something the character of a Moral-Play, the Vice figuring in it under the name of Merry Report.—Thus much must suffice for indicating the steps taken by Heywood in the direction of genuine Comedy.

An anonymous interlude called *Thersites* , and written in 1537, deserves mention as the oldest dramatic piece in English, with characters purporting to be borrowed from secular history. The piece, however, has nothing of historical matter but the names: it is merely a piece of broad comedy in the vein of English life and manners.

The oldest known specimen of a regular English comedy is *Ralph Roister Doister* , written as early as 1551. It was the work of Nicholas Udall, a name distinguished in the early literature of the Reformation; who, in 1534, was appointed Head-Master of Eton, then famous for teaching the classics, became Prebendary of Windsor in 1551, was afterwards made Head-Master of Westminster School, and died in 1556.

In his prologue the author refers to Plautus and Terence as his models. The play is in five Acts, which are subdivided into scenes; the scene is in London, the persons and manners all English. The hero and heroine are Ralph Roister Doister and Dame Custance, a widow; in the train of the former are Matthew Merrygreek and Harpax; of the latter, Truepenny her man, Madge Mumblecrust her nurse, Tibet Talkapace, and Annot Alyface. The play is opened by Matthew, who enters singing, and expounds his mind in a soliloquy, dilating on his patron's qualities and his own. Presently Ralph comes in talking to himself, and calls on Matthew for counsel and help, as he is dying for love of a lady whose name he does not at first remember, and who, he hears, is engaged to a merchant named Goodluck. Matthew stuffs him with the assurance that his figure is such as no woman can resist, and that the people go into raptures over him as he passes in the streets; all which he greedily swallows. Next, we have a scene of Madge, Tibet, and Annot at their work, praising their good fare, rallying each other, and singing snatches of song: Ralph overhears them, and takes joy to think how happy he shall live with a wife who keeps such servants; strikes up an acquaintance with them, and, after divers comic passages, leaves with Madge a letter for her mistress. The next day Dobinet Doughty comes from Goodluck with a ring and token, which Madge refuses to deliver, she having been scolded for taking Ralph's letter. He tells the servants he is a messenger from their lady's intended husband, but does not mention his name: they are delighted at the prospect of such a change in the family, and almost fall at strife for the honour of carrying the presents to their mistress, who, however, sharply reproves them for taking such things without knowing whence they come.

In the third Act Matthew is sent to reconnoitre, when he learns that the lady's hand is already engaged, and that she has not even read Ralph's letter. Returning, he tells Ralph she will have nothing to do with him, and how she abuses him with opprobrious terms; which puts him to dying for love right on the spot; and Matthew, to help on the joke, calls in the parish clerk and others to sing a mock requiem. As Ralph does not succeed in dying, Matthew counsels him to put on a bold face, and claim the lady's hand in person, after treating her to a serenade. He agrees to this, and while the serenade is in progress the lady enters; he declares his passion; she rejects him with scorn, and returns his letter unread; whereupon Matthew reads it in her hearing, but so varies the pointing as to turn the sense all upside down; and Ralph denies it to be his. As soon as she has left them, Matthew goes to refreshing him again with extravagant praise of his person, wishing himself a woman for his sake, and advising him to hold off awhile, as this will soon bring her to terms. Ralph consents to try this course, and swears vengeance against the scrivener who copied his letter; but in the scrivener's reading it is found all right, and Matthew is seen to be the true culprit.

In the fourth Act Sim Suresby comes from Goodluck to salute the lady on his master's return from a voyage; while they are talking, Ralph arrives with Matthew, and addresses her as his spouse; whereupon Sim, thinking them married, goes to inform his master what seems to have happened in his absence. The lady, full of grief and anger at this staining of her good name, calls on her man and maids to drive out Ralph and Matthew, who quickly retreat, but threaten to return. Matthew now contrives to let the lady know that he has joined with Ralph only to make fun of him. In due time, Ralph comes back armed with kitchen utensils and a popgun, and attended by Matthew and Harpax. The issue of the scrape is, that the lady and her maids beat off the assailants with mop and broom; Matthew managing to have all his blows light on Ralph.

The fifth Act opens with the arrival of Goodluck and his man Sim, both persuaded of the lady's infidelity. She proceeds to welcome him with much affection, but he draws back, and calls for an explanation: she protests her innocence, and refers him to her friend Tristram Trusty. This brings about the conclusion, the wedding of Goodluck and Custance being appointed, and Ralph and Matthew being invited to it.

The piece, its date considered, is certainly one of no little merit: it has considerable wit and humour, in which there is nothing coarse or vulgar; the dialogue abounds in variety and spirit, and the characters are well discriminated and life-like. The idea of Merrygreek was evidently caught from the old Vice; but his love of sport and mischief is without malignity, and the interest of his part is in the character, not in the trimmings. The play is written in lines of unequal length, and with nothing to mark them as verse but the rhymes.

Misogonus , a piece which has lately come to light, appears from internal evidence to have been written about 1560. The scene is laid in Italy, but the manners and allusions are English, while the persons have Greek and Roman names significant of their tempers or positions. Here, again, the characterization is diversified and sustained with no little skill, while many of the incidents and situations are highly diverting. Perhaps the most noteworthy feature of the play is Cacurgus, a specimen of the professional domestic Fool that succeeded the old Vice. And he is one of the most remarkable instances of his class that have survived; there being no other play of so early a date wherein the part is used with so much skill. Before his master, who is the hero, Cacurgus commonly affects the simpleton, but at other times is full of versatile shrewdness and waggish mischief. He is usually called, both by himself and others, Will Summer; as though he were understood to model his action after the celebrated court Fool of Henry the Eighth.

An analysis of the plot would occupy too much space; besides, the piece, with all its merit, does not really offer much towards illustrating the matter of dramatic progress: it only shows that the spirit of improvement was alive in more minds than one. Perhaps I ought to add, that the events of the play extend over a considerable period of time; yet the unity of action is so well maintained, that the diversities of time do not press upon the thoughts. On the whole, it is clear that even at that date the principles of the Gothic Drama were vigorously at work, preparing that magnificent fruitage of art which came to full harvest, ere she who then sat on the English throne was taken to her rest.

Hitherto we have met with no instance of regular tragedy, which was in England of later growth than comedy; though we have seen that some beginnings of tragedy were made in the older species of drama. *The Tragedy of Gorboduc* , or, as it is sometimes called, *Of Ferrex and Porrex* , is on several accounts deserving of special attention. It was acted before the Queen at Whitehall, by gentlemen of the Inner Temple, in January, 1562; and was printed in 1565, the title-page informing us that three Acts were written by Thomas Norton, and the last two by Thomas Sackville. Norton made and published a translation of Calvin's *Institutes* , which went through five editions during his lifetime. Sackville, afterwards Earl of Dorset, succeeded Burghley as Lord Treasurer in 1599, which office he held till his death, in 1608; and was eulogized by divers pens, Lord Bacon's being one, for his eloquence, his learning, his charity, and integrity.

Warton's statement of the plot is brief and accurate, as follows: "Gorboduc, a king of Britain about six hundred years before Christ, made in his lifetime a division of his kingdom to his two sons Ferrex and Porrex. The two young princes within five years quarrelled for universal sovereignty. A civil war ensued, and Porrex slew his elder brother Ferrex. Their mother, Videna, who loved Ferrex best, revenged his death by entering Porrex's chamber in the night, and murdering him in his sleep. The people, exasperated at the cruelty and treachery of this murder, rose in rebellion, and killed both Gorboduc and Videna. The nobility then assembled, collected an army, and destroyed the rebels. An intestine war commenced between the chief lords; the succession of the crown became uncertain and arbitrary, for want of a lineal royal issue; and the country, destitute of a king, and wasted by domestic slaughter, was reduced to a state of the most miserable desolation."

Each Act of the tragedy is preceded by a dumb-show significant of what is forthcoming, and the first four are followed by choruses, moralizing the events. But the most notable fact about it is, that all except the choruses is in blank-verse; in which respect it was a great and noble innovation. And the versification runs abundantly smooth; beyond which little can be said in its favour; though that was a good deal for the time. With considerable force of thought and language, the speeches are excessively formal, stately, and didactic; every thing is told, nothing represented; the dialogue is but a series of studied declamation, without any pulses of life, or any relish of individual traits; in brief, all is mere State rhetoric speaking in the same vein, now from one mouth, now from another. From the subject-matter, the unities of time and place are necessarily disregarded, while there is no continuity of action or character to lift it above the circumscriptions of sense. The Acts and scenes follow one another without any innate principle of succession: there is nothing like an organic composition of the parts, no weaving of them together by any law of dramatic sequence and development. Still, the piece marks an era in the English Drama. In the single article of blank-verse, though having all the monotony of the most regular rhyming versifier, it did more for dramatic improvement than, perhaps, could have been done in a century without that step being taken.

The Supposes , translated from the Italian of Ariosto by George Gascoigne, and acted at Gray's Inn in 1566, is chiefly remarkable as being the oldest extant play in English prose. *Jocasta* , also acted at Gray's Inn the same year, is the second known play in blank-verse. It was avowedly taken from Euripides, but can hardly be called a translation, since it makes "many omissions, retrenchments, and transpositions"; though the main substance of the original is retained.

The example of making English plays out of Italian novels appears to have been first set, unless the lost play of *Romeo and Juliet* should be excepted, in 1568, when the tragedy of *Tancred and Gismunda* was performed before Elizabeth at the Inner Temple. It was the work of five persons, each contributing an Act, and one of them being Christopher Hatton, afterwards known as Elizabeth's "dancing Chancellor." Except in the article of blank-verse, the writers seem to have taken *Gorboduc* as their model; each Act beginning with a dumb-show, and ending with a chorus. The play was founded on one of Boccaccio's tales, an English version of which had recently appeared in *The Palace of Pleasure* .

The accounts of the revels from 1568 to 1580 furnish the titles of fifty-two dramas performed at Court, none of which have survived. Of these fifty-two pieces, judging by the titles, eighteen were on classical subjects; twenty-one on subjects from modern history, romance, and other tales; while seven may be classed as comedies, and six as Moral-Plays. It is to be noted, also, that at this time the Master of the Revels was wont to have different sets of players rehearse their pieces before him, and then to choose such of them as he judged fit for royal ears; which infers that the Court rather followed than led the popular taste.

This may probably be taken as a fair indication how far the older species of drama still kept its place on the stage. Moral-Plays lingered in occasional use till long after this period; and we even hear of Miracle-Plays performed now and then till after the death of Elizabeth. And this was much more the case, no doubt, in the country towns and villages than in the metropolis, as the growing life of thought could not but beat lustiest at the heart; and of course all the rest of the nation could not bridle Innovation, spurred as she was by the fierce competition of wit in London.

Certain parts, however, of the Moral-Plays had vigour enough, it appears, to propagate themselves into the drama of comedy and tragedy after the main body of them had been withdrawn. An apt instance of this is furnished in *A Knack to know a Knave* , entered at the Stationers' in 1593, but written several years before. It was printed in 1594, the title-page stating that it had been "acted sundry times by Edward Alleyn and his company," and that it contained "Kempe's applauded merriments of the men of Gotham."

The play is made up partly of allegorical personages, partly of historical; the chief of the latter being King Edgar, St. Dunstan, Ethenwald, Osrick, and his daughter Alfrida. From reports of Alfrida's beauty, Edgar gets so enamoured of her, that he sends Ethenwald, Earl of Cornwall, to court her for him. The Earl, being already in love with the lady, wants to court her for himself. Introduced by her father, his passion gets the better of his commission; he woos and wins her, and has her father's consent. On his return, he tells Edgar she will do very well for an earl, but not for a king: Edgar distrusts his report, and goes to see for himself, when Ethenwald tries to pass off the kitchen-maid as Alfrida: the trick is detected, Dunstan counsels forgiveness, and Edgar generously renounces his claim. There is but one scene of "Kempe's applauded merriments," and this consists merely of a blundering dispute, whether a mock petition touching the consumption of ale shall be presented to the King by a cobbler or a smith.

As to the allegorical persons, it is worth noting that several of these have individual designations, as if the author had some vague ideas of representative character,—that is, persons standing for classes, yet clothed with individuality,—but lacked the skill to work them out. Such is the Bailiff of Hexham, who represents the iniquities of local magistrates. He has four sons,—Walter, representing the frauds of farmers; Priest, the sins of the clergy; Coney-catcher, the tricks of cheats; and Perin, the vices of courtiers. Besides these, we have Honesty, whose business it is to expose crimes and vices. The Devil makes his appearance several times, and, when the old Bailiff dies, carries him off. At last, Honesty exposes the crimes of all classes to the King, who has justice done on their representatives.—The piece is in blank-verse, and in respect of versification shows considerable improvement on the specimens hitherto noticed.

<<span id="filepos0039856861"> a>SHAKESPEARE'S CONTEMPORARIES.

Touching the general state of the Drama a few years before Shakespeare took hold of it, our information is full and clear, not only in the specimens that have survived, but in the criticisms of contemporary writers. A good deal of the criticism, however, is so mixed up with personal and polemical invective, as to be unworthy of much credit. George Whetstone, in the dedication of his *Promos and Cassandra* , published in 1578, tells us: "The Englishman in this quality is most vain, indiscreet, and out of order. He first grounds his work on impossibilities; then in three hours he runs through the world, marries, makes children men, men to conquer kingdoms, murder monsters, and bringeth gods from Heaven, and fetcheth devils from Hell. And, that which is worst, many times, to make mirth, they make a clown companion with a king; in their grave counsels they allow the advice of Fools; yea, they use one order of speech for all persons,—a gross indecorum."—In 1581, Stephen Gosson published a tract in which he says: "Sometimes you shall see nothing but the adventures of an amorous knight, passing from country to country for the love of his lady, encountering many a terrible monster made of brown paper; and at his return so wonderfully changed, that he cannot be known but by some posy in his tablet, or by a broken ring, or a handkerchief, or a piece of cockle-shell." And in another part of the same tract he tells us that "*The Palace of Pleasure, The Ethiopian History, Amadis of France* , and *The Round Table* , comedies in Latin, French, Italian, and Spanish, have been thoroughly ransacked, to furnish the play-houses in London." Which shows very clearly what direction the public taste was then taking. The matter and method of the old dramas, and all "such musty fopperies of antiquity," would no longer do: there was an eager though ignorant demand for something wherein the people might find or fancy themselves touched by the real currents of nature. And, as prescription was thus set aside, and art still ungrown, the materials of history and romance, foreign tales and plays, any thing that could furnish incidents and a plot, were blindly pressed into the service.

Whatever discredit may attach to the foregoing extracts on the score of prejudice or passion, nothing of the sort can hold in the case of Sir Philip Sidney, whose

Defence of Poesy , though not printed till 1595, must have been written before 1586, in which year the author died. "Our tragedies and comedies," says he, "are not without cause cried out against, observing rules neither of honest civility nor skilful poetry. You shall have Asia of the one side, and Afric of the other, and so many other under-kingdoms, that the player, when he comes in, must ever begin with telling where he is, or else the tale will not be conceived. Now you shall have three ladies walk to gather flowers, and then we must-believe the stage to be a garden: by-and-by we hear news of a shipwreck in the same place; then we are to blame if we accept it not for a rock. Upon the back of that, comes out a hideous monster with fire and smoke, and then the miserable beholders are bound to take it for a cave; while in the mean time two armies fly in, represented with four swords and bucklers, and then what hard heart will not receive it for a pitched field? Now, of time they are much more liberal; for ordinary it is, that two young princes fall in love; after many traverses she is delivered of a fair boy; he is lost, groweth a man, falleth in love, and all this in two hours' space: which how absurd it is in sense, even sense may imagine, and art hath taught, and all ancient examples justified. But, besides these gross absurdities, all their plays be neither right tragedies nor right comedies, mingling kings and clowns, not because the matter so carrieth it, but thrust in the clown by head and shoulders, to play a part in majestical matters with neither decency nor discretion."

From all which it is evident enough that very little if any heed was then paid to dramatic propriety and decorum. It was not *merely* that the unities of place and time were set at nought, but that events and persons were thrown together without *any* order or law; unconnected with each other save to the senses, while at the same time according to sense they were far asunder. It is also manifest that the principles of the Gothic Drama in respect of general structure and composition, in disregard of the minor unities, and in the free blending and interchange of the comic and tragic elements, were thoroughly established; though not yet moulded up with sufficient art to shield them from the just censure and ridicule of sober judgment and good taste. Here was a great work to be done; greater than any art then known was sufficient for. Without this, any thing like an original or national drama was impossible. Sir Philip saw the chaos about him; but he did not see, and none could foresee, the creation that was to issue from it. He would have spoken very differently, no doubt, had he lived to see the intrinsic relations of character and passion, the vital sequence of mental and moral development, set forth in such clearness and strength, the whole fabric resting on such solid grounds, of philosophy, and charged with such cunning efficacies of poetry, that breaches of local and chronological succession either pass without notice, or are noticed only for the gain of truth and nature that is made through them. For the laws of sense hold only as the thoughts are absorbed in what is sensuous and definite; and the very point was, to lift the mind above this by working on its imaginative forces, and penetrating it with the light of relations more inward and essential.

At all events, it was by going ahead, and not by retreating, that modern thought was to find its proper dramatic expression. The foundation of principles was settled, and stood ready to be built upon whenever the right workman should come. Moreover public taste was sharp for something warm with life, so much so indeed as to keep running hither and thither after the shabbiest semblances of it, but still unable to rest with them. The national mind, in discarding, or rather outgrowing the older species of drama, had worked itself into contact with Nature. And it was the uncritical, popular, living, practical mind that was to give the law in this business: nothing was to be achieved either by the word or the work of those learned folk who would not be pleased unless they could parse their pleasure by the rules of ancient grammar. But to reproduce nature in mental forms requires great power of art, much greater, perhaps, than minds educated amidst works of art can well conceive.

Which brings me to the matter of Shakespeare's SENIOR CONTEMPORARIES. For here, again, the process was gradual. Neither may we affirm that nothing had yet been done towards organizing the collected materials. But the methods and faculties of art were scattered here and there; different parts of the thing had been worked out severally; and it yet remained to draw and knit them all up together. It is difficult, perhaps impossible, to determine exactly by whom the first steps were taken in this work. But all that was done of much consequence, Shakespeare apart, may be found in connection with the three names of George Peele, Robert Greene, and Christopher Marlowe.

PEELE took his first degree at Oxford in 1577, and became Master of Arts in 1579. Soon after this, he is supposed to have gone to London as a literary adventurer. Dissipation and debauchery were especially rife at that time among the authors by profession, who hung in large numbers upon the metropolis, haunting its taverns and ordinaries; and it is but too certain that Peele plunged deeply into the vices of his class.

His first dramatic work, *The Arraignment of Paris* , was printed in 1584, the title-page stating that it had been played before the Queen by the children of her chapel. The piece is vastly superior to any thing known to have preceded it. It is avowedly a pastoral drama, and sets forth a whole troop of gods and goddesses; with nothing that can properly be called delineation of character. The plot is simply this: Juno, Pallas, and Venus get at strife who shall have the apple of discord which Até has thrown among them, with directions that it be given to the fairest. As each thinks herself the fairest, they agree to refer the question to Paris, the Trojan shepherd, who, after mature deliberation, awards the golden ball to Venus. An appeal is taken: he is arraigned before Jupiter in a synod of the gods for having rendered a partial and unjust sentence; but defends himself so well, that their godships are at a loss what to do. At last, by Apollo's advice, the matter is referred to Diana, who, as she wants no lovers, cares little for beauty. Diana sets aside all their claims, and awards the apple to Queen Elizabeth; which verdict gives perfect satisfaction all round.

The piece displays fair gifts of poetry; it abounds in natural and well-proportioned sentiment; thoughts and images seem to rise up fresh from the writer's observation, and not merely gathered at second hand; a considerable portion is in blank-verse, but the author uses various measures, in all which his versification is graceful and flowing.

The Battle of Alcazar , written as early as 1589, but not printed till 1594, is a strange performance, and nearly as worthless as strange; full of tearing rant and fustian; while the action, if such it may be called, goes it with prodigious license, jumping to and fro between Portugal and Africa without remorse. I have some difficulty in believing the piece to be Peele's: certainly it is not in his vein, nor, as to that matter, in anybody's else; for it betrays at every step an ambitions imitation of Marlowe, wherein, as usually happens, the faults of the model are exaggerated, and the virtues not reached. Peele could hardly have been cast into such an ecstasy of disorder, but from a wild attempt to rival the author of *Tamburlaine* , which is several times referred to in the piece.

King Edward the First , printed in 1593, and probably written later than the preceding, is much better every way. But its chief claim to notice is as an early attempt in the Historical Drama, which Shakespeare brought to such perfection. The character of Edward is portrayed with considerable spirit and truth to history, and is perhaps Peele's best effort in that line. On the other hand, Queen Elinor of Castile is shockingly disfigured, and this, not only in contempt of history, which might be borne with if it really enriched the scene, but to the total disorganizing of the part itself; the purpose being, no doubt, to gratify the bitter national antipathy to the Spaniards. Peele seems to have been incapable of the proper grace and delectation of comedy: nevertheless the part of Prince Lluellen, of Wales, and his adherents, who figure pretty largely, and sometimes in the disguise of Robin Hood and his merry men, shows something of comic talent, and adds to the entertainment of the piece. The other comic portions have nothing to recommend them.

The Old Wives' Tale , printed in 1595, is little worth mention save as having probably contributed somewhat to one of the noblest and sweetest poems ever written.—Two brothers are wandering in quest of their sister, whom Sacrapant, an enchanter, has imprisoned: they call her name, and Echo replies; whereupon Sacrapant gives her a potion that induces self-oblivion. His magical powers depend on a wreath which encircles his head, and on a light enclosed in glass which he keeps hidden under the turf. The brothers afterwards meet with an old man, also skilled in magic, who enables them to recover their sister. A Spirit in the likeness of a young page comes to Sacrapant, tears off his wreath, and kills him. Still the sister remains enchanted, and cannot be released till the glass is broken and the light extinguished; which can only be done by a Lady who is neither maid, wife, nor widow. The Spirit blows a magical horn, and the Lady appears, breaks the glass, and puts out the light. A curtain being then withdrawn discovers the sister asleep; she is disenchanted, joins her brothers, and the Spirit vanishes.—The resemblance to Milton's *Comus* need not be pointed out. The difference of the two pieces in all points of execution is literally immense; Peele's work in this case being all steeped in meanness and vulgarity, without a touch of truth, poetry, or wit.

The Love of King David and Fair Bethseba is commonly regarded as Peele's masterpiece. And here, again, we breathe the genuine air of nature and simplicity. The piece is all in blank-verse, which, though wanting in variety, is replete with melody; and it has passages of tenderness and pathos such as to invest it with an almost sacred charm. There is perhaps a somewhat too literal adherence to the Scripture narrative, and very little art used in the ordering and disposing of the materials, for Peele was neither strong nor happy in the gift of invention; but the characters generally are seized in their most peculiar traits, and presented with a good degree of vigour and discrimination; while at the same time their more prominent features are not worked into disproportion with the other parts.

Peele's contributions to the Drama were mainly in the single article of poetry: here his example was so marked, that it was bound to be respected and emulated by all who undertook to work in the same field. In the development of character, and in the high art of dramatic composition and organization, he added very little; his genius being far unequal to this high task, and his judgment still more so. And his efforts were probably rendered fitful and unsteady by vicious habits; which may explain why it was that he who could do so well sometimes did so meanly. Often, no doubt, when reduced to extreme shifts, he patched up his matter loosely and trundled it off in haste, to replenish his wasted means, and start him on a fresh course of riot and debauchery.

GREENE, inferior to Peele as a whole, surpassed him however in fertility and aptness of invention, in quickness and luxuriousness of fancy, and in the right seizing and placing of character, especially for comic effect. In his day he was vastly notorious both as a writer and a man;—a cheap counterfeit of fame which he achieved with remarkable ease, and seems not to have coveted any thing better. He took his first degree at Cambridge in 1578, proceeded Master of Arts in 1583, and was incorporated at Oxford in 1588; after which he was rather fond of styling himself "Master of Arts in both Universities." Soon after 1585, if not before, he betook himself to London, where he speedily sank into the worst type of a literary adventurer. Thenceforth his life seems to have been one continual spasm, plunging hither and thither in transports of wild profligacy and repentance. He died in 1592, eaten up with diseases purchased by sin.

Much of Greene's notoriety during his lifetime grew from his prose writings, which, in the form of tracts, were rapidly thrown off, and were well adapted both in matter and style to catch a loud but transient popularity. One of them had the honour of being laid under contribution for *The Winter's Tale* . In these pieces, generally, the most striking features are a constant affecting of the euphuistic style which John Lily had rendered popular, and a certain incontinence of metaphors and classical allusions, the issue of a full and ready memory unrestrained by taste or judgment; the writer galloping on from page to page with unflagging volubility, himself evidently captivated with the rolling sound of his own sentences. Still, his descriptions often have a warmth and height of colouring that could not fail to take prodigiously in an age when severity or delicacy of taste was none of the commonest. Several of his prose pieces are liberally interspersed with passages of poetry, in which he uses a variety of measures, and most of them with an easy, natural skill, while his cast of thought and imagery shows him by no means a stranger to the springs of poetic sweetness and grace, though he never rises to any thing like grandeur.

The History of Orlando Furioso was acted as early as 1591, and probably written some time before. The plot was partly founded on Ariosto's romance, partly invented by Greene himself. The action, or what stands for such, is conducted with the wildest license, and shows no sense or idea of dramatic truth, but only a prodigious straining after stage effect; the writer trying, apparently, how many men of different nations, European, African, and Asiatic, he could huddle in together, and how much love, rivalry, and fighting he could put them through in the compass of five Acts. As for the fury of Orlando, it is as far from the method of madness as from the logic of reason; being none other than the incoherent jargon of one endeavouring to talk stark nonsense.

Alphonsus, King of Arragon , belongs, by internal marks, to about the same period as the preceding, but is not known to have been printed till 1597. Each Act opens with a chorus by Venus. Medea, also, is employed to work enchantments, and raises Homer's Calchas, who comes forth "clad in a white surplice and a cardinal's mitre." This play, too, is crammed from first to last brimful of tumult and battle; the scene changing between Italy and Turkey with admirable lawlessness; and Christians of divers nations, Turks, and a band of Amazonian warriors, bestriding the stage with their monstrous din.

Both of these pieces are mainly in blank-verse, with a frequent interspersing of couplets. In the latter piece, allusion is made to "the mighty Tamburlaine," thus indicating the height which Greene was striving to reach, if not surpass. In fact, both pieces have plenty of Marlowe's thunder, but none of his lightning. Even the blank-verse reads like that of one accustomed to rhyme, and unable to get out of his wonted rut. And the versification runs, throughout, in a stilted monotony, the style being made thick and turgid with high-sounding epithets; while we have a perfect flux of learned impertinence. As for truth, nature, character, poetry, we look for them in vain; though there is much, in the stage noise and parade, that might keep the multitude from perceiving the want of them.

In *The Scottish History of James the Fourth* , probably written some time after the two preceding, the author seems to have got convinced that imitation of

Marlowe was not his line, and that he could do best by working his own native vein: accordingly, considerable portions of it are in prose and rhyme; while the style throughout is disciplined into a tolerable degree of sobriety and simplicity. Though purporting to be a history, it has scarce any thing of historical matter. It opens with a comic scene betwixt Oberon, King of Fairies, and Bohan, an old Scottish lord, who, disgusted with the vices of Court, city, and country, has withdrawn from the world with his two sons, Slipper and Nano, turned Stoic, lives in a tomb, and talks broad Scotch. King Oberon has nothing in common with the fairy king of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* , except the name. The main plot of the drama is as follows:

King James marries Dorothea, the daughter of Arius, King of England. Before the wedding is fairly over, he falls in love with Ida, the Countess of Arran's daughter, makes suit to her, and is rejected with horror. He then sets himself to work to get rid of his Queen, turns away from his old counsellors, and gives his ear to an unscrupulous parasite named Ateukin. Through his influence, the King forms a scheme for assassinating the Queen; who gets information of the plot, disguises herself in male attire, and escapes, with Nano in her company. The parasite's agent overtakes her, finds out who she is, fights with her, and leaves her for dead. During the fight, Nano runs for help, and soon returns with Sir Cuthbert Anderson, who takes her to his house, where her wounds are healed, both Sir Cuthbert and his wife supposing her all the while to be a man. Meanwhile Ida gives herself in marriage to Lord Eustace, with whom she has suddenly fallen in love upon his asking her hand. The King now begins to be devoured by compunctions on account of the Queen, believing her to be dead. The King of England also gets intelligence how his daughter has been treated, and makes war on her husband. When they are on the eve of a decisive battle, Dorothea makes her appearance, to the astonishment of all the parties: she pleads tenderly for her repentant husband, and a general reconciliation takes place; Ateukin and his abettors being delivered over to their deserts.

This play has something of what may not unworthily be called character. The parts of Ida and the Queen are not without delicacy and pathos, showing that the author was not far from some right ideas of what womanhood is. Ateukin's part, too, is very well conceived and sustained, though the qualities of a parasite are made rather too naked and bald, as would naturally result from the writer's ambition being stronger than his love of nature and truth. The comic portions are much beyond any thing we have met with in that line, since *Ralph Roister Doister* and *Misogonus* . The versification is endurably free from gas, and the style in many parts may be pronounced rather tight and sinewy.

Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay was printed in 1594, but acted as early as 1591. The hero is Edward, Prince of Wales, afterwards King Edward the First; the heroine, Margaret, a keeper's daughter, known as "the fair maid of Fressingfield." The Prince, who is out on a hunting excursion with Lacy and several other friends, and Ralph Simnel, the Court Fool, meets with Margaret, and his fancy is at once smitten with her, while she has no suspicion who he is. At Ralph's suggestion, he sends Lacy, in the disguise of a farmer's son, to court Margaret for him, and sets out on a visit to Friar Bacon at Oxford, to learn from the conjurer how his suit is going to speed. Lacy thinks the Prince's aim is not to wed the girl, but to entrap and beguile her; besides, his own heart is already interested; so he goes to courting her in good earnest for himself. Meanwhile the Prince with his company, all disguised, arrives at Friar Bacon's; and, through the conjurer's art, learns what Lacy is doing. Soon after, he comes upon Lacy, poniard in hand, meaning to kill him on the spot. Margaret, being present, intercedes for her lover, and takes all the blame of his course to herself. The Prince then lays siege to her in person, but she vows she will rather die with Lacy than divorce her heart from his, and finally reminds him of his own princely honour; whereupon he frankly resigns her to his rival's hand.

Among other entertainments of the scene, we have a trial of national skill between Bacon and Bungay on one side, and Vandermast, a noted conjurer from Germany, on the other. First, Bungay tries his art, and is thoroughly baffled by the German; then Bacon takes Vandermast in hand, and outconjures him all to nothing. Bacon has a servant named Miles, who, for his ignorant blundering in a weighty matter, is at last carried off by one of his master's devils. The last scene is concerned with the marriage of Prince Edward and Elinor of Castile, and is closed by Bacon with a grand prophecy touching Elizabeth.

Here, again, we have some fair lines of characterization, especially in the Prince, Lacy, Margaret, and Ralph. The heroine is altogether Greene's masterpiece in female character; she exhibits much strength, spirit, and sweetness of composition; in fact, she is not equalled by any woman of the English stage till we come to Shakespeare, whom no one has ever approached in that line. It scarce need be said that the play is quite guiltless of any thing worthy to be named *dramatic composition* . But it has a good deal of dramatic poetry, that would be almost charming, had not Shakespeare spoilt every thing of the kind that was done before he taught men how to do it.

The comedy of *George a Greene, the Pinner of Wakefield* , printed in 1599, is ascribed to Greene, but, it seems to me, not on very strong grounds. I can hardly believe it his; certainly the style and versification are much better than in any other of his plays; nor does it show any thing of that incontinence of learning which he seems to have been unable to restrain. The blank-verse, too, is far unlike Greene's anywhere else.

The story of the piece is quite entertaining in itself, and is set forth with a good deal of vivacity and spirit. Among the characters are King Edward of England, King James of Scotland, the Earl of Kendall, with other lords, and Robin Hood. George a Greene is the hero; who, what with his wit, and what with his strength, gets the better of all the other persons in turn. Withal he is full of high and solid manhood, and his character is drawn with more vigour and life than any hitherto noticed. The piece opens with the Earl of Kendall and his adherents in rebellion against the State. The Earl sends Sir Nicholas Mannering to Wakefield, to demand provision for his camp. Sir Nicholas enters the town, and shows his commission: the magistrates are at a loss what to do, till the hero comes amongst them, outfaces the messenger, tears up his commission, makes him eat the seals, and sends him back with an answer of defiance.

Greene was concerned, along with Thomas Lodge, in writing another extant play, entitled *A Looking-Glass for London and England* . This is little better than a piece of stage trash, being a mixture of comedy, tragedy, and Miracle-Play; an Angel, a Devil, and the Prophet Hosea taking part in the action. The verse parts are in Greene's puffiest style, the prose parts in his filthiest.

Greene probably wrote divers other plays, but none others have survived that are known to be his.

MARLOWE, the greatest of Shakespeare's senior contemporaries, was baptized in St. George's church, Canterbury, on the 26th of February, 1564, just two months before the baptism of Shakespeare. He took his first degree at Cambridge in 1583, became Master of Arts in 1587, and was soon after embarked among the worst literary adventurers in London, living by his wits, and rioting on the quick profits of his pen. His career was brief, but fruitful,—fruitful in more senses than one. He was slain by one Francis Archer in a brawl, on the 1st of June, 1593.

His first dramatic work was *Tamburlaine the Great* , in two parts; printed in 1590, but written before 1588. In this work, what Ben Jonson describes as "Marlowe's mighty line" is out in all its mightiness. The lines, to be sure, have a vast amount of strut and swell in them, but then they also have a good deal of real energy and force. Marlowe has had much praise, perhaps more than his due, as the introducer of blank-verse on the public stage; it being alleged that the previous use of it was only in what may be called private theatricals. Be that as it may, he undoubtedly did much towards *fixing* it as the habit of English dramatic poetry. *Tamburlaine* had a sudden, a great, and long-continued popularity. And its success may have been partly owing to its faults, inasmuch as the public ear, long used to rhyme, needed some compensation in the way of grandiloquent stuffing, which was here supplied in abundance.

The scene of these two plays, which are substantially one, takes in the whole period of time from the hero's first conquest till his death; so that the action ranges at large over divers kingdoms and empires. Except the hero, there is little really deserving the name of characterization, this being a point of art which Marlowe had not yet reached, and which he never attained but in a moderate degree, taking Shakespeare as the standard. But the hero is drawn with grand and striking proportions, and perhaps seems the larger, that the bones of his individuality stand out in undue prominence; the author lacking that balance of powers which is requisite, to produce the symmetry and roundness met with in the higher forms of Nature. And he knew not, apparently, how to express the hero's greatness *in word* , but by making him bethump the stage with tempestuous verbiage; which, to be sure, is not the style of greatness at all, but only of one trying to be great, and *trying* to be so, because he is not so. For to talk big is the instinct of ambitious littleness. But Tamburlaine is also represented *in act* as a most magnanimous prodigy: amidst his haughtiest strides of conquest, we have strains of gentleness mingling with his iron sternness; and he everywhere appears lifted high with generous passions and impulses: if he regards not others, he is equally ready to sacrifice himself, his ease, pleasure, and even life, in his prodigious lust of glory.

As to the rest, this drama consists rather of a long series of speeches than any genuine dialogue. And the persons all speak from one brain, the hero talking just like the others, only more so; as if the author had no way to discriminate character but by different degrees of the same thing: in which respect the work has often reminded me of divers more civilized stage preparations, such as Addison's *Cato* , Young's *Revenge, et id genus omne* . For the proper constituent of dramatic dialogue is, that the persons strike fire out of each other by their sharp collisions of thought, so that their words relish at once of the individual speaking and the individual spoken to. Moreover the several parts of this work are not moulded together in any thing like vital unity; the materials seem bundled up arbitrarily, and for stage effect, instead of being assorted on any principle of organic coherence; every thing thus going by the author's will, not by any law of reason or art. But this is a high region, from which there was in that age but one man big enough to be seen; so it's no use speaking of the rest. Therewithal the work affects us, throughout, as a dead-level of superlatives; everywhere we have nearly the same boisterous wind of tragical storm-and-stress: so that the effect is much like that of a picture all foreground, with no perspective, no proportionateness of light and shade, to give us distinct impressions.

The Jew of Malta shows very considerable advance towards a chaste and sober diction, but not much either in development of character or composition of parts. Barabas the Jew is a horrible monster of wickedness and cunning, yet not without strong lines of individuality. The author evidently sought to compass the effect of tragedy by accumulation of murders and other hellish deeds; which shows that he had no steady ideas as to wherein the true secret of tragic terror lies: he here strives to reach it by overfilling the senses; whereas its proper method stands in the joint working of the moral and imaginative powers, which are rather stifled than kindled by causing the senses to "sup full of horrors." The piece, however, abounds in quick and caustic wit; in some parts there is a good share of dialogue as distinguished from speech-making; and the versification is far more varied and compact than in *Tamburlaine* . Still the work, as a whole, shows little that can properly be called dramatic power as distinguished from the general powers of rhetoric and wit.

The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus , probably written before 1590, exhibits Marlowe in a higher vein of workmanship. I think it must be acknowledged that he here wields the right elements and processes of tragic effect with no ordinary subtlety and power. Faustus, the hero, is a mighty necromancer, who has studied himself into direct communion with preternatural beings, and beside whom Friar Bacon sinks into a tame forger of bugbears. A Good Angel and a Bad Angel figure in the piece, each trying to win Faustus to his several way. Lucifer is ambitious to possess "his glorious soul," and the hero craves Lucifer's aid, that he may work wonders on the Earth. At his summons, Mephistophilis, who acts as Lucifer's prime minister, visits him to negotiate an arrangement. I must quote a brief passage from their interview:

"*Faust* . Tell me, what is that Lucifer thy lord?

Meph . Arch-regent and commander of all spirits.

Faust . Was not that Lucifer an angel once?

Meph . Yes, Faustus, and most dearly lov'd of God.

Faust . How comes it, then, that he is Prince of Devils?

Meph . O, by aspiring pride and insolence! For which God threw him from the face of Heaven.

Faust . And what are you that live with Lucifer?

Meph . Unhappy spirits that fell with Lucifer, And are for ever damn'd with Lucifer.

Faust . Where are you damn'd?

Meph . In Hell.

Faust . How comes it, then, that thou art out of Hell?

Meph. Why, this is Hell, nor am I out of it : Think'st thou that I, who saw the face of God, And tasted the eternal joys of Heaven, Am not tormented with ten thousand hells In being depriv'd of everlasting bliss? *O Faustus, leave these frivolous demands, Which strike a terror to my fainting soul.*

Faust . What! is great Mephistophilis so passionate For being deprivéd of the joys of Heaven? Learn thou of Faustus manly fortitude, And scorn those joys thou never shalt possess. Go, bear these tidings to great Lucifer: Seeing Faustus hath incurr'd eternal death, Say, he surrenders up to him his soul, So he will spare him four-and-twenty years, Letting him live in all voluptuousness; Having thee ever to attend on me, To give me whatsoever I shall ask, To tell me whatsoever I demand, To slay mine enemies, and aid my friends, And always be obedient to my will."

This passage, especially the hero's cool indifference in questioning about things which the fiend shudders to consider, has often struck me as not altogether unworthy to be thought of in connection with Milton.

The result of the interview is, that Faustus makes a compact with Lucifer, draws blood from his own arm, and with it writes out a deed of gift, assuring his soul and body to the fiend at the end of twenty-four years. Thenceforth he spends his time in exercising the mighty spells and incantations thus purchased: he has the power of making himself invisible, and entering whatsoever houses he lists; he passes from kingdom to kingdom with the speed of thought; wields the elements at will, and has the energies of Nature at his command; summons the Grecian Helen to his side for a companion; and holds the world in wonder at his acts. Meanwhile the knowledge which Hell has given him of Heaven haunts him; he cannot shake off the thought of what the awful compact binds him to; repentance carries on a desperate struggle in him with the necromantic fascination, and at one time fairly outwrestles it; but he soon recovers his purpose, renews his pledge to Lucifer, and finally performs it.

This feature of the representation suggests a great thought, perhaps I should say, principle of man's moral being, which Shakespeare has more than once worked upon with surpassing effect. For it is remarkable that, in *Macbeth* , the thinking of the Weird Sisters (and he cannot choose but think of them) fires the hero's moral and imaginative forces into convulsive action, and thus causes him to shrink back from the very deed to which the prophetic greetings stimulate him. So, again, in *Hamlet* , the intimations of the Ghost touching "the secrets of its prison-house" kindle the hero full of "thoughts beyond the reaches of his soul," which entrance him in meditation, unstring his resolution, and render him morally incapable of the office to which that same Ghost has called him.

The Jew of Malta , has divers passages in a far higher and richer style of versification than any part of *Tamburlaine* . The author's diction has grown more pliant and facile to his thought; consequently it is highly varied in pause and movement; showing that in his hand the noble instrument of dramatic blank-verse was fast growing into tune for a far mightier hand to discourse its harmonies upon. I must add that considerable portions both of this play and the preceding are meant to be comical. But the result only proves that Marlowe was incapable of comedy. No sooner does he attempt the comic vein than his whole style collapses into mere balderdash. In fact, though plentifully gifted with wit, there was not a particle of real humour in him; none of that subtle and perfusive essence out of which the true comic is spun; for these choice powers can hardly live but in the society of certain moral elements that seem to have been left out of his composition.

Edward the Second , probably the latest, certainly much the best, of Marlowe's dramas, was printed in 1598. Here, for the first time, we meet with a genuine specimen of the English Historical Drama. The scene covers a period of twenty years; the incidents pass with great rapidity, and, though sometimes crushed into indistinctness, are for the most part well used both for historic truth and dramatic effect; and the dialogue, generally, is nervous, animated, and clear. In the great article of character, too, this play has very considerable merit. The King's insane dotage of his favourites, the upstart vanity and insolence of Gaveston, the artful practice and doubtful virtue of Queen Isabella, the factious turbulence of the nobles, irascible, arrogant, regardless of others' liberty, jealous of their own, sudden of quarrel, eager in revenge, are all depicted with a goodly mixture of energy and temperance. Therewithal the versification moves, throughout, with a freedom and variety, such as may almost stand a comparison with Shakespeare in what may be called his earlier period; as when, for instance, *King Richard the Second* was written. It is probable, however, that by this time, if not before, Marlowe had begun to feel the power of that music which was to charm him, and all others of the time, out of audience and regard. For we have very good evidence, that before Marlowe's death Shakespeare had far surpassed all of that age who had ever been competent to teach him in any point of dramatic workmanship.

Marlowe is of consequence, *mainly* , as one of the first and greatest improvers of dramatic poetry in so far as relates to diction and metrical style; which is my reason for emphasizing his work so much in that regard. But, as this is a virtue much easier felt than described, I can best show what it is, by giving a taste of it; which however must be brief:

"*Edw* . What, Lord Arundel, dost thou come alone?

Arun . Yea, my good lord, for Gaveston is dead.

Edw . Ah, traitors! have they put my friend to death? Tell me, Arundel, died he ere thou cam'st, Or didst thou see my friend to take his death?

Arun . Neither, my lord; for, as he was surpris'd, Begirt with weapons and with enemies round, I did your Highness' message to them all, Demanding him of them, entreating rather, And said, upon the honour of my name, That I would undertake to carry him Unto your Highness, and to bring him back.

Edw . And, tell me, would the rebels deny me that?

Spen . Proud recreants!

Edw . Yea, Spenser, traitors all!

Arun . I found them at the first inexorable: The Earl of Warwick would not bide the hearing; Mortimer hardly; Pembroke and Lancaster Spake least; and when they flatly had denied, Refusing to receive me pledge for him, The Earl of Pembroke mildly thus bespake: 'My lords, because our sovereign sends for him, And promiseth he shall be safe return'd, I will this undertake, to have him hence, And see him redeliver'd to your hands.'

Edw . Well, and how fortunes it that he came not?

Spen . Some treason or some villainy was cause.

Arun . The Earl of Warwick seiz'd him on the way; For, being deliver'd unto Pembroke's men, Their lord rode home, thinking the prisoner safe; But, ere he came, Warwick in ambush lay, And bare him to his death, and in a trench Strake off his head, and march'd unto the camp.

Spen . A bloody part, flatly 'gainst law of arms!

Edw . O, shall I speak, or shall I sigh, and die?

Spen . My lord, refer your vengeance to the sword Upon these barons; hearten up your men; Let them not unreveng'd murder your friends; Advance your standard, Edward, in the field, And march to fire them from their starting-holes.

Edw . I will have heads and lives for him as many As I have manors, castles, towns, and towers!— Treacherous Warwick! traitorous Mortimer! If I be England's king, in lakes of gore Your headless trunks, your bodies will I trail, That you may drink your fill, and quaff in blood, And stain my royal standard with the same; You villains that have slain my Gaveston!— And, in this place of honour and of trust, Spenser, sweet Spenser, I adopt thee here; And merely of our love we do create thee Earl of Gloucester and Lord Chamberlain.

Spen . My lord, here is a messenger from the barons, Desires access unto your Majesty.

Edw . Admit him.

Herald . Long live King Edward, England's lawful lord!

Edw . So wish not they, I wis, that sent thee hither."

This, to be sure, does not read much like, for instance, Hotspur's speech, beginning,

"O, then the earth shook to see the heavens on fire,"

nor is there any thing in Marlowe that does. In the passage quoted, however, (and there are many more like it,) we have the rhymeless ten-syllable iambic verse as the basis; but this is continually diversified, so as to relieve the ear and keep it awake, by occasional spondees, dibrachs, anapests, and amphibrachs, and by the frequent use of trochees in all parts of the verse, but especially at the beginning, and by a skilful shifting of the pause to any part of the line. It thus combines the natural ease and variety of prose with the general effect of metrical harmony, so that the hearing does not surfeit nor tire. As to the general *poetic* style of the performance, the kindling energy of thought and language that often beats and flashes along the sentences, there is much both in this and in *Faustus* to justify the fine enthusiasm of Drayton:

"Next, Marlowe, bathéd in the Thespian springs, Had in him those brave translunary things That the first poets had: his raptures were All air and fire, which made his verses clear; For that fine madness still he did retain Which rightly should possess a poet's brain."

Before leaving the subject, I must notice a remark by Charles Lamb,—the dear, delightful Charley. "The reluctant pangs," says he, "of abdicating royalty in Edward furnished hints which Shakespeare scarce improved in his *Richard the Second* ; and the death-scene of Marlowe's king moves pity and terror beyond any scene, ancient or modern, with which I am acquainted." Both the scenes in question have indeed great merit, but this praise seems to me far beyond the mark. Surely, there is more of genuine, pity-moving pathos in the single speech of York,—"As in a theatre the eyes of men," etc.,—than in all Marlowe's writings put together. And as to the moving of terror, there is, to my mind, nothing in *Edward the Second* that comes up to *Faustus* ; and there are a dozen scenes in *Macbeth* , any one of which has more of the terrific than the whole body of *Faustus* . And in the death-scene of Edward, it can hardly be denied that the senses are somewhat overcrammed with images of physical suffering, so as to give the effect rather of the horrible than the terrible.

Others, again, have thought that Marlowe, if he had lived, would have made some good approach to Shakespeare in tragic power. A few years more would no doubt have lifted him to very noble things, that is, provided his powers could have been kept from the eatings and cripplings of debauchery; still, any approach to that great Divinity of the Drama was out of the question for him. For, judging from his life and works, the moral part of genius was constitutionally defective in him; and, with this so defective, the intellectual part cannot be truly itself; and his work must needs be comparatively weak in those points of our being which it touches, because it does not touch them all: for the whole must be moved at once, else there can be no great moving of any part. No, no! there was not, there could not have been in Marlowe, great as he was, a tithe of Shakespeare, for tragedy, nor any thing else. To go no further, he was, as we have seen, destitute of humour; the powers of comedy evidently had no place in him; and these powers are indispensable to the production of high tragedy: a position affirmed as long ago as the days of Plato; sound in the reason of the thing; and, above all, made good in the instance of Shakespeare; who was *Shakespeare* , mainly because he had *all* the powers of the human mind in harmonious order and action, and *used* them all, explicitly or implicitly, in every play he wrote.

Shakespeare had one or two other senior contemporaries of whom I must say a few words, though it is not likely that they contributed much, if any thing, towards preparing him. John Lily, born in 1554, and Master of Arts in 1576, has considerable wit, some poetry; withal a certain crisp, clever, conceited mannerism of style, which caused him to be spoken of as "eloquent and witty"; but nothing that can be properly termed dramatic talent. His persons all speak in precisely the same vein, being indeed but so many empty figures or puppets, reflecting or propagating the motions of the author himself. His dramatic pieces, of which we have nine, seven in prose, one in rhyme, and one in blank-verse, seem to have been designed for Court entertainments, but were used more or less on the public stage, chiefly by the juvenile companies. They are all replete with that laboured affectation of fine writing which was distinguished at the time as Euphuism. One of his main peculiarities stands in using, for images and illustrations, certain imaginary products of a sort of artificial nature, which he got up especially for that purpose; as if he could invent better materials for poetic imagery than ancient Nature had furnished! Still, it is not unlikely that we owe to him somewhat of the polish and flexibility of the Shakespearian dramatic diction: that he could have helped the Poet in any thing beyond mere diction it were absurd to suppose.

I have already spoken of Thomas Lodge as joint author with Greene of a good-for-nothing play. We have one Other play by him, entitled *The Wounds of Civil War* , and having for its subject "the true tragedies of Harms and Sylla," written before 1590, but not printed till 1594. It is in blank-verse; which however differs from the most regular rhyming ten-syllable verse in nothing but the lack of consonous endings.—Lodge is chiefly memorable in that one of his prose pieces was drawn upon for Shakespeare's *As You Like It* .

We have now reached the time when Shakespeare's hand had learnt its cunning, so far at least as any previous examples could teach it. Perhaps I ought to add, as showing the prodigious rush of life and thought towards the drama in that age, that, besides the authors I have mentioned, Henslowe's *Diary* supplies the names of thirty other dramatists, most of whom have propagated some part of their workmanship down to our time. In the same document, during the twelve years beginning in February, 1591, we have the titles recorded of no less than two hundred and seventy pieces, either as original compositions, or as revivals of older plays. As all these entries have reference only to Henslowe's management; and as, during that period, except for some short intervals, he was concerned with the affairs of but a single company; we may thence conceive how vastly fertile the age was in dramatic production.

After all, it is hardly possible for us to understand how important a part dramatic exhibitions played in the life of "merry England in the olden time." From a very early period, the interest in them was deep, general, and constant; it grew with the growth of civilization; it became complicated with all the mental, moral, and social habitudes of the people; and, in fact, whatever "seed-points of light" got planted in the popular mind had no way but to organize themselves into that shape. Those old plays, such as they were, with their rude, bold attempts to combine religion and mirth, instruction and sport, may almost be described as having been the nerves upon which the whole mental character of the nation formed itself. The spirit which began so early to work in them kept on asserting itself more and more strongly from age to age, till the Drama became emphatically a popular passion; as indeed must always be the case before any thing deserving the name of a National Drama can possibly arise. And it is quite surprising how long this spirit, so universal and so intense, was restrained from putting on so much of institutional form and expression as is implied in having buildings erected or adapted for its special use and service. For we have thus far heard of nothing in the character of temples provided for the liturgies of the Dramatic Art.

The spirit in question, however, did at last reach such a measure of strength, that it could no longer be restrained from issuing in a provision of that sort. The play-house known as the *Blackfriars* was established in 1576, and was owned and run by the company to which Shakespeare afterwards belonged. Two others, called *The Theatre* and *The Curtain* , were probably started about the same time, as we find them in operation in 1577. Before the end of the century, the city and suburbs of London had at least eight more in full blast. And there were, besides, ever so many strolling companies of players carrying the mysteries of their craft into nearly all parts of the kingdom. So that the Drama may well be judged to have been, in the Poet's time, decidedly a great institution. In fact, it was a sort of fourth estate of the realm; nearly as much so, indeed, as the Newspaper Press is in our time. Practically, the Government was vested in King, Lords, Commons, and Dramatists, including in the latter both writers and actors; the Poet thus having far more reason than now exists for making Hamlet say to the old statesman, "After your death you were better have a bad epitaph, than their ill report while you live."

The foregoing review, brief and inadequate as it is, may answer the purpose of imparting some just notion of the growth and progress of the English Drama till it reached the eve of its maturity. The allegorical drama had great influence, no doubt, in determining the scope and quality of the proper drama of comedy and tragedy; since, by its long discipline of the popular mind in abstract ideas, or in the generalized forms of ethical thought, it did much towards forming that public taste which required and prompted the drama to rise above a mere geography of facts into the empyrean of truth; and under the instructions of which Shakespeare learned to make his persons embodiments of general nature as well as of individual character. For the excellences of the Shakespearian Drama were probably owing as much to the mental preparation of the time as to the powers of the individual man. He was in demand before he came; and it was that pre-existing demand that taught and enabled him to do what he did. If it was the strength of his genius that lifted him to the top of the heap, it was also the greatness of the heap that enabled him to reach and maintain that elevation. For it is a great mistake to regard Shakespeare as standing alone, and working only in the powers of his individual mind. In fact, there never was any growth of literature or art that stood upon a wider basis of collective experience, or that drew its form and substance from a larger or more varied stock of historical preparation.

Dryden, in one of his occasional pieces, represents the Poet's ghost as saying,

"Untaught, unpractis'd, in a barbarous age, I found not, but created first, the stage";

and such has been the common belief. But the saying is far from true; and Shakespeare's ghost must have sipped large draughts of Lethe, to be capable of speaking thus. For, though the least that he did is worth more than all that was done before him, and though his poorest performances surpass the best of his models; it is nevertheless certain that his task was but to continue and perfect what was already begun. Not only were the three forms of comedy, history, and tragedy in use on the English stage, but the elements of these were to some extent blended in the freedom and variety of the Gothic Drama. The usage also of dramatic blank-verse stood up inviting his adoption; though no one before or since has come near him in the mastery of its capabilities; his genius being an inexhaustible spring of both mental and verbal modulation. Nor can all this be justly regarded as any alleviation of his task, or any abatement of his fame. For, to work thus with materials and upon models already prepared, without being drawn down to their level and subdued to their quality, requires, if possible, a higher order and exercise of power than to strike out in a way and with a stock entirely new. And so the absorbing, quickening, creative efficacy of Shakespeare's genius is best seen in this, that, taking the Drama as it came to his hand, a thing of unsouled forms and lack-lustre eyes, all brainless and meaningless, he at once put a spirit into it, tempered its elements in the proportions of truth, informed its shapes with grace and virtue, and made it all alive, a breathing, speaking, operative power. Thus his work naturally linked in with the whole past; and in his hands the collective thought and wisdom of ages were smelted out of the earth and dross wherein they lay imbedded, and wrought into figures of undecaying beauty.

It is indeed true that the Drama shot ahead with amazing rapidity as soon as it came to feel the virtue of Shakespeare's hand. We have nothing more dreary, dismal, and hopeless than the course of the English Drama down to his time. The people would have dramatic entertainments, and hundreds of minds, apparently, were ever busy furnishing them wooden things in dramatic form. And so, century after century, through change after change, the work of preparation went on, still scarce any progress, and no apparent result, nothing that could live, or was worth keeping alive. It seemed as if no rain would ever fall, no sun ever shine, to take away the sterility of the land. Yet all of a sudden the Drama blazed up with a splendor that was to illuminate and sweeten the ages, and be at once the delight and the despair of other nations and future times. All this, too, came to pass in Shakespeare! and, which is more, the process ended with him! It is indeed a singular phenomenon, and altogether the most astonishing that the human mind has produced.

Yet even here we should be careful of attributing too much to the genius of the individual man. It was rather the genius of the age and nation springing into flowerage through him,—a flowerage all the larger and more eloquent for the long delay, and the vast accumulation of force. For it is remarkable that when the Warwickshire peasant entered upon his work, with the single exception of Chaucer, not one good English book had been written. Yet he was far from being alone in thus beginning and perfecting the great workmanship which he took in hand. Before *Hamlet* , *Othello* , and *The Tempest* were written, Romantic Poetry had done its best in Spenser, Philosophical Divinity in Hooker, Civil and Moral Discourse in Bacon. All these alike are unapproached and unapproachable in their several kinds. We have nothing more tuneable and melodious than Spenser's verse; no higher and nobler eloquence than Hooker's prose; no practical wisdom of deeper reach or more attractive garb than Bacon's *Essays* . Yet they did not learn their cunning from Shakespeare, nor did Shakespeare learn his cunning from them. The language was then just ripe for the uses of such minds; it had the wealth of much learning incorporated with it, yet had not been cast into rigidity nor dressed into primness by a technical and bookish legislation; it had gone on for centuries gathering in and assimilating stores from

Nature and from Religion; it was rich with the life of a nation of brave, free, honest, full-souled, and frank-hearted men; it was at once copious, limber, and sinewy, capable alike of expressing the largest and the subtlest thought, the deepest and strongest passion, the most tender and delicate feeling; wit could sport itself for ever, humour could trim its raciest issues, imagination could body forth its sweetest and awfullest visions, in the furnishings of the English tongue. And so these four great thinkers found it equal, apparently, to all their thoughts and powers. They were all, though each in a different sort, its masters, not its slaves. They used it, but they did not make it. And the thought which they found it capable of expressing must have pre-existed in some form, else the language could not have stood ready, as it did, for their use. The truth seems to be that, for reasons which we cannot fathom, and in ways past our finding out, the time had now come, the mental life of the nation was fully grown to a head, so as to express itself in several forms at the same time; and Shakespeare, wise, true, and mighty beyond his thought, became its organ of dramatic utterance; which utterance remains, and will remain, a treasury of everlasting sweetness and refreshment to mankind.

<<span id="filepos0039927484"> a> SHAKESPEARE'S ART

<<span id="filepos0039927889"> a>NATURE AND USE OF ART.

Tranquillity! the sovereign aim wert thou In heathen schools of philosophic lore; Heart-stricken by stern destiny of yore, The Tragic Muse thee serv'd with thoughtful vow; And what of hope Elysium could allow Was fondly seiz'd by Sculpture, to restore Peace to the Mourner. But when He who wore The crown of thorns around His bleeding brow Warm'd our sad being with celestial light, *Then* Arts which still had drawn a softening grace From shadowy fountains of the Infinite, Commun'd with that Idea face to face; And move around it now as planets run, Each in its orbit round the central Sun."—WORDSWORTH.

Art is in its proper character the solidest and sincerest expression of human thought and feeling. To be much within and little without, to do all for truth, nothing for show, and to express the largest possible meaning with the least possible stress of expression,—this is its first law.

Thus artistic virtue runs down into one and the same root with moral righteousness. Both must first of all be genuine and sincere, richer and better at the heart than on the surface; as always having it for their leading aim to recommend themselves to the perfect Judge; that is, they must seek the praise of God rather than of men: for, indeed, whatsoever studies chiefly to please men will not please them long, but will soon be openly or secretly repudiated by them; whereas, "when a man's ways are pleasing unto the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him."

Such is the right form, such the normal process, of what may be called intellectual and artistic righteousness. A soul of perfect veracity lies at the bottom of the thing, and is the source and the life of all that is good and beautiful in it. And the work, like Nature herself, does not strike excitingly, but "melts into the heart"; it therefore wears well, and don't wear out. Every thing is done "in simple and pure soul," and without any thought, on the doer's part, of the figure he is making; and when he turns from the beauty he should express to his own beauty of expression, his work becomes false. And it may be justly affirmed that perfection of workmanship in Art is where the senses are touched just enough, and in just the right way, to kindle the mind; and this too without making the mind distinctly conscious of being kindled; for when the soul is moved perfectly both in kind and degree, self-consciousness is lost in the interest of that which moves it.

Hence it is that all deep and earnest feeling, all high and noble thought so naturally puts on a style of modesty and reserve. It communicates itself, not by verbal emphasis or volume, but by a sort of blessed infection too subtile and too potent for words to convey. Volubility strangles it; and it is felt to be insincere when it grows loquacious. A wordy grief is merely a grief from the throat outwards; "the grief that does not speak," this it is that "whispers the o'erfraught heart, and bids it break." And the truly eloquent speaker or writer is not he who says a multitude of fine things in finely turned language and figures, which is very easily done, but he who says just the right things, and says them in the fewest, simplest, and aptest words. As for the speaker who lives, not in the inspiration of his theme, but in the display of his eloquence, we may rest assured that he will never say any thing worth hearing: his work will naturally turn all to mere elocution; which may be described as the art of pronouncing nothing in such a way as to make it pass for something grand.

Thus there appears to be a profound natural sympathy or affinity between the forces of religion and the forms of Art. Therefore it is that the higher efficacies of Christian culture and the deeper workings of religious thought and emotion have instinctively sought to organize and enshrine themselves in artistic creations; no other mode or power of expression being strong enough to hold them, or inclusive enough to contain them. It is in such works as the ancient marvels of ecclesiastical building that the Christian mind has found its most fitting and most operative eloquence.

What was the motive-principle, what the inspiring power, of those architectural wonders that transport the impress of mediaeval piety across the ocean of so many centuries? Wordsworth, referring to some of the English cathedrals, says, —

"They dreamt not of a perishable home, Who thus could build."

And, sure enough, we may well deem that nothing less than the most intense and burning conceptions of eternity could have inspired the souls of men and made them strong enough to project and accomplish those stupendous structures which, in their silent majesty and awe-inspiring suggestiveness, are the most persuasive and the most unanswerable preachers of Christianity that the Church of two thousand years has produced. "They builded better than they knew." And what are all the sermons and theologies of that time in comparison with those great old monuments of Christian Art? "The immortal mind craves objects that endure." And immortality itself, the spirit of celestial order, a beauty that awes while it charms, and chastens while it kindles, are imaged in the aspect and countenance of those structures. And it is remarkable that nothing has come down to us touching the persons of those grand old builders, not even their names. It seems indeed as if their great souls had been so possessed by the genius that stirred within them, so entranced in the contemplation of their religious ideals, as to leave no room, for any self-regarding thoughts; so that we know them only as a band of anonymous immortals.

"They were pedants who could speak: Grander souls have passed unheard; Such as found all language weak; Choosing rather to record Secrets before Heaven, than break Faith with Angels by a word."

Now it is the nature of Christian meaning thus embodied to penetrate and pervade the depths of the mind without agitating its surface; and when the effect is greatest, then it is that the mind is least conscious of it: it is a silent efficacy that "sweetly creeps into the study of imagination," and charms its way into "the eye and prospect of the soul" by delicacy of touch and smoothness of operation. Such art is of course in no sort an intellectual gymnastic. It is as complex and many-sided as our nature itself; and the frame of mind from which it proceeds, and which it aims to inspire, is that calmness wherein is involved a free and harmonious exercise of the whole man; sense, intellect, and heart moving together in sympathy and unison: in a word, it is the fitting expression of

"That monumental grace Of Faith, which doth all passions tame That reason *should* control; And shows in the untrembling frame A statue of the soul."

From such workmanship, every thing specially stimulant of any one part of the mind, every thing that ministers to the process of self-excitation, every thing that fosters an unhealthy consciousness by untuning the inward harmonies of our being, every thing that appeals to the springs of vanity and self-applause, or invites us to any sort of glass-gazing pleasure,—every such thing is, by an innate law of the work, excluded. So that here we have the right school of moral healthiness, a moral digestion so perfect as to be a secret unto itself. The intelligence, the virtue, the piety, that grows by such methods, is never seen putting on airs, or feeding on the reflection of its own beauty; but evermore breathes freely and naturally, as in communion with the proper sources of its life.

Works of Art, then, above all other productions of the mind, must have solidity and inwardness, that essential retiring grace which seems to shrink from the attention it wins, that style of power held in reserve which grows upon acquaintance, that suggestive beauty, "part seen, imagined part," which does not permit the beholder to leave without a silent invitation to return. And in proportion as the interest of such works depends on novelty, or stress of manner, or any strikingness of effect, as if they were ambitious to make themselves felt, and apprehensive of not being prized at their worth; in the same proportion their tenure of interest is naturally short, because they leave the real springs of thought untouched.

This, to be sure, holds more or less true of all the forms of mental production; but its truth is more evident and more self-approving in the sphere of Art than in the others. Hence the common saying, that poetry, for instance, must be very good indeed, else it is good for nothing. And men of culture and judgment in that line naturally feel, in general, that a work of art which is not worth seeing many times is not worth seeing at all; and if they are at first taken with such a work, they are apt to be ashamed of it afterwards, and to resent the transient pleasure they found in it, as a sort of fraud upon them. In other words, Art aspires to interest *permanently* , and even to be more interesting the more it is seen; and when it does not proceed in the order of this "modest charm of not too much," this remoteness of meaning where far more is inferred than is directly shown, there we may be sure the vital principle of the thing is wanting.

Allston, the distinguished painter-artist, is said to have had an intense aversion to all "eccentricity in Art." He might well do so; and, being a philosopher of Art as well as an artist, he had no difficulty in knowing that his aversion was founded in truth, and was fully justified by the reason of the thing. For the prime law of Art, as is implied in what I have been saying, is to produce the utmost possible of *silent* effect; and to secure this end *truth* must be the all-in-all of the artist's purpose,—a purpose too inward and vital, perhaps, for the subject to be distinctly conscious of it; which is the right meaning of *artistic inspiration* . But eccentricity in Art aims, first and last, at *sensible* effect; to appease an eager, prurient curiosity is its proper motive-spring; and it is radically touched with some disease, perhaps an itch of moral or intellectual or emotional demonstrativeness; and so it naturally issues in a certain *plurisy* of style, or some self-pleasing crotchet or specialty of expression,—something which is striking and emphatic, and which is therefore essentially disproportionate and false. In a word, there is a fatal root of insincerity in the thing. For instance, if one were to paint a tree in the brilliancy of full-bloom, or a human face in the liveliest play of soul, I suppose the painting might be set down as a work of eccentricity; for, though such things are natural in themselves, they are but transient or evanescent moods of Nature; and a painting of them has not that calmness and purity of truth and art on which the mind can repose:

"Soft is the music that would charm for ever."

Moreover a work of art, as such, is not a thing to be learnt or acquired, as formal knowledge is acquired: it is rather a presence for the mind to commune with, and drink in the efficacy of, with an "eye made quiet by the power of Beauty." Nor is such communion by any means unfruitful of mental good: on the contrary, it is the right force and food of the soundest and healthiest inward growth; and to be silent and secret is the character of every process that is truly vital and creative. It is on this principle that Nature, when conversed with in the spirit of her works, acts "as a teacher of truth through joy and through gladness, and as a creatress of the faculties by a process of smoothness and delight"; and we gather in the richer intellectual harvest from such converse when the mind is too intent on Nature's forms to take any thought of its gatherings. We cannot truly live with her without being built up in the best virtues of her life. It is a mighty poor way of growing wise, when one loves to see

"Each little drop of wisdom as it falls Into the dimpling cistern of his heart."

And so the conversing rightly with works of art may not indeed be very available for showing off in recitation: it is all the better for that, inasmuch as its best effect must needs be too deep for the intellectual consciousness to grasp: because the right virtue of Art lies in a certain self-withdrawing power which catches the mind as from a distance, and cheats the forces of self-applause into abdication through intentness of soul. All which infers, moreover, that a full appreciation of any true work of art cannot be extemporized; for such a work has a thousand meanings, which open out upon the eye gradually, as the eye feeds and grows and kindles up to them: its virtue has to *soak* into the mind insensibly; and to this end there needs a long, smooth, quiet fellowship.

<<span id="filepos0039943397"> a>PRINCIPLES OF ART.

The several forms of Art, as Painting, Sculpture, Music, Architecture, the Poem, the Drama, all have a common root, and proceed upon certain common principles. The faculties which produce them, the laws that govern them, and the end they are meant to serve, in short their source, method, and motive, are at bottom one and the same. Art, therefore, is properly and essentially *one* : accordingly I take care to use the phrase *several forms of Art* , and not *several arts* . This identity of life and law is perhaps most apparent in the well-known fact that the several forms of Art, wherever they have existed at all, and in any character of originality, have all had a religious origin; have sprung up and taken their growth in and for the service of religion. The earliest poems everywhere were sacred hymns and songs, conceived and executed in recognition and honour of the Deity. Grecian sculpture, in all its primitive and progressive stages, was for the sole purpose of making statues of the gods; and when it forsook this purpose, and sophisticated itself into a preference of other ends, it went into a decline. The Greek architecture, also, had its force, motive, and law in the work of building religious temples and shrines. That the Greek Drama took its origin from the same cause, is familiar to all students in dramatic history. And I have already shown that the Gothic Drama in England, in its upspring and through its earlier stages, was entirely the work of the Christian Church, and was purely religious in its purpose, matter, and use. That the same holds in regard to our modern music, is too evident to need insisting on: it all sprang and grew in the service of religion; religious thought and emotion were the shaping and informing spirit of it. I have often thought that the right use of music, and perhaps that which drew it into being, could not be better illustrated than in "the sweet Singer of Israel," who, when the evil spirit got into King Saul, took harp and voice, and with his minstrelsy charmed it out. Probably, if David had undertaken to argue the evil spirit out, he would have just strengthened the possession; for the Devil was then, as now, an expert logician, but could not stand a divine song.

Thus the several forms of Art have had their source and principle deep in man's religious nature: all have come into being as so many projections or outgrowths of man's religious life. And it may well be questioned whether, without the motives and inspirations of religion, the human soul ever was, or ever can be, strong and free enough to produce any shape of art. In, other words, it is only as the mind stands dressed in and for religion that the Creative Faculty of Art gets warmed and quickened into operation. So that religion is most truly the vivifying power of Art in all its forms; and all works of art that do not proceed from a religious life in the mind are but imitations, and can never be any thing more. Moreover the forms of Art have varied in mode, style, and character, according to the particular genius and spirit of the religion under which they grew. There is a most intimate correspondence between the two. This is manifestly true of the old Egyptian and Grecian art. And it is equally true of Christian art, save as this has been more or less modified by imitation of those earlier works, and in so far as this imitative process has got the better of original inspiration, the result has always been a falling from the right virtue of Art. For the Christian mind can never overtake the Greek mind in that style of Art which was original and proper to the latter. Nothing but the peculiar genius of the Greek mythology could ever freely and spontaneously organize or incarnate itself in a body of that shape. The genius of Christianity requires and naturally prompts a different body. Nor can the soul of the latter ever be made to take on the body of the former, but under the pressure of other than the innate and organic law of the thing. For every true original artist is much more possessed by the genius of his work than possessing it. Unless, indeed, a man be inspired by a power stronger than his individual understanding or any conscious purpose, his hand can never reach the cunning of any process truly creative. And so in all cases the temper and idiom of a people's religious culture will give soul and expression to their art; or, they have no religious culture, then there will not be soul-power enough in them to produce any art at all.

As I am on the subject of Art considered as the offspring of Religion or the religious Imagination, I am moved to add a brief episode in that direction. And I the rather do so, forasmuch as Artistic Beauty is commonly recognized as among the greatest educational forces now in operation in the Christian world. On this point a decided reaction has taken place within my remembrance. The agonistic or argumentative modes, which were for a long time in the ascendant, and which proceeded by a logical and theological presentation of Christian thought, seem to have spent themselves, insomuch as to be giving way to what may be called the poetical and imaginative forms of expression. It is not my purpose to discuss whether the change be right or for the better, but merely to note it as a fact; for such I think it clearly is. I presume it will be granted, also, that as a general thing we need to have our places of worship and our religious services made far more beautiful than they are; and that indeed we cannot have too much of beauty in them, so that beauty be duly steeped in the grace and truth of Christian inspiration. But Art has its dangers here as well as its uses: especially it is apt to degenerate from a discipline of religious virtue into a mere relaxation, losing the severity that elevates and purifies, in what is merely pretty or voluptuous or pleasing. It is therefore of the utmost consequence what style of beauty we cultivate, and how the tastes of people are set in this matter.

Now Christianity is indeed a great "beauty-making power"; but the Beauty which it makes and owns is a presence to worship in, not a bauble to play with, or a show for unbaptized entertainment and pastime. It cannot be too austerely discriminated from mere ornament, and from every thing approaching a striking and sensational character. Its right power is a power to chasten and subdue. And it is never good for us, especially in our religious hours, to be charmed without being at the same time chastened. Accordingly the highest Art always has something of the terrible in it, so that it awes you while it attracts. The sweetness that wins is tempered with the severity that humbles; the smile of love, with the sternness of reproof. And it is all the more beautiful in proportion as it knows how to bow the mind by the austere and hushing eloquence of its forms. And when I speak of Art, or the creation of the Beautiful, as the highest and strongest expression of man's intellectual soul, I must be understood to mean this order of the Beautiful: for indeed the beauty (if it be not a sin to call it such) that sacrifices or postpones truth to pleasure is not good;

"And that which is not good is not delicious To a well-govern'd and wise appetite."

In all our use of Art, therefore, it stands us much in hand to know that true Beauty is indeed an awful as well as a pleasant thing; and that men are not in a good way when they have ceased to feel that it is so. Nor can I deem our case a very hopeful one when we surrender ourselves to that style of beauty which pleases without chastening the soul. For it is but too certain that when Art takes to gratifying such an unreligious taste, and so works its forces for the pleasing of men without touching them with awe, it becomes no better than a discipline of moral enervation. Perhaps this same law would silence much of the voluble rhetoric with which a certain school of writers are wont to discourse of the great Miracle of Beauty which has been given to men in the life and character of the blessed Saviour. For I must needs think that, if they duly felt the awfulness of that Beauty, their fluency would be somewhat repressed; and that their eloquence would be better if they feared more and flourished less.

But the point which these remarks are chiefly meant to enforce is, that there is no true beauty of Art but what takes its life from the inspirations of religious awe;

and that even in our highest intellectual culture the intellect itself will needs be demoralized, unless it be toned to order by a supreme reference to the Divine will. There is no true school of mental health and vigour and beauty, but what works under the presidency of the same chastening and subduing power. Our faculties of thought and knowledge must be held firmly together with a strong girdle of modesty, else they cannot possibly thrive; and to have the intellect "undevoutly free," loosened from the bands of reverence, is a sure pledge and forecast of intellectual shallowness and deformity.

It were something beside my purpose to unfold and illustrate in detail the common principles of Art: I shall but endeavour to do this so far as may be needful for a due understanding of those principles as we have them embodied in the Shakespearian Drama.

The first of those principles, as I am to view them, is what I know not better how to designate than by the term *Solidarity* . By which I mean that the several parts of a given work must all stand in mutual sympathy and intelligence; or that the details must not only have each a force and meaning of their own, but must also be helpful, directly or remotely, to the force and meaning of the others; all being drawn together and made to coalesce in unity of effect by some one governing thought or paramount idea. This gives us what the philosophers of Art generally agree in calling an *organic structure* ; that is, a structure in which an inward vital law shapes and determines the outward form; all the parts being, moreover, assimilated and bound each to each by the life that builds the organization, and so rendered mutually aidant, and at the same time conducive to the well-being of the whole. In a word, they must all have a purpose and a truth in common as well as each a truth and purpose of its own.

To illustrate this in a small instance, and perhaps the more intelligible for being small.—Critics had been wont to speak lightly, not to say sneeringly, of the Sonnet, as being but an elaborate trifle that cost more than it came to. Wordsworth undertook to vindicate the thing from this unjust reproach, as he considered it; and to that end he wrote the following:

"Scorn not the Sonnet; Critic, you have frown'd, Mindless of its just honours: with this key Shakespeare unlock'd his heart; the melody Of this small lute gave ease to Petrarch's wound; A thousand times this pipe did Tasso sound; With it Camöens sooth'd an exile's grief; The Sonnet glitter'd a gay myrtle leaf Amid the cypress with which Dante crown'd His visionary brow; a glow-worm lamp, It cheer'd mild Spenser, call'd from Faery-land To struggle through dark ways; and, when a damp Fell round the path of Milton, in his hand The Thing became a trumpet; whence he blew Soul-animating strains,—alas, too few!"

Now, here we have a place for every thing, and every thing in its place. There is nothing irrelevant, nothing ajar. The parts are not only each true and good and beautiful in themselves, but each is helpful to the others, and all to the author's purpose: every allusion, every image, every word, tells in furtherance of his aim. There need nothing be added, there must nothing be taken away. The argument at every step is clear and strong. The thing begins, proceeds, and ends, just as it ought; you cannot change a word in it without injuring it: the understanding, the imagination, the ear, are all satisfied with the result. And the specimen is itself a full triumph of the Sonnet, from the intellectual truth and beauty and sweetness which are here put into it. So that, what with the argument, and what with the example, the vindication of the Sonnet is perfect. Accordingly, I believe no one has spoken lightly of the thing since that specimen was given to the public.

Many have written poetry, and good poetry too, who, notwithstanding, have not written, and could not write, a Poem. But this sonnet is, in its measure, a genuine poem; and as such I am willing to bear the responsibility of pronouncing it faultless. Wordsworth could do the Sonnet completely, and did it so in many instances: and he could do more than this; in several of his longer pieces the workmanship is perhaps equally faultless; as, for instance, in *Laodamia* , and the *Ode to Duty* , which, to my sense, are perfect poems in their kind. But to do thus through so complex and multitudinous a work as our higher specimens of the Gothic Drama, is a very different matter,—a thing far beyond the power of a Wordsworth. To combine and carry on together various distinct lines of thought, and various individual members of character, so that each shall constantly remember and respect the others, and this through a manifold, diversified, and intricate course of action; to keep all the parts true to the terms and relations of organic unity, each coming in and stopping just where it ought, each doing its share, and no more than its share, in the common plan, so as not to hinder the life or interfere with the rights of the others; to knit them all together in a consistent and harmonious whole, with nothing of redundancy or of deficiency, nothing "overdone or come tardy off,"—the members, moreover, all mutually interacting, all modifying and tempering one another;—this is a task which it is given to few to achieve. For the difficulty of the work increases in a sort of geometrical ratio with the number and greatness of the parts; and when we come to such a work as *Hamlet* or *Cymbeline* or *King Lear* , few of us have heads long enough and strong enough to measure the difficulty of it.

Such, then, in my reckoning, is the first principle, I will not say of artistic perfection, but of all true excellence in Art. And the same law, which thus requires that in a given work each earlier part shall prepare for what comes after, and each later part shall finish what went before, holds with equal force in all the forms of Art; for whether the parts be rendered or delivered in space, as in Painting and Architecture, or in time, as in Music, a Poem, or a Drama, makes no difference in this respect.

The second principle of Art which I am to consider is *Originality* . And by this I do not mean novelty or singularity, either in the general structure or in the particular materials, but something that has reference to the method and process of the work. The construction must proceed from the heart outwards, not the other way, and proceed in virtue of the inward life, not by any surface aggregation of parts, or by any outward pressure or rule. In organic nature, every plant, and every animal, however cast in the mould of the species, and so kept from novelty or singularity, has an individual life of its own, which life is and must be original. It is a development from a germ; and the process of development is vital, and works by selection and assimilation of matter in accordance with the inward nature of the thing. And so in Art, a work, to be original, must grow from what the workman has inside of him, and what he sees of Nature and natural fact around him, and not by imitation of what others have done before him. So growing, the work will, to be sure, take the specific form and character; nevertheless it will have the essence of originality in the right sense of the term, because it will have originated from the author's mind, just as the offspring originates from the parent. And the result will be, not a showy, emphatic, superficial virtue, which is indeed a vice, but a solid, genuine, substantive virtue; that is, the thing will be just what it seems, and will mean just what it says. Moreover the greatness of the work, if it have any, will be more or less hidden in the order and temperance and harmony of the parts; so that the work will keep growing larger and richer to you as you become familiar with it: whereas in case of a thing made in the unoriginal way, at a distance it will seem larger than it is, and will keep shrinking and dwarfing as you draw nearer to it; and perhaps, when you get fairly into it, it will prove to be no substance at all, but only a mass of shining vapour; or, if you undertake to grasp it, your hand will just close through it, as it would through a shadow.

All this, however, is nowise to be understood as inferring that a great original artist must be an independent or isolated growth, without parents and brethren, and the natural aids and inspirations of society. This never was and never can be. Art-life must be had in common, or not at all. In this, as in other things, many minds must grow up together, else none can grow up. And no form of Art ever grew to perfection, or any thing near it, but that it was and long had been matter of strong national passion, or of a free and vigorous public spirit. Men are not kindled to such a height without many convergent rays of fellowship. In other words, before excellence of Art in any kind can come, there has to be a large and long preparation, and this not only in the spiritual culture and development of the people, but also in the formal order and method of the thing. Accordingly great artists, so far as the history of the matter is known, have always lived and worked in successions and clusters, each adding something, till at length a master mind arose, and gathered the finer efficacies of them all into one result. This is notoriously true of Greek, Venetian, Florentine, and Gothic Art: Phidias, Sophocles, Titian, and Raphael had each many precursors and companions. The fact indeed is apt to be lost sight of, because the earlier and inferior essays perish, and only the finished specimens survive; so that we see them more or less isolated; whereas in truth their origin and growth were social, the fruit of a large intellectual partnership and co-operation.—It is on the same principle that nothing truly excellent either in the minds or the characters of men is reached without much of "ennobling impulse from the Past"; and that they who live too much in the present miss the right food of human elevation, contented to be, perhaps proud of being the vulgar things they are, because ignorant of what has been before them. It is not that the present age is worse than former ages; it may even be better as a whole: but what is bad or worthless in an age dies with the age; so that only the great and good of the Past touches us; while of the present we are most touched by that which is little and mean.

The third principle of Art, as I am taking them, is *Completeness* . A work of art must have within itself all that is needful for the due understanding of it, as *Art* ; so that the beholder will not have to go outside or beyond the work itself to learn what it means; that is, provided he have the corresponding faculties alive within him, so as to be capable of its proper force. For, if the work speaks through form and colour, there must be, in answering measure, a natural or an instructed eye; if sound is its organ, there must be a natural or an instructed ear; if its speech is verbal, there must be, besides a natural or an instructed taste, a sufficient knowledge also of the language in which it is written. All this of course. But, apart from this, the work must be complete in and of itself, so as to be intelligible without a commentary. And any work which requires a sign or a showman to tell the beholder what it is, or to enable him to take the sense and virtue of it, is most certainly a failure.

In all this, however, I am speaking of the work simply as art, and not as it is or may be something else. For works of art, in many cases, are or have a good deal besides that. And in connection with such a work there may arise various questions,—of antiquity, philology, local custom and allusion; in what place and at what time it was done; whence, how, and why it came to be as it is; where the author got any hints or materials for it, and what of antecedent or contemporary history may be gathered from it. All this is legitimate and right in its place, but has nothing to do with the character and meaning of the thing as a work of art, in which respect it must know its cue without a prompter, and be able to tell its own tale. That which holds the mirror up to nature must not need another mirror to discover or interpret its reflection to us. For instance, a building, as a building, looks to certain practical ends and uses; and, before we can rightly understand the order and reason of it, we must know from other sources the ends and uses for which it was designed: but in so far as it is architecture, in so far as it is truly imaginative, and embodies the author's intellectual soul, it must be able to express its own meaning, so that we can understand and feel it without any thing but what comes directly from the work itself. But perhaps the point may be better illustrated in the case of an historical drama, which may be viewed either as history or as art: and, to determine its merit as history, we must go to other sources; but, for ascertaining its merit as art, the work must itself give us all the knowledge we need: so that the question of its historic truth is distinct and separate from the question of its artistic truth: it may be true as history, yet false as art; or it may be historically wrong, yet artistically right; true to nature, though not true to past fact; and, however we may have to travel abroad in the historical inquiry, the virtue of the work as art must be ascertainable directly from the thing itself. This, then, is what I mean by artistic completeness; that quality in virtue of which a work justifies itself, without foreign help, by its own fulness and clearness of expression.

The fourth and last principle that I am to consider is *Disinterestedness* . This is partly an intellectual, but more a moral quality. Now one great reason why men fail so much in their mental work is because they are not willing to see and to show things as they are, but must still be making them as they would have them to be. Thus from self-love or wilfulness or vanity they work their own humours and crotchets and fancies into the matter, or overlay it with some self-pleasing quirks of peculiarity. Instead of this, the artist must lose himself, his personal aims, interests, passions, and preferences, in the enthusiasm and inspiration of his work, in the strength, vividness, and beauty of his ideas and perceptions, and must give his whole mind and soul to the task of working these out into expression. To this end, his mind must live in constant loving sympathy and intercourse with Nature; he must work close to her life and order; must study to seize and reproduce the truth of Nature just precisely as it is, and must not think to improve her or get ahead of her; though, to be sure, out of the materials she offers, the selection and arrangement must be his own; and all the strength he can put forth this way will never enable him to come up to her stern, honest, solid facts. So, for instance, the highest virtue of good writing stands in saying a plain thing in a plain way. And in all art-work the first requisite is, that a man have, in the collective sense and reason of mankind, a firm foothold for withstanding the shifting currents and fashions and popularities of the day. The artist is indeed to work in free concert with the imaginative soul of his age: but the trouble is, that men are ever mistaking some transient specialty of mode for the abiding soul; thus tickling the folly of the time, but leaving its wisdom untouched.

If, therefore, a man goes to admiring his own skill, or airing his own powers, or imitating the choice touches of others, or heeding the breath of conventional applause; if he yields to any strain of self-complacency, or turns to practising smiles, or to taking pleasure in his self-begotten graces and beauties and fancies;—in this giddy and vertiginous state he will be sure to fall into intellectual and artistic sin. The man, in such a case, is no more smitten with a genuine love of Art than Malvolio was with a genuine love of Virtue: like that hero of conceit, he is merely "sick of self-love, and tastes with a distempered appetite." And his giddiness of self-love will take from him the power of seeing things as they are; and because he sees them as they are not, therefore he will think he sees them better than they are. A man cannot find Nature by gazing in a looking-glass; and it is vanity or some undisinterested force, and not any inspiration of truth or genius, that puts a man upon doing so. And, in the condition supposed, the mind becomes a prism to sophisticate and falsify the light of truth into striking and brilliant colours, instead of being a clear and perfect lens to concentrate that light in its natural whiteness and purity. For, assuredly, the proper worth, health, strength, virtue, joy, and life of Art is to be the interpreter and discoverer of Truth, to "feel the soul of Nature, and see things as they are"; and when, instead of this, it turns to glorifying its own powers and achievements, or sets up any end apart from such discovery and interpretation, it becomes sickly, feeble, foolish, frivolous, vicious, joyless, and moribund; and meanness, cruelty, sensuality, impiety, and irreligion are the companions of it.

It is indeed true that an artist may find one of the main spurs to his art-work in the needs, duties, and affections of his earthly being. The support of himself, of his wife, or her whom he wishes to be his wife, of his children, his parents, or remoter kin; the desire of being independent, of having the respect of society, or of doing the charities of a Christian; an honest, manly yearning after fame, an ambition to achieve something that "the world will not willingly let die,"—all these, and yet others, may justly be among the determining motives of his pursuit, and the thought of them may add fresh life and vigour to his efforts: nevertheless he will not succeed, nor deserve to succeed, in his art, except he have such an earnest and disinterested love for it, and such a passion for artistic truth, as will find the work its own exceeding great reward. In a word, his heart and soul must be in it *as an end* , and not merely or chiefly as a means. However prudence may suggest and shape his plans, love must preside over the execution; and here, as elsewhere,

"Love's not love When it is mingled with respects that stand Aloof from the entire point."

These four, then, are, in my account, essential principles of Art, and the only ones which it lies within my purpose to consider; namely, Solidarity, Originality, Completeness, and Disinterestedness. And to the attaining of these there needs, especially, three things in the way of faculty,—high intellectual power, great force of will, and a very tender heart;—a strong head to perceive and grasp the truth of things, a strong will to select and order the materials for expressing it, and a strong heart, which is tenderness, to give the work a soul of beauty and sweetness and amiability. As a man combines all these strengths, and as, moreover, through the unifying power of imagination, he pours the united life and virtue of them all into his work; so will his worth and honour stand as an artist. For whence should the noblest fruitage of human thought and culture grow, but from the noblest parts and attributes of manhood, moving together in perfect concert and reciprocity?

<<span id="filepos0039974743"> a>DRAMATIC

COMPOSITION.

Shakespeare's dramas—not all of them indeed, but those which were written after he reached what may be called his mastership—are in the highest sense of term Works of Art, and as such embody to the full the principles set forth in the preceding section. In this general survey of his workmanship, I propose to consider, first, his Dramatic Architecture or Composition.

I have remarked in a previous chapter, that in Shakespeare's time, and for several ages before, the Drama was a national passion in England, nearly all classes of people being pervaded by it. And yet, strange to say, this passion, notwithstanding the great frequency and variety of dramatic exhibitions, never came to any sound fruitage of Art, till the work fell into Shakespeare's hands. Moreover the tide of patriotic feeling, or the passion of nationality, which had for centuries been growing in strength, intelligence, and manliness, was then at its height, the people of all sorts being possessed with a hearty, honest English enthusiasm and national pride. And this passion was inextricably bound up with traditions of the past and with the ancient currents of the national life. Therewithal this deep, settled reverence for what was then "Old England," while it naturally drew into the mind the treasured riches of many foregoing ages, was at the same time strangely combined with a very bold and daring spirit of progress and improvement. Men seem indeed to have been all the more open to healthy innovation for being thus firmly rooted in the ground of prescription. The public mind received what was new the more freely because it loved the old. So that hope and anticipation walked with the bolder pace, inasmuch as memory and retrospection were still their cherished companions. In a word, men's tenacity of the past gave them the larger and brighter vision of the future. Because they had no mind to forsake the law of their fathers, or to follow the leading of "sages undevoutly free," therefore they were able to legislate the better for their children, and felt the less of danger in true freedom of thought.

It was natural, perhaps inevitable, that those two passions thus coexisting should somehow work together, and at least endeavour to produce a joint result. And so it was in fact. Historical plays, or things purporting to be such, were highly popular: the public taste evidently favoured, not to say demanded them; and some of Shakespeare's earliest essays were undoubtedly in that line. There are many clear evidences to this point. For instance, Thomas Nash, in his *Pierce*

Penniless , 1592, speaks of certain plays "wherein our forefathers' valiant acts, that have been long buried in rusty brass and worm-eaten books, are revived, and they themselves raised from the grave of oblivion, and brought to plead their aged honours in open presence." And again: "How would it have joyed brave Talbot, the terror of the French, to think that, after he had lain two hundred years in the tomb, he should triumph again on the stage; and have his bones new-embalmed with the tears of ten thousand spectators at least,—at several times,—who, in the tragedian that represents his person, behold him fresh-bleeding!" From these passages it is clear that historical plays on English subjects were strong in the public interest and patronage. And I have no doubt that the second passage quoted refers to Shakespeare's First Part of *King Henry the Sixth* . And it might well be that the popular mind should take special delight in entertainments where, to the common interest of dramatic exhibitions was added the further charm of national feeling and recollection, and where a large patriotism, "looking before and after," would find itself at home.

The Historical Drama, then, grew up simultaneously with Comedy and Tragedy, and established itself as a coördinate branch of the Gothic Drama in England. Now this circumstance could not be without great influence in determining the whole scope and character of the English Drama in all its varieties. The natural effect was to make them all more or less historical in method and grain. For the process generated, and could not fail to generate, corresponding modes and habits of thought in dramatic composition; and these would needs go with the writers into whatever branch of the Drama they might take in hand. Because modes and habits of thought are not things that men can put off and on for different subjects and occasions. What they learn to practise in one field of labour transfers itself with them, whether they will or no, to other fields. Their way of viewing things, nay, their very faculties of vision, catch the temper and drift of what they work in; which drift and temper cleave to them in spite of themselves, and unconsciously shape all their movements of thought; so that, change their matter as they may, their mind still keeps the same. Accordingly, even when Shakespeare does not deal specifically with the persons and events of history; when he fetches his incidents and characters from the realms of imagination; still his workmanship is historical in its spirit and method; proceeding according to the *laws* , even while departing from the *matter* , of history; so that we have pure creations formed upon the principles, and in the order and manner, of historical dramas.

The practical consequences of all this were both manifold and strongly marked.

The Drama thus cut itself loose and swung clean away from the narrow circle of myths and legends, where the ancients had fixed it, and ranged at large in all the freedom and variety of historical representation. It took on all the compass, amplitude, and expansiveness of the Homeric Epos. The stereotyped sameness and confinement of the Greek stage were necessarily discarded, and the utmost breadth of matter and scope, compatible with clearness of survey, became the recognized freehold of Dramatic Art.

So that, as I have before observed, the English Drama was, in the largest sense, a national growth, and not the work of any individual. Neither was it a sudden growth, as indeed nothing truly national ever can be: like the English State, it was the slow, gradual, silent production of centuries,—the result of the thoughts of many minds in many ages. The whole platform, and all that relates to the formal construction of the work, were fixed before Shakespeare put his hand to it: what remained for him to do, and what he was supremely gifted for doing, was to rear a grand and beautiful fabric on the basis and out of the materials already prepared. And where I like best to contemplate the Poet is, not in the isolation of those powers which lift him so far above all others, but as having the mind of the nation, with its great past and greater present, to back him up. And it seems to me, his greatness consisted very much in that, as he had the gift, so he surrendered himself to the high task, of reproducing in artistic immortality the beatings of old England's mighty heart. He therefore did not go, nor needed he, to books to learn what others had done: he just sucked in without stint, and to the full measure of his angelic capacity, the wisdom and the poetry that lived on the lips, and in the thoughts, feelings, sentiments, and manners of the people. What he thus sucked in, he purged from its drossy mixtures, replenished with fresh vitality, and gave it back clothed in the grace and strength of his own clear spirit. He told the nation better—O how much better!—than any other could, just what it wanted to hear,—the very things which its heart was swelling with; only it found not elsewhere a tongue to voice them, nor an imagination to body them forth.

Thus the time and the man were just suited to each other; and it was in his direct, fearless, whole-hearted sympathy with the soul of the time that the man both lost himself and found his power: which is doubtless one reason why we see so little of him in what he wrote. So that the work could not possibly have been done anywhere but in England,—the England of Spenser and Raleigh and Bacon; nor could it have been done there and then by any man but Shakespeare. In his hand what had long been a national passion became emphatically a National

Institution: how full of life, is shown in that it has ever since refused to die. And it seems well worth the while to bring this clearly into view, inasmuch as it serves to remove the subject upon deeper and broader principles of criticism than have commonly stood uppermost in the minds of the Poet's critics.

Properly speaking, then, it was the mind and soul of old England that made the English Drama as we have it in Shakespeare: her life, genius, culture, spirit, character, built up the work, and built themselves into the work, at once infusing the soul and determining the form. Of course, therefore, they ordered and shaped the thing to suit their own purpose, or so as to express freely and fitly their proper force and virtue; and they did this in wise ignorance, or in noble disregard, of antecedent examples, and of all formal and conventional rules. In other words, they were the *life* of the thing; and that life organized its body, as it needs must do, according to its innate and essential laws.

Which naturally starts the question, how or why the Shakespearian Drama came to take on a form so very different from that of the Classic Drama. This question has been partly disposed of already, in speaking of the freedom and variety which the historical branch imported into the sphere of dramatic production. Still it may be asked how, if the Classic form is right, as all admit it to be, can we avoid concluding the Shakespearian form to be wrong? The answer of course is, that the form differs, and ought to differ, just as much as the life does; so that both forms may be right, or at least equally so. Formerly it was the custom to censure the Poet greatly, if not to condemn him utterly, because, in his dramatic workmanship, he did not observe what are called the Minor Unities, that is, the Unities of Time and Place. The controversy indeed is now all out of date, and there need not a word be said by way of answering or refuting that old objection: no interest attaches to the question, nor is it worth considering at all, save as it may yield light and illustration in the philosophy of Art, and in the general matter of art criticism. On this account, it may be worth the while to look a little further into the reason of the difference in question.

I have already said that religion or religious culture has always been the originating and shaping spirit of Art. There is no workmanship of Art in which this holds more true than in the English Drama. Now the religious culture of Christian England was essentially different from that of Classic Greece; the two being of quite diverse and incommunicable natures; so that the spirit of the one could not possibly live in the dramatic form of the other. In other words, the body of the Classic Drama was not big enough nor strong enough to contain the soul of Christian England. The thing could no more be, except in a purely mechanical and arbitrary way, than an acorn could develop itself into a violet, or the life of an eagle build itself into the body of a trout, or the soul of a horse put on the organism of a dove. Moreover the Greek religion was mythical or fabulous, and could nowise stand the historic method: the Christian religion is historical both in origin and form; as such it has a natural sympathy and affinity with the historic method, the hardest facts being more in keeping with its spirit than the most beautiful and ingenious fables and myths. Not indeed but that Christianity has its own ideal, or rather its sphere of ideality, and this in a much higher and purer kind than any mythology ever had; but its nature is to idealize from fact; its ideality is that of the waking reason and the ruling conscience, not that of the dreaming fancy and the dominating senses; and even in poetry its genius is to "build a princely throne on humble truth": it opens to man's imaginative soul the largest possible scope,—"Beauty, a living Presence, surpassing the most fair ideal forms which craft of delicate spirits hath composed from earth's materials"; a world where imagination gathers fresh life and vigour from breathing the air of reason's serenest sky, and where it builds the higher and nobler, that it rests on a deep and solid basis of humility, instead of "revolving restlessly" around its own airy and flitting centre. The Shakespearian Drama works in the order and spirit of this principle; so that what the Poet creates is in effect historical, has the solidity and verisimilitude of Fact, and what he borrows has all the freedom and freshness of original creation. Therewithal he often combines the two, or interchanges them freely, in the same work; where indeed they seem just as much at home together as if they were twins; or rather each is so attempered to the other, that the two are vitally continuous.

But let us note somewhat further the difference of structure. Now the Classic Drama, as we have it in Sophocles, though exquisitely clear and simple in form, and austerely beautiful withal, is comparatively limited in its scope, with few characters, little change of scene, no blending or interchanging of the humourous and the grave, the tragic and the comic, and hardly exceeding in length a single Act of the Shakespearian Drama. The interest all, or nearly all, centres in the catastrophe, there being only so much of detail and range as is needful to the evolving of this. Thus the thing neither has nor admits any thing like the complexity and variety, the breadth, freedom, and massiveness, of Shakespeare's workmanship. There is timber enough and life enough in one of his dramas to make four or five Sophoclean tragedies; and one of these might almost be cut out of *Hamlet* without being missed. Take, for instance, the *Oedipus at Colonos* of Sophocles and *King Lear* , each perhaps the most complex and varied work of the author. The Greek tragedy, though the longest of the author's pieces, is hardly more than a third the length of *King Lear* . The former has no change of scene at all; the first Act of the other has five changes of scene. The Sophoclean drama has eight characters in all, besides the Chorus; *King Lear* has twenty characters, besides the anonymous persons. To be sure, quantity in such things is no measure of strength or worth; but when we come to wealth, range, and amplitude of thought, the difference is perhaps still greater.

And so, generally, the Classic Drama, like the Classic Architecture, is all light, graceful, airy, in its form; whereas the Gothic is in nature and design profound, solemn, majestic. The genius of the one runs to a simple expressiveness; of the other to a manifold suggestiveness. That is mainly statuesque, and hardly admits any effect of background and perspective; this is mainly picturesque, and requires an ample background and perspective for its characteristic effect. There the mind is drawn more to objects; here, more to relations. The former, therefore, naturally detaches things as much as possible, and sets each out by itself in the utmost clearness and definiteness of view; while the latter associates and combines them in the largest possible variety consistent with unity of interest and impression, so as to produce the effect of indefiniteness and mystery. Thus a Shakespearian drama is like a Gothic cathedral, which, by its complexity of structure, while catching the eye would fain lift the thoughts to something greater and better than the world, making the beholder feel his littleness, and even its own littleness, comparison of what it suggests. For, in this broad and manifold diversity struggling up into unity, we may recognize the awe-inspiring grandeur and vastness of the Gothic Architecture, as distinguished from the cheerful, smiling beauty of the Classic. Such is the difference between the spirit of Classic Art and the spirit of Gothic Art.

Now, taking these two things together, namely, the historic spirit and method, and also the breadth and amplitude of matter and design, both of which belong to the Gothic Drama, and are indeed of its nature;—taking these together, it cannot but be seen, I think, that the work must have a much larger scope, a far more varied and expansive scene, than is consistent with the Minor Unities. If, for example, a man would *represent* any impressive course or body of historical events, the historic order and process of the thing plainly necessitate a form very different from that of the Classic Drama: the work must needs use considerable diversity of time and place, else narrative and description will have to be substituted, in a great measure, for representation; that is, the right dramatic form must be sacrificed to what, after all, has no proper coherence or consanguinity with the nature and genius of the work. As to which of the two is better in itself, whether the austere and simple beauty of the Sophoclean tragedy, or the colossal grandeur and massiveness of such a drama as *King Lear* , this is not for me to say: for myself, however, I cannot choose but prefer the latter; for this too has a beauty of its own; but it is indeed an *awful* beauty, and to my sense all the better for being so. Be this as it may, it is certain that the human mind had quite outgrown the formal limitations of the Classic Drama.

But what are the conditions of building, in right artistic order, a work of such vastness and complexity? As the mind is taken away from the laws of time and place, it must be delivered over to the higher laws of reason. So that the work lies under the necessity of proceeding in such a way as to make the spectator live in his imagination, not in his senses, and even his senses must, for the time being, be made imaginative, or be ensouled. That is, instead of the formal or numerical unities of time and place, we must have the unities of intellectual time and intellectual space: the further the artist departs from the local and chronological succession of things, the more strict and manifest must be their logical and productive succession. Incidents and characters are to be represented, not in the order of sensible juxtaposition or procession, but in that of cause and effect, of principle and consequence. Whether, therefore, they stand ten minutes or ten months, ten feet or ten miles, asunder, matters not, provided they are really and evidently united in this way; that is, provided the unities of action and interest are made strong enough and clear enough to overcome the diversities of time and place. For, here, it is not *where* and *when* a given thing happened, but how it was produced, and why, whence it came and whither it tended, what caused it to be as it was, and to do as it did, that we are mainly concerned with.

The same principle is further illustrated in the well-known nakedness of the Elizabethan stage in respect of furniture and scenic accompaniment. The weakness, if such it were, appears to have been the source of vast strength. It is to this poverty of the old stage that we owe, in part, the immense riches of the Shakespearian Drama, since it was thereby put to the necessity of making up for the defect of sensuous impression by working on the rational, moral, and imaginative forces of the audience. And, undoubtedly, the modern way of glutting the senses with a profusion of showy and varied dress and scenery has struck, as it must always strike, a dead palsy on the legitimate processes of Gothic Art. The decline of the Drama began with its beginning, and has kept pace with its progress. So that here we have a forcible illustration of what is often found true, that men cannot get along because there is nothing to hinder them. For, in respect of the moral and imaginative powers, it may be justly affirmed that we are often assisted most when *not* assisted, and that the right way of helping us on is by leaving us unhelped. That the soul may find and use her wings, nothing is so good as the being left where there is little for the feet to get hold of and rest upon.

To answer fully the conditions of the work, to bring the Drama fairly through the difficulties involved therein, is, it seems to me, just the greatest thing the human intellect has ever done in the province of Art. Accordingly I place Shakespeare's highest and most peculiar excellence in the article of Dramatic Composition. He it was, and he alone, that accomplished the task of *organizing* the English Drama. Among his predecessors and senior contemporaries there was, properly speaking, no dramatic artist. What had been done was not truly Art, but only a preparation of materials and a settlement of preliminaries. Up to his time, there was little more than the elements of the work lying scattered here and there, some in greater, some in less perfection, and still requiring to be gathered up and combined in right proportions, and under the proper laws of dramatic life. Take any English drama written before his, and you will find that the several parts do not stand or draw together in any thing like organic consistency: the work is not truly a *concrescence* of persons and events, but only, at the best, a mere succession or aggregation of them; so that, for the most part, each would both be and appear just as it does, if detached from the others, and viewed by itself. Instead, therefore, of a vital unity, like that of a tree, the work has but a sort of aggregative unity, like a heap of sand.

Which may in some fair measure explain what I mean by dramatic composition. For a drama, regarded as a work of art, should be in the strictest sense of the term a *society* ; that is, not merely a numerical collection or juxtaposition, but a living contexture, of persons and events. For men's natures do not, neither can they, unfold themselves severally and individually; their development proceeds from, through, and by each other. And, besides their individual circulations, they have a common circulation; their characters interpenetrating, more or less, one with another, and standing all together in mutual dependence and support. Nor does this vital coherence and reciprocity hold between the several characters merely, but also between these, taken collectively, and the various conditions, objects, circumstances, and influences, amidst which they have grown. So that the whole is like a large, full-grown tree, which is in truth made up of a multitude of little trees, all growing from a common root, nourished by a common sap, and bound together in a common life.

Now in Shakespeare's dramas—I do not say all of them, for some were but his apprentice-work, but in most of them—the several parts, both characters and incidents, are knit together in this organic way, so as to be all truly members one of another. Each needs all the others, each helps all the others, each is made what it is by the presence of all the others. Nothing stands alone, nothing exists merely for itself. The persons not only have each their several development, but also, besides this, and running into this, a development in common. In short, their whole transpiration proceeds by the laws and from the blood of mutual membership. And as each lives and moves and has his being, so each is to be understood and interpreted, with reference, explicit or implicit, to all the others. And there is not only this coherence of the characters represented, one with another, but also of them all with the events and circumstances of the representation. It is this coefficient action of all the parts to a common end, this mutual participation of each in all, and of all in each, that constitutes the thing truly and properly a work of art.

So then a drama may be fitly spoken of as an *organic* structure. And such it must be, to answer the conditions of Art. Here we have a thing made up of divers parts or elements, with a course or circulation of mutual reference and affinity pervading them all, and binding them together, so as to give to the whole the character of a multitudinous unit; just as in the illustration, before used, of a large tree made up of innumerable little trees. And it seems plain enough that, the larger the number and variety of parts embraced in the work, or the more diversified it is in matter and movement, the greater the strength of faculty required for keeping every thing within the terms of Art; while, provided this be done, the grander is the impression produced, and the higher is the standing of the work as an intellectual achievement of man.

This, then, as before observed, is just the highest and hardest part of dramatic creation: in the whole domain of literary workmanship there is no one thing so rarely attained, none that so few have been found capable of attaining, as this. And yet in this Shakespeare was absolutely—I speak advisedly—without any teacher whatever; not to say, what probably might be said without any hazard, that it is a thing which no man or number of men could impart. The Classic Drama, had he been ever so well acquainted with it, could not have helped him here at all, and would most likely have been a stumbling-block to him. And, in my view of the matter, the most distinguishing feature of the Poet's genius lies in this power of broad and varied combination; in the deep intuitive perception which thus enabled him to put a multitude of things together, so that they should exactly fit and finish one another. In some of his works, as *Titus Andronicus, The Comedy of Errors* , and the three Parts of *King Henry the Sixth* , though we have, especially in the latter, considerable skill in individual character,—far more than in any English plays preceding them,—there is certainly very little, perhaps nothing, that can be rightly termed dramatic composition. In several, again, as *The Two Gentlemen of Verona, Love's Labour's Lost* , and *King John* , we have but the beginnings and first stages of it. But in various others, as *The Tempest, The Merchant of Venice, As You Like It, King Henry the Fourth, Hamlet, Macbeth, King Lear* , and *Othello* , it is found, if not in entire perfection, at least so nearly perfect, that there has yet been no criticism competent to point out the defect.

All which makes a full and conclusive answer to the charge of irregularity which has been so often brought against the Poet. To be regular, in the right sense of the term, he did not need to follow the rules which others had followed before him: he was just as right in differing from them as they were in differing from him: in other words, he stands as an original, independent, authoritative legislator in the province of Art; or, as Gervinus puts it, "he holds the place of the revealing genius of the laws of Art in the Modern Drama"; so that it is sheer ignorance, or something worse, to insist on trying him by the laws of the ancient Tragedy. It is on this ground that Coleridge makes the pregnant remark,—"No work of true genius dares want its appropriate form, neither indeed is there any danger of this. As it must not, so genius cannot, be lawless; for it is even this that constitutes it genius,—the power of acting creatively under laws of its own origination." So that I may fitly close this branch of the subject by applying to Shakespeare a very noteworthy saying of Burke's, the argument of which holds no less true of the law-making prerogative in Art than in the State: "Legislators have no other rules to bind them but the great principles of reason and equity, and the general sense of mankind. These they are bound to obey and follow; and rather to enlarge and enlighten law by the liberality of legislative reason, than to fetter and bind their higher capacity by the narrow constructions of subordinate, artificial justice."

<<span id="filepos0040007021"> a>CHARACTERIZATION.

I am next to consider Shakespeare's peculiar mode of conceiving and working out character; as this stands next in order and importance to the article of Dramatic Composition.

Now, in several English writers before him, we find characters discriminated and sustained with considerable judgment and skill. Still we feel a want of reality about them: they are not men and women themselves, but only the outsides and appearances of men and women; often having indeed a good measure of coherence and distinctness, but yet mere appearances, with nothing behind or beneath, to give them real substance and solidity. Of course, therefore, the parts actually represented are all that they have; they stand for no more than simply what is shown; there is nothing in them or of them but what meets the beholder's sense: so that, however good they may be to look at, they will not bear looking into; because the outside, that which is directly seen or heard, really exhausts their whole force and meaning.

Instead, then, of beginning at the heart of a character, and working outwards, these authors began at the surface, and worked the other way; and so were precluded from getting beyond the surface, by their mode of procedure. It is as if the shell of an egg should be fully formed and finished before the contents were prepared; in which case the contents of course could not be got into it. It would have to remain a shell, and nothing more: as such, it might do well enough for a show, just as well indeed as if it were full of meat; but it would not stand the weighing.

With Shakespeare all this is just reversed. His egg is a real egg, brimful of meat, and not an empty shell; and this, because the formation began at the centre, and the shell was formed last. He gives us, not the mere imitations or appearances of things, but the very things themselves. His characters *have* more or less of surface, but they *are* solids: what is actually and directly shown, is often the least part of them, never the whole: the rest is left to be inferred; and the showing is so managed withal as to start and propagate the inferring process in the beholder's mind.

All which clearly implies that Shakespeare conceived his persons, not from their outside, but in their rudiments and first principles. He begins at the heart of a character, and unfolds it outwards, forming and compacting all the internal parts and organs as he unfolds it; and the development, even because it is a real and true development, proceeds at every step, not by mere addition or aggregation of particulars, but by digestion and vital assimilation of all the matter that enters into the structure; there being, in virtue of the life that pervades the thing, just such elements, and just so much of them, sent to each organ, as is necessary to its formation. The result of this wonderful process is, that the characters are all that they appear to be, and a vast deal more besides: there is food for endless thought and reflection in them: beneath and behind the surface, there is all the substance that the surface promises or has room for,—an inexhaustible stock of wealth and significance beyond what is directly seen; so that the more they are looked into the more they are found to contain.

Thus there is a sort of realistic verisimilitude in Shakespeare's characters. It is as if they had been veritable living men and women, and he had seen and comprehended and delivered the whole and pure truth respecting them. Of course, therefore, they are as far as possible from being mere names set before pieces of starched and painted rhetoric, or mere got-up figures of modes and manners: they are no shadows or images of fancy, no heroes of romance, no theatrical personages at all; they have nothing surreptitious or make-believe or ungenuine about them: they do not in any sort belong to the family of poetical beings; they are not designs from works of art; nay, they are not even *designs* from nature; they are nature itself. Nor are they compilations from any one-sided or sectional view of mankind, but are cut out round and full from the whole of humanity; so that they touch us at all points, and, as it were, surround us. From all this it follows that there is no repetition among them: though there are some striking family resemblances, yet no two of them are individually alike: for, as the process of forming them was a real growth, an evolution from a germ, the spontaneous result of creative Nature working within them, so there could be no copying of one from another. Accordingly, as in the men and women of Nature's own making, different minds conceive different ideas of them, and have different feelings towards them, and even the same mind at different times: in fact, hardly any two men view them alike, or any one man for two years together; the actual changes in us being reflected and measured by correspondent *seeming* changes in them: so that a further acquaintance with them always brings advancing knowledge, and what is added still modifies what was held before. Hence even so restrained, not to say grudging, a critic as Pope was constrained to pronounce Shakespeare's characters "so much Nature herself, that it is a sort of injury to call them by so distant a name as copies of her."

"Of Nature's inner shrine thou art the Priest, Where most she works when we perceive her least."

I have placed Shakespeare's power of dramatic architecture or organization at the head of his gifts and prerogatives *as an artist* . And so I suppose a just Philosophy of Art is bound to reckon it. But comparatively few men are or can be, in the fair sense of the term, philosophers of Art, as this requires a course of special training and study. But Shakespeare is a great teacher in the School of Life as well as a great master in the School of Art. And indeed the right use of Art is nowise to serve as the raw material of philosophy, but to furnish instruction and inspiration in the truth of things; and unless it can work home to the business and bosoms of plain practical men, it might as well be struck from the roll of legitimate interests. Now, in the circle of uninspired forces, Shakespeare's art may be justly regarded as our broadest and noblest "discipline of humanity." And his characterization, not his dramatic composition, is his point of contact with us as a practical teacher. In other words, it is by his thorough *at-homeness* with human nature in the transpirations of individual character that he touches the general mind and heart. Here he speaks a language which all men of developed intelligence can understand and feel. Accordingly it is in his characters that most men place, and rightly place, his supreme excellence: here it is that his wisdom finds and grasps men *directly* as men; nor, at this point of meeting, does he leave any part of our many-sided being without its fitting portion of meat in due season; while our receptiveness is the only limit to our acquisitions.

"That which he hath writ Is with such judgment labour'd and distill'd Through all the needful uses of our lives, That, could a man remember but his lines, He should not touch at any serious point, But he might breathe his spirit out of him."

Shakespeare, it is true, idealizes his characters, all of them more or less, some of them very much. But this, too, is so done from the heart outwards, done with such inward firmness and such natural temperance, that there is seldom any thing of hollowness or insolidity in the result. Except in some of his earlier plays, written before he had found his proper strength, and before his genius had got fairly disciplined into power, there is nothing ambitious or obtrusive in his idealizing; no root of falsehood in the work, as indeed there never is in any work of art that is truly worthy the name. Works of artifice are a very different sort of thing. And one, perhaps the main, secret of Shakespeare's mode in this respect is, that the ideal is so equally diffused, and so perfectly interfused with the real, as not to disturb the natural balance and harmony of things. In other words, his poetry takes and keeps an elevation at all points alike above the plane of fact. Therewithal his mass of real matter is so great, that it keeps the ideal mainly out of sight. It is only by a special act of reflection that one discovers there is any thing but the real in his workmanship; and the appreciative student, unless his attention is specially drawn to that point, may dwell with him for years without once suspecting the presence of the ideal, because in truth his mind is kindled secretly to an answering state. It is said that even Schiller at first saw nothing but realism in Shakespeare, and was repelled by his harsh truth; but afterwards became more and more impressed with his ideality, which seemed to bring him near the old poets.

Thus even when Shakespeare idealizes most the effect is to make the characters truer to themselves and truer to nature than they otherwise would be. This may sound paradoxical, nevertheless I think a little illustration will make it good. For the proper idealizing of Art is a concentration of truth, and not, as is often supposed, a substitution of something else in the place of it. Now no man, that has any character to speak of, does or can show his whole character at any one moment or in any one turn of expression: it takes the gathered force and virtue of many expressions to make up any thing rightly characteristic of him. In painting, for instance, the portrait of an actual person, if the artist undertakes to represent him merely as he is at a given instant of time, he will of course be sure to misrepresent him. In such cases literal truth is essential untruth. Because the person cannot fairly deliver himself in any one instant of expression; and the business of Art is to distil the sense and efficacy of many transient expressions into one permanent one; that is, out of many passing lines and shades of transpiration the artist should so select and arrange and condense as to deliver the right characteristic truth about him. This is at least one of the ways, I think it is the commonest way, in which Shakespeare idealizes his characters; and he surpasses all other poets in the ease, sureness, and directness with which his idealizing works in furtherance of truth. It is in this sense that he idealizes from nature. And here, as elsewhere, it is "as if Nature had entrusted to him the secret of her working power"; for we cannot but feel that, if she should carry her human handiwork up to a higher stage of perfection, the result would be substantially as he gives it. Accordingly our first impression of his persons is that they are simply natural: had they been literal transcripts from fact, they would not have seemed more intensely real than they do: yet a close comparison of them with the reality of human nature discloses an ideal heightening in them of the finest and rarest quality. Even so realistic a delineation as Hostess Quickly, or the Nurse in *Romeo and Juliet* , is not an exception to this rule.

The Poet's idealizing of his characters proceeds, in part, by putting his own intellectuality into them. And the wonder is, how he could do this in so large a measure as he often does, without marring or displacing or anywise obstructing their proper individuality. For they are never any the less themselves for having so much of his intelligence in them. Nay, more; whatever may be their peculiarity, whether wit, dulness, egotism, or absurdity, the effect of that infusion is to quicken their idiom, and set it free, so that they become all the more rightly and truly themselves. Thus what he gives them operates to extricate and enfranchise their propriety, and bring it out in greater clearness and purity. His intellectuality discovers them to us just as they are, and translates their mind, or want of mind, into fitting language, yet remains so transparently clear as to be itself unseen. He tells more truth of them, or rather makes them tell more truth of themselves, in a single sentence, than, without his help, they could tell in a month. The secret of this appears to lie in sifting out what is most idiomatic or characteristic of a man, purging and depurating this of all that is uncharacteristic, and then presenting the former unmixed and free, the man of the man.

We have a very striking instance of this in *King Henry the Fifth* , where the Boy, who figures as servant to Bardolph, Pistol, and Nym, soliloquizes his judgment of those worthies: "As young as I am, I have observed these three swashers. I am boy to them all three; but they all three, though they would serve me, could not be man to me; for indeed three such antics do not amount to a man. For Bardolph,—he is white-liver'd and red-fac'd; by the means whereof 'a faces it out, but fights not. For Pistol,—he hath a killing tongue and a quiet sword; by the means whereof 'a breaks words, and keeps whole weapons. For Nym,—he hath heard that men of few words are the best men; and therefore he scorns to say his prayers, lest 'a should be thought a coward: but his few bad words are match'd with as few good deeds; for 'a never broke any man's head but his own, and that was against a post when he was drunk. They will steal any thing, and call it purchase. Bardolph stole a lute-case, bore it twelve leagues, and sold it for three half-pence. Nym and Bardolph are sworn brothers in filching; and in Calais they stole a fire-shovel: I knew by that piece of service the men would carry coals. They would have me as familiar with men's pockets as their gloves or their handkerchers: which makes much against my manhood, if I should take from another's pocket to put into mine; for it is plain pocketing-up of wrongs. I must leave them, and seek some better service: their villainy goes against my weak stomach, and therefore I must cast it up."

Here one might think the Poet must have lapsed a little from the character in making the Boy talk such a high and solid strain of intelligence: but it is not so; the Boy talks strictly in character. The intellect he shows is all truly his own too, but not his own in that space of time. He has indeed a shrewd, quick eye, and knows a thing or two; still he could not, unaided and alone, deliver so much intellect in a whole month as he here lets off in this brief speech. Shakespeare just inspires the youngster, and the effect of that inspiration is to make him so much the more himself.

But the process of the thing involves, moreover, a sort of double consciousness, which probably cannot be altogether explained. The Poet had a strange faculty, or at least had it in a strange degree, of being truly himself and truly another at one and the same time. For he does not mould a character from the outside, but is truly inside of it, nay, *is* the character for the time being, and yet all the while he continues just as much Shakespeare as if he were nothing else. His own proper consciousness, and the consciousness of the person he is representing, both of these are everywhere apparent in his characterization; both of them working together too, though in a manner which no psychology has been able to solve. In other words, Shakespeare is perfectly in his persons and perfectly out of them at the same time; has his consciousness and theirs thoroughly identified, yet altogether distinct; so that they get all the benefit of his intellect without catching the least tinge of his personality. There is the mystery of it. And the wonder on this point is greatly enhanced in his delineations of mental disease. For his consciousness takes on, so to speak, or passes into, the most abnormal states without any displacement or suspension of its normal propriety. Accordingly he explores and delivers the morbid and insane consciousness with no less truth to the life than the healthy and sound; as if in both cases alike he were inside and outside the persons at the same time. With what unexceptional mastery in Nature's hidden processes he does this, must be left till I come to the analysis of particular instances.

It is to be noted further that Shakespeare's characters, generally, are not exhibited in any one fixed state or cast of formation. There is a certain vital limberness and ductility in them, so that upon their essential identity more or less of mutation is ever supervening. They grow on and unfold themselves under our eye: we see them in course of development, in the act and process of becoming; undergoing marked changes, passing through divers stages, animated by mixed and various motives and impulses, passion alternating with passion, purpose with purpose, train of thought with train of thought; so that they often end greatly modified from what they were at the beginning; the same, and yet another. Thus they have to our minds a past and a future as well as a present; and even in what we see of them at any given moment there is involved something both of history and of prophecy.

Here we have another pregnant point of divergence from the Classic form. For, as it is unnatural that a man should continue altogether the same character, or subject to the same passion, or absorbed in the same purpose, through a period of ten years; so it is equally against nature that a man should undergo much change of character, or be occupied by many passions, or get engrossed in many purposes, the same day. If, therefore, a character is to be represented under various phases and fluctuations, the nature of the work evidently requires much length of time, a great variety of objects and influences, and, consequently, a wide range of place. Thus, in the Gothic Drama, the complexity of matter, with the implied vicissitudes of character, was plainly incompatible with the Minor Unities. On the other hand, the clearness and simplicity of design, which belong to the Classic Drama, necessarily preclude any great diversity of time and place; since, as the genius of the thing requires character to be represented mainly under a single aspect, the time and place of the representation must needs be limited correspondingly.

Again: It is admitted on all hands that in Shakespeare's works, far more than in almost any others, every thing appears to come, not from him, but from the characters; and from these too speaking, not as authors, but simply as men. The reason of which must be, that the word is just suited to the character, the character to the word; every thing exactly fitting into and filling the place. Doubtless there are many things which, considered by themselves, might be bettered; but it is not for themselves that the Poet uses them, but as being characteristic of the persons from whom they proceed; and the fact of their seeming to proceed from the persons, not from him, is clear proof of their strict dramatic propriety. Hence it is that in reading his works we think not of him, but only of what he is describing: we can hardly realize his existence, his individuality is so lost in the objects and characters he brings before us. In this respect, he is a sort of impersonal intelligence, with the power to make every thing visible but itself. Had he been merely an omniloquent voice, there could hardly have been less of subjective idiom in his deliverances. That he should have known so perfectly how to avoid giving too much or too little; that he should have let out and drawn in the reins precisely as the matter required;—this, as it evinces an almost inconceivable delicacy of mind, is also one of the points wherein his originality is most conspicuous.

Equally remarkable is the Poet's intellectual plenipotence in so ordering and moving the several characters of a play as that they may best draw out each other by mutual influences, and set off each other by mutual contrasts. The persons are thus assorted and attempered with perfect insight both of their respective natures and of their common fitness to his purpose. And not the least wonderful thing in his works is the exquisite congruity of what comes from the persons with all the circumstances and influences under which they are represented as acting; their transpirations of character being withal so disposed that the principle of them shines out freely and clearly on the mind. We have a good instance of this in Romeo's speech just before he swallows the poison; every word of which is perfectly idiomatic of the speaker, and at the same time thoroughly steeped in the idiom of his present surroundings. It is true, Shakespeare's persons, like those in real life, act so, chiefly because they are so; but so perfectly does he seize and impart the germ of a character, along with the proper conditions of its development, that the results seem to follow all of their own accord. Thus in his delineations every thing is fitted to every other thing; so that each requires and infers the others, and all hang together in most natural coherence and congruity.

To illustrate this point a little more in detail, let us take his treatment of passion. How many forms, degrees, varieties of passion he has portrayed! Yet I am not aware that any instance of disproportion or unfitness has ever been successfully pointed out in his works. With but two or three exceptions at the most, so perfect is the correspondence between the passion and the character, and so freely and fitly does the former grow out of the circumstances in which the latter is placed, that we have no difficulty in justifying and accounting for the passion. The passion is thoroughly characteristic, and pervaded with the individuality of its subject. And this holds true not only of different passions, but of different modifications of the same passion; the forms of love, for instance, being just as various and distinct as the characters in which it is shown. Then too he unfolds a passion in its rise and progress, its turns and vicissitudes, its ebbings and flowings, so that we go along with it freely and naturally from first to last. Even when, as in case of Ferdinand and Miranda, or of Romeo and Juliet, he ushers in a passion at its full height, he so contrives to throw the mind back or around upon various predisposing causes and circumstances, as to carry our sympathies through without any revulsion. We are so prepared for the thing by the time it comes as to feel no abruptness in its coming. The exceptions to this, save in some of the Poet's earlier plays, are very rare indeed: the only one I have ever *seemed* to find is the jealousy of Leontes in *The Winter's Tale* , and I am by no means sure of it even there. This intuitive perception of the exact kind and degree of passion and character that are suited to each other; this quick and sure insight of the internal workings of a given mind, and of the why, the when, and the how far it should be moved; and this accurate letting-out and curbing-in of a passion precisely as the law of its individuality requires; in a word, this thorough mastery of the inmost springs and principles of human transpiration;—all this is so extraordinary, that I am not surprised to find even grave and temperate thinkers applying to the Poet such bold expressions as the instrument, the rival, the co-worker, the completer of Nature.

Nor is this the only direction in which he maintains the fitness of things: he keeps the matter right towards us as well as towards his characters. It is true, he often lays on us burdens of passion that would not be borne in any other writer. But, whether he wrings the heart with pity, or freezes the blood with terror, or fires the soul with indignation, the genial reader still rises from his pages refreshed. The reason of which is, instruction keeps pace with excitement: he strengthens the mind in proportion as he loads it. Shakespeare has been called the great master of passion: doubtless he is so; yet he is not more that than he is every thing else: for he makes us think as intensely as he requires us to feel; while opening the deepest fountains of the heart, he at the same time kindles the highest energies of the head. Nay, with such consummate art does he manage the fiercest tempests of our being, that in a healthy mind the witnessing of them is always attended by an overbalance of pleasure. With the very whirlwinds of passion he so blends the softening and assuaging influences of poetry, that they relish of nothing but sweetness and health; as in case of "the gentle Desdemona," where pathos is indeed carried to the extreme limit of endurance, so that "all for pity I could die," yet there is no breach of the rule in question. For while, as a philosopher, he surpassed all other philosophers in power to discern the passions of men; as an artist, he also surpassed all other artists in skill

"so to temper passion, that our ears Take pleasure in their pain, and eyes in tears

Both weep and smile."

Another point well worth the noting is the perfect evenhandedness of Shakespeare's representations. For, among all his characters, with the single exception, perhaps, of "Prince Hal," we cannot discover from the delineation itself that he preferred any one to another; though of course we cannot conceive it possible for any man to regard, for example, Edmund and Edgar, or Iago and Desdemona, with the same feelings. It is as if the scenes of his dramas were forced on his observation against his will, himself being under a solemn oath to report the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. He thus leaves the characters to make their own impression upon us. He is their mouth-piece, not they his: what they say is never Shakespeare ventriloquizing, but is to all intents and purposes their own. With the right or wrong, the honour or shame, of their actions, he has nothing to do: that they are so, and act so, is their concern, not his; and his business is, not to reform nor deprave, not to censure nor approve them, but simply to tell the truth about them. And so, because he would not serve as the advocate of any, therefore he was able to stand as the representative of all; which is indeed his characteristic office.

Most of the many faultings of Shakespeare's workmanship on the score of taste are easily disposed of from this point. As a general thing, the blame laid upon him in this behalf belongs only to his persons, and as regards him the matter of it should rather be a theme of praise. Take, for example, the gross images and foul language used by Leontes when the rage of jealousy is on him: the matter is offensive enough certainly in itself, but it is the proper outcome of the man's character in that state of mind; that is, it is a part, and an essential part, of the truth concerning him: as the passion turns him into a brute, so he is rightly made, or rather allowed to speak a brutal dialect; and the bad taste is his, not the Poet's. That jealousy, such as that of Leontes, naturally subverts a man's understanding and manners, turns his sense, his taste, his decency all out of doors, and causes him to gloat over loathsome thoughts and fancies,—this is among the things of human nature which it would be a sin to omit in a delineation of that passion.

And so of the many absurdities and follies and obscenities which Shakespeare puts into the mouths of certain persons: for the most part, they have an ample justification in that they are characteristic of the speakers; if not beauties of art, they often have a higher beauty than art, as truths of nature; and the Poet is no more to be blamed for them than an honest reporter is for the bad taste of a speaker reported. In like sort, we have Milton's Satan satanizing thus:

"The mind is its own place, and of itself Can make a Heaven of Hell, a Hell of Heaven."

I have often heard people quote this approvingly, as if they thought the better of Satan for thus declaring himself independent of God. But those words coming from Satan are a high stroke of dramatic fitness; and when people quote them with approval, this may be an argument of intellectual impiety in them, but not of Milton's agreement with them in opinion.

But do you say that Shakespeare should not have undertaken to represent any but persons of refined taste and decorous speech? That were to cut the Drama off from its proper freehold in the truth of human character, and also from some of its fruitfullest sources of instruction and wisdom: so, its office were quite another thing than "holding the mirror up to Nature." Not indeed but that Shakespeare is fairly chargeable with some breaches of good taste: these however are so few and of such a kind, that they still leave him just our highest authority in the School of Taste. Here, as elsewhere, he is our "canon of Polycletus." So Raphael made a painting of Apollo play the fiddle on Parnassus,—a grosser breach of good taste than any thing Shakespeare ever did. And yet Raphael is the painter of the finest taste in the world!—All which just approves the old proverb, that "no man is wise at all hours": so that we may still affirm without abatement the fine saying of Schlegel, that "genius is the almost unconscious choice of the highest excellence, and, consequently, it is taste in the greatest perfection."

It is to be observed, also, that Shakespeare never brings in any characters as the mere shadows or instruments or appendages of others. All the persons, high and low, contain within themselves the reason why they are there and not elsewhere, why they are so and not otherwise. None are forced in upon the scene merely to supply the place of others, and so to be trifled with till the others are ready to return; but each is treated in his turn as if he were the main character of the piece. So true is this, that even if one character comes in as the satellite of another, he does so by a right and an impulse of his own: he is all the while obeying, or rather executing the law of his individuality, and has just as much claim on the other for a primary as the other has on him for a satellite; which may be aptly instanced in Justice Shallow and Justice Silence, or in Sir Toby

Belch and Sir Andrew Aguecheek. The consequence is, that all the characters are developed, not indeed at equal length, but with equal perfectness as far as they go; for, to make the dwarf fill the same space as the giant were to dilute, not develop, the dwarf.

Thus much as to Shakespeare's mode of conceiving and working out character. Here, again, as in the matter of dramatic composition, we have the proper solidarity, originality, completeness, and disinterestedness of Art, all duly and rightly maintained: that is, what was before found true in reference to all the parts of a drama viewed as a whole; the same holds, also, in regard to all the parts of an individual character considered by itself. In both these respects, and in both alike, the Poet discovers a spirit of the utmost candour and calmness, such as could neither be misled by any inward bias or self-impulse from seeing things as they are, nor swayed from reflecting them according to the just forms and measures of objective truth; while his creative forces worked with such smoothness and equanimity, that it is hardly an extravagance to describe him as another Nature. All this, however, must not be taken as applying, at least not in the full length and breadth, to what I have before spoken of as the Poet's apprentice-work. For, I repeat, Shakespeare's genius was not born full-grown, as a good many have been used to suppose. Ben Jonson knew him right well personally, and was, besides, no stranger to his method of working; and, in his noble lines prefixed to the folio of 1623, he puts this point just as, we may be sure, he had himself seen it to be true:

"Yet must I not give Nature all; thy art, My gentle Shakespeare, must enjoy a part: For a good poet's made, as well as born; And such wert thou."

As to the question how far his genius went by a certain instinctive harmony and happiness of nature, how far by a process of conscious judgment and reflection, this is probably beyond the reach of any psychology to determine. From the way he often speaks of poets and poetry, of art and nature, it is evident that he was well at home in speculative and philosophical considerations of the subject. Then too the vast improvement made in some of his plays, as in *Hamlet* , upon rewriting them, shows that his greatest successes were by no means owing to mere lucky hits of instinct. On the whole, I suspect he understood the what, the how, and the why of his working as well as any first-class artist ever did. But genius, in its highest and purest instances, is a sort of unfallen intellect; so that from its pre-established harmony with the laws of mental being it goes right spontaneously. Sophocles comprehended the whole of what is meant by powerful genius working unconsciously, when he said of his great teacher, "Æschylus does what is right without knowing why." And the true secret of Shakespeare's excellence mainly lies, I take it, in a perfect co-operative union of instinct and understanding, of purpose and impulse; nature and art, inspiration and study, so working together and interpenetrating, that it is impossible to distinguish their respective shares in the joint result. And the wonder of it is, how the fruits of creative impulse could so pass through the medium of conscious reflection, as they seem to have done, and still retain all the dewy freshness of pure creative nature; insomuch that his art carries such an air of unstudied ease as gives it the appearance of perfect artlessness.

As to the time when Shakespeare passed from the apprentice into the master, I place this in the year 1597, or thereabouts, when he was thirty-two or thirty-three years old; and I take *The Merchant of Venice* and *King Henry the Fourth* as marking the clear and complete advent of the master's hand. And what I have been saying holds *altogether* true only of the plays written during his mastership. In all his earlier plays, even in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *King Richard the Second* , and *King Richard the Third* , probably neither the composition nor the characterization can fairly stand the test of any of the principles of Art, as I have noted them. But especially in the workmanship of that period, along with much that is rightly original, we have not a little, also, of palpable imitation. The unoriginality, however, is rather in the style than in the matter, and so will be more fitly remarked under the head of Style. Still worse, because it goes deeper, we have in those plays a want of clear artistic disinterestedness. The arts and motives of authorship are but too apparent in them; thus showing that the Poet did not thoroughly lose himself in the enthusiasm and truth of his work. In some cases, he betrays not a little sense of his own skill; at least there are plain marks of a conscious and self-observing exercise of skill. And perhaps his greatest weakness, if that word may be used of him at all, lies in a certain vanity and artifice of stage-effect, or in a sort of theatrical and dialogical intemperance, as if he were trying to shine, and pleased with the reflection of his own brilliancy. But as this too was the result of imitation, not of character, so in the earnestness of his work he soon outgrew it, working purely in the interest and from the inspiration of Nature and Truth.

Before passing on from this branch of the subject, perhaps I ought to add that Shakespeare drew largely from the current popular literature of his time. The sources from which he gathered his plots and materials will be noted pretty fully when I come to speak of particular plays. It may suffice to remark here, that there seems the more cause for dwelling on what the Poet took from other writers, in that it exhibits him, where a right-minded study should specially delight to contemplate him, as holding his unrivalled inventive powers subordinate to the higher principles of Art. He cared little for the interest of novelty, which is but a short-lived thing at the best; much for the interest of truth and beauty, which is indeed immortal, and always grows upon acquaintance. And the novel-writing of our time shows that hardly any thing is easier than to get up new incidents or new combinations of incidents for a story; and as the interest of such things turns mainly on their novelty, so of course they become less interesting the more one knows them: which order—for "a thing of beauty is a joy for ever"—is just reversed in genuine works of art. Besides, if Shakespeare is the most original of poets, he is also one of the greatest of borrowers; and as few authors have appropriated so freely from others, so none can better afford to have his obligations in this kind well known.

<<span id="filepos0040049707"> a>HUMOUR.

Shakespeare's *Humour* is so large and so operative an element of his genius, that a general review of his works would be very incomplete without some special consideration of it. And perhaps, except his marvellous duality of mind, there is nothing in his poetry of which it is more difficult to give a satisfactory account. For humour is nowise a distinct or separable thing with him, but a perfusive and permeating ingredient of his make-up: it acts as a sort of common solvent, in which different and even opposite lines of thought, states of mind, and forms of life are melted into happy reconcilement and co-operation. Through this, as a kind of pervading and essential sap, is carried on a free intercourse and circulation between the moral and intellectual parts of his being; and hence, perhaps, in part, the wonderful catholicity of mind which generally marks his representations.

It follows naturally from this that the Poet's humour is widely diversified in its exhibitions. There is indeed no part of him that acts with greater versatility. It imparts a certain wholesome earnestness to his most sportive moods, making them like the honest and whole-hearted play of childhood, than which human life has nothing that proceeds more in earnest. For who has not found it a property of childhood to be serious in its fun, innocent in its mischief, and ingenuous in its guile? Moreover it is easy to remark that, in Shakespeare's greatest dunces and simpletons and potentates of nonsense, there is something that prevents contempt. A fellow-feeling springs up between us and them; it is through our sympathetic, not our selfish emotions, that they interest us: we are far more inclined to laugh with them than at them; and even when we laugh at them we love them the more for that which is laughable in them. So that our intercourse with them proceeds under the great law of kindness and charity. Try this with any of the Poet's illustrious groups of comic personages, and it will be found, I apprehend, thoroughly true. What distinguishes us from them, or sets us above them in our own esteem, is never appealed to as a source or element of delectation. And so the pleasure we have of them is altogether social in its nature, and humanizing in its effect, ever knitting more widely the bands of sympathy.

Here we have what may be called a foreground of comedy, but the Poet's humour keeps up a living circulation between this and the serious elements of our being that stand behind it. It is true, we are not always, nor perhaps often, conscious of any stirring in these latter: what is laughable occupies the surface, and therefore is all that we directly see. But still there are deep undercurrents of earnest sentiment moving not the less really that their movement is noiseless. In the disguise of sport and mirth, there is a secret discipline of humanity going on; and the effect is all the better that it steals into us unseen and unsuspected: we know that we laugh, but we do something better than laughing without knowing it, and so are made the better by our laughter; for in that which betters us without our knowledge we are doubly benefited.

Not indeed but that Shakespeare has characters, as, for example, the Steward in *King Lear* , which are thoroughly contemptible, and which we follow with contempt. But it is to be observed that there is nothing laughable in Oswald; nothing that we can either laugh with or laugh at: he is a sort of human reptile, such as life sometimes produces, whom we regard with moral loathing and disgust, but in whose company neither mirth nor pity can find any foothold. On the other hand, the feelings moved by a Bottom, a Dogberry, an Aguecheek, or a Slender, are indeed very different from those which wait upon a Cordelia, an Ophelia, or an Imogen, but there is no essential oppugnance between them: in both cases the heart moves by the laws of sympathy; which is exactly reversed in the case of such an object as Oswald: the former all touch us through what we have in common with them; the latter touches us only through our antipathies. There is, therefore, nothing either of comic or of tragic in the part of Oswald viewed by itself: on the contrary, it runs in entire oppugnance to the proper currents of them both.

Much of what I have said touching Shakespeare's comic scenes holds true, conversely, of his tragic scenes. For it is a great mistake to suppose that his humour has its sole exercise in comic representations. It carries the power of tears as well as of smiles: in his deepest strains of tragedy there is often a subtile infusion of it, and this too in such a way as to heighten the tragic effect; we may feel it playing delicately beneath his most pathetic scenes, and deepening their pathos. For in his hands tragedy and comedy are not made up of different elements, but of the same elements standing in different places and relations: what is background in the one becomes foreground in the other; what is an undercurrent in the one becomes an uppercurrent in the other; the effect of the whole depending almost, perhaps altogether, as much on what is not directly seen as on what is. So that with him the pitiful and the ludicrous, the sublime and the droll, are like the greatness and littleness of human life: for these qualities not only coexist in our being, but, which is more, they coexist under a mysterious law of interdependence and reciprocity; insomuch that our life may in some sense be said to be great because little, and little because great.

And as Shakespeare's transports of humour draw down more or less into the depths of serious thought, and make our laughter the more refreshing and exhilarating because of what is moving silently beneath; so his tragic ecstasies take a richness of colour and flavour from the humour held in secret reserve, and forced up to the surface now and then by the super incumbent weight of tragic matter. This it is, in part, that truly makes them "awful mirth." For who does not know that the most winning smiles are those which play round a moistening eye, and tell of serious thoughts beneath; and that the saddest face is that which wears in its expression an air of remembered joy, and speaks darkly of sunshine in the inner courts of the soul? For we are so made, that no one part of our being moves to perfection unless all the other parts move with it: when we are at work, whatever there is of the playful within us ought to play; when we are at play, our working mind ought to be actively present in the exercise. It is this harmonious moving together of all the parts of our being that makes the true music of life. And to minister in restoring this "concord of a well-tuned mind," which has been broken by "discords most unjust," is the right office of Culture, and the right scope of Art as the highest organ of Culture. And in reference to this harmonious interplay of all the human faculties and sensibilities, I may not unfitly apply to Shakespeare's workmanship these choice lines from Wordsworth:

"Brisk Youth appeared, the Morn of youth, With freaks of graceful folly,— Life's temperate Noon, her sober Eve, Her Night not melancholy; Past, present, future, all appeared, In harmony united, Like guests that meet, and some from far, By cordial love invited."

I cannot, nor need I, stay to illustrate the point in hand, at any length, by detailed reference to the Poet's dramas. This belongs to the office of particular criticism, and therefore would be something out of keeping here. The Fool's part in *King Lear* will readily occur to any one familiar with that tragedy. And perhaps there is no one part of *Hamlet* that does more to heighten the tragic effect than the droll scene of the Gravediggers. But, besides this, there is a vein of humour running through the part of Hamlet himself, underlying his darkest moods, and giving depth and mellowness to his strains of impassioned thought. And every reflecting reader must have observed how much is added to the impression of terror in the trial-scene of *The Merchant of Venice* , by the fierce jets of mirth with which Gratiano assails old Shylock; and also how, at the close of the scene, our very joy at Antonio's deliverance quickens and deepens our pity for the broken-hearted Jew who lately stood before us dressed in such fulness of terror. But indeed the Poet's skill at heightening any feeling by awakening its opposite; how he manages to give strength to our most earnest sentiments by touching some spring of playfulness; and to further our liveliest moods by springing upon us some delicate surprises of seriousness;—all this is matter of common observation.

But the Poet's humour has yet other ways of manifesting itself. And among these not the least remarkable is the subtile and delicate irony which often pervades his scenes, and sometimes gives character to whole plays, as in the case of *Troilus and Cressida* , and *Antony and Cleopatra* . By methods that can hardly be described, he contrives to establish a sort of secret understanding with the reader, so as to arrest the impression just as it is on the point of becoming tragic. While dealing most seriously with his characters, he uses a certain guile: through them we catch, as it were, a roguish twinkle of his eye, which makes us aware that his mind is secretly sporting itself with their earnestness; so that we have a double sympathy,—a sympathy with their passion and with his play. Thus his humour often acts in such a way as to possess us with mixed emotions: the persons, while moving us with their thoughts, at the same time start us upon other thoughts which have no place in them; and we share in all that they feel, but still are withheld from committing ourselves to them, or so taking part with them as to foreclose a due regard to other claims.

<<span id="filepos0040061019"> a>STYLE.

The word *style* is often used in a sense equally appropriate to all the forms of Art,—a sense having reference to some peculiar mode of conception or execution; as the Saxon, the Norman, the Romanesque style of architecture, or the style of Titian, of Raphael, of Rembrandt, of Turner, in painting. In this sense, it includes the whole general character or distinctive impression of any given workmanship in Art, and so is applicable to the Drama; as when we speak of a writer's tragic or comic style, or of such and such dramas as being in too operatic a style. The peculiarities of Shakespeare's style in this sense have been involved in the foregoing sections; so that I shall have no occasion to speak further of them in this general survey of the Poet's Art. The more restrained and ordinary meaning of the word looks merely to an author's use of language; that is, his choice and arrangement of words, the structure of his sentences, and the cast and texture of his imagery; all, in short, that enters into his diction, or his manner of conveying his particular thoughts. This is the matter now to be considered. The subject, however, is a very wide one, and naturally draws into a multitude of details; so that I can hardly do more than touch upon a few leading points, lest the discussion should quite overgrow the limits I have prescribed myself.

On a careful inspection of Shakespeare's poetry, it becomes evident that none of the epithets commonly used in regard to style, such as *plain, simple, neat, ornate, elegant, florid, figurative, severe, copious, sententious* , can be rightly applied to him, at least not as characteristic of him. His style is all of them by turns, and much more besides; but no one of the traits signified by those terms is so continuous or prominent as to render the term in any sort fairly discriminative or descriptive of his diction.

Under this head, then, I am to remark, first, that Shakespeare's language is as far as possible from being of a constant and uniform grain. His style seems to have been always in a sort of fluid and formative state. Except in two or three of his earliest plays, there is indeed a certain common basis, for which we have no word but *Shakespearian* , running through his several periods of writing; but upon this basis more or less of change is continually supervening. So that he has various distinct styles, corresponding to his different stages of ripeness in his work. These variations, to be sure, are nowise abrupt: the transition from one to another is gradual and insensible, proceeding by growth, not by leaps: but still, after an interval of six or seven years, the difference becomes clearly marked. It will suffice for my purpose to speak of them all under the threefold distinction of earlier, middle, and later styles. And I probably cannot do better than to take *King Richard the Second, As You Like It* , and *Coriolanus* , as representing, severally, those three divisions.

Shakespeare began by imitating the prevailing theatrical style of the time. He wrote in much the same way as those before and about him did, till by experience and practice he found out a better way of his own. It is even doubtful whether his first imitations surpassed his models. In *Titus Andronicus* , the First Part of *King Henry the Sixth* , and *The Comedy of Errors* , if there be any thing of the right Shakespearian idiom, it is so overlaid by what he had caught from others as to be hardly discoverable. Accordingly those pieces seem to me little better than worthless, save as specimens of his apprentice-work. In *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* , also, *Loves Labour's Lost* , and *The Taming of the Shrew* , imitation has decidedly the upper hand; though in these plays, especially the latter, we have clear prognostics of the forthcoming dramatic divinity. From thence onward his style kept growing less imitative and more idiomatic till not the least taste or relish of the former remained. So that in this respect his course was in fact just what might be expected from a thoroughly modest, teachable, receptive, and at the same time most living, active, and aspiring mind,—a mind full indeed of native boldness, but yet restrained by judgment and good sense from the crudeness and temerity of self-will and eccentric impulse, and not trusting to its own strength till it had better reasons for doing so than the promptings of vanity and egotism.

It is to this process of imitation that the Poet's faults of style are to be mainly ascribed; though in the end it was no doubt in a great measure the source of his excellences also. For, taking his works in the order of their production, we can perceive very clearly that his faults of style kept disappearing as he became more and more himself. He advanced in the path of improvement by slow tentative methods, and was evidently careful not to deviate from what was before him till he saw unmistakably how he could do better. As he was thus "most severe in fashion and collection of himself"; so he worked in just the true way for disciplining and regulating his genius into power; and so in due time he had a good right to be "as clear and confident as Jove."

Shakespeare's faults of style, especially in his earlier plays, are neither few nor small. Among these are to be reckoned, of course, his frequent quibbles and plays upon words, his verbal conceits and affectations, his equivoques and clinches. Many of these are palpable sins against manliness; not a few of them are decidedly puerile; the results of an epidemic of trifling and of fanciful prettiness. Some critics, it is true, have strained a point, if not several points, in defence of them; but it seems to me that a fair-minded criticism has no way but to set them down as plain blemishes and disfigurements. And our right, nay, our duty to call them such is fully approved in that the Poet himself seasonably outgrew and forsook them; a comparison of his earlier and later plays thus showing that his manlier taste discarded them. They were however nowise characteristic of him: they were the fashion of the day, and were common to all the dramatic writers of the time. Nor were they by any means confined to the walks of the Drama: many men of the highest character and position both in Church and State were more or less infected with them.

It is not likely indeed that Shakespeare at first regarded these things as faults, or that he adopted them reluctantly in compliance with the popular bent, and as needful to success. In his youth he doubtless used them in good faith, and even sought for them as traits of excellence; for he himself shared to the fullest extent in the redundancy of mental life which distinguished the age, and which naturally loves to sport itself in such quirks of thought and speech. But it is manifest that he was not long in growing to distaste them, notwithstanding that he still continued occasionally to practise them. For, even in *The Merchant of Venice* , which I reckon among the last in his earlier or the first in his middle style, we find him censuring the thing while indulging it:

"O, dear discretion, how his words are suited! The fool hath planted in his memory An army of good words; and I do know A many fools, that stand in better place, Garnish'd like him, that for a tricksy word Defy the matter."

In the case here censured, however, the thing, though a vice in itself, is no offence to good taste, and may even be justly noted as a stroke of dramatic virtue, because it is rightly characteristic of the person using it: which only makes the reproof the more pointed as aimed at the habit, then but too common in the high places of learning, of so twisting language into puns and conceits, that one could hardly come at the sense. But I can admit no such plea, when, in

King Richard the Second , the dying Gaunt goes to punning on his name:

"Old Gaunt indeed; and gaunt in being old: Within me grief hath kept a tedious fast; And who abstains from meat, that is not gaunt? For sleeping England long time have I watch'd; Watching breeds leanness, leanness is all gaunt: The pleasure that some fathers feed upon Is my strict fast,—I mean my children's looks; And therein fasting, hast thou made me gaunt: Gaunt am I for the grave, gaunt as a grave, Whose hollow womb inherits nought but bones."

This, notwithstanding it is defended by so sound a critic as Schlegel, seems to me a decided blot; I cannot accept it as right either in itself or on the score of dramatic fitness. Many like instances occur in *Romeo and Juliet*, *King John* , and other plays of that period; instances which I cannot help regarding not only as breaches of good taste in the speakers, but as plain faults of style in the Poet himself: the blame of them indeed properly rests with him, not with the persons; for they are out of keeping with the sentiments of the occasion, and jar on the feelings which the surrounding matter inspires; that is, they are sins against dramatic propriety, as well as against honest manliness of style: so that, however the pressure of the age may account for them, it must not be taken as excusing them; and the best we can say on this point is, that in his faults of style the Poet went with the custom and fashion of his time, while in his virtues he went quite above and beyond the time.

Near akin to these are other faults of still graver import. In his earlier plays, the Poet's style is often, not to say generally, at least in the more serious parts, rather rhetorical than rightly dramatic. The persons often lay themselves out in what may not unfairly be called speech-making. Their use of language is highly self-conscious, and abounds in marks of elaborateness, as if their mind were more intent on the figure they are making than on what they are talking about: so that the right colloquial tone is lost in a certain ambitious, oratorical, got-up manner of speech; and we feel a want of that plain, native, spontaneous talk wherein heart and tongue keep touch and time together: in short, they speak rather as authors having an audience in view than as men and women moved by the real passions and interests of life.

The reason of all this I take to be, that the Poet himself was at that time highly self-conscious in his use of language. His art was then too young to lose itself in the enthusiasm of Truth and Nature; and, as remarked before, he seems to have felt no little pleasure in the tokens of his own skill. Thus, in his earlier plays, written before he had fully found himself, the arts and motives of authorship are but too apparent: he was then, I should say, somewhat in the humour of flirting with the Muses and Graces; which, because it lacks the modesty and delicacy of genuine passion, therefore naturally runs into that excess of manner and style which is commonly called "fine writing." And it is a very noteworthy point, that when he studies most for effect, then it is that we find him least effective. But here too, as in the matter mentioned before, his fault was clearly the result of imitation, not of character. Accordingly, in the earnestness of his work, he gradually outgrew it. In the plays of his later period, the fault disappears entirely; there is not a vestige of it left: in fact, this fault is mainly revealed to us by the higher standard of judgment which his later plays supply. Here all is straightforward, genuine, natural, with no rhetorical trickeries or fineries whatever; and among all modern writers his style stands quite alone in the solid purity, directness, and inward virtue of that perfect art which not only conceals itself from others, but is even a secret unto itself; or at least is too intent on something else to be listening to the music of its own voice. For so his highest style was when, in the maturity of his power, he left the style to take care of itself, and therefore had it perfectly subordinated to his matter and thought: in other words, he always writes best when most unconscious of it, being so possessed with his theme as to take no thought of himself.

We have somewhat the same order and course of things in Burke, who may be not unfitly described as the Shakespeare of political philosophy. His treatise *On the Sublime and Beautiful* was, though in a good sense, mainly the fruit of literary ambition. There he rather sought for something to say because he wanted to speak, than spoke because he had something he wanted to say. And so he is not properly himself in that work, but only a studious, correct, and tasteful writer. When thoroughly roused and kindled in the work of defending, intrenching, and illustrating the Constitution of his country as the sacred guardian of liberty and order, he became quite another man; then it was that all the powers of his great mind were taught and inspired to act in concert and unity. As Wordsworth says of him,—

"This is no trifler, no short-flighted wit, No stammerer of a minute, painfully Deliver'd. No! the Orator hath yok'd The Hours, like young Aurora, to his car: Thrice-welcome Presence! how can patience e'er Grow weary of attending on a track That kindles with such glory!"

The mere ambitions of authorship are not enough to make good authors; and what Burke needed was something to lift him far above them. And when he came to grapple with the high practical questions and living interests of mankind, here he was too full of his matter, and too earnest in his cause, to observe how finely he was working; and because he was captivated by his theme, not by the figure he made in handling it, therefore he earned a prerogative place among the sons of light.

The distinction I have been remarking between Shakespeare's rhetorical and dramatic use of language, or, as I before termed it, his imitative and idiomatic style, may be better understood on comparing some brief specimens of his earlier and later workmanship. As an instance of the former, take a part of York's speech to the King, in *King Richard the Second* , ii. 1:

"I am the last of noble Edward's sons, Of whom thy father, Prince of Wales, was first: In war was never lion rag'd more fierce, In peace was never gentle lamb more mild, Than was that young and princely gentleman. His face thou hast, for even so look'd he, Accomplish'd with the number of thy hours; But when he frown'd, it was against the French, And not against his friends: his noble hand Did win what he did spend, and not spend that Which his triumphant father's hand had won: His hands were guilty of no kindred's blood, But bloody with the enemies of his kin."

No one, I think, can help feeling that this is the style of a man rather aiming at finely-turned phrases than deeply in earnest with the matter in hand; more the language of brilliant rhetoric than of impassioned thought. At all events, there is to my taste an air of falsetto about it; it seems more like the image of a painted than of a living passion. Be this as it may, the Poet's own riper style quite discredits it; though I have to confess that, but for his teachings, we might not so well have known of any thing better. Now contrast with the foregoing one of the hero's speeches in *Coriolanus* , iii. 2, where his mother urges him to play the demagogue, and practise smiles for the gaining of votes:

"Away, my disposition, and possess me Some harlot's spirit! my throat of war be turn'd— Which quirèd with my drum—into a pipe Small as an eunuch's, or the virgin voice That babies lulls asleep! the smiles of knaves Tent in my cheeks; and school-boys' tears take up The glasses of my sight! a beggar's tongue Make motion through my lips; and my arm'd knees, Who bow'd but in my stirrup, bend like his That hath receiv'd an alms!—I will not do't; Lest I surcease to honour mine own truth, And by my body's action teach my mind A most inherent baseness."

Perhaps the Poet's different styles might be still better exemplified in passages of pathos; but here I must rest with merely referring, for instance, to York's speech in *King Richard the Second* , beginning, "As in a theatre the eyes of men," and the passage in *Macbeth* where Macduff first learns of the slaughter of his wife and children. Both are indeed very noble in their way; but I think no reader of disciplined taste can fail to see the vast superiority of the latter, and that this is owing not so much to any difference of character in the speakers as to a far higher stage of art in the Poet. I must add that the rhetorical or speech-making style appears more or less in all the plays of his first period: we find something of it even in such high specimens as *The Merchant of Venice* and *King Henry the Fourth* .

I have spoken of the fault in question as specially marking the *more serious* parts of the Poet's earlier plays. The more comic portions of the same plays are much less open to any such reproof. The Poet's style in comedy from the first ran closer to nature, and had much more of freedom, simplicity, and heartiness in its goings. The reason of this difference seems to be, that the lessons of nature in sport are more quickly learnt than those of nature in her graver moods. The child plays, the man works. And there needs a ripe soul of manhood, with much discipline besides, before a man warms into his work with the free gust and spirit of play.

In what more I have to say under this head, I shall spare further reference to the Poet's faults of imitation, and speak only of his characteristic or idiomatic traits of style.

In regard to Shakespeare's choice of words there probably need not much be said. Here the point I shall first consider is the relative proportion of Saxon and Latin words in his writing.—Students somewhat curious in this behalf have found his words of Latin derivation to average about forty per cent. This, I believe, does not greatly differ from the average used by the most select and accomplished writers of that age. I suspect that Hooker has a somewhat larger proportion of Latin words, but am not sure of it.—The English had already grown to be a learned tongue; and, which is far better, the learned portion of it had got thoroughly diffused and domesticated in the popular mind: for centuries the Saxon and Latin elements had been in process of blending and fusing together, so as to work smoothly and even lovingly side by side in the same thought; common people using both with the same easy and unstudied naturalness. Therewithal the language was then in just its freshest state of maturity; flexible to all the turns of philosophical and poetical discourse; full of vital sap and flavour; its cheeks plump and rosy, its step light and graceful, with health: pedants and grammarians had not starched and ironed it into self-conscious dignity and primness: it had not learnt the vice of putting on literary airs, and of practising before a looking-glass. Our translation of the Bible is enough of itself to prove all this, even if we had no other monuments of the fact. And the Elizabethan English was a right joyous and jolly tongue also, as became the heart of brave, honest, merry old England; yet it was earnest and candid withal, and had in no sort caught the French disease of vanity and persiflage: it was all alive, too, with virgin sensibility and imaginative delicacy; to say nothing of how Spenser found or made it as melodious and musical as Apollo's lute.

Shakespeare has many passages, some of them running to considerable length, made up almost wholly of Saxon words. Again, he has not a few wherein the Latin largely shares. Yet I can hardly see that in either case any thing of vigour and spirit is lost. On the other hand, I can often see a decided increase of strength and grasp resulting in part from a judicious mixing and placing of the two elements. I cite a few passages in illustration; the first two being from *King Lear* , the third from *Antony and Cleopatra* :

"Mine enemy's dog, Though he had bit me, should have stood that night Against my fire; and wast thou fain, poor father, To hovel thee with swine, and rogues forlorn, In short and musty straw?"

"We two alone will sing like birds i' the cage: When thou dost ask me blessing, I'll kneel down, And ask of thee forgivness: so we'll live, And pray, and sing, and tell old tales, and laugh At gilded butterflies, and hear poor rogues Talk of Court news; and we'll talk with them too,— Who loses and who wins, who's in, who's out;— And take upon 's the mystery of things, As if we were God's spies: and we'll wear out, In a wall'd prison, packs and sects of great ones, That ebb and flow by th' Moon."

"Henceforth The white hand of a lady fever thee, Shake thou to look on't. Get thee back to Cæsar, Tell him thy entertainment: look thou say He makes me angry with him; for he seems Proud and disdainful, harping on what I am, Not what he knew I was: he makes me angry; And at this time most easy 'tis to do't, When my good stars, that were my former guides, Have empty left their orbs, and shot their fires Into th' abysm of Hell."

With these collate the following from *Troilus and Cressida* and *King Lear* , where, for aught I can see, the interweaving of Saxon and Latin words proceeds with just as much ease and happiness as the almost pure Saxon of the foregoing:

"How could communities, Degrees in schools, and brotherhoods in cities, Peaceful commerce from dividable shores, The primogenity and due of birth, Prerogative of age, crowns, sceptres, laurels, But by degree, stand in authentic place? Take but degree away, untune that string, And, hark, what discord follows! each thing meets In mere oppugnancy: the bounded waters Should lift their bosoms higher than the shores, And make a sop of all this solid globe: Strength should be lord of imbecility, And the rude son should strike his father dead: Force should be right; or rather, right and wrong— Between whose endless jar justice resides— Should lose their names, and so should justice too. Then every thing includes itself in power Power into will, will into appetite; And appetite, an universal wolf, So doubly seconded with will and power, Must make perforce an universal prey, And last eat up himself."

"Tremble, thou wretch, That hast within thee undivulgèd crimes, Unwhipp'd of justice: hide thee, thou bloody hand; Thou perjur'd, and thou simular of virtue, That art incestuous: caitiff, to pieces shake, That under covert and convenient seeming Hast practis'd on man's life: close pent-up guilts, Rive your concealing continents, and cry These dreadful summoners grace."

Observe what a sense of muscularity this usage carries, not only in the foregoing, but also in various shorter instances:

"Stop up th' access and passage to remorse, That no compunctious visitings of nature Shake my fell purpose."

"This my hand will rather The multitudinous sea incarnardine."

"What is it then to me, if impious War— Array'd in flames, like to the Prince of Fiends— Do, with his smirch'd complexion, all fell feats Enlink'd to waste and desolation?"

"And other devils, that suggest by treasons, Do botch and bungle up damnation."

It should be noted, further, that Shakespeare has many palpable Latinisms, some of them very choice too; that is, words of Latin origin used quite out of their popular English sense; such as,—"Th' *extravagant* and *erring* spirit hies to his confine,"—"Upon my *secure* hour thy uncle stole,"—"Rank corruption, mining all within, *infects* unseen,"—and, "To *expostulate* what majesty should be, what duty is." And sometimes, not having the fear of poetical, or rather of unpoetical precisians and martinets before his eyes, he did not even scruple to naturalize words for his own use from foreign springs, such as *exsufflicate* and *deracinate* ; or to coin a word, whenever the concurring reasons of sense and verse invited it; as in *fedary, intrinse, intrinsicate, insisture* , and various others.

As to the sources from which Shakespeare drew his choice and use of words, the most material point seems to be, that he certainly did not go to books or scholars, or to those who made language a special object of study. Yet he knew right well that this was often done; for he ridicules it deliriously in *Love's Labour's Lost* , when Sir Nathaniel the Curate says of Constable Dull, "He hath never fed of the dainties that are bred in a book; he hath not eat paper, as it were; he hath not drunk ink; his intellect is not replenished"; and again, still better, when it is said of the learned Curate and Holofernes the School-master, "They have been at a great feast of languages, and stolen the scraps";—"They have lived long in the alms-basket of words." Shakespeare did not learn his language in this way: he went right into familiar, everyday speech for his words; caught them fresh, and beating with life, from the lips of common people and intelligent men of the world, farmers, mechanics, tradesmen, and housekeepers, who used language purely as a medium, not as an object, of thought; and of professional men, as they spoke when conversing with practical things, and stirred by the motives and feelings of actual life; that is, when, however they might think as wise men do, they spoke as common people do.

Hence we find him using the special terms of the street, the farm, the garden, the shop, the kitchen, the pantry, the wine-vault, the forecastle, the counting-room, the exchange, the bower, of hunting, falconry, angling, war, and even the technical terms of the Law, of Medicine, and Divinity, all as they actually lived on the tongues of men, and just as life had steeped its sense and spirit into them. This it is, in great part, that has made him so high and so wide an authority in verbal definition: as he took the meaning of words at first hand, and so preserved them with all their native sap and juice still in them; so lexicography uses him as its best guide. Hence, too, the prodigious compass, variety, limberness, and ever-refreshing raciness of his diction: no familiarity can suck the verdure out of it:

the perennial dews of nature are incorporated in its texture: so that no words but his own can fitly describe it; as when he says of Cleopatra, "Other women cloy the appetites they feed; but she makes hungry where most she satisfies." Yet there is very seldom any smack of vulgarity in his language, save when the right delineation of character orders it so: words, that are nothing but vulgar as used by vulgar minds, are somehow in his use washed clean of their vulgarity; for there was a cunning alchemy in his touch that could instantly transmute the basest materials into "something rich and strange." In this respect, Mr. White justly applies to him what Laertes says of his sister:

"Thought and affliction, passion, Hell itself, She turns to favour and to prettiness."

The Poet's arrangement of words is often very peculiar, and sometimes such as to render his meaning rather obscure; not obscure, perhaps, to his contemporaries, whose apprehension was less fettered by grammatical rules; but so to us, because our wits are more tied up from nimbleness with notions of literal correctness, and with habits of mind contracted from long intercourse with parsing writers. I mean that Shakespeare often sorts and places his words in what seems to us an arbitrary manner, throwing them out, so to speak, almost at random. Here is a small instance: "At our more consider'd time, we'll read, answer, and think upon this business." Of course, *our more consider'd time* means, when we have taken time for further consideration. So too when the King suddenly resolves on sending Hamlet to England, and on having him there put to death; fearing a popular tumult, because Hamlet is loved by the multitude, he says, "To bear all smooth and even, this sudden sending him away must seem deliberate pause"; that is, a thing that we have paused and deliberated upon. Here it would seem that the Poet, so he got the several elements of thought and the corresponding parts of expression drawn in together, cared little for the precise form and order of the latter, trusting that the hearer or reader would mentally shape and place them so as to fit the sense. But the meaning is not always so easy to come at as in these two cases. In *Macbeth* , v. 4, when others are surmising and forecasting the issue of the war, Macduff says, "Let our just censures attend the true event, and put we on industrious soldiership." He wants to have the present time all spent in doing the work, not in speculating of the issue; and his meaning is, Let us not try to judge how things are going, till the actual result enables us to judge rightly; or, Let our judgments wait till the issue is known, *that so they may be* just. In this case, the ideas signified by *judgment, waiting, result, known* , and *just* were all to be expressed together, and the answering parts of language are disposed in the handiest order for metre and brevity; while the relations which those parts bear to each other in the speaker's thought are to be gathered from the subject and drift of the foregoing dialogue.

As this is at times a rather troublesome feature in the Poet's style, I will add a few more instances. Thus in the same play: "This castle hath a pleasant seat: the air nimbly and sweetly recommends itself unto our gentle senses"; that is, the air *sweetens* our senses *into gentleness* , or *makes* them gentle, by its purity and pleasantness. Again: "Ere humane statute purg'd the gentle weal"; which means, ere humane laws *made* the commonwealth gentle by cleansing it from the wrongs and pollutions of barbarism. So too in *King Henry the Fifth* , when the conspiring lords find their plot detected, and hear the doom of death pronounced upon them by the King, one of them says, "And God be thankèd for prevention; which I in sufferance heartily will rejoice;" meaning, that he is thankful their murderous purpose is defeated, though it be by their death; and that he will heartily rejoice for such defeat, even while suffering the pains it involves. Again, in *King Henry the Fourth* , when Hotspur is burning to cross swords with Prince Henry in the forthcoming battle:

"And, fellows, soldiers, friends, Better consider what you have to do, Than I, that have not well the gift of tongue, Can lift your blood up with persuasion."

That is, you can better kindle your spirits to the work by thinking with yourselves what is to be done, than my small power of speech can heat your courage up for the fight by any attempts at persuasion. The well-known words of Juliet—"That runaway's eyes may wink"—come under the same class of cases; and how hard such forms of language sometimes are to understand, may be judged from the interminable discussion occasioned by that famous passage. And it must be confessed, I think, that in several cases of this kind perspicuity is not a little sacrificed to metrical convenience and verbal dispatch. But Shakespeare wrote with the stage in view, not the closet; and he doubtless calculated a good deal on the help of the actor's looks, tones, and gestures, in rendering his meaning intelligible.

As regards the other points in Shakespeare's arrangement of words, I have little more to say than that here again his practice has nothing bookish or formal about it, but draws right into life and the living speech of men. He has no settled rules, no favourite order. In this respect, as in others, language was in his hands as limber as water at the fountain. He found it full of vital flexibility, and he left it so; nay, rather made it more so. As he did not learn his craft in the little narrow world of school rhetoricians, where all goes by the cut-and-dry method, and men are taught to "laugh by precept only, and shed tears by rule," but from the spontaneous rhetoric of the great and common world; so we find him varying the order of his words with the unconscious ease of perfect freedom, and moulding his language into an endless diversity of shapes. Perhaps I cannot better express his style in this behalf than by saying that he pitches right into the matter, instead of walking or wording round it; not looking at all to the gracefulness of his attitudes or the regularity of his motions, but driving straight ahead at directness, compactness, perspicuity, and force; caring little for the grammar of his speech, so it convey his sense; and taking no thought about the facility or even possibility of parsing, but only to get the soul of his purpose into a right working body. Thus in *Cymbeline* , iii. 2, where the hard-beset Imogen is first beguiled into the hope of meeting her husband at Milford Haven:

"Then, true Pisanio,— Who long'st, like me, to see thy lord; who long'st,— O, let me bate,—but not like me;—yet long'st,— But in a fainter kind;—O, not like me, For mine's beyond beyond;—say, and speak thick,— Love's counsellor should fill the bores of hearing To th' smothering of the sense,—how far it is To this same blessèd Milford: and, by th' way, Tell me how Wales was made so happy as T' inherit such a haven: but, first of all, How we may steal from hence; and for the gap That we shall make in time, from our hence-going, And our return, t' excuse:—but, first, how get hence: Why should excuse be born or e'er begot? We'll talk of that hereafter."

What a chaos of verbal confusion have we here, until we penetrate to the soul of the heroine! and then what a pavilion of life and beauty this soul organizes that chaos into! How ignorant the glorious creature is of grammar; yet how subtile and sinewy of discourse! How incorrect her placing of words, yet how transfigured with grace of feeling and intelligence! Just think into what a nice trim garden of elocution a priest of the correct and classical church, like Pope, would have dressed this free outpouring of the speaker's heart. No doubt the language would be faultlessly regular; you might analyze and parse it *currente lingua* ; but how lifeless and odourless the whole thing! how all the soul of nature, which now throbs so eloquently in it, would have been dried and crimped out of it! The workmanship, in short, to borrow an illustration from Schlegel, would have been like the mimic gardens of children; who, eager to see the work of their hands, break off twigs and flowers, and stick them in the ground; which done, the childish gardener struts proudly up and down his showy beds.

Perhaps the Poet's autocratic overshooting of grammar and rhetoric is still better instanced in the same play, v. 3, where Posthumus relates the doings of old Belarius and the Princes in a certain lane. On being asked, "Where was this lane?" he replies:

"Close by the battle, ditch'd, and wall'd with turf; Which gave advantage to an ancient soldier,— An honest one, I warrant; who deserv'd So long a breeding as his white beard came to, In doing this for 's country: athwart the lane, He, with two striplings,—lads more like to run The country base than to commit such slaughter; With faces fit for masks, or rather fairer Than those for preservation cas'd or shame,— Made good the passage; cried to those that fled, *Our Britain's harts die flying, not our men* ."

And so on to the end of the speech; which is all, from first to last, as glorious in conception and imagery as it is reckless of rhetorical form.

I am next to say somewhat touching the Poet's sentence-building, this being a matter that rhetoricians make much of; though in this, also, I must in the outset acquit him of any practical respect for the rulings of courts rhetorical. For here, again, he has no set fashion, no preferred pattern, no oft-recurring form; nothing at all stereotyped or modish; but just ranges at large in all the unchartered freedom and versatility of the English colloquial idiom. You may find in him sentences of every possible construction; but, except in his early plays, you can hardly say that he took to any one mould of structure more than another. So that his most peculiar feature here is absence of peculiarity. Thought dominates absolutely the whole material of expression, working it, shaping it, out-and-out, as clay in the potter's hands; which has no character but what it receives from the occasion and purpose of the user. As the Poet cares for nothing but to "suit the action to the word, the word to the action," so his word takes on forms as various as the action of his persons; nay, more; is pliant to all their moods and tenses of thought, passion, feeling, and volition. Thus, in the structure of his sentences, as in other things, his language is strictly physiognomic of his matter, the speaking exterior of the inward life; which life is indeed the one sole organizing principle of it. Accordingly he has specimens of the most pithy, piercing, sententious brevity; specimens with all the ample and rich magnificence of ordered pomp; specimens of terse, restrained, yet rhythmical, and finely-modulated vigour; specimens of the most copious and varied choral harmony; specimens of the most quiet, simple, and pure-flowing melody; now a full burst of the many-voiced lordly organ, now the softest and mellowest notes of the flute. Not only these, but all the intermediate, and ever so many surrounding varieties of structure are met with in his omniformity of sentence-building. In short, the leaves of a forest are hardly more varied in figure and make than Shakespeare's sentences; so that if these were all sorted into rhetorical classes, and named, it would "dizzy the arithmetic of memory" to run through their names.

The only divisions on this score that I shall attempt to speak of are those called the Period and the Loose Sentence. Everybody knows, I presume, that in a periodic sentence, when rightly fashioned, the sense is not completed till you reach the close; so that the whole has to be formed in thought before any part is set down. The beginning forecasts the end, the end remembers the beginning, and all the intermediate parts are framed with an eye to both beginning and end. And the nearer it comes to a regular circle, the better it is held to be. This style of writing, then, may be not unfitly said to go on wheels. It is naturally rolling and high-sounding, or at least may easily be made so, and therefore is apt to be in favour with geniuses of a swelling, oratorical, and elocutionary order. Besides, it is a style easily imitated, and so is not unfavourable to autorial equality. On the other hand, the Loose Sentence begins without any apparent thought of how it is to end, and proceeds with as little apparent thought of how it began: the sense may stand complete many times before it gets through: it runs on seemingly at random, winding at its "own sweet will," though the path it holds is much nearer a straight line than a circle; and it stops, not where the starting foresaw, but where the matter so carries it. Thus it is a sort of lingual straggler, if you please, and may be said to wander with little or no conscience of the rhetorical toilet.

Shakespeare has many periodic sentences: at first he seems to have rather affected that structure: in the more serious parts of the plays written in his earlier style it is so common as to be almost characteristic of them. But, on the whole, he evidently much preferred writing in straight lines to writing in circles; and this preference grew stronger as he ripened in his art; so that in his later workmanship the periodic construction becomes decidedly rare: and the reason of his so preferring the linear to the circular structure seems to have been, not only because the former is the more natural and spontaneous way of speaking, but also because it offers far more scope for the proper freedom and variety of English colloquial speech. He has numberless sentences of exquisite beauty of structure; many indeed of the circular kind, but far more of the linear; and the beauty of the latter is purer and higher than that of the former, because it is much more unconscious and unsought, and comes along of its own accord in the undivided quest of something else: for, say what you will, the true law in this matter is just that so well stated by Professor Shairp in the passage before quoted in a note on page 138: "No one ever became really beautiful by aiming at beauty. Beauty comes, we scarce know how, as an emanation from sources deeper than itself." And so it was with Shakespeare in all respects,—I mean Shakespeare the master, not Shakespeare the apprentice,—and in none more so than in the matter of style.

Before quitting this branch of the theme, I will add a few illustrations. And I will begin with two specimens of the circular structure; the first being from the night-scene in *The Merchant of Venice* , v. I:

"For do but note a wild and wanton herd, Or race of youthful and unhandled colts, Fetching mad bounds, bellowing, and neighing loud, Which is the hot condition of their blood; If they but hear perchance a trumpet sound, Or any air of music touch their ears, You shall perceive them make a mutual stand, Their savage eyes turn'd to a modest gaze, By the sweet power of music."

The next is from one of Westmoreland's speeches in the Second Part of *King Henry the Fourth* , iv. 1:

"You, Lord Archbishop,— Whose See is by a civil peace maintain'd; Whose beard the silver hand of peace hath touch'd; Whose learning and good letters peace hath tutor'd; Whose white investments figure innocence, The dove and very blessèd spirit of peace,— Wherefore do you so ill translate yourself Out of the speech of peace, that bears such grace, Into the harsh and boisterous tongue of war?"

Now for some specimens in the linear style. The first is from the courtship of Ferdinand and Miranda, *The Tempest* , iii. 1:

"I do not know One of my sex; no woman's face remember, Save, from my glass, mine own; nor have I seen More that I may call men, than you, good friend, And my dear father: how features are abroad, I'm skilless of; but, by my modesty,— The jewel in my dower,—I would not wish Any companion in the world but you; Nor can imagination form a shape, Besides yourself, to like of."

The next is from the speech of Cominius to the people on proposing the hero for

Consul, in *Coriolanus* , ii. 2:

"At sixteen years, When Tarquin made a head for Rome, he fought Beyond the mark of others: our then Dictator, Whom with all praise I point at, saw him fight, When with his Amazonian chin he drove The bristled lips before him: he bestrid An o'erpress'd Roman, and i' the Consul's view Slew three opposers: Tarquin's self he met, And struck him on his knee: in that day's feats, When he might act the woman in the scene, He prov'd best man i' the field, and for his meed Was brow-bound with the oak."

The following is from the history of Posthumus given by one of the Gentlemen in *Cymbeline* , i. 1:

"The King he takes the babe To his protection; calls him Posthumus Leonatus; Breeds him, and makes him of his bed-chamber; Puts to him all the learnings that his time Could make him the receiver of; which he took, As we do air, fast as 't was minister'd, And in his spring became a harvest; liv'd in Court— Which rare it is to do—most prais'd, most lov'd; A sample to the youngest; to the more mature A glass that feated them; and to the graver A child that guided dotards: to his mistress, For whom he now is banish'd,—her own price Proclaims how she esteem'd him and his virtue; By her election may be truly read What kind of man he is."

In all these three passages, the structure shapes itself from step to step as it goes on, one idea starting another, and each clause being born of the momentary impulse of the under-working vital current; which is indeed the natural way of unpremeditated, self-forgetting discourse. There is no care about verbal felicities; none for rounded adjustment of parts, or nice balancing of members, or for exactness of pauses and cadences, so as to make the language run smooth on the ear; or, if there be any care about these things, it is rather a care to avoid them. This it is that gives to Shakespeare's style such a truly organic character, in contradistinction to mere pieces of nicely-adjusted verbal joinery or cabinet-work; so that, as we proceed, the lingual form seems budding and sprouting at the moving of the inner mental life; the thought unfolding and branching as the expression grows, and the expression growing with the growth of the thought. In short, language with him is not the dress, but the incarnation of ideas: he does not robe his thoughts with garments externally cut and fitted to them, but his thoughts robe themselves in a living texture of flesh and blood.

Hence the wonderful correspondence, so often remarked, between the Poet's style and the peculiar moods, tempers, motives, and habits of his characters, as if the language had caught the very grain and tincture of their minds. So, for instance, we find him rightly making the most glib-tongued rhetoric proceed from utter falseness of heart; for men never speak so well, in the elocutionary sense, as when they are lying; while, on the other hand, "there are no tricks in plain and simple faith." Thus, in *Macbeth* , when the murder of Duncan is first announced, we have the hero speaking of it to the Princes, when one of them asks, "What is amiss?"

"You are, and do not know't: The spring, the head, the fountain of your blood Is stopp'd; the very source of it is stopp'd."

Of course he words the matter so finely all because he is playing the hypocrite. Compare with this the quick honest way in which Macduff dashes out the truth: "Your royal father's murder'd." We have a still more emphatic instance of the same kind in Goneril and Regan's hollow-hearted, and therefore highly rhetorical professions of love, when the doting old King invites his three daughters to an auction of falsehood, by proposing,

"That we our largest bounty may extend Where nature doth with merit challenge."

So, again in *Hamlet* , i. 2, the King opens with an elaborate strain of phrase-making, full of studied and ingenious antitheses; and he keeps up that style so long as he is using language to conceal his thoughts; but afterwards, in the same speech, on coming to matters of business, he falls at once into the direct, simple style of plain truth and intellectual manhood.

But we have a more curious illustration, though in quite another kind, in *Macbeth* , iv. 3, where Ross, fresh from Scotland, comes to Macduff in England:

"*Macd* . Stands Scotland where it did?

Ross . Alas, poor country, Almost afraid to know itself! it cannot Be call'd our mother, but our grave: where nothing, But who knows nothing, is once seen to smile; Where sighs, and groans, and shrieks that rend the air, Are made, not mark'd; where violent sorrow seems A modern ecstasy: the dead man's knell Is there scarce ask'd for whom; and good men's lives Expire before the flowers in their caps, Dying or e'er they sicken.

Macd .   O, relation Too nice, and yet too true!"

Here Ross's picked and precise wording of the matter shows his speech to be the result of meditated preparation; for he has come with his mind so full of what he was to say, that he could think of nothing else; and Macduff, with characteristic plainness of ear and tongue, finds it "too nice." His comment, at once so spontaneous and so apt, is a delightful touch of the Poet's art; and tells us that Shakespeare's judgment as well as his genius was at home in the secret of a perfect style; and that he understood, no man better, the essential poverty of "fine writing."

Equally apt and characteristic is another speech of Macduff's later in the same scene, after learning how "all his pretty chickens and their dam" have been put to death by the tyrant:

"Gentle Heaven, Cut short all intermission; front to front Bring thou this fiend of Scotland and myself; Within my sword's length set him; if he 'scape, Heaven forgive him too."

Macduff is a man of great simplicity, energy, and determination of character; and here we have all these qualities boiled down to the highest intensity, as would naturally be the effect of such news on such a man. And observe how much is implied in that little word *too* ,—"Heaven forgive him too." As much as to say, "Let me once but have a chance at him, if I don't kill him, then I'm as great a sinner as he, and so God forgive us both!" I hardly know of another instance of so great a volume of meaning compressed into so few words. And how like it is to noble Macduff!

I could fill many pages with examples of this perfect suiting of the style to the mental states of the dramatic speakers, but must rest with citing a few more.

Hotspur is proverbially a man of impatient, irascible, headstrong temper. See now how all this is reflected in the very step of his language, when he has just been chafed into a rage by what the King has said to him about the Scottish prisoners:

"Why, look you, I am whipp'd and scourg'd with rods, Nettled, and stung with pismires, when I hear Of this vile politician, Bolingbroke. In Richard's time,—

what do you call the place?— A plague upon 't!—it is in Gloucestershire;— 'Twas where the madcap duke his uncle kept, His uncle York;—where I first bow'd my knee Unto this king of smiles, this Bolingbroke;— When you and he came back from Ravenspurg.— Why, what a candy deal of courtesy This fawning greyhound then did proffer me! Look, *When his infant fortune came to age* , And, *Gentle Harry Percy* , and, *Kind cousin* ,— O, the Devil take such cozeners!"

Hotspur's spirit is so all-for-war, that he can think of nothing else; hence he naturally scorns poetry, though his soul is full of it. But poetry is so purely an impulse with him, that he is quite unconscious of it. With Glendower, on the contrary, poetry is a purpose, and he pursues it consciously. Note, then, in iii. 1, how this poetical mood shapes and tunes his style, when he interprets his daughter's Welsh to her English husband:

"She bids you on the wanton rushes lay you down, And rest your gentle head upon her lap, And she will sing the song that pleaseth you, And on your eyelids crown the god of sleep, Charming your blood with pleasing heaviness; Making such difference betwixt wake and sleep, As is the difference betwixt day and night, The hour before the heavenly-harness'd team Begins his golden progress in the East."

Here the whole expression seems born of melody, and the melody to pervade it as an essence. So, too, in the same scene, Mortimer being deep in the lyrical mood of honeymoon, see how that mood lives in the style of what he says about his wife's speaking of Welsh, which is all Greek to him; her tongue

"Makes Welsh as sweet as ditties highly penn'd, Sung by a fair queen in a Summer's bower, With ravishing division, to her lute."

For another instance, take a part of the exiled Duke's speech in *As You Like It* , ii. 1:

"Sweet are the uses of adversity, Which, like the toad, ugly and venomous, Wears yet a precious jewel in his head; And this our life, exempt from public haunt, Finds tongues in trees, books in the running brooks, Sermons in stones, and good in every thing."

The Duke is a thoughtful, pensive, kind-hearted man, feeling keenly the wrong that has been done him, but not at all given to cherishing a resentful temper; and here, if I mistake not, his language relishes of the benevolent, meditative, and somewhat sentimental melancholy that marks his disposition.

Still more to the point, perhaps, is the passage in *Hamlet* , iv. 5, where Ophelia so touchingly scatters out the secrets of her virgin heart: "They say the owl was a baker's daughter.—Lord, we know what we are, but we know not what we may be.—God be at your table!" And again: "I hope all will be well. We must be patient; but I cannot choose but weep, to think they should lay him i' the cold ground. My brother shall know of it; and so I thank you for your good counsel.—Come, my coach!—Good night, ladies; good night, sweet ladies; good night, good night." A poor, crazed, but still gentle, sweet-tempered, and delicate-souled girl, quite unconscious of her own distress, yet still having a dim remembrance of the great sorrows that have crazed her,—such is Ophelia here; and her very manner of speech takes the exact colour and tone of her mind.

Probably, however, the best example of all is one that I can but refer to, it being too long for quotation. It is in the second scene of *The Tempest* , where Prospero relates to his daughter the story of his past life, at the same time letting her into the fact and the reasons of what he has just been doing, and still has in hand to do. The dear wise old gentleman is here absent-minded, his thoughts being busy and very intent upon the tempest he has lately got up, and upon the incoming and forthcoming consequences of it; and he thinks Miranda is not attentive to what he is saying, because he is but half-attending to it himself. This subdued mental agitation, and wandering of his thoughts from the matter his tongue is handling, silently registers itself in a broken, disjointed, and somewhat rambling course of narrative; that is, his style runs so in sympathy with his state of mind as to be unconsciously physiognomic of it. Certainly it is among the Poet's finest instances of "suiting the word to the action"; while at the same time it perfectly remembers the "special observance" of "o'erstepping not the modesty of nature."

Since Homer, no poet has come near Shakespeare in originality, freshness, opulence, and boldness of imagery. It is this that forms, in a large part, the surpassing beauty of his poetry; it is in this that much of his finest idealizing centres. And he abounds in all the figures of speech known in formal rhetoric, except the Allegory and the Apologue. The Allegory, I take it, is hardly admissible in dramatic writing; nor is the Apologue very well suited to the place: the former, I believe, Shakespeare never uses; and his most conspicuous instance of the latter, in fact the only one that occurs to me, is that of the Belly and the

Members, so quaintly delivered to the insurgent people by the juicy old Menenius in the first scene of *Coriolanus* . But, though Shakespeare largely uses all the other figures of speech, I shall draw most of what I have to say of his style in this respect, under the two heads of Simile and Metaphor, since all that can properly be called imagery is resolvable into these. Shakespeare uses both a great deal, but the Simile in a way somewhat peculiar: in fact, as it is commonly used by other poets, he does not seem to have been very fond of it; and when he admits it, he generally uses it in the most informal way possible. But, first, at the risk of seeming pedantic, I will try to make some analysis of the two figures in question.

Every student knows that the Simile may be regarded as an expanded Metaphor, or the Metaphor as a condensed Simile. Which implies that the Metaphor admits of greater brevity. What, then, is the difference?

Now a simile, as the name imports, is a comparison of two or more things, more or less unlike in themselves, for the purpose of illustration. The thing illustrated and the thing that illustrates are, so to speak, laid alongside each other, that the less known may be made more intelligible by the light of that which is known better. Here the two parts are kept quite distinct, and a sort of parallel run between them. And the actions or the qualities of the two things stand apart, each on their own side of the parallel, those of neither being ascribed to the other. In a metaphor, on the other hand, the two parts, instead of lying side by side, are drawn together and incorporated into one. The idea and the image, the thought and the illustration, are not kept distinct, but the idea is incarnated in the image, so that the image bears the same relation to the idea as the body does to the soul. In other words, the two parts are completely identified, their qualities interfused and interpenetrating, so that they become one. Thus a metaphor proceeds by ascribing to a given object certain actions or qualities which are not literally true of that object, and which have in reference to it only the truth of analogy.

To illustrate this. When, in his sonnet composed on Westminster Bridge, Wordsworth says, "This City now doth, like a garment, wear the beauty of the morning," the language is a simile in form. If he had said, This City hath now robed herself in the beauty of the morning, it would have been in form a metaphor. On the other hand, when in the same sonnet he says, "The river glideth at his own sweet will," the language is a metaphor. If in this case he had said, The river floweth smoothly along, like a man led on by the free promptings of his own will, it would have been a simile. And so, when Romeo says of Juliet,—

"O, she doth teach the torches to burn bright! Her beauty hangs upon the cheek of night, Like a rich jewel in an Ethiop's ear";

here we have two metaphors, and also one simile. Juliet cannot be said literally to teach the torches any thing; but her brightness may be said to make them, or rather the owner of them ashamed of their dimness; or she may be said to be so radiant, that the torches, or the owner of them may learn from her how torches ought to shine. Neither can it be said literally that her beauty hangs upon the cheek of night, for the night has no cheek; but it may be said to bear the same relation to the night as a diamond pendant does to the dark cheek that sets it off. Then the last metaphor is made one of the parts in a simile; what is therein expressed being likened to a rich jewel hanging in an Ethiop's ear. So, too, when Wordsworth apostrophizes Milton,—

"Thy soul was like a Star, and dwelt apart; Thou hadst a voice whose sound was like the sea";—

here we have two similes. But when he says,—

"Unruffled doth the blue lake lie, The mountains looking on";

and when he says of the birds singing,—

"Clear, loud, and lively is the din, From social warblers gathering in Their harvest of sweet lays";

and when he says of his Lucy,—

"The stars of midnight shall be dear To her; and she shall lean her ear In many a secret place Where rivulets dance their wayward round, And beauty born of murmuring sound Shall pass into her face";—

in these lines we have four pure and perfect metaphors.

Again: In *Cymbeline* , old Belarius says of the "two princely boys" that are with him,—

"They are as gentle As zephyrs, blowing below the violet, Not wagging his sweet head; and yet as rough, Their royal blood enchaf'd, as the rud'st wind, That by the top doth take the mountain pine, And make him stoop to th' vale."

Here are two similes, of the right Shakespeare mintage. As metaphors from the same hand, take this from Iachimo's temptation of Imogen, "This object, which takes prisoner the wild motion of mine eye"; and this from Viola, urging Orsino's suit to the Countess,—

"Holla your name to the reverberate hills, And make the babbling gossip of the air Cry out, *Olivia* !"

and this of Cleopatra's with the asp at her bosom,—

"Dost thou not see my baby at my breast, That sucks the nurse asleep?"

Or, as an instance of both figures together, take the following from *King Lear* , iv. 3, where the Gentleman describes to Kent the behaviour of Cordelia on hearing of her father's condition:

"You have seen Sunshine and rain at once; her smiles and tears Were like: a better way,—those happy smilets That play'd on her ripe lip seem'd not to know What guests were in her eyes; which parted thence As pearls from diamonds dropp'd."

Here we have two similes, in the first two and last clauses; and also two metaphors, severally conveyed in,—"That play'd on her ripe lip," and, "What guests were in her eyes." Perhaps I ought to add that a simile is sometimes merely suggested or implied; as in these lines from Wordsworth:

"What is glory?—in the socket See how dying tapers fare! What is pride?—a whizzing rocket That would emulate a star.

What is friendship?—do not trust her, Nor the vows which she has made; Diamonds dart their brightest lustre From a palsy-shaken head."

Thus much by way of analyzing the two figures, and illustrating the difference between them. In all these instances may be seen, I think, how in a metaphor the intensity and fire of imagination, instead of placing the two parts side by side, melts them down into one homogeneous mass; which mass is both of them and neither of them at the same time; their respective properties being so interwoven and fused together, that those of each may be affirmed of the other.

I have said that Shakespeare uses the Simile in a way somewhat peculiar. This may require some explication.—Homer, Virgil, Dante, Spenser, Milton, and the great Italian poets of the sixteenth century, all deal largely in what may be styled full-drawn similes; that is, similes carefully elaborated through all their parts, these being knit together in a balanced and rounded whole. Here is an instance of what I mean, from *Paradise Lost* , i.:

"As when the potent rod Of Amram's son, in Egypt's evil day, Wav'd round the coast, up call'd a pitchy cloud Of locusts, warping on the eastern wind, That o'er the realm of impious Pharaoh hung Like night, and darken'd all the land of Nile; So numberless where those bad angels seen Hovering on wing under the cope of Hell, 'Twixt upper, nether, and surrounding fires."

This may be fitly taken as a model specimen of the thing; it is severely classical in style, and is well worthy of the great hand that made it. Here is another, somewhat different in structure, and not easy to beat, from Wordsworth's *Miscellaneous Sonnets* , Part ii.:

"Desponding Father! mark this alter'd bough, So beautiful of late, with sunshine warm'd, Or moist with dews; what more unsightly now, Its blossoms shrivell'd, and its fruit, if form'd, Invisible? yet Spring her genial brow Knits not o'er that discolouring and decay As false to expectation. Nor fret thou At like unlovely process in the May Of human life: a Stripling's graces blow, Fade, and are shed, that from their timely fall (Misdeem it not a cankerous change) may grow Rich mellow bearings, that for thanks shall call."

It may be worth noting, that the first member of this no less beautiful than instructive passage contains one metaphor,—"Spring her genial brow knits not"; and the second two,—"in the May of human life," and, "a Stripling's graces blow, fade, and are shed." Herein it differs from the preceding instance; but I take it to be none the worse for that.

Shakespeare occasionally builds a simile on the same plan; as in the following from *Measure for Measure* , i. 3:

"Now, as fond fathers, Having bound up the threatening twigs of birch, Only to stick it in their children's sight For terror, not to use, in time the rod Becomes more mock'd than fear'd; so our decrees, Dead to infliction, to themselves are dead; And liberty plucks justice by the nose; The baby beats the nurse, and quite athwart Goes all decorum."

But the Poet does not much affect this formal mode of the thing: he has comparatively few instances of it; while his pages abound in similes of the informal mode, like those quoted before. And his peculiarity in the use of the figure consists partly in what seems not a little curious, namely, that he sometimes begins with building a simile, and then runs it into a metaphor before he gets through; so that we have what may be termed a mixture of the two; that is, he sets out as if to form the two parts distinct, and ends by identifying them. Here is an instance from the Second Part of *King Henry the Fourth* , iv. 1:

"His foes are so enrooted with his friends, That, plucking to unfix an enemy, He doth unfasten so and shake a friend. So that this land, like an offensive wife That hath enrag'd him on to offer strokes, As he is striking, holds his infant up, And hangs resolv'd correction in the arm That was uprear'd to execution."

And so in *King Henry the Fifth* , ii. 4:

"In cases of defence 'tis best to weigh The enemy more mighty than he seems: So the proportions of defence are fill'd; Which of a weak and niggardly projection, Doth, like a miser, spoil his coat with scanting A little cloth."

Also in *Hamlet* , iv. 1:

"So much was our love, We would not understand what was most fit; But, like the owner of a foul disease, To keep it from divulging, let it feed Even on the pith of life."

And somewhat the same again in iii. 4:

"No, in despite of sense and secrecy, Unpeg the basket on the house's top, Let the birds fly, and, like the famous ape, To try conclusions, in the basket creep, And break your own neck down."

Something very like this mixing of figures occurs, also, in *Timon of Athens* , iv. 3:

"But myself, Who had the world as my confectionary; The mouths, the tongues, the eyes, and hearts of men At duty, more than I could frame employment; That numberless upon me stuck, as leaves Do on an oak, have with one Winter's brush Fell from their boughs, and left me open, bare For every storm that blows."

And I suspect that certain passages, often faulted for confusion of metaphors, are but instances of the same thing, as this:

"Blest are those Whose blood and judgment are so well commingled, That they are not a pipe for Fortune's finger To sound what stop she please."

This feature mainly results, no doubt, from the Poet's aptness or endeavour to make his style of as highly symbolical a character as possible without smothering the sense. And by *symbolical* I here mean the taking a representative part of a thing, and using it in such a way as to convey the sense and virtue of the whole. Metaphors are the strongest and surest mode of doing this; and so keen was the Poet's quest of this, that his similes, in the very act of forming, often become half-metaphors, as from a sort of instinct. Thus, instead of fully forming a simile, he merely *suggests* it; throwing in just enough of it to start the thoughts on that track, and then condensing the whole into a semi-metaphorical shape. Which seems to explain why it is that these suggestions of similes, notwithstanding the stereotyped censures of a too formal criticism, seldom trouble any reader who is so unsophisticated as to care little for the form, so he be sure of the substance.

The thoughtful student can hardly choose but feel that there is something peculiar in Shakespeare's metaphors. And so indeed there is. But the peculiarity is rather in degree than kind. Now the Metaphor, as before remarked, proceeds upon a likeness in the relations of things; whereas the Simile proceeds upon a likeness in the things themselves, which is a very different matter. And so surpassing was Shakespeare's quickness and acuteness of eye to discern the most hidden resemblances in the former kind, that he outdoes all other writers in the exceeding fineness of the threads upon which his metaphors are often built. In other words, he beats all other poets, ancient and modern, in constructing metaphors upon the most subtile, delicate, and unobvious analogies.

Among the English poets, Wordsworth probably stands next to Shakespeare in the frequency, felicity, originality, and strength of his metaphorical language. I will therefore quote a few of his most characteristic specimens, as this seems the fairest way for bringing out the unequalled virtue of Shakespeare's poetry in this kind.

"With heart as calm as lakes that sleep, In frosty moonlight glistening; Or mountain rivers, where they creep Along a channel smooth and deep, To their own far-off murmurs listening." *Memory*.

"Leave to the nightingale her shady wood; A privacy of glorious light is thine; Whence thou dost pour upon the world a flood Of harmony, with instinct more divine." *To a Skylark* .

"And this huge Castle, standing here sublime, I love to see the look with which it braves— Cas'd in th' unfeeling armour of old time— The lightning, the fierce wind, and trampling waves." *Peele Castle* .

"Bright gem instinct with music, vocal spark; The happiest bird that sprang out of the Ark!" *A Morning Exercise* .

"One who was suffering tumult in his soul, Yet fail'd to seek the sure relief of prayer, Went forth,—his course surrendering to the care Of the fierce wind, while midday lightnings prowl Insidiously, untimely thunders growl; While trees, dim-seen, in frenzied numbers tear The lingering remnants of their yellow hair." *Mis. Son., Pt. ii* . 15.

"So deem'd the man who fashion'd for the sense These lofty pillars, spread that branching roof Self-pois'd, and scoop'd into ten thousand cells, Where light and shade repose, where music dwells Lingering,—and wandering on as loth to die."

"But, from the arms of silence,—list, O list!— The music bursteth into second life; The notes luxuriate, every stone is kiss'd By sound, or ghost of sound, in mazy strife." *Eccle. Son., Pt. iii* . 43, 44.

"The towering headlands, crown'd with mist, Their feet among the billows, know That Ocean is a mighty harmonist." *Power of Sound* .

"Whate'er I saw, or heard, or felt, was but a stream That flow'd into a kindred stream; a gale Confederate with the current of the soul, To speed my voyage."

"Past and Future are the wings On whose support harmoniously conjoin'd Moves the great spirit of human knowledge." *Prelude*, *Book vi* .

"Child of loud-throated War! the mountain Stream Roars in thy hearing; but thy hour of rest Is come, and thou art silent in thy age."

"What art thou, from care Cast off,—abandon'd by thy rugged Sire, Nor by soft Peace adopted?"

"Shade of departed Power, Skeleton of unflesh'd humanity, The chronicle were welcome that should call Into the compass of distinct regard The toils and struggles of thy infant years!" *Kilchurn Castle* .

"Advance,—come forth from thy Tyrolean ground, Dear Liberty! stern Nymph of soul untam'd; Sweet Nymph, O rightly of the mountains nam'd! Through the long chain of Alps from mound to mound, And o'er th' eternal snows, like Echo, bound; Like Echo, when the hunter-train at dawn Have rous'd her from her sleep; and forest-lawn, Cliffs, woods, and caves her viewless steps resound, And babble of her pastime!"

"Ye Storms, resound the praises of your King! And ye mild Seasons—in a sunny clime, Midway on some high hill, while father Time Looks on delighted—meet in festal ring, And long and loud of Winter's triumph sing! Sing ye, with blossoms crown'd, and fruits, and flowers, Of Winter's breath surcharg'd with sleety showers, And the dire flapping of his hoary wing! Knit the blithe dance upon the soft green grass; With feet, hands, eyes, looks, lips, report your gain; Whisper it to the billows of the main, And to th' aerial Zephyrs as they pass, That old decrepit Winter—*He* hath slain That Host which render'd all your bounties vain. *Son. to Lib., Pt. ii* . 10, 35.

In the foregoing passages, the imagery of course loses more or less of its force and beauty from being cut out of its proper surroundings; for Wordsworth's poetry, too, is far from being mere gatherings of finely-carved chips: as a general thing, the several parts of a poem all rightly know each other as co-members of an organic whole. Far more must this needs be the case in the passages that follow, inasmuch as these are from the most dramatic of all writing; so that the virtue of the imagery is inextricably bound up with the characters and occasions of the speakers:

"Look, love, what envious streaks Do lace the severing clouds in yonder East: Night's candles are burnt out, and jocund day Stands tiptoe on the misty mountain tops." *Rom. and Jul., iii* . 5.

"Death, that hath suck'd the honey of thy breath, Hath had no power yet upon thy beauty: Thou art not conquer'd; beauty's ensign yet Is crimson in thy lips and in thy cheeks, And death's pale flag is not advancèd there."

"Why art thou yet so fair? shall I believe That unsubstantial Death is amorous; And that the lean abhorrèd monster keeps Thee here in dark to be his paramour?" *Ibid., v* . 3.

"My gentle Puck, come hither. Thou remember'st Since once I sat upon a promontory, And heard a mermaid, on a dolphin's back, Uttering such dulcet and harmonious breath, That the rude sea grew civil at her song; And certain stars shot madly from their spheres, To hear the sea-maid's music." *Midsum. Night's D., ii* . 1.

"Rush on his host, as doth the melted snow Upon the valleys, whose low vassal seat The Alps doth spit and void his rheum upon." *King Henry V., iii* . 5.

"His face is all bubukles, and whelks, and knobs, and flames of fire; and his lips plows at his nose, and it is like a coal of fire, sometimes plue, and sometimes red; but his nose is executed, and his fire is out." *Ibid., iii* . 6.

"O, then th' Earth shook to see the heavens on fire, And not in fear of your nativity. Diseasèd Nature oftentimes breaks forth In strange eruptions; oft the teeming Earth Is with a kind of cholic pinch'd and vex'd By the imprisoning of unruly wind Within her womb; which, for enlargement striving, Shakes the old beldame Earth, and topples down Steeples and moss-grown towers. At your birth, Our grandam Earth, having this distemperature, In passion shook." 1 *King Henry IV., iii* . 1.

"Let heaven kiss earth! now let not Nature's hand Keep the wild flood-confin'd! let order die! And let this world no longer be a stage To feed contention in a lingering act; But let one spirit of the first-born Cain Reign in all bosoms, that, each heart being set On bloody courses, the rude scene may end, And darkness be the burier of the dead!" 2 *King Henry IV., i* . 1.

"An habitation giddy and unsure Hath he that buildeth on the vulgar heart. O thou fond many! with what loud applause Didst thou beat heaven with blessing Bolingbroke, Before he was what thou would'st have him be! And being now trimm'd in thine own desires, Thou, beastly feeder, art so full of him, That thou provok'st thyself to cast him up. So, so, thou common dog, did'st thou disgorge

Thy glutton bosom of the royal Richard; And now thou would'st eat thy dead vomit up, And howl'st to find it." *Ibid., i* . 3.

"But, look, the morn, in russet mantle clad, Walks o'er the dew of yon high eastern hill." *Hamlet, i* . 1.

"So, haply slander— Whose whisper o'er the world's diameter, As level as the cannon to his blank, Transports his poison'd shot—may miss our name, And hit the woundless air." *Ibid., iv* . 1.

"Thou sure and firm-set earth, Hear not my steps, which way they walk, for fear The very stones prate of my whereabout, And take the present horror from the time, Which now suits with it." *Macbeth, ii* . 1.

"O thou day o' the world, Chain mine arm'd neck; leap thou, attire and all, Through proof of harness to my heart, and there Ride on the pants triúmphing!" *Ant. and Cleo., iv* . 8.

"For his bounty, There was no Winter in't; an Autumn 'twas That grew the more by reaping: his delights Were dolphin-like; they show'd his back above The element they liv'd in: in his livery Walk'd crowns and crownets." *Ibid., v* . 2.

"The ample proposition that hope makes In all designs begun on earth below Fails in the promis'd largeness: checks and disasters Grow in the veins of actions highest rear'd."

"Distinction, with a broad and powerful fan, Puffing at all, winnows the light away." *Troil. and Cres., i* . 3.

"Be as a planetary plague, when Jove Will o'er some high-vie'd city hang his poison In the sick air."

"Put armour on thine ears and on thine eyes; Whose proof, nor yells of mothers, maids, nor babes, Nor sight of priests in holy vestments bleeding, Shall pierce a jot."

"Common mother, thou, Whose womb unmeasurable, and infinite breast, Teems, and feeds all; whose self-same mettle, Whereof thy proud child, arrogant man, is puff'd. Engenders the black toad and adder blue, The gilded newt and eyeless venom'd worm; Yield him, who all thy human sons doth hate, From forth thy plenteous bosom, one poor root!"

"What, think'st That the bleak air, thy boisterous chamberlain, Will put thy shirt on warm? will these moss'd trees, That have outliv'd the eagle, page thy heels, And skip where thou point'st out? will the cold brook. Candied with ice, caudle thy morning taste, To cure thy o'er-night's surfeit?"

"O thou sweet king-killer, and dear divorce 'Twixt natural son and sire! thou bright defiler Of Hymen's purest bed! thou valiant Mars! Thou ever young, fresh, lov'd, and delicate wooer, Whose blush doth thaw the consecrated snow That lies on Dian's lap! thou visible god, That solder'st close impossibilities, And mak'st them kiss! that speak'st with every tongue, To every purpose! O thou touch of hearts! Think, thy slave man rebels; and by thy virtue Set them into confounding odds, that beasts May have the world in empire!" *Timon of Athens, iv* . 3.

Shakespeare's boldness in metaphors is pretty strongly exemplified in some of the forecited passages; but he has instances of still greater boldness. Among these may be named Lady Macbeth's—

"Come, thick night, And pall thee in the dunnest smoke of Hell, That my keen knife see not the wound it makes, Nor Heaven peep through the blanket of the dark, To cry *Hold, hold* !"

Here "blanket of the dark" runs to so high a pitch, that divers critics, Coleridge among them, have been staggered by it, and have been fain to set it down as a corruption of the text. In this they are no doubt mistaken: the metaphor is in the right style of Shakespeare, and, with all its daring, runs in too fair keeping to be ruled out of the family. Hardly less bold is this of Macbeth's—

"Heaven's cherubin, hors'd Upon the sightless couriers of the air, Shall blow the horrid deed in every eye, That tears shall drown the wind."

With these I suspect may be fitly classed, notwithstanding its delicacy, the following from Iachimo's description of Imogen, when he comes out of the trunk in her chamber:

"The flame o' the taper Bows toward her; and would under-peep her lids, To see th' enclosèd lights, now canopied Under these windows, white and azure, lac'd With blue of heaven's own tinct."

Also this, from the soliloquy of Posthumus in repentance for the supposed death of Imogen by his order:

"My conscience, thou art fetter'd More than my shanks and wrists: you good gods give me The penitent instrument to pick that bolt, Then free for ever!"

I add still another example; from one of old Nestor's speeches on the selection of a champion to fight with the Trojan hero:

"It is suppos'd, He that meets Hector issues from our choice: And choice, being mutual act of all our souls, Makes merit her election; and doth boil, As 'twere from forth us all, a man distill'd Out of our virtues."

All these—and I could quote a hundred such—are, to my thinking, instances of happy and, I will add, even wise audacity: at least, if there be any overstraining of imagery, I can easily shrive the fault, for the subtile felicity involved in them. They are certainly quite at home in the millennium of poetry which Shakespeare created for us; albeit I can well remember the time when such transcendent raptures were to me as

"Some joy too fine, Too subtle-potent, tun'd too sharp in sweetness, For the capacity of my ruder powers."

It would be strange indeed if a man so exceedingly daring did not now and then overdare. And so I think the Poet's boldness in metaphor sometimes makes him overbold, or at least betrays him into infelicities of boldness. Here are two instances, from *The Tempest* , v. 1:

"The charm dissolves apace; And as the morning steals upon the night, Melting the darkness, so their rising senses Begin to chase the ignorant fumes that mantle Their clearer reason."

"Their understanding Begins to swell; and the approaching tide Will shortly fill the reasonable shore That now lies foul and muddy."

And here is another, of perhaps still more questionable character, from *Macbeth* , i. 7:

"His two chamberlains Will I with wine and wassail so convince, That memory, the warder of the brain, Shall be a fume, and the receipt of reason A limbeck only."

What, again, shall be said of the two following, where Coriolanus snaps off his fierce scorn of the multitude?—

"What's the matter, you dissentious rogues, That, rubbing the poor itch of your opinion, Make yourselves scabs?"

"So shall my lungs Coin words till their decay against those measles, Which we disdain should tetter us, yet sought The very way to catch them."

Either from overboldness in the metaphors, or from some unaptness in the material of them, I have to confess that my mind rather rebels against these stretches of poetical prerogative. Still more so, perhaps, in the well-known passage of *King Henry the Fifth* , iv. 3; though I am not sure but, in this case, the thing rightly belongs to the speaker's character:

"And those that leave their valiant bones in France, Dying like men, though buried in your dunghills, They shall be fam'd; for there the Sun shall greet them, And draw their honours reeking up to heaven; Leaving their earthly parts to choke your clime, The smell whereof shall breed a plague in France. Mark, then, abounding valour in our English; That, being dead, like to the bullet's grazing, Break out into a second course of mischief, Killing in rélapse of mortality."

But, whatever be the right mark to set upon these and some other instances, I find but few occasions of such revolt; and my only wonder is, how any mere human genius could be so gloriously audacious, and yet be so seldom chargeable with passing the just bounds of poetical privilege.

Metaphors are themselves the aptest and clearest mode of expressing much in little. No other form of speech will convey so much thought in so few words. They often compress into a few words what would else require as many sentences. But even such condensations of meaning did not—so it appears—always answer Shakespeare's purpose: he sometimes does hardly more than *suggest* metaphors, throwing off several of them in quick succession. We have an odd instance of this in one of Falstaff's speeches, Second Part of *King Henry the Fourth* , i. 2: "Well, he may sleep in security; for he hath the horn of abundance, and the lightness of his wife shines through it: and yet cannot he see, though he have his own lantern to light him." Here we have a thick-coming series of punning metaphors, all merely suggested. So Brutus, when hunting after reasons for killing Cæsar: "It is the bright day that brings forth the adder." Here the metaphor suggested is, that the sunshine of kingly power will develop a venomous serpent in the hitherto noble Julius. So, again, Cleopatra, when Antony dies: "O, see, my women, the crown o' the earth doth melt";—"O, wither'd is the garland of the war, the soldier's pole is fall'n";—"Look, our lamp is spent, it's out." And so in Macbeth's,—"The wine of life is drawn, and the mere lees is left this vault to brag of";—"Better be with the dead than on the torture of the mind to lie in restless ecstasy";—"Come, seeling night, scarf up the tender eye of pitiful day." Also one of the Thanes, when they are about to make their ultimate set-to against Macbeth:

"Meet we the medicine of the sickly weal; And with him pour we in our country's purge Each drop of us."

Macbeth indeed has more of this character than any other of the Poet's dramas; he having judged, apparently, that such a style of suggested images was the best way of *symbolizing* such a wild-rushing torrent of crimes, remorses, and retributions as that tragedy consists of.

Near akin to these is a number of passages like the following from one of Antony's speeches:

"The hearts That spaniel'd me at heels, to whom I gave Their wishes, do discandy, melt their sweets On blossoming Cæsar; and this pine is bark'd, That overtopp'd them all."

Here we have several distinct images merely suggested, and coming so thick withal, that our powers might be swamped but for the prodigious momentum or gale of thought that carries us through. I am aware that several such passages have often been censured as mere jumbles of incongruous metaphors; but they do not so strike any reader who is so unconscientious of rhetorical formalities as to care only for the meaning of what he reads; though I admit that perhaps no mental current less deep and mighty than Shakespeare's would waft us clean over such thought-foundering passages.

There is one other trait of the Poet's style which I must briefly notice. It is the effect of some one leading thought or predominant feeling in silently modifying the language, and drawing in sympathetic words and phrases by unmarked threads of association. Thus in the hero's description of Valeria, in *Coriolanus* , v. 3:

"The noble sister of Publicola, The moon of Rome; chaste as the icicle, That's curded by the frost from purest snow, And hangs on Dian's temple."

Here, of course, the leading thought is chastity; and observe how, as by a kind of silent sympathy, all the words and images are selected and toned in perfect unison with that thought, so that the whole may be said literally to relish of nothing else. Something of the same, though in a manner perhaps still better, because less pronounced, occurs in *As You Like It* , ii. 1, where, the exiled Duke having expressed his pain that the deer, "poor dappled fools, being native burghers of this desert city," should on their own grounds "have their round haunches gor'd," one of the attendant lords responds:

"Indeed, my lord, The melancholy Jaques grieves at that. To-day, my Lord of Amiens and myself Did steal behind him, as he lay along Under an oak whose antique root peeps out Upon the brook that brawls along this wood; To the which place a poor sequester'd stag, That from the hunter's aim had ta'en a hurt, Did come to languish: and indeed, my lord, The wretched animal heav'd forth such groans, That their discharge did stretch his leathern coat Almost to bursting; and the big round tears Cours'd one another down his innocent nose In piteous chase; and thus the hairy fool, Much marked of the melancholy Jaques, Stood on th' extremest verge of the swift brook, Augmenting it with tears."

Here the predominant feeling of the speaker is that of kindred or half-brotherhood with the deer; and such words as *languish, groans, coat, tears, innocent* , and *hairy fool* , dropping along so quietly, impart a sort of semi-humanizing tinge to the language, so that the very pulse of his feeling seems beating in its veins.

The Poet has a great many passages from which this feature might be illustrated. And it often imparts a very peculiar charm to his poetry;—a charm the more winning, and the more wholesome too, for being, I will not say unobtrusive, but hardly perceptible; acting like a soft undertone accompaniment of music, which we are kept from noticing by the delicate concert of thought and feeling it insensibly kindles and feeds within us. Thus the Poet touches and rallies all our most hidden springs of delight to his purpose, and makes them unconsciously tributary to the refreshment of the hour; stealing fine inspirations into us, which work their effect upon the soul without prating of their presence, and not unlike the virtue that lets not the left hand know what the right hand doeth. And all this, let me tell you, is a very different thing from merely making "the sound an echo to the sense,"—as much better too as it is different.

Everybody conversant with the subject knows that an author's style, if genuine, (and it is not properly a style, but a mannerism, if ungenuine,) is a just measure of his mind, and an authentic registration of all his faculties and forces. It has indeed passed into a proverb, that "the style is the man." And there is no other English writing, probably no uninspired writing in the world, of which this is so unreservedly true as of Shakespeare's; and this, because his is the most profoundly genuine: here the style—I mean in his characteristic pieces—is all his own,—rooted perfectly in and growing entirely from the man himself,—and has no borrowed sap or flavour whatever. And as he surpasses all others alike in breadth and delicacy of perception, in sweep and subtilty of thought, in vastness of grasp and minuteness of touch, in fineness of fibre and length and strength of line; so all these are faithfully reflected in his use of language. There is none other so overwhelming in its power, none so irresistible in its sweetness. If his intellect could crush the biggest and toughest problems into food, his tongue was no less able to voice in all fitting accents the results of that tremendous digestion. Coleridge, the profoundest of critics, calls him "an oceanic mind," and this language, as expressing the idea of multitudinous unity, is none too big for him; Hallam, the severest of critics, describes him as "thousand-souled," and this has grown into common use as no more than just; another writer makes his peculiarity to consist in "an infinite delicacy of mind"; and whatsoever of truth and fitness there may be in any or all of these expression's has a just exponent in his style.

All which may suffice to explain why it is that Shakespeare's style has no imitators. He were indeed a very hardy or else a very imbecile man, who should undertake to imitate it. All the other great English poets, however, have been imitated in this respect, and some of them with no little success. Thomson's *Castle of Indolence* , for example, is an avowed imitation of Spenser; and that, I think, is Thomson's best poem. Beattie's *Minstrel* , too, is another happy imitation of the same great original. I cannot say so much for any of Milton's or Wordsworth's imitators, though both have had many of them. But no one, apparently, ever thinks of trying to tilt in Shakespeare's Titanic armour.

<<span id="filepos0040177168"> a>MORAL SPIRIT.

Much of what may need to be said on this topic will come in more fitly in speaking of particular plays and characters. A few observations of a very inclusive scope will be sufficient here.

And I will begin by saying that soundness in this respect is the corner-stone of all artistic excellence. Virtue, or the loving of worthy objects, and in a worthy manner, is most assuredly the highest interest of mankind;—an interest so vital and fundamental, that nothing which really conflicts with it, or even postpones it to any other regards, can possibly stand the test of any criticism rooted in the principles of human nature. To offend in this point is indeed to be guilty of all: things must be substantially right here, else there can be nothing right about them. So that, if an author's moral teaching or moral influence be essentially bad; or even if it be materially loose and unsound, so as to unstring the mind from thinking and doing that which is right; nay, even if it be otherwise than positively wholesome and elevating as a whole; then I more than admit that no amount of seeming intellectual or poetical merit ought to shield his workmanship from reprobation, and this too on the score of art. But then, on the other hand, I must insist that our grounds of judgment in this matter be very large and liberal; and that to require or to expect a poet to teach better morals than are taught by Nature and Providence argues either a disqualifying narrowness of mind in us, or else a certain moral valetudinarianism which poetry is not bound to respect. For a poet has a right to the benefit of being tried by the moral sense and reason of mankind: it is indeed to that seat of judgment that every great poet virtually appeals; and the verdict of that tribunal must be an ultimate ruling to us as well as to him.

But one of the first things to be considered here is the natural relation of Morality to Art. Now I believe Art cannot be better defined than as the creation or the expression of the Beautiful. And truth is the first principle of all Beauty.

But when I say this, I of course imply that truth which the human mind is essentially constituted to receive as such. And in that truth the moral element holds, constitutionally, the foremost place. I mean, that the human mind draws and cannot but draw to that point, in so far as it is true to itself: for the moral consciousness is the rightful sovereign in the soul of man, or it is nothing; it cannot accept a lower seat without forfeiting all its rights, and disorganizing the whole intellectual house. So that a thing cannot be morally false and artistically true at the same time. And in so far as any workmanship sins in the former kind, just so far, whatever other elements of the Beautiful it may have, it still lacks the very bond of order which is necessary, to retain them in power; nay, the effect of those other elements is to cultivate a taste which the whole thing fails to satisfy; what of true beauty is present tends to awaken a craving for that part which is wanting.

Nor need we have any fear but that in the long run things will come right in this matter. In this, however, as in most things, truth is the daughter of time. The moral sense and reason is so strong a force in the calm and disinterested judgments of mankind, that it must and will prevail: its verdict may be some time in coming, but come it will, sooner or later, and will ultimately have things all its own way. For the æsthetic conscience is probably the most impartial and inexorable of the human powers; and this, because it acts most apart from any regards of self-interest or any apprehension of consequences. The elections of taste are in a special sort exempt both from hope of profit and from fear of punishment. And man's sense of the Beautiful is so much in the keeping of his moral reason,—secret keeping indeed, and all the surer for being secret,—that it cannot be bribed or seduced to a *constant* admiration of any beauty where the moral element is wanting, or even where it is excluded from its rightful place. In other words, the law of goodness or of moral rectitude is so closely interwoven with the nature and truth of things, that the human mind will not set up its rest with any workmanship in Art where that law is either set at nought or discrowned. Its natural and just prerogatives will assert themselves in spite of us; and their triumph is assured the moment we go to resisting them. That which appeals merely to our sense of the Beautiful, and which has nothing to recommend it but as it touches that sense, must first of all have the moral element of beauty, and this too in the foremost place, else it stands no chance of a permanent hold upon us.

It is indeed true that works of art, or things claiming to be such, in which this law of natural proportion is not respected or not observed, may have a transient popularity and success: nay, their success may be the greater, or at least the louder and more emphatic, for that very disproportion: the multitude may, and in fact generally do, go after such in preference to that which is better. And even men not exactly of the multitude, but still without the preparation either of a natural or a truly educated taste,—men in whom the sense of beauty is outvoiced by cravings for what is sensational, and who are ever mistaking the gratification of their lower passions for the satisfaction of their æsthetic conscience;—such men may be and often are won to a passing admiration of works in which the moral law of Art is plainly disregarded: but they seldom tie up with them; indeed their judgment never stays long enough in one place to acquire any weight; and no man of true judgment in such things ever thinks of referring to their preference but as a thing to be avoided. With this spirit of ignorant or lawless admiration the novelty of yesterday is eclipsed by the novelty of to-day; other things being equal, the later instance of disproportion always outbids the earlier. For so this spirit is ever taking to things which are impotent to reward the attention they catch. And thus men of such taste, or rather such want of taste, naturally fall in with the genius of sensationalism; which, whatever form it takes on, soon wears that form out, and has no way to sustain itself in life but by continual transmigration. Wherever it fixes, it has to keep straining higher and higher: under its rule, what was exciting yesterday is dull and insipid to-day; while the excess of to-day necessitates a further excess to-morrow; and the inordinate craving which it fosters must still be met with stronger and stronger emphasis, till at last exhaustion brings on disgust, or the poor thing dies from blowing so hard as to split its cheeks.

It is for these reasons, no doubt, that no artist or poet who aims at present popularity, or whose mind is possessed with the spirit of such popularity, ever achieves lasting success. For the great majority of men at any one time have always preferred, and probably always will prefer, that which is disproportioned, and especially that which violates the law of moral proportion. This, however, is not because the multitude have no true sense of the Beautiful, but because that sense is too slow in their minds to prevent their being caught and carried away by that which touches them at lower points. Yet that sense is generally strong enough to keep them from standing to the objects of their present election; so that it is ever drawing them back one by one to the old truth from which the new falsehood withdrew them. Thus, however the popular current of the day may set, the judgment of the wise and good will ultimately give the law in this matter; and in that judgment the æsthetic and the moral conscience will ever be found to coincide. So that he who truly works upon the principle, "Fit audience let me find, though few," will in the long run have the multitude too: he will not indeed be their first choice, but he will be their last: their first will be ever shifting its objects, but their last will stand firm. For here we may justly apply the aphoristic saying of Burke: "Man is a most unwise and most wise being: the individual is foolish; the multitude is foolish for the moment, when they act without deliberation; but the species is wise."

I have said that in the legislation of Art the moral sense and reason must not only have a voice, but a prerogative voice: I have also said that a poet must not be required to teach better morals than those of Nature and Providence. Now the law of moral proportion in Art may be defeated as well by overworking the moral element as by leaving it out or by making too little of it. In other words, redundancy of conscience is quite as bad here as deficiency; in some respects it is even worse, because its natural effect is to set us on our guard against the subtle invasions of pious fraud: besides, the deficiency we can make up for ourselves, but the evil of such suspicions is not so easily cured. For of all the things that enter into human thought, I suppose morality is the one wherein we are naturally least tolerant of special-pleading; and any thing savouring of this is apt to awaken our jealousy at once; probably from a sort of instinct, that, the better the cause, the less need there is, and the more danger there is too, of acting as its attorney or advocate. And the temptation to "lie for God" is one to which professed moral teachers are so exposed, that their lessons seldom have much effect: I even suspect that, in many cases, if not in most, their moralizing is of so obtrusive a kind, that it rather repels than wins the confidence of the pupils.

Then too moral demonstrativeness is never the habit either of the best poets or of the best men. True virtue indeed is a very modest and retiring quality; and we naturally feel that they who have most of it have "none to speak of." Or, to take the same thing on another side, virtue is a law of action, and not a distinct object of pursuit: those about us may know what object we are pursuing, but the mind with which we pursue it is a secret to them; they are not obliged to know it; and when we undertake to force that knowledge upon them, then it is that they just will not receive it. They will sometimes learn it from our life, never from our lips. Thus a man's moral rectitude has its proper seat inside of him, and is then most conspicuous when it stays out of sight, and when, whatever he does and wherever he goes, he carries it with him as a thing of course, and without saying or even thinking any thing about it. It may be that our moral instincts are made to work in this way, because any ambition of conscience, any pride or ostentation of virtue, any air of moral vanity or conceit, any wearing of rectitude on the outside, as if put on for effect, or "to be seen of men," if it be not essentially fictitious and false, is certainly in the most direct course of becoming so. And how much need there still is of those eloquently silent lessons in virtue which are fitted to inspire the thing without any boasting of the name,—all this may well be judged when we consider how apt men are to build their hopes on that which, as Burke says, "takes the man from his house, and sets him on a stage,—which makes him up an artificial creature, with painted, theatric sentiments, fit to be seen by the glare of candlelight."

These positions indicate, I believe, pretty clearly the right course for poetry to pursue in order to keep the just law of moral proportion in Art. Ethical didacticism is quite out of place in workmanship of this kind. To go about moralizing as of set purpose, or to be specially dealing in formal precepts of duty, is not the poet's business. I repeat, that moral demonstrativeness and poetry do not go well together. A poet's conscience of virtue is better kept to himself, save as the sense and spirit thereof silently insinuate themselves into the shapings of his hand, and so live as an undercurrent in the natural course of truth and beauty. If he has the genius and the heart to see and to represent things just as they really are, his moral teaching cannot but be good; and the less it stands out as a special aim, the more effective it will be: but if, for any purpose, however moral, he goes to representing things otherwise than as they are, then just so far his moral teaching will miss its mark: and if he takes, as divers well-meaning persons have done, to flourishing his ethical robes in our faces, then he must be content to pass with us for something less or something more than a poet: we may still read him indeed from a mistaken sense of duty; but we shall never be drawn to him by an unsophisticated love of the Beautiful and the True.

So much for what I hold to be the natural relation of Morality to Art. And I have put the matter thus, on the well-known principle, that the moral sensibilities are the most delicate part of our constitution; that as such they require to be touched with the utmost care, or rather not to be touched directly at all; and that the thrusting of instruction upon them tends to dull and deaden, not to quicken and strengthen them. For the true virtue-making power is an inspiration, not a catechism; and the truly cunning moral teacher is he who, in the honest and free enthusiasm of moral beauty, steals that inspiration into us without our knowing it, or before we know it. The author of *Ecce Homo* tells us, and truly too, that "no heart is pure that is not passionate; no virtue is safe that is not enthusiastic." And there is probably no vainer labour than the going about to make men good by dint of moral arguments and reasoned convictions of the understanding. One noble impulse will do more towards ennobling men than a volume of ethical precepts; and there is no sure way to put down a bad passion but by planting a good one. Set the soul on fire with moral beauty, that's the way to burn the devils out of it. So that, for making men virtuous, there is, as Gervinus says, "no more fruitless branch of literature than ethical science; except, perhaps, those dramatic moralities into whose frigid impotence poetry will always sink when it aims at direct moral teaching."

Now, I do not at all scruple to affirm that Shakespeare's poetry will stand the test of these principles better than any other writing we have outside the Bible, His rank in the School of Morals is indeed no less high than in the School of Art. He is every way as worthy to be our teacher and guide in what is morally just and noble and right as in what is artistically beautiful and true. In his workmanship the law of moral proportion is observed with a fidelity that can never be too much admired; in other words, the moral element of the beautiful not only has a place, but is in the right place,—the right place, I mean, to act the most surely and the most effectively on the springs of life, or as an inspiration of good thoughts and desires. And in the further explication or amplification of the matter I shall take for granted that the old sophism of holding Shakespeare responsible for all that is said and done by his characters is thoroughly exploded; though it is not many years since a grave writer set him down as a denier of immortality; because, forsooth, in *The Winter's Tale* he makes the rogue Autolycus say, "For the life to come, I sleep out the thought of it." This mode of judging is indeed so perverse or so ignorant, that to spend any words in refuting or reproving it would be a mere waste of breath; or, if there be any so innocent as to need help on that point, it is not to them that I write.

As to the exact features of Shakespeare's own moral character as a man; whether or how far he was himself a model of virtuous living; in what measure the moral beauty of his poetical conceptions lived in the substance of his practical conversations; the little that is known touching the facts of his life does not enable us to judge. The most we can say on this score is, that we have a few authentic notes of strong commendation, and nothing authentic whatever to set against them. Thus Chettle, in his apology, tells us that "divers of worship have reported his uprightness of dealing, which argues his honesty"; and his editors, Heminge and Condell, in their dedication claim to have no other purpose than "to keep the memory of so worthy a friend and fellow alive as was our Shakespeare." Ben Jonson, too, a pure and estimable man, who knew him well, and who was not apt to be over-indulgent in his judgments of men, speaks of him as "my beloved Shakespeare" and "my gentle Shakespeare"; and describes him as follows:

"Look, how the father's face Lives in his issue, even so the race Of Shakespeare's mind *and manners* brightly shines In his well-turnèd and true-filèd lines."

These things were said some seven years after the Poet's death; and many years later the same stanch and truthful man speaks of him as "being indeed honest, and of an open and free nature." I do not now recall any other authentic testimonials to his moral character; and, considering how little is known of his life, it is rather surprising that we should have so much in evidence of his virtues as a man. But it is with what he taught; not what he practised, that we are here mainly concerned: with the latter indeed we have properly nothing to do, save as it may have influenced the former: it is enough for our purpose that he saw and spoke the right, whether he acted it or not. For, whatever his faults and infirmities and shortcomings as a man, it is certain that they did not infect his genius or taint his mind, so as to work it into any deflection from the straight and high path of moral and intellectual righteousness.

I have said that Shakespeare does not put his personal views, sentiments, and preferences, in a word, his individuality, into his characters. These stand, morally, on their own bottom; he is but the describer of them, and so is not answerable for what they do: he holds the mirror up to them, or rather to nature in them; they do not hold it up to him: we see them in what he says, but not him in what they say. And, of course, as we may not impute to him, morally, their vices, so neither have we any right to credit him, morally, with their virtues. All this, speaking generally, is true; and it implies just the highest praise that can possibly be accorded to any man as a dramatic poet. But, true as it is generally, there is nevertheless enough of exception to build a strong argument upon as to his moral principles, or as to his theory of what is morally good and noble in human character.

I have already mentioned Henry the Fifth as the one of his characters into whom the Poet throws something of his own moral soul. He delivers him both as Prince Hal and as King in such a way, that we cannot but feel he has a most warm and hearty personal admiration of the man; nay, he even discovers an intense moral enthusiasm about him: in the Choruses, where he ungirds his individual loves from the strict law of dramatic self-aloofness, and lets in a stream from his own full heart, he calls him "the mirror of all Christian kings," and ascribes to him such qualities, and in such a way, as show unequivocally his own cherished ideal of manhood, and in what course the current of his personal approval ran. Here, then, we have a trustworthy exhibit of the Poet's moral principles; here we are left in no doubt as to what moral traits of character he in heart approved, whether his own moral character exemplified them or not. What sort of a man he represents this his favorite hero to be; how modest in his greatness, how great in his modesty; how dutiful and how devout; how brave, how gentle, how generous, how affable, how humane; how full of religious fervor, yet how bland and liberal in his piety; with "a tear for pity, and a hand open as day for melting charity"; how genuine and unaffected withal these virtues grow in him; in short, how all alive he is with the highest and purest Christian *ethos* which the old "ages of faith" could breathe into a man;—all this must stand over till I come to the plays wherein he is delineated.

Something further to the same point may be gathered, not so much from the Poet's treatment of particular good characters, as from the general style of character which he evidently prefers to draw in that class, and from the peculiar complexion and grain of goodness which he ascribes to them. Antonio the Merchant, Orlando, the Sebastian of *Twelfth Night* , Horatio, Kent, Edgar, Ferdinand, Florizel, Posthumus, Pisanio, are instances of what I mean. All these indeed differ very widely from each other as individuals; but they all have this in common, that their virtues sit easy and natural upon them, as native outgrowths, not as things put on: there is no ambition, no pretension, nothing at all boastful or fictitious or pharisaical or squeamish or *egoish* in their virtues; we never see the men hanging over them, or nursing and cosseting them, as if they were specially thoughtful and tender of them, and fearful lest they might catch cold. Then too, with all these men, the good they do, in doing it, pays itself: if they do you a kindness, they are not at all solicitous to have you know and remember it: if sufferings and hardships overtake them, if wounds and bruises be their portion, they never grumble or repine at it, as feeling that Providence has a grudge against them, or that the world is slighting them: whether they live or die, the mere conscience of rectitude suffices them, without further recompense. So that the simple happiness they find in doing what is right is to us a sufficient pledge of their perseverance in so doing. Now all this is, in its degree, just the ideal of virtue which Christian morality teaches and exemplifies. For so the right way of Christian virtue is when a man's good deeds are so much a matter of course with him, that he thinks not of himself for having done them. As bees when they have made their honey; as birds when they have carolled their hymn; as the vine when it has produced its clusters; so it is with the truly good man when he has done a good act: it suffices him that he has borne his proper fruit; and, instead of calling on others or even himself to note what he has done, he goes right on and does other good acts, just as if nothing had happened.

But if all this be true of the Poet's men, it is true in a still higher degree of his women. Here it is that the moral element of the Beautiful has its fullest and fairest expression. And I am bold to say that, next to the Christian religion, humanity has no other so precious inheritance as Shakespeare's divine gallery of Womanhood. Helena, Portia of Belmont, Rosalind, Viola, Portia of Rome, Isabella, Ophelia, Cordelia, Miranda, Hermione, Perdita, Desdemona, Imogen, Catharine of Arragon,—what a wealth and assemblage of moral beauty have we here! All the other poetry and art of the world put together cannot show such a varied and surpassing treasure of womanly excellence. And how perfectly free their goodness is from any thing like stress! How true it is in respect of their virtues, that "love is an unerring light, and joy its own security!" They are wise, witty, playful, humorous, grave, earnest, impassioned, practical, imaginative; the most profound and beautiful thoughts drop from them as things too common and familiar to be spoken with the least emphasis: they are strong, tender, and sweet, yet never without a sufficient infusion of brisk natural acid and piquancy to keep their sweetness from palling on the taste: they are full of fresh, healthy sentiment, but never at all touched with sentimentality: the soul of romance works mightily within them, yet never betrays them into any lapses from good sense, or any substitutions of feeling for duty.

Then too how nobly and serenely indifferent the glorious creatures are to the fashions and opinions and criticisms of the world! How composedly some of them walk amidst the sharpest perils and adversities, as "having the spirit to do any thing that is not foul in the truth of their spirit." Full of bitterness their cup sometimes is indeed; yet they do not mind it,—not they!—save as the welfare and happiness of others are involved in what pinches them. Several of them are represented passing through the most ticklish and trying situations in which it is possible for female modesty to be placed,—disguised in male attire and sharing as men in the conversations of men; yet so unassailable is their modesty, that they give themselves, apparently, no trouble about it. And, framed as they are, all this may well be so: for indeed such is their fear of God, or, which comes to the same thing, their fear of doing wrong, that it casts out all other fears; and so their "virtue gives herself light through darkness for to wade." Nor do we wonder that, timid maidens as they are, they should "put such boldness on"; for we see that with them

"Mighty are the soul's commandments To support, restrain, or raise: Foes may hang upon their path, snakes rustle near, But nothing from their inward selves have they to fear."

It is very noteworthy, withal, how some of them are so secure in the spirit and substance of the moral law, that they do not scruple, in certain circumstances, to overrule its letter and form. Thus Isabella feigns to practise sin; and she does so as a simple act of self-sacrifice, and because she sees that in this way a good and pious deed may be done in aid of others: she shrinks not from the social imputation of wrong in that case, so her conscience be clear; and she can better brave the external finger of shame than the inward sense of leaving a substantial good undone. Helena, also, puts herself through a course of literal dishonours, and this too, with a perfect understanding of what she is about; yet she yields to no misgivings; not indeed on the ground that the end justifies the means, but because she knows that the soul of a just and honorable purpose, such as hers, will have power to redeem and even to sanctify the formal dishonours of its body. Much the same principle holds, again, in the case of Desdemona's falsehood, when, Emilia rushing into the room, and finding her dying, and asking, "Who has done this?" she sighs out, "Nobody—I myself: commend me to my kind lord." I believe no natural heart can help thinking the better of Desdemona for this brave and tender untruth, for it is plainly the unaffected utterance of a deeper truth; and one must be blind indeed not to see that the dying woman's purpose is to shield her husband, so far as she can, from the retribution which she apprehends will befall him, and the thought of which wrings her pure breast more sharply than the pangs of death.

These are plain cases of virtue tried and purified in the straits of self-humiliation, virtue strained, as it were, through a close-knit fabric of difficulties and hardships, and triumphing over the wrongs that threaten its total defacement, and even turning its obstructions into a substance glorious as its own; that is, they are exceptional instances of a conscious departure from the letter and form of moral beauty for the fuller and clearer manifestation of its spirit and soul.

Nor are the virtues of Shakespeare's men and women the mere result of a certain felicity and harmony of nature, or the spontaneous movements of a happy instinct so strong in them that they do what is right without knowing or meaning it. No; his Henry the Fifth, and Horatio, and Kent, and Edgar, and Posthumus, his Helena, and Isabella, and Cordelia, and Hermione, and Imogen, and Catharine, are most truly "beings breathing thoughtful breath." Virtue is with them a discipline as well as a joy; a strong upright will is the backbone of it, and a healthy conscience is its keeper. They all have conscious reasons for what they do, and can state them with piercing eloquence, if occasion bids. For so the Poet, much as he delights in that fineness of nature or that innate grace which goes right of its own accord, evidently prefers, even in women, the goodness that has passed through struggles and temptations, and has its chief seat, not in impulse, but in principle, a virtue tested, and not merely instinctive: rather say, he delights most in the virtue that proceeds by a happy consent and marriage of the two. He therefore does not place his highest characters, whether men or women, in an atmosphere so pure that average mortals cannot breathe in it: he depicts their moral nature in conflict, with the powers of good and evil striving in them for the mastery; and when the former prevail, it is because they have "a strong siding champion, Conscience," to support them. Thus through their weakness they come near enough to get hold of us, while at the same time in their strength they are enough higher than we to lift us upwards.

But Shakespeare's main peculiarity as a teacher of goodness lies in this, that he keeps our moral sympathies in the right place without discovering his own. With the one exception of Henry the Fifth, we cannot perceive, from the delineation itself, whether he takes part with the good character or the bad; nevertheless he somehow so puts the matter that we cannot help taking part with the good. For I run no risk in saying there is not a single instance in his plays where the feelings of any natural-hearted reader fail to go along with those who are, at least relatively, the best. And as he does not make nor even let us see which side he is on, so of course we are led to take the right side, not because he does, but simply because it is the right side. Thus his moral lessons and inspirations affect us as coming, not from him, but from Nature herself; and so the authority they carry is not his, good as that may be, but hers, which is infinitely better. Thus he is ever appealing directly to the tribunal of our own inward moral forces, and at the same time speaking health and light into that tribunal. There need be, there can be, no higher proof of the perfect moral sanity of his genius than this. And for right moral effect it is just the best thing we can have, and is worth a thousand times more than all the ethical arguing and voting in the world. If it be a marvel how the Poet can keep his own hand so utterly unmoved by the passion he is representing, it is surely not less admirable that he should thus, without showing any compassion himself, move our compassion in just the degree, and draw it to just the place, which the laws of moral beauty and proportion require.

Herein even Milton, great and good as he unquestionably is, falls far below Shakespeare as a moral poet. Take the delineation of Satan in *Paradise Lost* . Now Milton does not leave us at all in doubt as to where his own moral sympathies go in that delineation: they are altogether on the side of God and the good Angels. And he tells us again and again, or as good as tells us, that ours ought to be there; so that there is no possibility of mistake in the matter. Notwithstanding I suspect he does not quite succeed in keeping the reader's moral sympathies there. He does indeed with me: my own feelings have somehow been so steeped in the foolish old doctrine or faith which holds obedience to be a cardinal virtue, that they have never sided with Satan in that controversy. But I believe a majority of readers do find their moral feelings rather drawing to the rebel side; this too, notwithstanding their moral judgment may speak the other way: and when the feelings and the judgment are thus put at odds, the former are pretty sure, in effect, to carry the day.

Now Milton's Satan, I think, may be not unfitly described as a highly magnified realistic freethinker. Iago and Edmund are also realistic freethinkers, the former slightly magnified, the latter unmagnified, though both may be somewhat idealized. And both of them speak and act strictly in that character. Accordingly all religion is in their account mere superstition; and they take pride in never acknowledging their Maker but to brave Him. Both exult above all things in their intellectuality; and what they have the intellect to do, that is with them the only limit to intellectual action; that is, their own will is to them the highest law: hence to ruin another by outwitting and circumventing him is their characteristic pastime; and if they can do this through his virtues, all the better. Iago's moral creed may be summed up in two of his aphoristic sayings,—"Virtue! a fig! 'tis in ourselves that we are thus or thus"; and, "Put money in thy purse"; while Edmund wants no other reason for his exploiting than that his brother is one

"Whose nature is so far from doing harms, That he suspects none; on whose foolish honesty My practices ride easy."

The characters of the two freethinking heroes are delineated consistently throughout, in keeping with these ideas, no one can say, no one has ever said, that the Poet discovers any the least prejudice against them, or any leanings of moral or personal sympathy towards their victims. Nothing comes from him that can be fairly construed as a hint to us against warming up to them. Nor has any one a right to say that he overdoes or overstresses their wickedness a jot: he merely shows it, or rather lets them show it, just as it is. He lends them the whole benefit of his genius for the best possible airing of their intellectual gifts and graces; all this too without swerving a hair from the line of cold, calm, even-handed justice: yet how do our feelings, how do our moral sympathies, run in these cases? I need not say they run wholly and unreservedly with the chivalrous but infirm Cassio, the honest and honour-loving Othello, the innocent though not faultless Desdemona; with the pious and unsuspecting Edgar, the erring indeed but still upright and sound-hearted Gloucester. Nay, more; we would rather be in the place of the victims than of the victors: virtue wronged, betrayed, crushed, seems to us a more eligible lot than crime triumphant, prosperous, happy.—Such is the moral spirit of these great delineations.

I could easily go through all the Poet's instances of virtue and innocence in conflict or in contrast with villainy and guilt, and show that he never fails thus to keep our moral sympathies in the right place without discovering his own; that he is just as far from overdoing or overstressing the villainy of the bad as the virtue of the good; both of which fall alike under the censure of moral demonstrativeness, while, as in the two cases specified, his moral teachings, even because they thus come from Nature, not from him, therefore bring in their right hand sanctions which we cannot appeal from if we would, and would not if we could.

There is one more point on which it may be needful to say a few words.—Johnson and others have complained that Shakespeare seems to write without any moral purpose; and that he does not make a just distribution of good and evil. Both charges are strictly true; at least, so I hope, and so I believe. As regards his seeming to write without any moral purpose, on the same principle he seems to write without any art. But who does not know that the very triumph of art lies in concealing art; that is, in seeming to write without it? And so, if the Poet writes without discovering any moral purpose, that very fact is just the highest triumph of art in the moral direction. For no one has alleged that he seems to write with an immoral purpose. Here, then, I have but to say that, with so consummate an artist as Shakespeare, if the charge is not true, it ought to be.

Redundancy of conscience is indeed fatal to art; but then it is also, if not fatal, at least highly damaging to morality; "for goodness, growing to a plurisy, dies in its own too much." Verily, a moral teacher's first business is to clear his mind of cant. And so much the wise and good Dr. Johnson himself will tell us.

If, again, Shakespeare fails to make a just distribution of good and evil, so also does Providence. If, in his representations, virtue is not always crowned with visible success, nor crime with apparent defeat; if the good are often cast down, the evil often lifted up, and sometimes both cast down together; the workings of Providence in the actual treatment of men are equally at fault in that matter. Or if he makes the sun of his genius to rise on the evil and on the good, and sends the rain of his genius on the just and on the unjust, why should this be thought wrong in him, when Providence manifestly does the same?

For, explain the fact as we may, it is certain that the consummations of justice are not always experienced here. The world is full of beginnings that are to be finished elsewhere, if finished at all. Virtue often meets with very rough usage in the present order of things: poverty and want, hardship, suffering, and reproach, are often the lot of the good; while men of the opposite character have their portion carved to them out of the best that the world has to bestow. Nay, it sometimes happens that the truest, the kindest, and most upright souls are the most exposed to injuries and wrongs; their virtues being to them a kind of "sanctified and holy traitors," and the heaven within them serving to disable them from winning the prizes of earth: whereas the very unscrupulousness of the bad, their hardness of heart and unbashfulness of front build or open for them the palaces of wealth and splendour and greatness; their want of principle seems to strengthen their hands; they rise the higher, that they care not whose ruins they rise upon, and command the larger success for being reckless how they succeed.

And is a poet, who professedly aims at nothing better than a just reflection of human life and character as he finds them, is he to be blamed for faithfully holding the mirror up to facts as they are in this respect? That our Shakespeare, the mighty and the lovely, sometimes permits the good to suffer while their wrongers prosper, I thence infer, not indeed that he regarded them indifferently, but that he had a right Christian faith in a further stage of being where the present disorder of things in this point is to be rectified, and the moral discriminations of Providence consummated. His judgment clearly was, that suffering and death are not the worst things that can happen to a man here. He reverences virtue, he does not patronize it. And the virtue he has in reverence is not a hanger-on at the counters of worldly thrift. He knew right well that "the fineness of such metal is not found in Fortune's love," but rather "in the wind and tempest of her frown"; and so he paints it as a thing "that Fortune's buffets and rewards doth take with equal thanks." And, surely, what we need here is a deeper faith, a firmer trust in the government of a Being "in whose pure sight all virtue doth succeed"; yea, and perhaps succeeds most highly in those very cases where the course of things in this world fails to recognize its claims.

For so in fact it seems pretty clear that the forces of Nature have little sense or discernment of right and wrong: the sunshine and the rain are rather blindly given to favouring the good and the evil indiscriminately; the plague and the thunderbolt are strangely indifferent to moral distinctions where they strike. What of that? these things are but the under-agents of Providence in the government of the world: whereas the inward conscience of truth and right is the immediate smile of God himself; and that is the Paradise of the truly good man's soul, the very life of his life; he can live without happiness, but he cannot live without that. Shakespeare's delineations reflect, none so well, none so well as his, this great, this most refreshing article of truth; and I heartily thank him for it; yes, heartily!

So then, what though the divine Cordelia and the noble Kent die, and this too in the very sweetness and fragrance of their beauty? Is it not, do we not feel that it is, better to die with them than to live with those who have caused their death? Their goodness was not acted for the sake of life, but purely for its own sake: virtue such as theirs does not make suit to Fortune's favours, nor build her trust in them; pays not her vows to time, nor is time's thrall; no! her thoughts are higher-reared; she were not herself, could she not "look on tempests, and be never shaken." And such characters as these, befall them what may, have their "exceeding great reward" in the very virtue that draws suffering and death upon them: they need nothing more, and it is their glory and immortality not to ask any thing more. And shall we pity them, or shall we blame the Poet, that their virtue is not crowned with Fortune's smiles? Nay, rather let us both pity and blame ourselves for being of so mean and miserable a spirit.

As for those poets, and those critics of poetry, who insist that in the Drama, which ought to be a just image of life as it is, there shall always be an exact fitting of rewards and punishments to moral desert; or that the innocent and the guilty, the just and the unjust, shall be perfectly discriminated in what befalls them; as for such poets and critics, I simply do not believe in them at all: their workmanship is radically both unchristian and immoral; and its moral effect, if it have any, can hardly be other than to "pamper the coward heart with feelings all too delicate for use."

Wherefore, if any students of Shakespeare are still troubled with such criticisms as the one in question, I recommend them to make a thorough study of the *Book of Job* , and not to leave it till they shall have mastered the argument of that wonderful and divine poem. They will there find that, when the good man was prosperous, the Accuser brought against him the charge, that his serving God so well was from his being sure of good pay; and that therefore he would presently give over or slack his service, if the pay should be withheld: they will also find that, when he was in affliction, his comforters sought to comfort him with the cruel reproach of having been all the while secretly a bad man, and with arguments no less cruel, that his afflictions were sent upon him as a judgment for his secret sins: and, further, they will find that, when his wife urged him to "curse God and die," her counsel proceeded upon the principle, that the evils which fall upon the upright prove the government of the world to be in the hands of a being who has no respect for the moral character of his subjects; or, in other words, the sufferings of good men are taken by her as evidence that goodness is not the law of the Divine administration.

Now, it was from such teachers as Nature and Job, and not from such as Job's Accuser and comforters and wife, that Shakespeare learnt his morality.

<<span id="filepos0040226155"> a> SHAKESPEARE'S CHARACTERS.

<<span id="filepos0040226568"> a>A MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM.

A Midsummer-Night's Dream was registered at the Stationers' October 8, 1600, and two quarto editions of it were published in the course of that year. The play is not known to have been printed again till it reappeared in the folio of 1623, where the repetition of certain misprints shows it to have been printed from one of the quarto copies. In all three of these copies, however, the printing is remarkably clear and correct for the time, insomuch that modern editors have little difficulty about the text. Probably none of the Poet's dramas has reached us in a more satisfactory state.

The play is first heard of in the list given by Francis Meres in his *Palladis Tamia* , 1598. But it was undoubtedly written several years before that time; and I am not aware that any editor places the writing at a later date than 1594. This brings it into the same period with *King John*, *King Richard the Second* , and the finished *Romeo and Juliet* ; and the internal marks of style naturally sort it into that company. Our Mr. Verplanck, however, thinks there are some passages which relish strongly of an earlier time; while again there are others that with the prevailing sweetness of the whole have such an intertwisting of nerve and vigour, and such an energetic compactness of thought and imagery, mingled occasionally with the deeper tonings of "years that bring the philosophic mind," as to argue that they were wrought into the structure of the play not long before it came from the press. The part of the Athenian lovers certainly has a good deal that, viewed by itself, would scarce do credit even to such a boyhood as Shakespeare's must have been. On the other hand, there is a large philosophy in Theseus' discourse of "the lunatic, the lover, and the poet," a manly judgment in his reasons for preferring the "tedious brief scene of young Pyramus and his love Thisbe," and a bracing freshness in the short dialogue of the chase, all in the best style of the author's second period. Perhaps, however, what seem the defects of the former, the fanciful quirks and far-fetched conceits, were wisely designed, in order to invest the part with such an air of dreaminess and unreality as would better sort with the scope and spirit of the piece, and preclude a disproportionate resentment of some naughty acts into which those love-bewildered frailties are betrayed.

There is at least a rather curious coincidence, which used to be regarded as proving that the play was not written till after the Summer of 1594. I refer to Titania's superb description, in ii. 1, of the strange misbehaviour of the weather, which she ascribes to the fairy bickerings. I can quote but a part of it:

"The seasons alter: hoary-headed frosts Fall in the fresh lap of the crimson rose; And on old Hiems' thin and icy crown An odorous chaplet of sweet summer buds Is, as in mockery, set: the Spring, the Summer, The childing Autumn, angry Winter, change Their wonted liveries; and the mazèd world, By their increase, now knows not which is which: And this same progeny of evils comes From our debate, from our dissension."

For the other part of the coincidence, Strype in his *Annals* gives the following passage from a discourse by the Rev. Dr. King: "And see whether the Lord doth not threaten us much more, by sending such unseasonable weather and storms of rain among us; which if we will observe, and compare it with what is past, we may say that the course of nature is very much inverted. Our years are turned upside down: our Summers are no Summers; our harvests are no harvests; our seed-times are no seed-times. For a great space of time scant any day hath been seen that it hath not rained." Dyce indeed scouts the supposal that Shakespeare had any allusion to this eccentric conduct of the elements in the Summer of 1594, pronouncing it "ridiculous"; but I do not quite see it so; albeit I am apt enough to believe that most of the play was written before that date. And surely, the truth of the allusion being granted, all must admit that passing events have seldom been turned to better account in the service of poetry.

I can hardly imagine this play ever to have been very successful on the stage; and I am sure it could not be made to succeed there now. Still we are not without contemporary evidence that it had at least a fair amount of fame. And we have authentic information that it was performed at the house of Dr. John Williams, Bishop of Lincoln, on Sunday, the 27th of September, 1631. The actor of Bottom's part was on that occasion sentenced by a Puritan tribunal to sit twelve hours in the porter's room of the Bishop's palace, wearing the ass's head. This Dr. Williams was the very able but far from faultless man who was treated so harshly by Laud, and gave the King such crooked counsel in the case of Strafford, and spent his last years in mute sorrow at the death of his royal master, and had his life written by the wise, witty, good Bishop Hacket.

Some hints towards the part of Theseus and Hippolyta appear to have been taken from *The Knight's Tale* of Chaucer. The same poet's *Legend of Thisbe of Babylon* , and Golding's translation of the same story from Ovid, probably furnished the matter of the Interlude. So much as relates to Bottom and his fellows evidently came fresh from Nature as she had passed under the Poet's eye. The linking of these clowns with the ancient tragic tale of Pyramus and Thisbe, so as to draw the latter within the region of modern farce, is not less original than droll. How far it may have expressed the Poet's judgment touching the theatrical doings of the time, were perhaps a question more curious than profitable. The names of Oberon, Titania, and Robin Goodfellow were made familiar by the surviving relics of Gothic and Druidical mythology; as were also many particulars in their habits, mode of life, and influence in human affairs. Hints and allusions scattered through many preceding writers might be produced, showing that the old superstition had been grafted into the body of Christianity, where it had shaped itself into a regular system, so as to mingle in the lore of the nursery, and hold an influential place in the popular belief. Some reports of this ancient Fairydom are choicely translated into poetry by Chaucer in *The Wife of Bath's Tale* .

But, though Chaucer and others had spoken about the fairy nation, it was for Shakespeare to let them speak for themselves: until he clothed their life in apt forms, their thoughts in fitting words, they but floated unseen and unheard in the mental atmosphere of his fatherland. So that on this point there need be no scruple about receiving Hallam's statement of the matter: "*A Midsummer-Night's Dream* is, I believe, altogether original in one of the most beautiful conceptions that ever visited the mind of a poet,—the fairy machinery. A few before him had dealt in a vulgar and clumsy manner with popular superstitions; but the sportive, beneficent, invisible population of the air and earth, long since established in the creed of childhood, and of those simple as children, had never for a moment been blended with 'human mortals' among the personages of the drama." How much Shakespeare did as the friend and saviour of those sweet airy frolickers of the past from the relentless mowings of Time, has been charmingly set forth in our day in Hood's *Plea of the Midsummer Fairies* .

What, then, are the leading qualities which the Poet ascribes to these ideal or fanciful beings? Coleridge says he is "convinced that Shakespeare availed himself of the title of this play in his own mind, and worked upon it as a dream throughout." This remark no doubt rightly hits the true genius of the piece; and on no other ground can its merits be duly estimated. The whole play is indeed a sort of ideal dream; and it is from the fairy personages that its character as such mainly proceeds. All the materials of the piece are ordered and assimilated to that central and governing idea. This it is that explains and justifies the distinctive features of the work, such as the constant preponderance of the lyrical over the dramatic, and the free playing of the action unchecked by the conditions of outward fact and reality. Accordingly a sort of lawlessness is, as it ought to be, the very law of the performance. King Oberon is the sovereign who presides over the world of dreams; Puck is his prime minister; and all the other denizens of Fairydom are his subjects and the agents of his will in this capacity. Titania's nature and functions are precisely the same which Mercutio assigns to Queen Mab, whom he aptly describes as having for her office to deliver sleeping men's fancies of their dreams, those "children of an idle brain." In keeping with this central dream-idea, the actual order of things everywhere gives place to the spontaneous issues and capricious turnings of the dreaming mind; the lofty and the low, the beautiful and the grotesque, the world of fancy and of fact, all the strange diversities that enter into "such stuff as dreams are made of," running and frisking together, and interchanging their functions and properties; so that the whole seems confused, flitting, shadowy, and indistinct, as fading away in the remoteness and fascination of moonlight. The very scene is laid in a veritable dream-land, called Athens indeed, but only because Athens was the greatest beehive of beautiful visions then known; or rather it is laid in an ideal forest near an ideal Athens,—a forest peopled with sportive elves and sprites and fairies feeding on moonlight and music and fragrance; a place where Nature herself is preternatural; where everything is idealized, even to the sunbeams and the soil; where the vegetation proceeds by enchantment, and there is magic in the germination of the seed and secretion of the sap.

The characteristic attributes of the fairy people are, perhaps, most availably represented in Puck; who is apt to remind one of Ariel, though the two have little in common, save that both are preternatural, and therefore live no longer in the faith of reason. Puck is no such sweet-mannered, tender-hearted, music-breathing spirit, as Prospero's delicate prime-minister; there are no such fine interweavings of a sensitive moral soul in his nature, he has no such soft touches of compassion and pious awe of goodness, as link the dainty Ariel in so smoothly with our best sympathies. Though Goodfellow by name, his powers and aptitudes for mischief are quite unchecked by any gentle relentings of fellow-feeling: in whatever distresses he finds or occasions he sees much to laugh at, nothing to pity: to tease and vex poor human sufferers, and then to think "what fools these mortals be," is pure fun to him. Yet, notwithstanding his mad pranks, we cannot choose but love the little sinner, and let our fancy frolic with him, his sense of the ludicrous is so exquisite, he is so fond of sport, and so quaint and merry in his mischief; while at the same time such is the strange web of his nature as to keep him morally innocent. In all which I think he answers perfectly to the best idea we can frame of what a little dream-god should be.

In further explication of this peculiar people, it is to be noted that there is nothing of reflection or conscience or even of a spiritualized intelligence in their proper life: they have all the attributes of the merely natural and sensitive soul, but no attributes of the properly rational and moral soul. They worship the clean, the neat, the pretty, and the pleasant, whatever goes to make up the idea of purely sensuous beauty: this is a sort of religion with them; whatever of conscience they have adheres to this: so that herein they not unfitly represent the wholesome old notion which places cleanliness next to godliness. Every thing that is trim, dainty, elegant, graceful, agreeable, and sweet to the senses, they delight in: flowers, fragrances, dewdrops, and moonbeams, honey-bees, butterflies, and nightingales, dancing, play, and song,—these are their joy; out of these they weave their highest delectation; amid these they "fleet the time carelessly," without memory or forecast, and with no thought or aim beyond the passing pleasure of the moment. On the other hand, they have an instinctive repugnance to whatever is foul, ugly, sluttish, awkward, ungainly, or misshapen: they wage unrelenting war against bats, spiders, hedgehogs, spotted snakes, blindworms, long-legg'd spinners, beetles, and all such disagreeable creatures: to "kill cankers in the musk-rosebuds," and to "keep back the clamorous owl," are regular parts of their business. Their intense dislike of what is ugly and misshapen is the reason why they so much practise "the legerdemain of changelings," stealing away finished, handsome babies, and leaving blemished and defective ones in their stead. For the same cause they love to pester and persecute and play shrewd tricks upon decrepit old age, wise aunts, and toothless, chattering gossips, and especially such awkward "hempen home-spuns" as Bottom and his fellow-actors in the Interlude.

Thus these beings embody the ideal of the mere natural soul, or rather the purely sensuous fancy which shapes and governs the pleasing or the vexing delusions of sleep. They lead a merry, luxurious life, given up entirely to the pleasures of happy sensation,—a happiness that has no moral element, nothing of reason or conscience in it. They are indeed a sort of personified dreams; and so the Poet places them in a kindly or at least harmless relation to mortals as the bringers of dreams. Their very kingdom is located in the aromatic, flower-scented Indies, a land where mortals are supposed to live in a half-dreamy state. From thence they come, "following darkness," just as dreams naturally do; or, as Oberon words it, "tripping after the night's shade, swifter than the wandering Moon." It is their nature to shun the daylight, though they do not fear it, and to prefer the dark, as this is their appropriate work-time; but most of all they love the dusk and the twilight, because this is the best dreaming-time, whether the dreamer be asleep or awake. And all the shifting phantom-jugglery of dreams, all the sweet soothing witcheries, and all the teasing and tantalizing imagery of dream-land, rightly belong to their province.

It is a very noteworthy point that all their power or influence over the hearts and actions of mortals works through the medium of dreams, or of such fancies as are most allied to dreams. So that their whole inner character is fashioned in harmony with their external function. Nor is it without rare felicity that the Poet assigns to them the dominion over the workings of sensuous and superficial love, this being but as one of the courts of the dream-land kingdom; a region ordered, as it were, quite apart from the proper regards of duty and law, and where the natural soul of man moves free of moral thought and responsibility. Accordingly we have the King of this Fairydom endowed with the rights and powers both of the classical god of love and the classical goddess of chastity. Oberon commands alike the secret virtues of "Dian's bud" and of "Cupid's flower"; and he seems to use them both unchecked by any other law than his innate love of what is handsome and fair, and his native aversion to what is ugly and foul; that is, he owns no restraint but as he is inwardly held to apply either or both of them in such a way as to avoid all distortion or perversion from what is naturally graceful and pleasant. For everybody, I take it, knows that in the intoxications of a life of sensuous love reason and conscience have as little force as they have in a life of dreams. And so the Poet fitly ascribes to Oberon and his ministers both Cupid's delight in frivolous breaches of faith and Jove's laughter at lovers' perjuries; and this on the ground, apparently, that the doings of those in Cupid's power are as harmless and unaccountable as the freaks of a dream.

In pursuance of this idea he depicts the fairies as beings without any proper moral sense in what they do, but as having a very keen sense of what is ludicrous and absurd in the doings of men. They are careless and unscrupulous in their dealings in this behalf. The wayward follies and the teasing perplexities of the fancy-smitten persons are pure sport to them. If by their wanton mistakes they can bewilder and provoke the lovers into larger outcomes of the laughable, so much the higher runs their mirth. And as they have no fellow-feeling with the pains of those who thus feed their love of fun, so the effect of their roguish tricks makes no impression upon them: they have a feeling of simple delight and wonder at the harmless frettings and fumings which their merry mischief has a hand in bringing to pass: but then it is to be observed also, that they find just as much sport in tricking the poor lover out of his vexations as in tricking him into them; in fact, they never rest satisfied with the fun of the former so long as there is any chance of enjoying that of the latter also.

All readers of Shakespeare are of course familiar with the splendid passage in ii. 1, where Oberon describes to Puck how, on a certain occasion,

"I heard a mermaid, on a dolphin's back, Uttering such dulcet and harmonious breath, That the rude sea grew civil at her song."

And all are no doubt aware that the subsequent lines, referring to "a fair vestal throned by the west," are commonly understood to have been meant as a piece of delicate flattery to Queen Elizabeth. Mr. Halpin has recently given to this famous passage a new interpretation or application, which is at least curious enough to justify a brief statement of it. In his view, "Cupid all arm'd" refers to Leicester's wooing of Elizabeth, and his grand entertainment of her at Kenilworth in 1575. From authentic descriptions of that entertainment we learn, that among the spectacles and fireworks witnessed on the occasion was one of a singing mermaid on a dolphin's back gliding over smooth water amid shooting stars. The "love-shaft" which was aimed at the "fair vestal," that is, the Priestess of Diana, whose bud has such prevailing might over "Cupid's flower," glanced off; so that "the imperial votaress passèd on, in maiden meditation, fancy-free."

Thus far, all is clear enough. But Halpin further interprets that the "little western flower" upon whom "the bolt of Cupid fell" refers to Lettice Countess of Essex, with whom Leicester carried on a secret intrigue while her husband was absent in Ireland. The Earl of Essex, on being apprised of the intrigue, set out to return the next year, but died of poison, as was thought, before he reached home. So Halpin understands the "western flower, before milk-white," that is, innocent, but "now purple with love's wound," as referring to the lady's fall, or to the deeper blush of her husband's murder. And the flower is called "love-in-idleness," to signify her listlessness of heart during the Earl's absence; as the Poet elsewhere uses similar terms of the pansy, as denoting the love that renders men pensive, dreamy, indolent, instead of toning up the soul with healthy and noble aspirations. The words of Oberon to Puck, "that very time I saw—but thou could'st not," are construed as referring to the strict mystery in which the affair was wrapped, and to the Poet's own knowledge of it, because a few years later the execution of Edward Arden, his maternal relative, was closely connected with it, and because the unfortunate Earl of Essex, so well known as for some time the Queen's favourite, and then the victim of her resentment, was the son of that Lettice, and was also the Poet's early friend and patron.

Such is, in substance, Halpin's view of the matter; which I give for what it may be worth; and freely acknowledge it to be ingenious and plausible enough. Gervinus regards it as "an interpretation full of spirit," and as "giving the most definite relation to the innermost sense of the whole piece." And I am very willing to believe that Shakespeare often took hints, perhaps something more than hints, for his poetry from the facts and doings of the time: nevertheless I rather fail to see how any real good is to be gained towards understanding the Poet from such interpretations of his scenes, or from tracing out such "definite relations" between his workmanship and the persons and particulars that may have come to his knowledge. For my own part, I doubt whether "the innermost sense" of the play is any the clearer to me for this ingenious piece of explanation.

Besides, I have yet to learn what proofs there are that the ill-fated Essex was an early patron and friend of Shakespeare. That great honour belongs to the Earls of Southampton and Pembroke. It was Lord Bacon, not Shakespeare, who enjoyed so richly the friendship and patronage of the generous Essex; and how he requited the same is known much too well for his credit. I am not unmindful that this may yield some comfort to those who would persuade us that Shakespeare's plays were written by Lord Bacon. Upon this point I have just four things to say: First, Bacon's requital of the Earl's bounty was such a piece of ingratitude as I can hardly conceive the author of *King Lear* to have been guilty of: Second, the author of Shakespeare's plays, whoever he may have been, certainly was not a scholar; he had indeed something vastly better than learning, but he had not that: Third, Shakespeare never philosophizes, Bacon never does anything else: Fourth, Bacon's mind, great as it was, might have been cut out of Shakespeare's without being missed.

Any very firm or strong delineation of character, any deep passion, earnest purpose, or working of powerful motives, would clearly go at odds with the spirit of such a performance as I have described this play to be. It has room but for love and beauty and delight, for whatever is most poetical in nature and fancy, and for such tranquil stirrings of thought and feeling as may flow out in musical expression. Any such tuggings of mind or heart as would ruffle and discompose the smoothness of lyrical division would be quite out of keeping in a course of dream-life. The characters here, accordingly, are drawn with light, delicate, vanishing touches; some of them being dreamy and sentimental, some gay and frolicsome, and others replete with amusing absurdities, while all are alike dipped in fancy or sprinkled with humour. And for the same reason the tender distresses of unrequited or forsaken love here touch not our moral sense at all, but only at the most our human sympathies; love itself being represented as but the effect of some visual enchantment, which the King of Fairydom can inspire, suspend, or reverse at pleasure. Even the heroic personages are fitly shown in an unheroic aspect: we see them but in their unbendings, when they have daffed their martial robes aside, to lead the train of day-dreamers, and have a nuptial jubilee. In their case, great care and art were required, to make the play what it has been blamed for being; that is, to keep the dramatic sufficiently under, and lest the law of a part should override the law of the whole.

So, likewise, in the transformation of Bottom and the dotage of Titania, all the resources of fancy were needed, to prevent the unpoetical from getting the upper hand, and thus swamping the genius of the piece. As it is, what words can fitly express the effect with which the extremes of the grotesque and the beautiful are here brought together? What an inward quiet laughter springs up and lubricates the fancy at Bottom's droll confusion of his two natures, when he talks, now as an ass, now as a man, and anon as a mixture of both; his thoughts running at the same time on honey-bags and thistles, the charms of music and of good dry oats! Who but Shakespeare or Nature could have so interfused the lyrical spirit, not only with, but into and through a series or cluster of the most irregular and fantastic drolleries? But indeed this embracing and kissing of the most ludicrous and the most poetical, the enchantment under which they meet, and the airy, dream-like grace that hovers over their union, are altogether inimitable and indescribable. In this singular wedlock, the very diversity of the elements seems to link them the closer, while this linking in turn heightens that diversity; Titania being thereby drawn on to finer issues of soul, and Bottom to larger expressions of stomach. The union is so very improbable as to seem quite natural: we cannot conceive how any thing but a dream could possibly have married things so contrary; and that they could not have come together save in a dream, is a sort of proof that they *were* dreamed together.

And so, throughout, the execution is in strict accordance with the plan. The play, from beginning to end, is a perfect festival of whatever dainties and delicacies poetry may command,—a continued revelry and jollification of soul, where the understanding is lulled asleep, that the fancy may run riot in unrestrained enjoyment. The bringing together of four parts so dissimilar as those of the Duke and his warrior Bride, of the Athenian ladies and their lovers, of the amateur players and their woodland rehearsal, and of the fairy bickerings and overreaching; and the carrying of them severally to a point where they all meet and blend in lyrical respondence; all this is done in the same freedom from the laws that govern the drama of character and life. Each group of persons is made to parody itself into concert with the others; while the frequent intershootings of fairy influence lift the whole into the softest regions of fancy. At last the Interlude comes in as an amusing burlesque on all that has gone before; as in our troubled dreams we sometimes end with a dream that we have been dreaming, and our perturbations sink to rest in the sweet assurance that they were but the phantoms and unrealities of a busy sleep.

Though, as I have already implied, the characterization is here quite secondary and subordinate, yet the play probably has as much of character as were compatible with so much of poetry. Theseus has been well described as a classic personage with romantic features and expression. The name is Greek, but the nature and spirit are essentially Gothic. Nor does the abundance of classical allusion and imagery in the story call for any qualification here; because whatsoever is taken is thoroughly steeped in the efficacy of the taker. This sort of anachronism, common to all modern writers before and during the age of Shakespeare, seems to have arisen in part from a comparative dearth of classical learning, which left men to contemplate the heroes of antiquity under the forms into which their own mind and manners had been cast. Thus their delineations became informed with the genius of romance; the condensed grace of ancient character giving way to the enlargement of chivalrous magnanimity and honour, with its "higherected thoughts seated in the heart of courtesy." Such in Shakespeare's case appears to have been the no less beautiful than natural result of the small learning, so often smiled and sometimes barked at, by those more skilled in the ancient languages than in the mother-tongue of nature.

In the two pairs of lovers there are hardly any lines deep and firm enough to be rightly called characteristic. Their doings, even more than those of the other human persons, are marked by the dream-like freakishness and whimsicality which distinguish the piece. Perhaps the two ladies are slightly discriminated as individuals, in that Hermia, besides her brevity of person, is the more tart in temper, and the more pert and shrewish of speech, while Helena is of a rather milder and softer disposition, with less of confidence in herself. So too in the case of Demetrius and Lysander the lines of individuality are exceedingly faint; the former being perhaps a shade the more caustic and spiteful, and the latter somewhat the more open and candid. But there is really nothing of heart or soul in what any of them do: as we see them, they are not actuated by principle at all, or even by any thing striking so deep as motive: their conduct issues from the more superficial springs of capricious impulse and fancy, the "jugglery of the senses during the sleep of reason"; the higher forces of a mental and moral bearing having no hand in shaping their action. For the fairy influences do not reach so far as to the proper seat of motive and principle: they have but the skin-depth of amorous caprice; all the elements of character and all the vital springs of faith and loyalty and honour lying quite beyond their sphere. Even here the judgment or the genius of the Poet is very perceptible; the lovers being represented from the start as acting from no forces or inspirations too deep or strong for the powers of Fairydom to overcome. Thus the pre-condition of the two pairs in their whim-bewilderment is duly attempered to the purposed dream-play of the general action. Nor is the seeming stanchness of Hermia and Demetrius in the outset any exception to this view; for nothing is more wilful and obstinate than amorous caprice or skin-deep love during its brief tenure of the fancy.

Of all the characters in this play, Bottom descends by far the most into the realities of common experience, and is therefore much the most accessible to the grasp of prosaic and critical fingers. It has been thought that the Poet meant him as a satire on the envies and jealousies of the greenroom, as they had fallen under his keen yet kindly eye. But, surely, the qualities uppermost in Bottom the Weaver had forced themselves on his notice long before he entered the greenroom. It is indeed curious to observe the solicitude of this protean actor and critic, that all the parts of the forthcoming play may have the benefit of his execution; how great is his concern lest, if he be tied to one, the others may be "overdone or come tardy off"; and how he would fain engross them all to himself, to the end of course that all may succeed, to the honour of the stage and the pleasure of the spectators. But Bottom's metamorphosis is the most potent drawer-out of his genius. The sense of his new head-dress stirs up all the manhood within him, and lifts his character into ludicrous greatness at once. Hitherto the seeming to be a man has made him content to be little better than an ass; but no sooner is he conscious of seeming an ass than he tries his best to be a man; while all his efforts that way only go to approve the fitness of his present seeming to his former being.

Schlegel happily remarks, that "the droll wonder of Bottom's metamorphosis is merely the translation of a metaphor in its literal sense." The turning of a figure of speech thus into visible form is a thing only to be thought of or imagined; so that probably no attempt to paint or represent it to the senses can ever succeed. We can bear—at least we often have to bear—that a man should seem an ass to the mind's eye; but that he should seem such to the eye of the body is rather too much, save as it is done in those fable-pictures which have long been among the playthings of the nursery. So a child, for instance, takes great pleasure in fancying the stick he is riding to be a horse, when he would be frightened out of his wits, were the stick to quicken and expand into an actual horse. In like manner we often delight in indulging fancies and giving names, when we should be shocked were our fancies to harden into facts: we enjoy visions in our sleep, that would only disgust or terrify us, should we awake and find them solidified into things. The effect of Bottom's transformation can hardly be much otherwise, if set forth in visible, animated shape. Delightful to think of, it is scarce tolerable to look upon: exquisitely true in idea, it has no truth, or even verisimilitude, when reduced to fact; so that, however gladly imagination receives it, sense and understanding revolt at it.

Partly for reasons already stated, and partly for others that I scarce know how to state, *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* is a most effectual poser to criticism. Besides that its very essence is irregularity, so that it cannot be fairly brought to the test of rules, the play forms properly a class by itself: literature has nothing else really like it; nothing therefore with which it may be compared, and its merits adjusted. For so the Poet has here exercised powers apparently differing even in kind, not only from those of any other writer, but from those displayed in any other of his own writings. Elsewhere, if his characters are penetrated with the ideal, their whereabout lies in the actual, and the work may in some measure be judged by that life which it claims to represent: here the whereabout is as ideal as the characters; all is in the land of dreams,—a place for dreamers, not for critics. For who can tell what a dream ought or ought not to be, or when the natural conditions of dream-life are or are not rightly observed? How can the laws of time and space, as involved in the transpiration of human character,—how can these be applied in a place where the mind is thus absolved from their proper jurisdiction? Besides, the whole thing swarms with enchantment: all the sweet witchery of Shakespeare's sweet genius is concentrated in it, yet disposed with so subtle and cunning a hand, that we can as little grasp it as get away from it: its charms, like those of a summer evening, are such as we may see and feel, but cannot locate or define; cannot say they are here, or they are there: the moment we yield ourselves up to them, they seem to be everywhere; the moment we go to master them, they seem to be nowhere.

<<span id="filepos0040265588"> a>THE MERCHANT OF VENICE .

The Merchant Of Venice was registered at the Stationers' in July, 1598, but with a special proviso, "that it be not printed without license first had from the Right Honourable the Lord Chamberlain." The theatrical company to which Shakespeare belonged were then known as "The Lord Chamberlain's Servants"; and the purpose of the proviso was to keep the play out of print till the company's permission were given through their patron. The play was entered again at the same place in October, 1600, his lordship's license having probably been obtained by that time. Accordingly two distinct editions of it were published in the course of that year. The play was never issued again, that we know of, till in the folio of 1623, where the repetition of various misprints shows it to have been reprinted from one of the quarto copies.

The Merchant of Venice also makes one in the list of Shakespeare's plays given by Francis Meres in 1598. How long before that time it was written we have no means of knowing; but, judging from the style, we cannot well assign the writing to a much earlier date; though there is some reason for thinking it may have been on the stage four years earlier; as Henslowe's *Diary* records *The Venetian Comedy* as having been originally acted in August, 1594. It is by no means certain, however, that this refers to Shakespeare's play; while the workmanship here shows such maturity and variety of power as argue against that supposal. It evinces, in a considerable degree, the easy, unlabouring freedom of conscious mastery; the persons being so entirely under the author's control, and subdued to his hand, that he seems to let them talk and act just as they have a mind to. Therewithal the style, throughout, is so even and sustained; the word and the character are so fitted to each other; the laws of dramatic proportion are so well observed; and the work is so free from any jarring or falling-out from the due course and order of art; as to justify the belief that the whole was written in the same stage of intellectual growth and furnishing.

In the composition of this play the Poet drew largely from preceding writers. Novelty of plot or story there is almost none. Nevertheless, in conception and development of character, in poetical texture and grain, in sap and flavour of wit and humour, and in all that touches the real life and virtue of the work, it is one of the most original productions that ever came from the human mind. Of the materials here used, some were so much the common stock of European literature before the Poet's time, and had been run into so many variations, that it is not easy to say what sources he was most indebted to for them. The incidents of the bond and the caskets are found separately in the *Gesta Romanorum* , an ancient and curious collection of tales. There was also an Italian novel, by Giovanni Fiorentino, written as early as 1378, but not printed till 1550, to which the Poet is clearly traceable. As nothing is known of any English translation of the novel dating as far back as his time, it seems not unlikely that he may have been acquainted with it in the original.

Such are the principal tributaries to the fund of this play. I cannot, nor need I, stay to specify the other sources to which some parts of the workmanship have been traced.

The praise of this drama is in the mouth of nearly all the critics. That the praise is well deserved appears in that, from the reopening of the theatres at the Restoration till the present day, the play has kept its place on the stage; while it is also among the first of the Poet's works to be read, and the last to be forgotten, its interest being as durable in the closet as on the boards. Well do I remember it as the very beginning of my acquaintance with Shakespeare; one of the dearest acquaintances I have ever made, and which has been to me a source of more pleasure and profit than I should dare undertake to tell.

Critics have too often entertained themselves with speculations as to the Poet's specific moral purpose in this play or that. Wherein their great mistake is the not duly bearing in mind, that the special proposing of this or that moral lesson is quite from or beside the purpose of Art. Nevertheless, a work of art, to be really deserving the name, must needs be moral, because it must be proportionable and true to Nature; thus attuning our inward forces to the voice of external order and law: otherwise it is at strife with the compact of things; a piece of dissonance; a jarring, unbalanced, crazy thing, that will die of its own internal disorder. If, then, a work be morally bad, this proves the author more a bungler than anything else. And if any one admire it or take pleasure in it, he does so, not from reason, but from something within him which his reason, in so far as he has any, necessarily disapproves: so that he is rather to be laughed at as a dunce than preached to as a sinner; though perhaps this latter should be done also.

As to the moral temper of *The Merchant of Venice* , critics have differed widely, some regarding the play as teaching the most comprehensive humanity, others as caressing the narrowest bigotries of the age. This difference may be fairly taken as an argument of the Poet's candour and evenhandedness. A special-pleader is not apt to leave the hearers in doubt on which side of the question he stands. In this play, as in others, the Poet, I think, ordered things mainly with a view to dramatic effect; though to such effect in the largest and noblest sense. And the highest praise compatible with the nature of the work is justly his, inasmuch as he did not allow himself to be swayed either way from the right measures and proportions of art. For Art is, from its very nature, obliged to be "without respect of persons." Impartiality is its essential law, the constituent of its being. And of Shakespeare it could least of all be said,

"he narrow'd his mind, And to party gave up what was meant for mankind."

He represented men as he had seen them. And he could neither repeal nor ignore the old law of human nature, in virtue of which the wisest and kindest men are more or less warped by social customs and prejudices, so that they come to do, and even to make a merit of doing, some things that are very unwise and unkind; while the wrongs and insults which they are thus led to practise have the effect of goading the sufferers into savage malignity and revenge. Had he so clothed the latter with gentle and amiable qualities as to enlist the feelings all in their behalf, he would have given a false view of human nature, and his work would have lost much of its instructiveness on the score of practical morality. For good morals can never be reached by departures from truth. A rule that may be profitably remembered by all who are moved to act as advocates and special-pleaders in what they think a good cause.

The leading incidents of the play are soon told. Antonio, the Merchant, has a strange mood of sadness upon him, and a parcel of his friends are bending their wits to play it off. Among them, and dearer to him than any of the rest, is one Bassanio, a gentleman who, young and generous, has lavished his fortune. Bassanio's heart is turning towards a wealthy heiress who, highly famed for gifts and virtues, resides not many miles off; and from whose eyes he has received "fair speechless messages." But he wants "the means to hold a rival place" among her princely suitors. Antonio's wealth and credit are freely pledged to his service. His funds, however, being all embarked in ventures at sea, he tries his credit with a rich Jew, whose person he has often insulted, and whose greed his Christian liberality has often thwarted. The Jew, feigning a merry humour, consents to lend the sum, provided Antonio sign a bond authorizing him, in case of forfeiture, to cut a pound of flesh from whatever part of his body he may choose. Antonio readily agrees to this, and so furnishes his friend for the loving enterprise. Bassanio prosecutes his suit to the lady with success. But, while yet in his first transports of joy, he learns that Antonio's ventures at sea have all miscarried, and that the Jew, with malignant earnestness, claims the forfeiture. Leaving his bride the moment he has sworn the sweet oath, he hastens away, resolved to save his friend's life at the expense, if need be, of his own.

Thereupon his virgin wife forthwith gets instructions from the most learned lawyer in those parts, and, habiting herself as a doctor of laws, repairs to the trial. To divert the Jew from his purpose, she taxes her wisdom and persuasion to the utmost, but in vain: scorning the spirit of Justice, and deaf to the voice of Mercy, both of which speak with heavenly eloquence from Portia's lips; rejecting thrice the amount of the bond, and standing immoveable on the letter of the law; he pushes his revenge to the very point of making the fatal incision, when she turns the letter of the law against him, strips him of penalty, principal, and all, and subjects even his life to the mercy of the Duke. As the condition of his life, he is required to sign a deed securing all his wealth to his daughter who, loaded with his ducats and jewels, has lately eloped with another of Antonio's friends, and is staying at Portia's mansion during her absence. The play winds up with the hastening of all the parties, except the Jew, to Portia's home. When all have met, Portia announces to Antonio the safe return of his ships supposed to be lost, and surprises the fugitive lovers with the news of their good fortune.

In respect of characterization this play is exceedingly rich, and this too both in quantity and quality. The persons naturally fall into three several groups, with each its several plot and action; yet the three are skilfully complotted, each standing out clear and distinct in its place, yet so drawing in with the others, that every thing helps on every thing else; there being neither any confusion nor any appearance of care to avoid it. Of these three groups, Antonio, Shylock, and Portia are respectively the centres; while the part of Lorenzo and Jessica, though strictly an episode, seems nevertheless to grow forth as an element of the original germ; a sort of inherent superfluity, and as such essential to the well-being of the piece. But perhaps it may be better described as a fine romantic undertone accompaniment to the other parts; itself in perfect harmony with them, and therefore perfecting their harmony with each other.

In the first entry at the Stationers', the play is described as "*The Merchant of Venice* , or otherwise called *The Jew of Venice* ." This would seem to infer that the author was then in some doubt whether to name it from Antonio or Shylock. As an individual, Shylock is altogether *the* character of the play, and exhibits more of mastership than all the others; so that, viewing the persons severally, we should say the piece ought to be named from him. But we have not far to seek for good reasons why it should rather be named as it is. For if the Jew is the more important individually, the Merchant is so dramatically. Antonio is the centre and main-spring of the action: without him, Shylock, however great in himself, had no business there. And the laws of dramatic combination, not any accident of individual prominence, are clearly what ought to govern in the naming of the play.

Not indeed that the Merchant is a small matter in himself; far from it: he is a highly interesting and attractive personage; nor am I sure but there may be timber enough in him for a good dramatic hero, apart from the Jew. Something of a peculiar charm attaches to him, from the state of mind in which we first see him. A dim, mysterious presage of evil weighs down his spirits, as though he felt afar off the coming-on of some great calamity. Yet this unwonted dejection, sweetened as it is with his habitual kindness and good-nature, has the effect of showing how dearly he is held by such whose friendship is the fairest earthly purchase of virtue. And it is considerable that upon tempers like his even the smiles of Fortune often have a strangely saddening effect. For such a man, even because he is good, is apt to be haunted with a sense of having more than he deserves; and this may not unnaturally inspire him with an indefinable dread of some reverse which shall square up the account of his present blessings. Thus his very happiness works, by subtle methods, to charge his heart with certain dark forebodings. So that such presentiments, whatever the disciples of positivism may say, are in the right line of nature:

"Oft startled and made wise By their low-breathed interpretings, The simply-meek foretaste the springs Of bitter contraries."

But the sorrow can hardly be ungrateful to us, that has such noble comforters as Antonio's. Our nature is honoured in the feelings that spring up on both sides.

Wealth indeed seldom dispenses such warnings save to its most virtuous possessors. And such is Antonio. A kind-hearted and sweet-mannered man; of a large and liberal spirit; affable, generous, and magnificent in his dispositions; patient of trial, indulgent to weakness, free where he loves, and frank where he hates; in prosperity modest, in adversity cheerful; craving wealth for the uses of virtue, and as the sinews of friendship;—his character is one which we never weary of contemplating. The only blemish we perceive in him is his treatment of Shylock: in this, though evidently much more the fault of the times than of the man, we cannot help siding against him; than which we need not ask a clearer instance of poetical justice. Yet even this we blame rather as a wrong done to himself than to Shylock; inasmuch as the latter, notwithstanding he has had such provocations, avowedly grounds his hate mainly on those very things which make the strongest title to a good man's love. For the Jew's revenge fastens not so much on the man's abuse of him as on his kindness to others.

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The friendship between the Merchant and his companions is such a picture as Shakespeare evidently delighted to draw. And so fair a sentiment is not apt to inhabit ignoble breasts. Bassanio, Gratiano, and Salarino are each admirable in their way, and give a pleasing variety to the scenes where they move. Bassanio, though something too lavish of purse, is a model of a gentleman; in whose character and behaviour all is order and propriety; with whom good manners are the proper outside and visibility of a fair mind,—the natural foliage and drapery of inward refinement and delicacy and rectitude. Well-bred, he has that in him which, even had his breeding been ill, would have raised him above it and made him a gentleman.

Gratiano and Salarino are two as clever, sprightly, and voluble persons as any one need desire to be with; the chief difference between them being, that the former *lets* his tongue run on from good impulses, while the latter *makes* it do so for good ends. If not so wise as Bassanio, they are more witty; and as much surpass him in strength, as they fall short of him in beauty, of character. It is observable that of the two Gratiano, while much the more prone to flood us with his talk, also shows less subjection of the individual to the common forms of social decorum; so that, if he behaves not quite so well as the others, he gives livelier proof that what good behaviour he has is his own; a growth from within, not a piece of imitation. And we are rather agreeably surprised, that one so talkative and rattle-tongued should therewithal carry so much weight of meaning; and he sometimes appears less sensible than he is, because of his galloping volubility. But he has no wish to be "reputed wise for saying nothing"; and he makes a merit of talking nonsense when, as is sometimes the case, nonsense is the best sort of sense: for, like a prime good fellow, as he is, he would rather incur the charge of folly than not, provided he can thereby add to the health and entertainment of his friends.

Lorenzo and Jessica, the runaway lovers, are in such a lyrical state of mind as rather hinders a clear view of their characters. Both are indeed overflowing with sweetness and beauty, but more, perhaps, as the result of nuptial inspiration than of inherent qualities. For I suppose the worst tempers are apt to run sweet while the honeymoon is upon them. However, as regards the present couple, it may be justly said that the instrument should be well-tuned and delicately strung to give forth such tones, be it touched ever so finely. Even Love, potent little god as he is, can move none but choice spirits to such delectable issues. Jessica's elopement, in itself and its circumstances, puts us to the alternative that either she is a bad child, or Shylock a bad father. And there is enough to persuade us of the latter; though not in such sort but that some share of the reproach falls to her. For if a young woman have so bad a home as to justify her in thus deserting and robbing it, the atmosphere of the place can hardly fail to leave *some* traces in her temper and character.

Lorenzo stands fair in our regard, negatively, because he does nothing unhandsome, positively, because he has such good men for his friends. And it is rather curious that what is thus done for him, should be done for Jessica by such a person as Launcelot Gobbo. For she and the clown are made to reflect each other's choicer parts: we think the better of her for having kindled something of poetry in such a clod, and of him for being raised above himself by such an object. And her conduct is further justified to our feelings by the odd testimony he furnishes of her father's badness; which testimony, though not of much weight in itself, goes far to confirm that of others. We see that the Jew is much the same at home as in the Rialto; that, let him be where he will, it is his nature to snarl and bite.

Such, in one view of the matter, is the dramatic propriety of this Launcelot. His part, though often faulted by those who can see but one thing at a time, materially aids the completeness of the work, in giving us a fuller view both of Jessica and of her father. But he has also a value in himself irrespective of that use: his own personal rights enter into the purpose of his introduction; and he carries in himself a part of the reason why he is so, and not otherwise: for Shakespeare seldom if ever brings in a person *merely* for the sake of others. A mixture of conceit and drollery, and hugely wrapped up in self, he is by no means a commonplace buffoon, but stands firm in his sufficiency of original stock. His elaborate nonsense, his grasping at a pun without catching it, yet feeling just as grand as if he did, is both ludicrous and natural. His jokes to be sure are mostly failures; nevertheless they are laughable, because he dreams not but they succeed. The poverty of his wit is thus enriched by his complacency in dealing it out. His part indeed amply pays its way, in showing how much of mirth may be caused by feebleness in a great attempt at a small matter. Besides, in him the mother element of the whole piece runs out into broad humour and travesty; his reasons for breaking with his master the Jew being, as it were, a variation in drollery upon the fundamental air of the play. Thus he exhibits under a comic form the general aspect of surrounding humanity; while at the same time his character is an integral part of that varied structure of human life which it belongs to the Gothic Drama to represent. On several accounts indeed he might not be spared.

In Portia Shakespeare seems to have aimed at a perfect scheme of an amiable, intelligent, and accomplished woman. And the result is a fine specimen of beautiful nature enhanced by beautiful art. Eminently practical in her tastes and turn of mind, full of native, homebred sense and virtue, Portia unites therewith something of the ripeness and dignity of a sage, a mellow eloquence, and a large, noble discourse; the whole being tempered with the best grace and sensibility of womanhood. As intelligent as the strongest, she is at the same time as feminine as the weakest of her sex: she talks like a poet and a philosopher, yet, strange to say, she talks, for all the world, just like a woman. She is as full of pleasantry, too, and as merry "within the limit of becoming mirth," as she is womanly and wise; and, which is more, her arch sportiveness always relishes as the free outcome of perfect moral health. Nothing indeed can be more fitting and well-placed than her demeanour, now bracing her speech with grave maxims of practical wisdom, now unbending her mind in sallies of wit, or of innocent, roguish banter. The sportive element of her composition has its happiest showing in her dialogue with Nerissa about the "parcel of wooers," and in her humorous description of the part she imagines herself playing in her purposed disguise.

The latter is especially delightful from its harmonious contrast with the solid thoughtfulness which, after all, forms the staple and frame-work of her character. How charmingly it sets off the divine rapture of eloquence with which she discourses to the Jew of mercy!

"I'll hold thee any wager, When we are both accoutred like young men, I'll prove the prettier fellow of the two, And wear my dagger with the braver grace; And speak between the change of man and boy With a reed voice; and turn two mincing steps Into a manly stride; and speak of frays, Like a fine-bragging youth; and tell quaint lies, How honourable ladies sought my love, Which I denying, they fell sick and died,— I could not do withal;—then I'll repent, And wish, for all that, that I had not kill'd them: And twenty of these puny lies I'll tell; That men shall swear I've discontinu'd school Above a twelvemonth. I've within my mind A thousand raw tricks of these bragging Jacks, Which I will practise."

Partly from condition, partly from culture, Portia has grown to live more in the understanding than in the affections; for which cause she is a little more self-conscious than I exactly like: yet her character is hardly the less lovely on that account: she talks considerably of herself indeed, but always so becomingly, that we hardly wish her to choose any other subject; for we are pleasantly surprised that one so well aware of her gifts should still bear them so meekly. Mrs. Jameson, with Portia in her eye, intimates Shakespeare to have been about the only artist, except Nature, who could make women wise without turning them into men. And it is well worth the noting that, honourable as the issue of her course at the trial would be to a man, Portia shows no unwomanly craving to be in the scene of her triumph: as she goes there prompted by the feelings and duties of a wife, and for the saving of her husband's honour and peace of mind, —being resolved that "never shall he lie by Portia's side with an unquiet soul"; so she gladly leaves when these causes no longer bear in that direction. Then too, exquisitely cultivated as she is, humanity has not been so refined out of her, but that in such a service she can stoop from her elevation, and hazard a brief departure from the sanctuary of her sex.

Being to act for once the part of a man, it would seem hardly possible for her to go through the undertaking without more of self-confidence than were becoming in a woman: and the student may find plenty of matter for thought in the Poet's so managing as to prevent such an impression. For there is nothing like ostentation or conceit of intellect in Portia. Though knowing enough for any station, still it never once enters her head that she is too wise for the station which Providence or the settled order of society has assigned her. She would therefore neither hide her light under a bushel, that others may not see by it, nor perch it aloft in public, that others may see it; but would simply set it on a candlestick, that it may give light to all in her house. With her noble intellect she has gathered in the sweets of poetry and the solidities of philosophy, all for use, nothing for show; she has fairly domesticated them, has naturalized them in her sphere, and tamed them to her fireside, so that they seem as much at home there as if they had been made for no other place. And to all this mental enrichment she adds the skill

"So well to know Her own, that what she wills to do or say Seems wisest, virtuousest, discreetest, best."

Portia's consciousness of power does indeed render her cool, collected, and firm, but never a whit unfeminine: her smooth command both of herself and of the matter she goes about rather heightens our sense of her modesty than otherwise: so that the impression we take from her is, that these high mental prerogatives are of no sex; that they properly belong to the common freehold of woman and man; and that the ladies of creation have just as good a right to them as the lords. Some of her speeches, especially at the trial, are evidently premeditated; for, as any good lawyer would do, she of course prepares herself in the case beforehand; but I should like to see the masculine lawyer that could premeditate any thing equal to them. It is to be noted withal that she goes about her work without the least misgiving as to the result; having so thoroughly booked herself both in the facts and the law of the case as to feel perfectly sure on that point. Hence the charming ease and serenity with which she moves amid the excitements of the trial. No trepidations of anxiety come in to disturb the preconcerted order and method of her course. And her solemn appeals to the Jew are made in the earnest hope of inducing him to accept a full and liberal discharge of the debt. When she says to him, "there's thrice thy money offer'd thee," it is because she really feels that both the justice of the cause and the honour of her husband would be better served by such a payment than by the more brilliant triumph which awaits her in case the Jew should spurn her offer.

Thus her management of the trial, throughout, is a piece of consummate art; though of art in such a sense as presupposes perfect integrity of soul. Hence, notwithstanding her methodical forecast and preparation, she is as eloquent as an angel, and her eloquence, as by an instinctive tact, knows its time perfectly. One of her strains in this kind, her appeal to the Jew on the score of mercy, has been so often quoted, that it would long since have grown stale, if it were possible by any means to crush the freshness of unwithering youth out of it. And I hope it will not be taken as any abatement of the speaker's claim as a wise jurist, that she there carries both the head and the heart of a ripe Christian divine into the management of her cause. Yet her style in that speech is in perfect keeping with her habitual modes of thought and discourse: even in her most spontaneous expressions we have a reflex of the same intellectual physiognomy. For the mental aptitude which she displays in the trial seems to have been the germinal idea out of which her whole part was consistently evolved; as the Poet's method often was, apparently, first to settle what his persons were to do, and then to conceive and work out their characters accordingly.

It has been said that Shakespeare's female characters are inferior to his characters of men. Doubtless in some respects they are so; they would not be female characters if they were not; but then in other respects they are superior. Some people apparently hold it impossible for man and woman to be equal and different at the same time. Hence the false equality of the sexes which has been of late so often and so excruciatingly advocated. On this ground, the Poet could not have made his women equal to his men without unsexing and unsphering them; which he was just as far from doing as Nature is. The alleged inferiority, then, of his women simply means, I suppose, that they are women, as they ought to be, and not men, as he meant they should not be, and as we have cause to rejoice that they are not. He knew very well that in this matter equality and diversity are nowise incompatible, and that the sexes might therefore stand or sit on the same level without standing in the same shoes or sitting in the same seats. If, indeed, he had not known this, he could not have given *characters* of either sex, but only wretched and disgusting medlies and caricatures of both.

How nicely, on the one hand, Shakespeare discriminates things that really differ, so as to present in all cases the soul of womanhood, without a particle of effeminacy; and how perfectly, on the other hand, he reconciles things that seem most diverse, pouring into his women all the intellectual forces of the other sex, without in the least impairing or obscuring their womanliness;—all this is not more rare in poetry than it is characteristic of his workmanship. Thus Portia is as much superior to her husband in intellect, in learning, and accomplishment, as she is in wealth; but she is none the less womanly for all that. Nor, which is more, does she ever on that account take the least thought of inverting the relation between them. In short, her mental superiority breeds no kind of social displacement, nor any desire of it. Very few indeed of the Poet's men are more highly charged with intellectual power. While she is acting the lawyer in disguise, her speech and bearing seem to those about her in the noblest style of manliness. In her judge-like gravity and dignity of deportment; in the extent and accuracy of her legal knowledge; in the depth and appropriateness of her moral reflections; in the luminous order, the logical coherence, and the beautiful transparency of her thoughts, she almost rivals our Chief Justice Marshall. Yet to us, who are in the secret of her sex, all the proprieties, all the inward harmonies, of her character are exquisitely preserved; and the essential grace of womanhood seems to irradiate and consecrate the dress in which she is disguised.

Nor is it any drawback on her strength and substantial dignity of character, that her nature is all overflowing with romance: rather, this it is that glorifies her, and breathes enchantment about her; it adds that precious seeing to the eye which conducts her to such winning beauty and sweetness of deportment, and makes her the "rich-souled creature" that Schlegel describes her to be. Therewithal she may be aptly quoted as a mark-worthy instance how the Poet makes the several parts and persons of a drama cohere not only with one another but with the general circumstances wherein they occur. For so in Portia's character the splendour of Italian skies and scenery and art is reproduced; their spirit lives in her imagination, and is complicated with all she does and says.

If Portia is the beauty of this play, Shylock is its strength. He is a standing marvel of power and scope in the dramatic art; at the same time appearing so much a man of Nature's making, that we can hardly think of him as a creation of art. In the delineation Shakespeare had no less a task than to fill with individual life and peculiarity the broad, strong outlines of national character in its most revolting form. Accordingly Shylock is a true representative of his nation; wherein we have a pride which for ages never ceased to provoke hostility, but which no hostility could ever subdue; a thrift which still invited rapacity, but which no rapacity could ever exhaust; and a weakness which, while it exposed the subjects to wrong, only deepened their hate, because it kept them without the means or the hope of redress. Thus Shylock is a type of national sufferings, national sympathies, national antipathies. Himself an object of bitter insult and scorn to those about him; surrounded by enemies whom he is at once too proud to conciliate and too weak to oppose; he can have no life among them but money; no hold on them but interest; no feeling towards them but hate; no indemnity out of them but revenge. Such being the case, what wonder that the elements of national greatness became congealed and petrified into malignity? As avarice was the passion in which he mainly lived, the Christian virtues that thwarted this naturally seemed to him the greatest of wrongs.

With these strong national traits are interwoven personal traits equally strong. Thoroughly and intensely Jewish, he is not more a Jew than he is Shylock. In his hard, icy intellectuality, and his dry, mummy-like tenacity of purpose, with a dash now and then of biting sarcastic humour, we see the remains of a great and noble nature, out of which all the genial sap of humanity has been pressed by accumulated injuries. With as much elasticity of mind as stiffness of neck, every step he takes but the last is as firm as the earth he treads upon. Nothing can daunt, nothing disconcert him; remonstrance cannot move, ridicule cannot touch, obloquy cannot exasperate him: when he has not provoked them, he has been forced to bear them; and now that he does provoke them, he is hardened against them. In a word, he may be broken; he cannot be bent.

Shylock is great in every scene where he appears, yet each later scene exhibits him in a new element or aspect of greatness. For as soon as the Poet has set forth one side or phase of his character, he forthwith dismisses that, and proceeds to another. For example, the Jew's cold and penetrating sagacity, as also his malignant and remorseless guile, are finely delivered in the scene with Antonio and Bassanio, where he is first solicited for the loan. And the strength and vehemence of passion, which underlies these qualities, is still better displayed, if possible, in the scene with Antonio's two friends, Solanio and Salarino, where he first avows his purpose of exacting the forfeiture. One passage of this scene has always seemed to me a peculiarly idiomatic strain of eloquence, steeped in a mixture of gall and pathos; and I the rather notice it, because of the wholesome lesson which Christians may gather from it. Of course the Jew is referring to Antonio:

"He hath disgraced me, and hindered me half a million; laughed at my losses, mocked at my gains, scorned my nation, thwarted my bargains, cooled my friends, heated mine enemies; and what's his reason? I am a Jew. Hath not a Jew eyes? hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions? fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same Winter and Summer, as a Christian is? If you prick us, do we not bleed? if you tickle us, do we not laugh? if you poison us, do we not die? and if you wrong us, shall we not revenge? if we are like you in the rest, we will resemble you in that. If a Jew wrong a Christian, what is his humility? revenge: if a Christian wrong a Jew, what should his sufferance be by Christian example? why, revenge. The villainy you teach me, I will execute; and it shall go hard but I will better the instruction."

I have spoken of the mixture of national and individual traits in Shylock. It should be observed further, that these several elements of character are so attempered and fused together, that we cannot distinguish their respective influence. Even his avarice has a smack of patriotism. Money is the only defence of his brethren as well as of himself, and he craves it for their sake as well as his own; feels indeed that wrongs are offered to them in him, and to him in them. Antonio has scorned his religion, balked him of usurious gains, insulted his person: therefore he hates him as a Christian, himself a Jew; hates him as a lender of money gratis, himself a griping usurer; hates him as Antonio, himself Shylock. Moreover, who but a Christian, one of Antonio's faith and fellowship, has stolen away his daughter's heart, and drawn her into revolt, loaded with his ducats and his precious, precious jewels? Thus his religion, his patriotism, his avarice, his affection, all concur to stimulate his enmity; and his personal hate thus reinforced overcomes for once his greed, and he grows generous in the prosecution of his aim. The only reason he will vouchsafe for taking the pound of flesh is, "if it will feed nothing else, it will feed my revenge"; a reason all the more satisfactory to him, forasmuch as those to whom he gives it can neither allow it nor refute it: and until they can rail the seal from off his bond, all their railings are but a foretaste of the revenge he seeks. In his eagerness to taste that morsel sweeter to him than all the luxuries of Italy, his recent afflictions, the loss of his daughter, his ducats, his jewels, and even the precious ring given him by his departed wife, all fade from his mind. In his inexorable and imperturbable hardness at the trial there is something that makes the blood to tingle. It is the sublimity of malice. We feel that the yearnings of revenge have silenced all other cares and all other thoughts. In his rapture of hate the man has grown superhuman, and his eyes seem all aglow with preternatural malignity. Fearful, however, as is his passion, he comes not off without moving our pity. In the very act whereby he thinks to avenge his own and his brethren's wrongs, the national curse overtakes him. In standing up for the letter of the law against all the pleadings of mercy, he has strengthened his enemies' hands, and sharpened their weapons, against himself; and the terrible Jew sinks at last into the poor, pitiable, heart-broken Shylock.

The inward strain and wrenching of his nature, caused by the revulsion which comes so suddenly upon him, is all told in one brief sentence, which may well be quoted as an apt instance how Shakespeare reaches the heart by a few plain words, when another writer would most likely pummel the ears with a high-strung oration. When it turns out that the Jew's only chance of life stands in the very mercy which he has but a moment before abjured; and when, as the condition of that mercy, he is required to become a Christian, and also to sign a deed conveying to his daughter and her husband all his remaining wealth; we have the following from him:

"I pray you, give me leave to go from hence; I am not well: send the deed after me, And I will sign it."

Early in the play, when Shylock is bid forth to Bassanio's supper, and Launcelot urges him to go, because "my young master doth expect your reproach," Shylock replies, "So do I his." Of course he expects that reproach through the bankruptcy of Antonio. This would seem to infer that Shylock has some hand in getting up the reports of Antonio's "losses at sea"; which reports, at least some of them, turn out false in the end. Further than this, the Poet leaves us in the dark as to how those reports grew into being and gained belief. Did he mean to have it understood that the Jew exercised his cunning and malice in plotting and preparing them? It appears, at all events, that Shylock knew they were coming, before they came. Yet I suppose the natural impression from the play is, that he lent the ducats and took the bond, on a mere chance of coming at his wish. But he would hardly grasp so eagerly at a bare possibility of revenge, without using means to turn it into something more. This would mark him with much deeper lines of guilt. Why, then, did not Shakespeare bring the matter forward more prominently? Perhaps it was because the doing so would have made Shylock appear too steep a criminal for the degree of interest which his part was meant to carry in the play. In other words, the health of the drama as a work of *comic* art required his criminality to be kept in the background. He comes very near overshadowing the other characters too much, as it is. And Shylock's character is *essentially tragic* ; there is none of the proper timber of comedy in him.

The Merchant of Venice is justly distinguished among Shakespeare's dramas, not only for the general felicity of the language, but also for the beauty of particular scenes and passages. For descriptive power, the opening scene of Antonio and his friends is not easily rivalled, and can hardly fail to live in the memory of any one having an eye for such things. Equally fine in its way is the scene of Tubal and Shylock, where the latter is so torn with the struggle of conflicting passions; his heart now sinking with grief at the account of his fugitive daughter's expenses, now leaping with malignant joy at the report of Antonio's losses. The trial-scene, with its tugging vicissitudes of passion, and its hush of terrible expectation,—now ringing with the Jew's sharp, spiteful snaps of malice, now made musical with Portia's strains of eloquence, now holy with Antonio's tender breathings of friendship, and dashed, from time to time, with Gratiano's fierce jets of wrath, and fiercer jets of mirth,—is hardly surpassed in tragic power anywhere; and as it forms the catastrophe proper, so it concentrates the interest of the whole play. Scarcely inferior in its kind is the night-scene of Lorenzo and Jessica, bathed as it is in love, moonlight, "touches of sweet harmony," and soul-lifting discourse, followed by the grave moral reflections of Portia, as she approaches her home, and sees its lights, and hears its music. The bringing in of this passage of ravishing lyrical sweetness, so replete with the most soothing and tranquillizing effect, close upon the intense dramatic excitement of the trial-scene, is such a transition as we shall hardly meet with but in Shakespeare, and aptly shows his unequalled mastery of the mind's capacities of delight. The affair of the rings, with the harmless perplexities growing out of it, is a well-managed device for letting the mind down from the tragic height whereon it lately stood, to the merry conclusion which the play requires. Critics, indeed, may easily quarrel with this sportive after-piece; but it stands approved by the tribunal to which Criticism itself must bow,—the spontaneous feelings of such as are willing to be made cheerful and healthy, without beating their brains about the *how* and *wherefore* . It is in vain that critics tell us we ought to "laugh by precept only, and shed tears by rule."

I ought not to close without remarking what a wide diversity of materials this play reconciles and combines. One can hardly realize how many things are here brought together, they are ordered in such perfect concert and harmony. The greatness of the work is thus hidden in its fine proportions. In many of the Poet's dramas we are surprised at the great variety of character: here, besides this, we have a remarkable variety of plot. And, admirable as may be the skill displayed in the characters individually considered, the interweaving of so many several plots, without the least confusion or embarrassment, evinces a still higher mastership. For, many and various as are the forms and aspects of life here shown, they all emphatically live together, as if they all had but one vital circulation.

<<span id="filepos0040315280"> a>THE MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR .

The Merry Wives of Windsor, as we have it, was first printed in the folio of 1623. The play, however, was registered at the Stationers', January 18, 1602, as "an excellent and pleasant-conceited comedy of Sir John Falstaff and the Merry Wives of Windsor." In pursuance of this entry, an imperfect and probably fraudulent edition was published in the course of the same year, and was reprinted in 1619. In this quarto edition, the play is but about half as long as in the authentic copy of 1623, and some of the prose parts are printed so as to look like verse. It is in doubt whether the issue of 1602 was a fair reproduction of the play as originally written, or whether it was printed from a defective and mutilated transcript stealthily taken down by unskilful reporters at the theatre. On the former supposal, of course the play must have been rewritten and greatly improved,—a thing known to have been repeatedly done by the Poet; so that it is nowise unlikely in this case. But, as the question hardly has interest enough to pay the time and labour of discussing it, I shall dismiss it without further remark.

It is to be presumed that every reader of Shakespeare is familiar with the tradition which makes this comedy to have been written at the instance of Queen Elizabeth; who, upon witnessing the performance of *King Henry the Fourth* , was so taken with Falstaff, that she requested the Poet to continue the character through another play, and to represent him in love. This tradition is first heard of in 1702, eighty-six years after the Poet's death; but it was accepted by the candid and careful Rowe; Pope, also, Theobald, and others, made no scruple of receiving it,—men who would not be very apt to let such a matter pass unsifted, or help to give it currency, unless they thought there was good ground for it. Besides, the thing is not at all incredible in itself, either from the alleged circumstances of the case, or from the character of the Queen; and there are some points in the play that speak not a little in its support. One item of the story is, that the author, hastening to comply with her Majesty's request, wrote the play in the brief space of fourteen days. This has been taken by some as quite discrediting the whole story; but, taking the play as it stands in the copy of 1602, it does not seem to me that fourteen days is too brief a time for Shakespeare to have done the work in, especially with such a motive to quicken him.

This matter has a direct bearing in reference to the date of the writing. *King Henry the Fourth* , the First Part certainly, and probably the Second Part also, was on the stage before 1598. And in the title-page to the first quarto copy of *The Merry Wives* , we have the words, "As it hath been divers times acted by the Right Honourable my Lord Chamberlain's Servants, both before her Majesty and elsewhere." This would naturally infer the play to have been on the stage a considerable time before the date of that issue. And all the *clear* internal evidences of the play itself draw in support of the belief, that the Falstaff of Windsor memory was a continuation from the Falstaff of Eastcheap celebrity. And the whole course of blundering and exposure which Sir John here goes through is such, that I can hardly conceive how the Poet should have framed it, but that he was prompted to do so by some motive external to his own mind. That the free impulse of his genius, without suggestion or inducement from any other source, could have led him to put Falstaff through such a series of uncharacteristic delusions and collapses, is to me wellnigh incredible. So that I can only account for the thing by supposing the man as here exhibited to have been an after-thought sprung in some way from the manner in which an earlier and fairer exhibition of the man had been received.

All which brings the original composition of the play to a point of time somewhere between 1598 and 1601. On the other hand, the play, as we have it, contains at least one passage, inferring, apparently, that the work of revisal must have been done some time after the accession of King James, which was in March, 1603. That passage is the odd reason Mrs. Page gives Mrs. Ford for declining to share the honour of knighthood with Sir John: "These knights will *hack* ; and so thou shouldst not alter the article of thy gentry"; which can scarce bear any other sense than as referring to the prodigality with which the King dispensed those honours in the first year of his English reign; knighthood being thereby in a way to grow so *hackneyed* , that it would rather be an honour not to have been dubbed. As for the reasons urged by Knight and Halliwell for dating the first writing as far back as 1593, they seem to me quite too far-fetched and fanciful to be worthy of notice; certainly not worth the cost of sifting, nor even of statement.

Much question has been made as to the particular period of his life in which Sir John prosecuted his adventures at Windsor, whether before or after the incidents of *King Henry the Fourth* , or at some intermediate time. And some perplexity appears to have arisen from confounding the order in which the several plays were written with the order of the events described in them. Now, at the close of the History, Falstaff and his companions are banished the neighborhood of the Court, and put under strong bonds of good behaviour. So that the action of the Comedy cannot well be referred to any point of time after that proceeding. Moreover we have Page speaking of Fenton as having "kept company with the wild Prince and Pointz." Then too, after Falstaff's experiences in the buck-basket and while disguised as "the wise woman of Brentford," we have him speaking of the matter as follows: "If it should come to the ear of the Court, how I have been transformed, and how my transformation hath been washed and cudgelled, they would melt me out of my fat drop by drop, and liquor fishermen's boots with me: I warrant they would whip me with their fine wits till I were as crestfallen as a dried pear." From which it would seem that he still enjoys at Court the odour of his putative heroism in killing Hotspur at the battle of Shrewsbury, with which the First Part of the History closes. The Second Part of the History covers a period of nearly ten years, from July, 1403, to March, 1413; in which time Falstaff may be supposed to have found leisure for the exploits at Windsor.

So that the action of the Comedy might well enough have taken place in one of Sir John's intervals of rest from the toils of war during the time occupied by the Second Part of the History. And this placing of the action is further sustained by the presence of Pistol in the Comedy; who is not heard of at all in the First Part of the History, but spreads himself with characteristic splendour in the Second. Falstaff's boy, Robin, also, is the same, apparently, who figures as his Page in the Second Part of the History. As for the Mrs. Quickly of Windsor, we can hardly identify her in any way with the Hostess of Eastcheap. For, as Gervinus acutely remarks, "not only are her outward circumstances different, but her character also is essentially diverse; similar in natural simplicity indeed, but at the same time docile and skilful, as the credulous wife and widow of Eastcheap never appears." To go no further, the Windsor Quickly is described as a *maid* ; which should suffice of itself to mark her off as distinct from the Quickly of Boar's-head Tavern.

In truth, however, I suspect the Poet was not very attentive to the point of making the events of the several plays fadge together. The task of representing Sir John in love was so very different from that of representing him in wit and war, that he might well fall into some discrepancies in the process. And if he had been asked whereabouts in the order of Falstaff's varied exploits he meant those at Windsor to be placed, most likely he would have been himself somewhat puzzled to answer the question.

For the plot and matter of the Comedy, Shakespeare was apparently little indebted to any thing but his own invention. *The Two Lovers of Pisa* , a tale borrowed from the novels of Straparola, and published in Tarlton's *News out of Purgatory* , 1590, is thought to have suggested some of the incidents; and the notion seems probable. In that tale a young gallant falls in love with a jealous old doctor's wife, who is also young, and really encourages the illicit passion. The gallant, not knowing the doctor, takes him for confidant and adviser in the prosecution of his suit, and is thus thwarted in all his plans. The naughty wife conceals her lover, first in a basket of feathers, then between some partitions of the house, and again in a box of deeds and valuable papers. If the Poet had any other obligations, they have not been traced clearly enough to be worth noting.

As a specimen of pure comedy, *The Merry Wives of Windsor* by general concession stands unrivalled. I say *pure* comedy, for it has no such interminglings of high poetry and serious passion as mark the Poet's best comedies, and give them a semi-tragic cast. This play is not only full of ludicrous situations and predicaments, but is also rich and varied in comic characterization. Even Falstaff apart, who is an inexhaustible storehouse of laughter-moving preparations, there is comic matter enough in the characters and doings of the other persons to make the play a perpetual diversion. Though historically connected with the reign of Henry the Fourth, the manners and humours of the scene are those of the Poet's own time; and in this respect we need but compare it with Ben Jonson's *Every Man in his Humour* , to see "how much easier it was to vanquish the rest of Europe than to contend with Shakespeare."

The action of the piece proceeds throughout by intrigue; that is, a complication of cross-purposes wherein the several persons strive to outwit and circumvent one another. And the stratagems all have the appropriate merit of causing a pleasant surprise, and a perplexity that is grateful, because it stops short of confusion; while the awkward and grotesque predicaments, into which the persons are thrown by their mutual crossing and tripping, hold attention on the alert, and keep the spirits in a frolic. Yet the laughable proceedings of the scene are all easy and free; that is, the comic situations are ingenious without being at all forced; the ingenuity being hidden in the naturalness with which every thing comes to pass. The play well illustrates, too, though in its own peculiar sort, the general order and method of Shakespeare's art; the surrounding parts falling in with the central one, and the subordinate plots drawing, as by a secret impulse, into harmony with the leading plot. For instance, while Falstaff undergoes repeated collapses from a hero into a butt, that others may laugh at his expense; the Welsh Parson and the French Doctor are also baulked of their revenge, just as they are getting over the preliminary pains and vexations; and, while pluming themselves with anticipated honours, are suddenly deplumed into "vlouting-stogs": Page, too, and his wife no sooner begin to exult in their success than they are taken down by the thrift of a counter stratagem, and left to the double shame of ignobly failing in an ignoble undertaking: and Ford's jealousy, again, is made to scourge himself with the very whip he has twisted for the scourging of its object. Thus all the more prominent persons have to chew the ashes of disappointment in turn; their plans being thwarted, and themselves made ridiculous, just as they are on the point of grasping their several fruitions. Falstaff, indeed, is the only one of them that rises by falling, and extracts grace out of his disgraces. For in him the grotesque and ludicrous is evermore laughing and chuckling over itself: he makes comedies extempore out of his own shames and infirmities; and is himself the most delighted spectator of the scenes in which he figures as chief actor.

This observation and enjoyment of the comical as displayed in himself, which forms one of Sir John's leading traits, and explains much in him that were else inexplicable, is here seen however labouring under something of an eclipse. The truth is, he is plainly out of his sphere; and he shows a strange lapse from his wanted sagacity in getting where he is: the good sense so conspicuous in his behaviour on other occasions ought to have kept him from supposing for a moment that he could inspire the passion of love in such a place; nor, as before observed, does it seem likely that the Poet would have shown him thus, but that he were moved thereto by something outside of his own mind. For of love in any right or even decent sense Sir John is essentially incapable. And Shakespeare evidently so regarded him: he therefore had no alternative but either to commit a gross breach of decorum or else to make the hero unsuccessful,—an alternative in which the moral sanity of his genius left him no choice. So that in undertaking the part of a lover the man must needs be a mark of interest chiefly for what is practised upon him. For, if we may believe Hazlitt, "wits and philosophers seldom shine in that character"; and, whether this be true or not, it is certain that "Sir John by no means comes off with flying colours." In fact, he is here the dupe and victim of his own heroism, and provokes laughter much more by what he suffers than by what he does.

But Falstaff, notwithstanding all these drawbacks, is still so far himself, that "nought but himself can be his conqueror." If he be overmatched, it is not so much by the strength or skill of his antagonists as from his being persuaded, seemingly against his judgment and for the pleasure of others, into a line of adventure where he is not qualified to shine, and where genius, wit, and understanding are commonly distanced by a full purse and a handsome person. His incomparable art in turning adversities into commodities; the good-humoured strategy whereby he manages to divert off all unpleasant feeling of his vices and frailties; the marvellous agility and aptness of wit which, with a vesture of odd and whimsical constructions, at once hides the offensive and discovers the comical features of his conduct; the same towering impudence and effrontery which so lift him aloft in his more congenial exploits; and the overpowering eloquence of exaggeration with which he delights to set off and heighten whatever is most ludicrous in his own person or situation;—all these qualities, though not in their full bloom and vigour, are here seen in triumphant exercise.

On the whole, this bringing-forth of Sir John rather for exposure than for exhibition is not altogether grateful to those whom he has so often made to "laugh and grow fat." Though he still gives us wholesome shakings, we feel that it costs him too much: the rare exhilaration he affords us elsewhere, and even here, invests him with a sort of humorous reverence; insomuch that we can scarce help pitying even while we approve his merited, yet hardly merited, shames and failures. Especially it touches us something hard that one so wit-proud as Sir John should be thus dejected, and put to the mortification of owning that "ignorance itself is a plummet o'er me"; of having to "stand at the taunt of one that makes fritters of English"; and of asking, "Have I laid my brain in the sun, and dried it, that it wants matter to prevent so gross o'er-reaching as this?" and we would fain make out some excuse for him on the score of these slips having occurred at a time in his life when experience had not yet disciplined away the natural vanity which may sometimes lead a man of genius to fancy himself an object of the tender passion. And we are the more disposed to judge leniently of Falstaff, inasmuch as his merry persecutors are but a sort of decorous, respectable, commonplace people, who borrow their chief importance from the victim of their mischievous sport; and if they are not so bad as to make us wish him success, neither are they so good that we like to see them thrive at his expense. On this point Mr. Verplanck, it seems to me, has spoken just about the right thing: "Our choler would rise, despite of us, against Cleopatra herself, should she presume to make a dupe and tool of regal old Jack, the natural lord and master of all about him; and, though not so atrociously immoral as to wish he had succeeded with the Windsor gypsies, we plead guilty to the minor turpitude of sympathy, when he tells his persecutors, with brightening visage and exultant twinkle of eye, 'I am glad, though you have ta'en a special stand to strike at me, that your arrow hath glanced.'"

There is, however, another and perhaps a more instructive view to be taken of Sir John as here represented. I shall have occasion hereafter to note how, all through the period of *King Henry the Fourth* , he keeps growing worse and worse, while the Prince is daily growing better. Out of their sport-seeking intercourse he picks whatever is bad, whereas the other gathers nothing but the good. As represented in the Comedy he seems to be in the swiftest part of this worsening process. At the close of the First Part of the History, the Prince freely yields up to him the honour of Hotspur's fall; thus carrying home to him such an example of self-renouncing generosity as it would seem impossible for the most hardened sinner to resist. And the Prince appears to have done this partly in the hope that it might prove a seed of truth and grace in Falstaff, and start him in a better course of life. But the effect upon him is quite the reverse. Honour is nothing to him but as it may help him in the matter of sensual and heart-steeling self-indulgence. And the surreptitious fame thus acquired, instead of working in him for good, merely serves to procure him larger means and larger license for pampering his gross animal selfishness. His thoughts dwell not at all on the Prince's act of magnanimity, which would shame his egotism and soften his heart, but only on his own ingenuity and success in the stratagem that led to that act. So that the effect is just to puff him up more than ever with vanity and conceit of wit, and thus to give a looser rein and a sharper stimulus to his greed and lust; for there is probably nothing that will send a man faster to the Devil than that sort of conceit. The result is, that Falstaff soon proceeds to throw off whatever of restraint may have hitherto held his vices in check, and to wanton in the arrogance of utter impunity. As he then unscrupulously appropriated the credit of another's heroism; so he now makes no scruple of sacrificing the virtue, the honour, the happiness of others to his own mean and selfish pleasure.

But this total subjection of the mental to the animal nature cannot long proceed without betraying the succours of reason. When the bands of morality are thus spurned, a man rapidly sins his understanding into lameness; as its better forces must needs be quickly rotted in such a vapour-bath of sensuality. In this way an overweening pride of wit often results in causing a man to be deserted by his wits; this too in matters where he feels surest of them and has most need of them. In refusing to see what is right, he loses the power of seeing what is prudent and safe. He who persists in such a course will inevitably be drawn into signal lapses of judgment, however richly nature may have endowed him with that faculty: he will stumble over his own self-love; his very assurance will be tripping him when he least expects it. And so Falstaff's conceit and egotism, working together, as they do, with his greed and lust, have the effect of stuffing him with the most childish gullibility, at once laying him open to the arts of bamboozling, and inviting others to practise them upon him. He has grown to look with contempt upon honesty as a cheap and vulgar thing, and is well punished in that honest simplicity easily outwits him: nay, more; his fancied skill in sensual intrigue brings him to a pass where ignorance itself is a clean overmatch for him, and fairly earns the privilege of flouting at him.

Falstaff is fair-spoken when he chooses to be, can talk with judgment and good sense, and has at command the arts of a gentlemanly and dignified bearing. The two Windsor wives, meeting him at a social dinner, and seeing him in his best suit of language and manners, think him honourable as well as pleasant, and are won to some notes of respect and affability towards him: "he would not swear; praised women's modesty; and gave such orderly and well-behaved reproof of all uncomeliness," that they would have sworn his disposition was at one with the truth of his words. And because they meet his fair deportment with some gentle returns of politeness, therefore he, in his conceit of wit, of rank, and of fame, thinks they are smitten with a passion for him. Fancying that they are hotly in love with him, he resolves on making love to them; not that he is at all touched with the passion, but with the cool intent of feigning a responsive flame for other and more selfish ends. Their husbands are known to be rich, and they are said to have the free use of their husbands' wealth. So his conclusion is, that they are "a region in Guiana, all gold and bounty: they shall be my East and West Indies, and I will trade to them both." In his spendthrift self-indulgence, notwithstanding all the supplies which his purse-taking habits and his late imputed service bring in, he has come to be hard-up for cash, insomuch that his rascal followers are for deserting him and turning to other resources. By driving a love-intrigue with the women, he expects to work the keys to the full coffers which they have at such command, and thus to replenish his low-ebbing means.

Thus we here have Sir John in the process of complacently feeding his glutton fancies with matter raked from the foulest gutters of baseness. The women, burning with anger and shame, knock their wits together for revenge; and the answer which they, in their shrewdly-concerted plan, return to his advances is to him a pledge of entire success: he is so transported, that he leaps clean out of his senses forthwith, and the giddiness of his newly-fired conceit fairly puts out the eyes of his understanding. His vanity is now quite omnivorous: once possessed with the monstrous idea of having become an object of love in such a place, nothing is too gross for him to swallow. The raw and unspiced stuffings of Master Brook convey to him no hint of mistrust: he drinks them in with unfaltering confidence; and opens his breast to this total stranger as freely as if he were his sworn and long-tried counsellor; the offered bribe of the man's money so falling in with the other baits of greed as to swamp his discretion utterly. After being cheated through the adventures of the buck-basket, where he was "stopped in with stinking clothes that fretted in their own grease," he appears indeed to have some smell of the gross trickery played upon him; and vows to himself that, if he be served such another trick, he will have his brains taken out, and buttered, and given to a dog for a new-year's gift. But still his vanity and thirst of money are too much for his startled prudence: upon the offer of a second device, that too of a very flimsy texture, and very thinly disguised, his paralysis of wit returns, and his suspicions sink afresh into their dreamless nap. In the hard blows and buffets there experienced, he has stronger arguments than before of the game practised on him; still the deep spell on his judgment continues unbroken: and now the very shame and grief of his past failures and punishments seem to co-operate with his palsy of reason in preparing him for a third hoax even more gross and palpable than the former two.

When at length the untrussed hero is made to see how matters have been carried with him, and to feel the chagrin of being so egregiously fooled, he is indeed cast down to the lowest notes of self-contempt; and though he so far rallies at last as to cover his retreat with marked skill, yet he leaves the path behind him strewn thick with the sweat-drops of his mortification. In his pride of wit and cleverness, he had looked with scorn upon plain common people as no better than blockheads; and had only thought to use them, and even his own powers of mind, for compassing the means of animal gratification. But he now stands thoroughly degraded in his own sight, and this too in the very points where he had built his conceit of superiority. He finds that all his wit and craft were not enough to prevent even Sir Hugh, the simple-minded Welsh parson, from making him a laughing-stock. We too, whose moral judgment may have been seduced from the right by the fascinations of his intellectual playing, are brought to estimate more justly the natural honours and safeguards of downright integrity and innocence; and to see that the deepest shrewdness stands in not thinking to be shrewd at all. Thus our judgment of the man is set right in the very point where it was most liable to be drawn astray. Gervinus regards this idea as being the soul of the piece. He thinks the Poet's leading purpose here was to teach that plain-thoughted, guileless honesty is a natural overmatch for studied cunning; and to show how self-seeking craft and intricacy are apt to be caught in the snares they have laid for others, while unselfish truth and simplicity are protected against them by those instinctive moral warnings of nature which crafty men despise. And he rightly observes that the play illustrates the point in repeated instances. Thus the policy and sharp practice of the Host to catch gain, of Ford to detect and expose the imagined sins of his wife, and of Mr. and Mrs. Page to mismatch their daughter, only bring to confusion the parties themselves; their crafty devices, like Falstaff's, being outwitted and cheated by the "*honest* knaveries" of their intended victims. Thus the several cases concur to enforce the moral, that "an egotist like Falstaff can suffer no severer defeat than from the honesty which he believes not, and from the simplicity which he esteems not."

I refrain from attempting a full analysis of Sir John's character, till I encounter him at the noontide of his glory, stealing, drinking, lying, recruiting, warring, and discoursing of wine, wit, valour, and honour, with Prince Hal at hand to wrestle forth the prodigies of his big-teeming brain.

Sir John's followers are here under a cloud along with him, being little more than the shadows of what they appear when their master is fully himself and in his proper element. Bardolph and Pistol are indeed the same men, or rather things, as in the History; but the redundant fatness of their several peculiarities is here not a little curtailed: the fire in Bardolph's nose waxes dim for lack of fuel; the strut is much dried out of Pistol's tongue from want of drink to generate loftiness: the low state of their master's purse, and the discords thence growing between him and them, have rather soured their tempers, and that sourness rusts and clogs the wheels of their inner man. Corporal Nym is not visibly met with in *King Henry the Fourth* , though the atmosphere smells at times as if he had been there; but we have him again in *King Henry the Fifth* , where he carries to a somewhat higher pitch the character of "a fellow that frights humour out of its wits."

I have before observed that the Mrs. Quickly of this play is plainly another individual than the Hostess of Eastcheap: the latter has known Sir John "these twenty-nine years, come peascod time," whereas to the former his person is quite unknown till she goes to him with a message from the Windsor wives. But she seems no very remote kin of the Hostess aforesaid: though clearly discriminated in character, yet they have a strong family likeness. Her chief action is in the capacity of a matchmaker and go-between; and her perfect impartiality towards all of Anne Page's suitors, both in the service she renders and the return she accepts, well exemplifies the indefatigable benevolence of that class of worthies towards themselves, and is so true to the life of a certain perpetual sort of people as almost to make one believe in the transmigration of souls.

"Mine Host of the Garter" is indeed a model of a host; up to any thing, and brimful of fun, so that it runs out at the ends of his fingers; and nothing delights him more than to uncork the wit-holders of his guests, unless, peradventure, it be to uncork his wine-holders for them. His exhilarating conceit of practical shrewdness, serving as oil to make the wheels of his mind run smooth and glib, is choicely characteristic both of himself individually and of the class he represents.—Sir Hugh Evans is an odd marriage of the ludicrous and the honourable. In his officious simplicity he moralizes the play much better, no doubt, than a wiser man would. The scene where, in expectation of the fight with Doctor Caius, he is full of "cholers," and "trempling of mind," and "melancholies," and has "a great dispositions to cry," and strikes up a lullaby to the palpitations of his heart without seeming to know it, while those palpitations in turn scatter his memory, and discompose his singing, is replete with a quiet delicacy of humour hardly to be surpassed. It is thought by some that both he and Caius may be delineations, slightly caricatured, of what the Poet had seen and conversed with; there being a certain portrait-like reality and effect about them, with just enough of the ideal to lift them into the region of art.

Hazlitt boldly pronounces Shakespeare "the only writer who was as great in describing weakness as strength." However this may be, I am pretty sure that, after Falstaff, there is not a greater piece of work in the play than Master Abraham Slender, cousin to Robert Shallow, Esquire,—a dainty sprout, or rather sapling, of provincial gentry, who, once seen, is never to be forgotten. In his consequential verdancy, his aristocratic boobyism, and his lack-brain originality, this pithless hereditary squireling is quite inimitable and irresistible;—a tall though slender specimen of most effective imbecility, whose manners and character must needs all be from within, because he lacks force of nature to shape or dress himself by any model. Mr. Hallam, whose judgment in such things is not often at fault, thinks Slender was intended as "a satire on the brilliant youth of the provinces," such as they were "before the introduction of newspapers and turnpike roads; awkward and boobyish among civil people, but at home in rude sports, and proud of exploits at which the town would laugh, yet perhaps with more courage and good-nature than the laughers."

Ford's jealousy is managed with great skill so as to help on the plot, bringing on a series of the richest incidents, and drawing the most savoury issues from the mellow, juicy old sinner upon whom he is practising. The means whereby he labours to justify his passion, spreading temptations and then concerting surprises, are quite as wicked as any thing Falstaff does, and have, besides, the further crime of exceeding meanness; but both their meanness and their wickedness are of the kind that rarely fail to be their own punishment. The way in which his passion is made to sting and lash him into reason, and the happy mischievousness of his wife in glutting his disease, and thereby making an opportunity to show him what sort of stuff it lives on, are admirable instances of the wisdom with which the Poet underpins his most fantastic creations.

The counter-plottings, also, of Page and his wife, to sell their daughter against her better sense, are about as far from virtue as the worst purposes of Sir John; though, to be sure, their sins are of a more respectable kind than to expose them to ridicule. But we are the more willing to forget their unhandsome practices therein, because of their good-natured efforts at last to make Falstaff forget his sad miscarriages, and to compose, in a well-crowned cup of social merriment, whatever vexations and disquietudes still remain.—Anne Page is but an average specimen of discreet, placid, innocent mediocrity, yet with a mind of her own, in whom we can feel no such interest as a rich father causes to be felt by those about her. In her and Fenton a slight dash of romance is given to the play; their love forming a barely audible undertone of poetry in the chorus of comicalities, as if on purpose that while the sides are shaken the heart may not be left altogether untouched.

<<span id="filepos0040352858"> a>MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING.

Much Ado about Nothing, together with *As You Like It*, *King Henry the Fifth* , and Ben Jonson's *Every Man in his Humour* , was registered in the Stationers' books August 4, 1600; all with a caveat "to be stayed." Why the plays were thus locked up from the press by an injunction, does not appear; perhaps to keep the right of publishing them in the hands of those who made the entry. *Much Ado about Nothing* was entered again on the 23d of the same month, and was issued in quarto in the course of that year, with "as it hath been sundry times publicly acted" in the title-page; which would naturally infer the play to have been written in 1599, or in the early part of 1600. All the internal marks of style and temper bear in favour of the same date; as in these respects it is hardly distinguishable from *As You Like It* . It has also been ascertained from Vertue's manuscripts, that in May, 1613, John Heminge the actor, and the Poet's friend, received £40, besides a gratuity of £20 from the King, for presenting six plays at Hampton Court, *Much Ado about Nothing* being one of them.

After the one quarto of 1600, the play is not met with again till it reappeared in the folio of 1623. Some question has been made whether the folio was a reprint of the quarto, or from another manuscript. Considerable might be urged on either side; but the arguments would hardly pay the stating; the differences of the two copies being so few and slight as to make the question a thing of little consequence. The best editors generally agree in thinking the quarto the better authority of the two. Remains but to add that, with the two original copies, the text of the play is so clear and well-settled as almost to foreclose controversy.

As with many of the author's plays, a part of the plot and story of *Much Ado* *about Nothing* was borrowed. But the same matter had been so often borrowed before, and run into so many variations, that we cannot affirm with certainty to what source Shakespeare was immediately indebted. Mrs. Lenox, an uncommonly deep person, instructs us that the Poet here "borrowed just enough to show his poverty of invention, and added enough to prove his want of judgment"; a piece of criticism so choice and happy, that it ought by all means to be kept alive; though it is indeed just possible that the Poet can better afford to have such things said of him than the sayer can to have them repeated.

So much of the story as relates to Hero, Claudio, and John, bears a strong resemblance to the tale of Ariodante and Ginevra in Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* . The Princess Ginevra, the heroine of the tale, rejects the love-suit of Duke Polinesso, and pledges her hand to Ariodante. Thereupon Polinesso engages her attendant Dalinda to personate the Princess on a balcony by moonlight, while he ascends to her chamber by a ladder of ropes; Ariodante being by previous arrangement stationed near the spot, so as to witness the supposed infidelity of his betrothed. This brings on a false charge against Ginevra, who is doomed to die unless within a month a true knight comes to do battle for her honour. Ariodante betakes himself to flight, and is reported to have perished. Polinesso now appears secure in his treachery. But Dalinda, seized with remorse for her part in the affair, and flying from her guilty paramour, meets with Rinaldo, and declares to him the truth. Then comes on the fight, in which Polinesso is slain by the champion of innocence; which done, the lover reappears, to be made happy with his Princess.

Here, of course, the wicked Duke answers to the John of the play. But there is this important difference, that the motive of the former in vilifying the lady is to drive away her lover, that he may have her to himself; whereas the latter acts from a spontaneous malignity of temper, that takes a sort of disinterested pleasure in blasting the happiness of others.

A translation, by Peter Beverly, of that part of Ariosto's poem which contains this tale, was licensed for the press in 1565; and Warton says it was reprinted in 1600. And an English version of the whole poem, by Sir John Harrington, came out in 1591; but the play discovers no special marks of borrowing from this source. And indeed the fixing of any obligations in this quarter is the more difficult, inasmuch as the matter seems to have been borrowed by Ariosto himself. For the story of a lady betrayed to peril and disgrace by the personation of her waiting-woman was an old European tradition; it has been traced to Spain;

and Ariosto interwove it with the adventures of Rinaldo, as yielding an apt occasion for his chivalrous heroism. Neither does the play show any traces of obligation to Spenser, who wrought the same tale into the variegated structure of his great poem. The story of Phedon, relating the treachery of his false friend Philemon, is in Book ii. canto 4 of *The Faerie Queene* ; which Book was first published in 1590.

The connection between the play and one of Bandello's novels is much more evident, from the close similarity both of incidents and of names. Fenicia, the daughter of Lionato, a gentleman of Messina, is betrothed to Timbreo de Cardona, a friend of Piero d'Aragona. Girondo, a disappointed lover of the lady, goes to work to prevent the marriage. He insinuates to Timbreo that she is disloyal, and then to make good the charge arranges to have his own hired servant in the dress of a gentleman ascend a ladder and enter the house of Lionato at night, Timbreo being placed so as to witness the proceeding. The next morning Timbreo accuses the lady to her father, and rejects the alliance. Fenicia sinks down in a swoon; a dangerous illness follows; and, to prevent the shame of her alleged trespass, Lionato has it given out that she is dead, and a public funeral is held in confirmation of that report. Thereupon Girondo becomes so harrowed with remorse, that he confesses his villainy to Timbreo, and they both throw themselves on the mercy of the lady's family. Timbreo is easily forgiven, and the reconciliation is soon followed by the discovery that the lady is still alive, and by the marriage of the parties. Here the only particular wherein the play differs from the novel, and agrees with Ariosto's plan of the story, is, that the lady's waiting-woman personates her mistress when the villain scales her chamber-window.

It does not well appear how the Poet could have come to a knowledge of Bandello's novel, unless through the original; no translation of that time having been preserved. But the Italian was then the most generally-studied language in Europe; educated Englishmen were probably quite as apt to be familiar with it as they are with the French in our day; Shakespeare, at the time of writing this play, was thirty-five years old; and we have many indications that he knew enough of Italian to be able to read such a story as Bandello's in that language.

The foregoing account may serve to show, what is equally plain in many other cases, that Shakespeare preferred, for the material of his plots, such stories as were most commonly known, that he might have some tie of popular association and interest to work in aid of his purpose. It is to be observed, further, that the parts of Benedick and Beatrice, of Dogberry and Verges, and of several other persons, are altogether original with him; so that he stands responsible for all the wit and humour, and for nearly all the character, of the play. Then too, as is usual with him, the added portions are so made to knit in with the borrowed matter by mutual participation and interaction as to give a new life and meaning to the whole.

So that in this case, as in others, we have the soul of originality consisting in something far deeper and more essential than any mere sorting or linking of incidents so as to form an attractive story. The vital workings of nature in the development of individual character,—it is on these, and not on any thing so superficial or mechanical as a mere frame-work of incident, that, the real life of the piece depends. On this point I probably cannot do better than by quoting the following remarks from Coleridge:

"The interest in the plot is on account of the characters, not *vice versa* , as in almost all other writers: the plot is a mere canvas, and no more. Take away from *Much Ado about Nothing* all that is not indispensable to the plot, either as having little to do with it, or, like Dogberry and his comrades, forced into the service, when any other less ingeniously-absurd watchmen and night-constables would have answered the mere necessities of the action; take away Benedick, Beatrice, Dogberry, and the reaction of the former on the character of Hero,—and what will remain? In other writers the main agent of the plot is always the prominent character: John is the main-spring of the plot in this play; but he is merely shown, and then withdrawn."

The style and diction of this play has little that calls for special remark. In this respect the workmanship, as before noted, is of about the same cast and grain with that of *As You Like It* ; sustained and equal; easy, natural, and modest in dress and bearing; everywhere alive indeed with the exhilarations of wit or humour or poetry, but without the laboured smoothness of the Poet's earlier plays, or the penetrating energy and quick, sinewy movement of his later ones. Compared with some of its predecessors, the play shows a decided growth in what may be termed virility of mind: a wider scope, a higher reach, a firmer grasp, have been attained: the Poet has come to read Nature less through "the spectacles of books," and does not hesitate to meet her face to face, and to trust and try himself alone with her. The result of all which appears in a greater freshness and reality of delineation. Here the persons have nothing of a dim, equivocal hearsay air about them, such as marks in some measure his earlier efforts in comedy. The characters indeed are not pitched in so high a key, nor conceived in so much breadth and vigour, as in several of the plays written at earlier dates: the plan of the work did not require this, or even admit of it; nevertheless the workmanship on the whole discovers more ripeness of art and faculty than even in *The Merchant of Venice* .

One of the Poet's methods was, apparently, first to mark out or else to adopt a given course of action, and then to conceive and work out his characters accordingly, making them such as would naturally cohere with and sustain the action, so that we feel an inward, vital, and essential relation between what they are and what they do. Thus there is nothing arbitrary or mechanical in the sorting together of persons and actions: the two stand together under a living law of human transpiration, instead of being gathered into a mere formal and outward juxtaposition. That is, in short, the persons act so because they *are* so, and not because the author *willed* to put them through such a course of action: what comes from them is truly rooted in them, and is *generated* vitally out of the nature within them; so that their deeds are the veritable pulsations of their hearts. And so it is in this play. The course of action, as we have seen, was partly borrowed. But there was no borrowing in the characteristic matter. The personal figures in the old tale are in themselves unmeaning and characterless. The actions ascribed to them have no ground or reason in any thing that they are: what they do, or rather *seem* to do,—for there is no real doing in the case,—proceeds not at all from their own natures or wills, but purely because the author chose to have it so. So that the persons and incidents are to all intents and purposes put together arbitrarily, and not under any vital law of human nature. Any other set of actions might just as well be tacked on to the same persons; any other persons might just as well be put through the same course of action. This merely outward and formal connection between the incidents and characters holds generally in the old tales from which Shakespeare borrowed his plots; while in his workmanship the connection becomes inherent and essential; there being indeed no difference in this respect, whether he first conceives the characters, and then draws out their actions, or whether he first plans a course of action, and then shapes the character from which it is to proceed.

Much Ado about Nothing has a large variety of interest, now running into grotesque drollery, now bordering upon the sphere of tragic elevation, now revelling in the most sparkling brilliancy. The play indeed is rightly named: we have several nothings, each in its turn occasioning a deal of stir and perturbation: yet there is so much of real flavour and spirit stirred out into effect, that the littleness of the occasions is scarcely felt or observed; the thoughts being far more drawn to the persons who make the much ado than to the nothing about which the much ado is made. The excellences, however, both of plot and character, are rather of the striking sort, involving little of the hidden or retiring beauty which shows just enough on the surface to invite a diligent search, and then enriches the seeker with generous returns. Accordingly the play has always been very effective on the stage; the points and situations being so shaped and ordered that, with fair acting, they tell at once upon an average audience; while at the same time there is enough of solid substance beneath to justify and support the first impression; so that the stage-effect is withal legitimate and sound as well as quick and taking.

The characters of Hero and Claudio, though reasonably engaging in their simplicity and uprightness, offer no very salient points, and are indeed nowise extraordinary. It cannot quite be said that one "sees no more in them than in the ordinary of Nature's sale-work"; nevertheless they derive their interest mainly from the events that befall them; the reverse of which is generally true in Shakespeare's delineations. Perhaps we may justly say that, had the course of love run smooth with them, its voice, even if audible, had been hardly worth the hearing.

Hero is indeed kind, amiable, and discreet in her behaviour and temper: she has just that air, nay, rather just that soul of bland and modest quietness which makes the unobtrusive but enduring charm of home, such as I have seen in many a priestess of the domestic shrine; and this fitly marks her out as the centre of silent or unemphatic interest in her father's household. She is always thoughtful, never voluble; and when she speaks, there is no sting or sharpness in her tongue: she is even proud of her brilliant cousin, yet not at all emulous of her brilliancy; keenly relishes her popping and sometimes caustic wit, but covets no such gift for herself, and even shrinks from the laughing attention it wins. As Hero is altogether gentle and womanly in her ways, so she offers a sweet and inviting nestling-place for the fireside affections. The soft down of her disposition makes an admirable contrast to the bristling and emphatic yet genuine plumage of Beatrice; and there is something very pathetic and touching in her situation when she is stricken down in mute agony by the tongue of slander; while the "blushing apparitions" in her face, and the lightning in her eyes, tell us that her stillness of tongue proceeds from any thing but weakness of nature, or want of spirit. Her well-governed intelligence is aptly displayed in the part she bears in the stratagem for taming Beatrice to the gentler pace of love, and in the considerate forbearance which abstains from teasing words after the stratagem has done its work.

Claudio is both a lighter-timbered and a looser-built vessel than Hero; rather credulous, unstable, inconstant, and very much the sport of slight and trivial occasions. A very small matter suffices to upset him, though, to be sure, he is apt enough to be set right again. All this, no doubt, is partly owing to his youth and inexperience; but in truth his character is mainly that of a brave and clever upstart, somewhat intoxicated with sudden success, and not a little puffed with vanity of the Prince's favour. Notwithstanding John's ingrained, habitual, and well-known malice, he is ready to go it blind whenever John sees fit to try his art upon him; and even after he has been duped into one strain of petulant folly by his trick, and has found out the falsehood of it, he is still just as open to a second and worse duping. All this may indeed pass as indicating no more in his case than the levity of a rather pampered and over-sensitive self-love. In his unreflective and headlong techiness, he fires up at the least hint that but seems to touch his honour, without pausing, or deigning to observe the plainest conditions of a fair and prudent judgment.

But, after all the allowance that can be made on this score, it is still no little impeachment of his temper, or his understanding, that he should lend his ear to the poisonous breathings of one whose spirits are so well known to "toil in frame of villainies." As to his rash and overwrought scheme of revenge for Hero's imputed sin, his best excuse therein is, that the light-minded Prince, who is indeed such another, goes along with him; while it is somewhat doubtful whether the patron or the favourite is more at fault in thus suffering artful malice to "pull the wool over his eyes." Claudio's finical and foppish attention to dress, so amusingly ridiculed by Benedick, is a well-conceived trait of his character; as it naturally hints that his quest of the lady grows more from his seeing the advantage of the match than from any deep heart-interest in her person. And his being sprung into such an unreasonable fit of jealousy towards the Prince at the masquerade is another good instance of the Poet's skill and care in small matters. It makes an apt preparation for the far more serious blunder upon which the main part of the action turns. A piece of conduct which the circumstances do not explain is at once explained by thus disclosing a certain irritable levity in the subject. On much the same ground we can also account very well for his sudden running into a match which at the best looks more like a freak of fancy than a resolution of love, while the same suddenness on the side of the more calm, discreet, and patient Hero is accounted for by the strong solicitation of the Prince and the prompt concurrence of her father. But even if Claudio's faults and blunders were greater than they are, still his behaviour at the last were enough to prove a real and sound basis of manhood in him. The clean taking-down of his vanity and self-love, by the exposure of the poor cheats which had so easily caught him, brings out the true staple of his character. When he is made to feel that on himself alone falls the blame and the guilt which he had been so eager to revenge on others, then his sense of honour acts in a right noble style, prompting him to avenge sternly on himself the wrong and the injury he has done to the gentle Hero and her kindred.

Critics have unnecessarily found fault with the Poet for the character of John, as if it lay without the proper circumference of truth and nature. They would prefer, apparently, the more commonplace character of a disappointed rival in love, whose guilt might be explained away into a pressure of violent motives. But Shakespeare saw deeper into human nature. And perhaps his wisest departure from the old story is in making John a morose, sullen, ill-conditioned rascal, whose innate malice renders the joy of others a pain, and the pain of others a joy, to him. The wanton and unprovoked doing of mischief is the natural luxury and pastime of such envious spirits as he is. To be sure, he assigns as his reason for plotting to blast Claudio's happiness, that the "young start-up hath all the glory of my overthrow"; but then he also adds, "If I can cross him any way, I bless myself every way"; which shows his true motive-spring to be a kind of envy-sickness. For this cause, any thing that will serve as a platform "to build mischief on" is grateful to him. He thus exemplifies in a small figure the same spontaneous malice which towers to such a stupendous height of wickedness in Iago. We may well reluct to believe in the reality of such characters; but, unhappily, human life discovers too many plots and doings that cannot be otherwise accounted for; nor need we go far to learn that men may "spin motives out of their own bowels." In pursuance of this idea, the Poet takes care to let us know that, in John's account, the having his sour and spiteful temper tied up under a pledge of fair and kindly behaviour is to be "trusted with a muzzle, and enfranchised with a clog"; that is, he thinks himself robbed of freedom when he is not allowed to bite.

Ulrici, regarding the play as setting forth the contrast between life as it is in itself and as it seems to those engaged in its struggles, looks upon Dogberry as embodying the whole idea of the piece. And, sure enough, the impressive insignificance of this man's action to the lookers-on is only equalled by its stuffed importance to himself: when he is really most absurd and ridiculous, then it is precisely that he feels most confident and grand; the irony that is rarefied into wit and poetry in others being thus condensed into broad humour and drollery in him. The German critic is not quite right however in thinking that his blundering garrulity brings to light the infernal plot; as it rather operates to keep that plot in the dark: he is too fond of hearing himself talk to make known what he has to say, in time to prevent the evil; and amidst his tumblings of conceit the truth leaks out at last rather in spite of him than in consequence of any thing he does. Dogberry and his "neighbour Verges" are caricatures; but such caricatures as Shakespeare alone of English writers has had a heart to conceive and a hand to delineate; though perhaps Sir Walter comes near enough to him in that line to be named in the same sentence. And how bland, how benignant, now genial, how human-hearted, these caricatures are! as if the Poet felt the persons, with all their grotesque oddities, to be his own veritable flesh-and-blood kindred. There is no contempt, no mockery here; nothing that ministers an atom of food to any unbenevolent emotion: the subjects are made delicious as well as laughable; and delicious withal through the best and kindliest feelings of our nature. The Poet's sporting with them is the free, loving, whole-hearted play of a truly great, generous, simple, child-like soul. Compared to these genuine offspring of undeflowered genius, the ill-natured and cynical caricatures in which Dickens, for example, so often and so tediously indulges, seem the workmanship of quite another species of being. The part of Dogberry was often attempted to be imitated by other dramatists of Shakespeare's time; which shows it to have been a decided hit on the stage. And indeed there is no resisting the delectable humour of it: but then the thing is utterly inimitable; Shakespeare being no less unapproachable in this vein than in such delineations as Shylock and Lear and Cleopatra.

Benedick and Beatrice are much the most telling feature of the play. They have been justly ranked among the stronger and deeper of Shakespeare's minor characters. They are just about the right staple for the higher order of comic delineation; whereas several of the leading persons in what are called the Poet's comedies draw decidedly into the region of the Tragic. The delineation, however, of Benedick and Beatrice stays at all points within the proper sphere of Comedy. Both are gifted with a very piercing, pungent, and voluble wit; and pride of wit is with both a specially-prominent trait; in fact, it appears to be on all ordinary occasions their main actuating principle. The rare entertainment which others have from their displays in this kind has naturally made them quite conscious of their gift; and this consciousness has not less naturally led them to make it a matter of some pride. They study it and rely on it a good deal as their title or passport to approval and favour. Hence a *habit* of flouting and raillery has somewhat usurped the outside of their characters, insomuch as to keep their better qualities rather in the background, and even to obstruct seriously the outcome of what is best in them.

Whether for force of understanding or for solid worth of character, Benedick is vastly superior both to Claudio and to the Prince. He is really a very wise and noble fellow; of a healthy and penetrating intelligence, and with a sound underpinning of earnest and true feeling; as appears when the course of the action surprises or inspires him out of his pride of brilliancy. When a grave occasion comes, his superficial habit of jesting is at once postponed, and the choicer parts of manhood promptly assert themselves in clear and handsome action. We are thus given to know that, however the witty and waggish companion or make-sport may have got the ascendency in him, still he is of an inward composition to forget it as soon as the cause of wronged and suffering virtue or innocence gives him a manly and generous part to perform. And when the blameless and gentle Hero is smitten down with cruel falsehood, and even her father is convinced of her guilt, he is the first to suspect that "the practice of it lies in John the bastard." With his just faith in the honour of the Prince and of Claudio, his quick judgment and native sagacity forthwith hit upon the right clew to the mystery. Much the same, all through, is to be said of Beatrice; who approves herself a thoroughly brave and generous character. The swiftness and brilliancy of wit upon which she so much prides herself are at once forgotten in resentment and vindication of her injured kinswoman. She becomes somewhat furious indeed, but it is a noble and righteous fury,—the fury of kindled strength too, and not of mere irritability, or of a passionate temper.

As pride of wit bears a main part in shaping the ordinary conduct of these persons; so the Poet aptly represents them as being specially piqued at what pinches or touches them in that point. Thus, in their wit-skirmish at the masquerade, what sticks most in Benedick is the being described as "the Prince's jester," and the hearing it said that, if his jests are "not marked, or not laughed at," it "strikes him into melancholy"; while, on the other side, Beatrice is equally stung at being told that "she had her good wit out of *The Hundred Merry Tales* ." Their keen sensitiveness to whatever implies any depreciation or contempt of their faculty in this kind is exceedingly well conceived. Withal it shows, I think, that jesting, after all, is more a matter of art with them than of character.

As might be expected, the good repute of Benedick and Beatrice has been not a little perilled, not to say damaged, by their redundancy of wit. But it is the ordinary lot of persons so witty as they to suffer under the misconstructions of prejudice or partial acquaintance. Their very sparkling seems to augment the difficulty of coming to a true knowledge of them. How dangerous it is to be so gifted that way, may be seen by the impression these persons have had the ill luck to make on one whose good opinion is so desirable as Campbell's. "During one half of the play," says he, "we have a disagreeable female character in Beatrice. Her portrait, I may be told, is deeply drawn and minutely finished. It is; and so is that of Benedick, who is entirely her counterpart, except that he is less disagreeable." And again he speaks of Beatrice as an "odious woman." I am right sorry that so tasteful and genial a critic should have such hard thoughts of the lady. In support of his opinion he quotes Hero's speech, "Disdain and scorn ride sparkling in her eyes," &c.; but he seems to forget that these words are spoken with the intent that Beatrice shall hear them, and at the same time think she overhears them; that is, not as being true, but as being suited to a certain end, and as having just enough of truth to be effective for that end. And the effect which the speech has on Beatrice proves that it is not true as regards her character, however good it may be for the speaker's purpose. To the same end, the Prince, Claudio, and Leonato speak as much the other way, when they know Benedick is overhearing them; and what is there said in her favour is just a fair offset to what was before said against her. But indeed it is plain enough that any thing thus spoken really for the ear of the subject, yet seemingly in confidence to another person, ought not to be received in evidence against her.

But the critic's disparaging thoughts in this case are well accounted for in what himself had unhappily witnessed. "I once knew such a pair," says he; "the lady was a perfect Beatrice: she railed hypocritically at wedlock before her marriage, and with bitter sincerity after it. She and her Benedick now live apart, but with entire reciprocity of sentiments; each devoutly wishing that the other may soon pass into a better world." So that the writer's strong dislike of Beatrice is a most pregnant testimony to the Poet's truth of delineation; inasmuch as it shows how our views of his characters, as of those in real life, depend less perhaps on what they are in themselves than on our own peculiar associations. Nature's and Shakespeare's men and women seem very differently to different persons, and even to the same persons at different times. Regarded, therefore, in this light, the censure of the lady infers such a tribute to the Poet, that I half suspect the author meant it as such. In reference to the subject, however, my judgment goes much rather with that of other critics: That in the unamiable passages of their deportment Benedick and Beatrice are playing a part; that their playing is rather to conceal than to disclose their real feelings; that it is the very strength of their feelings which puts them upon this mode of disguise; and that the pointing of their raillery so much against each other is itself proof of a deep and growing mutual interest: though it must be confessed that the ability to play so well, and in that kind, is a great temptation to carry it to excess, or to use it where it may cause something else than mirth. This it is that justifies the repetition of the stratagem for drawing on a match between them; the same process being needed in both cases in order "to get rid of their reciprocal disguises, and make them straightforward and in earnest." And so the effect of the stratagem is to begin the unmasking which is so thoroughly completed by the wrongs and sufferings of Hero: they are thus disciplined out of their playing, and made to show themselves as they are: before we saw their art; now we see their virtue,—the real backbone of their characters; and it becomes manifest enough that, with all their superficial levity and caustic sportiveness, they yet have hearts rightly framed for the serious duties and interests of life.

It is very considerable, also, how their peculiar cast of self-love and their pride of wit are adroitly worked upon in the execution of the scheme for bringing them together. Both are deeply mortified at overhearing how they are blamed for their addiction to flouting, and at the same time both are highly flattered in being made each to believe that the other is secretly dying of love, and that the other is kept from showing the truth by dread of mocks and gibes. As they are both professed heretics on the score of love and marriage, so both are tamed out of their heresy in the glad persuasion that they have each proved too much for the other's pride of wit, and have each converted the other to the true faith. But indeed that heresy was all along feigned as a refuge from merry persecutions; and the virtue of the thing is, that in the belief that they have each conquered the other's assumed fastidiousness, they each lay aside their own. The case involves a highly curious interplay of various motives on either side; and it is not easy to say whether vanity or generosity, the self-regarding or the self-forgetting emotions, are uppermost in the process.

The wit of these two persons, though seeming at first view much the same, is very nicely discriminated. Beatrice, intelligent as she is, has little of reflection in her wit; but throws it off in rapid flashes whenever any object ministers a spark to her fancy. Though of the most piercing keenness and the most exquisite aptness, there is no ill-nature about it; it stings indeed, but does not poison. The offspring merely of the moment and the occasion, it catches the apprehension, but quickly slides from the memory. Its agility is infinite; wherever it may be, the instant one goes to put his hand upon it, he is sure to find it or feel it somewhere else. The wit of Benedick, on the other hand, springs more from reflection, and grows with the growth of thought. With all the pungency, and nearly all the pleasantry of hers, it has less of spontaneous volubility. Hence in their skirmishes she always gets the better of him; hitting him so swiftly, and in so many spots, as to bewilder his aim. But he makes ample amends when out of her presence, trundling off jests in whole paragraphs. In short, if his wit be slower, it is also stronger than hers: not so agile of movement, more weighty in matter, it shines less, but burns more; and as it springs much less out of the occasion, so it bears repeating much better. The effect of the serious events in bringing these persons to an armistice of wit is a happy stroke of art; and perhaps some such thing was necessary, to prevent the impression of their being jesters by trade. It proves at least that Beatrice is a witty woman, and not a mere female wit. To be sure, she is rather spicy than sweet; but then there is a kind of sweetness in spice,—especially such spice as hers.

I have already referred to the apt naming of this play. The general view of life which it presents answers well to the title. The persons do indeed make or have *much ado* ; but all the while to us who are in the secret, and ultimately to them also, all this much ado is plainly *about nothing* . Which is but a common difference in the aspect of things as they appear to the spectators and the partakers; it needs but an average experience to discover that real life is full of just such passages: what troubled and worried us yesterday made others laugh then, and makes us laugh to-day: what we fret or grieve at in the progress, we still smile and make merry over in the result.

<<span id="filepos0040392755"> a>AS YOU LIKE IT.

The Comedy of As You Like It was registered at the Stationers', in London, on the 4th of August, 1600. Two other of Shakespeare's plays, and one of Ben Jonson's, were entered at the same time; all of them under an injunction, "to be stayed." In regard to the other two of Shakespeare's plays, the stay appears to have been soon removed, as both of them were entered again in the course of the same month, and published before the end of that year. In the case of *As You Like It* , the stay seems to have been kept up; perhaps because its continued success on the stage made the theatrical company unwilling to part with their interest in it.

This is the only contemporary notice of the play that has been discovered. As it was not mentioned in the list given by Francis Meres in 1598, we are probably warranted in presuming it had not been heard of at that time. The play has a line, "Who ever lov'd, that lov'd not at first sight?" apparently quoted from Marlowe's version of *Hero and Leander* , which was published in 1598. So that we may safely conclude the play to have been written some time between that date and the date of the forecited entry at the Stationers'; that is, when the Poet was in his thirty-sixth or thirty-seventh year. The play was never printed, that we know of, till in the folio of 1623, where it stands the tenth in the division of Comedies. The text is there presented in a very satisfactory state, with but few serious errors, and none that can fairly be called impracticable.

Before passing from this branch of the subject, perhaps I ought to cite a curious piece of tradition, clearly pointing to the play in hand. Gilbert Shakespeare, a brother of William, lived till after the Restoration, which occurred in 1660; and Oldys tells us of "the faint, general, and almost lost ideas" which the old man had, of having once seen the Poet act a part in one of his own comedies;

"wherein, being to personate a decrepit old man, he wore a long beard, and appeared so weak and drooping, that he was forced to be carried by another person to a table, at which he was seated among some company who were eating, and one of them sung a song." This could have been none other than the "goold old man" Adam, in and about whom we have so much noble thought; and we thus learn that his character, beautiful in itself, yet more so for this circumstance, was sustained by the Poet himself.

In regard to the originals of this play, two sources have been pointed out,—*The Cook's Tale of Gamelyn* , sometime attributed to Chaucer, but upon better advice excluded from his works; and a novel by Thomas Lodge entitled *Rosalynd; Euphues' Golden Legacy* . As the *Tale of Gamelyn* was not printed till more than a century later, it has been questioned whether Shakespeare ever saw it. Nor indeed can much be alleged as indicating that he ever did: one point there is, however, that may have some weight that way. An old knight, Sir John of Boundis, being about to die, calls in his wise friends to advise him touching the distribution of his property among his three sons. They advise him to settle all his lands on the eldest, and leave the youngest without any thing. Gamelyn, the youngest, being his favourite son, he rejects their advice, and bestows the largest portion upon him. The Poet goes much more according to their advice; Orlando, who answers to Gamelyn, having no share in the bulk of his father's estate. A few other resemblances, also, may be traced, wherein the play differs from Lodge's novel; though none of them are so strong as to force the inference that Shakespeare must have consulted the *Tale* . Nor, in truth, is the matter of much consequence, save as bearing upon the question whether the Poet was of a mind to be unsatisfied with such printed books as lay in his way. I would not exactly affirm him to have been "a hunter of manuscripts"; but indications are not wanting, that he sometimes had access to them: nor is it at all unlikely that one so greedy of intellectual food, so eager and so apt to make the most of all the means within his reach, should have gone beyond the printed resources of his time. Besides, there can be no question that Lodge was very familiar with the *Tale of Gamelyn* : he follows it so closely in a large part of his novel as to leave scarce any doubt that he wrote with the manuscript before him; and if he, who was also sometime a player, availed himself of such sources, why may not Shakespeare have done the same?

The practical use of such inquiries is, that they exhibit the Poet in the character where I like especially to view him, namely, as an earnest and diligent seeker after knowledge, and as building himself up in intelligence and power by much the same means as are found to serve in the case of other men. He himself tells us that "ignorance is the curse of God, knowledge the wing wherewith we fly to Heaven." Assuredly he was a great student as well as a great genius; as full of aptness to learn as of force to create. If he had great faculties to work with, he was also a greater worker in the use of them. Nor is it best for us to think of him as being raised by natural gifts above the common methods and processes of high intellectual achievement.

Lodge's *Rosalynd* was first printed in 1590; and its popularity appears in that it was reprinted in 1592, and again in 1598. Steevens pronounced it a "worthless original"; but this sweeping sentence is so unjust as to breed some doubt whether he had read it. Compared with the general run of popular literature then in vogue, the novel has no little merit; and is very well entitled to the honour of having contributed to one of the most delightful poems ever written. A rather ambitious attempt indeed at fine writing; pedantic in style, not a little blemished with the elaborate euphemism of the time, and occasionally running into absurdity and indecorum; nevertheless, upon the whole, it is a varied and pleasing narrative, with passages of great force and beauty, and many touches of noble sentiment, and sometimes informed with a pastoral sweetness and simplicity quite charming.

To make a full sketch of the novel, in so far as the Poet borrowed from it, would occupy too much space. Still it seems desirable to indicate, somewhat, the extent of the Poet's obligations in this case; which can be best done, I apprehend, by stating, as compactly as may be, a portion of the story.

Sir John of Bordeaux, being at the point of death, called in his three sons, Saladyne, Fernandine, and Rosader, and divided his wealth among them, giving nearly a third to Rosader the youngest. After a short period of hypocritical mourning for his father, Saladyne went to studying how he might defraud his brothers, and ravish their legacies. He put Fernandine to school at Paris, and kept Rosader as his foot-boy. Rosader bore this patiently for three years, and then his spirit rose against it. While he was deep in meditation on the point, Saladyne came along and began to jerk him with rough speeches. After some interchange of angry and insulting words, Rosader "seized a great rake, and let drive at him," and soon brought him to terms. Saladyne, feigning sorrow for what he had done, then drew the youth, who was of a free and generous nature, into a reconciliation, till he might devise how to finish him out of the way.

Now, Gerismond, the rightful King of France, had been driven into exile, and his crown usurped, by Torismond, his younger brother. To amuse the people, and keep them from thinking of the banished King, the usurper appointed a day of wrestling and tournament; when a Norman, of great strength and stature, who had wrestled down as many as undertook with him, was to stand against all comers. Saladyne went to the Norman secretly, and engaged him with rich rewards to despatch Rosader, in case Rosader should come within his grasp. He then pricked his brother on to the wrestling, telling him how much honour it would bring him, and that he was the only one to uphold the renown of the family. The youth, full of heroic thoughts, was glad of such an opportunity. When the time came, Torismond went to preside over the games, taking with him the Twelve Peers of France, his daughter Alinda, his niece Rosalynd, and all the most famous beauties of the Court. Rosalynd, "upon whose cheeks there seemed a battle between the graces," was the centre of attraction, "and made the cavaliers crack their lances with more courage." The tournament being over, the Norman offered himself as general challenger at wrestling. While he is in the full career of success, Rosader alights from his horse, and presents himself for a trial. He quickly puts an end to the Norman's wrestling; though not till his eyes and thoughts have got badly entangled with the graces of Rosalynd. On the other side, she is equally smitten with his handsome person and heroic bearing, insomuch that, the spectacle being over, she takes from her neck a jewel, and sends it to him by a page, as an assurance of her favour.

This outline, as far as it goes, almost describes, word for word, the course and order of events in the play. And so it is, in a great measure, through the other parts and incidents of the plot; such as the usurper's banishment of his niece, and the escape of his daughter along with her; their arrival in the Forest of Arden, where Rosalynd's father has taken refuge; their encounter with the shepherds, their purchase of the cottage, and their adventures in the pastoral life. So, too, in the flight of Rosader to the same Forest, taking along with him the old servant, who is called Adam Spencer, his carving of love-verses in the bark of trees, his meeting with the disguised Rosalynd, and the wooing and marrying that enrich the forest scenes.

Thus much may suffice to show that the Poet has here borrowed a good deal of excellent matter. With what judgment and art the borrowed matter was used by him can only be understood on a careful study of his workmanship. In no one of his comedies indeed has he drawn more freely from others; nor, I may add, is there any one wherein he has enriched his drawings more liberally from the glory of his own genius. To appreciate his wisdom as shown in what he left unused, one must read the whole of Lodge's novel. In that work we find no traces of Jaques, or Touchstone, or Audrey; nothing, indeed, that could yield the slightest hint towards either of those characters. It scarce need be said that these superaddings are enough of themselves to transform the whole into another nature; pouring through all its veins a free and lively circulation of the most original wit and humour and poetry. And by a judicious indefiniteness as to persons and places, the Poet has greatly idealized the work, throwing it at a romantic distance, and weaving about it all the witchery of poetical perspective; while the whole falls in so smoothly with the laws of the imagination, that the breaches of geographical order are never noticed save by such as cannot understand poetry without a map.

No one at all competent to judge in the matter will suppose that Shakespeare could have been really indebted to Lodge, or to whomsoever else, for any of the *characters* in *As You Like It* . He merely borrowed certain names and incidents for the bodying-forth of conceptions purely his own. The resemblance is all in the drapery and circumstances of the representation, not in the individuals. For instance, we can easily imagine Rosalind in an hundred scenes not here represented; for she is a substantive personal being, such as we may detach and consider apart from the particular order wherein she stands: but we can discover in her no likeness to Lodge's Rosalynd, save that of name and situation: take away the similarity here, and there is nothing to indicate any sort of relationship between the heroines of the play and the novel. And it is considerable that, though the Poet here borrows so freely, still there is no sign of any borrowing in the work itself: we can detect no foreign influences, no second-hand touches, nothing to suggest that any part of the thing had ever been thought of before; what he took being so thoroughly assimilated with what he gave, that the whole seems to have come fresh from Nature and his own mind: so that, had the originals been lost, we should never have suspected there were any.

Shakespeare generally preferred to make up his plots and stories out of such materials as were most familiar to his audience. Of this we have many examples; but the fact is too well known to need dwelling upon. Though surpassingly rich in fertility and force of invention, he was notwithstanding singularly economical and sparing in the use of it. Which aptly shows how free he was from every thing like a sensational spirit or habit of mind. Nature was every thing to him, novelty nothing, or next to nothing. The true, not the new, was always the soul of his purpose; than which nothing could better approve the moral healthiness of his genius. Hence, in great part, his noble superiority to the intellectual and literary fashions of his time. He understood these perfectly; but he deliberately rejected them, or rather struck quite above or beyond them. We rarely meet with any thing that savours of *modishness* in his workmanship. Probably the best judgment ever pronounced upon him is Ben Jonson's, "He was not of an age, but for all time." For even so it is with the permanences of our intellectual and imaginative being that he deals, and not with any transiencies of popular or fashionable excitement or pursuit. And as he cared little for the new, so he was all the stronger in that which does not grow old, and which lives on from age to age in the perennial, unwithering freshness of Truth and Nature. For the being carried hither and thither by the shifting mental epidemics of the day, what is it, after all, but a tacit confession of weakness or disease? proving, at the least, that one has not strength of mind enough to "feel the soul of Nature," or to live at peace with the solidities of reason. And because the attractions of mere novelty had no force with Shakespeare; because his mind dwelt far above the currents of intellectual fashion and convention; therefore his dramas stand "exempt from the wrongs of time"; and the study of them is, with but a single exception, just our best discipline in those forms and sources of interest which underlie and outlast all the flitting specialties of mode and custom,—

"Truths that wake, to perish never; Which neither listlessness nor mad endeavour, Nor Man nor Boy, Nor all that is at enmity with joy, Can utterly abolish or destroy."

As You Like It is exceedingly rich and varied in character. The several persons stand out round and clear in themselves, yet their distinctive traits in a remarkable degree sink quietly into the feelings without reporting themselves in the understanding; for which cause the clumsy methods of criticism are little able to give them expression. Subtile indeed must be the analysis that should reproduce them to the intellect without help from the Dramatic Art.

Properly speaking, the play has no hero; for, though Orlando occupies the foreground, the characters are mainly co-ordinate; the design of the work precluding any subordination among them. Diverted by fortune from all their cherished plans and purposes, they pass before us in just that moral and intellectual dishabille which best reveals their indwelling graces of mind and heart. Schlegel remarks that "the Poet seems to have aimed, throughout, at showing that nothing is wanting, to call forth the poetry that has its dwelling in Nature and the human mind, but to throw off all artificial restraint, and restore both to their native liberty." This is well said; but it should be observed withal that the persons have already been "purified by suffering"; and that it was under the discipline of social restraint that they developed the virtues which make them go right without such restraint, as indeed they do, while we are conversing with them. Because they have not hitherto been altogether free to do as they would, therefore it is that they are good and beautiful in doing as they have a mind to now. Let us beware of attributing to Nature, as we call it, that goodness which proceeds from *habits* generated under Gospel culture and the laws of Christian society. After all, the ordinary conditions of social and domestic life give us far more than they take away. It requires a long schooling in the *prescriptions* of order and rectitude, to fit us for being left to ourselves. In some sense indeed it is a great enlargement of liberty to be rid of all the loves and duties and reverences which the Past may have woven about us; and many there are who seem to place freedom of mind in having nothing to look up to, nothing to respect outside of themselves. But human virtue does not grow in this way; and the stream must soon run dry if cut off from the spring. And I have no sympathy with those who would thus crush all tender and precious memories out of us, and then give the name of *freedom* to the void thus created in our souls. The liberty that goes by unknitting the bands of reverence and dissolving the ties that draw and hold men together in the charities of a common life, is not the liberty for me, nor is it the liberty that Shakespeare teaches. I am much rather minded to say, with a lawyer-poet of our time,

"If we lose All else, we will preserve our household laws; Nor let the license of these fickle times Subvert the holy shelter which command Of fathers, and undoubting faith of sons, Rear'd for our shivering virtues."

It is true, however, that in this play the better transpirations of character are mainly conducted in the eye of Nature, where the passions and vanities that so much disfigure human life find little to stir them into act. In the freedom of their woodland resort, and with the native inspirations of the place to kindle and gladden them, the persons have but to live out the handsome thoughts which they have elsewhere acquired. Man's tyranny has indeed driven them into banishment; but their virtues are much more the growth of the place they are banished from than of the place they are banished to.

Orlando is altogether such a piece of young-manhood as it does one good to be with. He has no special occasion for heroism, yet we feel that there is plenty of heroic stuff in him. Brave, gentle, modest, and magnanimous; never thinking of his high birth but to avoid dishonouring it; in his noble-heartedness, forgetting, and causing others to forget, his nobility of rank; he is every way just such a man as all true men would choose for their best friend. His persecuting brother, talking to himself, describes him as "never school'd, and yet learned; full of noble device; of all sorts enchantingly beloved; and indeed so much in the heart of the world, and especially of my own people, who best know him, that I am altogether misprised"; and this description is amply justified by his behaviour. The whole intercourse between him and his faithful old servant Adam is replete on both sides with that full-souled generosity in whose eye the nobilities of Nature are always sure of recognition.

Shakespeare evidently delighted in a certain natural harmony of character wherein virtue is free and spontaneous, like the breathing of perfect health. And such is Orlando. He is therefore good without effort; nay, it would require some effort for him to be otherwise; his soul gravitating towards goodness as of its own accord: "In his proper motion he ascends; descent and fall to him is adverse." And perhaps the nearest he comes to being aware of his virtue is when his virtue triumphs over a mighty temptation; that is, when he sees his unnatural brother in extreme peril;

"But kindness, nobler ever than revenge, And nature, stronger than his just occasion,"

made him risk his own life to save him; and even in this case the divine art of overcoming evil with good seems more an instinct than a conscious purpose with him. This is one of the many instances wherein the Poet delivers the highest results of Christian discipline as drawing so deeply and so creatively into the heart, as to work out with the freedom and felicity of native, original impulse.

I must dismiss Orlando with a part of his tilt of wit with Jaques, as that very well illustrates the composition of the man:

"*Jaq* . I thank you for your company; but, good faith, I had as lief have been myself alone.

Orlan . And so had I; but yet, for fashion's sake, I thank you too for your society.

Jaq . God b' wi' you: let's meet as little as we can.

Orlan . I do desire we may be better strangers.

Jaq . I pray you, mar no more trees with writing love-songs in their barks.

Orlan . I pray you, mar no more of my verses with reading them ill-favouredly.

Jaq . Rosalind is your love's name?

Orlan . Yes, just.

Jaq . I do not like her name.

Orlan . There was no thought of pleasing you when she was christened.

Jaq . What stature is she of?

Orlan . Just as high as my heart.

Jaq . You have a nimble wit: I think it was made of Atalanta's heels. Will you sit down with me? and we two will rail against our mistress the world and all our misery.

Orlan . I will chide no breather in the world but myself, against whom I know most faults."

The banished Duke exemplifies the best sense of nature as thoroughly informed and built up with Christian discipline and religious efficacy; so that the asperities of life do but make his thoughts run the smoother. How sweet, yet how considerative and firm, is every thing about his temper and moral frame! He sees all that is seen by the most keen-eyed satirist, yet is never moved to be satirical, because he looks with wiser and therefore kindlier eyes. The enmity of Fortune is fairly disarmed by his patience; her shots are all wasted against his breast, garrisoned as it is with the forces of charity and peace: his soul is made storm-proof by gentleness and truth: exile, penury, the ingratitude of men, the malice of the elements, what are they to him? he has the grace to sweeten away their venom, and to smile the sting out of them. He loves to stay himself upon the compensations of life, and to feed his gentler affections by dwelling upon the good which adversity opens to him, or the evil from which it withdraws him; and so he rejoices in finding "these woods more free from peril than the envious Court." In his philosophy, so bland, benignant, and contemplative, the mind tastes the very luxury of rest, and has an antepast of measureless content.

Touchstone, though he nowhere strikes so deep a chord within us as the poor Fool in *King Lear* , is, I think, the most entertaining of Shakespeare's privileged characters. And he is indeed a mighty delectable fellow! wise too, and full of the most insinuative counsel. How choicely does his grave, acute nonsense moralize the scenes wherein he moves! Professed clown though he be, and as such ever hammering away with artful awkwardness at a jest, a strange kind of humorous respect still waits upon him notwithstanding. It is curious to observe how the Poet takes care to let us know from the first, that beneath the affectations of his calling some precious sentiments have been kept alive; that far within the Fool there is laid up a secret reserve of the man, ready to leap forth and combine with better influences as soon as the incrustations of art are thawed and broken up. This is partly done in the scene where Rosalind and Celia arrange for their flight from the usurper's Court. Rosalind proposes,—

"But, cousin, what if we assay'd to steal The clownish Fool out of your father's Court? Would he not be a comfort to our travel?"

And Celia replies,—

He'll go along o'er the wide world with me: Leave me alone to woo him."

Where we learn that some remnants, at least, of a manly heart in him have asserted their force in the shape of unselfish regards, strong as life, for whatever is purest and loveliest in the characters about him. He would rather starve or freeze, with Celia near him, than feed high and lie warm where his eye cannot find her. If, with this fact in view, our honest esteem does not go out towards him, then we, I think, are fools in a worse sense than he is.

So much for the substantial manhood of Touchstone, and for the Poet's human-heartedness in thus putting us in communication with it. As for the other points of his character, I scarce know how to draw a reader into them by any turn of analysis. Used to a life cut off from human sympathies; stripped of the common responsibilities of the social state; living for no end but to make aristocratic idlers laugh; one therefore whom nobody heeds enough to resent or be angry at any thing he says;—of course his habit is to speak all for effect, nothing for truth: instead of reflecting the natural force and image of things, his vocation is to wrest and transshape them from their true form and pressure. Thus a strange wilfulness and whimsicality has wrought itself into the substance of his mind. He takes nothing for what it is in itself, but only for the odd quirks of thought he can twist out of it. Yet his nature is not so "subdued to what it works in" but that, amidst the scenes and inspirations of the Forest, the Fool quickly slides into the man; the supervenings of the place so running into and athwart what he brings with him, that his character comes to be as dappled and motley as his dress. Even the new passion which there overtakes him has a touch of his wilfulness in it: when he falls in love, as he really does, nothing seems to inspire and draw him more than the unloveliness of the object; thus approving that even so much of nature as survives in him is not content to run in natural channels.

Jaques is, I believe, an universal favourite, as indeed he well may be, for he is certainly one of the Poet's happiest conceptions. Without being at all unnatural, he has an amazing fund of peculiarity. Enraptured out of his senses at the voice of a song; thrown into a paroxysm of laughter at sight of the motley-clad and motley-witted Fool; and shedding the twilight of his merry-sad spirit over all the darker spots of human life and character; he represents the abstract and sum-total of an utterly useless yet perfectly harmless man, seeking wisdom by abjuring its first principle. An odd choice mixture of reality and affectation, he does nothing but think, yet avowedly thinks to no purpose; or rather thinking is with him its own end. On the whole, if in Touchstone there is much of the philosopher in the Fool, in Jaques there is not less of the fool in the philosopher; so that the German critic, Ulrici, is not so wide of the mark in calling them "two fools."

Jaques is equally wilful, too, with Touchstone, in his turn of thought and speech, though not so conscious of it; and as he plays his part more to please himself so he is proportionably less open to the healing and renovating influences of Nature. We cannot justly affirm, indeed, that "the soft blue sky did never melt into his heart," as Wordsworth says of his Peter Bell; but he shows more of resistance than all the other persons to the poetries and eloquences of the place. Tears are a great luxury to him: he sips the cup of woe with all the gust of an epicure. Still his temper is by no means sour: fond of solitude, he is nevertheless far from being unsocial. The society of good men, provided they be in adversity, has great charms for him. He likes to be with those who, though deserving the best, still have the worst: virtue wronged, buffeted, oppressed, is his special delight; because such moral discrepancies offer the most salient points to his cherished meditations. He himself enumerates nearly all the forms of melancholy except his own, which I take to be the melancholy of self-love. And its effect in his case is not unlike that of Touchstone's art; inasmuch as he greatly delights to see things otherwise than as they really are, and to make them speak out some meaning that is not in them; that is, their plain and obvious sense is not to his taste. Nevertheless his melancholy is grateful, because free from any dash of malignity. His morbid habit of mind seems to spring from an excess of generative virtue. And how racy and original is everything that comes from him! as if it bubbled up from the centre of his being; while his perennial fulness of matter makes his company always delightful. The Duke loves especially to meet him in his "sullen fits," because he then overflows with his most idiomatic humour. After all, the worst that can be said of Jaques is, that the presence of men who are at once fortunate and deserving corks him up; which may be only another way of saying that he cannot open out and run over, save where things are going wrong.

It is something uncertain whether Jaques or Rosalind be the greater attraction: there is enough in either to make the play a continual feast; though her charms are less liable to be staled by use, because they result from health of mind and symmetry of character; so that in her presence the head and the heart draw together perfectly. I mean that she never starts any moral or emotional reluctances in our converse with her: all our sympathies go along with her freely, because she never jars upon them, or touches them against the grain.

For wit, this strange, queer, lovely being is fully equal to Beatrice, yet nowise resembling her. A soft, subtile, nimble essence, consisting in one knows not what, and springing up one can hardly tell how, her wit neither stings nor burns, but plays briskly and airily over all things within its reach, enriching and adorning them; insomuch that one could ask no greater pleasure than to be the continual theme of it. In its irrepressible vivacity it waits not for occasion, but runs on for ever, and we wish it to run on for ever: we have a sort of faith that her dreams are made up of cunning, quirkish, graceful fancies; her wits being in a frolic even when she is asleep. And her heart seems a perennial spring of affectionate cheerfulness: no trial can break, no sorrow chill, her flow of spirits; even her sighs are breathed forth in a wrappage of innocent mirth; an arch, roguish smile irradiates her saddest tears. No sort of unhappiness can live in her company: it is a joy even to stand her chiding; for, "faster than her tongue doth make offence, her eye doth heal it up."

So much for her choice idiom of wit. But I must not pass from this part of the theme without noting also how aptly she illustrates the Poet's peculiar use of humour. For I suppose the difference of wit and humour is too well understood to need any special exposition. But the two often go together; though there is a form of wit, much more common, that burns and dries the juices all out of the mind, and turns it into a kind of sharp, stinging wire. Now Rosalind's sweet establishment is thoroughly saturated with humour, and this too of the freshest and wholesomest quality. And the effect of her humour is, as it were, to *lubricate* all her faculties, and make her thoughts run brisk and glib even when grief has possession of her heart. Through this interfusive power, her organs of play are held in perfect concert with her springs of serious thought. Hence she is outwardly merry and inwardly sad at the same time. We may justly say that she laughs out her sadness, or plays out her seriousness: the sorrow that is swelling her breast puts her wits and spirits into a frolic; and in the mirth that overflows through her tongue we have a relish of the grief with which her heart is charged. And our sympathy with her inward state is the more divinely moved, forasmuch as she thus, with indescribable delicacy, touches it through a masquerade of playfulness. Yet, beneath all her frolicsomeness, we feel that there is a firm basis of thought and womanly dignity; so that she never laughs away our respect.

It is quite remarkable how, in respect of her disguise, Rosalind just reverses the conduct of Viola, yet with much the same effect. For, though she seems as much at home in her male attire as if she had always worn it, this never strikes us otherwise than as an exercise of skill for the perfecting of her masquerade. And on the same principle her occasional freedoms of speech serve to deepen our sense of her innate delicacy; they being manifestly intended as a part of her disguise, and springing from the feeling that it is far less indelicate to go a little out of her character, in order to prevent any suspicion of her sex, than it would be to hazard such a suspicion by keeping strictly within her character. In other words, her free talk bears much the same relation to her character as her dress does to her person, and is therefore becoming to her even on the score of feminine modesty.—Celia appears well worthy of a place beside her whose love she shares and repays. Instinct with the soul of moral beauty and female tenderness, the friendship of these more-than-sisters "mounts to the seat of grace within the mind."

"We still have slept together; Rose at an instant, learn'd, play'd, eat together; And wheresoe'er we went, like Juno's swans, Still we went coupled and inseparable."

The general drift and temper, or, as some of the German critics would say, the ground-idea of this play, is aptly hinted by the title. As for the beginnings of what is here represented, these do not greatly concern us; most of them lie back out of our view, and the rest are soon lost sight of in what grows out of them; but the issues, of which there are many, are all exactly to our mind; we feel them to be just about right, and would not have them otherwise. For example, touching Frederick and Oliver, our wish is that they should repent, and repair the wrong they have done, in brief, that they should become good; which is precisely what takes place; and as soon as they do this, they naturally love those who were good before. Jaques, too, is so fitted to moralize the discrepancies of human life, so happy and at home, and withal so agreeable, in that exercise, that we would not he should follow the good Duke when in his case those discrepancies are composed. The same might easily be shown in respect of the other issues. Indeed I dare ask any genial, considerate reader, Does not every thing turn out just *as you like it* ? Moreover there is an indefinable something about the play that puts us in a receptive frame of mind; that opens the heart, soothes away all querulousness and fault-finding, and makes us easy and apt to be pleased. Thus the Poet here disposes us to like things as they come, and at the same time takes care that they shall come as we like. The whole play indeed is *as you like it* .

Much has been said by one critic and another about the improbabilities in this play. I confess they have never troubled me; and, as I have had no trouble here to get out of, I do not well know how to help others out. Wherefore, if any one be still annoyed by these things, I will turn him over to the elegant criticism of the poet Campbell: "Before I say more of this dramatic treasure, I must absolve myself by a confession as to some of its improbabilities. Rosalind asks her cousin Celia, 'Whither shall we go?' and Celia answers, 'To seek my uncle in the Forest of Arden.' But, arrived there, and having purchased a cottage and sheep-farm, neither the daughter nor niece of the banished Duke seem to trouble themselves much to inquire about either father or uncle. The lively and natural-hearted Rosalind discovers no impatience to embrace her sire, until she has finished her masked courtship with Orlando. But Rosalind was in love, as I have been with the comedy these forty years; and love is blind; for until a late period my eyes were never couched so as to see this objection. The truth however is, that love is *wilfully* blind; and now that my eyes are opened, I shut them against the fault. Away with your best-proved improbabilities, when the heart has been touched and the fancy fascinated."

As a fitting pendent to this, I may further observe that the bringing of lions, serpents, palm-trees, rustic shepherds, and banished noblemen together in the Forest of Arden, is a strange piece of geographical license, which certain critics have not failed to make merry withal. Perhaps they did not see that the very grossness of the thing proves it to have been designed. The Poet keeps his geography true enough whenever he has cause to do so. He knew, at all events, that lions did not roam at large in France. By this irregular combination of actual things, he informs the whole with ideal effect, giving to this charming issue of his brain "a local habitation and a name," that it may link-in with our flesh-and-blood sympathies, and at the same time turning it into a wild, wonderful, remote, fairy-land region, where all sorts of poetical things may take place without the slightest difficulty. Of course Shakespeare would not have done thus, but that he saw quite through the grand critical humbug which makes the proper effect of a work of art depend upon our belief in the actual occurrence of the thing represented. But your "critic grave and cool," I suppose, is one who, like Wordsworth's "model of a child,"

"Can string you names of districts, cities, towns, The whole world over, tight as beads of dew Upon a gossamer thread: he sifts, he weighs; All things are put to question; he must live Knowing that he grows wiser every day, Or else not live at all, and seeing too Each little drop of wisdom as it falls Into the dimpling cistern of his heart, O, give us once again the wishing-cap Of Fortunatus, and the invisible coat Of Jack the Giant-killer, Robin Hood, And Sabra in the forest with Saint George! The child, whose love is here, at least doth reap One precious gain, that he forgets himself."

As far as I can determine the matter, *As You Like It* is, upon the whole, my favourite of Shakespeare's comedies. Yet I should be puzzled to tell why; for my preference springs not so much from any particular points or features, wherein it is surpassed by several others, as from the general toning and effect. The whole is replete with a beauty so delicate yet so intense, that we feel it everywhere, but can never tell especially where it is, or in what it consists. For instance, the descriptions of forest scenery come along so unsought, and in such easy, quiet, natural touches, that we take in the impression without once noticing what it is that impresses us. Thus there is a certain woodland freshness, a glad, free naturalness, that creeps and steals into the heart before we know it. And the spirit of the place is upon its inhabitants, its genius within them: we almost breathe with them the fragrance of the Forest, and listen to "the melodies of woods and winds and waters," and feel

"The Power, the Beauty, and the Majesty, That have their haunts in dale, or piny mountain, Or forest by slow stream, or pebbly spring."

Even the Court Fool, notwithstanding all the crystallizing process that has passed upon him, undergoes, as we have seen, a sort of rejuvenescence of his inner man, so that his wit catches at every turn the fresh hues and odours of his new whereabout. I am persuaded indeed that Milton had a special eye to this play in the lines,—

"And sweetest Shakespeare, Fancy's child, Warbles his native wood-notes wild."

To all which add, that the kindlier sentiments here seem playing out in a sort of jubilee. Untied from set purposes and definite aims, the persons come forth with their hearts already tuned, and so have but to let off their redundant music. Envy, jealousy, avarice, revenge, all the passions that afflict and degrade society, they have left in the city behind them. And they have brought the intelligence and refinement of the Court without its vanities and vexations; so that the graces of art and the simplicities of nature meet together in joyous, loving sisterhood. A serene and mellow atmosphere of thought encircles and pervades the actors in this drama; as if on purpose to illustrate how

"One impulse from a vernal wood May teach you more of man, Of moral evil, and of good, Than all the sages can."

Nature throws her protecting arms around them; Beauty pitches her tents before them; Heaven rains its riches upon them: with "no enemy but Winter and rough weather," Peace hath taken up her abode with them; and they have nothing to do but to "fleet the time carelessly, as they did in the golden world."

But no words of mine, I fear, will justify to others my own sense of this delectable workmanship. I can hardly think of any thing else in the whole domain of Poetry so inspiring of the faith that "every flower enjoys the air it breathes." The play, indeed, abounds in wild, frolicsome graces which cannot be described; which can only be seen and felt; and which the hoarse voice of

Criticism seems to scare away, as the crowing of the cocks is said to have scared away the fairy spirits from their nocturnal pastimes. I know not how I can better dismiss the theme than with some lines from Wordsworth, which these scenes have often recalled to my thoughts:

"Nature never did betray The heart that lov'd her; 'tis her privilege Through all the years of this our life to lead From joy to joy: for she can so inform The mind that is within us, so impress With quietness and beauty, and so feed With lofty thoughts, that neither evil tongues, Rash judgments, nor the sneers of selfish men, Nor greetings where no kindness is, nor all The dreary intercourse of daily life, Shall e'er prevail against us, or disturb Our cheerful faith, that all which we behold Is full of blessings."

<<span id="filepos0040442637"> a>TWELFTH NIGHT; OR, WHAT YOU WILL.

The comedy of Twelfth Night; or, What You Will, was never printed, that we know of, during the author's life. It first appeared in the folio of 1623: consequently that edition, and the reprint of it in 1632, are our only authorities for the text. Fortunately, in this instance, the original printing was very good for that time; the few errors have proved, for the most part, easy of correction; so that the text offers little matter of difficulty or disagreement among editors.

In default of positive information, this play was for a long time set down as among the last-written of the Poet's dramas. This opinion was based upon such slight indications, gathered from the work itself, as could have no weight but in the absence of other proofs. No contemporary notice of the play was discovered till the year 1828, when Mr. Collier, delving among the "musty records of antiquity" stored away in the Museum, lighted upon a manuscript *Diary* , written, as was afterwards ascertained, by one John Manningham, a barrister who was entered at the Middle Temple in 1597. Under date of February 2d, 1602, the author notes, "At our feast we had a play called *Twelfth Night, or What You Will* , much like *The Comedy of Errors* , or *Menechmi* in Plautus, but most like and near to that in the Italian called *Inganni* ." The writer then goes on to state such particulars of the action, as fully identify the play which he saw with the one now under consideration. It seems that the benchers and members of the several Inns-of-Court were wont to enrich their convivialities with a course of wit and poetry. And the forecited notice ascertains that Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* was performed before the members of the Middle Temple on the old Church festival of the Purification, formerly called Candlemas;—an important link in the course of festivities that used to continue from Christmas to Shrovetide. We thus learn that one of the Poet's sweetest plays was enjoyed by a gathering of his learned and studious contemporaries, at a time when this annual jubilee had rendered their minds congenial and apt, and when Christians have so much cause to be happy and gentle and kind, and therefore to cherish the convivial delectations whence kindness and happiness naturally grow.

As to the date of the composition, we have little difficulty in fixing this somewhere between the time when the play was acted at the Temple, and the year 1598. In Act iii., scene 2, when Malvolio is at the height of his ludicrous beatitude, Maria says of him, "He does smile his face into more lines than are in the new map, with the augmentation of the Indies." In 1598 was published an English version of *Linschoten's Discourse of Voyages* , with a map exactly answering to Maria's description. Nor is any such multilineal map known to have appeared in England before that time. Besides, that was the first map of the world, in which the *Eastern Islands* were included. So that the allusion can hardly be to any thing else; and the words *new map* would seem to infer that the passage was written not long after the appearance of the map in question.

Again: In Act iii., scene 1, the Clown says to Viola, "But, indeed, words are very rascals, since bonds disgraced them." This may be fairly understood as referring to an order issued by the Privy Council in June, 1600, and laying very severe restrictions upon stage performances. This order prescribes that "there shall be about the city two houses and no more, allowed to serve for the use of common stage plays"; that "the two several companies of players, assigned unto the two houses allowed, may play each of them in their several houses twice a-week, and no oftener"; and that "they shall forbear altogether in the time of Lent, and likewise at such time and times as any extraordinary sickness or infection of disease shall appear to be in or about the city." The order was directed to the principal magistrates of the city and suburbs, "strictly charging them to see to the execution of the same"; and it is plain, that if rigidly enforced it would have amounted almost to a total suppression of play-houses, as the expenses of such establishments could hardly have been met, in the face of so great drawbacks.

Therewithal it is to be noted that the Puritans were specially forward and zealous in urging the complaints which put the Privy Council upon issuing this stringent process; and it will hardly be questioned that the character of Malvolio was partly meant as a satire on that remarkable people. That the Poet should be somewhat provoked at their action in bringing about such tight restraints upon the freedom of his art, was certainly natural enough. Nor is it a small addition to their many claims on our gratitude, that their aptness to "think, because they were virtuous, there should be no more cakes and ale," had the effect of calling forth so rich and withal so good-natured a piece of retaliation. Perhaps it should be remarked further, that the order in question, though solicited by the authorities of the city, was not enforced; for even at that early date those magistrates had hit upon the method of stimulating the complaints of discontented citizens till orders were taken for removing the alleged grievances, and then of letting such orders sleep, lest the enforcing of them should hush those complaints, and thus take away all pretext for keeping up the agitation.

The story upon which the more serious parts of *Twelfth Night* were founded appears to have been a general favourite before and during Shakespeare's time. It is met with in various forms and under various names in the Italian, French, and English literature of that period. The earliest form of it known to us is in Bandello's collection of novels. From the Italian of Bandello it was transferred, with certain changes and abridgments, into the French of Belleforest, and makes one in his collection of *Tragical Histories* . From one or the other of these sources the tale was borrowed again by Barnabe Rich, and set forth as *The History of Apolonius and Silla* , making the second in his collection of tales entitled *Farewell to the Military Profession* , which was first printed in 1581.

Until the discovery of Manningham's *Diary* , Shakespeare was not supposed to have gone beyond these sources, and it was thought something uncertain to which of these he was most indebted for the raw material of his play. It is now held doubtful whether he drew from either of them. The passage I have quoted from that *Diary* notes a close resemblance of *Twelfth Night* to an Italian play "called *Inganni* ." This has had the effect of directing attention to the Italian theatre in quest of his originals. Two comedies bearing the title of *Gl' Inganni* have been found, both of them framed upon the novel of Bandello, and both in print before the date of *Twelfth Night* . These, as also the three forms of the tale mentioned above, all agree in having a brother and sister, the latter in male attire, and the two bearing so close a resemblance in person and dress as to be indistinguishable; upon which circumstance some of the leading incidents are made to turn. In one of the Italian plays, the sister is represented as assuming the name of *Cesare* ; which is so like *Cesario* , the name adopted by Viola in her disguise, that the one may well be thought to have suggested the other. Beyond this point, *Twelfth Night* shows no clear connection with either of those plays.

But there is a third Italian comedy, also lately brought to light, entitled *Gl' Ingannati* , which is said to have been first printed in 1537. Here the traces of indebtedness are much clearer and more numerous. I must content myself with abridging the Rev. Joseph Hunter's statement of the matter. In the Italian play, a brother and sister, named Fabritio and Lelia, are separated at the sacking of Rome in 1527. Lelia is carried to Modena, where a gentleman resides, named Flamineo, to whom she was formerly attached. She disguises herself as a boy, and enters his service. Flamineo, having forgotten his Lelia, is making suit to Isabella, a lady of Modena. The disguised Lelia is employed by him in his love-suit to Isabella, who remains utterly deaf to his passion, but falls desperately in love with the messenger. In the third Act the brother Fabritio arrives at Modena, and his close resemblance to Lelia in her male attire gives rise to some ludicrous mistakes. At one time, a servant of Isabella's meets him in the street, and takes him to her house, supposing him to be the messenger; just as Sebastian is taken for Viola, and led to the house of Olivia. In due time, the needful recognitions take place, whereupon Isabella easily transfers her affection to Fabritio, and Flamineo's heart no less easily ties up with the loving and faithful Lelia. In her disguise, Lelia takes the name of *Fabio* ; hence, most likely, the name of Fabian, who figures as one of Olivia's servants. The Italian play has also a subordinate character called Pasquella, to whom Maria corresponds; and another named *Malevolti* , of which *Malvolio* is a happy adaptation. All which fully establishes the connection between the Italian comedy and the English. But it does not follow necessarily that the foreign original was used by Shakespeare; so much of the lighter literature of his time having perished, that we cannot affirm with any certainty what importations from Italy may or may not have been accessible to him in his native tongue.

As for the more comic portions of *Twelfth Night* ,—those in which Sir Toby Belch, Sir Andrew Aguecheek, and the Clown figure so delectably,—we have no reason for believing that any part of them was borrowed; there being no hints or traces of any thing like them in the previous versions of the story, or in any other book or writing known to us. And it is to be observed, moreover, that the Poet's borrowings, in this instance as in others, relate only to the plot of the work, the poetry and character being all his own; and that, here as elsewhere, he used what he took merely as the canvas whereon to pencil out and express the breathing creatures of his mind. So that the whole workmanship is just as original, in the only right sense of that term, as if the story and incidents had been altogether the children of his own invention; and he but followed his usual custom of so ordering his work as to secure whatever benefit might accrue from a sort of pre-established harmony between his subject and the popular mind.

I am quite at a loss to conceive why *Twelfth Night* should ever have been referred to the Poet's latest period of authorship. The play naturally falls, by the internal notes of style, temper, and poetic grain, into the middle period of his productive years. It has no such marks of vast but immature powers as are often met with in his earlier plays; nor, on the other hand, any of "that intense idiosyncrasy of thought and expression,—that unparalleled fusion of the intellectual with the passionate,"—which distinguishes his later ones. Every thing is calm and quiet, with an air of unruffled serenity and composure about it, as if the Poet had purposely taken to such matter as he could easily mould into graceful and entertaining forms; thus exhibiting none of that crushing muscularity of mind to which the hardest materials afterwards or elsewhere became as limber and pliant as clay in the hands of a potter. Yet the play has a marked severity of taste; the style, though by no means so great as in some others, is singularly faultless; the graces of wit and poetry are distilled into it with indescribable delicacy, as if they came from a hand at once the most plentiful and the most sparing: in short, the work is everywhere replete with "the modest charm of not too much"; its beauty, like that of the heroine, being of the still, deep, retiring sort, which it takes one long to find, forever to exhaust, and which can be fully caught only by the reflective imagination in "the quiet and still air of delightful studies." Thus all things are disposed in most happy keeping with each other, and tempered in the blandest proportion of Art; so as to illustrate how

"Grace, laughter, and discourse may meet, And yet the beauty not go less; For what is noble should be sweet."

If the characters of this play are generally less interesting in themselves than some we meet with elsewhere in the Poet's works, the defect is pretty well made up by the felicitous grouping of them. Their very diversities of temper and purpose are made to act as so many mutual affinities; and this too in a manner so spontaneous that we see not how they could possibly act otherwise. For broad comic effect, the cluster of which Sir Toby is the centre—all of them drawn in clear yet delicate colours—is inferior only to the unparalleled assemblage that makes rich the air of Eastcheap. Of Sir Toby himself—that most whimsical, madcap, frolicsome old toper, so full of antics and fond of sprees, with a plentiful stock of wit, which is kept in motion by an equally plentiful lack of money—it is enough to say, with our Mr. Verplanck, that "he certainly comes out of the same associations where the Poet saw Falstaff hold his revels"; and that, though "not Sir John, nor a fainter sketch of him, yet he has an odd sort of a family likeness to him." Sir Toby has a decided *penchant* for practical jokes; though rather because he takes a sort of disinterested pleasure in them, than because he loves to see himself in the process of engineering them through: for he has not a particle of ill-nature in him. Though by no means a coward himself, he nevertheless enjoys the exposure of cowardice in others; yet this again is not so much because such exposure feeds his self-esteem, as because he delights in the game for its own sake, and for the nimble pastime it yields to his faculties: that is, his impulses seem to rest in it as an ultimate object, or a part of what is to him the *summum bonum* of life. And it is much the same with his addiction to vinous revelry, and to the moister kind of minstrelsy; an addiction that proceeds in part from his keen gust of fun, and the happiness he finds in making sport for others as well as for himself: he will drink till the world turns round, but not unless others are at hand to enjoy the turning along with him.

Sir Andrew Aguecheek, the aspiring, lackadaisical, self-satisfied echo and sequel of Sir Toby, fitly serves the double purpose of a butt and a foil to the latter, at once drawing him out and setting him off. Ludicrously proud of the most petty, childish irregularities, which, however, his natural fatuity keeps him from acting, and barely suffers him to affect, on this point he reminds us of that impressive imbecility, Abraham Slender; yet not in such sort as to encroach at all on Slender's province. There can scarcely be found a richer piece of diversion than Sir Toby's practice in dandling Sir Andrew out of his money, and paying him off with the odd hope of gaining Olivia's hand. And the funniest of it is, that while Sir Toby understands him thoroughly he has not himself the slightest suspicion or inkling of what he is; he being as confident of his own wit as others are of his want of it. Nor are we here touched with any revulsions of moral feeling, such as might disturb our enjoyment of their fellowship; on the contrary, we sympathize with Sir Toby's sport, without any reluctances of virtue or conscience. To our sense of the matter, he neither has nor ought to have any scruples or compunctions about the game he is hunting. For, in truth, his dealing with Sir Andrew is all in the way of fair exchange. He gives as much pleasure as he gets. If he is cheating Sir Andrew out of his money, he is also cheating him into the proper felicity of his nature, and thus paying him with the equivalent best suited to his capacity. It suffices that, in being stuffed with the preposterous delusion about Olivia, Sir Andrew is rendered supremely happy at the time; while he manifestly has not force enough to remember it with any twinges of shame or self-reproach. And we feel that, while clawing his fatuous crotchets and playing out his absurdities, Sir Toby is really doing Sir Andrew no wrong, since the latter is then most himself, is in his happiest mood, and in the most natural freedom of his indigenous gifts and graces. All which quite precludes any division of our sympathies, and just makes our comic enjoyment of their intercourse simply perfect.

Malvolio, the self-love-sick Steward, has hardly had justice done him, his bad qualities being indeed of just the kind to defeat the recognition of his good ones. He represents a perpetual class of people, whose leading characteristic is moral demonstrativeness, and who are never satisfied with a law that leaves them free to do right, unless it also give them the power to keep others from doing wrong. To quote again from Mr. Verplanck, Malvolio embodies "a conception as true as it is original and droll; and its truth may still be frequently attested by comparison with real Malvolios, to be found everywhere from humble domestic life up to the high places of learning, of the State, and even of the Church." From the central idea of the character it follows in course that the man has too much conscience to mind his own business, and is too pure to tolerate mirth in others, because too much swollen and stiffened with self-love to be merry himself. His highest exhilaration is when he contemplates the image of his self-imputed virtues: he lives so entranced with the beauty of his own inward parts, that he would fain hold himself the wrong side out, to the end that all the world may duly appreciate and admire him. Naturally, too, the more he hangs over his own moral beauty, the more pharisaical and sanctimonious he becomes in his opinion and treatment of others. For the glass which magnifies to his view whatever of good there may be in himself, also serves him as an inverted telescope to *minify* the good of those about him; and, which is more, the self-same spirit that prompts him to invert the instrument upon other men's virtues, naturally moves him to turn the big end upon their faults and the small end upon his own. Of course, therefore, he is never without food for censure and reproof save when he is alone with himself, where, to be sure, his intense consciousness of virtue just breathes around him "the air of Paradise." Thus his continual frothing over with righteous indignation all proceeds from the yeast of pride and self-importance working mightily within him. Maria, whose keen eye and sure tongue seldom fail to hit the white of the mark, describes him as not being "any thing constantly, but a time-pleaser." And it is remarkable that the emphasized moral rigidity of such men is commonly but the outside of a mind secretly intent on the service of the time, and caring little for any thing but to trim its sails to the winds of self-interest and self-advancement. Yet Malvolio is really a man of no little talent and accomplishment, as he is also one of marked skill, fidelity, and rectitude in his calling; so that he would be a right worthy person all round, but for his inordinate craving

"to be dress'd in an opinion Of wisdom, gravity, profound conceit; As who should say, *I am Sir Oracle, And when I ope my lips, let no dog bark* ."

This overweening moral coxcombry is not indeed to be reckoned among the worst of crimes; but perhaps there is no other one fault so generally or so justly offensive, and therefore none so apt to provoke the merciless retaliations of mockery and practical wit.

Maria, the little structure packed so close with mental spicery, has read Malvolio through and through; she knows him without and within; and she never speaks of him, but that her speech touches the very pith of the theme; as when she describes him to be one "that cons State without book, and utters it by great swaths; the best-persuaded of himself, so crammed, as he thinks, with excellences, that it is his ground of faith that all who look on him love him." Her quaint stratagem of the letter has and is meant to have the effect of disclosing to others what her keener insight has long since discovered; and its working lifts her into a model of arch, roguish mischievousness, with wit to plan and art to execute whatsoever falls within the scope of such a character. Her native sagacity has taught her how to touch him in just the right spots to bring out the reserved or latent notes of his character. Her diagnosis of his inward state is indeed perfect; and when she makes the letter instruct him,—"Be opposite with a kinsman, surly with servants; let thy tongue tang arguments of State; put thyself into the trick of singularity,"—her arrows are so aimed as to cleave the pin of his most characteristic predispositions.

The scenes where the waggish troop, headed by this "noble gull-catcher" and "most excellent devil of wit," bewitch Malvolio into "a contemplative idiot," practising upon his vanity and conceit till he seems ready to burst with an ecstasy of self-consequence, and they "laugh themselves into stitches" over him, are almost painfully diverting. It is indeed sport to see him "jet under his advanced plumes"; and during this part of the operation our hearts freely keep time with theirs who are tickling out his buds into full-blown thoughts: at length, however, when he is under treatment as a madman, our delight in his exposure passes over into commiseration of his distress, and we feel a degree of resentment towards his ingenious persecutors. The Poet, no doubt, meant to push the joke upon him so far as to throw our sympathies over on his side, and make us take his part. For his character is such that perhaps nothing but excessive reprisals on his vanity and conceit could make us do justice to his real worth.

The shrewd, mirth-loving Fabian, who in greedy silence devours up fun, tasting it too far down towards his knees to give any audible sign of the satisfaction it yields him, is an apt and willing agent in putting the stratagem through. If he does nothing towards inventing or cooking up the repast, he is at least a happy and genial partaker of the banquet that others have prepared.—Feste, the jester, completes this illustrious group of laughing and laughter-moving personages. Though not, perhaps, quite so wise a fellow as Touchstone, of *As-You-Like-It* memory, nor endowed with so fluent and racy a fund of humour, he nevertheless has enough of both to meet all the demands of his situation. If, on the one hand, he never launches the ball of fun, neither, on the other, does he ever fail to do his part towards keeping it rolling. On the whole, he has a sufficiently facile and apposite gift at jesting out philosophy, and moralizing the scenes where he moves; and whatever he has in that line is perfectly original with him. It strikes me, withal, as a rather note-worthy circumstance that both the comedy and the romance of the play meet together in him, as in their natural home. He is indeed a right jolly fellow; no note of mirth springs up but he has answering susceptibilities for it to light upon; but he also has at the same time a delicate vein of tender pathos in him; as appears by the touchingly-plaintive song he sings, which, by the way, is one of

"The very sweetest Fancy culls or frames, Where *tenderness* of heart is strong and deep."

I am not supposing this to be the measure of his lyrical invention, for the song probably is not of his making; but the selection marks at least the setting of his taste, or rather the tuning of his soul, and thus discovers a choice reserve of feeling laid up in his breast.

Such are the scenes, such the characters that enliven Olivia's mansion during the play: Olivia herself, calm, cheerful, of "smooth, discreet, and stable bearing," hovering about them; sometimes unbending, never losing her dignity among them; often checking, oftener enjoying their merry-makings, and occasionally emerging from her seclusion to be plagued by the Duke's message and bewitched by his messenger: and Viola, always perfect in her part, yet always shrinking from it, appearing among them from time to time on her embassies of love; sometimes a partaker, sometimes a provoker, sometimes the victim of their mischievous sport.

All this array of comicalities, exhilarating as it is in itself, is rendered doubly so by the frequent changes and playings-in of poetry breathed from the sweetest spots of romance, and which "gives a very echo to the seat where Love is thron'd"; ideas and images of beauty creeping and stealing over the mind with footsteps so soft and delicate that we scarce know what touches us,—the motions of one that had learned to tread

"As if the wind, not he, did walk, Nor press'd a flower, nor bow'd a stalk."

Upon this portion of the play Hazlitt has some spirited remarks: "We have a friendship for Sir Toby; we patronize Sir Andrew; we have an understanding with the Clown, a sneaking kindness for Maria and her rogueries; we feel a regard for Malvolio, and sympathize with his gravity, his smiles, his cross-garters, his yellow stockings, and imprisonment: but there is something that excites in us a stronger feeling than all this."

Olivia is a considerable instance how much a fair and candid setting-forth may do to render an ordinary person attractive, and shows that for the homebred comforts and fireside tenour of life such persons after all are apt to be the best.

Nor, though something commonplace in her make-up, such as the average of cultivated womanhood is always found to be, is she without bright and penetrative thoughts, whenever the occasion calls for them. Her reply to the Steward, when, by way of scorching the Clown, he "marvels that her ladyship takes delight in such a barren rascal," gives the true texture of her mind and moral frame: "O, you are sick of self-love, Malvolio, and taste with a distempered appetite. To be generous, guiltless, and of free disposition, is to take those things for bird-bolts that you deem cannon-bullets. There is no slander in an allowed Fool, though he do nothing but rail; nor no railing in a known discreet man, though he do nothing but reprove." Practical wisdom enough to make the course of any household run smooth! The instincts of a happy, placid temper have taught Olivia that there is as little of Christian virtue as of natural benignity in stinging away the spirit of kindness with a tongue of acid and acrimonious pietism. Her firm and healthy pulse beats in sympathy with the sportiveness in which the proper decorum of her station may not permit her to bear an active part. And she is too considerate, withal, not to look with indulgence on the pleasantries that are partly meant to divert her thoughts, and air off a too vivid remembrance of her recent sorrows. Besides, she has gathered, even under the discipline of her own afflictions, that as, on the one hand, "what Nature makes us mourn she bids us heal," so, on the other, the free hilarities of wit and humour, even though there be something of nonsense mixed up with them, are a part of that "bland philosophy of life" which helps to knit us up in the unions of charity and peace; that they promote cheerfulness of temper, smooth down the lines of care, sweeten away the asperities of the mind, make the eye sparkling and lustrous; and, in short, do much of the very best stitching in the embroidered web of friendship and fair society. So that she finds abundant motive in reason, with no impediment in religion, to refrain from spoiling the merry passages of her friends and servants by looking black or sour upon them.

Olivia is manifestly somewhat inclined to have her own way. But then it must also be acknowledged that her way is pretty apt to be right. This wilfulness, or something that borders upon it, is shown alike in her impracticability to the Duke's solicitations, and in her pertinacity in soliciting his messenger. And it were well worth the while to know, if we could, how one so perverse in certain spots can manage notwithstanding to be so agreeable as a whole. Then too, if it seems rather naughty in her that she does not give the Duke a better chance to try his power upon her, she gets pretty well paid in falling a victim to the eloquence which her obstinacy stirs up. Nor is it altogether certain whether her conduct springs from a pride that will not listen where her fancy is not taken, or from an unambitious modesty that prefers not to "match above her degree." Her "beauty truly blent, whose red and white Nature's own sweet and cunning hand laid on," saves the credit of the fancy-smitten Duke in such an urgency of suit as might else breed some question of his manliness; while her winning infirmity, as expressed in the tender violence with which she hastens on "a contract and eternal bond of love" with the astonished and bewildered Sebastian, "that her most jealous and too doubtful soul may live at peace," shows how well the sternness of the brain may be tempered into amiability by the meekness of womanhood.

Manifold indeed are the attractions which the Poet has shed upon his heroes and heroines; yet perhaps the learned spirit of the man is more wisely apparent in the home-keeping virtues and unobtrusive beauty of his average characters. And surely the contemplation of Olivia may well suggest the question, whether the former be not sometimes too admirable to be so instructive as those whose graces walk more in the light of common day. At all events, the latter may best admonish us,

"How Verse may build a princely throne On humble truth."

Similar thoughts might aptly enough be suggested by the Duke, who, without any very splendid or striking qualities, manages somehow to be a highly agreeable and interesting person. His character is merely that of an accomplished gentleman, enraptured at the touch of music, and the sport of thick-thronging fancies. It is plain that Olivia has only enchanted his imagination, not won his heart; though he is not himself aware that such is the case. This fancy-sickness—for it appears to be nothing else—naturally renders him somewhat capricious and fantastical, "unstaid and skittish in his motions"; and, but for the exquisite poetry which it inspires him to utter, would rather excite our mirth than enlist our sympathy. To use an illustration from another play, Olivia is not so much his Juliet as his Rosalind; and perhaps a secret persuasion to that effect is the real cause of her rejecting his suit. Accordingly, when he sees her placed beyond his hope, he has no more trouble about her; but turns, and builds a true affection where, during the preoccupancy of his imagination, so many sweet and tender appeals have been made to his heart.

In Shakespeare's delineations as in nature, we may commonly note that love, in proportion as it is deep and genuine, is also inward and reserved. To be voluble, to be fond of spreading itself in discourse, or of airing itself in the fineries of speech, seems indeed quite against the instinct of that passion; and its best eloquence is when it ties up the tongue, and *steals* out in other modes of expression, the flushing of the cheeks and the mute devotion of the eyes. In its purest forms, it is apt to be a secret even unto itself, the subjects of it knowing indeed that something ails them, but not knowing exactly what. So that the most effective love-making is involuntary and unconscious. And I suspect that, as a general thing, if the true lover's passion be not returned before it is spoken, it stands little chance of being returned at all.

Now, in Orsino's case, the passion, or whatever else it may be, is too much without to be thoroughly sound within. Like Malvolio's virtue, it is too glass-gazing, too much enamoured of its own image, and renders him too apprehensive that it will be the death of him, if disappointed of its object. Accordingly he talks too much about it, and his talking about it is too ingenious withal; it makes his tongue run glib and fine with the most charming divisions of poetic imagery and sentiment; all which shrewdly infers that he lacks the genuine thing, and has mistaken something else for it. Yet, when we hear him dropping such riches as this,—

"O, when mine eyes did see Olivia first, Methought she purg'd the air of pestilence!"

and this,—

"She that hath a heart of that fine frame To pay this debt of love but to a brother, How will she love when the rich golden shaft Hath kill'd the flock of all affections else That live in her!"—

we can hardly help wishing that such were indeed the true vernacular of that passion. But it is not so, and on the whole it is much better than so: for love, that which is rightly so called, uses a diviner language even than that; and this it does when, taking the form of religion, it sweetly and silently embodies itself in deeds. And this is the love that Southey had in mind when he wrote,—

"They sin who tell us love can die."

In Viola, divers things that were else not a little scattered are thoroughly composed; her character being the unifying power that draws all the parts into true dramatic consistency. Love-taught herself, it was for her to teach both Orsino and Olivia how to love: indeed she plays into all the other parts, causing them to embrace and cohere within the compass of her circulation. And yet, like some subtile agency, working most where we perceive it least, she does all this without rendering herself a special prominence in the play.

It is observable that the Poet has left it uncertain whether Viola was in love with the Duke before assuming her disguise, or whether her heart was won afterwards by reading "the book even of his secret soul" while wooing another. Nor does it much matter whether her passion were the motive or the consequence of her disguise, since in either case such a man as Olivia describes him to be might well find his way to tougher hearts than Viola's. But her love has none of the skittishness and unrest which mark the Duke's passion for Olivia: complicated out of all the elements of her being, it is strong without violence; never mars the innate modesty of her character; is deep as life, tender as infancy, pure, peaceful, and unchangeable as truth.

Mrs. Jameson—who, with the best right to know what belongs to woman, unites a rare talent for taking others along with her, and letting them see the choice things which her apprehensive eye discerns, and who, in respect of Shakespeare's heroines, has left little for others to do but quote her words—remarks that "in Viola a sweet consciousness of her feminine nature is for ever breaking through her masquerade: she plays her part well, but never forgets, nor allows us to forget, that she is playing a part." And, sure enough, every thing about her save her dress "is semblative a woman's part": she has none of the assumption of a pert, saucy, waggish manhood, which so delights us in Rosalind in *As You Like It* ; but she has that which, if not better in itself, is more becoming in her,—"the inward and spiritual grace of modesty" pervading all she does and says. Even in her railleries with the comic characters there is all the while an instinctive drawing-back of female delicacy, touching our sympathies, and causing us to feel most deeply what she is, when those with whom she is playing least suspect her to be other than she seems. And the same is true concerning her passion, of which she never so speaks as to compromise in the least the delicacies and proprieties of her sex; yet she lets fall many things from which the Duke easily gathers the drift and quality of her feelings directly he learns what she is. But the great charm of her character lies in a moral rectitude so perfect and so pure as to be a secret unto itself; a clear, serene composure of truth, mingling so freely and smoothly with the issues of life, that while, and perhaps even because she is herself unconscious of it, she is never once tempted to abuse or to shirk her trust, though it be to play the attorney in a cause that makes so much against herself. In this respect she presents an instructive contrast to Malvolio, who has much virtue indeed, yet not so much but that the counter-pullings have rendered him intensely conscious of it, and so drawn him into the vice, at once hateful and ridiculous, of moral pride. The virtue that fosters conceit and censoriousness is like a dyspeptic stomach, the owner of which is made all too sensible of it by the conversion of his food to wind,—a wind that puffs him up. On the other hand, a virtue that breathes so freely as not to be aware of its breathing is the right moral analogue of a thoroughly eupeptic state; as "the healthy know not of their health, but only the sick."

Sundry critics have censured, some of them pretty sharply, the improbability involved in the circumstance of Viola and Sebastian resembling each other so closely as to be mistaken the one for the other. Even so just and liberal a critic as Hallam has stumbled at this circumstance, so much so as quite to disconcert his judgment of the play. The improbability is indeed palpable enough; yet I have to confess that it has never troubled me, any more than certain things not less improbable in *As You Like It* . But even if it had, still I should not hold it any just ground for faulting the Poet, inasmuch as the circumstance was an accepted article in the literary faith of his time. But indeed this censure proceeds from that old heresy which supposes the proper effect of a work of art to depend on the imagined reality of the matter presented; that is, which substitutes the delusions of insanity for the half-voluntary illusions of a rational and refining pleasure.

Of Sebastian himself the less need be said, forasmuch as the leading traits of his character, in my conception of it, have been substantially evolved in what I have said of his sister. For the two are really as much alike in the inward texture of their souls as in their visible persons; at least their mutual resemblance in the former respect is as close as were compatible with proper manliness in the one, and proper womanliness in the other. Personal bravery, for example, is as characteristic of him as modesty is of her. In simplicity, in gentleness, in rectitude, in delicacy of mind, and in all the particulars of what may be termed complexional harmony and healthiness of nature,—in these they are as much twins as in birth and feature. Therewithal they are both alike free from any notes of a pampered self-consciousness. Yet in all these points a nice discrimination of the masculine and feminine proprieties is everywhere maintained. In a word, there is no confusion of sex in the delineation of them: as like as they are, without and within, the man and the woman are nevertheless perfectly differentiated in all the essential attributes of each.

The conditions of the plot did not require nor even permit Sebastian to be often or much in sight. We have indeed but little from him, but that little is intensely charged with significance; in fact, I hardly know of another instance in Shakespeare where so much of character is accomplished in so few words. The scene where he is first met with consists merely of a brief dialogue between him and Antonio, the man who a little before has recovered him from the perils of shipwreck. He there has neither time nor heart for any thing but gratitude to his deliverer, and sorrow at the supposed death of his sister: yet his expression of these is so ordered as to infer all the parts of a thorough gentleman; the efficacies of a generous nature, of good breeding, of liberal culture, and of high principle, all concurring in one result, and thus filling up the right idea of politeness as "benevolence guided by intelligence."

The society delineated in this play is singularly varied and composite; the names of the persons being a mixture Of Spanish, Italian, and English. Though the scene is laid in Illyria, the period of the action is undefined, and the manners and costumes are left in the freedom of whatever time we may choose antecedent to that of the composition, provided we do not exceed the proper limits of imaginative reason.

This variety in the grouping of the persons, whether so intended or not, very well accords with the spirit in which, or the occasion for which, the title indicates the play to have been written. Twelfth Day, anciently so called as being the twelfth after Christmas, is the day whereon the Church has always kept the feast of "The Epiphany, or the Manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles." So that, in preparing a Twelfth-Night entertainment, the idea of fitness might aptly suggest, that national lines and distinctions should be lost in the paramount ties of a common Religion; and that people the most diverse in kindred and tongue should draw together in the sentiment of "one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism"; their social mirth thus relishing of universal Brotherhood.

The general scope and plan of *Twelfth Night, as a work of art* , is hinted in its second title; all the comic elements being, as it were, thrown out simultaneously, and held in a sort of equipoise; so that the readers are left to fix the preponderance where it best suits their several bent or state of mind, and each, within certain limits and conditions, may take the work in *what sense he will* . For, where no special prominence is given to any one thing, there is the wider scope for individual aptitude or preference, and the greater freedom for each to select for virtual prominence such parts as will best knit in with what is uppermost in his thoughts.

The significance of the title is further traceable in a peculiar spontaneousness running through the play. Replete as it is with humours and oddities, they all seem to spring up of their own accord; the comic characters being free alike from disguises and pretensions, and seeking merely to let off their inward redundancy; caring nothing at all whether everybody or nobody sees them, so they may have their whim out, and giving utterance to folly and nonsense simply because they cannot help it. Thus their very deformities have a certain grace, since they are genuine and of Nature's planting: absurdity and whimsicality are indigenous to the soil, and shoot up in free, happy luxuriance, from the life that is in them. And by thus setting the characters out in their happiest aspects, the Poet contrives to make them simply ludicrous and diverting, instead of putting upon them the constructions of wit or spleen, and thereby making them ridiculous or contemptible. Hence it is that we so readily enter into a sort of fellowship with them; their foibles and follies being shown up in such a spirit of good-humour, that the subjects themselves would rather join with us in laughing than be angered or hurt at the exhibition. Moreover the high and the low are here seen moving in free and familiar intercourse, without any apparent consciousness of their respective ranks: the humours and comicalities of the play keep running and frisking in among the serious parts, to their mutual advantage; the connection between them being of a kind to be felt, not described.

Thus the piece overflows with the genial, free-and-easy spirit of a merry Twelfth Night. Chance, caprice, and intrigue, it is true, are brought together in about equal portions; and their meeting and crossing and mutual tripping cause a deal of perplexity and confusion, defeating the hopes of some, suspending those of others: yet here, as is often the case in actual life, from this conflict of opposites order and happiness spring up as the final result: if what we call accident thwart one cherished purpose, it draws on something better, blighting a full-blown expectation now, to help the blossoming of a nobler one hereafter: and it so happens in the end that all the persons but two either have *what they will* , or else grow willing to have what comes to their hands.

Such, I believe, as nearly as I know how to deliver it, is the impression I hold of this charming play; an impression that has survived, rather say, has kept growing deeper and deeper through many years of study, and after many, many an hour spent in quiet communion with its scenes and characters. In no one of his dramas, to my sense, does the Poet appear to have been in a healthier or happier frame of mind, more free from the fascination of the darker problems of humanity, more at peace with himself and all the world, or with Nature playing more kindly and genially at his heart, and from thence diffusing her benedictions through his whole establishment. So that, judging from this transpiration of his inner poetic life, I should conclude him to have had abundant cause for saying, —

"Eternal blessings on the Muse, And her divine employment;— The blameless Muse who trains her sons For hope and calm enjoyment."

<<span id="filepos0040495307"> a>ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL.

All's Well that End's Well was first published in the folio of 1623, and is among the worst-printed plays in that volume. In many places the text, as there given, is in a most unsatisfactory state; and in not a few I fear it must be pronounced incurably at fault. A vast deal of study and labour has been spent in trying to rectify the numerous errors; nearly all the editors and commentators, from Rowe downwards, have strained their faculties upon the work: many instances of corruption have indeed yielded to critical ingenuity and perseverance, and it is to be hoped that still others may; but yet there are several passages which give little hope of success, and seem indeed too hard for any efforts of corrective sagacity and skill. This is not the place for citing examples of textual difficulty: so I must be content with referring to Dyce's elaborate annotation on the play.

Why the original printing of this play should thus have been exceptionally bad, is a matter about which we can only speculate; and as in such cases speculation can hardly lead to any firm result, probably our best way is to note the textual corruption as a fact, and there let it rest. Still it may be worth the while to observe on this head, that in respect of plot and action the piece is of a somewhat forbidding, not to say repulsive nature; and though it abounds in wisdom, and is not wanting in poetry, and has withal much choice delineation of character, and contains scenes which stream down with the Poet's raciest English, yet it is not among the plays which readers are often drawn to by mere recollections of delight: one does not take to it heartily, and can hardly admire it without something of effort: even when it wins our approval, it seems to do so rather through our sense of right than through our sense of pleasure: in short, I have to confess that the perusal is more apt to inspire an apologetic than an enthusiastic tone of mind. It may be a mere fancy of mine; but I have often thought that the extreme badness of the printing may have been partly owing to this cause; that the Poet may have left the manuscript in a more unfinished and illegible state, from a sense of something ungenial and unattractive in the subject-matter and action of the play.

No direct and certain contemporary notice of *All's Well that Ends Well* has come down to us. But the often-quoted list of Shakespeare's plays set forth by Francis Meres in his *Palladis Tamia* , 1598, includes a play called *Love's Labour's Won* , —a title nowhere else given to any of the Poet's pieces. Dr. Farmer, in his *Essay on the Learning of Shakespeare* , 1767, first gave out the conjecture, that the two titles belonged to one and the same play; and this opinion has since been concurred or acquiesced in by so many competent critics, that it might well be allowed to pass without further argument. There is no other of the Poet's dramas to which that title applies so well, while, on the other hand, it certainly fits this play quite as well as the one it now bears. The whole play is emphatically *love's labour* : its main interest throughout turns on the unwearied and finally-successful struggles of affection against the most stubborn and disheartening obstacles. It may indeed be urged that the play entitled *Love's Labour's Won* has been lost; but this, considering what esteem the Poet's works were held in, both in his time and ever since, is so very improbable as to be hardly worth dwelling upon. There was far more likelihood that other men's dross would be fathered upon him than that any of his gold would be lost. And, in fact, contemporary publishers were so eager to make profit of his reputation, that they forged his name to various plays which most certainly had no touch of his hand.

The Rev. Joseph Hunter has spent a deal of learning and ingenuity in trying to make out that the play referred to by Meres as *Lovers Labour's Won* was *The Tempest* . Among Shakespeare's dramas he could hardly have pitched upon a more unfit subject for such a title. There is no *love's labour* in *The Tempest* . For, though a lover does indeed there labour awhile in piling logs, this is nowise from love, but simply because he cannot help himself. Nor does he thereby *win* the lady, for she was won before,—"at the first sight they have chang'd eyes";—and the labour was imposed for the testing of his love, not for the gaining of its object; and was all the while refreshed with the "sweet thoughts" that in heart she was already his; while in truth the father was overjoyed at the "fair encounter of two most rare affections," and was quite as intent on the match as the lovers were themselves. In short, there is no external evidence whatever in favour of Mr. Hunter's notion, while the internal evidence makes utterly against it.

There is, then, no reasonable doubt that *All's Well that Ends Well* was originally written before 1598. For myself, I have no doubt that the first writing was several years before that date; as early at least as 1592 or 1593. Coleridge, in his *Literary Remains* , holds the play to have been "originally intended as the counterpart of *Love's Labour's Lost* "; and a comparison of the two naturally leads to that conclusion without any help from the title. This inward relation of the plays strongly infers them both to have been written about the same time, or in pretty near succession. Now *Love's Labour's Lost* was published in 1598, and in the title-page is said to have been "newly corrected and augmented," which fairly supposes the first writing of that play also to have been several years before, since some considerable time would naturally pass before the Poet saw cause for revising his workmanship. And the diversities of style in that play fully concur herewith in arguing a considerable interval between the original writing and the revisal.

It is abundantly certain, from internal evidence, that the play now in hand also underwent revisal, and this too after a much longer interval than in the case of *Love's Labour's Lost* . Here the diversities of style are much more strongly marked than in that play. Accordingly it was Coleridge's decided opinion, first given out in his lectures in 1813, and again in 1818, though not found in his *Literary Remains* , that "*All's Well that Ends Well* was written at two different and rather distant periods of the Poet's life." This we learn from Mr. Collier, who heard those lectures, and who adds that Coleridge "pointed out very clearly two distinct styles, not only of thought, but of expression." The same judgment has since been enforced by Tieck and other able critics; and the grounds of it are so manifest in the play itself, that no observant reader will be apt to question it. Verplanck tells us he had formed the same opinion before he learned through Mr. Collier what Coleridge thought on the subject; and his judgment of the matter is given with characteristic felicity as follows: "The contrast of two different modes of thought and manners of expression, here mixed in the same piece, must be evident to all who have made the shades and gradations of Shakespeare's varying and progressive taste and mind at all a subject of study."

I have elsewhere observed at some length on the Poet's diversities of style, marking them off into three periods, severally distinguished as earlier, middle, and later styles. Outside of the play itself, we have in this case no help towards determining at what time the revisal was made, or how long a period intervened between this and the original writing. To my taste, the better parts of the workmanship relish strongly of the Poet's later style,—perhaps I should say quite as strongly as the poorer parts do of his earlier. This would bring the revisal down to as late a time as 1603 or 1604: which date accords, not only with my own sense of the matter, but with the much better judgment of the critics I have quoted. I place the finished *Hamlet* at or near the close of the Poet's middle period; and I am tolerably clear that in this play he discovers a mind somewhat more advanced in concentrated fulness, and a hand somewhat more practised in sinewy sternness, than in the finished *Hamlet* . I will quote two passages by way of illustrating the Poet's different styles as seen in this play. The first is from the dialogue of Helena and the King, in Act ii., scene 1, where she persuades him to make trial of her remedy:

"The great'st Grace lending grace, Ere twice the horses of the Sun shall bring Their fiery torcher his diurnal ring; Ere twice in murk and occidental damp Moist Hesperus hath quench'd his sleepy lamp; Or four-and-twenty times the pilot's glass Hath told the thievish minutes how they pass; What is infirm from your sound parts shall fly, Health shall live free, and sickness freely die."

Here we have the special traits of Shakespeare's youthful style,—an air of artifice and studied finery, a certain self-conscious elaborateness and imitative rivalry,—which totally disappear in, for instance, the blessing the Countess gives her son as he is leaving for the Court:

"Be thou blest, Bertram! and succeed thy father In manners, as in shape! thy blood and virtue Contend for empire in thee, and thy goodness Share with thy birthright! Love all, trust a few, Do wrong to none; be able for thine enemy Rather in power than use, and keep thy friend Under thy own life's key; be check'd for silence, But never tax'd for speech. What Heaven more will, That thee may furnish, and my prayers pluck down, Fall on thy head!"

I the rather quote this latter, because of its marked resemblance to the advice Polonius gives his son in *Hamlet* . Mr. White justly observes that "either the latter is an expansion of the former, or the former a reminiscence of the latter"; and I fully concur with him that the second part of the alternative is the more probable. It is hardly needful to add that the passage here quoted breathes a higher and purer moral tone than the resembling one in *Hamlet* ; but this I take to be merely because the venerable Countess is a higher and purer source than the old politician. For a broader and bulkier illustration of the point in hand, the student probably cannot do better than by comparing in full the dialogue from which the first of the forecited passages is taken with the whole of the second scene in Act i. These seem to me at least as apt and telling examples as any, of the Poet's rawest and ripest styles so strangely mixed in this play; and the difference is here so clearly pronounced, that one must be dull indeed not to perceive it.

As regards the notion of Mr. Hunter before referred to, it is indeed true, as he argues, that the play twice bespeaks its present title; but both instances occur in just those parts which relish most of the Poet's later style. And the line in the epilogue,—"*All is well ended* , if this suit *be won* ,"—may be fairly understood as intimating some connection between the two titles which the play is supposed to have borne.

The only known source from which the Poet could have borrowed any part of this play is a story in Boccaccio, entitled *Giletta di Nerbona* . In 1566 William Paynter published an English version of this tale in his *Palace of Pleasure* . Here it was, no doubt, that Shakespeare got his borrowed matter; and the following outline will show the nature and extent of his obligations.

Isnardo, Count of Rousillon, being sickly, kept in his house a physician named Gerardo of Nerbona. The Count had a son named Beltramo, and the physician a daughter named Giletta, who were brought up together. The Count dying, his son was left in the care of the King and sent to Paris. The physician also dying some while after, his daughter, who had loved the young Count so long that she knew not when her love began, sought occasion of going to Paris, that she might see him; but, being diligently looked to by her kinsfolk, because she was rich and had many suitors, she could not see her way clear. Now the King had a swelling on his breast, which through ill treatment was grown to a fistula; and, having tried all the best physicians and being only rendered worse by their efforts, he resolved to take no further counsel or help. Giletta, hearing of this, was very glad, as it suggested an apt reason for visiting Paris, and offered a chance of compassing her secret and cherished wish. Arming herself with such knowledge in the healing art as she had gathered from her father, she rode to Paris and repaired to the King, praying him to show her his disease. He consenting, as soon as she saw it she told him that, if he pleased, she would within eight days make him whole. He asked how it was possible for her, being a young woman, to do that which the best physicians in the world could not; and, thanking her for her good-will, said he was resolved to try no more remedies. She begged him not to despise her knowledge because she was a young woman, assuring him that she ministered physic by the help of God, and with the cunning of Master Gerardo of Nerbona, who was her father. The King, hearing this, and thinking that peradventure she was sent of God, asked what might follow, if she caused him to break his resolution, and did not heal him. She said, "Let me be kept in what guard you list, and if I do not heal you let me be burnt; but, if I do, what recompense shall I have?" He answered that, since she was a maiden, he would bestow her in marriage upon a gentleman of right good worship and estimation. To this she agreed, on condition that she might have such a husband as herself should ask, without presumption to any member of his family; which he readily granted. This done, she set about her task, and before the eight days were passed he was entirely well; whereupon he told her she deserved such a husband as herself should choose, and she declared her choice of Beltramo, saying she had loved him from her childhood. The King was very loth to grant him to her; but, because he would not break his promise, he had him called forth, and told him what had been done. The Count, thinking her stock unsuitable to his nobility, disdainfully said, "Will you, then, sir, give me a physician to wife?" The King pressing him to comply, he answered, "Sire, you may take from me all that I have, and give my person to whom you please, because I am your subject; but I assure you I shall never be contented with that marriage." To which he replied, "Well, you shall have her, for the maiden is fair and wise, and loveth you entirely; and verily you shall lead a more joyful life with her than with a lady of a greater House"; whereupon the Count held his peace. The marriage over, the Count asked leave to go home, having settled beforehand what he would do. Knowing that the Florentines and the Senois were at war, he was no sooner on horseback than he stole off to Tuscany, meaning to side with the Florentines; by whom being honorably received and made a captain, he continued a long time in their service.

His wife, hoping by her well-doing to win his heart, returned home, where, finding all things spoiled and disordered by reason of his absence, she like a sage lady carefully put them in order, making all his people very glad of her presence and loving to her person. Having done this, she sent word thereof to the Count by two knights, adding that, if she were the cause of his forsaking home, he had but to let her know it, and she, to do him pleasure, would depart thence. Now he had a ring which he greatly loved, and kept very carefully, and never took off his finger, for a certain virtue which he knew it had. When the knights came, he said to them churlishly, "Let her do what she list; for I purpose to dwell with her when she shall have this ring on her finger, and a son of mine in her arms." The knights, after trying in vain to change his purpose, returned to the lady, and told his answer; at which she was very sorrowful, and bethought herself a good while how she might accomplish those two things. She then called together the noblest of the country, and told them what she had done to win her husband's love; that she was loth he should dwell in perpetual exile on her account; and therefore would spend the rest of her life in pilgrimages and devotion; praying them to let him know she had left, with a purpose never to return. Then, taking with her a maid and one of her kinsmen, she set out in the habit of a pilgrim, well furnished with silver and jewels, told no one whither she was going, and rested not till she came to Florence. She put up at the house of a poor widow; and the next day, seeing her husband pass by on horseback, she asked who he was. The widow told her this, and also that he was marvellously in love with a neighbour of hers, a gentlewoman who was poor, but of right honest life and report, and dwelt with her mother, a wise and honest lady. After hearing this, she was not long in deciding what to do. Going secretly to the house, and getting a private interview with the mother, she told her whole story, and how she hoped to thrive in her undertaking, if the mother and daughter would lend their aid. In recompense she proposed to give the daughter a handsome marriage portion; and the mother replied, "Madam, tell me wherein I may do you service; if it be honest, I will gladly perform it; and, that being done, do as it shall please you." So an arrangement was made, that the daughter should encourage the Count, and signify her readiness to grant his wish, provided he would first send her the ring he prized so highly, as a token of his love. Proceeding with great subtlety as she was instructed, the daughter soon got the ring; and at the time fixed for the meeting the Countess supplied her place; the result of which was, that she became the mother of two fine boys, and so was prepared to claim her dues as a wife upon the seemingly-impossible terms which the Count himself had proposed.

Meanwhile her husband, hearing of her departure, had returned to his country. In due time the Countess also took her journey homeward, and arrived at Montpellier, where, hearing that the Count was about to have a great party at his house, she determined to go thither in her pilgrim's weeds. Just as they were on the point of sitting down to the table, she came to the place where her husband was, and fell at his feet weeping, and said, "My lord, I am thy poor unfortunate wife, who, that thou mightest return and dwell in thy house, have been a great while begging about the world. Therefore I now beseech thee to observe the conditions which the two knights that I sent to thee did command me to do; for behold, here in my arms, not only one son of thine, but twain, and likewise the ring: it is now time, if thou keep promise, that I should be received as thy wife." The Count knew the ring, and the children also, they were so like him, and desired her to rehearse in order how all these things came about. When she had told her story, he knew it to be true; and, perceiving her constant mind and good wit, and the two fair young boys, to keep his promise, and to please his people, and the ladies that made suit to him, he caused her to rise up, and embraced and kissed her, and from that day forth loved and honoured her as his wife.

From this sketch it will be seen that the Poet anglicized Beltramo into Bertram, changed Giletta to Helena, and closely followed Boccaccio in the main features of the plot so far as regards these persons and the widow and her daughter. Beyond this, the novel yields no hints towards the play, while the latter has several judicious departures from the matter of the former. Giletta is rich, and has a fine establishment of her own; which so far reduces the social inequality between her and the Count: Helena is poor and dependent, so that she has nothing to stand upon but her nobility of nature and merit. Beltramo, again, has no thought of going to Florence till after his compelled marriage; so that his going to the war is not from any free stirring of virtue in him, but purely to escape the presence of a wife that has been forced upon him. With Bertram, the unwelcome marriage comes in only as an additional spur to the execution of a purpose already formed. Before Helena makes her appearance at the Court, his spirit is in revolt against the command which would make him

"stay here the forehorse to a smock, Creaking his shoes on the plain masonry, Till honour is bought up, and no sword worn But one to dance with."

He therefore resolves to "steal away" to the war along with other brave and enterprising spirits; and we have some lords of the Court ministering fuel to this noble fire burning within him. These stirrings of native gallantry, this brave thirst of honourable distinction, go far to redeem him from the rank dishonours of his conduct, as showing that he is not without some strong and noble elements of manhood. Here we have indeed no little just ground of respect; and that his purpose is but quickened into act by the thought of finding a refuge in such manly work from the thraldom of a hated marriage, operates as further argument in the same behalf. And this purpose, springing as it does from the free promptings of his nature, has the further merit, that it involves a deliberate braving of the King's anger; thus showing that he will even peril his head rather than leave what is best in him to "fust unused." All which plainly infers that he has at least the right virtues of a soldier. And the promise thus held out from the start is made good in the after-performance. He proves a gallant, a capable, a successful warrior, and returns with well-won laurels. In all these points, the play is a manifest improvement on the tale. And I suspect the Poet took care to endow his hero with this streak of nobility, because he felt that there was some danger lest Helena's pursuit of Bertram should rather have the effect of lowering her than of elevating him in our thoughts.

But the crowning innovation upon the matter of the tale lies in the characters of Lafeu, the Countess, the Clown, and Parolles, and in the comic proceedings; all which, so far as is known, are entirely of the Poet's invention. And it is quite remarkable what an original cast is given to his development of the borrowed characters by the presence of these; and how in the light of their mutual interaction the conduct of all becomes, not indeed right or just, but consistent and clear. Helena's native force and rectitude of mind are approved from the first in her just appreciation of Parolles; and her nobility of soul and beauty of character are reflected all along in the honest sagacity of Lafeu and the wise motherly affection of the Countess, who never see or think of her but to turn her advocates and wax eloquent in her behalf. The thoughtful and benevolent King also, on becoming acquainted with her, is even more taken with her moral and intellectual beauty than with her service in restoring him to health. The Countess regards her as "a maid too virtuous for the contempt of empire"; and, on bearing Bertram's "dreadful sentence" against her, she is prompt to declare, "He was my son, but I do wash his name out of my blood, and thou art all my child"; and it is her very heart that speaks,—

"What angel shall Bless this unworthy husband? he cannot thrive, Unless her prayers, which Heaven delights to hear, And loves to grant, reprieve him from the wrath Of greatest justice."

To the King she is "all that is virtuous"; "young, wise, fair"; "virtue and she is her own dower." Lafeu remembers her at the close as "a sweet creature," and as one

"Whose beauty did astonish the survey Of richest eyes; whose words all ears took captive; Whose dear perfection hearts that scorn'd to serve Humbly call'd mistress."

Thus she walks right into all hearts that have any doors for the entrance of virtue and loveliness. And her modest, self-sacrificing worth is brought home to our feelings by the impression she makes on the good; while in turn our sense of their goodness is proportionably heightened by their noble sensibility to hers.

Parolles, again, is puffed up into a more consequential whiffet than ever, by being taken into the confidence of a haughty young nobleman; while, on the other side, the stultifying effects of Bertram's pride are seen in that it renders him the easy dupe of a most base and bungling counterfeit of manhood. It was natural and right, that such a shallow, paltry word-gun should ply him with impudent flatteries, and thereby gain an ascendency over him, and finally draw him into the crimes and the shames that were to whip down his pride; and it was equally natural that his scorn of Helena should begin to relax, when he was brought to see what a pitiful rascal, by playing upon that pride, had been making a fool of him. He must first be mortified, before he can be purified. The springs of moral health within him have been overspread by a foul disease; and the proper medicine is such an exposure of the latter as shall cause him to feel that he is himself a most fit object of the scorn which he has been so forward to bestow. Accordingly the embossing and untrussing of his favourite is the starting of his amendment: he begins to distrust the counsels of his cherished passion, when he can no longer hide from himself into what a vile misplacing of trust they have betrayed him. Herein, also, we have a full justification, both moral and dramatic, of the game so mercilessly practised on Parolles: it is avowedly undertaken with a view to rescue Bertram, whose friends know full well that nothing can be done for his good, till the fascination of that crawling reptile is broken.

Finally, Helena's just discernment of character, as shown in the case of Parolles, pleads an arrest of judgment in behalf of Bertram. And the fact that with all her love for him she is not blind to his faults, is a sort of pledge that she sees through them into a worth which they hide from others. For, indeed, she has known him in his childhood, before his heart got pride-bound with conceit of rank and titles; and therefore may well have a reasonable faith, that beneath the follies and vices which have overcrusted his character, there is still an undercurrent of sense and virtue, a wisdom of nature, not dead but asleep, whereby he may yet be recovered. So that, in effect, we are not unwilling to see him through her eyes, and, in the strength of her well-approved wisdom, to take it upon trust that he has good qualities which we are unable of ourselves to discover.

Thus the several parts are drawn into each other, and thereby made to evolve a manifold rich significance; insomuch that the characters of Helena and Bertram, as Shakespeare conceived them, cannot be rightly understood apart from the others with which they are dramatically associated.

It is indeed curious to observe how much care the Poet takes that his heroine may come safe and sweet through the perils of her course. For instance, at the very outset, when she first learns of the King's disease, in the dialogue about her father, the Countess says in her hearing, "Would, for the King's sake, he were living! I think it would be the death of the King's disease"; and Lafeu replies, "The King very lately spoke of him admiringly and mourningly." This serves as a pregnant hint to her for what she afterwards undertakes. She now remembers the special instructions of her father touching that disease; and the hint combining with her treasured science, her loyalty, and affection, works her into the strong confidence of being able to help the King. Thus the main point of her action is put into her mind incidentally by the speech of others. And she goes to Paris, with the full approval and blessing of her foster-mother, *mainly* with the view of securing to one whom she highly reveres the benefit of her father's skill. It is true, a still deeper and dearer hope underlies and supports her action; which hope however springs and grows, not because she foresees at all how things are to turn, but merely from a pious trust, which is in her case both natural and just, that her father's "good receipt" will somehow, "for her legacy, be sanctified by the luckiest stars in heaven."

The same delicate care for her honour, as if this were indeed sacred and precious in the Poet's regard, is shown at various other points. It is very noteworthy how, all along, she shapes her action from step to step, not by any long-headed planning, but merely as events suggest and invite her onward. Helena is indeed brave, wise, prudent, sagacious, quick and clear of perception, swift and steadfast in resolution, prompt, patient, and persevering in action; but there is nothing of a crafty or designing mind in what she does. She displays no special forecast, no subtle or far-sighted scheming; though quick and apt at seizing and using opportunities, she does not make or even seek them. So it is in the strange proceedings at Florence, whereby she manages to fulfil the hard conditions imposed by her husband. Here, as elsewhere, she has her fine penetrative faculties all wide-awake, but there is no contriving or forcing of occasions: when she sees a way open before her, she strikes into it promptly, and pursues it with quiet yet energetic constancy; and whatever apt occasions emerge to her view, she throws herself into them at once, and, with a sort of divine tact, turns them to the best possible account in furtherance of her cherished hope. In this way the Poet manages to bring her character off clean and fragrant in our thoughts, by making us feel that in whatever blame might else attach to her acts, the circumstances only are responsible, while to her belongs the credit of using those circumstances purely, wisely, and well.

It is further observable, and a very material point too, that Helena seems to think the better of Bertram for his behaviour towards her: she takes it as evidence at least of honesty in him, and of a certain downrightness of character, that shrinks from a life of appearances, and knows not how to affect what he does not feel. So far from blaming his indifference, she rather blames herself as having brought him into a false position. She loves him simply because she cannot help it; she wants him to love her for the same reason; and the point she aims at is so to act and be and appear, that he cannot help loving her. She knows right well that the choice must be mutual, else marriage is rather a sacrilege than a sacrament; and the great question is, how she may win him to reciprocate her choice: nothing less than this will suffice her; and she justly takes it as her part to *inspire* him with the feeling, understanding perfectly that neither talk nor force can be of any use to that end. Even a love that springs from a sense of duty is not what she wants: her own love did not spring from that source. So she "would not have him till she does deserve him," yet knows not how that desert should ever be: still she cannot put off the faith that love will sooner or later triumph, if worthily shown by deeds. He is much noted as a fine instance of manly beauty: all are taken with his handsome person. It is not, probably ought not to be, in womanhood, to be proof against such attractions. In the sweetness of their youthful intercourse, this has silently got the mastery of her thoughts, and penetrated her being through and through:

"Twas pretty, though a plague, To see him every hour; to sit and draw His arched brows, his hawking eye, his curls, In our heart's table."

And now she must needs strive with all her might, by loving ways, by kind acts, by self-sacrificing works, to catch his heart, as he has caught hers. Then too a holy instinct of womanhood teaches her that a man must be hard indeed, to resist the wedded mother of his children, and most of all, to keep his heart untouched by the power of a wife when burdened with a mother's precious wealth. Therewithal she rightly apprehends the danger Bertram is in from the wordy, cozening squirt, the bedizened, scoundrelly dandiprat, who has so beguiled his youth and ignorance. She must bless and sweeten him out of that contagion into the religion of home; and she feels that nothing but an honourable love of herself can save him. This she aims at, and finally accomplishes.

Coleridge incidentally speaks of Helena as "Shakespeare's loveliest character." And Mrs. Jameson, from whose judgment I shall take no appeal, sets her down as exemplifying that union of strength and tenderness which Foster, in one of his *Essays* , describes as being "the utmost and rarest endowment of humanity";—a character, she adds, "almost as hard to delineate in fiction as to find in real life." Without either questioning or subscribing these statements, I have to confess that, for depth, sweetness, energy, and solidity of character, all drawn into one, Helena is not surpassed by more than two or three of Shakespeare's heroines. Her great strength of mind is well shown in that, absorbed as she is in the passion that shapes her life, hardly any of the Poet's characters, after Hamlet, deals more in propositions of general truth, as distinguished from the utterances of individual sentiment and emotion. We should suppose that all her thoughts, being struck out in such a glowing heat, would so cleave to the circumstances as to have little force apart from them; yet much that she says holds as good in a general application as in her own particular. Which rightly infers that she sees things in their principles; that is, her thoughts touch the pith of whatever matter she takes in hand; while at the same time broad axiomatic notes of discourse drop from her with an ease which shows that her mind is thoroughly at home in them. For this cause, her feelings, strong as they are, never so get the upper hand as to beguile her into any self-delusion; as appears in the unbosoming of herself to the Countess, where we have the greatest reluctance of modesty yielding to a holy regard for truth. It is there manifest that she has taken a full and just measure of her situation: she frankly avows the conviction that she "loves in vain," and that she "strives against hope"; that she "lends and gives where she is sure to lose"; nevertheless she resolves to "venture the well-lost life of hers on his Grace's cure," and leave the result in other hands.

In her condition, both there and afterwards, there is much indeed to move our pity; yet her behaviour and the grounds of it are such that she never suffers any loss of our respect; one reason of which is, because we see that her sound faculties and fine feelings are keenly alive to the nature of what she undertakes. Thus she passes unharmed through the most terrible outward dishonours, firmly relying on her rectitude of purpose; and we dare not think any thing to her hurt, because she looks her danger square in the face, and nobly feels secure in that apparelling of strength. Here, truly, we have something very like the sublimity of moral courage. And this precious, peerless jewel in a setting of the most tender, delicate, sensitive womanhood! It is a clear triumph of the inward and essential over the outward and accidental; her character being radiant of a moral and spiritual grace which the lowest and ugliest situation cannot obscure.

There certainly needs no scruple that the delineation is one of extraordinary power: perhaps, indeed, it may stand as Shakespeare's masterpiece in the conquest of inherent difficulties. And it is observable that here, for once, he does not carry his point without evident tokens of exertion. He does not outwrestle the resistance of the matter without letting us see that he is wrestling. Of course the hardness of the task was to represent the heroine as doing what were scarce pardonable in another; yet as acting on such grounds, from such motives, and to such issues, that the undertaking not only is, but is felt to be, commendable in her. Lamb puts it just right: "With such exquisite address is the dangerous subject handled, that Helena's forwardness loses her no honour: delicacy dispenses with its laws in her favour; and nature, in her single case, seems content to suffer a sweet violation." And the Poet seems to have felt that something like a mysterious, supernatural impulse, together with all the reverence and authority of the old Countess, and also the concurring voice of all the wise and good about her in hearty approval of her course and eloquent admiration of her virtue,—that all these were needful to bring her through with dignity and honour. Nor, perhaps, after all, could any thing but success fully vindicate her undertaking; for such a thing, to be proper, must be practicable: and who could so enter into her mind as to see its practicability till it is done? At the last we accept it as a sort of inspiration,—authenticated to us as such in the result,—when she frames her intent in the meditation,—

"Impossible be strange attempts to those That weigh their pains in sense, and do suppose What hath not been can't be."

Before leaving the subject, I am moved to add that, though Helena is herself all dignity and delicacy, some of her talk with Monsieur Words the puppy in the first scene is neither delicate nor dignified: it is simply a foul blot, and I can but regret the Poet did not throw it out in the revisal; sure I am that he did not retain it to please himself.

Almost everybody falls in love with the Countess. And, truly, one so meek and sweet and venerable, who can help loving her? or who, if he can resist her, will dare to own it? I can almost find it in my heart to adore the beauty of youth; yet this blessed old creature is enough to persuade me that age may be more beautiful still. Her generous sensibility to native worth amply atones for her son's mean pride of birth: all her honours of rank and place she would gladly resign, to have been the mother of the poor orphan left in her charge. Feeling as she does the riches of that orphan's soul,—a feeling that bespeaks like riches in herself,—all the factitious distinctions of life sink to nothing in her regard; and the only distinction worth having is that which grows by building honour out of one's own virtue, and not by inheriting it from the virtue of others. So, in her breast, "adoption strives with nature"; and, weighing the adopted and the native together in her motherly judgment, she finds "there's nothing here too good for him but only she"; and "which of them both is dearest to her, she has no skill in sense to make distinction." Withal she is a charming instance of youth carried on into age; so that Helena justly recognizes her as one "whose aged honour cites a virtuous youth." Thus her Winter inherits a soft warm robe of precious memories woven out of her Spring: when she first learns of the heroine's state of mind, the picture of her own May revives to her eye, the treasure of her maiden years blooms afresh; she remembers that "this thorn doth to our rose of youth rightly belong"; and has more than ever a mother's heart towards the silent sufferer, because she holds fast her old faith that

"It is the show and seal of nature's truth, Where love's strong passion is impress'd in youth."

Well might Campbell say of her, that "she redeems nobility by reverting to nature."

* * *

Johnson delivers his mind touching the young Count as follows: "I cannot reconcile my heart to Bertram;—a man noble without generosity, and young without truth; who marries Helena as a coward, and leaves her as a profligate: when she is dead by his unkindness, sneaks home to a second marriage; is accused by a woman he has wronged, defends himself by falsehood, and is dismissed to happiness." A terrible sentence indeed! and its vigour, if not its justice, is attested by the frequency with which it has been quoted.

Now, in the first place, the Poet did not mean we should reconcile our hearts to Bertram, but that he should not unreconcile them to Helena; nay, that her love should appear the nobler for the unworthiness of its object. Then, he does not marry her as a coward, but merely because he has no choice; nor does he yield till he has shown all the courage that were compatible with discretion. She is forced upon him by a stretch of prerogative which seems strange indeed to us, but which in feudal times was generally held to be just and right, so that resistance to it was flat rebellion. And, as before observed, Bertram's purpose of stealing away to the war was bravely formed without any reference to Helena, and from a manly impulse or ambition to be doing something that might show him not unworthy of his House and his social inheritance. The King presses him with the hard alternative of taking Helena as his wife,

"Or I will throw thee from my care for ever Into the staggers and the cureless lapse Of youth and ignorance; both my revenge and hate Loosing upon thee, in the name of justice, Without all terms of pity."

Nor, when thus driven to make a show of mastering his aversion, is there any thing mean or cringing in the way he does it: his language is not only reluctant and reserved, but is even made severe with a dash of irony:

"When I consider What great creation and what dole of honour Flies where you bid it, I find that she, which late Was in my nobler thoughts most base, is now *The praisèd of the King* ."

Marriage, in truth, is a thing that he has not begun to think of; the passion that rightly leads to it is yet dormant in him; to the proper charms of woman he is insensible, his heart being all set on other things. Then, again, he does not leave Helena as a profligate, but rather to escape from what is to him an unholy match, as being on his side without love; and his profligacy is not so much the cause as the consequence of his flight and exile. In the midst of his manlier work, he is surprised into a passion unfelt by him before; and the tie which has been strained upon him, and which his heart still disowns, is partly to blame for the profligate intrigue into which he plunges, because it shuts off the conditions of an honourable love.—Finally, he is not dismissed to happiness, but rather left where he cannot be happy, unless he shall have dismissed his faults. And, surely, he may have some allowance, because of the tyranny laid upon him,—this too in a sentiment where nature pleads loudest for freedom, and which, if free, yields the strongest motives to virtue; if not, to vice.

As for his falsehood, or rather string of falsehoods, this is indeed a pretty dark passage. The guilty passion with which he is caught betrays him into a course of action still more guilty: he is entangled, almost before he knows it, in a net of vile intrigue, from which there is no escape but by lying his way out; and the more he struggles to get free the more he gets engaged. It seems an earnest of "the staggers and the cureless lapse of youth" with which the King has threatened him. But he pays a round penalty in the shame that so quickly overtakes him; which shows how careful the Poet was to make due provision for his amendment. His original fault, as already noted, was an overweening pride of birth: yet in due time he unfolds in himself better titles to honour than ancestry can bestow; and, this done, he naturally grows more willing to recognize similar titles in another. It is to be noted further, that Bertram is all along a man of few words; which may be one reason why Parolles, who is all words, as his name imports, *burrs* upon him and works his infection into him with such signal success. His habitual reticence springs mainly from real, inward strength of nature; but partly also from that same unsocial pride which lays him so broadly open to the arts of sycophancy, and thus draws him, as if spellbound, under the tainted breath of that strange compound of braggart, liar, and fop.

Thus Shakespeare purposely represents Bertram as a very mixed character, in whom the evil gains for some time a most unhopeful mastery; and he takes care to provide, withal, the canon whereby he would have him judged: "The web of our life is of a mingled yarn, good and ill together: our virtues would be proud, if our faults whipp'd them not; and our crimes would despair, if they were not cherished by our virtues." A pregnant and subtile reflection indeed, which may sound strange to many; but the truth and wisdom of it are well approved by the grave and saintly Hooker, who was "not afraid to affirm it boldly," that proud men sometimes "receive a benefit at the hands of God, and are assisted with His grace, when with His grace they are not assisted, but permitted, and that grievously, to transgress; whereby, as they were in overgreat liking of themselves supplanted, so the dislike of that which did supplant them may establish them afterwards the surer."

Captain Parolles is verily Shakespeare's most illustrious *pronoun* of a man. Several critics have somehow found it in their hearts to speak of him and Falstaff together. A foul sin against Sir John! who, whatever else he may deserve, certainly does not deserve that. Schlegel, however, justly remarks that the scenes where our captain figures contain matter enough for an excellent comedy. It is indeed a marvel that one so inexpressibly mean, and withal so fully aware of his meanness, should not cut his own acquaintance. But the greatest wonder about him is, how the Poet could so run his own intellectuality into such a windbag, without marring his windbag perfection. The character of Parolles is interpreted with unusual fulness in the piercing comments of the other persons. He seems indeed to have been specially "created for men to breathe themselves upon." Thus one describes him as "a most notable coward, an infinite and endless liar, an hourly promise-breaker, the owner of no one good quality"; and again, as having "outvillained villainy so far, that the rarity redeems him." And he is at last felt to be worth feeding and keeping alive for the simple reason of his being such a miracle of bespangled, voluble, impudent good-for-nothingness, that contempt and laughter cannot afford to let him die. But the roundest and happiest delivery of him comes from the somewhat waggish but high-spirited and sharpsighted Lord Lafeu, who finds him "my good window of lattice," and one whose "soul is in his clothes"; and who says to him, "I did think thee, for two ordinaries, to be a pretty wise fellow; thou didst make tolerable vent of thy travel; it might pass: yet the scarfs and the bannerets about thee did manifoldly dissuade me from believing thee a vessel of too great a burden." The play is choicely seasoned throughout with the good-humoured old statesman's spicery; and our captain is the theme that draws most of it out.

That the goddess whom Bertram worships does not whisper in his ear the unfathomable baseness of this "lump of counterfeit ore," is a piece of dramatic retribution at once natural and just. Far as the joke is pushed upon Parolles, we never feel like crying out, *Hold, enough* ! for, "that he should know what he is, and be that he is," seems an offence for which infinite shames were hardly a sufficient indemnification. And we know right well that such a hollow, flaunting, strutting roll of effrontery and poltroonery cannot possibly have soul enough to be inwardly hurt by the utmost pressure of disgrace and scorn. And yet, strange as it may seem, Parolles represents a class of actual men; how truly, is well shown in that the delineation, in its main features, but especially as of "one that lies three thirds, and uses a known truth to pass a thousand nothings with," might almost be mistaken for a portrait of a very noted character of our time,—a man too—which is strangest of all—whose success with the voters has even beaten that of his dramatic prototype with Bertram.

Verplanck thinks, as he well may, that the Poet's special purpose in this play was to set forth the precedence of innate over circumstantial distinctions. Gervinus also takes the same view: "The idea that merit goes before rank is the soul of this piece and of the relation between Bertram and Helena." And this high moral centre is not only pronounced strongly in verbal discourse, but, which is still better, is silently placed in the characters themselves and in the facts of the play. Yet observe with what a catholic spirit the Poet teaches this great lesson; frankly recognizing the noble man in the nobleman, and telling us, in effect, that none know so well how to prize the nobilities of nature as those who, like the King and the Countess of this play, have experienced the nothingness of all other claims. To be sure, their generous superiority to adventitious distinctions is partly because of a certain regenerative efficacy flowing from the heroine: pride of birth is sweetly rebuked in her presence; a subtile inspiration from her seems to steal away whatever prejudice of rank they may have, and to cheat them into full sympathy with truth and virtue; and, with the exception of Bertram and the bescarfed coxcomb that spaniels him, all from the King downwards are won to the free worship of untitled merit directly they begin to converse with this meek and modest incarnation of Nature's eloquence.

<<span id="filepos0040552490"> a>MEASURE FOR MEASURE.

Measure for Measure, in its vein of thought and complexion of character, is the deepest of Shakespeare's comedies,—deeper even than some of his tragedies. The foundation principles of ethics are here explored far as the plummet of thought can sound; the subtleties and intricacies of the human heart are searched with an insight which the sharpest and most inquisitive criticism may strive in vain to follow. The mind almost loses itself in attempting to trace out through their course the various and complicated lines of reflection here suggested.

We have no authentic contemporary notice of the play whatever, till it appeared in the folio of 1623. I say *authentic* notice; because the item which, some years ago, Mr. Peter Cunningham claimed to have found among some old records preserved at Somerset House, and which makes the play to have been acted at Court in December, 1604, has been lately set aside as a fabrication. Though printed much better than *All's Well that Ends Well* , still the text set forth in the folio gives us but too much cause to regret the lack of earlier copies; there being several passages that are, to all appearance, incurably defective or corrupt.

The strongly-marked peculiarities of the piece in language, cast of thought, and moral temper, have invested it with great psychological interest, and bred a strange desire among critics to connect it in some way with the author's mental history,—with some supposed crisis in his feelings and experience. Hence the probable date of the writing was for a long time argued more strenuously than the subject would otherwise seem to justify; and, as often falls out in such cases, the more the critics argued the point, the further they were from coming to an agreement. And, in truth, the plain matter-of-fact critics have here succeeded much better in the work than their more philosophical brethren; which aptly shows how little the brightest speculation can do in questions properly falling within the domain of facts.

In default of other data, the critics in question based their arguments upon certain probable allusions to contemporary matters; especially on those passages which express the Duke's fondness for "the life remov'd," and his aversion to being greeted by crowds of people. Chalmers brought forward also the very pertinent fact of a long-sleeping statute having been revived in 1604, which punished with death all divorced or divorcing persons who married again while their former husbands or wives were living. This circumstance, he thinks, might well have suggested what is said by the Duke:

"We have strict statutes and most biting laws,— The needful bits and curbs to headstrong steeds,— Which for this fourteen years we have let sleep; Even like an o'ergrown lion in a cave, That goes not out to prey."

Chalmers had the sagacity to discover also a sort of portrait-like resemblance in the Duke to King James the First. As the King was indeed a much better theologian than statesman or ruler, the fact of the Duke's appearing rather more at home in the cowl and hood than in his ducal robes certainly lends some colour to this discovery.

The King's unamiable repugnance to being gazed upon by throngs of admiring subjects is thus spoken of by a contemporary writer: "In his public appearance, especially in his sports, the accesses of the people made him so impatient, that he often dispersed them with frowns, that we may not say, with curses." And his churlish bearing towards the crowds which, prompted by eager loyalty, flocked forth to hail his accession, is noted by several historians. But he was a pretty free encourager of the Drama, as well as of other liberal preparations; and, with those who had tasted, or who sought, his patronage, it was natural that these symptoms of weakness should pass for tokens of a wise superiority to the dainties of popular applause. All which renders it not unlikely that the Poet may have had an eye to the King in the passages cited by Malone in support of his conjecture:

"I love the people, But do not like to stage me to their eyes: Though it do well, I do not relish well Their loud applause and aves vehement; Nor do I think the man of safe discretion That does affect it."

"So play the foolish throngs with one that swoons; Come all to help him, and so stop the air By which he should revive: and even so The general, subject to a well-wish'd king, Quit their own part, and in obsequious fondness Crowd to his presence, where their untaught love Must needs appear offence."

The allusion here being granted, Malone's inference, that the play was made soon after the King's accession, and before the effect of his unlooked-for austerity on this score had spent itself, was natural enough. Nor is the conjecture of Ulrici and others without weight, "that Shakespeare was led to the composition of the play by the rigoristic sentiments and arrogant virtue of the Puritans." And in this view several points of the main action might have been aptly suggested at the time in question: for the King had scarcely set foot in England but he began to be worried by the importunities of that remarkable people; who had been feeding upon the hope, that by the sole exercise of his prerogative he would work through a radical change in the constitution of the Church, and so bring her into accordance with their ideas:—all this on the principle, of course, that a minority however small, with the truth, was better than a majority however large, without it.

The accession of King James to the English throne was in March, 1603. So that the forecited arguments would conclude the writing of the play to have been nearly synchronous with the revisal of *All's Well that Ends Well* , and with the production of *King Lear* , perhaps also of *Macbeth* ; at least, within the same period of four or five years. The characteristics of style and temper draw to the same conclusion as regards the date of the writing.

There is no doubt that for some particulars in the plot and story of *Measure for Measure* the Poet was ultimately indebted to Cinthio, an Italian novelist of the sixteenth century. The original story makes the eighty-fifth in his *Hundred Tales* . A youth named Ludovico is there overtaken in the crime of seduction: Juriste, a magistrate highly reputed for wisdom and justice, passes sentence of death upon him; and Ludovico's sister, a virgin of rare gifts and graces, goes to pleading for his life. Her beauty and eloquence have the same effect on Juriste as Isabella's on Angelo. His proposals are rejected with scorn and horror; but the lady, overcome by the pathetic entreaties of her brother, at last yields to them under a solemn promise of marriage. His object being gained, the wicked man then commits a double vow-breach, neither marrying the sister nor sparing the brother. She appeals to the Emperor, by whom Juriste is forced to marry her, and then sentenced to death; but is finally pardoned at the lady's suit, who is now as earnest and eloquent for her husband as she had been for her brother. Her conduct touches him with remorse, and at length proves as effective in reforming his character as it was in redeeming his life.

As early as 1578, this tale was dramatized after a sort by George Whetstone, and was published as *The History of Promos and Cassandra* . Whetstone was a writer of learning and talent, but not such that even the instructions of a Shakespeare could have made him capable of dramatic excellence; and, as he had no such benefit, his performance is insipid and worthless enough. The drama is in Two Parts, and is written in verse, with alternate rhymes. In his conduct of the story Whetstone varies somewhat from the original; as the following abstract will show:

In the city of Julio, then under the rule of Corvinus, King of Hungary, there was a law that for incontinence the man should suffer death, and the woman be marked out for infamy by her dress. Through the indulgence of magistrates, this law came to be little regarded. The government falling at length into the hands of Lord Promos, he revived the statute, and, a youth named Andrugio being convicted of the fault in question, resolved to visit the penalties in their utmost rigour upon both the parties. Andrugio had a sister of great virtue and accomplishment, named Cassandra, who undertook to sue for his life. Her good behaviour, great beauty, and "the sweet order of her talk" wrought so far with the governor as to induce a short reprieve. Being inflamed soon after with a criminal passion, he set down the spoil of her honour as the ransom. She spurned his suit with abhorrence. Unable, however, to resist the pleadings of her brother, she at last yielded to the man's proposal, on condition of his pardoning her brother and then marrying her. This he vowed to do; but, his end once gained, instead of keeping his vow, he ordered the jailer to present Cassandra with her brother's head. As the jailer knew what the governor had done, he took the head of a felon just executed, and set Andrugio at liberty. Cassandra, supposing the head to be her brother's, was at the point to kill herself for grief, but spared that stroke, to be avenged on the traitor. She devised to make her case known to the King; who forthwith hastened to do justice on Promos, ordering that, to repair the lady's honour, he should marry her, and then, for his crime against the State, lose his head. No sooner was Cassandra a wife than all her rhetoric of eye, tongue, and action was tasked to procure the pardon of her husband; but the King, tendering the public good more than hers, denied her suit. At length, Andrugio, overcome by his sister's grief, made himself known; for he had all the while been about the place in disguise; whereupon the King, to honour the virtues of Cassandra, pardoned both him and Promos.

In 1592, Whetstone published his *Heptameron of Civil Discourses* , containing a prose version of the same tale. It is observable that he deviates from Cinthio in bringing Andrugio off alive; and as Shakespeare does the same with Claudio, we may well conclude that he drew directly from Whetstone, not from the original author. Beyond the mere outline of the story, it does not appear that the Poet borrowed any thing more than a few slight hints and casual expressions. And a comparison of the two pieces would nowise reduce his claims; it being not less creditable to have lifted the story out of the mire into such a region of art and poetry than to have invented it. Then too, even as regards the story, Shakespeare varies from Whetstone much more materially than the latter does from Cinthio: representing the illicit meeting of Claudio and Juliet as taking place under the shield of a solemn betrothment; which very much lessens their fault, as marriage bonds were already upon them; and proportionably heightens Angelo's wickedness, as it brings on him the guilt of making the law responsible for his own arbitrary rigour. But the main *original* feature in the plot of *Measure for Measure* is the part of Mariana, which puts a new life into the whole, and purifies it almost into another nature; as it prevents the soiling of Isabella's womanhood, supplies an apt reason for the Duke's mysterious conduct, and yields a pregnant motive for Angelo's pardon, in that his life is thereby bound up with that of a wronged and innocent woman, whom his crimes are made the occasion of restoring to her rights and happiness; so that her virtue may be justly allowed to reprieve him from death.

In the comic parts of Whetstone's drama there is all the grossness of *Measure for Measure* , without any thing that the utmost courtesy of language can call wit or humour. So that, if the Poet here received no help, neither can he have any excuse, from the workmanship of his predecessor. But he probably saw that some such matter was required by the scheme of the play and the laws of dramatic proportion. And as in these parts the truth and character are all his own, so he can hardly be blamed for not anticipating the delicacy or squeamishness of later times, there being none such in the most refined audiences of his day; while, again, his choice of a subject so ugly in itself is amply screened from censure by the lessons of virtue and wisdom which he used it as an opportunity for delivering. To have trained and taught a barbarous tale of cruelty and lust into such a fruitage of poetry and humanity, may well offset whatever of offence there may be in the play to modern taste.

I have already referred to certain characteristics of style and temper which this play shares with several others probably written about the same time, and which, as before observed, have been thought to mark some crisis in the Poet's life. It cannot well be denied that the plays in question have something of a peculiar spirit, which might aptly suggest that some passage of bitter experience must have turned the milk of his genius for a time into gall, and put him upon a course of harsh and indignant thought. The point is well stated by Hallam: "There seems to have been a period of Shakespeare's life when his heart was ill at ease, and ill content with the world or his own conscience: the memory of hours misspent, the pang of affection misplaced or unrequited, the experience of man's worser nature, which intercourse with ill-chosen associates peculiarly teaches,—these, as they sank down into the depths of his great mind, seem not only to have inspired into it the conception of Lear and Timon, but that of one primary character, the censurer of mankind." And Verplanck speaks in a similar strain of "that portion of the author's life which was memorable for the production of the additions to the original *Hamlet* , with their melancholy wisdom; probably of *Timon* , with its indignant and hearty scorn, and rebukes of the baseness of civilized society; and above all of *Lear* , with its dark pictures of unmixed, unmitigated guilt, and its terrible and prophet-like denunciations."

These words certainly carry much weight, and may go far to warrant the belief of the writers, that the Poet was smitten with some rude shock of fortune which untuned the melody of his soul, and wrenched his mind from its once smooth and happy course, causing it to recoil upon itself and brood over its own thoughts. Yet there are considerable difficulties besetting a theory of this kind. For, in some other plays referred by these critics to the same period, there is so much of the Poet's gayest and happiest workmanship as must greatly embarrass if not quite upset such a theory. But, whatever may have caused the peculiar tone and the cast of thought in the forenamed plays, it is pretty certain that the darkness was not permanent; the clear azure, soft sunshine, and serene sweetness of *The Tempest* and *The Winter's Tale* being unquestionably of a later date. And, surely, in the life of so earnest and thoughtful a man as Shakespeare, there might well be, nay, there must have been, times when, without any special woundings or bruisings of fortune, his mind got fascinated by the appalling mystery of evil that haunts our fallen nature.

That such darker hours, however occasioned, were more frequent at one period of the Poet's life than at others, is indeed probable. And it was equally natural that their coming should sometimes engage him in heart-tugging and brain-sweating efforts to scrutinize the inscrutable workings of human guilt, and thus stamp itself strongly upon the offspring of his mind. Thus, without any other than the ordinary progress of thoughtful spirits, we should naturally have a middle period, when the early enthusiasm of hope had passed away, and before the deeper, calmer, but not less cheerful tranquillity of resignation had set in. For so it is apt to be in this life of ours: the angry barkings of fortune, or what seem such, have their turn with us; "the fretful fever and the stir unprofitable" work our souls full of discord and perturbation; but after a while these things pass away, and are followed by a more placid and genial time; the experienced insufficiency of man for himself having charmed our wrestlings of thought into repose, and our spirits having undergone the chastening and subduing power of life's sterner discipline.

In some such passage, then, I should rather presume the unique conception of *Measure for Measure* to have been formed in the Poet's mind. I say unique, because this is his only instance of comedy where the wit seems to foam and sparkle up from a fountain of bitterness; where even the humour is made pungent with sarcasm; and where the poetry is marked with tragic austerity. In none of his plays does he discover less of leaning upon pre-existing models, or a more manly negligence, perhaps sometimes carried to excess, of those lighter graces of manner which none but the greatest minds may safely despise. His genius is here out in all its colossal individuality, and he seems to have meant it should be so; as if he felt quite sure of having now reached his mastership; so that henceforth, instead of leaning on those who had gone before, he was to be himself a leaning-place for those who should follow.

Accordingly the play abounds in fearless grapplings and strugglings of mind with matters too hard to consist with much facility and gracefulness of tongue. The thought is strong, and in its strength careless of appearances, and seems rather wishing than fearing to have its roughnesses seen: the style is rugged, irregular, abrupt, sometimes running into an almost forbidding sternness, but everywhere throbbing with life: often a whole page of meaning is condensed and rammed into a clause or an image, so that the force thereof beats and reverberates through the entire scene: with little of elaborate grace or finish, we have bold, deep strokes, where the want of finer softenings and shadings is more than made up by increased energy and expressiveness; the words going right to the spot, and leaving none of their work undone. Thus the workmanship is in a very uncommon degree what I sometimes designate as *steep* , meaning thereby *hard to get to the top of* . Hence it is perhaps, in part, that so many axioms and "brief sententious precepts" of moral and practical wisdom from this play have wrought themselves into the currency and familiarity of household words, and live for instruction or comfort in the memory of many who know nothing of their original source. As a strong instance in point, take Isabella's meaty apothegm,—

"Man, proud man, Drest in a little brief authority,— Most ignorant of what he's most assur'd,— Plays such fantastic tricks before high Heaven As make the angels weep; who, *with our spleens, Would all themselves laugh mortal* ."

Which means that, if the angels had our disposition to splenetic or satirical mirth, the sight of our human arrogance strutting through its absurd antics would cast them into such an ecstasy of ridicule, that they would laugh themselves clean out of their immortality; this celestial prerogative being quite incompatible with such ebullitions of spleen.

Whether from the nature of the subject, or the mode of treating it, or both, *Measure for Measure* is generally regarded as one of the least attractive, though most instructive, of Shakespeare's plays. Coleridge, in those fragments of his critical lectures which now form our best text-book of English criticism, says, "This play, which is Shakespeare's throughout, is to me the most painful—rather say the only painful—part of his genuine works." From this language, sustained as it is by other high authorities, I probably should not dissent; but when, in his *Table Talk* , he says that "Isabella herself contrives to be unamiable, and Claudio is detestable," I can by no means go along with him.

It would seem indeed as if undue fault had sometimes been found, not so much with the play itself as with some of the persons, from trying them by a moral standard which cannot be fairly applied to them, or from not duly weighing all the circumstances, feelings, and motives under which they are represented as acting. Thus Ulrici speaks of Claudio as being guilty of seduction. Which is surely wide of the mark; it being clear enough that, according to the usages then and there established, he was, as he considered himself to be, virtually married, though not admissible to all the rights of the married life. Hence we have the Duke assuring Mariana that there would be no crime in her meeting with Angelo, because he was her "husband on a pre-contract." And it is well known that in ancient times the ceremony of betrothment conferred the marriage tie, though not the nuptials, so that the union of the parties was thenceforth firm in the eye of the law itself. So again Hallam, speaking of Isabella: "One is disposed to ask whether, if Claudio had been really executed, the spectator would not have gone away with no great affection for her; and at least we now feel that her reproaches against her miserable brother, when he clings to life like a frail and guilty being, are too harsh." As to the first branch of this indictment, I might have ventured to ask the writer how his affection would have stood towards the heroine, if she had yielded to Angelo's proposal. As to the second branch, though I do indeed feel that Claudio were rather to be pitied than blamed, whatever course he had taken in so terrible an alternative, yet the conduct of his sister strikes me as every way creditable to her. Her reproaches were indeed too harsh, if they sprang from want of love; but such is evidently not the case. The truth is, she is in a very hard struggle between affection and principle: she needs, and she hopes, to have the strain upon her womanly fortitude lightened by the manly fortitude of her brother; and her harshness of reproof discovers the natural workings of a tender and deep affection, in an agony of disappointment at being urged, by one for whom she would die, to an act which she shrinks from with noble horror, and justly considers worse than death. So that we here have the keen anguish of conflicting feelings venting itself in a severity which, though unmerited, serves to disclose the more impressively her nobleness of character.

Again, the same critic, referring to the part of Mariana as indispensable to "a satisfactory termination" of the story, objects, that "it is never explained how the Duke had become acquainted with this secret, and, being acquainted with it, how he had preserved his esteem and confidence in Angelo." But, surely, we are given to understand at the outset that the Duke has not preserved the esteem and confidence in question. In his first scene with Friar Thomas, among his reasons for the action he has on foot, he makes special mention of this one:

"Lord Angelo is precise; *Stands at a guard with envy* ; scarce confesses That his blood flows, or that his appetite Is more to bread than stone: *hence shall we see, If power change purpose, what our* SEEMERS *be* ."

Which clearly infers that his main purpose in assuming the disguise of a monk is to unmask the deputy, and demonstrate to others what has long been known to himself. And he throws out other hints of a belief or suspicion that Angelo is angling for emolument or popularity, and baiting his hook with great apparent strictness and sanctity of life; thus putting on sheep's clothing, in order to play the wolf with more safety and success. As to the secret concerning Mariana, it seems enough that the Duke knows it, that the knowledge justifies his distrust, and that when the time comes he uses it for a good purpose; the earlier part of the play thus preparing quietly for what is to follow, and the later explaining what went before. In truth, the Duke is better able to understand the deputy's character than to persuade others of it: this is one of his motives for the stratagem. And a man of his wisdom, even if he have no available facts in the case, might well suspect an austerity so theatrical as Angelo's to be rather an art than a virtue: he could not well be ignorant that, when men are so forward to air their graces and *make* their light shine, they can hardly be aiming at any glory but their own.

It is to be supposed, withal, that Angelo has been wont to set himself up as an example of ghostly rectitude, and to reflect somewhat on the laxity of the Duke's administration. These reproofs the Duke cannot answer without laying himself open to the retort of being touched with jealousy. Then too Angelo is nervously apprehensive of reproach; is ever on the watch, and "making broad his phylacteries," lest malice should spy some holes in his conduct; for such is the meaning of "standing at a guard with envy": whereas "virtue is bold, and goodness never fearful" in that kind. The Duke knows that such an ostentatious strictness, however it may take with the multitude, is among the proper symptoms of a bad conscience; that such high professions of righteousness are seldom used but as a mask to cover some secret delinquencies from the public eye. Angelo had entered into a solemn engagement of marriage, his motive being the lady's wealth; her wealth being lost, so that she could no longer hold him through his secret sin of covetousness, he had cruelly deserted her; this great wrong he had still more cruelly made use of to purchase a brighter semblance of virtue, blasting her good name with alleged discoveries of crime, and thus fattening his own reputation with the life-blood of his innocent and helpless victim. Here was an act of extreme heartlessness and turpitude, too bad to be believed of one so ensconced in solemn plausibilities. The matter had come privately to the Duke's knowledge; but his tongue was tied by the official delicacies of his position.

A certain class of offences had caused a law to be passed of such overstrained severity that it broke down in the trial; so it fell into disuse, and became a dead letter,—a perch to birds of prey, and not their terror. From its extreme rigour, this law was extremely odious; and, as is always the case with laws so hated, the attempt to enforce it drew on a commensurate reaction of licentiousness; the law thus stimulating the evil it was meant to repress,—a mistaken plaster inflaming the sore. Angelo had been secretly guilty of a far worse sin than the one this law was aimed against, but had managed to fence himself about with practical impunity; nay, his crafty, sanctimonious selfishness had even turned that sin to an increase of honour, and so made it a basis of pride. As the slumbering law does not touch his case, he is earnest to have it revived and put to work: so the Duke, being somewhat divided between the pleadings of justice and mercy, concludes to let him try his hand. In the discharge of his new office, which he conceives his great moral strictness to have gained for him, Angelo thinks to build his reputation still higher by striking at a conspicuous object. In the prosecution of his scheme, he soon goes to attempting a vastly deeper breach of the very law he is enforcing than that of the man whom he has found obnoxious to its penalties. Claudio's offence was done when the law was sleeping. Angelo has just awakened it, yet he proceeds against Claudio as if the latter had transgressed while the law was vigilant. Angelo's transgression has no such excuse, since he has himself already given new life and force to the law. Nevertheless he persists in his design, and hardens himself to the point of resolving to "give his sensual race the rein." The hitherto unsuspected evil within he is now fully aware of, but looks it squarely in the face, and rushes headlong into the double crime of committing in its worst form the sin and at the same time punishing the lighter form of it with death in another. Thus it turns out that

"This outward-sainted deputy— Whose settled visage and deliberate word Nips youth i' the head, and follies doth emmew As falcon doth the fowl—is yet a devil; His filth within being cast, he would appear A pond as deep as Hell."

Yet Angelo is at first not so properly a hypocrite as a self-deceiver. For it is very considerable that he wishes to be and sincerely thinks he is, what he affects and appears to be; as is plain from his consternation at the wickedness which opportunity awakens into conscious action within him. He thus typifies that sort of men of whom Bishop Butler says, "they try appearances upon themselves as well as upon the world, and with at least as much success; and choose to manage so as to make their own minds easy with their faults, which can scarce be done without management, rather than to mend them." Even so Angelo for self-ends imitates sanctity, and then gets taken in by his own imitation. This "mystery of iniquity" locks him from all true knowledge of himself. He must be worse before he will be better. The refined hypocrisies which so elude his eye, and thus nurse his self-righteous pride, must put on a grosser form, till he cannot choose but see himself as he is. The secret devil within must blaze out in a shape too palpable to be ignored. And so, as often happens where the subtleties of self-deceit are thus cherished, he at length proceeds a downright conscious hypocrite, this too of the deepest dye.

Angelo's original fault lay in forgetting or ignoring his own frailty. As a natural consequence, his "darling sin is pride that apes humility." And his conceit of virtue,—"my gravity, wherein (let no man hear me) I take pride,"—while it keeps him from certain vices, is itself a far greater vice than any it keeps him from; insomuch that his interviews with Isabella may almost be said to *elevate* him into lust. They at least bring him to a just vision of his inward self. The serpent charms of self-deceit which he has so hugged are now broken. For even so—and how awful is the fact!—men often wound themselves so deeply with medicines, that Providence has no way for them, apparently, but to make wounds medicinal, or, as Hooker says, "to cure by vice where virtue hath stricken." So indeed it must be where men turn their virtues into food of spiritual pride; which is the hardest of all sores to be cured, "inasmuch as that which rooteth out other vices causeth this." And perhaps the array of low and loathsome vices, which the Poet has clustered about Angelo in the persons of Lucio, Pompey, and Mrs. Overdone, was necessary, to make us feel how unspeakably worse than any or all of these is Angelo's pride of virtue. It can hardly be needful to add, that in Angelo these fearful traits of character are depicted with a truth and sternness of pencil, such as could scarce have been achieved but in an age fruitful in living examples of them.

The placing of Isabella, "a thing ensky'd and sainted," and who truly *is* all that Angelo seems, side by side with such a breathing, shining mass of pitch, is one of those dramatic audacities wherein none perhaps but a Shakespeare could safely indulge. Of her character the most prolific hint that is given is what she says to the disguised Duke, when he is urging her to fasten her ear on his advisings touching the part of Mariana: "I have spirit to do any thing that appears not foul in the truth of my spirit." That is, she cares not what face her action may wear to the world, nor how much reproach it may bring on her from others, if it will only leave her the society, which she has never parted from, of a clean breast and a pure conscience.

Called from the cloister, where she is on the point of taking the veil of earthly renouncement, to plead for her brother's life, she comes forth a saintly anchoress, clad in the austerest sweetness of womanhood, to throw the light of her virgin soul upon the dark, loathsome scenes and characters around her. With great strength of intellect and depth of feeling she unites an equal power of imagination, the whole being pervaded, quickened, and guided by a still, intense religious enthusiasm. And because her virtue is securely rooted and grounded in religion, therefore she never thinks of it as her own, but only as a gift from the Being whom she adores, and who is her only hope for the keeping of what she has. Which suggests the fundamental point of contrast between her and Angelo, whose virtue, if such it may be called, is nothing, nay, worse than nothing, because it is a virtue of his own making, is without any inspiration from the one Source of all true good, and so has no basis but pride, which is itself a bubble. Accordingly her character appears to me among the finest, in some respects the very finest, in Shakespeare's matchless cabinet of female excellence.

The power and pathos with which she pleads for her brother are well known. At first she is timid, distrustful of her powers, shrinking with modest awe of the law's appointed organ; and she seems drawn unawares into the heights of moral argument and the most sweetly-breathing strains of Gospel wisdom. Much of what she says has become domesticated wherever the English language is spoken, and would long since have grown stale, if it were possible to crush the freshness of immortal youth out of it. The dialogues between her and Angelo are extremely subtile and suggestive on both sides, fraught with meanings to reward the most searching ethical study, but which I cannot stay to trace out, and which the closest criticism would fail to exhaust. At the opening of their interview, she is in a struggle between wishing and not wishing, and therefore not in a mood to "play with reason and discourse." With her settled awe of purity, she cannot but admit the law to be right, yet she sees not how, in the circumstances, mercy can be wrong. At this thought her heart presently kindles, her eloquence springs to work, and its tones grow deeper, clearer, more penetrating, as point after point catches her mental eye. Thenceforth it is a keen encounter of mind with mind; but on his side it is the conscious logic of an adroit and practised lawyer, who has full mastery of his case, and is prompt in all the turns of legal ingenuity;

while on her side it is the logic of nature's finest moral instincts spontaneously using the forces of a quick, powerful, and well-balanced intellect as their organ of expression. She perceives at once how subtile and acute of apprehension he is; so, lest her speech should have too much edge, she veils the matter in figures of a somewhat enigmatical cast, because she knows that he will instantly take the sense. Her instinctive knowledge of the human heart guides her directly to his secret springs of action. With a tact that seems like inspiration, she feels out his assailable points, and still surprises and holds him with new and startling appeals to his innermost feelings. At length, when, his wicked purpose being formed, he goes to talking to her in riddles, she quickly understands him, but thinks he is only testing her: her replies leave him in doubt whether craft or innocence speaks in her: so she draws him on to speaking plainer and plainer, till at last he makes a full and explicit avowal of his inhuman baseness. He is especially caught, be it observed, "in the strong toil" of her moral grace; at least he is pleased to think so: and as he has been wont to pride himself on being a saint, so he now takes refuge in the thought, "O cunning enemy, that to catch a saint, with saints dost bait thy hook!"

It is not to be denied, indeed, that Isabella's chastity is rather too demonstrative and self-pronounced; but this is because of the unblushing and emphatic licentiousness of her social environment. Goodness cannot remain undemonstrative amidst such a rank demonstrativeness of its opposite: the necessity it is under of fighting against so much and such aggressive evil forces it into stress, and so into taking a full measure of itself. Isabella, accordingly, is deeply conscious and mindful of her virtue, which somewhat mars the beauty of it, I admit; but in the circumstances it could not be otherwise: with such a strong stew of corruption boiling and bubbling all about her, it was not possible that purity in her case should retain that bland, unconscious repose which is indeed its greatest charm. From the prevailing rampancy of vice, a certain air of over-sternness and rigidity has wrought itself into her character, displacing somewhat of its proper sweetness and amiability: but, in the right view of things, this loss is well made up in that she is the more an object of reverence; albeit I have to confess that she would touch me rather more potently, if she had a little more of loveliness and a little less of awfulness. And it is remarkable that even Lucio, light-minded libertine as he is, whose familiar sin it is to jest with maids, "tongue far from heart," cannot approach her, but that his levity is at once awed into soberness, and he regards her as one "to be talk'd with in sincerity, as with a saint."

The Duke has been rather hardly dealt with by critics. Shakespeare—than whom it would not be easy to find a better judge of what belongs to wisdom and goodness—seems to have meant him for a wise and good man: yet he represents him as having rather more skill and pleasure in strategical arts and roundabout ways than is altogether in keeping with such a character. Some of his alleged reasons for the action he goes about reflect no honour on him; but it is observable that the sequel does not approve them to have been his real ones: his conduct, as the action proceeds, infers better motives than his speech offered at the beginning; which naturally suggests that there may have been more of purpose than of truth in his speaking. His first dialogue with Angelo is, no doubt, partly ironical. A liberal, thoughtful, and merciful prince, but with more of whim and caprice than exactly suits the dignity of his place, humanity speaks richly from his lips; yet in his actions the philosopher and the divine are better shown than the statesman and ruler. Therewithal he seems to take a very questionable delight in moving about as an unseen providence, by secret counsels leading the wicked designs of others to safe and just results. It is indeed true, as Heraud observes regarding him, that so "Divine Providence, while it deputes its authority to the office-bearers of the world, is still present both with them and it, and ever ready to punish the evil-doer": still I doubt of its being just the thing for the world's office-bearers to undertake the functions of Providence in that particular. Probably the Duke should not be charged with a fanaticism of intrigue; but he comes something nearer to it than befits a mind of the first order. Schlegel thinks "he has more pleasure in overhearing his subjects than in governing them in the usual way of princes"; and sets him down as an exception to the proverb, "A cowl does not make a monk": and perhaps his princely virtues are somewhat obscured by the disguise which so completely transforms him into a monk. Whether he acts upon the wicked principle with which that fraternity is so often reproached, or not, it is pretty certain that some of his means can be justified by nothing but the end. But perhaps, in the vast complexity of human motives and affairs, a due exercise of fairness and candour will find cause enough for ascribing to him the merit of honestly pursuing the good and true according to the best lights he has. Hereabouts Schlegel makes the following just remark: "Shakespeare, amidst the rancour of religious parties, delights in painting monks, and always represents their influence as beneficial; there being in his plays none of the black and knavish specimens which an enthusiasm for Protestantism, rather than poetical inspiration, has put some modern poets upon delineating. He merely gives his monks an inclination to be busy in the affairs of others, after renouncing the world for themselves; though in respect of pious frauds he does not make them very scrupulous."

As to the Duke's pardoning of Angelo, though Justice seems to cry out against the act, yet in the premises it were still more unjust in him to do otherwise; the deception he has practised on Angelo in substituting Mariana having plainly bound him to the course he finally takes in that matter. For the same power whereby he works through this deception might easily have prevented Angelo's crime; and to punish the offence after thus withholding the means of prevention were clearly wrong: not to mention how his proceedings here involve an innocent person; so that he ought to spare Angelo for her sake, if not for his own. Coleridge indeed strongly reprehends this act, on the ground that "cruelty, with lust and damnable baseness, cannot be forgiven, because we cannot conceive them as being morally repented of." But it seems to me hardly prudent, or becoming thus to set bounds to the grace of repentance, or to say what amount of sin must necessarily render a man incapable of being reformed. All which may in some measure explain the Duke's severity to the smaller crime of Lucio, after his clemency to the greater one of Angelo.

I must not leave the gentle Duke without remarking how, especially in the earlier portions of the play, his tongue drops the very manna of moral and meditative wisdom. His discourse in reconciling Claudio to the quick approach of death condenses the marrow of all that philosophy and divinity can urge, to wean us mortals from the "many deceiving promises of life."

Lucio is one of those mixed characters, such as are often generated amidst the refinements and pollutions of urban society, in whom low and disgusting vices, and a frivolity still more offensive, are blended with engaging manners and some manly sentiments. Thus he appears a gentleman and a blackguard by turns; and, which is more, he does really unite something of these seemingly-incompatible qualities. With a true eye and a just respect for virtue in others, yet, so far as we can see, he cares not a jot to have it in himself. And while his wanton, waggish levity seems too much for any generous sentiment to consist with, still he shows a strong and steady friendship for Claudio, and a heart-felt reverence for Isabella; as if on purpose to teach us that "the web of our life is of a mingled yarn, good and ill together." And perhaps the seeming "snow-broth blood" of Angelo puts him upon affecting a more frisky circulation than he really has. For an overacted austerity is not the right way to win others out of a too rollicking levity.

Dr. Johnson rather oddly remarks that "the comic scenes are natural and pleasing": not that the remark is not true enough, but that it appears something out of character in him. And if these scenes please, it is not so much from any fund of mirthful exhilaration, or any genial gushings of wit and humour, as for the remorseless, unsparing freedom, not unmingled with touches of scorn, with which the deformities of mankind are anatomized. The contrast between the right-hearted, well-meaning Claudio, a generous spirit walled in with overmuch infirmity, and Barnardine, a frightful petrification of humanity, "careless, reckless and fearless of what is past, present, or to come," is in the Poet's boldest manner.

Nevertheless the general current of things is far from musical, and the issues greatly disappointing. The drowsy Justice which we expect and wish to see awakened, and set in living harmony with Mercy, apparently relapses at last into a deeper sleep than ever. Our loyalty to Womanhood is not a little wounded by the humiliations to which poor Mariana stoops, at the ghostly counsels of her spiritual guide, that she may twine her life with that of the execrable hypocrite who has wronged her sex so deeply. That, amid the general impunity, the mere telling of some ridiculous lies to the disguised Duke about himself, should draw down a disproportionate severity upon Lucio, the lively, unprincipled, fantastic jester and wag, who might well be let pass as a privileged character, makes the whole look more as if done in mockery of justice than in honour of mercy. Except, indeed, the noble unfolding of Isabella, scarce any thing turns out to our wish; nor are we much pleased at seeing her diverted from the quiet tasks and holy contemplations where her heart is so much at home; although, as Gervinus observes, "she has that two-sided nature, the capacity to enjoy the world, according to circumstances, or to dispense with it."

The title of this play is apt to give a wrong impression of its scope and purpose. *Measure for Measure* is itself equivocal; but the subject-matter here fixes it to be taken in the sense, not of the old Jewish proverb, "An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth," but of the divine precept, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them." Thus the title falls in with one of Portia's appeals to Shylock, "We do pray for mercy, and that same prayer doth teach us all to render the deeds of mercy." The moral centre of the play properly stands in avoidance of extremes,—

"the golden mean and quiet flow Of truths that soften hatred, temper strife.

<<span id="filepos0040604902"> a>THE TEMPEST.

The Tempest is on all hands regarded as one of Shakespeare's perfectest works. Some of his plays, I should say, have beams in their eyes; but this has hardly so much as a mote; or, if it have any, my own eyes are not clear enough to discern it. I dare not pronounce the work faultless, for this is too much to affirm of any human workmanship; but I venture to think that whatever faults it may have are such as criticism is hardly competent to specify. In the characters of Ariel, Miranda, and Caliban, we have three of the most unique and original conceptions that ever sprang from the wit of man. We can scarce imagine how the Ideal could be pushed further beyond Nature; yet we here find it clothed with all the truth and life of Nature. And the whole texture of incident and circumstance is framed in keeping with that Ideal; so that all the parts and particulars cohere together, mutually supporting and supported.

The leading sentiment naturally inspired by the scenes of this drama is, I believe, that of delighted wonder. And such, as appears from the heroine's name, Miranda, who is *the* potency of the drama, is probably the sentiment which the play was meant to inspire. But the grace and efficacy in which the workmanship is steeped are so ethereal and so fine, that they can hardly be discoursed in any but the poetic form: it may well be doubted whether Criticism has any fingers delicate enough to grasp them. So much is this the case, that it seemed to me quite doubtful whether I should do well to undertake the theme at all. For Criticism is necessarily obliged to substitute, more or less, the forms of logic for those of art; and art, it scarce need be said, can do many things that are altogether beyond the reach of logic. On the other hand, the charm and verdure of these scenes are so unwithering and inexhaustible, that I could not quite make up my mind to leave the subject untried. Nor do I know how I can better serve my countrymen than by engaging and helping them in the study of this great inheritance of natural wisdom and unreproved delight. For, assuredly, if they early learn to be at home and to take pleasure in these productions, their whole after-life will be the better and the happier for it.

The Tempest is one of the plays that were never printed till in the folio of 1623; where, for reasons unknown to us, it stands the first in the volume; though, as we shall presently see, it was among the last of the Poet's writing.

It has been ascertained clearly enough that the play was written somewhere between 1608 and 1613. On the one hand, the leading features of Gonzalo's Commonwealth, as described in the play, were evidently taken from Florio's translation of Montaigne. As the passage is curious in itself, and as it aptly illustrates the Poet's method of appropriating from others, I will quote it:

"*Gon* . Had I plantation of this isle, my lord, And were the King on 't, what would I do? I' the Commonwealth I would by contraries Execute all things: for no kind of traffic Would I admit; no name of magistrate; Letters should not be known; riches, poverty, And use of service, none; contract, succession, Bourn, bound of land, tilth, vineyard, none; No use of metal, corn, or wine, or oil; No occupation; all men idle, all; And women too,—but innocent and pure; No sovereignty;—

Seb .   Yet he would be King on't.

Ant . The latter end of his Commonwealth forgets the beginning.

Gon . All things in common Nature should produce Without sweat or endeavour: treason, felony, Sword, pike, knife, gun, or need of any engine, Would I not have; but Nature should bring forth, Of its own kind, all foison, all abundance, To feed my innocent people."

In Montaigne's Essay *Of the Cannibals* , as translated by Florio, we have the following: "It is a nation, would I answer Plato, that hath no kind of traffic, no knowledge of letters, no intelligence of numbers, no name of magistrate, nor of politic superiority; no use of service, of riches, or of poverty; no contracts, no successions, no dividences; no occupation, but idle; no respect of kindred, but common; no apparel, but natural; no manuring of lands; no use of wine, corn, or metal: the very words that import lying, falsehood, treason, dissimulation, covetousness, envy, detraction, and pardon, were never heard amongst them."

Here the borrowing is too plain to be questioned; and this fixes the writing of *The Tempest* after 1603. On the other hand, Malone ascertained from some old records that the play was acted by the King's players "before Prince Charles, the

Princess Elizabeth, and the Prince Palatine, in the beginning of 1613."

For any nearer fixing of the date we have nothing firm to go upon but probabilities. Some of these, however, are pretty strong. I must rest with noting one of them:

Some hints towards the play were derived, apparently, from a book published by one Jourdan in 1610, and entitled, *A Discovery of the Bermudas, otherwise called the Isle of Devils* . The occasion was as follows: A fleet of nine ships, with some five hundred people, sailed from England in May, 1609. Among the officers were Sir George Somers, Sir Thomas Gates, and Captain Newport. The fleet was headed by the *Sea-Venture* , called the Admiral's Ship. On the 25th of July they were struck by a terrible tempest, which scattered the whole fleet, and parted the *Sea-Venture* from the rest. Most of the ships, however, reached Virginia, left the greater part of their people there, and sailed again for England, where Gates arrived in August or September, 1610, having been sent home by Lord Delaware. Jourdan's book, after relating their shipwreck, continues thus: "But our delivery was not more strange in falling so happily upon land, than our provision was admirable. For the Islands of the Bermudas, as every one knoweth that hath heard or read of them, were never inhabited by any Christian or Heathen people, but ever reputed a most prodigious and enchanted place, affording nothing but gusts, storms, and foul weather. Yet did we find the air so temperate, and the country so abundantly fruitful, that, notwithstanding we were there for the space of nine months, we were not only well refreshed, but out of the abundance thereof provided us with some reasonable quantity of provision to carry us for Virginia, and to maintain ourselves and the company we found there." About the same time, the Council of Virginia also put forth a narrative of "the disasters which had befallen the fleet, and of their miraculous escape," wherein we have the following: "These Islands of the Bermudas have ever been accounted an enchanted pile of rocks, and a desert inhabitation of devils; but all the fairies of the rocks were but flocks of birds, and all the devils that haunted the woods were but herds of swine."

In this account and these extracts there are several points which clearly connect with certain things in the play. To mark those points, or to trace out that connection, seems hardly worth the while. It may be well to add that the Poet's *still-vexed Bermoothes* seems to link his work in some way with Jourdan's narrative. So that 1610 is as early a date as can well be assigned for the writing of *The Tempest* . The supernatural in the play was no doubt the Poet's own creation; but it would have been in accordance with his usual method to avail himself of whatever interest might spring from the popular notions touching the Bermudas. In his marvellous creations the people would see nothing but the distant marvels with which their fancies were prepossessed.

Concurrent with all this is the internal evidence of the play itself. The style, language, and general cast of thought, the union of richness and severity, the grave, austere beauty of character which pervades it, and the organic compactness of the whole structure, all go to mark it as an issue of the Poet's ripest years. Coleridge regarded it as "certainly one of Shakespeare's latest works, judging from the language only." Campbell the poet considers it his very latest. "*The Tempest* ," says he, "has a sort of sacredness as the last work of a mighty workman. Shakespeare, as if conscious that it would be his last, and as if inspired to typify himself, has made his hero a natural, a dignified, and benevolent magician, who could conjure up 'spirits from the vasty deep,' and command supernatural agency by the most seemingly-natural and simple means. Shakespeare himself is Prospero, or rather the superior genius who commands both Prospero and Ariel. But the time was approaching when the potent sorcerer was to break his staff, and bury it fathoms in the ocean 'deeper than did ever plummet sound.' That staff has never been and will never be recovered." But I suspect there is more of poetry than of truth in this; at least I can find no warrant for it: on the contrary, we have fair ground for believing that at least *Coriolanus, King Henry the Eighth* , and perhaps *The Winter's Tale* were written after *The Tempest* . Mr. Verplanck, rather than give up the notion so well put by Campbell, suggests that the Poet may have *revised The Tempest* after all his other plays were written, and inserted the passage where Prospero abjures his "rough magic," and buries his staff, and drowns his book. But I can hardly think that Shakespeare had any reference to himself in that passage: for, besides that he did not use to put his own feelings and purposes into the mouth of his characters, the doing so in this case would infer such a degree of self-exultation as, it seems to me, his native and habitual modesty would scarce permit.

No play or novel has been discovered to which Shakespeare could have been at all indebted for the plot or matter of *The Tempest* . There is indeed an old ballad called *The Inchanted Island* , which was once thought to have contributed something towards the play: but it is now generally held to be more modern than the play, and probably founded upon it; the names and some of the incidents being varied, as if on purpose to disguise its connection with a work that was popular on the stage.

There has been considerable discussion as to the scene of *The Tempest* . A wide range of critics from Mr. Chalmers to Mrs. Jameson have taken for granted that the Poet fixed his scene in the Bermudas. For this they have alleged no authority but his mention of "the still-vex'd Bermoothes." Ariel's trip from "the deep nook to fetch dew from the still-vex'd Bermoothes" does indeed show that the Bermudas were in the Poet's mind; but then it also shows that his scene was not there; for it had been no feat at all worth mentioning for Ariel to fetch dew from one part of the Bermudas to another. An aerial voyage of some two or three thousand miles was the least that so nimble a messenger could be expected to make any account of. Besides, in less than an hour after the wrecking of the King's ship, the rest of the fleet are said to be upon the Mediterranean, "bound sadly home for Naples." On the other hand, the Rev. Mr. Hunter is very positive that, if we read the play with a map before us, we shall bring up at the island of Lampedusa, which "lies midway between Malta and the African coast." He makes out a pretty fair case, nevertheless I must be excused; not so much that I positively reject his theory as that I simply do not care whether it be true or not. But if we must have any supposal about it, the most reasonable as well as the most poetical one seems to be, that the Poet, writing without a map, placed his scene upon an island of the mind; and that it suited his purpose to transfer to his ideal whereabout some of the wonders of trans-Atlantic discovery. I should almost as soon think of going to history for the characters of Ariel and Caliban, as to geography for the size, locality, or whatsoever else, of their dwelling-place. And it is to be noted that the old ballad just referred to seems to take for granted that the island was but an island of the mind; representing it to have disappeared upon Prospero's leaving it:

"From that day forth the isle has been By wandering sailors never seen: Some say 'tis buried deep Beneath the sea, which breaks and roars Above its savage rocky shores, Nor e'er is known to sleep."

Coleridge says "*The Tempest* is a specimen of the purely romantic drama." The term *romantic* is here used in a technical sense; that is, to distinguish the Shakespearian from the Classic Drama. In this sense, I cannot quite agree with the great critic that the drama is *purely* romantic. Highly romantic it certainly is, in its wide, free, bold variety of character and incident, and in all the qualities that enter into the picturesque; yet not romantic in such sort, I think, but that it is at the same time equally classic; classic, not only in that the unities of time and place are strictly observed, but as having the other qualities which naturally go with those laws of the classic form; in its severe beauty and majestic simplicity, its interfusion of the lyrical and the ethical, and in the mellow atmosphere of serenity and composure which envelopes it: as if on purpose to show the Poet's mastery not only of both the Classic and Romantic Drama, but of the common Nature out of which both of them grew. This union of both kinds in one without hindrance to the distinctive qualities of either,—this it is, I think, that chiefly distinguishes *The Tempest* from the Poet's other dramas. Some have thought that in this play Shakespeare specially undertook to silence the pedantic cavillers of his time by showing that he could keep to the rules of the Greek stage, if he chose to do so, without being any the less himself. But it seems more likely that he was here drawn into such a course by the leadings of his own wise spirit than by the cavils of contemporary critics; the form appearing too cognate with the matter to have been dictated by any thing external to the work itself.

There are some points that naturally suggest a comparison between *The Tempest* and *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* . In both the Poet has with equal or nearly equal success carried Nature, as it were, beyond herself, and peopled a purely ideal region with the attributes of life and reality; so that the characters touch us like substantive, personal beings, as if he had but described, not created them. But, beyond this, the resemblance ceases: indeed no two of his plays differ more widely in all other respects.

The Tempest presents a combination of elements apparently so incongruous that we cannot but marvel how they were brought together; yet they blend so sweetly, and co-operate so smoothly, that we at once feel at home with them, and see nothing to hinder their union in the world of which we are a part. For in the mingling of the natural and the supernatural we here find no gap, no break; nothing disjointed or abrupt; the two being drawn into each other so harmoniously, and so knit together by mutual participations, that they seem strictly continuous, with no distinguishable line to mark where they meet and join. It is as if the gulf which apparently separates the two worlds had been abolished, leaving nothing to prevent a free circulation and intercourse between them.

Prospero, standing in the centre of the whole, acts as kind of subordinate Providence, reconciling the diverse elements to himself and in himself to one another. Though armed with supernatural might, so that the winds and waves obey him, his magical and mysterious powers are tied to truth and right: his "high charms work" to none but just and beneficent ends; and whatever might be repulsive in the magician is softened and made attractive by the virtues of the man and the feelings of the father: Ariel links him with the world above us, Caliban with the world beneath us, and Miranda—"thee, my dear one, thee my daughter"—with the world around and within us. And the mind acquiesces freely in the miracles ascribed to him; his thoughts and aims being so at one with Nature's inward harmonies, that we cannot tell whether he shapes her movements or merely falls in with them; that is, whether his art stands in submission or command. His sorcery indeed is the sorcery of knowledge, his magic the magic of virtue. For what so marvellous as the inward, vital necromancy of good which transmutes the wrongs that are done him into motives of beneficence, and is so far from being hurt by the powers of Evil, that it turns their assaults into new sources of strength against them? And with what a smooth tranquillity of spirit he everywhere speaks and acts! as if the discipline of adversity had but served

"to elevate the will, And lead him on to that transcendent rest Where every passion doth the sway attest Of Reason seated on her sovereign hill."

Shakespeare and Bacon, the Prince of poets and the Prince of philosophers, wrought out their mighty works side by side, and nearly at the same time, though without any express recognition of each other. And why may we not regard Prospero as prognosticating in a poetical form those vast triumphs of man's rational spirit which the philosopher foresaw and prepared? For it is observable that, before Prospero's coming to the island, the powers which cleave to his thoughts and obey his "so potent art" were at perpetual war, the better being in subjection to the worse, and all being turned from their rightful ends into a mad, brawling dissonance: but he teaches them to know their places; and, "weak masters though they be," without such guidance, yet under his ordering they become powerful, and work together as if endowed with a rational soul and a social purpose; their insane gabble turning to speech, their savage howling to music; so that

"the isle is full of noises, Sounds, and sweet airs, that give delight, and hurt not."

Wherein is boldly figured the educating of Nature up, so to speak, into intelligent ministries, she lending man hands because he lends her eyes, and weaving her forces into vital union with him.

"You by whose aid— Weak masters though ye be—I have bedimm'd The noontide Sun, call'd forth the mutinous winds, And 'twixt the green sea and the azure vault Set roaring war: to the dread rattling thunder Have I given fire, and rifted Jove's stout oak With his own bolt: the strong-bas'd promontory Have I made shake; and by the spurs pluck'd up The pine and cedar."

In this bold imagery we seem to have a kind of prophecy of what human science and skill have since achieved in taming the great forces of Nature to man's hand, and harnessing them up into his service. Is not all this as if the infernal powers should be appeased and soothed by the melody and sweetness of the Orphean harp and voice? And do we not see how the very elements themselves grow happy and merry in serving man, when he by his wisdom and eloquence has once charmed them into order and concert? Man has but to learn Nature's language and obey her voice, and she clothes him with plenipotence. The mad warring of her forces turns to rational speech and music when he holds the torch of reason before them and makes it shine full in their faces. Let him but set himself steadfastly to understand and observe her laws, and her mighty energies hasten to wait upon him, as docile to his hand as the lion to the eye and voice of Lady Una. So that we may not unfairly apply to Prospero what Bacon so finely interprets of Orpheus, as "a wonderful and divine person skilled in all kinds of harmony, subduing and drawing all things after him by sweet and gentle methods and modulations."

All this, to be sure, is making the work rather an allegory than a drama, and therein of course misrepresents its quality. For the connecting links in this strange intercourse of man and Nature are "beings individually determined," and affect us as persons, not as propositions.

Ariel and Caliban are equally preternatural, though in opposite directions. Ariel's very being is spun out of melody and fragrance; at least, if a feeling soul and an intelligent will are the warp, these are the woof of his exquisite texture. He has just enough of human-heartedness to know how he would feel were he human, and a proportionable sense of gratitude, which has been aptly called "the memory of the heart": hence he needs to be often reminded of his obligations, but is religiously true to them so long as he remembers them. His delicacy of nature is nowhere more apparent than in his sympathy with right and good: the instant he comes within their touch he follows them without reserve; and he will suffer any torments rather than "act the earthy and abhorr'd commands" that go against his moral grain. And what a merry little personage he is withal! as if his being were cast together in an impulse of play, and he would spend his whole life in one perpetual frolic.

But the main ingredients of Ariel's zephyr-like constitution are shown in his leading inclinations; as he naturally has most affinity for that of which he is framed. Moral ties are irksome to him; they are not his proper element: when he enters their sphere, he feels them to be holy indeed; but, were he free, he would keep out of their reach, and follow the circling seasons in their course, and always dwell merrily in the fringes of Summer. Prospero quietly intimates his instinctive dread of the cold by threatening to make him "howl away twelve Winters." And the chief joy of his promised release from service is, that he will then be free to live all the year through under the soft rule of Summer, with its flowers and fragrances and melodies. He is indeed an arrant little epicure of perfume and sweet sounds, and gives forth several songs which "seem to sound in the air, and as if the person playing them were invisible."

A part of Ariel's unique texture is well shown in the scene where he relents at the sufferings of the shipwrecked lords, and remonstrates with his master in their behalf:

"*Ariel* . The King, His brother, and yours, abide all three distracted; And the remainder mourning over them, Brimful of sorrow and dismay; but chiefly He that you term'd *the good old lord, Gonzalo* : His tears run down his beard, like Winter's drops From eaves of reeds: your charm so strongly works 'em. That, if you now beheld them, your affections Would become tender.

Pros . Dost thou think so, spirit?

Ariel . Mine would, sir, were I human."

Another mark-worthy feature of Ariel is, that his power does not stop with the physical forces of Nature, but reaches also to the hearts and consciences of men; so that by his music he can kindle or assuage the deepest griefs of the one, and strike the keenest pangs of remorse into the other. This comes out in the different effects of his art upon Ferdinand and the guilty King, as related by the men themselves:

"Where should this music be? i' the air or th' earth? It sounds no more:—and, sure, it waits upon Some god o' the island. Sitting on a bank, Weeping again the King my father's wreck, This music crept by me upon the waters, Allaying both their fury and my passion With its sweet air: thence I have follow'd it, Or it hath drawn me rather:—but it is gone. No, it begins again."

Such is the effect on Ferdinand: now mark the contrast when we come to the King:

"O, it is monstrous, monstrous! Methought the billows spoke, and told me of it; The winds did sing it to me; and the thunder, That deep and dreadful organ-pipe, pronounc'd The name of Prosper: it did bass my trespass. Therefore my son i' the ooze is bedded; and I'll seek him deeper than e'er plummet sounded, And with him there lie mudded."

In the planting of love, too, Ariel beats old god Cupid all to nothing. For it is through some witchcraft of his that Ferdinand and Miranda are surprised into a mutual rapture; so that Prospero notes at once how "at the first sight they have chang'd eyes," and "are both in either's power." All which is indeed just what Prospero wanted; yet he is himself fairly startled at the result: that fine issue of nature outruns his thought; and the wise old gentleman takes care forthwith lest it work too fast:

"This swift business I must uneasy make, lest too light winning Make the prize light."

I must note one more trait in Ariel. It is his fondness of mischievous sport, wherein he reminds us somewhat of Fairy Puck in *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* . It is shown in the evident gust with which he relates the trick he has played on Caliban and his confederates, when they were proceeding to execute their conspiracy against the hero's life:

"As I told you, sir, they were red-hot with drinking; So full of valour, that they smote the air For breathing in their faces; beat the ground For kissing of their feet; yet always bending Towards their project. Then I beat my tabor; At which, like unback'd colts, they prick'd their ears, Advanc'd their eyelids, lifted up their noses As they smelt music: so I charm'd their ears, That, calf-like, they my lowing follow'd through Tooth'd briers, sharp furzes, pricking goss, and thorns, Which enter'd their frail shins: at last I left them I' the filthy-mantled pool beyond your cell, There dancing up to th' chins."

Of Ariel's powers and functions as Prospero's prime minister, no logical forms, nothing but the Poet's art, can give any sort of an idea. No painter, I am sure, can do any thing with him; still less can any sculptor. Gifted with the ubiquity and multiformity of the substance from which he is named, before we can catch and define him in any one shape, he has passed into another. All we can say of him on this score is, that through his agency Prospero's thoughts forthwith become things, his volitions events. And yet, strangely and diversely as Ariel's nature is elemented and composed, with touches akin to several orders of being, there is such a self-consistency about him, he is so cut out in individual distinctness, and so rounded-in with personal attributes, that contemplation freely and easily rests upon him as an object. In other words, he is by no means an abstract idea personified, or any sort of intellectual diagram, but a veritable *person* ; and we have a personal feeling towards the dear creature, and would fain knit him into the living circle of our human affections, making him a familiar playfellow of the heart, to be cherished with "praise, blame, love, kisses, tears, and smiles."

If Caliban strikes us as a more wonderful creation than Ariel, it is probably because he has more in common with us, without being in any proper sense human. Perhaps I cannot hit him off better than by saying that he represents, both in body and soul, a sort of intermediate nature between man and brute, with an infusion of something that belongs to neither; as though one of the transformations imagined by the Developmentists had stuck midway in its course, where a breath or vapour of essential Evil had knit itself vitally into his texture. Caliban has all the attributes of humanity from the moral downwards, so that his nature touches and borders upon the sphere of moral life; still the result but approves his exclusion from such life, in that it brings him to recognize moral law only as making for self; that is, he has intelligence of seeming wrong in what is done to him, but no conscience of what is wrong in his own doings. It is a most singular and significant stroke in the delineation, that sleep seems to loosen the fetters of his soul, and lift him above himself: then indeed, and then only, "the muddy vesture of decay" doth not so "grossly close him in," but that some proper spirit-notices come upon him; as if in his passive state the voice of truth and good vibrated down *to* his soul, and stopped there, being unable to kindle any answering tones within: so that in his waking hours they are to him but as the memory of a dream.

"Sometime a thousand twangling instruments Will hum about mine ears; and sometime voices, That, if I then had wak'd after long sleep, Will make me sleep again: and then, in dreaming, The clouds methought would open, and show riches Ready to drop upon me; that, when I wak'd, I cried to dream again."

Thus Caliban is part man, part demon, part brute, each being drawn somewhat out of itself by combination with the others, and the union of all preventing him from being either; for which cause language has no generic term that fits him. Yet this strange, uncouth, but life-like confusion of natures Prospero has educated into a sort of poet. This, however, has nowise tamed, it has rather increased, his innate malignity and crookedness of disposition; education having of course but *educed* what was in him. Even his poetry is, for the most part, made up of the fascinations of ugliness; a sort of inverted beauty; the poetry of dissonance and deformity; the proper music of his nature being to curse, its proper laughter to snarl. Schlegel finely compares his mind to a dark cave, into which the light of knowledge falling neither illuminates nor warms it, but only serves to put in motion the poisonous vapours generated there.

Now it is by exhausting the resources of instruction on such a being that his innate and essential deficiency is best shown. For, had he the germs of a human soul, they must needs have been drawn forth by the process that has made him a poet. The magical presence of spirits has indeed cast into the caverns of his brain some faint reflection of a better world, but without calling up any answering emotions or aspirations; he having no susceptibilities to catch and take in the epiphanies that throng his whereabout. So that, paradoxical as it may seem, he exemplifies the twofold triumph of art over nature, and of nature over art; that is, art has triumphed in making him a poet, and nature, in still keeping him from being a man; though he has enough of the human in him to evince in a high degree the swelling of intellectual pride.

But what is most remarkable of all in Caliban is the perfect originality of his thoughts and manners. Though framed of grossness and malignity, there is nothing vulgar or commonplace about him. His whole character indeed is developed from within, not impressed from without; the effect of Prospero's instructions having been to make him all the more himself; and there being perhaps no soil in his nature for conventional vices and knaveries to take root and grow in. Hence the almost classic dignity of his behaviour compared with that of the drunken sailors, who are little else than a sort of low, vulgar conventionalities organized, and as such not less true to the life than consistent with themselves. In his simplicity, indeed, he at first mistakes them for gods who "bear celestial liquor," and they wax merry enough at the "credulous monster"; but, in his vigour of thought and purpose, he soon conceives such a scorn of their childish interest in whatever trinkets and gewgaws meet their eye, as fairly drives off his fit of intoxication; and the savage of the woods, half-human though he be, seems nobility itself beside the savages of the city.

In fine, if Caliban is, so to speak, the organized sediment and dregs of the place, from which all the finer spirit has been drawn off to fashion the delicate Ariel, yet having some parts of a human mind strangely interwoven with his structure; every thing about him, all that he does and says, is suitable and correspondent to such a constitution of nature. So that all the elements and attributes of his being stand and work together in living coherence, thus rendering him no less substantive and personal to our apprehension than he is original and peculiar in himself.

Such are the objects and influences amidst which the clear, placid nature of Miranda has been developed. Of the world whence her father was driven, its crimes and follies and sufferings, she knows nothing; he having studiously kept all such notices from her, to the end, apparently, that nothing might thwart or hinder the plastic efficacies that surrounded her. And here all the simple and original elements of her being, love, light, grace, honour, innocence, all pure feelings and tender sympathies, whatever is sweet and gentle and holy in womanhood, seem to have sprung up in her nature as from celestial seed: "the contagion of the world's slow stain" has not visited her; the chills and cankers of artificial wisdom have not touched nor come nigh her: if there were any fog or breath of evil in the place that might else dim or spot her soul, it has been sponged up by Caliban, as being more congenial with his nature; while he is simply "a villain she does not love to look on." Nor is this all. The aerial music beneath which her soul has expanded with answering sweetness seems to rest visibly upon her, linking her as it were with some superior order of beings: the spirit and genius of the place, its magic and mystery, have breathed their power into her face; and out of them she has unconsciously woven herself a robe of supernatural grace, in which even her mortal nature seems half hidden, so that we are in doubt whether she belongs more to Heaven or to Earth. Thus both her native virtues and the efficacies of the place seem to have crept and stolen into her unperceived, by mutual attraction and assimilation twining together in one growth, and each diffusing its life and beauty over and through the others. It would seem indeed as if Wordsworth must have had Miranda in his eye, (or was he but working in the spirit of that Nature which she so rarely exemplifies?) when he wrote,

"The floating clouds their state shall lend To her; for her the willow bend: Nor shall she fail to see Even in the motions of the storm Grace that shall mould the maiden's form By silent sympathy.

The stars of midnight shall be dear To her; and she shall lean her ear In many a secret place Where rivulets dance their wayward round, And beauty born of murmuring sound Shall pass into her face."

Yet, for all this, Miranda not a whit the less touches us as a creature of flesh and blood,

"A being breathing thoughtful breath, A traveller between life and death."

Nay, rather she seems all the more so, inasmuch as the character thus coheres with the circumstances, the virtues and poetries of the place being expressed in her visibly; and she would be far less real to our feelings, were not the wonders of her whereabout thus vitally incorporated with her innate and original attributes.

It is observable that Miranda does not perceive the working of her father's art upon herself. For, when he casts a spell of drowsiness over her, so that she cannot choose but sleep, on being awaked by him she tells him, "The strangeness of your story put heaviness in me." So his art conceals itself in its very potency of operation; and seems the more like nature for being preternatural. It is another noteworthy point, that while he is telling his strange tale he thinks she is not listening attentively to his speech, partly because he is not attending to it himself, his thoughts being busy with the approaching crisis of his fortune, and drawn away to the other matters which he has in hand, and partly because in her trance of wonder at what he is relating she seems abstracted and self-withdrawn from the matter of his discourse. His own absent-mindedness on this occasion is aptly and artfully indicated by his broken and disjointed manner of speech. That his tongue and thought are not beating time together appears in that the latter end of his sentences keeps forgetting the beginning.

These are among the fine strokes and delicate touches whereby the Poet makes, or rather permits, the character of his persons to transpire so quietly as not to excite special notice at the time. That Miranda should be so rapt at her father's tale as to seem absent and wandering, is a charming instance in point. For indeed to her the supernatural stands in the place of Nature; and nothing is so strange and wonderful as what actually passes in the life and heart of man: miracles have been her daily food, her father being the greatest miracle of all; which must needs make the common events and passions and perturbations of the world seem to her miraculous. All which is wrought out by the Poet with so much art and so little appearance of art, that Franz Horn is the only critic, so far as I know, that seems to have thought of it.

I must not dismiss Miranda without remarking the sweet union of womanly dignity and childlike simplicity in her character, she not knowing or not caring to disguise the innocent movements of her heart. This, too, is a natural result of her situation. The instance to which I refer is when Ferdinand, his manhood all alive with her, lets her hear his soul speak; and she, weeping at what she is glad of, replies,—

"Hence, bashful cunning! And prompt me, plain and holy innocence!— I am your wife, if you will marry me; If not, I'll die your maid: to be your fellow You may deny me; but I'll be your servant, Whether you will or no."

Equally fine is the circumstance that her father opens to her the story of his life, and lets her into the secret of her noble birth and ancestry, at a time when she is suffering with those that she saw suffer, and when her eyes are jewelled with "drops that sacred pity hath engender'd"; as if on purpose that the ideas of rank and dignity may sweetly blend and coalesce in her mind with the sympathies of the woman.

In Ferdinand is portrayed one of those happy natures, such as we sometimes meet with, who are built up all the more strongly in truth and good by contact with the vices and meannesses of the world. Courage, piety, and honour are his leading characteristics; and these virtues are so much at home in his breast, and have such an easy, natural ascendant in his conduct, that he thinks not of them, and cares only to prevent or remove the stains which affront his inward eye. The meeting of him and Miranda is replete with magic indeed,—a magic higher and more potent even than Prospero's; the riches that nestle in their bosoms at once leaping forth and running together in a stream of poetry which no words of mine can describe. So much of beauty in so few words, and those few so plain and simple,—"O, wondrous skill and sweet wit of the man!"

Shakespeare's genius is specially venerable in that he makes piety and honour go hand in hand with love. It seems to have been a fixed principle with him, if indeed it was not rather a genial instinct, that where the heart is rightly engaged, there the highest and tenderest thoughts of religion do naturally cluster and converge. For indeed the love that looks to marriage is itself a religion: its first impulse is to invest its object with poetry and consecration: to be "true to the kindred points of Heaven and home," is both its inspiration and its law. It thus involves a sort of regeneration of the inner man, and carries in its hand the baptismal fire of a nobler and diviner life.

And so it is in this delectable instance. In Ferdinand, as in all generous natures, "love betters what is best." Its first springing in his breast stirs his heavenward thoughts and aspirations into exercise: the moment that kindles his heart towards Miranda also kindles his soul in piety to God; and he knows not how to commune in prayer with the Source of good, unless he may couple her welfare with his own, and breathe her name in his holiest service. Thus his love and piety are kindred and coefficient forces, as indeed all true love and piety essentially are. However thoughtless we may be of the Divine help and guardianship for ourselves, we can hardly choose but crave them for those to whom our souls are knit in the sacred dearness of household ties. And so with this noble pair, the same power that binds them to each other in the sacraments of love also binds them both in devout allegiance to the Author of their being; whose presence is most felt by them in the sacredness of their mutual truth.

So much for the illustration here so sweetly given of the old principle, that whatsoever lies nearest a Christian's heart, whatsoever he tenders most dearly on Earth, whatsoever draws in most intimately with the currents of his soul, that is the spontaneous subject-matter of his prayers; our purest loves thus sending us to God, as if from an instinctive feeling that unless God be sanctified in our hearts, our hearts cannot retain their proper life.

In regard to what springs up between Ferdinand and Miranda, it is to be noted that Prospero does little but furnish occasions. He indeed thanks the quaint and delicate Ariel for the kindling touch that so quickly puts them "both in either's power"; for it seems to him the result of a finer inspiration than his art can reach; and so he naturally attributes it to the magic of his airy minister; whereas in truth it springs from a source far deeper than the magic of either,—a pre-established harmony which the mutual recognition now first quickens into audible music. After seeing himself thus outdone by the Nature he has been wont to control, and having witnessed such a "fair encounter of two most rare affections," no wonder that Prospero longs to be a man again, like other men, and gladly returns to

"The homely sympathy that heeds The common life; our nature breeds; A wisdom fitted to the needs Of hearts at leisure."

The strength and delicacy of imagination displayed in the characters already noticed are hardly more admirable than the truth and subtilty of observation shown in others.

In the delineation of Antonio and Sebastian, short as it is, we have a volume of wise science, which Coleridge remarks upon thus: "In the first scene of the second Act, Shakespeare has shown the tendency in bad men to indulge in scorn and contemptuous expressions, as a mode of getting rid of their own uneasy feelings of inferiority to the good, and also of rendering the transition of others to wickedness easy, by making the good ridiculous. Shakespeare never puts habitual scorn into the mouths of other than bad men, as here in the instance of Antonio and Sebastian."

Nor is there less of judgment in the means used by Prospero for bringing them to a better mind; provoking in them the purpose of crime, and then taking away the performance; that so he may lead them to a knowledge of themselves, and awe or shame down their evil by his demonstrations of good. For such is the proper effect of bad designs thus thwarted, showing the authors at once the wickedness of their hearts and the weakness of their hands; whereas, if successful in their schemes, pride of power would forestall and prevent the natural shame and remorse of guilt. And we little know what evil it lieth and lurketh in our hearts to will or to do, till occasion invites or permits; and Prospero's art here stands in presenting the occasion till the wicked purpose is formed, and then removing it as soon as the hand is raised. In the case of Antonio and Sebastian, the workings of magic are so mixed up with those of Nature, that we cannot distinguish them;

or rather Prospero here causes the supernatural to pursue the methods of Nature.

And the same deep skill is shown in the case of the good old Lord Gonzalo, whose sense of his own infelicities seems lost in his care to minister comfort and diversion to others. Thus his virtue spontaneously opens the springs of wit and humour in him amid the terrors of the storm and shipwreck; and he is merry while others are suffering, and merry even from sympathy with them; and afterwards his thoughtful spirit plays with Utopian fancies; and if "the latter end of his Commonwealth forgets the beginning," it is all the same to him, his purpose being only to beguile the anguish of supposed bereavement. It has been well said that "Gonzalo is so occupied with duty, in which alone he finds pleasure, that he scarce notices the gnat-stings of wit with which his opponents pursue him; or, if he observes, firmly and easily repels them."

The comic portions and characters of this play are in Shakespeare's raciest vein; yet they are perfectly unique and singular withal, being quite unlike any other of his preparations in that kind, as much so as if they were the growth of a different planet.

The presence of Trinculo and Stephano in the play has sometimes been regarded as a blemish. I cannot think it so. Their part is not only good in itself as comedy, but is in admirable keeping with the rest. Their follies give a zest and relish to the high poetries amidst which they grow. Such things go to make up the mysterious whole of human life; and they often help on our pleasure while seeming to hinder it: we may think they were better left out, but, were they left out, we should somehow feel the want of them. Besides, this part of the work, if it does not directly yield a grateful fragrance, is vitally connected with the parts that do. For there is perhaps no one of the Poet's dramas of which it can be more justly affirmed that all the parts draw together in organic unity, so that every thing helps every other thing.

Such are the strangely-assorted characters that make up this charming play. This harmonious working together of diverse and opposite elements,—this smooth concurrence of heterogeneous materials in one varied yet coherent impression,—by what subtile process this is brought about, is perhaps too deep a problem for Criticism to solve.

I cannot leave the theme without remarking what an atmosphere of wonder and mystery overhangs and pervades this singular structure; and how the whole seems steeped in glories invisible to the natural eye, yet made visible by the Poet's art: so that the effect is to lead the thoughts insensibly upwards to other worlds and other forms of being. It were difficult to name any thing else of human workmanship so thoroughly transfigured with

"the gleam, The light that never was on sea or land, The consecration and the poet's dream."

The celestial and the earthly are here so commingled,—commingled, but not confounded,—that we see not where the one begins or the other ends: so that in the reading we seem transported to a region where we are strangers, yet old acquaintances; where all things are at once new and familiar; the unearthly visions of the spot hardly touching us with surprise, because, though wonderful indeed, there is nothing about them but what readily finds or creates some answering powers and sympathies within us. In other words, they do not surprise us, because they at once kindle us into fellowship with them. That our thoughts and feelings are thus at home with such things, and take pleasure in them,—is not this because of some innate aptitudes and affinities of our nature for a supernatural and celestial life?

"Point not these mysteries to an art Lodg'd above the starry pole?"

<<span id="filepos0040662137"> a>THE WINTER'S TALE.

In Shakespeare's time there lived in London one Simon Forman, M.D., to whom we are indebted for our earliest notice of THE WINTER'S TALE. He was rather an odd genius, I should think; being an adept in occult science and the arts of magic, and at the same time an ardent lover of the stage; thus symbolizing at once with the most conservative and the most radical tendencies of the age: for, strange as it may seem, the Drama then led the van of progress; Shakespeare being even a more audacious innovator in poetry and art than Bacon was in philosophy. Be this as it may, Forman evidently took great delight in the theatre, and he kept a diary of what he witnessed there. Not many years ago, the manuscript of this diary was discovered by Mr. Collier in the Ashmolean Museum, and a portion of its contents published. Forman was at the Globe theatre on Wednesday, the 15th of May, 1611, and under that date he records "how Leontes the King of Sicilia was overcome with jealousy of his wife with the King of Bohemia, his friend that came to see him, and how he contrived his death, and would have had his cup-bearer poison him, who gave the King warning thereof, and fled with him to Bohemia. Also, how he sent to the oracle of Apollo, and the answer of Apollo was that she was guiltless; and except the child was found again that was lost, the King should die without issue: for the child was carried into Bohemia, and there laid in a forest, and brought up by a shepherd; and the King of Bohemia's son married that wench, and they fled into Sicilia, and by the jewels found about her she was known to be Leontes' daughter, and was then sixteen years old."

This clearly identifies the performance seen by Forman as *The Winter's Tale* of Shakespeare. It is altogether probable that the play was then new, and was in its first course of exhibition. For Sir George Buck became Master of the Revels in October, 1610, and was succeeded in that office by Sir Henry Herbert in 1623, who passed *The Winter's Tale* without examination, on the ground of its being an "old play formerly allowed by Sir George Buck." As the play had to be licensed before it could be performed, this ascertains its first performance to have been after October, 1610. So that *The Winter's Tale* was most likely presented for official sanction some time between that date and the 15th of May following, when Forman saw it at the Globe. To all this must be added the internal characteristics of the play itself, which is in the Poet's ripest and most idiomatic style of art. It is not often that the date of his workmanship can be so closely remarked. *The Winter's Tale* was never printed, so far as we know, till it appeared in the folio of 1623.

In the plot and incidents of this play, Shakespeare followed very closely the *Pandosto* , or, as it was sometimes called, the *Dorastus and Fawnia* , of Robert Greene. This novel appears to have been one of the most popular books of the time; there being no less than fourteen old editions of it known, the first of which was in 1588. Greene was a scholar, a man of some genius, Master of Arts in both the Universities, and had indeed much more of learning than of judgment in the use and application of it. For it seems as if he could not write at all without overloading his pages with classical allusion, nor hit upon any thought so trite and commonplace, but that he must run it through a series of aphoristic sentences twisted out of Greek and Roman lore. In this respect, he is apt to remind one of his fellow-dramatist, Thomas Lodge, whose *Rosalynd* contributed so much to the Poet's *As You Like It* : for it was then much the fashion for authors to prank up their matter with superfluous erudition. Like all the surviving works of Greene, *Pandosto* is greatly charged with learned impertinence, and in the annoyance thence resulting one is apt to overlook the real merit of the performance. It is better than Lodge's *Rosalynd* for this reason, if for no other, that it is shorter. I must condense so much of the tale as may suffice to indicate the nature and extent of the Poet's obligations.

Pandosto, King of Bohemia, and Egistus, King of Sicilia, had passed their boyhood together, and grown into a mutual friendship which kept its hold on them long after coming to their crowns. Pandosto had for his wife a very wise and beautiful lady named Bellaria, who had made him the father of a prince called Garinter in whom both himself and his people greatly delighted. After many years of separation, Egistus "sailed into Bohemia to visit his old friend," who, hearing of his arrival, went with a great train of lords and ladies to meet him, received him very lovingly, and wished his wife to welcome him. No pains were spared to honour the royal visitor and make him feel at home. Bellaria, "to show how much she liked him whom her husband loved," treated Egistus with great confidence, often going herself to his chamber to see that nothing should be amiss. This honest familiarity increased from day to day, insomuch that when Pandosto was busy with State affairs they would walk into the garden and pass their time in pleasant devices. After a while, Pandosto began to have doubtful thoughts, considering the beauty of his wife, and the comeliness and bravery of his friend. This humour growing upon him, he went to watching them, and fishing for proofs to confirm his suspicions. At length his mind got so charged with jealousy that he felt quite certain of the thing he feared, and studied for nothing so much as revenge. He resolved to work by poison, and called upon his cup-bearer, Franion, to execute the scheme, and pressed him to it with the alternative of preferment or death. The minister, after trying his best to dissuade the King, at last gave his consent, in order to gain time, then went to Egistus, and told him the secret, and fled with him to Sicilia. Full of rage at being thus baffled, Pandosto then let loose his fury against the Queen, ordering her forthwith into close prison. He then had his suspicion proclaimed as a certain truth; and though her character went far to discredit the charge, yet the sudden flight of Egistus caused it to be believed. And he would fain have made war on

Egistus, but that the latter not only was of great strength and prowess, but had many kings in his alliance, his wife being daughter to the Emperor of Russia.

Meanwhile the Queen in prison gave birth to a daughter, which put the King in a greater rage than ever, insomuch that he ordered both the mother and the babe to be burnt alive. Against this cruel sentence his nobles stoutly remonstrated; but the most they could gain was, that he should spare the child's life; his next device being to put her in a boat and leave her to the mercy of the winds and waves. At the hearing of this hard doom, the Queen fell down in a trance, so that all thought her dead; and on coming to herself she at last gave up the babe, saying, "Let me kiss thy lips, sweet infant, and wet thy tender cheeks with my tears, and put this chain about thy little neck, that if fortune save thee, it may help to succour thee."

When the day of trial came, the Queen, standing as a prisoner at the bar, and seeing that nothing but her death would satisfy the King, "waxed bold, and desired that she might have law and justice," and that her accusers might be brought before her face. The King replied that their word was enough, the flight of Egistus confirming what they had said; and that it was her part "to be impudent in forswearing the fact, since she had passed all shame in committing the fault." At the same time he threatened her with a cruel death; which she met by telling him that her life had ever been such as no spot of suspicion could stain, and that, if she had borne a friendly countenance towards Egistus, it was only as he was her husband's friend: "therefore, if she were condemned without further proof, it was rigour, and not law." The judges said she spoke reason, and begged that her accusers might be openly examined and sworn; whereupon the King went to browbeating them, the very demon of tyranny having got possession of him. The Queen then told him that, if his fury might stand for law, it was of no use for the jury to give their verdict; and therefore she begged him to send six of his noblemen to "the Isle of Delphos," to inquire of Apollo whether she were guilty or not. This request he could not refuse. The messengers using all haste soon came back with the sealed answer of Apollo. The court being now assembled again, the scroll was opened and read in their presence, its contents being much the same as in the play. As soon as Apollo's verdict was known, the people raised a great shout, rejoicing and clapping their hands, that the Queen was clear. The repentant King then besought his nobles to intercede with the Queen in his behalf, at the same time confessing how he had tried to compass the death of Egistus; and while he was doing this word came that the young Prince was suddenly dead; at the hearing of which the Queen fell down, and could never be revived: the King also sank down senseless, and lay in that state three days; and there was nothing but mourning in Bohemia. Upon reviving, the King was so frenzied with grief and remorse that he would have killed himself, but that his peers being present stayed his hand, entreating him to spare his life for the people's sake. He had the Queen and Prince very richly and piously entombed; and from that time repaired daily to the tomb to bewail his loss.

Up to this point, the play, so far as the mere incidents are concerned, is little else than a dramatized version of the tale: henceforth the former diverges more widely from the latter, though many of the incidents are still the same in both.

The boat with its innocent freight was carried by wind and tide to the coast of Sicilia, where it stuck in the sand. A poor shepherd, missing one of his sheep, wandered to the seaside in search of it. As he was about to return he heard a cry, and, there being no house near, he thought it might be the bleating of his sheep; and going to look more narrowly he spied a little boat from which the cry seemed to come. Wondering what it might be, he waded to the boat, and found the babe lying there ready to die of cold and hunger, wrapped in an embroidered mantle, and having a chain about the neck. Touched with pity he took the infant in his arms, and as he was fixing the mantle there fell at his feet a very fair rich purse containing a great sum of gold. To secure the benefit of this wealth, he carried the babe home as secretly as he could, and gave her in charge to his wife, telling her the process of the discovery. The shepherd's name was Porrus, his wife's Mopsa; the precious foundling they named Fawnia. Being themselves childless, they brought her up tenderly as their own daughter. With the gold Porrus bought a farm and a flock of sheep, which Fawnia at the age of ten was set to watch; and, as she was likely to be his only heir, many rich farmers' sons came to his house as wooers; for she was of singular beauty and excellent wit, and at sixteen grew to such perfection of mind and person that her praises were spoken at the Sicilian Court. Nevertheless she still went forth every day with the sheep, veiling her face from the Sun with a garland of flowers; which attire became her so well, that she seemed the goddess Flora herself for beauty.

King Egistus had an only son, named Dorastus, a Prince so adorned with gifts and virtues, that both King and people had great joy of him. He being now of ripe age, his father sought to match him with some princess; but the youth was little minded to wed, as he had more pleasure in the exercises of the field and the chase. One day, as he was pursuing this sport, he chanced to fall in with the lovely shepherdess, and while he was rapt in wonder at the vision one of his pages told him she was Fawnia, whose beauty was so much talked of at the Court.

The story then goes on to relate the matter of their courtship; how the Prince resolved to forsake his home and inheritance, and become a shepherd, for her sake, as she could not think of matching with one above her degree; how, forecasting the opposition and dreading the anger of his father, he planned for escaping into Italy, in which enterprise he was assisted by an old servant of his named Capnio, who managed the affair so shrewdly, that the Prince made good his escape, taking the old shepherd along with him; how, after they got to sea, the ship was seized by a tempest and carried away to Bohemia; and how at length the several parties met together at the Court of Pandosto, which drew on a disclosure of the facts, and a happy marriage of the fugitive lovers.

I must add one more item from the novel, as it aptly shows what advantage is sometimes to be gained by tracing the Poet in his reading. In the play, the Shepherd on finding the babe is made to exclaim, "What have we here? Mercy on 's, a bairn; a very pretty bairn! a boy, or a child, I wonder?" For some hundred years, editorial ingenuity has been strained to the utmost to explain why *child* should be thus used in opposition to *boy* ; and nothing would do but to surmise an obsolete custom of speech which made *child* signify *girl* . The simple explanation is, that *boy* is a misprint for *god* . For this felicitous restoration we are indebted to Mr. R.G. White, of New York, who was guided to it by the corresponding passage of the novel: "The shepherd, who before had never seen so fair a babe nor so rich jewels, thought assuredly that it was *some little god* , and began with great devotion to knock on his breast. The babe, who writhed with the head to seek for the pap, began again to cry, whereby the poor man knew *it was a child* ." That we are not gods, is indeed evident enough when we cry. Of course the man's devotion turned all to pity as soon as he caught that little but most unequivocal note of humanity.

From the foregoing sketch, it would seem that the Poet must have written with the novel before him, and not merely from general recollection. Here, again, as in case of *As You Like It* , to appreciate his judgment and taste, one needs to compare his workmanship in detail with the original, and to note what he left unused. The free sailing between Sicily and Bohemia he retained, inverting, however, the local order of the persons and incidents, so that Polixenes and Florizel are Bohemian Princes, whereas their prototypes, Egistus and his son, are Sicilians. The reason of this inversion does not appear. Of course, the Poet could not have done it with any view to disguise his obligations; as his purpose evidently was, to make the popular interest of the tale tributary to his own success and profit. The most original of men, he was also the most free from pride and conceit of originality. In this instance, too, as in others, the instinctive rectitude of his genius is manifest in that, the subject once chosen, and the work begun, he thenceforth lost himself in the inspiration of his theme; all thoughts of popularity and pay being swallowed up in the supreme regards of Nature and Truth. For so, in his case, however prudence might dictate the plan, poetry was sure to have command of the execution. If he was but human in electing what to do, he became divine as soon as he went to doing it. And it is further considerable that, with all his borrowings in this play, the Poet nowhere drew more richly or more directly from his own spring. The whole life of the work is in what he gave, not in what he took; the mechanism of the story being used but as a skeleton to underpin and support the eloquent contexture of life and beauty. In the novel, Paulina and the Clown are wanting altogether; while Capnio yields but a slight hint, if indeed it be so much, towards the part of Antolycus. And, besides the great addition of life and matter in these persons, the play has several other judicious departures from the novel.

In Leontes all the revolting features of Pandosto, save his jealousy, and the headstrong insolence and tyranny thence proceeding, are purged away; so that while the latter has neither intellect nor generosity to redeem his character, jealousy being the least of his faults, the other has a liberal stock of both. And in Bellaria the Poet had little more than a bare framework of incident wherein to set the noble, lofty womanhood of Hermione,—a conception far, far above the reach of such a mind as Greene's. In the matter of the painted statue, Shakespeare, so far as is known, was altogether without a model, as he is without an imitator; the boldness of the plan being indeed such as nothing but entire success could justify, and wherein it is hardly possible to conceive of anybody but Shakespeare's having succeeded. And yet here it is that we are to look for the idea and formal cause of Hermione's character, while her character, again, is the shaping and informing power of the whole drama. For this idea is really the living centre and organic law in and around which all the parts of the work are vitally knit together. But, indeed, the Poet's own most original and inimitable mode of conceiving and working out character is everywhere dominant.

So much has been said about the anachronisms of this play, that it seems needful to add a word concerning them. We have already seen that the making of seaports and landing of ships in Bohemia were taken from Greene. Mr. Verplanck conjectures that by Bohemia Shakespeare meant simply the land of the Boii, an ancient people several tribes of whom settled in the maritime parts of France: but I hardly think he would have used the name with so much license at a time when the boundaries of that country were so well fixed and so widely known. For the events of the Reformation had made Bohemia an object of special interest to the people of England, and there was much intercourse between the English and Bohemian Courts. I have no notion indeed that this breach of geography was a blunder: it was meant, no doubt, for the convenience of thought; and such is its effect, until one goes to viewing the parts of the work with reference to ends not contemplated in the use here made of them. And the same is to be said touching several points of chronological confusion; such as the making Whitsun pastorals, Christian burial, Julio Romano, the Emperor of Russia, and Puritans singing psalms to hornpipes, all contemporary with the Oracle of Delphi; wherein actual things are but marshalled into an ideal order, so as to render Memory subservient to Imagination. In these and such points, it is enough that the materials be apt to combine among themselves, and that they agree in working out the issue proposed, the end thus regulating the use of the means. For a work of art, as such, should be itself an object for the mind to rest upon, not a directory to guide it to something else. So that here we may justly say "the mind is its own place"; and, provided the work be true to this intellectual whereabout, breaches of geography and history are of little consequence. And Shakespeare knew full well, that in poetical workmanship Memory stands absolved from the laws of time, and that the living order of art has a perfect right to overrule and supersede the chronological order of facts. In a word, history and chronology have no rights which a poet, as such, is bound to respect. In his sphere, things draw together and unite in virtue of other affinities than those of succession and coexistence. A work of art must indeed aim to be understood and felt; and so far as historical order is necessary to this, so far it may justly claim a prerogative voice. But still such a work must address itself to the mind and heart of man as man, and not to particular men as scholars or critics. That Shakespeare did this better than anybody else is the main secret of his supremacy. And it implies a knowledge far deeper than books could give,—

the knowledge of a mind so intuitive of Nature, and so at home with her, as not to need the food of learning, because it fed directly on that which is the original food of learning itself.

Hence the conviction which I suppose all true Shakespearians to have, that no amount of scholastic advantages and acquirements could really do any thing towards explaining the mystery of his works. To do what he did at all, he must have had a native genius so strong and clear and penetrative, as to become more than learned without the aid of learning. What could the hydrants of knowledge do for a mind which thus dwelt at its fountain? Or why should he need to converse with Wisdom's messengers, whose home was in the very court and pavilion of Wisdom herself? Shakespeare is always weakest when a fit of learning takes him. But then he is stronger without learning than any one else is with it, and, perhaps, than he would have been with it himself; as the crutches that help the lame are but an incumbrance to the whole.

Perhaps I ought to add, touching the forecited anachronisms, that the Poet's sense of them may be fairly regarded as apparent in the naming of the piece. He seems to have judged that, in a dramatic *tale* intended for the delight of the fireside during a long, quiet Winter's evening, such things would not be out of place, and would rather help than mar the entertainment and life of the performance. Thus much indeed is plainly hinted more than once in the course of the play; as in Act v. scene 2, where, one of the Gentlemen being asked, "What became of Antigonus, that carried hence the child?" he replies, "Like an *old tale* still, which will have matter to rehearse, though credit be asleep, and not an ear open."

Much the same is to be said touching the remarkable freedom which the Poet here takes with the conditions of time; there being an interval of sixteen years between the third and fourth Acts, which is with rather un-Shakespearian awkwardness bridged over by the Chorus introducing Act iv. This freedom, however, was inseparable from the governing idea of the piece, nor can it be faulted but upon such grounds as would exclude all dramatized fiction from the stage. It is to be noted also that while the play thus divides itself into two parts, these are skilfully woven together by a happy stroke of art. The last scene of the third Act not only finishes the action of the first three, but by an apt and unforced transition begins that of the other two; the two parts of the drama being smoothly drawn into the unity of a continuous whole by the introduction of the old Shepherd and his son at the close of the one and the opening of the other. This natural arrangement saves the imagination from being disturbed by any yawning or obtrusive gap of time, notwithstanding the lapse of so many years in the interval. On this point, Gervinus remarks that, "while Shakespeare has in other dramas permitted a twofold action united by a common idea, he could not in this instance have entirely concentrated the two fictions; he could but unite them indistinctly by a leading idea in both; though the manner in which he has outwardly united them is a delicate and spirited piece of art."

In the delineation of Leontes there is an abruptness of change which strikes us, at first view, as not a little a-clash with nature: we cannot well see how one state of mind grows out of another: his jealousy shoots in comet-like, as something unprovided for in the general ordering of his character. Which causes this feature to appear as if it were suggested rather by the exigencies of the stage than by the natural workings of human passion. And herein the Poet seems at variance with himself; his usual method being to unfold a passion in its rise and progress, so that we go along with it freely from its origin to its consummation. And, certainly, there is no accounting for Leontes' conduct, but by supposing a predisposition to jealousy in him, which, however, has been hitherto kept latent by his wife's clear, firm, serene discreetness, but which breaks out into sudden and frightful activity as soon as she, under a special pressure of motives, slightly overacts the confidence of friendship. There needed but a spark of occasion to set this secret magazine of passion all a-blaze.

The Pandosto of the novel has, properly speaking, no character at all: he is but a human figure going through a set of motions; that is, the person and the action are put together arbitrarily, and not under any law of vital correspondence. Almost any other figure would fit the motions just as well. It is true, Shakespeare had a course of action marked out for him in the tale. But then he was bound by his own principles of art to make the character such as would rationally support the action, and cohere with it. For such is the necessary law of moral development and transpiration. Nor is it by any means safe to affirm that, he has not done this. For it is to be noted that Polixenes has made a pretty long visit, having passed, it seems, no less than nine changes of the Moon at the home of his royal friend. And he might well have found it not always easy to avoid preferring the Queen's society to the King's; for she is a most irresistible creature, and her calm, ingenuous modesty, itself the most dignified of all womanly graces, is what, more than any thing else, makes her so. What secret thoughts may have been gathering to a head in the mind of Leontes during that period, is left for us to divine from the after-results. And I believe there is a jealousy of friendship, as well as of love. Accordingly, though Leontes invokes the Queen's influence to induce a lengthening of the visit, yet he seems a little disturbed on seeing that her influence has proved stronger than his own.

"*Leon* . Is he won yet?

Herm . He'll stay, my lord.

Leon . At my request he would not. Hermione, my dear'st, thou never spok'st To better purpose.

Herm . Never?

Leon . Never, but once.

Herm . What! have I twice said well? when was't before? I pr'ythee tell me.

Leon . Why, that was when Three crabbed months had sour'd themselves to death, Ere I could make thee open thy white hand, And clap thyself my love: then didst thou utter, *I'm yours forever* ."

There is, I think, a relish of suppressed bitterness in this last speech, as if her long reluctance had planted in him a germ of doubt whether, after all, her heart was really in her words of consent. For the Queen is a much deeper character than her husband. It is true, these notices, and various others, drop along so quiet and unpronounced, as hardly to arrest the reader's attention. Shakespeare, above all other men, delights in just such subtile insinuations of purpose; they belong indeed to his usual method of preparing for a given issue, yet doing it so slyly as not to preclude surprise when the issue comes.

So that in his seeming abruptness Leontes, after all, does but exemplify the strange transformations which sometimes occur in men upon sudden and unforeseen emergencies. And it is observable that the very slightness of the Queen's indiscretion, the fact that she goes but a little, a very little too far, only works against her, causing the King to suspect her of great effort and care to avoid suspicion. And on the same principle, because he has never suspected her before, therefore he suspects her all the more vehemently now: that his confidence has hitherto stood unshaken, he attributes to extreme artfulness on her part; for even so, to an ill-disposed mind perfect innocence is apt to give an impression of consummate art. A passion thus groundless and self-generated might well be full-grown as soon as born. The more greedy and craving, too, that it has nothing real to eat; it therefore proceeds at once to "make the meat it feeds on," causing him to magnify whatever he sees, and to imagine many things that are not. That jealousy, however, is not the habit of his mind, appears in that it finds him unprepared, and takes him by surprise; insomuch that he forthwith loses all self-control, and runs right athwart the rules of common decency and decorum, so that he becomes an object at once of pity, of hatred, and scorn.

I think the Poet hardly anywhere shows a keener and juster insight of nature than in the behaviour of this man while the distemper is upon him. He is utterly reason-proof, and indeed acts as one literally insane. For the poison infects not only his manners, but his very modes of thought: in fact, all his rational and imaginative forces, even his speech and language, seem to have caught the disease. And all the loathsome filth which had settled to the bottom of his nature is now shaken up to the surface, so that there appears to be nothing but meanness and malignity and essential coarseness in him. Meanwhile an instinctive shame of his passion and a dread of vulgar ridicule put him upon talking in dark riddles and enigmas: hence the confused, broken, and disjointed style, an odd jumble of dialogue and soliloquy, in which he tries to jerk out his thoughts, as if he would have them known, and yet not have them known. I believe men generally credit themselves with peculiar penetration when they are in the act of being deluded, whether by themselves or by others. Hence, again, the strange and even ludicrous conceit in which Leontes wraps himself. "Not noted, is 't," says he, referring to the Queen's imaginary crime,—

"not noted, is 't, But of the finer natures? by some severals Of head-piece extraordinary? lower messes, Perchance, are to this business purblind."

Thus he mistakes his madness for a higher wisdom, and clothes his delusion with the spirit of revelation; so that Camillo rightly says,—

"You may as well Forbid the sea for to obey the Moon As or by oath remove or counsel shake The fabric of his folly, whose foundation Is pil'd upon his faith."

I must note one more point of the delineation. When Leontes sends his messengers to Delphos, he avows this as his reason for doing so:

"Though I am satisfied, and need no more Than what I know, yet shall the Oracle Give rest to th' minds of others."

Which means simply that he is not going to let the truth of the charge stand in issue, and that he holds the Divine authority to be a capital thing, provided he may use it, and need not obey it; that is, if he finds the god agreeing with him in opinion, then the god's judgment is infallible; if not, then, in plain terms, he is no god. And they who have closely observed the workings of jealousy, know right well that in all this Shakespeare does not one whit "overstep the modesty of Nature."

The Poet manages with great art to bring Leontes off from the disgraces of his passion, and repeal him home to our sympathies, which had been freely drawn to him at first by his generosity of friendship. To this end, jealousy is represented as his only fault, and this as a sudden freak, which passes on directly into a frenzy, and whips him quite out of himself, temporarily overriding his characteristic qualities, but not combining with them; the more violent for being unwonted, and the shorter-lived for being violent. In his firm, compact energy of thought and speech, after his passion has cleared itself, and in his perennial flow of repentance after his bereavement, are displayed the real tone and texture of his character. We feel that, if his sin has been great, his suffering is also great, and that if he were a greater sinner, his suffering would be less. Quick, impulsive, headstrong, he admits no bounds to anger or to penitence; condemns himself as vehemently as he does others; and will spend his life in atoning for a wrong he has done in a moment of passion: so that we are the more willing to forgive him, inasmuch as he never forgives himself.

The old poets seem to have contemplated a much wider range of female excellence than it has since grown customary to allow; taking for granted that whatsoever we feel to be most divine in man might be equally so in woman; and so pouring into their conceptions of womanhood a certain *manliness* of soul, wherein we recognize an union of what is lovely with what is honourable,—such a combination as would naturally inspire any right-minded man at the same time with tenderness and with awe. Their ideas of delicacy did not preclude strength: in the female character they were rather pleased than otherwise to have the sweetness of the violet blended with the grandeur of the oak; probably because they saw and felt that woman might be big-hearted and brave-minded, and yet be none the less womanly; and that love might build all the higher and firmer for having its foundations laid deep in respect. This largeness of heart and liberality of thought often comes out in their writings, and that too whether in dealing with ideal or with actual women; which suggests that in what they chose to create they were a good deal influenced by what they were accustomed to see. For in a thing that works so much from the sympathies, it could hardly be but that they reflected the mind and spirit of their age. Of this the aptest illustration that my reading has lighted upon is in Ben Jonson's lines on the Countess of Bedford, describing "what kind of creature I could most desire to honour, serve, and love":

"I meant to make her fair, and free, and wise, Of greatest blood, and yet more good than great; I meant the day-star should not brighter rise, Nor lend like influence from his lucent seat: I meant she should be courteous, facile, sweet, Hating that solemn vice of greatness, pride; I meant each softest virtue there should meet, Fit in that softer bosom to reside: Only a learned and a manly soul I purpos'd her; that should with even powers The rock, the spindle, and the shears control Of Destiny, and spin her own free hours."

That Shakespeare fully shared in this magnanimous bravery of sentiment, we need no further proof than is furnished in the heroine of this play. We can scarce call Hermione sweet or gentle, though she is both; she is a *noble* woman,—one whom, even in her greatest anguish, we hardly *dare* to pity. The whole figure is replete with classic grace, is shaped and finished in the highest style of classic art. As she acts the part of a statue in the play, so she has a statue-like calmness and firmness of soul. A certain austere sweetness pervades her whole demeanour, and seems, as it were, the essential form of her life. It is as if some masterpiece of ancient sculpture had warmed and quickened into life from its fulness of beauty and expression.

Appearing at first as the cheerful hostess of her husband's friend, and stooping from her queenly elevation to the most winning affabilities, her behaviour rises in dignity as her sorrow deepens. With an equal sense of what is due to the King as her husband, and to herself as a woman, a wife, and a mother, she knows how to reconcile all these demands; she therefore resists without violence, and submits without weakness. And what her wise spirit sees to be fit and becoming, that she always has strength and steadiness of character to do: hence, notwithstanding the insults and hardships wantonly put upon her, she still preserves the smoothnesses of peace; is never betrayed into the least sign of anger or impatience or resentment, but maintains, throughout, perfect order and fitness and proportion in act and speech: the charge, so dreadful in itself, and so cruel in its circumstances, neither rouses her passions, as it would Paulina's, nor stuns her sensibilities, as in the case of Desdemona; but, like the sinking of lead in the ocean's bosom, it goes to the depths without ruffling the surface of her soul. Her situation is indeed full of pathos,—a pathos the more deeply-moving to others, that it stirs no tumults in her; for her nature is manifestly fitted up and furnished with all tender and gentle and womanly feelings; only she has the force of mind to control them, and keep them all in the right place and degree. "They are the patient sorrows that touch nearest." And so, under the worst that can befall, she remains within the region of herself, calm and serenely beautiful, stands firm, yet full of grace, in the austere strengths of reason and conscious rectitude. And when, at her terrible wrongs and sufferings, all hearts are shaken, all eyes wet, but her own, the impression made by her stout-hearted fortitude is of one whose pure, tranquil, deep-working breast is the home of sorrows too big for any eye-messengers to report:

"Calm pleasures there abide, majestic pains."

The delineation keeps the same tone and texture through all its parts, but the sense of it is specially concentrated in what she says when the King winds up his transport of insane fury by ordering her off to prison:

"Good my lords, I am not prone to weeping, as our sex Commonly are; the want of which vain dew Perchance shall dry your pities; but I have That honourable grief lodg'd here which burns Worse than tears drown. 'Beseech you all, my lords, With thoughts so qualified as your charities Shall best instruct you, measure me;—and so, The King's will be perform'd!—'Beseech your Highness, My women may be with me; for, you see, My plight requires it.—Do not weep, good fools; There is no cause: when you shall know your mistress Has deserv'd prison, then abound in tears, As I come out.—.... Adieu, my lord: I never wish'd to see you sorry; now I trust, I shall."

And her character is answerably reflected in the minds of the King's chief counsellors, whose very swords seem stirring with life in the scabbards, and yearning to leap forth and vindicate the honour of their glorious Queen, but that awe of the crown restrains them.

Her last speech at the trial is, I am apt to think, the solidest piece of eloquence in the language. It is like a piece of the finest statuary marble, chiselled into perfect form; so compact of grain, that you cannot crush it into smaller space; while its effect is as wholesome and bracing as the atmosphere of an iced mountain when tempered by the Summer sun. The King threatens her with death, and she replies,—

"Sir, spare your threats: The bug which you would fright me with I seek. To me can life be no commodity: The crown and comfort of my life, your favour, I do give lost; for I do feel it gone, But know not how it went: my second joy, And first-fruits of my body, from his presence I'm barr'd, like one infectious: my third comfort, Starr'd most unluckily, is from my breast, The innocent milk in its most innocent mouth, Hal'd out to murder: myself on every post Proclaim'd a strumpet; with immodest hatred, The child-bed privilege denied, which 'longs To women of all fashion: lastly, hurried Here to this place, i' the open air, before I have got strength of limit. Now, my liege, Tell me what blessings I have here alive, That I should fear to die. Therefore, proceed. But yet hear this; mistake me not: My life, I prize it not a straw; but for mine honour, Which I would free, if I shall be condemn'd Upon surmises, all proofs sleeping else But what your jealousies awake, I tell you 'Tis rigour, and not law."

Noble simplicity of the olden time, when the best and purest of women, with the bravest men in presence, thought no shame to hear themselves speaking such plain honest words as these!

The Queen's long concealing of herself has been censured by some as repugnant to nature. Possibly they may think it somewhat strained and theatrical, but it is not so: the woman is but true to herself, in this matter, and to the solid and self-poised repose in which her being dwells. So that the thing does not seem repugnant to nature as individualized by her reason and will; nor is her character herein more above or out of nature than the proper ideal of art abundantly warrants. For to her keen sensibility of honour the King's treatment is literally an *infinite* wrong; nor does its cruelty more wound her affection, than its meanness alienates her respect; and one so strong to bear injury might well be equally strong to remember it. Therewithal she knows full well that, in so delicate an instrument as married life, if one string be out of tune the whole is ajar, and will yield no music: for her, therefore, all things must be right, else none are so. And she is both too clear of mind and too upright of heart to put herself where she cannot be precisely what the laws of propriety and decorum require her to seem.

Accordingly, when she does forgive, the forgiveness is simply *perfect* ; the breach that has been so long a-healing is at length *completely* healed; for to be whole and entire in whatever she does, is both an impulse of nature and a law of conscience with her. When the King was wooing her, she held him off three months, which he thought unreasonably long; but the reason why she did so is rightly explained when, for his inexpressible sin against her, she has locked herself from his sight sixteen years, leaving him to mourn and repent. Moreover, with her severe chastity of principle, the reconciliation to her husband must begin there where the separation grew. Thus it was for Perdita to restore the parental unity which her being represents, but of which she had occasioned the breaking.

Such is Hermione, in her "proud submission," her "dignified obedience," with her Roman firmness and integrity of soul, heroic in strength, heroic in gentleness, the queenliest of women, the womanliest of queens. She is perhaps the Poet's best illustration of the great principle, which I fear is not so commonly felt as it should be, that the highest beauty always has an element or shade of the terrible in it, so that it awes you while it attracts.

"If I prove honey-mouth'd, let my tongue blister, And never to my red-look'd anger be The trumpet any more."

"Good Queen, my lord, good Queen; I say, good Queen, And would by combat make her good, so were I A man, the worst about you."

"For ever Unvenerable be thy hands, if thou Tak'st up the Princess by that forcèd baseness Which he has put upon 't."

Such are some of the words that boil over from the stout heart of Paulina,—the noblest and most amiable termagant we shall anywhere find,—when, with the new-born babe in charge, she confronts the furious King. He threatens to have her burnt, and she replies instantly,—

"I care not: It is an heretic that makes the fire, Not she which burns in 't."

If her faults were a thousand times greater than they are, I could pardon them all for this one little speech; which proves that Shakespeare was, I will not say a Protestant, but a true Christian, intellectually at least, and far deeper in the spirit of his religion than a large majority of the Church's official organs were in his day, or, let me add, have been any day since. And this was written, be it observed, at a time when the embers of the old ecclesiastical fires were not yet wholly extinct, and when many a priestly bigot was deploring the lay ascendency which kept them from being rekindled.

Paulina makes a superb counterpart to Hermione, heightening the effect of her character by the most emphatic contrast, and at the same time reflecting it by her intense and outspoken sympathy. Without any of the Queen's dignified calmness and reserve, she is alive to all her inward beauty and greatness: with a head to understand and a heart to reverence such a woman, she unites a temper to fight, a generosity to die for her. But no language but her own can fitly measure the ardour with which she loves and admires and even adores her "dearest, sweetest mistress," whose power has indeed gone all through her, so that every part of her nature cannot choose but speak it, when the occasion kindles her. Loud, voluble, violent, and viraginous, with a tongue sharper than a sword, and an eloquence that fairly blisters where it hits, she has, therewithal, too much honour and magnanimity and kind feeling either to use them without good cause, or to forbear using them at all hazards when she has such cause. Mrs. Jameson classes her, and justly, no doubt, among those women—and she assures us there are many such—who seem regardless of the feelings of those for whom they would sacrifice their life.

"I thought she had some great matter there in hand; for she hath privately, twice or thrice a day, ever since the death of Hermione, visited that removed house." Such is the speech of one gentleman to another, as the royal party and all the Court are going to Paulina's house to see the mysterious workmanship of Julio Romano. Nothing could better suggest the history of that quiet, placid intercourse, with its long record of patient, self-rewarding service; a fellowship in which little needed to be said, for each knew what was in the other's mind by a better language than words. It is such an idea of friendship as it does the heart good to rest upon. Just think of those two great manly souls, enshrined in womanly tenderness, thus communing together in secret for sixteen long years! And what a powerful charm of love and loyalty must have been cast upon Paulina's impulsive tongue, that she should keep so reticent of her dear cause through all that time! To play the woman after that fashion would not hurt any of us.

During the first three Acts the interest of this play is mainly tragic; the scene is densely crowded with incidents; the action hurried, abrupt, almost spasmodic; the style quick and sharp, flashing off point after point in brief, sinewy strokes; and all is rapidity and despatch: what with the insane fury of the King, the noble agony of the Queen, the enthusiasm of the Court in her behalf, and the King's violence towards both them and her, the mind is kept on the jump: all which, if continued to the end, would generate rather a tumult and hubbub in the thoughts, than that inward music which the title of the play promises; not to say, that such a prolonged hurry of movement would at length become monotonous and wearisome. Far otherwise the latter half of the play. Here the anticipations proper to a long, leisurely winter evening are fully met; the general effect is soothing and composing; the tones, dipped in sweetness, fall gently on the ear, disposing the mind to be still and listen and contemplate; thus making the play, as Coleridge describes it, "exquisitely respondent to the title." It would seem, indeed, that in these scenes the Poet had specially endeavoured how much of silent effect he could produce, without diverging from the dramatic form. To this end, he provides resting-places for thought; suspending or retarding the action by musical pauses and periods of lyrical movement, and breathing in the mellowest strains of poetical harmony, till the eye is "made quiet by the power of beauty," and all tumult of mind is hushed in the very intensity of feeling.

In the last two Acts we have a most artful interchange and blending of romantic beauty and comic drollery. The lost Princess and the heir-apparent of Bohemia, two of the noblest and loveliest beings that ever fancy conceived, occupy the centre of the picture, while around them are clustered rustic shepherds and shepherdesses amid their pastimes and pursuits, the whole being enlivened by the tricks and humours of a merry pedler and pickpocket. For simple purity and sweetness, the scene which unfolds the loves and characters of the Prince and Princess is not surpassed by any thing in Shakespeare. Whatsoever is enchanting in romance, lovely in innocence, elevated in feeling, and sacred in faith, is here concentrated; forming, all together, one of those things which we always welcome as we do the return of Spring, and over which our feelings may renew their youth for ever. So long as flowers bloom and hearts love, they will do it in the spirit of this scene.

It is a pastoral frolic, where free thoughts and guileless hearts rule the hour, all as true and as pure as the tints and fragrances with which field and forest and garden have beautified the occasion. The neighbouring swains and lasses have gathered in, to share and enhance the sport. The old Shepherd is present, but only as a looker-on, having for the nonce resigned the command to his reputed daughter. Under their mutual inspiration, the Prince and Princess are each in the finest rapture of fancy, while the surrounding influences of the rustic festival are just enough to enfranchise their inward music into modest and delicate utterance. He has tastefully decked her person with flowers, till no traces of the shepherdess can be seen, and she seems herself a multitudinous flower; having also attired himself "with a swain's wearing," so that the prince is equally obscured.

"These your unusual weeds to each part of you Do give a life: no shepherdess; but Flora, Peering in April's front. This your sheep-shearing Is as a meeting of the petty gods, And you the queen on't."

Thus he opens the play. And when she repeats her fears of the event:

"Thou dearest Perdita, With these forc'd thoughts, I pr'ythee, darken not The mirth o' the feast: or I'll be thine, my fair, Or not my father's; for I cannot be Mine own, nor any thing to any, if I be not thine: to this I am most constant, Though destiny say no."

The King and Camilla steal upon them in disguise, and while they are present we have this:

"*Perdita* . Come, take your flowers: Methinks I play as I have seen them do In Whitsun pastorals: sure, this robe of mine Does change my disposition.

Florizel . What you do Still betters what is done. When you speak, sweet, I'd have you do it ever: when you sing, I'd have you buy and sell so; so give alms; Pray so; and, for the ordering your affairs, To sing them too: when you do dance I wish you A wave o' the sea, that you might ever do Nothing but that; move still, still so, and own No other function. Each your doing is So singular in each particular, Crowning what you have done i' the present deed, That all your acts are queens.

Perdita . O Doricles! Your praises are too large: but that your youth, And the true blood that peeps so fairly through 't, Do plainly give you out an unstain'd shepherd, With wisdom I might fear, my Doricles, You woo'd me the false way.

Florizel . I think you have As little skill to fear as I have purpose To put you to 't. But come; our dance, I pray.

Polix . This is the prettiest low-born lass that ever Ran on the green-sward: nothing she does or seems But smacks of something greater than herself,— Too noble for this place.

Camil . He tells her something That makes her blood look out: Good sooth, she is The queen of curds and cream.

Polix . 'Pray you, good shepherd, what fair swain is this Which dances with your daughter?

Shep . They call him Doricles; and boasts himself To have a worthy feeding: I but have it Upon his own report, and I believe it; He looks like sooth. He says he loves my daughter: I think so too; for never gaz'd the Moon Upon the water, as he'll stand, and read, As 't were, my daughter's eyes: and, to be plain, I think there is not half a kiss to choose Who loves another best.

Polix . She dances featly.

Shep . So she does any thing, though I report it, That should be silent."

Perdita, notwithstanding she occupies so little room in the play, fills a large space in the reader's thoughts, almost disputing precedence with the Queen. And her mother's best native qualities reappear in her, sweetly modified by pastoral associations; her nature being really much the same, only it has been developed and seasoned in a different atmosphere; a nature too strong indeed to be displaced by any power of circumstances or supervenings of art, but at the same time too delicate and susceptive not to take a lively and lasting impress of them. So that, while she has thoroughly assimilated, she nevertheless clearly indicates, the food of place and climate, insomuch that the dignities of the princely and the simplicities of the pastoral character seem striving which shall express her goodliest. We can hardly call her a poetical being; she is rather poetry itself, and every thing lends and borrows beauty at her touch. A playmate of the flowers, when we see her with them, we are at a loss whether they take more inspiration from her or she from them; and while she is the sweetest of poets in making nosegays, the nosegays become in her hands the richest of crowns. If, as Schlegel somewhere remarks, the Poet is "particularly fond of showing the superiority of the innate over the acquired," he has surely nowhere done it with finer effect than in this unfledged angel.

There is much to suggest a comparison of Perdita and Miranda; yet how shall I compare them? Perfectly distinct indeed as individuals, still their characters are strikingly similar; only Perdita has perhaps a sweeter gracefulness, the freedom, simplicity, and playfulness of nature being in her case less checked by external restraints; while Miranda carries more of a magical and mysterious charm woven into her character from the supernatural influences of her whereabout. So like, yet so different, it is hard saying which is the better of the two, or rather one can hardly help liking her best with whom he last conversed. It is an interesting fact also, for such it seems to be, that these two glorious delineations were produced very near together, perhaps both the same year; and this too when Shakespeare was in his highest maturity of poetry and wisdom; from which it has been not unjustly argued that his experience both in social and domestic life must have been favourable to exalted conceptions of womanhood. The Poet, though in no sort a bigot, was evidently full of loyal and patriotic sentiment; and I have sometimes thought that the government of Elizabeth, with the grand national enthusiasm which clustered round her throne and person, may have had a good deal to do in shaping and inspiring this part of his workmanship. Be that as it may, with but one great exception, I think the world now finds its best ideas of moral beauty in Shakespeare's women.

Florizel's character is in exquisite harmony with that of the Princess. To be sure, it may be said that if he is worthy of her, it is mainly her influence that makes him so. But then it is to be observed, on the other hand, that as in such cases men find only what they bring the faculties for finding, so the meeting with her would not have elicited such music from him, had not his nature been originally responsive to hers. For he is manifestly drawn and held to her by a powerful instinct of congeniality. And none but a living abstract and sum-total of all that is manly could have so felt the perfections of such a woman. The difference between them is, that she was herself before she saw him, and would have been the same without him; whereas he was not and could not be himself, as we see him, till he caught inspiration from her; so that he is but right in saying,—

"I bless the time When my good falcon made her flight across Thy father's ground."

Nevertheless it is a clear instance of the pre-established harmony of souls: but that his spirit were akin to hers, he could not have recognized his peer through such a disguise of circumstances. For any one to be untouched and unsweetened by the heavenly purity of their courtship, were indeed a sin almost too great to be forgiven.

Shakespeare knew,—none better,—that in order to be a lover in any right sense of the term, one must first be a man. He therefore does not leave the Prince without an opportunity to show that he is such. And it is not till after the King has revealed himself, and blown up the mirth of the feast by his explosion of wrath, that the Prince displays his proper character in this respect. I need not stay to remark how well the Poet orders the action for that purpose; suffice it to say that the Prince then fully makes good his previous declaration:

"Were I crown'd the most imperial monarch, Thereof most worthy; were I the fairest youth That ever made eye swerve; had force and knowledge More than was ever man's; I would not prize them, "Without her love; for her employ them all; Commend them or condemn them to her service, Or to their own perdition."

The minor characters of this play are both well conceived and skilfully disposed, the one giving them a fair personal, the other a fair dramatic interest. The old Shepherd and his clown of a son are near, if not in, the Poet's happiest comic vein. Autolycus, the "snapper-up of unconsidered trifles," is the most amiable and ingenious rogue we should desire to see; who cheats almost as divinely as those about him love, and whose thieving tricks the very gods seem to crown with thrift in reward of his wit. His self-raillery and droll soliloquizing give us the feeling that his sins are committed not so much for lucre as for fun.—The Poet was perhaps a little too fond of placing his characters in situations where they have to be false in order to be the truer; which no doubt sometimes happens; yet, surely, in so delicate a point of morality, some care is needful, lest the exceptions become too much for the rule. And something too much of this there may be in the honest, upright, yet deceiving old lord, Camillo. I speak this under correction; for I know it is not safe to fault Shakespeare's morals; and that they who affect a better morality than his are very apt to turn out either hypocrites or moral coxcombs. As for the rest, this Camillo, though little more than a staff in the drama, is nevertheless a pillar of State; his integrity and wisdom making him a light to the counsels and a guide to the footsteps of the greatest around him. Fit to be the stay of princes, he is one of those venerable relics of the past which show us how beautiful age can be, and which, linking together different generations, format once the salt of society and the strength of government.

I have never seen this play on the stage; but I can well understand how the scene with the painted statue, if fairly delivered, might be surpassingly effective. The illusion is all on the understandings of the spectators; and they seem to feel the *power* without the *fact* of animation, or to have a *sense* of mobility in a *vision* of fixedness. And such is the magic of the scene, that we almost fancy them turning into marble, as they fancy the marble turning into flesh.

<<span id="filepos0040731877"> a>LIFE OF WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE by Sir Sidney Lee

Sir Sidney Lee (1859–1926) was an English biographer and critic. In 1882 he became assistant-editor of the *Dictionary of National Biography* . In 1890 he became joint editor, and on the retirement of Sir Leslie Stephen in 1891 succeeded him as editor. Lee himself contributed voluminously to the Dictionary, writing some 800 articles, mainly on Elizabethan authors or statesmen. While still at Balliol he had written two articles on Shakespearean questions, which were printed in *The Gentleman's Magazine* , and in 1884 he published a book about Stratford-on-Avon. His article on Shakespeare in the fifty-first volume (1897) of the Dictionary of National Biography formed the basis of his *Life of William Shakespeare* (1898), which reached its fifth edition in 1905.

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<<span id="filepos0040739959"> a>PREFACE

This work is based on the article on Shakespeare which I contributed last year to the fifty-first volume of the ‘Dictionary of National Biography.’ But the changes and additions which the article has undergone during my revision of it for separate publication are so numerous as to give the book a title to be regarded as an independent venture. In its general aims, however, the present life of Shakespeare endeavours loyally to adhere to the principles that are inherent in the scheme of the ‘Dictionary of National Biography.’ I have endeavoured to set before my readers a plain and practical narrative of the great dramatist’s personal history as concisely as the needs of clearness and completeness would permit. I have sought to provide students of Shakespeare with a full record of the duly attested facts and dates of their master’s career. I have avoided merely æsthetic criticism. My estimates of the value of Shakespeare’s plays and poems are intended solely to fulfil the obligation that lies on the biographer of indicating succinctly the character of the successive labours which were woven into the texture of his hero’s life. Æsthetic studies of Shakespeare abound, and to increase their number is a work of supererogation. But Shakespearean literature, as far as it is known to me, still lacks a book that shall supply within a brief compass an exhaustive and well-arranged statement of the facts of Shakespeare’s career, achievement, and reputation, that shall reduce conjecture to the smallest dimensions consistent with coherence, and shall give verifiable references to all the original sources of information. After studying Elizabethan literature, history, and bibliography for more than eighteen years, I believed that I might, without exposing myself to a charge of presumption, attempt something in the way of filling this gap, and that I might be able to supply, at least tentatively, a guide-book to Shakespeare’s life and work that should be, within its limits, complete and trustworthy. How far my belief was justified the readers of this volume will decide.

I cannot promise my readers any startling revelations. But my researches have enabled me to remove some ambiguities which puzzled my predecessors, and to throw light on one or two topics that have hitherto obscured the course of Shakespeare’s career. Particulars that have not been before incorporated in

Shakespeare’s biography will be found in my treatment of the following subjects: the conditions under which ‘Love’s Labour’s Lost’ and the ‘Merchant of Venice’ were written; the references in Shakespeare’s plays to his native town and county; his father’s applications to the Heralds’ College for coat-armour; his relations with Ben Jonson and the boy actors in 1601; the favour extended to his work by James I and his Court; the circumstances which led to the publication of the First Folio, and the history of the dramatist’s portraits. I have somewhat expanded the notices of Shakespeare’s financial affairs which have already appeared in the article in the ‘Dictionary of National Biography,’ and a few new facts will be found in my revised estimate of the poet’s pecuniary position.

In my treatment of the sonnets I have pursued what I believe to be an original line of investigation. The strictly autobiographical interpretation that critics have of late placed on these poems compelled me, as Shakespeare’s biographer, to submit them to a very narrow scrutiny. My conclusion is adverse to the claim of the sonnets to rank as autobiographical documents, but I have felt bound, out of respect to writers from whose views I dissent, to give in detail the evidence on which I base my judgment. Matthew Arnold sagaciously laid down the maxim that ‘the criticism which alone can much help us for the future is a criticism which regards Europe as being, for intellectual and artistic purposes, one great confederation, bound to a joint action and working to a common result.’ It is criticism inspired by this liberalising principle that is especially applicable to the vast sonnet-literature which was produced by Shakespeare and his contemporaries. It is criticism of the type that Arnold recommended that can alone lead to any accurate and profitable conclusion respecting the intention of the vast sonnet-literature of the Elizabethan era. In accordance with Arnold’s suggestion, I have studied Shakespeare’s sonnets comparatively with those in vogue in England, France, and Italy at the time he wrote. I have endeavoured to learn the view that was taken of such literary endeavours by contemporary critics and readers throughout Europe. My researches have covered a very small portion of the wide field. But I have gone far enough, I think, to justify the conviction that Shakespeare’s collection of sonnets has no reasonable title to be regarded as a personal or autobiographical narrative.

In the Appendix (Sections III. and IV.) I have supplied a memoir of Shakespeare’s patron, the Earl of Southampton, and an account of the Earl’s relations with the contemporary world of letters. Apart from Southampton’s association with the sonnets, he promoted Shakespeare’s welfare at an early stage of the dramatist’s career, and I can quote the authority of Malone, who appended a sketch of Southampton’s history to his biography of Shakespeare (in the ‘Variorum’ edition of 1821), for treating a knowledge of Southampton’s life as essential to a full knowledge of Shakespeare’s. I have also printed in the Appendix a detailed statement of the precise circumstances under which Shakespeare’s sonnets were published by Thomas Thorpe in 1609 (Section V.), and a review of the facts that seem to me to confute the popular theory that Shakespeare was a friend and *protégé* of William Herbert, third Earl of Pembroke, who has been put forward quite unwarrantably as the hero of the sonnets (Sections VI., VII., VIII.) I have also included in the Appendix (Sections IX. and X.) a survey of the voluminous sonnet-literature of the Elizabethan poets between 1591 and 1597, with which Shakespeare’s sonnetteering efforts were very closely allied, as well as a bibliographical note on a corresponding feature of French and Italian literature between 1550 and 1600.

Since the publication of the article on Shakespeare in the ‘Dictionary of National Biography,’ I have received from correspondents many criticisms and suggestions which have enabled me to correct some errors. But a few of my correspondents have exhibited so ingenuous a faith in those forged documents relating to Shakespeare and forged references to his works, which were promulgated chiefly by John Payne Collier more than half a century ago, that I have attached a list of the misleading records to my chapter on ‘The Sources of Biographical Information’ in the Appendix (Section I.) I believe the list to be fuller than any to be met with elsewhere.

The six illustrations which appear in this volume have been chosen on grounds of practical utility rather than of artistic merit. My reasons for selecting as the frontispiece the newly discovered ‘Droeshout’ painting of Shakespeare (now in the Shakespeare Memorial Gallery at Stratford-on-Avon) can be gathered from the history of the painting and of its discovery which I give on pages 288-90. I have to thank Mr. Edgar Flower and the other members of the Council of the Shakespeare Memorial at Stratford for permission to reproduce the picture. The portrait of Southampton in early life is now at Welbeck Abbey, and the Duke of Portland not only permitted the portrait to be engraved for this volume, but lent me the negative from which the plate has been prepared. The Committee of the Garrick Club gave permission to photograph the interesting bust of Shakespeare in their possession, but, owing to the fact that it is moulded in black terra-cotta no satisfactory negative could be obtained; the engraving I have used is from a photograph of a white plaster cast of the original bust, now in the Memorial

Gallery at Stratford. The five autographs of Shakespeare’s signature—all that exist of unquestioned authenticity—appear in the three remaining plates. The three signatures on the will have been photographed from the original document at Somerset House, by permission of Sir Francis Jenne, President of the Probate Court; the autograph on the deed of purchase by Shakespeare in 1613 of the house in Blackfriars has been photographed from the original document in the Guildhall Library, by permission of the Library Committee of the City of London; and the autograph on the deed of mortgage relating to the same property, also dated in 1613, has been photographed from the original document in the British Museum, by permission of the Trustees. Shakespeare’s coat-of-arms and motto, which are stamped on the cover of this volume, are copied from the trickings in the margin of the draft-grants of arms now in the Heralds’ College.

The Baroness Burdett-Coutts has kindly given me ample opportunities of examining the two peculiarly interesting and valuable copies of the First Folio in her possession. Mr. Richard Savage, of Stratford-on-Avon, the Secretary of the Birthplace Trustees, and Mr. W. Salt Brassington, the Librarian of the Shakespeare Memorial at Stratford, have courteously replied to the many inquiries that I have addressed to them verbally or by letter. Mr. Lionel Cust, the Director of the National Portrait Gallery, has helped me to estimate the authenticity of Shakespeare’s portraits. I have also benefited, while the work has been passing through the press, by the valuable suggestions of my friends the Rev. H. C. Beeching and Mr. W. J. Craig, and I have to thank Mr. Thomas Seccombe for the zealous aid he has rendered me while correcting the final proofs.

October 12, 1898.

<<span id="filepos0040752841"> a>I—PARENTAGE AND BIRTH

Distribution of the name.

Shakespeare came of a family whose surname was borne through the middle ages by residents in very many parts of England—at Penrith in Cumberland, at Kirkland and Doncaster in Yorkshire, as well as in nearly all the midland counties. The surname had originally a martial significance, implying capacity in the wielding of the spear. Its first recorded holder is John Shakespeare, who in 1279 was living at ‘Freyndon,’ perhaps Frittenden, Kent. The great mediæval guild of St. Anne at Knowle, whose members included the leading inhabitants of Warwickshire, was joined by many Shakespeares in the fifteenth century. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the surname is found far more frequently in Warwickshire than elsewhere. The archives of no less than twenty-four towns and villages there contain notices of Shakespeare families in the sixteenth century, and as many as thirty-four Warwickshire towns or villages were inhabited by Shakespeare families in the seventeenth century. Among them all William was a common Christian name. At Rowington, twelve miles to the north of Stratford, and in the same hundred of Barlichway, one of the most prolific Shakespeare families of Warwickshire resided in the sixteenth century, and no less than three Richard Shakespeares of Rowington, whose extant wills were proved respectively in 1560, 1591, and 1614, were fathers of sons called William. At least one other William Shakespeare was during the period a resident in Rowington. As a consequence, the poet has been more than once credited with achievements which rightly belong to one or other of his numerous contemporaries who were identically named.

The poet’s ancestry.

The poet’s ancestry cannot be defined with absolute certainty. The poet’s father, when applying for a grant of arms in 1596, claimed that his grandfather (the poet’s great-grandfather) received for services rendered in war a grant of land in Warwickshire from Henry VII. No precise confirmation of this pretension has been discovered, and it may be, after the manner of heraldic genealogy, fictitious. But there is a probability that the poet came of good yeoman stock, and that his ancestors to the fourth or fifth generation were fairly substantial landowners. Adam Shakespeare, a tenant by military service of land at Baddesley Clinton in 1389, seems to have been great-grandfather of one Richard Shakespeare who held land at Wroxhall in Warwickshire during the first thirty-four years (at least) of the sixteenth century. Another Richard Shakespeare who is conjectured to have been nearly akin to the Wroxhall family was settled as a farmer at Snitterfield, a village four miles to the north of Stratford-on-Avon, in 1528. It is probable that he was the poet’s grandfather. In 1550 he was renting a messuage and land at Snitterfield of Robert Arden; he died at the close of

1560, and on February 10 of the next year letters of administration of his goods, chattels, and debts were issued to his son John by the Probate Court at Worcester. His goods were valued at £35 17s. Besides the son John, Richard of Snitterfield certainly had a son Henry; while a Thomas Shakespeare, a considerable landholder at Snitterfield between 1563 and 1583, whose parentage is undetermined, may have been a third son. The son Henry remained all his life at Snitterfield, where he engaged in farming with gradually diminishing success; he died in embarrassed circumstances in December 1596. John, the son who administered Richard's estate, was in all likelihood the poet's father.

The poet's father.

About 1551 John Shakespeare left Snitterfield, which was his birthplace, to seek a career in the neighbouring borough of Stratford-on-Avon. There he soon set up as a trader in all manner of agricultural produce. Corn, wool, malt, meat, skins, and leather were among the commodities in which he dealt. Documents of a somewhat later date often describe him as a glover. Aubrey, Shakespeare's first biographer, reported the tradition that he was a butcher. But though both designations doubtless indicated important branches of his business, neither can be regarded as disclosing its full extent. The land which his family farmed at Snitterfield supplied him with his varied stock-in-trade. As long as his father lived he seems to have been a frequent visitor to Snitterfield, and, like his father and brothers, he was until the date of his father's death occasionally designated a farmer or 'husbandman' of that place. But it was with Stratford-on-Avon that his life was mainly identified.

His settlement at Stratford.

In April 1552 he was living there in Henley Street, a thoroughfare leading to the market town of Henley-in-Arden, and he is first mentioned in the borough records as paying in that month a fine of twelvepence for having a dirt-heap in front of his house. His frequent appearances in the years that follow as either plaintiff or defendant in suits heard in the local court of record for the recovery of small debts suggest that he was a keen man of business. In early life he prospered in trade, and in October 1556 purchased two freehold tenements at Stratford—one, with a garden, in Henley Street (it adjoins that now known as the poet's birthplace), and the other in Greenhill Street with a garden and croft. Thenceforth he played a prominent part in municipal affairs. In 1557 he was elected an ale-taster, whose duty it was to test the quality of malt liquors and bread. About the same time he was elected a burgess or town councillor, and in September 1558, and again on October 6, 1559, he was appointed one of the four petty constables by a vote of the jury of the court-leet. Twice—in 1559 and 1561—he was chosen one of the affeerors—officers appointed to determine the fines for those offences which were punishable arbitrarily, and for which no express penalties were prescribed by statute. In 1561 he was elected one of the two chamberlains of the borough, an office of responsibility which he held for two years. He delivered his second statement of accounts to the corporation in January 1564. When attesting documents he occasionally made his mark, but there is evidence in the Stratford archives that he could write with facility; and he was credited with financial aptitude. The municipal accounts, which were checked by tallies and counters, were audited by him after he ceased to be chamberlain, and he more than once advanced small sums of money to the corporation.

The poet's mother.

With characteristic shrewdness he chose a wife of assured fortune—Mary, youngest daughter of Robert Arden, a wealthy farmer of Wilmcote in the parish of Aston Cantlowe, near Stratford. The Arden family in its chief branch, which was settled at Parkhall, Warwickshire, ranked with the most influential of the county. Robert Arden, a progenitor of that branch, was sheriff of Warwickshire and Leicestershire in 1438 (16 Hen. VI), and this sheriff's direct descendant, Edward Arden, who was himself high sheriff of Warwickshire in 1575, was executed in 1583 for alleged complicity in a Roman Catholic plot against the life of Queen Elizabeth. John Shakespeare's wife belonged to a humbler branch of the family, and there is no trustworthy evidence to determine the exact degree of kinship between the two branches. Her grandfather, Thomas Arden, purchased in 1501 an estate at Snitterfield, which passed, with other property, to her father Robert; John Shakespeare's father, Richard, was one of this Robert Arden's Snitterfield tenants. By his first wife, whose name is not known, Robert Arden had seven daughters, of whom all but two married; John Shakespeare's wife seems to have been the youngest. Robert Arden's second wife, Agnes or Anne, widow of John Hill (*d.* 1545), a substantial farmer of Bearley, survived him; but by her he had no issue. When he died at the end of 1556, he owned a farmhouse at Wilmcote and many acres, besides some hundred acres at Snitterfield, with two farmhouses which he let out to tenants. The post-mortem inventory of his goods, which was made on December 9, 1556, shows that he had lived in comfort; his house was adorned by as many as eleven 'painted cloths,' which then did duty for tapestries among the middle class. The exordium of his will, which was drawn up on November 24, 1556, and proved on December 16 following, indicates that he was an observant Catholic. For his two youngest daughters, Alice and Mary, he showed especial affection by nominating them his executors. Mary received not only £6. 13s. 4d. in money, but the fee-simple of Asbies, his chief property at Wilmcote, consisting of a house with some fifty acres of land. She also acquired, under an earlier settlement, an interest in two messuages at Snitterfield.   But, although she was well provided with worldly goods, she was apparently without education; several extant documents bear her mark, and there is no proof that she could sign her name.

The poet’s birth and baptism.

John Shakespeare’s marriage with Mary Arden doubtless took place at Aston Cantlowe, the parish church of Wilmcote, in the autumn of 1557 (the church registers begin at a later date). On September 15, 1558, his first child, a daughter, Joan, was baptised in the church of Stratford. A second child, another daughter, Margaret, was baptised on December 2, 1562; but both these children died in infancy. The poet William, the first son and third child, was born on April 22 or 23, 1564. The latter date is generally accepted as his birthday, mainly (it would appear) on the ground that it was the day of his death. There is no positive evidence on the subject, but the Stratford parish registers attest that he was baptised on April 26.

Alleged birthplace.

Some doubt is justifiable as to the ordinarily accepted scene of his birth. Of two adjoining houses forming a detached building on the north side of Henley Street, that to the east was purchased by John Shakespeare in 1556, but there is no evidence that he owned or occupied the house to the west before 1575. Yet this western house has been known since 1759 as the poet’s birthplace, and a room on the first floor is claimed as that in which he was born.   The two houses subsequently came by bequest of the poet’s granddaughter to the family of the poet’s sister, Joan Hart, and while the eastern tenement was let out to strangers for more than two centuries, and by them converted into an inn, the ‘birthplace’ was until 1806 occupied by the Harts, who latterly carried on there the trade of butcher. The fact of its long occupancy by the poet’s collateral descendants accounts for the identification of the western rather than the eastern tenement with his birthplace. Both houses were purchased in behalf of subscribers to a public fund on September 16, 1847, and, after extensive restoration, were converted into a single domicile for the purposes of a public museum. They were presented under a deed of trust to the corporation of Stratford in 1866. Much of the Elizabethan timber and stonework survives, but a cellar under the ‘birthplace’ is the only portion which remains as it was at the date of the poet’s birth.

<<span id="filepos0040769490"> a> II—CHILDHOOD, EDUCATION, AND MARRIAGE

The father in municipal office.

In July 1564, when William was three months old, the plague raged with unwonted vehemence at Stratford, and his father liberally contributed to the relief of its poverty-stricken victims. Fortune still favoured him. On July 4, 1565, he reached the dignity of an alderman. From 1567 onwards he was accorded in the corporation archives the honourable prefix of ‘Mr.’ At Michaelmas 1568 he attained the highest office in the corporation gift, that of bailiff, and during his year of office the corporation for the first time entertained actors at Stratford. The Queen’s Company and the Earl of Worcester’s Company each received from John Shakespeare an official welcome. On September 5, 1571, he was chief alderman, a post which he retained till September 30 the following year. In 1573 Alexander Webbe, the husband of his wife’s sister Agnes, made him overseer of his will; in 1575 he bought two houses in Stratford, one of them doubtless the alleged birthplace in Henley Street; in 1576 he contributed twelvepence to the beadle’s salary. But after Michaelmas 1572 he took a less active part in municipal affairs; he grew irregular in his attendance at the council meetings, and signs were soon apparent that his luck had turned. In 1578 he was unable to pay, with his colleagues, either the sum of fourpence for the relief of the poor or his contribution ‘towards the furniture of three pikemen, two bellmen, and one archer’ who were sent by the corporation to attend a muster of the trained bands of the county.

Brothers and sisters.

Meanwhile his family was increasing. Four children besides the poet—three sons, Gilbert (baptised October 13, 1566), Richard (baptised March 11, 1574), and Edmund (baptised May 3, 1580), with a daughter Joan (baptised April 15, 1569)—reached maturity. A daughter Ann was baptised September 28, 1571, and was buried on April 4, 1579. To meet his growing liabilities, the father borrowed money from his wife’s kinsfolk, and he and his wife mortgaged, on November 14, 1578, Asbies, her valuable property at Wilmcote, for £40 to Edmund Lambert of Barton-on-the-Heath, who had married her sister, Joan Arden. Lambert was to receive no interest on his loan, but was to take the ‘rents and profits’ of the estate. Asbies was thereby alienated for ever. Next year, on October 15, 1579, John and his wife made over to Robert Webbe, doubtless a relative of Alexander Webbe, for the sum apparently of £40, his wife’s property at Snitterfield.

The father’s financial difficulties.

John Shakespeare obviously chafed under the humiliation of having parted, although as he hoped only temporarily, with his wife’s property of Asbies, and in the autumn of 1580 he offered to pay off the mortgage; but his brother-in-law, Lambert, retorted that other sums were owing, and he would accept all or none. The negotiation, which was the beginning of much litigation, thus proved abortive. Through 1585 and 1586 a creditor, John Brown, was embarrassingly importunate, and, after obtaining a writ of distraint, Brown informed the local court that the debtor had no goods on which distraint could be levied.   On September 6, 1586, John was deprived of his alderman’s gown, on the ground of his long absence from the council meetings.

Education.

Happily John Shakespeare was at no expense for the education of his four sons. They were entitled to free tuition at the grammar school of Stratford, which was reconstituted on a mediæval foundation by Edward VI. The eldest son, William, probably entered the school in 1571, when Walter Roche was master, and perhaps he knew something of Thomas Hunt, who succeeded Roche in 1577. The instruction that he received was mainly confined to the Latin language and literature. From the Latin accidence, boys of the period, at schools of the type of that at Stratford, were led, through conversation books like the ‘Sententiæ Pueriles’ and Lily’s grammar, to the perusal of such authors as Seneca Terence, Cicero, Virgil, Plautus, Ovid, and Horace. The eclogues of the popular renaissance poet, Mantuanus, were often preferred to Virgil’s for beginners. The rudiments of Greek were occasionally taught in Elizabethan grammar schools to very promising pupils; but such coincidences as have been detected between expressions in Greek plays and in Shakespeare seem due to accident, and not to any study, either at school or elsewhere, of the Athenian drama.

Dr. Farmer enunciated in his ‘Essay on Shakespeare’s Learning’ (1767) the theory that Shakespeare knew no language but his own, and owed whatever knowledge he displayed of the classics and of Italian and French literature to English translations. But several of the books in French and Italian whence Shakespeare derived the plots of his dramas—Belleforest’s ‘Histoires Tragiques,’ Ser Giovanni’s ‘Il Pecorone,’ and Cinthio’s ‘Hecatommithi,’ for example—were not accessible to him in English translations; and on more general grounds the theory of his ignorance is adequately confuted. A boy with Shakespeare’s exceptional alertness of intellect, during whose schooldays a training in Latin classics lay within reach, could hardly lack in future years all means of access to the literature of France and Italy.

The poet’s classical equipment.

With the Latin and French languages, indeed, and with many Latin poets of the school curriculum, Shakespeare in his writings openly acknowledged his acquaintance. In ‘Henry V’ the dialogue in many scenes is carried on in French, which is grammatically accurate if not idiomatic. In the mouth of his schoolmasters, Holofernes in ‘Love’s Labour’s Lost’ and Sir Hugh Evans in ‘Merry Wives of Windsor,’ Shakespeare placed Latin phrases drawn directly from Lily’s grammar, from the ‘Sententiæ Pueriles,’ and from ‘the good old Mantuan.’ The influence of Ovid, especially the ‘Metamorphoses,’ was apparent throughout his earliest literary work, both poetic and dramatic, and is discernible in the ‘Tempest,’ his latest play (v. i. 33 seq.) In the Bodleian Library there is a copy of the Aldine edition of Ovid’s ‘Metamorphoses’ (1502), and on the title is the signature W^{m} . Sh^{e} ., which experts have declared—not quite conclusively—to be a genuine autograph of the poet.   Ovid’s Latin text was certainly not unfamiliar to him, but his closest adaptations of Ovid’s ‘Metamorphoses’ often reflect the phraseology of the popular English version by Arthur Golding, of which some seven editions were issued between 1565 and 1597. From Plautus Shakespeare drew the plot of the ‘Comedy of Errors,’ but it is just possible that Plautus’s comedies, too, were accessible in English. Shakespeare had no title to rank as a classical scholar, and he did not disdain a liberal use of translations. His lack of exact scholarship fully accounts for the ‘small Latin and less Greek’ with which he was credited by his scholarly friend, Ben Jonson. But Aubrey's report that 'he understood Latin pretty well' need not be contested, and his knowledge of French may be estimated to have equalled his knowledge of Latin, while he doubtless possessed just sufficient acquaintance with Italian to enable him to discern the drift of an Italian poem or novel.

Shakespeare and the Bible.

Of the few English books accessible to him in his schooldays, the chief was the English Bible, either in the popular Genevan version, first issued in a complete form in 1560, or in the Bishops' revision of 1568, which the Authorised Version of 1611 closely followed. References to scriptural characters and incidents are not conspicuous in Shakespeare's plays, but, such as they are, they are drawn from all parts of the Bible, and indicate that general acquaintance with the narrative of both Old and New Testaments which a clever boy would be certain to acquire either in the schoolroom or at church on Sundays. Shakespeare quotes or adapts biblical phrases with far greater frequency than he makes allusion to episodes in biblical history. But many such phrases enjoyed proverbial currency, and others, which were more recondite, were borrowed from Holinshed's 'Chronicles' and secular works whence he drew his plots. As a rule his use of scriptural phraseology, as of scriptural history, suggests youthful reminiscence and the assimilative tendency of the mind in a stage of early development rather than close and continuous study of the Bible in adult life.

Withdrawal from school.

Shakespeare was a schoolboy in July 1575, when Queen Elizabeth made a progress through Warwickshire on a visit to her favourite, the Earl of Leicester, at his castle of Kenilworth. References have been detected in Oberon's vision in Shakespeare's 'Midsummer Night's Dream' (II. ii. 148-68) to the fantastic pageants and masques with which the Queen during her stay was entertained in Kenilworth Park. Leicester's residence was only fifteen miles from Stratford, and it is possible that Shakespeare went thither with his father to witness some of the open-air festivities; but two full descriptions which were published in 1576, in pamphlet form, gave Shakespeare knowledge of all that took place. Shakespeare's opportunities of recreation outside Stratford were in any case restricted during his schooldays. His father's financial difficulties grew steadily, and they caused his removal from school at an unusually early age. Probably in 1577, when he was thirteen, he was enlisted by his father in an effort to restore his decaying fortunes. ‘I have been told heretofore,’ wrote Aubrey, ‘by some of the neighbours that when he was a boy he exercised his father’s trade,’ which, according to the writer, was that of a butcher. It is possible that John’s ill-luck at the period compelled him to confine himself to this occupation, which in happier days formed only one branch of his business. His son may have been formally apprenticed to him. An early Stratford tradition describes him as ‘a butcher’s apprentice.’ ‘When he kill’d a calf,’ Aubrey proceeds less convincingly, ‘he would doe it in a high style and make a speech. There was at that time another butcher’s son in this towne, that was held not at all inferior to him for a naturall witt, his acquaintance, and coetanean, but dyed young.’

The poet’s marriage.

At the end of 1582 Shakespeare, when little more than eighteen and a half years old, took a step which was little calculated to lighten his father’s anxieties. He married. His wife, according to the inscription on her tombstone, was his senior by eight years. Rowe states that she ‘was the daughter of one Hathaway, said to have been a substantial yeoman in the neighbourhood of Stratford.’

Richard Hathaway of Shottery. Anne Hathaway.

On September 1, 1581, Richard Hathaway, ‘husbandman’ of Shottery, a hamlet in the parish of Old Stratford, made his will, which was proved on July 9, 1582, and is now preserved at Somerset House. His house and land, ‘two and a half virgates,’ had been long held in copyhold by his family, and he died in fairly prosperous circumstances. His wife Joan, the chief legatee, was directed to carry on the farm with the aid of her eldest son, Bartholomew, to whom a share in its proceeds was assigned. Six other children—three sons and three daughters—received sums of money; Agnes, the eldest daughter, and Catherine, the second daughter, were each allotted £6 13s. 4d, ‘to be paid at the day of her marriage,’ a phrase common in wills of the period. Anne and Agnes were in the sixteenth century alternative spellings of the same Christian name; and there is little doubt that the daughter ‘Agnes’ of Richard Hathaway’s will became, within a few months of Richard Hathaway’s death, Shakespeare’s wife.

Anne Hathaway’s cottage.

The house at Shottery, now known as Anne Hathaway’s cottage, and reached from Stratford by field-paths, undoubtedly once formed part of Richard

Hathaway's farmhouse, and, despite numerous alterations and renovations, still preserves many features of a thatched farmhouse of the Elizabethan period. The house remained in the Hathaway family till 1838, although the male line became extinct in 1746. It was purchased in behalf of the public by the Birthplace trustees in 1892.

The bond against impediments.

No record of the solemnisation of Shakespeare's marriage survives. Although the parish of Stratford included Shottery, and thus both bride and bridegroom were parishioners, the Stratford parish register is silent on the subject. A local tradition, which seems to have come into being during the present century, assigns the ceremony to the neighbouring hamlet or chapelry of Luddington, of which neither the chapel nor parish registers now exist. But one important piece of documentary evidence directly bearing on the poet's matrimonial venture is accessible. In the registry of the bishop of the diocese (Worcester) a deed is extant wherein Fulk Sandells and John Richardson, 'husbandmen of Stratford,' bound themselves in the bishop's consistory court, on November 28, 1582, in a surety of £40, to free the bishop of all liability should a lawful impediment—'by reason of any precontract' [*i.e.* with a third party] or consanguinity—be subsequently disclosed to imperil the validity of the marriage, then in contemplation, of William Shakespeare with Anne Hathaway. On the assumption that no such impediment was known to exist, and provided that Anne obtained the consent of her 'friends,' the marriage might proceed 'with once asking of the bannes of matrimony betwene them.'

Bonds of similar purport, although differing in significant details, are extant in all diocesan registries of the sixteenth century. They were obtainable on the payment of a fee to the bishop's commissary, and had the effect of expediting the marriage ceremony while protecting the clergy from the consequences of any possible breach of canonical law. But they were not common, and it was rare for persons in the comparatively humble position in life of Anne Hathaway and young Shakespeare to adopt such cumbrous formalities when there was always available the simpler, less expensive, and more leisurely method of marriage by 'thrice asking of the banns.' Moreover, the wording of the bond which was drawn before Shakespeare's marriage differs in important respects from that adopted in all other known examples. In the latter it is invariably provided that the marriage shall not take place without the consent of the parents or governors of both bride and bridegroom. In the case of the marriage of an 'infant' bridegroom the formal consent of his parents was absolutely essential to strictly regular procedure, although clergymen might be found who were ready to shut their eyes to the facts of the situation and to run the risk of solemnising the marriage of an ‘infant’ without inquiry as to the parents’ consent. The clergyman who united Shakespeare in wedlock to Anne Hathaway was obviously of this easy temper. Despite the circumstance that Shakespeare’s bride was of full age and he himself was by nearly three years a minor, the Shakespeare bond stipulated merely for the consent of the bride’s ‘friends,’ and ignored the bridegroom’s parents altogether. Nor was this the only irregularity in the document. In other pre-matrimonial covenants of the kind the name either of the bridegroom himself or of the bridegroom’s father figures as one of the two sureties, and is mentioned first of the two. Had the usual form been followed, Shakespeare’s father would have been the chief party to the transaction in behalf of his ‘infant’ son. But in the Shakespeare bond the sole sureties, Sandells and Richardson, were farmers of Shottery, the bride’s native place. Sandells was a ‘supervisor’ of the will of the bride’s father, who there describes him as ‘my trustie friende and neighbour.’

Birth of a daughter.

The prominence of the Shottery husbandmen in the negotiations preceding Shakespeare’s marriage suggests the true position of affairs. Sandells and Richardson, representing the lady’s family, doubtless secured the deed on their own initiative, so that Shakespeare might have small opportunity of evading a step which his intimacy with their friend’s daughter had rendered essential to her reputation. The wedding probably took place, without the consent of the bridegroom’s parents—it may be without their knowledge—soon after the signing of the deed. Within six months—in May 1583—a daughter was born to the poet, and was baptised in the name of Susanna at Stratford parish church on the 26th.

Formal betrothal probably dispensed with.

Shakespeare’s apologists have endeavoured to show that the public betrothal or formal ‘troth-plight’ which was at the time a common prelude to a wedding carried with it all the privileges of marriage. But neither Shakespeare’s detailed description of a betrothal nor of the solemn verbal contract that ordinarily preceded marriage lends the contention much support. Moreover, the whole circumstances of the case render it highly improbable that Shakespeare and his bride submitted to the formal preliminaries of a betrothal. In that ceremony the parents of both contracting parties invariably played foremost parts, but the wording of the bond precludes the assumption that the bridegroom’s parents were actors in any scene of the hurriedly planned drama of his marriage.

A difficulty has been imported into the narration of the poet’s matrimonial affairs by the assumption of his identity with one ‘William Shakespeare,’ to whom, according to an entry in the Bishop of Worcester’s register, a license was issued on November 27, 1582 (the day *before* the signing of the Hathaway bond), authorising his marriage with Anne Whateley of Temple Grafton. The theory that the maiden name of Shakespeare’s wife was Whateley is quite untenable, and it is unsafe to assume that the bishop’s clerk, when making a note of the grant of the license in his register, erred so extensively as to write Anne Whateley of Temple Grafton’ for ‘Anne Hathaway of Shottery.’ The husband of Anne Whateley cannot reasonably be identified with the poet. He was doubtless another of the numerous William Shakespeares who abounded in the diocese of Worcester. Had a license for the poet’s marriage been secured on November 27, it is unlikely that the Shottery husbandmen would have entered next day into a bond ‘against impediments,’ the execution of which might well have been demanded as a preliminary to the grant of a license but was wholly supererogatory after the grant was made.

<<span id="filepos0040796393"> a> III—THE FAREWELL TO STRATFORD

Anne Hathaway’s greater burden of years and the likelihood that the poet was forced into marrying her by her friends were not circumstances of happy augury. Although it is dangerous to read into Shakespeare’s dramatic utterances allusions to his personal experience, the emphasis with which he insists that a woman should take in marriage ‘an elder than herself,’ and that prenuptial intimacy is productive of ‘barren hate, sour-eyed disdain, and discord,’ suggest a personal interpretation. To both these unpromising features was added, in the poet’s case, the absence of a means of livelihood, and his course of life in the years that immediately followed implies that he bore his domestic ties with impatience. Early in 1585 twins were born to him, a son (Hamnet) and a daughter (Judith); both were baptised on February 2. All the evidence points to the conclusion, which the fact that he had no more children confirms, that in the later months of the year (1585) he left Stratford, and that, although he was never wholly estranged from his family, he saw little of wife or children for eleven years. Between the winter of 1585 and the autumn of 1596—an interval which synchronises with his first literary triumphs—there is only one shadowy mention of his name in Stratford records. In April 1587 there died Edmund Lambert, who held Asbies under the mortgage of 1578, and a few months later Shakespeare's name, as owner of a contingent interest, was joined to that of his father and mother in a formal assent given to an abortive proposal to confer on Edmund's son and heir, John Lambert, an absolute title to the estate on condition of his cancelling the mortgage and paying £20. But the deed does not indicate that Shakespeare personally assisted at the transaction.

Poaching at Charlecote.

Shakespeare's early literary work proves that while in the country he eagerly studied birds, flowers, and trees, and gained a detailed knowledge of horses and dogs. All his kinsfolk were farmers, and with them he doubtless as a youth practised many field sports. Sympathetic references to hawking, hunting, coursing, and angling abound in his early plays and poems.   And his sporting experiences passed at times beyond orthodox limits. A poaching adventure, according to a credible tradition, was the immediate cause of his long severance from his native place. 'He had,' wrote Rowe in 1709, 'by a misfortune common enough to young fellows, fallen into ill company, and, among them, some, that made a frequent practice of deer-stealing, engaged him with them more than once in robbing a park that belonged to Sir Thomas Lucy of Charlecote near Stratford. For this he was prosecuted by that gentleman, as he thought, somewhat too severely; and, in order to revenge that ill-usage, he made a ballad upon him, and though this, probably the first essay of his poetry, be lost, yet it is said to have been so very bitter that it redoubled the prosecution against him to that degree that he was obliged to leave his business and family in Warwickshire and shelter himself in London.' The independent testimony of Archdeacon Davies, who was vicar of Saperton, Gloucestershire, late in the seventeenth century, is to the effect that Shakespeare 'was much given to all unluckiness in stealing venison and rabbits, particularly from Sir Thomas Lucy, who had him oft whipt, and sometimes imprisoned, and at last made him fly his native county to his great advancement.' The law of Shakespeare's day (5 Eliz. ca) punished deer-stealers with three months' imprisonment and the payment of thrice the amount of the damage done.

Unwarranted doubts of the tradition.

The tradition has been challenged on the ground that the Charlecote deer-park was of later date than the sixteenth century. But Sir Thomas Lucy was an extensive game-preserver, and owned at Charlecote a warren in which a few harts or does doubtless found an occasional home. Samuel Ireland was informed in 1794 that Shakespeare stole the deer, not from Charlecote, but from Fulbroke Park, a few miles off, and Ireland supplied in his ‘Views on the Warwickshire Avon,’ 1795, an engraving of an old farmhouse in the hamlet of Fulbroke, where he asserted that Shakespeare was temporarily imprisoned after his arrest. An adjoining hovel was locally known for some years as Shakespeare’s ‘deer-barn,’ but no portion of Fulbroke Park, which included the site of these buildings (now removed), was Lucy’s property in Elizabeth’s reign, and the amended legend, which was solemnly confided to Sir Walter Scott in 1828 by the owner of Charlecote, seems pure invention.

Justice Shallow

The ballad which Shakespeare is reported to have fastened on the park gates of Charlecote does not, as Rowe acknowledged, survive. No authenticity can be allowed the worthless lines beginning ‘A parliament member, a justice of peace,’ which were represented to be Shakespeare’s on the authority of an old man who lived near Stratford and died in 1703. But such an incident as the tradition reveals has left a distinct impress on Shakespearean drama. Justice Shallow is beyond doubt a reminiscence of the owner of Charlecote. According to Archdeacon Davies of Saperton, Shakespeare’s ‘revenge was so great that’ he caricatured Lucy as ‘Justice Clodpate,’ who was (Davies adds) represented on the stage as ‘a great man,’ and as bearing, in allusion to Lucy’s name, ‘three louses rampant for his arms.’ Justice Shallow, Davies’s ‘Justice Clodpate,’ came to birth in the ‘Second Part of Henry IV’ (1598), and he is represented in the opening scene of the ‘Merry Wives of Windsor’ as having come from Gloucestershire to Windsor to make a Star-Chamber matter of a poaching raid on his estate. The ‘three luces hauriant argent’ were the arms borne by the Charlecote Lucys, and the dramatist’s prolonged reference in this scene to the ‘dozen white luces’ on Justice Shallow’s ‘old coat’ fully establishes Shallow’s identity with Lucy.

The flight from Stratford.

The poaching episode is best assigned to 1585, but it may be questioned whether Shakespeare, on fleeing from Lucy's persecution, at once sought an asylum in London. William Beeston, a seventeenth-century actor, remembered hearing that he had been for a time a country schoolmaster 'in his younger years,' and it seems possible that on first leaving Stratford he found some such employment in a neighbouring village. The suggestion that he joined, at the end of 1585, a band of youths of the district in serving in the Low Countries under the Earl of Leicester, whose castle of Kenilworth was within easy reach of Stratford, is based on an obvious confusion between him and others of his name. The knowledge of a soldier's life which Shakespeare exhibited in his plays is no greater and no less than that which he displayed of almost all other spheres of human activity, and to assume that he wrote of all or of any from practical experience, unless the evidence be conclusive, is to underrate his intuitive power of realising life under almost every aspect by force of his imagination.

<<span id="filepos0040806572"> a> IV—ON THE LONDON STAGE

The journey to London.

To London Shakespeare naturally drifted, doubtless trudging thither on foot during 1586, by way of Oxford and High Wycombe. Tradition points to that as Shakespeare's favoured route, rather than to the road by Banbury and Aylesbury. Aubrey asserts that at Grendon near Oxford, 'he happened to take the humour of the constable in "Midsummer Night's Dream"'—by which he meant, we may suppose, 'Much Ado about Nothing'—but there were watchmen of the Dogberry type all over England, and probably at Stratford itself. The Crown Inn, (formerly 3 Cornmarket Street) near Carfax, at Oxford, was long pointed out as one of his resting-places.

Richard Field, his townsman.

To only one resident in London is Shakespeare likely to have been known previously. Richard Field, a native of Stratford, and son of a friend of Shakespeare's father, had left Stratford in 1579 to serve an apprenticeship with Thomas Vautrollier, the London printer. Shakespeare and Field, who was made free of the Stationers' Company in 1587, were soon associated as author and publisher; but the theory that Field found work for Shakespeare in Vautrollier's printing-office is fanciful. No more can be said for the attempt to prove that he obtained employment as a lawyer's clerk. In view of his general quickness of apprehension, Shakespeare's accurate use of legal terms, which deserves all the attention that has been paid it, may be attributable in part to his observation of the many legal processes in which his father was involved, and in part to early intercourse with members of the Inns of Court.

Theatrical employment.

Tradition and common-sense alike point to one of the only two theatres (The Theatre or The Curtain) that existed in London at the date of his arrival as an early scene of his regular occupation. The compiler of 'Lives of the Poets' (1753) was the first to relate the story that his original connection with the playhouse was as holder of the horses of visitors outside the doors. According to the same compiler, the story was related by D'Avenant to Betterton; but Rowe, to whom Betterton communicated it, made no use of it. The two regular theatres of the time were both reached on horseback by men of fashion, and the owner of The Theatre, James Burbage, kept a livery stable at Smithfield. There is no inherent improbability in the tale. Dr. Johnson's amplified version, in which Shakespeare was represented as organising a service of boys for the purpose of tending visitors' horses, sounds apocryphal.

A playhouse servitor.

There is every indication that Shakespeare was speedily offered employment inside the playhouse. In 1587 the two chief companies of actors, claiming respectively the nominal patronage of the Queen and Lord Leicester, returned to London from a provincial tour, during which they visited Stratford. Two subordinate companies, one of which claimed the patronage of the Earl of Essex and the other that of Lord Stafford, also performed in the town during the same year. Shakespeare's friends may have called the attention of the strolling players to the homeless youth, rumours of whose search for employment about the London theatres had doubtless reached Stratford. From such incidents seems to have sprung the opportunity which offered Shakespeare fame and fortune. According to Rowe's vague statement, 'he was received into the company then in being at first in a very mean rank.' William Castle, the parish clerk of Stratford at the end of the seventeenth century, was in the habit of telling visitors that he entered the playhouse as a servitor. Malone recorded in 1780 a stage tradition ‘that his first office in the theatre was that of prompter’s attendant’ or call-boy. His intellectual capacity and the amiability with which he turned to account his versatile powers were probably soon recognised, and thenceforth his promotion was assured.

The acting companies.

Shakespeare’s earliest reputation was made as an actor, and, although his work as a dramatist soon eclipsed his histrionic fame, he remained a prominent member of the actor’s profession till near the end of his life. By an Act of Parliament of 1571 (14 Eliz. ca), which was re-enacted in 1596 (39 Eliz. ca), players were under the necessity of procuring a license to pursue their calling from a peer of the realm or ‘personage of higher degree;’ otherwise they were adjudged to be of the status of rogues and vagabonds. The Queen herself and many Elizabethan peers were liberal in the exercise of their licensing powers, and few actors failed to secure a statutory license, which gave them a rank of respectability, and relieved them of all risk of identification with vagrants or ‘sturdy beggars.’ From an early period in Elizabeth’s reign licensed actors were organised into permanent companies. In 1587 and following years, besides three companies of duly licensed boy-actors that were formed from the choristers of St. Paul’s Cathedral and the Chapel Royal and from Westminster scholars, there were in London at least six companies of fully licensed adult actors; five of these were called after the noblemen to whom their members respectively owed their licenses (viz. the Earls of Leicester, Oxford, Sussex, and Worcester, and the Lord Admiral, Charles, lord Howard of Effingham), and one of them whose actors derived their license from the Queen was called the Queen’s Company.

The Lord Chamberlain’s company.

The patron’s functions in relation to the companies seem to have been mainly confined to the grant or renewal of the actors’ licenses. Constant alterations of name, owing to the death or change from other causes of the patrons, render it difficult to trace with certainty each company’s history. But there seems no doubt that the most influential of the companies named—that under the nominal patronage of the Earl of Leicester—passed on his death in September 1588 to the patronage of Ferdinando Stanley, lord Strange, who became Earl of Derby on September 25, 1592. When the Earl of Derby died on April 16, 1594, his place as patron and licenser was successively filled by Henry Carey, first lord Hunsdon, Lord Chamberlain (*d.* July 23, 1596), and by his son and heir, George

Carey, second lord Hunsdon, who himself became Lord Chamberlain in March 1597. After King James's succession in May 1603 the company was promoted to be the King's players, and, thus advanced in dignity, it fully maintained the supremacy which, under its successive titles, it had already long enjoyed.

A member of the Lord Chamberlain's.

It is fair to infer that this was the company that Shakespeare originally joined and adhered to through life. Documentary evidence proves that he was a member of it in December 1594; in May, 1603 he was one of its leaders. Four of its chief members—Richard Burbage, the greatest tragic actor of the day, John Heming, Henry Condell, and Augustine Phillips were among Shakespeare's lifelong friends. Under this company's auspices, moreover, Shakespeare's plays first saw the light. Only two of the plays claimed for him—'Titus Andronicus' and '3 Henry VI'—seem to have been performed by other companies (the Earl of Sussex's men in the one case, and the Earl of Pembroke's in the other).

The London theatres.

When Shakespeare became a member of the company it was doubtless performing at The Theatre, the playhouse in Shoreditch which James Burbage, the father of the great actor, Richard Burbage, had constructed in 1576; it abutted on the Finsbury Fields, and stood outside the City's boundaries. The only other London playhouse then in existence—the Curtain in Moorfields—was near at hand; its name survives in Curtain Road, Shoreditch. But at an early date in his acting career Shakespeare's company sought and found new quarters. While known as Lord Strange's men, they opened on February 19, 1592, a third London theatre, called the Rose, which Philip Henslowe, the speculative theatrical manager, had erected on the Bankside, Southwark. At the date of the inauguration of the Rose Theatre Shakespeare's company was temporarily allied with another company, the Admiral's men, who numbered the great actor Edward Alleyn among them. Alleyn for a few months undertook the direction of the amalgamated companies, but they quickly parted, and no further opportunity was offered Shakespeare of enjoying professional relations with Alleyn. The Rose Theatre was doubtless the earliest scene of Shakespeare's pronounced successes alike as actor and dramatist. Subsequently for a short time in 1594 he frequented the stage of another new theatre at Newington Butts, and between 1595 and 1599 the older stages of the Curtain and of The Theatre in Shoreditch. The Curtain remained open till the Civil Wars, although its vogue after 1600 was eclipsed by that of younger rivals. In 1599 Richard Burbage and his brother Cuthbert demolished the old building of The Theatre and built, mainly out of the materials of the dismantled fabric, the famous theatre called the Globe on the Bankside. It was octagonal in shape, and built of wood, and doubtless Shakespeare described it (rather than the Curtain) as ‘this wooden O’ in the opening chorus of ‘Henry V’ (1. 13). After 1599 the Globe was mainly occupied by Shakespeare’s company, and in its profits he acquired an important share. From the date of its inauguration until the poet’s retirement, the Globe—which quickly won the first place among London theatres—seems to have been the sole playhouse with which Shakespeare was professionally associated. The equally familiar Blackfriars Theatre, which was created out of a dwelling-house by James Burbage, the actor’s father, at the end of 1596, was for many years afterwards leased out to the company of boy-actors known as ‘the Queen’s Children of the Chapel;’ it was not occupied by Shakespeare’s company until December 1609 or January 1610, when his acting days were nearing their end.

Place of residence in London.

In London Shakespeare resided near the theatres. According to a memorandum by Alleyn (which Malone quoted), he lodged in 1596 near ‘the Bear Garden in Southwark.’ In 1598 one William Shakespeare, who was assessed by the collectors of a subsidy in the sum of 13s. 4d. upon goods valued at £5, was a resident in St. Helen’s parish, Bishopsgate, but it is not certain that this taxpayer was the dramatist.

Shakespeare’s alleged travels. In Scotland.

The chief differences between the methods of theatrical representation in Shakespeare’s day and our own lay in the fact that neither scenery nor scenic costume nor women-actors were known to the Elizabethan stage. All female *rôles* were, until the Restoration in 1660, assumed in the public theatres by men or boys.   Consequently the skill needed to rouse in the audience the requisite illusions was far greater then than at later periods. But the professional customs of Elizabethan actors approximated in other respects more closely to those of their modern successors than is usually recognised. The practice of touring in the provinces was followed with even greater regularity then than now. Few companies remained in London during the summer or early autumn, and every country town with two thousand or more inhabitants could reckon on at least one visit from travelling actors between May and October. A rapid examination of the extant archives of some seventy municipalities selected at random shows that Shakespeare’s company between 1594 and 1614 frequently performed in such towns as Barnstaple, Bath, Bristol, Coventry, Dover, Faversham, Folkestone, Hythe, Leicester, Maidstone, Marlborough, New Romney, Oxford, Rye in Sussex, Saffron Walden, and Shrewsbury.   Shakespeare may be credited with faithfully fulfilling all his professional functions, and some of the references to travel in his sonnets were doubtless reminiscences of early acting tours. It has been repeatedly urged, moreover, that Shakespeare’s company visited Scotland, and that he went with it.   In November 1599 English actors arrived in Scotland under the leadership of Lawrence Fletcher and one Martin, and were welcomed with enthusiasm by the king.   Fletcher was a colleague of Shakespeare in 1603, but is not known to have been one earlier. Shakespeare’s company never included an actor named Martin. Fletcher repeated the visit in October 1601. There is nothing to indicate that any of his companions belonged to Shakespeare’s company. In like manner, Shakespeare’s accurate reference in ‘Macbeth’ to the ‘nimble’ but ‘sweet’ climate of Inverness,   and the vivid impression he conveys of the aspects of wild Highland heaths, have been judged to be the certain fruits of a personal experience; but the passages in question, into which a more definite significance has possibly been read than Shakespeare intended, can be satisfactorily accounted for by his inevitable intercourse with Scotsmen in London and the theatres after James I’s accession.

In Italy.

A few English actors in Shakespeare’s day occasionally combined to make professional tours through foreign lands, where Court society invariably gave them a hospitable reception. In Denmark, Germany, Austria, Holland, and France, many dramatic performances were given before royal audiences by English actors between 1580 and 1630.   That Shakespeare joined any of these expeditions is highly improbable. Actors of small account at home mainly took part in them, and Shakespeare’s name appears in no extant list of those who paid professional visits abroad. It is, in fact, unlikely that Shakespeare ever set foot on the continent of Europe in either a private or professional capacity. He repeatedly ridicules the craze for foreign travel.   To Italy, it is true, and especially to cities of Northern Italy, like Venice, Padua, Verona, Mantua, and Milan, he makes frequent and familiar reference, and he supplied many a realistic portrayal of Italian life and sentiment. But the fact that he represents Valentine in the ‘Two Gentlemen of Verona’ (I. i. 71) as travelling from Verona to Milan by sea, and Prospero in ‘The Tempest’ as embarking on a ship at the gates of Milan (I. ii. 129-44), renders it almost impossible that he could have gathered his knowledge of Northern Italy from personal observation. He doubtless owed all to the verbal reports of travelled friends or to books, the contents of which he had a rare power of assimilating and vitalising.

Shakespeare's rôles.

The publisher Chettle wrote in 1592 that Shakespeare was 'exelent in the qualitie he professes,' and the old actor William Beeston asserted in the next century that Shakespeare 'did act exceedingly well.' But the *rôles* in which he distinguished himself are imperfectly recorded. Few surviving documents refer directly to performances by him. At Christmas 1594 he joined the popular actors William Kemp, the chief comedian of the day, and Richard Burbage, the greatest tragic actor, in 'two several comedies or interludes' which were acted on St. Stephen's Day and on Innocents' Day (December 27 and 28) at Greenwich Palace before the Queen. The players received 'xiii*li* . vj*s* . viii*d* . and by waye of her Majesties rewarde vi*li* . xiii*s* . iiij*d* ., in all xx*li* . Neither plays nor parts are named. Shakespeare's name stands first on the list of those who took part in the original performances of Ben Jonson's 'Every Man in his Humour' (1598). In the original edition of Jonson's 'Sejanus' (1603) the actors' names are arranged in two columns, and Shakespeare's name heads the second column, standing parallel with Burbage's, which heads the first. But here again the character allotted to each actor is not stated. Rowe identified only one of Shakespeare's parts, 'the Ghost in his own "Hamlet,"' and Rowe asserted his assumption of that character to be 'the top of his performance.' John Davies of Hereford noted that he 'played some kingly parts in sport.' One of Shakespeare's younger brothers, presumably Gilbert, often came, wrote Oldys, to London in his younger days to see his brother act in his own plays; and in his old age, when his memory was failing, he recalled his brother's performance of Adam in 'As you like it.' In the 1623 folio edition of Shakespeare's 'Works' his name heads the prefatory list 'of the principall actors in all these playes.'

Alleged scorn of an actor's calling.

That Shakespeare chafed under some of the conditions of the actor's calling is commonly inferred from the 'Sonnets.' There he reproaches himself with becoming 'a motley to the view' (cx. 2), and chides fortune for having provided for his livelihood nothing better than 'public means that public manners breed,' whence his name received a brand (cxi. 4-5). If such self-pity is to be literally interpreted, it only reflected an evanescent mood. His interest in all that touched the efficiency of his profession was permanently active. He was a keen critic of actors' elocution, and in 'Hamlet' shrewdly denounced their common failings, but clearly and hopefully pointed out the road to improvement. His highest ambitions lay, it is true, elsewhere than in acting, and at an early period of his theatrical career he undertook, with triumphant success, the labours of a playwright. But he pursued the profession of an actor loyally and uninterruptedly until he resigned all connection with the theatre within a few years of his death.

<<span id="filepos0040834428"> a> V.—EARLY DRAMATIC EFFORTS

Dramatic work.

The whole of Shakespeare's dramatic work was probably begun and ended within two decades (1591-1611), between his twenty-seventh and forty-seventh year. If the works traditionally assigned to him include some contributions from other pens, he was perhaps responsible, on the other hand, for portions of a few plays that are traditionally claimed for others. When the account is balanced, Shakespeare must be credited with the production, during these twenty years, of a yearly average of two plays, nearly all of which belong to the supreme rank of literature. Three volumes of poems must be added to the total. Ben Jonson was often told by the players that 'whatsoever he penned he never blotted out (*i.e.* erased) a line.' The editors of the First Folio attested that 'what he thought he uttered with that easinesse that we have scarce received from him a blot in his papers.' Signs of hasty workmanship are not lacking, but they are few when it is considered how rapidly his numerous compositions came from his pen, and they are in the aggregate unimportant.

His borrowed plots.

By borrowing his plots he to some extent economised his energy, but he transformed most of them, and it was not probably with the object of conserving his strength that he systematically levied loans on popular current literature like Holinshed's 'Chronicles,' North's translation of 'Plutarch,' widely read romances, and successful plays. In this regard he betrayed something of the practical temperament which is traceable in the conduct of the affairs of his later life. It was doubtless with the calculated aim of ministering to the public taste that he unceasingly adapted, as his genius dictated, themes which had already, in the hands of inferior writers or dramatists, proved capable of arresting public attention.

The revision of plays.

The professional playwrights sold their plays outright to one or other of the acting companies, and they retained no legal interest in them after the manuscript had passed into the hands of the theatrical manager. It was not unusual for the manager to invite extensive revision of a play at the hands of others than its author before it was produced on the stage, and again whenever it was revived. Shakespeare gained his earliest experience as a dramatist by revising or rewriting behind the scenes plays that had become the property of his manager. It is possible that some of his labours in this direction remain unidentified. In a few cases his alterations were slight, but as a rule his fund of originality was too abundant to restrict him, when working as an adapter, to mere recension, and the results of most of his labours in that capacity are entitled to rank among original compositions.

Chronology of the plays. Metrical tests.

The determination of the exact order in which Shakespeare's plays were written depends largely on conjecture. External evidence is accessible in only a few cases, and, although always worthy of the utmost consideration, is not invariably conclusive. The date of publication rarely indicates the date of composition. Only sixteen of the thirty-seven plays commonly assigned to Shakespeare were published in his lifetime, and it is questionable whether any were published under his supervision. But subject-matter and metre both afford rough clues to the period in his career to which each play may be referred. In his early plays the spirit of comedy or tragedy appears in its simplicity; as his powers gradually matured he depicted life in its most complex involutions, and portrayed with masterly insight the subtle gradations of human sentiment and the mysterious workings of human passion. Comedy and tragedy are gradually blended; and his work finally developed a pathos such as could only come of ripe experience. Similarly the metre undergoes emancipation from the hampering restraints of fixed rule and becomes flexible enough to respond to every phase of human feeling. In the blank verse of the early plays a pause is strictly observed at the close of each line, and rhyming couplets are frequent. Gradually the poet overrides such artificial restrictions; rhyme largely disappears; recourse is more frequently made to prose; the pause is varied indefinitely; extra syllables are, contrary to strict metrical law, introduced at the end of lines, and at times in the middle; the last word of the line is often a weak and unemphatic conjunction or preposition. To the latest plays fantastic and punning conceits which abound in early work are rarely accorded admission. But, while Shakespeare's achievement from the beginning to the end of his career offers clearer evidence than that of any other writer of genius of the steady and orderly growth of his poetic faculty, some allowance must be made for ebb and flow in the current of his artistic progress. Early work occasionally anticipates features that become habitual to late work, and late work at times embodies traits that are mainly identified with early work. No exclusive reliance in determining the precise chronology can be placed on the merely mechanical tests afforded by tables of metrical statistics. The chronological order can only be deduced with any confidence from a consideration of all the internal characteristics as well as the known external history of each play. The premisses are often vague and conflicting, and no chronology hitherto suggested receives at all points universal assent.

'Love's Labour's Lost.'

There is no external evidence to prove that any piece in which Shakespeare had a hand was produced before the spring of 1592. No play by him was published before 1597, and none bore his name on the title-page till 1598. But his first essays have been with confidence allotted to 1591. To 'Love's Labour's Lost' may reasonably be assigned priority in point of time of all Shakespeare's dramatic productions. Internal evidence alone indicates the date of composition, and proves that it was an early effort; but the subject-matter suggests that its author had already enjoyed extended opportunities of surveying London life and manners, such as were hardly open to him in the very first years of his settlement in the metropolis. 'Love's Labour's Lost' embodies keen observation of contemporary life in many ranks of society, both in town and country, while the speeches of the hero Biron clothe much sound philosophy in masterly rhetoric. Its slender plot stands almost alone among Shakespeare's plots in that it is not known to have been borrowed, and stands quite alone in openly travestying known traits and incidents of current social and political life. The names of the chief characters are drawn from the leaders in the civil war in France, which was in progress between 1589 and 1594, and was anxiously watched by the English public. Contemporary projects of academies for disciplining young men; fashions of speech and dress current in fashionable circles; recent attempts on the part of Elizabeth's government to negotiate with the Tsar of Russia; the inefficiency of rural constables and the pedantry of village schoolmasters and curates are all satirised with good humour. The play was revised in 1597, probably for a performance at Court. It was first published next year, and on the title-page, which described the piece as 'newly corrected and augmented,' Shakespeare's name first appeared in print as that of author of a play.

'Two Gentlemen of Verona.'

Less gaiety characterised another comedy of the same date, 'The Two Gentlemen of Verona,' which dramatises a romantic story of love and friendship. There is every likelihood that it was an adaptation—amounting to a reformation—of a lost 'History of Felix and Philomena,' which had been acted at Court in 1584. The story is the same as that of 'The Shepardess Felismena' in the Spanish pastoral romance of 'Diana' by George de Montemayor, which long enjoyed popularity in England. No complete English translation of 'Diana' was published before that of Bartholomew Yonge in 1598, but a manuscript version by Thomas Wilson, which was dedicated to the Earl of Southampton in 1596, was possibly circulated far earlier. Some verses from 'Diana' were translated by Sir Philip Sidney and were printed with his poems as early as 1591. Barnabe Rich's story of 'Apollonius and Silla' (from Cinthio's 'Hecatommithi'), which Shakespeare employed again in 'Twelfth Night,' also gave him some hints. Trifling and irritating conceits abound in the 'Two Gentlemen,' but passages of high poetic spirit are not wanting, and the speeches of the clowns, Launce and Speed—the precursors of a long line of whimsical serving-men—overflow with farcical drollery. The 'Two Gentlemen' was not published in Shakespeare's lifetime; it first appeared in the folio of 1623, after having, in all probability, undergone some revision.

'Comedy of Errors.'

Shakespeare next tried his hand, in the 'Comedy of Errors' (commonly known at the time as 'Errors'), at boisterous farce. It also was first published in 1623. Again, as in 'Love's Labour's Lost,' allusion was made to the civil war in France. France was described as 'making war against her heir' (III. ii. 125). Shakespeare's farcical comedy, which is by far the shortest of all his dramas, may have been founded on a play, no longer extant, called 'The Historie of

Error,' which was acted in 1576 at Hampton Court. In subject-matter it resembles the 'Menæchmi' of Plautus, and treats of mistakes of identity arising from the likeness of twin-born children. The scene (act iii. sc. i.) in which Antipholus of Ephesus is shut out from his own house, while his brother and wife are at dinner within, recalls one in the 'Amphitruo' of Plautus. Shakespeare doubtless had direct recourse to Plautus as well as to the old play, and he may have read Plautus in English. The earliest translation of the 'Menæchmi' was not licensed for publication before June 10, 1594, and was not published until the following year. No translation of any other play of Plautus appeared before. But it was stated in the preface to this first published translation of the 'Menæchmi' that the translator, W. W., doubtless William Warner, a veteran of the Elizabethan world of letters, had some time previously 'Englished' that and 'divers' others of Plautus's comedies, and had circulated them in manuscript 'for the use of and delight of his private friends, who, in Plautus's own words, are not able to understand them.'

'Romeo and Juliet.'

Such plays as these, although each gave promise of a dramatic capacity out of the common way, cannot be with certainty pronounced to be beyond the ability of other men. It was in 'Romeo and Juliet,' Shakespeare's first tragedy, that he proved himself the possessor of a poetic and dramatic instinct of unprecedented quality. In 'Romeo and Juliet' he turned to account a tragic romance of Italian origin, which was already popular in English versions. Arthur Broke rendered it into English verse from the Italian of Bandello in 1562, and William Painter had published it in prose in his 'Palace of Pleasure' in 1567. Shakespeare made little change in the plot as drawn from Bandello by Broke, but he impregnated it with poetic fervour, and relieved the tragic intensity by developing the humour of Mercutio, and by grafting on the story the new comic character of the Nurse. The ecstasy of youthful passion is portrayed by Shakespeare in language of the highest lyric beauty, and although a predilection for quibbles and conceits occasionally passes beyond the author's control, 'Romeo and Juliet,' as a tragic poem on the theme of love, has no rival in any literature. If the Nurse's remark, ''Tis since the earthquake now eleven years' (I. iii. 23), be taken literally, the composition of the play must be referred to 1591, for no earthquake in the sixteenth century was experienced in England after 1580. There are a few parallelisms with Daniel's 'Complainte of Rosamond,' published in 1592, and it is probable that Shakespeare completed the piece in that year. It was first printed anonymously and surreptitiously by John Danter in 1597 from an imperfect acting copy. A second quarto of 1599 (by T. Creede for Cuthbert Burbie) was printed from an authentic version, but the piece had probably undergone revision since its first production.

Of the original representation on the stage of three other pieces of the period we have more explicit information. These reveal Shakespeare undisguisedly as an adapter of plays by other hands. Though they lack the interest attaching to his unaided work, they throw invaluable light on some of his early methods of composition and his early relations with other dramatists.

‘Henry VI.’

On March 3, 1592, a new piece, called ‘Henry VI,’ was acted at the Rose Theatre by Lord Strange’s men. It was no doubt the play which was subsequently known as Shakespeare’s ‘The First Part of Henry VI.’ On its first performance it won a popular triumph. ‘How would it have joyed brave Talbot (the terror of the French),’ wrote Nash in his ‘Pierce Pennilesse’ (1592, licensed August 8), in reference to the striking scenes of Talbot’s death (act iv. sc. vi. and vii.), ‘to thinke that after he had lyne two hundred yeares in his Tombe, hee should triumphe againe on the Stage, and have his bones newe embalmed with the teares of ten thousand spectators at least (at severall times) who, in the Tragedian that represents his person, imagine they behold him fresh bleeding!’ There is no categorical record of the production of a second piece in continuation of the theme, but such a play quickly followed; for a third piece, treating of the concluding incidents of Henry VI’s reign, attracted much attention on the stage early in the following autumn.

Greene’s attack. Chettle’s apology.

The applause attending the completion of this historical trilogy caused bewilderment in the theatrical profession. The older dramatists awoke to the fact that their popularity was endangered by the young stranger who had set up his tent in their midst, and one veteran uttered without delay a rancorous protest. Robert Greene, who died on September 3, 1592, wrote on his deathbed an ill-natured farewell to life, entitled ‘A Groats-worth of Wit bought with a Million of Repentance.’ Addressing three brother dramatists—Marlowe, Nash, and Peele or Lodge—he bade them beware of puppets ‘that speak from our mouths,’ and of ‘antics garnished in our colours.’ ‘There is,’ he continued, ‘an upstart Crow, beautified with our feathers, that with his *Tygers heart wrapt in a players hide* supposes he is as well able to bumbast out a blanke verse as the best of you; and being an absolute *Johannes factotum* is, in his owne conceit, the only Shake-scene in a countrie. . . . Never more acquaint [those apes] with your admired inventions, for it is pity men of such rare wits should be subject to the pleasures of such rude groomes.' The 'only Shake-scene' is a punning denunciation of Shakespeare. The tirade was probably inspired by an established author's resentment at the energy of a young actor—the theatre's factotum—in revising the dramatic work of his seniors with such masterly effect as to imperil their hold on the esteem of manager and playgoer. The italicised quotation travesties a line from the third piece in the trilogy of Shakespeare's 'Henry VI:'

Oh Tiger's heart wrapt in a woman's hide.

But Shakespeare's amiability of character and versatile ability had already won him admirers, and his successes excited the sympathetic regard of colleagues more kindly than Greene. In December 1592 Greene's publisher, Henry Chettle, prefixed an apology for Greene's attack on the young actor to his 'Kind Hartes Dreame,' a tract reflecting on phases of contemporary social life. 'I am as sory,' Chettle wrote, 'as if the originall fault had beene my fault, because myselfe have seene his [*i.e.* Shakespeare's] demeanour no lesse civill than he [is] exelent in the qualitie he professes, besides divers of worship have reported his uprightnes of dealing, which argues his honesty, and his facetious grace in writing that aprooves his art.'

Divided authorship of 'Henry VI.'

The first of the three plays dealing with the reign of Henry VI was originally published in the collected edition of Shakespeare's works; the second and third plays were previously printed in a form very different from that which they subsequently assumed when they followed the first part in the folio. Criticism has proved beyond doubt that in these plays Shakespeare did no more than add, revise, and correct other men's work. In 'The First Part of Henry VI' the scene in the Temple Gardens, where white and red roses are plucked as emblems by the rival political parties (act ii. sc. iv.), the dying speech of Mortimer, and perhaps the wooing of Margaret by Suffolk, alone bear the impress of his style. A play dealing with the second part of Henry VI's reign was published anonymously from a rough stage copy in 1594, with the title 'The first part of the Contention betwixt the two famous houses of Yorke and Lancaster.' A play dealing with the third part was published with greater care next year under the title ‘The True Tragedie of Richard, Duke of Yorke, and the death of good King Henry the Sixt, as it was sundrie times acted by the Earl of Pembroke his servants.’ In both these plays Shakespeare’s revising hand can be traced. The humours of Jack Cade in ‘The Contention’ can owe their savour to him alone. After he had hastily revised the original drafts of the three pieces, perhaps with another’s aid, they were put on the stage in 1592, the first two parts by his own company (Lord Strange’s men), and the third, under some exceptional arrangement, by Lord Pembroke’s men. But Shakespeare was not content to leave them thus. Within a brief interval, possibly for a revival, he undertook a more thorough revision, still in conjunction with another writer. ‘The First Part of The Contention’ was thoroughly overhauled, and was converted into what was entitled in the folio ‘The Second Part of Henry VI;’ there more than half the lines are new. ‘The True Tragedie,’ which became ‘The Third Part of Henry VI,’ was less drastically handled; two-thirds of it was left practically untouched; only a third was thoroughly remodelled.

Shakespeare’s coadjutors.

Who Shakespeare’s coadjutors were in the two successive revisions of ‘Henry VI’ is matter for conjecture. The theory that Greene and Peele produced the original draft of the three parts of ‘Henry VI,’ which Shakespeare recast, may help to account for Greene’s indignant denunciation of Shakespeare as ‘an upstart crow, beautified with the feathers’ of himself and his fellow dramatists. Much can be said, too, in behalf of the suggestion that Shakespeare joined Marlowe, the greatest of his predecessors, in the first revision of which ‘The Contention’ and the ‘True Tragedie’ were the outcome. Most of the new passages in the second recension seem assignable to Shakespeare alone, but a few suggest a partnership resembling that of the first revision. It is probable that Marlowe began the final revision, but his task was interrupted by his death, and the lion’s share of the work fell to his younger coadjutor.

Shakespeare’s assimilative power.

Shakespeare shared with other men of genius that receptivity of mind which impels them to assimilate much of the intellectual effort of their contemporaries and to transmute it in the process from unvalued ore into pure gold. Had Shakespeare not been professionally employed in recasting old plays by contemporaries, he would doubtless have shown in his writings traces of a study of their work. The verses of Thomas Watson, Samuel Daniel, Michael Drayton, Sir Philip Sidney, and Thomas Lodge were certainly among the rills which fed the mighty river of his poetic and lyric invention. Kyd and Greene, among rival writers of tragedy, left more or less definite impression on all Shakespeare’s early efforts in tragedy. It was, however, only to two of his fellow dramatists that his indebtedness as a writer of either comedy or tragedy was material or emphatically defined. Superior as Shakespeare’s powers were to those of Marlowe, his coadjutor in ‘Henry VI,’ his early tragedies often reveal him in the character of a faithful disciple of that vehement delineator of tragic passion. Shakespeare’s early comedies disclose a like relationship between him and Lyly.

Lyly’s influence in comedy.

Lyly is best known as the author of the affected romance of ‘Euphues,’ but between 1580 and 1592 he produced eight trivial and insubstantial comedies, of which six were written in prose, one was in blank verse, and one was in rhyme. Much of the dialogue in Shakespeare’s comedies, from ‘Love’s Labour’s Lost’ to ‘Much Ado about Nothing,’ consists in thrusting and parrying fantastic conceits, puns, or antitheses. This is the style of intercourse in which most of Lyly’s characters exclusively indulge. Three-fourths of Lyly’s comedies lightly revolve about topics of classical or fairy mythology—in the very manner which Shakespeare first brought to a triumphant issue in his ‘Midsummer Night’s Dream.’ Shakespeare’s treatment of eccentric character like Don Armado in ‘Love’s Labour’s Lost’ and his boy Moth reads like a reminiscence of Lyly’s portrayal of Sir Thopas, a fat vainglorious knight, and his boy Epiton in the comedy of ‘Endymion,’ while the watchmen in the same play clearly adumbrate Shakespeare’s Dogberry and Verges. The device of masculine disguise for love-sick maidens was characteristic of Lyly’s method before Shakespeare ventured on it for the first of many times in ‘Two Gentlemen of Verona,’ and the dispersal through Lyly’s comedies of songs possessing every lyrical charm is not the least interesting of the many striking features which Shakespeare’s achievements in comedy seem to borrow from Lyly’s comparatively insignificant experiments.

Marlowe’s influence in tragedy. ‘Richard III.’

Marlowe, who alone of Shakespeare’s contemporaries can be credited with exerting on his efforts in tragedy a really substantial influence, was in 1592 and 1593 at the zenith of his fame. Two of Shakespeare’s earliest historical tragedies, ‘Richard III’ and ‘Richard II,’ with the story of Shylock in his somewhat later comedy of the ‘Merchant of Venice,’ plainly disclose a conscious resolve to follow in Marlowe’s footsteps. In ‘Richard III’ Shakespeare, working single-handed, takes up the history of England near the point at which Marlowe and he, apparently working in partnership, left it in the third part of ‘Henry VI.’ The subject was already familiar to dramatists, but Shakespeare sought his materials in the ‘Chronicle’ of Holinshed. A Latin piece, by Dr. Thomas Legge, had been in favour with academic audiences since 1579, and in 1594 the ‘True Tragedie of Richard III’ from some other pen was published anonymously; but Shakespeare’s piece bears little resemblance to either. Throughout Shakespeare’s ‘Richard III’ the effort to emulate Marlowe is undeniable. The tragedy is, says Mr. Swinburne, ‘as fiery in passion, as single in purpose, as rhetorical often, though never so inflated in expression, as Marlowe’s “Tamburlaine” itself.’ The turbulent piece was naturally popular. Burbage’s impersonation of the hero was one of his most effective performances, and his vigorous enunciation of ‘A horse, a horse! my kingdom for a horse!’ gave the line proverbial currency.

‘Richard II.’

‘Richard II’ seems to have followed ‘Richard III’ without delay. Subsequently both were published anonymously in the same year (1597) as they had ‘been publikely acted by the right Honorable the Lorde Chamberlaine his servants;’ but the deposition scene in ‘Richard II,’ which dealt with a topic distasteful to the Queen, was omitted from the early impressions. Prose is avoided throughout the play, a certain sign of early work. The piece was probably composed very early in 1593. Marlowe’s tempestuous vein is less apparent in ‘Richard II’ than in ‘Richard III.’ But if ‘Richard II’ be in style and treatment less deeply indebted to Marlowe than its predecessor, it was clearly suggested by Marlowe’s ‘Edward II.’ Throughout its exposition of the leading theme—the development and collapse of the weak king’s character—Shakespeare’s historical tragedy closely imitates Marlowe’s. Shakespeare drew the facts from Holinshed, but his embellishments are numerous, and include the magnificently eloquent eulogy of England which is set in the mouth of John of Gaunt.

Acknowledgments to Marlowe.

In ‘As you like it’ (III. v. 80) Shakespeare parenthetically commemorated his acquaintance with, and his general indebtedness to, the elder dramatist by apostrophising him in the lines:

Dead Shepherd! now I find thy saw of might:
‘Who ever loved that loved not at first sight?’

The second line is a quotation from Marlowe’s poem ‘Hero and Leander’ (line 76). In the ‘Merry Wives of Windsor’ (III. i. 17-21) Shakespeare places in the mouth of Sir Hugh Evans snatches of verse from Marlowe’s charming lyric, ‘Come live with me and be my love.’

Between February 1593 and the end of the year the London theatres were closed, owing to the prevalence of the plague, and Shakespeare doubtless travelled with his company in the country. But his pen was busily employed, and before the close of 1594 he gave marvellous proofs of his rapid powers of production.

‘Titus Andronicus.’

‘Titus Andronicus’ was in his own lifetime claimed for Shakespeare, but Edward Ravenscroft, who prepared a new version in 1678, wrote of it: ‘I have been told by some anciently conversant with the stage that it was not originally his, but brought by a private author to be acted, and he only gave some master-touches to one or two of the principal parts or characters.’ Ravenscroft’s assertion deserves acceptance. The tragedy, a sanguinary picture of the decadence of Imperial Rome, contains powerful lines and situations, but is far too repulsive in plot and treatment, and too ostentatious in classical allusions, to take rank with Shakespeare’s acknowledged work. Ben Jonson credits ‘Titus Andronicus’ with a popularity equalling Kyd’s ‘Spanish Tragedy,’ and internal evidence shows that Kyd was capable of writing much of ‘Titus.’ It was suggested by a piece called ‘Titus and Vespasian,’ which Lord Strange’s men played on April 11, 1592; this is only extant in a German version acted by English players in Germany, and published in 620. ‘Titus Andronicus’ was obviously taken in hand soon after the production of ‘Titus and Vespasian’ in order to exploit popular interest in the topic. It was acted by the Earl of Sussex’s men on January 23, 1593-4, when it was described as a new piece; but that it was also acted subsequently by Shakespeare’s company is shown by the title-page of the first extant edition of 1600, which describes it as having been performed by the Earl of Derby’s and the Lord Chamberlain’s servants (successive titles of Shakespeare’s company), as well as by those of the Earls of Pembroke and Sussex. It was entered on the ‘Stationers’ Register’ to John Danter on February 6, 1594. Langbaine claims to have seen an edition of this date, but none earlier than that of 1600 is now known.

‘Merchant of Venice.’

For part of the plot of ‘The Merchant of Venice,’ in which two romantic love stories are skilfully blended with a theme of tragic import, Shakespeare had recourse to ‘Il Pecorone,’ a fourteenth-century collection of Italian novels by Ser Giovanni Fiorentino. There a Jewish creditor demands a pound of flesh of a defaulting Christian debtor, and the latter is rescued through the advocacy of ‘the lady of Belmont,’ who is wife of the debtor’s friend. The management of the plot in the Italian novel is closely followed by Shakespeare. A similar story is slenderly outlined in the popular medieval collection of anecdotes called ‘Gesta Romanorum,’ while the tale of the caskets, which Shakespeare combined with it in the ‘Merchant,’ is told independently in another portion of the same work. But Shakespeare’s ‘Merchant’ owes much to other sources, including more than one old play. Stephen Gosson describes in his ‘Schoole of Abuse’ (1579) a lost play called ‘the Jew . . . showne at the Bull [inn]. . . representing the greedinesse of worldly chusers and bloody mindes of usurers.’ This description suggests that the two stories of the pound of flesh and the caskets had been combined before for purposes of dramatic representation. The scenes in Shakespeare’s play in which Antonio negotiates with Shylock are roughly anticipated, too, by dialogues between a Jewish creditor Gerontus and a Christian debtor in the extant play of ‘The Three Ladies of London,’ by R[obert] W[ilson], 1584. There the Jew opens the attack on his Christian debtor with the lines:

Signor Mercatore, why do you not pay me? Think you I will be mocked in this sort?
This three times you have flouted me—it seems you make thereat a sport.
Truly pay me my money, and that even now presently,
Or by mighty Mahomet, I swear I will forthwith arrest thee.

Subsequently, when the judge is passing judgment in favour of the debtor, the Jew interrupts:

Stay, there, most puissant judge. Signor Mercatore consider what you do.
Pay me the principal, as for the interest I forgive it you.

Shylock and Roderigo Lopez.

Above all is it of interest to note that Shakespeare in ‘The Merchant of Venice’ betrays the last definable traces of his discipleship to Marlowe. Although the delicate comedy which lightens the serious interest of Shakespeare’s play sets it in a wholly different category from that of Marlowe’s ‘Jew of Malta’, the humanised portrait of the Jew Shylock embodies distinct reminiscences of Marlowe’s caricature of the Jew Barabbas. But Shakespeare soon outpaced his master, and the inspiration that he drew from Marlowe in the ‘Merchant’ touches only the general conception of the central figure. Doubtless the popular interest aroused by the trial in February 1594 and the execution in June of the Queen’s Jewish physician, Roderigo Lopez, incited Shakespeare to a new and subtler study of Jewish character. For Shylock (not the merchant Antonio) is the hero of the play, and the main interest culminates in the Jew’s trial and discomfiture. The bold transition from that solemn scene which trembles on the brink of tragedy to the gently poetic and humorous incidents of the concluding act attests a mastery of stagecraft; but the interest, although it is sustained to the end, is, after Shylock’s final exit, pitched in a lower key. The ‘Venesyon Comedy,’ which Henslowe, the manager, produced at the Rose on August 25, 1594, was probably the earliest version of ‘The Merchant of Venice,’ and it was revised later. It was not published till 1600, when two editions appeared, each printed from a different stage copy.

‘King John.’

To 1594 must also be assigned ‘King John,’ which, like the ‘Comedy of Errors’ and ‘Richard II,’ altogether eschews prose. The piece, which was not printed till 1623, was directly adapted from a worthless play called ‘The Troublesome Raigne of King John’ (1591), which was fraudulently reissued in 1611 as ‘written by W. Sh.,’ and in 1622 as by ‘W. Shakespeare.’ There is very small ground for associating Marlowe’s name with the old play. Into the adaptation Shakespeare flung all his energy, and the theme grew under his hand into genuine tragedy. The three chief characters—the mean and cruel king, the noblehearted and desperately wronged Constance, and the soldierly humourist, Faulconbridge—are in all essentials of his own invention, and are portrayed with the same sureness of touch that marked in Shylock his rapidly maturing strength. The scene, in which the gentle boy Arthur learns from Hubert that the king has ordered his eyes to be put out, is as affecting as any passage in tragic literature.

‘Comedy of Errors’ in Gray’s Inn Hall.

At the close of 1594 a performance of Shakespeare’s early farce, ‘The Comedy of Errors,' gave him a passing notoriety that he could well have spared. The piece was played on the evening of Innocents' Day (December 28), 1594, in the hall of Gray's Inn, before a crowded audience of benchers, students, and their friends. There was some disturbance during the evening on the part of guests from the Inner Temple, who, dissatisfied with the accommodation afforded them, retired in dudgeon. 'So that night,' the contemporary chronicler states, 'was begun and continued to the end in nothing but confusion and errors, whereupon it was ever afterwards called the "Night of Errors."' Shakespeare was acting on the same day before the Queen at Greenwich, and it is doubtful if he were present. On the morrow a commission of oyer and terminer inquired into the causes of the tumult, which was attributed to a sorcerer having 'foisted a company of base and common fellows to make up our disorders with a play of errors and confusions.'

Early plays doubtfully assigned to Shakespeare.

Two plays of uncertain authorship attracted public attention during the period under review (1591-4)—'Arden of Feversham' (licensed for publication April 3, 1592, and published in 1592) and 'Edward III' (licensed for publication December 1, 1595, and published in 1596). Shakespeare's hand has been traced in both, mainly on the ground that their dramatic energy is of a quality not to be discerned in the work of any contemporary whose writings are extant. There is no external evidence in favour of Shakespeare's authorship in either case. 'Arden of Feversham' dramatises with intensity and insight a sordid murder of a husband by a wife which took place at Faversham in 1551, and was fully reported by Holinshed. The subject is of a different type from any which Shakespeare is known to have treated, and although the play may be, as Mr. Swinburne insists, 'a young man's work,' it bears no relation either in topic or style to the work on which young Shakespeare was engaged at a period so early as 1591 or 1592. 'Edward III' is a play in Marlowe's vein, and has been assigned to Shakespeare on even more shadowy grounds. Capell reprinted it in his 'Prolusions' in 1760, and described it as 'thought to be writ by Shakespeare.' Many speeches scattered through the drama, and one whole scene—that in which the Countess of Salisbury repulses the advances of Edward III—show the hand of a master (act ii. sc. ii.) But there is even in the style of these contributions much to dissociate them from Shakespeare's acknowledged productions, and to justify their ascription to some less gifted disciple of Marlowe. A line in act ii. sc. i. ('Lilies that fester smell far worse than weeds') reappears in Shakespeare's Sonnets' (xciv. l. 14). It was contrary to his practice to literally plagiarise himself. The line in the play was doubtless borrowed from a manuscript copy of the 'Sonnets.'

'Mucedorus.'

Two other popular plays of the period, 'Mucedorus' and 'Faire Em,' have also been assigned to Shakespeare on slighter provocation. In Charles II.'s library they were bound together in a volume labelled 'Shakespeare, Vol. I.,' and bold speculators have occasionally sought to justify the misnomer.

'Mucedorus,' an elementary effort in romantic comedy, dates from the early years of Elizabeth's reign; it was first published, doubtless after undergoing revision, in 1595, and was reissued, 'amplified with new additions,' in 1610. Mr. Payne Collier, who included it in his privately printed edition of Shakespeare in 1878, was confident that a scene interpolated in the 1610 version (in which the King of Valentia laments the supposed loss of his son) displayed genius which Shakespeare alone could compass. However readily critics may admit the superiority in literary value of the interpolated scene to anything else in the piece, few will accept Mr. Collier's extravagant estimate. The scene was probably from the pen of an admiring but faltering imitator of Shakespeare.

'Faire Em.'

'Faire Em,' although not published till 1631, was acted by Shakespeare's company while Lord Strange was its patron, and some lines from it are quoted for purposes of ridicule by Robert Greene in his 'Farewell to Folly' in 1592. It is another rudimentary endeavour in romantic comedy, and has not even the pretension of 'Mucedorus' to one short scene of conspicuous literary merit.

<<span id="filepos0040886210"> a>VI—THE FIRST APPEAL TO THE READING PUBLIC

Publication of 'Venus and Adonis.'

During the busy years (1591-4) that witnessed his first pronounced successes as a dramatist, Shakespeare came before the public in yet another literary capacity. On April 18, 1593, Richard Field, the printer, who was his fellow-townsman, obtained a license for the publication of ‘Venus and Adonis,’ a metrical version of a classical tale of love. It was published a month or two later, without an author’s name on the title-page, but Shakespeare appended his full name to the dedication, which he addressed in conventional style to Henry Wriothesley, third earl of Southampton. The Earl, who was in his twentieth year, was reckoned the handsomest man at Court, with a pronounced disposition to gallantry. He had vast possessions, was well educated, loved literature, and through life extended to men of letters a generous patronage. ‘I know not how I shall offend,’ Shakespeare now wrote to him, ‘in dedicating my unpolished lines to your lordship, nor how the world will censure me for choosing so strong a prop to support so weak a burden. . . . But if the first heir of my invention prove deformed, I shall be sorry it had so noble a godfather.’ ‘The first heir of my invention’ implies that the poem was written, or at least designed, before Shakespeare’s dramatic work. It is affluent in beautiful imagery and metrical sweetness, but imbued with a tone of license which may be held either to justify the theory that it was a precocious product of the author’s youth, or to show that Shakespeare was not unready in mature years to write with a view to gratifying a patron’s somewhat lascivious tastes. The title-page bears a beautiful Latin motto from Ovid’s ‘Amores:’

Vilia miretur vulgus; mihi flavus Apollo
Pocula Castalia plena ministret aqua.

The influence of Ovid, who told the story in his ‘Metamorphoses,’ is apparent in many of the details. But the theme was doubtless first suggested to Shakespeare by a contemporary effort. Lodge’s ‘Scillaes Metamorphosis,’ which appeared in 1589, is not only written in the same metre (six-line stanzas rhyming *a b a b c c*), but narrates in the exordium the same incidents in the same spirit. There is little doubt that Shakespeare drew from Lodge some of his inspiration.

‘Lucrece.’

A year after the issue of ‘Venus and Adonis,’ in 1594, Shakespeare published another poem in like vein, but far more mature in temper and execution. The digression (ll. 939-59) on the destroying power of Time, especially, is in an exalted key of meditation which is not sounded in the earlier poem. The metre, too, is changed; seven-line stanzas (Chaucer’s rhyme royal, *a b a b b c c*) take the place of six-line stanzas. The second poem was entered in the ‘Stationers’ Registers’ on May 9, 1594, under the title of ‘A Booke intitled the Ravyshement of Lucrece,’ and was published in the same year under the title ‘Lucrece.’ Richard Field printed it, and John Harrison published and sold it at the sign of the White Greyhound in St. Paul’s Churchyard. The classical story of Lucretia’s ravishment and suicide is briefly recorded in Ovid’s ‘Fasti,’ but Chaucer had retold it in his ‘Legend of Good Women,’ and Shakespeare must have read it there. Again, in topic and metre, the poem reflected a contemporary poet’s work. Samuel Daniel’s ‘Complaint of Rosamond,’ with its seven-line stanza (1592), stood to ‘Lucrece’ in even closer relation than Lodge’s ‘Scilla,’ with its six-line stanza, to ‘Venus and Adonis.’ The pathetic accents of Shakespeare’s heroine are those of Daniel’s heroine purified and glorified. The passage on Time is elaborated from one in Watson’s ‘Passionate Centurie of Love’ (No. lxxvii.) Shakespeare dedicated his second volume of poetry to the Earl of Southampton, the patron of his first. He addressed him in terms of devoted friendship, which were not uncommon at the time in communications between patrons and poets, but suggest that Shakespeare’s relations with the brilliant young nobleman had grown closer since he dedicated ‘Venus and Adonis’ to him in colder language a year before. ‘The love I dedicate to your lordship,’ Shakespeare wrote in the opening pages of ‘Lucrece,’ ‘is without end, whereof this pamphlet without beginning is but a superfluous moiety. . . What I have done is yours; what I have to do is yours; being part in all I have, devoted yours.’

Enthusiastic reception of the poems.

In these poems Shakespeare made his earliest appeal to the world of readers, and the reading public welcomed his addresses with unqualified enthusiasm. The London playgoer already knew Shakespeare’s name as that of a promising actor and playwright, but his dramatic efforts had hitherto been consigned in manuscript, as soon as the theatrical representation ceased, to the coffers of their owner, the playhouse manager. His early plays brought him at the outset little reputation as a man of letters. It was not as the myriad-minded dramatist, but in the restricted role of adapter for English readers of familiar Ovidian fables, that he first impressed a wide circle of his contemporaries with the fact of his mighty genius. The perfect sweetness of the verse, and the poetical imagery in ‘Venus and Adonis’ and ‘Lucrece’ practically silenced censure of the licentious treatment of the themes on the part of the seriously minded. Critics vied with each other in the exuberance of the eulogies in which they proclaimed that the fortunate author had gained a place in permanence on the summit of Parnassus. ‘Lucrece,’ wrote Michael Drayton in his ‘Legend of Matilda’ (1594), was ‘revived to live another age.’ In 595 William Clerke in his ‘Polimanteia’ gave ‘all praise’ to ‘sweet Shakespeare’ for his ‘Lucrecia.’ John Weever, in a sonnet addressed to ‘honey-tongued Shakespeare’ in his ‘Epigramms’ (1595), eulogised the two poems as an unmatchable achievement, although he mentioned the plays ‘Romeo’ and ‘Richard’ and ‘more whose names I know not.’ Richard Carew at the same time classed him with Marlowe as deserving the praises of an English Catullus. Printers and publishers of the poems strained their resources to satisfy the demands of eager purchasers. No fewer than seven editions of ‘Venus’ appeared between 1594 and 1602; an eighth followed in 1617. ‘Lucrece’ achieved a fifth edition in the year of Shakespeare’s death.

Shakespeare and Spenser.

There is a likelihood, too, that Spenser, the greatest of Shakespeare’s poetic contemporaries, was first drawn by the poems into the ranks of Shakespeare’s admirers. It is hardly doubtful that Spenser described Shakespeare in ‘Colin Clouts come home againe’ (completed in 1594), under the name of ‘Aetion’—a familiar Greek proper name derived from ‘µÄ¿Â, an eagle:

And there, though last not least is Aetion;
  A gentler Shepheard may no where be found,
Whose muse, full of high thought’s invention,
  Doth, like himselfe, heroically sound.

The last line seems to allude to Shakespeare’s surname. We may assume that the admiration was mutual. At any rate Shakespeare acknowledged acquaintance with Spenser’s work in a plain reference to his ‘Teares of the Muses’ (1591) in ‘Midsummer Night’s Dream’ (v. i. 52-3).

The thrice three Muses, mourning for the death
Of learning, late deceased in beggary,

is stated to be the theme of one of the dramatic entertainments wherewith it is proposed to celebrate Theseus’s marriage. In Spenser’s ‘Teares of the Muses’ each of the Nine laments in turn her declining influence on the literary and dramatic effort of the age. Theseus dismisses the suggestion with the not inappropriate comment:

That is some satire keen and critical,
Not sorting with a nuptial ceremony.

But there is no ground for assuming that Spenser in the same poem referred figuratively to Shakespeare when he made Thalia deplore the recent death of ‘our pleasant Willy.’ The name Willy was frequently used in contemporary literature as a term of familiarity without relation to the baptismal name of the person referred to. Sir Philip Sidney was addressed as ‘Willy’ by some of his elegists. A comic actor, ‘dead of late’ in a literal sense, was clearly intended by Spenser, and there is no reason to dispute the view of an early seventeenth-century commentator that Spenser was paying a tribute to the loss English comedy had lately sustained by the death of the comedian, Richard Tarleton. Similarly the ‘gentle spirit’ who is described by Spenser in a later stanza as sitting ‘in idle cell’ rather than turn his pen to base uses cannot be reasonably identified with Shakespeare.

Patrons at court.

Meanwhile Shakespeare was gaining personal esteem outside the circles of actors and men of letters. His genius and ‘civil demeanour’ of which Chettle wrote arrested the notice not only of Southampton but of other noble patrons of literature and the drama. His summons to act at Court with the most famous actors of the day at the Christmas of 1594 was possibly due in part to personal interest in himself. Elizabeth quickly showed him special favour. Until the end of her reign his plays were repeatedly acted in her presence. The revised version of ‘Love’s Labour’s Lost’ was given at Whitehall at Christmas 1597, and tradition credits the Queen with unconcealed enthusiasm for Falstaff, who came into being a little later. Under Elizabeth’s successor he greatly strengthened his hold on royal favour, but Ben Jonson claimed that the Queen’s appreciation equalled that of James I. When Jonson wrote in his elegy on Shakespeare of

Those flights upon the banks of Thames
That so did take Eliza and our James,

he was mindful of many representations of Shakespeare’s plays by the poet and his fellow-actors at the palaces of Whitehall, Richmond, or Greenwich during the last decade of Elizabeth’s reign.

VII—THE SONNETS AND THEIR LITERARY HISTORY

The vogue of the Elizabethan sonnet.

It was doubtless to Shakespeare’s personal relations with men and women of the

Court that his sonnets owed their existence. In Italy and France, the practice of writing and circulating series of sonnets inscribed to great men and women flourished continuously throughout the sixteenth century. In England, until the last decade of that century, the vogue was intermittent. Wyatt and Surrey inaugurated sonnetteering in the English language under Henry VIII, and Thomas Watson devoted much energy to the pursuit when Shakespeare was a boy. But it was not until 1591, when Sir Philip Sidney's collection of sonnets entitled 'Astrophel and Stella' was first published, that the sonnet enjoyed in England any conspicuous or continuous favour. For the half-dozen years following the appearance of Sir Philip Sidney's volume the writing of sonnets, both singly and in connected sequences, engaged more literary activity in this country than it engaged at any period here or elsewhere. Men and women of the cultivated Elizabethan nobility encouraged poets to celebrate in single sonnets their virtues and graces, and under the same patronage there were produced multitudes of sonnet-sequences which more or less fancifully narrated, after the manner of Petrarch and his successors, the pleasures and pains of love. Between 1591 and 1597 no aspirant to poetic fame in the country failed to seek a patron's ears by a trial of skill on the popular poetic instrument, and Shakespeare, who habitually kept abreast of the currents of contemporary literary taste, applied himself to sonnetteering with all the force of his poetic genius when the fashion was at its height.

Shakespeare's first experiments.

Shakespeare had lightly experimented with the sonnet from the outset of his literary career. Three well-turned examples figure in 'Love's Labour's Lost,' probably his earliest play; two of the choruses in 'Romeo and Juliet' are couched in the sonnet form; and a letter of the heroine Helen, in 'All's Well that Ends Well,' which bears traces of very early composition, takes the same shape. It has, too, been argued ingeniously, if not convincingly, that he was author of the somewhat clumsy sonnet, 'Phaeton to his friend Florio,' which prefaced in 1591 Florio's 'Second Frutes,' a series of Italian-English dialogues for students.

Majority of Shakespeare's sonnets composed in 1594.

But these were sporadic efforts. It was not till the spring of 1593, after Shakespeare had secured a nobleman's patronage for his earliest publication, 'Venus and Adonis,' that he became a sonnetteer on an extended scale. Of the hundred and fifty-four sonnets that survive outside his plays, the greater number were in all likelihood composed between that date and the autumn of 1594, during his thirtieth and thirty-first years. His occasional reference in the sonnets to his growing age was a conventional device—traceable to Petrarch—of all sonnetteers of the day, and admits of no literal interpretation. In matter and in manner the bulk of the poems suggest that they came from the pen of a man not much more than thirty. Doubtless he renewed his sonnetteering efforts occasionally and at irregular intervals during the nine years which elapsed between 1594 and the accession of James I in 1603. But to very few of the extant examples can a date later than 1594 be allotted with confidence. Sonnet cvii., in which plain reference is made to Queen Elizabeth's death, may be fairly regarded as a belated and a final act of homage on Shakespeare's part to the importunate vogue of the Elizabethan sonnet. All the evidence, whether internal or external, points to the conclusion that the sonnet exhausted such fascination as it exerted on Shakespeare before his dramatic genius attained its full height.

Their literary value.

In literary value Shakespeare's sonnets are notably unequal. Many reach levels of lyric melody and meditative energy that are hardly to be matched elsewhere in poetry. The best examples are charged with the mellowed sweetness of rhythm and metre, the depth of thought and feeling, the vividness of imagery and the stimulating fervour of expression which are the finest fruits of poetic power. On the other hand, many sink almost into inanity beneath the burden of quibbles and conceits. In both their excellences and their defects Shakespeare's sonnets betray near kinship to his early dramatic work, in which passages of the highest poetic temper at times alternate with unimpressive displays of verbal jugglery. In phraseology the sonnets often closely resemble such early dramatic efforts as 'Love's Labour's Lost' and 'Romeo and Juliet.' There is far more concentration in the sonnets than in 'Venus and Adonis' or in 'Lucrece,' although occasional utterances of Shakespeare's Roman heroine show traces of the intensity that characterises the best of them. The superior and more evenly sustained energy of the sonnets is to be attributed, not to the accession of power that comes with increase of years, but to the innate principles of the poetic form, and to metrical exigencies, which impelled the sonnetteer to aim at a uniform condensation of thought and language.

Circulation in manuscript.

In accordance with a custom that was not uncommon, Shakespeare did not publish his sonnets; he circulated them in manuscript. But their reputation grew, and public interest was aroused in them in spite of his unreadiness to give them publicity. A line from one of them:

Lilies that fester smell far worse than weeds (xciv. 14),

was quoted in the play of ‘Edward III,’ which was probably written before 1595. Meres, writing in 1598, enthusiastically commends Shakespeare’s ‘sugred sonnets among his private friends,’ and mentions them in close conjunction with his two narrative poems. William Jaggard piratically inserted in 1599 two of the most mature of the series (Nos. cxxxviii. and cxliv.) in his ‘Passionate Pilgrim.’

Their piratical publication in 1609. ‘A Lover’s Complaint.’

At length, in 1609, the sonnets were surreptitiously sent to press. Thomas Thorpe, the moving spirit in the design of their publication, was a camp-follower of the regular publishing army. He was professionally engaged in procuring for publication literary works which had been widely disseminated in written copies, and had thus passed beyond their authors’ control; for the law then recognised no natural right in an author to the creations of his brain, and the full owner of a manuscript copy of any literary composition was entitled to reproduce it, or to treat it as he pleased, without reference to the author’s wishes. Thorpe’s career as a procurer of neglected ‘copy’ had begun well. He made, in 1600, his earliest hit by bringing to light Marlowe’s translation of the ‘First Book of Lucan.’ On May 20, 1609, he obtained a license for the publication of ‘Shakespeares Sonnets,’ and this tradesman-like form of title figured not only on the ‘Stationers’ Company’s Registers,’ but on the title-page. Thorpe employed George Eld to print the manuscript, and two booksellers, William Aspley and John Wright, to distribute it to the public. On half the edition Aspley’s name figured as that of the seller, and on the other half that of Wright. The book was issued in June, and the owner of the ‘copy’ left the public under no misapprehension as to his share in the production by printing above his initials a dedicatory preface from his own pen. The appearance in a book of a dedication from the publisher’s (instead of from the author’s) pen was, unless the substitution was specifically accounted for on other grounds, an accepted sign that the author had no hand in the publication. Except in the case of his two narrative poems, which were published in 1593 and 1594 respectively, Shakespeare made no effort to publish any of his works, and uncomplainingly submitted to the wholesale piracies of his plays and the ascription to him of books by other hands. Such practices were encouraged by his passive indifference and the contemporary condition of the law of copyright. He cannot be credited with any responsibility for the publication of Thorpe’s collection of his sonnets in 1609. With characteristic insolence Thorpe took the added liberty of appending a previously unprinted poem of forty-nine seven-line stanzas (the metre of ‘Lucrece’) entitled ‘A Lover’s Complaint,’ in which a girl laments her betrayal by a deceitful youth. The poem, in a gentle Spenserian vein, has no connection with the ‘Sonnets.’ If, as is possible, it be by Shakespeare, it must have been written in very early days.

Thomas Thorpe and ‘Mr. W. H.’

A misunderstanding respecting Thorpe’s preface and his part in the publication has led many critics into a serious misinterpretation of Shakespeare’s poems. Thorpe’s dedication was couched in the bombastic language which was habitual to him. He advertised Shakespeare as ‘our ever-living poet.’ As the chief promoter of the undertaking, he called himself ‘the well-wishing adventurer in setting forth,’ and in resonant phrase designated as the patron of the venture a partner in the speculation, ‘Mr. W. H.’ In the conventional dedicatory formula of the day he wished ‘Mr. W. H.’ ‘all happiness’ and ‘eternity,’ such eternity as Shakespeare in the text of the sonnets conventionally foretold for his own verse. When Thorpe was organising the issue of Marlowe’s ‘First Book of Lucan’ in 1600, he sought the patronage of Edward Blount, a friend in the trade. ‘W. H.’ was doubtless in a like position. He is best identified with a stationer’s assistant, William Hall, who was professionally engaged, like Thorpe, in procuring ‘copy.’ In 1606 ‘W. H.’ won a conspicuous success in that direction, and conducted his operations under cover of the familiar initials. In that year ‘W. H.’ announced that he had procured a neglected manuscript poem—‘A Foure-fould Meditation’—by the Jesuit Robert Southwell who had been executed in 1595, and he published it with a dedication (signed ‘W. H.’) vaunting his good fortune in meeting with such treasure-trove. When Thorpe dubbed ‘Mr. W. H.,’ with characteristic magniloquence, ‘the onlie begetter [*i.e.* obtainer or procurer] of these ensuing sonnets,’ he merely indicated that that personage was the first of the pirate-publisher fraternity to procure a manuscript of Shakespeare’s sonnets and recommend its surreptitious issue. In accordance with custom, Thorpe gave Hall’s initials only, because he was an intimate associate who was known by those initials to their common circle of friends. Hall was not a man of sufficiently wide public reputation to render it probable that the printing of his full name would excite additional interest in the book or attract buyers.

The common assumption that Thorpe in this boastful preface was covertly addressing, under the initials ‘Mr. W. H.,’ a young nobleman, to whom the sonnets were originally addressed by Shakespeare, ignores the elementary principles of publishing transactions of the day, and especially of those of the type to which Thorpe’s efforts were confined. There was nothing mysterious or fantastic, although from a modern point of view there was much that lacked principle, in Thorpe’s methods of business. His choice of patron for this, like all his volumes, was dictated solely by his mercantile interests. He was under no inducement and in no position to take into consideration the affairs of Shakespeare’s private life. Shakespeare, through all but the earliest stages of his career, belonged socially to a world that was cut off by impassable barriers from that in which Thorpe pursued his calling. It was wholly outside Thorpe’s aims in life to seek to mystify his customers by investing a dedication with any cryptic significance.

No peer of the day, moreover, bore a name which could be represented by the initials ‘Mr. W. H.’ Shakespeare was never on terms of intimacy (although the contrary has often been recklessly assumed) with William, third Earl of Pembroke, when a youth. But were complete proofs of the acquaintanceship forthcoming, they would throw no light on Thorpe’s ‘Mr. W. H.’ The Earl of Pembroke was, from his birth to the date of his succession to the earldom in 1601, known by the courtesy title of Lord Herbert and by no other name, and he could not have been designated at any period of his life by the symbols ‘Mr. W. H.’ In 1609 Pembroke was a high officer of state, and numerous books were dedicated to him in all the splendour of his many titles. Star-Chamber penalties would have been exacted of any publisher or author who denied him in print his titular distinctions. Thorpe had occasion to dedicate two books to the earl in later years, and he there showed not merely that he was fully acquainted with the compulsory etiquette, but that his sycophantic temperament rendered him only eager to improve on the conventional formulas of servility. Any further consideration of Thorpe’s address to ‘Mr. W. H.’ belongs to the biographies of Thorpe and his friend; it lies outside the scope of Shakespeare’s biography.

The form of Shakespeare’s Sonnets.

Shakespeare’s ‘Sonnets’ ignore the somewhat complex scheme of rhyme adopted by Petrarch, whom the Elizabethan sonnetteers, like the French sonnetteers of the sixteenth century, recognised to be in most respects their master. Following the example originally set by Surrey and Wyatt, and generally pursued by Shakespeare's contemporaries, his sonnets aim at far greater metrical simplicity than the Italian or the French. They consist of three decasyllabic quatrains with a concluding couplet, and the quatrains rhyme alternately. A single sonnet does not always form an independent poem. As in the French and Italian sonnets of the period, and in those of Spenser, Sidney, Daniel, and Drayton, the same train of thought is at times pursued continuously through two or more. The collection of Shakespeare's 154 sonnets thus presents the appearance of an extended series of independent poems, many in a varying number of fourteen-line stanzas. The longest sequence (i.-xvii.) numbers seventeen sonnets, and in Thorpe's edition opens the volume.

Want of continuity. The two 'groups.'

It is unlikely that the order in which the poems were printed follows the order in which they were written. Fantastic endeavours have been made to detect in the original arrangement of the poems a closely connected narrative, but the thread is on any showing constantly interrupted. It is usual to divide the sonnets into two groups, and to represent that all those numbered i.-cxxvi. by Thorpe were addressed to a young man, and all those numbered cxxvii.-cliv. were addressed to a woman. This division cannot be literally justified. In the first group some eighty of the sonnets can be proved to be addressed to a man by the use of the masculine pronoun or some other unequivocal sign; but among the remaining forty there is no clear indication of the kind. Many of these forty are meditative soliloquies which address no person at all (cf. cv. cxvi. cxix. cxxi.) A few invoke abstractions like Death (lxvi.) or Time (cxxiii.), or 'benefit of ill' (cxix.) The twelve-lined poem (cxxvi.), the last of the first 'group,' does little more than sound a variation on the conventional poetic invocations of Cupid or Love personified as a boy. And there is no valid objection to the assumption that the poet inscribed the rest of these forty sonnets to a woman (cf. xxi. xlvi. xlvii.) Similarly, the sonnets in the second 'group' (cxxvii.-cliv.) have no uniform superscription. Six invoke no person at all. No. cxxviii. is an overstrained compliment on a lady playing on the virginals. No. cxxix. is a metaphysical disquisition on lust. No. cxlv. is a playful lyric in octosyllabics, like Lyly's song of 'Cupid and Campaspe,' and its tone has close affinity to that and other of Lyly's songs. No. cxlvi. invokes the soul of man. Nos. cliii. and cliv. soliloquise on an ancient Greek apologue on the force of Cupid's fire.

Main topics of the first ‘group.’

The choice and succession of topics in each ‘group’ give to neither genuine cohesion. In the first ‘group’ the long opening sequence (i.-xvii.) forms the poet’s appeal to a young man to marry so that his youth and beauty may survive in children. There is almost a contradiction in terms between the poet’s handling of that topic and his emphatic boast in the two following sonnets (xviii.-xix.) that his verse alone is fully equal to the task of immortalising his friend’s youth and accomplishments. The same asseveration is repeated in many later sonnets (cf. lv. lx. lxiii. lxxiv. lxxxi. ci. cvii.) These alternate with conventional adulation of the beauty of the object of the poet’s affections (cf. xxi. liii. lxviii.) and descriptions of the effects of absence in intensifying devotion (cf. xlviii. l. cxiii.) There are many reflections on the nocturnal torments of a lover (cf. xxvii. xxviii. xliii. lxi.) and on his blindness to the beauty of spring or summer when he is separated from his love (cf. xcvii. xcviii.) At times a youth is rebuked for sensual indulgences; he has sought and won the favour of the poet’s mistress in the poet’s absence, but the poet is forgiving (xxxii.-xxxv. xl.-xlii. lxix. xcv.-xcvi.) In Sonnet lxx. the young man whom the poet addresses is credited with a different disposition and experience:

And thou present’st a pure unstained prime.
Thou hast pass’d by the ambush of young days,
Either not assail’d, or victor being charg’d!

At times melancholy overwhelms the writer: he despairs of the corruptions of the age (lxvi.), reproaches himself with carnal sin (cxix.), declares himself weary of his profession of acting (cxi. cxii.), and foretells his approaching death (lxxi.-lxxiv.) Throughout are dispersed obsequious addresses to the youth in his capacity of sole patron of the poet’s verse (cf. xxiii. xxxvii. c. ci. ciii. civ.) But in one sequence the friend is sorrowfully reproved for bestowing his patronage on rival poets (lxxviii.-lxxxvi.) In three sonnets near the close of the first group in the original edition, the writer gives varied assurances of his constancy in love or friendship which apply indifferently to man or woman (cf. cxxii. cxxiv. cxxv.)

Main topics of the second ‘group.’

In two sonnets of the second ‘group’ (cxxvi.-clii.) the poet compliments his mistress on her black complexion and raven-black hair and eyes. In twelve sonnets he hotly denounces his ‘dark’ mistress for her proud disdain of his affection, and for her manifold infidelities with other men. Apparently continuing a theme of the first 'group,' the poet rebukes the woman, whom he addresses, for having beguiled his friend to yield himself to her seductions (cxxxiii.-cxxxvi.) Elsewhere he makes satiric reflections on the extravagant compliments paid to the fair sex by other sonnetteers (No. cxxx.) or lightly quibbles on his name of 'Will' (cxxx.-vi.) In tone and subject-matter numerous sonnets in the second as in the first 'group' lack visible sign of coherence with those they immediately precede or follow.

It is not merely a close study of the text that confutes the theory, for which recent writers have fought hard, of a logical continuity in Thorpe's arrangement of the poems in 1609. There remains the historic fact that readers and publishers of the seventeenth century acknowledged no sort of significance in the order in which the poems first saw the light. When the sonnets were printed for a second time in 1640—thirty-one years after their first appearance—they were presented in a completely different order. The short descriptive titles which were then supplied to single sonnets or to short sequences proved that the collection was regarded as a disconnected series of occasional poems in more or less amorous vein.

Lack of genuine sentiment in Elizabethan sonnets. Their dependence on French and Italian models.

In whatever order Shakespeare's sonnets be studied, the claim that has been advanced in their behalf to rank as autobiographical documents can only be accepted with many qualifications. Elizabethan sonnets were commonly the artificial products of the poet's fancy. A strain of personal emotion is occasionally discernible in a detached effort, and is vaguely traceable in a few sequences; but autobiographical confessions were very rarely the stuff of which the Elizabethan sonnet was made. The typical collection of Elizabethan sonnets was a mosaic of plagiarisms, a medley of imitative studies. Echoes of the French or of the Italian sonnetteers, with their Platonic idealism, are usually the dominant notes. The echoes often have a musical quality peculiar to themselves. Daniel's fine sonnet (xlix.) on 'Care-charmer, sleep,' although directly inspired by the French, breathes a finer melody than the sonnet of Pierre de Brach apostrophising 'le sommeil chasse-soin' (in the collection entitled 'Les Amours d'Aymée'), or the sonnet of Philippe Desportes invoking

‘Sommeil, paisible fils de la nuit solitaire’ (in the collection entitled ‘Amours d’Hippolyte’). But, throughout Elizabethan sonnet literature, the heavy debt to Italian and French effort is unmistakable. Spenser, in 1569, at the outset of his literary career, avowedly translated numerous sonnets from Du Bellay and from Petrarch, and his friend Gabriel Harvey bestowed on him the title of ‘an English Petrarch’—the highest praise that the critic conceived it possible to bestow on an English sonnetteer. Thomas Watson in 1582, in his collection of metrically irregular sonnets which he entitled ‘ˆš‘¤Ÿœ ‘˜™‘, or A Passionate Century of Love,’ prefaced each poem, which he termed a ‘passion,’ with a prose note of its origin and intention. Watson frankly informed his readers that one ‘passion’ was ‘wholly translated out of Petrarch;’ that in another passion ‘he did very busily imitate and augment a certain ode of Ronsard;’ while ‘the sense or matter of “a third” was taken out of Serafino in his “Strambotti.”’ In every case Watson gave the exact reference to his foreign original, and frequently appended a quotation. Drayton in 1594, in the dedicatory sonnet of his collection of sonnets entitled ‘Idea,’ declared that it was ‘a fault too common in this latter time’ ‘to filch from Desportes or from Petrarch’s pen.’ Lodge did not acknowledge his borrowings more specifically than his colleagues, but he made a plain profession of indebtedness to Desportes when he wrote: ‘Few men are able to second the sweet conceits of Philippe Desportes, whose poetical writings are ordinarily in everybody’s hand.’ Giles Fletcher, who in his collection of sonnets called ‘Licia’ (1593) simulated the varying moods of a lover under the sway of a great passion as successfully as most of his rivals, stated on his title-page that his poems were all written in ‘imitation of the best Latin poets and others.’ Very many of the love-sonnets in the series of sixty-eight penned ten years later by William Drummond of Hawthornden have been traced to their sources in the Italian sonnets not merely of Petrarch, but of the sixteenth-century poets Guarini, Bembo, Giovanni Battista Marino, Tasso, and Sannazzaro. The Elizabethans usually gave the fictitious mistresses after whom their volumes of sonnets were called the names that had recently served the like purpose in France. Daniel followed Maurice Sève in christening his collection ‘Delia;’ Constable followed Desportes in christening his collection ‘Diana;’ while Drayton not only applied to his sonnets on his title-page in 1594 the French term ‘amours,’ but bestowed on his imaginary heroine the title of Idea, which seems to have been the invention of Claude de Pontoux, although it was employed by other French contemporaries.

Sonnetteers’ admission of insincerity.

With good reason Sir Philip Sidney warned the public that ‘no inward touch’ was to be expected from sonnetteers of his day, whom he describes as

‘[Men] that do dictionary’s method bring
Into their rhymes running in rattling rows;
[Men] that poor Petrarch’s long deceasèd woes
With newborn sighs and denizened wit do sing.’

Sidney unconvincingly claimed greater sincerity for his own experiments. But ‘even amorous sonnets in the gallantest and sweetest civil vein,’ wrote Gabriel Harvey in ‘Pierces Supererogation’ in 1593, ‘are but dainties of a pleasurable wit.’ Drayton’s sonnets more nearly approached Shakespeare’s in quality than those of any contemporary. Yet Drayton told the readers of his collection entitled ‘Idea’ (after the French) that if any sought genuine passion in them, they had better go elsewhere. ‘In all humours *sportively* he ranged,’ he declared. Giles Fletcher, in 1593, introduced his collection of imitative sonnets entitled ‘Licia, or Poems of Love,’ with the warning, ‘Now in that I have written love sonnets, if any man measure my affection by my style, let him say I am in love. . . . Here, take this by the way . . . a man may write of love and not be in love, as well as of husbandry and not go to the plough, or of witches and be none, or of holiness and be profane.’

Contemporary censure of sonnetteers’ false sentiment. ‘Gulling Sonnets.’

The dissemination of false sentiment by the sonnetteers, and their monotonous and mechanical treatment of ‘the pangs of despised love’ or the joys of requited affection, did not escape the censure of contemporary criticism. The air soon rang with sarcastic protests from the most respected writers of the day. In early life Gabriel Harvey wittily parodied the mingling of adulation and vituperation in the conventional sonnet-sequence in his ‘Amorous Odious Sonnet intituled The Student’s Loove or Hatrid.’ Chapman in 1595, in a series of sonnets entitled ‘A Coronet for his mistress Philosophy,’ appealed to his literary comrades to abandon ‘the painted cabinet’ of the love-sonnet for a coffer of genuine worth. But the most resolute of the censors of the sonnetteering vogue was the poet and lawyer, Sir John Davies. In a sonnet addressed about 1596 to his friend, Sir Anthony Cooke (the patron of Drayton’s ‘Idea’), he inveighed against the ‘bastard sonnets’ which ‘base rhymers’ ‘daily’ begot ‘to their own shames and poetry’s disgrace.’ In his anxiety to stamp out the folly he wrote and circulated in manuscript a specimen series of nine ‘gulling sonnets’ or parodies of the conventional efforts. Even Shakespeare does not seem to have escaped Davies's condemnation. Sir John is especially severe on the sonnetteers who handled conceits based on legal technicalities, and his eighth 'gulling sonnet,' in which he ridicules the application of law terms to affairs of the heart, may well have been suggested by Shakespeare's legal phraseology in his Sonnets lxxxvii. and cxxiv.; while Davies's Sonnet ix., beginning:

'To love, my lord, I do knight's service owe'

must have parodied Shakespeare's Sonnet xxvi., beginning:

'Lord of my love, to whom in vassalage,' *etc.*

Shakespeare's scornful allusion to sonnets in his plays.

Echoes of the critical hostility are heard, it is curious to note, in nearly all the references that Shakespeare himself makes to sonnetteering in his plays. 'Tush, none but minstrels like of sonnetting,' exclaims Biron in 'Love's Labour's Lost' (IV. iii. 158). In the 'Two Gentlemen of Verona' (III. ii. 68 seq.) there is a satiric touch in the recipe for the conventional love-sonnet which Proteus offers the amorous Duke:

You must lay lime to tangle her desires
By wailful sonnets whose composèd rime
Should be full fraught with serviceable vows . . .
Say that upon the altar of her beauty
You sacrifice your sighs, your tears, your heart.

Mercutio treats Elizabethan sonnetteers even less respectfully when alluding to them in his flouts at Romeo: 'Now is he for the numbers that Petrarch flowed in: Laura, to his lady, was but a kitchen-wench. Marry, she had a better love to be-rhyme her.' In later plays Shakespeare's disdain of the sonnet is still more pronounced. In 'Henry V' (III. vii. 33 et seq.) the Dauphin, after bestowing ridiculously magniloquent commendation on his charger, remarks, 'I once writ a sonnet in his praise, and begun thus: "Wonder of nature!"' The Duke of Orleans retorts: 'I have heard a sonnet begin so to one's mistress.' The Dauphin replies: 'Then did they imitate that which I composed to my courser; for my horse is my mistress.' In 'Much Ado about Nothing' (V. ii. 4-7) Margaret, Hero's waiting-woman, mockingly asks Benedick to 'write her a sonnet in praise of her beauty.' Benedick jestingly promises one so 'in high a style that no man living shall come over it.’ Subsequently (V. iv. 87) Benedick is convicted, to the amusement of his friends, of penning ‘a halting sonnet of his own pure brain’ in praise of Beatrice.

<<span id="filepos0040943872"> a>VIII—THE BORROWED CONCEITS OF THE SONNETS

Slender autobiographical element in Shakespeare’s sonnets. The imitative element.

At a first glance a far larger proportion of Shakespeare’s sonnets give the reader the illusion of personal confessions than those of any contemporary, but when allowance has been made for the current conventions of Elizabethan sonnetteering, as well as for Shakespeare’s unapproached affluence in dramatic instinct and invention—an affluence which enabled him to identify himself with every phase of emotion—the autobiographic element in his sonnets, although it may not be dismissed altogether, is seen to shrink to slender proportions. As soon as the collection is studied comparatively with the many thousand sonnets that the printing presses of England, France, and Italy poured forth during the last years of the sixteenth century, a vast number of Shakespeare’s performances prove to be little more than professional trials of skill, often of superlative merit, to which he deemed himself challenged by the efforts of contemporary practitioners. The thoughts and words of the sonnets of Daniel, Drayton, Watson, Barnabe Barnes, Constable, and Sidney were assimilated by Shakespeare in his poems as consciously and with as little compunction as the plays and novels of contemporaries in his dramatic work. To Drayton he was especially indebted.   Such resemblances as are visible between Shakespeare’s sonnets and those of Petrarch or Desportes seem due to his study of the English imitators of those sonnetteers. Most of Ronsard’s nine hundred sonnets and many of his numerous odes were accessible to Shakespeare in English adaptations, but there are a few signs that Shakespeare had recourse to Ronsard direct.

Adapted or imitated conceits are scattered over the whole of Shakespeare’s collection. They are usually manipulated with consummate skill, but

Shakespeare’s indebtedness is not thereby obscured. Shakespeare in many beautiful sonnets describes spring and summer, night and sleep and their influence on amorous emotion. Such topics are common themes of the poetry of the Renaissance, and they figure in Shakespeare’s pages clad in the identical livery that clothed them in the sonnets of Petrarch, Ronsard, De Baïf, and Desportes, or of English disciples of the Italian and French masters.   In Sonnet xxiv. Shakespeare develops Ronsard’s conceit that his love’s portrait is painted on his heart; and in Sonnet cxxii. he repeats something of Ronsard’s phraseology in describing how his friend, who has just made him a gift of ‘tables,’ is ‘character’d’ in his brain.   Sonnet xcix., which reproaches the flowers with stealing their charms from the features of his love, is adapted from Constable’s sonnet to Diana (No. ix.), and may be matched in other collections. Elsewhere Shakespeare meditates on the theory that man is an amalgam of the four elements, earth, water, air, and fire (xl.-xlv.)   In all these he reproduces, with such embellishments as his genius dictated, phrases and sentiments of Daniel, Drayton, Barnes, and Watson, who imported them direct from France and Italy. In two or three instances Shakespeare showed his reader that he was engaged in a mere literary exercise by offering him alternative renderings of the same conventional conceit. In Sonnets xlvi. and xlvii. he paraphrases twice over—appropriating many of Watson’s words—the unexhilarating notion that the eye and heart are in perpetual dispute as to which has the greater influence on lovers.   In the concluding sonnets, cliii. and cliv., he gives alternative versions of an apologue illustrating the potency of love which first figured in the Greek anthology, had been translated into Latin, and subsequently won the notice of English, French, and Italian sonnetteers.

Shakespeare’s claims of immortality for his sonnets a borrowed conceit.

In the numerous sonnets in which Shakespeare boasted that his verse was so certain of immortality that it was capable of immortalising the person to whom it was addressed, he gave voice to no conviction that was peculiar to his mental constitution, to no involuntary exaltation of spirit, or spontaneous ebullition of feeling. He was merely proving that he could at will, and with superior effect, handle a theme that Ronsard and Desportes, emulating Pindar, Horace, Ovid, and other classical poets, had lately made a commonplace of the poetry of Europe.   Sir Philip Sidney, in his ‘Apologie for Poetrie’ (1595) wrote that it was the common habit of poets to tell you that they will make you immortal by their verses.   ‘Men of great calling,’ Nash wrote in his ‘Pierce Pennilesse,’ 1593, ‘take it of merit to have their names eternised by poets.’   In the hands of

Elizabethan sonnetteers the ‘eternising’ faculty of their verse became a staple and indeed an inevitable topic. Spenser wrote in his ‘Amoretti’ (1595, Sonnet lxxv.)

My verse your virtues rare shall eternize,
And in the heavens write your glorious name.

Drayton and Daniel developed the conceit with unblushing iteration. Drayton, who spoke of his efforts as ‘my immortal song’ (*Idea* , vi. 14) and ‘my world-out-wearing rhymes’ (xliv. 7), embodied the vaunt in such lines as:

While thus my pen strives to eternize thee (*Idea* xliv. 1).
Ensuing ages yet my rhymes shall cherish (*ib.* xliv. 11).
My name shall mount unto eternity (*ib.* xliv. 14).
All that I seek is to eternize thee (*ib.* xlvii. 54).

Daniel was no less explicit

This [*sc.* verse] may remain thy lasting monument (*Delia* , xxxvii. 9).
Thou mayst in after ages live esteemed,
Unburied in these lines (*ib.* xxxix. 9-10).
These [*sc.* my verses] are the arks, the trophies I erect
That fortify thy name against old age;
And these [*sc.* verses] thy sacred virtues must protect
Against the dark and time’s consuming rage (*ib.* l. 9-12).

Conceits in sonnets addressed to a woman.

Shakespeare, in his references to his ‘eternal lines’ (xviii. 12) and in the assurances that he gives the subject of his addresses that the sonnets are, in Daniel’s exact phrase, his ‘monument’ (lxxxi. 9, cvii. 13), was merely accommodating himself to the prevailing taste. Characteristically in Sonnet lv. he invested the topic with a splendour that was not approached by any other poet:

Not marble, nor the gilded monuments
Of princes, shall outlive this powerful rhyme;
But you shall shine more bright in these contents
Than unswept stone besmear’d with sluttish time.
When wasteful war shall statues overturn,

And broils root out the work of masonry,
Nor Mars his sword nor war's quick fire shall burn
The living record of your memory.
'Gainst death and all-oblivious enmity
Shall you pace forth; your praise shall still find room
Even in the eyes of all posterity
That wear this world out to the ending doom.
  So, till the judgement that yourself arise,
  You live in this, and dwell in lovers' eyes.

The imitative element is no less conspicuous in the sonnets that Shakespeare distinctively addresses to a woman. In two of the latter (cxxxv.-vi.), where he quibbles over the fact of the identity of his own name of Will with a lady's 'will' (the synonym in Elizabethan English of both 'lust' and 'obstinacy'), he derisively challenges comparison with wire-drawn conceits of rival sonnetteers, especially of Barnabe Barnes, who had enlarged on his disdainful mistress's 'wills,' and had turned the word 'grace' to the same punning account as Shakespeare turned the word 'will.'   Similarly in Sonnet cxxx. beginning

My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun;
Coral is far more red than her lips' red . . .
If hairs be wires, black wires grow on her head,

he satirises the conventional lists of precious stones, metals, and flowers, to which the sonnetteers likened their mistresses' features.

The praise of 'blackness.'

In two sonnets (cxxvii. and cxxxii.) Shakespeare amiably notices the black complexion, hair, and eyes of his mistress, and expresses a preference for features of that hue over those of the fair hue which was, he tells us, more often associated in poetry with beauty. He commends the 'dark lady' for refusing to practise those arts by which other women of the day gave their hair and faces colours denied them by Nature. Here Shakespeare repeats almost verbatim his own lines in 'Love's Labour's Lost'(IV. iii. 241-7), where the heroine Rosaline is described as 'black as ebony,' with 'brows decked in black,' and in 'mourning' for her fashionable sisters' indulgence in the disguising arts of the toilet. 'No face is fair that is not full so black,' exclaims Rosaline's lover. But neither in the sonnets nor in the play can Shakespeare's praise of 'blackness' claim the merit of being his own invention. Sir Philip Sidney, in sonnet vii. of his ‘Astrophel and Stella,’ had anticipated it. The ‘beams’ of the eyes of Sidney’s mistress were ‘wrapt in colour black’ and wore ‘this mourning weed,’ so

That whereas black seems beauty’s contrary,
She even in black doth make all beauties flow.

To his praise of ‘blackness’ in ‘Love’s Labour’s Lost’ Shakespeare appends a playful but caustic comment on the paradox that he detects in the conceit. Similarly, the sonnets, in which a dark complexion is pronounced to be a mark of beauty, are followed by others in which the poet argues in self-confutation that blackness of feature is hideous in a woman, and invariably indicates moral turpitude or blackness of heart. Twice, in much the same language as had already served a like purpose in the play, does he mock his ‘dark lady’ with this uncomplimentary interpretation of dark-coloured hair and eyes.

The sonnets of vituperation.

The two sonnets, in which this view of ‘blackness’ is developed, form part of a series of twelve, which belongs to a special category of sonnetteering effort. In them Shakespeare abandons the sugared sentiment which characterises most of his hundred and forty-two remaining sonnets. He grows vituperative and pours a volley of passionate abuse upon a woman whom he represents as disdaining his advances. The genuine anguish of a rejected lover often expresses itself in curses both loud and deep, but the mood of blinding wrath which the rejection of a lovesuit may rouse in a passionate nature does not seem from the internal evidence to be reflected genuinely in Shakespeare’s sonnets of vituperation. It was inherent in Shakespeare’s genius that he should import more dramatic intensity than any other poet into sonnets of a vituperative type; but there is also in his vituperative sonnets a declamatory parade of figurative extravagance which suggests that the emotion is feigned and that the poet is striking an attitude. He cannot have been in earnest in seeking to conciliate his disdainful mistress—a result at which the vituperative sonnets purport to aim—when he tells her that she is ‘black as hell, as dark as night,’ and with ‘so foul a face’ is ‘the bay where all men ride.’

Gabriel Harvey’s ‘Amorous Odious Sonnet.’

But external evidence is more conclusive as to the artificial construction of the vituperative sonnets. Again a comparison of this series with the efforts of the modish sonnetteers assigns to it its true character. Every sonnetteer of the sixteenth century, at some point in his career, devoted his energies to vituperation of a cruel siren. Ronsard in his sonnets celebrated in language quite as furious as Shakespeare's a 'fierce tigress,' a 'murderess,' a 'Medusa.' Barnabe Barnes affected to contend in his sonnets with a female 'tyrant,' a 'Medusa,' a 'rock.' 'Women' (Barnes laments) 'are by nature proud as devils.' The monotonous and artificial regularity with which the sonnetteers sounded the vituperative stop, whenever they had exhausted their notes of adulation, excited ridicule in both England and France. In Shakespeare's early life the convention was wittily parodied by Gabriel Harvey in 'An Amorous Odious sonnet intituled The Student's Loove or Hatrid, or both or neither, or what shall please the looving or hating reader, either in sport or earnest, to make of such contrary passions as are here discoursed.' After extolling the beauty and virtue of his mistress above that of Aretino's Angelica, Petrarch's Laura, Catullus's Lesbia, and eight other far-famed objects of poetic adoration, Harvey suddenly denounces her in burlesque rhyme as 'a serpent in brood,' 'a poisonous toad,' 'a heart of marble,' and 'a stony mind as passionless as a block.' Finally he tells her,

If ever there were she-devils incarnate,
They are altogether in thee incorporate.

Jodelle's 'Contr' Amours.'

In France Etienne Jodelle, a professional sonnetteer although he is best known as a dramatist, made late in the second half of the sixteenth century an independent endeavour of like kind to stifle by means of parody the vogue of the vituperative sonnet. Jodelle designed a collection of three hundred sonnets which he inscribed to 'hate of a woman,' and he appropriately entitled them 'Contr' Amours' in distinction from 'Amours,' the term applied to sonnets in the honeyed vein. Only seven of Jodelle's 'Contr' Amours' are extant, but there is sufficient identity of tone between them and Shakespeare's vituperative efforts almost to discover in Shakespeare's invectives a spark of Jodelle's satiric fire. The dark lady of Shakespeare's 'sonnets' may therefore be relegated to the ranks of the creatures of his fancy. It is quite possible that he may have met in real life a dark-complexioned siren, and it is possible that he may have fared ill at her disdainful hands. But no such incident is needed to account for the presence of ‘the dark lady’ in the sonnets. It was the exacting conventions of the sonnetteering contagion, and not his personal experiences or emotions, that impelled Shakespeare to give ‘the dark lady’ of his sonnets a poetic being. She has been compared, not very justly, with Shakespeare’s splendid creation of Cleopatra in his play of ‘Antony and Cleopatra.’ From one point of view the same criticism may be passed on both. There is no greater and no less ground for seeking in Shakespeare’s personal environment the original of ‘the dark lady’ of his sonnets than for seeking there the original of his Queen of Egypt.

<<span id="filepos0040965946"> a>IX—THE PATRONAGE OF THE EARL OF SOUTHAMPTON

Biographic fact in the ‘dedicatory’ sonnets.

Amid the borrowed conceits and poetic figures of Shakespeare’s sonnets there lurk suggestive references to the circumstances in his external life that attended their composition. If few can be safely regarded as autobiographic revelations of sentiment, many of them offer evidence of the relations in which he stood to a patron, and to the position that he sought to fill in the circle of that patron’s literary retainers. Twenty sonnets, which may for purposes of exposition be entitled ‘dedicatory’ sonnets, are addressed to one who is declared without periphrasis and without disguise to be a patron of the poet’s verse (Nos. xxiii., xxvi., xxxii., xxxvii., xxxviii., lxix., lxxvii.-lxxxvi., c., ci., cvi.) In one of these —Sonnet lxxviii.—Shakespeare asserted:

So oft have I invoked thee for my Muse
And found such fair assistance in my verse
As every alien pen hath got my use
And under thee their poesy disperse.

Subsequently he regretfully pointed out how his patron’s readiness to accept the homage of other poets seemed to be thrusting him from the enviable place of pre-eminence in his patron’s esteem.

The Earl of Southampton the poet’s sole patron.

Shakespeare’s biographer is under an obligation to attempt an identification of the persons whose relations with the poet are defined so explicitly. The problem presented by the patron is simple. Shakespeare states unequivocally that he has no patron but one.

Sing [*sc.* O Muse!] to the ear that doth thy lays esteem,
And gives thy pen both skill and argument (c. 7-8).
For to no other pass my verses tend
Than of your graces and your gifts to tell (ciii. 11-12).

The Earl of Southampton, the patron of his narrative poems, is the only patron of Shakespeare that is known to biographical research. No contemporary document or tradition gives the faintest suggestion that Shakespeare was the friend or dependent of any other man of rank. A trustworthy tradition corroborates the testimony respecting Shakespeare's close intimacy with the Earl that is given in the dedicatory epistles of his 'Venus and Adonis' and 'Lucrece', penned respectively in 1593 and 1594. According to Nicholas Rowe, Shakespeare's first adequate biographer, 'there is one instance so singular in its magnificence of this patron of Shakespeare's that if I had not been assured that the story was handed down by Sir William D'Avenant, who was probably very well acquainted with his affairs, I should not venture to have inserted; that my Lord Southampton at one time gave him a thousand pounds to enable him to go through with a purchase which he heard he had a mind to. A bounty very great and very rare at any time.'

There is no difficulty in detecting the lineaments of the Earl of Southampton in those of the man who is distinctively greeted in the sonnets as the poet's patron. Three of the twenty 'dedicatory' sonnets merely translate into the language of poetry the expressions of devotion which had already done duty in the dedicatory epistle in prose that prefaces 'Lucrece.' That epistle to Southampton runs:

The love I dedicate to your lordship is without end; whereof this pamphlet, without beginning, is but a superfluous moiety. The warrant I have of your honourable disposition, not the worth of my untutored lines, makes it assured of acceptance. What I have done is yours; what I have to do is yours; being part in all I have, devoted yours. Were my worth greater, my duty would show greater; meantime, as it is, it is bound to your lordship, to whom I wish long life, still lengthened with all happiness.

Your lordship's in all duty,
William Shakespeare.

Sonnet xxvi. is a gorgeous rendering of these sentences:—

Lord of my love, to whom in vassalage
Thy merit hath my duty strongly knit,
To thee I send this written ambassage,
To witness duty, not to show my wit:

Duty so great, which wit so poor as mine
May make seem bare, in wanting words to show it,
But that I hope some good conceit of thine
In thy soul's thought, all naked, will bestow it;
Till whatsoever star that guides my moving,
Points on me graciously with fair aspect,
And puts apparel on my tatter'd loving
To show me worthy of thy sweet respect
  Then may I dare to boast how I do love thee;
  Till then not show my head where thou may'st prove me.

The 'Lucrece' epistle's intimation that the patron's love alone gives value to the poet's 'untutored lines' is repeated in Sonnet xxxii., which doubtless reflected a moment of depression:

If thou survive my well-contented day,
When that churl Death my bones with dust shall cover,
And shalt by fortune once more re-survey
These poor rude lines of thy deceased lover,
Compare them with the bettering of the time,
And though they be outstripp'd by every pen,
Reserve them for my love, not for their rhyme,
Exceeded by the height of happier men.
O, then vouchsafe me but this loving thought:
'Had my friend's Muse grown with this growing age,
A dearer birth than this his love had brought,
To march in ranks of better equipage;
  But since he died and poets better prove,
  Theirs for their style I'll read, his for his love.'

A like vein is pursued in greater exaltation of spirit in Sonnet xxxviii.:

How can my Muse want subject to invent,
While thou dost breathe, that pour'st into my verse
Thine own sweet argument, too excellent
For every vulgar paper to rehearse?
O give thyself the thanks, if aught in me
Worthy perusal stand against thy sight;
For who's so dumb that cannot write to thee,

When thou thyself dost give invention light?
Be thou the tenth Muse, ten times more in worth
Than those old nine which rhymers invocate;
And he that calls on thee, let him bring forth
Eternal numbers to outlive long date.
  If my slight Muse do please these curious days,
  The pain be mine, but thine shall be the praise.

The central conceit here so finely developed—that the patron may claim as his own handiwork the *protégé's* verse because he inspires it—belongs to the most conventional schemes of dedicatory adulation. When Daniel, in 1592, inscribed his volume of sonnets entitled 'Delia' to the Countess of Pembroke, he played in the prefatory sonnet on the same note, and used in the concluding couplet almost the same words as Shakespeare. Daniel wrote:

Great patroness of these my humble rhymes,
Which thou from out thy greatness dost inspire . . .
O leave [*i.e.* cease] not still to grace thy work in me . . .
Whereof the travail I may challenge mine,
But yet the glory, madam, must be thine.

Elsewhere in the Sonnets we hear fainter echoes of the 'Lucrece' epistle. Repeatedly does the sonnetteer renew the assurance given there that his patron is 'part of all' he has or is. Frequently do we meet in the Sonnets with such expressions as these:—

[I] by a *part of all* your glory live (xxxvii. 12);
Thou art *all the better part of me* (xxxix. 2);
My spirit is thine, *the better part of me* (lxxiv. 8);

while 'the love without end' which Shakespeare had vowed to Southampton in the light of day reappears in sonnets addressed to the youth as 'eternal love' (cviii. 9), and a devotion 'what shall have no end' (cx. 9).

Rivals in Southampton's favour.

The identification of the rival poets whose 'richly compiled' 'comments' of his patron's 'praise' excited Shakespeare's jealousy is a more difficult inquiry than the identification of the patron. The rival poets with their 'precious phrase by all the Muses filed' (lxxxv. 4) must be sought among the writers who eulogised

Southampton and are known to have shared his patronage. The field of choice is not small. Southampton from boyhood cultivated literature and the society of literary men. In 1594 no nobleman received so abundant a measure of adulation from the contemporary world of letters. Thomas Nash justly described the Earl, when dedicating to him his ‘Life of Jack Wilton’ in 1594, as ‘a dear lover and cherisher as well of the lovers of poets as of the poets themselves.’ Nash addressed to him many affectionately phrased sonnets. The prolific sonnetteer Barnabe Barnes and the miscellaneous literary practitioner Gervase Markham confessed, respectively in 1593 and 1595, yearnings for Southampton’s countenance in sonnets which glow hardly less ardently than Shakespeare’s with admiration for his personal charm. Similarly John Florio, the Earl’s Italian tutor, who is traditionally reckoned among Shakespeare’s literary acquaintances, wrote to Southampton in 1598, in his dedicatory epistle before his ‘Worlde of Wordes’ (an Italian-English dictionary), ‘as to me and many more, the glorious and gracious sunshine of your honour hath infused light and life.’

Shakespeare’s fear of a rival poet.

Shakespeare magnanimously and modestly described that *protégé* of Southampton, whom he deemed a specially dangerous rival, as an ‘able’ and a ‘better’ ‘spirit,’ ‘a worthier pen,’ a vessel of ‘tall building and of goodly pride,’ compared with whom he was himself ‘a worthless boat.’ He detected a touch of magic in the man’s writing. His ‘spirit,’ Shakespeare hyperbolically declared, had been ‘by spirits taught to write above a mortal pitch,’ and ‘an affable familiar ghost’ nightly gulled him with intelligence. Shakespeare’s dismay at the fascination exerted on his patron by ‘the proud full sail of his [rival’s] great verse’ sealed for a time, he declared, the springs of his own invention (lxxxvi.)

Barnabe Barnes probably the rival.

There is no need to insist too curiously on the justice of Shakespeare’s laudation of the other poet’s’ powers. He was presumably a new-comer in the literary field who surprised older men of benevolent tendency into admiration by his promise rather than by his achievement. ‘Eloquence and courtesy,’ wrote Gabriel Harvey at the time, ‘are ever bountiful in the amplifying vein;’ and writers of amiability, Harvey adds, habitually blazoned the perfections that they hoped to see their young friends achieve, in language implying that they had already achieved them. All the conditions of the problem are satisfied by the rival’s identification with the young poet and scholar Barnabe Barnes, a poetic panegyrist of Southampton and a prolific sonnetteer, who was deemed by contemporary critics certain to prove a great poet. His first collection of sonnets, ‘Parthenophil and Parthenophe,’ with many odes and madrigals interspersed, was printed in 1593; and his second, ‘A Centurie of Spiritual Sonnets,’ in 1595. Loud applause greeted the first book, which included numerous adaptations from the classical, Italian, and French poets, and disclosed, among many crudities, some fascinating lyrics and at least one almost perfect sonnet (No. lxvi. ‘Ah, sweet content, where is thy mild abode?’) Thomas Churchyard called Barnes ‘Petrarch’s scholar;’ the learned Gabriel Harvey bade him ‘go forward in maturity as he had begun in pregnancy,’ and ‘be the gallant poet, like Spenser;’ Campion judged his verse to be ‘heady and strong.’ In a sonnet that Barnes addressed in this earliest volume to the ‘virtuous’ Earl of Southampton he declared that his patron’s eyes were ‘the heavenly lamps that give the Muses light,’ and that his sole ambition was ‘by flight to rise’ to a height worthy of his patron’s ‘virtues.’ Shakespeare sorrowfully pointed out in Sonnet lxxviii. that his lord’s eyes

    that taught the dumb on high to sing,
And heavy ignorance aloft to fly,
Have added feathers to the learned’s wing,
And given grace a double majesty;

while in the following sonnet he asserted that the ‘worthier pen’ of his dreaded rival when lending his patron ‘virtue’ was guilty of plagiarism, for he ‘stole that word’ from his patron’s ‘behaviour.’ The emphasis laid by Barnes on the inspiration that he sought from Southampton’s ‘gracious eyes’ on the one hand, and his reiterated references to his patron’s ‘virtue’ on the other, suggest that Shakespeare in these sonnets directly alluded to Barnes as his chief competitor in the hotly contested race for Southampton’s favour. In Sonnet lxxxv. Shakespeare declares that ‘he cries Amen to every hymn that able spirit [*i.e.* his rival] affords.’ Very few poets of the day in England followed Ronsard’s practice of bestowing the title of hymn on miscellaneous poems, but Barnes twice applies the word to his poems of love. When, too, Shakespeare in Sonnet lxxx. employs nautical metaphors to indicate the relations of himself and his rival with his patron—

My saucy bark inferior far to his . . .
Your shallowest help will hold me up afloat,

he seems to write with an eye on Barnes's identical choice of metaphor:

My fancy's ship tossed here and there by these [*sc.* sorrow's floods]
Still floats in danger ranging to and fro.
How fears my thoughts' swift pinnace thine hard rock!

Other theories as to the rival's identity.

Gervase Markham is equally emphatic in his sonnet to Southampton on the potent influence of his patron's 'eyes,' which, he says, crown 'the most victorious pen'—a possible reference to Shakespeare. Nash's poetic praises of the Earl are no less enthusiastic, and are of a finer literary temper than Markham's. But Shakespeare's description of his rival's literary work fits far less closely the verse of Markham and Nash than the verse of their fellow aspirant Barnes.

Many critics argue that the numbing fear of his rival's genius and of its influence on his patron to which Shakespeare confessed in the sonnets was more likely to be evoked by the work of George Chapman than by that of any other contemporary poet. But Chapman had produced no conspicuously 'great verse' till he began his translation of Homer in 1598; and although he appended in 1610 to a complete edition of his translation a sonnet to Southampton, it was couched in the coldest terms of formality, and it was one of a series of sixteen sonnets each addressed to a distinguished nobleman with whom the writer implies that he had no previous relations. Drayton, Ben Jonson, and Marston have also been identified by various critics with 'the rival poet,' but none of these shared Southampton's bounty, nor are the terms which Shakespeare applies to his rival's verse specially applicable to the productions of any of them.

Sonnets of friendship.

Many besides the 'dedicatory' sonnets are addressed to a handsome youth of wealth and rank, for whom the poet avows 'love,' in the Elizabethan sense of friendship. Although no specific reference is made outside the twenty 'dedicatory' sonnets to the youth as a literary patron, and the clues to his identity are elsewhere vaguer, there is good ground for the conclusion that the sonnets of disinterested love or friendship also have Southampton for their subject. The sincerity of the poet's sentiment is often open to doubt in these poems, but they seem to illustrate a real intimacy subsisting between Shakespeare and a young

Mæcenas.

Extravagances of literary compliment.

Extravagant compliment—'gross painting' Shakespeare calls it—was more conspicuous in the intercourse of patron and client during the last years of Elizabeth's reign than in any other epoch. For this result the sovereign herself was in part responsible. Contemporary schemes of literary compliment seemed infected by the feigned accents of amorous passion and false rhapsodies on her physical beauty with which men of letters servilely sought to satisfy the old Queen's incurable greed of flattery. Sir Philip Sidney described with admirable point the adulatory excesses to which less exalted patrons were habituated by literary dependents. He gave the warning that as soon as a man showed interest in poetry or its producers, poets straightway pronounced him 'to be most fair, most rich, most wise, most all.' 'You shall dwell upon superlatives . . . Your soule shall be placed with Dante's Beatrice.' The warmth of colouring which distinguishes many of the sonnets that Shakespeare, under the guise of disinterested friendship, addressed to the youth can be matched at nearly all points in the adulation that patrons were in the habit of receiving from literary dependents in the style that Sidney described.

Patrons habitually addressed in affectionate terms.

Shakespeare assured his friend that he could never grow old (civ.), that the finest types of beauty and chivalry in mediæval romance lived again in him (cvi.), that absence from him was misery, and that his affection for him was unalterable. Hundreds of poets openly gave the like assurances to their patrons. Southampton was only one of a crowd of Mæcenases whose panegyrists, writing without concealment in their own names, credited them with every perfection of mind and body, and 'placed them,' in Sidney's apt phrase, 'with Dante's "Beatrice."'

Illustrations of the practice abound. Matthew Roydon wrote of his patron, Sir Philip Sidney:

His personage seemed most divine,
A thousand graces one might count
Upon his lovely cheerful eyne.
To heare him speak and sweetly smile

You were in Paradise the while.

Edmund Spenser in a fine sonnet told his patron, Admiral Lord Charles Howard, that ‘his good personage and noble deeds’ made him the pattern to the present age of the old heroes of whom ‘the antique poets’ were ‘wont so much to sing.’ This compliment, which Shakespeare turns to splendid account in Sonnet cvi., recurs constantly in contemporary sonnets of adulation. Ben Jonson apostrophised the Earl of Desmond as ‘my best-best lov’d.’ Campion told Lord Walden, the Earl of Suffolk’s undistinguished heir, that although his muse sought to express his love, ‘the admired virtues’ of the patron’s youth

Bred such despairing to his daunted Muse
That it could scarcely utter naked truth.

Dr. John Donne includes among his ‘Verse Letters’ to patrons and patronesses several sonnets of similar temper, one of which, acknowledging a letter of news from a patron abroad, concludes thus:

And now thy alms is given, thy letter’s read,
The body risen again, the which was dead,
And thy poor starveling bountifully fed.
After this banquet my soul doth say grace,
And praise thee for it and zealously embrace
Thy love, though I think thy love in this case
To be as gluttons’, which say ‘midst their meat
They love that best of which they most do eat.

The tone of yearning for a man’s affection is sounded by Donne and Campion almost as plaintively in their sonnets to patrons as it was sounded by Shakespeare. There is nothing, therefore, in the vocabulary of affection which Shakespeare employed in his sonnets of friendship to conflict with the theory that they were inscribed to a literary patron with whom his intimacy was of the kind normally subsisting at the time between literary clients and their patrons.

Direct references to Southampton in the sonnets of friendship.

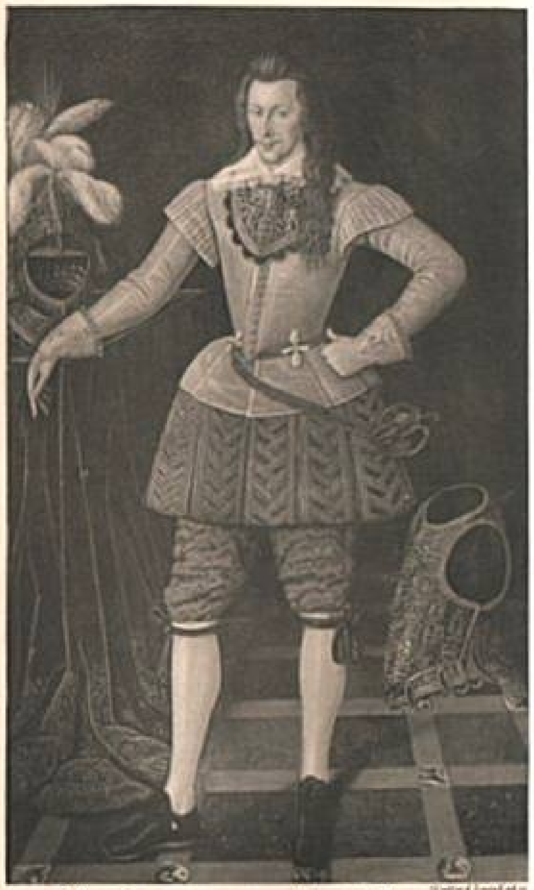
We know Shakespeare had only one literary patron, the Earl of Southampton, and the view that that nobleman is the hero of the sonnets of ‘friendship’ is strongly corroborated by such definite details as can be deduced from the vague eulogies in those poems of the youth’s gifts and graces. Every compliment, in fact, paid by Shakespeare to the youth, whether it be vaguely or definitely phrased, applies to Southampton without the least straining of the words. In real life beauty, birth, wealth, and wit sat ‘crowned’ in the Earl, whom poets acclaimed the handsomest of Elizabethan courtiers, as plainly as in the hero of the poet’s verse. Southampton has left in his correspondence ample proofs of his literary learning and taste, and, like the hero of the sonnets, was ‘as fair in knowledge as in hue.’ The opening sequence of seventeen sonnets, in which a youth of rank and wealth is admonished to marry and beget a son so that ‘his fair house’ may not fall into decay, can only have been addressed to a young peer like Southampton, who was as yet unmarried, had vast possessions, and was the sole male representative of his family. The sonnetteer’s exclamation, ‘You had a father, let your son say so,’ had pertinence to Southampton at any period between his father’s death in his boyhood and the close of his bachelorhood in 1598. To no other peer of the day are the words exactly applicable. The ‘lascivious comment’ on his ‘wanton sport’ which pursues the young friend through the sonnets, and is so adroitly contrived as to add point to the picture of his fascinating youth and beauty, obviously associates itself with the reputation for sensual indulgence that Southampton acquired both at Court and, according to Nash, among men of letters.

His youthfulness.

There is no force in the objection that the young man of the sonnets of ‘friendship’ must have been another than Southampton because the terms in which he is often addressed imply extreme youth. In 1594, a date to which I refer most of the sonnets Southampton was barely twenty-one, and the young man had obviously reached manhood. In Sonnet civ. Shakespeare notes that the first meeting between him and his friend took place three years before that poem was written, so that, if the words are to be taken literally, the poet may have at times embodied reminiscences of Southampton when he was only seventeen or eighteen.   But Shakespeare, already worn in worldly experience, passed his thirtieth birthday in 1594, and he probably tended, when on the threshold of middle life, to exaggerate the youthfulness of the nobleman almost ten years his junior, who even later impressed his acquaintances by his boyish appearance and disposition.   ‘Young’ was the epithet invariably applied to Southampton by all who knew anything of him even when he was twenty-eight. In 1601 Sir Robert Cecil referred to him as the ‘poor young Earl.’

The evidence of portraits.

But the most striking evidence of the identity of the youth of the sonnets of ‘friendship’ with Southampton is found in the likeness of feature and complexion which characterises the poet’s description of the youth’s outward appearance and the extant pictures of Southampton as a young man. Shakespeare’s many references to his youth’s ‘painted counterfeit’ (xvi., xxiv., xlvii., lxvii.) suggest that his hero often sat for his portrait. Southampton’s countenance survives in probably more canvases than that of any of his contemporaries. At least fourteen extant portraits have been identified on good authority—nine paintings, three miniatures (two by Peter Oliver and one by Isaac Oliver), and two contemporary prints. Most of these, it is true, portray their subject in middle age, when the roses of youth had faded, and they contribute nothing to the present argument. But the two portraits that are now at Welbeck, the property of the Duke of Portland, give all the information that can be desired of Southampton’s aspect ‘in his youthful morn.’ One of these pictures represents the Earl at twenty-one, and the other at twenty-five or twenty-six. The earlier portrait, which is reproduced on the opposite page, shows a young man resplendently attired. His doublet is of white satin; a broad collar, edged with lace, half covers a pointed gorget of red leather, embroidered with silver thread; the white trunks and knee-breeches are laced with gold; the sword-belt, embroidered in red and gold, is decorated at intervals with white silk bows; the hilt of the rapier is overlaid with gold; purple garters, embroidered in silver thread, fasten the white stockings below the knee. Light body armour, richly damascened, lies on the ground to the right of the figure; and a white-plumed helmet stands to the left on a table covered with a cloth of purple velvet embroidered in gold. Such gorgeous raiment suggests that its wearer bestowed much attention on his personal equipment. But the head is more interesting than the body. The eyes are blue, the cheeks pink, the complexion clear, and the expression sedate; rings are in the ears; beard and moustache are at an incipient stage, and are of the same, bright auburn hue as the hair in a picture of Southampton’s mother that is also at Welbeck. But, however scanty is the down on the youth’s cheek, the hair on his head is luxuriant. It is worn very long, and falls over and below the shoulder. The colour is now of walnut, but was originally of lighter tint.



Henry Wriothesley, third Earl of Southampton
as a young man from the original picture at Welbeck Abbey.

The portrait depicting Southampton five or six years later shows him in prison, to which he was committed after his secret marriage in 1598. A cat and a book in a jewelled binding are on a desk at his right hand. Here the hair falls over both his shoulders in even greater profusion, and is distinctly blonde. The beard and thin upturned moustache are of brighter auburn and fuller than before, although still slight. The blue eyes and colouring of the cheeks show signs of ill-health, but differ little from those features in the earlier portrait.

From either of the two Welbeck portraits of Southampton might Shakespeare have drawn his picture of the youth in the Sonnets. Many times does he tell us that the youth is fair in complexion, and that his eyes are fair. In Sonnet lxviii., when he points to the youth's face as a map of what beauty was 'without all ornament, itself and true'—before fashion sanctioned the use of artificial 'golden tresses'—there can be little doubt that he had in mind the wealth of locks that fell about Southampton's neck.

Sonnet cvii. the last of the series.

A few only of the sonnets that Shakespeare addressed to the youth can be allotted to a date subsequent to 1594; only two bear on the surface signs of a later composition. In Sonnet lxx. the poet no longer credits his hero with juvenile wantonness, but with a 'pure, unstained prime,' which has 'passed by the ambush of young days.' Sonnet cvii., apparently the last of the series, was penned almost a decade after the mass of its companions, for it makes references that cannot be mistaken to three events that took place in 1603—to Queen Elizabeth's death, to the accession of James I, and to the release of the Earl of Southampton, who had been in prison since he was convicted in 1601 of complicity in the rebellion of the Earl of Essex. The first two events are thus described:

The mortal moon hath her eclipse endured
And the sad augurs mock their own presage;
Incertainties now crown themselves assured
And peace proclaims olives of endless age.

Allusion to Elizabeth's death.

It is in almost identical phrase that every pen in the spring of 1603 was felicitating the nation on the unexpected turn of events, by which Elizabeth's crown had passed, without civil war, to the Scottish King, and thus the revolution that had been foretold as the inevitable consequence of Elizabeth's demise was happily averted. Cynthia (*i.e.* the moon) was the Queen's recognised poetic appellation. It is thus that she figures in the verse of Barnfield, Spenser, Fulke Greville, and Ralegh, and her elegists involuntarily followed the same fashion. 'Fair Cynthia's dead' sang one.

Luna's extinct; and now beholde the sunne
Whose beames soake up the moysture of all teares,

wrote Henry Petowe in his 'A Fewe Aprill Drops Showered on the Hearse of Dead Eliza,' 1603. There was hardly a verse-writer who mourned her loss that did not typify it, moreover, as the eclipse of a heavenly body. One poet asserted that death 'veiled her glory in a cloud of night.' Another argued: 'Naught can eclipse her light, but that her star will shine in darkest night.' A third varied the formula thus:

When winter had cast off her weed
Our sun eclipsed did set. Oh! light most fair.

At the same time James was constantly said to have entered on his inheritance ‘not with an olive branch in his hand, but with a whole forest of olives round about him, for he brought not peace to this kingdom alone’ but to all Europe.

Allusions to Southampton’s release from prison.

‘The drops of this most balmy time,’ in this same sonnet, cvii., is an echo of another current strain of fancy. James came to England in a springtide of rarely rivalled clemency, which was reckoned of the happiest augury. ‘All things look fresh,’ one poet sang, ‘to greet his excellence.’ ‘The air, the seasons, and the earth’ were represented as in sympathy with the general joy in ‘this sweetest of all sweet springs.’ One source of grief alone was acknowledged: Southampton was still a prisoner in the Tower, ‘supposed as forfeit to a confined doom.’ All men, wrote Manningham, the diarist, on the day following the Queen’s death, wished him at liberty.   The wish was fulfilled quickly. On April 10, 1603, his prison gates were opened by ‘a warrant from the king.’ So bountiful a beginning of the new era, wrote John Chamberlain to Dudley Carleton two days later, ‘raised all men’s spirits . . . and the very poets with their idle pamphlets promised themselves’ great things.   Samuel Daniel and John Davies celebrated Southampton’s release in buoyant verse.   It is improbable that Shakespeare remained silent. ‘My love looks fresh,’ he wrote in the concluding lines of Sonnet cvii., and he repeated the conventional promise that he had so often made before, that his friend should live in his ‘poor rhyme,’ ‘when tyrants’ crests and tombs of brass are spent.’ It is impossible to resist the inference that Shakespeare thus saluted his patron on the close of his days of tribulation. Shakespeare’s genius had then won for him a public reputation that rendered him independent of any private patron’s favour, and he made no further reference in his writings to the patronage that Southampton had extended to him in earlier years. But the terms in which he greeted his former protector for the last time in verse justify the belief that, during his remaining thirteen years of life, the poet cultivated friendly relations with the Earl of Southampton, and was mindful to the last of the encouragement that the young peer offered him while he was still on the threshold of the temple of fame.

<<span id="filepos0041013272"> a>X—THE SUPPOSED STORY OF INTRIGUE IN THE SONNETS

It is hardly possible to doubt that had Shakespeare, who was more prolific in invention than any other poet, poured out in his sonnets his personal passions and emotions, he would have been carried by his imagination, at every stage, far beyond the beaten tracks of the conventional sonnetteers of his day. The imitative element in his sonnets is large enough to refute the assertion that in them as a whole he sought to ‘unlock his heart.’ It is likely enough that beneath all the conventional adulation bestowed by Shakespeare on Southampton there lay a genuine affection, but his sonnets to the Earl were no involuntary ebullitions of a devoted and disinterested friendship; they were celebrations of a patron’s favour in the terminology—often raised by Shakespeare’s genius to the loftiest heights of poetry—that was invariably consecrated to such a purpose by a current literary convention. Very few of Shakespeare’s ‘sugared sonnets’ have a substantial right to be regarded as untutored cries of the soul. It is true that the sonnets in which the writer reproaches himself with sin, or gives expression to a sense of melancholy, offer at times a convincing illusion of autobiographic confessions; and it is just possible that they stand apart from the rest, and reveal the writer’s inner consciousness, in which case they are not to be matched in any other of Shakespeare’s literary compositions. But they may be, on the other hand, merely literary meditations, conceived by the greatest of dramatists, on infirmities incident to all human nature, and only attempted after the cue had been given by rival sonnetteers. At any rate, their energetic lines are often adapted from the less forcible and less coherent utterances of contemporary poets, and the themes are common to almost all Elizabethan collections of sonnets. Shakespeare’s noble sonnet on the ravages of lust (cxxix.), for example, treats with marvellous force and insight a stereotyped theme of sonnetteers, and it may have owed its whole existence to Sir Philip Sidney’s sonnet on ‘Desire.’

The youth’s relations with the poet’s mistress.

Only in one group, composed of six sonnets scattered through the collection, is there traceable a strand of wholly original sentiment, not to be readily defined and boldly projecting from the web into which it is wrought. This series of six sonnets deals with a love adventure of no normal type. Sonnet cxliv. opens with the lines:

Two loves I have of comfort and despair
Which like two angels do suggest (*i.e.* tempt) me still:
The better angel is a man right fair,
The worser spirit a woman colour'd ill.

The woman, the sonnetteer continues, has corrupted the man and has drawn him from his 'side.' Five other sonnets treat the same theme. In three addressed to the man (xl., xli., and xlii.) the poet mildly reproaches his youthful friend for having sought and won the favours of a woman whom he himself loved 'dearly,' but the trespass is forgiven on account of the friend's youth and beauty. In the two remaining sonnets Shakespeare addresses the woman (cxxxiii. and cxxxiv.), and he rebukes her for having enslaved not only himself but 'his next self'—his friend. Shakespeare, in his denunciation elsewhere of a mistress's disdain of his advances, assigns her blindness, like all the professional sonnetteers, to no better defined cause than the perversity and depravity of womankind. In these six sonnets alone does he categorically assign his mistress's alienation to the fascinations of a dear friend or hint at such a cause for his mistress's infidelity. The definite element of intrigue that is developed here is not found anywhere else in the range of Elizabethan sonnet-literature. The character of the innovation and its treatment seem only capable of explanation by regarding the topic as a reflection of Shakespeare's personal experience. But how far he is sincere in his accounts of his sorrow in yielding his mistress to his friend in order to retain the friendship of the latter must be decided by each reader for himself. If all the words be taken literally, there is disclosed an act of self-sacrifice that it is difficult to parallel or explain. But it remains very doubtful if the affair does not rightly belong to the annals of gallantry. The sonnetteer's complacent condonation of the young man's offence chiefly suggests the deference that was essential to the maintenance by a dependent of peaceful relations with a self-willed and self-indulgent patron. Southampton's sportive and lascivious temperament might easily impel him to divert to himself the attention of an attractive woman by whom he saw that his poet was fascinated, and he was unlikely to tolerate any outspoken protest on the part of his *protégé* . There is no clue to the lady's identity, and speculation on the topic is useless. She may have given Shakespeare hints for his pictures of the 'dark lady,' but he treats that lady's obduracy conventionally, and his vituperation of her sheds no light on the personal history of the mistress who left him for his friend.

'Willobie his Avisa.'

The emotions roused in Shakespeare by the episode, even if potent at the moment, were not likely to be deep-seated or enduring. And it is possible that a half-jesting reference, which would deprive Shakespeare's amorous adventure of serious import, was made to it by a literary comrade in a poem that was licensed for publication on September 3, 1594, and was published immediately under the title of 'Willobie his Avisa, or the True Picture of a Modest Maid and of a Chaste and Constant Wife.' In this volume, which mainly consists of seventy-two cantos in varying numbers of six-line stanzas, the chaste heroine, Avisa, holds converse—in the opening section as a maid, and in the later section as a wife—with a series of passionate adorers. In every case she firmly repulses their advances. Midway through the book its alleged author—Henry Willobie—is introduced in his own person as an ardent admirer, and the last twenty-nine of the cantos rehearse his woes and Avisa's obduracy. To this section there is prefixed an argument in prose (canto xliv.) It is there stated that Willobie, 'being suddenly affected with the contagion of a fantastical wit at the first sight of Avisa, pineth a while in secret grief. At length, not able any longer to endure the burning heat of so fervent a humour, [he] bewrayeth the secrecy of his disease unto his familiar friend *W. S.* , *who not long before had tried the courtesy of the like passion and was now newly recovered of the like infection* . Yet [W. S.], finding his friend let blood in the same vein, took pleasure for a time to see him bleed, and instead of stopping the issue, he enlargeth the wound with the sharp razor of willing conceit,' encouraging Willobie to believe that Avisa would ultimately yield 'with pains, diligence, and some cost in time.' 'The miserable comforter' [W. S.], the passage continues, was moved to comfort his friend 'with an impossibility,' for one of two reasons. Either 'he now would secretly laugh at his friend's folly' because he 'had given occasion not long before unto others to laugh at his own.' Or 'he would see whether another could play his part better than himself, and, in viewing after the course of this loving comedy,' would 'see whether it would sort to a happier end for this new actor than it did for *the old player* . But at length this comedy was like to have grown to a tragedy by the weak and feeble estate that H. W. was brought unto,' owing to Avisa's unflinching rectitude. Happily, 'time and necessity' effected a cure. In two succeeding cantos in verse W. S. is introduced in dialogue with Willobie, and he gives him, in *oratio recta* , light-hearted and mocking counsel which Willobie accepts with results disastrous to his mental health.

Identity of initials, on which the theory of Shakespeare's identity with H. W.'s unfeeling adviser mainly rests, is not a strong foundation, and doubt is justifiable as to whether the story of 'Avisa' and her lovers is not fictitious. In a preface signed Hadrian Dorell, the writer, after mentioning that the alleged author (Willobie) was dead, discusses somewhat enigmatically whether or no the work is ‘a poetical fiction.’ In a new edition of 1596 the same editor decides the question in the affirmative. But Dorell, while making this admission, leaves untouched the curious episode of ‘W. S.’ The mention of ‘W. S.’ as ‘the old player,’ and the employment of theatrical imagery in discussing his relations with Willobie, must be coupled with the fact that Shakespeare, at a date when mentions of him in print were rare, was eulogised by name as the author of ‘Lucrece’ in some prefatory verses to the volume. From such considerations the theory of ‘W. S.’s’ identity with Willobie’s acquaintance acquires substance. If we assume that it was Shakespeare who took a roguish delight in watching his friend Willobie suffer the disdain of ‘chaste Avisa’ because he had ‘newly recovered’ from the effects of a like experience, it is clear that the theft of Shakespeare’s mistress by another friend did not cause him deep or lasting distress. The allusions that were presumably made to the episode by the author of ‘Avisa’ bring it, in fact, nearer the confines of comedy than of tragedy.

Summary of conclusions respecting the sonnets.

The processes of construction which are discernible in Shakespeare’s sonnets are thus seen to be identical with those that are discernible in the rest of his literary work. They present one more proof of his punctilious regard for the demands of public taste, and of his marvellous genius and skill in adapting and transmuting for his own purposes the labours of other workers in the field that for the moment engaged his attention. Most of Shakespeare’s sonnets were produced in 1594 under the incitement of that freakish rage for sonnetteering which, taking its rise in Italy and sweeping over France on its way to England, absorbed for some half-dozen years in this country a greater volume of literary energy than has been applied to sonnetteering within the same space of time here or elsewhere before or since. The thousands of sonnets that were circulated in England between 1591 and 1597 were of every literary quality, from sublimity to inanity, and they illustrated in form and topic every known phase of sonnetteering activity. Shakespeare’s collection, which was put together at haphazard and published surreptitiously many years after the poems were written, was a medley, at times reaching heights of literary excellence that none other scaled, but as a whole reflecting the varied features of the sonnetteering vogue. Apostrophes to metaphysical abstractions, vivid picturings of the beauties of nature, adulation of a patron, idealisation of a *protégé’s* regard for a nobleman in the figurative language of amorous passion, amiable compliments on a woman's hair or touch on the virginals, and vehement denunciation of the falseness and frailty of womankind—all appear as frequently in contemporary collections of sonnets as in Shakespeare's. He borrows very many of his competitors' words and thoughts, but he so fused them with his fancy as often to transfigure them. Genuine emotion or the writer's personal experience very rarely inspired the Elizabethan sonnet, and Shakespeare's sonnets proved no exception to the rule. A personal note may have escaped him involuntarily in the sonnets in which he gives voice to a sense of melancholy and self-remorse, but his dramatic instinct never slept, and there is no proof that he is doing more in those sonnets than produce dramatically the illusion of a personal confession. Only in one scattered series of six sonnets, where he introduced a topic, unknown to other sonnetteers, of a lover's supersession by his friend in a mistress's graces, does he seem to show independence of his comrades and draw directly on an incident in his own life, but even there the emotion is wanting in seriousness. The sole biographical inference deducible from the sonnets is that at one time in his career Shakespeare disdained no weapon of flattery in an endeavour to monopolise the bountiful patronage of a young man of rank. External evidence agrees with internal evidence in identifying the belauded patron with the Earl of Southampton, and the real value to a biographer of Shakespeare's sonnets is the corroboration they offer of the ancient tradition that the Earl of Southampton, to whom his two narrative poems were openly dedicated, gave Shakespeare at an early period of his literary career help and encouragement, which entitles the Earl to a place in the poet's biography resembling that filled by the Duke Alfonso d'Este in the biography of Ariosto, or like that filled by Margaret, duchess of Savoy, in the biography of Ronsard.

<<span id="filepos0041029358"> a>XI—THE DEVELOPMENT OF DRAMATIC POWER

'Midsummer Night's Dream.'

But, all the while that Shakespeare was fancifully assuring his patron

[How] to no other pass my verses tend
Than of your graces and your gifts to tell,

his dramatic work was steadily advancing. To the winter season of 1595 probably belongs ‘Midsummer Night’s Dream.’ The comedy may well have been written to celebrate a marriage—perhaps the marriage of the universal patroness of poets, Lucy Harington, to Edward Russell, third earl of Bedford, on December 12, 1594; or that of William Stanley, earl of Derby, at Greenwich on January 24, 1594-5. The elaborate compliment to the Queen, ‘a fair vestal throned by the west’ (II. i. 157 *seq.*), was at once an acknowledgment of past marks of royal favour and an invitation for their extension to the future. Oberon’s fanciful description (II. ii. 148-68) of the spot where he saw the little western flower called ‘Love-in-idleness’ that he bids Puck fetch for him, has been interpreted as a reminiscence of one of the scenic pageants with which the Earl of Leicester entertained Queen Elizabeth on her visit to Kenilworth in 1575.

The whole play is in the airiest and most graceful vein of comedy. Hints for the story can be traced to a variety of sources—to Chaucer’s ‘Knight’s Tale,’ to Plutarch’s ‘Life of Theseus,’ to Ovid’s ‘Metamorphoses’ (bk. iv.), and to the story of Oberon, the fairy-king, in the French mediæval romance of ‘Huon of Bordeaux,’ of which an English translation by Lord Berners was first printed in 1534. The influence of John Lyly is perceptible in the raillery in which both mortals and immortals indulge. In the humorous presentation of the play of ‘Pyramus and Thisbe’ by the ‘rude mechanicals’ of Athens, Shakespeare improved upon a theme which he had already employed in ‘Love’s Labour’s Lost.’ But the final scheme of the ‘Midsummer Night’s Dream’ is of the author’s freshest invention, and by endowing—practically for the first time in literature—the phantoms of the fairy world with a genuine and a sustained dramatic interest, Shakespeare may be said to have conquered a new realm for art.

‘All’s Well.’

More sombre topics engaged him in the comedy of ‘All’s Well that Ends Well,’ which may be tentatively assigned to 1595. Meres, writing three years later, attributed to Shakespeare a piece called ‘Love’s Labour’s Won.’ This title, which is not otherwise known, may well be applied to ‘All’s Well.’ ‘The Taming of The Shrew,’ which has also been identified with ‘Love’s Labour’s Won,’ has far slighter claim to the designation. The plot of ‘All’s Well,’ like that of ‘Romeo and Juliet,’ was drawn from Painter’s ‘Palace of Pleasure’ (No. xxxviii.) The original source is Boccaccio’s ‘Decamerone’ (giorn. iii. nov. 9). Shakespeare, after his wont, grafted on the touching story of Helena’s love for the unworthy Bertram the comic characters of the braggart Parolles, the pompous Lafeu, and a clown (Lavache) less witty than his compeers. Another original creation, Bertram’s mother, Countess of Roussillon, is a charming portrait of old age. In frequency of rhyme and other metrical characteristics the piece closely resembles ‘The Two Gentlemen,’ but the characterisation betrays far greater power, and there are fewer conceits or crudities of style. The pathetic element predominates. The heroine Helena, whose ‘pangs of despised love’ are expressed with touching tenderness, ranks with the greatest of Shakespeare’s female creations.

‘Taming of the Shrew.’

‘The Taming of The Shrew’—which, like ‘All’s Well,’ was first printed in the folio—was probably composed soon after the completion of that solemn comedy. It is a revision of an old play on lines somewhat differing from those which Shakespeare had followed previously. From ‘The Taming of A Shrew,’ a comedy first published in 1594, Shakespeare drew the Induction and the scenes in which the hero Petruchio conquers Catherine the Shrew. He first infused into them the genuine spirit of comedy. But while following the old play in its general outlines, Shakespeare’s revised version added an entirely new underplot—the story of Bianca and her lovers, which owes something to the ‘Supposes’ of George Gascoigne, an adaptation of Ariosto’s comedy called ‘I Suppositi.’ Evidence of style—the liberal introduction of tags of Latin and the exceptional beat of the doggerel—makes it difficult to allot the Bianca scenes to Shakespeare; those scenes were probably due to a coadjutor.

Stratford allusions in the Induction.

The Induction to ‘The Taming of The Shrew’ has a direct bearing on Shakespeare’s biography, for the poet admits into it a number of literal references to Stratford and his native county. Such personalities are rare in Shakespeare’s plays, and can only be paralleled in two of slightly later date—the ‘Second Part of Henry IV’ and the ‘Merry Wives of Windsor.’ All these local allusions may well be attributed to such a renewal of Shakespeare’s personal relations with the town, as is indicated by external facts in his history of the same period. In the Induction the tinker, Christopher Sly, describes himself as ‘Old Sly’s son of Burton Heath.’ Burton Heath is Barton-on-the-Heath, the home of Shakespeare’s aunt, Edmund Lambert’s wife, and of her sons. The tinker in like vein confesses that he has run up a score with Marian Hacket, the fat alewife of Wincot. The references to Wincot and the Hackets are singularly precise. The name of the maid of the inn is given as Cicely Hacket, and the alehouse is described in the stage direction as ‘on a heath.’

Wincot.

Wincot was the familiar designation of three small Warwickshire villages, and a good claim has been set up on behalf of each to be the scene of Sly’s drunken exploits. There is a very small hamlet named Wincot within four miles of Stratford now consisting of a single farmhouse which was once an Elizabethan mansion; it is situated on what was doubtless in Shakespeare’s day, before the land there was enclosed, an open heath. This Wincot forms part of the parish of Quinton, where, according to the parochial registers, a Hacket family resided in Shakespeare’s day. On November 21, 1591, ‘Sara Hacket, the daughter of Robert Hacket,’ was baptised in Quinton church. Yet by Warwickshire contemporaries the Wincot of ‘The Taming of The Shrew’ was unhesitatingly identified with Wilnecote, near Tamworth, on the Staffordshire border of Warwickshire, at some distance from Stratford. That village, whose name was pronounced ‘Wincot,’ was celebrated for its ale in the seventeenth century, a distinction which is not shown by contemporary evidence to have belonged to any place of like name. The Warwickshire poet, Sir Aston Cokain, within half a century of the production of Shakespeare’s ‘Taming of The Shrew,’ addressed to ‘Mr. Clement Fisher of Wincott’ (a well-known resident at Wilnecote) verses which begin

Shakspeare your *Wincot* ale hath much renowned,
That fox’d a Beggar so (by chance was found
Sleeping) that there needed not many a word
To make him to believe he was a Lord.

In the succeeding lines the writer promises to visit ‘Wincot’ (*i.e.* Wilnecote) to drink

    Such ale as *Shakspeare* fancies
Did put Kit Sly into such lordly trances.

It is therefore probable that Shakespeare consciously invested the home of Kit Sly and of Kit’s hostess with characteristics of Wilnecote as well as of the hamlet near Stratford.

Wilmcote, the native place of Shakespeare's mother, is also said to have been popularly pronounced 'Wincot.' A tradition which was first recorded by Capell as late as 1780 in his notes to the 'Taming of The Shrew' () is to the effect that Shakespeare often visited an inn at 'Wincot' to enjoy the society of a 'fool who belonged to a neighbouring mill,' and the Wincot of this story is, we are told, locally associated with the village of Wilmcote. But the links that connect Shakespeare's tinker with Wilmcote are far slighter than those which connect him with Wincot and Wilnecote.

The mention of Kit Sly's tavern comrades—

Stephen Sly and old John Naps of Greece,
And Peter Turf and Henry Pimpernell—

was in all likelihood a reminiscence of contemporary Warwickshire life as literal as the name of the hamlet where the drunkard dwelt. There was a genuine Stephen Sly who was in the dramatist's day a self-assertive citizen of Stratford; and 'Greece,' whence 'old John Naps' derived his cognomen, is an obvious misreading of Greet, a hamlet by Winchcombe in Gloucestershire, not far removed from Shakespeare's native town.

'Henry IV.'

In 1597 Shakespeare turned once more to English history. From Holinshed's 'Chronicle,' and from a valueless but very popular piece, 'The Famous Victories of Henry V,' which was repeatedly acted between 1588 and 1595,   he worked up with splendid energy two plays on the reign of Henry IV. They form one continuous whole, but are known respectively as parts i. and ii. of 'Henry IV.' The 'Second Part of Henry IV' is almost as rich as the Induction to 'The Taming of The Shrew' in direct references to persons and districts familiar to Shakespeare. Two amusing scenes pass at the house of Justice Shallow in Gloucestershire, a county which touched the boundaries of Stratford (III. ii. and V. i.) When, in the second of these scenes, the justice's factotum, Davy, asked his master 'to countenance William Visor of Woncot   against Clement Perkes of the Hill,' the local references are unmistakable. Woodmancote, where the family of Visor or Vizard has flourished since the sixteenth century, is still pronounced Woncot. The adjoining Stinchcombe Hill (still familiarly known to natives as 'The Hill') was in the sixteenth century the home of the family of Perkes. Very precise too are the allusions to the region of the Cotswold Hills, which were easily accessible from Stratford. ‘Will Squele, a Cotswold man,’ is noticed as one of Shallow’s friends in youth (III. ii. 23); and when Shallow’s servant Davy receives his master’s instructions to sow ‘the headland’ ‘with red wheat,’ in the early autumn, there is an obvious reference to the custom almost peculiar to the Cotswolds of sowing ‘red lammas’ wheat at an unusually early season of the agricultural year.

The kingly hero of the two plays of ‘Henry IV’ had figured as a spirited young man in ‘Richard II;’ he was now represented as weighed down by care and age. With him are contrasted (in part i.) his impetuous and ambitious subject Hotspur and (in both parts) his son and heir Prince Hal, whose boisterous disposition drives him from Court to seek adventures among the haunters of taverns. Hotspur is a vivid and fascinating portrait of a hot-headed soldier, courageous to the point of rashness, and sacrificing his life to his impetuous sense of honour. Prince Hal, despite his vagaries, is endowed by the dramatist with far more self-control and common sense.

Falstaff.

On the first, as on every subsequent, production of ‘Henry IV’ the main public interest was concentrated neither on the King nor on his son, nor on Hotspur, but on the chief of Prince Hal’s riotous companions. At the outset the propriety of that great creation was questioned on a political or historical ground of doubtful relevance. Shakespeare in both parts of ‘Henry IV’ originally named the chief of the prince’s associates after Sir John Oldcastle, a character in the old play. But Henry Brooke, eighth lord Cobham, who succeeded to the title early in 1597, and claimed descent from the historical Sir John Oldcastle, the Lollard leader, raised objection; and when the first part of the play was printed by the acting-company’s authority in 1598 (‘newly corrected’ in 1599), Shakespeare bestowed on Prince Hal’s tun-bellied follower the new and deathless name of Falstaff. A trustworthy edition of the second part of ‘Henry IV’ also appeared with Falstaff’s name substituted for that of Oldcastle in 1600. There the epilogue expressly denied that Falstaff had any characteristic in common with the martyr Oldcastle. Oldcastle died a martyr, and this is not the man. But the substitution of the name ‘Falstaff’ did not pass without protest. It hazily recalled Sir John Fastolf, an historical warrior who had already figured in ‘Henry VI’ and was owner at one time of the Boar’s Head Tavern in Southwark; according to traditional stage directions, the prince and his companions in ‘Henry IV’ frequent the Boar’s Head, Eastcheap. Fuller in his ‘Worthies,’ first published in

1662, while expressing satisfaction that Shakespeare had ‘put out’ of the play Sir John Oldcastle, was eloquent in his avowal of regret that ‘Sir John Fastolf’ was ‘put in,’ on the ground that it was making overbold with a great warrior’s memory to make him a ‘Thrasonical puff and emblem of mock-valour.’

The offending introduction and withdrawal of Oldcastle’s name left a curious mark on literary history. Humbler dramatists (Munday, Wilson, Drayton, and Hathaway), seeking to profit by the attention drawn by Shakespeare to the historical Oldcastle, produced a poor dramatic version of Oldcastle’s genuine history; and of two editions of ‘Sir John Oldcastle’ published in 1600, one printed for T[homas] P[avier] was impudently described on the title-page as by Shakespeare.

But it is not the historical traditions which are connected with Falstaff that give him his perennial attraction. It is the personality that owes nothing to history with which Shakespeare’s imaginative power clothed him. The knight’s unfettered indulgence in sensual pleasures, his exuberant mendacity, and his love of his own ease are purged of offence by his colossal wit and jollity, while the contrast between his old age and his unreverend way of life supplies that tinge of melancholy which is inseparable from the highest manifestations of humour. The Elizabethan public recognised the triumphant success of the effort, and many of Falstaff’s telling phrases, with the names of his foils, Justice Shallow and Silence, at once took root in popular speech. Shakespeare’s purely comic power culminated in Falstaff; he may be claimed as the most humorous figure in literature.

‘Merry Wives of Windsor.’

In all probability ‘The Merry Wives of Windsor,’ a comedy inclining to farce, and unqualified by any pathetic interest, followed close upon ‘Henry IV.’ In the epilogue to the ‘Second Part of Henry IV’ Shakespeare had written: ‘If you be not too much cloyed with fat meat, our humble author will continue the story with Sir John in it . . . where for anything I know Falstaff shall die of a sweat, unless already a’ be killed with your hard opinions.’ Rowe asserts that ‘Queen Elizabeth was so well pleased with that admirable character of Falstaff in the two parts of “Henry IV” that she commanded him to continue it for one play more, and to show him in love.’ Dennis, in the dedication of ‘The Comical

Gallant' (1702), noted that the 'Merry Wives' was written at the Queen's 'command and by her direction; and she was so eager to see it acted that she commanded it to be finished in fourteen days, and was afterwards, as tradition tells us, very well pleased with the representation.' In his 'Letters' (1721,) Dennis reduces the period of composition to ten days—'a prodigious thing,' added Gildon, 'where all is so well contrived and carried on without the least confusion.' The localisation of the scene at Windsor, and the complimentary references to Windsor Castle, corroborate the tradition that the comedy was prepared to meet a royal command. An imperfect draft of the play was printed by Thomas Creede in 1602; the folio of 1623 first supplied a complete version. The plot was probably suggested by an Italian novel. A tale from Straparola's 'Notti' (iv. 4), of which an adaptation figured in the miscellany of novels called Tarleton's 'Newes out of Purgatorie' (1590), another Italian tale from the 'Pecorone' of Ser Giovanni Fiorentino (i. 2), and a third romance, the Fishwife's tale of Brainford in the collection of stories called 'Westward for Smelts,' supply incidents distantly resembling episodes in the play. Nowhere has Shakespeare so vividly reflected the bluff temper of contemporary middle-class society. The presentment of the buoyant domestic life of an Elizabethan country town bears distinct impress of Shakespeare's own experience. Again, there are literal references to the neighbourhood of Stratford. Justice Shallow, whose coat-of-arms is described as consisting of 'luces,' is thereby openly identified with Shakespeare's early foe, Sir Thomas Lucy of Charlecote. When Shakespeare makes Master Slender repeat the report that Master Page's fallow greyhound was 'outrun on Cotsall' (I. i. 93), he testifies to his interest in the coursing matches for which the Cotswold district was famed.

'Henry V.'

The spirited character of Prince Hal was peculiarly congenial to its creator, and in 'Henry V' Shakespeare, during 1598, brought his career to its close. The play was performed early in 1599, probably in the newly built Globe Theatre. Again Thomas Creede printed, in 1600, an imperfect draft, which was thrice reissued before a complete version was supplied in the First Folio of 1623. The dramatic interest of 'Henry V' is slender. There is abundance of comic element, but death has removed Falstaff, whose last moments are described with the simple pathos that comes of a matchless art, and, though Falstaff's companions survive, they are thin shadows of his substantial figure. New comic characters are introduced in the persons of three soldiers respectively of Welsh, Scottish, and Irish nationality, whose racial traits are contrasted with telling effect. The irascible

Irishman, Captain MacMorris, is the only representative of his nation who figures in the long list of Shakespeare's *dramatis personæ* . The scene in which the pedantic but patriotic Welshman, Fluellen, avenges the sneers of the braggart Pistol at his nation's emblem, by forcing him to eat the leek, overflows in vivacious humour. The piece in its main current presents a series of loosely connected episodes in which the hero's manliness is displayed as soldier, ruler, and lover. The topic reached its climax in the victory of the English at Agincourt, which powerfully appealed to patriotic sentiment. Besides the 'Famous Victories,' there was another lost piece on the subject, which Henslowe produced for the first time on November 28, 1595. 'Henry V' may be regarded as Shakespeare's final experiment in the dramatisation of English history, and it artistically rounds off the series of his 'histories' which form collectively a kind of national epic. For 'Henry VIII,' which was produced very late in his career, he was only in part responsible, and that 'history' consequently belongs to a different category.

Essex and the rebellion of 1601.

A glimpse of autobiography may be discerned in the direct mention by Shakespeare in 'Henry V' of an exciting episode in current history. In the prologue to act v. Shakespeare foretold for Robert Devereux, second earl of Essex, the close friend of his patron Southampton, an enthusiastic reception by the people of London when he should come home after 'broaching' rebellion in Ireland.

Were now the general of our gracious empress,
As in good time he may, from Ireland coming,
Bringing rebellion broached on his sword,
How many would the peaceful city quit
To welcome him!—(Act v. Chorus, ll. 30-4.)

Essex had set out on his disastrous mission as the would-be pacificator of Ireland on March 27, 1599. The fact that Southampton went with him probably accounts for Shakespeare's avowal of sympathy. But Essex's effort failed. He was charged, soon after 'Henry V' was produced, with treasonable neglect of duty, and he sought in 1601, again with the support of Southampton, to recover his position by stirring up rebellion in London. Then Shakespeare's reference to Essex's popularity with Londoners bore perilous fruit. The friends of the rebel leaders sought the dramatist's countenance. They paid 40s. to Augustine

Phillips, a leading member of Shakespeare’s company, to induce him to revive at the Globe Theatre ‘Richard II’ (beyond doubt Shakespeare’s play), in the hope that its scene of the killing of a king might encourage a popular outbreak. Phillips subsequently deposed that he prudently told the conspirators who bespoke the piece that ‘that play of Kyng Richard’ was ‘so old and so long out of use as that they should have small or no company at it.’ None the less the performance took place on Saturday (February 7, 1601), the day preceding that fixed by Essex for the rising. The Queen, in a later conversation with William Lambarde (on August 4, 1601), complained that ‘this tragedie’ of ‘Richard II,’ which she had always viewed with suspicion, was played at the period with seditious intent ‘forty times in open streets and houses.’ At the trial of Essex and his friends, Phillips gave evidence of the circumstances under which the tragedy was revived at the Globe Theatre. Essex was executed and Southampton was imprisoned until the Queen’s death. No proceedings were taken against the players, but Shakespeare wisely abstained, for the time, from any public reference to the fate either of Essex or of his patron Southampton.

Shakespeare’s popularity and influence.

Such incidents served to accentuate Shakespeare’s growing reputation. For several years his genius as dramatist and poet had been acknowledged by critics and playgoers alike, and his social and professional position had become considerable. Inside the theatre his influence was supreme. When, in 1598, the manager of the company rejected Ben Jonson’s first comedy—his ‘Every Man in his Humour’—Shakespeare intervened, according to a credible tradition (reported by Rowe but denounced by Gifford), and procured a reversal of the decision in the interest of the unknown dramatist who was his junior by nine years. He took a part when the piece was performed. Jonson was of a difficult and jealous temper, and subsequently he gave vent to an occasional expression of scorn at Shakespeare’s expense, but, despite passing manifestations of his unconquerable surliness, there can be no doubt that Jonson cherished genuine esteem and affection for Shakespeare till death. Within a very few years of Shakespeare’s death Sir Nicholas L’Estrange, an industrious collector of anecdotes, put into writing an anecdote for which he made Dr. Donne responsible, attesting the amicable relations that habitually subsisted between Shakespeare and Jonson. ‘Shakespeare,’ ran the story, ‘was godfather to one of Ben Jonson’s children, and after the christening, being in a deep study, Jonson came to cheer him up and asked him why he was so melancholy. “No, faith, Ben,” says he, “not I, but I have been considering a great while what should be the fittest gift for me to bestow upon my godchild, and I have resolv'd at last." "I pr'ythee, what?" sayes he. "I' faith, Ben, I'll e'en give him a dozen good Lattin spoons, and thou shalt translate them."'

The Mermaid meetings.

The creator of Falstaff could have been no stranger to tavern life, and he doubtless took part with zest in the convivialities of men of letters. Tradition reports that Shakespeare joined, at the Mermaid Tavern in Bread Street, those meetings of Jonson and his associates which Beaumont described in his poetical 'Letter' to Jonson:

'What things have we seen
Done at the Mermaid? heard words that have been
So nimble, and so full of subtle flame,
As if that every one from whence they came
Had meant to put his whole wit in a jest,
And had resolved to live a fool the rest
Of his dull life.'

'Many were the wit-combats,' wrote Fuller of Shakespeare in his 'Worthies' (1662), 'betwixt him and Ben Jonson, which two I behold like a Spanish great galleon and an English man of war; Master Jonson (like the former) was built far higher in learning, solid but slow in his performances. Shakespear, with the Englishman of war, lesser in bulk, but lighter in sailing, could turn with all tides, tack about, and take advantage of all winds by the quickness of his wit and invention.'

Mere's eulogy, 1598.

Of the many testimonies paid to Shakespeare's literary reputation at this period of his career, the most striking was that of Francis Meres. Meres was a learned graduate of Cambridge University, a divine and schoolmaster, who brought out in 1598 a collection of apophthegms on morals, religion, and literature which he entitled 'Palladis Tamia.' In the book he interpolated 'A comparative discourse of our English poets with the Greek, Latin, and Italian poets,' and there exhaustively surveyed contemporary literary effort in England. Shakespeare figured in Meres's pages as the greatest man of letters of the day. 'The Muses would speak Shakespeare's fine filed phrase,' Meres asserted, 'if they could speak English.' 'Among the English,' he declared, 'he was the most excellent in both kinds for the stage' (*i.e.* tragedy and comedy). The titles of six comedies ('Two Gentlemen of Verona, 'Errors,' 'Love's Labour's Lost,' 'Love's Labour's Won,' 'Midsummer Night's Dream,' and 'Merchant of Venice') and of six tragedies ('Richard II,' 'Richard III,' 'Henry IV,' 'King John,' 'Titus,' and 'Romeo and Juliet') were set forth, and mention followed of his 'Venus and Adonis,' his 'Lucrece,' and his 'sugred sonnets among his private friends.' These were cited as proof 'that the sweet witty soul of Ovid lives in mellifluous and honey-tongued Shakespeare.' In the same year a rival poet, Richard Barnfield, in 'Poems in divers Humors,' predicted immortality for Shakespeare with no less confidence.

And Shakespeare, thou whose honey-flowing vein
(Pleasing the world) thy Praises doth obtain,
Whose *Venus* and whose *Lucrece* (sweet and chaste)
Thy name in Fame's immortal Book have placed,
Live ever you, at least in fame live ever:
Well may the Body die, but Fame dies never.

Value of his name to publishers.

Shakespeare's name was thenceforth of value to unprincipled publishers, and they sought to palm off on their customers as his work the productions of inferior pens. As early as 1595, Thomas Creede, the surreptitious printer of 'Henry V' and the 'Merry Wives,' had issued the crude 'Tragedie of Locrine, as 'newly set foorth, overseene and corrected. By W. S.' It appropriated many passages from an older piece called 'Selimus,' which was possibly by Greene and certainly came into being long before Shakespeare had written a line of blank verse. The same initials—'W.S.' —figured on the title-page of 'The True Chronicle Historie of Thomas, Lord Cromwell,' which was licensed on August 11, 1602, was printed for William Jones in that year, and was reprinted verbatim by Thomas Snodham in 1613. On the title-page of the comedy entitled 'The Puritaine, or the Widdow of Watling Streete,' which George Eld printed in 1607, 'W.S.' was again stated to be the author. Shakespeare's full name appeared on the title-pages of 'The Life of Oldcastle' in 1600 (printed for T[homas] P[avier]), of 'The London Prodigall' in 1605 (printed by T. C. for Nathaniel Butter), and of 'The Yorkshire Tragedy' in 1608 (by R. B. for Thomas Pavier). None of these six plays have any internal claim to Shakespeare's authorship; nevertheless all were uncritically included in the third folio of his collected works,(1664). Schlegel and a few other critics of repute have, on no grounds that merit acceptance, detected signs of Shakespeare's genuine work in one of the six, 'The Yorkshire Tragedy;' it is 'a coarse, crude, and vigorous impromptu,' which is clearly by a far less experienced hand.

The fraudulent practice of crediting Shakespeare with valueless plays from the pens of comparatively dull-witted contemporaries was in vogue among enterprising traders in literature both early and late in the seventeenth century. The worthless old play on the subject of King John was attributed to Shakespeare in the reissues of 1611 and 1622. Humphrey Moseley, a reckless publisher of a later period, fraudulently entered on the 'Stationers' Register' on September 9, 1653, two pieces which he represented to be in whole or in part by Shakespeare, *viz.* 'The Merry Devill of Edmonton' and the 'History of Cardenio,' a share in which was assigned to Fletcher. 'The Merry Devill of Edmonton,' which was produced on the stage before the close of the sixteenth century, was entered on the 'Stationers' Register,' October 22, 1607, and was first published anonymously in 1608; it is a delightful comedy, abounding in both humour and romantic sentiment; at times it recalls scenes of the 'Merry Wives of Windsor,' but no sign of Shakespeare's workmanship is apparent. The 'History of Cardenio' is not extant. Francis Kirkman, another active London publisher, who first printed William Rowley's 'Birth of Merlin' in 1662, described it on the title-page as 'written by William Shakespeare and William Rowley;' it was reprinted at Halle in a so-called 'Collection of pseudo-Shakespearean plays' in 1887.

'The Passionate Pilgrim.'

But poems no less than plays, in which Shakespeare had no hand, were deceptively placed to his credit as soon as his fame was established. In 1599 William Jaggard, a well-known pirate publisher, issued a poetic anthology which he entitled 'The Passionate Pilgrim, by W. Shakespeare.' The volume opened with two sonnets by Shakespeare which were not previously in print, and there followed three poems drawn from the already published 'Love's Labour's Lost;' but the bulk of the volume was by Richard Barnfield and others. A third edition of the 'Passionate Pilgrim' was printed in 1612 with unaltered title-page, although the incorrigible Jaggard had added two new poems which he silently filched from Thomas Heywood's 'Troia Britannica.' Heywood called attention to his own grievance in the dedicatory epistle before his 'Apology for Actors' (1612), and he added that Shakespeare resented the more substantial injury which the publisher had done him. ‘I know,’ wrote Heywood of Shakespeare, ‘[he was] much offended with M. Jaggard that (altogether unknown to him) presumed to make so bold with his name.’ In the result the publisher seems to have removed Shakespeare’s name from the title-page of a few copies. This is the only instance on record of a protest on Shakespeare’s part against the many injuries which he suffered at the hands of contemporary publishers.

‘The Phœnix and the Turtle.’

In 1601 Shakespeare’s full name was appended to ‘a poetical essaie on the Phœnix and the Turtle,’ which was published by Edward Blount in an appendix to Robert Chester’s ‘Love’s Martyr, or Rosalins complaint, allegorically shadowing the Truth of Love in the Constant Fate of the Phœnix and Turtle.’ The drift of Chester’s crabbed verse is not clear, nor can the praise of perspicuity be allowed to the appendix to which Shakespeare contributed, together with Marston, Chapman, Ben Jonson, and ‘Ignoto.’ The appendix is introduced by a new title-page running thus: ‘Hereafter follow diverse poeticall Essaies on the former subject, viz: the Turtle and Phœnix. Done by the best and chiefest of our modern writers, with their names subscribed to their particular workes: never before extant.’ Shakespeare’s alleged contribution consists of thirteen four-lined stanzas in trochaics, each line being of seven syllables, with the rhymes disposed as in Tennyson’s ‘In Memoriam.’ The concluding ‘threnos’ is in five three-lined stanzas, also in trochaics, each stanza having a single rhyme. The poet describes in enigmatic language the obsequies of the Phœnix and the Turtle-dove, who had been united in life by the ties of a purely spiritual love. The poem may be a mere play of fancy without recondite intention, or it may be of allegorical import; but whether it bear relation to pending ecclesiastical, political, or metaphysical controversy, or whether it interpret popular grief for the death of some leaders of contemporary society, is not easily determined. Happily Shakespeare wrote nothing else of like character.

<<span id="filepos0041076522"> a>XII—THE PRACTICAL AFFAIRS OF LIFE

Shakespeare’s practical temperament.

Shakespeare, in middle life, brought to practical affairs a singularly sane and sober temperament. In ‘Ratseis Ghost’ (1605), an anecdotal biography of Gamaliel Ratsey, a notorious highwayman, who was hanged at Bedford on March 26, 1605, the highwayman is represented as compelling a troop of actors whom he met by chance on the road to perform in his presence. At the close of the performance Ratsey, according to the memoir, addressed himself to a leader of the company, and cynically urged him to practise the utmost frugality in London. ‘When thou feelest thy purse well lined (the counsellor proceeded), buy thee some place or lordship in the country that, growing weary of playing, thy money may there bring thee to dignity and reputation.’ Whether or no Ratsey’s biographer consciously identified the highwayman’s auditor with Shakespeare, it was the prosaic course of conduct marked out by Ratsey that Shakespeare literally followed. As soon as his position in his profession was assured, he devoted his energies to re-establishing the fallen fortunes of his family in his native place, and to acquiring for himself and his successors the status of gentlefolk.

His father’s difficulties.

His father’s pecuniary embarrassments had steadily increased since his son’s departure. Creditors harassed him unceasingly. In 1587 one Nicholas Lane pursued him for a debt for which he had become liable as surety for his brother Henry, who was still farming their father’s lands at Snitterfield. Through 1588 and 1589 John Shakespeare retaliated with pertinacity on a debtor named John Tompson. But in 1591 a creditor, Adrian Quiney, obtained a writ of distraint against him, and although in 1592 he attested inventories taken on the death of two neighbours, Ralph Shaw and Henry Field, father of the London printer, he was on December 25 of the same year ‘presented’ as a recusant for absenting himself from church. The commissioners reported that his absence was probably due to ‘fear of process for debt.’ He figures for the last time in the proceedings of the local court, in his customary *rôle* of defendant, on March 9, 1595. He was then joined with two fellow traders—Philip Green, a chandler, and Henry Rogers, a butcher—as defendant in a suit brought by Adrian Quiney and Thomas Barker for the recovery of the sum of five pounds. Unlike his partners in the litigation, his name is not followed in the record by a mention of his calling, and when the suit reached a later stage his name was omitted altogether. These may be viewed as indications that in the course of the proceedings he finally retired from trade, which had been of late prolific in disasters for him. In January 1596-7 he conveyed a slip of land attached to his dwelling in Henley Street to one

George Badger.

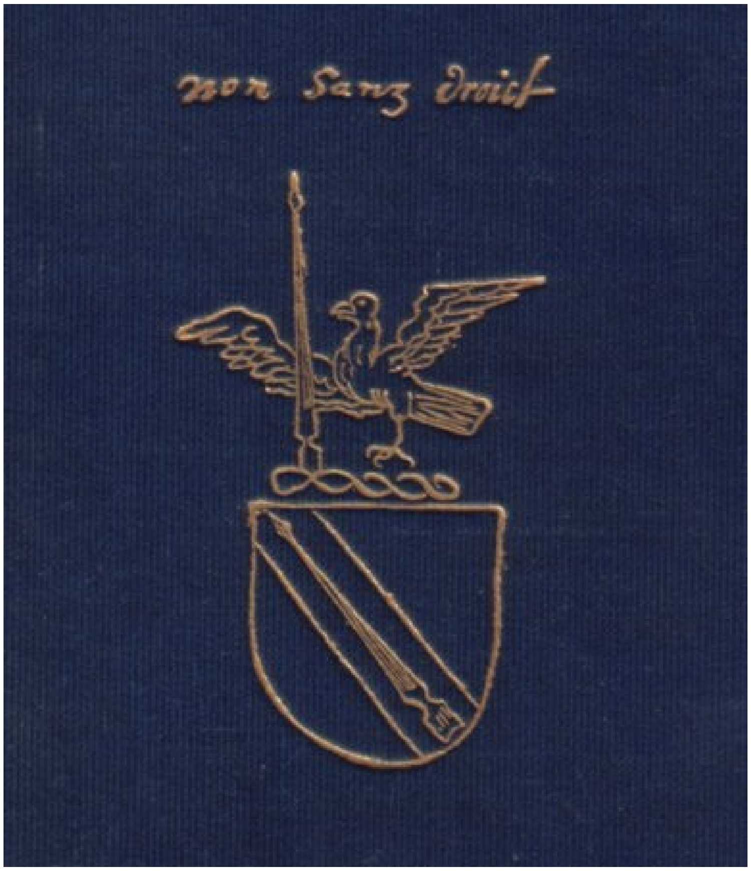
His wife’s debt.

There is a likelihood that the poet’s wife fared, in the poet’s absence, no better than his father. The only contemporary mention made of her between her marriage in 1582 and her husband’s death in 1616 is as the borrower at an unascertained date (evidently before 1595) of forty shillings from Thomas Whittington, who had formerly been her father’s shepherd. The money was unpaid when Whittington died in 1601, and he directed his executor to recover the sum from the poet and distribute it among the poor of Stratford.

It was probably in 1596 that Shakespeare returned, after nearly eleven years’ absence, to his native town, and worked a revolution in the affairs of his family. The prosecutions of his father in the local court ceased. Thenceforth the poet’s relations with Stratford were uninterrupted. He still resided in London for most of the year; but until the close of his professional career he paid the town at least one annual visit, and he was always formally described as ‘of Stratford-on-Avon, gentleman.’ He was no doubt there on August 11, 1596, when his only son, Hamnet, was buried in the parish church; the boy was eleven and a half years old.

The coat-of-arms.

At the same date the poet’s father, despite his pecuniary embarrassments, took a step, by way of regaining his prestige, which must be assigned to the poet’s intervention. He made application to the College of Heralds for a coat-of-arms. Then, as now, the heralds when bestowing new coats-of-arms commonly credited the applicant’s family with an imaginary antiquity, and little reliance need be placed on the biographical or genealogical statements alleged in grants of arms. The poet’s father or the poet himself when first applying to the College stated that John Shakespeare, in 1568, while he was bailiff of Stratford, and while he was by virtue of that office a justice of the peace, had obtained from Robert Cook, then Clarenceux herald, a ‘pattern’ or sketch of an armorial coat. This allegation is not noticed in the records of the College, and may be a formal fiction designed by John Shakespeare and his son to recommend their claim to the notice of the heralds. The negotiations of 1568, if they were not apocryphal, were certainly abortive; otherwise there would have been no necessity for the further action of 1596. In any case, on October 20, 1596, a draft, which remains in the College of Arms, was prepared under the direction of William Dethick, Garter King-of-Arms, granting John's request for a coat-of-arms. Garter stated, with characteristic vagueness, that he had been 'by credible report' informed that the applicant's 'parentes and late antecessors were for theire valeant and faithfull service advanced and rewarded by the most prudent prince King Henry the Seventh of famous memories sythence whiche tyme they have continewed at those partes [*i.e.* Warwickshire] in good reputacion and credit;' and that 'the said John [had] maryed Mary, daughter and heiress of Robert Arden, of Wilmcote, gent.' In consideration of these titles to honour, Garter declared that he assigned to Shakespeare this shield, viz.: 'Gold, on a bend sable, a spear of the first, and for his crest or cognizance a falcon, his wings displayed argent, standing on a wreath of his colours, supporting a spear gold steeled as aforesaid.' In the margin of this draft-grant there is a pen sketch of the arms and crest, and above them is written the motto, 'Non Sans Droict.' A second copy of the draft, also dated in 1596, is extant at the College. The only alterations are the substitution of the word 'grandfather' for 'antecessors' in the account of John Shakespeare's ancestry, and the substitution of the word 'esquire' for 'gent' in the description of his wife's father, Robert Arden. At the foot of this draft, however, appeared some disconnected and unverifiable memoranda which John Shakespeare or his son had supplied to the heralds, to the effect that John had been bailiff of Stratford, had received a 'pattern' of a shield from Clarenceux Cook, was a man of substance, and had married into a worshipful family.



Neither of these drafts was fully executed. It may have been that the unduly favourable representations made to the College respecting John Shakespeare's social and pecuniary position excited suspicion even in the habitually credulous minds of the heralds, or those officers may have deemed the profession of the son, who was conducting the negotiation, a bar to completing the transaction. At any rate, Shakespeare and his father allowed three years to elapse before (as far as extant documents show) they made a further endeavour to secure the coveted distinction. In 1599 their efforts were crowned with success. Changes in the interval among the officials at the College may have facilitated the proceedings. In 1597 the Earl of Essex had become Earl Marshal and chief of the Heralds' College (the office had been in commission in 1596); while the great scholar and antiquary, William Camden, had joined the College, also in 1597, as Clarenceux King-of-Arms. The poet was favourably known to both Camden and the Earl of Essex, the close friend of the Earl of Southampton. His father's application now took a new form. No grant of arms was asked for. It was asserted without qualification that the coat, as set out in the draft-grants of 1596, had been *assigned* to John Shakespeare while he was bailiff, and the heralds were merely invited to give him a 'recognition' or 'exemplification' of it. At the same time he asked permission for himself to impale, and his eldest son and other children to quarter, on ‘his ancient coat-of-arms’ that of the Ardens of Wilmcote, his wife’s family. The College officers were characteristically complacent. A draft was prepared under the hands of Dethick, the Garter King, and of Camden, the Clarenceux King, granting the required ‘exemplification’ and authorising the required impalement and quartering. On one point only did Dethick and Camden betray conscientious scruples. Shakespeare and his father obviously desired the heralds to recognise the title of Mary Shakespeare (the poet’s mother) to bear the arms of the great Warwickshire family of Arden, then seated at Park Hall. But the relationship, if it existed, was undetermined; the Warwickshire Ardens were gentry of influence in the county, and were certain to protest against any hasty assumption of identity between their line and that of the humble farmer of Wilmcote. After tricking the Warwickshire Arden coat in the margin of the draft-grant for the purpose of indicating the manner of its impalement, the heralds on second thoughts erased it. They substituted in their sketch the arms of an Arden family living at Alvanley in the distant county of Cheshire. With that stock there was no pretence that Robert Arden of Wilmcote was lineally connected; but the bearers of the Alvanley coat were unlikely to learn of its suggested impalement with the Shakespeare shield, and the heralds were less liable to the risk of litigation. But the Shakespeares wisely relieved the College of all anxiety by omitting to assume the Arden coat. The Shakespeare arms alone are displayed with full heraldic elaboration on the monument above the poet’s grave in Stratford Church; they alone appear on the seal and on the tombstone of his elder daughter, Mrs. Susanna Hall, impaled with the arms of her husband; and they alone were quartered by Thomas Nash, the first husband of the poet’s granddaughter, Elizabeth Hall.

Some objection was taken a few years later to the grant even of the Shakespeare shield, but it was based on vexatious grounds that could not be upheld. Early in the seventeenth century Ralph Brooke, who was York herald from 1593 till his death in 1625, and was long engaged in a bitter quarrel with his fellow officers at the College, complained that the arms ‘exemplified’ to Shakespeare usurped the coat of Lord Mauley, on whose shield ‘a bend sable’ also figured. Dethick and Camden, who were responsible for any breach of heraldic etiquette in the matter, answered that the Shakespeare shield bore no more resemblance to the Mauley coat than it did to that of the Harley and the Ferrers families, which also bore ‘a bend sable,’ but that in point of fact it differed conspicuously from all three by the presence of a spear on the ‘bend.’ Dethick and Camden added, with customary want of precision, that the person to whom the grant was made had ‘borne magistracy and was justice of peace at Stratford-on-Avon; he maried the daughter and heire of Arderne, and was able to maintain that Estate.’

Purchase of New Place.

Meanwhile, in 1597, the poet had taken openly in his own person a more effective step in the way of rehabilitating himself and his family in the eyes of his fellow townsmen. On May 4 he purchased the largest house in the town, known as New Place. It had been built by Sir Hugh Clopton more than a century before, and seems to have fallen into a ruinous condition. But Shakespeare paid for it, with two barns and two gardens, the then substantial sum of £60. Owing to the sudden death of the vendor, William Underhill, on July 7, 1597, the original transfer of the property was left at the time incomplete. Underhill’s son Fulk died a felon, and he was succeeded in the family estates by his brother Hercules, who on coming of age, May 1602, completed in a new deed the transfer of New Place to Shakespeare. On February 4, 1597-8, Shakespeare was described as a householder in Chapel Street ward, in which New Place was situated, and as the owner of ten quarters of corn. The inventory was made owing to the presence of famine in the town, and only two inhabitants were credited with a larger holding. In the same year (1598) he procured stone for the repair of the house, and before 1602 had planted a fruit orchard. He is traditionally said to have interested himself in the garden, and to have planted with his own hands a mulberry-tree, which was long a prominent feature of it. When this was cut down, in 1758, numerous relics were made from it, and were treated with an almost superstitious veneration. Shakespeare does not appear to have permanently settled at New Place till 1611. In 1609 the house, or part of it, was occupied by the town clerk, Thomas Greene, ‘alias Shakespeare,’ who claimed to be the poet’s cousin. His grandmother seems to have been a Shakespeare. He often acted as the poet’s legal adviser.

It was doubtless under their son’s guidance that Shakespeare’s father and mother set on foot in November 1597—six months after his acquisition of New Place—a lawsuit against John Lambert for the recovery of the mortgaged estate of Asbies in Wilmcote. The litigation dragged on for some years without result.

Appeals for aid from his fellow-townsmen.

Three letters written during 1598 by leading men at Stratford are still extant among the Corporation’s archives, and leave no doubt of the reputation for wealth and influence with which the purchase of New Place invested the poet in his fellow-townsmen’s eyes. Abraham Sturley, who was once bailiff, writing early in 1598, apparently to a brother in London, says: ‘This is one special remembrance from our father’s motion. It seemeth by him that our countryman, Mr. Shakspere, is willing to disburse some money upon some odd yardland or other at Shottery, or near about us: he thinketh it a very fit pattern to move him to deal in the matter of our tithes. By the instructions you can give him thereof, and by the friends he can make therefor, we think it a fair mark for him to shoot at, and would do us much good.’ Richard Quiney, another townsman, father of Thomas (afterwards one of Shakespeare’s two sons-in-law), was, in the autumn of the same year, harassed by debt, and on October 25 appealed to Shakespeare for a loan of money. ‘Loving countryman,’ the application ran, ‘I am bold of you as of a friend craving your help with xxx*li* .’ Quiney was staying at the Bell Inn in Carter Lane, London, and his main business in the metropolis was to procure exemption for the town of Stratford from the payment of a subsidy. Abraham Sturley, writing to Quiney from Stratford ten days later (on November 4, 1598), pointed out to him that since the town was wholly unable, in consequence of the dearth of corn, to pay the tax, he hoped ‘that our countryman, Mr. Wm. Shak., would procure us money, which I will like of, as I shall hear when and where, and how.’

Financial position before 1599.

The financial prosperity to which this correspondence and the transactions immediately preceding it point has been treated as one of the chief mysteries of Shakespeare’s career, but the difficulties are gratuitous. There is practically nothing in Shakespeare’s financial position that a study of the contemporary conditions of theatrical life does not fully explain. It was not until 1599, when the Globe Theatre was built, that he acquired any share in the profits of a playhouse. But his revenues as a successful dramatist and actor were by no means contemptible at an earlier date. His gains in the capacity of dramatist formed the smaller source of income. The highest price known to have been paid before 1599 to an author for a play by the manager of an acting company was £11; £6 was the lowest rate. A small additional gratuity—rarely apparently exceeding ten shillings—was bestowed on a dramatist whose piece on its first production was especially well received; and the author was by custom allotted, by way of ‘benefit,’ a certain proportion of the receipts of the theatre on the production of a play for the second time. Other sums, amounting at times to as much as £4, were bestowed on the author for revising and altering an old play for a revival. The nineteen plays which may be set to Shakespeare’s credit between 1591 and 1599, combined with such revising work as fell to his lot during those eight years, cannot consequently have brought him less than £200, or some £20 a year. Eight or nine of these plays were published during the period, but the publishers operated independently of the author, taking all the risks and, at the same time, all the receipts. The publication of Shakespeare’s plays in no way affected his monetary resources, although his friendly relations with the printer Field doubtless secured him, despite the absence of any copyright law, some part of the profits in the large and continuous sale of his poems.

But it was as an actor that at an early date he acquired a genuinely substantial and secure income. There is abundance of contemporary evidence to show that the stage was for an efficient actor an assured avenue to comparative wealth. In 1590 Robert Greene describes in his tract entitled ‘Never too Late’ a meeting with a player whom he took by his ‘outward habit’ to be ‘a gentleman of great living’ and a ‘substantial man.’ The player informed Greene that he had at the beginning of his career travelled on foot, bearing his theatrical properties on his back, but he prospered so rapidly that at the time of speaking ‘his very share in playing apparel would not be sold for £200.’ Among his neighbours ‘where he dwelt’ he was reputed able ‘at his proper cost to build a windmill.’ In the university play, ‘The Return from Parnassus’ (1601?), a poor student enviously complains of the wealth and position which a successful actor derived from his calling.

England affords those glorious vagabonds,
That carried erst their fardles on their backs,
Coursers to ride on through the gazing streets,
Sweeping it in their glaring satin suits,
And pages to attend their masterships;
With mouthing words that better wits had framed,
They purchase lands and now esquires are made.

The travelling actors, from whom the highwayman Gamaliel Ratsey extorted a free performance in 1604, were represented as men with the certainty of a rich competency in prospect. An efficient actor received in 1635 as large a regular salary as £180. The lowest known valuation set an actor’s wages at 3s. a day, or about £45 a year. Shakespeare’s emoluments as an actor before 1599 are not likely to have fallen below £100; while the remuneration due to performances at

Court or in noblemen's houses, if the accounts of 1594 be accepted as the basis of reckoning, added some £15.

Thus over £130 (equal to £1,040 of to-day) would be Shakespeare's average annual revenue before 1599. Such a sum would be regarded as a very large income in a country town. According to the author of 'Ratseis Ghost,' the actor, who may well have been meant for Shakespeare, practised in London a strict frugality, and there seems no reason why Shakespeare should not have been able in 1597 to draw from his savings £60 wherewith to buy New Place. His resources might well justify his fellow-townsmen's opinion of his wealth in 1598, and suffice between 1597 and 1599 to meet his expenses, in rebuilding the house, stocking the barns with grain, and conducting various legal proceedings. But, according to tradition, he had in the Earl of Southampton a wealthy and generous friend who on one occasion gave him a large gift of money to enable 'him to go through with' a purchase to which he had a mind. A munificent gift, added to professional gains, leaves nothing unaccounted for in Shakespeare's financial position before 1599.

Financial position after 1599.

After 1599 his sources of income from the theatre greatly increased. In 1635 the heirs of the actor Richard Burbage were engaged in litigation respecting their proprietary rights in the two playhouses, the Globe and the Blackfriars theatres. The documents relating to this litigation supply authentic, although not very detailed, information of Shakespeare's interest in theatrical property. Richard Burbage, with his brother Cuthbert, erected at their sole cost the Globe Theatre in the winter of 1598-9, and the Blackfriars Theatre, which their father was building at the time of his death in 1597, was also their property. After completing the Globe they leased out, for twenty-one years, shares in the receipts of the theatre to 'those deserving men Shakespeare, Hemings, Condell, Philips, and others.' All the shareholders named were, like Burbage, active members of Shakespeare's company of players. The shares, which numbered sixteen in all, carried with them the obligation of providing for the expenses of the playhouse, and were doubtless in the first instance freely bestowed. Hamlet claims, in the play scene (III. ii. 293), that the success of his improvised tragedy deserved to get him 'a fellowship in a cry of players'—a proof that a successful dramatist might reasonably expect such a reward for a conspicuous effort. In 'Hamlet,' moreover, both a share and a half-share of 'a fellowship in a cry of players' are described as assets of enviable value (III. ii. 294-6). How many shares originally fell to Shakespeare there is no means of determining. Records of later subdivisions suggest that they did not exceed two. The Globe was an exceptionally large and popular playhouse. It would accommodate some two thousand spectators, whose places cost them sums varying between twopence and half a crown. The receipts were therefore considerable, hardly less than £25 daily, or some £8,000 a year. According to the documents of 1635, an actor-sharer at the Globe received above £200 a year on each share, besides his actor's salary of £180. Thus Shakespeare drew from the Globe Theatre, at the lowest estimate, more than £500 a year in all.

His interest in the Blackfriars Theatre was comparatively unimportant, and is less easy to estimate. The often quoted documents on which Collier depended to prove him a substantial shareholder in that playhouse have long been proved to be forgeries. The pleas in the lawsuit of 1635 show that the Burbages, the owners, leased the Blackfriars Theatre after its establishment in 1597 for a long term of years to the master of the Children of the Chapel, but bought out the lessee at the end of 1609, and then 'placed' in it 'men-players which were Hemings, Condell, Shakespeare, etc.' To these and other actors they allotted shares in the receipts, the shares numbering eight in all. The profits were far smaller than at the Globe, and if Shakespeare held one share (certainty on the point is impossible), it added not more than £100 a year to his income, and that not until 1610.

Later income.

His remuneration as dramatist between 1599 and 1611 was also by no means contemptible. Prices paid to dramatists for plays rose rapidly in the early years of the seventeenth century, while the value of the author's 'benefits' grew with the growing vogue of the theatre. The exceptional popularity of Shakespeare's plays after 1599 gave him the full advantage of higher rates of pecuniary reward in all directions, and the seventeen plays which were produced by him between that year and the close of his professional career in 1611 probably brought him an average return of £20 each or £340 in all—nearly £30 a year. At the same time the increase in the number of Court performances under James I, and the additional favour bestowed on Shakespeare's company, may well have given that source of income the enhanced value of £20 a year.

Thus Shakespeare in the later period of his life was earning above £600 a year in money of the period. With so large a professional income he could easily, with good management, have completed those purchases of houses and land at Stratford on which he laid out, between 1599 and 1613, a total sum of £970, or an annual average of £70. These properties, it must be remembered, represented investments, and he drew rent from most of them. He traded, too, in agricultural produce. There is nothing inherently improbable in the statement of John Ward, the seventeenth-century vicar of Stratford, that in his last years ‘he spent at the rate of a thousand a year, as I have heard,’ although we may reasonably make allowance for exaggeration in the round figures.

Incomes of fellow-actors.

Shakespeare realised his theatrical shares several years before his death in 1616, when he left, according to his will, £350 in money in addition to an extensive real estate and numerous personal belongings. There was nothing exceptional in this comparative affluence. His friends and fellow-actors, Heming and Condell, amassed equally large, if not larger, fortunes. Burbage died in 1619 worth £300 in land, besides personal property; while a contemporary actor and theatrical proprietor, Edward Alleyn, purchased the manor of Dulwich for £10,000 (in money of his own day), and devoted it, with much other property, to public uses, at the same time as he made ample provision for his family out of the residue of his estate. Gifts from patrons may have continued occasionally to augment Shakespeare’s resources, but his wealth can be satisfactorily assigned to better attested agencies. There is no ground for treating it as of mysterious origin.

Formation of the estate at Stratford 1601-10.

Between 1599 and 1611, while London remained Shakespeare’s chief home, he built up at Stratford a large landed estate which his purchase of New Place had inaugurated. In 1601 his father died, being buried on September 8. He apparently left no will, and the poet, as the eldest son, inherited the houses in Henley Street, the only portion of the property of the elder Shakespeare or of his wife which had not been alienated to creditors. Shakespeare permitted his mother to reside in one of the Henley Street houses till her death (she was buried September 9, 1608), and he derived a modest rent from the other. On May 1, 1602, he purchased for £320 of the rich landowners William and John Combe of Stratford 107 acres of arable land near the town. The conveyance was delivered, in the poet’s absence, to his brother Gilbert, ‘to the use of the within named William Shakespere.’ A third purchase quickly followed. On September 28, 1602, at a court baron of the manor of Rowington, one Walter Getley transferred to the poet a cottage and garden which were situated at Chapel Lane, opposite the lower grounds of New Place. They were held practically in fee-simple at the annual rental of 2s. 6d. It appears from the roll that Shakespeare did not attend the manorial court held on the day fixed for the transfer of the property at Rowington, and it was consequently stipulated then that the estate should remain in the hands of the lady of the manor until he completed the purchase in person. At a later period he was admitted to the copyhold, and he settled the remainder on his two daughters in fee. In April 1610 he purchased from the Combes 20 acres of pasture land, to add to the 107 of arable land that he had acquired of the same owners in 1602.

The Stratford tithes.

As early as 1598 Abraham Sturley had suggested that Shakespeare should purchase the tithes of Stratford. Seven years later, on July 24, 1605, he bought for £440 of Ralph Huband an unexpired term of thirty-one years of a ninety-two years' lease of a moiety of the tithes of Stratford, Old Stratford, Bishopton, and Welcombe. The moiety was subject to a rent of £17 to the corporation, who were the reversionary owners on the lease's expiration, and of £5 to John Barker, the heir of a former proprietor. The investment brought Shakespeare, under the most favourable circumstances, no more than an annuity of £38, and the refusal of persons who claimed an interest in the other moiety to acknowledge the full extent of their liability to the corporation led that body to demand from the poet payments justly due from others. After 1609 he joined with two interested persons, Richard Lane of Awston and Thomas Greene, the town clerk of Stratford, in a suit in Chancery to determine the exact responsibilities of all the tithe-owners, and in 1612 they presented a bill of complaint to Lord-chancellor Ellesmere, with what result is unknown. His acquisition of a part-ownership in the tithes was fruitful in legal embarrassments.

Recovery of small debts.

Shakespeare inherited his father's love of litigation, and stood rigorously by his rights in all his business relations. In March 1600 he recovered in London a debt of £7 from one John Clayton. In July 1604, in the local court at Stratford, he sued one Philip Rogers, to whom he had supplied since the preceding March malt to the value of £1 19s. 10d, and had on June 25 lent 2s. in cash. Rogers paid back 6s., and Shakespeare sought the balance of the account, £1 15s. 10d. During 1608 and 1609 he was at law with another fellow-townsman, John

Addenbroke. On February 15, 1609, Shakespeare, who was apparently represented by his solicitor and kinsman Thomas Greene, obtained judgment from a jury against Addenbroke for the payment of £6, and £1 5s. costs, but Addenbroke left the town, and the triumph proved barren. Shakespeare avenged himself by proceeding against one Thomas Horneby, who had acted as the absconding debtor's bail.

<<span id="filepos0041120076"> a>XIII—MATURITY OF GENIUS

Literary work in 1599.

With an inconsistency that is more apparent than real, the astute business transactions of these years (1597-1611) synchronise with the production of Shakespeare's noblest literary work—of his most sustained and serious efforts in comedy, tragedy, and romance. In 1599, after abandoning English history with 'Henry V,' he addressed himself to the composition of his three most perfect essays in comedy—'Much Ado about Nothing,' 'As You Like It,' and 'Twelfth Night.' Their good-humoured tone seems to reveal their author in his happiest frame of mind; in each the gaiety and tenderness of youthful womanhood are exhibited in fascinating union; while Shakespeare's lyric gift bred no sweeter melodies than the songs with which the three plays are interspersed. At the same time each comedy enshrines such penetrating reflections on mysterious problems of life as mark the stage of maturity in the growth of the author's intellect. The first two of the three plays were entered on the 'Stationers' Registers' before August 4, 1600, on which day a prohibition was set on their publication, as well as on the publication of 'Henry V' and of Ben Jonson's 'Every Man in his Humour.' This was one of the many efforts of the acting company to stop the publication of plays in the belief that the practice was injurious to their rights. The effort was only partially successful. 'Much Ado,' like 'Henry V,' was published before the close of the year. Neither 'As You Like It' nor 'Twelfth Night,' however, was printed till it appeared in the Folio.

'Much Ado.'

In 'Much Ado,' which appears to have been written in 1599, the brilliant and spirited comedy of Benedick and Beatrice, and of the blundering watchmen

Dogberry and Verges, is wholly original; but the sombre story of Hero and Claudio, about which the comic incident revolves, is drawn from an Italian source, either from Bandello (novel. xxii.) through Belleforest's 'Histoires Tragiques,' or from Ariosto's 'Orlando Furioso' through Sir John Harington's translation (canto v.) Ariosto's version, in which the injured heroine is called Ginevra, and her lover Ariodante, had been dramatised before. According to the accounts of the Court revels, 'A Historie of Ariodante and Ginevra was showed before her Majestie on Shrovetuesdaie at night' in 1583. Throughout Shakespeare's play the ludicrous and serious aspects of humanity are blended with a convincing naturalness. The popular comic actor William Kemp filled the role of Dogberry, and Cowley appeared as Verges. In both the Quarto of 1600 and the Folio of 1623 these actors' names are prefixed by a copyist's error to some of the speeches allotted to the two characters (act iv. scene ii.)

'As You Like It.'

'As You Like It,' which quickly followed, is a dramatic adaptation of Lodge's romance, 'Rosalynde, Euphues Golden Legacie' (1590), but Shakespeare added three new characters of first-rate interest—Jaques, the meditative cynic; Touchstone, the most carefully elaborated of all Shakespeare's fools; and the hoyden Audrey. Hints for the scene of Orlando's encounter with Charles the Wrestler, and for Touchstone's description of the diverse shapes of a lie, were clearly drawn from a book called 'Saviolo's Practise,' a manual of the art of self-defence, which appeared in 1595 from the pen of Vincentio Saviolo, an Italian fencing-master in the service of the Earl of Essex. None of Shakespeare's comedies breathes a more placid temper or approaches more nearly to a pastoral drama. Yet there is no lack of intellectual or poetic energy in the enunciation of the contemplative philosophy which is cultivated in the Forest of Arden. In Rosalind, Celia, Phœbe, and Audrey, four types of youthful womanhood are contrasted with the liveliest humour.

'Twelfth Night.'

The date of 'Twelfth Night' is probably 1600, and its name, which has no reference to the story, doubtless commemorates the fact that it was designed for a Twelfth Night celebration. 'The new map with the augmentation of the Indies,' spoken of by Maria (III. ii. 86), was a respectful reference to the great map of the world or 'hydrographical description' which was first issued with Hakluyt's 'Voyages' in 1599 or 1600, and first disclosed the full extent of recent explorations of the ‘Indies’ in the New World and the Old. Like the ‘Comedy of Errors,’ ‘Twelfth Night’ achieved the distinction, early in its career, of a presentation at an Inn of Court. It was produced at Middle Temple Hall on February 2, 1601-2, and Manningham, a barrister who was present, described the performance. Manningham wrote that the piece was ‘much like the “Comedy of Errors” or “Menechmi” in Plautus, but most like and neere to that in Italian called “Inganni.”’ Two sixteenth-century Italian plays entitled ‘Gl’ Inganni’ (‘The Cheats’), and a third called ‘Gl’ Ingannati,’ bear resemblance to ‘Twelfth Night.’ It is possible that Shakespeare had recourse to the last, which was based on Bandello’s novel of Nicuola, was first published at Siena in 1538, and became popular throughout Italy. But in all probability he drew the story solely from the ‘Historie of Apolonius and Silla,’ which was related in ‘Riche his Farewell to Militarie Profession’ (1581). The author of that volume, Barnabe Riche, translated the tale either direct from Bandello’s Italian novel or from the French rendering of Bandello’s work in Belleforest’s ‘Histoires Tragiques.’ Romantic pathos, as in ‘Much Ado,’ is the dominant note of the main plot of ‘Twelfth Night,’ but Shakespeare neutralises the tone of sadness by his mirthful portrayal of Malvolio, Sir Toby Belch, Sir Andrew Aguecheek, Fabian, the clown Feste, and Maria, all of whom are his own creations. The ludicrous gravity of Malvolio proved exceptionally popular on the stage.

‘Julius Cæsar,’ 1601.

In 1601 Shakespeare made a new departure by drawing a plot from North’s noble translation of Plutarch’s ‘Lives.’ Plutarch is the king of biographers, and the deference which Shakespeare paid his work by adhering to the phraseology wherever it was practicable illustrates his literary discrimination. On Plutarch’s lives of Julius Cæsar, Brutus, and Antony, Shakespeare based his historical tragedy of ‘Julius Cæsar.’ Weever, in 1601, in his ‘Mirror of Martyrs,’ plainly refers to the masterly speech in the Forum at Caæsar’s funeral which Shakespeare put into Antony’s mouth. There is no suggestion of the speech in Plutarch; hence the composition of ‘Julius Cæsar’ may be held to have preceded the issue of Weever’s book in 1601. The general topic was already familiar on the stage. Polonius told Hamlet how, when he was at the university, he ‘did enact Julius Cæsar; he was kill’d in the Capitol: Brutus kill’d him.’ A play of the same title was known as early as 1589, and was acted in 1594 by Shakespeare’s company. Shakespeare’s piece is a penetrating study of political life, and, although the murder and funeral of Cæsar form the central episode and not the climax, the tragedy is thoroughly well planned and balanced. Cæsar is ironically depicted in his dotage. The characters of Brutus, Antony, and Cassius, the real heroes of the action, are exhibited with faultless art. The fifth act, which presents the battle of Philippi in progress, proves ineffective on the stage, but the reader never relaxes his interest in the fortunes of the vanquished Brutus, whose death is the catastrophe.

While ‘Julius Cæsar’ was winning its first laurels on the stage, the fortunes of the London theatres were menaced by two manifestations of unreasoning prejudice on the part of the public. The earlier manifestation, although speciously the more serious, was in effect innocuous. The puritans of the city of London had long agitated for the suppression of all theatrical performances, and it seemed as if the agitators triumphed when they induced the Privy Council on June 22, 1600, to issue to the officers of the Corporation of London and to the justices of the peace of Middlesex and Surrey an order forbidding the maintenance of more than two playhouses—one in Middlesex (Alleyn’s newly erected playhouse, the ‘Fortune’ in Cripplegate), and the other in Surrey (the ‘Globe’ on the Bankside). The contemplated restriction would have deprived very many actors of employment, and driven others to seek a precarious livelihood in the provinces. Happily, disaster was averted by the failure of the municipal authorities and the magistrates of Surrey and Middlesex to make the order operative. All the London theatres that were already in existence went on their way unchecked.

The strife between adult and boy actors.

More calamitous was a temporary reverse of fortune which Shakespeare’s company, in common with the other companies of adult actors, suffered soon afterwards at the hands, not of fanatical enemies of the drama, but of playgoers who were its avowed supporters. The company of boy-actors, chiefly recruited from the choristers of the Chapel Royal, and known as ‘the Children of the Chapel,’ had since 1597 been installed at the new theatre in Blackfriars, and after 1600 the fortunes of the veterans, who occupied rival stages, were put in jeopardy by the extravagant outburst of public favour that the boys’ performances evoked. In ‘Hamlet,’ the play which followed ‘Julius Cæsar,’ Shakespeare pointed out the perils of the situation. The adult actors, Shakespeare asserted, were prevented from performing in London through no falling off in their efficiency, but by the ‘late innovation’ of the children’s vogue. They were compelled to go on tour in the provinces, at the expense of their revenues and reputation, because ‘an aery [*i.e.* nest] of children, little eyases [*i.e.* young hawks],' dominated the theatrical world, and monopolised public applause. 'These are now the fashion,' the dramatist lamented, and he made the topic the text of a reflection on the fickleness of public taste:

Hamlet. Do the boys carry it away?

Rosencrantz. Ay, that they do, my lord, Hercules and his load too.

Hamlet. It is not very strange; for my uncle is King of Denmark, and those that would make mows at him while my father lived, give twenty, forty, fifty, a hundred ducats apiece for his picture in little.

Jealousies in the ranks of the dramatists accentuated the actors' difficulties. Ben Jonson was, at the end of the sixteenth century, engaged in a fierce personal quarrel with two of his fellow dramatists, Marston and Dekker. The adult actors generally avowed sympathy with Jonson's foes. Jonson, by way of revenge, sought an offensive alliance with 'the Children of the Chapel.' Under careful tuition the boys proved capable of performing much the same pieces as the men. To 'the children' Jonson offered in 1600 his comical satire of 'Cynthia's Revels,' in which he held up to ridicule Dekker, Marston, and their actor-friends. The play, when acted by 'the children' at the Blackfriars Theatre, was warmly welcomed by the audience. Next year Jonson repeated his manœuvre with greater effect. He learnt that Marston and Dekker were conspiring with the actors of Shakespeare's company to attack him in a piece called 'Satiro-Mastix, or the Untrussing of the Humourous Poet.' He anticipated their design by producing, again with 'the Children of the Chapel,' his 'Poetaster,' which was throughout a venomous invective against his enemies—dramatists and actors alike. Shakespeare's company retorted by producing Dekker and Marston's 'Satiro-Mastix' at the Globe Theatre next year. But Jonson's action had given new life to the vogue of the children. Playgoers took sides in the struggle, and their attention was for a season riveted, to the exclusion of topics more germane to their province, on the actors' and dramatists' boisterous war of personalities.

Shakespeare's references to the struggle.

In his detailed references to the conflict in 'Hamlet' Shakespeare protested against the abusive comments on the men-actors of 'the common stages' or public theatres which were put into the children's mouths. Rosencrantz declared that the children ‘so berattle [*i.e.* assail] the common stages—so they call them—that many wearing rapiers are afraid of goose-quills, and dare scarce come thither [*i.e.* to the public theatres].’ Hamlet in pursuit of the theme pointed out that the writers who encouraged the vogue of the ‘child-actors’ did them a poor service, because when the boys should reach men’s estate they would run the risk, if they continued on the stage, of the same insults and neglect which now threatened their seniors.

Hamlet. What are they children? Who maintains ’em? how are they escoted [*i.e.* paid]? Will they pursue the quality [*i.e.* the actor’s profession] no longer than they can sing? Will they not say afterwards, if they should grow themselves to common players—as it is most like, if their means are no better—their writers do them wrong to make them exclaim against their own succession?

Rosencrantz. Faith, there has been much to do on both sides, and the nation holds it no sin to tarre [*i.e.* incite] them to controversy: there was for a while no money bid for argument, unless the poet and the player went to cuffs in the question.

Hamlet. Is it possible?

Guildenstern. O, there has been much throwing about of brains!

Shakespeare clearly favoured the adult actors in their rivalry with the boys, but he wrote more like a disinterested spectator than an active partisan when he made specific reference to the strife between the poet Ben Jonson and the players. In the prologue to ‘Troilus and Cressida’ which he penned in 1603, he warned his hearers, with obvious allusion to Ben Jonson’s battles, that he hesitated to identify himself with either actor or poet. Passages in Ben Jonson’s ‘Poetaster,’ moreover, pointedly suggest that Shakespeare cultivated so assiduously an attitude of neutrality that Jonson acknowledged him to be qualified for the role of peacemaker. The gentleness of disposition with which Shakespeare was invariably credited by his friends would have well fitted him for such an office.

Jonson’s ‘Poetaster.’

Jonson figures personally in the ‘Poetaster’ under the name of Horace.

Episodically Horace and his friends, Tibullus and Gallus, eulogise the work and genius of another character, Virgil, in terms so closely resembling those which Jonson is known to have applied to Shakespeare that they may be regarded as intended to apply to him (act v. sc. i.) Jonson points out that Virgil, by his penetrating intuition, achieved the great effects which others laboriously sought to reach through rules of art.

His learning labours not the school-like gloss
That most consists of echoing words and terms . . .
Nor any long or far-fetched circumstance—
Wrapt in the curious generalities of arts—
But a direct and analytic sum
Of all the worth and first effects of arts.
And for his poesy, ’tis so rammed with life
That it shall gather strength of life with being,
And live hereafter, more admired than now.

Tibullus gives Virgil equal credit for having in his writings touched with telling truth upon every vicissitude of human existence.

That which he hath writ
Is with such judgment laboured and distilled
Through all the needful uses of our lives
That, could a man remember but his lines,
He should not touch at any serious point
But he might breathe his spirit out of him.

Finally, Virgil in the play is nominated by Cæsar to act as judge between Horace and his libellers, and he advises the administration of purging pills to the offenders. That course of treatment is adopted with satisfactory results.

Shakespeare’s alleged partisanship.

As against this interpretation, one contemporary witness has been held to testify that Shakespeare stemmed the tide of Jonson’s embittered activity by no peacemaking interposition, but by joining his foes, and by administering to him, with their aid, the identical course of medicine which in the ‘Poetaster’ is meted out to his enemies. In the same year (1601) as the ‘Poetaster’ was produced, ‘The Return from Parnassus’—a third piece in a trilogy of plays—was ‘acted by the students in St. John's College, Cambridge.' In this piece, as in its two predecessors, Shakespeare received, both as a playwright and a poet, high commendation, although his poems were judged to reflect somewhat too largely 'love's lazy foolish languishment.' The actor Burbage was introduced in his own name instructing an aspirant to the actor's profession in the part of Richard the Third, and the familiar lines from Shakespeare's play—

Now is the winter of our discontent
Made glorious summer by this sun of York—

are recited by the pupil as part of his lesson. Subsequently in a prose dialogue between Shakespeare's fellow-actors Burbage and Kempe, Kempe remarks of university dramatists, 'Why, here's our fellow Shakespeare puts them all down; aye, and Ben Jonson, too. O! that Ben Jonson is a pestilent fellow. He brought up Horace, giving the poets a pill; but our fellow Shakespeare hath given him a purge that made him bewray his credit.' Burbage adds: 'He is a shrewd fellow indeed.' This perplexing passage has been held to mean that Shakespeare took a decisive part against Jonson in the controversy with Dekker and Dekker's actor friends. But such a conclusion is nowhere corroborated, and seems to be confuted by the eulogies of Virgil in the 'Poetaster' and by the general handling of the theme in 'Hamlet.' The words quoted from 'The Return from Parnassus' hardly admit of a literal interpretation. Probably the 'purge' that Shakespeare was alleged by the author of 'The Return from Parnassus' to have given Jonson meant no more than that Shakespeare had signally outstripped Jonson in popular esteem. As the author of 'Julius Cæsar,' he had just proved his command of topics that were peculiarly suited to Jonson's vein, and had in fact outrun his churlish comrade on his own ground.

'Hamlet,' 1602.

At any rate, in the tragedy that Shakespeare brought out in the year following the production of 'Julius Cæsar,' he finally left Jonson and all friends and foes lagging far behind both in achievement and reputation. This new exhibition of the force of his genius re-established, too, the ascendency of the adult actors who interpreted his work, and the boys' supremacy was quickly brought to an end. In 1602 Shakespeare produced 'Hamlet,' 'that piece of his which most kindled English hearts.' The story of the Prince of Denmark had been popular on the stage as early as 1589 in a lost dramatic version by another writer—doubtless Thomas Kyd, whose tragedies of blood, 'The Spanish Tragedy' and 'Jeronimo,' long held the Elizabethan stage. To that lost version of ‘Hamlet’ Shakespeare’s tragedy certainly owed much. The story was also accessible in the ‘Histoires Tragiques’ of Belleforest, who adapted it from the ‘Historia Danica’ of Saxo Grammaticus. No English translation of Belleforest’s ‘Hystorie of Hamblet’ appeared before 1608; Shakespeare doubtless read it in the French. But his authorities give little hint of what was to emerge from his study of them.

The problem of its publication.

The First Quarto, 1603.

Burbage created the title-part in Shakespeare’s tragedy, and its success on the stage led to the play’s publication immediately afterwards. The bibliography of ‘Hamlet’ offers a puzzling problem. On July 26, 1602, ‘A Book called the Revenge of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark, as it was lately acted by the Lord Chamberlain his Servants,’ was entered on the Stationers’ Company’s Registers, and it was published in quarto next year by N[icholas] L[ing] and John Trundell. The title-page stated that the piece had been ‘acted divers times in the city of London, as also in the two Universities of Cambridge and Oxford and elsewhere.’ The text here appeared in a rough and imperfect state. In all probability it was a piratical and carelessly transcribed copy of Shakespeare’s first draft of the play, in which he drew largely on the older piece.

The Second Quarto, 1604.

A revised version, printed from a more complete and accurate manuscript, was published in 1604 as ‘The Tragical History of Hamlet Prince of Denmark, by William Shakespeare, newly imprinted and enlarged to almost as much again as it was, according to the true and perfect copy.’ This was printed by I[ames] R[oberts] for the publisher N[icholas] L[ing]. The concluding words —‘according to the true and perfect copy’—of the title-page of the second quarto were intended to stamp its predecessor as surreptitious and unauthentic. But it is clear that the Second Quarto was not a perfect version of the play. It was itself printed from a copy which had been curtailed for acting purposes.

The Folio Version.

A third version (long the *textus receptus*) figured in the Folio of 1623. Here many passages, not to be found in the quartos, appear for the first time, but a few others that appear in the quartos are omitted. The Folio text probably came nearest to the original manuscript; but it, too, followed an acting copy which had been abbreviated somewhat less drastically than the Second Quarto and in a different fashion. Theobald in his ‘Shakespeare Restored’ (1726) made the first scholarly attempt to form a text from a collation of the First Folio with the Second Quarto, and Theobald’s text with further embellishments by Sir Thomas Hanmer, Edward Capell, and the Cambridge editors of 1866, is now generally adopted.

Popularity of ‘Hamlet.’

‘Hamlet’ was the only drama by Shakespeare that was acted in his lifetime at the two Universities. It has since attracted more attention from actors, playgoers, and readers of all capacities than any other of Shakespeare’s plays. Its world-wide popularity from its author’s day to our own, when it is as warmly welcomed in the theatres of France and Germany as in those of England and America, is the most striking of the many testimonies to the eminence of Shakespeare’s dramatic instinct. At a first glance there seems little in the play to attract the uneducated or the unreflecting. ‘Hamlet’ is mainly a psychological effort, a study of the reflective temperament in excess. The action develops slowly; at times there is no movement at all. The piece is the longest of Shakespeare’s plays, reaching a total of over 3,900 lines. It is thus some nine hundred lines longer than ‘Antony and Cleopatra’—the play by Shakespeare that approaches ‘Hamlet’ more closely in numerical strength of lines. At the same time the total length of Hamlet’s speeches far exceeds that of those allotted by Shakespeare to any other of his characters. Humorous relief is, it is true, effectively supplied to the tragic theme by Polonius and the grave-diggers, and if the topical references to contemporary theatrical history (II. ii. 350-89) could only count on an appreciative reception from an Elizabethan audience, the pungent censure of actors’ perennial defects is calculated to catch the ear of the average playgoer of all ages. But it is not to these subsidiary features that the universality of the play’s vogue can be attributed. It is the intensity of interest which Shakespeare contrives to excite in the character of the hero that explains the position of the play in popular esteem. The play’s unrivalled power of attraction lies in the pathetic fascination exerted on minds of almost every calibre by the central figure—a high-born youth of chivalric instincts and finely developed intellect, who, when stirred to avenge in action a desperate private wrong, is foiled by introspective workings of the brain that paralyse the will.

‘Troilus and Cressida.’

Although the difficulties of determining the date of ‘Troilus and Cressida’ are very great, there are many grounds for assigning its composition to the early days of 1603. In 1599 Dekker and Chettle were engaged by Henslowe to prepare for the Earl of Nottingham’s company—a rival of Shakespeare’s company—a play of ‘Troilus and Cressida,’ of which no trace survives. It doubtless suggested the topic to Shakespeare. On February 7, 1602-3, James Roberts obtained a license for ‘the booke of Troilus and Cresseda as yt is acted by my Lord Chamberlens men,’ *i.e.* Shakespeare’s company. Roberts printed the Second Quarto of ‘Hamlet’ and others of Shakespeare’s plays; but his effort to publish ‘Troilus’ proved abortive owing to the interposition of the players. Roberts’s ‘book’ was probably Shakespeare’s play. The metrical characteristics of Shakespeare’s ‘Troilus and Cressida’—the regularity of the blank verse—powerfully confirm the date of composition which Roberts’s license suggests. Six years later, however, on January 28, 1608-9, a new license for the issue of ‘a booke called the history of Troylus and Cressida’ was granted to other publishers, Richard Bonian and Henry Walley, and these publishers, more fortunate than Roberts soon printed a quarto with Shakespeare’s full name as author. The text seems fairly authentic, but exceptional obscurity attaches to the circumstances of the publication. Some copies of the book bear an ordinary type of title-page stating that the piece was printed ‘as it was acted by the King’s majesties servants at the Globe.’ But in other copies, which differ in no way in regard to the text of the play, there was substituted for this title-page a more pretentious announcement running: ‘The famous Historie of Troylus and Cresseid, excellently expressing the beginning of their loues with the conceited wooing of Pandarus, prince of Lacia.’ After this pompous title-page there was inserted, for the first and only time in the case of a play by Shakespeare that was published in his lifetime, an advertisement or preface. In this interpolated page an anonymous scribe, writing in the name of the publishers, paid bombastic and high-flown compliments to Shakespeare as a writer of ‘comedies,’ and defiantly boasted that the ‘grand possessers’—*i.e.* the owners—of the manuscript deprecated its publication. By way of enhancing the value of what were obviously stolen wares, it was falsely added that the piece was new and unacted. This address was possibly the brazen reply of the publishers to a more than usually emphatic protest on the part of players or dramatist against the printing of the piece. The editors of the Folio evinced distrust of the Quarto edition by printing their text from a different copy showing many deviations, which were not always for the better.

Treatment of the theme.

The work, which in point of construction shows signs of haste, and in style is exceptionally unequal, is the least attractive of the efforts of Shakespeare’s middle life. The story is based on a romantic legend of the Trojan war, which is of mediæval origin. Shakespeare had possibly read Chapman’s translation of Homer’s ‘Iliad,’ but he owed his plot to Chaucer’s ‘Troilus and Cresseid’ and Lydgate’s ‘Troy Book.’ In defiance of his authorities he presented Cressida as a heartless coquette; the poets who had previously treated her story—Boccaccio, Chaucer, Lydgate, and Robert Henryson—had imagined her as a tender-hearted, if frail, beauty, with claims on their pity rather than on their scorn. But Shakespeare’s innovation is dramatically effective, and accords with strictly moral canons. The charge frequently brought against the dramatist that in ‘Troilus and Cressida’ he cynically invested the Greek heroes of classical antiquity with contemptible characteristics is ill supported by the text of the play. Ulysses, Nestor, and Agamemnon figure in Shakespeare’s play as brave generals and sagacious statesmen, and in their speeches Shakespeare concentrated a marvellous wealth of pithily expressed philosophy, much of which has fortunately obtained proverbial currency. Shakespeare’s conception of the Greeks followed traditional lines except in the case of Achilles, whom he transforms into a brutal coward. And that portrait quite legitimately interpreted the selfish, unreasoning, and exorbitant pride with which the warrior was credited by Homer, and his imitators.

Shakespeare’s treatment of his theme cannot therefore be fairly construed, as some critics construe it, into a petty-minded protest against the honour paid to the ancient Greeks and to the form and sentiment of their literature by more learned dramatists of the day, like Ben Jonson and Chapman. Although Shakespeare knew the Homeric version of the Trojan war, he worked in ‘Troilus and Cressida’ upon a mediæval romance, which was practically uninfluenced either for good or evil by the classical spirit.

Queen Elizabeth’s death, March 26, 1603.

Despite the association of Shakespeare’s company with the rebellion of 1601, and its difficulties with the children of the Chapel Royal, he and his fellow actors retained their hold on Court favour till the close of Elizabeth’s reign. As late as February 2, 1603, the company entertained the dying Queen at Richmond. Her death on March 26, 1603, drew from Shakespeare’s early eulogist, Chettle, a vain appeal to him under the fanciful name of Melicert, to

Drop from his honied muse one sable teare,
To mourne her death that gracèd his desert,
And to his laies opened her royal eare.

But, except on sentimental grounds, the Queen’s death justified no lamentation on the part of Shakespeare. On the withdrawal of one royal patron he and his friends at once found another, who proved far more liberal and appreciative.

James I’s patronage.

On May 19, 1603, James I, very soon after his accession, extended to Shakespeare and other members of the Lord Chamberlain’s company a very marked and valuable recognition. To them he granted under royal letters patent a license ‘freely to use and exercise the arte and facultie of playing comedies, tragedies, histories, enterludes, moralls, pastoralles, stage-plaies, and such other like as they have already studied, or hereafter shall use or studie as well for the recreation of our loving subjectes as for our solace and pleasure, when we shall thinke good to see them during our pleasure.’ The Globe Theatre was noted as the customary scene of their labours, but permission was granted to them to perform in the town-hall or moot-hall of any country town. Nine actors are named. Lawrence Fletcher stands first on the list; he had already performed before James in Scotland in 1599 and 1601. Shakespeare comes second and Burbage third. The company to which they belonged was thenceforth styled the King’s company; its members became ‘the King’s Servants’ and they took rank with the Grooms of the Chamber. Shakespeare’s plays were thenceforth repeatedly performed in James’s presence, and Oldys related that James wrote Shakespeare a letter in his own hand, which was at one time in the possession of Sir William D’Avenant, and afterwards, according to Lintot, in that of John Sheffield, first duke of Buckingham.

In the autumn and winter of 1603 the prevalence of the plague led to the closing of the theatres in London. The King’s players were compelled to make a prolonged tour in the provinces, which entailed some loss of income. For two months from the third week in October, the Court was temporarily installed at Wilton, the residence of William Herbert, third earl of Pembroke, and late in November the company was summoned by the royal officers to perform in the royal presence. The actors travelled from Mortlake to Salisbury ‘unto the Courte aforesaide,’ and their performance took place at Wilton House on December 2. They received next day ‘upon the Councells warrant’ the large sum of £30 ‘by way of his majesties reward.'   Many other gracious marks of royal favour followed. On March 15, 1604, Shakespeare and eight other actors of the company walked from the Tower of London to Westminster in the procession which accompanied the King on his formal entry into London. Each actor received four and a half yards of scarlet cloth to wear as a cloak on the occasion, and in the document authorising the grant Shakespeare's name stands first on the list.   The dramatist Dekker was author of a somewhat bombastic account of the elaborate ceremonial, which rapidly ran through three editions. On April 9, 1604, the King gave further proof of his friendly interest in the fortunes of his actors by causing an official letter to be sent to the Lord Mayor of London and the Justices of the Peace for Middlesex and Surrey, bidding them 'permit and suffer' the King's players to 'exercise their playes' at their 'usual house,' the Globe.   Four months later—in August—every member of the company was summoned by the King's order to attend at Somerset House during the fortnight's sojourn there of the Spanish ambassador extraordinary, Juan Fernandez de Velasco, duke de Frias, and Constable of Castile, who came to London to ratify the treaty of peace between England and Spain, and was magnificently entertained by the English Court.   Between All Saints' Day [November 1] and the ensuing Shrove Tuesday, which fell early in February 1605, Shakespeare's company gave no fewer than eleven performances at Whitehall in the royal presence.

<<span id="filepos0041169701"> a>XIV—THE HIGHEST THEMES OF TRAGEDY

'Othello' and 'Measure for Measure.'

Under the incentive of such exalted patronage, Shakespeare's activity redoubled, but his work shows none of the conventional marks of literature that is produced in the blaze of Court favour. The first six years of the new reign saw him absorbed in the highest themes of tragedy, and an unparalleled intensity and energy, which bore few traces of the trammels of a Court, thenceforth illumined every scene that he contrived. To 1604 the composition of two plays can be confidently assigned, one of which—'Othello'—ranks with Shakespeare's greatest achievements; while the other—‘Measure for Measure’—although as a whole far inferior to ‘Othello,’ contains one of the finest scenes (between Angelo and Isabella, II. ii. 43 sq.) and one of the greatest speeches (Claudio on the fear of death, III. i. 116-30) in the range of Shakespearean drama. ‘Othello’ was doubtless the first new piece by Shakespeare that was acted before James. It was produced at Whitehall on November 1. ‘Measure for Measure’ followed on December 26. Neither was printed in Shakespeare’s lifetime. The plots of both ultimately come from the same Italian collection of novels—Giraldi Cinthio’s ‘Hecatommithi,’ which was first published in 1565.

Cinthio’s painful story of ‘Othello’ (decad. iii. nov. 3) is not known to have been translated into English before Shakespeare dramatised it. He followed its main drift with fidelity, but he introduced the new characters of Roderigo and Emilia, and he invested the catastrophe with new and fearful intensity by making Iago’s cruel treachery known to Othello at the last, after Iago’s perfidy has impelled the noble-hearted Moor in his groundless jealousy to murder his gentle and innocent wife Desdemona. Iago became in Shakespeare’s hands the subtlest of all studies of intellectual villainy and hypocrisy. The whole tragedy displays to magnificent advantage the dramatist’s fully matured powers. An unfaltering equilibrium is maintained in the treatment of plot and characters alike.

Cinthio made the perilous story of ‘Measure for Measure’ the subject not only of a romance, but of a tragedy called ‘Epitia.’ Before Shakespeare wrote his play, Cinthio’s romance had been twice rendered into English by George Whetstone. Whetstone had not only given a somewhat altered version of the Italian romance in his unwieldy play of ‘Promos and Cassandra’ (in two parts of five acts each, 1578), but he had also freely translated it in his collection of prose tales, ‘Heptameron of Civil Discources’ (1582). Yet there is every likelihood that Shakespeare also knew Cinthio’s play, which, unlike his romance, was untranslated; the leading character, who is by Shakespeare christened Angelo, was known by another name to Cinthio in his story, but Cinthio in his play (and not in his novel) gives the character a sister named Angela, which doubtless suggested Shakespeare’s designation. In the hands of Shakespeare’s predecessors the tale is a sordid record of lust and cruelty. But Shakespeare prudently showed scant respect for their handling of the narrative. By diverting the course of the plot at a critical point he not merely proved his artistic ingenuity, but gave dramatic dignity and moral elevation to a degraded and repellent theme. In the old versions Isabella yields her virtue as the price of her brother’s life. The central fact of Shakespeare’s play is Isabella’s inflexible and unconditional chastity. Other of Shakespeare's alterations, like the Duke's abrupt proposal to marry Isabella, seem hastily conceived. But his creation of the pathetic character of Mariana 'of the moated grange'—the legally affianced bride of Angelo, Isabella's would-be seducer—skilfully excludes the possibility of a settlement (as in the old stories) between Isabella and Angelo on terms of marriage. Shakespeare's argument is throughout philosophically subtle. The poetic eloquence in which Isabella and the Duke pay homage to the virtue of chastity, and the many expositions of the corruption with which unchecked sexual passion threatens society, alternate with coarsely comic interludes which suggest the vanity of seeking to efface natural instincts by the coercion of law. There is little in the play that seems designed to recommend it to the Court before which it was first performed. But the two emphatic references to a ruler's dislike of mobs, despite his love of his people, were perhaps penned in deferential allusion to James I, whose horror of crowds was notorious. In act i. sc. i. 67-72 the Duke remarks:

I love the people,
But do not like to stage me to their eyes.
Though it do well, I do not relish well
Their loud applause and aves vehement.
Nor do I think the man of safe discretion
That does affect it.

Of like tenor is the succeeding speech of Angelo (act ii. sc. iv. 27-30):

The general [*i.e.* the public], subject to a well-wish'd king, . . .
Crowd to his presence, where their untaught love
Must needs appear offence.

'Macbeth.'

In 'Macbeth,' his 'great epic drama,' which he began in 1605 and completed next year, Shakespeare employed a setting wholly in harmony with the accession of a Scottish king. The story was drawn from Holinshed's 'Chronicle of Scottish History,' with occasional reference, perhaps, to earlier Scottish sources. The supernatural machinery of the three witches accorded with the King's superstitious faith in demonology; the dramatist lavished his sympathy on Banquo, James's ancestor; while Macbeth's vision of kings who carry 'twofold balls and treble sceptres' (iv. i. 20) plainly adverted to the union of Scotland with

England and Ireland under James’s sway. The allusion by the porter (ii. iii. 9) to the ‘equivocator . . . who committed treason’ was perhaps suggested by the notorious defence of the doctrine of equivocation made by the Jesuit Henry Garnett, who was executed early in 1606 for his share in the ‘Gunpowder Plot.’ The piece was not printed until 1623. It is in its existing shape by far the shortest of all Shakespeare’s tragedies, (‘Hamlet’ is nearly twice as long) and it is possible that it survives only in an abbreviated acting version. Much scenic elaboration characterised the production. Dr. Simon Forman witnessed a performance of the tragedy at the Globe in April 1611, and noted that Macbeth and Banquo entered the stage on horseback, and that Banquo’s ghost was materially represented (iii. iv. 40 seq.) Like ‘Othello,’ the play ranks with the noblest tragedies either of the modern or the ancient world. The characters of hero and heroine—Macbeth and his wife—are depicted with the utmost subtlety and insight. In three points ‘Macbeth’ differs somewhat from other of Shakespeare’s productions in the great class of literature to which it belongs. The interweaving with the tragic story of supernatural interludes in which Fate is weirdly personified is not exactly matched in any other of Shakespeare’s tragedies. In the second place, the action proceeds with a rapidity that is wholly without parallel in the rest of Shakespeare’s plays. Nowhere, moreover, has Shakespeare introduced comic relief into a tragedy with bolder effect than in the porter’s speech after the murder of Duncan (II. iii. I seq.) The theory that this passage was from another hand does not merit acceptance. It cannot, however, be overlooked that the second scene of the first act—Duncan’s interview with the ‘bleeding sergeant’—falls so far below the style of the rest of the play as to suggest that it was an interpolation by a hack of the theatre. The resemblances between Thomas Middleton’s later play of ‘The Witch’ (1610) and portions of ‘Macbeth’ may safely be ascribed to plagiarism on Middleton’s part. Of two songs which, according to the stage directions, were to be sung during the representation of ‘Macbeth’ (III. v. and IV. i.), only the first line of each is noted there, but songs beginning with the same lines are set out in full in Middleton’s play; they were probably by Middleton, and were interpolated by actors in a stage version of ‘Macbeth’ after its original production.

‘King Lear.’

‘King Lear,’ in which Shakespeare’s tragic genius moved without any faltering on Titanic heights, was written during 1606, and was produced before the Court at Whitehall on the night of December 26 of that year. It was entered on the ‘Stationers’ Registers’ on November 26, 1607, and two imperfect editions, published by Nathaniel Butter, appeared in the following year; neither exactly corresponds with the other or with the improved and fairly satisfactory text of the Folio. The three versions present three different playhouse transcripts. Like its immediate predecessor, ‘Macbeth,’ the tragedy was mainly founded on Holinshed’s ‘Chronicle.’ The leading theme had been dramatised as early as 1593, but Shakespeare’s attention was no doubt directed to it by the publication of a crude dramatic adaptation of Holinshed’s version in 1605 under the title of ‘The True Chronicle History of King Leir and his three Daughters—Gonorill, Ragan, and Cordella.’ Shakespeare did not adhere closely to his original. He invested the tale of Lear with a hopelessly tragic conclusion, and on it he grafted the equally distressing tale of Gloucester and his two sons, which he drew from Sidney’s ‘Arcadia.’ Hints for the speeches of Edgar when feigning madness were drawn from Harsnet’s ‘Declaration of Popish Impostures,’ 1603. In every act of ‘Lear’ the pity and terror of which tragedy is capable reach their climax. Only one who has something of the Shakespearean gift of language could adequately characterise the scenes of agony—‘the living martyrdom’—to which the fiendish ingratitude of his daughters condemns the abdicated king—‘a very foolish, fond old man, fourscore and upward.’ The elemental passions burst forth in his utterances with all the vehemence of the volcanic tempest which beats about his defenceless head in the scene on the heath. The brutal blinding of Gloucester by Cornwall exceeds in horror any other situation that Shakespeare created, if we assume that he was not responsible for the like scenes of mutilation in ‘Titus Andronicus.’ At no point in ‘Lear’ is there any loosening of the tragic tension. The faithful half-witted lad who serves the king as his fool plays the jesting chorus on his master’s fortunes in penetrating earnest and deepens the desolating pathos.

‘Timon of Athens.’

Although Shakespeare’s powers showed no sign of exhaustion, he reverted in the year following the colossal effort of ‘Lear’ (1607) to his earlier habit of collaboration, and with another’s aid composed two dramas—‘Timon of Athens’ and ‘Pericles.’ An extant play on the subject of ‘Timon of Athens’ was composed in 1600, but there is nothing to show that Shakespeare and his coadjutor were acquainted with it. They doubtless derived a part of their story from Painter’s ‘Palace of Pleasure,’ and from a short digression in Plutarch’s ‘Life of Marc Antony,’ where Antony is described as emulating the life and example of ‘Timon Misanthropos the Athenian.’ The dramatists may, too, have known a dialogue of Lucian entitled ‘Timon,’ which Boiardo had previously converted into a comedy under the name of ‘Il Timone.’ Internal evidence makes it clear that Shakespeare’s colleague was responsible for nearly the whole of acts III. and V. But the character of Timon himself and all the scenes which he dominates are from Shakespeare’s pen. Timon is cast in the mould of Lear.

‘Pericles.’

There seems some ground for the belief that Shakespeare’s coadjutor in ‘Timon’ was George Wilkins, a writer of ill-developed dramatic power, who, in ‘The Miseries of Enforced Marriage’ (1607), first treated the story that afterwards served for the plot of ‘The Yorkshire Tragedy.’ At any rate, Wilkins may safely be credited with portions of ‘Pericles,’ a romantic play which can be referred to the same year as ‘Timon.’ Shakespeare contributed only acts III. and V. and parts of IV., which together form a self-contained whole, and do not combine satisfactorily with the remaining scenes. The presence of a third hand, of inferior merit to Wilkins, has been suspected, and to this collaborator (perhaps William Rowley, a professional reviser of plays who could show capacity on occasion) are best assigned the three scenes of purposeless coarseness which take place in or before a brothel (IV. ii., v. and vi.) From so distributed a responsibility the piece naturally suffers. It lacks homogeneity, and the story is helped out by dumb shows and prologues. But a matured felicity of expression characterises Shakespeare’s own contributions, narrating the romantic quest of Pericles for his daughter Marina, who was born and abandoned in a shipwreck. At many points he here anticipated his latest dramatic effects. The shipwreck is depicted (IV. i.) as impressively as in the ‘Tempest,’ and Marina and her mother Thaisa enjoy many experiences in common with Perdita and Hermione in the ‘Winter’s Tale.’ The prologues, which were not by Shakespeare, were spoken by an actor representing the mediæval poet John Gower, who in the fourteenth century had versified Pericles’s story in his ‘Confessio Amantis’ under the title of ‘Apollonius of Tyre.’ It is also found in a prose translation (from the French), which was printed in Lawrence Twyne’s ‘Patterne of Painfull Adventures’ in 1576, and again in 1607. After the play was produced, George Wilkins, one of the alleged coadjutors, based on it a novel called ‘The Painful Adventures of Pericles, Prynce of Tyre, being the True History of the Play of Pericles as it was lately presented by the worthy and ancient Poet, John Gower’ (1608). The play was issued as by William Shakespeare in a mangled form in 1608, and again in 1611, 1619, 1630, and 1635. It was not included in Shakespeare’s collected works till 1664.

‘Antony and Cleopatra.’

In May 1608 Edward Blount entered in the ‘Stationers’ Registers,’ by the authority of Sir George Buc, the licenser of plays, ‘a booke called “Anthony and Cleopatra.”’ No copy of this date is known, and once again the company probably hindered the publication. The play was first printed in the folio of 1623. The source of the tragedy is the life of Antonius in North’s ‘Plutarch.’ Shakespeare closely followed the historical narrative, and assimilated not merely its temper, but, in the first three acts, much of its phraseology. A few short scenes are original, but there is no detail in such a passage, for example, as Enobarbus’s gorgeous description of the pageant of Cleopatra’s voyage up the Cydnus to meet Antony (II. ii. 194 seq.), which is not to be matched in Plutarch. In the fourth and fifth acts Shakespeare’s method changes and he expands his material with magnificent freedom. The whole theme is in his hands instinct with a dramatic grandeur which lifts into sublimity even Cleopatra’s moral worthlessness and Antony’s criminal infatuation. The terse and caustic comments which Antony’s level-headed friend Enobarbus, in the rôle of chorus, passes on the action accentuate its significance. Into the smallest as into the greatest personages Shakespeare breathed all his vitalising fire. The ‘happy valiancy’ of the style, too—to use Coleridge’s admirable phrase—sets the tragedy very near the zenith of Shakespeare’s achievement, and while differentiating it from ‘Macbeth,’ ‘Othello,’ and ‘Lear,’ renders it a very formidable rival.

‘Coriolanus.’

‘Coriolanus’ (first printed from a singularly bad text in 1623) similarly owes its origin to the biography of the hero in North’s ‘Plutarch,’ although Shakespeare may have first met the story in Painter’s ‘Palace of Pleasure’ (No. iv.) He again adhered to the text of Plutarch with the utmost literalness, and at times—even in the great crises of the action—repeated North’s translation word for word. But the humorous scenes are wholly of Shakespeare’s invention, and the course of the narrative was at times slightly changed for purposes of dramatic effect. The metrical characteristics prove the play to have been written about the same period as ‘Antony and Cleopatra,’ probably in 1609. In its austere temper it contrasts at all points with its predecessor. The courageous self-reliance of Coriolanus’s mother, Volumnia, is severely contrasted with the submissive gentleness of Virgilia, Coriolanus’s wife. The hero falls a victim to no sensual flaw, but to unchecked pride of caste, and there is a searching irony in the emphasis laid on the ignoble temper of the rabble, who procure his overthrow. By way of foil, the speeches of Menenius give dignified expression to the maturest political wisdom. The dramatic interest throughout is as single and as unflaggingly sustained as in ‘Othello.’

<<span id="filepos0041193031"> a>XV—THE LATEST PLAYS

The latest plays.

In ‘Cymbeline,’ ‘The Winter’s Tale,’ and ‘The Tempest,’ the three latest plays that came from his unaided pen, Shakespeare dealt with romantic themes which all end happily, but he instilled into them a pathos which sets them in a category of their own apart alike from comedy and tragedy. The placidity of tone conspicuous in these three plays (none of which was published in his lifetime) has been often contrasted with the storm and stress of the great tragedies that preceded them. But the commonly accepted theory that traces in this change of tone a corresponding development in the author’s own emotions ignores the objectivity of Shakespeare’s dramatic work. All phases of feeling lay within the scope of his intuition, and the successive order in which he approached them bore no explicable relation to substantive incident in his private life or experience. In middle life, his temperament, like that of other men, acquired a larger measure of gravity and his thought took a profounder cast than characterised it in youth. The highest topics of tragedy were naturally more congenial to him, and were certain of a surer handling when he was nearing his fortieth birthday than at an earlier age. The serenity of meditative romance was more in harmony with the fifth decade of his years than with the second or third. But no more direct or definite connection can be discerned between the progressive stages of his work and the progressive stages of his life. To seek in his biography for a chain of events which should be calculated to stir in his own soul all or any of the tempestuous passions that animate his greatest plays is to under-estimate and to misapprehend the resistless might of his creative genius.

‘Cymbeline.’

In ‘Cymbeline’ Shakespeare freely adapted a fragment of British history taken from Holinshed, interweaving with it a story from Boccaccio’s ‘Decameron’ (day 2, novel ix.) Ginevra, whose falsely suspected chastity is the theme of the Italian novel, corresponds to Shakespeare’s Imogen. Her story is also told in the tract called ‘Westward for Smelts,’ which had already been laid under contribution by Shakespeare in the ‘Merry Wives.’ The by-plot of the banishment of the lord, Belarius, who in revenge for his expatriation kidnapped the king’s young sons and brought them up with him in the recesses of the mountains, is Shakespeare’s invention. Although most of the scenes are laid in Britain in the first century before the Christian era, there is no pretence of historical vraisemblance. With an almost ludicrous inappropriateness the British king’s courtiers make merry with technical terms peculiar to Calvinistic theology, like ‘grace’ and ‘election.’ The action, which, owing to the combination of three threads of narrative, is exceptionally varied and intricate, wholly belongs to the region of romance. On Imogen, who is the central figure of the play, Shakespeare lavished all the fascination of his genius. She is the crown and flower of his conception of tender and artless womanhood. Her husband Posthumus, her rejected lover Cloten, her would-be seducer Iachimo are contrasted with her and with each other with consummate ingenuity. The mountainous retreat in which Belarius and his fascinating boy-companions play their part has points of resemblance to the Forest of Arden in ‘As You Like It;’ but life throughout ‘Cymbeline’ is grimly earnest, and the mountains nurture little of the contemplative quiet which characterises existence in the Forest of Arden. The play contains the splendid lyric ‘Fear no more the heat of the sun’ (IV. ii. 258 seq.) The ‘pitiful mummery’ of the vision of Posthumus (V. iv. 30 seq.) must have been supplied by another hand. Dr. Forman, the astrologer who kept notes of some of his experiences as a playgoer, saw ‘Cymbeline’ acted either in 1610 or 1611.

‘A Winter’s Tale.’

‘A Winter’s Tale’ was seen by Dr. Forman at the Globe on May 15, 1611, and it appears to have been acted at court on November 5 following. It is based upon Greene’s popular romance which was called ‘Pandosto’ in the first edition of 1588, and in numerous later editions, but was ultimately in 1648 re-christened ‘Dorastus and Fawnia.’ Shakespeare followed Greene, his early foe, in allotting a seashore to Bohemia—an error over which Ben Jonson and many later critics have made merry. A few lines were obviously drawn from that story of Boccaccio with which Shakespeare had dealt just before in ‘Cymbeline.’ But Shakespeare created the high-spirited Paulina and the thievish pedlar Autolycus, whose seductive roguery has become proverbial, and he invented the reconciliation of Leontes, the irrationally jealous husband, with Hermione, his wife, whose dignified resignation and forbearance lend the story its intense pathos. In the boy Mamilius, the poet depicted childhood in its most attractive guise, while the courtship of Florizel and Perdita is the perfection of gentle romance. The freshness of the pastoral incident surpasses that of all Shakespeare's presentations of country life.

'Tempest.'

'The Tempest' was probably the latest drama that Shakespeare completed. In the summer of 1609 a fleet bound for Virginia, under the command of Sir George Somers, was overtaken by a storm off the West Indies, and the admiral's ship, the 'Sea-Venture,' was driven on the coast of the hitherto unknown Bermuda Isles. There they remained ten months, pleasurably impressed by the mild beauty of the climate, but sorely tried by the hogs which overran the island and by mysterious noises which led them to imagine that spirits and devils had made the island their home. Somers and his men were given up for lost, but they escaped from Bermuda in two boats of cedar to Virginia in May 1610, and the news of their adventures and of their safety was carried to England by some of the seamen in September 1610. The sailors' arrival created vast public excitement in London. At least five accounts were soon published of the shipwreck and of the mysterious island, previously uninhabited by man, which had proved the salvation of the expedition. 'A Discovery of the Bermudas, otherwise called the Ile of Divels,' written by Sylvester Jourdain or Jourdan, one of the survivors, appeared as early as October. A second pamphlet describing the disaster was issued by the Council of the Virginia Company in December, and a third by one of the leaders of the expedition, Sir Thomas Gates. Shakespeare, who mentions the 'still vexed Bermoothes' (I. i. 229), incorporated in 'The Tempest' many hints from Jourdain, Gates, and the other pamphleteers. The references to the gentle climate of the island on which Prospero is cast away, and to the spirits and devils that infested it, seem to render its identification with the newly discovered Bermudas unquestionable. But Shakespeare incorporated the result of study of other books of travel. The name of the god Setebos whom Caliban worships is drawn from Eden's translation of Magellan's 'Voyage to the South Pole' (in the 'Historie of Travell,' 1577), where the giants of Patagonia are described as worshipping a 'great devil they call Setebos.' No source for the complete plot has been discovered, but the German writer, Jacob Ayrer, who died in 1605, dramatised a somewhat similar story in 'Die schöne Sidea,' where the adventures of Prospero, Ferdinand, Ariel, and Miranda are roughly anticipated. English actors were performing at Nuremberg, where Ayrer lived, in 1604 and 1606, and may have brought reports of the piece to Shakespeare. Or perhaps both English and German plays had a common origin in some novel that has not yet been traced. Gonzalo's description of an ideal commonwealth (II. i. 147 seq.) is derived from Florio's translation of Montaigne's essays (1603), while into Prospero's great speech renouncing his practice of magical art (V. i. 33-57) Shakespeare wrought reminiscences of Golding's translation of Medea's invocation in Ovid's 'Metamorphoses' (vii. 197-206). Golding's rendering of Ovid had been one of Shakespeare's best-loved books in youth.

A highly ingenious theory, first suggested by Tieck, represents 'The Tempest' (which, excepting the 'The Comedy of Errors,' is the shortest of Shakespeare's plays) as a masque written to celebrate the marriage of Princess Elizabeth (like Miranda, an island-princess) with the Elector Frederick. This marriage took place on February 14, 1612-13, and 'The Tempest' formed one of a series of nineteen plays which were performed at the nuptial festivities in May 1613. But none of the other plays produced seem to have been new; they were all apparently chosen because they were established favourites at Court and on the public stage, and neither in subject-matter nor language bore obviously specific relation to the joyous occasion. But 1613 is, in fact, on more substantial ground far too late a date to which to assign the composition of 'The Tempest.' According to information which was accessible to Malone, the play had 'a being and a name' in the autumn of 1611, and was no doubt written some months before. The plot, which revolves about the forcible expulsion of a ruler from his dominions, and his daughter's wooing by the son of the usurper's chief ally, is, moreover, hardly one that a shrewd playwright would deliberately choose as the setting of an official epithalamium in honour of the daughter of a monarch so sensitive about his title to the crown as James I.

In the theatre and at court the early representations of 'The Tempest' evoked unmeasured applause. The success owed something to the beautiful lyrics which were dispersed through the play and had been set to music by Robert Johnson, a lutenist in high repute. Like its predecessor 'A Winter's Tale,' 'The Tempest' long maintained its first popularity in the theatre, and the vogue of the two pieces drew a passing sneer from Ben Jonson. In the Induction to his 'Bartholomew Fair,' first acted in 1614, he wrote: 'If there be never a servant-monster in the Fair, who can help it he [*i.e.* the author] says? nor a nest of Antics. He is loth to make nature afraid in his plays like those that beget Tales, Tempests, and such like Drolleries.' The 'servant-monster' was an obvious allusion to Caliban, and 'the nest of Antics' was a glance at the satyrs who figure in the sheepshearing feast in 'A Winter's Tale.'

Fanciful interpretations of ‘The Tempest.’

Nowhere did Shakespeare give rein to his imagination with more imposing effect than in ‘The Tempest.’ As in ‘Midsummer Night’s Dream,’ magical or supernatural agencies are the mainsprings of the plot. But the tone is marked at all points by a solemnity and profundity of thought and sentiment which are lacking in the early comedy. The serious atmosphere has led critics, without much reason, to detect in the scheme of ‘The Tempest’ something more than the irresponsible play of poetic fancy. Many of the characters have been represented as the outcome of speculation respecting the least soluble problems of human existence. Little reliance should be placed on such interpretations. The creation of Miranda is the apotheosis in literature of tender, ingenuous girlhood unsophisticated by social intercourse, but Shakespeare had already sketched the outlines of the portrait in Marina and Perdita, the youthful heroines respectively of ‘Pericles’ and ‘A Winter’s Tale,’ and these two characters were directly developed from romantic stories of girl-princesses, cast by misfortune on the mercies of nature, to which Shakespeare had recourse for the plots of the two plays. It is by accident, and not by design, that in Ariel appear to be discernible the capabilities of human intellect when detached from physical attributes. Ariel belongs to the same world as Puck, although he is delineated in the severer colours that were habitual to Shakespeare’s fully developed art. Caliban—Ariel’s antithesis—did not owe his existence to any conscious endeavour on Shakespeare’s part to typify human nature before the evolution of moral sentiment. Caliban is an imaginary portrait, conceived with matchless vigour and vividness, of the aboriginal savage of the New World, descriptions of whom abounded in contemporary travellers’ speech and writings, and universally excited the liveliest curiosity. In Prospero, the guiding providence of the romance, who resigns his magic power in the closing scene, traces have been sought of the lineaments of the dramatist himself, who in this play probably bade farewell to the enchanted work of his life. Prospero is in the story a scholar-prince of rare intellectual attainments, whose engrossing study of the mysteries of science has given him command of the forces of nature. His magnanimous renunciation of his magical faculty as soon as by its exercise he has restored his shattered fortunes is in perfect accord with the general conception of his just and philosophical temper. Any other justification of his final act is superfluous.

Unfinished plays. The lost play of ‘Cardenio.’

While there is every indication that in 1611 Shakespeare abandoned dramatic composition, there seems little doubt that he left with the manager of his company unfinished drafts of more than one play which others were summoned at a later date to complete. His place at the head of the active dramatists was at once filled by John Fletcher, and Fletcher, with some aid possibly from his friend Philip Massinger, undertook the working up of Shakespeare's unfinished sketches. On September 9, 1653, the publisher Humphrey Moseley obtained a license for the publication of a play which he described as 'History of Cardenio, by Fletcher and Shakespeare.' This was probably identical with the lost play, 'Cardenno,' or 'Cardenna,' which was twice acted at Court by Shakespeare's company in 1613—in May during the Princess Elizabeth's marriage festivities, and on June 8 before the Duke of Savoy's ambassador.   Moseley, whose description may have been fraudulent,   failed to publish the piece, and nothing is otherwise known of it with certainty; but it was no doubt a dramatic version of the adventures of the lovelorn Cardenio which are related in the first part of 'Don Quixote' (ch. xxiii.-xxxvii.) Cervantes's amorous story, which first appeared in English in Thomas Shelton's translation in 1612, offers much incident in Fletcher's vein. When Lewis Theobald, the Shakespearean critic, brought out his 'Double Falsehood, or the Distrest Lovers,' in 1727, he mysteriously represented that the play was based on an unfinished and unpublished draft of a play by Shakespeare. The story of Theobald's piece is the story of Cardenio, although the characters are renamed. There is nothing in the play as published by Theobald to suggest Shakespeare's hand,   but Theobald doubtless took advantage of a tradition that Shakespeare and Fletcher had combined to dramatise the Cervantic theme.

'Two Noble Kinsmen.'

Two other pieces, 'The Two Noble Kinsmen' and 'Henry VIII,' which are attributed to a similar partnership, survive.   'The Two Noble Kinsmen' was first printed in 1634, and was written, according to the title-page, 'by the memorable worthies of their time, Mr. John Fletcher and Mr. William Shakespeare, gentlemen.' It was included in the folio of Beaumont and Fletcher of 1679. On grounds alike of æsthetic criticism and metrical tests, a substantial portion of the play was assigned to Shakespeare by Charles Lamb, Coleridge, and Dyce. The last included it in his edition of Shakespeare. Coleridge detected Shakespeare's hand in act I., act II. sc. i., and act III. sc. i. and ii. In addition to those scenes, act IV. sc. iii. and act V. (except sc. ii.) were subsequently placed to his credit. Some recent critics assign much of the alleged Shakespearean work to Massinger, and they narrow Shakespeare's contribution to the first scene (with the opening song, ‘Roses their sharp spines being gone’) and act V. sc. i. and iv.

An exact partition is impossible, but frequent signs of Shakespeare’s workmanship are unmistakable. All the passages for which Shakespeare can on any showing be held responsible develop the main plot, which is drawn from Chaucer’s ‘Knight’s Tale’ of Palamon and Arcite, and seems to have been twice dramatised previously. A lost play, ‘Palæmon and Arcyte,’ by Richard Edwardes, was acted at Court in 1566, and a second piece, called ‘Palamon and Arsett’ (also lost), was purchased by Henslowe in 1594. The non-Shakespearean residue of ‘The Two Noble Kinsmen’ is disfigured by indecency and triviality, and is of no literary value.

‘Henry VIII.’

A like problem is presented by ‘Henry VIII.’ The play was nearly associated with the final scene in the history of that theatre which was identified with the triumphs of Shakespeare’s career. ‘Henry VIII’ was in course of performance at the Globe Theatre on June 29, 1613, when the firing of some cannon incidental to the performance set fire to the playhouse, which was burned down. The theatre was rebuilt next year, but the new fabric never acquired the fame of the old. Sir Henry Wotton, describing the disaster on July 2, entitled the piece that was in process of representation at the time as ‘All is True representing some principal pieces in the Reign of Henry VIII.’ The play of ‘Henry VIII’ that is commonly allotted to Shakespeare is loosely constructed, and the last act ill coheres with its predecessors. The whole resembles an ‘historical masque.’ It was first printed in the folio of Shakespeare’s works in 1623, but shows traces of more hands than one. The three chief characters—the king, Queen Katharine of Arragon, and Cardinal Wolsey—bear clear marks of Shakespeare’s best workmanship; but only act i. sc. i., act ii. sc. iii. and iv. (Katharine’s trial), act iii. sc. ii. (except ll. 204-460), act v. sc. i. can on either æsthetic or metrical grounds be confidently assigned to him. These portions may, according to their metrical characteristics, be dated, like the ‘Winter’s Tale,’ about 1611. There are good grounds for assigning nearly all the remaining thirteen scenes to the pen of Fletcher, with occasional aid from Massinger. Wolsey’s familiar farewell to Cromwell (III. ii. 204-460) is the only passage the authorship of which excites really grave embarrassment. It recalls at every point the style of Fletcher, and nowhere that of Shakespeare. But the Fletcherian style, as it is here displayed, is invested with a greatness that is not matched elsewhere in Fletcher’s work. That Fletcher should have exhibited such faculty once and once only is barely credible, and we are driven to the alternative conclusion that the noble valediction was by Shakespeare, who in it gave proof of his versatility by echoing in a glorified key the habitual strain of Fletcher, his colleague and virtual successor. James Spedding's theory that Fletcher hastily completed Shakespeare's unfinished draft for the special purpose of enabling the company to celebrate the marriage of Princess Elizabeth and the Elector Palatine, which took place on February 14, 1612-13, seems fanciful. During May 1613, according to an extant list, nineteen plays were produced at Court in honour of the event, but 'Henry VIII' is not among them. The conjecture that Massinger and Fletcher alone collaborated in 'Henry VIII' (to the exclusion of Shakespeare altogether) does not deserve serious consideration.

<<span id="filepos0041219728"> a>XVI—THE CLOSE OF LIFE

Plays at Court in 1613. Actor-friends.

The concluding years of Shakespeare's life (1611-1616) were mainly passed at Stratford. It is probable that in 1611 he disposed of his shares in the Globe and Blackfriars theatres. He owned none at the date of his death. But until 1614 he paid frequent visits to London, where friends in sympathy with his work were alone to be found. His plays continued to form the staple of Court performances. In May 1613, during the Princess Elizabeth's marriage festivities, Heming, Shakespeare's former colleague, produced at Whitehall no fewer than seven of his plays, *viz.* 'Much Ado,' 'Tempest,' 'Winter's Tale,' 'Sir John Falstaff' (*i.e.* 'Merry Wives'), 'Othello,' 'Julius Cæsar,' 'and Hotspur' (doubtless 'Henry IV'). Of his actor-friends, one of the chief, Augustine Phillips, had died in 1605, leaving by will 'to my fellowe, William Shakespeare, a thirty-shillings piece of gold.' With Burbage, Heming, and Condell his relations remained close to the end. Burbage, according to a poetic elegy, made his reputation by creating the leading parts in Shakespeare's greatest tragedies. Hamlet, Othello, and Lear were rôles in which he gained especial renown. But Burbage and Shakespeare were popularly credited with co-operation in less solemn enterprises. They were reputed to be companions in many sportive adventures. The sole anecdote of Shakespeare that is positively known to have been recorded in his lifetime relates that Burbage, when playing Richard III, agreed with a lady in the audience to visit her after the performance;

Shakespeare, overhearing the conversation, anticipated the actor’s visit, and met Burbage on his arrival with the quip that ‘William the Conqueror was before Richard the Third.’

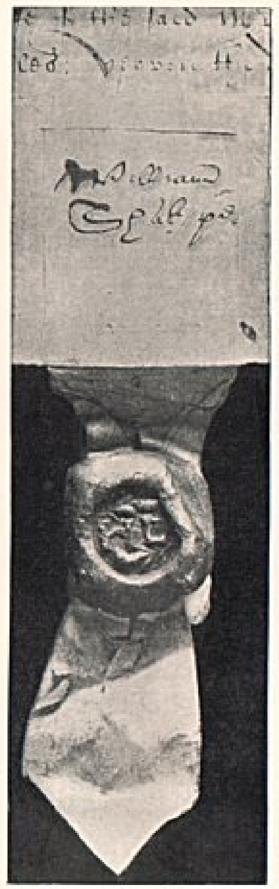
Such gossip possibly deserves little more acceptance than the later story, in the same key, which credits Shakespeare with the paternity of Sir William D’Avenant. The latter was baptised at Oxford on March 3, 1605, as the son of John D’Avenant, the landlord of the Crown Inn, where Shakespeare lodged in his journeys to and from Stratford. The story of Shakespeare’s parental relation to D’Avenant was long current in Oxford, and was at times complacently accepted by the reputed son. Shakespeare is known to have been a welcome guest at John D’Avenant’s house, and another son, Robert, boasted of the kindly notice which the poet took of him as a child. It is safer to adopt the less compromising version which makes Shakespeare the godfather of the boy William instead of his father. But the antiquity and persistence of the scandal belie the assumption that Shakespeare was known to his contemporaries as a man of scrupulous virtue. Ben Jonson and Drayton—the latter a Warwickshire man—seem to have been Shakespeare’s closest literary friends in his latest years.

Final settlement at Stratford.

At Stratford, in the words of Nicholas Rowe, ‘the latter part of Shakespeare’s life was spent, as all men of good sense will wish theirs may be, in ease, retirement, and the conversation of his friends.’ As a resident in the town, he took a full share of social and civic responsibilities. On October 16, 1608, he stood chief godfather to William, son of Henry Walker, a mercer and alderman. On September 11, 1611, when he had finally settled in New Place, his name appeared in the margin of a folio page of donors (including all the principal inhabitants of Stratford) to a fund that was raised ‘towards the charge of prosecuting the bill in Parliament for the better repair of the highways.’

Domestic affairs.

Meanwhile his own domestic affairs engaged some of his attention. Of his two surviving children—both daughters—the eldest, Susanna, had married, on June 5, 1607, John Hall (1575-1635), a rising physician of Puritan leanings, and in the following February there was born the poet’s only granddaughter, Elizabeth Hall. On September 9, 1608, the poet’s mother was buried in the parish church, and on February 4, 1613, his third brother Richard. On July 15, 1613, Mrs. Hall preferred, with her father’s assistance, a charge of slander against one Lane in the ecclesiastical court at Worcester; the defendant, who had apparently charged the lady with illicit relations with one Ralph Smith, did not appear, and was excommunicated.

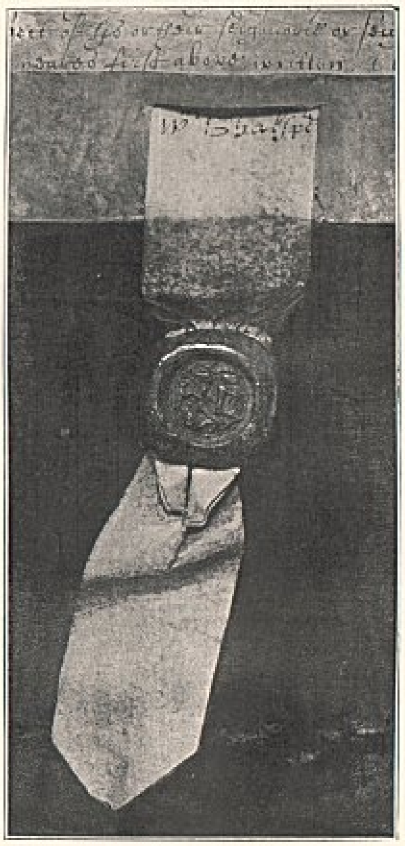


SHAKESPEARE'S AUTOGRAPH SIGNATURE APPENDED TO THE PURCHASE-DEED OF A HOUSE IN BLACKFRIARS ON MARCH 10, 1612-13.

Reproduced from the original document now preserved in the Guildhall Library, London

Purchase of a house in Blackfriars.

In the same year (1613), when on a short visit to London, Shakespeare invested a small sum of money in a new property. This was his last investment in real estate. He then purchased a house, the ground-floor of which was a haberdasher’s shop, with a yard attached. It was situated within six hundred feet of the Blackfriars Theatre—on the west side of St. Andrew’s Hill, formerly termed Puddle Hill or Puddle Dock Hill, in the near neighbourhood of what is now known as Ireland Yard. The former owner, Henry Walker, a musician, had bought the property for £100 in 1604. Shakespeare in 1613 agreed to pay him £140. The deeds of conveyance bear the date of March 10 in that year. Next day, on March 11, Shakespeare executed another deed (now in the British Museum) which stipulated that £60 of the purchase-money was to remain on mortgage until the following Michaelmas. The money was unpaid at Shakespeare’s death. In both purchase-deed and mortgage-deed Shakespeare’s signature was witnessed by (among others) Henry Lawrence, ‘servant’ or clerk to Robert Andrewes, the scrivener who drew the deeds, and Lawrence’s seal, bearing his initials ‘H. L.,’ was stamped in each case on the parchment-tag, across the head of which Shakespeare wrote his name. In all three documents—the two indentures and the mortgage-deed—Shakespeare is described as ‘of Stratford-on-Avon, in the Countie of Warwick, Gentleman.’ There is no reason to suppose that he acquired the house for his own residence. He at once leased the property to John Robinson, already a resident in the neighbourhood.



SHAKESPEARE’S AUTOGRAPH SIGNATURE APPENDED TO A DEED MORTGAGING HIS HOUSE IN BLACKFRIARS ON MARCH 11, 1612-13.

Reproduced from the original document now preserved in the British Museum

Attempt to enclose the Stratford common fields.

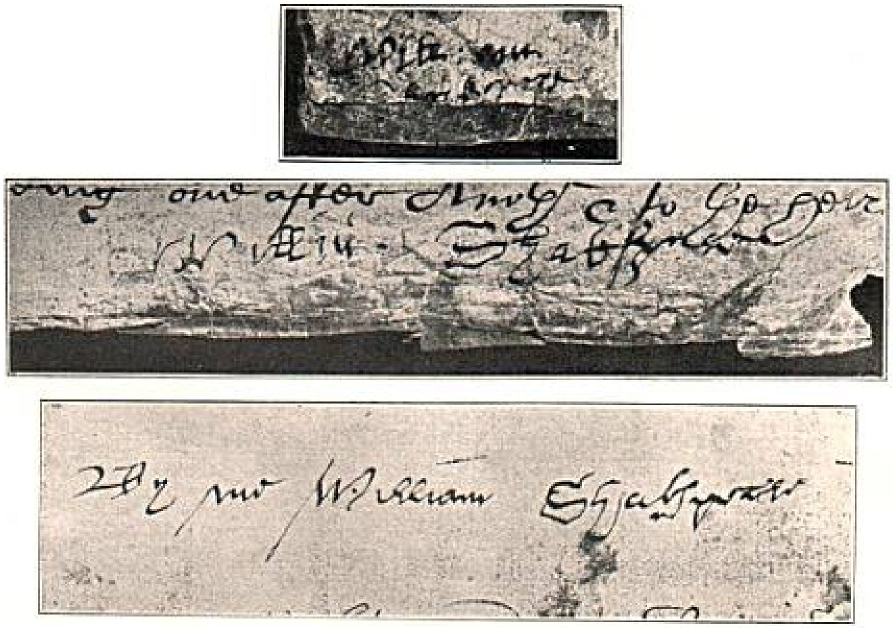
With puritans and puritanism Shakespeare was not in sympathy, and he could hardly have viewed with unvarying composure the steady progress that puritanism was making among his fellow-townsmen. Nevertheless a preacher, doubtless of puritan proclivities, was entertained at Shakespeare's residence, New Place, after delivering a sermon in the spring of 1614. The incident might serve to illustrate Shakespeare's characteristic placability, but his son-in-law Hall, who avowed sympathy with puritanism, was probably in the main responsible for the civility. In July John Combe, a rich inhabitant of Stratford, died and left £5 to Shakespeare. The legend that Shakespeare alienated him by composing some doggerel on his practice of lending money at ten or twelve per cent. seems apocryphal, although it is quoted by Aubrey and accepted by Rowe. Combe's death involved Shakespeare more conspicuously than before in civic affairs. Combe's heir William no sooner succeeded to his father's lands than he, with a neighbouring owner, Arthur Mannering, steward of Lord-chancellor Ellesmere (who was ex-officio lord of the manor), attempted to enclose the common fields, which belonged to the corporation of Stratford, about his estate at Welcombe. The corporation resolved to offer the scheme a stout resistance. Shakespeare had a twofold interest in the matter by virtue of his owning the freehold of 106 acres at Welcombe and Old Stratford, and as joint owner—now with Thomas Greene, the town clerk—of the tithes of Old Stratford, Welcombe, and Bishopton. His interest in his freeholds could not have been prejudicially affected, but his interest in the tithes might be depreciated by the proposed enclosure. Shakespeare consequently joined with his fellow-owner Greene in obtaining from Combe's agent Replingham in October 1614 a deed indemnifying both against any injury they might suffer from the enclosure. But having thus secured himself against all possible loss, Shakespeare threw his influence into Combe's scale. In November 1614 he was on a last visit to London, and Greene, whose official position as town clerk compelled him to support the corporation in defiance of his private interests, visited him there to discuss the position of affairs. On December 23, 1614, the corporation in formal meeting drew up a letter to Shakespeare imploring him to aid them. Greene himself sent to the dramatist 'a note of inconveniences [to the corporation that] would happen by the enclosure.' But although an ambiguous entry of a later date (September 1615) in the few extant pages of Greene's ungrammatical diary has been unjustifiably tortured into an expression of disgust on Shakespeare's part at Combe's conduct, it is plain that, in the spirit of his agreement with Combe's agent, he continued to lend Combe his countenance. Happily Combe's efforts failed, and the common lands remain unenclosed.

Death. Burial.

At the beginning of 1616 Shakespeare's health was failing. He directed Francis Collins, a solicitor of Warwick, to draft his will, but, though it was prepared for signature on January 25, it was for the time laid aside. On February 10, 1616, Shakespeare's younger daughter, Judith, married, at Stratford parish church, Thomas Quincy, four years her junior, a son of an old friend of the poet. The ceremony took place apparently without public asking of the banns and before a license was procured. The irregularity led to the summons of the bride and bridegroom to the ecclesiastical court at Worcester and the imposition of a fine. According to the testimony of John Ward, the vicar, Shakespeare entertained at New Place his two friends, Michael Drayton and Ben Jonson, in this same spring of 1616, and 'had a merry meeting,' but 'itt seems drank too hard, for Shakespeare died of a feavour there contracted.' A popular local legend, which was not recorded till 1762, credited Shakespeare with engaging at an earlier date in a prolonged and violent drinking bout at Bidford, a neighbouring village, but his achievements as a hard drinker may be dismissed as unproven. The cause of his death is undetermined, but probably his illness seemed likely to take a fatal turn in March, when he revised and signed the will that had been drafted in the previous January. On Tuesday, April 23, he died at the age of fifty-two. On Thursday, April 25 (O.S.), the poet was buried inside Stratford Church, near the northern wall of the chancel, in which, as part-owner of the tithes, and consequently one of the lay-rectors, he had a right of interment. Hard by was the charnel-house, where bones dug up from the churchyard were deposited. Over the poet's grave were inscribed the lines:

Good friend, for Jesus' sake forbeare
To dig the dust enclosed heare;
Bleste be the man that spares these stones,
And curst be he that moves my bones.

According to one William Hall, who described a visit to Stratford in 1694, these verses were penned by Shakespeare to suit 'the capacity of clerks and sextons, for the most part a very ignorant set of people.' Had this curse not threatened them, Hall proceeds, the sexton would not have hesitated in course of time to remove Shakespeare's dust to 'the bone-house.' As it was, the grave was made seventeen feet deep, and was never opened, even to receive his wife, although she expressed a desire to be buried with her husband.



THREE AUTOGRAPH SIGNATURES SEVERALLY WRITTEN BY SHAKESPEARE ON THE THREE SHEETS OF HIS WILL ON MARCH 25, 1616.
Reproduced from the original document now at Somerset House, London

The will. Bequest to his wife.

Shakespeare’s will, the first draft of which was drawn up before January 25, 1616, received many interlineations and erasures before it was signed in the ensuing March. Francis Collins, the solicitor of Warwick, and Thomas Russell, ‘esquier,’ of Stratford, were the overseers; it was proved by John Hall, the poet’s son-in-law and joint-executor with Mrs. Hall, in London on June 22 following. The religious exordium is in conventional phraseology, and gives no clue to Shakespeare’s personal religious opinions. What those opinions were, we have neither the means nor the warrant for discussing. But while it is possible to quote from the plays many contemptuous references to the puritans and their doctrines, we may dismiss as idle gossip Davies’s irresponsible report that ‘he dyed a papist.’ The name of Shakespeare’s wife was omitted from the original draft of the will, but by an interlineation in the final draft she received his second best bed with its furniture. No other bequest was made her. Several wills of the period have been discovered in which a bedstead or other article of household furniture formed part of a wife’s inheritance, but none except Shakespeare’s is forthcoming in which a bed forms the sole bequest. At the same time the precision with which Shakespeare’s will accounts for and assigns to other legatees every known item of his property refutes the conjecture that he had set aside any portion of it under a previous settlement or jointure with a view to making independent provision for his wife. Her right to a widow's dower—*i.e.* to a third share for life in freehold estate—was not subject to testamentary disposition, but Shakespeare had taken steps to prevent her from benefiting—at any rate to the full extent—by that legal arrangement. He had barred her dower in the case of his latest purchase of freehold estate, *viz.* the house at Blackfriars. Such procedure is pretty conclusive proof that he had the intention of excluding her from the enjoyment of his possessions after his death. But, however plausible the theory that his relations with her were from first to last wanting in sympathy, it is improbable that either the slender mention of her in the will or the barring of her dower was designed by Shakespeare to make public his indifference or dislike. Local tradition subsequently credited her with a wish to be buried in his grave; and her epitaph proves that she inspired her daughters with genuine affection. Probably her ignorance of affairs and the infirmities of age (she was past sixty) combined to unfit her in the poet's eyes for the control of property, and, as an act of ordinary prudence, he committed her to the care of his elder daughter, who inherited, according to such information as is accessible, some of his own shrewdness, and had a capable adviser in her husband.

His heiress. Legacies to friends.

This elder daughter, Susanna Hall, was, according to the will, to become mistress of New Place, and practically of all the poet's estate. She received (with remainder to her issue in strict entail) New Place, all the land, barns, and gardens at and near Stratford (except the tenement in Chapel Lane), and the house in Blackfriars, London, while she and her husband were appointed executors and residuary legatees, with full rights over nearly all the poet's household furniture and personal belongings. To their only child and the testator's granddaughter, or 'niece,' Elizabeth Hall, was bequeathed the poet's plate, with the exception of his broad silver and gilt bowl, which was reserved for his younger daughter, Judith. To his younger daughter he also left, with the tenement in Chapel Lane (in remainder to the elder daughter), £150 in money, of which £100, her marriage portion, was to be paid within a year, and another £150 to be paid to her if alive three years after the date of the will. To the poet's sister, Joan Hart, whose husband, William Hart, predeceased the testator by only six days, he left, besides a contingent reversionary interest in Judith's pecuniary legacy, his wearing apparel, £20 in money, a life interest in the Henley Street property, with £5 for each of her three sons, William, Thomas, and

Michael. To the poor of Stratford he gave £10, and to Mr. Thomas Combe (apparently a brother of William, of the enclosure controversy) his sword. To each of his Stratford friends, Hamlett Sadler, William Reynoldes, Anthony Nash, and John Nash, and to each of his 'fellows' (*i.e.* theatrical colleagues in London), John Heming, Richard Burbage, and Henry Condell, he left xxvj*s* . viij*d* ., with which to buy memorial rings. His godson, William Walker, received 'xx' shillings in gold.

The tomb.

Before 1623 an elaborate monument, by a London sculptor of Dutch birth, Gerard Johnson, was erected to Shakespeare's memory in the chancel of the parish church. It includes a half-length bust, depicting the dramatist on the point of writing. The fingers of the right hand are disposed as if holding a pen, and under the left hand lies a quarto sheet of paper. The inscription, which was apparently by a London friend, runs:

Judicio Pylium, genio Socratem, arte Maronem,
Terra tegit, populus mæret, Olympus habet.

Stay passenger, why goest thou by so fast?
Read, if thou canst, whom envious death hath plast
Within this monument; Shakespeare with whome
Quick nature dide; whose name doth deck ys tombe
Far more than cost; sith all yt he hath writt
Leaves living art but page to serve his witt.

Obiit ano. doi 1616 Ætatis 53 Die 23 Ap.

Personal character.

At the opening of Shakespeare's career Chettle wrote of his 'civil demeanour' and of the reports of 'his uprightness of dealing which argues his honesty.' In 1601—when near the zenith of his fame—he was apostrophised as 'sweet Master Shakespeare' in the play of 'The Return from Parnassus,' and that adjective was long after associated with his name. In 1604 one Anthony Scoloker in a poem called 'Daiphantus' bestowed on him the epithet 'friendly.' After the close of his career Jonson wrote of him: 'I loved the man and do honour his memory, on this side idolatry as much as any. He was, indeed, honest and of an open and free nature.' No other contemporary left on record any definite impression of Shakespeare’s personal character, and the ‘Sonnets,’ which alone of his literary work can be held to throw any illumination on a personal trait, mainly reveal him in the light of one who was willing to conform to all the conventional methods in vogue for strengthening the bonds between a poet and a great patron. His literary practices and aims were those of contemporary men of letters, and the difference in the quality of his work and theirs was due not to conscious endeavour on his part to act otherwise than they, but to the magic and involuntary working of his genius. He seemed unconscious of his marvellous superiority to his professional comrades. The references in his will to his fellow-actors, and the spirit in which (as they announce in the First Folio) they approached the task of collecting his works after his death, corroborate the description of him as a sympathetic friend of gentle, unassuming mien. The later traditions brought together by Aubrey depict him as ‘very good company, and of a very ready and pleasant smooth wit,’ and there is much in other early posthumous references to suggest a genial, if not a convivial, temperament, linked to a quiet turn for good-humoured satire. But Bohemian ideals and modes of life had no genuine attraction for Shakespeare. His extant work attests his ‘copious’ and continuous industry,   and with his literary power and sociability there clearly went the shrewd capacity of a man of business. Pope had just warrant for the surmise that he

For gain not glory winged his roving flight,
And grew immortal in his own despite.

His literary attainments and successes were chiefly valued as serving the prosaic end of providing permanently for himself and his daughters. His highest ambition was to restore among his fellow-townsmen the family repute which his father’s misfortunes had imperilled. Ideals so homely are reckoned rare among poets, but Chaucer and Sir Walter Scott, among writers of exalted genius, vie with Shakespeare in the sobriety of their personal aims and in the sanity of their mental attitude towards life’s ordinary incidents.

<<span id="filepos0041250009"> a>XVII—SURVIVORS AND DESCENDANTS

The survivors. Mistress Judith Quiney.

Shakespeare’s widow died on August 6, 1623, at the age of sixty-seven, and was buried near her husband inside the chancel two days later. Some affectionately phrased Latin elegiacs—doubtless from Dr. Hall’s pen—were inscribed on a brass plate fastened to the stone above her grave. The younger daughter, Judith, resided with her husband, Thomas Quiney, at The Cage, a house which he leased in Bridge Street from 1616 till 1652. There he carried on the trade of a vintner, and took part in municipal affairs, acting as a councillor from 1617 and as chamberlain in 1621-2 and 1622-3; but after 1630 his affairs grew embarrassed, and he left Stratford late in 1652 for London, where he seems to have died a few months later. Of his three sons by Judith, the eldest, Shakespeare (baptised on November 23, 1616), was buried in Stratford Churchyard on May 8, 1617; the second son, Richard (baptised on February 9, 1617-18), was buried on January 28, 1638-9; and the third son, Thomas (baptised on January 23, 1619-20), was buried on February 26, 1638-9. Judith survived her husband, sons, and sister, dying at Stratford on February 9, 1661-2, in her seventy-seventh year.

Mistress Susannah Hall.

The poet’s elder daughter, Mrs. Susanna Hall, resided at New Place till her death. Her sister Judith alienated to her the Chapel Place tenement before 1633, but that, with the interest in the Stratford tithes, she soon disposed of. Her husband, Dr. John Hall, died on November 25, 1635. In 1642 James Cooke, a surgeon in attendance on some Royalist troops stationed at Stratford, visited Mrs. Hall and examined manuscripts in her possession, but they were apparently of her husband’s, not of her father’s, composition. From July 11 to 13, 1643, Queen Henrietta Maria, while journeying from Newark to Oxford, was billeted on Mrs. Hall at New Place for three days, and was visited there by Prince Rupert. Mrs. Hall was buried beside her husband in Stratford Churchyard on July 11, 1649, and a rhyming inscription, describing her as ‘witty above her sex,’ was engraved on her tombstone. The whole inscription ran: ‘Heere lyeth ye body of Svsanna, wife to John Hall, Gent. ye davghter of William Shakespeare, Gent. She deceased ye 11th of Jvly, A.D. 1649, aged 66.

‘Witty above her sexe, but that’s not all,
Wise to Salvation was good Mistress Hall,
Something of Shakespere was in that, but this
Wholy of him with whom she’s now in blisse.
Then, passenger, ha’st ne’re a teare,
  To weepe with her that wept with all?

That wept, yet set herselfe to chere
  Them up with comforts cordiall.
Her Love shall live, her mercy spread,
When thou hast ne're a teare to shed.'

The last descendant.

Mrs. Hall's only child, Elizabeth, was the last surviving descendant of the poet. In April 1626 she married her first husband, Thomas Nash of Stratford (*b.* 1593), who studied at Lincoln's Inn, was a man of property, and, dying childless at New Place on April 4, 1647, was buried in Stratford Church next day. At Billesley, a village four miles from Stratford, on June 5, 1649, Mrs. Nash married, as a second husband, a widower, John Bernard or Barnard of Abington, Northamptonshire, who was knighted by Charles II in 1661. About the same date she seems to have abandoned New Place for her husband's residence at Abington. Dying without issue, she was buried there on February 17, 1669-70. Her husband survived her four years, and was buried beside her. On her mother's death in 1649 Lady Barnard inherited under the poet's will the land near Stratford, New Place, the house at Blackfriars, and (on the death of the poet's sister, Joan Hart, in 1646) the houses in Henley Street, while her father, Dr. Hall, left her in 1635 a house at Acton with a meadow. She sold the Blackfriars house, and apparently the Stratford land, before 1667. By her will, dated January 1669-70, and proved in the following March, she left small bequests to the daughters of Thomas Hathaway, of the family of her grandmother, the poet's wife. The houses in Henley Street passed to her cousin, Thomas Hart, the grandson of the poet's sister Joan, and they remained in the possession of Thomas's direct descendants till 1806 (the male line expired on the death of John Hart in 1800). By her will Lady Barnard also ordered New Place to be sold, and it was purchased on May 18, 1675, by Sir Edward Walker, through whose daughter Barbara, wife of Sir John Clopton, it reverted to the Clopton family. Sir John rebuilt it in 1702. On the death of his son Hugh in 1752, it was bought by the Rev. Francis Gastrell (*d.* 1768), who demolished the new building in 1759.

Shakespeare's brothers.

Of Shakespeare's three brothers, only one, Gilbert, seems to have survived him. Edmund, the youngest brother, 'a player,' was buried at St. Saviour's Church, Southwark, 'with a fore-noone knell of the great bell,' on December 31, 1607; he was in his twenty-eighth year. Richard, John Shakespeare's third son, died at Stratford in February 1613, aged 29. 'Gilbert Shakespeare adolescens,' who was buried at Stratford on February 3, 1611-12, was doubtless son of the poet's next brother, Gilbert; the latter, having nearly completed his forty-sixth year, could scarcely be described as 'adolescens;' his death is not recorded, but according to Oldys he survived to a patriarchal age.

<<span id="filepos0041258792"> a>XVIII—AUTOGRAPHS, PORTRAITS, AND MEMORIALS

Spelling of the poet's surname. Autograph signatures.

Much controversy has arisen over the spelling of the poet's surname. It has been proved capable of four thousand variations. The name of the poet's father is entered sixty-six times in the council books of Stratford, and is spelt in sixteen ways. The commonest form is 'Shaxpeare.' Five autographs of the poet of undisputed authenticity are extant: his signature to the indenture relating to the purchase of the property in Blackfriars, dated March 10, 1612-13 (since 1841 in the Guildhall Library); his signature to the mortgage-deed relating to the same purchase, dated March 11, 1612-13 (since 1858 in the British Museum), and the three signatures on the three sheets of his will, dated March 25, 1615-16 (now at Somerset House). In all the signatures some of the letters are represented by recognised signs of abbreviation. The signature to the first document is 'William Shakspere,' though in all other portions of the deed the name is spelt 'Shakespeare.' The signature to the second document has been interpreted both as Shakspere and Shakspeare. The ink of the first signature in the will has now faded almost beyond decipherment, but that it was 'Shakspere' may be inferred from the facsimile made by Steevens in 1776. The second and third signatures to the will, which are also somewhat difficult to decipher, have been read both as Shakspere and Shakspeare; but a close examination suggests that whatever the second signature may be, the third is 'Shakespeare.' Shakspere is the spelling of the alleged autograph in the British Museum copy of Florio's 'Montaigne,' but the genuineness of that signature is disputable. Shakespeare was the form adopted in the full signature appended to the dedicatory epistles of the 'Venus and Adonis' of 1593 and the 'Lucrece' of 1594, volumes which were produced under the poet's supervision. It is the spelling adopted on the title-pages of the majority of contemporary editions of his works, whether or not produced under his supervision. It is adopted in almost all the published references to the poet during the seventeenth century. It appears in the grant of arms in 1596, in the license to the players of 1603, and in the text of all the legal documents relating to the poet's property. The poet, like most of his contemporaries, acknowledged no finality on the subject. According to the best authority, he spelt his surname in two ways when signing his will. There is consequently no good ground for abandoning the form Shakespeare, which is sanctioned by legal and literary custom.

Shakespeare's portraits. The Stratford bust. The 'Stratford' portrait.

Aubrey reported that Shakespeare was 'a handsome well-shap't man,' but no portrait exists which can be said with absolute certainty to have been executed during his lifetime, although one has recently been discovered with a good claim to that distinction. Only two of the extant portraits are positively known to have been produced within a short period after his death. These are the bust in Stratford Church and the frontispiece to the folio of 1623. Each is an inartistic attempt at a posthumous likeness. There is considerable discrepancy between the two; their main points of resemblance are the baldness on the top of the head and the fulness of the hair about the ears. The bust was by Gerard Johnson or Janssen, who was a Dutch stonemason or tombmaker settled in Southwark. It was set up in the church before 1623, and is a rudely carved specimen of mortuary sculpture. There are marks about the forehead and ears which suggest that the face was fashioned from a death mask, but the workmanship is at all points clumsy. The round face and eyes present a heavy, unintellectual expression. The bust was originally coloured, but in 1793 Malone caused it to be whitewashed. In 1861 the whitewash was removed, and the colours, as far as traceable, restored. The eyes are light hazel, the hair and beard auburn. There have been numberless reproductions, both engraved and photographic. It was first engraved—very imperfectly—for Rowe's edition in 1709; then by Vertue for Pope's edition of 1725; and by Gravelot for Hanmer's edition in 1744. A good engraving by William Ward appeared in 1816. A phototype and a chromo-phototype, issued by the New Shakspere Society, are the best reproductions for the purposes of study. The pretentious painting known as the 'Stratford' portrait, and presented in 1867 by W. O. Hunt, town clerk of Stratford, to the Birthplace Museum, where it is very prominently displayed, was probably painted from the bust late in the eighteenth century; it lacks either historic or artistic interest.

Droeshout’s engraving.

The engraved portrait—nearly a half-length—which was printed on the title-page of the folio of 1623, was by Martin Droeshout. On the opposite page lines by Ben Jonson congratulate ‘the graver’ on having satisfactorily ‘hit’ the poet’s ‘face.’ Jonson’s testimony does no credit to his artistic discernment; the expression of countenance, which is very crudely rendered, is neither distinctive nor lifelike. The face is long and the forehead high; the top of the head is bald, but the hair falls in abundance over the ears. There is a scanty moustache and a thin tuft under the lower lip. A stiff and wide collar, projecting horizontally, conceals the neck. The coat is closely buttoned and elaborately bordered, especially at the shoulders. The dimensions of the head and face are disproportionately large as compared with those of the body. In the unique proof copy which belonged to Halliwell-Phillipps (now with his collection in America) the tone is clearer than in the ordinary copies, and the shadows are less darkened by cross-hatching and coarse dotting. The engraver, Martin Droeshout, belonged to a Flemish family of painters and engravers long settled in London, where he was born in 1601. He was thus fifteen years old at the time of Shakespeare’s death in 1616, and it is consequently improbable that he had any personal knowledge of the dramatist. The engraving was doubtless produced by Droeshout very shortly before the publication of the First Folio in 1623, when he had completed his twenty-second year. It thus belongs to the outset of the engraver’s professional career, in which he never achieved extended practice or reputation. A copy of the Droeshout engraving, by William Marshall, was prefixed to Shakespeare’s ‘Poems’ in 1640, and William Faithorne made another copy for the frontispiece of the edition of ‘The Rape of Lucrece’ published in 1655.

The ‘Droeshout’ painting.

There is little doubt that young Droeshout in fashioning his engraving worked from a painting, and there is a likelihood that the original picture from which the youthful engraver worked has lately come to light. As recently as 1892 Mr. Edgar Flower, of Stratford-on-Avon, discovered in the possession of Mr. H. C. Clements, a private gentleman with artistic tastes residing at Peckham Rye, a portrait alleged to represent Shakespeare. The picture, which was faded and somewhat worm-eaten, dated beyond all doubt from the early years of the seventeenth century. It was painted on a panel formed of two planks of old elm, and in the upper left-hand corner was the inscription ‘Willm Shakespeare, 1609.’ Mr. Clements purchased the portrait of an obscure dealer about 1840, and knew nothing of its history, beyond what he set down on a slip of paper when he acquired it. The note that he then wrote and pasted on the box in which he preserved the picture, ran as follows: ‘The original portrait of Shakespeare, from which the now famous Droeshout engraving was taken and inserted in the first collected edition of his works, published in 1623, being seven years after his death. The picture was painted nine [*verè* seven] years before his death, and consequently sixteen [*verè* fourteen] years before it was published. . . . The picture was publicly exhibited in London seventy years ago, and many thousands went to see it.’ In all its details and in its comparative dimensions, especially in the disproportion between the size of the head and that of the body, this picture is identical with the Droeshout engraving. Though coarsely and stiffly drawn, the face is far more skilfully presented than in the engraving, and the expression of countenance betrays some artistic sentiment which is absent from the print. Connoisseurs, including Sir Edward Poynter, Mr. Sidney Colvin, and Mr. Lionel Cust, have almost unreservedly pronounced the picture to be anterior in date to the engraving, and they have reached the conclusion that in all probability Martin Droeshout directly based his work upon the painting. Influences of an early seventeenth-century Flemish school are plainly discernible in the picture, and it is just possible that it is the production of an uncle of the young engraver Martin Droeshout, who bore the same name as his nephew, and was naturalised in this country on January 25, 1608, when he was described as a ‘painter of Brabant.’ Although the history of the portrait rests on critical conjecture and on no external contemporary evidence, there seems good ground for regarding it as a portrait of Shakespeare painted in his lifetime—in the forty-fifth year of his age. No other pictorial representation of the poet has equally serious claims to be treated as contemporary with himself, and it therefore presents features of unique interest. On the death of its owner, Mr. Clements, in 1895, the painting was purchased by Mrs. Charles Flower, and was presented to the Memorial Picture Gallery at Stratford, where it now hangs. No attempt at restoration has been made. A photogravure forms the frontispiece to the present volume.

Of the same type as the Droeshout engraving, although less closely resembling it than the picture just described, is the ‘Ely House’ portrait (now the property of the Birthplace Trustees at Stratford), which formerly belonged to Thomas Turton, Bishop of Ely, and it is inscribed ‘Æ. 39 x. 1603.’ This painting is of high artistic value. The features are of a far more attractive and intellectual cast than in either the Droeshout painting or engraving, and the many differences in detail raise doubts as to whether the person represented can have been intended for Shakespeare. Experts are of opinion that the picture was painted early in the seventeenth century.

Early in Charles II's reign Lord Chancellor Clarendon added a portrait of Shakespeare to his great gallery in his house in St. James's. Mention is made of it in a letter from the diarist John Evelyn to his friend Samuel Pepys in 1689, but Clarendon's collection was dispersed at the end of the seventeenth century and the picture has not been traced.

Later portraits.

Of the numerous extant paintings which have been described as portraits of Shakespeare, only the 'Droeshout' portrait and the Ely House portrait, both of which are at Stratford, bear any definable resemblance to the folio engraving or the bust in the church. In spite of their admitted imperfections, those presentments can alone be held indisputably to have been honestly designed to depict the poet's features. They must be treated as the standards of authenticity in judging of the genuineness of other portraits claiming to be of an early date.

The 'Chandos' portrait.

Of other alleged portraits which are extant, the most famous and interesting is the 'Chandos' portrait, now in the National Portrait Gallery. Its pedigree suggests that it was intended to represent the poet, but numerous and conspicuous divergences from the authenticated likenesses show that it was painted from fanciful descriptions of him some years after his death. The face is bearded, and rings adorn the ears. Oldys reported that it was from the brush of Burbage, Shakespeare's fellow-actor, who had some reputation as a limner, and that it had belonged to Joseph Taylor, an actor contemporary with Shakespeare. These rumours are not corroborated; but there is no doubt that it was at one time the property of D'Avenant, and that it subsequently belonged successively to the actor Betterton and to Mrs. Barry the actress. In 1693 Sir Godfrey Kneller made a copy as a gift for Dryden. After Mrs Barry's death in 1713 it was purchased for forty guineas by Robert Keck, a barrister of the Inner Temple. At length it reached the hands of one John Nichols, whose daughter married James Brydges, third duke of Chandos. In due time the Duke became the owner of the picture, and it subsequently passed, through Chandos's daughter, to her husband, the first

Duke of Buckingham and Chandos, whose son, the second Duke of Buckingham and Chandos, sold it with the rest of his effects at Stowe in 1848, when it was purchased by the Earl of Ellesmere. The latter presented it to the nation. Edward Capell many years before presented a copy by Ranelagh Barret to Trinity College, Cambridge, and other copies are attributed to Sir Joshua Reynolds and Ozias Humphrey (1783). It was engraved by George Vertue in 1719 for Pope's edition (1725), and often later, one of the best engravings being by Vandergucht. A good lithograph from a tracing by Sir George Scharf was published by the trustees of the National Portrait Gallery in 1864. The Baroness Burdett-Coutts purchased in 1875 a portrait of similar type, which is said, somewhat doubtfully, to have belonged to John lord Lumley, who died in 1609, and to have formed part of a collection of portraits of the great men of his day at his house, Lumley Castle, Durham. Its early history is not positively authenticated, and it may well be an early copy of the Chandos portrait. The 'Lumley' painting was finely chromo-lithographed in 1863 by Vincent Brooks.

The 'Jansen' portrait.

The so-called 'Jansen' or Janssens portrait, which belongs to Lady Guendolen Ramsden, daughter of the Duke of Somerset, and is now at her residence at Bulstrode, was first doubtfully identified about 1770, when in the possession of Charles Jennens. Janssens did not come to England before Shakespeare's death. It is a fine portrait, but is unlike any other that has been associated with the dramatist. An admirable mezzotint by Richard Earlom was issued in 1811.

The 'Felton' portrait.

The 'Felton' portrait, a small head on a panel, with a high and very bald forehead (belonging since 1873 to the Baroness Burdett-Coutts), was purchased by S. Felton of Drayton, Shropshire, in 1792 of J. Wilson, the owner of the Shakespeare Museum in Pall Mall; it bears a late inscription, 'Gul. Shakespear 1597, R. B.' [*i.e.* Richard Burbage]. It was engraved by Josiah Boydell for George Steevens in 1797, and by James Neagle for Isaac Reed's edition in 1803. Fuseli declared it to be the work of a Dutch artist, but the painters Romney and Lawrence regarded it as of English workmanship of the sixteenth century. Steevens held that it was the original picture whence both Droeshout and Marshall made their engravings, but there are practically no points of resemblance between it and the prints.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE.

From a plaster-cast of the terra-cotta bust now in the possession of the Garrick Club

The ‘Soest’ portrait.

The ‘Soest’ or ‘Zoust’ portrait—in the possession of Sir John Lister-Kaye of the Grange, Wakefield—was in the collection of Thomas Wright, painter, of Covent Garden in 1725, when John Simon engraved it. Soest was born twenty-one years after Shakespeare’s death, and the portrait is only on fanciful grounds identified with the poet. A chalk drawing by John Michael Wright, obviously inspired by the Soest portrait, is the property of Sir Arthur Hodgson of Clopton House, and is on loan at the Memorial Gallery, Stratford.

Miniatures.

A well-executed miniature by Hilliard, at one time in the possession of William Somerville the poet, and now the property Of Sir Stafford Northcote, bart., was engraved by Agar for vol. ii. of the ‘Variorum Shakespeare’ of 1821, and in

Wivell’s ‘Inquiry,’ 1827. It has little claim to attention as a portrait of the dramatist. Another miniature (called the ‘Auriol’ portrait), of doubtful authenticity, formerly belonged to Mr. Lumsden Propert, and a third is at Warwick Castle.

The Garrick Club bust.

A bust, said to be of Shakespeare, was discovered in 1845 bricked up in a wall in Spode and Copeland’s china warehouse in Lincoln’s Inn Fields. The warehouse had been erected on the site of the Duke’s Theatre, which was built by D’Avenant in 1660. The bust, which is of black terra cotta, and bears traces of Italian workmanship, is believed to have adorned the proscenium of the Duke’s Theatre. It was acquired by the surgeon William Clift, from whom it passed to Clift’s son-in-law, Richard (afterwards Sir Richard) Owen the naturalist. The latter sold it to the Duke of Devonshire, who presented it in 1851 to the Garrick Club, after having two copies made in plaster. One of these copies is now in the Shakespeare Memorial Gallery at Stratford, and from it an engraving has been made for reproduction in this volume.

Alleged death-mask.

The Kesselstadt death-mask was discovered by Dr. Ludwig Becker, librarian at the ducal palace at Darmstadt, in a rag-shop at Mayence in 1849. The features resemble those of an alleged portrait of Shakespeare (dated 1637) which Dr. Becker purchased in 1847. This picture had long been in the possession of the family of Count Francis von Kesselstadt of Mayence, who died in 1843. Dr. Becker brought the mask and the picture to England in 1849, and Richard Owen supported the theory that the mask was taken from Shakespeare’s face after death, and was the foundation of the bust in Stratford Church. The mask was for a long time in Dr. Becker’s private apartments at the ducal palace, Darmstadt. The features are singularly attractive; but the chain of evidence which would identify them with Shakespeare is incomplete.

Memorials in sculpture.

A monument, the expenses of which were defrayed by public subscription, was set up in the Poets’ Corner in Westminster Abbey in 1741. Pope and the Earl of Burlington were among the promoters. The design was by William Kent, and the statue of Shakespeare was executed by Peter Scheemakers. Another statue was executed by Roubiliac for Garrick, who bequeathed it to the British Museum in 1779. A third statue, freely adapted from the works of Scheemakers and Roubiliac, was executed for Baron Albert Grant and was set up by him as a gift to the metropolis in Leicester Square, London, in 1879. A fourth statue (by Mr. J. A. Q. Ward) was placed in 1882 in the Central Park, New York. A fifth in bronze, by M. Paul Fournier, which was erected in Paris in 1888 at the expense of an English resident, Mr. W. Knighton, stands at the point where the Avenue de Messine meets the Boulevard Haussmann. A sixth memorial in sculpture, by Lord Ronald Gower, the most elaborate and ambitious of all, stands in the garden of the Shakespeare Memorial buildings at Stratford-on-Avon, and was unveiled in 1888; Shakespeare is seated on a high pedestal; below, at each side of the pedestal, stand figures of four of Shakespeare's principal characters: Lady Macbeth, Hamlet, Prince Hal, and Sir John Falstaff.

At Stratford, the Birthplace, which was acquired by the public in 1846 and converted into a museum, is with Anne Hathaway's cottage (which was acquired by the Birthplace Trustees in 1892), a place of pilgrimage for visitors from all parts of the globe. The 27,038 persons who visited it in 1896 and the 26,510 persons who visited it in 1897 represented over forty nationalities. The site of the demolished New Place, with the gardens, was also purchased by public subscription in 1861, and now forms a public garden. Of a new memorial building on the river-bank at Stratford, consisting of a theatre, picture-gallery, and library, the foundation-stone was laid on April 23, 1877. The theatre was opened exactly two years later, when 'Much Ado about Nothing' was performed, with Helen Faucit (Lady Martin) as Beatrice and Barry Sullivan as Benedick. Performances of Shakespeare's plays have since been given annually during April. The library and picture-gallery were opened in 1881. A memorial Shakespeare library was opened at Birmingham on April 23, 1868, to commemorate the tercentenary of 1864, and, although destroyed by fire in 1879, was restored in 1882; it now possesses nearly ten thousand volumes relating to Shakespeare.

<<span id="filepos0041289151"> a>XIX—BIBLIOGRAPHY

Quartos of the poems in the poet's lifetime.

Only two of Shakespeare's works—his narrative poems 'Venus and Adonis' and 'Lucrece'—were published with his sanction and co-operation. These poems were the first specimens of his work to appear in print, and they passed in his lifetime through a greater number of editions than any of his plays. At the time of his death in 1616 there had been printed in quarto seven editions of his 'Venus and Adonis' (1593, 1594, 1596, 1599, 1600, and two in 1602), and five editions of his 'Lucrece' (1594, 1598, 1600, 1607, 1616). There was only one lifetime edition of the 'Sonnets,' Thorpe's surreptitious venture of 1609; but three editions were issued of the piratical 'Passionate Pilgrim,' which was fraudulently assigned to Shakespeare by the publisher William Jaggard, although it contained only a few occasional poems by him (1599, 1600 no copy known, and 1612).

Posthumous quartos of the poems.

Of posthumous editions in quarto of the two narrative poems in the seventeenth century, there were two of 'Lucrece'—viz. in 1624 ('the sixth edition') and in 1655 (with John Quarles's 'Banishment of Tarquin')—and there were as many as six editions of 'Venus' (1617, 1620, 1627, two in 1630, and 1636), making thirteen editions in all in forty-three years. No later editions of these two poems were issued in the seventeenth century. They were next reprinted together with 'The Passionate Pilgrim' in 1707, and thenceforth they usually figured, with the addition of the 'Sonnets,' in collected editions of Shakespeare's works.

The 'Poems' of 1640.

A so-called first collected edition of Shakespeare's 'Poems' in 1640 (London, by T. Cotes for I. Benson) was mainly a reissue of the 'Sonnets,' but it omitted six (Nos. xviii., xix., xliii., lvi., lxxv., and lxxvi.) and it included the twenty poems of 'The Passionate Pilgrim,' with some other pieces by other authors. Marshall's copy of the Droeshout engraving of 1623 formed the frontispiece. There were prefatory poems by Leonard Digges and John Warren, as well as an address 'to the reader' signed with the initials of the publisher. There Shakespeare's 'Sonnets' were described as 'serene, clear, and elegantly plain; such gentle strains as shall re-create and not perplex your brain. No intricate or cloudy stuff to puzzle intellect. Such as will raise your admiration to his praise.' A chief point of interest in the volume of 'Poems' of 1640 is the fact that the 'Sonnets' were printed then in a different order from that which was followed in the volume of 1609. Thus the poem numbered lxvii. in the original edition opens the reissue, and what has been regarded as the crucial poem, beginning

Two loves I have of comfort and despair,

which was in 1609 numbered cxliv., takes the thirty-second place in 1640. In most cases a more or less fanciful general title is placed in the second edition at the head of each sonnet, but in a few instances a single title serves for short sequences of two or three sonnets which are printed as independent poems continuously without spacing. The poems drawn from ‘The Passionate Pilgrim’ are intermingled with the ‘Sonnets,’ together with extracts from Thomas Heywood’s ‘General History of Women,’ although no hint is given that they are not Shakespeare’s work. The edition concludes with three epitaphs on Shakespeare and a short section entitled ‘an addition of some excellent poems to those precedent by other Gentlemen.’ The volume is of great rarity. An exact reprint was published in 1885.

Quartos of the plays in the poet’s lifetime.

Of Shakespeare’s plays there were in print in 1616 only sixteen (all in quarto), or eighteen if we include the ‘Contention,’ the first draft of ‘2 Henry VI’ (1594 and 1600), and ‘The True Tragedy,’ the first draft of ‘3 Henry VI’ (1595 and 1600). These sixteen quartos were publishers’ ventures, and were undertaken without the co-operation of the author.

Two of the plays, published thus, reached five editions before 1616, *viz.* ‘Richard III’ (1597, 1598, 1602, 1605, 1612) and ‘1 Henry IV’ (1598, 1599, 1604, 1608, 1615).

Three reached four editions, *viz.* ‘Richard II’ (1597, 1598, 1608 supplying the deposition scene for the first time, 1615); ‘Hamlet’ (1603 imperfect, 1604, 1605, 1611), and ‘Romeo and Juliet’ (1597 imperfect, 1599, two in 1609).

Two reached three editions, *viz.* ‘Henry V’ (1600 imperfect, 1602, and 1608) and ‘Pericles’ (two in 1609, 1611).

Four reached two editions, *viz.* ‘Midsummer Night’s Dream’ (both in 1600);

‘Merchant of Venice’ (both in 1600); ‘Lear’ (both in 1608); and ‘Troilus and Cressida’ (both in 1609).

Five achieved only one edition, *viz.* ‘Love’s Labour’s Lost’ (1598), ‘2 Henry IV’ (1600), ‘Much Ado’ (1600), ‘Titus’ (1600), ‘Merry Wives’ (1602 imperfect).

Posthumous quartos of the plays.

Three years after Shakespeare’s death—in 1619—there appeared a second edition of ‘Merry Wives’ (again imperfect) and a fourth of ‘Pericles.’ ‘Othello’ was first printed posthumously in 1622 (4to), and in the same year sixth editions of ‘Richard III’ and ‘I Henry IV’ appeared. The largest collections of the original quartos—each of which survives in only four, five, or six copies—are in the libraries of the Duke of Devonshire, the British Museum, and Trinity College, Cambridge, and in the Bodleian Library. All the quartos were issued in Shakespeare’s day at sixpence each.

The First Folio. The publishing syndicate.

In 1623 the first attempt was made to give the world a complete edition of Shakespeare’s plays. Two of the dramatist’s intimate friends and fellow-actors, John Heming and Henry Condell, were nominally responsible for the venture, but it seems to have been suggested by a small syndicate of printers and publishers, who undertook all pecuniary responsibility. Chief of the syndicate was William Jaggard, printer since 1611 to the City of London, who was established in business in Fleet Street at the east end of St. Dunstan’s Church. As the piratical publisher of ‘The Passionate Pilgrim’ he had long known the commercial value of Shakespeare’s work. In 1613 he had extended his business by purchasing the stock and rights of a rival pirate, James Roberts, who had printed the quarto editions of the ‘Merchant of Venice’ and ‘Midsummer Night’s Dream’ in 1600 and the complete quarto of ‘Hamlet’ in 1604. Roberts had enjoyed for nearly twenty years the right to print ‘the players’ bills,’ or programmes, and he made over that privilege to Jaggard with his other literary property. It is to the close personal relations with the playhouse managers into which the acquisition of the right of printing ‘the players’ bill’ brought Jaggard after 1613 that the inception of the scheme of the ‘First Folio’ may safely be attributed. Jaggard associated his son Isaac with the enterprise. They alone of the members of the syndicate were printers. Their three partners were publishers or booksellers only. Two of these, William Aspley and John Smethwick, had already speculated in plays of Shakespeare. Aspley had published with another in 1600 the ‘Second Part of Henry IV’ and ‘Much Ado about Nothing,’ and in 1609 half of Thorpe’s impression of Shakespeare’s ‘Sonnets.’ Smethwick, whose shop was in St. Dunstan’s Churchyard, Fleet Street, near Jaggard’s, had published in 1611 two late editions of ‘Romeo and Juliet’ and one of ‘Hamlet.’ Edward Blount, the fifth partner, was an interesting figure in the trade, and, unlike his companions, had a true taste in literature. He had been a friend and admirer of Christopher Marlowe, and had actively engaged in the posthumous publication of two of Marlowe’s poems. He had published that curious collection of mystical verse entitled ‘Love’s Martyr,’ one poem in which, ‘a poetical essay of the Phœnix and the Turtle,’ was signed ‘William Shakespeare.’

The First Folio was doubtless printed in Jaggard’s printing office near St. Dunstan’s Church. Upon Blount probably fell the chief labour of seeing the work through the press. It was in progress throughout 1623, and had so far advanced by November 8, 1623, that on that day Edward Blount and Isaac (son of William) Jaggard obtained formal license from the Stationers’ Company to publish sixteen of the twenty hitherto unprinted plays that it was intended to include. The pieces, whose approaching publication for the first time was thus announced, were of supreme literary interest. The titles ran: ‘The Tempest,’ ‘The Two Gentlemen,’ ‘Measure for Measure,’ ‘Comedy of Errors,’ ‘As you like it,’ ‘All’s Well,’ ‘Twelfth Night,’ ‘Winter’s Tale,’ ‘3 Henry VI,’ ‘Henry VIII,’ ‘Coriolanus,’ ‘Timon,’ ‘Julius Cæsar,’ ‘Macbeth,’ ‘Antony and Cleopatra,’ and ‘Cymbeline.’ Four other hitherto unprinted dramas for which no license was sought figured in the volume, *viz.* ‘King John,’ ‘1 and 2 Henry VI,’ and the ‘Taming of the Shrew;’ but each of these plays was based by Shakespeare on a play of like title which had been published at an earlier date, and the absence of a license was doubtless due to an ignorant misconception on the past either of the Stationers’ Company’s officers or of the editors of the volume as to the true relations subsisting between the old pieces and the new. The only play by Shakespeare that had been previously published and was not included in the First Folio was ‘Pericles.’

The prefatory matter.

Thirty-six pieces in all were thus brought together. The volume consisted of nearly one thousand double-column pages and was sold at a pound a copy.

Steevens estimated that the edition numbered 250 copies. The book was described on the title-page as published by Edward Blount and Isaac Jaggard, and in the colophon as printed at the charges of ‘W. Jaggard, I. Smithweeke, and W. Aspley,’ as well as of Blount. On the title-page was engraved the Droeshout portrait. Commendatory verses were supplied by Ben Jonson, Hugh Holland, Leonard Digges, and I. M., perhaps Jasper Maine. The dedication was addressed to the brothers William Herbert, earl of Pembroke, the lord chamberlain, and Philip Herbert, earl of Montgomery, and was signed by Shakespeare’s friends and fellow-actors, Heming and Condell. The same signatures were appended to a succeeding address ‘to the great variety of readers.’ In both addresses the two actors made pretension to a larger responsibility for the enterprise than they really incurred, but their motives in identifying themselves with the venture were doubtless irreproachable. They disclaimed (they wrote) ‘ambition either of selfe-profit or fame in undertaking the design,’ being solely moved by anxiety to ‘keepe the memory of so worthy a friend and fellow alive as was our Shakespeare.’ ‘It had bene a thing we confesse worthie to haue bene wished,’ they inform the reader, ‘that the author himselfe had liued to haue set forth and ouerseen his owne writings. . . .’ A list of contents follows the address to the readers.

The value of the text.

The title-page states that all the plays were printed ‘according to the true originall copies.’ The dedicators wrote to the same effect. ‘As where (before) we were abus’d with diuerse stolne and surreptitious copies, maimed and deformed by the frauds and stealthes of incurious impostors that expos’d them: even those are now offer’d to your view cur’d and perfect in their limbes, and all the rest absolute in their numbers as he conceived them.’ There is no doubt that the whole volume was printed from the acting versions in the possession of the manager of the company with which Shakespeare had been associated. But it is doubtful if any play were printed exactly as it came from his pen. The First Folio text is often markedly inferior to that of the sixteen pre-existent quartos, which, although surreptitiously and imperfectly printed, followed playhouse copies of far earlier date. From the text of the quartos the text of the First Folio differs invariably, although in varying degrees. The quarto texts of ‘Love’s Labour’s Lost,’ ‘Midsummer Night’s Dream,’ and ‘Richard II,’ for example, differ very largely and always for the better from the folio texts. On the other hand, the folio repairs the glaring defects of the quarto versions of ‘The Merry Wives of Windsor’ and of ‘Henry V.’ In the case of twenty of the plays in the

First Folio no quartos exist for comparison, and of these twenty plays, ‘Coriolanus,’ ‘All’s Well,’ and ‘Macbeth’ present a text abounding in corrupt passages.

The order of the plays.

The plays are arranged under three headings—‘Comedies,’ ‘Histories,’ and ‘Tragedies’—and each division is separately paged. The arrangement of the plays in each division follows no principle. The comedy section begins with the ‘Tempest’ and ends with the ‘Winter’s Tale.’ The histories more justifiably begin with ‘King John’ and end with ‘Henry VIII.’ The tragedies begin with ‘Troilus and Cressida’ and end with ‘Cymbeline.’ This order has been usually followed in subsequent collective editions.

The typography.

As a specimen of typography the First Folio is not to be commended. There are a great many contemporary folios of larger bulk far more neatly and correctly printed. It looks as though Jaggard’s printing office were undermanned. The misprints are numerous and are especially conspicuous in the pagination. The sheets seem to have been worked off very slowly, and corrections were made while the press was working, so that the copies struck off later differ occasionally from the earlier copies. One mark of carelessness on the part of the compositor or corrector of the press, which is common to all copies, is that ‘Troilus and Cressida,’ though in the body of the book it opens the section of tragedies, is not mentioned at all in the table of contents, and the play is unpaged except on its second and third pages, which bear the numbers 79 and 80.

Unique copies.

Three copies are known which are distinguished by more interesting irregularities, in each case unique. The copy in the Lenox Library in New York includes a cancel duplicate of a leaf of ‘As You Like It’ (sheet R of the comedies), and the title-page bears the date 1622 instead of 1623; but it is suspected that the figures were tampered with outside the printing office. Samuel Butler, successively headmaster of Shrewsbury and Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry, possessed a copy of the First Folio in which a proof leaf of ‘Hamlet’ was bound up with the corrected leaf.

The Sheldon copy.

The most interesting irregularity yet noticed appears in one of the two copies of the book belonging to the Baroness Burdett-Coutts. This copy is known as the Sheldon Folio, having formed in the seventeenth century part of the library of Ralph Sheldon of Weston Manor in the parish of Long Compton, Warwickshire.

In the Sheldon Folio the opening page of ‘Troilus and Cressida,’ of which the recto or front is occupied by the prologue and the verso or back by the opening lines of the text of the play, is followed by a superfluous leaf. On the recto or front of the unnecessary leaf are printed the concluding lines of ‘Romeo and Juliet’ in place of the prologue to ‘Troilus and Cressida.’ At the back or verso are the opening lines of ‘Troilus and Cressida’ repeated from the preceding page. The presence of a different ornamental headpiece on each page proves that the two are not taken from the same setting of the type. At a later page in the Sheldon copy the concluding lines of ‘Romeo and Juliet’ are duly reprinted at the close of the play, and on the verso or back of the leaf, which supplies them in their right place, is the opening passage, as in other copies, of ‘Timon of Athens.’ These curious confusions attest that while the work was in course of composition the printers or editors of the volume at one time intended to place ‘Troilus and Cressida,’ with the prologue omitted, after ‘Romeo and Juliet.’ The last page of ‘Romeo and Juliet’ is in all copies numbered 79, an obvious misprint for 77; the first leaf of ‘Troilus’ is paged 78; the second and third pages of ‘Troilus’ are numbered 79 and 80. It was doubtless suddenly determined while the volume was in the press to transfer ‘Troilus and Cressida’ to the head of the tragedies from a place near the end, but the numbers on the opening pages which indicated its first position were clumsily retained, and to avoid the extensive typographical corrections that were required by the play’s change of position, its remaining pages were allowed to go forth unnumbered.

Estimated number of extant copies.

It is difficult to estimate how many copies survive of the First Folio, which is intrinsically the most valuable volume in the whole range of English literature, and extrinsically is only exceeded in value by some half-dozen volumes of far earlier date and of exceptional typographical interest. It seems that about 140 copies have been traced within the past century. Of these fewer than twenty are in a perfect state, that is, with the portrait *printed* (*not inlaid*) *on* the title-page, and the flyleaf facing it, with all the pages succeeding it, intact and uninjured. (The flyleaf contains Ben Jonson’s verses attesting the truthfulness of the portrait.) Excellent copies in this enviable state are in the Grenville Library at the British Museum, and in the libraries of the Duke of Devonshire, the Earl of

Crawford, the Baroness Burdett-Coutts, and Mr. A. H. Huth. Of these probably the finest and cleanest is the ‘Daniel’ copy belonging to the Baroness Burdett-Coutts. It measures 13 inches by 8¼, and was purchased by its present owner for £716 2s. at the sale of George Daniel’s library in 1864. Some twenty more copies are defective in the preliminary pages, but are unimpaired in other respects. There remain about a hundred copies which have sustained serious damage at various points.

Reprints of the First Folio.

A reprint of the First Folio unwarrantably purporting to be exact was published in 1807-8. The best reprint was issued in three parts by Lionel Booth in 1861, 1863, and 1864. The valuable photo-zincographic reproduction undertaken by Sir Henry James, under the direction of Howard Staunton, was issued in sixteen folio parts between February 1864 and October 1865. A reduced photographic facsimile, too small to be legible, appeared in 1876, with a preface by Halliwell-Phillipps.

The Second Folio. The Third Folio. The Fourth Folio.

The Second Folio edition was printed in 1632 by Thomas Cotes for Robert Allot and William Aspley, each of whose names figures as publisher on different copies. To Allot Blount had transferred, on November 16, 1630, his rights in the sixteen plays which were first licensed for publication in 1623. The Second Folio was reprinted from the First; a few corrections were made in the text, but most of the changes were arbitrary and needless. Charles I’s copy is at Windsor, and Charles II’s at the British Museum. The ‘Perkins Folio,’ now in the Duke of Devonshire’s possession, in which John Payne Collier introduced forged emendations, was a copy of that of 1632. The Third Folio—for the most part a faithful reprint of the Second—was first published in 1663 by Peter Chetwynde, who reissued it next year with the addition of seven plays, six of which have no claim to admission among Shakespeare’s works. ‘Unto this impression,’ runs the title-page of 1664, ‘is added seven Playes never before printed in folio, viz.: Pericles, Prince of Tyre. The London Prodigall. The History of Thomas Ld. Cromwell. Sir John Oldcastle, Lord Cobham. The Puritan Widow. A Yorkshire Tragedy. The Tragedy of Locrine.’ The six spurious pieces which open the volume were attributed by unprincipled publishers to Shakespeare in his lifetime. Fewer copies of the Third Folio are reputed to be extant than of the Second or Fourth, owing to the destruction of many unsold impressions in the

Fire of London in 1666. The Fourth Folio, printed in 1685 'for H. Herringman, E. Brewster, R. Chiswell, and R. Bentley,' reprints the folio of 1664 without change except in the way of modernising the spelling; it repeats the spurious pieces.

Eighteenth-century editors.

Since 1685 some two hundred independent editions of the collected works have been published in Great Britain and Ireland, and many thousand editions of separate plays. The eighteenth-century editors of the collected works endeavoured with varying degrees of success to purge the text of the numerous incoherences of the folios, and to restore, where good taste or good sense required it, the lost text of the contemporary quartos. It is largely owing to a due co-ordination of the results of the efforts of the eighteenth-century editors by their successors in the present century that Shakespeare's work has become intelligible to general readers unversed in textual criticism, and has won from them the veneration that it merits.

Nicholas Rowe, 1674-1718.

Nicholas Rowe, a popular dramatist of Queen Anne's reign, and poet laureate to George I., was the first critical editor of Shakespeare. He produced an edition of his plays in six octavo volumes in 1709. A new edition in eight volumes followed in 1714, and another hand added a ninth volume which included the poems. Rowe prefixed a valuable life of the poet embodying traditions which were in danger of perishing without a record. His text followed that of the Fourth Folio. The plays were printed in the same order, except that he transferred the spurious pieces from the beginning to the end. Rowe did not compare his text with that of the First Folio or of the quartos, but in the case of 'Romeo and Juliet' he met with an early quarto while his edition was passing through the press, and inserted at the end of the play the prologue which is met with only in the quartos. He made a few happy emendations, some of which coincide accidentally with the readings of the First Folio; but his text is deformed by many palpable errors. His practical experience as a playwright induced him, however, to prefix for the first time a list of *dramatis personæ* to each play, to divide and number acts and scenes on rational principles, and to mark the entrances and exits of the characters. Spelling, punctuation, and grammar he corrected and modernised.

Alexander Pope, 1688-1744.

The poet Pope was Shakespeare's second editor. His edition in six quarto volumes was completed in 1725. The poems, edited by Dr. George Sewell, with an essay on the rise and progress of the stage, and a glossary, appeared in a seventh volume. Pope had few qualifications for the task, and the venture was a commercial failure. In his preface Pope, while he fully recognised Shakespeare's native genius, deemed his achievement deficient in artistic quality. Pope claimed to have collated the text of the Fourth Folio with that of all preceding editions, and although his work indicates that he had access to the First Folio and some of the quartos, it is clear that his text was based on that of Rowe. His innovations are numerous, and are derived from 'his private sense and conjecture,' but they are often plausible and ingenious. He was the first to indicate the place of each new scene, and he improved on Rowe's subdivision of the scenes. A second edition of Pope's version in ten duodecimo volumes appeared in 1728 with Sewell's name on the title-page as well as Pope's. There were few alterations in the text, though a preliminary table supplied a list of twenty-eight quartos. Other editions followed in 1735 and 1768. The last was printed at Garrick's suggestion at Birmingham from Baskerville's types.

Lewis Theobald, 1688-1744.

Pope found a rigorous critic in Lewis Theobald, who, although contemptible as a writer of original verse and prose, proved himself the most inspired of all the textual critics of Shakespeare. Pope savagely avenged himself on his censor by holding him up to ridicule as the hero of the 'Dunciad.' Theobald first displayed his critical skill in 1726 in a volume which deserves to rank as a classic in English literature. The title runs 'Shakespeare Restored, or a specimen of the many errors as well committed as unamended by Mr. Pope in his late edition of this poet, designed not only to correct the said edition but to restore the true reading of Shakespeare in all the editions ever yet publish'd.' There at page 137 appears Theobald's great emendation in Shakespeare's account of Falstaff's death (Henry V, II. iii. 17): 'His nose was as sharp as a pen and a' babbled of green fields,' in place of the reading in the old copies, 'His nose was as sharp as a pen and a table of green fields.' In 1733 Theobald brought out his edition of Shakespeare in seven volumes. In 1740 it reached a second issue. A third edition was published in 1752. Others are dated 1772 and 1773. It is stated that 12,860 copies in all were sold. Theobald made the First Folio the basis of his text, although he failed to adopt all the correct readings of that version, but over

300 corrections or emendations which he made in his edition have become part and parcel of the authorised canon. Theobald’s principles of textual criticism were as enlightened as his practice was triumphant. ‘I ever labour,’ he wrote to Warburton, ‘to make the smallest deviation that I possibly can from the text; never to alter at all where I can by any means explain a passage with sense; nor ever by any emendation to make the author better when it is probable the text came from his own hands.’ Theobald has every right to the title of the Porson of Shakespearean criticism. The following are favourable specimens of his insight. In ‘Macbeth’ (I. vii. 6) for ‘this bank and school of time,’ he substituted the familiar ‘bank and shoal of time.’ In ‘Antony and Cleopatra’ the old copies (v. ii. 87) made Cleopatra say of Antony:

For his bounty,
There was no winter in’t; an Anthony it was
That grew the more by reaping.

For the gibberish ‘an Anthony it was,’ Theobald read ‘an autumn ’twas,’ and thus gave the lines true point and poetry. A third notable instance, somewhat more recondite, is found in ‘Coriolanus’ (II. i. 59-60) where Menenius asks the tribunes in the First Folio version ‘what harm can your besom conspectuities [*i.e.* vision or eyes] glean out of this character?’ Theobald replaced the meaningless epithet ‘besom’ by ‘bisson’ (*i.e.* purblind), a recognised Elizabethan word which Shakespeare had already employed in ‘Hamlet’ (II. ii. 529).

Sir Thomas Hanmer, 1677-1746.

The fourth editor was Sir Thomas Hammer, a country gentleman without much literary culture, but possessing a large measure of mother wit. He was speaker in the House of Commons for a few months in 1714, and retiring soon afterwards from public life devoted his leisure to a thorough-going scrutiny of Shakespeare’s plays. His edition, which was the earliest to pretend to typographical beauty, was printed at the Oxford University Press in 1744 in six quarto volumes. It contained a number of good engravings by Gravelot after designs by Francis Hayman, and was long highly valued by book collectors. No editor’s name was given. In forming his text, Hanmer depended exclusively on his own ingenuity. He made no recourse to the old copies. The result was a mass of common-sense emendations, some of which have been permanently accepted. Hanmer’s edition was reprinted in 1770-1.

Bishop Warburton, 1698-1779.

In 1747 Bishop Warburton produced a revised version of Pope’s edition in eight volumes. Warburton was hardly better qualified for the task than Pope, and such improvements as he introduced are mainly borrowed from Theobald and Hanmer. On both these critics he arrogantly and unjustly heaped abuse in his preface. The Bishop was consequently criticised with appropriate severity for his pretentious incompetence by many writers; among them, by Thomas Edwards, whose ‘Supplement to Warburton’s Edition of Shakespeare’ first appeared in 1747, and, having been renamed ‘The Canons of Criticism’ next year in the third edition, passed through as many as seven editions by 1765.

Dr. Johnson, 1709-1783.

Dr. Johnson, the sixth editor, completed his edition in eight volumes in 1765, and a second issue followed three years later. Although he made some independent collation of the quartos, his textual labours were slight, and his verbal notes show little close knowledge of sixteenth and seventeenth century literature. But in his preface and elsewhere he displays a genuine, if occasionally sluggish, sense of Shakespeare’s greatness, and his massive sagacity enabled him to indicate convincingly Shakespeare’s triumphs of characterisation.

Edward Capell, 1713-1781.

The seventh editor, Edward Capell, advanced on his predecessors in many respects. He was a clumsy writer, and Johnson declared, with some justice, that he ‘gabbled monstrously,’ but his collation of the quartos and the First and Second Folios was conducted on more thorough and scholarly methods than those of any of his predecessors not excepting Theobald. His industry was untiring, and he is said to have transcribed the whole of Shakespeare ten times. Capell’s edition appeared in ten small octavo volumes in 1768. He showed himself well versed in Elizabethan literature in a volume of notes which appeared in 1774, and in three further volumes, entitled ‘Notes, Various Readings, and the School of Shakespeare,’ which were not published till 1783, two years after his death. The last volume, ‘The School of Shakespeare,’ consisted of ‘authentic extracts from divers English books that were in print in that author’s time,’ to which was appended ‘Notitia Dramatica; or, Tables of Ancient Plays (from their beginning to the Restoration of Charles II).’

George Steevens, 1736-1800.

George Steevens, whose saturnine humour involved him in a lifelong series of literary quarrels with rival students of Shakespeare, made invaluable contributions to Shakespearean study. In 1766 he reprinted twenty of the plays from the quartos. Soon afterwards he revised Johnson's edition without much assistance from the Doctor, and his revision, which embodied numerous improvements, appeared in ten volumes in 1773. It was long regarded as the standard version. Steevens's antiquarian knowledge alike of Elizabethan history and literature was greater than that of any previous editor; his citations of parallel passages from the writings of Shakespeare's contemporaries, in elucidation of obscure words and phrases, have not been exceeded in number or excelled in aptness by any of his successors. All commentators of recent times are more deeply indebted in this department of their labours to Steevens than to any other critic. But he lacked taste as well as temper, and excluded from his edition Shakespeare's sonnets and poems, because, he wrote, 'the strongest Act of Parliament that could be framed would fail to compel readers into their service.' The second edition of Johnson and Steevens's version appeared in ten volumes in 1778. The third edition, published in ten volumes in 1785, was revised by Steevens's friend, Isaac Reed (1742-1807), a scholar of his own type. The fourth and last edition, published in Steevens's lifetime, was prepared by himself in fifteen volumes in 1793. As he grew older, he made some reckless changes in the text, chiefly with the unhallowed object of mystifying those engaged in the same field. With a malignity that was not without humour, he supplied, too, many obscene notes to coarse expressions, and he pretended that he owed his indecencies to one or other of two highly respectable clergymen, Richard Amner and John Collins, whose surnames were in each instance appended. He had known and quarrelled with both. Such proofs of his perversity justified the title which Gifford applied to him of 'the Puck of Commentators.'

Edmund Malone, 1741-1812.

Edmund Malone, who lacked Steevens's quick wit and incisive style, was a laborious and amiable archæologist, without much ear for poetry or delicate literary taste. He threw abundance of new light on Shakespeare's biography, and on the chronology and sources of his works, while his researches into the beginnings of the English stage added a new chapter of first-rate importance to English literary history. To Malone is due the first rational 'attempt to ascertain the order in which the plays attributed to Shakespeare were written.' His earliest results on the topic were contributed to Steevens's edition of 1778. Two years later he published, as a supplement to Steevens's work, two volumes containing a history of the Elizabethan stage, with reprints of Arthur Brooke's 'Romeus and Juliet,' Shakespeare's Poems, and the plays falsely ascribed to him in the Third and Fourth Folios. A quarrel with Steevens followed, and was never closed. In 1787 Malone issued 'A Dissertation on the Three Parts of King Henry VI,' tending to show that those plays were not originally written by Shakespeare. In 1790 appeared his edition of Shakespeare in ten volumes, the first in two parts.

Variorum editions.

What is known among booksellers as the 'First Variorum' edition of Shakespeare was prepared by Steevens's friend, Isaac Reed, after Steevens's death. It was based on a copy of Steevens's work of 1793, which had been enriched with numerous manuscript additions, and it embodied the published notes and prefaces of preceding editors. It was published in twenty-one volumes in 1803. The 'Second Variorum' edition, which was mainly a reprint of the first, was published in twenty-one volumes in 1813. The 'Third Variorum' was prepared for the press by James Boswell the younger, the son of Dr. Johnson's biographer. It was based on Malone's edition of 1790, but included massive accumulations of notes left in manuscript by Malone at his death. Malone had been long engaged on a revision of his edition, but died in 1812, before it was completed. Boswell's 'Malone,' as the new work is often called, appeared in twenty-one volumes in 1821. It is the most valuable of all collective editions of Shakespeare's works, but the three volumes of preliminary essays on Shakespeare's biography and writings, and the illustrative notes brought together in the final volume, are confusedly arranged and are unindexed; many of the essays and notes break off abruptly at the point at which they were left at Malone's death. A new 'Variorum' edition, on an exhaustive scale, was undertaken by Mr. H. Howard Furness of Philadelphia, and eleven volumes have appeared since 1871 ('Romeo and Juliet,' 'Macbeth,' 'Hamlet,' 2 vols., 'King Lear,' 'Othello,' 'Merchant of Venice,' 'As You Like It,' 'Tempest,' 'Midsummer Night's Dream,' and 'Winter's Tale').

Nineteenth-century editors.

Of nineteenth-century editors who have prepared collective editions of Shakespeare's work with original annotations those who have most successfully pursued the great traditions of the eighteenth century are Alexander Dyce, Howard Staunton, Nikolaus Delius, and the Cambridge editors William George Clark (1821-1878) and Dr. Aldis Wright.

Alexander Dyce, 1798-1869. Howard Staunton, 1810-1874. The Cambridge edition, 1863-6.

Alexander Dyce was almost as well read as Steevens in Elizabethan literature, and especially in the drama of the period, and his edition of Shakespeare in nine volumes, which was first published in 1857, has many new and valuable illustrative notes and a few good textual emendations, as well as a useful glossary; but Dyce's annotations are not always adequate, and often tantalise the reader by their brevity. Howard Staunton's edition first appeared in three volumes between 1868 and 1870. He also was well read in contemporary literature and was an acute textual critic. His introductions bring together much interesting stage history. Nikolaus Delius's edition was issued at Elberfeld in seven volumes between 1854 and 1861. Delius's text is formed on sound critical principles and is to be trusted thoroughly. A fifth edition in two volumes appeared in 1882. The Cambridge edition, which first appeared in nine volumes between 1863 and 1866, exhaustively notes the textual variations of all preceding editions, and supplies the best and fullest *apparatus criticus* . (Of new editions, one dated 1887 is also in nine volumes, and another, dated 1893, in forty volumes.)

Other nineteenth-century editions.

Other editors of the complete works of Shakespeare of the nineteenth century whose labours, although of some value, present fewer distinctive characteristics are:—William Harness (1825, 8 vols.); Samuel Weller Singer (1826, 10 vols., printed at the Chiswick Press for William Pickering, illustrated by Stothard and others; reissued in 1856 with essays by William Watkiss Lloyd); Charles Knight, with discursive notes and pictorial illustrations by F. W. Fairholt and others ('Pictorial edition,' 8 vols., including biography and the doubtful plays, 1838-43, often reissued under different designations); Bryan Waller Procter, *i.e.* Barry Cornwall (1839-43, 3 vols.); John Payne Collier (1841-4, 8 vols.; another edition, 8 vols., privately printed, 1878, 4to); Samuel Phelps, the actor (1852-4, 2 vols.; another edition, 1882-4); J. O. Halliwell (1853-61, 15 vols. folio, with an encyclopædic collection of annotations of earlier editors and pictorial illustrations); Richard Grant White (Boston, U.S.A., 1857-65, 12 vols.); W. J.

Rolfe (New York, 1871-96, 40 vols.); the Rev. H. N. Hudson (the Harvard edition, Boston, 1881, 20 vols.) The latest complete annotated editions published in this country are ‘The Henry Irving Shakespeare,’ edited by F. A. Marshall and others—especially useful for notes on stage history (8 vols. 1888-90)—and ‘The Temple Shakespeare,’ concisely edited by Mr. Israel Gollancz (38 vols. 12mo, 1894-6).

Of one-volume editions of the unannotated text, the best are the Globe, edited by W. G. Clark and Dr. Aldis Wright (1864, and constantly reprinted—since 1891 with a new and useful glossary); the Leopold (1876, from the text of Delius, with preface by Dr. Furnivall); and the Oxford, edited by Mr. W. J. Craig (1894).

<<span id="filepos0041343993"> a>XX—POSTHUMOUS REPUTATION

Shakespeare defied at every stage in his career the laws of the classical drama. He rode roughshod over the unities of time, place, and action. There were critics in his day who zealously championed the ancient rules, and viewed with distrust any infringement of them. But the force of Shakespeare’s genius—its revelation of new methods of dramatic art—was not lost on the lovers of the ancient ways; and even those who, to assuage their consciences, entered a formal protest against his innovations, soon swelled the chorus of praise with which his work was welcomed by contemporary playgoers, cultured and uncultured alike. The unauthorised publishers of ‘Troilus and Cressida’ in 1608 faithfully echoed public opinion when they prefaced the work with the note: ‘This author’s comedies are so framed to the life that they serve for the most common commentaries of all actions of our lives, showing such a dexterity and power of wit that the most displeased with plays are pleased with his comedies. . . . So much and such savoured salt of wit is in his comedies that they seem for their height of pleasure to be born in the sea that brought forth Venus.’

Ben Jonson’s tribute.

Anticipating the final verdict, the editors of the First Folio wrote, seven years after Shakespeare’s death: ‘These plays have had their trial already and stood out all appeals.’ Ben Jonson, the staunchest champion of classical canons, noted that Shakespeare ‘wanted art,’ but he allowed him, in verses prefixed to the First

Folio, the first place among all dramatists, including those of Greece and Rome, and claimed that all Europe owed him homage:

Triumph, my Britain, thou hast one to show,
To whom all scenes [*i.e.* stages] of Europe homage owe.
He was not of an age, but for all time.

In 1630 Milton penned in like strains an epitaph on ‘the great heir of fame:’

What needs my Shakespeare for his honoured bones
The labour of an age in pilèd stones?
Or that his hallowed reliques should be hid
Under a star-ypointing pyramid?
Dear son of memory, great heir of fame,
What need’st thou such weak witness of thy name?
Thou in our wonder and astonishment
Hast built thyself a lifelong monument.

A writer of fine insight who veiled himself under the initials I. M. S. contributed to the Second Folio of 1632 a splendid eulogy. The opening lines declare ‘Shakespeare’s freehold’ to have been

A mind reflecting ages past, whose clear
And equal surface can make things appear
Distant a thousand years, and represent
Them in their lively colours’ just extent.

It was his faculty

To outrun hasty time, retrieve the fates,
Roll back the heavens, blow ope the iron gates
Of death and Lethe, where (confused) lie
Great heaps of ruinous mortality.

Milton and I. M. S. were followed within ten years by critics of tastes so varied as the dramatist of domesticity Thomas Heywood, the gallant lyrist Sir John Suckling, the philosophic and ‘ever-memorable’ John Hales of Eton, and the untiring versifier of the stage and court, Sir William D’Avenant. Before 1640 Hales is said to have triumphantly established, in a public dispute held with men of learning in his rooms at Eton, the proposition that ‘there was no subject of which any poet ever writ but he could produce it much better done in Shakespeare.' Leonard Digges (in the 1640 edition of the 'Poems') asserted that every revival of Shakespeare's plays drew crowds to pit, boxes, and galleries alike. At a little later date, Shakespeare's plays were the 'closet companions' of Charles I's 'solitudes.'

1660-1702. Dryden's view.

After the Restoration public taste in England veered towards the French and classical dramatic models. Shakespeare's work was subjected to some unfavourable criticism as the product of nature to the exclusion of art, but the eclipse proved more partial and temporary than is commonly admitted. The pedantic censure of Thomas Rymer on the score of Shakespeare's indifference to the classical canons attracted attention, but awoke in England no substantial echo. In his 'Short View of Tragedy' (1692) Rymer mainly concentrated his attention on 'Othello,' and reached the eccentric conclusion that it was 'a bloody farce without salt or savour.' In Pepys's eyes 'The Tempest' had 'no great wit,' and 'Midsummer Night's Dream' was 'the most insipid and ridiculous play;' yet this exacting critic witnessed thirty-six performances of twelve of Shakespeare's plays between October 11, 1660, and February 6, 1668-9, seeing 'Hamlet' four times, and 'Macbeth,' which he admitted to be 'a most excellent play for variety,' nine times. Dryden, the literary dictator of the day, repeatedly complained of Shakespeare's inequalities—'he is the very Janus of poets.' But in almost the same breath Dryden declared that Shakespeare was held in as much veneration among Englishmen as Æschylus among the Athenians, and that 'he was the man who of all modern and perhaps ancient poets had the largest and most comprehensive soul. . . . When he describes anything, you more than see it—you feel it too.' In 1693, when Sir Godfrey Kneller presented Dryden with a copy of the Chandos portrait of Shakespeare, the poet acknowledged the gift thus:

TO SIR GODFREY KNELLER.

Shakespear , thy Gift, I place before my sight;
With awe, I ask his Blessing ere I write;
With Reverence look on his Majestick Face;
Proud to be less, but of his Godlike Race.
His Soul Inspires me, while thy Praise I write,
And I, like *Teucer* , under *Ajax* fight.

Writers of Charles II’s reign of such opposite temperaments as Margaret Cavendish, duchess of Newcastle, and Sir Charles Sedley vigorously argued for Shakespeare’s supremacy. As a girl the sober duchess declares she fell in love with Shakespeare. In her ‘Sociable Letters,’ which were published in 1664, she enthusiastically, if diffusely, described how Shakespeare creates the illusion that he had been ‘transformed into every one of those persons he hath described,’ and suffered all their emotions. When she witnessed one of his tragedies she felt persuaded that she was witnessing an episode in real life. ‘Indeed,’ she concludes, ‘Shakespeare had a clear judgment, a quick wit, a subtle observation, a deep apprehension, and a most eloquent elocution.’ The profligate Sedley, in a prologue to the ‘Wary Widdow,’ a comedy by one Higden, produced in 1693, apostrophised Shakespeare thus:

Shackspear whose fruitfull Genius, happy wit
Was fram’d and finisht at a lucky hit
The pride of Nature, and the shame of Schools,
Born to Create, and not to Learn from Rules.

Restoration adaptations.

Many adaptations of Shakespeare’s plays were contrived to meet current sentiment of a less admirable type. But they failed efficiently to supersede the originals. Dryden and D’Avenant converted ‘The Tempest’ into an opera (1670). D’Avenant single-handed adapted ‘The Two Noble Kinsmen’ (1668) and ‘Macbeth’ (1674). Dryden dealt similarly with ‘Troilus’ (1679); Thomas Duffett with ‘The Tempest’ (1675); Shadwell with ‘Timon’ (1678); Nahum Tate with ‘Richard II’ (1681), ‘Lear’ (1681), and ‘Coriolanus’ (1682); John Crowne with ‘Henry VI’ (1681); D’Urfey with ‘Cymbeline’ (1682); Ravenscroft with ‘Titus Andronicus’ (1687); Otway with ‘Romeo and Juliet’ (1692), and John Sheffield, duke of Buckingham, with ‘Julius Cæsar’ (1692). But during the same period the chief actor of the day, Thomas Betterton, won his spurs as the interpreter of Shakespeare’s leading parts, often in unrevised versions. Hamlet was accounted that actor’s masterpiece. ‘No succeeding tragedy for several years,’ wrote Downes, the prompter at Betterton’s theatre, ‘got more reputation or money to the company than this.’

From 1702 onwards.

From the accession of Queen Anne to the present day the tide of Shakespeare’s reputation, both on the stage and among critics, has flowed onward almost uninterruptedly. The censorious critic, John Dennis, in his ‘Letters’ on Shakespeare’s ‘genius,’ gave his work in 1711 whole-hearted commendation, and two of the greatest men of letters of the eighteenth century, Pope and Johnson, although they did not withhold all censure, paid him, as we have seen, the homage of becoming his editor. The school of textual criticism which Theobald and Capell founded in the middle years of the century has never ceased its activity since their day. Edmund Malone’s devotion at the end of the eighteenth century to the biography of the poet and the contemporary history of the stage, secured for him a vast band of disciples, of whom Joseph Hunter and John Payne Collier well deserve mention. But of all Malone’s successors, James Orchard Halliwell, afterwards Halliwell-Phillipps (1820-1889), has made the most important additions to our knowledge of Shakespeare’s biography.

Meanwhile, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, there arose a third school to expound exclusively the æsthetic excellence of the plays. In its inception the æsthetic school owed much to the methods of Schlegel and other admiring critics of Shakespeare in Germany. But Coleridge in his ‘Notes and Lectures’ and Hazlitt in his ‘Characters of Shakespeare’s Plays’ (1817) are the best representatives of the æsthetic school in this or any other country. Although Professor Dowden, in his ‘Shakespeare, his Mind and Art’ (1874), and Mr. Swinburne in his ‘Study of Shakespeare’ (1880), are worthy followers, Coleridge and Hazlitt remain as æsthetic critics unsurpassed. In the effort to supply a fuller interpretation of Shakespeare’s works textual, historical, and æsthetic—two publishing societies have done much valuable work. ‘The Shakespeare Society’ was founded in 1841 by Collier, Halliwell, and their friends, and published some forty-eight volumes before its dissolution in 1853. The New Shakspere Society, which was founded by Dr. Furnivall in 1874, issued during the ensuing twenty years twenty-seven publications, illustrative mainly of the text and of contemporary life and literature.

Stratford festivals.

In 1769 Shakespeare’s ‘jubilee’ was celebrated for three days (September 6-8) at Stratford, under the direction of Garrick, Dr. Arne, and Boswell. The festivities were repeated on a small scale in April 1827 and April 1830. ‘The Shakespeare tercentenary festival,’ which was held at Stratford from April 23 to May 4, 1864, claimed to be a national celebration.

On the English stage. The first appearance of actresses in Shakespearean parts. David Garrick, 1717-1779.

On the English stage the name of every eminent actor since Betterton, the great actor of the period of the Restoration, has been identified with Shakespearean parts. Steele, writing in the 'Tatler' (No. 167) in reference to Betterton's funeral in the cloisters of Westminster Abbey on May 2, 1710, instanced his rendering of Othello as proof of an unsurpassable talent in realising Shakespeare's subtlest conceptions on the stage. One great and welcome innovation in Shakespearean acting is closely associated with Betterton's first name. He encouraged the substitution, that was inaugurated by Killigrew, of women for boys in female parts. The first rôle that was professionally rendered by a woman in a public theatre was that of Desdemona in 'Othello,' apparently on December 8, 1660. The actress on that occasion is said to have been Mrs. Margaret Hughes, Prince Rupert's mistress; but Betterton's wife, who was at first known on the stage as Mrs. Saunderson, was the first actress to present a series of Shakespeare's great female characters. Mrs. Betterton gave her husband powerful support, from 1663 onwards, in such rôles as Ophelia, Juliet, Queen Catherine, and Lady Macbeth. Betterton formed a school of actors who carried on his traditions for many years after his death. Robert Wilks (1670-1732) as Hamlet, and Barton Booth (1681-1733) as Henry VIII and Hotspur, were popularly accounted no unworthy successors. Colley Cibber (1671-1757) as actor, theatrical manager, and dramatic critic, was both a loyal disciple of Betterton and a lover of Shakespeare, though his vanity and his faith in the ideals of the Restoration incited him to perpetrate many outrages on Shakespeare's text when preparing it for theatrical representation. His notorious adaptation of 'Richard III,' which was first produced in 1700, long held the stage to the exclusion of the original version. But towards the middle of the eighteenth century all earlier efforts to interpret Shakespeare in the playhouse were eclipsed in public esteem by the concentrated energy and intelligence of David Garrick. Garrick's enthusiasm for the poet and his histrionic genius riveted Shakespeare's hold on public taste. His claim to have restored to the stage the text of Shakespeare—purified of Restoration defilements—cannot be allowed without serious qualifications. Garrick had no scruple in presenting plays of Shakespeare in versions that he or his friends had recklessly garbled. He supplied 'Romeo and Juliet' with a happy ending; he converted the 'Taming of the Shrew' into the farce of 'Katherine and Petruchio,' 1754; he introduced radical changes in 'Antony and Cleopatra,' 'Two Gentlemen of Verona,' 'Cymbeline,' and 'Midsummer Night's Dream.' Nevertheless, no actor has won an equally exalted reputation in so vast and varied a repertory of Shakespearean roles. His triumphant début as Richard III in 1741 was followed by equally successful performances of Hamlet, Lear, Macbeth, King John, Romeo, Henry IV, Iago, Leontes, Benedick, and Antony in ‘Antony and Cleopatra.’ Garrick was not quite undeservedly buried in Westminster Abbey on February 1, 1779, at the foot of Shakespeare’s statue.

Garrick was ably seconded by Mrs. Clive (1711-1785), Mrs. Cibber (1714-1766), and Mrs. Pritchard (1711-1768). Mrs. Cibber as Constance in ‘King John,’ and Mrs. Pritchard in Lady Macbeth, excited something of the same enthusiasm as Garrick in Richard III and Lear. There were, too, contemporary critics who judged rival actors to show in certain parts powers equal, if not superior, to those of Garrick. Charles Macklin (1697?-1797) for nearly half a century, from 1735 to 1785, gave many hundred performances of a masterly rendering of Shylock. The character had, for many years previous to Macklin’s assumption of it, been allotted to comic actors, but Macklin effectively concentrated his energy on the tragic significance of the part with an effect that Garrick could not surpass. Macklin was also reckoned successful in Polonius and Iago. John Henderson, the Bath Roscius (1747-1785), who, like Garrick, was buried in Westminster Abbey, derived immense popularity from his representation of Falstaff; while in subordinate characters like Mercutio, Slender, Jaques, Touchstone, and Sir Toby Belch, John Palmer (1742?-1798) was held to approach perfection. But Garrick was the accredited chief of the theatrical profession until his death. He was then succeeded in his place of predominance by John Philip Kemble, who derived invaluable support from his association with one abler than himself, his sister, Mrs. Siddons.

John Philip Kemble, 1757-1823. Mrs. Sarah Siddons, 1755-1831.

Somewhat stilted and declamatory in speech, Kemble enacted a wide range of characters of Shakespearean tragedy with a dignity that won the admiration of Pitt, Sir Walter Scott, Charles Lamb, and Leigh Hunt. Coriolanus was regarded as his masterpiece, but his renderings of Hamlet, King John, Wolsey, the Duke in ‘Measure for Measure,’ Leontes, and Brutus satisfied the most exacting canons of contemporary theatrical criticism. Kemble’s sister, Mrs. Siddons, was the greatest actress that Shakespeare’s countrymen have known. Her noble and awe-inspiring presentation of Lady Macbeth, her Constance, her Queen Katherine, have, according to the best testimony, not been equalled even by the achievements of the eminent actresses of France.

Edmund Kean, 1787-1833.

During the present century the most conspicuous histrionic successes in Shakespearean drama have been won by Edmund Kean, whose triumphant rendering of Shylock on his first appearance at Drury Lane Theatre on January 26, 1814, is one of the most stirring incidents in the history of the English stage. Kean defied the rigid convention of the 'Kemble School,' and gave free rein to his impetuous passions. Besides Shylock, he excelled in Richard III, Othello, Hamlet, and Lear. No less a critic than Coleridge declared that to see him act was like 'reading Shakespeare by flashes of lightning.' Among other Shakespearean actors of Kean's period a high place was allotted by public esteem to George Frederick Cooke (1756-1811), whose Richard III, first given in London at Covent Garden Theatre, October 31, 1801, was accounted his masterpiece. Charles Lamb, writing in 1822, declared that of all the actors who flourished in his time, Robert Bensley 'had most of the swell of soul,' and Lamb gave with a fine enthusiasm in his 'Essays of Elia' an analysis (which has become classical) of Bensley's performance of Malvolio. But Bensley's powers were rated more moderately by more experienced playgoers. Lamb's praises of Mrs. Jordan (1762-1816) in Ophelia, Helena, and Viola in 'Twelfth Night,' are corroborated by the eulogies of Hazlitt and Leigh Hunt. In the part of Rosalind Mrs. Jordan is reported on all sides to have beaten Mrs. Siddons out of the field.

William Charles Macready, 1793-1873.

The torch thus lit by Garrick, by the Kembles, by Kean and his contemporaries was worthily kept alive by William Charles Macready, a cultivated and conscientious actor, who, during a professional career of more than forty years (1810-1851), assumed every great part in Shakespearean tragedy. Although Macready lacked the classical bearing of Kemble or the intense passion of Kean, he won as the interpreter of Shakespeare the whole-hearted suffrages of the educated public. Macready's chief associate in women characters was Helen Faucit (1820-1898, afterwards Lady Martin), whose refined impersonations of Imogen, Beatrice, Juliet, and Rosalind form an attractive chapter in the history of the stage.

Recent revivals.

The most notable tribute paid to Shakespeare by any actor-manager of recent times was paid by Samuel Phelps (1804-1878), who gave during his tenure of

Sadler’s Wells Theatre between 1844 and 1862 competent representations of all the plays save six; only ‘Richard II,’ the three parts of ‘Henry VI,’ ‘Troilus and Cressida,’ and ‘Titus Andronicus’ were omitted. Sir Henry Irving, who since 1878 has been ably seconded by Miss Ellen Terry, has revived at the Lyceum Theatre between 1874 and the present time eleven plays (‘Hamlet,’ ‘Macbeth,’ ‘Othello,’ ‘Richard III,’ ‘The Merchant of Venice,’ ‘Much Ado about Nothing,’ ‘Twelfth Night,’ ‘Romeo and Juliet,’ ‘King Lear,’ ‘Henry VIII,’ and ‘Cymbeline’), and has given each of them all the advantage they can derive from thoughtful acting as well as from lavish scenic elaboration. But theatrical revivals of plays of Shakespeare are in England intermittent, and no theatrical manager since Phelps’s retirement has sought systematically to illustrate on the stage the full range of Shakespearean drama. Far more in this direction has been attempted in Germany. In one respect the history of recent Shakespearean representations can be viewed by the literary student with unqualified satisfaction. Although some changes of text or some rearrangement of the scenes are found imperative in all theatrical representations of Shakespeare, a growing public sentiment in England and elsewhere has for many years favoured as loyal an adherence to the authorised version of the plays as is practicable on the part of theatrical managers; and the evil traditions of the stage which sanctioned the perversions of the eighteenth century are happily well-nigh extinct.

In music and art.

Music and art in England owe much to Shakespeare’s influence. From Thomas Morley, Purcell, Matthew Locke, and Arne to William Linley, Sir Henry Bishop, and Sir Arthur Sullivan, every distinguished musician has sought to improve on his predecessor’s setting of one or more of Shakespeare’s songs, or has composed concerted music in illustration of some of his dramatic themes. In art, the publisher John Boydell organised in 1787 a scheme for illustrating scenes in Shakespeare’s work by the greatest living English artists. Some fine pictures were the result. A hundred and sixty-eight were painted in all, and the artists, whom Boydell employed, included Sir Joshua Reynolds, George Romney, Thomas Stothard, John Opie, Benjamin West, James Barry, and Henry Fuseli. All the pictures were exhibited from time to time between 1789 and 1804 at a gallery specially built for the purpose in Pall Mall, and in 1802 Boydell published a collection of engravings of the chief pictures. The great series of paintings was dispersed by auction in 1805. Few eminent artists of later date, from Daniel Maclise to Sir John Millais, have lacked the ambition to interpret some scene or character of Shakespearean drama.

In America.

In America no less enthusiasm for Shakespeare has been manifested than in England. Editors and critics are hardly less numerous there, and some criticism from American pens, like that of James Russell Lowell, has reached the highest literary level. Nowhere, perhaps, has more labour been devoted to the study of his works than that given by Mr. H. H. Furness of Philadelphia to the preparation of his ‘New Variorum’ edition. The Barton collection of Shakespeareana in the Boston Public Library is one of the most valuable extant, and the elaborate catalogue (1878-80) contains some 2,500 entries. First of Shakespeare’s plays to be represented in America, ‘Richard III’ was performed in New York in March 1750. More recently Edwin Forrest, Junius Brutus Booth, Edwin Booth, Charlotte Cushman, and Miss Ada Rehan have maintained on the American stage the great traditions of Shakespearean acting; while Mr. E. A. Abbey has devoted high artistic gifts to pictorial representation of scenes from the plays.

Translations. In Germany. German translations.

The Bible, alone of literary compositions, has been translated more frequently or into a greater number of languages than the works of Shakespeare. The progress of his reputation in Germany, France, Italy, and Russia was somewhat slow at the outset. But in Germany the poet has received for nearly a century and a half a recognition scarcely less pronounced than that accorded him in America and in his own country. Three of Shakespeare’s plays, now in the Zurich Library, were brought thither by J. R. Hess from England in 1614. As early as 1626 ‘Hamlet,’ ‘King Lear,’ and ‘Romeo and Juliet’ were acted at Dresden, and a version of the ‘Taming of The Shrew’ was played there and elsewhere at the end of the seventeenth century. But such mention of Shakespeare as is found in German literature between 1640 and 1740 only indicates a knowledge on the part of German readers either of Dryden’s criticisms or of the accounts of him printed in English encyclopædias. The earliest sign of a direct acquaintance with the plays is a poor translation of ‘Julius Cæsar’ into German by Baron C. W. von Borck, formerly Prussian minister in London, which was published at Berlin in 1741. A worse rendering of ‘Romeo and Juliet’ followed in 1758. Meanwhile J. C. Gottsched (1700-66), an influential man of letters, warmly denounced Shakespeare in a review of Von Borck’s effort in ‘Beiträge zur deutschen Sprache’ and elsewhere. Lessing came without delay to Shakespeare’s rescue, and set his reputation, in the estimation of the German public, on that exalted pedestal which it has not ceased to occupy. It was in 1759, in a journal entitled ‘Litteraturbriefe,’ that Lessing first claimed for Shakespeare superiority, not only to the French dramatists Racine and Corneille, who hitherto had dominated European taste, but to all ancient or modern poets. Lessing’s doctrine, which he developed in his ‘Hamburgische Dramaturgie’ (Hamburg, 1767, 2 vols. 8vo), was at once accepted by the poet Johann Gottfried Herder in the ‘Blätter von deutschen Art and Kunst,’ 1771. Christopher Martin Wieland (1733-1813) in 1762 began a prose translation which Johann Joachim Eschenburg (1743-1820) completed (Zurich, 13 vols., 1775-84). Between 1797 and 1833 there appeared at intervals the classical German rendering by August Wilhelm von Schlegel and Ludwig Tieck, leaders of the romantic school of German literature, whose creed embodied, as one of its first articles, an unwavering veneration for Shakespeare. Schlegel translated only seventeen plays, and his workmanship excels that of the rest of the translation. Tieck’s part in the undertaking was mainly confined to editing translations by various hands. Many other German translations in verse were undertaken during the same period—by J. H. Voss and his sons (Leipzig, 1818-29), by J. W. O. Benda (Leipzig, 1825-6), by J. Körner (Vienna, 1836), by A. Böttger (Leipzig, 1836-7), by E. Ortlepp (Stuttgart, 1838-9), and by A. Keller and M. Rapp (Stuttgart, 1843-6). The best of more recent German translations is that by a band of poets and eminent men of letters including Friedrich von Bodenstedt, Ferdinand von Freiligrath, and Paul Heyse (Leipzig, 1867-71, 38 vols.) Most of these versions have been many times reissued, but, despite the high merits of von Bodenstedt and his companions’ performance, Schlegel and Tieck’s achievement still holds the field. Schlegel’s lectures on ‘Shakespeare and the Drama,’ which were delivered at Vienna in 1808, and were translated into English in 1815, are worthy of comparison with those of Coleridge, who owed much to their influence. Wordsworth in 1815 declared that Schlegel and his disciples first marked out the right road in æsthetic criticism, and enjoyed at the moment superiority over all English æsthetic critics of Shakespeare. Subsequently Goethe poured forth, in his voluminous writings, a mass of criticism even more illuminating and appreciative than Schlegel’s. Although Goethe deemed Shakespeare’s works unsuited to the stage, he adapted ‘Romeo and Juliet’ for the Weimar Theatre, while Schiller prepared ‘Macbeth’ (Stuttgart, 1801). Heine published in 1838 charming studies of Shakespeare’s heroines (English translation 1895), and acknowledged only one defect in Shakespeare—that he was an Englishman.

Modern German writers on Shakespeare.

During the last half-century textual, æsthetic, and biographical criticism has been pursued in Germany with unflagging industry and energy; and although laboured and supersubtle theorising characterises much German æsthetic criticism, its mass and variety testify to the impressiveness of the appeal that Shakespeare's work has made to the German intellect. The efforts to stem the current of Shakespearean worship made by the realistic critic, Gustav Rümelin, in his 'Shakespearestudien' (Stuttgart, 1866), and subsequently by the dramatist, J. R. Benedix, in 'Die Shakespearomanie' (Stuttgart, 1873, 8vo), proved of no effect. In studies of the text and metre Nikolaus Delius (1813-1888) should, among recent German writers, be accorded the first place; in studies of the biography and stage history Friedrich Karl Elze (1821-1889); in æsthetic studies Friedrich Alexander Theodor Kreyssig (1818-1879), author of 'Vorlesungen über Shakespeare' (Berlin, 1858 and 1874), and 'Shakespeare-Fragen' (Leipzig, 1871). Ulrici's 'Shakespeare's Dramatic Art' (first published at Halle in 1839) and Gervinus's Commentaries (first published at Leipzig in 1848-9), both of which are familiar in English translations, are suggestive but unconvincing æsthetic interpretations. The German Shakespeare Society, which was founded at Weimar in 1865, has published thirty-four year-books (edited successively by von Bodenstedt, Delius, Elze, and F. A. Leo); each contains useful contributions to Shakespearean study.

On the German stage.

Shakespeare has been no less effectually nationalised on the German stage. The three great actors—Frederick Ulrich Ludwig Schroeder (1744-1816) of Hamburg, Ludwig Devrient (1784-1832), and his nephew Gustav Emil Devrient (1803-1872)—largely derived their fame from their successful assumptions of Shakespearean characters. Another of Ludwig Devrient's nephews, Eduard (1801-1877), also an actor, prepared, with his son Otto, an acting German edition (Leipzig, 1873 and following years). An acting edition by Wilhelm Oechelhaeuser appeared previously at Berlin in 1871. Twenty-eight of the thirty-seven plays assigned to Shakespeare are now on recognised lists of German acting plays, including all the histories. In 1895 as many as 706 performances of twenty-five of Shakespeare's plays were given in German theatres. In 1896 no fewer than 910 performances were given of twenty-three plays. In 1897 performances of twenty-four plays reached a total of 930—an average of nearly three Shakespearean representations a day in the German-speaking districts of Europe. It is not only in capitals like Berlin and Vienna that the representations are frequent and popular. In towns like Altona, Breslau, Frankfort-on-the-Maine, Hamburg, Magdeburg, and Rostock, Shakespeare is acted constantly and the greater number of his dramas is regularly kept in rehearsal. ‘Othello,’ ‘Hamlet,’ ‘Romeo and Juliet,’ and ‘The Taming of the Shrew’ usually prove most attractive. Of the many German musical composers who have worked on Shakespearean themes, Mendelssohn (in ‘Midsummer Night’s Dream’), Schumann, and Franz Schubert (in setting separate songs) have achieved the greatest success.

In France. Voltaire’s strictures.

In France Shakespeare won recognition after a longer struggle than in Germany. Cyrano de Bergerac (1619-1655) plagiarised ‘Cymbeline,’ ‘Hamlet,’ and ‘The Merchant of Venice’ in his ‘Agrippina.’ About 1680 Nicolas Clement, Louis XIV’s librarian, allowed Shakespeare imagination, natural thoughts, and ingenious expression, but deplored his obscenity. Half a century elapsed before public attention in France was again directed to Shakespeare. The Abbé Prévost, in his periodical ‘Le Pour et Contre’ (1733 et seq.), acknowledged his power. But it is to Voltaire that his countrymen owe, as he himself boasted, their first effective introduction to Shakespeare. Voltaire studied Shakespeare thoroughly on his visit to England between 1726 and 1729, and his influence is visible in his own dramas. In his ‘Lettres Philosophiques’ (1731), afterwards reissued as ‘Lettres sur les Anglais,’ 1734 (Nos. xviii. and xix.), and in his ‘Lettre sur la Tragédie’ (1731), he expressed admiration for Shakespeare’s genius, but attacked his want of taste and art. He described him as ‘le Corneille de Londres, grand fou d’ailleurs mais il a des morceaux admirables.’ Writing to the Abbé des Fontaines in November 1735, Voltaire admitted many merits in ‘Julius Cæsar,’ on which he published ‘Observations’ in 1764. Johnson replied to Voltaire’s general criticism in the preface to his edition (1765), and Mrs. Elizabeth Montagu in 1769 in a separate volume, which was translated into French in 1777. Diderot made, in his ‘Encylopédie,’ the first stand in France against the Voltairean position, and increased opportunities of studying Shakespeare’s works increased the poet’s vogue. Twelve plays were translated in De la Place’s ‘Théâtre Anglais’ (1745-8). Jean-Francois Ducis (1733-1816) adapted without much insight six plays for the French stage, beginning in 1769 with ‘Hamlet,’ his version of which was acted with applause. In 1776 Pierre Le Tourneur began a bad prose translation (completed in 1782) of all Shakespeare’s plays, and declared him to be ‘the god of the theatre.’ Voltaire protested against this estimate in a new remonstrance consisting of two letters, of which the first was read before the French Academy on August 25, 1776. Here Shakespeare was described as a barbarian, whose works—'a huge dunghill'—concealed some pearls.

French critics' gradual emancipation from Voltairean influence.

Although Voltaire's censure was rejected by the majority of later French critics, it expressed a sentiment born of the genius of the nation, and made an impression that was only gradually effaced. Marmontel, La Harpe, Marie-Joseph Chénier, and Chateaubriand, in his 'Essai sur Shakespeare,' 1801, inclined to Voltaire's view; but Madame de Staël wrote effectively on the other side in her 'De la Littérature, 1804 (i. caps. 13, 14, ii. 5.) 'At this day,' wrote Wordsworth in 1815, 'the French critics have abated nothing of their aversion to "this darling of our nation." "The English with their bouffon de Shakespeare" is as familiar an expression among them as in the time of Voltaire. Baron Grimm is the only French writer who seems to have perceived his infinite superiority to the first names of the French theatre; an advantage which the Parisian critic owed to his German blood and German education.' The revision of Le Tourneur's translation by François Guizot and A. Pichot in 1821 gave Shakespeare a fresh advantage. Paul Duport, in 'Essais Littéraires sur Shakespeare' (Paris, 1828, 2 vols.), was the last French critic of repute to repeat Voltaire's censure unreservedly. Guizot, in his discourse 'Sur la Vie et les Œuvres de Shakespeare' (reprinted separately from the translation of 1821), as well as in his 'Shakespeare et son Temps' (1852), Villemain in a general essay, and Barante in a study of 'Hamlet,' acknowledge the mightiness of Shakespeare's genius with comparatively few qualifications. Other complete translations followed—by Francisque Michel (1839), by Benjamin Laroche (1851), and by Emil Montégut (1867), but the best is that in prose by Francois Victor Hugo (1859-66), whose father, Victor Hugo the poet, published a rhapsodical eulogy in 1864. Alfred Mézières's 'Shakespeare, ses Œuvres et ses Critiques' (Paris, 1860), is a saner appreciation.

On the French stage.

Meanwhile 'Hamlet' and 'Macbeth,' 'Othello,' and a few other Shakespearean plays, became stock pieces on the French stage. A powerful impetus to theatrical representation of Shakespeare in France was given by the performance in Paris of the chief plays by a strong company of English actors in the autumn of 1827. 'Hamlet' and 'Othello' were acted successively by Charles Kemble and Macready; Edmund Kean appeared as Richard III, Othello, and Shylock;

Miss Smithson, who became the wife of Hector Berlioz the musician, filled the *rôles* of Ophelia, Juliet, Desdemona, Cordelia, and Portia. French critics were divided as to the merits of the performers, but most of them were enthusiastic in their commendations of the plays. Alfred de Vigny prepared a version of ‘Othello’ for the Théâtre-Français in 1829 with eminent success. An adaptation of ‘Hamlet’ by Alexandre Dumas was first performed in 1847, and a rendering by the Chevalier de Châtelain (1864) was often repeated. George Sand translated ‘As You Like It’ (Paris, 1856) for representation by the Comédie Française on April 12, 1856. ‘Lady Macbeth’ has been represented in recent years by Madame Sarah Bernhardt, and ‘Hamlet’ by M. Mounet Sully of the Théâtre-Français. Four French musicians—Berlioz in his symphony of ‘Romeo and Juliet,’ Gounod in his opera of ‘Romeo and Juliet,’ Ambroise Thomas in his opera of ‘Hamlet,’ and Saint-Saëns in his opera of ‘Henry VIII’—have sought with public approval to interpret musically portions of Shakespeare’s work.

In Italy.

In Italy Shakespeare was little known before the present century. Such references as eighteenth-century Italian writers made to him were based on remarks by Voltaire. The French adaptation of ‘Hamlet’ by Ducis was issued in Italian blank verse (Venice, 1774, 8vo). Complete translations of all the plays made direct from the English were issued by Michele Leoni in verse at Verona in 1819-22, and by Carlo Rusconi in prose at Padua in 1831 (new edit. Turin, 1858-9). ‘Othello’ and ‘Romeo and Juliet’ have been very often translated into Italian separately. The Italian actors, Madame Ristori (as Lady Macbeth), Salvini (as Othello), and Rossi rank among Shakespeare’s most effective interpreters. Verdi’s operas on Macbeth, Othello, and Falstaff (the last two with libretti by Boito), manifest close and appreciative study of Shakespeare.

In Holland.

Two complete translations have been published in Dutch; one in prose by A. S. Kok (Amsterdam 1873-1880), the other in verse by Dr. L. A. J. Burgersdijk (Leyden, 1884-8, 12 vols.)

In Russia.

In Eastern Europe, Shakespeare first became known through French and German translations. Into Russian ‘Romeo and Juliet’ was translated in 1772, ‘Richard

III' in 1783, and 'Julius Cæsar' in 1786. Sumarakow translated Ducis' version of 'Hamlet' in 1784 for stage purposes, while the Empress Catherine II adapted the 'Merry Wives' and 'King John.' Numerous versions of all the chief plays followed; and in 1865 there appeared at St. Petersburg the best translation in verse (direct from the English), by Nekrasow and Gerbel. A prose translation, by N. Ketzcher, begun in 1862, was completed in 1879. Gerbel issued a Russian translation of the 'Sonnets' in 1880, and many critical essays in the language, original or translated, have been published. Almost every play has been represented in Russian on the Russian stage.

In Poland.

A Polish version of 'Hamlet' was acted at Lemberg in 1797; and as many as sixteen plays now hold a recognised place among Polish acting plays. The standard Polish translation of Shakespeare's collected works appeared at Warsaw in 1875 (edited by the Polish poet Kraszewski), and is reckoned among the most successful renderings in a foreign tongue.

In Hungary.

In Hungary, Shakespeare's greatest works have since the beginning of the century been highly appreciated by students and by playgoers. A complete translation into Hungarian appeared at Kaschau in 1824. At the National Theatre at Budapest no fewer than twenty-two plays have been of late years included in the actors' repertory.

In other countries.

Other complete translations have been published in Bohemian (Prague 1874), in Swedish (Lund, 1847-1851), in Danish (1845-1850), and Finnish (Helsingfors, 1892-5). In Spanish a complete translation is in course of publication (Madrid, 1885 et seq.), and the eminent Spanish critic Menéndez y Pelayo has set Shakespeare above Calderon. In Armenian, although only three plays ('Hamlet,' 'Romeo and Juliet,' and 'As You Like It') have been issued, the translation of the whole is ready for the press. Separate plays have appeared in Welsh, Portuguese, Friesic, Flemish, Servian, Roumanian, Maltese, Ukrainian, Wallachian, Croatian, modern Greek, Latin, Hebrew, and Japanese; while a few have been rendered into Bengali, Hindustani, Marathi, Gujarati, Urdu, Kanarese, and other languages of India, and have been acted in native theatres.

<<span id="filepos0041404642"> a>XXI—GENERAL ESTIMATE

General estimate.

No estimate of Shakespeare’s genius can be adequate. In knowledge of human character, in wealth of humour, in depth of passion, in fertility of fancy, and in soundness of judgment, he has no rival. It is true of him, as of no other writer, that his language and versification adapt themselves to every phase of sentiment, and sound every note in the scale of felicity. Some defects are to be acknowledged, but they sink into insignificance when measured by the magnitude of his achievement. Sudden transitions, elliptical expressions, mixed metaphors, indefensible verbal quibbles, and fantastic conceits at times create an atmosphere of obscurity. The student is perplexed, too, by obsolete words and by some hopelessly corrupt readings. But when the whole of Shakespeare’s vast work is scrutinised with due attention, the glow of his magination is seen to leave few passages wholly unillumined. Some of his plots are hastily constructed and inconsistently developed, but the intensity of the interest with which he contrives to invest the personality of his heroes and heroines triumphs over halting or digressive treatment of the story in which they have their being. Although he was versed in the technicalities of stagecraft, he occasionally disregarded its elementary conditions. But the success of his presentments of human life and character depended little on his manipulation of theatrical machinery. His unassailable supremacy springs from the versatile working of his insight and intellect, by virtue of which his pen limned with unerring precision almost every gradation of thought and emotion that animates the living stage of the world.

Character of Shakespeare’s achievement.

Shakespeare’s mind, as Hazlitt suggested, contained within itself the germs of all faculty and feeling. He knew intuitively how every faculty and feeling would develop in any conceivable change of fortune. Men and women—good or bad, old or young, wise or foolish, merry or sad, rich or poor—yielded their secrets to him, and his genius enabled him to give being in his pages to all the shapes of humanity that present themselves on the highway of life. Each of his characters gives voice to thought or passion with an individuality and a naturalness that rouse in the intelligent playgoer and reader the illusion that they are overhearing men and women speak unpremeditatingly among themselves, rather than that they are reading written speeches or hearing written speeches recited. The more closely the words are studied, the completer the illusion grows. Creatures of the imagination—fairies, ghosts, witches—are delineated with a like potency, and the reader or spectator feels instinctively that these supernatural entities could not speak, feel, or act otherwise than Shakespeare represents them. The creative power of poetry was never manifested to such effect as in the corporeal semblances in which Shakespeare clad the spirits of the air.

Its universal recognition.

So mighty a faculty sets at naught the common limitations of nationality, and in every quarter of the globe to which civilised life has penetrated Shakespeare's power is recognised. All the world over, language is applied to his creations that ordinarily applies to beings of flesh and blood. Hamlet and Othello, Lear and Macbeth, Falstaff and Shylock, Brutus and Romeo, Ariel and Caliban are studied in almost every civilised tongue as if they were historic personalities, and the chief of the impressive phrases that fall from their lips are rooted in the speech of civilised humanity. To Shakespeare the intellect of the world, speaking in divers accents, applies with one accord his own words: 'How noble in reason! how infinite in faculty! in apprehension how like a god!'

<<span id="filepos0041409748"> a>APPENDIX

I. —THE SOURCES OF BIOGRAPHICAL KNOWLEDGE.

Contemporary records abundant.

The scantiness of contemporary records of Shakespeare’s career has been much exaggerated. An investigation extending over two centuries has brought together a mass of detail which far exceeds that accessible in the case of any other contemporary professional writer. Nevertheless, some important links are missing, and at some critical points appeal to conjecture is inevitable. But the fully ascertained facts are numerous enough to define sharply the general direction that Shakespeare’s career followed. Although the clues are in some places faint, the trail never altogether eludes the patient investigator.

First efforts in biography.

Fuller, in his ‘Worthies’ (1662), attempted the first biographical notice of Shakespeare, with poor results. Aubrey, in his gossiping ‘Lives of Eminent Men,’ based his ampler information on reports communicated to him by William Beeston (*d.* 1682), an aged actor, whom Dryden called ‘the chronicle of the stage,’ and who was doubtless in the main a trustworthy witness. A few additional details were recorded in the seventeenth century by the Rev. John Ward (1629-1681), vicar of Stratford-on-Avon from 1662 to 1668, in a diary and memorandum-book written between 1661 and 1663 (ed. C. A. Severn, 1839); by the Rev. William Fulman, whose manuscripts are at Corpus Christi College, Oxford (with valuable interpolations made before 1708 by the Rev. Richard Davies, vicar of Saperton, Gloucestershire); by John Dowdall, who recorded his experiences of travel through Warwickshire in 1693 (London, 1838); and by William Hall, who described a visit to Stratford in 1694 (London, 1884, from Hall’s letter among the Bodleian MSS.) Phillips in his ‘Theatrum Poetarum’ (1675), and Langbaine in his ‘English Dramatick Poets’ (1691), confined themselves to elementary criticism. In 1709 Nicholas Rowe prefixed to his edition of the plays a more ambitious memoir than had yet been attempted, and embodied some hitherto unrecorded Stratford and London traditions with which the actor Thomas Betterton supplied him. A little fresh gossip was collected by William Oldys, and was printed from his manuscript ‘Adversaria’ (now in the

British Museum) as an appendix to Yeowell's 'Memoir of Oldys,' 1862. Pope, Johnson, and Steevens, in the biographical prefaces to their editions, mainly repeated the narratives of their predecessor, Rowe.

Biographers of the nineteenth century. Stratford topography.

In the Prolegomena to the Variorum editions of 1803, 1813, and especially in that of 1821, there was embodied a mass of fresh information derived by Edmund Malone from systematic researches among the parochial records of Stratford, the manuscripts accumulated by the actor Alleyn at Dulwich, and official papers of state preserved in the public offices in London (now collected in the Public Record Office). The available knowledge of Elizabethan stage history, as well as of Shakespeare's biography, was thus greatly extended. John Payne Collier, in his 'History of English Dramatic Poetry' (1831), in his 'New Facts' about Shakespeare (1835), his 'New Particulars' (1836), and his 'Further Particulars' (1839), and in his editions of Henslowe's 'Diary' and the 'Alleyn Papers' for the Shakespeare Society, while occasionally throwing some further light on obscure places, foisted on Shakespeare's biography a series of ingeniously forged documents which have greatly perplexed succeeding biographers. Joseph Hunter in 'New Illustrations of Shakespeare' (1845) and George Russell French's 'Shakespeareana Genealogica' (1869) occasionally supplemented Malone's researches. James Orchard Halliwell (afterwards Halliwell-Phillipps) printed separately, between 1850 and 1884, in various privately issued publications, all the Stratford archives and extant legal documents bearing on Shakespeare's career, many of them for the first time. In 1881 Halliwell-Phillipps began the collective publication of materials for a full biography in his 'Outlines of the Life of Shakespeare;' this work was generously enlarged in successive editions until it acquired massive proportions; in the seventh and last edition of 1887 it numbered near 1,000 pages. Mr. Frederick Gard Fleay, in his 'Shakespeare Manual' (1876), in his 'Life of Shakespeare' (1886), in his 'History of the Stage' (1890), and his 'Biographical Chronicle of the English Drama' (1891), adds much useful information respecting stage history and Shakespeare's relations with his fellow-dramatists, mainly derived from a study of the original editions of the plays of Shakespeare and of his contemporaries; but unfortunately many of Mr. Fleay's statements and conjectures are unauthenticated. For notices of Stratford, R. B. Wheler's 'History and Antiquities' (1806), John R. Wise's 'Shakespere, his Birthplace and its Neighbourhood' (1861), the present writer's 'Stratford-on-Avon to the Death of Shakespeare' (1890), and Mrs. C. C. Stopes's 'Shakespeare's Warwickshire

Contemporaries' (1897), may be consulted. Wise appends to his volume a tentative 'glossary of words still used in Warwickshire to be found in Shakspere.' The parish registers of Stratford have been edited by Mr. Richard Savage for the Parish Registers Society (1898-9). Nathan Drake's 'Shakespeare and his Times' (1817) and G. W. Thornbury's 'Shakespeare's England' (1856) collect much material respecting Shakespeare's social environment.

Specialised studies in biography. Useful epitomes.

The chief monographs on special points in Shakespeare's biography are Dr. Richard Farmer's 'Essay on the Learning of Shakespeare' (1767), reprinted in the Variorum editions; Octavius Gilchrist's 'Examination of the Charges . . . . of Ben Jonson's Enmity towards Shakespeare' (1808); W. J. Thoms's 'Was Shakespeare ever a Soldier?' (1849), a study based on an erroneous identification of the poet with another William Shakespeare; Lord Campbell's 'Shakespeare's Legal Acquirements considered' (1859); John Charles Bucknill's 'Medical Knowledge of Shakespeare' (1860); C. F. Green's' 'Shakespeare's Crab-Tree, with its Legend' (1862); C. H. Bracebridge's 'Shakespeare no Deer-stealer' (1862); William Blades's 'Shakspere and Typography' (1872); and D. H. Madden's 'Diary of Master William Silence (Shakespeare and Sport),' 1897. A full epitome of the biographical information accessible at the date of publication is supplied in Karl Elze's 'Life of Shakespeare' (Halle, 1876; English translation, 1888), with which Elze's 'Essays' from the publications of the German Shakespeare Society (English translation, 1874) are worth studying. A less ambitious effort of the same kind by Samuel Neil (1861) is seriously injured by the writer's acceptance of Collier's forgeries. Professor Dowden's 'Shakspere Primer' (1877) and his 'Introduction to Shakspere' (1893), and Dr. Furnivall's 'Introduction to the Leopold Shakspere,' are all useful summaries of leading facts.

Aids to study of plots and text. Concordances. Bibliographies.

Francis Douce's 'Illustrations of Shakespeare' (1807, new edit. 1839), 'Shakespeare's Library' (ed. J. P. Collier and W. C. Hazlitt, 1875), 'Shakespeare's Plutarch' (ed. Skeat, 1875), and 'Shakespeare's Holinshed' (ed. W. G. Boswell-Stone, 1896) are of service in tracing the sources of Shakespeare's plots. Alexander Schmidt's 'Shakespeare Lexicon' (1874) and Dr. E. A. Abbott's 'Shakespearian Grammar' (1869, new edit. 1893) are valuable aids to a study of the text. Useful concordances to the Plays have been prepared by Mrs. Cowden-Clarke (1845), to the Poems by Mrs. H. H. Furness (Philadelphia, 1875), and to Plays and Poems, in one volume, with references to numbered lines, by John Bartlett (London and New York, 1895). A 'Handbook Index' by J. O. Halliwell (privately printed 1866) gives lists of obsolete words and phrases, songs, proverbs, and plants mentioned in the works of Shakespeare. An unprinted glossary prepared by Richard Warner between 1750 and 1770 is at the British Museum (Addit. MSS. 10472-542). Extensive bibliographies are given in Lowndes's 'Library Manual' (ed. Bohn); in Franz Thimm's 'Shakespeariana' (1864 and 1871); in the 'Encyclopædia Britannica,' 9th edit. (skilfully classified by Mr. H. R. Tedder); and in the 'British Museum Catalogue' (the Shakespearean entries in which, comprising 3,680 titles, were separately published in 1897).

Critical studies.

The valuable publications of the Shakespeare Society, the New Shakspere Society, and of the Deutsche Shakespeare-Gesellschaft, comprising contributions alike to the æsthetic, textual, historical, and biographical study of Shakespeare, are noticed above (see p-4, 346). To the critical studies, on which comment has already been made (see)—viz. Coleridge's 'Notes and Lectures,' 1883, Hazlitt's 'Characters of Shakespeare's Plays,' 1817, Professor Dowden's 'Shakspere: his Mind and Art,' 1875, and Mr. A. C. Swinburne's 'A Study of Shakespeare,' 1879—there may be added the essays on Shakespeare's heroines respectively by Mrs. Jameson in 1833 and Lady Martin in 1885; Dr. Ward's 'English Dramatic Literature' (1875, new edit. 1898); Richard G. Moulton's 'Shakespeare as a Dramatic Artist' (1885); 'Shakespeare Studies' by Thomas Spencer Baynes (1893); F. S. Boas's 'Shakspere and his Predecessors', (1895), and Georg Brandes's 'William Shakespeare'—an elaborately critical but somewhat fanciful study—in Danish (Copenhagen, 1895, 8vo), in German (Leipzig, 1895), and in English (London, 1898, 2 vols. 8vo).

Shakespearean forgeries.

The intense interest which Shakespeare's life and work have long universally excited has tempted unprincipled or sportively mischievous writers from time to time to deceive the public by the forgery of documents purporting to supply new information. The forgers were especially active at the end of last century and during the middle years of the present century, and their frauds have caused students so much perplexity that it may be useful to warn them against those

Shakespearean forgeries which have obtained the widest currency.

John Jordan, 1746-1809.

The earliest forger to obtain notoriety was John Jordan (1746-1809), a resident at Stratford-on-Avon, whose most important achievement was the forgery of the will of Shakespeare's father; but many other papers in Jordan's 'Original Collections on Shakespeare and Stratford-on-Avon' (1780), and 'Original Memoirs and Historical Accounts of the Families of Shakespeare and Hart,' are open to the gravest suspicion.

The Ireland forgeries, 1796.

The best known Shakespearean forger of the eighteenth century was William Henry Ireland (1777-1835), a barrister's clerk, who, with the aid of his father, Samuel Ireland (1740?-1800), an author and engraver of some repute, produced in 1796 a volume of forged papers claiming to relate to Shakespeare's career. The title ran: 'Miscellaneous Papers and Legal Instruments under the Hand and Seal of William Shakespeare, including the tragedy of "King Lear" and a small fragment of "Hamlet" from the original MSS. in the possession of Samuel Ireland.' On April 2, 1796 Sheridan and Kemble produced at Drury Lane Theatre a bombastic tragedy in blank verse entitled 'Vortigern' under the pretence that it was by Shakespeare, and had been recently found among the manuscripts of the dramatist that had fallen into the hands of the Irelands. The piece, which was published, was the invention of young Ireland. The fraud of the Irelands, which for some time deceived a section of the literary public, was finally exposed by Malone in his valuable 'Inquiry into the Authenticity of the Ireland MSS.' (1796). Young Ireland afterwards published his 'Confessions' (1805). He had acquired much skill in copying Shakespeare's genuine signature from the facsimile in Steevens's edition of Shakespeare's works of the mortgage-deed of the Blackfriars house of 1612-13,   and, besides conforming to that style of handwriting in his forged deeds and literary compositions, he inserted copies of the signature on the title-pages of many sixteenth-century books, and often added notes in the same feigned hand on their margins. Numerous sixteenth-century volumes embellished by Ireland in this manner are extant, and his forged signatures and marginalia have been frequently mistaken for genuine autographs of Shakespeare.

Forgeries promulgated by Collier and others, 1835-1849.

But Ireland's and Jordan's frauds are clumsy compared with those that belong to the present century. Most of the works relating to the biography of Shakespeare or the history of the Elizabethan stage produced by John Payne Collier, or under his supervision, between 1835 and 1849 are honeycombed with forged references to Shakespeare, and many of the forgeries have been admitted unsuspectingly into literary history. The chief of these forged papers I arrange below in the order of the dates that have been allotted to them by their manufacturers.

1589 (November).	Appeal from the Blackfriars players (16 in number) to the Privy Council for favour. Shakespeare's name stands twelfth. From the manuscripts at Bridgewater House, belonging to the Earl of Ellesmere. First printed in Collier's 'New Facts regarding the Life of Shakespeare,' 1835.
1596 (July).	List of inhabitants of the Liberty of Southwark, Shakespeare's name appearing in the sixth place. First printed in Collier's 'Life of Shakespeare,' 1858, .
1596.	Petition of the owners and players of the Blackfriars Theatre to the Privy Council in reply to an alleged petition of the inhabitants requesting the closing of the playhouse. Shakespeare's name is fifth on the list of petitioners. This forged paper is in the Public Record Office, and was first printed in Collier's 'History of English Dramatic Poetry' (1831), vol. i. , and has been constantly reprinted as if it were genuine.
1596 (*circa*).	A letter signed H. S.(*i.e.* Henry, Earl of Southampton), addressed to Sir Thomas Egerton, praying protection for the players of the Blackfriars Theatre, and mentioning Burbage and Shakespeare by name. First printed in Collier's 'New Facts.'
1596 (*circa*	A list of sharers in the Blackfriars Theatre, with the valuation of their property, in which Shakespeare is credited with four shares,

).	worth £933 6s. 8d. This was first printed in Collier's 'New Facts,' 1835, , from the Egerton MSS. at Bridgewater House.
1602 (August 6).	Notice of the performance of 'Othello' by Burbage's 'players' before Queen Elizabeth when on a visit to Sir Thomas Egerton, the lord-keeper, at Harefield, in a forged account of disbursements by Egerton's steward, Arthur Mainwaringe, from the manuscripts at Bridgewater House, belonging to the Earl of Ellesmere. Printed in Collier's 'New Particulars regarding the Works of Shakespeare,' 1836, and again in Collier's edition of the 'Egerton Papers,' 1840 (Camden Society)) p-3.
1603 (October 3).	Mention of 'Mr. Shakespeare of the Globe' in a letter at Dulwich from Mrs. Alleyn to her husband; part of the letter is genuine. First published in Collier's Memoirs of Edward Alleyn,' 1841, .
1604 (April 9).	List of the names of eleven players of the King's Company fraudulently appended to a genuine letter at Dulwich College from the Privy Council bidding the Lord Mayor permit performances by the King's players. Printed in Collier's 'Memoirs of Edward Alleyn,' 1841, .
1605 (November-December).	Forged entries in Master of the Revels' account-books (now at the Public Record Office) of performances at Whitehall by the King's players of the 'Moor of Venice'—*i.e.* 'Othello'—on November 1, and of 'Measure for Measure' on December 26. Printed in Peter Cunningham's 'Extracts from the Accounts of the Revels at Court' (p-4), published by the Shakespeare Society in 1842. Doubtless based on Malone's trustworthy memoranda (now in the Bodleian Library) of researches among genuine papers formerly at the Audit Office at Somerset House.
	Notes of performances of 'Hamlet' and 'Richard II' by the crews of the vessels of the East India Company's fleet off Sierra Leone.

1607.	First printed in ‘Narratives of Voyages towards the North-West, 1496-1631,’ edited by Thomas Rundall for the Hakluyt Society, 1849, , from what purported to be an exact transcript ‘in the India Office’ of the ‘Journal of William Keeling,’ captain of one of the vessels in the expedition. Keeling’s manuscript journal is still at the India Office, but the leaves that should contain these entries are now, and have long been, missing from it.
1609 (January 4).	A warrant appointing Robert Daborne, William Shakespeare, and others instructors of the Children of the Revels. From the Bridgewater House MSS. first printed in Collier’s ‘New Facts,’ 1835.
1609 (April 6).	List of persons assessed for poor rate in Southwark, April 6, 1609, in which Shakespeare’s name appears. First printed in Collier’s ‘Memoirs of Edward Alleyn,’ 1841, . The forged paper is at Dulwich.
1611 (November).	Forged entries in Master of the Revels’ account-books (now at the Public Record Office) of performances at Whitehall by the King’s Players of the ‘Tempest’ on November 1, and of the ‘Winter’s Tale’ on November 5. Printed in Peter Cunningham’s ‘Extracts from the Revels Accounts,’ . Doubtless based on Malone’s trustworthy memoranda of researches among genuine papers formerly at the Audit Office at Somerset House.

II.—THE BACON-SHAKESPEARE CONTROVERSY.

Its source. Toby Matthew’s letter.

The apparent contrast between the homeliness of Shakespeare’s Stratford career and the breadth of observation and knowledge displayed in his literary work has evoked the fantastic theory that Shakespeare was not the author of the literature that passes under his name, and perverse attempts have been made to assign his works to his great contemporary, Francis Bacon (1561-1626), the great contemporary prose-writer, philosopher, and lawyer. It is argued that Shakespeare's plays embody a general omniscience (especially a knowledge of law) which was possessed by no contemporary except Bacon; that there are many close parallelisms between passages in Shakespeare's and passages in Bacon's works, and that Bacon makes enigmatic references in his correspondence to secret 'recreations' and 'alphabets' and concealed poems for which his alleged employment as a concealed dramatist can alone account. Toby Matthew wrote to Bacon (as Viscount St. Albans) at an uncertain date after January 1621: 'The most prodigious wit that ever I knew of my nation and of this side of the sea is of your Lordship's name, though he be known by another.' This unpretending sentence is distorted into conclusive evidence that Bacon wrote works of commanding excellence under another's name, and among them probably Shakespeare's plays. According to the only sane interpretation of Matthew's words, his 'most prodigious wit' was some Englishman named Bacon whom he met abroad—probably a pseudonymous Jesuit like most of Matthew's friends. (The real surname of Father Thomas Southwell, who was a learned Jesuit domiciled chiefly in the Low Countries, was Bacon. He was born in 1592 at Sculthorpe, near Walsingham, Norfolk, being son of Thomas Bacon of that place, and he died at Watten in 1637.)

Chief exponents. Its vogue in America.

Joseph C. Hart (U.S. Consul at Santa Cruz, *d.* 1855), in his 'Romance of Yachting' (1848), first raised doubts of Shakespeare's authorship. There followed in a like temper 'Who wrote Shakespeare?' in 'Chambers's Journal,' August 7, 1852, and an article by Miss Delia Bacon in 'Putnams' Monthly,' January, 1856. On the latter was based 'The Philosophy of the Plays of Shakespeare unfolded by Delia Bacon,' with a neutral preface by Nathaniel Hawthorne, London and Boston, 1857. Miss Delia Bacon, who was the first to spread abroad a spirit of scepticism respecting the established facts of Shakespeare's career, died insane on September 2, 1859. Mr. William Henry Smith, a resident in London, seems first to have suggested the Baconian hypothesis in 'Was Lord Bacon the author of Shakespeare's plays?—a letter to Lord Ellesmere' (1856), which was republished as 'Bacon and Shakespeare' (1857). The most learned exponent of this strange theory was Nathaniel Holmes, an American lawyer, who published at New York in 1866 'The Authorship of the Plays attributed to Shakespeare,' a monument of misapplied ingenuity (4th edit. 1886, 2 vols.) Bacon's 'Promus of Formularies and Elegancies,' a commonplace book in Bacon's handwriting in the British

Museum (London, 1883), was first edited by Mrs. Henry Pott, a voluminous advocate of the Baconian theory; it contained many words and phrases common to the works of Bacon and Shakespeare, and Mrs. Pott pressed the argument from parallelisms of expression to its extremest limits. The Baconian theory has found its widest acceptance in America. There it achieved its wildest manifestation in the book called ‘The Great Cryptogram: Francis Bacon’s Cypher in the so-called Shakespeare Plays’ (Chicago and London, 1887, 2 vols.), which was the work of Mr. Ignatius Donnelly of Hastings, Minnesota. The author pretended to have discovered among Bacon’s papers a numerical cypher which enabled him to pick out letters appearing at certain intervals in the pages of Shakespeare’s First Folio, and the selected letters formed words and sentences categorically stating that Bacon was author of the plays. Many refutations have been published of Mr. Donnelly’s arbitrary and baseless contention.

Extent of the literature.

A Bacon Society was founded in London in 1885 to develop and promulgate the unintelligible theory, and it inaugurated a magazine (named since May 1893 ‘Baconiana’). A quarterly periodical also called ‘Baconiana,’ and issued in the same interest, was established at Chicago in 1892. ‘The Bibliography of the Shakespeare-Bacon Controversy’ by W. H. Wyman, Cincinnati, 1884, gives the titles of two hundred and fifty-five books or pamphlets on both sides of the subject, published since 1848; the list was continued during 1886 in ‘Shakespeariana,’ a monthly journal published at Philadelphia, and might now be extended to fully twice its original number.

The abundance of the contemporary evidence attesting Shakespeare’s responsibility for the works published under his name gives the Baconian theory no rational right to a hearing while such authentic examples of Bacon’s effort to write verse as survive prove beyond all possibility of contradiction that, great as he was as a prose writer and a philosopher, he was incapable of penning any of the poetry assigned to Shakespeare. Defective knowledge and illogical or casuistical argument alone render any other conclusion possible.

III.—THE YOUTHFUL CAREER OF THE EARL OF SOUTHAMPTON.

Southampton and Shakespeare.

From the dedicatory epistles addressed by Shakespeare to the Earl of Southampton in the opening pages of his two narrative poems, 'Venus and Adonis' (1593) and 'Lucrece' (1594), from the account given by Sir William D'Avenant, and recorded by Nicholas Rowe, of the earl's liberal bounty to the poet, and from the language of the sonnets, it is abundantly clear that Shakespeare enjoyed very friendly relations with Southampton from the time when his genius was nearing its maturity. No contemporary document or tradition gives the faintest suggestion that Shakespeare was the friend or *protégé* of any man of rank other than Southampton; and the student of Shakespeare's biography has reason to ask for some information respecting him who enjoyed the exclusive distinction of serving Shakespeare as his patron.

Parentage. Birth on Oct. 6, 1573.

Southampton was a patron worth cultivating. Both his parents came of the New Nobility, and enjoyed vast wealth. His father's father was Lord Chancellor under Henry VIII, and when the monasteries were dissolved, although he was faithful to the old religion, he was granted rich estates in Hampshire, including the abbeys of Titchfield and Beaulieu in the New Forest. He was created Earl of Southampton early in Edward VI's reign, and, dying shortly afterwards, was succeeded by his only son, the father of Shakespeare's friend. The second earl loved magnificence in his household. 'He was highly reverenced and favoured of all that were of his own rank, and bravely attended and served by the best gentlemen of those counties wherein he lived. His muster-roll never consisted of four lacqueys and a coachman, but of a whole troop of at least a hundred well-mounted gentlemen and yeomen.' The second earl remained a Catholic, like his father, and a chivalrous avowal of sympathy with Mary Queen of Scots procured him a term of imprisonment in the year preceding his distinguished son's birth. At a youthful age he married a lady of fortune, Mary Browne, daughter of the first Viscount Montague, also a Catholic. Her portrait, now at Welbeck, was painted in her early married days, and shows regularly formed features beneath bright auburn hair. Two sons and a daughter were the issue of the union. Shakespeare's friend, the second son, was born at her father's residence, Cowdray House, near Midhurst, on October 6, 1573. He was thus Shakespeare's junior by nine years and a half. 'A goodly boy, God bless him!' exclaimed the gratified father, writing of his birth to a friend. But the father barely survived the boy's infancy. He died at the early age of thirty-five—two days before the child’s eighth birthday. The elder son was already dead. Thus, on October 4, 1581, the second and only surviving son became third Earl of Southampton, and entered on his great inheritance.

Education.

As was customary in the case of an infant peer, the little earl became a royal ward—‘a child of state’—and Lord Burghley, the Prime Minister, acted as the boy’s guardian in the Queen’s behalf. Burghley had good reason to be satisfied with his ward’s intellectual promise. ‘He spent,’ wrote a contemporary, ‘his childhood and other younger terms in the study of good letters.’ At the age of twelve, in the autumn of 1585, he was admitted to St. John’s College, Cambridge, ‘the sweetest nurse of knowledge in all the University.’ Southampton breathed easily the cultured atmosphere. Next summer he sent his guardian, Burghley, an essay in Ciceronian Latin on the somewhat cynical text that ‘All men are moved to the pursuit of virtue by the hope of reward.’ The argument, if unconvincing, is precocious. ‘Every man,’ the boy tells us, ‘no matter how well or how ill endowed with the graces of humanity, whether in the enjoyment of great honour or condemned to obscurity, experiences that yearning for glory which alone begets virtuous endeavour.’ The paper, still preserved at Hatfield, is a model of calligraphy; every letter is shaped with delicate regularity, and betrays a refinement most uncommon in boys of thirteen.   Southampton remained at the University for some two years, graduating M.A. at sixteen in 1589. Throughout his after life he cherished for his college ‘great love and affection.’

Before leaving Cambridge, Southampton entered his name at Gray’s Inn. Some knowledge of law was deemed needful in one who was to control a landed property that was not only large already but likely to grow.   Meanwhile he was sedulously cultivating his literary tastes. He took into his ‘pay and patronage’ John Florio, the well-known author and Italian tutor, and was soon, according to Florio’s testimony, as thoroughly versed in Italian as ‘teaching or learning’ could make him.

‘When he was young,’ wrote a later admirer, ‘no ornament of youth was wanting in him;’ and it was naturally to the Court that his friends sent him at an early age to display his varied graces. He can hardly have been more than seventeen when he was presented to his sovereign. She showed him kindly notice, and the Earl of Essex, her brilliant favourite, acknowledged his fascination. Thenceforth

Essex displayed in his welfare a brotherly interest which proved in course of time a very doubtful blessing.

Recognition of Southampton's youthful beauty.

While still a boy, Southampton entered with as much zest into the sports and dissipations of his fellow courtiers as into their literary and artistic pursuits. At tennis, in jousts and tournaments, he achieved distinction; nor was he a stranger to the delights of gambling at primero. In 1592, when he was in his eighteenth year, he was recognised as the most handsome and accomplished of all the young lords who frequented the royal presence. In the autumn of that year Elizabeth paid Oxford a visit in state. Southampton was in the throng of noblemen who bore her company. In a Latin poem describing the brilliant ceremonial, which was published at the time at the University Press, eulogy was lavished without stint on all the Queen's attendants; but the academic poet declared that Southampton's personal attractions exceeded those of any other in the royal train. 'No other youth who was present,' he wrote, 'was more beautiful than this prince of Hampshire (*quo non formosior alter affuit*), nor more distinguished in the arts of learning, although as yet tender down scarce bloomed on his cheek.' The last words testify to Southampton's boyish appearance. Next year it was rumoured, that his 'external grace' was to receive signal recognition by his admission, despite his juvenility, to the Order of the Garter. 'There be no Knights of the Garter new chosen as yet,' wrote a well-informed courtier on May 3, 1593, 'but there were four nominated.' Three were eminent public servants, but first on the list stood the name of young Southampton. The purpose did not take effect, but the compliment of nomination was, at his age, without precedent outside the circle of the Sovereign's kinsmen. On November 17, 1595, he appeared in the lists set up in the Queen's presence in honour of the thirty-seventh anniversary of her accession. The poet George Peele pictured in blank verse the gorgeous scene, and likened the Earl of Southampton to that ancient type of chivalry, Bevis of Southampton, so 'valiant in arms,' so 'gentle and debonair,' did he appear to all beholders.

Reluctance to marry.

But clouds were rising on this sunlit horizon. Southampton, a wealthy peer without brothers or uncles, was the only male representative of his house. A lawful heir was essential to the entail of his great possessions. Early marriages —child-marriages—were in vogue in all ranks of society, and Southampton's mother and guardian regarded matrimony at a tender age as especially incumbent on him in view of his rich heritage. When he was seventeen Burghley accordingly offered him a wife in the person of his granddaughter, Lady Elizabeth Vere, eldest daughter of his daughter Anne and of the Earl of Oxford. The Countess of Southampton approved the match, and told Burghley that her son was not averse from it. Her wish was father to the thought. Southampton declined to marry to order, and, to the confusion of his friends, was still a bachelor when he came of age in 1594. Nor even then did there seem much prospect of his changing his condition. He was in some ways as young for his years in inward disposition as in outward appearance. Although gentle and amiable in most relations of life, he could be childishly self-willed and impulsive, and outbursts of anger involved him, at Court and elsewhere, in many petty quarrels which were with difficulty settled without bloodshed. Despite his rank and wealth, he was consequently accounted by many ladies of far too uncertain a temper to sustain marital responsibilities with credit. Lady Bridget Manners, sister of his friend the Earl of Rutland, was in 1594 looking to matrimony for means of release from the servitude of a lady-in-waiting to the Queen. Her guardian suggested that Southampton or the Earl of Bedford, who was intimate with Southampton and exactly of his age, would be an eligible suitor. Lady Bridget dissented. Southampton and his friend were, she objected, ‘so young,’ ‘fantastical,’ and volatile (‘so easily carried away’), that should ill fortune befall her mother, who was ‘her only stay,’ she ‘doubted their carriage of themselves.’ She spoke, she said, from observation.

Intrigue with Elizabeth Vernon.

In 1595, at two-and-twenty, Southampton justified Lady Bridget’s censure by a public proof of his fallibility. The fair Mistress Vernon (first cousin of the Earl of Essex), a passionate beauty of the Court, cast her spell on him. Her virtue was none too stable, and in September the scandal spread that Southampton was courting her ‘with too much familiarity.’

Marriage in 1598.

The entanglement with ‘his fair mistress’ opened a new chapter in Southampton’s career, and life’s tempests began in earnest. Either to free himself from his mistress’s toils, or to divert attention from his intrigue, he in 1596 withdrew from Court and sought sterner occupation. Despite his mistress’s lamentations, which the Court gossips duly chronicled, he played a part with his friend Essex in the military and naval expedition to Cadiz in 1596, and in that to the Azores in 1597. He developed a martial ardour which brought him renown, and Mars (his admirers said) vied with Mercury for his allegiance. He travelled on the Continent, and finally, in 1598, he accepted a subordinate place in the suite of the Queen's Secretary, Sir Robert Cecil, who was going on an embassy to Paris. But Mistress Vernon was still fated to be his evil genius, and Southampton learnt while in Paris that her condition rendered marriage essential to her decaying reputation. He hurried to London and, yielding his own scruples to her entreaties, secretly made her his wife during the few days he stayed in this country. The step was full of peril. To marry a lady of the Court without the Queen's consent infringed a prerogative of the Crown by which Elizabeth set exaggerated store.

Imprisonment, 1601-3.

The story of Southampton's marriage was soon public property. His wife quickly became a mother, and when he crossed the Channel a few weeks later to revisit her he was received by pursuivants, who had the Queen's orders to carry him to the Fleet prison. For the time his career was ruined. Although he was soon released from gaol, all avenues to the Queen's favour were closed to him. He sought employment in the wars in Ireland, but high command was denied him. Helpless and hopeless, he late in 1600 joined Essex, another fallen favourite, in fomenting a rebellion in London, in order to regain by force the positions each had forfeited. The attempt at insurrection failed, and the conspirators stood their trial on a capital charge of treason on February 19, 1600-1. Southampton was condemned to die, but the Queen's Secretary pleaded with her that 'the poor young earl, merely for the love of Essex, had been drawn into this action,' and his punishment was commuted to imprisonment for life. Further mitigation was not to be looked for while the Queen lived. But Essex, Southampton's friend, had been James's sworn ally. The first act of James I as monarch of England was to set Southampton free (April 10, 1603). After a confinement of more than two years, Southampton resumed, under happier auspices, his place at Court.

Later career. Death on Nov. 10, 1624.

Southampton 's later career does not directly concern the student of Shakespeare's biography. After Shakespeare had congratulated Southampton on his liberty in his Sonnet cvii., there is no trace of further relations between them, although there is no reason to doubt that they remained friends to the end. Southampton on his release from prison was immediately installed a Knight of the Garter, and was appointed governor of the Isle of Wight, while an Act of Parliament relieved him of all the disabilities incident to his conviction of treason. He was thenceforth a prominent figure in Court festivities. He twice danced a correnta with the Queen at the magnificent entertainment given at Whitehall on August 19, 1604, in honour of the Constable of Castile, the special ambassador of Spain, who had come to sign a treaty of peace between his sovereign and James I. But home politics proved no congenial field for the exercise of Southampton's energies. Quarrels with fellow-courtiers continued to jeopardise his fortunes. With Sir Robert Cecil, with Philip Herbert, Earl of Montgomery, and with the Duke of Buckingham he had violent disputes. It was in the schemes for colonising the New World that Southampton found an outlet for his impulsive activity. He helped to equip expeditions to Virginia, and acted as treasurer of the Virginia Company. The map of the country commemorates his labours as a colonial pioneer. In his honour were named Southampton Hundred, Hampton River, and Hampton Roads in Virginia. Finally, in the summer of 1624, at the age of fifty-one, Southampton, with characteristic spirit, took command of a troop of English volunteers which was raised to aid the Elector Palatine, husband of James I's daughter Elizabeth, in his struggle with the Emperor and the Catholics of Central Europe. With him went his eldest son, Lord Wriothesley. Both on landing in the Low Countries were attacked by fever. The younger man succumbed at once. The Earl regained sufficient strength to accompany his son's body to Bergen-op-Zoom, but there, on November 10, he himself died of a lethargy. Father and son were both buried in the chancel of the church of Titchfield, Hampshire, on December 28. Southampton thus outlived Shakespeare by more than eight years.

IV.—THE EARL OF SOUTHAMPTON AS A LITERARY PATRON.

Southampton 's collection of books.

Southampton 's close relations with men of letters of his time give powerful corroboration of the theory that he was the patron whom Shakespeare commemorated in the sonnets. From earliest to latest manhood—throughout the dissipations of Court life, amid the torments that his intrigue cost him, in the distractions of war and travel—the earl never ceased to cherish the passion for literature which was implanted in him in boyhood. His devotion to his old college, St. John's, is characteristic. When a new library was in course of construction there during the closing years of his life, Southampton collected books to the value of £360 wherewith to furnish it. This ‘monument of love,’ as the College authorities described the benefaction, may still be seen on the shelves of the College library. The gift largely consisted of illuminated manuscripts—books of hours, legends of the saints, and mediæval chronicles. Southampton caused his son to be educated at St. John’s, and his wife expressed to the tutors the hope that the boy would ‘imitate’ his father ‘in his love to learning and to them.’

References in his letters to poems and plays.

Even the State papers and business correspondence in which Southampton’s career is traced are enlivened by references to his literary interests. Especially refreshing are the active signs vouchsafed there of his sympathy with the great birth of English drama. It was with plays that he joined other noblemen in 1598 in entertaining his chief, Sir Robert Cecil, on the eve of the departure for Paris of that embassy in which Southampton served Cecil as a secretary. In July following Southampton contrived to enclose in an official despatch from Paris ‘certain songs’ which he was anxious that Sir Robert Sidney, a friend of literary tastes, should share his delight in reading. Twelve months later, while Southampton was in Ireland, a letter to him from the Countess attested that current literature was an everyday topic of their private talk. ‘All the news I can send you,’ she wrote to her husband, ‘that I think will make you merry, is that I read in a letter from London that Sir John Falstaff is, by his mistress Dame Pintpot, made father of a goodly miller’s thumb—a boy that’s all head and very little body; but this is a secret.’ This cryptic sentence proves on the part of both earl and countess familiarity with Falstaff’s adventures in Shakespeare’s ‘Henry IV,’ where the fat knight apostrophised Mrs. Quickly as ‘good pint pot’ (Pt. I. II. iv. 443). Who the acquaintances were about whom the countess jested thus lightly does not appear, but that Sir John, the father of ‘the boy that was all head and very little body,’ was a playful allusion to Sir John’s creator is by no means beyond the bounds of possibility. In the letters of Sir Toby Matthew, many of which were written very early in the seventeenth century (although first published in 1660), the sobriquet of Sir John Falstaff seems to have been bestowed on Shakespeare: ‘As that excellent author Sir John Falstaff sayes, “what for your businesse, news, device, foolerie, and libertie, I never dealt better since I was a man.”’

His love of the theatre.

When, after leaving Ireland, Southampton spent the autumn of 1599 in London, it was recorded that he and his friend Lord Rutland ‘come not to Court’ but ‘pass away the time merely in going to plays every day.’ It seems that the fascination that the drama had for Southampton and his friends led them to exaggerate the influence that it was capable of exerting on the emotions of the multitude. Southampton and Essex in February 1601 requisitioned and paid for the revival of Shakespeare’s ‘Richard II’ at the Globe Theatre on the day preceding that fixed for their insurrection, in the hope that the play-scene of the deposition of a king might excite the citizens of London to countenance their rebellious design. Imprisonment sharpened Southampton’s zest for the theatre. Within a year of his release from the Tower in 1603 he entertained Queen Anne of Denmark at his house in the Strand, and Burbage and his fellow players, one of whom was Shakespeare, were bidden to present the ‘old’ play of ‘Love’s Labour’s Lost,’ whose ‘wit and mirth’ were calculated ‘to please her Majesty exceedingly.’

Poetic adulation. Barnabe Barnes’s sonnet, 1593.

But these are merely accidental testimonies to Southampton’s literary predilections. It is in literature itself, not in the prosaic records of his political or domestic life, that the amplest proofs survive of his devotion to letters. From the hour that, as a handsome and accomplished lad, he joined the Court and made London his chief home, authors acknowledged his appreciation of literary effort of almost every quality and form. He had in his Italian tutor Florio, whose circle of acquaintance included all men of literary reputation, a mentor who allowed no work of promise to escape his observation. Every note in the scale of adulation was sounded in Southampton’s honour in contemporary prose and verse. Soon after the publication, in April 1593, of Shakespeare’s ‘Venus and Adonis,’ with its salutation of Southampton, a more youthful apprentice to the poet’s craft, Barnabe Barnes, confided to a published sonnet of unrestrained fervour his conviction that Southampton’s eyes—‘those heavenly lamps’—were the only sources of true poetic inspiration. The sonnet, which is superscribed ‘to the Right Noble and Virtuous Lord, Henry, Earl of Southampton,’ runs:

Receive, sweet Lord, with thy thrice sacred hand
  (Which sacred Muses make their instrument)
  These worthless leaves, which I to thee present,
(Sprung from a rude and unmanurèd land)
That with your countenance graced, they may withstand
  Hundred-eyed Envy’s rough encounterment,

Whose patronage can give encouragement
To scorn back-wounding Zoilus his band.
Vouchsafe, right virtuous Lord, with gracious eyes—
Those heavenly lamps which give the Muses light,
Which give and take in course that holy fire—
To view my Muse with your judicial sight:
Whom, when time shall have taught, by flight, to rise
Shall to thy virtues, of much worth, aspire.

Tom Nash's addresses.

Next year a writer of greater power, Tom Nash, betrayed little less enthusiasm when dedicating to the earl his masterly essay in romance, 'The Life of Jack Wilton.' He describes Southampton, who was then scarcely of age, as 'a dear lover and cherisher as well of the lovers of poets as of the poets themselves.' 'A new brain,' he exclaims, 'a new wit, a new style, a new soul, will I get me, to canonise your name to posterity, if in this my first attempt I am not taxed of presumption.' Although 'Jack Wilton' was the first book Nash formally dedicated to Southampton, it is probable that Nash had made an earlier bid for the earl's patronage. In a digression at the close of his 'Pierce Pennilesse' he grows eloquent in praise of one whom he entitles 'the matchless image of honour and magnificent rewarder of vertue, Jove's eagle-borne Ganimede, thrice noble Amintas.' In a sonnet addressed to 'this renowned lord,' who 'draws all hearts to his love,' Nash expresses regret that the great poet, Edmund Spenser, had omitted to celebrate 'so special a pillar of nobility' in the series of adulatory sonnets prefixed to the 'Faerie Queene;' and in the last lines of his sonnet Nash suggests that Spenser suppressed the nobleman's name

Because few words might not comprise thy fame.

Southampton was beyond doubt the nobleman in question. It is certain, too, that the Earl of Southampton was among the young men for whom Nash, in hope of gain, as he admitted, penned 'amorous villanellos and qui passas.' One of the least reputable of these efforts of Nash survives in an obscene love-poem entitled 'The Choosing of Valentines,' which may be dated in 1595. Not only was this dedicated to Southampton in a prefatory sonnet, but in an epilogue, again in the form of a sonnet, Nash addressed his young patron as his 'friend.'

Markham's sonnet, 1595. Florio's address, 1598.

Meanwhile, in 1595, the versatile Gervase Markham inscribed to Southampton, in a sonnet, his patriotic poem on Sir Richard Grenville's glorious fight off the Azores. Markham was not content to acknowledge with Barnes the inspiriting force of his patron's eyes, but with blasphemous temerity asserted that the sweetness of his lips, which stilled the music of the spheres, delighted the ear of Almighty God. Markham's sonnet runs somewhat haltingly thus:

Thou glorious laurel of the Muses' hill,
  Whose eyes doth crown the most victorious pen,
Bright lamp of virtue, in whose sacred skill
  Lives all the bliss of ear-enchanting men,
From graver subjects of thy grave assays,
  Bend thy courageous thoughts unto these lines—
The grave from whence my humble Muse doth raise
  True honour's spirit in her rough designs—
And when the stubborn stroke of my harsh song
Shall seasonless glide through Almighty ears
Vouchsafe to sweet it with thy blessèd tongue
Whose well-tuned sound stills music in the spheres;
  So shall my tragic lays be blest by thee
  And from thy lips suck their eternity.

Subsequently Florio, in associating the earl's name with his great Italian-English dictionary—the 'Worlde of Wordes'—more soberly defined the earl's place in the republic of letters when he wrote: 'As to me and many more the glorious and gracious sunshine of your honour hath infused light and life.'

The congratulations of the poets in 1603.

The most notable contribution to this chorus of praise is to be found, as I have already shown, in Shakespeare's 'Sonnets.' The same note of eulogy was sounded by men of letters until Southampton's death. When he was released from prison on James I's accession in April 1603, his praises in poets' mouths were especially abundant. Not only was that grateful incident celebrated by Shakespeare in what is probably the latest of his sonnets (No. cvii.), but Samuel Daniel and John Davies of Hereford offered the Earl congratulation in more prolonged strains. Daniel addressed to Southampton many lines like these:

The world had never taken so full note

Of what thou art, hadst thou not been undone:
And only thy affliction hath begot
More fame than thy best fortunes could have won;
For ever by adversity are wrought
The greatest works of admiration;
And all the fair examples of renown
Out of distress and misery are grown . . .
Only the best-compos'd and worthiest hearts
God sets to act the hard'st and constanst'st parts.

Davies was more jubilant:

Now wisest men with mirth do seem stark mad,
And cannot choose—their hearts are all so glad.
Then let's be merry in our God and King,
That made us merry, being ill bestead.
Southampton, up thy cap to Heaven fling,
And on the viol there sweet praises sing,
For he is come that grace to all doth bring.

Many like praises, some of later date, by Henry Locke (or Lok), George Chapman, Joshua Sylvester, Richard Brathwaite, George Wither, Sir John Beaumont, and others could be quoted. Beaumont, on Southampton's death, wrote an elegy which panegyrises him in the varied capacities of warrior, councillor, courtier, father, and husband. But it is as a literary patron that Beaumont insists that he chiefly deserves remembrance:

I keep that glory last which is the best,
The love of learning which he oft expressed
In conversation, and respect to those
Who had a name in arts, in verse or prose.

Elegies on Southampton.

To the same effect are some twenty poems which were published in 1624, just after Southampton's death, in a volume entitled 'Teares of the Isle of Wight, shed on the Tombe of their most noble valorous and loving Captaine and Governour, the right honorable Henrie, Earl of Southampton.' The keynote is struck in the opening stanza of the first poem by one Francis Beale:

Ye famous poets of the southern isle,
Strain forth the raptures of your tragic muse,
And with your Laureate pens come and compile
The praises due to this great Lord: peruse
His globe of worth, and eke his virtues brave,
Like learned Maroes at Mecænas' grave.

V.—THE TRUE HISTORY OF THOMAS THORPE AND 'MR. W. H.'

The publication of the sonnets in 1609.

In 1598 Francis Meres enumerated among Shakespeare's best known works his 'sugar'd sonnets among his private friends.' None of Shakespeare's sonnets are known to have been in print when Meres wrote, but they were doubtless in circulation in manuscript. In 1599 two of them were printed for the first time by the piratical publisher, William Jaggard, in the opening pages of the first edition of 'The Passionate Pilgrim.' On January 3, 1599-1600, Eleazar Edgar, a publisher of small account, obtained a license for the publication of a work bearing the title, 'A Booke called Amours by J. D., with certein other Sonnetes by W. S.' No book answering this description is extant. In any case it is doubtful if Edgar's venture concerned Shakespeare's 'Sonnets.' It is more probable that his 'W. S.' was William Smith, who had published a collection of sonnets entitled 'Chloris' in 1596. On May 20, 1609, a license for the publication of Shakespeare's 'Sonnets' was granted by the Stationers' Company to a publisher named Thomas Thorpe, and shortly afterwards the complete collection as they have reached us was published by Thorpe for the first time. To the volume Thorpe prefixed a dedication in the following terms:

to the onlie begetter of
these insuing sonnets
mr. w. h., all happinesse
and that eternitie
promised
by
our ever-living poet
wisheth
the well-wishing
adventurer in
setting

forth

T. T.

The words are fantastically arranged. In ordinary grammatical order they would run: ‘The well-wishing adventurer in setting forth [*i.e.* the publisher] T[homas] T[horpe] wisheth Mr. W. H., the only begetter of these ensuing sonnets, all happiness and that eternity promised by our ever-living poet.’

Publishers’ dedication.

Few books of the sixteenth or seventeenth century were ushered into the world without a dedication. In most cases it was the work of the author, but numerous volumes, besides Shakespeare’s ‘Sonnets,’ are extant in which the publisher (and not the author) fills the role of dedicator. The cause of the substitution is not far to seek. The signing of the dedication was an assertion of full and responsible ownership in the publication, and the publisher in Shakespeare’s lifetime was the full and responsible owner of a publication quite as often as the author. The modern conception of copyright had not yet been evolved. Whoever in the sixteenth or early seventeenth century was in actual possession of a manuscript was for practical purposes its full and responsible owner. Literary work largely circulated in manuscript. Scriveners made a precarious livelihood by multiplying written copies, and an enterprising publisher had many opportunities of becoming the owner of a popular book without the author’s sanction or knowledge. When a volume in the reign of Elizabeth or James I was published independently of the author, the publisher exercised unchallenged all the owner’s rights, not the least valued of which was that of choosing the patron of the enterprise, and of penning the dedicatory compliment above his signature. Occasionally circumstances might speciously justify the publisher’s appearance in the guise of a dedicator. In the case of a posthumous book it sometimes happened that the author’s friends renounced ownership or neglected to assert it. In other instances, the absence of an author from London while his work was passing through the press might throw on the publisher the task of supplying the dedication without exposing him to any charge of sharp practice. But as a rule one of only two inferences is possible when a publisher’s name figured at the foot of a dedicatory epistle: either the author was ignorant of the publisher’s design, or he had refused to countenance it, and was openly defied. In the case of Shakespeare’s ‘Sonnets’ it may safely be assumed that Shakespeare received no notice of Thorpe’s intention of publishing the work, and that it was owing to the author's ignorance of the design that the dedication was composed and signed by the 'well-wishing adventurer in setting forth.'

But whether author or publisher chose the patron of his wares, the choice was determined by much the same considerations. Self-interest was the principle underlying transactions between literary patron and *protégé* . Publisher, like author, commonly chose as patron a man or woman of wealth and social influence who might be expected to acknowledge the compliment either by pecuniary reward or by friendly advertisement of the volume in their own social circle. At times the publisher, slightly extending the field of choice, selected a personal friend or mercantile acquaintance who had rendered him some service in trade or private life, and was likely to appreciate such general expressions of good will as were the accepted topic of dedications. Nothing that was fantastic or mysterious entered into the Elizabethan or the Jacobean publishers' shrewd schemes of business, and it may be asserted with confidence that it was under the everyday prosaic conditions of current literary traffic that the publisher Thorpe selected 'Mr. W. H.' as the patron of the original edition of Shakespeare's 'Sonnets.'

Thorpe's early life.

A study of Thorpe's character and career clears the point of doubt. Thorpe has been described as a native of Warwickshire, Shakespeare's county, and a man eminent in his profession. He was neither of these things. He was a native of Barnet in Middlesex, where his father kept an inn, and he himself through thirty years' experience of the book trade held his own with difficulty in its humblest ranks. He enjoyed the customary preliminary training. At midsummer 1584 he was apprenticed for nine years to a reputable printer and stationer, Richard Watkins. Nearly ten years later he took up the freedom of the Stationers' Company, and was thereby qualified to set up as a publisher on his own account. He was not destitute of a taste for literature; he knew scraps of Latin, and recognised a good manuscript when he saw one. But the ranks of London publishers were overcrowded, and such accomplishments as Thorpe possessed were poor compensation for a lack of capital or of family connections among those already established in the trade. For many years he contented himself with an obscure situation as assistant or clerk to a stationer more favourably placed.

His ownership of the manuscript of Marlowe's 'Lucan.' His dedicatory

address to Edward Blount in 1600.

It was as the self-appointed procurer and owner of an unprinted manuscript—a recognised role for novices to fill in the book trade of the period—that Thorpe made his first distinguishable appearance on the stage of literary history. In 1600 there fell into his hands in an unexplained manner a written copy of Marlowe's unprinted translation of the first book of 'Lucan.' Thorpe confided his good fortune to Edward Blount, then a stationer's assistant like himself, but with better prospects. Blount had already achieved a modest success in the same capacity of procurer or picker-up of neglected 'copy.' In 1598 he became proprietor of Marlowe's unfinished and unpublished 'Hero and Leander,' and found among better-equipped friends in the trade both a printer and a publisher for his treasure-trove. Blount good-naturedly interested himself in Thorpe's 'find,' and it was through Blount's good offices that Peter Short undertook to print Thorpe's manuscript of Marlowe's 'Lucan,' and Walter Burre agreed to sell it at his shop in St. Paul's Churchyard. As owner of the manuscript Thorpe exerted the right of choosing a patron for the venture and of supplying the dedicatory epistle. The patron of his choice was his friend Blount, and he made the dedication the vehicle of his gratitude for the assistance he had just received. The style of the dedication was somewhat bombastic, but Thorpe showed a literary sense when he designated Marlowe 'that pure elemental wit,' and a good deal of dry humour in offering to 'his kind and true friend' Blount 'some few instructions' whereby he might accommodate himself to the unaccustomed *rôle* of patron. For the conventional type of patron Thorpe disavowed respect. He preferred to place himself under the protection of a friend in the trade whose goodwill had already stood him in good stead, and was capable of benefiting him hereafter.

This venture laid the foundation of Thorpe's fortunes. Three years later he was able to place his own name on the title-page of two humbler literary prizes—each an insignificant pamphlet on current events. Thenceforth for a dozen years his name reappeared annually on one, two, or three volumes. After 1614 his operations were few and far between, and they ceased altogether in 1624. He seems to have ended his days in poverty, and has been identified with the Thomas Thorpe who was granted an alms-room in the hospital of Ewelme, Oxfordshire, on December 3, 1635.

Character of his business.

Thorpe was associated with the publication of twenty-nine volumes in all, including Marlowe's 'Lucan;' but in almost all his operations his personal energies were confined, as in his initial enterprise, to procuring the manuscript. For a short period in 1608 he occupied a shop, The Tiger's Head, in St. Paul's Churchyard, and the fact was duly announced on the title-pages of three publications which he issued in that year. But his other undertakings were described on their title-pages as printed for him by one stationer and sold for him by another; and when any address found mention at all, it was the shopkeeper's address, and not his own. He never enjoyed in permanence the profits or dignity of printing his 'copy' at a press of his own, or selling books on premises of his own, and he can claim the distinction of having pursued in this homeless fashion the well-defined profession of procurer of manuscripts for a longer period than any other known member of the Stationers' Company. Though many others began their career in that capacity, all except Thorpe, as far as they can be traced, either developed into printers or booksellers, or, failing in that, betook themselves to other trades.

Very few of his wares does Thorpe appear to have procured direct from the authors. It is true that between 1605 and 1611 there were issued under his auspices some eight volumes of genuine literary value, including, besides Shakespeare's 'Sonnets,' three plays by Chapman, four works of Ben Jonson, and Coryat's 'Odcombian Banquet.' But the taint of mysterious origin attached to most of his literary properties. He doubtless owed them to the exchange of a few pence or shillings with a scrivener's hireling; and the transaction was not one of which the author had cognisance.

Shakespeare's sufferings at publishers' hands.

It is quite plain that no negotiation with the author preceded the formation of Thorpe's resolve to publish for the first time Shakespeare's 'Sonnets' in 1609. Had Shakespeare associated himself with the enterprise, the world would fortunately have been spared Thorpe's dedication to 'Mr. W. H.' T. T.'s' place would have been filled by 'W. S.' The whole transaction was in Thorpe's vein. Shakespeare's 'Sonnets' had been already circulating in manuscript for eleven years; only two had as yet been printed, and those were issued by the pirate publisher, William Jaggard, in the fraudulently christened volume, 'The Passionate Pilgrim, by William Shakespeare,' in 1599. Shakespeare, except in the case of his two narrative poems, showed utter indifference to all questions touching the publication of his works. Of the sixteen plays of his that were published in his lifetime, not one was printed with his sanction. He made no audible protest when seven contemptible dramas in which he had no hand were published with his name or initials on the title-page while his fame was at its height. With only one publisher of his time, Richard Field, his fellow-townsman, who was responsible for the issue of ‘Venus’ and ‘Lucrece,’ is it likely that he came into personal relations, and there is nothing to show that he maintained relations with Field after the publication of ‘Lucrece’ in 1594.

In fitting accord with the circumstance that the publication of the ‘Sonnets’ was a tradesman’s venture which ignored the author’s feelings and rights, Thorpe in both the entry of the book in the ‘Stationers’ Registers’ and on its title-page brusquely designated it ‘Shakespeares Sonnets,’ instead of following the more urbane collocation of words invariably adopted by living authors, *viz.* ‘Sonnets by William Shakespeare.’

The use of initials in dedications of Elizabethan and Jacobean books.

In framing the dedication Thorpe followed established precedent. Initials run riot over Elizabethan and Jacobean books. Printers and publishers, authors and contributors of prefatory commendations were all in the habit of masking themselves behind such symbols. Patrons figured under initials in dedications somewhat less frequently than other sharers in the book’s production. But the conditions determining the employment of initials in that relation were well defined. The employment of initials in a dedication was a recognised mark of a close friendship or intimacy between patron and dedicator. It was a sign that the patron’s fame was limited to a small circle, and that the revelation of his full name was not a matter of interest to a wide public. Such are the dominant notes of almost all the extant dedications in which the patron is addressed by his initials. In 1598 Samuel Rowlands addressed the dedication of his ‘Betraying of Christ’ to his ‘deare affected *friend* Maister H. W., gentleman.’ An edition of Robert Southwell’s ‘Short Rule of Life’ which appeared in the same year bore a dedication addressed ‘to my deare affected *friend* M. [*i.e.* Mr.] D. S., gentleman.’ The poet Richard Barnfield also in the same year dedicated the opening sonnet in his ‘Poems in divers Humours’ to his ‘*friend* Maister R. L.’ In 1617 Dunstan Gale dedicated a poem, ‘Pyramus and Thisbe,’ to the ‘worshipfull his verie *friend* D. [*i.e.* Dr.] B. H.

Frequency of wishes for ‘happiness’ and ‘eternity’ in dedicatory greetings.

There was nothing exceptional in the words of greeting which Thorpe addressed to his patron ‘Mr. W. H.’ They followed a widely adopted formula. Dedications of the time usually consisted of two distinct parts. There was a dedicatory epistle, which might touch at any length, in either verse or prose, on the subject of the book and the writer’s relations with his patron. But there was usually, in addition, a preliminary salutation confined to such a single sentence as Thorpe displayed on the first page of his edition of Shakespeare’s sonnets. In that preliminary sentence the dedicator habitually ‘wisheth’ his patron one or more of such blessings as health, long life, happiness, and eternity. ‘Al perseverance with soules happiness’ Thomas Powell ‘wisheth’ the Countess of Kildare on the first page of his ‘Passionate Poet’ in 1601. ‘All happines’ is the greeting of Thomas Watson, the sonnetteer, to his patron, the Earl of Oxford, on the threshold of Watson’s ‘Passionate Century of Love.’ There is hardly a book published by Robert Greene between 1580 and 1592 that does not open with an adjuration before the dedicatory epistle in the form: ‘To --- --- Robert Greene wisheth increase of honour with the full fruition of perfect felicity.’

Thorpe in Shakespeare’s sonnets left the salutation to stand alone, and omitted the supplement of a dedicatory epistle; but this, too, was not unusual. There exists an abundance of contemporary examples of the dedicatory salutation without the sequel of the dedicatory epistle. Edmund Spenser’s dedication of the ‘Faerie Queene’ to Elizabeth consists solely of the salutation in the form of an assurance that the writer ‘consecrates these his labours to live with the eternitie of her fame.’ Michael Drayton both in his ‘Idea, The Shepheard’s Garland’ (1593), and in his ‘Poemes Lyrick and Pastorall’ (1609), confined his address to his patron to a single sentence of salutation. Richard Brathwaite in 1611 exclusively saluted the patron of his ‘Golden Fleece’ with ‘the continuance of God’s temporall blessings in this life, with the crowne of immortalitie in the world to come;’ while in like manner he greeted the patron of his ‘Sonnets and Madrigals’ in the same year with ‘the prosperitie of times successe in this life, with the reward of eternitie in the world to come.’ It is ‘happiness’ and ‘eternity,’ or an equivalent paraphrase, that had the widest vogue among the good wishes with which the dedicator in the early years of the seventeenth century besought his patron’s favour on the first page of his book. But Thorpe was too self-assertive to be a slavish imitator. His addiction to bombast and his elementary appreciation of literature recommended to him the practice of incorporating in his dedicatory salutation some high-sounding embellishments of the accepted formula suggested by his author’s writing. In his dedication of the ‘Sonnets’ to ‘Mr. W. H.’ he grafted on the common formula a reference to the immortality which Shakespeare, after the habit of contemporary sonnetteers, promised the hero of his sonnets in the pages that succeeded. With characteristic magniloquence, Thorpe added the decorative and supererogatory phrase, ‘promised by our ever-living poet,’ to the conventional dedicatory wish for his patron’s ‘all happiness’ and ‘eternitie.’

Five dedications by Thorpe.

Thorpe, as far as is known, penned only one dedication before that to Shakespeare’s ‘Sonnets.’ His dedicatory experience was previously limited to the inscription of Marlowe’s ‘Lucan’ in 1600 to Blount, his friend in the trade. Three dedications by Thorpe survive of a date subsequent to the issue of the ‘Sonnets.’ One of these is addressed to John Florio, and the other two to the Earl of Pembroke. But these three dedications all prefaced volumes of translations by one John Healey, whose manuscripts had become Thorpe’s prey after the author had emigrated to Virginia, where he died shortly after landing. Thorpe chose, he tells us, Florio and the Earl of Pembroke as patrons of Healey’s unprinted manuscripts because they had been patrons of Healey before his expatriation and death. There is evidence to prove that in choosing a patron for the ‘Sonnets,’ and penning a dedication for the second time, he pursued the exact procedure that he had followed—deliberately and for reasons that he fully stated—in his first and only preceding dedicatory venture. He chose his patron from the circle of his trade associates, and it must have been because his patron was a personal friend that he addressed him by his initials, ‘W. H.’

‘W. H.’ signs dedication of Southwell’s poems in 1606.

Shakespeare’s ‘Sonnets’ is not the only volume of the period in the introductory pages of which the initials ‘W. H.’ play a prominent part. In 1606 one who concealed himself under the same letters performed for ‘A Foure-fould Meditation’ (a collection of pious poems which the Jesuit Robert Southwell left in manuscript at his death) the identical service that Thorpe performed for Marlowe’s ‘Lucan’ in 1600, and for Shakespeare’s ‘Sonnets’ in 1609. In 1606 Southwell’s manuscript fell into the hands of this ‘W. H.,’ and he published it through the agency of the printer, George Eld, and of an insignificant bookseller, Francis Burton. ‘W. H.,’ in his capacity of owner, supplied the dedication with his own pen under his initials. Of the Jesuit’s newly recovered poems ‘W. H.’ wrote, ‘Long have they lien hidden in obscuritie, and haply had never scene the light, had not a meere accident conveyed them to my hands. But, having seriously perused them, loath I was that any who are religiously affected, should be deprived of so great a comfort, as the due consideration thereof may bring unto them.' 'W. H.' chose as patron of his venture one Mathew Saunders, Esq., and to the dedicatory epistle prefixed a conventional salutation wishing Saunders long life and prosperity. The greeting was printed in large and bold type thus:—

To the Right Worfhipfull and
Vertuous Gentleman, Mathew
Saunders, Efquire
W.H. wifheth, with long life, a profperous
achieuement of his good defires.

There follows in small type, regularly printed across the page, a dedicatory letter—the frequent sequel of the dedicatory salutation—in which the writer, 'W.H.,' commends the religious temper of 'these meditations' and deprecates the coldness and sterility of his own 'conceits.' The dedicator signs himself at the bottom of the page 'Your Worships unfained affectionate, W.H.'

The two books—Southwell's 'Foure-fould Meditation' of 1606, and Shakespeare's 'Sonnets' of 1609—have more in common than the appearance on the preliminary pages of the initials 'W. H.' in a prominent place, and of the common form of dedicatory salutation. Both volumes, it was announced on the title-pages, came from the same press—the press of George Eld. Eld for many years co-operated with Thorpe in business. In 1605 he printed for Thorpe Ben Jonson's 'Sejanus,' and in each of the years 1607, 1608, 1609, and 1610 at least one of his ventures was publicly declared to be a specimen of Eld's typography. Many of Thorpe's books came forth without any mention of the printer; but Eld's name figures more frequently upon them than that of any other printer. Between 1605 and 1609 it is likely that Eld printed all Thorpe's 'copy' as matter of course and that he was in constant relations with him.

'W. H.' and Mr. William Hall.

There is little doubt that the 'W. H.' of the Southwell volume was Mr. William Hall, who, when he procured that manuscript for publication, was an humble auxiliary in the publishing army. Hall flits rapidly across the stage of literary history. He served an apprenticeship to the printer and stationer John Allde from 1577 to 1584, and was admitted to the freedom of the Stationers' Company in the latter year. For the long period of twenty-two years after his release from his indentures he was connected with the trade in a dependent capacity, doubtless as assistant to a master-stationer. When in 1606 the manuscript of Southwell's poems was conveyed to his hands and he adopted the recognised role of procurer of their publication, he had not set up in business for himself. It was only later in the same year (1606) that he obtained the license of the Stationers' Company to inaugurate a press in his own name, and two years passed before he began business. In 1608 he obtained for publication a theological manuscript which appeared next year with his name on the title-page for the first time. This volume constituted the earliest credential of his independence. It entitled him to the prefix 'Mr.' in all social relations. Between 1609 and 1614 he printed some twenty volumes, most of them sermons and almost all devotional in tone. The most important of his secular undertaking was Guillim's far-famed 'Display of Heraldrie,' a folio issued in 1610. In 1612 Hall printed an account of the conviction and execution of a noted pickpocket, John Selman, who had been arrested while professionally engaged in the Royal Chapel at Whitehall. On the title-page Hall gave his own name by his initials only. The book was described in bold type as 'printed by W. H.' and as on sale at the shop of Thomas Archer in St. Paul's Churchyard. Hall was a careful printer with a healthy dread of misprints, but his business dwindled after 1613, and, soon disposing of it to one John Beale, he disappeared into private life.

'W. H.' are no uncommon initials, and there is more interest attaching to the discovery of 'Mr. W. H.'s' position in life and his function in relation to the scheme of the publication of the 'Sonnets' than in establishing his full name. But there is every probability that William Hall, the 'W. H.' of the Southwell dedication, was one and the same person with the 'Mr. W. H.' of Thorpe's dedication of the 'Sonnets.' No other inhabitant of London was habitually known to mask himself under those letters. William Hall was the only man bearing those initials who there is reason to suppose was on familiar terms with Thorpe. Both were engaged at much the same period in London in the same occupation of procuring manuscripts for publication; both inscribed their literary treasure-trove in the common formula to patrons for whom they claimed no high rank or distinction, and both engaged the same printer to print their most valuable prize.

'The onlie begetter' means 'only procurer'.

No condition of the problem of the identity of Thorpe's friend 'Mr. W. H' seems ignored by the adoption of the interpretation that he was the future master-printer

William Hall. The objection that ‘Mr. W. H.’ could not have been Thorpe’s friend in trade, because while wishing him all happiness and eternity Thorpe dubs him ‘the onlie begetter of these insuing sonnets,’ is not formidable. Thorpe rarely used words with much exactness. It is obvious that he did not employ ‘begetter’ in the ordinary sense. ‘Begetter,’ when literally interpreted as applied to a literary work, means father, author, producer, and it cannot be seriously urged that Thorpe intended to describe ‘Mr. W. H.’ as the author of the ‘Sonnets.’ ‘Begetter’ has been used in the figurative sense of inspirer, and it is often assumed that by ‘onlie begetter’ Thorpe meant ‘sole inspirer,’ and that by the use of those words he intended to hint at the close relations subsisting between ‘W. H.’ and Shakespeare in the dramatist’s early life; but that interpretation presents numberless difficulties. It was contrary to Thorpe’s aims in business to invest a dedication with any cryptic significance, and thus mystify his customers. Moreover, his career and the circumstances under which he became the publisher of the sonnets confute the assumption that he was in such relations with Shakespeare or with Shakespeare’s associates as would give him any knowledge of Shakespeare’s early career that was not public property. All that Thorpe—the struggling pirate-publisher, ‘the well-wishing adventurer in setting forth’ wares mysteriously come by—knew or probably cared to know of Shakespeare was that he was the most popular and honoured of the literary producers of the day. When Thorpe had the luck to acquire surreptitiously an unprinted manuscript by ‘our ever-living poet,’ it was not in the great man’s circle of friends or patrons, to which hitherto he had had no access, that he was likely to seek his own patron. Elementary considerations of prudence impelled him to publish his treasure-trove with all expedition, and not disclose his design prematurely to one who might possibly take steps to hinder its fulfilment. But that Thorpe had no ‘inspirer’ of the ‘Sonnets’ in his mind when he addressed himself to ‘Mr. W. H.’ is finally proved by the circumstance that the only identifiable male ‘inspirer’ of the poems was the Earl of Southampton, to whom the initials ‘W. H.’ do not apply.

Of the figurative meanings set in Elizabethan English on the word ‘begetter,’ that of ‘inspirer’ is by no means the only one or the most common. ‘Beget’ was not infrequently employed in the attenuated sense of ‘get,’ ‘procure,’ or ‘obtain,’ a sense which is easily deducible from the original one of ‘bring into being.’ Hamlet, when addressing the players, bids them ‘in the very whirlwind of passion acquire and beget a temperance that may give it smoothness.’ ‘I have some cousins german at Court,’ wrote Dekker in 1602, in his ‘Satiro-Mastix,’ ‘[that] shall beget you the reversion of the Master of the King’s Revels.’ ‘Mr.

W. H.,' whom Thorpe described as 'the onlie begetter of these insuing sonnets,' was in all probability the acquirer or procurer of the manuscript, who, figuratively speaking, brought the book into being either by first placing the manuscript in Thorpe's hands or by pointing out the means by which a copy might be acquired. To assign such significance to the word 'begetter' was entirely in Thorpe's vein. Thorpe described his *rôle* in the piratical enterprise of the 'Sonnets' as that of 'the well-wishing adventurer in setting forth,' *i.e.* the hopeful speculator in the scheme. 'Mr. W. H.' doubtless played the almost equally important part—one as well known then as now in commercial operations—of the 'vendor' of the property to be exploited.

VI.—'MR. WILLIAM HERBERT.'

Origin of the notion that 'Mr. W. H.' stands for 'Mr. William Herbert.'

For fully sixty years it has been very generally assumed that Shakespeare addressed the bulk of his sonnets to the young Earl of Pembroke. This theory owes its origin to a speciously lucky guess which was first disclosed to the public in 1832, and won for a time almost universal acceptance. Thorpe's form of address was held to justify the mistaken inference that, whoever 'Mr. W. H.' may have been, he and no other was the hero of the alleged story of the poems; and the cornerstone of the Pembroke theory was the assumption that the letters 'Mr. W. H.' in the dedication did duty for the words 'Mr. William Herbert,' by which name the (third) Earl of Pembroke was represented as having been known in youth. The originators of the theory claimed to discover in the Earl of Pembroke the only young man of rank and wealth to whom the initials 'W. H' applied at the needful dates. In thus interpreting the initials, the Pembroke theorists made a blunder that proves on examination to be fatal to their whole contention.

The Earl of Pembroke known only as Lord Herbert in youth.

The nobleman under consideration succeeded to the earldom of Pembroke on his father's death on January 19, 1601 (N. S.), when he was twenty years and nine months old, and from that date it is unquestioned that he was always known by his lawful title. But it has been overlooked that the designation 'Mr. William Herbert,' for which the initials 'Mr. W. H.' have been long held to stand, could never in the mind of Thomas Thorpe or any other contemporary have denominated the Earl at any moment of his career. When he came into the world on April 9, 1580, his father had been (the second) Earl of Pembroke for ten years, and he, as the eldest son, was from the hour of his birth known in all relations of life—even in the baptismal entry in the parish register—by the title of Lord Herbert, and by no other. During the lifetime of his father and his own minority several references were made to him in the extant correspondence of friends of varying degrees of intimacy. He is called by them, without exception, ‘my Lord Herbert,’ ‘the Lord Herbert,’ or ‘Lord Herbert.’ It is true that as the eldest son of an earl he held the title by courtesy, but for all practical purposes it was as well recognised in common speech as if he had been a peer in his own right. No one nowadays would address in current parlance, or even entertain the conception of, Viscount Cranborne, the heir of the present Prime Minister, as ‘Mr. J. C.’ or ‘Mr. James Cecil.’ It is no more legitimate to assert that it would have occurred to an Elizabethan—least of all to a personal acquaintance or to a publisher who stood toward his patron in the relation of a personal dependent—to describe ‘young Lord Herbert,’ of Elizabeth’s reign, as ‘Mr. William Herbert.’ A lawyer, who in the way of business might have to mention the young lord’s name in a legal document, would have entered it as ‘William Herbert, commonly called Lord Herbert.’ The appellation ‘Mr.’ was not used loosely then as now, but indicated a precise social grade. Thorpe’s employment of the prefix ‘Mr.’ without qualification is in itself fatal to the pretension that any lord, whether by right or courtesy, was intended.

Thorpe’s mode of addressing the Earl of Pembroke.

Proof is at hand to establish that Thorpe was under no misapprehension as to the proper appellation of the Earl of Pembroke, and was incapable of venturing on the meaningless misnomer of ‘Mr. W. H.’ Insignificant publisher though he was, and sceptical as he was of the merits of noble patrons, he was not proof against the temptation, when an opportunity was directly offered him, of adorning the prefatory pages of a publication with the name of a nobleman, who enjoyed the high official station, the literary culture, and the social influence of the third Earl of Pembroke. In 1610—a year after he published the ‘Sonnets’—there came into his hands the manuscripts of John Healey, that humble literary aspirant who had a few months before emigrated to Virginia, and had, it would seem, died there. Healey, before leaving England, had secured through the good offices of John Florio (a man of influence in both fashionable and literary circles) the patronage of the Earl of Pembroke for a translation of Bishop Hall’s fanciful satire, ‘Mundus alter et idem.’ Calling his book ‘The Discoverie of a New World,’ Healey had prefixed to it, in 1609, an epistle inscribed in garish terms of flattery to the ‘Truest mirrour of truest honor, William Earl of Pembroke.’ When Thorpe subsequently made up his mind to publish, on his own account, other translations by the same hand, he found it desirable to seek the same patron. Accordingly, in 1610, he prefixed in his own name, to an edition of Healey’s translation of St. Augustine’s ‘Citie of God,’ a dedicatory address ‘to the honorablest patron of the Muses and good mindes, Lord William, Earle of Pembroke, Knight of the Honourable Order (of the Garter), &c.’ In involved sentences Thorpe tells the ‘right gracious and gracefule Lord’ how the author left the work at death to be a ‘testimonie of gratitude, observance, and heart’s honor to your honour.’ ‘Wherefore,’ he explains, ‘his legacie, laide at your Honour’s feete, is rather here delivered to your Honour’s humbly thrise-kissed hands by his poore delegate. Your Lordship’s true devoted, Th. Th.’

Again, in 1616, when Thorpe procured the issue of a second edition of another of Healey’s translations, ‘Epictetus Manuall. Cebes Table. Theoprastus Characters,’ he supplied more conspicuous evidence of the servility with which he deemed it incumbent on him to approach a potent patron. As this address by Thorpe to Pembroke is difficult of access, I give it *in extenso* :

‘To the Right Honourable, William Earle of Pembroke, Lord Chamberlaine to His Majestie, one of his most honorable Privie Counsell, and Knight of the most noble order of the Garter, &c.

‘Right Honorable.—It may worthily seeme strange unto your Lordship, out of what frenzy one of my meanenesse hath presumed to commit this Sacriledge, in the straightnesse of your Lordship’s leisure, to present a peece, for matter and model so unworthy, and in this scribbling age, wherein great persons are so pestered dayly with Dedications. All I can alledge in extenuation of so many incongruities, is the bequest of a deceased Man; who (in his lifetime) having offered some translations of his unto your Lordship, ever wisht if *these ensuing* were published they might onely bee addressed unto your Lordship, as the last Testimony of his dutifull affection (to use his own termes) *The true and reall upholder of Learned endeavors* . This, therefore, beeing left unto mee, as a Legacie unto your Lordship (pardon my presumption, great Lord, from so meane a man to so great a person) I could not without some impiety present it to any other; such a sad priviledge have the bequests of the *dead* , and so obligatory they are, more than the requests of the *living* . In the hope of this honourable acceptance I will ever rest,

‘Your lordship’s humble devoted,
‘T. Th.’

With such obeisances did publishers then habitually creep into the presence of the nobility. In fact, the law which rigorously maintained the privileges of peers left them no option. The alleged erroneous form of address in the dedication of Shakespeare’s ‘Sonnets’—‘Mr. W. H.’ for Lord Herbert or the Earl of Pembroke—would have amounted to the offence of defamation. And for that misdemeanour the Star Chamber, always active in protecting the dignity of peers, would have promptly called Thorpe to account.

Of the Earl of Pembroke, and of his brother the Earl of Montgomery, it was stated a few years later, ‘from just observation,’ on very pertinent authority, that ‘no men came near their lordships [in their capacity of literary patrons], but with a kind of religious address.’ These words figure in the prefatory epistle which two actor-friends of Shakespeare addressed to the two Earls in the posthumously issued First Folio of the dramatist’s works. Thorpe’s ‘kind of religious address’ on seeking Lord Pembroke’s patronage for Healey’s books was somewhat more unctuous than was customary or needful. But of erring conspicuously in an opposite direction he may, without misgiving, be pronounced innocent.

VII.—SHAKESPEARE AND THE EARL OF PEMBROKE.

With the disposal of the allegation that ‘Mr. W. H.’ represented the Earl of Pembroke’s youthful name, the whole theory of that earl’s identity with Shakespeare’s friend collapses. Outside Thorpe’s dedicatory words, only two scraps of evidence with any title to consideration have been adduced to show that Shakespeare was at any time or in any way associated with Pembroke.

Shakespeare with the acting company at Wilton in 1603.

In the late autumn of 1603 James I and his Court were installed at the Earl of Pembroke’s house at Wilton for a period of two months, owing to the prevalence of the plague in London. By order of the officers of the royal household, the King’s company of players, of which Shakespeare was a member, gave a performance before the King at Wilton House on December 2. The actors travelled from Mortlake for the purpose, and were paid in the ordinary manner by the treasurer of the royal household out of the public funds. There is no positive evidence that Shakespeare attended at Wilton with the company, but assuming, as is probable, that he did, the Earl of Pembroke can be held no more responsible for his presence than for his repeated presence under the same conditions at Whitehall. The visit of the King's players to Wilton in 1603 has no bearing on the Earl of Pembroke's alleged relations with Shakespeare.

The dedication of the First Folio.

The second instance of the association in the seventeenth century of Shakespeare's name with Pembroke's tells wholly against the conjectured intimacy. Seven years after the dramatist's death, two of his friends and fellow-actors prepared the collective edition of his plays known as the First Folio, and they dedicated the volume, in the conventional language of eulogy, 'To the most noble and incomparable paire of brethren, William Earl of Pembroke, &c., Lord Chamberlaine to the King's most excellent Majesty, and Philip, Earl of Montgomery, &c., Gentleman of His Majesties Bedchamber. Both Knights of the most Noble Order of the Garter and our singular good Lords.'

The choice of such patrons, whom, as the dedication intimated, 'no one came near but with a kind of religious address,' proves no private sort of friendship between them and the dead author. To the two earls in partnership nearly every work of any literary pretension was dedicated at the period. Moreover, the third Earl of Pembroke was Lord Chamberlain in 1623, and exercised supreme authority in theatrical affairs. That his patronage should be sought for a collective edition of the works of the acknowledged master of the contemporary stage was a matter of course. It is only surprising that the editors should have yielded to the passing vogue of soliciting the patronage of the Lord Chamberlain's brother in conjunction with the Lord Chamberlain.

The sole passage in the editors' dedication that can be held to bear on the question of Shakespeare's alleged intimacy with Pembroke is to be found in their remarks: 'But since your lordships have beene pleas'd to thinke these trifles something, heretofore; and have prosequuted both them, and their Authour living, with so much favour: we hope that (they outliving him, and he not having the fate, common with some, to be exequutor to his owne writings) you will use the like indulgence toward them you have done unto their parent. There is a great difference, whether any Booke choose his Patrones, or find them: This hath done both. For, so much were your lordships' likings of the severall parts, when they were acted, as, before they were published, the Volume ask'd to be yours.' There is nothing whatever in these sentences that does more than justify the inference that the brothers shared the enthusiastic esteem which James I and all the noblemen of his Court extended to Shakespeare and his plays in the dramatist’s lifetime. Apart from his work as a dramatist, Shakespeare, in his capacity of one of ‘the King’s servants’ or company of players, was personally known to all the officers of the royal household who collectively controlled theatrical representations at Court. Throughout James I’s reign his plays were repeatedly performed in the royal presence, and when the dedicators of the First Folio, at the conclusion of their address to Lords Pembroke and Montgomery, describe the dramatist’s works as ‘these remaines of your *Servant* Shakespeare,’ they make it quite plain that it was in the capacity of ‘King’s servant’ or player that they knew him to have been the object of their noble patrons’ favour.

No suggestion in the sonnets of the youth’s identity with Pembroke.

The sonnets offer no internal indication that the Earl of Pembroke and Shakespeare ever saw each other. Nothing at all is deducible from the vague parallelisms that have been adduced between the earl’s character and position in life and those with which the poet credited the youth of the sonnets. It may be granted that both had a mother (Sonnet iii.), that both enjoyed wealth and rank, that both were regarded by admirers as cultivated, that both were self-indulgent in their relations with women, and that both in early manhood were indisposed to marry, owing to habits of gallantry. Of one alleged point of resemblance there is no evidence. The loveliness assigned to Shakespeare’s youth was not, as far as we can learn, definitely set to Pembroke’s account. Francis Davison, when dedicating his ‘Poetical Rhapsody’ to the earl in 1602 in a very eulogistic sonnet, makes a cautiously qualified reference to the attractiveness of his person in the lines:

[His] outward shape, though it most lovely be,
Doth in fair robes a fairer soul attire.

The only portraits of him that survive represent him in middle age, and seem to confute the suggestion that he was reckoned handsome at any time of life; at most they confirm Anthony Wood’s description of him as in person ‘rather majestic than elegant.’ But the point is not one of moment, and the argument neither gains nor loses, if we allow that Pembroke may, at any rate in the sight of a poetical panegyrist, have at one period reflected, like Shakespeare’s youth, ‘the lovely April of his mother’s prime.’

But when we have reckoned up the traits that can, on any showing, be admitted to be common to both Pembroke and Shakespeare's alleged friend, they all prove to be equally indistinctive. All could be matched without difficulty in a score of youthful noblemen and gentlemen of Elizabeth's Court. Direct external evidence of Shakespeare's friendly intercourse with one or other of Elizabeth's young courtiers must be produced before the sonnets' general references to the youth's beauty and grace can render the remotest assistance in establishing his identity.

Aubrey's ignorance of any relation between Shakespeare and Pembroke.

Although it may be reckoned superfluous to adduce more arguments, negative or positive, against the theory that the Earl of Pembroke was a youthful friend of Shakespeare, it is worth noting that John Aubrey, the Wiltshire antiquary, and the biographer of most Englishmen of distinction of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, was zealously researching from 1650 onwards into the careers alike of Shakespeare and of various members of the Earl of Pembroke's family—one of the chief in Wiltshire. Aubrey rescued from oblivion many anecdotes—scandalous and otherwise—both about the third Earl of Pembroke and about Shakespeare. Of the former he wrote in his 'Natural History of Wiltshire' (ed. Britton, 1847), recalling the earl's relations with Massinger and many other men of letters. Of Shakespeare, Aubrey narrated much lively gossip in his 'Lives of Eminent Persons.' But neither in his account of Pembroke nor in his account of Shakespeare does he give any hint that they were at any time or in any manner acquainted or associated with one another. Had close relations existed between them, it is impossible that all trace of them would have faded from the traditions that were current in Aubrey's time and were embodied in his writings.

VIII.—THE 'WILL' SONNETS.

No one has had the hardihood to assert that the text of the sonnets gives internally any indication that the youth's name took the hapless form of 'William Herbert;' but many commentators argue that in three or four sonnets Shakespeare admits in so many words that the youth bore his own Christian name of Will, and even that the disdainful lady had among her admirers other gentlemen entitled in familiar intercourse to similar designation. These are fantastic assumptions which rest on a misconception of Shakespeare's phraseology and of the character of the conceits of the sonnets, and are solely attributable to the fanatical anxiety of the supporters of the Pembroke theory to extort, at all hazards, some sort of evidence in their favour from Shakespeare's text.

Elizabethan meanings of 'will.'

In two sonnets (cxxxv.-vi.)—the most artificial and 'conceited' in the collection—the poet plays somewhat enigmatically on his Christian name of 'Will,' and a similar pun has been doubtfully detected in sonnets cxxxiv. and cxlvii. The groundwork of the pleasantry is the identity in form of the proper name with the common noun 'will.' This word connoted in Elizabethan English a generous variety of conceptions, of most of which it has long since been deprived. Then, as now, it was employed in the general psychological sense of volition; but it was more often specifically applied to two limited manifestations of the volition. It was the commonest of synonyms alike for 'self will' or 'stubbornness'—in which sense it still survives in 'wilful'—and for 'lust,' or 'sensual passion.' It also did occasional duty for its own diminutive 'wish,' for 'caprice,' for 'goodwill,' and for 'free consent' (as nowadays in 'willing,' or 'willingly').

Shakespeare's uses of the word.

Shakespeare constantly used 'will' in all these significations. Iago recognised its general psychological value when he said, 'Our bodies are our gardens, to the which our wills are gardeners.' The conduct of the 'will' is discussed after the manner of philosophy in 'Troilus and Cressida' (II. ii. 51-68). In another of Iago's sentences, 'Love is merely a lust of the blood and a permission of the will,' light is shed on the process by which the word came to be specifically applied to sensual desire. The last is a favourite sense with Shakespeare and his contemporaries. Angelo and Isabella, in 'Measure for Measure,' are at one in attributing their conflict to the former's 'will.' The self-indulgent Bertram, in 'All's Well,' 'fleshes his "will" in the spoil of a gentlewoman's honour.' In 'Lear' (IV. vi. 279) Regan's heartless plot to seduce her brother-in-law is assigned to 'the undistinguished space'—the boundless range—'of woman's will.' Similarly, Sir Philip Sidney apostrophised lust as 'thou web of will.' Thomas Lodge, in 'Phillis' (Sonnet xi.), warns lovers of the ruin that menaces all who 'guide their course by will.' Nicholas Breton's fantastic romance of 1599, entitled 'The Will of Wit, Wit's Will or Will's Wit, Chuse you whether,' is especially rich in like illustrations. Breton brings into marked prominence the antithesis which was familiar in his day between ‘will’ in its sensual meaning, and ‘wit,’ the Elizabethan synonym for reason or cognition. ‘A song between Wit and Will’ opens thus:

Wit : What art thou, Will? *Will* : A babe of nature’s brood,

Wit : Who was thy sire? *Will* : Sweet Lust, as lovers say.

Wit : Thy mother who? *Will* : Wild lusty wanton blood.

Wit : When wast thou born? *Will* : In merry month of May.

Wit : And where brought up? *Will* : In school of little skill.

Wit : What learn’dst thou there? *Will* : Love is my lesson still.

Of the use of the word in the sense of stubbornness or self-will Roger Ascham gives a good instance in his ‘Scholemaster,’ (1570), where he recommends that such a vice in children as ‘will,’ which he places in the category of lying, sloth, and disobedience, should be ‘with sharp chastisement daily cut away.’ ‘A woman will have her will’ was, among Elizabethan wags, an exceptionally popular proverbial phrase, the point of which revolved about the equivocal meaning of the last word. The phrase supplied the title of ‘a pleasant comedy,’ by William Haughton, which—from 1597 onwards—held the stage for the unusually prolonged period of forty years. ‘Women, because they cannot have their wills when they dye, they will have their wills while they live,’ was a current witticism which the barrister Manningham deemed worthy of record in his ‘Diary’ in 1602.

Shakespeare’s puns on the word.

It was not only in the sonnets that Shakespeare—almost invariably with a glance at its sensual significance—rang the changes on this many-faced verbal token. In his earliest play, ‘Love’s Labour’s Lost’ (II. i. 97-101), after the princess has tauntingly assured the King of Navarre that he will break his vow to avoid women’s society, the king replies, ‘Not for the world, fair madam, by my *will* ’ (*i.e.* willingly). The princess retorts ‘Why *will* (*i.e.* sensual desire) shall break it (*i.e.* the vow), *will* and nothing else.’ In ‘Much Ado’ (V. iv. 26 seq.), when Benedick, anxious to marry Beatrice, is asked by the lady’s uncle ‘What’s your will?’ he playfully lingers on the word in his answer. As for his ‘will,’ his ‘will’ is that the uncle’s ‘goodwill may stand with his’ and Beatrice’s ‘will’—in other words that the uncle may consent to their union. Slender and Anne Page vary the tame sport when the former misinterprets the young lady’s ‘What is your will?’ into an inquiry into the testamentary disposition of his property. To what depth of vapidity Shakespeare and contemporary punsters could sink is nowhere better illustrated than in the favour they bestowed on efforts to extract amusement from the parities and disparities of form and meaning subsisting between the words ‘will’ and ‘wish,’ the latter being in vernacular use as a diminutive of the former. Twice in the ‘Two Gentlemen of Verona’ (I. iii. 63 and IV. ii. 96) Shakespeare almost strives to invest with the flavour of epigram the unpretending announcement that one interlocutor’s ‘wish’ is in harmony with another interlocutor’s ‘will.’

It is in this vein of pleasantry—‘will’ and ‘wish’ are identically contrasted in Sonnet cxxxv.—that Shakespeare, to the confusion of modern readers, makes play with the word ‘will’ in the sonnets, and especially in the two sonnets (cxxxv.-vi.) which alone speciously justify the delusion that the lady is courted by two, or more than two, lovers of the name of Will.

Arbitrary and irregular use of italics by Elizabethan and Jacobean printers.

One of the chief arguments advanced in favour of this interpretation is that the word ‘will’ in these sonnets is frequently italicised in the original edition. But this has little or no bearing on the argument. The corrector of the press recognised that Sonnets cxxxv. and cxxxvi. largely turned upon a simple pun between the writer’s name of ‘Will’ and the lady’s ‘will.’ That fact, and no other, he indicated very roughly by occasionally italicising the crucial word. Typography at the time followed no firmly fixed rules, and, although ‘will’ figures in a more or less punning sense nineteen times in these sonnets, the printer bestowed on the word the distinction of italics in only ten instances, and those were selected arbitrarily. The italics indicate the obvious equivoque, and indicate it imperfectly. That is the utmost that can be laid to their credit. They give no hint of the far more complicated punning that is alleged by those who believe that ‘Will’ is used now as the name of the writer, and now as that of one or more of the rival suitors. In each of the two remaining sonnets that have been forced into the service of the theory, Nos. cxxxiv. and cxliii., ‘will’ occurs once only; it alone is italicised in the second sonnet in the original edition, and there, in my opinion, arbitrarily and without just cause.

The conceits of sonnets cxxxv-vi. interpreted.

The general intention of the complex conceits of Sonnets cxxxv. and cxxxvi. becomes obvious when we bear in mind that in them Shakespeare exploits to the uttermost the verbal coincidences which are inherent in the Elizabethan word 'will.' 'Will' is the Christian name of the enslaved writer; 'will' is the sentiment with which the lady inspires her worshippers; and 'will' designates stubbornness as well as sensual desire. These two characteristics, according to the poet's reiterated testimony, are the distinguishing marks of the lady's disposition. He often dwells elsewhere on her 'proud heart' or 'foul pride,' and her sensuality or 'foul faults.' These are her 'wills,' and they make up her being. In crediting the lady with such constitution Shakespeare was not recording any definite observation or experience of his own, but was following, as was his custom, the conventional descriptions of the disdainful mistress common to all contemporary collections of sonnets. Barnabe Barnes asks the lady celebrated in his sonnets, from whose 'proud disdainfulness' he suffered,

Why dost thou my delights delay,
And with thy cross unkindness kills (*sic*)
Mine heart, bound martyr to thy wills?

Barnes answers his question in the next lines:

But women will have their own wills,
Since what she lists her heart fulfils.

Similar passages abound in Elizabethan sonnets, but certain verbal similarities give good ground for regarding Shakespeare's 'will' sonnets as deliberate adaptations—doubtless with satiric purpose—of Barnes's stereotyped reflections on women's obduracy. The form and the constant repetition of the word 'will' in these two sonnets of Shakespeare also seem to imitate derisively the same rival's Sonnets lxxii. and lxxiii. in which Barnes puts the words 'grace' and 'graces' through much the same evolutions as Shakespeare puts the words 'will' and 'wills' in the Sonnets cxxxv. and cxxxvi.

Shakespeare's 'Sonnet' cxxxv. runs:

Whoever hath her wish, thou hast thy Will,
And will to boot, and will in over-plus;
More than enough am I that vex thee still,

To thy sweet will making addition thus.
Wilt thou, whose will is large and spacious,
Not once vouchsafe to hide my will in thine?
Shall will in others seem right gracious,
And in my will no fair acceptance shine?
The sea, all water, yet receives rain still,
And in abundance addeth to his store;
So thou, being rich in will, add to thy will
One will of mine, to make thy large will more.
  Let no unkind no fair beseechers kill;
  Think all but one, and me in that one—Will.

Sonnet cxxxv.

In the opening words, ‘Whoever hath her wish,’ the poet prepares the reader for the punning encounter by a slight variation on the current catch-phrase ‘A woman will have her will.’ At the next moment we are in the thick of the wordy fray. The lady has not only her lover named Will, but untold stores of ‘will’—in the sense alike of stubbornness and of lust—to which it seems supererogatory to make addition.   To the lady’s ‘over-plus’ of ‘will’ is punningly attributed her defiance of the ‘will’ of her suitor Will to enjoy her favours. At the same time ‘will’ in others proves to her ‘right gracious,’   although in him it is unacceptable. All this, the poet hazily argues, should be otherwise; for as the sea, although rich in water, does not refuse the falling rain, but freely adds it to its abundant store, so she, ‘rich in will,’ should accept her lover Will’s ‘will’ and ‘make her large will more.’ The poet sums up his ambition in the final couplet:

Let no unkind no fair beseechers kill;
Think all but one, and me in that one—Will.

This is as much as to say, ‘Let not my mistress in her unkindness kill any of her fair-spoken adorers. Rather let her think all who beseech her favours incorporate in one alone of her lovers—and that one the writer whose name of “Will” is a synonym for the passions that dominate her.’ The thought is wiredrawn to inanity, but the words make it perfectly clear that the poet was the only one of the lady’s lovers—to the definite exclusion of all others—whose name justified the quibbling pretence of identity with the ‘will’ which controls her being.

Sonnet cxxxvi.

The same equivocating conceit of the poet Will's title to identity with the lady's 'will' in all senses is pursued in Sonnet cxxxvi. The sonnet opens:

If thy soul check thee that I come so near,
Swear to thy blind soul that I was thy will,
And will thy soul knows is admitted there.

Here Shakespeare adapts to his punning purpose the familiar philosophic commonplace respecting the soul's domination by 'will' or volition, which was more clearly expressed by his contemporary, Sir John Davies, in the philosophic poem, 'Nosce Teipsum:'

Will holds the royal sceptre in the soul,
And on the passions of the heart doth reign.

Whether Shakespeare's lines be considered with their context or without it, the tenor of their thought and language positively refutes the commentators' notion that the 'will' admitted to the lady's soul is a rival lover named Will. The succeeding lines run:

Thus far for love, my love-suit, sweet, fulfil.
Will will fulfil the treasure of thy love;
Ay, fill it full with wills, and my will one.
In things of great receipt with ease we prove
Among a number one is reckon'd none:
Then in the number let me pass untold,
Though in thy stores' account, I one must be;
For nothing hold me, so it please thee hold
That nothing me, a something sweet to thee.

Here the poet Will continues to claim, in punning right of his Christian name, a place, however small and inconspicuous, among the 'wills,' the varied forms of will (*i.e.* lust, stubbornness, and willingness to accept others' attentions), which are the constituent elements of the lady's being. The plural 'wills' is twice used in identical sense by Barnabe Barnes in the lines already quoted:

Mine heart, bound martyr to thy *wills* .
But women will have their own *wills* .

Impulsively Shakespeare brings his fantastic pretension to a somewhat more practical issue in the concluding apostrophe:

Make but my name thy love, and love that still,
And then thou lovest me—for my name is Will.

That is equivalent to saying 'Make "will"' (*i.e.* that which is yourself) 'your love, and then you love me, because Will is my name.' The couplet proves even more convincingly than the one which clinches the preceding sonnet that none of the rivals whom the poet sought to displace in the lady's affections could by any chance have been, like himself, called Will. The writer could not appeal to a mistress to concentrate her love on his name of Will, because it was the emphatic sign of identity between her being and him, if that name were common to him and one or more rivals, and lacked exclusive reference to himself.

Loosely as Shakespeare's sonnets were constructed, the couplet at the conclusion of each poem invariably summarises the general intention of the preceding twelve lines. The concluding couplets of these two sonnets cxxxv.-vi., in which Shakespeare has been alleged to acknowledge a rival of his own name in his suit for a lady's favour, are consequently the touchstone by which the theory of 'more Wills than one' must be tested. As we have just seen, the situation is summarily embodied in the first couplet thus:

Let no unkind no fair beseechers kill;
Think all but one, and me in that one—Will.

It is re-embodied in the second couplet thus:

Make but my name thy love, and love that still,
And then thou lovest me—for my name is Will.

The whole significance of both couplets resides in the twice-repeated fact that one, and only one, of the lady's lovers is named Will, and that that one is the writer. To assume that the poet had a rival of his own name is to denude both couplets of all point. 'Will,' we have learned from the earlier lines of both sonnets, is the lady's ruling passion. Punning mock-logic brings the poet in either sonnet to the ultimate conclusion that one of her lovers may, above all others, reasonably claim her love on the ground that his name of Will is the name of her ruling passion. Thus his pretension to her affections rests, he punningly assures her, on a strictly logical basis.

Sonnet cxxxiv. Meaning of Sonnet cxliii.

Unreasonable as any other interpretation of these sonnets (cxxxv.-vi.) seems to be, I believe it far more fatuous to seek in the single and isolated use of the word ‘will’ in each of the sonnets cxxxiv. and cxliii. any confirmation of the theory of a rival suitor named Will.

Sonnet cxxxiv. runs:

So now I have confess’d that he is thine,
And I myself am mortgaged to thy will.
Myself I’ll forfeit, so that other mine
Thou wilt restore, to be my comfort still.
But thou wilt not, nor he will not be free,
For thou art covetous and he is kind.
He learn’d but surety-like to write for me,
Under that bond that him as fast doth bind.
The statute of thy beauty thou wilt take,
Thou usurer, that putt’st forth all to use,
And sue a friend came debtor for my sake;
So him I lose through my unkind abuse.
  Him have I lost; thou hast both him and me;
  He pays the whole, and yet am I not free.

Here the poet describes himself as ‘mortgaged to the lady’s will’ (*i.e.* to her personality, in which ‘will,’ in the double sense of stubbornness and sensual passion, is the strongest element). He deplores that the lady has captivated not merely himself, but also his friend, who made vicarious advances to her.

Sonnet cxliii. runs:

Lo, as a careful housewife runs to catch
One of her feathered creatures broke away,
Sets down her babe, and makes all swift despatch
In pursuit of the thing she would have stay;
Whilst her neglected child holds her in chase,
Cries to catch her whose busy care is bent
To follow that which flies before her face,

Not prizing her poor infant's discontent:
So runn'st thou after that which flies from thee,
Whilst I, thy babe, chase thee afar behind;
But if thou catch thy hope turn back to me,
And play the mother's part, kiss me, be kind:
  So will I pray that thou mayst have thy will,
  If thou turn back and my loud crying still.

In this sonnet—which presents a very clear-cut picture, although its moral is somewhat equivocal—the poet represents the lady as a country housewife and himself as her babe; while an acquaintance, who attracts the lady but is not attracted by her, is figured as a 'feathered creature' in the housewife's poultry-yard. The fowl takes to flight; the housewife sets down her infant and pursues 'the thing.' The poet, believing apparently that he has little to fear from the harmless creature, lightly makes play with the current catch-phrase ('a woman will have her will'), and amiably wishes his mistress success in her chase, on condition that, having recaptured the truant bird, she turn back and treat him, her babe, with kindness. In praying that the lady may have her 'will' the poet is clearly appropriating the current catch-phrase, and no pun on a man's name of 'Will' can be fairly wrested from the context.

IX.—THE VOGUE OF THE ELIZABETHAN SONNET, 1591-1597.

The sonnetteering vogue, as I have already pointed out, reached its full height between 1591 and 1597, and when at its briskest in 1594 it drew Shakespeare into its current. An enumeration of volumes containing sonnet-sequences or detached sonnets that were in circulation during the period best illustrates the overwhelming force of the sonnetteering rage of those years, and, with that end in view, I give here a bibliographical account, with a few critical notes, of the chief efforts of Shakespeare's rival sonnetteers.

Wyatt's and Surrey's Sonnets, published in 1557. Watson's 'Centurie of Love,' 1582.

The earliest collections of sonnets to be published in England were those by the Earl of Surrey and Sir Thomas Wyatt, which first appeared in the publisher Tottel's poetical miscellany called 'Songes and Sonnetes' in 1557. This volume included sixteen sonnets by Surrey and twenty by Wyatt. Many of them were translated directly from Petrarch, and most of them treated conventionally of the torments of an unrequited love. Surrey included, however, three sonnets on the death of his friend Wyatt, and a fourth on the death of one Clere, a faithful follower. Tottel’s volume was seven times reprinted by 1587. But no sustained endeavour was made to emulate the example of Surrey and Wyatt till Thomas Watson about 1580 circulated in manuscript his ‘Booke of Passionate Sonnetes,’ which he wrote for his patron, the Earl of Oxford. The volume was printed in 1582, under the title of ‘ˆš‘¤Ÿœ ‘˜™‘, or Passionate Centurie of Loue. Divided into two parts: whereof the first expresseth the Authours sufferance on Loue: the latter his long farewell to Loue and all his tyrannie. Composed by Thomas Watson, and published at the request of certaine Gentlemen his very frendes.’ Watson’s work, which he called ‘a toy,’ is a curious literary mosaic. He supplied to each poem a prose commentary, in which he not only admitted that every conceit was borrowed, but quoted chapter and verse for its origin from classical literature or from the work of French or Italian sonnetteers. Two regular quatorzains are prefixed, but to each of the ‘passions’ there is appended a four-line stanza which gives each poem eighteen instead of the regular fourteen lines. Watson’s efforts were so well received, however, that he applied himself to the composition of a second series of sonnets in strict metre. This collection, entitled ‘The Teares of Fancie,’ only circulated in manuscript in his lifetime.

Sidney’s ‘Astrophel and Stella,’ 1591.

Meanwhile a greater poet, Sir Philip Sidney, who died in 1586, had written and circulated among his friends a more ambitious collection of a hundred and eight sonnets. Most of Sidney’s sonnets were addressed by him under the name of Astrophel to a beautiful woman poetically designated Stella. Sidney had in real life courted assiduously the favour of a married lady, Penelope, Lady Rich, and a few of the sonnets are commonly held to reflect the heat of passion which the genuine intrigue developed. But Petrarch, Ronsard, and Desportes inspired the majority of Sidney’s efforts, and his addresses to abstractions like sleep, the moon, his muse, grief, or lust, are almost verbatim translations from the French. Sidney’s sonnets were first published surreptitiously, under the title of ‘Astrophel and Stella,’ by a publishing adventurer named Thomas Newman, and in his first issue Newman added an appendix of ‘sundry other rare sonnets by divers noblemen and gentlemen.’ Twenty-eight sonnets by Daniel were printed in the appendix anonymously and without the author’s knowledge. Two other editions of Sidney’s ‘Astrophel and Stella’ without the appendix were issued in the same year. Eight other of Sidney’s sonnets, which still circulated only in manuscript, were first printed anonymously in 1594 with the sonnets of Henry

Constable, and these were appended with some additions to the authentic edition of Sidney's 'Arcadia' and other works that appeared in 1598. Sidney enjoyed in the decade that followed his death the reputation of a demi-god, and the wide dissemination in print of his numerous sonnets in 1591 spurred nearly every living poet in England to emulate his achievement.

In order to facilitate a comparison of Shakespeare's sonnets with those of his contemporaries it will be best to classify the sonnetteering efforts that immediately succeeded Sidney's under the three headings of

(1) sonnets of more or less feigned love, addressed to a more or less fictitious mistress;

(2) sonnets of adulation, addressed to patrons; and

(3) sonnets invoking metaphysical abstractions or treating impersonally of religion or philosophy.

(1) Collected sonnets of feigned love. Daniel's 'Delia,' 1592.

In February 1592 Samuel Daniel published a collection of fifty-five sonnets, with a dedicatory sonnet addressed to his patroness, Sidney's sister, the Countess of Pembroke. As in many French volumes, the collection concluded with an 'ode.' At every point Daniel betrayed his indebtedness to French sonnetteers, even when apologising for his inferiority to Petrarch (No. xxxviii.) His title he borrowed from the collection of Maurice Sève, whose assemblage of dixains called 'Délie, objet de plus haute vertu' (Lyon, 1544), was the pattern of all sonnet-sequences on love, and was a constant theme of commendation among the later French sonnetteers. But it is to Desportes that Daniel owes most, and his methods of handling his material may be judged by a comparison of his Sonnet xxvi. with Sonnet lxiii. in Desportes' collection, 'Cleonice: Dernieres Amours,' which was issued at Paris in 1575.

Desportes' sonnet runs:

Je verray par les ans vengeurs de mon martyre
  Que l'or de vos cheveux argenté deviendra,
  Que de vos deux soleils la splendeur s'esteindra,
Et qu'il faudra qu'Amour tout confus s'en retire.
La beauté qui si douce à present vous inspire,

Cedant aux lois du Temps ses faveurs reprendra,
L’hiver de vostre teint les fleurettes perdra,
Et ne laissera rien des thresors que i’admire.
Cest orgueil desdaigneux qui vous fait ne m’aimer,
En regret et chagrin se verra transformer,
Avec le changement d’une image si belle:
Et peut estre qu’alors vous n’aurez desplaisir
De revivre en mes vers chauds d’amoureux desir,
Ainsi que le Phenix au feu se renouvelle.

This is Daniel’s version, which he sent forth as an original production:

I once may see, when years may wreck my wrong,
And golden hairs may change to silver wire;
And those bright rays (that kindle all this fire)
Shall fail in force, their power not so strong,
Her beauty, now the burden of my song,
Whose glorious blaze the world’s eye doth admire,
Must yield her praise to tyrant Time’s desire;
Then fades the flower, which fed her pride so long,
When if she grieve to gaze her in her glass,
Which then presents her winter-withered hue:
Go you my verse! go tell her what she was!
For what she was, she best may find in you.
Your fiery heat lets not her glory pass,
But Phœnix-like to make her live anew.

In Daniel’s beautiful sonnet (xlix.) beginning,

Care-charmer Sleep, son of the sable Night,
Brother to Death, in silent darkness born,

he has borrowed much from De Baïf and Pierre de Brach, sonnetteers with whom it was a convention to invocate ‘O Sommeil chasse-soin.’ But again he chiefly relies on Desportes, whose words he adapts with very slight variations. Sonnet lxxiii. of Desportes’ ‘Amours d’Hippolyte’ opens thus:

Sommeil, paisible fils de la Nuict solitaire . . .
O frère de la Mort, que tu m’es ennemi!

Fame of Daniel’s sonnets.

Daniel’s sonnets were enthusiastically received. With some additions they were republished in 1594 with his narrative poem, ‘The Complaint of Rosamund.’ The volume was called ‘Delia and Rosamund Augmented.’ Spenser, in his ‘Colin Clouts come Home againe,’ lauded the ‘well-tuned song’ of Daniel’s sonnets, and Shakespeare has some claim to be classed among Daniel’s many sonnetteering disciples. The anonymous author of ‘Zepheria’ (1594) declared that the ‘sweet tuned accents’ of ‘Delian sonnetry’ rang throughout England; while Bartholomew Griffin, in his ‘Fidessa’ (1596), openly plagiarised Daniel, invoking in his Sonnet xv. ‘Care-charmer Sleep, . . . brother of quiet Death.’

Constable’s ‘Diana,’ 1592.

In September of the same year (1592) that saw the first complete version of Daniel’s ‘Delia,’ Henry Constable published ‘Diana: the Praises of his Mistres in certaine sweete Sonnets.’ Like the title, the general tone was drawn from Desportes’ ‘Amours de Diane.’ Twenty-one poems were included, all in the French vein. The collection was reissued, with very numerous additions, in 1594 under the title ‘Diana; or, The excellent conceitful Sonnets of H. C. Augmented with divers Quatorzains of honourable and learned personages.’ This volume is a typical venture of the booksellers. The printer, James Roberts, and the publisher, Richard Smith, supplied dedications respectively to the reader and to Queen Elizabeth’s ladies-in-waiting. They had swept together sonnets in manuscript from all quarters and presented their customers with a disordered miscellany of what they called ‘orphan poems.’ Besides the twenty sonnets by Constable, eight were claimed for Sir Philip Sidney, and the remaining forty-seven are by various hands which have not as yet been identified.

Barnes’ sonnets, 1593.

In 1593 the legion of sonnetteers received notable reinforcements. In May came out Barnabe Barnes’s interesting volume, ‘Parthenophil and Parthenophe: Sonnets, Madrigals, Elegies, and Odes. To the right noble and virtuous gentleman, M. William Percy, Esq., his dearest friend.’ The contents of the volume and their arrangement closely resemble the sonnet-collections of Petrarch or the ‘Amours’ of Ronsard. There are a hundred and five sonnets altogether, interspersed with twenty-six madrigals, five sestines, twenty-one elegies, three ‘canzons,’ and twenty ‘odes,’ one in sonnet form. There is, moreover, included what purports to be a translation of ‘Moschus’ first eidillion describing love,’ but is clearly a rendering of a French poem by Amadis Jamin, entitled ‘Amour Fuitif, du grec de Moschus,’ in his ‘Œuvres Poétiques,’ Paris, 1579. At the end of Barnes’s volume there also figure six dedicatory sonnets. In Sonnet xcv. Barnes pays a compliment to Sir Philip Sidney, ‘the Arcadian shepherd, Astrophel,’ but he did not draw so largely on Sidney’s work as on that of Ronsard, Desportes, De Baïf, and Du Bellay. Legal metaphors abound in Barnes’s poems, but amid many crudities, he reaches a high level of beauty in Sonnet lxvi., which runs:

Ah, sweet Content! where is thy mild abode?
  Is it with shepherds, and light-hearted swains,
  Which sing upon the downs, and pipe abroad,
  Tending their flocks and cattle on the plains?
Ah, sweet Content! where dost thou safely rest
  In Heaven, with Angels? which the praises sing
  Of Him that made, and rules at His behest,
  The minds and hearts of every living thing.
Ah, sweet Content! where doth thine harbour hold?
  Is it in churches, with religious men,
  Which please the gods with prayers manifold;
  And in their studies meditate it then?
Whether thou dost in Heaven, or earth appear;
Be where thou wilt! Thou wilt not harbour here!

Watson’s ‘Tears of Fancie,’ 1593.

In August 1593 there appeared a posthumous collection of sixty-one sonnets by Thomas Watson, entitled ‘The Tears of Fancie, or Love Disdained.’ They are throughout the imitative type of his previously published ‘Centurie of Love.’ Many of them sound the same note as Shakespeare’s sonnets to the ‘dark lady.’

Fletcher’s ‘Licia,’ 1593.

In September 1593 followed Giles Fletcher’s ‘Licia, or Poems of Love in honour of the admirable and singular virtues of his Lady.’ This collection of fifty-three sonnets is dedicated to the wife of Sir Richard Mollineux. Fletcher makes no concealment that his sonnets are literary exercises. ‘For this kind of poetry,’ he tells the reader, ‘I did it to try my humour;’ and on the title-page he notes that the work was written ‘to the imitation of the best Latin poets and others.’

Lodge’s ‘Phillis,’ 1593.

The most notable contribution to the sonnet-literature of 1593 was Thomas Lodge’s ‘Phillis Honoured with Pastoral Sonnets, Elegies, and Amorous Delights.’ Besides forty sonnets, some of which exceed fourteen lines in length and others are shorter, there are included three elegies and an ode. Desportes is Lodge’s chief master, but he had recourse to Ronsard and other French contemporaries. How servile he could be may be learnt from a comparison of his Sonnet xxxvi. with Desportes’s sonnet from ‘Les Amours de Diane,’ livre II. sonnet iii.

Thomas Lodge’s Sonnet xxxvi. runs thus:

If so I seek the shades, I presently do see
The god of love forsake his bow and sit me by;
If that I think to write, his Muses pliant be;
If so I plain my grief, the wanton boy will cry.
  If I lament his pride, he doth increase my pain
If tears my cheeks attaint, his cheeks are moist with moan
If I disclose the wounds the which my heart hath slain,
He takes his fascia off, and wipes them dry anon.
  If so I walk the woods, the woods are his delight;
If I myself torment, he bathes him in my blood;
He will my soldier be if once I wend to fight,
If seas delight, he steers my bark amidst the flood.
  In brief, the cruel god doth never from me go,
  But makes my lasting love eternal with my woe.

Desportes wrote in ‘Les Amours de Diane,’ book II. sonnet iii.:

Si ie me siés l’ombre, aussi soudainement
  Amour, laissant son arc, s’assiet et se repose:
  Si ie pense à des vers, ie le voy qu’il compose:
  Si ie plains mes douleurs, il se plaint hautement.
Si ie me plains du mal, il accroist mon tourment:
  Si ie respan des pleurs, son visage il arrose:
  Si ie monstre la playe en ma poitrine enclose,

  Il défait son bandeau l'essuyant doucement.
Si ie vay par les bois, aux bois il m'accompagne:
  Si ie me suis cruel, dans mon sang il se bagne:
  Si ie vais à la guerre, it deuient mon soldart:
Si ie passe la mer, il conduit ma nacelle:
  Bref, iamais l'inhumain de moy ne se depart,
  Pour rendre mon amour et ma peine eternelle.

Drayton's 'Idea', 1594.

Three new volumes in 1594, together with the reissue of Daniel's 'Delia' and of Constable's 'Diana' (in a piratical miscellany of sonnets from many pens), prove the steady growth of the sonnetteering vogue. Michael Drayton in June produced his 'Ideas Mirrour, Amours in Quatorzains,' containing fifty-one 'Amours' and a sonnet addressed to 'his ever kind Mecænas, Anthony Cooke.' Drayton acknowledged his devotion to 'divine Sir Philip,' but by his choice of title, style, and phraseology, the English sonnetteer once more betrayed his indebtedness to Desportes and his compeers. 'L'Idée' was the name of a collection of sonnets by Claude de Pontoux in 1579. Many additions were made by Drayton to the sonnets that he published in 1594, and many were subtracted before 1619, when there appeared the last edition that was prepared in Drayton's lifetime. A comparison of the various editions (1594, 1599, 1605, and 1619) shows that Drayton published a hundred sonnets, but the majority were apparently circulated by him in early life.

Percy's 'Cœlia,' 1594.

William Percy, the 'dearest friend' of Barnabe Barnes, published in 1594, in emulation of Barnes, a collection of twenty 'Sonnets to the fairest Cœlia.' He explains, in an address to the reader, that out of courtesy he had lent the sonnets to friends, who had secretly committed them to the press. Making a virtue of necessity, he had accepted the situation, but begged the reader to treat them as 'toys and amorous devices.'

Zepheria, 1594.

A collection of forty sonnets or 'canzons,' as the anonymous author calls them, also appeared in 1594 with the title 'Zepheria.' In some prefatory verses addressed 'Alli veri figlioli delle Muse' laudatory reference was made to the sonnets of Petrarch, Daniel, and Sidney. Several of the sonnets labour at conceits drawn from the technicalities of the law, and Sir John Davies parodied these efforts in the eighth of his ‘gulling sonnets’ beginning, ‘My case is this, I love Zepheria bright.’

Barnfield’s sonnets to Ganymede, 1595.

Four interesting ventures belong to 1595. In January, appended to Richard Barnfield’s poem of ‘Cynthia,’ a panegyric on Queen Elizabeth, was a series of twenty sonnets extolling the personal charms of a young man in emulation of Virgil’s Eclogue ii., in which the shepherd Corydon addressed the shepherd-boy Alexis.   In Sonnet xx. the author expressed regret that the task of celebrating his young friend’s praises had not fallen to the more capable hand of Spenser (‘great Colin, chief of shepherds all’) or Drayton (‘gentle Rowland, my professed friend’). Barnfield at times imitated Shakespeare.

Spenser’s ‘Amoretti’, 1595.

Almost at the same date as Barnfield’s ‘Cynthia’ made its appearance there was published the more notable collection by Edmund Spenser of eighty-eight sonnets, which in reference to their Italian origin he entitled ‘Amoretti.’ Spenser had already translated many sonnets on philosophic topics of Petrarch and Joachim Du Bellay. Some of the ‘Amoretti’ were doubtless addressed by Spenser in 1593 to the lady who became his wife a year later. But the sentiment was largely ideal, and, as he says in Sonnet lxxxvii., he wrote, like Drayton, with his eyes fixed on ‘Idæa.’

‘Emaricdulfe,’ 1595.

An unidentified ‘E.C., Esq.,’ produced also in 1595, under the title of ‘Emaricdulfe,’   a collection of forty sonnets, echoing English and French models. In the dedication to his ‘two very good friends, John Zouch and Edward Fitton Esquiers,’ the author tells them that an ague confined him to his chamber, ‘and to abandon idleness he completed an idle work that he had already begun at the command and service of a fair dame.’

Sir John Davies’s ‘Gullinge Sonnets,’ 1595.

To 1595 may best be referred the series of nine ‘Gullinge sonnets,’ or parodies, which Sir John Davies wrote and circulated in manuscript, in order to put to shame what he regarded as ‘the bastard sonnets’ in vogue. He addressed his collection to Sir Anthony Cooke, whom Drayton had already celebrated as the Mecænas of his sonnetteering efforts. Davies seems to have aimed at Shakespeare as well as at insignificant rhymers like the author of ‘Zepheria.’ No. viii. of Davies’s ‘gullinge sonnets,’ which ridicules the legal metaphors of the sonnetteers, may be easily matched in the collections of Barnabe Barnes or of the author of ‘Zepheria,’ but Davies’s phraseology suggests that he also was glancing at Shakespeare’s legal sonnets lxxxvii. and cxxxiv. Davies’s sonnet runs:

My case is this. I love Zepheria bright,
Of her I hold my heart by fealty:
Which I discharge to her perpetually,
Yet she thereof will never me acquit[e].
For, now supposing I withhold her right,
She hath distrained my heart to satisfy
The duty which I never did deny,
And far away impounds it with despite.
I labour therefore justly to repleave [*i.e.* recover]
My heart which she unjustly doth impound.
But quick conceit which now is Love’s high shreive
Returns it as esloyned [*i.e.* absconded], not to be found.
Then what the law affords I only crave,
Her heart for mine, in wit her name to have (*sic*).

Linche’s ‘Diella,’ 1596.

‘R. L., gentleman,’ probably Richard Linche, published in 1596 thirty-nine sonnets under the title ‘Diella.’ The effort is thoroughly conventional. In an obsequious address by the publisher, Henry Olney, to Anne, wife of Sir Henry Glenham, Linche’s sonnets are described as ‘passionate’ and as ‘conceived in the brain of a gallant gentleman.’

Griffin ’s ‘Fidessa,’ 1596. Thomas Campion, 1596.

To the same year belongs Bartholomew Griffin’s ‘Fidessa,’ sixty-two sonnets inscribed to ‘William Essex, Esq.’ Griffin designates his sonnets as ‘the first fruits of a young beginner.’ He is a shameless plagiarist. Daniel is his chief model, but he also imitated Sidney, Watson, Constable, and Drayton. Sonnet iii., beginning ‘Venus and young Adonis sitting by her,’ is almost identical with the fourth poem—a sonnet beginning ‘Sweet Cytheræa, sitting by a brook’—in Jaggard’s piratical miscellany, ‘The Passionate Pilgrim,’ which bore Shakespeare’s name on the title-page. Jaggard doubtless stole the poem from Griffin, although it may be in its essentials the property of some other poet. Three beautiful love-sonnets by Thomas Campion, which are found in the Harleian MS. 6910, are there dated 1596.

William Smith’s ‘Chloris,’ 1596.

William Smith was the author of ‘Chloris,’ a third collection of sonnets appearing in 1596. The volume contains forty-eight sonnets of love of the ordinary type, with three adulating Spenser; of these, two open the volume and one concludes it. Smith says that his sonnets were ‘the budding springs of his study.’ In 1600 a license was issued by the Stationers’ Company for the issue of ‘Amours’ by W. S. This no doubt refers to a second collection of sonnets by William Smith. The projected volume is not extant.

Robert Tofte’s ‘Laura,’ 1597.

In 1597 there came out a similar volume by Robert Tofte, entitled ‘Laura, the Joys of a Traveller, or the Feast of Fancy.’ The book is divided into three parts, each consisting of forty ‘sonnets’ in irregular metres. There is a prose dedication to Lucy, sister of Henry, ninth Earl of Northumberland. Tofte tells his patroness that most of his ‘toys’ ‘were conceived in Italy.’ As its name implies, his work is a pale reflection of Petrarch. A postscript by a friend—‘R. B.’—complains that a publisher had intermingled with Tofte’s genuine efforts ‘more than thirty sonnets not his.’ But the style is throughout so uniformly tame that it is not possible to distinguish the work of a second hand.

Sir William Alexander’s ‘Aurora.’

To the same era belongs Sir William Alexander’s ‘Aurora,’ a collection of a hundred and six sonnets, with a few songs and elegies interspersed on French patterns. Sir William describes the work as ‘the first fancies of his youth,’ and formally inscribes it to Agnes, Countess of Argyle. It was not published till 1604.

Sir Fulke Greville’s ‘Cælica.’

Sir Fulke Greville, afterwards Lord Brooke, the intimate friend of Sir Philip Sidney, was author of a like collection of sonnets called 'Cælica.' The poems number a hundred and nine, but few are in strict sonnet metre. Only a small proportion profess to be addressed to the poet's fictitious mistress, Cælica. Many celebrate the charms of another beauty named Myra, and others invoke Queen Elizabeth under her poetic name of Cynthia (cf. Sonnet xvii.) There are also many addresses to Cupid and meditations on more or less metaphysical themes, but the tone is never very serious. Greville doubtless wrote the majority of his 'Sonnets' during the period under survey, though they were not published until their author's works appeared in folio for the first time in 1633, five years after his death.

Estimate of number of love-sonnets issued between 1591 and 1597.

With Tofte's volume in 1597 the publication of collections of love-sonnets practically ceased. Only two collections on a voluminous scale seem to have been written in the early years of the seventeenth century. About 1607 William Drummond of Hawthornden penned a series of sixty-eight interspersed with songs, madrigals, and sextains, nearly all of which were translated or adapted from modern Italian sonnetteers. About 1610 John Davies of Hereford published his 'Wittes Pilgrimage . . . through a world of Amorous Sonnets.' Of more than two hundred separate poems in this volume, only the hundred and four sonnets in the opening section make any claim to answer the description on the title-page, and the majority of those are metaphysical meditations on love which are not addressed to any definite person. Some years later William Browne penned a sequence of fourteen love-sonnets entitled 'Cælia' and a few detached sonnets of the same type. The dates of production of Drummond's, Davies's, and Browne's sonnets exclude them from the present field of view. Omitting them, we find that between 1591 and 1597 there had been printed nearly twelve hundred sonnets of the amorous kind. If to these we add Shakespeare's poems, and make allowance for others which, only circulating in manuscript, have not reached us, it is seen that more than two hundred love-sonnets were produced in each of the six years under survey. France and Italy directed their literary energies in like direction during nearly the whole of the century, but at no other period and in no other country did the love-sonnet dominate literature to a greater extent than in England between 1591 and 1597.

Of sonnets to patrons between 1591 and 1597, of which detached specimens may be found in nearly every published book of the period, the chief collections were:

II. Sonnets to patrons, 1591-7.

A long series of sonnets prefixed to ‘Poetical Exercises of a Vacant Hour’ by King James VI of Scotland, 1591; twenty-three sonnets in Gabriel Harvey’s ‘Four Letters and certain Sonnets touching Robert Greene’ (1592), including Edmund Spenser’s fine sonnet of compliment addressed to Harvey; a series of sonnets to noble patronesses by Constable circulated in manuscript about 1592 (first printed in ‘Harleian Miscellany,’ 1813, ix. 491); six adulatory sonnets appended by Barnabe Barnes to his ‘Parthenophil’ in May 1593; four sonnets to ‘Sir Philip Sidney’s soul,’ prefixed to the first edition of Sidney’s ‘Apologie for Poetrie’ (1595); seventeen sonnets which were originally prefixed to the first edition of Spenser’s ‘Faerie Queene,’ bk. i.-iii., in 1590, and were reprinted in the edition of 1596;   sixty sonnets to peers, peeresses, and officers of state, appended to Henry Locke’s (or Lok’s) ‘Ecclesiasticus’ (1597); forty sonnets by Joshua Sylvester addressed to Henry IV of France ‘upon the late miraculous peace in Fraunce’ (1599); Sir John Davies’s series of twenty-six octosyllabic sonnets, which he entitled ‘Hymnes of Astræa,’ all extravagantly eulogising Queen Elizabeth (1599).

III. Sonnets on philosophy and religion.

The collected sonnets on religion and philosophy that appeared in the period 1591-7 include sixteen ‘Spirituall Sonnettes to the honour of God and Hys Saynts,’ written by Constable about 1593, and circulated only in manuscript; these were first printed from a manuscript in the Harleian collection (5993) by Thomas Park in ‘Heliconia,’ 1815, vol. ii. In 1595 Barnabe Barnes published a ‘Divine Centurie of Spirituall Sonnets,’ and, in dedicating the collection to Toby Matthew, bishop of Durham, mentions that they were written a year before, while travelling in France. They are closely modelled on the two series of ‘Sonnets Spirituels’ which the Abbé Jacques de Billy published in Paris in 1573 and 1578 respectively. A long series of ‘Sonnets Spirituels’ written by Anne de Marquets, a sister of the Dominican Order, who died at Poissy in 1598, was first published in Paris in 1605. In 1594 George Chapman published ten sonnets in praise of philosophy, which he entitled ‘A Coronet for his Mistress Philosophy.’ In the opening poem he states that his aim was to dissuade poets from singing in sonnets ‘Love’s Sensual Empery.’ In 1597 Henry Locke (or Lok) appended to his verse-rendering of Ecclesiastes   a collection of ‘Sundrie Sonets of Christian

Passions, with other Affectionate Sonets of a Feeling Conscience.’ Lok had in 1593 obtained a license to publish ‘a hundred Sonnets on Meditation, Humiliation, and Prayer,’ but that work is not extant. In the volume of 1597 his sonnets on religious or philosophical themes number no fewer than three hundred and twenty-eight.

Thus in the total of sonnets published between 1591 and 1597 must be included at least five hundred sonnets addressed to patrons, and as many on philosophy and religion. The aggregate far exceeds two thousand.

X.—BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE ON THE SONNET IN FRANCE, 1550-1600.

Ronsard (1524-1585) and ‘La Pléiade.’ Desportes (1546-1606).

In the earlier years of the sixteenth century Melin de Saint-Gelais (1487-1558) and Clément Marot (1496-1544) made a few scattered efforts at sonnetteering in France; and Maurice Sève laid down the lines of all sonnet-sequences on themes of love in his dixains entitled ‘Délie’ (1544). But it was Ronsard (1524-1585), in the second half of the century, who first gave the sonnet a pronounced vogue in France. The sonnet was handled with the utmost assiduity not only by Ronsard, but by all the literary comrades whom he gathered round him, and on whom he bestowed the title of ‘La Pléiade.’ The leading aim that united Ronsard and his friends was the re-formation of the French language and literature on classical models. But they assimilated and naturalised in France not only much that was admirable in Latin and Greek poetry, but all that was best in the recent Italian literature. Although they were learned poets, Ronsard and the majority of his associates had a natural lyric vein, which gave their poetry the charms of freshness and spontaneity. The true members of ‘La Pléiade,’ according to Ronsard’s own statement, were, besides himself, Joachim du Bellay (1524-1560); Estienne Jodelle (1532-1573); Remy Belleau (1528-1577); Jean Dinemandy, usually known as Daurat or Dorat (1508-1588), Ronsard’s classical teacher in early life; Jean-Antoine de Baïf (1532-1589); and Ponthus de Thyard (1521-1605). Others of Ronsard’s literary allies are often loosely reckoned among the ‘Pléiade.’ These writers include Jean de la Péruse (1529-1554), Olivier de Magny (1530-1559), Amadis Jamyn (1538?-1585), Jean Passerat (1534-1602), Philippe Desportes (1546-1606), Estienne Pasquier (1529-1615), Scévole de Sainte-Marthe (1536-1623), and Jean Bertaut (1552-1611). These subordinate members of the ‘Pléiade’ were no less devoted to sonnetteering than the original members. Of those in this second rank, Desportes was most popular in France as well as in England. Although many of Desportes's sonnets are graceful in thought and melodious in rhythm, most of them abound in overstrained conceits. Not only was Desportes a more slavish imitator of Petrarch than the members of the 'Pléiade,' but he encouraged numerous disciples to practise 'Petrarchism,' as the imitation of Petrarch was called, beyond healthful limits. Under the influence of Desportes the French sonnet became, during the latest years of the sixteenth century, little more than an empty and fantastic echo of the Italian.

Chief collections of French sonnets published between 1550 and 1584.

The following statistics will enable the reader to realise how closely the sonnetteering movement in France adumbrated that in England. The collective edition in 1584 of the works of Ronsard, the master of the 'Pléiade,' contains more than nine hundred separate sonnets arranged under such titles as 'Amours de Cassandre,' 'Amours de Marie,' 'Amours pour Astrée,' 'Amours pour Hélène;' besides 'Amours Divers' and 'Sonnets Divers,' complimentary addresses to friends and patrons. Du Bellay's 'Olive,' a collection of love sonnets, first published in 1549, reached a total of a hundred and fifteen. 'Les Regrets,' Du Bellay's sonnets on general topics, some of which Edmund Spenser first translated into English, numbered in the edition of 1565 a hundred and eighty-three. De Baïf published two long series of sonnets, entitled respectively 'Les Amours de Meline' (1552) and 'Les Amours de Francine' (1555). Amadis Jamyn was responsible for 'Les Amours d'Oriane,' 'Les Amours de Callirée,' and 'Les Amours d'Artemis' (1575). Desportes's 'Premieres Œuvres' (1575), a very popular book in England, included more than three hundred sonnets—a hundred and fifty being addressed to Diane, eighty-six to Hippolyte, and ninety-one to Cleonice. Ponthus de Thyard produced between 1549 and 1555 three series of his 'Erreurs Amoureuses,' sonnets addressed to Pasithée, and Belleau brought out a volume of 'Amours' in 1576.

Minor collections of French sonnets published between 1553 and 1605.

Among other collections of sonnets published by less known writers of the period, and arranged here according to date of first publication, were those of Guillaume des Autels, 'Amoureux Repos' (1553); Olivier de Magny, 'Amours, Soupirs,' &c. (1553, 1559); Louise Labé, 'Œuvres' (1555); Jacques Tahureau, 'Odes, Sonnets,' &c. (1554, 1574); Claude de Billet, 'Amalthée,' a hundred and twenty-eight love sonnets (1561); Vauquelin de la Fresnaye, ‘Foresteries’ (1555 et annis seq.); Jacques Grévin, ‘Olympe’ (1561); Nicolas Ellain, ‘Sonnets’ (1561); Scévole de Sainte-Marthe, ‘Œuvres Françaises’ (1569, 1579); Estienne de la Boétie, ‘Œuvres’ (1572), and twenty-nine sonnets published with Montaigne’s ‘Essais’ (1580); Jean et Jacques de la Taille, ‘Œuvres’ (1573); Jacques de Billy, ‘Sonnets Spirituels’ (first series 1573, second series 1578); Estienne Jodelle ‘Œuvres Poétiques’ (1574); Claude de Pontoux, ‘Sonnets de l’Idée’ (1579); Les Dames des Roches, ‘Œuvres’ (1579, 1584); Pierre de Brach, ‘Amours d’Aymée’ (*circa* 1580); Gilles Durant, ‘Poésies’—sonnets to Charlotte and Camille (1587, 1594); Jean Passerat, ‘Vers . . . d’Amours’ (1597); and Anne de Marquet, who died in 1588, ‘Sonnets Spirituels’ (1605).

<<span id="filepos0041637819"> a>SHAKESPEARE'S LOST YEARS IN LONDON by Arthur Acheson

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INTRODUCTORY

The most interesting and important fifteen years in the records of English dramatic literature are undoubtedly those between 1588 and 1603, within which limit all of Shakespeare's poems and the majority of his plays were written; yet no exhaustive English history, intelligently co-ordinating the social, literary, and political life of this period, has ever been written.

Froude, the keynote of whose historical work is contained in his assertion that "the Reformation was the root and source of the expansive force which has spread the Anglo-Saxon race over the globe," recognising a logical and dramatic climax for his argument in the defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588, ends his history in that year; while Gardiner, whose historical interest was as much absorbed by the Puritan Revolution as was Froude's by the Reformation, finds a fitting beginning for his subject in the accession of James I. in 1603. Thus an historical hiatus is left which has never been exhaustively examined. To the resulting lack of a clearly defined historical background for those years on the part of Shakespearean critics and compilers—who are not as a rule also students of original sources of history—may be imputed much of the haziness which still exists regarding Shakespeare's relations to, and the manner in which his work may have been influenced by, the literary, social, and political life of this period.

The defeat of the Armada ended a long period of threatened danger for England, and the following fifteen years of Elizabeth's reign were passed in comparative security. The social life of London and the Court now took on, by comparison with the troubled past, an almost Augustan phase. During these years poetry and the drama flourished in England as they never did before, or since, in any such space of time. Within a few years of the beginning of this time Shakespeare became the principal writer for, and later on a sharer in, a company of players which, at about the same time, was chosen as the favourite Court company; a position which—under various titles—it continued to hold thereafterwards for over forty years.

When we compare the plays of Shakespeare with those of his contemporaries and immediate successors, it becomes evident that this dominant position was maintained by his company largely through the superior merit of his work while he lived, and by the prestige he had attained for it after he had passed away.

In the time of Elizabeth the stage was recognised as one of the principal vehicles for the reflection of opinion concerning matters of public interest; the players being, in Shakespeare's phrase, "the abstract and brief chronicles of the time." The fact that laws were passed and Orders in Council issued prohibiting the representation of matters of Church or State upon the stage, clearly implies the prevalence of such representations. It is altogether unlikely that the most popular dramatist of the day should, in this phase of his art, have remained an exception to the rule.

I hold it to have been impossible that such an ardent Englishman as Shakespeare, one also so deeply interested in human motive, character, and action, should have lived during these fifteen years in the heart of English literary and political life,—coming, through his professional interests, frequently and closely in contact with certain of its central figures,—and should during this interval have written twenty original plays, three long poems, and over one hundred and fifty sonnets, without leaving in this work decipherable reflections of the characters and movements of his time. That these conscious, or unconscious, reflections have not long ago been recognised and interpreted I impute to the lack of an intimate knowledge of contemporary history on the part of the majority of his critics and biographers.

Competent text critics, in their efforts to establish the chronological order of the dramas, have long since displayed the facts that Shakespeare's earlier original plays were largely comedies of a joyous nature, and that, as the years pass, his work becomes more serious and philosophical; in time developing into the pessimistic bitterness of *Lear* and *Timon of Athens* , but softening and lightening, at the end of his career, in the gravely reflective but kindly mood of *Cymbeline* , *A Winter's Tale* , and *The Tempest* ; yet no serious attempt has ever been made to trace and demonstrate in the personal contact of the writer with concurrent life the underlying spiritual causes of these very palpable changes in his expression of it. Until this is done no adequate life of Shakespeare can be written.

Now, in order to be enabled to find in Shakespeare's personal observation and experience the well-springs of the plainly developing and deepening reflections of human life in action, so evident in his dramas when studied chronologically, a sound knowledge of contemporary social, literary, and political history is the first essential; possessing this, the serious student will soon realise in the likenesses between Shakespeare's dramatic expression, and his concurrent possibilities of observation and experience, that he portrayed life as he himself saw and felt it, and that he used the old and hackneyed stories and chronicles which he selected for his plots, not because he lacked the power of dramatic construction, but in order to hide the underlying purposes of his plays from the public censor. While no intelligent student needs any other warrant for this belief than the plays themselves, when chronologically co-ordinated with even an elementary knowledge of the history of the period, we have Shakespeare's own assertion that this was the actual method and spirit of his work. When he tells us in *Hamlet* that "the purpose of playing, whose end, both at the first *and now* , was, *and is* , to hold, as 'twere, the mirror up to nature; to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and *the very age and body of the time* his form and pressure," he is not attempting to describe the dramatic methods of ancient Denmark, but is definitely expounding the functions of dramatic exposition as they prevailed in actual use in his own day, and as he himself had then exercised them for over ten years.

Any attempt to visualise Shakespeare in his contemporary environment, and spiritually to link his work year by year with the life of his time, would be impossible unless there can first be attained a far clearer idea than now exists of his theatrical connections, the inception of his dramatic work, and of the literary and social affiliations he formed and antagonisms he aroused, during his first six or eight years in London. The purpose of this book is—by casting new light upon this period of Shakespeare's career—to show the inception and development of conditions and influences which continued from that time forward materially to affect his and his friends' lives, and in turn to shape and colour the expression of life in action which he gives us in his works.

Though there is nothing known definitely concerning Shakespeare between 1587—when his name is mentioned in a legal document at Stratford regarding the transfer of property in which he held a contingent interest and which possibly infers his presence in Stratford at that date—and 1592, when Robert Greene alludes to him in his posthumously published *A Groatsworth of Wit* , it is usually assumed that he left Stratford in 1586 or 1587 with a company of players, or else that he joined a company in London at about that time.

As the Earl of Leicester's company is recorded as having visited Stratford-upon-Avon in 1587,—some time before 14th June,—and as James Burbage, the father of Richard Burbage, with whom we find Shakespeare closely affiliated in later years, was manager of the Earl of Leicester's company as late as 1575,—the year before he built the Theatre at Shoreditch,—it is generally assumed that he was still manager of this company in 1586-87, and that Shakespeare became connected with him by joining Leicester's company at this time. This assumption is, however, somewhat involved by another, nebulously held by some critics, *i.e.* , that James Burbage severed his connection with Leicester's company in 1583, and joined the Queen's company, and that the latter company played under his management at the Theatre in Shoreditch for several years afterwards. It is further involved by the equally erroneous assumption that Burbage managed the Curtain along with the Theatre between 1585 and 1592.

Certain biographical compilers also assert that Shakespeare, having joined the Earl of Leicester's company, continued to be connected with it under its supposed varying titles until the end of his London career, and that he was never associated with any other company. They assume that Leicester's company merged with Lord Strange's company of acrobats in 1589, the combination becoming known as Lord Strange's players; and that when this company left James Burbage and the Theatre, in 1592, for Philip Henslowe and the Rose Theatre, that Shakespeare accompanied them and worked for Henslowe both as a writer and an actor. They suppose that Edward Alleyn became the manager of a combination of the Admiral's company and Strange's men for a "short period," but that the companies "soon parted," "Strange's men continuing with Henslowe for a prolonged period." It is also asserted that "the Rose Theatre was the first scene of Shakespeare's successes alike as an actor and a dramatist," and that he "helped in the authorship of *The First Part of Henry VI.* , with which Lord Strange's company scored a triumphant success in 1592."

These assumptions, which were advanced tentatively by former scholars and merely as working hypotheses, have now, by repetition and the dogmatic dicta of biographical compilers, come to be accepted by the uncritical as ascertained facts.

While it is now generally accepted that Greene's "Shake-scene" alludes to Shakespeare, and that his parody of a line from *The True Tragedie* :

"O Tyger's heart wrapt in a Player's hide"

denotes some connection of Shakespeare's with either *The True Tragedie of the Duke of York* , or with *The Third Part of Henry VI.* before September 1592, when Greene died, and while the title-page of the first issue of *The True Tragedie of the Duke of York* informs us that this play was acted by the Earl of Pembroke's company, and no mention of the play appears in the records of Henslowe, under whose financial management Shakespeare is supposed to have been working with Strange's company in 1592, *nothing has ever been done to elucidate Shakespeare's evident connection with this play or with the Earl of Pembroke's company at this period* .

In the same year—1592—Nashe refers to the performance by Lord Strange's company under Henslowe of *The First Part of Henry VI.* , and praises the work of the dramatist who had recently incorporated the Talbot scenes, which are plainly the work of a different hand from the bulk of the remainder of the play. This also is generally accepted as a reference to Shakespeare and as indicating his connection with Henslowe as a writer for the stage. It is erroneously inferred from this supposed evidence, and from the fact that Richard Burbage was with Strange's company in 1592, that Shakespeare also acted with and wrote for this company under Henslowe.

No explanation has ever been given for the palpable fact that not one of the plays written by Shakespeare—the composition of which all competent text critics impute to the years 1591 to 1594—is mentioned in Henslowe's Diary as having been presented upon his boards. It is generally agreed that *The Comedy of Errors, King John, Richard II., Love's Labour's Lost, Love's Labour's Won, The Two Gentlemen of Verona, Richard III.* , and *Midsummer Night's Dream* , were all produced before the end of 1594, yet there is no record nor mention of any one of these plays in Henslowe's *Diary* , which gives a very full list of the performances at the Rose and the plays presented between 1592 and 1594.

During the same years in which records of Shakespeare are lacking they are also very limited regarding Edward Alleyn, whose reputation as an actor and whose leadership in his profession were won during these years—1586-92. Nothing is at present known concerning him between 1584, when he is mentioned in the Leicester records as a member of the Earl of Worcester's company, and 3rd January 1589, when he bought Richard Jones' share of theatrical properties, owned conjointly by Edward Alleyn, John Alleyn, Robert Browne, and Richard Jones. As Edward Alleyn, Robert Browne, and Richard Jones were all members of Worcester's company in 1584, it is erroneously assumed that they were still Worcester's men in 1589, and that it was Jones' share in the Worcester properties that Alleyn bought at this time to take with him to the Admiral's company, which he is consequently supposed to have joined some time between 1589 and 1592. The next record we have of Alleyn is his marriage to Joan Woodward, Henslowe's stepdaughter, in October 1592. In the following May we find him managing Lord Strange's company in the provinces, though styling himself a Lord Admiral's man. *Where, then, was Edward Alleyn between 1585 and 1589; where between 1589 and 1593; and when did he become a Lord Admiral's man?*

Worcester 's company, with which Alleyn was connected in 1584, is last mentioned in the records as appearing at Barnstaple in 1585; it then disappears from view for five years, and is next mentioned in the provincial records as appearing at Coventry in 1590. Between 1590 and 1603 it is mentioned regularly in the provincial records. *Where was Worcester's company between 1585 and 1590?*

I propose to demonstrate by new evidence and analysis that James Burbage ceased to be an active member of Leicester's company soon after he took on the responsibilities of the management of the Theatre; but continued his theatrical employees under Leicester's protection as Lord Leicester's musicians until 1582, when he began to work under the licence of Lord Hunsdon, his company being composed of his own employees and largely of musicians, to act as an adjunct to the companies to whom, from time to time, he let the use of the Theatre during the absence in the provinces of the companies, such as Leicester's and the Admiral's, with which I shall give evidence he held more permanent affiliations, and, seeing that he was owner and manager of the Theatre, that these affiliations were somewhat similar to those maintained by Henslowe—the owner of the Rose Theatre—with Lord Strange's company between 1592 and 1594, and with the Lord Admiral's, and other companies, at the several theatres he controlled in later years. I shall indicate that from the time Burbage built the Theatre in 1576 until early in 1585, he maintained such a connection with Leicester's company, and shall show that the disruption of this company in 1585 by the departure of seven of their principal members for the Continent—where they remained until July 1587—necessitated a similar connection with some other good company to take its place, and that he now secured Edward Alleyn and his fellows, who, ceasing to be Worcester's men at this time, and securing the licence of the Lord Admiral, affiliated themselves with the remnant of Leicester's men and joined Burbage and Lord Hunsdon's men at the Theatre. In this year the latter became the Lord Chamberlain's men through the elevation of Lord Hunsdon to that office. These companies, while retaining individual licences, continued to play when in London as one company until the end of 1588, or beginning of 1589, when another reorganisation took place, a number of the old men being eliminated and new blood being taken in from the restored Leicester company and Lord Strange's company of youthful acrobats, who had now become men. I shall give evidence that this organisation continued to work as one company for the next three years, though the Admiral's men still retained their own licence, and consequently that the company as a whole is at times mentioned in both Court and provincial records under one title and at times under the other. The principal reason that a number of companies, combining at a London theatre as one company, preserved their several licences was no doubt the greater protection afforded them by the patronage of several powerful noblemen against the hostility of puritanically inclined municipal authorities. Recorder Fleetwood, who was noted as an enemy of the players, in his weekly reports on civic affairs to Lord Burghley, frequently complains of the stoppage by Court influence of his prosecutions of alleged offenders. Upon one occasion he writes: "When the Court is farthest from London then is the best justice done in England."

Some time between the beginning of 1591 and the end of that year, James Burbage's disfavour with certain of the authorities, as well as legal and financial difficulties in which he became involved, made it necessary for the combined companies, which in December 1591 had attained to the position of the favourite Court company, to seek more convenient quarters and stronger financial backing than Burbage and the Theatre afforded. Under its various titles Strange's company continued to be the leading Court company for the next forty years. I shall indicate the probability that Strange's company in supplanting the Queen's company at Court at this time *also supplanted it at the Rose Theatre* , which was built by Henslowe in 1587 as a theatre. Henslowe repaired and reconstructed it late in 1591 and early in 1592 for the uses of Strange's men. I will show the unlikelihood that this was Henslowe's first venture in theatrical affairs, and the probability that the Queen's players, under his financial management, occupied the Rose Theatre from the time it was built in 1587 until they were superseded by Strange's men in 1591.

I shall also give evidence that Shakespeare did not accompany Strange's men to Henslowe and the Rose, but that he remained with Burbage, who backed him in the formation of Pembroke's company, and that he and Marlowe wrote for this company until Marlowe was killed in 1593, and that Shakespeare was probably its sole provider of plays from the time of Marlowe's death until the company disrupted early in 1594. I shall show further that during the time Shakespeare and Marlowe wrote for Pembroke's company, and for some years later, George Peele revised old and wrote new plays for Henslowe and Alleyn, and that it was he that revised *Henry VI.* and introduced the Talbot scene in 1592, and consequently that it was to Peele, and not to Shakespeare, that Nashe's praises were given at this time. Evidence shall be given to show that Nashe was antagonistic to Shakespeare and co-operated with Greene against him at this period.

It shall be made clear that *Titus Andronicus* , which was acted as a new play by Sussex's company under Henslowe on 23rd January 1594, was also written by Peele, or rewritten from *Titus and Vespasian* , which is now lost, but which—being written for Strange's men in the previous year—we may assume was also Peele's, or else his first revision of a still older play.

Some time before the middle of 1594 a new reorganisation of companies took place, the Admiral's and the Lord Chamberlain's separating and absorbing men from Pembroke's and Sussex's companies, which ceased to exist as active entities at this time, though a portion of Pembroke's men—while working with the Admiral's men between 1594 and 1597—retained their own licence and attempted to operate separately in the latter year, but, failing, returned to Henslowe and became Admiral's men. A few of their members whom Langley, the manager of the Swan Theatre, had taken from them, struggled on as Pembroke's men for a year or two and finally disappeared from the records.

A consideration of the affairs of Lord Strange's men—now the Lord Chamberlain's men—while under Henslowe's financial management between 1592 and 1594, and of Pembroke's company's circumstances during the same period, with their enforced provincial tours owing to the plague in London, will show that these were lean years for both organisations, and for the men composing them; *yet in December 1594—as is shown by the Court records of March 1595—Shakespeare appears as a leading sharer in one of the most important theatrical companies in England* . I shall advance evidence to show that his position in this powerful company, and its apparent prosperity at this time, were due to financial assistance accorded him in 1594 by his patron, the Earl of Southampton, to whom in this year he dedicated *Lucrece* , and in the preceding year *Venus and Adonis* .

If these hypotheses be demonstrated it shall appear that though Shakespeare, as Burbage's employee in the conduct of the Theatre, had theatrical relations with the Earl of Leicester's company that he was not a member of that company, and that if he may be regarded as having become a member of any company in 1586-87, when he came to London, he was a member of the Lord Chamberlain's company,—which was owned by James Burbage,—*but as a bonded and hired servant or servitor to James Burbage for a term of years which ended in about 1589* ; that his work with Burbage from the time he entered his service was of a general nature, and more of a literary and dramatic than of an histrionic character, though it undoubtedly partook of both; that he worked in conjunction with both Richard Burbage and Edward Alleyn from the time he came to London in 1586-87 until 1591; that neither he nor Burbage were connected with the Queen's company, nor with the Curtain Theatre, during these years, *and that the ownership by the Burbage organisation of a number of old Queen's plays resulted from their absorption of Queen's men in 1591, when Pembroke's company was formed, and not from the supposed fact that James Burbage was at any time a member or the manager of the Queen's company* ; that Robert Greene's attack upon Shakespeare as "the onely Shake-scene," in 1592, was directed at him as the manager of Pembroke's company; that the Rose Theatre was not "the scene of Shakespeare's pronounced success, both as a writer and a dramatist," *and that in fact he never was connected with that theatre, nor with Henslowe, either as a writer or an actor* ; that Nashe's laudation of the Talbot scenes in *Henry VI.* was complimentary to his friend Peele, and that whatever additions Shakespeare may have made to this play were made after he rejoined the Lord Chamberlain's men in 1594; that he had no hand in the composition of *Titus Andronicus* , acted by Sussex's company and published in 1594, which is the same as that now generally included in Shakespeare's plays; and finally that his business ability and social and dramatic prestige restored Burbage's waning fortunes and enabled his new organisation to compete successfully with the superior political favour and financial power of Henslowe and Alleyn, and started it upon its prolonged career of Court and public favour.

As a clear conception of Shakespeare's theatrical affiliations between 1586 and 1594 has not hitherto been realised so a knowledge of his relations with contemporary writers during his entire career still remains nebulous. Greene's attack in 1592 in *A Groatsworth of Wit* and Chettle's apology are the only things regarding Shakespeare's early relations with other writers that have been generally accepted by critics. Until the publication of *Shakespeare and the Rival Poet* in 1903, nothing was known of his prolonged enmity with Chapman; while the name of Matthew Roydon was unmentioned in connection with Shakespearean affairs until 1913. The revelations of the present volume regarding the enmity between Florio and Shakespeare, and Shakespeare's dramatic characterisations of Florio, have never been anticipated, though the possibility that they may have come at odds has been apprehended. The Rev. J.H. Halpin suggested in 1856 that the "H.S." attacked by Florio in his *Worlde of Wordes* in 1590 may have been directed at Shakespeare, but advanced no evidence to support his theory, which has since been relegated by the critics to the limbo of fanciful conjecture. I was not aware of Mr. Halpin's suggestion when I reached my present conclusions.

There has hitherto been no suspicion whatever on the part of critics that anything of the nature of a continuous collusion between the scholars existed against Shakespeare in these early years, and consequently, when at a later period it was manifested in plays presented upon rival stages, it was regarded as a new development and named "The War of the Theatres"; but even this open phase of the antagonism and the respective sides taken by its participants are still misunderstood. This critical opacity is due largely to the fact that Shakespearean criticism has for many years been regarded as the province of academic specialists in literature who have neglected the social and political history of Shakespeare's day as outside their line of specialisation. It was probably Froude's recognition of this nebulous condition in Shakespearean criticism that deterred him from continuing his history to the end of the reign of Elizabeth, and prevented Gardiner beginning his where Froude's ended. These great historians realised that no adequate history of that remarkable period could be written that did not include a full consideration of Shakespeare and his influence; yet, making no pretensions themselves to Shakespearean scholarship, and finding in extant knowledge no sure foundations whereon to build, they evaded the issue, confining their investigations to the development of those phases of history in which they were more vitally interested.

Froude's intimate knowledge of the characters and atmosphere of Elizabethan social and political life, acquired by years of devoted application to an exhaustive examination of documentary records and the epistolatory correspondence of the period, convinced him that Shakespeare drew his models and his atmosphere from concurrent life. He writes: "We wonder at the grandeur, the moral majesty of some of Shakespeare's characters, so far beyond what the noblest among ourselves can imitate, and at first thought we attribute it to the genius of the poet who has outstripped nature in his creations, but we are misunderstanding the power and the meaning of poetry in attributing creativeness to it in any such sense. Shakespeare created but only as the spirit of nature created around him, working in him as it worked abroad in those among whom he lived. The men whom he draws were such men as he saw and knew; the words they utter were such as he heard in the ordinary conversations in which he joined.... At a thousand unnamed English firesides he found the living originals for his Prince Hals, his Orlandos, his Antonios, his Portias, his Isabellas. The closer personal acquaintance which we can form with the English of the age of Elizabeth, the more we are satisfied that Shakespeare's great poetry is no more than the rhythmic echo of the life which he depicts."

As this book is intended as a precursor to one shortly to be published dealing with the sonnets and the plays of the Sonnet period, the only plays here critically considered are *King John* and *The Comedy of Errors* , which I shall argue are the only plays—now extant—written by Shakespeare before the inception of his intimacy with the Earl of Southampton, which I date, upon good evidence, in the autumn of 1591. In the former we have probably the best example of the manner in which Elizabethan playwrights dramatised contemporary affairs. In this instance Shakespeare worked from an older play which had been composed with the same intention with which he rewrote it, and as the old play had passed the censor and been for years upon the public boards, he was enabled to develop his intention more openly than even he dared to do in later years, when, owing to the influence of Lord Burghley and his son, Sir Robert Cecil, the enforcement of the statutes against the representation of matters of State upon the stage became increasingly stringent.

Though the political phases of Shakespeare's dramas become more veiled as the years pass, I unhesitatingly affirm that there is not a single play composed between the end of 1591 and the conclusion of his dramatic career that does not, in some manner, intentionally reflect either the social, literary, or political affairs of his day.

In order that the reader may approach a consideration of the rearranged sonnets with a clear perspective, and to keep the Sonnet story uninvolved by subsidiary argument, I now demonstrate not only the beginning of the acquaintance between Shakespeare and the Earl of Southampton—which has not hitherto been known—but also take a forward glance of several years in order definitely to establish the identity of John Florio as Shakespeare's original for Falstaff, Parolles, and Armado. His identity as the original for still other characters will be made apparent as this history develops in the Sonnet period.

<<span id="filepos0041679982"> a> CHAPTER II

THE STRATFORD DAYS

"What porridge had John Keats?" asks Browning. So may we well inquire of what blood was Shakespeare? What nice conjunction of racial strains produced this unerring judgment, this heaven-scaling imagination, this exquisite sensibility? for, however his manner of life may have developed their expression, these qualities were plainly inherent in the man.

The name Shakespeare has been found to have existed during the thirteenth, fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries in various parts of England, and has been most commonly encountered in and about Warwickshire. While it is spelt in many different ways, the commonest form is *Shaxper* or *Shaxpeare* , giving the *a* in the first syllable the same sound as in flax. Wherever Shakespeare families are found, however, they invariably show a very great preponderance of Christian names that are characteristically Norman: Richard, Gilbert, Hugh, William, John, Robert, Anthony, Henry, Thomas, Joan, Mary, Isabella, Ann, Margaret, being met with frequently. It is likely then that the widespread and persistent use of Norman Christian names by Shakespeare families denotes their

Norman origin, and that this link with their past was preserved by family custom long after pride of ancestry—which first continued its use—was forgotten, as in the case of the Irish peasantry of Norman origin in Leinster—within what was formerly known as the Norman Pale—who have long forgotten their origin, but having Norman patronymics still preserve also Norman Christian names.

The etymological origin of Shakespeare's name is yet unsettled: one scholar suggests that it derives from the Anglo-Saxon, *Saexberht* . This would imply that the Anglo-Saxon prefix *saex* has by time been transmuted into Shake, and that the suffix, *berht* has become pear or pere. The instances in which the Anglo-Saxon *sae* have changed into the English *sh* are extremely rare. The modern *sh* in English when derived from Anglo-Saxon is almost invariably *sc* softened, or when derived from Danish or Norse *sh* , as, for instance, in the words *sceadu* shade, *sceaft* shaft, *sceacan* shake, *sceal* shall, *scamu* shame, *skapa* shape. I cannot find a single instance in the growth of Anglo-Saxon into English where the original *berht* has taken on the *p* sound and become *pear* or *pere* . The English for *berht* as a rule is bert, burt, or bard.

Shakespeare's sanity of judgment and spiritual self-reliance are qualities which we naturally associate with the Norse temperament; his fine sensibility and unfettered imagination strike us as much more characteristically Gallic or Celtic. It seems probable then that in his physical and spiritual composition we have a rare admixture of these related Aryan types. Physically he was not a large man, being, in fact, rather below the middle stature; his hair was strong in texture and dark reddish in colour, while his eyes were brown; his nose was large, and his lips full, but the face relieved of sensuousness by the dominant majesty of the brow. This is not descriptive of an Anglo-Saxon type: it is much more distinctly French or Norman. It is probable that the blood of the Norman ran full in Shakespeare's veins, and who was the Norman but the racial combination of the Norseman and the Gaul? In this light, then, I suggest that the name Shakespeare seems to be much closer to the Norman-French *Jacquespierre* than it is to the Anglo-Saxon *saexberht* . In the gradual transition of Norman-French into English pronunciation, Shakespeare, or as the name was pronounced in Elizabethan days, Shaxper, is exactly the form which the English tongue would have given to the name *Jacquespierre* . It is significant that Arden, his mother's name, is also of Norman origin; that his grandfather's name Richard, his father's name John, his own name William, and the names of all his brothers and sisters, but one, were Norman. In view of these indications, it is not unreasonable to assume that Norman blood held good proportion in the veins of this greatest of all Englishmen.

Exhaustive research by interested genealogists has failed to trace Shakespeare's forebears further into the past than to his grandfather, Richard Shakespeare, a substantial yeoman of Snitterfield, and this relationship, while generally accepted, is not yet definitely established. There is no doubt, however, that John Shakespeare, butcher, glover, woolstapler, or corndealer, or all of these things combined, of Stratford-upon-Avon, was his father, and that the poet was baptized in the Parish Church of that town upon 26th April, in the year 1564. He was born on, or shortly before, 23rd April in the same year.

Shakespeare's mother was Mary Arden, the youngest of eight daughters—by the first wife—of Robert Arden, a landed gentleman of Wilmcote, related to the Ardens of Parkhill, at that time one of the leading families of Warwickshire.

On the theory that men of great intellectual capacity inherit their qualities from the distaff side, it might help us to realise Shakespeare better if we know more about his mother: of her personality and character, however, we know absolutely nothing.

The mothers depicted by Shakespeare in his plays are, as a rule, devoted, strong, and noble characters, and are probably in some measure spiritual reflections of the model he knew most intimately. It is improbable that Shakespeare's childhood should not have shown some evidence of the qualities he later displayed, and impossible that such promise should be hidden from a mother's eye.

The wealth of Shakespeare's productiveness in the three years preceding the end of 1594 gives ample evidence that the dark years intervening between his departure from Stratford and the autumn of 1591 had not been idly spent. Such mastery of his art as he displays even at this early period was not attained without an active and interested novitiate in his profession. It is evident that the appellation *Johannes factotum* , which Greene in 1592 slurringly bestows upon him, had been well earned in the six or seven preceding years of his London life for which we possess no records.

Whatever misgivings their staid and thrifty Stratford neighbours may have had as to the wisdom of the youthful Shakespeare's London adventure, we may well believe that Mary Arden, knowing her son's fibre, felt fair assurance that his success there would come near to matching her desires, and that of the several spurs to his industry and pride of achievement the smile of her approval was not the least. There is possibly a backward glance to his mother's faith in him in the spirit of Volumnia's hopes for the fame of her son:

"When yet he was but tender-bodied, and the only son of my womb; when youth with comeliness plucked all gaze his way; when for a day of Kings' entreaties, a mother should not sell him an hour from her beholding; I—considering how honour would become such a person; that it was no better than picture-like to hang by the wall, if renown made it not stir,—was pleased to let him seek danger where he was like to find fame. To a cruel war I sent him; from whence he returned, his brows bound with oak. I tell thee, daughter—I sprang not more in joy at first hearing he was a man-child, than now in first seeing he had proved himself a man."

Mary Arden died in 1608, at about the time the passage quoted above was written, having lived long enough to see the fortunes of the family restored through her son's efforts, and also to see him become one of the most noted men in England, and returning to Stratford with his brows crowned, if not with martial oak, with more enduring laurels.

We have no record of Shakespeare's schooldays. We know that a free grammar school of good standard existed in Stratford during his boyhood, and later. It is usually assumed that it was here that Shakespeare got the elements of his education. Though he was in no sense a classical scholar, he undoubtedly had an elementary knowledge of Latin, and may possibly, in later years, have acquired a smattering of Greek. George Chapman accuses Shakespeare of spreading the report that his alleged translations of Homer from the original Greek were, in fact, made from Latin versions. Whatever truth there may have been in Chapman's accusation against Shakespeare in this connection, modern scholarship has found that there were good grounds for such a report, and that Chapman undoubtedly made free use of the Latin of Scapula in all of his translations. Chapman's allegation, if true, seems to imply that Shakespeare's knowledge of Latin was not so meagre but that he could, upon occasion, successfully combat his learned opponents with weapons of their own choice.

Once at work in London, Shakespeare wrought hard, and in view of his immense productiveness can have had little leisure in the ten or fifteen years following. We may infer, then, that the wealth of knowledge of nature he displays was acquired in his boyhood and youth in the country round about Stratford. His intimate acquaintance with animate and inanimate life in all their forms, his knowledge of banks where wild thyme grew, his love of flowers and of natural beauty which remained with him all through his life, were evidently gained at that receptive period:

"When meadow, grove, and stream,
The earth and every common thing to (him) did seem,
Appareled in celestial light,
The glory and the freshness of a dream."

Though Shakespeare's schooldays were over long before he left Stratford for London, his real education had only then begun. To his all-gleaning eye and hungry mind every day he lived brought new accretions of knowledge. Notwithstanding the paucity of recorded fact which exists regarding his material life, and the wealth of intimate knowledge we may possess regarding the lives of other writers, I doubt if, in the works of any other author in the entire history of literature, we can trace such evidence of continuous intellectual and spiritual growth.

While we have no light on Shakespeare's childhood, a few facts have been gleaned from the Stratford records concerning his father's affairs and his own youth, a consideration of which may enable us to judge the underlying causes which led him to seek his fortunes in London.

There is something pathetic yet dignified about the figure of John Shakespeare as we dimly sight it in what remains of the annals of his town and time. The stage he treads is circumscribed, and his appearances are few, but sufficient for us to apprehend a high-spirited but injudicious man, showing always somewhat superior in spirit to his social conditions.

He settled in Stratford twelve years previous to the birth of our poet, and appears to have been recognised as a man of some importance soon after his arrival. We have record that he was elected to various small municipal offices early in his Stratford career, and also of purchases of property from time to time, all of which evidences a growth in estate and public regard. At about the time of Shakespeare's birth, and during a season of pestilence, we find him prominent amongst those of his townsmen who contributed to succour their distressed and stricken neighbours. A year later than this we find him holding office as alderman, and later still as bailiff of Stratford; the latter the highest office in the gift of his fellow-townsmen. While holding this office we catch a glimpse of him giving welcome to a travelling company of players; an innovation in the uses of his position which argues a broad and tolerant catholicity of mind when contrasted with the growing Puritanism of the times. And so, for several years, we see him prosper, and living as befits one who prospers, and, withal, wearing his village honours with a kindly dignity. But fortune turns, and a period of reverses sets in; we do not trace them very distinctly; we find him borrowing moneys and mortgaging property, and, later, these and older obligations fall due, and, failing payment, he is sued, and thereafter for some years he fights a stubborn rearguard fight with pursuing fate in the form of truculent creditors and estranged relatives.

In the onset of these troubles an event occurred which, we may safely assume, did not tend to ease his worries nor add to his peace of mind. In 1582, his son, our poet, then a youth of eighteen, brought to his home an added care in the shape of a wife who was nearly eight years his senior, and who (the records tell us) bore him a daughter within six months of the date of their betrothal. All the circumstances surrounding the marriage lead us to infer that Shakespeare's family was not enthusiastically in favour of it, and was perhaps ignorant of it till its consummation, and that it was practically forced upon the youthful Shakespeare by the bride's friends for reasons obvious in the facts of the case. About two and a half years from this date, and at a period when John Shakespeare's affairs had become badly involved and his creditors uncomfortably persistent, his son's family and his own care were increased by the addition of the twins, Judith and Hamnet. The few records we have of this period (1585-86) show a most unhappy state of affairs; his creditors are still on the warpath, and one, owning to the solid name of John Brown, having secured judgment against him, is compelled to report to the court that "the defendant hath no property whereon to levy." Shortly after this, John Shakespeare is shorn of the last shred of his civic honours, being deprived of his office of alderman for non-attendance at the council meetings. In this condition of things we may realise the feelings of an imaginative and sensitive youth of his son's calibre; how keenly he would feel the helplessness and the reproach of his position, especially if—as was no doubt the case—it was augmented by the looks of askance and wagging of heads of the sleek and thrifty wise-ones of his community.

We are fairly well assured that Shakespeare did not leave Stratford before the end of 1585, and it appears probable that he remained there as late as 1586 or 1587. Seeing that he had compromised himself at the age of eighteen with a woman eight years his senior, whom he married from a sense of honour or was induced to marry by her friends, we may infer that the three or four subsequent years he spent in Stratford were not conducive either to domestic felicity or peace of mind. How Shakespeare occupied himself during these years we may never know, though it is very probable that he worked in the capacity of assistant to his father. That these were years of introspection and remorse to one of his spirit, however, there can be little doubt; there can be still less doubt that they were also years of formative growth, and that in this interval the irresponsible youth, who had given hostages to fortune by marrying at the age of eighteen, steadied by the responsibility of a growing family, quickly developed into some promise of the man to be.

No biographer has yet taken into consideration the effect which the circumstances of Shakespeare's life during these four or five formative years must necessarily have had in the development of his character. That this exquisite poet, this builder of dreams, should in the common affairs of life have displayed such an effectively practical bent, has always appeared an anomaly; a partial explanation is to be found in the incentive given to his energies by the conditions of his life, and of his father's affairs, at this formative period. To the habitually poor, poverty is a familiar; to the patrician who has had reverses, it may be a foil to his spirit: he still has his pride of family and caste. To the burgher class, in which Shakespeare moved in Stratford, the loss of money was the loss of caste. To provide for the future of his children and to restore the declining fortunes and prestige of his family became now his most immediate concern, if we may form any judgment from his subsequent activities. The history of literature has given us so many instances of poetic genius being unaccompanied by ordinary worldly wisdom, and so few instances of a combination of business aptitude with poetic genius, that some so-called biographers, enamoured of the conventional idea of a poet, seem almost to resent our great poet's practical common sense when displayed in his everyday life, and to impute to him as a derogation, or fault, the sound judgment in worldly matters, without which he never could have evolved the sane and unimpassioned philosophy of life, which, like a firm and even warp, runs veiled through the multicoloured weft of incident and accident in his dramas.

All Shakespearean biographers now agree in dating his hegira from Stratford not later than the year 1587. Early in 1585 his twin children, Judith and Hamnet, were born. The fact that no children were born to him later is usually advanced in favour of the assumption that he left Stratford shortly after this date. In the next eleven years we have but one mention of him in the Stratford records. Towards the end of 1587 his name, in conjunction with his father's, appears upon a legal form relating to the proposed cancellation of a mortgage upon some property in which he held a contingent interest. This, however, does not necessarily indicate his presence in Stratford at that time.

At the present time the most generally accepted hypothesis regarding the beginning of Shakespeare's theatrical career is that he joined the Earl of Leicester's company of players upon the occasion of their visit to Stratford-upon-Avon, either in the year 1586 or 1587. Upon the death of the Earl of Leicester in 1588, when this company was disrupted, it is thought probable that in company with Will Kempe, George Bryan, and Thomas Pope (actors with whom he was afterwards affiliated for years), he joined Lord Strange's players, with which company under its various later titles he continued to be connected during the remainder of his theatrical career. I shall prove this theory to be erroneous and adduce evidence to show that of whatever company, or companies, he may later have been an active member, his theatrical experience had its inception in a connection as theatrical assistant with the interests of the Burbages; with whose fortunes he thereafter continued to be connected till the end of his London career.

In judging of the youthful Shakespeare, of whom we can only conjecture, we may reasonably draw inferences from the character of the man we find revealed in his life's work. I am convinced that Shakespeare's departure from Stratford was deliberate, and that when he went to London he did so with a definite purpose in view. Had Shakespeare's father been a prosperous man of business, in all probability the world would never have heard of his son; though the local traditions of Stratford might have been enriched by the proverbial wit and wisdom of a certain anonymous sixteenth-century tradesman.

Unconfirmed legend, originating nearly a hundred years after the alleged event, is the sole basis for the report that Shakespeare was forced to leave his native town on account of his participation in a poaching adventure. It is possible that Shakespeare in his youth may have indulged in such a natural transgression of the law, but supposing it to be a fact that he did so, it does not necessarily brand him as a scapegrace. A ne'er-do-well in the country would probably remain the same in the city, and would be likely to accentuate his characteristics there, especially if his life was cast, as was Shakespeare's, in Bohemian surroundings. Instead of this, what are the facts? Assuming that Shakespeare left Stratford in 1586 or 1587, and became, as tradition reports, a servitor in the theatre at that period, let us look ten years ahead and see how he has fared.

We know that he had already returned to Stratford in 1597 and purchased one of the most important residences in the town. From the fact that John Shakespeare's creditors from this time forward ceased to harass him, we may assume that he had also settled his father's affairs. We have record that in 1596 he had, through his father, applied for the confirmation of an old grant of arms, which was confirmed three years later, and that he thereafter was styled "William Shakespeare, Gentleman of Stratford-upon-Avon." At this period he had also produced more than one-third of his known literary work, and was acknowledged as the leading dramatist of the time. All of this he had attained working in the same environment in which other men of about his own age, but of greater education and larger opportunities, had found penury, disgrace, and death. Marlowe, his confrère, at the age of thirty, in 1593, was killed in a tavern brawl. A year earlier, Greene, also a university man, would have died a beggar on the street but for the charity of a cobbler's wife who housed him in his dying hours. Spenser, breathing a purer atmosphere, but lacking the business aptitude of Shakespeare, died broken-hearted in poverty in 1599. George Peele, another university man, at about the same date, and at the age of thirty-four, we are told by Meres, died from the results of an irregular life. And those of his literary contemporaries who lived as long as, or outlived, Shakespeare, what were their ends, and where are their memories? Unknown and in most cases forgotten except where they live in his reflected light. Matthew Roydon lived long and died in poverty, no one knows when or where. George Chapman outlived his great rival many years, and died as he had lived, a friendless misanthropist.

Though Shakespeare won to fame and fortune over the temptations and vicissitudes of the same life and environments to which so many of his fellows succumbed, we have proof that this was not due to any inherent asceticism or native coldness of blood.

No man in Shakespeare's circumstances could have attained and accomplished what he did during those early years living at haphazard or without a controlling purpose in life. Whatever may have been the immediate accident of fate that turned his face Londonwards, we may rest assured that he went there with the purpose of retrieving his good name in his own community and rehabilitating the fortunes of his family.

Shakespeare's literary history does not show in him any evidence of remarkable precocity. Keats was famous and already gathered to the immortals at an age at which Shakespeare was still in the chrysalid stage of the actual buskin and sock. It may reasonably be doubted that Shakespeare produced any of his known poems or plays previous to the years 1590-91. Though his genius blossomed late his common sense and business capacity developed early, forced into being, no doubt, by a realisation of his responsibilities, as well as by the deplorable condition into which his father's affairs had fallen. So, between the years 1583, when he was married, and 1591-92, when we first begin to get some hints of his literary activities, his Pegasus was in harness earning bread and butter and, incidentally, gleaning worldly wisdom. "Love's young dream" is over; the ecstatic quest of the "not impossible she," almost at its inception, has ended in the cold anticlimax of an enforced marriage.

We may dismiss the deer-stealing rumour as referring to this period. The patient industry, sound judgment, and unusual business capacity exhibited by Shakespeare from the time we begin to get actual glimpses of his doings until the end of his career, belie the stupid and belated rumour of his having been forced to leave Stratford as a fugitive from justice on account of his participation in a poaching adventure upon Sir Thomas Lucy's preserves. While it is apparent that this bucolic Justice of the Peace is caricatured as Justice Shallow in *Henry IV., Part II.* , it is still more clear that this play was not written until the end of the year 1598. When Shakespeare's methods of work are better understood it will become evident that he did not in 1598 revenge an injury from ten to twelve years old. Whatever may have been his animus against Sir Thomas Lucy it undoubtedly pertained to conditions existent in the year 1598. In 1596 John Shakespeare's application for arms was made, but was not finally granted until late in 1598, or early in 1599. It was still under consideration by the College of Heralds, or had very recently been granted when Shakespeare wrote *Henry IV., Part II.* , late in 1598. It is not likely that such a grant of arms would be made even by the most friendly disposed authorities without consultation with, or reference to, the local magistracy or gentry regarding the character and social standing of the applicant. It is quite likely then that the rustic squire resented—what such a character would undoubtedly have regarded as a tradesman's presumption, and that Shakespeare, becoming cognizant of his objections, answered them in kind by caricaturing the Lucy arms. The critical student of Shakespeare's works will find that wherever a reflection of a topical nature is palpable in his plays, that the thing, or incident, referred to is almost invariably a matter of comparatively recent experience. If it is a reflection of, or a reference to, another writer we may be assured that Shakespeare has recently come from a perusal of the writer in question. If the allusion is of a social or political nature it will refer to some recent happening or to something that is still of public interest. Should such an allusion be in any sense autobiographical and pertaining to his own personal interests or feelings, it is still more likely to refer to recent experience. Whatever may have been the reason for his caricature of Sir Thomas Lucy, its cause was evidently of a later date than his departure from Stratford. It was no shiftless runagate nor fugitive from justice who went to London in, or about, 1585-87; neither was it a wrathful Chatterton, eating out his heart in bitter pride while firing his imagination to

"Paw up against the light
And do strange deeds upon the clouds."

It was a very sane, clear-headed, and resourceful young man who took service with the Players, one, as yet, probably unconscious of literary ability or dramatic genius, but with a capacity for hard work; grown somewhat old for his years through responsibility, and with a slightly embittered and mildly cynical pose of mind in regard to life.

An early autobiographical note seems to be sounded in Falconbridge's soliloquy in *King John* , Act II. Scene ii., as follows:

"And why rail I on this commodity?
But for because he hath not woo'd me yet;
Not that I have the power to clutch my hand,
When his fair angels would salute my palm;
But for my hand, as unattempted yet,
Like a poor beggar, raileth on the rich.
Well, whiles I am a beggar, I will rail
And say there is no sin but to be rich;
And being rich, my virtue then shall be
To say there is no vice but beggary.
Since kings break faith upon commodity,
Gain, be my lord, for I will worship thee."

I have new evidence to show that this play was composed by Shakespeare in 1591, and though it was revised in about 1596, the passage quoted above, which exhibits the affected cynicism of youth, pertains to the earlier period. Aside from the leading of the natural bent of his genius it is evident that the greater pecuniary reward to be attained from the writing rather than from the acting of plays would be quickly apparent to a youth who in this spirit has left home to make London his oyster.

As research and criticism advance and we are enabled, little by little, more intimately to apprehend the personality of Shakespeare and to construct a more definite chronology of his doings, the shifting lights of evidence in the form of tradition and legend, which in the past have dazed, or misled, searchers, either disappear or take on new values. When we remember that Shakespeare, when he went to London, was about twenty-three years old, the father of a family, and the son of an ex-bailiff of the not unimportant town of Stratford, we may dismiss as a fanciful distortion the story of his holding horses at the theatre doors for stray pennies; and in the added embellishment of the story which describes this Orpheon, yet thrifty street Arab, as organising for this purpose a band of his mates who, to prove their honesty when soliciting the care of a horse, would claim to be "Shakespeare's boys," we may find a clue to the actual facts of the case. We have hitherto had no definite record of, nor recognised allusion to, Shakespeare between the year 1587, when his name is mentioned with his father's in a legal document, and the year 1592, when we have the well-known allusions of Robert Greene. Greene's references in this latter year reveal Shakespeare as having already entered upon his literary career, and at the same time, in the phrases "upstart crow beautified with our feathers" and "the onlie Shake-scene in the country," seem to point to him as an actor; the expression "*Johannes factotum* " seems still further to widen the scope of his activities and to indicate the fact that Shakespeare wrought in several capacities for his masters during his earlier theatrical career. Part of his first work for his employers, it is possible, consisted in taking charge of the stabling arrangements for the horses of the gentlemen and noblemen who frequented the Theatre. The expression "rude groome," which Greene uses in his attack upon Shakespeare, is evidently used as pointing at his work in this capacity. The story of the youths who introduced themselves as "Shakespeare's boys" seems to indicate that he was the recognised representative of the theatrical proprietors who provided accommodations for this purpose. It is to be assumed then that Shakespeare, having charge of this work, would upon occasions come personally in contact with the noblemen and gentry who frequented Burbage's Theatre, which was situated in the parish of Shoreditch, then regarded as the outskirts of the City.

Of the several records concerning this alleged incident in Shakespeare's early London experience, that which is simplest and latest in date seems to bear the greatest evidence of truth when considered in connection with established facts and coincident circumstantial evidence. Traditions preserved in the poet's own family would in essentials be likely to be closer to the truth than the bibulous gossip of Sir William Davenant, from which source all the other records of this story are derived. In the monthly magazine of February 1818 the story is told as follows: "Mr. J.M. Smith said he had often heard his mother state that Shakespeare owed his rise in life and his introduction to the theatre to his accidentally holding the horse of a gentleman at the door of the theatre on his first arriving in London; his appearance led to inquiry and subsequent patronage." The "J.M. Smith" mentioned here was the son of Mary Hart, a lineal descendant of Joan Hart, Shakespeare's sister. While it is clearly impossible that Shakespeare owed his introduction to the theatre to Southampton, there can be little doubt, in the light of data to follow, that his rise in life was much enhanced by his friendship and patronage. What truth there may be in this story is evidently a distorted reflection of Shakespeare's earlier work in the Theatre at Shoreditch and of his later acquaintance with the Earl of Southampton. We have no record, hint, or suggestion of his personal acquaintance or business connection with any noblemen or gentlemen other than Southampton, and possibly Sir Thomas Heneage, at this early period. It shall later be shown that

Southampton first became identified with London and Court life in October 1590. I am led by good evidence to the belief that Shakespeare's acquaintance with this nobleman had its inception very soon after this date, and that he, and the theatrical company to which he was attached at that time, attended the Earl of Southampton at Cowdray House and at Tichfield House in August and September 1591, upon the occasion of the Queen's progress to, and sojourn at, these places.

<<span id="filepos0041721404"> a> CHAPTER III

SHAKESPEARE, THE BURBAGES, AND EDWARD ALLEYN

As we have well-attested evidence that Shakespeare was connected with the interests of James Burbage and his sons from 1594 until the end of his London career, it is usually, and reasonably, assumed that his early years in London were also spent with the Burbages; but as nothing is definitely known regarding Burbage's company affiliations between 1575, when we have record that he was still manager of Leicester's company, and 1594, when the Lord Chamberlain's company left Henslowe and Alleyn and returned to Burbage and the Theatre, knowledge of Shakespeare's company affiliations during these years is equally nebulous. Only by throwing light upon Burbage's activities during these years can we hope for light upon Shakespeare during the same period. Much of the ambiguity regarding Burbage's affairs during these years arises from the fact that critics persist in regarding him as an actor and an active member of a regular theatrical company after 1576, instead of recognising the palpable fact that he was now also a theatrical manager with a large amount of borrowed money invested in a theatre upon which it would take all of his energies to pay interest and make a profit. After 1576 Burbage's relations with companies of actors were necessarily much the same as those of Henslowe's with the companies that acted at his theatres, though it is probable that Burbage acted at times for a few years after this date. He was now growing old, and his business responsibility increasing, it is unlikely that he continued to act long after 1584, when his son

Richard entered upon his histrionic career.

When Shakespeare came to London in 1586-87, there were only two regular theatres,—the Theatre and the Curtain,—though there were usually several companies playing also at innyards within and about the City. The Theatre at Shoreditch, owned by James Burbage, was built by him in 1576, and was the first building designed in modern England specially for theatrical purposes. Though he had many troubles in later years with his brother-in-law and partner, John Brayne, and with his grasping landlord, Giles Allen, he retained his ownership of the Theatre until his death in 1597, and he, or his sons, maintained its management until the expiration of their lease in the same year.

In 1571 an Act of Parliament was passed making it necessary for a company of players who wished to exercise their profession without unnecessary interference from petty officials and municipal authorities, to secure a licence as the players, or servants, of a nobleman; lacking such licences members of their calling were classed before the law, and liable to be treated, as "vagabonds and sturdy beggars." Such a licence once issued to a company was regarded as a valuable corporate asset by its sharers. At times a company possessing a licence would diminish by attrition until the ownership of the licence became vested in the hands of a few of the original sharers, who, lacking either the means or ability to continue to maintain themselves as an effective independent organisation, would form a connection with a similarly depleted company and perform as one company, each of them preserving their licensed identity. In travelling in the provinces such a dual company would at times be recorded under one title, and again under the other, in the accounts of the Wardens, Chamberlains, and Mayors of the towns they visited. Occasionally, however, the names of both companies would be recorded under one payment, and when their functions differed, they seem at times to have secured separate payments though evidently working together—one company supplying the musicians and the other the actors.

If we find for a number of years in the provincial and Court records the names of two companies recorded separately, who from time to time act together as one company, and that these companies act together as one company at the same London theatre, we may infer that the dual company may be represented also at times where only the name of one of them is given in provincial or Court records. It is likely that the full numbers of such a dual company would not make prolonged provincial tours except under stress of circumstances, such as the enforced closing of the theatres in London on account of the plague; and that while the entire combination might perform at Coventry and other points within a short distance of London, they would probably divide their forces and act as separate companies upon the occasions of their regular provincial travels.

Such a combination as this between two companies in some instances lasted for years. The provincial, and even the Court records, will make mention of one company, and at times of the other, in instances where two companies had merged their activities while preserving their respective titles. A lack of knowledge of this fact is responsible for most of the misapprehension that exists at present regarding Shakespeare's early theatrical affiliations.

Under whatever varying licences and titles the organisation of players to which Shakespeare attached himself upon his arrival in London may have performed in later years, all tradition, inference, and evidence point to a connection from the beginning with the interests of James Burbage and his sons.

Though other companies played at intervals at Burbage's Theatre at, and shortly following, 1586-87, the period usually accepted as marking the beginning of Shakespeare's connection with theatrical affairs, it shall be made evident that the Lord Chamberlain's—recently Lord Hunsdon's—company, of which James Burbage was at that date undoubtedly the manager, made their centre at his house when performing in London. That this was a London company with an established theatrical home in the most important theatre in London, between the years 1582 and 1589, is established by the facts that James Burbage was its manager, and the infrequency of mention of it in the provincial records. It is probable that at this early period it was not a full company of actors, but that Lord Hunsdon's licence covered Burbage and his theatrical employees and musicians.

Numerous and continuous records of provincial visits for a company infer that it would be better known as a provincial than as a London company, while the total lack of any record of Court performances, taken in conjunction with a large number of records of provincial performances, would imply that such a company had no permanent London abiding-place, such as Lord Hunsdon's company undoubtedly had in Burbage's Theatre.

The fact that James Burbage, the leader of Leicester's company in its palmy days —1574 to 1582—was, between 1582 and 1589, the leader of Lord Hunsdon's company, when coupled with the fact that they appeared before the Court during this interval, gives added evidence that it was a recognised London company at this period.

Much ambiguity regarding James Burbage's theatrical affiliations in the years between 1583 and 1594 has been engendered by the utterly gratuitous assumption that he joined the Queen's players upon the organisation of that company by Edmund Tilney, the Master of the Revels, in 1583, leaving the Earl of Leicester's players along with Robert Wilson, John Laneham, and Richard Tarleton at that time. We have conclusive evidence, however, against this assumption. James Burbage worked under the patronage of Lord Hunsdon and was undoubtedly the owner of the Theatre in 1584, although Halliwell-Phillipps, and others who have followed him in his error have assumed, on account of his having mortgaged the lease of the Theatre in the year 1579 to one John Hyde, a grocer of London, that the actual occupancy and use of the Theatre had also then been transferred. There is nothing unusual or mysterious in the fact that Burbage mortgaged the Theatre to Hyde. In the time of Elizabeth, leases of business property were bought, sold, and hypothecated for loans and regarded as investment securities. Burbage at this time was in need of money. His brother-in-law, John Brayne, who had engaged with him to advance half of the necessary expenses for the building and conduct of the Theatre, defaulted in 1578 in his payments. It is evident that Burbage borrowed the money he needed from Hyde, mortgaging the lease as security, probably agreeing to repay the loan with interest in instalments. It is not unlikely that it was Giles Allen's knowledge of this transaction that excited his cupidity and led him to demand £24 instead of £14 a year when Burbage sought an agreed upon extension of the lease in 1585. As Hyde transferred the lease to Cuthbert Burbage in 1589, it appears that he held a ten years' mortgage, which was a common term in such transactions. In 1584 Burbage was clearly still manager of the Theatre, and in the eyes of the companies playing there from time to time, who were not likely to be cognizant of his private business transactions, such as borrowing of money upon a mortgage, was also still *the owner of the Theatre* .

In one of the witty Recorder Fleetwood's reports to Lord Burghley, dated 18th June 1584, we have the following matter referring to the Theatre and the Curtain: "Upon Sondaie, my Lord sent two aldermen to the court, for the suppressing and pulling downe of the theatre and curten, for all the Lords agreed thereunto, saving my Lord Chamberlayn and Mr. Vice-Chamberlayn; but we obtayned a letter to suppresse them all. Upon the same night I sent for the Queen's players, and my Lord of Arundell his players, for they all well nighe obeyed the Lords letters. The chiefest of her Highnes' players advised me to send for the owner of the theatre, who was a stubborne fellow, and to bynd him. I dyd so. He sent me word that he was my Lord of Hunsdon's man, and that he would not come to me, but he would in the morning ride to my Lord. Then I sent the under-sheriff for hym, and he brought him to me, and at his coming he showted me out very justice. And in the end, I showed hym my Lord his master's hand, and then he was more quiet. But to die for it he wold not be bound. And then I mynding to send hym to prison, he made sute that he might be bounde to appeare at the oier and determiner, the which is to-morrowe, where he said that he was sure the court wold not bynd hym, being a counsellor's man. And so I have graunted his request, where he is sure to be bounde, or else is lyke to do worse." The "stubborne fellow" was, without doubt, none other than the high-spirited and pugnacious James Burbage, who fought for twenty-one years over leases with his avaricious landlord, Giles Allen, and of whom Allen's lawyer writes in a Star Chamber document in 1601: "Burbage tendered a new lease which he, the said Allen, refused to sign because it was different from the first and also because Burbage had assigned the Theatre to John Hyde and has also been a very bad and troublesome tenant to your orator." This document also makes mention of the fact as one of the reasons for Allen refusing to sign the new lease that "Hyde conveyed the lease to Cuthbert, son of James." The conveyance here mentioned was made in 1589. It is plain that Allen's lawyer implies that the mortgaging of the Theatre to Hyde and its later conveyance to Cuthbert Burbage were made, not alone for value received, but also for the protection of James Burbage against legal proceedings. Here, then, we have good evidence that James Burbage, who, in the year 1575, had been the manager, and undoubtedly a large owner, of the Earl of Leicester's company,—at that time the most important company of players in England,—was in 1584 a member of Lord Hunsdon's company, and if a member—in view of his past and present prominence in theatrical affairs—also, evidently, its manager and owner. As no logical reasons are given by Halliwell-Phillipps, or by the compilers who base their biographies upon his *Outlines of the Life of Shakespeare* , for declining to accept the reference in Fleetwood's letter to the "owner of the Theatre" as an allusion to Burbage, whom they admit to have been, and who undoubtedly was, the owner of the Theatre from 1576 until he transferred his property to his sons, Cuthbert and Richard, shortly before he died in 1597, their refusal to see the light must arise from their obsession that Burbage at this time was a member of either Leicester's or the Queen's company, and as to which one they do not seem to have a very clear impression. Shakespearean biography may be searched in vain for any other recorded facts concerning Burbage's company affiliations between 1575 and 1594. In view of this general lack of knowledge of Burbage in these years the critical neglect of such a definite allusion as Recorder Fleetwood makes to the "owner of the Theatre" as a servant of Lord Hunsdon is difficult to understand.

The alleged reason for the proposed suppression of the Theatre and the Curtain at this, and at other times, was that they had become public nuisances by attracting large crowds of the most unruly elements of the populace, which led to disturbances of the peace.

In this same report of Fleetwood's to Burghley, he informs him that on the previous Monday, upon his return to London from Kingston, he "found all the wardes full of watches. The cause thereof was for that neare the theatre or curten, at the time of the plays, there laye a prentice sleeping upon the grasse; and one Challes alias Grostock did turne upon the toe upon the belly of the prentice; whereupon this apprentice start up, and afterwards they fell to playne blowes. The companie increased of both sides to the number of 500 at the least. This Challes exclaimed and said, that he was a gentleman, and that the apprentice was but a rascal and some there were littel better than roogs, that took upon them the name of gentleman, and said the prentices were but the skume of the worlde. Upon these troubles, the prentices began the next daye, being Tuesdaye, to make mutinies, and assemblies, and conspyre to have broken the prisones, and to have taken forth the prentices that were imprisoned. But my Lord and I having intelligence thereof, apprehended four or fyve of the chief conspirators, who are in Newgate, and stand indicted of their lewd demeanours.

"Upon Weddensdaye, one Browne a serving man in a blew coate, a shifting fellowe, having a perilous wit of his owne, intending a spoil if he could have brought it to passe, did at the theatre-doore quarrell with certayn poore boyes, handicraft prentices, and strooke some of them; and lastlie, he, with his sword, wounded and maymed one of the boyes upon the left hand. Whereupon there assembled near a thousand people. This Browne did very cunningly conveye himself away, but by chance he was taken after and brought to Mr. Humprey Smithe, and because no man was able to charge him, he dismyssed him."

Though the Council ordered the suppression of both the Theatre and the Curtain at this time, Fleetwood's report of the disturbances seems to place the blame largely upon the Theatre. If the Queen's players were then performing at the Theatre, under the management of Burbage, it is most unlikely that the "chiefest of her Highnes' players"—who informed Fleetwood that the owner of the Theatre was a "stubborne fellow," and advised that he be sent for and "bounde"—would have given advice and information so unfriendly to their own manager, and there cannot be the slightest doubt that Burbage was "the owner" of the Theatre from 1576 to 1596. It is apparent that the leader of the Queen's company was willing that the onus of the disturbances should be placed upon the Theatre rather than upon the Curtain, where the Queen's players were evidently performing at this time—Lord Arundel's company temporarily occupying the Theatre, Lord Hunsdon's company being at that time upon a provincial tour. They are recorded as performing in Bath in June 1584.

A consideration of the records of Lord Hunsdon's company, and of previous companies that performed under this name, gives fair evidence that James Burbage established this company in 1582, at or before which date he severed his active connection as a player with the Earl of Leicester's players, though still continuing his own theatrical organisation at the Theatre under the patronage of Leicester, as the Earl of Leicester's musicians, and maintaining relations with Leicester's players as a theatre owner.

Burbage's reason in 1582 for transferring from the patronage of Leicester for his theatrical employees to that of Lord Hunsdon was, no doubt, *the fact of Leicester's departure for the Continent in this year* . The constant attacks being made by the puritanical authorities upon the London theatrical interests made it expedient for him to have the protection of a nobleman whose aid could be quickly invoked in case of trouble. As I will show later that Burbage was regarded with disfavour by Burghley in 1589, it is likely that the opposition he met with from the local authorities in these earlier years was instigated by Burghley's agents and gossips. Recorder Fleetwood, chief amongst these, reports Burbage's alleged transgressions with such evident unction it is apparent that he knew his message would have a sympathetic reception.

It shall be shown that in later years the Burbage theatrical organisation was anti-Cecil and pro-Essex in its tacit political representations; it is not unlikely that it was recognised as anti-Cecil and pro-Leicester in these early years, and that in this manner it incurred Burghley's ill-will.

Previous to the year 1567 there existed a company under the patronage of Lord Hunsdon; between that date and 1582 there is no record of any company acting under this nobleman's licence. In July 1582 there is record that Lord Hunsdon's company acted at Ludlow, and upon 27th December 1582 we have record that Lord Hunsdon's players acted before the Court, presenting *A Comedy of Beauty and Housewifery* . The provincial records show a few performances by this company in the provinces in every year, except one, between 1582 and 1589; while 1587 shows no provincial performance, a payment of five shillings is recorded in Coventry "to the Lord Chamberlain's Musicians that came with the Judge at the assizes"; these were, no doubt, a portion of Burbage's company, Lord Hunsdon then being Lord Chamberlain. This entry, however, is immediately preceded by the entry of a payment of twenty shillings to the Lord Admiral's players. It shall be shown that the Admiral's company was affiliated with Burbage at this time.

The Lord Hunsdon who patronised this company from the time of its inception, in 1582, until we hear no more about it in 1589, was the same Henry Carey, Baron Hunsdon, who, in 1594, still holding the office of Lord Chamberlain, again took Burbage and his theatrical associates under his protection.

In imagining James Burbage as a member of the Queen's company of players for several years following 1583, and ending in about 1591, it has been customary also to assume that the Queen's company played regularly, when in London, at Burbage's Theatre during these years; and that the Lord Admiral's company, between 1585 and 1591, played principally at the Curtain. There is very slight foundation for the former, and not the slightest for the latter, assumption, both of which were first mooted by Halliwell-Phillipps, and in which he has since been followed blindly by the compilers. The supposition that the Queen's company made their London centre at the Theatre from 1583 onwards, is based upon the disproved assumption that Burbage was the manager of this company. This supposition has been supported by the argument that Tarleton, who was a member of the Queen's company after 1583, is mentioned in 1592, in Nashe's *Pierce Penniless* , as having "made jests" "at the Theatre," and again in Harrington's *Metamorphosis of Ajax* in 1596, as follows: "Which word was after admitted into the Theatre by the mouth of Mayster Tarleton, the excellent comedian." As Tarleton died in 1588 these references cannot apply to the "Theatre" later than this date, and if they apply at all to Burbage's Theatre and the term is not used generically, they apply to it in the years preceding 1583, when Tarleton played at the Theatre as a member of Lord Leicester's company. The author of *Martin's Month's Mind* , in 1587, refers to "twittle twattle that I learned in ale-houses and at the Theatre of Lanam and his fellowes." This also probably refers to the period preceding 1583, when Laneham was a member and evidently the leader of Leicester's company and after Burbage had retired from its leadership. In *News out of Purgatory* , published in 1587, in which the ghost of Tarleton appears, "the Curtaine of his Countenance" is mentioned, which apparently alludes to his recent connection with that house. While it is possible, however, that the Queen's company may have performed occasionally at the Theatre after their formation in 1582-83 and before the Rose was built in 1587, all evidence and logical assumption regarding the regular playing-places of the Queen's and the Admiral's companies when in London, between 1586 and 1589, infer that the Queen's company played at the Curtain, and after 1587, at the Rose, and the Lord Admiral's company, in conjunction with the Lord Chamberlain's, at the Theatre in summer and the Crosskeys in winter.

Towards the end of this period a rivalry existed between the Queen's company and the combined companies playing under Burbage at the Theatre, which ended in 1591 in the supersession for Court performances of the Queen's company by Lord Strange's players—a new company of which Richard Burbage was a member, which had been organised out of the best actors from the defunct companies of the Lord Chamberlain and Lord Leicester, and with accretions from the Lord Admiral's company and Lord Strange's company of boy acrobats; which latter had for about a year past been affiliated in some manner with the Lord Admiral's company, which, in turn, had worked in conjunction with Burbage's players (the Lord Chamberlain's company) since 1585-86.

For this connection between the Lord Admiral's company and the company of Lord Hunsdon, who was now Lord Chamberlain, we have record of a Court performance on 6th January 1586, which was paid for on 31st January: "The Lord Admiral's and the Lord Chamberlain's players were paid for a play before the Queen on Twelfth Day."

While two companies of players, meeting accidentally in the provinces, might at times have combined their forces in an entertainment, we may assume that in such cases each would give a short interlude from their own stock of plays, and not that they joined action in the same play. A performance before the Court, however, was no haphazard thing, but something that had been carefully rehearsed; hence, when we find—as in the case of the Lord Admiral's players and the Lord Chamberlain's players, mentioned above—members of two companies uniting in a play before the Court and receiving one payment for it, it is apparent that they must have acted in the same play, and also that such a play had been previously rehearsed. Burbage's Theatre being the theatrical home of his company, known, until 1585, as Lord Hunsdon's company, and after that date, when Lord Hunsdon became Lord Chamberlain, as the Lord Chamberlain's players, it becomes evident that the rehearsal of plays for the Court would take place at the Theatre in the summer or the inn used by Burbage and his company in the winter-time, and that the members of the Lord Admiral's company, who had acted with him in the Court performance mentioned, would rehearse at the same places. As we find Lord Strange's company preparing to act in the winter-time of 1589 at the Crosskeys, when they were refused permission to do so by the Lord Mayor, and as we know also that—as the Lord Chamberlain's men—in 1594, after their separation from Henslowe, they again sought leave to act there in the winter season, we may infer that Burbage's men used this same inn for winter performances previous to 1589. Lord Hunsdon's letter to the Lord Mayor in December 1594, referring to the Crosskeys, reads: "Where my *now* company of players have byn accustomed ... to play this winter time within the City."

While both the Lord Admiral's and Lord Hunsdon's players performed occasionally in the provinces previous to 1591, the limited number of their provincial appearances, taken in conjunction with the fact that they were of sufficient importance to play at intervals before the Court, during the years that the Queen's company—which had been specially formed for that purpose—held sway, implies that they were players of recognised importance.

While it is apparent that Burbage ceased to be an active member of Leicester's players at or soon after the time he undertook the responsibilities of the management of the Theatre, he evidently continued to work under the protection of the Earl of Leicester, as the owner of the Theatre and of the organisation known as Leicester's musicians, as late as 1582, when he secured the protection of Lord Hunsdon, and in transferring took with him his theatrical musicians, who now became Lord Hunsdon's and, later, the Lord Chamberlain's musicians. The first and last mention of Lord Leicester's musicians as distinct from the players in any of the records is in 1582, when they are mentioned in the Coventry records as accompanying Lord Leicester's players. These were evidently Burbage's theatrical musicians who accompanied Leicester's men to Coventry, as we find them accompanying the Admiral's men to the same place a few years later under the title of the "Lord Chamberlain's Musicians."

It is evident that Leicester's company continued to be Burbage's most permanent customer in the use of the Theatre as late as 1585, and that they acted there until that date in conjunction with Lord Hunsdon's men, who were Burbage's theatrical employees, and mostly musicians. Some time in, or before, June 1585, seven of the more important actors of Leicester's company sailed for the Continent, where they remained till July 1587. In June 1585 the remnant of Leicester's company joined forces with the new Admiral's company. They are recorded as acting together at Dover in this month. It is apparent that Leicester's men had come to this port to see their fellows off for the Continent, and that they were joined there by the Admiral's men by pre-arrangement. This performance of the Admiral's men, in conjunction with the remnant of Leicester's men at Dover, is the first record we possess for many years of any company under this title. The next record is a performance before the Court in the following Christmas season, when we find them acting conjointly with the Lord Chamberlain's men, *i.e.* Burbage's men, recently Lord Hunsdon's. It is evident that they had now taken the place of Leicester's men as Burbage's permanent company at the Theatre, holding much the same relations to him as Lord Strange's men held to Henslowe at the Rose between 1592 and 1594.

Both Leicester's and Lord Hunsdon's companies disappear from the records at the same date (1588-89), and Lord Strange's players appear for the first time as a regular London company of players, performing in the City of London and at the Crosskeys in the same year. Three years later, when we are enabled, for the first time, to learn anything of the personnel of this company, we find among its members Thomas Pope, George Bryan, and, later on, William Kempe, all of them members of Leicester's company before 1589. We also find in Lord Strange's company, in 1592, Richard Burbage, who, without doubt, between 1584—in which year he first began as a player—and 1589, was a member of his father's company,—Lord Hunsdon's,—known as the Lord Chamberlain's company after 1585. It becomes apparent, then, that early in the year 1589 a junction of forces took place between the leading actors of the companies previously known as Lord Strange's tumblers, Lord Hunsdon's, or, as it was then known, the Lord Chamberlain's company, and the Earl of Leicester's players—the new organisation becoming known as Lord Strange's players. This company continued under the patronage of Lord Strange, under his successive titles of Lord Strange and the Earl of Derby, until his death in April 1594; they then, for a short period, passed under the patronage of his widow, the Countess of Derby, when they again secured the patronage of Lord Hunsdon—who was still Lord Chamberlain.

Before the combination between these companies took place in December 1588, or January 1589, it is evident that an alliance of some kind was formed between the leading men of Lord Strange's tumblers and the Lord Admiral's company. For several years, between about 1580 and 1587, Lord Strange's company was merely a company of acrobats, or tumblers, composed of boys and youths. In the provincial records they are mentioned at times as "Lord Strange's tumblers," "Symons and his fellowes," and as "John Symonds and Mr. Standleyes Boyes" (Lord Strange's name being Fernando Stanley). The Lord Admiral's players, on the other hand, were clearly a regular company of players who presented plays, yet we find them paid for Court performances in 1588 and 1589, and also "For showing other feats of activitye and tumblinge." In the following year they are again paid for a Court performance where "feates of activitye" are also mentioned. The last performances of this nature given by the Lord Admiral's players were on 27th December 1590 and 16th February 1591. The record of payment for these performances makes mention of "other feates of activitye then also done by them." Upon the 5th of March 1591 the payment for these performances is recorded in the Acts of the Privy Council to the Lord Admiral's company, while—as Mr. E.K. Chambers has pointed out—in the Pipe Rolls (542 fol. 156) these same performances are assigned to Strange's men. It is evident, then, that late in 1588 (the first performance of this nature being recorded on the 27th of December) a junction took place between certain members of Lord Strange's tumblers and the Lord Admiral's men, who had been connected since 1585 with the Lord Chamberlain's men, and that, at the same time, the leading members of Lord Leicester's company became affiliated with them.

In the following Christmas season, 1591-92, Lord Strange's players—now thoroughly organised into a regular company of players—gave six performances before the Court, supplanting the formerly powerful and popular Queen's company, which gave only one performance in that season, and never afterwards appeared before the Court. There is no further record of a Court performance by the Lord Admiral's company until the Christmas season of 1594-95, by which time they had parted from the Lord Chamberlain's men and reorganised by absorbing members from other companies—such as the Earl of Sussex and Earl of Pembroke's companies, which at this time disappear from the records.

Here, then, we find, between the Christmas season of 1588-89 and 1591-92, an amalgamation into one company of a portion of the membership of four different companies, all of which had, immediately before, been associated in some measure with the theatrical interests of the Burbages.

While a chance record remains which reveals official action in the formation of the Queen's company of players in 1583, and no actual record of official action has yet been found to account for the sudden Court favour accorded the new and powerful Lord Strange's company in 1591, *it is very apparent that an equally authoritative purpose existed in the latter case* .

Between the years 1574 and 1583 the Earl of Leicester's company, under the auspices of James Burbage, held the position of the leading company of players in London. During the Christmas and New Year festivities in every year but one in this decade, Leicester's company played before the Court, being supplanted by the newly formed Queen's company in 1583-84.

Howes states in his *Additions to Stowe's Chronicles* that "in 1583 twelve of the best players were chosen out of several great Lords' companies and sworn the Queen's servants, being allowed wages and liveries as Grooms of the Chamber," and among these, two players, Thomas (Robert) Wilson and Richard Tarleton, were chosen. As these players and John Laneham were taken from Lord Leicester's company it has been incorrectly inferred that James Burbage—who is known to have been the leader of the company as late as 1575—went with them to the Queen's company at this time.

It is apparent that changes so important in the several companies affected by the disruption of their memberships could not be made in a very short time, and that test performances and negotiations of some duration preceded the actual amalgamation of the new company. Burbage's reason for securing Lord Hunsdon's patronage in 1582 was, no doubt, because of Leicester's departure for the Continent in this year and the disorganisation of Leicester's company, caused by the formation of the new Queen's company at the same period.

Between 1583 and 1590, while other companies performed occasionally at the Court, the Queen's company performed during the Christmas festivities every season—and usually upon several occasions—in each year. In the Christmas season of 1591-92, however, they performed only once, *and then for the last time on record* , while Lord Strange's company appeared in this season upon six occasions. This company, under its various later titles, retained the position it had now attained—of the leading Court company—for the next forty years. It is evident, then, that the amalgamation of the leading members of Lord Strange's acrobats, the Lord Chamberlain's, the Earl of Leicester's, and the Lord Admiral's players, which I have shown began in tentative Court performances in the Christmas season of 1588-89, and which culminated in the success of the thoroughly organised company in the season of 1591-92, was—at least in its later stage—fostered by similar official sanction and encouragement to that which brought about the formation of the Queen's company in 1582-83. Edmund Tilney, the Master of the Revels, who chose the players for the Queen's company in 1583, held the same position in 1591, and evidently exercised a similar function in forwarding the promotion of Lord Strange's company, and the discarding of the Queen's company for Court purposes in the latter year. It is significant that Henslowe, the owner of the Rose Theatre, where Lord Strange's players commenced to perform on 19th February 1592, was made a Groom of the Privy Chamber in that year, and that the weekly payments of his fees to Tilney, in connection with his new venture, begin at that time. Henslowe became the financial backer of this company in 1591, at which time, it shall be shown, later on, that James Burbage's fortunes were at a low ebb, and that he also was in disfavour with the authorities. Henslowe evidently was brought into the affair by Tilney's influence, the office of Groom of the Privy Chamber being a reward for his compliance. It shall be indicated that Tilney and Henslowe had probably held similar relations in connection with the Queen's company, which evidently performed at the Rose under Henslowe between 1587 and 1591.

I have shown a connection between Burbage's company, *i.e.* the Lord Chamberlain's, and the Lord Admiral's company between 1585 and 1589, and will now inquire into the previous identity of the latter company.

A company performing under the licence of Lord Charles Howard of Effingham appears in the Court records between 1574 and 1577. Between 1581 and June 1585 there are no provincial records of any company performing under this nobleman's licence, and, until 6th January 1586, no Court records. On this latter date a company licensed by this nobleman, who was now Lord Admiral, appeared at Court working in conjunction with the Lord Chamberlain's company. The last provincial visit of Lord Howard's old company is at Ipswich in 1581. The first provincial record of his new company—the Lord Admiral's—is at Dover in June 1585, when the entry reads: "Paid unto my Lord Admiralles and my Lord Lycestors players 20 shillings." This seems to show that the new Admiral's company had joined forces with the remnant of Lord Leicester's players, the depletion of which company at this time was occasioned by the departure of seven of their members, including Kempe, Pope, and Bryan, for Denmark.

Their next recorded provincial visit is to Ipswich under date of 20th February 1586, when they are mentioned as the Lord Admiral's players. In this same year they appear at Cambridge, also as the Lord Admiral's players. On 15th November 1586 they are recorded at Coventry as having been paid twenty shillings, and immediately following, under the same date of entry, the Lord Chamberlain's men are recorded as being paid three shillings and fourpence, and on 15th November 1587 they are again recorded at Coventry as receiving twenty shillings; and again, under the same date, is an entry recording the payment of five shillings "to the Lord Chamberlain's Musicians that came with the Judge at the assizes."

The juxtaposition of the entries on these records of the names of these two companies in 1586 and 1587, and their union in a performance before the Court in January 1586, shows that a combination of some sort between them was formed in 1585. *Who, then, were the men that composed the Lord Admiral's company from 1585 to 1589?*

In 1592, when Lord Strange's players left Burbage to perform under Henslowe at the Rose, we are assured that Edward Alleyn was the manager of the company, and, though the manager of Lord Strange's company, that he still styled himself a Lord Admiral's man. When, then, did Edward Alleyn, who is mentioned in the Leicester records in 1584 as a member of the Earl of Worcester's company, become a Lord Admiral's man and cease to perform under the licence of the Earl of Worcester? Is it not palpable that the change took place in 1585, when all records of Worcester's company cease for several years and a new Lord Admiral's company begins? The last record of a provincial performance for Worcester's company is at Barnstaple in 1585. The Court and provincial records of 1586 show that within about eight months of its inception the Lord Admiral's company worked in conjunction with Burbage's players—the Lord Chamberlain's men. That this connection continued in the case of Edward Alleyn and a few others of the Admiral's men, who were old Worcester men, and that they preserved their licensed identity through the several changes in the title of the company, until they finally separated early in 1594, shall be made apparent in this history.

It is evident that Edward Alleyn's brother, John Alleyn, joined the Admiral's men at about the time of its inception, when his old company, Lord Sheffield's players, suddenly disappear from the records. Their last recorded provincial performance is in Coventry, under date of 15th November 1585, *the Lord Admiral's men and the Lord Chamberlain's men being recorded there under the same date of entry* . John Alleyn continued his connection with the Lord Admiral's men at least as late as July 1589, when he is mentioned as "servant to me the Lord Admiral" in a letter from the Privy Council to certain aldermen. After this he is not heard of again either in connection with Lord Strange's or the Admiral's men. He was evidently one of the discarded actors in the reorganisations of 1589-91.

Past critics, ignoring the fact that there are no records of either Court, London, or provincial performances for Worcester's company between 1585 and 1589-90, have assumed that this company was in existence during these years, and that it was disrupted and reorganised in 1589, Edward Alleyn leaving it and joining the Lord Admiral's men at that period. This inference is drawn erroneously from the following facts: first, that Richard Jones, who is recorded in 1584, in the Leicester records, as a member of Lord Worcester's company, in January 1589, sold to Edward Alleyn his share in theatrical properties, consisting of playing apparel, playbooks, instruments, etc., owned by him conjointly with Robert Brown, Edward Alleyn, and his brother, John Alleyn, all of whom are supposed to have been members of Worcester's company at that time, as Brown and Edward Alleyn are also recorded in 1584 as members of that company; secondly, that John Alleyn is mentioned as a servant to the Lord Admiral later on in this year; and thirdly, that Edward Alleyn, when managing Lord Strange's company in 1593, is also mentioned as a Lord Admiral's man.

In the light of the foregoing facts and deductions it is evident that the Earl of Worcester's company, or at least a large portion of it, *became the Lord Admiral's company in 1585* , and that, at about the same time, they became affiliated with Burbage and the Lord Chamberlain's company. It is probable, however, that in making this change they discarded some of their old members and took on others, John Alleyn evidently joining them from Sheffield's company at that time.

The new licence they sought and secured in 1585 was evidently made necessary by the disfavour and ill repute which the ill-regulated behaviour of some of their members—whom they now discarded—had gained for them. In June 1583 the Earl of Worcester's company was refused permission to perform in Ipswich, the excuse being given that they had passed through places infected by the plague. They were, however, given a reward on their promise to leave the city, but instead of doing so they proceeded to their inn and played there. The Mayor and Court ordered that the Earl of Worcester should be notified, that this company should never again receive a reward from the city, and that they leave at once on pain of imprisonment. Though the Mayor and Court, at the entreaty of the company, agreed not to inform the Earl of their misconduct, it is not unlikely that this and similar happenings came to his knowledge, as they seem to have had little respect for municipal authorities. They were again in trouble in March 1584, when they quarrelled with the Leicester authorities. Finding at their inn at Leicester the commission of the Master of the Revels' company, which in leaving Leicester three days before this company had inadvertently left behind, they appropriated it and presented it to the Leicester authorities as their own, stating that the previous company had stolen it from them. Not being believed, they were forced to produce their own licence, when they were refused permission to play, but given an angel to pay for their dinner. Later in the day, meeting the Mayor on the street, they again asked leave to play, and, being refused, abused the Mayor with "evyll and contemptuous words, and said they would play whether he wold or not," and went "in contempt of the Mayor with drum and trumpet through the town." On apologising later to the Mayor and begging him not to inform the Earl of Worcester, they secured leave to play on condition that they prefaced their performance with an apology for their misconduct and a statement that they were permitted to play only by the Mayor's goodwill.

If their past reputation had been good in Leicester there seems to be no reason why they should have wished to perform under another company's licence. We may infer that these were not isolated instances of their misbehaviour, and that their change of title in 1585 was made necessary by reports of their misconduct coming to the notice of the old Earl of Worcester. No company of players is known to have acted under this nobleman's licence after 1585.

In 1589, when the process of amalgamation between the Lord Admiral's, the

Lord Chamberlain's, and Lord Leicester's companies, and Lord Strange's acrobats, which resulted in the formation of Lord Strange's company, was under way, discarded members of their companies, including, no doubt, some of the players of the old Worcester company, secured a licence from the new Earl of Worcester and continued to perform—though mostly as a provincial company—until 1603. Other old members, including Robert Brown—the leader of the former Worcester company—and Richard Jones, formed a new company for continental performances. Brown and others continued to make continental trips for years afterwards, while Richard Jones rejoined the Lord Admiral's men in 1594, after they and the Lord Chamberlain's men had separated.

It was plainly, then, Richard Jones' share in the stage properties of the Lord Admiral's company that Edward Alleyn bought in 1589. It is apparent that he also bought out his brother's and Robert Brown's shares, as neither of them afterwards appeared as Strange's or Admiral's men. *This would give Edward Alleyn entire ownership of the properties of the Admiral's company* , and, consequently, an important share in the new amalgamation.

It was on Burbage's stage, then, that this great actor between 1585 and 1589—after having spent several years touring the provinces—entered upon and established his metropolitan reputation, attaining in the latter year, at the age of twenty-three, a large, if not the largest, share in the properties and holdings, and also the management of the strongest company of players in England, as well as the reputation of being the greatest actor of the time.

It somewhat enlarges our old conception of the beginnings of Shakespeare's theatrical experiences and dramatic inspiration to know, that when he entered into relations with James Burbage, in 1586-87, and for from four to six years afterwards, he had as intimate associates both Edward Alleyn and Richard Burbage; two young men of about his own age, who were already winning a good share of the notice and appreciation that later established them as the leading actors of the age. Which of them was the greater was one of the moot questions of the day eight to ten years later, when they had become the star actors of rival companies, and those the foremost two in London.

It is now pertinent to inquire as to which of these companies, if to any, Shakespeare was connected previous to the amalgamation, and also, whether or not he became a member of Lord Strange's company, along with Richard Burbage, and acted under, or wrote for, Alleyn and Henslowe between 1591 and 1594.

The suggestion which was first made by Mr. Fleay—in which he has since been followed by encyclopædists and compilers—that Shakespeare joined Lord Leicester's company upon one of its visits to Stratford-upon-Avon in 1586 or 1587, is plainly without foundation in the light of the foregoing facts, as is also his assumption that Lord Strange's company was merely a continuation of Lord Leicester's company under new patronage.

Lord Leicester's company spent the greater part of the years between 1585-86 and 1589 performing in the provinces. The records of its provincial visits outnumber all of those recorded for the other three companies concerned in the reorganisation of 1589. If Shakespeare acted at all in these early years he must have done so merely incidentally. When we bear in mind the volume and quality of his literary productions, between 1591 and 1594, it becomes evident that his novitiate in dramatic affairs in the dark years, between 1585-86 and 1592, was of a literary rather than of an histrionic character, though he also acted in those years. He would have found little time for dramatic composition or study during these years had he accompanied Lord Leicester's company in their provincial peregrinations. Bearing in mind his later habit of revising earlier work it is not unlikely that some of his dramatic work, which from internal and external evidence we now date between 1591 and 1594, is rewritten or revised work originally produced before 1591.

It is palpable that Shakespeare had not been previously affiliated with Lord Strange's acrobats, nor a member of the Lord Admiral's company, and evident, in view of the above facts and deductions, as well as of his future close and continuous connection with James Burbage, that his inceptive years in London were spent in his service, working in various capacities in his business and dramatic interests. It is apparent that between 1586-87 and 1588-89 Shakespeare worked for James Burbage as a bonded and hired servant. In Henslowe's *Diary* there are several instances of such bonds with hired servants, and covenant servants, covering terms of years—usually from two to three—between Henslowe and men connected with the Lord Admiral's company. It shall be shown later that Nashe in his preface to Greene's *Menaphon* alludes to

Shakespeare in this capacity.

The title of *Johannes factotum* , which Greene, in 1592, bestowed upon Shakespeare, as well as the term "rude groome," which he inferentially applies to him, when coupled with the tradition collected by Nicholas Rowe, his earliest biographer, who writes: "He was received into the company then in being, at first, in a very mean rank, but his admirable wit, and the natural turn of it to the stage, soon distinguished him, if not as an extraordinary actor, yet as an excellent writer," all point to a business rather than to an exclusively histrionic connection with the Burbages in his earlier London years. These evidences are confirmed by the gossip of William Castle, who was parish clerk of Stratford for many years, and who was born two years before Shakespeare died, and, consequently, must have known and talked with many people who had known Shakespeare. He frequently told visitors that Shakespeare was first received in the playhouse as "a servitor." When the legal usage and business customs of that period, as exhibited in legal records and in Henslowe's *Diary* , are considered it becomes apparent that a youth of from twenty-one to twenty-three years of age, newly come to London, with no previous training in any particular capacity, with a bankrupt father and without means of his own, could not very well associate himself with a business concern in any other capacity than that of an indentured apprentice or bonded and hired servant. Without such a legally ratified connection with some employer, a youth of Shakespeare's poverty and social degree, and a stranger in London, would be classed before the law as a masterless man and a vagrant. The term "servitor" then does not refer to his theatrical capacity—as stated by Halliwell-Phillipps—but to his legal relations with James Burbage, his employer. Only sharers in a company were classed as "servants" to the nobleman under whose patronage they worked; the hired men were servants to the sharers, or to the theatrical owner for whom they worked.

Being connected with the Burbages between 1586-87 to 1588-89, whatever theatrical training Shakespeare may have received came undoubtedly from his association with the Lord Admiral's and Lord Hunsdon's companies, which performed at the Theatre in Shoreditch as one company during these years, combining in the same manner as Strange's company and the Lord Admiral's company did, under Henslowe and Alleyn at the Rose, between 1592-94. Though in later life he was reputed to be a fair actor, he never achieved great reputation in this capacity; it was plainly not to acting that he devoted himself most seriously during these early years. Working in the capacity of handy-man or, as Greene calls him, *Johannes factotum* , for the Burbages, besides, possibly, taking general charge of their stabling arrangements,—as tradition asserts,—he also, no doubt, took care of the theatrical properties, which included the MSS. and players' copies of the plays owned by the company. Though Shakespeare's grammar school days ended in Stratford he took his collegiate course in Burbage's Theatre. During the leisure hours of the years of his servitorship he studied the arts as he found them in MS. plays. *I shall show, later, that Robert Greene, through the pen of his coadjutor, Thomas Nashe, in an earlier attack than that of 1592, refers to Shakespeare's servitorship and to the acquisitions of knowledge he made during his idle hours.* That he made good use of his time and his materials, however, is demonstrated by the fact that in the four years intervening between the end of 1590 and the end of 1594, he composed, at least, seven original plays, two long poems, and over sixty sonnets; much of this work being since and still regarded—three hundred years after its production—as a portion of the world's greatest literature.

While it is apparent, even to those critics and biographers who admit the likelihood that Shakespeare's earliest connection with theatrical affairs was with the Burbage interests, that Lord Strange's company—of which they, erroneously, suppose that he still continued to be a member—ceased to perform under James Burbage in, or before, February 1592, when they began to play under Alleyn and Henslowe's management at the Rose Theatre, no previous attempt has been made to explain the reasons for Lord Strange's company's connection with Henslowe, or to account for the fact that no plays written by Shakespeare were presented by this company while they performed at the Rose Theatre, though it is very evident, and admitted by all critics, that he composed several original plays during this interval.

As it is probable that James Burbage, through his son Richard, retained some interest in Lord Strange's company during the period that it acted under Henslowe's and Alleyn's management, the question naturally arises, Why should Lord Strange's company, which was composed largely of members of Leicester's and Hunsdon's company, both of which, affiliated with the Admiral's men, had been previously associated with the Burbage interests—why should this company, having Richard Burbage in its membership, enter into business relations with Henslowe and perform for two years at the Rose Theatre instead of playing under James Burbage at the Theatre in Shoreditch in summer, and at the Crosskeys in winter, where they formerly played?

A consideration of the business affairs of James Burbage will show that the temporary severance of his business relations with Strange's men was due to legal and financial difficulties in which he became involved at this time, when strong financial backing became necessary to establish and maintain this new company, which, I have indicated, had been formed specially for Court performances. It also appears evident that he again incurred the disfavour of Lord Burghley and the authorities at this time.

In the following chapter I analyse the reasons for the separation of Strange's company from Burbage at this time and give inceptive evidence that Shakespeare did not accompany Strange's men to Henslowe and the Rose, but that he remained with Burbage as the manager and principal writer for the Earl of Pembroke's company—a fact regarding his history which has not hitherto been suspected.

<<span id="filepos0041790452"> a> CHAPTER IV

SHAKESPEARE AND THE EARL OF PEMBROKE'S COMPANY

Almost from the time he first began to operate the Shoreditch Theatre in 1576, until his death in 1597, James Burbage had trouble from one source or another regarding his venture. Both the Theatre, and the Curtain at Shoreditch, seem to have been particularly obnoxious to the puritanical element among the local authorities, who made numerous attempts to have both theatres suppressed. There were long intervals during the term of Burbage's lease of the Theatre when, owing to various causes, both the Theatre and the Curtain were closed. Among the causes were—the prevalence of the plague, alleged rioting, and the performance of plays which infringed the law prohibiting the presentation of matters of Church and State upon the stage. Burbage's Theatre came into disfavour with the authorities in 1589 owing to the performance there of plays relating to the Martin Marprelate controversy; and that it was the combined Strange's and Admiral's company that was concerned in these performances, and not the Queen's, as is usually supposed, is evident from the fact that in November, when they moved to their winter quarters in the City at the Crosskeys, the Lord Mayor, John Hart, under instructions from Lord Burghley, issued orders prohibiting them from performing in the City. It is not unlikely that their connection with the Martin Marprelate affair earlier in the year at the Theatre, and their deliberate defiance of the Mayor's orders in performing at the Crosskeys on the afternoon of the day the prohibition was issued, delayed the full measure of Court favour presaged for them by their recent drastic—and evidently officially encouraged—reorganisation. When they performed at Court in the Christmas seasons of 1589-90 and 1590-91, they did so as the Lord Admiral's men; and in the latter instance, while the Acts of the Privy Council credit the performance to the Admiral's, the Pipe Rolls assign it to Strange's men. Seeing that the Admiral's men had submitted dutifully to the Mayor's orders, and that Lord Strange's men—two of whom had been committed to the Counter for their contempt—were again called before the Mayor and forbidden to play, the company's reason for performing at Court at this period as the Lord Admiral's men is plainly apparent. It is not unlikely that their transfer to Henslowe's financial management became necessary because of Burbage's continued disfavour with Lord Burghley and the City authorities, as well as his financial inability adequately to provide for the needs of the new Court company, in 1591. In the defiance of Burghley's and the Mayor's orders by the Burbage portion of the company, and the subservience of the Alleyn element at this time, is foreshadowed their future political bias as independent companies. From the time of their separation in 1594 until the death of Elizabeth, the Lord Admiral's company represented the Cecil-Howard, and Burbage's company the Essex factional and political interests in their covert stage polemics. Shakespeare's friendship and intimacy with Essex's *fidus Achates* , the Earl of Southampton, between 1591 and 1601, served materially to accentuate the pro-Essex leanings of his company. This phase of Shakespeare's theatrical career has not been investigated by past critics, though Fleay, Simpson, and Feis recognise the critical and biographical importance of such an inquiry, while the compilers do not even suspect that such a phase existed.

While the Curtain seems to have escaped trouble arising from its lease and its ownership, the Theatre came in for more than its share. The comparative freedom of the Curtain from the interference and persecution of the local authorities in these years was evidently due to the fact that it was the recognised summer home of the Queen's company between 1584 and 1591. It is evident that during the winter months the Queen's company performed at the Rose between 1587—when this theatre was erected—and the end of 1590; it was superseded at Court by Lord Strange's company at the end of 1591, and was disrupted during this year—a portion of them continuing under the two Duttons, as the Queen's men. The Rose, being the most important, centrally located, theatre available for winter performances during these years, would naturally be used by the leading Court company. It is significant that Lord Strange's company commenced to play there when they finally supplanted the Queen's company at Court. It is probable that they played there also before it was reconstructed during 1591.

The large number of old plays formerly owned by the Queen's company, which came into the hands of the companies associated with Henslowe and Burbage at this time, suggests that they bought them from Henslowe, who had retained them, and probably other properties, in payment for money owed him by the Queen's company which, having been several years affiliated with him at the Rose, would be likely to have a similar financial experience to that of the Lord Admiral's men, who, as shown by the *Diary* , got deeply into his debt between 1594 and 1598. The Queen's company was plainly not in a prosperous financial condition in 1591. It is apparent also that some Queen's men joined Strange's, and Pembroke's men at this time bringing some of these plays with them as properties.

In building the Theatre, in 1576, Burbage had taken his brother-in-law, one John Brayne, into partnership, agreeing to give him a half-interest upon certain terms which Brayne apparently failed to meet. Brayne, however, claimed a moiety and engaged in a lawsuit with Burbage which dragged along until his death, when his heirs continued the litigation. Giles Allen, the landlord from whom Burbage leased the land on which he had built the Theatre, evidently a somewhat sharp and grasping individual, failed to live up to the terms of his lease which he had agreed to extend, provided that Burbage expended a certain amount of money upon improvements. There was constant bickering between Allen and Burbage regarding this matter, which also eventuated in a lawsuit that was carried on by Cuthbert and Richard Burbage after their father's death in 1597. Added to these numerous irritations, came further trouble from a most unlooked-for source. In 1581, Edmund Peckham, son of Sir George Peckham, on the most shadowy and far-fetched grounds, questioned the validity of Giles Allen's title to the land he had leased to Burbage, and not only entered a legal claim upon it, but found a jury to agree with him. This suit also continued for years.

In *Burbage and Shakespeare's Stage* , which is the best account yet written of Burbage and his affairs, Mrs. Stopes evidently gives all available details regarding his legal embarrassments. Mrs. Stopes' account makes it clear that by the year 1591, James Burbage could not have amassed much wealth in the practice of his profession, though we may infer that he had enriched a number of lawyers. In the legal records examined by Mrs. Stopes, I learn that upon 10th January 1591 an attachment on the Theatre was awarded against Burbage for contempt of court on the plea of one Robert Miles, and though several attempts were made in the meantime to have the matter adjudicated, that the attachment was still in force in November 1591; there is apparently no record as to when and how the matter was finally settled and the attachment lifted. It evidently held three months later when Lord Strange's company commenced to perform under Henslowe at the Rose, or at least as late as December and January 1591-92, in which months Henslowe repaired and enlarged the Rose in anticipation of the coming of Strange's company. I have reason to believe that some settlement was made regarding the attachment upon Burbage's Theatre early in 1592, and that the Earl of Pembroke's company played there when in London from that time until we lose sight of them late in 1593. In the spring of 1594 their membership and properties were absorbed by the Lord Admiral's company and Lord Strange's company, most of the properties they had in the way of plays going to the latter.

The Rose Theatre was first erected in 1587. By the year 1592, when Lord Strange's players commenced to appear there, it evidently needed to be repaired and enlarged. Between the 7th of March and the end of April 1592, Henslowe paid out over £100 for these repairs; the work paid for having been done in the few months preceding 19th February 1592, when Lord Strange's company commenced to perform there.

Henslowe was much too careful a business man to invest the large sum of money in the enlargement and repair of the Rose Theatre, which he did at this time, without the assurance of a profitable return. When his other business transactions, as shown in his *Diary* , are considered it becomes apparent that in undertaking this expenditure he would stipulate for the use of his house by Lord Strange's men for a settled period, probably of, at least, two years, and that Edward Alleyn, who was the manager of Lord Strange's men at this time, and continued to be their manager for the next two years,—though still remaining the Lord Admiral's man,—was Henslowe's business representative in the company.

Alleyn married Henslowe's stepdaughter in October, this year, and continued to be his business associate until Henslowe's death, when, through his wife, he became his heir. Lord Strange's company, under this and the later title of the Lord Chamberlain's men, continued to perform at theatres owned or operated by Henslowe, and probably also under Alleyn's management, until the spring of 1594, when it appears that they returned to Burbage and resumed performances, as in 1589-91, at the Theatre in Shoreditch in summer, and at the Crosskeys in winter.

The assumption that Shakespeare was a member of Lord Strange's company while it was with Henslowe, is based upon three things: first, the undoubted fact that his close friend and coadjutor, Richard Burbage, was one of the leading members of the company at that time; secondly, that *The First Part of Henry VI.* , in an early form, was presented as a revised play by Lord Strange's men at the Rose, upon 3rd March 1592, and upon several subsequent occasions while they were with Henslowe; thirdly, an alleged reference to Shakespeare's name in Peele's *Edward I.* , which was owned by the Lord Admiral's players after 1594, and presumably written for them when Shakespeare acted with the company before 1592. Let us examine these things in order.

At first sight it is a plausible inference, in view of Shakespeare's earlier, and later, connection with the Burbages, that he should continue to be associated with Richard Burbage during these two years. When the reason for the formation of Lord Strange's company is remembered, however, it becomes clear that Richard Burbage would be a member for the very reason that Shakespeare would not. The intention in the formation of this company being to secure an organisation of the best actors for the services of the Court, it is evident that Richard Burbage—who even at this early date was one of the leading actors in London—would be chosen. Shakespeare never at any time attained distinction as an actor.

The presentation of *Henry VI., Part I.* , by Lord Strange's players, as a reason for Shakespeare's membership, infers that he was the author of this play, or, at least, its reviser in 1592, and that the Talbot scenes are his. This, consequently, implies that Nashe's commendatory references to these scenes were complimentary to work of Shakespeare's in 1592. It is evident that the play of *Henry VI.* , acted by Lord Strange's men in March 1592, and commended by Nashe, was much the same play as *Henry VI., Part I.* , included in all editions of Shakespeare. Textual criticism has long since proved, however, that this was not a new play in 1592—

though marked "ne" by Henslowe—but merely a revision. Three hands are distinctly traceable in it; the unknown original author who wrote the opening lines:

"Hung be the heavens with black, yield day to night!
Comets, importing change of times and states,
Brandish your crystal tresses in the sky,
And with them scourge the bad revolting stars
That have consented unto Henry's death!"

Whoever wrote these lines, it is very palpable that Shakespeare did not. The second hand in the play was the reviser of 1592 who introduced the Talbot passages. There cannot be the slightest doubt that this was George Peele, who in 1592, and for some time before and later, was the principal producer and reviser of plays for the Lord Admiral's company. The classical allusions in the Talbot scenes, and the manner in which they are always lugged in by the ear, as though for adornment, plainly proclaim the hand of Peele, and as plainly disassociate Shakespeare from their composition. The third hand is clearly Shakespeare's. The "Temple Garden" scene has been accepted by practically all critics as unquestionably his work; it is not the work, either, of his "pupil pen." His revision was evidently not made until 1594, when the Lord Chamberlain's company brought the MS. with them as a portion of their properties, upon their return to Burbage. The references to red and white roses, as the badges of Lancaster and York, were evidently then introduced by Shakespeare in order to link together, and give dramatic continuity to, the whole historical series connected with the Wars of the Roses, upon which he had already worked, or was then working for his company. There is not a single classical allusion in the "Temple Garden" scene, while there are twenty-seven classical allusions in the whole play: eight of them being in the Talbot passages. In Shakespeare's *Richard II.* —which I shall give good evidence was written within about a year of the time that *Henry VI.* was presented as a new play—there are two classical allusions. In any authentic play by Marlowe, Greene, or Peele of an equal length there will be found from forty to eighty classical allusions, besides, as a rule, a number of Latin quotations. In revising the first part of *Henry VI.* in, or after, 1594, it is evident that Shakespeare eliminated many classical allusions, and that in the early work which he did upon *The Contention* , and also in his final revision of *The Contention* , into the second and third parts of *Henry VI.* , he eliminated classical allusions, reducing the average in these plays to from thirty to thirty-five. In his own acknowledged historical plays, *Richard II.* , *King John* , *Richard III.* , *Henry IV.* , and *Henry V.* , *there is not an average of six classical allusions* .

When the settled animus which Nashe, in conjunction with Greene, between 1589-92, displays against Shakespeare is better understood, the utter improbability of his referring to Shakespeare's work in a laudatory manner in the latter year shall readily be seen. When, also, the high praise which Nashe bestows upon Peele in the same publications in which he attacks Shakespeare is noted, it becomes evident that he again intends to commend Peele in his complimentary allusion to the Talbot scenes. Peele was the principal writer and reviser for Henslowe at this period, while not one of Shakespeare's plays is mentioned in his whole *Diary* .

While I believe that the reference to Shakespeare's name in *Edward I.* —which was first noticed by Mr. Fleay—was actually intended by Peele, the passage in which it occurs pertains to an early form of the play, which was old when it was published in 1593. It was written by Peele for the Lord Admiral's company before their conjunction with Strange's men under Henslowe, and at the time when they acted with Lord Hunsdon's company at the Theatre in Shoreditch in summer, and at the Crosskeys in the winter. It is significant that this play was not acted by Lord Strange's men during their tenure of the Rose Theatre, and that in 1595, after they had separated from Henslowe, it was revised and presented as a new play by the Lord Admiral's company. It is quite likely that it was the property of Pembroke's company in 1592-93. The allusion to Shakespeare in this play is probably the first evidence we possess of the well-authenticated fact that as an actor he usually appeared in kingly parts. It is recorded of him that he played the part of the ghost in *Hamlet* , and his friend, John Davies, the poet, writes in 1603:

"Some say, good Will, which I in sport do sing,
Hadst thou not played some kingly parts in sport,
Thou hadst been a companion for a King."

The reference to his name by Peele in *Edward I.* , in which play Shakespeare evidently took the part of John Baliol, the Scottish King, is as follows:

"Shine with thy golden head,
Shake thy *speare* , in honour of his name,
Under whose royalty thou wear'st the same."

Against the assumption that Shakespeare acted with Lord Strange's company under Alleyn and Henslowe for two years, there is some positive, and much inferential, evidence, the strongest of the latter being that between the end of 1590 and the middle of 1594, at about which latter date the Lord Chamberlain's company parted from Henslowe, Shakespeare produced,—as I shall later demonstrate,—in addition to *Venus and Adonis* , *Lucrece* , and nearly half of the whole body of his *Sonnets* , at least seven new plays, not one of which was performed at the Rose by Lord Strange's company. The remainder of the evidence against this assumption shall develop in this history.

We may infer that Henslowe in entering into business relations with Lord Strange's company would make quite as binding a contract with them as we find him making a few years later with the Lord Admiral's men. In those contracts he binds the players to play at the Rose and "at no other house publicly about London"; further stipulating that should the London theatres be closed by the authorities for any reason "then to go for the time into the country, then to return again to London."

The fact that his manager, and son-in-law, Edward Alleyn, accompanied Lord Strange's men upon their provincial tour in 1593, when, owing to the plague, the London theatres were closed by order of the Council, implies a similar understanding with this company.

The words "in any other house publicly about London" in Henslowe's contracts with players apparently infer that they retained the right of giving private and Court performances upon their own account and for their own profit. The money they received for Court performances appears to have belonged exclusively to the players, as the total amount collected by them is at times turned over to Henslowe in part payment of their corporate indebtedness to him, and credited to them in full. Had Henslowe shared in these payments his portion would have been deducted from the credits. It is evident that he was merely the financial backer of, and not a sharer in, this company.

In the apparently comprehensive list of the members of Lord Strange's company —as it existed early in 1592—which was owned by Edward Alleyn and is now preserved at Dulwich College, while Pope and Bryan, who came from Leicester's company, and Richard Burbage and others, no doubt, who came from

Lord Hunsdon's company are mentioned, Shakespeare's name does not appear. There is no reason why he should not have been mentioned in this list had he been a member of the company at that time. About three years later, when Strange's men had separated from Henslowe and the Admiral's men, and returned to Burbage, Shakespeare is mentioned, with William Kempe and Richard Burbage, in the Court records as receiving payment for Court performances, from which we may infer that he was regarded as one of the leading members of, and was also a sharer in, the company at this time.

Where, then, was Shakespeare during the period of Henslowe's management? What company of players performed in the plays he produced between about the end of 1590 and the middle of 1594, which are—*The Comedy of Errors* , *Love's Labour's Lost* , *Love's Labour's Won* , *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* , *King John* , *Richard II.* , *Richard III.* , and *Midsummer Night's Dream* ? Later on I shall advance conclusive evidence to prove that all of these plays were written in this interval, though most of them were materially revised in later years.

In order to answer these questions it will be advisable to revert to a consideration of the drastic changes which took place between the end of 1588 and the beginning of 1592, in the comparative standing, as well as in the personnel, of several of the most prominent companies of players. I have shown that early in 1589 a union took place between the leading members of Lord Strange's tumblers, the Lord Admiral's, the Lord Chamberlain's, and the Earl of Leicester's men. If an average of only three men were taken from each of these companies—forming a company of twelve players, which was then regarded as a large company—it would necessarily leave a considerable number of men free to make new connections, as three of the companies involved in the changes disappear from the records at that time. Thereafter we hear no more of Lord Strange's tumblers, nor of Lord Leicester's, nor Lord Hunsdon's players. It is not unlikely, then, that while some of the players discarded from the three companies that had gone out of existence would drift into different existing companies, that some of them would unite to form a new company. The disruption of the Queen's company in 1590-91 would also leave some men at large. As most of these men had been previously connected with well-known companies, which performed principally in London, it is likely that they would endeavour to continue as London performers instead of forming a provincial company.

That such a company for London performances was actually formed some time in 1591 is evident in the appearance of a company—hitherto unheard of for sixteen years—under the patronage of the Earl of Pembroke. Between the years 1576 and 1592 there is no mention of a company acting under this nobleman's licence in either the provincial or Court records, nor is there any mention of, or reference to, such a company in any London records.

All we know about this new company is that record of it appeared for the first time in December 1592, when it played twice before the Court; that it returned to London in the early autumn of 1593 after a disastrous tour in the provinces, being compelled to pawn a portion of its properties to pay expenses; that Marlowe wrote *Edward II.* for it in about 1593; that *The True Tragedy of the Duke of York* was one of its properties, and that Shakespeare was connected with either the revision or the theatrical presentation of this play at the period that it belonged to Pembroke's company, *i.e.* in 1592, as he is attacked by Greene on that score at this time.

Owing to the prevalence of the plague in London in 1593, and early in 1594, the public performance of plays was prohibited. The Earl of Pembroke's company, which had failed to make its expenses travelling, and which was not allowed to play in London on account of the plague, evidently disrupted in the spring or summer of 1594; and as some of its members joined Henslowe at this time and some of the properties came to the Burbage organisation, we may infer that they were brought as properties by men who came from Pembroke's company to Burbage.

Edward Alleyn, who toured the provinces in the summer of 1593 with Lord Strange's company, and for the same reason that Pembroke's toured at this time, *i.e.* owing to the plague in London, wrote to Henslowe in September 1593, from the country, inquiring as to the whereabouts of Pembroke's company, and was told by Henslowe that they had returned to London five or six weeks before, as they could not make their charges travelling. He further informed him that he had heard that they were compelled to pawn their apparel. The fact that the fortunes of Pembroke's company should be a matter of interest to Alleyn and Henslowe appears to imply that it was a new theatrical venture of some importance, and that it probably had in its membership some of the Admiral's, Strange's, or Queen's company's old players. That a new company should play twice before the Court, in what was evidently the first or second year of its existence, speaks well for the influence of its management and for the quality of its plays and performances. After this mention of Pembroke's company in Henslowe's letter to Alleyn in September 1593, we hear nothing further concerning it as an independent company until 1597. At that time Gabriel Spencer and Humphrey Jeffes, who were evidently Pembroke's men in 1592-93, became members of, and sharers in, the Lord Admiral's company, with which they had evidently worked—though under Pembroke's licence—between 1594 and 1597.

It is now agreed by critics that the Admiral's and Chamberlain's men, who had been united under Alleyn for the past two years, divided their forces and fortunes in June 1594, or earlier. It is evident that some of Pembroke's company's plays were absorbed by the Lord Chamberlain's company, and that a few of the Pembroke men joined the Lord Admiral's company at this time. As evidence of the absorption of the plays of Pembroke's men by Lord Strange's players is the fact that between 3rd and 13th June 1594, when Strange's players acted under Henslowe for the last time, three of the seven plays they then presented, —*Hamlet* , *Andronicus* , and *The Taming of a Shrew* ,—while all old plays, were new to the repertory of Strange's company presented upon Henslowe's stages, and furthermore, that all three of these plays were rewritten—or alleged to have been rewritten—by Shakespeare. At about the same time that Pembroke's company ceased to exist the Earl of Sussex's company, which had recently played for Henslowe, was also disrupted. It is evident that some of these men joined the Lord Admiral's and the Lord Chamberlain's companies also, and that in this manner the Lord Chamberlain's company secured *Andronicus* , which had lately been played by the Earl of Sussex's men as well as by Pembroke's men.

Humphrey Jeffes and Gabriel Spencer, whose names are mentioned in *The True Tragedy of the Duke of York* , which was played by Pembroke's company in 1592-93, and who, we may therefore infer, were members of Pembroke's company in those years, or else were members of the company that previously owned this play, are mentioned as playing with the Lord Admiral's company as Pembroke's men in 1597. The name of John Sinkler, who is mentioned as one of Lord Strange's men in Edward Alleyn's list, which evidently represents the company as it appeared in the first performance of *Four Plays in One* at the Rose Theatre upon 6th March 1592, also appears with that of Gabriel Spencer and Humphrey Jeffes in *The True Tragedy of the Duke of York* . From this we may infer either that Sinkler left Strange's company and joined Pembroke's men after this date, or else that he, Spencer, and Jeffes, before 1592, were members of the company that originally owned the play. It is very evident that the originals of the three parts of *Henry VI.* were old plays composed at about the time of the Spanish Armada, and, it is generally agreed, for the Queen's company. As *The True Tragedy of the Duke of York* —in common with *Hamlet* and *The Taming of a Shrew* —was also later revised or rewritten by Shakespeare, into the play now known as *Henry VI., Part III.* , it evidently came from Pembroke's company to Lord Strange's company, along with *Hamlet* and *The Taming of a Shrew* in 1594. Later on I shall adduce evidence showing that *The Taming of a Shrew* and *Hamlet* were owned and acted by a company, or companies, associated with the Burbage interests previous to the amalgamation of 1589, and that *The True Tragedy of the Duke of York* , which was an old play in 1592, probably originally written by Greene, was revised in that year by Marlowe and Shakespeare for Pembroke's company, and that its final change into the play now known as *Henry VI., Part III.* , was made by Shakespeare in, or after, 1594, when he rejoined the Lord Chamberlain's company.

Within a year of the time that Marlowe, with Shakespeare, revised *The True Tragedy of the Duke of York* for Pembroke's men in 1592, Marlowe also wrote *Edward II.* for this company, Shakespeare producing *Richard II.* for the company at the same time. The friendly co-operation between Shakespeare and Marlowe, which I shall show commenced in 1588-89, and which aroused Greene's jealousy at that time, was evidently continued until the death of Marlowe in June 1593. It is in the historical plays composed or revised between 1591-93 by Shakespeare that Marlowe's influence is most apparent, as also is Shakespeare's influence upon Marlowe in his one play which we know was produced at the same period. *Edward II.* is much more Shakespearean in character than any other of Marlowe's plays. It is evident that their close association at this time reacted favourably upon the work of each of them.

The deductions I draw from these and other facts and inferences still to be developed, is, that shortly after the Lord Admiral's and Lord Strange's men passed under Alleyn's and Henslowe's management, some time between Christmas 1590 and Christmas 1591, Shakespeare formed Lord Pembroke's company, becoming its leader and also its principal producer of plays, and that it was through his influence and the reputation that certain of his early plays had already attained in Court circles that this new company was enabled to appear twice before the Court in the Christmas season of 1592. To demonstrate this hypothesis it will be necessary to revert to a consideration of Shakespeare's status in theatrical affairs between 1588-89 and 1594.

<<span id="filepos0041827780"> a> CHAPTER V

SHAKESPEARE AND THE SCHOLARS

1588-1594

In considering the conditions of Shakespeare's life at the beginning of his career in London, and his application to the College of Heralds for a grant of arms in 1596, it must be borne in mind that social distinctions and class gradations at that time still retained much of their feudal significance. At that period an actor, unless protected by the licence of a nobleman or gentleman, was virtually a vagrant before the law, while felonies committed by scholars were still clergyable. When Ben Jonson was indicted for killing Gabriel Spencer in 1598, he pleaded and received benefit of clergy, his only legal punishment consisting in having the inside of his thumb branded with the Tyburn "T," and it is unlikely that even this was inflicted.

While a university degree thus enhanced both the social and legal status of sons of yeomen and tradesmen, the sons of equally reputable people who became actors were correspondingly debased both socially and legally.

Though the established status which the actors' profession attained during Shakespeare's connection with the stage—and largely through his elevating influence—made these legal disabilities of an actor a dead letter, it still continued to militate against the social standing of its members. John Davies leaves record that at the accession of James I. it was gossiped that Shakespeare, had he not formerly been an actor, instead of being appointed Groom of the Privy Chamber, might have received the higher appointment of Gentleman of the Privy Chamber. This idea owed its birth to Shakespeare's friendship with the Earl of Southampton, whose influence in the early days of the new Court—when he himself stood high in favour—secured the office for his other protégé, John Florio, one of the gentlemen by the grace of a university degree who joined issue with the "university pens" against Shakespeare, and who in consequence—as I shall later demonstrate—shall be pilloried to far-distant ages in the character of Sir John Falstaff. Though Shakespeare had acquired a legal badge of gentility with his coat of arms in 1599, the histrionic taint—according to Davies—proved a bar to his official promotion.

"Some say, good Will, which I in sport do sing,
Hadst thou not played some kingly parts in sport,
Thou hadst been a companion to a King
And been a King among the meaner sort."

Arrogance towards social inferiors, as well as servility to superiors, is always manifested most offensively in the manners of those who are themselves conscious of equivocal social standing. I shall adduce evidence to prove that from the time we first begin dimly to apprehend Shakespeare in his London environment, in 1588-89, until his final return to Stratford in about 1610, he was continuously and spitefully attacked and vilified by a coterie of jealous scholars who, while lifted above him socially by the arbitrary value attaching to a university degree, were in no other sense his superiors either in birth or breeding. It was evidently, then, the contemptuous attitude of his jealous scholastic rivals, as well as the accruing material advantages involved, that impelled Shakespeare in 1596 to apply, through his father, to the College of Heralds for official confirmation of a grant of arms alleged to have been made to his forebears.

Shakespeare's earliest scholastic detractor was Robert Greene, who evidently set much store by his acquired gentility, as he usually signed his publications as "By Robert Greene, Master of Arts in Cambridge," and who, withal, was a most licentious and unprincipled libertine, going, through his ill-regulated course of life, dishonoured and unwept to a pauper's grave at the age of thirty-two. After the death of Greene, when his memory was assailed by Gabriel Harvey and others whom he had offended, his friend Nashe, who attempted to defend him, finding it difficult to do so, makes up for the lameness of his defence by the bitterness of his attack on Harvey. Nashe, in fact, resents being regarded as an intimate of Greene's, yet his, and Greene's, spiteful and ill-bred reflections upon Shakespeare's social quality, education, and personal appearance, between 1589 and 1592, were received sympathetically by the remainder of the "gentlemen poets,"—as they styled themselves in contradistinction to the stage poets,—and used thereafter for years as a keynote to their own jealous abuse of him.

John Florio, in his *First Fruites* , published in 1591, and after he had entered the service of the Earl of Southampton, though not yet assailing Shakespeare personally, as did these other scholars, appears as a critic of his historical dramatic work.

In 1593 George Peele, in his *Honour of the Garter* , re-echoes the slurs against Shakespeare voiced by Greene in the previous year. In the same year George Chapman, who thereafterwards proved to be Shakespeare's arch-enemy among the "gentlemen scholars," caricatures him and his affairs in a new play, which he revised, in conjunction with John Marston, six years later, under the title of *Histriomastix, or The Player Whipt* . Neither the authorship, date of production, nor satirical intention of the early form of the play has previously been known.

In 1594 Chapman again attacks Shakespeare in *The Hymns to the Shadow of Night* , as well as in the prose dedication written to his colleague, Matthew Roydon. In the same year Roydon enters the lists against Shakespeare by publishing a satirical and scandalous poem reflecting upon, and distorting, his private affairs, entitled *Willobie his Avisa* . From this time onward until the year 1609-10, Chapman, Roydon, and John Florio—who in the meantime had joined issue with them—continue to attack and vilify Shakespeare. Every reissue, or attempted reissue, of *Willobie his Avisa* was intended as an attack upon Shakespeare. Such reissues were made or attempted in 1596-1599-1605 and 1609, though some of them were prevented by the action of the public censor who, we have record, condemned the issue of 1596 and prevented the issue of 1599. As no copies of the 1605 or 1609 issues are now extant, it is probable that they also were estopped by the authorities. In 1598-99 these partisans (Chapman, Roydon, and Florio) are joined by John Marston, and a year later, also by Ben Jonson, when, for three or four years, Chapman, Jonson, and Marston collaborate in scurrilous plays against Shakespeare and friends who had now rallied to his side. In about 1598 Thomas Dekker and Henry Chettle joined sides with Shakespeare and answered his opponents' attacks by satirising them in plays. John Florio, while not participating in the dramatic warfare, attacks Shakespeare viciously in the dedication to his *Worlde of Wordes* , in 1598, and comes in for his share of the satirical chastisement which Shakespeare, Dekker, and Chettle administer to them in acted, as well as in published, plays.

As Ben Jonson's dramatic reputation became assured the heat of his rivalry against Shakespeare died down; his vision cleared and broadened and he, more plainly than any writer of his time, or possibly since his time, realised

Shakespeare in his true proportions. Jonson, in time, tires of Chapman's everlasting envy and misanthropy, and quarrels with him and in turn becomes the object of Chapman's invectives. After Shakespeare's death Jonson made amends for his past ill-usage by defending his memory against Chapman, who, even then, continued to belittle his reputation.

While various critics have from time to time apprehended a critical attitude upon the part of certain contemporary writers towards Shakespeare, they have usually regarded such indications as they may have noticed, merely as passing and temporary ebullitions, but no conception of the bitterness and continuity of the hostility which actually existed has previously been realised. Much of the evidence of the early antagonism of Greene and Nashe to Shakespeare has been entirely misunderstood, while their reflections against other dramatists and actors are supposed to have been directed against him. Past critics have been utterly oblivious of the fact that Florio, Roydon, and Chapman and others colluded for many years in active hostility to Shakespeare.

In publications issued between 1585 and 1592 Robert Greene vents his displeasure against various dramatic writers whose plays had proved more popular than his, as well as against the companies of actors, their managers, and the theatre that favoured his rivals. The writers and actor-managers whom he attacks have been variously identified by past writers. Mr. Richard Simpson, one of the most acute, ingenious, and painstaking pioneers in Shakespearean research, whose *School of Shakespeare* was issued after his death in 1878, supposed that all of Greene's attacks in these years, including those in which his friend, Thomas Nashe, collaborated with him, were directed against Shakespeare and Marlowe. Since Mr. Simpson wrote, however, now over forty years ago, some new light has been thrown upon the theatrical companies, and their connection with the writers of the period with which he dealt, which negatives many of his conclusions. While it is evident that Greene was jealous of, and casts reflections upon, Marlowe, to whom he refers as "Merlin" and "the athiest Tamburlaine," Mr. Fleay has since proved that several of Greene's veiled reflections were directed against others. Mr. Fleay's suggestion that Robert Wilson was the Roscius so frequently referred to by Greene and Nashe is, however, based upon incorrect inference, though he proves by several characteristic parallels, which he adduces between lines in *The Three Ladies of London* , *The Three Lords and Three Ladies* , and *Fair Em* ,—the last of which is satirically alluded to by Greene in his *Farewell to Folly* , in 1591,—that they were all three either written, or revised, by the same hand. While his ascription of the composition of the first two of these plays to Wilson is probably also correct, his assumption that Wilson was a writer and an actor for Lord Strange's company in 1591 was due to lack of collected and compiled records concerning the Elizabethan companies of players at the time he wrote, which have since been made available.

There is nothing whatever known of Robert Wilson after 1583, when he is mentioned, along with Tarleton, as being selected by Tilney, the Master of the Revels, for the Queen's company. In an appended note I analyse the literary evidence upon which Mr. Fleay associates Robert Wilson with Strange's company in 1589-91.

Robert Wilson must have been passé as an actor in 1589, if indeed he was then living, while Strange's company was composed of younger and rising men, all recently selected for their histrionic abilities from several companies, amongst which, it appears evident, the Queen's company was not then included, though it is likely that in 1591 some Queen's men joined Strange's company. That Robert Wilson was not the Roscius referred to by Greene and Nashe in 1589 and 1590 a further examination of the evidence will fully verify.

The person indicated as Roscius by Nashe in his Address to Greene's *Menaphon* in 1589, and in Greene's *Never Too Late* in 1590, was the leading actor of a new company that was then gaining great reputation, which, however, was largely due—according to Nashe—to the pre-eminent excellence of this Roscius' acting. The pride and conceit of this actor had risen to such a pitch, Nashe informs us in his *Anatomy of Absurdity* (1589), that he had the "temerity to encounter with those on whose shoulders all arts do lean." This last is a plain reference to George Peele, whom he had recently described in his *Menaphon* "Address" as "The Atlas of Poetry." In the following year Greene refers to the same encounter in the first part of his *Never Too Late* . Pretending to describe theatrical conditions in Rome, he again attacks the London players and brings in Roscius —*who without doubt was Edward Alleyn* —as contending with Tully, who is Peele. "Among whom," he writes, "in the days of Tully, one Roscius grew to be of such exquisite perfection in his faculty that *he offered to contend with the orators of that time in gesture as they did in eloquence, boasting that he would express a passion in as many sundry actions as Tully could discourse it in a variety of phrases* . Yet so proud he grew by the daily applause of the people that he looked for honour or reverence to be done him in the streets, which conceit when Tully entered into with a piercing insight, he quipped it in this manner:

"It chanced that Roscius and he met at dinner both guests unto Archias, the poet, when the proud comedian dared to make comparison with Tully. Why Roscius art thou proud with Æsop's crow, being prankt with the glory of others' feathers? Of thyself thou canst say nothing and if the cobbler hath taught thee to say *Ave Cæsar* disdain not thy tutor because thou pratest in a King's chamber. What sentence thou utterest on the stage flows from the censure of our wits, and what sentence or conceit the people applaud for excellence, that comes from the secrets of our knowledge. I grant your acting, though it be a kind of mechanical labour, yet well done, 'tis worthy of praise, but you worthless if for so small a toy you wax proud."

Here again Tully is Peele, and Greene is merely describing more fully the alleged encounter between Alleyn and Peele, mentioned by Nashe the year before in *The Anatomy of Absurdity* .

Though it has never been noticed before, in this connection, we possess in Edward Alleyn's own papers preserved at Dulwich College a remarkable confirmation of this emulation, which, however, Greene and Nashe distort to the prejudice of Alleyn, who, as shall be shown, was innocent in the affair. The whole thing arose from admirers of Alleyn's among the theatre-frequenting gentry offering wagers to friends who championed Peele in order to provide after-dinner entertainment for themselves, by putting the poet and the player on their mettle in "expressing a passion"—the one in action and the other in phrases. Alleyn refused the contest "for fear of hurting Peele's credit," but gossip of the proposed wager got abroad and was distorted by the scholars, who affected to be insulted by the idea of one of their ilk contending with a player. Failing to bring about this match, Alleyn's backers, not to be beaten, and in order, willy-nilly, to make a wager on their champion, evidently tried to get Alleyn to display his powers before friends who professed to admire Bentley and Knell —actors of a slightly earlier date, who were now either retired from the stage or dead. The following letter and poem were evidently written in 1589, as Nashe's reference to the "encounter," which is the first notice of it, was published in this year:

"Your answer the other nighte, so well pleased the Gentlemen, as I was satisfied therewith, though to the hazarde of ye wager; and yet my meaninge was not to prejudice Peele's credit; neither wolde it, though it pleased you so to excuse it, but beinge now growen farther into question, the partie affected to Bentley (scornynge to wynne the wager by your deniall), hath now given you libertie to make choice of any one playe, that either Bentley or Knell plaide, and least this advantage, agree not with your minde, he is contented, both the plaie, and the time, shall be referred to the gentlemen here present. I see not, how you canne any waie hurte your credit by this action; for if you excell them, you will then be famous, if equall them; you wynne both the wager and credit, if short of them; we must and will saie Ned Allen still.—Your frend to his power,

W.P.

Deny me not sweete Nedd, the wager's downe,
and twice as muche, commande of me and myne:
And if you wynne I sweare the half is thyne;
and for an overplus, an English Crowne.
Appoint the tyme, and stint it as you pleas,
Your labor's gaine; and that will prove it ease."

(addressed) "To Edward Allen."

This letter to Edward Alleyn from his friend "W.P." is finely written in an English, and the verses in an Italian, hand. The words, "Ned Allen," "sweete Nedd," and "English Crowne" are in gilt letters. The occasion and its instigation must have been of interest to Alleyn for him to have preserved the letter for so many years; his reason for doing so evidently being to enable him to refute Greene's published and widely circulated misconstruction of it. It is evident that both the letter and poem were written while Alleyn was still young, when he already had ardent admirers, and his reputation was growing but not generally admitted, and at about the time that Peele had commenced to write for his company. Alleyn was twenty-four years old in 1589, and already regarded by many as the best actor in London. George Peele, who had written for the Queen's company in the past, at about, or shortly after, this date, began to write for Strange's company. His *Edward I.* , which was published in 1593, was undoubtedly written between 1589-91, when Shakespeare was still connected with Strange's men.

The "cobbler" who taught Roscius to say "Ave Cæsar" was Christopher Marlowe, whose father was a shoemaker. Marlowe was the principal writer for

Burbage at this period, and continued so until his death in 1593. "Ave Cæsar" and "a King's chamber" are references to the play of *Edward III.* , which I shall demonstrate later was written by Marlowe, though revised by Shakespeare after Marlowe's death. It is the only known play of this period in which the expression "Ave Cæsar" occurs.

In many of Greene's romances the central figure has been recognised as a more or less fanciful autobiographical sketch. In his last work, *A Groatsworth of Wit* , in the introduction to which he makes his well-known attack upon Shakespeare, the adventures of Roberto, the protagonist of the story, tally approximately with known circumstances of Greene's life. In the opening of the story, Roberto's marriage, his desertion of his wife, his attachment to another woman who deserts him when he falls into poverty, all coincide with the facts in his own career. From this we may infer that what follows has also a substratum of truth regarding a temporary connection of Greene with Alleyn's company as playwright, though it is evident that he describes Alleyn's theatrical conditions as they were between 1589 and 1592 and after Alleyn had acquired the theatrical properties of the old Admiral's company from Richard Jones, Robert Browne, and his brother, John Alleyn, in 1589. Greene's account of Roscius' own attempts at dramatic composition need not be taken very seriously, though it is not at all improbable that Alleyn, who was very ambitious, at some time tentatively essayed dramatic composition or revision. It was certainly a very inexperienced playwright, yet one who had some idea of the style of phrase that caught the ear of the masses, who interpolated the tame and prosy lines of the old *Taming of a Shrew* so freely with selections from Marlowe's most inflated grandiloquence, and one, also, who had access to Marlowe's manuscripts. The plays from which these selections were taken were all Burbage properties in 1588-89, as was also *The Taming of a Shrew* . It was this kind of dramatic stage-carpenter work that left an opening for Nashe's strictures in 1589 in his *Menaphon* "Address." Several of the later covert references to Alleyn as Roscius, by Greene and Nashe, indicate that he had tried his hand upon the composition and revision of dramatic work, in which he had the assistance of a "theological poet." While they undoubtedly refer to Shakespeare as one of the "idiot art-masters" they use the plural and include others in authority in Burbage's company.

Greene, representing himself as Roberto after his mistress had deserted him, describes himself as sitting under a hedge as an outcast and bemoaning his fate.

"On the other side of the hedge sat one that heard his sorrow, who, getting over, came ... and saluted Roberto.... 'If you vouchsafe such simple comfort as my ability will yield, assure yourself that I will endeavour to do the best that ... may procure your profit ... the rather, for that I suppose you are a scholar; and pity it is men of learning should live in lack.' Roberto ... uttered his present grief, beseeching his advice how he might be employed. 'Why, easily,' quoth he, 'and greatly to your benefit; for men of my profession get by scholars their whole living.' 'What is your profession?' said Roberto. 'Truly, sir,' said he, 'I am a player.' 'A player!' quoth Roberto; 'I took you rather for a gentleman of great living; for if by outward habit men should be censured, I tell you you would be taken for a substantial man.' 'So am I, where I dwell,' quoth the player, 'reputed able at my proper cost to build a windmill. What though the world once went hard with me, when I was fain to carry my fardel a foot-back? *Tempora mutantur* —I know you know the meaning of it better than I, but I thus construe it—*It is otherwise now* ; for my very share in playing apparel will not be sold for two hundred pounds.' 'Truly,' said Roberto, 'it is strange that you should so prosper in that vain practice, for that it seems to me your voice is nothing gracious.' 'Nay, then,' said the player, 'I mislike your judgement; why, I am as famous for *Delphrygus* and *The King of Fairies* as ever was any of my time; *The Twelve Labours of Hercules* have I thundered on the stage, and played three scenes of the Devil in *The Highway to Heaven* .' 'Have ye so?' said Roberto; 'then I pray you pardon me.' 'Nay, more,' quoth the player, 'I can serve to make a pretty speech, for I was a country author, passing at a moral; for it was I that penned *The Moral of Man's Wit* , *The Dialogue of Dives* , and for seven years' space was absolute interpreter of the puppets. But now my almanac is out of date:

'"The people make no estimation
Of morals, teaching education——"

Was this not pretty for a rhyme extempore? If ye will ye shall have more.' 'Nay, it is enough,' said Roberto; 'but how mean ye to use me?' 'Why, sir, in making plays,' said the other, 'for which you shall be well paid, if you will take the pains.' Roberto, perceiving no remedy, thought it best to respect his present necessity, (and,) to try his wit, went with him willingly; who lodged him at the town's end in a house of retail ... there by conversing with bad company, he grew *a malo in pegus* , falling from one vice to another.... But Roberto, now famoused for an arch-playmaking poet, his purse, like the sea, sometime swelled, anon, like the same sea, fell to a low ebb; yet seldom he wanted, his labours were so well esteemed. Marry this rule he kept, whatever he fingered beforehand, was the certain means to unbind a bargain; and being asked why he so slightly dealt with them that did him good, 'It becomes me,' saith he, 'to be contrary to the world. For commonly when vulgar men receive earnest, they do perform. When I am paid anything aforehand, I break my promise.'"

The player described here is the same person indicated by Nashe three years before in his *Menaphon* "Address." Both are represented as being famous for their performance of *Delphrygus* and *The King of the Fairies* , but the events narrated connecting Greene with Alleyn, and the opulent condition of the latter, refer to a more recent stage of Greene's and Alleyn's affairs than Nashe's reference. Both Nashe's and Greene's descriptions point to a company of players that between 1589-91 had won a leading place in London theatrical affairs; that performed at the Theatre; that played *Hamlet* , *The Taming of a Shrew* , *Edward III.* , and *Fair Em* : the leader of which personally owned theatrical properties valued at two hundred pounds, and who was regarded by them as an actor of unusual ability. Seven years before 1592 this company performed mostly in the provinces, carrying their "fardels on their backs." It is very apparent then that it is Alleyn's old and new companies, the Worcester-Admiral-Strange development, to which the allusions refer.

While the "idiot art-masters" indicated by Nashe and Greene as those who chose, purchased, and reconstructed the plays used by Strange's company, included others beside Shakespeare in their satirical intention, this phase of their attacks upon the Theatre and its leading figures became centred upon Shakespeare as his importance in the conduct of its business increased, and his dramatic ability developed.

It is now generally agreed by critics that Shakespeare cannot have left Stratford for London before 1585, and probably not before 1586-87, and the likelihood has been shown that he then entered the service of James Burbage as a hired servant, or servitor, for a term of years. When Henslowe, in 1598, bound Richard Alleyn as a hired servant, he did so for a period of two years, which, we may judge, was then the customary term of such service. Assuming that Shakespeare bound himself to Burbage in 1586-87, his term of service would have expired in 1588-89. Though we possess no evidence that Shakespeare had produced any original plays at this time, the strictures of Nashe and Greene make it apparent that he had by then attained to the position of what might be called dramatic critic for the Burbage interests. In this capacity he helped to choose the plays purchased by his employers for the use of the companies in which they were interested.

Greene had come at odds with theatrical managers several years before Shakespeare could have attained to the position of reader for the Burbages. Even some of Greene's earlier reflections, however, seem to be directed against the management of the Shoreditch Theatre. In attacking theatrical managers he writes in, what he calls, "mystical speeches," and transfigures the persons he attacks under fictitious characters and names. In his *Planetomachia* , published in 1585, he caricatures one actor-manager under the name of Valdracko, who is an actor in *Venus' Tragedy* , one of the tales of the book. Valdracko is described as an old and experienced actor, "stricken in age, melancholick, ruling after the crabbed forwardness of his doting will, impartial, for he loved none but himself, politic because experienced, familiar with none except for his profit, skillful in dissembling, trusting no one, silent, covetous, counting all things honest that were profitable." This characterisation cannot possibly have referred to Shakespeare in the year 1585. When it is noticed, however, that nearly all of Greene's later attacks are directed against the Theatre and its fellows, it is probable that the stubborn, wilful, and aged James Burbage is also here scurrilously indicated. In writing of London and the actors in his "dark speeches," Greene refers to London as Rome and to the Shoreditch Theatre as the "theatre in Rome." In his *Penelope's Web* he writes: "They which smiled at the theatre in Rome might as soon scoff at the rudeness of the scene as give a plaudite at the perfection of the acting." While it is Burbage's Theatre that is here referred to, it is evident that his quarrel was not now with the actors—whom both he and Nashe praise in their quality—but with the plays, their authors, and the theatrical managers who patronised them.

It is evident that Shakespeare had something to do with the acceptance by the Burbages of plays by Marlowe and Kyd, and that Greene believed his own lack of patronage by the companies playing at the Theatre was due to Shakespeare's adverse influence. Knowing Shakespeare to be *the son of a Stratford butcher, educated at a grammar school and recently a bonded servitor to Burbage* , this "Master of Arts in Cambridge" questions the literary and dramatic judgment of the grammar school youth, and late serving-man, and employs his fellow university scholar, Thomas Nashe, to ridicule him and his critical pretensions.

Nashe returned to England in 1589, after a two years' absence upon the

Continent, and cannot have acquired at first hand the knowledge he shows of dramatic affairs in London during the preceding year. It is evident that this knowledge was gained from Greene for that purpose. Mr. Fleay has demonstrated that Nashe, in his preface to Greene's *Menaphon* , alludes satirically to Thomas Kyd as the author of *The Taming of a Shrew* , and of the old *Hamlet* . Both of these plays were owned by Lord Strange's (now the Lord Chamberlain's) company in 1594, when, as I have suggested, they had recently taken them over from Pembroke's company, which was undoubtedly a Burbage company—using some of the Burbage properties and plays while under Shakespeare's management in 1591-94. Being Burbage properties, these plays were acted by Lord Strange's company between 1589 and 1591. Besides satirically indicating these plays and their author, Nashe goes on to criticise the "idiot art-masters" who make choice of such plays for the actors. "This affectation of actors and audience," writes Nashe—meaning this suiting of plays to the crude taste of the actors and the cruder taste of the public—"is all traceable to their idiot art-masters that intrude themselves as the alchemists of eloquence, who (mounted on the stage of arrogance) think to outbrave better pens with the swelling bombast of bragging blank verse, indeed it may be the ingrafted overflow of some killcow conceit, *etc.* Among this kind of men that repose eternity in the mouth of a player I can but engross some *deep read school men or grammarians, who have no more learning in their skull than will serve to take up a commodity, nor art in their brains than was nourished in a serving man's idleness* , will take upon them to be ironical censurers of all when God and poetry doth know they are the simplest of all."

This attack of Nashe's upon Shakespeare was recognised by all of the scholastic clique, and certain of its phrases are re-echoed in later attacks upon him by other scholars for several years afterwards; in fact, Nashe's diatribe proved to be a cue for Shakespeare's future detractors. In the expression "killcow," Nashe alludes to Shakespeare's father's trade. A few years later—1594—Chapman refers to Shakespeare as "judgements butcher," and later still, in 1598, Florio in his dedication of the *Worlde of Wordes* , and, in 1600, Ben Jonson in *Every Man out of his Humour* , also refer satirically to the supposed fact that Shakespeare's father was a butcher. In 1593 Chapman, in attacking Shakespeare in the early *Histriomastix* , re-echoes the term "idiot art-master." The phrase "ingrafted overflow of a killcow conceit" refers to Shakespeare's additions to, or revisions of, plays owned by his company that were originally written by such scholars as Greene. "Deep read school men or grammarians" is a reference to Shakespeare's grammar school education. "No more learning than will serve to take up a commodity" refers to Shakespeare's business management of Burbage's affairs, and "a serving man's idleness" to his recently ended term of service with Burbage in that capacity.

It shall be shown that in later years when Chapman, Roydon, Florio, Marston, and Jonson attacked Shakespeare in published or acted plays that he invariably answers them in kind. We have only inferential evidence that he answered Greene's and Nashe's reflections at this time by writing a ballad against them. Ralph Sidley, in verses prefixed to Greene's *Never Too Late* , published in the following year (1590), defends Greene from the attack of a ballad or jig maker, whom he calls a clown.

"The more it works, the quicker is the wit;
The more it writes, the better to be 'steemed.
By labour ought men's wills and wits be deem'd,
Though dreaming dunces do inveigh against it.
But write thou on, though Momus sit and frown;
A Carter's jig is fittest for a clown.
Bonum quo communius eo melius. "

At the end of Greene's *Never Too Late* in the host's tale a ballad maker and player is attacked under the name of Mullidor; he is described as follows: "He is said to be a fellow that was of honest parents, but very poor: and his person was as if he had been cast in Æsop's mould; his back like a lute, and his face like Thersites', his eyes broad and tawny, his hair harsh and curled like a horse-mane, his lips were of the largest size in folio.... The only good part that he had to grace his visage was his nose, and that was conqueror-like, as beaked as an eagle.... Into his great head (Nature) put little wit, that he knew rather his sheep by the number, for he was never no good arithmetician, and yet he was a proper scholar, and well seen in ditties."

When we discount the caricature and spiteful animus of this description it closely matches the presentments of Shakespeare given by the most authoritative portraits which have come down to us. His parents, as we know, were undoubtedly poor, otherwise he would not have been in London as a servitor to Burbage. His eyes are invariably shown as hazel in colour and widely set apart; his hair heavy, curled, and falling to his shoulders; his lips very full, his nose large and "beaked," and his brow, or "great head," of unusual height and breadth. It is apparent, then, that this is a spiteful and distorted, but recognisable, description of Shakespeare, who, I infer from many indications in his opponents' plays, wore his hair in a peculiar manner, was not very tall, and was also somewhat thin-legged. The Chandos portrait which shows his shoulders, suggests that they were slightly sloping and somewhat round rather than square. On the whole, a physical type not calculated to inspire fear in a bully. Greene, on the other hand, is described by Chettle as a handsome-faced and well-proportioned man, and we may judge of a rather swash-buckling deportment.

Robert Greene died in September 1592. Shortly afterwards Henry Chettle published Greene's *Groatsworth of Wit* , which was his last literary effort, and appended a farewell letter of Greene's addressed "To those gentlemen, his quandam acquaintances, that spend their time in making plays, R.G. wisheth a better exercise and wisdom to prevent his extremities." In this epistle, addressing Marlowe, Nashe, and Peele, as well as two others at whose identity we can only guess, he says:

"If wofull experience may move you, gentlemen, to beware, or unheard-of wretchedness intreat you to take heed, I doubt not but you will look backe with sorrow on your time past, and endevour with repentance to spend that which is to come. Wonder not (for with thee will I first beginne), thou famous gracer of tragedians, that Greene, who hath said with thee, like the foole in his heart, 'There is no God,' should now give glorie unto his greatnesse; for penetrating is his power, his hand lyes heavy upon me, he hath spoken unto me with a voyce of thunder, and I have felt he is a God that can punish enemies. Why should thy excellent wit, his gift, be so blinded that thou shouldest give no glory to the giver? Is it pestilent Machivilian policie that thou hast studied? O peevish follie! what are his rules but meere confused mockeries, able to extirpate in small time the generation of mankinde? for if *sic volo, sic iubeo* , holde in those that are able to command, and if it be lawfull *fas et nefas* , to doo any thing that is beneficiall, onely tyrants should possesse the earth, and they, striving to exceed in tiranny, should each to other be a slaughterman, till, the mightyest outliving all, one stroke were left for Death, that in one age mans life should end.... With thee I joyne young Juvenall, that byting satyrist, that lastly with mee together writ a comedie. Sweet boy, might I advise thee, be advised, and get not many enemies by bitter words; inveigh against vaine men, for thou canst doo it, no man better, no man so well; thou hast a libertie to reproove all and name none; for one being spoken to, all are offended—none being blamed, no man is injured. Stop shallow water still running, it will rage; tread on a worme, and it will turne; then blame not schollers who are vexed with sharpe and bitter lines, if they reproove thy too much liberty of reproofe.

"And thou no lesse deserving then the other two, in some things rarer, in nothing inferiour, driven, as myselfe, to extreame shifts, a little have I to say to thee; and, were it not an idolatrous oath, I would sweare by sweet S. George, thou art unworthy better hap, sith thou dependest on so mean a stay. Base-minded men all three of you, if by my misery yee bee not warned; for unto none of you, like me, sought those burs to cleave; those puppits, I meane, that speake from our mouths, those anticks garnisht in our colours. Is it not strange that I to whom they have been beholding, is it not like that you to whom they all have been beholding, shall, were yee in that case that I am now, be both of them at once forsaken? Yes, trust them not; for there is an upstart crow beautified with our feathers, that, with his *Tygres heart wrapt in a players hyde* , supposes hee is as well able to bombast out a blanke-verse as the best of you; and, beeing an absolute Johannes-fac-totum, is in his owne conceit the onely Shake-scene in a countrey. Oh, that I might intreat your rare wittes to bee imployed in more profitable courses, and let these apes imitate your past excellence, and never more acquaynte them with your admyred inventions! I knowe the best husband of you all will never proove an usurer, and the kindest of them all will never proove a kinde nurse; yet, whilst you may, seeke you better maisters; for it is pitty men of such rare wits should bee subject to the pleasures of such rude groomes.

"In this I might insert two more that both have writte against these buckram gentlemen; but let their owne worke serve to witnesse against their owne wickednesse, if they persever to maintaine any more such peasants. For other new comers, I leave them to the mercie of those painted monsters, who, I doubt not, will drive the best-minded to despise them; for the rest, it skills not though they make a jeast at them...."

It is now accepted by critics that these allusions of Greene's were directed against Shakespeare, and that the line "Tygres heart wrapt in a players hyde" refers to Shakespeare's revision of *The True Tragedy of Richard, Duke of York* , a play in the original composition of which Greene evidently had some hand. It has not before been suggested, however, that this play was performed by the Earl of Pembroke's company, under Shakespeare's management, in 1592. It was evidently the publicity given Marlowe's and Shakespeare's revision by the stage revival of the play by Pembroke's company at this time that called forth Greene's attack. This brings us to the end of the year 1592 in outlining chronologically the evidences of the antagonism of the scholars to Shakespeare.

In June 1593 George Peele shows animus against Shakespeare by echoing Greene's phrases in the introduction to *The Honour of the Garter* . In these verses, in complimenting several noblemen and "gentlemen poets," such as Sidney, Spenser, Harrington, Fraunce, Campion, and others, he refers also to

"ordinary grooms,
With trivial humours to pastime the world,
That favour Pan and Phœbus both alike."

This appears to be a reflection of Greene's "rude groomes" of the previous September and a reference to Shakespeare's theatrical work and his *Venus and Adonis* , which, though only recently published, had no doubt been read in MS. form for some time before.

I shall now proceed to show that at the end of 1593, after Lord Pembroke's company had returned from their unprofitable provincial tour when they were compelled to "pawn their apparel for their charges," George Chapman wrote a play satirising Shakespeare and the disastrous fortunes of this company. This play was revised by Marston and Chapman in 1599, under the title of *Histriomastix, or The Player Whipt* , as a counter-attack upon Shakespeare in order to revenge the satire which he, in conjunction with Dekker and Chettle, directed against Chapman and Marston in *Troilus and Cressida* , and in a play reconstructed from *Troilus and Cressida* by Dekker and Chettle, called *Agamemnon* , in 1598-99. This latter phase of the matter shall be dealt with when I come to a consideration of the literary warfare of the later period.

It has never before been suggested that George Chapman had any hand in the composition of *Histriomastix* , though Mr. Richard Simpson shows clearly that it was an old play roughly revised in the form in which it was acted in 1599. Mr. Simpson suggests that it might have been written by Peele, in its original form, owing to certain verbal resemblances between portions of it and Peele's dedication to his *Honour of the Garter* . He dates its original composition in about 1590, but in doing so had evidently forgotten that he had already written: "The early Chrisoganus (of this play) seems to be of the time when the Earl of Northumberland, Raleigh, and Harriot strove to set up an Academy in London, and the spirit of the play, and even its expressions, were quite in unison with Peele's dedication of his *Honour of the Garter* ,1593." All literary and historical references to the academical efforts of the Earl of Northumberland, Harriot, and others point to the years 1591-93 as the time in which this attempt to establish an Academy was made. Chapman in his dedication of *The Shadow of Night* to Roydon, in 1594, refers to the movement as then of comparatively recent date. "But I stay this spleen when I remember, my good Matthew, how joyfully oftentimes you reported unto me that most ingenious Derby, deep-searching Northumberland, and skill-embracing Earl of Hunsdon had most profitably entertained learning in themselves to the vital warmth of freezing Science," *etc.* Peele's allusions to the movement in his dedication to the *Honour of the Garter* , which is dated 26th June 1593, are as follows:

"Renowned Lord, Northumberland's fair flower,
The Muses' love, patron and favourite,
That artisans and scholars dost embrace.
And clothest Mathesis in rich ornaments,
That admirable mathematic skill,
Familiar with the stars and Zodiac,
To whom the heaven lies open as her book;
By whose directions undeceivable,
Leaving our Schoolmen's vulgar trodden paths,
And following the ancient reverent steps
Of Trismegistus and Pythagoras,
Through uncouth ways and unaccessible,
Doth pass into the pleasant spacious fields
Of divine science and philosophy," *etc.*

Shakespeare evidently reflects knowledge of this academical attempt and pokes fun at the scholars in his reference to "a little academie" in *Love's Labour's Lost* :

"Navarre shall be the wonder of the world
Our Court shall be a little academie
Still and contemplative in living art."

This play was originally written late in 1591, but was drastically revised late in 1594, or early in 1595, after Shakespeare had read Chapman's *Hymns to the Shadow of Night* ; and again, in 1598. The reference to the Academy was evidently introduced at the time of its first revision.

Mr. Simpson recognises the fact that most of the Chrisoganus passages, especially those in the earlier portions of *Histriomastix* , pertain to the play in its original form. If the reader will take the trouble to read Chapman's *Hymns to the Shadow of Night* (1594), his poem to Thomas Harriot, and his *Tears of Peace* , and compare their mental attitude and verbal characteristics with the "Chrisoganus" and "Peace" passages of *Histriomastix* , Chapman's authorship of the latter will become apparent. The following parallels from four of Chapman's poems are convincing, and they can be extended indefinitely:

Histriomastix —

"Have always borne themselves in Godlike State
With lofty foreheade higher than the stars."

De Guiana, Carmen Epicum —

"Whose forehead knocks against the roof of stars."

Histriomastix —

"Consume whole groves and standing fields of corn
In thy wild rage and make the proud earth groan."

The Shadow of Night —

"Convert the violent courses of thy floods,
Remove whole fields of corn and highest woods."

Histriomastix —

"Whose glory which thy solid virtues won
Shall honour Europe while there shines a sun."

Poem to Harriot —

"When thy true wisdom by thy learning won
Shall honour learning while there shines a sun."

Chapman in several instances in this play echoes Greene's slurs against

Shakespeare and, in the same manner as Peele in the *Honour of the Garter* , repeats the actual phrases and epithets used by Greene and Nashe.

Histriomastix —

"I scorn a scoffing fool about my throne—
An artless idiot (that like Æsop's daw
Plumes fairer feathered birds)."

These lines evince Chapman's knowledge of Nashe's phrase "idiot art-master," and of Greene's "upstart crow beautified with our feathers," and clearly pertain to the play in its earlier form (1593) when Greene's *Groatsworth of Wit* (published late in 1592) was still a new publication. In fact, it is not improbable that Nashe collaborated with Chapman in the early form of this play.

Again when Chapman writes the following lines:

Histriomastix —

"O age, when every Scriveners boy shall dippe
Profaning quills into Thessalies spring;
When every artist prentice that hath read
The pleasant pantry of conceipts shall dare
To write as confident as Hercules;
When every ballad-monger boldly writes," *etc*.

It is apparent that he again echoes Nashe's and Greene's attacks upon Shakespeare and Thomas Kyd, all of which, however, he appears to have thought (as have later critics) were directed against Shakespeare.

The lines quoted above evidently reflect Chapman's knowledge of Nashe's preface to Greene's *Menaphon* in the expressions "Scriveners boy," "artist prentice," and "ballad-monger," while the words

"shall dippe
Profaning quills into Thessalies spring"

refer to Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis* , and the lines from Ovid with which he heads that poem.

In 1593 when, as I have indicated, *Histriomastix* in its early form was written, Shakespeare had published *Venus and Adonis* and dedicated it to the Earl of Southampton. In the composition of this poem Shakespeare undoubtedly worked from Arthur Golding's translation of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* . He prefixed to the poem two lines from Ovid's fifteenth Elegy:

"Vilia miretur vulgus; mihi flavus Apollo
Pocula Castalia plena ministret aqua";

which are rendered in Marlowe's translation:

"Let base conceited wits admire vile things,
Fair Phœbus lead me to the Muses springs."

In *The Shadow of Night* , published in the following year, Chapman again resents the fact that one of Shakespeare's "small Latin and less Greek" should invade the classical preserves of the scholars for his poetical and dramatic subjects:

"Then you that exercise the virgin court
Of peaceful Thespia, my muse consort,
Making her drunken with Gorgonean dews,
And therewith all your ecstasies infuse,
That she may reach the topless starry brows
Of steep Olympus, crown'd with freshest boughs
Of Daphnean laurel, and the praises sing
Of mighty Cynthia: truly figuring
(As she is Hecate) her sovereign kind,
And in her force, the forces of the mind:
An argument to ravish and refine
An earthly soul and make it more devine.
Sing then with all, her palace brightness bright,
The dazzle-sun perfection of her light;
Circling her face with glories, sing the walks,
Where in her heavenly magic mood she stalks,
Her arbours, thickets, and her wondrous game,
(A huntress being never match'd in fame,)
Presume not then ye flesh-confounded souls,
That cannot bear the full Castalian bowls ,

Which sever mounting spirits from the senses,
To look into this deep fount for thy pretenses ."

In these lines, besides indicating Shakespeare's recent Ovidian excursion in *Venus and Adonis* by his reference to "Castalian bowls," Chapman shows knowledge of Shakespeare's intention, in the composition of *Love's Labour's Lost* , of exhibiting Queen Elizabeth as a huntress. Chapman's Cynthia of *The Shadow of Night* is plainly a rhapsodised idealisation of the Queen. Later on I shall elaborate the fact that *Love's Labour's Lost* was written late in 1591, or early in 1592, as a reflection of the Queen's progress to Cowdray House, the home of the Earl of Southampton's maternal grandfather, Viscount Montague, and that the shooting of deer by the Princess and her ladies fancifully records phases of the entertainments arranged for the Queen during her visit.

Assuming, then, from the foregoing evidence and inferences that Chapman composed the early *Histriomastix* in 1593, let us examine the play further in order to trace its fuller application to Shakespeare and his affairs in that year.

Though *Histriomastix* was revised as an attack upon Shakespeare in 1599 by Chapman and Marston, who had commenced to collaborate in dramatic work in the previous year, its original plot and action remain practically unaltered. In its revision its early anti-Shakespearean intention was merely amplified and brought up to date by a few topical allusions, fitting circumstances in the lives of the persons caricatured, pertaining to the later period. The substitution of *Troilus and Cressida* for *The Prodigal Child* , as the play within the play presented by Sir Oliver Owlet's company, is also due to the period of revision. All of the passages of the play which are suggestive of the period of revision are palpably in the style of John Marston.

Among the persons of the early play is Chrisoganus, a scholar and mathematician, who has set up an academy to expound the seven liberal Sciences: Grammar, Logic, Rhetoric, Arithmetic, Geometry, Music, and Astronomy, all of which are introduced as persons in the first act. Chrisoganus was undoubtedly intended for Chapman's friend Thomas Harriot, the mathematician and astronomer, who was so prominent in the academical movement of 1592-93. The name Chrisoganus is evidently a reflection of Harriot's *Ephemeris Chrisometra* , a MS. copy of which is preserved in Zion College. Chapman's poem to Harriot, prefixed to his *Achilles Shield* (1599), expresses many of the same ideas voiced in *Histriomastix* and in much the same language, and indicates Chapman's collaboration with Marston in the revision of the play in that year.

In the early *Histriomastix* Chapman represents himself in the character of Peace. When the utterances of Peace are compared with certain of Chapman's poems, such as his *Euthymia Raptus* , or *The Tears of Peace* (1609), his poem to Harriot (1598), *The Shadow of Night* (1594), and *Ovid's Banquet of Sense* (1595), in all of which he breaks away from his subject-matter at intervals to extol his own virtues and bewail his poverty and his neglect by patrons, it becomes evident that he transfigures himself in *Histriomastix* as Peace; which character acts as a chorus to, or running commentary on, the action of the play.

The whole spirit and purpose of this play is reproduced in *The Tears of Peace* , which is a dialogue between Peace and an interlocutor, who discuss at great length exactly the same ideas and subjects, dramatically treated, in *Histriomastix* , *i.e.* the neglect of learning and the learned, and "the pursuit of wealth, glory, greatness, pleasure, and fashion" by "plebian and lord alike," as well as the unaccountable success of an ignorant playwright who writes plays on any subject that comes into his head:

"And how they trot out in their lines the ring
With idly iterating oft one thing,
A new fought combat, an affair at sea,
A marriage or progress or a plea.
No news but fits them as if made for them,
Though it be forged but of a woman's dream."

The plays of no other dramatist of that period match the description of the subjects of the plays given here. The "progress," mentioned by Chapman, is undoubtedly a reference to *Love's Labour's Lost* ; "A marriage," *Midsummer Night's Dream* ; "a plea," *The Merchant of Venice* ; "A new fought combat," *Henry V.* —as a reflection of the military services of Southampton and Essex in Ireland in 1599; "an affair at sea," *Twelfth Night* , *The Merchant of Venice* , *etc.*

In the second scene of *Histriomastix* , to Peace, the Arts, and Chrisoganus, come Mavortius and a group of his friends representing the nobility whom the academicians endeavour to win to their attendance and support. Mavortius and his followers refuse to cultivate Chrisoganus and the Arts, preferring a life of dalliance and pleasure, and to patronise plays and players instead. Other characters are introduced representing the Law, the Army, and Merchandise, who also neglect the Arts and live for pastime and sport.

The company of players patronised by Mavortius performs under the licence of Sir Oliver Owlet, and under the leadership of Posthaste, an erstwhile ballad maker, who writes plays for the company and who threatens to return to ballad making when playing proves unprofitable.

One of Mavortius' followers, Landulpho, an Italian lord, criticises the play presented by Posthaste and his fellows, and lauds the Italian drama.

A period of peace and prosperity, during which Chrisoganus and the Arts are neglected by the extravagant and pleasure-seeking lords and populace, is followed by war with an aftermath of poverty when Sir Oliver Owlet's company of players is disrupted, and the actors are compelled to "pawn their apparel for their charges."

Enter Constable.

Host. Master Constable, ho! these players will not pay their shot.
Post. Faith, sir, war hath so pinch'd us we must pawn.
Const. Alas, poor players! Hostess, what comes it to?
Host. The Sharers dinners sixpence a piece. The hirelings—pence.
Post. What, sixpence an egg, and two and two an egg?
Host. Faith, famine affords no more.
Post. Fellows, bring out the hamper. Chose somewhat out o'th stock.

Enter the Players.

What will you have this cloak to pawn? What think you its worth?
Host. Some fewer groats.
Onin. The pox is in this age; here's a brave world fellows!
Post. You may see what it is to laugh at the audience.
Host. Well, it shall serve for a pawn.

The further development of this narrative will make it evident beyond any reasonable doubt that Posthaste, the poet-actor, is intended to caricature Shakespeare, and Sir Oliver Owlet's company and its misfortunes to reflect the Earl of Pembroke's company in similar circumstances in 1593; that Mavortius is the young Earl of Southampton, to whom Shakespeare dedicated *Venus and Adonis* in 1593, and *Lucrece* in the year following; that Landulpho, the Italian lord, represents John Florio, who, in 1591, in his *Second Fruites* , criticised English historical drama and praised Italian plays, and who, at about the same time as teacher of languages entered into the pay and patronage of the Earl of Southampton, a connection which his odd and interesting personality enabled him to hold thereafterwards for several years. The part which Landulpho takes in the play was somewhat developed by Marston in 1599, at which time it shall later on be shown that the relations between Florio and Shakespeare had reached a heated stage. The play of *The Prodigal Child* , which was the play within the play acted by Posthaste and his fellows in the earlier form of *Histriomastix* , did not, in my opinion, represent the English original of the translated German play of *The Prodigal Son* which Mr. Simpson presents as the possible original, but was meant to indicate Shakespeare's *Love's Labours Won* , which was written late in the preceding year as a reflection of Southampton's intimacy with Florio, and the beginning of his affair with Mistress Davenant, the Oxford tavern keeper's wife. The expression *The Prodigal Child* differs from that of *The Prodigal Son* in meaning, in that the word "Child" at that period meant a young nobleman. There is nothing whatever suggestive of Shakespeare's work in the translated German play, and it was merely the similarity of title that led Mr. Simpson to propose it as the play indicated. The play satirised by Chapman under the title of *The Prodigal Child* was undoubtedly written by Shakespeare, and it is no more likely that Chapman would use the actual name of the play at which he points than that he would use the actual names of the various persons or of the company of players whose actions and work he caricatures.

In 1594 George Chapman published *Hymns to the Shadow of Night* , and in 1595 his *Ovid's Banquet of Sense* and *A Coronet for his Mistress Philosophy* , dedicating both publications to his friend Matthew Roydon. The dedication of these poems to Roydon was an afterthought; they were not primarily written with Roydon in mind. It has been made evident that Chapman had first submitted these poems to the Earl of Southampton in an endeavour to win his patronage, and failing to do so dedicated them to Roydon and attacked Shakespeare in the dedications, where he refers to him in the capacity of reader to the Earl of Southampton, and imputes to his adverse influence his ill-success in his attempt. In the dedication to *The Shadow of Night* he writes:

"How then may a man stay his marvailing to see passion-driven men reading but to curtail a tedious hour and altogether hidebound with affection to great men's fancies take upon them as killing censures as if they were judgements butchers or as if the life of truth lay tottering in their verdicts.

"Now what supererogation in wit this is to think skill so mightily pierced with their loves that she should prostitutely shew them her secrets when she will scarcely be looked upon by others but with invocation, fasting, watching; yea not without having drops of their souls like an heavenly familiar. Why then should our *Intonsi Catones* with their profit ravished gravity esteem her true favours such questionless vanities as with what part soever thereof they seem to be something delighted they queamishly commend it for a pretty toy. Good Lord how serious and eternal are their idolatrous platts for riches."

The expression "passion-driven," as applied by Chapman to Shakespeare in 1594, especially in a dedication written to Matthew Roydon,—who in this same year published *Willobie his Avisa* ,—plainly refers to Shakespeare's relations at that time with Mistress Davenant, who was the original for the figure now known as the Dark Lady of the Sonnets, as well as for the Avisa of *Willobie his Avisa* . The words "reading but to curtail a tedious hour and altogether hidebound with affection to great men's fancies," refer to Shakespeare in the capacity of reader to the Earl of Southampton. In an attack which John Florio makes upon Shakespeare in 1598, he also makes a similar reference to him in this capacity. The expression "judgements butcher," like Nashe's "killcow," indicates Shakespeare's father's trade of butcher.

It was the obvious parallel between Chapman's, "when she will scarcely be looked upon by others but with invocation, fasting, watching; yea not without having drops of their souls like an heavenly familiar," and Shakespeare's allusion, in Sonnet 86, to a poet who attempted to supplant him in Southampton's favour—

"He nor that affable familiar ghost
Which nightly gulls him with intelligence,
As victors of my silence cannot boast;
I was not sick of any fear from thence:
But when your countenance filled up his line,

Then lack'd I matter; that enfeebled mine"—

that led Professor Minto to suggest Chapman as the rival poet of the Sonnets. In a former essay I have demonstrated the truth of Professor Minto's suggestion.

Chapman's *Intonsi Catones* , or "Unshorn Catos," refers to the peculiar manner in which Shakespeare wore his hair, which Greene describes as "harsh and curled like a horse-mane," and is also a reference to his provincial breeding and, presumed, lack of culture.

There are a number of indications in the few facts we possess of Shakespeare's life in 1594, and also in his own and contemporary publications, to warrant the assumption that the Earl of Southampton bestowed some unusual evidence of his bounty upon him in this year. If ever there was a period in his London career in which Shakespeare needed financial assistance more than at other times it was in this year. Lord Strange's company had now been acting under Henslowe's management for two years. The financial condition of both Burbage and Shakespeare must at this time have been at a low ebb. The plague had prevented Pembroke's company playing in London for nearly a year, and we have seen that their attempts to play in the provinces had resulted in failure and loss. In about the middle of 1594, however, Lord Strange's players (now the Lord Chamberlain's men) return to Burbage and the Theatre, when Shakespeare becomes not only a member of the company, but, from the fact that his name is mentioned with that of Kempe and Richard Burbage in the Court records of the payment for performances in December 1594, it is evident that he was then also a leading sharer in the company.

In parting from Henslowe and reorganising under Burbage in 1594 it is apparent that the reorganisers of the Lord Chamberlain's men would need considerable capital if we may judge the financial affairs of this company by those of the Lord Admiral's company (subsequently Lord Nottingham's men) while under Henslowe's management. On 13th October 1599 Henslowe records in his *Diary* : "Received with the company of my Lord of Nottingham's men to this place, beinge the 13th of October 1599, and it doth appeare that I have received of the debte which they owe unto me three hundred fifty and eight pounds." This was only a partial payment of this company's debt, which evidently was considerably in excess of this amount. It is unlikely, then, that Lord Strange's company was free of debt to him at the end of their term under his management.

Shakespeare's earliest biographer, Nicholas Rowe, records, on the authority of Sir William Davenant, "that my Lord Southampton at one time gave him a thousand pounds to enable him to go through with a purchase which he heard he had a mind to." Whatever truth there may be as to the amount of money here mentioned, it is apparent that Southampton evidenced his bounty to Shakespeare in 1594 in some substantial manner, which quickly became noised abroad among the poets and writers who sought patronage. Several of these poets in approaching Southampton refer inferentially to his munificence to Shakespeare. In 1594 Barnabe Barnes writes:

"Vouchsafe right virtuous Lord with gracious eyes
Those heavenly lamps which give the muses light
To view my muse with your judicial sight," *etc.*

The words italicised evidently refer to Southampton's acceptance of *Venus and Adonis* in the preceding year. Later in 1594, Thomas Nashe dedicated *The Life of Jack Wilton* to Southampton, and in a dedicatory Sonnet to a poem preserved in the Rawlinson MS. in the Bodleian Library, entitled *The Choice of Valentines* , Nashe apologises for the salacious nature of the poem, and in an appended Sonnet evidently refers to Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis* in the line italicised below:

"Thus hath my pen presumed to please my friend,
Oh might'st thou likewise please Apollo's eye;
No, honor brooks no such impietie,
Yet Ovids Wanton Muse did not offend ,
He is the fountain whence my streams do flow,
Forgive me if I speak as I were taught."

In 1595 Gervase Markham, in a Sonnet prefixed to his poem on Richard Grenville's fight in the *Revenge* , addresses Southampton as:

"Thou glorious laurel of the Muses' hill,
Whose eyes doth crown the most victorious pen ,
Bright lamp of virtue, in whose sacred skill
Lives all the bliss of ear-enchanting men."

The line italicised not only refers to Shakespeare but gives evidence also of the assured standing among poets which he had now attained in unbiased judgments.

In addition to these evidences of Southampton's bounty to Shakespeare at this time, we have the poet's own acknowledgment of the recent receipt of a valuable gift in the *Lucrece* dedication: "*The warrant I have of your honourable disposition, not the worth of my untutored lines, makes it assured of acceptance* ."

In his *Hymns to the Shadow of Night* (1594) and its dedication, Chapman complains of his lack of patronage and refers to what he designates as Shakespeare's "*idol atrous platts for riches* ." In the body of the poem he writes:

"Wealth fawns on fools; virtues are meat for vices,
Wisdom conforms herself to all earth's guises,
Good gifts are often given to men past good
And noblesse stoops sometimes beneath his blood ."

In view of the general knowledge of Southampton's bounty to Shakespeare at this time, and of the anti-Shakespearean intention which I have demonstrated in Chapman's poem, it is apparent that these lines refer to the nobleman's gift as well as to the intimacy between the peer and the player at this period.

In this same year (1594) the scholars devised a plan to disrupt the intimacy between Shakespeare and Southampton by producing and publishing a scandalous poem satirising their relations, entitled *Willobie his Avisa, or the true picture of a modest maid and a chaste and constant wife* . In this poem Henry Wriothesley, Earl of Southampton, is represented as "Henry Willobie a young man and a scholar of very good hope," while Shakespeare is indicated as "W.S.," an "old actor." "W.S." is depicted as aiding and abetting Henry Willobie in a love affair with Avisa, the wife of an Oxford tavern keeper who conducts a tavern described as follows:

"See yonder house where hangs the badge
Of England's saint when captains cry
Victorious land to conquering rage."

In this poem Henry Willobie is alleged to have fallen in love with Avisa at first sight, and to have confided in his friend "W.S.," "who not long before had tryed the courtesy of the like passion and was now newly recovered of the like infection." *Willobie his Avisa* in some measure reproduces but at the same time grossly distorts actual facts in the lives of Shakespeare and Southampton which are dimly adumbrated in Sonnets written by Shakespeare to Southampton and to the Dark Lady at this time. I have elsewhere demonstrated Matthew Roydon's authorship as well as the anti-Shakespearean intention of this poem.

In 1595 George Chapman published his *Ovid's Banquet of Sense* and his *A Coronet for his Mistress Philosophy* , in both of which poems, as well as in the dedications, he again indicates and attacks Shakespeare. Shakespeare's cognizance of Chapman's intention, as well as the manner in which he answered him, have been examined in detail in a previous essay which is now generally accepted by authoritative critics as definitely establishing the fact of Chapman's ingrained hostility to Shakespeare as well as his identity as the rival poet of the Sonnets.

Thus we find that, beginning with the reflections of Nashe and Greene in 1589, Shakespeare was defamed and abused by some one or more of this coterie of jealous scholars in every year down to 1595, and that the rancour of his detractors intensifies with the growth of his social and literary prestige.

The one thing of all others that served most to feed and perpetuate the envy of the scholars against Shakespeare was the friendship and patronage accorded him by the Earl of Southampton.

Past biographers and critics usually date the beginning of the acquaintance between Shakespeare and Southampton in 1593, when *Venus and Adonis* was published. In a later chapter I shall advance new evidence to show that their acquaintance had its inception nearly two years before that date.

<<span id="filepos0041921362"> a> CHAPTER VI

THE POLITICAL PURPOSE OF *KING JOHN*

1591-1592

The three parts of *Henry VI.* and their originals are of interest to Shakespearean students as marking the beginning of a phase of English historical drama, afterwards developed by Shakespeare, Kyd, Marlowe, and others. They owed their origin to the demand of the theatres for material with which to cater to the ebullient national spirit aroused by the long-threatened danger of a Spanish invasion, and its happy issue in the destruction of the great Armada, in 1588. They were originally produced between 1589 and 1591, and evidently for the Queen's players. The theatrical managers having found them a profitable investment, encouraged the continued production of historical plays. Peele, who is usually supposed to have been the author of *The First Part of Henry VI.* , soon after wrote a play upon the reign of *Edward I.* ; Marlowe appropriating *Edward III.* and later on *Edward II.* ; and Shakespeare *King John* in 1591 and *Richard II.* in 1592-93.

Shakespeare, before composing *Richard II.* ,—in the composition of which he was evidently guided by the previous production of Marlowe's *Edward II.* ,—tried his "prentice hand" on *King John* . Both this play and the older play of *The Troublesome Raigne of King John* (upon which it is based, and which, in fact, it practically recasts) owe their origin to the same influences as the other historical plays mentioned. *The Troublesome Raigne of King John* was composed for the Queen's company at, or near to, the date of the Spanish Armada, and at a period when religious animosities were acute. Its anti-Catholic spirit is very aggressive. We have good evidence, in the manner in which Shakespeare, on recasting the old play, toned down or eliminated this spirit, that whatever dogmatic latitude he allowed himself in religion, his social and religious sympathies at this period were Catholic rather than Protestant. He was, withal, in common with a large proportion, and probably a majority, of his compatriots at that time, an English, as distinguished from a Roman, Catholic, and like them, though he outwardly acquiesced in the established religion, tacitly favoured the old Church in spiritual matters, while resenting its political activities.

Socially and politically, Shakespeare was essentially conservative. He looked naturally unto the rock whence he was hewn and to the hole of the pit whence he was digged. With a deep and abiding pride of race, linking him spiritually with the historic past of his people, he was inclined to look askance at the subverting spirit of Puritanism, which was now beginning to give Merrie England food for serious thought. His temperamental bias against Puritanism was accentuated by the openly avowed hostility of the Puritans to his chosen profession. Though born of the people, Shakespeare's social ideals were strongly aristocratic, and, while possessing, in an unusual degree that unerring knowledge of human nature in all classes and conditions of men, and broad tolerance of human foibles and weaknesses, attainable only by spiritual sympathy, in the political wisdom of democracy as it could then be conceived he had little confidence.

We have good evidence that Shakespeare's father was a Catholic, and it is more than likely that Shakespeare's sympathies were Catholic. His most intimate affiliations were Catholic. Southampton's family, the Wriothesleys, and his mother's family, the Browns, were adherents of the old faith, and though Southampton, in later life, turned to Protestantism he was Catholic during the early years of his intimacy with Shakespeare. For the clergy of the Established Church Shakespeare had little respect; he probably regarded the majority of them as trimmers and time-servers. He always makes his curates ridiculous; this, however, was probably due to his hostility to Roydon, whom he caricatures. On the other hand, his priests and friars, while erring and human, are always dignified and reverend figures. There is, however, no indecision in his attitude towards Rome's political pretensions. The most uncompromising Protestant of the time sounds no more defiant national note than he.

In *King John* we have an ingenuous revelation of Shakespeare's outlook on life while he was still comparatively young, and within a few years of his advent in London. He was yet unacquainted with the Earl of Southampton at the date of its composition, early in 1591.

In the character of Falconbridge, with which one instinctively feels its creator's sympathy, I am convinced that Shakespeare portrayed the personality of Sir John Perrot, an illegitimate son of Henry VIII., and half-brother to Queen Elizabeth. The immense physical proportions of both Perrot and Falconbridge; their characteristic and temperamental resemblances; their common illegitimate birth; the fact that both were trusted generals and relatives of their sovereigns; their similar bluff and masterful manner; their freedom of speech; and the suggestive unison between important incidents in their lives, all exhibit a resemblance much too remarkable for mere coincidence.

In the development of certain of Shakespeare's characters we instinctively feel his sympathy with, or antipathy for, the type he represents. Like Thackeray in the case of *Barry Lyndon* , he paints in Falstaff a rascal so interesting that he leads us almost to condone his rascality; yet who can doubt in either instance the author's inherent antipathy to the basic character he portrays. On the other hand, in depicting Biron, Antonio, and Jacques, we feel a sympathetic touch. For no one of his numerous characters is his admiration so apparent and unreserved as for that of Falconbridge. With other characters, such as Biron, Antonio, Jacques, Hamlet, and Prospero in their successive stages, we apprehend a closer mental likeness to, and spiritual synthesis of, their creator; here, however, is no creature of the brain, but a flesh-and-blood man of action, taken bodily from life. An early date for the original composition of *King John* is manifest in the broad strokes of portraiture, and lack of introspective subtlety, with which this character is drawn.

Sir John Perrot was a natural son of Henry VIII. and Mary Berkley, afterwards wife of Thomas Perrot of Islington and Herrodston in Pembrokeshire. His resemblance to Henry VIII. was striking, although his physical proportions were still larger. Much as he resembled his father he more nearly approximated in type both temperamentally and physically to "Cœur-de-lion." Perrot lived about two hundred years too late for his own fame. Had he been born a couple of centuries earlier he might have lived in history as a paladin of romance. He was a fantastical recrudescence, of the most fanciful age of chivalry. He is reported to have possessed extraordinary strength, and in his youth to have been much addicted to brawling. At about the age of twenty he owed his introduction to Henry VIII. to a fight in which he became engaged with two of the Yeomen of the Guard who endeavoured to oust him from the palace grounds, and whom he worsted in the effort. The King appearing upon the scene, Perrot is reported to have proclaimed himself his son. Henry received him favourably and promised him preferment, but died soon afterwards. Edward VI., upon his accession, acknowledged his kinship and created him Knight of the Bath. He was a very skilful horseman and swordsman, and excelled in knightly exercises.

In 1551 he accompanied the Marquis of Southampton to France upon the mission of the latter to negotiate a marriage between Edward VI. and Elizabeth, daughter of Henry II. The French King was so well pleased with him that he offered to retain him in his service. While generous and brave to an unusual degree, Perrot was extremely hot-tempered and of an arbitrary disposition. He seems to have inherited all of his father's mental, moral, and physical attributes in an exaggerated form, and to have had an ever-present consciousness of his kingly lineage. Money flowed through his fingers like water; he was rarely out of debt, and was relieved in this respect by both Edward VI. and Elizabeth. Upon the accession of Queen Mary, Perrot, though a Protestant, continued in royal favour; his kinship outweighing his religious disadvantage. He was, however, never without enemies at Court, created largely by his high-handed behaviour. During Mary's reign he was accused of sheltering heretics in his house in Wales, and was, in consequence, committed for a while to the Fleet, but was soon released. He saw service in France under the Earl of Pembroke, being present at the capture of St. Quentin. Later on he had a violent disagreement with his old commander, owing to his refusal to assist the latter in persecuting Welsh Protestants. A life-enduring friendship was later established between them by Pembroke's magnanimity in rallying to his support at a crucial period in his career. When Protestantism, at a later period, gained the upper hand under Elizabeth, he was equally averse to the persecution of Catholics. Elizabeth upon her accession continued the favours shown him by her predecessors. He was selected as one of four gentlemen to carry the canopy of state at her Coronation, and was appointed Vice-Admiral of the seas about South Wales. In 1570 he was made President of Munster, where he performed his duties in an extremely strenuous manner. He used deputies only in clerical matters; where there was fighting to be done he was there in person, and usually in the thick of it. Much as he liked to command he never could resist being in the actual scrimmage. He challenged James Fitmaurice Fitzgerald, the rebel leader in Munster, to single combat, which the latter prudently refused; later on, Fitzgerald led him and a small body of men into an ambush where he was out-numbered ten to one; Perrot refused to surrender, and though he made great slaughter of his assailants, was saved only by the timely arrival of a small body of his own men, whom the rebels supposed to be the advance guard of a stronger force. He was as generous in victory as he was imprudent in action; having defeated and captured Fitzgerald, he forgave him and restored him to his property. Such actions on his part being criticised by the Council, Perrot, in dudgeon, resigned his command and returned to England in 1573. He was received favourably by Elizabeth, whose goodwill he still continued to keep in spite of his numerous enemies at Court. Retiring to his Welsh estates at this time, he told Burghley that he intended thereafter to lead a "countryman's life," and "to keep out of debt." Much of his time during the following ten years was spent in suppressing piracy on the seas in his capacity of Vice-Admiral and Warden of the Marches. In 1584 he was appointed Viceroy of Ireland, an office which he executed vigorously and effectively, but in the same dominating spirit and with the same impatience of control that had marked his earlier Irish career. Exasperated at the delays of the Council in agreeing to his plans, he even went to the length of addressing the English Parliament in a letter, which, however, was suppressed by Walsingham, who apprehended the resentment of Elizabeth at such an unwarranted appropriation of her prerogative.

While Perrot's physical proportions were much above the average he was an extremely graceful and handsome man. A German nobleman of the time, visiting Ireland, seeing Perrot at the opening of Parliament, declared that though he had travelled all Europe he had never seen any one comparable to him for his port and majesty of personage.

Perrot's arbitrary and dominating manner created constant friction in his Council and aroused the enmity of his coadjutors and subordinates. He challenged Sir Richard Bingham, President of Munster, to a duel, and came to actual blows in the council chamber with Sir Nicholas Bagenal. He aroused the deadly enmity of Loftus, Archbishop of Dublin, who set many plots on foot to work his undoing. One Philip Williams, a former secretary of Perrot's, was set on by Loftus to make revelations reflecting on Perrot's loyalty, which gained such credence that they resulted in his recall to England in 1588. He left behind him, writes Sir Henry Wallop, "a memory of such hard usage and haughty demeanour amongst his associates as I think never any before him in this place hath done." After Perrot's return to England, Loftus continued his machinations against him. Informers of all kinds were forthcoming to accuse him. One Denis O'Roughan, an ex-priest, offered to prove that he was the bearer of a letter from Perrot to Philip of Spain, promising that if the latter would give him the Principality of Wales, he would make him Master of England and Ireland. While this evidence was palpably false, the excited condition of public feeling in regard to the Jesuit plots and the aggressive plans of Spain lent it credence. A year before, Sir William Stanley, previously quite unsuspected of disloyalty, had turned the fortress of Deventer over to the Spaniards, and the Armada, which had been in preparation for years, was expected daily on the English coasts. Perrot, while not yet placed under arrest, was treated coldly by the Court. His was not a temper that could stand such treatment uncomplainingly. Knowing that the Queen's ill-usage of him arose largely from the influence of Sir Christopher Hatton, he expressed himself somewhat freely regarding that gentleman, and in a manner that reflected upon the Queen. Hatton's hatred of Perrot was well founded, he having seduced Hatton's niece some years before. The unceasing plotting of

Perrot's enemies and his own imprudence of speech led to his arrest early in 1591. After a short confinement in Burghley's house, he was removed to the Tower, where he remained for a year before he was brought to trial. At this period and while still under restraint at Burghley's house, I date the composition of Shakespeare's *King John* . He was tried for high treason in April 1592, being charged with using contemptuous words about the Queen, relieving known traitors and Romish priests, and also with treasonable correspondence with Philip of Spain and the Duke of Parma. All of the evidence against him, except that relating to the use of disrespectful expressions regarding the Queen, fell to the ground. He was found guilty on this one point and taken back to the Tower. Two months later—that is, on 26th June—he was brought up for judgment and condemned to death. "God's death," he exclaimed, on being led back to the Tower, "will the Queen suffer her brother to be offered up as a sacrifice to the envy of his frisking adversary?" He died a natural death in the Tower in September 1592. It is probable that had he lived the Queen would have pardoned him. It was rumoured at the time that she intended to do so. While such an intention appears probable from the fact that after his death his son was restored to his estates, it is more likely that Perrot's death, while under the Queen's disfavour, softened her resentment toward his family. Perrot's son, Sir Thomas, who inherited his estates, had incurred the ill-will of Elizabeth some years before by his clandestine marriage to Dorothy Devereux, sister of the Earl of Essex. She vented her displeasure upon every one remotely concerned in this transaction. Essex, who was entirely innocent of any complicity in it, was frowned upon for a time, and Bishop Aylmer, under whose surreptitiously obtained licence the marriage ceremony was performed, was called before the Council. The Queen for years declined to receive Lady Perrot, and upon one occasion, when visiting the Earl of Essex, refused to remain in his house upon the arrival of his sister, and was pacified only when Lady Perrot removed to a distant neighbour's.

It thus appears that the rancour of Elizabeth towards Sir John Perrot, which led to his imprisonment in 1591 and his later prosecution, was intensified by the fact of his family connection with the Earl of Essex, who at this same period was deep in her disfavour owing to his own unauthorised marriage to Lady Sidney. We may then infer that Court circles were divided in their attitude towards Perrot, and that while Sir Christopher Hatton and his followers were antagonistic to him, that Essex and his faction were correspondingly sympathetic.

I am convinced that Shakespeare's first recast of *The Troublesome Raigne of King John* was made at about this period, at the instigation of a court of action friendly to Perrot and antagonistic to Hatton, with the intention of arousing sympathy for Perrot by presenting him inferentially in heroic colours in the character of Falconbridge. Whatever animosities his outspoken criticisms and arbitrary demeanour may have aroused, amongst the courtiers and politicians, it is likely that his romantic history, his personal bravery, and his interesting personality had made him a hero to the younger nobility and the masses. It is evident that the author of *The Troublesome Raigne of King John* had Perrot in mind in the composition of that play, which is usually dated by the text critics in about 1588-89. It is acknowledged that the old play is based almost entirely upon the second edition of Holinshed's *Chronicles* , which was published in 1587, and that the Falconbridge incident has no foundation in that source, it being transposed from a portion of Hall's *Chronicles* relating to French history of an earlier time. If the original author's intention had been to dramatise the reign or character of King John, why should he have transposed incidents and characters from French history in no way connected with John's reign, and also have made one of these characters practically the protagonist of the action? Bearing this fact in mind, in conjunction with the evident date of composition of the old play in or about 1588-89, at the time when Perrot was recalled from Ireland and was being accused of disloyalty by his political enemies, it appears evident that the author, or authors, of *The Troublesome Raigne* had Perrot's interests in mind in its composition, and that its intention and personal point were recognised by the public upon its presentation, and also that it was published and rewritten in 1591, at the time when Perrot was sent to the Tower, in order further to stir up sympathy for his cause by a still more palpable and heroic characterisation.

In recasting the old play in 1591 at the most crucial period of Perrot's troubles, Shakespeare—evidently cognizant of its original intention and of the interpretation placed upon it by the theatre-going public—still further enhanced the character of Falconbridge as the protagonist of the drama, while he minimised the character of King John and quite neglected to explain the reason for much of the plot and action, which is quite clear in the old play. The neglect of historical and dramatic values, and the absence of analytical characterisation shown by Shakespeare in this play when it is considered as a dramatisation of the reign of King John, has been noticed by many past critics, who have not suspected the possibility of an underlying intention in its production. Mr. Edward Rose, in his excellent essay upon Shakespeare as an adapter, writes:

"Shakespeare has no doubt kept so closely to the lines of the older play because it was a favorite with his audience and they had grown to accept its history as absolute fact; but one can hardly help thinking that, had he boldly thrown aside these trammels and taken John as his Hero, his great central figure; had he analyzed and built up before us the mass of power, craft, passion, and devilry which made up the worst of the Plantagenets; had he dramatized the grand scene of the signing of the Charter and shown vividly the gloom and horror which overhung the excommunicated land; had he painted John's last despairing struggles against rebels and invaders as he has given us the fiery end of Macbeth's life, we might have had another Macbeth, another Richard, who would by his terrible personality have welded the play together and carried us breathless through his scene of successive victory and defeat. That, by this means, something would be lost, 'tis true—Falconbridge, for example, would certainly be lesser," *etc. etc.*

While regretting Shakespeare's neglect of the great dramatic possibilities in the reign and the character of King John, Mr. Rose recognised Shakespeare's evident interest in the character of Falconbridge. He writes:

"In reconstructing the play the great want that struck Shakespeare seems to have been that of a strong central figure. He was attracted by the rough, powerful nature which he could see the Bastard must have been; almost like a modern dramatist writing up a part for a star actor, he introduced Falconbridge wherever it was possible, gave him the end of every act (except the third), and created from a rude and inconsistent sketch a character as strong as complete and as original as even he ever drew. Throughout a series of scenes not otherwise very closely connected, this wonderful real type of faulty combative, not ignoble manhood, is developed, a support and addition to the scenes in which he has least to say, a great power where he is prominent."

Had Mr. Rose endeavoured briefly to describe the character of Sir John Perrot, he could not have done so more aptly.

Shakespeare in recasting *The Troublesome Raigne of King John* did not endeavour to dramatise either the character or reign of that King, but purposely followed the story of the earlier dramatist, having the same personal point in view. The author of *The Troublesome Raigne of King John* intentionally subordinated or distorted the actual facts of history in order to match his dramatic characterisation to the personality of Perrot, and its action to well-known incidents of Perrot's career in France and England. A palpable instance of this is exhibited in Falconbridge's soliloquy in Scene i., when questioned by the

King before the Court regarding his paternity. Here the old author reflects a story of Perrot's youth which his biographers state was frequently related by Perrot to his friends. Soon after the accession of Edward VI., Perrot having by his extravagance become deeply involved in debt purposely placed himself in the path of the King's daily walk and, hearing his footsteps and pretending not to know of his presence, indulged in a soliloquy complaining of his misfortunes and lamenting his lack of wisdom and bemoaning the nonage of his half-brother the King, who in endeavouring to help him would probably be overruled by the Lord Protector and the Lords of the Council. He also debated aloud with himself other means of retrieving his fortune, such as retiring from the Court into the country or betaking himself to the wars. His anonymous biographer of 1592 wrote:

"As he was thus sadly debating the Matter unto hymselfe, the Kinge came behynd hym, and overheard most of that which he sayd, who at length stepped before him, and asked him, How now Perrott (quoth the Kinge) what is the matter that you make this great Moane? To whom Sir John Perrott answered, And it lyke your Majestie, I did not thinck that your Highness had byn there. Yes, said the Kinge, we heard you well inough: And have you spent your Livinge in our Service, and is the Kinge so younge, and under Government, that he cannot give you any Thinge in Recompence of your Service? Spie out somewhat, and you shall see whether the Kinge hath not Power to bestow it on you. Then he most humbly thanked his Majestie and shortly after founde out a Concealment, which as soon as he sought, the Kinge bestowed it on hym, wherewith he paid the most part of his Debtes; and for always after he became a better Husband. This story Sir John Perrott would sometimes recounte unto his Frends, acknowledging it a greate Blessinge of God, that had given him Grace in Time to look into his decaying Estate."

Comparison of this biographical incident with the following passage from *The Troublesome Raigne* not only reveals the source of the dramatist's inspiration but also accounts for a scene that has appeared peculiar to many critics.

K. John. Ask Philip whose son he is.

Essex . Philip, who was thy father?

Philip. Mass, my lord, and that's a question: and you had not taken some pains with her before, I should have desired you to ask my mother.

K. John.. Say, who was thy father?

Philip. Faith, my lord, to answer you sure, he is my father that was nearest my mother when I was gotten; and him I think to be Sir Robert Falconbridge.

K. John. Essex, for fashion's sake demand again: And so an end to this contention.

Robert. Was ever man thus wrong'd as Robert is?

Essex . Philip! Speak, I say; who was thy father?

K. John. Young man, how now? what! art thou in a trance?

Q. Elinor. Philip, awake! The man is in a dream.

Philip. Philippus, atavis edite Regibus. (*Aside.*)
What say'st thou: Philip, sprung of ancient Kings?
Quo me rapit tempestas?
What wind of honour blows this fury forth,
Or whence proceed these fumes of majesty?
Methinks I hear a hollow echo sound,
That Philip is the son unto a King:
The whistling leaves upon the trembling trees
Whistle in concert I am Richard's son;
The bubbling murmur of the water's fall
Records Philippus Regis filius;
Birds in their flight make music with their wings,
Filling the air with glory of my birth;
Birds, bubbles, leaves and mountains, echo, all
Ring in mine ears, that I am Richard's son.
Fond man, ah, whither art thou carried?
How are thy thoughts yrapt in Honour's heaven?
Forgetful what thou art, and whence thou cam'st?

Thy father's land cannot maintain these thoughts;
These thoughts are far unfitting Falconbridge;
And well they may; for why this mounting mind
Doth soar too high to stoop to Falconbridge
Why, how now? Knowest thou where thou art?
And know'st thou who expects thine answer here?
Wilt thou, upon a frantic madding vein,
Go lose thy land, and say thyself base-born?
No, keep thy land, though Richard were thy sire;
Whate'er thou think'st say thou art Falconbridge.

K. John. Speak, man! be sudden, who thy father was.

Philip. Please it your Majesty, Sir Robert ...
Philip, that Falconbridge cleaves to thy jaws: (*Aside*)
It will not out; I cannot for my life
Say I am son unto a Falconbridge.
Let land and living go! 'tis Honour's fire
That makes me swear King Richard was my sire.
Base to a King, adds title of more state,
Than knight's begotten, though legitimate.
Please it your Grace, I am King Richard's son.

While it is generally agreed by text critics that Shakespeare's *King John* was drastically revised in about 1596, the metrical tests and the scarcity of classical allusions denote its composition at about the same period as that of the original composition of *Richard II.* ; and though the later time revision of both of these plays has no doubt replaced much of Shakespeare's earlier work in them with matter of a later time, an early date for their original composition is very evident. I therefore assign the original composition of *King John* to the early part of the year 1591, and believe, that in writing this play Shakespeare worked from a copy of *The Troublesome Raigne of King John* , and that he followed, and still further developed, the original intention of that play regarding the interests of Sir John Perrot. It is evident that *King John* was written at the time *The Troublesome Raigne* was published in 1591, and that the play was Burbage property when it was published. A play was not as a rule published until it had outrun its interest upon the stage, or had been replaced by a new play upon the same subject.

While records of Henslowe's affiliations with Lord Strange's and the Admiral's companies do not appear in his *Diary* until February 1592, when the Rose Theatre was ready for their occupancy, it is likely that their connection commenced in the previous year and that his affiliations with the Queen's company ended at the same time. The number of old plays formerly owned by the Queen's company that came into the hands of Strange's, the Admiral's, and Pembroke's men at this time were probably purchased from Henslowe, upon the reorganisation of companies in 1591-92, or else were brought to these companies as properties by Queen's men who joined them upon the disruption of this large and powerful company at this period. Gabriel Spencer, Humphrey Jeffes, and John Sinkler, whose names are mentioned in *The True Tragedy of the Duke of York* , were evidently old Queen's men, the former two joining Pembroke's men, and Sinkler, Strange's men at this time. The entry of their names as actors in this play was evidently made while it was a Queen's property and when the Queen's company acted under Henslowe's auspices at the Rose Theatre between 1587 and 1591. Both Jeffes and Spencer rejoined Henslowe upon the new reorganisation of companies in 1594, and continued to perform with him and the Lord Admiral's men as Pembroke's men until 1597, when they became Admiral's men. After Spencer was killed in a duel by Ben Jonson in 1598, his widow continued to be a protégé or pensioner of Henslowe's for some years.

The generally accepted belief that the old *Henry VI.* , *The Contention* , and *The True Tragedie* were—like *The Troublesome Raigne of King John* , *The Seven Deadly Sins* , and other plays owned by companies with which Burbage was connected—originally Queen's plays, is responsible for the otherwise unsupported assumption that Burbage was a member and the manager of the Queen's company for several years.

As the disruption of the old Queen's company and its reorganisation into a smaller company under the two Duttons, as well as the inception of Henslowe's connection with Strange's men, evidently took place some time between the Christmas season of 1590-91, when the Queen's company performed four times at Court and the Admiral-Strange company only once, and the Christmas season of 1591-92, when Strange's company performed six times and the Queen's only once, and then for the last time on record, it is evident that Pembroke's company was formed also in this year. It is not unlikely then that Shakespeare's recast of *The Troublesome Raigne of King John* into *King John* was made at the instigation of the Earl of Pembroke himself at the time of Perrot's arrest in 1591. As Pembroke's father was a lifelong friend of Perrot's it is extremely probable that he also would be his partisan and well-wisher.

In every poem or play written by Shakespeare from the time he made the acquaintance of the Earl of Southampton at the end of 1591, and even for some time after the accession of James I. in 1603, I find some reflection of his interest in that nobleman or in the fortunes of the Essex party with which he was affiliated. I find no reflection of this interest in *King John* nor in *The Comedy of Errors* , except in a few passages which palpably pertain to a period of revision in the former play. From this and other subjective evidence already advanced I date the composition of both of these plays in 1591, and in doing so conform to the chronological conclusions reached by authoritative text critics whose judgments have been formed altogether upon textual and stylistic grounds.

While nearly all writers upon the Elizabethan drama recognise the topical, political, or controversial nature of much of the dramatic representation of that age, it is usual to deny for Shakespeare's plays any such topical significance. This attitude of the critics is due largely to neglect or ignorance of contemporary history, and also to the lack of a proper understanding of the chronological order in which the plays were produced, and their consequent inability to synchronise the characters or action of the plays, with circumstances of Shakespeare's life, or with matters of contemporary interest, as well as to the masterly objective skill by which he disguised his intentions, in order to protect himself and his company from the stringent statutes then in force, prohibiting the presentation of matters concerning Church or State upon the stage.

<<span id="filepos0041962571"> a> CHAPTER VII

THE INCEPTION OF THE FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN SHAKESPEARE AND THE EARL OF SOUTHAMPTON

1591-1594

A few months after the publication of Greene's *A Groatsworth of Wit* , Henry Chettle issued a book entitled *Kinde Heartes Dreame* , to which he prefaced an apology for publishing Greene's attack upon Shakespeare. He writes: "I am as sorry as if the original fault had been my fault, because myselfe have seene his demeanour no lesse civill than he exelent in the qualitie he professes, besides divers of worship have reported his uprightnes of dealing, which argues his honesty, and his facetious grace in writing that approoves his art." When critically examined, these references to Shakespeare take on a somewhat greater biographical value than has usually been claimed for them. Agreeing with the assumption that Shakespeare left Stratford between 1586 and 1587,—that is, at between the ages of twenty-two and twenty-three years,—we are informed by these allusions, that by the time he had reached his twenty-eighth year he had attained such social recognition as to have enlisted in his behalf the active sympathies of "divers of worship,"—that is, men of assured social prestige and distinction,—whose protest against Greene's attack evidently induced Chettle's amends. Chettle's book was published in December 1592; just four months later, in April 1593, *Venus and Adonis* was licensed for publication, and shortly afterwards was issued with the well-known dedication to Henry Wriothesley, Earl of Southampton. It is reasonable to assume that this poem and its dedication had been submitted in MS. to Southampton and held some time previous to the date of the application for licence to publish, and that his favour was well assured before the poem was finally let go to press. The few months intervening between Greene's attack and Chettle's apology, and the application for licence to publish, may then easily be bridged by the reading in MS. form of *Venus and Adonis* by Southampton's friends. It is likely also that Greene's public attack upon Shakespeare led this generous and high-spirited nobleman to acquiesce in the use of his name as sponsor for the publication. The nearness of these dates and incidents gives us good grounds for believing that the Earl of Southampton was included in the number referred to by Chettle as "divers of worship." In using the expression "the qualitie he professes," Chettle plainly referred to Shakespeare's profession as an actor-manager, and of his excellence in this respect bears his own record: "myselfe," he writes, "*have seene* his demeanour no lesse civill than he exelent in the qualitie he professes." Of Shakespeare's literary merits, however, he expresses no personal knowledge, but tells us that "divers of worship have reported his uprightnes of dealing, which argues his honesty, and his facetious grace in writing that approoves his art." Had Chettle referred to any of Shakespeare's known dramatic work he could have passed his own judgment, as in fact he does upon his civility as manager and his excellence as an actor. Having seen Shakespeare act he would also, no doubt, have heard his lines declaimed had our poet at that period produced upon the *public boards* any of his original dramas. The term "facetious grace" might well be applied to the manner and matter of Shakespeare's lighter comedies had any of them been *publicly acted* , but would be somewhat inapt if applied to the rather stilted staginess of his early historical work. Much argument has been advanced in various attempts to prove that Shakespeare produced *Love's Labour's Lost* , *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* , *Romeo and Juliet* , and *Midsummer Nights Dream* previous to the year 1591-92, but no particle of evidence, either external or internal, has yet been advanced in support of these assumptions; much, however, has been advanced against them. If we may accept Shakespeare's own subscribed statement as evidence, and that evidence is truthful, *Venus and Adonis* was his first acknowledged original literary effort. In the dedication to Southampton he distinctly names it "the first heir of my invention." It is probable, then, that the "facetious grace" in writing, of which "divers of worship" had reported, referred to this poem, which had been held then for several months (as were his Sonnets for years) in MS. "among his private friends."

At the time that Chettle published his *Kinde Heartes Dreame* Shakespeare had already produced *The Comedy of Errors* and *King John* , and had evidently had a hand with Marlowe in the revision of *The True Tragedie of the Duke of York* . It is unlikely, however, that Chettle had witnessed a performance of *The Comedy of Errors* , which was produced primarily for private presentation. *The True Tragedie of the Duke of York* and *The Troublesome Raigne of King John* were both old plays by other hands, and it was for publishing Greene's attack upon Shakespeare for his share in the revision of the former, that Chettle now apologised. He would therefore not regard his revision of *The Troublesome Raigne* , if he knew of it, as original work. It is evident, then, Shakespeare's "facetious grace in writing," of which Chettle had heard, referred either to *Venus and Adonis* , or *The Comedy of Errors* , or both, neither of which were known to the public at this time.

Friendship may perhaps be too strong a term to apply to the relations that subsisted at this date between Southampton and Shakespeare, but we have good proof in Chettle's references to him late in 1592, in the dedication of *Venus and Adonis* in 1593, and of *Lucrece* in 1594, as well as the first *book* of Sonnets,—which I shall later show belongs to the earlier period of their connection,—that the acquaintance between these two men, at whatever period it may have commenced, was at least in being towards the end of the year 1592. A brief outline and examination of the recorded incidents of Southampton's life in these early years may throw some new light upon the earliest stage of this acquaintance, especially when those incidents and conditions are considered *correlatively with the spirit and intention of the poems which Shakespeare wrote for him, and dedicated to him a little later* .

Thomas Wriothesley, second Earl of Southampton, and father of Shakespeare's patron, died on 4th October 1581. Henry, his only surviving son, thus became Earl of Southampton before he had attained his eighth birthday, and consequently became, and remained until his majority, a ward of the Crown. The Court of Chancery was at that period a much simpler institution than it is to-day, and Lord Burghley seems personally to have exercised the chief functions of that Court in its relation to wards in Chancery, and also to have monopolised its privileges. We may infer that this was a position by no means distasteful to that prudent minister's provident and nepotic spirit. Burghley was essentially of that type of statesmen who are better contented with actual power, and its accruing profits, than the appearance of power and the glory of its trappings. Leicester, Raleigh, and Essex might, in turn, pose their day as they willed upon the political stage so long as they confined themselves to subordinate or ornamental capacities; but whenever they attempted seriously to encroach upon the reins of power, he set himself to circumvent them with a patience and finesse that invariably wrought their undoing.

In this system of politics he had an apt pupil in his son, Sir Robert Cecil, who, viewed through the ages, while presenting a less solid figure than his father, displays a much more refined and Machiavellian craft.

The attention and care which Burghley bestowed from the beginning upon his young ward's affairs bespeak an interest within an interest when his prudent and calculating nature is borne in mind and the later incidents of his guardianship are considered.

Towards the end of 1585, at the age of twelve, Southampton became a student of St. John's College, Cambridge, from whence he graduated as M.A. about four years later, *i.e.* in June 1589. After leaving Cambridge in 1589, *he lived for over a year with his mother at Cowdray House in Sussex* . Early in this year, or possibly while Southampton was still at Cambridge, Burghley had opened negotiations with the Countess of Southampton with the object of uniting the interests and fortunes of her son with his own house, by consummating a marriage between this wealthy and promising young peer and his own granddaughter, Lady Elizabeth Vere, daughter of the Earl of Oxford. Burghley's extreme interest in the match is fully attested by a few letters that are still extant. In the Calendar State Papers we have an apologetic letter from Sir Thomas Stanhope (whose wife and daughter had recently visited Lady Southampton at Cowdray) to Lord Burghley, dated 15th July 1590, assuring him that he had never sought to procure the young Earl of Southampton in marriage for his daughter, as he knew Burghley intended marriage between him and the Lady Vere. That an actual engagement of marriage had already been entered into, we have proof in another letter dated 19th September 1590, from Anthony Brown, Viscount Montague (Southampton's maternal grandfather), to Lord Burghley. Regarding this engagement he writes, that Southampton "is not averse from it," and repeats further, that his daughter, Lady Southampton, is not aware of any alteration in her son's mind. The tone of this latter epistle does not seem to evince any great enthusiasm for the match upon the part of either Southampton or his mother; its rather diffident spirit was not lost upon Burghley, who, within a few days of its receipt, commanded the attendance of his young ward at Court. Upon 14th October 1590—that is, less than a month after Viscount Montague's letter to Burghley—we have a letter from Lady Southampton announcing her son's departure for London, and commending him to Burghley, but making no mention of the proposed marriage. *From the fact that she thanks Burghley for the "long time" he "had intrusted" her son with her, we may infer that his present departure for London was occasioned by Burghley's order, and also that the "long time"* indicated by Lady Southampton's letter, was the interval between Southampton's leaving Cambridge in June 1589 and his present departure for London in October 1590. We are also assured by this data that Southampton had not travelled upon the Continent previous to his coming to Court. Between the time of his coming to London in October 1590 and August 1591, I find no dates in contemporary records referring to Southampton; but it appears evident that these nine months were spent at Court.

Some misgivings regarding the young Earl's desire for the match with his granddaughter seem to have arisen in Burghley's mind in March 1592, *at which time Southampton was with the English forces in France* . From this we may judge that Southampton's departure for the wars was undertaken at his own initiative and not at Burghley's suggestion. It appears likely that a lack of marital ardour inspired his martial ardour at this time, and that Burghley was conscious of his disinclination to the proposed marriage. In a letter dated 6th March 1592 (new style) Roger Manners writing to Burghley tells him he has been at North Hall with the Countess of Warwick, whom he reports as "very well inclined to the match between the Earl of Bedford and the Lady Vere." "She is desirous to know," he adds, "if your Lordship approves of it." While this letter shows that Burghley at this date had doubts regarding Southampton's fulfilment of his engagement, other inferences lead me to judge that *it was not finally disrupted until the spring of 1594* .

We have record that Southampton's name was entered as a student of Gray's Inn in July 1590,—that is, three months before his arrival in London,—and may therefore assume that some of his subsequent time in London was occupied in more or less perfunctory legal studies.

As continental travel and an acquaintance with foreign tongues—at least Italian and French—had then come to be regarded as a part of a nobleman's education, Burghley, soon after Southampton's coming to Court, provided him with a tutor of languages in the person of John Florio, who thereafter continued in his pay and patronage as late as, if not later than, 1598. Even after this date Southampton continued to befriend Florio for many years.

As Florio continued in Southampton's service during the entire Sonnet period and played an important rôle in what shall hereafter be developed as *The Story of the Sonnets* , and as he shall also be shown to have provided Shakespeare with a model for several important characters in *The Plays of the Sonnet Period* , a brief consideration of his heredity and personal characteristics may help us to realise the manner in which Shakespeare held "the mirror up to nature" in his dramatic characterisations.

John Florio was born before 1553 and was the son of Michael Angelo Florio, a Florentine Protestant, who left Italy in the reign of Henry VIII. to escape the persecution in the Valteline. Florio's father was pastor to a congregation of his religious compatriots in London for several years. He was befriended by Archbishop Cranmer, and was patronised by Sir William Cecil during the reign of Edward VI.; but lost his church and the patronage of Cecil on account of charges of gross immorality that were made against him. We are informed by Anthony Wood that the elder Florio left England upon the accession of Mary, and moved to the Continent, probably to France, where John Florio received his early education. The earliest knowledge we have of John Florio in England is that he lived at Oxford for several years in his youth, and that, in or about 1576, he became tutor in Italian to a Mr. Barnes, son of the Bishop of Durham. In 1581, according to Anthony Wood, Florio matriculated at Magdalen and was teacher and instructor to certain scholars at the University. In 1578 he was still living at Oxford when he dedicated his *First Fruites* to the Earl of Leicester, his dedication being dated "From my lodgings in Worcester Place." In 1580 he dedicated a translation from the Italian of Ramusio to Edward Bray, sheriff of Oxford, and two years later dedicated to Sir Edmund Dyer a MS. collection of Italian proverbs, which is also dated from Oxford on the 12th of November 1582.

Nothing definite is known concerning Florio between 1582 and 1591; in the latter year he published his *Second Fruites* , dedicating it to a recent patron, Mr. Nicholas Saunder of Ewell. Between about 1590 and 1591, and the end of 1598 and possibly later, he continued in the pay and patronage of the Earl of Southampton, dedicating his *Worlde of Wordes* in the latter year "To the Right Honourable Patrons of Virtue, Patterns of Honour, Roger, Earl of Rutland; Henry, Earl of Southampton; and Lucy, Countess of Bedford." A new and enlarged edition of this book containing his portrait was published in 1611. In the medallion surrounding this picture he gives his age as fifty-eight, which would date his birth in 1553, the year of Queen Mary's accession. It is probable that Florio understated his age, as he is said to have received his early education in France and to have returned to England with his father upon the accession of Elizabeth in 1558. Anthony Wood gives the date of his birth as 1545, and though I cannot find his authority am inclined to believe the earlier date to be correct. Florio was vain enough to prevaricate on a matter of this nature. In 1603 he published his chief work, a translation of *The Essaies of Montaigne* . Florio was attached to the Court of James I. as French and Italian tutor to Prince Henry and the Queen, and also held the appointment of Gentleman of the Privy Chamber.

Florio was married on 9th September 1617 to a Rose Spicer, of whom nothing earlier than the marriage record is known. From the facts that his daughter Aurelia was already married at the time of his death in 1625, and that in his will he leaves her "the wedding ring wherewith I married her mother," it is evident that Rose Spicer was his second wife.

Following a suggestion made by the Rev. J.H. Halpin, it is supposed that his first wife was a Rose Daniel, a sister of Samuel Daniel, the poet, who was Florio's classfellow at Oxford. In the address to dedicatory verses by Daniel, prefixed to the 1611 edition of Florio's *Worlde of Wordes* he calls Florio "My dear friend and brother, Mr. John Florio, one of the gentlemen of Her Majesties Royal Privy Chamber." From this it has been supposed that Florio's first wife was Daniel's sister, and Mr. Halpin inferred that she was named Rose from his assumption that Spenser refers to her as Rosalinde, and to Florio as Menalcas in *The Shepheards Calendar* in 1579. Mr. Grosart, who carefully investigated the matter, states that Daniel—who in 1611 was also a Gentleman of the Privy Chamber—had only two sisters, neither of them being named Rose. It is likely, then, that Daniel referred to his official connection with Florio by the term "brother," as in 1603, in a similar address to dedicatory verses prefixed to *Montaigne's Essaies* he refers to him only as "My Friend." There is no record of Florio's first marriage.

It is very unlikely, however, that two women named Rose should have come so intimately into Florio's life, and probable, when all the evidence is considered, that Rose Spicer, the "dear wife Rose" mentioned in his will, was the "Rosalinde" of his youth, whom, it appears, he had seduced, and with whom he had evidently lived in concubinage in the intervening years; making tardy amends by marriage in 1617, only eight years before his death. His marriage to Rose Spicer was evidently brought about by the admonitions of his friend Theophilus Field, Bishop of Llandaff, under whose influence Florio became religious in his declining years.

In Florio's will, in which he bequeaths nearly all of his small property to his "beloved wife Rose," he regrets that he "cannot give or leave her more in requital of her tender love, loving care, painful diligence, and *continual labour to me in all my fortunes and many sicknesses* , than whom never had husband a more loving wife, painful nurse, and comfortable consort." The words I have italicised indicate conjugal relations covering a much longer period than the eight years between his formal marriage in 1617 and his death in 1625. The term "*all my fortunes* " certainly implies a connection between them antedating Florio's sixty-fourth year.

We may infer that the Bishop of Llandaff and Florio's pastor, Dr. Cluet, whom he appointed overseers and executors of his will, held Florio in light esteem, as "for certain reasons" they renounced its execution. The Earl of Pembroke, to whom he bequeathed his books, apparently neglected to avail himself of the legacy, and probably for the same reasons. An examination of Florio's characteristic will—in the Appendix—will suggest the nature of these reasons.

Mr. Halpin's inference that Florio as Menalcas had already married "Rosalinde" in 1596, when the last books of *The Faerie Queen* were published, is deduced from the idea that the originals for "Mirabella" and the "Carle and fool" of the *The Faerie Queen* are identical with those for "Rosalinde" and "Menalcas" of *The Shepheards Calendar* . While it is probable that Spenser had the same originals in mind in both cases, an analysis of his verses in *The Faerie Queen* shows that the "Carle and fool," who accompany Mirabella, represent two persons, *i.e.* "Disdaine" and "Scorne." In the following verses Mirabella speaks:

"In prime of youthly yeares, when first the flowre
Of beauty gan to bud, and bloosme delight,
And Nature me endu'd with plenteous dowre
Of all her gifts, that pleased each living sight,
I was belov'd of many a gentle Knight,
And sude and sought with all the service dew:
Full many a one for me deepe groand and sight,
And to the dore of death for sorrow drew,
Complayning *out on me* that would not on them rew.

But let them love that list, or live or die,
Me list not die for any lovers doole;
Ne list me leave my loved libertie
To pitty him that list to play the foole;
To love myselfe I learned had in schoole.
Thus I triumphed long in lovers paine.
And sitting carelesse on the scorners stoole,
Did laugh at those that did lament and plaine;
But all is now repayd with interest againe.

For loe! the winged God that woundeth harts
Causde me be called to accompt therefore;
And for revengement of those wrongfull smarts,
Which I to others did inflict afore,
Addeem'd me to endure this penaunce sore;
That in this wise, and this unmeete array,
With these two lewd companions, and no more,
Disdaine and Scorne, I through the world should stray. "

Assuming "Mirabella" and "Rosalinde" to indicate the same woman, *i.e.* Rose Spicer, whom Florio married in 1617, but with whom he had been living in concubinage for about eighteen years when the last three books of *The Faerie Queen* were published, Mirabella's penance of being forced to "stray through the world" accompanied by "Disdaine" and "Scorne," would match her plight as Florio's mistress, but would not apply to her as his wife.

The Rosalinde indicated by Spenser was undoubtedly a north of England girl, while Samuel Daniel belonged to a Somerset family. While it is certain that Florio was married before 1617, it is evident he did not marry a Miss Daniel, and that Menalcas had not married Rosalinde in 1596; yet it is practically certain that Spenser refers to Florio as Menalcas, and that Shakespeare recognised that fact in 1592 and pilloried Florio to the initiated of his day as Parolles in *Love's Labour's Won* in this connection. Florio habitually signed himself "Resolute John Florio" to acquaintances, obligations, dedications, *etc.* When he commenced this practice I cannot learn, but the use of the word was known to Spenser in 1579, as the Greek word Menalcas means Resolute. It is not difficult to fathom Spenser's meaning in regard to the relations between Menalcas and Rosalinde, and it is clear that he had a poor opinion of the moral character of the former, and plainly charges him with seduction.

"And thou, Menalcas, that by treacheree
Didst underfong my lasse to waxe so light,
Shouldest well be known for such thy villanee.
But since I am not as I wish I were,
Ye gentle Shepheards, which your flocks do feede,
Whether on hylls, or dales, or other where,
Beare witnesse all of thys so wicked deede:
And tell the lasse, whose flowre is woxe a weede,
And faultlesse fayth is turned to faithlesse fere,
That she the truest shepheards hart made bleede,
That lyves on earth, and loved her most dere."

The very unusual word "underfong" which Spenser uses in these verses, and the gloss which he appends to the verses of *The Shepheards Calendar* for June, were not lost upon Shakespeare. Spenser, in the glossary, writes: "Menalcas, the name of a shephearde in Virgile; but here is meant a person unknowne and secrete, against whome he often bitterly invayeth. *Underfonge* , undermyne, and deceive by false suggestion." The immoral flippancy of the remarkable dialogue between the disreputable Parolles and the otherwise sweet and maidenly Helena, in Act I. Scene i. of *All's Well that Ends Well* , has often been noticed by critics as a peculiar lapse in dramatic congruity on the part of Shakespeare. This is evidently one of several such instances in his plays where he sacrificed his objective dramatic art to a subjective contingency, though by doing so undoubtedly adding a greater interest to contemporary presentations not only by the palpable reflection of Spenser's point at Florio in the play on the word "undermine" in a similar connection, but also as reflecting the wide latitude his Italianate breeding and manners and his Mediterranean unmorality allowed him and his type to take in conversing with English gentlewomen at that period.

The Rev. J.H. Halpin was not far from the truth in saying that "Florio was beset with tempers and oddities which exposed him more perhaps than any man of his time to the ridicule of his contemporaries"; and that "he was in his literary career, jealous, vain, irritable, pedantic, bombastical, petulant, and quarrelsome, ever on the watch for an affront, always in the attitude of a fretful porcupine."

Florio became connected as tutor of languages with the Earl of Southampton some time before the end of April 1591, when he issued his *Second Fruites* and dedicated it to his recent patron, Nicholas Saunder of Ewell. In this publication there is a passage which not only exhibits the man's unblushing effrontery, but also gives us a passing glimpse of his early relations with his noble patron, the spirit of which Shakespeare reflects in Falstaff's impudent familiarity with Prince Hal. This passage serves also to show that at the time it was written, the last of April 1591, Florio had entered the pay and patronage of the Earl of Southampton. He introduces two characters as follows, and, with true Falstaffian assurance, gives them his own and the Earl of Southampton's Christian names, Henry and John. Falstaff invariably addresses the Prince as Hal.

Henry. Let us make a match at tennis.

John. Agreed, this fine morning calls for it.

Henry. And after, we will go to dinner, and after dinner we will see a play.

John. The plaies they play in England are neither right comedies nor right tragedies.

Henry. But they do nothing but play every day.

John. Yea: but they are neither right comedies nor right tragedies.

Henry. How would you name them then?

John. Representations of history, without any decorum.

It shall later be shown that Chapman also noticed Florio's presumption in this instance, and that he recognised the fact, or else assumed as a fact, that Florio's stricture on English historical drama was directed against Shakespeare.

We may judge from the conversation between Henry and John that Southampton, in attaining a colloquial knowledge of French and Italian, entered into intimate relations with Florio, and from the interest that he displayed in dramatic affairs in later years, that during his first year in London he would be likely frequently to witness the performance of plays in the public theatres. It is probable, then, that he would have seen performances by both Pembroke's and Strange's companies in this year.

It is evident that an acquaintance between the Earl of Southampton and Shakespeare was not formed previous to Southampton's coming to Court in November 1590. A first acquaintance undoubtedly had its inception between that date and Southampton's departure for France early in 1592. I shall now develop evidence for my belief that their first acquaintance was made upon the occasion of the Queen's progress to Cowdray and Tichfield House in August and September 1591.

I find no record in the State Papers concerning Southampton between the date of his departure from home for the Court in October 1590, and 2nd March 1592 (new style), when he wrote from Dieppe to the Earl of Essex. We may, however, infer that he was still in England on 15th August 1591, the date of the arrival of the Queen and Court at Cowdray House. *It is evident also that the progress would not have proceeded a week later to his own county seat, Tichfield House, unless he was present.* We have evidence in the State Papers that the itineraries of the Queen's progresses were usually planned by Burghley; the present progress to Cowdray and Tichfield was undoubtedly arranged *in furtherance of his matrimonial plans for his granddaughter and Southampton* . The records of this progress give us details concerning the entertainments for the Queen, which were given at some of the other noblemen's houses she visited; the verses, masques, and plays being still preserved in a few instances, even where she tarried for only a few days. The Court remained at Cowdray House for a full week. No verses nor plays recited or performed upon this occasion, nor upon the occasion of her visit, a week later, to the Earl of Southampton's house at Tichfield, have been preserved in the records. It is very probable, however, in the light of the facts to follow, *that our poet and his fellow-players attended the Earl of Southampton, both at Cowdray House and at Tichfield, during this progress* . In the description of the Queen's entertainment during her stay at Cowdray, I find a most suggestive resemblance to much of the action and plot of *Love's Labours Lost* . The Queen and Court arrived at Cowdray House at eight o'clock on Saturday evening, 15th August. That night, the records tell us, "her Majesty took her rest and so in like manner the next, which was Sunday, being most royally feasted, the proportion of breakfast being 3 oxen and 140 geese." "The next day," we are informed, "she rode in the park where a delicate bower" was prepared and "a nymph with a sweet song delivered her a crossbow to shoot at the deer of which she killed three or four and the Countess of Kildare one." In *Love's Labour's Lost* the Princess and her ladies shoot at deer from a coppice.

Princess. Then, forester, my friend, where is the bush
That we must stand and play the murderer in?

For. Hereby, upon the edge of yonder coppice;
A stand where you may make the fairest shoot.

In Act IV. Scene ii., Holofernes makes an "extemporal epitaph on the death of the deer," which is reminiscent of the "sweet song" delivered to the Queen by "the nymph."

Hol. Sir Nathaniel, will you hear an extemporal epitaph on the death of the deer?
And, to humour the ignorant, call I the deer the princess killed a pricket.

I will something affect the letter, for it argues facility.

The preyful princess pierced and prick'd a pretty pleasing pricket;
Some say a sore, but not a sore, till now made sore with shooting.
The dogs did yell; put L to sore, then sorel jumps from thicket;
Or pricket sore, or else sorel; the people fall a-hooting.
If sore be sore, then L to sore makes fifty sores one sorel.
Of one sore I an hundred make by adding but one more L.

In a former publication I have shown that an antagonism had developed between Shakespeare and Chapman as early as the year 1594, and in a more recent one have shown Matthew Roydon's complicacy with Chapman in his hostility to Shakespeare, and also Shakespeare's cognizance of it. I have displayed Shakespeare's answers to the attacks of these scholars in his caricature of Chapman as Holofernes, and of the curate Roydon as the curate Nathaniel. Chapman's attack upon Shakespeare in 1593 in the early *Histriomastix* and his reflection of the Earl of Southampton as Mavortius give evidence that his hostility owed its birth to Shakespeare's success in winning the patronage and friendship of Southampton; unless Chapman and Roydon had already solicited this nobleman's patronage, or had at least come into contact with him in some manner, and considered themselves displaced by Shakespeare, both the virulence of their opposition to our poet, and the manner and matter of Chapman's slurs against him in *Histriomastix* , and in the dedications of his poems to Matthew Roydon in 1594-95, are unaccountable.

It is likely that Matthew Roydon was one of the theological poets—who wrote anonymously for the stage—mentioned by Robert Greene in the introduction to *The Farewell to Folly* , which was published in 1591. It is probable also that Roydon is referred to as a writer for the stage in Greene's *Groatsworth of Wit* , where, after indicating Marlowe, Peele, and Nashe, he says:

"In this I might insert two more who have both writ against (for) these buckram gentlemen."

Now seeing that both Roydon and Chapman are satirised by Shakespeare in *Love's Labours Lost* , it occurs to me that the "preyful Princess" verses quoted above (which display parody in every line) are intended by Shakespeare to caricature the known work of the author of the sweet song delivered to the Queen by the nymph, and consequently that this song was from the pen of one of this learned couple. As I have already noticed, in the records of the Queen's stay at the other noblemen's houses that she visited on this progress, many verses and songs appear which were written specially for these occasions, while no songs, nor verses, have been preserved from the Cowdray or Tichfield festivities, occasions when they would be likely to have been used, considering Southampton's interest in literary matters and the court paid to him by the writers of the day. Among the poems which I have collected that I attribute to Roydon, I have elsewhere noticed one that Shakespeare makes fun of at a later time in *Midsummer Night's Dream* —that is, *The Shepherd's Slumber* . This poem deals with the exact season of the year when the Queen was at Cowdray—"peascod time"—and also with the killing of deer,

"when hound to horn gives ear till buck be killed";

and in one verse describes just such methods of killing deer as is suggested, both in *Love's Labours Lost* and in *Nichol's Progresses* , which latter records the entertainment for the Queen at Cowdray House.

"And like the deer, I make them fall!
That runneth o'er the lawn.
One drops down here! another there!
In bushes as they groan;
I bend a scornful, careless ear,
To hear them make their moan."

May not this be the identical "sweet song" delivered by the nymph to the Queen, and the occasion of the progress to Cowdray, in 1591, indicate the entry of Roydon and Chapman into the rivalry between Shakespeare and the scholars inaugurated two years earlier by Greene and Nashe?

This poem which I attribute to Roydon has all the manner of an occasional production and is about as senseless as most of his other "absolute comicke inventions." The masque-like allegory it exhibits, introducing "Delight," "Wit," "Good Sport," "Honest Meaning" as persons, was much affected by the Queen and Court in their entertainments. At the marriage of Lord Herbert, son of the Earl of Worcester, in 1599, a masque was given for the Queen in which we are told eight ladies of the Court performed. One of these ladies "wooed her to dawnce, her Majesty asked what she was, affection she said, affection, said the Queen, affection is false, yet her Majesty rose and dawnced." During the stay at

Cowdray similar make-believe and allegory were evidently used in the entertainments given for the Queen. Roydon's poem may, like *Love's Labours Lost* , be a reflection of such courtly nonsense.

During the first three days of the Queen's stay at Cowdray she was feasted and entertained (the records inform us) by Lady Montague, but on the fourth day "she dined at the Priory," where Lord Montague kept bachelor's hall, and whither he had retired to receive and entertain the Queen without the assistance of Lady Montague. This reception and entertainment of the Queen by Lord Montague was, no doubt, accompanied by fantastic allegory—Lord Montague and his friends playing the parts of hermits, or philosophers in retreat, as in the case of the King of Navarre and his friends in *Love's Labour's Lost* . The paucity of plot in this play has been frequently noticed, and no known basis for its general action and plot has ever been discovered or proposed.

At this time (1591) Shakespeare had been in London only from four to five years, and, judging from the prominence in his profession which he shortly afterwards attained, we may be assured that these were years of patient drudgery in his calling. Neither in his Stratford years, nor during these inceptive theatrical years, would he be likely to have had much, if any, previous experience with the social life of the nobility; yet here, in what is recognised by practically all critical students as his earliest comedy, the original composition of which is dated by the best text critics in, or about, 1591, he displays an intimate acquaintance with their sports and customs which in spirit and detail most significantly coincide with the actual records of the Queen's progress, late in 1591, to Cowdray House, the home of the mother of the nobleman whose fortunes, from this time forward for a period of from ten to fifteen years, may be shown to have influenced practically every poem and play he produced.

As the incidents of the Queen's stay at Cowdray are reflected in the plot and action of *Loves Labour's Lost* , so, in *All's Well that Ends Well* , or, at least, in those portions of that play recognised by the best critics as the remains of the older play of *Love's Labour's Won* , the incidents and atmosphere of the Queen's stay at Tichfield House are also suggested. The gentle and dignified Countess of Rousillon suggests the widowed Countess of Southampton; the wise and courtly Lafeu gives us a sketch of Sir Thomas Heneage, the Vice-Chamberlain of the Court, who married Lady Southampton about three years later. Bertram's insensibility to Helena's love, and indifference to her charms, as well as his departure for the French Court, coincide with the actual facts in the case of

Southampton, who at this time was apathetic to the match planned by his friends, and who also left home for France shortly after the Queen's visit to Cowdray. Parolles is, I am convinced, a caricature from life, and in his original characterisation in *Love's Labour's Won* was probably a replica of the original Armado of the earliest form of *Love's Labours Lost* . Both of these characters I believe I can demonstrate to be early sketches, or caricatures, of John Florio, the same individual who is caricatured in *Henry IV.* and the *Merry Wives of Windsor* as Sir John Falstaff. The characterisation of Parolles as we have it in *All's Well that Ends Well* is probably much more accentuated than the Parolles of the earlier form of the play, in which he would most likely have been presented as a fantastical fop, somewhat of the order of Armado. By the time the earlier play of 1591-92 was rewritten into its present form, in 1598, the original of the character of Parolles had in Shakespeare's opinion developed also into a "misleader of youth"; in fact, into another Falstaff, minus the adipose tissue.

As both *Loves Labour's Lost* and *Love's Labour's Won* (*All's Well that Ends Well* in its early form) reflect persons and incidents of the Cowdray-Tichfield progress, it is evident that both plays were composed after the event. It is of interest then to consider which, if any, of Shakespeare's plays were likely to have been presented upon that occasion.

As this narrative and argument develop, a date of composition later than the date of the Cowdray progress—when Shakespeare first formed the acquaintance of the Earl of Southampton—and based upon subjective evidence regarding the poet's relations with this nobleman, yet coinciding with the chronological conclusions of the best text critics, shall be demonstrated for all of Shakespeare's early plays with the exception of *King John* and *The Comedy of Errors* . In all the early plays except these two I find palpable time reflections of Shakespeare's interest in the Earl of Southampton or his affairs. I therefore date the original composition of both of these early plays previous to the Cowdray progress, in September 1591. I have already advanced my evidence for the original composition of Shakespeare's *King John* early in 1591. I cannot so palpably demonstrate the composition of *The Comedy of Errors* in this year, but, following the lead of the great majority of the text critics who date its composition in this year, and finding no internal reflection of Southampton or his affairs, I infer that it was written after the composition of *King John* , before Shakespeare had made Southampton's acquaintance and intentionally for presentation before the Queen and Court at Cowdray or Tichfield. The fact that *The Comedy of Errors* is the shortest of all Shakespeare's plays, the farce-like nature of the play and its recorded presentation in 1594 before the members of Gray's Inn, with which Southampton was connected, marks it as one of the plays originally composed for private rather than for public presentation. It is evident that it never proved sufficiently popular upon the public boards to warrant its enlargement to the size of the average publicly presented play.

While I cannot learn the actual date at which Southampton left England, we have proof in a letter written by him to the Earl of Essex, that he was in France upon 2nd March 1592.

When we take into consideration the fact that this visit of the Queen's to Cowdray and Tichfield was arranged by Burghley in furtherance of his plans to marry his granddaughter to the Earl of Southampton, and that Shakespeare's earlier sonnets (which I shall argue were written with the intention of forwarding this match) are of a period very slightly later than this, it is evident that the incidents of the Queen's stay at Cowdray and Tichfield would become known to Shakespeare by report, even though he was not himself present upon those occasions. The plot of the first four Acts of *Love's Labour's Lost* , such as it is, bears such a strong resemblance to the recorded incidents of that visit as to suggest reminiscence much more than hearsay.

While Burghley in this affair was, no doubt, primarily seeking a suitable alliance for his granddaughter, the rather hurried and peremptory manner of Southampton's invitation to Court may partially be accounted for by other motives, when the conditions of the Court and its intrigues at that immediate period are considered.

The long struggle for political supremacy between Burghley and Elizabeth's first, and most enduring favourite, Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, came to an end in 1588 through the death of Leicester in that year. While Elizabeth's faith in Burghley's political wisdom was never at any time seriously shaken by the counsels of her more polished and courtly confidant, Leicester, there was a period in her long flirtation with the latter nobleman when the great fascination, which he undoubtedly exercised over her, seemed likely to lead her into a course which would completely alter, not only the political complexion of the Court, but possibly also the actual destinies of the Crown. There was never at any period of their career any love lost between Burghley and Leicester; the latter, in the heyday of his favour, frequently expressed himself in such plain terms regarding Burghley that he could have had little doubt of the disastrous effect upon his own fortunes which might ensue from the consummation of Leicester's matrimonial ambitions. He, withal, wisely gauged the character and limits of Leicester's influence with Elizabeth. While Leicester played upon the vanities and weakness of the woman, Burghley appealed to the strong mentality and love of power of the queen; yet though he unceasingly opposed Leicester's projects and ambitions, wherein they threatened his own political supremacy, or the good of the State, he seems to have recognised the impossibility of undermining the Queen's personal regard for her great favourite, which continued through all the years of his selfish, blundering, and criminal career, down to the day of his death. While Leicester also in time appears to have realised the impossibility of seriously impairing Burghley's power, he, to the last, lost no opportunity of baffling that minister's more cherished personal policies. In introducing his stepson, Essex, to Court life and the notice of the Queen, in 1583, it is evident that he had in mind designs other than the advancement of his young kinsman. Essex, from the first, seems to have realised in whose shoes he trod, and for the first ten years of his life at Court fully maintained the Leicester tradition, and seemed likely in time even to refine upon and enhance it. Had this young nobleman possessed ordinary equipoise of temper it is questionable if Burghley would later have succeeded in securing the succession of his own place and power to his son, Sir Robert Cecil. Preposterous as it may seem, when judged from a modern point of view, that the personal influence of this youth of twenty-three with the now aged Queen should in any serious measure have menaced the firm power and cautious policies of the experienced Burghley, we have abundance of evidence that he and his son regarded Essex's growing ascendancy as no light matter. From their long experience and intimate association with Elizabeth, and knowing her vanities and weaknesses, as well as her strength, they apprehended in her increasing favour for Essex the beginning and rooting of a power which might in time disintegrate their own solid foundations. The subtlety, dissimulation, and unrelenting persistency with which Burghley and his son opposed themselves to Essex's growing influence while yet posing as his confidants and well-wishers, fully bespeak the measure of their fears. While Burghley himself lacked the polished manners and graceful presence of the courtier, which so distinguished Raleigh, Leicester, and Essex, and owed his influence and power entirely to qualities of the mind and his indefatigable application to business, he had come to recognise the importance of these more ornamental endowments in securing and holding the regard of Elizabeth. His son, Sir Robert Cecil, who was not only puny and deformed, but also somewhat sickly all his days, made, and could make, no pretensions to courtier-like graces, and must depend for Court favour, to a yet greater degree than his father, upon his own powers of mind and will. To combat Essex's social influence at Court, these two more clerkly politicians, soon after Essex's appearance, proceeded to supplement their own power by making an ally of the accomplished Raleigh; to whom, previous to this, they had shown little favour. They soon succeeded in fomenting a rivalry between these two courtiers which, with some short periods of truce, continued until their combined machinations finally brought Essex to the block. How Sir Robert Cecil, having used Raleigh as a tool against Essex, in turn effected his political ruin shall be shown in due course.

We shall now return to Southampton and to the period of his coming to London and the Court, towards the end of October, in the year 1590. A recent biographer of Shakespeare, writing of Southampton, sums up the incidents of this period in the following generalisation: "It was naturally to the Court that his friends sent him at an early age to display his varied graces. He can hardly have been more than seventeen when he was presented to his Sovereign. She showed him kindly notice, and the Earl of Essex, her brilliant favourite, acknowledged his fascination. Thenceforth Essex displayed in his welfare a brotherly interest which proved in course of time a very doubtful blessing." This not only hurries the narrative but also misconstrues the facts and ignores the most interesting phases of the friendship between these noblemen, as they influenced Southampton's subsequent connection with Shakespeare. Essex may have acknowledged Southampton's fascination at this date, though I find no evidence that he did do so, but for the assertion that he "*thenceforth* " displayed in his welfare a brotherly interest there is absolutely no basis. All reasonable inference, and some actual evidence, lead me to quite divergent conclusions regarding the relations that subsisted between these young noblemen at this early date. Southampton's interests, it is true, became closely interwoven with those of Essex at a somewhat later period when he had become enamoured of Essex's cousin, Elizabeth Vernon, whom he eventually married. The inception of this latter affair cannot, however, at the earliest, be dated *previous to the late spring of 1594* . At whatever date Southampton and Essex became intimate friends, there can be no doubt *that such a conjunction was contrary to Burghley's intentions in bringing Southampton to the Court in October 1590* . In making use of Raleigh to counteract Essex's influence with the Queen, the Cecils were well aware, as their subsequent treatment of Raleigh proves, that they might in him augment a power which, if opposed to their own, would prove even more dangerous than that of Essex; yet feeling the need of a friend and ally in the more intimately social life of the Court, whose interests would be identical with their own, they chose what appeared to them an auspicious moment to introduce their graceful and accomplished protégé and prospective kinsman, to the notice of the Queen, whose predilection for handsome young courtiers seemed to increase with advancing age.

Essex , although then but in his twenty-sixth year, had spent nearly six years at Court. During this period he had been so spoiled and petted by his doting Sovereign that he had already upon several occasions temporarily turned her favour to resentment by his arrogance and ill-humour. In his palmiest days even Leicester had never dared to take the liberties with the Queen now, at times, indulged in by this brilliant but wilful youth. In exciting Essex's hot and hasty temper the watchful Cecils soon found their most effectual means of defence. Early in the summer of 1590, Essex, piqued by the Queen's refusal of a favour, committed what was, up till that time, his most wilful breach of Court decorum and flagrant instance of opposition to the Queen's wishes. Upon the 6th of April in that year the office of Secretary of State became vacant by the death of Sir Francis Walsingham. Shortly afterward, Essex endeavoured to secure the office for William Davison, who, previous to 1587, had acted in the capacity of assistant to Walsingham and was therefore presumably well qualified for the vacant post. Upon the execution of Mary, Queen of Scots, in 1587, Elizabeth, in disavowing her responsibility for the act, had made a scapegoat of Davison, who, she claimed, had secured her signature to the death-warrant by misrepresentation, and had proceeded with its immediate execution contrary to her commands. Though she deceived no one but herself by this characteristic duplicity, she never retreated from the stand she had taken, but, feeling conscious that she was doubted, to enforce belief in her sincerity, maintained her resentment against Davison to the last. Upon Elizabeth's refusal of the Secretaryship to his luckless protégé, Essex, in dudgeon, absented himself from the Court, and within a few weeks chose a yet more effectual means of exasperating the Queen by privately espousing Sir Francis Walsingham's daughter, Lady Sidney, widow of the renowned Sir Philip. When knowledge of this latest action reached the Queen her anger was kindled to a degree that (to the Court gossips) seemed to preclude Essex's forgiveness, or the possibility of his reinstatement in favour. With the intention of increasing Essex's ill-humour and still further estranging him from the Queen, Burghley now proposed that all his letters and papers be seized. *He also chose this period of estrangement to introduce his prospective grandson-in-law, Southampton, to the Court.* The very eagerness of Essex's enemies, however, appears to have cooled the Queen's anger, as we find that within a month of Southampton's arrival at the Court—that is, on 26th November—Essex is reported as "once more in good favour with the Queen."

In the light of the foregoing facts and deductions, it does not seem likely that Burghley would encourage a friendship between Essex and Southampton. The assumption that he would (at least tacitly) seek rather to provoke a rivalry is under the circumstances more reasonable. Though I find no record in the State Papers of this immediate date that hostility was aroused between these young courtiers, in a paper of a later date, which refers to this time, I find fair proof that such a condition of affairs did at this period actually exist. In the declaration of the treason of the Earl of Essex, 1600-1, in the State Papers we have the following passage: "There was present this day at the Council, the Earl of Southampton, with whom in former times he (Essex) *had been at some emulations and differences at Court* , but after, Southampton, having married his kinswoman (Elizabeth Vernon), plunged himself wholly into his fortunes," *etc.*

Though the matrimonial engagement between Burghley's granddaughter and Southampton never reached its consummation, and we have evidence in Roger Manners' letter of 6th March 1592 that some doubt in regard to its fulfilment had even then arisen in Court circles, we have good grounds for assuming that all hope for the union was not abandoned by Burghley till a later date. Lady Elizabeth Vere eventually married the Earl of Derby in January 1595. This marriage was arranged for in the summer of the preceding year, and after the Earl of Derby had come into his titles and estates, through the death of his elder brother, in April 1594.

Referring again to the State Papers, we have on 15th August 1594 the statement of a Jesuit, named Edmund Yorke, who is reported as saying "Burghley poisoned the Earl of Derby so as to marry his granddaughter to his brother." Fernando Stanley, Earl of Derby, died under suspicious circumstances after a short illness, and it was reported at the time that he was poisoned. As he had recently been instrumental in bringing about the execution of a prominent Jesuit, whom he had accused of having approached him with seditious proposals, it was believed at the time that an emissary of that society was concerned in his death. While disregarding Yorke's atrocious imputation against Burghley, we may safely date the inception of the negotiations leading to Elizabeth Vere's marriage somewhere after 16th April, the date of the preceding Earl's death; Burghley did not choose younger sons in marriage for his daughters or granddaughters. Thus we are fully assured that, at however earlier a date the prospects for a marriage between Southampton and Lady Vere were abandoned, they had ceased to be entertained by the early summer of 1594. Shortly after this, Southampton's infatuation for Elizabeth Vernon had its inception. The intensity of the young nobleman's early interest in this latter affair quite precludes the necessity for Shakespeare's poetical incitements thereto; we may therefore refer the group of sonnets, in which Shakespeare urges his friend's marriage, to the more diffident affair of the earlier years and to a period antedating the publication of *Venus and Adonis* in May 1593. A comparison of the argument of *Venus and Adonis* with that of the first book of Sonnets will indicate a common date of production, and that Shakespeare wrote both poems with the same purpose in view.

<<span id="filepos0042033508"> a> CHAPTER VIII

JOHN FLORIO AS SIR JOHN FALSTAFF'S ORIGINAL

Probably the most remarkable and interesting æsthetic study of a single Shakespearean character ever produced is Maurice Morgann's *Essay on the Dramatic Character of Sir John Falstaff* , which was written in 1774, and first published in 1777. This excellent piece of criticism deserves a much wider cognizance than it has ever attained; only three editions have since been issued.

Morgann's *Essay* was originally undertaken in jest, in order to disprove the assertion made by an acquaintance that Falstaff was a coward; but, inspired by his subject, it was continued and finished in splendid earnest. As his analysis of the character of Falstaff becomes more intimate his wonder grows at the concrete human personality he apprehends. Falstaff ceases to be a fictive creation, or the mere dramatic representation of a type, and takes on a distinctive individuality. He writes:

"The reader will not now be surprised if I affirm that those characters in Shakespeare, which are seen only in part, are yet capable of being unfolded and understood in the whole; every part being in fact relative, and inferring all the rest. It is true that the point of action or sentiment, which we are most concerned in, is always held out for our special notice. But who does not perceive that there is a peculiarity about it, which conveys a relish of the whole? And very frequently, when no particular point presses, he boldly makes a character act and speak from those parts of the composition, which are inferred only, and not distinctly shewn. This produces a wonderful effect; it seems to carry us beyond the poet to nature itself, and give an integrity and truth to facts and character, which they would not otherwise obtain. And this is in reality that art in Shakespeare, which being withdrawn from our notice, we more emphatically call nature. A felt propriety and truth from causes unseen, I take to be the highest point of Poetic composition. If the characters of Shakespeare are thus whole, and as it were original, while those of almost all other writers are mere imitation, it may be fit to consider them rather as Historic than Dramatic beings; and, when occasion requires, to account for their conduct from the whole of character, from general principles, from latent motives, and from policies not avowed."

Morgann was closer to the secret of Shakespeare's art than he realised; he had really penetrated to the truth without knowing it. The reason that his fine analytical sense had led him to feel that "it may be fit to consider them rather as Historic than Dramatic beings" is the fact that in practically every instance where a very distinctive Shakespearean character, such as Falconbridge, Falstaff, Armado, Malvolio, and Fluellen, acts and speaks "from those parts of the composition, which are inferred only, and not distinctly shewn," the characters so apprehended may be shown by the light of contemporary social, literary, or political records to have been, in some measure, a reflection of a living model. Shakespeare had literally, in his own phrase, held "the mirror up to nature"; the reflection, however, being heightened and vivified by the infusion of his own rare sensibility, and the power of his dramatic genius.

With all his genius Shakespeare was yet mortal, and human creativeness cannot transcend nature. What we call creativeness, even in the greatest artists, is but a fineness of sensibility and cognition, or rather recognition, coupled with the power to express what they see and feel in nature.

As a large number of Shakespeare's plays were written primarily for private or Court presentation, to edify or amuse his patron and his patron's friends, or with their immediate political or factional interests in mind to influence the Court in their favour, the shadowed purposes of such plays, the acting or speaking of a character "from those parts of the composition, which are inferred only, and not distinctly shewn," as well as a number of hitherto supposedly inexplicable asides and allusions, such as Bottom's "reason and love keep little company together nowadays; the more the pity, that some honest neighbours will not make them friends," would give to those acquaintances who were in Shakespeare's confidence an added zest and interest in such plays quite lacking to the uninitiated, or to a modern audience.

I propose in this chapter to demonstrate the facts that John Florio—the translator of *Montaigne's Essays* and tutor of languages to Shakespeare's patron, the Earl of Southampton—was Shakespeare's original for Sir John Falstaff and other of his characters; that the Earl of Southampton and Lady Southampton were cognizant of the shadowed identity, and that Florio himself recognised and angrily resented the characterisation when a knowledge of its personal application had spread among their mutual acquaintances.

In preceding chapters and in former books I have advanced evidence of a cumulative nature for Southampton's identity as the patron addressed in the Sonnets; the identity of Chapman as the "rival poet," and Shakespeare's caricature of him as Holofernes; the identity of Matthew Roydon as the author of *Willobie his Avisa* , as well as Shakespeare's caricature of him as the curate Nathaniel; and the identity of Mistress Davenant as the "dark lady" of the Sonnets. If, then, we find in the same plays in which these personal reflections are shown a certain distinctly marked type of character, bearing stronger *prima facie* evidence than the others of having been developed from a living original, may we not reasonably infer that the individual so represented might also have been linked in life in some manner approximating to his relations in the play, with the lives and interests of the other persons shadowed forth?

With this idea in mind I have searched all available records relating to Southampton, in the hope of finding among his intimates an individual whose personality may have suggested Shakespeare's characterisation, or caricature, set forth in the successive persons of Armado, Parolles, and Sir John Falstaff. The traceable incidents of John Florio's life, his long and intimate association with Shakespeare's patron, and reasonable inferences for the periods where actual record of him is wanting, gave probability, in my judgment, to his identity as Shakespeare's original for these and other characters. A further consideration of the man's personality, temperament, and mental habitude, as I could dimly trace them in his few literary remains that afford scope for unconscious self-revelation, left no doubt in my mind as to his identity as Shakespeare's model.

Supposing it to be impossible, with our present records, to visualise Shakespeare more definitely in his contemporary environment, it has been common with biographers, in their endeavours to link him with the men of his times, to draw imaginative pictures of his intimate and friendly personal relations with such men as Sir Walter Raleigh, Bacon, Chapman, Marston, and others, equally improbable, forgetting the social distinctions, the scholastic prejudices, and still more, the religious or political animosities that divided men in public life in those days, as they do, though in a lesser degree, to-day. The intimate relations of the Earl of Southampton with Lord Burghley, during the earliest period of his

Court life, when he was affianced to Burghley's granddaughter, and his later intimacy with the Earl of Essex and with the gentlemen of the Essex faction, coupled with Shakespeare's sympathy with the cause of his patron and his patron's friends, must be borne in mind in any endeavour that is made to trace in the plays either Shakespeare's political leanings or his probable affiliations with, or antagonisms to, his early contemporaries. The natural jealousies that would arise between the followers, dependants, or protégés of a liberal patron must also be considered.

John Florio became connected, in the capacity of Italian tutor, with the Earl of Southampton late in the year 1590, or early in 1591, shortly after his coming to Court, and a little before Southampton first began to show favour to Shakespeare. We have Florio's own statement for the fact that he continued in Southampton's "pay and patronage" at least as late as 1598, in which year he published his *Worlde of Wordes* . Whether or not he continued in Southampton's service after this date is uncertain, but we may safely impute to that nobleman's good offices the favour shown to him by James I. and his Queen in 1604, and later.

From the first time that Shakespeare and Florio were thrown together, through their mutual connection with Southampton, in or about 1591, down to the year 1609, when the Sonnets were issued at the instigation of Shakespeare's literary rivals, I find intermittent traces of antagonism between them, and also of Florio's intimacy and sympathy with Chapman and his friends. In later years, Chapman, Jonson, and Marston, however, seem to have recognised in Florio an unstable ally, and tacitly to have regarded him as a selfish and shifty opportunist. Florio appears to have used his intimacy with Southampton, and his knowledge of that nobleman's relations with Shakespeare and the "dark lady" in 1593 to 1594, to the poet's disadvantage, by imparting intelligence of the affair to Chapman and Roydon, the latter of whom exploited this knowledge in the production of *Willobie his Avisa* .

In Chapman's dedication to Roydon of *The Shadow of Night* in 1594, he shows knowledge of the fact that Shakespeare was practically reader to the Earl of Southampton, and that he passed his judgment upon literary matter submitted to that nobleman. Referring to Shakespeare, Chapman writes: "How then may a man stay his marvailing to see passion-driven men, reading but to curtail a tedious hour, and altogether hidebound with affection to great men's fancies, take upon them as killing censures as if they were judgment's butchers, or as if the life of truth lay tottering in their verdicts." This reference to Shakespeare as "passion-driven" refers to the affair of the "dark lady," upon which Chapman's friend, Roydon, was then at work in *Willobie his Avisa* . Florio, in later years, as shall appear, also makes a very distinct point at Shakespeare as a "reader." Unless there was an enemy in Shakespeare's camp to report to Chapman and Roydon the fact of his "reading" to curtail tedious hours for his patron, and to convey intelligence to Roydon of Shakespeare's and Southampton's relations with the "dark lady," either by reporting the affair or by bringing Shakespeare's earlier MS. *books* of sonnets to his notice, it is improbable that these men would have had such intimate knowledge of the incidents and conditions of this stage of Shakespeare's friendship with his patron. Florio probably fostered the hostility of these scholars to Shakespeare by imputing to his influence their ill-success in winning Southampton's favour. It is not improbable that for his own protection he secretly used his influence with Southampton in defeating their advances while posing as their friend and champion. Shakespeare distrusted Florio from the beginning of his acquaintance, and deprecated his influence upon his patron.

In the earlier stages of Shakespeare's observation of Florio he appears to have been more amused than angered, but as the years pass his dislike grows, as he sees more clearly into the cold selfishness of a character, obscured to his earlier and more casual view by the interesting personality and frank and humorous worldly wisdom of the man. However heightened and amplified by Shakespeare's imagination the characterisation of Falstaff may now appear, a consideration of the actual character of Florio, as we find it revealed between the lines of his own literary productions, and in the few contemporary records of him that have survived, suggests on Shakespeare's part portrayal rather than caricature.

Assuming for the present that Shakespeare has characterised, or caricatured, Florio as Parolles, Armado, and Falstaff, the first and second of these characters are represented in plays originally produced in, or about, 1592, but reflecting the spirit and incidents of the Cowdray and Tichfield progress of the autumn of 1591. While these plays were altered at a later period, or periods, of revision, it is apparent that both characters pertain in a large measure to the plays in their earlier forms. If Shakespeare used Florio as his model for these characters, we have added evidence that by the autumn of 1591 Florio had already entered the "pay and patronage" of Southampton, who about this period, under his tuition and in anticipation of continental travel, developed his knowledge of Italian and French. In his dedication of the *Worlde of Wordes* to Southampton in 1598,

Florio writes:

"In truth I acknowledge an entire debt, not only of my best knowledge, but of all, yea of more than I know or can, to your bounteous Lordship, most noble, most virtuous, and most Honourable Earl of Southampton, in whose pay and patronage I have lived some years, to whom I owe and vow the years I have to live."

Further on in this dedication he refers to Southampton's study of Italian under his tuition as follows:

"I might make doubt least I or mine be not now of any further use to your self-sufficiencie, being at home so instructed in Italian as teaching or learning could supply that there seemed no need of travell, and now by travell so accomplished as what wants to perfection?"

All's Well that Ends Well , in its earlier form of *Loves Labour's Won* , reflects the spirit and incidents of the Queen's progress to Tichfield House in September 1591; the widowed Countess of Rousillon personifies the widowed Countess of Southampton; the wise and courtly Lafeu the courtly Sir Thomas Heneage, who within three years married the Countess of Southampton. I have suggested that Bertram represented Southampton, and that his coolness towards Helena, and his proposed departure for the French Court, reflects Southampton's disinclination to the marriage with Elizabeth Vere, and the fact of his departure shortly afterwards for France. In Florio, who was at that time attached to the Earl of Southampton's establishment, and presumably was present upon the occasion of the progress to Tichfield, we have the prototype of Parolles, though much of the present characterisation of that person, while referring to the same original, undoubtedly pertains to a period of later time revision, which on good evidence I date in, or about, the autumn of 1598, at which period Shakespeare's earlier antipathy had grown by knowledge and experience into positive aversion.

In 1591 Southampton was still a ward in Chancery, and the management of his personal affairs and expenditures under the supervision of Lord Burghley, to whose granddaughter he was affianced. It is evident then that when Florio was retained in the capacity of tutor, or bear-leader, and with the intention of having him accompany the young Earl upon his continental travels, his selection for the post would be made by Burghley—Southampton's guardian—who in former years had patronised and befriended Florio's father.

In Lafeu's early distrust of Parolles' pretensions, and his eventual recognition of his cowardice and instability, I believe we have a reflection of the attitude of Sir Thomas Heneage towards Florio, and a suggestion of his disapproval of Florio's intimacy with Southampton. This leads me to infer that though Lady Southampton and Heneage apparently acquiesced in, and approved of, Burghley's marital plans for Southampton, secretly they were not displeased at their miscarriage.

When Southampton first came to Court he was a fresh and unspoiled youth, with high ideals and utterly unacquainted with the ethical latitude and moral laxity of city and Court life. In bringing him to Court and the notice of the Queen, and at the same time endeavouring to unite his interests with his own by marriage with his granddaughter, Burghley hoped that—as in the case of his son-in-law, the Earl of Oxford, some years before—Southampton would become a Court favourite, and possibly supplant Essex in the Queen's favour, as the Earl of Oxford had for a while threatened to displace Leicester. The ingenuous frankness and independence of the young Earl, however, appeared likely to defeat the plans of the veteran politician. Burghley now resolved that he must broaden his protégé's knowledge of the world and adjust his ideals to Court life. He accordingly engaged the sophisticated and world-bitten Florio as his intellectual and moral mentor. I do not find any record of Southampton's departure for France immediately after the Cowdray progress, but it is apparent either that he accompanied the Earl of Essex upon that nobleman's return to his command in France after a short visit to England in October 1591, or that he followed shortly afterwards. Essex was recalled from France in January 1592 (new style), and on 2nd March of the same year we have a letter dated at Dieppe from Southampton to Essex in England, which shows that Southampton was with the army in France within a few months of the Cowdray progress.

Conceiving both Parolles and Falstaff to be caricatures of Florio I apprehend in the military functions of these characters a reflection of a probable quasi-military experience of their original during his connection with Southampton in the year 1592.

An English force held Dieppe for Henry IV. in March 1592, awaiting reinforcements from England to move against the army of the League, which was encamped near the town. If Southampton took Florio with him at this time it is quite likely that he had him appointed to a captaincy, though probably not to a command. Captain Roger Williams, a brave and capable Welsh officer (whom I have reason to believe was Shakespeare's original for the Welsh Captain Fluellen in *Henry V* .), joined the army at the end of this month, bringing with him six hundred men. In a letter to the Council, upon his departure from England, he writes sarcastically of the number and inefficiency of the captains being made. This letter is so characteristic of the man, and so reminiscent of blunt Fluellen, that I shall quote it in full.

"Moste Honorables, yesterdaie it was your Lordship's pleasure to shewe the roll of captaines by their names. More then half of them are knowen unto me sufficient to take charges; a greate number of others, besides the rest in that roll, although not knowen unto me, maie be as sufficient as the others, perhapps knowen unto menn of farr better judgment than myselfe. To saie truthe, no man ought to meddle further than his owne charge. Touching the three captaines that your Lordships appointed to go with me, I knowe Polate and Coverd, but not the thirde. There is one Captaine Polate, a Hampshire man, an honest gentleman, worthie of good charge. There is another not worthie to be a sergeant of a band, as Sir John Norris knows, with many others; and I do heare by my Lord of Sussex it is he. Captain Coverd is worthie, but not comparable unto a dozen others that have no charge; but whatsoever your Lordships direct unto me, I muste accept, and will do my best endeavour to discharge my dutie towards the service comitted unto me. But be assured that the more new captaines that are made, the more will begg, I meane will trouble her Majestie after the warrs, unless the olde be provided for. I must confess I wrote effectual for one Captaine Smithe unto Sir Philipp Butler; two of the name Sir John Norris will confess to be well worthie to commande, at the least, three hundred men a-piece. He that I named, my desire is that he may be one of myne. I protest, on my poore credytt, I never delt with her Majestic concerning any of those captaines, nor anything that your Lordships spake yesterday before me; but true it is, I spake before the Earle of Essex and Sir John Norris, it was pittie that young captaines should be accepted and the old refused. True it is that I toulde them also that the lieutenants of the shire knew not those captaines so well as ourselves. On my creditt, my meaning was the deputies lieutenants, the which, as it was toulde me, had made all these captaines. My speeches are no lawe, nor scarce good judgment, for the warrs were unknowen to me 22 yeres agon. Notwithstanding, it shall satisfie me, that the greatest generalls in that time took me to be a souldier, for the which I will bring better proofs than any other of my qualitie shall deny. Humbly desiring your Lordships' accustomed good favor towards me, I reste to spend my life alwaies at her Majestie's pleasure, and at your Lordships' devotion. (27th March 1591.)"

Within a short period of the arrival of Sir Roger Williams he had dispersed the enemy and opened up the road to the suburbs of Paris; which city was then held by the combined forces of the League and the Spanish. I cannot learn whether Southampton accompanied the troops in the proposed attack on Paris or continued his travels into the Netherlands and Spain. Some verses in *Willobie his Avisa* suggest such a tour at this time. He was back in England, however, by September 1592, when he accompanied the Queen and Court to Oxford. It is probable that Florio accompanied the Earl of Southampton upon this occasion, and that the nobleman's acquaintance with the mistress of the Crosse Inn, the beginning of which I date at this time, was due to his introduction. Florio lived for many years at Oxford and was undoubtedly familiar with its taverns and tavern keepers.

In depicting Parolles as playing Pander for Bertram, and at the same time secretly pressing his own suit, I am convinced that Shakespeare caricatured Florio's relations with Southampton and the "dark lady." It is not unlikely that Florio is included by Roydon in *Willobie his Avisa* among Avisa's numerous suitors.

The literary history of *All's Well that Ends Well* , aside from internal considerations, suggests that it was not composed originally for public performance, nor revised with the public in mind. It appeared in print for the first time in the Folio of 1623, and it is practically certain that no earlier edition was issued. If we except Meres' mention of the play, *Love's Labour's Won* , in 1598, the earliest reference we have to *All's Well that Ends Well* is that in the Stationers' Registers dated 8th November 1623, where it is recorded as a play not previously entered to other men. There is no record of its presentation during Shakespeare's lifetime.

Though the old play of *Love's Labour's Won* mentioned by Meres has been variously identified by critics, the consensus of judgment of the majority is in favour of its identification as *All's Well that Ends Well* . In no other of Shakespeare's plays—even in instances where we have actual record of revision—can we so plainly recognise by internal evidence both the work of his "pupil" and of his master pen. As I have assigned the original composition of this play to the year 1592, regarding it as a reflection of the Queen's progress to Tichfield House and of the incidents of the Earl of Southampton's life at, and following, that period, so I infer and believe I can demonstrate that its revision reflects the same personal influences under new phases in later years.

In February 1598 the Earl of Southampton left England for the French Court with Sir Robert Cecil. He returned secretly in August and was married privately at Essex House to Elizabeth Vernon, whose condition had recently caused her dismissal from the Court. Southampton returned to France as secretly as he had come, but knowledge of his return and of his unauthorised marriage reaching the Queen, she issued an order for his immediate recall, and upon his return in November committed him, and even threatened to commit his wife (who was now a mother), to the Fleet. It is not unlikely that Florio accompanied Southampton to France upon this visit, and that much of Shakespeare's irritation at this time arose from Southampton's neglect or coolness, which he supposed to be due to Florio's increasing influence, to which Shakespeare also imputed much of the young Earl's ill-regulated manner of life at this period.

In the happy ending of Helena's troubles, and in Bertram's recognition of his moral responsibility and marital obligations, and also in the significant change of the title of this play from *Love's Labour's Won* to *All's Well that Ends Well* , we have Shakespeare's combined reproof and approval of Southampton's recent conduct towards Elizabeth Vernon, as well as a practical reflection of the actual facts in their case.

At about this time, in addition to the revision of *All's Well that Ends Well* , I date the first production, though not the original composition, of *Troilus and Cressida* , and also the final revision of *Love's Labour's Lost* . In this latter play the part taken by Armado was, I believe, enlarged and revised, as in the case of Parolles in *All's Well that Ends Well* , to suit the incidents and characterisation to Shakespeare's developed knowledge of, and experience with, Florio. There are several small but significant links of description between the Parolles of 1598 and the enlarged Armado of the same date. Both of these characters are represented as braggart soldiers and also as linguists, which evidently reflect Florio's quasi-military connection with Southampton and his known proficiency in languages.

In Act IV. Scene iii. Parolles is referred to as "the manifold linguist and armipotent soldier." In *Love's Labour's Lost* , in Act I. Scene i., in lines that palpably belong to the play in its earliest form, Armado is described as "a man of fire-new words." He is also represented as a traveller from Spain. In Act V. Scene ii., in lines that pertain to the revision of 1598, he is made to take the soldier's part again, in giving him the character of Hector in *The Nine Worthies* . In this character Armado is made to use the peculiar word "armipotent" twice. It is significant that this word is never used by Shakespeare except in connection with Armado and Parolles. In giving Armado the character of Hector, I am convinced that Shakespeare again indicates Florio's military experience. In the lines which Armado recites in the character of Hector, Shakespeare intentionally makes his personal point at Florio more strongly indicative by alluding to the name Florio by the word "flower," in the interrupted line with which Hector ends his verses.

Arm. Peace!——
"The armipotent Mars, of lances the almighty,
Gave Hector a gift, the heir of Ilion;
A man so breathed, that certain he would fight ye
From morn till night, out of his pavilion.
I am that flower,——"

He reinforces his indication by Dumain's and Longaville's interpolations—"That mint," "That columbine." Florio undoubtedly indicated this meaning to his own name in entitling his earliest publication *First Fruites* and a later publication *Second Fruites* . In a sonnet addressed to him by some friend of his who signs himself "Ignoto," his name is also referred to in this sense. In his Italian-English dictionary, published in 1598, he does not include the word Florio. In the edition of 1611, however, he includes it, but states that it means, "A kind of bird." In using the word "columbine" Shakespeare gives the double meaning of a flower and also a bird. Florio used a flower for his emblem, and had inscribed under his portrait in the 1611 edition of his *Worlde of Wordes* :

"Floret adhuc et adhuc florebit
Florius haec specie floridus optat amans."

The frequent references to the characters of the *Iliad* in this act and scene of *Love's Labour's Lost* link the period of its insertion with the date of the original composition of *Troilus and Cressida* in, or about, 1598, to which time I have also assigned the revision of *Love's Labour's Won* into *All's Well that Ends Well*

, and the development of Parolles into a misleader of youth.

Another phase of Act V. Scene ii. of *Love's Labour's Lost* appears to be a reflection of an affair in the life of the individual whom Shakespeare has in mind in the delineation of the characters of Armado and Sir John Falstaff. Costard accuses Armado regarding his relations with Jaquenetta.

Cost. The party is gone, fellow Hector, she is gone; she is two months on her way.

Arm. What meanest thou?

Cost. Faith, unless you play the honest Trojan, the poor wench is cast away: she's quick; the child brags in her belly already: 'tis yours.

Arm. Dost thou infamonize me among potentates?

Precisely similar conditions are shown to exist in the relations between Falstaff and Doll Tearsheet, in the *Second Part of Henry IV.* , in which play there are also allusions to the characters of the *Iliad* , which link its composition with the same period as *Troilus and Cressida* ; and an allusion to *The Nine Worthies* that apparently link it in time with the final revision of *Love's Labour's Lost* late in 1598.

ACT V. Scene iv.

Enter Beadles *dragging in Hostess* Quickly *and* Doll Tearsheet.

Host. No, thou arrant knave; I would to God that I might have thee hanged: thou hast drawn my shoulder out of joint.

First Bead. The constables have delivered her over to me: and she shall have whipping-cheer enough I warrant her: there hath been a man or two lately killed about her.

Dol. Nut-hook, nut-hook, you lie. Come on; I'll tell thee what, thou damned tripe-visaged rascal, and the child I now go with miscarry, thou wert better thou hadst struck thy mother, thou paper-faced villain.

Host. O the Lord, that Sir John were come! he would make this a bloody day to somebody. But I pray God the fruit of her womb miscarry.

The natural sequel to the conditions so plainly indicated in the passages quoted from the lately revised *Love's Labour's Lost* , regarding Jaquenetta and Armado, and from the recently written *Henry IV.* in reference to Doll Tearsheet and Falstaff, is reported in due time in a postscript to a letter written by Elizabeth Vernon, now Lady Southampton, on 8th July 1599, to her husband, who was in Ireland with Essex. She writes from Chartley:

"All the nues I can send you that I thinke will make you mery is that I reade in a letter from London that Sir John Falstaff is by his Mistress Dame Pintpot made father of a godly millers thum a boye thats all heade and very litel body: but this is a secret."

Here we have record that Shakespeare's patron, and his patron's wife, knew that Falstaff had a living prototype who was numbered among their acquaintances. That the birth of this child was not in wedlock is suggested by the concluding words of the Countess's letter "but this is a secret."

The identification of Florio as the original caricatured as Parolles and Falstaff has never been anticipated, though some critics have noticed the basic resemblances between these two characters of Shakespeare's. Parolles has been called by Schlegel, "the little appendix to the great Falstaff."

A few slight links in the names of characters have led some commentators to date a revision of *All's Well that Ends Well* at about the same time as that of the composition of *Measure for Measure* and *Hamlet* . While the links of subjective evidence I have adduced for one revision in, or about, the autumn of 1598, and at the same period as that of the composition of the *Second Part of Henry IV.* , of the final revision of *Love's Labour's Lost* , and shortly after the production of *Troilus and Cressida* , in 1598, are fairly conclusive, a consideration of the characterisation of Falstaff in the *First Part of Henry IV.* and of the evidence usually advanced for the date of the composition of this play will elucidate this idea.

The *First Part of Henry IV.* in its present form belongs to a period shortly preceding the date of its entry in the Stationers' Registers, in February 1598. I am convinced that it was published at this time with Shakespeare's cognizance, and that he revised it with this intention in mind. All inference and evidence assign the composition of the *Second Part of Henry IV.* to some part of the year 1598. It is unlikely, however, that it was included in Meres' mention of *Henry IV.* in his *Palladis Tamia* , which was entered on the Stationers' Registers in September of that year. If the link between Doll Tearsheet's condition and the similar affair reported in Lady Southampton's letter in July 1599 be connected in intention with the same conditions reflected in the case of Armado and Jaquenetta, its date of production is palpably indicated, as is also the final revision of *Love's Labour's Lost* in about December 1598. Both of these plays were probably presented—the *Second Part of Henry IV.* for the first time, and *Love's Labour's Lost* for the first time in its final form—for the Christmas festivities at Court, in 1598. While the Quarto of *Love's Labours Lost* is dated as published in 1598, there is no record of its intended publication in the Stationers' Registers. It must be remembered, however, that all publications issued previous to the 25th of March 1599 would be dated 1598.

A comparison of the two parts of *Henry IV.* under the metrical test, while clearly showing *Part I.* as an earlier composition, yet approximates their dates so closely in time as to suggest a comparatively recent and thorough revision of the earlier portion of the play in 1597 or 1598. It is plain, however, that Shakespeare's *Henry IV., Part I.* , held the boards in some form for several years before this date. The numerous contemporary references, under the name of Sir John Oldcastle, to the character now known as Falstaff, evidences on the part of the public such a settled familiarity with this same character, under the old name, as to suggest frequent presentations of Shakespeare's play in the earlier form. The Oldcastle of *The Famous Victories of Henry V.* has no connection whatever with the characterisation of Falstaff.

Though the metrical evidences of so early a date are now obscured by the drastic revision of the autumn of 1597, or spring of 1598, I am of the opinion that *Henry IV., Part I.* , as it was originally written, belongs to a period antedating the publication of *Willobie his Avisa* in 1594, and that it was composed late in 1593, or early in 1594. I am led to this conclusion by the underlying thread of subjective evidence linking the plays of this period with the affairs of Southampton and his connections. It is unlikely that Shakespeare would introduce that "sweet wench" my "Young Mistress of the Tavern" into a play after the publication of the scandal intended by Roydon in 1594, and probable that he altered the characterisation of the hostess to the old and widowed Mistress Quickly in the *Second Part of Henry IV.* for this reason.

Believing that *Love's Labour's Won* —i.e. *All's Well that Ends Well* in its earlier form—reflects Southampton in the person of Bertram, and Florio as Parolles, I have suggested that the military capacity of the latter character infers a temporary military experience of Florio's in the year 1592. It is evident that most of the matter in this play following Act IV. Scene iii. belongs to the period of revision in 1598. In Act IV. Scene iii. we have what was apparently Parolles' final appearance in the old play of 1592; here he has been exposed, and his purpose in the play ended.

First Soldier. You are undone, Captain, all but your scarf; that has a knot on't yet.

Parolles. Who cannot be crushed with a plot?

First Soldier. If you could find out a country where women were that had received so much shame, you might begin an impudent nation. Fare ye well, Sir; I am for France too; we shall speak of you there.

[*Exit Soldiers.*

Parolles. Yet am I thankful: if my heart were great,
'Twould burst at this. Captain, I'll be no more;
But I will eat and drink, and sleep as soft
As captain shall: simply the thing I am
Shall make me live. Who knows himself a braggart,
Let him fear this, for it will come to pass
That every braggart shall be found an ass.

Rust sword! cool blushes! and, Parolles, live
Safest in shame, being fool'd, by foolery thrive.
There's place and means for every man alive.
I'll after them.

[*Exit.*

The resolution he here forms augurs for the future a still greater moral deterioration. He resolves to seek safety in shame; to thrive by foolery; and, though fallen from his captaincy, to

"eat and drink, and sleep as soft as captain shall."

When Shakespeare resumed his plan of reflecting Florio's association with Southampton, in the *First Part of Henry IV.* he recalled the state of mind and morals in which he had left him as Parolles in *Love's Labour's Won* , and allowing for a short lapse of time, and the effects of the life he had resolved to live, introduces him in *Henry IV.* , Part I. Act 1. Scene ii., as follows:

Fal. Now, Hal, what time of day is it, lad?

Prince. Thou art so fat-witted, with drinking of old sack and unbuttoning thee after supper and sleeping upon benches after noon, that thou hast forgotten to demand that truly which thou would'st truly know. What a devil hast thou to do with the time of the day? Unless hours were cups of sack, and minutes capons, and clocks the tongues of bawds, and dials the signs of leaping-houses, and the blessed sun himself a fair hot wench in flame-coloured taffeta, I see no reason why thou should'st be so superfluous to demand the time of day.

In Parolles and Falstaff we have displayed the same lack of moral consciousness, the same grossly sensuous materialism, and withal, the same unquenchable optimism and colossal impudence.

When we remember that though Shakespeare based his play upon the old *Famous Victories of Henry V.* and took from it the name Oldcastle, that the actual characterisation of his Oldcastle—Falstaff—has no prototype in the original, the abrupt first entry upon the scene of this tavern-lounger and afternoon sleeper-upon-benches, as familiarly addressing the heir apparent as

"Hal" and "lad," supplies a good instance of Shakespeare's method—noticed by Maurice Morgann—of making a character *act and speak from those parts of the composition which are inferred only and not distinctly shown* ; but to the initiated, including Southampton and his friends, who knew the bumptious self-sufficiency of Shakespeare's living model, and who followed the developing characterisation from play to play, the effect of such bold dramatic strokes must have been irresistibly diverting.

It is difficult now to realise the avidity with which such publications as Florio's *First* and *Second Fruites* were welcomed from the press and read by the cultured, or culture-seeking, public of his day. Italy being then regarded as the centre of culture and fashion a colloquial knowledge of Italian was a fashionable necessity. A reference in a current play to an aphorism of Florio's or to a characteristic passage from the proverbial philosophy of which he constructs his Italian-English conversations, which would pass unnoticed now, would be readily recognised by a fashionable Elizabethan audience.

When Shakespeare, through the utterances of the prince, characterises Falstaff by suggestion upon his first appearance in the play in the following lines:

"Thou art so fat-witted, with drinking of old sack and unbuttoning thee after supper and sleeping upon benches after noon, that thou hast forgotten to demand that truly which thou would'st truly know,"

for the benefit of his initiated friends he links up and continues Florio's characterisation as Parolles and Falstaff, and in the remainder of the passage,

"What a devil hast thou to do with the time of the day? Unless hours are cups of sack, and minutes capons, and clocks the tongues of bawds, and dials the signs of leaping-houses, and the blessed sun himself a fair hot wench in flame-coloured taffeta,"

suggests Florio's character from his own utterances in the *Second Fruites* , where one of the characters holds forth as follows:

"As for me, I never will be able, nor am I able, to be willing but to love whatsoever pleaseth women, to whom I dedicate, yield, and consecrate what mortal thing soever I possess, and I say, that a salad, a woman and a capon, as yet was never out of season."

A consideration of certain of the divergences between the *dramatis personæ* of the *First Part of Henry IV.* and the *Second Part of Henry IV.* , made in the light of the thread of subjective evidence in the plays of the Sonnet period, may give us some new clues in determining the relative periods of their original composition.

In the *First Part of Henry IV.* the hostess of the tavern is referred to as a young and beautiful woman in Act I. Scene ii., as follows:

Falstaff. ... And is not my hostess of the tavern a most sweet wench?

Prince. As the honey of Hybla, my old lad of the castle. And is not a buff jerkin a most sweet robe of durance?

Fal. How now, how now, mad wag! what, in thy quips and quiddities? What a plague have I to do with a buff jerkin?

Prince."Why, what a pox have I to do with my hostess of the tavern?

Fal. Well, thou hast called her to a reckoning many a time and oft.

Prince. Did I ever call for thee to pay thy part?

Fal. "No, I'll give thee thy due, thou hast paid all there.

Prince. Yes, and elsewhere, so far as my coin would stretch; and where it would not, I have used my credit.

Fal. Yea, and so used it that, were it not here apparent that thou art heir apparent—but, I prithee, sweet wag, shall there be gallows standing in England when thou art king? And resolution thus fobbed as it is with the rusty curb of old father antic the law? Do not thou, when thou art king, hang a thief.

Falstaff's impertinent and suggestive reference to the prince's intimacy with the hostess, not being taken well, he quickly gives the conversation a turn to cover up the mistake he finds he has made. It is palpable that the characterisation of the hostess in the *First Part of Henry IV.* , in its original form, was not the same as that presented in the *Second Part* of this play in which she is represented as Mistress Quickly, an old, unattractive, and garrulous widow. In the *First Part of Henry IV.* she is mentioned only once as Mistress Quickly. In Act III. Scene iii. the prince addresses her under this name and inquires about her husband.

Prince. What sayest thou, Mistress Quickly? How doth thy husband? I love him well; he is an honest man.

This single mention of the hostess as Mistress Quickly is evidently an interpolation made at the period of the revision of this play late in 1597, or early in 1598. It is also probable that the revision at this time was made with the intention of linking the action of the *First Part* to the *Second Part* of the play, the outline of which Shakespeare was probably planning at that time.

The dramatic time of the *First Part* of the play has been estimated as at the outside covering a period of three months, and of the *Second Part* , a period of two months. No long interval is supposed to have elapsed between the action of the two parts; yet, in the *First Part* of the play the hostess is young, attractive, and has a husband. In the *Second Part* , she is old, unattractive, and is a widow. This divergence is evidently to be accounted for by the fact that the *First Part of Henry IV.* in its earliest, and unrevised, form was written, not long after the composition of *Love's Labour's Won* (*All's Well that Ends Well* in its early form), and during the estrangement between Southampton and Shakespeare in 1594, caused by the nobleman's relations with the "dark lady," that "most sweet wench," "my hostess of the tavern."

I have indicated a certain continuity and link of characterisation between Parolles, as we leave him in *All's Well that Ends Well* , and Falstaff, as we first encounter him in the *First Part of Henry IV.* I shall now demonstrate parallels between the characterisation of Falstaff in the *First Part of Henry IV.* , and the tone and spirit of the conversations between the imaginary characters of Florio's *Second Fruites* . Fewer resemblances are to be found between the *Second Fruites* and the *Second Part of Henry IV.* From this I infer that when Shakespeare composed the *First Part of Henry IV.* in its original form, his personal acquaintance with Florio was recent and limited, and that he developed his characterisation of Falstaff in that portion of the play largely from Florio's self-revelation in the *Second Fruites* , and that in continuing this characterisation later on, in the *Second Part* of the play, he reinforced it from a closer personal observation of the idiosyncrasies of his prototype.

The Earl of Southampton, who was shadowed forth as Bertram in *Love's Labour's Won* , with Parolles as his factotum,—representing Florio in that capacity,—becomes the prince in *Henry IV.* , while Florio becomes Falstaff. The *First Part* of the play in its original form reflected their connection and the affair of the "dark lady" in 1593-94. The *First Part of Henry IV.* , in its revised form, and the *Second Part of Henry IV.* reflect a resumed, or a continued, familiarity between Southampton and Florio in 1598. This leads me to infer that Florio may again have accompanied Southampton when he left England with Sir Robert Cecil for the French Court in February 1598, in much the same capacity as he had served him on his first visit to France in 1592, when they were first reflected as Bertram and Parolles.

In the original development of the characterisation of Parolles, Armado, and Falstaff, I am convinced that Shakespeare worked, not only from observation of his prototype in their daily intercourse, but that he also studied Florio's mental and moral angles and literary mannerisms in his extant productions. If Armado's letters to Jaquenetta and to the King be compared with Florio's dedication of his *Second Fruites* —which was published in 1591, several months preceding the original composition of *Love's Labour's Lost* —and also with his "Address to the Reader," a similitude will be found that certainly passes coincidence. A comparison of Parolles' and Falstaff's opportunist and materialistic philosophy with Florio's outlook on life as we find it unconsciously exhibited in his *Second Fruites* , reveals a characteristic unity that plainly displays intentional parody on Shakespeare's part.

Didactic literature seldom presents the real character and workaday opinions and beliefs of a writer. The teacher generally speaks from a height transcending his ordinary levels of thought and action. In Florio's *Second Fruites* his intention is didactic only in relation to imparting a colloquial knowledge of Italian. In this endeavour he arranges a series of twelve conversations on matters of everyday life between imaginary characters, who are, presumably, of about the same social quality as his usual pupils—the younger gentry of the time. In these talks his intention was to be entirely natural and to reproduce, what he conceived to be, ordinary conversation between gentlemen of fashion. In doing this he reveals ethics, manners, and morals of a decidedly Falstaffian flavour. The gross and satyr-like estimate of women he displays; his primping enjoyment of apparel; the gusto with which he converses of things to eat and drink—of ale, and wine, and capons; his distrust of the minions of the law; his knowledge and horror of arrest and imprisonment, and his frankly animal zest of life, all suggest Shakespeare's knowledge of the book as well as the man.

As Florio's *Second Fruites* is not easily accessible to the general reader, a few extracts may serve to exhibit the characteristic resemblances to Shakespeare's delineation of Falstaff.

The twelve chapters of the work are headed as follows:

The first chapter, "Of rising in the morning and of things belonging to the chamber and to apparel."

The second, "For common speech in the morning between friends; wherein is described a set of tennis."

The third, "Of familiar morning communication; wherein many courtesies are handled, and the manner of visiting and saluting the sick, and of riding, with all that belongeth to a horse."

The fourth chapter, "Wherein is set down a dinner for six persons, between whom there fall many pleasant discourses concerning meat and repast."

The fifth, "Wherein discourse is held of play and many things thereto appertaining, a game of primero and of chess."

The sixth chapter, "Concerning many familiar and ceremonious compliments among six gentlemen who talk of many pleasant matters, but especially of divers necessary, profitable, civil, and proverbial receipts for a traveller."

The seventh, "Between two gentlemen who talk of arms, and of the art of fencing, and of buying and selling."

The eighth chapter, "Between James, and Lippa, his man, wherein they talk of many pleasant and delightsome jests, and in it is described an unpleasant lodging, an illformed old woman, also the beautiful parts that a woman ought to have to be accounted fair in all perfection, and pleasantly blazoned a counterfeit lazy and naught-worth servant."

The ninth, "Between Cæzar and Tiberio; wherein they discourse of news of the Court, of courtiers of this day, and of many other matters of delight."

The tenth chapter, "Between gentlemen and a servant; wherein they talk of going to supper, and familiar speech late in the evening."

The eleventh, "Wherein they talk of going to bed, and many things thereto belonging."

The twelfth, "Wherein proverbially and pleasantly discourse is held of love and women."

He makes one of his characters end this last chapter as follows:

"As for me, I never will be able, nor am I able, to be willing but to love whatsoever pleaseth women, to whom I dedicate, yield, and consecrate what mortal thing soever I possess, and I say, that a salad, a woman, and a capon as yet was never out of season."

The remarkable resemblance between the sentiments here expressed and the characteristics attributed to Falstaff by Prince Henry in the passage quoted above from *Henry IV.* , Act I. Scene ii., suggest Shakespeare's knowledge of the *Second Fruites* .

He describes the wardrobe of a man of fashion with envious unction, giving a minute inventory of his shirts, handkerchiefs, ruffs, cuffs, towels, quoises, shoes, buskins, daggers, swords, gloves, doublets, jerkins, gowns, hats, caps, and boots. The very superabundance recalling, by contrast, the paucity in this regard in the cases of Armado and Falstaff.

The philosophy of his conversations is selfish and worldly-wise to a degree, with nowhere the slightest suggestion of ideality or altruism.

"T. From those that I do trust, good Lord deliver me, from such as I mistrust, I'll harmless come to be.

G. He gives me so many good words I cannot fail but trust him.

T. Wot you not that fair words and foul deeds are wont to make both fools and wise men fain.

G. I know it, but if he beat me with a sword, I will beat him again with a scabbard.

T. What, will you give him bread for cake then?

G. If any man wrong thee, wrong him again, or else be sure to remember it."

In the conversation concerning meats and repast he is Gargantuan in his descriptions.

"S. The meat is coming in, let us set down.

C. I would wash first if it were not to trouble Robert.

S. What, ho! Bring some water to wash our hands.

Robert. Here it is fresh and good to drinke for a neede.

H. God hath made water for other things than to drinke.

C. Hast thou not heard that water rots, not only men, but stakes?

R. Yet men say that water was made to drinke, to saile, and to wash.

M. It was good to drinke when men did eat acornes.

T. I pray you set down for I have a good stomach.

N. As for a good stomach, I do yield a jot unto you.

S. My masters, the meat cooles.

S. My masters, sit down; every man take his place.

N. Tush, I pray you, sit down.

C. With obliging you I shall show myself unmannerly.

H. Of courtesie, Master M., sit here between us two.

M. Virtue consists in the midst quothe the devil when he found himself between two nuns.

S. Bring hither that salad, those steaks, that leg of mutton, that piece of beef with all the boiled meats we have.

S. I pray you, every man serve himself, let everyone cut where he please, and seek the best morsels.

N. Truly these meats are very well seasoned.

S. Call for drinke when you please, and what kind of wine you like best.

N. Give me some wine but put some water in it.

S. You may well enough drinke it pure, for our wines are all borne under the sign of Aquarius.

M. Do you not know that wine watered is esteemed a vile thing?

C. Give me a cup of beere, or else a bowl of ale.

S. I pray you, do not put that sodden water into your bellie.

C. I like it as well as wine, chiefly this hot weather.

T. He that drinks wine drinks blood, he that drinks water drinks fleame (phlegm).

H. I love to drink wine after the Dutch fashion.

T. How do they drinke it, I pray you?

H. In the morning, pure; at dinner, without water, and at night as it comes from the vessel.

M. I like this rule; they are wise, and God's blessing light upon them.

H. A slice of bacon would make us taste this wine well.

S. What, ho! set that gammon of bacon on the board.

M. God be thanked, I am at a truce with my stomach.

T. In faith, I would stay until the bells do ring.

S. You were not fasting then when you came here?

M. I had only drunk a little Malmslie.

T. And I a good draught of Muscatine, and eat a little bread.

S. Bring the meat away, in God's name.

R. The meat is not enough yet.

S. Take away that empty pot, set some bread upon the table and put some salt in the salt cellar, and make roome for the second messe.

R. Now, comes the roast.

S. Welcome may with his flowers.

T. And good speed may our barke have.

S. The Jews do not look for their Messias with more devotion than I have looked for the roast meat.

S. Set that capon upon the table, and those chickens, those rabbits, and that hen, that goose; those woodcock, those snipes, those larks, those quails, those partridges, those pheasants and that pasty of venison.

R. Here is everything ready.

N. You have led us to a wedding.

S. I pray you, cut up that hen, I pray God it be tender.

C. Alas, I think she was dam to the cock that crowed to St. Peter.

S. I thought that so soon as I saw her.

N. I beseech you, sir, will you carve some of that pheasant?

M. They be offices that I love to do.

N. I will one day fill my bellie full of them.

S. Master Andrew, will it please you to eat an egg?

A. With all my heart, sir, so be it new laid.

S. As new as may be; laid this morning.

A. I love new-laid eggs well.

S. Sirra, go cause a couple of eggs to be made readie.

R. By and by, will you have them hard or soft?

A. It is no matter, I love them better raire.

T. An egg of an hour, bread of a day, kidd of a month, wine of six, flesh of a year, fish of ten, a woman of fifteen, and a friend of a hundred, he must have that will be merrie.

S. What aileth Master T. that he looks so sad?

T. I am not very well at ease.

S. What feel you, where grieves it you?

T. I feel my stomach a little over-cloyde.

N. Shall I teach you a good medicine?

H. My mother, of happy memorie, was wont to tell me that a pill of wheat, of a hen the days work sweat, and some vine juice that were neat was best physick I could eat.

M. Your mother was a woman worthy to govern a kingdom.

S. My masters, you see here the period of this poor dinner; the best dish you have had hath been your welcome.

H. As that hath fed our minds so have the others fed our bodies well.

S. It grieves me that you have been put to such penance, but yet I hope you will excuse me.

C. If doing such penance a man might win heaven, O sweet penance for a man to do every day."

Portions of the sixth chapter, with its talk of divers necessary prophetic and proverbial precepts for a traveller, evidently supplied Shakespeare with the hint for Scene iv. Act II. of the *First Part of Henry IV.* , between Falstaff and Prince Hal, wherein Falstaff personates the prince's father.

"S. Mister Peeler, whatsoever I shall tell you, according to my wonted manner, I will speak as plainly unto you as though you were my son, and therefore pardon me, if I shall seem eyther too familiar, or too homely with you.

P. Say on boldly, for I shall be very proud if it please you to account me as your child, and that I may repute you as my father.

S. First, my loving Mister Peeler, if you purpose to come unto the wished end of your travel, have always your mind and thought on God."

This highly moral preamble is followed by much ungodly, worldly wisdom.

"S. And if you will be a traveller and wander safely through the world, wheresoever you come have always the eyes of a falcon that you may see far, the ears of an ass that you may hear well, the face of an ape that you may be ready to laugh, the mouth of a hog to eat all things, the shoulder of a camel that you may bear anything with patience, the legs of a stag that you may flee from dangers, and see that you never want two bags very full; that is, one of patience, for with it a man overcomes all things, and another of money, for,

They that have good store of crownes,
Are called lordes, though they be clownes;

and gold hath the very same virtue that charity hath, it covereth a multitude of faults, and golden hammers break all locks, and golden meedes do reach all heights, have always your hand on your hat, and in your purse, for,

A purse or cap used more or less a year
Gain many friends, and do not cost thee dear.

Travelling by the way in winter time, honour your companion, so shall you avoid falling into dangerous places. In summer go before, so shall not the dust come into your eyes. Setting at board, if there be but little bread, hold it fast in your hand, if small store of flesh, take hold on the bone, if no store of wine, drink often, and unless you be required, never offer any man either salt, etc."

The ninth chapter, wherein they "plausibly discourse of news of the Court and of courtiers of this day, and of many other matters of delight," is full of Falstaffian paradox, and reminiscent of Justice Shallow's relations with Jane Nightwork.

"C. What is become of your neighbour, I mean the old doating man grown twice a child?

T. As old as you see him he has of late wedded a young wench of fifteen years old.

C. Then he and she will make up the whole bible together; I mean the old and new testament.

T. To an old cat a young mouse.

C. Old flesh makes good broth.

T. What has become of his son that I see him not?

C. He was put in prison for having beaten an enemy of his.

T. Be wrong or right prison is a spite.

C. A man had need look to himself in this world.

T. What is become of his fair daughter whom he married to what you call him that was sometime our neighbour?

C. She spins crooked spindles for her husband and sends him into Cornwall without ship or boat.

T. What, does she make him wear the stag's crest then?

C. You have guessed right and have hit the nail on the head.

T. His blood is of great force and virtue then.

C. What virtue can his blood have, tell me in good faith?

T. It is good to break diamonds withal.

C. Why, man's blood cannot break diamonds.

T. Yes, but the blood of a he-goat will.

C. Moreover, he may challenge to have part in heaven by it.

T. What matter is it for him then to be a he-goat, or a stumpbuck, or a kid, or a chamois, a stag, or a brill, a unicorn, or an elephant so he may be safe, but how may that be, I pray thee, tell me?

C. I will tell thee, do not you know that whosoever is made a cuckold by his wife, either he knows it, or he knows it not.

T. That I know, then what will you infer upon it?

C. If he knows it he must needs be patient, and therefore a martyr, if he knows it not, he is innocent, and you know that martyrs and innocents shall be saved, which if you grant, it followeth that all cuckolds shall obtain paradise.

T. Methinks then that women are not greatly to be blamed if they seek their husbands' eternal salvation, but are rather to be commended as causes of a noble and worthy effect."

He speaks with evident feeling of one who is imprisoned for debt.

"T. Take heed of debts; temper thy desires, and moderate thy tongue.

C. It is a devilish thing to owe money.

T. For all that he is so proud that though he have need of patience he calleth for revenge.

C. Could not he save himself out of the hands of those catchpoles, counter guardians, or sergeants?

T. Seeking to save himself by flight from that rascality he had almost left the lining of his cap behind.

C. I am sorry for his mischance, for with his jests, toys, fooleries, and pleasant conceits, he would have made Heraclitus himself to burst his heart with laughing.

T. Did you ever go see him yet?

C. I would not go into prison to fetch one of my eyes if I had left it there.

T. Yet there be some honest men there.

C. And where will you have them but in places of persecution?

T. You have reason.

C. I would not be painted there so much do I hate and loathe the place."

Speaking of the Court and courtiers he says:

"C. The favours of the Court are like fair weather in winter, or clouds in summer, and Court, in former time, was counted death.

T. It is still Court for the vicious, but death for the virtuous, learned and wise.

C. Seven days doth the Court regard a virtuous man, be he never so mannerly, well-brought up, and of gentle conditions. That is, the first day he makes a show of himself, he is counted gold; the second, silver; the third, copper; the fourth, tin; the fifth, lead; the sixth, dross; and the seventh, nothing at all, whereas the contrary happeneth of the vicious.

T. Yet the virtuous have sometimes got rich gifts there.

C. Yea, but they come as seldom as the year of jubilee.

T. Yet some of them are so courteous, so gentle, so kind, so liberal, so bountiful, that envy itself cannot choose but love them, and blame honour them, and, I think, there is no Court in the world that hath more nobility in it than ours.

T. But tell me truth, had you never the mind to become a courtier?

C. He that is well, let him not stir, for if in removing he break his leg, at his own peril be it.

T. Where there is life there is means; where means, entertainment; where entertainment, hope; where hope, there is comfort."

How closely this last passage resembles the philosophy of Parolles, after his disgrace, in Act IV. Scene iii. of *All's Well that Ends Well* .

Par. Yet am I thankful: if my heart were great,
'Twould burst at this. Captain, I'll be no more;
But I will eat and drink, and sleep as soft
As captain shall: simply the thing I am
Shall make me live.

There's place and means for every man alive.

The familiarity of the public with the character of Falstaff, under the name of Sir John Oldcastle, is evidenced by the frequency with which both this play and character are referred to by the latter name even after the publication of the *First Part of Henry IV.* in 1598, with the name changed to Falstaff. If this play was originally composed, as is usually suggested, in 1596 or 1597, the short period which it could have been presented in its earlier form, and before its revision in the beginning of 1598, would scarcely allow for the confirmed acquaintance of the public with the name of Sir John Oldcastle in connection with the characterisation developed by Shakespeare. While Shakespeare took this name from the old play of *The Famous Victories of Henry V.* , there is no similarity between the characterisation of the persons presented under that name in the two plays.

Nicholas Rowe, Shakespeare's earliest biographer, is responsible for the report that the change of the name of this character from Oldcastle to Falstaff was made by Shakespeare at the command of the Queen, and owing to the protest of Lord Cobham. It is not unlikely that there was some basis of truth for this report, nor improbable that Lord Cobham's alleged objection was caused by the misrepresentations of Shakespeare's literary rivals, including Florio, whose own "ox had been gored."

In 1597 the Wardenship of the Cinque Ports having become vacant, Sir Robert Sidney, who had been long absent from England as Governor of Flushing, and was desirous of returning, made application for the office, being aided in his suit by the Earl of Essex and others of his friends in Essex's party. Sir Robert Cecil, while encouraging Sidney and professing friendship, secretly aided Lord Cobham for the post. Sidney's military fitness for so responsible a charge was constantly urged against Cobham's lack of martial experience, but the Queen, after a long delay, during which much heat developed between the contestants and their friends, finally decided in favour of her relative, Lord Cobham. The Earl of Southampton was one of Sir Robert Sidney's most intimate friends and ardent admirers, and must have taken some interest in this long-drawn-out rivalry. It is possible that Shakespeare, instigated by Southampton, may have introduced some personal reflections suggestive of Cobham's military inadequacy into the performance of the play at this crucial period, Cobham's alleged descent from the historical Oldcastle lending the suggestion its personal significance.

The sixth *book* of Sonnets was written either late in 1596, or in 1597. A line in the first Sonnet of this book (Thorpe's 66) implies, on Shakespeare's part, a recent unpleasant experience with the authorities:

"And art made tongue-tied by authority."

It is apparent that whatever was the cause, some difficulty arose in about 1597 regarding the name Oldcastle. Nicholas Rowe's report is substantiated by Shakespeare's own apologetic words in the Epilogue to *Henry IV., Part II.* :

"If you be not too much cloyed with fat meat, our humble author will continue the story, with Sir John in it, and make you merry with fair Katherine of France; where, for any thing I know, Falstaff shall die of a sweat, unless already a' be killed with your hard opinions; for Oldcastle died a martyr, and this is not the man."

If Shakespeare was compelled to alter this name for the reasons reported by Nicholas Rowe, it is not unlikely that Florio and his literary allies helped in some manner to arouse the resentment of Lord Cobham. In altering the play in 1598, and changing the name of Sir John Oldcastle to Sir John Falstaff, I am convinced that Shakespeare intentionally made his caricature of John Florio more transparent by choosing a name having the same initials as his, and furthermore, that in altering the historical name of *Fastolfe* to *Falstaff* , he intended to indicate Florio's relations with Southampton as a *false-staff* , a misleader of youth. The Epilogue of the *Second Part of Henry IV.* , while denying a representation of the historical Sir John Oldcastle in the words "this is not the man," implies at the same time *that some other personal application is intended* in the characterisation of Falstaff.

The *First Part of Henry IV.* , with its significant allusion to the "Humourous Conceits of Sir John Falstaff" on the title-page, was entered on the Stationers' Registers under date of 25th February 1598, and was published within a short period. That John Florio recognised Shakespeare's satire and personal intention in choosing a character with his own initials he shows within a month or two of this date in his "Address to the Reader," prefixed to his *Worlde of Wordes* . He accuses a person, whom he indicates under the initials "H.S." of having made a satirical use of his initials "J.F." It is evident that in using the letters "H.S." he is not giving the actual initials of his antagonist. Addressing "H.S." he says: "And might not a man, that can do as much as you (that is reade) finde as much matter out of H.S. as you did out of J.F.?" He says the person at whom he aims is a "reader" and a "writer" too; he also indicates him as a maker of plays. He says:

"Let Aristopanes and his comedians *make plaies* , and scowre their mouthes on Socrates; those very mouthes they make to vilifie, shall be meanes to amplifie his vertue. And it was not easie for Cato to speake evill, so was it not usuall for him to heare evill. It may be Socrates would not kicke againe, if an asse did kicke at him, yet some that cannot be so wise, and will not be so patient as Socrates, will for such jadish tricks give the asse his due burthen of bastonadas. Let H.S. hisse, and his complices quarrell, and all breake their gals, *I have a great faction of good writers to bandie with me* ."

Florio here gives palpable evidence of the fact that his was not an isolated case, but that he was banded with a literary faction in hostility to Shakespeare, which included Roydon, who published *Willobie his Avisa* , in 1594, again in 1596, and again in 1599; Chapman, who, in 1593, attacked Shakespeare in the early *Histriomastix* , and again in 1599 in its revision, as well as in his poem to Harriot, appended to his *Achilles Shield* in the same year; and Marston, who joined Chapman in opposition to Shakespeare, and helped in the revision of *Histriomastix* . In the words "Let H.S. hisse, and his complices quarrell, etc.," Florio also gives evidence that Shakespeare at this period had literary allies. In the story of the Sonnets I shall show that Dekker was Shakespeare's principal ally in what has been called the "War of the Theatres," which is supposed to have commenced at this time, and, bearing in mind Chettle's recorded collaboration with Dekker at this same period, it is evident that he also sided with Shakespeare.

A careful search of Elizabethan literature fails to bring to light *any other writer who makes a satirical use of the initials "J.F.," or any record of a writer bearing initials in any way resembling "H.S." who in any manner approximates to Florio's description of a "reader" and a "writer too" as well as a maker of plays* .

I have already shown Chapman's references to Shakespeare in the dedication of *The Shadow of Night* . His allusion to Shakespeare as "passion-driven" at that date (1594) being a reference to his relations with the "dark lady." That he suggests Shakespeare, in his capacity of "reader" to the Earl of Southampton, and that he takes flings at his social quality in the expression "Judgements butcher," which I recognise as an allusion to his father's trade, and in the words "Intonsi Catones," as a reference to his provincial breeding as well as to the flowing manner in which he wore his hair. In elucidating the meaning of the initials "H.S.," Florio still more coarsely indicates our country-bred poet, and accuses him of being a parasite, a bloodsucker, and a monster of lasciviousness. His abusive descriptions are given in Latin and Italian phrases commencing with the letters H and S. His reason for using the letter H no doubt being that *there is no W in either Italian or Latin, H being its nearest phonetic equivalent* . Let us consider the whole passage.

"There is another sort of leering curs, that rather snarle than bite, whereof I coulde instance in one, who lighting upon a good sonnet of a gentlemans, a friend of mine, that loved better to be a Poet, then to be counted so, called the author a rymer, notwithstanding he had more skill in good Poetrie, then my slie gentleman seemed to have in good manners or humanitie. But my quarrell is to a tooth-lesse dog, that hateth where he cannot hurt, and would faine bite when he hath no teeth. His name is H.S. Do not take it for the Romane H.S. for he is not of so much worth, unlesse it be as H.S. is twice as much and a halfe as halfe an As. But value you him how you will, I am sure he highly valueth himselfe. This fellow, this H.S. reading (for I would you should knowe he is *a reader and a writer too*) under my last epistle to the reader J.F. made as familiar a word of F. as if I had bin his brother. Now Recte fit oculis magister tuis, said an ancient writer to a much-like reading gramarian-pedante : God save your eie-sight, sir, or at least your insight. And might not a man, that can do as much as you (that is, reade) finde as much matter out of H.S. as you did out of J.F.? As for example H.S. why may it not stand as well for Hæres Stultitiæ, as for Homo Simplex? or for Hircus Satiricus, as well as for any of them? And this in Latine, besides Hedera Seguace, Harpia Subata, Humore Superbo, Hipocrito Simulatore in Italian. And in English world without end. Huffe Snuffe, Horse Stealer, Hob Sowter, Hugh Sot, Humphrey Swineshead, Hodge Sowgelder. Now Master H.S. if this do gaule you, forbeare kicking hereafter, and in the meane time you may make a plaister of your dried Marjoram. I have seene in my daies an inscription, harder to finde out the meaning, and yet easier for a man to picke a better meaning out of it, if he be not a man of H.S. condition."

It will be noticed that Florio's reflections upon Shakespeare's breeding, morals, and manners, while couched in coarser terms, are of the same nature as Chapman's. Ben Jonson,—as shall later be shown,—in *Every Man out of his Humour* , casts similar slurs at Shakespeare's provincial origin. It is likely that the friend whose sonnet had been criticised and who was called a "rymer" by "H.S." was none other than George Chapman. The fifth *book* of Shakespeare's Sonnets to the Earl of Southampton was written against Chapman's advances upon his patron's favour. In the tenth Sonnet in this *book* , which is numbered as the 38th in Thorpe's arrangement, Shakespeare refers to Chapman as a rhymer in the lines:

"Be thou the tenth Muse ten times more in worth
Than those old nine which *rhymers* invocate."

The few records concerning Florio, from which we may derive any idea of his personal appearance and manner, suggest a very singular individuality. There was evidently something peculiar about his face; he was undoubtedly witty and worldly-wise, a braggart, a sycophant, and somewhat of a buffoon. He was imbued with an exaggerated idea of his own importance, and possessed of most unblushing assurance. In 1591 he signed his address "To the Reader," prefixed to his *Second Fruites* , "Resolute John Florio," a prefix which he persisted thereafter in using in similar addresses in other publications. In 1600 Sir William Cornwallis (who at that time had seen Florio's translation of *Montaigne's Essays* in MS.) writes of him: "Montaigne now speaks good English. It is done by a fellow less beholding to nature for his fortune than wit, yet lesser for his face than fortune. The truth is, he looks more like a good fellow than a wise man, and yet he is wise beyond either his fortune or education."

Between the year 1598 (when Florio dedicated his *World of Wordes* to the Earl of Southampton) and 1603, when Southampton was released from the Tower upon the accession of James I., we have no record of Florio's connection with that nobleman. It was undoubtedly due to Southampton's influence in the new Court that Florio became reader to Queen Anna and Gentleman of the Privy Chamber to James I. His native vanity and arrogance blossomed into full bloom in this connection, in which he seems to have been tolerated as a sort of superior Court jester. The extravagant and grandiloquent diction of his early dedications read like commonplace prose when compared with the inflated verbosity of his later dedications to Queen Anna. In 1613 he issued a new edition of *Montaigne's Essays* which he dedicated to the Queen. A comparison of the flattering sycophancy of this dedication with the quick transition of his tone in his curt and insolent address "To the Reader" in the same book will give some idea of the man's shallow bumptiousness.

"To the Most Royal and Renowned Majestie of the Highborn Princess Anna of Denmark

By the grace of God, Queen of England, Scotland, France and Ireland. Imperial and Incomparable Majestic. Seeing with me all of me is in your royal possession, and whatever pieces of mine have hitherto under the starres passed the public view, come now of right to be under the predomination of a power that both contains all their perfections and hath influences of a more sublime nature. I could not but also take in this part (whereof time had worn out the edition) which the world had long since had of mine and lay it at your sacred feet as a memorial of my devoted duty, and to show that where I am I must be all I am and cannot stand dispersed in my observance being wholly (and therein happy)—Your Sacred Majesties most humble and Loyal servant,

John Florio.

To the Reader

Enough, if not too much, hath been said of this translation, if the faults found even by my own selfe in the first impression be now by the printer corrected, as he was directed, the work is much amended; if not, know, that through this mine attendance on her Majestic I could not intend it: and blame not Neptune for thy second shipwrecke. Let me conclude with this worthy mans daughter of alliance 'Que l'en semble donc lecteur.'

Still Resolute John Florio,

Gentleman Extraordinary and Groome of the Privy Chamber."

<<span id="filepos0042160685"> a> APPENDIX

<<span id="filepos0042161183"> a> I

DEDICATION OF FLORIO'S *SECOND FRUITES* , 1591

To the right worshipfull, the kinde entertainer of vertue, and mirrour of a good minde Master Nicholas Saunder of Ewel, Esquire, his devoted John Florio congratulates the rich reward of the one, and lasting beautie of the other, and wishes all felicitie els

Sir, in this stirring time, and pregnant prime of invention when everie bramble is fruitefull, when everie mol-hill hath cast of the winters mourning garment, and when everie man is busilie woorking to feede his owne fancies; some by delivering to the presse the occurrences & accidents of the world, newes from the marte, or from the mint, and newes are the credite of a travailer, and first question of an Englishman. Some like Alchimists distilling quintessences of wit, that melt golde to nothing, and yet would make golde of nothing; that make men in the moone, and catch the moon shine in the water. Some putting on pyed coates lyke calendars, and hammering upon dialls, taking the elevation of *Pancridge* Church (their quotidian walkes) pronosticate of faire, of foule, and of smelling weather; men weatherwise, that wil by aches foretell of change and alteration of wether. Some more active gallants made of a finer molde, by devising how to win their Mistrises favours, and how to blaze and blanche their passions, with aeglogues, songs, and sonnets, in pitifull verse or miserable prose, and most for a fashion: is not Love then a wagg, that makes men so wanton? yet love is a pretie thing to give unto my Ladie. Othersome with new caracterisings bepasting al the posts in *London* to the proofe, and fouling of paper, in twelve howres thinke to effect *Calabrian* wonders: is not the number of twelve wonderfull? Some with Amadysing & Martinising a multitude of our libertine yonkers with triviall, frivolous, and vaine vaine droleries, set manie mindes a gadding; could a foole with a feather make men better sport? I could not chuse but apply my self in some sort to the season, and either proove a weede in my encrease without profit, or a wholesome pothearbe in profit without pleasure. If I prove more than I promise, I will impute it to the bountie of the gracious Soile where my endevours are planted, whose soveraine vertue divided with such worthles seedes, hath transformed my unregarded slips to medcinable simples. Manie sowe corne, and reape thisles; bestow three yeares toyle in manuring a barraine plot, and have nothing for their labor but their travel: the reason why, because they leave the low dales, to seeke thrift in the hill countries; and dig for gold on the top of the Alpes, when *Esops* cock found a pearle in a lower place. For me I am none of their faction, I love not to climbe high to catch shadowes; suficeth gentle Sir, that your perfections are the Port where my labors must anchor, whose manie and liberall favours have been so largely extended unto me, that I have long time studied how I might in some fort gratefully testifie my thankfulnes unto you. But when I had assembled all my thoughts, & entred into a contrarious consultation of my utmost abilities, I could not find anie employment more agreeable to my power, or better beseeming my dutie, than this present Dedication, whereby the world, by the instance of your never entermitted benevolence towards me, should have a perfect insight into your vertue & bountie, (qualities growne too solitary in this age) and your selfe might be unfallibly perswaded in what degree I honor and regarde you. For indeede I neither may in equitie forget, nor in reason conceale the rare curtesies you vouchsaft me at Oxford, the friendly offers and great liberalitie since (above my hope and desert) continued at *London* , wherewith you have fast bound me to beare a dutiful & grateful observance towards you while I live, & to honour that mind from which as from a spring al your friendships & goodnes hath flowed: And therefore to give you some paune and certaine assurance of a thankfull minde, and my professed devotion I have consecrated these my slender *endevours* wholy to your *delight* , which shall stand for an image and monument of your worthines to posteritie. And though they serve to pleasure and profite manie, yet shall my selfe reape pleasure, also if they please you well, under whose name and cognisance they shall goe abroad and seeke their fortunes. How the world will entertaine them I know not, or what acceptance your credit may adde to their basenes I am yet uncertaine; but this I dare vaunt without sparke of vaine-glory that I have given you a taste of the best Italian fruites, the Thuscane Garden could affoorde; but if the pallate of some ale or beere mouths be out of taste that they cannot taste them, let them sporte but not spue. The moone keeps her course for all the dogges barking. I have for these fruites ransackt and rifled all the gardens of fame throughout Italie (and they are the Hesperides) if translated they do prosper as they flourished upon their native stock, or eate them & they will be sweete, or set them & they will adorne your orchyards.

The maiden-head of my industrie I yeelded to a noble Mecenas (renoumed Lecester) the honor of England, whom thogh like Hector every miscreant Mirmidon dare strik being dead, yet sing *Homer* or *Virgil* , write friend or foe, of *Troy* , or *Troyes* issue, that *Hector* must have his desert, the General of his Prince, the Paragon of his Peeres, the watchman of our peace,

"*Non so se miglior Duce o Cavalliero* "

as *Petrarke* hath in his triumph of fame; and to conclude, the supporter of his friends, the terror of his foes, and the *Britton* Patron of the Muses.

"Dardanias light, and Troyans faithfulst hope."

But nor I, nor this place may halfe suffice for his praise, which the sweetest singer of all our westerns shepheards hath so exquisitely depainted, that as Achilles by Alexander was counted happy for having such a rare emblazoner of his magnanimitie, as the Meonian Poete; so I account him thrice-fortunate in having such a herauld of his vertues as Spencer; Curteous Lord, Curteous Spencer, I knowe not which hath purchast more fame, either he in deserving so well of so famous a scholler, or so famous a scholler in being so thankfull without hope of requitall to so famous a Lord: But leaving him that dying left al Artes, and al strangers as Orphanes, forsaken, and friendles, I will wholy convert my muze to you (my second patron) who amongst many that beare their crests hie, and mingle their titles with TAMMARTI QUAM MERCURIO are an unfayned embracer of vertues, and nourisher of knowledge and learning. I published long since my first fruits of such as were but meanely entred in the Italian tongue, (which because they were the first, and the tree but young were something sower, yet at last digested in this cold climat) knowing well that they would both nourish and delight, & now I have againe after long toyle and diligent pruning of my orcharde brought forth my second fruites, (better, riper, and pleasanter than the first) not unfit for those that embrace the language of the muses, or would beautifie their speech with a not vulgar bravery. These two I brought forth as the daughters and offsprings of my care and studie: My elder (as before is noted) because she was ambitious (as heires are wont) I married for preferment and for honour, but this younger (fayrer, better nurtured, & comelier than her sister) because my hope of such preferment and honour as my first had, fayled me, I thought to have cloystred up in some solitarynes, which shee perceiving, with haste putting on her best ornaments and (following the guise of her countrie-women presuming very much upon the love and favour of her parentes) hath voluntaryly made her choyce (plainly telling me that she will not leade apes in hell) and matched with such a one as she best liketh, and hopeth will both dearly love her, & make her such a joynter as shal be to the comfort of her parents, and joy of her match, and therefore have I given her my consent, because shee hath jumped so well with modesty, and not aspired so high that shee might be upbraided either with her birth or basenes when she could not mend it. I know the world will smile friendlier, and gaze more upon a damzell marching in figured silkes (who are as paper bookes with nothing in them) than upon one being onely clad in home-spunn cloth (who are as playne cheasts full of treasure) yet communis error shall not have my company, and therefore have I rather chosen to present my Italian and English proverbiall sportes to such a one as I know joynes them both so aptly in himselfe, as I doubt whether is best in him, but he is best in both; who loves them both, no man better; and touching proverbs, invents them, no man finer; and aplyes them, no man fitter; and that taketh his greatest contentment in knowledge of languages (guides and instruments to perfection and excellency) as in Nectar and Ambrosia (meate onely for Gods and deyfied mindes,) I shal not neede to trouble my selfe or you with any commendation of the matter I deliver, nor to give credit by some figures and colours to proverbs and sentences, seeing your selfe know well (whose censure I most respect) both how much a proverbiall speech (namely in the Italian) graceth a wise meaning, and how probably it argueth a good conceipt, and also how naturally the Italians please themselves with such materyall, short, and witty speeches (which when they themselves are out of Italy and amongst strangers, who they think hath learnt a little Italian out of Castilions courtier, or Guazzo his dialogues, they will endevour to forget or neglect and speake bookish, and not as they wil doe amongst themselves because they know their proverbs never came over the Alpes) no lesse than with the conceipted apothegmes, or Impreses, which never fall within the reach of a barren or vulgar head. What decorum I have observed in selecting them, I leave to the learned to consider. Thus craving the continuall sun-shine of your worships favour towards me, and that they may never decline to any west, and desiring your friendly censure of my travailes, I wish unto you your owne wishes, which are such as wisedome endites, and successe should subscribe.—Your affectionate in all he may.

I.F.

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ADDRESS TO THE READER FROM FLORIO'S *SECOND FRUITES* , 1591

To the Reader

Reader, good or bad, name thyself, for I know not which to tearme thee, unless heard thee read, and reading judge, or judging exercise; or curtesie the cognisance of a Gentleman, or malice the badge of a Momus, or exact examination the puritane scale of a criticall censor: to the first (as to my friends) I wish as gracious acceptance where they desire it most, as they extend where I deserve it least; to the second I can wish no worse than they worke themselves, though I should wish them blyndnes, deafnes, and dumbnes: for blynd they are (or worse) that see their owne vices, others vertues: deafe they are (or worse) that never could heare well of themselves, nor would heare well of others: and dumbe they are (and worse) that speake not but behinde mens backs (whose bookes speake to all;) and speake nought but is naught like themselves, than who, what can be worse? As for critiks I accompt of them as crickets; no goodly bird if a man marke them, no sweete note if a man heare them, no good luck if a man have them; they lurke in corners, but catch cold if they looke out; they lie in sight of the furnace that tryes others, but will not come neare the flame that should purifie themselves: they are bred of filth, & fed with filth, what vermine to call them I know not, or wormes, or flyes, or what worse? They are like cupping glasses, that draw nothing but corrupt blood; like swine, that leave the cleare springs to wallow in a puddle: they doo not as Plutarke and Aristarcus derive philosophie, and set flowers out of Homer; but with Zoylus deride his halting, and pull asunder his faire joynted verses: they doo not seeke honie with the bee, but suck poyson with the spider. They will doo nought, yet all is naught but what they doo; they snuff our lampes perhaps, but sure they add no oyle; they will heale us of the toothache, but are themselves sick of the fever-lourdane. Demonstrative rethorique is their studie, and the doggs letter they can snarle alreadie. As for me, for it is I, and I am an Englishman in Italiane, I know they have a knife at command to cut my throate, Un Inglese Italianato, e un Diauolo incarnato. Now, who the Divell taught thee so much Italian? speake me as much more, and take all. Meane you the men, or their mindes? be the men good, and their mindes bad? speake for the men (for you are one) and I will doubt of your minde: Mislike you the language? Why the best speake it best, and hir Majestie none better. I, but too manie tongues are naught; indeede one is too manie for him that cannot use it well. Mithridates was reported to have learned three and twentie severall languages, and Ennius to have three harts, because three tongues, but it should seeme thou hast not one sound heart, but such a one as is cancred with ennui; nor anie tongue, but a forked tongue, thou hissest so like a snake, and yet me thinkes by thy looke, thou shouldst have no tongue thou gapest and mowest so like a frogg: I, but thou canst reade whatsoever is good in Italian, translated into English. And was it good that they translated then? or were they good that translated it? Had they been like thee, they were not woorth the naming; and thou being unlike them, art unworthie to name them. Had they not knowen Italian, how had they translated it? had they not translated it, where were not thy reading? Rather drinke at the wel-head, than sip at pudled streames; rather buy at the first hand, than goe on trust at the hucksters. I, but thou wilt urge me with their manners & vices, (not remembring that where great vices are, there are infinit vertues) & aske me whether they be good or bad? Surely touching their vices, they are bad (& I condemne them) like thyself; the men are as we are, (is bad, God amend both us & them) and I think wee may verie well mend both. I, but (peradventure) thou wilt say my frutes are wyndie, I pray thee keepe thy winde to coole thy potage. I, but they are rotten: what, and so greene? that's marvell; indeede I thinke the caterpiller hath newly caught them. If thy sight and taste be so altred, that neither colour or taste of my frutes will please thee, I greatly force not, for I never minded to be thy fruterer. Muro bianco is paper good enough for everie matto: Prints were first invented for wise mens use, and not for fooles play. These Proverbs and proverbiall Phrases, (hethertoo so peculiar to the Italians, that they could never find the way over the Apenines, or meanes to become familiar to anie other Nation) have onely been selected and stamped for the wise and not for thee, (and therefore hast thou no part in them) who will kindly accept of them: (though in the ordering of them I differ from most mens methodes, who in their compositions onely seeke for words to expresse their matter, and I have endevored to finde matter to declare those

Italian words & phrases, that yet never saw Albions cliffes) for the pleasure of which, I will shortly send into the world an exquisite Italian and English Dictionary, and a compendious Grammer. The Sunne spreading his beames indifferently (and my frutes are in an open orchyard, indifferent to all) doth soften wax, and harden clay; (my frutes will please the gentler, but offend the clayish or clownish sort, whom good things scarcely please, and I care not to displease). I know I have them not all, and you with readie (if I should say so) with Bate me an ace quoth Bolton, or Wide quoth Bolton when his bolt flew backward. Indeed here are not all, for tell me who can tell them; but here are the chiefs, and thanke me that I cull them. The Greekes and Latines thanks Erasmus, and our Englishmen make much of Heywood: for Proverbs are the pith, the proprieties, the proofs, the purities, the elegancies, as the commonest so the commendablest phrases of a language. To use them is a grace, to understand them a good, but to gather them a paine to me, though gain to thee. I, but for all that I must not scape without some new flout: now would I were by thee to give thee another, and surely I would give thee bread for cake. Farewell if thou meane well; els fare as ill, as thou wishest me to fare.

The last of April, 1591.

Resolute I.F.

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DEDICATION OF FLORIO'S *WORLDE OF WORDES* , 1598

To the right honorable patrons of vertue, patterns of honor, Roger Earle of Rutland, Henrie Earle of Southampton, Lucie Countesse of Bedford

This dedication (Right Honorable and that worthily) may haply make your Honors muse; wellfare that dedication, that may excite your muse. I am no auctorifed Herauld to marshall your precedence. Private dutie might perhaps give one the prioritie, where publike respect should prefer another. To choose

Tullie or *Ausonius* Consuls, is to prefer them before all but one; but to choose either the former of the twaine, is to prefer him before all. It is saide of *Atreus* in a fact most disorderly, that may be saide of any in so ordering his best dutie.

It makes no matter whether, yet he resolves of neither. I onely say your Honors best knowe your places: An Italian turne may serve the turne. Lame are we in *Platoes* censure, if we be not ambidexters, using both handes alike. Right-hand, or left-hand as Peeres with mutuall paritie, without disparagement may be please your Honors to joyne hand in hand, an so jointly to lende an eare (and lende it I beseech you) to a poore man, that invites your Honors to a christening, that I and my poore studies, like *Philemon* and *Baucis* , may in so lowe a cottage entertaine so high, if not deities, yet dignities; of whom the Poet testifies.

"Ma sopraogni altro frutto gradito
Fu il volto allegro, e'l non bigiardo amore.
E benchefosse pouero il conuito,
Non fu la volonta pouera e'l core.

But of all other cheere most did content
A cheerefull countenance, and a willing minde,
Poore entertainment being richly ment,
Pleaded excuse for that which was behinde."

Two overhastie fruites of mine nowe some yeeres since, like two forwarde females, the one put her selfe in service to an Earle of Excellence, the other to a Gentleman of Woorth, both into the worlde to runne the race of their fortune. Now where my rawer youth brought foorth those female fruites, my riper yeeres affoording me I cannot say a braine-babe *Minerva* , armed at all affaies at first houre; but rather from my Italian *Semele* , and English thigh, a bouncing boie, *Bacchus* -like, almost all named: And being as the manner of this countrie is, after some strength gathered to bring it abroade; I was to entreate three witnesses to the entrie of it into Christendome, over-presumptuous (I grant) to entreate so high a preference, but your Honors so gracious (I hope) to be over-entreated. My hope springs out of three stems: your Honors naturall benignitie; your able employment of such servitours; and the towardly likeliehood of this Springall to do you honest service. The first, to vouchsafe all; the second, to accept this; the third, to applie it selfe to the first and second. Of the first, your birth, your place, and your custome; of the second, your studies, your conceits, and your exercise: of the thirde, my endevours, my proceedings, and my project gives assurance.

Your birth, highly noble, more than gentle: your place, above others, as in degree, so in height of bountie, and other vertues: your custome, never wearie of well dooing: your studies much in al, most in Italian excellence: your conceits, by understanding others to work above them in your owne: your exercise, to reade, what the worlds best wits have written and to speake as they write. My endevours, to apprehend the best, if not all: my proceedings, to impart my best, first to your Honors, then to all that emploie me: my project, in this volume to comprehend the best and all. In truth I acknowledge an entyre debt, not onely of my best knowledge, but of all, yea of more then I know or can, to your bounteous Lordship most noble, most vertuous, and most Honorable Earle of Southampton, in whose paie and patronage I have lived some yeeres; to whom I owe and vowe the yeeres I have to live. But as to me, and manie more the glorious and gracious sunne-shine of your Honor hath infused light and life: so may my lesser borrowed light, after a principall respect to your benigne aspect, and influence, affoorde some lustre to some others. In loyaltie I may averre (my needle toucht, and drawne, and held by such an adamant) what he in love assumed, that sawe the other stars, but bent his course by the Pole-starre, and two guardes, avowing, *Aspicit unam* One guideth me, though more I see. Good parts imparted are not empaired: Your springs are first to serve your selfe, yet may yeelde your neighbours sweete water; your taper is to light to you first, and yet it may light your neighbours candle. I might make doubt, least I or mine be not now of any further use to your selfe-sufficiencie, being at home so instructed for Italian, as teaching or learning could supplie, that there seemed no neede of travell: and nowe by travell so accomplished, as what wants to perfection? Wherein no lesse must be attributed to your embellisht graces (my most noble, most gracious, and most gracefull Earle of Rutland) well entred in the toong, ere your Honor entered Italie, there therein so perfected, as what needeth a Dictionarie? Naie, if I offer service but to them that need it, with what face seeke I a place with your excellent Ladiship (my most-most honored, because best-best adorned Madame) who by conceited Industrie, or industrious conceite, in Italian as in French, in French as in Spanish, in all as in English, understand what you reade, write as you reade, and speake as you write; yet rather charge your minde with matter, then your memorie with words? And if this present, present so small profit, I must confesse it brings much lesse delight: for, what pleasure is a plot of simples, *O non vista, o mal note, o mal gradite* , Or not seene, or ill knowne, or ill accepted? Yet heere-hence may some good accrewe, not onelie to truantlie-schollers, which ever-and-anon runne to *Venuti* , and *Alunno* ; or to new-entred novices, that hardly can construe their lesson; or to well-forwarde students, that have turned over *Guazzo* and *Castiglione* , yea runne through *Guarini* , *Ariosto* , *Taffo* , *Boccace* and *Petrarche* : but even to the most compleate Doctor; yea to him that best can stande *All'erta* for the best Italian, heereof sometimes may rise some use: since, have he the memorie of *Themistocles* , of *Seneca* , of *Scaliger* yet is it not infinite, in so finite a bodie. And I have seene the best, yea naturall Italians, not onely stagger, but even sticke fast in the myre, and at last give it over, or give their verdict with An *ignoramus* , *Boccace* is prettie hard, yet understood: *Petrarche* harder, but explaned: *Dante* hardest, but commented. Some doubt if all aright. *Alunno* for his foster-children hath framed a worlde of their wordes. *Venuti* taken much paines in some verie fewe authors; and our *William Thomas* hath done prettilie; and if all faile, although we misse or mistake the worde, yet make we up the sence. Such making is marring. Naie all as good; but not as right. And not right, is flat wrong. One saies of *Petrarche* for all: A thousand strappadas coulde nor compell him to confesse, what some interpreters will make him saie he ment. And a Judicious gentleman of this lande will uphold, that none in England understands him thoroughly. How then ayme we at *Peter Aretine* , that is so wittie, hath such varietie, and frames so manie new words? At *Francesco Doni* who is so fantasticall, & so strange? At *Thomaso Garzoni* in his *Piassa universale* ; or at *Allesandro Cittolini* , in his *Typecosmia* , who have more proper and peculiar words concerning everie severall trade, arte, or occupation for everie particular toole, or implement belonging unto them, then ever any man heeretofore either collected in any booke, or sawe collected in any one language? How shall we understand *Hanniball Caro* , who is so full of wittie jestes, sharpe quips, nipping tantes, and scoffing phrases against that grave and learned man *Lodivico Castelvetri* , in his *Apologia de' Banchi* ? How shall the English Gentleman come to the perfect understanding of *Federico Grisone* , his *Arte del Cavalcare* , who is so full of strange phrases, and unusuall wordes, peculiar onely to horse-manship, and proper but to *Cavalarizzi* ? How shall we understand so manie and so strange bookes, of so severall, and so fantasticall subjects as be written in the Italian toong? How shall we, naie how may we ayme at the Venetian, at the Romane, at the Lombard, at the Neapolitane, at so manie, and so much differing Dialects, and Idiomes, as be used and spoken in Italie, besides the Florentine? Sure we must saie as that most intelligent and grave Prelate said, when he came new out of the South into the North, and was saluted with a womans sute in Northern. Now what is that in English? If I, who many yeeres have made profession of this toong, and in this search or quest of inquirie have spent most of my studies; yet many times in many wordes have beene so stal'd, and stabled, as such sticking made me blushinglie confesse my ignorance, and such confession indeede made me studiouslie seeke helpe, but such helpe was not readilie to be had at hande.

Then may your Honors without any dishonour, yea what and whosoever he be that thinkes himselfe a very good Italian, and that to trip others, doth alwaies stande *All'erta* , without disgrace to himselfe, sometimes be at a stand, and standing see no easie issue, but for issue with a direction, which in this mappe I hold, if not exactlie delineated, yet conveniently prickt out. Is all then in this little? All I knowe: and more (I know) then yet in any other. Though most of these you know alreadie, yet have I enough, if you know anie thing more then you knew, by this. The retainer doth some service, that now and then but holds your Honors styrrop, or lendes a hande over a stile, or opens a gappe for easier passage, or holds a torch in a darke waie: enough to weare your Honors cloth. Such then since this may proove, proove it (right Honorable) and reproove not for it my rudenes, or my rashnes; rudenes in presuming so high, rashnes in assuming so much for it that yet is unaprooved. Some perhaps will except against the sexe, and not allowe it for a male-broode, sithens as our Italians saie, *Le parole sono femine, & i fatti sono maschy* , Wordes they are women, and deeds they are men. But let such know that *Detti* and *fatti* , wordes and deeds with me are all of one gender. And although they were commonly Feminine, why might not I by strong imagination (which Phisicions give so much power unto) alter their sexe? Or at least by such heaven-pearcing devotion as transformed *Iphis* , according to that description of the Poet.

"Et ognimembro suo piu forte e sciolto
Sente, e volge allamadre il motto, e'l lume.
Come veto fanciullo esser vede
Iphi va con parole alme, e devote
Altempio con la madre, e la nutrice,
E paga il voto, e'l suo miracoldice.

Feeling more vigor in each part and strength
Then earst, and that indeede she was a boy.
Towards hir mother eies and wordes at length
She turns, and at the temple with meeke joy
He and his nurse and mother utter how
The case fell out, and so he paide his vow."

And so his strength, his stature, and his masculine vigor (I would, naie I coulde saie vertue) makes me assure his sexe, and according to his sexe provide so autenticall testimonies. Laie then your blisse-full handes on his head (right Honorable) and witnes that he by me devoted to your Honors, forsakes my private cell, all retired conceites, and selfe-respects to serve you in the worlde, the world in you; and beleeves in your Honors goodnes, in proportion as his service shall be of moment and effectuall; and that you will not onely in due censure be his judges, but on true judgement his protectors; and in this faith desires to be numbered in your familie; so in your studies to attend, as your least becke may be his dieugarde; for he hath toong to answer, words at will, and wants not some wit, though he speake plaine what each thing is. So have I crost him, and so blest him, your god-childe, and your servant; that you may likewise give him your blessing, if it be but as when one standes you in steede, supplies you, or pleases you, you saie, Gods-blessing on him. But though in the fore-front he beares your Honorable names, it may be demanded how is it, your Honors gave not him his name? Heerein (right Honorable) beare with the fondnes of his mother, my Mistresse *Muse* , who seeing hir female *Arescusa* turn'd to a pleasing male *Arescon* (as *Plinie* tels of one) beg'd (as some mothers use) that to the fathers name she might prefixe a name befitting the childes nature. So cald she him, A worlde of wordes: since as the Univers containes all things, digested in best equipaged order, embellisht with innumerable ornaments by the universall creator. And as *Tipocosmia* imaged by *Allesandro Cittolini* , and *Fabrica del mondo* , framed by *Francesco Alunno* , and Piazza *universale* set out by *Thomaso Garzoni* tooke their names of the universall worlde, in words to represent things of the world: as words are types of things, and everie man by himselfe a little world in some resemblances; so thought she, she did see as great capacitie, and as meete method in this, as in those latter, and (as much as there might be in Italian and English) a modell of the former, and therefore as good cause so to entitle it. If looking into it, it looke like the Sporades, or scattered Ilands, rather than one well-joynted or close-joyned bodie, or one coherent orbe: your Honors knowe, an armie ranged in files is fitter for muster, then in a ring; and jewels are sooner found in severall boxes, then all in one bagge. If in these rankes the English outnumber the Italian, congratulate the copie and varietie of our sweete-mother toong, which under this most Excellent well-speaking Princesse or Ladie of the worlde in all languages is growne as farre beyond that of former times, as her most flourishing raigne for all happines is beyond the raignes of former Princes. Right Honorable, I feare me I have detained your Honors too long with so homelie entertainment, yet being the best the meanenes of my skill can affoorde; which intending as my childes christening-banquet, heereunto I presumed to invite your Honors: but I hope what was saide at you Honors first comming (I meane in the beginning of my Epistle) shall serve for a finall excuse. And in conclusion (most Honorable) once againe at your departure give me leave to commend this sonne of mine to your favourable protections, and advowe him yours, with this licence, that as *Henricus Stephanus* dedicated his Treasure of the Greeke toong to *Maximilian* the Emperour, to *Charles* the French king, and to *Elizabeth* our dread Soveraigne, and by their favours to their Universities: So I may consecrate this lesser-volume of little-lesse value, but of like import, first, to your triple-Honors, then under your protections to all Italian-English, or English-Italian students. Vouchsafe then (highlie Honorable) as of manie made for others, yet made knowne to your Honors, so of this to take knowledge, who was borne, bred, and brought foorth for your Honors chiefe service; though more service it may do, to many others, that more neede it; since manie make as much of that, which is made for them, as that they made themselves, and of adopted, as begotten children; yea Adrian the Emperour made more of those then these; since the begotten are such as fates give us, the adopted such as choice culs us; they oftentimes *Stolti, sgarbati, & inutili* , these ever with *Corpo intiero, leggiadre membra, entente sana* . Accepting therefore of the childe, I hope your Honors wish as well to the Father, who to your Honors all-devoted wisheth meeds of your merits, renowme of your vertues, and health of your persons, humblie with gracious leave kissing your thrice-honored hands, protesteth to continue ever

Your Honors most humble and

bounden in true service,

John Florio.

<<span id="filepos0042200137"> a> IV

ADDRESS TO THE READER FROM FLORIO'S *WORLDE OF WORDES* , 1598

To the Reader

I know not how I may again adventure an Epistle to the reader, so are these times, or readers in these times, most part sicke of the sullens, and peevish in their sicknes, and conceited in their peevishnes. So should I feare the fire, that have felt the flame so lately, and flie from the sea, that have yet a vow to pay for escaping my last shipwracke. Then what will the world say for ventring againe? A fuo danno, one will say. Et a torto si lamenta del mare, chi due volte civoul tornare, will another say. Good council indeede, but who followeth it? Doe we not daily see the contrarie in practise? Who loves to be more on the sea, then they that have been most on it? Whither for change if they have kept at a stay: or for amends if they have lost: or for increase if they have gotten. Of these there are ynow and wise-ynough to excuse me. Therefore I have put forward at aventure: But before I recount unto thee (gentle reader) the purpose of my new voyage: give me leave a little to please my selfe and refresh thee with the discourse of my olde danger. Which because in some respect is a common danger, the discoverie thereof may happily profit other men, as much as please myselfe. And here might I begin with those notable Pirates in this our paper-sea, those sea-dogs, or lande-Critikes, monsters of men, if not beastes rather than men; whose teeth are Canibals, their toongs adder-forkes, their lips aspes-poyson, their eies basiliskes, their breath the breath of a grave, their wordes like swordes of Turkes, that strive which shall dive deepest into a Christian lying bound before them. But for these barking and biting dogs, they are as well knowne as Scylla and Charybdis.

There is another sort of leering curs, that rather snarle than bite, whereof I coulde instance in one, who lighting upon a good sonnet of a gentlemans, a friend of mine, that loved better to be a Poet, then to be counted so, called the auctor a rymer, notwithstanding he had more skill in good Poetrie, then my slie gentleman seemed to have in good manners or humanitie But my quarrell is to a tooth-lesse dog that hateth where he cannot hurt, and would faine bite, when he hath no teeth. His name is H.S. Doe not take it for the Romane H.S. for he is not of so much worth, unlesse it be as H.S. is twice as much and a halfe as halfe an As. But value him how you will, I am sure he highly valueth himselfe. This fellow, this H.S. reading (for I would you should knowe he is a reader and a writer too) under my last epistle to the reader I.F. made as familiar a word of F. as if I had bin his brother. Now Recte fit oculis magister tuis, said an ancient writer to a much-like reading gramarian-pedante: God save your eie-sight, sir, or at least your insight. And might not a man that can do as much as you (that is, reade) finde as much matter out of H.S. as you did out of I.F.? As for example, H.S. why may it not stand as well for Haerus Stultitiae, as for Homo Simplex? or for Hara Suillina, as for Hostis Studioforum? or for Hircus Satiricus, as well as for any of them? And this in Latine, besides Hedera Seguice, Harpia Subata, Humore Superbo, Hipocrito Simulatore in Italian. And in English world without end, Huffe Snuffe, Horse Stealer, Hob Sowter, Hugh Sot, Humfrey Swineshead, Hodge Sowgelder. Now Master H.S. if this doe gaule you, forbeare kicking hereafter, and in the meane time you may make you a plaister of your dride Maroram. I have seene in my daies an inscription, harder to finde out the meaning, and yet easier for a man to picke a better meaning out of it, if he be not a man of H.S. condition. There is a most excellent preface to the excellently translated booke signed A.B. which when I sawe, I eftsoones conceived, could I in perusing the whole A B C omit the needelesse, and well order the requisite letters, I should find some such thing as Admirabilis Bonitas, or Amantum Beatissumus. But how long thinke you would H.S. have bin rooting and grunting ere he could have found as he is Hominum Simplicissimus, or would have pickt out as he is Hirudo Sanguifuga, so honest a meaning? Trust me I cannot but marvell at the disposition of these men, who are so malicious as they will not spare to stab others, though it be through their owne bodies, and wrong other men with their owne double harme. Such mens wordes a wise man compares to boltes shot right-up against heaven, that come not neare heaven, but downe againe upon their pates that shot them: or a man may compare them to durt flung at another man, which besides it defiles his handes that flings it, possibly it is blowne backe againe upon his owne face: or to monie put out to usurie, that returnes with increase, so they delivered with hatred, are repaide with much more: or to the blasting Sereno in hot countries, rising from puddles, dunghils, carions, putrified dampes, poysoned lakes, that being detestable itselfe, makes that much more detested from whence it comes. On the other side a good word is a deaw from heaven to earth, that soakes into the roote and sends forth fruite from earth to heaven: it is a precious balme, that hath sweetenesse in the boxe, whence it comes, sweetnesse and vertue in the bodie, whereto it comes: it is a golden chaine, that linkes the toongs, and eares, and harts of writers and readers, each to other. They hurt not God (faith Seneca) but their owne soules, that overthrowe his altars: Nor harme they good men, but themselves, that turns their sacrifice of praises into blasphemie. They that rave, and rage, and raile against heaven I say not (faith be) they are guiltie of sacrilege, but at least they loose their labour. Let Aristophanes and his comedians make plaies, and scowre their mouthes on Socrates; those very mouthes they make to vilifie, shall be the meanes to amplifie his vertue. And as it was not easie for Cato to speake evill, so was it not usuall for him to hear evill: it may be Socrates would not kicke againe, if an asse did kicke at him, yet some that cannot be so wise, and will not be so patient as Socrates, will for such jadish tricks give the asse his due burthen of bastonadas. Let H.S. hisse, and his complices quarrell, and all breake their gals, I have a great faction of good writers to bandie with me.

"Think they to set their teeth on tender stuffe?
But they shall marre their teeth, and finde me tough."

Conantes frangere frangam, said Victoria Collonna:

"Those that to breake me strive,
I'le breake them if I thrive."

Yet had not H.S. so causelesly, so witlesly provoked me, I coulde not have bin hired, or induced against my nature, against my manner thus far to have urged him: though happily heereafter I shall rather contemne him, then farther pursue him. He is to blame (faith Martiall, and further he brandes him with a knavish name) that will be wittie in another mans booke. How then will scoffing readers scape this marke of a maledizant? whose wits have no other worke, nor better worth then to flout, and fall out? It is a foule blemish that Paterculus findes in the face of the Gracchi. They had good wits, but used them ill. But a fouler blot then a Jewes letter is it in the foreheads of Caelies and Curio, that he sets, Ingeniose nequam, they were wittily wicked. Pitie it is but evermore wit should be vertuous, vertue gentle, gentrie studious, students gracious. Let follie be dishonest, dishonestie unnoble, ignobilitie scandalous and scandall slanderous. Who then are they that mispend all their leisure, yea take their cheefe pleasure in back biting well-deservers? I see and am sorie to see a sort of men, whose fifth element is malediction, whose life is infamie, whose death damnation, whose daies are surfeiting, whose nights lecherie, yea such as Nanna could never teach Pippa, nor Comare and Balia discourse of and whose couches are Spintries; whose thrift is usurie, meales gluttonie, exercise cousenage, whose valour bragardrie, Astolpheidas, or Rodomontadas, or if it come to action, crueltie; whose communication is Atheisme, contention, detraction, or Paillardise, most of lewdness, seld of vertue, never of charitie; whose spare-time is vanitie or villanie: yet will I not deale by them, as they doe by others. I like not reproofe where it pertaines not to me: But if they like to see their owne pictures in lively colours of their own ornaments, habillements, attendants, observances, studies, amours, religions, games, travels, imployments, furnitures, let them as gentlemen (for so I construe Nobiles, and more they be not, if they be no lesse) goe to the Painters shop, or looking-glasse of Ammianus Marcellinus, an unpartiall historian, in his 28. booke about the middle, and blush, and amend, and think, that thence, and out of themselves I might well draw a long declamation: they that understand him, will agnise this; they that doe not, let them learne: let both conceive, how they conforme, and both reforme their deformities; or if they will not, at least let them forbeare to blur others because they are blacke themselves, least it be saide to them, as Seneca saide to one not unfitely, Te fera scabies depascitur, tu nacuos rides pulchriorum? this let them construe, and take to them the meaning of their labour. And though I more then feare much detracting: for I have already tasted some, and that extraordinarie though in an ordinarie place, where my childe was beaten ere it was borne: some divining of his imperfectnes for his English part; some fore-speaking his generall weakenes, and very gently seeming to pitie his fathers. And one averring he could beget a better of his owne, which like ynough he can, and hath done many a one, God forgive him. But the best is, my sonne with all his faultes shall approove himself no misse-begotten. And for those exceptions, knowing from whom they come, I were very weake-minded if they coulde anything moove me. And that husbandman might be counted very simple, that for the ominous shreekes of an unluckie, hoarce-voist, dead-devouring night-raven or two, or for feare of the malice of his worst conditioned neighbors, would neglect either to till and sowe his ground, or after in due time to reape and thresh out his harvest, that might benefite so many others with that, which both their want might desire, and their thankfulness would deserve. So did I intend my first seede, so doe I my harvest. The first fruites onely reserved to my Honorable Patrones, the rest to every woorthie Ladie and gentleman that pleases to come and buy; and though I doubt not but ravens and crowes both, will have a graine or two now and then in spite of my teeth, especially H.S. who is so many graines too light: yet I am well content to repay good for evill, thinking it not impossible that by the taste of the corne those very soules may in time have their mouthes stopt for speaking evill against the husbandman. And let this comparison of a labouring man by the way put you in minde (gentle reader) of his labours, that hath laboured so much, and so long to save you a labour, which I doubt not but he may as justly stand upon in this toong-work, as in Latin Sir Thomas Eliot, Bishop Cooper, and after them Thomas Thomas, and John Rider have done amongst us: and in Greeks and Latin both the Stephans, the father and the sonne, who notwithstanding the helpes each of them had, yet none of them but thought he might challenge speciall thankes for his special travell, to better purpose then any before him. And if they did so in those toongs, where they had so many, and so great helpes, and in toongs which were helpes to one another; they that understande, will easily acknowledge the difference betwixt my paines and theirs: yet I desire no pre-eminence of thankes; but either equall thankes, or equall excuse. And well may I make that comparison betwixt our labours, that Allessandro Cittolini maketh in his Tipocosmia: we all fared indeed like sea-faring men (according to my first comparison) and lanched foorth into a deepe, and dangerous sea, but they had this advantage of me, that they were many to steere a passage-boate; I was but one to turne and winde the sailes, to use the oare, to sit at sterne, to pricke my carde, to watch upon the upper decke, boate-swaine, pilot, mate, and master, all offices in one, and that in a more unruly, more unweildie, and more roome-some vessell, then the biggest hulke on Thames, or burthen-bearing Caracke in Spaine, or slave-tiring Gallie in Turkie, and that in a sea more divers, more dangerous, more stormie, and more comfortlesse then any Ocean. If any thinke I had great helpes of Alunno, or of Venuti, let him confer, and knowe I have in two, yea almost in one of my letters of the Alphabet, more wordes, then they have in all their twentie; and they are but for a few auctors in the Italian toong, mine for most that write well, as may appeere by the Catalog of bookes that I have read through of purpose for the accomplishing of this Dictionarie. I would not meddle with their defects and errors nor yet amplifie the fulnesse or perfection of my owne worke, farther then upon a just ground to satisfie his good desire that wisheth the best helpe. If any man aske whether all Italian wordes be here? I answer him, it may be no: and yet I thinke heere be as many, as he is likely to finde (that askes the question) within the compasse of his reading; and yet he may have read well too. I should thinke that very few wordes could escape those auctors I have set downe, which I have read of purpose to the absolute accomplishing of this worke, being the most principall, choisest, and difficult in the toong; especially writing in such varietie not onely of matters, but of dialects: but what I aske him againe, how many hundred wordes he, and possibly his teachers too were gravelled in? which he shall finde here explaned? If no other bookes can be so well perfected, but still some thing may be added, how much lesse a Word-booke? Since daily both new wordes are invented; and bookes still found, that make a new supplie of olde. We see the experience in Latin, a limited toong, that is at his full growth: and yet if a man consider the reprinting of Latin Dictionaries, ever with addition of new store, he would thinke it were still increasing. And yet in these Dictionaries as in all other that that is printed still is reputed perfect. And so it is no doubt after the customarie and possible perfection of a Dictionarie, which kinde of perfection if I chalenge to mine (especially considering the yeerelt increase, which is as certainly in this, in French, in Spanish, in Dutch, &c., as we find by experience it is in English; and I thinke I may well saie more in this, then in the rest; yea and in the rest mostly from this) I hope no man that shall expend the woorth of this worke in impartiall examination, will thinke I challenge more then is due to it. And for English-gentlemen me thinks it must needs be a pleasure to them, to see so rich a toong out-vide by their mother-speech, as by the manie-folde Englishes or manie wordes in this is manifest? The want whereof in England heeretofore, I might justly say in all Europe, might more endeare the woorth. Though without it some knew much, yet none knew all Italian, as all may do by this. That well to know Italian is a grace of all graces, without exception, which I ever exemplifie in her gracious Highnes; whose due-deserved-praises set foorth aright I may rightly say, as a notable Italian writer saide earst of hir most-renowmed father of famous memorie, Che per capir le giufte lodi della quale conuerrebbe o che il cieli s'inalzaffe, o ch'il mondo s'allargaffe; or as the moderne Italian Homer saide of a Queene far inferious to hir thrice-sacred Majestie, Che le glorie altrui si esprimono scrivendo e parlando, quelle di fua serenissima e sacratissima Maesta si possono solo esprimere maravigliando e tacendo. Of whose innumerable excellencies, is not the fore-most, yet most famous I have heard, and often have had the good hap and comfort to see, that no Embassador or stranger hath audience of hir Majestie, but in his native toong; and none hath answere but in the same; or in the common toongs of Greeke and Latin, by hir sacred lips pronounced. That the best by hir patterne desire to doe as much, I doubt not; but I doubt how they can without such helpe, and that such helpe was to be had till now. I denie: yet doe I understand that a gentleman of worshipful account, well travelled, well conceited, and well experienced in the Italian, hath in this very kinde taken great pains, and made as great proofes of his inestimable worth. Glad would I be to see that worke abroad; some sight whereof gave me twenty yeeres since the first light to this. But since he suppresseth his, for private respects, or further perfection, nor he, nor others will (I hope) prize this the lesse. I could here enter into a large discourse of the Italian toong, and of the teachers and teaching thereof, and shew the ease and facilities of it, with setting downe some few, yea very few observations whereunto the Italian toong may be reduced: which some of good sort and experience have merrily compared to jugling-tricks, all which afore a man know or discover how they are done, one would judge to be very hard and difficult; but after a man hath seene them and knowes them, they are deemed but slight and easie. And I was once purposed for the benefite of all learners to have done it, and to have shewed why through my Dictionarie I have in all verbs of the first conjugation onely set downe the Infinitive moode, except it be of fower irregular verbes, and wherefore in all of the seconde and thirde conjugations I have noted besides the Infinitive moode, the first person singular of the present-tence of the Indicative moode, the first person singular of the first preterperfect-tence of the Indicative, and the participle. And why in the verbes of the fourth conjugation, I have besides the Infinitive moode, the participle, the first person singular of the present-tence of the Indicative moode of some very few, and not of all, and how by those fewe onely one may frame all the persons of all the tences of all the verbes in the Italian toong; without the knowledge of which, and of those few observations glanced at before, no man can or shall ever learne to speake or write true Italian in England: But that I understand there be some that are perswaded, yea and affirme, that nothing can be set down either by me, or any else that they have not or knowe not before; and I am informed, that some would not be ashamed to protest they knewe as much before: and therefore contrarie to my first resolution I forbeare to doe it, grieving that for their sakes the gentle reader and learner shall be barred of so necessarie a scale of the Italian toong. If these, or others thinke of this no such paines, little price, or lesse profit then I talke of, I onely wish, they felt but halfe my paines for it; or let them leave this, and tie themselves to the like taske, and then let the fruites of our labors, and the reapers of the fruites judge betwixt us whose paines hath sorted to best perfection: which ere long (if God sende me life, and blesse these labors) I meane to perfect with addition of the French and Latine, and with the wordes of some twenty good Italian auctors, that I could never obtaine the sight of, and hope shortly to enjoy: And I intend also to publish and annexe unto this, an Alphabeticall English Dictionarie, that any man knowing but the English word, shall presently finde the Italian for it. Meane-while I wish to thee, as of me thou shalt deserve, and wish of thee as I knowe of thee I have deserved.

Resolute

John Florio.

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WILL OF JOHN FLORIO

In the blessed name of God the Father my gracious Creator and Maker, of God the Sonne Jesus Christ my merciful Savyo^{r} and Redeemer, and of God the Holie Ghost three persons and one ever liveing and omnipotent God, in unity and Trinity my most loving Comforter and preserver Amen. I John Florio of Fulham in the Countie of Middlesex Esqre , being of good health and sound minde and perfect memory, hearty thankes bee ever ascribed and given therefore unto Almighty God, And well in remembering and knowing that nothing is more certayne unto mortall man than death and noe one thing more uncertayne then is the houre therof, doe make appoint pronounce and declare this my Testament therin fully contayning my last direct and unrevocable will and intention in manner and forme following; That is to say, First and principally as duty and Christianity willeth mee I most heartily and penitently sorrowfull for all my sinnes committ and recommend my soule into the mercifull handes of Almighty God, assuredly trusting and faithfully beleeving by the onely meritts bitter passion precious blood and glorious death of the immaculate Lambe Jesus Christ his Sonne, to have full remission and absolute forgiveness of all my sinnes whatsoever, and after this transitory life to live and raigne with him in his most blessed Kingdome of heaven. As for my wretched Body I committe the same as earth to earth and dust to dust to be buried in such decent order as to my deare Wife and by my executors here under-named shalbee thought meete and convenient. And as touching the disposing and ordering of all and whatsoever such goodes cattle, chattle, Leases, monie, plate, jewells, bookes, apparrell, bedding, hangings, peawter, brasse, household stuffe moveables, immoveables and all other things whatsoever named or unnamed, specifide or unspecifide, wherwith my most gracious God hath beene pleased to endowe mee with or hereafter shall of his infinite mercy bee pleased to bestowe or conferre upon me in this transitory life, I will appoint give order dispose and bequeath all and every part and parcel of the same firmely and unalterably to stand in manner and forme following, That is to say, Item, I give and bequeath unto my daughter Aurelia Molins the Wedding Ring wherewith I married her mother, being aggrieved at my very heart that by reason of my poverty I am not able to leave her anything els. Item, I give and bequeath as a poore token of my love to my sonne in law James Molins, a faire black velvett deske embroidered with seede pearles and with a silver and guilt inkhorne and dust box therin, that was Queen Anne's. Item, I give and bequeath unto the right honourable my sigulare and even honoured good Lord William Earle of Pembroke Lord Chamberlaine to the Kings most excellent maiestie and one of his royal counsell of state (if at my death he shall then be living) all my Italian, French and Spanish bookes, as well printed as unprinted, being in number about Three hundred and fortie, namely my new and perfect dictionary, as also my tenne dialogues in Italian and English and my unbound volume of divers written collections and rapsodies, most heartilie entreating his Honorable Lordshippe (as hee once promised mee) to accept of them as a sign and token of my service and affection to his honor and for my sake to place them in his library, either at Wilton or else at Baynards Castle at London, humbly desiring him to give way and favourable assistance that my dictionarie and dialogues may bee printed and the profitt therof accrud unto my wife. Item, I doe likewise give and bequeath unto his noble Lordship the Corinne Stone as a jewell fitt for a Prince which Ferdinando the great Duke of Tuscanie sent as a most precious gift (among divers others) unto Queen Anne of blessed memory; the use and vertue wherof is written in two pieces of paper, both in Italian and English being in a little box with the Stone, most humbly beseeching his honour (as I right confidently hope and trust hee will in charity doe if neede require) to take my poore and deere wife into his protection and not suffer her to be wrongfully molested by any enemie of myne, and also in her extremity to afforde her his helpe good worde and assistance to my Lord Treasurer, that she may be payed my wages and the arrearages of that which is unpayed or shall bee behind at my death. The rest the residue and remainder of all whatsoever and singular my goods, cattles, chattles, jewells, plate, debts, leases, money, or monie worth, household stuffe, utensills, English bookes, moveables or immoveables, named or not named, and things whatsoever by mee before not given disposed or bequeathed (provided that my debts bee paid and my funerall discharged). I wholly give, fully bequeath, absolutely leave, assigne and unalterably consigne unto my deerly beloved wife Rose Florio, most heartily greiving and ever sorrowing that I cannot give or leave her more in requitall of her tender love, loving care painfull dilligence, and continuall labour, to me and of mee in all my fortunes and many sicknesses; then whome never had husband a more loving wife, painfull nurce, or comfortable consorte, And I doe make institute, ordaine, appoint and name the right Reverend Father in God, Theophilus Feild Lord bishoppe of Landaffe and Mr. Richard Cluet Doctor of Divinity vicar and preacher of the word of God at Fulham, both my much esteemed, dearely beloved and truely honest good frendes, my sole and onely Executors and overseers; And I doe give to each of them for their paines an ould greene velvett deske with a silver inke and dust box in each of them that were sometymes Queene Annes my Soveraigne Mistrisse, entreating both to accept of them as a token of my hearty affection towards them, and to excuse my poverty which disableth mee to requite the trouble, paines, and courtesie, which I confidently beleeve they will charitably and for Gods sake undergoe in advising directing and helping my poore and deere wife in executing of this my last and unrevocable will and testament, if any should be soe malicious or unnaturall as to crosse or question the same; And I doe utterly revoke and for ever renounce, frustrate, disanull, cancell and make void, all and whatsoever former wills, legacies, bequests, promises, guifts, executors or overseers (if it should happen that anie bee forged or suggested for untill this tyme, I never writt made or finished any but this onely) And I will appoint and ordaine that this and none but this onely written all with mine owne hand, shall stand in full force and vigor for my last and unrevocable will and Testament, and none other nor otherwise. As for the debts that I owe the greatest and onelie is upon an obligatory writing of myne owne hand which my daughter Aurelia Molins with importunity wrested from me of about threescore pound, wheras the truth, and my conscience telleth mee, and soe knoweth her conscience, it is but thirty-four pound or therabouts, But let that passe, since I was soe unheedy, as to make and acknowledge the said writing, I am willing that it bee paid and discharged in this forme and manner, My sonne in lawe (as daughter his wife knoweth full well) hath in his handes as a pawne, a faire gold ring of mine, with thirteene faire table diamonds therein enchased; which cost Queene Anne my gracious Mistrisse seaven and forty pounds starline, and for which I might many tymes have had forty pounds readie money: upon the said ring my sonne in the presence of his wife lent me Tenne pound. I desire him and pray him to take the overplus of the said Ring in parte of payment, as also a leaden Ceasterne which hee hath of myne standing in his yard at his London-house that cost mee at a porte-sale fortie shillings, as also a silver candle cup with a cover worth about forty shillings which I left at his house being sicke there; desiring my sonne and daughter that their whole debt may bee made up and they satisfied with selling the lease of my house in Shoe lane, and soe accquitt and discharge my poore wife who as yet knoweth nothing of his debt. Moreover I entreat my deare wife that if at my death my servant Artur [*blank*] shall chance to bee with mee and in my service, that for my sake she give him such poore doubletts, breeches, hattes, and bootes as I shall leave, and therwithall one of my ould cloakes soe it bee not lyned with velvett. In witnesse whereof I the said John Florio to this my last will and Testament (written every sillable with myne owne hande, and with long and mature deliberation digested, contayning foure sheetes of paper, the first of eight and twenty lines, the second of nine and twenty, the third of nyne and twenty and the fourth of six lines) have putt, sett, written and affixed my name and usual seale of my armes. The twentyth day of July in the yeare of our Lord and Savyour Jesus Christ 1625, and in the first yeare of the raigne of our Soveraigne Lord and King (whom God preserve) Charles the First of that name of England, Scotland, France and Ireland King. By mee John Florio being, thankes bee ever given to my most gracious

God, in perfect sence and memory.

Proved 1 June 1626 by Rose Florio the relict, the executors named in the Will for certain reasons renouncing execution.

NOTE

Florio was eighty years of age at his death in 1625. From significant references by Shakespeare, in *Henry IV.* , to Falstaff's age, I have long been of the opinion that Florio was more than forty-five years old in 1598, when the *First Part* of this play was revised and the *Second Part* written; yet if the age of fifty-eight, which Florio gives himself in the medallion round his picture in the 1611 edition of his *Worlde of Wordes* is to be believed, he was only forty-five in 1598. I have now found Anthony Wood's authority for dating his birth in 1545.

In *Registrium Universitalus Oxon.* , vol. ii., by Andrew Clark, I find: "1st May 1581, Magd. Co., John Florio, æt. 36, serviens mei Barnes."

In a copy of Florio's first edition of his *Worlde of Wordes* in my library, which evidently belonged to his friend William Godolphin, as his name is written in it, there is also written in an old hand, under Florio's name on the title-page, "born 1545."

<<span id="filepos0042234588"> a>THE PEOPLE FOR WHOM SHAKESPEARE WROTE by Charles Dudley Warner

Queen Elizabeth being dead about ten o'clock in the morning, March 24, 1603, Sir Robert Cary posted away, unsent, to King James of Scotland to inform him of the "accident," and got made a baron of the realm for his ride. On his way down to take possession of his new kingdom the king distributed the honor of knighthood right and left liberally; at Theobald's he created eight-and-twenty knights, of whom Sir Richard Baker, afterwards the author of "A Chronicle of the Kings of England," was one. "God knows how many hundreds he made the first year," says the chronicler, "but it was indeed fit to give vent to the passage of Honour, which during Queen Elizabeth's reign had been so stopped that scarce any county of England had knights enow to make a jury."

Sir Richard Baker was born in 1568, and died in 1645; his "Chronicle" appeared in 1641. It was brought down to the death of James in 1625, when, he having written the introduction to the life of Charles I, the storm of the season caused him to "break off in amazement," for he had thought the race of "Stewards" likely to continue to the "world's end"; and he never resumed his pen. In the reign of James two things lost their lustre—the exercise of tilting, which Elizabeth made a special solemnity, and the band of Yeomen of the Guard, choicest persons both for stature and other good parts, who graced the court of Elizabeth; James "was so intentive to Realities that he little regarded shows," and in his time these came utterly to be neglected. The virgin queen was the last ruler who seriously regarded the pomps and splendors of feudalism.

It was characteristic of the age that the death of James, which occurred in his fifty-ninth year, should have been by rumor attributed to "poyson"; but "being dead, and his body opened, there was no sign at all of poyson, his inward parts being all sound, but that his Spleen was a little faulty, which might be cause enough to cast him into an Ague: the ordinary highway, especially in old bo'dies, to a natural death."

The chronicler records among the men of note of James's time Sir Francis Vere, "who as another Hannibal, with his one eye, could see more in the Martial Discipline than common men can do with two"; Sir Edward Coke; Sir Francis Bacon, "who besides his profounder book, of Novum Organum, hath written the reign of King Henry the Seventh, in so sweet a style, that like Manna, it pleaseth the tast of all palats"; William Camden, whose Description of Britain "seems to keep Queen Elizabeth alive after death"; "and to speak it in a word, the Trojan Horse was not fuller of Heroick Grecians, than King James his Reign was full of men excellent in all kindes of Learning." Among these was an old university acquaintance of Baker's, "Mr. John Dunne, who leaving Oxford, lived at the Innes of Court, not dissolute, but very neat; a great Visitor of Ladies, a great frequenter of Playes, a great writer of conceited Verses; until such times as King James taking notice of the pregnancy of his Wit, was a means that he betook him to the study of Divinity, and thereupon proceeding Doctor, was made Dean of Pauls; and became so rare a Preacher, that he was not only commended, but even admired by all who heard him."

The times of Elizabeth and James were visited by some awful casualties and portents. From December, 1602, to the December following, the plague destroyed 30,518 persons in London; the same disease that in the sixth year of Elizabeth killed 20,500, and in the thirty-sixth year 17,890, besides the lord mayor and three aldermen. In January, 1606, a mighty whale came up the Thames within eight miles of London, whose body, seen divers times above water, was judged to be longer than the largest ship on the river; "but when she tasted the fresh water and scented the Land, she returned into the sea." Not so fortunate was a vast whale cast upon the Isle of Thanet, in Kent, in 1575, which was "twenty Ells long, and thirteen foot broad from the belly to the backbone, and eleven foot between the eyes. One of his eyes being taken out of his head was more than a cart with six horses could draw; the Oyl being boyled out of his head was Parmacittee." Nor the monstrous fish cast ashore in Lincolnshire in 1564, which measured six yards between the eyes and had a tail fifteen feet broad; "twelve men stood upright in his mouth to get the Oyl." In 1612 a comet appeared, which in the opinion of Dr. Bainbridge, the great mathematician of

Oxford, was as far above the moon as the moon is above the earth, and the sequel of it was that infinite slaughters and devastations followed it both in Germany and other countries. In 1613, in Standish, in Lancashire, a maiden child was born having four legs, four arms, and one head with two faces—the one before, the other behind, like the picture of Janus. (One thinks of the prodigies that presaged the birth of Glendower.) Also, the same year, in Hampshire, a carpenter, lying in bed with his wife and a young child, "was himself and the childe both burned to death with a sudden lightning, no fire appearing outwardly upon him, and yet lay burning for the space of almost three days till he was quite consumed to ashes." This year the Globe playhouse, on the Bankside, was burned, and the year following the new playhouse, the Fortune, in Golding Lane, "was by negligence of a candle, clean burned down to the ground." In this year also, 1614, the town of Stratford-on-Avon was burned. One of the strangest events, however, happened in the first year of Elizabeth (1558), when "dyed Sir Thomas Cheney, Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports, of whom it is reported for a certain, that his pulse did beat more than three quarters of an hour after he was dead, as strongly as if he had been still alive." In 1580 a strange apparition happened in Somersetshire—three score personages all clothed in black, a furlong in distance from those that beheld them; "and after their appearing, and a little while tarrying, they vanished away, but immediately another strange company, in like manner, color, and number appeared in the same place, and they encountered one another and so vanished away. And the third time appeared that number again, all in bright armour, and encountered one another, and so vanished away. This was examined before Sir George Norton, and sworn by four honest men that saw it, to be true." Equally well substantiated, probably, was what happened in Herefordshire in 1571: "A field of three acres, in Blackmore, with the Trees and Fences, moved from its place and passed over another field, traveling in the highway that goeth to Herne, and there stayed." Herefordshire was a favorite place for this sort of exercise of nature. In 1575 the little town of Kinnaston was visited by an earthquake: "On the seventeenth of February at six o'clock of the evening, the earth began to open and a Hill with a Rock under it (making at first a great bellowing noise, which was heard a great way off) lifted itself up a great height, and began to travel, bearing along with it the Trees that grew upon it, the Sheep-folds, and Flocks of Sheep abiding there at the same time. In the place from whence it was first moved, it left a gaping distance forty foot broad, and fourscore Ells long; the whole Field was about twenty Acres. Passing along, it overthrew a Chappell standing in the way, removed an Ewe-Tree planted in the Churchyard, from the West into the East; with the like force it thrust before it Highwayes, Sheep-folds, Hedges, and Trees, made Tilled ground Pasture, and again turned Pasture into Tillage. Having walked in this sort from Saturday in the evening, till Monday noon, it then stood still." It seems not improbable that Birnam wood should come to Dunsinane.

It was for an age of faith, for a people whose credulity was fed on such prodigies and whose imagination glowed at such wonderful portents, that Shakespeare wrote, weaving into the realities of sense those awful mysteries of the supernatural which hovered not far away from every Englishman of his time.

Shakespeare was born in 1564, when Elizabeth had been six years on the throne, and he died in 1616, nine years before James I., of the faulty spleen, was carried to the royal chapel in Westminster, "with great solemnity, but with greater lamentation." Old Baker, who says of himself that he was the unworthiest of the knights made at Theobald's, condescends to mention William Shakespeare at the tail end of the men of note of Elizabeth's time. The ocean is not more boundless, he affirms, than the number of men of note of her time; and after he has finished with the statesmen ("an exquisite statesman for his own ends was Robert Earl of Leicester, and for his Countries good, Sir William Cecill, Lord Burleigh"), the seamen, the great commanders, the learned gentlemen and writers (among them Roger Askam, who had sometime been schoolmaster to Queen Elizabeth, but, taking too great delight in gaming and cock-fighting, lived and died in mean estate), the learned divines and preachers, he concludes: "After such men, it might be thought ridiculous to speak of Stage-players; but seeing excellency in the meanest things deserve remembring, and Roscius the Comedian is recorded in History with such commendation, it may be allowed us to do the like with some of our Nation. Richard Bourbidge and Edward Allen, two such actors as no age must ever look to see the like; and to make their Comedies compleat, Richard Tarleton, who for the Part called the Clowns Part, never had his match, never will have. For Writers of Playes, and such as have been players themselves, William Shakespeare and Benjamin Johnson have especially left their Names recommended to posterity."

Richard Bourbidge (or Burbadge) was the first of the great English tragic actors, and was the original of the greater number of Shakespeare's heroes—Hamlet, Othello, Lear, Shylock, Macbeth, Richard III., Romeo, Brutus, *etc.* Dick Tarleton, one of the privileged scapegraces of social life, was regarded by his contemporaries as the most witty of clowns and comedians. The clown was a permitted character in the old theatres, and intruded not only between the acts, but even into the play itself, with his quips and antics. It is probable that he played the part of clown, grave-digger, etc., in Shakespeare's comedies, and no doubt took liberties with his parts. It is thought that part of Hamlet's advice to the players—"and let those that play your clowns speak no more than is set down for them," etc.—was leveled at Tarleton.

The question is often asked, but I consider it an idle one, whether Shakespeare was appreciated in his own day as he is now. That the age, was unable to separate him from itself, and see his great stature, is probable; that it enjoyed him with a sympathy to which we are strangers there is no doubt. To us he is inexhaustible. The more we study him, the more are we astonished at his multiform genius. In our complex civilization, there is no development of passion, or character, or trait of human nature, no social evolution, that does not find expression somewhere in those marvelous plays; and yet it is impossible for us to enter into a full, sympathetic enjoyment of those plays unless we can in some measure recreate for ourselves the atmosphere in which they were written. To superficial observation great geniuses come into the world at rare intervals in history, in a manner independent of what we call the progress of the race. It may be so; but the form the genius shall take is always determined by the age in which it appears, and its expression is shaped by the environments. Acquaintance with the Bedouin desert life of today, which has changed little for three thousand years, illumines the book of Job like an electric light. Modern research into Hellenic and Asiatic life has given a new meaning to the Iliad and the Odyssey, and greatly enhanced our enjoyment of them. A fair comprehension of the Divina Commedia is impossible without some knowledge of the factions that rent Florence; of the wars of Guelf and Ghibelline; of the spirit that banished Dante, and gave him an humble tomb in Ravenna instead of a sepulchre in the pantheon of Santa Croce. Shakespeare was a child of his age; it had long been preparing for him; its expression culminated in him. It was essentially a dramatic age. He used the accumulated materials of centuries. He was playwright as well as poet. His variety and multiform genius cannot otherwise be accounted for. He called in the coinage of many generations, and reissued it purified and unalloyed, stamped in his own mint. There was a Hamlet probably, there were certainly Romeos and Juliets, on the stage before Shakespeare. In him were received the imaginations, the inventions, the aspirations, the superstitions, the humors, the supernatural intimations; in him met the converging rays of the genius of his age, as in a lens, to be sent onward thenceforth in an ever-broadening stream of light.

It was his fortune to live not only in a dramatic age, but in a transition age, when feudalism was passing away, but while its shows and splendors could still be seriously comprehended. The dignity that doth hedge a king was so far abated that royalty could be put upon the stage as a player's spectacle; but the reality of kings and queens and court pageantry was not so far past that it did not appeal powerfully to the imaginations of the frequenters of the Globe, the Rose, and the Fortune. They had no such feeling as we have in regard to the pasteboard kings and queens who strut their brief hour before us in anachronic absurdity. But, besides that he wrote in the spirit of his age, Shakespeare wrote in the language and the literary methods of his time. This is not more evident in the contemporary poets than in the chroniclers of that day. They all delighted in ingenuities of phrase, in neat turns and conceits; it was a compliment then to be called a "conceited" writer.

Of all the guides to Shakespeare's time, there is none more profitable or entertaining than William Harrison, who wrote for Holinshed's chronicle "The Description of England," as it fell under his eyes from 1577 to 1587. Harrison's England is an unfailing mine of information for all the historians of the sixteenth century; and in the edition published by the New Shakespeare Society, and edited, with a wealth of notes and contemporary references, by Mr. Frederick J. Furnivall, it is a new revelation of Shakespeare's England to the general reader.

Harrison himself is an interesting character, and trustworthy above the general race of chroniclers. He was born in 1534, or, to use his exactness of statement, "upon the 18th of April, hora ii, minut 4, Secunde 56, at London, in Cordwainer streete, otherwise called bowe-lane." This year was also remarkable as that in which "King Henry 8 polleth his head; after whom his household and nobility, with the rest of his subjects do the like." It was the year before Anne Boleyn, haled away to the Tower, accused, condemned, and executed in the space of fourteen days, "with sigheing teares" said to the rough Duke of Norfolk, "Hither I came once my lord, to fetch a crown imperial; but now to receive, I hope, a crown immortal." In 1544, the boy was at St. Paul's school; the litany in the English tongue, by the king's command, was that year sung openly in St. Paul's, and we have a glimpse of Harrison with the other children, enforced to buy those books, walking in general procession, as was appointed, before the king went to

Boulogne. Harrison was a student at both Oxford and Cambridge, taking the degree of bachelor of divinity at the latter in 1569, when he had been an Oxford M.A. of seven years' standing. Before this he was household chaplain to Sir William Brooke, Lord Cobham, who gave him, in 1588-89, the rectory of Radwinter, in Essex, which he held till his death, in 1593. In 1586 he was installed canon of Windsor. Between 1559 and 1571 he married Marion Isebrande,—of whom he said in his will, referring to the sometime supposed unlawfulness of priests' marriages, "by the laws of God I take and repute in all respects for my true and lawful wife." At Radwinter, the old parson, working in his garden, collected Roman coins, wrote his chronicles, and expressed his mind about the rascally lawyers of Essex, to whom flowed all the wealth of the land. The lawyers in those days stirred up contentions, and then reaped the profits. "Of all that ever I knew in Essex," says Harrison, "Denis and Mainford excelled, till John of Ludlow, alias Mason, came in place, unto whom in comparison these two were but children." This last did so harry a client for four years that the latter, still called upon for new fees, "went to bed, and within four days made an end of his woeful life, even with care and pensiveness." And after his death the lawyer so handled his son "that there was never sheep shorn in May, so near clipped of his fleece present, as he was of many to come." The Welsh were the most litigious people. A Welshman would walk up to London bare-legged, carrying his hose on his neck, to save wear and because he had no change, importune his countrymen till he got half a dozen writs, with which he would return to molest his neighbors, though no one of his quarrels was worth the money he paid for a single writ.

The humblest mechanic of England today has comforts and conveniences which the richest nobles lacked in Harrison's day, but it was nevertheless an age of great luxury and extravagance; of brave apparel, costly and showy beyond that of any Continental people, though wanting in refined taste; and of mighty banquets, with service of massive plate, troops of attendants, and a surfeit of rich food and strong drink.

In this luxury the clergy of Harrison's rank did not share. Harrison was poor on forty pounds a year. He complains that the clergy were taxed more than ever, the church having become "an ass whereon every man is to ride to market and cast his wallet." They paid tenths and first-fruits and subsidies, so that out of twenty pounds of a benefice the incumbent did not reserve more than L 13 6s. 8d. for himself and his family. They had to pay for both prince and laity, and both grumbled at and slandered them. Harrison gives a good account of the higher clergy; he says the bishops were loved for their painful diligence in their calling, and that the clergy of England were reputed on the Continent as learned divines, skillful in Greek and Hebrew and in the Latin tongue.

There was, however, a scarcity of preachers and ministers in Elizabeth's time, and their character was not generally high. What could be expected when covetous patrons canceled their debts to their servants by bestowing advowsons of benefices upon their bakers, butlers, cooks, grooms, pages, and lackeys—when even in the universities there was cheating at elections for scholarships and fellowships, and gifts were for sale! The morals of the clergy were, however, improved by frequent conferences, at which the good were praised and the bad reproved; and these conferences were "a notable spur unto all the ministers, whereby to apply their books, which otherwise (as in times past) would give themselves to hawking, hunting, tables, cards, dice, tipling at the ale house, shooting, and other like vanities." The clergy held a social rank with tradespeople; their sons learned trades, and their daughters might go out to service. Jewell says many of them were the "basest sort of people" unlearned, fiddlers, pipers, and what not. "Not a few," says Harrison, "find fault with our threadbare gowns, as if not our patrons but our wives were the causes of our woe." He thinks the ministers will be better when the patrons are better, and he defends the right of the clergy to marry and to leave their goods, if they have any, to their widows and children instead of to the church, or to some school or almshouse. What if their wives are fond, after the decease of their husbands, to bestow themselves not so advisedly as their calling requireth; do not duchesses, countesses, and knights' wives offend in the like fully so often as they? And Eve, remarks the old philosopher of Radwinter—"Eve will be Eve, though Adam would say nay."

The apparel of the clergy, at any rate, was more comely and decent than it ever was in the popish church, when the priests "went either in divers colors like players, or in garments of light hue, as yellow, red, green, etc.; with their shoes piked, their hair crisped, their girdles armed with silver; their shoes, spurs, bridles, etc., buckled with like metal; their apparel (for the most part) of silk, and richly furred; their caps laced and buttoned with gold; so that to meet a priest, in those days, was to behold a peacock that spreadeth his tail when he danceth before the hen."

Hospitality among the clergy was never better used, and it was increased by their marriage; for the meat and drink were prepared more orderly and frugally, the household was better looked to, and the poor oftener fed. There was perhaps less feasting of the rich in bishops' houses, and "it is thought much peradventure, that some bishops in our time do come short of the ancient gluttony and prodigality of their predecessors;" but this is owing to the curtailing of their livings, and the excessive prices whereunto things are grown.

Harrison spoke his mind about dignitaries. He makes a passing reference to Thomas a Becket as "the old Cocke of Canturburie," who did crow in behalf of the see of Rome, and the "young cockerels of other sees did imitate his demeanour." He is glad that images, shrines, and tabernacles are removed out of churches. The stories in glass windows remain only because of the cost of replacing them with white panes. He would like to stop the wakes, guilds, paternities, church-ales, and brides-ales, with all their rioting, and he thinks they could get on very well without the feasts of apostles, evangelists, martyrs, the holy-days after Christmas, Easter, and Whitsuntide, and those of the Virgin Mary, with the rest. "It is a world to see," he wrote of 1552, "how ready the Catholicks are to cast the communion tables out of their churches, which in derision they call Oysterboards, and to set up altars whereon to say mass." And he tells with sinful gravity this tale of a sacrilegious sow: "Upon the 23rd of August, the high altar of Christ Church in Oxford was trimly decked up after the popish manner and about the middest of evensong, a sow cometh into the quire, and pulled all to the ground; for which heinous fact, it is said she was afterwards beheaded; but to that I am not privy." Think of the condition of Oxford when pigs went to mass! Four years after this there was a sickness in England, of which a third part of the people did taste, and many clergymen, who had prayed not to live after the death of Queen Mary, had their desire, the Lord hearing their prayer, says Harrison, "and intending thereby to give his church a breathing time."

There were four classes in England—gentlemen, citizens, yeomen, and artificers or laborers. Besides the nobles, any one can call himself a gentleman who can live without work and buy a coat of arms—though some of them "bear a bigger sail than his boat is able to sustain." The complaint of sending abroad youth to be educated is an old one; Harrison says the sons of gentlemen went into Italy, and brought nothing home but mere atheism, infidelity, vicious conversation, and ambitious, proud behavior, and retained neither religion nor patriotism. Among citizens were the merchants, of whom Harrison thought there were too many; for, like the lawyers, they were no furtherance to the commonwealth, but raised the price of all commodities. In former, free-trade times, sugar was sixpence a pound, now it is two shillings sixpence; raisins were one penny, and now sixpence. Not content with the old European trade, they have sought out the East and West Indies, and likewise Cathay and Tartary, whence they pretend, from their now and then suspicious voyages, they bring home great commodities. But Harrison cannot see that prices are one whit abated by this enormity, and certainly they carry out of England the best of its wares.

The yeomen are the stable, free men, who for the most part stay in one place, working the farms of gentlemen, are diligent, sometimes buy the land of unthrifty gentlemen, educate their sons to the schools and the law courts, and leave them money to live without labor. These are the men that made France afraid. Below these are the laborers and men who work at trades, who have no voice in the commonwealth, and crowds of young serving-men who become old beggars, highway-robbers, idle fellows, and spreaders of all vices. There was a complaint then, as now, that in many trades men scamped their work, but, on the whole, husbandmen and artificers had never been so good; only there were too many of them, too many handicrafts of which the country had no need. It appears to be a fault all along in history that there are too many of almost every sort of people.

In Harrison's time the greater part of the building in cities and towns was of timber, only a few of the houses of the commonalty being of stone. In an old plate giving a view of the north side of Cheapside, London, in 1638, we see little but quaint gable ends and rows of small windows set close together. The houses are of wood and plaster, each story overhanging the other, terminating in sharp pediments; the roofs projecting on cantilevers, and the windows occupying the whole front of each of the lower stories. They presented a lively and gay appearance on holidays, when the pentices of the shop fronts were hung with colored draperies, and the balconies were crowded with spectators, and every pane of glass showed a face. In the open country, where timber was scarce, the houses were, between studs, impaneled with clay-red, white, or blue. One of the Spaniards who came over in the suite of Philip remarked the large diet in these homely cottages: "These English," quoth he, "have their houses made of sticks and dirt, but they fare commonly so well as the king." "Whereby it appeareth," comments Harrison, "that he liked better of our good fare in such coarse cabins, than of their own thin diet in their prince-like habitations and palaces." The timber houses were covered with tiles; the other sort with straw or reeds. The fairest houses were ceiled within with mortar and covered with plaster, the whiteness and evenness of which excited Harrison's admiration. The walls were hung with tapestry, arras-work, or painted cloth, whereon were divers histories, or herbs, or birds, or else ceiled with oak. Stoves had just begun to be used, and only in some houses of the gentry, "who build them not to work and feed in, as in Germany and elsewhere, but now and then to sweat in, as occasion and need shall require." Glass in windows, which was then good and cheap, and made even in England, had generally taken the place of the lattices and of the horn, and of the beryl which noblemen formerly used in windows. Gentlemen were beginning to build their houses of brick and stone, in stately and magnificent fashion. The furniture of the houses had also grown in a manner "passing delicacy," and not of the nobility and gentry only, but of the lowest sort. In noblemen's houses there was abundance of arras, rich hangings of tapestry, and silver vessels, plate often to the value of one thousand and two thousand pounds. The knights, gentlemen, and merchants had great provision of tapestry, Turkie work, pewter, brass, fine linen, and cupboards of plate worth perhaps a thousand pounds. Even the inferior artificers and many farmers had learned also to garnish their cupboards with plate, their joined beds with silk hangings, and their tables with fine linen—evidences of wealth for which Harrison thanks God and reproaches no man, though he cannot see how it is brought about, when all things are grown to such excessive prices.

Old men of Radwinter noted three things marvelously altered in England within their remembrance. The first was the multitude of chimneys lately erected; whereas in their young days there were not, always except those in the religious and manor houses, above two or three chimneys in most upland towns of the realm; each one made his fire against a reredos in the hall, where he dined and dressed his meat. The second was the amendment in lodging. In their youth they lay upon hard straw pallets covered only with a sheet, and mayhap a dogswain coverlet over them, and a good round log for pillow. If in seven years after marriage a man could buy a mattress and a sack of chaff to rest his head on, he thought himself as well lodged as a lord. Pillows were thought meet only for sick women. As for servants, they were lucky if they had a sheet over them, for there was nothing under them to keep the straw from pricking their hardened hides. The third notable thing was the exchange of treene (wooden) platters into pewter, and wooden spoons into silver or tin. Wooden stuff was plenty, but a good farmer would not have above four pieces of pewter in his house; with all his frugality, he was unable to pay his rent of four pounds without selling a cow or horse. It was a time of idleness, and if a farmer at an alehouse, in a bravery to show what he had, slapped down his purse with six shillings in it, all the rest together could not match it. But now, says Harrison, though the rent of four pounds has improved to forty, the farmer has six or seven years' rent, lying by him, to purchase a new term, garnish his cupboard with pewter, buy three or four feather-beds, coverlets, carpets of tapestry, a silver salt, a nest of bowls for wine, and a dozen spoons. All these things speak of the growing wealth and luxury of the age. Only a little before this date, in 1568, Lord Buckhurst, who had been ordered to entertain the Cardinal de Chatillon in Queen Elizabeth's palace at Sheen, complains of the meanness of the furniture of his rooms. He showed the officers who preceded the cardinal such furniture and stuff as he had, but it did not please them. They wanted plate, he had none; such glass vessels as he had they thought too base. They wanted damask for long tables, and he had only linen for a square table, and they refused his square table. He gave the cardinal his only unoccupied tester and bedstead, and assigned to the bishop the bedstead upon which his wife's waiting-women did lie, and laid them on the ground. He lent the cardinal his own basin and ewer, candlesticks from his own table, drinking-glasses, small cushions, and pots for the kitchen. My Lord of Leicester sent down two pair of fine sheets for the cardinal and one pair for the bishop.

Harrison laments three things in his day: the enhancing of rents, the daily oppression of poor tenants by the lords of manors, and the practice of usury—a trade brought in by the Jews, but now practiced by almost every Christian, so that he is accounted a fool that doth lend his money for nothing. He prays the reader to help him, in a lawful manner, to hang up all those that take cent. per cent. for money. Another grievance, and most sorrowful of all, is that many gentlemen, men of good port and countenance, to the injury of the farmers and commonalty, actually turn Braziers, butchers, tanners, sheep-masters, and woodmen. Harrison also notes the absorption of lands by the rich; the decay of houses in the country, which comes of the eating up of the poor by the rich; the increase of poverty; the difficulty a poor man had to live on an acre of ground; his forced contentment with bread made of oats and barley, and the divers places that formerly had good tenants and now were vacant, hop-yards and gardens.

Harrison says it is not for him to describe the palaces of Queen Elizabeth; he dare hardly peep in at her gates. Her houses are of brick and stone, neat and well situated, but in good masonry not to be compared to those of Henry VIII's building; they are rather curious to the eye, like paper-works, than substantial for continuance. Her court is more magnificent than any other in Europe, whether you regard the rich and infinite furniture of the household, the number of officers, or the sumptuous entertainments. And the honest chronicler is so struck with admiration of the virtuous beauty of the maids of honor that he cannot tell whether to award preeminence to their amiable countenances or to their costliness of attire, between which there is daily conflict and contention. The courtiers of both sexes have the use of sundry languages and an excellent vein of writing. Would to God the rest of their lives and conversation corresponded with these gifts! But the courtiers, the most learned, are the worst men when they come abroad that any man shall hear or read of. Many of the gentlewomen have sound knowledge of Greek and Latin, and are skillful in Spanish, Italian, and French; and the noblemen even surpass them. The old ladies of the court avoid idleness by needlework, spinning of silk, or continual reading of the Holy Scriptures or of histories, and writing diverse volumes of their own, or translating foreign works into English or Latin; and the young ladies, when they are not waiting on her majesty, "in the mean time apply their lutes, citherns, pricksong, and all kinds of music." The elders are skillful in surgery and the distillation of waters, and sundry other artificial practices pertaining to the ornature and commendation of their bodies; and when they are at home they go into the kitchen and supply a number of delicate dishes of their own devising, mostly after Portuguese receipts; and they prepare bills of fare (a trick lately taken up) to give a brief rehearsal of all the dishes of every course. I do not know whether this was called the "higher education of women" at the time.

In every office of the palaces is a Bible, or book of acts of the church, or chronicle, for the use of whoever comes in, so that the court looks more like a university than a palace. Would to God the houses of the nobles were ruled like the queen's! The nobility are followed by great troops of serving-men in showy liveries; and it is a goodly sight to see them muster at court, which, being filled with them, "is made like to the show of a peacock's tail in the full beauty, or of some meadow garnished with infinite kinds and diversity of pleasant flowers." Such was the discipline of Elizabeth's court that any man who struck another within it had his right hand chopped off by the executioner in a most horrible manner.

The English have always had a passion for gardens and orchards. In the Roman time grapes abounded and wine was plenty, but the culture disappeared after the Conquest. From the time of Henry IV. to Henry VIII. vegetables were little used, but in Harrison's day the use of melons, pompions, radishes, cucumbers, cabbages, turnips, and the like was revived. They had beautiful flower-gardens annexed to the houses, wherein were grown also rare and medicinal herbs; it was a wonder to see how many strange herbs, plants, and fruits were daily brought from the Indies, America and the Canaries. Every rich man had great store of flowers, and in one garden might be seen from three hundred to four hundred medicinal herbs. Men extol the foreign herbs to the neglect of the native, and especially tobacco, "which is not found of so great efficacy as they write." In the orchards were plums, apples, pears, walnuts, filberts; and in noblemen's orchards store of strange fruit-apricots, almonds, peaches, figs, and even in some oranges, lemons, and capers. Grafters also were at work with their artificial mixtures, "dallying, as it were, with nature and her course, as if her whole trade were perfectly known unto them: of hard fruits they will make soft, of sour sweet, of sweet yet more delicate; bereaving also some of their kernels, others of their cores, and finally endowing them with the flavor of musk, amber, or sweet spices at their pleasure." Gardeners turn annual into perpetual herbs, and such pains are they at that they even used dish-water for plants. The Gardens of Hesperides are surely not equal to these. Pliny tells of a rose that had sixty leaves on one bud, but in 1585 there was a rose in Antwerp that had one hundred and eighty leaves; and Harrison might have had a slip of it for ten pounds, but he thought it a "tickle hazard." In his own little garden, of not above three hundred square feet, he had near three hundred samples, and not one of them of the common, or usually to be had.

Our kin beyond sea have always been stout eaters of solid food, and in Elizabeth's time their tables were more plentifully laden than those of any other nation. Harrison scientifically accounts for their inordinate appetite. "The situation of our region," he says, "lying near unto the north, does cause the heat of our stomachs to be of somewhat greater force; therefore our bodies do crave a little more ample nourishment than the inhabitants of the hotter regions are accustomed withal, whose digestive force is not altogether so vehement, because their internal heat is not so strong as ours, which is kept in by the coldness of the air, that from time to time (specially in winter) doth environ our bodies." The north Britons in old times were accustomed often to great abstinence, and lived when in the woods on roots and herbs. They used sometimes a confection, "whereof so much as a bean would qualify their hunger above common expectation"; but when they had nothing to qualify it with, they crept into the marsh water up to their chins, and there remained a long time, "only to qualify the heat of their stomachs by violence."

In Harrison's day the abstemious Welsh had learned to eat like the English, and the Scotch exceeded the latter in "over much and distemperate gormandize." The English eat all they can buy, there being no restraint of any meat for religion's sake or for public order. The white meats—milk, butter, and cheese—though very dear, are reputed as good for inferior people, but the more wealthy feed upon the flesh of all sorts of cattle and all kinds of fish. The nobility ("whose cooks are for the most part musical-headed Frenchmen and strangers ") exceed in number of dishes and change of meat. Every day at dinner there is beef, mutton, veal, lamb, kid, pork, conie, capon, pig, or as many of these as the season yielded, besides deer and wildfowl, and fish, and sundry delicacies "wherein the sweet hand of the seafaring Portingale is not wanting." The food was brought in commonly in silver vessels at tables of the degree of barons, bishops, and upwards, and referred first to the principal personage, from whom it passed to the lower end of the table, the guests not eating of all, but choosing what each liked; and nobody stuffed himself. The dishes were then sent to the servants, and the remains of the feast went to the poor, who lay waiting at the gates in great numbers.

Drink was served in pots, goblets, jugs, and bowls of silver in noblemen's houses, and also in Venice glasses. It was not set upon the table, but the cup was brought to each one who thirsted; he called for such a cup of drink as he wished, and delivered it again to one of the by-standers, who made it clean by pouring out what remained, and restored it to the sideboard. This device was to prevent great drinking, which might ensue if the full pot stood always at the elbow. But this order was not used in noblemen's halls, nor in any order under the degree of knight or squire of great revenue. It was a world to see how the nobles preferred to gold and silver, which abounded, the new Venice glass, whence a great trade sprang up with Murano that made many rich. The poorest even would have glass, but home-made—a foolish expense, for the glass soon went to bits, and the pieces turned to no profit. Harrison wanted the philosopher's stone to mix with this molten glass and toughen it.

There were multitudes of dependents fed at the great houses, and everywhere, according to means, a wide-open hospitality was maintained. Froude gives a notion of the style of living in earlier times by citing the details of a feast given when George Neville, brother of Warwick the king-maker, was made archbishop of York. There were present, including servants, thirty-five hundred persons. These are a few of the things used at the banquet: three hundred quarters of wheat, three hundred tuns of ale, one hundred and four tuns of wine, eighty oxen, three thousand geese, two thousand pigs,—four thousand conies, four thousand heronshaws, four thousand venison pasties cold and five hundred hot, four thousand cold tarts, four thousand cold custards, eight seals, four porpoises, and so on.

The merchants and gentlemen kept much the same tables as the nobles, especially at feasts, but when alone were content with a few dishes. They also desired the dearest food, and would have no meat from the butcher's but the most delicate, while their list of fruits, cakes, Gates, and outlandish confections is as long as that at any modern banquet. Wine ran in excess. There were used fifty-six kinds of light wines, like the French, and thirty of the strong sorts, like the Italian and Eastern. The stronger the wine, the better it was liked. The strongest and best was in old times called theologicum, because it was had from the clergy and religious men, to whose houses the laity sent their bottles to be filled, sure that the religious would neither drink nor be served with the worst; for the merchant would have thought his soul should have gone straightway to the devil if he had sent them any but the best. The beer served at noblemen's tables was commonly a year old, and sometimes two, but this age was not usual. In households generally it was not under a month old, for beer was liked stale if it were not sour, while bread was desired as new as possible so that it was not hot.

The husbandman and artificer ate such meat as they could easiest come by and have most quickly ready; yet the banquets of the trades in London were not inferior to those of the nobility. The husbandmen, however, exceed in profusion, and it is incredible to tell what meat is consumed at bridals, purifications, and such like odd meetings; but each guest brought his own provision, so that the master of the house had only to provide bread, drink, houseroom, and fire. These lower classes Harrison found very friendly at their tables—merry without malice, plain without Italian or French subtlety—so that it would do a man good to be in company among them; but if they happen to stumble upon a piece of venison or a cup of wine or very strong beer, they do not stick to compare themselves with the lord-mayor—and there is no public man in any city of Europe that may compare with him in port and countenance during the term of his office.

Harrison commends the great silence used at the tables of the wiser sort, and generally throughout the realm, and likewise the moderate eating and drinking. But the poorer countrymen do babble somewhat at table, and mistake ribaldry and loquacity for wit and wisdom, and occasionally are cup-shotten; and what wonder, when they who have hard diet and small drink at home come to such opportunities at a banquet! The wealthier sort in the country entertain their visitors from afar, however long they stay, with as hearty a welcome the last day as the first; and the countrymen contrast this hospitality with that of their London cousins, who joyfully receive them the first day, tolerate them the second, weary of them the third, and wish 'em at the devil after four days.

The gentry usually ate wheat bread, of which there were four kinds, and the poor generally bread made of rye, barley, and even oats and acorns. Corn was getting so dear, owing to the forestallers and middlemen, that, says the historian, "if the world last a while after this rate, wheat and rye will be no grain for poor men to feed on; and some catterpillers [two-legged speculators] there are that can say so much already."

The great drink of the realm was, of course, beer (and it is to be noted that a great access of drunkenness came into England with the importation much later of Holland gin) made from barley, hops, and water, and upon the brewing of it Harrison dwells lovingly, and devotes many pages to a description of the process, especially as "once in a month practiced by my wife and her maid servants." They ground eight bushels of malt, added half a bushel of wheat meal, half a bushel of oat meal, poured in eighty gallons of water, then eighty gallons more, and a third eighty gallons, and boiled with a couple of pounds of hops. This, with a few spices thrown in, made three hogsheads of good beer, meet for a poor man who had only forty pounds a year. This two hundred gallons of beer cost altogether twenty shillings; but although he says his wife brewed it "once in a month," whether it lasted a whole month the parson does not say. He was particular about the water used: the Thames is best, the marsh worst, and clear spring water next worst; "the fattest standing water is always the best." Cider and perry were made in some parts of England, and a delicate sort of drink in Wales, called metheglin; but there was a kind of "swish-swash" made in Essex from honey-combs and water, called mead, which differed from the metheglin as chalk from cheese.

In Shakespeare's day much less time was spent in eating and drinking than formerly, when, besides breakfast in the forenoon and dinners, there were "beverages" or "nuntion" after dinner, and supper before going to bed —"a toie brought in by hardie Canutus," who was a gross feeder. Generally there were, except for the young who could not fast till dinnertime, only two meals daily, dinner and supper. Yet the Normans had brought in the habit of sitting long at the table—a custom not yet altogether abated, since the great people, especially at banquets, sit till two or three o'clock in the afternoon; so that it is a hard matter to rise and go to evening prayers and return in time for supper.

Harrison does not make much account of the early meal called "breakfast"; but Froude says that in Elizabeth's time the common hour of rising, in the country, was four o'clock, summer and winter, and that breakfast was at five, after which the laborers went to work and the gentlemen to business. The Earl and Countess of Northumberland breakfasted together and alone at seven. The meal consisted of a quart of ale, a quart of wine, and a chine of beef; a loaf of bread is not mentioned, but we hope (says Froude) it may be presumed. The gentry dined at eleven and supped at five. The merchants took dinner at noon, and, in London, supped at six. The university scholars out of term ate dinner at ten. The husbandmen dined at high noon, and took supper at seven or eight. As for the poorer sort, it is needless to talk of their order of repast, for they dined and supped when they could. The English usually began meals with the grossest food and ended with the most delicate, taking first the mild wines and ending with the hottest; but the prudent Scot did otherwise, making his entrance with the best, so that he might leave the worse to the menials.

I will close this portion of our sketch of English manners with an extract from the travels of Hentzner, who visited England in 1598, and saw the great queen go in state to chapel at Greenwich, and afterwards witnessed the laying of the table for her dinner. It was on Sunday. The queen was then in her sixty-fifth year, and "very majestic," as she walked in the splendid procession of barons, earls, and knights of the garter: "her face, oblong, fair, but wrinkled; her eyes small, yet black and pleasant; her nose a little hooked; her lips narrow, and her teeth black (a defect the English seem subject to from their great use of sugar). She had in her ears two pearls with very rich drops; she wore false hair, and that red; upon her head she had a small crown, reported to be made of some of the gold of the celebrated Lunebourg table. Her bosom was uncovered, as all the English ladies have it till they marry; and she had on a necklace of exceeding fine jewels; her hands were small, her fingers long, and her stature neither small nor low; her air was stately, her manner of speaking mild and obliging. That day she was dressed in white silk, bordered with pearls of the size of beans, and over it a mantle of black silk, shot with silver threads; her train was very long, and the end of it borne by a marchioness; instead of a chain she had an oblong collar of gold and jewels." As she swept on in this magnificence, she spoke graciously first to one, then to another, and always in the language of any foreigner she addressed; whoever spoke to her kneeled, and wherever she turned her face, as she was going along, everybody fell down on his knees. When she pulled off her glove to give her hand to be kissed, it was seen to be sparkling with rings and jewels. The ladies of the court, handsome and well shaped, followed, dressed for the most part in white; and on either side she was guarded by fifty gentlemen pensioners with gilt battle-axes. In the ante-chapel, where she graciously received petitions, there was an acclaim of "Long live Queen Elizabeth!" to which she answered, "I thank you, my good people." The music in the chapel was excellent, and the whole service was over in half an hour. This is Hentzner's description of the setting out of her table:

"A gentleman entered the room bearing a rod, and along with him another who had a table-cloth, which, after they had both kneeled three times, he spread upon the table; and after kneeling again they both retired. Then came two others, one with the rod again, the other with a salt-cellar, a plate, and bread; and when they had kneeled as the others had done, and placed what was brought upon the table, they two retired with the same ceremonies performed by the first. At last came an unmarried lady (we were told she was a countess) and along with her a married one, bearing a tasting-knife; the former was dressed in white silk, who, when she had prostrated herself three times, in the most graceful manner approached the table, and rubbed the plates with bread and salt, with as much awe as if the Queen had been present. When they had waited there a little while the Yeomen of the Guard entered, bare-headed, clothed in scarlet, with a golden rose upon their backs, bringing in at each turn a course of twenty-four dishes, served in plate, most of it gilt; these dishes were received by a gentleman in the same order they were brought, and placed upon the table, while the Lady Taster gave to each of the guard a mouthful to eat, of the particular dish he had brought, for fear of, any poison. During the time that this guard, which consists of the tallest and stoutest men that can be found in all England, being carefully selected for this service, were bringing dinner, twelve trumpets and two kettle-drums made the hall ring for half an hour together. At the end of all this ceremonial, a number of unmarried ladies appeared, who with particular solemnity lifted the meat off the table and conveyed it into the Queen's inner and more private chamber, where, after she had chosen for herself, the rest goes to the Ladies of the court."

The queen dined and supped alone, with very few attendants.

II

We now approach perhaps the most important matter in this world, namely, dress. In nothing were the increasing wealth and extravagance of the period more shown than in apparel. And in it we are able to study the origin of the present English taste for the juxtaposition of striking and uncomplementary colors. In Coryat's "Crudities," 1611, we have an Englishman's contrast of the dress of the Venetians and the English. The Venetians adhered, without change, to their decent fashion, a thousand years old, wearing usually black: the slender doublet made close to the body, without much quilting; the long hose plain, the jerkin also black—but all of the most costly stuffs Christendom can furnish, satin and taffetas, garnished with the best lace. Gravity and good taste characterized their apparel. "In both these things," says Coryat, "they differ much from us Englishmen. For whereas they have but one color, we use many more than are in the rainbow, all the most light, garish, and unseemly colors that are in the world. Also for fashion we are much inferior to them. For we wear more fantastical fashions than any nation under the sun doth, the French only excepted." On festival days, in processions, the senators wore crimson damask gowns, with flaps of crimson velvet cast over their left shoulders; and the Venetian knights differed from the other gentlemen, for under their black damask gowns, with long sleeves, they wore red apparel, red silk stockings, and red pantofles.

Andrew Boord, in 1547, attempting to describe the fashions of his countrymen, gave up the effort in sheer despair over the variety and fickleness of costume, and drew a naked man with a pair of shears in one hand and a piece of cloth in the other, to the end that he should shape his apparel as he himself liked; and this he called an Englishman. Even the gentle Harrison, who gives Boord the too harsh character of a lewd popish hypocrite and ungracious priest, admits that he was not void of judgment in this; and he finds it easier to inveigh against the enormity, the fickleness, and the fantasticality of the English attire than to describe it. So unstable is the fashion, he says, that today the Spanish guise is in favor; tomorrow the French toys are most fine and delectable; then the high German apparel is the go; next the Turkish manner is best liked, the Morisco gowns, the Barbary sleeves, and the short French breeches; in a word, "except it were a dog in a doublet, you shall not see any so disguised as are my countrymen in England."

This fantastical folly was in all degrees, from the courtier down to the tarter. "It is a world to see the costliness and the curiosity, the excess and the vanity, the pomp and the bravery, the change and the variety, and finally the fickleness and the folly that is in all degrees; insomuch that nothing is more constant in England than inconstancy of attire. So much cost upon the body, so little upon souls; how many suits of apparel hath the one, or how little furniture hath the other!" "And how men and women worry the poor tailors, with endless fittings and sending back of garments, and trying on!" "Then must the long seams of our hose be set with a plumb line, then we puff, then we blow, and finally sweat till we drop, that our clothes may stand well upon us."

The barbers were as cunning in variety as the tailors. Sometimes the head was polled; sometimes the hair was curled, and then suffered to grow long like a woman's locks, and many times cut off, above or under the ears, round as by a wooden dish. And so with the beards: some shaved from the chin, like the Turks; some cut short, like the beard of the Marquis Otto; some made round, like a rubbing-brush; some peaked, others grown long. If a man have a lean face, the Marquis Otto's cut makes it broad; if it be platterlike, the long, slender beard makes it seem narrow; "if he be weasel-beaked, then much hair left on the cheeks will make the owner look big like a bowdled hen, and so grim as a goose." Some courageous gentlemen wore in their ears rings of gold and stones, to improve God's work, which was otherwise set off by monstrous quilted and stuffed doublets, that puffed out the figure like a barrel.

There is some consolation, though I don't know why, in the knowledge that writers have always found fault with women's fashions, as they do today. Harrison says that the women do far exceed the lightness of the men; "such staring attire as in time past was supposed meet for light housewives only is now become an habit for chaste and sober matrons." And he knows not what to say of their doublets, with pendant pieces on the breast full of jags and cuts; their "galligascons," to make their dresses stand out plumb round; their farthingales and divers colored stockings. "I have met," he says, "with some of these trulls in London so disguised that it hath passed my skill to determine whether they were men or women." Of all classes the merchants were most to be commended for rich but sober attire; "but the younger sort of their wives, both in attire and costly housekeeping, cannot tell when and how to make an end, as being women indeed in whom all kind of curiosity is to be found and seen." Elizabeth's time, like our own, was distinguished by new fashionable colors, among which are mentioned a queer greenish-yellow, a pease-porridge-tawny, a popinjay of blue, a lusty gallant, and the "devil in the hedge." These may be favorites still, for aught I know.

Mr. Furnivall quotes a description of a costume of the period, from the manuscript of Orazio Busino's "Anglipotrida." Busino was the chaplain of Piero Contarina, the Venetian ambassador to James I, in 1617. The chaplain was one day stunned with grief over the death of the butler of the embassy; and as the Italians sleep away grief, the French sing, the Germans drink, and the English go to plays to be rid of it, the Venetians, by advice, sought consolation at the Fortune Theatre; and there a trick was played upon old Busino, by placing him among a bevy of young women, while the concealed ambassador and the secretary enjoyed the joke. "These theatres," says Busino, "are frequented by a number of respectable and handsome ladies, who come freely and seat themselves among the men without the slightest hesitation . . . . Scarcely was I seated ere a very elegant dame, but in a mask, came and placed herself beside me . . . . She asked me for my address both in French and English; and, on my turning a deaf ear, she determined to honor me by showing me some fine diamonds on her fingers, repeatedly taking off no fewer than three gloves, which were worn one over the other . . . . This lady's bodice was of yellow satin, richly embroidered, her petticoat—[It is a trifle in human progress, perhaps scarcely worth noting, that the "round gown," that is, an entire skirt, not open in front and parting to show the under petticoat, did not come into fashion till near the close of the eighteenth century.]—of gold tissue with stripes, her robe of red velvet with a raised pile, lined with yellow muslin with broad stripes of pure gold. She wore an apron of point lace of various patterns; her headtire was highly perfumed, and the collar of white satin beneath the delicately wrought ruff struck me as exceedingly pretty." It was quite in keeping with the manners of the day for a lady of rank to have lent herself to this hoax of the chaplain.

Van Meteren, a Netherlander, 1575, speaks also of the astonishing change or changeableness in English fashions, but says the women are well dressed and modest, and they go about the streets without any covering of mantle, hood, or veil; only the married women wear a hat in the street and in the house; the unmarried go without a hat; but ladies of distinction have lately learned to cover their faces with silken masks or vizards, and to wear feathers. The English, he notes, change their fashions every year, and when they go abroad riding or traveling they don their best clothes, contrary to the practice of other nations. Another foreigner, Jacob Rathgeb, 1592, says the English go dressed in exceeding fine clothes, and some will even wear velvet in the street, when they have not at home perhaps a piece of dry bread. "The lords and pages of the royal court have a stately, noble air, but dress more after the French fashion, only they wear short cloaks and sometimes Spanish caps."

Harrison's arraignment of the English fashions of his day may be considered as almost commendative beside the diatribes of the old Puritan Philip Stubbes, in "The Anatomie of Abuses," 1583. The English language is strained for words hot and rude enough to express his indignation, contempt, and fearful expectation of speedy judgments. The men escape his hands with scarcely less damage than the women. First he wreaks his indignation upon the divers kinds of hats, stuck full of feathers, of various colors, "ensigns of vanity," "fluttering sails and feathered flags of defiance to virtue"; then upon the monstrous ruffs that stand out a quarter of a yard from the neck. "As the devil, in the fullness of his malice, first invented these ruffs, so has he found out two stays to bear up this his great kingdom of ruffs—one is a kind of liquid matter they call starch; the other is a device made of wires, for an under-propper. Then there are shirts of cambric, holland, and lawn, wrought with fine needlework of silk and curiously stitched, costing sometimes as much as five pounds. Worse still are the monstrous doublets, reaching down to the middle of the thighs, so hard quilted, stuffed, bombasted, and sewed that the wearer can hardly stoop down in them. Below these are the gally-hose of silk, velvet, satin, and damask, reaching below the knees. So costly are these that now it is a small matter to bestow twenty nobles, ten pound, twenty pound, fortie pound, yea a hundred pound of one pair of Breeches. (God be merciful unto us!)" To these gay hose they add nether-socks, curiously knit with open seams down the leg, with quirks and clocks about the ankles, and sometimes interlaced with gold and silver thread as is wonderful to behold. Time has been when a man could clothe his whole body for the price of these nether-socks. Satan was further let loose in the land by reason of cork shoes and fine slippers, of all colors, carved, cut, and stitched with silk, and laced on with gold and silver, which went flipping and flapping up and down in the dirt. The jerkins and cloaks are of all colors and fashions; some short, reaching to the knee; others dragging on the ground; red, white, black, violet, yellow, guarded, laced, and faced; hanged with points and tassels of gold, silver, and silk. The hilts of daggers, rapiers, and swords are gilt thrice over, and have scabbards of velvet. And all this while the poor lie in London streets upon pallets of straw, or else in the mire and dirt, and die like dogs!"

Stubbes was a stout old Puritan, bent upon hewing his way to heaven through all the allurements of this world, and suspecting a devil in every fair show. I fear that he looked upon woman as only a vain and trifling image, a delusive toy, away from whom a man must set his face. Shakespeare, who was country-bred when he came up to London, and lived probably on the roystering South Side, near the theatres and bear-gardens, seems to have been impressed with the painted faces of the women. It is probable that only town-bred women painted. Stubbes declares that the women of England color their faces with oils, liquors, unguents, and waters made to that end, thinking to make themselves fairer than God made them—a presumptuous audacity to make God untrue in his word; and he heaps vehement curses upon the immodest practice. To this follows the trimming and tricking of their heads, the laying out their hair to show, which is curled, crisped, and laid out on wreaths and borders from ear to ear. Lest it should fall down it is under-propped with forks, wires, and what not. On the edges of their bolstered hair (for it standeth crested round about their frontiers, and hanging over their faces like pendices with glass windows on every side) is laid great wreaths of gold and silver curiously wrought. But this is not the worst nor the tenth part, for no pen is able to describe the wickedness. "The women use great ruffs and neckerchers of holland, lawn, camerick, and such cloth, as the greatest thread shall not be so big as the least hair that is: then, lest they should fall down, they are smeared and starched in the Devil's liquor, I mean Starch; after that dried with great diligence, streaked, patted and rubbed very nicely, and so applied to their goodly necks, and, withall, under-propped with supportasses, the stately arches of pride; beyond all this they have a further fetch, nothing inferior to the rest; as, namely, three or four degrees of minor ruffs, placed gradatim, step by step, one beneath another, and all under the Master devil ruff. The skirts, then, of these great ruffs are long and side every way, pleted and crested full curiously, God wot."

Time will not serve us to follow old Stubbes into his particular inquisition of every article of woman's attire, and his hearty damnation of them all and several. He cannot even abide their carrying of nosegays and posies of flowers to smell at, since the palpable odors and fumes of these do enter the brain to degenerate the spirit and allure to vice. They must needs carry looking-glasses with them; "and good reason," says Stubbes, savagely, "for else how could they see the devil in them? for no doubt they are the devil's spectacles [these women] to allure us to pride and consequently to destruction forever." And, as if it were not enough to be women, and the devil's aids, they do also have doublets and jerkins, buttoned up the breast, and made with wings, welts, and pinions on the shoulder points, as man's apparel is, for all the world. We take reluctant leave of this entertaining woman-hater, and only stay to quote from him a "fearful judgment of God, shewed upon a gentlewoman of Antwerp of late, even the 27th of May, 1582," which may be as profitable to read now as it was then: "This gentlewoman being a very rich Merchant man's daughter: upon a time was invited to a bridal, or wedding, which was solemnized in that Toune, against which day she made great preparation, for the pluming herself in gorgeous array, that as her body was most beautiful, fair, and proper, so her attire in every respect might be correspondent to the same. For the accomplishment whereof she curled her hair, she dyed her locks, and laid them out after the best manner, she colored her face with waters and Ointments: But in no case could she get any (so curious and dainty she was) that could starch, and set her Ruffs and Neckerchers to her mind wherefore she sent for a couple of Laundresses, who did the best they could to please her humors, but in any wise they could not. Then fell she to swear and tear, to curse and damn, casting the Ruffs under feet, and wishing that the Devil might take her when she wear any of those Neckerchers again. In the meantime (through the sufference of God) the Devil transforming himself into the form of a young man, as brave and proper as she in every point of outward appearance, came in, feigning himself to be a wooer or suitor unto her. And seeing her thus agonized, and in such a pelting chase, he demanded of her the cause thereof, who straightway told him (as women can conceal nothing that lieth upon their stomachs) how she was abused in the setting of her Ruffs, which thing being heard of him, he promised to please her mind, and thereto took in hand the setting of her Ruffs, which he performed to her great contentation and liking, in so much as she looking herself in a glass (as the Devil bade her) became greatly enamoured of him. This done, the young man kissed her, in the doing whereof she writhe her neck in, sunder, so she died miserably, her body being metamorphosed into black and blue colors, most ugglesome to behold, and her face (which before was so amorous) became most deformed, and fearful to look upon. This being known, preparence was made for her burial, a rich coffin was provided, and her fearful body was laid therein, and it covered very sumptuously. Four men immediately assayed to lift up the corpse, but could not move it; then six attempted the like, but could not once stir it from the place where it stood. Whereat the standers-by marveling, caused the coffin to be opened to see the cause thereof. Where they found the body to be taken away, and a black Cat very lean and deformed sitting in the coffin, setting of great Ruffs, and frizzling of hair, to the great fear and wonder of all beholders."

Better than this pride which forerunneth destruction, in the opinion of Stubbes, is the habit of the Brazilian women, who "esteem so little of apparel" that they rather choose to go naked than be thought to be proud.

As I read the times of Elizabeth, there was then greater prosperity and enjoyment of life among the common people than fifty or a hundred years later. Into the question of the prices of labor and of food, which Mr. Froude considers so fully in the first chapter of his history, I shall not enter any further than to remark that the hardness of the laborer's lot, who got, mayhap, only twopence a day, is mitigated by the fact that for a penny he could buy a pound of meat which now costs a shilling. In two respects England has greatly changed for the traveler, from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century—in its inns and its roads.

In the beginning of Elizabeth's reign travelers had no choice but to ride on horseback or to walk. Goods were transported on strings of pack-horses. When Elizabeth rode into the city from her residence at Greenwich, she placed herself behind her lord chancellor, on a pillion. The first improvement made was in the construction of a rude wagon a cart without springs, the body resting solidly on the axles. In such a vehicle Elizabeth rode to the opening of her fifth Parliament. In 1583, on a certain day, Sir Harry Sydney entered Shrewsbury in his wagon, "with his trompeter blowynge, verey joyfull to behold and see." Even such conveyances fared hard on the execrable roads of the period. Down to the end of the seventeenth century most of the country roads were merely broad ditches, water-worn and strewn with loose stones. In 1640 Queen Henrietta was four weary days dragging over the road from Dover to London, the best in England. Not till the close of the sixteenth century was the wagon used, and then rarely. Fifty years later stage-wagons ran, with some regularity, between London and

Liverpool; and before the close of the seventeenth century the stagecoach, a wonderful invention, which had been used in and about London since 1650, was placed on three principal roads of the kingdom. It averaged two to three miles an hour. In the reign of Charles II. a Frenchman who landed at Dover was drawn up to London in a wagon with six horses in a line, one after the other. Our Venetian, Busino, who went to Oxford in the coach with the ambassador in 1617, was six days in going one hundred and fifty miles, as the coach often stuck in the mud, and once broke down. So bad were the main thoroughfares, even, that markets were sometimes inaccessible for months together, and the fruits of the earth rotted in one place, while there was scarcity not many miles distant.

But this difficulty of travel and liability to be detained long on the road were cheered by good inns, such as did not exist in the world elsewhere. All the literature of the period reflects lovingly the homelike delights of these comfortable houses of entertainment. Every little village boasted an excellent inn, and in the towns on the great thoroughfares were sumptuous houses that would accommodate from two to three hundred guests with their horses. The landlords were not tyrants, as on the Continent, but servants of their guests; and it was, says Harrison, a world to see how they did contend for the entertainment of their guests—as about fineness and change of linen, furniture of bedding, beauty of rooms, service at the table, costliness of plate, strength of drink, variety of wines, or well-using of horses. The gorgeous signs at their doors sometimes cost forty pounds. The inns were cheap too, and the landlord let no one depart dissatisfied with his bill. The worst inns were in London, and the tradition has been handed down. But the ostlers, Harrison confesses, did sometimes cheat in the feed, and they with the tapsters and chamberlains were in league (and the landlord was not always above suspicion) with highwaymen outside, to ascertain if the traveler carried any valuables; so that when he left the hospitable inn he was quite likely to be stopped on the highway and relieved of his money. The highwayman was a conspicuous character. One of the most romantic of these gentry at one time was a woman named Mary Frith, born in 1585, and known as Moll CutPurse. She dressed in male attire, was an adroit fencer, a bold rider, and a staunch royalist; she once took two hundred gold jacobuses from the Parliamentary General Fairfax on Hounslow Heath. She is the chief character in Middleton's play of the "Roaring Girl"; and after a varied life as a thief, cutpurse, pickpocket, highwayman, trainer of animals, and keeper of a thieves' fence, she died in peace at the age of seventy. To return to the inns, Fyner Morrison, a traveler in 1617, sustains all that Harrison says of the inns as the best and cheapest in the world, where the guest shall have his own pleasure.

No sooner does he arrive than the servants run to him—one takes his horse, another shows him his chamber and lights his fire, a third pulls off his boots. Then come the host and hostess to inquire what meat he will choose, and he may have their company if he like. He shall be offered music while he eats, and if he be solitary the musicians will give him good-day with music in the morning. In short, "a man cannot more freely command at home, in his own house, than he may do in his inn."

The amusements of the age were often rough, but certainly more moral than they were later; and although the theatres were denounced by such reformers as Stubbes as seminaries of vice, and disapproved by Harrison; they were better than after the Restoration, when the plays of Shakespeare were out of fashion. The Londoners went for amusement to the Bankside, or South Side of the Thames, where were the famous Paris Gardens, much used as a rendezvous by gallants; and there were the places for bear and bull baiting; and there were the theatres—the Paris Gardens, the Swan, the Rose, the Hope, and the Globe. The pleasure-seekers went over usually in boats, of which there were said to be four thousand plying between banks; for there was only one bridge, and that was crowded with houses. All distinguished visitors were taken over to see the gardens and the bears baited by dogs; the queen herself went, and perhaps on Sunday, for Sunday was the great day, and Elizabeth is said to have encouraged Sunday sports, she had been (we read) so much hunted on account of religion! These sports are too brutal to think of; but there are amusing accounts of lion-baiting both by bears and dogs, in which the beast who figures so nobly on the escutcheon nearly always proved himself an arrant coward, and escaped away as soon as he could into his den, with his tail between his legs. The spectators were once much disgusted when a lion and lioness, with the dog that pursued them, all ran into the den, and, like good friends, stood very peaceably together looking out at the people.

The famous Globe Theatre, which was built in 1599, was burned in 1613, and in the fire it is supposed were consumed Shakespeare's manuscripts of his plays. It was of wood (for use in summer only), octagon shaped, with a thatched roof, open in the centre. The daily performance here, as in all theatres, was at three o'clock in the afternoon, and boys outside held the horses of the gentlemen who went in to the play. When theatres were restrained, in 1600, only two were allowed, the Globe and the Fortune, which was on the north side, on Golden

Lane. The Fortune was fifty feet square within, and three stories high, with galleries, built of wood on a brick foundation, and with a roof of tiles. The stage was forty-three feet wide, and projected into the middle of the yard (as the pit was called), where the groundlings stood. To one of the galleries admission was only twopence. The young gallants used to go into the yards and spy about the galleries and boxes for their acquaintances. In these theatres there was a drop-curtain, but little or no scenery. Spectators had boxes looking on the stage behind the curtain, and they often sat upon the stage with the actors; sometimes the actors all remained upon the stage during the whole play. There seems to have been great familiarity between the audience and the actors. Fruits in season, apples, pears, and nuts, with wine and beer, were carried about to be sold, and pipes were smoked. There was neither any prudery in the plays or the players, and the audiences in behavior were no better than the plays.

The actors were all men. The female parts were taken usually by boys, but frequently by grown men, and when Juliet or Desdemona was announced, a giant would stride upon the stage. There is a story that Kynaston, a handsome fellow, famous in female characters, and petted by ladies of rank, once kept Charles I. waiting while he was being shaved before appearing as Evadne in "The Maid's Tragedy." The innovation of women on the stage was first introduced by a French company in 1629, but the audiences would not tolerate it, and hissed and pelted the actresses off the stage. But thirty years later women took the place they have ever since held; when the populace had once experienced the charm of a female Juliet and Ophelia, they would have no other, and the rage for actresses ran to such excess at one time that it was a fashion for women to take the male parts as well. But that was in the abandoned days of Charles II. Pepys could not control his delight at the appearance of Nell Gwynne, especially "when she comes like a young gallant, and hath the motions and carriage of a spark the most that ever I saw any man have. It makes me, I confess, admire her." The acting of Shakespeare himself is only a faint tradition. He played the ghost in "Hamlet," and Adam in "As You Like It." William Oldys says (Oldys was an antiquarian who was pottering about in the first part of the eighteenth century, picking up gossip in coffee-houses, and making memoranda on scraps of paper in book-shops) Shakespeare's brother Charles, who lived past the middle of the seventeenth century, was much inquired of by actors about the circumstances of Shakespeare's playing. But Charles was so old and weak in mind that he could recall nothing except the faint impression that he had once seen "Will" act a part in one of his own comedies, wherein, being to personate a decrepit old man, he wore a long beard, and appeared so weak and drooping and unable to walk that he was forced to be supported and carried by another person to a table, at which he was seated among some company who were eating, and one of them sang a song. And that was Shakespeare!

The whole Bankside, with its taverns, playhouses, and worse, its bear pits and gardens, was the scene of roystering and coarse amusement. And it is surprising that plays of such sustained moral greatness as Shakespeare's should have been welcome.

The more private amusements of the great may well be illustrated by an account given by Busino of a masque (it was Ben Jonson's "Pleasure Reconciled to Virtue") performed at Whitehall on Twelfthnight, 1617. During the play, twelve cavaliers in masks, the central figure of whom was Prince Charles, chose partners, and danced every kind of dance, until they got tired and began to flag; whereupon King James, "who is naturally choleric, got impatient, and shouted aloud, 'Why don't they dance? What did you make me come here for? Devil take you all, dance!' On hearing this, the Marquis of Buckingham, his majesty's most favored minion, immediately sprang forward, cutting a score of lofty and very minute capers, with so much grace and agility that he not only appeased the ire of his angry sovereign, but moreover rendered himself the admiration and delight of everybody. The other masquers, being thus encouraged, continued successively exhibiting their powers with various ladies, finishing in like manner with capers, and by lifting their goddesses from the ground . . . . The prince, however, excelled them all in bowing, being very exact in making his obeisance both to the king and his partner; nor did we ever see him make one single step out of time—a compliment which can scarcely be paid to his companions. Owing to his youth, he has not much wind as yet, but he nevertheless cut a few capers very gracefully." The prince then went and kissed the hand of his serene parent, who embraced and kissed him tenderly. When such capers were cut at Whitehall, we may imagine what the revelry was in the Bankside taverns.

The punishments of the age were not more tender than the amusements were refined. Busino saw a lad of fifteen led to execution for stealing a bag of currants. At the end of every month, besides special executions, as many as twenty-five people at a time rode through London streets in Tyburn carts, singing ribald songs, and carrying sprigs of rosemary in their hands. Everywhere in the streets the machines of justice were visible-pillories for the neck and hands, stocks for the feet, and chains to stretch across, in case of need, and stop a mob. In the suburbs were oak cages for nocturnal offenders. At the church doors might now and then be seen women enveloped in sheets, doing penance for their evil deeds. A bridle, something like a bit for a restive horse, was in use for the curbing of scolds; but this was a later invention than the cucking-stool, or ducking-stool. There is an old print of one of these machines standing on the Thames' bank: on a wheeled platform is an upright post with a swinging beam across the top, on one end of which the chair is suspended over the river, while the other is worked up and down by a rope; in it is seated a light sister of the Bankside, being dipped into the unsavory flood. But this was not so hated by the women as a similar discipline—being dragged in the river by a rope after a boat.

Hanging was the common punishment for felony, but traitors and many other offenders were drawn, hanged, boweled, and quartered; nobles who were traitors usually escaped with having their heads chopped off only. Torture was not practiced; for, says Harrison, our people despise death, yet abhor to be tormented, being of frank and open minds. And "this is one cause why our condemned persons do go so cheerfully to their deaths, for our nation is free, stout, hearty, and prodigal of life and blood, and cannot in any wise digest to be used as villains and slaves." Felony covered a wide range of petty crimes—breach of prison, hunting by night with painted or masked faces, stealing above forty shillings, stealing hawks' eggs, conjuring, prophesying upon arms and badges, stealing deer by night, cutting purses, counterfeiting coin, *etc.* Death was the penalty for all these offenses. For poisoning her husband a woman was burned alive; a man poisoning another was boiled to death in water or oil; heretics were burned alive; some murderers were hanged in chains; perjurers were branded on the forehead with the letter P; rogues were burned through the ears; suicides were buried in a field with a stake driven through their bodies; witches were burned or hanged; in Halifax thieves were beheaded by a machine almost exactly like the modern guillotine; scolds were ducked; pirates were hanged on the seashore at low-water mark, and left till three tides overwashed them; those who let the sea-walls decay were staked out in the breach of the banks, and left there as parcel of the foundation of the new wall. Of rogues-that is, tramps and petty thieves-the gallows devoured three to four hundred annually, in one place or another; and Henry VIII. in his time did hang up as many as seventy-two thousand rogues. Any parish which let a thief escape was fined. Still the supply held out.

The legislation against vagabonds, tramps, and sturdy beggars, and their punishment by whipping, branding, etc., are too well known to need comment. But considerable provision was made for the unfortunate and deserving poor—poorhouses were built for them, and collections taken up. Only sixty years before Harrison wrote there were few beggars, but in his day he numbers them at ten thousand; and most of them were rogues, who counterfeited sores and wounds, and were mere thieves and caterpillars on the commonwealth. He names twenty-three different sorts of vagabonds known by cant names, such as "ruffers," "uprightmen," "priggers," "fraters," "palliards," "Abrams," "dummerers "; and of women, "demanders for glimmer or fire," "mortes," "walking mortes," "doxes," "kinching coves."

London was esteemed by its inhabitants and by many foreigners as the richest and most magnificent city in Christendom. The cities of London and Westminster lay along the north bank in what seemed an endless stretch; on the south side of the Thames the houses were more scattered. But the town was mostly of wood, and its rapid growth was a matter of anxiety. Both Elizabeth and James again and again attempted to restrict it by forbidding the erection of any new buildings within the town, or for a mile outside; and to this attempt was doubtless due the crowded rookeries in the city. They especially forbade the use of wood in house-fronts and windows, both on account of the danger from fire, and because all the timber in the kingdom, which was needed for shipping and other purposes, was being used up in building. They even ordered the pulling down of new houses in London, Westminster, and for three miles around. But all efforts to stop the growth of the city were vain.

London, according to the Venetian Busino, was extremely dirty. He did not admire the wooden architecture; the houses were damp and cold, the staircases spiral and inconvenient, the apartments "sorry and ill connected." The wretched windows, without shutters, he could neither open by day nor close by night. The streets were little better than gutters, and were never put in order except for some great parade. Hentzner, however, thought the streets handsome and clean. When it rained it must have been otherwise. There was no provision for conducting away the water; it poured off the roofs upon the people below, who had not as yet heard of the Oriental umbrella; and the countryman, staring at the sights of the town, knocked about by the carts, and run over by the horsemen, was often surprised by a douche from a conduit down his back. And, besides, people had a habit of throwing water and slops out of the windows, regardless of passers-by.

The shops were small, open in front, when the shutters were down, much like those in a Cairo bazaar, and all the goods were in sight. The shopkeepers stood in front and cried their wares, and besought customers. Until 1568 there were but few silk shops in London, and all those were kept by women. It was not till about that time that citizens' wives ceased to wear white knit woolen caps, and three-square Minever caps with peaks. In the beginning of Elizabeth's reign the apprentices (a conspicuous class) wore blue cloaks in winter and blue gowns in summer; unless men were threescore years old, it was not lawful to wear gowns lower than the calves of the legs, but the length of cloaks was not limited. The journeymen and apprentices wore long daggers in the daytime at their backs or sides. When the apprentices attended their masters and mistresses in the night they carried lanterns and candles, and a great long club on the neck. These apprentices were apt to lounge with their clubs about the fronts of shops, ready to take a hand in any excitement —to run down a witch, or raid an objectionable house, or tear down a tavern of evil repute, or spoil a playhouse. The high-streets, especially in winter-time, were annoyed by hourly frays of sword and buckler-men; but these were suddenly suppressed when the more deadly fight with rapier and dagger came in. The streets were entirely unlighted and dangerous at night, and for this reason the plays at the theatres were given at three in the afternoon.

About Shakespeare's time many new inventions and luxuries came in: masks, muffs, fans, periwigs, shoe-roses, love-handkerchiefs (tokens given by maids and gentlewomen to their favorites), heath-brooms for hair-brushes, scarfs, garters, waistcoats, flat-caps; also hops, turkeys, apricots, Venice glass, tobacco. In 1524, and for years after, was used this rhyme

"Turkeys, Carpes, Hops: Piccarel, and beers,
 Came into England: all in one year."

There were no coffee-houses as yet, for neither tea nor coffee was introduced till about 1661. Tobacco was first made known in England by Sir John Hawkins in 1565, though not commonly used by men and women till some years after. It was urged as a great medicine for many ills. Harrison says, 1573, "In these days the taking in of the smoke of the Indian herb called 'Tabaco,' by an instrument formed like a little ladle, whereby it passeth from the mouth into the head and stomach, is greatly taken up and used in England, against Rewmes and some other diseases engendered in the lungs and inward parts, and not without effect." It's use spread rapidly, to the disgust of James I. and others, who doubted that it was good for cold, aches, humors, and rheums. In 1614 it was said that seven thousand houses lived by this trade, and that L 399,375 a year was spent in smoke. Tobacco was even taken on the stage. Every base groom must have his pipe; it was sold in all inns and alehouses, and the shops of apothecaries, grocers, and chandlers were almost never, from morning till night, without company still taking of tobacco.

There was a saying on the Continent that "England is a paradise for women, a prison for servants, and a hell or purgatory for horses." The society was very simple compared with the complex condition of ours, and yet it had more striking contrasts, and was a singular mixture of downrightness and artificiality; plainness and rudeness of speech went with the utmost artificiality of dress and manner. It is curious to note the insular, not to say provincial, character of the people even three centuries ago. When the Londoners saw a foreigner very well made or particularly handsome, they were accustomed to say, "It is a pity he is not an ENGLISHMAN." It is pleasant, I say, to trace this "certain condescension" in the good old times. Jacob Rathgeb (1592) says the English are magnificently dressed, and extremely proud and overbearing; the merchants, who seldom go unto other countries, scoff at foreigners, who are liable to be illused by street boys and apprentices, who collect in immense crowds and stop the way. Of course Cassandra Stubbes, whose mind was set upon a better country, has little good to say of his countrymen.

"As concerning the nature, propertie, and disposition of the people they be desirous of new fangles, praising things past, contemning things present, and coveting after things to come. Ambitious, proud, light, and unstable, ready to be carried away with every blast of wind." The French paid back with scorn the traditional hatred of the English for the French. Perlin (1558) finds the people "proud and seditious, with bad consciences and unfaithful to their word in war unfortunate, in peace unfaithful"; and there was a Spanish or Italian proverb: "England, good land, bad people." But even Perlin likes the appearance of the people: "The men are handsome, rosy, large, and dexterous, usually fair-skinned; the women are esteemed the most beautiful in the world, white as alabaster, and give place neither to Italian, Flemish, nor German; they are joyous, courteous, and hospitable (de bon recueil)." He thinks their manners, however, little civilized: for one thing, they have an unpleasant habit of eructation at the table (car iceux routent a la table sans honte & ignominie); which recalls Chaucer's description of the Trumpington miller's wife and daughter:

> "Men might her rowtyng hearen a forlong,
>   The wenche routeth eek par companye."

Another inference as to the table manners of the period is found in Coryat's "Crudities" (1611). He saw in Italy generally a curious custom of using a little fork for meat, and whoever should take the meat out of the dish with his fingers—would give offense. And he accounts for this peculiarity quite naturally: "The reason of this their curiosity is, because the Italian cannot by any means indure to have his dish touched with fingers, seeing all men's fingers are not alike cleane." Coryat found the use of the fork nowhere else in Christendom, and when he returned, and, oftentimes in England, imitated the Italian fashion, his exploit was regarded in a humorous light. Busino says that fruits were seldom served at dessert, but that the whole population were munching them in the streets all day long, and in the places of amusement; and it was an amusement to go out into the orchards and eat fruit on the spot, in a sort of competition of gormandize between the city belles and their admirers. And he avers that one young woman devoured twenty pounds of cherries, beating her opponent by two pounds and a half.

All foreigners were struck with the English love of music and drink, of banqueting and good cheer. Perlin notes a pleasant custom at table: during the feast you hear more than a hundred times, "Drink iou" (he loves to air his English), that is to say, "Je m'en vois boyre a toy." You respond, in their language, "Iplaigiu"; that is to say, "Je vous plege." If you thank them, they say in their language, "God tanque artelay"; that is, "Je vous remercie de bon coeur." And then, says the artless Frenchman, still improving on his English, you should respond thus: "Bigod, sol drink iou agoud oin." At the great and princely banquets, when the pledge went round and the heart's desire of lasting health, says the chronicler, "the same was straight wayes knowne, by sound of Drumme and Trumpet, and the cannon's loudest voyce." It was so in Hamlet's day:

> "And as he drains his draughts of Rhenish down,
>   The kettle-drum and trumpet thus bray out

The triumph of his pledge."

According to Hentzner (1598), the English are serious, like the Germans, and love show and to be followed by troops of servants wearing the arms of their masters; they excel in music and dancing, for they are lively and active, though thicker of make than the French; they cut their hair close in the middle of the head, letting it grow on either side; "they are good sailors, and better pyrates, cunning, treacherous, and thievish;" and, he adds, with a touch of satisfaction, "above three hundred are said to be hanged annually in London." They put a good deal of sugar in their drink; they are vastly fond of great noises, firing of cannon, beating of drums, and ringing of bells, and when they have a glass in their heads they go up into some belfry, and ring the bells for hours together, for the sake of exercise. Perlin's comment is that men are hung for a trifle in England, and that you will not find many lords whose parents have not had their heads chopped off.

It is a pleasure to turn to the simple and hearty admiration excited in the breasts of all susceptible foreigners by the English women of the time. Van Meteren, as we said, calls the women beautiful, fair, well dressed, and modest. To be sure, the wives are, their lives only excepted, entirely in the power of their husbands, yet they have great liberty; go where they please; are shown the greatest honor at banquets, where they sit at the upper end of the table and are first served; are fond of dress and gossip and of taking it easy; and like to sit before their doors, decked out in fine clothes, in order to see and be seen by the passers-by. Rathgeb also agrees that the women have much more liberty than in any other place. When old Busino went to the Masque at Whitehall, his colleagues kept exclaiming, "Oh, do look at this one—oh, do see that! Whose wife is this?—and that pretty one near her, whose daughter is she?" There was some chaff mixed in, he allows, some shriveled skins and devotees of S. Carlo Borromeo, but the beauties greatly predominated.

In the great street pageants, it was the beauty and winsomeness of the London ladies, looking on, that nearly drove the foreigners wild. In 1606, upon the entry of the king of Denmark, the chronicler celebrates "the unimaginable number of gallant ladies, beauteous virgins, and other delicate dames, filling the windows of every house with kind aspect." And in 1638, when Cheapside was all alive with the pageant of the entry of the queen mother, "this miserable old queen," as

Lilly calls Marie de' Medicis (Mr. Furnivall reproduces an old cut of the scene), M. de la Serre does not try to restrain his admiration for the pretty women on view: only the most fecund imagination can represent the content one has in admiring the infinite number of beautiful women, each different from the other, and each distinguished by some sweetness or grace to ravish the heart and take captive one's liberty. No sooner has he determined to yield to one than a new object of admiration makes him repent the precipitation of his judgment.

And all the other foreigners were in the like case of "goneness." Kiechel, writing in 1585, says, "Item, the women there are charming, and by nature so mighty pretty as I have scarcely ever beheld, for they do not falsify, paint, or bedaub themselves as in Italy or other places;" yet he confesses (and here is another tradition preserved) "they are somewhat awkward in their style of dress." His second "item" of gratitude is a Netherland custom that pleased him—whenever a foreigner or an inhabitant went to a citizen's house on business, or as a guest, he was received by the master, the lady, or the daughter, and "welcomed" (as it is termed in their language); "he has a right to take them by the arm and to kiss them, which is the custom of the country; and if any one does not do so, it is regarded and imputed as ignorance and ill-breeding on his part." Even the grave Erasmus, when he visited England, fell easily into this pretty practice, and wrote with untheological fervor of the "girls with angel faces," who were "so kind and obliging." "Wherever you come," he says, "you are received with a kiss by all; when you take your leave you are dismissed with kisses; you return, kisses are repeated. They come to visit you, kisses again; they leave you, you kiss them all round. Should they meet you anywhere, kisses in abundance in fine, wherever you move there is nothing but kisses"—a custom, says this reformer, who has not the fear of Stubbes before his eyes, "never to be sufficiently commended."

We shall find no more convenient opportunity to end this part of the social study of the age of Shakespeare than with this naive picture of the sex which most adorned it. Some of the details appear trivial; but grave history which concerns itself only with the actions of conspicuous persons, with the manoeuvres of armies, the schemes of politics, the battles of theologies, fails signally to give us the real life of the people by which we judge the character of an age.

III

When we turn from France to England in, the latter part of the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth century, we are in another atmosphere; we encounter a literature that smacks of the soil, that is as varied, as racy, often as rude, as human life itself, and which cannot be adequately appreciated except by a study of the popular mind and the history of the time which produced it.

"Voltaire," says M. Guizot, "was the first person in France who spoke of Shakespeare's genius; and although he spoke of him merely as a barbarian genius, the French public were of the opinion that he had said too much in his favor. Indeed, they thought it nothing less than profanation to apply the words genius and glory to dramas which they considered as crude as they were coarse."

Guizot was one of the first of his nation to approach Shakespeare in the right spirit—that is, in the spirit in which he could hope for any enlightenment; and in his admirable essay on "Shakespeare and His Times," he pointed out the exact way in which any piece or period of literature should be studied, that is worth studying at all. He inquired into English civilization, into the habits, manners, and modes of thought of the people for whom Shakespeare wrote. This method, this inquiry into popular sources, has been carried much further since Guizot wrote, and it is now considered the most remunerative method, whether the object of study is literature or politics. By it not only is the literature of a period for the first time understood, but it is given its just place as an exponent of human life and a monument of human action.

The student who takes up Shakespeare's plays for the purpose of either amusement or cultivation, I would recommend to throw aside the whole load of commentary, and speculation, and disquisition, and devote himself to trying to find out first what was the London and the England of Shakespeare's day, what were the usages of all classes of society, what were the manners and the character of the people who crowded to hear his plays, or who denounced them as the works of the devil and the allies of sin. I say again to the student that by this means Shakespeare will become a new thing to him, his mind will be enlarged to the purpose and scope of the great dramatist, and more illumination will be cast upon the plays than is received from the whole race of inquisitors into his phrases and critics of his genius. In the light of contemporary life, its visions of empire, its spirit of adventure, its piracy, exploration, and warlike turmoil, its credulity and superstitious wonder at natural phenomena, its implicit belief in the supernatural, its faith, its virility of daring, coarseness of speech, bluntness of manner, luxury of apparel, and ostentation of wealth, the mobility of its shifting society, these dramas glow with a new meaning, and awaken a profounder admiration of the poet's knowledge of human life.

The experiences of the poet began with the rude and rural life of England, and when he passed into the presence of the court and into the bustle of great London in an age of amazing agitation, he felt still in his veins the throb of the popular blood. There were classic affectations in England, there were masks and mummeries and classic puerilities at court and in noble houses—Elizabeth's court would well have liked to be classical, remarks Guizot—but Shakespeare was not fettered by classic conventionalities, nor did he obey the unities, nor attempt to separate on the stage the tragedy and comedy of life—"immense and living stage," says the writer I like to quote because he is French, upon which all things are represented, as it were, in their solid form, and in the place which they occupied in a stormy and complicated civilization. In these dramas the comic element is introduced whenever its character of reality gives it the right of admission and the advantage of opportune appearance. Falstaff appears in the train of Henry V., and Doll Tear-Sheet in the train of Falstaff; the people surround the kings, and the soldiers crowd around their generals; all conditions of society, all the phases of human destiny appear by turns in juxtaposition, with the nature which properly belongs to them, and in the position which they naturally occupy. . . .

"Thus we find the entire world, the whole of human realities, reproduced by Shakespeare in tragedy, which, in his eyes, was the universal theatre of life and truth."

It is possible to make a brutal picture of the England of Shakespeare's day by telling nothing that is not true, and by leaving out much that is true. M. Taine, who has a theory to sustain, does it by a graphic catalogue of details and traits that cannot be denied; only there is a great deal in English society that he does not include, perhaps does not apprehend. Nature, he thinks, was never so completely acted out. These robust men give rein to all their passions, delight in the strength of their limbs like Carmen, indulge in coarse language, undisguised sensuality, enjoy gross jests, brutal buffooneries. Humanity is as much lacking as decency. Blood, suffering, does not move them. The court frequents bull and bear baitings; Elizabeth beats her maids, spits upon a courtier's fringed coat, boxes Essex's ears; great ladies beat their children and their servants. "The sixteenth century," he says, "is like a den of lions. Amid passions so strong as these there is not one lacking. Nature appears here in all its violence, but also in all its fullness. If nothing has been softened, nothing has been mutilated. It is the entire man who is displayed, heart, mind, body, senses, with his noblest and finest aspirations, as with his most bestial and savage appetites, without the preponderance of any dominant passion to cast him altogether in one direction, to exalt or degrade him. He has not become rigid as he will under Puritanism. He is not uncrowned as in the Restoration." He has entered like a young man into all the lusty experiences of life, every allurement is known, the sweetness and novelty of things are strong with him. He plunges into all sensations. "Such were the men of this time, Raleigh, Essex, Elizabeth, Henry VIII himself, excessive and inconstant, ready for devotion and for crime, violent in good and evil, heroic with strange weaknesses, humble with sudden changes of mood, never vile with premeditation like the roisterers of the Restoration, never rigid on principle like the Puritans of the Revolution, capable of weeping like children, and of dying like men, often base courtiers, more than once true knights, displaying constantly, amidst all these contradictions of bearing, only the overflowing of nature. Thus prepared, they could take in everything, sanguinary ferocity and refined generosity, the brutality of shameless debauchery, and the most divine innocence of love, accept all the characters, wantons and virgins, princes and mountebanks, pass quickly from trivial buffoonery to lyrical sublimities, listen alternately to the quibbles of clowns and the songs of lovers. The drama even, in order to satisfy the prolixity of their nature, must take all tongues, pompous, inflated verse, loaded with imagery, and side by side with this vulgar prose; more than this, it must distort its natural style and limits, put songs, poetical devices in the discourse of courtiers and the speeches of statesmen; bring on the stage the fairy world of opera, as Middleton says, gnomes, nymphs of the land and sea, with their groves and meadows; compel the gods to descend upon the stage, and hell itself to furnish its world of marvels. No other theatre is so complicated, for nowhere else do we find men so complete."

M. Taine heightens this picture in generalizations splashed with innumerable blood-red details of English life and character. The English is the most warlike race in Europe, most redoubtable in battle, most impatient of slavery. "English savages" is what Cellini calls them; and the great shins of beef with which they fill themselves nourish the force and ferocity of their instincts. To harden them thoroughly, institutions work in the same groove as nature. The nation is armed. Every man is a soldier, bound to have arms according to his condition, to exercise himself on Sundays and holidays. The State resembles an army; punishments must inspire terror; the idea of war is ever present. Such instincts, such a history, raises before them with tragic severity the idea of life; death is at hand, wounds, blood, tortures. The fine purple cloaks, the holiday garments, elsewhere signs of gayety of mind, are stained with blood and bordered with black. Throughout a stern discipline, the axe ready for every suspicion of treason; "great men, bishops, a chancellor, princes, the king's relations, queens, a protector kneeling in the straw, sprinkled the Tower with their blood; one after the other they marched past, stretched out their necks; the Duke of Buckingham, Queen Anne Boleyn, Queen Catherine Howard, the Earl of Surrey, Admiral Seymour, the Duke of Somerset, Lady Jane Grey and her husband, the Duke of Northumberland, the Earl of Essex, all on the throne, or on the steps of the throne, in the highest ranks of honor, beauty, youth, genius; of the bright procession nothing is left but senseless trunks, marred by the tender mercies of the executioner."

The gibbet stands by the highways, heads of traitors and criminals grin on the city gates. Mournful legends multiply, church-yard ghosts, walking spirits. In the evening, before bedtime, in the vast country houses, in the poor cottages, people talk of the coach which is seen drawn by headless horses, with headless postilions and coachmen. All this, with unbounded luxury, unbridled debauchery, gloom, and revelry hand in hand. "A threatening and sombre fog veils their mind like their sky, and joy, like the sun, pierces through it and upon them strongly and at intervals." All this riot of passion and frenzy of vigorous life, this madness and sorrow, in which life is a phantom and destiny drives so remorselessly, Taine finds on the stage and in the literature of the period.

To do him justice, he finds something else, something that might give him a hint of the innate soundness of English life in its thousands of sweet homes, something of that great force of moral stability, in the midst of all violence and excess of passion and performance, which makes a nation noble. "Opposed to this band of tragic figures," which M. Taine arrays from the dramas, "with their contorted features, brazen fronts, combative attitudes, is a troop (he says) of timid figures, tender before everything, the most graceful and love-worthy whom it has been given to man to depict. In Shakespeare you will meet them in Miranda, Juliet, Desdemona, Virginia, Ophelia, Cordelia, Imogen; but they abound also in the others; and it is a characteristic of the race to have furnished them, as it is of the drama to have represented them. By a singular coincidence the women are more of women, the men more of men, here than elsewhere. The two natures go to its extreme—in the one to boldness, the spirit of enterprise and resistance, the warlike, imperious, and unpolished character; in the other to sweetness, devotion, patience, inextinguishable affection (hence the happiness and strength of the marriage tie), a thing unknown in distant lands, and in France especially a woman here gives herself without drawing back, and places her glory and duty in obedience, forgiveness, adoration, wishing, and pretending only to be melted and absorbed daily deeper and deeper in him whom she has freely and forever chosen." This is an old German instinct. The soul in this race is at once primitive and serious. Women are disposed to follow the noble dream called duty. "Thus, supported by innocence and conscience, they introduce into love a profound and upright sentiment, abjure coquetry, vanity, and flirtation; they do not lie, they are not affected. When they love they are not tasting a forbidden fruit, but are binding themselves for their whole life. Thus understood, love becomes almost a holy thing; the spectator no longer wishes to be malicious or to jest; women do not think of their own happiness, but of that of the loved ones; they aim not at pleasure, but at devotion."

Thus far M. Taine's brilliant antitheses—the most fascinating and most dangerous model for a young writer. But we are indebted to him for a most suggestive study of the period. His astonishment, the astonishment of the Gallic mind, at what he finds, is a measure of the difference in the literature of the two races as an expression of their life. It was natural that he should somewhat exaggerate what he regards as the source of this expression, leaving out of view, as he does, certain great forces and currents which an outside observer cannot feel as the race itself feels. We look, indeed, for the local color of this English literature in the manners and habits of the times, traits of which Taine has so skillfully made a mosaic from Harrison, Stubbes, Stowe, Holinshed, and the pages of Reed and Drake; but we look for that which made it something more than a mirror of contemporary manners, vices, and virtues, made it representative of universal men, to other causes and forces-such as the Reformation, the immense stir, energy, and ambition of the age (the result of invention and discovery), newly awakened to the sense that there was a world to be won and made tributary; that England, and, above all places on the globe at that moment, London, was the centre of a display of energy and adventure such as has been scarcely paralleled in history. And underneath it all was the play of an uneasy, protesting democracy, eager to express itself in adventure, by changing its condition, in the joy of living and overcoming, and in literature, with small regard for tradition or the unities.

When Shakespeare came up to London with his first poems in his pocket, the town was so great and full of marvels, and luxury, and entertainment, as to excite the astonishment of continental visitors. It swarmed with soldiers, adventurers, sailors who were familiar with all seas and every port, men with projects, men with marvelous tales. It teemed with schemes of colonization, plans of amassing wealth by trade, by commerce, by planting, mining, fishing, and by the quick eye and the strong hand. Swaggering in the coffee-houses and ruffling it in the streets were the men who had sailed with Frobisher and Drake and Sir Humphrey Gilbert, Hawkins, and Sir Richard Granville; had perhaps witnessed the heroic death of Sir Philip Sidney, at Zutphen; had served with Raleigh in Anjou, Picardy, Languedoc, in the Netherlands, in the Irish civil war; had taken part in the dispersion of the Spanish Armada, and in the bombardment of Cadiz; had filled their cups to the union of Scotland with England; had suffered shipwreck on the Barbary Coast, or had, by the fortune of war, felt the grip of the Spanish Inquisition; who could tell tales of the marvels seen in new-found America and the Indies, and, perhaps, like Captain John Smith, could mingle stories of the naive simplicity of the natives beyond the Atlantic, with charming narratives of the wars in Hungary, the beauties of the seraglio of the Grand Turk, and the barbaric pomp of the Khan of Tartary. There were those in the streets who would see Raleigh go to the block on the scaffold in Old Palace Yard, who would fight against King Charles on the fields of Newbury or Naseby, Kineton or Marston Moor, and perchance see the exit of Charles himself from another scaffold erected over against the Banqueting House.

Although London at the accession of James I.(1603) had only about one hundred and fifty thousand inhabitants—the population of England then numbering about five million—it was so full of life and activity that Frederick, Duke of Wurtemberg, who saw it a few years before, in 1592, was impressed with it as a large, excellent, and mighty city of business, crowded with people buying and selling merchandise, and trading in almost every corner of the world, a very populous city, so that one can scarcely pass along the streets on account of the throng; the inhabitants, he says, are magnificently appareled, extremely proud and overbearing, who scoff and laugh at foreigners, and no one dare oppose them lest the street boys and apprentices collect together in immense crowds and strike to right and left unmercifully without regard to persons.

There prevailed an insatiable curiosity for seeing strange sights and hearing strange adventures, with an eager desire for visiting foreign countries, which Shakespeare and all the play-writers satirize. Conversation turned upon the wonderful discoveries of travelers, whose voyages to the New World occupied much of the public attention. The exaggeration which from love of importance inflated the narratives, the poets also take note of. There was also a universal taste for hazard in money as well as in travel, for putting it out on risks at exorbitant interest, and the habit of gaming reached prodigious excess. The passion for sudden wealth was fired by the success of the sea-rovers, news of which inflamed the imagination. Samuel Kiechel, a merchant of Ulm, who was in London in 1585, records that, "news arrived of a Spanish ship captured by Drake, in which it was said there were two millions of uncoined gold and silver in ingots, fifty thousand crowns in coined reals, seven thousand hides, four chests of pearls, each containing two bushels, and some sacks of cochineal—the whole valued at twenty-five barrels of gold; it was said to be one year and a half's tribute from Peru."

The passion for travel was at such a height that those who were unable to accomplish distant journeys, but had only crossed over into France and Italy, gave themselves great airs on their return. "Farewell, monsieur traveler," says Shakespeare; "look, you lisp, and wear strange suits; disable all the benefits of your own country; be out of love with your nativity, and almost chide God for making you that countenance you are, or I will scarce think you have swam in a gondola." The Londoners dearly loved gossip, and indulged in exaggeration of speech and high-flown compliment. One gallant says to another: "O, signior, the star that governs my life is contentment; give me leave to interre myself in your arms."—"Not so, sir, it is too unworthy an enclosure to contain such preciousness!"

Dancing was the daily occupation rather than the amusement at court and elsewhere, and the names of dances exceeded the list of the virtues—such as the French brawl, the pavon, the measure, the canary, and many under the general titles of corantees, jigs, galliards, and fancies. At the dinner and ball given by James I. to Juan Fernandez de Velasco, Constable of Castile, in 1604, fifty ladies of honor, very elegantly dressed and extremely beautiful, danced with the noblemen and gentlemen. Prince Henry danced a galliard with a lady, "with much sprightliness and modesty, cutting several capers in the course of the dance"; the Earl of Southampton led out the queen, and with three other couples danced a brando, and so on, the Spanish visitors looking on. When Elizabeth was old and had a wrinkled face and black teeth, she was one day discovered practicing the dance step alone, to the sound of a fiddle, determined to keep up to the last the limberness and agility necessary to impress foreign ambassadors with her grace and youth. There was one custom, however, that may have made dancing a labor of love: it was considered ill manners for the gentleman not to kiss his partner. Indeed, in all households and in all ranks of society the guest was expected to salute thus all the ladies a custom which the grave Erasmus, who was in England in the reign of Henry VIII., found not disagreeable.

Magnificence of display went hand in hand with a taste for cruel and barbarous amusements. At this same dinner to the Constable of Castile, the two buffets of the king and queen in the audience-chamber, where the banquet was held, were loaded with plate of exquisite workmanship, rich vessels of gold, agate, and other precious stones. The constable drank to the king the health of the queen from the lid of a cup of agate of extraordinary beauty and richness, set with diamonds and rubies, praying his majesty would condescend to drink the toast from the cup, which he did accordingly, and then the constable directed that the cup should remain in his majesty's buffet. The constable also drank to the queen the health of the king from a very beautiful dragon-shaped cup of crystal garnished with gold, drinking from the cover, and the queen, standing up, gave the pledge from the cup itself, and then the constable ordered that the cup should remain in the queen's buffet.

The banquet lasted three hours, when the cloth was removed, the table was placed upon the ground—that is, removed from the dais—and their majesties, standing upon it, washed their hands in basins, as did the others. After the dinner was the ball, and that ended, they took their places at the windows of a roam that looked out upon a square, where a platform was raised and a vast crowd was assembled to see the king's bears fight with greyhounds. This afforded great amusement. Presently a bull, tied to the end of a rope, was fiercely baited by dogs. After this tumblers danced upon a rope and performed feats of agility on horseback. The constable and his attendants were lighted home by half an hundred halberdiers with torches, and, after the fatigues of the day, supped in private. We are not surprised to read that on Monday, the 30th, the constable awoke with a slight attack of lumbago.

Like Elizabeth, all her subjects were fond of the savage pastime of bear and bull baiting. It cannot be denied that this people had a taste for blood, took delight in brutal encounters, and drew the sword and swung the cudgel with great promptitude; nor were they fastidious in the matter of public executions. Kiechel says that when the criminal was driven in the cart under the gallows, and left hanging by the neck as the cart moved from under him, his friends and acquaintances pulled at his legs in order that he might be strangled the sooner.

When Shakespeare was managing his theatres and writing his plays London was full of foreigners, settled in the city, who no doubt formed part of his audience, for they thought that English players had attained great perfection. In 1621 there were as many as ten thousand strangers in London, engaged in one hundred and twenty-one different trades. The poet need not go far from Blackfriars to pick up scraps of German and folk-lore, for the Hanse merchants were located in great numbers in the neighborhood of the steel-yard in Lower Thames Street.

Foreigners as well as contemporary chronicles and the printed diatribes against luxury bear witness to the profusion in all ranks of society and the variety and richness in apparel. There was a rage for the display of fine clothes. Elizabeth left hanging in her wardrobe above three thousand dresses when she was called to take that unseemly voyage down the stream, on which the clown's brogan jostles the queen's slipper. The plays of Shakespeare, Jonson, Beaumont and Fletcher, and of all the dramatists, are a perfect commentary on the fashions of the day, but a knowledge of the fashions is necessary to a perfect enjoyment of the plays. We see the fine lady in a gown of velvet (the foreigners thought it odd that velvet should be worn in the street), or cloth of gold and silver tissue, her hair eccentrically dressed, and perhaps dyed, a great hat with waving feathers, sometimes a painted face, maybe a mask or a muffler hiding all the features except the eyes, with a muff, silk stockings, high-heeled shoes, imitated from the "chopine" of Venice, perfumed bracelets, necklaces, and gloves—"gloves sweet as damask roses"—a pocket-handkerchief wrought in gold and silver, a small looking-glass pendant at the girdle, and a love-lock hanging wantonly over the shoulder, artificial flowers at the corsage, and a mincing step. "These fashionable women, when they are disappointed, dissolve into tears, weep with one eye, laugh with the other, or, like children, laugh and cry they can both together, and as much pity is to be taken of a woman weeping as of a goose going barefoot," says old Burton.

The men had even greater fondness for finery. Paul Hentzner, the Brandenburg jurist, in 1598, saw, at the Fair at St. Bartholomew, the lord mayor, attended by twelve gorgeous aldermen, walk in a neighboring field, dressed in a scarlet gown, and about his neck a golden chain, to which hung a Golden Fleece. Men wore the hair long and flowing, with high hats and plumes of feathers, and carried muffs like the women; gallants sported gloves on their hats as tokens of ladies' favors, jewels and roses in the ears, a long love-lock under the left ear, and gems in a ribbon round the neck. This tall hat was called a "capatain." Vincentio, in the "Taming of the Shrew," exclaims: "O fine villain! A silken doublet! A velvet hose! A scarlet cloak! And a capatain hat!" There was no limit to the caprice and extravagance. Hose and breeches of silk, velvet, or other rich stuff, and fringed garters wrought of gold or silver, worth five pounds apiece, are some of the items noted. Burton says, "'Tis ordinary for a gallant to put a thousand oaks and an hundred oxen into a suit of apparel, to wear a whole manor on his back." Even serving-men and tailors wore jewels in their shoes.

We should note also the magnificence in the furnishing of houses, the arras, tapestries, cloth of gold and silver, silk hangings of many colors, the splendid plate on the tables and sideboards. Even in the houses of the middle classes the furniture was rich and comfortable, and there was an air of amenity in the chambers and parlors strewn with sweet herbs and daily decked with pretty nosegays and fragrant flowers. Lights were placed on antique candelabra, or, wanting these at suppers, there were living candleholders. "Give me a torch," says Romeo; "I'll be a candleholder, and look on." Knowledge of the details of luxury of an English home of the sixteenth century will make exceedingly vivid hosts of allusions in Shakespeare.

Servants were numerous in great households, a large retinue being a mark of gentility, and hospitality was unbounded. During the lord mayor's term in London he kept open house, and every day any stranger or foreigner could dine at his table, if he could find an empty seat. Dinner, served at eleven in the early years of James, attained a degree of epicureanism rivaling dinners of the present day, although the guests ate with their fingers or their knives, forks not coming in till 1611. There was mighty eating and swigging at the banquets, and carousing was carried to an extravagant height, if we may judge by the account of an orgy at the king's palace in 1606, for the delectation of the King and Queen of Denmark, when the company and even their majesties abandoned discretion and sobriety, and "the ladies are seen to roll about in intoxication."

The manners of the male population of the period, says Nathan Drake, seem to have been compounded from the characters of the two sovereigns. Like

Elizabeth, they are brave, magnanimous, and prudent; and sometimes, like James, they are credulous, curious, and dissipated. The credulity and superstition of the age, and its belief in the supernatural, and the sumptuousness of masques and pageants at the court and in the city, of which we read so much in the old chronicles, are abundantly reflected in the pages of Jonson, Shakespeare, and other writers.

The town was full of public-houses and pleasure-gardens, but, curiously enough, the favorite place of public parading was the middle aisle of St. Paul's Cathedral—"Paul's Walk," as it was called—which was daily frequented by nobles, gentry, perfumed gallants, and ladies, from ten to twelve and three to six o'clock, to talk on business, politics, or pleasure. Hither came, to acquire the fashions, make assignations, arrange for the night's gaming, or shun the bailiff, the gallant, the gamester, the ladies whose dresses were better than their manners, the stale knight, the captain out of service. Here Falstaff purchased Bardolph. "I bought him," say's the knight, "at Paul's." The tailors went there to get the fashions of dress, as the gallants did to display them, one suit before dinner and another after. What a study was this varied, mixed, flaunting life, this dance of pleasure and license before the very altar of the church, for the writers of satire, comedy, and tragedy!

But it is not alone town life and court life and the society of the fine folk that is reflected in the English drama and literature of the seventeenth century, and here is another wide difference between it and the French literature of the same period; rural England and the popular life of the country had quite as much to do in giving tone and color to the writings of the time. It is necessary to know rural England to enter into the spirit of this literature, and to appreciate how thoroughly it took hold of life in every phase. Shakespeare knew it well. He drew from life the country gentleman, the squire, the parson, the pedantic schoolmaster who was regarded as half conjurer, the yeoman or farmer, the dairy maids, the sweet English girls, the country louts, shepherds, boors, and fools. How he loved a fool! He had talked with all these persons, and knew their speeches and humors. He had taken part in the country festivals-May Day, Plow Monday, the Sheep Shearing, the Morris Dances and Maud Marian, the Harvest Home and Twelfth Night. The rustic merrymakings, the feasts in great halls, the games on the greensward, the love of wonders and of marvelous tales, the regard for portents, the naive superstitions of the time pass before us in his pages.

Drake, in his "Shakespeare and his Times," gives a graphic and indeed charming picture of the rural life of this century, drawn from Harrison and other sources.

In his spacious hall, floored with stones and lighted by large transom windows, hung with coats of mail and helmets, and all military accoutrements, long a prey to rust, the country squire, seated at a raised table at one end, held a baronial state and dispensed prodigal hospitality. The long table was divided into upper and lower messes by a huge salt-cellar; and the consequence of the guests was marked by their seats above or below the salt. The distinction extended to the fare, for wine frequently circulated only above the salt, and below it the food was of coarser quality. The literature of the time is full of allusions to this distinction. But the luxury of the table and good cooking were well understood in the time of Elizabeth and James. There was massive eating done in those days, when the guests dined at eleven, rose from the banquet to go to evening prayers, and returned to a supper at five or six, which was often as substantial as the dinner. Gervase Markham in his "English Housewife," after treating of the ordering of great feasts, gives directions for "a more humble feast of an ordinary proportion." This "humble feast," he says, should consist for the first course of "sixteen full dishes, that is, dishes of meat that are of substance, and not empty, or for shew—as thus, for example: first, a shield of brawn with mustard; secondly, a boyl'd capon; thirdly, a boyl'd piece of beef; fourthly, a chine of beef rosted; fifthly, a neat's tongue rosted; sixthly, a pig rosted; seventhly, chewets bak'd; eighthly, a goose rosted; ninthly, a swan rosted; tenthly, a turkey rosted; the eleventh, a haunch of venison rosted; the twelfth, a pasty of venison; the thirteenth, a kid with a pudding in the belly; the fourteenth, an olive-pye; the fifteenth, a couple of capons; the sixteenth, a custard or dowsets. Now to these full dishes may be added sallets, fricases, 'quelque choses,' and devised paste; as many dishes more as will make no less than two and thirty dishes, which is as much as can conveniently stand on one table, and in one mess; and after this manner you may proportion both your second and third course, holding fullness on one half the dishes, and shew in the other, which will be both frugal in the splendor, contentment to the guest, and much pleasure and delight to the beholders." After this frugal repast it needed an interval of prayers before supper.

The country squire was a long-lived but not always an intellectual animal. He kept hawks of all kinds, and all sorts of hounds that ran buck, fox, hare, otter, and badger. His great hall was commonly strewn with marrow-bones, and full of hawks' perches, of hounds, spaniels, and terriers. His oyster-table stood at one end of the room, and oysters he ate at dinner and supper. At the upper end of the room stood a small table with a double desk, one side of which held a church Bible, the other Fox's "Book of Martyrs." He drank a glass or two of wine at his meals, put syrup of gilly-flower in his sack, and always had a tun-glass of small beer standing by him, which he often stirred about with rosemary. After dinner, with a glass of ale by his side he improved his mind by listening to the reading of a choice passage out of the "Book of Martyrs."

This is a portrait of one Henry Hastings, of Dorsetshire, in Gilpin's "Forest Scenery." He lived to be a hundred, and never lost his sight nor used spectacles. He got on horseback without help, and rode to the death of the stag till he was past fourscore.

The plain country fellow, plowman, or clown, is several pegs lower, and described by Bishop Earle as one that manures his ground well, but lets himself lie fallow and untitled. His hand guides the plow, and the plow his thoughts. His mind is not much disturbed by objects, but he can fix a half-hour's contemplation on a good fat cow. His habitation is under a poor thatched roof, distinguished from his barn only by loop-holes that let out the smoke. Dinner is serious work, for he sweats at it as much as at his labor, and he is a terrible fastener on a piece of beef. His religion is a part of his copyhold, which he takes from his landlord and refers it wholly to his discretion, but he is a good Christian in his way, that is, he comes to church in his best clothes, where he is capable only of two prayers—for rain and fair weather.

The country clergymen, at least those of the lower orders, or readers, were distinguished in Shakespeare's time by the appellation "Sir," as Sir Hugh, in the "Merry Wives," Sir Topas, in "Twelfth Night," Sir Oliver, in "As You Like It." The distinction is marked between priesthood and knighthood when Vista says, "I am one that would rather go with Sir Priest than Sir Knight." The clergy were not models of conduct in the days of Elizabeth, but their position excites little wonder when we read that they were often paid less than the cook and the minstrel.

There was great fondness in cottage and hall for merry tales of errant knights, lovers, lords, ladies, dwarfs, friars, thieves, witches, goblins, for old stories told by the fireside, with a toast of ale on the hearth, as in Milton's allusion

"—-to the nutbrown ale, With stories told of many a feat"

A designation of winter in "Love's Labour's Lost" is

"When roasted crabs hiss in the bowl."

To "turne a crab" is to roast a wild apple in the fire in order to throw it hissing hot into a bowl of nutbrown ale, into which had been put a toast with some spice and sugar. Puck describes one of his wanton pranks:

"And sometimes I lurk in a gossip's bowl,
In very likeness of a roasted crab,
And when she drinks against her lips I bob:"

I love no roast, says John Still, in "Gammer Gurton's Needle,"

"I love no rost, but a nut-browne torte,
And a crab layde in the fyre;
A lytle bread shall do me stead,
Much bread I not desire."

In the bibulous days of Shakespeare, the peg tankard, a species of wassail or wish-health bowl, was still in use. Introduced to restrain intemperance, it became a cause of it, as every drinker was obliged to drink down to the peg. We get our expression of taking a man "a peg lower," or taking him "down a peg," from this custom.

In these details I am not attempting any complete picture of the rural life at this time, but rather indicating by illustrations the sort of study which illuminates its literature. We find, indeed, if we go below the surface of manners, sober, discreet, and sweet domestic life, and an appreciation of the virtues. Of the English housewife, says Gervase Markham, was not only expected sanctity and holiness of life, but "great modesty and temperance, as well outwardly as inwardly. She must be of chaste thoughts, stout courage, patient, untired, watchful, diligent, witty, pleasant, constant in friendship, full of good neighborhood, wise in discourse, but not frequent therein, sharp and quick of speech, but not bitter or talkative, secret in her affairs, comportable in her counsels, and generally skillful in the worthy knowledges which do belong to her vocation." This was the mistress of the hospitable house of the country knight, whose chief traits were loyalty to church and state, a love of festivity, and an ardent attachment to field sports. His well-educated daughter is charmingly described in an exquisite poem by Drayton:

He had, as antique stories tell,

He had, as antique stories tell,
  A daughter cleaped Dawsabel,
  A maiden fair and free;
  And for she was her father's heir,
  Full well she ycond the leir
  Of mickle courtesy.

"The silk well couth she twist and twine,
  And make the fine march-pine,
  And with the needle work:
  And she couth help the priest to say
  His matins on a holy day,
  And sing a psalm in Kirk.

"She wore a frock of frolic green
  Might well become a maiden queen,
  Which seemly was to see;
  A hood to that so neat and fine,
  In color like the columbine,
  Ywrought full featously.

"Her features all as fresh above
  As is the grass that grows by Dove,
  And lythe as lass of Kent.
  Her skin as soft as Lemster wool,
  As white as snow on Peakish Hull,
  Or swan that swims in Trent.

"This maiden in a morn betime
  Went forth when May was in the prime

To get sweet setywall,
The honey-suckle, the harlock,
The lily, and the lady-smock,
To deck her summer hall."

How late such a simple and pretty picture could have been drawn to life is uncertain, but by the middle of the seventeenth century the luxury of the town had penetrated the country, even into Scotland. The dress of a rich farmer's wife is thus described by Dunbar. She had "a robe of fine scarlet, with a white hood, a gay purse and gingling keys pendant at her side from a silken belt of silver tissue; on each finger she wore two rings, and round her waist was bound a sash of grass-green silk, richly embroidered with silver."

Shakespeare was the mirror of his time in things small as well as great. How far he drew his characters from personal acquaintances has often been discussed. The clowns, tinkers, shepherds, tapsters, and such folk, he probably knew by name. In the Duke of Manchester's "Court and Society from Elizabeth to Anne" is a curious suggestion about Hamlet. Reading some letters from Robert, Earl of Essex, to Lady Rich, his sister, the handsome, fascinating, and disreputable Penelope Devereaux, he notes, in their humorous melancholy and discontent with mankind, something in tone and even language which suggests the weak and fantastic side of Hamlet's mind, and asks if the poet may not have conceived his character of Hamlet from Essex, and of Horatio from Southampton, his friend and patron. And he goes on to note some singular coincidences. Essex was supposed by many to have a good title to the throne. In person he had his father's beauty and was all that Shakespeare has described the Prince of Denmark. His mother had been tempted from her duty while her noble and generous husband was alive, and this husband was supposed to have been poisoned by her and her paramour. After the father's murder the seducer had married the guilty mother. The father had not perished without expressing suspicion of foul play against himself, yet sending his forgiveness to his faithless wife. There are many other agreements in the facts of the case and the incidents of the play. The relation of Claudius to Hamlet is the same as that of Leicester to Essex: under pretense of fatherly friendship he was suspicious of his motives, jealous of his actions; kept him much in the country and at college; let him see little of his mother, and clouded his prospects in the world by an appearance of benignant favor. Gertrude's relations with her son Hamlet were much like those of Lettice with Robert Devereaux. Again, it is suggested, in his moodiness, in his college learning, in his love for the theatre and the players, in his desire for the fiery action for which his nature was most unfit, there are many kinds of hints calling up an image of the Danish Prince.

This suggestion is interesting in the view that we find in the characters of the Elizabethan drama not types and qualities, but individuals strongly projected, with all their idiosyncrasies and contradictions. These dramas touch our sympathies at all points, and are representative of human life today, because they reflected the human life of their time. This is supremely true of Shakespeare, and almost equally true of Jonson and many of the other stars of that marvelous epoch. In England as well as in France, as we have said, it was the period of the classic revival; but in England the energetic reality of the time was strong enough to break the classic fetters, and to use classic learning for modern purposes. The English dramatists, like the French, used classic histories and characters. But two things are to be noted in their use of them. First, that the characters and the play of mind and passion in them are thoroughly English and of the modern time. And second, and this seems at first a paradox, they are truer to the classic spirit than the characters in the contemporary French drama. This results from the fact that they are truer to the substance of things, to universal human nature, while the French seem to be in great part an imitation, having root neither in the soil of France nor Attica. M. Guizot confesses that France, in order to adopt the ancient models, was compelled to limit its field in some sort to one corner of human existence. He goes on to say that the present "demands of the drama pleasures and emotions that can no longer be supplied by the inanimate representation of a world that has ceased to exist. The classic system had its origin in the life of the time; that time has passed away; its image subsists in brilliant colors in its works, but can no more be reproduced." Our own literary monuments must rest on other ground. "This ground is not the ground of Corneille or Racine, nor is it that of Shakespeare; it is our own; but Shakespeare's system, as it appears to me, may furnish the plans according to which genius ought now to work. This system alone includes all those social conditions and those general and diverse feelings, the simultaneous conjuncture and activity of which constitute for us at the present day the spectacle of human things."

That is certainly all that any one can claim for Shakespeare and his fellow-dramatists. They cannot be models in form any more than Sophocles and Euripides; but they are to be followed in making the drama, or any literature, expressive of its own time, while it is faithful to the emotions and feeling of universal human nature. And herein, it seems to me, lies the broad distinction between most of the English and French literature of the latter part of the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth centuries. Perhaps I may be indulged in another observation on this topic, touching a later time. Notwithstanding the prevalent notion that the French poets are the sympathetic heirs of classic culture, it appears to me that they are not so imbued with the true classic spirit, art, and mythology as some of our English poets, notably Keats and Shelley.

Ben Jonson was a man of extensive and exact classical erudition; he was a solid scholar in the Greek and Roman literatures, in the works of the philosophers, poets, and historians. He was also a man of uncommon attainments in all the literary knowledge of his time. In some of his tragedies his classic learning was thought to be ostentatiously displayed, but this was not true of his comedy, and on the whole he was too strong to be swamped in pseudo-classicism. For his experience of men and of life was deep and varied. Before he became a public actor and dramatist, and served the court and fashionable society with his entertaining, if pedantic, masques, he had been student, tradesman, and soldier; he had traveled in Flanders and seen Paris, and wandered on foot through the length of England. London he knew as well as a man knows his own house and club, the comforts of its taverns, the revels of lords and ladies, the sports of Bartholomew Fair, and the humors of suburban villages; all the phases, language, crafts, professions of high and low city life were familiar to him. And in his comedies, as Mr. A. W. Ward pertinently says, his marvelously vivid reproduction of manners is unsurpassed by any of his contemporaries. "The age lives in his men and women, his country gulls and town gulls, his imposters and skeldering captains, his court ladies and would-be court ladies, his puling poetasters and whining Puritans, and, above all, in the whole ragamuffin rout of his Bartholomew Fair. Its pastimes, fashionable and unfashionable, its games and vapors and jeering, its high-polite courtships and its pulpit-shows, its degrading superstitions and confounding hallucinations, its clubs of naughty ladies and its offices of lying news, its taverns and its tobacco shops, its giddy heights and its meanest depths—all are brought before us by our author."

No, he was not swamped by classicism, but he was affected by it, and just here, and in that self-consciousness which Shakespeare was free from, and which may have been more or less the result of his classic erudition, he fails of being one of the universal poets of mankind. The genius of Shakespeare lay in his power to so use the real and individual facts of life as to raise in the minds of his readers a broader and nobler conception of human life than they had conceived before.

This is creative genius; this is the idealist dealing faithfully with realistic material; this is, as we should say in our day, the work of the artist as distinguished from the work of the photographer. It may be an admirable but it is not the highest work of the sculptor, the painter, or the writer, that does not reveal to the mind—that comes into relation with it something before out of his experience and beyond the facts either brought before him or with which he is acquainted.

What influence Shakespeare had upon the culture and taste of his own time and upon his immediate audience would be a most interesting inquiry. We know what his audiences were. He wrote for the people, and the theatre in his day was a popular amusement for the multitude, probably more than it was a recreation for those who enjoyed the culture of letters. A taste for letters was prevalent among the upper class, and indeed was fashionable among both ladies and gentlemen of rank. In this the court of Elizabeth set the fashion. The daughter of the duchess was taught not only to distill strong waters, but to construe Greek. When the queen was translating Socrates or Seneca, the maids of honor found it convenient to affect at least a taste for the classics. For the nobleman and the courtier an intimacy with Greek, Latin, and Italian was essential to "good form." But the taste for erudition was mainly confined to the metropolis or the families who frequented it, and to persons of rank, and did not pervade the country or the middle classes. A few of the country gentry had some pretension to learning, but the majority cared little except for hawks and hounds, gaming and drinking; and if they read it was some old chronicle, or story of knightly adventure, "Amadis de Gaul," or a stray playbook, or something like the "History of Long Meg of Westminster," or perhaps a sheet of news. To read and write were still rare accomplishments in the country, and Dogberry expressed a common notion when he said reading and writing come by nature. Sheets of news had become common in the town in James's time, the first newspaper being the English Mercury, which appeared in April, 1588, and furnished food for Jonson's satire in his "Staple of News." His accusation has a familiar sound when he says that people had a "hunger and thirst after published pamphlets of news, set out every Saturday, but made all at home, and no syllable of truth in them."

Though Elizabeth and James were warm patrons of the theatre, the court had no such influence over the plays and players as had the court in Paris at the same period. The theatres were built for the people, and the audiences included all classes. There was a distinction between what were called public and private theatres, but the public frequented both. The Shakespeare theatres, at which his plays were exclusively performed, were the Globe, called public, on the Bankside, and the Blackfriars, called private, on the City side, the one for summer, the other for winter performances. The Blackfriars was smaller than the Globe, was roofed over, and needed to be lighted with candles, and was frequented more by the better class than the more popular Globe. There is no evidence that Elizabeth ever attended the public theatres, but the companies were often summoned to play before her in Whitehall, where the appointments and scenery were much better than in the popular houses.

The price of general admission to the Globe and Blackfriars was sixpence, at the Fashion Theatre twopence, and at some of the inferior theatres one penny. The boxes at the Globe were a shilling, at the Blackfriars one-and-six. The usual net receipts of a performance were from nine to ten pounds, and this was about the sum that Elizabeth paid to companies for a performance at Whitehall, which was always in the evening and did not interfere with regular hours. The theatres opened as early as one o'clock and not later than three in the afternoon. The crowds that filled the pit and galleries early, to secure places, amused themselves variously before the performance began: they drank ale, smoked, fought for apples, cracked nuts, chaffed the boxes, and a few read the cheap publications of the day that were hawked in the theatre. It was a rough and unsavory audience in pit and gallery, but it was a responsive one, and it enjoyed the acting with little help to illusion in the way of scenery. In fact, scenery did not exist, as we understand it. A board inscribed with the name of the country or city indicated the scene of action. Occasionally movable painted scenes were introduced. The interior roof of the stage was painted sky-blue, or hung with drapery of that tint, to represent the heavens. But when the idea of a dark, starless night was to be imposed, or tragedy was to be acted, these heavens were hung with black stuffs, a custom illustrated in many allusions in Shakespeare, like that in the line,

"Hung be the heavens in black, yield day to night"

To hang the stage with black was to prepare it for tragedy. The costumes of the players were sometimes less niggardly than the furnishing of the stage, for it was an age of rich and picturesque apparel, and it was not difficult to procure the cast-off clothes of fine gentlemen for stage use. But there was no lavishing of expense. I am recalling these details to show that the amusement was popular and cheap. The ordinary actors, including the boys and men who took women's parts (for women did not appear on the stage till after the Restoration) received only about five or six shillings a week (for Sundays and all), and the first-class actor, who had a share in the net receipts, would not make more than ninety pounds a year. The ordinary price paid for a new play was less than seven pounds; Oldys, on what authority is not known, says that Shakespeare received only five pounds for "Hamlet."

The influence of the theatre upon politics, contemporary questions that interested the public, and morals, was early recognized in the restraints put upon representations by the censorship, and in the floods of attacks upon its licentious and demoralizing character. The plays of Shakespeare did not escape the most bitter animadversions of the moral reformers. We have seen how Shakespeare mirrored his age, but we have less means of ascertaining what effect he produced upon the life of his time. Until after his death his influence was mainly direct, upon the play-goers, and confined to his auditors. He had been dead seven years before his plays were collected. However the people of his day regarded him, it is safe to say that they could not have had any conception of the importance of the work he was doing. They were doubtless satisfied with him. It was a great age for romances and story-telling, and he told stories, old in new dresses, but he was also careful to use contemporary life, which his hearers understood.

It is not to his own age, but to those following, and especially to our own time, that we are to look for the shaping and enormous influence upon human life of the genius of this poet. And it is measured not by the libraries of comments that his works have called forth, but by the prevalence of the language and thought of his poetry in all subsequent literature, and by its entrance into the current of common thought and speech. It may be safely said that the English-speaking world and almost every individual of it are different from what they would have been if Shakespeare had never lived. Of all the forces that have survived out of his creative time, he is one of the chief.

<<span id="filepos0042419221"> a>Shakespeare’s Last Will and Testament

Vicesimo Quinto die Januarii Martii Anno Regni Domini nostri Jacobi nunc Regis Angliae etc decimo quarto & Scotie xlixo Annoque Domini 1616

Testamentum Willemi Shackspeare Registretur

In the name of god Amen I William Shackspeare of Stratford upon Avon in the countrie of Warr' gent in perfect health and memorie god by praysed doe make and Ordayne this my last will and testament in manner and forme followeing that ys to saye first I Comend my Soule into the hands of god my Creator hoping and assuredlie beleeving through thonelie merittes of Jesus Christe my Saviour to be made partaker of lyfe everlastinge And my bodye to the Earthe whereof yt ys made.

Item I Gyve and bequeath unto my sonne in Law and Daughter Judyth One Hundred and fyftie pounds of lawfull English money to be paied unto her in manner and forme follewing That ys to saye One Hundred Poundes in discharge of her marriage porcion within one yeare after my deceas with consideracion after the Rate of twoe shillinges in the pound for soe long tyme as the same shalbe unpaid unto her after my deceas & the fyftie pounds Residewe therof upon her surrendering of or gyving of such sufficient securitie as the overseers of this my will shall like of to Surrender or graunte All her estate and Right that shall discend or come unto her after my deceas or that she nowe hath of in or to one Copiehold tenemente with theappertenances lyeing & being in Stratford upon Avon aforesaied in the saide countie of warr' being parcell or holden of the mannor of Rowington unto my daughter Susanna Hall and her heires for ever.

Item I gyve and bequeath unto my saied Daughter Judyth One Hundred and ffyftie Poundes more if shee or Anie issue of her bodie Lyvinge att thend of three yeares next ensueing the daie of the date of this my will during which tyme my executors to paie her consideracion from my deceas according to the Rate afore saied. And if she dye within the saied terme without issue of her bodye then my will ys and and I doe gyve and bequeath One Hundred Poundes therof to my Neece Eliabeth Hall and ffiftie Poundes to be sett fourth by my executors during the lief of my Sister Johane Harte and the use and proffitt therof cominge shalbe payed to my saied Sister Jone and after her deceas the saied L li shall

Remaine Amongst the childredn of my saied Sister Equallie to be devided Amongst them. But if my saied daughter Judith be lyving att thend of the saeid three yeares or anie issue of her bodye then my will ys and soe I devise and bequeath the saied Hundred and ffyftie poundes to be sett out by my executors and overseers for the best benefit of her and her issue and the stock not to be paied unto her soe long as she shalbe marryed and Covert Baron by my executors and overseers but my will ys that she shall have the consideracion yearelie paied unto her during her lief and after her deceas the saied stock and condieracion to bee paid to her children if she have Anie and if not to her executors or Assignes she lyving the saied terme after my deceas provided that if such husbond as she shall att thend of the saied three yeares by marryed unto or attain after doe sufficiently Assure unto her and thissue of her bodie landes answereable to the portion gyven unto her and to be adjudged soe by my executors and overseers then my will ys that the saied CL li shalbe paied to such husbond as shall make such assurance to his owne use.

Item I gyve and bequeath unto my saied sister Jone XX li and all my wearing Apprell to be paied and delivered within one yeare after my deceas. And I doe will and devise unto her the house with thappurtenances in Stratford where in she dwelleth for her naturall lief under the yearelie Rent of xiid

Item I gyve and bequeath unto her three sonnes William Hart—Hart and Michaell Harte ffyve pounds A peece to be payed within one yeare after my decease to be sett out for her within one yeare after my deceas by my executors with thadvise and direccons of my overseers for her best proffitt untill her marriage and then the same with the increase thereof to be paied unto her.

Item I gyve and bequath unto her the said Elizabeth Hall All my Plate (except my brod silver and gilt bole) that I now have att the date of this my will.

Item I gyve and bequeath unto the Poore of Stratford aforesaied tenn poundes; to Mr Thomas Combe my Sword; to Thomas Russell Esquier ffyve poundes and to ffrauncis collins of the Borough of Warr' in the countie of Warr' gent. thriteene poundes Sixe shillinges and Eight pence to be paied within one yeare after my deceas.

Item I gyve and bequeath to mr richard Hamlett Sadler Tyler thelder XXVIs VIIId to buy him A Ringe; to William Raynoldes gent XXVIs VIIId to buy him a Ringe; to my godson William Walker XXVIs VIIId in gold and to my ffellowes John Hemynges, Richard Burbage and Heny Cundell XXVIs VIIId A peece to buy them Ringes.

Item I Gyve Will Bequeth and Devise unto my Daughter Susanna Hall for better enabling of her to performe this my will and towardes the performans thereof All that Capitall Messuage or tenemente with thappertenaces in Stratford aforesaid called the newe plase wherein I now Dwell and two messuags or tenementes with thappurtenances scituat lyeing and being in Henley Streete within the borough of Stratford aforesaied. And all my barnes, stables, Orchardes, gardens, landes, tenementes and herediaments whatsoever scituat lyeing and being or to be had receyved, perceyved or taken within the townes and Hamletts, villages, ffieldes and groundes of Stratford upon Avon, Oldstratford, Bushopton and Welcombe or in anie of them in the saied countie of warr And alsoe All that Messuage or tenemente with thappurtenances wherein one John Robinson dwelleth, scituat, lyeing and being in the blackfriers in London nere the Wardrobe and all other my landes tenementes and hereditamentes whatsoever. To Have and to hold All and singular the saied premisses with their Appurtenances unto the saied Susanna Hall for and during the terme of her naturall lief and after her deceas to the first sonne of her bodie lawfullie yssueing and to the heiries Males of the bodie of the saied Second Sonne lawfullie yssyeinge and for defalt of such heires Males of the bodie of the saied third sonne lawfullie yssye ing And for defalt of such issue the same soe to be Reamine to the ffourth sonne, ffythe, sixte and seaventh sonnes of her bodie lawfullie issueing one after Another and and to the heires Males of the bodies of the saied ffourth, ffythe, Sixte and Seaventh sonnes lawfullie yssueing in such mamer as yt ys before Lymitted to be and remaine to the first, second and third Sonns of her bodie and to their heires males. And for defalt of such issue the saied premisses to be and Remaine to my sayed Neede Hall and the heires Males of her bodie Lawfully yssueing for default of...such issue to my daughter Judith and the heires of me the saied William Sahckspere for ever.

Item I gyve unto my wief my second best bed with the furniture; Item I gyve and bequeath to my saied daughter Judith my broad silver gilt bole.

All the rest of my goodes Chattels, Leases, plate, jewles and Household stuffe whatsoever after my dettes and Legasies paied and my funerall expences discharged, I gyve devise and bequeath to my Sonne in Lawe John Hall gent and my daughter Susanna his wief whom I ordaine and make executors of this my Last will and testament. And I doe intreat and Appoint the saied Thomas Russell Esquier and ffrauncis Collins gent to be overseers herof And doe Revoke All former wills and publishe this to be my last will and testament. In witnes whereof I have hereunto put my Seale hand the Daie and Yeare first above Written.

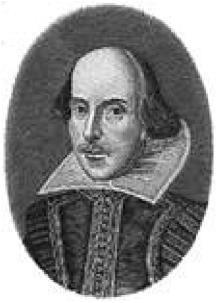
Witness to the publishing hereof: Fra: Collyns, Juilyus Shawe, John Robinson, Hamnet Sadler, robert Whattcott.

By me William Shakespeare

Probatum coram Magistro Williamo Byrde legum doctore Commissario etc xxiido die mensis Junii Anno domini 1616 Juramento Jahannis Hall unius executorum *etc.* Cui etc de bene etc Jurati Reservata potestate etc Sussane Hall alteri executorum etc cum venerit etc petitur.

Inventarium exhibitum.

<<span id="filepos0042429517"> a>Glossary of Elizabethan Language



By clicking on the links below, readers can view a glossary of Elizabethan words and meanings not used in English today:

A B C D E F G

H I J K L M N

O P Q R S T U

V W X Y Z

<<span id="filepos0042434026"> a> A

ABANDONED - banished, kept away from

ABATE - to lessen, shorten; to blunt; to bar

ABATEMENT - reduction, diminution

ABHOR - to horrify, disgust; to protest

ABIDE - remain, make only a brief stay (*Winter's Tale* 42); to face or encounter

ABILITY - wealth, means

ABJECT - *adj* an object of contempt

ABJECTLY - basely, horribly

ABODE - to bode; ie, an evil omen (*3KH6* , 56)

ABORTIVE - born prematurely; unnatural

ABRIDGEMENT - a short play

ABROAD - apart from one's own body; away from one's home

ABROOK - abide, bear

ABSEY-BOOK - an ABC book

ABSOLUTE - positive, certain

ABUSE - to deceive

ABUSE - deception

ABY - to atone for

ABYSM - abyss

ACCITED - summoned (*Titus Andronicus* , 11)

ACCUSE - accusation

ACHIEVE - to obtain

ACKNOWN - acknowledge

ACQUITTANCE (1) - a receipt or discharge

ACQUITTANCE (2) - to acquit, clear

ACTION-TAKING - wanting satisfaction through the law

ACTURE - action, performance

ADDITION - title, attribute

ADDRESS - to prepare oneself

ADDRESSED - prepared

ADVANCE - to prefer, promote to honour

ADVERTISEMENT - admonition

ADVERTISING - attentive

ADVICE - consideration, discretion

ADVISE - sometimes neuter, sometimes reflective, to

ADVISED - considerate

ADVOCATION - pleading, advocacy

AFEARED - afraid

AFFECT - to love

AFFRAY - frighten

AFFY - to affiance

AFRONT - in front

AGAZED - looking in amazement

AGLET-BABY - the small figure engraved on a jewel

AGNIZE - to acknowledge, confess (*Othello* , 13)

A-GOOD - a good deal, plenteously

A-HOLD - a sea-term

AIERIE - the nest of a bird of prey

AIM - a guess

ALDERLIEFEST - dearest of all

ALE - alehouse

ALLAYMENT - abatement; antidote (*Cym* 1522)

ALL HID - the game of hide and seek

ALLIGANT - a corruption of either 'elegant' or 'eloquent', used in Wiv 2269

ALLICHOLLY - a corruption of melancholy

ALLOW - to approve

ALLOWANCE - approval

ALMAIN - a German

ALMS-BASKET - public charity (to live on public charity - LLL 5142)

ALMS-DEED - act of charity

ALMS-DRINK - remains of drink set aside for the poor

ALMS-MAN - a person supported by charity

ALOES - a bitter drug

ALONE - unique

ALTER - to exchange

AMAIN - with force

AMAZE - to bewilder, confound

AMBLE - to move around with ease; to move affectedly

AMBUSCADO - ambush

AMES-ACE - two aces, the lowest throw of the dice

AMERCE - punish by fining

AMISS - misfortune; disaster

AMORT - dejected; dispirited

AN - if

ANCHOR - an anchorite, hermit

ANCIENT - an ensign-bearer

ANGEL - a coin, so called because it bore the image of

ANIGHT - by night

ANON - soon

ANSWER - retaliation

ANTHROPOPHAGINIAN - a cannibal

ANTICK - the fool in the old plays

ANTRE - a cave

APPARENT - heir-apparent

APPEAL - accusation

APPEAL - to accuse

APPEARED - made apparent

APPLE-JOHN - a kind of apple

APPOINTMENT - preparation

APPREHENSION - sharp wit

APPREHENSIVE - quick to understand

APPROBATION - probation

APPROPRIATION - special attribute or excellence

APPROOF - trial, proof; approbation

APPROVE - to prove, demonstrate to be true, confirm; to convict; to put to the test; to commend

APPROVER - one who orders a trial

AQUA-VITAE - ardent spirits

AQUILON - the north wind

ARABIAN BIRD - phoenix

ARABIAN TREE - the tree of the phoenix

ARCH - chief, prime, principal

ARGAL - a corruption of Ergo

ARGENTINE - silver

ARGIER - Algiers

ARGOSY - a vessel of Ragusa in Sicily - hence a ship of large size

ARGUMENT - proof, evidence; subject of debate; subject matter of discourse

ARMIGERO - a mistake for Armiger, the Latin for Esquire

AROINT - get thee out of the way

A-ROW - one after another

ARRAS - hanging screen of tapestry

ARREST - to seize; an order or decree

ARTICULATE - to enter into articles of agreement; to set forth in articles

ASKANCE - to turn aside

ASPECT - look, glance

ASPEN - of the asp tree

ASPERSION - sprinkling (of dew)

ASPIC - an asp

ASPIRE - to be ambitious; to rise; to mount up to (obs)

ASSAIL - to address with offers of love

ASSAY - attempt; to learn by experience; to accost (with words of love); to challenge to a trial of skill

ASSAY - to attempt, test, make proof of

ASSINEGO - an ass

ASSUBJUGATE - to subjugate

ASSURANCE - deed of assurance

ASSURED - betrothed

ASTRAE - goddess of justice

ATOMY - an atom; tiny being (insect)

ATONE - to reconcile, unite

ATTACH - to seize, lay hold on

ATTASKED - taken to task, reprehended

ATTEND - to listen to

ATTENT - attentive

ATTORNEY - an agent

ATTORNEY - agent, deputy; advocate or pleader

AUDACIOUS - spirited, daring

AUGUR (1) - carpenter's tool for creating holes in wood

AUGUR (2) - a prophet; to prophesy (vb)

AUGURE - augury

AUGURER - religious official among the Romans

AUNT - old woman; a gossip

AURICULAR - perceived by the ear

AUTHENTIC - of authority

AUSPICIOUS - favourable; spreading happiness

AVAUNT - order to be gone

AVE - shout of welcome (Latin for hail)

AVE-MARY - recited in saying the Rosary

AVERRING - confirming

AVOID - get rid of

AVOUCH - guarantee; an assurance

AWELESS - fearless; that inspires no awe

AWFUL - respectful; law-abiding

AWKWARD - adverse (invented by Shk), unfavourable; uncouth

AY - yes

AYE - ever

<<span id="filepos0042455065"> a> B

BABE - baby; a child's rag doll

BACCARE - stand back!

BACCHUS - the god of wine and the son of Zeus and Semele

BACCHANALS - drunken dance to Bacchus

BACKWARD - what lies behind; in the past

BACK - sound all the way through; rear of an army; support, backing; to mount (invented by Shk)

BACK-FRIEND - a bailiff (usually the bailiff approached from the back to arrest the criminal); false friend

BACKWARD - the past; behind

BACKWARDLY - perversely

BACON - a man from the country

BACON-FED - country-bred (the modern form is "chaw-bacon"); also slang for "fat"

BAFFLE - to disgrace

BAG - to retreat without surrender of any goods

BAIT - to harass (ie "bear-baiting")

BAKED-MEATS - meat-pies, pastry

BALD - naked; bare; bare-headed

BALDRICK - a belt

BALE - evil; mischief; injury

BALK (1) - to let slip; to dispute logic

BALK (2) - a little mound or heap

BALKED - heaped up

BALLOW - syn for cudgel

BALM - to anoint with oil; to sooth, heal (used 3 times in Shk)

BALMY - fragrant and soothing (invented by Shk)

BALSAM - balm

BAN - to curse

BAND - bond; obligation; agreement or promise

BANDY - to strike or throw; to fight; to beat to and fro like a tennis ball

BANE - poison; murder, destruction, cause of death of another

BANK - to coast, skirt

BARM - yeast

BARN (1) - a child

BARN (2) - to store in a barn

BARNACLE - species of goose supposed to be hatched from sea shells

BASE (1) - a boy's game, sometimes called "prisoners' base"

BASE (2) - reason

BASE (3) - dark-coloured; low-lying

BASE-COURT - outer court of a mansion or castle

BASES - pleated skirt of cloth, brocade, or velvet, reaching from waist to knee

BASE-VIOL - an early version of a modern cello

BASILISK - a reptile, said to kill with its breath; large cannon, made of brass

BASIMECU - negative term for a Frenchman

BASTARD (1) - sweet Spanish wine

BASTARD (2) - counterfeit; false

BATE (1) - strife

BATE (2) - a bird's beating wings

BATE (3) - to blunt; to reduce or diminish

BAT-FOWLING - catching birds in the dark with a bright light

BATLET - a small bat, used for beating clothes

BATTLE - army

BAVIN - brushwood

BAWCOCK - a fine fellow

BAWD - procurer

BAY - deep barking; to pursue with barking

BEADSMAN - one paid to pray for others (see hermits)

BEARING-CLOTH - child's christening robe

BEAT - to flutter; to think deeply or ponder

BEAVER - face guard of a helmet

BEDLAM - the Hospital of St Mary of Bethelem in London, used as an insane asylum

BED PRESSER - lazy person

BEEF-WITTED - thick-headed

BEETLE (1) - a kind of mallet

BEETLE (2) - overhang threateningly

BEETLE-BROWS - bushy eyebrows

BEING (1) - life, existence

BEING (2) - abode; dwelling

BELDAME - grandmother; hag

BELLONA - the goddess of war (Macbeth is "Bellona's bridegroom")

BE-METE - to measure

BE-MOILED - to befoul with dirt

BENDING - submissive

BENVENUTO - welcome

BESHREW - curse

BERGOMASK - a rustic dance (named after the people of Bergamo, Venice)

BESTRAUGHT - distracted

BETEEM - to grant

BETIDE - to happen

BEZONIAN - a beggar; rascal

BIDING - abiding-place

BIGGEN - a night-cap

BILBERRY - the whortleberry

BILBO - a sword Comes from the sword *Bilbao* , known for its amazing blade

BILBOES - shackles on an iron bar locked to the floor

BILL - a bill-hook, a weapon

BIN - been, are

BIRD-BOLT - a bolt to be shot from a crossbow at birds

BIRDING - part hawking at partridges

BIRTH-STRANGLED - killed at moment of birth

BIS COCTUS - twice cooked

BISSON - blinding

BLANK - the white mark in the middle of a target

BLENCH - to move; flinch

BLENT - blended

BLIND-WORM - small, venomous snake

BLOOD-BOLTERED - hair matted with blood

BLOOD-DRINKING - "blood-drinking sighs" - reference to the belief that every sigh causes the heart to lose a drop of blood

BLOW - to inflate

BOARD - to make advances to; accost

BOB (1) - to taunt

BOB (2) - to cheat

BOB (3) - to bang or thump

BODGE - to give way

BODKIN - dagger; long pin for the hair

BOLD - to embolden

BOLLEN - swollen

BOLTED - sifted, refined

BOLTER - a sieve

BOLTING-HUTCH - a hutch in which meal was sifted

BOMBARD - a barrel, a drunkard

BOMBAST - padding

BONA-ROBAS - a harlot

BOND - that to which one is bound

BOOK - learning; writing on a tablet

BOOT - help, use

BOOT - advantage

BOOTLESS - without advantage, useless

BOOTS - bots, a kind of worm

BORE - calibre of a gun

BOREAS - the north wind

BORES - stabs

BOSKY - covered with underwood

BOSOM - wish, heart's desire

BOTS - worms which infest horses

BOTCHER - cobbler

BOTTLE - a bundle of hay

BOURN - a boundary

BRACE - armour for the arm, state of defence

BRACH - a hound bitch

BRAID - deceitful

BRAVE - handsome, well-dressed

BRAVE - boast

BRAVERY - finery

BRAWL - a dance

BREAST - voice (*Twelfth Night* , 23)

BREATHE - to exercise

BREATHING - exercising

BREECHING - liable to be whipt

BREED-BATE - a breeder of debate, a mischief-maker

BREESE - the gadfly

BREWAGE - brewed drink

BRIBE-BUCK - a stolen buck

BRING - to attend one on a journey

BRINDED - striped

BRING - to attend one on a journey

BROCK - a badger, a term of contempt

BROKE - to act as a procurer

BROKEN - having lost some teeth by age

BROKEN MUSIC - the music of stringed instruments

BROKER - a sly and crafty knave

BROTHERHOOD - trading company

BROWNIST - a follower of a sect of Puritans

BRUIT (1) - noise, report, rumour

BRUSH - rude assault

BUBUKLES - pimples

BUCK - suds or lye for washing clothes in

BUCK-BASKET - the basket in which clothes are carried to the

BUCKING - washing

BUCK-WASHING - washing in lye

BUG - a bugbear, a spectre

BULLY-ROOK - a bragging cheater

BURGONET - a kind of helmet

BURST - to break

BUSKY - bushy

BUTT-SHAFT - a light arrow for shooting at a target

<<span id="filepos0042478013"> a> C

CABIN - temporary shelter; a cave; the den of an animal

CABIN'D -   to imprison or confine

CABLE - scope (a nautical metaphor used in *Oth* 1217)

CACODEMON - evil spirit

CADE - small barrel or keg (a barrel of herrings in *2kh6* 4236)

CADDIS - worsted tape or binding used for garters

CADENT - falling

CADMUS - son of Agenor, King of Phoenicia, and the founder of Thebes

CADUCEUS - the wand of Mercury, around which two snakes are twined

CADWALADER - last king of the Welsh Known for his feats of valour against the Saxons

CAESAR - supreme ruler; emperor

CAGE (1) - a prison

CAGE (2) - a wicker-work basket

CAIN-COLOURED - red (supposed color of Cain's hair)

CAITIFF - a wretch (used to express pity)

CALCULATE -   prophesy

CALIVER - a hand-gun, lighter than a musket

CALLET, CALLAT, CALLOT - a woman of bad character

CALLING - appellation; title

CALM (1) - to becalm

CALM (2) - confused with "qualm" in *2KH4* 3439

CAMEL - derrogatory name for an awkward person

CAMELOT - the court of King Arthur

CAN - to know, be skillful in

CANAKIN - small can or drinking vessel

CANARY (1) - a wine brought from the Canary Islands

CANARY (2) - lively Spanish dance

CANARY (3) - mistaken for "quandary" by Mrs Quickly in *Wiv* 2261

CANCER - the fourth sign of the zodiac

CANDIDATUS - candidate for Roman office, named after the white gown worn by Roman senators

CANDLE - a light made of wax and a wick; the stars; the "light" of the human spirit

CANDLE-CASE - case to store candles

CANDLE-HOLDER - one who lights others while they work

CANDLE-MINE - a mass of tallow

CANDLE-WASTER - one who wastes candles by studying late into the night

CANKER - a worm that destroys leaves; a spreading sore or ulcer

CANSTICK - a candlestick

CANTLE - a corner piece; part

CANTON - a song

CANVASS - to deal with severely; to toss

CANZONET - a short song

CAP - a head-covering; give up for lost; top, chief

CAPABLE - able to take in much; sensible; capable of; gifted

CAP-A-PE - from head to foot

CAPER - the flower of the caper-bush, used for pickling

CAPET - Hugh Capet, the first French king of the Capetian dynasty

CAPITULATE - propose terms; draw up a contract or agreement

CAPRICCIO - caprice

CAPRICIOUS - fantastic; whimsical

CAPTIOUS - capacious

CARACK - a large ship of burden

CARBONADO - meat scotched for broiling

CARD - playing-card; to mix with something foul

CAROUSE - a toast

CARKANET - a necklace

CARL - a churl

CASSIBELAN - King of Britain during Caesar's reign

CASTILIAN - a native of Castile; used as a cant term

CATAIAN - a native of Cathay; a scoundrel

CATLING - catgut

CAUTEL - deceit

CAUTELOUS - deceitful

CAVALERO - a cavalier, gentleman

CAVIARE - roe of sturgeon pressed and salted (an acquired taste)

CEASE (1) - cessation

CEASE (2) - silence

CENSURE - judgment

CENSURE - to judge, criticise, blame

CENTURY - one hundred years or men

CEREMONY - an external accessory or a symbol of the state; a portent or omen (used thus in Shk only)

CERTES - certainly

CESS - rate, reckoning

CHACE - a term at tennis

CHAMBER - a species of great gun

CHAMBERER - an effeminate man

CHANSON - a song

CHARACT - affected quality

CHARACTER - a letter, handwriting

CHARACTER - to carve or engrave

CHARACTERY - handwriting

CHARE - a turn of work

CHARGE-HOUSE - a boarding-school

CHARNECO - a type of wine

CHAUDRON - entrails

CHEQUIN - sequin, gold coin of Turkey and Italy

CHEQUES - perhaps intended for ethics

CHEER - fortune, countenance

CHERRY-PIT - a game played with cherrystones

CHEVERIL - kid leather

CHEWIT - cough

CHILDING - pregnant

CHILL - 'I will'

CHIRURGEONLY - like a skilled surgeon

CHOPINE - a high shoe with a cork sole, worn in Renaissance Italy and Spain

CHRISTENDOM - the state of being a Christian

CHRISTOM CHILD - child in its christening garment

CHUCK - chick (term of endearment)

CHUFF - avaricious person

CINQUE-PACE - a lively dance

CIPHER (1) - zero, a mere nothing

CIPHER (2) - to decipher

CIRCUMSTANCE - a condition; the state of affairs

CITAL - mention, recite

CITE - to call or arouse

CLACK-DISH - a beggar's wooden dish

CLAW - to seize; to scratch; to flatter or cajole

CLEPE - to call

CLIFF - clef, the key in music

CLING - to starve

CLINQUANT - glittering

CLIP - to embrace, enclose

CLOUT - the mark in the middle of a target

COAST - to advance

COBLOAF - a big loaf

COCK (1) - a cockboat

COCK (2) - a spout to release liquor

COCK-AND-PIE - an oath

COCKLE - tares or darnel

COCKNEY - a cook

COCK-SHUT-TIME - the twilight, when cocks and hens go to roost

COG - to cheat, dissemble

COGNIZANCE - badge, token

COIGN - projecting corner stone

COIL - tumult, turmoil

COLLECTION - drawing a conclusion

COLLIED - blackened Othello;

COLOUR - pretence

COLOURABLE - specious

COLT - to defraud, befool

CO-MART - a joint bargain

COMBINATE - betrothed

COMBINE - to bind

COMMODITY - interest, profit

COMMONTY - used ludicrously for comedy

COMPACT - compacted, composed

COMPARATIVE - drawing comparisons

COMPARATIVE - rival

COMPARE - comparison

COMPASSIONATE - moving comparison

COMPETITOR - one who seeks the same thing

COMPLEMENT - accomplishment

COMPLEXION - passion

COMPOSE - to agree

COMPOSTION - composition

COMPTIBLE - tractable

COMPTER - counter

CON - to learn by heart

CONCAVE - hollow

CONCEIT - conception, opinion, fancy

CONCEPTIOUS - fruitful

CONCUPISCIBLE - lustful

CONCUPY - concubine

CONDITION - temper, quality

CONDOLEMENT - grief

CONDUCT - escort

CONFECT - to make up into sweetmeats

CONFOUND - to consume, destroy

CONJECT - conjecture

CONSANGUINEOUS - of the same blood

CONSCIONABLE - conscientious

CONSIGN - to sign a common bond, to confederate

CONSORT - company

CONSORT - to accompany

CONSTANCY - consistency

CONSTANT - settled, determined

CONSTANTLY - firmly

CONSTER - to construe

CONTEMPTIBLE - contemptuous

CONTINENT - a container; earth; summary or sum

CONTINUATE - uninterrupted

CONTRACTION - the marriage contract

CONTRARY - to oppose

CONTRIVE - to conspire

CONTROL - to confute

CONVENT - to convene, summon

CONVERT - to change

CONVERTITE - a convert

CONVEY - to represent oneself; euphemism for "to steal"

CONVEYANCE - theft, fraud

CONVICT - convicted

CONVICTED - overpowered, defeated

CONVINCE - to conquer, subdue

CONVIVE - to feast together

CONVOY - escort

CONY-CATCH - to cheat

CONY-CATCHING - poaching, pilfering

COOLING CARD - used metaphorically for an insurmountable obstacle

COPATAIN HAT - a high-crowned hat

COPE - to reward, to give in return

COPESMATE - companion

COPY - theme

CORAGIO - courage!

CORAM - possibly a mistake for "quorum"

CORANTO - lively dance

CORINTH - a cant term for a brothel

CORINTHIAN - a wencher

CORKY - dry like cork

CORNUTO - a cuckold

COROLLARY - a surplus

CORPORAL - bodily "Corporals of the field" were army officers who acted as assistants to the sergeant-major

CORRIVAL - rival or partner

COSTARD - the head

COSTER-MONGER - peddling, mercenary

COTE - a cottage

COTE - to quote, instance

COTE - to come alongside, overtake

COT-QUEAN - an effeminate man, molly-coddle

COUCHINGS - crouchings

COUNT CONFECT - a nobleman composed of affectation

COUNTENANCE - fair shew

COUNTERFEIT - deceitful; portrayed (*rare*)

COUNTERPOINT - a counterpane

COUNTERVAIL - to equal or counterbalance

COUNTRY - traveller

COUNTY - count

COUPLEMENT - union or coupling

COURT HOLY-WATER - flattery

COVENT - a convent

COVER - to lay the table for dinner

COWISH - cowardly

COWL-STAFF - the pole on which a basket is supported between two people

COY (1) - to stroke or caress

COY (2) - to disdain

COYSTRIL - a knave; base fellow

COZEN - to cheat

COZENAGE - cheating

COZENER - a cheater

COZIER - a tailor

CRACK - to boast

CRACK - a loud noise, clap

CRACKER - boaster

CRACK-HEMP - a gallows-bird

CRANK - a winding passage

CRANKING - winding

CRANTS - garlands A doubtful word

CRARE - a ship of burden

CRAVEN - a dunghill cock

CREATE - formed, compounded

CREDENT - believing; credible

CREDIT - report

CRESCIVE - increasing

CRESTLESS - not entitled to bear arms, lowborn

CRISP - curled, winding

CROSS (1) - a piece of money, coin

CROSS (2) - passing from side to side

CROSS (3) - across

CROSS (4) - to meet, face; to pass

CROW-KEEPER - one who keeps crows away from corn-fields

CROWNER - a coroner

CROWNET - a coronet

CRY (1) - the yelping of hounds

CRY (2) - to appeal; to beg

CRY (3) - public report or rumour

CRY AIM - to encourage

CUISSES - armour to cover the thighs

CULLION - a base fellow

CUNNING (1) - skill

CUNNING (2) - bashful

CUNNING (3) - to be strange

CURB - to bend, truckle

CURRENTS - occurrences

CURST -

CURSTNESS - shrewishness

CURTAIL - a cur

CURTAL - a docked horse

CURTAL-AXE - a cutlass

CUSTALORUM - a ludicrous mistake for Custos Rotulorum

CUSTARD-COFFIN - the crust of a custard-pie

CUSTOMER - a common woman

CUT - to slash; to carve; to preclude (*from*)

CYPRESS (1) - a kind of crape

CYPRESS (2) - tree of durable wood (symbol of mourning)

CYTHEREA - Venus

<<span id="filepos0042515598"> a> D

DAEDALUS - mythical figure in Greek history, said to have created the saw, the axe, the augur, and glue He created a pair of wings and flew safely over the Aegean sea

DAFF - to put off; to push; to thrust aside

DAISIED - full of daisies

DALLIANCE - procrastination; idle delay

DAMASK - the color of the damask rose

DAME - mistress of a household; woman of rank; mother

DAMN - to condemn

DAMP - fog, mist

DAN - lord, master

DANGER - reach, control, power

DANKISH - dank, humid

DANSKERS - Danes (*Hamlet* , 21)

DAPHNE - a beautiful nymph loved by Apollo and Leucippus The gods turned her into a laurel tree

DARE - to challenge; boldness

DARKING - eclipse

DARK HOUSE - a mad house

DARKLING - in the dark

DARKNESS - nighttime; death

DARRAIGN - arrange

DARTING - shooting darts

DASH - to frustrate; to set aside

DAUB - to disguise, cover; to smear; to color

DAUBERY - imposition

DAY-WOMAN - a dairy-maid

DEAD-KILLING - mortal; deadly

DEADLY - death-like; mortally

DEADLY-HANDED - murderous

DEAD-STANDING - eyes fixed and staring like the dead

DEAR - dire

DEARN - lonely

DEBOSHED - debauched, drunken

DECK (1) - to bedew This is probably a form of the verb

DECK (2) - a pack of cards

DECLINE - to incline or lean; to bend

DECLINED - fallen

DEEM - doom, judgment

DEFEAT (1) - to undo, destroy

DEFEAT (2) - destruction

DEFEATURE - disfigurement

DEFENCE - art of fencing

DEFEND - to forbid

DEFENSIBLE - having the power to defend

DEFICIENT - failing; fainting

DEFTLY - dexterously

DEFY - to challenge; to reject

DEFUSE - disorder (*King Lear* , 14)

DEFUSED - deformed; shapeless

DEGREES - a step

DELAY - to let slip by delaying

DEMERIT - merit, desert

DEMURELY - solemnly

DENAY - denial

DENIER - the 12th part of a French sol coin

DENY - to refuse

DEPART - departure

DEPART - to part

DEPARTING - parting, separation

DEPEND - to be in service

DERIVED - born, descended

DERIVATIVE - inheritance (*Winter's Tale* , 32)

DEROGATE - degraded

DESCANT - a melody

DESIGN - to draw up articles

DESPATCH - to deprive, bereave

DESPERATE - determined, bold

DETECT - to charge, blame

DETERMINE - to conclude

DEVEST - to undress

DICH - a corruption of "do it"

DIET (1) - course of life; regimen; food

DIET (2) - to feed; to prescribe a diet for

DIFFUSED - confused

DIGRESSING - transgressing, going out of the right way

DIGRESSION - transgression

DIG-YOU-GOOD-DEN - give you good evening

DILDO - the chorus or burden of a song

DINT - stroke

DIRECTION - judgment, skill

DISABLE - to disparage

DISAPPOINTED - unprepared

DISCASE - to undress

DISCONTENT - a malcontent

DISCOURSE - power of reasoning

DISDAINED - disdainful

DISEDGE - to reduce the appetite

DISLIMN - to disfigure, transform

DISME - a tenth or tithe

DISPARK - to destroy a park

DISPITEOUS - pitiless

DISPONGE, DISPUNGE - to squeeze out as from a sponge

DISPOSE (1) - disposal

DISPOSE (2) - to conspire

DISPOSITION - maintenance

DISPUTABLE - inclined to dispute

DISPUTE - to discuss; to resist

DISSEMBLY - Dogberry's misuse of the word assembly (*Much Ado* 421)

DISTAIN - to soil; to stain; defile

DISTANCE - disagreement; hostility; not close

DISTASTE - to have no taste for; cause disgust

DISTEMPERED - discontented

DISTRACTION - division, detachment

DISTRAUGHT - distracted, mad

DIVERTED - turned from the natural course

DIVISION - a phrase or passage in a melody

DIVULGED - published, spoken of

DOFF - to put off

DOG-APE - a male ape

DOG-DAYS - hottest days of the year, corresponding to the rising of the Dog-star

DOIT - a small Dutch coin

DOLE - share, portion; destiny

DONE - 'agreed!'; ruined, lost

DOTANT - one who dotes, a dotard

DOUT - to do out, quench

DOWLAS - a kind of coarse sacking

DOWLE - the swirl of a feather

DOWN-GYVED - hanging down like gyves or fetters

DRAB - a harlot

DRABBING - whoring

DRAUGHT - a privy

DRAWN - having his sword drawn

DRAWN - drunk, having taken a good draught

DRIBBLING - weak

DRIVE - to rush impetuously

DROLLERY - a puppet-show

DRUMBLE - to dawdle

DRY - severe, hard; dull, stupid; thirsty

DUC-DAME - perhaps the Latin duc-ad-me, "bring him to me", but usually regarded as a nonsense word

DUDGEON - a dagger

DULL - not quick or sharp; slow, heavy, drowsy; gloomy; blunt

DULL-EYED - having the eyes dimmed; wanting

DUMP - mournful melody; tune in general

DUN - an old Christian game in which a heavy log was carried by the players; the color of a mouse

DUP - to open

DURANCE - confinement

DUST - particle of dust

DUTEOUS - dutiful; submissive

DWELL - to remain; to stand on

DWINDLE - to become smaller and smaller; waste away; shrink (invented by Shk, *Macbeth* 13)

<<span id="filepos0042534360"> a> E

EAGER - pungent; sour; ardent

EAGLE - an ensign of the Roman army; an emblem of Jupiter

EAGLE-SIGHTED - having sight strong enough to stare into the sun without going blind

EAN - to yean; to bring forth young

EANLING - a young lamb

EAR - to plough

EAR-KISSING - private; whispered

EASEFUL - restful

EASILY - without difficulty; smoothly, freely

EAVES - the clipt edge of a thatched roof

EBB - to decline, decay

EBON - black, ebony

EBREW - common spelling of Hebrew in the Renaissance

ECHE - to eke out

ECHO - mountain nymph (from Greek mythology)

ECSTASY - state of frenzy; extreme delight; madness

E'ER - contraction of 'ever'

EFFECT (1) - end result; drift, tenor; expression; intimation

EFFECT (2) - (*vb*) to produce; to give effect

EFFUSE - pouring out

EFT - ready, convenient

EFTSOONS - shortly, soon

EGAL - equal

EGLANTINE - sweet-briar

EGMA - used mistakenly for 'enigma' in *LLL* 3175

EGREGIOUS - very great

EISEL - vinegar

EKE (1) - to increase; to add; to supplement

EKE (2) - (*avb*) also

ELD - old age

ELF - to mat the hair together

EMBALLING - the ceremony of carrying the ball at a coronation (invented by Shk)

EMBASSADOR - ambassador

EMBASSAGE - errand

EMBATTLE - to engage in combat

EMBOSSED - swollen; foaming at the mouth

EMBOWELLED - disembowelled, emptied

EMBRASURE - embrace

EMBRUE - old spelling of 'imbrue'

EMINENCE - exalted station

EMPERY - empire

EMULATION - jealousy, mutiny

EMULOUS - jealous

ENCAVE - to place oneself in a cave

ENCHAFED - excited, irritated

END - conclusion, close; death, destruction

ENFEOFF - to place in possession in fee simple

ENGINE - a machine of war

ENGLUT - to swallow

ENGROSS - to write out in legal hand; to collect; to monopolize

ENGROSSMENT - quantity collected

ENKINDLE - to make keen

ENLARD - to fatten

ENMEW - to shut up, as a hawk is shut up in a mew

ENSCONCE - to cover as with a fort

ENSEAMED - fat, rank

ENSHIELD - hidden

ENTERTAIN - to keep up; to treat; to occupy (time)

ENTERTAINMENT - way of spending time; reception of guests (treatment of guests)

ENTREATMENTS - interviews

EPHESIAN - a toper, a cant term

EQUIPAGE - attendance

EREWHILE - a short time since

ERCLES - Hercules

ESCOT - to pay a man's reckoning, to maintain

ESPERANCE - hope, used as a war-cry

ESPIAL - a scout or spy

ESTIMATION - conjecture

ESTRIDGE - ostridge

ETERNE - eternal

EVEN - coequal

EVEN - to equal

EXAMINE - to question

EXCREMENT - outgrowth (of hair)

EXECUTOR - an executioner

EXEMPT - excluded

EXERCISE - a religious service

EXHALE - to hale or draw out

EXHIBITION - allowance, pension

EXIGENT - death, ending

EXION - mistakenly used for "action" by Mrs Quickly in *2KH4* 2134

EXPECT - expectation

EXPEDIENCE - expedition, undertaking

EXPEDIENT - expeditious, swift

EXPIATE - to end

EXPOSTULATE - to expound, discuss

EXPOSTURE - exposure

EXPRESS - to reveal

EXPULSE - to expel

EXSUFFICATE - contemptible

EXTEND - to seize

EXTENT - a seizure

EXTERN - outward

EXTIRP - to root out, extirpate

EXTRACTING - distracting

EXTRAUGHT - extracted, descended

EXTRAVAGANT - foreign, wandering

EXTREMES - extravagance of conduct

EYAS - a young hawk taken fromthe nest for training

EYAS-MUSKET - 'nest-bird', used to mean 'sprightly child'

EYE - the organ of sight; attributed to the heavenly bodies; sight, a slight shade or tinge

EYE - (*vb*) to appear to the eye

EYE-WINK, EYE-BEAM - look, glance

EYE-GLASS - the lens of the eye

EYESTRINGS - the nerves and tendons of the eyes

<<span id="filepos0042548716"> a> F

FACINOROUS - wicked

FACT - guilt

FACTIOUS - instant, importunate

FACULTY - essential virtue or power

FADGE - to suit

FADING - a kind of ending to a song

FAIN - glad

FAIN - gladly

FAIR - beauty

FAITOR - a traitor

FAll - to let fall

FALLOW - fawn-coloured

FALSE - falsehood

FALSING - deceptive

FAMILIAR - a familiar spirit

FANCY -

FANCY-FREE - untouched by love

FANG - to seize in the teeth

FANTASTIC - a fantastical person

FAP - drunk

FAR - farther

FARCED - stuffed

FARDEL - a burden

FARTUOUS - used ridiculously for ' virtuous'

FAST - assuredly, unalterably

FAT - dull

FAVOUR - countenance

FEAR - the object of fear

FEAR - to affright

FEARFUL - subject to fear, timorous

FEAT - dexterous

FEAT - to make fine

FEATER - comp degree more neatly

FEATLY - nimbly, daintily

FEATURE - beauty

FEDERARY - confederate

FEEDER - agent, servant

FEERE - a companion, husband

FEHEMENTLY - used ridiculously for 'vehemently'

FELL - the hide

FENCE - art or skill in defence

FEODARY - confederate, accomplice

FESTER - to rankle, grow virulent

FESTINATELY - quickly

FET - fetched

FICO - a fig

FIELDED - in the field of battle

FIG - to insult

FIGHTS - screen hung around a ship to conceal the men in battle

FILE - a list or catalogue

FILE - to defile

FILL-HORSE - shaft-horse

FILLS - the shafts

FILTH - a whore

FINE - end

FINE - to make fine or specious

FINELESS - endless

FIRAGO - ridiculously used for 'Virago'

FIRE-DRAKE - Will o' the Wisp

FIRE-NEW - with the glitter of novelty on, like newly-

FIRK - to chastise

FIT - a canto or division of a song

FITCHEW - a polecat

FIVES - a disease incident to horses

FLAP-DRAGON - raisins in burning brandy

FLAP-JACK - a pan-cake

FLAT - certain

FLATNESS - lowness, depth

FLAW - a gust of wind

FLAW - to make a flaw in, to break

FLECKED - spotted, streaked

FLEET - to float

FLEETING - inconstant

FLESHMENT - excitement resulting from a first success

FLEWED - furnished with hanging lips, as hounds are

FLIGHT - a particular mode of practising archery

FLIRT-GILL - a light woman

FLOTE - wave, sea

FLOURISH - an ornament

FLOURISH - to ornament, disguise with ornament

FLUSH - fresh, full of vigour

FOIL - defeat, disadvantage

FOIN - to fence, fight

FOISON - plenty

FOND - foolish, foolishly affectionate

FOOT-CLOTH - a saddle-cloth hanging down to the ground

FOR - for that, because

FORBID - accursed, outlawed

FORBODE - forbidden

FORCE - to stuff, for 'farce'

FORCED - falsely attributed

FORDO - to kill, destroy

FOREIGN - obliged to live abroad

FOREPAST - former

FORESLOW - to delay

FORFEND - to forbid

FORGETIVE - inventive

FORKED - horned

FORMAL - regular, retaining its proper and essential

FORSPEAK - to speak against

FORSPENT - exhausted, weary

FORTHRIGHT - a straight path; forthright

FORWEARY - to weary, exhaust

FOSSET-SELLER - one who sells the pipes inserted into a vessel

FOX - a sword; a cant word

FOX-SHIP - the cunning of the fox

FRAMPOLD - peevish, unquiet

FRANK - the feeding place of swine

FRANKED - confined

FRANKLIN - a freeholder, a small squire

FRAUGHT - freighted

FRAUGHTAGE - freight

FRAUGHTING - to fraught; foarming the cargo

FRESH - a spring of fresh water

FRET - the stop of a guitar

FRET - to wear away

FRIEND - to befriend

FRIPPERY - an old-clothes shop

FROM - prep contrary to

FRONT - to affront, oppose

FRONTIER - opposition

FRONTLET - that which is worn on the forehead

FRUSH - to break or bruise

FRUSTRATE - frustrated

FUB OFF - to put off

FULFILL - to fill full

FULL - complete

FULLAM - a loaded die

FULSOME - lustful

FURNISHED - equipped

FURNITOR - furnitory, an herb

<<span id="filepos0042565695"> a> G

GABERDINE - a loose outer coat, or smock frock

GAD - a sharp spike

GAIN-GIVING - misgiving

GAIT - going, steps

GALLIARD - a kind of dance

GALLIASSE - a kind of ship

GALLIMAUFRY - a ridiculous medley

GALLOW - to scare

GALLOWGLASS - soldiers formerly maintained by Irish chiefs

GAMESTER - a frolicsome person

GARBOIL - disorder, uproar

GARISH - gaudy, staring

GARNER - to lay by, as corn in a barn

GAST - frightened

GAUDY - festive

GAZE - an object of wonder

GEAR - matter of business of any kind

GECK - a fool

GENERAL - the generality, common people

GENERATIONS - children

GENEROSITY - noble birth

GENEROUS - noble

GENTILITY - good manners

GENTLE - gentlefolk

GENTLE - noble

GENTLE - to ennoble

GENTRY - complaisance, conduct becoming gentlefolk

GERMAN - akin

GERMEN - seed, embryo

GEST - period

GIB - a he-cat

GIFTS - talents, endowment

GIGLOT - a wanton girl

GILDER - a coin

GILT - money

GIMMAL - double

GIMMOR - contrivance

GING - gang

GIRD - to gibe

GIRD - a sarcasm or gibe

GLEEK - to scoff

GLEEK - a scoff

GLOSE - to comment; hence, to be garrulous

GLUT - to swallow

GNARL - to snarl

GOOD-DEED - indeed

GOOD-DEN - good-evening, contracted from 'Good-even'

GORBELLIED - corpulent

GOURD - a species of game of chance

GOUT - a drop

GOVERNMENT - discretion

GRACIOUS - abounding in grace Divine

GRAINED - engrained

GRAMERCY - int grand mercy, much thanks

GRANGE - the farmstead attached to a monastery

GRATILLITY - used ridiculously for 'gratuity'

GRATULATE - to congratulate

GRAVE - to bury

GREASILY - grossly

GREEK - a bawd

GREEN - immature, fresh, unused

GREENLY - foolishly

GREET - to weep

GRIZE - a step

GROSSLY - palpably

GROUNDLING - one who sits in the pit of a theatre

GROWING - accruing

GUARD - decoration

GUARD - to decorate

GUARDAGE - guardianship

GUINEA-HEN - the pintado, a cant term

GULES - red, a term in heraldry

GULF - the throat

GUN-STONE - a cannon ball

GUST - taste, relish

GYVE - to fetter

<<span id="filepos0042575669"> a> H

HA' - shortened form of "have"

HABITUDE - condition of the body

HACK - to become cheap or vulgar (really of uncertain meaning, used in *Wiv* 2152)

HAGGARD (1) - a wild hawk

HAGGARD (2) - unprincipled; wild (*adv*)

HAG-SEED - seed or offspring of a hag

HAI, HAY - a thrust in fencing *Rom* 2427

HAIR - course, order, grain

HALBERD - battle-axe fastened to a long pole

HALCYON - a bird The Elizabethans believed that the halcyon had the power to calm the sea - hence the term "halcyon days"

HALF-CAPS - a hat tipped slightly as a greeting

HALF-CHEEK - side-face

HALF-FACE - thin face

HALF-KIRTLE - jacket; petticoat

HALF-PART - half

HALFPENCE - little pieces

HALF-SUPP'D - half-satisfied

HALF-SWORD - within half the length of a sword

HALF-WORLD - hemisphere

HALIDOM - holiness, salvation, Christian fellowship

HALL - an open space to dance in

HALLOWMAS - All Hallows' Day

HAP - chance, fortune

HAPPILY - accidentally

HANDSAW - perhaps a corruption of Heronshaw; a hern

HARDIMENT - defiance, brave deeds

HARLOCK - charlock, wild mustard

HARRY - to annoy, harass

HAUGHT - haughty

HAUNT - company

HAVING - property, fortune

HAVIOUR - behavior

HAY - a term in fencing

HEADBOROUGH - a parish officer (an officer for the church) having the same functions as a petty police constable

HEADY - violent, headlong

HEAT - of 'to heat,' heated

HEBENON - henbane

HEFT - a heaving

HEFT - furnished with a handle

HELM - to steer, manage

HENCE - henceforward

HENCHMAN - a page or attendant

HENT - to seize, take

HERMIT - a beadsman, one bound to pray for another

HEST - command

HIGH - used in composition with adjectives to heighten

HIGHT - called

HILD - held

HILDING - a paltry fellow

HINT - suggestion

HIREN - a prostitute with a pun on the word 'iron'

HIT - to agree

HOISE - to hoist, heave up on high

HOIST - hoisted

HOLP - to help; helped

HOME - to the utmost

HONEST - chaste

HONESTY - chastity

HONEY-STALKS - the red clover

HOODMAN-BLIND - the game now called blindman's-buff

HORN-MAD - probably, 'harn-mad,' that is, brain-mad

HOROLOGE - a clock

HOT-HOUSE - a brothel

HOX - to hamstring

HUGGER-MUGGER - secresy

HULL - to drift on the sea like a wrecked ship

HUMOROUS - fitful, or, perhaps, hurried

HUNT-COUNTER - to follow the scent the wrong way

HUNTS-UP - the name of a song used in hunting

HURLY - noise, confusion

HURTLE - to clash

HURTLING - noise, confusion

HUSBANDRY - frugality

HUSWIFE - woman who manages a household

<<span id="filepos0042586063"> a> I

ICE-BROOK - an icy-cold brook

I'FECKS - int in faith, a euphemism

IGNOMY - ignominy

IMAGE - representation

IMBARE - to bare, lay open

IMMEDIACY - close connexion

IMMOMENT - unimportant

IMP - to graft to splice a falcon's broken feathers

IMP - a scion, a child

IMPAWN - to stake, compromise

IMPEACH - to bring into question

IMPEACH - impeachment

IMPEACHMENT - cause of censure, hindrance

IMPERCEIVERANT - duff of perception

IMPETICOS - to pocket

IMPORTANCE - importunity

IMPORTANT - importunate

IMPORTING - significant

IMPOSE - imposition, meaning command or task imposed

IMPOSITIONS - command

IMPRESE - a device with a motto

IMPRESS - to compel to serve

INCAPABLE - unconscious

INCARNARDINE - to dye red

INCENSED - incited, egged on

INCH-MEAL - by inch-meal, by portions of inches

INCLINING - compliant

INCLINING - inclination

INCLIP - to embrace

INCLUDE - conclude

INCONY - fine, delicate

INCORRECT - ill-regulated

IND - India

INDENT - to compound or bargain

INDEX - a preface

INDIFFERENT - ordinary

INDIGEST - disordered

INDITE - to invite

INDUCTION - introduction, beginning

INDURANCE - delay

INFINITE - infinite power

INGRAFT - to engraff, engrafted

INHABITABLE - uninhabitable

INHERIT - to possess

INHOOPED - penned up in hoops

INKLE - a kind of narrow fillet or tape

INLAND - civilized, well-educated

INLY - inward

INLY - inwardly

INQUISITION - enquiry

INSANE - that which causes insanity

INSCONCE - to arm, fortify

INSTANCE - example

INTEND - to pretend

INTENDING - regarding

INTENDMENT - intention

INTENTIVELY - attentively

INTERESSED - allied

INTERMISSION - pause, delay

INTRENCHMENT - not capable of being cut

INTRINSE - intricate

INTRINSICATE - intricate

INVENTION - imagination

INWARD - an intimate friend

INWARDNESS - intimacy

IRREGULOUS - lawless, licentious

ITERATION - reiteration

<<span id="filepos0042595170"> a> J

JACK - a mean fellow

JACK-A-LENT - a puppet thrown for fun at Lent

JACK-AN-APES - Jack o' lantern

JACK GUARDANT - a jack in office

JADE - to whip, to treat with contempt

JANUS - two-headed

JAPE - rude joke

JAR (1) - the ticking of a clock

JAR (2) - to tick as a clock

JAUNCE - to prance

JERKIN - sheriff's coat

JESS - a strap of leather

JEST - to tilt in a tournament

JET - to strut

JOHN-A-DREAMS - a daydreamer

JOURNAL - daily

JOVIAL - appertaining to Jove

JUDICIOUS - critical

JUMP - to agree

JUMP - hazard

JUMP - exactly, nicely

JUSTICER - a judge, magistrate

JUT - to encroach

JUTTY - a projection

JUTTY - to jut out beyond

JUVENAL - youth, young man

<<span id="filepos0042598987"> a> K

KAM - crooked

KECKSY - hemlock

KEECH - a lump of fat

KEEL (1) - to skin

KEEL (2) - cool

KEEP - to restrain

KEISAR - Emperor

KENNEL - to restrain

KERN - the rude foot soldiers of the Irish

KIBE - a chilblain

KICKSHAW - a made dish

KICKSY WICKSY - a wife, used in disdain

KILN-HOLE - the ash-hole under a kiln

KIND - nature

KINDLE - to bring forth young; used only of beasts

KINDLESS - unnatural

KINDLY - natural

KIRTLE - a gown

KNAP - to snap, crack

KNAVE - a boy; serving-man

KNOT - a figure in garden beds

KNOW - to acknowledge

<<span id="filepos0042602286"> a> L

LABRAS - lips

LACED-MUTTON - a courtesan

LAG - the lowest of the people

LAG - late, behindhand

LAKIN - ladykin, little lady, an endearing term applied

LAND-DAMN - perhaps to extirpate

LAPSED - taken, apprehended

LARGE - licentious, free

LARGESS - a present

LASS-LORN - deserted by a mistress

LATCH - to smear

LATED - belated

LATTEN - made of brass

LAUND - lawn

LAVOLTA - a dance

LAY - wager

LEAGUE - besieging army

LEASING - lying

LEATHER-COATS - a kind of apple

LEECH - a physician

LEER - countenance, complexion

LEET - a manor court

LEGE - to allege

LEGERITY - lightness

LEIGER - an ambassador resident abroad

LEMAN - a lover or mistress

LENTEN - meagre

L'ENVOY - the moral at the end of a tale

LET - to hinder

 - to binder

LET - hindrance

LETHE - death

LEVEL - to aim

LEVEL - that which is aimed at

LEWD - ignorant, foolish

LEWDLY - wickedly

LEWDSTER - a lewd person

LIBBARD - a leopard

LIBERAL - licentious

LIBERTY - libertinism

LICENCE - licentiousness

LIEF - dear

LIFTER - a thief

LIGHT O' LOVE - a tune so called

LIGHTLY - easily, generally

LIKE - to please

LIKE - to liken, compare

LIKE - likely

LIKELIHOOD - promise, appearance

LIKING - condition

LIMBECK - an alembick, a still

LIMBO - or Limbo patrum, the place where good men under

LIME - bird-lime

LIME - to entangle as with bird-lime

LIMN - to draw

LINE - to cover on the inside

LINSTOCK - a staff with a match at the end

LIST - a margin, hence a bound or enclosure

LITHER - lazy

LITTLE - miniature

LIVELIHOOD - appearance of life

LIVERY - a law phrase, signifying the act of delivering

LIVING - lively, convincing

LOACH - a fish so called

LOB - a looby

LOCKRAM - a sort of coarse linen

LODE-STAR - the leading-star, pole-star

LOFFE - to laugh

LOGGATS - the game called nine-pins

LONGLY - longingly

LOOF - to lull, bring a vessel up to the wind

LOON - a low contemptible fellow

LOT - a prize in a lottery

LOTTERY - that which falls to a man by lot

LOWT - a clown

LOWT - to treat one as a lowt, with contempt

LOZEL - a spendthrift

LUBBER - a leopard

LUCE - n the pike or jack, a fresh-water fish

LUMPISH - duff, dejected

LUNES - fits of lunacy

LURCH - to defeat, to win

LURCH - to shift, to play tricks

LURE - something stuffed to resemble a bird

LUSH - juicy, luxuriant

LUSTIG - lusty, cheerful

LUXURIOUS - lascivious

LUXURY - lust

LYM - a slow hound

<<span id="filepos0042614073"> a> M

MACE - staff carried by a sergeant

MACHINE - bodily frame

MACULATE - stained, polluted

MAD-BRED - produced by madness

MADE-UP - accomplished (*Tim* 51103)

MADRIGAL - short lyrical poem

MAGNIFICO - the chief magistrate at Venice

MAGOT-PIE - a magpie

MAHU - name of a daemon

MAID-PALE - white-complexioned

MAIL - covered as with a coat of mail

MAIN-COURSE - a sea-term for the mainsail

MAINLY - forcible, violently

MAINTENANCE - bearing, demeanour

MAKE - to do up, bar

MALKIN - untidy servant-woman, slut

MALLECHO - mischief

MALMSEY - a sweet fortified wine originally made in Greece

MALMSEY-BUTT - a cask of sweet wine containing the heads of two hogs

MALMSEY-NOSE - red-nosed

MALT-HORSE - heavy kind of horse - used as a term of abuse

MAMMERING - wavering, hesitating

MAMMETS - a doll or puppet; woman's breasts

MAMMOCK - to break into fragments

MAN - to tame a hawk

MANAGE - management

MANDRAGORA - mandrake, the poisonous plant

MANDRAKE - poisonous plant known for its narcotic properties

MANE - used to describe the crests of waves

MANKIND - having a masculine nature

MAN-QUELLER - murderer

MANTLE (1) - vegetable coating on the surface of stagnant water

MANTLE (2) - *vb* to cover, envelope

MAPPERY - map-making

MARBLE (1) - metamorphic rock formed by alteration of limestone or dolomite

MARBLE (2) - hard-hearted

MARCANTANT - corruption of 'merchant'

MARCHES - frontiers, borders

MARCHPANE - a kind of sweet biscuit made of almond-paste

MARGENT - margin; edge, border

MARISH - marsh, swamp

MARL - clay, earth

MARMOSET - small monkey

MARRY (1) - *vb* to join closely

MARRY (2) - name of the Blessed Virgin used as an oath

MARRY TRAP - an oath

MARSHALSEA - prison in Southwark

MART - meeting of people to exchange goods; traffic; bargain

MARTLEMAS - the Feast of St Martin

MARTLET - swallow or house-martin

MASTERDOM - absolute control

MATCH - an appointment

MATE - to confound, dismay

MEACOCK - tame, cowardly

MEALED - mingled

MEAN - instrument used to promote an end

MEAN - the tenor part in a harmony

MEAN - opportunity, power

MEASURE - distance of a fencer from his opponent; limit; moderation; metre; dance; to judge; to tread

MEAZEL - a leper, spoken in contempt of a mean person

MEDAL - a portrait in a locket

MEDICINE - a physician

MEED - reward, hire

MEHERCLE - by Hercules

MEINY - retinue

MELL - to mix, to meddle

MEMORISE - to cause to be remembered

MEPHISTOPHILUS - the name of a familiar spirit

MERCATANTE - a foreign trader

MERELY - simply, absolutely

MESS - a company of four

METAPHYSICAL - supernatural

METE-YARD - measuring-wand

MEW UP - to confine

MICHER - a truant

MICKLE - much

MILK-LIVERED - cowardly

MILKY - timid, weak

MILL-SIXPENCE - a milled sixpence

MIMIC - burlesque actor

MINCE - to do any thing affectedly

MINCING - affected

MIRTH - fun; object of merriment

MISCREATE - illegitimate

MISDOUBT - to suspect

MISERY - avarice

MISPRISE - to despise

MISPRISION - mistake

MISSIVE - messenger

MISTEMPERED - angry

MISTHINK - to think ill of

MISTRESS - the jack in bowling

MOBLED - muffled

MODERN - commonplace

MODULE - a model, image

MOE - and more Of frequent occurrence

MOIETY - a portion; small part, lesser portion

MOME - a stupid person

MOMENTANY - momentary

MONTHS-MIND - a monthly commemoration of the dead

MOOD - anger

MOON-CALF - a nick-name applied to Caliban

MOONISH - inconstant

MOP - nod

MORISCO - a Moor

MORRIS-PIKE - Moorish-pike

MORT - death; sound of the horn signalling the slaughter of game

MORT-DU-VINAIGRE - a ridiculous oath

MORTAL - fatal, deadly

MORTIFIED - ascetic

MOSE - a doubtful word, applied to some disease

MOTION - solicitation

MOTION - a puppet

MOTIVE - one who moves

MOTLEY - or the many-coloured coat of a fool

MOTLEY-MINDED - foolish

MOUSE-HUNT - a weasel

MOW - to make grimaces

MOY - imaginary name of a coin in *Hen V*

MUCH - approximately

MUNITION - military stores

MURE - a wall

MURRAIN - plague

MUSCADEL - strong sweet wine

MUSET - a gap in a fence or shrub

MUST - a scramble

MUTINE - to mutiny

MUTINE - a mutineer

MYRMIDON - from the warlike race of Thessaly

<<span id="filepos0042631787"> a> N

NAPKIN - a handkerchief

NATURAL - an idiot

NAYWARD - towards denial

NAYWORD - a catch-word, by-word

NEB - the beak

NEELD - a needle

NEIF - hand

NEPHEW - a grandson

NETHER-STOCKS - stockings

NEXT - nearest

NICE - foolish

NICK - score or reckoning

NICK - to brand with folly

NIGHTED - black as night

NIGHT-RULE - nightly solemnity

NINE MEN'S MORRIS - a place set apart for a Moorish dance

NINNY - a fool, jester

NOBILITY - nobleness

NOBLE - a coin, worth 6s 8d

NODDY - a dolt

NONCE - for the nonce, corrupted from 'for then once,'

NOOK-SHOTTEN - indented with bays and creeks

NOURISH - a nurse

NOVUM - a game at dice

NOWL - head

NUTHOOK - a hook for pulling down nuts, hence a thief

NUZZLING, pr p nosing

<<span id="filepos0042635816"> a> O

O - a circle

OAR - to row as with oars

OBSEQUIOUS - behaving as becomes one who attends funeral

OBSEQUIOUSLY - funereally

OBSTACLE - ridiculously used for 'obstinate'

OCCUPATION - persons occupied in business

OCCURENT - an incident

OD'S BODY - God's body

OEILLIAD - an amorous glance

O'ERPARTED - having too important a part to act

O'ER-RAUGHT - overreached

OFFERING - challenging

OFFICE - benefit, kindness

OLD - a cant term for great

ONCE - some time

ONEYER - a banker A doubtful word

OPE - open

OPE - to open

OPEN - plain

OPEN - to give tongue as a hound

OPERANT - active

OPINIONED - used ridiculously for pinioned

OPPOSITE - adversary

OPPOSITION - combat

OR - before

ORDER - measures

ORDINANCE - rank, order

ORGULOUS - proud

ORT - leaving, refuse

OSTENT - show, appearance

OSTENTATION - show, appearance

OUNCE - a beast of prey of the tiger kind

OUPHE - a fairy

OUSEL-COCK - the blackbird

OUT - all out, fully

OUT-LOOK - to face down

OUTWARD - not in the secret of affairs

OUTWARD - outside

OWE - to own

<<span id="filepos0042641260"> a> P

PACK - to conspire; a gang

PACK - to depart; load

PADDOCK - a toad

PAID - punished

PALE - to enclose

PALL - to cover as with a pall

PALLED - impaired

PALLIAMENT - white gown of a Roman official

PALMER - one who bears a palm-branch

PALMY - victorious

PARCELLED - belonging to individuals

PARD - the leopard

PARITOR - an apparitor

PARLE - talk

PARLOUS - perilous

PARTED - endowed, gifted

PARTIZAN - a pike

PASH - the face

PASH - to strike violently, to bruise, crush

PASS - to practice

PASSANT - a term of heraldry, applied to animals

  - represented on the shield as passing by at a trot

PASSING - surpassingly, exceedingly

PASSION - to have feelings

PASSIONATE - to suffer

PASSY-MEASURE - a kind of dance

PASTRY - the room where pastry was made

PATCH - a mean fellow

PATCHED - dressed in motley

PATCHERY - trickery

PATH - to walk

PATHETICAL - affected, hypocritical

PATIENT - to make patient, to compose

PATINE - the metal disc on which the bread is placed

PATTERN - to give an example of

PAUCA VERBA - few words

PAUCAS - few, a cant word

PAVIN - a dance

PAX - a small image of Christ

PAY - to despatch

PEAT - a term of endearment for a child

PEDASCULE - a pedant, schoolmaster

PEER - to peep out

PEIZE - to balance, weigh down

PELTING - paltry

PERDU - lost

PERDURABLE - durable

PERDY - a euphemism for Par Dieu

PERFECT - certain

PERFECT - to inform perfectly

PERIAPTS - charms worn round the neck

PERJURE - a perjured person

PERSEVER - to persevere

PERSPECTIVE - a telescope, or some sort of optical glass

PEW-FELLOW - a comrade

PHEEZE - to comb, fleece, curry

PIA-MATER - the membrane covering the brain, the brain

PICK - to pitch, throw

PICKED - chosen, selected

PICKERS - (and stealers), the fingers, used ridiculously

PICKING - insignificant

PICKT-HATCH - a place noted for brothels Merry Wives

PIED - motley-coated

PIELED - shaven

PLIGHT - pitched

PILCHER - a scabbard

PILL - to pillage

PIN - a malady of the eye

PINFOLD - a pound, a place to confine lost cattle

PIONED - digged

PLACKET - a petticoat-front

PLAIN SONG - a simple air

PLAITED - intricate

PLANCHED - made of boards

PLANTATION - colonizing, planting a colony

PLAUSIVE - plausible

PLEACHED - interwoven

POINT - a lace furnished with a tag by which the

 - breeches were held up

POINT-DE-VICE - faultless

POISE - balance

POLLED - bare

POMANDER - a perfumed ball

POMEWATER - a kind of apple

POOR-JOHN - a herring

POPINJAY - a parrot

PORT - pomp, state

PORT - a gate

PORTABLE - bearable

PORTANCE - conduct, behavior

POSSESS - to inform

POTCH - to push violently

POTENT - a potentate

POUNCET-BOX - a box for holding perfumes

POWER - forces, army

PRACTISE - wicked stratagem

PRACTISANT - a confederate

PRANK - to dress up

PRECEPT - a justice's summons

PRECIOUSLY - in business of great importance

PREGNANCY - fertility of invention

PREGNANT - fertile of invention

PRENOMINATE - to name beforehand, to prophesy

PRE-ORDINANCE - old-established law

PRESENCE - the presence-chamber

PREST - ready

PRETENCE - design

PRETEND - to portend

PREVENT - to anticipate

PRICK - the mark denoting the hour on a dial

PRICK - to incite

PRICK-SONG - music sung in parts by note

PRICKET - a stag of two years

PRIDE - heat

PRIG - to steal

PRIME - rank, lecherous

PRIMER - more-important

PRIMERO - a game at cards

PRINCIPALITY - that which holds the highest place

PRINCOX - a coxcomb

PRISER - a prize-fighter

PROCURE - to bring

PREFACE - interj much good may it do you

PROFANE - outspoken

PROGRESS - a royal ceremonial journey

PROJECT - to shape or contrive

PROMPTURE - suggestion

PRONE - ready, willing

PROOF - strength of manhood

PROPAGATE - to advance, to forward

PROPAGATION - obtaining

PROPER-FALSE - natural falsehood

PROPERTIED - endowed with the properties of

PROPERTIES - scenes, dresses, &c used in a theatre

PROPERTY - to take possession of

PROPOSE - to suppose, for the sake of argument

PROPOSE - conversation

PROROGUE - to defer

PROVAND - provender

PROVISION - forecast

PUCELLE - a virgin, the name given to Joan of Arc

PUDENCY - modesty

PUGGING - thieving

PUN - to pound

PURCHASE - to acquire, win

PURCHASE - gain, winnings

PUT - to compel

PUTTER-ON - an instigator

PUTTER-OUT - one who lends money at interest

PUTTING-ON - instigation

PUTTOCK - a kite

<<span id="filepos0042661119"> a> Q

QUAIL - to faint, be languid, be afraid

QUAINT - curiously beautiful

QUAKE - to cause to quake or tremble

QUALIFY - to moderate

QUALITY - those of the same nature

QUARREL - a suit, cause

QUARRY - game, a heap of game

QUART D'ECU - a quarter crown

QUARTER - the post allotted to a soldier

QUAT - a pimple; used in contempt of a person

QUEASY - squeamish, unsettled

QUELL - murder

QUENCH - to grow cool

QUERN - a hand-mill

QUEST - enquiry, search, inquest, jury

QUESTRIST - one who goes in search of another

QUICK - living, alive; running; hasty

QUICKEN - to come to life

QUIDDIT - a subtle question

QUILLET - quidebet, a subtle case in law

QUINTAIN - a post for tilting at

QUIP - sharp jest, a taunt

QUIRE - to sing in concert

QUIT - to requite, respond

QUIT - past tense of the verb to quit, quitted

QUITANCE - requital

QUIVER - active

QUOTE - to note

<<span id="filepos0042665329"> a> R

RABATO - a ruff

RABBIT-SUCKER - a weasel

RACE - breed; inherited nature

RACK - wreck

RACK - to enhance the price of anything

RAG - a term of contempt applied to persons

RAKE - to cover

RAPT - transported with emotion

RAPTURE - a fit

RASCAL - a lean deer

RASH - quick, violent

RATE - opinion, judgment

RATE - to assign, to value

RATOLORUM - a ludicrous mistake for Rotulorum

RAUGHT - past tense of reach

RAVIN - ravenous

RAVIN - to devour

RAWLY - inadequately

RAWNESS - unprovided state

RAYED - arrayed, served

RAZED - slashed

REAR-MOUSE - the bat

REBATE - to deprive of keenness

REBECK - a three-stringed fiddle

RECEIPT - money received

RECEIVING - capacity

RECHEAT - a point of the chase to call back the hounds

RECORD - to sing

RECORDER - a flute

RECURE - to cure, recover

RED-LATTICE - lattice painted red, usually outside an ale-house

RED-PLAGUE - erysipelas

REDUCE - to bring back

REECHY - smoky, dirty

REFELL - to refute

REFER - to reserve to

REGIMENT - government

REGREET - a salutation

REGREET - to salute

REGUERDON - requital

RELATIVE - applicable

REMEMBER - to remind

REMORSE - pity

REMORSEFUL - full of pity, compassionate

REMOTION - removal

REMOVED - sequestered, remote

RENDER - to describe you

RENDER - account

RENEGE - to renounce, to deny

REPAIR - to renovate, comfort

REPEAL - to reverse the sentence of exile

REPROOF - confutation

REPUGN - to resist

REQUIEM - mass for the dead

RESOLVE - to satisfy

RESPECT - consideration

RESPECTIVE - respectful, thoughtful

RESPECTIVE - corresponding

RESPECTIVELY - respectfully

RETAILED - handed down

RETIRE - retreat

RETIRE - to draw back

REVERB - to echo

REVOLT - a rebel

RIB - to enclose as within ribs

RID - to destroy

RIFT - to split

RIFT - a split

RIGGISH - wanton

RIGOL - a circle

RIPE - drunk

RIVAGE - the shore

RIVAL - a partner

RIVALITY - equal rank

RIVE - to fire

ROAD - the high road, applied to a common woman

ROISTING - roistering, violent

ROMAGE - unusual stir

RONVON - a term of contempt applied to a woman

ROOD - the crucifix

ROOK - a cheater

ROPERY - roguery

ROPE-TRICKS - tricks such as are played by a rope-dancer

ROUND (1) - circle; circular movement

ROUND (2) - to finish off; to hem

ROUND (3) - to whisper

ROUNDEL - a dance or song

ROUNDURE - an enclosure

ROUSE - carousal

ROYNISH - mangy

RUBIOUS - ruddy

RUDDOCK - the redbreast

RUSH - to push

RUSHLING - rustling

<<span id="filepos0042677496"> a> S

SA - repeated, incites to sudden action

SACRIFICIAL - reverent, as words used in religious worship

SACRING-BELL - a bell rung at mass

SAD - serious

SADLY - seriously

SADNESS - seriousness

SAFE - to make safe

SAG - to hang down

SALT - lascivious

SALT - taste

SANDED - marked with yellow spots

SANS - without

SAUCY - lascivious

SAW - a moral saying

SAY - silken

SAY - assay, taste, relish

SCAFFOLDAGE - the gallery of a theatre

SCALD - scurvy, scabby

SCALE - to weigh in scales

SCALL - a scab, a word of reproach

SCAMBLE - to scramble

SCAMEL - probably a misprint for sea-mel, sea-mew

SCAN - to examine subtly

SCANT (1) - to cut short, to spare

SCANT (2) - to put, to reduce; to limit

SCANTLING - a small portion

SCAPE - to escape

SCAPE - a sally

SCATHE - injury

SCATHE - to injure

SCATHFUL - destructive

SCONCE - the head

SCOTCH - to bruise or cut slightly

SCRIMER - a fencer

SCROYLE - a scabby fellow

SCULL - a shoal of fish

SCURVY - scabby; metaph mean

SEAL - to set one's seal to a deed; hence, to confirm

SEAM - fat

SEAMY - showing the seam or sewing

SEAR - scorched, withered

SEAR - to stigmatise

SEARCH - to seek; to probe; to penetrate

SEATED - fixed, confirmed

SECT - party, faction; rank, class of people

SECURELY - inconsiderately

SEEL - to close

SEELING - closing, blinding

SEEMING - seemly, becomingly

SEEMING - outward manner and appearance

SEEN - versed, instructed

SELD - seldom

SELF-BOUNTY - native goodness

SEMBLABLY - alike

SENIORY - seniority

SENNET - a flourish of trumpets

SEPULCHRE - to bury

SEQUESTRATION - separation

SERE - dry

SERJEANT - a bailiff

SERPIGO - a cutaneous disease

SERVICEABLE - active in service

SERVILE - subject to

SETEBOS - the name of a fiend

SETTER - one who decoys people who are to be robbed

SEVERAL - land which is not common but appropriated

SHAME - to be ashamed

SHAME - modesty

SHARDS - shreds, broken fragments of pottery

SHARDS - the sheaths of the wings of insects; patch of dung; fragment of pottery

SHARKED - snatched up, as a shark does his prey

SHEEN - brilliancy

SHEER - pure, clear

SHENT - rebuked, blamed

SHERIFF'S-POST - a post at the door of a sheriff

SHIVE - slice

SHOT - the reckoning at an ale-house

SHOUGHS - shaggy dogs

SHOULDERED - plunged

SHOVEL-BOARD - game played with sliding metal pieces

SHREWD - mischievous

SHRIFT - confession

SHRIVE - to confess

SHRIVING-TIME - time for confession

SHROUD - to enshroud oneself, cover oneself up

SIDE-SLEEVES - loose hanging sleeves

SIEGE - seat; rank; excrement

SIGHT - an aperture in a helmet

SIGHTLESS - invisible

SIGN - to give an omen

SILLY - simple, rustic

SIMULAR - counterfeit, feigned

SINGLE - feeble

SIR - a title applied to a bachelor of arts at the

SITH - since

SITHENCE - since

SIZES - allowances

SKAINS-MATES - scapegraces

SKILL - to be of importance

SKILLESS - ignorant

SKIMBLE-SKAMBLE - rambling, disjointed

SKINKER - a drawer of liquor

SKIRR - to scour

SLACK - slacken

SLAVE - to turn to slavish uses

SLEAVE - floss-silk

SLEDDED - sledged

SLEIDED - untwisted, raw, applied to silk

SLEIGHTS - artifices

SLIPPER - slippery

SLIPS - a kind of noose, or leash

SLIVER - to slice

SLIVER - a slice

SLOPS - loose breeches

SLUBBER - to slur over

SMIRCHED - smeared, soiled

SMOOTH - to flatter

SMOOTHED - flattered, fawned upon

SNEAP - taunt, sarcasm

SNEAPED - pinched

SNECK-UP - go hang!

SNUFF - anger; to take offence

SOFTLY - gently

SOIL - spot, taint

SOLICIT - solicitation

SOLIDARE - a small coin

SOLVE - solution

SOMETIMES - formerly

SOOTH - truth

SOOTH - true

SOREL - a buck of the third year

SORRIEST - most sorrowful

SORRY - sorrowful, dismal

SORT - a company

SORT - to choose

SOT - fool

SOUL-FEARING - soul-terrifying

SOWL - to lug, drag

SOWTER - name of a dog

SPECIALLY - a special contract

SPED - settled, done for

SPEED - fortune

SPERR - to bolt, fasten

SPIAL - spy

SPILL - to destroy

SPILTH - spilling

SPLEEN - the bodily organ; fiery temper; haste; impulse

SPRAG - quick

SPRING - shoot, bud

SPRINGHALT - stringhalt, a disease of horses

SPRITED - haunted

SPURS - roots of trees

SQUANDERED - scattered

SQUARE - to quarrel

SQUARE - the front part of a woman's dress, stomacher

SQUARE - equitable

SQUARER - quarreller

SQUASH - an unripe peascod

SQUIER - a square or rule

SQUINY - to squint

STAGGERS - a disease in cattle, attended by giddiness, hence, giddiness

STAIN - to disfigure

STALE - a decoy

STALE - to make stale

STAND UPON - to be incumbent on

STANIEL - an inferior kind of hawk

STARK - stiff

STARKLY - stiffly

STATE - a canopied chair

STATION - attitude

STATIST - a statesman

STATUA - a statue

STATUE - image, picture

STATUTE - security, obligation

STATUTE-CAPS - woollen caps worn by citizens

STAY - a cheque

STEAD - to profit

STEELED - set or fixed

STERNAGE - steerage, course

STICKLER - an arbitrator in combats

STIGMATIC - a deformed person

STIGMATICAL - deformed

STILL - constant

STILL - constantly

STILLY - softly

STINT - to stop

STITHY - a smith's forge

STITHY - to forge

STOCCADO - a stoccata, or thrust in fencing

STOCK - a stocking

STOMACH - courage, stubbornness; angry temper; inclination

STONE-BOW - a cross-bow for throwing stones

STOUP - a cup

STOUT - strong, healthy

STOVER - fodder

STRACHY - A word of doubtful meaning

STRAIGHT - immediately

STRAIN - lineage

STRAITED - straitened

STRANGE - foreign

STRANGENESS - coyness, reserve

STRANGER - foreigner

STRAPPADO - a kind of punishment

STRICTURE - strictness

STROSSERS - trowsers

STUCK - a thrust of a sword

STUCK IN - corruption of stoccata

STUFF - baggage

STUFFED - filled, stored

STY - to lodge as in a sty

SUBSCRIBE - to yield

SUCCESS - issue, consequence

SUCCESSIVE - succeeding

SUCCESSIVELY - in succession

SUDDEN - hasty, rash

SUDDENLY - hastily

SUFFERANCE - suffering

SUGGEST - to tempt, entice

SUGGESTION - temptation, enticement

SUITED - dressed

SULLEN - doleful, melancholy

SUMPTER - a horse that carries provisions on a journey

SUPPOSE - a trick, imposition

SUPPOSED - counterfeit

SURCEASE - to cease

SURCEASE - cessation, end

SURPRISE - to capture by surprise

SUR-REINED - over-worked

SUSPECT - suspicion

SUSPIRE - to breathe

SWABBER - a sweeper of the deck of a ship

SWARTH (1) - dark-complexioned

SWARTH (2) - heap

SWASHER - swaggerer

SWASHING - dashing, smashing

SWATH - The same as 'swarth'

SWATHLING - swaddling

SWAY - to move on

SWEAR - to adjure

SWEAR OVER - to out-swear

SWIFT - ready, quick

SWINGE-BUCKLER - a bully

<<span id="filepos0042708243"> a> T

TABLE - a tablet, note-book

TABLE-BOOK - note-book

TABLES - backgammon

TABOUR - a small side-drum

TABOURER - a player on the tabour

TABOURINE - tambourine, drum

TAG - the rabble

TAINT - tainted

TAINTURE - defilement

TAKE IN - to conquer

TAKE OUT - to copy

TAKE UP - raise, levy

TAKING - malignant influence; state of agitation

TAKING UP - buying on credit

TALE - counting, reckoning

TALL - strong, valiant

TALLOW-CATCH - a lump of tallow

TANG - twang, sound

TANG - to sound

TANLING - anything tanned by the sun

TARRE - to excite, urge on

TARRIANCE - delay

TARTAR - Tartarus

TASK - to lay a tax upon; to occupy fully

TASKING - challenging

TASTE - to try

TAWDRY-LACE - a rustic necklace

TAXATION - satire, sarcasm

TAXING - satire

TEEN - grief

TELL - to count

TEMPER - to mix

TEMPERANCE - temperature

TEMPERED - mixed

TEND - to attend to

TENDER - to offer; regard, care

TENT (1) - bed hangings

TENT (2) - to lodge

TENT (3) - to probe

TENT (4) - roll of lint usd to clean a wound

TERCEL - the male of the goshawk

TERMAGANT - a ranting character in old plays

TESTED - pure, assayed

TESTERN - to reward with a tester, or sixpence

THARBOROUGH - a constable

THEE - you

THEORICK - theory

THEWES - sinews, muscles

THICK - rapidly

THICK-PLEACHED - thickly intertwined

THIRD-BOROUGH - a constable

THOU - you

THOUGHT - anxiety, grief

THRASONICAL - boastful

THREE-MAN BEETLE - a wooden mallet worked by three men

THREE-MAN-SONG-MEN - singers of songs in three parts

THREE-PILE - three-piled velvet

THRENE - funeral song

THRID - thread, fibre

THROE - to put in agonies

THRUM - the tufted end of a thread in weaving

THRUMMED - made od coarse ends or tufts

THY - your

TICKLE - ticklish

TIGHT - nimble, active

TIGHTLY - briskly, promptly

TIKE - a cur

TILLY-VALLY - int an exclamation of contempt

TILTH - tillage

TIMELESS - untimely

TINCT - stain, dye

TIRE (1) - head-dress

TIRE (2) - to feed upon like a bird of prey

TIRED - dressed, clothed

TANG - twang, sound

TOD - to yield a tod of wool

TOKENED - marked with plague spots

TOKENS - plague spots

TOLL - to exact toll; to strike

TOPLESS - supreme, without superior

TOUCH - stroke; trait or feature; dash, spice; touchstone for testing gold

TOUCHED - pricked

TOUSE - to pull, drag

TOWARD - nearly ready

TOWARDS - nearly ready

TOYS - trifles, foolish tricks

TRADE - beaten path

TRANECT - a ferry

TRANSLATED - transformed

TRASH - to cheque, as a huntsman his hounds

TRAVAIL - labour, toil

TRAY-TRIP - an old game played with dice

TREACHERS - traitors

TREATIES - entreaties

TRENCHED - carved

TRICK - custom, habit; art, knack; characteristic expression; touch

TRICK - to adorn, dress up

TRICKED - blazoned

TRICKING - ornament

TRICKSY - elegantly quaint

TRIPLE - third

TROJAN - a cant word for a thief

TROL-MY-DAMES - a game using balls and arches

TROTH-PLIGHT - betrothed

TROW - to trust, think

TRUE - honest

TRUNDLE-TAIL - a long-tailed dog

TUCKET-SONANCE - a flourish on the trumpet

TUNDISH - a funnel

TURLYGOOD - a name adopted by bedlam-beggars

TURN - to modulate

TWANGLING - twanging

TWIGGEN - made of twigs, wicker

TWILLED - Retained by woven branches

TWINK - a twinkling

TWIRE - to peep, twinkle

<<span id="filepos0042723319"> a> U

ULLORXA - lustful persons (*a puzzling word to all editors*)

UMBER - brown pigment

UMBERED - darkened, as with umber

UMBRAGE - shadow

UNABLE - weak, impotent

UNACCOMMODATED - not furnished with what is necessary

UNANELED - not having received extreme unction

UNAVOIDED - unavoidable

UNBACKED - unridden

UNBANDED - without a hatband

UNBARBED - unarmed

UNBATED - unabated, undiminished

UNBEND - to relax; make slack

UNBID - unwelcome

UNBITTED - unbridled

UNBOLT - to disclose

UNBOLTED - unsifted, unrefined

UNBOOKISH - unskilled

UNBORN - non-existent

UNBRACED - unbuttoned

UNBRAIDED - not soiled or faded

UNBREATHED - unpractised

UNCAPE - to throw off the hounds

UNCHARGED - undefended, applied to the gates of a city

UNCLEW - to unravel, unwind

UNCOINED - unfeigned, natural

UNDERGO - to undertake

UNDERTAKER - one who takes up another's quarrel

UNDER-WROUGHT - undermined

UNEATH - hardly

UNEXPRESSIVE - inexpressible

UNFAIR - to deprive of beauty

UNHAPPILY - censoriously

UNHAPPY - mischievous

UNHATCHED - undisclosed

UNHOUSELED - without receiving the sacrament

UNIMPROVED - unreproved

UNION - a pearl

UNJUST - dishonest

UNKIND - unnatural

UNLIVED - bereft of life

UNMANNED - untamed, applied to a hawk

UNOWED - unowned

UNPREGNANT - stupid

UNPROPER - common to all

UNQUESTIONABLE - not inquisitive

UNREADY - undressed

UNRESPECTIVE - inconsiderate

UNSISTING - unresting

UNSTANCHED - incontinent

UNTEMPERING - unsoftening

UNTENTED - unsearchable

UNTRADED - unused, uncommon

UNTRIMMED - spoiled of grace or ornament

UNTRUE - untruth

UNVALUED - invaluable

UPSPRING REEL - a boisterous dance

URCHIN - the hedge-hog

USANCE - usury

USE - interest

UTIS - *from "huit", "eight" in French* - signifies the eighth day after any festival

UTTER - to expel, put forth

UTTERANCE - extremity

<<span id="filepos0042731914"> a> V

VACANCY - empty space; unoccupied time

VACANT - devoid of

VADE - to fade

VAGABOND - moving to and fro

VAGROM - vagrant

VAIL (1) - going down

VAIL (2) - to let fall, lower; to pay homage

VAILFUL - advantageous

VAILING - lowering

VAIN - foolish; false; for nothing

VAINNESS - vanity

VALANCED - hidden in a beard

VALIDITY - value; strength

VANTAGE - advantage

VANTBRACE - armour for the front of the arm

VARLET - a servant, valet

VASSAL - base, wretched fellow

VASSALAGE - vassals (collective)

VAST - properly a waste-place, metaphorically, the dead

VASTIDITY - immensity

VASTLY - far and wide

VASTY - vast, waste

VAUNT - the van, that which precedes

VAUNT-COURIERS - forerunners

VAWARD - vanguard

VEGETIVES - vegetables

VEIN - disposition, humor; lifestyle

VELURE - velvet

VELVET-GUARDS - wearers of velvet trimmings

VENEW - a thrust in fencing

VENEY - a thrust in fencing

VENGE - to avenge

VENTAGES - vent-holes in a flute

VERBAL - wordy

VERBATIM - by word of mouth

VERY - true, real; complete

VEX - to annoy, disturbe, agitate

VIAL - bottle or flask

VICE (1) - to screw

VICE (2) - sinful act

VICEGERENT - deputy

VIE - to challenge; to compete

VIEWLESS - invisible

VILLAIN - a serf, servant; evil person

VINEWED - mouldy

VIOL-DE-GAMBOYS - a bass viol

VIRGINALLING - playing as on the virginals (from harp family)

VIRTUE - bravery, merit; essence, essential part

VIRTUOUS - excellent; essential

VIZAMENT - advisement

VOIDING-LOBBY - waiting-room

VOLABLE - quick-witted

VOLUBLE - fickle

VOLUNTARY - volunteer

VOTARIST - votary, one who has taken a vow

VULGAR (1) - common people; vulgar tongue

VULGAR (2) - of the common people

VULGARLY - publicly

<<span id="filepos0042739857"> a> W

WAFT - to wave, beckon; to turn away

WAFTAGE - passage by water

WAFTURE - wave

WAGE - to renumerate; to lay as a wager; to venture, hazard

WAGGISH - roguish

WAGGON - chariot, carriage

WAGGONER - charioteer

WAGTAIL - an obsequious person

WAINROPE - cart-rope

WAILFUL - lamentable

WAIST - girdle; the middle of a ship

WAIT - to be expecting something; to be in attendance

WALK - a person's way or course; a tract of garden or park; to withdraw

WALL-EYED - glaring, fierce-looking

WALL-NEWT - small lizard

WAN - to turn pale

WAN'D - withered

WANNION - with a vengeance

WAPPENED - withered, stale

WARD - to guard

WARDEN - a large pear used for baking

WARDER - staff held by one presiding over a combat

WARM - well off, comfortable

WARN - to summon

WASP-STUNG - irritable

WASSAIL - revelry

WAT - a common word for a hare

WATCH (1) - clock

WATCH (2) - being constantly awake

WATCH (3) - to be or lie awake; to look out for

WATER - consumable liquid; tears; the lustre of a diamond

WATER-FLY - fly that hovers over water; idle person

WATER-GALL - a secondary rainbow

WATER-RUG - a kind of dog

WATER-WORK - painting in distemper

WAX - to grow

WAXEN - perhaps, to hiccough

WEALTH - weal, advantage

WEAR - fashion

WEATHER-FEND - to defend from the weather

WEB AND PIN - the cataract in the eye

WEE - small, tiny

WEE - to think

WEED - garment

WEET - to wit, know

WEIGH OUT - to outweigh

WELKIN - the sky

WELKIN - sky-blue

WELL-LIKING - in good condition

WELL SAID - int well done!

WEND - to go

WESAND - the wind-pipe

WHELK - a weal

WHELKED - marked with whelks or protuberances

WHEN - an exclamation of impatience

WHEN AS - when

WHERE - whereas

WHERE - a place

WHIFFLER - an officer who clears the way in processions

WHILE-ERE - a little while ago

WHILES - until

WHIP-STOCK - handle of a whip

WHIST - hushed, silent

WHITE - the centre of an archery butt

WHITELY - pale-faced A doubtful word

WHITING-TIME - bleaching time

WHITSTER - bleacher

WHITTLE - a clasp knife

WHOO-BUB - hubbub

WHOOP - to cry out with astonishment

WICKED - noisome, baneful

WIDOW - to settle a jointure upon; to become a widow

WIDOWHOOD - the estate belonging to a widow

WIGHT - man, person

WILD - weald

WILDERNESS - wildness

WIMPLED - veiled, blindfolded

WINDOW-BARS - lattice-work across a woman's bodice

WINDRING - winding

WINTER-GROUND - to protect (a plant) from frost

WIS - 'I'

WISH - to commend

WISTLY - wistfully

WIT - knowledge, wisdom; sound judgement

WITHOUT - beyond

WITS - five, the five senses

WITTOL - a contented cuckold

WITTY - intelligent

WOMAN-TIRED - hen-pecked

WONDERED - marvellously gifted

WOOD - mad

WOODCOCK - a simpleton, fool

WOODMAN - a hunter

WOOLWARD - shirtless

WORD - to flatter or put off with words

WORLD - life, condition of existence; 'to go to the world' is to get married

WORM - a serpent

WORSER - worse

WORSHIP - to honour

WORTH - wealth, fortune

WORTS - cabbages

WOT - to know

WOUND - entwined

WREAK - vengeance

WREAK - to avenge

WREAKFUL - revengeful, avenging

WREST - an instrument used for tuning a harp

WRIT - gospel, truth

WRITHLED - shrivelled

WROTH - calamity, misfortune

WRUNG - twisted, strained

WRY - to swerve

WRY-NECK'D - head awkwardly turned sideways

<<span id="filepos0042754791"> a> X

XANTHIPPE Socrate's scolding wife

<<span id="filepos0042755525"> a> Y

YARE - ready, nimble, brisk

YARELY - *adv* readily

YAW - unsteady

YCLAD - clad, clothed

YCLEPED - called, named

YCLIPPED - do

YE – you

YEARN - to grieve, vex

YEDWARD - a form of "Edward"

YELLOWNESS - jealousy

YELLOWS - jaundice in horses

YEOMAN - a sheriff's officer

YERK - to thrust or push

YEST - foam on disturbed water

YESTY - foamy; frothy

YEW - a tree frequently planted in churchyards The wood is poisonous

YIELD - to bring forth; to reward

YORE - once upon a time

YOKE - pair of oxen; to be combined, coupled

YOND - yonder

YOUNKER - novice

YRAVISH - to ravish

YSLAKED - to silence; to renender inactive

<<span id="filepos0042759008"> a> Z

ZANY - a buffoon who imitates fools and jesters

ZEAL - zeal of

ZENITH - highest point of one's fortune

ZODIAC - used for "year"

ZONE - path of the sun (see *Hamlet* Vi304)

ZOUNDS - God's wounds (Swounds)

Holy Trinity Church, Stratford - *Shakespeare’s final resting place*

GOOD FREND FOR IESVS SAKE FORBEARE,
TO DIGG THE DVST ENCLOASED HEARE.
BLESE BE Y MAN Y SPARES THES STONES,
AND CVRST BE HE Y MOVES MY BONES.
THE GRAVE
OF THE POET
WILLIAM
SHAKESPEARE
1564-1616

Shakespeare's grave